

# DECOR MAINe

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**A 1900-ish  
COTTAGE  
IN ROME GETS  
*a Sunny Update***

## *Gather (Again!) in Style*

**THE RETURN OF THE SMALL AND  
SOPHISTICATED SOIREE**

**AT HOME & IN  
THE KITCHEN WITH  
LUKE HOLDEN  
*(of Luke's Lobster)***

**SO LONG,  
SWEATPANTS  
OUR FAVORITE CLOTHING  
SHOPS STATEWIDE**

**A CHEF'S  
SCANDI PASTRY  
SHOP IN  
BIDDEFORD  
*(& His Perfect  
Saturday Morning  
Waffles)***



# COTTAGE

# CLASSIC



A painting by Mary Brosnan complements the owners' bedroom color scheme. **OPPOSITE:** Jim and Lee love entertaining on the screened porch, where a sheep sculpture by Nantz Comyns adds colorful whimsy.

On Great Pond in Rome, a circa 1900 summer cottage gets a sunny update

by Allison Paige photographs by Erin Little



## When Jim Bilodeau and Lee Marquis started their search for a camp not far from their hometown of Portland,

they almost didn't give the cottage in Rome a chance. Turned off by the Realtor's photo showing vinyl siding and what looked like a cheek-to-jowl situation with a neighboring building (it turned out to be a garden shed), they almost missed the dwelling's many charms.

Luckily, they persuaded themselves to do a walk-through anyway, and the rest is history. Just stepping inside the cottage took the Auburn natives back to the summers of their youth. Jim was reminded of lazy days on Lily Lake. In fact, the cottage felt redolent of his grandparents' camp in Frankfort in a way that took him a while to put his finger on. "I later figured out it was really the smell of mothballs," Jim laughs.

Suffice to say, after a sunny update, the cottage isn't the least bit stuffy. Originally part of the historic Jamaica Point Camps resort, the cottage is one of about 20 surrounding Great



Lee and Jim head to their alfresco dining space. The "Great Pond" sign came with the property. **OPPOSITE:** The well-maintained cottage looks much as it did almost a century ago.



Lee and Jim enjoy the view from the screened porch, where the sunsets over Great Pond are truly spectacular. The outdoor furniture is from Maine Cottage.

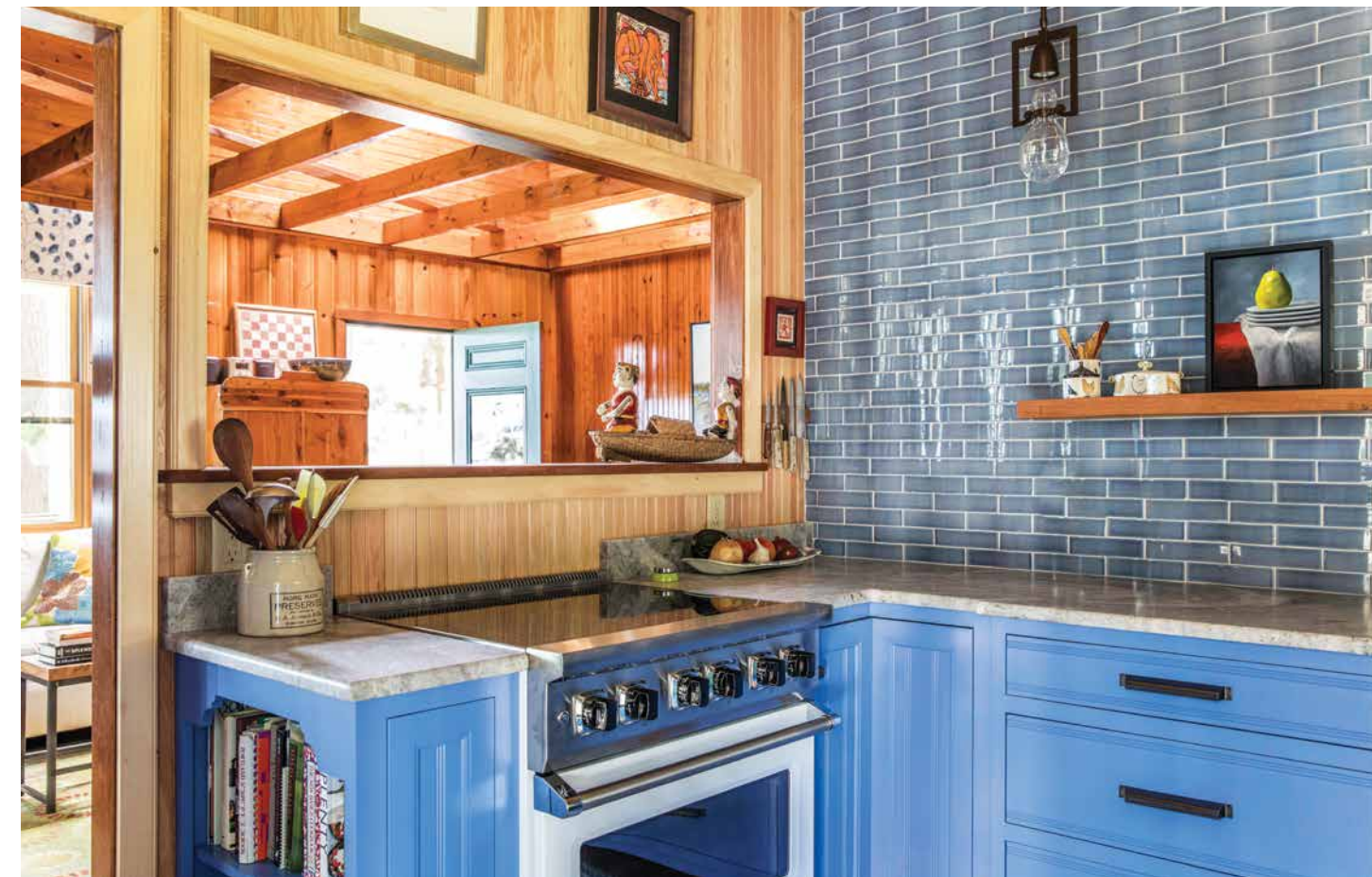


In the guest room, quilt-topped iron beds from L.L. Bean feel cottage quaint. **BELOW:** Kitchen design by Kitchen Cove Design Studio. Cobalt cabinets from Crystal Cabinets. Tile from Distinctive Tile & Design.

Pond. Some 46 miles wide, it is the largest pond in the Kennebec County Belgrade Lakes region. An ever-popular destination for boaters, fishermen, and holiday seekers, the lake was surrounded by cabins, with a main lodge providing meals and all the conveniences of the day. (An early brochure boasts “Daily mail service, long distance telephone, and telegraph.”) Founded around 1904, it ran as a full-service seasonal camp until the late 1950s, when the cottages were later sold off as private summer residences. Jim and Lee bought in 2013 and have spent the ensuing years making the cottage their own.

The two-bedroom, one-bath dwelling measures out at 1,140 square feet with a style Lee calls “cozy, comfortable, cheerful, and bright.” A lemon-yellow exterior with a metal hipped roof gives way to a woodsy, rustic-yet-refined interior. Beyond the pine-green door and into the kitchen bathed in watery blues, cobalt cabinetry and slate-blue subway tile transport the nearby water view indoors. Traditional furnishings, such as twin painted iron beds from L.L. Bean in the guest room, are paired with patchwork quilts and feel true to the cottage aesthetic. A propane stove from Jøtul keeps the cottage cozy on cool summer nights.

Jim and Lee honored the home’s charming retro appeal, leaving the post-and-beam knotty pine interior mostly as is, while making some longed-for updates, like





Stained-glass panels made by the couple hang above their bed from Maine Cottage furniture. OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT: Maine pride on display: a Pine Tree State flag and moose-detailed door from the Wooden Screen Door Company.



Simone enjoys joining her owners on their 1969 Lyman, the *Sogni d'Oro*.



transforming the small, dark kitchen into a bright, harmonious workspace. They teamed with Mary O. Adams of Kitchen Cove Design Studio, Portland, for the reno.

“The desire was for a kitchen that felt bright and fun but still fit the feel of a lake home,” says Mary. “They came to us with this beautiful blue in mind and we mixed it with a custom, inset door style. The combination of this bright blue with the warmth of the original wood created a wonderfully inviting, cozy cottage. The kitchen was designed to fit into the original space, but we needed to maximize the storage and functionality, as the couple loves to cook and to entertain weekend guests. The furniture-style cabinetry, glass doors, and decorative brackets

add to the old feel of this new kitchen. Only the draw of the lake would pull you out of this fabulous cottage.” The custom cabinets were installed by Jim’s brother, Peter, of Bilodeau Builders in West Poland and pair beautifully with River Blue honed marble countertops by Morningstar Stone and Tile in Topsham. Open shelving keeps both crockery and favorite artwork on display.

“I was behind the big push to renovate,” Jim admits. “I do 98 percent of the cooking.”

“You’re asking me what I would like in a kitchen. I say a telephone and a takeout order,” Lee quips.

As for the unsightly vinyl siding? As it turned out, there was beautiful clapboard underneath that Lee

painted a sunny lemon (Sherwin-Williams’s aptly named “Decisive Yellow”). “I did 98 percent of the painting,” he counters, with a laugh.

The cottage sits just steps from the shore of Great Pond, where the pair love to kayak and motor on their 22-foot 1969 Lyman, the *Sogni d’Oro*. Italian for “Sweet Dreams,” an inside joke because the boat is a sleeper and the camp is in Rome. Jim recalls, “A funny story: Some guys who were fishing went by one morning and we could hear them trying to pronounce the name of the boat. They pronounced it ‘Soggy Oreo.’ We later had a dinghy built by Chris Cushman (the same guy who restored the Lyman), and he named the dinghy *Soggi Oreo*.” Painted



cheery yellow, the *Sogni d'Oro* pairs nicely with the cottage.

Simone, their rescue dog from Georgia, likes to join them on the water and visit with the neighboring pups. "She has her summer friends," says Lee. "There's a Belgian Malinois up at the lodge named Enzo that she likes quite a bit."

Jim works at Medical Mutual Insurance in Portland and Lee at Tyler Technologies in Yarmouth. Ordinarily, they spend May through November at the cottage, but that changed last year when the pandemic struck and the retreat became more of a year-round haven. They had Internet installed ("Before that, we didn't even have a TV," Jim shares) so they could work remotely and have a tranquil place to hunker down. "It looks out on the lake, and in the morning it's a very peaceful, pleasant place," says Jim.

The expansive screened-in porch is their favorite spot, where the couple can dine and entertain outdoors with

no fear of blackflies or other Pine State pests. A dining table by Moosehead Furniture, joined by chairs by Lee's brother, Dan Marquis, allow them to take most of their meals overlooking Great Pond. Lee converted a chandelier found in a salvage yard into a true candelabra for the ultimate *hygge*. Porch chairs and a coffee table from Maine Cottage look right at home, while an antique Irish hutch and bench complete the outdoor dining decor.

Located on the West Point of the former resort, the cottage feels perfectly situated, with a blue view as far as the eye can see that resounds with the calls of loons in the evening. While the east side gets the sunrises, this spot is best as far as Jim and Lee are concerned. "You can sleep in a bit," Jim says.

"And the sunsets are really spectacular," adds Lee. Jim agrees. "It's just a nice way to end the day." ■

**ABOVE:** A painting by Melissa Post van der Burg hangs above a table and chairs by Vermont Farm Table in the dining space.