Fresh white paint and new fabrics perk up a collection of old wicker furniture on this welcoming porch.

colorful spirit

A new cottage with an old soul tucks into a historic summer home colony on Lake Michigan without raising a ripple.

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There's a difference between a summer home and a second home, at least to Cindy Rohde. The summer home she and husband Bill built in Harbor Springs, Michigan, is second to none in matters of the heart. "Harbor Springs is our family's source of continuity," says Cindy, explaining that Bill's job as an insurance executive has meant frequent moves for the native Texans and their two children (a son in college and a newlywed daughter). "We started coming here 20 years ago to visit Bill's uncle, and we've been back every year since. To our children, this is home—the most consistent place on earth."

For years, they rented a house in Harbor Springs for the summer. In 2012, they decided to build their own home—a first for the Rohdes, who now live in Greenwich, Connecticut. "We've restored many homes, but this is the only one we've ever built," Cindy says. Working with architect Dan Gorman and interior designer Carrie Blanck, the couple stayed true to the classic cottage style of the resort's original century-old homes, embracing features like a wraparound porch, windows topped with small panes, and beaded board. And, of course, they adhered to the cottage style rule: No skimping on fresh white paint.

"Crisp white backgrounds keep everything clean," Blanck says. "We added bright color with fresh fabrics." The playful palette begins on the porch, where pinks and yellows join blue, green, and white on washable rugs and pillow fabrics.

The living room pays homage to Lake Michigan with blues and whites, yet pops of brighter color are a glance away. The hues from the front porch pillows repeat on seat cushions in the screen porch. "When we entertain, we can have 40 people, and everyone wants to be outside," Cindy says. "These aren't colors that would work in every house, but we wanted our rooms to be fun."

Fun, as in the master bath's old claw-foot tub painted an unexpected persimmon orange, picking up the hue from the bird fabric on the chair. What's good for the bath is good for the bedroom. Blanck slathered an old cane headboard of Cindy's with a spirit-lifting green, "a cross between a Kelly and an apple green."

Memorial Day to Labor Day finds Cindy at the cottage, joined by Bill between his work travels. "This is where our daughter was married. It's where our future grandchildren will spend time. It's my happy place. And when Bill gets here, he takes a deep breath and knows he's home."

"Even in the living room, we tried not to do anything too precious," interior designer Carrie Blanck says. Blue-and-white houndstooth covers the backs of wing chairs inherited from homeowner Cindy Rohde's grandmother; an overscale pattern of medallions and ginger jars upholsters the front.

OPPOSITE: Furniture-style feet on the cabinets and island bring a vintage look to the kitchen. Countertops are Vermont Danby marble, noted for its warm white color. Flooring in the main spaces is wood finished with a gray undertone "for a little more contemporary patina without a whole lot of shine," Blanck says. **TOP:** Gingerbread trim beneath the gable features a lone star in honor of the owners' Texas roots. Built in 2012, the house stays true to the traditional cottage style of Harbor Springs summer homes, many of which are more than 100 years old. **ABOVE LEFT:** A washable rug anchors the dining table in the sunporch. Wood chairs painted sky blue join natural wicker pieces. **ABOVE RIGHT:** Cushy seating flanks a blue cabinet Cindy found and filled with her majolica collection.

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OPPOSITE: Board-and-batten walls give the master bedroom a classic cottage look. Because the old cane headboard was short, it's mounted on the wall for better presentation. Cindy found the side tables while traveling. **ABOVE:** An old claw-foot tub that had been stored in a barn was revived with persimmon-color paint, which also adorns a nearby chair. High windows admit a flow of light while maintaining privacy.