



Cottage extols 'Barefoot, carefree' living

Couple's cottage renovations featured in national magazine

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Not everyone gets a three-page spread in a national magazine extolling the beauty of their home, but that's exactly what happened to a South Haven area couple.

Jay and Gwen DeBruyn's summer cottage in Saugatuck captured a leading spot in the March issue of Coastal Living.

The article and accompanying photos tell how the DeBruyns remodeled and expanded an older-style cottage into a modern one whose color scheme and furnishings reflect the comfort of beachfront living.

"I've collected Coastal Living magazines for 12 years," Gwen said. "I felt I had the right design project and decided to submit what we had done. They said they loved it."

The DeBruyns purchased their 1950s-era, one-story cottage overlooking the Kalamazoo River several years ago. They envisioned a home where they could entertain friends and families in a relaxing "barefoot, carefree" setting.

But the home at the time didn't lend itself to what Gwen envisioned. The walls and ceilings



Contributed photo

The living room of Jay and Gwen DeBruyn's cottage in Saugatuck is shown after it underwent remodeling and redecorating. The cottage was recently featured in an article in Coastal Living magazine.

were covered in dark, knotty pine and the rooms were quite small. Gwen, along with Amber Burger, who both own Bayberry Cottage design store in South Haven, set to work reconfiguring the home's interior.

Gwen also hired architect John Hurst and builder Chris Lozano of Custom Carpentry to build an addition for a new dining room and master suite. Other improvements included expansion of the porch and installation of a large double window to connect the new porch with the kitchen.

While the architect and carpenter worked on the cottage's structure, Gwen and Amber chose furniture, wall coverings and window treatments

to compliment the many perennials located outside of the cottage.

"There are two acres of beautiful azalea gardens that were planted by the original owner, who was a landscaper," Gwen told Coastal Living magazine. "The colors remind me of a fireworks show — pinks and purples and yellows and oranges — and it all looks out over the Kalamazoo River."

Inspired by the colorful flowers, Gwen painted the home's exterior a neutral green and chose yellow for the front door. She then painted the interior ceilings and walls in neutral white and accented them with bold-colored blue, red, orange, lime green and yellow furnishings.

"A lot of it is custom

furnishings, things that I have collected and ones that I sell through Bayberry Cottage," Gwen said. "I've always been inspired by the barefoot, carefree feel."

Apparently, so are Coastal Living magazine editors.

The magazine photographer and writer spent two days at the DeBruyn's home.

Gwen said she didn't know what to expect after the photo shoots and interviews were over, but was quite surprised to open the March issue of Coastal Living to see her cottage on display.

"Very few designers make it into a national publication," she said. "It's kind of like the Super Bowl for us."