



A built-in hutch with a counter-top hides the microwave and coffee maker.

YOUR HOME ✨ WINTER WARMERS

# COLOR ME COZY

When finishing and furnishing a cottage in Maine, a designer takes cues from the outdoors.

By Marni Elyse Katz

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SEAN LITCHFIELD



**J**ENNY MORRISON, founder of Morrison Design House, starts her process by spending time by herself at the site. “I like to absorb what the site is telling me,” she says.

In this case, the site was a cottage nestled among the trees on a serene lake in Denmark, Maine. The clients, a couple with grown children and grandchildren, hired Stephen Blatt Architects to design a home in the same footprint as their old family camp. “The design is a one-story cottage that hugs the ground and has a low-slung hipped roof,” says Jessie Couture, a project manager at Stephen Blatt Architects. “We intentionally did not use any tall walls to make the experience of the cottage feel as cozy as possible.”

So the house would blend with its surroundings, the exterior boards are stained a gray-green that looks different depending on the weather and lighting around them. The trim matches exactly and the window frames are dark. Inside, Morrison also took cues from the landscape. “I was taken by the trees, the greenery, and the dark blue of the lake water,” she says.

Natural wood tones also play a role, especially with the character-grade rift- and quarter-sawn

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**Left:** The upholstery on the swivel chair is Rebecca Atwood’s Bricks linen.

**Right:** Jenny Lind beds from Crate & Barrel evoke the twin beds found in old Maine cabins.

oak floorboards. “The oak we chose for the floors is very warm and expresses the condition of the outdoors,” Morrison says. “The knots convey the trees in their most natural state.”

The vaulted ceiling in the open concept kitchen and living space is lined with nickel gap planks painted warm white, adding interest and preserving airiness. “Jessie suggested just doing nickel gap on the ceiling, not the walls, since there are so many windows,” Morrison says. “Nickel gap looks best in large expanses.”

One end of the open space is filled with cabinetry painted Farrow & Ball Lichen, a green that echoes the baby leaves of the birch trees in spring. “We tried to match the earthiness of those leaves,” Morrison says.

The black soapstone with white and green veining used for the countertops, sink, and backsplash anchors the cabinetry and island. “Every project should have an element that showcases nature in its raw form,” the designer says. “This rock right in the center evokes emotion.”

Morrison explains that the unlacquered brass plumbing fixtures and hardware, which will patina, also offer an elemental connection. “Everything that the homeowners can touch will age with them,” she says. Above the island, irregularly-shaped handblown-glass pendants look to have floated in from outdoors. The result is unfussy and intimate.

In the dining room, the architects countered two walls of windows with a lower ceiling to help the space feel snug. “The design encourages

connectivity with the outdoors while providing coziness,” Couture says. Morrison accentuates the effect by wrapping the window walls with light-filtering linen drapes. “They soften the harsh edges of the glass and encase the space in delicious texture,” she says.

The drapes also serve as a subtle backdrop for the clean-lined dining ensemble: comfortable but no-nonsense spindle chairs by Maine-based Chilton Furniture and a table by local craftsman Kyle Kidwell of Kidwell Fabrications. “We designed the table with both maple and white oak to tie to other pieces, like the pendant above and the bar stools at the island,” says Markie Mello, Morrison’s lead designer.

Morrison switches to blue, namely Farrow & Ball De Nimes, for the built-ins that provide the main moments of color in the living area. A deep window seat with storage drawers and a plush down cushion is a glorious spot to curl up with a book or for a nap. “The client loves to nap and wanted to be able to do so anywhere — the window seat, the sofa, the porch,” Morrison says.

On the other side of the stone fireplace, which includes a big hearth

### RESOURCES

**Interior design:** Morrison Design House, [morrisondesignhouse.com](http://morrisondesignhouse.com)

**Architect:** Stephen Blatt Architects, [sbarchitects.com](http://sbarchitects.com)

**Contractor:** Great Falls Construction, [greatfallsinc.com](http://greatfallsinc.com)

perfect for perching with a cup of coffee, bookshelves in the same blue as the window seat hold family treasures and the television. “A darker color helps camouflage the mounted TV,” Morrison says. In front of it, small-scale swivel chairs embrace the body and offer a touch of playful pattern.

Directly opposite, a sectional ensures ample space for lounging and defines the living space without cutting it off from the kitchen. “It was important to unite the kitchen, living, and dining areas to create a big gathering space where everyone can be at home together,” Morrison says. “It feels like you can snuggle into any part as soon as you arrive.” ■

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