

America's
Favorite Home
Inside and Out

Cottage

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{ CLINTON, WASHINGTON }



A Cherished American Tradition

Sometimes the best way to make a bold statement is to whisper because everyone will quiet down

to hear what you have to say. That is precisely the strategy architect Ross Chapin took in designing this understated 1,300-sq.-ft. cottage in Washington State. The island cottage is a primer in wood cottage vernacular, from the cedar shakes on the gable end right down to the Shaker-influenced knobs on the kitchen cabinets.

Building a cottage out of wood is a cherished American tradition. The warmth and texture of wood are symbolic of a connection to nature, instantly conjuring up a simple lifestyle. The Pacific Northwest is the perfect environment in which to explore the colors, textures, strength, and flexibility of a wide variety of hardwoods and softwoods.

The Art of Connection

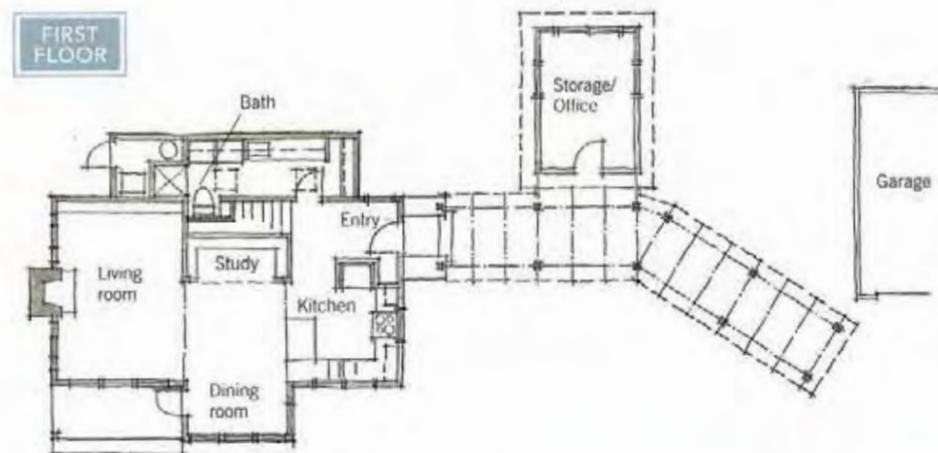
Ross's whispering campaign begins with a covered walkway that focuses the visitor's view to the forest while subtly leading to the front door. In a wooded, fairy-tale setting, there is no need to have a massive paneled door to announce entry.

◀ Looking for all the world like a woodsman's hut, the simple wood porte cochère links the outbuildings to the cottage while screening them from view. The front door of the cottage is discovered at the end of the angled and covered pathway.



▲ Like the slender, tapered trunk of a Douglas fir tree, this mosaic rubblestone chimney reaches to the sky. Combined with the horizontal siding, the thin taper accentuates the steep peak of the gable.

▷ In the rainy Northwest, covering and crowning the paved walkway keep both visitors and entries dry. At night, when the robust king-pin trusses are lit from above, the approach gleams in golden light.



And by clearly exposing the arbor's timber framing, the cottage's connection to the trees is affirmed.

Washington has a progressive energy policy, and the allowable square footage of glazing is limited by building code. Windows in this cottage are carefully placed to capture the best views, maximize daylight and cross-ventilation, and minimize heat gain. Living in a cottage that works in concert with the microclimate heightens the family's awareness that they live in a specific place, not Anywhere USA.

Smaller Than It Looks

Owners of large homes often trade quality materials and detailing for vastly increased square footage. These cottage owners did just the opposite. The main living spaces of the cottage—the kitchen and living-dining area—occupy a petite 17-ft. by 32-ft. footprint. Both rooms combined are smaller than just one room in many new subdivision homes. In spite of the dimensions, this is hardly an ascetic hermit's cottage. The cherry dining table seats six graciously.



▲ Pine frames around windows, doorways, and openings between rooms express a Shaker simplicity matched by the dining chairs. The beckoning, half-open Dutch door is a classic hallmark of Northwest cottages.

▷ Even in small cottages, variety can be refreshing. Cheery, clear-finished pine frames the opening to the buttermilk-yellow sitting room and calls it out as a restful alcove away from the main flow of cottage activity.



Going Dutch

{Inside&Out} In the early 17th century, Dutch colonists to New York's Hudson Valley introduced Dutch doors to America's farmsteads and barns. Originally these were batten doors split horizontally into two halves that could be opened separately. The upper section could be swung out to allow air and light into the interior, while the lower portion was kept closed to keep children safely within and livestock safely out. As the Dutch door was adopted across the United States, a shallow shelf was often added to the top of the lower door to accommodate leaning elbows and packages deposited by itinerant tinkers and traveling merchants.

Today, Dutch doors typically are constructed like a pair of swinging casement windows stacked one on top of the other. The elegant cedar Dutch door shown here is modeled on the appearance of a four-panel, plank Craftsman-style door.



Dining with the backdrop of an arched boulder stone fireplace and honey-toned coffered pine ceiling establishes a warm and intimate feeling throughout the open plan. The kitchen is just 9 ft. 5 in. by 12 ft., but its flush cabinets, monochromatic color scheme, and hidden lighting work together to make it look larger than it is.

The two bedrooms are snuggled under the pitched roof, with operable casement windows located on both gable ends. Skylights provide additional light in the master bedroom. Islands off the coast of Washington have their fair share of gloomy days, and on those occasions a small cottage needs some activity space. The ceiling in the children's room follows the pitch all the way up the gable roof, providing enough height to slip a skylighted loft under the ridge beam.



△ The curve of the fireplace surround complements the stone and contrasts with the overlapping geometries of the exposed-beam ceiling. The top of the mantel, which aligns with the windowsill, implies a unifying horizontal band.

◀ Variation in wood grain, color, and texture is celebrated in these simple Craftsman kitchen cabinets. The beveled drawer and door edges create shadow lines that echo the tone of the dark wood door pulls.



△ The woodwork in the children's bedroom combines usefulness, beauty, and delight. The ladder, with its wood pegs, smooth finish, and rounded ends, is a work of art that carries the kids up to the loft.

The room is just the right size for stretching out with a board game until the sun shines through the skylight and gives the “okay to play outdoors” signal.

The Clearing

The term *cottage garden* tends to call up images of overplanted gardens with lots of hollyhocks and blousy rosebushes. For many of us, cottage pleasures may include gardening, but more often our gardens are the entire landscape around the cottage, enjoyed for its diversity more than for prize-specimen plants. This cottage has no tame plantings. Instead, it is surrounded on three sides by fir trees, ferns, ground cover, and dappled light. By contrast, the sunny spot of lawn behind the cottage is magical, like a fairy circle discovered in the woods.

COTTAGE PEDIGREE

LIKE A HOUSE IN PARADISE

The coffered ceiling of this cottage is a microcosm of the cottage itself. The warmth of natural wood, the craft of good building, and the intimacy of well-scaled design have all been blended to create the perfect ceiling and the perfect living space.

Both ceiling and cottage have a structural purpose—the ceiling to hold up the upper floor and the cottage to provide shelter. Both fulfill the function of creating a space for dining, discussion, and work at home. And both glory in the Snow White, cottage-in-the-woods



image that gives this tiny cottage such allure.

The rough-hewn structural wood members of the ceiling conjure up the feeling of sitting beneath the branches of trees. Most likely Adam and Eve lived in an “aedicule,” the progenitor of all buildings, a basic hut made of four peeled-bark

columns supporting four peeled-bark beams. Like Adam and Eve's house in Paradise, this ceiling expresses the simplicity and strength of the most basic of buildings.



△ The owners tamed a bit of the woodland landscape with a handkerchief patch of lawn that sets the cottage off from the dense woods. A gay perennial border edged with a woven twig picket completes the transition from lawn to paved patio.



◁ The peaked ceiling, open window flaps, and tree-top views lend a tentlike feeling to the children's bedroom. Single beds placed toe-to-toe reinforce the camp atmosphere.

