

guest appearance

An emergency makeover on a quaint guest cottage



SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL
 This nook was redesigned using existing items, such as the chair, vases, and felt flowers. The guest house is one of several buildings on this sprawling property. Designers stacked brightly colored books and handmade pieces like this oyster-shell votive holder. Clean lines and no clutter in the bedroom.



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alking into Jody Rosen's two-bedroom guest cottage was like stepping inside a thrift shop—albeit a very cool thrift shop. It had a collection of old pieces she couldn't or didn't want to use in her house anymore, so over time it was relegated to the furniture wasteland known as the guest house.

It was handy, but it wasn't homey. And it certainly wasn't fun. It reflected none of Rosen's sparkling personality or pops of whimsy. "When we bought the property a year and a half ago the inside of the whole guest house was a bad shade of yellow," says Rosen. "So I just whitewashed the whole place and haven't touched it since." It was a space badly in need of specialists' attention. Fortunately, on call were two doctors of décor, Susan Buzaid and Robin Curnan, owners of Olley Court on Main Street in Ridgefield, who share Rosen's love of funky fabrics and eye-catching, yet

functional pieces. The guest house became the patient in an emergency home makeover: the North Salem edition.

The first thing the decorators did was cull a few personal pieces from Rosen's main house. "It's what I love to do," says Curnan. "To accessorize and pull it all together." Curnan didn't relocate anything huge, just some ceramic vases, a few dish towels, and some crockery. Already in the master was an old bed, a white dresser, some white shelves, and that was it. The Olley Court crew brought in major medication in the form of a brown fluffy rug and a papier-maché lamp made in Haiti. (These particular Haitian artists will create pieces in any size or color, and to Curnan and Buzaid's great relief, escaped mishap in the recent earthquake.) The bed is made with linens that make you want to curl up with a book. The white Ankasa spread is complemented with an orange throw and raspberry and tangerine John Robshaw pillows. The hanging shelves were given color with the addition of new vases and flowers. With those simple touches, the whole room exudes a relaxing, spa-like atmosphere.

The kitchen had a trickier diagnosis. It was white, with perfectly good, though plain, cabinetry. The dishwasher, refrigerator, and countertops weren't going anywhere either. So Curnan found an antique, green nursery cart tucked away in storage and positioned it at the end of the counter to serve as both a natural divider between the kitchen and the living room, and extra shelving. With brightly colored dish towels, a fun pink rug, and some green accents, the kitchen became an inviting space. It exuded a healthy glow in a matter of minutes and without spending a cent.





SIMPLY BETTER
The designers raided the main house for flowers, a bright bowl, and a green colander to add pizzazz to this cozy kitchen. The exterior has a Caribbean feel with sky blue shutters. A bright pink chair incorporates Rosen's flair for color.



The main room required a bit more elective surgery, and a bigger budget. The existing seating was all-weather, iron-framed chairs, and a loveseat with red cushions. Rosen got points for color—not for comfort. Curnan replaced those pieces with soft, brown, organic Verellen chairs made in North Carolina. “They’re a take on the bergère style,” Curnan says of this French country-inspired armchair. The hand-sewn, ultrasuede purple throw pillows give chairs the “pop” Rosen loves so much. Two different sized gold-leaf spheres were placed in the empty fireplace for a twist on the trend of using candleholders and votives. Rosen’s favorite piece in the whole house is the painting on the mantel. It was done by Kerri Rosenthal of Weston, who does custom creations in any color for Olley Court. “That painting set the tone for the room,” says Rosen. “And with the chairs, it made the room feel like home.”

The final touches on this facelift included another papier-maché lamp to bring the outdoors in, this one a natural-colored floor lamp; a few pink resin vases from Oly Studio; a Missoni throw; and a chunk of vintage glass on the mantel. The plain Jane cottage with barely a heartbeat recovered quickly, now infused with Rosen’s lively, fun style—a surefire way to rejuvenate any guest. ■



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