

ASK THE DESIGNER: Cottage Decor

Rejuvenate Your Cottage Decor

By Jean Bisnaire, Niche Decor

?We've just gone up north to our cottage for the first time since winter started, and while we love our home away from home, it's looking a little bit tired. What are some simple ways to liven things up??

Feel free to send me your comments or questions to askjean@nichedecor.ca

After a long and cold winter, it's finally time to pack our bags, load up the car and head up to the cottage!

Weekends will soon consist of sunshine, barbecues, good friends and great times. Because cottages serve as a second home, they sometimes come in second place in terms of design and decor.

Not to worry - there are many simple ways to rejuvenate your space, large or small, without breaking the bank.

If you want to make a dramatic difference to your space, paint is a great place to start. Apply a fresh coat of paint to your walls or try a new colour. Don't be afraid to paint over wood paneling; it can do wonders in terms of lightening and brightening an area, not to mention, losing that old 70s look.

People often think that paint starts and ends with walls - why not paint your floor? Play it safe with a neutral like a pale gray, or get wild with wide stripes or a checkered pattern in a bright colour.

Over time, floor paint will start to wear, adding beautiful character to your space. Another great way to breathe life into your space is to paint your kitchen cabinets or an old piece of furniture. Think about painting your side tables a fun blue like, Farrow and Ball's Blue Ground #210 for that unexpected pop.

If your living room furniture is looking a little bit tired, slip covers are the perfect way to go. They can instantly add colour or pattern in your sitting area, and can be removed for stress-free cleaning.

Don't forget that mix and match chairs create a relaxed feel and it's perfectly okay to add a different style of seating to your already existing dining set.

Ottomans are also great pieces for the cottage and can easily add colour and design to big or small spaces. They're versatile - offering storage or extra seating for visitors.

Changing your lighting and hardware are other ways to invigorate your space. Switch out old cabinet handles with brushed nickel for a more modern feel, or replace your standard doorknobs with antique or funky hand-painted ones for an eclectic vibe.

Lighting can really help to set the mood in a space too. Adding an industrial light fixture or some vintage Edison bulbs will create a cool, cottagey feel.

Once you have the big pieces in place, it comes down to the details. Clients often struggle with finding the right accessories for a summer home to keep it looking like a cottage and not a house in the city. Start with a good de-cluttering.

You'll be surprised what a difference this will make to your space. When you're looking to add character and charm, I suggest sticking to natural fibers and interesting elements.

A sisal rug in the living room, a butcher's block island in the kitchen, and photos framed in reclaimed wood are always a good solution.

Bundle some birch wood beside a fireplace, display a driftwood sculpture or create a gallery wall with old window frames and shutters.

It's amazing what you can find at the old cottage dump. Remember, ?One man's trash is another man treasure.? Have fun with it! The combination of materials and textures will really come together to create that relaxed and playful feeling that everyone should have when they're visiting their home away from home.