



OPPOSITE:
Homeowner and
designer Victoria
Kruggel filled a
timeworn cupboard
with humble
green-and-white
kitchenware
amassed from
thrift stores and
flea markets.

open *hearts*

A cottage sprouts in the backyard
of a Northern California couple
determined to make room for their
growing, unconventional family.

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Abundant texture and natural light wrap the cottage's main room in fresh, woodsy style. The open floor plan promotes casual interaction between the living room, kitchen, and sleeping loft.

As children leave the nest,

most couples begin thinking about downsizing. Not Victoria and Tom Kruggel. Instead, they opted to expand their living space as well as their family, which already included three nearly grown children. They adopted daughter Poppy from China when their oldest was in college. "A year later, we reasoned we may as well open our lives to one more child—and so we adopted our daughter Willow," Victoria says. As the couple's hearts swelled, so did their modest ranch-style home. "Every bedroom in it was fully occupied," Victoria says. "We no longer had that 'extra' guest bedroom for our visiting older children, and with our eldest soon to be married, we saw the writing on the wall. We realized we either had to add on or move."

That's when Tom had an *aha!* moment: Why not convert their seldom-used backyard sport court into a cozy guest house? "We felt a freestanding cottage would provide a sense of retreat, privacy, and fun during our kids' visits home," Victoria says. And so the decision was made—not only to build, but also to adopt one more time. Just as the couple began work on the cottage, they added daughter Piper to their brood, filling their ranch to capacity once again. "As a mother and an interior designer, I experienced so much joy envisioning my married children in the cottage," Victoria says. "I wanted to nurture them through the environment I was creating."

Her vision? A sweetly rustic space charmed by texture, pattern, and patina—specifically, milky paneled walls, salvaged wood floors and vaulted ceilings, a generous stone fireplace, and pillowy layers of fabric. Although the sofa is new and the graphic buffalo check draperies were ordered from a catalog, nearly everything else in the 420-square-foot cottage is either vintage or antique. "Because the cottage is so small, my biggest challenge was finding furnishings that were the right scale," says Victoria, an avid flea market shopper. "I was also careful to coordinate a little bit from room to room so there'd be some harmony throughout the spaces." For example, the checks repeat on a duvet ruffle, living room chair cushions, and bedroom lampshades.

Still, while rooms complement one another, the cottage feels more collected than coordinated. Woodland toile fabric featuring bears and deer cozies rooms during cooler months; come spring, exuberant floral patterns from the 1970s are casually tossed into the mix. Souvenir plates gathered while antiquing, bedding fashioned from an old quilt Victoria owned for years, and a cupboard full of kitchen accessories that share nothing more than a vaguely similar green hue all express Victoria's warm and welcoming style. After all, anyone who opens her heart and home to child after child can always find room for one more magical treasure.



OPPOSITE: A compass-style iron chandelier floats above the living room. ABOVE LEFT: Limestone countertops proffer an organic touch in the kitchen. ABOVE RIGHT: A wisp of cotton lace adorns a weathered café table Victoria snagged at a flea market. The chipped metal chairs hail from France. BELOW: The fireplace wall is a thrift store fanatic's dream, combining various widths of paneling, a romantic \$5 floral painting, and a pair of cane-backed chairs that Victoria painted and upholstered to coordinate with the buffalo check draperies.





OPPOSITE: The bedroom's iron bed beckons guests to snuggle under a generous bounty of mismatched linens, including a duvet fashioned from vintage woodland fabric that also appears in the kitchen. ABOVE: The Kruggels tucked a sleeping loft under the eaves for future grandchildren. BELOW LEFT: Leaf-shape cutouts drift along the sleeping loft railing, an homage to surrounding oak trees. BELOW RIGHT: The cottage is a mere 5 feet from the family's primary residence. "It honors our grown children's separateness, yet keeps us all close," Victoria says.

