

BY SARAH REIDY-FERGUSON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY ATLANTIC ARCHIVES, INC./RICHARD LEO JOHNSON,
ATLANTICARCHIVES.COM | STYLING BY JAY MASSEY AND JAMES MARTIN

Chic and Comfortable

Light colors, architectural upgrades and collected treasures give this small Victorian contemporary style.

A LOWCOUNTRY COTTAGE LOCATED in Savannah's Historic District, overlooked by many due to its dilapidated condition,

caught the eye of Jay Massey and James Martin, founders of the Washington, DC based firm, Massey Martin Design. Design challenges, including an inefficient layout and small size (500 square feet), instantly inspired the pair with the possibilities of restoring this pre-1900 Victorian charmer into a jewel box.

Following the purchase, Massey and Martin began a three-month renovation and redesign, with their firm responsible for both the interiors and architecture. "Our goal for the design was to honor the historical integrity of the property, while making it livable for today's modern needs," Jay says. "We strove to achieve maximum use of the interior spaces, while keeping within the cottage's original footprint."

Covering the front and rear porches added incredible square footage to their petite cottage. They become additional rooms, and the designers treated them in this fashion. Inviting black rocking chairs are accented with pillows and flanked with garden stools, sharing a similar color palette to the interior accessories. A ceiling-mounted nautical bronze light fixture was installed on a dimmer, to allow the cast light to be adjusted as the evening hours progress.



"Our design approach for the cottage was focused on livability."



The intricate Victorian spindles and gingerbread brackets and tracery on the front porch were repaired and, where it was missing, replicated. The home's exterior wood siding was painted to complement the painted tin red roof. The window sashes were painted to provide contrast to the exterior and emulate the look of steel windows, giving the home the sense of solidarity. The porch floors and ceiling were painted in shades similar to those selected for the interior.



At the onset, the pair skillfully applied a creamy paint palette throughout the interior and exterior, at once establishing a style consistency and infusing a light and airy appeal. The shared subtle tones also provided a serene backdrop to highlight the cottage's décor, a collection of acquired antiques, heirloom pieces and new acquisitions, defining a signature look that best reflects the couple's desire to strike a unique design balance between classic and current.

"The trunk in the living room that serves as the coffee table was a tool chest from France that once belonged to [James'] great-grandmother," Jay says. "It also provides a savvy storage solution." Likewise, the leather trunk in the

The home is a traditional four-square floor plan with a center shotgun hall from the north to the south of the home. The designers added back screen doors on the front and rear of the center hall to the porches to provide natural ventilation. The pair decorated the narrow space with simple art and accessories.



The kitchen and the living room are side by side, separated by pocket doors, which for the most part are left open. Using antique Lambert chairs with caned seats at the new Gueridon table provides a formality that relates to the adjacent living room. When entertaining, these chairs are used in the living room and the kitchen table serves as a place for hors d'oeuvres.