



In 2003, consultant and author Mike Kerrison bought this little 1912 Lake Minnetonka gem. But it wasn't until 2004, when he married interior designer Andrea Larson, the owner of LarsonKerrison Interior Design, that the couple decided to do a major remodel.

A happy match, Andrea and Mike both have a passion for American history, architecture, and antiques. They enjoy vacationing on Cape Cod, and in Boston and New York—travels that helped guide their choices as the project got underway. The couple banished the white wall-to-wall carpeting and mismatched windows. They replaced a crumbling brick fireplace with knotty wood and a stone hearth surround, inspired by Katherine Hepburn's home in Connecticut.

In the end, the Kerrisons had fashioned their own slice of Cape Cod in the shingle-style cottage on Lake Minnetonka. "The house itself had no specific historic architectural style," says Andrea. "We just felt it need a little help from friends."

1 Color "We wanted something beachy and casual, but warm enough to keep from feeling cold in the winter," says Andrea. Water and sand inspired the couple's choices: Sandy linens and rich, blue-gray mohair the color of the Atlantic on a turbulent day keep the room simple and serene. Although blue is considered a cool color, the rich textures—the mohair of the ottomans, the velvet of the sofa, and the plump down cushions—convey a luxurious warmth. "I didn't want the room to feel precious and formal, so I used A. Rudin chairs, then slip covered them in linen," Andrea says. Always slightly wrinkled, linen keeps the room from looking too perfect.

2 Symmetry When in doubt, buy in pairs. The human face is our first experience of symmetry, a quality that instantly makes us feel at ease. Andrea taps into our innate comfort with symmetry by centering two pairs of matching chairs and a pair of ottomans on the fireplace, which is the heart of the room. Even the surrounding cabinets are architecturally symmetrical. The layout invites you into the room and into conversation. Everything you need is at hand: a lamp, a table for your wine and book, and a coffee table sturdy enough to handle a pair of tired feet.

3 Accessories Mike and Andrea agreed to use only accessories that they loved, rather than "props." Both are avid readers and collectors—of old books (which they actually read), coral, and blue and white Chinese ginger jars. Their favorites surround them in a deliciously edited way. "I just get dizzy looking at too many little things," Andrea admits. She groups objects for emphasis and uses larger-scale items to keep the cottage from looking like it belongs to another era. The display of coral in the inherited mahogany cabinet is stunning in its modern attitude. **MH**

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