

ZALEA

The Best of Bay Life

Inspired Design

Point Clear Guest Cottage

**Lessons from Florida's
panhandle**

Plus:

David Holloway talks beer

Neighborhood gardens

Fuego restaurant





A Great Escape

The McAleers' guesthouse marries old and new



WARM & WHIMSICAL | Bold color adds a lively touch to these cozy, intimate living spaces.

Photo by Jean Allsopp



Photo by Jean Allsopp

months after the estate was purchased, the category-three hurricane left the original structure severely damaged. A complete rebuild would be needed, although the home's remnants proved quite valuable.

"The cool thing was that although there was a plan for the cottage that (architect) Lea Verneuille had developed, (contractor) Randy Crocker took the house that was here apart, so we could utilize a lot of the materials," Jack said. "And since the cottage was under construction at the time, we put a lot of the materials into it."

Two layers of heart pine floors from the original house were reclaimed for use in the

guest home, and beadboard from the old structure was incorporated into the cottage's kitchen cabinetry and paneling. All of the railings and doors were created from the substructure of the first house, which had been fortified by heart pine beams. The old-fashioned, wavy glass from the home was also recovered for the guesthouse windows and transoms.

"Jack and Jamie like to reuse and they hate to waste things," Crocker said. "So after the house collapsed with Katrina, we recycled as much as we could of it. Nothing went to waste. You'll notice in every corner of the guesthouse, there's something going

WHAT'S IN A NAME | The brick around this raised flower bed was among the original home's remains following Katrina. Used in the foyer steps, the St. Joe markings were hidden on the underside of the laid brick. Its reuse around the guest cottage, name-side up, was particularly important to Jack, as it reminded him of his father, Joe.

Photo by G. M. Andrews



Photo by Bill Starling



on. It's just eat up with character. And of course, Lea's design just brought it all together."

Inspired by photographs found by the McAleers, Verneuille imagined the cottage according to traditional, Southern style. Its comfortable, breezy design creates a familiar and inviting respite.

"We stayed with a kind-of-historical approach with the house," he explained. "The exposed rafter tails, the shaped roof, the lap siding – all of this is pretty typical of older-style architectural details that give the house a built-in age."

An open arrangement of kitchen, breakfast area and living space allows a roomy interior. A glass-encased porch and deep overhangs also lend regional flair.

"Jack just wanted it to feel like it had always been here," Verneuille said. "But really, it was more about interiors – more about color. And I think one of my favorite things (about the guesthouse) is its mix of youthful interiors with older materials. I like that juxtaposition."

Decorated by Betsy Davis of Today & Tomorrow Interiors in North Carolina, the guesthouse is full of bright, cheerful colors and whimsical pattern. The vivid details add a sense of laidback fun to the structure's thoughtful design. Such friendly atmosphere is particularly fitting for the McAleers' regular guests.

"We're both involved in the Catholic church and we're involved in a bunch of ministry programs, so we have a lot of teen ministries that come down and do workshops or retreats and they'll use the cottage," Jack said. "It's just enough room for a group of people to stay there and work in a beautiful environment. And we just love to share that with others that might not have that opportunity."

Just a stone's throw from the water, guests may enjoy all Mobile Bay has to offer – fishing, tubing, skiing, swimming and boating. And now settled in their dream home, the McAleers are more than happy to share their new surroundings with others.

"You know, a house isn't home until it has memories," Jamie said. "We had a lot of memories in Winston in our other houses, so we're anxious to get memories here, too." 🍷

SIGN OF SUMMER | Hanging at the end of the McAleers' driveway, the Happy Times sign evokes memories of the family's previous vacations on the bay. When flying down to visit, Jack's parents would pick the group up in an old conversion van, which was affectionately called Happy Times.

Photo by Bill Starling



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