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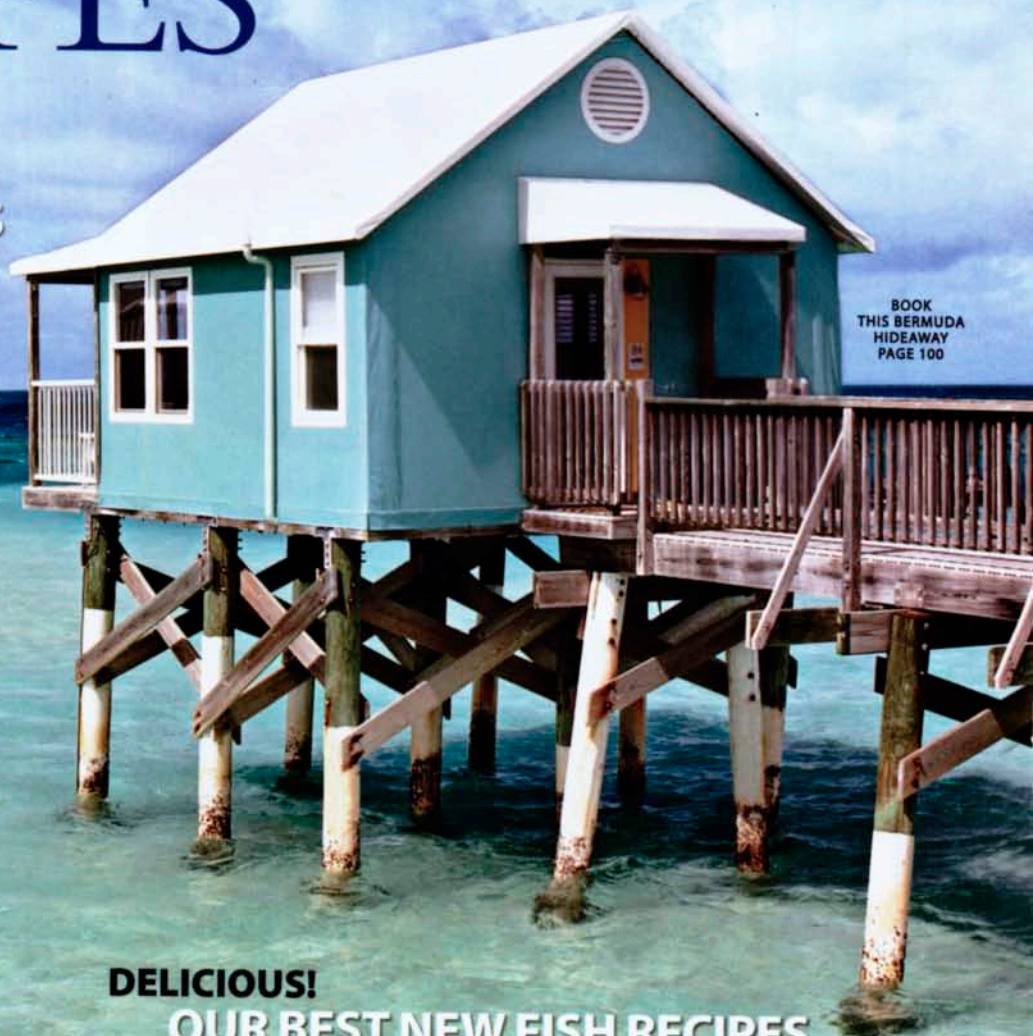
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# 10 WEEKS TO GORGEOUS

With all the invitations ready to go, Bonnie and Anthony McAlister outfit their Carolina cottage with a fresh, new look just in time to host their friend's waterfront wedding



April and Bryan Gawrych

WRITER **BEATY COLEMAN** PHOTOGRAPHER **J. SAVAGE GIBSON** STYLIST **HEATHER CHADDUCK**

## DINING ROOM

### The Quick Changes

■ Butted board now clads bare plaster walls for more character.

■ Designer Missi Ervin punched up the existing dining chairs with green fabric. "They were black and a little linty, like a pair of

worn-out black pants," she says. "The green brought them back to life."

■ Coastal accents—sea-grass rugs, coral pieces, even bamboo flatware—are scattered throughout to reflect Mount Pleasant's beach-loving lifestyle.





## KITCHEN

### The Quick Changes

- Missi painted the floor a leafy green when a stain couldn't be matched to the rest of the house. "When the first coat went on I knew it was the right decision," she says. "I can't wait until the boards start to show through."
- The McAlisters installed vintage-inspired beaded board, new countertops, and new cabinetry ...
- ... but changed course mid-construction when Missi traded cabinet doors under the farmhouse sink for a green ticking skirt.

## LIVING ROOM

### The Quick Changes

- Missi doused every wall with a coat of white paint for a clean, crisp look.
- She chose furnishings that appeal to the family's laid-back lifestyle, such as a slipcovered sofa and sea-grass rugs.
- Then she dressed up the room with a few antiques, like iron lamps and an old Mandarin-style cocktail table.

**I**n most home renovations, time is of the essence. No one wants to wade through sawdust for months in a gutted house full of plumbers and electricians. But Bonnie and Anthony McAlister really put time to the test. It was critical that their cottage on Charleston Harbor be completely trimmed, painted, decorated, and landscaped at lightning speed. They were hosting a close friend's wedding exactly 10 weeks after the project began.

## Overnight Crew Assembly

When Anthony spotted friend and designer Missi Ervin at a party, he approached her without hesitation. "Help," he pleaded. "We

need an architect and a decorator. Do you think you can be both?" Missi, who lives near the McAlisters in Mount Pleasant, where you can still get a cherry Coke at the Pitt Street Pharmacy and "put it on your tab," walked over the next morning to take a look.

"'Color' was the only direction they gave me," recalls Missi. So, with several fabrics in hand, she went to Anthony and Bonnie and said, "Pick one." After that they trusted Missi to make most of the decisions. Though the cottage was stripped down to the studs, there were no



An under-sink skirt adds softness to the kitchen.

“THE IDEA WAS TO GET THAT  
'COMING INTO A BEACH HOUSE  
FEELING' WHERE YOU KNOW YOU'RE  
GOING TO HAVE A GOOD TIME”

—ANTHONY McALISTER





## EXTERIOR

### The Quick Changes

- The bluff, which had eroded from years of high and low tides, was rebuilt during the renovation.
- Landscape architect Glen Gardner added mature boxwood and azalea shrubs and trees to create an instantaneous Southern garden.
- The house's exterior received a cleanup of fresh paint, new shutters, and a copper roof.

## SCREENED PORCH

### The Quick Changes

- Missi scoured an antiques consignment store for this vintage fishing net, which provides a focal point in an outdoor space where the McAlisters often gather to enjoy sweeping vistas of Charleston Harbor and the city's skyline across the water.

structural changes. They did, however, put in new cabinetry and countertops, and added beaded board in the kitchen and butted board in the living and dining rooms to lend some character to the once-plain spaces.

## Installation in the Fast Lane

The contractor, Tre Sheppard, and Missi showed up each morning to make daily decisions. "We picked out tile and plumbing as we went along," Missi says. "And Tre had a great carpenter who could work on the fly." When Missi wanted to skirt the kitchen sink, for instance, the carpenter removed cabinet doors there immediately. And when the kitchen floors couldn't be matched to the stain in the rest of the house, she said, "Paint them green—the wedding is in a week!"

She even chose a paint color for the guest room before she'd looked at a single fabric. "I went with a saffron-yellow wall color on a whim because I wanted to keep the green palette in the living areas and let the bedrooms stand alone," Missi explains. "Then, because

of the deadline, I chose some complementary fabrics based on whether or not they were in stock. And I still had to beg to get them on time!"

## A Few Finishing Touches

To give the house a sense of place, Missi used coastal elements throughout.

Maps of Charleston Harbor decorate a wall in the dining room, and a vintage fishing net serves as artwork and a focal point on the screened porch. "We wanted the house to be comfortable, but also fun and exciting," says Anthony. "The idea was to get that 'coming into a beach house feeling' where you know you're going to have a good time."

The day before the wedding, Missi pulled out of the driveway at 3 p.m., leaving the crew to finish the job. "It was nutty," she says with a laugh. Thankfully, everything wrapped up without a hitch—except for one.



## ON THE HOUSE

**STYLE:** 1915 Victorian summer cottage

**SPACE:** Three bedrooms, two baths, 1,800 square feet

**SETTING:** Mount Pleasant, South Carolina

**VIEW:** a grassy bluff overlooking Charleston Harbor



## COASTAL CONFIDENTIAL

# Designer Missi Ervin's Secrets to Decorating With Color

1.

### Unify living spaces with a simple scheme,

says Missi, who repeated her leaf-green-and-white palette throughout the open kitchen, dining, and living rooms. For an unexpected twist, she varied the surfaces she doused with green—from the kitchen floor to the dining chair upholstery to the living room window treatments.

2.

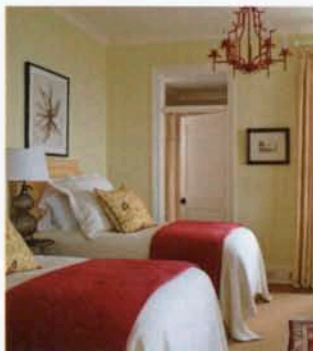
### Saturate master bedrooms with several hues of one serene color.

Inspired by views of sky meeting sea, Missi chose a pale blue shade for the walls and drapery trim and a deeper blue for the bedding and upholstery. Her loyalty to one color allowed her to layer floral, geometric, and batik fabrics while maintaining the room's peaceful vibe.

3.

### Create a bright and cheerful guest room by combining a pair of bold colors.

Missi chose saffron yellow for the McAlisters' guest room (below). "That color might be too much to live with every day but, especially when accented with rich red, gives guests a warm welcome." 🌸





#### MASTER BEDROOM

##### The Quick Changes

- Inspired by the harbor, Missi set the mood with a soothing blue palette and added an oyster shell-encrusted mirror.
- The owners got the look of an expensive, old-world painting with an antique Zuber wallpaper piece mounted in acrylic (not shown).
- Finally, Missi added "elements that really bring a room to life, such as throw pillows and a killer light fixture."