

MAY 5, 2006

HOMELIFE

THE COAST NEWS

B3

Cottage style allows escape at home

By Phoebe Chongchua
STAFF WRITER

When is the last time you vacationed at a cozy cottage-style bed and breakfast? Didn't you just wish you could stay forever in that magical sanctuary? There's a very cozy, comfortable and romantic feeling to a cottage-style home. It helps people escape.

"Cottage style is a style that's always been in existence but there is a resurgence of it lately because it's easy, breezy, it's not expensive to do. It's just a comfortable casual, style," said designer Kathryn Bechen.

This type of decorating is growing more popular, likely because so many of us lead hectic and chaotic lives. Homeowners are looking to create a peaceful and serene décor that takes them away from their everyday troubles. Creating the cottage-style look can be done with any style home.

"It's something anybody can achieve. You can do it whether you actually have a small cottage or

it lends itself to small spaces really well," Bechen explained.

While cottage style is simple and comfortable, there are still many variations of the look. It's not just slipcovers, flowers and leaves stenciled on walls. Bechen describes about 10 different styles on her Web site, www.kathrynbechen-designs.com. Here are a few of them.

Beachy: of course, think of coastal colors such as white, blue and touches of yellow and even red. Furniture is simple, maybe slightly rustic. Painted wood, Adirondack chairs and displays of shells are often found in this type of home.

Modern: for the de-clutter type, this variation is perfect. Furniture is modern with simple lines. You'll find soft accents and color is displayed using throw pillows or textured throws. Carefully selected artwork is displayed, but not overpowering.

Garden: this is a variation that probably comes

COTTAGE

CONTINUED FROM B3

to mind most frequently when cottage style is mentioned. It blends indoor and outdoor and creates a colorful, wispy style. Picture leaves stenciled on walls, prints on linens, wicker or twig furniture, birdhouses and trellises.

Romantic: a popular style for bed and breakfast inns. This style blends together pastels such as pink, peach, green, and rose with gold, burgundy, and deep green. Antique wooden furniture and wrought iron beds fill the room. Flowered prints appear on upholstery, pictures, linens and decorative plates — all to help you feel that romance is blossoming.

Creating one of these cottage-style looks doesn't have to be difficult. If you're going to change the theme of your home, Bechen said it's often best to start with one room at a time so that you don't feel overwhelmed with the redecorating. Here are a few quick tips about getting started.

Assess the furniture and accessories in a room and determine what you want to keep.

Evaluate color: sometimes

simply changing the color of paint can provide a tremendously different look to a room.

Decide if your window treatments need to be replaced.

Don't overlook items such as throw pillows and other soft furnishings

"If you take all the accessories out of a room and have your basic large furniture pieces left you can still create a whole new look. For example, say you have a sofa that's still in (the room); you might be able to pull out a color that's in the sofa and paint the walls to go with it. Then pull out another color (from the sofa) and get a new throw and some pillows to go with it so that it will look totally different when you are finished," she said.

The wonderful thing about the cottage-style look is that at its core is comfort coupled with the homeowner's own unique decorating flair that gives it a magical appeal.

Phoebe Chongchua is a Realtor and the real estate reporter for The Coast News Group. You can visit her Web site at phoebchongchua.com or contact her at pchongchua@coastnewsgroup.com