



A Bit of FRESH AIR

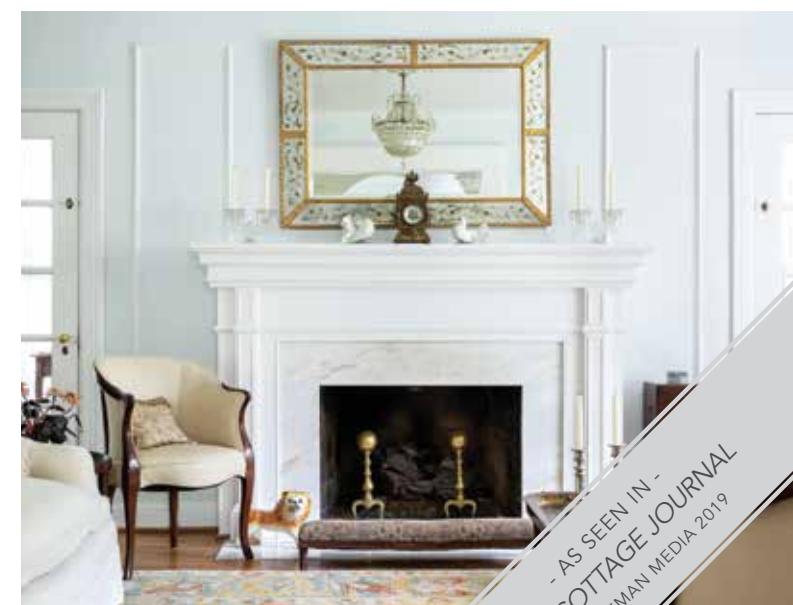
Carefully crafted to nurture a creative spirit, this renovated cottage offers a refreshing breath of country charm in the city.



When it came to renovating their 1927 cottage in Washington, DC, landscape architects Leslie and Scott Fritz were set on crafting a space that would foster creativity. Largely untouched until the couple purchased the property in 1996, the home was the perfect canvas for creating a cottage-style haven in the middle of the city. "There's a feeling that you're walking down a country lane," Leslie says. "You know, we can't get to the country as much as we'd like to, so we created it here."

From the curved stone pathway to the cheerful blue shutters, it's clear even from the yard that Leslie and Scott were careful to honor the traditional Arts & Crafts style of the home. Inside, the design places an emphasis on natural light and an open, connected flow. "When you look through from one room, we designed it so that you also have views of the other rooms," Leslie says. "You don't feel enclosed necessarily to one room—you have a very good flow."

Everything from the wall color to the furniture choices was selected in the context of welcoming in the light. Surrounded by the glow of pale blue paint, living room furniture featuring beautiful lines allows the light to flow underneath, and neutral fabrics introduce texture to the space. Original to the home's porch, a pair of glass doors flanks a mantel designed by Scott, allowing light from the couple's office to pass through.





In the kitchen, the couple's love of antique pieces is evident in the Royal Crown Derby china that is showcased in wooden cabinets custom-made by a family friend. "It's actually a curly maple, and all it has is a coat of varnish on it, so it's the natural color of the wood," Leslie says, noting that they paired it with a robin's egg blue inside the cabinets. "And then you have my grandmother's beautiful china, which has oranges and blues and gold in it, so the contrast . . . is just spectacular."

Marrying the Fritzes' love of light and timeworn pieces, an antique Baccarat crystal chandelier recovered from a hotel in Paris, France, hangs over the dining room table. "Capturing the light with the chandelier just makes the room," Leslie says. "There's no other fixture we could have done to draw in the light."





In the bedrooms, Leslie and Scott kept things light and summery through the use of white cotton sheets and sprinkles of blue. "We really love a cottagey feel," Leslie says. "It's a cottage house, essentially—it's a farmhouse. And we wanted bedrooms that felt like you were in the country."



Every room in the home offers a view to the garden, and stepping out into the space makes it clear why the Fritzes were so careful to create an easy flow from the indoors to the outdoors. "Being landscape architects, we're just always at a project, so we're always kind of changing and adding," Scott says.

The result of more than 20 years of evolution, the garden is now a vibrant haven that was heavily influenced by a love of literature and creativity. "We had little children," Leslie says, "and we are great fans of Beatrix Potter's stories and her garden. We visited her house and garden, and we've traveled through England and been to all the gardens of great writers and illustrators."

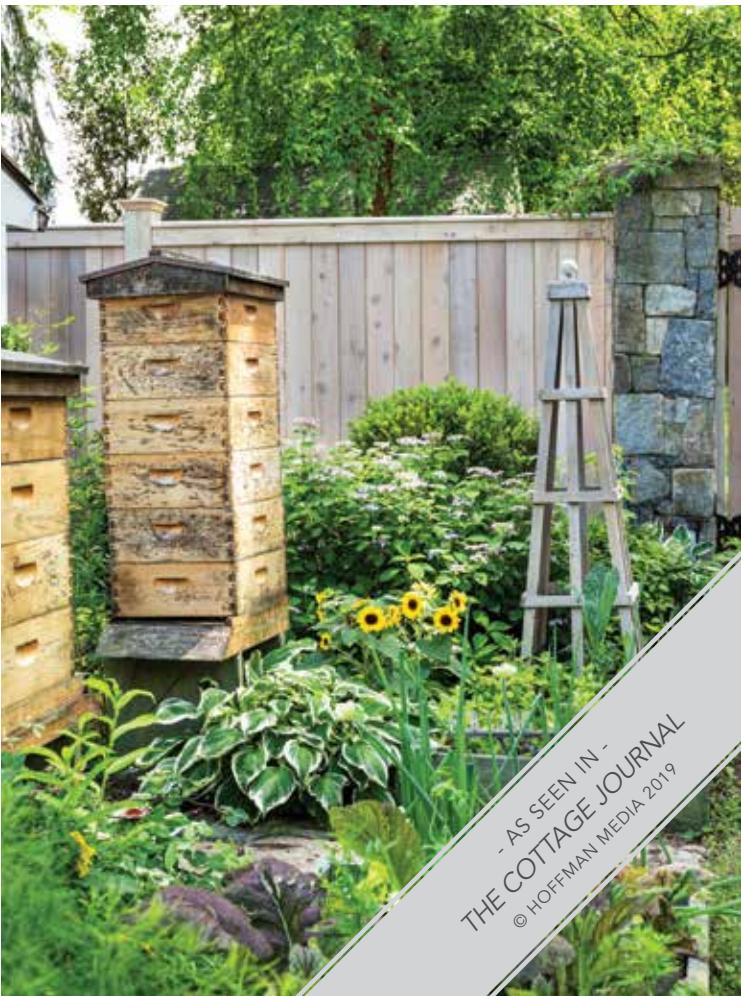
A mixture of hedges, shrub borders, potted plants, and more helped to capture the feeling that the Fritzes fell in love with on their travels, and local natural stones in a variety of shades and applications provide plenty of spaces to stroll and enjoy the view. "We're creative," says Scott, "so we really wanted a creative garden that just enveloped us."

Seated on any of the benches tucked within the greenery of the Fritzes' garden, it's easy to imagine yourself somewhere in the English countryside. "And that's also a feeling that we wanted to convey when you're coming into our house," Leslie says, "that you're coming into the country—a bit of fresh air." □

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"It sort of nurtures you," Leslie says of the garden she and Scott cultivated around their home. "It nurtures your spirit."



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