

The cottage's stacked stone foundation was built right on the rocky shoreline. "You feel like you're on a boat in the ocean with the waves crashing into the ledge," says homeowner Braxton Jarratt. A favorite family pastime is to congregate around a firepit, which Braxton and his brother-in-law built the first summer in the cottage.



gathering PLACE

A native Mainer strengthens his roots, purchasing a century-old cliffside cottage where family comes together to create memories.

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As a boy growing up in Brunswick, Maine, Braxton Jarratt explored nearby Bailey Island year-round, daring the waves to catch him on the geologic formation called Giant's Stair and stomping along Casco Bay's rocky beaches with friends. As an adult, he introduced his own kids, Julia, 17, and Quinn, 15, to rustic island life, renting shorefront cottages in the summertime and visiting his folks in Brunswick at other times of year.

These days, Braxton, his kids, and his partner, Tanya Lacourse, fly up from their home in Atlanta to spend holidays at the cottage he's since purchased on Bailey Island. Historic homes rarely come up for sale, so when Braxton saw one, known by locals as "the house with the red roof on the cliff," he jumped. "It had the look, feel, and smell that instantly brought me back to childhood," he says.

The 1904 dwelling was upgraded after a fierce storm demolished the front facade in 1978, and the work held strong. Aesthetically, however, two walls in the dining room that choked the flow and blocked the view needed to come

down. Tanya then used her training as an interior designer to rearrange furniture, swap out lighting, and add fresh pieces to the mix. "Braxton wanted a relaxed, comfortable cottage, not a themed beach house," she says.

For Christmas, the crew adorns the cottage simply with evergreens, all cut and collected from the property. New traditions, including DIY lobster rolls on Christmas Eve and multigenerational coastal hikes, mingle with ones borrowed from Braxton's boyhood. "The cottage is like another family member," Tanya says. "It's a character that helps us create memories; we have a special relationship with it." ■

ABOVE The red front door opens into a mudroom with original beaded board where the family hangs coats and towels and kicks off their shoes. A wooden sailboat that came with the house and vintage brass fire hose nozzles share shelf space with a straw beach bag and winter gloves. *OPPOSITE* The sofa, which comes just up to the windowsill, was chosen by interior designer Tanya Lacourse so as not to obstruct the ocean view. She pushed together two coffee tables with glass tops that reflect the light and mimic the ocean. "The open, distressed wood bases feel weightless and subtly resemble a lobster trap," she says.



Tanya notes that the country kitchen, which had been renovated in the 1990s, is back in style again. She and Braxton replaced the appliances and added an island with an Asian limestone top that works well with the existing soapstone counters. Tanya loves the kitchen. "It's the perfect size and everything is exactly where you need it to be," she says.

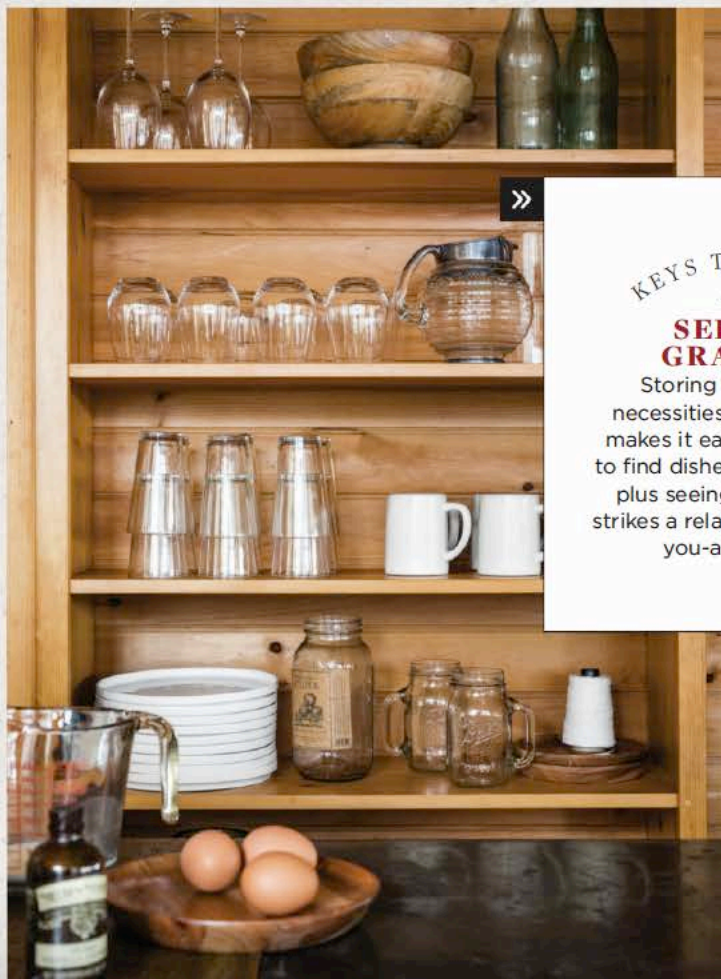


“IN THE MORNING, WE GET GIANT CUPS OF COFFEE AND WATCH THE OCEAN. IT HAS A DIFFERENT MOOD EVERY DAY.”

—INTERIOR DESIGNER TANYA LACOURSE



RIGHT A raised sill on the back of the sink allows for a wall-mount faucet, which accommodates a large sink for cleanup. *BELOW* Simple white dishes and transparent glassware are easy to access from an open shelving unit. On winter mornings, Braxton makes pancakes or lobster scrambled eggs for breakfast. *OPPOSITE* Opening up the dining room allowed space for a pedestal table that seats 10. Tanya illuminated the area with a light fixture reminiscent of a ship's lantern. "It has a nautical feel that doesn't hit you over the head," she says.



KEYS TO COZY

SEE IT,
GRAB IT

Storing utilitarian necessities in the open makes it easy for guests to find dishes and glasses, plus seeing the pieces strikes a relaxed, come-as-you-are vibe.





ABOVE The reading nook extends the main seating area off the living room. “It’s my favorite place to be with a book,” Tanya says. She added blue accents to satisfy Braxton’s desire for color. “The whole house is wood—basically orange,” she says. “Watery blues and greens worked best.” **RIGHT** Tanya reinvented a hutch that was in the dining room by donating the top half, painting the bottom portion with blue chalk-finish paint, and adding rope knobs. “We use it in the entry to store flashlights and old towels for the dogs,” she says. **OPPOSITE** The couple’s bedroom on the upper level looks out to the ocean. The canopy bed, left behind by the prior owners, blends well with the wood-lined room. Tanya added new cushions and pillows to the window seat. The small paintings are from a local gallery.

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