

Beautiful Tiny Beach House, *Oregon Home Magazine, Fall/Winter 2013/14*

by Margaret Foley (photography by Paula Watts)

Although it's only 400 square feet, the Cannon Beach retreat of Steve Smith and Kim DeMent has more than enough room. Tucked at the end of a willow-lined path and affectionately known as the "Sugar Shack," the shingled cottage is a comfortable getaway for family and friends.



The wooden deck gives the house more space and remodeled cedar- functionality. "Because the house is set so far back from the road, the deck can be a quiet, private comfortable space," DeMent says.

The one-bedroom, one-bath home originally belonged to Smith's brother and sister-in-law. "Because family owned it, we were familiar with the house, Dement says. "About eight years ago, we had the opportunity to buy it, but we knew we would need to make the house work for us. We loved its location. It's just a couple blocks from the beach and a few blocks to some of our favorite places in town."

Smith and DeMent, who own Portland-based Steven Smith Teamaker, set about reworking the exterior and interior. Originally used as a bunkhouse for a larger, nearby property that was torn down long ago, the layout of the home was not family or beach-access friendly. "The home was originally entered on the other side through a garage-style door," Smith says. "It was also dark inside with small windows."

Working with architect Jimmy Onstott and woodworker Tevis Dooley, Smith and DeMent made both cosmetic and structural changes. “We really had to figure out what would work with building small,” DeMent says. “We wanted to sweeten up the house, but we also wanted it to be low maintenance because we wanted to come here to relax.”

To transform the house, the exterior siding was removed and replaced with cedar shingles, and the front door was relocated so the home could be entered from the pathway. A screened deck was added to the front of the house. The couple installed easy-to-care-for tile and rugs and added a gas insert to a redesigned mantel. Warm wainscoting and wood details – such as doorframes and beams – were added throughout the house to give it a unified feel, and new wood windows let in more light. Cheerful paint colors help make the space bright and airy. “Several of the changes we made were small,” Smith says. “But, overall they made a huge difference.”

The home’s only bedroom presented another design challenge – how to provide enough space for the couple and their son, Jack. “We ended up with a built-in captain’s bed and a crow’s nest bunk over its foot,” DeMent says. “That created room for the three of us when we need it, and we also have storage space under the beds.”

For furnishings, Smith and DeMent looked for pieces that could do double duty. The red sleeper sofa can be used for guests. Stacking coffee tables can be moved around the main area as needed. The table can be used for eating, socializing or working. “We also kept the kitchen minimal,” DeMent says. “We have a smaller refrigerator, and there’s no range. We use a microwave, and we have a grill for things like paninis or pancakes.”



By choosing furniture that has more than one use or can be rearranged easily, Smith and Dement created a living area

that doesn't feel cramped. The red sleeper sofa is from Ligne Roset.

Because the house is set back on its lot and has some protection from the elements, the yard has become an extension of the living space. "When we can use the deck, it's almost as if the size of the house doubles," Smith says.

The lawn – like everything else in the house – serves more than one purpose. "It's a nice space for hanging out," DeMent says. "And, when we have guests in the summer, they can pitch their tents."



Left: The beach is just a short stroll away. "It doesn't matter what time of year we're here," DeMent says. *Center:* In summer weather, a pitched tent provides extra sleeping space. "Quite often, it's the kids who will be sleeping in tents," DeMent says. *Right:* The shipshape bedroom efficiently uses space. In addition to built-in bed storage, the wainscoting and windowsills double as shelving.