

Shipshape

A Fifeville
cottage maxes
out its footprint



In such a small space (it's just under 500 square feet), this home in the Ridge-McIntire neighborhood makes the most of each inch, with hidden storage and undersized appliances for a roomier feel.



It's not quite a "tiny house," but it's about the smallest structure Latitude 38 has built. After renovating a Fifeville duplex, company owners Jeff Erkelens and Joey Conover decided to build a one-bedroom cottage on the rear portion of the lot. Zoning allowed for three units, and since Latitude had already built a triplex next door, they saw an opportunity to create a mini-community here: a total of six rental units sharing outdoor space and a communal feel. "They all know each other; it's all very friendly," says Conover.

The cottage, being the smallest of all the neighboring homes, is an exercise in simple, smart design. "It's kind of like a little boat," says Conover. Each element has to earn its keep, and space-saving measures abound. For example, a daybed and built-in dining bench fit into a bumpout, not unlike the "rooms" that slide out from RVs (but with a much crisper, modern

By Erika
Howsare
*Photography
by Isaac Miller*

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look). Lined with cheerful windows, this arrangement adds dimension to the long wall of the cottage and increases the interior volume but not the footprint.

While many elements are diminutive—like the kitchen appliances, all sized about 6" more narrow than standard ones—the space avoids feeling cramped through a simple, bright aesthetic in uniform white. Shiplap walls add quiet visual texture. “The living room feels very open,” says Conover. “And the kitchen too; it’s not a low ceiling, particularly,” even though it’s under the upstairs loft. Details keep the kitchen as spacious and minimal as possible, like leaving ceiling joists exposed and putting open shelving in place of boxlike upper cabinets.

“The cottage has everything,” says tenant Jeff Boichuk, pointing out that none of the conveniences are missing here, including a washer/dryer, hidden in the bathroom. (On his wish list for the future: a projector and screen.)

Storage, of course, is a key question in any small home. The loft can be used for storage or sleeping; an upstairs catwalk accesses more storage and two full closets are on the ground floor. The dining bench doubles as a place to keep storage baskets, while the daybed conceals pull-out drawers.

A tightly spaced wooden railing, painted white, is the most distinctive design element in the main living space. The bathroom features tile that mimics reclaimed wood. “It’s really a great product because it hides dirt,” says Conover. “It doesn’t get funky looking but it also feels warm. There are many tile versions of wood now that are really good.”

One can picture a fishing cottage, say, with the same square footage but a much darker, closed-in feel; this is the opposite, spacious and airy. “The big square windows in the living room are south-facing,” says Conover. “The whole thing is super light.”

The outdoor space, shared by all tenants, includes garden areas, a big bike rack and a patio. “My neighbors in the Latitude 38 community are the best to live with, as are our Fifeville neighbors,” says Boichuk. “Living here’s awesome.”



The loft space, situated above the kitchen and overlooking the living area, can be used for sleeping or storage.

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