



Winter's tale

Candles, twinkling lights and pretty decorations bring an extra sprinkling of magic to Claire Georghiades and Chris Mitsis' enchanting thatched cottage

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HOME TRUTHS

THE PROPERTY

Thatched cottage dating from 1898

ROOMS

Kitchen-diner, dining room, sitting room, snug, cloakroom, four bedrooms, three bathrooms

LOCATION

West Sussex

DINING ROOM

Natural foliage and pine cones chime with the rustic character of the space.

Prague dining table; Kuba chairs, both PHI Concepts. Try the Factory pendant light in Olive Grey, Artifact. Baba glass table lamp, Nkuku. Brookby set of two leaf prints, One.World

SITTING ROOM

White-painted floorboards and weathered timbers lend a subtle coastal aesthetic to the different spaces.

Colonial coffee table, Hicks & Hicks. Lewes sofa in Orkney, PR Home. Round in Square mirror; Kuba wicker chair, both PHI Concepts. Floor lamp, Lampandlight.co.uk. Artwork (right of door), Biggie Best







SITTING ROOM
Textural cushions and throws make a feature of the pretty window seat. Maroq coffee table, Cox & Cox. Toulon pendant light in Chalk, Garden Trading. Macramé tufted diamond cushion, M&S Home



SNUG
 A woven platter and a soothing seascape add interest to the walls. Kibo coffee table, Gathered Living, Brookby Wooden Ocean wall art, One.World. Find a similar woven wall basket at The Basket Room

The weather may be unpredictable at this time of year, but for Claire Georghiades, it is probably her favourite season. ‘There is something very special about heading out for walks by the sea and then warming up by the wood burner,’ says Claire, who moved to a seaside town in West Sussex with her husband, Chris, in 2019. ‘We are both Londoners, but we decided we wanted to be by the coast; we fell in love with this area because it has so much to offer – from wonderful vineyards to the beautiful South Downs,’ she says.

Three years after moving, the couple decided that they wanted to purchase a holiday let. ‘I had come into a small inheritance and we wanted to find a property that we could inject with a lot of love so that people could come and stay and explore the area,’ she explains, adding, ‘We were keen to find a thatched house because we live in a thatched cottage ourselves and we love that romantic idea of an old-fashioned English coastal home.’

The Wishing Well – the property has its own well in the garden – is situated on a lane just back from the sea. ‘It is one of four thatched cottages that were built in 1898 for Londoners coming down to enjoy the coastal air,’ Claire explains. The previous owner had extended the kitchen and adapted the ground floor so that it was easily accessible for a wheelchair user. ‘This includes the ground floor bedroom and en suite, which makes it perfect for multigenerational family gatherings,’ says Claire.



SNUG
Vintage pieces bring a lived-in feel to the room.
 Vintage cupboard, Goose Home and Garden. Vintage plum tray (on wall), Daylesford Organic. Sculptural piece, One.World

While the couple were keen to replace the uPVC windows for more traditional versions, they were happy to keep the cottage's somewhat quirky layout. 'Each bedroom is accessed from a little corridor, but it helps give a feeling of space; we also loved the fact that the cottage has a separate snug as well as a dining room, which lends a sense of occasion to family meals,' notes Claire, who tasked Paul Hervey of PHI Concepts with the interiors: 'We loved his approach to coastal decorating – it is calming yet warm at the same time,' she says.

Paul has used an abundance of texture – rustic timbers, rattan, linens, velvets and wools – in a soothing, knocked-back palette that spans chalky whites to earthy neutrals. 'Each room has its own feel and yet there's a sense of cohesion throughout,' he says. He was also asked to decorate the cottage for its inaugural Christmas last year. 'We wanted to go with a natural theme, mixing gathered foliage with twinkling fairy lights and decorations that enhance the character,' he says.

This festive scheme is one that the couple intend to revive each year to ensure that visits to the cottage are truly magical. 'We want our guests to feel very special,' smiles Claire, adding, 'We hope they will come away with lasting memories, whether that's of board games by the fire or a walk down to the beach with a glass of fizz. It's moments like these that stay with you forever.' 25

The Wishing Well is available to rent via Boutique Retreats, boutique-retreats.co.uk; phiconcepts.co.uk



MAIN BEDROOM

A writing desk and storage have been neatly tucked beneath the eaves.

Coco bed in House Thatch; the Stowaway bedside table is discontinued, but the Bastille is similar; both Loaf. Kibo bench, Gathered Living



TWIN BEDROOM

The soothing palette of neutrals continues in this inviting space.

Bespoke headboards in Norfolk Natural, PR Home. Ramsbury bouclé cushions, Cotswold Company. Throws, Belle Maison Vintage