



# Holiday at Home

An exquisite guest cottage brings a touch of the Hamptons to Williams Creek

*Written by Neil Charles*

*Photography by Andrew Kung*





*The pineapple was a symbol of wealth and sophistication in eighteenth century England*

Stepping into this extraordinary cottage-style guest house in Indianapolis' exclusive Williams Creek district, you might be forgiven for imagining you had just wandered into a seaside retreat in the Hamptons or Cape Cod at the start of a weekend of swimming, tennis and seaside revelry. Unostentatious, yet generously proportioned, this purpose-built slice of New England has been designed with entertaining in mind. Although physically connected to the family's principal residence, the assigned functions of these two unique buildings don't necessarily intersect.

Designer Julie Boutilier loves surprises, and she assures me on our hour-long tour that she is going to save the best surprise for last. Initially that seems like a tall order, because here there's a surprise around every corner: some clever, some witty, all enthralling. In an era when so many self-styled "great" houses are merely big, and impress only with their square footage and daunting room count, the Cottage impresses with a myriad of nuances and airy, classical proportions. It also puts to rest the old adage "they don't build them like that anymore." Boutilier and architect Bill Sickmeyer have proven that yes, unequivocally, they do.



*The White Bedroom*





*The open kitchen with adjoining bar*



*Semi-formal gardens in the pool area*



*An informal dining area looks over the pool*



*Slip-covered chairs were inspired by a summer retreat in the Hamptons*



*Guests can enjoy outdoor cooking year-round in the all-season kitchen*

Leaving the main residence (a story in itself for another time) and stepping through the automatic, self-locking doorways, the first thing you notice is the floor. Seemingly fashioned from broad, lightly-stained wooden planks, it turns out that the material is in fact wood-grained Italian tile. Well-suited to heavy traffic and the rigors of entertaining, it appears practically indestructible. Passing by the changing rooms which serve the pool area, you arrive at a stately indoor-outdoor seating and dining area complete with professional barbecue grill and range hood.

With Indiana's brooding climate, this is probably more indoor than outdoor, but in good weather, two large sets of French doors open onto the patio. Here, (another surprise) the Cape-Cod-style cedar shingles are fashioned from concrete, obviating the need for constant maintenance while retaining the elegance of old-school design. The pool, of the infinite variety, comes equipped with industrial-grade water slide and overlooks a gas-fired crystal fire pit. There's a decidedly Tuscan feel to the surrounding low stone walls and irregular flagstones, setting the tone for the rambling semi-formal gardens beyond.

Back inside, the main room is dominated by an extraordinary gambrel ceiling, unusual because it makes a ninety degree turn, creating an L-shaped



*The Heat-N-Glo fireplace provides a focal point for the principal living area*

space. At one end of the L, an elongated Heat-N-Glo fireplace is illuminated within by L.E.D.s, while the fireplace surround is fashioned from thousands of individual one-inch recycled glass tiles finished with an iridescent coating. These took a month to locate: their acquisition epitomizes the incredible attention to detail which has gone into every aspect of this building. Above the mantle, discreetly out of view, hides a flat screen TV, which lowers into place when needed. A projector is housed in what can only be described as a lighthouse-like structure, cunningly evocative of the life aquatic.

Beneath the apex of the L, a well-stocked bar area, with maple cabinetry, takes care of liquid needs, while an open galley-style kitchen, with six-burner Wolf stove and a vast honed marble countertop takes care of the solids. A highly detailed yet durable honeycomb backsplash completes the work surface, while the oversized Kraus sink and the goose-neck Grohe faucet transform the chore of clean-up into a pleasure. Should large numbers require feeding, there is also a catering kitchen, beautifully detailed with three-quarter inch granite countertops and beaded inset cabinetry; “downstairs” at Downton Abbey would surely have been overjoyed to use such a facility.



*The countertop in the white bathroom  
is made from recycled glass*



*The subterranean gymnasium features a full-size basketball court complete with Indiana Pacers, Indiana University and Butler University motifs.*

Glass features heavily throughout: in the main “white” bathroom, the countertop is made from a new material produced from recycled glass, while the cabinets are faced with mirrors to maximize the light in this already dazzling space. In another bathroom, a shimmering mosaic of recycled glass tiles decks the walls, while the front of the vanity (from Golden Apple Fine Furniture and Accessories, Boutilier’s own brand) whimsically changes color electronically when one enters and exits the room. A mirror in a third bathroom is framed with fragments from an antique mirror, creating the impression of burnished bronze, a theme elaborated upon by the rich hue of the glazed nickel twisted knot motif handles.

We pass through guest bedrooms, entertainment areas and gaze upon intricate tile work and impeccable fixtures. There’s so much more to see, but the tour is drawing to a close. True to her promise, Julie has saved the biggest and best surprise for last. Descending a stairwell past a long, oddly opaque window by Indiana artist Greg Thompson, we pass into what at first glance seems to be a memorabilia room of sorts. Through a door, and we’re suddenly looking down onto a full-sized basketball court, complete with twenty-seven foot acoustic ceiling, and commercial warehouse lighting. It’s impressive enough until you realize that the windows high up in the ceiling are in fact at ground level and that the whole thing is subterranean. It’s only then that you begin to wonder where all the soil went. [sl](#)