

RECYCLING MY CAMELOT

It was love at first sight. The 1929 cottage sat forlornly with peeling paint and uneven floors, but a hint of grander days wept through the grime. So, the papers were signed, and this old house was mine. Although the transformation took two years, my fascination never wavered. Lots of tears and frustration but never despair.

An old rug belonging to my nephew was the second venture of my recycling journey through beauty and joy. He did not want the rug and gave it to me with gratitude. Although the rug binder thought I had lost my mind, I held tightly to my idea. Age had only enhanced its beauty to me. Now it graces my floors with stunning elegance. Its vibrant colors of red, blue, yellow, green, beige and black are now splattered through my cottage and cause happiness to resound throughout.

The red lamp in my library is topped with a black shade resembling a Chinese hat. This delight was bought in two separate visits to Goodwill and cost less than the ornate finial that crowns its head. Another trip to Goodwill yielded three tiny pictures of flowers, each costing twenty-five cents. They have been cleaned and now are cradled in picture holders adorning shelves in my china cabinet. This trip also held a discovery of an old mirror I purchased for five dollars. My uncle stripped away the white paint to reveal a rich wood.

One of my friends retrieved a chair from the dumpster area of her apartment complex. She knew the previous owners of the chair and said they were nice and clean. So, this was a welcomed addition after a trip to the upholsterer for a makeover. All my old furniture has been recycled into lovely pieces by the magic in the hands of the upholsterer and some new material. You should see my red couch!

An old pair of French doors I found in my basement have been recycled into windows and stand proudly, knowing they have replaced a blank wall in my kitchen. Sunshine, my flower garden, and the outdoors are now a part of each morning.

I painted a rusted enamel bowl of my mother's with white paint and then flicked the bowl with red, causing an interesting design to appear.

Besides visiting Goodwill on a regular basis, I frequented yard sales, auction sales, and antique shops. I bought other folks' memories, which I now cherish.

As I move through each room of my cottage, I continue to be amazed at the recycled transformation of warmth and delightfulness and the wonderful story attached to each article and color. But perhaps the most important recycling that simultaneously occurred was the love, ideas, and exceptional talent of so many of my family and friends with this undertaking. The contractor who knocked out walls, built bookshelves and closets was a craftsman with a passion for excellence. How lucky can I be! He even listened to classical music as he worked. One of my dearest friends is a superb decorator, not by trade but by love, and she pulled everything together with such enchantment that I believe we have recycled Camelot!

