

Bestselling novelist's homes are the stuff of fiction



AT HOME WITH
Marni Jameson

place to put my finds," she said.

It's not far from true. When she and her husband (of 47 years) bought their first beach cottage 17 years ago, he didn't know she already had enough furniture stashed in their basement to completely furnish it. "I had been hoarding for years. Not being a designer, I didn't know that you should never buy furniture before you have a place."

Just as her books infuse her homes, her penchant for junking and remodeling filter into her books. "My protagonist is always a woman who while fixing up her own life is fixing up her surroundings."

Her characters are often antique pickers, interior designers, real estate agents, location scouts, house flippers, and those who go on junking trips.

"Early on, an editor told me people love decorating porn. They eat it up. I wasn't writing it on purpose. It just so happened to be what I do."

In "The Homewreckers," for instance, her protagonist goes to work for a company that restores old houses and marries the boss' son, who dies in an accident. Determined to pursue their dream of restoring homes, she takes the

life insurance money, buys a small house, flips it, and eventually lands herself a role in a reality TV show with a handsome but shady leading man. You get the idea.

I could have talked to this woman all day, but she had books to write. Here are some more outtakes from our inspiring conversation:

SEE **MARNI, 3H**

Walking into Breeze Inn or Ebdtide, two vacation rental cottages on Georgia's Tybee Island, is like stepping into one of Mary Kay Andrews' popular beach reads.

And that is exactly what the New York Times-bestselling author of 32 books intends.

Literally the stuff of fiction, Breeze Inn is named after a hotel in her book, "Savannah Breeze." The two-story getaway channels coastal Florida in the '40s, with a palette of turquoise and hot pink and paintings of herons and flamingos.

Ebdtide, which features lots of rattan and wicker, is the name of a beach house where the action happens in her book, "Summer Rental."

An intrepid junker, Andrews found all the décor, as well as the furnishings for Squirrel Hollow, her primary home in Savannah, while combing estate and yard sales, and, more recently, Facebook Marketplace.

"It's a passion project for me," Andrews said when I called to talk about her enviable life as a writer and remodeler. (Seriously, a bestselling novelist who restores old beach houses and shops for reusable furniture in her spare time?)

"My family accuses me of buying beach houses just so I have a

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