

Deep IN THE WOODS

This hidden gem-turned-retreat amid the trees *lives big* thanks to clever uses of space and simple finishes that celebrate its surroundings.

SWEET GETAWAY

By painting their cabin's exterior black (French Beret by Benjamin Moore), homeowners Christine Stucker and James Veal produced the modern Scandinavian feel they admire. They also added larger windows and a simple wood deck.



THE GREAT INDOORS

In keeping with the minimalist spirit of the architecture, the homeowners let the views become the main decoration. Mossy green upholstery blends nicely with the sylvan scene. A slim wood-burning fireplace grounds the living area without blocking the view.



Christine Stucker and James Veal joke about their cabin being a former “mouse

hotel,” and they’re not referring to its diminutive size. Uninhabited for at least a decade, the 700-square-foot structure—sitting at a corner of their property in Easton, CT—previously hosted a large population of mice who had chewed through the floors, walls, and carpeting. “It smelled so bad in there I had to wear a mask,” Christine recalls. “The real estate agent assumed we were going to tear it down.”

But the husband-and-wife duo saw its potential as guest quarters, an office, and a creative laboratory for their architecture and interiors firm, Stewart-Schäfer. “We wanted to have fun with it,” James says. “But also not throw a lot of money at the renovation.”

They kept the interiors bright and minimal with an emphasis on pale woods and natural light. After gutting the main level, they installed large windows and a sliding-glass door to create a living-dining-kitchen area with enveloping views. A large

GOT IT COVERED

"In the kitchen, everything you see is meant to be seen," James says of the range and countertop accessories. The rest (cabinets, range hood, and refrigerator) is hidden in pine to create a seamless look. "We used a water-based polyurethane, which leaves the wood with more of a natural matte finish," Christine says.



"WHEN DESIGNING A SMALL SPACE, YOU WANT TO MINIMIZE THE NUMBER OF DIFFERENT FINISHES. THAT'S WHY WE USED ONLY A HANDFUL OF MATERIALS IN THE ENTIRE HOUSE." —JAMES VEAL

LET IT SLIDE

With its large size and paneled design, the Douglas fir barn door acts like art in the dining room, warming and adding texture to the white walls. The wood dining table and chairs blend with the door and floors, keeping the small space from seeming crowded.





NATURE NURTURED

While most of the house was in disrepair, the roof was surprisingly sound. “We liked the look of the moss on the roof, so we kept it,” James says. “It suits the environment.” Modern black deck chairs and a concrete-look coffee table echo the clean aesthetic of the interiors.

BRIGHT IDEAS

The couple enlarged the cabin’s only bathroom and added thoughtful details, including a clerestory window (which allows in light without limiting wall space), a terrazzo wall, and a handy niche that matches the light wood tone of the vanity.



sliding barn door separates the dining area from the bedroom. For the floors, they chose Douglas fir, an affordable alternative to oak. Inexpensive pine serves as the kitchen cabinetry, refrigerator paneling, built-in bookcases, and other millwork. Because the main living area is compact and multipurpose, “we didn’t want the kitchen to read as a kitchen,” James says. The spare palette of white walls, blond wood, and green upholstery emphasizes the serenity of the surroundings.

Upstairs in the loft, beneath the steeply sloped, pine-clad ceiling, they built a platform that accommodates two full-size mattresses side by side. The cozy result recalls a sleek camping tent, complete with a skylight. The couple’s son, Marlowe, loves the stripped-down house so much that he often convinces his parents to “camp out” there overnight.



THE NICEST NOOK

The built-in sleeping platform makes the most of the loft’s tight space, turning the low ceiling height into a design feature. A ledge behind the bed does double duty as headboard and shelf, and drawers below provide accessible storage. “And yes, there’s plenty of room to sit up in bed,” Christine says. ■