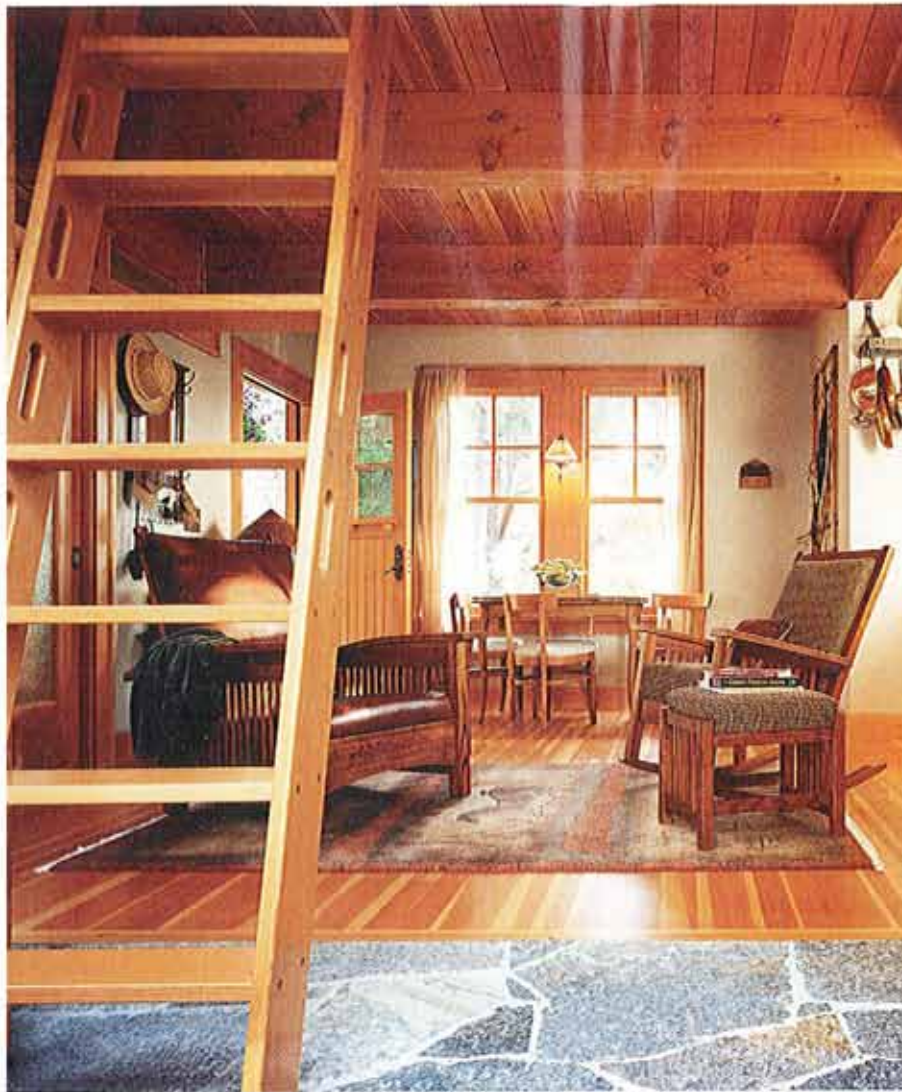


small wonders

Cabin living in less than 1,000 square feet: Ideas for a space-efficient weekend getaway or home

By Mary Jo Bowling





GREAT IDEAS

- **Get to know the site.** "Before we started construction, we studied the way sun and shadow fell on the land," says Vandervort.
- **Patio paving is used indoors** to create a hearth and blur the distinction between inside and outside.
- **Loft windows are 2 feet from the floor.** They make it easy to see outside from the sleeping platform and give the low-ceilinged space a feeling of roominess.
- **A simplified materials palette**—fir for the floor, the cabinetry, and the trim; black sink and appliances, and cream-colored walls—contributes to the unified and restful look.



island retreat

For the past 14 years, Paul and Phyllis Caisse have used their 5-acre plot on Orcas Island, Washington, as a retreat. In the beginning, their only shelter was a tent. Now they relax in a recently completed 556-square-foot cabin, but they feel just as close to the land. "As we drive to the cabin, we can feel our city nerves fading away," says Phyllis.

The Caissees have great childhood memories of tiny cabins in the Sierra foothills and in Montana, and they hoped to re-create those happy times for their family. "We wanted a feeling of warmth and cozy interaction," says Paul. "Plus, we felt its small size would make it easy to take care of." And they wanted to disturb nature as little as possible. A larger cabin would have meant cutting down some of the old madrone trees surrounding the site. "After spending so much time there, we know which trees the eagles like to land on," says Paul. "We didn't want to take those away."

Seattle architect David Vandervort helped them design a little cabin that seems larger than it is. Simply put, it's a great room flanked by a galley kitchen and a narrow bathroom and topped with a low-ceilinged sleeping loft. The cabin was constructed with as many green materials as possible, including recycled wood and nontoxic stains and paints.

DESIGN: David Vandervort Architects, Seattle (206/784-1614)

With lamps lit against the dusk, this little "four poster" of a house embodies the romance of escape. One wall opens to the outdoors.

