

HOUSES

ARCHITECTURAL CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

BY DESIGN

CURATED BY JANICE ROHLF





COTTAGE TOWER

This 1200-sq. ft. house, designed as a retreat away from home for a couple with a minimalist aesthetic, comprises a pared down style with unobtrusive furniture and materials. The low-maintenance cottage-style building with just one bedroom and one full bathroom sits on a site selected for its privacy, surrounded by acres of protected woodlands, fields, and ponds. Its observation-tower silhouette was generated by a desire to climb as high as possible to capture the panoramic ocean views, with the living spaces placed at the top of the tower, rising above a meadow of native grasses with wide walking paths for the couple and their dog. The island's eclectic shingled cottages, built early in the 20th century, influenced the architectural style. Alaskan yellow cedar shingles, bronze railings, and charcoal gray aluminum-clad windows on the exterior will weather over time. The crisp white interior features nickel-gap paneling, rift-sawn and quartersawn light oak flooring and, on the first floor, hand-hewn ceiling beams. The second-floor living room seems bigger than it is thanks to a 20-ft. hip-roof ceiling, a smaller version of which rises above the small kitchen. A powder room completes this level. Nixed in favor of lower-level storage for gardening and beach gear, a guest room was deemed superfluous while an outdoor shower for the outdoors-loving couple was a must.



Architect Haver & Skolnick Architects, haverskolnickarchitects.com
Builder HP Broom Housewright, hpbroom.com
Location Fishers Island, NY
Photos Robert Benson Photography



PRACTICAL PREFAB

Their home destroyed by wildfire, a couple, both artists, and their architect were looking for replacement housing in the wake of a natural disaster. They turned to modular methods and prefabricated design as starting points, and then placed an emphasis on sustainability and craft. By economizing on size, making the spaces practical, and at the same time opening them up as much as possible, the house seems bigger than its actual size. Conceptually, two boxes make up the plan: one public box, wrapped in a custom-formed copper, for the kitchen/dining/living-room space, and one private box containing two bedrooms and two baths. The two boxes connect to create an entry, a gallery, and a screened porch. Unlike a hallway, this central area allows the house to be connected on all levels by circulation and light. Interiors that are essentially plain sheetrock boxes are personalized using fairly simple but dramatic gestures; the sheetrock is interrupted by birchwood skins and recesses that wrap around the living room and form skylights, a stair, and a screened wall, giving relief to the otherwise mostly all-white palette. The house has a quiet feel without being sterile, allowing the artwork to shine.

Architect Alchemy, alchemyarch.com
Builder Plant Prefab, plantprefab.com
Location Santa Rosa, Calif.
Photos Edward Caldwell Photography

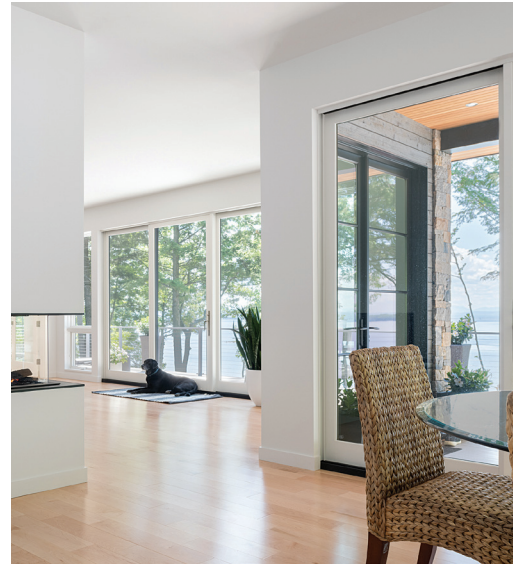




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CONTINUED





LAKESIDE RETIREMENT RETREAT

The homeowners had a clear vision for this private retirement retreat tucked along the water's edge of Lake Champlain, and presented the architect with a helpful preliminary design plan for their open-concept, two-level-home. Shou Sugi Ban siding and natural stone help the house blend into the hillside and also satisfy the clients' desire for a sustainable and low-maintenance exterior. The 3:12 pitch of the metal standing-seam roof is flat enough so as not to obstruct the lake view as you approach the house. The focus is on single-floor living—the primary suite, a powder room, and living spaces are up top—with a mono-stringer staircase that echoes the deck railing leading to the downstairs home office, exercise space, and guest rooms for family when they visit. Offering easy access to the outdoors, the home has a 52-ft.-long waterproofed deck with a screened-in porch below it, both overlooking the water. Windows and glass doors provide lake views and natural light throughout the day. Regardless of the time of year, the ever-changing landscape can be enjoyed seated near the three-sided gas fireplace separating the kitchen from the living room, or in the primary bath's soaking tub. Durable, scrubbable Ikea cabinets with a high-gloss finish encapsulate the home's overall interior aesthetic of elegant, simple, and clean.

Architect Hillview Design Collaborative, hillviewdesign.com

Builder Red House, redhousebuilding.com

Location Lake Champlain, Vt.

Photos Ryan Bent Photography