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cabins

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**TRY
A TINY
CABIN**

Set on the pristine Priest Lake in northern Idaho, this vacation cabin was designed to feel one with the sand and water. Natural materials ground the cabin with its natural setting. Extra wide 18-inch concrete steps serve a dual purpose as access to the lake from the cabin and as extra seating space for outdoor living. Soaring eaves protect the upper balconies.



to infinity

Making memories in an Idaho cabin.







ABOVE: Glue laminated timbers, commonly known as glulams, add architectural interest to the home's overhang and are ideal for carrying the extra weight of heavy snow loads.

OPPOSITE: Glass lines the front of the cabin that overlooks the lake. When guests enter from the driveway side of the home, they can see straight through the interior out to the lake.

If it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a community of artisans to build a truly special cabin. And such a community exists at and near Priest Lake. Living in relatively close proximity allows this talented group of architects, builders and craftspeople to form a cohesive team that can turn what might be a utilitarian cabin into something special.

Priest Lake, located in the northern Idaho panhandle just 80 miles north of Spokane, Washington, is often touted as one of the world's premiere vacation destinations. For many years, Curt and Nancy brought their two sons to this high Alpine glacier lake for summer vacations, staying in one of the many available guest cabins. In 1990, they purchased a small non-winterized cabin at the end of a steep, single-lane road.

"The cabin worked well for us for summer vacations but was impractical for year-round

visits. When our boys grew up and starting having children of their own, we decided it was time to find something that would suit our expanding family," Curt says.

A Blank Slate

Since they loved their location so much, Curt and Nancy decided to tear down the old cabin and start over. They had previously worked with architect Jon Sayler when they were considering building a new residence in Spokane. They subsequently moved into a home he had designed and were very impressed with his work.

"I have been designing homes for over 30 years and, although I never originally intended for it to work out this way, almost 85 percent of my business is waterfront homes," Sayler says. That percentage makes sense: Sayler's area is replete with lakes and rivers.

For Curt and Nancy's home, Sayler's de-





sign team included Eric Owens and Matt Kerr, architects in his Sandpoint office. Owens, the project manager for the home, played a pivotal role by translating the homeowners' must-haves into a tangible plan the other members could use as the blueprint.

They started the cabin design by taking into consideration the large amount of precipitation that falls at Priest Lake. In addition to having the reputation of being the rainiest place in Idaho, the area also has a yearly average of six to eight feet of snowfall. Although most architects might opt for a steeply pitched roof to speed the shedding of snow, Sayler has long thought that a gently sloping roof, similar to what is found in Swiss chalets, is actually preferable. "The idea is to prevent the snow from falling off and injuring people and damaging property. A flatter roof allows

the snow to melt naturally," he explains.

Owens took the low slope idea and designed a tweaked rectangle shape to the roof that not only responds to the site, setbacks and natural contours, but also provided cover where needed: at the outdoor grilling area on the lake side and the parking area on the entry side.

A second consideration in the design was the location of the cabin at the end of a single-lane steep road, which made turning a standard-sized vehicle around very difficult, if not impossible. To solve the problem, Owens created a lower-level shop where the family could store their kayaks, catamaran and other recreational items. The shop has a reinforced concrete roof that doubles as a three-car parking slab/carport and automobile turnaround space.

ABOVE: Bleached walnut cabinets, custom-made by Mingo Mountain Woodworking, are topped with granite. A cable light system with LED fixtures highlights the kitchen island. Open space in the kitchen makes room for several cooks to work together.

OPPOSITE: A simple L-shaped leather couch and a set of gray upholstered metal side chairs fulfill Nancy's desire that all materials in the home be natural. Curt salvaged the front door from their old cabin and converted it into a coffee table.

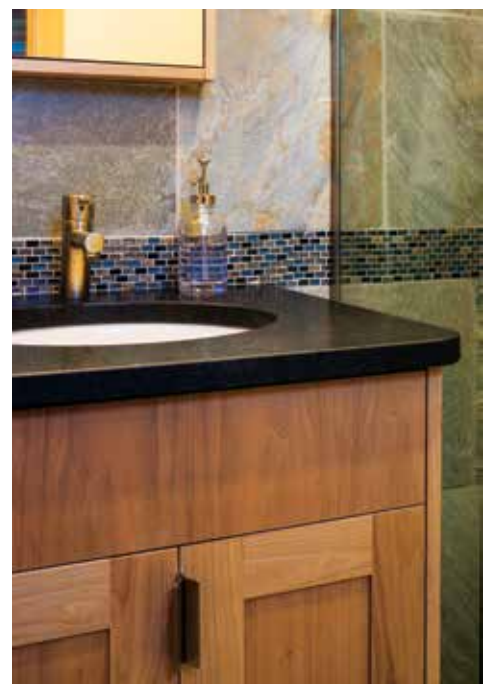
Interior designer
Tammie Ladd
selected matte-finish
aluminum tiles for
the kitchen back-
splash to comple-
ment the stainless
steel vent and
gas range. Nancy
selected the cabinet
hardware to keep
the lines simple.





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:

Stairs with cables in lieu of traditional balusters set the home's contemporary tone. ■ Wood beams and ceilings add warmth and continue out to the timbered overhang seen through the windows. ■ The reinforced concrete slab roof over the lower-level shop space serves as a covered parking area outside the main entrance. ■ The master bathroom is finished with Jua Gray limestone tile. ■ A rainfall showerhead elevates the luxury of the walk-in shower. ■ Architect Jon Saylor finished the exterior with wire-brushed, sanded and pre-sealed reclaimed fir by Montana Timber for a stylish look that's low-maintenance.



View Points

"We loved the large sand-level deck on our original cabin," Curt says, "but above all, the cabin had to have an indoor-outdoor feel and make the most of the views of the lake. After all, Priest Lake is the reason we are here."

Because the unusual shape of the lot didn't lend itself well to a traditional floor plan, the architects envisioned the home as a modified rectangle, which allowed for the greatest vantage point to the southwest overlooking the lake.

The resulting 2,800-square-foot cabin is arranged to accommodate all of the family's wants. The home, which is accessed on the main level from the carport, includes three bedrooms and two baths. The master and one of the guest bedrooms each have a private balcony with a view of the lake. The lower level walks out to the lake and includes all of the public spaces: living room, dining area, kitchen and a family room that could double as a fourth bedroom, and a three-quarter bath. As an example of how every square inch of the cabin was put to a functional use, the area under the stairs with the lowest ceiling serves as a play nook for the children while the taller space was planned as a pantry.

Dream Team

Another critical member of the team was Sandau Builders, led by Mike Sandau, who lives on Priest Lake and is very familiar with the climate and challenges of building a lakefront home. Von Sandau and Dan Griesemer served as foremen for the project. Ernie Ahlers, John Haworth and Daniel Dixon all contributed to the project's success.

Sandau Builders started construction in November and had to ensure all the materials would be delivered to this remote area over snow-packed roads in a timely manner. "I was confident Mike would be on site to supervise the project. He has such a good reputation for reliability," Curt adds.

Sandau credits the success of the project to his team of craftsmen who have

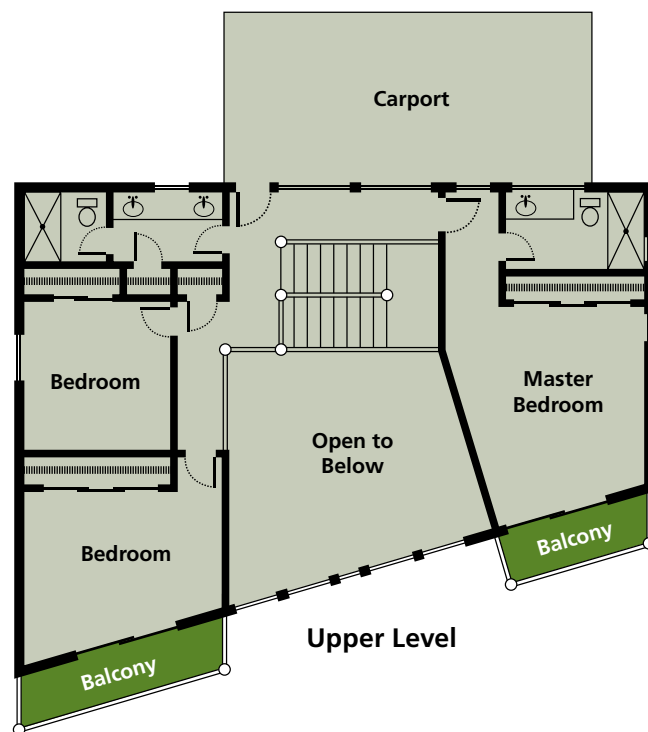


A color-infused concrete finish accents the wall with the gas-burning fireplace in the master bedroom. The private balcony is outfitted with metal railings. Screens for the patio doors retract when not in use to allow for unobstructed views of the lake.





The gas fireplace, with its rustic-yet-contemporary concrete hearth, is one focal point in the room—the other is the water view just beyond the deck, which is constructed of lpe wood.



SQUARE FOOTAGE: 2,800

BEDROOMS: 4

BATHROOMS: 3

Architects: Jon Sayler and Eric Owens
(208-265-9160; jonsayler.com)

Builder: Sandau Builders, Inc. (208-443-3324)

Interior Designer: Tammie Ladd Design, Inc. (509-230-7495)

Iron work: Mountain Metal Works (208-263-6031)

Masonry: Kingstone Masonry (509-336-4561; kingstonemasonry.com)

Exterior siding: Montana Timber Products
(406-552-0462; montanatimberproducts.com)

Cabinets and woodworking:
Mingo Mountain Woodworking, Inc.
(509-389-4114; mingomountainwoodworking.com)

Drywall: Premier Drywall Inc. (208-610-1009)

Electrical Contractor: Action Electric (208-265-4789)

Plumbing: Bailey's Plumbing (208-290-6869)

Light Fixtures: Hubbardton Forge (800-826-4766; hubbardtonforge.com)

worked together for many years and are dedicated to creating handcrafted homes. “We are a package deal so that the homeowners don’t have to worry if I will be able to find subs to complete the job to their specifications,” Sandau says.

Tammie Ladd, an interior designer, worked with Nancy and the other team members to select the finishing touches. The goal was for the home to flow seamlessly with the lake. Ladd accomplished this flowing feeling by selecting colors that harmonized with the natural beauty outside the windows. The infinite view feel was achieved by taking a minimalistic approach to the interior such as in the railings and lighting. The home only has as much

furniture as is required for utility and comfort because the real beauty is visible through the large expanses of windows.

One of the special aspects of the home is the programmable thermostat, which the owners can access remotely to adjust the heat from their home using their cell phones. The reason it is so special is that their mechanical engineer son was on the team at Honeywell that designed the unit. “Because he also is a designer, his input was invaluable in helping make this home unique,” Nancy says.

Carefree Days

Over the years, Priest Lake has been a special place for Curt and Nancy and their

family. “Almost immediately after we began the drive from Spoke to the lake, we would begin to relax,” Curt says. The couple would look forward to hiking, kayaking or sailing the family’s catamaran. “We would spend our days, not worrying about what needed to be accomplished, but rather what different species of wildlife we might see,” he says.

“This is where we have good memories of family and friends,” Nancy says. In the new cabin, they are looking forward to time spent with their children and grandchildren—moments that will last a lifetime. “This is truly our infinity cabin,” Nancy says.