

Mountaintop

This 440-sq.-ft. house shows that well-designed homes can be comfortable and inviting no matter what their size

BY MAUREEN FRIEDMAN

Used as a guest house and work studio, this one-bedroom, one-bath house has an inviting open floor plan, is finished and furnished simply yet elegantly, and is filled with natural light. Sited on uneven terrain behind the main house, the little retreat is more like an elegant tree house. It is built on wood posts and raised approximately 14 ft. over the bank of a ravine. To stand up to harsh Vermont winters, the exterior is sided with James Hardie Artisan Collection cementboard and topped with a painted-steel standing-seam roof; the house is insulated with both spray foam and rigid foam. The custom-built entry door of reclaimed hemlock



Architect Brad Rabinowitz Architect, Burlington, Vt.; bradrabinowitzarchitect.com

Builder Naylor & Breen, Brandon, Vt.; naylorbreen.com

Structural engineer Harris Structural Engineering, Essex Junction, Vt.; harris-eng.com

Tile installation Abatiello Design Center, Rutland, Vt.

Tree House



is accessed via a bridge at grade level. The bridge and the deck are constructed of ipé planks with mahogany railings and have a Penofin finish. An array of natural materials create a cozy interior: Pine paneling was used for the walls, ceilings, and cabinetry at the fireplace. The exposed structural beams are fir. The entry floor and fireplace surround are tiled with African Blaze Indian

slate. The interior doors and custom kitchen cabinetry are clear vertical-grain western fir. The kitchen backsplash is a mix of glass and stone tile, and the counter is Marron Dubois polished granite. The wood flooring is reclaimed hemlock boards. □

Maureen Friedman is administrative assistant.

BARE NECESSITIES

The use of a limited palette of colors and natural materials starts in the open common areas and continues to the bedroom and bathroom. The original machine marks are visible in the finish of the reclaimed hemlock floorboards. The living-room chandelier is made of copper and steel wire and rods; the shades are made from brown beer



bottles. Clear tongue-and-groove pine is also used on the bathroom ceiling and on the bedroom ceiling and walls. The pine received a coat of light stain prior to installation to enhance the variations from board to board. The bedroom's light fixtures were made from gas piping and fittings. A variety of tiles were used in the bathroom and adjoining shower room. The shower walls are porcelain tile, and the floor is tumbled onyx pebbles. The bathroom floor is a slate and onyx blend in a basketweave pattern, and the walls are Jerusalem Gold limestone with 2x2 accent tiles of African Blaze Indian slate. The vanity is topped with honed black slate. The bathroom sconce was fabricated with vintage glass insulators.

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Bird's-eye views. A wall of glass at the end of the main living area allows for expansive views of the deck and the woods beyond. Though this house is small, it hardly seems so, perched in the trees with its sweeping forest views and the sound of the stream below.