

Sunset

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JUNE 2009



At home in the West

Everything about the Johnstons' cabin near Twisp, WA, reflects its setting. The cedar siding echoes nearby stands of pine and aspen, the south yard is a natural meadow, and the windows frame the view.



The little cabin that lives big

In a jewel-like house in Washington's Methow Valley, a family of four makes

use of every inch **BY SAMANTHA SCHOECH | PHOTOGRAPHS BY DOMINIQUE VORILLON**

WHEN THE FRONT YARD is a sage steppe overlooking Washington's Methow Valley and the Cascade Sawtooth Mountains, the house's job is simply to stand there in awe. The 1,200-square-foot cabin that Ray and Mary Johnston of Johnston Architects designed for their family of four does just that. Every part of it is oriented toward the floor-to-ceiling windows that frame the mountain view. "We wanted to borrow from the outdoors and participate in the landscape," Mary says.

That doesn't mean the interior was overlooked. Maintaining the small footprint and satisfying their sense of design meant getting creative and making use of every inch. "Spatial economics is the idea that you should be able to live within the radius of your interaction," says Ray. In other words, no extra rooms and no wasted space.

See how the Johnstons got the most from their square footage >68



OUTDOOR EXTENSIONS

Living space doesn't have to mean four walls and a ceiling. The Johnstons think of the veranda as another room. "The concrete steps off the veranda extend the house further," Mary explains. "And in the summer, people sit on the granite rocks below. The firepit is yet another extension."



LOTS OF OPEN SPACE

"I love my kitchen," says Mary. "It's small and open and really efficient." One of the couple's favorite things is the appliance-free island they made from a stainless steel and butcher block workspace they bought at a restaurant-supply store and covered on three sides with plywood. "It was incredibly inexpensive, and it's become one of the central gathering spots in the house," she says.



"In a small space, the most satisfying thing is variety"



Design tip
Sliding barn doors save precious space



COZY NOOK

"In a small space, the most satisfying thing is variety," Mary says of the built-in bookshelf on the wall above the staircase. The inviting alcove is not only a through-way but also another place to hang out.

MULTIPLE LEVELS

"What makes it work is the mezzanine," Ray says of the sleeping loft above the living room. "It gives you a little bit of spaciousness."

SMALL SLEEPING QUARTERS

This area can't rightly be called a bedroom, so the Johnstons call it the "bed cabinet." It's a foot larger than a queen-size bed on every side. "We were a little experimental," Ray says about the design. Unless there's company, the doors are left open to the view.

DESIGN Johnston Architects, Seattle (johnstonarchitects.com or 206/523-6150) ■