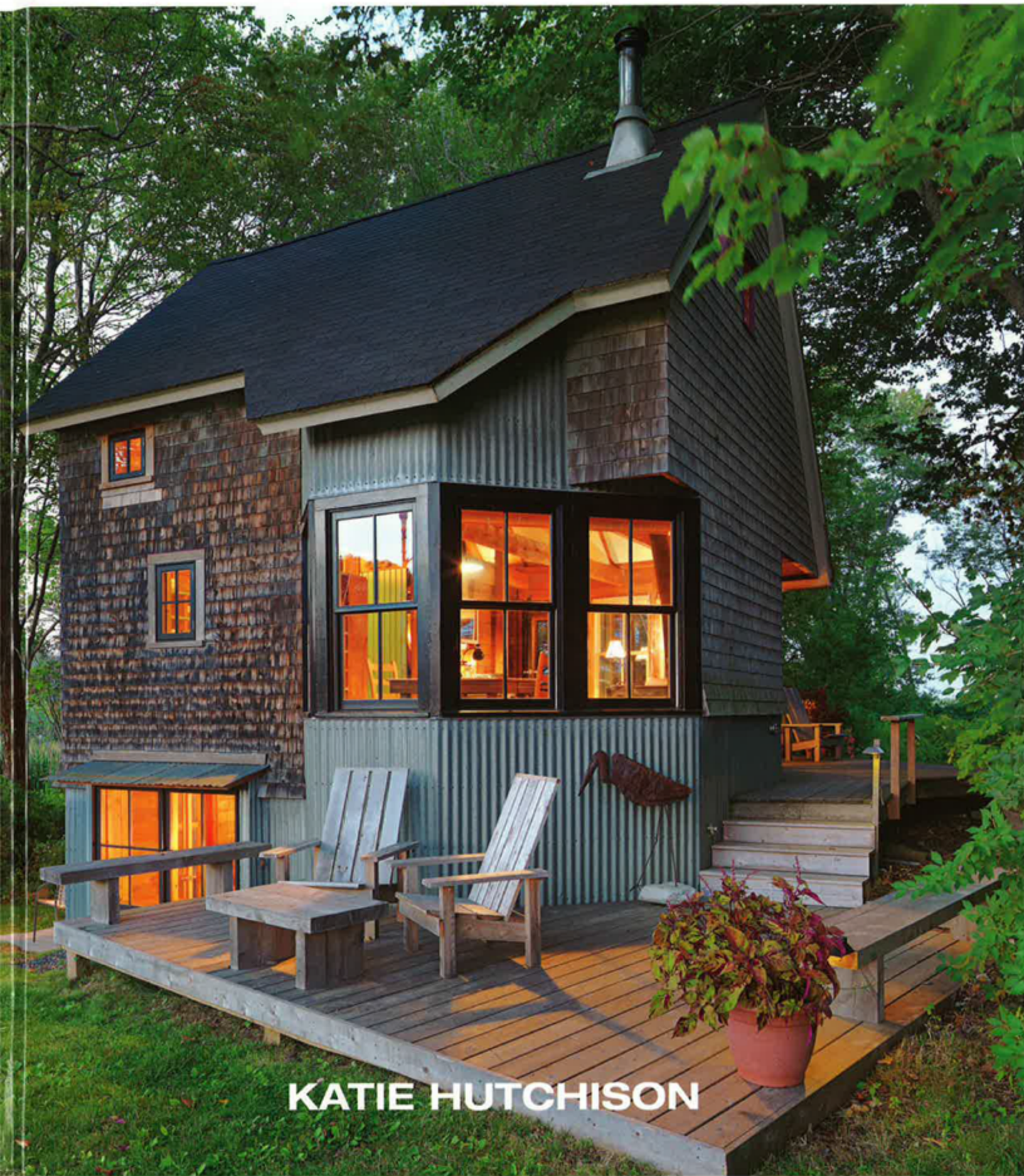


# the **new** small house



**KATIE HUTCHISON**

# HERON COTTAGE



SITE



3D



DAYLIGHT



MULTI-PURPOSE



PRIVACY



IN/OUT



FINISH PALETTE



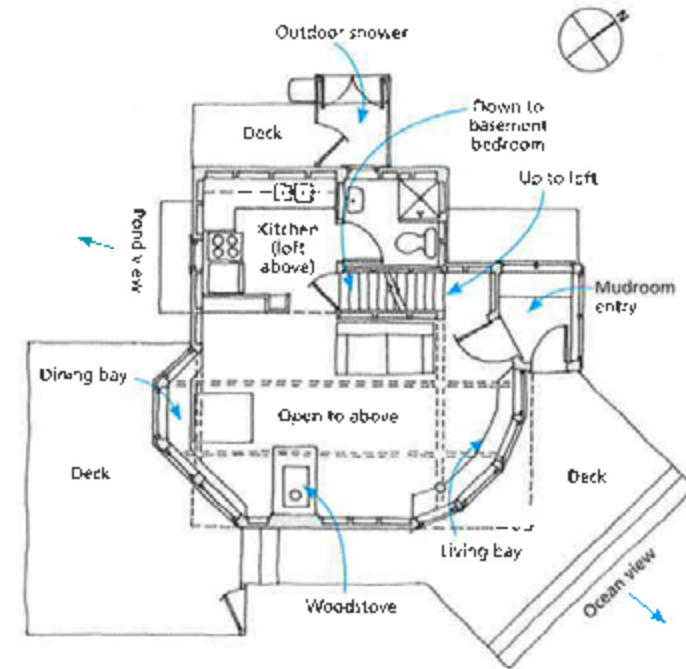
QUALITY MATERIALS

NOT MANY OF US have a chance to revisit with a fresh perspective a creative project we started a couple of decades beforehand. Architect Will Winkelman has enjoyed just such an opportunity. In 1990 as a young architect relatively new to Maine, he and his wife, Kathy Hanley, built a small cabin for themselves on property they acquired on Peaks Island. They named it Heron Cottage in reference to the great blue herons and night herons that frequent the unique site along a freshwater pond on one side and within view of the ocean on the other.

The cottage really does live sanely as a dwelling year round.



Tucked beneath trees and angled toward two views in opposite directions, Heron Cottage with its ample entry/entertaining deck takes full advantage of the site's multiple unique assets.



Architect: Will Winkelman of Winkelman Architecture  
Peaks Island, Maine  
600 sq. ft.



The living-area bay features galvanized corrugated steel wainscoting that wraps the house and suits the rugged yet simple aesthetic of Maine retreats. A boxlike mudroom entry was added after the first summer storm necessitated more shelter and gear storage.



The open dining/living area shares distant ocean views via the faceted bay. A birch tree that had been removed to make way for the cottage finds a new role inside supporting a beam. The woodstove flue climbs to exit through the roof instead of exiting via the side wall, so as much heat as possible is captured inside the cottage.

Their goal was to construct Heron Cottage quickly and affordably, so they would have a place to live on site while they designed and built what would later become the nearby main house. The cottage, they figured, would in short order transition into a guest house, a rental retreat, or accommodations for a family member. What they didn't anticipate was that the cottage would become their primary residence for seven or eight years while the main house design and construction percolated and was ultimately completed.

Fortunately, the cottage "really does live sanely as a dwelling year round," says Will.

Then a couple of years ago, Will and Kathy recognized that it was time to update some of the cottage's weather-worn materials and products. "To achieve the low-maintenance vocabulary, you have to spend some money," Will notes, and they were on a very tight budget when they originally constructed the cottage. While upgrading to extruded aluminum-clad windows, replacing the asphalt roofing in kind,



The dining bay borders a mid-level deck that enjoys views of the pond. Hefty eastern white cedar furnishings, handmade by Kathy, provide a comfortable spot to savor the surroundings. Galvanized corrugated steel makes another appearance to the left over the new bay window in the basement.



The open cathedral ceiling is tall enough to accommodate a loft bedroom, which features a guardrail made of the same type of stainless-steel mesh that you might see around a bird enclosure. The ceiling is painted plywood to reflect light back down into the space. Hemlock ceiling battens tie the look back to the hemlock studs and board sheathing.

and replacing eastern white-cedar wall shingles and trim as necessary, Will tweaked the original design with knowledge gleaned from decades on the property and in the practice of designing homes. He left unchanged the many aspects of the design that had performed successfully over the years.



The original one-and-a-half-story design features a steeply pitched gable roof that's "evocative of Maine retreats, which are more traditional forms," according to Will. Taking advantage of the third dimension, a loft, open to the cathedral ceiling shared by the multipurpose dining/living space, is tucked in over the kitchen and full bath and provides a pocket for privacy. Two bays push out from a 14-ft. by 20-ft. core open space. One 45° bay off the dining area bulges to the southwest toward a view of wetlands and a freshwater pond, while another multifaceted bay off the living area reaches out to the northeast toward the yard and a distant view of the





The dining bay is a cozy spot to enjoy the pond. Another birch tree, salvaged from when the house was constructed, is now a beam that spans between two rafter ties, providing a mounting surface for a pendant lamp above the table.





  The left bedroom is easily accessed from a stair and offers a good siesta space for visitors who don't want to completely miss out on activity down below. A small peekaboo window provides a glimpse of the pond from the bed.



  The basement built-in bed and window writing surface contribute to the boat-like feel. Hemlock battens applied to hemlock boards imply a tree pattern in relief and add to the rustic Maine style.



ocean (allowing the dining and living areas to borrow view and daylight from opposite directions). Both bays include built-in benches that wrap double-hung windows. In the dining bay, a table efficiently nests into the window seat.

What the original cottage lacked was a truly habitable basement. "Before, you couldn't stand up in there," Will says. During the renovation, they dropped the basement floor, insulated with spray foam, improved drainage, and installed a bay window with a built-in writing surface looking out toward the pond. The new-and-improved basement bedroom with its wood ceiling is "like a ship's cabin," notes Will. Steps from the window desk is a Hobbit-size 5-ft.-tall door leading to a new private, red cedar deck and outdoor shower, which brings the indoors out and the outdoors in. Taking full advantage of the grade drop to the rear of the house, the renovated

private basement quarters, indoors and out, greatly enhance the cottage's livability.

Much of Will's other recent enhancements are more subtle but reinforce the intentions and strengths of the original design. A new guardrail system on the loft made of stainless-steel mesh and black plumbing pipe replaces the original cable guardrail, which Will decided was too techy for the cottage's rustic vibe. New hidden, low-voltage LED tape lights affixed to beams in the more enclosed spaces—like the kitchen, bathroom, and stairs—provide a welcome glow. A new closet door in the basement echoes a tree-like applied batten design also visible on a prerestoration access door.

Over the past quarter century or so, as Will has grown professionally and come to call Peaks Island home, Heron Cottage has grown to express his more complete vision for it.

  With newly improved head height, the walk-out basement bedroom boasts its own private deck and outdoor shower.



The custom red cedar outdoor shower features shutters that the less shy can open to the view. The bench inside the shower extends to the exterior to serve as outdoor seating too.