

BY DESIGN PUBLISHING'S

DECOR / GARDEN / TRAVEL

HBD
HOME BY DESIGN®

2022

modern repose

THE RETREATS ISSUE

A Gift From:

By Design Publishing

A Teldon Company

877.423.4567 ext.600

sales@bydesignpublishing.com

www.ByDesignPublishing.com



Whitten Architects worked with their client for about a year to design this site-specific family retreat. The building process by K.P. Hood Construction also required about a year.

freedom in imperfection.

A NEW HAMPSHIRE HOME
EMBRACES THE CONCEPT OF WABI-SABI

There's a little place, nestled amongst tall pines and hemlocks. It fronts an idyllic lake and serves as a year-round, part-time residence for a family with generations of local history. It's a place to escape society's expectations of perfection—in *how* we live our daily lives and *where* we live them. This place? It's called Freedom. Freedom, New Hampshire. And this family retreat lives up to the spirit of its locale.

"The intimate scale and handcrafted quality of the home invites focus and introspection," says Tom Lane, associate with Whitten Architects. The award-winning architectural firm, based in Portland, Maine focuses exclusively on residential design. At 1,400 square feet, this two-bedroom, two-bathroom home was designed with only the must-haves in mind. ". . . We sought to emphasize what is essential while unburdening the design from what is unneeded."

The goal of simplicity stems from the request to incorporate wabi-sabi. "The wabi-sabi concept is part of our client's life philosophy," says Lane. "At the outset of the design process, they gave us the book *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers* by Leonard Koren. That book opens: 'Wabi-sabi is a beauty of things imperfect, impermanent, and incomplete. It is a beauty of things modest and humble. It is a beauty of things unconventional.' As a design team, we were inspired by this concept."

With that philosophy in mind, Whitten Architects along with a team of talented collaborators (Heidi Lachapelle Interiors, Soren deNiord Design Studio, and Albert Putnam Associates), set to work on the design-build process. K.P. Hood Construction removed the existing, dilapidated cabin on the two plus-acre lot (there is a point where the imperfect is also unworkable) and built a T-shape building within that cabin's footprint. "We sought a floor plan that engaged with the site," says Lane. "The T layout creates two partial courtyards: one smaller at the west side where you enter from the drive and one larger on the eastern lake side that creates an outdoor living room."

From the outside in, the experience with the home—from its materials to its site placement—is designed to dance with nature. The exterior cladding mimics a cut log, with western red cedar stained black as the bark, and Douglas fir representing the sapwood. Vertical board-and-batten

WRITTEN BY MARESA GIOVANNINI / PHOTOGRAPHY BY TRENT BELL PHOTOGRAPHY







freedom, new hampshire.

This town of 1,689 (per the 2020 census) in the granite state, might not boast a wealth of commercial attractions, but that is part of its appeal. The tiny village, which you can learn about in person at the Freedom Historical Society & Museum, is nestled between the Lakes Region and the White Mountain Region of New Hampshire. This is the place to get away from it all, whether on Ossipee Lake or Loon Lake.

When in town, stop by the circa-1860 Freedom Village Store. The volunteer-run gathering place hosts community events and classes along with plenty of local gifts and food (prepared and pantry items).

It shares its eastern border with Maine, and Portland International Jetport (PWM) is your best bet for a flight into the area. Rent a car and drive the forty-four scenic miles to ultimate Freedom.

OPPOSITE: In the living space, a natural palette focuses on imperfect textures: polished concrete, unpainted veneer plaster, and soft natural linens. THIS PAGE: "The screen porch is detached to provide a different experience and point of view on the site," says associate Tom Lane. Here, the family and their guests can face the lake or turn their chairs the opposite direction to enjoy a woodstove.





OPPOSITE: In the kitchen, the cabinetry echoes the color and finish of the home's exterior. Subtle texture lends interest to simple, clean lines: a vertical woven screen is made of ash. "The screen was designed for subtle audio and visual connection with the west entry," says Lane.

THIS PAGE: The home and site are designed to be enjoyed differently from a variety of angles. Here, the living spaces and primary bedroom open to the entry courtyard.

and tongue and groove lend texture. The concrete courtyard and seating benches, interrupted by the occasional granite boulder, which "express the splice of the architectural intervention with nature," extend the sight lines into the interior, where polished concrete flows throughout. The floor sheen is balanced with pronounced-grain cabinetry and unpainted, hand-troweled, veneer plaster walls—imperfect in a timeless way.

The entry bench, crafted from a solid block of Maine ash, is replete with all its splits and checks. But each subtle nod to wabi-sabi is balanced with thoughtful application for a seamless experience. "To limit distraction, technology is used discreetly," says Lane. "For example, the HVAC system: radiant heating and the energy recovery ventilation system, runs quietly behind the scenes."

An abundance of windows, which welcome changing natural light, creates varying experiences throughout the day and across the seasons. Although the home was designed to enjoy year round, the detached screen porch with an inviting wood-burning stove, is most comfortable during moderate weather. Concrete, galvanized steel, standing-seam metal, and ipe decking help it stand up to harsh New Hampshire winters. The porch, a retreat from retreat, offers a different point of view and another way for the family to experience their slice of Freedom.

"As a team of collaborators, we welcomed the challenge and were enriched by designing with wabi-sabi in mind, in the hopes that the house—like us—will age gracefully, developing a patina and gaining wisdom with time." ■