

The Family Cabin

Inspiration for Camps, Cottages, and Cabins

DALE MULFINGER author of *The Cabin* and *Back to the Cabin*





The Family Cabin

Inspiration for Camps, Cottages, and Cabins

DALE MULFINGER, author of *The Cabin* and *Back to the Cabin*



The Taunton Press

For Everyone a View

Views to snow-capped mountains, across meadows of grazing cows, or over lakes or rivers have long been an attraction for family cabins, and their designs reflect it. Their rooms may stretch along a lakeshore or be collected on a promontory with views in many directions. Modern cabins use expanses of glass for both near and far views.

Linear plans allow all the rooms in a cabin to have the best possible views. On sloped sites, multiple levels take advantage of the views, with service and utility spaces tucked back against the hillside. Views to mountains are more likely to necessitate vertical assemblies of windows, whereas lake views require horizontal arrangements to capture sunset horizons.

Nature's Bounty

The unique beauty of rich natural settings is usually what first attracts us to a future cabin site. Projects featured in this section draw ideas or materials directly from the land. Family stories are often uniquely connected to these sites and may have been nurtured for decades and across

generations. For some families, a connection to the land began as a camping experience or a stay at a resort nearby. Buying a property often begins an odyssey, with investments made over time or in one fell swoop.

Respect for the land has directed low-impact development with the goal of treading lightly on the earth. A predilection for remote-access sites on islands or across streams has led to cabins built with small lightweight components easily transported by snowmobiles, boats, or small all-terrain vehicles.

Pier foundations help to preserve tree roots close to construction. Trees removed are milled for lumber in cabin interiors, and exterior wood siding is either left to weather natural gray or stained to match surrounding tree bark.

Nature's cabins are often off-grid, relying on passive or active solar orientation for warmth and electricity. The sound of loons, babbling streams, or the chopping of wood is preferable to that of electric generators.

Nestled Together

An encampment of family structures can often be created with shared land, trails, beach, or even a common dining hall. Or a single family might construct a hamlet of cabins focused around a main social and dining structure. Some larger cabins with multiple sleeping accommodations are created as a hamlet of cabins under a single roof.

A few cabin compounds have been created by development companies as a part of larger communities with diverse amenities. Other cabin compounds are the result of a collection of family and friends with a shared vision. Many have been in existence for generations, and new ones are still being developed. Sharing may begin only as a collective vision, but legal provisions are also necessary



The warm glow of shelter draws us inside for food, family, friendship, and rest.



A trout stream flows down from the Teton Mountains past this family encampment of new and refurbished cabins.



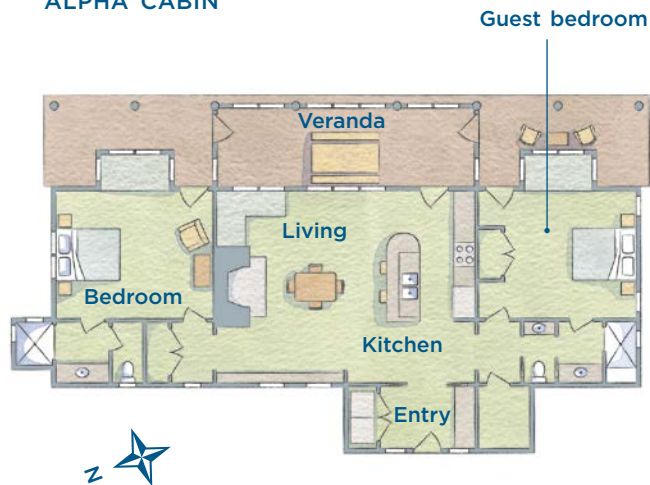
CHILDHOOD MEMORIES RUN DEEP in our psyche and sometimes surface later in life to inform cabin decisions. Kelly's roots were in Montana, the big sky and mountain country most of us read

Fish Creek Cabins

about or see on TV westerns. Kelly left the wide-open spaces for college, met Curtis, married, and settled in Houston, Texas. Children arrived and soon the family was escaping the Texas heat to the closest mountains Kelly could find, the Colorado Rockies.

Curtis wanted to be near water and after their adult daughter moved to Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Kelly began looking for fly-fishing cabins near the majestic Teton Mountains where

ALPHA CABIN



they could build a family lodge. The property she found is on Fish Creek and had a ranch house that was only worthy of demolition. She also was introduced to the Ankeny clan, Papa Charlie and his son Jake, both capable of demo or new construction, and daughters-in-law Shawn, an architect, and Dana, a property manager.

As the demo crew dug in, finding historical treasures such as a buried-car septic system, Kelly and Shawn had time to envision a future for the property. An old log cabin close to the creek was deemed worthy of restoration, and the idea of a large family lodge was quickly nixed in favor of a more humble approach. A new, smaller two-bedroom cabin was envisioned on the ranch house site and a second historic cabin was purchased for an adjacent spot downstream. This would give them an encampment of three retreat structures that could be enjoyed in diverse ways to fit many combinations of family and friends.

RIGHT A glazed porch nestled between two open porches overlooks the trout stream. Wood paneling, nostalgic light fixtures, and a wooden picnic table maintain a simple rustic character.





LEFT Cozying up to a fire after a day of trout fishing in a cool stream brings the family together at the dining table, whether for food or games.



RIGHT A compact galley kitchen amidst the warmth and rustic surrounds of the wood interior is big enough for the owners' needs. A dormer window brings additional daylight to this interior room.

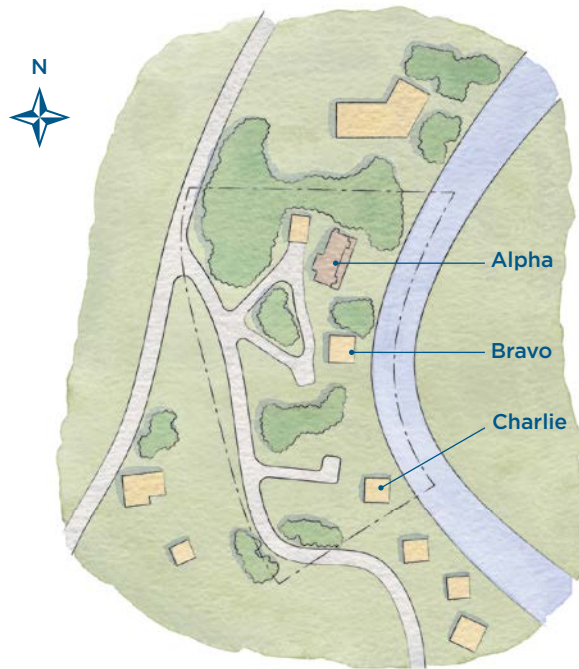


Log Cabin Preservation

Log cabins have a mystique and charm that often encourage their preservation, usually at their original site but occasionally miles away at a new location. Logs can be marked, dismantled, and reassembled. A rotted sill log can be replaced or an additional log added to create a taller interior space. A window can be cut larger or a door taller. Log structures do have constraints such as retaining their corners and having sufficient header logs over doors and windows to carry roof loads.

Architect Shawn Ankeny notes that repurposing log structures is open to tough interpretations by local building code officials as to both structural adequacies and energy performance. Roofs can receive added structure and insulation from above, allowing them to retain the historic interior ceiling character.

Builder Jake Ankeny inserted a new floor system in the historic Fish Creek cabins that also facilitated running new plumbing and electrical distributions. A few logs were replaced or repaired and new chinking was added throughout. The pine logs were cob-blasted to remove old paint and varnishes, and a fresh coat of Transformation Stain was applied to the exterior. Although the foundations weren't great, the building crew was able to shore them up without needing to lift the old log structure.





ABOVE The compact living space in Bravo cabin looks back toward the main Alpha cabin.

LEFT The corner bedroom in Bravo cabin is in close proximity to the creek, its existing location grandfathered in since it was only remodeled.



Shawn's plan for the new main cabin, which they named Alpha, has living space sandwiched between two bedroom/bath suites. A veranda stretches across the creek side of the cabin, and each bedroom includes a cushioned bay window large enough for additional sleeping or just curling up with a good book while listening to the fast-flowing stream.

The two historic log cabins, Bravo and Charlie, were renovated to include living space, bathroom, bedroom, and bunkroom. Both offer the opportunity of fly fishing right outside the door and with Alpha share a fire pit for cookouts and sing-alongs.

Kelly, a self-taught decorator, furnished each cabin with hardware, light fixtures, and artwork that retain a rustic west-



ABOVE Each of the two bedrooms in the Alpha cabin has a comfortable window seat alcove for book reading or a sleeping child.

LEFT A historical marker attests to the origins of this settlement and the beginnings of homesteading in the Jackson Hole Valley.



ern aesthetic. In the new cabin, drywall was eschewed in favor of pine paneling installed vertically and horizontally. The fireplace is clad in a regional moss rock that enhances the interior's timeless character.

The family greatly enjoys their stays at the encampment along the creek, whether for summer fly fishing, rafting, mountain biking, or winter skiing. The site is also home to "The Children's Grand Adventure," a joint program of the Teton Science School and the Texas Children Center in Houston. Youth whose lives are defined by the grueling physical and psychological demands of cancer can enjoy a welcome respite among rushing water, bird songs at sunrise, and shooting stars over bonfires.



With lights aglow in the early evening, the Alpha cabin is an enticing beacon from across the meadow on the other side of the creek. The foothills to the Teton Mountains rise in the background.

HOUSE & HOME

FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF
FINE HOMEBUILDING



“Architect and ‘cabinologist’ Dale Mulfinger possesses an intuitive sense about the deep affection we hold for our cabins. Whether old or new, cottage or camp, these homes away from home are intimate refuges where the family circle expands to include the woods, the lake, the seashore.” —Chris Lee, editor of *Midwest Home* magazine



The Taunton Press
Inspiration for hands-on living®

Taunton Product #077405