

This Jackson Hole Guest House Is an Alpine Dream

And it's only 1,000 square feet.



BY HADLEY KELLER AUG 7, 2019



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Natural Elegance:
Luxurious Mountain

In *Natural Elegance*, their new book out this fall, Rush Jenkins and Klaus Baer of WRJ Design describe one particular structure as "intimacy in nature." For this 1,000-square-foot cottage, nestled into the landscape of WRJ's native Jackson Hole, Wyoming, there is no better description: The guest house is a true nature lover's dream—and an apt representation of WRJ's ability to integrate its design into its surroundings.

The guesthouse's small size is by necessity—legal necessity. The city of Jackson caps guest residences at 1,000 square feet, so Jenkins and Baer worked with architect [Shawn Ankeny](#) (also a Jackson resident) to



The entrance to the cabin.

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"It's a super simple plan," says Ankeny of the layout. "It's really a traditional cabin." The simplicity here was key, because both designers and architect were adamant that the structure look at home in its surroundings, and also that anyone inside it would feel connected to them. "It's almost like a painting, like you just within this vast expanse," the architect continues. We wanted to open up to that."



In the living room, WRJ went with texture over color, opting for furniture and accents with rich patina in neutral tones for a cozy look.

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So, nearly one entire wall of the house's [living room](#) is made of glass, with both windows and sliding doors that overlook a patio area and the fields and mountainscape beyond. "They wanted the cabin to really feel like it was part of the place, part of historic Jackson," says Baer, whose childhood memories of the mountains of Georgia led him to settle in the area. "It's kind of out in the field, this field filled with cows and it has a little stream that goes through it; that to me was the perfect place for it."

Location secured, the designers wanted to ensure that the structure's connection with nature continued on the interiors of the home. "We wanted to make sure every aspect of the aesthetic worked in harmony with the architecture and the surroundings," explains Jenkins. So, they covered virtually every surface in the home with reclaimed barn wood, and chose window treatments in a natural linen that adds warmth and texture.



Reclaimed barn wood covers the walls throughout the house.

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Additional [furniture pieces](#), like leather armchairs and an antique wooden carved chest, also bring patina. Meanwhile, the designers incorporated another element of American history with the wheat-motif dining chairs, rare models Rush and Klaus found while antiquing in the southeast.

"With the texture and the finishes we wanted to create that intimacy," says Baer. "All the furnishings, the fabrics, the art—all those other elements come together layer upon layer upon layer and create an ultimate coziness."



A small hallway provides a sense of entry, while well-concealed cabinets keep skis and outdoor gear out of sight.

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Somewhat paradoxically, though, the consistent finish throughout the home also makes it feel larger than its 1,000 square feet.

"Having all the materials the same makes it seamless," Baer says, a visual element that, when paired with the designers' and architect's strategic floor plan, makes for a house that packs a lot in a small footprint.