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JANUARY 2017



Welcome additions

*An Ivy cottage readies for guests*





# Lodge living

An Ivy cabin gets ready to welcome guests

BY ERIKA HOWSARE

PHOTOGRAPHY BY VIRGINIA HAMRICK





An original log cabin with later additions, the Ivy cottage stays true to its rustic nature but layers in a restrained, Scandinavian aesthetic at the hand of interior designer Yvette Freeman.

When Justin Rood went house-hunting in Charlottesville, he looked really hard. Many dozens of properties into his search, he still hadn't found just the right place—but not because he was picky. Intending to create a vacation rental in an older house, he needed to find a rare combination of location, character and function to serve out-of-town guests.

"Charlottesville's one of my favorite places in the world," says Rood, who lives in Washington, D.C. His search yielded many appealing homes, but often, because he was focusing on older properties, "the rooms were very small. From a business perspective, that isn't what guests are looking for."

At last he came across an Ivy property that had it all. "It was really wonderful," he remembers. "It's nestled between two streams on a rolling piece of property, and it was just instantly charming."

The house—an original log section with later additions—was in the midst of an expansion and renovation by then-owners Josh and Jen Deibert. Josh, a mason, was working to honor

the rustic character of the house by layering it with a spare, Scandinavian aesthetic. "They'd done a really great job of highlighting and preserving the best aspects of the old structure and carrying that through into the new," says Rood.

Rood decided this was the one, and Deibert continued his work with Rood's input. "It had really wonderful space and light," says Rood, who saw the mission as this: "to strip away everything else."

## Quiet cooking

"The house was still pretty raw on the inside, and we started working closely together on the details," says Rood. Finish work, tile, trim, roofing, landscaping and many other aspects were still to be completed.

Yet the kitchen was in large part finished before Rood found the house, and that room set the tone for the rest of the renovation: "uncluttered, light, monochromatic and very simple," as he puts it.

Located in the oldest section of the house, the kitchen design balances modern minimalism with the structure's rural vernacular roots. A simple layout uses an island to separate the work zone from the dining area—a transition that's also marked by a change in the ceiling height. Custom Shaker-style cabinets, in white, are as understated as can be, and instead of upper cabinets, open reclaimed-wood shelves hold mugs, toaster and other morning necessities.

There are very contemporary materials here—countertops in concrete and soapstone, stainless steel appliances—but these have a foil in the elements that proclaim their historic or handmade origins. A forest view through the large dining-room window seems to echo the prominence of wood in the design. Rough-sawn planks form the island. Like the exposed ceiling joists, they are painted white. The floors are painted gray, and in a stroke of design luck, they are laid diagonally.

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## Unifying elements

As Rood and Deibert continued with the renovation, the stripped-down aesthetic first established in the kitchen informed all their decisions. “The appeal of that to me came from a modern sensibility and the appeal of that [for Deibert] was from a more rustic sensibility, so it was a lot of fun to see where those met in the middle and complemented each other,” says Rood. “We started making more decisions, leaning toward modern fixtures and finishes.”

Interiors are white-walled throughout, and in the newer portions of the house, wide-plank white pine floors become a key design element. The team, says Rood, “did a wonderful job creating this authentic feel of aging on brand new floors by leaving them unfinished while they built.” Deibert then applied motor oil—an old method of staining floors that’s seldom used these days—giving the floors a luminous glow.

A double-height ceiling in the entry lends a little drama to an otherwise cozy home. “There are so many spaces,” says Rood. “If somebody wants to read or have a conversation, you’re not exposed to anyone else. You can go off into corners.” Those include a sunroom with a wall full of reclaimed-wood shelves, and an office with



Interiors are white-walled throughout, and wide-plank pine floors become a key design element from the public living spaces to the master bath.

its own sliding barn door for undisturbed lap-top time.

The views from every window—featuring yard, woods and creeks—create serenity, and the renovation team tucked a number of outdoor living spaces into the plan to invite guests out into the fresh air. The master suite has a private balcony, but all guests can share two other porches, including one with a dining table, plus a patio off the walkout basement. A landscape design by Anna Boeschstein, including a pool with a rolling lawn that takes advantage of neighboring views, is in the works for the future.

Stucco on the exterior of the three-story addition distinguishes it from the lower-slung original portion, clad in clapboard, but stand-

ing-seam metal roofing, eminently appropriate for a rural Virginia house, unites the whole structure. Deibert’s stonework on the foundation draws the eye, and it’s echoed indoors by a new stone fireplace surround.

Rood hired D.C. designer Yvette Freeman to furnish the house, telling her he was after a restrained look. “I said the most beautiful thing about the house is the house itself,” he says. She delivered an eclectic yet overwhelmingly neutral design that relies heavily on natural materials: wood, leather, fur and jute.

Freeman arranged books by color on the sunroom shelves, mounted real antlers and sculptural mooseheads on walls and sourced antiques ranging from bowling pins to a model ship with Union Jack sails. Cowskin and Oriental rugs play off modern art and leather seating.

“I told her I wanted it to look like somebody traveled all over the world, but still thought Charlottesville is the most wonderful place to be,” says Rood.

Rood is a little sorry, now that the renovation is finished and the property is available for rent through Stay Charlottesville, that he won’t be able to spend as much time in the house as before. “Every space is just really wonderful to be in,” he says. “There’s a timelessness in the design; it could be 100 years old or brand new.”