

BACK TO THE CABIN

more inspiration for the classic american getaway



DALE MULFINGER author of *The Cabin* | photographs by CHERYL KORALIK



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HOME RUN

Some architects create prototype home plans on speculation, seeking to conceive designs with mass-market appeal. In the case of Ross Chapin and his company, Good Fit, he works backward from that, designing for clients and making plans available for wider purchase only if he feels the design is one that will work uncoupled from the specific requirements of the original site (and, of course, if the original client gives their permission).

Just such a case are the plans Chapin drew up for a 635-sq.-ft. guest cottage on Whidbey Island near Seattle, Washington, for Gil and Ann Graham. The property the Grahams purchased had a modest cabin on it that Chapin had designed for the previous owner. The couple intended to retire there and sought Chapin's counsel for adding to the structure.



LEFT The cottage is positioned on an open knoll with a south-facing terrace.

OPPOSITE A built-in window seat provides extra seating in the small living room and is a great place to snuggle up with a book.



TOP Two pairs of French doors open to the terrace of the guest cottage with a view back to the Grahams' primary home.

ABOVE The site of the Gilann Cottage has a spectacular view of Puget Sound and the shipping lane.

The Grahams and Chapin decided that the best strategy for satisfying their needs was to build a small addition onto the existing cabin; this would become their residence. To accommodate visitors, a guest cottage/studio with two bedrooms and communal living space would be built at the back of the property. The Grahams knew that a number of their regular visitors would be elderly, and asked that the structure be kept to a single story. They also asked Chapin to design the guest house so that it would look as if it had been built at the same time as the primary structure, using the same style of windows and the same paint color, and erecting a lattice shelter over the guest house patio. Chapin also added his signature built-ins throughout the house—



The ladder gives access to a sleeping loft above. A linen cabinet terminates the short hall.

including a window seat in the living room, drawers in one of the bedrooms, and a kitchenette—making the most of the available space and creating a welcome ambiance of coziness.

“Ross hit a home run,” enthuses Ann Graham. “The guest cottage seems so much bigger than its actual square footage.” She loves the way it sits on the property and “how the views from each room add to a feeling of contentment.” The light moves through the house over the course of the day, a precious commodity during the gray days of the Puget Sound.

The positive feedback Chapin received from the Grahams and their guests suggested to him that others might want to utilize this plan. In honor of the Grahams, he named the plan Gilann Cottage, and promised not to sell it anywhere in the vicinity of Whidbey Island.





LEFT As a guest cabin, there's no need for a stovetop in the compact kitchenette. The microwave, under-counter refrigerator, and sink are sufficient for preparing snacks and small meals.

OPPOSITE BOTTOM In lieu of a closet, a niche provides a bench for suitcases and hooks for clothing.



PREPACKAGED COTTAGE AND CABIN PLANS

There are several companies that sell cabin and cottage plans, ready for the building. In addition to Chapin's Good Fit Company on the West Coast, there is Robert Knight's Lucia's Little Houses, which offers an excellent array of plans generated from actual projects in New England. *Southern Living* House Plans has several cabin plans under 1,000 sq. ft., such as Deer Run, a two-bedroom, two-bath gable structure with a porch, metal roof, and board-and-batten siding.

Plans can also be found in the back pages of many cabin and cottage magazines. They can be ordered as study plans for a modest cost, or you can purchase multiple sets of construction drawings ready for bidding by your contractor. Plans created for generic use should be reviewed by an architect or engineer in the area you intend to build so local conditions—soil, zoning, building codes—as well as available materials can be accounted for.

