

Charlotte

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HOME

DESIGN & DECOR



mountain MAGIC

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*Do you believe in magic?
The transformation of this
Appalachian Mountain house is
both magical and unpredictable
in its use of color and texture,
how spaces are delineated,
and the effect of “hidden” rooms.*

COMPLETING THIS 5,000-plus square foot project in a record 10 months, architect Ruard Veltman of Ruard Veltman Architecture and interior designer Cindy Smith of Circa Interiors formed a team that was able to visualize the relaxing retreat hidden inside this abandoned construction project.

The color palette is a source of relaxation for the Charlotte family who owns this mountain house, a weekend retreat from a hectic lifestyle. Smith intended the muted interior colors, such as walls stained gray

with a drop of blue and the slightly tinted and lime-washed wooden floors, to blend with the natural surroundings outside the windows.

“This well-traveled family wanted a quiet, serene, spa-like home, so I did not make any big design statements but decorated around the architecture and mountain views,” Smith says. “The house is up high in the clouds, and the color translates from inside to outside.

A mix of muted blues and soft Scottish wool plaid in the dining room are just a couple of touches that provide a slightly masculine feel.

“Toning down the dark wood with a slightly tinted wash of color is more elegant than the traditional rustic mountain home, Smith



continues. “And natural fiber materials – wool and cotton, for example – are tactile and provide a hand-hewn feeling.”

Earth-toned colors and palpable textures in this mountain retreat are not the only surprises that await guests. Veltman’s method of breaking up spaces while still maintaining an open floor plan adds character and intimacy to the home. His magic elixir to remedy this home’s cavernous living room with uncomfortably tall ceilings was simple: lower ceilings (to 12 feet!) and add an entire second floor above the space. This adjustment enables the homeowners’ invited guests to have a private lounge and bedrooms on the second floor all their own. It also allows the owners to close off the upstairs when the children and grandchildren are not visiting and live very happily on the first floor, where the master suite resides.

Varied ceiling heights in different spaces also help the eye recognize separate “rooms.” The dining room’s timbered ceiling, with alternating dark wood between the timbers, is clearly delineated from the adjacent living room ceiling where timbers are alternated with painted plaster for a lighter effect. The entryway off the living room has its own personality with a smooth, lowered ceiling height (still at 9 ½ feet). A traditional English inglenook at the fireplace provides a room within a room, with its own intimate touches of cozy bench seating and an even lower ceiling height. Smith enhanced the architectural features with a touch of muted colors including toned-down wooden beams to coordinate all the spaces and ensure the elegant and romantic aesthetic of this unpredictable house is consistent throughout every nook.





One of the most surprising – and can we say magical – features of the home is its “hidden rooms.” The kitchen is streamlined with beautifully appointed cabinetry, a simple island sink, and a cooktop – a nice place to have a cup of coffee or a quick bite of lunch. The trick of it all is a full chef’s kitchen and butler pantry all rolled into one behind-the-scenes workhorse space. Can’t find it? It’s behind an “invisible” entrance, which is a barn door near the cooktop that blends with the wall but can be pushed aside for access. The same goes for the laundry room, which hides behind a paneled door minus its hardware. It is accessed via an automated system that operates the door. Closing off these utilitarian spaces enables the homeowners to have every









appliance and convenience they need, all the while keeping the modernistic streamlined appearance in all the public spaces.

Likewise, the master suite on the first floor is behind paneled doors near the living room fireplace and appears to be a part of the wall, allowing the owners a nearby retreat that others cannot see.

Smith advises homeowners involved in a full-scale renovation project like this one to stay true to the architecture of the

structure without letting the design compete with it. The homeowners did not have existing furnishings so the mountain home's clean slate gave Smith the opportunity to carefully choose pieces the owners loved.

"My favorite house is one with thoughtful architecture and spaces that allow for furniture, not just relying on fabrics and window treatments," she says. "This house has no bad spaces to cover up and decorate around. Although there are very few

walls for hanging artwork, we achieved strong design by accessorizing with a few large items, choosing handmade objects with pretty form and shape and "found" items like strong earthenware pieces.

"Above all, we considered the environment and moved the eye from inside to outside so it feels like one natural progression. That makes sense to me."◆

To see all the photos from this home, visit www.homedesigndecor.com.

