

Cabin

By Chantal Lomera
Photographs by Thomas J. Story

Fever



EXTERIOR: Friedmann reimagined the cabin facade in Benjamin Moore's Onyx to allow the green hues of the neighboring trees to pop. She swapped antique-inspired lamps for sleek industrial fixtures, added a \$40 salvaged-wood door, and scraped more layers of brown paint off the redwood deck to make it feel like an extension of the interior floors. The heart of the deck features a 10-foot custom tabletop from Arborica in West Marin. Ceramic nesting bowls and plates, vintage flatware, bone-handled knives, blue overdyed napkins, wood cutting boards, and stoneware vases; all elsiegreen.com.

A Bay Area designer strips back an A-frame to create a moody hideaway tucked among the evergreens.



LIVING ROOM: The existing layout was already open and airy—no sledgehammers, or structural engineering, were required to fit the vision. The heavy lifting came by way of sanding off three coats of brown paint, which after several days revealed the raw Douglas fir beams. Out came the plastic-laminate flooring and hollow composite doors for solid wood with black hardware. Finally, rather than playing around with multiple paint colors, she relied solely on Benjamin Moore's Chantilly Lace for the walls and wood ceiling planks to cast shadows and tones across the cabin.

On

a Sunday afternoon three years ago, interior designer Blythe Friedmann (*blythedesignco.com*) was at the tail end of an

hourlong drive up to Point Reyes Station, near the start of her favorite hike to Bear Valley Visitor Center, from her San Francisco apartment. But when she and her hiking companion noticed an open-house sign pointing up a winding road into the West Marin woods, they couldn't resist a quick detour.

There, amid a dense patch of Douglas fir, oak, and bay trees, stood a candy-apple red A-frame. The property was dotted with rose bushes and fuchsia, and a circular gravel driveway lead to a sprawling chocolate brown deck with Parisian-style lampposts. Friedmann, who grew up in New York City, had never stepped foot in one of these iconic California cabins but coincidentally had recently designed one for a project in a 3-D rendering course through University of California, Berkeley's extension program. As she chatted up the selling agent, her friend noted the striking similarities between the A-frame they were standing in and the one Friedmann produced for the assignment.

Friedmann's plan unfolded in her mind in real time during the hike: She would strip the beams, swap the laminate floors for wide-plank white oak, and brighten up the walls with white paint. "I felt a pull," she recalls. "It just felt like a sign."

A year after the fateful hike, Friedmann had simplified the overly embellished A-frame, including, as she puts it, "wilding up" the landscape with hundreds of native plants. Now it's in high demand on Airbnb (*airbnb.com/rooms/21729295*) thanks to its stylish black exterior and carefully edited, organic interiors. Her escape among the woods boasts open spaces, natural surfaces, and textures in a calming palette dominated by white, black, and soft gray. "I had absolutely no idea I would love sharing the A-frame so much with guests," she says. "I love giving people a space to commune with nature."



ARTIST'S CABIN: Friedmann worked with a paint specialist at House of Color in San Francisco's Mission District to create a custom deep green for the property's tiny cabin. "I wanted it to look like it had been there for a while," she says. To achieve the matte shade, they "dirtied up" a bunch of green hues and threw in a bit of black. "It's tricky to add green to a forest." But now the two structures are linked via their cool inky hues and a rambling flagstone walkway.

LOFT: The chunky, custom Douglas fir L-shaped daybed was replicated from Friedmann's original A-frame drawing, a piece she added for its rec-room-like quality. A collection of vintage indigo fabric was put to use as cushion upholstery, which is occasionally repaired by a local artist from Wishbones Workshop using Japanese mending techniques. Then, to create some intimacy despite the soaring ceilings, she wrapped a set of low beams with a trio of artist Windy Chien's Helix Lights artfully woven from natural-cotton rope. Layered Navajo rugs echo the loft's palette.

BOOKSHELVES: The shelving, tucked cleverly into an alcove below the staircase, is constructed of Douglas fir. "I really wanted the shelves to echo the beams and feel cohesive," says Friedmann. The built-ins serve dual purposes. One, they allow for simple graphic moments in lieu of traditional wall-hung art. In addition, the shelves house a collection of poetry and nature-themed books that she curated specifically for cabin guests.

BATHROOM: "After a long hike, it just felt like something we needed in the space," Friedmann says of the classic white soaking tub in the bathroom. The view from the tub, through a pair of swing windows, looks out onto a slope dense with tangles of wild fern, coffeeberry, and huckleberry. To make the room's snug configuration work, she purchased a petite five-foot tub from Rejuvenation and salvaged an old janitorial mop sink designed to wedge into a corner. The floor tiles are by Commune for Exquisite Surfaces.

BEDROOM: The soaring triangle windows that look onto a forest of bay trees and Douglas fir made this second-floor bedroom all about the view. "I never want to compete with nature," says Friedmann. Rather than locating the bed beneath the window, she situated it for optimal views instead. "I love how it feels tucked into the corner, and you can turn your head and look at the stars and trees at night." The lumbar pillow is from The Citizenry.



KITCHEN: One aspect of the slanted wall structure that piqued Friedmann's curiosity was developing creative means to display art. "That's one of the things that got me really intrigued," she says. She looked to the kitchen island first: situated near the center of the space, it seemed ideal. She collaborated with fabricators at Nashville-based 1767 Designs on the inlaid reclaimed-wood pattern painted in a palette of white, black, and tonal grays that repeats the home's dominant hues.