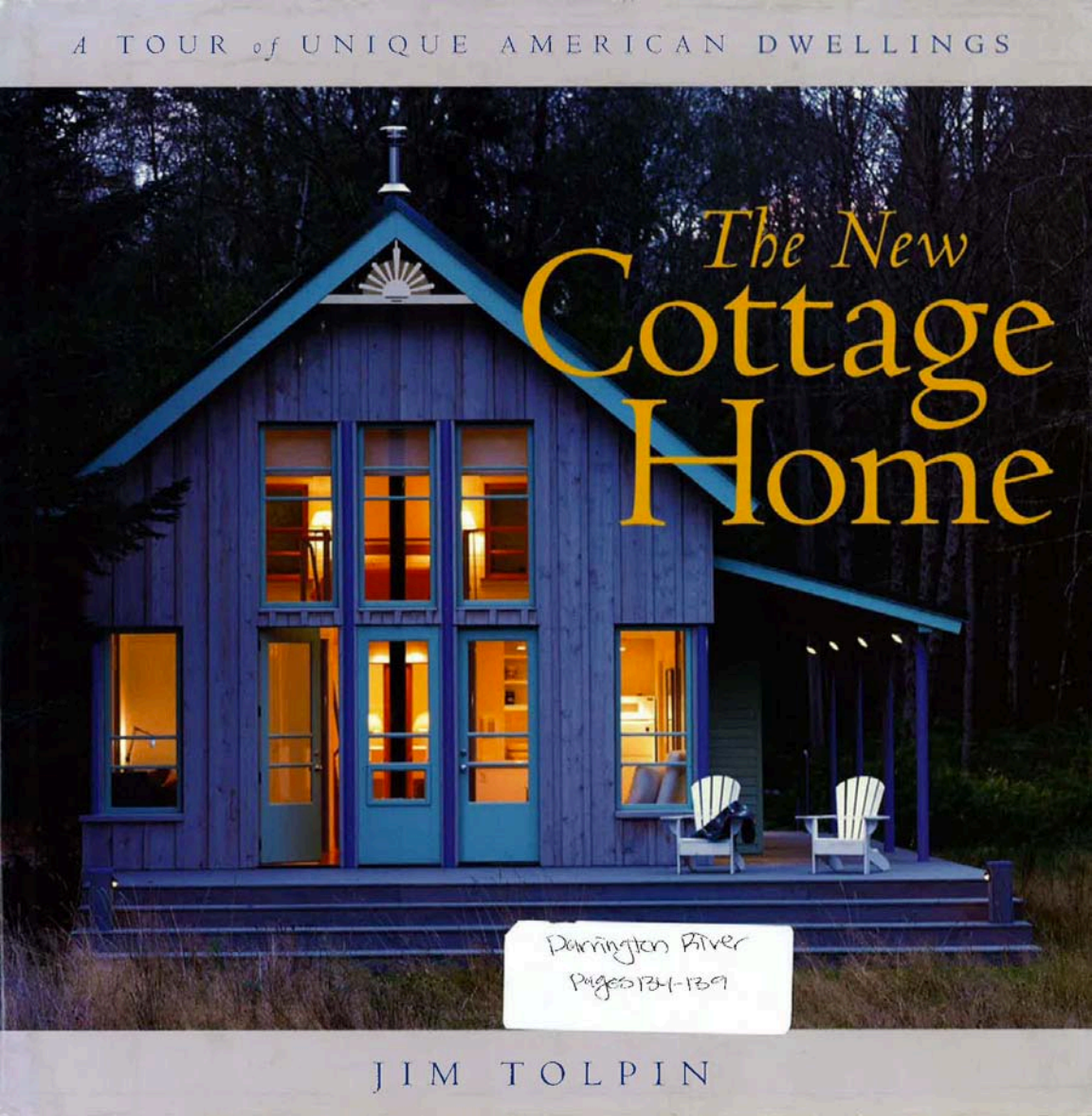


A TOUR of UNIQUE AMERICAN DWELLINGS



# *The New* Cottage Home

Darrington River  
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JIM TOLPIN

# A Little House for a Big Mountain



**A**FTER MONTHS OF SEARCHING, a city-weary family looking for a weekend country retreat finally found the perfect site: a south-facing, tree-lined meadow with a sweeping view of glaciated mountains in the distance. The site even included an old log structure nestled into the forest at the edge of the meadow. Though the building itself was beyond repair, the foundation proved to be solid—it would

provide an economical starting point for the creation of a delightful country-cottage home.

Local architect Geoffrey Prentiss encouraged the family to keep the house to the same footprint as the old log cabin (20 ft. by 30 ft.). A small home would require little maintenance so that time spent on retreat could be just that.

**SIZE** 880 sq. ft.; **COMPLETED** 1996; **LOCATION** Darrington, Washington;  
**DESIGNER** Geoffrey Prentiss (Prentiss Architects), Seattle, Washington;  
**BUILDER** Chuck De Graffenreid (Renaissance Builders); **PHOTOGRAPHER**  
Jim Malecki



**THE STEEPLY PITCHED ROOF,** the tall, narrow windows that extend up into the gable, and the vertical battens over the cedar siding combine to give the tiny house a feeling of height. At the same time, an expansive deck served by a broad set of stairs visually anchors the building to the ground.

Prentiss boldly chose to draw attention to the steel structural posts that support the porch and act as mullions between the windows, painting them a bright blueberry color. The columns add a playful contemporary effect, while the gable ornament evokes a more traditional cottage form.

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#### TO SIMPLIFY CONSTRUCTION

and to reinforce contemporary design elements, Prentiss eliminated traditional trimwork around windows and door openings. The strong vertical proportions reinforced by the pole mullions and dramatic color combinations avoid the featureless,

blank stare of modern picture windows.

The unheated vestibule on the side porch offers a weather barrier for the entryway while also providing a coat closet and a pantry area for the kitchen that does not encroach upon the precious 600-sq.-ft. footprint.



#### THE PAINTED STEEL POLES

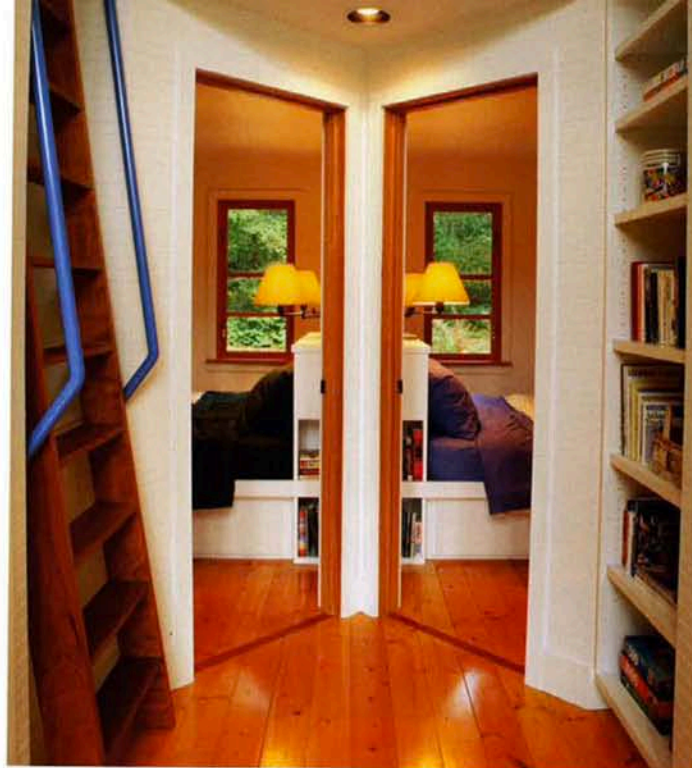
have come inside to support the sleeping and storage loft. Smaller versions of the posts form balusters, while cable guardrails allow an unobstructed view of the mountains through the windows in the south gable. Below the loft, an island defines the boundary between the kitchen and dining area.



#### A BUILT-IN WINDOW SEAT

mirroring the one in the dining area runs the full length of the living room's inside wall, adding color, comfort, and economy of space.

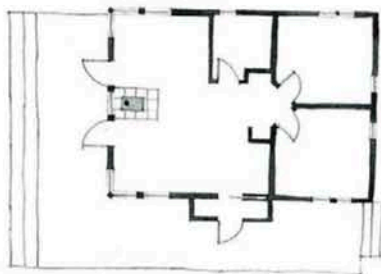
To add a pleasing texture and to differentiate some of the wall surfaces, Prentiss specified the installation of horizontal beaded paneling in the living room.



#### THE FIRST-FLOOR BEDROOMS

are designed as mirror images, down to the identical built-in bed platforms, headboards, and bookshelves (only the books are different). Clothing and bedding drawers slide out on rollers from under the bed platforms to maximize storage potential.

A short partition-wall alcove to the right of the bedroom doorway is fitted with built-in shelving to create a bookcase. Throughout the cottage, finely crafted built-in furnishings make the most of the limited space while adding a good measure of charm.



#### A SHIP'S-TYPE LADDER

(with painted metal handrails to continue the theme of the steel columns) provides access to the sleeping loft, eliminating the need for a space-consuming stairway.

*Right:* Soaring gable windows and a welcome absence of clutter create an open, airy space—like the fields and mountains upon which this cottage will gaze for many generations.

