



PHOTOS: TIM LENZ.

Small Wonders

PLAYFUL, PRACTICAL AND OH-SO-PRETTY ACCESSORY DWELLINGS ARE TAKING THE AMERICAN BACKYARD BY STORM.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY GRACE BEULEY HUNT

There's a certain magic to a backyard hideaway; a conjuring of escape from the comforts of home with ageless appeal. Perhaps it is this very quality that spurred a movement of quarantined homeowners to convert or construct petite outbuildings devoted to good times and creative pursuits. The way we see it, the trend is a win-win for maximizing property while staying young at heart. Take inspiration from these bite-sized exemplars around the country.

Designer Bryan Graybill and Historical Concepts President Andrew Cogar looked to the primitive, monochrome homes of early Nantucket and Newport in selecting Benjamin Moore's Narragansett Green for the façade of Graybill's East Hampton cocktail shed. With a view to easy-breezy entertaining by the pool, the accordion window with mahogany sill functions as a self-catering bar.



HAPPY HOUR

For Bryan Graybill, designing a cocktail shed at his Hamptons home alongside architect Andrew Cogar proved a great opportunity to flex his background in hospitality design. “My husband and I love to entertain, but we also like to be part of the party, so we tried to create a self-directed environment,” he explains. “We wanted a casual hosting program, and to keep guests and wet bathing suits out of the kitchen when they need a drink. We defined that purpose first and the architecture followed.”

For the exterior expression, Cogar and Graybill drew inspiration from East Hampton village—specifically, from its one-room schoolhouse whose modest scale and circa 1784 charm felt apropos. “Reclaimed materials were key to bringing a sense of nostalgia into the present,” says Graybill. Cement tile (allegedly salvaged from stables in Spain), irregular-width wood siding to reflect hand planing of the 18th century, a simple shake roof and burnished brass details all lend to the historical ethos, while restaurant-grade appliances, including an ice maker, dishwasher and refrigeration suite, offer all the modern comforts of a tiny resort.

“There’s something fun and ceremonial about ‘opening up the bar,’” says Cogar, pointing to the pool-facing accordion window, a busy watering hole in the summer months. Meanwhile, the interior functions as a dressing room (replete with an outdoor shower off the back) and a berth-like loft accessed via ladder provides guests (and often Graybill himself) a comfy place to steal away for a nap. “It’s such a fun little workhouse and not redundant to the kitchen,” says Cogar, adding, “if you’re going to do an outbuilding, being honest about what you want—whether that’s turning out 30 margaritas in a hour or not—will help you make the most of it.”

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