

atHome

Winter 2020

COVETED
INTERIORS
+
WINTER
ENTERTAINING





Bridge House

A simple feat of perspective was realized by treading lightly.

/ by Jonathan Ammons
/ photography by Kevin Meechan

THRESHOLD

Periscope



TUCKED AWAY IN THE MOUNTAINS near Cashiers, rather intentionally hidden, is an architectural marvel. It's not obtrusive, rather it's built to blend in, to tread as lightly as possible on the world around it. I've come to believe that part of the wonder of the Bridge House is that it was as much a project of whimsy for the owners as it was for the team that erected it.

A family in Sullivan's Island had bought the property and filed for a conservation easement to protect the trout stream that ran through the 90 acres of mountain land. "They wanted to build a home to experience this waterfall, and waterfalls are typically hard to see when you build," says Parker Platt, part of the father/son duo at Platt architecture and construction that designed and built the Bridge House. "The relationship to seeing a waterfall is that you usually have to look up a river, so it takes a unique spot to be able to look effectively at a waterfall."

After showing the owners several designs, it dawned on Parker's father, Alfred, what they were looking for. As Parker explains "I remember Dad looked at the woman and said, 'You want to bridge the creek, don't you?' And she said, 'Oh, could I?' We had no idea, so we spent the next seven or eight months trying to get this house permitted."

After months of working with the permitting offices, it was given the green light as a bridge; a bridge with people living in it.

Parker says the design turned out to be a simple one. The bulk of the house -- the sleeping quarters -- sits on the bank, removed from the part of the property under the protective easement. But the living areas stretch out as a great

hall, with the living room, dining areas and kitchen configured as a shotgun, bridging over the stream, all with a perfectly framed view of the waterfall through floor-to-ceiling windows.

"It plays well with our belief that it's really our job to let the house kind of be quiet," says Parker. "We get to work in really beautiful environments and it's about just putting people in those places in a comfortable way. Letting the place be the star, because it's not about the house, it's about the experience of the place."

Alfred agrees. "As architects, we were conscious of the effect we were producing and the uniqueness of the relationship of the living spaces to the bridge," he says.

They started with a configuration where all the rooms would face out, but the homeowners set about furnishing the rooms just like they were anywhere with the expected social groupings and televisions. "They just made a home that happens to have windows on both sides overlooking a creek and a waterfall," says Alfred. "Ultimately, the river is a pleasant addition to the house. We enjoyed having that side of things shown to us."

The principal resonated with Platt. Alfred says the firm runs from any whiff of clever and this project, though unique, would be no exception. There's even a motto in the office: if something looks like an architect's been messing around with it, then keep messing with it until it doesn't.

In terms of the Bridge House, the home has settled into its inimitable neighborhood and quietly become a part of community. No one involved expected anything less. **ah**