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Mountain Majesty

A renowned Arkansas firm designs the ideal cabin for drinking in a stunning Ozarks view.

Charred and clear-stained cypress wrap a weekend retreat designed by Marlon Blackwell Architects in Rogers, Arkansas. The home sits in a dense forest 85 feet above Beaver Lake.

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“We wanted to get as close to the edge as we could without doing crazy gymnastics.”

MARLON BLACKWELL, ARCHITECT



“It’s like an apple you took a bite of,” says architect Marlon Blackwell, describing a cabin designed by his firm on a sloping bluff overlooking Beaver Lake in the Ozark Mountains. Its boxy shape has a section carved out of one side that creates a semi-enclosed porch where the views are best. “In a strange way, we made a cave in response to the forest,” Marlon says, “a place for refuge.”

The house is a weekend getaway for a Kansas City couple—Leah Curry, a project manager at an experience design company, and Dan Curry, a lawyer—and their 17-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son. “We drew the plan around the porch area,” says Meryati Blackwell, Marlon’s wife and his partner at Marlon Blackwell Architects. Indeed,

the cabin’s kitchen, living room, and three bedrooms all surround the porch in a U shape. “It’s like a central court,” Meryati adds.

Outside, the rectangular house is clad in cypress that was charred black in a burn chamber to give it a shou sugi ban look. “For wood where we are, you either stain it or do this treatment, which defers maintenance over time,” Marlon explains. “We left the wood in the chamber for a while, so it really looks like alligator skin.” The remaining materials are fairly straightforward: a concrete slab on grade, eight feet of it cantilevered over the hillside; a wood frame; and a standing seam metal roof.

A black bent steel plate stair leads up three steps to a notched entry paneled in clear-stained cypress. >

The architects worked with Insite Construction to build the 2,175-square-foot cabin, which is cantilevered eight feet over the drop (opposite). Owners Leah and Dan

Curry and their son gather at a custom ash table by Urban Lumber Company (above). The floor-to-ceiling windows are by Ozark Mountain Glass and Razorback Ironworks.

Tanglewood Cabin



ARCHITECT **Marlon Blackwell Architects** LOCATION **Rogers, Arkansas**

- A Entrance
- B Kitchen
- C Dining Area
- D Living Area
- E Laundry
- F Bedroom
- G Bathroom
- H Porch

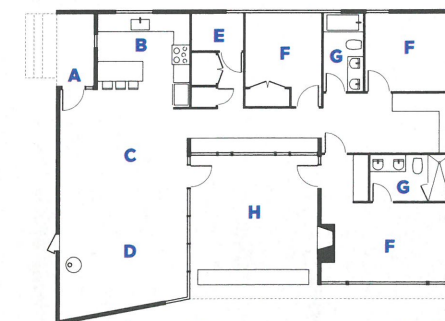


ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES + WRIGHT



A rattan loveseat from Golden & Pine softens a corner of the living area (opposite). Dan and Leah's bedroom (left) features a platform bed by Unruh Furniture and Cypress sconces

by Cedar & Moss from Rejuvenation. Running along the open side of the porch (below) is a built-in wood bench that doubles as a security barrier. The fireplace surround is by

Razor Ironworks. In the kitchen (bottom), a pair of Swell pendants from Design Within Reach hang above an island lined with Industry West stools. The appliances are from KitchenAid.



“It’s a south-facing slope, so there’s exposure to sun. The nifty part of the porch design is that it provides shade without obstructing the view out to the lake.”

DAN CURRY, RESIDENT



Once inside, you’re pulled toward the outdoor space. “You step through the front door and see through the living room and dining room and out to the porch,” says project architect Justin Hershberger. “There’s a real transparency, and formally we needed that simple move.” Enclosed on three sides by glass and clear-stained cypress, the porch draws your eye out to the vista, helped by the roof, which, roughly one-third of the way across the building, bends slightly upward to stretch the view.

A fireplace heats the porch, and a low-lying bench with a flip-up backrest does double duty as a seating area and security measure, marking where the edge of the porch gives on to a steep, 85-foot drop. “It’s kind of a sharp drop-off, but the bench spans the whole length of the porch, so it’s a barrier,” says Leah. “We use it a lot, sitting out there with unobstructed views.”

The interior spaces are compact and flow around the courtyard. “There’s no fat in the building,” Marlon says. “There’s a conciseness about it too, not sprawl. Essentially it’s made of three materials, and it’s meant to be as reductive as it can be.”

In addition to peering down to the lake below, the house is adjacent to Hobbs State Park, which at more than 12,000 acres is Arkansas’s largest state park. “The site was powerful enough,” says Hershberger. “We didn’t need to do much.” ■