

# HOMES

& GARDENING



Rachel Lea Stocker Photography

## LESS IS MORE

By NANCY NGO • Star Tribune

Less is more. That’s the philosophy that wife/husband duo Alyssa Meyer and Bryce Caldwell set out to follow. They decided to adopt a lifestyle in which they lived abroad part of the time. And while they loved their south Minneapolis home, they didn’t need all 2,200 square feet when they were traveling so much.

That’s when they brought in Christopher Strom Architects to rebuild their shed-like garage and add an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) above it.

“We wanted something that was more tailored to us and we wanted to rent out our main house,” Meyer said. “We wanted a really beautiful design full of light. We wanted a tropical Scandinavian vibe with tile and butcher block.”

See **LESS** on H6 ►



Alyssa Lee Photography

A large tree in the yard makes for a perfect canopy while an upper deck provides outdoor living space for Alyssa Meyer, Bryce Caldwell with their dog Pippa and cat Penny.

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## Wisconsin log cabin ‘retreat’

The hilltop cabin is minutes away from ski resorts and town centers.

By NANCY NGO • Star Tribune

When house hunting, many home buyers might pass on a house that requires projects from top to bottom — even more so, an unfinished log cabin.

But when Darryl and Melissa Quiram came across such a place in Osceola Township, Wis., they were all in.

“When we got to the house, there was a dusty countertop

with 11 Realtor cards on it,” Darryl said. “The electrical outlets were still open, and we could see through the logs and daylight was coming in.”

They were drawn to the rustic cabin made of Canadian Douglas fir logs, in part because it was on a secluded and sprawling 7-acre-plus property that offered views of Lotus Lake.

Knowing they would have to seal the logs and finish the electrical work, they threw in an offer.

“Apparently the guy who owned it started to build it. He

See **CABIN** on H3 ►



Jamie Hiner Creations

The hillside rustic cabin in Osceola Township, Wis., is made of Canadian Douglas fir logs and sits on 7 acres.

## Stylish but practical feature walls

Showcase the area around your bed while addressing practicality.

By CHRISTINA STURDIVANT SANI  
Special to the Washington Post

Your bedroom is arguably the most sacred place in your home. It’s where your body rests after a long day and rises after a peaceful slumber. The first and last things you see each day live in your bedroom. That’s why it’s important to be mindful of aesthetics and mood when choosing pieces for this space.

Many people achieve this bedroom bliss by using the real estate around and behind the bed as a feature wall to show-

case their creativity and to cater to their personal needs. And, of course, this space also serves practical purposes by providing lighting and storage around the bed.

A feature wall has many components — lighting, art, texture and color, for starters — so your design must be strategic to create a cohesive, uncluttered look. “Make sure you have a complete composition and everything on that wall works well to create a beautiful vignette,” says Quintece Hill-Mattauszek, owner of Studio Q Designs in Alexandria, Va.

That said, the trick to pulling off a dreamy space is choosing a focal point, then

See **WALLS** on H2 ►



# LESS IS MORE

◀ **LESS** from HI  
**The challenge:** While they were up for living within a smaller blueprint, the 550-square-foot space would need to comfortably accommodate the entire family — the couple, their dog Pippa and cat Penny. The location, above their garage and next to an alleyway, also needed to feel tucked away.

**The team:** Christopher Strom Architects’ Elizabeth Akkerman, project manager/AIA, and Christopher Strom, architect/AIA. Collaborators include Über Built general associates and Bunkers and Associates structural engineers.

**The solution:** With such a small space, a few custom pieces were key. A slope in the roofline allows for custom shelving and storage, including a large slide-out cabinet near the entryway for shoes and kitchen items such as slow cookers and blenders.  
“It’s as deep as the couch,” Akkerman said. “Every square inch was used for decorative and storage purposes.”  
They also built a special cabinet with a cat entrance for the litter box.  
“The door to the side opens completely so you have very easy access by just sliding it out and cleaning it. But it’s very out of sight and self-contained at all times,” Akkerman said.

**Full potential:** To further maximize space, a double sliding door was installed for closing off the bedroom and the main space.  
Still, a smaller footprint didn’t mean the house is without amenities. The ADU has a walk-in closet, a full bathroom with a soaking tub and a shower with wall-spray jets. There’s also a full laundry room.  
Thanks to an upper deck that was integrated into the design, it also boasts outdoor living space.

**Finishing touches:** The homeowners love plants and gardening, and that became part of the design. A large catalpa tree in their yard serves as a canopy for the house.  
Windows and skylights were strategically placed to connect the outdoors and create spaces for plants to grow. That includes a large picture-frame window in the kitchen, which was made from the same butcher block material as the counter.

“The wood butcher block adds warmth to the space,” Akkerman said. And “we really wanted to frame that window in a way that would pull the light in, so if you were washing dishes or prepping food, you would capture that feeling of being outside, being pulled into a large space. We were trying to blur the lines between outside and inside.”

**The reward:** An ADU with a “tropical Scandinavian” feel and a place where the entire family can exist comfortably.  
“It’s been a great space full of light. We call it the treehouse because the canopy of the tree is fully covering it,” Meyer said. “Both of our animals love it because they can be with us all the time and that’s all they want, anyway.”  
During the pandemic, the couple stopped traveling and have been home full time. They recently transitioned back to the main house for now and are renting out their ADU as an Airbnb. And for a couple who love to travel, they’re happy to provide a space for others to rest their head while in town.  
“We’ve met so many guests from all over,” Meyer said. “It’s been great.”

Everyday Solutions showcases projects by members of the Minnesota chapter of the American Institute of Architects that solve a homeowner’s everyday design challenge.



Alyssa Lee Photography

The just over 550-square-foot square space was designed to comfortably accommodate the couple as well as their dog and cat. The cat, Penny, even gets her own hidden litter box. From a picture-frame window in the kitchen to a custom shelving unit that includes slide-out storage, the ADU uses every available space.

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