

## RAINFOREST RETREAT

MILL BAY, VANCOUVER ISLAND, BRITISH COLUMBIA, CANADA

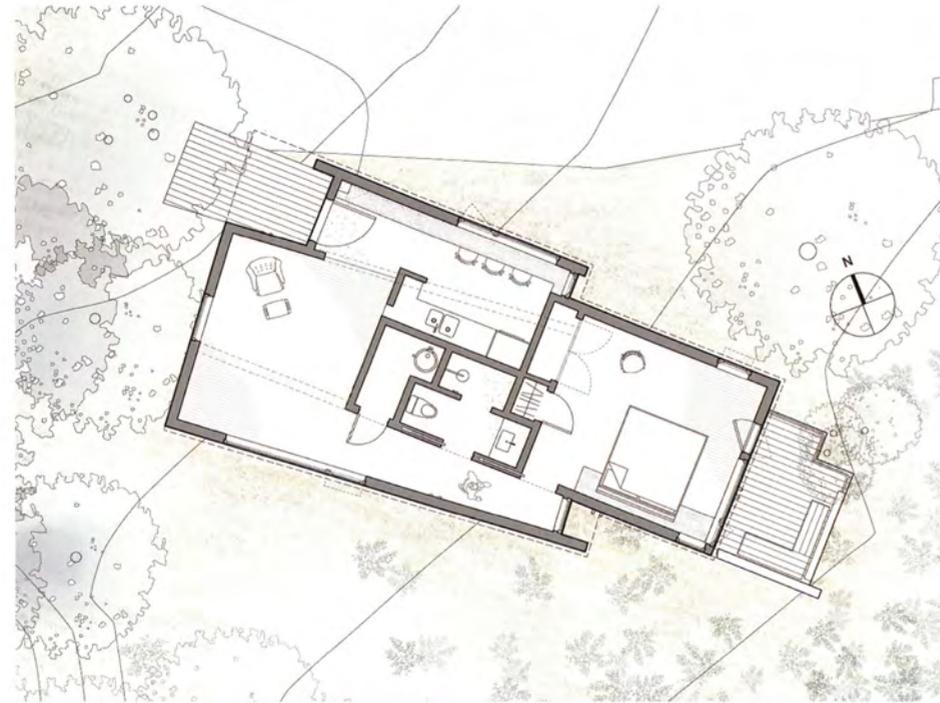
Architect: Agathom

Area: 825 square feet

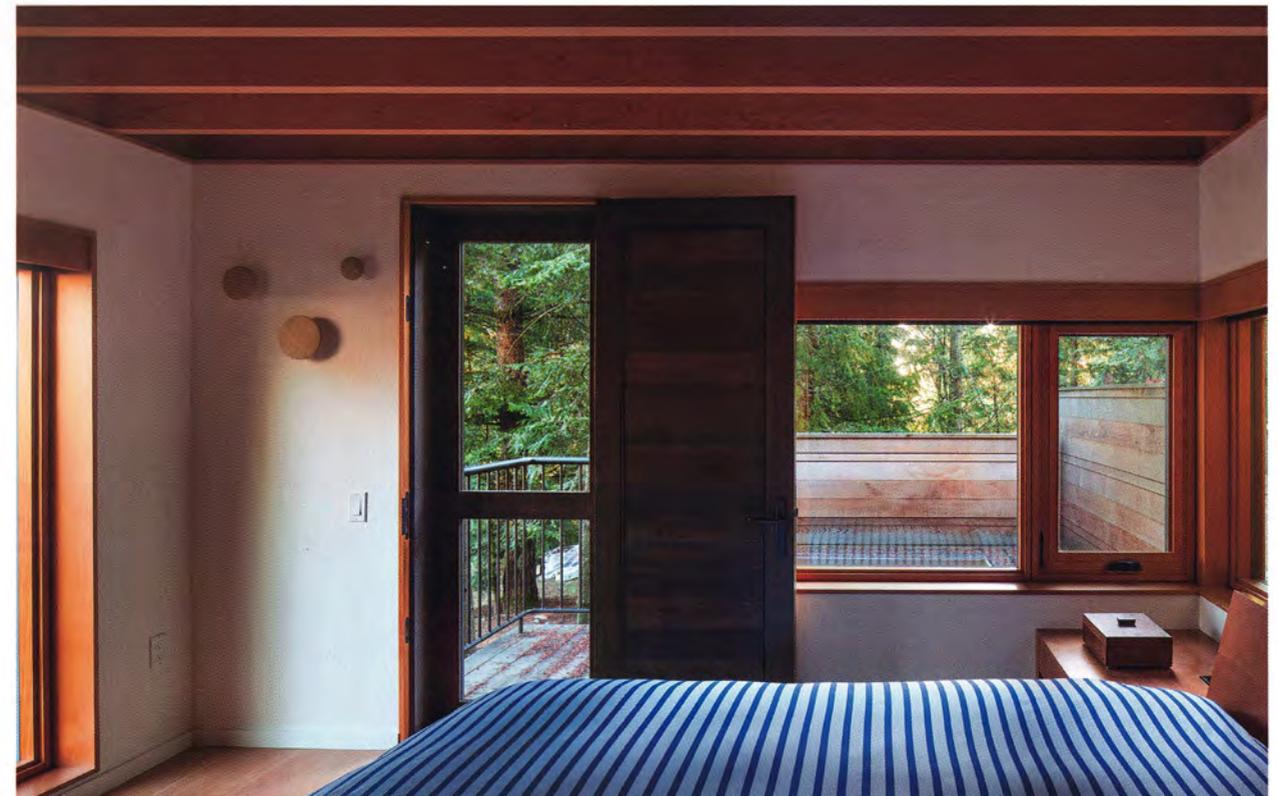
This small house is located on the east, mountainous edge of Vancouver Island. It is intended for short stays and also serves as an art studio. The structure includes a small kitchen with window counter seating, a living room/art studio, a bathroom with shower, a generous bedroom, and a “secret” floating deck. The client requested the small size of the house and its abundant natural lighting. The architects explain, “Great effort was taken to minimize the building’s impact on the site, resulting in a long and slim structure. By slightly twisting two main blocks of the plan, and overlapping these shapes, a building modest in area is ever expansive and full of unexpected depth. Spaces overlap and reveal themselves gradually as one moves through the house.” Locally harvested red cedar and Douglas fir (interiors) were used for cladding, with fir planks and exposed concrete slabs for the floors. Radiant floor heating is used throughout. Operable windows are designed to maximize airflow in the warmer months. A 14-foot-tall window in the art studio frames a view of the old Douglas fir trees on the site. Exterior lighting was specially designed for the house to gently illuminate the forest and the house itself.

Agathom is a practice based in Toronto that was founded by Adam Thom and Katja Aga Sachse Thom, both of whom obtained their MArch degrees from the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc).

The house sits lightly on its concrete base, with red cedar cladding allowing it to blend in better with the forest environment. A very high window allows light in and permits residents to look into the woods.



The slightly elongated plan of the house seen on this page corresponds to the horizontal cladding on this sloped site. Landscaping is limited to grass and gravel. Below, a bedroom opens to the natural setting.





The forest site is all the more present because of the large windows and the sparse furnishing of the house as seen in these photos. Generous ceiling height allows high windows to take in the spectacle of neighboring trees.

