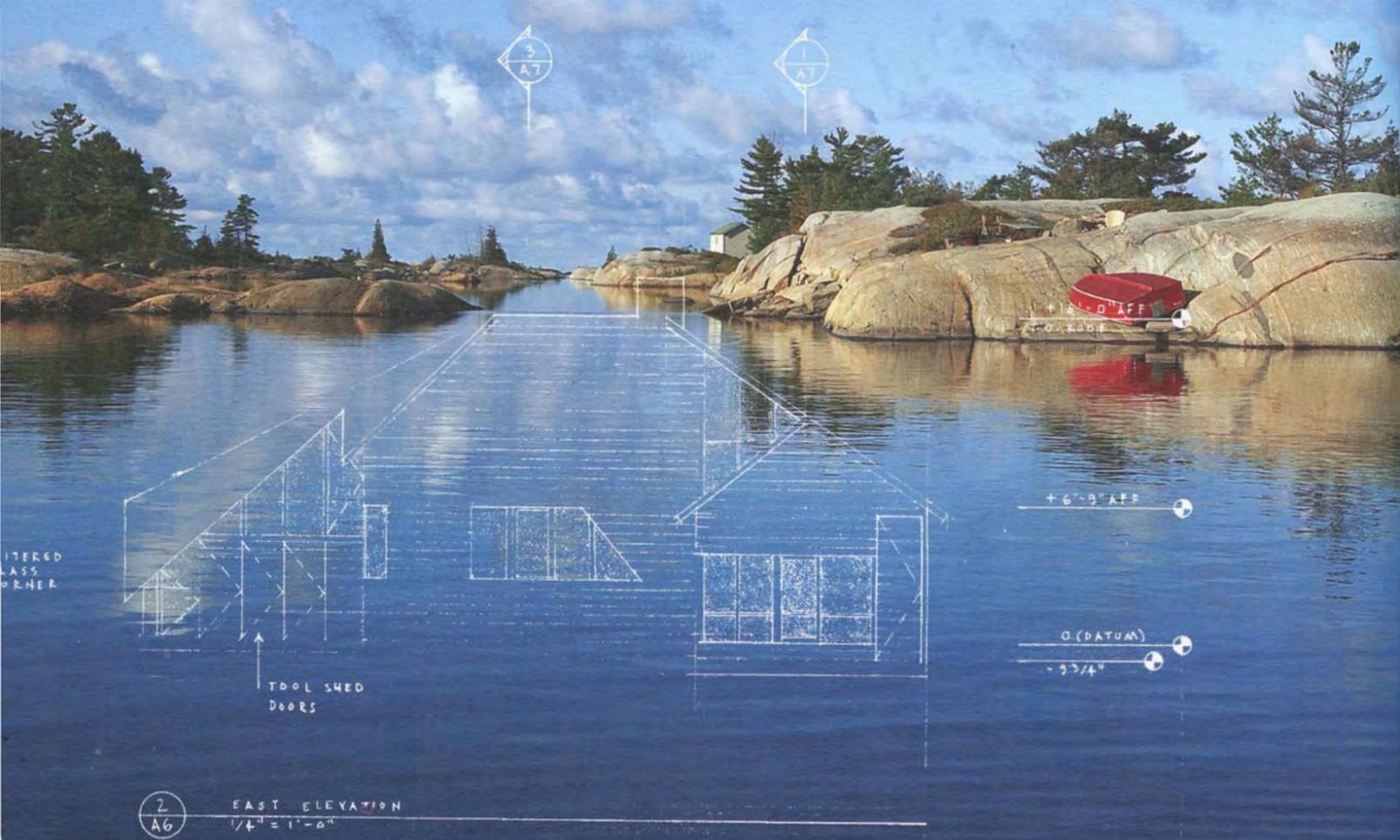


Cabin Fever

Perched on a desolate 2.8 acre (a little over a hectare) island in Georgian Bay, on Lake Huron in Canada, is Molly's Cabin. Swept by wind and rain that drives in off the 59,600² km lake, this diminutive timber building is anchored to the island with mortared stone piers and bolts driven into the uneven rock surface to stop it quite literally blowing away in heavy winds.



this page Reclaimed timber is the main structural material in this light-filled cabin.
opposite A large fireplace constructed from stone found on the island is a centrepiece.





The island is accessible only by boat and eight miles (10 km) away from the nearest marina. It has virtually no tree cover and is uninhabitable from November until May, when the more sheltered parts of the bay are variously iced up, battered by storms and chilled by temperatures that drop as low as minus 30°C.

In the face of this climatic onslaught, Toronto-based architect AGATHOM Co has designed and built Molly's Cabin, a three-season holiday retreat that is far from the rough and ready image that the word "cabin" suggests. Practice principal Adam Thom describes the design as an amalgamation of vernacular style, Japanese wooden buildings and even slave homes of the American south.

"The form was also derived from the site," he says, "the relationship to the open water views, hidden inner channel views as well as orientation to the strong westerly winds that can become fierce at this location. We wanted to address the winds to create a building that felt tethered like a tent, while designing the building's plan and its openings to address the patterns of the sun."

The 93² m cabin consists of a bedroom, a living room with a library nook, a kitchen/dining room and a small loft that can serve as a drawing-studio, playroom or supplementary bedroom. Although open

in plan, the L-shaped design enables occupants to find their own space. Wooden decks and bridges extend the interior to the outdoors. The cabin interior is dominated by a large stone Rumford fireplace, which along with the wood-burning stove provides all the heating required. The Rumford is an 18th century design, shallow in proportion and celebrated at reflecting maximum heat into the room and never smoking.

"The Rumford was forgotten or ignored for much of the 20th century as designers built large, deep fire boxes that did not perform well," says Thom. "We like it because it is handsome and the fire feels like it is right in your lap – very primal."

Timber shelves adorn the walls and exposed rafters provide additional high storage space. AGATHOM's ingenuity extends to a "triple duty" cabinet that connects with the dining room, kitchen and external sundeck. From the dining room there is wine storage and two drawers for candles, napkins etc; from the kitchen, the refrigerator is tucked into it; and lastly, from the sundeck, three doors open into the cabinet, where tools are stored.

"We refer to this kind of design move as 'piggy-backing,'" says Thom, "and we try and implement this into most of our work." →



Molly's Cabin nestles low in the harsh but beautiful landscape of Lake Huron.

Specs:

Architect

Agathom Co
www.agathom.com

Structural timber

Recovered pine

Roof boards

Recovered hemlock

Rafters

Recovered Douglas fir

Roof covering

Asphalt shingles

External cladding

Ontario white cedar

Fireplace and foundation stone

Scavenged from the site

Electrical energy

Photovoltaic panel

Composting toilet

Sun-Mar

1/ Bedroom

2/ Library Breezeway

3/ Living Room

4/ Kitchen (loft above)

5/ Dining

6/ Storage

7/ Bridge

8/ Sun Deck

9/ Garden

Floor plan

