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Garage into getaway

The building in Aaron Crespi's backyard started life as a small garage. A previous owner did the original conversion, which was somewhat primitive, adding electricity, running water, and a shag carpet. After a small fire damaged the building, Crespi decided to make it a guest cottage.

The project became a creative outlet for Crespi, a furniture designer and builder. His love for wood is evident in the finishes. He used 13 different kinds of wood to build the cabinets, floors, countertops, and shelves. "I think the natural colors of wood are really beautiful," he says. "When you mix them, they give an interior a rich quality."

He added windows and a skylight to let in maximum natural light. A small room with a slate floor at the front of the building creates a sense of entry. An interior window brings the natural light from this space inside.

Crespi saved money by designing the building around materials he could get inexpensively. "The windows, the sink, and the faucet were floor samples," he says.

**BEFORE**

Photos by Christina Schmidhofer

Fixing up this guest cottage, which used to be a garage, became a hobby for furniture maker Aaron Crespi, who now uses the space for relaxing. He painted it bright colors to match his house. The cottage has room for a bed and an efficient kitchen.

"They were good quality and had the aesthetic I wanted, so I made them work in the design."

To maximize space, Crespi used built-in storage units and added a sleeping loft over the bathroom. He also built a deck and painted the building the same color as the main house for a unified look. "When I don't have guests, I like to hang out on the deck or in the house," he says. "It's a very harmonious space."

DESIGN: Crespi Woodworking, Petaluma, CA (707/778-6022)



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