

Restoration and Rejuvenation

The Story of Alder Creek Cabin



A neglected Steiner cabin is given new life



Alder Creek Cabin as it looks today.

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Introduction: Expanding the Family

When Terry Hescocock and Coni Scott purchased the Steiner log cabin that would become Hidden Woods, they had no notion of taking on a second project—rejuvenating the cabin next door. It was owned by a coworker of Terry's (although operated as a long-term rental property), and the extensive and demanding work on their existing project, combined with their full-time jobs, left Terry and Coni with their hands more than full already.

But after a couple of years of living next door to lackluster renters who showed the long-suffering classic Steiner no respect, Terry was ready to ride to the cabin's defense—a knight in sawdust armor!

This is the story of the restoration and rejuvenation of Alder Creek Cabin.



Photo courtesy of Mt. Hood Museum

STEINER CABINS

In the early 1900s, Henry Steiner built over 100 hand-made log cabins, mainly from Government Camp southwest to Sandy, Oregon. They were stout and charming. We aren't going to go into great detail here, as there are many books on the subject and even an annual tour, but Steiner's work is considered the basis and embodiment of Oregon Rustic style. You could even say Timberline Lodge, which began construction in 1936, was conceptualized as a giant Steiner cabin. Using logs and stone and other natural materials found on the site is a Steiner hallmark.

One Project Becomes Two

If he's being honest, Terry admits he had his eye on the neighboring 1929 Steiner cabin even as he and Coni (and a host of friends and family) began work on Hidden Woods. He watched with dismay as the next-door cottage became more decrepit as the years as a rental took their toll on the sturdy, classic structure.

An opportunity arises

Finally, after a particularly noisy day of teenagers racing dirt bikes around the cabin's perimeter, Terry had to act. He approached the owner and made his case. If the cabin was ever to be sold, he wanted to buy it. Then he told Coni.

In early 1997, Coni was beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel. It was still distant, but it was there. Few major projects were left to do before Terry, Coni, and her patiently waiting antique furniture could move into Hidden Woods and rediscover a "normal" life.



Heavy equipment was brought in to begin the restoration process

Both Terry and Coni were still working full time in downtown Portland. For Coni, living in a tent to avoid chemical fumes from the sealing of Hidden Woods' interior logs was a small price to pay for at long last having a move-in date.. So Terry's announcement of the availability of the next-door Steiner cabin was met with something less than cries of jubilation and clouds of confetti.



"Just when I thought the end was in sight!"—Coni

Restoration and Renewal

On first inspection of the cabin next door, there was good news and bad news. The good news was the overall condition. The interior and exterior surfaces of the logs had never been painted. The cottage was sound and would not require new logs.



Major clean-up had to take place before the restoration could begin.



The previous occupants had left a large amount of garbage in and around the cabin.

There was a tree to be removed at one corner, which if left alone would nudge the cabin off its foundation.

The bad news was, it showed every bit of its years as a long-term rental. The inside and outside clean-up would be considerable. The cabin was certainly not “move-in ready” when Terry and Coni took possession.



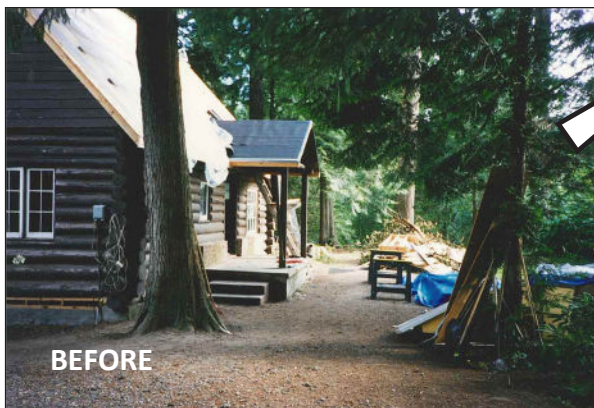
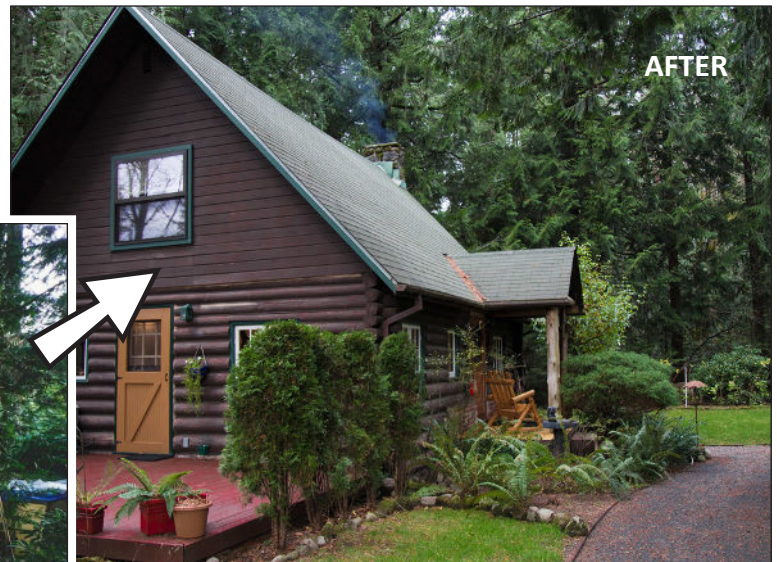
What a mess!

Almost as if the gods were laughing at the folly of taking on a second cabin restoration when the first was not yet over, three days after getting the keys a storm blew down a massive Douglas Fir that neatly calved the fireplace chimney from the short wall of the house. Terry feared the worst; that building a new wall and a new chimney were in his immediate future.

It was more like the gods were only winking... It was a clean severing of rock and walls, and the chimney just needed to be tipped back into place after the fallen tree was cut into sections and lifted dramatically out of the way. The seam between the chimney and logs was reinforced, and Terry and Coni ended up with a 100-foot long firewood wall along the west boundary and driveway. 🏠



Three days after Coni and Terry purchased the property, a large Douglas-fir tree fell across the cabin roof, nearly separating the chimney from the house.



Another large tree was threatening the foundation of the cabin, and had to be removed.

Becoming Alder Creek Cabin

It was 18 months from taking ownership of the cabin before it was ready to serve as Coni and Terry's pied-a'-terre. After the extensive clean-up, Terry rewired the cabin throughout, sanded and re-varnished the interior logs, expanded the upstairs bedrooms by opening more attic space, and rebuilt the interior stairway.



Friends helped rebuild the front porch supports, and true to the Steiner tradition, the new logs were cut and peeled from the site. In another nod to the original integrity of a Steiner cabin, the front porch stairs were returned to facing directly out from the house, instead of stepping down to the sides of the porch.

Terry and Coni moved into the cabin to avoid living in a tent while the finishing touches were

added to Hidden Woods, and much to their surprise, neither was comfortable inside a snug, completed cottage.

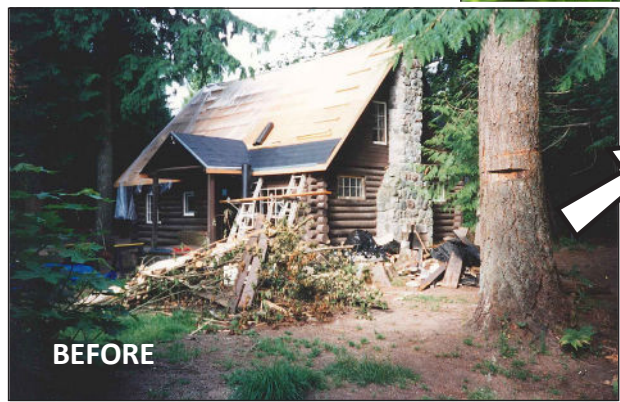
"Living inside four walls again was weird. Normal was strange."

—Terry

After many years of roughing it with an outdoor privy and bedroom under wind-ruffled tarps in the unheated shell of their unfinished house, both of them had to learn to live like civilized people again!

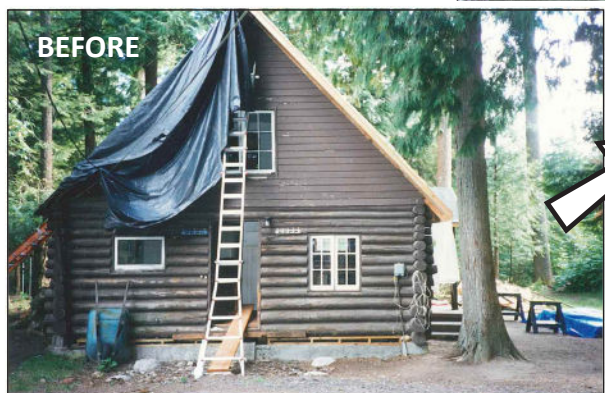


Terry building the steps down to the river.



Reviving the neglected grounds around the cabin resulted in the garden you see today.





BEFORE

A deck was added to the south side of the cabin.

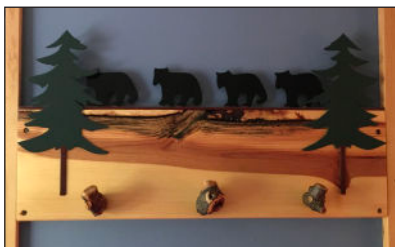


AFTER



"I was claustrophobic and had to keep the windows open all the time." —Coni

In his onsite shop, Terry created the bears that decorate and reinforce the screen doors, using the same motif for the towel and robe pegs outside the upstairs closet. He also built a deck on the south side of the cabin for a picnic table and barbecue. An additional deck was later built to encompass the sauna and hot tub. Terry is also the builder of the wood and metal stairway leading through the woods down to the Sandy River. In the summer the short stretch of beach that emerges is a great place to relax and refresh.



The Hidden Mice

Over the years, Terry and Coni's artist friends have added eight whimsical illustrations of mice,



Strawberry mouse

illustrations of mice, painted in both out of the way and obvious places throughout the cabin. These mice now have a cult-like following of guests who search them out with each visit.

See if you can find them all. But remember: mice in frames—cute as they are—don't count as members of the eight!
(Note: hints are not offered!)

The Amenities at Alder Creek Cabin — INSIDE

The Alder Creek Cabin has all of the comforts of home (if home is an authentic Steiner cabin tucked in the foothills of Mt. Hood!). The living room features a commanding stone fireplace built with basalt gathered from the shores of the nearby Sandy River.

Kitchen

There is a full kitchen with adjacent breakfast corner for when the weather isn't nice enough to dine al fresco. But when the sun shines, the adjacent deck is a relaxing venue for eating outdoors or just enjoying the surrounding forest.



Thistle mouse



The peeled-log beds reflect the classic Steiner style of the cabin.

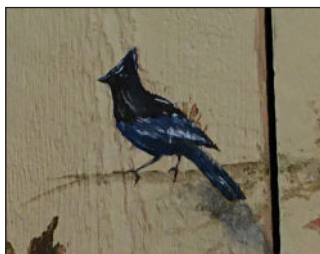
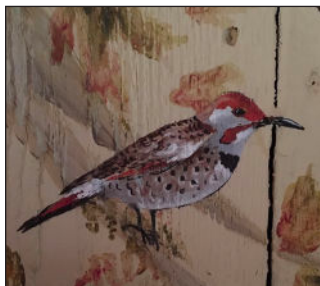
Bedrooms

The cozy upstairs bedrooms offer a charming reading nook, comfortable beds, and views of both the garden and forest. Keep an eye out for any hidden mice!



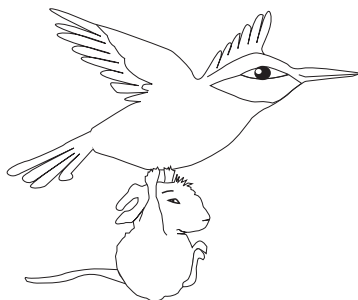
Bath

The claw-foot tub now in the first floor bathroom had served as Coni's "outdoor spa" throughout the rebuilding of Hidden Woods. The door to the cabin's bathroom was salvaged from the burn pile, complete with original "bear art" on the inside of the door. It was further embellished with leather strap handles that had once been belts belonging to Coni's father.



Painted Wildlife

There are also beautifully rendered images of birds painted throughout the cabin, all of which you may also see outside in the forest. Inside you'll find images of Northern Flickers, Spotted Towhees, and Stellar's Jays—not to mention a bear in a rowboat!



Hummingbird mouse

Needless to say, Alder Creek Cabin is full of wonderful surprises!



A breakfast table sits in a sunny corner adjoining the kitchen.

The Amenities at Alder Creek Cabin — OUTSIDE

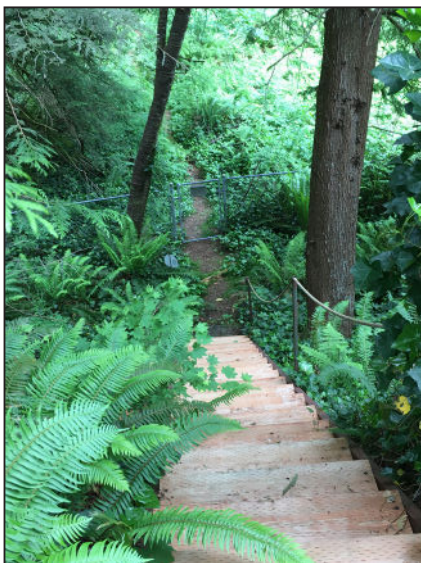


Native rhododendron

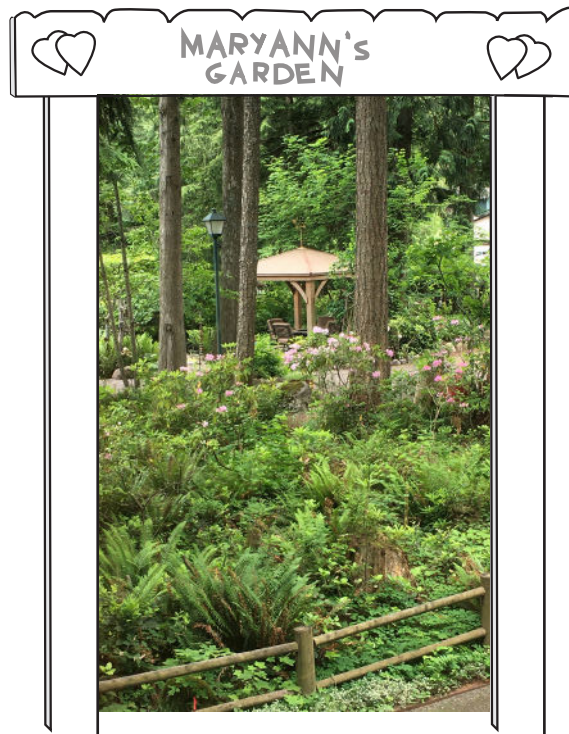
When Coni retired in 2000, her attention turned to extending her garden to surround the Alder Creek Cabin with a soothing palette of native plants. When Coni's sister Mary Ann joined the household, the wilderness (a stand of Douglas-fir and native rhododendrons between Coni and Terry's

home and the cabin) was cleaned of invasive non-native plants (another friends and family project), and named for Mary Ann. Its entrance is best seen

from the front porch of Alder Creek Cabin, and guests are



The finished steps down to the Sandy River.



TIMELINE OF ALDER CREEK CABIN RESTORATION

- 1996: Terry and Coni purchased the Steiner cottage that would become Alder Creek Cabin
- 1998: Clean-up complete (18 months!)
- 1998-99: Coni and Terry move into the cabin as their own home, Hidden Woods, enters the final phases of completion
- 2000: Coni retires and begins to extend her garden around the cabin
- 2001: Coni's sister Mary Ann joins the household
- 2001: Friends and family begin using the cottage as a retreat and guesthouse
- 2002: Alder Creek Cabin is named and begins a new life as the "B" (bed) of Hidden Woods Bed and Breakfast.

Massage availability



During your stay, you may request a list of recommended local massage therapists for a full spa experience. Make your own appointment on your own schedule for an outdoor or indoor professional massage. It's a great way to prepare for, or recuperate from, an active day around Mt. Hood.



The newly enhanced deck area includes a hot tub and shower, a fire pit, and a sauna.

welcome to wander all of the gardens and relax at the far gazebo.

In addition to booking a massage, the deck has expanded to include a hot tub, and a bath-house for showering before and after using the hot tub. In 2020 during the COVID-19 shutdown, Terry added a sauna to the menu of spa amenities at Alder Creek



The bear bench.

The best view of the Sandy River is seen sitting on the "bear bench". The lookout bear, carved of wood and carrying a lantern as if watching for anyone lost in the woods, came home with Coni from a garage sale. It's the ideal place for a glass of wine at sunset, since it seats two people perfectly.



Honeymoon mice

Alder Creek Cabin amenities:

- Hot tub
- Sauna
- Professional massage
- Fireplace
- Garden and gazebo
- River access

Alder Creek Cabin

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