

# all the wright moves

With a nod to Fallingwater, 24H Architecture builds an expandable summer cabin by a Swedish lake

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If there's anything the Dutch have mastered, it's the art of making elbow room—a space-conjuring tradition that 24H Architecture principals Maartje Lammers and Boris Zeisser drew on in building a quirky addition to their summer cottage, an 18th-century fishing cabin in southwestern Sweden. The boulder-strewn location was eminently picturesque, situated between a small stream and Lake Övre Gla, but the site was part of a nature preserve strictly zoned to prohibit the construction of an addition larger than 320 square feet or closer to the property line than 15 feet. And the existing shack was clearly too small for the Dutch architects and their 8-year-old daughter.

So, Lammers says almost apologetically, “We got around the rules.” She and Zeisser turned the original cabin into a family bedroom. Then, right next to it, they built a 320-square-foot addition to house the dining area, kitchen, and living area. One end of the addition's shell is constructed like a giant matchbox, with a cantilevered drawer that slides in →

*In the kitchen and dining area of their telescoping cabin on Lake Övre Gla in southwestern Sweden, husband and wife architects Boris Zeisser and Maartje Lammers covered the walls and ceiling with pine slats. The custom-dyed polycarbonate light fixtures were inspired by the aurora borealis.*



*“Buildings,” says Maartje Lammers, “should evolve through a lifetime, a season, or 24 hours”*



**Above:** The cantilevered living area, which overhangs the boundary stream, can be retracted manually with a lever-hoist and roller-bearing system.

**Opposite:** The living area is lined with reindeer pelts, a method of insulation typical of the Sami culture in Scandinavia's far north; a birch dado keeps

and out. When fully extended, the mobile structure not only provides 160 square feet of supplementary space but also touches the property line—both legal because no fixed foundation is involved.

The couple began designing their flexible addition at the same time that they were establishing their own practice in the Netherlands. (Both had graduated from the Technical University in Delft, the town where they still live, and had worked together at Erick van Egeraat Associated Architects in Rotterdam.) Thus, the cabin became an exploration—and declaration—of their new firm's philosophy that architecture should be capable of responding directly to changes in the environment. “Buildings should evolve through a lifetime, a season, or 24 hours,” says Lammers, alluding to the origin of the studio's name.

The Swedish project more than fulfills these tenets of adaptability. During the long Scandinavian winter, the sliding drawer closes, its windows and doors sealed behind shingles. From the outside, the cabin resembles a turtle drawn into its shell to hibernate.

Because the 15-foot-long mobile section sits on an inexpensive catalog-bought lever-hoist and roller-bearing system, one person turning a handle can extend the structure in less than a minute when summer arrives. In those few seconds, the kitchen at the center of the fixed addition doubles in size, while the small living area beyond is thrust out to overhang the nearby stream, paying homage to Frank Lloyd Wright's →

→ mice from climbing into the hides. The Birdy chandelier is by Ingo Maurer.





Fallingwater. A wall of floor-to-ceiling pivoting windows is uncovered, offering views of the lake. Across the living area, next to the wood-burning stove, a porthole appears—facing a stream-fed hot tub up the hill.

Mixing Wright with Louis Sullivan, function was truly what determined the form of the cabin. “We thought about what we needed—a terrace, for instance, and windows placed to maximize light and views,” says Zeisser. “If you’ve only got limited space, and you need specific things, they make the shape for you. In that sense, the house grew by itself.”

In fact, the amorphous structure does look very organic. The hornlike chimney lends a reptilian appearance, as do the undulating lines of the cedar-shingle skin, stretched over a plywood rib cage. “We walked round the unfinished building shell, drawing on it with pencils,” explains Lammers. “Then friends put up shingles along the wavy lines we’d sketched.”

Closely following the biomorphic curves of the rib cage, interior walls are pine slats. The walls of the retractable extension are covered in whole reindeer hides, turning the living area into a sensuous fur-lined cave. Inspired by the indigenous Sami culture of northern Scandinavia, this treatment also acts as excellent insulation, keeping the space cool in the daytime and warm at night.

There are few hours of darkness during the Swedish summer, but light fixtures were carefully chosen to blend with the natural surroundings. Footsteps in the living area cause Ingo Maurer’s Birdy chandelier to tremble overhead, an avian flock in delicate flight. →

**Opposite:** Johannes Foersom and Peter Hiort-Lorenzen’s chairs surround the dining area’s brass table-top, which is an extension of the compact unit-kitchen counter.

**Top, from left:** At the stationary end of the cabin, the terrace’s lip is

sheathed in copper. A chair by Per Holgersson and Nicko Åberg stands in the living area. **Bottom, from left:** The cottage is constructed like a matchbox with a sliding drawer. Canadian red-cedar shingles clad the entire structure.



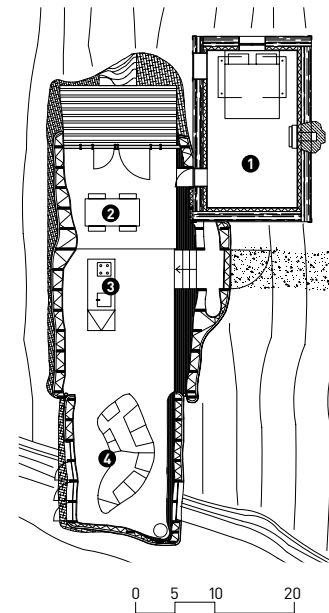


Above the kitchen and dining area, custom red polycarbonate ceiling fixtures were inspired by the aurora borealis.

Solar panels provide what little power is needed for the lighting. However, the cabin has no electricity or plumbing to speak of. Even the outhouse is a traditional *utedas*, as septic tanks are difficult to install on the nature preserve. “Most of the world,” admits Zeisser, “isn’t quite ready for such extreme solutions.”

PROJECT TEAM: OLAV BRUIN; JEROEN TER HAAR; SABRINA KERS; FIEKE POELMAN.  
 CUSTOM CEILING FIXTURES (DINING AREA): ILLI. CHAIRS: LAMMHULTS. CHAIRS (LIVING AREA): LOO DESIGN. STOVE: DICK LUITING. CHANDELIER: INGO MAURER THROUGH FINNSLOTH. ROCKING CHAIR (KITCHEN): VITRA. STOOL (TERRACE): IKEA. LIGHTING CONSULTANT: GAULDDESIGN. STRUCTURAL ENGINEER: ABT: WALTER SPANGENBERG & WILJAN HOUWELING.

- 1 BEDROOM
- 2 DINING AREA
- 3 KITCHEN
- 4 LIVING AREA



**Top:** A porthole window faces a stream-fed hot tub up the hill.

**Bottom:** The traditional outhouse stands 130 feet from the cabin.

**Opposite:** This *utedas* is necessary because septic tanks are difficult to install on the nature preserve.

