



# LANDSCAPE CABINS

It's been a natural reaction for urban dwellers to retreat to the wilderness during the pandemic, but a growing number of architecturally amazing micro-retreats mean this will likely be a trend for the long-haul

**BY MARISA CANNON**



## LANDSCAPE CABINS



Our delight in reconnecting with the natural world has been one of the happier by-products of the pandemic. Over the last year, demand for remote accommodation far from cities has continued to soar, with rural listings on Airbnb earning hosts more than US\$5 billion since March 11, 2020. The "sharing economy" platform has even gone so far as launching a "rural bootcamp" project, designed to help non-urban communities unlock access to their homes more easily.

The US-based custom-built cabin specialists Getaway has also thrived during the pandemic, thanks to its off-the-beaten-track vacation concept. "We went from being around 90% occupied to more than 99% occupied through the pandemic, with a higher average length of stay and more repeat guests," says CEO and founder Jon Staff. Ranging from 13 sqm to 18.6 sqm, Getaway's cabins are small but affordable, featuring queen-sized beds, kitchenettes and fire pits.

A leader in nature-based travel, Norway is home to a selection of outstanding remote accommodation providers. Design agency Livit's Birdbox cabin concept allows guests to book a stay in a "human birdbox": a standalone minimalist room designed to blend in with nature using natural shapes and colours, perched in some of the country's most remote and spectacular locations. "We wanted to create a product with minimal footprint, [which can] withstand any environment with no need for maintenance," says Livit designer, Torstein Aa.

Woodnest (pictured right) is a similar Norwegian proposition but with cabins elevated among the trees. Designed by Helen & Hard, each treehouse is just 15 sqm and has been engineered so the tree trunk itself bears the full weight of the structure. The tree then lives inside the cabin, giving the ultimate "biophilic" experience. Inside is a shower, flushing toilet and even wifi.

Also based in Norway, award-winning architectural firm Snøhetta has unveiled a new concept called Tungestølen: a "constellation" of nine pentagonal cabins for hikers setting out on trips to the nearby Jostedal glacier, which is the largest in continental Europe. The cabins can house up to 30 people in total, and include a large stone fireplace, timber-clad walls and long, wooden tables for collective meals. "The pentagonal shape of the cabins stands out from traditional Norwegian cabin design," Snøhetta's senior architect Anne Cecilie Haug told *Dezeen*. "They are something new and also surprising."

In Switzerland, high-altitude stays are trending, with Cube Aletsch on the Eggishorn near the Aletsch Glacier offering guests a place for an overnight stay. Reached by cable car, the cosy cube features a large glass façade, terrace and hot tub, more

than 2,800 metres above sea level.

Meanwhile, NYDE Studio has come up with a cantilevered concept cabin set at a 55-degree angle, so that it appears to defy gravity. Inside, the Diagonal Dwelling comprises a kitchenette, a bedroom (with a "floating" bed) and a living space with a day bed and fireplace, plus a hot tub and elevated terrace outdoors. In a

statement, the company said the Dwelling can be manufactured within 20 weeks and installed on-site in less than ten.

In the future, we may wonder why we ever stayed in hotels, especially when companies such as Cuba's Veliz Arquitecto are designing structures as stunning as the 150 sqm cocoon-like mountain cabins pictured here (left) and on the cover of our report.

