



Tyler Scharpf catches up on office work during a summer getaway to his family's new cabin at Leaburg Lake. The cabin replaces a more primitive structure originally built by his great-grandparents.

FAMILY CABIN ON THE LAKESHORE

Four generations of memories considered when Scharpf family replaced their modest, 1930s shack with a new vacation getaway at Leaburg Lake.

By Kelly Fenley
Photos by Collin Andrew
 THE REGISTER-GUARD

Try to imagine the Scharpf family's cabin at Leaburg Lake on the McKenzie River way back in the 1930s:

Idyllic shoreline setting beneath big fir trees. Long deck for sunbathing, meals, watching people boat and swim in the frigid but sparkling water. Dragging a wood rowboat to the floating dock and catching trout for dinner.

On colder days, warming up by a

real river rock fireplace.

But that was back then. Now when the family steals away to their new, modern cabin in the very same idyllic setting beneath tall fir trees, they like to lounge and barbecue on a long deck while watching people boat and swim in the lake. They may drag an aluminum boat or canoe to their floating dock and (rarely, they admit) catch a trout for dinner.

If it's cold out, they warm up by a real river-rock fireplace.

Indeed, with their new 1,464-square-

foot vacation cabin, everything has changed and little has changed for today's generations of Scharpfs.

"It's so pretty, to be able to sit on that deck, eat dinner, watch the river go by or the boats on the river," says Tad Scharpf, 69, whose own childhood summers at the cabin included water-skiing on the lake.

Sentimental pain aside, the old cabin simply had to go.

Built as a "temporary structure" by Tad's grandparents back in the 1930s, the modest, single-floor shelter had

survived only as long as it did due to annual family work parties for basic repairs. But when dry rot, carpenter ants and mice in the old walls finally got the upper hand, Tad and his wife, Jeri, hired Rainbow Valley Design & Construction to scrap the old cabin and rebuild with modern appointments.

While nothing but the original cabin's classic, 4-foot-wide front door made of fir could be salvaged, family memories had to be recycled.

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“They wanted to carry forward parts of the original cabin’s history in a good, positive way,” explains Rainbow Valley designer Scott Felsher.

So for almost nine months, Felsher invited wish lists from the whole family: Tad, Jeri, and — via emails — their three grown children, Amy, Tyler and Gretchen.

Synergy kicked in, and, guided by Rainbow Valley foreman John Krause, the cabin took shape: modern elegance and open floor plan, but with woody accents to match the setting. “We all got onboard,” Felsher says. “It was sort of an amazing meshing of that energy.”

“It was an amazing collaborative process,” Tad agrees. “Not everybody got what they wanted, but at least everyone got heard.”

Rustic/modern blend

While elegant with white-plaster walls, stainless-steel kitchen appliances and posh comforts, the cabin’s not a total tenderfoot, either.

In the living room, a real river-rock fireplace warms memories of the old cabin. “We wanted river rock because that’s what we had before,” Tad says.

Hickory floors in a dark, wild grain rouse rustic tones. Hemlock frames doors and windows, and lighter hickory forms an open, U-shaped stairway rising with the living room’s 17-foot vault to a pair of upstairs bedrooms.

Other exposed wood includes two laminated beams that shore up ceilings for open living.

But the contemporary backdrop of off-white plaster walls — fireplace chase included — helps tame rustic elements and magnifies daylight streaming through windows on a shed dormer. “Especially in the winter, it’s a real dark place to be,” Tad says. “Having those upper windows adds a lot of light to the cabin.”

Weary of the old cabin’s heavy, dark woods, the family wanted a brighter mood this time. Beadboard, also painted off-white, adds vintage cheer to all of the cabin’s flat ceilings. More beadboard, this time painted light green, frames door fronts on kitchen cabinets.

“The beadboard is partly to bring in that old-time feel,” Tad says.

In more earthy contrast, light-gray concrete countertops — precast in Bend by Cement Elegance— help tone down the kitchen’s modern stainless-steel appliances. “We were looking for that rustic cabin look,” Tad says.

Tad refused to cut corners on the new cabin, which was finished about two years ago.

“With the cost of materials, there’s not much difference between good quality and the cheapest stuff. Like everything, if you go too cheap, you’re going to regret it later,” says the voice of experience (he used to have Scharpf’s Twin



The new cabin has three bedrooms, including two upstairs. Beadboard covers all of the cabin’s flat ceilings for vintage effect.



Amy Scharpf and dog Sage at the cabin’s dock, where family memories run deep along the McKenzie River at Leaburg Lake.



Hickory floors, light-gray concrete countertops, and beadboard cabinets painted light green help give new cabin an earthy side.



Cement-based shingles in wood pattern and metal roof add to durability and low maintenance; shed dormer’s windows fill living room with light.



Plaster walls vaulting to 17 feet in living room give a more elegant backdrop to wild-grain hickory floors and real river-rock fireplace.

Oaks Builders Supply Co. in Eugene, originally started by his father, before selling it about 12 years ago).

Typical for a cabin in the woods, the Scharpfs chose dark-brown shingles for exterior siding. But look closer, and the shingles are Hardi cement, not wood.

A green, standing-seam metal roof sheds the continual snowfall of fir needles. And the knotty cedar deck along three sides of the cabin is sheltered from weather by wide hemlock overhangs with beadboard ceilings.

“Overwhelmingly, low maintenance was their priority,” Felsher says.

Grounds surrounding the cabin look

so natural, with colorful plants such as hydrangea and magnolias mixing with ferns, rhodies and other native plants, you would never guess that all but some of the oldest rhodies were placed by Tom Crandall Landscape Design.

“There’s actually year-round color,” Jeri Scharpf says.

Launch to the lake

Unlike the old cabin, the Scharpfs now have a basement facing the lake. They open a garage-style door and carry their portable boats to the family’s dock about 50 feet away. Tad also has room in the basement for his wood shop.

With speed limits on Leaburg Lake these days, the family of national-caliber competitive water-skiers must practice elsewhere. Yet, at the cabin itself, the years are still blending nicely.

“The main body of the cabin is basically where the old footprint was,” sums up Felsher. “We didn’t stylistically copy what was there before, but for the footprint and experientially, there are sort of similar experiences that can tie into all of their memories.”

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Original cabin’s river-rock fireplace, charred from year’s of use, was a memory family wanted to carry forward in new cabin.



Original cabin’s deck was where the new cabin’s deck is today. It’s another family memory that guided new cabin’s design.



New cabin’s deck has wide hemlock overhangs with beadboard ceiling and hog-wire railing. Steps lead to the dock below.