

# HOME & ARCHITECTURAL TRENDS<sup>®</sup>



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# Jester's hat

This whimsical structure combines an appealing symmetry with nods to the local architectural vernacular

**Sometimes the most modest** of structures can generate enormous interest. Whatever a building lacks in size can be more than made up for in sheer design imagination.

This small guest house was designed by architect James Righter. With the exception of its French doors, the structure is appealingly symmetrical, with wings, principal windows and roof all in perfect balance.

"The client had requested something spirited and light-hearted, that would also be in keeping with other architecture in the area," says Righter. "At the same time, the building had to take in surrounding coastal views and complement the style of the main house. This is a tower-shaped building which also features an unusual centric layout."

Righter says the house is

deceptively simple in terms of design. Viewed from above, the base structure resembles a plus sign – a square with wings butting out equally on all sides.

Seen from the driveway, the rotational symmetry of the sloping roof lines and stepped windows help create a turning, pinwheel effect. But it is really the introduction of an unusual, geometric roof that sets the building in motion visually.

***Facing page:** Small and sculptural, this attractive folly forms part of a coastal island environment. The design means views are enjoyed from all sides of the upstairs room. Lanterns hanging from the roof corners are former ship buoys.*

***Above:** Siding and white window frames echo local traditional fishermen's cottages, as does the unusual window placement, close to the corner of the building.*





**Above:** The wooden French doors provide a contrasting touch to the generally homogenous exterior finishes. In winter, with the living room furniture pulled back and the doors flung open, the house reveals its second role as a garage – the building is off a drive leading up to the main house. This side of the home is oriented to the expansive coastal scenery.



"On a traditional structure the roof hips meet the corners of the building," says Righter. "On this structure, the roof is swiveled 45°, bringing the hips to the center of the walls.

"The crenelated roof line accentuates the light-hearted, jaunty effect."

Despite its undoubted individuality, the guest house works well with other coastal architecture in the vicinity,

where shingled roofs and walls generally hold sway.

"The walls are in white cedar shingles traditional to the area. On the roof, the shingles are red cedar – a more robust species," Righter says.

In terms of function, the structure fulfills two roles. Over the winter it serves as a garage for a large, classic truck.

The interior is simple: the ground floor, two wide





are incorporated into the main open room, with the other two wings holding a bathroom and storeroom. A simple stair leads up to the bedroom.

Righter's architectural firm also created the changing-shed pavilions featured here.

"These were inspired by the owner's love of similar structures in Biarritz, France," says Righter. "They are in a classic weatherboard, utilized

in an unexpected way – with the boards running vertically rather than horizontally. These have a broad face and an edge that casts a shadow. This adds a third shadow tone to the two principal colors."

A zigzag finish at the base of the structures adds to the tent-like whimsy.

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**Architect:** Jim Righter, project leader, Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects (Boston, MA), design team Nick Iselin

**Roof:** Red cedar shingles

**Siding:** White cedar shingles

**Cabana roof:** Red cedar shingles

**Cabana siding:** Weatherboards

**Story by** Charles Moxham  
**Photography courtesy of** Albert, Righter & Tittmann Architects

**Far left:** The interiors are kept simple, with exposed studs and beams.

Simple rustic furniture was chosen to complement the interiors.

**Above:** These individualistic changing sheds feature traditional materials used in an unusual way. The weatherboards are vertical and intended to resemble the striped awnings of a tent. Red cedar shingle roofs complete the cabanas.