

## A tree house that's for the birds

Needing a spare room for occasional overnight guests, ornithologist Alan Poole first thought about building a yurt on his wooded lot. Poole asked contractor and fellow bird-watcher Mike Sylvia to tackle the project. Rather than a yurt, Sylvia suggested that Poole consider building a tree house that could be used for nature watching as well as housing guests. Poole, the author of *Ospreys: A Natural and Unnatural History* and the editor of *The Birds of North America*, says that Sylvia didn't have to work hard to get him to agree.

Set approximately 12 ft. above ground, the tree house is constructed of rough pine supplied by a local sawmill, recycled windows and doors, and a metal roof. The platform measures 16 ft. by 16 ft., and the house is 10 ft. by 12 ft. Sylvia used Garnier Limb brackets (treehouses.com) to affix the supports for the tree house to the trees. These brackets allow the tree to continue growing and enable the structure to sway gently in the wind. Sylvia built the tree house in addition to doing most of the design work. At Poole's suggestion, Sylvia added bunk beds constructed from cedar for overnight guests and a porch for sitting and practicing yoga.

—Maureen Friedman



DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION Mike Sylvia, Right Angel Restoration, Lakeville, Mass.  
PHOTOGRAPHS Nat Rea, natrea.com