

# Find Your Hideaway

The beauty of building a living room—or workout zone, or home office—in your backyard is that a true retreat is now just steps away. *By Carisha Swanson*

**A**s busy parents can attest, what busy parents really need is some quality alone time. It was with this in mind that husband-and-wife team Brett and Kara Phillips of High Street Homes dreamt up a 440-square-foot back house dubbed “The WeShed” for our 2020 Whole Home Concept House in Colorado. Part indoor hangout space and part covered patio, the building was constructed to serve as a retreat for date night—though every

## Double Your Usable Square Footage

Porches add great value to a shed and are not an excessive additional cost. They allow you to get more usable space out of a small footprint.



## Use Sliding Doors to Save Floor Space

Having Marvin Ultimate Sliding Patio Doors as an entry point, instead of French doors that swing open, means furniture can go exactly where you want it.





family member would want to use it.

"We thought about our own lives, and realized this could be a place for having one-on-one time with each other, but also with our kids individually to really connect away from technology," Kara says, pointing to the roomy window seat, kitchenette, and split-unit heating and cooling system that make it so cozy. "It was designed to be a place where you can shut out the world in a really nice way," Brett points out.

Should you be inspired to add a WeShed to your own home, the couple agrees: Hire great builders, and don't skimp on the windows, doors, fixtures, or lighting. Then change up the furnishings as desired. "Something about these spaces gives you the flexibility to grow and change and not feel so stuck," Brett says. "A painter today, a ceramist next month: As long as you have beautiful natural light, durable finishes, and a space you love to go, you can rearrange it to fit your every whim."

### Use Custom Covers to Disguise HVAC

To make the WeShed livable all year round, this LG Art Cool Premier split—outfitted with a custom vented cover by [Architectural Grille](#) and then painted to match the walls—was installed.



### Create a Second Indoor Seating Area

Panoramic views literally surround whoever's sitting in the [Marvin Skycove](#). "This added another perching area," says Kara, "without actually bumping out a wall!"



Lighting: [Circa Lighting](#). Basket and Ottoman: [The Citizenry](#). Pillow: [Stoffer Home](#). Coffee table: upcycled industrial, [Simple Things Furniture](#). Rug: vintage, [Nomads Loom](#).





### Use Inky Colors to Frame a View

"We knew we wanted a dark room because of the abundance of windows and natural light," Brett explains. "Using Mount Etna by [Sherwin-Williams](#) in such a small space really showcases the outside."



### Don't Skimp on Sunlight

A [Marvin](#) Awaken skylight allows the WeShed's occupants to enjoy sunlight *and* moonlight. If the sun is too bright, the automated shade closes; if it's hazy, a built-in tunable light will mimic daylight or create cool, energizing tones for increased productivity.

### Create Hidden Doors

Flanking the wet bar are two openings, one to the bathroom, the other to a storage closet. To "disguise them," Kara and Brett paneled and painted them to match the rest of the room. Not doing so would have made the small space feel too busy.

### Max Out Your Plumbing

If you've gone to the trouble of adding a bathroom, the plumbing line is there—so go ahead and create a kitchenette too! Brett and Kara added in an [Elkay](#) Quartz bar sink and Avado bar faucet, along with a [Signature Kitchen Suite](#) dishwasher and [Zephyr](#) beverage cooler.

## The Invisible Essentials

Invest in these and you'll use your WeShed so much more often.

### PLUMBING

**For a shed to really be a retreat, it needs a bathroom.** From a practicality standpoint, this will keep you from running back and forth to the house (a big plus in inclement weather). Live in a place with hot summers? While you're at it, add on an outdoor shower.

### ELECTRICAL

**You gotta have lights!** Unless this is a storage shed, electricity is nonnegotiable. It will allow you to use the shed from sunset to sunrise, making it a comfortable spot for any activity, from office work to working out. Be sure to add outlets in addition to overheads.

### HVAC

**Stay cozy year round.** A mini-split is a smart, space-saving heating and cooling system that's a major upgrade from window units. Another option: a complementary whole-home system, like one from [Trane](#) that can be managed from a control pad or smartphone.



# 9 Other Genius Shed Conversions *By Kelly Allen*



## Art Studio

A dedicated work space with natural light offers room to make a mess in peace.



## Bonus Bathroom

Solar panels power a fixture and heated seat in this outhouse by Commune Design.



## Breakfast Nook

An airy entertaining space by Heather Hilliard Design is warmed by an open flame.



## Private Hangout

Large windows give this space by Reath Design an immersed-in-nature effect.



## Reading Room

This mini retreat by Justina Blakeney acts as a tranquil place to disappear with a book.



## Kids' Play Gym

Along with swings, Darryl Carter added a basketball hoop for a crew of growing boys.

## Safe & Sound

A smart lock will allow you to open and secure your WeShed remotely (e.g., from bed!) by simply tapping your phone. Not sold on keypads? A [Level Lock](#) turns your existing hardware into a smart lock. "It was created for people who equally value design, security, and technology," says John Martin, Level cofounder and CEO.



## Crafting Corner

A converted garage by L.H.Designs has a wall storage system for activities and toys.



## Guesthouse

Light furniture and cozy details make this tent by Hoedemaker Pfeiffer a restful oasis.

PRODUCER: HADLEY MENDEL SOHN; ART STUDIO: BG COLLECTION/GALLERY STOCK; COMMUNE DESIGN: STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON/OTTO; HEATHER HILLIARD: MICHELE LEE WILLSON; REATH DESIGN: LAURE JOLIET; JUNGALOW: CATLIN WATSON BOYES; DARRYL CARTER: GORDON BEALL; L.H. DESIGNS: AMY BARTLAM; HOEDEMAKER PFEIFFER: LISA ROMERIN/OTTO; MICHELLE ADAMS: DAVID A. LAND



### Potting Shed

Planters and gardening tools are right at arm's reach in designer and editor Michelle Adams's back house by [Tuff Shed](#).

A mirror, floral artwork, and woven basket keep it from feeling too austere.

