

Honorable Mention

New Hampshire Retreat Bethlehem, N.H. NADAAA

Modeled after the MacDowell Colony for artists, this northern New Hampshire retreat is designed to take full advantage of its hilltop site in the Presidential Range of the White Mountains. Designed by Boston-based NADAAA, its rooms—three guestrooms, dining and living spaces, a photo lab, and support facilities—are arranged in an ellipse, and angled to optimize views out over a broad valley. The rooms sit under a single roof and open onto a central, slate-floored courtyard, making each a semi-autonomous structure within the whole; the different orientations create spaces in between the rooms which the architects have set aside for semi-private patios.

While the 6,354-square-foot facility is intended as a space for visiting artists, its program also encourages a significant commitment to rest and relaxation. A semi-detached spa can be reached via a covered walkway, and voluminous storage space in the basement is meant for skis, snowshoes, and other cold-weather sporting equipment.

The structure is clad in vertical, tongue-and-groove white cedar slats, reflecting the local forests. White cedar is also used in the ceilings, fencing, and louvers between passageways and the interior courtyard, creating an instant, common visual element. The structure is protected from the elements by triple-glazed windows and a stout thermal mass.

The retreat's bold main entry is an open-air passage formed by the sinuous underside of a stairway to the roof deck. It leads to the central courtyard, which centers on a fire pit, providing a visual and material refuge from the wild and often harsh nature outside.

“It’s a simple parti, but the plan and the interstitial areas between the rooms that serve as indoor-outdoor spaces are really quite beautiful.”

—Jennifer Bonner

