



A study in scale: the 8' front door seems just right  
—welcoming you home to the island lifestyle.

# San Juan Island

## Ravenhill Construction Cady Mountain Tower House

The highest peaks on San Juan Island follow the flank of the island's western coastline. At nearly 900 ft. of elevation, Cady Mountain has one of the highest summits. Yet its far more eastern inland location is different from the other mountains, making it somewhat unique and affecting its ecology. On its upper reaches are one of the finest stands of old-growth forest remaining

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The raw lightly finished concrete floors blend with the views provided by the doors and windows.

### Owner's Essay

"My parents purchased the property on Cady Mountain in the 70's, and as a kid I had fantasized about having my own little house on the "wild" side of the property. I grew up, moved out of state, moved back, moved onto a boat – my home for almost 20 years – but the mountain house idea continued to percolate over the decades.

Ravenhill had been completing a project just across from my marina, and I had watched eagerly as the structures were completed. So much of the craftsmanship evident there intrigued me, and John and I contacted them in 2015 to learn more.

From the beginning, our collaboration with Jonathan Hu (Habitat Design LLC.) on design was a fun and illuminating adventure. So many years of life as a live-aboard had informed my ideas of design and use of space, while at the same time I wanted to create a structure that would coexist naturally with the oak groves, meadows, and rocky terrain of the land. Jonathan was able to juggle all the variables, keep my marine-based strong opinions in mind, while gently correcting course to the realities of home construction.

Once the plans were finalized, an amazing team developed, and each phase of construction continued the adventure we had enjoyed during planning. The organization and scheduling kept us well apprised, and we could negotiate decisions with plenty of information.

And now that we're moved in (and adapting to having so much space!), we are cozily getting settled. So many elements combine to create this snug and perfect space; each morning I am surprised again by the 'crow's nest'-like vista from the bedroom, and each evening we wind up in front of our cheerful hearth.

We are truly home . . ."



in the San Juan Islands and the best example of surviving Garry Oak Savannah to be found anywhere in the entire Puget Sound region.

Though the preserve's elevation and inland location make it special, it is the combination of untouched old-growth forest and remnants of a once dominant habitat that are its most important natural features. This restored native stunning landscape was the canvas for our project.

### The Clients

John & Elisabeth are advertising professionals. Business trips to Seattle, Los Angeles, and beyond are part of their regular work life. They are lucky enough to call San Juan Island home when not working on a busy shoot.

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The guest bedroom also doubles as an office space.



The master bedroom with an Oak knoll view. The small Jotul woodstove and access to the covered deck make for classic Pacific Northwest living.



A fresh, simplistic modern galley-style kitchen.

### Ravenhill Construction Inc.

In business in the San Juan Islands since 1978, owner Peter Kilpatrick has built a reputation that focuses on the ability to bring quality and innovative building techniques to challenging projects. Employing a team of highly skilled carpenters, Ravenhill specializes in building unique custom homes, while recognizing and appreciating the beauty and fragility of this island environment.

### Ravenhill Team

- Jonathan Hu - Project Manager (9 years)
- Joe Cooper - Interior and Cabinetry Design (26 years)
- Credence Ross - Foreman (12 years)
- Mike Melville - Carpenter (11 years)
- Mick Foster - Carpenter (25 years)
- Arvid Lindstrum - Cabinet Maker (13 years)



A clean, simple, and highly functional bathroom.



A private water closet and large shower is a must for a well designed smaller house.



### Habitat Design LLC.

• Jonathan Hu - Principle

Residential House Designer. Practicing in the San Juan Islands. A contemporary approach to classic island architecture. Making the probable possible. Jonathan was responsible for both the design and the project management for Ravenhill.

They had lovingly nurtured their 10 acres of Garry Oak tree preserve, clearing out much of the invasive species to make room for the beautiful native trees. They had created a native sanctuary which offers a peaceful refuge from their mainland lives.

### The Vision

A clean, indigenous design with efficient space usage. Wood-burning fire place. Plenty of book storage. Dedicated cooking and dining areas. Multi-level living. Ground floor public access and living area, a second floor as the personal living space, and a third floor as an open roofed crow’s nest to take advantage of the views and the surrounding trees.

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The exterior spiral staircase accesses the third floor from the covered master bedroom deck.

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The “Tower House” third floor really defines this house. It gives incredible views of the surrounding oak knoll. The roof port opening will be used to let the smoke from a future fire ring escape.



The gentle curve and proportions were derived by using the golden mean - an age old architectural trick. It ensured the brace proportions related to the overall structure.



Intentional spaces and living. The winder staircase is one of the most efficient of designs.





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## The Product

The end result was a three-story tower house. The inspiration came from similar tower houses the owners had seen in Bhutan (Eastern Himalayas), where the entire third floor is committed as a covered outdoor living space. We placed windows and doors to frame the views, and to also provide privacy from the adjacent road. This house is perfectly suited to its landscape. We at Ravenhill believe in the surgical insertion of a project into existing landscapes; sometimes there's no better landscaping than what is already there. A combination of naturally finished cedar siding and the raw concrete floor matched the elemental nature of the the house's surroundings.

We were able to apply some custom touches that really took the design to the next level. A personal, 2nd floor covered porch off the master bedroom also serves as the staging for the spiral staircase to the third floor. The third floor is wide open to the views. We installed an opening in the roof that will serves as the outlet for a future fire pit. A future bar and sauna area is already designed in for future use. The galley kitchen is totally isolated from the rest of the house (per owner's request). It's white under-counter laminate cabinets and Richlite counter tops offer a clean yet functional kitchen experience. The house is maximized with built in cabinetry. An entire wall of precision-crafted cabinets within the living room, as well as a trick bookshelf door tucked under the stairway, completed the owner's vision for an idealic retreat. ■

For more information visit:  
[www.ravenhillconstruction.com](http://www.ravenhillconstruction.com)



Habitat Design LLC.



Winter snow in the San Juan Islands makes this distinctive home a special retreat.

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