



The "Binker Barn," named for the salesman who came up with the idea, is repeatable in several different versions. The basic shape is a heavy-framed box, with a kitchen and living areas on the first floor (opposite), two bedrooms and a bath above, and, higher still, lofts for sleeping, or simply for retreat. The lean-to (below) can be a carport, a garage, or a third bedroom with bath. Or a separate garage can be added, as in the more distant of the two versions on the left.



A. Youngmeister photos

15

This ingenious vacation house has been built well over a dozen times at the Sea Ranch in California. The basic notion is simplicity itself: a barn-like space with a plan that can be flipped and with an appended lean-to whose function is variable. The working out of the notion, though, assures that simplicity does not lead to dullness.

The ground floor plan is circuitous, so that the apparent size of the space is increased because the eye can never see all of it at once. The "Z" shaped plan of the second floor allows sunlight to fall into the living areas from skylights in the

roof, casting patterns that change with the hours and the seasons. It also provides upward vistas from below, and the pleasure of moving from a low space, like the dining area, to one that is dramatically higher. One can also move outside the enclosing walls of the house to lounge in a bay window, or right up to the peak of the roof to doze or sleep in one of the lofts there. What begins, then, as a simple space ends up providing an admirable array of different places to be and things to do.

The architects assumed that in a vacation house choices of what to

do and where to do it would be made casually, and so the feeling of the interior is relaxed. The details are simple, the rough-sawn boards are left unfinished, and the heavy framing members stand fully exposed.

Outside, this way of building produces an effect that is downright modest, recalling simple rural structures. It has turned out that, at the Sea Ranch, this assumption of modesty was wise, for as more and more houses are built on the open meadows, each more obviously "designed" than the next, and each one competing with all the others

for attention, there is the danger that the place may begin to look more like a statuary farm than the beautifully desolate landscape which it once was, and which the original developers, planners and architects had sought with great care to preserve.

Architects: WILLIAM TURNBULL AND CHARLES MOORE of MLTW / Moore-Turnbull—Robert Theel, associate. *Location:* The Sea Ranch, California. *Engineers:* Patrick Morreau (structural); Brelje and Race (civil). *Contractor:* Matthew D. Sylvia.

