

Treehouses - Not Just For Kids Anymore...

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What is it about being up in a tree? I know I'm not the only one who wanted to climb any tree I could when I was a kid. And then there was the treehouse; a delightful mixture of whimsy, danger and adventure! Come to think of it, getting into one was probably the most dangerous part, but there was always the thought in the back of my mind about how well it was actually built. "Did you feel that wobble?" "I think I heard something crack!" "Whatever - just keep shooting the bad guys!" Ah, then there was the movie "Swiss Family Robinson". What a delight for every little kid's imagination - shucks; it helped make a builder out of me.

Well, I'm happy to say that technology, safety and good sense have finally taken treehouses to the next level. Gone are the days of peppering a tree with hundreds of nails and lag bolts. Today we have hardware specifically designed for strength, movement and protection of the trees used to house our childhood fantasies and now our adult ones as well.

Let's chat a little about the "grown-up" uses for treehouses. The following photos are not treehouses, but the small spaces help spark the imagination...



Envision a space like this as your treehouse. Telecommuting is very common here in Northern Virginia, and a home office or studio in a tree is a great way to take advantage of a great view. All in a day's work!

With proper site conditions, plumbing can be added to ensure long periods of work without running to the house for bathroom breaks.



You'll be the talk of your family and friends with a guest room treehouse! The only problem you might have is getting them to leave.

These spaces don't need to be large in order to



accommodate a guest or two for a few nights. The charm of being up in a tree will more than make up for the smaller spaces.



Finally, how about a tasting room for a few of your closest friends? With a nice deck and tall railing, you can enjoy a glass of your favorite wine while taking in the view. The Piedmont is home to some of the best wineries in Virginia (and some say in the country). Of course, you'll want a good lock on this treehouse!

Depending on the use and how many modern features (like plumbing) you want to include in your treehouse, the location will be important. If your treehouse is for your children, consider the proximity to the main house. If plumbing is included, hook-up to septic or sewer needs to be feasible. Of course, accessibility and views are important too. If you only have one good tree, than your site selection will be real easy!

Treehouses are a realistic alternative to adding on to your home. Like any custom project, researching and hiring the right professional will ensure your treehouse will be the envy of the town!

Photo credits: Foley Fiore Architecture, SHED Architecture & Design and Siemasko + Verbridge