

second-home journeys

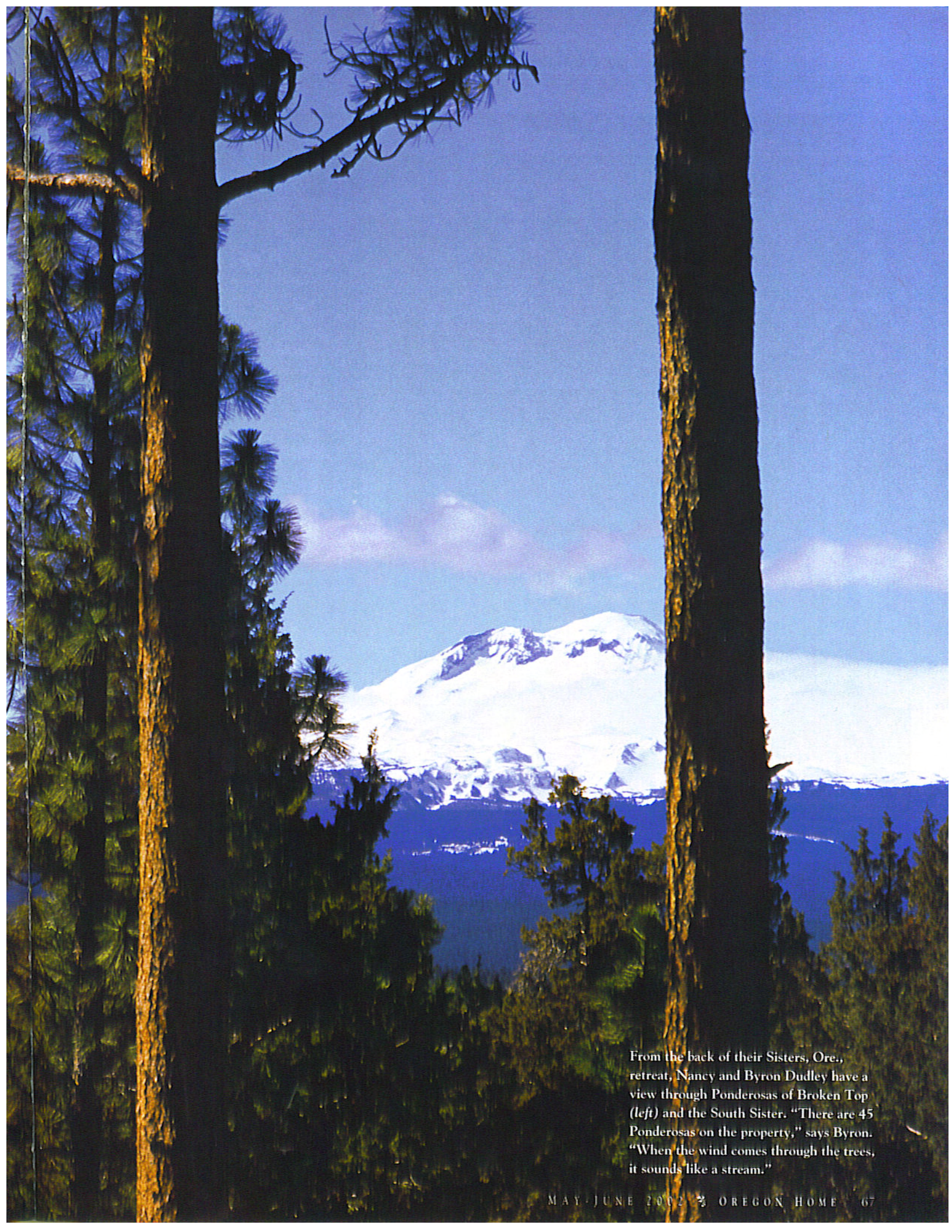
Byron H. Dudley is talking about the 110-mile trek he and his wife, Nancy, have to make whenever they leave their home in Eugene, Ore., for their new retreat in Sisters, Ore. But whining about it, he's not.

"The drive from McKenzie Bridge to Black Butte is just a delight," he says. "From McKenzie Bridge up to the pass, you've got about 25 miles of Upper McKenzie white

water that is more than pleasing to see—it's soothing. It sets the approach to the property. As you come over Santiam Pass, there's a point where you see Black Butte ahead and the expanse of Central Oregon, and I feel such eager anticipation as I come down the pass. As we approach the 1/2-acre pond in our development, I start to think, *Who's going to be our neighbor today? Will the geese be back? The red-wing blackbirds?*"



PHOTOGRAPHY BY BYRON H. DUDLEY



From the back of their Sisters, Ore., retreat, Nancy and Byron Dudley have a view through Ponderosas of Broken Top (left) and the South Sister. "There are 45 Ponderosas on the property," says Byron. "When the wind comes through the trees, it sounds like a stream."



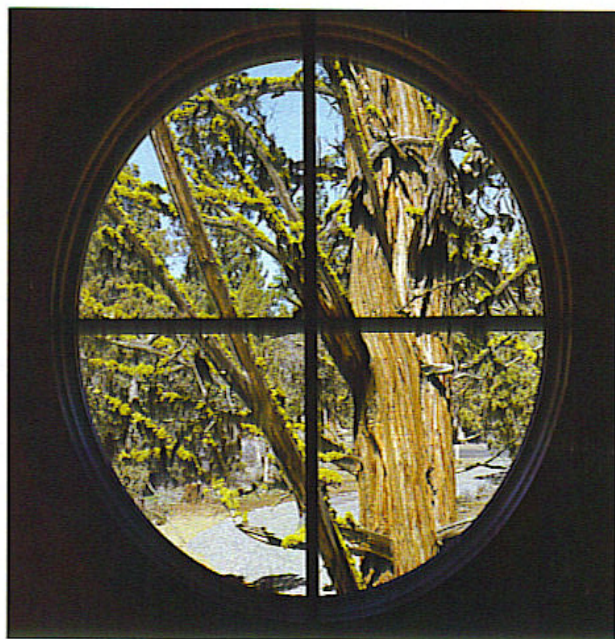
"I love the fireplace's Montana river rock," says Nancy, of the living room's focal point (left). "It's so colorful. It's fun to sit there in the evening with the fire going and look at each stone and say, 'That one looks like a horned toad ... this one looks like...'" The book, *A Room of Her Own*, inspired Nancy when she was planning the loft above the garage (top). "It's not a large space," she says, "but it's mine if I want it to be." Cherry cabinets and granite counters warm up the kitchen.

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Hearing the contentment in his voice, it's difficult to believe that just three years ago, he and Nancy put their dream of building a second home in Sisters on hold—on ice, actually, due to an untimely diagnosis for Byron.

Oh, Byron is generally healthy, so he's doctor-avoidant," says Nancy, his wife of 26 years, who retired last year as a juvenile court counselor after a 34-year career. "Some years back, I'd noticed this spot on his arm and I kept nagging him until he went to see a doctor, who discovered what it was: a melanoma."

It was a few years after the first excision, when Nancy and Byron began to get serious about building a second home on a lot they'd purchased just outside of Sisters a couple of years earlier, that Nancy insisted that her husband go to the doctor and get a clean bill of health before they went further with the



"This is one of two ancient junipers on the property," says Byron, of the view through a custom Lincoln window. "They're hundreds of years old. We even moved the house 44 feet to spare the trees. Only three young junipers had to be cut down for the driveway and to site the house near the garage." The landscape photographer hopes to soon turn his camera on the trees.

side effects were devastating," remembers Nancy. "He didn't have the energy to get off the sofa. He decided he didn't want to pursue the Sisters project and—against my suggestion—we put the lot on the market."

Luckily, the property didn't sell.

building of their new retreat. "We were already working with an architect," recalls Nancy. "And that's when we found out that he had cancer in a lymph node under the same arm that he'd had the melanoma lesion on before."

Surgery and a year of chemical therapy three times a week followed. "The

The Northwest Cape Cod, as the Dudleys define their house style, was built on one of 19 homesites in a 155-acre development called The Ridge at Indian Ford. "We have the title

to 2.2 acres, but we own another 6 acres in common with the development," explains Byron, a 64-year-old retired school administrator, whose work as a landscape photographer has been published in many magazines (see "Why We Live Here" on p. 96 for his latest landscape photography contribution to *Oregon Home*).

The house was designed by architect

Chad Phillips of Phillips Design in Bend, Ore., and built by Brad Nicholson of Sisters, Ore. "Most of the sub-contractors were from Sisters," says Byron. "I purposely wanted to use people in Sisters as much as possible. Ronnie Barton, the site manager—he was aware of my health situation—kept saying, 'This is your dream house and I want it to be exactly as you desire.' It's a much better house because

of their care."

The property consists of a 2,044-square-foot main house, which looks to the Southwest, and, a 450 square-foot garage with a loft above it that serves as guest quarters. "Two books really influenced me when we were planning the house," says Byron. "*The New Cottage Book* and *The Not So Big House*."

Nancy, 58, found inspiration in *A Room of Her Own*. "So many of the homes that you tour, like on the Eugene Tour of Homes, they're massive in scale. There's a lot of wasted space and volume, which makes the space seem impersonal. So this is a very different house in that regard."



"I always get up at first light, then I take McKenzie for a 1/3-mile walk to retrieve the paper from the road," says Byron, of his 5-year-old Golden Retriever, sunning herself on the porch.

Although the couple planned the home as a retreat, they had long discussions in the evenings as their idea of a second home began to shift. "We started thinking, *What if we decide to live there? How would the house need to be different?* As an afterthought, we added a second closet in the master bedroom, which makes it much more livable. The final plan was to end up with a house that we could live in fulltime if we chose to do that."

Indeed, the house feels substantial. The walls are plaster. The ceilings on the first floor are 9 foot tall with crown moldings. "There are nine different types

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of wood in the house," says Byron. "The decks are mahogany. The porch ceilings are clear cedar. The cabinets throughout the house are cherry with birch interiors. The mantel in the living room is cherry. The floors are 4-inch oak planks chosen for durability but also for the richness of the patterns. We used some maple in the outside railings. And there's a lot of fir in the house, but you don't see it! It's covered up."

As attractive as the coast is, the weather is a major concern," says Byron. "The gray days, the wind, the fog. There's a sense of space in Sisters that's very appealing to me."

All of the interior upgrades were smart, because Byron has become smitten with the home and with Central Oregon. "He really prefers to be here, and I don't blame him," says Nancy. "The house is charming. The views are fantastic. It's peaceful and quiet—that's probably what I enjoy most. Byron enjoys the quality of light, the sunshine, the photographic opportunities. He likes being able to sleep with our bedroom windows open and hear coyotees and owls. Or hear absolutely *nothing*, which is also nice, because our Eugene house is a block away from a major artery and the traffic noise makes sitting out on the deck less enjoyable."

To Byron, the second home at the Ridge is truly a retreat. He likes to watch the ravens glide through the trees. A birder, he has seen eagles, juncos, hairy woodpeckers and pine siskins.

"I like Thoreau's statement, 'There is strength in retreat,'" he says. "Pulling back . . . renewal. Actually, I really feel that this house is *home*. I've made the transition. Part of it is the quality of

light. I find that the gloominess of the Willamette Valley gets to me after a period of time. We've owned two different pieces of property on the Oregon Coast, but as attractive as the coast is, the weather is a major concern. The gray days, the wind, the fog. There's a sense of space in Sisters that's very appealing to me."

When city life calls, the couple is



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only 25 minutes from Bend. "And we're just 20 miles from the Redmond airport, which has frequent service to Portland," says Byron.

The Dudleys plan on doing lots of hiking this summer, their first one at the Ridge. "I think we'll take our wicker chairs and sit on the porch and look at

Almost every
night, we
build a fire in the
fireplace," says
Byron. "We go
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brilliant out here."

the mountains in the evening light," says Nancy. "Byron has always had a great appreciation for nature and light, but I think it's been enhanced as a result of recovering from his illness and his treatment."

"I feel a sense of place and peace that's unlike anything I've ever experienced," he agrees. "Like every day is special. I'm very fortunate to have the good health to be able to pursue the building of this house. You know how, on occasion, someone will say, 'If you live long enough and you're lucky enough, dreams do come true.' Well, this is a dream that's come true for *both* of us."

Nancy and Byron Dudley are planning to have a housewarming party for all the craftspeople who helped make their house at the Ridge. "It was the small things they did," remembers Byron. "One time, I got a

call from Ronnie and he said, 'We're supposed to put the hot-water heater in a closet in the laundry room, but we've got space underneath the laundry room. Why don't we just pour a floor and put it in there and it'll give you more space and the house will be quieter, too?'"

Another time, Byron approached Sisters plumber Bill Sweeney about an extra 52-gallon water tank that he saw under the house. "I said, 'Bill, there's supposed to be one tank *here* and one in the *garage*,'" says Byron. "And he said, 'I took a look at it and it just seemed like you needed a second tank, so, no charge.' It's small experiences like that that make this a special place for us. And we've had more contact with people in the Ridge than we have with our neighbors in Eugene in the last 20 years. There's a sense of community at the Ridge that I really like."

The Dudleys say they think of their second home as a *different* way of investing their money. "Instead of having it in the stock market or credit union, real estate is a good investment in Central Oregon," says Nancy. "It's a way of having your money appreciate in value—and you get to enjoy it, too. Sometimes, we laugh about spending it *all*—and we have!"

Byron, too, is quick to embrace the good life after decades of being in the workforce. "Almost every night we build a fire in the fireplace," he says. "We go out and look at the stars—they're so brilliant out here. We're just trying to live in the present moment. It may sound self-centered, but Nancy and I both worked hard for a very long time and now, my two daughters have been educated and have their own lives.

"They went through the new house after Christmas for the first time," he continues. "They were kind of wide-eyed. And I said to them, 'How do you like the house?'"

"It's really elegant," Julie said.

"And I said, 'I'm spending your inheritance!'"

"And she said, 'Dad! That's not funny.'"

—Sheila De La Rosa
