

Hi Wayne,

This is Kate, Bob's wife, checking in to add some notes to the pictures of our Sky-Shed (attached).

We live in the San Lorenzo Mountains just north-east of Santa Cruz, amongst 100'-plus tall redwood trees, on a steep slope. We bought Bob's 10" Meade scope several years ago, but he didn't have much of a field of view and the scope was on our rather wobbly front deck.

Last December the lot next to ours came up for sale at a drastically reduced price. A third of an acre, logged over a decade ago, bought and resold several times - but un-buildable under county code. Unless the structure was 12'x10' or less...hmmm, a SkyShed, perhaps?

The lot also offered what was perhaps the clearest view in miles. But it was covered with blackberry vines and the remains of an old '40's cabin. So the first step (after buying the land) was to clear it. Many pratfalls as we and our workers hauled and hacked the muddy and hilly lot (it was rainy season in CA).

Bob had noticed your ad for Sky Sheds in Astronomy Magazine. We sent away for the plans on CD and Bob started to dream his shed into reality. Our neighbors recommended a contractor, Larry, who lived not far away and who builds guitars as a hobby. He took a look at the Sky Shed plans and was quite interested. His colleague, David, just happened to be a master welder who could make the pier.

Work picked up as the weather improved. Larry and David demonstrated their proficiency by building a 12'x10' storage shed for us. With nice siding and redwood trim, shingles and a small skylight, it looked like a perfect little house. And (as never happens here in earthquake country) it had a solid foundation and all the corners were square!

They took even more care with the SkyShed. The Sono-Tube for the pier took 880 pounds of concrete (to go four feet below grade) and is completely isolated from the rest of the SkyShed. Since the shed is on a steep slope, the redwood posts supporting the back rails wound up about 18' tall!

They're braced with a cross-beam at the back and Larry and David will add to that to make it really stable.

We used SunTuf in Solar Gray for the roof. The pictures may show a gap where the roof rolls off, but that will be sealed with some kind of hinged piece that occurred to Larry in a dream :-)

The outside is T-111 with tar-paper sheathing underneath. We used bead-board (wainscoting) for the inside paneling. We'll probably stain the bead-board with white-oak MinWax. Flooring and most inside furniture is from IKEA. The shed is kind of tall, but in keeping with the horizon as defined by the redwoods.

David did a great job fabricating the pier per Sky-Shed specs. We tried to match the paint on the pier as close as possible to the dark-blue of the Meade scope. The fins and the other parts of the pier are black. Once again, Larry did a great job -- and it gave him a good excuse to buy a paint sprayer. I've got dark-blue shades on order for the windows and the door.

This Memorial Day weekend I haven't seen much of my husband during the dark hours, just a little red glow from what Bob calls "Next Door". As in "I'll be next door!". We bought a pair of walkie talkies...just in case I wake up at three a.m. and can't find him.

Many thanks for the inspiration, the plans, and your help!