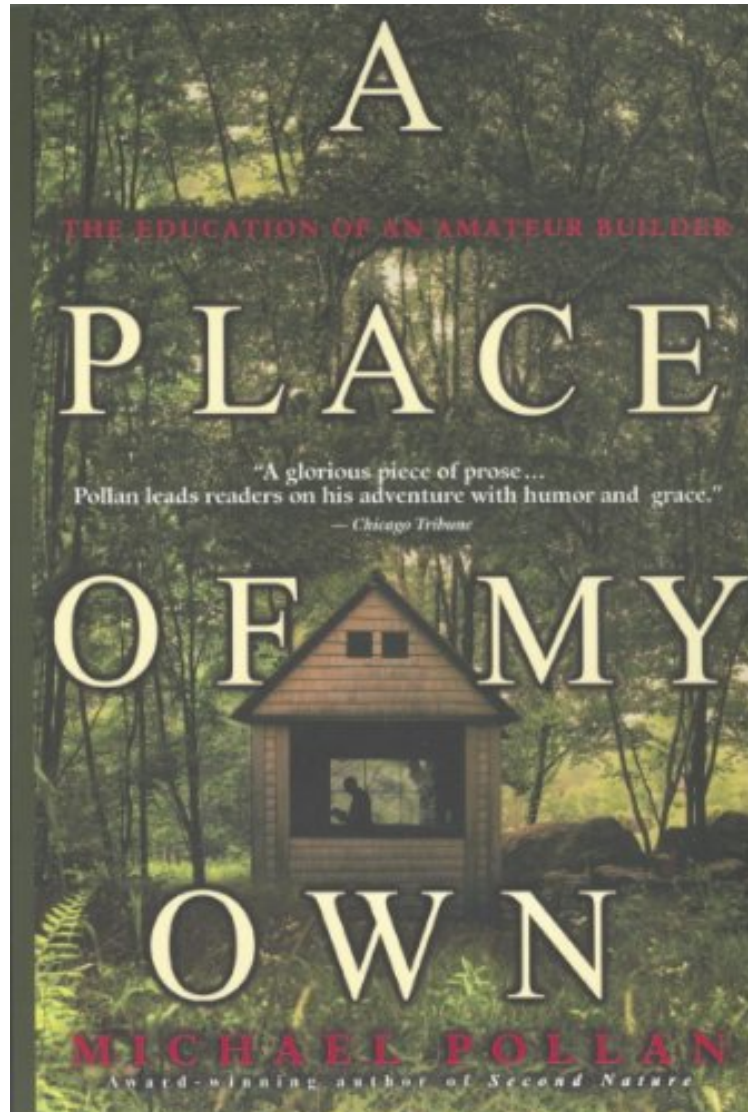


(Free pdf) A Place of My Own: The Education of an Amateur Builder

A Place of My Own: The Education of an Amateur Builder

Michael Pollan

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Michael Pollan : A Place of My Own: The Education of an Amateur Builder before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Place of My Own: The Education of an Amateur Builder:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Nice memoir of building a private writer's space By paterfamilia Pollan drives nails. Nice memoir of building a private writer's space. I do like his skewering of the modern and post-modern architects. As he seems to have some especial scorn for Philip Johnson, I recall reading elsewhere that Johnson was notorious for never designing a window that didn't leak. And irony of ironies, Pollan found himself confronted with inadequate construction drawings of the windows, and an architect with no real idea of how to design an inward-opening awning window that didn't inherently leak. One thing that does stand out, from a perspective of

years after the project was completed was that Mr. Pollan and his architect put a higher value on the visual and aural aesthetics of an uninsulated shingle roof than on the winter habitability of the workspace. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. He's also not afraid to poke fun at himself when he messes things up. It's like talking to a friend. By Gene Bowker Really enjoyed the story of how he built a small writers cottage on his property mostly by hand and with some help. I'm jealous because I'd love a retreat like that to write and read in. Pollan's writing style is easy to read. He's also not afraid to poke fun at himself when he messes things up. It's like talking to a friend. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Really enjoyed it By 1.5 Trick Pony I remember in high school hearing about the eccentricities of Walden and rolling my eyes. This book has helped me see why that book has held such a strong place in the zeitgeist... and yes, makes me want to build my own little place in the woods. I really appreciated how Pollan went into some of the architectural history and theory - although at one point I just wanted to shout at him to just get up off of his duff and DO something rather than reading about doing something! And then only a few paragraphs later, he made fun of himself for that very thing, and went and actually started with the doing. Pretty handy, that! Wish it always worked that way for me, the things I could do... The book really has 3 main characters - his architect friend/mentor, his contractor/mentor, and Pollan. The book spends an awful lot of time on the struggle between architects and contractors, and Pollan's place stuck between the two of them... and his gradual acquisition of knowledge and confidence, which allows him to make decisions outside of the blueprints. I read this book on audiobook, so it was solidly built out of imagination. I imagine that the book itself has drawings or illustrations - and see, even just looking at the cover shows me what the finished product looks like, and darn that little hut looks cute and snug! - which would help give it shape mentally... but actually that may have helped me a bit. I rewound and relistened in some parts to try to figure out what he meant when describing building details, and I don't know that I would have thought so hard about it if it had been diagrammed. That said, is this the Omnivore's Dilemma? Nope, not by a long shot. But if I had never read OD, I'd have given it 5 stars, so that's what I'm doing here. (maybe OD should get an imaginary 6th star, to make it fair to every other book?) This was just a really enjoyable book, and it's subtly altered how I look at buildings around me. Worth the reading, definitely.

A captivating personal inquiry into the art of architecture, the craft of building, and the meaning of modern work
 "A room of one's own: Is there anybody who hasn't at one time or another wished for such a place, hasn't turned those soft words over until they've assumed a habitable shape?" When Michael Pollan decided to plant a garden, the result was the acclaimed bestseller *Second Nature*. In *A Place of My Own*, he turns his sharp insight to the craft of building, as he recounts the process of designing and constructing a small one-room structure on his rural Connecticut property—a place in which he hoped to read, write, and daydream, built with his own two unhandy hands. Invoking the titans of architecture, literature, and philosophy, from Vitruvius to Thoreau, from the Chinese masters of feng shui to the revolutionary Frank Lloyd Wright, Pollan brilliantly chronicles a realm of blueprints, joints, and trusses as he peers into the ephemeral nature of "houseness" itself. From the spark of an idea to the search for a perfect site to the raising of a ridgepole, Pollan revels in the infinitely detailed, complex process of creating a finished structure. At once superbly written, informative, and enormously entertaining, *A Place of My Own* is for anyone who has ever wondered how the walls around us take shape—and how we might shape them ourselves. Praise for *A Place of My Own* "A glorious piece of prose . . . Pollan leads readers on his adventure with humor and grace."—Chicago Tribune "Pollan alternates between describing the building process and introducing informative asides on various aspects of construction. These explanations are deftly and economically supplied. Pollan's beginner status serves him well, for he asks the kind of obvious questions about building that most readers will want answered."—The New York Review of Books "By shrewdly combining just the right mix of personal reflection, architectural background, and nuts-and-bolts detail, Michael Pollan enables us to see, feel, and understand what goes into the building of a house. The result is a captivating and informative adventure."—John Berendt, author of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* "An utterly terrific book . . . an inspired meditation on the complex relationship between space, the human body and the human spirit."—Francine du Plessix Gray "A tour de force . . . [Pollan] writes gracefully and humanely. He is a true carpenter-craftsman of prose."—Phillip Lopate

.com Michael Pollan's *A Place of My Own* might be suspiciously viewed by some readers as a text begging for interpretation. What is it that causes this man at midlife to attempt to put up a structure, an actual wood and concrete dwelling, where he can work on his own craft away from his domestic life? Arguably, Pollan's intentions are more transparent than a too clever postmodern audience can easily appreciate. The author of this fine, well-crafted book offers an explanation that seems honest and understandable: "Whenever I heard myself described as an 'information service worker' or a 'symbolic analyst,' I wanted to reach for a hammer, or a hoe, and with it make something less virtual than a sentence." In Pollan's bestselling book *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education*, he illustrated his facility with both hoe and pen. In *A Place of My Own* he hefts the hammer and again records with great intelligence how thoroughly thought and reflection can be woven into our common lives and the patterns of a day's work. His book's

subtitle, "An Education of an Amateur Builder," captures much of what this book contains: the lessons learned by a diligent student of architecture, design, and construction. The writing contains no gaps or unsightly seams, and it's full of clues to readers who share a similar desire to build something tangible in a world that prizes the evanescent. From Library Journal Wanting to have a place of his own where he could think and write, Pollan decided to erect a small structure in the woods behind his house. Fancying himself a modern-day Thoreau, he wanted to build his "dream hut" with his own hands, even though he had no carpentry skills or experience. We learn very little about how to build a small structure; the majority of this book is devoted to Pollan's pretentious musings about a variety of architectural theories and about his interaction with the architect and carpenter who helped him (wasn't this supposed to be a simple structure?). Although it cost Pollan \$125 per square foot and took him two and one-half years to build, ultimately it is the reader who works the hardest. Libraries serving those with a strong interest in architecture will want this title; other libraries should skip this book. ?Jonathan Hershey, Akron-Summit Cty. P.L., Ohio Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Author and former Harper's editor Pollan, a writer fast approaching 40 and fatherhood, spent two and a half years (Saturdays mostly) building a writing hut in the woods behind his Connecticut house. Its taking shape is a springboard for exploring architecture, construction, and the concept of home. Not so much a how-to as a how-and-why-it-happened, this account details quickly and clearly everything from ancient construction techniques to postmodern architectural theory to the on-site politics among Pollan and his two guides ("Virgils," he calls them): Joey, the surly local handyman, and Charles, an old college friend and architect who occasionally gets zealous. Pollan's success, despite a confessed lack of skill or understanding, is heartening to others hoping to do something similar. His melding theory and practice, when, for instance, he considers roofs, foundations, windows, and walls as both objects and metaphors, makes this book particularly interesting to those content to study architecture from afar--which translates into a rather large group of readers. Kevin Grandfield