SPRING **3** DESIGN

Where Rachel Maddow Is Allowed to Watch TV

A BATHHOUSE THAT IS MORE THAN JUST A BATHHOUSE.

By Wendy Goodman

THE CABINETS
Migeon worked with the woodworker Chuck Bayliss to install cabinets with sliding doors so that the TV and storage area can be hidden when not in use.

THE PATH
This stone walkway from the main house leads right up to the bathhouse.

THE LOUNGE AREA
The bathhouse can accommodate guests. Just below the fireplace is a special window where Poppy—Maddow and Mikula's black Lab—can watch the squirrel action.

FOR MSNBC HOST Rachel Maddow and her partner, artist Susan Mikula, their pre-Civil War farmhouse in Western Massachusetts was perfect—except for the bathroom. "In order to reach it, you have to climb up a very steep staircase," Maddow explains. "It's not quite a ladder, but it's a vertical challenge." The couple knew they needed a second bathroom for their weekend home but insisted that its original bones not be disturbed. "The house is symmetrical and historically preserved, and the idea that we would stick something onto it as an addition felt like putting a hat on a horse," Maddow says. So last year, architect Nicole Migeon—who worked with Maddow and Mikula on their West Village apartment—designed a one-room bathhouse tucked away in the woods. The simple pitched-roof structure, more than just an outhouse, features vertical wood slats (made from sustainably grown cedar) that reference the design of old tobacco-drying barns in the area and conceal drains and vents while providing soft, diffused light; perfect for a low-key late-afternoon dip in the hot tub. Migeon worked with woodworker Chuck Bayliss to build the reclaimed-maple cabinets that hide an entertainment center and linen closet. When the large front door is open, the bathhouse has an indoor-outdoor airiness; closed, "it's some kind of magic," Mikula says. For Maddow, it's her retreat within a retreat. "We don't have a TV in the main house," she says, "but I can seal myself in the bathhouse and watch football really loudly without bothering anybody. It's very satisfying."