

# Futuro Cabin

by Robin Washington

## A back to the future getaway



The author disembarking from a UFO-shaped cabin.

**I**t was a day in the fall of 1970 and family meeting time at our house in Chicago. We had just bought the derelict building next door and were deciding what to do with it.

“I know,” I said, 12 years old at the time. “Let’s put a Futuro House there.”

“A what?” my mother asked. A look of surprise, then panic, swept over my brother Glen’s face.

“A Futuro,” I repeated, running into Glen’s bedroom. Underneath his bed I retrieved a recent *Playboy* and ran back, opening the spread for our mother to see, and pointed to the photo of the UFO-shaped house. “Here!”

“What are you doing with that?” she exclaimed.

Glen shelved his embarrassment to join my cause. “No, no – he’s right. Look at it,” he said.

She refused to look at it again. Ever. And a Futuro never came to Orleans Street.

But it never left my mind, and years later, I called the magazine to ask about the fiberglass flying saucer right out of the *Jetsons* that ...

“September 1970, Finnish company, went out of business,” the receptionist interrupted in a stop-calling-here voice.

Okay, at least I wasn’t dreaming. I found the issue at a used bookstore.

There it was – the “*Playboy* Pad of the Month” – as unattainable as any other image in the magazine.

Another dozen years went by. The Internet was invented. I typed in “Futuro” and got only hits in Italian. Then finally, the mother lode: The owners of the 100 Futuros ever made were making contact with each other, listing their Earthly coordinates. One Futuro pod was in northern Wisconsin, and its owner was Drew Pogge-mann of suburban Milwaukee. Not an original owner, he had learned about his Futuro in a more innocent fashion than myself: from his mom, a local realtor.

As Drew explained to me, she was trying to sell the place to clients, so she asked him, “Could you give me a description of what *Trekkies* would like so I can get them to look at the place?”

Drew said, “I did research and found it was a Futuro. I said, ‘I want it.’ She said, ‘But it’s a flying saucer.’ I said, ‘I want it.’”

He got it, for a steal – basically the price of the land. Then he renovated it ‘60s-chic, to offer as a summer rental.

Perfect. I reserved it for the Solstice week.

Approaching through the trees and entering the pod bay door (take that, Hall!) was everything *Playboy* promised: A kitchen, bath, captain’s

bedroom and living room set cylindrically around a fireplace (nonworking), complete with electricity and running water.

With the pod situated in a natural setting just steps from a lake, deer visited the property daily. I even saw a doe nurse two fawns 10 feet away from the Futuro. They didn’t seem to think of it as a human dwelling.

Local humans were impressed, too. “You’re in the UFO house?” said Erin Kubinek at the video store. “You’re the first person I’ve met who’s seen it.”

Previous renters know it well. “There is nothing like telling ghost stories by the camp fire to the eerie cry of the loon with a yellow saucer in the foreground,” Thom Quinn of Madison, Wis., penned in the guest book. Or as someone named Heather versed: “Oh my God/We love the Pod/Delightfully Odd/Extremely Mod!!!”

The Washington family missed our opportunity back in 1970. Had we placed a Futuro on our street across from the El, it surely would have become a landmark in Chicago.

But I’ll settle for my Wisconsin rental and will return every year – as long as it never takes flight. ☺

*Robin Washington is news director of his city paper and often fantasizes about getting a Futuro of his own to put in his backyard.*