

Big Sky Beckons

A timber and stone Montana getaway in prime Rocky Mountain terrain was designed for family and fun.

SOUTHWESTERN MONTANA'S BIG SKY REGION IS HOME TO SOME OF THE MOST SPECTACULAR, unspoiled mountain terrain in the country, showcasing the Rocky Mountains, access to Yellowstone National Park, blue ribbon rivers, and expansive blue skies. Recreational opportunities abound all year long, from summer golf outings to skiing in the winter. It's no surprise many people choose Big Sky for their vacation retreat, and this home in particular was designed with family and fun in mind.



BY JENNIFER DONAHUE
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THE STONE THREE-CAR GARAGE ANCHORS THE HOME ON THE SITE, JUXTAPOSED WITH THE ANGULAR TIMBERS. AN ADDED DECK NEXT TO THE ENTRY MAKES THE MOST OF VIEWS OF LONE PEAK. INSET: OUTDOOR LIVING IS A WAY OF LIFE IN MONTANA. LOOK CLOSELY AT THE FIREPLACE. DO YOU SEE THE ADJACENT WOOD-FIRED PIZZA OVEN?



ABOVE: THE LIGHT FIXTURE IN THE OPEN STAIRWELL, CREATED BY FRY STEEL & WOOD WORKS, BRIGHTENS ALL THREE FLOORS OF THE HOME.

LEFT: THE STONE FIREPLACE OFFERS A DRAMATIC FOCAL POINT FOR THE LIVING AREA.

Construction was completed in late fall 2014, just in time for the holidays. Constructed of Deep Creek ledgerstone and reclaimed timbers, the 6,600-square-foot home was built as a mountain getaway. With eight bedrooms and an equal number of bathrooms, there is plenty of space for family and friends to visit for holiday gatherings, enjoy a week of skiing, or simply retreat for a vacation. "They wanted to be able to bring their family and friends to see Montana," says John Seelye, president of Big Sky Build in Bozeman, Montana. "It's a very accommodating, comfortable home."

The location alone makes this house a special place, nestled in the Rockies with views of both Lone Peak and the Spanish Peaks. "It's a stellar mountain location with expansive views," says Seelye. The design makes the most of Montana's splendor, siting the house to take advantage of the jaw-dropping views.

"We used the stairway as a hinge point to get the house's two wings to sit on the site the way we wanted it," says Daryl Nourse, project architect at Reid Smith Architects in Bozeman, Montana. "The stairs are open but connect all three levels." There are multiple outdoor living spaces, including a deck near the entry of the home, created to capture views of Lone Peak.

The homeowners wanted the area's natural beauty reflected in the interior of the house, so there is extensive use of Deep Creek ledgerstone throughout. "We tried to bring stone inside as much as we could so you can touch it and interact with it," says Nourse. One unique feature is the office, which was built with stone walls, balancing the stone fireplace on the other side of the entry. "We created a stone box for the office," says Nourse.

Reclaimed timbers lend a rugged texture to the woodwork in the house, while custom-forged steel accents bring a contemporary edge. The design-



ABOVE: WARM-TONED TILE WRAPS THE MASTER BATHROOM IN LUXURY. LEFT: THE STEAM ROOM—THE PERFECT WAY TO SOOTHE TIRED MUSCLES AFTER A DAY ON THE SLOPES—FEATURES A BOULDER BENCH. RIGHT: RECLAIMED BARNWOOD ADDS CHARACTER TO A GUEST BEDROOM. FAR RIGHT: BEAUTIFUL STONEMWORK ENHANCES THE SOARING CEILING IN THE MASTER BEDROOM. BOTTOM RIGHT: A SHOW-STOPPING WOOD WALL GRACES A GUEST BATHROOM. BELOW: A CORNER IN THE MASTER BEDROOM IS AN IDEAL SPOT FOR ENJOYING THE VIEW AND A CRACKLING FIRE.



ers took challenges and transformed them into opportunities, including converting open space above the office into a play space for the homeowners' children. "One element that is hard to conceal in most houses is the garage," says Nourse. "We decided to hunker down and cover it with stone; as you approach the house it comes off pretty well with the contemporary stone garage juxtaposed with the gables of the house."

The design features some unique touches that make the home feel personal, including an open kitchen that flows into the dining room, great room, and beyond to the outdoor living spaces. "It's a place where they can all gather and make memories," says Seelye. The homeowners wanted functionality to be a part of the home's design, so it reflects their lifestyle. A ski room on the lower level makes ski-in/ski-out access a breeze, while the lower level spa bathroom (complete with steam room) is ideal for relaxing after a day on the slopes. In the kitchen, the design includes a walk-in pantry that houses a refrigerator, sink, dishwasher, and wine cabinet.

"A lot of times we'll put the master where it gets the primary views," says Nourse. For this project, the homeowners were looking for something different, so Nourse put the master bedroom on the southeast corner of the house. "They wanted a cozy, treed-in feeling; it's more private." A reading nook set just off the master bedroom and surrounded by trees offers even more privacy, with full drapes that can be closed and vintage-style chairs that invite you in.



The homeowners' classic Southern style took on a mountain modern twist for the interiors, keeping things clean with modern lines. "It's an eclectic style with a little bit of mountain modern and traditional blended," says Erika Jennings of Carol Sisson Interiors in Bozeman, Montana. Jennings says that they had a handful of elements that made statements. "The stair light was something we found at the very beginning of the project and it really stood out," says Jennings. "It really exudes the natural Montana feel."

With green among the homeowners' favorite colors, Jennings brought a lot of natural tones and fabrics into the décor. Keeping to a clean look meant minimizing patterns but using solid colors in a creative way. "We had fun playing with fur and different textures," she says. Throughout the home there are details intended to add depth to the décor without overwhelming the overall design, including textured leathers, fur rugs, and embroidered furniture.

The homeowners are avid antiques shoppers and enjoyed choosing art and accessories to complement the décor and give the home character. "A lot of the accessories that they chose really make it a home," says Jennings.

"So many places here are vacation houses, but it was really important to them to make it feel like a home."

With expert guidance and engaged homeowners, the end result is a vacation home that truly exceeds expectations. "This was definitely a collaborative project between the owners, the architect, the designer, and us as the builder from the outset and I think that's what made it a successful project," says Seelye, noting that the involvement of the homeowners in the design was a key element to the success. "It was a fun and rewarding project; everybody worked as a team from the beginning to see this project through." ❦

Builder: John Seelye, Big Sky Build, Big Sky, Montana
Architect: Daryl Nourse, Reed Smith Architects, Bozeman Montana
Interior Design: Erika Jennings, Carol Sisson Interiors, Big Sky, Montana
Three-story home ❦ **Square footage:** 6,600
Bedrooms: 8 **Bathrooms:** 8.5



LEFT: THERE ARE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR FAMILY FUN ON THE LOWER LEVEL.

BELOW: THE DINING ROOM SHOWCASES NOT ONLY SPECTACULAR VIEWS BUT STUNNING EMBROIDERED DINING CHAIRS AND A TABLE LARGE ENOUGH FOR ENTERTAINING AS WELL.

OPPOSITE: THE OPEN KITCHEN ADDS A TOUCH OF CLASSIC SOUTHERN CHARM TO THIS RUSTIC MONTANA RETREAT.

