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Twice As Nice

The sum proves greater than its parts in a Montana mountain home uniting logs and big timbers.

STORY BY TERESA L. WOLFF | PHOTOS BY KARL NEUMANN

The home consists of a conventionally framed lower level with log accents, a log-stacked main level with timber accents and a conventionally framed upper level with log post-and-beam elements. Outside finishes feature an artful blend of logs, timbers, vertical lap siding, poplar bark siding, stone walls and foundations, and metal and cedar-shake roofing.



ABOVE: The custom-built, octagonal dining table seats 10. Wide-plank, old-growth heart pine flooring adds to the seamless flow between dining and great rooms. Juliann Iron Originals fashioned the custom light fixture.

RIGHT: The great room takes full advantage of mountain views while creating a comfortable interior. A massive king-post truss and black iron tension rods add overhead drama, which is punctuated by the custom chandelier from Fire Mountain Forge. The fir tongue-and-groove ceiling complements the hand-scraped pine flooring that bolsters the home's rustic flavor.

After spending 10 years searching for just the right place, Mark and Judy Shelstad finally realized their dream of owning land in Big Sky, Montana. They realized that the best way to create the perfect home for their long-awaited mountain setting was to assemble a team of specialists. “The entire process of designing and building this home was a collaborative effort,” Mark says. “Everyone knew our financial limitations and would ask, ‘Can we do this within the budget?’ Consequently, we were able to realize the most pleasing aesthetic result by being ingenious.”

The Shelstads had no particular style of home in mind when they enlisted Centre Sky Architecture’s Jamie Dugaard, whose “experience, creativity and design philosophy,” and “the chemistry between us

led us to believe he would be the best fit,” Mark recalls.

The couple wanted a contractor who had worked with Centre Sky. They admired the homes Dugaard did with Peter Lee of Teton Heritage Builders and invited him to join them.

Next, the Shelstads thought about the style of home. “When I spoke with Mark, it became apparent that full-log was not going to be feasible, given his parameters. In order to accomplish what he desired, we decided to build a hybrid home,” Lee explains. “Once I put it together in my head, I priced it and handed the baton to my partner, Ben Jones.”

“The house combines log, timber and conventional framed elements,” says Jones, who acted as general contractor. “We removed the inner 6 inches from oversized fir logs and installed this skin



RIGHT: Hand-blown glass shades in the kitchen match the Exotic River Blue granite countertops on the alder center island with a white rubbed-through finish. The homeowners selected distressed knotty alder for the perimeter cabinets. A handmade zinc hood with hammered steel strapping frames the cooking area. “We specifically included a large overhang on the island to seat four guests, in addition to the 10 around the dining room table,” Judy Shelstad says.

over the stick frame. We then sprayed in foam insulation, giving it an R-25 energy-efficiency rating.”

Judy and Mark collaborated with Ben Emanuel, project manager and lead designer for Centre Sky, on the actual design for the home. Their top priority was capturing the view of Spanish Peaks to the north. The gentle slope of their property contributed to the feasibility of a walkout basement, resulting in three levels of windows on the view side. To further enjoy the scenery and mild Montana summers, Judy and Mark added a covered deck off the dining room with a wood-burning fireplace in a massive single-stone hearth, a grill tied into the central propane system and sufficient lighting for evening dining.

A highlight of the home is the interplay of space and logs. “We structured the overall layout of the home with the three primary pods (central great room, master suite wing and garage wing) all as independent log structures and then infilled or linked these spaces with traditional wood-framed elements,” Emanuel says. “Ultimately, I think the intersections of these different structures, these interstitial spaces, are what the most interesting spaces in the home became.”

Although Judy and Mark liked the concept of an open floor plan, they wanted each space defined. Thus, the kitchen is separated from the dining room by the center island, but it still has a clear and easy line of sight into the great room, allowing for unencumbered conversation and traffic flow. “As we began to plan for our vacation home, we wanted to be able to accommodate as many as 16 guests at any one time,” Mark says. “We also hoped





ABOVE: The Spanish Peaks and Lone Peak are visible from the master bedroom through tall windows and a custom alder door that leads to a private porch. The room mixes full-log walls and log accents over conventionally framed walls.

OPPOSITE: Steps from the master suite's handcrafted-log porch lead to the flagstone patio and hot tub. Teton Heritage Builders notched the outside and outside corners of the logs, removed the core and stacked it around the framed building to give it a full-log look, then sprayed in foam insulation to boost the home's energy efficiency.

to minimize the disturbance of any guests who intended to stay up late and maximize the privacy of those who desired it."

To assure privacy, an office serves as an almost-soundproof buffer between the dining room and the main-level master bedroom suite in the 6,800-square-foot home. The guest suite is at the opposite side of the home and is insulated from the great room by a small anteroom. "This suite is located on the wing of the house with larger trees, furnishing views that give a feeling of solidarity," architect Daugaard points out, adding, "It has large windows, vaulted ceilings, a log ridge beam and fully tiled shower with two windows."

As the design unfolded, Emanuel looked forward to working with Lazure

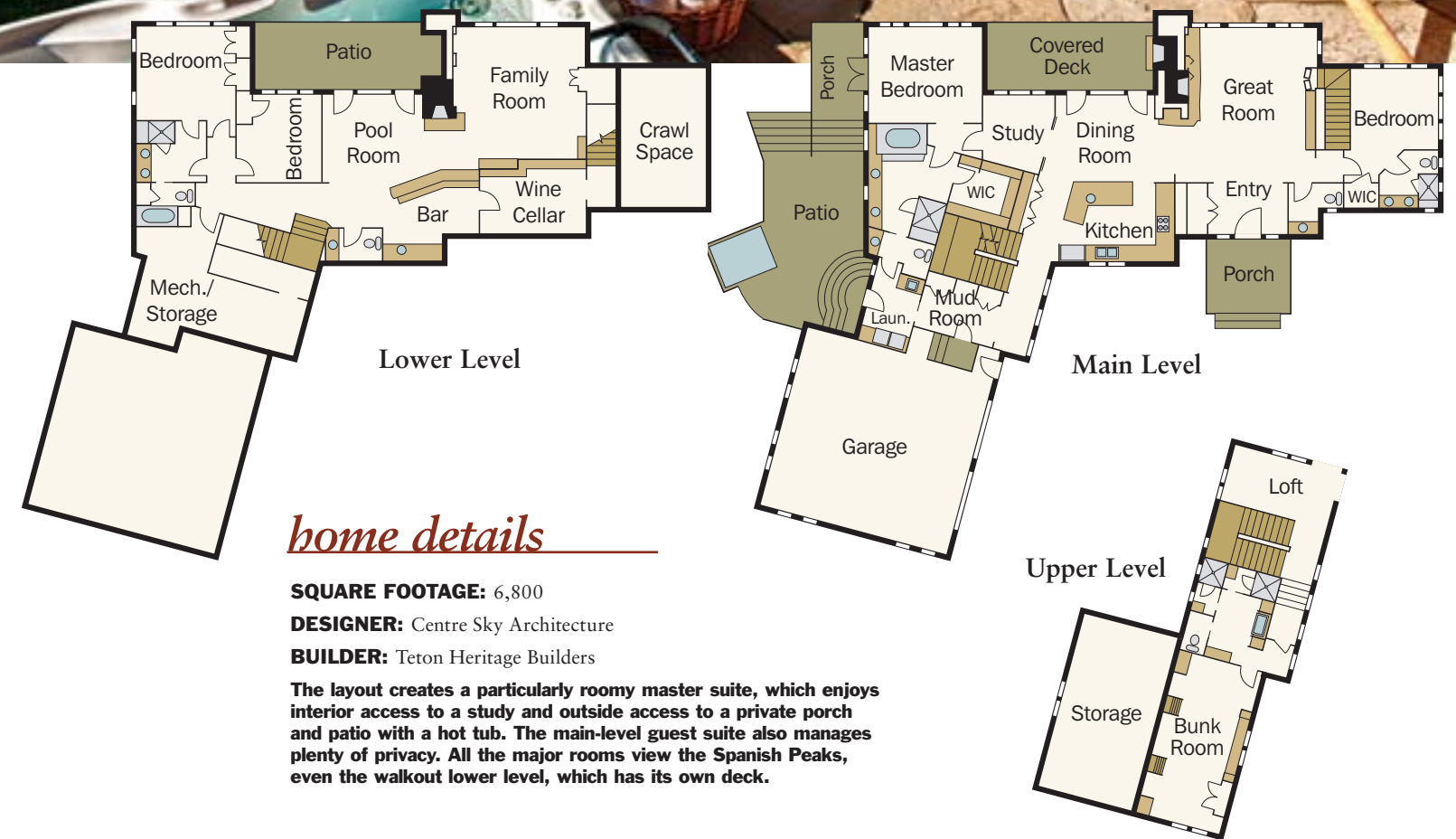
Ereaux and Peoples Creek Log Builders, a Native American company from Fort Belknap Reservation. Ereaux's crew spent 10 months onsite assembling the frame and log and timber components.

During this time, interior designer Erika Jennings of Carole Sisson Designs joined the team to help with the specification work, as well as tile, cabinetry, lighting, wall treatments and other furnishings. She also designed the kitchen island, which features an Exotic River Blue countertop that Daugaard describes as "one of the most extravagant in the world, offering visual light displays as Labradorite within the granite glows with brilliant colors like those of a peacock tail."

More than content with their dream home, the Shelstads credit planning and

teamwork for how everything came together so beautifully, including their own involvement. "Even if you aren't doing the construction yourself, you still need to be passionate about the project," Mark says, adding that it helps "to find a builder who has your interest at heart."

Able to easily fly from their Illinois home to Bozeman and drive to Big Sky in less than an hour, the Shelstads take full advantage of the Montana outdoors and enjoy quiet time reflecting on the natural beauty. They've dubbed their home "Koselig Hus" (*pronounced KOOSH-lee*). "This comes from the Norwegian term for 'comfortable' or 'cozy,'" Mark explains, "because we wanted this to be a 'koselig' home with a fire, plenty of candles, yummy smells and good friends." 🏡



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