

THE LAST HOUSE ON THE MOUNTAIN

A visionary family ropes in a talented design team to bring to fruition their longtime dreams of a rustic lodge-like home

Located on a mountaintop parcel with astonishing views in Big Sky's Moonlit Basin community, and built with reclaimed timbers salvaged from old barns, the rustic lodge-like abode provided sanctuary during the pandemic.

STORY **TATE GUNNERSON** PHOTOS **GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY**
ARCHITECTURE **CENTRE SKY ARCHITECTURE**
INTERIOR DESIGN **DESIGN COLLECTIVE WEST**
CONSTRUCTION **LOHSS CONSTRUCTION**



Unpolished pieces, such as textural reclaimed beams and a custom range hood built with salvaged wood planks, juxtapose the hand-crafted white cabinetry, white quartzite countertops and marble mosaic backsplash in the bright and airy open kitchen.

After countless skiing trips, a couple with four adult children fulfilled a longtime dream by acquiring a mountaintop parcel with miles-long vistas of the Spanish Peaks, the Tobacco Root Range and the Lone Peak summit at Big Sky—the last lot on the mountain in Cowboy Heaven at the Moonlit Basin resort community in Big Sky, Montana.

Soon their attention turned to the home they envisioned: A quintessential ski lodge with a strong connection to the picturesque landscape. “We built this house for our family and for future generations to enjoy,” the husband says. “Even though it’s beautiful and grand, everybody who comes to visit remarks at how cozy, comfortable and livable it is.”

Far from being passive observers, the couple were intimately involved in the home’s design, collaborating closely with architect Jamie Daugaard, interior designer Michele Wheeler, and builder Chris Lohss on the project.

Built exclusively with reclaimed timbers and regionally harvested stone, the rustic abode’s double-gable entry opens to the natural light-filled great room, which boasts an awe-inspiring view with no other homes in sight. “It’s quite a show,” says Daugaard, who collaborated closely with project manager Ben Emanuel on the project. “Exhilarating.”

The space’s soaring wood-beamed ceilings with metal banding create a dramatic backdrop for back-to-back sofas facing two stone fireplaces, which are affectionately known as the “twin sisters.” A quartet of contemporary barrel-back swivel chairs near the windows provides a convivial spot to take in the majestic vistas.

“We incorporated modern clean-lined furnishings with lighter colors and soft textures to help balance out the rustic architecture,” Wheeler explains. “It brings a sense of repose and helps the space feel lighter and brighter.”

The husband often works at a leather-tufted banquette in a cozy niche that includes a well-appointed bar alongside one of the fireplaces. Steps away, in the open dining area, the same stone that houses one of the twin sisters encloses a refrigerated wine bar with metal-and-glass doors that play off the windows and light fixtures throughout. >>

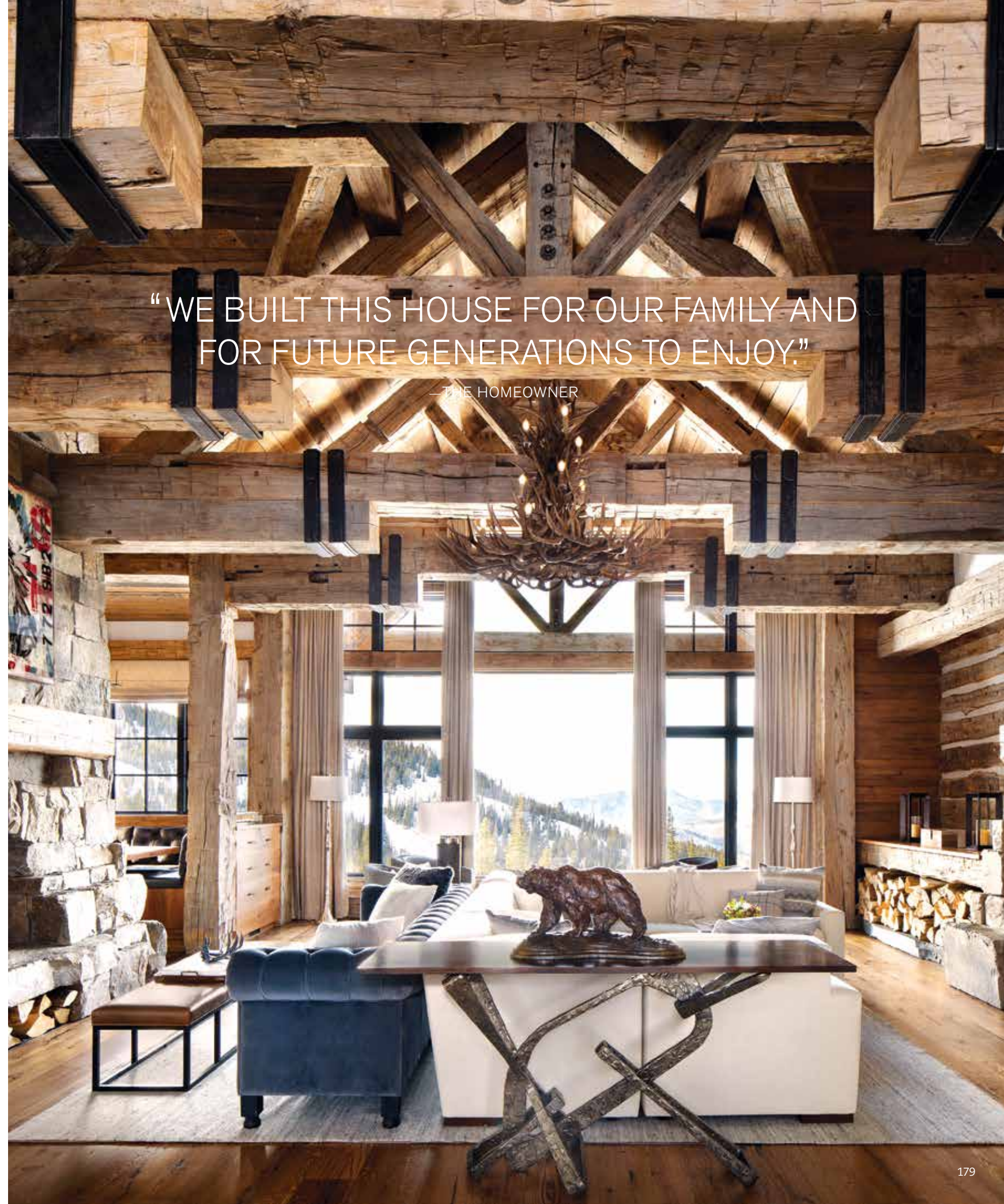


PERFECT BALANCE

Built with reclaimed, hand-tooled wood salvaged from several Midwest barns and stone harvested in Montana, this lodge-like home is nothing if not rustic. Yet thanks to a well-balanced material palette, the timeless result will no doubt appeal to future generations as well.

- 1) Metal-clad windows, light fixtures and accent furnishings juxtapose the hand-tooled reclaimed timber throughout.
- 2) The bedrooms are outfitted with custom headboards in leather and hide that perfectly accent the wood furnishings and reclaimed oak flooring.
- 3) Tailored upholstered furnishings, such as the cream-colored sectional in the living room, add a contemporary feel that balances the salvaged hand-hewn beams and stone fireplaces.
- 4) Crisp painted cabinetry, beefy white quartzite countertops and a complementary marble mosaic backsplash likewise play off a reclaimed wooden hood and sawhorse-shaped stools in the light-filled kitchen.
- 5) Last but certainly not least are the original art pieces throughout, including a burned-wood grizzly bear by Carly Jo Haughton of Carlyjo Studio in the gym and pieces by Ben Pease and Ashley Sumner over the great room fireplaces. "Art is very meaningful to the owners," interior designer Michele Wheeler explains. "They selected pieces that have a lot of color to contrast with the rustic, earthy tones." >>

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: The stone structure containing one of the living room fireplaces also houses wine storage with metal-and-glass doors, which coordinates with the chandelier over the dining table by Kravet. In the great room, a chandelier made of antlers illuminates the more refined furnishings in between the two stone fireplaces. A contemporary metal mesh fixture by Hammerton plays off the wood walls in the stairway tower.



"WE BUILT THIS HOUSE FOR OUR FAMILY AND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS TO ENJOY."

—THE HOMEOWNER



CLOCKWISE FROM THIS PAGE: A bespoke leather headboard with integrated light fixtures, along with sumptuous textiles, perfectly contrast the lofty wood ceilings and weighty stone fireplace in the spacious principal bedroom. Light marble flooring and hand-hewn reclaimed wood elements beautifully balance one another in the spa-like primary bathroom. One of several throughout the custom mountain abode, a roaring stone fireplace warms the three-season porch, which is elegantly furnished with areas for living and dining.



A wood-and-metal chandelier, for example, illuminates the thick white quartzite island countertop in the nearby kitchen, where a hood made of reclaimed wood offers a rustic contrast to the crisp white cabinetry and marble mosaic backsplash. According to Lohss, working with those salvaged timbers required special care.

"It's always more challenging, because there are so many unknowns," he says, noting that each board must be sorted and graded. "The amount of labor and man hours in this house is incredible, but the result feels timeless and multigenerational."

Indeed: Lohss' crew also spent nearly four months building a stairway tower with clerestory windows that connects all three levels. At the top of the light-filled stairway, a long hallway lined with bunks leads to the guest suites. According to the husband, many guests prefer the bunks, sleeping there even when the other guest rooms are unoccupied.

As one might expect, the house has seen a steady stream of visiting family members since the completion of the project. During the winter, the family can simply walk out the back door, don their skis by the outdoor fireplace, and push off the mountain. And when the valley is green and the weather warm, they enjoy golf, hiking, fly-fishing, mountain biking, horseback riding and other activities.

They are quick to express their gratitude to the team that brought their vision to fruition. "There are little touches all over this house that are the combination of brainstorming sessions with the architects, designers and the builder," says the husband. "It was a phenomenal partnership." ○

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