



CALL OF THE WILD

A Florida couple collaborates with an Atlanta-based designer and many local craftsmen to revitalize a dated house in Big Sky, Montana

A chandelier by Andrew Crawford Ironworks illuminates the great room, which is furnished with a mix of antiques and new pieces, including a sofa by Bradley and a daybed by Bjork Studio.

STORY **TATE GUNNERSON**
PHOTOS **GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY**
INTERIOR DESIGN **PEACE DESIGN**
CONSTRUCTION: **HIGHLINE PARTNERS**

Punctuated by the occasional rise in pitch, the rhythmic cadence of an old-fashioned auctioneer is something to behold. That was the scene on a snowy winter day in Big Sky, Montana, when a small group, among them David and Cameron Given, gathered to bid on a chalet-like house on a secluded lot at the Yellowstone Club.

After a tense, rapid-fire round of bidding, the couple's final competitor dropped out, and with a bang of his gavel the auctioneer shouted out that timeworn phrase: "Going once, going twice, whoa," Cameron recalls. "It was wild."

Perhaps it's an apt way to buy a home in a region of the country known for its abundant wildlife: The couple sometimes spy bears, moose and elk in the woods behind their place—a far cry from their residences in Seattle and Florida. Fortunately, renovating their home with interior designer William "Bill" Peace and builder Rob McRae and Allison Roberts of Highline Partners was as collaborative as the auction was competitive.

During the first phase of the project, Peace set out to modernize the dated interior finishes, staining the exposed hand-peeled log structural beams and tongue-and-groove ceiling in a far darker hue inspired by the color of the trees behind the house. Newly plastered walls add contrast, depth and richness. "They wanted a fresher, updated approach," Peace says.

In its new context, the living room's stone fireplace takes on a whole new life—a warm and rustic focal point for a cozy sitting area with contemporary clean-lined seating around an antique Italian cocktail table. An armless daybed separates the space into two distinct sitting areas without interfering with the majestic vistas. "The palette was inspired by tones that you see in the mountains," Peace explains, referencing the textured fabrics and accessories.

The setting also influenced the art pieces that Peace helped the couple acquire. An abstracted landscape depicting wild horses by Theodore Waddell hangs above the living room fireplace, and a large encaustic painting of a wolf by Theresa Stirling brings the great outdoors into the front foyer. "People come to Montana to be outside, but they also need shelter," Peace says. "We created something that complements the exterior."

In the same vein, a mounted elk rack adds a sculptural element above the wall-to-wall upholstered bed in the master suite, where a tactile wallcovering, a sumptuous area rug and soft >>

A coat of paint, new concrete-and-walnut countertops and a custom range hood give the handsome wooden kitchen cabinetry a new look that perfectly suits the updated interior. The pressed glass lighting pendants are by Tom Dixon.





BLENDING ANTIQUES AND CONTEMPORARY PIECES SUCCESSFULLY

Antiques and new furnishings elevate one another in this Montana manse. "We were after a balance of elegance, traditional and modern, and bringing in antiques from Robuck in special areas really gave us the opportunity to do that," says interior designer Bill Peace. Here's how he did it:

INCORPORATE PIECES THAT MAKE A STATEMENT In the living room, Peace paired new furnishings with an Italian wooden cocktail table and an antique desk that was a family heirloom. "It's important in a house like this that it doesn't feel like everything was bought in a single afternoon, that there is a collected feeling," Peace says. **CREATE A NEW CONTEXT** Paired with a sleek nickel sink, an antique Italian cabinet becomes a bespoke vanity for an elegant powder room with a silver- and gold-leafed faux bois wallcovering and luxurious finishes. **USE IT OR LOSE IT** A tall 18th-century walnut cabinet in the front entry makes a terrific spot for storage while adding a sense of history to the mountain abode. According to Peace, the mix of contemporary clean-lined furnishings with select antiques works very well in the rustic milieu. "This home has depth and richness," he says. "There's a romance about it"

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: A mix of new furnishings and antiques creates a timeless feeling in the great room. In the powder room, a wallcovering by Phillip Jeffries glimmers in the light cast by the sconces from Urban Electric. A woven grass-cloth wallcovering from Phillip Jeffries fosters a sense of coziness in the den. OPPOSITE: Over a dining table from Beau Studio and chairs by Bjork Studio, a branch-like chandelier from Allan Knight references the exterior.

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— INTERIOR DESIGNER BILL PEACE



draperies create an enveloping milieu. In the corner, a wing chair with silver-leafed detailing invites reading and contemplation. “We didn’t want it to feel too Western or clichéd in any way,” Peace says. “There’s an elegance about this home that’s simple and understated.”

In the second phase of the project, the team tackled the home’s exterior, replacing the original siding with reclaimed wood. “In this day and age, when people literally annihilate homes and start over, it was exciting to repurpose what was there,” say builder McRae, who also built David’s first home in the area many years earlier.

One item remained on David and Cameron’s proverbial punch list months after the project ended: naming their house, a tradition in the area. Then a friend made the perfect suggestion: “Call of the Wild,” a nod to the classic Jack London book. David and Cameron certainly feel called to the region, skiing, golfing and breaking bread with some of the best friends they’ve ever had.

In fact, they have become friends with a couple who bid against them for the house right down to the wire. What accounts for the live-and-let-live attitude? Maybe it’s those jaw-dropping views. “They call it Big Sky for a reason,” Cameron says. “Montana makes me feel peaceful, appreciative and open. It’s spectacular.” ○

OPPOSITE: A rug from Stark Carpet and an upholstered headboard fabricated by Glass House Atelier are two of the many textures in the master suite. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** The master bathroom has been updated with a wallcovering, a new vanity and marble floors. Photographs of wildlife bring the outside into the comfortable guest bedroom. An upholstered bed by Ochre is flanked by custom side tables in the spacious guest suite.

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PERFECT BALANCE

Classic meets contemporary in a California family's inviting vacation home in Big Sky, Montana

Builder Rob McRae sourced the reclaimed timber for the home's exterior from Montana Reclaimed Lumber. The wood's muted gray color is the result of the timbers lying outside in the sun for a year in advance.

STORY **RHONDA REINHART** PHOTOS **GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY**
ARCHITECTURE **LOCATI ARCHITECTS**
INTERIOR DESIGN **KENDALL WILKINSON DESIGN**
CONSTRUCTION **HIGHLINE PARTNERS**



For a Bay Area investment professional who met his wife on a ski trip to Tahoe 18 years ago—and eventually had three children who also love to hit the slopes—a personal ski retreat was the ultimate aspiration. “We had the vision of one day having a ski house where we could take our kids,” he says. “We spent time traveling all over the western U.S. sampling different areas with the idea of picking one for our family over the long term.” When the couple found a private three-acre lot at Montana’s Yellowstone Club that was perched at over 8,000 feet elevation and offered sweeping mountain views, they knew it was time to make their dream a reality.

To help them bring their vision to life, the homeowners enlisted Greg Dennee of Locati Architects, builder Rob McRae of Highline Partners and their go-to California interior designer, Kendall Wilkinson. The four-year collaborative effort resulted in an 11,000-square-foot mountain getaway that mixes modern touches with classic forms. “The clients really wanted the house to have roots in the traditional ski lodge aesthetic but have an unexpected contemporary feel,” says Dennee, who paired a time-honored gable roof design with less conventional floor-to-ceiling glass. “Modern doesn’t have to be severe; it can be comfortable. In this home, we were able to strike the balance between something that does feel overtly modern but still has a relaxed quality to it.”

The mix of materials in the home also required a deft touch from the architect. Composed primarily of steel, stone and reclaimed timber, the house could have ended up feeling dark and heavy, but instead it’s cheerful and welcoming throughout. By exposing the steel trusses in the ceiling of the kitchen, family room and great room, for instance, Dennee created an airy effect as well as visual interest overhead. “You can wood a home to death,” he says, “and the homeowners were really sensitive to that. They wanted the home to feel light and bright.”

The dwelling’s most dramatic feature, however, is the corner-to-corner glass that lets in panoramic views of Montana’s famous sky, trees and Sphinx and Pioneer Mountains. For interior designer Wilkinson and her design principal, Kristin Rowell, those views were the driving force behind all of their design decisions. “When you have the kind of view they have, you want to bring the outdoors in,” says Wilkinson. To achieve that goal, the duo started with a neutral palette of grays and creams accented with pops of green and blue to honor the surrounding nature. The designers were also careful with the scale and proportion of furnishings and light fixtures, ensuring that nothing would distract from the picturesque scenes visible from every room. >>

Throughout the house, architect Greg Dennee brought the outside in by using the same materials inside and out. At the entry, for example, he allowed the Montana moss rock on the exterior to carry directly through to the interior.



A PLACE FOR ALL

“When you have a vacation home, there are a lot of guests in and out,” says interior designer Kendall Wilkinson. “These homeowners are very close to their extended family, so the idea was how to make it intimate for the five of them but also accommodate 20 people.”

USE SPACE WISELY In the kitchen, the design team opted for an L-shaped island, which allowed for extra seating when needed as well as additional cabinet space. **PLAN FOR EXPANSION** Multifunctional furnishings are critical when there’s a crowd. The dining room table, for example, has leaves for both ends (meaning no pesky seam in the middle), and it can be extended to seat up to 18 people. **CHOOSE FAMILY-FRIENDLY FABRICS** In addition to their frequent visitors, the homeowners have a 6-year-old daughter and twin 8-year-old sons, so the high-traffic home was also designed with kids in mind. “Indoor-outdoor fabrics are hugely important,” Wilkinson says, “and there are so many different lines.” She recommends Perennials textiles as well as her own line for Fabricut, both of which are known for their durability and stain resistance.

ABOVE: Two Lindsey Adelman light fixtures hang in the dining room, which offers spectacular views of Sphinx Mountain. RIGHT: The great room’s cozy seating arrangement includes Holly Hunt sofas upholstered in Rosemary Hallgarten fabric and a pair of Kimberly Denman swivel chairs. The custom Perigee chandeliers, made of matte-black metal and handblown glass, are by Debra Weninger.



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— ARCHITECT GREG DENNEE



To maintain the cozy feeling of the home's expansive spaces, Wilkinson and Rowell added layers of texture (think wool rugs, cotton pillows, velvet sofas and fur-covered stools) and finished with a little bit of luster. "Shine is really important, and I don't think you should get shine in fabrics or too much in the furniture," Wilkinson says. "The shine comes with the lighting." The starting point for the designers' decorative lighting choices were the custom chandeliers in the great room and family room. Designed by artisan Debra Weninger, a relative of the homeowners, the sculptural fixtures feature a series of handblown glass spheres that add the luminosity Wilkinson so appreciates.

The fact that the homeowners chose a family member to create such prominent pieces is rather appropriate for a house meant to be an all-season vacation spot for their children and them as well as their extended family. With seven bedrooms and the capacity to sleep up to 24 people, the home has room for friends and kin alike. "This is the dream for our family for decades to come," says the homeowner. "It's a place where we'll always gather and come back to." ○

OPPOSITE: In the master bedroom, a light-reflecting chandelier illuminates a vintage rug and vintage tub chair. **CLOCKWISE FROM TOP, LEFT:** The all-white master bathroom provides a spa-like ambiance. The home's many sleeping quarters mean there is always room for guests. A bench upholstered in material from an authentic Swiss Army blanket perches outside the wine room.

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