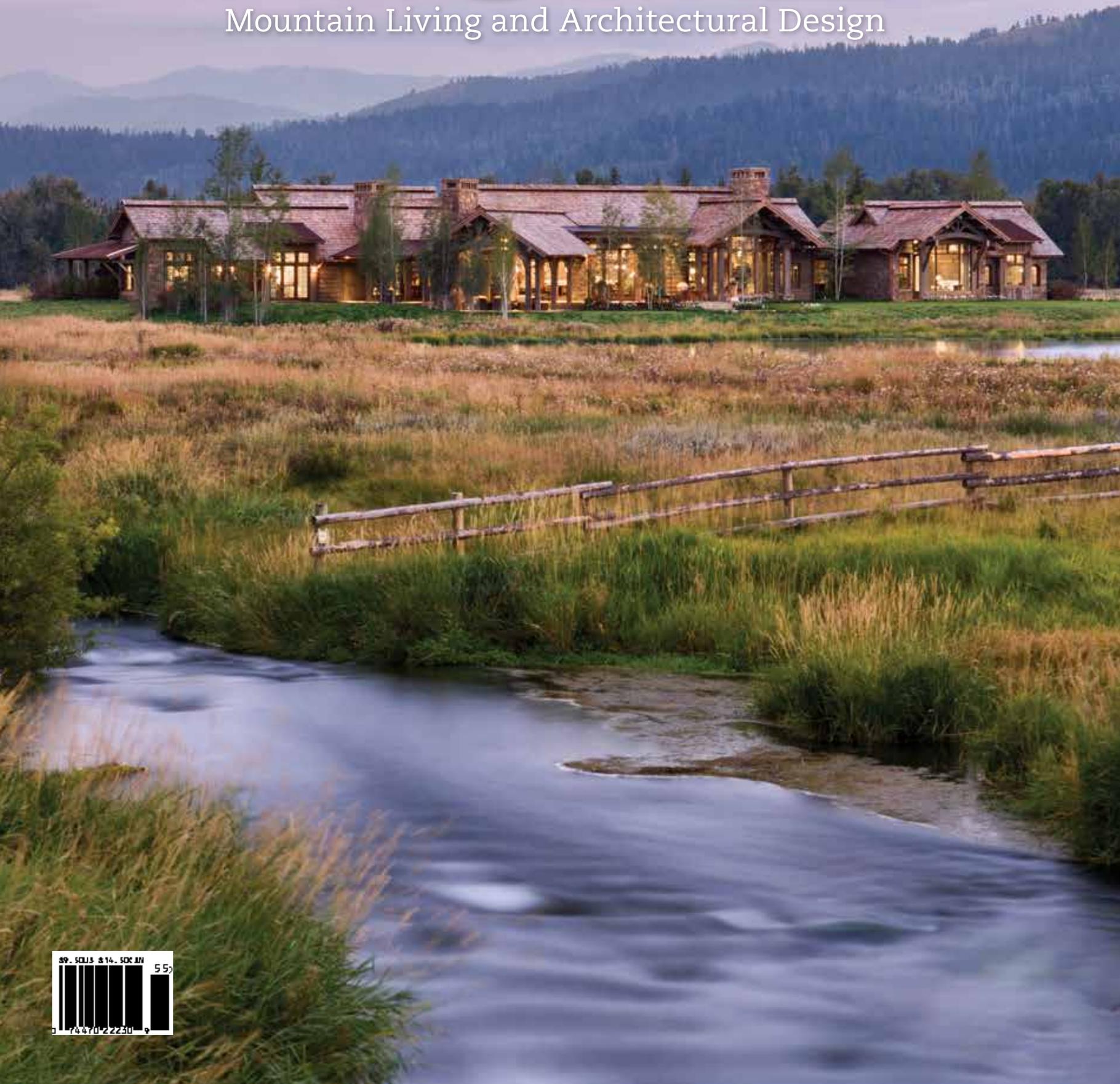


BIG SKY JOURNAL HOME

Mountain Living and Architectural Design



blending the elements

Inspired by the practical nature of vernacular buildings in the West, this Montana home appears as if it was constructed over time

WRITTEN BY CHRISTINE ROGEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARL NEUMANN

ARCHITECTURE
Stillwater Architects

CONSTRUCTION
Dovetail Construction

WITH CAREERS IN REAL ESTATE and the building industry, the owners of this Bozeman, Montana, residence knew what they wanted when planning to build a home overlooking the Bridger Mountains. Over the years, they poured foundations, designed, remodeled, bought and sold multiple homes in the region and each project contributed to their vision of how their new home should look and function.

"We were always very involved. Probably way too much," the couple said, laughing. "We lived up there the whole time [phase 2] was being built and we were there day in and day out."

A rooftop deck is one of many areas that maximizes the use of outdoor space, allowing the homeowners to enjoy the expansive views surrounding their home.



In the dining room, refined details such as herringbone flooring, cornices, dentil moulding and recessed ceilings soften rustic elements of stately exposed timber columns and stone walls.

The home's design combines traditionally Western architecture with European and contemporary details. Designed by architect Robert Gilbert of Stillwater Architects, the home came together in two phases, first as a mother-in-law suite above the garage with the primary living quarters undergoing construction five years later by Dovetail Construction.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Gilbert designed the home to include exterior facades of varying materials. Here, stone joins log and chink to give the appearance of a home constructed over time, reflecting the history and aesthetics of regional architecture. • The fixtures, tile work and white cabinetry in the kitchen lend a contemporary feel. • Light is an important aspect in each home designed by Gilbert, who thinks that multiple splashes of warm-spectrum light reference our primal inclinations towards candlelight and fire.

"I always look at history. I always look backwards in order to go forward," he said, noting that Parkitecture, homesteads, ranches and farm houses inform the design of his custom Western homes. "I travel places and see all these different styles — Craftsman, Traditional or Classical — and they all have rules, and you become fluent in these rules and then integrate them into the program of designing a new home."

Historically, western homes used

"It was reinforcing to have worked with these clients who have built on their own multiple times and who have so much industry insight, and to hear their words to us that they are very grateful and appreciative of the tremendous quality of Dovetail — that that really made us proud," said Tim Rote, co-founder of the Bozeman-based construction company.

The home is orientated to observe the ridgeback of the Bridgers and is grounded in the vernacular architecture and historical context of construction in the Northern Rockies. Stillwater Architects uses a historical approach to design buildings that span the spectrum stylistically, said architect Robert Gilbert, noting that the firm seeks to blend orthodox guidelines with today's standards of living.



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utilitarian materials in a purposeful manner and buildings developed periodically as generations added on to them. This inspired Gilbert to create a barn-like structure for the home's first phase and to include different siding, such as log and chink, reclaimed timber and stone, and multiple shed roofs on the second addition. The purpose was for the home to appear as though it was constructed over time.

"We took those elements that you see out West in an old compound and used those elements intentionally so no one will think its been there since 1880, but it looks like it belongs to the place," Gilbert said, also noting the importance of proportionality between these different elements.

"Connecting the roofing systems was something we took great care in doing," Rote said. "One of the more challenging aspects was the interacting roof geometry and how that related to the heavy timber work and correlated to the finishes of a very detailed interior trim. The home incorporates both rustic and refined



ABOVE: A custom blue paint was used on the exterior windows to add a pop of color and keep the home from appearing dated. **BELOW AND RIGHT:** The 5,300-square-foot home (including the garage) has four bedrooms and four-and-a-half baths. A unique attribute is the spiral staircase that leads to a cozy wine cellar.



elements, and to have those two inherently dissimilar type of materials connect and relate very well to each other is not an easy task."

Interior details depart from the traditional Western aesthetic. For example, the panels, soffits and masonry found throughout the home are more typical of European architecture, Gilbert said, pointing to the home's front entryway with its diagonal timber braces that settle on massive protruding stones on either side of the front door.



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LEFT TO RIGHT: The bathrooms in the home include modern fit and fixtures and brightly painted walls. The homeowners designed the interiors, choosing crystal chandeliers to add elegance to some spaces. The powder room is a clear departure from the rustic aesthetic.

“The Romans have been doing that for 2,500 years,” he said. “No farmer or rancher is going through that amount of effort. Some details like that are more contemporary, more finished, a little more polished.”

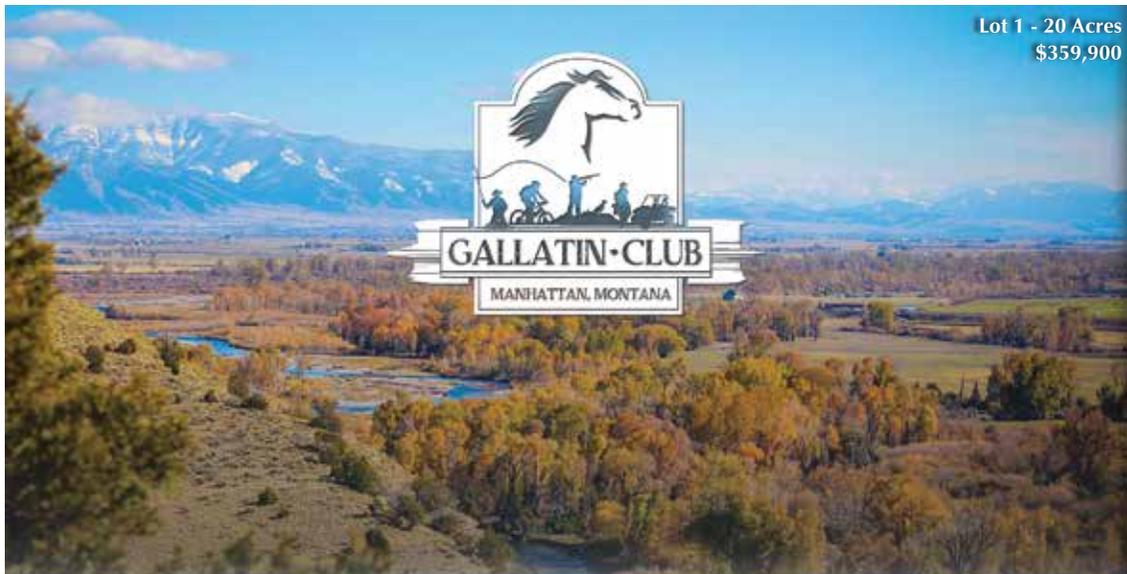
The end result is exactly what the homeowners had in mind.

“Bob was on the same page as we were,” they said. “It was so great to see a drawing and we’d be

like, ‘huh. That’s exactly what we want.’ He actually listened to what we wanted and came up with a great design, and we were sold right there.”

And despite the homeowners’ careers of buying, selling and building houses, they plan to stay and call this one home.

“There is nothing that we don’t like about it, and this is the first house that we’ve built that is that way,” they said. 🏡



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