

Size-Wise

Pocket Ranch brings the outside in with this inspired design by Strout Architects, Teton Heritage Builders and Laurie Waterhouse Interiors.

Glass rises to the rafters—less to make a statement than to illuminate the abundance of the natural surroundings.

Bottom left: Gently angled metal roofing and a clean-cut timber frame settle this mountain home against the backdrop of its surroundings.

Bottom middle: Laurie Waterhouse Interiors set the dining area with chairs of woven sea grass and a table reconstituted from hardwood floors.

Opposite page bottom right: In the bathroom, river rock adds an organic element to a tiled shower.



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—Roger Strout,
Strout Architects



+ Story by Nicole Burdick
+ Photography by David Swift

To create a home that integrates with the landscape is appealing; to design one that breathes in the natural environment requires a connection to the space that—dare we say—offers a glimpse at how a dwelling becomes part of the ecosystem. Atop Heck of a Hill, one such home does just that.

In a way that early homesteaders might appreciate, Pocket Ranch revels in efficiency. And that is just what homeowner Richard Spencer had in mind when he went looking to build this time around. Pocket Ranch capitalizes on simplicity, though its history is a bit more rugged. Having been started for a previous owner in 2007, the home sat in Tyvek wrap for nearly two years, sustaining the recession, before Spencer came upon it in his search for the kind of place in which he'd like to settle. The story, and the house, started rebuilding.

“The genesis for our projects is the people living within the environment,” says architect Roger Strout, owner of Strout Architects and designer of the initial Pocket Ranch project. “We determine who they are and how they want to live and then couple that with the site. I don’t believe in style the way other people might; every piece of architecture has a character to it. And though Richard’s house fits within a vernacular because of the use of traditional materials—stone, timber, rusted metal—it cannot be put in a box.”

Character rises out of articulate choices. From the beginning, each aspect of the building process was defined by aligning with Spencer’s unadorned sense of comfort. Having spent a great deal of time sailing, even living on a boat, Spencer appreciates a certain economy of space and a long-reaching view, so the Teton Range became part of the architecture. Pocket Ranch’s windows climb toward the clean lines of heavy timber frame and curve around the entirety of a living room that makes a literal centerpiece of Glory Bowl. Despite remarkable sights pulling through from every direction, the home remains modest in all other ways at less than 2,000 square feet.





Pocket Ranch builds rapport from every dimension of its design on a rare, unforested lot off of Fall Creek Road in Wilson. It overlooks a quaint valley and sweeping expanses of the Teton Range to the north, with an arresting view of Glory Bowl to the west.

Within this space, Laurie Waterhouse of Laurie Waterhouse Interiors, knew she had to make the most, and with a single piece of furniture she saw the opportunity to further honor the outdoors through interior design. The sociable, double-sided couch anchors the room while fitting Spencer's own masculine aesthetics. Waterhouse describes it as "a brute," yet adds that it's as soft as Italian leather gloves.

Waterhouse says her job was to create a timeless environment, and she did this partly by making choices that further channeled vistas through each window. She explains that the warm neutral interior colors don't fight with what is outside. Simple wood lamps feel rooted, and this minimalism allowed her to do what she loves, which is to give a sense of wholeness and continuity to a space.

"To overfill a room of this kind would have been criminal," Waterhouse says, and her respect for her client runs deep. From his no-hassle attitude to his decisiveness, "everything had a place" for him, and that imbued each element of the design with significance. "It is a privilege to get to do what I do. And Richard is the perfect client."

From Strout Architects to Laurie Waterhouse Interiors to Teton Heritage Builders, all of the professionals who created this space admirably describe Spencer as a whole lot of fun, as the kind of client who knows what he wants while being open to ideas and flexible to the inevitable changes and challenges that arise on any project. This sense of ease translated directly into the home, which lacks the trappings of a stereotypically Western house.

"I am not a Westerner," says Spencer, who has been coming to Jackson since the late 70s. To round out the content of his home he brought collected antiques. "Though just a few," he says, as he speaks wistfully again of boat travel and how early Americans weren't afforded the luxury of clutter: They, like Spencer, arrived with only their most favored items.

Mark Dalby, co-owner at Teton Heritage Builders, also describes the project as feeling right, that each element had a sense of value. He explains that, even structurally, the spaces are comfortable, efficient and effective. From a builder's standpoint it was easy to get a sense of Spencer's lifestyle, and Dalby gained a real appreciation for the way the building materials represent the solidity of the edifice.

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*—Laurie Waterhouse,
Laurie Waterhouse Interiors*



Subtle connections, such as soft pendant lighting and the same cut of leather tying bar stools to sofa, give flow to Spencer's love of entertaining, as does a wine cellar in the basement.

The handcrafted trout table box by Jackson artist A.D. Maddox mingles with an intimate collection of antique pieces from England, extending the sense of a life highlighted by the outdoors.

*"The elements come together to make it
a fresh look. And it's so nice to build what
size-wise is appropriate."*

—Mark Dalby,
Teton Heritage Builders





The Suzanne Crane basin finds good company with this graceful vanity's whimsical antiques.



Strout Architects describes the naturally occurring rusty red patina as having a life of its own, one meant to deepen with time as it turns a beautiful rusted red.




The guest house actually boasts more square footage than the main residence, and Richard Spencer doesn't mind a bit if it seems his guests are living larger than he does.

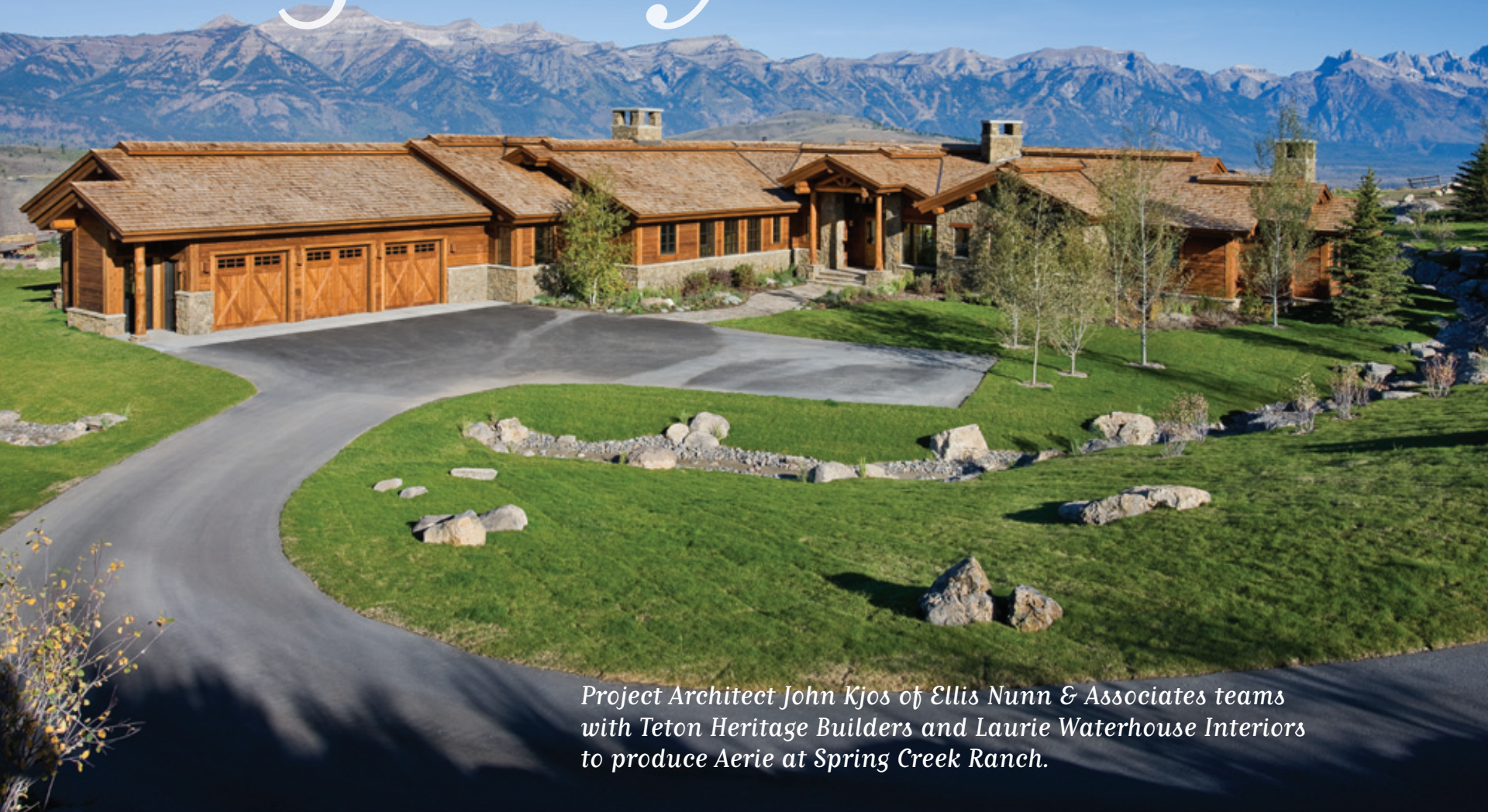
Pushing away from typical Western touches, specifically using square timbers instead of log, was also refreshing for Teton Heritage Builders. Having earned a reputation for quality work on some of the more grandiose homes in the valley, Dalby enjoyed transferring that same level of excellence into such a refined design. At Pocket Ranch, the savings on space were put back into materials, from stonework to metal roofing and copper-clad windows. "The elements come together to make it a fresh look," says Dalby. "And it's so nice to build what size-wise is appropriate."

Even the undercarriage of the home embraces practicality. When Strout Architects recognized that the grade change of the terrain would permit a basement, the home grew organically. Spencer took the chance for a small indulgence with what he calls his "man pit"—a compact space designed and equipped for movie viewing.

Strout, Waterhouse and Dalby all found great satisfaction in being part of a project that sincerely speaks to ecologically conscientious choices. "We are living on three percent of what we have," says Strout, reiterating the well-known Jackson Hole statistic about 97% of the land being in the public domain. "People need to assess more and more often how they want to live in this beautiful environment."

As the natural light streams in, it's the resident who gives each home a personality and a sense of quality. Strout observes that it is indeed Richard Spencer who has made Pocket Ranch unique: "A client like Richard doesn't care what the rest of the world really thinks. He knows what he likes. And he knew what he needed—and that was all that he needed." 

Eagle-Eye Views



Project Architect John Kjos of Ellis Nunn & Associates teams with Teton Heritage Builders and Laurie Waterhouse Interiors to produce Aerie at Spring Creek Ranch.



Granite counters do double duty as an area for food prep and a “settling in” place for the visitor.

- + Story by Alisan Peters
- + Photography by Roger Wade Studios

You’d be forgiven if you suddenly burst into song, and “Doe, a deer” wouldn’t be far off the mark. There’s a herd of them that love this view as much as Randy and Nancy Ronning. “We wanted this home to be like a group of cabins, but with uninterrupted flow through all the rooms,” Randy notes.

The Ronnings were attracted to Spring Creek Ranch because of its unequalled views and convenience to the varied and exciting aspects of Jackson Hole. They found a resort that offers many more amenities to the residents of this full-service community. “Homeowners like the Ronnings choose Spring Creek Ranch not only for the views, but because the resort offers a warm community atmosphere with all the amenities of a world-class resort hotel, from concierge and housekeeping services to shuttle transportation and room service,” says Spring Creek’s General Manager Stephen Price. “A simple phone call takes care of most needs and that includes keeping an eye on their investment while they’re away.”

Led by John Kjos of Ellis Nunn & Associates Architects and supported by Teton Heritage Builders, the team added Laurie Waterhouse and her daughter, Cynthia Slavens, of Laurie Waterhouse Interiors to help trim out the home. Together, they produced what’s become known as Aerie, a 5,400-square-foot main level, lodge-style home that offers 360-degree views of the mountains surrounding Jackson Hole. View windows and outdoor decks take in the entire Teton Mountain Range, Sleeping Indian, the Snake River Range and sights all the way to the southern portion of Yellowstone National Park. The home also has a 900-square-foot bunkroom that can sleep twelve, with an additional 4,500 square feet of unfinished basement.

“Randy’s only request was that the granite look the way the Snake River bottom looked from his fishing boat.”

*—Laurie Waterhouse,
Laurie Waterhouse Interiors*



Above: Comfortable, cozy rooms flow seamlessly through this carefully designed home, capturing breathtaking views of Grand Teton National Park with views up to Yellowstone National Park.

Left: The Elk master suite opens onto a personal deck—just the ticket for hot chocolate and a little star gazing.



*“We hand-selected those logs,
keeping the root ball intact to help create
a grounded and historical feeling.”*

—John Kjos,
Ellis Nunn & Associates Architects



Above: The great room organically incorporates magnificent Teton Range views through its band of vista windows. Careful selections in artwork and design elements accent the theme.

Right: Covered porches and wrap-around decks provide sumptuous outdoor living spaces that complement breathtaking views from a handsome building site.

Opposite page: Views from the rustic and timeless front entry zip right through the house, framing the Grand Teton and invoking a sense of delighted surprise while drawing the visitor in. Note the rooted base of the portico-supporting lodgepole pines.





“... everything had a purpose,” right down to the 12-foot-diameter boulders they jackhammered out for the basement.


*—Keith Benjamin,
Teton Heritage Builders*

Ellis Nunn’s L-shaped floor plan was executed using the latest in construction techniques and incorporates indigenous lodgepole pine logs retrieved from forestry fuel reduction efforts at the site of the Green Knoll Fire in nearby Wilson, Wyoming. “We hand-selected those logs, keeping the root ball intact to help create a grounded and historical feeling,” says Kjos. Wrap-around decks, complete with three different sound systems, serve as covered outdoor living areas, suitable for impromptu barbecues or quiet evening sunsets. And with R-35 insulated walls, an R-60 insulated roof and low-E, high-efficiency windows, Aerie competently withstands whatever winter weather comes its way.

Inside, the flow between rooms is seamless, while décor choices help give each room a distinctive feel. In the Howling Wolf guest room, you’ll find a faux-fur wolf spread on the bed and wolf tracks embedded in the *en suite* bathroom tiles. The Elk room serves as the master suite, with female elk adorning Nancy’s half of the master bath and male elk gracing Randy’s half. Their son’s room is called Fishing Lodge, with all the appropriate touches, but with special consideration given to capturing perfect views of the Grand Teton. The granite countertop in the kitchen was discovered by Nancy and Laurie

Waterhouse on a sourcing trip to Salt Lake City. “Randy’s only request,” says Laurie, “was that the granite look the way the Snake River bottom looked from his fishing boat.” Gulp. “When we found it,” says Nancy, “we showed him a little two-by-two-inch square and said, ‘We found it!’”

Keith Benjamin, project manager for Teton Heritage Builders, and Matthew Niska, project superintendent, admit that for such an intense project—planning and building took two and a half years—the team had to work together with incredible focus and attention to detail. “The Ronnings really thought this out,” says Niska, “there wasn’t a whole lot of redesign.” “And everything had a purpose,” Benjamin adds, right down to the 12-foot-diameter boulders they jackhammered out for the basement. “Every single chunk was used on site, in the hardscape around the property.”

For the Ronnings, Aerie is a dream come true. “You know, it’s not often that people exceed your expectations,” says Randy, “but with our team, that’s what happened. The process was so enjoyable, we look forward to doing it again with the same team.” 

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