

# true GRIT



A couple creates a **1930s-style escape** with their rustic Wyoming **guesthouse**.

BY AMY LAUGHINGHOUSE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER WADE

The **two cabins** were lifted intact with a giant crane and placed on a **new foundation**.



Landscaper Brad Suske peppered the property with native grasses, shrubs, aspen and spruce. "It was a true habitat restoration project," he says.



At the top of a winding road on the outskirts of Jackson, Wyoming, a snug cabin clings to the steep slope of West Gros Ventre Butte. A rocking chair creaks on the wraparound sandstone patio, while wildflowers rustle in the breeze. Inside, triumphant laughter rings over the slap-BANG of solids and stripes colliding on a pool table. Noticeably absent, though, is the irksome ring of a telephone and any other modern-day noises. This place has just one purpose: to help folks get away from it all.

“It’s the ultimate escape from the 21st century,” says Neal, a native Texan who designed the 1,000-square-foot outbuilding as a guesthouse to the vacation home he shares with his wife Nancy. But the cabin’s lightly peeled antique logs, rough-sawn floors and deliberate disconnection from many modern amenities make it decidedly more rough-and-tumble than the main residence 40 yards away.

### Roughing It

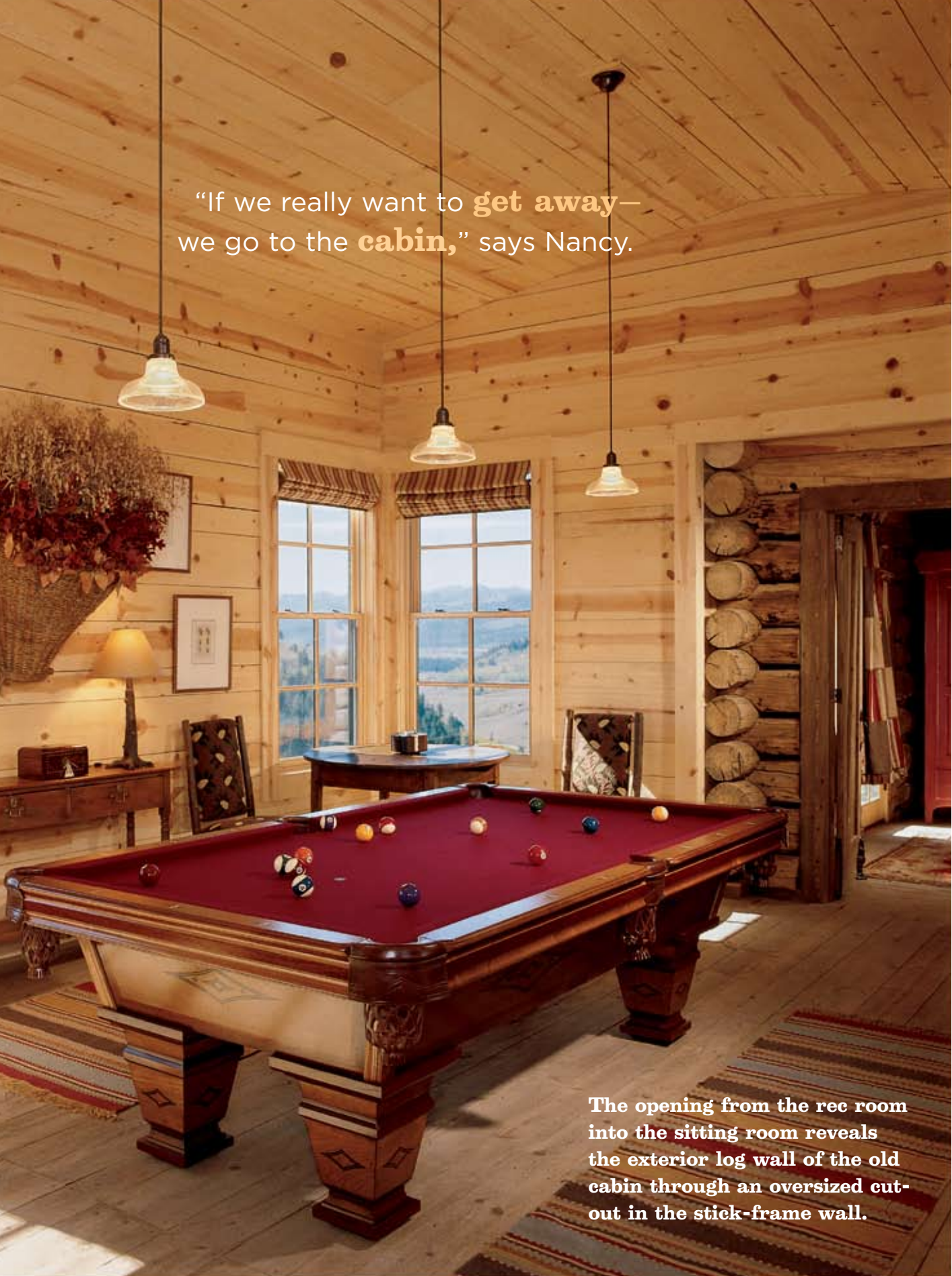
“Neal and Nancy wanted the cabin to be completely rustic,” says architect Eliot Goss. “Not ‘Jackson Hole’ rustic, which tends to be pretty elegant and expensive, but true rustic.”

To that end, the couple wanted to use antique logs that would complement the log siding on the main house and “fit the feel” of



**Left:** The sitting room features the original cathedral ceiling, which gives the small space an open feel.

**Above:** The bedroom’s red armoire takes the place of a built-in closet, which would never be found in an authentic 1930s log cabin.



“If we really want to **get away**—  
we go to the **cabin**,” says Nancy.

The opening from the rec room  
into the sitting room reveals  
the exterior log wall of the old  
cabin through an oversized cut-  
out in the stick-frame wall.

Jackson, Nancy says. Teton Heritage Builders found two small 1930s-era log cabins—each measuring about 14 by 18 square feet—that fit the bill. The cabins were lifted intact with a giant crane and placed onto a new foundation. Connected by a central stick-frame core, the duo now also include a small entryway, a bedroom and sitting room, a large game room with a kitchenette/bar, and a full bath.

For an authentic 1930s look, the stick-framed core’s exterior was clad in vertical cedar boards and pine battens. The core’s interior is made entirely of rough-sawn fir, which was used for the walls, ceiling, floor, counters and trim. Most of the fir was left untreated, allowing it to develop its own natural patina over time. Only the random-width wide-planked flooring received a light stain—but it, too, is deliberately low-maintenance. “We wanted people to be able to walk in wearing their ski boots,” explains Nancy.



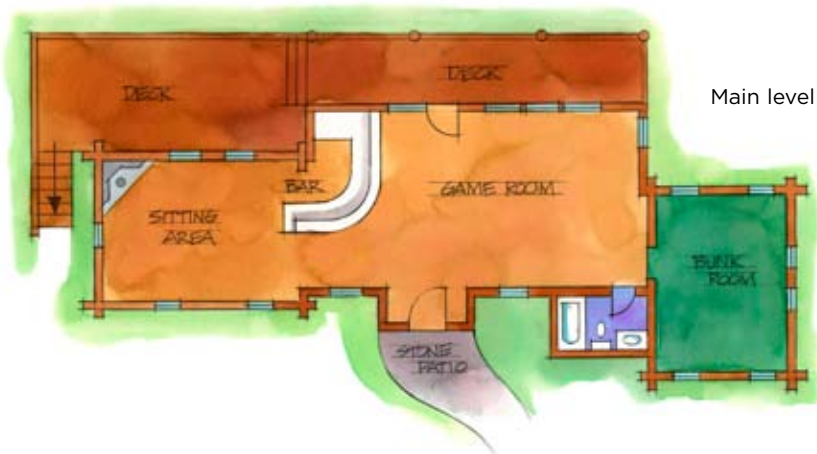
**Above left:** A butter-churn lamp, pine cabinet and paisley curtains form a charming vignette in the sitting room. **Above right:** An open wrought-iron bed and an empty picture frame draw attention to the rustic walls in the bedroom.

The couple took the same “less-is-more” approach with the cabins, preserving as much of their original look as possible—from the interior wood chinking to the wear-and-tear from previous owners. “The logs are notched where someone hung a picture or a mirror,” Nancy admits, “but we decided that it’s part of the charm.”

### Windows to the Past

Neal and Nancy view the logs themselves as art—and they’ve “framed” them accordingly. The opening from the rec room into the sitting room reveals the exterior log wall of the old cabin through an oversized cut-out in the stick-frame wall. Houston-based interior designer Cathy Chapman also hung empty “tramp art” frames (which wandering souls fashioned for money during the Great Depression). “We just let the logs show through,” Cathy explains. “It’s kind of primitive and fun.”

To enhance the look of the logs and rough-sawn fir, Chapman devised an autumnal palette of red, gold and sage green, which appears in striped, floral, plaid and leaf-printed fabrics throughout the guest-house. “We wanted warm-toned decor—nothing crisp,” she explains.



Main level

## HOMESPECS

**Square Footage:** 1,000

**Log Provider:** Lost River Log

Specialists Inc.

**Builder:** Teton Heritage Builders

**Architect:** Eliot Goss

**Interior Decorator:** Chapman

Design Inc.

In the bedroom, Cathy dressed a custom-made wrought-iron bed, which once belonged to Neal and Nancy's son, in a solid taupe quilt with floral and striped pillows. A reproduction pine end table and an antique English ottoman sidle up to the bed, while a small pine dresser, plump armchair and striking red armoire flank the room's perimeter. As Nancy notes, "There's something cozy about a small room having all that furniture."

The game room, by contrast, is sparsely furnished with little more than a pool table, poker table and a few small log chairs. "Function is more important than form around a pool table," Cathy

notes. "You need a lot of space."

But the adjacent sitting room is all about warmth and comfort. A wood-burning stove, which supplements the electric baseboard heating, glows in the corner. Two inviting armchairs accompany the custom rolled-arm leather-and-chenille sofa. And several unique accents—such as a butter-churn lamp and a bison rug Neal picked up in Jackson—complete a vignette too tempting to reserve only for guests.

"Sometimes when I can't find Neal, I know he's just hanging out down there," Nancy reveals with a laugh. "As much as Jackson Hole is a getaway for us, if we really want to get away—we go to the cabin." ■

The couple took a **"less is more"** approach—preserving the look of the **original cabins.**



A randomly patterned Montana moss-rock patio and rocking chairs provide a perfect reading spot in warmer weather.

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