

BIG SKY JOURNAL

HOME

MOUNTAIN LIVING + ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN



Alpine Aerie

A Midwestern couple brings the home of their dreams to life in Big Sky, Montana

ARCHITECTURE
Centre Sky Architecture
CONSTRUCTION
Teton Heritage Builders
INTERIOR DESIGN
Pamela Straub Interior Design

WHEN A COUPLE FROM THE MIDWEST CAME TO VISIT dear friends in Big Sky, Montana, to ring in the New Year in 1993, they had no idea how much the experience would change their lives. Both avid skiers (a sport they enjoyed with their then-school-aged daughters), they fell in love with the remote world-class ski resort, so much so that, within a few years, they'd found their own getaway: a log home in the area's Mountain Village. Positioned alongside the slopes, the dwelling was also an easy 20-minute drive from the community's golf course, another passion they shared during the summer months.

WRITTEN BY NORMAN KOLPAS

Sited toward the mountain views and warmed by a fireplace and overhead heaters, the home's large wraparound deck serves as a year-round outdoor living space.

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Fast forward to 2018 — with the couple now retired and living in Florida — they were ready to build the ski house of their dreams and found the perfect spot in the Spanish Peaks Mountain Club. “We wanted something more contemporary in design, and with all our living space on one floor,” the wife says. “And we also wanted to be close to the club, while keeping the same ski-in/ski-out convenience we’d enjoyed.” In addition, the couple needed ample space on another floor for their now-adult daughters and their own growing families, as well as for visiting friends.

FROM TOP: Well-equipped for entertaining, the kitchen features a regular oven, a steam oven, and a gas cooktop, all from Wolf, along with a Sub-Zero refrigerator and a Scotsman ice maker in the bar. Pendant lights from The Urban Electric Company hang above a kitchen island that’s surfaced in Taj Mahal quartzite. The chrome stools are from Interlude Home. • The custom front door, built from horizontal alder boards, opens to reveal the sweeping views beyond the foyer and great room.



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The lot that they acquired was in an ideal location, in a neighborhood just a minute’s drive from the Spanish Peak’s clubhouse. “The views from there are great,” says the husband. “It looks down toward the [new] Montage Hotel and the valley below. And a little bit to the right, we can see Big Sky village.”

Desiring creativity in the building process and a timely turnaround, they assembled an experienced local team to fulfill their vision. For the home’s design, they chose to work with Jamie Daugaard, founder and principal of Centre Sky Architecture, who has developed a reputation for site-specific, client-responsive, sustainable design in the Big Sky area and beyond (they also have offices in Telluride, Colorado, and Park City, Utah). For the construction, they chose to work with Peter Lee and his team at Teton Heritage Builders, which has locations in Bozeman and Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and is well-respected



FROM TOP: Bella, the homeowners’ Abyssinian cat, relaxes in the study located off the hallway between the great room and the sleeping quarters. Prints by artist Bev Doolittle hang above the sofa, and a coffee table from Oomph sits atop an antique Persian rug. • Seen from the dining room, lamps by Circa Lighting on a credenza from Studio A Home frame the fireplace, which features a painting by Montana artist Allen Knows His Gun.



for custom residential projects that feature high-quality local materials.

Just 18 months later, the couple moved into their new home, which marks a subtle yet nonetheless dramatic departure from their previous lodge-style abode. “I’d call it clean-lined traditional,” says Daugaard, describing the structure’s subtly sleek combination of “long, flowing rooflines and softly pitched gables.” The home’s material palette features gray-toned Chief Cliff Skookum stone, a quartzite from the mountains of Northwest Montana, and rusticated Douglas fir. “It still has the feeling of a very traditional form, but just simplifies it and makes

it more livable for today," he adds, summing it all up with words that capture the end result's openly inviting effect: "The house breathes."

The wood surfaces on the doors, ceilings, and exterior roofline and decking were finished with a neutral gray stain that harmonizes with the stone. That marks a "refreshingly contemporary" tonal departure from the typical mountain residential color palette of natural materials in earthen shades of brown, orange, and yellow, notes Lee.

In a similar spirit, the interior walls were surfaced with drywall and painted a soft shade of white, instead of the rough-hewn wood that's often used in rustic homes. That provided the perfect backdrop for the contemporary furnishings, fabrics, and finishes that were chosen by the Toledo, Ohio-based interior designer Pamela Straub, in collaboration with the homeowners. "We



FROM TOP: Western and contemporary touches come together in the entry, where a bench with suede strapping complements the pierced-metal chandelier and sconces by Oly. • The homeowners' bedroom features both rustic and contemporary styles, with a hide-covered night table by Interlude Home, bed linens from Legacy Home, and curtains made from Thistle Garden Linen by Sanderson Design Group.



tried to use organic shapes and natural materials to create a soft, welcoming aesthetic," says Straub, who also introduced harmonious touches of color in accents, such as the throw pillow fabric that features subtle shades of buttermilk, moss, and teal.

Now finished, life in the new 5,418-square-foot home revolves around the main level, just as the clients requested. This floor features a great room that opens to a dining area, and a spacious kitchen with a prep island, walk-in pantry, and wet bar. Kimball Derrick, a Cincinnati-based kitchen designer, custom-tailored the cooking space and bar to fulfill the couple's love of preparing meals together and entertaining friends and family.

Along a hallway to the east of this central area is a large ski/mud room with a door that leads to the slopes. And in the other direction, there's a cozy study where the owners usually begin their day, with their bedroom suite just beyond. The lower floor features three guest suites and a family room, and a smaller floor above the main level includes a home office and

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"The owners always wanted to reference the Montana location and make it feel like a home in the Rocky Mountain West."

— PAMELA STRAUB, INTERIOR DESIGNER

ABOVE: The dining room's sleek-lined furniture and fixtures allow the views to be the center of attention. The metallic three-tiered chandelier is from Arteriors.




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one more guest suite.

With the spirit of hospitality effortlessly flowing into the outdoor living spaces, the doors in the dining room slide all the way open, leading to a spacious, covered wrap-around deck, complete with an outdoor fireplace, overhead heaters, lounge chairs with faux-fur throws, and a large-screen TV.

“Outdoor living was very important to them,” Dugaard says. “That’s how they want to live, whether it’s for apres ski in the winter or at the end of the day in summertime.”

“We even had dinner out there last New Year’s Eve,” adds the owner. A fitting book-end, no doubt, to their very first experience in Big Sky almost 30 years earlier. 



A powder room on the lower level features a washstand by Waterworks and, above it, a wild turkey illustration from John James Audubon’s *Birds of America*. **OPPOSITE PAGE:** The owners’ suite at the top right and the guest bedroom below it share the same south-facing vistas as the study, great room, and dining room.