

# WYOMING WONDER

“EVERYBODY WANTS TO COME UP TO OUR PLACE,” says Doug Yarrow. “With the way space is used in our home, it’s possible to still have privacy, even while a great house party goes on around you.”

Doug and his wife Penny didn’t leave anything to chance or luck in planning and building their second home. Even though the 7,500-square-foot home is more than a thousand miles from the couple’s full-time residence in southern California, the Yarrows had the advantage of familiarity with the Grand Teton Basin. For several years, they owned a succession of condominiums in the Jackson Hole area, so they didn’t have to rely on anyone for advice about the lifestyle and laid-back ambience that dictates a lot of the surrounding architecture. But even armed with knowledge, Doug and Penny realized that getting professional assistance would only make the process better.



Montana moss rock was used in the home’s three fireplaces, including this one in the family room. A comfortable leather sofa, a big-screen television, and a fire burning—what better way could anyone spend a lazy Sunday afternoon?

INSET: Lots of natural material, led by cedar siding, allows Doug and Penny Yarrow’s vacation home to blend in beautifully with the surroundings.

A rustic living room with a stone fireplace, a mounted deer head, a red leather sofa, and a wooden rocking chair. The room features a high ceiling with exposed wooden beams and a large window. The fireplace is made of stone and has a wooden mantel. A mounted deer head with large antlers is on the wall above the mantel. A red leather sofa is in the foreground, and a wooden rocking chair is near a large window. The room is decorated with various rustic items, including a wooden coffee table, a small table with a lamp, and a vase of flowers.

*Architect and homeowners  
collaborate to create a home  
that suits a couple or  
a crowd.*

BY JOYCE STANDRIDGE · PHOTOS BY ROGER WADE · STYLING BY DEBRA GRAHL

**RIGHT:** Lots of open space—vertical as well as horizontal—adds to the Western lodge feel of the home. The massive logs overhead appear perfectly in scale with the overall size of the home. Douglas fir wraps the steel I-beams that ensure the home will stand through the ages.

**OPPOSITE TOP:** By keeping the kitchen, breakfast nook, and family room open, family gatherings include the cook—and occasional raids on the fridge!

**OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** Architect Ellis Nunn convinced the Yarrows that sheetrock would set off the logs in their home. The light-colored walls also brighten up some of the interior spaces.



Enter the neighbors. “We had a shared porch at our first condo and, of course, we became friends,” explains Doug. “Ellis Nunn Architects designed a home for our neighbors and we were able to watch the process and then see the results. We were sufficiently impressed that we contacted Ellis and set up an appointment with his team. It was a great decision.”

Doug and Penny had seen a lot of different ideas in home design in the area. In fact, they had even driven

around taking snapshots as well as gathering thoughts gleaned from publications and from visits to friends’ homes. By the time they sat down with Ellis and project manager John Kjos, the Yarrows had a very good idea of what they wanted.

“They were absolutely delightful to work with,” notes Ellis. “It’s rewarding to work with people who know what they want but are willing to listen to suggestions and understand the parameters within which a home has



to be created. We want to accommodate their wishes, but we also have to keep in mind what the land dictates, as well as restrictions and covenants.”

“There are real estate laws in Wyoming regarding the envelope—or area that can be developed—within given properties,” adds Penny. “The development had some requirements regarding building styles, heights, and similar restrictions. There’s also a homeowners association, but all these things exist to keep the Western character and maintain the property values. We didn’t run into anything that we couldn’t live with, and we didn’t really have to make any significant changes to our original plans.”

As is always the case, the building site itself determined some of the home’s design. In this instance, Doug and Penny traded their first lot for the one next door. They got more privacy and a slightly better view (from marvelous to fabulous), while the original owner was able to adjoin a family member’s property. Everyone was happy and the Yarrows got a beautiful mountainside lot with many mature trees. With assistance from their pros, Doug and Penny were able to selectively harvest trees and create a comfortable footprint for their home while still retaining considerable seclusion. Furthermore, the cedar siding and Montana moss rock on the foundation blend beautifully with the surroundings. “We considered decorative chinking,” says Doug, “but decided that the upkeep was more than we wanted. The exterior was well planned to avoid a lot of maintenance over time.”





**ABOVE:** Even if the Yarrows' home is overflowing with guests, Doug and Penny can always slip away to the quiet of their master bedroom. Its cozy comfort belies the generous size.

**RIGHT:** Doug and Penny have ample dressing and grooming room in the master bath. Across from the oversized double vanity is a shower and Penny's hidden laundry closet, while behind it is a huge walk-in closet. And then there is the sylvan beauty outside the window over the spa tub.





While the exterior offers a spectacular welcome for visitors, the interior features a warmth and versatility that reflect the collective vision of the homeowners and the architect. The integration of casual log with the formality of timber frame resulted in an utterly surprising and charming layout. "It's the result of compromise, but very nice compromise," Doug assures.

What Doug means is that structural requirements had considerable bearing on how the interior was designed. "In this part of the country, plans have to consider seismic issues as well as the winter snow loads," says John Kjos, the architect who worked most closely with the Yarrows. "Considering Doug and Penny's desire for lots of open space inside as well, we had to use steel I-beams to support the load. There's a remarkable amount of steel

in this house, in fact. But we wrapped the steel with Douglas fir to stunning effect."

The home also has a few 2-by-10-inch walls to hide some of the vertical steel posts, mostly to frame the massive window walls. But with clever planning those areas most definitely are not detrimental to the overall plan. "It's a fun challenge to turn an unusual aspect into a featured highlight," notes John with a satisfied smile in his voice.

In fact, beyond a smart floorplan that yields no wasted space, the home boasts all kinds of well-planned details, and only the lower level home theater was something that happened during the building phase. Everything else came from the original sketches, including the stackable washer and dryer in the master bedroom closet. "I have a won-

**ABOVE: Doug wanted a pool table for the couple's two sons and their friends to enjoy. There is also a seating area so the gang can enjoy video games and other entertainment.**



**It's the great outdoors that lures people to northwestern Wyoming, and the Yarrows wisely took advantage of their private lot to have decks and porches that allow plenty of room for outdoor relaxation as well as parties.**

derful full laundry on the lower level," says Penny, "with lots of room for folding and storage. But on those occasions when it's just Doug and me here I've been so grateful to have the small set in the closet."

From the original idea of one gathering room, the Yarrows accepted Ellis's urging that they have a great room and a family room, which meant more walls upon which they could display their growing art collection. More pragmatically, having the family room open off the kitchen meant that the cook—i.e., Penny—would not be left out of the laughter and conversations with family and friends. Locating a game room on the upper level—but leaving it open to the family room and breakfast nook—meant that the younger Yarrows and their pals could have their own fun but still feel a part of the overall good buzz.

"I also decided to forego a butler's pantry in order to have my own small office area off the master bedroom,"

adds Penny. "Doug has a full office, which has been just wonderful. It allows him to stay in touch with his business back in California and we can often extend our stays here. But by having my own area, I can have a computer and printer and keep up with my interests without disturbing things in his office."

Another well-thought-out aspect of the home's layout is the manner in which the bedrooms have been scattered, allowing for privacy. All guest rooms have their own separate baths, with one bedroom secluded on the lower, walk-out floor and the other two upstairs off the game room. The master is on the main floor and when Doug and Penny are alone they can virtually shut off the rest of the house if they wish. That helps with the heating, a dual system that features hydronics for much of the house, and a forced-air system for the main floor. "We turn the heat down to 52 degrees when we are gone," says Doug.

"By doing our heating system this way, within 15 minutes of arrival the main floor is warm again. Plus, it allows us to humidify the house, which is an issue here where it's so dry."

Large Douglas fir logs with 18-to-24-inch diameters, finished onsite, add a lot of character to the ceilings. "Originally, I wanted wood-plank ceilings," says Doug, "but Ellis convinced me that using sheetrock instead would really make the logs stand out. I have to say he was absolutely correct."

Although a few rooms have carpeting, there is liberal use of character-filled hickory floors. "We have a textured finish that's unusual, and it came out beautifully," Doug continues. "It also hides the sins brought in on shoes and paws from the mountains and the snow. We don't have to worry about dogs—or people—dripping snow or mud and ruining the floors."

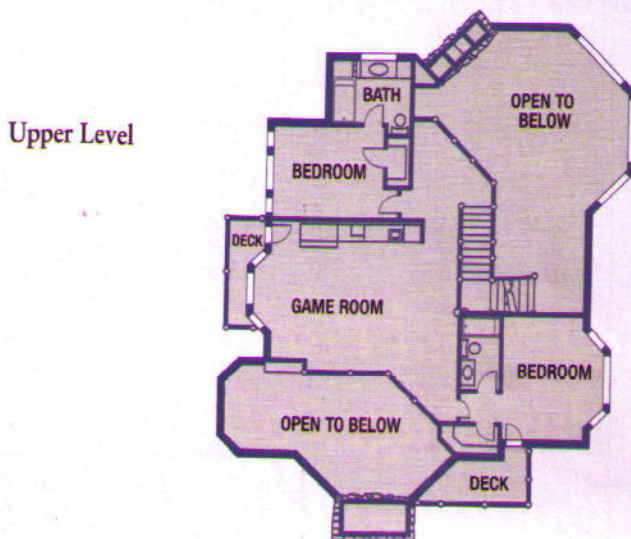
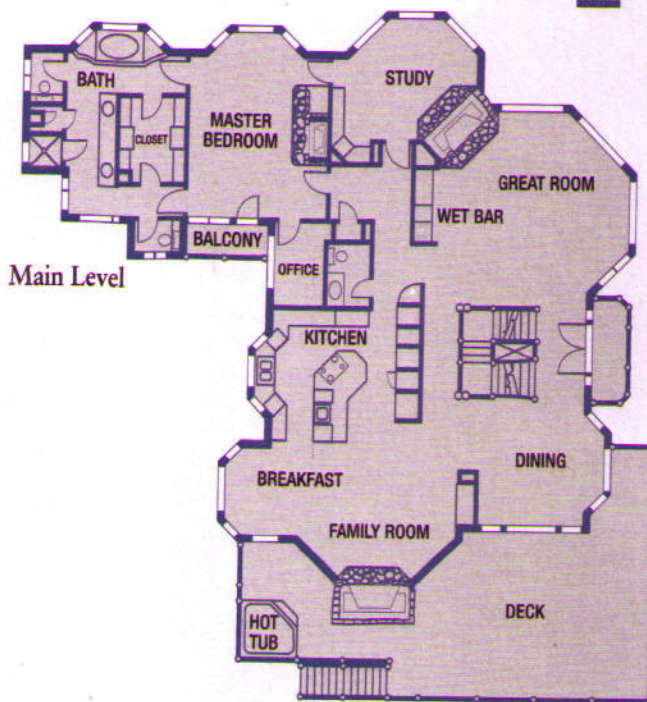
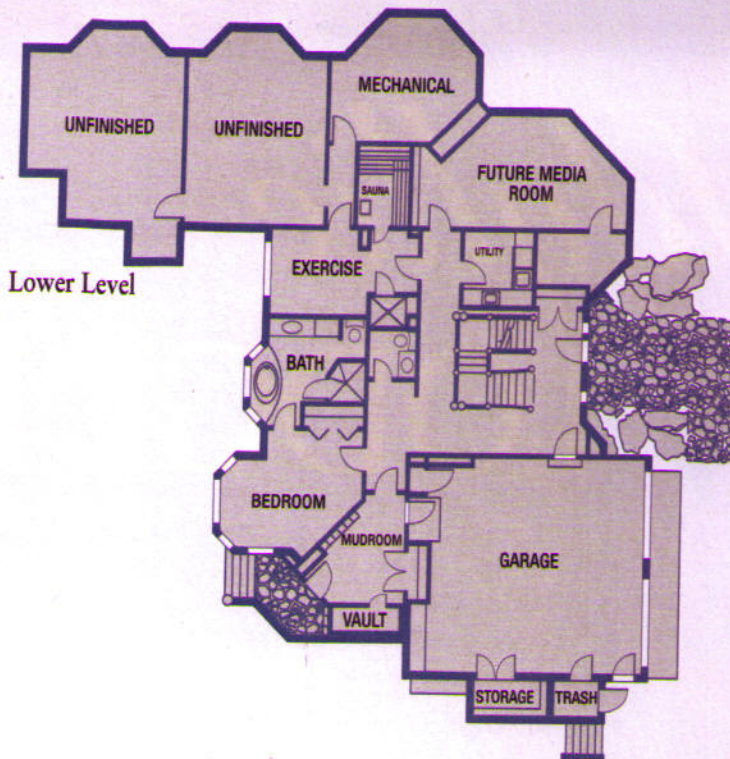
The cabinetry, constructed by local firm Jackson Hole Kitchen & Bath, features lightly stained alder that flatters the rock, stone, and tile used throughout the house. Selecting these elements was just part of the fun for Doug and Penny.

"We started with colors first," says Doug. "From there it was easy and enjoyable. We found fire screens from local artists and the chandeliers came from Salt Lake City, among many special touches."

"All the furniture came from an area store," Penny adds. "But we started about 18 months before the house was finished and we began buying furniture one room at a time. They stored the items for us, but that way when the home was done, no bed was missing—or any other major piece. We've added some more touches since moving in, but we got an occupancy permit on October 15th, and on October 19th we had a party for everyone who helped build the home."

Because they already had a condo in the area, Doug and Penny were able to visit the work site frequently—usually once a month—to watch the progress and be involved in hands-on decision-making. Internet and fax connections meant that Doug averaged about five hours a week reviewing and approving progress, as well. That emotional investment fueled their enthusiasm and now that they are settled, they spend 12 to 13 weeks a year in the home, nearly always with guests. "We're rarely here by ourselves, although we like to sneak up here when we can," says Penny. "But even when we don't bring friends and neighbors from California we have Jackson Hole friends and neighbors in, so it's always a delightful place to be and to share time."

It's no wonder friends clamor for invitations—it's a Wyoming wonder! ❁



ARCHITECT: Ellis Nunn & Associates, Jackson Hole, Wyoming;  
CONTRACTOR: Teton Heritage Builders, Jackson Hole, Wyoming.