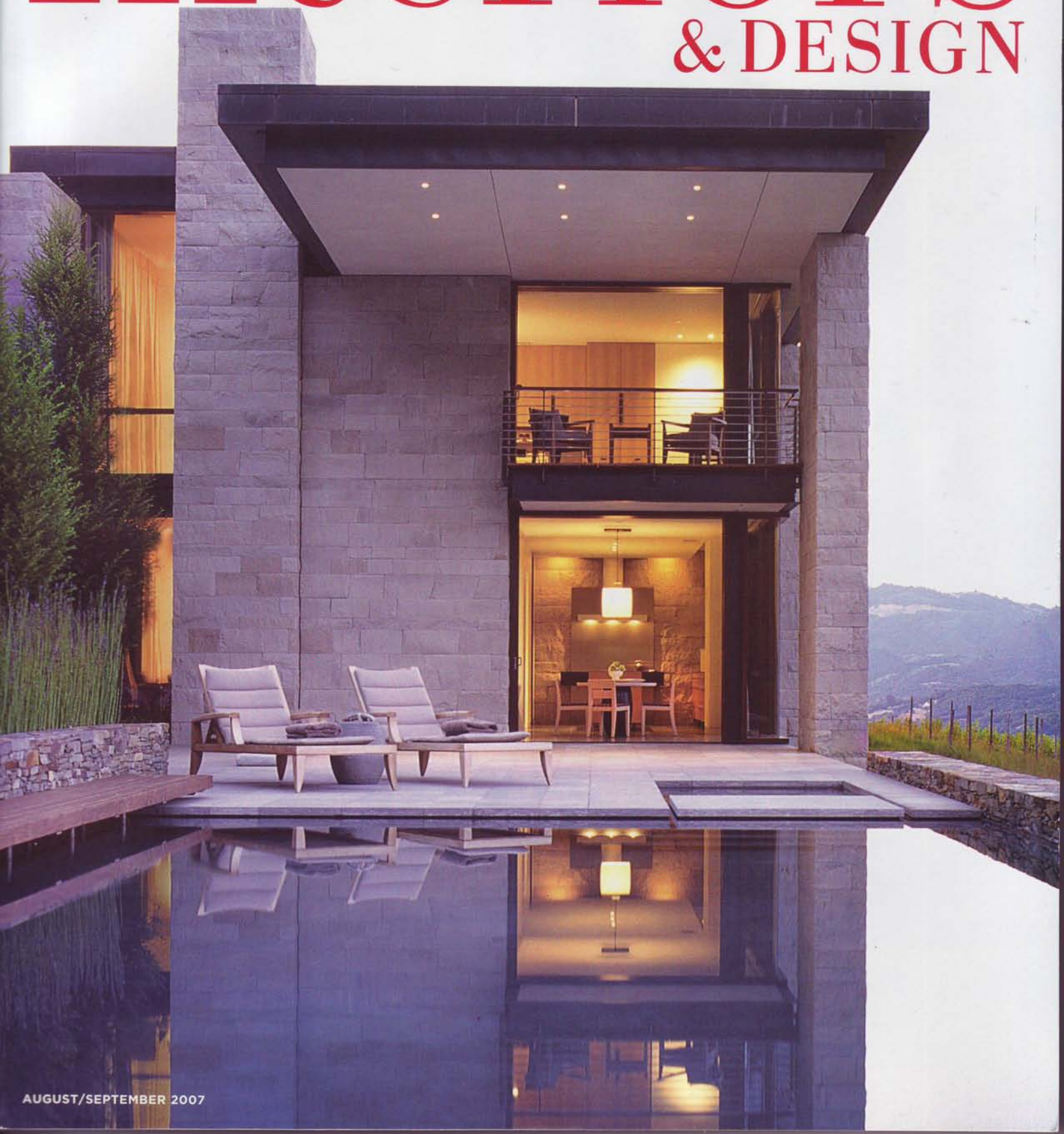


# WESTERN Interiors & DESIGN

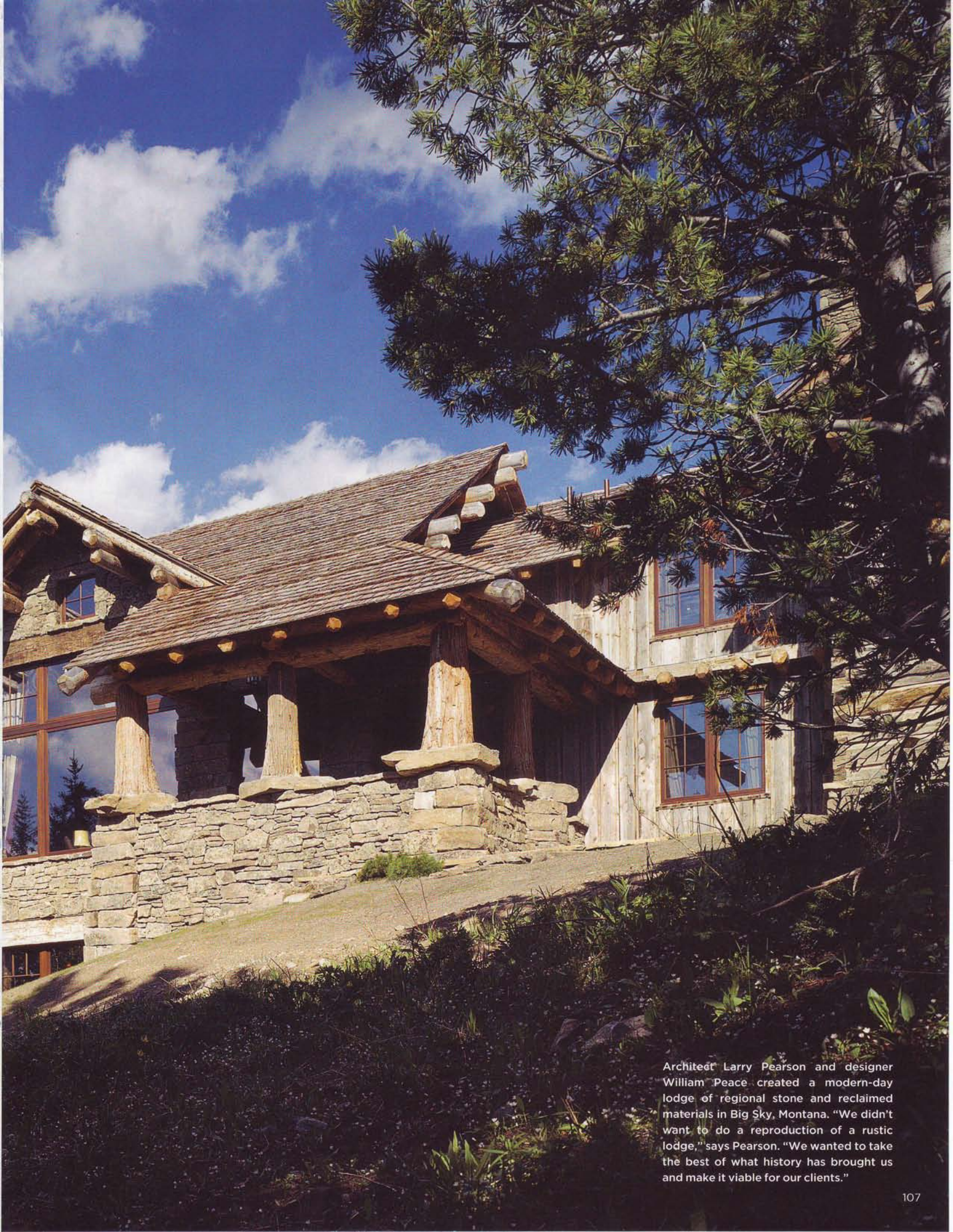


# MONTANA TRADITIONS

For a family retreat in Big Sky, architect Larry Pearson honors historic western lodges and the rugged landscapes that inspired them

Photography by Matthew Millman/Text by Caren Kurlander





Architect Larry Pearson and designer William Peace created a modern-day lodge of regional stone and reclaimed materials in Big Sky, Montana. "We didn't want to do a reproduction of a rustic lodge," says Pearson. "We wanted to take the best of what history has brought us and make it viable for our clients."



## “WESTERN ARCHITECTS HAVE A

greater responsibility than just matching the building next door,” says architect Larry Pearson. “We need to create something that’s inspired by the landscape and that becomes part of the landscape.” This exact sentiment has informed Pearson’s work since he left California for the raw beauty of Montana, where he started his firm in 1997. “I would like to believe that my work isn’t stylistic,” he explains. “My work is more fundamental and responds to environmental factors like sun and wind. A relationship to the landscape is instrumental in anything successful.”

His point is perfectly illustrated by the lodge-style vacation house he designed for a family in a rugged area of Big Sky, Montana. The clients wanted “a building that feels old but has light and transparency,” says Pearson, who also had to take into account the remote, nearly nine-thousand-foot-high elevation of the site. “The house needed to be substantial.” Inspired by the straightforwardness of great Canadian lodges, he articulated a stone core with expansive windows and centered it between two wings, one

built with round logs harvested from standing dead trees and one made with reclaimed hewn logs (squared-off logs that have been hand-worked to remove small angled chunks from the sides). Canadian cedar columns define deep eaves and a long terrace supported by log framework, and the simple forms of the two wings are embellished only by the weathered patina of the wood.

The weight and presence of the materials are felt inside the house, too, as stone walls are left exposed, and ceilings are marked by log and hewn beams and trusses. “It would be too strong of an environment not to be equally balanced by a strong interior,” says Pearson, who suggested designer William Peace to his clients. Peace, who is based in Atlanta, Georgia, and has a satellite office in Bozeman, Montana, has collaborated with Pearson on many occasions and is well versed in creating interiors that manage to hold their own against the dramatic western landscape. “We’re about creating a backdrop for living that’s relatively neutral,” says Peace. “We try hard not to create visual competition for the views.” To that end, he worked within a calm color palette that is short on pattern but long on texture.

**above, left:** A custom door of antique hand-hewn timbers leads to the entry. **above, right:** Vintage leather-covered armchairs face the living room fireplace. **opposite:** Peace used soft textures to contrast with the exposed stone walls of the living room. Draperies are made with Nancy Corzine velvet, and S. Harris mohair covers the two Edward Ferrell sofas. *Moonlight on the Lake*, by Debbie Edgers Sturges, rests on a nineteenth-century Flemish oak easel. The floor planks are antique, and the iron-and-glass chandelier was custom-made by Wil Wilkins. The oak low table is French.





**left:** The kitchen opens to the dining room for a casual feel. A Dynasty range fits between cabinetry custom-made by the project's construction company, On Site Management. The island features a Kohler apron-front sink and a Rohl faucet. **opposite:** A dining table made with reclaimed wood complements the plank walls. "The view and the beautiful materials create a true western experience," says Peace. The dining chairs are from Gallery 440, and the bowl is from Ainsworth-Noah.

The living room, housed in the central stone core, is an expansive space conducive to entertaining, but Peace didn't want it, or any part of the house, to be too serious. "We wanted the interiors to have an old-world, European feel to them," says Peace, "though definitely not formal in any way. Our whole goal was to make it look like it had been done over time." To achieve that eclectic look, he scoured shops in Montana and on both coasts, and then grouped his seemingly disparate finds. In the living room alone, there are two Edward Ferrell sofas on casters, an early-nineteenth-century ratchet armchair, authentic Molesworth chairs covered with Chimayo weavings and a combination of western landscape paintings and bronze sculptures.

Another important aspect of the design was making the rough stone and wood finishes feel livable and inviting. Peace did this by bringing in a variety of luxurious fabrics to balance out the hard edges. Rich red velvet draperies frame the living room picture windows, and soft mohair covers the sofas. "I wanted to have this rugged, ancient type of building contrasted with really luscious fabrics," says Peace, who took a more spare approach in the dining room. "This is really a dramatic place," says the designer, who intentionally went without draperies to make the views "as wide

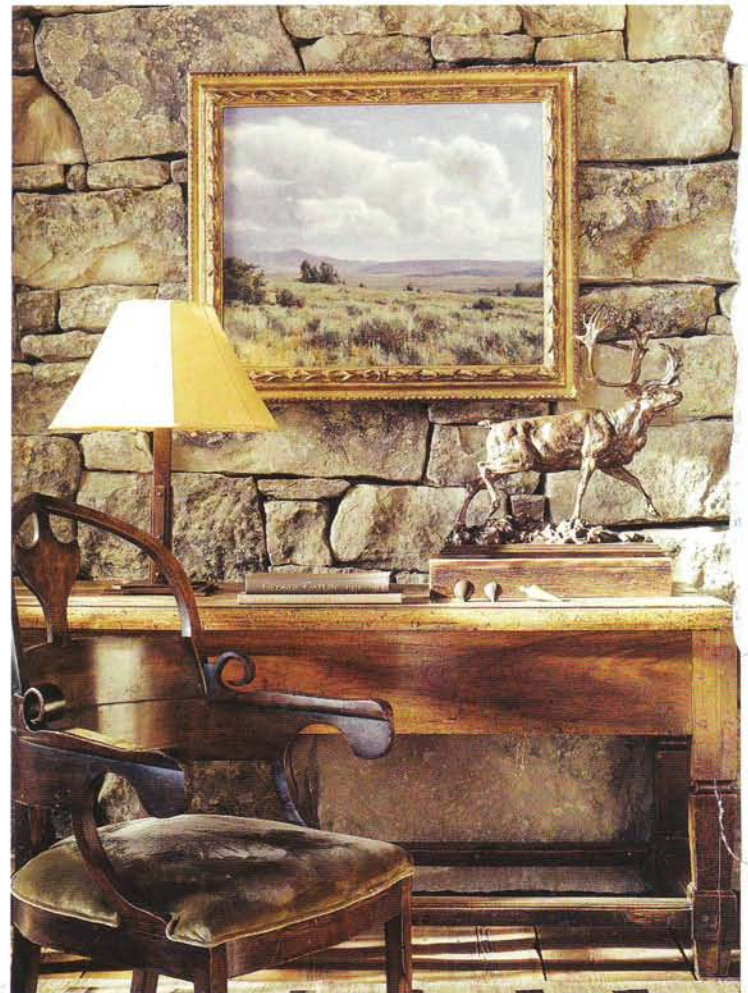
open as possible." But sturdy furnishings, including a custom-made table, simple wood chairs and a commanding iron chandelier made by artist blacksmith Wil Wilkins, who did most of the fixtures in the house, keep the room grounded.

The scale of the rooms becomes more intimate in the wings—one of which contains the family's private quarters and the other the kitchen and guest rooms—but the palette and easy mix of furnishings flow with those in the rest of the house. In the master bedroom, a sophisticated carved-fruitwood headboard crowns a bed dressed with a velvet spread, and draperies made with creamy cashmere complement the hewn walls. "In this type of environment, the sleeping quarters are not typically large," says Peace. "A house like this is more about family spaces and being outside."

It's clear that Pearson and Peace consider creating houses for the iconic western locales a privilege and one that they take very seriously. "Working in a landscape as beautiful as this, you have a real accountability that goes well beyond the client," says Pearson. "It's an environmental stewardship. It's the responsibility to make something that will feel right in the landscape a hundred years from now. You have a responsibility to get it right." +



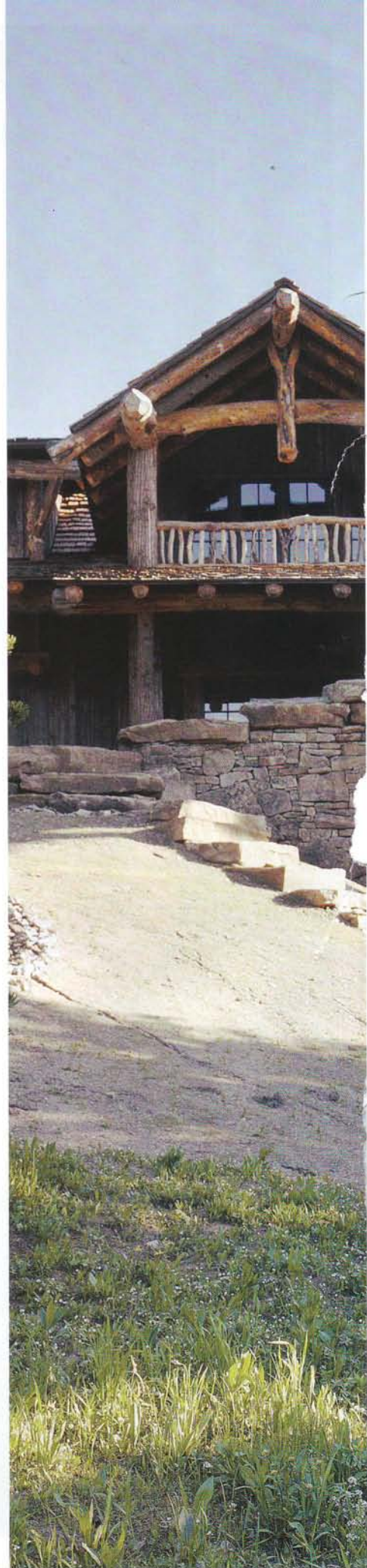
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above: "It's gracious, but it's not overwhelmingly big," Peace says of the master bath. Waterworks' Empire Freestanding tub sits beneath a window hung with linen draperies. top, right: An antique leather screen and an Arts and Crafts trunk define a guest room. right: An antique French table is paired with a nineteenth-century carved fauteuil in the living room. *Afternoon Thunder*, an oil by Clyde Aspevig, hangs on the stone wall. opposite: A fruitwood headboard from Holland & Company lends a formal touch to the master bedroom. The Art Déco love seat is from Amy Perlin Antiques. Holland & Sherry cashmere was chosen for the draperies, and a pillow covered with Scalamandré crewel-embroidered fabric accents the velvet spread.







**FLOOR PLAN**  
(Main Level)

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 Bedroom       | 7 Kitchen      |
| 2 Bedroom       | 8 Pantry       |
| 3 Family room   | 9 Laundry room |
| 4 Living room   | 10 Mudroom     |
| 5 Dining room   | 11 Garage      |
| 6 Viewing porch |                |



## nature friendly

“Working with recycled materials is a signature of my work,” says Larry Pearson (left), who chose two types of sustainable woods for the residence in Big Sky, Montana. Large-diameter hewn logs were reclaimed from an old building in rural British Columbia, and for the round logs, he worked with trees that had died before being harvested. “This way,” he explains, “you can get patina without needing to go out and find an old log stack.”

The Harlowton, Montana, stone and log detailing tie the house to its rugged site, which was landscaped by Lone Peak Landscaping & Design. **opposite:** "We created more than four distinct outdoor spaces," says Pearson. The main-level viewing porch is furnished with vintage chairs and custom benches and provides expansive views of the snowcapped mountain peaks.

