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FOR SMALL SPACES*

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14
INSTANT
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1,750 square foot CABIN

A MIX OF RUSTIC AND MODERN MATERIALS AND A SENSIBLE FLOOR PLAN HELP A MONTANA GUESTHOUSE FEEL LIKE IT'S LIVING LARGE

STORY BY NORMAN KOLPAS PHOTOGRAPHY BY AUDREY HALL



An expanse of steel-framed, triple-paned windows seems to float free of the stone walls on either side, heightening the illusion that the recently built cabin was salvaged from an historical relic found on the 6.21-acre property in Montana's Yellowstone Club. Custom updated versions of old lanterns mounted on the columns combine with the glow from interior lighting to make the window-wall feel all the more transparent come nightfall.

Above the dining table, a Cumulus chandelier of woven off-white fabric on a satin aluminum frame, designed by Ted Abramczyk and available exclusively at Ralph Pucci, adds an ethereal complement to the surrounding wood, stone and glass. FACING PAGE: Glass pendants from Lindsey Adelman Studio illuminate a kitchen island made from reclaimed oak.



THE OWNERS OF THIS MONTANA CABIN MAY WELL HAVE DECIDED TO NAME THE PLACE CAMP RUN-A-MUCK

as a playful reference to a 1960s sitcom about a summer camp where everything that could go wrong did. But there's nothing at all chaotic about the versatile, beautiful living solutions achieved in this cabin's compact floor plan.

"The whole project started with our clients' vision of creating a structure that looked like they'd found and restored an old Forest Service cabin on the property," says project architect Greg Matthews, of Bozeman-based Pearson Design Group. "We expanded upon that concept by creating a storyline that involved repurposing the remnants of an old stone cabin," he adds. "And then," notes Larry Pearson, the firm's founding principal, "we created the effect of having restored that imaginary remnant by replacing walls that had collapsed with steel-framed glass, for a fusion of contemporary and historical."

The family of four intended to use the compact one-story cabin

as a temporary place to stay and entertain while on visits from their New England home, before building a much larger main house elsewhere on the 6.21-acre property. They wanted to maximize the size and efficiency of shared spaces while incorporating furnishings they already had in a nearby townhome. Bedrooms and baths would be smaller, though nonetheless stylish. "We scaled those as secondary spaces to the common area," Matthews says.

An open great room encompassing the living, dining and kitchen areas occupies about two-thirds of the cabin's total square footage. This multifunctional and most-used part of the house was designed to showcase its most spectacular prospect—a south-facing view of nearby Pioneer Mountain—through a wall of 9-foot-tall steel-framed windows with low-E coated, insulated triple-pane glazing. A concrete slab floor not only absorbs heat from the low-angled winter sun but also includes radiant heating elements. >>

MAKING THE MOST OF MINIMAL SPACE

The team behind this 1,750-square-foot cabin shares tips for living large regardless of your own home's size or style.

FOCUS ON FUNCTION Ask yourself where you and others occupying the home will spend most of your time. "Design the common space that you envision first," counsels contractor Rob McRae. "Then fill the remaining square footage with bedrooms."

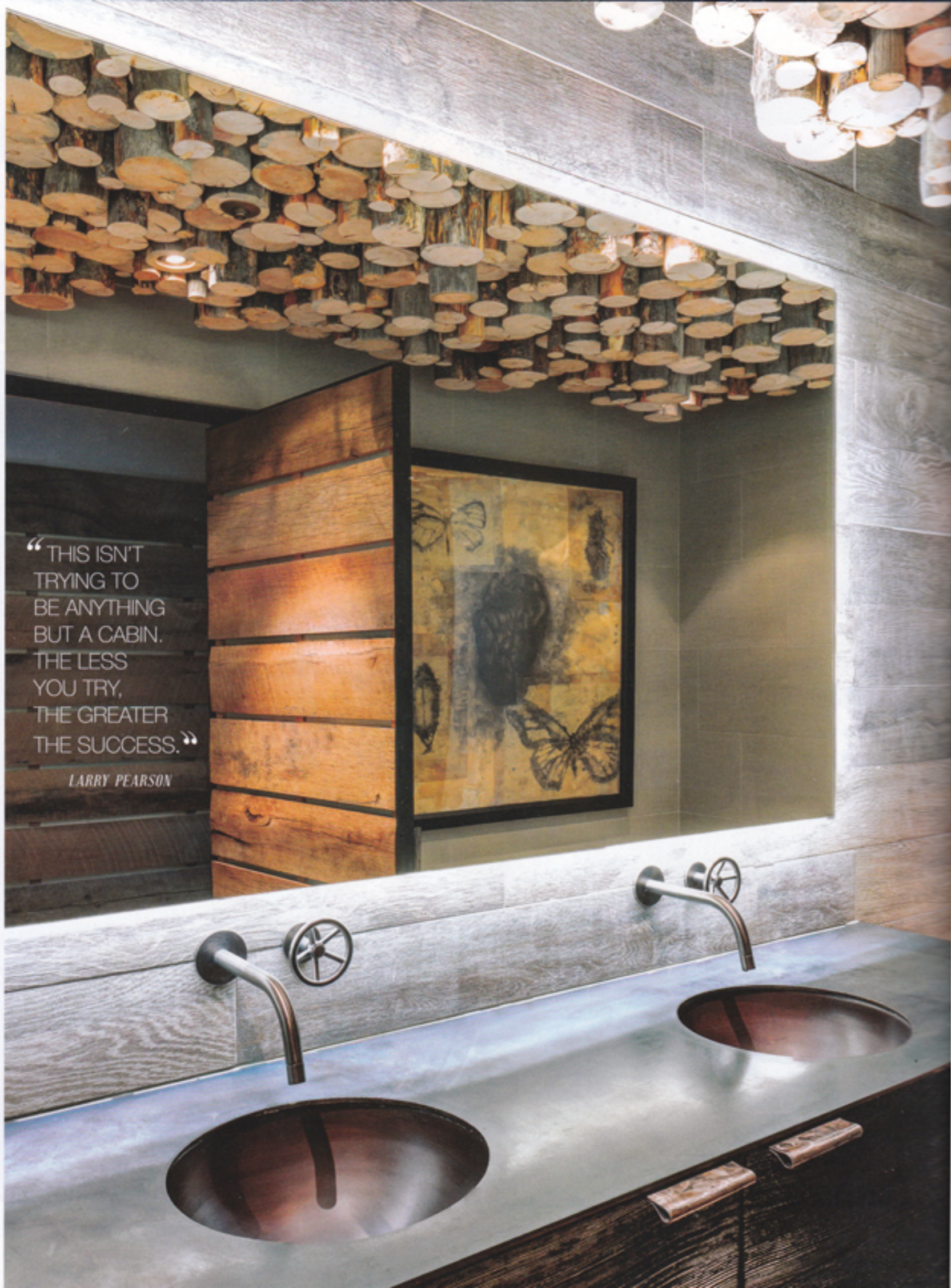
KEEP IT SIMPLE "Don't get too clever," warns principal architect Larry Pearson. Whether it's the structure itself, its layout, furnishings or finishes, the simplest choices are often the best ones.

BE PRACTICAL "Do you need a wall or not? Do you need a door or not?" asks project architect Greg Matthews. "Do only what is absolutely required in the situation." And forget about the details you really don't need.

GO WITH THE FLOW "Whatever you do, your space needs to flow," says interior designer Rain Houser. Arrange furnishings to make it as easy as possible for occupants to move effortlessly from one area to another, and for each area to serve multiple purposes. "When your house is small," Houser concludes, "it helps when each space can be utilized in many different ways."



FAR LEFT: Flanked by steel doors, the wood-burning fireplace is surrounded by Montana moss rock in a tight dry-stack pattern. THIS PAGE: A modern chandelier above the living area subtly echoes the surrounding natural materials with scrolls of wood veneer encased between its lighting element and glass bottom. On the stone wall overlooking the dining area is a scrap-steel moose head sculpture the owners moved here from their old townhome.



“THIS ISN'T TRYING TO BE ANYTHING BUT A CABIN. THE LESS YOU TRY, THE GREATER THE SUCCESS.”

LARRY PEARSON

“This is a hybrid heating design created with energy efficiency in mind,” Pearson explains. Adds Rob McRae, a principal at project contractor Highline Partners, “This enabled us to dramatically decrease the size of the heating system.”

A simple palette of rustic and modern materials enhances the feeling of spaciousness inside the small cabin. Local Harlowton stone walls are a traditional—and ruggedly attractive—choice for a mountain retreat, while cement floors and steel fireplace doors introduce a sleek industrial vibe. Reclaimed white oak was selected as another primary interior material. Planed and sanded to a uniform toast-like finish, it was used for the ceilings and kitchen cabinetry, and also installed horizontally to panel the walls and doors of the main hallway. “Horizontal boards make a space feel far more spacious than vertical ones,” Pearson notes. “And when the bedroom, bathroom and closet doors are closed, the 15-foot-long hallway becomes a simple, clean gallery.”

Least such a pared-down palette, combined with repurposed

furniture, seem a trifle low-key, the team found creative ways to embellish each space. Interior designer Rain Houser worked with the architects and clients to select many of the home's eye-catching light fixtures, from the hand-blown glass pendants that illuminate the kitchen island to the master bedroom's funky chandelier made from a fibrous object that was retrofitted with a lighting element. She also found porcelain tiles for the bathroom walls that wittily echo the wealth of wood paneling elsewhere in the house. “I think our use of those gray tones in the tile—and also in the wood, stone and steel—helps create a modern feeling within the rustic structure,” she notes.

The house functions in such a welcoming manner that the owners of Camp Run-A-Muck now seem less hurried about starting the next phase of the project. “Our joke,” Pearson chuckles, “is that we make intimate spaces like these so inviting and enjoyable for our clients that they never get around to building their main house.” ○



FACING PAGE: The guest bathroom's ceiling is covered with a “log cloud” composed of random-length sections cut from fallen lodgepole pines on the property, into which are recessed eight LED lights. Wood-grained porcelain tiles, oak cabinets, a steel countertop and antique-style brass faucets enhance the rustic-meets-modern aesthetic. ABOVE, LEFT: A custom chandelier composed of coarse fibers adds a soft, wild touch to the master bedroom's clean lines. ABOVE, RIGHT: Viewed from across its adjacent meadow, the cabin tucks cozily into a stand of trees and a nearby hillside.

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