

Three generations come together in a rustic-modern
Montana home designed with summer camp in mind

FAMILY BALANCE

STORY **LAURA BEAUSIRE** PHOTOS **GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY**
ARCHITECTURE **PEARSON DESIGN GROUP** INTERIOR DESIGN **PEARSON DESIGN GROUP WITH HOMEOWNERS**
CONSTRUCTION **LOHSS CONSTRUCTION** LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE **POND AND STREAM CONSULTING**

Pearson Design Group put a modern spin on traditional ranch structures to create a home that's reflected in a water feature by Pond and Stream Consulting. The modern Adirondack chairs are from POLYWOOD.

This green Montana valley is the perfect place for a big family gathering—just ask the local elk. “Every fall we get elk standing around our property—you can be sitting there on your front porch having a cup of coffee, and there are 75 elk, and the bulls are bugling, and it’s just spectacular,” says the owner of this Bozeman-area retreat. “There was something magical about that.”

The inspiring setting was just the right place for a family with members in California, Arizona and South Carolina to build a retreat that they hoped would feel like a summer camp. They turned to Bozeman-based Pearson Design Group with principals Larry Pearson and Justin Tollefson leading the design process and Brady Ernst serving as project architect.

“We like very traditional, American, simple lines,” the homeowner explains. “We didn’t want to go full rustic on the log cabin side, and we didn’t want to go full modern on the concrete and steel side—we wanted to flirt with that line between the rustic and the modern.” The family had imagined one main ranch house surrounded by a series of individual cabins, but zoning regulations prevented that approach. Still, it was important that the home’s design allowed everyone to spread out. >>

Glass, metal, stone and wood provide a rustic-modern mix of materials and textures in an airy entryway. The floors are Mohave schist flagstone, and the dramatic orb chandelier is by Four Hands.





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— THE HOMEOWNER

The solution? An innovative layout based on two main structures—the 7,900-square-foot gathering lodge and 3,200-square-foot creek cabin—framing a central entry cabin crafted from hand-hewn timbers. “Pearson came up with the idea of the breezeway as a means to connect what are two different architectural concepts,” the homeowner says. “And then we came up with this idea of putting that log cabin in the middle—as if that was the original trapper’s cabin on the property—so, when you approach the property, you think maybe that log home was here from the very beginning and they built a house around it.”

A sense of place resonates throughout the home’s design. “We took inspiration from farm buildings and agrarian forms—not from farmhouses—so everything is scaled up a little bit,” says Tollefson. Traditional materials provide echoes of familiar barns and sheds, with local stone, weathered wood and standing-seam metal roofs. “These more rustic elements fit in very nicely into the modern designs,” says builder Chris Lohss, founder and owner of Lohss Construction. “From a standpoint of color tones, form and contrast to the clean materials, they are very appealing.”

Although it’s a single-story home, the interiors are spacious and airy, offering plenty of room for everyone. “There’s an idea that each sibling would have a suite, and then their parents would have a suite, and there are a couple of extras,” says Tollefson. “And then the grandkids take over a great bunk room and rec room area.” >>

Lee Industries sofas from Gallatin Valley Furniture add soft blue tones in a sitting room that opens to the pond-side terrace. Pearson Design Group helped the homeowners source furnishings and fixtures, including this custom-made chandelier.

THIS PAGE: The crowd-friendly kitchen was designed so two or three people could cook while other family members sit at the counter and keep them company. The pendant lights are from Cottage & Bungalow, and the stools are from Crate & Barrel. OPPOSITE ABOVE: The kitchen's granite countertops are matched with a custom concrete sink and a Newport Brass faucet. OPPOSITE BELOW: The home is in harmony with nature. "To me, the greatest accomplishment is how it sits on the land," the homeowner says. "It's not obtrusive; it blends very neatly into the landscape."



THE POWER OF PONDS

"I had no real appreciation for how significant those ponds would be in terms of influencing indoor-outdoor living, but also in terms of anchoring the buildings into the landscape," says the homeowner of this Montana retreat. "For me, the ponds are the single most important feature of the entire house." Alex Fox, principal of Bozeman's Pond and Stream Consulting, shares some water wisdom:

FIND THE RIGHT LOCATION "Closer is often better, within reason, as constructed features appear larger and provide more recreational opportunity and aesthetic appeal as they approach a home or landscape. Ultimately, we work with the owners and their team [architects, general contractor, landscape architect] to create features that complement the site and provide optimized recreational opportunity, aesthetic appeal and habitat value." **FOLLOW NATURE** "We always attempt to naturalize constructed water features by mimicking natural conditions. To that end, we exclusively utilize appropriate, native wetland materials, natural field stone and well-graded gravels. We exclusively use carex [sedges] and scirpus [rushes] species in development of the shorelines of the constructed ponds and streams." **INVITE WILDLIFE** "Inclusion of a fishery always results in increased wildlife usage and recreational appeal. We get waterfowl obviously, but lots of big game too: moose, elk, deer and bear." >>



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Architects and builders repurposed and resized a hand-hewn cabin to serve as the home's entrance.



Family members selected a mix of modern and rustic furnishings, fixtures and finishes. They created a warm, comfortable and unfussy gathering space, where local furniture from shops including Gallatin Valley Furniture and Montana Expressions mixes with custom pieces and items from Restoration Hardware, Arhaus and Pottery Barn. The floors are wide-plank white oak, and the kitchen cabinetry is crafted from reclaimed white oak with a rich patina.

Spending time outdoors is one of the family's main pleasures, and the architects collaborated with Bozeman's Valley of the Flowers Landscaping, and Alex Fox, of Pond and Stream Consulting, to create a naturally beautiful environment including new ponds and a pavilion where the family could swim and picnic and play.

When COVID-19 caused widespread lockdowns in California, the family was grateful for their quiet Montana refuge. "Everybody started coming, and it really started to blossom," the homeowner says. "We started to have these wonderful experiences together; the kind that create memories that you tell your kids about." That's just the summer camp magic the family had hoped for. ○

LEFT: Chairs by Lee Industries are placed beside a corner window in this bedroom, with a light fixture from Bozeman's Distinctive Lighting and a bed by Universal Furniture. The wood ceiling adds natural warmth to the space. ABOVE: Semi-recessed sinks by Lacava are lit by Currey & Company pendants in the bathroom.

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