CELEBRATING 25 YEARS

BIG SKY JOURNAL

WINTER 2018 LIFESTYLE IN THE NORTHERN ROCKIES

Livingston: A Rebel Outpost of the Writerly West

One of Montana's Most Expensive Bull Sales

The Quest for Wild Ice

A Small Idaho Town Propels a Tradition

At Home in the Mountains

A custom home in Big Sky, Montana, complements an active family's lifestyle

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY

MATT AND HEATHER MORRIS MET AT WORK, and although the venue was Fenway Park (she was there as a writer, he was there as a pitcher), they talked about skiing, specifically about skiing in Big Sky, Montana. Skiing was a passion for Matt, despite his being contractually obligated *not* to ski, as well as for Heather, who had attended college in Colorado. It came as no surprise, then, that after courtship, marriage, moves to various cities, and the arrival of young children, they would eventually land in Big Sky, where, over the years, they have created many of their most special memories.

ABOVE: The back of the home features vaulted roof lines, expansive glass walls, and exposed steel beams set within rock and reclaimed wood. Solar panels on the roof are a conscientious and contemporary element that was requested by the owners. **RIGHT:** The open floor plan, with multiple sitting areas, suits this busy family of six. Reclaimed wood, stone, steel, and marble create a clean, but substantive environment, and the upholstery colors align with the natural world outside.

ARCHITECT	Centre Sky Architecture
CONSTRUCTION	Highline Partners
INTERIOR DESIGN	Peace Design

Comfortable seating with luxurious fabrics and sculptural accessories indigenous to the area create an inviting living room.

The Morris family — by this time expanded to include four children and a puppy — was living in Big Sky's Moonlight Basin when they realized their home was just not serving their needs. They loved the location and considered expanding, but ultimately ended up purchasing the property next door. Having made a home in the community — through the kids' school, sports, socializing, and, of course, skiing — their choice of architect and contractor came easily. Both Jamie Daugaard of Centre Sky Architects and Rob McRae of Highline Partners had become personal friends, and Centre Sky had worked on the renovation of their original house. For the interiors, Daugaard suggested bringing Bill Peace of Peace Design on board, who, as a part-time Montana resident, seemed to understand the realities of life in the mountains. "We wanted it elegant and sophisticated," recalls Matt, "but with the understanding that inevitably we're going to scratch the floors and mess things up. We had an 8-, 7-, 6- and 3-year-old, and a puppy; we were going to live in it and live hard."

FROM TOP: The kitchen island provides plenty of space for cooking or casual dining. The ochre in the painting *Barrido* by Duke Beardsley provides a strong visual in the living area that's otherwise commanded by natural stone, wood, and a color palette reminiscent of the Montana landscape. • The ski room features radiant-heat concrete floors with boot warmers, space to hang helmets and gloves, and lockers made of reclaimed wood.

It was important that the new home fit with the character of the neighborhood. "We were thinking rustic timeless, but we wanted an up-to-date contemporary look," Matt says. They weren't far into the design phase when they came up with the term that best described what they were looking for: "Business up front, party in the back."

This meant creating a more traditional view from the street while opening the back up to light-filled spaces that were generously proportioned for family living and frequent entertaining, offering big views and a dynamic interplay of materials. The gabled facade has simple forms with rustic siding; the rear elevation is mountain modern with both gabled and flat shed roofs and a mix of metal

panels and multi-toned wood siding. A covered deck projects dramatically between stone piers and columns with steel details, which, says Daugaard, "creates interesting structural expression, especially with the steel knife plate joinery and floating wood columns."

The home's interior volume is characterized by glass on all sides. "This allows natural light to wash both sides of the elements, and minimizes the contrast with the darker elements," Daugaard explains, referring to a combination of wood and steel beams, and locally sourced Deep Creek stone. "We wanted to bring in the ruggedness of the Montana stone," he continues. "The color and texture help with materials such as steel, which can feel cold and unapproachable."

The back deck, which offers expansive mountain views, features a mix of local Montana stone and wood, applied with clean lines and minimal detail to create a modern rustic aesthetic.

The main entrance to the house features an oversized wood door of hand-hewn timber slabs flanked by glass panels. Guests then pass under an elevated steel bridge that leads to the top floor childrens' bedrooms and a common work/play space. The open living space on the main floor opens up dramatically upon entering the great room/dining/kitchen area. There, large glassed volumes and a soaring ceiling are anchored by a massive stone fireplace, neutral upholstered furniture, and a built-in window seat. "When you enter," explains Peace, "there are spectacular views with the wall of glass in the living area. They really live in that area so it needed to be simple, understated, and rustic. The steel and glass is very welcoming, yet has a real cutting-edge feel without being cold and austere. It's elegant and modern and very livable."

Alexander & Avery by Anke Schofield and Luis Garcia Nerey is the focal point in the master bedroom. Soothing tones of slate blue in the draperies and rug mixed with gray woods echo the sky and forest outside.

In the kitchen, a dropped ceiling defined by a steel beam creates a sense of separation without feeling closed off, while a walk-in pantry makes it easy to minimize clutter on the countertops and open shelving. A nearby sitting area offers a cozy spot for the family to gather for more intimate meals. The master and junior master suites feature serene, human-scaled bedrooms and bathrooms designed with a combination of stone, wood, and marble.

The family room features a reclaimed wood bar, and the wood and iron coffee table anchors the space.

Upon returning from a day of skiing, the homeowners come through a covered entry to the downstairs ski room, which features a custom boot rack wall and large ventilated cupboards for gear storage. This opens into a steel-beamed, wood-columned family room with comfortable seating, cleverly integrated bunk beds, a bar, TV, fireplace, and a wine room accessed through a steel door. Throughout the home, carefully curated contemporary Western art pieces define the spaces, adding color and drama, as do modern-leaning light fixtures. The result is fresh and current, yet decidedly of its place in the mountains.

Throughout the building process, everyone involved, from the homeowners to the subcontractors, worked as a team. "If I'd said, 'Do what you want,' it would still have been amazing," says Matt. "But being part of the process every day and getting to know the crew on the ground [made it special]. … The stonemasons were awesome and went the extra mile; they carved New York and Wisconsin, our home states, in hidden places in the rock. My wife used to collect heart-shaped rocks; they incorporated 13 of them into the stonework. The builders had amazing ideas, such as having a secret door in a bookcase that leads to a hidden passageway. We have a chimney outside that's 36 feet high; they said they could … create a climbing wall with an auto-belay. Things like that made it really personal."

In the master bath, a freestanding white porcelain tub is set against the rugged, vintage stone that frames the marble shower room. Native American rugs and a contemporary horse painting, *A Pair* by Matt Flint, further elevates the melding of old and new.

And for a year-round home that's designed as a forever home, that is exactly what one hopes for. ▲

Chase Reynolds Ewald *is an active freelancer and author. Her most recent projects are the books* American Rustic *and* Rustic Modern, *published by Gibbs Smith, both collaborations with photographer Audrey Hall; chasereynoldsewald.com.*

As married co-workers, ***Peter*** *and* ***Kelley Gibeon*** *complement each other while shooting, playing, and absorbing life. Since 2004, their market has grown to include regional and international projects and publications.*