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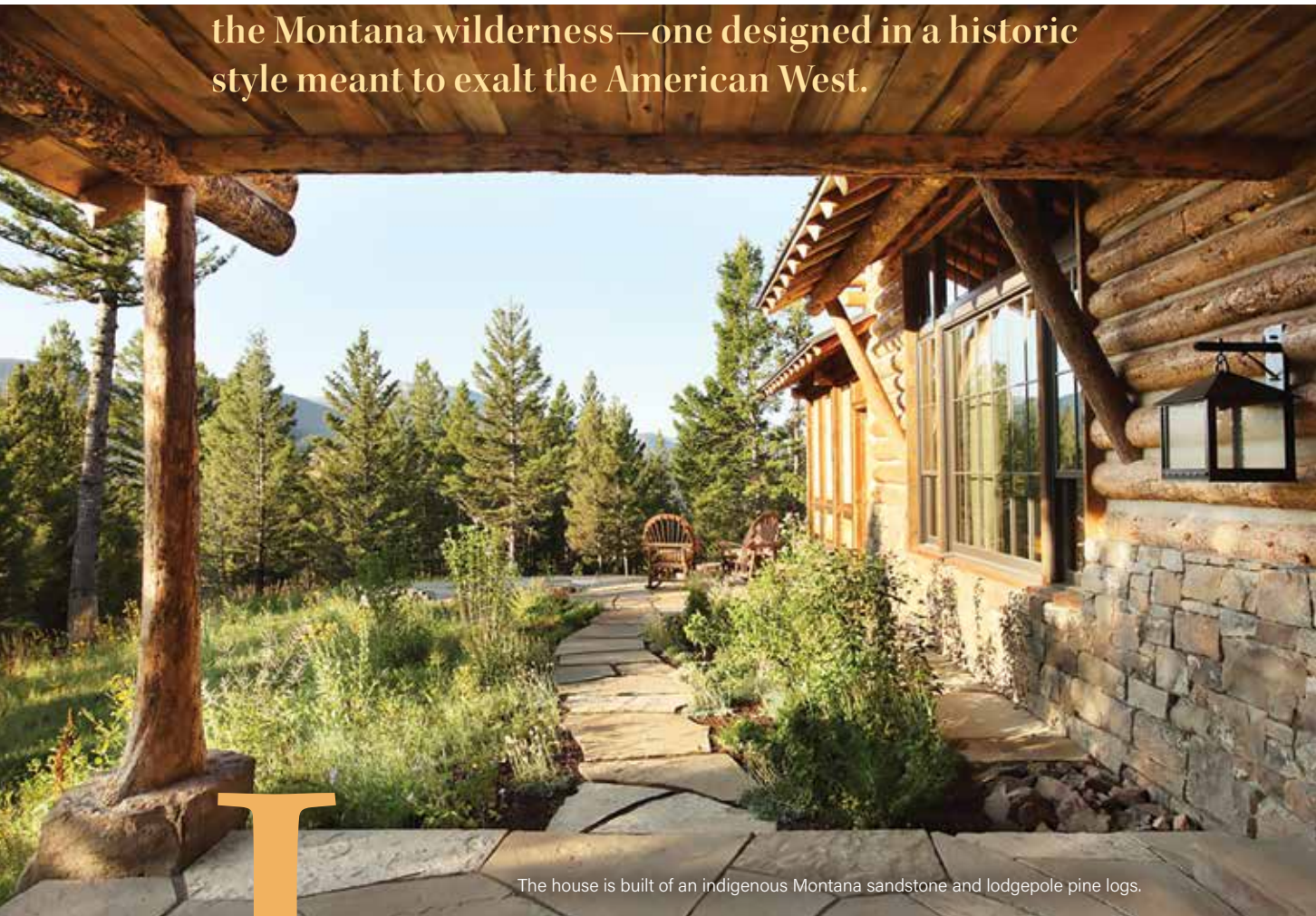
TIMELESS NATURAL BEAUTY AND A RESPECT FOR AUTHENTICITY REVEAL THEMSELVES IN THIS REMOTE BIG SKY HOME WHERE FAMILY GATHERS.

Built in the early 1900s for use by rangers and fire lookouts, U.S. Forest Service housing offered more comfort than sleeping in a tent, but not by much. It was the aesthetic, if not the austerity, of those primitive log cabins that inspired the design and construction of one family's remote lodge in Big Sky, Montana. • As a retreat for the owners, their grown children, and an expanding group of grandchildren, the timeless structure harbors three generations who cherish time together without distractions, mainly in the summer months. Indeed, its location on an access road that's only open from May through November guarantees peace and quiet along with the more than 600 acres of national forest that surround the house. **By Janice Randall Rohlf | Photos by Chris Little**



Above This new home appears to be a primitive log structure deep in the Montana woods. Though well appointed for life today, it is similar to U.S. Forest Service buildings from the early 1900s. **Opposite** Velvet and heavy linen fabrics add to the rugged warmth.

Knowing it was a rare commodity, the family bought this remote property to build a home in the Montana wilderness—one designed in a historic style meant to exalt the American West.



The house is built of an indigenous Montana sandstone and lodgepole pine logs.

LIKE THOSE EARLY RANGERS, this family enjoys hiking and horseback riding. They wanted their secluded getaway to be as authentic as possible and for its presence to have minimal impact on the land. “This was meant to mimic a Forest Service cabin that would be traditional to the Rocky Mountain West,” says architect Matt Miller, principal at Miller Roodell Architects in Bozeman. As with its more rudimentary precursors, he explains, the new house was built using native lodgepole pine curated on site by the contractor, North Fork Builders. “They found the lodgepole, peeled it,

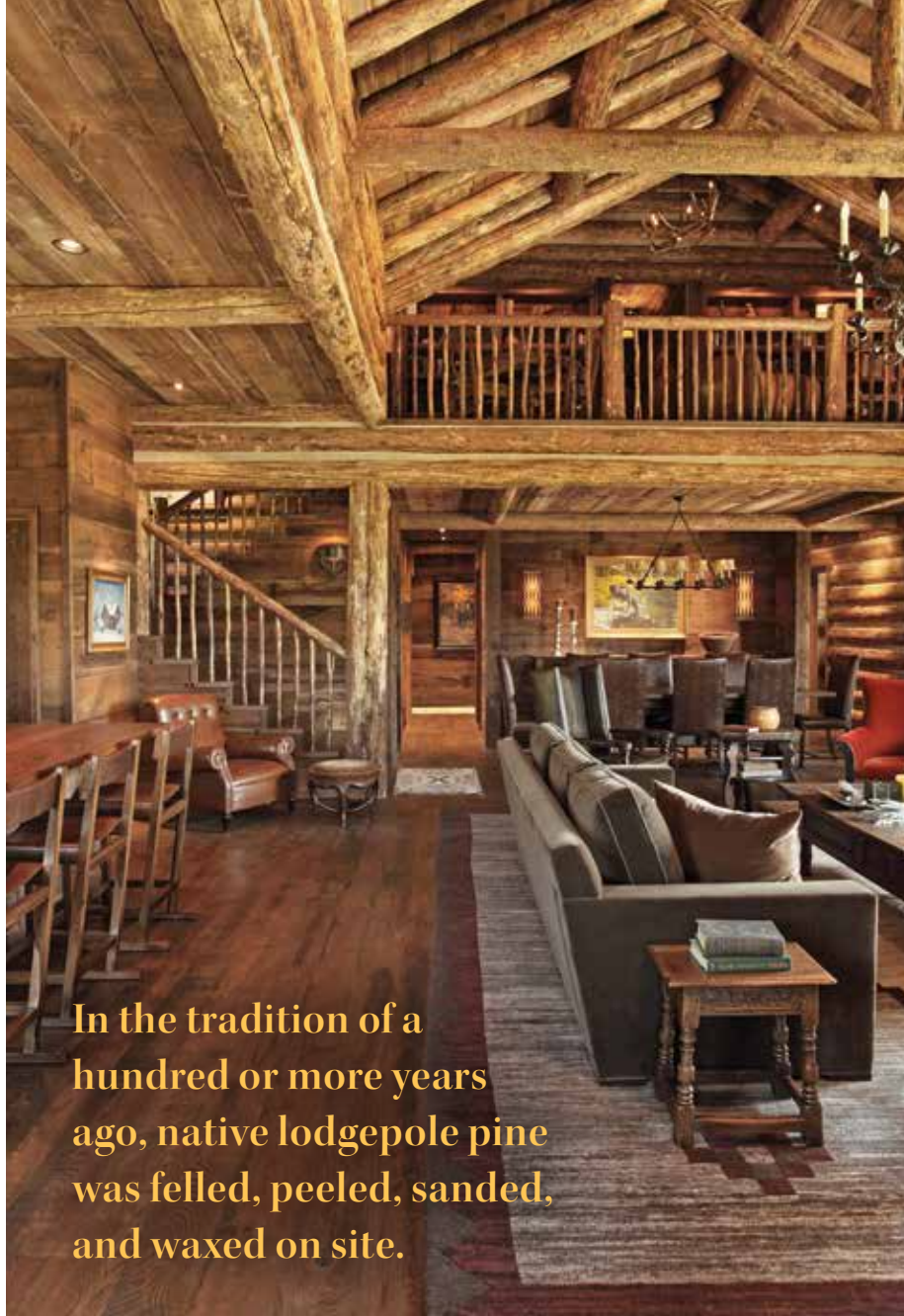
sanded it, and waxed it,” says Miller, pointing out that the method is the same as that employed a century ago.

Other native building materials used in the house include reclaimed planks, a combination of rough-sawn pine and fir, pocked by wormholes and featuring vintage hardware from the turn of the century. Montana Moss Rock, an indigenous sandstone fieldstone, was used in crafting the family-room fireplace. The hearth has a commanding spot in the open-concept layout—family room, kitchen, breakfast nook, dining room—that encourages interaction.



Clockwise (from top left) A deep, neutral palette was used. • Floors are covered with several early-20th-century Navajo rugs, some of which were likely first used as blankets. • The massive screened porch is the perfect spot to enjoy the cool mountain air. • Art in the home is mainly from Montana artists. Many paintings depict animals native to the area, such as elk and moose.





In the tradition of a hundred or more years ago, native lodgepole pine was felled, peeled, sanded, and waxed on site.



Above The core of the house is the stone fireplace that rises to the ceiling in the open family room. The family room incorporates the kitchen and dining area. **Left** (top) A stair leads to the upstairs sitting area and library that opens to two bunkrooms. • (bottom) A standing-seam Bonderized steel roof, which will take on a subtle patina over time, suits the solidly built rustic log house. **Opposite** (bottom) Antique furniture includes Spanish and French pieces as well as vintage pieces made in the Northeast. They offer the perfect vintage look.





“Because it’s a family getaway, the client didn’t want to over design,” says Miller. “They didn’t want a lot of empty bedrooms.” The 4,600-square-foot home offers three bedrooms with en-suite baths on the main level along with two bunkrooms, each with four beds and an en-suite bath, upstairs. The architect elaborates on his approach to flex space: “We tucked in berths, which are like window nooks—places where you can read a book and, in the evening, put out bedding to make it a sleeping space.”

“One goal was to create different opportunities for people to gather together but also have spaces for alone time,” explains Miller’s collaborator William Peace, found-

er of Atlanta- and Bozeman-based Peace Design. As Miller did with the architecture, Peace approached the house’s interiors “with the idea to create the story of what a home like this could have been if it had been built 100 years ago or more.”

For the dark, wood-clad rooms brightened by abundant natural light, Peace worked with a neutral color palette that doesn’t compete with the views, and he chose fabrics like chenille, velvet, and heavy-textured linen, which, he says, “have a lot of soul and age gracefully.”

While materials from the land were typically used to build American West ranches, furnishing them often meant sourcing from





farther afield. “There was no furniture of any caliber being built in the West a century and more ago, so a lot of things would have come from the Northeast—New York, Boston, Philadelphia—or people traveled to Europe and brought back furnishings,” says Peace, indicating a Spanish chair in the living room and a French cocktail table representative of pieces he culled for this house. Yet, Peace adds, “Nothing here is particularly precious; the house is meant to be lived in and used.”

These clients, who have other homes, didn’t bring collections of their own, so to make the house feel as if had had been furnished over time, “we found almost everything for them,” says Peace, who travels in the U.S. and abroad in search of distinctive antiques. “These pieces become focal points. Whether it’s a special chair, a painting or a rug, these are the things the family wants to remember, along with the view.”

Of the land, “This is the last frontier,” says Miller. • **FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 114.**



Left Reclaimed planks of rough-sawn pine and fir were used in the house. The log bedstead is new. **Below** (left and right) Two bunkrooms, each with four beds, are located upstairs. **Opposite** Rough lodgepole pine logs are evident in this view of the reading nook at the top of the stairs. The chandelier is crafted from naturally shed elk antlers.

