

Peace in the West

The Rustic Luxury Interiors of William Peace

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This is a story about resilience, respect for the land, wildlife, and the way people live together.

This visually stunning book is not just about the interior design work of the talented team at Peace Design. It is a story about resilience, respect for the land, wildlife, and the way people live together. The book, like the interior design work itself, tells a story.

I was drawn to *Peace in the West* initially because I once worked on a cattle ranch in southwest Montana. I lived in a 19th-century log cabin, the bunkhouse, with creaky wood floors and animal hides on the wall. We worked from dawn till dusk with a keen sense of how the light changed throughout the day, as we baled hay after the sun dried the dew and stacked it until dusk.

Peace in the West is organized into sections titled Dawn, Daybreak, Sunrise, Mid-Morning, Late Morning, Early Afternoon, Mid Afternoon, Late Afternoon, Dusk and Night, a progression that conveys how important light and shadow are to the designer's vision: where the house fits on the landscape, where the views are framed through windows, how sun and shade accentuate color, and how shadows cast across the artwork. Each time of day features a

Peace project, from Ruby River to Fish Creek, Paradise Valley to the Moonlight Chalet.

The outdoor settings are as celebrated as are the indoor spaces, with two-page spreads depicting winding rivers, snowcapped mountains, and dusty roads that reach to the horizon. Each house, every interior, is of its place, with a reference to the region's history, and materials sourced from the land.

The first chapter, "Dawn," features the Ruby River project, a generational family ranch that began as an old log cabin once used as a schoolhouse. The author explains: "Taking direction from both the family brief and the existing cabin, we designed several cabins to work in unison, whether only a few family members were on the property or children were in tow. We lined the porches with rocking chairs, providing a welcoming place to watch the sun rise over the ranch."

The Ruby River project was the dawning of Bill Peace's experience designing in the west. He writes, "It was through this landscape as we visualized cabins and fishing quarters that I fell in love with the American West.

Through this project I learned about Rocky Mountain light and sight lines, about water flow and river rise, about the seasons and storms, about animals that might transit the property. I felt my creativity soar as I incorporated Native American pieces with European references with Southern decorative arts. The Ruby River project is where I created relationships with brilliant architects and talented builders in the West."

Wood, leather, velvet and mohair are among the finishes and furnishings layered in Fish

Creek, the project featured in "Sunrise". This Palladio Award-winning log and timber cabin is new but looks old, with roughhewn logs for columns and square timber chinking as generous as the cream filling in an Oreo. There are cabinets made from reclaimed chestnut, and a bathroom with Calacatta Caldia marble juxtaposing Montana moss rock. "This log home is a symphony of period, styles, countries and materials but one in constant unison," the author observes. "The minuet between this house and the Teton mountains outside is a memorable concert."

Each of the book's ten projects features interiors with distinctive, signature elements. My eye was drawn to the chandelier, in the house named "Paradise Valley," which is an early 20th-century Italian Art Deco work of art made of black iron. Beneath it, in the foyer, stands an Old-World center table.

There is a common theme in all of Peace Design's interiors: rustic western vernacular finishes with European antique furnishings, casual yet sophisticated. There is a leather English wing chair fit for a king.

In Mid-Afternoon is another Palladio Award-winning project called Hill Country, a sprawling ranch on the Sabinal River near San Antonio, Texas. Both the architecture and the interiors are an eclectic blend of Spanish and German influences, but also Dutch and South African, reflecting the worldly client's taste. After the visual richness of these interiors, the book turns to a light and airy whitewashed limestone chimney, two stories tall, then describes a 40-foot retractable window...revealing an open-country view evocative of the African savanna in the mid-afternoon sun.

Here again, the layering of authentic materials and a continental curation of furniture, finishes, building material, and art creates a symphony for the senses. Read this book cover to cover, and see for yourself. Sunup to twilight it is a scenic journey through the West. **TB**

