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BIG SKY JOURNAL HOME

Mountain Living and Architectural Design



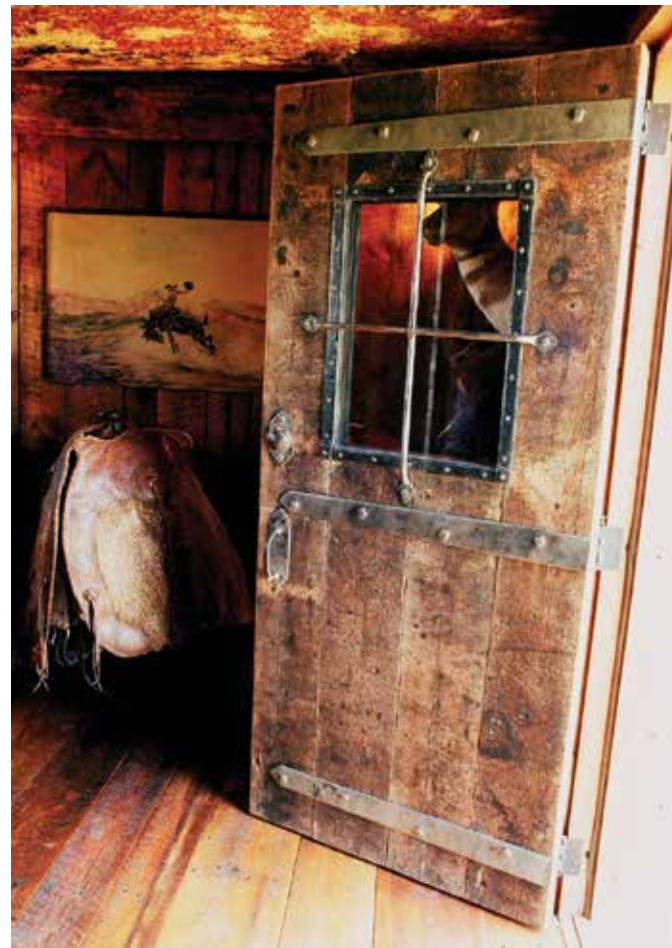
Yellowstone Traditions

Known for craftsmanship and creativity with reclaimed materials, the YT Custom Shop addresses every detail

WRITTEN BY CHRISTINE ROGEL

NEAR THE MAIN OFFICE OF general contractor Yellowstone Traditions (YT) sits a large warehouse abuzz with the business of carpentry. Known as YT's Custom Shop, a team of woodworkers is busy turning raw materials into useful household items. Two carpenters transform reclaimed barn wood into custom doors for a client in Wyoming, while others chisel away bark on a set of hand-peeled outdoor furniture. Another carpenter sorts through a pile of weathered chestnut boards, carefully selecting pieces for their width, thickness and character to later cut, sand and finish — refining them until they no longer appear as discarded scraps, but rather as beautifully colored boards with rich texture and new purpose.

YT is known for building structures using native and historic materials, but another branch of their business is this Custom Shop, which creates everything from cabinets, to armoires, to ping pong tables. "If (the clients) have a vision in their heads then we can build it," said Kevin Cain, YT's Custom Shop manager. "From rustic, to modern, to anything in between.



RALPH KYLLOE

From the YT Custom Shop this heavily aged, wide plank style door with hand-forged hardware is a one-of-a-kind feature.

just never know what we're going to find," Adams said.

Each material inspires a different design and some materials wait for years for the right project. Take for example a

With new materials, aged materials — we can do it all."

Founded in 1986, the Bozeman-based company started by restoring log homes. They began to source aged materials when building additions. Over time, they brought the use of reclaimed materials to the forefront of western design, said principal builder Ron Adams. Their expertise using those materials has become a hallmark of their business, allowing them to create custom buildings and interiors with a strong sense of place and history.

Rows of wooden planks lean against the walls of the shop. Hardwoods such as mahogany and oak are grouped together, and new materials are separated from reclaimed items, such as fir speckled with dark dots of nail holes and planks where red barn paint from a past life has faded.

"We're like wood pack rats, we



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Clockwise from above: In the kitchen, aged fir/pine cabinetry with a raised panel door design, edges are eased with detailed chiseling and hand sanding. The island integrates log pole corners for additional detail, and the cabinetry is complimented with stone countertops and a custom-built wrought iron hood. • Bathroom vanity and linen cabinet with hand inlaid willow twig door panels and backsplash. • Custom built in bunk bed scribe fit to adjacent log walls. Includes a pull out trundle bed for additional sleeping opportunity.



RALPH KYLLOE

has worked with YT since the early 1990s because of their attention to detail and sense of proportion that's particularly valuable when choosing reclaimed materials. "YT has a stable of artisans that can be tapped for very creative detailing from diverse influences," she said. "Cabinetry and doors are something we touch and use everyday in a home, so function is paramount, but doors and cabinets are elements that play a large role in providing beauty and delight to a space. YT's so helpful in presenting and defining options for materials, texture and finishes, basically their ability to listen to what can be our broad stroke descriptions, only to have samples presented by them that perfectly exemplify the thought."

More than a general contractor the artisans at Yellowstone Traditions put care and craftsmanship into every project, whether it's a hand-tailored kitchen or a whole house from foundation to finish. **■**

Off the dining room, a well-equipped bar features aged walnut cabinetry with a raised panel door style, hand carved turned columns and custom patinaed copper wrapped countertops.

"nearly impossible to find" chestnut plank from Pennsylvania that will become an impressive front door in a Jackson, Wyoming home. "These planks were probably cut and put into a barn somewhere around the Civil War," Cain said, noting the axe marks and that they've been stored at YT for 10 or 12 years. "The real historic defects are the way to go," he said. "Mother Nature is tough to replicate."

YT built Nancy Domaille's home at Big Sky's Yellowstone Club, also helping to design and build some of its interiors. "Their use of aged materials provides a definite feeling of warmth, comfort and the outdoors to the home," she said, noting that she contracted YT again to build an addition on her second home.

A majority of YT's aged materials are sourced from Montana companies including Montana Reclaimed Lumber in Bozeman and Superior Hardwoods & Millwork in Missoula. But YT also has relationships with suppliers from across the country, allowing them to build with reclaimed materials that are specific to geography.

Candace Tillotson-Miller of Livingston's Miller Architects

Known for craftsmanship in every detail, the round logs are complemented by cabinetry and countertops built with aged fir sourced from Wisconsin pickle vats built in the early 1900's. The material has been processed to thickness and hand sanded to bring out the natural patina.



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