

# MOUNTAIN LIVING®

# LIVING

MONTANA CABIN  
REDEFINED

ELEGANT ASPEN  
MESA-TOP HOME

CONTEMPORARY  
BRECKENRIDGE  
CASTLE

*WHERE THE LIVING IS EASY*

# BUILDING ON TRADITION

A YOUNG COUPLE BUILDS A NEW LIGHT-FILLED HOME ON FAMILY PROPERTY NEAR BOZEMAN



OPPOSITE: A home designed by Miller Architects and built by Yellowstone Traditions for a young family outside Bozeman, Montana, makes the most of its treetop setting and mountain views. A high-efficiency Tulikivi stove separates the living room from a sunroom. THIS PAGE: To access the master suite, which has its own outdoor seating area, one passes through a hall whose grace note is a steel railing handmade by the owner, a farrier.

STORY BY CHASE REYNOLDS EWALD PHOTOGRAPHY BY GORDON GREGORY

ARCHITECTURE BY MILLER ARCHITECTS  
INTERIOR DESIGN BY LAURA FEDRO INTERIORS  
CONSTRUCTION BY YELLOWSTONE TRADITIONS



LEFT: The owners were very clear about wanting sunny, youthful notes throughout the house, notes interior designer Laura Fedro. Red bar stools from Mulligan and an island painted yellow accomplish that goal in the cheerful kitchen. ABOVE: The custom hood, large-format tile backsplash, butcher-block island countertop, built-in seating area, open shelving, whitewashed walls and orange curtains create a warm, family-friendly space.

WHEN A YOUNG COUPLE MOVED TO A FAMILY PROPERTY OUTSIDE BOZEMAN, MONTANA, they settled into an existing home that was perfectly situated in the ranch-like setting. Poised on a sloping site with views of the Bridger and Bangtail Mountains, the home sat above a grove of quaking aspens, which shielded it from the road while providing an ever-changing natural palette.

Although the site was ideal, it became apparent that the house wasn't suited for a modern lifestyle; its design was compartmentalized and the floor plan ran longitudinally.

The couple, who had their first child shortly after construction finished, live and work full-time on the property; he is a farrier who competes in blacksmithing competitions. "Our goal was to create usable space and give it a communal feel where our family could all be in one big room together," explains the wife. "When we lived in the previous house we only used a third of the space. We wanted to make sure we'd use it more efficiently and enjoy the views." >>

THIS PAGE: Custom steel windows and accordion doors to a screened porch bring the outdoors in. OPPOSITE, TOP: The house was constructed on the site of a pre-existing structure on a terraced bench that steps down almost 12 feet. OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: A sunny screened porch is the perfect spot for enjoying a summer breeze.



**BLACKSMITHING**, is an age-old art that enjoys great relevance today, especially in Montana. In a house that combines ironwork hand-forged by multiple artisans, the metalwork details provide artistry, utility and a sense of permanence.

For the homeowner, a young father who shoes horses, makes hardware and participates in international competitions, the pursuit is fulfilling in many ways. "It's very physical," he explains. "You're tired at the end of the day. There's so much involved in terms of art, ratios and proportions. The fact that you have to heat materials to make a change means you have a time limit. The fact you're under the clock means there's a desire to move quickly and efficiently, and [to learn] new techniques."

**METAL ADDS MUCH TO AN INTERIOR EXPERIENCE**, notes designer Laura Fedro. "Especially with homes that are largely wood, as Rocky Mountains homes have been for generations, it's nice to have the coolness and tactile nature of iron in juxtaposition with wood. And it has a stability and strength that will be there forever."

**THE EASE WITH WHICH METALWORK CAN BE CUSTOMIZED** is a plus, says the blacksmith's wife, who appreciated being able to choose specifically what she wanted. "It really seems more like art when you have it in front of you and it adds personality to the space. But the real benefit of it is that the pieces function so beautifully."

**FOR THOSE SEEKING TO INJECT A METAL EDGE IN A MORE MODEST WAY**, Fedro suggests iron cabinet hardware, drapery rods and rings. "Instead of cheap rods and brackets, buying real iron rods with iron drapery rings is a lovely way to step up a finish. It's a subtle thing, but it's a simple, relatively affordable solution."





OPPOSITE: A light-filled guest room is furnished with family pieces such as an antique trunk and a custom flat-weave carpet by Matt Camron. THIS PAGE: The bathroom is kept light and airy with walls of reclaimed wood that have been white-washed, a feature throughout the house at the owners' suggestion. The vintage-look slipper bathtub is from Signature Tubs. The countertops are of Seagrass limestone.

Miller Architects' Candace Miller had previously designed agricultural structures and a caretaker's house on the rural property. She collaborated on the design of this year-round livable space with her colleague Matt Miller, who also oversaw the project through construction.

Led by project manager Tim Blazina and superintendent Charles Bunney, the Yellowstone Traditions building team took the existing structure down to the foundation—keeping the original footprint—but then raised it by several feet. This allowed the team to add a light-filled living space on the lower level while accessing bigger views upstairs. Overall, interiors with communal areas, a master suite and child's room on the main floor and additional bedrooms, custom-built home office, family room, billiards room and utility rooms below, were made more open and energy-efficient. The exterior—weathered corral board and stone, with a metal roof intended to develop a natural patina—complements existing structures, including a period barn.

Working on a terraced bench that steps down almost 12 feet provided challenges for the construction team, but the result is a highly livable, uplifting experience, from the mudroom entry to the public areas. The rooms are comfortable, filled with light—thanks to generous glazing and whitewashed walls—and given unexpected youthful touches, such as bold colors in the kitchen. Hand-hewn beams add warmth, character and sense of place; steel windows lend a contemporary edge. An ultra-high-efficiency wood-burning Tulikivi fireplace

divides the living room and south-facing sun porch, which makes the most of sunshine and views. NanaWall doors leading to a screened porch fold back to further blur the transition between the indoors and outside.

The wife credits designer Laura Fedro with being open-minded about their preferences. "The original house had a lot of darker wood; we both knew we wanted more color. We wanted to include yellow in fabrics and in the kitchen. Whitewashing the reclaimed wood walls was one of the biggest decisions we made. It gives the benefit of texture with the brightness of the light walls."

Along with her design associate Sarah Riordan, Fedro enjoyed the vitality the owners brought to the project, which reflects the family's design sensibilities with its mixture of family pieces, new purchases and commissioned handmade works, including metalwork by several artisans and custom-built doors and furniture by Yellowstone Traditions. The resulting contemporary-rustic treetop home provides the perfect setting for the young family's memories. "From the moment we met they said they didn't want this to be over the top," the designer recalls. "They wanted to be able to live in it, enjoy it and inject their own personalities. I think this is very much what the house communicates." ○

more  For a guide to this home's products and pros, visit [mountainliving.com/BuildingOnTradition](http://mountainliving.com/BuildingOnTradition).