WESTERN Interiors



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montana hybrid

CREATING A RUSTIC LOG HOUSE USING RECLAIMED WOOD, TRADITIONAL STONEWORK AND UP-TO-DATE TECHNOLOGY RESULTS IN AN AUTHENTIC WESTERN RETREAT THAT ALSO PERFORMS FOR MODERN LIVING

photography by GORDON GREGORY text by AMANDA DAMERON



opposite Indigenous moss rock and reclaimed fir timber characterize a Big Sky, Montana, retreat designed by architect Candace Tillotson-Miller.
this page Rafter ceilings with hewn beams "make the great room feel even bigger," says the architect. In the dining area, designer Diana Beattie placed a custom nailhead-edged oak and walnut table by Yellowstone Traditions. *Pale Moon,* the oil painting on the living-area fireplace, is by Peter Campbell.





above left *Alone in Pawnee Country,* a 2006 oil by Todd Connor, hangs in the entry. Lamps with pierced copper shades and wrought-iron tripod bases sit on a console table made of interlocking lodgepole pine branches. **above right** The barn-wood and timber kitchen occupies one end of the great room. The kilim rug is from Chuk Palu. **opposite** Beattie selected an antique rusty-red Heriz rug "to interrupt the masculine scheme" created in the library by the fir beams and stone fireplace. The oil painting above the mantel is Tom Gilleon's *Winter Camp.* A custom hand-forged iron chandelier from Jackson Hole Designs depicts trout on waves of water.

It's not really a log house—it's just the *idea* of a log house," says architect Candace Tillotson-Miller of a residence she created for clients in Big Sky, Montana. The 7,000-square-foot structure, sheathed in hewn fir logs harvested from old homesteads in the area and resting on Harlowton moss rock, certainly looks the part. But beneath the historic veneer lie hallmarks of modern technology: energy-efficient windows, nontoxic urethane insulation and the floor's radiant-heating system. "We're trying to emulate something from the past," the architect says, "but in the end this house is a hybrid."

Nestled on a sloping site inside the Yellowstone Club, a private golf and ski resort in southwest Montana, the four-bedroom residence is a casual retreat for the owners. "They wanted light, and they wanted to take in the views," says Tillotson-Miller, who has worked with famed preservationist architect Jonathan Foote and is now the principal of her own firm in Livingston, Montana. Using the "simplicity and truth" of old barns as inspiration, she folds indigenous materials like reclaimed wood and fieldstone into her buildings. New York designer Diana Beattie, who has been working in the West for eleven years, collaborated with Tillotson-Miller to establish warm, open spaces with casual furnishings, soft fabrics and intimate lighting.

An artisan-crafted fir door surrounded by moss stone opens to the front entry that transitions between the heavily textured exterior and the adjacent great room, a soaring space embracing the living and dining areas and the kitchen. Reclaimed hewn-fir rafters emphasize the 22-foot-high pitched roof. At one end of the great room Tillotson-Miller anchored the sitting area with a massive stacked-moss-stone fireplace supported by a hewn-log hearth. "A stone fireplace





is essential for a good log home, because it becomes a focal point for people to gather around," the architect explains.

Beattie balanced the rough stone and hewn-log walls with inviting textiles and an earthy palette of ochre, rust and green. "Log homes often read as more masculine," she says, "so I wanted to add feminine touches"—among them, raw silk draperies at the tall windows in the living area, and a chenille-covered sofa next to a leather-covered one. Armchairs with swivel bases let people turn to the fire or to the conversation. Custom hand-forged iron chandeliers from Jackson Hole Designs "shoot little lights into the rafters, which is such a western way to illuminate a space," Beattie notes. Imagining long days of fishing and skiing, she opted for a wide oak and walnut dining table and high-back buffalo-leather-covered armchairs. "People can put their feet up on the table's trestle base and lean way back in their seats," she points out.

Tillotson-Miller sought an intimate scale for the master bedroom. A carved-mahogany four-poster dressed in Brunschwig & Fils damask and another stacked-moss-stone fireplace dominate the room. Beattie chose richly patterned pillow fabrics and put soft-pile Kazak rugs on each side of the bed. A coral-and-orange-glazed plaster wall contrasts with hewn logs on the other three. "The space is like a little jewel box," she says.

By integrating reclaimed materials into a twenty-first-century house, Tillotson-Miller honored the past without sacrificing her clients' comfort. "It looks like a log home and feels like a log home," she says, "but it's actually a very modern environment within a historic context." +

DESIGN IDEAS

RUSTIC AND GREEN

On Site Management, the project builder, supplied the reclaimed wood for the Big Sky house. The company maintains a stockpile collected from old structures in the area.

For the walls, Tillotson-Miller used dovetail-notched hewn logs sealed with latex polymer to avoid heat loss and to keep out insects and rodents.

Under the fir flooring, Tillotson-Miller placed a radiant-heating system embedded in layers of Gyp-Crete, a mix of gypsum and concrete.

The windows have heat-flow-suppressing (low-E) glass. It reflects radiant solar heat in summer and retains radiant interior heat in winter.



opposite The bunk room, created for the clients' two sons, has built-in beds made of heavy hewn timbers. O'Lampia iron reading lamps, plaid linens from Hines, and blackout matchstick window shades outfit the room. **this page** "The goal was to turn the master bedroom into a color-filled jewel box," says Beattie. She and her associate, Kristin Moday, brightened the space with hot reds and oranges. The mahogany bed is from Leonards New England.