

PENELOPE ROWLANDS ~ PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK DARLEY

# weekend houses





# BEATTIE HOMESTEAD

MCALLISTER, MONTANA

"It's the kind of house where, whenever you walk in, you see a different detail of workmanship," interior designer Diana Beattie says of the Double D Homestead, which she and her husband, Dick, a New York-based mergers and acquisitions lawyer, recently built near Bozeman, Montana. With its rustic exuberance, it is easy to see how its architect has come to call this "the three bears house." Set on two hundred acres of historic land (containing a once-active gold mine, among other intriguing relics), it's a place where craftsmanship has been taken to its absolute limit.

How the Beatties — quintessential easterners who have spent much of their lives in Washington, D.C., and New York — ended up in Montana is simple: they fell in love with the place. Dick, an avid fly fisherman, had kept a fishing cabin here for years. Inevitably, the couple soon wanted to spend more time in a state that Diana — only partly jokingly — calls "God's best work." Like the homesteaders who made their way out here a century ago, they set out to build a house.

The use of wood was inevitable. "Logs are what you build of around here," as Candace Tillotson-Miller, the couple's architect, says. "It just really is the Montana vocabulary." When word got out that Jane Fonda and Ted Turner, then still married, had put some old barns from their extensive Montana acreage up for sale, the Beatties bought three. "We ended up with these 1890 old log barns," says Diana, who also runs an events-planning business. "We used them as the footprint for our house."

The structures were dismantled, then reassembled at their site, which overlooks five ponds and is in listening distance of Washington Creek. "I had to do an infill connecting the three log buildings together," Tillotson-Miller explains. The largest barn became the main living area and kitchen; a traditional "dog-trot"—type building was used for bedrooms (including an enchanting space with a built-in, rustic bunk bed for the couple's grandchildren); a third structure was transformed into a horse barn. The finished building totals about three thousand square feet.

Both architect and clients credit some exceptional detail work by Harry Howard and his crew at the building firm of Yellowstone Traditions for the success of this project. "The most important thing about this site is the artistry of the craft," Diana says. "And that craft is carpentry."

The impetus behind much of the detailing was hers. "The house had a very strong masculine feeling," she says, "so I asked Harry to





"I felt very strongly that we do something traditional," the owner says. Architect Candace Tillotson-Miller crafted the house out of three old log structures, including a traditional "dog-trot" barn, using an infill to connect all three.





This chaise in the master bedroom of the Beattie homestead was made in New Hampshire in the nineteenth century. Its fabric, while loomed in Paris, has a Western motif. On the floor lies a cozy stack of five kilim rugs.





LEFT: "I think Montana is God's best work," says owner Diana Beattie. Here, sunrise over the Revenue Mountains.

RIGHT: The master bedroom is sited within earshot of Washington Creek. The mahogany four-poster bed is South American; the antique mirror is from the Black Forest.



add wiggly wood, and other touches, to soften the feel. I wanted to add whimsy to the overall structure." Wiggly wood — a natural Western phenomenon that's just as curvy as it sounds — results when wormwood branches, in the course of a long Montana winter, become weighed down with snow. This unique material is used copiously here, from the fanciful porch railing to the ornate mud-room entrance. (Other elements, including carved doors inspired by Lech, the famous Austrian ski resort, and an upstairs bedroom that might have been lifted from an Alpine chalet, have decidedly non-Western origins.)

"We used old plaster and wonderful glazes to bring a warmth of color to the interior surfaces," Diana says. She furnished the place with local traditions in mind, using leather upholstery, for example, because it is a strong part of the Western palette. The appearance of

an occasional antique (such as the dining room's walnut hutch, from Normandy, which dates from about 1860) is also traditional, she explains: "Homesteaders coming out here would certainly bring a family heirloom." Because the couple's two grown daughters urged them to avoid hanging animal trophies, they have mounts on the wall that come from the Black Forest and from Indonesia, all made of wood.

The Beatties spend much of their time outdoors, hiking, fishing, riding, or just sitting on a meditation bench under a venerable Douglas fir. From here, they can keep tabs on the state's legendary ever-changing weather and on moose and other animals in their native habitat. "You don't appreciate it back East, this utter peace," Diana muses. "Out here, I feel a far greater respect for nature."





**TOP LEFT:** In the "treetops" guest bedroom (added above the dog-trot barn) are an eighteenth-century French Normandy armoire and chest. The antique chaise longue — a mate to the one in the master bedroom — is covered in its original fabric.

**TOP RIGHT:** "The thing that makes this house special is the detail work," says owner Diana Beattie. This antler stair rail (by David Black, a local craftsman) includes fallen horn from moose, mountain sheep, and other animals.

**BOTTOM:** The guest bedroom painting is actually an oil-on-canvas fire screen, from the Colorado Mountains, dating from about 1820. The whimsically carved bed is contemporary Italian. The "lace leather" rocker is from Old Hickory.

**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Variations on a wooden theme, in the main cabin, looking toward the dining room. Even the trophy mount, which is Indonesian, is wood.









OPPOSITE PAGE: In the fishing cabin, an ornate Adirondack cabinet from the 1920s sits next to a sturdy bench by Yellowstone Traditions. The painting is by Todd Connor.



**TOP:** At the house's mudroom entry, architect Tillotson-Miller combined lodgepole pine, wood shingle, wiggly wood, and old logs. "There's a timeworn patina you don't get with newer logs," she says.

**BOTTOM:** "You don't have that appreciation of nature until you get out of the East Coast," says New Yorker Diana Beattie. Here, a view from the fishing cabin, looking toward Ward Peak.











OPPOSITE PAGE: Beattie used a warm khaki palette for the rustic living room, which is located in the largest of the three barns. The painting, of bears on the Yellowstone River, is by Michael Coleman. Leather couches are from National Upholstery.



According to Beattie, there's a "fantastic cinemascope view into the valley" from these rustic, porch rocking chairs.