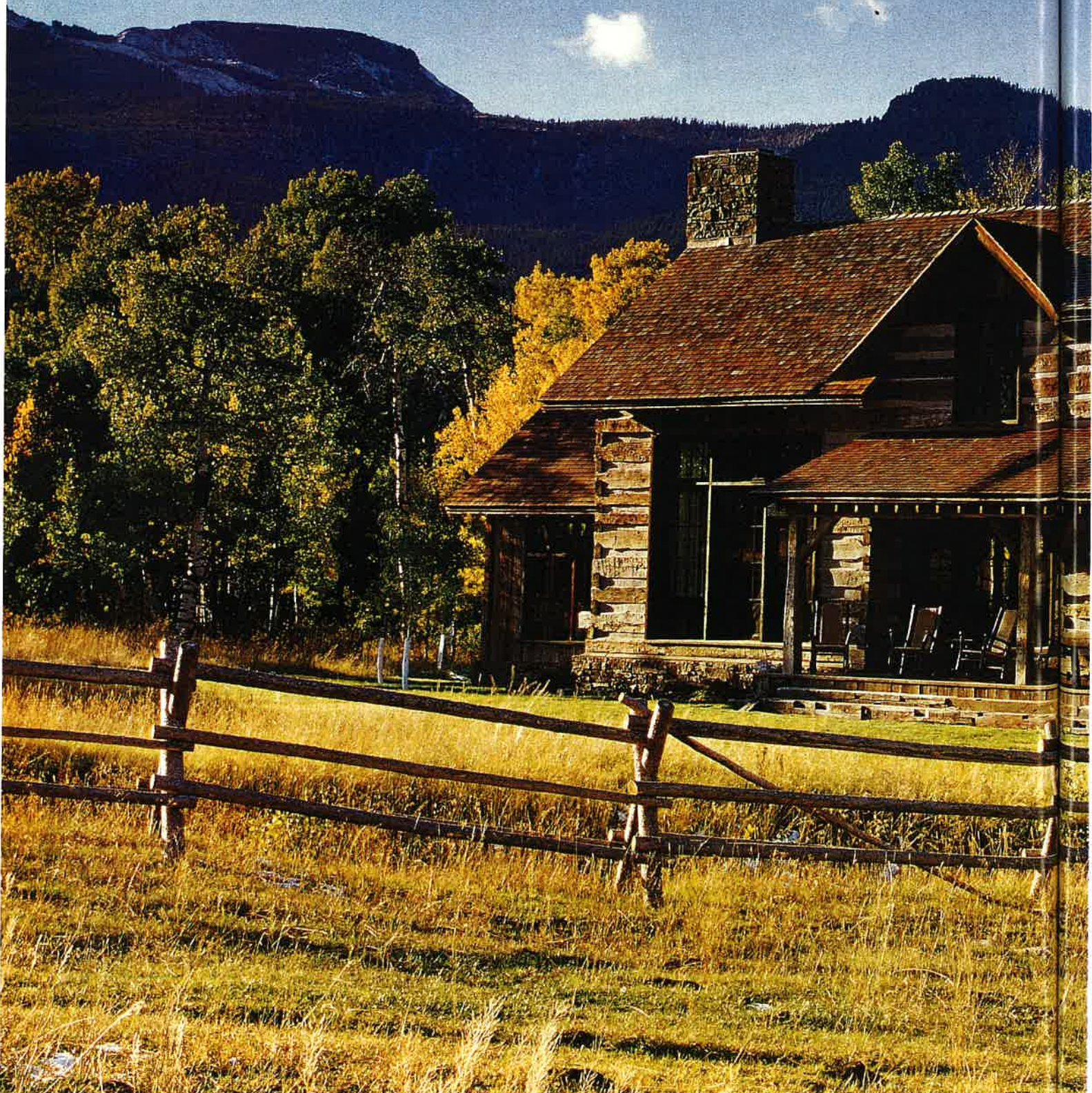
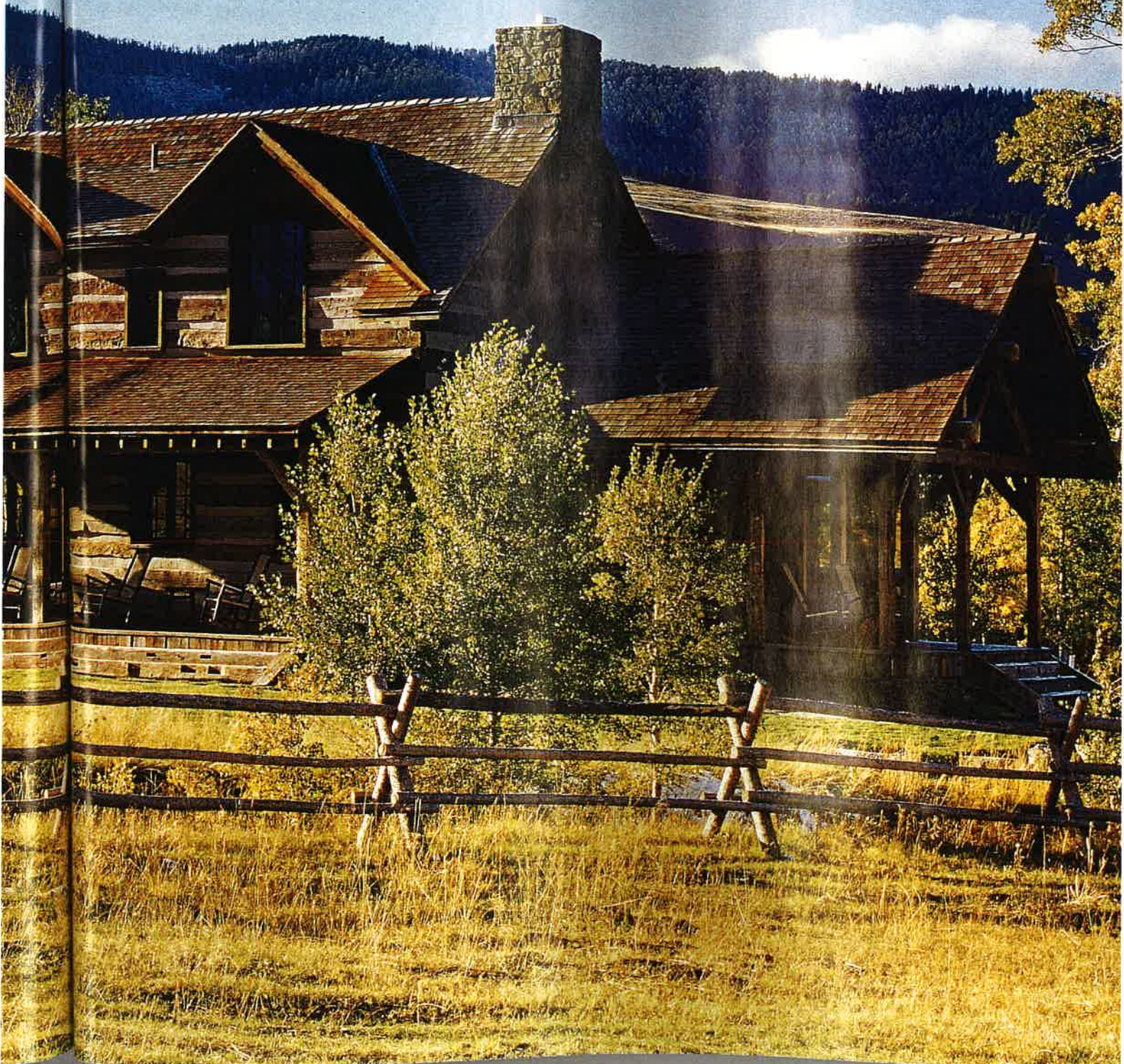


photography by Mark Darley / text by Sam Curtis



Montana Spirit

A classic western house in a classic American landscape
by architect Candace Tillotson-Miller and designer William Peace

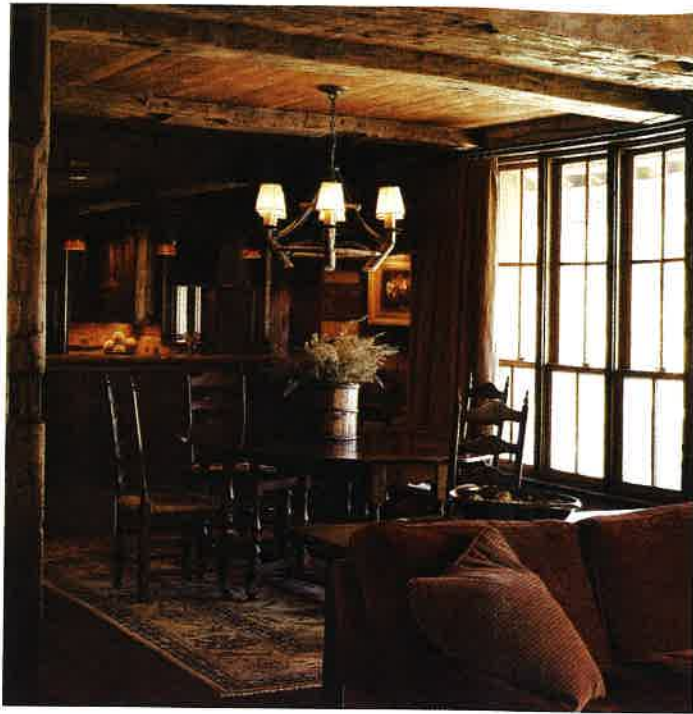






previous pages: Stan and Andrea Lumsden reclaimed two structures, relocated them and had architect Candace Tillotson-Miller and designer William Peace meld them to create their Montana house. Photograph by Gordon Gregory. left: Durable materials such as iron slate and rough-hewn wood were used in the entry. this page: A Montana-stone fireplace sets the tone for the living room. Adding to the warmth are a low table made of teak from PierceMartin and chenille upholstery.





THIS VIEW COMES WITH A DRUM ROLL," says architect Candace Tillotson-Miller, looking up at the rock cliffs of Sawtooth Mountain in southwestern Montana. Then she turns east to the long sweep of aspen and fir trees leading down to the Yellowstone River. "But this view makes me dream. I asked myself, 'How do I create a home that's as natural as this landscape?'" Her answers are just what Stan and Andrea Lumsden of Atlanta wanted in their second home, near Yellowstone National Park.

"Candace specializes in exactly what we were looking for," Stan Lumsden says. "Plus, she has a wonderful relationship with Yellowstone Traditions, builders that have a reputation for working with natural materials."

One look at the Lumsdens' landscape, and Tillotson-Miller knew those materials should be rock and timber. Stan, with the assistance of Dan Robinson at Walden Log Homes, found two vintage log structures, one in Kentucky, the other in Tennessee, and had them shipped to Montana. Local Harlowton moss rock was selected to blend with the browns and greys of the old timbers.

Tillotson-Miller transformed the large white-oak structure into the home's living, dining and kitchen areas, integrating its oversize door openings into her design. She used the smaller hemlock structure for the master bedroom suite, joining the two buildings with a stone entry hall that firmly anchors the house to the landscape.

"Logs and stone are about as indigenous as you can get in this region," Tillotson-Miller says. "They have a wonderful patina and sense of age. They lend a ruggedness to the house that encourages people to enjoy the outdoors and not be afraid to come inside with mud on their boots."

Tillotson-Miller urged the masons to "let the stones be stones" and to stack them irregularly with uneven joints so that their shadows added interest. "We wanted to engage the landscape in its natural sense, with its irregularities and wonderful imperfections, so we used that same language in putting the building together."

opposite: Tall windows and sheer draperies embrace the view off the living room. **above:** The dining room, kitchen and living room were designed as one continuous space for family interaction. **above right:** An antique cherrywood server sits at the base of the stairs leading to the bedrooms. Plain plaster walls were chosen to contrast with heavily textured logs.



Despite the building's inherent weight, Tillotson-Miller gave it a sense of transparency. On the approach walkway, a visitor's gaze is drawn both straight ahead to the mountains visible through the screened porch next to the kitchen and to the right by the simple elegance of the recessed stone entry. Likewise, in the entry hall, windows opposite the front door provide an intimate view of the aspen grove into which she nestled the house. The Lumdsens' home is also rooted to the land by subtle transitions, including natural landscaping—aspens trees, wildflowers, native stones and rockwork—and a “designed garden look,” both by Linda Iverson.

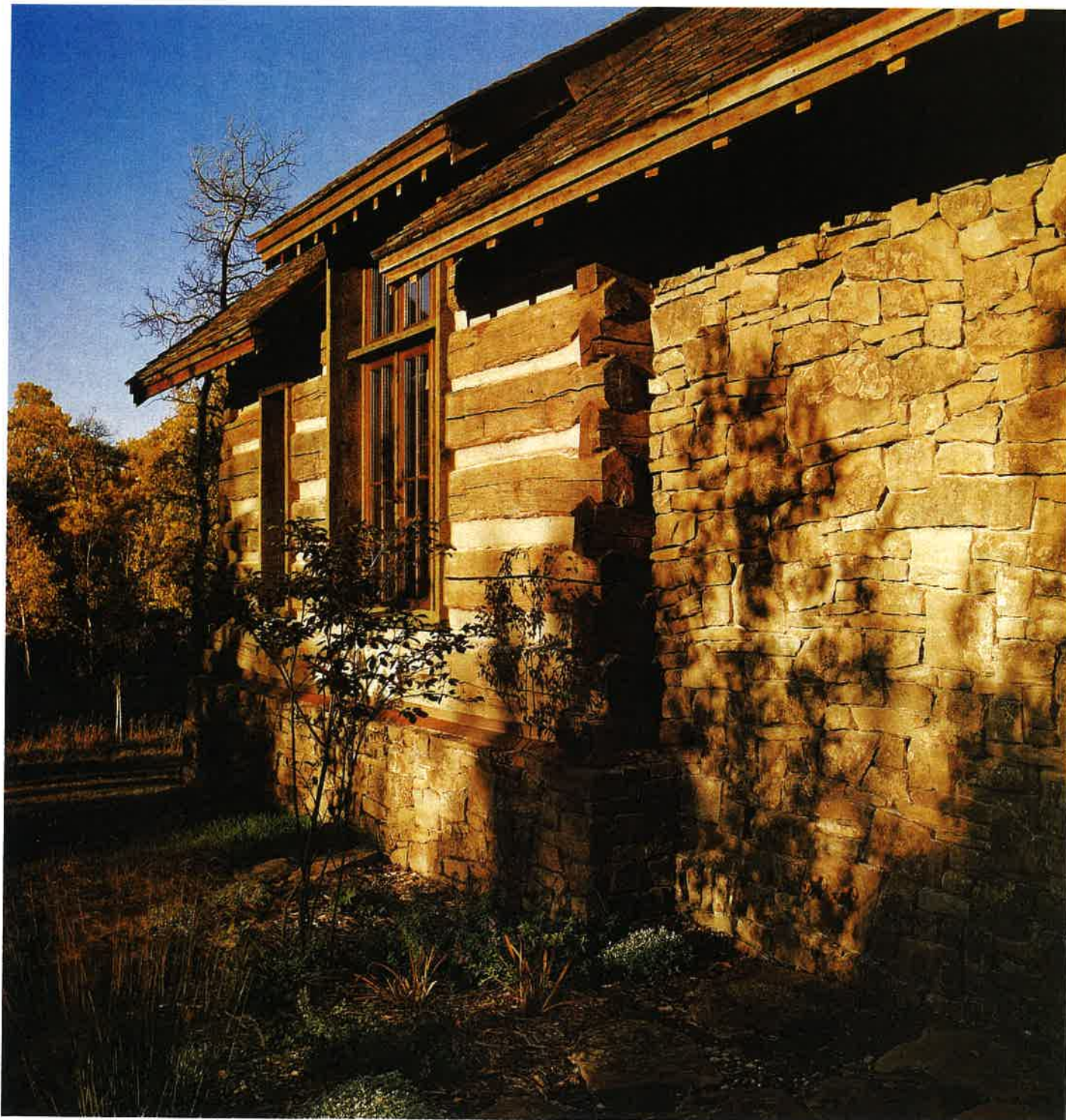


opposite: In the children's bedroom, a vintage creel hangs on an antique bed that has been in the Lumsden family for years.
above: Rusted and flattened corrugated metal makes up the walls in the powder room, where a cauldron from the clients' farm in Georgia serves as a sink.

Throughout the house, Tillotson-Miller used large windows with mullions that help tame the landscape into a series of visual vignettes. All of the windows are operable, so they can be opened in mild weather to let in the burble of the creek and the rustle of aspen leaves.

"Both the architecture and the interiors are driven by the western setting, because that's what the Lumsdens come here to enjoy," says interior designer William Peace of Peace Design in Atlanta. "Our goal was to create interiors that reflect the nature and vernacular of the area. That includes such choices as homespun fabrics, leather chairs and colors that connect with the outside."

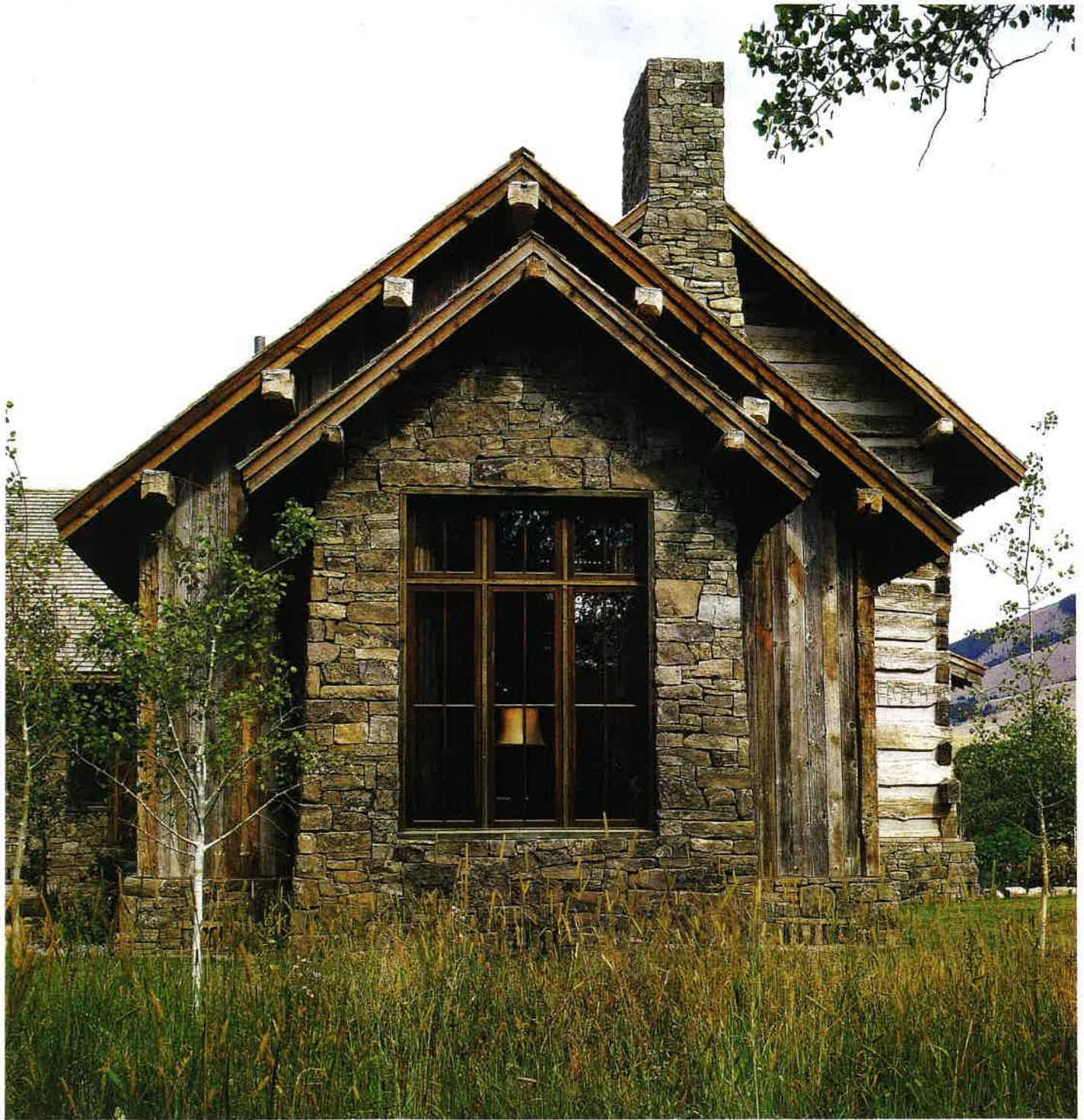
Tillotson-Miller has worked with Peace on several other homes she has designed in Montana. "He responds to the architecture as well as to the landscape," she says. "He looks at the volume of a space, for example, and decides where we need to relate to the vertical or the horizontal elements so that the interior design helps everyone experience the architecture. They go hand in hand. This is why I find value in working with someone like Bill, who has a good sense of three-dimensional space and is aware of the surrounding environment."



Gordon Gregory

The Lumsden home is a family home: The floor plan is simple, and the spaces are intimate. “When we’re living here, family ties become more valuable to us,” Stan Lumsden says. “The boys open up; we learn more about their inner thoughts. We do a lot of work together on the ranch. And when we’re all tired at the end of the day, it’s just a great place to take our boots off and relax.”

One of the Lumsdens’ favorite rooms in the summer is the screened porch with its panoramic views and a fireplace that takes the chill out of the night air and offers a sense of security in a locale that leans to the wild side. “Elk are common,” Stan says. “We see wolves and occasionally grizzlies, even moose. It’s our own little Serengeti.”



“Stone is used as the common material that links the old buildings together,” explains Tillotson-Miller. **opposite:** The master suite, an old reclaimed hemlock structure, is connected to the main part of the house by a stone wall. **above:** The vertical nature of the billiard room and chimney is emphasized with stone.

Candace Tillotson-Miller has had plenty of practice with old buildings. She spent three summers prospecting for gold with her father in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, where they also scavenged boards, logs, tin and stones from old mining-camp structures to fashion “funky, fun places” of their own. After attending the Rhode Island School of Design and Montana State University, where she earned her degree in architecture, she started creating designs drawn from old building types in the region. “I’ve developed an instinct for a natural palette,” she says, “and for renewing old homesteads and turning them into buildings of beauty that we can appreciate and live in with comfort.” ✦