

The covered entry is designed to welcome. Architect Nick Fullerton says, "By adding a fireplace on the porch, once it caught your eye, you were at home." The sculpture is by Lee Proctor.

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ARCHITECTURE FULLERTON ARCHITECTS INTERIOR DESIGN HUNTER & COMPANY  
CONSTRUCTION MEREDITH CONSTRUCTION COMPANY

# A Home for Sharing

This convivial Montana forest retreat is the perfect place for savoring family, friends and wine



**A** love of wine flows right through the heart of this family getaway in the Iron Horse community of Whitefish, Montana. And that was the plan all along: “We wanted to have a very prominent place for my husband’s wine collection—that was really a priority,” homeowner Erica Sandner says of her late husband who provided much of the vision for the home. “Anyone who knew him knew that he loved his wine and he loved sharing it with anyone and everyone.”

Nick Fullerton, of Fullerton Architects in nearby Bigfork, along with interior designer Hunter Dominick, of Whitefish’s Hunter & Company, took on the project of creating a family home infused with that spirit of congeniality; one that would fit the high-country setting without feeling too rustic. “I didn’t really want a Western home that was outrageously Western,” Sandner says. Fullerton found a creative compromise: “The Iron Horse project as a whole has a great set of design guidelines based on the National Park and railroad environments,” he explains. “We wanted a more contemporary feel, but we also wanted to work within the character of our site and the existing guidelines.”

Instead of choosing a lake-view lot, the family opted to build a nest in the forest. “What we really liked was that we could tuck our home into this area and there were a lot of mature trees around it—you were part of this bigger community but you could feel very private,” says Sandner. “It’s heavily wooded and the house fits the landscape,” Dominick remarks. “There’s no >>

The great room offers views of both wilderness and wine. A mixed-metal chandelier designed by Hunter & Company hangs above a pair of Kent sofas from Hickory Chair, upholstered in a bold pattern.



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**WINE CELLAR 101**

*Dreaming of a wine cellar but don’t have a clue how to fit one into your home? Hunter Dominick is here to help. “Wine rooms can be large or small, simple to ornate,” she says. “The sky is the limit and open to your interpretation—from modern to rustic, island or glam.” Here are some key questions to consider:*

**FUNCTION** How many bottles will you be storing? What size will they be? Do you want to include a tasting area? Will it be public, or private? Temperature by control, or naturally regulated by location within the home?

**FORM** What kind of aesthetics or style do you prefer? What’s the story and experience you want to convey?

**REMEMBER** Contrasting materials make a statement. Glass-and-steel horizontal racks create a modern style of storage. Stone, terra cotta and plaster give the feel of an Old World cellar. Color and texture go a long way and make a big impact in a small space.



ABOVE: A custom blown-glass chandelier by Newt Grover graces the dining room, with a table by Green Front Furniture and Morgan dining chairs from Orient Express Furniture. HERE: A pair of cozy swiveling armchairs provides a perfect spot for fireside reading in the sitting room



The kitchen’s sophisticated alder cabinetry harmonizes with Fusion Quartzite counters, a black range and a copper vent hood. The Bilbao Fishtail Pendants are from Arteriors.



A twig chandelier illuminates the guest master bedroom, with wavy blue-patterned bedding echoing the nearby lake. Dominick designed the room to be rustic yet light and airy.

30-foot ceiling with double-height windows." Fullerton emphasized the home's low horizontal lines. "My belief is that horizontals define spaces," he says. "The overhangs are important in that they give us the shadow lines, to read the horizontals and to keep the structure grounded and comfortable on the site."

The covered entry strikes a welcoming note, with an outdoor fireplace beside an oversized front door. Inside, the layout encourages visitors to meander and discover each new space. "Most people have that in-your-face view, but this home makes you want to go into the next room—it's not all right there for you to see," Dominick explains. "It's not quite so obvious as one big room," Sandner agrees. "It's broken up, so there's a tale to be told as you move along."

At the center of everything is the wine room. The extensive wine collection was gathered by Sandner and her husband over years of travel. When it came time to consider storage options, Sandner wondered, "Why are we relegating the wine to this other place in the house where we're always going to have to go run and get it? If you're entertaining, you want to be with your guests." So the wine room became a major feature of the home's main floor. "We thought it was a nice bridge between our living room and dining room, Sandner says. "We designed >>

**CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT:** A dramatic black-and-white bedroom features a charcoal wall as a backdrop for a Selby Headboard from Hickory Chair. Dominick played visual tricks by hanging a smaller mirror over a larger antique mirror in a chic bathroom with a white-painted tin ceiling. The master bath's freestanding tub is matched with a floor-mounted faucet from Hydrology and elegant Carrara marble floor tiles installed in a random pattern.





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it in such a way that there is a lot of transparency, so you can see from the living room to the dining room and vice versa, but you also get to see the wine.”

The home’s interiors are bright and open, warm and inviting. “They were looking for a home in the woods,” Dominick explains. “Much more sophisticated, but still a mountain home.” The reclaimed beams came from a Hiram Walker whiskey distillery in the family’s home state of Illinois. “On the truss, we went with iron cross bars instead of wood—a more open, cleaner look, but still within a ‘truss’ concept,” Fullerton explains. A light, neutral color palette, sparked by occasional flashes of color, helps the rooms feel airy and fresh. “And the bathrooms took on a very contemporary European look,” Dominick adds.

“I hope that people walk in and just feel an overwhelming sense of comfort; that they are able to feel the sense of community that the spaces were intended to create,” Sandner says. Filled with children, grandchildren and plenty of friends, it’s a convivial gathering place for sharing time—and a great bottle of wine—together. ◦

**CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT:** The powder room features Feather Bloom wallpaper from Schumacher and a vanity and faucet from Hydrology. The great room’s textures are varied, with reclaimed wood, a mix of metals, and a fireplace framed by refined limestone. The Western saloon-inspired bar has a hand-painted tin ceiling by Revival Finishes and Hicks extra-large pendants. The vintage back bar was discovered by the homeowners and matched with leather barstools by Four Hands.

» For a guide to this home’s products and pros, visit [mountainliving.com/MontanaWineRetreat](http://mountainliving.com/MontanaWineRetreat)



The entry portico is crafted from aged timbers reclaimed from a Hiram Walker whiskey distillery. The designers chose an oversized pivoting door to enhance the sense of arrival.