

BIG SKY JOURNAL

# HOME

MOUNTAIN LIVING + ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN







# *Living* Legacy

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## A Northwest Montana lake house takes on a timeless rustic elegance

**T**UCKED AWAY IN THE FAR NORTHWESTERN corner of Montana, a rustic home is perched on the shore of a remote lake. At first glance — say, if you were approaching from across the water by canoe — you might think it was an old chalet, one of the grand lakeside lodges erected at the turn of the 20th century. The angles of the rooflines, the massive timbers and stout chimneys, and the rows of transom windows all gesture toward that classic architectural style. Mature pines stand guard as though they've been watching over the home for a century.

**ARCHITECTURE**  
Centre Sky Architecture

**CONSTRUCTION**  
High Country Builders

**INTERIOR DESIGN**  
Hunter & Company





**OPPOSITE PAGE:** Approached from the water, this home is reminiscent of the grand lakeside lodges of the past. From above: The great room combines rustic elements of stone, timber, and turnbuckles with modern accents, such as sheet metal and rivets. • Double islands in the kitchen are the perfect solution for entertaining while cooking.

But upon closer inspection, it immediately becomes clear that this is a much newer home, built in 2014, although no less grand for its newness. And the nod toward history is no accident. “We liked the rustic look,” says the homeowner. “We wanted the house to look as if it had been there a long time, and to blend into the surrounding landscape.”

Jamie Daugaard, principal at Centre Sky Architecture, took that directive and ran with it. “The client came to me looking for a lake house that had that quaintness, but was a little bit different,” he recalls. “We ended up using stone that was very rustic, incorporating it with wood timber and steel beams for a little interplay of materials, but not much — we wanted it to still feel like a lake house.”





What Daugaard did — along with High Country Builders, Hunter & Company interiors, Greenwood Masonry, and a team of highly skilled artisans — was take the classic lake home and make it even better, with clever updates and pragmatic design choices. “We made a lot of decisions based on their lifestyle,” says Hunter Dominick of Hunter & Company. “They’re on the water, they have dogs, they want people to be able to come in and out without a lot of maintenance, so the idea was a super-functional, usable house.”

That eye toward functionality meant choosing a layout that was both practical and aesthetically pleasing. A mudroom and pantry provide ample storage without cluttering up primary living spaces. A bunk room and separate shower and bath area are perfect for younger visitors. “Children come to visit, and



**FROM TOP:** The patio’s flagstone transitions seamlessly into the mudroom floor, to blur the line between indoors and out. • The home makes the most of the lake views, with custom couches that invite visitors to relax and enjoy the scenery.







they wonder if they're going to have to be sleeping in the same room as their parents. Then they see this bunk room and their eyes light up," the homeowner says.

Material choices were critical to the home's livability as well. One illustration of this is the flagstone flooring that plays a starring role in the house — and continues into the outdoor living spaces. "The whole main floor is flagstone, which we wanted to do because of the dogs — it's more durable," the homeowner says. And the uninterrupted flooring "also makes it so you don't quite know if you're inside or outside."

This fluidity between indoor and outdoor living spaces was a primary goal of the homeowners and the design team. As a predominantly summer residence, the house needed to allow its inhabitants to capitalize on Montana's beautiful-but-brief months of warmth. "We wanted to be able to spend most of the time outdoors, and



**FROM TOP:**  
A bright subway tile backsplash in the kitchen offers striking contrast to the weathered metal fixtures and rustic cabinetry.  
• Raw stone and wood provide the perfect background for well-placed contemporary art.





**FROM TOP:** The family had a historic canoe repurposed as a light fixture, which highlights the outdoor dining space. • Guest accommodations include doors that access the patio and lakefront.

wanted the home to be conducive to that, with seamless access to the outside,” the homeowner says. Sliding NanaWall doors on the ground floor invite guests to wander between the entertainment room and lakeshore. A spacious, partially covered deck on the main floor offers outdoor seating and dining, a commanding stone fireplace, and, perhaps the highlight of the space, a wood-fired oven.

Ever vigilant for opportunities to meld form and function, the team jumped at the opportunity to turn what was a necessary structural component into a useful — and fun — feature: Because of the slope of the property, the outdoor oven required a massive concrete support structure below. “We took the mass that’s supporting the oven and carved it out to create an outdoor shower,” says Daugaard. The area around the shower became a functional patio, as well as a place to stash kayaks and water toys, and clean off after a day on the lake. “The shower is great if you’re chilled from being in the water, and it’s great for hosing off dogs,” adds the homeowner.





**FROM TOP:** A guest apartment over the garage offers a more private option for visitors. • Reclaimed tin and retro light fixtures add a historical flair to the bar on the ground floor. • The tile in this shower mimics weathered wood paneling.

Clever functionality and practical living spaces are, in and of themselves, worthy subjects. Where this home truly shines, however, is in its ability to elevate livability to a level of rustic elegance and mindful intentionality: the canoe-turned-chandelier in the outdoor dining room; the uncompromising, timeless quality of the stonework throughout; antique furniture discovered during the homeowners' travels; steel details, including an accent wall, the range hood, and the turnbuckles spanning the beams in the great room; the meticulous selection of finishes in each bathroom; the siting of the house on the property, in order to best capitalize on the terrain and waterfront access. All of these small choices add up to a home that rightfully deserves comparison to the lake lodges of the past, and will one day be a 100-year-old legacy of its own. 