



The homeowners wanted their cabin to have an airy and modern look. "To do a complete timber frame would make the room seem darker and heavier," says architect Nick Fullerton. "The metal tie rods are structural but give texture and make the room seem lighter." The wood trusses are reclaimed fir; tie rods are hammered steel.

SMALL SPACES ISSUE

[2,800 square feet]

A COZY WHITEFISH, MONTANA, GETAWAY PROVIDES A SECLUDED FAMILY HAVEN WITH BOLD STYLE AND BREATHTAKING MOUNTAIN-AND-LAKE VISTAS

LITTLE HOUSE WITH A BIG SKY VIEW

STORY BY IRENE RAWLINGS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY

WESTERN MONTANA IS FAMOUS FOR ITS VAST BLUE SKIES, LONG SUMMER EVENINGS, CRISP WINTER DAYS

and the beauty of Glacier National Park. But it was the fiery sunsets over the Flathead Valley and Whitefish Lake that sealed the deal for this Chicago family. “Before we came to Whitefish for the first time, my husband ... he’d traveled here on business...[and] promised me the most beautiful sunsets I was ever going to see,” the homeowner recalls, admitting, “He certainly delivered on his promise.”

They bought and for many years enjoyed one of the original cabins at Iron Horse Golf Community. Eventually they decided to look for something a bit more secluded, and, as luck would have it, the property had become available. Though located within Iron Horse, the building site was tucked away in the woods, and they loved the idea of being surrounded by birdsong and the wind in the tops of “beautiful mountain trees.”

The couple chose architect Nick Fullerton (who also heads Iron Horse’s design review committee) to turn their dream—a cabin in the forest—into reality. “It is the ideal site,” says Fullerton, who is based in nearby Bigfork and Los Angeles. “Fully wooded with a great deal of interesting topography—but not too steep.” Without cutting down “any more trees than we had to,” Fullerton created view lines to Whitefish Lake while retaining the privacy that the family desired.

The homeowners wanted their 2,800-square-foot cabin to incorporate the best of Western elements, with plenty of modern comfort, while also reflecting the rich architectural heritage of their own Midwestern roots. The materials Fullerton used and his attention to period detail give a nod to Montana’s mining, ranching and transportation history. “The windows, for example, are based on blueprints from the old railroad days,” says Fullerton, “except that ours are energy saving.” Adding to the historic appeal, some of the interior wood is reclaimed from the 1880s

Hiram Walker whiskey distillery in Peoria, Illinois. “It had such a beautiful age and patina that we only treated it lightly...with oil,” says the homeowner. “You can actually see where the whiskey barrels sat for ages,” she adds.

“Our designer has an incredible sense of style and is a bit fearless,” says the homeowner about interior designer Hunter Dominick, owner of Hunter & Company Interior Design in Whitefish. Dominick explains, “The homeowners had a clear vision: clean lines, iconic pieces and nothing over-the-top rustic. They encouraged me to play with scale, texture and materials.” Natural elements like wood, leather, metal and stone give a warmth and coziness to the home’s interior. Bold, oversized patterns are paired with smaller pieces to create the illusion of spaciousness.

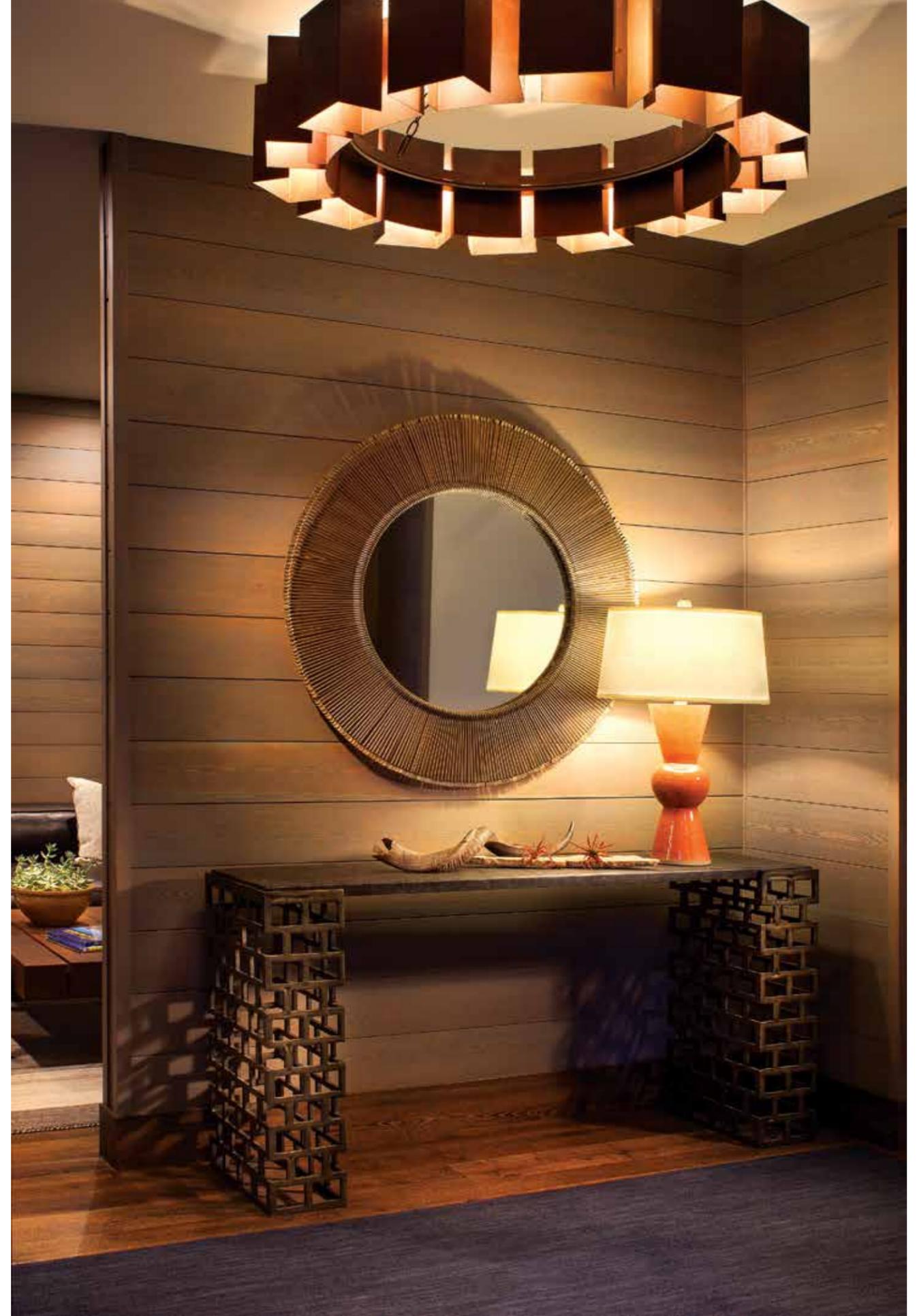
In the entry, an outsized contemporary metal chandelier cleverly references the wagon-wheel chandeliers popular in 1950s dude ranches. A large mirror (framed in thin strips of metal) reflects the chandelier’s light and makes the space appear larger.

The “gingham bedroom” breaks all of the rules for decorating a small space. An entire wall is upholstered in an attention-grabbing, patterned textile. “I was trying to create the impression of a fabric headboard,” says Dominick, “and the big pattern makes a big impact.” If you use one hugely bold element, she cautions, the other forms and fabrics in the room need to be restful and even a bit understated.

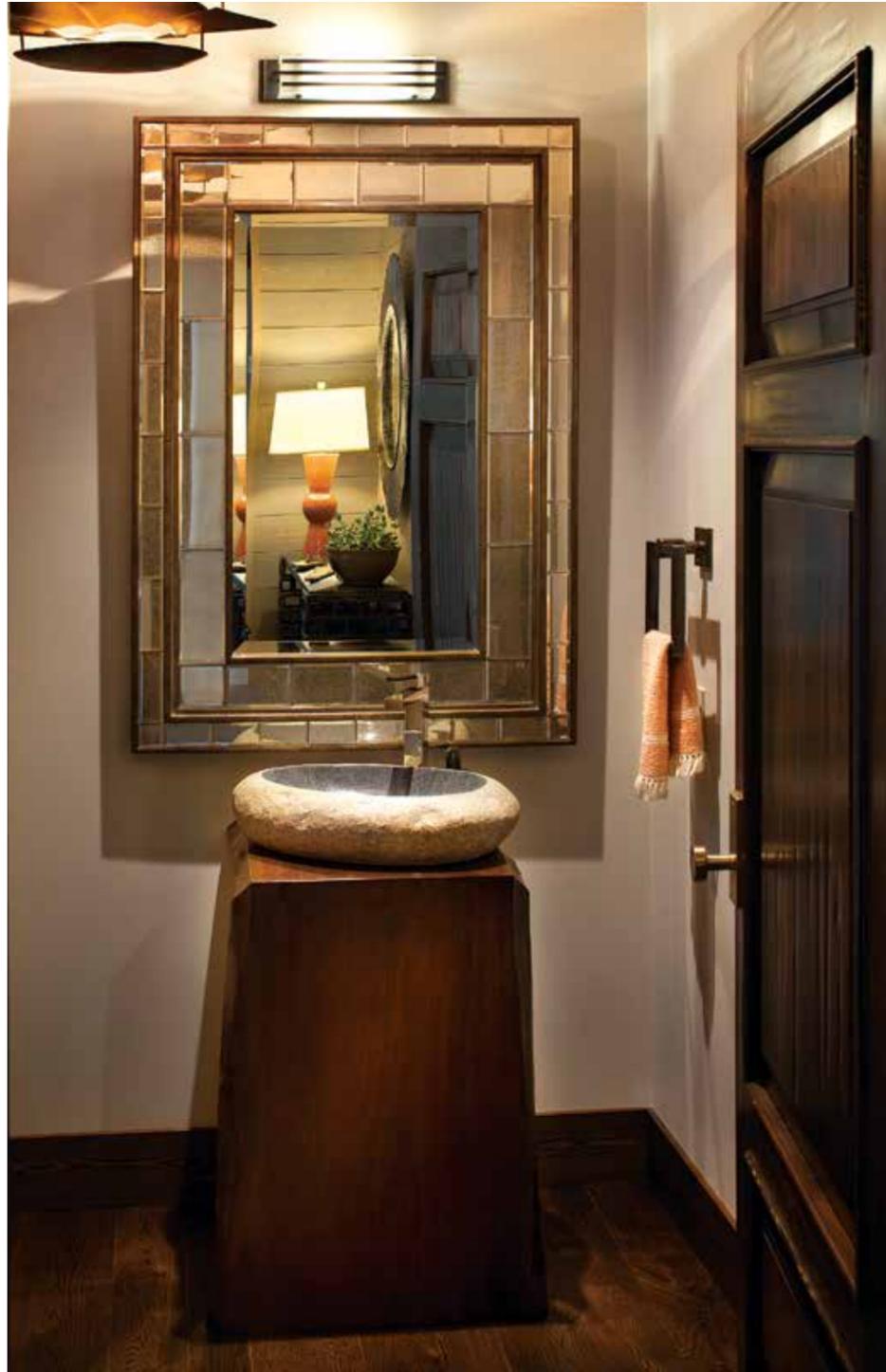
The homeowners incorporated a few beloved pieces of furniture into the décor of the cabin—namely, an original midcentury Florence Knoll sofa and an antique dining table they had bought on a trip to New Orleans. Dominick reupholstered the sofa in a luscious lime green mohair (a fashionable color during Knoll’s time) and paired it with contemporary Scandinavian wingback chairs upholstered in a gray-plaid wool with just a hint of lime.

Many years have passed since the homeowners first began vacationing in Montana; their oldest child was only 6 when they first came, and they now explore Big Sky Country with their grandchildren. But Montana’s rugged charm endures, and the family’s little cabin in the woods has become the perfect place to savor lingering sunsets over the Flathead Valley. ○

An oversized metal chandelier in the entry sets the tone for the rest of the home—bold and stylish. The light in each of the chandelier’s openings shines both up and down. The sculptural legs of the granite-and-metal console allow for a play of light on the walls. “I enjoyed working with scale and light,” says interior designer Hunter Dominick. The wood paneling is locally harvested pine with a semi-transparent stain, so the texture of the wood is clearly visible.



BELOW: The powder room mixes many seemingly disparate materials in a super-small space—stone vessel sink, angular wood pedestal, Art Deco lighting piece over a large contemporary mirror. OPPOSITE: Backsplash tiles in the kitchen mirror the vibrant green of the vintage Florence Knoll sofa at the opposite end of the room (page 65). The homeowners purchased the antique dining table on a trip to New Orleans. Wishbone chairs are a modern interpretation of an iconic midcentury design.



DECORATING SMALL SPACES

Hints from Hunter Dominick, of Hunter & Company Interior Design, Whitefish, Montana

BE BRAVE
 "Don't be frightened of big scale or bold color. But don't overdo it. Remember that a little of a large pattern goes a long way."

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITY
 "People think smaller spaces need to be light and airy. Yes, there's value in that, but a small space can sustain dark colors and gives the opportunity to showcase color and pattern."

EXPERIMENT WITH THE UNEXPECTED
 "Small spaces are perfect for big pieces of furniture. One large and unexpected piece works very well in a small space; it gives a focal point to the room."



“THEY (THE HOMEOWNERS) HAD A CLEAR VISION—CLEAN LINES, ICONIC PIECES AND NOTHING OVER-THE-TOP RUSTIC.”

—interior Designer Hunter Dominick



ABOVE: Each of the guest bedrooms has specially designed twin beds that can be pushed together and mattresses that can be zipped together to create a king-sized bed. The gingham guest room features a fabric-upholstered wall. “It’s a headboard,” says interior designer Hunter Dominick, “and the bold pattern makes a big impact.” OPPOSITE: She wrapped the bathroom in horizontal tile and used a glass shower wall to open up the space. A sculptural tub was chosen because “it seems to take up less space.” Dark grouting plays up the vintage look of the ceramic penny tile floor.

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