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MOUNTAIN BUILDERS AT THE TOP
KITCHEN REFINEMENT ON THE RANGE
A CRAFTSMAN-STYLE GUESTHOUSE

*Long-term stays are encouraged in a Montana guesthouse
outfitted with stellar views, fine finishes and all the comforts of home*

A GRAND GRANNY FLAT



STORY **LAURA KOSTELNY** PHOTOS **HEIDI LONG**

INTERIOR DESIGN **HUNTER & CO. INTERIOR DESIGN** CONSTRUCTION **MALMQUIST CONSTRUCTION** ARCHITECTURE **ALTIUS DESIGN GROUP**

OPPOSITE: A pretty patio overlooking Whitefish River is outfitted with sculptural ebony rattan chairs and a rounded, polished-concrete table painted a faded indigo. THIS PAGE: The brand-new structure was designed to look like it had a long history of farming use before being repurposed into a jewel-box-like guesthouse.



Necessity may be the mother of innovation, but it turns out it's also the key to a pretty extraordinary granny flat. That's the lesson a couple learned while relocating their vacation home to Montana. "We found the greatest place in the world by accident in Whitefish, Montana, back in 2015," says the homeowner. "This property kept popping up in our lake house internet searches for almost three years. It's totally unique—Whitefish Lake is 7 miles long and 1 mile wide. We call it a 'personal lake' because it's a very nice size. At the end, there's a piece of property that's 12 acres surrounded by Lazy Bay. We knew we had to buy it as soon as we saw it in person."

The paradisiacal plot also came with a quintessential Montana log cabin with exceptional views. "Most lake properties have 50 to 100 feet of frontage; this one has 3,000 feet," says the homeowner. And while the home also boasts plenty of interior square footage, it was important that extended family and friends—specifically grandparents—felt welcome to come and stay awhile. The best way to do that, the homeowners figured, was to build a one-bedroom, one-bath granny flat right on the lake and outfit it with soaring ceilings, two-story-tall windows, a well-equipped kitchenette, a cozy loft and plenty of outdoor living space.

Because the couple wasn't interested in duplicating the timber-frame construction of the main house, they collaborated with architect Rich Graves of Altius Design Group to create a totally unique structure that stayed true to the surroundings. "They wanted something very simple—new construction that looked like it could have been an old agricultural building or loafing shed for horses that had been repurposed into a jewel box," says Graves. "The clients came with photos of a Sonoma winery that had these beautiful steel trusses in the roof system. Because we have big snow loads here, the trusses had to become more structural and a bit more robust. When you look at them, it's evident they're the real deal and actually support the roof."

Whitefish-based interior designer Hunter Dominick has worked with the couple on multiple homes around the country, so it only made sense to call her in to make their vision for a dreamy abode a reality. "They asked for a combination of rustic and modern, with streamlined, clean materials," she says. To that end, she mixed finishes like barnwood, plaster and steel with sculptural lighting, luxurious fabrics, quartz, limestone and even a beautiful blush

Guests have everything they need in the "great room," including a kitchenette furnished with gorgeous globe lighting, fir cabinetry and honed limestone countertops and a living area featuring Noir chairs upholstered in a graphic fabric arranged around a coffee table from Arteriors.





THE GUEST (HOUSE) LIST

Designer Hunter Dominick and her clients share their tips for making extended stays exceptional

ADOPT AN OPEN-DOOR POLICY The homeowners don't expect their guests to work while staying here—and that includes toiling in a kitchen. "All we needed here was a spot to make small snacks and breakfast, so they can walk over and eat lunch and dinner with us at the main house," says the homeowner. To that end, Dominick outfitted the flat with a bar area complete with a sink, small refrigerator, ice machine and basic appliances like a coffee maker, toaster oven and microwave. **THINK PINK** Dominick created a spa-like primary bathroom that also leaned into the surroundings with a mix of refined and rugged materials like an alder vanity, Salvatori stone on the walls and textured limestone countertops. She also brought in a little surprise: Sherwin-Williams Quaint Peche SW 6330 paint. "The contractor told us, 'I've never painted a pink ceiling before,'" says the homeowner. "But the whole time, Hunter said, 'Trust me, it's going to look great with the barnwood,'" and she was right!" **KEEP THE FLEX SPACE FLEXIBLE** While guests have everything they could ever need on the first floor, the upstairs loft can accommodate both grown-up business and kid-friendly fun thanks to a small sitting area and two extra-long window seats piled high with custom pillows. **CREATE PLENTY OF LIGHT-BULB MOMENTS** The designer devoted extra time to choosing just-right fixtures for overhead, task and moody moments. "We were successful in accenting and highlighting the simplicity of the structure and all the materials," she says. The homeowners also opted to add LED uplighting to the trusses, which makes the entire house glow from the outside once night falls.

TOP: The upstairs loft provides the perfect perch to take in the views thanks to a large window seat piled high with pillows. BOTTOM: No square inch is wasted here—designer Hunter Dominick carved out room for a built-in, bar cart and even a dog bed tucked beneath the stairs.



The designer says the project began with wood selections, finishes and the grand fireplace, which combines plaster with a steel hearth. "From there, we moved on to the furniture and functionality. Above all, we wanted it light and airy," explains Dominick.

“THE CONTRACTOR TOLD US, ‘I’VE NEVER PAINTED A PINK CEILING BEFORE.’”

—THE HOMEOWNER

In order to create a spa-like bathroom retreat, Dominick combined an abundance of natural materials including textured limestone, alder and white oak with modern lighting and a soothing rose paint color (Sherwin-Williams Quaint Peche SW #6330) on the ceiling.



paint color. “Naturally, because of the location, it was important to maximize the views of the lake, and the landscape influenced the interiors. My clients wanted a pronounced indoor-outdoor connection. It seems like a big space because of the landscape, but it’s a very inviting and warm space as well,” Dominick adds.

A great deal of attention went into getting all the outdoor sights just right. “The views are absolutely spectacular. We spent a lot of time talking to Hunter and Rich, trying to figure out exactly where we wanted the home to face, and we really did just nail it,” says the homeowner. “It looks like the structure is located right on the water, but it still feels so private. When boats come by, no one can see inside.”

As for the intended short-term residents? The homeowners say Grandma and Grandpa felt welcome to stay long-term from the first moment they toured the state-of-the-art familial flat. “They were absolutely blown away. Obviously, there are these incredible views, but I don’t think they were expecting this level of sophistication without any feelings of fussiness.” In sum, “They were super, super pleased.” o

THIS PAGE: Visitors survey the lay of the land from comfy chairs placed high above in the loft. The bedroom feels extra special thanks to reclaimed wood-clad walls, and a vanity area complete with a custom slab and a cowhide pouf.

>> For a guide to this home’s products and pros, visit mountainliving.com/GrannyFlat

