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A Montana timber cabin designed with scenery and aging-in-place provisions in mind

The Rotes' predominantly one-story cabin was designed to match the aesthetics of old homesteads in the area: a central gathering space that appears to have been added onto over the years. The other key requirement: "Keep it open, keep it light, and get the outside inside," states owner Richard Rote.

Location is everything for most cabin owners — from the views to the ambience to the outdoor connection. Having an immediate connection with the community also helps.

East Coast natives Richard and Nancy Rote were drawn to Bozeman, Montana, for the friendly residents, the university atmo-

sphere and the culture. Richard had often fly-fished in the area during summertime, and with family nearby, their decision in 2006 to purchase the property on which their cabin sits was a simple one.

Of course, majestic views can't hurt. Located in the Gallatin Valley, the cabin is surrounded by four exquisite mountain ranges: the Bridger Mountains to the north, the Hyalite Mountains to the east, the Spanish Peaks to the south and the Tobacco Root Mountains to the west. The predominantly one-level



Mountain views surround the hybrid timber Montana cabin. The great room timbers create structural support, while the hearth, featuring local stacked stone, provides needed warmth for Montana winters.

design, with ample windows in the great room and transition areas, captures these views with its targeted siting.

“Any window you look out, you’re getting a different view corridor that brings the outdoors to the inside of the house,” Richard observes.

Natural Fit

Equally important to the views, though, was a cabin that suited the surrounding area. The couple traveled around Bozeman and snapped pictures of homes they liked to help shape the look of the cabin. The end result is a mix of authentic, time-worn materials and modern elements.

“I was looking for something that reflected the architecture of old homes,” Richard explains. “It seemed to me the old homesteads started with a base house. As the years progressed, additions were put onto the original house. If you look at our house, it’s not one rectangular structure.”

The exterior materials used also resemble that of an old homestead. Dove-tail Construction, owned by the couple’s son, Tim, and his friend Kevin Sullivan, hand-selected the local reclaimed, re-sawn Douglas fir timbers that anchor the cabin’s appearance from old buildings based on their wealth of character.

“We played on the older construction motif of incorporating various exterior materials,” Tim states, noting the varied use of local stone, stucco and metal, as well as the horizontal and vertical orientation of the timber siding.

Easy Access

The owners’ forethought on their cabin’s design also shines through in the aging-in-place features that ensure this retirement cabin remains functional for years to come. The couple worked with Dove-tail Construction and Tammy Minge at Frog Rock Design to create an open plan that is easily accessible through wide-open doorways and grade-level paving around the cabin, with only one 6-inch step located on the main entry.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Nancy was initially unsure of the muted cranberry color for the kitchen island because she wasn't sure how it would look with the alder cabinets. But the end result was a pleasantly eye-catching surprise. "I am so happy I chose that because I thought it would be too monochromatic with more wood around the base," she states. ■ Although Richard was fond of the West because of his fly-fishing excursions, Nancy initially had her heart set on retiring to Cape Cod. The compromise with this coastal-styled master bedroom. ■ Transition spaces were crucial to capturing viewpoints. A complementary sitting area is located inside past this exterior perch. The space connects the master bedroom to the great room and can be closed off by barnwood doors for peace and quiet. ■ Two stamped concrete pathways provide outside access to the area around the cabin. The flowers that have blossomed round out the pathways nicely. "We both love to garden," Nancy states.



SQUARE FOOTAGE:
2,875

BEDROOMS:
3

BATHROOMS:
3

“We’ve had people who are physically challenged in wheelchairs here. It’s easy for them to enter by themselves as well as with the aid of one other person,” Richard observes.

The main living areas are all located on the ground level, separated from the two main-level bedrooms by well-designed transition spaces that serve as sitting areas and outdoor access points. The open layout provides great sight lines throughout the home and to the outdoors. An upper-level bonus room is reserved as a private room for guests.

Welcome Home

Entertaining was an important factor in the design as well. In addition to being easily navigable, the open kitchen layout provides immediate access to the great room and dining room.

“We wanted to see our guests,” Nancy states.

One of Nancy’s favorite features in the kitchen is the pantry, hidden behind an ornately carved antique door. Ample space allows her to categorize everything so that she doesn’t have to hunt around for the right foodstuffs.

The welcoming aesthetic of the beam work and timber accents showcased throughout this hybrid timber cabin also makes it easy for anyone to feel at home.

“Everything’s not overwhelming,” Kevin Sullivan observes. “The amount of timberwork, the ceiling heights and the relationships throughout that whole public area — it just feels very homey.”

With these and other details planned so well in advance, the only adjustment the Rotes had to make was acclimating to the Montana winters.

“We heard people say they would go away in April. Back east, that’s the start of spring,” Richard jokes. “We found out why people went away then — we pray spring starts in May.”

EFFICIENT CONSTRUCTION

Dovetail Construction utilized hybrid timber construction to craft a cabin that exudes the warmth of wood but also achieves a high level of efficiency.

“It’s a great building system in that it incorporates very efficient building envelopes, yet it achieves the beauty and illusion of a timber-frame home,” states builder Tim Rote.

Structural timbers in the great room and porches are complemented by non-structural design elements, such as the coffered ceiling in the kitchen and the whitewashed lodge-pole pine rafters in the master bedroom.

In addition to the timber siding, the shell of the home comprises vapor barriers and increased insulation via urethane foam and down sprays in the walls and vaulted ceilings. The plumbing system was design for minimal thermal loss in the hot water lines, with a highly efficient heating system and air exchanges installed to keep the rest of the home comfortable. Proper flashing techniques around windows and doors prevent air leaks.