

BIG SKY, personalized

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Photography by
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*A Montana vacation home mixes elegance, antlers
and antiques without a cowboy hat in sight*



Opening Pages: As perfect as its setting, the Hodapp family home is just a short walk from the driving range, and minutes to superb dining and shopping in Bozeman.



When even the builder's dog cooperates, you know it's going to be a great collaboration.

While Sue and Jim Hodapp's vacation home was being photographed, a very contented pup settled in comfortably for his close-up. But while the couple has two dogs, the cuddly canine in the shot is not one of them. "That's our builder's dog," Sue


explains. "He's a good dog! Our dogs, Lucy and McDuff, are bad. There's no way they would have posed like that without a cookie!"

From the minute they first met builder Tim Rote, of Dovetail Construction, and architect Andrew Brechbuhler, the Hodapps knew they'd found the right team to create the vacation (and eventually permanent) home they'd been dreaming about for years. "We just had so much faith in

these guys! We pushed them in a direction they had not gone before, and it all turned out just beautifully," Sue says happily. Trust and confidence was especially important for a project some 1,500 miles away, but she explains that the distance was not really a problem. "It's actually easier, because you aren't there everyday, wondering what's been done."

For Sue, the most important direction was the one that led away from the typical Western-style homes so prevalent in the region. "After we chose Bozeman and began touring homes, we saw some very nice properties. But everything, in every price range, was just so rustic — the furniture, the architecture, every component was rustic. I didn't want a theme-based house, and I didn't want to live in a lodge," she says. That's when the couple decided to build. "I wanted to live in a house with my things that I love, and make them translate into a new space for our family. And I love color!"

Pulling the elements together with her own vision and without a decorator — "none of them were on board with what I wanted" — Sue has created a welcoming and elegant family home.



Vino with friends beneath the spectacular Montana sky! It's no wonder Sue and Jim describe their home as a "dream come true."

Above, substantial beams, fashioned from reclaimed lumber, reach across the spacious main rooms. Below, easy-to-maintain floors of circle-sawn fir are impervious to traffic. And in between, diverse design elements work together in stylish harmony.





Abundant sunshine and magnificent views are an integral part of the home's décor, giving new authenticity to the term "picture window." When choosing draperies for the dining room and master suite, Sue avoided valances and other elaborate details, letting the views take center stage. "I'm not a fan of fussy window treatments," she explains. In the master bedroom, simple gathered panels surround another mountain vista. Although the floor-to-ceiling draperies are not fussy, the crewel-embroidered velvet offers a cozy intimacy, perfect with the glamorous padded headboard.

Eventually the family plans to live permanently in their Bozeman home, but for now they visit at least once a month. Last year they arrived on Christmas day with sons Jack and Andy (and those naughty dogs!) and stayed for the entire holiday season. "It's like living in a snow globe! There's so much sunshine, and the sky is just a different shade of blue in Montana. It's insanely beautiful!"

With no upper cabinets and no curtains, great views are guaranteed for the cook, as well as friends and family gathered around the center island.

Effervescent and formal play nicely in the dining room, where an exquisite sideboard works perfectly with chairs upholstered in a casual orange and coral print. Gold-framed works by British illustrator Prideaux John Selby are from Sue's home in St. Louis, part of her collection of the artist's drawings. The Selby pieces add an elegant accent, but the jaw-dropping art is the panorama outside the dining room window, where the Bridger Mountain Range points to the Montana sky.



While elk and moose are in the area, Sue says their only wildlife visitors are deer and — much to her surprise and delight — pelicans. “There’s a small lake across the street, and one day I counted 15 pelicans. Apparently they stop here en route from South America.” The beautiful birds are not popular with the locals, however. “They

can’t wait for them to leave, because they eat all of the fish!”

Pelicans and deer mingling in the same neighborhood? Well, there’s an antler chandelier illuminating an 18th century table just inside the door. Somehow, it all just works. ■



One of the challenges Jim and Sue presented to their builder was the two-sided fireplace shared by the great room and the library. “It took a

huge amount of stone to make it all work!” And while the fireplace and beamed ceiling add drama to the great room, the library is the

couple’s favorite space. “It has bookcases, a window seat, two leather chairs and of course, the TV! It’s a tiny room, but we love it.”



A friend’s dog finds a favorite spot near the door, in a room outfitted with lots of storage for coats and outdoor gear.



In the master bath, the shower is outfitted with a convenient corner seat, and even the clawfoot tub enjoys scenic views. (Once she saw it, Sue says the clawfooted charmer was a "must-have.")



Sue and Jim worked with several wonderful St. Louis companies when decorating their Montana home.

Denise Fogarty Interiors | Overall design direction

The Curtain Exchange | Master Bedroom drapes and bedding

Shannon O'Dougherty of Sambeau's Ltd. | Iron furniture (dining room table, coffee table in great room, bedside table in master bedroom)

Louise Harre of Maplewood Galleries | Armoire and nightstand in master bedroom

Bob Tamsky of Anatol's Fabrics | Dining room drapes fabric

Betty Kouzomis | Seamstress for master bedroom drapes and throw pillows and dining room drapes.