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Timber Home Living

Design ideas for custom wood homes


6 WAYS TO SAVE

on your kitchen,
hearth & more

SPECIAL
READERS'
CHOICE
AWARDS

PLUS
GREAT
ROOMS
WE LOVE

FLOORING
GUIDE
TOP TRENDS
TO WATCH



The home's hybrid design provided the homeowners the freedom to work with a mix of materials, including Douglas fir timbers, stone and stucco. Roofing materials include both standing-seam metal and asphalt.

Come Together

First-time homebuilders tap into the collective talents of their design-build team to create a Montana hybrid home.

STORY BY SCOTT GIBSON | PHOTOS BY KARL NEUMANN

This gorgeous great room is the heart of the house, complete with a well-loved fireplace and large windows to take in views of the lake to the north.

DAVE AND SERENE KLUMPAR had never built a house, “never so much as hired someone to pound a nail.” But when the chance came to build a weekend retreat on a Montana lake, they knew exactly how they’d go about it.

An aerospace scientist and now the director of the Space Science and Engineering Laboratory at Montana State University, Dave knew from experience that flexibility and collaboration could work wonders in seeing complex projects through to completion. And he decided to apply those lessons to the construction of his house.

The result is a 3,400-square-foot, three-bedroom hybrid timber frame on Georgetown Lake, two and a half hours west of Bozeman, Montana. It’s a house where owners, builders and designers all had a chance to come together and let their creativity shine.

STUDYING THE SITE

Long before architect Tammy Minge at Frog Rock Design took her first pass at a floor plan or the team at Dovetail Construction broke ground on the project, Dave and Serene learned everything they

could about their home site.

In the eight years that followed their purchase of the 4.5-acre lot, they cleared low-hanging branches from the pines and studied how the light changed seasonally. When they were ready to move ahead, they not only had a good sense of the type of house they wanted to build, but also exactly how it should be oriented on the site.

The house, organized along an east-west axis, has a good view of the lake, lots of windows and what Dave calls a “Montana mountain flavor.” The design includes a first-floor master suite, a screened porch facing the lake and a great room where a fireplace and stone hearth are a big draw.

“In the winter, we’re in front of that fireplace all day, from the time that first cup of coffee is ready,” says Dave. “The last thing we do at night is watch the fire burn out and hit the sack.”

They chose Minge after seeing a house she had designed for some friends. “We liked the idea of working with someone who was fairly young and willing to learn with us and explore boundaries and try new things,” Dave says. “And we wanted an architect who would give us a lot of freedom to play a big part in coming up





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with a concept and design.”

They started construction with what Dave says were a few elevations, a basic floor plan and good details on electrical and mechanicals. But they were content to let a lot of the details work themselves out as they went along. “We really wanted everybody to bring their own innovations to the project,” Dave says.

A HYBRID DESIGN

The finished house combines timber-frame trusses and detailing with conventional stick-framing. The hybrid approach is less expensive than a full structural timber-frame, says Tim Rote of Dovetail Construction, and maximizes the energy efficiency of the building envelope.

And that factor of energy efficiency is important on a site where the number of heating-degree days can top 8,000 a year. To battle the elements, Dovetail insulated the house with closed-cell polyurethane foam, R-25 in the walls and R-50 to R-60 in the ceiling. Heat is provided by a gas-fired boiler and a radiant-floor distribution system. The radiant-floor

ABOVE: The kitchen includes a stone-detailed breakfast bar. Overhead, the 2-inch-thick tongue-and-groove ceiling is the finished flooring on the second level.

RIGHT: The nook located off the main entry provides a cozy place to visit, or to remove gear before entering the main house.





ABOVE: A walk-in shower made from travertine, a type of limestone, is a focal point in the master bath. Doors and trim are made from knotty alder.

OPPOSITE: The main entry opens into a two-story foyer with a built-in bench and closet. Doors made by Dovetail Construction craftsmen are knotty alder.

tubing is set in a bed of lightweight concrete and capped with a layer of subfloor and white oak flooring.

Dovetail craftsmen assembled the timbered trusses on site, while doors and other architectural elements were produced in the company's Bozeman shop and trucked to the site. The frame is made from reclaimed Douglas fir.

With the building site so far from Bozeman where Dovetail is located, Rote and his partner Kevin Sullivan decided to send a team of craftsmen to Georgetown Lake for the duration

of the project. A half-dozen carpenters lived in a rented house for a year. "Remote projects require thinking outside the box," Rote says.

And thinking outside the box is exactly what the Klumpars valued. In allowing a certain amount of spontaneity into the building process, they got more than they could have predicted.

"That's what I learned in working with students," Dave says. "If you give them authority and responsibility they rise to the occasion, and I think that's a good lesson for everybody to keep in mind." ■

home details

SQUARE FOOTAGE: 3,400

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