



EWALD  
HALL

# RUSTIC MODERN



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CHASE REYNOLDS EWALD  
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## LAKESIDE RUSTIC

When an architect known for designing beautiful rustic homes in spectacular natural settings sits down to design a retreat for himself, it is bound to be a very intentional, intensely personal process. Larry Pearson of Pearson Design Group has an in-town home and a new Bozeman office for his architecture firm. When he thought about building a lakeside getaway for himself, his kids, and his friends, he wanted to have the best of both worlds: he was seeking a laid-back feel and full immersion in nature, yet because of his busy lifestyle he wanted to be close enough to town so that once there he would never have to pick up the car keys.

The site he selected, ten acres on the northeastern tip of thirty-two-mile-long Flathead Lake, is semi-wetland. Usually partly under water, it is lush with native grasses, birch, spruce, and cottonwoods and alive with birdlife such as osprey, hawks, and songbirds. It is not unusual to see fox kits hopping through the grass and fawns bedded down with their mothers. At night the great expanse of lake and low levels of light pollution create a perfect setting for star gazing, while the lakeside setting provides ample opportunity for sporty water activities. Better yet, the property is close enough to Big Fork to walk into town, but still perfectly positioned for spectacular views of the dramatic summer lightning storms that sweep up the length of the lake.

Pearson had owned a generously scaled lake home before. For this project, he wanted to create a true retreat. An aficionado of modern design, he was envisioning a small and rather minimalist modernist main structure; more than anything, he wanted a camp-like feel. He drew—and discarded—many designs, he recalls. “I went back and forth between a modern and ‘lake country’ design, but



In its twenty-first-century iteration, the home celebrates the indoor/outdoor relationship, with every room opened up to nature and the views.

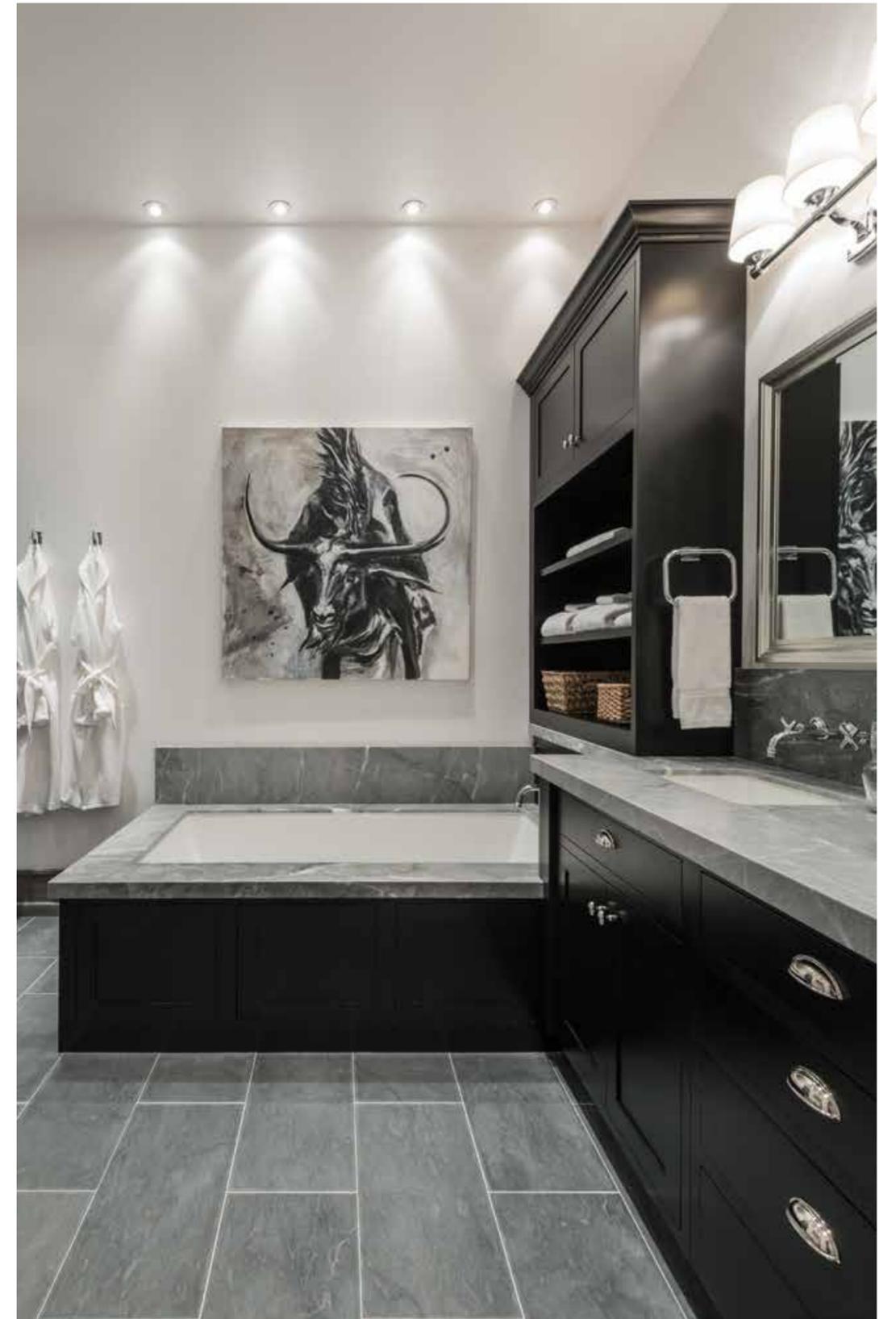
on the rocky promontory, from every room the vastness of the ocean and the ruggedness of the coastline are stunningly immediate. To stand on the small terrace with its transparent wall at the edge of the cliff is to be held aloft high above the waves, with an unimpeded view up and down the iconic Big Sur coastline and across the ocean to the curved horizon, listening to the constant barking from the seal rookery on the boulders below, with California condors circling above, sea birds diving below, and the intermittent surfacing of whales, porpoises, and sea otters. To witness this festival of nature as the sun slowly drops into the sea is an experience nothing short of sublime.

It was this promise that prompted an English businessman with a longtime interest in the area to purchase the property, practically sight unseen, in 2000. He bought it somewhat as a birthday surprise for his wife, who loved the area; herself a hotelier,



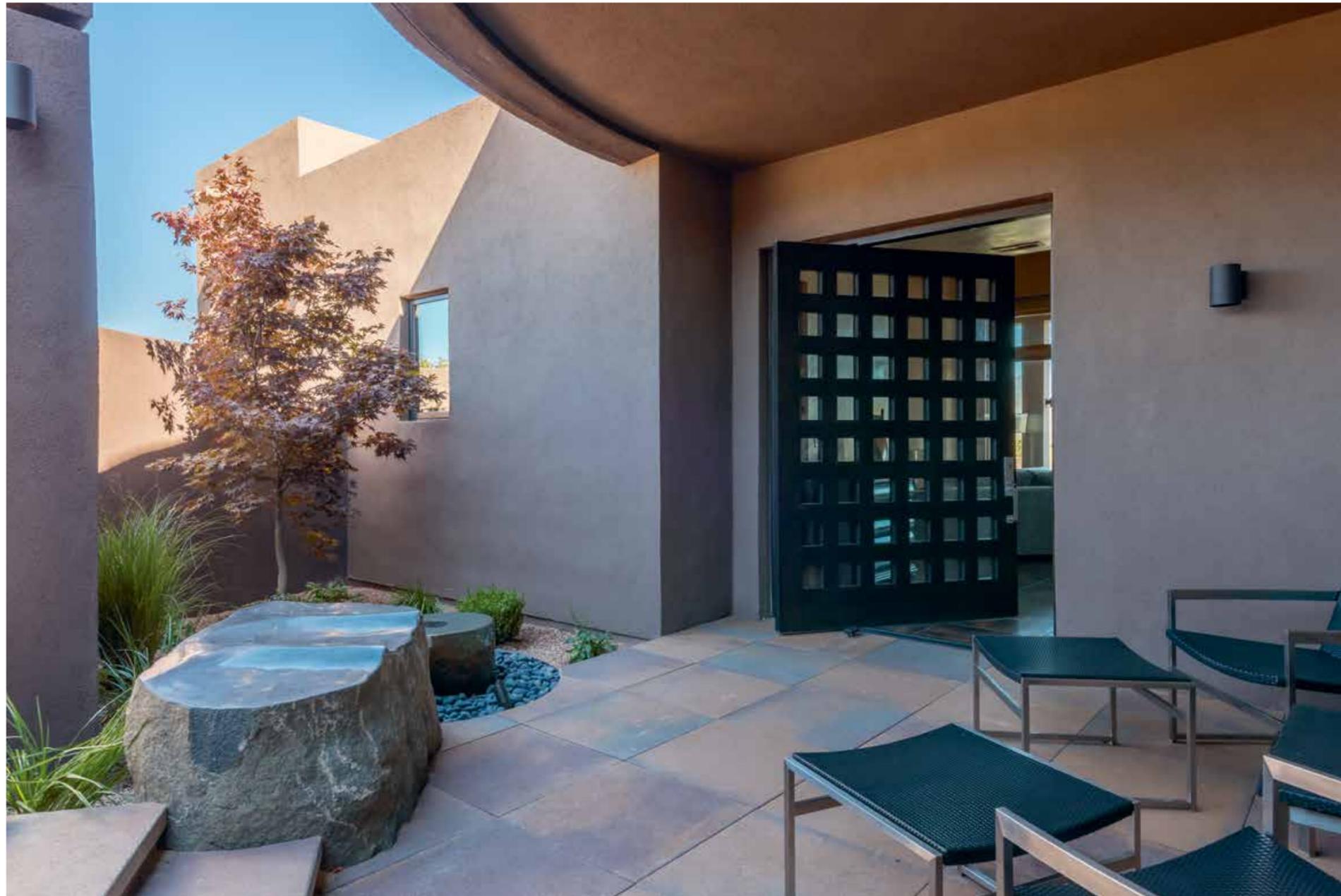
◀ An arrangement of ceramic antlers against a wall of weathered barn boards and a grouping of metallic objects on a traditional sideboard skillfully bridge the rustic modern divide.

▶ Dark cabinetry, gray tones, and white walls create a clean palette while a vintage painting of a bull—a traditional western subject rendered in a contemporary hand—injects energy into an otherwise serene master bath.



Homeowner Dina Mishev's bold color choices throughout the house brighten and energize the spaces during Jackson Hole's occasional blizzards. In such a minimalist interior, the colorful zigzag fabric shade of YLighting's Missy suspension light stands out as a graceful artistic statement. The large format artwork is by Monica Aiello, a painter inspired by geological processes.





◀◀ The entry courtyard conveys the appropriate sense of arrival with a massive granite bench and a dramatic, custom-made oversized pivoting door designed by David Naylor.

◀ The Zen-like water feature provides natural sounds that ease the transition from the nearby road and parking area to the interior of the home.

For instance, when a German porcelain tile they'd chosen for the main living areas arrived it was markedly different from the sample they'd seen; it was more active, with greater contrast. Naylor laid eight tiles down and found he liked the activity. He visualized the finished house and made the decision that the flooring would work well with the client's pottery collection, a bold move he only would have made because of the client's "artistic acceptance" and the fact that he knew she loved organic, interesting tile. In the end it was a fortuitous accident that helped marry the house to the art.

Recently retired and relocated, the homeowner is now ensconced in a home that looks to and celebrates the land while being grounded in its artistic

expression. Says Andren, "It's a neat house in that it expresses the personality of its owner and really addresses the site: the slopes, the vegetation, the climactic considerations, the views. When you stand in the house, the views are right in your face. It's overwhelming. And," he adds, "it's only about five minutes to the Plaza."

Artistic affinity and professional trust between the designers, the builder, and the client constituted the starting and end point of a project characterized throughout by harmony. "We were pushed outside our comfort zone," reflects David Naylor, "but not outside our intellectual abilities." The house represents the best efforts of a talented team: it makes a bold artistic statement, yet still feels like home.



she counted nearby Ventana Inn as one of her favorite hotels in the world. But when they first viewed Wild Bird prior to the purchase, he recalls, “I fell in love with it. She hated it.”

The house was in poor shape. “It was completely run down,” says the owner. “There were voles, mice, rats. The kitchen was from the 1950s. The woodwork in the studio was all broken up. There was almost no plumbing and the basement was solid concrete with little slits for light. My wife said, ‘It’s magical, but I’d rather stay at Ventana.’”

“Everyone was aware the house needed to be renovated,” says longtime local and informal advisor Ken Wright, who first met the couple at the time of the purchase. “It leaked like a sieve in storms, and was drafty and cold.” Margaret Owings, who had died there at age eighty-five, had spent her last years

▲ Margaret Owings was an artist as well as a conservationist. Her “Wild Bird” mosaic occupies pride of place at Wild Bird today.

► A dramatic, cliff’s-edge patio with an outdoor fireplace and infinity-edge spa offers the perfect vantage point for observing whales and watching the sun slowly sink into the ocean.





**Previous page** An ultra-modern subterranean wine cellar proved an engineering feat for Carney Logan Burke Architects and Dembergh Construction but the end result, tucked under the driveway, cleverly integrates into the slope-side site.

▲ The project grew from a small storage space in an existing basement to a state-of-the-art cellar with storage for 7,500 bottles of wine. The wine racks and stainless steel cabinets were designed by the architect and manufactured by Spearhead Timberworks in British Columbia.

Instead of telling him he was crazy, Burke recalls, the owner simply asked, “What would that look like?”

Many late-night design sessions, complicated engineering discussions, and countless hours later, the result is a 2,500-square-foot underground suite with climate-controlled storage for 7,500 bottles, a powder room, wet bar/kitchenette, and a sculptural lounge space with a dramatic curved ceiling. The very contemporary aesthetic celebrated there stands in decided contrast to the home’s more traditional mountain design; the two distinct spaces are joined by a stairway passage whose materials suggest a transition but hardly prepare the visitor for the surprise that is in store eighteen feet below. In fact, any visitors approaching the house (walking from the guest parking area along the driveway, then through a carefully

calibrated landscape of plantings, walkways, and a bridge over a waterfall to the front door) would have no hint that they were walking across the top of a luxurious subterranean hideaway.

The project was not without its complications, says Burke. “It became one of the most technologically challenging projects we have ever had to work with. We essentially blew up the driveway, eliminating access for all construction activities. Then we found we had an underground spring, and that the snowmelt from the resort’s nearby slopes runs under the house and driveway. Two walls of this project are adjacent to the garage, so how do you dig down eighteen feet and not undermine the footings of the garage? Then, once we were through all the gymnastics of engineering the existing house from



Comfortable modernistic furniture for lounging and a formal table (crafted by Brandner Design in Bozeman, along with blackened steel doors) for tastings are all that’s needed in a room where the architecture makes a grand statement.

falling into the excavation holes, we had to create a watertight concrete box that could withstand a stream and the weight of a fire truck parked on top.”

With help from the creative minds at Spearhead Timberworks, which prefabricated all the wood and helped design a curved ceiling that could conceal the complex ductwork, and Dembergh Construction of Jackson Hole, the addition surprises, delights, and more than fulfills its promise. From a hallway off the main public spaces of the house, a stone stairway with mahogany walls and a flowing, recessed, blackened steel handrail leads the visitor downstairs and opens into a room of wood, stone, glass, and minimal modernist furnishings. Wall-to-wall south-facing windows admit natural light and open up to a view of water,

boulders, and a steep treed slope; a glass door can be opened for access to a modestly scaled patio. Beyond a sheer glass wall with a cleverly designed retractable curtain stand rows and rows of custom-designed shelving filled with bottles. The smooth, curved ceiling creates a sense of luxury, intimacy, and cave-like shelter. There’s a feeling of timelessness in the space that perfectly promotes its goal: to enjoy fine wines with the best of friends.

To be involved with such a project was a gift for its designers. The project may have started as a simple retrofit of a basement corner, but, says Burke, “At the end of the day, the client gave us creative license to do something really special.”



wall balances the weathered wood while an ethereal lighting fixture floats above it all.

The balancing act is achieved in every room, from the oversized kitchen, with its double islands and black cabinetry, to the bedrooms and bunk room. In each room, explains Locati, “It all plays together rather than your eye being drawn to one spot. It works well and comes off with very clean lines. But,” he adds, “you don’t ever forget you’re in Montana.”

▲ The bunk room with built-in beds finished in weathered wood combines rustic finishes with a refined chest of drawers and a contemporary-leaning black ladder.

► The wood treatment in the master bedroom delivers an unexpected surprise when it travels up and over the ceiling. A quiet combination of cream and gray tones creates a restful refuge, while the chrome bed delivers a touch of glam. The twig chandelier is by Wish Design; the handmade Flokati rug is from the Sheepskin Factory.

