

SUMMER CABIN REDEFINED

A MODERN TAKE
ON A MONTANA
TRADITION,
INSPIRED BY
THE MUSIC OF
A CASCADING
CREEK



OPPOSITE: The custom zinc-and-wood dining table is surrounded by Kentucky arm rattan chairs by Palecek. "Everybody gets an arm," remarks interior designer Carter Kay. "And that's fun, especially in a vacation house." THIS PAGE: Easy living in Big Sky country: Natural light pours into the home through floor-to-ceiling windows.

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ARCHITECTURE BY **CTA ARCHITECTS ENGINEERS**
INTERIOR DESIGN BY **CARTER KAY INTERIORS**
CONSTRUCTION BY **DICK ANDERSON CONSTRUCTION**



OPPOSITE: The home has an open-air feeling thanks to enormous windows and a neutral, natural color palette. The living room's steel-framed sofas and cozy swivel chairs are perfect for either conversation or wildlife-watching. BELOW: A glass-enclosed breezeway, which also serves as the home's entry, connects the two halves of the home. Arriving guests are welcomed by an enticing view all the way through to the fire pit in the backyard.



THE CREEK WAS LIKE A LULLABY.

And the Texas couple wanted their new retreat to cozy up beside it. They had considered other building lots in Deer Lodge, Montana's, Rock Creek Cattle Company—a 30,000-acre working ranch and residential community with world-class golf and private club amenities—but they were won over by the sights and sounds encountered on this narrow ridge overlooking the water. “You hear the creek and it’s like Mother Nature’s giant sleep machine,” says the homeowner.

Their architect—Jesse Vigil, of Missoula-based CTA—agreed. “You get a really nice babbling creek sound, and we wanted to make sure we captured that throughout the house,” he says. But the constraints of the location, rising above a horseshoe bend of the creek on one side and hemmed in by a road on the other, required some design ingenuity. “It was pretty spectacular, but it was going to be a little bit of a difficult site,” Vigil admits. “We knew that all of the views would mainly be out the back side of the house while we were trying to protect the front side of the house,” he explains. “And our building envelope was very narrow to stay on top of that little hogback.

The resulting slender, 2,642-square-foot, single-level home is “kind of a redefinition of a cabin,” according to Vigil. It follows the contours of the topography, divided into two sections—kitchen/dining/living spaces on one end, bedroom suite and office on the other—connected by a breezeway. Clad in locally quarried Montana moss rock and cedar shakes, with a gradually rusting COR-TEN roof, the home blends easily into the surrounding landscape. Vigil explains, “We tried to pair clean, simple-line detailing with some rustic materials for a fresh take on Rocky Mountain rustic style.” >>



Dark wood flooring, aged Douglas fir beams, and horizontal-boarded walls painted with Benjamin Moore's Clay Beige create an updated rustic look in the airy kitchen. "Even though it has clean lines and sharp edges we wanted to soften that and give a very livable feel to the house," says Vigil. Kay avoided upper cabinets in favor of handy open shelving, and the island was designed with friendly face-to-face seating.



THE MAGIC OF A SCREENED PORCH

Who doesn't love a screened porch? But these favorite summertime spaces can pose a design conundrum. Thankfully, Carter Kay comes to the rescue with some tips for achieving easy elegance out on the porch.

COMPLEMENT THE HOUSE "Porches are created for reading, relaxing and rejuvenation, with or without cocktails! The colors and design should definitely reflect the comfort and colors of the house of which it is the relaxed extension."

HAVE A COLOR STRATEGY "The color palette usually reflects either the softening or intensification of the home's colors. My favorite porch colors are all neutrals: beige, taupe, greens, browns (all of nature's colors). In using them, people become the focus in the room, while nature grounds us all."

FIND THE RIGHT FURNITURE "For me, porch furniture needs to be wicker or rattan. These two materials live well in humid areas, and each one conveys a relaxed state of mind."

LIMIT THE LIGHT "Porch lighting, for me, needs to be subtle and soft. My focus is always on the people around me and the view beyond. No overhead lights. Period!"

GO WITH THE FLOW "Air movement is a key on porches, so a fan above, or one in each corner."

OPPOSITE: Rattan sofas and ipe wood rocking chairs offer laid-back comfort on the screened porch, where the stained-and-scored concrete floor is covered by an indoor-outdoor rug. BELOW: Walls virtually disappear—thanks to Sierra Pacific bi-fold glass doors and huge windows—allowing living, cooking and dining spaces to merge with the natural surroundings. "It's so peaceful, so quiet, you can hear the crickets and the creek and bullfrogs," says Kay. The back-to-back living spaces become one large room, bookended by matching fireplaces.



“YOU GET ALL THE WINDOWS OPEN AND THE DOORS OPEN AND YOU HEAR THE CREEK, AND IT’S LIKE MOTHER NATURE’S GIANT SLEEP MACHINE.” —*the homeowner*




OPPOSITE: A gorgeous patina of rust transforms steel panels into an art wall on the bedroom’s private terrace. It’s an ideal spot for morning coffee, with comfy low-slung Flex chairs from Brown Jordan. The wood-and-steel Sean King bed is by Four Hands. LEFT: An inviting reading nook is just the place for a daydream, with built-in shelves for treasures scavenged on woodland walks.

THANKS TO HUGE WINDOWS AND RETRACTABLE GLASS DOORS, there’s an open-air feel. “The most fun thing about the house is the screened-in porch,” the homeowner says. “When there’s nice weather, you can open up the folding glass doors and then all of a sudden you’ve got this indoor-outdoor space. It’s kind of a wow factor.” Vigil agrees: “It definitely doesn’t feel like a traditional, stuffy cabin.” Three additional patios provide ample outdoor seating and living space, as well as views of the babbling Rock Creek nearby.

When it came to choosing an interior designer, there was no doubt: Atlanta-based Carter Kay, of Carter Kay Interiors, is an old school pal of the homeowners, and over the years she’s helped the couple with numerous projects. “She showed not one lick of design talent when we were in college,” the wife affectionately wisecracks. As former roommates, the two women have the easygoing rapport of longtime friends, so decisions were straightforward. Kay describes her instruction: “Go ahead and just do it. I know it’ll be good.”

Taking advantage of the bright wash of natural light, Kay and her associates—Nancy Hooff and Catherine Branstetter—created a clean, neutral setting that avoided antler-centric Montana ranch clichés. Kay says, “It’s a combination of midcentury industrial with the use of natural materials. It’s almost lofty, like an old warehouse that’s been transformed.” The color palette echoes the hues of the home’s exterior. “Knowing the architect was using rusty colors of stone and metal, we thought we’d pull that inside, along with a putty-gray color,” she explains.

The home is as easy and comfortable as a summer day. “It almost feels like you’re in a spa setting,” says Vigil. “That view and that sound add to the tranquil feeling.” The homeowners have found their perfect summer getaway: “It’s a great place to gather and entertain, to be with friends and listen to the creek and have dinner.” ○

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