

High Country HOMAGE

A spectacular home in the mountains of Montana pays tribute to Frank Lloyd Wright while bringing the homeowners' vision to life.

BY MIKE HASKEW ✨ PHOTOGRAPHY BY KARL NEUMANN

MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO, celebrated architect Frank Lloyd Wright initiated the Prairie Style. A departure from the residential architecture of old Europe that had been widespread in the United States, it was distinctly American and featured bold horizontal lines.

Wright's influence on modern architecture remains strong, and in southwestern Montana near the city of Bozeman a tribute to his legacy rises in splendor next to a quiet pond with majestic vistas of the Bridger Mountains in the distance. The owners chose the site of their year-round home after visiting the area for more than 20 years. Their love of the Mountain West combines with Wright's influence and the appeal of the Arts & Crafts movement to create a breathtaking 11,000-square-foot stone and timber frame home, including spacious finished living areas, a three-car garage, and a basement.



A FLIGHT OF GEESE FRAMES THE HOME, BATHED IN AFTERNOON SUN, AS ITS REFLECTION SHIMMERS ON THE SURFACE OF THE ADJACENT POND. THE HORIZONTAL LINES OF THE PRAIRIE STYLE OF ARCHITECTURE ARE EVIDENT IN THIS IMAGE.

The 15 rooms include a pair of offices, a media room, four bedrooms, and 4½ baths. The great room on the main floor is centered on a soaring stone fireplace, and grand windows offer panoramic views of the surrounding Big Sky Country. An expansive stone patio is just outside.

"We described the home of our dreams to our architect, Frank Cikan, and he came up with a vision that combined more traditional construction with timber framing," say the homeowners.

Cikan, whose offices are located in Bozeman, blended the owners' ideas into a workable concept. "I wanted to pay homage to Frank Lloyd Wright by using the cutout red square that was his symbol as a tying detail element throughout the house," he explains. "Using elements of the Prairie Style and giving them a design twist brings unexpected freshness to the style and yet gives it timelessness. Historical allusions and references transcend the new design, and yet the psychological link of continuity with the past remains. That makes the new residence comfortable and cozy."

The contractor, Big Sky Builders of Bozeman and Alder, Montana, is a family operation, and the father-son team of Howard and Wesley Mills takes great pride in their work. "The opportunity to have a part in the design and finishes that are unique to this home are what the craftsman savors," smiles Wesley. "Actually being involved in the project from start to finish, knowing that the owners are happy with their home and that it is what they envisioned, and being able to stand

RIGHT: THE PETRIFIED WOOD SERVING TOPS IN THE KITCHEN COMPLEMENT THE STATE-OF-THE-ART APPLIANCES AND RICH CHERRY CABINETRY. THE KITCHEN IS EASILY ACCESSIBLE FROM THE ADJACENT DINING AREA, ALLOWING THE HOSTS TO EFFICIENTLY SERVE DINNER GUESTS.

BELOW: THE STAINED GLASS CEILING IS A FOCAL POINT OF THE DINING AREA, WHICH ALSO FEATURES A LONG HARDWOOD TABLE WITH SEATING FOR EIGHT.



STRIKING STAINED GLASS, STONEWORK, AND LIGHTING BLEND BEAUTIFULLY ALONG THE DIVIDER BETWEEN THE KITCHEN AND GREAT ROOM.



back and review the different facets of this home and the efforts of all who were part of its construction is a feeling and memory that will define our building company for many years to come."

The home features clear-stained cedar siding on the exterior along with fir timber framing, the trusses fashioned in a local workshop under the supervision of Big Sky Builders of Bozeman. Massive fir beams accented with true mortice and tenon construction and decorative steel elements are visible in multiple locations throughout the structure's interior. The main level flooring is a mixture of quarter and rife sawn oak, while the upper level is rustic Hoosier oak. The cabinetry is cherry throughout.

"In part, the pattern of the masonry on the exterior makes our home stand out from others," the owners remark. "Kootenai stone has been set with a band of Frontier stone at four-foot intervals to create a more horizontal effect. The soffit all around the home, as well as the ceiling of the covered deck, has a unique pattern, again inspired by Wright. The custom garage doors also exhibit Wright's Tree of Life motif."

Perhaps the most striking feature of the home is its use of stained glass in the dining room ceiling, divider between the kitchen and great room, pantry transom, entryway, and master suite divider. Artist David Fjeld, a Bozeman resident, created all the stained glass.

"You enter the home through custom double doors that lead to a gallery, home to many of the paintings and some of the bronzes in our collection," relate the homeowners. "Special attention was paid to the lighting here and throughout the home for the artwork. Unique highlights in the interior include the way the fir timber trusses have been accented with metal inserts inspired by Wright's Tree of Life, and the use of the

Why We Love Our Home

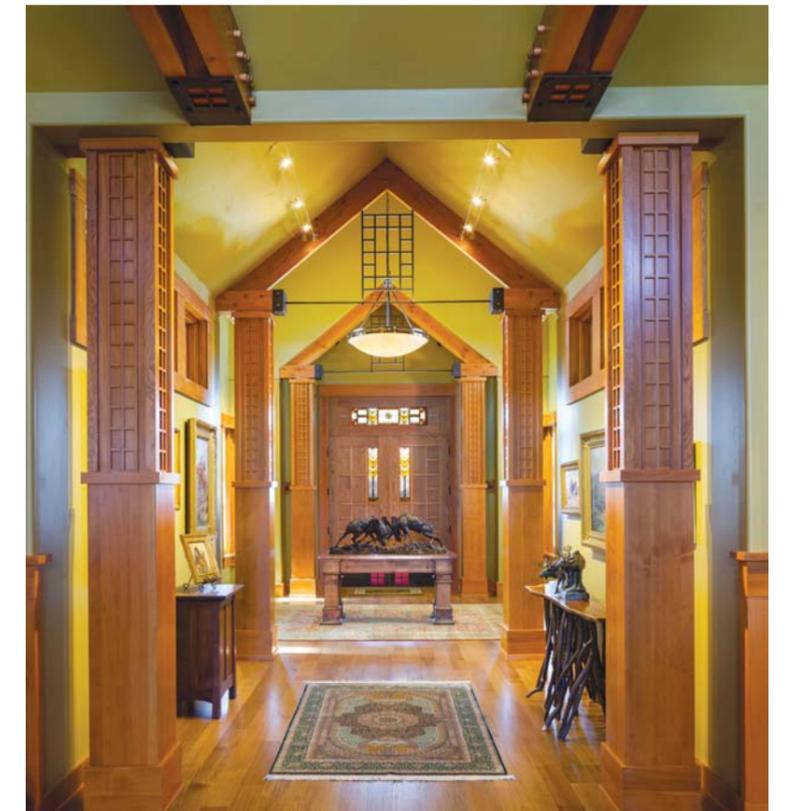
"We love our hybrid timber and traditional home because of the process of design and building. It resulted in a home that is very detailed and comfortable. There is not a room in the house that we would change either in design or finish."

"We probably spend most of our time in the offices that were designed to accommodate each of our needs and hobbies and the media room for reading and watching television."

—The Homeowners



THE FOCUS OF THE GREAT ROOM IS THE EXPERTLY CRAFTED STONE FIREPLACE. THE INVITING CONVERSATION AREA OFFERS A VIEW OF THE ROARING FIRE OR THE PICTURESQUE SCENERY THAT SURROUNDS THE HOME.



ABOVE: THE GALLERY STRETCHES INVITINGLY FROM THE ENTRY FOYER AND OFFERS VISITORS AN OPPORTUNITY TO VIEW THE EXTENSIVE HOLDINGS IN ARTWORK, INCLUDING PAINTINGS AND BRONZES THAT THE OWNERS HAVE COLLECTED THROUGH THE YEARS.

TOP: THE ARTWORK ON DISPLAY IN THE GALLERY IS COMPLEMENTED BY THE STAINED GLASS WINDOWS IN THE STYLE OF FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT THAT WERE PRODUCED BY BOZEMAN, MONTANA, MASTER ARTIST DAVID FJELD.

Tree of Life motif in the stained glass. Handmade tile was used in all the backsplash areas to complement the stained glass, and coordinating tiles accent the floor in the mud room and the stair risers.”

The kitchen includes a column refrigerator and freezer, range, two dishwashers, and built-in coffeemaker by Thermador, a Sharp microwave drawer, Wolf steam oven, and two Marvel refrigerator drawers. The kitchen island buffet and dining room serving area countertops are fashioned from petrified wood slabs set together with composite. A couple of Stickley chairs and a few other furnishings were purchased specifically for the home; however, most of the pieces were acquired through the years by the homeowners.

“We added a few pieces after moving in, but for the most part the furnishings and artwork we owned were very important factors in the design of the home,” the owners add. “We have collected Western art for years, and as Frank was designing the interiors we were placing art and furnishings on the blueprints to make sure we had a great spot for everything that was important to us.”

A timeless blend of past, present, and days to come, this magnificent home defines the vision of its owners, gracing a landscape that stretches far and away. ✨

RIGHT: PRAIRIE STYLE ABOUNDS IN A GUEST BATHROOM WITH ITS WALL MURAL, INTRICATE WOOD WAINSCOTING, AND NATURAL STONE VESSEL SINK.

BELOW: THE MASTER SUITE IS BREATHTAKING WITH AN AMPLE FIREPLACE, BROADLY CURVED CEILING THAT REVEALS THE INTRICATE WOODWORK AND TRUSSES, A CUSTOM DESIGNED HEADBOARD, AND INNOVATIVE LIGHTING.

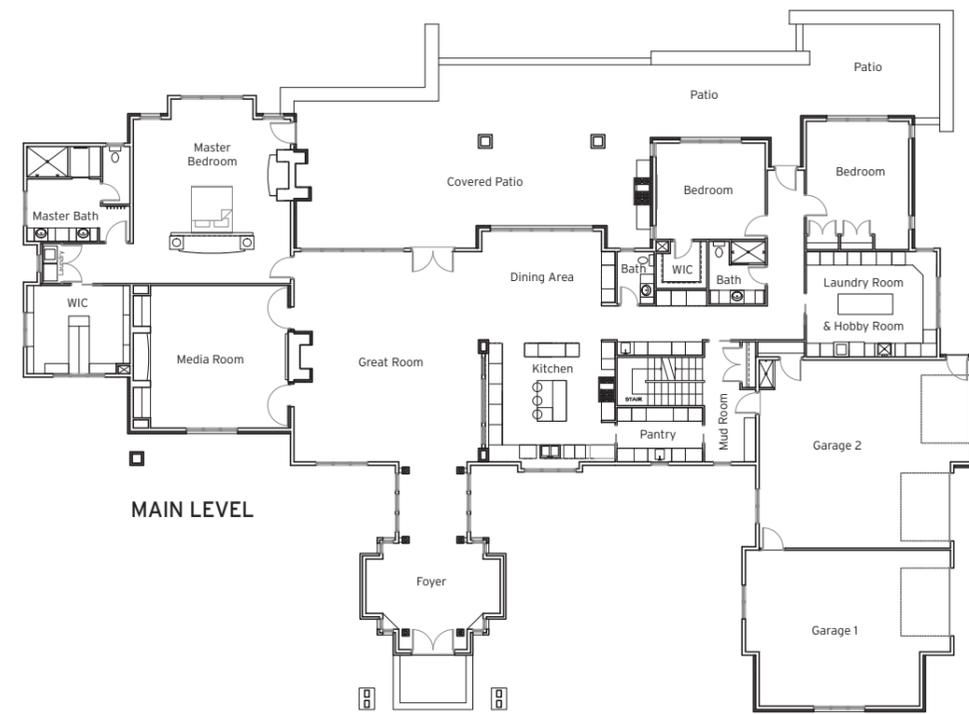
OPPOSITE: THE COVERED PATIO PROVIDES THE PERFECT PLACE FOR MORNING COFFEE OR TO CATCH AN EVENING BREEZE. FUTURE PLANS MAY INCLUDE THE INSTALLATION OF A HOT TUB.



Architectural Design: Frank Cikan,
Cikan Architects, PC, Bozeman, Montana
Contractor: Big Sky Builders, Bozeman
and Alder, Montana

Square Footage: Basement 2,873;
Main Level 5,395; Upper Level 1,227;
Garage 1,552
Bedrooms: 4 ✨ Baths: 4.5

ONE OF THE FOUR GUEST
BEDROOMS AND A LARGE OFFICE
ARE LOCATED ON THE UPPER
LEVEL OF THE HOME.



ON THE MAIN LEVEL, THE ENTRY FOYER OPENS INTO THE GALLERY, WHERE NUMEROUS PAINTINGS AND BRONZES ARE DISPLAYED, AND MOVES ALONG TO THE GREAT ROOM.