

Family Time on Flathead Lake

Something will likely occupy this subhed treatment ...

PHOTOGRAPHY BY HEIDI LONG

MARK DAVIS, THE PROJECT SUPERINTENDENT for Martel Construction, has built a lot of houses in the past 30 years: as many as 250, he estimates. Therefore, it's quite a statement when he says, "Of all the houses I've built so far, this one is my favorite."

The structure he's talking about doesn't call attention to itself. It's not showy, oversized, or filled with high-tech bells and whistles. Instead, tucked in the trees toward the southern end of Flathead Lake in Northwest Montana, and facing north across the waters to take in the long, mountain-heavy view toward Canada, this home maintains a low

profile, with a second story at one end and lake views from virtually every room. The exterior is clad in distressed barn wood, with a stone chimney stack, varied rooflines of shingle and standing-seam metal, and timbers and trusses that were charred using a *shou sugi ban* treatment to add color and character. Its quiet harmony carries through to its interiors and helps the home blend into the forested site.

The project was designed by Greg Dennee and Kevin Bute of Locati Architects, and built by Travis Frey and Davis' team at Martel. Because the site's original home was in poor shape, the owners made the decision to begin anew. What



ARCHITECTURE

Locati Architects

CONSTRUCTION

Martel Construction

INTERIOR DESIGN

Elizabeth Robb Interiors

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Deopker Landscaping

LEFT + OPPOSITE HERE: PERHAPS THE BACKGROUND TOO? VIEW OF THE LAKE ... Even in the interiors, bold architectural touches complement the grandeur of the views. The guest suites feature Juliette balconies that overlook the great room and offer a unique perspective of the elaborate truss work and the alpine vistas. • A dramatic floating staircase creates an artistic touch at the home's front entry.

they did choose to keep was an old boathouse clad in wood and topped with a standing-seam metal roof, a crumbling seawall that was restored, and a shoreline that was replanted — with the help of Deopker Landscaping — for a more natural look.

The new home was designed in a collaborative effort with enthusiastic involvement from the homeowners, a young family that sought an escape from Arizona's summertime heat. It was conceived to take full advantage of the views and its proximity to the water. But most importantly,

says Dennee, "It was a chance for the owners to create their own space as a family" after a busy and peripatetic career.

The entrance of the home is announced from the driveway by offset poured-concrete stepping stones that lead to a gabled doorway with stone columns and knee braces that convey a substantial sense of shelter. The front door — made from solid vertical grain fir, bisected by powder-coated metal bands — is surrounded by glass, offering tantalizing glimpses through the home and to the waters. As the door swings open, the lake views are unimpeded, neatly integrating the house

into its site. The feel is open and airy, but the spaces are grounded by stone accent walls and wide-plank walnut flooring that continues into the main living space. The open-plan great room/kitchen/dining area features a stone fireplace and soaring vaulted ceilings. Timber and steelwork create comfort and scale, contrasting the floor-to-ceiling windows that capture the panoramic lake view.

The scale of the home purposefully brings people together but is spread out just enough to allow privacy when larger groups visit. The master suite, a guest bedroom, and a playfully designed bunk room for the children are clustered on one end, while a private guest suite anchors the opposite end. "We used the lower slope of some of the roofs to break up the massing of the home so it would appear to be smaller," says Dennee. "We made an effort to achieve the

BELOW: Kitchen caption here maybe ... chairs and globe pendant lights lend an airiness to the kitchen, which is grounded by quartzite countertops and backsplash tiles from Ann Sacks. The cabinets are reclaimed French



feel of interconnected cabins, as opposed to one very large structure."

A large recreation room, with a bar, a bumper pool table, and a variety of games, offers plenty of rainy-day activities and opportunities for evening fun. From there, the action can flow right out through a sliding Nana door system to the covered concrete patio. The outdoor living space is anchored by a fireplace that features a 17-foot-long, 18,000-pound hearthstone that was hand-selected from a local quarry by Davis. The grill, seating area, and nearby fire pit, shower, and hot tub meet every need — whether the family is returning from a day on the lake or entertaining friends.

The home's welcoming and livable vibe is a reflection of its owners, says interior designer Liz Robb of Elizabeth Robb Interiors. "They're young and very down to earth," she adds. "They wanted to be involved, and they wanted their home to be inviting, fresh, and

FROM TOP: The open-back chairs and globe pendant lights lend an airiness to the kitchen, which is grounded by quartzite countertops and backsplash tiles from Ann Sacks. The cabinets are reclaimed French oak. • A Gabriel Scott chandelier, featuring cascading chain mail in the form of a waterfall, adds an artistic flair to the dining room.





FROM TOP + OPPOSITE HERE: Caption space here for this spread of three. The serene master bathroom is centered on a wall of book-matched Taj Mahal polished quartzite. The quartzite slabs were purchased by the owners before the house was even designed. The floor tiles are from Ann Sacks. Caption space here for this spread of three. The serene master bathroom is centered on a wall of book-matched Taj Mahal



super casual.”

The interior palette relies on blues and earth tones for a timeless lake house feel, while minimal artwork helps keep the focus on nature. “It feels good in every room, because the scale is not too large and all the elements in the house are really beautiful,” Robb explains. “The design is strong enough to hold your interest and make you feel like you want to be there, but it was really about saluting the views.”

It was also about living as close to nature as possible. The owners even planted an orchard of plum, apple, and pear trees, and placed blueberry and huckleberry bushes just outside of the

door, so their kids can grab handfuls as they run in and out.

According to Davis, this is a home with heart, and you can feel it the moment you arrive. “It’s simple, it’s comfortable, and you don’t feel out of place in it,” he says. “It just feels like home when you get there.” ▲

Chase Reynolds Ewald has been writing about Western design, food, art, travel, craftsmanship, and rustic style for more than 25 years. Cabin Style, her 10th book and 5th collaboration with photographer Audrey Hall, was released in August 2019; chasereynoldsewald.com.

Heidi Long travels the Rocky Mountains as an architectural and food photographer. Her work appears in national and regional magazines, such as Mountain Living, Cabin Living, Western Art & Architecture, and Timber Home Living. She lives in Kalispell, Montana, with her two sons.

