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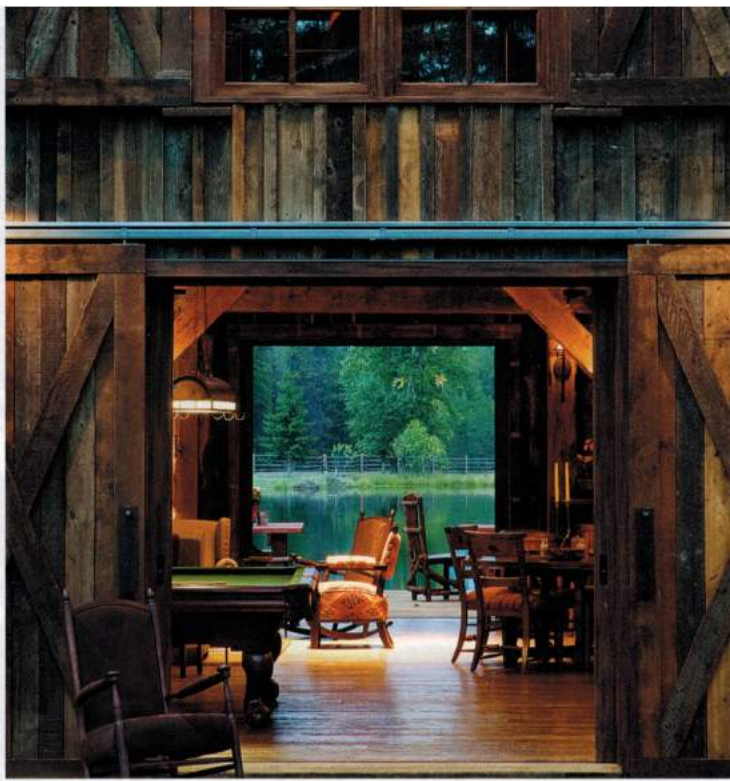
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# SUMMER CAMP

A NEW BARN WITH AN OLD SOUL OFFERS NOSTALGIC FUN AND  
EPIC RELAXATION AT A FAMILY'S RANCH IN SWAN VALLEY, MONTANA.

BY DEBORAH DONOHUE | IMAGES BY HEIDI A. LONG



**I**magination, vision and verve; perfect attributes for a couple with a dream of building a comfortable, upscale-yet-authentic ranch in the wilds of Montana. They found their ideal acreage in a historic valley to the east of Missoula, and south of Bigfork. Condon, or Swan Valley, as it has come to be called, is pristine and remote, once home to trappers and homesteaders. Today, the area is a favored destination for horseback riding, trout fishing, boating and backpacking. The nearby Bob Marshall and Mission Mountains Wilderness areas afford endless opportunities for adventures off the beaten path.

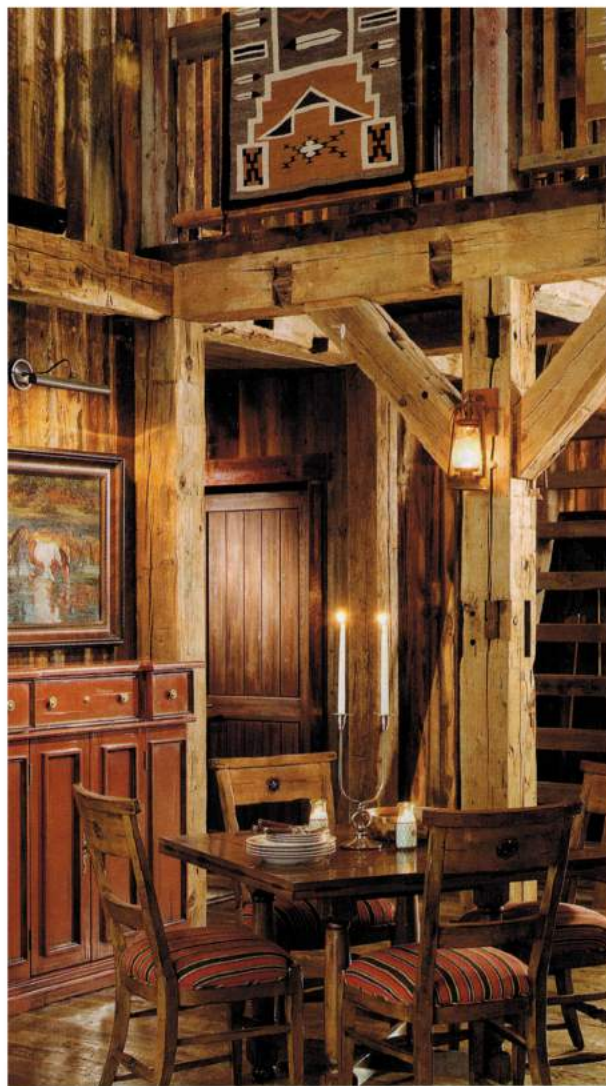
With their location selected, and plans in place for the main residence and requisite horse barn, focus turned to another prominent item on the design docket: a family-oriented, recreational barn for entertaining. Built adjacent to a spring-fed lake stocked with rainbow trout, the owners envisioned the cozy ambiance and timeless tradition of a structure that might have stood there for 100 years or more. Paul Miller of RMT Architects in Avon, Colorado, spearheaded the design, which incorporated the nostalgic proportions of a classic barn, with wings on either side. The hands-on team of Brad Reedstrom and Andy Fischer of Bigfork Builders assembled a collaborative, inventive group of artisans and craftsmen, who worked closely with them throughout the length of the project. Materials were the key element. A variety of vintage reclaimed wood would be used, both on the exterior and interior. The “rec barn” would be a completely new structure, but crafted in the traditional timber framing method. Wildwood Eccentrics supplied all interior woods (fir and larch among them) including those for cabinetry, flooring, trim, and mirror framing. Felicia Walsh and Jamie Carroll of Panache Interiors were enlisted to curate the owner’s artwork and collections, and source custom made furnishings.

Reedstrom and Fischer searched multiple rural areas for reclaimed timber, carefully scouring the north sides of old ranch buildings, where

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THE SYMMETRICAL PROPORTIONS OF THE CLASSICAL BARN STRUCTURE LEND AN IMMEDIATE SENSE OF WELL-BEING. THE CINNAMON PATINA OF RECLAIMED WOOD PERFECTLY SUITS THE BARN'S ARCHITECTURAL PERSONA. OPPOSITE: THE GREAT ROOM AND ITS "SHOTGUN" BREEZEWAY, SO NAMED BECAUSE A SHOTGUN FIRED AT THE FRONT DOOR WILL TRAVEL STRAIGHT THROUGH THE BUILDING AND OUT THE BACK DOOR. ABOVE THE GREAT ROOM IS A LOFT WITH SOFA BED.



1. WESTERN STARS BRAND THE DINING CHAIRS UPHOLSTERED IN KRAVET FABRIC. 2. PLASTER MIXED WITH HAY ADDS TEXTURE ON THE POWDER ROOM WALLS; THE CONCRETE SINK IS INSPIRED BY A HORSE'S WATER TROUGH. 3. NATIVE AMERICAN ART AND RUGS ADD COLOR AND CULTURE. 4. THE OWNERS' COLLECTION OF SPURS IS ALWAYS A CONVERSATION STARTER.



NATURAL LICHEN FROM MANY YEARS PAST ADORNS THE MASONRY HEARTH. THE MIX OF COMFORTABLE CHAIRS IS FROM HICKORY CHAIR FURNITURE COMPANY. A VIBRANT NATIVE AMERICAN PRINT REPRODUCED IN A KRAVAT FABRIC DRESSES THE ARMCHAIR. THE CUSTOM MADE FIREPLACE SCREEN IS BY DAMON DESIGNS IN KALISPELL, MONTANA.



ONE WING OF THE BARN IS A LUXURIOUS SCREENED IN PORCH. A LOCAL ARTISAN CRAFTED THE TABLE AND CHAIRS. WICKER SOFAS FROM LANE ARE UPHOLSTERED IN PLUSH BOURBON COLORED, INDOOR-OUTDOOR CHENILLE. THE RUGGED HEARTH IS TAILOR MADE FOR EVENING S' MORES.



A FARM SINK AND VINTAGE-STYLE STOVE ARE RIGHT AT HOME IN THE COUNTRY KITCHEN. CABINETS ARE BUILT FROM SALVAGED RED BARN WOOD, FOUND AT A RANCH IN CAMAS PRAIRIE. THE RUSTIC COUNTER TOPS ARE ROLLED COLD STEEL THAT HAS BEEN DISTRESSED AND ATTACHED WITH RIVETS. POPS OF TOMATO RED BALANCE THE BROWN ELEMENTS.

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the wood had retained its original root beer coloring, naturally warm and rich. JL Haverstadt found the classic red barn boards for the kitchen cabinetry. None of the wood was subsequently stained.

The most challenging part of this ambitious project, according to the construction team, was the structural timber framing that supports the building. Often, reclaimed wood is used simply as a decorative element of the design. In this case, ninety percent of the structure was reclaimed timber, much of which had previous joinery and mortises. All of the wood for the whole project was laid out and closely examined, then purposefully selected with a view toward quality and aesthetics, tailored for each specific area. All beams are hand-hewn oak hardwood. As in the traditional method of timber framing employed 100-200 years ago, wooden pegs through joiners were used to create structural soundness and integrity, rather than fasteners, bolts, screws and nails.

The hearths, both in the Great Room, and the screened-in porch, along with the chimney and steps, received the same meticulous attention to detail. All are Chief Cliff Stone, native to Montana. Surface stones with naturally occurring lichen and moss were chosen for their aged look, enhancing the barn's authenticity.

One of the most captivating elements of the structure is the Great Room, whose north and south sliding doors (with glass and screen pocket doors behind them) can be opened, framing a view of the lake. As envisioned, the barn is a perfect place to kick back after a day in the saddle, enjoy a game of pool, foosball, or shuffleboard, complete with a bar and a kitchen nearby for chips and margaritas! ■



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