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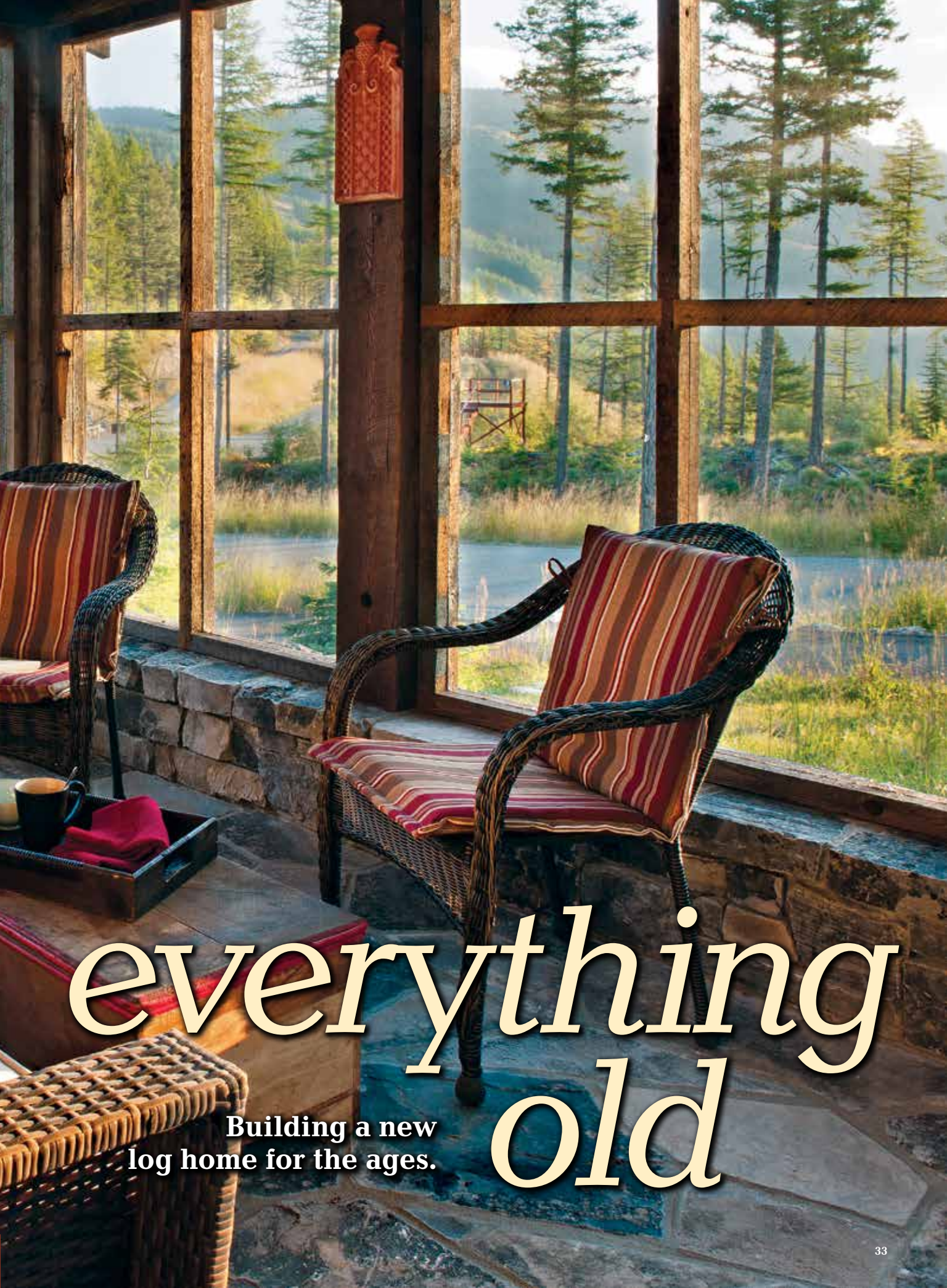
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A large, screened-in porch with a wicker sofa, striped pillows, and a view of a forest and a lake. The porch is furnished with a wicker sofa with light-colored cushions and several pillows, including a large white one and two with red, white, and brown stripes. A red fringed blanket is draped over the sofa. A small white table with a fern sits next to the sofa. A wicker chair with a striped cushion is visible on the right. The porch is surrounded by a wooden frame and large windows that offer a view of a forest and a lake. The text is overlaid on the upper left portion of the image.

The screened-in porch almost didn't get built, Sue says, but they found a spot for it off the office on the home's north side.



everything old

Building a new
log home for the ages.



Natural and painted wood, metal and glass give texture and interest to the interior design.

The kitchen in the open floor plan is configured so that cooks and guests can enjoy each other's company—and have access to great views any time of the day. The gray soapstone countertops and island—when oiled they look almost black—and gray painted cabinets give the space a calm feel.



When Sue Williams talks about the cabin she owns with her husband Rick, she uses the word “cozy” over and over. She laughs when she realizes it, but it’s an apt description. Even builder Brad Reedstrom, vice president of Bigfork Builders, and designer Rich Graves, with Altius Design Group (formerly Kibo Group Architecture), describe the nearly 5,000-square-foot “ski in, ski out” house on Whitefish Resort as “cozy.”

Yes, 5,000 square feet—and cozy. The home’s intimate feeling is all about proportion, scale and ceiling height.

The building process presented a bit of a challenge. Located 5,100 feet up in the Flathead Valley where it snows

400 inches a year, construction was challenging. “Getting materials up the mountain and then everything would get buried in snow. It was a banner winter for snow,” Reedstrom says of the year they built the Williamses’ cabin. Bigfork’s crew was out every morning at 6:00 just for snow removal. They created a moat around the site—careful not to disturb plantings and trees. “A previous developer had cut a lot of trees,” Reedstrom says. “And every tree that was there was sacred to our clients. We weaved the house in to save every tree we could.” Where the crew did disturb the land, they planted native snowberry bush and bear grass to regenerate the landscape—even going so far as to roll back into place any downed logs they dislodged from the forest floor during construction.

All this suited the Williamses well, for they were determined to have a home that looked as if it had been there “for a long time, almost like an old homestead,” Sue says.

Reclaiming a Home

“The site helps drive the design,” Graves says. At this latitude, a structure takes a pounding from the weather. “They



A masonry-built fireplace with local mossy-lichen stone is the centerpiece of the living room. In-floor radiant heating and cooling keeps the house comfortable, and a unique air-source heat pump system from Germany makes the home energy-efficient.





The master bedroom suite is on the main floor and off to the side away from the public spaces.

wanted an exterior that looked rugged and weathered and that didn't require a lot of maintenance." Reclaimed materials were the perfect choice.

On the outside, they chose a thick, hand-hewn timber siding—reclaimed larchwood and fir from old homestead buildings in Marion, Montana—that when chinked looked like a true log. "We wrapped the house in rigid board insulation under the siding to cut the wind and increase the insulation value," Graves says. The chinking is a highly elastic acrylic product that allows the wood to move and contract. "It keeps out the weather and the bugs." The foundation is poured cement veneered with local stone from the Hot Springs, Montana, area. "It has a lot of lichen and moss and really looks like an aged material," Reedstrom says. The same goes for the shingles. Every choice reinforced the design goal to make the home seem as if it had always been there.

The chinking is used again at the entry wall near the kitchen to connect the interior to the exterior and to give the design a warm feeling. But the West ends there. Sue deftly designed the interior with an East Coast flair. She and Rick are from Rochester, New York, and have designed and built several homes together. Now retired—she from advertising and he

from a family business—they had spent a lot of vacation time in Whitefish before purchasing the property.

Avid hikers, skiers, snowshoers and mountain bikers, the couple's priorities for the interior were to have a mud room that accommodated their gear, and a screened-in porch, Sue says. "We didn't want a McMansion," she says...which gets us back to "cozy."

They wanted an open floor plan so Sue could do the cooking she loves and still be part of the action when they entertain family and guests. But an open floor plan with a vaulted ceiling can make a space feel cavernous. To avoid "soaring spaces," Graves says, they used a mix of ceiling heights: The living room's highest point is 13 feet with side-walls just over nine feet, and a ceiling height in the upstairs hallway at seven and a half feet. "We wanted it to feel like Grandma's attic and authentic to the older homes in the region," Graves says.

Light and Views

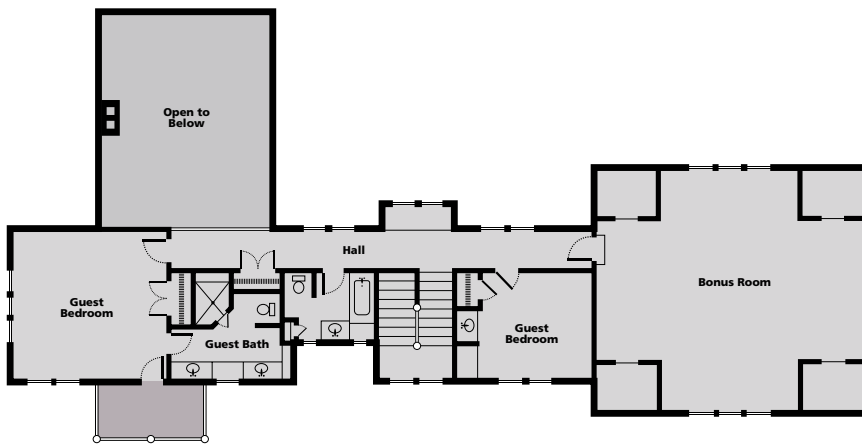
Often in homes with a lot of reclaimed materials, the atmosphere can feel dark and heavy, Reedstrom notes. Windows, paint and other design choices can help alleviate that feeling.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The entry highlights the various reclaimed materials—moss-and-lichen covered logs, shingles, stone—used on the home. While it makes the home feel as if it's old and a long-time part of the site, it announces that what's behind the door is going to be inviting and warm. ■ Bunk beds are cleverly tucked in the dormer eaves in a guest room above the garage. The room is on the south end of the house toward the end of the lot, says designer Rich Graves, so it "doesn't overwhelm you when you look at the house from the road." ■ A mix of materials keeps the home's exterior lively and well-suited to its wooded site. ■ Local wildlife enjoys the area around the home, too.





SQUARE FOOTAGE: 5,000

BEDROOMS: 3

BATHROOMS: 3.5

Builder: Bigfork Builders
(406-837-3373; bigforkbuilders.com)

Architect: Altius Design Group
(406-862-7373)



Upstairs there are window seats and the “rhythm of pairs of windows along the hallway,” says Graves, who made an effort “to get windows on two walls of each room.” There are three windows in the master bedroom. The dining area has large windows that capture a view of Whitefish Lake, and the living room has mountain views on one side and access to a covered porch and hot tub on the other.

Sue’s East Coast design sensibilities and material and furniture choices brighten the space, with also boasts a great mix of materials and textures—wood, stone, stainless steel. Well ahead of current design trends, she chose gray soapstone for the kitchen’s island and countertops and gray painted cabinets. Light-colored paint on the walls contrasts with the wood beams, rustic wood window frames and the gray stones on the fireplace. “The unique blend of refined painted millwork alongside reclaimed wood really brightens up the rooms,” Reedstrom says.

The main floor houses the public spaces and master suite, but Sue and Rick’s favorite spots are all about connecting with their outdoor lifestyle. Hidden behind sliding barn doors on the lower level is a stone-floored mud room with reclaimed wood lockers. Each guest gets his or her own locker for skis and boots, Sue says. There’s an air flow system to allow wet gear to dry. “We love that room. It looks almost like a tack room.” Their other top hang-out area is the screened-in porch off the office. “It’s small and cozy and the view is spectacular,” Sue says.

While the Williamses usually arrive around Christmas and stay until the ski season ends, they’re finding more reasons to visit in the summer to mountain bike and hike in nearby Glacier National Park. But they don’t see themselves retiring full time in Whitefish. They have another home on one of the Finger Lakes in Western New York, “which is paradise,” Sue says. East and West, the best of both worlds.