

Third Time's



The logs and stones that comprise the home allow the structure to all but disappear among the tamaracks and lodgepole pines that grace the property.

a Charm

by Suzanna Logan | Photography by Heidi Long



Rugged and refined elements come together to dramatic effect in a fashionable Montana renovation.

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gainst the backdrop of Montana's Swan Valley, where

clouds brush the mountain peaks at sunrise and glacial waters sparkle against endless emerald pine forests, Bill and Patricia Cruz's log home is much like its surroundings: stunning, but not flashy; breathtaking, but in a quiet, natural way.

This kind of effortless, bewitching beauty makes perfect sense for a home once owned by a fashion legend. Liz Claiborne and her husband purchased the house in the 1980s, and while the structure was far from an instant head-turner back then, the couple recognized its potential and took on a full and magnificent restoration.

Fast forward three decades: When Bill and Patricia Cruz decided to call the home their own, it was in good repair but, once again, in need of an update. Ultimately, what started as a relatively simple



A 45-foot-tall stacked Montana-surface stone fireplace anchors the great room and sets the stage for the grandeur of the space. As for the home's character logs, builder Brad Reedstrom hiked countless miles in the forest to source the perfect trees.



*“Our main focus was the connection of the home to the outdoors.
A pair of glass walls slides open, easily merging the indoor and outdoor experience.”*

— ARCHITECT DARIN HOEKEMA



facelift of the master suite soon turned into a total makeover, as the couple’s vision clashed with the existing structure.

“The Cruzes really wanted a true Montana lodge experience,” explains Brad Reedstrom of Bigfork Builders, who spearheaded the renovation, along with Montana-based Locati Architects. “The original log home was built with very small, simple logs, so as we kept

building new parts of the house, the older parts didn’t quite seem to fit. Piece by piece, area by area, we kept circling back until it was nearly brand new.”

Lead architect Darin Hoekema confirms: “As things progressed, there was a realization that the ultimate target was at a higher level of detail and aesthetic than the remaining house would allow.”

Now, in its third iteration, the lodge

seems to have settled into its final form. As visitors to the home step inside from under the big Montana sky, the change is almost imperceptible. A towering entryway anchored by a 45-foot-tall stone fireplace sets the stage for the grandeur to come. Slip around the hearth, and the sheer volume — and views — of the great room, dining area and kitchen sweep you back into nature; but not





With its multiple prep spaces and double island with bar stool seating, the free-flowing kitchen offers enough elbowroom for multiple cooks or those simply wanting to join in the conversation.

without help from the jaw-dropping character logs that frame the mountain vistas and crown the space.

“I can’t tell you how many days I spent in the woods and how many miles I hiked to find all of these individual logs,” says Brad of the old growth pine trees that replaced the Douglas fir and larch logs of the original cabin. “We worked for an entire year to source the logs.” However, once the timbers were felled and prepped, the work was far from over. “We carefully selected every log from three or four others and rotated them to get the perfect side,” shares Darin. “We needed the logs to have an artisan look but remain structural all at the same time.”

Even the local stone used to accent the fireplaces, exterior and indoor pool room is spoken of with a hint of reverence: “It’s local Montana surface stone. It’s been exposed to the elements for years and has a lot of lichen and moss. They have great character, unlike ordinary stone dug out of the ground,” explains Brad.

Elevating logs and stone — sometimes considered humble materials — into pieces of art allow unmistakably refined elements to dovetail seamlessly throughout the home’s three levels, which include seven bedrooms and an abundance of gathering spaces, from a home theater to a wine tasting room. On every floor, ornately carved furnishings abound, some of them antiques, along with rich textiles balanced by delicate accents, including floral-patterned rugs, velvet-cushioned





Attention to detail was paid in every one of the log home's abundant spaces, including this daybed/reading nook tucked into a bump-out in one of its seven spacious bedrooms.

HOME DETAILS

SQUARE FOOTAGE

16,900 including basement

BEDROOMS

7

BATHS

7 FULL
4 HALF

BUILDER

BIGFORK BUILDERS
bigforkbuilders.com

ARCHITECT/INTERIOR DESIGN

LOCATI ARCHITECTS
locatiarchitects.com

ottomans, chenille-covered sofas and crystal chandeliers.

“There is an unmatched attention to detail in this home,” says interior designer Crystal Johanson of Locati Architects, who worked alongside colleague Amanda Heys to add the finishing touches to the home. “You can tell thought went into each and every one of the spaces; everywhere you look, there are layers of detail,” she says.

Co-designer Amanda agrees, suggesting this most recent renovation is one that will never go out of style: “None of the elements are in competition. It’s elegant but cozy, refined with a lot of rustic details. As a whole, what’s most striking is how timeless and classic it feels.”

BILL AND PATRICIA'S
special
spaces



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1 Because the couple loves to entertain outdoors — and each of the main living spaces offers views towards the lake — the design team paid close attention to creating outdoor spaces that felt cohesive with the overall design of the home. “We wanted something that broke down the rigid architecture and felt a little more organic, so we brought in a water feature, fire pit and small outdoor cooking area,” says Darin. **2** The Cruzes’ three children each played a role in designing the bedrooms they would call home when visiting the family retreat. “Those spaces are a little more clean-lined and contemporary,” explains Crystal, “but it just goes to show that regardless of the bones of the house, you have a lot of freedom in design.” **3** Built to pamper, the master bath is graced with an expanse of windows overlooking the water, luxe finishes and a soaking tub set in a cozy alcove.

4 Although the pool room was not remodeled, it received plenty of attention from the project’s interior designers, due to its prime location adjacent to the home’s entryway. “Our goal was to make it feel less like a pool room and more like an entertaining and gathering area,” shares Crystal. In addition to updating the tile and stone surrounding the pool, they scattered stylish lounge furniture around the water’s edge and added a bar with impressive wood details and a comfy sitting area across the room. **5** Every stone in the home’s entryway was hand-selected for its unique character. “Where some clients might say, ‘I want a rock wall,’ Bill and Patricia were acutely aware of materials, colors and textures,” says builder Brad Reedstrom. “We went the extra mile to select only materials, whether they were logs or stones, that had a lot of detail.”

