



BIG SKY COUNTRY

THIS FLORIDA COUPLE BUILT A CUSTOM WESTERN-INSPIRED RETREAT
IN MONTANA PERFECT FOR WINTER SKI GETAWAYS.

By Jennie Nunn

Photography by Karl Neumann Photography

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FOR CANDY AND DONN FULLER, the idea to build a second home in Big Sky, Montana, came 12 years ago after a ski trip with friends to Deer Valley, Utah.

"We stayed in a 10,000-square-foot log house there that really sort of inspired us as far as having a house that a lot of people could stay in, and that we could entertain in, with a lot of different rooms and alcoves," says Donn, an orthopedic surgeon based in Cape Coral, Florida. "I've been skiing all

of my life and was in the ski patrol. We've got grandkids now, and we thought, Wouldn't it be nice to have a similar place and still do all the skiing we love?"

The Fullers—who have one daughter and three grandsons, ages 9, 10, and 11 (all ropers on the rodeo circuit from Florida to Texas)—fell in love with the expert skiing at Big Sky Resort and settled on a lot overlooking Lone Peak with direct access to the slopes.

"We ski out our backyard and take a lift to the





major part of the hill. Going home is the same way," says Donn, who now spends about six weeks a year in the mountain home perched at 8,200 feet. "Being a skier, I hate carrying skis and parking, and here, we can just head up the mountain and we don't get in the car again until we leave for the airport."

But before they could ski, they had to build, so the

Fullers enlisted designer and architect David Seabury to create a retreat as idyllic as the snowy surroundings. From plans to completion, the project took 18 months, resulting in an 11,200-square-foot log-accented house with five bedrooms and five-and-a-half baths.

The owners then took on outfitting the interior themselves. "When it came to decorating the house, we



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were strongly encouraged to get an interior decorator, but we really didn't want someone else having the fun of decorating our home," says Candy, who owns the Rodeo and Juliet Boutique in Okeechobee, Florida, and helps manage the family ranch, Ruff Diamond. "Donn designed all the bedroom furniture and tables in the house, and Wade & Associates custom-made them using

accents of cowhide and oxidized copper. We knew we wanted more of a Western and Native American feel versus a cabin like most mountain homes."

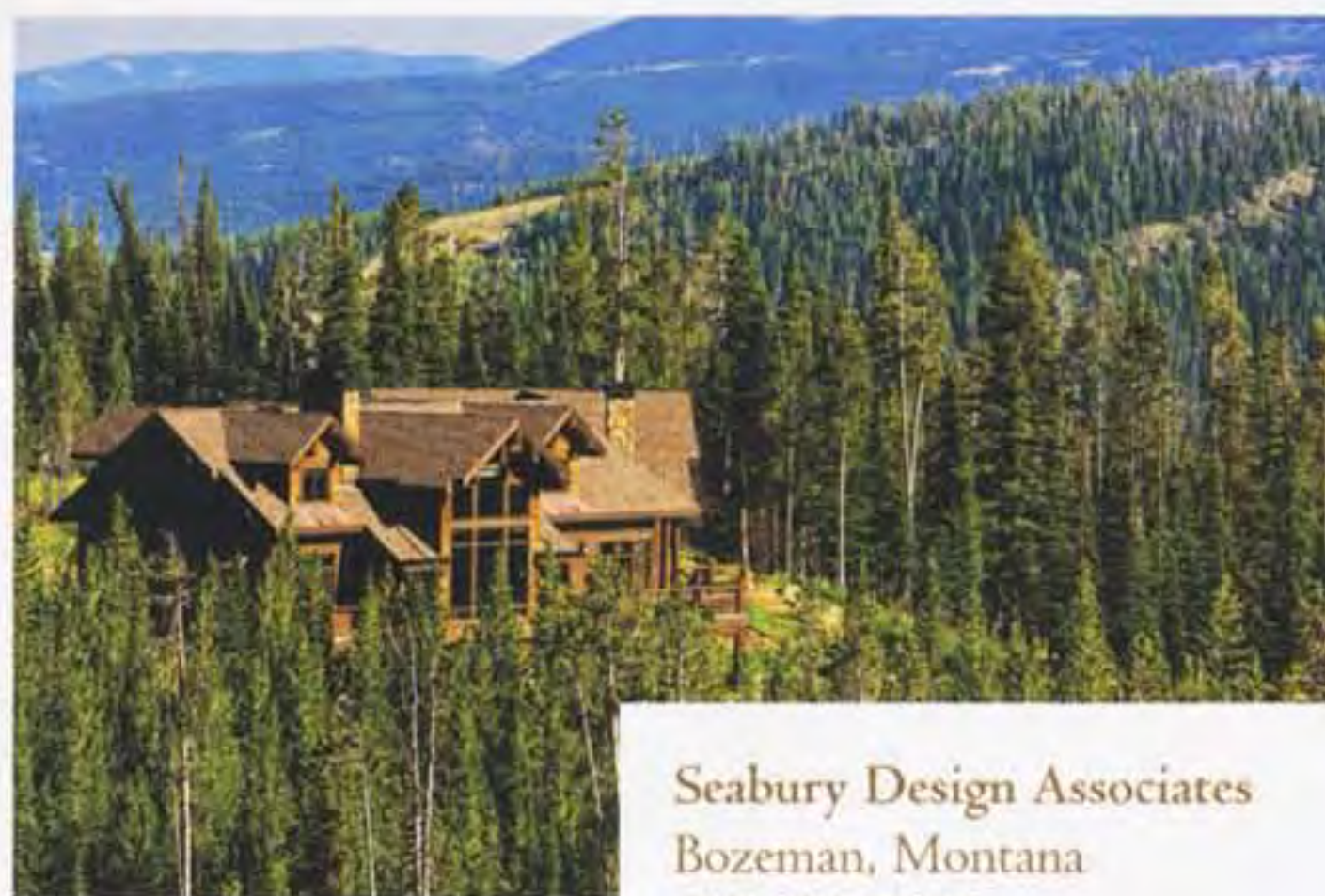
Along with additional custom furnishings, such as kitchen bar stools made from old saddles, the couple made the home their own with whimsical accessories procured from Montana and Wyoming and an impressive

collection of Western art—including nearly 50 works from The Plainsmen Gallery in Dunedin, Florida, alone. Some of their most prized pieces include *Ascent* by sculptor Gary Lee Price, a Vic Payne bronze titled *Ancient Hunter*, and two works by Cowboy Artists of America sculptor John Coleman.

In the expansive living room, hints of the Fuller's personal touches include chandeliers made from authentic Henry rifles and custom handrails made from hand-picked branches. "I guess you could say that Donn and I both have very eclectic taste; if we see something we like, we buy it and then figure out where we are going to put it," says Candy. "The week we moved in, Donn and our son-in-law drove the largest U-Haul you could get full of all of our finds from Florida."

The kitchen and the media room, which acts as a home theater with its 10-foot projection screen and 15 recliners, remain two of the family's preferred gathering spots. "My favorite room is the kitchen," Candy says. "It has amazing views through the many windows, but most of all, this is where we gather after a long day of skiing or hiking. We have one rule when cooking: Everyone gets a job, whether you can cook or not. We have created lots of laughs and amazing meals. Also, there is nothing like grilling in zero-degree weather and building a fire in the outdoor fireplace to keep warm."

Donn agrees. "I don't think any one of us would make any changes to the house. It's pretty much perfect."



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