

at home

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Keeping it Intimate

A cozy, year-round retreat
in the Yellowstone Club

**at home
for the money**

One family's new American dream



KEEPING IT INTIMATE

A cozy, year-round retreat in the Yellowstone Club

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PHOTOGRAPHY
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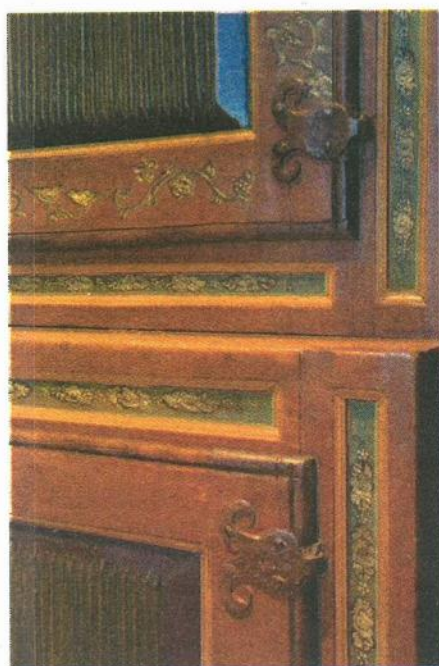
“T he Yellowstone Club is sort of the anti-Aspen,” says Tim McKenna. He and his wife Debby spend eight months of the year at their home anchored to the Club’s soaring Andesite Ridge.

A drive through the exclusive ski and golf retreat might seem counter to Tim’s assessment — as you spot the bevy of sprawling, Aspenoid castles, the chairlifts ready to whisk residents through the neighborhood, and the snow-covered bridges at every switchback to ferry skiers over the roadway. Just from the look of the stone guard tower at the entrance, a visitor might expect the attendant to offer

some leftover pomp and circumstance just to help him fit in.

But the gatekeeper is casual and friendly and seems more fit for the entrance of Yellowstone National Park than the Yellowstone Club. No pomp, no circumstance. He just smiles and issues a laminated dashboard pass.

Tim says you can’t really judge the Club’s residents by their homes. Many of them drive older pickups, one of which is even plastered with bumper stickers, “really doing the anti-money thing,” he said. While it’s a little odd to call a millionaire member of the hyper-exclusive club “anti-money,” it does seem that flaunting wealth and status is frowned upon.



Many pieces throughout the home feature fine detailing, like this wooden hutch.

Debby says that at house parties attended by international CEOs, best-selling authors, famous actors and celebrities, all the guests wear jeans, and even pitch in to help with the dishes.

"No one seems to take themselves too seriously," Tim says. "You have your exceptions, but you'd be amazed at how down-to-earth most people are up here."

The McKennas match their assessment of the Club's residents. Their home, while fabulous in its design and execution, wasn't built as a display of wealth. Any builder or architect would be proud to display the fine example of workmanship, but it really doesn't qualify as a trophy home.

At 4,700 square feet, it's no one-room cottage, but it isn't a castle, either.

Stone slab steps lead from the driveway to a weathered front door, encased in a wall of stone. The door swings open into an unexpectedly small entryway, just big enough for an entry table.

But once inside, the entryway opens to reveal an airy great room, bursting with light from wide windows on either side that billow up to a ceiling of reclaimed barn beams and snow fence paneling.

Despite the dark, rustic woods, the room feels so light that it might float away if it weren't moored to the towering stone fireplace.

The great room encompasses the living area that surrounds the fireplace, the kitchen, and a dining area that spans the two. Smart proportions, along with expansive windows, make the great room feel cozy, intimate and majestic all at once.

Doors on either side of the fireplace open onto a spacious, covered stone porch that hosts a large outdoor fireplace. The porch wraps the house in both directions, and as the steep slope falls away, burly stone walls rise to keep it on plane. The usual wooden deck that floats out on piers makes no appearance, replaced by stone walls and solid earth under foot as the wraparound porch makes its way to the barbecue area just outside the kitchen.

The kitchen, though beautiful in its finishes, was designed for function. Debby said her neighbors, who do a great deal of entertaining, have a kitchen with three islands, each with its own sink and dishwasher. But the McKenna's kitchen has no island, no bar for barstools, and only one dishwasher.

Situated on Andesite Ridge, this home inside the Yellowstone Club is less than 5,000 square feet. Despite the use of dark, rustic wood in both the living and kitchen areas, well-placed windows create a light, open feel.



The master bedroom enjoys a private bathroom with a window that looks out into the surrounding forest.

Keeping it intimate

"Most of the time, it's just the two of us," she said. "We really don't need another dishwasher."

Beyond the kitchen is the library — a smaller version of their living room with lower ceilings, a grand fireplace, and an undeniable coziness.

"This is where we spend the bulk of our time," Debby says.

The library leads on to the master suite, where a sliding door opens onto a snug bedroom with another of the home's signature fireplaces. The master bath is roomy and bright, accented with red and yellow Moroccan tiles, and the bathtub window looks out into the surrounding forest.

Three bedrooms on the second floor provide ample space for guests, with two couples' suites and a kids' room that comfortably sleeps six. Each of the guest rooms has its own attached bathroom to offer privacy, and the

couples' suites open onto an intimate second-story deck.

The rooms aren't oversized, and have been appointed for reading, sleeping and not much else. As Debby explains, she wants people to be able to have their privacy, but a house shouldn't be a place for distance and isolation.

"Everybody comes together in the living room and spends their time together," she says. "It's just a lot of fun. We had 17 people in the house for Thanksgiving, and we had such a great time."

When it's just the two of them at home, Tim and Debbie keep the thermostat down on the guest quarters, and only use the main rooms of the house.

Down two flights of stairs, the walk-out basement offers a giant flat panel TV, big, comfortable couches and a pool table to make for an ideal recreation and theater room. Just outside, an in-ground hot-tub beckons to

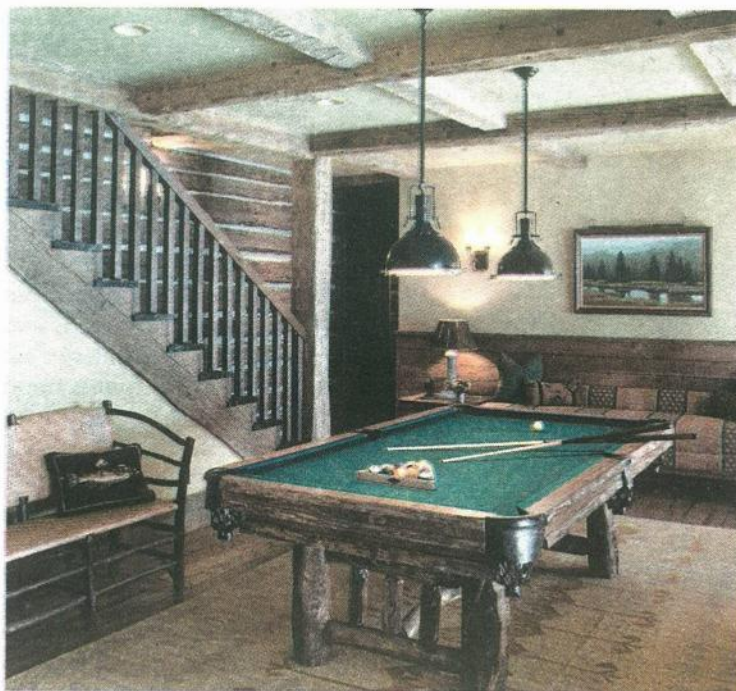


Jello-legged après skiers.

The most interesting detail of the lower level, however, is a watercolor caricature of a family on skis. Under closer investigation, it's clear that the faces are younger, cartoon versions of Tim and Debby and their kids.

"We had that done at Y2K in New Hampshire, where our old ski house was," Debby says, explaining that the boys were ski racers growing up. Weekends in New Hampshire alternated with weekdays in Massachusetts, where Tim worked in the financial industry until his retirement the same year the watercolor was done. *continued on page 14*

Intimate seating in the media room allows for visiting.



A pool room beckons guests to relax and have fun in the walkout basement.

Keeping it intimate *continued from page 12*

The family had been coming to Montana for fly fishing since the early 1990s, and when they visited Big Sky in the 2000s, "The concept of the Yellowstone Club was a little different for us to fathom," Tim says. "But we got invited to ski at the Club, and that was the end of the story. Once the youngest was off to school, we traded the New Hampshire house for one out West."

Tim says he and Debby spent a lot of time looking for the perfect place, visiting Aspen and Snowmass, Alta and Snowbird, Sun Valley and others, but the Yellowstone Club offered something more, and that more went beyond endless acres of untracked powder and the proximity to world-class fly fishing.

"We met a lot of really great, genuine people from all over the world. And we continue to," he says. "There's really quite a community that's devel-

oping here. We spend a lot of time together."

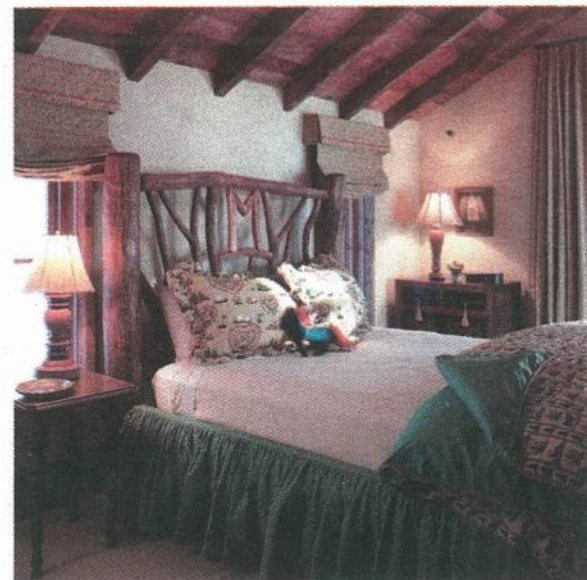
When they decided to build their perfect house in the perfect place, they looked to Candace Miller of Miller Architects to design it, and On Site Management to build it.

"Both of them were absolutely extraordinary," Debby says, adding that this was the first time she and Tim had ever built a home. "Candace created all of these wonderful, intimate spaces, and OSM, they are just incredible craftsmen."

And as happy as they are in their cozy mountain home, twice a year, the McKenna's road trip with their golden retriever back to Massachusetts to visit with friends and family — and, as Tim says, to avoid Montana's mud season. ☺

Alex Tenenbaum writes from Bozeman.

One of two couples' suites allow the family to house guests comfortably.



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