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The Wind River Mountains tower in the distance beyond this log home, situated on a 4,000-acre cattle ranch. While it's 75 miles to the nearest town, the owners are never at a loss to keep themselves (and their guests) entertained. The area is a perfect place for fishing, hiking, horseback riding and bicycling.





At Home on the Range

STORY BY Amy Laughinghouse
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Roger Wade

*t*he scene couldn't be more provincial. Nestled among the twists and turns of Wyoming's Green River and overlooking miles of meadowland and not-so-distant mountains, lies a cattle ranch and a nearly 3,000-square-foot log home that combines the best of modern design with the glory of the past. Architect John Carney, who designed this home for his aunt and uncle, spent much of his youth on the ranch, so he was intimately familiar with all that the spectacular location had to offer. He took his design cues from early 20th-century Western architecture that's practical enough to face the elements yet sufficiently inspiring to hold its own with the dramatic backdrop of Big Sky country.

**A MODERN LOG HOME FINDS ITS PLACE AMONG
4,000 ACRES, TWO NATIONAL PARKS AND A
HERD OF PERSISTENT CATTLE.**



Styled by Debra Grahl

“We wanted the home to be compatible with other structures on the ranch,” says John, who runs his Jackson Hole-based firm, Carney Architects, with his wife and fellow architect, Nancy. Given the prevalence of log buildings on the 4,000-acre homestead, a log home was the obvious choice, and John’s aunt and uncle eagerly embraced this rustic vision for their Western vacation retreat.

History in the Making

To give the impression that this new home had been on the ranch almost as long as the other buildings, John wanted a historic-looking, handcrafted log package, so he relied on the expertise of Jay Pohley, founder of Pioneer Log Homes in Victor, Montana. “It was a unique type of log profile,” says Jay, who selected standing dead Engelmann spruce and lodgepole pine for the job. “We used hand adzes to cut the logs flat on the inside, but they were left round on the outside.”

Rather than joining these “D-shaped” logs at the corners with a common saddle notch, Jay used a lap joint to create square corners like those found on other log buildings on the property. Though ranchers typically covered their rough-hewn lap joints with vertical 2-by-4s, Pioneer’s handiwork

ABOVE: Architect John Carney, who designed this log home for his aunt and uncle, chose a scenic spot just yards from the meandering Green River. The home’s L-shaped design features a private master wing attached to a two-story core housing three guest bedrooms—an ideal set-up for entertaining the small groups his aunt and uncle love to host.

OPPOSITE: Wide overhangs, steeply pitched rooflines and a log-and-shingle combination echo the early 20th-century architecture found in nearby Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks.



In the great room, sunlight streams through double-hung, three-over-one windows. Double-hung windows are more old-fashioned, and they also coordinate with the ranch's other buildings. A pair of red sofas adds a bold punch of color to the otherwise neutral palette.





was too exceptional to cover up. John decided to showcase it, leaving the joints in full view.

To complement the logs, taper-sawn cedar shingles envelop the second story and rise to meet the steeply sloping roofline. Although this is a departure from traditional ranch building styles, these

“Log homes can be dark sometimes, so we chose a light driftwood stain in the main rooms.”

—JOHN CARNEY, ARCHITECT

details are grounded in the 20th-century architectural vernacular of the West. “You can see examples of this in National Parks,” says John, who finds this a particularly appropriate reference, given that the ranch stands at the gateway to both Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. The roof’s wide overhangs, which shelter gracious upper-level balconies, also reference park architecture and provide a sensible response to the regions heavy winter snows. “The climate here is pretty tough, and you want to shed the snow and the water away from the house as much as possible,” John says. “So this big, sheltering roof is very much in keeping with the type of architecture found here.”

General contractor Michael Riley of On Site Management Inc. can certainly vouch for the harsh winters. “The building season was short; the snow came early and stayed late,” says Michael, noting that it took the crew more than 16 months to complete the home. “The trucks would get stuck in the mud and the snow.” Michael estimates that 120 inches of snow fell that winter. “The roads would drift over, and there were times when we had to bring in snowplows to get the crew out of the job site, let alone into it.”

Mother Nature didn’t present the







OPPOSITE: American Windsor chairs, gathered around a trestle table, offer plenty of seating for friends and family.

ABOVE: “One of the things the owners like about this house is that it’s full of sunshine, but the kitchen doesn’t get much direct sun,” says interior designer William Hodgins. “So we lightened it up with an old-style, diamond-pattern linoleum floor, and we painted the cupboards soft yellow to make it warmer.”

only hurdle; a few manmade obstacles stood in the way of progress, too. For instance, before the On Site Management team could start construction, they had to uproot an old log shop to make way for the new log home’s foundation. “It was an absolutely gorgeous site that had been devoted to this virtually windowless shop,” John explains.

But the old shop had too much character simply to be razed, so it was re-located a few hundred yards away from the new home’s foundation—an effort that required a couple of steel I-beams, a jack, a trailer and a great deal of precision and patience. Yet that delicate process proved to be a piece of cake compared to the challenge of evicting a stubborn herd of former “occupants.”

“The cattle kept trying to come back to that spot,” Michael recalls with a chuckle. “It was a traditional place for them to gather, and they just wanted to be where they had hung out for years.” A simple fence, he says, finally convinced them to move on.



ABOVE: In the master bedroom, the pale walnut bed, topped by a warm quilt, looks south over the hay meadows towards Black Butte. A large rag carpet, woven in neutral hues of white and beige, is soft and inviting underfoot.



LEFT: The current trend in the housing market is to build lavish walk-in closets, but "that's not necessary out here where we don't dress up as much," says Wyoming-based architect John Carney. His clients opted for a single wall of built-in closets and drawers that's in keeping with this rustic log-and-timber home.

An Artful Blend

Besides battling trespassing cows and severe snowstorms, the builders were dealing with a fairly complex structure. “The house integrated a full-log package with a timber-framed roof system, which made for a very labor-intensive project,” Michael says.

The timber frame, with its intricate joinery, creates geometric intrigue in the soaring great room and imparts a rustic, Old World feeling throughout the home. Big Timberworks—the Montana-based company that provided both the materials and the labor for this portion of the project—used reclaimed Douglas fir, lending authentic character to the frame and avoiding the shrinking and checking that can occur with new, “green” timber.

“When you use new timbers, you don’t know what they’re going to look like after they dry,” explains Merle Adams, who founded Big Timberworks 20 years ago. Reclaimed wood is not only thoroughly dry, it’s generally harvested from old-growth forests—an increasingly rare but highly desirable commodity. “It’s a higher quality, denser, knot-free wood, which is a woodworker’s dream,” Merle says.

To enhance the airy, cathedral-like effect the beams create in the great room, a driftwood stain was applied to the post and beams and the wood-paneled ceiling was stained a weathered white. Colorado buff sandstone floors, which are as beautiful as they are durable, complement the pale palette.

French doors welcome guests into this inviting space, which is casually furnished with white-painted wooden chairs and a pair of red sofas (one of John’s aunt’s favorite colors) gathered around the fireplace. At the other end of the room, American Windsor chairs with red-and-white-checked cushions belly up to a sturdy trestle dining table, as if beckoning folks to gather ’round for a hearty meal.

“They wanted to keep the decor simple,” says Boston-based interior designer William Hodgins. “They wanted a quiet place away from the rest of the world—a real retreat.”

Looking out at the gently swaying grasses and the lazy bends of the river, it’s easy to understand why anyone—even the cows—would be anxious to return.



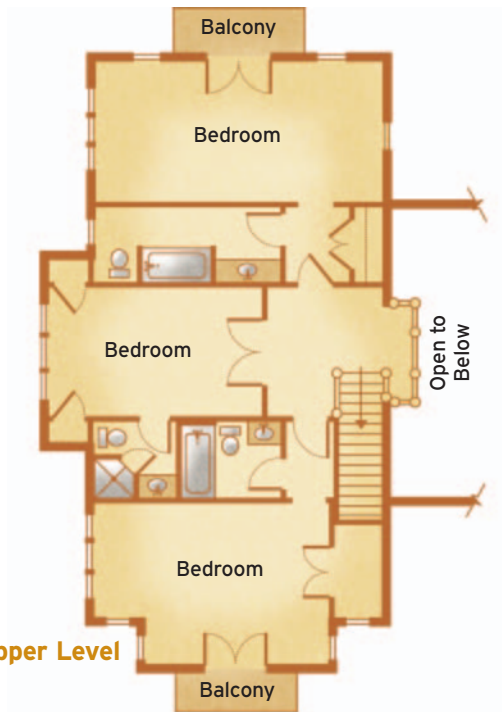
TOP: When visiting their ranch, the home owners spend relaxing afternoons in the inviting master wing’s study. A child’s antique wicker rocker cozies up to the fireplace, which is faced with tiles that interior designer William Hodgins found on a trip to Marrakech.

ABOVE: New York subway tile and white beadboard, juxtaposed against the warm hues of the reclaimed Douglas fir flooring, creates a serene, spa-like feeling in the master bathroom.



ABOVE: "A screened-in porch is pretty sensible in rural Wyoming, because we have quite a healthy bug population," architect John Carney says with a laugh. In addition to a rocking chair and a padded banquette of seating, which offer views of the old barn and shop, John installed a porch swing. "It's a very romantic notion to sit on a porch and hear the reassuring squeak of the swing," he says.

LEFT: This rustic log-and-cedar-shingle home sits on a site once occupied by the ranch's old shop, where farm implements were repaired and horses were re-shoed. The shop, whose square lap-joint corners are echoed in the architecture of the new home, was relocated a few hundred yards away.



Upper Level

HOME DETAILS

- **Square footage:** 2,948
 - **Package price:** \$59,457
 - **Architect:** Carney Architects
 - **General contractor:** On Site Management
 - **Log dealer:** Pioneer Log Homes
 - **Log producer:** Rocky Mountain Log Homes
- For more information, see Resources on page 125.*



Main Level