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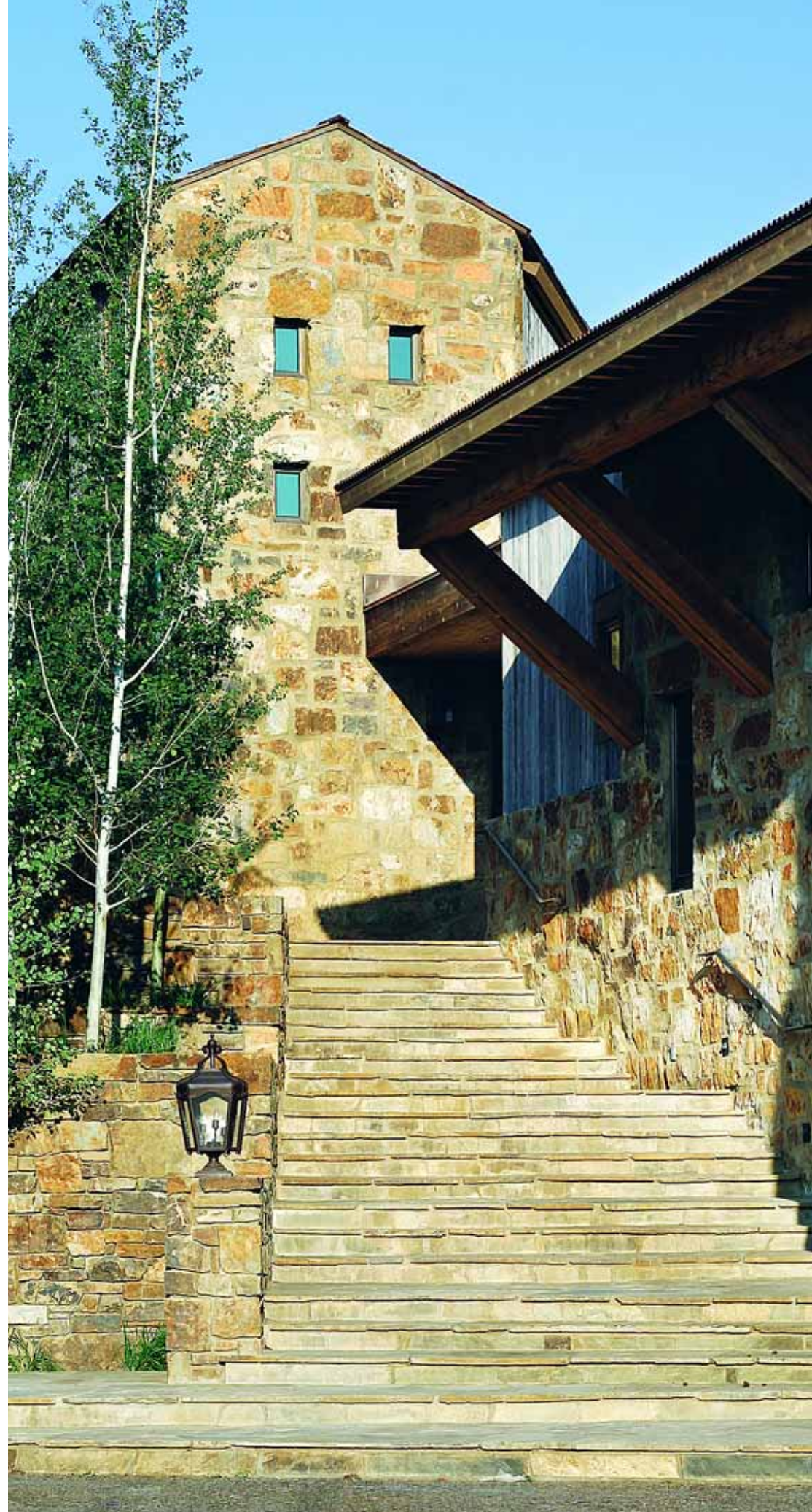


Nestled among 40 acres with amazing mountain views, this home looks as though it was transplanted directly from Italy.

An old-world estate feels at home in Jackson Hole, Wyoming

BY DINA MISHEV

Prime Jackson Hole real estate—whether it’s a ski-in, ski-out cabin in Teton Village, a family retreat along the Snake River or a hillside horse property—tends to have massive views. When talking about their homes, Jackson Hole homeowners don’t start with details about the actual house, but about what can be seen through the windows: the aptly named Sleeping Indian, the magnificent Tetons or panoramas of horses grazing in sprawling mountain valleys. With such considerable backdrops, many homes fall victim to being either little more than vessels for the views or colossal fortresses built on a superhuman scale. But Karla Tessler’s newly completed, Tuscan-by-way-of-Wyoming home on 40 hillside acres has achieved that rare happy medium. Grand yet gentle, the 10,000-square-foot home blends into its environs while showing the area’s natural scenery at its best.



(left) The rough-hewn Kemmerer and Colorado fieldstone exterior of this home creates a rustic feel that complements the home’s old-world style.

(bottom) Materials used to give the home a worn look include a rusty tin roof and planks of reclaimed Wyoming snow fence for siding.



"I knew the home had to have a strong presence to balance the Tetons directly across the valley, but I didn't want it to compete," says Tessler. "The more time I spent on the property, the more I envisioned the hillside towns of Tuscany, where homes are tucked away and you don't sense their grandeur or size until you're inside." It was a bold thought in an area long a bastion of log homes, moose heads and cowboy chic. While spending an entire winter skiing the property's boundaries, Tessler continued to develop her vision. "We couldn't see much

of the topography because it was buried under snow, but we could tell the lot was something really special and needed a home that had never been done in Jackson before," Tessler says.

She interviewed dozens of architects, but after seeing a photo of a Cottle, Graybeal & Yaw Architects-designed copper waterspout coming out of an old-world drystack stone wall, she was pretty sure she had found her firm. "In that one image I saw a piece of the aesthetic I was trying to achieve in this home's architecture," Tessler says. When she met with John Cottle, a principal at the Aspen, Telluride and Vail-based firm, and noticed that his slide show had a few images of his family biking through European hillside towns, she knew she had her man. And Cottle was even familiar with Jackson Hole, having spent many summers in and around the area. "John was the first architect to say 'No' to me, though," Tessler says. "He said he wasn't sure he would have the time necessary to do the project justice. That's when I knew I had to work with him."

Tessler and Cottle, along with a half dozen other CGY architects, Jackson-based builders On Site Management and Marcia Shaw Goodman of Marcia Shaw Goodman Design Consultants of Los Angeles were in design development for 18 months. "It was a true



(above) The rustic charm of the home is present inside and out, from the hewn stone and mortar exterior to the interior replete with heavy wood posts and beams.



The kitchen's alder cabinetry accents the chestnut oak flooring in the kitchen and throughout the home.



meeting of the minds,” Tessler says. “We trusted each other. The home changed dramatically from my original vision, but the core stayed the same—European-feeling, but still a part of Wyoming.”

The success of the project hinged on the architects’ ability to showcase the majestic setting without overpowering it. “I’ve been an architect for nearly 30 years and this is one of the two most incredible sites I’ve ever worked on,” Cottle explains. “It is an amazing, amazing piece of land. I wanted to unlock the magic there and have people connect with it rather than just with the house on it.” Ten thousand square feet is a lot of house to hide, but Tessler was adamant about making it part of the landscape.

From the beginning, it was clear that the best way to avoid a massive intrusion on the environment was to break the house into two wings connected by a hidden lower level. This had the added advantage of pulling the

main wing out from the hillside and into the sun. The house was positioned to the north for the views—straight across to the Tetons and, on a clear day, up to Yellowstone—but, as Cottle notes, “in our climate, the north isn’t the most livable side.” Pulling the house out let southern light in.

The home’s exterior is wrapped in reclaimed Wyoming snow fence, stone and corrugated tin, native materials that nonetheless evoke a sense of Europe. “The tin roof looks like the red tile roofing of Italy, but also feels like an old Wyoming silo or barn,” Tessler says. Architectural bronze and distressed Douglas fir Albertini windows (European tilt-turn) and doors (lift-slide) imported from Verona, Italy, complete the elegantly rustic look. Interior timbers reclaimed from a Montana factory destroyed by a fire mimic the mammoth stone pillars of European castles and churches, “but are still very much Wyoming elements,” Tessler explains.



(opposite) Antique side tables in the bedroom flank the king pillowtop bed, which is crowned by an 18th-century English headpiece. On cold nights, a gas fireplace—surrounded by a circa 1790 French mantel—keeps the room warm. (below) Imported Italian Albertini windows beautifully frame every breathtaking view in the house. Made of Douglas fir, the windows give an authentic flair to the home.



Strengthening the connection between the house and land even further are 8,000 square feet of Colorado fieldstone and Kemmerer stone decking (the latter is quarried south of Jackson and contains fossilized animal remains tens of millions of years old). “You have your own private outside space from nearly every room in the house,” Tessler says. There’s even a heated cigar deck off the library.

Tessler and Shaw Goodman furnished the home with antiques and architectural salvage pieces Tessler had been collecting for years. “I had no idea where or how I would use them when I bought them,” Tessler says, “but I couldn’t pass them up. These pieces were spectacular enough that I knew they’d get used eventually.” The butcher’s block in the kitchen is 19th century English. The fireplace in the master bedroom is circa 1790 France. The cherubs on the living room wall? Nearly 150 years old.

Most surprising about the antiques aren’t their diversity or quality, but the ways in which Tessler and Shaw Goodman used them. There is a Belgian pediment Tessler turned into a fireplace surround. Antique doors

are coffee tables and benches. Rather than a door that would block light, centuries-old hand wrought gates separate the wine cellar and tasting area from the second wing of the house. “Wherever I was, I tried not to look at things in the way someone else had interpreted them, but as how we might use them,” Tessler says.

The eclectic marriage of old-world rustic with Cottle’s architecture satisfies another of Tessler’s criteria: a roomy yet intimate home. “John once said the living room had to be able to handle a grand party of 100, but that if an intimate gathering of four wasn’t comfortable in there as well, he had failed as an architect,” Tessler says. “For so many reasons, there’s no doubt it’s a success.” ♦

The furnished home is currently listed with Mercedes Huff of Sotheby’s International Realty Inc. (877) 739-8135.

SOURCES: Albertini Windows of Utah and Wyoming, (435) 647-0399, www.albertini-usa.com; Cottle, Graybeal & Yaw Architects, (970) 927-4925, www.cgyarchitects.com; Design Workshop, (303) 623-5786, www.designworkshop.com; Marcia Shaw Goodman Design Consultants, (310) 472-6261; On Site Management, (307) 733-0733

