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BIG SKY JOURNAL HOME

Mountain Living and Architectural Design



Classic Connection: Miller Architects

Designing timeless buildings in the West

WRITTEN BY SEABRING DAVIS

HERE'S THE TRUTH about Architect Candace Tillotson-Miller: She's a romantic. Principal of Miller Architects in Livingston, she came to Montana, fresh from the Rhode Island School of Design to work with a horsepacking outfitter in Yellowstone National Park, chasing her self-professed "cowgirl dream." The lifestyle, the land, the freedom appealed to her then and continued as she focused on architecture at Montana State University in Bozeman.

Ultimately, she founded the firm in Livingston in 1992 and steadily made a name for herself as an architect who looks to history, to regional vernacular and to the natural world to inform her designs. Since then, Miller has made a career of uniting the romance and reality of living in the West by designing homes with both a sense of place and modern functionality.

"The landscape speaks to me first and foremost," says Miller.

Designing straightforward homes that connect to the land is a Miller Architects signature. Relying less on decorative bells and whistles and more on the level of detail in the construction, in the siting of buildings and in the natural materials conveys as much beauty as any architectural frill. Her body of work includes extensive ranch reconstruction, mountain lodges, family camps and personal residences that resound with a connection to history. She incorporates reclaimed wood and stone in a way that revitalizes old materials into new forms.

Tucked into a drainage in Paradise Valley, this family home incorporates gracious Western styling, with a low-slung roofline, shed-style gables and oversized mullioned windows to keep the connection to the landscape ever-present.



AUDREY HALL



MATTHEW MILLMAN

Above: Utilizing reclaimed and repurposed beams in this Colorado ranch house adds an immediate sense of history to a home, according to AIA Candace Tillotson-Miller. **Below:** Tone and texture welcome visitors to this mountain home. **Right:** A fireside dining and sitting area is surrounded by the sound and sight of Mill Creek, adding to the sensory connections that envelope this outdoor room.

"I've had my own business for 21 years and it has been a love affair with old buildings and new materials. The old buildings are a testament to our environment, creating a storyline by their texture, handcrafted surfaces and lovely patinas, materials that will continue to speak for generations. To me old materials provide a new building an immediate sense of place."

Yet each project is different, just as each client is unique. Miller is good at listening and working with a client's vision. The Miller Architects team prides itself on collaboration and trust in the relationships between homeowner, architects and general contractor.



GORDON GREGORY

"Visiting the site, listening to clients, analyzing the way they want to live on a property, assessing views, amenities, challenges and considering the natural impact of the elements, combined with mutual communication, is what moves a project forward," reflects Miller.

It isn't easy to get Miller to talk about herself. Despite several architectural awards during her firm's tenure, a roster of clients who return for multiple projects and a reputation as one of the top architects in the Rocky Mountain West, she's more likely to let her work speak for itself than to list her achievements. Not because she isn't interesting or accomplished, but more so because she's humble and efficacious of her time and yours. She is all business. To know her is to read between the lines.

For instance, the location of the Miller

Miller has made a career of uniting the romance and reality of living in the West by designing homes with a sense of place and modern functionality.

Architects office in the iconic Livingston Depot baggage building is an indicator of Miller's own connection to place. Built in 1902 by the Burlington Northern Railroad, the elegant brick structure was a gateway for easterners coming West to Yellowstone National Park. The same architects behind New York's Grand Central Terminal designed it. The charming location and architectural integrity of the building are reflections of Miller's sensibilities. As an East Coast girl who came West, she relates to the structure on a personal level and respects its historic value on a professional level.

"The location of the firm is significant because of the building's historic qualities, but also because I find it appealing to have the park next to it," she reflects, "even in town I need that touchpoint with the natural environment."

Miller Architects is licensed in Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, New Mexico and Colorado, but most of Miller's design work happens on her drafting table at the cattle ranch, which she and her husband call home. There she reflects on the importance of revering open space and appreciating the connection to place that is endemic to this region. She is inspired by barns, hand-built structures that sit gently on the horizon, old world craftsmanship and buildings that aren't oversized, but remain human in scale.

Miller is reticent to label her design style, yet her hand is distinct. Often over-sized windows bring views inside; broad, overhanging porches, screened sleeping porches and a collection of cabins connected by a courtyard are all elements that keep the landscape ever-present in Miller Architects designs.



GORDON GREGORY



Exemplifying the versatility of reclaimed materials, Miller Architects designed a Kiva-inspired passageway.

Simple rooflines that don't protrude from the site are key. A balance of proportion and volume and excellent siting are her hallmarks.

"I try to produce designs that are timeless in form so that in 15 years they won't seem outdated," she says. "Our homes are a backdrop for our lives."

Clients who hire Candace Tillotson-Miller to design a home generally have a long relationship with her; they come back and ask her to design a second, a third project. General contractors, artisans and interior designers who work with her sing her praises. She is direct, honest and trustworthy. She has the heart of an artist, with the sensibility of a businessperson: Romance and reality combined. **H**

ELEVATED LODGE STYLE

Acanthus Architecture
and On Site Management
reinterpret rustic materials
in a mountain retreat

WRITTEN BY KIM IBES
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROGER WADE

Aptly named "Over the Edge,"
this finely crafted home is
delicately perched upon a
rugged western ridge high
atop Andesite Mountain in a
private Big Sky community.

WHEN MARK DULANEY GLEN, AIA AND PRINCIPAL of North Carolina-based Acanthus Architecture, was invited to Big Sky, Montana, to design a family vacation home, he was quick to note the tradition of mountain lodge style, homestead cabins and iconic national park architecture. His clients, an outdoor-loving family based in New York, had a different idea of how they wanted to live in Big Sky. And it didn't include a log cabin.

"We started from a point of *not* doing a log building, but something more modern," says Glen.

The home's concept evolved from there, as the owners defined how they would live in the home, with priorities of space and personal taste. Glen teamed up with Bozeman-based general contractor On Site Management (OSM) and interior designer Urling Searle of Connecticut-based Sibley Design to refine the idea of a mountain lodge and customize it

to the family's needs.

Early on in the project, the demands of a steeply graded, high-elevation building site and the priority of capturing the area's panoramic views played into the design process. The solution is a home with two forms, moving front to back, east to west. Starting at the east entrance, the home resembles a classic chalet with its high gabled roof, reclaimed vertical-grain fir siding and weathered Montana fieldstone foundation. Glen's

Right: With a rift cut wenge top and African oak base, the Berman Rosetti Ocampo dining table and mocha leather Berman Rosetti Jake chairs enhance the kitchen and dining room and provide a comfortable place to recline for dining and conversation or just to enjoy the views. **Below:** Cleft Montana sandstone surrounds the fireplace, its soft gray tones blend nicely with the tightly clad pine walls along with the Kohlberg Sedona rug spun in a soothing terracotta color. The dragon pillow, from the owner's alma mater, adds a touch of color.



keen eye toward detail and the team's desire to refine the use of rustic materials is apparent throughout the home.

"The details were challenging and outside OSM's usual rustic work, but they worked closely with us to determine the best methods to achieve our design intentions. And their craftsmanship is extraordinary," notes Glen.

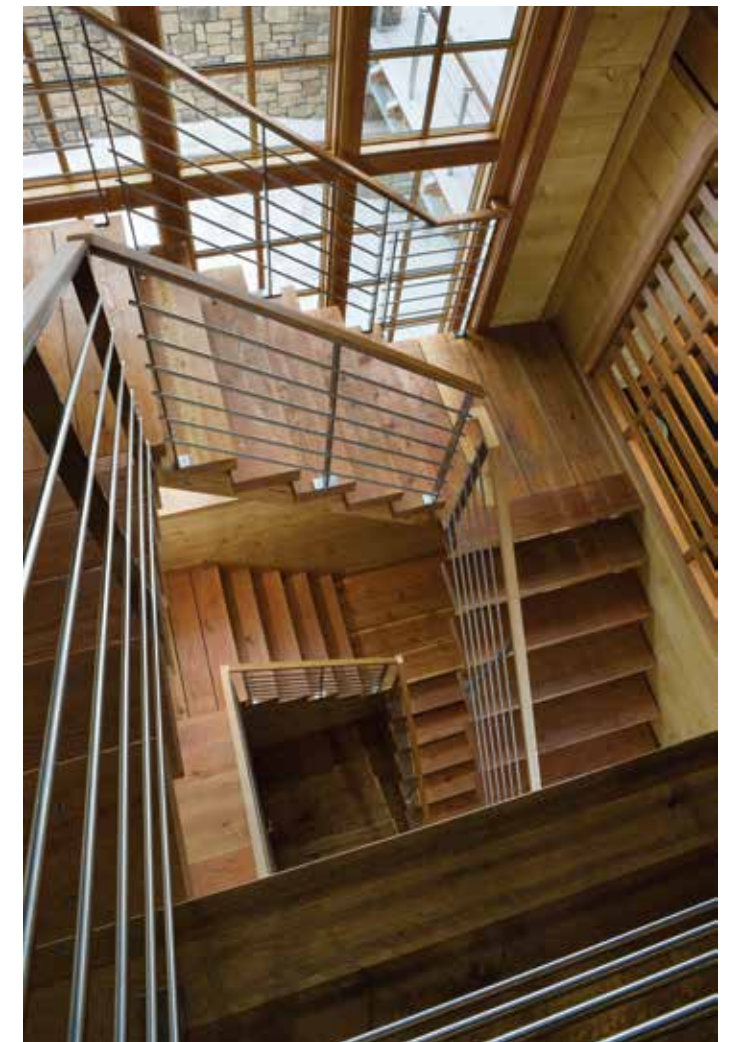
Seeming to defy gravity, the house is perched upon the western ridge of 8,300-foot Andesite Mountain. It is a dwelling that celebrates the surrounding environment, both with an emphasis on views and the conscious effort to utilize sustainable building components throughout the project, resulting in a LEED-certified mountain retreat.

Aptly named "Over the Edge" by the family, for its precarious location and dramatic views, the 6,500-square-foot, four-bedroom home is a true expression of its owners.

"We think of this house as being about the sky. When we're here we watch the clouds during the day and the stars at night," the owners reminisce.

It is that sensation of going over the edge that draws visitors into the home. A steep and sinuous driveway climbs up the mountain and then plunges down 60 feet toward the entrance. From there, two bridged-entries, built over a moat

Rising some 40 feet from floor to ceiling, the stair tower with its wall of windows, is one of the home's standout architectural details.





Once over the threshold, its traditional façade gives way to clean lines, contemporary furnishings and a view that quickly spans Eglise Rock, Pioneer, Cedar and Sphinx Mountains.



designed for natural drainage, progress west, where the home transitions into a post-and-beam frame allowing for horizontal ribbons of glass, on some floors spanning 50 feet across, to capture its stunning vistas.

Once over the threshold, its traditional façade gives way to clean lines, contemporary furnishings and a view that quickly spans Eglise Rock, Pioneer, Cedar and Sphinx Mountains. The home is awash in warm variations of wood tones. Instead of round logs, the walls have been tightly clad in pine, finished with an age-old, simple treatment of tongue oil and trimmed in vertical-grain fir. When the sun shines through the windows the light spreads across the rift and quartered white oak flooring, blanketing the home in a soft, comforting light.

Relying on crisp interior design and a connection to the landscape in nearly every room was integral to cultivating a comfortable home that marries urban sensibilities

Left: The owners purchased this series of Jennifer Bartlett prints and hung them in the stair tower to mimic the glass panes in the adjacent windows. **Above:** To capture views of Eglise Rock, Pioneer, Cedar and Sphinx Mountains, the home was built perpendicular to its slope. With reclaimed siding and vertical-grain fir timbers, the home is gently set upon its base of weathered Montana fieldstone installed in a random ashlar pattern.

in a mountain setting.

“We chose natural hues, warm browns and grays in the entrance, chestnut brown, warm rich beiges, sienna and spruce green in the living room with mossy greens and deep chocolate browns in the dining room,” explains Searle. The same refined details noted in architecture are mimicked by the choice of furnishings and the family’s collection of artwork.

Architecturally, the high gables and soaring vertical scheme allow for four stories of mullioned windows to unite the interior and exterior continuously. Even the sculptural staircase — comprised of a recessed steel plate, structural welded steel supporting floating fir treads, brushed steel and blond wood details — preserves visibility to create, not only a functional corridor, but also a light well that allows the home to flow from floor to floor almost imperceptibly.

OSM’s remarkable craftsmanship shows in every detail of the house, from the central staircase to the built-in cabinets in the main living area. The continuity of streamlined

Views greet visitors from the moment they cross the bridged entry. A friend custom cast the blue glass Banner Stone that hangs effortlessly from a foyer alcove.



design echoes throughout the home.

"All the details flow through this home," says OSM project manager Todd Smith. "Nothing here is cowboy'd up."



The open floor plan on the main level, primarily consisting of living room, dining room, and kitchen — and of course a large, private mudroom filled with lockers for fishing and skiing gear — is overwhelmingly a tribute to celebrating the outdoors and casting away that New York state of mind. The subtlety and efficiency of furnishings, the use of natural materials and expanse of windows are constant reminders that this is a timeless safe haven to gather family and friends.

"We think it fits into the landscape and the area, it doesn't feel as if we've stuck a modern house into a western landscape," notes the family.

That consciousness and continuity shines through every aspect of the house, which ultimately elevates the Montana lodge to new heights. **H**

The spa provides a welcome place to relax after a day spent outside, completed in Artistic Tile's oyster matte and Pearl Matte with wall accents from Opera Glass.



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YELLOWSTONE CLUB POST-MODERNE

WRITTEN BY TODD WILKINSON | PHOTOGRAPHY BY AUDREY HALL



JLF and OSM deliver a northern Rockies getaway where rustic chic and Modern style blend inimitably

WITH THE WHITE PYRAMID OF LONE PEAK hovering skyward, Paul Bertelli drives along a mountain road in winter, winding through Montana's most exclusive gated community.

The design principal of JLF & Associates passes beneath a line of multimillion-dollar great lodge mansions. Copping big views of the panorama unfolding around Pioneer Mountain, they ply snow-covered ridgelines and belong to some of the most famous VIP surnames in America. Their owners include Fortune 500 executives, Hollywood actors, sports stars and retired politicians.

Left: This luxury duplex showcases a Moderne interpretation of rustic reclaimed wood and stone that climbs the vertical steppe to mirror its mountain setting. **Right:** Like snowflakes, no two vintage Murano glass fixtures — this 1960 version in the living room ornamented in an orchid blossom motif — are ever the same. Besides accentuating JLF's classic rock and wood elements, the fixture hangs above Edward Wormley for Dunbar sofas, vintage Scandinavian swivel chairs and a classic patchwork cowhide rug.





Perhaps the first hint that we are bound for a different kind of “ski-in, ski-out” residence comes when Bertelli offers this intriguing description: “The home we’re visiting today is actually a duplex and the clients, who spend only part of the year here, have a special appreciation for middle-of-the-last-century antiques.”

By “middle of the last century,” Bertelli isn’t referring to French or Adirondack furniture from the 1800s; it’s an allusion instead to late-moderne, circa 1950s and 1960s. And one shouldn’t be confused by “duplex.” This, after all, is the Yellowstone Club, a high-end secluded enclave where every building project within its boundary falls under strict aesthetic guidelines. An unofficial motto: where luxury meets the intersection of wilderness.

JLF, headquartered in Bozeman, has been a leader in what has become known these last 30 years as “New West” rustic regionalism. The company’s hallmark is creatively finding and recycling fine historic materials — one of a kind rough-hewn woods, “simple” or unassuming and common stone structures (regional or vernacular) and uniquely weathered fabricated metals — into ageless design.

As Bertelli pulls up beneath the port cochère, which serves as a sheltering canopy for two homes connected only by a common wall and drive, it quickly becomes apparent



Above: A marriage of rough and refined, weathered and reclaimed wood complements sleek concrete countertops and stainless steel appliances. **Left:** The dining room offers vintage Jacques Adnet armchairs and a linear 1960 Italian Mazzega chandelier. **Opposite:** Lone Peak punctuates the purpose of this Yellowstone Club getaway.



that this “duplex” is in a rare league. Saddled next to a private ski slope, the exterior, an elegant melding of moss-covered fieldstone, weathered barn planks and JLF’s signature reverse board and batten siding, conveys the ambiance of a quaint Old World cottage appearing much smaller than its actual 5,500 square feet.

Once inside, there is a sensation of surprising expansiveness. There is no foyer, instead, the front door functions merely as a point of entry into a schematic that widens the deeper one moves into it. Spread across three stories are six bedrooms, sun-drenched gathering areas and commanding outward-looking views that absorb the grandeur of the landscape.

Regarding Bertelli’s earlier mention of “antique” décor, the home is filled with vintage furnishings

Indeed, a benefit of JLF’s preference for using elemental earth-toned materials is the conduciveness of palette — in this case gray — to any style of interior decor, be it traditional or contemporary.

and artistic accents that echo Pop culture. “The decorative motif isn’t intended to be a Victorian solution or a Molesworth solution,” Bertelli says. “It’s a 21st century solution, blending the art of nature, the art of distinctive materials, and an era of art that speaks to youth and vitality.”

Indeed, a benefit of JLF’s preference for using elemental earth-toned materials is the conduciveness of palette — in this case gray — to any style of interior décor, be it traditional or contemporary. Waxing about his clients, Bertelli says the owners, Generation X husband and wife professionals with children, make pilgrimages to Montana a couple times a year, during summer and winter.

“The spirit of this home isn’t about what’s in here, it’s about what’s out there,” Bertelli explains, adding that it’s also about appealing to what’s in the clients’ heart.

Under his direction, JLF’s senior staff architects Christa Gertiser and Travis Growney transformed conversations with the client about the home’s intended practical function and the intangible aspects of what they desired into reality.

While the Yellowstone Club is noted for dwellings with massive upscale blueprints, this couple’s desires were simpler — inspiring views, décor that fit their personalities and a place that feels comfortable to live in — a sanctuary their kids will always fondly remember.

Moving up from the entry level to the second floor, one passes steel and glass railings on the stairs. If there is an anchor that speaks to the magic of the JLF-client design process, it is the open air floor plan that unites a sun room, living room and kitchen along a sightline that avails, to the northwest, an iconic view of Lone Peak, and, in the other direction, just past massive picture windows, the ski slope and member lodge.

From the sun room’s traditional cowhide rug remade into a modern patchwork, to the Warren Platner lounge



In the sun room a patchwork cowhide rug brings warmth to the open floor plan, while defining a seating area.

chairs and mohair covered mid-century Edward Wormley for Dunbar sofas, it’s guaranteed to fill any Baby Boomer’s heart with nostalgia.

The dazzling star of the living room is a massive 1960 Murano globe chandelier in the middle of a vaulted ceiling. The size of a disco dance floor ball, it resembles an intricately patterned snowball shaped by hand-blown glass flowers. Seeming to float above the cozy fireplace sitting area, it is a

graceful, enigmatic touch. Bertelli praises interior designers Timothy Haynes and Kevin Roberts for assisting the clients in making decisions that deliver sweet rewards.

Adjacent to the living room is the dining area, adorned with vintage Jacques Adnet snakeskin armchairs, a linear 1960 Italian Mazzega chandelier and a custom-designed oak banquet table. Nearby, the kitchen, with a lower ceiling, offers a more intimate area and breakfast nook. Reclaimed wood surfaces, a classic Viking oven, custom gray concrete countertops and a priceless view of Lone Mountain are complemented by an outdoor deck for après-ski festivities.

On the top floor, the master bedroom, replete with a 1960 Stilnovi chandelier, custom wool and silk carpet, master bath with a Gobi tub by Boffi and a walk-in closet. It, too, offers a feasting glimpse at Lone Peak.

Reinforcing the element of transparency throughout the home, a glass and steel banister lines two levels of stairs.





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A custom designed silk rug adds texture and bold pattern to the grey-and-white-toned bedroom.

To deliver the best quality and value, JLF, in partnership with its longtime construction collaborator On Site Management (OSM), has been praised for evolving the design/build concept. The purpose is to bring continuity and reliability to every step of the construction process, from site walk to turning the key, giving customers a transparent view of how and why decisions are made.

As Bertelli notes, it's how the firm keeps client costs better controlled by eliminating unnecessary surprises.

"Aesthetically, as this project suggests, we are evolving our roots. Building a home, no matter what the size, should be a joyful experience," Bertelli says. "Much of the fun and power resides in the choice-making. Our goal is to engage the client as much as they want to be and try to ensure they are extraordinarily, happily surprised when it's all done."

By all reports from the client, this job is mission accomplished. **H**



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