JANUARY-FEBUARY 2005 $5.50

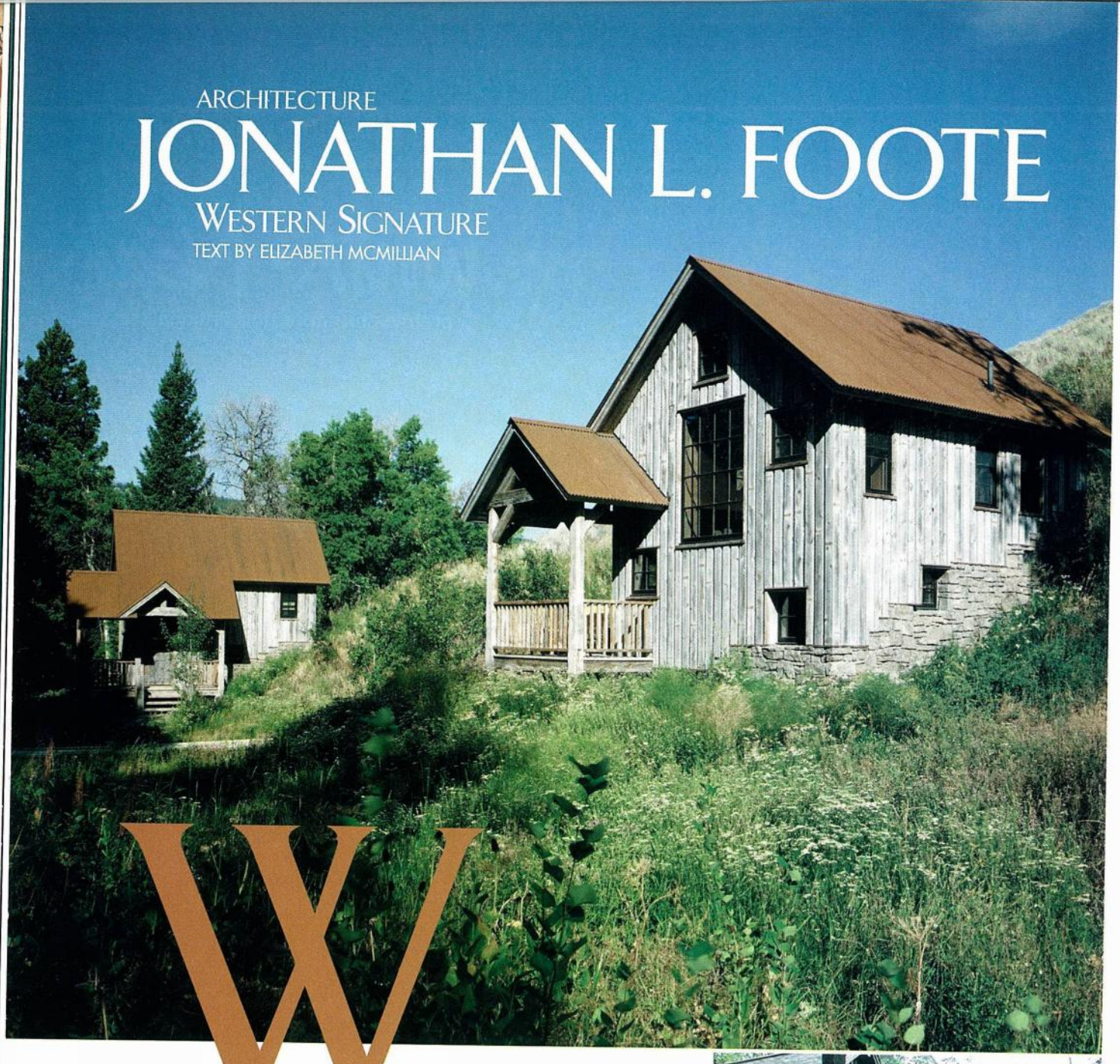
VERANDA

ARCHITECTURE

JONATHAN L. FOOTE

Western Signature

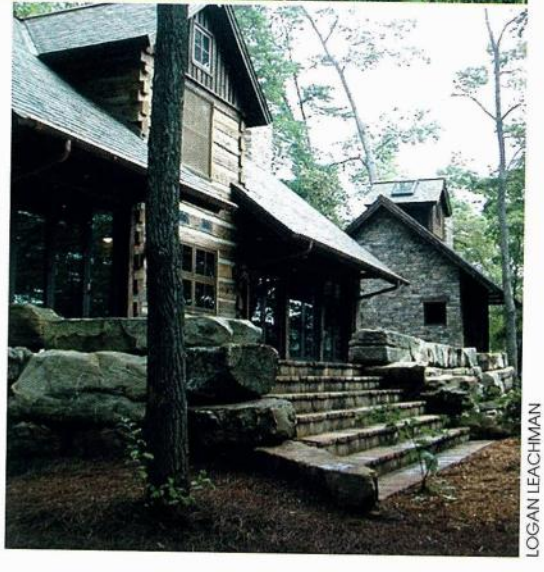
TEXT BY ELIZABETH MCMILLIAN



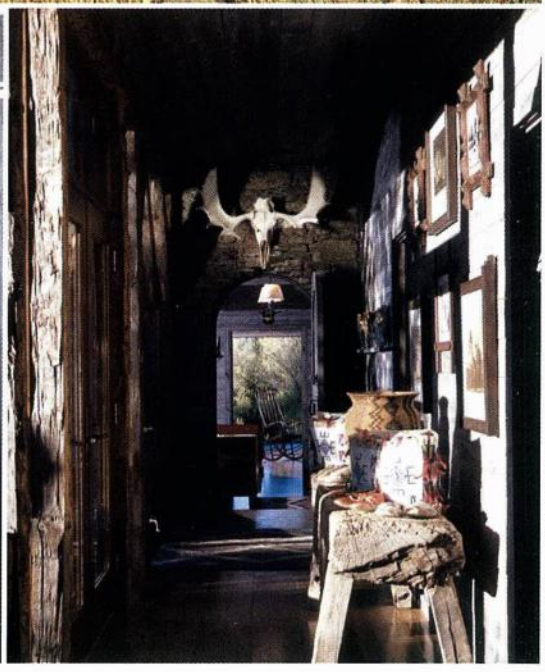
Begun out West, Jonathan L. Foote & Associates now applies its aesthetic throughout the country. ABOVE: At Papoose Creek Lodge, an ecotourist destination in Montana, stone-based wood cabins nestle into the landscape. RIGHT: On an island in a north Georgia lake, the firm built a log house with wood reclaimed from a Tennessee building.

Weathered materials, dramatic transitions and contrasts of textures mimic the wilderness settings of the wood-and-stone houses produced by Jonathan L. Foote & Associates, based in Bozeman, Montana. "We combine old-world craftsmanship and aged, weathered materials with state-of-the-art equipment and modern spaces. The result is a comfortable sanctuary," explains Paul Bertelli, who as a young man joined Jonathan Foote for the firm's launch in 1979, when Foote relocated his architectural practice from New England to the Wild West.

Foote's admiration of the region began when he was thirteen, during the same year



LOGAN LEACHMAN



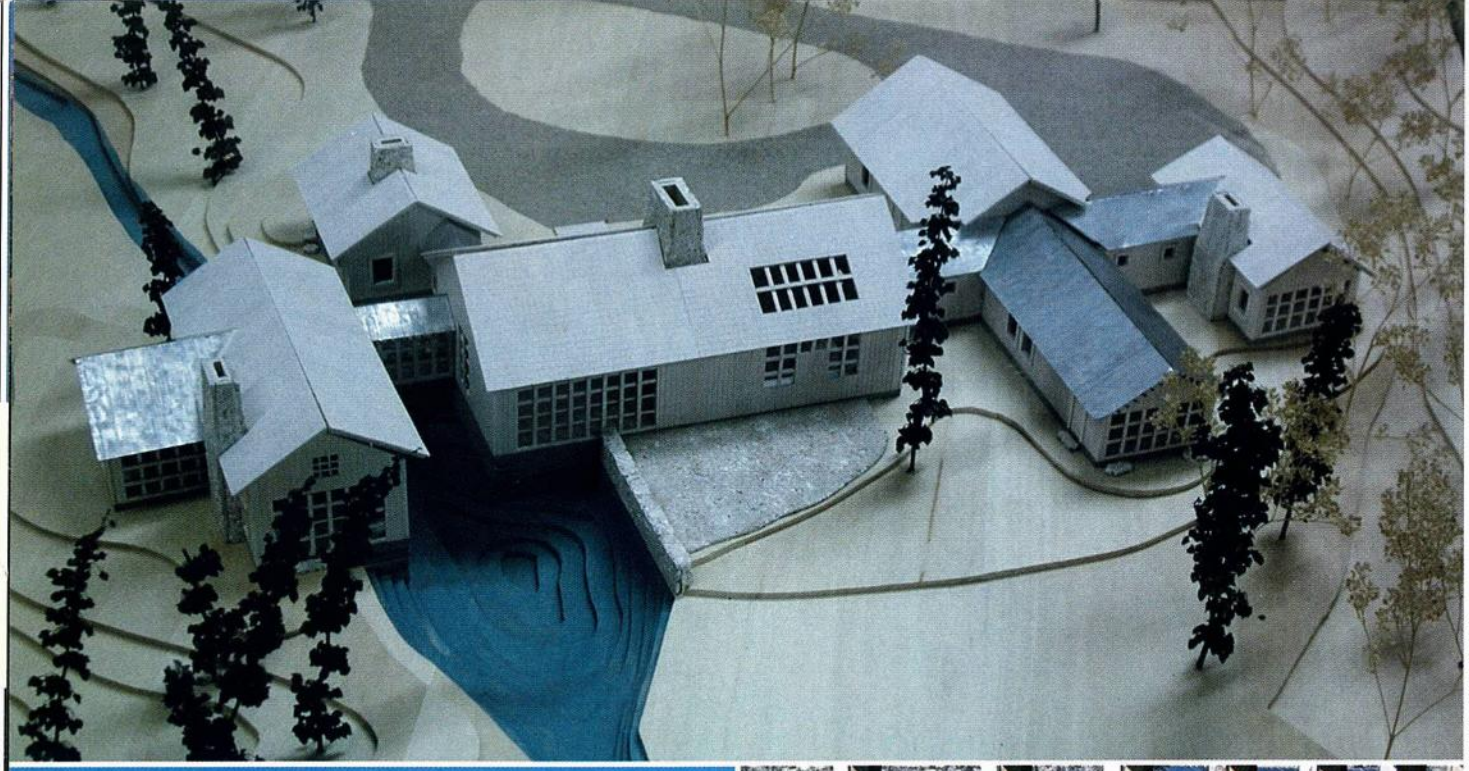
LYNN DONALDSON (FAR LEFT)

TOP: "The logs are tamarack from northern Montana," says architect Paul Bertelli of this house in Wyoming. ABOVE LEFT: The kitchen of a Montana ranch house is surfaced in reclaimed wood. ABOVE RIGHT: A gallery hallway runs the length of the house.

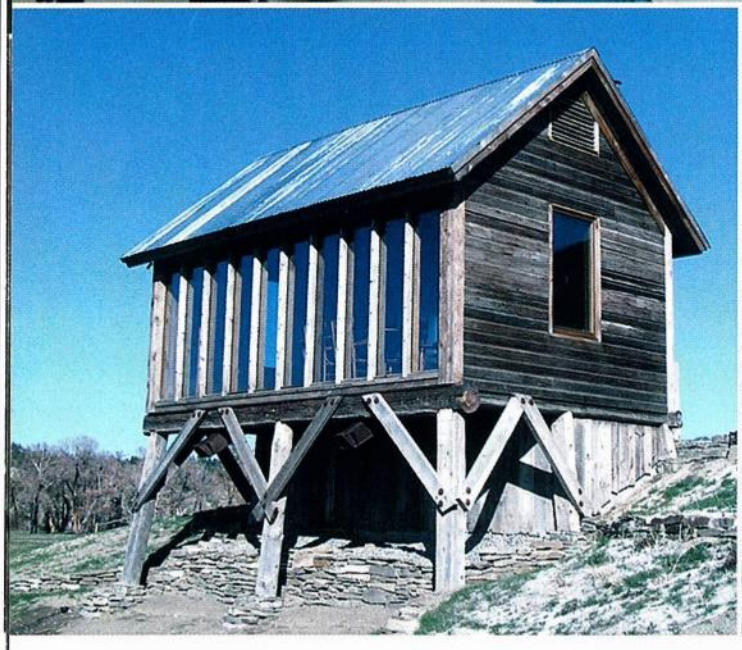
that a visiting professor ignited his interest in architecture. "I was at that age where you become inspired by grand ideas, and architecture seemed to embody the whole spirit of living," he says. The following summer, he and his family vacationed at a dude ranch, the HF Bar in Saddlestring, Wyoming. In succeeding years, Foote returned to work as a wrangler at the A Bar A in Encampment. "I fell in love with the merit of hard work and individuality as well as the beauty of the landscape."

Foote grew up in Englewood, New Jersey, and studied architecture at Yale, where he became skilled in preservation. As an undergraduate student, he restored a 1735 barn in Guilford, Connecticut, and while completing his master's degree in the 1960s, he preserved two small New England towns. Since then, Foote has saved more than 150 buildings and an entire Western town.

The architect practiced for fifteen years in New Haven, completing major institutional and commercial projects and teaching at Yale as a visiting lecturer. His concern for the environment came early—preserving the mouth of the Connecticut River and designing two of the world's largest recycling plants to use refuse to power electrical generators.



TERRY MCDONALD



BOB SABO (FAR LEFT AND LEFT)

TOP: A model shows a house in Jackson, Wyoming, that will span a forest creek. ABOVE LEFT: JLF reused an old granary at Sweet Grass Creek Ranch, Big Timber, Montana. ABOVE RIGHT: The new glass wall of the granary overlooks a barn. To view the decor of a house designed by JLF, see page 78.

"Then the economy hit a lull," explains Foote. "I just loaded up some clothes and my horses and went West." He sold his Connecticut farm and headed to Livingston, Montana. Since then, Foote has built up the JLF firm by focusing on restoration, preservation and designs that reuse old material and maintain the undisturbed natural environment.

"Paul Bertelli has been like a son to me," Foote says of his colleague. "He was a student and a carpenter and asked me, 'What can I do to become an architect?' I was starting the Western scheme and said, 'Come work for me.' "

"It was the two of us working together out at the ranch with a part-time secretary," Bertelli remembers. "We worked that way for quite a while till we moved into town." Bertelli studied architecture at Boston Architectural Center and Montana State University, where he earned a master of architecture and a bachelor of arts degree in environmental design in 1999.

"I'm now semi-retired," adds Foote. "I had a couple of strokes and sold the company to my associates. After recuperating, I do one project at a time, but the firm continues to expand and work around the country." Besides partner and principal designer Bertelli, the firm—now under the name JLF & Associates—encompasses partners Dick Storbo, Logan Leachman and Tammy Gable, along with senior associate John Lauman and associate Jake Scott.

The most distinguishing aspect of the firm's

organization is its control over the construction of each project. Intricate work is a hallmark of its designs, and it requires employing craftsmen with extensive experience in high-end construction and expertise in restoring and stabilizing old buildings. For that reason, in 1981, the firm created a separate related company called On Site Management. "It began on a ranch project," explains Bertelli. "It was such a remote location that we were asked to manage it."

The design-build aspect contributes to the consistency and high quality of residential projects. "Architects typically have contracts with owners, and owners have contracts with builders," continues Bertelli. "But in the design-build world, the architect and builder are one entity. We work with the craftspeople, and they give us valuable feedback. For example, a log worker might say to us, 'If I split the log and then put something inside it to stabilize it, it will be better and look like this.' We like that collaboration in our work.

"Jon taught me about honesty in materials, that architecture was a process, and the mantra of keeping it simple," continues Bertelli. "He also taught me to maintain a rigorous commitment to design."

Foote's work developed from a process of investigation learned from his Modern Movement professors, Louis Kahn and Paul Rudolph. For Foote, it was a natural progression to reinvent modern architecture from the Western point of view, where there was a respect for construction and materials that reflect the values of regionalism and vernacularism. "Even now as we do things in other states," says Bertelli, "we can take those same values and apply them in another regional context and have success."

"Having been taught by the great stars of architecture—Paul Rudolph, James Sterling, Philip Johnson and Lou Kahn—I realized that they were all saying the same things," says Foote. "Rudolph articulated it best when he said: 'It's about five things: how a building comes to the ground; how a building turns a corner; how a building stops at the top; how you get into a building; and its materials.' And, of course, you can throw in propor-

tion. The language of the '60s was getting into an expressionist mode with Sterling and Rudolph, and that was appealing to me. It was a rich organic approach, and when I went west, I found that it was so sensual—the land, the materials, the climate—that it gave me tremendous inspiration."

Bertelli also explains an East Coast influence on the firm's reuse of old materials. "That idea grew out of some of our restoration projects but also from our New England ethic. We came with an extreme sense of quality and patina of materials. A lot of people want to make something look old and falsely present that image, but we learned the best way to do that was to use something that really is old."

While one might assume Foote was inspired by the great wood-and-stone lodges of the National Park system, the architect denies that connection. "My architecture is not driven by style but by a more spiritual abstract quality of sequences, spaces and volumes. Those elements then develop into a form in which proportion, color and shape come into play.

"One of the things I think is really important is the transition," Foote explains. "You can gain more variety and personality in a house by the transitions between the spaces, the corridors and connective links." Recalling Frank Lloyd Wright's stream analogy, Foote says, "All along the stream, there are pools, rapids and eddies—those things that give a stream, or an architectural passage, excitement and personality."

Foote began his first Western project in 1974 when Geof, his brother, asked him to design a home in Meadow Springs Ranch, near Ovando, Montana. They rehabilitated a 1900s ranch, incorporating the existing log homestead buildings by using saddle notches and dovetail corners from the roughhewn barns and cabins. In addition, the architects watched the wildlife and noted the nesting and feeding patterns to create a balanced habitat for both man and animals.

After the firm began in 1979, JLF set up offices in an old Livingston, Montana, firehouse that Foote had restored a few years earlier. Initially, work was scarce. There were small projects such as transforming an old horse barn into a manager's house. Then some bigger ranch restoration projects came in, and many recognized their value. The firm's first new house—for a Montana family moving to Jackson, Wyoming—incorporated the unique idea of using old materials. As Jackson became a center of gentrification, this new house and the ranch restoration work attracted clients who liked the way the firm took old materials and combined them with other elements to give each project a sense of history in a new structure.

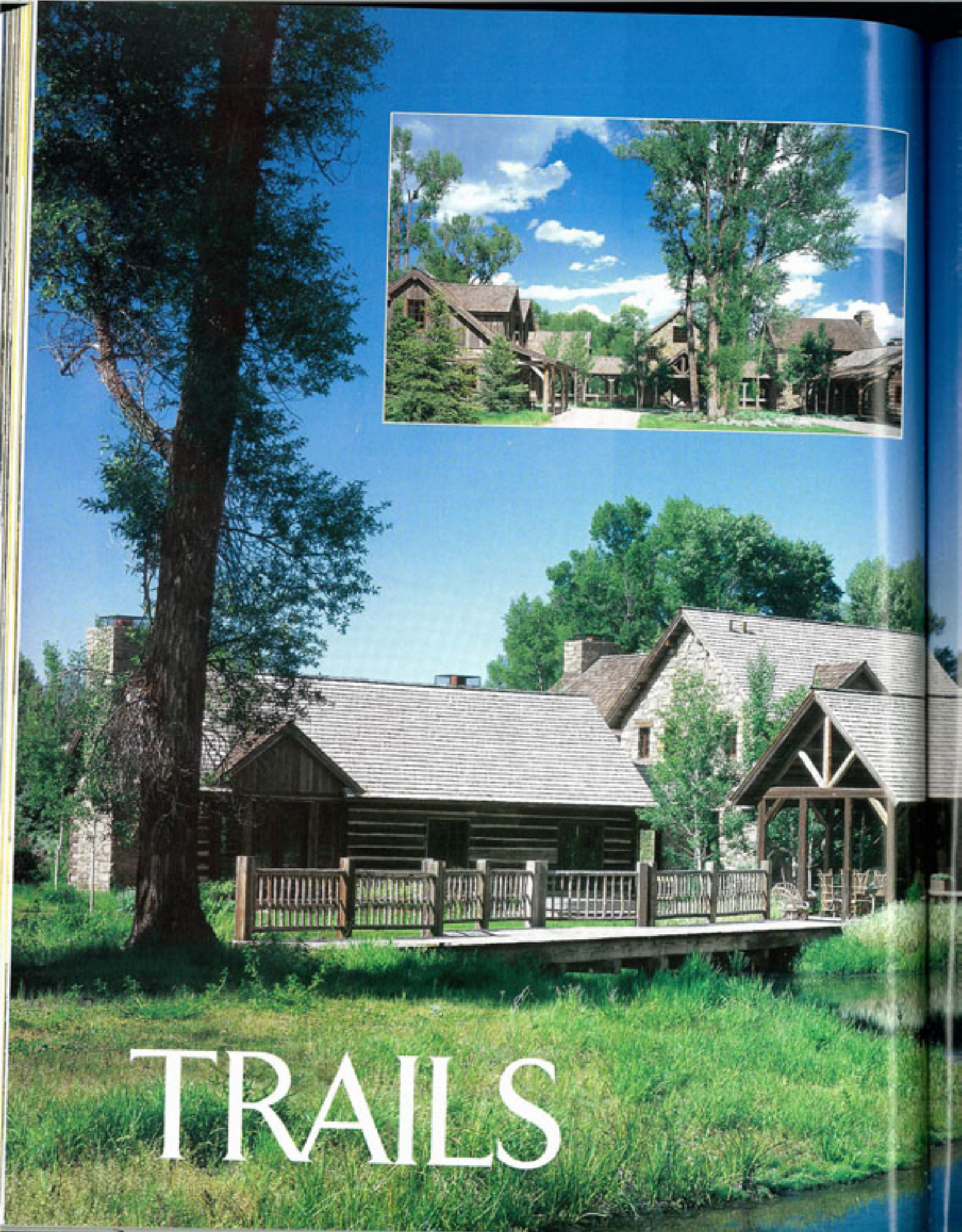
In one early Wyoming log home for a Connecticut native, JLF hid a twelve-room lodge amid tall trees in the woods to maintain the spirit of a one-room cabin. Handhewn logs were recycled from a stagecoach stop, a homestead cabin and an early-1900s barn. And JLF maintained all the original trees at another Montana home. The unspoiled site includes meadows, clearings and aspen groves. The relationship to the outside is made by the natural materials and the views through glass walls. Inside, the transitions are changed by scale, such as a low-ceilinged study at the heart of the house and a glassed walkway with a stream flowing beneath that connects the main house with a stone building.

JLF's most complex ranch project came in 1992, when Foote designed a house for a high-altitude ranch called Switchback, a 70,000-acre spread named for its many hairpin turns that lead up and down the mountains. The historic site has hosted some of the region's most notorious and legendary cowboys, such as Butch Cassidy, Sundance Kid's Hole in the Wall Gang and Buffalo Bill Cody. The main house and guesthouses are historic handhewn log cabins transplanted in pieces by helicopter from Montana and Wyoming homesteads.

"We've had lots of repeat clients," says Bertelli. "One of our early projects was the recreation of Frederic Remington's studio in the Cody Museum, and that family continues to work with us on projects."

"We've had exceptional clients," Foote concludes. "They're strong individuals who're not afraid to pursue their dreams, and we work to capture a spirit of place for them." □

See Sources page 174.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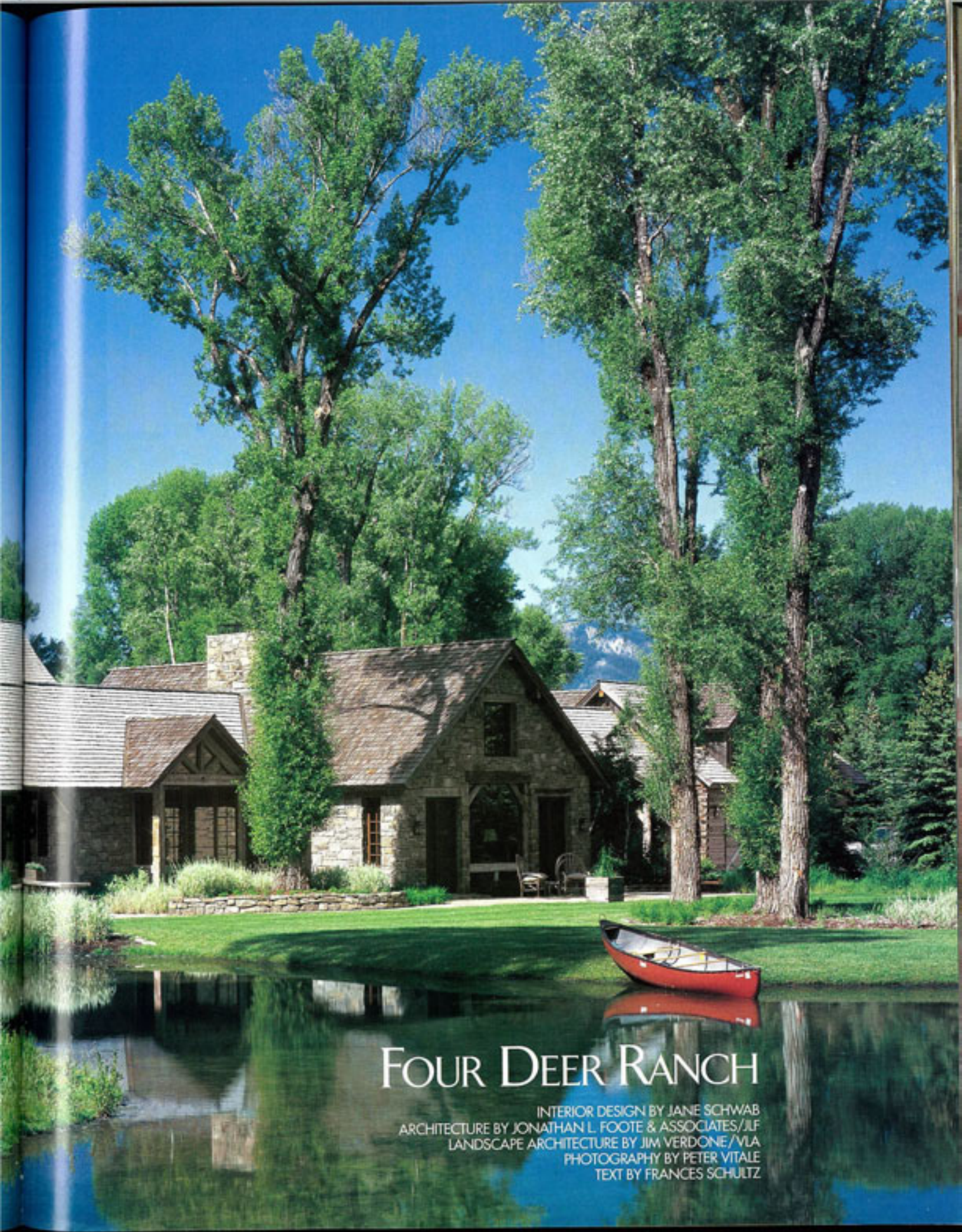

Four Deer Ranch

INTERIOR DESIGN BY JANE SCHWAB
ARCHITECTURE BY JONATHAN L. FOOTE & ASSOCIATES/JLF
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE BY JIM VERDONE/VLA
PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER VITALE
TEXT BY FRANCES SCHULTZ

Jane and Nelson Schwab's house in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, is grand but not grandiose.

Architect Paul Bertelli of Montana-based Jonathan L. Foote & Associates considers this one of his favorite projects. Though aged and weathered materials constructed with old-world craftsmanship are hallmarks of the firm's designs, the architect might say the success of a house's design is about the quality of the clients, particularly when they "know their place in life and aren't trying to make a statement." When they build a house, explains Bertelli, "It says everything about them and not about how they want to appear to other people."

PRECEDING PAGES: In the American West, architects Jonathan L. Foote and Paul Bertelli have strived to design houses that "live in the scenery without spoiling it, to look as if they've been there forever." Fly-fishing enthusiasts, the homeowners also dug a pond and stocked it with trout. A trail leads from the bridge over the pond to the Snake River. RIGHT: In the entrance hall, antique French armchairs, slipcovered in Ralph Lauren fabric, attend English pine demilunes. Rug is antique Karabagh. Iron chandelier by Paul Ferrante. French oak buffet, early 19th c. Follow the "trail" from the entrance hall through a sunlit glass corridor to the dining room in the distance in a separate building. FOLLOWING PAGES: In the dining room, antique Heriz rug was designer Jane Schwab's "That's it!" inspiration for the color scheme. English oak dining chairs, slipcovered in Schumacher stripe, surround French walnut dining table. Watercolors by William Matthews. French and English antiques mix with Native American motifs. In the living room, Lee Industries sofas face cowhide-covered ottoman. Chair fabric from Bennison, pillow fabrics from Clarence House and Old World Weavers. Mesa stripe rug from Dash & Albert. Painting, *Spotted Elk*, by Sean Glover. Faux mink throw from Pierre Frey. Floral arrangements by Flower Hardware.

The Schwabs' twenty-acre Four Deer Ranch presents a Western vision by turns both illusory and real, intangible yet quantifiable and rigorous but relaxed. Inside and out, the design embraces these paradoxes, making the home at once interesting and charming.

With nearly 8,000 square feet, the spread is imposing. And yet a visitor's initial reaction is not likely to be "My, what a big house you have." Nor does it feel that way once you're in it. And that, says Bertelli, is exactly the point. Rather than one massive building, five smaller buildings are connected by enclosed timber and glass passageways, which break down the scale of the house. Passing from one building into the next via the virtual "outdoors" of these scenic connectors, Bertelli explains, "enriches the day-to-day experience of being in the house." In winter, Jane delights in these hallways made of glass: "It's almost like you're walking through the snow."

The arrangement—a concept authored by Bertelli's mentor and the firm's founder, the inestimable Jonathan L. Foote—facilitates the ebb and flow of family and guests among the public and private spaces. Nelson has four grown children. "So you need space for all these autonomous adults to coexist easily," Bertelli says. "By having a little house for three or four over here, and for two or three over there, they can retreat when they need to and come together when they like."

It's also the power of good design. When color, fabric and furnishings harmonize to provide visual pleasure as well as physical comfort, they foster a sense of well-being, here wrought deftly by interior designer Jane Schwab herself. A partner at Charlotte, North Carolina-based Circa Interiors & Antiques, Jane spends most of her non-Wyoming time working closely with her own clients.

She puts a premium on soothing, unpretentious and refreshingly cowboy cliché-free rooms with a beguiling appeal. Schwab deploys a felicitous if unlikely mix of European antiques and American art, of Oriental carpets and Navaho rugs, and of casual slipcovers and tailored upholstery. In muted tones of earth and sky—their real-life inspirations but a windowpane away—Schwab's palette is also a popular preference.

"My new family likes color, so I really tried to bring it in but without too much pattern," says Schwab, who aims to complement but not compete with her husband's collection of Western art and Native American beadwork.

The designer's insightful choices seem eminently suited to the honest, rustic elegance of the home's construction materials. Weathered wood salvaged from old barns and rough-hewn beams, reclaimed log walls and great stone chimneys make up a house as stunning as the scenery it inhabits but does not infringe upon. Which is statement enough. □

COVER: Master bedroom features bed of lodgepole pine and Douglas fir, both from a Montana corral, with fir branches as finials, all handmade by Clair Sharp of Idaho. Slipper chair wears Raoul Textiles print from A.M. Collections. Draperies in Schumacher linen. Antique English bench. English oak and antler planter holds Snake River rocks. Roger Oates rug from London. Frette linens. RIGHT: Guest room does gingham two ways, as dust ruffle and headboard in Richard Bernard fabric and as Pindler & Pindler trim on P. Collins' drapery fabric. Framed gauntlets, c. 1890, from owner's collection. Linens from Frette. Blanket by Pendleton. FOLLOWING PAGES: Kitchen cabinetry glows with silvery, weathered patina of reclaimed barn wood. Countertops are camel travertine. Why not let what works in clothing work in rooms as well? "I love camel and gray together," says Schwab. Stove by Viking. CLOSING PAGES: Moose antler vase sits atop mudroom table made by Sharp, who also crafted the kitchen barstools. Benches in Bennison stripe. Kitchen nook frames a perfect view of the Grand Teton itself. Banquette from Circa Interiors & Antiques in Scalamandré stripe. John Lauman was the house's project manager for Jonathan L. Foote & Associates.

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