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10th Anniversary Issue
Inspired designs for your home



The Power of Place

+ Story by Alisan Peters

Wallace Stegner, the dean of western writers, once wrote, “When the West fully learns that cooperation, not rugged individualism, is the quality that most characterizes and preserves it, then it has a chance to create a society to match its scenery.”

They may not be forming societies, but Carney Logan Burke Architects of Jackson Hole help build communities in the West, and they take Stegner’s words to heart. Formerly Carney Architects, the firm is committed to seeing their projects take shape as integral elements of the landscapes they inhabit. Since its founding 17 years ago, the firm has grown and evolved enough to warrant a name change while continuing a process that is rooted in attention to detail and the focused exploration of ideas. “We are driven by site, context and the special relationship we form with our clients,” said founder John Carney. “We feel a responsibility to create architecture that coexists with and, in a sense, matches its scenery.”

Such profound respect for landscape within the creative context is clearly the reason this Jackson Hole architectural firm has been honored repeatedly with local, regional and national design awards, including many from the American Institute of Architects. In 2009, they were named Firm of the Year for the Western Mountain Region, and in 2008, received an AIA Western Mountain Region Award for the Laurance S. Rockefeller Preserve Interpretive Center in Grand Teton National Park. The project was honored for its overall design, including LEED Platinum Certification, a first for Wyoming and the national parks.

This same respect for land and context transforms into a synthesis of site, client and budget rather than predetermined styles. In the residence at left, overlooking the Snake River, the clients shared a desire for green construction but wanted a more traditional European structure. After several design iterations, Carney Logan Burke met both needs by pulling bedroom and kitchen wings apart, wrapping them around exterior spaces, and shifting the garage into the tree line to anchor the compound. The landscape plan tied various elements together with a pond, stream, native vegetation and boulders, lending an air of permanence. “Each project is a fusion of site, materials and the client’s needs and desires,” partner Kevin Burke said. “We act as interpreters, bringing many diverse elements into an integrated whole, at one with the land.”



Left: An elegantly rendered staircase is sculptural and functional. Wood stairs contrast with a stainless steel railing and the dry-stacked stone wall that continues outside.

Right: Built as a series of pavilions, the stone buildings connect via bridges, walkways and a stream that encircles the main house. A timber trellis and steel railings lend a modern air to the more traditional gabled roof forms.



Photographs by Roger Wade Studio



“Our work is driven by the site, the client and working as a team.”



Left and Opposite Page: Photographs by Matthew Millman
Below: Photograph by Roger Wade Studio

Reinterpreting historic structures of the West is something that Carney Logan Burke does with flawless execution. In this residence completed for a California couple with young children, the architecture grew from the clients' fondness for the West's naturally rugged style and their nostalgic sense of the past. The architects opted for square-cut logs with broad chinking, and created a plan with two wings in an H-pattern centered on the great room.

Above: Surrounded by mature foliage and tall trees, and fronting a spring creek, this home seems to have been in place for a century or more.

Below: The history of the West is kept alive through small details like open cabinets, a country sink, turn-of-the-century drawer pulls and a forged-iron oven hearth ensconced in a moss-rock fireplace.

Natural materials appear in everything from the dry-stack stone fireplace to the log mantel and the custom-designed iron chandeliers. Heavy timber columns, exposed truss and rafter ceilings lend an air of permanence and history. To lighten the home's exterior profile, the architects shifted from logs on the first floor to vertical, aged barn wood on the second. "Historically," Carney pointed out, "log buildings were low-slung structures. We changed materials to break up the mass and make it feel more like a turn-of-the-century lodge, or an old parks building." The result is an elegant residence that looks as if it has withstood the rigors of time and weather, and grown old with its wooded riparian surroundings.

Taking these same classic building materials, Carney Logan Burke Architects created a western home for a Chicago couple who dreamed of having the traditional, romantic log cabin but . . . different. The cabin notion was reinvented as a refined compound sited in the bend of a stream. Architect Eric Logan's early plan sketches reveal a central cruciform structure of log walls—connecting three shed-like forms that contain the various spaces



A high ceiling and heavy timber trusses combine with clerestory windows to daylight the sitting area. The large room is made more intimate by nestled furniture groupings, a dropped chandelier and a generous fireplace opening.

“Living in this incredible place, we feel obligated to design and build responsibly.”



Contrasting materials—rough against smooth, soft against hard, new versus old—pique interest and draw the visitor in. Rustic, dovetailed logs at left counter refined fir slats on a sliding barn door. A leather bench echoes the blackened and waxed steel walls that connect the entry with the remainder of the house.



Carefully situated, this cabin-inspired home revels in expansive vistas, both inside and out. Additional structural details include timber trusses resting on columns that allow broad expanses of windows, a device that would not have been possible in a more traditional log cabin.

within the house. Pulling it together through a well-considered selection of finish materials, the result is a cohesive set of discreet yet connected pavilions reaching into the landscape.

Interior spaces and finish materials are polished and patinaed to show off their innate beauty. “Meeting a client is just the start of the journey,” Logan said. “We don’t know where any given project will lead, as the process is so interactive between client and site. We listen well, and we’re adaptable. Our design aesthetic is based on strongly-held values about an appropriate way to build in this place.”

Meeting yet another challenge, this time with New York City clients, the team set about translating an East Coast vernacular into a rural Wyoming setting. Constrained by homeowners’ association covenants, the firm provided a clean, contemporary house that evokes the West’s traditional gabled forms, with a decidedly modernist attitude.

The main floor exterior relies on horizontal runs of wood-inspired, cast-in-place and stained concrete, while a two-story wing of the house rises in front of a mature cottonwood grove and uses more traditional cedar siding. Rooflines are gabled and articulated to break



Photographs by Paul Warchol



up the long ridgelines of the T-shaped plan. Inside, time-tested materials continue the story: a stainless steel kitchen, poured concrete floors, and wood and tile finishes create the modern environment the client desired.

“Our firm searches for a unifying set of ideas that inform our projects, and a palette of materials that resonates with the place,” Carney summed up. “We tend to be less stylistically driven than spirit driven, less literal than interpretive. The work of the firm is rooted in memory but draws on a broad range of modern ideas. When we succeed, we like to think that our work reinforces and helps sustain the architectural heritage of the West.”

Above: Minimalist in both materials and profile, this residence seems to emerge from the surrounding cottonwood stand. Grounded by a rusticated concrete base, a projecting copper-clad bay overhangs the first floor and punctuates the long, unbroken elevation.

Below: Refined finishes such as the teak tub surrounded by the Ice Stone counters, convey an uncluttered mindset and draw attention to the outdoors.

Right-hand page: The house reveals its minimalist roots with the Arne Jacobsen-designed artichoke lamp. Steel railings, an open-riser stair and projecting shelves define the character of the library and loft space above.



The team at Carney Logan Burke Architects.
For more information, call 307-733-4000 or visit us online at www.clbarchitects.com



Photographs by Matthew Millman



“We practice as a small studio—creative exploration and knowledge are the currency.”