

# CABIN STYLE

**CHASE REYNOLDS EWALD**

Photographs by **AUDREY HALL**







# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Cabin Style*, our fifth collaboration, represents the culmination of many miles on the road, many months in the making, and many hours in the design and polishing, all resting on many decades of sustained effort on the part of the architects, designers, builders, craftspeople, and artists whose work is showcased in these pages.

We so greatly appreciate the generous homeowners who, at inconvenience to themselves, allow us to feature their homes. They do it for the sake of the designers and builders so their work can be shared, as it so richly deserves.

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—CRE and AH

## THE AUTHOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER



Photo by Jocelyn Knight Photography

Chase Reynolds Ewald has been writing about art, travel, design, food, and rustic style for more than twenty-five years. She is an active freelancer and the author of ten books. A graduate of Yale and the Graduate School of Journalism at U.C. Berkeley, she lives in northern California.



Photo by Susan Stella

Rooted in the dirt of the American West, Audrey Hall's photographs are formed by the unbridled spirit of its land. Her images about people and place are widely featured, from social campaigns to magazines and television. This is her twelfth book.

# INTRODUCTION

The word *cabin* inevitably evokes a vision of a sturdy, modestly sized stacked-log structure, usually featuring a stone fireplace from which a curl of smoke wafts into the sky. This idyllic dwelling is typically envisioned as being tucked amongst trees, sometimes situated by a mountain stream and often with an enviable mountain or lake prospect—a true retreat.

One aspect of the enduring appeal of the cabin is that the more restrained the size and palette of the dwelling, the more one is open to and able to appreciate the nature within which it is immersed. Traditionally built with small windows and dark logs, it has long been characterized by dark and cavelike interiors, leaving it cut off from the outdoors. This was partly due to the limitations of the materials and partly by design: the more closed off from nature a cabin feels, the more it becomes a refuge from the elements.

The ideal of the cabin has transformed at a rapid pace in recent years due to evolutions in taste, patterns of use, and advances in technology. It no longer needs to be small, or cut off from the outdoors, or suffer from dark interiors. Today's cabins enjoy the best of both worlds. They are open to nature, with more glazing and doorways and outdoor living spaces, both covered and exposed to the elements. Yet they still retain a coziness and warmth that enhances the sense of their sheltering aspect.

Contemporary cabin style is expressed in a multitude of nontraditional, cabinlike structures. The elements of a cabin—wood, stone, sheltering eaves, cozy interiors, adjacent outdoor spaces—can be combined with nontraditional elements such as flat roofs, steel details, floor-to-ceiling glass, and aesthetic influences from around the world. The cabin ideal today might be expressed as a small house constructed of reclaimed wood and glass on a huge conservation property, furnished with a hint of eastern influence, and oriented toward its unique feature: in one case, natural hot springs and a phenomenal view of the Sawtooth Mountains. It can include a slopeside ski home imbued with color and unique verve, or, conversely, a European-influenced chalet striking in its sophistication and restraint. It might be a low-slung, 1950s repurposed ranch house featuring a long porch with rocking chairs, its window trim painted red to highlight the extraordinary Big Horn mountain views reflected in the glass. It could be a bespoke reclaimed timber home in which every item, from the building itself to stairs to metalwork, is handcrafted by master artisans. Alternatively, cabin style can be expressed in dramatic renovations of dated log homes from the 1990s; in such homes, a coat of black or white paint can utterly transform the spaces while highlighting the tactile nature of the log experience.

Kentucky-based designer Chuck Bolton furnished a stone and log cabin built by JLF Architects and Design Builders in a riparian meadow environment near the Jackson Hole elk refuge. A spring creek sprang

A reclaimed wood-and-stone cabin designed by JLF Architects and Design Builders on the edge of a natural meadow with rehabilitated riparian habitat suggests a timeless permanence. Interiors by Chuck Bolton of Lyle House Antiques are cozy and evocative, featuring many handcrafted details.



out of the ground just behind the house and flowed on to create safe harbors for trout: shallow pools and spawning beds which had been silted in but were restored under the new owners and their neighbors. This is not an environment into which one introduces new structures without great forethought and sensitivity. Says JLF Principal Paul Bertelli, "If you had to pick a sacred spot in Jackson, I'd have to venture that this would be on the list." In such a setting, says Chuck Bolton, "My first principle in interior design is to get out of the way."

In the same valley lives a larger home with a more modernistic expression. Designed by CLB Architects, its cabin style is expressed in reclaimed wood, posts and beams. Multihued corral boards help it blend into the landscape, while its roof-lines echo the mountain peaks that frame it. Inside, high-end finishes, airy volumes, uncluttered interiors, and modern light fixtures suggesting a contemporary outlook are balanced with grounding beams and reclaimed materials.

Both homes capture the ethos of cabin style today. On the inside, the style is expressive, organic, changeable, and unique to the personalities who inhabit it. On the outside it is respectful of place and lives lightly in deference to the land.

"From the very beginning," says JLF's Bertelli, "we discuss what we see in the land so that the architecture doesn't lose an opportunity in the landscape, and the landscape doesn't lose an opportunity in the architecture."

In cabin style, interiors and exteriors work together to comprise one harmonious whole. Whether the expression is modern-leaning or a more literal reference to regional history, the result is the same: buildings that seem to belong.

Eric Logan, principal of CLB Architects, has spent his entire life in the West and is now raising his family there. As a result, he takes a long view; he has never lost sight of the context in which he designs. "We tend to speak about the work in plain language," he explains. "The grandeur of the landscape puts us in our place."

CLB Architects employed cabin elements in a transitional home with guesthouse. Working within neighborhood guidelines that favored more traditional styles, the exterior is a clean mountain-modern aesthetic of stonework, beams, reclaimed siding, and cedar shake roofs.













# THE ARTFUL CABIN

**Y**ou know you're in the home of an artist when every object, whether a museum-worthy painting or a repurposed flea-market find, is placed in perfect juxtaposition to the other objects in the rooms. The result is that each item, no matter its value, is elevated to a piece of art. It can be a rarefied experience to visit such a place, where the filled spaces are perfectly balanced by the negative spaces, and where the featured items are positioned in such a way as to create an experience that is at once gallery-like and restorative.

For a pair of artists and art aficionados, their longtime search in Jackson, Wyoming, for a contemporary house suitable for displaying art led them to an unlikely choice: a circa 1989 log home and guest cabin with all the features characteristic of the era. Although the house was well proportioned and in good shape, the varnish applied to the logs decades before had yellowed and become UV-damaged. Inside, an oversized river rock fireplace constituted a domineering presence against floors of Douglas fir and quartzite flagstone. The windows were too small, and the rooms were cut off from one another. Overall, the home was dark and confining, and lacked a healthy connection to the outdoors.

The husband had known John Carney of CLB Architects for a long time. Having purchased the property for its proximity to the ski mountain, the direct view north to the Grand Teton, and its location in a neighborhood in which homes on generous treed lots are screened from the street, he and his wife placed their faith in CLB and Tennyson-Ankeny Construction to enact a dramatic transformation of the structures.

Architect Matt Thackray led the effort and credits the owners—the wife a mixed-media artist, and the husband a wood-turning hobbyist—with being open to ideas and confident enough to challenge the team to think creatively. "Great clients make great projects," he says. "That was the case here."

The house, arrayed on one level with a separate two-bedroom guest cabin, was straightforward in its design. The massive river rock fireplace, "a 700-pound gorilla that overpowered the scale of the living room," according to Thackray, was the first to go, while the yellowed logs were blasted with environmentally friendly ground-up corn cobs and finished to a muted blue-gray on the exterior, where fresh white trim enhanced the newly clean look. Inside, the logs were painted with an alabaster-tinted lacquer. The treatment brightened and united the interiors while also highlighting the texture and cracks in the wood, emphasizing their artistic

The great room of a transformed 1989 log home in Jackson Hole is a study in serenity. The horse race artwork came from a Wyoming bar; when pulled from its frame the effects of decades of tobacco smoke were revealed along its edges. The wood tansu is a Japanese antique, its wheels making it a rare find.









quality. This proved crucial, since the preponderance of true stacked log corners and exposed log ends within the rooms made them very much part of the dialog.

The team covered some log surfaces with dry wall to allow lighting coves and to create a suitable backdrop for art, giving those areas the same alabaster treatment for a smooth transition between surfaces. Circle-sawn Douglas fir floors, whose orange-leaning tone and gapping created a dated, cabin-like feel, were refinished and stained ebony for a modernist contrast. Other significant architectural moves included installing a partial wall between the dining area and kitchen with its breakfast nook, to create a sense of separation without losing openness; reengineering a wall in the art-filled office in order to install a large, room-transforming window; opening up a warren-like series of spaces in the master-bedroom suite; transforming the master bath with floating cabinets, a glass shower, and white subway tile on floors and walls; and introducing generous amounts of glazing in the living room and master bath to take full advantage of the Grand Teton prospect.

Despite the heavy quality of the logs, the home's indoor-outdoor transitions are seamless, with outdoor living spaces created on either side of the house to allow the inhabitants to take advantage of—or escape—the warmth of the sun. Landscape designers Hershberger Design enacted a rustic modern transformation of the landscape contiguous to the house with minimalistic hardscaping and plantings. Rusted Corten steel partitions screen the driveway from the house and define the clean-lined walkways of Peregrine limestone. Terraces edged by tall grasses and lawn amidst mature aspens and cottonwoods give way to meadow spaces extending to the north, where an additional lot was purchased by the owners to safeguard the view.

Inside and out, the house has a light and peaceful feeling, a far cry from the dark and dated ponderousness of its previous incarnation. Carney Logan Burke's Sarah Kennedy worked closely with the owners on conceptualizing the interiors. "These are really creative people who put a lot of thought into the project and weren't afraid to push the boundaries," she explains. "The owner didn't buy art for the house. She just created the most amazing pieces, like a bust covered entirely with pills. She has to take a lot of the credit for its beauty."

With its modest volumes, great light, and perfectly placed objects, the house has a palpable serenity. "It still has that log cabin vibe," says Thackray, "but all around there are modern, crisp rooms that show art well. People want to feel a connection to nature in their homes; this is natural, timeless, and modern all at the same time. It has the cozy qualities of a cabin yet it still feels fresh." And whether the project is a log cabin update or altogether new construction, that is the ultimate goal.

CLB Architects and Tennyson-Ankeny Construction transformed the dated cabin by enlarging openings, painting its yellowed logs with a tinted alabaster lacquer, and coating the orange fir floors with an ebony finish. The Arco floor lamp was designed by Achille and Pier Giacomo Castiglioni for Flos. The newspaper array on the wall was created by the wife, a fine artist.





ABOVE: The office is an art-filled inner sanctum, now bathed in light.


RIGHT: All the wood vessels were made by the husband. Peregrine limestone floors provide a pleasing contrast to the textured white log ends.











Nowhere is the quality of light better appreciated than in the kitchen. There a partial wall was installed to create a sense of separation from the entry and main dining area; the openness comes from an eat-in dining area with built-in window seat and door leading directly to the front patio and garden. Backless counter stools tuck out of sight when not in use. The Moooi tube light echoes the shape and color of the logs. The bust artwork by the owner is covered entirely in white pills.













The cob-blasted logs have a clean appearance appropriate to today's mountain modern ethos. Landscaping by Hershberger Design creates a sense of arrival through a minimal approach using natural grasses, Peregrine limestone walkways, and Corten steel panels.













# MINIMALIST FISHING RETREAT

**D**estination holiday towns throughout the Mountain West are riddled with what were, in the 1980s and 1990s, the aspirational standard: high-end log homes. These blown-up versions of the universally iconic mountain structure are defined by exposed logs inside and out, true stacked corners, vaulted-ceilinged great rooms, and river rock fireplaces. Sadly, they are also defined by their yellow-brown hue, their big inefficient volumes, and their generally poor energy ratings. Although usually sturdily built and often constructed of hand-hewn logs by dedicated artisan builders, these plus-sized cabins, while possessing a certain timeless appeal, are now not only dated but unable to meet the demands of a contemporary lifestyle.

When Eric Logan of CLB Architects was shown the house his new client had purchased, he knew he had a project ahead of him. Its prospect was extraordinary, but the structure was a poorly conceived and shoddily constructed iteration of the 1990s ideal. The client, a passionate fly-fisherman and outdoorsman who intended to use the house primarily in the summer, had fallen for the site. Located just five minutes from the town of Jackson, Wyoming, the ten-acre property has lush, open meadows, mature cottonwoods that lend a feeling of privacy, a dramatic butte with a rock face that plunges right down to the edge of the site, and dead-on north-facing views of the Tetons. It also abuts the conservation property held in common by the development—large ponds that are protected habitat for swans and other birds. Best of all, it has an idyllic spring creek flowing right past the view side of the house.

This slice of paradise was marred by its architecture, which, though marginally habitable, begged for a thorough renovation. Not only was the house—three gabled forms with steep pitched roofs—poorly planned and haphazardly massed, it was structurally unsound. According to Jake Ankeny of Ankeny Construction Management, its logs weren't properly pinned to each other or anchored to the foundation. The structure had settled and nothing was level. The couple authorized Logan and Ankeny, whose team was ably led by site superintendent Gary Zundel, to start drawing up plans and estimates and to work with both the county and the homeowners' association to determine what could be done within existing structural regulations and aesthetic guidelines. A radical renovation, much of it constructed with the existing logs, was enacted upon the original foundation. The result is a sleek, modern expression of the contemporary West.

CLB Architects were tasked with reimagining a dated 1990s log home on 10 acres in Jackson, Wyoming. A total rebuild was not an option due to its proximity to a fishing stream, so the architects kept the basic forms but simplified the architecture and made it more abstract. They also reimagined the palette. The result was a lightening and brightening, with white-plaster walls, whitewashed log purloins, black steel windows, and a minimalist approach to furnishings. The great room is centered on the spectacular view of the Tetons.



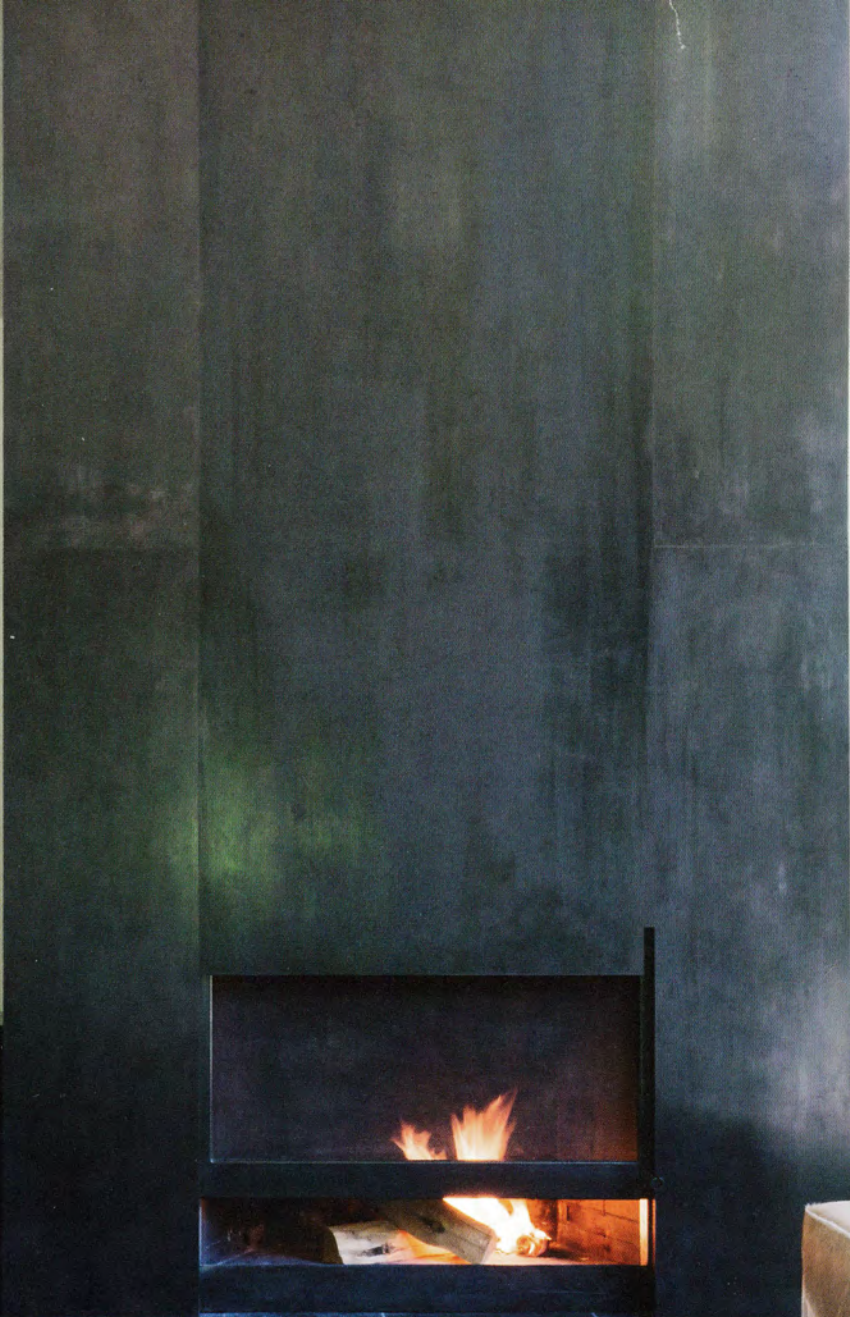


ABOVE LEFT: Interior design was a collaboration by the owners with designer Lorraine Letendre, Elisa Chambers of Snake River Interiors, and Jennifer Mei of CLB Architects. A quiet corner in a passageway, with a hair-on-hide rug and slipcovered chair, offers a light-bathed spot for reading.



ABOVE RIGHT AND FACING: The guillotine-door fireplace with steel surround, manufactured by Brandner Design, makes a refined modern statement in the great room.





ARCTICA  
THE VA ISHING NORTH  
Sebastian Cleveland  
THE WILD HORSES OF SABLE ISLAND  
Roberto Dutesco









FACING: The heavily patinated steel staircase rail panel, by metal artisan Jeff Brandner of Brandner Design, makes a bold architectural statement in the living area and balances the fireplace on the opposite end. A simple block wood bench allows an unobstructed view to the mountains for diners seated in the tall chairs. Black-blue Belgian slate flooring extends throughout the open plan.

ABOVE: The kitchen is a study in contrast: black countertops and floors against white cabinets and plaster walls. The oak cabinets were wire-brushed and whitewashed. A collection of handmade vessels displayed near the ceiling draws the eye upward and adds an organic touch.









LEFT: The entry is both dramatic—with its entire wall of glass, oversized door, and exposed log ends—and restrained in its feeling of containment. The seamless transition between indoor and outdoor highlights the craftsmanship of site superintendent Gary Zundel and his team from Ankeny Construction Management.

ABOVE: The quiet bedroom is a study in tranquility, with neutral tones and natural fibers.





A black-and-white bathroom featuring limestone and marble opens directly onto a meadow, its glass doors offering a full on view of a rocky bluff that comes down to the edge of the property.









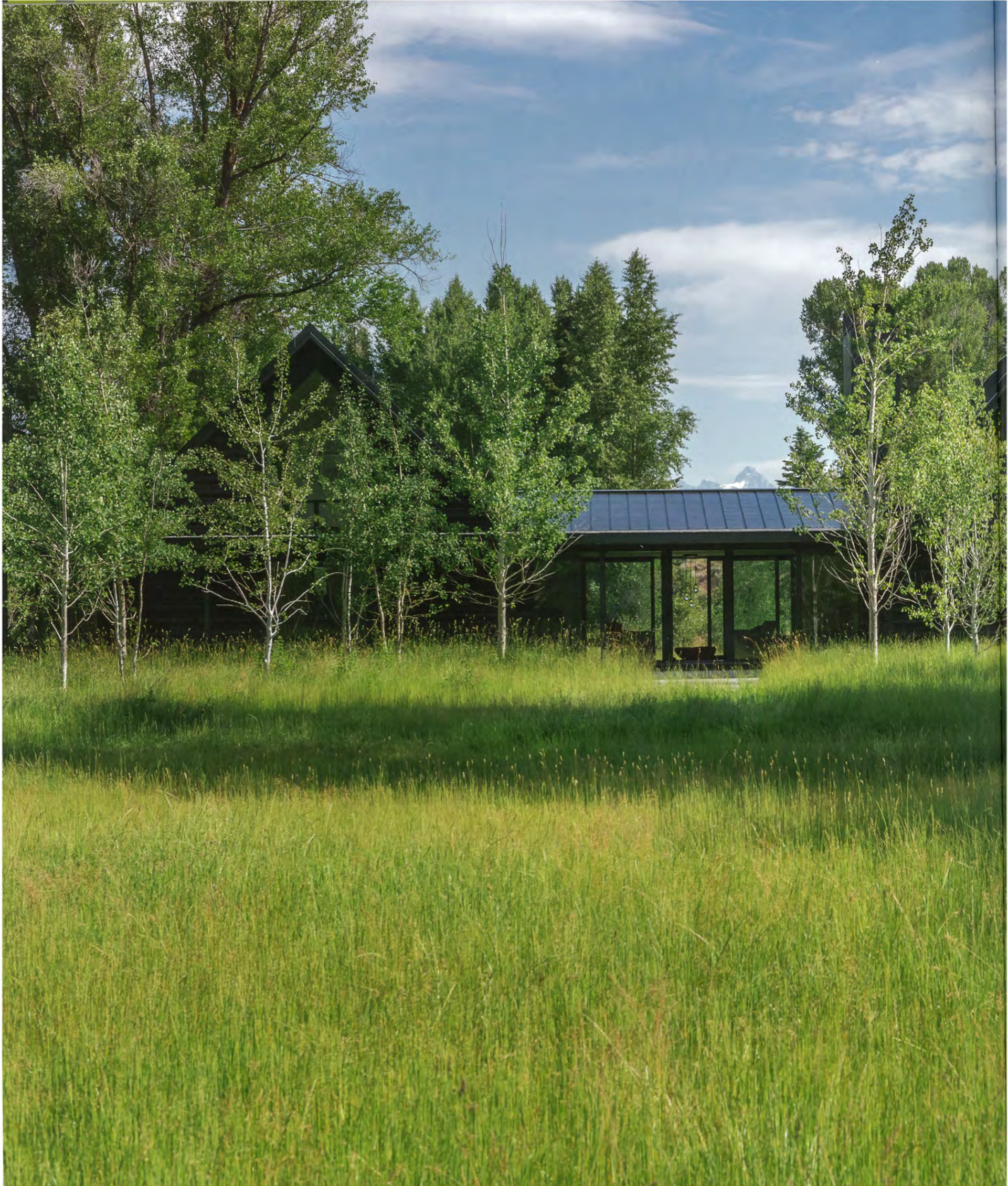
ABOVE TOP: Meticulous attention to detail is evident in Brandner's craftsmanship.

ABOVE AND RIGHT: The landscaping, in which the natural meadow comes right up to the edge of the house, was conceived by Hershberger Design. The long, low exterior covered walkway links the garage structure to the main house where it extends the length of the arrival side. An opening in the ceiling above a raised planter lightens the roof mass.














The house is nestled among aspens and tucked between the foothills and open meadow. Despite its bold hue, it defers to its site rather than dominating. Moose, mountain lions, and a variety of birds are frequent visitors to the property.





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