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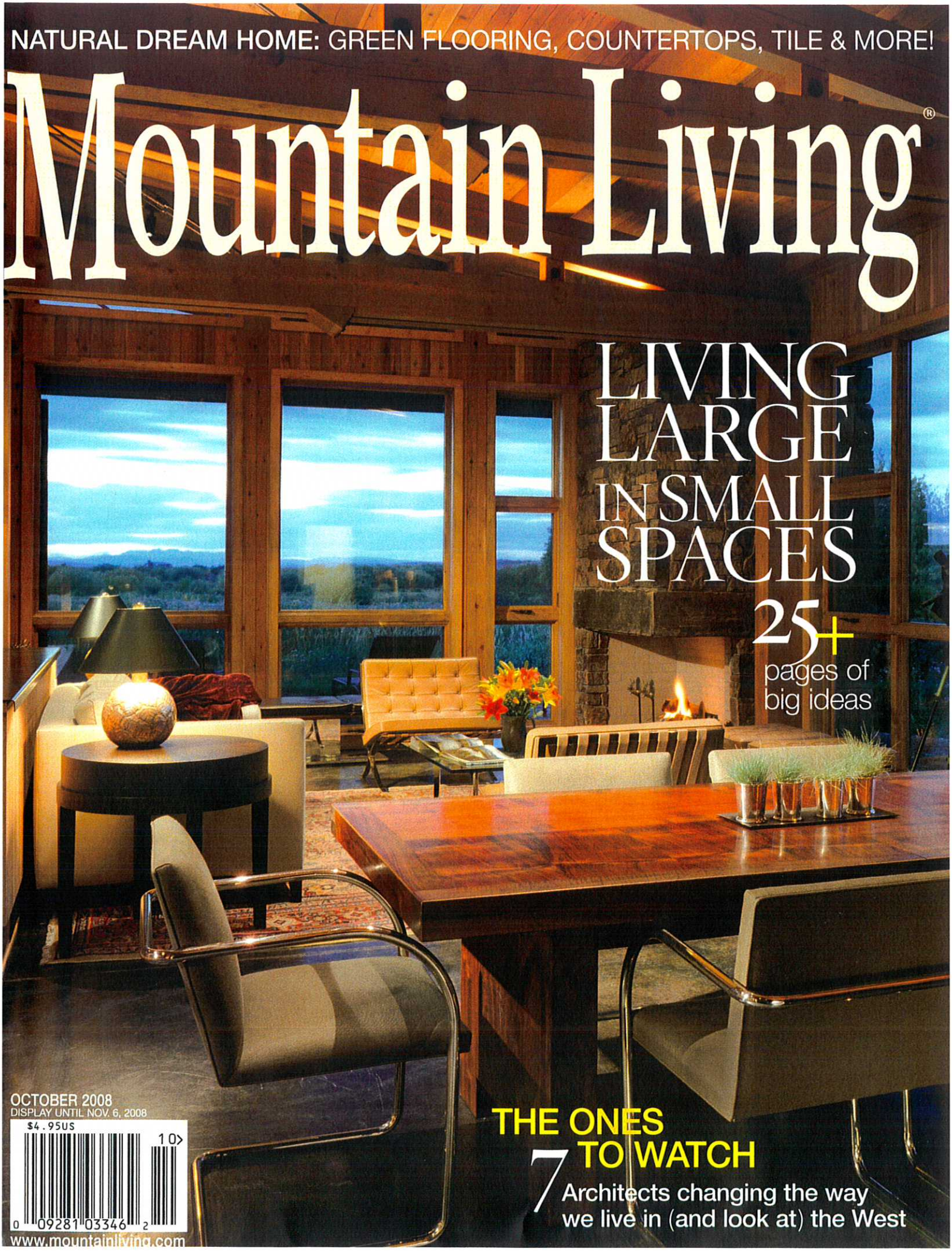

LIVING LARGE IN SMALL SPACES

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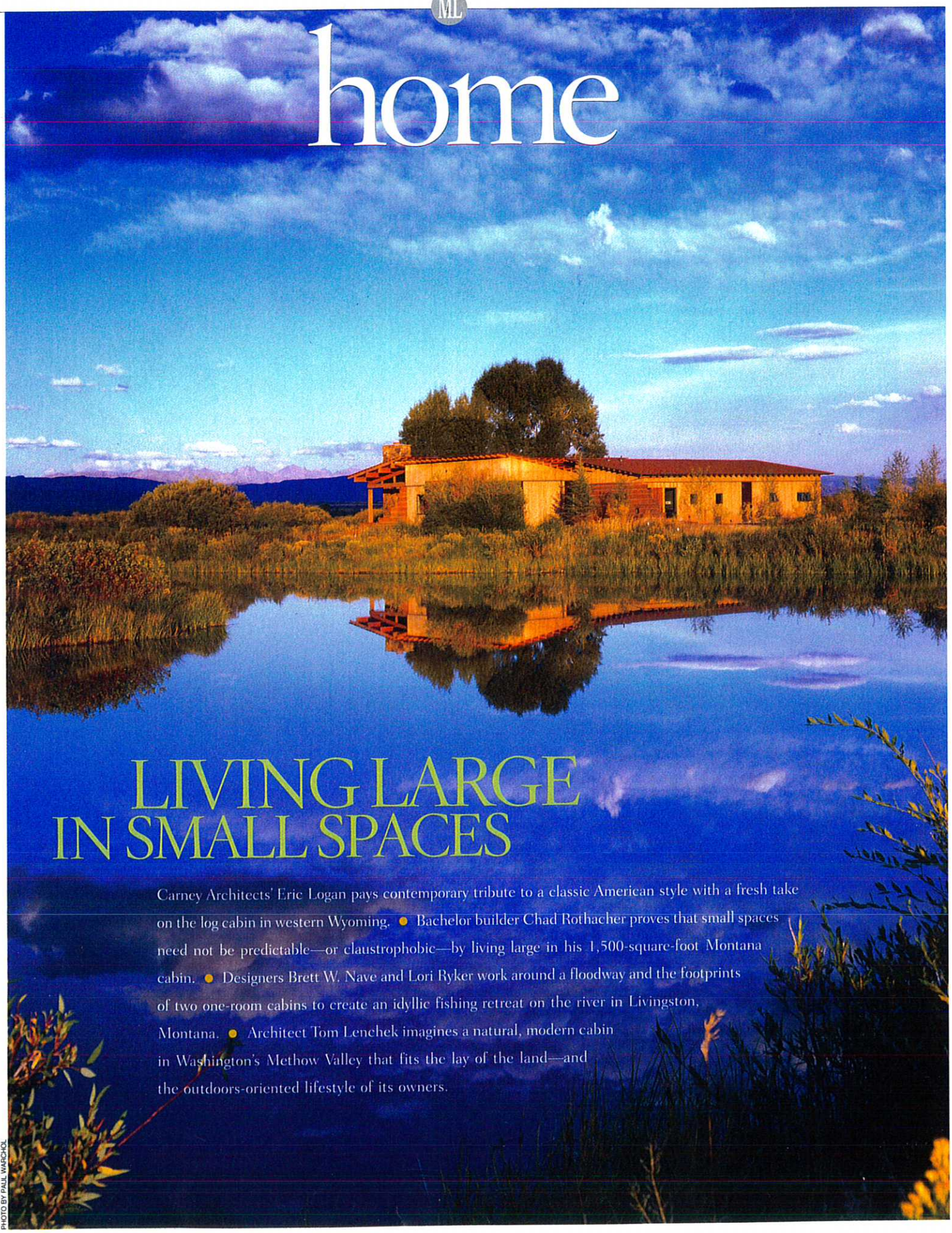


LIVING LARGE IN SMALL SPACES

Carney Architects' Eric Logan pays contemporary tribute to a classic American style with a fresh take on the log cabin in western Wyoming. • Bachelor builder Chad Rothacher proves that small spaces need not be predictable—or claustrophobic—by living large in his 1,500-square-foot Montana cabin. • Designers Brett W. Nave and Lori Ryker work around a floodway and the footprints of two one-room cabins to create an idyllic fishing retreat on the river in Livingston, Montana. • Architect Tom Lenchek imagines a natural, modern cabin in Washington's Methow Valley that fits the lay of the land—and the outdoors-oriented lifestyle of its owners.

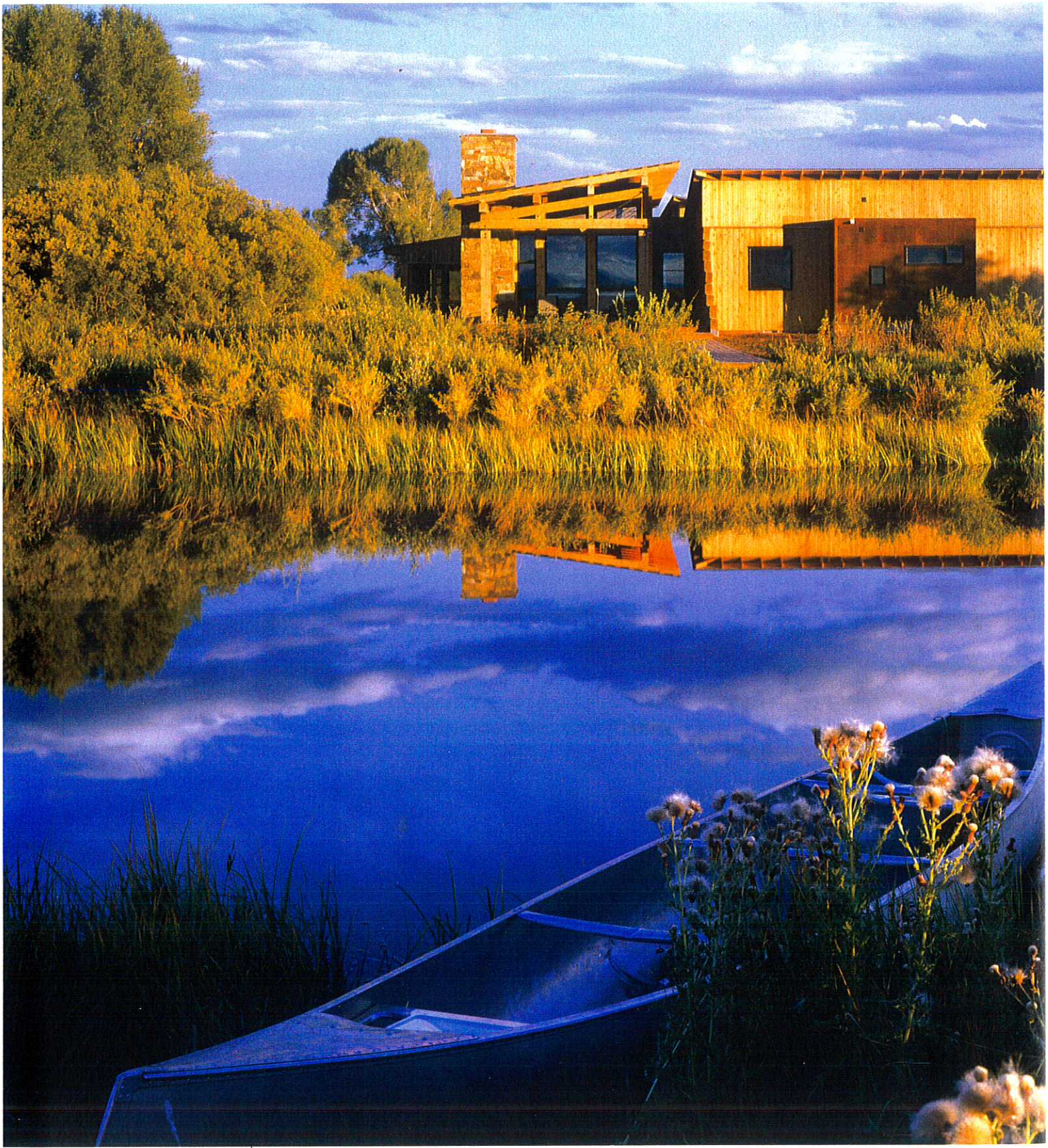
PHOTO BY PAUL WARCHOL

A new home, encircled by western Wyoming's New Fork River, pays contemporary tribute to a classic American style

LOG CABIN REVISITED

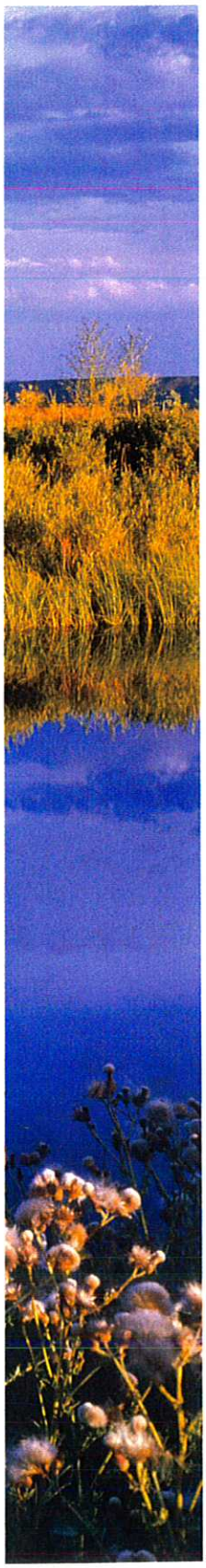
PHOTOGRAPHY BY
PAUL WARCHOL PHOTOGRAPHY

INTERVIEW BY
NORMAN KOLPAS



INSPIRING ENVIRONS

ABOVE: Fringed by native grasses, the New Fork River winds past the northwestern side of the one-story cedar-clad house, offering tranquil views from the master suite (to the right) and the terrace off the main living area's great room. OPPOSITE: In the great room, a corner fireplace of dry-stacked farmer's rock rises between two window walls facing north and west to behold the Wind River Range, part of the Rockies. Mid-century modern furniture feels right at home amidst the streamlined architecture.



LOG HOMES ENDURE AS IDEAL EXPRESSIONS

of the harmony that can be achieved between humankind and nature. With walls of wood in its almost-natural form, they bring us intimately closer to our surroundings. Yet log structures mostly hew to traditional looks dictated by the material's form. Which makes this boldly contemporary home, designed by Eric Logan, AIA, of Carney Architects for clients settling within sight of Wyoming's Rockies, all the more eye-opening for its fresh take on the old log cabin.

MOUNTAIN LIVING: Say the words "log home" and most people imagine something traditional, whether Abe Lincoln's boyhood log cabin or a grand Adirondack lodge. What led you to reimagine a log home in such a nontraditional way?

ERIC LOGAN: Our clients, Phil and Patty Washburn, were coming here from Chicago, but they had spent time in this part of Wyoming and were interested in something rooted in the West; the notion of living in a log cabin. That began a process a couple of years long with the Washburns and the builder, thinking about the way they wanted to live here. They wanted a public living area, a more private master-bedroom wing, and a semi-public guest wing with a garage. We decided to give each of those spaces its own distinct pavilion. And because the landscape in this valley is long and low, we came up with an ode to the local cabins and ranch buildings from homesteading days, with a series of three shed-style buildings oriented around a central courtyard that's open to the south so it's warm in the winter and protected from the winds. >>

"It didn't make sense to us to put a big hunk of a house out here, so we asked the architects to make it look like it grew here naturally." *Patty Washburn*

ML: So, what parts are traditional and what parts are modern?

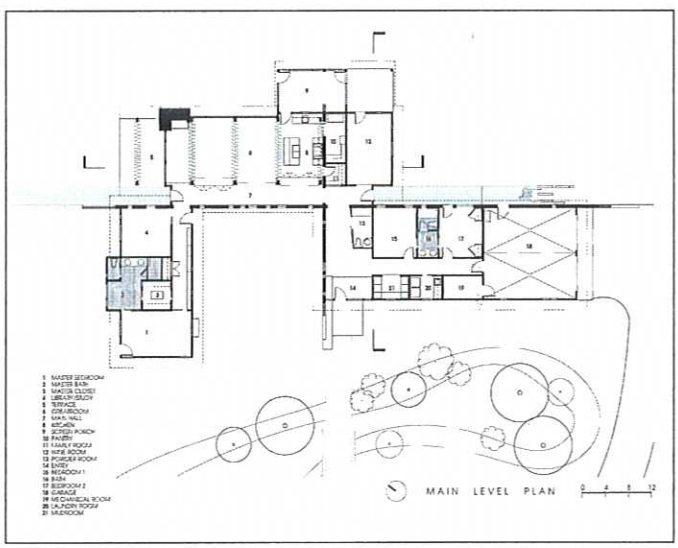
EL: I like to think we used traditional materials, but maybe in some nontraditional ways. The exterior is clad in cedar siding, oriented vertically like in simple corral buildings. All the roofs are corrugated steel oxidized to a ruddy brown color, which recalls old corrugated-iron roofs. Bits of that same oxidized steel appear as detailing here and there. It's a humble palette appropriate for the setting.

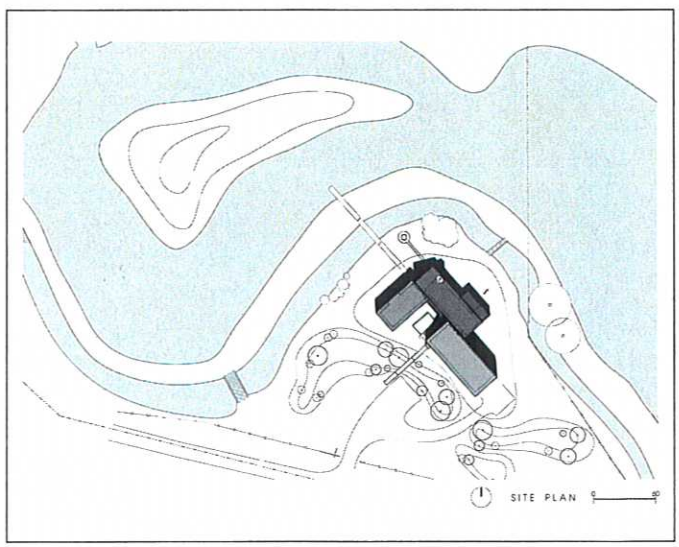
ML: How do those exterior details translate to the interior architecture?

EL: It's still a very simple palette of humble materials, but manipulated for a more luxurious look. Panels of steel wall cladding were given a blackened and waxed finish that makes them look almost like leather. The concrete floors, which include radiant heating, were stained a rich deep brown and waxed, and there's also hardwood flooring. While the exterior siding is rough-sawn cedar, inside the walls are square-cut Douglas fir logs, hand-hewn to give them a crafted feeling, and the ceilings are paneled in smooth hemlock with a light stain. None of these details scream for attention, but they're all subtle beauties in their own right.

ML: How do your clients' furniture choices work with this design?

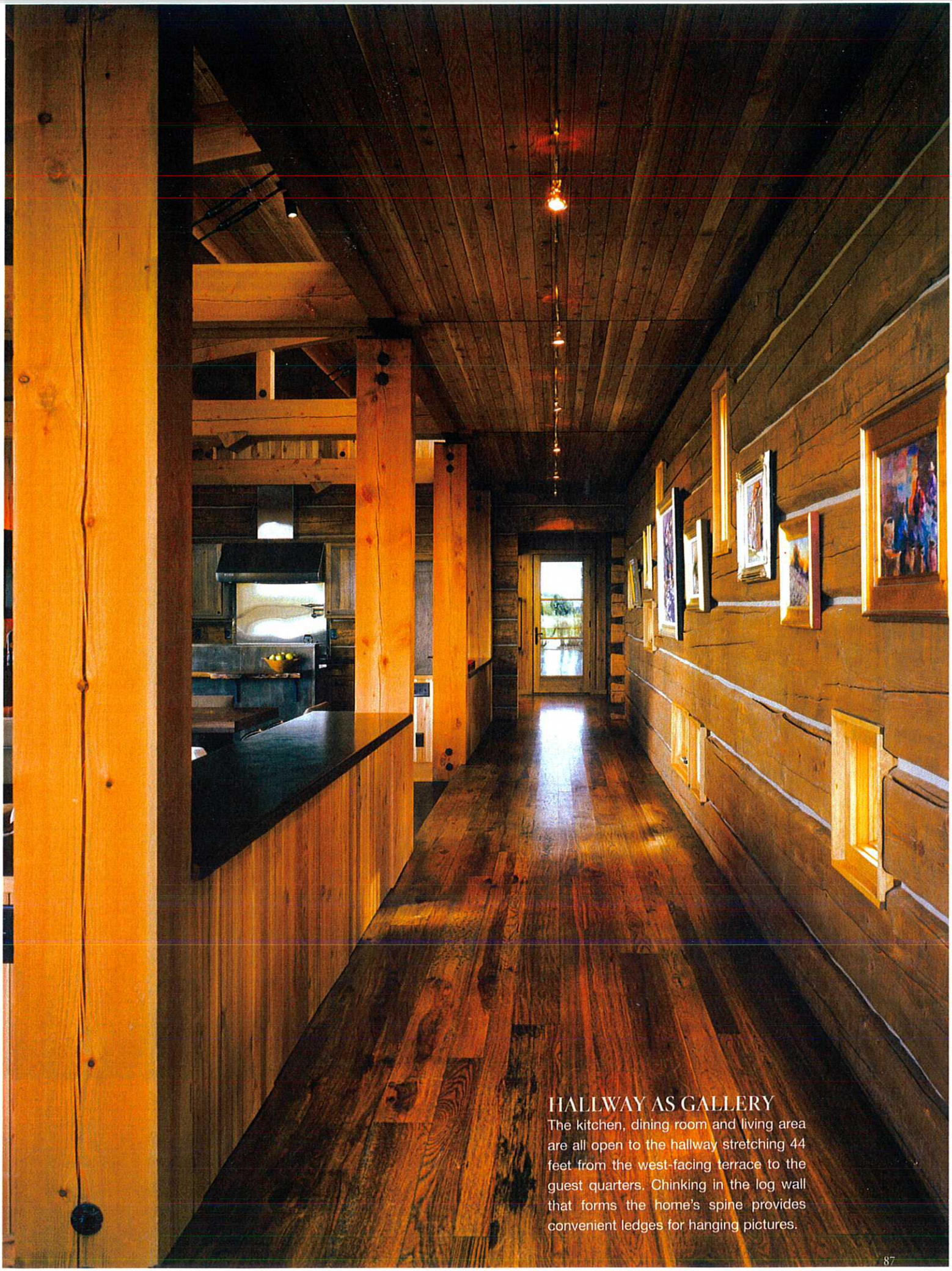
EL: The Washburns and their interior designer brought with them a bit of their Chicago modernist sensibility. The classic mid-century pieces in chrome and leather seem to take their cues from the architecture and pay it quite a nice compliment. >>





A THOUGHTFUL DESIGN

The 3,700-square-foot residence is low-slung, keeping a modest profile appropriate to the rugged high-plains site. The log cabin idea was reduced to two intersecting hand-hewn log walls, which sponsor three separate shed-roof volumes, forming outdoor spaces of distinctly different character and opening to the views. The three sheds organize the house into guest rooms, great room and master suite.



HALLWAY AS GALLERY

The kitchen, dining room and living area are all open to the hallway stretching 44 feet from the west-facing terrace to the guest quarters. Chinking in the log wall that forms the home's spine provides convenient ledges for hanging pictures.

NATURAL INSTINCTS

THIS PAGE: In the master bedroom, a dark-stained floor of reclaimed fir complements an antique Persian carpet and smooth hemlock ceiling. Bedding, upholstery, and wall color in neutral earth tones harmonize with the natural materials. RIGHT: With one wall of square-cut Douglas fir logs, the home's main entry hall in the guest pavilion faces a bulkhead of blackened and waxed steel panels at its intersection with a hallway leading to the main living area and master suite.

{DESIGN BOOK}

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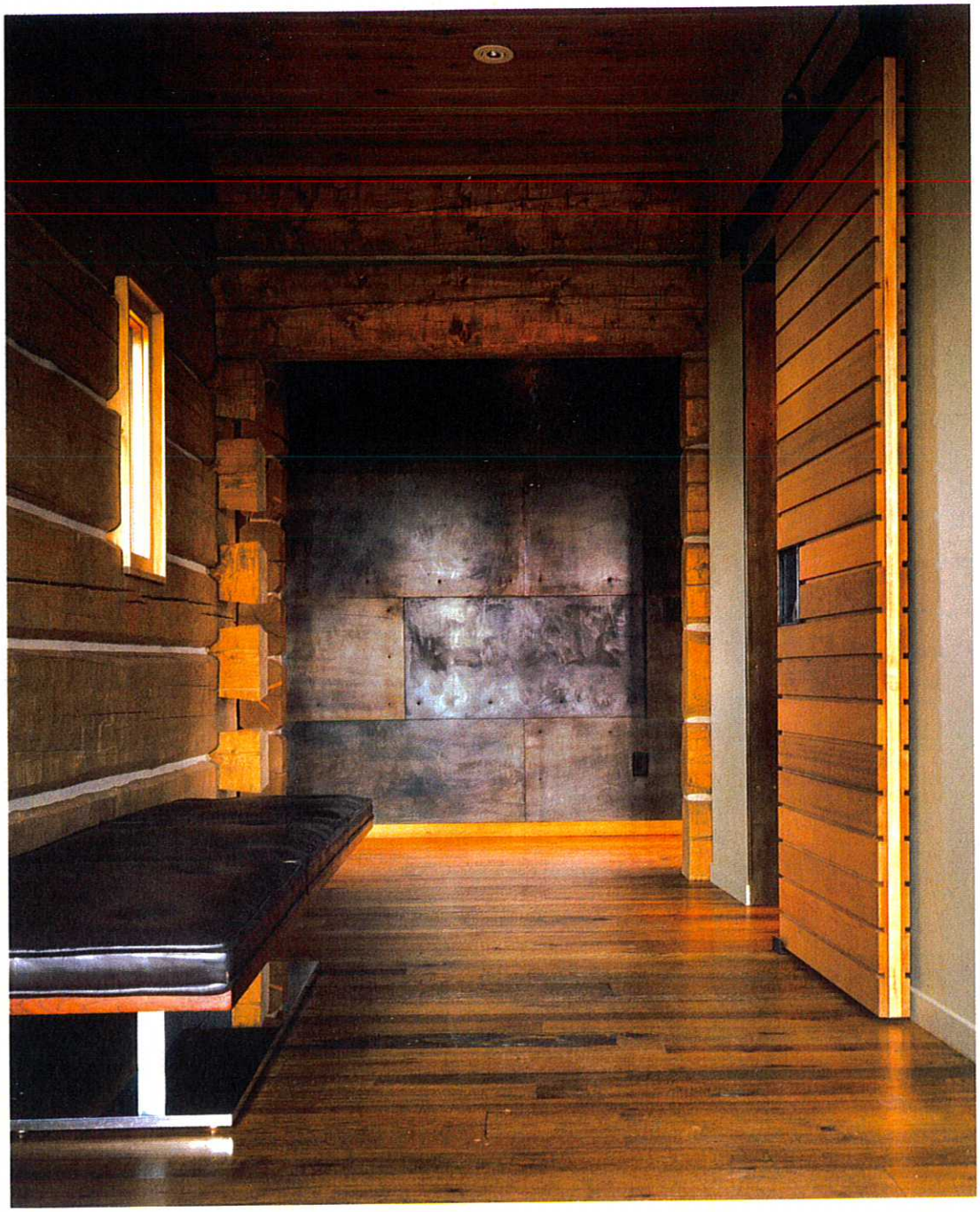

ML: Inside the house, it's all the more clear how much the architecture responds to the surroundings. What was your plan here?

EL: Each of the three pavilions I mentioned has a different attitude. Guests have great views of the surrounding grasslands and of the nearby New Fork River, plus a little bit of the mountains—just tidbits and snippets. The master suite is more about intimate views directed at particular parts of the site, including one opening right onto the south-facing courtyard. The big gesture is found in the main living/dining/kitchen area, where the north and west walls dissolve into a window wall with views to the Wind River Range, about 20 miles to the west, that make you feel quite literally part of the landscape. It's a humbling view, quintessential Wyoming.

ML: You completed the home in the summer of 2005, so now, with three years' perspective, what to you works best about the home?

EL: It's a good-sized home, more than 3,100 square feet. Yet we broke it down into little bite-sized pieces. The way each of those pieces is placed on the site and responds to the specific influences of the site outside its doors is my favorite thing. We nailed it.