

A photograph of a modern residential building at dusk. The building features a mix of materials, including dark blue vertical siding, light-colored horizontal siding, and dark wood slats. Large windows are illuminated from within, showing warm interior lights and a modern interior design. A stone path leads from the foreground towards the building's entrance. The sky is a deep blue, and the overall atmosphere is serene and sophisticated.

RD

RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

FOR ARCHITECTS AND BUILDERS
OF DISTINCTIVE HOMES

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Gable Havens

The Marvelous Middle

They're a little bit country, they're a little bit rock 'n roll:
three houses that vamp the vernacular.

BY S. CLAIRE CONROY





Opposite: Three distinct volumes zone Owl Ditch Ranch's main house. An adult wing comprises a first-floor guest suite and second-floor master. A glass-enclosed stair connects to the double-height living/dining volume. Then another two-story wing contains the mayhem of four boys and garage/mudroom services. *Above:* Traditional ranch house materials come together with sharp, modern detailing.

Owl Ditch Ranch

JACKSON, WYO.

CARNEY LOGAN BURKE ARCHITECTS

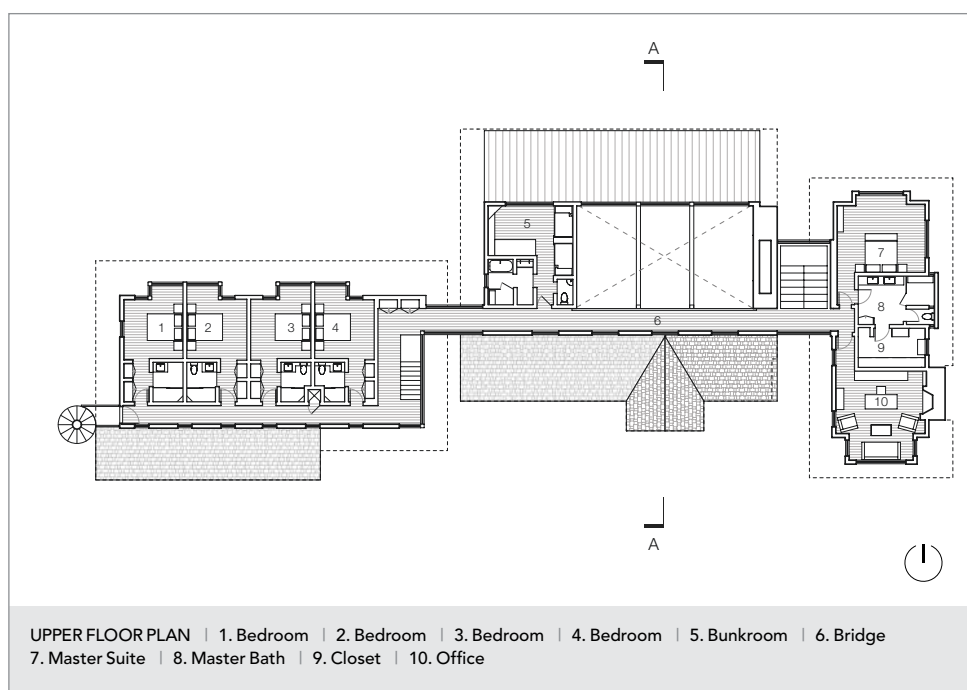
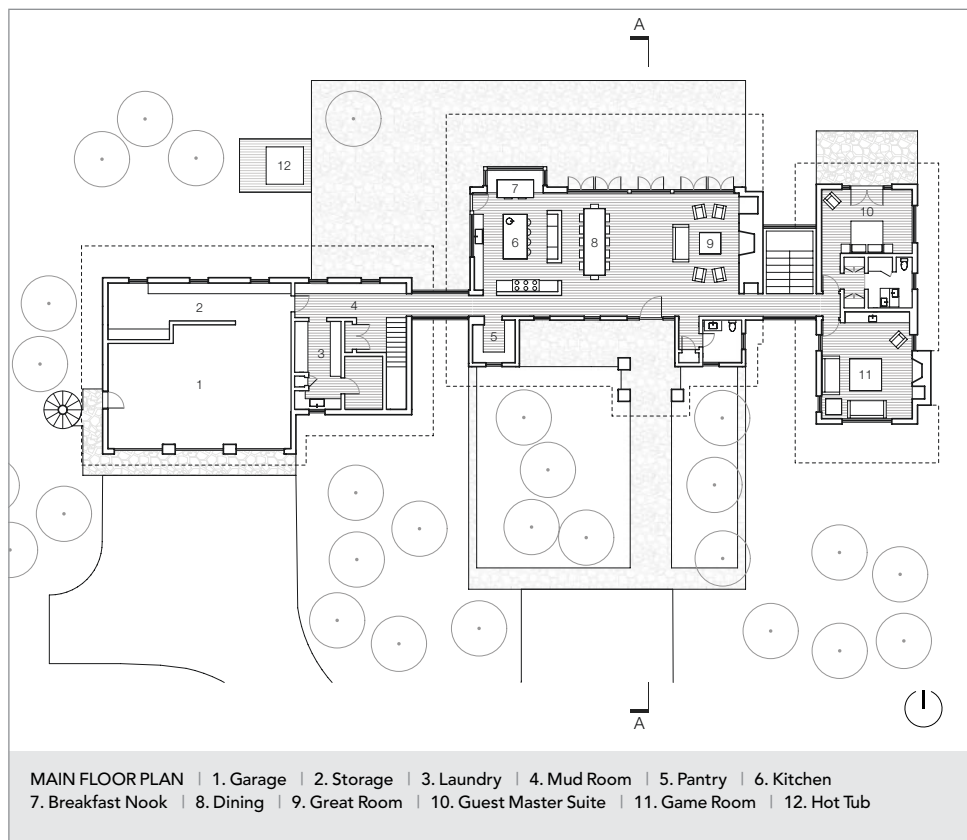
The mountains call many people to them, but there's a particularly irresistible beckoning to those who spend their day-to-day lives in the flatlands of commerce. The entire state of Wyoming has worked diligently to establish itself as a financial haven for the wealthy, all while serving up some of the most picturesque landscape in the country. Nowhere is this phenomenon more prominent than in Jackson, Wyo. Flatlanders feel perfectly at home here in "The Hole," an eerily level, basin bisected by the sinuous Snake River. Yet surrounding the town are some of the highest elevation mountains in the United States. And what's especially unusual is there are no foothills here—access to those mountains for hiking or skiing or simply admiring from the basin is immediate.

The absence of foothills is an artifact of the Teton fault which, over the course of millennia, has thrust the mountains up from the earth's crust while pushing the basin down. The dramatic topography and snowy climate (an average of 70 inches a year) combine with the vast national park acreage of Grand Teton, Gros Ventre, and Yellowstone to make Jackson and its adjacent villages

a highly desirable year-round destination for recreation. So, it's no wonder that along with the Tetons, you'll find the titans of Wall Street, Washington, Hollywood, and other centers of wealth generation vacationing here, seeking immersion and escape in Jackson's natural beauty. They are among the fortunate few who can afford to buy or build a house here, where the median list price for single-family homes is just under \$2.5 million, according to local real estate experts.

With so much land in conservation, prime lots are also pricey. And it's expensive to build here—materials are trucked in from afar over the mountains. But what really adds to construction costs is its geology: Jackson is classified as a Seismic Design Category D area, which is similar to much of inland San Francisco. The Teton fault, part of the Intermountain Seismic Belt, is capable of earthquakes to 7.5 magnitude—although the last one of that force was nearly 4,000 years ago. Still, mild earthquakes happen with relative frequency, and the basin is kept protected from floods by a dam and a series of levees that control the Snake River's flow in snow melt season.

The buyers of this 10-acre parcel along the Snake River were vacationing in the area when they stopped by to see the listing in North Jackson. They were immediately taken by its setting, mostly wooded with a man-made pond, facing west to the Grand Teton range. On the property was a dated 1980s main house and an old log guest house. The original house did not meet their needs as a family (two adults and four rambunctious boys), nor did it meet current seismic standards, so the couple enlisted Carney Logan Burke (CLB) to design a suitable replacement and John Jennings of Peak Builders to construct it.





Clockwise from top left: An exercise and party barn is runaway space for the boys. Salvaged wood clads its exteriors and interiors. The double-height living/dining area links the two sleeping wings with a second-story bridge. The stone fireplace surround is Montana Moss rock, also used on the exterior.

Geologic Time

And then everything ground to a halt, as the husband's day job grew more demanding of his attention elsewhere. It took nearly five years of fits and starts for the project to reach the finish line. Meanwhile, the family crammed into the rustic, 800-square-foot log cabin on visits back (John Jennings renovated it enough to be livable) and continued to meet with the firm periodically to discuss the master plan for the property.

Although not great for the balance sheets of architecture firms and custom building companies, taking time to live on a property and to get to know its rhythms and character is always helpful to the owners. During the extended project hiatus, the wife collected finds from all over the world that she asked to have incorporated into the new house. The husband, too, developed an inventory of items to include in his private office space. And each of the four boys had a say in how their rooms would look.

Over time, the wife's tastes emerged as



Left: The glass stair hall is the home's big modern move. It leads to the master suite and home office. The open treads and slender wall and railing connections allow breathtaking views of the Grand Teton mountains beyond.



Clockwise from top left: In the master shower, a slab of onyx is mounted on steel rods and lit from behind. Kitchen windows frame majestic mountain views.



somewhat more modern than the husband's—a common wrinkle architecture firms must smooth out. The subdivision also imposed constraints on the design—for instance, gabled roofs and rustic exterior materials were mandates.

Principal-in-charge John Carney, FAIA, and his colleagues constantly work the possibilities of the region's design vocabulary, exploring that continuum between traditional and modern. Everyone here is drawn to the place for its earthy colors, its jagged edges, its wild and prickly roots. Although, no one wants to lose the dusty patina that permeates its appeal, the continuum is a rich vein to mine—and CLB is among the best firms at doing so.

Baby Steps

After the log cabin renovation at Owl Ditch Ranch (ODR), as the compound is called, the next addition was a 1,000-square-foot “barn” building. Built by the ever-patient John Jennings, it was intended as a party structure and exercise studio. While the main house took shape, it provided the family with welcome breathing room from the close quarters of the cabin.

The simple building makes liberal use of reclaimed wood and weathered steel, evoking the appearance of an old outbuilding on a working ranch. Salvaged wood, says John Carney, “is a double-edged sword here. It's so popular

and so in demand, that people now put up snow fencing, leave it to weather for six years, then replace it with new fencing and sell off the old.”

At first glance, the building seems a straightforward interpretation of a small barn, but the differences are in the detailing and generous application of glazing. “We used hand-forged nails, steel flashing, and steel connectors. The random-width wood cladding is installed both vertically and horizontally,” says John. A deep, inviting covered porch makes you think this little building is all you need to feel at home and protected from the elements.

Inside, the workout room is bright and energizing. Whitewashed wood ceilings



Above: A clever bunkroom absorbs friends of the four resident boys. Right: All the bedrooms—including the master—make use of wallpaper to set them apart and add warmth in the winter months; the ceilings are tongue-and-groove hemlock with antique-finished oak trim.



and white painted walls are punctuated by rough-hewn, wood-framed windows, exposed beams, and sliding interior barn doors. Exercise machines face a large window wall overlooking the view of the meadow.

On the other side of the barn lies the “party room” (really more of a family room) with kitchenette, big sectional couch, and game-size television. There’s a full bathroom, too, making the building viable as overflow guest space. In the party room, the salvaged wood wraps the walls, and the wood floor is dark stained. We won’t call it a “man cave,” but you get the picture.

Survival Zones

When it came time to build the main house, the first priority for the clients was a plan that would take advantage of the site’s views and opportunities for indoor-outdoor living. The second priority was a scheme that could absorb those four teenage boys with a minimum of fuss and disruption. “The house,” says John, “is very much zoned.”

John and project manager Maria James devised a three-part harmony solution: three separate volumes, containing a wing for the boys and their visiting friends (to the south and over the garage for acoustic isolation), a wing for the parents and their

guests (to the north), and a shared family gathering space at the center. The wings are linked to the central kitchen and great room building by two double-height glass connectors or hyphens, allowing sight lines through the house at both interstices and west to the mountains. Overlooking the great room, a bridge borrows views of the Tetons through a clerestory and provides second-level access between the wings.

The boys, who were given four separate-but-equal bedrooms to decorate as they chose, have both an interior back stair to spirit them up from the first-floor mudroom and laundry area, and an



Above: Material choices in Jackson's subdivisions are heavily regulated, but that doesn't mean they can't be applied with modern sensibilities and techniques, as shown in this sidelong view of the rear porch.

exterior spiral staircase to convey them directly outside.

Over in the parents' wing, the first floor contains a guest suite and a family sitting room. The glass connector on their side of the house has a steel-and-glass stair that accesses the master bedroom and the husband's office, while supplying uninterrupted views of the mountains. Windows and doors in the connectors are thermally broken steel units from Italy.

Of course, the dramatic use of glass and steel is the big modern move within the otherwise traditional lodge-style building. However, there are smaller moves as well—for instance, those gabled roof elements preordained by the subdivision. John likes to get the roofs as thin and the pitch as moderate as possible while still hefting the area's heavy snow loads. "I will never allow a big, thick cold roof where you don't need it," he says. Elsewhere, blackened copper connections turn up on edges to sharpen details; all cabinetry has plain, slab-front doors; and a steel pergola shades the back patio. Dry-stacked Montana Moss rock appears on the exteriors and interiors of the house—on the fireplace wall and in the glass staircase connector—but its application is crisp and clean. Material selection and use is decorative and practical: On the exterior, the rock protects the house up to the winter snow line, where more vulnerable



Above: Another glass connector links the boys' wing with the bridge to the parents' wing, while also showcasing the Grand Tetons beyond.

materials would be exposed.

Generous porches at front and back help hold snow and direct its melt, sheltering the wood elements of the exterior—reclaimed siding, notched half-logs, and hand-hewn fir beams and columns. All the wood has been worked in some way—weathered and salvaged, wire-brushed or sandblasted, and even burned in the Shou Sugi Ban tradition. The porches also provide essential shade and sun control for those western mountain views.

After more than 6,000 square feet of choices, curations, and collaborations with

homeowners and other team members, a new house was born. But is the result “traditional” or “modern”? Are the criteria standard enough for everyone to agree upon them? A modern architect might survey Owl Ditch Ranch’s main house and barn and call them traditional, while a classicist might insist they’re modern. No matter; once the punch list is done and the homeowner takes the keys, the argument is settled. Architects may enjoy parsing the finer distinctions of style, but most clients are just happy to call this comfortable middle ground on the continuum “home.”

Owl Ditch Ranch

JACKSON, WYO.

ARCHITECT: John Carney, FAIA, principal in charge, and Maria James, project manager, Carney Logan Burke Architects, Jackson

BUILDER: John Jennings, Peak Builders, Jackson

INTERIOR DESIGNER: Owner and Cynthia Harms, Carney Logan Burke

LANDSCAPE DESIGNER: Mark and Bonny Hershberger, Hershberger Design, Jackson

PROJECT SIZE: Main house, 6,192 square feet (conditioned); fitness barn: 1,000 square feet (conditioned)

SITE SIZE: 10.7 acres

CONSTRUCTION COST: Withheld

PHOTOGRAPHY: ©Matthew Millman Photography

KEY PRODUCTS

WINDOWS/WINDOW WALLS: Brombal, JELD-WEN.

ROOFING: Cedar shakes

CLADDING: Reclaimed wood vertical siding, 12-inch hand-adzed spruce slab siding with synthetic chinking

DOOR HARDWARE: Rocky Mountain Hardware

COOKTOP: Wolf

VENT HOOD: Wolf

Ovens: Wolf

REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

WINE REFRIGERATOR: Sub-Zero

DISHWASHERS: Miele, Fisher & Paykel drawer

KITCHEN FAUCETS: Rohl Perrin & Rowe

KITCHEN SINK: Rohl Shaws

SECONDARY FAUCETS/SHOWERHEADS: Kallista, Kohler

SINKS/LAVS: Kallista, Kohler, Duravit

SHOWER DOORS: Vigo

TOILETS: Toto

TILE: Daltile, Florida Tile, Arizona Tile, Island Stone, Heath Ceramics

SHADING/SUN CONTROL: Lutron

LIGHTING: Halo, Iris, Lucifer, Belfer, B-K Lighting, Leviton, Metalux, Rebel, Hevi Lite, Edge Lighting, Delta Star, Schoolhouse