

DESIGN IDEAS ♦ HOME TOURS ♦ EXPERT ADVICE

SKI MAGAZINE'S
**MOUNTAIN
HOME**

YOUR GUIDE TO MOUNTAIN LIVING AND REAL ESTATE DECEMBER 2006

A SUPPLEMENT TO SKI MAGAZINE

**MOUNTAIN
RETREATS**
♦ ASPEN
♦ CRESTED BUTTE
♦ BIG SKY

BURN CLEAN
ECO-FRIENDLY
FIREPLACE
ALTERNATIVES



**LOG HOME
STYLE**

DESIGN, BUILD & DECORATE
AN AMERICAN CLASSIC



BLUEPRINT

Location Big Sky, Mont. **Square footage** 1,000 **Lot size** 0.75 acres **Architect** Bruce Conaway, The Conaway Group, Fort Worth, Texas **Building materials** Cedar on the exterior withstands the Montana elements. Pine beams and knotty pine paneling keep the cabin cozy inside. Andocite, or Montana moss rock, covers the lower exterior and fireplace. **Design strategy** The McGarrys wanted a small vintage cabin, like those the Forest Service might use or that tourists would book for a vacation in the '50s. To help evoke that feel, they kept wood exposed and furnished the cabin with secondhand items and antiques from Texas.

TROPHIES

Simple Pleasures



FORGET HEATED SIDEWALKS, ESPRESSO MAKERS AND LIVE-IN CHEFS. AT THE MCGARRYS' HOUSE IN BIG SKY, LUXURY MEANS HAVING TIME TO WATCH THE SNOW FALL.

By Tim Neville
Photographs by
Roger Wade





SLOW DOWN AND PEEK THROUGH THE pines that line the Gallatin Canyon south of Big Sky, Mont., and you'll catch a glimpse of a snow-country home that has a rather unusual quality: It's tiny.

"People come to Montana and say they want a cabin, but then they want it to be 5,000 square feet," says JoDean Bing, who, along with her partner and husband, Doug Bing, owns Blue Ribbon Builders,

ECLECTIC Paintings the McGarrys "pulled out of a pile" decorate the living room walls. (The large piece over the sofa once hung in a Kansas bar.) Previous pages: Branches form part of the deck railing; Ralph Lauren patterns in the master bedroom evoke a vintage-cabin feel.

which constructed the 1,000-square-foot cabin for Jane and Kevin McGarry. "Very rarely is anyone disciplined enough to build a true cabin like this one."

But the Texas-based McGarrys had exactly that cabin in mind as they combed mountain towns from Lake Placid, N.Y.,

to Telluride, Colo., looking for a place to introduce their 12-year-old son, Michael, to snow. Their dream location? The banks of the Gallatin River, where 400 inches of snow falls each year and a 20-minute drive puts them on the lifts at Big Sky. "We've always had this romantic



ROOM TO BREATHE The McGarrys kept their 1,000-square-foot cabin airy by leaving the second floor open, with the kitchen, living room and dining room one main living space. French-style glass doors (not pictured) offer views of the Gallatin River that flows through the backyard.

notion of having a cabin where we could go throw rocks in the river and fish or ski," says Jane, 50, an evening news anchor for NBC5 in Fort Worth, Texas. "You don't have to spend a fortune to have a really enjoyable place for family."

Though they won't disclose how much they did spend, the McGarrys will say that the two-bedroom, two-bathroom

cabin they built in 2001 cost "several multiples less" than the \$700-per-square-foot rate that some new homes in Big Sky command. That's partly thanks to Kevin, 56, a self-employed public relations and advertising professional who found old appliances, reclaimed knotty-pine paneling and secondhand loot from thrift stores and antiques shops to create a vintage feel.

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The result is a 1950s-feeling cabin with a moss-rock fireplace, green linoleum countertops and beat-up iron chandeliers. "A lot of things in there don't cost more than 50 bucks," he jokes. The cabin, which is smaller than some garages in Big Sky, doesn't even have real floors, just sub-flooring painted red. "It's all scuffed up," says Jane. "That's how we wanted it."

The family already has plenty of room to roam in their home in Fort Worth, a

LOST AND FOUND Decorating the cabin became a study in antiques and thrift-store shopping. Jane says she found the reading chair at a Salvation Army, then had it reupholstered in Ralph Lauren fabric. The twisted-iron sconce above it came from an antiques shop in Fort Worth, Texas.

city with all the football practices, Boy Scouts and piano lessons they could want. So when they found a 0.75-acre lot on the Gallatin—with 170 feet of land along the water—just eight miles north of Yellowstone National Park, they couldn't believe their luck. The fact that the town of Big Sky has only 2,200 year-round residents

was a bonus. "Jane's kind of a celebrity in Dallas," says Bing. "Here she can go to the store in sweats."

The McGarrys teamed up with Blue Ribbon Builders and Fort Worth-based architect Bruce Conaway of The Conaway Group. Conaway kept the living space upstairs open to make it feel



OUTPOST The couple wanted the cabin to feel like an Forest Service outpost or lakeside bungalow. Kevin scavenged knotty pine paneling from old cabins near Dallas and drove the wood to Montana with other treasures, like the 1930s Mexican pottery that sits over the antique pie safe.

roomy, and left the pine walls exposed to give it a warm feeling. Windows along the back of the house look toward the river. A large entryway that also leads to a basement suite serves as a mudroom for shedding soggy boots.

Five years since their first Big Sky winter, the McGarrys consider themselves

solid blue skiers. Michael rides the Lone Peak tram for tougher runs. "I'd say that's pretty good for a kid from Texas," says his father. Come summer, Kevin rides horses along the river. Jane reads *The Wall Street Journal* on the deck and Michael gets to throw those rocks.

But it's during winter evenings, when

the snow batters the windows and the mercury plummets, that the cabin feels most like the sanctuary the McGarrys set out to build. They'll decorate a small tree at Christmas with some fat lights from the 1940s and play checkers or Scrabble by the fire. "That's something we never take time to do in our regular lives," Kevin says. "It really is a retreat." For the McGarrys, that's all the space they could want. ♦