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KEEPING IT *Simple*

A Wyoming guest house takes advantage of spectacular views and its 1,000 square feet.

BY JENNIFER DONAHUE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY HG PHOTOGRAPHY





The views are stunning no matter which way you turn on this three-acre Jackson, Wyoming, retreat. Nestled just a couple of miles from the Teton Range, homeowners Paul and Caryn can see the Grand Tetons from their front porch and enjoy views of Jackson Hole Resort, Blacktail Butte, and Sheep Mountain (known as Sleeping Indian by locals), all set to the soundtrack of elk bugles and a river rushing by.

Caryn first visited the Jackson area on a ski trip with friends. She was so enamored with the area, she brought Paul back with her on her next trip, and he quickly fell in love with the area too. It checked all the boxes—abundant natural beauty, recreation, and a vibrant community all in the same place.

With a background in real estate, Paul knows that the approach to a home makes a lasting impression, so he took the time to make sure they were selecting the right property before building. “I looked at every property we were considering three times a day—morning, noon, and night,” he says. He knows he picked a winner. “You drive right toward the Teton Range and then drop off to the property, about 1500 feet from the river,” he says. “We can hear the river roaring at night.”

The plan was to build a home for retirement, with a guest house for family and friends—especially Paul’s parents, who loved the area as much as Paul and Caryn did. They decided to build the guest house first, keeping things simple but making the most of the house’s 1,000 square feet.

Paul and Caryn selected Summit Handcrafted Log Homes, with project manager Keith Austin leading the way. “I researched log home companies and I currently live in a log home,” says Paul. “I wanted a custom handcrafted log home, and I thought Summit was the way to go.” They had a great working relationship from the start, with Paul submitting plans and Summit designing the log work. “Keith built the whole place, beginning to end,” says Paul. “He handled everything.” Paul and Caryn also appreciated the time and care the company’s employees put into selecting just the right logs for their specific house.



“You wouldn’t believe the things we experience here,” says Paul. “We sit on the porch and hear the elk bugle. We had a cow moose with three calves in the yard one morning. One day great big bull moose came through.”



PATIOS ON TWO SIDES OF THE HOME ARE THE PERFECT SPOTS FOR WATCHING NEIGHBORING WILDLIFE OR LISTENING TO THE RIVER GO BY. OPPOSITE: THE INCREDIBLE RED CEDAR LOGS ARE THE MAIN FOCUS IN THE BEDROOM AND BATH.

The home is built with Western Red Cedar logs—valued for their moisture resistance and insect resistance—with flared ends and a latewood finish. “Instead of drawknifing the bark off we use a pressure washer that leaves the cambium layer on and leaves more character,” explains Austin. The massive logs have dramatic flared ends, ranging from 16 inches at midspan to up to 48 inches on the flared end.

The interior makes efficient use of the limited space, and high pine ceilings and abundant windows make it feel open and airy. The home has one bedroom and bathroom on the main floor along with a great room, dining area, and kitchen. The great room is anchored by a Montana Moss rock fireplace at one end, which generates plenty of heat. The same rock was used for the patios on two sides of the home. The house has radiant heat and triple pane windows to keep things cozy during cold Wyoming winters.

The home uses wood in a variety of ways, beyond the logs and the pine ceilings. Floors are hickory, while the dining room table, bathroom vanity, and bedroom furnishings are all hand crafted from reclaimed wood from an old tobacco barn. Furnishings were selected by Paul and Caryn from a local interiors store, Wild West Designs.

“We used the best products we could find,” says Paul, for comfort and so

that they could keep maintenance requirements to a minimum. “The roof shingles are a fireproof composite; we don’t want to ever put another roof on the house.” That’s an important consideration in an area where wildfires are a part of life.

The next step is to build the main house, which will also be built by Summit Handcrafted Log Homes and will be about 4,000 square feet when it is finished. For now, though, Paul and Caryn are enjoying their simple Wyoming getaway. “You wouldn’t believe the things we experience here,” says Paul. “We sit on the porch and hear the elk bugle. We had a cow moose with three calves in the yard one morning. One day great big bull moose came through.” The couple enjoys the recreation the area offers, including mountain biking, hiking, snowmobiling, and skiing but are also content to just sit back and relax. “Depending on the time of year you can do anything—but sometimes we like doing nothing—it’s so peaceful.” ❄️

Log Home Producer and Builder: Summit Handcrafted Log Homes, Boise, Idaho

One-story home ❄️ Square footage: 1,000

Bedrooms: 1 Baths: 1



LEFT: HIGH PINE-PANELED CEILINGS AND LARGE WINDOWS IN THE KITCHEN AND GREAT ROOM GIVE THE MODESTLY SIZED GUEST HOUSE A SPACIOUS FEELING.

OPPOSITE: THE DINING ROOM TABLE IS HAND-CRAFTED FROM RECLAIMED BARNWOOD SOURCED FROM AN OLD TOBACCO BARN.

BELOW: PAUL AND CARYN SELECTED THE WESTERN-THEMED FURNISHINGS FROM A LOCAL INTERIORS STORE, WILD WEST DESIGNS.

