

# Ranch Style Refined

INSPIRED BY NATURE AND CRAFTED BY ARTISANS,  
THIS EXQUISITE MOUNTAIN RETREAT CAPTURES THE  
GRANDEUR OF BIG SKY.



By Allyn Calton  
Photography by Roger Wade

**H**IGH UP IN THE GALLATIN MOUNTAINS, FREE FROM THE distraction of city lights, the setting sun paints a brilliant portrait across the Montana sky. Blazing orange melts into bright pink, finishing in blood red.

"There is something very special about this place, a grandness, a magnificence that is difficult to put into words," says Peter Spano, who along with his wife, Cathy, chose this location for their home. Bounded by Yellowstone Park to the south, Spanish Peaks to the north, and a breathtaking panorama of mountain ranges all around, the landscape is exquisite. "We wanted to build here, and we wanted our home to pay homage to Montana," Peter says.

Before building their vacation home in Montana, the couple had been regular visitors to the state. "We vacationed at the same guest ranch in Paradise Valley for many years," Cathy says. They felt a connection to the region and decided to build their own vacation retreat. A friend suggested they look at the Yellowstone Club, a private community close to Big Sky. "The community was beautiful and had all the amenities we were looking for," Peter says. They picked out a gorgeous piece of property and immediately started planning.

The Spanos had a clear vision of what they wanted. The home had to embody a sense of timelessness and grandeur yet at the same time feel welcoming and blend into the natural environment. Integral to pulling the project together was veteran architect and project manager Darin Hoekema, with Locati Architects. He worked with the Spanos closely to design, build, and finish their home. "Peter and Cathy knew how to meld ideas and pull materials together," Hoekema says.

**Located high in the Gallatin Mountains near Big Sky, Montana, Peter and Cathy Spanos' ranch-style home reflects its natural surroundings with a refined mix of locally quarried stone, recycled timbers, and custom wrought-iron accents.**









The Spanos also knew how to chose a prime piece of property. Like a peninsula, the land has a natural, well-defined building site, which drops off dramatically on three sides to the valley below. "To meet Peter and Cathy's vision, we designed a low-slung, ranch-style home that would blend into the terrain," Hoekema says. "We also oriented the home to capitalize on the uniqueness of the land, giving every room a spectacular view. Finally, we used building materials that reflect the indigenous environment, such as large timbers, stone, and iron, and carried those elements through to the interior."

Cresting the circular driveway, guests are greeted by a grand yet welcoming portico. Natural stone steps cascade from the landing to the drive. Pillars constructed of massive, recycled timbers fitted on a stone base support the arched trusses and overhang. Instead of floor-to-ceiling glass in the oversize windows, the Spanos opted for small, individual panes of glass that catch the sparkle of the alpine sun.

Just inside the entry is the formal great room. "It is quite dramatic," Peter says. The room features a vaulted ceiling supported by large, hand-hewn, arched trusses reinforced by artful iron rods. On the far wall enormous windows frame the stunning mountain panorama. To the left is an immense stone fireplace with arched detailing and a massive wood mantel.

"The sheer size of the room posed a challenge," says Lynnelle Oseroff Stoner, the Spanos' interior designer. "We had to create a scale of detail that made it warm and invit-



**OPPOSITE:** A massive stone fireplace and floor-to-ceiling windows with stunning mountain views give dramatic flair to the great room. **TOP:** The Spanos chose a round dining table for ease of conversation. An antique Welsh cupboard tucked into a nook in the arched stone wall adds to the intimate feel. **ABOVE:** In the breakfast nook, an antique Middle Eastern turban spinner was retrofitted into a one-of-a-kind chandelier.



**TOP:** The master suite is located in a private wing and features a sitting area, full breakfast/beverage bar, private deck, and gas fireplace. **ABOVE:** The master bath features natural travertine tile and stone and wood elements. **OPPOSITE:** A 1,200-square-foot covered deck enables the family to enjoy spectacular mountain vistas while dining outdoors.

ing," she says. To accomplish this, Oseroff Stoner started by creating two different sitting areas. Using standard-size furniture, she chose over-scaled cushions and soft upholstery. Additional oversize accents, such as the painting above the fireplace and custom iron sconces that rest above the mantel, help tie the space together.

"Cathy wanted a traditional yet comfortable motif—she chose a vibrant palette of reds, bold yellows, golds, and greens to use throughout the house along with a mix of patterns and fabrics," Oseroff Stoner says. The color scheme complements the home's wood and stone accents.

The dining area represented a change of direction and interior design application. Here the home transitions from formal to informal space. A blend of antique and rustic pieces along with more refined furnishings visually expresses the transition. The Spanos chose a casual round dining table for the space. "Dinners here are more informal, and the round table makes conversation easier," Cathy says.

Off the kitchen is a bright and cheery informal breakfast nook. "Peter and I eat here all the time," Cathy says. "See the chandelier? We always ask our guests to guess what it is—so far, no one has," she says. The chandelier was fashioned from an antique Middle Eastern turban spinner. The designer added custom shades to soften the unusual fixture.

The Spanos' master suite is located in a private wing. The



large bedroom has a gas fireplace, full breakfast bar, sitting area, and private deck where the couple can comfortably spend time. Soft sage greens and butterscotch-colored plaster walls soften the timbers and stone. The head of the bed sits on one side of an arched stone wall, and on the opposite side is the master bath. Accessible from either side of the bed, the bath features neutral travertine tile on the floor and countertops along with dual vanities and custom-made sconces. The bath makes a perfect backdrop for a richly colored, 100-year-old antique Gabbeh rug from the Middle East, which is exquisitely displayed down the length of the bathroom floor.

Another treasured area of the home is the outside deck, which offers spectacular mountain views. At 8,000 feet in elevation, summers are short and evenings are cool. Knowing this, Peter and Cathy built the large covered deck with amenities designed to maximize time outdoors. On one side is the sitting area, where willow chairs with large, comfortable cushions entice guests to enjoy the outdoor fireplace. Across the way, a handmade hickory dining table offers perfect seats for a stunning view of Pioneer Mountain, Yellowstone Club's private ski area. "We are so fortunate to have found our place under the Big Sky and to have found the architects, builder, designer, and local artisans who helped us put it all together," Peter says. "It is magnificent yet tranquil and exceeds our every expectation."



## Resources

**Locati Architects**, (877) 587-1139

Jerry Locati, A.I.A., Principal

Darin Hoekema, A.I.A., Project Manager

**Lynnelle Oseroff Stoner Architectural Design**

(406) 763-4216

Lynnelle Oseroff Stoner, Interior Designer

**SBC Schlauch Bottcher Construction, Inc.**

(406) 585-0735; [www.sbconstruction.com](http://www.sbconstruction.com)