

# Mountain Living

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12 >





One of the challenges was bringing the existing structure up to code. Logs were sandblasted and the old, wood chinking was replaced with a synthetic material. The building was made strong enough to withstand four feet of wet snow.

Photography by Judy Lawrence

After she left a tropical island for a Wyoming cabin,  
this homeowner discovered that Western living is in her genes.



By Elizabeth Clair Flood

# Pioneer Spirit

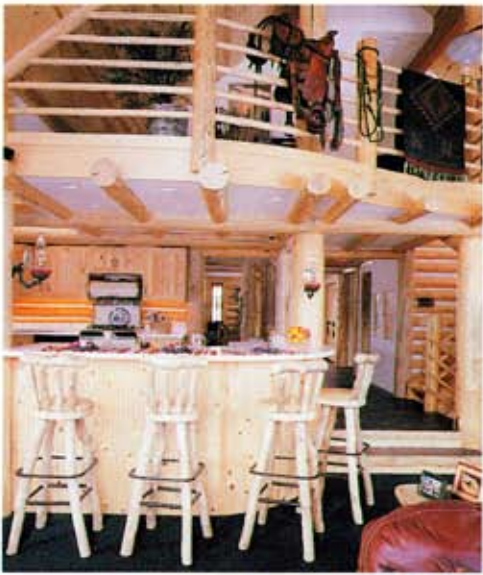
**A** former resident of the Bahamas, Nancy Breitens-tine first visited Jackson Hole, Wyoming, on an elk-hunting trip with her brother a few years ago. A neat, tidy, blond woman, she hardly looks like a hunter. In fact, she admits, "I'd never hunted before. But my brother had invited me to come along; he had done a lot of research, and it was his lifelong dream to go elk hunting. I thought I'd try, myself."

Nancy didn't bag an elk, but she did discover a whole new world and, subsequently, another adventure. "I loved the area so much, I decided to treat myself to another week for my birthday," she says. When the owners of the bed and breakfast where she was staying announced that their place was for sale, Nancy

laid down her money and made plans to move her two young children, Karl and Tammy, to Wyoming.

Nancy's grandfather hunted in Wyoming; her mother grew up in the town of Midwest, Wyoming. And soon after Nancy arrived in Jackson Hole, her sister called to tell her that she had discovered through extensive Internet research that their family was related to fur trapper David Edward Jackson, Jackson Hole's namesake. Davy Crockett was also a distant relative. "I didn't know all that until I got out here," Nancy says. "But maybe there was a pull to the place. Some kind of draw."

After Nancy purchased Twin Mountain in 1994, she and her children camped out in a tack shed on the property to oversee renovations. The old place, a log home with wood



chinking, needed work. The home wasn't plumb, the floors sagged and rodents were found in the chinking. Nancy also envisioned an addition with a modern kitchen looking out over a larger living space.

She found her contractor when her dishwasher went kaput. Nancy was in Sunrise Lumber buying a new appliance when a clerk referred her to David Getz. Upon Getz's suggestion, local architect Christopher Moulder of Dubbe-Moulder joined the team.

All agreed that they wanted to preserve the original structure's integrity. "The biggest obstacle was bringing the existing structure up to code," Moulder says. They had to make the building strong enough to withstand four feet of wet snow and an earthquake.

To start, Getz and his crew gutted the place and made the structure level and square. They sandblasted the logs and pulled out the old chinking, refilling the cracks with a popular synthetic material. They kept the two main-level fireplaces but redid each facade with local stone. They laid maple flooring in the dining room and the kitchen and alder flooring in



Original cabin logs are incorporated as accent pieces into the new structure. Four standing-dead logs frame the main fireplace in the great room, *left*. Many of the river rocks and field stones used to construct the fireplace came from the property.





the game room. Nancy placed a handmade wooden compass in the hallway's slate floor to help anyone who's gotten turned around in the canyon where Twin River sits.

The addition—a great room and a new kitchen—became a large, comfortable space. Many of the fireplace stones come from the property; large windows frame views of the mountains and the Hoback River nearby. Commodious couches and lodge-

## One of the family's favorite ways to relax...

pole furniture made by local artisan Leland Johnson make the room enchanting for friends and family. Getz incorporated some of the original logs as accent pieces and created the banister from old buck and rail. Cove lighting installed around the top of the room highlights art pieces and gives the room a subtle, inviting glow in the evening. Four standing-dead logs from Ten Sleep, Wyoming, frame the main fireplace.

From her new kitchen, Nancy can participate in great room conversations while she prepares a meal. She loves her new appliances—an old-style stove and a refrigerator and microwave to match. One evening, while watching the film *The Quick and the Dead*, Nancy sketched swinging saloon doors, which Wyoming Millworks turned into a whimsical kitchen entrance.

Other nostalgic images pop up throughout the home. Nancy calls her downstairs powder room her "inhouse" and

has decorated it with vintage outhouse pictures, an antique shelf for magazines and a horse-bit toilet paper holder. In her dining room, a wooden bear sculpture peeks in the window. Downstairs in the poolroom, a cowboy sculpture holds the cue sticks; upstairs in Karl's room, Nancy decorated the wall with a lariat and hung a variety of family cowboy hats on the wall. And in her own bathroom, she soaks in an old-fashioned slipper tub while a fire crackles.

One of the family's favorite ways to relax after a busy day is to sit in front of their outdoor fireplace, feeling the heat and

## in front of their outdoor fireplace, feeling the heat and watching the stars.

watching the stars. They can also be found soaking in the built-in hot tub. "We work hard, and we play hard," Nancy says.

When they aren't maintaining their home—hosting a few guests, mowing the lawn, cleaning, shoveling and snowblowing heaps of snow—they are off exploring the national forest on horseback in the summer or snowmobiling trails in the winter.

Recently, Nancy hunted with a friend, a retired hunting guide, and killed her first deer. "It must be one of those things," she says, shrugging her shoulders. "I find hunting fun because it's challenging. It tests all your skills and abilities." The spirit of her pioneer ancestors appears to be in her genes. ▲

*Elizabeth Clair Floor, the author of Cowboy High Style and Old-Time Dude Ranches Out West, lives in Wyoming.*