

# Art and Architecture

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PICTURE-PERFECT VIEWS AND WESTERN MASTERPIECES  
MEET IN A WYOMING HOME.



By Janice Brewster

**P**erched at the top of a small ladder in the middle of the 35 acres she and her husband had purchased in Wilson, Wyoming, Georgene Tozzi looked out on a view of the Grand Tetons and knew she'd found the spot.

"We said, 'Okay, this should be our living room right here,'" Georgene recalls. Finding just the right location for their mountain home hadn't been easy. Georgene and her husband, John, traveled often from their primary home in San Francisco to spend time on their property. "We walked it and walked it and walked it," Georgene says. That day, with their architect and his ladder along, the couple made a final decision and set the plans for the home in motion.

"They wanted a home that they could have their family, their children, and their friends come to," says San Francisco area designer Linda Daly, who worked with the Tozzis on the home. Idaho architect Jim McLaughlin was charged with designing the 10,000-square-foot home in a style that would lean more toward refined than rustic.

"The Tozzis responded to a number of homes that we'd done in the Jackson area that used natural materials: native stone and wood

*photography by Roger Wade*





An antique Navajo rug takes center stage in the Tozzis' living room, its colors defining the palette for the room's furnishings. Overhead, shed antler chandeliers and wood trusses fill the vaulted space with character.

One of the couple's bronzes keeps watch over the living room seating area. Twin staircases lead to the home's bedrooms and guest suite. The wall of the living room that resembles log construction is actually wide waneboard siding finished with chinking.



and timbers," McLaughlin says. "In this case, they did not want a log home per se." McLaughlin specified wide wane-board siding, finished with chinking to make some walls resemble log construction. He added timber posts and beams for even more wood flavor.

Visually anchoring the home are tons of stone, brought to the site from Montana. "We were taken by these large stones because their scale really gave an interesting character," McLaughlin says. Combining stones from different quarries created an intriguing blend of color, size, and texture. "We were very fortunate to find a stonemason who was very, very talented," the architect says. "So we worked closely with him to incorporate these really large slabs of stone."

Inside, wood posts rise from the floor and support trusses that span the ceilings. The timbers were salvaged from older buildings, giving the new home a feeling of age and providing structural stability. "If you look closely at those timbers, a lot of them have bolt holes," McLaughlin says. "We like to use aged timbers because they're done twisting and checking, and so they're more reliable. Plus, we liked the bolt holes and the character that they have."

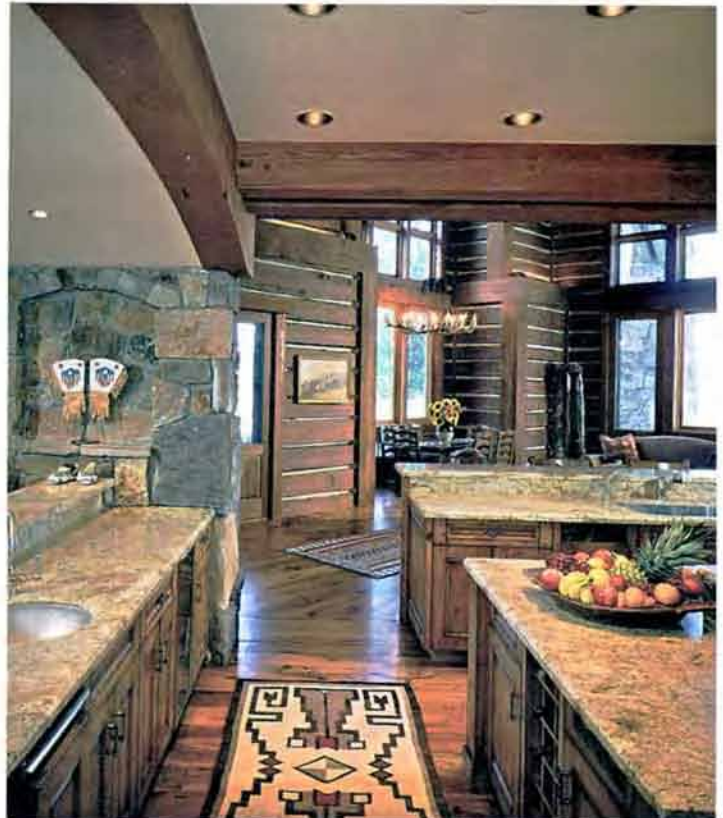
Truckloads of stone and dozens of timbers form the home's shell, but with the site's picture-perfect views, the home also called for lots of windows. "The hardest part of planning this house was there's a view from every single room," Georgene says. "Even in the back of the house, there's this beautiful creek. There's a beautiful view no matter which direction you look."

McLaughlin planned expansive windows to frame the masterpiece views outside, but the Tozzis also asked him to consider another factor in his design: their collection of Western art. The Tozzis purchased their first painting in the late '60s; since then they have acquired significant modern and contemporary art, including works by Diebenkorn, De Kooning, and Thiebaud.

After buying the Wyoming property, the couple expanded their collections to include Western and Native American pieces, including paintings and bronzes by Joseph Henry Sharp, Frank Tenney Johnson, Charles Russell, Frederic Remington, and Howard Terpning. Northern Plains artifacts and beadwork round out the collection.

"When people are collectors, then when we're designing a home, we'll attempt to create special places for artwork or the ability to display art," McLaughlin says. "It's always a challenge on these absolutely beautiful sites, because the tendency is to have windows everywhere. But you also need to have a certain amount of wall space to accommodate art and books and for practical reasons." The architect carved out niches in the home's walls to accommodate treasured pieces.

"We really wanted to accentuate the view, the architecture itself, and the art," Georgene recalls. Still, even if the home's finishes and furnishings might play second fiddle, they would define the home's look and feel. For help with the interior, the



Beaded gauntlets displayed in a stonework niche off the kitchen are just a part of the Tozzis' collection. The homeowners limited the cabinetry to floor units, to keep the view of the Tetons uninterrupted.



Georgene Tozzi fell in love with this railroad baron's bed from M. Craig before she and her husband even started construction on their Wyoming home. In this whimsical bed, a hidden compartment built into the headboard serves as a place for the baron to stash his cash.



**The Tozzis rerouted a stream on their property to create a pond. Now, they look out across water to view the Grand Tetons from their living room. A variety of covered and uncovered outdoor living spaces accommodate all kinds of weather.**

Tozzis called on Linda Daly.

The Tozzis' art collection was a boon to Daly as she planned the interior spaces. "It's wonderful when you have a client like this, that they have these treasured collections and things that they're really interested in," she explains, "because you can just look at it and you know exactly where they are and you don't have to read the people."

Daly started with the Tozzis' antique Navajo rugs. "When we were looking at fabrics for the dining room chairs, for the sofa, for the pillows, the Navajos were very much where we took our color hints from," she says. The soft grays and browns Linda chose also complement the coloration of the stonework.

Working closely with custom furniture makers, Daly designed oversized pieces for the home's living room. Bigger, Daly knew, would be better for this room, where the ceiling soars to 30 feet and the floor space measures just over 1,000

square feet. "With all of the stone and the scale of the home and this room alone," Daly says, "you had to be able to work with that and still have something that could be comfortable and feel very much like a home."

Of course, the heart of any home, big or small, is the kitchen. "When I got the plans," Daly recalls, "the kitchen was pretty bare." She and Georgene immediately set to work, creating a room that would accommodate both everyday meal preparation and large catered parties. The custom-made cabinets' carved doors conceal plenty of functional storage. The floor cabinets had to work hard, because Georgene didn't want the kitchen's view of the mountains disrupted by hanging wall cabinets.

The same logic dictated twin staircases in the living room. "When you walk in the front door, the owners wanted to have a clear vision of the mountains," McLaughlin explains. "A more

typical solution would have been a stairway up one side with a bridge that connects the two sides, but they didn't want that interruption."

Guests arriving at the Tozzis' home are treated to an awe-inspiring view of the mountains even before they go inside. McLaughlin's vision and landscape contractor Dean Kunz's plan included a driveway that wends its way through the woods, curves by the side of the house for a glimpse, then brings visitors to the front door, with a clear view of the Tetons rising up beyond.

The view is meaningful: After all, the mountains' beauty lured the Tozzis to Wyoming years ago. "We came when our kids were little," Georgene remembers. "We stayed at Jenny Lake Lodge, rode horseback, hiked, and enjoyed the whole Western experience. Never did I ever dream I would be moving here. I mean it was just so beautiful."

Then, years later, with their three chil-

dren almost grown, the couple returned to the area. "We saw it through adults' eyes," Georgene says. What they found was a Western town with a thriving arts community, an exciting mix of people, and a range of outdoor activities, all surrounded by breathtaking landscapes. The appeal was too strong to resist: They decided to make part of Wyoming their own. "It's gorgeous here," Georgene says. "We love it."

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