

In the living room of Christi and Jay Turner's retreat in Big Sky, Montana, which was designed by Markham Roberts, the custom furniture includes a tufted sofa upholstered in a Holland & Sherry fabric, another sofa covered in a Rogers & Goffigon fabric, a cocktail table, and a pendant light of iron and parchment; the artwork includes a Julia Condon print and a moose-head sculpture by Shawn Smith. **OPPOSITE:** In the entry, the console and settee, covered in a fabric by Lisa Fine, are custom made, the pendant light is by Studio Van den Akker, and the wool rug is from Tibetano. For details, see Resources.



ELEVATED EXPECTATIONS

When a Nashville couple buy a property in a famed Montana resort, they forgo the traditional ski-lodge aesthetic and ask designer Markham Roberts to create a fresh approach to mountain style

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When a young family from Nashville approached Markham Roberts to design their vacation home in Montana's Rocky Mountains, he jumped at the chance. But that didn't mean there weren't challenges. For one thing, the couple—real estate developer Jay Turner and his wife, Christi—had very different conceptions of what their getaway should look like. He envisioned a house that leaned traditional, much like their antiques-filled 1930s Georgian Revival in Nashville. But she was in the mood for a significant style change and requested something sleek and ultra-contemporary.

In addition to making both of them happy, Roberts had another concern: the even-greater-than-usual pressure to do something entirely new and unexpected. Because he'd long had connections to Nashville through an old friend, the designer has done several homes in the city, which is how the Turners knew of his talents. In fact, it was those acquaintances who had lured the Turners to sell their longtime ski home in Deer Valley, Utah, and purchase a

retreat in Montana's famed Yellowstone Club, a 13,600-acre private ski area and golf resort in Big Sky, where high-profile neighbors include Bill Gates and Justin Timberlake. What's more, Roberts had already designed three residences in the posh resort community for the couple's friends. "I knew they would be gathering at each others' houses," Roberts says. "For me, it was a point of pride to do something completely original, that really spoke to who the Turners are."

Roberts was arguably the ideal person for the task. The Manhattan-based designer, who early on worked for Mark Hampton, is known for being fluent in every idiom—from English country to contemporary loft—without the need to have a signature style. To appease both husband and wife, he seized upon a sophisticated yet minimalist, organic take on a rustic lodge for the 7,000-square-foot home. The concept was up-to-date enough for Christi while satisfying Jay that the ambience would feel warm and inviting, with none of the sleek chill that can accompany an ultramodern approach. Most



In the family room, the sectional sofa, which is upholstered in a Manuel Canovas fabric, pool table, pendant light, and Moroccan rug are all custom designs; the circa-1950 Swedish chair is by Carl-Axel Acking, the portrait of Philip Glass is by Chuck Close, and the landscape photograph was taken by Christl. For details, see Resources.



The outdoor deck's sofas and chairs by Sutherland have cushions upholstered in a Perennials fabric; the bronze pendant and round cocktail table are custom designs, and the stool is African. **OPPOSITE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP:** In the dining room, chairs by Mattaliano, covered in a Jasper stripe, surround a custom oak table; the cabinetry is fitted with pulls by Rocky Mountain Hardware. The breakfast area's chairs are by Hans Wegner, the console is by Julian Chichester, and the banquette is upholstered in a Peter Dunham ikat; the walls are sheathed in white oak, the flooring is reclaimed oak, and the artwork is by Karen Gunderson. A view of the nearby hills and mountains. For details, see Resources.





important, the house, to which the family escapes five or six times a year throughout the seasons, was designed to be kid-friendly: a place where their three children can lounge at ease after a winter day of skiing, or a summer afternoon of swimming, tennis, and fly fishing. “We didn’t want anything too formal,” Christi says. “We wanted to feel as though we were away from all that.”

Roberts began by paring down the inside structure, which had been hastily assembled by the developer. Sheetrock was banned, replaced by plaster and local stone on the walls, as well as a variety of reclaimed woods throughout. These weathered textures highlight the geometry of the rooms, giving each space both a sense of history and a modern edge. “I was trying to frame the view,” the designer says, “without making the home feel cold or empty.”

Custom furniture was a must, Roberts explains, because the proportions of the rooms are complex and imposing; some of the ceilings are nearly 20 feet high. Fabric colors are subdued—grays and beiges reign—so there is no competition with the lush, ever-changing palette of the outdoors. Roberts’s special trick is to design furniture that is deceptively comfortable; the sofas and chairs look well structured and cleanly formal but are engineered to be luxuriously relaxed. To further polish the effect, he mixed in pieces of fine modern furniture, including chairs by Hans Wegner and Jean-Michel Frank.

Respecting Christi’s desire that her vacation spot be simple and uncluttered, Roberts made sure that the few decorative objects would have maximum oomph. The art is bold and unfussy, like the round painting of a moonscape above a banquette and the black-and-white Chuck Close portrait of Philip Glass that hangs in the downstairs family room. Meanwhile, a whimsical moose head made of plywood by the Austin-based artist Shawn Smith hangs at the top of the living room wall above a bookshelf Roberts designed to highlight it. The family consider it their offbeat take on the usual over-the-hearth animal-head trophy and refer to it as “Fred.”

On a warm night, nothing makes Christi happier than being out on the vast deck. There, she can keep in sight both the calm, handsome interiors of her family’s mountain refuge and the spellbinding panorama of well-groomed wilderness that surrounds her. “Whether I’m out with the paper, a cocktail, or with nothing at all, just looking out at all this,” she says, “this is the only place I can imagine being.” ■