

FULL HOUSE

A modern-day “Brady Bunch” family builds a refined-rustic home that supports their playful lifestyle in Big Sky

A BDDW dining table, comfy MTC Studio chairs and a Holly Hunt chandelier were chosen for the dining room. An heirloom portrait of one of the homeowners' distant relatives was painted by famed 19th-century artist Thomas Sully.

STORY MICHELLE JOHNSON PHOTOGRAPHY DAVID O. MARLOW
ARCHITECTURE MILLER RODELL ARCHITECTS
INTERIOR DESIGN ABBY HETHERINGTON INTERIORS
CONSTRUCTION ON SITE MANAGEMENT

When Sue and Hap Brakeley were planning their Montana getaway home, two priorities were at the crux of the design—family and fun. The couple has an abundance of both: After they tragically lost their previous spouses in 2002, Sue and Hap were each left with three children to parent solo. A year later they were introduced by a mutual friend and immediately hit it off, leading to their marriage in 2004, which combined Sue's three girls and Hap's three boys (ranging from 11 to 20 years old at the time) into one big family.

"We definitely are the 'Brady Bunch,'" Sue says. Hap adds: "And back then we had the Alice and we had the dog, so it goes even further."

Now that the children are grown, living all over the country and starting families of their own, the Brakeleys wanted a space where the whole family could gather for holidays and vacations. And with the intention of spending nearly half the year in Montana (the other half is spent in Florida), Sue and Hap wanted a home that would accommodate their mutual hobbies of skiing, golfing and throwing parties.

"A lot of people say you've got to go where the kids are, but we went the other way. We said, 'Let's go create cool places and we'll make sure the kids can come anytime they want,'" Hap says, to which Sue adds, "If you build it, they will come."

As previous owners of a condo in the Yellowstone Club's main lodge, they were captivated by Big Sky's jaw-dropping views and accessibility to ski slopes, but wanted more space to spread out.

"All the sudden we wanted to be there more often," Sue recalls. "Every time we had a break, we wanted to be on a plane going to Montana."

The Brakeleys purchased a 1.25-acre lot perched on a ridge that backs up to the golf course on one end, faces the mountains on the other, and is still only a few minutes from the main lodge. They hired Joe Roodell of Bozeman-based Miller Roodell Architects to devise a footprint that capitalized on the versatile landscape.

"It was this bridge of two different environments—from the manicured golf course to the ruggedness of the mountains," Roodell explains. "We knew we wanted to bring those two together, so we straddled the ridge and accomplished that through form." >>

"I wanted it to be a sanctuary," Sue says of the master bedroom. A set of oversized Jean De Merry Sao chairs and a Kelly Wearstler table cozy up to the fireplace. The antique mirror is from Architect's Wife.





HIDDEN TOUCHES “We wanted to have some magic in every room you walk into,” says Hap Brakeley of his getaway home in Montana’s picturesque Yellowstone Club. He and his wife Sue worked with their design team to add an element of surprise in each space via hidden high-tech functionalities. Here, a few of their favorites.

WARM WELCOME The Brakeleys traded the traditional ding-dong doorbell tone for a more modern greeting. Each time a guest rings, “Welcome to My House” by rapper Flo Rida plays throughout the home. **CLOSING TIME** Situated in the main living space, the bar is where the Brakeleys do most of their entertaining. “It’s where Hap reigns supreme,” Sue says. Once the party dies down, bottle shelving can be concealed by retractable steel covers that operate with one click. **SECRET SOAK** On the back patio, a hidden hot tub is unveiled with the push of a button. An 8-by-12-foot section of the patio sinks down, becoming the floor of the hot tub, while water pours in from the sides. **BEHIND DOOR NO. 1** The basement wine cellar can only be accessed via a hidden door that’s password-protected. **NO ADULTS ALLOWED** In an upstairs media area, a teal 4-foot-tall “hobbit door” opens to a 5-by-5-foot play space enjoyed by the Brakeleys’ toddler granddaughter.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A bison bust, an antler chandelier and “Cowboy” by Wallace is Art add a Western touch to the living room. MFGR Designs manufactured many of the custom steel accents throughout the home, including the locker room’s metal doors. The colorful rug is from Amadi Carpets. “The bar itself is a work of art,” says Hap of the custom creation by MFGR Designs. Orange MTC Studio bar stools add a pop of color; a Holly Hunt pendant light hangs above.



Fringe, fur and geometric patterns add texture to the library’s seating options. The Kirsten Kainz chandelier is made of discarded toys and gadgets. A mini door leads to a toddler-sized play space, perfect for the Brakeleys’ granddaughter.



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—HOMEOWNER SUE BRAKELEY

Montana Lighting Service fashioned a light fixture made from old globes for the guest bedroom. The beaver fur stools are from North Mountain Gallery.



Built by Bozeman-based contracting firm On Site Management, the 14,000-square-foot home includes four master suites, a junior suite, a bunkroom for grandchildren, a downstairs theater, ample outdoor patio space and commanding views. Sue and Hap's master plus the open-concept living, dining and entertaining area comprise the main floor, while the guest rooms are tucked away for privacy. To satisfy the couple's differing styles—Hap prefers traditional log beams and barnwood while Sue leans more contemporary—the design team combined indigenous Montana moss rock and reclaimed wood with steel accents and clean lines.

Interior designer Abby Hetherington worked with the Brakeleys to add a “fun factor” to every room. A colorful and eclectic mix of art, playful lighting and luxurious fabrics provides contrast to the structure's Western materials palette, while pops of orange, pink and teal blues found in the furnishings offset the home's more dominant earthy hues.

Since the home's completion in 2017, the Brakeleys have hosted a slew of dinner parties, holiday celebrations and movie nights in the fun-filled manse. (They love hosting so much that they even invested in their own 20-foot red carpet for an Oscars-themed event.) Even so, when the party winds down, they have a space that still feels warm and intimate enough for two.

“From a functional point of view, this home works so well because when it's just us, you can shut off the rest of the house. And if there are guests there, it opens up,” Hap says. Sue adds: “We love to entertain, whether it's two people or 100 people. That's what makes us happy, being surrounded by family and friends.” ◊

THIS PAGE: Bunk beds with teal-blue C&C Milano headboards offer extra sleeping space for grandchildren and visitors. The bunk room and adjacent powder rooms are adorned in rustic timbers for a modern take on the traditional log cabin.

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