



# Ready for the Next **50** Years

written by Doug Copsey • photographed by Giuseppe Saitta







**T**he house was born, you might say, in 1959. It was a quaint little cabin, right on the lake. And for the next 50 years the Compton family spent their summers enjoying all that McCall has to offer. When they finally sold it, the new owners contacted Steve and Patricia Minor of McCall Craftsman Homes, who have been designing, building and remodeling homes for 37 years—17 of them in McCall—to talk about what they could do to make it their own.

“It was very important to our owners to re-use as much of the old structure as we could,” explains Patricia, “so we saved all the red fir ceiling material, which ran throughout the house, and had it re-milled to use for the door and window trim and the stair treads.”

The owners wanted more room, but they liked the basic location of the old house, so they decided to keep that, do a little reconfiguring, and add a new section to one end, where an old covered porch stood.

“Steve gave his initial design to the owners and together they made some modifications,” Patricia

remembers. “So it was a true collaboration, which makes the home even more special.”

The original Arizona flagstone fireplace was one item everyone wanted to keep, so the Minors cleaned it up and added a sandstone mantle to dress it up a bit, then converted it to gas. Behind it were three small bedrooms and two tiny bathrooms. The new design opened the area up into two bigger bedrooms and one large bathroom, and added a powder room under the stairs in what used to be a closet. They also kept the original wood ceilings in the bedrooms, and added big windows to emphasize the view.



The stairs up to the second floor were moved to open up the old living space, and the upstairs loft was turned into another guest bedroom. Steve added a dormer to make room for a bigger window, creating a stunning view of the lake and mountains. The stairs leading down to the full basement were left in place, and although a spacious walk-in wine cellar was installed, there was still plenty of room left in the basement for future use.



On visiting the Minors' home, the clients fell in love with the circular-sawn oak floors and the black filler that had been rubbed into the saw marks and knotholes, so they decided on the spot that was the flooring they wanted throughout their new home. When it came to the staircase landing, the oak proved to be a beautiful complement to the ornate wrought iron railing, a design element contributed by the owners' 15-year-old son and fabricated by Danny's Welding in McCall.

The add-on begins at the open entryway that extends from the front of the house, where the Minors installed a portico supported by log posts and running the entire length of the house and on to the lake.

"It was the new owner who suggested the arches," says Patricia, referring to the arched beams that begin outside the front door and continue all the way through the foyer. "The design is even repeated in the double glass doors that lead onto the terrace in back. It's all in the details."

The massive use of glass that flows from the entryway through the spacious living room not only promotes the incredible view, but also seems to bring the outdoors inside.

"That's one of Steve's design goals," Patricia points out, "to make the house look like it grew out of the earth instead of being built on top of it. And also to take



complete advantage of this gorgeous place we live in.”

The log posts supporting the high ceiling tie into the look created in the portico and entryway. They also continue the rustic, raw-wood theme, as do the multiple wood mantelpieces in the huge stone wall housing a real fireplace. All the woodwork has a soft, aged appearance and feel achieved through a light sandblasting and application of oil.

The kitchen may seem a little small at first glance, but as you turn to look out into the spacious living room, the feeling disappears entirely. Steve was able to enhance the openness even more by extending the exposed kitchen ceiling beams out into the living room a few feet.





“It carries your eye from the solid, lower ceiling in the kitchen to the high, vaulted ceiling out in the living room,” explains Patricia. “Otherwise the shift from one room to the other would be a little too abrupt.”

The wood block island is a story unto itself. When a neighbor of the owners cut down an 85-year-old black walnut tree that had graced their North End home in Boise, they donated a 2- x 12-foot log to the remodel effort. Just transporting it to McCall was no small task, and once the piece was milled, the owners had to turn the back bedrooms of the lake house into a makeshift kiln and dry it with a huge heater and blowers for three months to get it to the right moisture content. Then the finish carpenters reshaped, sanded and lacquered it, creating a true showpiece—and a little more history—for the home.

Just off the kitchen, a mud room encloses the laundry area and another unique feature designed by the owners. It looks like a typical wooden armoire, but it’s vented top and bottom to facilitate a small baseboard heater at the back. Just hang up your wet ski clothes, boots, gloves, and anything else you like, and close the door. Voilà: they’re dry in no time!

There’s another surprise in the master bath: a Japanese soaking tub, complete with jets that spew champagne-sized bubbles.

“Specifically requested by the owner, who likes being in all the way up to her neck,” says Patricia with a grin. “She also found all the lighting fixtures. All I had to do was order them and have them installed.”







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In order for the master bedroom to take full advantage of the spectacular view, Steve took an unusual step. He cocked the room on an angle so that when you wake up in the morning, you're looking straight down the Narrows on the lake. And as if that weren't enough, the wall next to the windows is made up entirely of the same stone as the fireplace in the living room, exactly opposite. Steve even left a few "clinkers" sticking out from the rest of the wall to give it a feeling of having been there forever.

The landscaping was the final step in making the house a home, and High Mountain Nursery did a beautiful job of using only native plants around the house and adding more trees than were removed. The back terrace is almost as large as the entryway and living

room combined, with beautiful stonework by Rocky Baumgartner of Gene Baumgartner & Sons. The log post theme continues out there, too, and High Mountain Nursery tied it all together with stone slabs that make up the terrace and a broad stone pathway leading down to a seating area near the lake.

Steve and Patricia will tell you that every house has its own personality, created by studying how the site presents itself and then overlaying the clients' hopes and dreams.

"And if you don't make decisions too soon," Patricia adds, "there will come a point where the house will tell you what it wants. Because it's history; it's honoring the past. I like to think this house finally grew up to be what it always wanted to be." 