



Photos: Shaye Fitzgerald





# PEACEFUL AND SERENE

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## :THE BARBOUR RANCH:

By Brad Shannon

The Barbour residence, on 90 acres near Lory State Park, is what Tom Barbour calls the culmination of a 40-year process for him and his wife, Suzie.

For 25 years, the couple lived a stone's throw to the south, in a conventional home two doors away. They always admired the land to the north, becoming friends with the owner, a veterinarian who lived in a 1967 ranch home. Eventually, the vet retired. Suzie, a nurse, kept an eye out for him. He sold the property to the Barbours, who told him he could remain in his home as long as he wished.

Once he passed away, the Barbours moved in for a year to get a feel for the place, how it felt through the seasons, and to design how their new home would look and feel, and where it should be placed.

They worked with Frank Vaught and Taylor Meyer of Vaught Frye Larson Architects, and Lee Barker, of Lee Barker Builder, LLC, to design and place the home. "Tom played at my wedding, so there's a personal connection," notes Vaught. "We do a lot of residential architecture, but a special house like this doesn't come around every day."

Suzie focused on the floor plan, while Tom worked on exterior details. Once that process was complete, they moved into a rental unit that Barker had renovated for them in Laporte, and the old ranch was taken down.

They ultimately chose to build on that same spot, with a focus on energy efficiency. The living room was placed at the spot where it was in the old house, along with the fireplace, which, with help from the geothermal radiant heat system, keeps them warm and toasty through the worst winter gales, and also pre-heats their hot water. "It's amazing how designing and building has evolved," Tom says. "The materials, fireplace science, HVAC—everything is just so impressive." The home's long, low structure, from the garage on the south end to the master suite on the north, also benefits from being, as Tom says, "hunkered down" behind the hogback.

Once designed, the build took about 15 months, including blast work to set the foundation into the red sandstone of the hogback. "They wanted to be very respectful of the site and do something unique," recalls Vaught. "They did not want a McMansion: they wanted a functional home where they can spend the rest of their years together."

The home does not immediately appear to be recent construction. That's thanks to painstaking effort by the landscape designer and the entire construction crew to ensure the area around the home, especially in front, was not disturbed during the build. "We took pictures and planned how we would protect all the ponderosa pine around the house," Barker recalls. "They were very concerned with that, so we took great care to preserve the habitat."

Vaught adds, "They did not want this to feel like a brand-new

















house; they wanted it to feel like it was lived in. New, but with a warm feeling, and integrated into the landscape in a way that doesn't feel like it was just plopped onto the site."

The Barbours had been perched near the top of the ridge in their prior home and had been subjected to decades of harsh and suddenly changing winds and weather. Here, they saw the opportunity to use the red sandstone ridge on the west side of the lot to give them protection.

The rambling, rustic Montana-lodge-style home's appearance belies the technology inside. The geothermal system that drives the radiant heating and cooling system has four wells built by Colorado Geothermal sunk beneath the driveway. Spray foam insulation on the underside of the roof, Anderson windows from Builder's Supply Inc., and double thick walls in selected spots are covered with solid, native stone from a local quarry. Energy-efficient lighting and appliances round out measures taken to reduce ongoing utility costs.

The result, notes Chap Rose of RPM Mechanical, is an unmatched comfort level. "The whole home, and the objects inside, are warmed by the system in winter," he notes. "There's no air circulating, so the allergens are low, and the system is silent." Radiant cooling, an unusual approach, works well for this home, which does not have a high cooling load, particularly given the dry climate.

The feel of the home as having always been here carries inside.

"We wanted a design, a décor, that was new, but looked and felt lived in, that had a bit of an aged feel," says Tom. To get that, they turned to Aneka Kerlin of Aneka Interiors Inc. "They gave me a great blank slate, with the lot and the structure. Tom favors traditional style, Suzie a more rustic look, so it was interesting and fun to blend those two," Kerlin notes. "We wanted warm, natural colors and lots of wood. We worked to bring color from the surrounding area inside and use it on the exterior, but I didn't want to be redundant with wood on wood on wood. You see that so often, with stain on floors, cabinets, and trim."

The result is an interesting, broad, earthy palette of warm colors and textures that are anything but dull and repetitive. Hand-scraped wood flooring undulates beneath your feet. Knotty alder trim and cabinets complete the mudroom. Painted kitchen cabinets in olive divert from the typical approach. A custom powder room features a sliding barn-style door and vanity designed by Kerlin and built by Ryan Schaefer of Trimrite Woodworks using weathered Wyoming snow fence. Internal doors and trim by Sun Mountain Inc. are distressed for an old-school feel. Exterior and interior stone veneer, including fireplaces and mantels and some of the interior countertops and work surfaces were provided by The Rock Garden. Kerlin specifically sought to use natural granite in places, which she says has a leathered texture rather than the usual shiny finish.

The basement has a guest suite, along with a room for Tom's









Homeowners Tom & Susie Barbour and Builders Lee Barker and Alex Barker

audio and exercise equipment, and a place where he retreats to work on his music. A lower-level project/hobby garage provides room for storage and an automobile restoration in process. Suzie has easy access from here to her horses and a dedicated laundry area to handle saddle pads, horse blankets, and cleaning and storage for a host of equine equipment.

"We built this just the way we wanted it, from the efficiency and amenities to the ranch design, because this is our last home—this is where we will live out the rest of our lives together," says Tom. "Suzie and I could not be more thrilled, with the process, our partners, and the end result."

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