

# PEAK

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# A PLACE BY



# THE RIVER

*A modern fishing cabin on the Taylor brings the inside outward*

BY KATHERINE NETTLES

In the Taylor Canyon southeast of Crested Butte, lined with towering pines and granite, the occasional breaks of prairie feel like welcoming pockets of expansive wilderness hugging the canyon's namesake river.

*continued on page 11*



*Architect Dan Murphy, Pike Builders, Inc. and I.D. Studio came together to create an old-world style fishing retreat for a summer-loving family using reclaimed wood, steel and the home's natural surroundings*

PHOTOS BY JAMES RAY SPAHN





*continued from page 9*

The Herring family retreat is tucked into one such prairie pocket, nestled against the pristine waters of the Taylor River. As part of the Wilder development, the Herring home site spreads across several acres to accommodate more nature than brick and mortar—or in this case, log, chink and stone.

The home was completed in late 2021 and designed as a guest house and fishing cabin for the Herring family of Dallas, Texas. The family has design plans for a main house and tentative plans to build it in the next few years. In the meantime, the 2,500 square foot guest house makes use of every available space and the well-planned architecture and design achieve a welcoming, spacious layout able to accommodate 14 people or more.

The home was originally designed by architect

Dan Murphy as a timber-framed house. But, according to builder Paul Pike, who co-owns Pike Builders with his brother Steve, the timber frame design evolved dramatically as designer Carolina Fehino Alling of I.D. Studios was encouraged to build on her creative vision. Carolina incorporated ornate steel elements into the structure and design, inside and out that create a more modern mountain style.

“So we incorporated some steel features like steel I-beams, steel gussets and steel chinking inside and out,” Paul says.

Carolina’s unique steel chinking concept, perhaps the first of its kind, complements the sleek black roof, window frames and other modern elements, and had to be installed in tandem with the log stacks as opposed to traditional methods that fill in afterward.

*continued on page 12*

*continued from page 11*

Pike Builders specializes in timber construction, and Paul recalls the former round-log structures of the 1980s that were standard in log home designs for a long time. In recent decades, reclaimed wood has taken off, and according to Pike, in the last few years, that look has been a mainstay in local design. “The mountain modern home has started to show its colors here, and Carolina took it to a different level with this house,” he says.

Carolina used contemporary features in fine detail, from continued use of steel inside at the bar kickplate, to kitchen accents to the custom made fireplace.

The home also uses a shadow line, which is a minimalist, etched-in gap between the walls and baseboards. Dry wall plaster used on the window returns, American clay plaster applied to the walls and a concrete hearth also achieve a variety of textures and smooth modern finishes.

“There are so many details you wouldn’t notice right at first,” says Paul of the countless delightful discoveries to be made throughout the home. “But they make all the difference.”

To introduce additional warmth, the reflective ceiling in the kitchen and hallway and all the interior doors and door jambs were made using reclaimed white oak from a nineteenth-century New Hampshire church floor. Each board is peppered with black nail holes hinting at the story of the wood’s previous life.

*continued on page 14*



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—PAUL PIKE OF PIKE BUILDERS, INC.

continued from page 12

The main floor holds an open kitchen, dining room and living area with vaulted ceilings and windows that face the river just steps away, where property owners share fishing rights to the entire section of the Taylor within the Wilder Ranch area.

A main floor primary bedroom suite and bunk room with eight large bunk beds offer comfortable accommodations for the Herrings and their three middle to high-school-aged kids and plenty of friends. There is also an over-sized laundry and mudroom, a powder room and a covered walkway leading to the single car garage.

Upstairs, custom made handrails and timber trusses embedded with LED lights lead the way to two more en suite guest bedrooms allowing for additional couples or families to spread out. The bedrooms have built-in bench seating and cushions that can double as trundle beds for additional sleeping quarters.

Pike Builders custom built all of the home's cabinetry and much of the furniture as well, from built-in bench seating in the kitchen and bedrooms to the dressers, wardrobes, mud-room and bathroom consoles.

Every space is well utilized, with built-in cabinets, drawers, a pantry and shelving nooks taking advantage of every available area that might otherwise have been unused space.



The interior spills out into the exterior property from every angle, with expansive flag-stone patios and pathways leading to the river and a garden-lined pavilion leading to a large fire circle surrounded by Adirondack chairs. Views of the surrounding canyon can be enjoyed from every side of the home.

Even the garage is a rustic modern master-piece, with steel framed glass doors and trim. Inside, a tidy line of fly fishing vests and rods stand ready for the next fishing trip and various lawn games are ready for the call of starlit summer evenings and the next barbeque.

"It's such a pleasure to build homes in a setting like this," says Paul. And despite the framing having started in March 2020, as COVID precautions restricted the number of workers allowed at a build site and stalled supply chains, the whole project was complete in about 18 months. "We just had to be really proactive," he says of the ordering and planning process. "Especially in this home, when there are so many specialty items, we were always looking one or two months ahead. It's a complete team involvement."

Paul put on his own tool bags alongside the crews, he says, and in cases like this one, his clients become friends after working together so closely for a time. The Pike brothers and the family now get together when the family is in town to enjoy barbeques and their combined handiwork. "It's a beautiful place up here," says Paul. "And some of the homes that have been built here over the years are in magical places."

