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✦ GLORIOUS GARDENS  
AND THE DESIGNERS BEHIND THEM



ARCHITECTURE Van Bryan Studio Architects  
INTERIOR DESIGN Lathie Poole  
CONSTRUCTION MDM Construction

# Water's Edge

WITH SALVAGED ARCHITECTURAL ELEMENTS, HANDCRAFTED FINISHES AND STORIED ANTIQUES AT EVERY TURN, THIS FAMILY HOME ON THE MADISON RIVER IS STEEPED IN HERITAGE AND GROUNDED IN ITS WILD MONTANA SETTING

INTERVIEW BY ELIZA CROSS PHOTOGRAPHY BY GORDON GREGORY



Nestled in a pastoral setting amidst towering trees, Lee and Lathie Poole's elegant home looks like a picture-perfect page from a calendar of European country manors. In fact, the house sits on an unbridled 300 acres of land near Bozeman, Montana, where the Madison River provides an ever-changing landscape. To create a cohesive interior design for the four-bedroom, six-bathroom house—which was originally a much smaller cabin—Lathie Poole scoured antique stores and flea markets, commissioned local artisans and found new uses for old items. The result: A welcoming and peaceful retreat that blends European tradition with rustic high-country style.

**MOUNTAIN LIVING:** You couldn't have found a more perfect setting.  
What led you to this particular place?

**Lathie Poole:** We always loved the Bozeman area, and we fell in love with this property on the river. We walked the land numerous times to find just the right site for the house. It's on a high point overlooking the river, which is endlessly fascinating. >>



**ML:** You added on to the property's original cabin and built your new home in several phases; tell us about the remodel.

**LP:** We sometimes say that we "added a house on to the house" because the new addition is significantly larger than the original square log-framed cabin. We worked with Van Bryan Studio Architects in Bozeman because although we wanted a traditional look for our home, we liked their modern design sensibilities.

**ML:** The materials you chose beautifully marry the rustic with the traditional. What are some of your favorites?

**LP:** The living room floor is inlaid with a checkerboard design of limestone and purple heart wood from South America, and in the foyer there is a "yellow brick road" of yellow marble that runs throughout the main level. Lee and I hand-picked the Madison Valley river rocks that are now in the chimney of the trophy room and family rooms, and local stone masons installed them.

**ML:** Did the architecture guide your decisions when you began to design the interior spaces?

**LP:** The architecture has a decidedly traditional, European feel to it, and that led me to explore the use of antiques. For instance, the home has 28 antique doors imported from France. I began looking for European antiques in New Orleans, and a fortuitous meeting with an antiques dealer in Baton Rouge gave me the bug to go to France. In all, I took six trips to France to buy furnishings. The first place we visited was the flea market at Saint-Ouen, near Paris. It's acres and acres of everything you can imagine, from silverware to castle gates. We bought many wonderful things for our home at the flea markets, from a huge antique armoire to a vintage grandfather clock that keeps perfect time.

**ML:** How in the world did you get those treasures safely back to Montana?

**LP:** There are companies right at the flea market that handle the shipping and paperwork for you; it's surprisingly easy. Plus, the shippers pack everything so carefully you'd think they were transporting your purchases from the Louvre to the Smithsonian! >>



THIS PAGE: The European-styled kitchen is filled with antiques; the French lamp over the island was originally a gas fixture that hung over a billiards table. OPPOSITE, FROM TOP: Sofas flank an ornate carved fireplace mantel inset with yellow marble. Now restored to their original grandeur, the French stair railings in the foyer were rusted and covered with peeling paint when Lathie Poole discovered them in an antiques store in New Orleans.

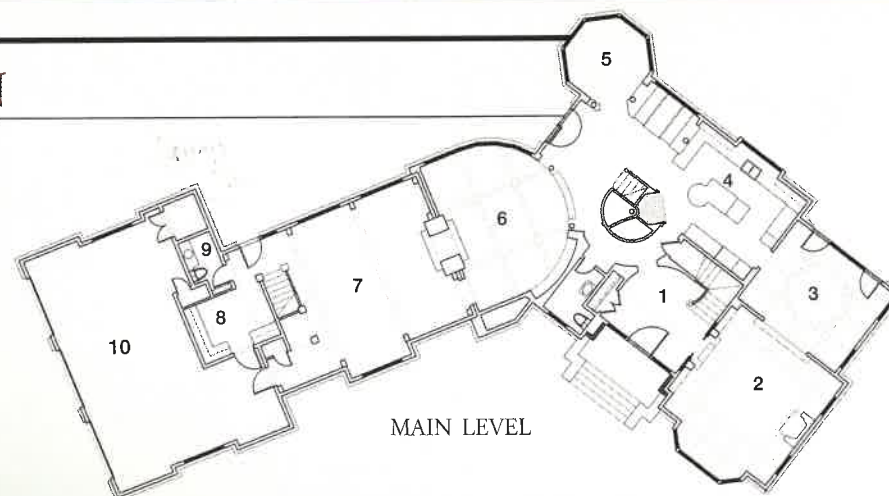




## FLOOR PLAN

a traditional addition

- 1 Foyer
- 2 Living Room
- 3 Dining Room
- 4 Kitchen
- 5 Sun Room
- 6 Den
- 7 Recreation Room
- 8 Laundry Room
- 9 Powder Room
- 10 Garage



**ML:** Is the beautiful iron staircase in the foyer imported as well?

**LP:** I bought the railings from an antiques dealer in New Orleans, and when I first saw them they were rusted and covered with peeling paint. They are originally from France, and there were just enough of them to fit the staircase. A local metalsmith added the top and side railings and made sure the design met local building codes.

**ML:** Tell us about your extensive art collection.

**LP:** We owned the Hole in the Wall art gallery in Ennis, Montana, for many years and are big supporters of local artists. We love American art depicting the West and wildlife, but our tastes also tend toward European and traditional artwork; we also have some paintings that my grandmother did.

**ML:** What's your favorite season at the house?

**LP:** That's a tough question. In the wintertime when the temperatures stay below zero for several days, the river freezes and it's quite spectacular. Still, I'd have to say I like summer best because it's just gorgeous here. We see baby birds and fawns, and the river becomes so alive. We also love working in the gardens, and summertime brings lots of house guests.

**TOP:** Soft fabrics and beautiful antiques mix to create a peaceful retreat in a comfortable bedroom that overlooks the river. **BOTTOM:** The clouds that hover over the Gallatin Mountains provide an ever-changing panorama.



## Gracious Design


Lathie Poole shares her favorite elements in the house.

**THE KITCHEN SINK** "It's mounted in a piece that was originally a church altar in France. We had new gold leaf applied to the angels' faces and added a drawer."

**THE ARCHED STONE FIREPLACES** "Lee and I hand-picked the river rocks from our property."

**THE LIVING ROOM'S ANTIQUE CRYSTAL CHANDELIER** "I found it at a flea market in France, but all the wires were crumbling so it had to be rewired."

**THE PINK MARBLE MASTER BATHROOM** "The vintage sink stand was originally a French barber sink. We added eight inches to the base and painted it green."

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