

BIG SKY JOURNAL HOME

Mountain Living and Architectural Design





Where the Livin' is *Easy*

Blending high
design with a
relaxed lifestyle on the
lake at the Whitefish Yacht Club

*Written by Seabring Davis
Photography by Peter Gibeon*

For the record, there is no Whitefish Yacht Club. But if there were, Rob and Chris Schumacher would be its ambassadors.

The Schumachers were drawn to Whitefish for the lakeside living. They built a home centered around that easy pace

of summer on the water where that means a swim before breakfast and waterskiing at midnight under the full moon. With them they brought a spirit of fun that infuses their house and the friendships that extend from time spent enjoying Montana together.

Opposite: On the shores of Whitefish Lake, Locati Architects designed a traditional stone and timber home that makes lakeside living easy. **Below:** Hunter and Co. interior design responded to the homeowners' desire to blend high style with casual living. Custom lighting, contemporary upholstery and clean lines complement the rustic timbers in the great room.





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“When we came up to Whitefish I was surprised there were no sail boats let alone a yacht club — apparently it’s not very windy but when it is, it really blows,” explains Rob, who grew up in the San Francisco Bay area sailing out of the St. Francis Yacht Club and later in college from Marina del Rey. “So I bought a small racing sail boat and thought it would be a great spoof to start the Whitefish Yacht Club and also become its Commodore.” In the last decade he has handed out 200 Whitefish Yacht Club hats and other paraphernalia, admitting, tongue in cheek, it’s very fun to be called the Commodore.

Above: Incorporating a contemporary art collection with a water theme was a crucial inspiration for the interior design in the home. Above the mantel, Gregg Chadwick’s painting “The Pale Hour” brings a serene tone to the room and on the left “Parkers Pool” is by Greg Miller. **Opposite, clockwise from left:** For a playful departure, interior designer Hunter Dominick added matching chairs overlooking Whitefish Lake to create a private seating area off the great room. • In the open kitchen a branch chandelier made by a Brazilian artist adds a sculptural element to the room. The blue glass tile backsplash links with the interior color palette. • A nook in the wine room provides a casual tasting area.



Clockwise from above: Clockwise from above: Essential art pieces set the tone for the contemporary style throughout the house. This oil on panel in the entryway, entitled "Pink Hose" by Kelly Reemtsen is a subtle nod to the water theme in the art collection. • Matching chaise longues in the master suite reinforce the sense of relaxation. • Extending the living space to an outdoor room that connects to the kitchen is where most mornings begin and evenings culminate after a day spent on Whitefish Lake. Malmquist Construction continued the exposed trussing from the main house to the exterior.



The result is a home that embodies a sense of high style with the practicality of comfort for an active family.



That playfulness extends to the way their home seamlessly connects indoor-outdoor living. Upon walking through the front door the first view is the lake. From its sloped lot the house cascades down to the water, with expansive windows, open floor plan in the main living area, a patio that spills out from the kitchen, down toward the fire pit, a big yard replete with trampoline for the kids and ultimately down to the dock.

Designed by Locati Architects and built by Casey Malmquist of Malmquist Construction, the house flows in a way that makes the lake ever-present. From the art collection to the blue elements, which define the interior design color palette, the theme of water is predominant.

"We really try to pull the inside out and the outside in so that you feel like you are part of your surroundings," says Jerry Locati principal of Locati Architects. Locati's firm, based in Bozeman, has cultivated a reputation for architectural design

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that doesn't stop at the front door, but encompasses the whole site.

At the Schumacher residence, that translates to a traditional rustic stone and timber design that resonates with the homeowners' longtime connection to Lake Tahoe and recent love affair with Montana mountain culture.

Attracted to Whitefish for the friendly atmosphere ("We've made lifelong friends on the lake," says Rob.) and the location — a lake ideal for water skiing and warm enough to swim in any time of the summer, incredible winter skiing at Whitefish Mountain and great golfing nearby — topped with a quaint mountain town that boasts fine restaurants and airport to make all of it accessible from California within two hours (a much shorter commute than a trip to Lake Tahoe).

"We wanted it to be a really special home," Rob says,



"What was most important to me was that when you walked in the door you had the feeling of walking out to the lake."

To get that effect, Locati Architects created large, open spaces for gathering family and friends, with careful attention to managing the scale of those larger spaces with timbers and other structural elements to keep the feel warm, friendly and interactive, keeping the family dynamic and fun as the driving forces of the design.

"We took architectural elements from Montana vernacular, Adirondack summer camps, mountain lodges, and kind of stirred the pot with all of them to create a new twist on what is possible lakeside

at Whitefish," explains project architect and partner, Greg Dennee, of Locati Architects.

Interior designer, Hunter Dominick, of Hunter & Co. in Whitefish took some risks in interpreting the Schumachers'

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vision of their home and completing the design package.

"They came to me with a home that is clearly a traditional rustic style and said they wanted a more contemporary interior living space," Dominick recalls. "They wanted to carry a water theme throughout the home, based on three pieces of art and a blue couch for the great room."

The result is a home that embodies a sense of high style with the practicality of comfort for an active family. Most significantly, custom lighting defines spaces uniquely and stands out as sculptural statement pieces throughout the home. In the kitchen, for instance Hunter & Co. placed a branch-chandelier, handcrafted by a Brazilian artist; it elevates the design of the kitchen, which links to an outdoor dining area.

The Schumachers trusted Hunter entirely and did not balk at her application of the wilder zebra-print chairs in a sitting area that overlooks the lake (Officially, Rob's favorite nook for reading.), nor the handmade silk rug in the living room where colored fish swim serenely. Each room displays a distinct custom feature, from the starlight chandelier in the living room to the hand-applied birch bark that lines the walls of the master

suite and even more so to the theater, where the blue element continues in the giraffe-print bean bags and cozy blue couches.

"We discussed how much time they would be spending at the house and how they were going to live there," says Hunter. "It was clear that it needed to be a functional home; we are coming into an era of livable spaces, where a high design style can also be casual and comfortable."

Acknowledging every detail, Hunter & Co. selected every fixture, furnishing and finish, right down to the linens and silverware. She granted their wish to elevate the traditional home with contemporary style that suited their tastes.

"We wanted a totally different approach to a stone and timber house in the mountains," admits Rob. "Adding Hunter's perspective to the mix brought a feeling that is light and fresh because of the color palette she chose and a style that is contemporary, but also timeless."

Ultimately, casual and approachable, the Schumacher home was built to enjoy the summers at Whitefish Lake, where, as Dennee puts it, "... this home is best enjoyed when wearing shorts and flip-flops." **H**



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