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# LOCATI ARCHITECTS



## THE JOY OF LIVABLE DESIGN

Ed. Note: Locati Architects, located in Bozeman, has been designing fine residential and commercial properties for decades. This interview with firm partners is an enlightening glimpse into the firm's approach to world-class design.



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JERRY LOCATI



Locati Architects Partners (left to right): Greg Dennee, Steve Locati, Jerry Locati, and Kyle Tage

**LET'S START AT THE CONCLUSION OF ONE OF YOUR ARCHITECTURAL PROJECTS. WHAT DO YOU HOPE YOUR CLIENTS HAVE GAINED FROM THE EXPERIENCE?**

**JERRY LOCATI (OWNER/PARTNER):** In 30 years of Locati Architects' existence, we have not yet had a client who didn't have high expectations for their building project and our role in it. Inherent to building a home is that the process is deeply personal and important, but we also think it should be enjoyable. Our clients have come back to us, or recommended us to their friends, or otherwise put in a good word, because we have lived up to the high expectations and created something of real value for their family.

**LIFESTYLE IS CERTAINLY A KEY ELEMENT IN LOCATI DESIGN, PERHAPS THE KEY ELEMENT. CAN YOU ELABORATE ON ITS IMPORTANCE?**

**GREG DENNEE (PARTNER):** We make every effort to understand people's lifestyle as the first step in our work. And, perhaps more importantly, we work with them to imagine the life-

style they aspire to! There's a common misconception that we sell "plans," which we think is largely a disservice to the kind of work we do. We strive to get to know our clients on a personal level, and our built work reflects their character and lifestyle as much as our own.



Learn all about  
Locati's firm

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**YOU MAKE A STRONG CASE FOR LANDSCAPE AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF YOUR DESIGN PROCESS. DOES THIS COME AS A REVELATION TO YOUR CLIENTS?**

**KYLE TAGE (PARTNER):** Our clientele tends to be fairly sophisticated and comes to us with an articulate idea about our architecture. Understanding that our designs don't stop at the doors is a key element to our design ethos. We don't have to do much convincing with our clients that creating outside space through landscaping is as important as designing the perfect kitchen.

The process really begins with us earnestly trying to learn as much about the client and their lifestyle as possible, so that we can hone in on a design that reflects each client's detailed needs. The more information we can collect at the onset, the easier the design flows for us. We have been fortunate to work with some pretty spectacular properties, and often times our design work is more about letting the land speak more than the architecture.

**FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT ONCE SAID "THE MOTHER OF ART IS ARCHITECTURE." WHAT DOES THAT MEAN TO YOU?**

**GREG DENNEE:** For us, there are a few sides to architecture that differentiate it from other forms of art. First is the technical intensity of the work, where we have to fold in all of the practical issues like engineering, constructability, sustainability, and cost to create truly beautiful solutions. Second, the task in creating something that improves lives is a humbling challenge, but connecting people's lives to others, connecting them to the outdoor landscape, and creating space for memories to be made is certainly rewarding work. Perhaps that is what Mr. Wright meant, but I still enjoy a great painting, too.

**HOW DOES LOCATI ARCHITECTS ASSIST ASPIRING ARCHITECTS IN THEIR EDUCATION AND CAREER CHOICE?**

**JERRY LOCATI:** We support two programs to help aspiring architects and youth. The first is the Montana State's School of Architecture, which year after year turns out remarkable

students and progressive student work. Our endowment there is among the largest in the School, and we feel fortunate to continue to give to the local university where all four partners in Locati Architects, as well as nearly all our 40 employees, earned their degrees.


Secondly, we started an internal program for our employees that provides scholarships to their children for any aspiration that leads to personal growth. Sometimes this is related to art and architecture, but more often it is travel, education, school, athletics, and adventure. Whatever it is, if it demonstrates a path to more fulfillment and opportunity for our children, we are happy to use funds from our architectural business to support it.



**FINALLY, WHAT IS THE BEST ADVICE YOU CAN GIVE SOMEONE WHO IS SEEKING ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES?**

**STEVE LOCATI (PARTNER):**

Probably two things: Surround yourself with the best possible team, and give yourself enough time during the earliest part of

the design process to enjoy it. With the team, it's important to find architects and designers you resonate with, builders and crafts people you respect and trust, and create clear expectations for the entire team. But, it's equally important to let this team "do their thing," and make smart recommendations to the project after they understand your vision. 

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