

SanOLD SOUL

TUCKED INTO A VALLEY WITH MOUNTAIN VIEWS IN EVERY DIRECTION, A NEW MONTANA HOME TREADS LIGHTLY ON THE LAND AND LOOKS LIKE IT'S BEEN THERE FOR CENTURIES.



WRITTEN BY PAULA M. BODAH PHOTOGRAPHED BY AUDREY HALL

The Montana home of Max Baucus, former U.S. senator and ambassador to China, and his wife, Melodee Hanes, was designed to be an unassuming presence on the land. Variable rooflines in a mix of metal and shingle along with natural wood siding help the home keep a low profile.



OPPOSITE LEFT The painting by Rudy Autio, originally purchased by Max's mother, inspired the color choices for furniture and accessories. Touches of Art Deco-Era glam include the dramatic cascading glass chandelier. **OPPOSITE RIGHT** The guesthouse gets plenty of use. Says Max, "This is a bit overstated, but people say Montana is nine months of winter and three months of friends and relatives." **THIS PHOTO** A double-sided fireplace of Montana moss rock separates the living and dining rooms.



MELODEE HANES AND MAX BAUCUS WON'T TAKE OFFENSE IF YOU FIND YOURSELF SO AWED BY THE VIEWS THAT YOU BARELY NOTICE THEIR HOME IN MONTANA'S GALLATIN VALLEY. IN FACT, that's what they hoped for when they joined forces with Paul Bertelli and Ashley Sullivan, principals at Bozeman-based JLF Architects.

Max, who served as a U.S. senator for more than 35 years, is a Montanan to his very soul. And Melodee, despite her Iowa roots, is as mad about the state as her husband. They envisioned a home that would keep the focus squarely on the spectacular natural beauty surrounding their 4-acre parcel outside Bozeman. "When we first met with Paul, Max said, 'We don't want people to drive by and say, Oh God, who lives there?'" says Melodee, a former attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice. "Being ostentatious is just not Montana." Max agrees: "Montanans are unassuming people. We don't put on airs."

The house they imagined would sit quietly on the land, appearing as if it had been there for generations. "They wanted a homestead feeling with a true connection to place," Sullivan says. Sullivan and Bertelli began by designing three distinct buildings: the main house, a guesthouse, and—the mainstay of any old homestead—a barn. "We wanted an iconic structure," Sullivan says about the barn, which holds the garage below and a guest apartment above.

Reclaimed wood—from the barn's weathered red boards to the mix of fir, pine, and oak vertical siding on the main home and guesthouse—enhances the sense that the home evolved over generations. Variable rooflines, some shingled and others clad in



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—HOMEOWNER MELODEE HANES

a type of galvanized metal with a flat, gunmetal-color finish, will take on a mottled patina over the years, lending depth and texture.

The age-old feeling continues indoors, where the architects used reclaimed wood on walls and ceilings and introduced Montana moss rock to further the connection to nature. “We like to use outdoor materials indoors,” Sullivan says. “They’re infused with a sense of history because they’ve lived lives before us.”

The front door sits in a breezewaylike, glass-enclosed connector that joins the barn and the main house, welcoming friends and family with a stunning view through the house to the Bridger Mountains beyond. A left turn leads to the main living spaces, including the spacious kitchen, clean and modern with its white cabinets, and the high-ceiling living and dining rooms separated by a double-sided stone fireplace. Bifold doors that run the length of the north and south sides of the dining room open to let the mountain breezes through and entice dinner guests to step outside to take in the vistas.

Interior designer Melina Datsopoulos, of Missoula-based Trappings Studio, worked with the couple to select furnishings that infuse the home with warmth and a touch of glamour. The colors in a painting by Montana artist Rudy Autio that hangs in the dining room inspired the living room’s deep-blue velvet sofa and sunset-hue mohair toss pillows. The clean-lined furniture was chosen with an eye to keeping things light and airy. “Big, overstuffed furniture is totally not their vibe,” Datsopoulos says. “Mel and Max understand their own aesthetic, and I helped them get there.”

Indeed, everything about the house suits the couple. “Virtually daily,” Max says, “I say to Mel, ‘Boy, I love this place.’” □

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OPPOSITE Washing the dishes is a pleasure when a wall of windows offers endless views. The island’s chairs wear faux leather, ideal for quick cleanup when the couple’s three young grandchildren visit. **THIS PHOTO** The clean, modern kitchen nods to its Western location with a range hood clad in reclaimed wood.

THIS PHOTO A chenille-upholstered headboard with silver leaf trim adds a touch of Hollywood allure to the main bedroom. **OPPOSITE, TOP LEFT** The main bath is a luxurious, spa-like oasis with more than a hint of glamour in the limestone floor, marble walls, and silvery-gray vanity topped with luminous quartzite. **OPPOSITE, TOP RIGHT** A powder room is tucked into the hallway leading to the main house. The arched opening leads to the garage. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM LEFT** A bedroom in the guesthouse keeps cozy with walls of salvaged wood. **OPPOSITE, BOTTOM RIGHT** The main entrance to the house features a glass breezeway that connects to the barn. Guests step in to a stunning view of the Bridger Mountains beyond.



"YOU CAN SEE RAINSTORMS OR SNOWSTORMS WAY ACROSS THE GALLATIN VALLEY, 10 TO 15 MILES AWAY. IT'S A BEAUTIFUL WEATHER KALEIDOSCOPE, ALWAYS CHANGING."

—HOMEOWNER MAX BAUCUS

