



# Old Farmhouse Charm, Modern High-Tech Convenience

BY NANCY KESSLER  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY THOMAS LEE

*Bozeman couple mixes it up  
for the 21st century*

A small pond highlights the back yard.

**O**n THEIR FIRST DATE IN 2006, Greg Dennee told his future wife Stephanie about the house he wanted to build. "I seem to remember us enjoying a glass of wine and looking at plans," Greg said. "Really, what girl could resist that?"

Evidently he was right — the young couple moved into their dream home in Manley Meadows north of Bozeman in March 2009. Getting to that point, however, took a lot of effort.

"Once we had the property, we came over a lot and sat in the field visualizing the house," said Stephanie, 29. "We spent so much time planning, I started calling it the 'hypothetical house.'"



**Farmhouse Charm**

At nearly 3,600 square-feet, the house is hypothetical no more. Greg, 31, and now a partner in Locati Architects, actually began designing his ideal home back in high school. "But the only changes I made were to enlarge the closet and add a garden," Stephanie laughed.

"It's a big house, but it's not enormous," said Greg. "It's scaled for a family." That was fortunate since the couple learned they would become parents as they designed their home, built by Schlauch-Bottcher Construction, which they now share with their 1-year-old daughter Reese and Border collie Roo.

Although neither Greg nor Stephanie was raised on farms, both the Bozeman natives said they had wanted to grow up on one. The "nostalgic" house Greg designed "has modern touches with a farmhouse theme," he said. "I wanted to create a modern home for a modern lifestyle without reinventing the wheel."

Clad in reclaimed weathered barn wood and stock fencing, the house appears as if it had been added on to over years. Part of the multi-level roof is covered in rusted corrugated metal while copper gutters and chimney caps are acquiring a browned patina. The exposed roof rafters are highlighted by recycled fir soffits. Red barn wood in the upper gable above the garage is reminiscent of an old loft door and a bump-out at the end of the garage appears to be a stone root cellar. The land was graded up from the road to make the garage appear smaller and so "it doesn't feel like a towering home," Greg said.

West of the entry, the structural framing is on the exterior, similar to construction of a grain silo. On both the north and south sides of the house, angled bracing made of reclaimed timbers and beams, many complete with notches from their previous industrial uses, hold up roof overhangs. "That is my inner architect coming out," Greg joked. "I want to see all the structure that has a purpose."

The entry itself is highlighted by a custom alder door, stone patio and floor-to-ceiling wall pieced together of tumbled sandstone. "I like the fact that it looks a



little raw," Greg said. "It makes the entrance friendly, not imposing."

Inside, the natural weathered colors continue, as does the farmhouse feel. The sandstone wall extends into the entry, with a view straight through the dining room's glass doors and beyond to the Spanish Peaks. But the first pieces of furniture seen are the long and narrow recycled wood farmhouse dining table and an antique oak workbench set against the back of one of the large and inviting leather sofas. "It still works," said Greg, as he turned the vise wheel.

The Dennees also focused on making the house as efficient as possible, incorporating both recycled materials and high-tech devices. One of the initial modern touches is the radiant-heated concrete floor throughout the first story, stained root beer brown. Less visible are the house-wide centrally controlled sound and low-voltage detail lighting systems.

Left of the entry is a large kitchen, with an apron front farmhouse sink facing the Bridger Mountains, antique brick backsplash and white 1910-style flush inset cabinet doors. But there's also dark brown soapstone-looking counters made of recycled paper, a television suspended beneath a cabinet, paneled Sub Zero built-in refrigerator with two freezer drawers, six-burner Wolf cooktop, convection oven and warming drawer.

Stephanie, who loves to cook, said, "I'm a better cook in this kitchen. I have to rise up to meet my equipment."

Centered in the kitchen is a walnut-topped cooking island with an inset hammered nickel sink. Above it hang a pair of reproduction vintage industrial lights. Tucked past the refrigerator is a large pantry with a serious splash of color — tomato soup red walls. A door from the breakfast nook in the opposite corner leads to the barbeque and back patio.

The kitchen is open to both the dining and living rooms. To provide visual separation between the spaces, Greg varied the ceiling in each. The kitchen is topped by a white raised bead board ceiling, and the living room sports a coffered



**The back porch has lots of room for entertaining. Above, all beams inside the house are recycled fir, including these that make up the coffered ceiling in the living area.**





**A small work area hides just off the main living space. Below, whitewashed beams support the ceiling in the master bedroom. Right, windows open from the bottom in a small eating area off of the kitchen.**

ceiling of timbered beams and recycled fir. In between, a recycled fir ceiling runs straight from the outer entry through the dining room out to the back outdoor living area.

"We love the look of wood," Greg said, "but I was very cautious not to use it to death. We wanted the house to be light and bright."

A glass-door wine closet is a focal point of the dining room with mushroom walls. The spacious living room, highlighted by a massive sandstone and boulder fireplace with an antique beam mantle, appears even larger due to the southern glass wall connected to the outdoor patio. All of the first floor walls are faux painted to look like older plaster, with multiple-piece baseboard and picture frame trim of stained and glazed knotty alder. The windows are made of wire-brushed cedar, adding another element of texture to the home.

Hidden from the living area behind the fireplace lies a small double office, with Greg's drafting table and Stephanie's desk for her floral design business. An "electronics" nook with the integrated sound system components and space for DVDs, games and books is tucked

around the other end of the great room, along with a Bosc pear-painted guest bath holding a custom built vanity topped with travertine.

The main entrance to the master suite is past the office, heralded by a stunning painting of horses on newsprint. The airy room facing south toward a pond with double doors leading outside was situated to block the back patio from prevailing west winds. The grey-brown walls, dark brown furnishings and custom solar see-through shades that block sunlight are offset by a white linen rug and quilted curtains, while the room is topped with white-washed timber trusses.

The master bath "is where things get more modern, and more retro," said Greg. "It's set up for privacy but still has a floor-to-ceiling window." Nostalgic white subway tile and bead board ceiling are combined with a walnut counter and double vanity with modern shallow rectangular sinks. A separate soaking tub abuts the double glass and tile shower, with a heated bench and shower heads set at specific heights for Greg and Stephanie.

A huge walk-in his-and-her closet with built-in dresser space lies beyond the bath, and has direct access to the laundry room, sporting custom tin counters and a built-in ironing center. "We never have clothes, clean or dirty, in the bedroom," Stephanie said. "And a separate toilet room keeps the bath spa-like."

Another door from the master suite leads to the back hall lined with prints of historic Bozeman, which swings back around to the electronics nook or straight into the mudroom where there's another door into the laundry, an entrance to the oversized garage where Stephanie has flower coolers and a work area, and a stairway to the second floor.

At the top of the stairs is a family room with vintage schoolhouse lights, integrated theater sound, a peaked ceiling and views of the Bridgers. If ever needed, a wall could be put up to turn the room into another bedroom. The vaulted ceiling guest bedroom with grey mist walls and a sleigh bed sits next to the guest bath, notable for the grey crackled porcelain subway tile shower surround and traver-



tine-topped vanity.

Finally, Reese's room, with a bead board vaulted ceiling, grass green walls, white furniture and a delightful tulip mural next to the crib, boasts a kid-friendly scaled closet Greg redesigned when they learned Reese was on the way. The room also has a farmhouse-style bath with vintage tile wainscot and floor, and separate shower and toilet. All the upstairs whitewashed cedar windows have pull-in screens and push out panes with white shutters while the floors are *continued*



## Farmhouse Charm

covered in earth-tone natural dyed wool carpeting. While the family appreciates what they have inside, they favor the outdoor living spaces, designed for separate functions. "It's a great house for entertaining, indoors or outside," Stephanie said. "It lives really comfortably."

A large seating area is highlighted by the pond and a sandstone fireplace set against the master bedroom wall. Guests can eat at the large table next to the dining room and the family can gather in three Adirondack chairs farther on. A deep overhang keeps the sun out in summer but allows light to heat the concrete interior floors in winter. And a horseshoe pit to the east is complemented by "large flat rocks architecturally set for beer," laughed Greg.

"It took a long time from design to moving in," he added. "But I didn't do it myself. The builders and craftsmen had an opportunity to showcase their fine detailing in this house, and it shows. It was a wonderful process." ☺

*Nancy Kessler is a freelance writer in Livingston and a frequent contributor to the Bozeman Daily Chronicle's niche publications.*

The front facade of the home shows recycled barn wood siding, including some built to replicate the outside of an old grain bin.



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