



# HOT SPRINGS HIDEAWAY

Northern Idaho is a wilderness paradise of wildlife, mountain ranges, trout-rich rivers and lakes, and high-elevation peaks. It includes the headwaters of multiple major rivers and is criss-crossed by National Scenic Byways. To say that its scenery is breathtaking would be an understatement. Heart-stopping is more like it.

Into this mountain fastness, an empty nester with grown children and a love of tranquility alighted on a small property that might as well have been ten times larger for its sense of space, privacy, wildlife, and wilderness. To be there is to experience a complete immersion in nature; despite its proximity to the road, the avian life is so robust the birdsong drowns out all other noises. The property is inaccessible half the year except by snowmobile, so while most use occurs in the summertime, any construction would need to be sturdy and the compound self-sufficient enough so that someone snowed in during a blizzard could emerge unscathed a week later. The overriding factor for the owner was its strong sense of quiet, peace, and tranquility. For that reason, she desired her own home separate from the other lodgings and outbuildings—just one in a compound designed to take advantage of the site’s most unique feature, its natural hot springs.

The owner had extensive experience in homebuilding and design and had admired the work of Miller Roodell Architects for years. She told architect Candace Miller that she knew she wanted a rustic style, but a version of that style that would be an accurate reflection of who she was, of her interests and influences. An inveterate traveler and student of eastern philosophies, she was clear in expressing her desire to focus on the peace and relaxation found on the property. The overriding mood, she insisted, should be serenity. To that end, it was crucial that the house be simple, quiet in tone, and not overly ornamented or heavily furnished.

The property starts on the western edge of the broad, flat valley floor, on the fringes of a wetland. It rises up through sagebrush foothills whose contours allow for a sense of privacy and separation, not only from the main and access roads but from each other. Candace Miller and Miller Roodell project manager Chris Clay spent an inordinate amount of time working on the master plan in a conscientious effort to get the placement and sequencing just right. The goal was to create multiple buildings of modest size that would integrate within rather than dominate the landscape. They would be designed to take full advantage of the extraordinary views without drawing attention to themselves.

For a unique Idaho property blessed by natural hot springs, the owner tapped Miller Roodell Architects to design a multi-building compound in which her own home would be modest in scale and nestle into the landscape. “This is a place for the owner and her family to come to the area and be able to enjoy one another, play together and just be in the wild together,” says architect Candace Miller. “Paying attention to scale was important in making the buildings fit the site.” The 2,500-square-foot structure is built of stone and dovetailed logs and topped with a bonderized metal roof.



The entrance gate lies on the upper part of the property. The road drops down past a previously existing house, a barn with caretaker's quarters, a horse shed, a greenhouse, guest cabins, and the compound's South Camp, with its outdoor kitchen, changing-room pavilion, and boardwalk connectors leading to three pools fed by natural hot springs. It then continues down to the owner's home, which one approaches on foot through a small grove of aspens at the very base of the hillside where the wetlands meet the sagebrush hills.

The 2,500-square-foot structure is composed of stone and dovetailed logs and topped with a roof of bonderized metal. Purposefully scaled to the diminutive size of the owner, it has no wasted space. Designed on one level (except for the central gabled section, which creates an opportunity for a sleeping loft), it hugs the ground at the edge of the hillside. "The client wanted it to be warm, inviting, and able to accommodate a crowd. And she wanted the views to be primary," says Miller. "It was our idea to keep everything low slung to the landscape so it couldn't be spotted from the roadway. We wanted it to look like a homesteader cabin that might have already been there.

Despite its two guest rooms and loft, it was designed as the owner's hideaway, with the master suite separate from and on the far side of the main kitchen/living/dining space. Debra Shull and Phoebe McEldowney of Haven Interior Design worked closely with the owner on the home's interiors. "She wanted places in the house that had nothing, in order to celebrate the beauty of the architecture and its peacefulness," says Shull. "Her mandate to us was that everything in the house should have purpose and meaning." As a result, the furnishings include handmade Moroccan tiles and many antiques, some Balinese and some Asian. Throughout the home, antique Navajo, Turkish, and Moroccan rugs convey the feeling of age and add to the spiritual well-being of the house. A modern, clean-lined ethos defines the spaces despite the vintage feel conveyed by the low-ceilinged, reclaimed-wood entry,

At this family compound the emphasis is on the mountain views and hot springs. A natural-looking trio of pools was created off the owner's bedroom in a design conceived by an Onsen hot pool specialist in Japan and executed by DHM Landscape Design. Further up the hill, on the property's South Camp, another three pools are connected by boardwalks to an outdoor kitchen and changing-room pavilion.





reclaimed terra-cotta and oak floors, and items like the distressed hutch in the kitchen and claw-foot tub in one bathroom. Sheer draperies and natural fabrics such as linen, silk, and alpaca infuse the home with a luxurious, tactile quality.

The master bedroom suite, accessed via a quiet nook furnished with a desk, is a study in simplicity: a low bed on a built-in platform with a Balinese gate as a headboard and a window seat. A crystal chandelier adds a touch of sparkle and light; a restrained palette and the gold Buddha in the corner amplify the feeling of serenity. But with windows on three sides and a door to the private patio, it is all about the view across and up the valley, and of course the hot springs. Three gathering pools—a

cold plunge pool, a medium-temperature pool, and a hot pool—form a trio just off the roofed and trussed private patio. To soak in the healing minerals of the hot springs while admiring the mountain scenery or gazing at the stars, brilliant in the night sky, is to literally feel one with nature.

The project remains ongoing, and each addition is meant to harmonize with the land and existing architecture while respecting environmental tenets for pristine, irreplaceable areas. The challenge, says the architect, is to be as conscientious as possible about limiting the disturbance on the site. “You want to complement the land,” says Clay, “rather than drop a marker on the site.”

RIGHT: The low-ceilinged entry has a cozy, protected feel with its wood ceiling and beams. The Michael Coleman painting acts almost as a window in the enclosed space. The antique Balinese buffet is flanked by sconces from Always Antiques.

FACING: The living room with reclaimed beams centers on a stone fireplace with arched opening and wood mantel. A table designed by Haven Interiors rests on a vintage Heriz rug. The lamp is an antique from the 1920s.







The serene kitchen walks the line between rustic and refined. The Moroccan tile backsplash and quartzite countertop give a fresh, clean look, while the cabinet from Mulligans wears its patina well. Pendants were designed by Haven Interiors; hardware and faucet came from Rocky Mountain Hardware and Newport Brass, respectively. Skylights bathe the room in light, even on cloudy days.



RIGHT: A simple wooden ladder leads to a lofted space above the living room. A sleek steel box inset into the side of the fireplace provides wood storage.

FACING: The hallway to the master bedroom accommodates an office nook with a desk handcrafted by Hickory Furniture Designs. The chair is from Restoration Hardware. The small antique lamp adds a graceful note.







The homeowner wanted to emphasize tranquility throughout the home. The master bedroom is for repose, contemplation and enjoying the views. Furnishings are deliberately kept minimal with an antique chandelier and Moroccan rug and a vintage Balinese headboard and trunk. An alpaca throw adds warmth and a touch of luxury.







ABOVE: A bunk room charms with its curtained nook with built-in window seat tucked between built-in beds under a cozy low-beamed ceiling. Pendleton blankets and an antique Navajo rug speak to the home's place in the West.

FACING: In the modestly scaled guest bed and bath, a Rohl sink, Newport Brass faucet, Pottery Barn lamp, and Rose Tarlow table furnish with simplicity.





A Kohler claw-foot tub positioned by the window gives a retro feel to the almost spartan master bath.



The outdoor living room sees a lot of use in the summer, its antique daybed the perfect place for a rest. The chair, from Old Hickory, has a Donghia fabric cushion.

