

TIMBER HOMES

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At the Gates

A little house offers big ideas

Within the Montana mountain wilderness sits a little piece of paradise: 1,275 acres of lush meadows, timber-lined ridges and big sky views, bordered by majestic national parks.

Standing as sentinel for the property—once part of 250 million acres turned over to private citizens by the 1862 Homestead Act—is a small, timber-framed gatehouse. The rustic building, completed within the past year but looking as if it's been there for a century, is the harbinger for what will soon come to The Homestead at Whitefish.

The Homestead development, located just 12 minutes north of Whitefish, Montana, will offer 40 new custom home sites on 20-acre lots, along with 50 planned condominium “cabins,” all catering to those who love the beauty of old wood and the luxury of modern amenities.

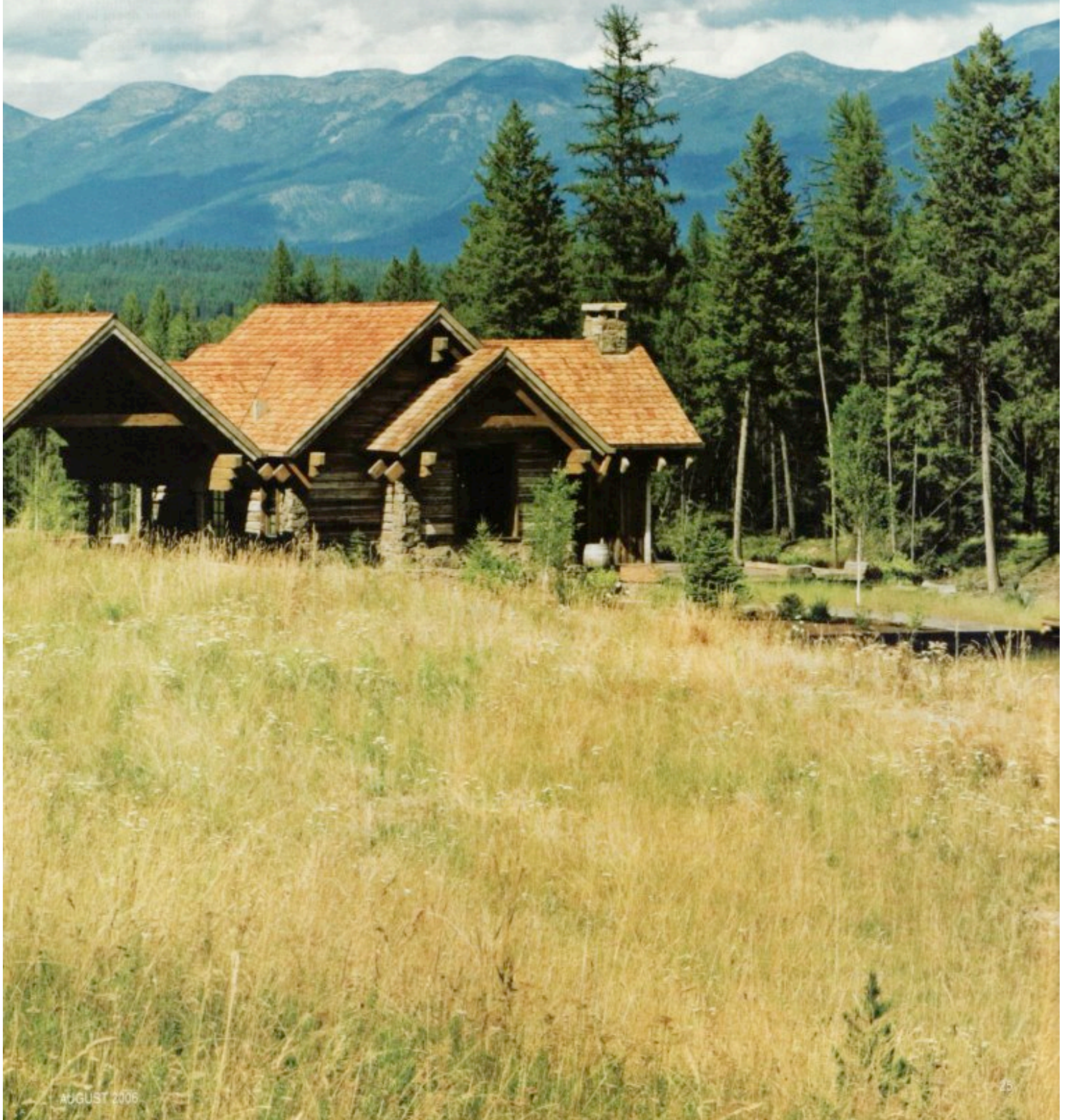
Mark Kvamme, developer of the community, notes “The construction and materials we use connect with the past and reflect the natural beauty of the area and neighboring national forest. The community offers a balance of a refined charm of an era long past and sophisticated modern services.”

Story by Cheryl Kenny • Photos by Roger Wade • Styling by Debra Grahl

Rustic Elegance

The rustic charm of the log cabin is a timeless appeal. It's a perfect blend of nature and craftsmanship, offering a serene escape from the hustle and bustle of modern life. The warm tones of the wood and the sturdy construction evoke a sense of history and tradition.

The Homestead development, near Whitefish, Montana, includes a natural lake; and a 10-acre manmade lake is in the plans. The property offers magnificent views of Glacier Park, Big Mountain Ski Resort and the Stillwater Valley.





Left: The home's logs are more than a century old. They were salvaged from a Great Falls, Montana, cabin. Left, below: The chandelier that hangs above the conference table is fashioned from antlers naturally shed by local elk and moose. The conference room doors, like all the other doors in the Gatehouse, are made of reclaimed wood.

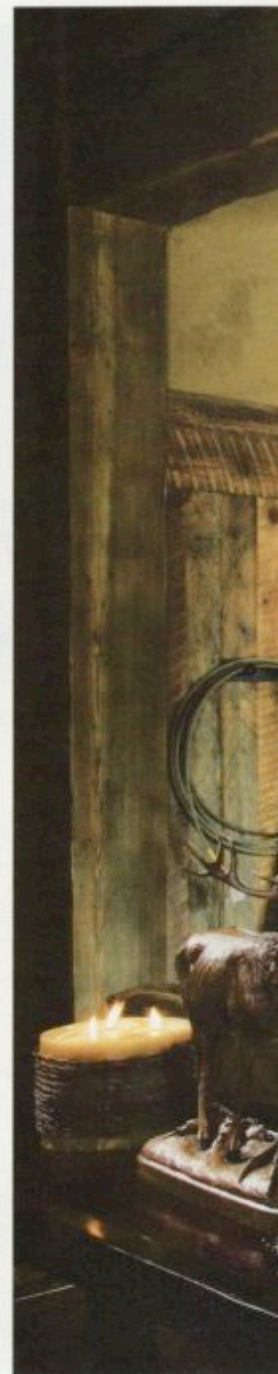


The Past Is Present

The Gatehouse, which currently serves as a sales office, highlights the type of handcrafted construction and rich, reclaimed materials that the new homes will feature. "When you pull up to the Gatehouse, it looks like an 1890s home," says Walt Landi, owner of High Country Builders, which is helping to build the community. In fact, the exterior logs of the Gatehouse are more than 100 years old, taken from a Great Falls, Montana, cabin reported to be once owned by Western painter, Charlie M. Russell. The exterior fascia board, also of reclaimed wood, is still covered with moss and lichen, as are the huge, local fieldstones that comprise the structure's cornerstones.

To maintain the look of authenticity, the Gatehouse features wooden rain gutters and downspouts, albeit lined with metal for modern-day functionality. As a tribute to times past, the downspouts empty into 50-gallon wooden barrels with plugged holes. When the plugs are removed, the barrels become simple irrigation systems.

The inside of the 1,100-square-foot Gatehouse is as true to the past as its exterior. "Old homestead homes had a core building of logs, then newer materials were used as rooms were added around it," Walt notes. "That's what the Gatehouse is like."



Rustic Elegance

The log core of the Gatehouse is its timber-framed great room, constructed from a combination of hand-hewn, reclaimed timbers and new timbers hewn to look old. The room's standard truss system assembled with 10-by-16-inch timbers creates a warm, primitive look.

The great room ceiling, paneled with reclaimed barn wood of larch and fir, peaks at about 20 feet then lowers to a cozy 10 feet around the fireplace. The fireplace, made of local fieldstone, includes 60-year-old firebricks that were originally from copper smelters in Anaconda, Montana.

Floors are 10-inch planks of old wood: spruce, fir, pine and larch. "This is the kind of place where, if you don't take off your shoes, it doesn't make a difference," Walt points out. "Hardwood oak floors are not the look we are going for here."

A unique wainscoting created from a variety of reclaimed local woods runs along the great room walls. The vertically hung planks have a natural finish to highlight the differences in grains and colors, and provide an attractive contrast to the earthy green and browns of the room's Venetian plaster walls.

"I searched far and wide for the Gatehouse materials," Walt explains. "I hand-picked them to give the Gatehouse an




A lowered, beamed ceiling around the fireplace creates a cozy seating area in the great room. Reclaimed wood planks, hung vertically on the walls, add texture and character to the rustic room.



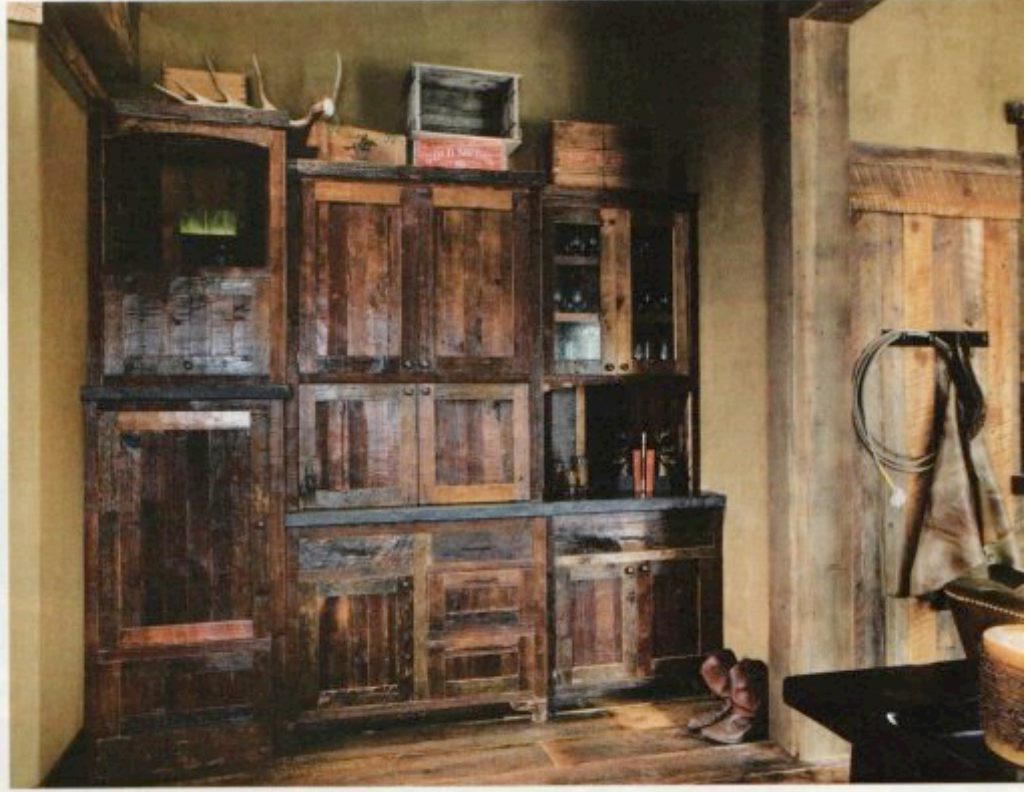
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The conference room pocket doors are of reclaimed barn wood, with top panels of antique seedy glass. Earthy colors were chosen for the home's Venetian plaster walls.

Below, left: The powder room includes a hammered copper sink and black granite vanity top with chiseled edges, features that will also be offered in the community's new custom homes. Below, right: In the office, built-in cabinets, also of reclaimed barn wood, house office supplies. When the development is finished, this gatehouse will become a business center for the community's homeowners.



authentic, aged look. The new homes also will include primarily natural materials that are indigenous to the area.”

The other rooms of the Gatehouse—a conference room, guest bath and office—are conventionally built, but have been crafted to maintain the aura of age. The conference room pocket doors are of reclaimed barn wood, with top panels of antique seedy glass. Built-in cabinets, also of reclaimed barn wood, house office supplies; the Gatehouse will become a business center for the community's homeowners after it is no longer used for sales.

The panels of the master bath door—which faces the great room—have gray plaster insets that depict a map of the area from the 1890s etched into the plaster, and a quote from William Clark, of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

Windows of the Gatehouse are new, but the frames were wire-brushed to appear old. Window timbers were torched, then sandblasted, to simulate age.

Blending Old and New

Construction of the Homestead's new homes, which will range in size from 4,000 to 12,000 square feet, will begin later this year. (Two homeowner cabins, which will range from 2,200 to 3,500 square feet, are already under construction.) Homes will be sited so as not to be seen from neighboring houses, and to incorporate 180-degree panoramic views of

the picturesque Whitefish Range and the peaks of Glacier National Park.

The complex will have 300 acres of common area, which will include lakes, a livery stable, a trail system that allows access to the surrounding national forests and a lodge with a dining area, theater, fitness center, outdoor seasonal pool and spa. Construction of the lodge will begin in September 2006.

“This project blends new technology and first-class fixtures with the traditional and the old,” Walt says. “It has a nice warm, homey feel; a lodge style that is comfortable, elegant and rustic.”

Mark adds, “People have a passion for both conserving and enjoying the environment. The Homestead resonates with our desire to connect with the great outdoors and past generations.” **THI**

RESOURCES

High Country Builders,

www.highbcountrybuilders.com, (406) 863-9511

The Homestead at Whitefish,

www.homesteadatwhitefish.com, (406) 863-1862