

# The W House

E/Ye Design, Henderson Construction, and Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary work a singular parcel of land, a rare vision, a unique philosophy, and an innovative team into an inimitable family home.



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- + Photography by David Agnello

Why W? Is it for the suggestive roofline? Or for the owner's son, Wyatt? Or is it for just plain wow? Let's all say WOW.

Because there is nothing else like it — especially in the Rocky Mountain realm of the mountain log lodge.

This organic, flowing mass of steel, wood, glass and concrete near Wilson, Wyoming, seems to have been born — rather than built — into its undulating landscape.

And that's an apt analogy for the project direction of team Nona Yehia of E/Ye Design, Howard Henderson of Henderson Construction and Lyndsay McCandless of Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary. The powerful trio of local entrepreneurs each flexed their respective areas of expertise in a showing of strength and teamwork that flowed into a unified project.

Owner and principle architectural designer Nona Yehia of E/Ye Design describes the process with a meticulous technique. "My approach is to really get to know a site, then conceive of structures that conform to, integrate, and interact with all the natural elements and forces of that site, and finally develop a strategy to bring them to life as painlessly as possible."

Above: Siting a structure to take advantage of every positive aspect of the environment and mitigate every negative one requires tour de force planning. This unique design exploits stunning Teton and pastoral views, exposes concrete floors to western sunlight, and limits the impact of blowing snow and harsh winds. It fits the contours of the landscape as if eons of erosion simply unveiled it.

Below: Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary furnished a selection of paintings, sculptures and baskets to blend and complement the home's aesthetics. Fitting in especially well are glass sculptures by Barry Hood. Cast in the hearts of tree stumps, the conversation pieces reflect light in a translucent quality that seems to beat in synch with the home's pulse.



According to owner Yehia, the steel structure of the house totally defined it, becoming one of the dominant visual themes both inside and out. Interior materials also include cedar, sheet rock, and glass in pleasing proportion. An opaque wall at the foot of the stairs separates a bathroom from the hallway.

A three-column sculpture by Kate Hunt from Lyndsay McCandless Contemporary made of stacked newspaper with pigmented surfaces leans quietly against the stairwell wall. Made of recycled newspaper, metal and resin, the silent sentry complements the organic curvature of the space and guards the stairs.



The kitchen is open, efficient and uncomplicated. The counters are granite turned to their rough side and feature a mottled matte surface in order to mute reflection. The translucent-sided cabinets double as light boxes that softly illuminate the space.



"The dining area was the perfect place to imitate the natural landscape with more Hood sculptures," says McCandless. "Oil paintings by Lee Klein aid in moving your eyes lightly and consistently around the room."

Working with her partner Jefferson Ellinger, Associate Professor at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Nona explains, "Our style is to create forms that are often viewed as part of the natural elements of a site. The only boundaries that we intentionally push are the ones having to do with normative construction techniques and material applications."

To execute such a vision, however, takes a talented, problem-solving team under the management of an experienced but open-minded craftsman. Dedicated to building a cooperative team from local firms whenever possible, E/Ye selected Jackson Hole general contractor and renowned perfectionist Howard Henderson, of Henderson Construction. His mandate was to provide leadership that would encourage communication, collaboration, novel thinking — and above all, a shared commitment to excellence.

After all the intricate challenges, Henderson is even more delighted with the finished project than he was with winning the bid process. His attitude is, in itself, a ringing endorsement of the team's relationship. "No matter how many unusual situations we encountered, there was a can-do attitude that pervaded the whole team — from Nona right through to the steelworkers.

"At this point in my career, I thought I had pretty much mastered every aspect of the building process. I think many of the subcontractors felt that way, too. But this project expanded our consciousness, challenged our skills, and stretched our competence. Its unorthodoxy involved everyone on the job in a continuous process of research, innovation and discovery. It felt constantly interesting and inspiring. A terrific educational experience."

"My challenge," says McCandless, "was to identify pieces of art that added color, light, interest, perhaps even implied movement, without detracting from the strong architectural statement made by the steel, glass and wood. I leaned toward lyrical pieces that repeated natural or structural shapes, such as glass castings and unusual basketry constructions."

With movement flowing throughout the house, selecting art that complemented the strong structural themes but also made occasional bold statements required a specialist indeed. "I had to engage and enhance a project of this size with a completely different approach," she says. "The surrounding landscapes inspired and set the tone, while also creating a harmony with the pieces I selected that balance the structure and its furnishings; the outside and the inside.

"I was honored to contribute to such a unique project. One of the driving forces behind my gallery is the desire to contribute within a sustainable framework. The W House was born out of that same philosophy. To me, this house was like a canvas waiting for the final strokes of paint."

W— for Work of art? Wow, that too. ■



Open to the main floor, the lower-level living area spills out to a hillside where family and guests enjoy sledding, skiing and snowshoeing. Casual and cozy, more Lee Klein paintings from McCandless seem to dance above the built-in bench in imitation of the joyful activities and the carefree spirits who reside here.



Decks and balconies extend interior spaces, inviting the outdoors in, and demanding the residents interact with the landscape and the elements.