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**Excerpt below**; Full copy available upon request.



## **Creative Vision: Family's home far from the typical Big Sky retreat** by Anna Bjorklund

Anyone who sets out on the custom-home journey for the first time, dreams of the day they'll finally move into a space that embodies their lifestyle and personality. Of course, in the tangled interplay of structural limitations, budgets and contractor's opinions, the full realization of the dream is rare. But for one Big Sky homeowner, dream became a very present reality through a creative process that stretched, challenged and ultimately rewarded all involved.

"She came to us with a lot of ideas," admitted architect Patrick Larum of Comma-Q Architecture in Bozeman. Those ideas included a round dining room, an eyebrow dormer, a multi-colored glass tile fireplace and a kitchen in two stanzas—one a presentable kitchen, visible from the entertaining space, the other a country style butler's pantry, artfully hidden around a corner. A friend of the family referred to the final look as "Scandinavian."

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As for the exterior, it needed to give a wink and a nod to neighborhood requirements, but she didn't want it to disappear into the surroundings. The trim was painted a rich merlot, mustard stucco highlights were added and natural slate was used instead of more common stone façade. And finally, though yet unheard of in Big Sky, the house was crying for a sod roof.

Usually such expressions are limited to the interior treatments only, Larum pointed out. "But this one has some of that vocabulary on the exterior as well, shapes and colors that hint at what's inside... without being too different."

The plans by Comma-Q created a framework that the homeowner worked around and adjusted as construction progressed. Her ingenuity and persistence were admittedly a touch overwhelming for John Seelye of Big Sky Woodwork & Design. His crew kept with it though and wound up feeling very enthusiastic about the house, he shared. "By the end, every one of our employees looked at it and said, 'Yeah, I get it.' As we got further along, her vision just came together."

How did she get away with it? Even more importantly, how did she get away with it so beautifully? Friends and family alike have often asked the same question that has repeatedly run through the minds of both the architect and the builder.

Watch the homeowner's son and daughter enjoy the new house and you might find a clue to the answer. The kids were originally very sad about moving. They were leaving behind a neighborhood full of friends. The lament did not last long though. Their mother insisted, "I'm going make a house that you can be glad to move into." And in the end, her son and daughter were indeed excited about the move. "I've never had any complaints."

Now, the friends are all coming over and spending the night. No one's lonely. Imagine being nine years old and inviting a buddy to play video games in the entertainment room upstairs. Half an hour in, you shock your friend by disappearing into the secret passageway behind a recessed bookshelf. The hidden hallway leads to a guest bedroom. From there, a trap door leads to a small platform, an indoor treehouse of sorts, accessible from either of the children's rooms below.

When these kids run laps around the house, it's in both horizontal and vertical circles.

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