



Intimacy in Nature

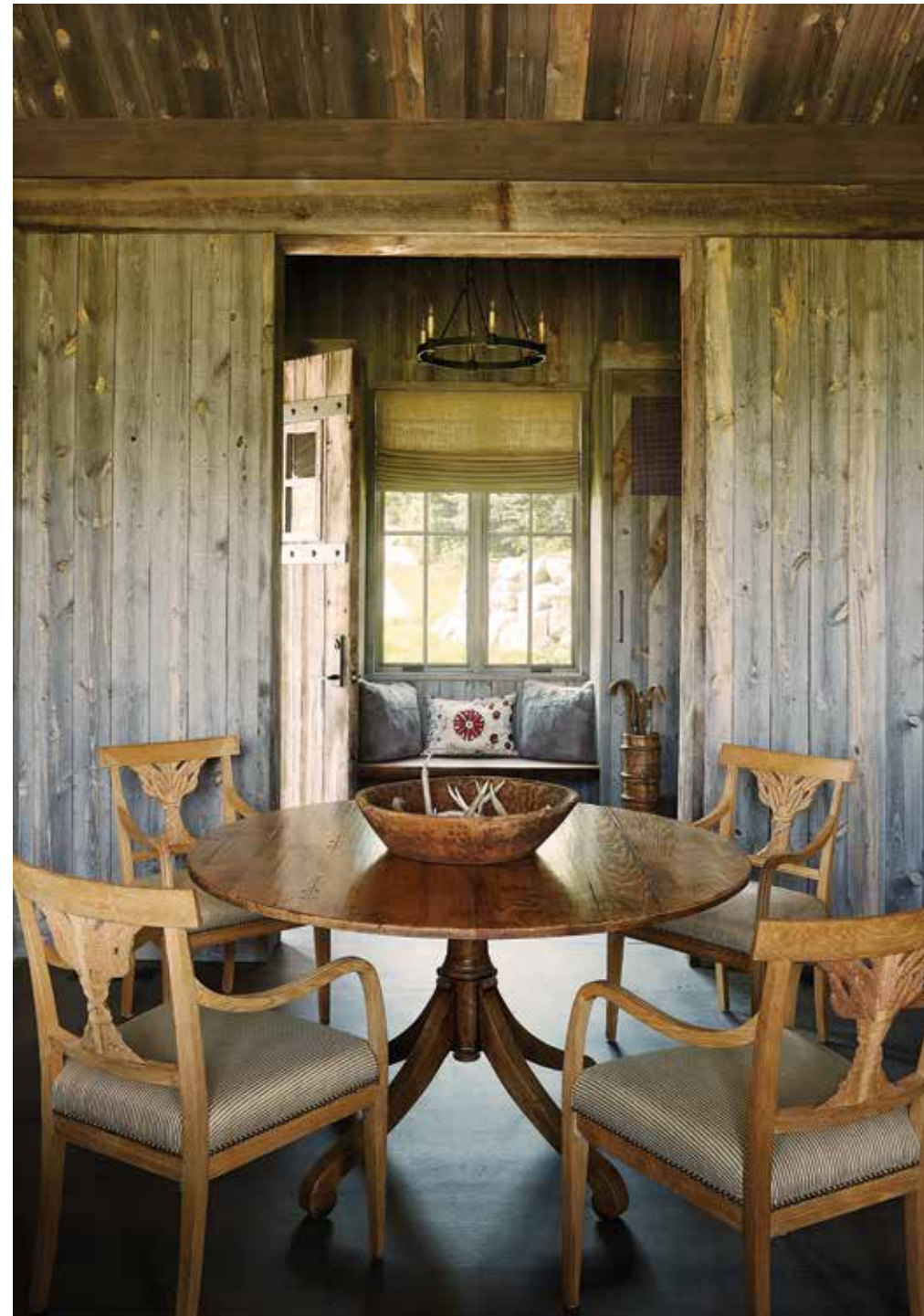
A new book, *Natural Elegance*, uncovers luxury and charm in a cosy mountain hideaway

Previous page: The compact living area, a combination living room, dining room, and kitchen, feels spacious, thanks to its soaring, steeply peaked ceiling and the deck that extends from it.

A small creek trickles behind this property's main residence. Follow it for just a bit and you'll soon come upon an unexpected surprise: a cosy guest cottage nestled among the spruce and aspen on a hillside overlooking a ranch dotted with grazing cows. Enticed to step inside by a single 19th-century antique Swiss chair perched on the front porch, guests lucky enough to stay here are quickly impressed by the view from the living room and back deck, which look out over a beautiful estuary meadow and a great variety of birds flying overhead.



Above: To complement the weathered wood that covers the walls, we furnished the rooms with pieces acquired on various sourcing trips, including vintage and antique chairs, tables, and chests.



Above: Antique wheat sheaf chairs serve as airy and elegant dining chairs.



The essence of this home is captured by one word: charm. And not a precious, self-conscious, or fussy charm, but a natural, effortless charm. We've often thought of this cottage as the 'big little house': two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and one small, perfectly functioning kitchen/dining/living area – all within the 1,000 square foot footprint allowable for a guest residence on the property.

We engaged local architect Shawn Ankeny to help us refine the modest spaces in a way that would flow and work as needed, and to create rooms that were proportionate to the footprint. Similar to the process of designing a New York apartment, where every square inch counts, creating living spaces that were cosy and charming yet fully functional was our mutual objective. Close attention was paid to all surfaces and finishes; we used old, weathered wood panelling and timbers for all interior walls and ceilings to give a sense of being steeped in history and provide a warm feeling of home.

Left: In this small bedroom, the scarlet tufted headboard and bed skirt add a bold bit of colour that's picked up in the desk, chair, artwork and wool pillow from Chamonix, France.

Right: We chose exquisite Taj Mahal quartzite for the countertops as a contrast to the aged patina of the barn-wood walls.

To help deepen that connection with the past, we furnished the rooms with a number of antique pieces, including a pair of vintage leather chairs upholstered in chocolate-brown velvet and trimmed with nailheads; an early 20th-century chest that serves as a coffee table; and a beautiful set of rare, early 20th-century wheatsheaf dining chairs featuring hand-carved wheat bundles on the backs. The magic of vintage furnishings, having been passed down from generation to generation and touched by many hands, is that they develop an elusive quality—a rich and beautiful patina that cannot be replicated by new fabrication.

Bringing some modern elements into the design, we complemented the beautiful antiques with new pieces chosen to evoke familiarity and comfort – again, nothing fussy or precious, but with an emphasis on superb craftsmanship. Linen curtains, soft knotted throws, textured wool rugs, and an assortment of cotton, linen, and fur pillows add a final layer of comfort to this irresistibly charming mountain guest cottage.



Natural Elegance: Luxurious Mountain Living by Rush Jenkins and Klaus Baer. Published by Vendome Press, available in all good bookstores and online, (September 2019, £50).