

homestead

jackson hole architecture + interiors + art



homesteadmag.com



BLENDING INTO THE LANDSCAPE

STORY KELSEY DAYTON | PHOTOS ROGER WADE



The owners originally requested a home inspired by a villa, but after a site visit, the landscape instead inspired architect Mitch Blake to propose a horizontal home that would stretch across the property and blend with the horizon.



ARCHITECTURE
WARD | BLAKE ARCHITECTS
WARDBLAKE.COM

Among a sweeping expanse of grains and grasses, a modern home stretches unobtrusively, surrounded by views that extend for miles across an open landscape and include the silhouette of the Teton Range in the distance.

This Idaho home is not so much *on* the landscape, but *of* the landscape. The owners originally approached **Ward Blake Architects** about designing a house inspired by a Tuscan villa. But when architect Mitch Blake visited the site, the strong horizontal plane of the landscape inspired a different idea. With the owners' blessing, he designed a building with an elongated floor plan to capture the surrounding views, while blending into the landscape. The resulting structure, situated on 160 acres, has sod roofs, and the grain fields of the neighboring farmland come right to its edge, rooting the home to the earth.

Blake designed the building on one level to stretch across the landscape and blend into the natural environment. Massive windows throughout—many floor-to-ceiling—allow light to pour in and provide a sense of openness.

"You don't feel constrained in the house," Blake says. "It just kind of expands. The views are so great we opened up whole walls to the Tetons."

The windows are also designed to maximize solar benefits. The roof overhang is perfectly calculated to allow winter sun into the house. Concrete floors absorb the heat and keep the home temperate no matter the weather. The design works so well that on a bitter cold day when the house was still under construction, Blake visited the site and found workers inside without



ABOVE The owners wanted a modern home with a connection to the natural environment. Large windows throughout the house give it a sense of openness and blur the indoors and outdoors, bringing the outside in.

RIGHT The front door of the home is a tribute to Western culture and designed as a reinterpretation of a Western fence. Steel beams supporting the roof in the exterior entryway are wrapped in split logs, blending rustic and industrial elements.



jackets. The building had been warmed merely by the passive solar heat.

The home features a master suite, as well as a living room, dining room, kitchen, family room, sauna and garage. There are also guest quarters with bedrooms and a small sitting area in a separate wing connected to the main house by a covered pathway.

The ceilings are made of wood from an old barn, and the fireplace is made with stone from an old one-room schoolhouse. The aesthetic fits the owners' personalities and makes it feel like a sanctuary, Blake says.

"It's a composition of raw materials assembled in a modern way," he explains. "It's a fun, comfortable house—a place where you feel like you can totally relax." ▣