



BACK TO NATURE

A haven for anglers, this Colorado fishing retreat reflects a Texas clan's passion for the outdoors. **Jaime Gillin** enjoys the inspired living

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY MINTON REDFIELD



WESTERN AMERICANA
From left: The design of Table Rock Ranch was inspired by National Park Service buildings, with dark stained wood, fieldstone and a cedar shake roof; the family wanted the interiors to “feel like traditional Colorado — but they weren’t looking for an over-the-top, rustic-mountain thing.”



Drive down a crunchy gravel road in central Colorado, and you’ll discover a private ranch retreat nestled in a lush valley. The surroundings are idyllic: a low-lying 750-acre property cut steeply into red rock, with a stream running through it for 3 miles. Your first clue as to the property’s purpose comes with the first building you encounter: a massive 12-sided porch in the center of the compound. Look closely and you’ll see the silhouettes of trout heads cut into the rafter tails. Welcome to Table Rock Ranch, a private family ranch dedicated primarily to fly-fishing, entertaining, and spending quality time in nature.

Like the rest of the six structures on the property — a main house, two family cabins, a barn, a bunkhouse, and a building dedicated to fly-fishing gear — the porch is built in an architectural style reminiscent of National Park Service buildings, with dark stained wood, Colorado fieldstone and a green cedar shake roof.

It’s a “rustic, simple aesthetic,” says architect Bill Curtis of Curtis & Windham, the Houston-based firm hired to design the ranch. “We didn’t want to plunk a big whopping log house in the middle of the valley — that seemed a little ponderous.” Instead, the designers took inspiration from trout fishing and the rituals and etiquette around it to craft an architecture that feels delicate, light and refined, and sits gently on the land. “We didn’t want the buildings to have visual impact on the valley when you see them from afar,” says Curtis. “We let the valley win.”

Curtis and his team had unusually free rein on the design of the buildings — a privilege earned through a long friendship and professional relationship with his client, a Houston-based businessman whose family had made its fortune over generations in the oil and gas industry. The ranch was to be a family retreat shared by the client and his sister; the siblings also own ranches throughout Colorado and Texas, each dedicated to a different type of hunting (a white-tailed deer and quail-hunting property in rural Texas, for example). More than just a place for family to convene, the Colorado property also had to work as a business retreat, accommodating executive meetings and entertaining large groups.

It was a tricky proposition, but thanks to some clever design solutions, both the architects and the interior designers — Ashley Campbell and Gail Mahoney, a mother-and-daughter team — pulled it off. Of primary importance was “creating buildings at various scales that could tolerate many different kinds of use,” says Curtis.

To that end, the architects designed the guest cabins to be smaller and more intimate, and the interior designers furnished them with “ornate pieces with lots of attention to detail,” says Campbell, such as carved wooden beds, antique chests, and layered traditional prints and patterns. Step into the main house, however, and you’ll find a gracious open-plan living space with soaring 20-foot ceilings hung with antler chandeliers, a tall, walk-up stone fireplace, and room to entertain upward of 30 people. Thanks to smaller, clustered arrangements of seating and residential-scale (rather than oversized) furnishings, even the 1,152-square-foot room feels cozy and welcoming, accommodating an intimate family dinner as readily as a board meeting. A separate bunkhouse, carved out of a renovated existing outbuilding that dates



Clockwise from top left: The large kitchen features a copper range hood and tongue-and-groove walls; natural materials and warm colors add to the home's organic feel; custom train-car style bunks in the attic above the fly-fishing tackle room easily accommodate extra guests.



The grand exhibition kitchen, set in the heart of the main building, is emblematic of the entire property's demeanor — as well as the family's, according to Curtis. "Instead of keeping the chef behind closed



At Table Rock Ranch, connecting to nature and its wildlife is much more than just a design motif — it's a way of life. With its palette of natural materials, refined yet comfortable furnishings, and long views out across the valley any direction you look — not to mention the epic fishing on-site — the ranch buildings support the family's mission of being comfortable in the great outdoors. "Architecture is like a guitar — it can be in tune, or it can be out of tune," says Curtis. "When everything is dialed into a specific place, architecture gives you a chance to better understand where you are." 🌞



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