



From top: DJArchitects opened up the walls of an existing '80s log cabin with a steel frame bifolding door, providing direct access to the river; the sights and sounds of the Roaring Fork River in Woody Creek.

## RIVER RUSH

A log cabin in Woody Creek springs new life as a fishing cabin retreat.

*By The Editors*

When Pam and Tom Russell first saw the log cabin at the confluence of Woody Creek and the Roaring Fork River, they knew it had the potential to be a one-of-kind home. Surrounded by mature trees, the secluded 30-year-old property was a rare find just 40 feet from the river, providing 500 feet of private water access, views and the sounds of the Roaring Fork River rushing by. "For two years, we were looking for a little cabin by the river to fish and relax," says Pam. "When I first opened the door to this place, my mouth dropped. You are hit with drop-dead water views. The cabin needed lots of love, but it had a great bones."

To transform the dated 1980s log cabin to a fresh home capable of hosting family and friends, the Russells engaged DJArchitects (formerly David Johnston Architects, [djarchitects.com](http://djarchitects.com)). New development





guidelines in Pitkin County would have required them to place a new structure 100 feet further from the river, so the Russells decided to remodel and save the existing structure. “Pam and Tom were looking for a family retreat for the holidays and summers spent fly-fishing on the river,” says DJA principal architect Brian Beazley. “We knew we could turn the cabin into a beautiful home for them and still retain that unique access to the river for their family.”

Because it wasn’t a new build, the project was restricted as to how much square footage could be added to the existing footprint—approximately 400 square feet, but the footprint remained the same. Beazley was able to reimagine the home’s living spaces both inside and out, doubling the size of the master suite and creating a dedicated office and a two-bedroom guest suite above the garage. Additionally, he created a new entry, expanded the kitchen and designed an essential screened-in fisherman’s porch where the family

could store waders and fly rods. Utilizing unused outdoor sites, Beazley created a new outdoor room with a fire pit and spa facing Woody Creek.

“I wanted the cabin to look and feel open to the outside,” says Pam. Her vision included opening up the home with new windows and replacing existing ones. Acadia Windows installed a large 15-foot bifolding glass door with a retractable screen, embracing the Roaring Fork River.

“The view—I just can’t get enough of it,” says Pam. “Every window brings something different. I love water, and we are surrounded by it.”

To transform the interiors, Beazley brought designer Robyn Scott to the project. Known for her clean, modern aesthetic, Scott was able to interpret the Russells’ eclectic and colorful preferences in everything from kitchen design to monogrammed napkins. “Pam wanted it to be fun and welcoming,” says Scott. “That allowed us to take some risks and use large patterned

From top: The client asked for a dedicated study with river views to enjoy between rounds of fishing; the guest bedroom is the perfect spot for guests to relax in its cozy window-seat nook.

From top: The new kitchen and dining layout extends the floor plan toward Woody Creek; whitewashed timber brightens the bathroom; a monochromatic palette gives the cabin a modern feel.



## DESIGN DETAILS

### ARCHITECT

Brian Beazley, DJArchitects  
djarchitects.com

### INTERIOR DESIGN

Robyn Scott, Robyn Scott Interiors  
rsidesigns.com

### BUILDER

RA Nelson  
ranelson.com



wallcoverings and strong accents of color in the furnishings.”

Using the river as a thematic tool for design selections, Scott and Pam began with giving the cabin a monochromatic palette by whitewashing the orange-hued timbers into a calm gray. They added warm, light oak floors, and added mixed metals through railings, furnishings and pendants while bringing in color with geometric Navajo rugs and turquoise wall tiles.

The result is a bright and charming cabin that still retains the personality of the family and essence of the unique location in Woody Creek. “Log cabins in the American West are timeless structures that can be modernized and adapted for today’s needs,” says Beazley. “There’s a look and a feel that you get from real logs that can’t be recreated with other materials. The Russell cabin today is cozy and atmospheric. In that setting, it is exactly what needs to be there. It was fantastic to preserve a part of Woody Creek.” ■