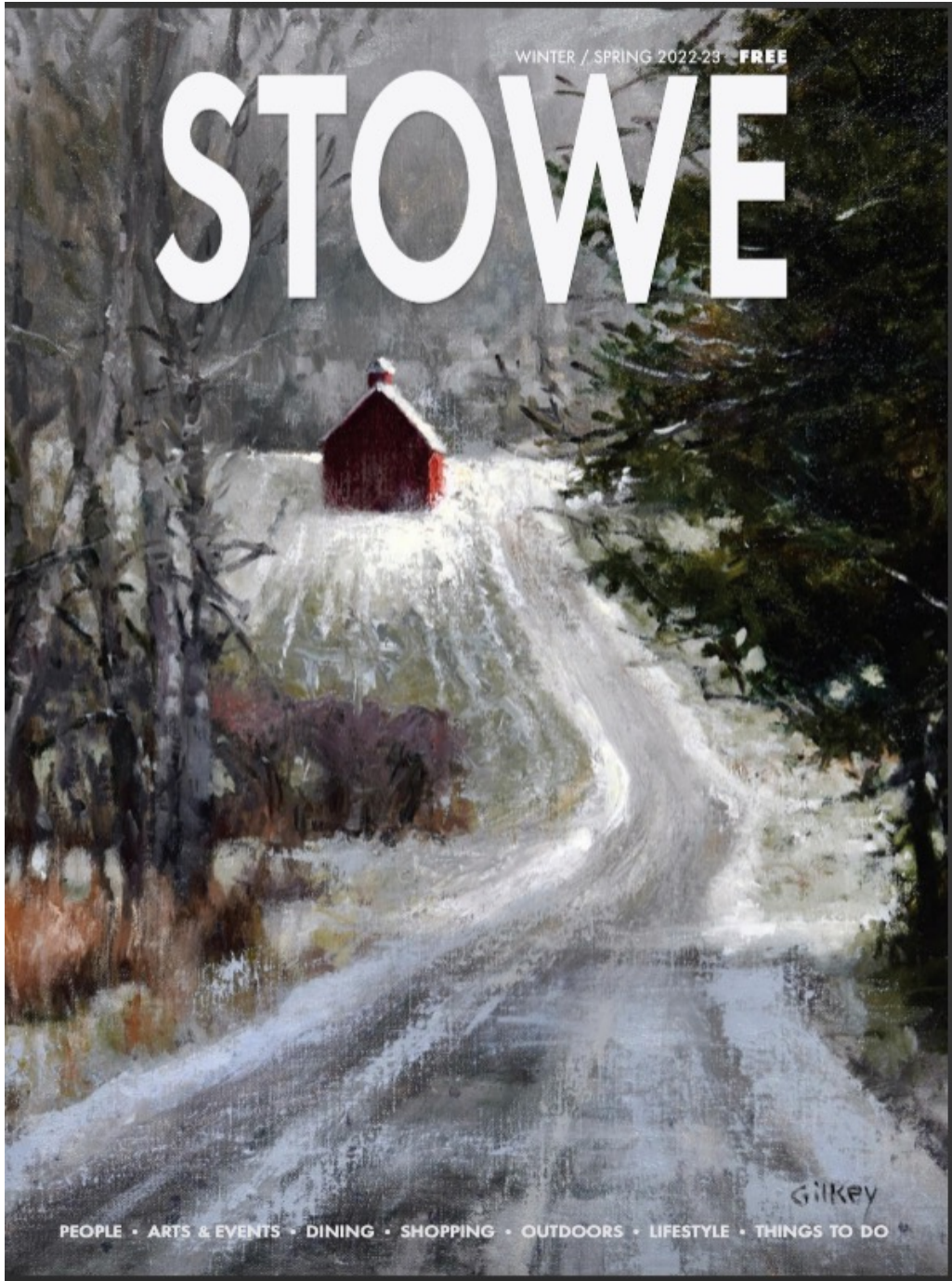


WINTER / SPRING 2022-23 FREE

# STOWE



Gilkey

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# FROM THE GROUND UP

Newcomers to Stowe build dream home



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rika Dodge smiles broadly as she remembers her first meeting with the clients who eventually hired her to design their "dream home" on the lot they'd recently purchased in Robinson Springs. The couple, who decided to relocate to Stowe with their three young boys from their home in Chicago, were interviewing architects because they decided to build after they couldn't



find an existing home that appealed to them.

"They were very clear about what they didn't want," says Dodge.

"They didn't want a home that look-

ed like a traditional country house or a farmhouse or a dated ski house. As the wife told me, they were looking for a design that said 'modern mountain' and was warm, welcoming, yet elegant."

In other words: No antler chandeliers, no vintage skis, no "log cabin" features.

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PHOTO: KATE CARTER

**STOWE-BASED ARCHITECT ERIKA DODGE** was able to pack a lot of house—6,761 square feet—and a pool onto this relatively small 5.1-acre Robinson Springs lot. The three-floor home includes a great room with cathedral ceilings, four bedrooms, four baths, a home office, home gym, a basement with 10-foot high ceilings, and a 3-car garage. Left, a small, three-screen screened-in porch features a fireplace for those cool autumn nights.

## VIEWS GALORE



**BECAUSE THEIR LOT'S VIEWS** of Mt. Mansfield and Snow Mountain Resort ski runs were so dramatic, the owners wanted nothing to detract from them.

They asked for an open-plan, high-ceilinged great room with massive sliding pocket doors to emphasize and frame the views. Even the pool area (below) was designed so as not to detract from the vista.



## GREAT ROOM



**TO HELP "BRING THE OUTSIDE IN,"** the great room features natural materials such as the fireplace's regionally sourced granite and white oak floors. The pendant lighting was from Hubberton Forge and the custom oak, statement-making coffee table was crafted by John Congdon.

## OPEN PLAN



FROM TOP RIGHT COUNTER, ISLAND, SEAT

**THE KITCHEN'S CENTER** island includes a full sink so the owners don't have to "turn their backs" on family and guests while preparing or cleaning up after meals. The kitchen counters, as well as the island, are topped by a quartz counter material selected for durability and is "book matched" to create a color pattern for the island.

The stools are covered in an indoor/outdoor textured fabric. The owners suggested lighted upper cabinets to break up the mass of storage in the kitchen.

The home's oak beams were stained and textured to blend in with the rest of the home's neutral color palette, which featured a range of grays and creams.



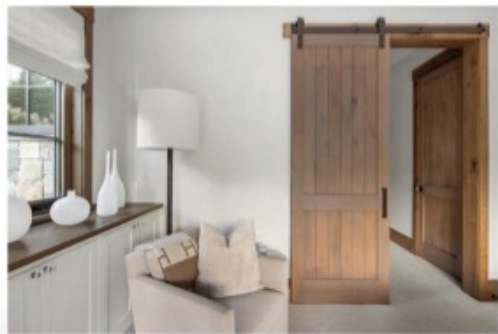
## DINE IN



RYAN LEBET

**INSTEAD OF A FORMAL** dining room, the owners opted for an informal window-side dining area with a table that can function for everything from family breakfasts to formal dining. The table features comfortable and durable upholstered dining chairs and is topped by a glass and brushed nickel light fixture.

## SLUMBER TIME



**THE LIGHT, AIRY** ground-floor primary bedroom looks out onto Mt. Marshfield and is decorated in a palette of soothing creamy whites, soft grays, and blush pinks, with wall-to-wall carpeting, which the owners asked for in each of the home's bedrooms.

The bedroom includes cozy sitting areas and features a solid core interior barn door.

## COMFORT ZONE



PHOTOS BY KATE CARTER

**DESIGNER KRISTA FOX** wanted this lower-level guest bedroom to be warm and cozy—and bright—despite the lack of a view.

The primary bath features a custom back-and-front-lit mirror from Ferguson in Chicago over a custom vanity with toe-kick lighting that functions well as a night light.

All the Vermont vendors, like Flooring America, Close to Home, and many others were so helpful and knowledgeable, according to Fox.

"Taprootchi!"



# MUD ROOM

RYAN BENT



ONE OF THE HOME'S two mudrooms, this oversized one includes lots of storage in stained oak cupboards and features a durable porcelain, large-format tile floor and a rustic pendant lamp.

# PLAYGROUND



FROM LEFT: KATE CARTER, RYAN BENT, CARTER



**THE STEPS UP** from the bathroom shower area to the pool are actually concrete made to resemble real stone. The color was selected to integrate well with the stone veneer on the retaining walls and the boulders in the garden.

The home's Italian porcelain stone patio features an in-ground Curie's pool and in-ground hot tub.



KOYE GANTNER

Like many clients, the couple had put together a dream book of pictures of homes they'd found that appealed to them. Says Dodge, "We were flipping through their pictures when the wife stopped at one she'd found on Pinterest and told me, 'Now this one; it's almost exactly what we're looking for.'"

"I couldn't believe it," says Dodge, who only recently had set up her own practice in Stowe after working for TruexCullins in Burlington and an architectural firm in California. "It was a house near Lake Tahoe, and I knew it very well. In fact, I had helped design it when I worked out West!"

As the homeowner explains, "I still get goose bumps when I remember Erika telling me she had worked on that house. Call it serendipity. We were on the same page, and I knew, almost immediately, we had found the perfect architect for our new mountain modern home in Stowe."

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The next step: Assemble a team. With Dodge on board, the wife signed up Colchester-based Red House Building, interior designer Krista Fox from New Canaan, Conn., and Burlington-based landscape architect Cynthia Knauf.

"I was confident that we had assembled a great team and we broke ground in late 2019," says the homeowner.

Although this was the seventh home the owners had built, they quickly realized that building in Stowe was far different from building a home in Chicago, the location of their six previous homes. The wife remembers, "I thought, given our experience, I knew most of what I needed to know about building. Boy, was I in for a surprise. First off, I learned that we needed an engineer. Huh? Well, we needed to plan for a septic tank and a leach-field—all new to us. We also needed to drill a well for our water. Also new. And electric services, and the list went on and on. In Chicago we had just hooked up to the city's utilities. >>

This was a real learning process."

As the couple discovered, assembling a team from day one meant they could all collaborate and help problem solve. For example, Knauf worked with Dodge to lay out and landscape the curving driveway to establish the most attractive approach to the home. Fox worked with Dodge to choose exterior colors and trim and then worked to bring them inside for a cohesive design. Red House's owner Dunbar Oehmig and his team helped consult with engineers on everything from site work to drainage issues.

"The collaboration on this project was great," says Oehmig. "Everyone worked hand in hand."

While the initial designs were based on the California home Dodge helped to design, the owners asked her to consider several "must haves" when she began formulating her plans. "We stressed that one of our most important requirements was to take full advantage of the view," says the wife. "The minute we saw the distant views of Mount Mansfield and its ski runs, we knew these would be the focal point of the design. We didn't want anything to obscure the views or distract from them."

The couple also asked for an open, light-filled floor plan with a great room, high ceilings, a "killer" fireplace, a primary bedroom and bath, three separate bedrooms with ensuite bathrooms for their boys, a three-car garage, his-and-her home offices and a basement with 10-foot ceilings. "Our boys wanted a basement/playroom where they could play basketball," says the wife. "Everyone said we were crazy, but it works."

What started out as a 4,000 square foot house, gradually evolved into a home of more than 6,000 square feet.

After siting the home to take best advantage of the views, Dodge cleverly angled the three-car garage wing at 90 degrees to the main structure of the home to lessen the mass of the residence. She added a front porch that, as she explains, "also helps break up the large home and provides a welcoming sense of entry."

The front porch, like some other features of the house, such as the staggered rooflines and the stone and wood used on the exterior, also reference the Vermont vernacular, explains Dodge. "The owners wanted the home to look like it was 'of the land' instead of a structure that was simply placed upon the lot," she says.

By design, once visitors come inside, their eyes are drawn through the high-ceilinged great room to the distant, picture-postcard views of Mt. Mansfield. There is nothing to obscure the scene. Massive pocket sliders open and disappear into the walls and the screening is retractable. Even the pool is set lower than the home so as not to detract from the view.

As landscape architect Knauf notes, "We worked together to design the pool area as an extension to the house, instead of having it appear as a separate element. There is a nice, seamless flow, or a connection, from inside

## ROLL THE CREDITS

### ARCHITECT:

Erika Dodge, ELD Architecture

### INTERIOR DESIGNER:

Krista Fox, Krista Fox Interiors

Brenna Brochhausen,  
Brenna B Interiors

### BUILDER:

Dunbar Oehmig, Red House Building

### LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:

Cynthia Knauf,  
Knauf Landscape Architecture

the house to the immediate outdoor space. Again, this was done so as not to distract from the distant views."

Based on the wife's request for an interior that resembled what she termed, "hotel chic," Fox chose a color palette that included soft, natural and neutral colors such as creams, off whites, and grays. "We took a lot of our cues from the home's natural materials—the wood and stone outside, the granite in the fireplace, the beams inside, and the white oak floors. It was a very organic scheme."

Again, the design took full advantage of the views as even the furniture in the great room featured low backs so as not to obscure the views to the outside.

Details were important. For example, because there were numerous species of wood used in the home, the design team tested many stains to find, as Fox explains, "Just the right tones and finishes that worked together. It took a lot of sampling to find the custom color and tones that spoke to one another. Everything had to balance."

The design team ended up using eight different custom wood stains throughout the home.

The wife also explained that because she lived with three boys and her husband, she needed some soft, feminine touches. "She loves crystal, and we included that in custom chandeliers in the great room and over the breakfast table," says Fox.

Adds Dodge, "There are also many little features, such as light fixtures and door hardware, that add feminine touches throughout the house, almost like bits of jewelry."

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Recently, when showing off her home to a visitor, the wife explained, "We couldn't be happier. This is the seventh house we've built, and we are still learning. But the most important lesson we learned while building here in Stowe is this: You have to choose the right people. Trust them. Then let them do their thing. It's as simple as that." ■