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HOME+DESIGN

GREAT ESCAPES

A DESIGNER'S
FAMILY
PARADISE
IN HAWAII

RUSTIC
RETREAT ALONG
MEXICO'S
CARIBBEAN
COAST

TIMELESS
LODGE STYLE ON
LAKE TAHOE

A MODERN VILLA IN
SANTA ROSA

PLUS DREAMY SPA LUXURIES



CABIN FEVER

A TRUE LAKE TAHOE LODGE,
THIS YEAR-ROUND VACATION
HOME NEVER LOSES
SIGHT OF ITS RUSTIC ROOTS.

BY TAYLOR BOWLES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON

Juanita and Manny Del Arroz's vacation home in Lake Tahoe's Incline Village needed to be many things to many people: a quiet getaway for Juanita and Manny; a vacation destination for their three children—Jonathan, 23, Lisa, 21, and Lauren, 15; and a prime spot for viewing Fourth of July fireworks with all of their friends and neighbors. Not up for group discussion, however, was the robust lodge style that Juanita and Manny wanted for the home's interior design. From tribal-rugs to exposed-beam ceilings, the cabin is a study in that unmistakable combination of elegance and rusticity that has defined Tahoe interiors for more than a century.

The Del Arrozes—whose primary residence is in the East Bay—purchased the home in 2000 during the dot-com boom, when the Tahoe real estate market had little to offer. “There was pretty much nothing,” laughs Juanita. When the home came onto the market, Juanita and Manny made an offer on the spot. “The house itself, the roof pitch and the colors on the roof and the beams were amazing,” says Juanita. “I told Manny, ‘This is it.’ But the decor was

odd.” The home's 1980s furnishings and accessories didn't evoke the eclectic cabin feel that the Del Arrozes had envisioned.

Enter Catherine Macfee of Orinda-based Catherine Macfee and Associates Interior Design, whose work Manny had seen in pictures and who, says Juanita, “had the perfect vision of what we wanted out here.” For Macfee, the project was an opportunity to work in an area that her own family had enjoyed for years: Her husband had grown up visiting Lake Tahoe, and her children held summer jobs in the area. With the Del Arroz home, she sought to bring back the “old Tahoe style.”

“Tahoe went through an evolution,” explains Macfee. While many today equate Tahoe style with the Southwestern or Santa Fe look that crept in 20 or 25 years ago, its original iteration was based on miscellaneous furnishings and accessories from upscale urban homes. “In the early 1900s, lake houses were decorated with pieces left over from people's town homes,” says Macfee. The designer studied cabins as far away as the Adirondacks to develop a sense of old lodge style, and then updated the look with

splashes of sophistication. "It's always an unusually crazy mix," says Macfee. "And it's always layering."

Take, for example, the great room: While a fish mounted atop the mantel, a pair of antlers on the wall and a mica-and-iron chandelier shout "lodge," a Tiffany-style lamp and Turkish wool rug ensure that the room's voice is entirely refined. The unexpected frequently melds with the rustic and the traditional, as seen in a pair of custom-made knotted-juniper Molesworth chairs upholstered in a time-honored plaid. Each of the occasional tables in the room—which are inlaid, adorned or simply irregular—become a surprising design element. "It's all about adding texture," says Macfee.

While the great room draws a crowd when the Del Arroz entertain, other spaces in the home provide perfect nooks for the family. Juanita's favorite is the den, a snug room whose design evokes a classic library. "We intentionally wanted this room to look as old as it does, sort of like Grandma's house," says Macfee. Custom shelving envelops the den's sitting area, which is lit softly by wall sconces. "When you walk into the room, you really have to study it," says Macfee of the wide variety of furnishings and accents. "You keep discovering new things."

The bedrooms layer patterns on patterns and mix European antiques with one-of-a-kind and custom-made finds, such as an oversize master bed forged from two wooden wall panels from Peru. The sleeping quarters of the Del Arroz' youngest daughter, Lauren, are anchored by a canopy bed draped in panels of a Pierre Frey fabric that Macfee chose for its whimsical print. "It has little skiers on it and an Austrian, ski-chalet feel," she says. An antique wedding chest offers a welcome contrast to kilim chairs, pillows and rugs. Says Macfee, "You don't know why it connects, but it does."

Of course, any cabin worth its firewood must be cozy, a truth made all the more compelling by this home's lakefront setting and large windows. The view is striking, certainly, but a little cold when the sun disappears. "At night, the lake is completely black," says Macfee. Though the Del Arroz spend summers enjoying kayaks and boat rides, a wintry lake is a chilly prospect indeed. Heavy draperies were Macfee's first defense against the dropping temperatures, as were burnished colors that suggest warmth. "It's a brighter palette, but it's still in the earth tones," says Macfee.

While color plays an important role, the star of the show is undoubtedly the natural pine on the walls, floors and ceilings throughout the home. "We gave it a patina, because sometimes pine has that vanilla look to it, like it's lacquered," explains Macfee. "Coating pine with layers of distressed wax and varnish builds up that warm, yellowy tone with some dark in it—like natural leather."

"I love using natural stone, but this house has such a personality that I wanted to add some color to it," says Macfee of the bright nautical-flag tiles in the shower. Each flag represents a letter of the alphabet; the tiles spell out "Del Arroz."



With pine walls and roaring fireplaces, the home's unmistakable lodge style still manages to leave room for the Del Arroz family members to show their personality. In the shower, colorful tiles spell out "Del Arroz" in nautical flags and a kelly-green Adirondack-style grandfather clock keeps time in a dining room corner. "The family is so free-spirited," says Macfee. "They love little things like this."

The Del Arroz cherish their second home, which they visit on weekends and for extended vacations during the holidays and summertime. "You feel like you're in your own little world," says Juanita. "I love the privacy of it: When you look out, all you see is the water." And though the family originally envisioned the home as a ski house, "We've discovered the summers are almost more fun than the winters," says Juanita. The experience, she adds, has been full of delightful surprises—much like the home itself. ■





Stone and pine lay a rustic backdrop for upscale furnishings, such as a leather nail-head-trim sofa. Macfee designed an entertainment cabinet in the corner to camouflage the television. "I'm not passionate about big televisions that show, so I always try to build some sort of cabinetry to put them away," she says.