

NEW CONSTRUCTION | BY RINA RAPUANO

HOUSE BLEND

This modern mountain retreat allows home owner and interior designer Stephanie Bradshaw to mix work with pleasure.





"The house sits up on a hill," says Stephanie Bradshaw. "It's a pretty large structure, so we really wanted it to feel like it was coming out of the ground and not fighting in any way with nature."



The great room has a wall of custom Marwin windows that peak with the 25-foot ceiling. In spring, these windows showcase a flowering cherry tree, but before it blooms, the accent pillows on the couch pick up the exact hue of its buds.

AS INTERIOR DESIGNER Stephanie Bradshaw leads a tour through her two-year-old home on a stark January day that threatens snow, she uses the word “quiet” 18 times. It’s an apt description of her home, partly because her 5-year-old son, Dallas, is with his grandmother that morning, but also because the peaceful vibe is so intentional. In fact, she, along with partner Brett Bernard—a general contractor himself with the company ProCor—wants guests to start unwinding the minute they turn into the driveway.

“The house sits up on a hill,” says Bradshaw, looking casually glam in her fawn-colored oversized hoodie, ripped jeans, gemstone necklace, and retro Air Jordan high-tops. “It’s a pretty large structure, so we really wanted it to feel like it was coming out of the ground and not fighting in any way with nature.”

The couple moved into their newly built

three-bedroom Sparks Glencoe home just days before the world came to a screeching halt in March, 2020. They dubbed the home Wild Pines in homage to the pine trees dotting the 1.5-acre property. (Bradshaw says reading *Anne of Green Gables* when she was younger sparked the idea that it would be really fun to have a house with a name.)

“If you ask Dallas where he lives, he says Wild Pines,” says Bradshaw, adding that they have planted a tree each year in honor of their son since they found out they were expecting. “I just really wanted him to have fond memories of his childhood home.”

How could he not when there’s a pollinator garden lining the front path, a fire pit in the backyard, and a rustic, pint-sized hideaway made of construction pallets and a door that reads “The Fort at Wild Pines”?

But the house wasn’t designed solely to

cater to a little boy’s dreams. Bradshaw and Bernard tweaked, fine-tuned, reconfigured, and reimagined countless details large and small to make the home’s construction and design look effortless. First, the original plans for a more traditional house were scrapped in favor of this modern mountain retreat. Similarly, they eschewed the idea of traditional trim around doors and windows, creating a simple look that was not easy to achieve. And they shunned the trendy open floor plan in favor of a breathtaking 72-foot hallway that connects the powder room, kitchen, dining room, and great room, with the idea of the home slowly revealing itself.

“Everybody wants an open floor plan,” says Bernard. “The issue we see with that is when you walk into a space, it’s really nice and large, but there’s no exploration. You get everything at once. This is kind of

the opposite of that. We wanted to close in the spaces and make them connected, but also kind of give you the [feeling of], ‘Oh, I wonder what’s around that corner. I wonder what’s behind that door.’”

Bradshaw adds, “And you can really be present in each space that you’re in.”

That sense of embarking on a treasure hunt pays off in a big way when you walk down the dramatically long hallway that Bradshaw likens to a runway—with windows and French doors along its left-hand side—and turn the corner into the last room on the right. What guests will undoubtedly notice first is the wall of custom Marvin windows that peaks with the

25-foot ceiling. In spring, these windows showcase a flowering cherry tree, but before it blooms, the accent pillows on the couch pick up the exact hue of its buds.

“All of the finish selections—textiles, artwork, everything—are to bring the outside in and not in any way fight with what the real art is, which are the views,” says Bradshaw.

That philosophy led her to choose textured backsplash tiles in the kitchen that evoke a fern or a snakeskin, draperies and upholsteries that echo the leaves just outside, wallpaper depicting bare tree trunks and limbs in Dallas’ bedroom, and a feathered tribal juju hat mounted on the wall above their bed. Even the abstract artworks

she so thoughtfully curated—and, in many instances, commissioned from female artists around the country—remind her of mountains, the sun, the moon, and water.

As proud as she is of her curated art collection, she can’t resist pointing out her son’s artwork, framed and displayed throughout the home.

“That’s Dallas’ very first acrylic painting,” she beams as she shows off the ab-

The philosophy of Wild Pines, says Bradshaw, is to bring the outside in and not in any way fight with the views. That led her to choose textured backsplash tiles that evoke a fern or snakeskin, draperies and upholsteries that echo the leaves just outside, and commissioned artwork that reminds her of mountains, the sun, the moon, and water.





Clockwise from left: Dallas' bedroom features a wallpaper depicting bare tree trunks and limbs. Dallas, Bradshaw, and Bernard standing in front of Wild Pines' main entrance. Bradshaw says reading *Anne of Green Gables* when she was younger sparked the idea that it would be really fun to have a house with a name. A cozy spot for a meal.



stract work hanging in the kitchen. “And also, when you’re looking through all the openings, his first watercolor is actually straight ahead under the antelope.”

(The eland antelope head from South Africa mounted beside the fireplace is a consignment piece from an animal that’s in no way endangered, she’s quick to point out.)

Still, most of Dallas’ artwork can be found in the laundry room, which doubles as his gallery, and on the walls of Bradshaw’s studio above the garage on the other side of the house.

Both Bradshaw and Bernard currently work out of home studios, which they had always planned to do at some point but didn’t realize how soon that would become a necessity. After the pandemic hit, Bradshaw pivoted her successful event planning business into interior design, letting go of her office space near Woodberry Kitchen in Hampden-Woodberry and eventually moving her six employees to a hybrid work model that brings them to the bright workspace at Wild Pines a few days a week.

“Everybody kept their jobs,” she says of her staff. “That’s my greatest accomplishment of 2020.”

When your office is just across the foyer of your home, the questions about work-life balance are inevitable.

“A lot of people talk about balance, but

I don’t think that balance is really that achievable,” says Bradshaw, a two-time cancer survivor who bonded with Bernard partly over the fact that he had also battled cancer before they met. “For me, integration is where it is. I don’t turn off ‘Stephanie the entrepreneur’ when I’m a mom, and when I’m an entrepreneur, I’m still a mother. In my opinion, entrepreneurs don’t have balanced lives. We have integrated lives.”

In both worlds, for instance, she is a connector of people who likes to support women every chance she gets, whether it’s highlighting female artists, mentoring those coming up in the industry, or creating network opportunities, such as serving as co-host for the popular *Cake & Whiskey* events before COVID.

“I’ve worked in a lot of places where, when the door closes, you’re always wondering what’s happening behind that door,” she says. “I just knew that if I ever started my own business, that’s not the culture I wanted to create.”

So, when the time came to strike out on her own after years of working for a large-scale party rental company, she intentionally created ways to make an impact on young women in the field.

“I didn’t really realize how much I was going to love the opportunity to mentor young women, and so that has been a really

great joy for me in my business,” she says. “It’s been part of my brand DNA to hopefully be a resource to other young women, but also women at my stage, or any age, to connect them and have them support and empower one another.”

All that integration stuff doesn’t leave much room for relaxation. But during her precious moments of downtime, Bradshaw likes to run through the trails behind her house; chill out in the great room with Bernard, Dallas, and their Insta-famous Maltipoo pup, Brooks; and recharge for another day of making design magic happen.

“One of my gifts is creating beauty, and I’m glad I can share it with others in my daily life,” she says. “I push people a lot to take risks they wouldn’t normally take, and I think that’s one of the reasons why people hire me.” ❁