

a SPECTACULAR RETREAT  
BENEATH *the* TETONS

# STARFALL

“WE ARE SO LUCKY  
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BEAUTY OF JACKSON HOLE.”

—Nida Risto, Designer, Nida Risto Interiors

by CASSIDY MANTOR

Located a short distance from Grand Teton National Park and just minutes from Town Square, Starfall offers unobstructed views of the Teton Range, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, the Grand Teton, and Sleeping Indian from every room on the property. The approach reveals a glass storefront entry and the drama of the Tetons unfolds in the foyer. Natural cedar ceilings, interior weathered siding, white French oak flooring, plastered walls, limestone floors, massive stone countertops, solid European rift white oak cabinets, and bespoke wall fabrics grace the living spaces and exude luxury.

“When you stand in the south side of the living room with the doors open, the colors inside of the house blend so well with the natural landscape outside. From the sagebrush in the meadow to the mountains in the background, it is seamless,” says Mark Dalby, project manager and owner of Teton Heritage Builders (THB).

Award-winning architect Tyler Wilson had a longstanding relationship with the homeowner, having built him numerous homes in Southern California over the previous decade. Working together over those years, they created a relationship built on trust that allowed creative free-

dom for this house. Starfall, named after the experience of sitting beneath a meteor shower, is the unique and thoughtful expression of this synergy between client and architect, between builder, interior designer, and the land itself. The home is aptly named for its magical views of the Northern Lights and Milky Way, and the two-and-a-half-year journey to build it began as one man’s forever dream. It evolved into a turnkey lifestyle estate ready to welcome those who desire an expansive setting at the base of the Tetons.

Starfall drew its initial inspiration as a transitional house for someone moving from

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California to Jackson. Indoor/outdoor living is integral to Southern California design, and the same lifestyle principles were applied to this home. Set on a highly desirable flat parcel of 18 acres bordered by an elk migration corridor on one side and the Tetons on the other, Starfall offers 7,486 square feet of livable space, including six bedrooms, five baths plus a powder room, and an almost 900-square-foot guest house located in coveted Bar B Bar Meadows. The estate offers an immediate opportunity to access the luxurious Jackson lifestyle without waiting for a custom home to be built.

The main home features an entertainment wing, a guest wing, and a private master wing. All components have a glass front that connects occupants to the Grand Tetons from

the moment they set eyes on the house. After the team parceled the home into three wings, they staggered those masses to capture as much of the Tetons as they could in the house and also retain privacy in each area.

“We are so lucky to be in the natural beauty of Jackson Hole,” says interior designer Nida Risto. “This home has views of elk and bison roaming around, fox and mountain lions. Where else in the world do you get to experience that in its raw, purest form?” Accordingly, Nida Risto Interiors designed Starfall to complement the exterior environment. It is a welcoming, extremely livable home that provides warmth in the colder months and flexibility that flows outside in the summer. Throughout the home there is an unwavering focus on the views.





## THE WOW FACTOR

Starfall's entry is centered on the Grand Teton. "We wanted the owner and guests to experience the best view right from the get-go, that big wow factor," Wilson recalls. The team conducted multiple site visits and staked out the house each time using cameras, technology, and 3D modeling programs to make sure they nailed the alignment. They framed the central view with garages on either side and a nice mudroom to enter through. The mudroom leads to a butler's kitchen with excellent storage adjacent to the main kitchen, an ideal spot for dropping off groceries.

"The owner was in love with the setting and let us design the home to fit the landscape," says Burt Mills, who oversees business development and client relations for THB. "The way we laid the home out with the entry court positioned directly at the mountains, everything else fell into place from there." Wilson adds, "He wanted the house to fit the surrounding context, textures, and colors, and sought the timeless character

he was accustomed to with living in Southern California but with a Jackson flair."

The journey to Starfall was indirect. Originally, the owner purchased a five-acre lot on Fairway Estates, but when these 18 acres became available, he knew he had to have them. "He wanted a flat lot and epic views with lots of privacy, and finding acreage that lines up with those priorities can be difficult," Mack Mendenhall, associate broker at Graham Faupel Mendenhall, says. Local ownership with year-round residents surrounds this lot in addition to the elk migration corridor. It's a special property. "You see the home from about half a mile away before you arrive, and in the distance, it's framed perfectly under the Tetons. You can be in the town of Jackson in under ten minutes, at the airport in five, and photographing a moose or catching a trout in another five," he adds.

The change of site meant the home needed to be redesigned at a different scale. More

berth was created between the wings and several elements were repositioned. Livability and timeless warmth underpinned the entire design process.

"The owner wanted single-level living and so we vaulted as many spaces as we could, which allowed us to use many exposed timber beams," Mills shares. Tongue and groove add visual interest and warm up the atmosphere. It feels like a mountain home, but still transitional. "He favors cleaner lines and wanted to embrace the spectacular setting. The main focal point of the home is the mountain range. You feel that the Grand Tetons are part of the home."

Although this home was meant to be the owner's forever home, plans changed. The owner continued the project sparing no cost to ensure it was completed as he had originally envisioned it in all of its magnificence. Part of that vision included future-proofing the home to be able to flex into future home tech applications. Lutron automat-

ed shades and lighting control provide privacy and make each room simple to manage.

"The owner has roots in the low voltage industry, so he was familiar with the current technology and installed a straightforward system that can easily adapt for the future," Dalby explains. "The home's infrastructure allows for full automation so the master, the great room, and the guest wing could be easily adapted to integrate the newest innovation in home technology."

As much as it is a showstopping, opulent home, it is also built for daily life. Patio furniture is stored in the second garage, open and closed lockers offer generous storage in the laundry room, and the kitchen is laid out for both entertaining as well as cooking for a family multiple nights a week. Cabinetry with quiet closures and inlaid dividers add to the functionality. "Every detail was considered such as where pots, pans, and utensils should go, where wine storage should be and whether it should be on display, where the pet and kid stuff goes," Mendenhall shares. "All those

sensitivities add up to the thoughtfulness of the design, a level of comfort and practicality that we don't always see in luxury homes."

A new build of this caliber is unique for Jackson's real estate market. Most homes on lots of this quality and price range were built in the 90s. They are older homes that need a significant amount of remodeling to make them livable today, or they are on steep lots that don't offer the same feeling of expansiveness.

From adding trees to additional landscaping, the homeowner continues to care for this property and create an environment that is fitting to its native land. Winding pathways, abundant perennials, boulders, native grasses, and sprawling lawns make it the perfect outdoor entertaining space. In addition to being within walking distance of the Jackson Hole Golf and Tennis Club from spring through fall, winter offers a groomed Nordic track that runs through Starfall's neighborhood. The owner shares, "Showshoeing and day hikes are encouraged."

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## THE OWNER'S WING

From the way the bed is oriented against the wall to look out at the mountains, to other adjacencies, this wing encompasses everything an owner would need. An office adjacent to the bedroom has large pocket doors looking north and south. A bathroom is shared with a gym with a private patio that allows the homeowner to watch the migration corridor to the south and retreat to that wing for privacy when more intimate time is sought.

An 11-foot-tall black steel fireplace complements the intrepid personality the owner cultivated in the home. While the architect designed the home with steel elements, those materials were thoughtfully incorporated into the master bedroom to contrast with softer elements. "We designed a three-sided fireplace to be visible from all angles in the room, whether in bed, reading in the seating area, or enjoying the outside views," Risto explains.

The primary bath is another example of how Starfall juxtaposes intimacy at home with the expansiveness of nature. "THB's craftsman-ship in the sauna and steam shower speaks for itself," Wilson praises.

When approaching the sauna and steam shower, the glass is the primary focus. What is not visible from that straight-on perspective is that there is glass both in the steam shower on the right and in the sauna on the left. There are glass partitions in between those two units that allow full visibility of both views – the migration corridor on the south and the Tetons on the north. "In this particular room, we wanted you to be able to see the elk when you're in the shower and look at the Tetons while you're in the sauna," Mills explains.

Floor-to-ceiling sleek Calcutta Lincoln marble slab in the shower contrasts with fossilized limestone tile flooring. "Jackson is a lifestyle focused on health, so we aspired to complement the emphasis on well-being with a memorable shower and spa experience," Risto shares. The feeling in the shower is akin to being in a high-end five-star resort spa. A soaking tub and dueling vanities round out the space.

The amount of glazing in those two areas and at the transitions was challenging from a building and interiors standpoint. A tower holds the controls for the steam shower, but on either side is glass. The feel is as if one is outdoors.

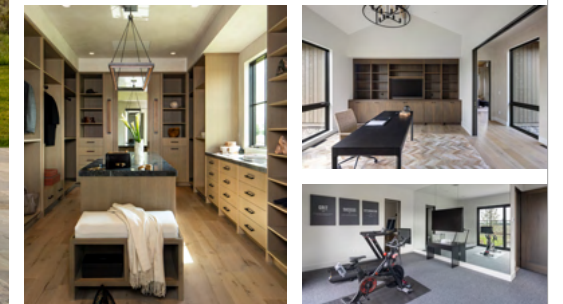
"One of the tricky considerations with this type of construction is with the waterproofing and drainage of both those units," Dalby shares. "It's a very minimalist design, which may look simple, but it takes a lot of thought to get it right." In addition to a Euro-style installation of the hinged glass door, the team transitioned from a tile floor in the shower to marble slabs in the sauna.

The beauty of the sauna and steam shower cannot be overstated. A floating bench on each side mimics the other. The team wrapped the benches, creating balance in the overall space. "Symmetry is a big part of the way I like to design," Wilson shares. "Your eye picks it up even if you don't realize it, and that balance creates a sense of ease."

In addition to a meticulously designed primary bedroom and bath, the master closet is a destination for fashion lovers. Designed to maximize storage and space for a generous wardrobe, the closet incorporates single-hanging elements, double-hanging elements, and drawers that are typically unseen in a closet. The functionality reduces clutter and makes the space feel like a personal clothing boutique.

Heading outside, a single lift and slide door opens to the hot tub, a large saltwater spa that seats eight comfortably. It is sheltered from the wind yet preserves all the views and is easily accessible throughout all seasons. Elsewhere, a glass breezeway connects the great room and the owner's wing. With glass on both sides, it feels like one is crossing a bridge with a courtyard on one side and plantings on both.

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## THE ENTERTAINING HUB

“OUR CLIENT COULD HAVE PULLED OFF THE PLASTER OR REDUCED CERTAIN ELEMENTS WHEN HIS PLANS CHANGED AND HE NO LONGER WAS GOING TO LIVE IN IT AS HIS OWN HOUSE, BUT HE WANTED TO DO THE PROJECT JUSTICE. FROM THE DESIGN STANDPOINT, I DON’T THINK A WHOLE LOT WOULD HAVE CHANGED ONE WAY OR THE OTHER IF THIS WAS HIS FOREVER HOME OR NOW SOMEONE ELSE’S.”

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Kitchen countertops of Capolavoro quartzite – an exotic slab with vibrant red and metallic gray bands – have a place-appropriate leathered texture. “You can feel the movement in stone, similar to the sensation of touching a tree trunk when you’re hiking around the Tetons,” Risto shares. “That composition of rocks and rough elements is a familiar sensory experience to when you hop around boulders. This countertop brought everything I love about this home together.”

Bronze and leather pendants hang in the kitchen. Dual-fuel Wolf and Sub-Zero appliances offer top-of-the-line culinary options. Behind the island, a steel hood is amplified by warm white oak, creating a subtle Western story that is a tasteful nod to Jackson’s rugged history.

Off the kitchen, a golden vanity in the powder room complements the mood of entertainment. Wallpaper that feels like a textile meets a dark countertop with a custom vessel sink designed by Nida Risto Interiors. The same tile used in the master bath was used here. “It creates a vibe,” Risto comments. “It’s a cool powder room.”

The great room is a grand gathering space at the confluence of the kitchen, lounge seating, and dining area. Eleven-foot-tall, European triple-glazed doors and storefront glass create a snow globe effect. “The ridge beam in the great room is almost 60 feet long and is one of the largest steel beams in a home in Jackson,” Dalby says. In earlier designs, truss work was incorporated to help support the beam, but both builder and architect strived to find a way to keep the ceiling open. The beam is 24 inches deep and weighs 229 pounds per foot – almost 14,000 pounds total.

Because the lot is flat, THB was able to use a large crane to hoist the beam into the site. “It was a pretty monumental day for the construction team,” Mills remembers. That beam allows an open modern flair for the ceilings. “Cedar was very important to the client, and the ceilings, siding, and eaves were all custom pre-stained high-quality cedar,” Wilson adds.

Robust engineered wood from Burchette and Burchette, a third-generation heirloom-quality flooring company, creates an atmosphere that matches the grandeur of the space. Large-format wide planks of European white oak enhance the scale of the great room. These long, custom boards create a rustic texture that complements the home’s warm beige and gray modern color palette.

The design challenge throughout the project was ensuring that the interiors would replicate the colors seen outside in nature. “Our selections balanced bright modern western design with a twist of sexy, masculine dark colors,” Risto explains. Dark, wire-brushed oak cabinets with black hardware have a more masculine feeling that harmonizes beautifully with the lighter tones of the floors, lighting, and plaster walls.

The effect is a sense of tranquility. In the summer, the green landscape and full trees breathe life into the home. In the fall, warm yellows, oranges, and reds add excitement for the season. “The challenge in the winter, when everything becomes gray because of snow, is to keep the home still feeling inviting,” Risto

shares. “This home has a blue, northern light tone, so it was extremely important to bring warmth through the wood finishes, the plaster, and the textures.”

She adds, “When you have this many windows, nature and the landscape become your art. You don’t want to compete with that; you want your home to complement that in every season. In summer you get all colors coming in and you don’t want to be overwhelmed with the interiors because that would distract from the beauty. At the same time, we also considered the winter and how we could bring the warmth inside.”

Adjacent to the great room, an outdoor kitchen is fully protected and clad by a full door system. The owner didn’t want to see the equipment left out in the elements. “A barbecue would get hammered in Jackson,” Mills notes. From a maintenance standpoint, they made a clean line and hid the kitchen behind a bi-fold unit. Nearby, an outdoor dining area is protected from the elements underneath a trellis.

The level of craftsmanship and materials specifications were extensively detailed through the drawing process. In addition to having a relationship with the fabricator, the team went back and forth sampling whether to use plain white oak or wire-brushed white oak. Ultimately settling on the latter, everyone was pleased.

The attention to detail is evident in the plaster work as well. While another client on a spec house might have sacrificed plaster for the sake of the bottom line, Starfall was a passion-driven labor of love – no detail was spared. A plaster specialist created an authentic mottled marble look that enhances the home’s timelessness and intrinsic value.

“Our client could have pulled off the plaster or reduced certain elements when his plans changed and he no longer was going to live in it as his own house, but he wanted to do the project justice,” Wilson offers. “From the design standpoint, I don’t think a whole lot would have changed one way or the other if this was his forever home or now someone else’s.”

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## THE GUEST EXPERIENCE

Beyond the kitchen and great room, a glass foyer creates a thoughtful entry to the guest wing. This wing holds a large junior suite and a secondary bedroom, both with views, ensuites, and generous closets. One consideration the owner wanted was to give the guests their private entertainment destination, so the theater is located down this wing. It functions as a secondary family room and media room.

The separate guest house also has a small family room, kitchenette, full bed and bath, and outdoor, covered area that distinguishes the structure from the main house. The guest house also has a private drive with private parking

to be used independently from the main house and guest wing.

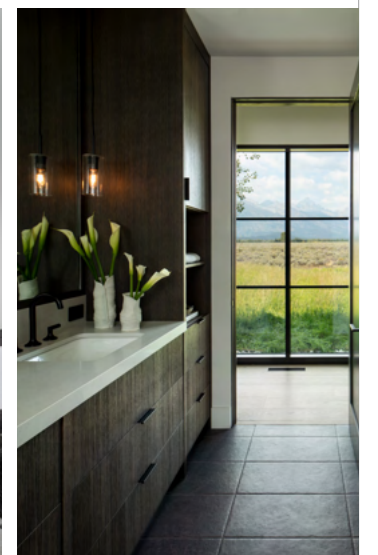
The sprawling single-level layout affords the separate wings extensive privacy from view angles. The effect is that a person can keep their doors and windows open to preserve their views while still having privacy in intimate spaces. The 18 acres are in the Bar B Bar subdivision that backs up to other large private properties ranging from 15 to 25 acres. The density is low and the team took advantage of that.

“It’s why this lot was so spectacular,” Dalby comments. “There’s a lot of buffer between everybody’s space. The next house is 500 or maybe 1,000 feet

away. Even if you’re inside the house you can’t see any other house.”

The team also coordinated recessed shade pockets in the master bathroom and the great room. They’re hidden, but there is the opportunity to drop big shades if a person wants to close off a particular space.

“We wanted it to be comfortable,” Wilson adds. “Every aspect of this design is intended to have the flexibility to entertain a large number of people, but for day-to-day living it does not feel like a party house. Between the scale and the wings, and what we did with the ceiling heights throughout, it is a very flexible home for its size.”



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#### PLACE-APPROPRIATE LUXURY

At its core, Starfall is a custom home built with precise intent defining every nook and cranny. It flows for someone to live in and has practical considerations such as how the angles of sun and snowfall will affect livability. Mendenhall explains that there are no odd spaces that are sometimes seen in different designs that are built solely to sell.

Getting a timeless look that borrowed concepts from modern and mountain aesthetics took a partnership with First Choice Millworks in northern Idaho. Ryan Yurek was a key player who assisted in the siding, ceiling, timber design, and colors. Also on the exterior, the masonry and sandstone veneer contribute to the home’s longevity. Sourced in Montana, the stone complemented the German glass and gave a sense of the European countryside.

Doors and windows are a huge part of Starfall’s design, and European glass

company Glo Windows helped source the home’s European-inspired door and window system. Jackson’s harsh climate necessitates triple pane units and very custom materials with advanced thermal properties. From the front entry that offers an immediate view of the Tetons, the home’s clean glazing looks like old Italian-style steel windows but they’re actually aluminum-clad. “You don’t know the full value until you go touch it and realize how beautiful it is,” Mills explains.

Starfall is a testament to custom homes and working with talented designers and craftspeople whose work represents an understanding and deep appreciation for the local lifestyle. When asked if they have anything planned in the future together, the team unanimously affirms that they hope so. For more information about the property, contact Mack Mendenhall at Graham Faupel Mendenhall & Associates, Compass Real Estate in Jackson, Wyoming. ■ whj COVER FEATURE