

Mountain Masterpiece

Award Winner



The Matta Family Retreat

FOREST FARMS, VT

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FROM HUMBLE BEGINNINGS AS A SMALL, 3-BEDROOM, PSEUDO SWISS SKI CHALET OVERLOOKING STRATTON MOUNTAIN'S SKI SLOPES, A 4,500 SQUARE FOOT MASTERPIECE EMERGED FROM THE OUTCROPPINGS OF ROCKS AND LANDSCAPED GROUNDS.

As a second home for Joe and Theo Matta, it was obvious from the start that this mountain retreat would be anything but traditional.

Combining unique finishes, textures, building components and furnishings inside and a blend of stone, wood and steel on the exterior, this special home became a one of a kind post and beam masterpiece. Architectural features included an innovative, custom built truss design spanning 48 feet, a grotto waterfall with running water under the entrance way and a unique four-post bed in the master bedroom suite actually incorporated into the foundation of the home.

To compliment the building and its site, monolithic boulders, dramatic elevation changes and ambitious landscaping utilizing indigenous plants created an inviting access to the entrance and presented a private, but visible, perspective from the mountain road leading to the home.

The ultimate retreat for one of the most creative and innovative designer/builders in the region. ■



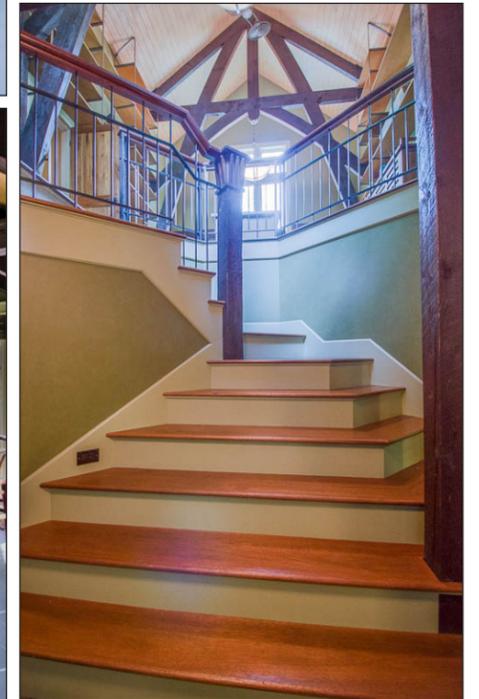
“There was a great joy that came from creating something special together” – Theo Matta

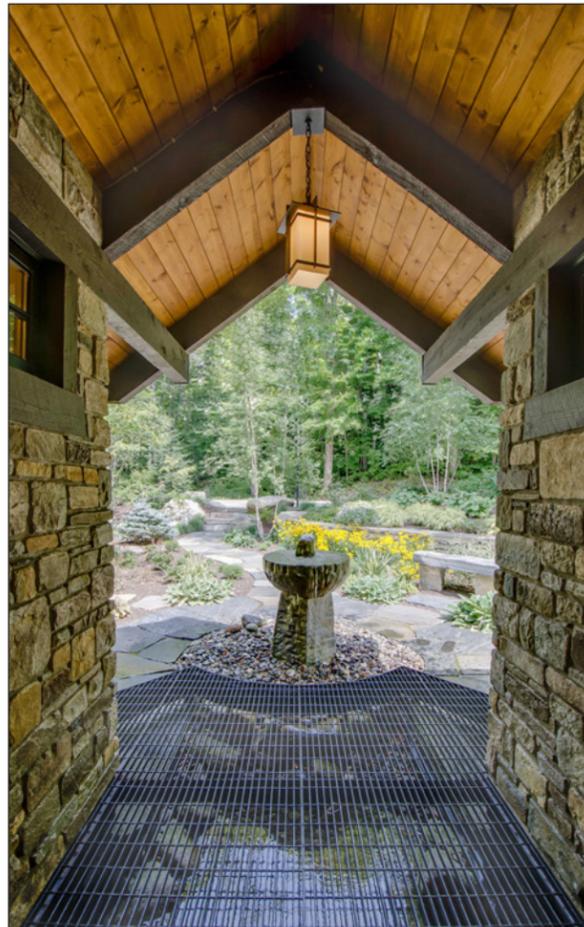
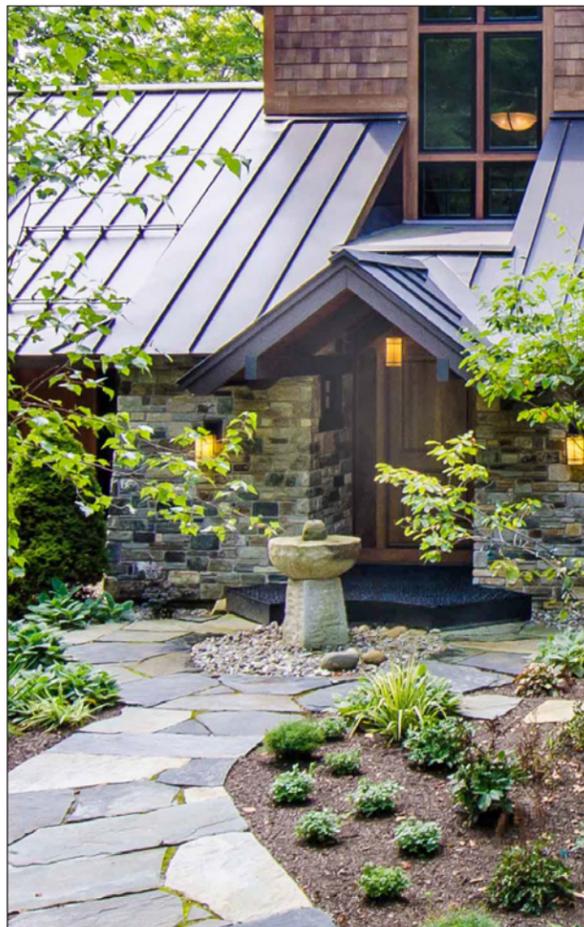
The Matta Family

After decades of working side by side with Joe, I understood the logistics of transforming a home, but living through the step by step process gave a new perspective to the experience.

Using the project as therapy during his recuperation, Joe threw himself into the project without reservation and, frankly, he got a little carried away. We wanted a social gathering space that family and friends could retreat to and enjoy together and we succeeded beyond our wildest expectations. Extensive use was made of the lodge and, of course, we escaped to our mountain retreat as often as possible.

The process totally absorbed Joe’s spare time for almost 2 years and it got a little demanding. Still, the joy of relaxing in front of a roaring fire with a glass of wine and a gourmet meal while watching the snow cats during a raging storm is a memory I’ll never forget. ■■





Joe's Viewpoint

WHEN WE WENT SHOPPING FOR A PROPERTY IN THE AREA, I TOLD

REALTOR, DIANNA STUGGER, WE WANTED SOMETHING THAT NEEDED A LOT OF WORK AND SHE DELIVERED. The site was tremendous and the tiny 50-year-old ski chalet fit my bill perfectly.

I designed everything from the ground up personally—from the engineering, site planning and architectural design through the custom built trusses and grotto/waterfall, everything about this house was a labor of love. In fact, we even built a shop on the premises to accommodate all the custom work. I'd truck my crew up on weekends and even recruited friends into the building process, much to their chagrin.

Okay, so maybe I went a little overboard on the project. Four different types of siding for the exterior. A four-poster bed that actually functioned as supporting beams for the whole master bedroom. An entrance way with running water below it culminating into a miniature waterfall. I took a little kidding from friends, but when we were through...well, all I can say is that this home was the most incredible thing I've ever done. ■■



Tom Hoffman, Design/Build Manager

COLLABORATING WITH JOE MATTA ON THE GROUNDS OF THE SITE OF THIS HOME WAS ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING AND UNIQUE ASSIGNMENTS I'VE EVER UNDERTAKEN. From the moment we met, I knew I was going to like this purveyor of unorthodox ideas. His creativity and style spoke for themselves, but the knowledge of materials he brought to the table were nothing short of amazing. What he didn't know, he quickly learned and the challenge he posed was intense.

Blend an organic, homogenous footprint of impressive new features into the existing land. Do it all on a grand scale, but make it feel like the treatment had always been there. We worked closely together as the project evolved. He was always firm and engaging and there's no doubt in my mind that he brought out the best in myself and my team.

The fountain and waterfall were all Joe's idea and, frankly, pulling it off wasn't easy. Who thinks about field carving a stone fountain and running a stream under their entry? Joe does. Because he pays such close attention to details, and plans meticulously for every eventuality, a masterpiece emerged that has to be experienced to be truly appreciated. ■■

Landscape architecture and design in Vermont presents unique challenges and opportunities and Homestead Landscaping is the premiere landscape design/build team in the region. Old fashioned craftsmanship creates a synergistic vision that resonates to the beauty of each setting they lovingly create.



Vermont
Country
Properties

Diana Stugger
Broker

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International Realty® is the local real estate service provider that offers unrivaled access to qualified people and distinctive properties around the world.

In November of 2005, Joe and Theo Matta purchased, through Vermont Country Properties Sotheby's, a small dated ski chalet as a family retreat and began to remodel with an eye toward making it larger. But, it soon became apparent that the project had grown to a major expansion and architectural redesign.

The chalet disappeared and a mountain masterpiece began to emerge. Soon all who drove by were remarking on the stunning transformation of the property. It beckoned them to come in. They couldn't help yearning to see what it was like inside. It seemed to emerge naturally from the land as the design enhanced the natural hillside setting and mountain view. The organic design & texture of materials in this intriguing and handsome property was reminiscent of Frank Lloyd Wright; the house reflected "form follows function" of open planning & flow throughout. The moment you walked into the house you were embraced by its captivating and restful ambiance.

When Joe told me that he wanted to list his house for sale in 2011, I regretted the timing. Given the market conditions, it was unlikely that the property could be listed at a value that would reflect its true worth. But

there were several sophisticated customers with design backgrounds who were intrigued by the home. They appreciated an exceptional property with the finest of materials and a comprehensive artistic design right down to the finishes and furnishings. A property that was "a home and not a house." In September 2012, the property was sold to one of those customers, commanding the highest price for a property in the area that year.

"I was so impressed with the design and craftsmanship in this property that I asked Joe to design my master bath."

I was so impressed with the design and craftsmanship that I asked him to design my master bath. As the design evolved, I learned that he puts the same energy and enthusiasm, artistry and dedication into his clients' projects as he did his own. I was awed by his intuitive sense of what a client's style and tastes are.

Joe's design concept has an organic quality that naturally flows from property for which it is conceived. His attention to detail is impeccable. He takes great thought and time in walking you through the process and being on top of it every step along the way. He cares about every aspect of the project. You know that when the project is completed you will have a "work of art." He is a master at what he does. ■■



"Clearly the product of a creative, thoughtful design process with attention paid to every detail throughout the entire house and property."

The Ladner Family - The New Owners

We purchased this house largely because the design is so much more unique and refined than others we considered. The aesthetics are Arts and Crafts/Zen and very appealing to us. Space is better utilized, the materials are high quality and the overall workmanship is well done throughout.

The house is very comfortable in all seasons. The radiant heating system is cozy in the winter and numerous well placed windows permit great airflow in the summer. The kitchen is functional and well designed and the appliances are all of high quality. Even the wood storage area is well designed and convenient to the fireplace.

Due to its strategic placement, the site provides a dramatic view and the landscape design is well done and consistent with the overall aesthetic. We didn't purchase the house for its inherent value as an investment, but were interested in its ability to make us feel happy and comfortable. We are very pleased. ■■