

Building TRUST

WITH FARMER PAYNE
ARCHITECTS

by CASSIDY MANTOR



Farmer Payne Architects embodies the adage that good things come in threes. The boutique architecture firm has three studios in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Sun Valley, Idaho, and Shreveport, Louisiana. Their designs span three disciplines—custom residential homes, cutting-edge commercial architecture, and luxury interior design.

Named after its principals, Jamie Farmer and Scott Payne, the two aim to thoughtfully design spaces and forms that enrich the lives and experiences of their clients and audiences. The fundamentals of design guide their approach. Quality, simplicity, and personal collaboration comprise their values.

The best designs are achieved when a team of creators, users, planners, and builders is assembled, and Farmer Payne has assembled and engaged the best team. Their designs are unique but unobtrusive, fresh but refined, and each project is informed by place, specifically the surrounding landscape, weather, and region.

From construction to custom furniture building and formal architecture, Farmer Payne's team offers a wealth of diverse experience. That synergy allows them to reflect upon and combine all the crucial design elements to make each project memorable and successful. Honoring each teammate's unique

abilities, FPA is rooted in the belief that great architecture is produced when influenced by both individuality and collaboration.

Intentionally small in nature, the boutique size of the firm means that each member of the team is engaged with every project. With this size comes the commitment to the client that a principal will be working immersively on their house for a fully customized experience. That not only brings a distinct thoughtfulness and level of expertise not always accessible at larger firms, but it also allows them to apply different materials and building methods used across North America to find the best possible solutions.

The ENGAGEMENT Phase

Farmer Payne's high-end custom homes are unique to each homeowner. Every moment is spent designing for an individual client's lifestyle. With that bespoke personalization comes a need to get to know the client. The first stage of the process involves touring houses, past projects, design inspiration boards, visiting vendors, and the occasional impromptu dinner. The process takes time and as it unfolds, a relationship built on trust develops and flourishes.

The engagement phase of the relationship is as fun as it sounds and rolls over into other activities that help the architects get to know the clients. It helps

them inform future steps in the process, such as designing gear rooms for skiers as they rush out the door in the morning for first tracks and can be easily organized at the end of the day before heading to après activities. "We joke that especially with couples, we're going to be getting to know them as best as possible, which can feel fairly intimate," Payne adds. The process allows them to take on a diversity of projects and develop what their clients are envisioning in their heads into the structures they'll call home.

"For us to be successful, we have to understand how our clients live their lives so we can design for how they want to live in

their homes," Jamie Farmer, Principal, says. They are open to communicating through any avenue—call, text, and email. FPA's client relationships are paramount. Because of this, doing activities outside of the traditional studio/client relationship allows both to know one another on a more personal level, which always benefits the end result.

One of the firm's current clients is a wine aficionado, so the Farmer Payne team went out one night to drink wine with him. "As he was explaining how he puts his feet up drinking a glass of port by the fire, I was visualizing how to put his office together based on how he unwinds for the day," Jamie Farmer, Principal, shares.



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—Tory Hinson, Sun Valley Studio Manager and Interiors, Farmer Payne Architects

M a k i n g M E M O R I E S

Farmer Payne’s clients are interesting people who have extraordinary life stories. Often, they will have an heirloom, treasured object, or piece of art they want to showcase in their new home. Farmer Payne delights in those moments. One example of FPA’s thoughtful design is a recent project they did for a client whose father was a renowned furniture maker from the 1950s through the 1970s. Jamie Farmer, Principal, says, “At the beginning of our process, we reviewed with her the pieces she wanted to use that included art and some of her father’s furniture designs. We’re incorporating those mid-century custom woodworked ottomans and headboards into the design—it’s unique from an architectural standpoint and incredibly meaningful to our client, who is an artist herself.”

Tory Hinson, Sun Valley Studio Manager and Interiors, echoes this sentiment and adds that it becomes more unique and exciting when clients bring Farmer Payne something they can design around. “We ask clients to bring objects like antiques and fine artwork to get a sense of what they treasure and want to showcase in their dream homes. We’ve had clients who have been on safari and have trophies and want the perfect spot for them in their new home.”

In addition to personally meaningful objects, Farmer Payne designs with a consideration of the overarching context of the home. “Especially in Jackson with the Tetons in our backyard, we often spend time figuring out how to optimize our client’s lot so that we can put the Grand on display for them,” Jamie explains. “That process involves puzzling together how to create moments and views that help them live both inside and outside.”

With context and location being unique to each client, Farmer Payne takes great care in designing for the specific set of criteria each project presents. Jamie adds that it’s a fun challenge to create a built environment where clients can experience nature within their homes. Of the many values Farmer Payne brings to its clients, being able to form an individualized relationship with nature in one’s intimate spaces is most meaningful.



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TEAMwork

Farmer Payne has found a unique way to balance individuality with teamwork when building custom high-end residential architecture. “Every project is different,” Scott says. “Our end goal is always to deliver an amazing product at the end, which is possible as a result of being exposed to this team and the village of people it takes to create it.” Diverse personalities are a part of the process when constructing a home. Matching the right team members with the right clients is key. It takes a special group to be able to get to the finish line and deliver beautiful and memorable work, and Farmer Payne has that chemistry.

Collaboration is a top priority for Farmer Payne, where “teamwork” is not just a buzzword. They highlight each of their

staff members’ experience. “Each person who touches a project has a unique skill, and we strive to collectively bring those personalities together to create a team with rich experience. It’s how we end up informing the highest quality product or project,” Jamie says. Clients experience this attitude of teamwork from the moment they do site visits together and notice that everyone is part of the process.

Teamwork also extends outside of the Farmer Payne studio to partners, builders, engineers, and interior designers. Farmer Payne is willing and able to take on every aspect of interior design, but also welcomes coordinating and collaborating with interior designers in whatever capacity is appropriate for the client and the job. This adaptability is

immensely valuable because each project has its own intricacies that require pivoting and flexibility to complete the project to the client’s satisfaction. “We curate every step for folks,” Scott says.

Trust is built through this teamwork dynamic as their homes take shape. Most of Farmer Payne’s clients are referrals. Some are second homes for the same homeowner, others are friends of past clients. A custom home with Farmer Payne may take three to five years to complete. Because this is a long-term commitment, it’s important to select the right people to be partners. “Our goal is to cultivate a strong relationship with the homeowner so we can fully understand their vision and advocate for them throughout the building process,” Tory adds.



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Scott sums it up with the utmost ease. “We used to say we were different because we were young and passionate. Now we’re... well, there’s more gray hair, but we’re wiser. We’ve been exposed to so much high-end architecture across the country in different markets. Unlike other firms that might find themselves pigeon-holed into one market or one way of working, our experience has taught us that there may be 10 different ways to tackle and solve a problem. It’s satisfying to leverage this wisdom because it helps ensure decisions lead to successful outcomes that our clients treasure.”

A custom home from Farmer Payne aims to set a new standard. One that is based on a belief that relationships and teamwork create the strongest designs. Their work artfully balances connection to people and place with an expression of individual life experiences that form the ultimate home. ■ [whj COVER FEATURE](#)



Building COMMUNITY

The idea of connection to one’s surroundings is inherent in a collaborative mindset, and Farmer Payne designs from a perspective that honors the environment. Although the majority of their work is custom residential, they have also designed workforce housing, restaurants, hotel property, and storefronts. In Jackson Hole, they are currently constructing workforce housing including a 12-unit apartment building partnered with Post Company and are in the process of designing 25 single-family workforce units. “We love projects like this that are still residential, but also prioritize the community,” Jamie says. Other projects include the Anvil Hotel and Glorietta restaurant, where Farmer Payne served as the Architect of Record. The firm is also designing Farmer Payne’s new Sun Valley office building that will be shared with four other partners.

Along with individuality and collaboration, the firm prioritizes the human connection with nature and how a home is an extension of a person. “Growing up in this area, the focus has always been on being outside, whether it’s going to National Parks, climbing mountains, or mountain biking,” Jamie says. “We have access to so many amenities and there’s an authenticity to the outside world. We strive to facilitate the connection to that, especially today when everyone is so plugged into the digital world. Nature is true design, so we work in a way that celebrates how we experience the rhythm of nature as the ultimate expression of design.”

