

BISHOP & HEENAN LAW FIRM

JOHN HEENAN AND RANDY BISHOP REDEFINE THE MODERN LAW FIRM

PHOTOS BY CASEY PAGE & JAMES WOODCOCK



As an attorney specializing in consumer protection law, John Heenan is passionate about advocating for his clients.

“I knew before ever graduating from law school this was the kind of practice I would pursue,” Heenan said.

While still a law student at the University of Montana, Heenan participated in a variety of class clinicals. One of those was representing students

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— Eric Hulteng
Hulteng
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against unscrupulous landlords and debt collectors. “That experience was immensely rewarding,” he said. Originally from Pennsylvania, Heenan received both his undergraduate and law degree from the University of Montana. In 2003 he moved to Billings where he worked for Judge Richard Cebull before joining a local firm. Four years later, Heenan struck out on his own. “It was important to me to take on the cases I wanted to take on and to be able to do what I needed to do in order to succeed for my clients,” he said.

For several years, Heenan along with

Left and inset: The architects chose a modern form that includes a unique reverse butterfly roof. They then integrated native Montana rock and timber and applied a color palette that mirrored the surrounding landscape. Top: As visitors pass through the foyer into the reception area, they are enveloped in a richly-appointed sitting area awash in soft light. The west wall of the room features a floor-to-ceiling dry-stacked stone wall with a two-sided fireplace that fronts to both the reception area and a conference room on the other side. Right: The conference room is flooded with light and has a natural stone fireplace that creates an inviting ambience.



his administrative assistant Amber Shanks officed on the third floor of the downtown Post Office. Eventually they relocated the two-person firm to Billings' West End.

In 2012 Heenan merged his practice with attorneys Randy Bishop and Gene Jarrussi and changed the name to Bishop & Heenan Law Firm. The new partners quickly realized they had outgrown their current office space and began considering options.

BUTTRESSED BEAUTY

Although Heenan looked at multiple professional office spaces, he didn't find the right combination of location and aesthetics he was looking for.

"We needed to be centrally-located for our clients, and easy to get to from downtown and Billings Heights," Heenan said. "I also wanted to have a comfortable, inviting environment. Nothing pretentious or intimidating. A kind of 'anti-law firm, law firm.'"

Unable to find what he wanted, Heenan decided to build and purchased a lot on Zimmerman Trail. Heenan and Bishop hired Eric Hulteng of Hulteng Inc. as the general contractor for the project, and Hulteng



Right and next page: Individual offices feature high ceilings and oversized windows with comfortable furnishings.

introduced Heenan to Brian Johnson, an architect with Collaborative Design Architects.

"Eric had a big hand in bringing in the right people for the project, and everyone brought brought their best to the table," Heenan said.

Johnson and his associate, interior designer Nick Pancheaum, joined the team as did Heenan's wife, Meagen. Together, the group began developing a concept for Heenan's vision.

"The client wanted a space that felt really comfortable – homey with a rustic yet refined quality," Hulteng said. "The entire team worked very well together to accomplish just that."

Johnson and Pancheaum started with a modern form that included a unique reverse butterfly roof. They then integrated native Montana rock and timber and applied a color palette that mirrored the surrounding landscape. The reverse roofline reaches upward from the center creating more space for larger windows with transom panes that flood the interior with natural light.

"We call this eastern Montana modern," Johnson said.

Meagen Heenan was also integral to the process.

"Meagen attended every meeting. She would catch things on the plans and make great suggestions," Heenan said. "And Eric's people were amazing. He transformed the concept into this incredible building, and he made the process feel seamless."

VERTICAL HORIZON

Tucked back from the bustling arterial, the elegant new building appears to rise organically from the earth. Clad in locally-quarried stone and dark cedar, the outline projects a stunning silhouette.

"The wings of the roof system point upward, opening the view line to the expansive Montana panorama," Johnson noted.

Inside, a warm palette of taupe, heavy cream and rich green complement the use of natural stone,



Above: Beautiful upscale kitchen with stainless steel appliances, quartz countertops and a large island where people can sit comfortably to share lunch or simply talk.



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reclaimed wood and heavy timber creating an inviting environment somewhat reminiscent of a Montana lodge.

As visitors pass through the foyer into the reception area, they are enveloped in a richly-appointed sitting area awash in soft light. The west wall of the room features a floor-to-ceiling dry-stacked stone wall with a two-sided fireplace that fronts to both the reception area and a conference room on the other side. Above, a massive timber beam bisects the room penetrating through the wall to the outside to support the roof. Tall ceilings with exposed ductwork and metal detailing accentuate the rustic vibe.

Beyond the reception area are seven offices plus three conference rooms, one of which features a table that transforms into a regulation-sized billiards table. There is also a large open space with wireless state-of-the-art work stations for the firm's legal assistants.

Past the workstations, the space opens to a beautiful upscale kitchen with stainless steel appliances, quartz countertops and a large island where people can sit comfortably to share lunch or simply talk.

"I respect and enjoy the company of my associates and clients. This kitchen was designed to be a relaxed setting where we can sit and talk about issues or cases," Heenan said.

Off the far side of the kitchen, a glass door leads to an expansive outdoor living space with a full-sized grill and fire pit. "The patio was my idea," Heenan said smiling.

CLIENT CARE

According to Heenan, the new building was part of his philosophy of putting clients first.

"I want my clients to feel comfortable working with me," he said. For Heenan, that means having an environment that isn't stodgy or staid.

"I'm proud of my clients, and I'm fortunate to work with a great staff. We respect each other and are all invested," said Heenan. "I sleep very well at night doing what I do."

**Top: a glass door leads to an expansive outdoor living space with a full-sized grill and fire pit.
Right: One of the firm's three conference rooms houses a full size billiard table.**

