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ONE WITH NATURE

WRITTEN BY MINDY PANTIEL

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID O. MARLOW

THE OWNERS OF THIS MOUNTAIN CONTEMPORARY MISSOURI HEIGHTS HOME FIRST DISCOVERED THE ASPEN VALLEY WHEN THEY CAME ON VACATION TO ESCAPE THE OPPRESSIVE SUMMER HEAT OF CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. "We purchased a fractional timeshare and spent time in the mountains every year," says the husband, who, after 23 years of living in Washington, DC, sold his clinical laboratory business and, along with his wife, retired to the South.

ARCHITECTURE John Muir and Lane Laugesen, John Muir Architects, Inc.

INTERIOR DESIGN Kari Foster and Natalie Lynch, Associates III Interior Design

HOME BUILDER Patrick Maley, Maley Building Corporation

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE Daisuke Yoshimura, Yoshimura Design, Inc.

BEDROOMS 4 **BATHROOMS** 4 **SQUARE FEET** 6,500





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But Colorado kept calling to them—“We fell in love with the beauty and lifestyle,” the husband says—and when a property search turned up the perfect four-and-a-half-acre lot near Basalt, they knew a permanent move was imminent. “The site had year-round greenery and a microclimate that made it about 10 degrees warmer in winter than it was in Aspen,” the husband adds. “My wife had this idea of building our own home, and what happened really was her vision.”

By the time they sat down with architect John Muir, principal of John Muir Architects in Carbondale, that vision had morphed into a two-page mission statement in which the couple detailed their feelings about everything from the surroundings and materials to the actual structure. Muir translated their words into a stone, wood and metal residence built into the hillside to minimize its impact on the site while still maximizing

NEUTRAL TONES

In the entry, an earthen plaster wall simulates stone and serves as a backdrop for a custom walnut table from Sheker Studio, a mirror by Ruth Livingston Designs and artful accents from the owners' collection.



CASUAL ELEGANCE

Tailored furnishings and a wool and silk rug from Rug Source sit on a burnished bronze concrete floor. A combination of textures, from the jacquard-covered Berman Rosetti dining chairs to the copper-shine fireplace surround and lamps from Visual Comfort, adds visual interest.



PINPOINT DESIGN

An ergonomically correct, crescent-shaped island topped in Caesarstone is the central food prep area. The backsplash over the sink is glass mosaic tile from Pedini in Washington, DC. Appliances available at Abt.com.



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the magnificent views of Mount Sopris, Chair Mountain and the Flat Tops range. "People build here to capture views and live in picture frames," says Muir, who strove to disturb as little vegetation as possible.

Unlike more imposing traditional mountain homes, Muir used partial barrel and flat roof forms, and a horizontal orientation to create a modified modern look. "This was not the site for a cold, sleek contemporary house," says the architect, who chose farmers stone for its ability to blend with the local color, copper shingle siding, and standing seam metal for the flat roof portions.

With the front door intentionally hidden from view to create a progression upon arrival, entering the house is a carefully composed experience that begins with a boardwalk floating over the landscape and transforms into a more precise walkway of pavers set in pea gravel. "The point is to go from wild and random to geometric and organized," he adds.

VIEW TIME

The burnished concrete floors continue in the outdoor dining room, where mature evergreens frame a spectacular view of Mount Sopris. Design by landscape architect Daisuke Yoshimura, of Carbondale-based Yoshimura Design. Chairs by Gloster.



ARTFUL GALLERY

A Hilliard mosaic-glass chandelier lights the travertine tile floor in the entry. The barrel vault ceiling is clear vertical-grain fir, and the hallway flooring is walnut. Statue at far end by Debra Fritts.



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Once inside, the focus is a large piece of sculpture at the far end of the hallway, rather than on immediate mountain views. “You walk down the gallery and discover Mount Sopris around the corner,” says Muir, who established a linear layout so the living room, dining room and kitchen all open to the commanding backdrop. The second floor master suite, actually at grade level, claims the best view in the house.

When it came to interior finishes and furnishings, the wife managed, along with interior designers Kari Foster and Natalie Lynch, of Denver-based Associates III, “to keep things as warm and contemporary as possible.” Capitalizing on their firm’s reputation as a sustainable design company, Foster and Lynch assembled a palette of natural materials with non-toxic finishes—linen, wool, silk and chenille among them—and let the surroundings guide the color scheme. “The colors in the furnishings mirror nature,” says Foster. “We actually pulled samples of pine needles, juniper, moss and lichen and took them home with us.”

HOT SPOT

In the outdoor lounge area, a custom steel box filled with black lava rock provides a warm glow long after the sun goes down. Chairs by Kingsley Bate.



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A yin and yang of smooth and rough textures defines things like the wool cashmere blend sofas and mohair chairs that offset the stone walls, and the weave of the cotton jacquard Berman Rosetti dining chairs that contrast with the walnut table. The textural juxtaposition continues in the kitchen, where the same coarse farmers stone is a foil for smoother rift-cut, gray-stained oak cabinets, and even sleeker Caesarstone countertops. The wife, a gourmet cook, had every inch of the space designed to her specifications, including a gridded storage system customized to hold her considerable collection of cooking ware.

Weather permitting, which is almost always, the owners like to entertain outdoors, where both the dining and living areas, complete with a fire pit, nestle in the landscape. "Having lived in cities much of my life, I'd heard that having nature surround you could be a spiritual experience," says the wife. "Before, I couldn't appreciate what that meant, but now I do." **L**

INSIDE OUT

A neutral palette in the master bath, which features honed granite countertops and travertine floors, allows mountain views to take center stage.



LAYERED TONES

In the master suite, where the best views in the home are enjoyed, the custom bed from Sheker Studio is walnut, the ottomans are covered in wool and the Donghia chair in chenille, and full-length custom walnut dressers do double duty as nightstands.