

MID WINTER 2006

Mountain homestyle

ASPEN | SNOWMASS VAIL | BEAVER CREEK TELLURIDE

ultimate ski house

Slopeside Splendor in Aspen

> Exotic Asian Imports

> Greening for Greed

+ Party in the Kitchen!

A big, open dining room perfect for a big, active family in Aspen

WITH THE HELP OF A CAN-DO ARCHITECT, A TEN-SIBLING CLAN BUILDS A DREAM SKI CHATEAU IN ASPEN



Tiered uphill, seven levels nestle into the mountainside for ultimate privacy.



SKIING
LISTENING
ORGANIZING
PICNICS
EVENINGS
SKATING
INDULGENCE
DINNERS
EXCITEMENT
FRESHIES
ALPENGLOW
MOONLIGHT
INTIMACY
LAUGHTER
YOUTH
SLEEP OVERS
TOGETHERNES
YEAR-ROUND
LOVE
EVERYWHERE

BY LINDA HAYES

PHOTOS BY DAVID O. MARLOW



The sandstone hearth of the living room's fireplace extends out onto the patio, allowing a space for the outdoor barbecue. This creates a visual continuity between the interior and exterior living areas.

“It’s the ultimate ski-in, ski-out house,” says Aspen architect Bill Poss of the contemporary, 7,000-square-foot retreat he designed and built for a formidable client at the edge of a

prime Aspen Mountain slope. “Every level has access to the mountain. There’s a generous ski room, an entertaining deck with a barbecue that you can ski into for lunch, and an outdoor hot tub.” That said, it’s also

the ultimate example of how a team effort can bring a wish list of requirements and desires to fruition.

The clients were an extended family that included ten siblings with young families



The staircase is a central feature of the home, providing easy access throughout. Poss calls it a "collector/connector" staircase for the circulation between levels it promotes.



Double kitchen islands topped with black granite offer ample working and gathering space.

of their own. And while the location was perfectly suited for snow-sliding pursuits, it posed a whole set of challenges for Poss and his own extended crew of architects and designers at Poss Architecture +

Planning. First, there were basic building practicalities. "The architects had to work with many constraints, such as a very difficult, steep site and strict Aspen codes for height restrictions and square-footage

limitations," recalls family member and spokesperson Sheridan Lorenz, who, herself an architect, has a good working knowledge of such things.

In addition, the family wanted the house



to blend into the mountainside, which, according to Lorenz, required very careful attention to elevation, design concept and choice of exterior materials. And then there were the more aesthetic aspects. "We wanted to address the position of the sun and direction of the wind to maximize breezes in summer and sun in winter," she says. "And, of course, views are one of the most



Contemporary and Cozy: Guest master suites offer all the comforts, including, in some cases, direct access to the slopes.

important aspects of the site.”

With ideas and solutions coming from all directions, Poss and project architect Lyndal Williams set about working up plans. “The Poss team readily embraced and developed the design concepts and made the process really fun,” Lorenz says. “They all embraced the project and made it truly fun. As client and spokesman for our larger family, I had to consider all their



A slope-side entertaining patio features cut slate the color of the natural soil and a stainless steel barbecue set into a smooth sandstone surround.

Contemporary materials and design details mix with indigenous Colorado sandstone. The slatted windows filter in Southern light.

A private hot tub offers respite for skiers just off the slopes.



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THE KEY TO THE DESIGN CONCEPT WAS LAYING OUT THE HOUSE IN SEVEN HALF-LEVELS

wishes and the Poss team was respectful of each and every request. Lyndal was flexible and undaunted by any requirement or suggestion, and she anticipated many needs that were not expressed by us."

Key to the design concept was laying out the house in seven half-levels that, stepping gradually uphill, matched the slope of the ski hill on one side and an access road on the other. Inspiration for the overall form came from Aspen's historic silver-mining days. "Its steep and stepped roofs, which gave us the chance to add volume to the rooms, are very reminiscent of local mining structures, such as smelters and ore tipplers that used to be at the bottom of the mountain," Poss says.

Certain exterior materials, such as Douglas fir and Colorado red sandstone, were a nod to the local environment and the influence of the Victorian architecture of Aspen's earlier days. Others, including copper (intended to patina over time) and cypress siding lent a modern edge, while horizontally slatted stacked clerestory windows take advantage of the natural light, letting in just the right amount of southern sunlight while offering up distinctive views. "You can see up into the treetops during the day," Poss says, "and blue sky filters through."

Inside, an elegant stairway (Poss calls it a "collector/connector") links the levels together, from a garage on the lowest level to a series of private guest master suites on middle levels to communal living, dining and playing areas, including a custom "sleeping room" where all the children can settle in together for the night. "Aside from being a central feature of the house, the stairway allows for easy circulation and privacy," Poss says. "You can move between levels and rooms without bumping into people."

With flow and privacy concerns handled, interior design work fell onto the capable shoulders of Poss Architecture's in-house design division, in particular Barbara Mullen and her husband, Richard. "It was important to us that each room be cozy and warm, something that I find is some-

FULL UP, THE HOUSE IS AT IT'S BEST

times difficult with such a contemporary design," explains Lorenz. "Working in very close association with Lyndal, Barbara was masterful at pulling together all the architectural features with great interior elements."

Playing off of the natural surroundings, the overall color scheme reflects the colors of autumn—warm reds, forest green, orange and gold. Fabrics for everything from upholstery to floor-coverings are highly textural. Leathers, chenilles and mohairs were added to the mix of furnishings, which include pieces by Holly Hunt, J. Robert Scott and A. Rudin, because of their soft, tactile qualities and eye appeal.

The main living areas feature near-360-degree views to Aspen Mountain, as well as the Roaring Fork Valley and Independence Pass. Of particular note is the kitchen, which was designed to allow multiple chefs, or families, to be cooking at the same time, as well as for heavy-duty entertaining. Double islands of birch with horizontal metal detailing are both architectural and functional. Black granite countertops and stainless steel appliances add contrast to smooth wood floors and ceilings. Guests may be seated casually counter-side, or at a sleek dining table large enough for a crowd. In good weather, a large outdoor terrace facing the mountain extends gathering and entertaining options.

On the private levels, bedroom suites are all similar in size and offerings, including softly cushioned sofa beds tucked into bay window wells. A couple of them have private access to the mountain (perfect, Lorenz says, for early-bird skiers who don't want to get caught up in the morning ski-room conversations).

Full up, the house is at its best. "The beauty is that it functions so well for so many different needs," says Lorenz. "For shared events, or small parties, intimate conversations around the fireplace, or group meetings in the living room, or even when everyone is in the ski room at once, the scale is always right."

Poss attributes the success to the contributions of everyone involved. "It's always a process," he says. "Interpreting the client's vision is our job. The more feedback we get, the better the house will be."