

Soft Landing

A new Missouri Heights contemporary home is designed to rest gently against its sloped surroundings.

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The homeowners' dog, Zeus, sits atop limestone slabs that lead to glass entry doors by Pella. Landscape architect Shannon Murphy planted aspen trees, coneflowers and salvia to bring the spirit of the mountain meadow surroundings right up to the house.

W

hen you start with an especially spectacular expanse of land, the task of a design team is to create a residence that lives as harmoniously as possible with Mother Nature. Such was the

case when homeowners Steve Brammell and Laurie Cusinato decided to purchase 35 acres in Missouri Heights—a rural area just outside of Carbondale renowned for its sprawling ranches, unsurpassed views and ample seclusion—as the site for their new home.

For their primary residence, they were determined to strike just the right balance: The goal was to create a home that worked well for their lifestyle and also merged into the stunning surroundings. “There are million-dollar views out here,” says Laurie, noting the home’s unobstructed sight lines out to Mount Sopris. “We wanted this home to settle closely into the landscape,” Steve adds, “which moved us toward flat roofs and a lower profile.” While they were starting from scratch, one aspect was predetermined: their interior designer. The couple had already been working with Lindsay Kadlick on a home in Arizona when they took a trip out to Colorado—where they had lived until their move to the Grand Canyon State two years prior—and realized their hearts still lay in the mountains after all. The designer pivoted with them as they moved back from the Southwest and began the design process anew.

To get things going, Steve and Laurie pulled in architect David Johnston and general contractor Gary M. Johnson. Positioning the house within the site’s broad acreage was the first important step. “Dealing with the initial slopes and the setting of the house, and tying it back into the natural landscape were the biggest factors early on,” recalls Gary, who handled the first stages of the project while his brother, Robert A. Johnson, took over the later phases of construction.

The architect’s answer to the challenging topology was to place most of the main living spaces on a single story with the guest rooms tucked into the slope below. “It makes us feel like we’re nestled into nature, having most of the house at ground level,” Laurie says. Rustic materials applied to a contemporary aesthetic also help make it feel at home in the mountains—like the patinated-copper panels and reclaimed wood of

the exterior that nudge up against walls of glass addressing the Elk Range. Variations in the façade and roofline provide rhythm and experiences of discovery and revelation. “There’s a simplicity to this home, but the level of detail allows its simplistic nature to be very expressive,” Johnston notes.

One key design moment is the entrance, a glass breezeway that transitions between the outside world and the interior spaces and looks directly into the courtyard. It acts as a divider between the public living spaces and the service areas, which include a mud room, laundry room and garage. And a grove of aspen trees planted right up to the breezeway—the work of landscape architect Shannon Murphy—further blur the lines between indoors and out.

Kadlick drew inspiration from the architecture’s exterior palette, bringing metals and reclaimed woods indoors, including reclaimed-oak flooring from an old Maker’s Mark warehouse that appears throughout the home. “It has great natural distressing,” the designer points out. “The floors bring in so much visual interest, so we kept the finishes very clean and natural with a neutral palette to draw your eye out to the beautiful views.”

And that’s not to say that the hushed tones and subtle patterns she skillfully employs are the least bit forgettable. Just look to the great room’s showstopping fireplace wall, which features floor-to-ceiling patinated-steel panels fronted by a clean-lined, contemporary concrete surround “that ties back to the exterior,” Kadlick explains. “This is our ‘wow’ room, with the most mesmerizing surroundings visible from both sides.”

As construction finalized, Murphy was tasked with revegetating the landscape to bring the valley’s meadow right up to the house. See, for instance, the different types of sage the landscape architect placed near the house, inspired by a big sagebrush growing wild in the distance. While many mature spruce and aspens were added to the site, these varieties of shorter, native sage bring softness to the garden, Murphy explains.

As those plantings continue to fill in, the melding of dwelling and landscape will only be further enhanced with time. And what also continues to grow is the owners’ love of the area, as this home now makes them feel even more confident about their decision to return to Colorado. “I always describe the Roaring Fork Valley as a slice of paradise,” Laurie reflects. “It’s just a really stunning place.” ■

A Pierre Frey chenille on bespoke chairs and a Giant chenille on the Burton James sectional cozy up to a concrete fireplace surround and patinated-metal panels by Scherer Metals in the great room. The art is Marcia Myers and the chandelier is from Hinkley's Lighting.





Left: In the kitchen, white oak cabinets by Distinctive Custom Cabinetry feature quartzite countertops from Galleria of Stone. The flooring is reclaimed wood from a Maker's Mark distillery that was sourced through Longwood Antique Woods.

Opposite: Joining a banquette sporting Erica Shamrock Textiles faux leather, the breakfast nook's bespoke dining table pairs a white oak base with a bronze-glass top. The pendant lights are Hammerton Studio and the art is by Alexander Putov.





Above: Clad in the same reclaimed wood found on the exterior, which was sourced through American Antique Lumber, the stairwell wall is illuminated by slender, integrated LED lights embedded between the boards. Pella windows frame the space.

Opposite: A seating area near the lower guest suites mixes a Burton James sofa in a Pindler textile with Bernhardt ottomans wearing fabric from Erica Shamrock Textiles. The lamp and rug are by Four Hands.

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—LINDSAY KADLICK



Outside a guest bedroom, lounge chairs from Four Hands provide a perch to take in the view. The rustic decorative teak ball was purchased from Revelation. The bed is by Brownstone Furniture.