

Altitude Adjustment

Rustic yet refined, a renovated Colorado mountain retreat with breathtaking views exudes a refreshingly urbane attitude.

Designer Susse Budde's freewheeling approach to traditional mountain style is announced at the two-story entry, where polished concrete floors ground industrial-chic raw steel wall panels and a metal staircase punctuated by distressed wooden treads. Peppy mustard-color accents take their color cues from the drifts of wildflowers surrounding the house.



Script a story of serendipity, and

it might read like this: A couple moving into their Colorado vacation home get stuck in their truck on a steep mountain road. Friendly neighbor Susse Budde stops to help. Later, the couple bring a six-pack of beer to Budde's house as a thank-you gift and notice she is mulling over tile samples. "Are you by chance an interior designer?" the couple asks. "Yes, I am!" Budde says.

Cue the launch of a two-year renovation that Budde worked on with her husband, builder Corey Larsen. "The house had been a 2,000-square-foot box," Budde says. "We gutted it and added another 4,000 square feet. The owners were living in Dubai at the time and traveling the world for work, so we got to do everything from picking the flatware to deciding where it should go."

But that doesn't mean the owners were without opinions. Quite the contrary. "He wanted a typical mountain home, with log walls and wagon wheels and antlers everywhere," Budde says. "Her taste, on the other hand, is very elegant and modern. Our job was to meld all that into a house they'd both love."



To that end, Larsen and Budde deftly juxtaposed rustic and refined to create a house that would easily welcome large numbers of far-flung family members for long, cozy weekends and activity-packed holidays, all in sophisticated—yet approachable—mountain style. "His taste is reflected in the building itself, in the more permanent things like walls and floors and ceilings, which are nearly all made of reclaimed wood," Budde says. "Her taste can be seen in the interior design, which is all about modern furniture mixed with steel and glass."

Furnishings range from an iconic midcentury Papa Bear chair—whimsically upholstered in reptile-print velvet—to timeworn antiques cloaked in geometric patterns. Low, clean-lined sofas and striking custom light fixtures round out the inventive mix. "The furnishings are atypical, that's for sure," Budde says. "You'd expect a mountain home to have lots of giant leather chairs with rolled arms, nailhead trim, and plaid pillows, all of which would have been fine here. But we weren't going for fine. We wanted to create something extraordinary."

In spite of the home's palette of cool, gray neutrals—chosen so breathtaking mountain views and noteworthy furniture silhouettes would take center stage—colorful art and accessories perform key supporting roles. "One of the owners is an exuberant person," Budde says. "She loves color, so mustard, orange, green, blue, and purple make appearances here and there." Also enlivening the design is an abundance of texture. "Texture brings movement and personality into neutral spaces," Budde says. "Going from steel to wood to stone is a lot more interesting than painted drywall."

Her clients wholeheartedly agree. "We all wanted this house to be memorable—not just mountainy," Budde says.

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This photo: The great-room's beetle-kill pine ceiling is accented by hand-distressed beams and a 60-inch-diameter halo of contemporary lighting. To mimic the look of steel, windows framing spectacular views sport exterior black paint. **Opposite:** Secluded at the top of a hill, the newly expanded house features a contemporary addition.

In the dining area of the great-room, hand-blown glass orb lights float above a reclaimed-pine table surrounded by chairs with indoor-outdoor fabric seats. A stainless-steel backsplash and range hood in the adjoining kitchen add sheen to balance rustic wood- and stone-clad walls.







“The great-room’s scale and vistas, the coziness of the guest suites, the playful nature of the bunk room — this house just screams vacation home.”

—DESIGNER SUSSE BUDDÉ

Opposite: In the great-room, a vintage, velvet-clad Papa Bear chair and matching ottoman offer a comfortable perch to curl up with a book and enjoy unobstructed mountain scenery. **Above left:** Custom cubes fabricated from prism glass, then strapped and suspended from leather, illuminate the upper-level hallway, which is lined with 200-year-old oak floors. A pocket door encloses the powder room. **Above:** A textural hide wallcovering adds a glam factor to the powder room’s stone basin sink and limestone counter.



“I love mixing rustic woods with glass and

steel. The combination makes each one stand out even more.”

—SUSSE BUDDÉ



Opposite: This guest room pampers with its caned headboard and footboard, subtly forested wallcovering, and linen-upholstered bench. **Left:** A quartet of queen-size bunk beds crafted from vintage barnwood sleeps eight in relaxed, welcoming style. “The owners knew they’d always have a lot of people joining them here,” Budde says. **Below:** An ideal spot for alfresco lunches and evening cocktails, a generous deck wraps around the house, leading to a hot tub, barbecue pit, and lounge area near the kitchen.

