



Balancing Act

A skillful blend of sleek and rustic elements delivers mountain modern style to homeowners with distinctly different tastes

BY NANCY RICHMAN MILLIGAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID PATTERSON

HE IS FROM AUSTRALIA AND ENVISIONED all-American Wild West influences for their Steamboat Springs vacation home—antler chandeliers, reclaimed wood walls and bearskin rugs. She travels the world on business and stays in high-design hotels, and craved a similar modern elegance. Design/build team Susse Budde and Corey Larsen of Dimension Fine Homes skillfully delivered both aesthetics to homeowners Sean Curnow and Ginnie Carlier without compromising design. “Sean saw photos of a shiny glass-and-steel chandelier and worried about not getting his mountain home. Ginnie saw barn wood samples and worried they were too rustic,” says Budde. “When paired together, everything worked.”

The homeowners, who live overseas, found the house while vacationing in Colorado. A chance meeting with Larsen and Budde resulted in a two-year project that would triple the size of the original 2,000-square-foot house and take it from a dated, predictable vacation home to a striking example of sophisticated, yet approachable,

(opposite) This alcove exemplifies designer Susse Budde's mountain modern style: a glam, mirrored console is juxtaposed with rough wood walls and the antler chandelier that homeowner Sean Curnow craved. The wood slice sculpture is from HW Home.

John Pomp Studios' hand-blown glass pendants, painted cabinetry and stainless steel backsplashes mix with textural wood and stone surfaces in the kitchen and dining area. The table is made of reclaimed pine.





(above) A commissioned painting of aspen trees by Lance Whitner adds a strong pop of color to the landing; a painting by Carol Jean depicts the mountain view seen from the home's living room window. The commanding prism pendants from Fuse Lighting hang by leather straps, a nod to the mountain aesthetic. (opposite) A 60-inch round chandelier from Ochre has a steel canopy and individual glass pieces that look like oversize raindrops. "It's the ultimate contrast to barn wood," says the designer.

mountain modern style. "I love to mix old and new, shiny and rough, clean-painted and rustic wood surfaces," says Budde. "Everything stands out when you mix opposites. You can really appreciate barn wood when you see stainless steel and glass next to it. It's more exciting than the expected."

Budde and Larsen completely gutted the home and pushed out the walls in two directions to add two new guest suites, a giant bunkroom, an entry and mudroom, a large gym and a three-car garage. The shell of the house relies heavily on wood finishes: eco-friendly beetle-kill pine ceilings, recycled barn-wood walls and 200-year-old reclaimed oak floors. Larsen hand-distressed the hefty wood ceiling beams to make them appear old. "Together we built the exterior shell, then I just went to town with spatial arrangements, flow and windows," Budde says. "I'm a big pusher of windows, especially with this home's 270-degree unobstructed mountain views."

Shedding Some Light

It is no accident that the light fixtures in this house command attention. Designer Susse Budde shares her design philosophy and advice on lighting:

Design Inspiration

Budde typically starts her rooms with lighting and builds a design around it. "It's somewhat unconventional, but if you start with a fabulous piece, it sets the tone for the room," she says. "Look at lighting as a piece of art and let it be your starting point."

Key Element

Budde points out that lighting is often an afterthought, once the room is designed and most of the budget is spent. "Lighting needs to be well thought out. Spend money on lighting first and make concessions later on less important things," she advises. "People say they can always change out a light fixture, but they don't."

Complement

Fixtures in the same or adjoining rooms don't need to match. They can be different, but should have similar elements, such as materials and shape. (See how the curved glass fixtures in the living and dining rooms of this house relate to one another.)





(opposite) A guest suite brings the outdoors in with tree-motif wallpaper and chandelier, a pair of Lance Whitner paintings and barnwood pocket doors. Recycled glass lamps from Cisco Home and refined antique reproductions add polish. (above) Modern steel railings and raw steel wall panels are in sleek contrast to the distressed wooden stair treads in the new entry. The furniture includes a vintage-look settee, a hundred-year-old wood chair and a sawhorse table from HW Home. "I loved all the lines and thought it was an interesting mix," says Budde. (right) The exterior features rustic finishes paired with modern lines and large windows.



Budde brought in modern elements and glossy finishes to contrast with all the rustic wood. Stunning glass light fixtures provide sparkle and drama: a canopy of glass globes in the dining room relates to an oversize glass-and-steel chandelier in the adjacent living room; three large cubes of prism glass highlight the two-story entry. Industrial steel railings and paneling also help counterbalance the warmth of natural elements.

Budde mixed some vintage finds with custom furniture of her own design—clean, modern pieces upholstered in luscious linen and velvet. Color comes from art and accessories, which is employed in sparing, yet effective amounts—bright orange lockers in the entry, bursts of blue and gold in the art. "There is a lot going on with the texture of the wood—up close you see so much depth—so you need to be careful with color," Budde says.

The design team prepared the house down to the smallest detail: cupboards stocked, beds made and champagne and fruit on the table. "The homeowners showed up with 18 people in tow—friends and family from across the globe," Budde relates. "Sean picked me up and spun me around; Ginnie just couldn't believe it. The whole family was over the moon. It was a very dramatic reveal." □

DESIGN DETAILS
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