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ADDING DIMENSION

Hollywood-actress-turned-Colorado-designer Susse Budde creates eclectic, textured spaces that reflect her Scandinavian heritage and the lifestyle of her high-country clients

WRITTEN BY Eliza Cross PHOTOGRAPHY BY David Patterson



Susse Budde's European parents were never into fancy cars or keeping up with the Joneses. Instead, the couple made good design a priority. "My parents were always passionate about architecture and design, and they were constantly improving our house and working on the landscaping," says the Colorado designer, who pronounces her name "Sousa," as in the composer, and "Buddha," as in ... the Buddha.

Budde's father, born and raised in Silkeborg, Denmark, met his Welsh wife on the island of Guernsey where they were both working. The couple married and lived in Denmark before moving in the early 1970s to Dallas, Texas, where Budde was born.

"My parents' Danish heritage has always influenced me, and I still feel most comfortable in spaces that are light, bright and airy," she says.

Budde earned degrees in finance and drama from the University of Texas. A freshman acting class ignited a passion for creativity, and after spending a year in corporate banking, she moved to Hollywood to pursue acting for more than a decade. Between auditions and roles in the film "Date Movie" and in television shows "Lost" and "NCIS," Budde began flipping homes and taking on design projects to earn extra money.

"More people starting asking for help, and I realized I'd found



my true passion,” she says. Budde decided to move to Steamboat Springs, Colorado, and bought a rustic 1800s log cabin with only a wood stove for heat. After painstakingly remodeling and restoring the primitive structure, a magazine published an article on the project, definitively launching Budde’s design career.

When friends set her up on a blind date in 2007, the designer had no idea the introduction would be so fortuitous. She and contractor Corey Larsen discovered they had much in common and soon merged their lives and businesses. “He’s truly my partner in life and work,” Budde says. “We’re constantly discussing our projects, and we joke that it’s a good arrangement for our clients because we don’t have to schedule meetings. Corey and I both share the same philosophy, which is that we treat every home we work on like it’s our own.”

The couple’s company, Dimension Fine Homes, is located in Steamboat Springs’ rustic downtown. From there, they’ve tackled extensive residential projects in the Yampa Valley and commercial projects, including a dance studio and several restaurants. “I love working with organic materials, and I’m pas-

Opposite: The painting is Gregory Block’s *Night Cap* from Gallery 1261 in Denver, Colorado. The chandelier is Bocci and the chairs are from Room & Board. **This page, clockwise from top left:** The staircase is anchored by a custom timber beam. The armchair is a Swedish antique, and the side table is from Room & Board. | A custom walnut island on wheels is topped with Carrara marble in a sleek kitchen; German pendant lights are from Plug Lighting. | Susan Schiesser’s *Ocean* painting inspired the soothing palette in a cozy bedroom. Lily wallpaper is from Cole & Son, and the hanging light is from Plug Lighting.

Clockwise from top right: Concrete Revolution created the custom concrete trough sink. The faucet is from Sonoma Forge, and the paintings are by Lance Whitner. | Budde kept the focus on the views in a contemporary mountain living space. The light fixture is from Jean de Merry, and the red rug is from HW Home. | The bedroom's sliding door is custom made of antique barnwood, and the light is from Cisco Home.



sionate about light fixtures, tile and wallpaper,” Budde says. “While I tend toward contemporary design, I like an eclectic mix of old and new and the juxtaposition of modern spaces with reclaimed materials.”

The little cabin Budde once remodeled was expanded to accommodate Larsen and their two sons, ages 11 and 15. The family’s home is sometimes the company’s best calling card.

“After visiting their cabin, my husband, Rob, and I fell in love with the clean, Danish feel and knew we wanted Corey and Susse to build our new Steamboat Springs home,” says client Ellen Race. “I love the way Susse blends contemporary design with antiques and wood — it’s modern, but cozy.”

While the Race’s new house was under construction, they were 2,000 miles away in New England. “Susse helped with so many details, she oversaw the tile installation and even chose just the right switch plates,” Race adds. “She suggested some elements I never would have considered, like the vintage white barn wood we put on the ceiling and the old hand-hewn beams we used to frame the doors. Those were expensive choices, but they made the space.”

“... I like an **eclectic mix** of old and new and the juxtaposition of modern spaces with **reclaimed** materials.”

Budde says she pushes her clients to take chances at times. “I’ll say, ‘Why settle for plain painted drywall when you could enjoy American Clay plaster or exquisite wallpaper?’ My mother used to tease me and say, ‘Your eye always goes right to the most expensive thing,’ but she and my dad always taught me the



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The advertisement features a black background. At the top left is a stylized 'A' logo. To its right, the text 'ANDY & AARON SANCHEZ' is written in a white, sans-serif font. Below this, a photograph shows a family of four (two men, one woman, and one younger man) standing behind a large, rustic wooden table. The table is made of reclaimed wood with prominent knots and a natural, weathered finish. Below the family photo is a close-up of the table's surface, showing its organic shape and texture. At the bottom of the ad, there are two smaller images: one showing a bright turquoise resin inlay in a hole in the wood, and another showing a dark, circular resin inlay. At the bottom of the ad, the website 'ANDYSANCHEZ.COM | (505) 385-1189' and email 'EMAIL ANDY@ANDYSANCHEZ.COM' are listed in white text.



Left: Budde specified vintage, hand-hewn oak beams to trim the door frames and white reclaimed barnwood for the ceilings of Rob and Ellen Race's home. **Above:** An antique headboard references the weathered barnwood that Budde specified for the bedroom walls. The recycled handblown glass pendant light is from Cisco Home.

value of craftsmanship and quality." And Budde brings those tools to work with her every day. ■

Eliza Cross is a senior contributing editor for *Western Art and Architecture* and the author of nine books, including the award-winning *Family Home of the New West* (Cooper Square Publishing). A member of the Authors Guild and Colorado Authors' League, she has written more than 250 articles for a variety of national and regional publications. Her work can be seen at www.elizacross.com.



Photo: David Heisler

WA&A wants to know...

Designer Susse Budde shares some of her favorite sources, travel destinations and design tips

Q: You're known for finding unique, unusual light fixtures. Would you share a few of your favorite lines? **A:** John Pomp does beautiful, fluid blown-glass pendants and chandeliers. I love Ochre's high-quality fixtures for contemporary spaces and Serip is a newer lighting line I love, with organic, textural forms. **Q:** The rooms you design often have a distinctive wall. What companies do you like for interesting wall coverings? **A:** The Casamance wallpaper line is just amazing and totally different. I'm also obsessed with Phillip Jeffries' wall coverings and recently used a pattern from its line called Fade, which reminds me of a Utah landscape. **Q:** Do you have a go-to interior wall paint color? **A:** I tend to stick with neutrals. Sherwin-Williams' Requisite Gray is a warm, happy gray that isn't too stark. For ceilings, I always use Benjamin Moore's Mountain Peak White. **Q:** Your spaces often feature fabulous art. Is there a particular artist you like right now? **A:** I love to bring in bright color with art. Lance Whitner is an artist who does wonderful abstract oil paintings of mountain landscapes and meadows and aspen trees. She happens to be married to David Patterson, who does all of our architectural photography. **Q:** When you and Corey want to unwind, where do you like to travel? **A:** Every time we visit Hanalei Bay on the north shore of Kauai in Hawaii, I feel like I add two years to my life. Corey and I both love nature and being outdoors, and it's absolutely beautiful and relaxing there. We also enjoy going to Europe and recently took our boys to Italy. We visit my family in Denmark every other year, too. **Q:** Describe your personal entertaining style. **A:** We like small gatherings and casual parties where everyone stands in the kitchen. I usually plan a simple menu, like a Mexican-themed cocktail party with homemade ceviche and mojitos. Our house feels bigger in the summer when we spend a lot of time outside on our deck. Corey's an avid hunter, so we cook a lot of elk meat on the grill.