

Cabin Confidential

A relocated L.A. designer
reclaims and renovates a
rustic mountain cabin with
a mix of retro and new
elements, creating a style
that is decidedly modern





BY SALLY STICH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID PATTERSON

Interior designer Susse Budde, co-owner of Dimension Fine Homes, spotted a quaint—and tragically neglected—log cabin in an aspen grove near Steamboat Springs and knew she just had to investigate. Never mind that she wasn't in the market for a second home. Never mind that she was in Steamboat because her home in Los Angeles was undergoing a major remodel and she needed a vacation from construction. The “For Sale” sign and stand of aspens were too alluring to pass by. “It was a small cabin, built in the early 1900’s,” she says, “and it only had a loft, a bedroom and a kitchen with a shower in the corner—as well as a very dark, underground basement.” Yet she saw potential. “I thought it’d make a nice vacation home,” she explains. So she bought it.

(previous page) Light and bright, this living room is the antithesis of a typical log cabin. A deep orange houndstooth rug from HW Home anchors the space, accommodating a white-leather Italian couch and a custom-made swivel chair; a live-edge tree slab serves as a coffee table, with a Gail Folwell sculpture from Walker Fine Art dancing on top. *(opposite)* Budde loves animal skins and has them scattered throughout the house, as in this transition area from the second to third floor. The tree log was found and hollowed (but not finished) to wrap around an existing post.



BEFORE



BEFORE

(top) Tucked cozily into an aspen grove, Susse Budde’s Steamboat Springs home was originally a small log cabin with an unfinished basement and a tiny living space on the main floor. Excavated from below and extended vertically, the three-story house is all windows and logs, fitting perfectly into its setting. *(right)* The furniture on the lower patio—a charming combination of wicker-like sofas and chairs and colorful poufs—is from Restoration Hardware.



“Lighten up. Instead of wrought-iron light fixtures, go with glass and white. Instead of dark floral rugs, choose light hides or classic designs in oversized patterns. Instead of dark log walls, stain the wood an off-white or light gray.”

—Susse Budde



(above, from left) A custom-made twig chandelier is a new spin on the traditional mountain-style antler fixture. Real sticks and stems are lacquered white, adding a focal point too pretty to be ignored. Purchased in San Francisco, the pendants are a dramatic, modern contrast to the rustic logs. The modern Acquamiki pendant light from YLighting is a sleek foil to Osborne & Little’s hummingbird wallpaper. (opposite) A Bocci custom-made chandelier reminded Budde of snowballs in winter. Because of space constraints, the designer chose a compact dining room table and simple chairs from Room & Board. The abstract painting, Gregory Block’s *Night Cap* from Gallery 1261 in Denver, adds a contemporary blast of color to the monochromatic space.

That was 2005, but the remodel didn’t really get serious until 2007. When it was completed the next year, Budde and her husband decided to leave Los Angeles and live in their cabin in the woods full-time.

The complete reconstruction included gutting the main and lower level (as well as excavating to allow a walkout basement) and “popping the top” to create two master suites at tree level.

Budde’s design goals were specific—to include the gorgeous views while creating a mountain aerie, not a cavern. “So many mountain homes are dark—even with windows—and are filled with heavy furniture and antler chandeliers,” she says. The renovated home is a modest 3,000 square feet on three floors, so she wanted to make it look as spacious as possible while respecting the integrity of the setting.





Budde's Tips for Bringing
**Modern
 TO THE
 Mountains**

Lighten up. Instead of wrought-iron light fixtures, go with glass and white. Instead of heavy dark floral rugs, choose light hides or classic designs in oversized patterns. Instead of dark log walls, stain the wood an off-white or light gray.

Get stoned. Unless you love it, forget polished river rock. Instead, think about dry-stacking rectangular stones.

Say adios to arches. Arched doorways are passé. Clean straight lines are always in style.

Go trimless. Trimmed windows add another layer of wood. Ask your installer to do a "drywall return"—or trimless windows.

Hang it! Wallpaper is hotter than ever, and new patterns that replicate nature are perfect for a mountain house.



(opposite) Practicality reigns in the kitchen. An island, topped in Carrara marble, is on wheels. Paired with red Leo barstools from Room & Board, it provides the perfect spot for casual dining. Glass upper cabinets create airiness and display space while solid lowers hide kitchen accouterments. (this page, top) A stainless counter and commercial-style faucet add simple modern style.

In search of a more modern vernacular, Budde mixed antiques with new pieces, wood and wallpaper, glass and steel—all the while keeping the log cabin a log cabin. The original exterior, a D-log frame, allowed both sunlight and drafts into the house, so Budde had flat logs installed on the interior sides of the exterior walls so they could be chinked. To keep everything light, airy and natural, she stained the logs light gray and either painted or wallpapered all of the interior walls.

The designer filled the home with new, modern furniture mixed with beloved antiques. The living room's creamy Italian sofa sidles up to a vintage Brazilian credenza, topped with a modern lamp from Arhaus. Clean, neutral fabrics pull pieces together.

The home's location is so private that Budde was able to eschew window coverings and open up each room to natural light.



DESIGN DETAILS
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(left) White oak floors brighten a lower-level bedroom while light aspen wallpaper brings the outdoors in. An antique Swedish chair mixes beautifully with a mid-century modern-inspired nightstand from Room & Board. (above) With views of the valley, this master bath is an oasis of natural materials. Custom walnut cabinets under a limestone counter, a cast iron tub, and transparent green shower tiles make indoors and out nearly inseparable. (opposite) In keeping with the airy feel, the master bedroom and bath are separated only by a partial interior wall. *Ocean*, an oil painting by Susan Schiesser (from Red Contemporary Gallery in Steamboat Springs) hangs above the simply-dressed bed.

Carefully placed wall mirrors, in elegant frames, reflect the outdoors; glass light fixtures contribute to the feeling of airiness.

While the home design includes those traditional mountain touches—natural materials, animal hides and logs used in usual—and unusual—ways, the overall effect is exciting and new. “This home—now our permanent residence—feels energetic,” Budde says. “Unlike many mountain homes that rely on what is heavy and dark in nature, this one is about space and light.” □