

ASPEN HOME

HOLIDAY 2007/08

M A G A Z I N E



DOWNRIGHT FUN

IMAGINATIVE FAMILY SPACES



SNOWMASS REJUVENATED

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN

JUST RIGHT

A PERFECT PAIRING OF HOUSE
AND LANDSCAPE

PLUS

ROARING FORK LIVING, MOROCCAN STYLE
ART FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE
TWO TOP ASPEN DESIGNERS





Character Study

THE TEAM AT ID INTERIORS HAS A KNACK FOR CAPTURING THE ESSENCE OF A HOMEOWNER'S STYLE

BY SUSANNAH LUTHI

Above: Kristin Jensen, seated, and Michael Dunsdon enjoy a rare break from their design work in Jensen's Basalt house. "The nice thing about this room is watching the coke ovens," says Jensen. "The changing light on them is like a show."

As design influences, Kristin Jensen cites John Saladino, Christian Liaigre, Andrée Putman, and Rose Tarlow: "They don't get carried away. It's honest design that stands on its own merits."

Kristin Jensen and Michael Dunsdon, principals of the Aspen design firm ID Interiors, have covered a lot of ground in their 20 years of working together. They've collaborated with clients—including U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein and producer/director Ivan Reitman—in the Roaring Fork Valley and farther afield, such as England and Australia. They've worked side by side with leading architects, including California-based Howard Backen (on the *AD* 100 list) and locals David Warner and Charles Cunniffe. And they've run the gamut on projects, from the traditional red-flannel-and-leather log cabin motif to mountain contemporary to urban chic.

One keystone, however, remains constant in all of their work: character. No matter whom the client, Jensen and Dunsdon make sure that the character of a home stays true to that of its owners. At the same time, their projects channel what makes these two women so special—their humor, diversity, and imagination, which they convey through creative use of space and light.

"Get them involved early in a project," says longtime client Mark Savage, who met Jensen and Dunsdon 13 years ago while refurbishing a home in Aspen's West End and has since hired them for six additional jobs. "They're better than most architects."

The two first connected shortly after Jensen moved to the Roaring Fork Valley from Denver, to "ski for a little bit," in the late 1970s. Jensen has a degree in interior design and Dunsdon a degree in fine arts, with a strong interest in design. ("My husband is a contractor, and my father was a carpenter," she says. "I've always been in the business.") The women began working together at Bethune and Moore, an Aspen design firm, and after it closed, Dunsdon persuaded Jensen to strike out independently, but together.

"We're trying very hard to be green," notes Jensen; hence the hemp carpet in her dining room, below. As for the baskets tucked up high, "I collect them in my travels," she says. "One of these is an old English tea set—I could see it as an *Out of Africa* piece."



Brent Moss



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—Michael Dunsdon

Their first project—a 7,500-square-foot Snowmass home that “back then was really big,” notes Dunsdon—showed them not only that they could successfully join forces, but also that doing so was fun.

Since then, Jensen and Dunsdon have been written up in *Mountain Living*, *Colorado Homes and Lifestyles*, and *Western Interiors and Design*, but they prefer to keep a low profile. “We’re kind of quiet,” says Dunsdon. “We don’t want the egos.”

About a third of the firm’s work is commercial; recent jobs include rooms at The Little Nell and updates at Aspen’s Cigar Bar lounge and adjacent Su Casa restaurant.

Typically, the two collaborate on about half the projects they take on. Jensen loves the initial planning and layout. “I like to see how it all fits together and to try to do something different,” she says. During the planning phase with one client, for instance, “we were talking about how we all love to read and how great it is to have a special spot for it,” Jensen recalls. Inspired, she created a window seat in an unexpected place off the kitchen and family room, which serves as a special little reading nook. “It’s now one of their favorite spaces,” she says.

Dunsdon’s favorite part is the accessorizing—“pulling it all together,” she says—and shopping. (Jensen calls her partner a “shopper extraordinaire.”)



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Left: The living room of Michael Dunsdon's own guest house, left, combines timeless style with the unexpected—a garage door that opens up to views of the garden. Through the spotting scope, guests can look at the deer on the side of Basalt Mountain, Dunsdon notes. Below: The designers often incorporate muted palettes and natural materials in their work.



Brent Moss

Favorite sources include, locally, Fraiche Home, in Basalt, for contemporary soft goods and accessories, and Aspen Design Works, in Carbondale, for its handcrafted wood furniture and custom cabinetry. Outside the valley the designers favor Town, at the Denver Design District, for modern furnishings from boutique firms; Four Winds Antiques, in Santa Fe; and, in Los Angeles, Dos Gallos for Latin American antiques and Rituals for lodge- and ranch-style pieces.

The ID Interiors style is, says Jensen, “clean and timeless.” They soften what’s harsh and mitigate what’s massive—for example, as on a recent project, using wood paneling and beams to bring a lofty

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drywall ceiling down to a more human scale. "We want people to be the stars of the interior," says Jensen, who admits it can be a challenge to instill that sense in some of Aspen's more immense homes. Using color to make walls pop is another technique they rely on to warm up a room. And they're experts at determining what their clients really want. "You're a psychologist and counselor," says Dunsdon. "And once you have a feeling of the house and the owners, it flows."

Getting the feel of the owners was key in a project like Feinstein's mesa-top log cabin, in which they melded the senator's preference for East Coast elegance with her husband's penchant for Asian motifs. "The project drives the inspiration," Jensen says. "The result doesn't look like us. It represents the client. There's no cookie-cutter look."

The projects the pair has done with Savage—including a beach house in Australia, a ski lodge in Taos, and a Southwestern-style home in Albuquerque—reflect the variety they love to explore. "They're incredibly unique," says Savage. In the case of the Taos home, this includes a stairwell tower made all of glass. "They're very eclectic, and they can do any style that totally fits in with the surroundings," he continues. "They don't try to put a particular style to where you are, but it always fits in with the natural environment and the architecture unique to that particular area." ■



Brent Moss

For the walls of this master bedroom, Kristin Jensen chose a custom shade of red from Benjamin Moore, a color that "sets the tone and quiets the room," she says. Jensen purchased the print above the bed, by Catherine Chauvin, at Anderson Ranch's annual art auction.