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VISION QUEST

A FAMILY'S WISH FOR A MODERN GETAWAY IN ASPEN LEADS TO A TREE HOUSE-LIKE ABODE THAT OFFERS SOARING VIEWS WHILE STAYING GROUNDED IN TEXTURE.

WRITTEN BY LINDA HAYES PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEREK SKALKO

ARCHITECTURE Tim Hagman and Kurt Carruth, Hagman Architects

INTERIOR DESIGN Michael Dunsdon and Kristin Jensen, ID Interiors

HOME BUILDER Chris Passero, Heritage Builders Inc.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE Paul Finger, Columbine Landscape Service Co.

BEDROOMS 4 | **BATHROOMS** 5 | **SQUARE FEET** 4,200



Hagman Architects had a head start in being selected to design an Aspen getaway for a Denver couple and their two out-of-state sons. The firm's principal Tim Hagman and lead architect Kurt Carruth were connected with the owners through their real estate agent while they were still scoping out the property. But more than just timing, they had initiative. "We interviewed five architects," explains the older son, who drove the project on the family's end from his home base in Los Angeles. "Tim and Kurt spent the most time on their proposal. They were really passionate about the project, and they captured our vision for the home."

From the start, the owners had clear goals in mind. "We wanted a home that was modern, that integrated a rammed-earth wall and reflected elements of Colorado," says the son. The architects, keeping in mind the steep hillside site and the strict height limits that came along with it, interpreted that description by designing a minimalist structure that appears to be carved into the mountain on one side and float like a tree house on the other.



Architects Tim Hagman and Kurt Carruth designed an Aspen residence to have an open-plan living area, which interior designers Michael Dunsdon and Kristin Jensen appointed with A. Rudin sofas and a Poltrona Frau coffee table. *Opposite:* The custom front door was fabricated by Genesis Innovations.



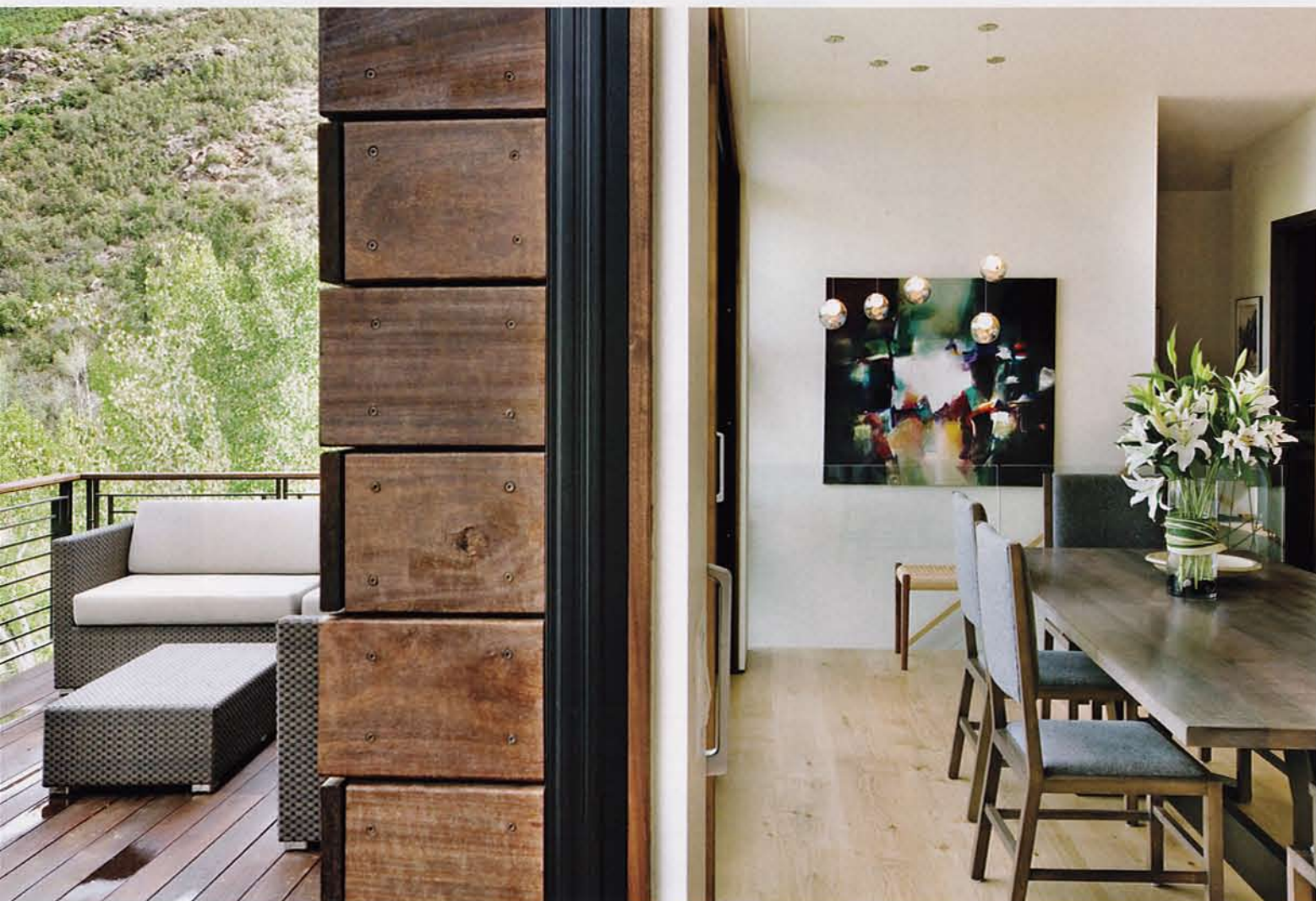
The main level, which includes living, dining and kitchen areas, is informed by the linear rammed-earth Sirewall. Bespoke Furniture, Inc. fabricated the walnut dining table and chair set, and the oak flooring is by Mafi.

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Underscoring that effect is a wall of windows and sliding glass doors that frame sweeping views of the town and mountains. “The view is amazing,” says Carruth, “and the main point of building in Aspen.”

The family also wanted the structure to be environmentally friendly while incorporating state-of-the-art technology. “From day one, the house would be as green as we could make it, but that’s an automatic with us,” Carruth says of elements including, LED lighting, solar panels, Nest thermostats and low-E glass that were integrated into the structure. “We went round and round investigating alternative energy ideas, and we actually learned a lot from the investigations.” The house’s sustainable bent extended to the surrounding grounds as well, which Paul Finger landscaped with low-maintenance care in mind. “We used native grasses on the steep slopes and planted perennial gardens along the level area in front,” notes Finger.

But perhaps the most distinguishing architectural feature of the house is the 20-inch-thick energy-efficient rammed-earth Sirewall that runs along one side of the structure. “It’s the anchor wall, the first thing you see as you approach the house, and it exists in every room on the main level,” Carruth says of the wall, which was inspired by images the son had come across in a book on Washington architect James Cutler. “It’s a very tactile surface, and it brings a gritty, earthy, grounded feel to the house.” The architects juxtaposed the earthen wall with a variety of materials, including ipe for horizontal planking and stacked details, plate steel panels to wrap the garage and matte-black anodized aluminum for the windows.



Above: The main level opens onto a deck, which is furnished with pieces by Dedon. Right: The Sirewall functions as a natural backsplash in the kitchen, where Tom Dixon pendants hang above an island topped with Caesarstone.

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The Sirewall also informs the interiors of the main level, which includes an open-plan living area, dining area and kitchen. "It was an important element of the space and gave it a horizontal feel," says interior designer Michaela Dunsdon, who with her partner in ID Interiors, Kristin Jensen, handled the interior finishes and furnishings. "We wanted the furniture to play off that horizontal feel as well as not distract from the view."

In selecting furnishings, they opted for classic designs mixed with some cutting-edge elements. In the main living space, they chose two A. Rudin sofas to pair with custom chairs that the owner brought from Los Angeles. A walnut dining table was also custom-made and juxtaposes with the oak flooring. "The clean lines of the architecture drove the interiors toward a masculine feel," says Jensen, who, with Dunsdon, kept to a cool neutral palette that would contrast with the Sirewall but complement the view.



At the core of the main level, the custom kitchen was designed with the input of the owner, who is an avid cook. Genesis Innovations crafted the cabinetry, which incorporates stainless-steel appliances by Miele. The island's stovetop is also by Miele.



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The structure nestles into the steep hillside, which landscape designer Paul Finger planted with low-maintenance native grasses. *Opposite:* The Sirewall's natural striations mix with other materials including matte-black anodized aluminum detailing and ipe siding on the house's exterior.





Positioned in a corner of the main level, the master bedroom seems to float in the treetops. The bed was custom made by Bespoke Furniture, Inc. in Los Angeles, and the bedding is from The Brass Bed in Denver.



In the master bath, the clean-lined vanity contrasts with the textural Sirewall. A thin vertical frosted window bisects the mirror and stands between dual sinks. The sconce is by Waterworks, and the faucet is by Hansgrohe.

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The family collaborated throughout the project, but the open kitchen—set against the Sirewall and looking out to mountain vistas—was one area in which the parents, especially the dad, who is an avid cook, got involved. “It was very important to my dad that there was an island with a stove in the center,” explains the son. The interior designers further set off the area with sculptural mismatched spun-brass pendants. “They add a little edginess to counteract the angularity of the architecture,” notes Dunsdon.

The collaborative effort extended to the construction as well. “The whole design team worked at picking different elements and materials,” says builder Ty McSwain, who worked as the project manager under the firm’s president, Chris Passero. “The challenge was integrating them all.” But the challenge was met. “When it was complete,” says the son, “the home just seemed to click together in perfect harmony.” **L**