

Mountain Living

FALL 1996

A WIESNER PUBLICATION \$3.95

AUTUMN MAGIC!

MOUNTAIN HOME AWARDS

**IN SEARCH OF NATURAL
ARCHITECTURE**

SEDONA SPIRIT

HEAVEN ON EARTH

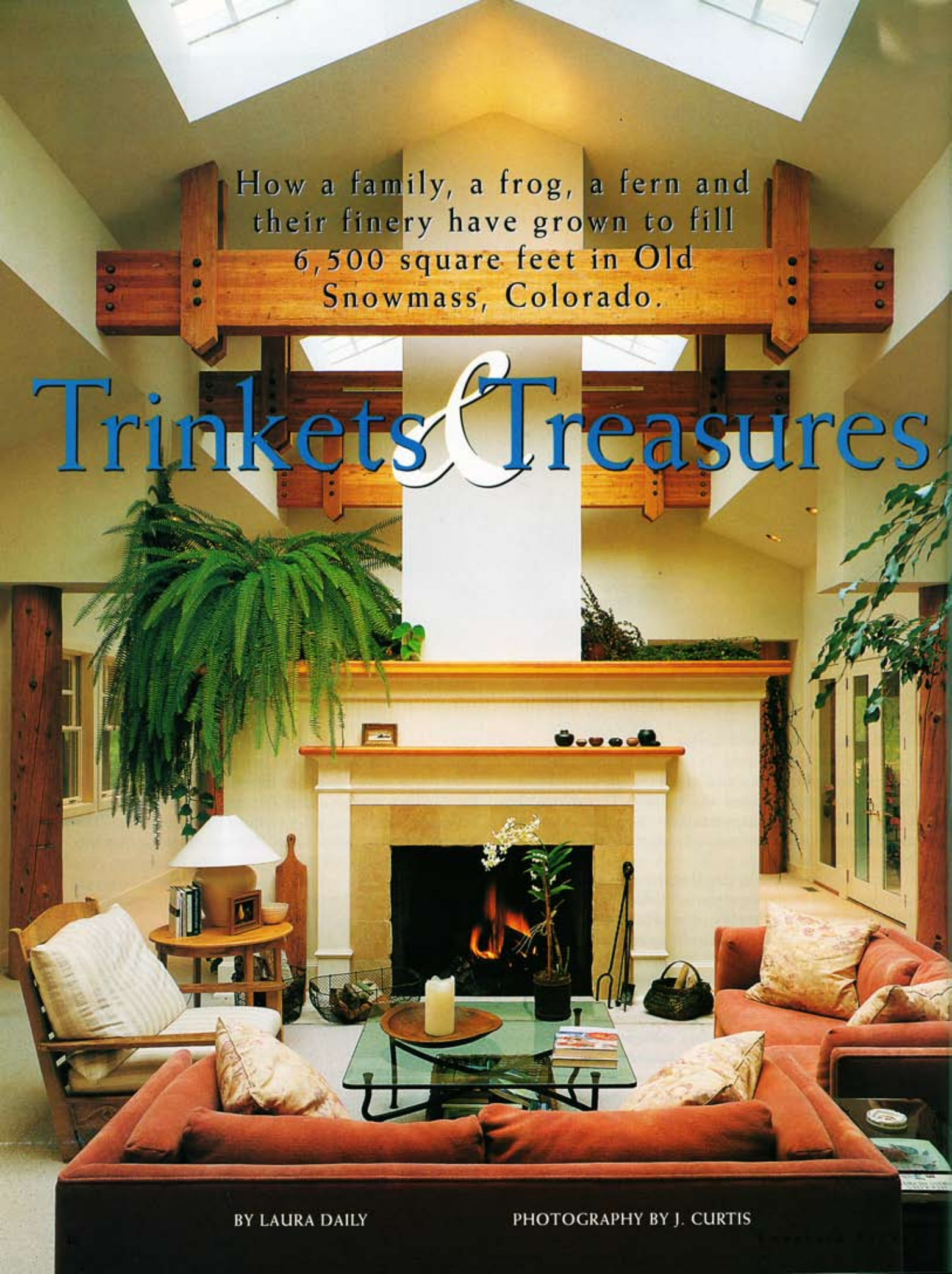
**9 FENG
SHUI
SECRETS**

**HOW TO TAKE GREAT
MOUNTAIN PHOTOS:
A MASTER'S VISION**



DISPLAY UNTIL NOV. 5



A large, bright living room with a vaulted ceiling and exposed wooden beams. A large fireplace with a white mantel is the focal point, with a fire burning inside. To the left, a large fern hangs from the ceiling. In the foreground, there are two orange sofas and a glass coffee table. The room is filled with natural light from skylights and large windows.

How a family, a frog, a fern and
their finery have grown to fill
6,500 square feet in Old
Snowmass, Colorado.

Trinkets & Treasures

BY LAURA DAILY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. CURTIS

It seems to be a law of nature that living things often grow to fill their environment.

Art, an 8-year-old African frog who resides with interior designer Kristin Jensen, is a case in point.

When Kristin's business partner gave Art to Kristin's son, R.J., both the boy and the frog were mere tadpoles. Every time Kristin thought Art appeared cramped in his living quarters, she bought him larger ones. Today, Kristin's friends caution her against further increasing Art's habitat. Already the size of a Ruby Red grapefruit, Art might grow so huge that he would seek out one of the many movie producers who vacation in nearby Aspen, Colorado, and demand a contract for his own amphibian-saves-world film (costarring his girlfriend, Petunia, a luscious albino specimen) and a spin-off toy line.

While the Jensen family is not lobbying for film rights, over the past two decades Kristin and her husband, Bob, have moved from home to home in Colorado's Roaring Fork Valley, always expanding to fill their living space. The couple and their two children have lived in a house on the Roaring Fork River; a tiny, two-bedroom place in Snowmass Creek; a 4,000-square-foot home on a mesa; and a log cabin. In 1991, they built a 6,500-square-foot cedar shake house on a 70-acre lot in rural Old Snowmass. "I wanted it to be spacious, because the family spends so much time inside in the winter. It fit

Glass-block skylights let in abundant light but no excessive heat in the living room, left. In the sunny kitchen, above, right, a butcher-block island provides the perfect gathering spot for guests.





our needs at the time, but I was sure we could never fill up all the space," recalls Kristin, a partner in ID Interiors. "Was I wrong."

The home reflects Kristin's philosophy that a house should be a background for people and furniture. Virtually everywhere one turns, there's a knickknack or collectible. Alaskan trade beads, kewpie dolls and porcupine quills are but a few of the items behind the doors of a glass case in Kristin's office. There's a torrey pine needle basket in the master bedroom. Handmade Indian pots Kristin's grandmother bought at a roadside stand in the 1930s adorn the flagstone fireplace. French linens found on a European holiday cover daughter Kate's bed. Bob's office is a rainbow of ribbons won by his prizewinning Labradors. Dolls from Alaska, Japan and Hungary nestle in a small basket in the guest room, alongside an antique trunk and a funky glass jug lamp filled with sunflower seeds, corn and barley.

Such treasures blend with an eclectic mix of furnishings, including an ash peacock chair designed by Hans Wegner, a woven wicker chaise, a classic Italian Artemide swing-arm desk lamp, and a Navajo rug Kristin's grandmother procured in the 1920s. Kristin designed the pine dining table and walnut entry table, which were built by local artisan Eric Jensen. "I love natural surfaces. You won't find a lot of lacquer in my house," she says.

Kristin is passing along her passion for collecting to R.J. and Kate. "Whenever the children find neat stuff, they throw it into a bowl on the countertop. Then we keep the best," she says. On a given day, the "stuff bowl" might have a piece of old glass, a wasp's nest, snake skin, feathers and arrowheads.

Most items are discovered while family members are hiking, biking or skiing through their Old Snowmass neighborhood. Though the Snowmass Ski Resort sits a mere mountain away, the area boasts more working farms

White walls throughout the home create a fresh, crisp forum for displaying the family's art and collectibles. Kristin designed the pine dining table, *left*.





than ski chalets. "We tried to design a low-lying home and nestle it in among the cottonwoods and evergreens so as not to make a huge impact," Kristin says. "We wanted to be sensitive to the land and to our neighbors, many of whom have lived here for generations."

But more importantly, Kristin adds, "we wanted a place where we could walk out the front door and hop on our mountain bikes or cross-country skis. We don't have to drive somewhere to do that. Our back yard is our playground."

If there's one leitmotif in the home, it may be the abundance of light. Every room is flooded with Colorado sunshine. Glass-block skylights saturate the living room with sun but no excessive heat. Windows overlooking the valley enwrap one side, and a series of glass doors opens to the expansive back yard. Because the house is so well insulated from neighbors, Kristin eschewed window coverings.

The center of the Jensen home is the farm-style kitchen. Here, Kristin installed beadboard cabinetry. A huge butcher-block island provides a gathering spot for guests. Sunlight washes across countertops and walls. "We almost never use the formal dining room, except on holidays," Kristin says. "Everyone seems to gather in the kitchen."

White walls throughout the home create a fresh, crisp look and serve as blank canvas for the Jensens' art collection. Works by Veloy Vigil, Ann Richardson and Fritz Scholder share space with a thumbprint oil done by Kristin's grandmother.

Then there's Bob's fern. Once an unassuming friendly flora, this King Kong of greenery now holds court atop the fireplace, draping tentacle-like fronds almost to the floor. "Every time we move, it fills the space—sort of like us," says Kristin.

Rumor has it the fern and the frog are looking to team up for a feature. ▲

The home is able to house all sorts of knickknacks without appearing cluttered. Because of its remote location, Kristin eschewed window coverings in order to take advantage of the light and the views.

