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BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

Several discrete seating areas bring the great room's grand scale down to a more comfortable size.

VAIL

MASTERING THE STEEPS

A Bachelor Gulch getaway combines contemporary style and enviable mountain access in a seemingly improbable location.

By Linda Hayes

Photography by Emily Minton Redfield

Connecting with the land is a common goal of those looking to build a Colorado mountain home, and with it often comes various challenges. In the case of an East Coast couple with property in Beaver Creek's Bachelor Gulch, the challenge turned out to be the land itself.

The large, slopeside lot at the top of the Beaver Creek ski resort was extremely steep—so steep, in fact, that some had declared it unbuildable. Restrictive architectural guidelines complicated things further, affecting everything from the style of the architecture, to landscaping, to how much stucco versus stone could be used on the exteriors.

The solution? Finding an architectural firm best suited to tackle both issues. New York City-based Hart Howerton was the obvious choice. "Hart Howerton had considerable experience building in the area and working within the parameters of the landscape and building requirements," explains the wife (the family prefers to remain anonymous). "Plus, they had a good system for working with us long distance, and we got along really well."

The firm's connection to the area harkens back to when Bachelor Gulch was still in the planning stages. "Working with Vail Resorts, we shaped the vision of Bachelor Gulch, designed the community and neighborhood environment and even brought in a historian from the National Park Service to advise on great National Park architecture," says Jim Tinson, CEO and principal of Hart Howerton. "We set the controls that governed all the architecture, including for [The Ritz-Carlton] hotel."



QUIET TIME

Arranged around a greystone fireplace and with ample natural light, the study is an oasis of calm, with tufted chairs by William Switzer, a Henredon coffee table and a chandelier from Eron Johnson Antiques in Denver.

After confirming that the site was, indeed, buildable, Albrecht Pichler, principal architect on the project, set about designing the 10,000-square-foot, stone-and-timber home, stepping it down the hillside and adding a series of terraces that open it to the outdoors. Satellite imagery was used to help position the house for maximum exposure to the dramatic Gore Range views. "It was my husband's brilliant idea," notes the wife.

In addition to placement of the main living spaces, such as the open living room, dining room and kitchen, the location of the five guest bedrooms was key. "We looked at a lot of homes in the area before we built, and most had the bedrooms on lower or below-grade levels, and they were dark," explains the wife. "It was a very deliberate decision to place the guest rooms on upper levels. If someone is a guest in our home, we want to make sure they have a lovely bedroom to stay in with lots of natural light."

Styling the home's interiors was the task of interior designer Eddy Doumas, principal of Avon-based Worth Interiors, which also has an office in New York City. "We started with the color palette for finishes—floors, wood stain, wall colors, kitchen cabinetry, all of that—to build a background that reads rich and warm, without distracting from the views," he explains.

In collaboration with the owners, who appreciate many different styles, Doumas selected furnishings that are elegant, yet reflect the mountain setting. "We went for a slightly edgier, cleaner, more tailored look," he says, "without it feeling too cliché." Furnishings were sourced from Denver showrooms, as well as in New York.

The main living area, or great room, was a natural focal point. "It's a really grand room, with vaulted ceilings with wood beams and gables and iron stretchers, and a main window oriented to capture the Gore Range view," says Doumas. "Our idea was to bring it down to scale and make it cozier by creating separate seating areas."

The primary seating area is oriented around a custom-designed fireplace of fieldstone with a tailored limestone surround. That mix of rustic and clean lines "is our trademark," Doumas says. Furnishings there include a Maxine Snider sofa, a chaise by EF+LM, Barbara Barry side tables and a Carini Lang custom rug—all in neutral tones and with soft, textured fabrics.

CONTINUED...





CASUAL SETTINGS

Clockwise from top: Appropriate to its woodsy setting, the home's architecture recalls National Park lodges; the breakfast nook features a CL Sterling & Son metal drum pendant, custom Altura table and leather-wrapped chairs from Cassina; the master bath's window-side tub and glass-enclosed steam shower enable bathing with a view.



...CONTINUED Off the great room, the kitchen was designed with both form and function in mind. "The owners are big cooks, and they like to entertain, so it's set up to handle big social events," says Dumas. "But there's also counter space for seating and an adjacent breakfast nook where the family can gather more casually."

In contrast to the more traditional living areas, the kitchen is contemporary, with clean lines and custom detailing. Countertops are highly polished concrete. White-oak cabinetry, finished with a dark espresso stain to match the overhead beams, is accented in places with antiqued mirrors. The backsplash behind the stainless, commercial-style range consists of randomly placed polished bronze tiles by Ann Sacks.

Private spaces were treated with sensitivity and personalized to the taste and lifestyle of their occupants. Set off on its own, the master suite was designed as a sanctuary. Peaceful and serene, it's the epitome of comfort with a four-poster bed

and chaise by Maxine Snider, and a plush bench by Baker that serves as a window seat. The master bath extends the concept, with a set of his-and-hers vanities flanking a sunken tub and steam shower, both of which have mountain views.

A bunkroom for the owners' two boys is furnished with custom-designed bunk beds, while patterned fabrics add a playful touch to each guest room. On a lower level, a family game room got a splash of color. "It's the most casual room in the house, and we wanted to make it fun," says Dumas.

Spending summers in the house and being able to ski from their door in the winter, the family is quite pleased with their Colorado getaway. "It's unique to our tastes," says the wife. "It's definitely not a standard mountain home, but it's not out of place either."

Adds Tinson, "The house embraces what they loved about Bachelor Gulch. It's very natural. It steps up and meets the land." Connection accomplished. ▢