

SKI COUNTRY *Chic*

This home in Vail has enough space to hold three generations of a family dedicated to skiing and other mountain activities.

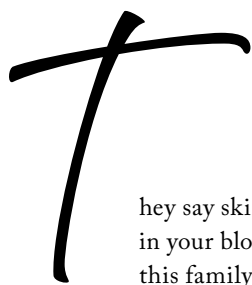


A Forest Road Home Becomes a Family Legacy

By Jennifer Weintraub

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRENT BINGHAM

*When you walk in
the house, there's
an immediate
sense of elegance.*



hey say skiing runs in your blood; for this family, it's practically a genetic code. Their story on the slopes in the Vail Valley dates back to the 1970s, when they first discovered Vail's powder-filled promise and claimed a little slice of mountain magic on the famed Forest Road.

Half a duplex, mere steps from Vail Mountain, became their winter sanctuary. It was a gathering place for the family, where ski boots spilled into the hallway and memories were made on the mountain. Over the years, their family grew, and so did their dream — to build a home that captured contemporary design with timeless alpine charm, capable of holding everyone under one roof.

When fate offered up the other half of the duplex, the family didn't hesitate. With possession of both sides, the dream shifted from renovation to reimagination.

The goal was simple, yet sentimental: create a legacy home that could hold three generations, from the eighty-year-old parents to the eight-year-old grandkids, without losing the soul that made the original ski home so special.

A FAMILY AFFAIR

To bring their multi-generational home to life, they turned to KH Webb Architects, known for crafting mountain modern masterpieces that balance precision with personality. The plan was to transform the Forest Road lot into two detached duplexes: one to keep, one to sell.

Each side of the project was designed as its own character in the same story. The east side leans into sweeping Gore Range views with darker wood and contrasting colors. The west side, by contrast, has lighter wood and the quiet presence of the surrounding forest. In the end, the family chose the west side for its serenity and seclusion.

Designing the home became a family affair. "Everyone was actively involved in the process; it was a team effort among the family, which was unique," says Kyle Webb, Principal Architect of KH Webb Architects. Each of the three grown children brought ideas to the table, as did their parents, creating a creative dialogue that shaped every decision, finish and fixture.

Webb knew he wasn't just designing a house — he was curating a family legacy. "The journey with them was so long that I got to know the family really well. We talked at length about what they wanted and how to accommodate their growing family," Webb says. By understanding the family dynamics, he was able to design a space that felt personal and practical, ensuring every generation had room to breathe.

The result was a collaboration that was rich with meaning. Every detail reflects a shared decision rather than a single designer's hand.

WHERE TECHNOLOGY MEETS TOPOGRAPHY

Every masterpiece begins with a blank canvas. With the entire lot

in their hands, it opened the door to possibility, ready for reinvention.

"Once we decided we had a blank slate to work with, it became a fun process," Webb says. Fun, yes, but hardly simple. Building two detached duplexes totaling over 11,000 square feet beneath Vail Mountain comes with its own set of alpine-sized challenges.

Enter RA Nelson: The custom home general contractor took on the ambitious project.

"We build ski homes in the Vail Valley and have for 50 years," says Jeff Beacom, Owner and Director of Custom Homes at RA Nelson. They've garnered a reputation for their ability to solve complex site puzzles that come with building in the Rockies.

Before the first shovel hit dirt, the home was already taking shape in the virtual world. RA Nelson's preconstruction team turned to cutting-edge technology to ensure every beam, wall and detail would fit flawlessly.

"We use technology to make sure everything fits before we're in the field," Project Manager Nick Haller explains. "Our goal is to do everything in the virtual world so it doesn't impact the schedule. We're able to order accurate material quantities, which reduces waste and keeps the budget on track."

Building below a ski mountain is never a simple affair. The site presented its own topographical and technical hurdles: steep grades, significant snowmelt and rocky soils.

To navigate these challenges, the team utilized Design Mechanical for virtual design to craft a detailed virtual earthwork model. Using soil borings from the geotechnical engineer, they mapped the terrain to understand the soil types and identify areas with bedrock. "Once we developed a virtual model, we put together a shoring plan and addressed groundwater issues, both of which significantly affect the schedule and budget," Haller explains.

With the foundation in place and the structure taking form, the focus shifted from earth and engineering to atmosphere and emotion — the art of making a house feel like a home.

OLD WORLD SOUL, MODERN SPIRIT

The design team, led by Yvonne Jacobs of Jacobs + Interiors, was tasked with weaving all those voices into one harmonious vision. It was striking a balance between family sentiment and refined mountain style.

"The family wanted to capture European charm in a modern way," explains Jacobs. Think chalet chic meets contemporary cool — where sleek lines and modern design blend with authentic textures. "They wanted a modern ski chalet. We were always looking for ways to add subtle rustic touches to each space without it being too kitschy."

That balance begins before you step inside. The home's exterior nods to its alpine surroundings while maintaining a modern silhouette. "The exterior of the home looks comfortable with the surroundings, but the architecture is modern," Jacobs explains. A mix of Colorado Buff Stone, Siberian Larch wood from Arrigoni Woods and black

ANCHORING THE ROOM IS AN OPEN-HEARTH FIREPLACE WRAPPED IN THE SAME RUGGED STONE AS THE HOME'S EXTERIOR. IT'S EQUAL PARTS ART AND FUNCTION.



The sculptural staircase is a showpiece of glass, metal and light, spiraling upward from the entry like a piece of architectural art. Suspended from the third-floor ceiling, the chandelier cascades as long as 25 feet with 26 strands.



The design goal included blending European charm with modern chic.

steel creates a refined palette. It's an authentic ski home, reimagined through a modern lens.

Inside, it's a delicate duet of old and new, sleek and antique. Jacobs layered "rough and tumble finishes" with modern forms to create a sense of timeless texture and design.

The authenticity lives in the details. A powder room features a hand-carved limestone sink sourced from Turkey, resting on a reclaimed wood vanity. Bronze fixtures and modern lighting elevate the space, blending rustic with refined.

Touches of European ski charm are thoughtfully sprinkled throughout the house. "When the family first moved to the Vail Valley, they found several alpine Nordic chairs at a local antiques shop. Those pieces stayed with the family, even throughout the renovation," Jacobs says.

Today, they are scattered like memories throughout the home. In the mudroom, a chair offers a perch for shedding ski boots. In the hallways, they're dressed in sheepskin throws. These humble heirlooms thread a story through the home, linking the past and present in the most personal way.

THE HEART OF THE HOME

The great room didn't just inspire the design of the home — it defined it.

"The great room was the driving factor when designing the home. We designed the top level first and everything else unfolded around that," says Webb.

Perched on the third story among the pines, the living room is the heart of the home. Flooded with natural light from walls of glass on every side, the room feels both expansive and intimate — a space suspended between sky and forest. "Usually, for homes on Forest Road, we have the opportunity to focus on one view. But here, we were able to have views in every direction," Webb explains.

The ceiling is a sculptural statement in itself.

A soaring 20-foot cathedral-style roofline draws the eye upward. Tongue-and-groove planks meet at 45-degree angles, forming a seamless

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The kitchen is a myriad of artisan details, from the blue quartzite slab to the woven mesh cabinets on either side of the stove.



wood pattern of perfect symmetry. Sleek steel crossbeams intersect at the peaks, softly illuminated by hidden lighting that gives the space a soft sculptural glow.

With a four-pointed layout and dormers extending in every direction, the ceiling became one of the most meticulous details to achieve. “It’s one of the coolest and most challenging elements to pull off,” says Beacom. Every beam, plank and junction demanded precision — a feat of both geometry and craftsmanship.

Anchoring the room is an open-hearth fireplace wrapped in the same rugged stone as the home’s exterior. It’s equal parts art and

function. It serves as an intentional buffer, providing privacy from the neighboring house. With glass walls framing forest views on all sides, the room feels suspended in nature, like a modern treehouse, elevated for mountain living.

On Forest Road, space is as coveted as the location, and every inch is intentional.

In the adjoining room, the kitchen, a striking antique black steel hood takes center stage, framed by a backsplash of blue quartzite streaked with rust-colored veins. “The family chose this specific slab because the veins looked like a mountain range and there’s a half-moon

spot that looks like a sunset,” explains Haller. Bronze light fixtures and accents echo those warm tones, tying the kitchen together in subtle sophistication.

On either side of the stove, woven steel-mesh cabinets softly glow from within, casting the outline of dishes and glassware like a still life. “These cabinets have a mysterious quality to them,” says Webb. “They become a beautiful focus as the light shines through the mesh.”

The rest of the kitchen is sleek and seamless. Custom white oak cabinets from Exquisite Kitchen Designs conceal Sub-Zero Wolf appliances, while a hidden

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door reveals a cleverly tucked-away and spacious pantry. “The home is vertically stacked, so every square inch was thought out to utilize space,” explains Jacobs. The result is a kitchen that is functional and flawless.

Just off the kitchen, a sleek wet bar invites easy entertaining, a convenient stop between the kitchen and the great room’s inviting hearth. Above the bar, a familiar face watches over the home.

“George” is a stately bull elk with a story of his own. Originally hunted in the Gore Range by the home’s first owner, George has watched the home evolve

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from its earliest form to its most recent modern incarnation.

Ownership and design may shift, but George, like the spirit of the mountains themselves, stays right where he belongs.

SEAMLESS LIVING, INSIDE AND OUT

Luxury is in the flow. From the moment you step onto the third level, whitewash oak floors from Arrigoni Woods draw your eye — and your footsteps — effortlessly, from dining room to living room. The seamless expanse of wood grounds the open-concept space, while the layout invites conversation and connection. It’s a

room made for family gatherings and après-ski storytelling.

At one end, 11-foot stacking glass doors blur the line between indoors and out, opening to a snow-melted patio that’s inviting year-round. The patio backs up to Vail Mountain, creating an extension of the living space that’s both scenic and social.

“The home was designed as a winter house, so all the exterior living areas can be fully utilized year-round,” Haller says. The entire outdoor area is designed for year-round use of the fireplace, fire pit, grill and hot tub. Because in this home, mountain living never goes into hibernation.



A snow-melted staircase carved into the hillside climbs above the home and leads directly to the slopes. On powder days, it's a private lift line with access to the Born Free catwalk. And on the last run of the day, the family simply skis home, gliding straight around the patio or to ski storage tucked on the first level of the house.

The design keeps the mountains not just in view, but always within reach.

THE ART OF ASCENT

This staircase doesn't just connect floors — it commands the entire home.

More than just a means of moving between floors, the sculptural staircase is a showpiece of glass, metal and light. It spirals upward from the entry like a piece of architectural art. It's the first thing guests see when they step

through the front door and the last thing they forget. The home orbits a vertical axis of movement and design, which strings each level together.

At its core hangs a show-stopping chandelier. Suspended from the third-floor ceiling, the chandelier cascades as long as 25 feet with 26 strands, each meticulously hand-strung with nearly 460 individual rock crystals. Every strand was measured and each stone was hand-set, creating a waterfall of refracted light that seems to float mid-air. Though the crystals themselves are unlit, the glow from above creates an illusion of radiance.

"That stairwell is such a huge part of the home," Jacobs says. "You look at it through the living and dining room and see it from every level."

Finding the perfect fixture took time. Inspiration, as it often does, struck on the road. One of the family's sons spotted a similar design in a hotel lobby while traveling and brought the idea home.

Encircling this centerpiece is a staircase of clean lines and clever concealment. Glass and metal railings sweep gracefully upward, their simplicity hiding their complexity.

"The structure of the stairs is wrapped in blackened steel panels that hide the glass attachments, so it appears that the glass is rising from the steel," Beacom says. Every joint, seam and support was planned with surgical-like precision through virtual modeling to achieve a seamless, high-quality finish.

The effect is both modern and magical, serving as a focal point and an organizer in the home.

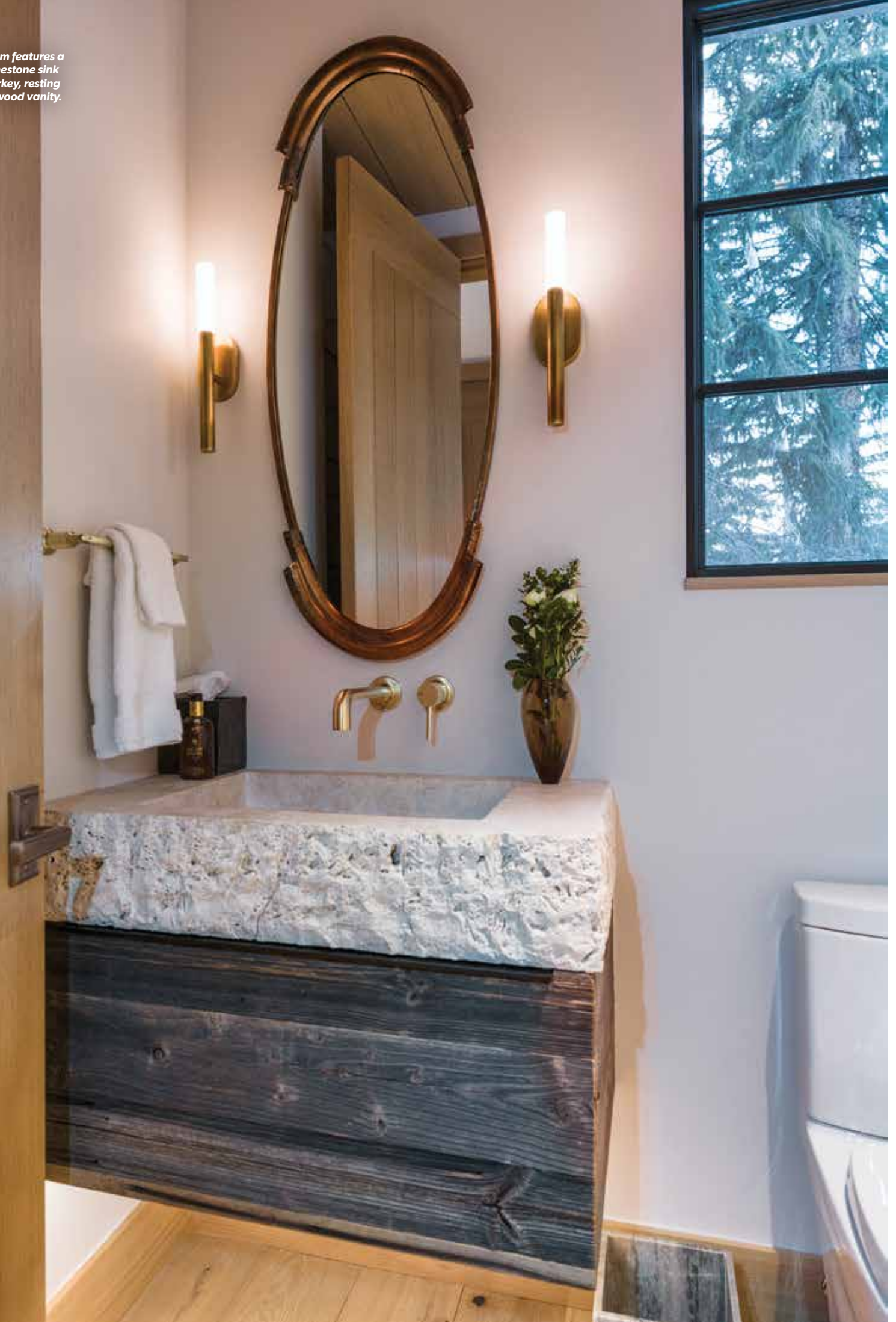
"THEY WANTED A MODERN SKI CHALET. WE WERE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO ADD SUBTLE RUSTIC TOUCHES TO EACH SPACE WITHOUT IT BEING TOO KITSCHY."

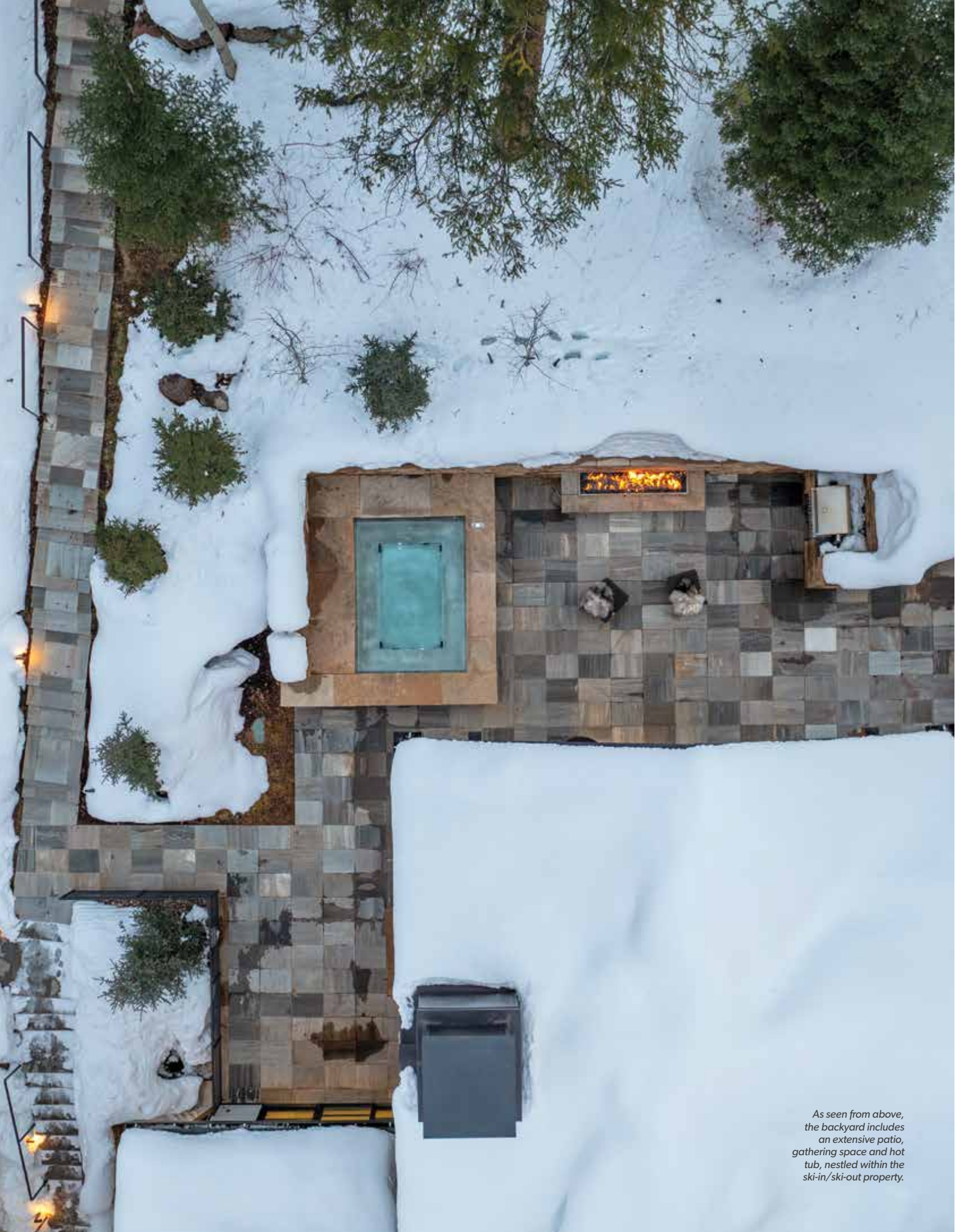
ABOVE: The view outside is a major design element for many of the rooms.

RIGHT: The custom-built bunkroom accommodates several grandkids — the next generation.



One powder room features a hand-carved limestone sink sourced from Turkey, resting on a reclaimed wood vanity.





As seen from above, the backyard includes an extensive patio, gathering space and hot tub, nestled within the ski-in/ski-out property.

ELEVATED LIVING, FAMILY STYLE

Every dream home starts with a wish list, and in this case, everyone got a say — especially for their rooms.

For the parents, the request was simple but significant: They wanted to live on one level. The solution to their single-level lifestyle was to have their bedroom on the third floor, with a connection to the kitchen and living room.

Down a hallway, warmth and sophistication meet in subtle harmony in the primary suite. The bedroom opens to sweeping north and east-facing views of the Gore Range, where early light spills softly into the room and the alpenglow lights up the peaks.

Across from the bed, a zero-clearance fireplace is wrapped in natural wood paneling. Its design allows minimal space between the fireplace and combustible materials like wood paneling, bringing the edge close to the

flames. This detail lets the grain's hues glow in the flickering light.

A built-in oxygen generation machine quietly infuses the room with enriched air throughout the night, ensuring deep sleep and easier adjustment to the mountain altitude. "Nearly every home we build now includes an oxygen system," says Beacom.

In the bathroom, light and luxury collide. Vaulted ceilings soar above a serene palette of white Calcutta marble, which wraps floors and countertops. Strategically placed windows frame glimpses of the forest while preserving privacy. A marble toekick gives the vanity a floating effect, while fluted marble in the steam shower adds sculptural texture to the spa-like calm space.

Downstairs, the tone shifts from serene to spirited. A custom-built bunkroom offers a playful retreat for the grandkids. Each step doubles as storage. A TV nook lends to a multi-



The fire pit allows for year-round enjoyment of the backyard.

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functional space that's meant to move, play and evolve.

Every detail reflects that this home isn't just designed for mountain living; it's designed for living well, together.

THE SOUL OF A SKI HOUSE

This Forest Road home strikes a rare balance between form and feeling. It's sleek and soulful, modern yet rich with nostalgia. It's both a retreat and a reunion spot, a place that celebrates connection as much as craft.

In the end, it's more than an architectural masterpiece — it's a living, breathing reflection of the people inside it. [vvm](#)

THE PATIO BACKS UP TO VAIL MOUNTAIN, CREATING AN EXTENSION OF THE LIVING SPACE THAT'S BOTH SCENIC AND SOCIAL.



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