



THIS PAGE: Configured just as glassmaker Dale Chihuly specified, 18 pieces from the artist's Persian Collection are mounted above the fireplace on a wall specifically conceived for them. Pencil spotlights, one precisely aimed at each element of the sculpture, are hidden behind the ceiling beam closest to the fireplace, setting the glass aglow.

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ROCKIES REIMAGINED

A FINE ART COLLECTION AND RIVERSIDE SETTING INSPIRE
THE FRESH LOOK OF A MOUNTAIN LODGE IN ASPEN



In 2002, when they first began designing a house to occupy their half-acre lot less than two miles from downtown Aspen, the owners of this riverside retreat planned to build a mountain dream home—and sell it. As they collaborated with John Galambos, AIA, of Galambos Architects Inc., however, the setting and the architectural vision it inspired began to enchant them. “As soon as they started seeing the design,” says Galambos, “they decided to live here.”

It isn't hard to see why. The entire north-

ern boundary of the setting is defined by the Roaring Fork River, a swift-flowing tributary of the Colorado River, bordered on its other bank by wooded, protected foothills. From the start, Galambos positioned the 7,000-square-foot house as close to the sight and sound of the water—just 20 feet away—as building codes allowed and took careful measures to shelter it from neighboring houses 25 feet away on either side (see sidebar, page 75). He tailored the interiors so that despite the home's grand size, they would “feel homey and comfortable, not grandiose.” As the homeowner sums up, “We wanted a space for relaxed living, with privacy and isolation.”

They also wanted something else not usually found in a rustic Rocky Mountain lodge: exhibition space. Dedicated collectors, they aimed to showcase some of the many sculptures and paintings they've gathered over the years, artwork that looks best not against rough-hewn timbers and rock-clad walls but in a more gallery-like setting (see sidebar, page 77).

Galambos rose to that challenge, too. “I like to think about how people are actually going to live in a house,” he explains. “So, while this design started out having a lot more heavy woodwork, we responded to their collection with lighter, cleaner, more contemporary lines and surfaces.”

That overall strategy—a mountain lodge designed with privacy, comfort, nature and art in mind—becomes evident at first glimpse of the residence. Galambos replaced the triangular gables normally found on such lodge homes with graceful arches, and downsized the front door to “a more human scale” at just eight feet tall. An equally modest entry foyer sets the >>

ABOVE: A singular chandelier hangs from the up-lit cove ceiling in the dining area. Arrayed on a black-painted crafted metal platform, each of its 50 wax cylinders appears to be a lit candle. In fact, wiring replaced the wicks to light tiny bulbs that flicker like genuine flames. OPPOSITE: Natural maple cabinetry with stainless-steel pulls gives the kitchen a look of sleek contemporary sophistication and country warmth. Above the center island, an overhang of stainless steel and maple combines ventilation and task lighting while lending the space—16 feet high at the ceiling's peak—greater intimacy.





DESIGNING FOR PRIVACY

Architect John Galambos, AIA, followed several simple strategies to maximize the privacy of this Rocky Mountain home:

GO AS FAR AS CODES ALLOW Galambos sited the structure as far away as possible from the road, and as close to its most serene asset, the river, as local building codes allowed.

BE NEIGHBORLY, BUT IGNORE THE NEIGHBORS Galambos placed a tall garage on the home's eastern end to conceal a view of one neighbor and a windowless master closet wall on the western end facing the other neighbor.

PLAY THE ANGLES The floor plan angled the master suite 10 degrees inward off the line of the living areas, tilting its outlook toward the optimal river view.

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF NATURE Galambos sited the house among existing trees that would conceal views of nearby homes and brought in more trees to maximize privacy.



Throughout the house, every detail reflects an understated intimacy, complements river views and lets the impressive art collection shine.

OPPOSITE: The powder room features a sink that looks like a work of minimalist sculpture: a slab of travertine with a middle section carefully carved to a drainage slope of five degrees. Two tones of one-by-two-inch travertine tile set in a basket-weave pattern cover the wall framing the sink and mirror. ABOVE: A position 90 feet from the property's road frontage adds to the contemporary lodge-style home's privacy.

aesthetic tone with its Jerusalem limestone floor and glazed Venetian plaster walls, both part of a plan, masterminded by interior designer Todd Heimerl of JH Todd Interiors in Aspen, to give inside surfaces what he describes as "understated elegance."

From that foyer, dark-stained walnut stairs descend to the ground level, where three guest bedrooms open to river-facing terraces, and rise to the upper level, where the main living areas and master suite all feature house-long terraces overlooking the Roaring Fork.

Those interiors feel as spacious and open

as the Rockies themselves. Yet here, as throughout the house, every detail—from subtle wall colors in earth tones to checkerboard-patterned woven raffia that lines the coved ceilings to area rugs with an aspen-leaf design—reflects an understated intimacy, complements river views and lets the impressive art collection shine.

What they've achieved, the homeowner concludes, is "a mountain home that pushes the limits to bring in a clean, contemporary feeling. It's very welcoming—for us, for our guests and for the art." ●



SHOWCASING ART

Working in concert with interior designer Todd Heibel and architect John Galambos, AIA, the homeowners tailored every room to the optimal display of their art collection, employing techniques that can be followed in any home, whether existing or custom-built:

SELECT NEUTRAL MATERIALS AND TONES Use the same sorts of surfaces galleries use to highlight art: plaster walls and natural stone or wood floors in neutral, soft off-white or light earth tones.

DON'T OVER-DISPLAY Resist the urge to place too many pieces of art on view, allowing individual works sufficient breathing room to be appreciated in their own right.

CREATE FEATURE WALLS For one or more major works, plan dedicated areas of wall space that provide sufficient room to showcase the art—such as the configuration of Dale Chihuly glass sculptures over the fireplace.

PLAN LIGHTING CAREFULLY Supplement natural and general lighting with sources dedicated to individual artworks, concealing such lights—generally more narrowly focused halogen “pencil” spots—in recessed ceiling cans or, in the case of a lodge-style residence, behind or above ceiling beams.



OPPOSITE: Although completely open to the foyer on the left and the living room to the right, the upstairs hallway is clearly differentiated from those spaces by its one-foot-square spruce posts and beams and a travertine band surrounding the dark walnut flooring. Visible through the open door, a painting of a hummingbird in flight hovers above a sideboard in the small foyer leading to the master bedroom. ABOVE: For the homeowners, both almost six feet tall, Todd Heibel designed the polished walnut-topped cabinets for the master bath with a counter height of 38 inches, two inches higher than standard. Honed black granite borders the limestone floor and forms ledges for the display of small art objects on the stepped shower enclosure.

FLOOR PLAN at home with art

- 1 Breakfast Room
- 2 Kitchen
- 3 Dining Room
- 4 Great Room
- 5 Foyer
- 6 Study
- 7 Master Bedroom
- 8 Master Closet
- 9 Master Bathroom

