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# NATURAL HIGH

Designer Shawn Henderson and architect Scott Lindenaufashion a discreetly luxurious Aspen retreat perfectly sited to appreciate the ravishing landscape

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Interior designer Shawn Henderson collaborated with architect Scott Lindenauf of Studio B Architects to create a rustic, modern, open-plan, two-story house. The structure is clad in Japanese plaster and reclaimed teak. For details, see Sources.



There's a spot about ten miles outside the village of Aspen, Colorado, some 9,400 feet up, where the skies seem a brighter blue and the mountain views are almost surreal in their majesty. A nearby stream rushes with a dulcet murmur, and herds of elk roam amid slender white aspens whose leaves turn magnificently gold each autumn. It was here that a Hong Kong businessman bought a 24-acre plot several years ago, determined to create his ideal refuge.

The log-cabin-style house that occupied the site was not what he had in mind, however. So he enlisted a local firm, Studio B Architecture + Interiors, to draw up concepts for a new home, while the existing dwelling was removed and donated to Habitat for Humanity. A divorced father of one at the time, the businessman soon remarried, and since his wife also had a child, the architects were tasked with thinking a bit more expansively—yet also modestly. “We were very conscious of preserving the feeling of unspoiled countryside,” says the wife, who recently gave birth to the couple’s twins. “We could have built something larger, but the setting is so perfect, the last thing we wanted was to ruin it with an over-the-top house. It had to be quiet.”

Studio B satisfied the brief with an 11,000-square-foot residence that projects an unexpectedly reserved attitude, thanks to its low horizontal profile and the fact that the first of its two floors is partially embedded in a slope. While the overall vibe of the L-shaped structure—which wraps around a rear courtyard and pool terrace—is minimal and modern, an unmistakable warmth emanates from the home’s materials. “The husband spoke a lot about the spirit and nature of wood,” says Studio B founder and design principal Scott Lindeman. “We

used wire-brushed white oak and contrasted it with a beautifully grained reclaimed teak on both the interior and exterior.” The thoughtful palette also includes hand-chiseled limestone and *wara juraku*—a Japanese-style plaster that incorporates straw to produce an exquisite organic texture. →

**Near right:** A theater Gates artwork overlooks a vintage Vladimir Kagan sofa in a Holland & Sherry suede and a Dunbar side table; the vase on the Philip and Kevin Laverne cocktail table is by Masamichi Yoshikawa.

**Opposite:** The residence offers majestic views.



The living room's club chairs, Jean Royère-inspired sofa, cocktail table, and carpet were all custom designed by Sean Wedel for the Hong Kong businessman. The back chair is from Vitex.





When it came to furnishing the seven-bedroom home, the couple initially decided to handle it themselves. Collectors of midcentury design, they owned a number of quality pieces—mostly American and Scandinavian—but the wife concedes that they just couldn't pull it all together. "The house had a horribly empty feel," she recalls.

Then, by chance, they were introduced to New York designer Shawn Henderson, whose discerning approach to texture and color and sophisticated vintage and contemporary pairings aligned perfectly with their own sensibilities. "They had been doing the interior piecemeal and wanted someone to come in and do a complete program," Henderson explains.

While the designer's handwork is a study in lyrical restraint, the home certainly has its showstopping moments. The coup de théâtre is the living room, the first space you encounter after ascending the entrance hall stairs to the main floor. Measuring 25 by 40 feet, the room is enclosed on two adjacent sides by floor-to-ceiling windows, offering panoramic vistas across the valley to the Elk Mountains beyond. "I didn't want it to feel overly decorated, with a thousand pieces," the designer says, "so I decided to go with big gestures."

To anchor the larger of the living room's two seating areas, Henderson devised a sprawling 11-and-a-half-foot sofa based on a Jean Royère design, a pair of club chairs deep enough to curl up in, and a seven-foot-diameter cocktail table—all overlooked by a supersize Sam Orlando Miller mirror, mounted above the fireplace. In this room, as throughout the house, Henderson upholstered the clients' existing seating in rich monotone fabrics. "For me, the landscape is what provides the color, so I wanted to be careful how I brought in other elements," he notes.

Among those other elements are a smattering of large-scale artworks—including the living room's Theaster Gates composition made with fire hoses and the stairwell's Claudy Jongstra tapestry—as well as punchy Swedish carpers, which Henderson laid in the tailored wood-and-stone master bath and the meditation room. The latter, says the wife, is "probably the most important space for my husband"—a Buddhist who meditates every morning. "And because it's mostly windows, it's where you really feel closest to nature."

That is if you're not counting the guest cottage, which stands in a thicket just downhill from the main house. A later addition, also by Studio B and Henderson, the simple gable-roofed structure is all black, clad in a Japanese-style charred cedar that, Lindemau says, "picks up the dusky flecks in the bark of the aspen trees." Inside, Henderson kept the furnishings uncomplicated, utilizing Danish pieces from the clients' collection and tying everything together with a palette of soothing blues. "It's amazing," the designer says of the cottage. "You and I would be thrilled to live in it."

In fact, the wife jokes about decamping to the ecoconlike cabin with her husband, leaving the children to fend for themselves in the main house. But the cottage lacks two of the residence's very important features—the inviting pool and the rooftop terrace, where the stargazing never fails to serve up a "wonderful shock," as the wife puts it, for this family of city dwellers. "In Hong Kong we don't get that kind of front-row seat to spectacular night skies," she says. "It is truly breathtaking." □

*Clockwise from right:* The dining room features a David Weeks Studio chandelier, a set of 1950s dining chairs cushioned in an Edelman leather, a wall-mounted Paul Evans console from Todd Merrill Studio, a Vico Magistretti table lamp, and a rug by ALT for Living; the photo montage is by Tacita Dean; in the kitchen, a vintage Louis Poulsen pendant light from Lost City Arts hangs above a Caesarsstone-top island and Orange Furniture bar stools upholstered in an Edelman leather; the hood is by Butthaup, the cabinetry is by Studio B; the ovens are by Gaggenau, and the sink fittings are by Dornbracht. The guest cottage is clad in charred-cedar siding and topped by an anthracite-zinc roof.





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