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ARCHITECT Reid Smith Architects
BUILDER Big Sky Build
INTERIOR DESIGN Lisa Kanning

A Fresh Start

Remodeling a slope-side home in Big Sky's Yellowstone Club adds contemporary mountain style

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER AND KELLEY GIBEON

THE YELLOWSTONE CLUB, BIG SKY, Montana's exclusive gated community, is hardly the place one would expect to find a duplex. Yet, overlooking the base area of some of the best private skiing in the country, this one manages to seem stately. As a ski-in, ski-out residence, it doesn't get any better. Exit



through the backdoor via a cozy equipment room, ski a few hundred yards, and find yourself at a lift providing access to 2,200 snowy acres and 2,700 vertical feet.

But for the homeowners, the interior of their slope-side condo didn't quite match the beauty of the dreamscape outside. Their home needed to be as inviting and exceptional as their surroundings.

Local contractor, Big Sky Build, and Lisa Kanning Interior Design worked to meet this vision. The team, with assistance from Reid Smith Architects, redefined the home's aesthetic from a predominately white, California contemporary to one that exudes the warmth, durability and uniqueness of a slope-side chateau.

"I think once [the homeowners] got into the space and realized how they were going to use it, some of what had been done wasn't

Left: A monochromatic and neutral palette was employed throughout the home to balance the hues found in the fir timbers and walnut floors. **Top:** Adding a sheepskin cushion to an existing chair is representative of Kanning's attention to detail and the recognition that the outcome of a project is a reflection of its individual components. **Above:** Mountain views are visible from the dining room table.

practical,” said John Seelye, president and founder of Big Sky Build. “They wanted to transform this into something a little different from what you are used to seeing, something that was livable, something a little more mountain contemporary.”

Completed in 2013, the remodel of the 7,000-square-foot residence, with five bedrooms and three floors (including the basement-level garage), took about seven months to finish. Originally the residence was designed by Bozeman’s Locati Architects, Bridger Builders and interior designer Elizabeth Elliott. The new team made a few



Above: Walnut cabinets match the floor and ceiling in the inviting kitchen.
Left: The entryway leading to the master bedroom was covered in aspen bark sourced from Earth Elements Design Center.
Below: In the master bedroom, a bark wall covering adds depth and contrasts with the soft luxe bedding.

proportional balance and thoughtful compositions in color and scale. “[The homeowners] are very busy, so I think we did a walk-through, I met with them once and then I just kind of ran with it,” Kanning said. “My biggest direction was to make it feel like a mountain home.”

To achieve this, she accentuated the view by removing heavy drapery and installing motorized shades. She also scaled furniture to better fit within each room and swapped out about 75 percent of the lighting fixtures. New fabrics were applied to existing furniture. And additional details, such as new hardware in the bathrooms and metal cladding around the fire-

subtle structural changes to customize the home for the new owners, such as removing a closet and converting an office into a bedroom. And some of the original interior elements were kept or updated to fit within the home’s new context.

“One of my challenges, and something I really tried to do, was not have [the homeowners] start over,” Kanning explained. “I really tried to do the best I could to save what was there and just rework the space.”

With 20 years of design experience, Kanning’s New York City-based firm is known for clean lines, textural contrast,



place, were also added.

“I also just wanted to make it comfortable, livable and functional,” she said, noting that the homeowners have five young boys, making durability critical. She chose hide rugs and fabrics that were outdoor-quality for that task. “[My design process] is about aesthetics, but it’s also about making it functional. Most people these days want to be able to use every room and be comfortable in every room, not having to worry about looking at a finish and having it scratch,” she said.

The home’s new color palette includes soft gray and taupe hues that help tone down some of the more vibrant orange and yellows found in the exposed timber and floors, she explained. “It’s a palette of rich, warm neutrals and then we came in with just a few pops of color — the red accent in the living room, for example — but overall I tend to be more monochromatic and that’s where texture comes in to create the interest,” she explained. Textured details, including



An essential in any slope-side residence, the gear room, with its aspen-lined entryway, is a primer to what waits outside.





wall coverings that look like aspen or pine bark, “helped set the tone without starting fresh.”

The outcome is a slope-side residence that reflects each carefully planned component for a unified result. And it is the perfect place to come home to after a long day outdoors. It’s just as inviting as the slopes outside. **BSJ**

Christine Rogel is the associate editor for both Big Sky Journal and Western Art & Architecture magazines.

As married co-workers, Peter and Kelley Gibeon, compliment each other while shooting, playing and absorbing life. Since 2004, their market has grown from local to include regional and international projects and publications.



Above: Textural contrast is a hallmark of Kanning’s design aesthetic. **Right:** Originally designed as an office, this room was converted into an additional guest bedroom after the homeowners spent time in the house.

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