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The great room's abundant windows draw the outside world into the home's living space. Here, the flat top of a distant mesa rises beyond the sheer canyon that hems in the home's lot. Inside, fir ceiling trusses inspired the heavy fir couches, and a dark-colored concrete floor adds warmth.



Design Harmony

With its rustic face, sleek soul and secluded setting, this Telluride home merges cliffside drama with modern elegance.

BY BILL BRIGGS
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY



(left) In this open living area, cream-colored overstuffed chairs, warm woods and an airy aesthetic are enhanced by tall panels of glass that welcome a flood of natural sunlight into the room and open the space to views of the towering peaks in the distance. A fireplace anchors the room in warmth.

(opposite) In this intimate reading area in the great room, the heavy timber chairs, also designed by Snow, are called "tuskers"—a colloquial African word for male elephants. The light curve of the chair's arms appears again in the design of the kitchen.

Like ghosts in a lonely meadow, the rock walls appeared to architect Jack Snow as he strolled near the canyon's edge. They seemed perfect: long swaths of tumbled stone, slashing through that empty land above Telluride, perhaps the relics of an old farm. Though they were the mere concoction of Snow's inventive mind, those imaginary stones gave Snow, of RKD Architects in Vail, the genesis for what would become an artistic residential masterpiece. "The walls," Snow says, "that's the first thing that settled into my brain and stayed there as an organizing concept."

The home grew on and around these once-imaginary walls. Dubbed "Canyon Point," the home is a six-bedroom, seven-and-a-half-bath balance of modern lines and high-country textures, surrounded by a cozy oasis of patios, fire pit and pond. Canyon Point, designed by Snow for a Telluride couple, not only absorbed the natural colors and materials of its high perch, but also became part of the breath-grabbing scenery, 1,500 feet above the floor of the San Miguel River Canyon.

Each architectural element, rooted in the craggy scenery, flowed into the next design feature as Canyon Point took shape. The hovering ridgelines helped inspire the gentle pitch of the roof. An exterior of copper and reclaimed-oak barnwood influenced inside spaces dominated by Douglas-fir trusses, reclaimed oak flooring and limestone tile. Massive windows let visitors feel they're alone in the wild when they're actually drenched in contemporary comfort. Ultimately, the home's smart-but-grounded personality even motivated the curves and woods of about 20 pieces of custom furniture that Snow conceived for the owners.

Snow describes the home as comfortable, livable space inside a structure that is "dynamic and sculptural." Much of the interior's warmth came from Telluride-based designer Kameron Gerber, who coordinated finishing touches such as the colors, fabrics, lighting and fixtures. "I was the woman who needed to be involved in warming up the project," says Gerber, whose husband, Dave, served as the contractor.

For example, while Snow specified concrete floors and countertops - installed by Concrete Revolution of Denver—Kameron chose the surface's warm tones: taupe for the floors; cream for the pre-cast concrete slabs in the kitchen and master bathroom. She also handpicked glass tiles in the kitchen and the bathrooms to reflect the hues of Telluride's four seasons. Ann Sacks mosaic tiles with hints of copper, pearl and rustic orange make up the kitchen backsplash, while bathroom tiles throughout the house are tinted in other seasonal colors, such as olive green and smoky, grayish blue. >



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(opposite) This west-facing seating area within the great room provides a perfect place for afternoon cocktails. The windows overlook the home's private pond.

(above) The spa-like master bathroom, with its tall ceilings and lavish natural light, is more minimalist than other spaces in the home, providing unobstructed views to the north and west. A cascading concrete slab cantilevers from one wall and flows into the shower where it becomes a bench.

Perhaps the most distinctive element of the interiors is the custom furniture—the brainchild of Snow and the owner's brother, an industrial designer. The timber in the house inspired Douglas-fir-based, leather-padded couches and lounge chairs. Once the pieces inhabited the house, they brought a certain heaviness with them, so the team drew up sculptural, light mahogany tables and chairs to balance the heftier, darker designs. Then, after seeing so much wood in the house, Snow devised overstuffed chairs to soften the look.

While the lounging and dining pieces were created specifically to mesh with each room (most were later manufactured in Denver or Canada), they will be reproduced in the future as part of Snow's new venture: a distinctive and delicious line of furniture, for which Canyon Point serves as the perfect showroom. Side by side in the spectacular home, the intricate twists of light barstools play off of the robust presence of the fir-based couches and chairs. Throughout the furniture line, Snow shows his signature attraction to dramatic, swooping lines—a creative touch that has ignited the imaginations of prospective buyers. "I'm drawn to pieces of long radius instead of tight half-curves or half-rounds that a lot of other people tend to draw when designing furniture," Snow says.

Snow's continuity of design—his ability to pull inventive contours from his mind to his sketch pad, to the sprawling floors of Canyon Point, and finally to the home's furniture—is what makes Canyon Point so distinctive. What began as a series of imaginary walls has become a complete design that feels purposeful and fresh. The finished product: a home that is as unique as its perch amid Telluride's picturesque terrain.



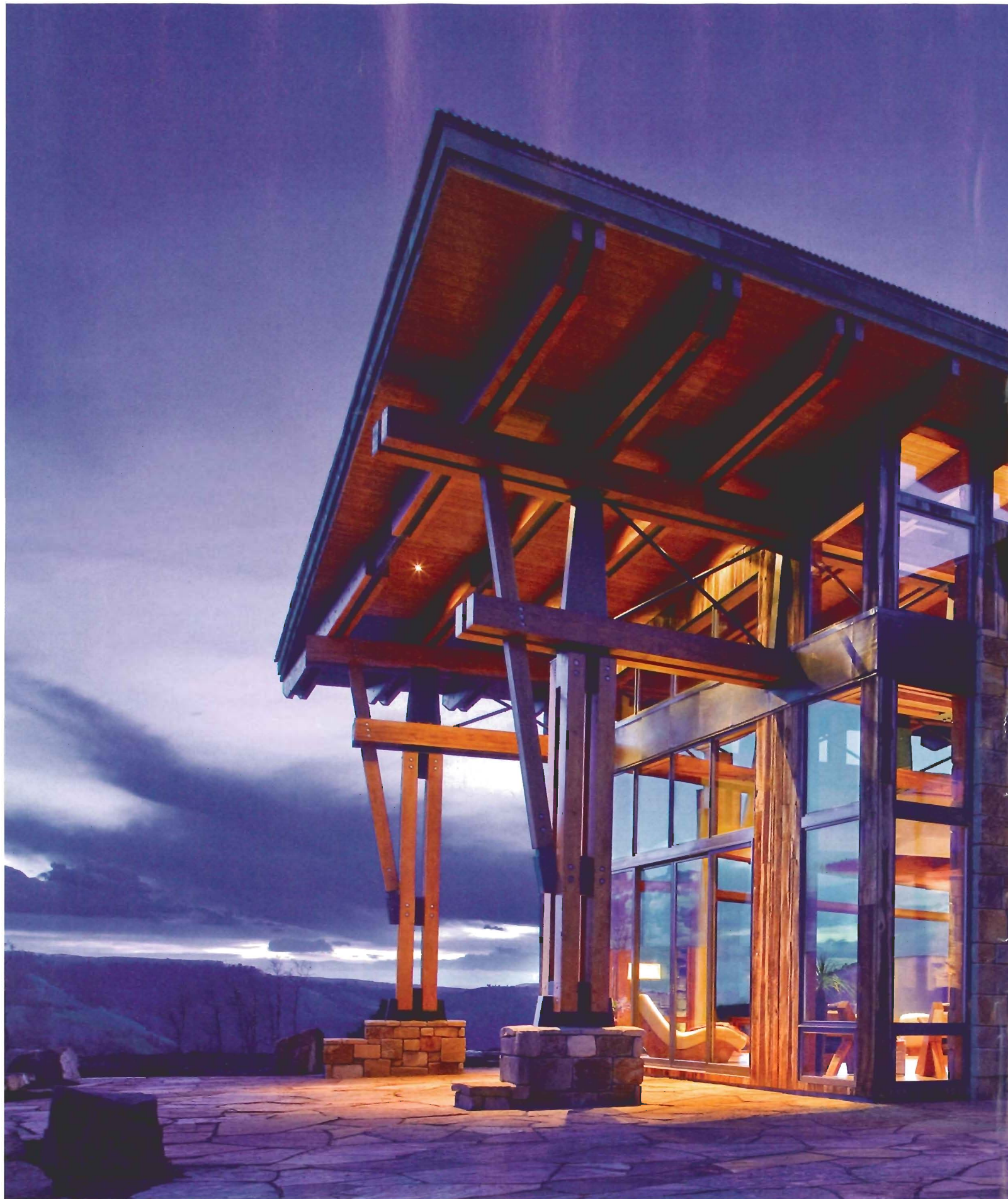
(left) The dining room table and chairs, created by Snow, are made from mahogany and contain blackened steel accents that reflect the detailing in the home's trusses.

(below) Andirons and grates in the see-through fireplace also pick up the dark steel of the ceiling trusses. The walls are a blend of local rock and Arkansas stone—materials that appear again in the outside walls that served as Snow's creative starting point.





(above) The kitchen's expansive concrete island is softened by its mottled finish. The sculpted barstools—also custom pieces—are made from Baltic birch. The gentle curve of the outside-facing cabinets and counters continue the theme of swooping lines seen throughout the home and in its furniture. The kitchen is designed for two people to work side by side comfortably while taking in views of Telluride's majestic peaks in the distance.





(opposite) Canyon Point encompasses vast stretches of outside living space. This sweeping patio, looking back into the great room, contains elevated flat rocks for sitting.

(above) The master bed, yet another piece that was custom-made by Snow, contains abundant storage beneath.

(left) In the master bedroom, a copper-encased fireplace shares the view with Mount Wilson. The puffy chairs, designed by architect Jack Snow, are named "m'vues"—"hippo" in an African dialect—in response to the homeowner's deep love of African cultures and landscapes.

DESIGN DETAILS

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