



WRITTEN BY

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# para- digm shift

A BOLD NEW  
DESIGN IN  
BRUSH CREEK  
REKINDLES  
A FAMILY'S  
LOVE FOR  
ITS HOME.

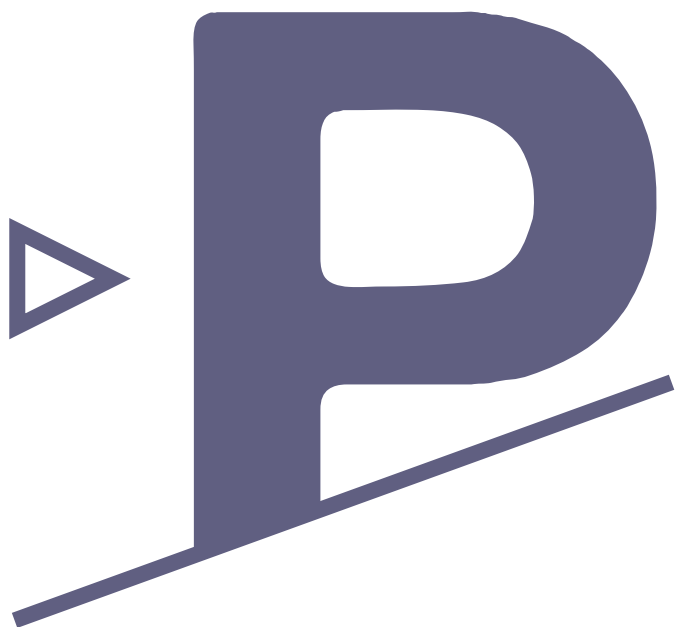
PHOTOGRAPHS BY BRENT MOSS

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Pull into the driveway of this Brush Creek hideaway, and the feeling is a bit like stepping off the beaten path of a familiar trail. What you expect to see is so entirely different from what appears that your bearings are momentarily disrupted. In a neighborhood of homes scattered haphazardly across slopes of shale, steep and sunbaked, a modern black cube is nestled discreetly, almost invisibly, amid a landscape of oak and aspen. The structure's simplicity complements the ever-changing textures and colors of this native mountain landscape. More than many homes, perhaps, this one carries with it a story that speaks to the value of transformative design on establishing a sense of place.

The story begins with the owners, a professional couple who raised a family in this location but in a very different house. Set into a densely vegetated north-facing hillside, the 3,000-square-foot existing home was certainly sufficient for the family's needs, but it was also cold, dark, and in need of constant upkeep. With a complacency that comes from being in a place for more than 40 years, the owners accepted the existing conditions. No view? Go for a walk. No privacy? Chalk it up to family togetherness. Ratty furniture? Wait until the kids are gone.

But eventually the call for change became too strong to ignore—at least for one of the homeowners, who had been thinking about a renovation for years and collected boxes of magazine clippings for design inspiration. “My husband and boys loved the old house the way it was and saw no reason to do anything other than a simple remodel,” she relates. As the saying goes, however, mother knows best, and she knew it was high time to do something different. Typical of 1970s home designs, the rooms were small, and very little privacy was afforded. “The layout of the house was such that we all had to be in the same space,” she adds. “There was no place to escape to if you wanted to be by yourself.”

The reality associated with making a dramatic change turned out to be overwhelming and a bit scary, but in 2012, the couple, both professionals with busy travel schedules—she's a buyer for a local clothing store, and he's an ER doctor—decided to take

the plunge. Because they had toyed with the idea of remodeling for so many years, they were familiar with the local architecture scene and ultimately chose the firm of Rowland + Broughton to lead the process. “We loved the ideas and energy that the team presented to us,” says the wife. “More importantly, we had confidence that they could give us something that was entirely doable and not pretentious.”

In business for more than 15 years, Rowland + Broughton, which designs both residential and commercial projects, emphasizes collaboration and client perspective. A trademark of the firm's architectural








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Clockwise from top:  
The house is tucked into  
a densely vegetated  
north-facing slope; the  
homeowners; black-metal  
corrugated skin on the  
exterior makes a bold  
statement.

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this home  
carries with  
it a story that  
speaks to  
the value of  
**TRANSFORMATIVE  
DESIGN**  
on place-making.

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style is, quite simply, that they don't have one. Instead, says principal Sarah Broughton, they let the client and the site dictate design. In this case, the owners' dream was to create a mountain loft incorporating tall ceilings, clean and contemporary spaces, views, and light. What they got was all of that, as well as a home well suited for entertaining and hosting extended family.

The new house has transformed the family's love of the place. Moreover, the children and grandchildren visit more often than they used to. And with the more efficient use of space, the homeowners have a place for everything. "They feel more in control of their lives," says Broughton. "They're just happier. It was a huge paradigm shift for them."

"What I love about projects like this," adds Broughton, "is that it shows you don't have to be a millionaire to hire an architect. You hire professionals to do something simple and efficient, and the end result is something great and transformative." The home remains a modest-for-Aspen 3,000 square feet with a two-car garage—though it does include an elevator, a convenience the homeowners were willing to splurge for.

Interiors are crisp  
and clean, with a  
monochromatic palette.









Expansive metal-clad windows allow the outdoor elements to take center stage; an open floor plan on the upper level sustains a feeling of penthouse living in a mountain oasis; large sliding doors access a south-facing deck for a seamless indoor-outdoor transition.



In place of the old residence, which was razed, the home Broughton and team designed is a straightforward two-story rectangle that rests on a concrete base. Sheathed in black corrugated metal, its minimalist structure makes a bold statement in all seasons. To maintain a sense of timelessness, current trends in interior and exterior finishes were skipped over. Instead, a monochromatic palette includes expansive metal-clad windows, a floating staircase made of white-oak flooring, and white cabinetry. This exercise in restraint allows the surrounding landscape—finally—to take center stage in

the home. “There’s such a transparency to this home that wasn’t evident in the original house,” notes R+B architect Bryan May. The house is oriented toward views of a prominent rock outcropping known locally as Cougar Point, a feature that the owners could previously see only when they stood on a stool in the bathroom. To ensure that the new home would indeed capture all of the available views and natural light, the architects spent hours on the roof and on ladders, determin-

ing the appropriate floor-to-floor ratios. The process also resulted in a naturally efficient structure. Every room features large windows, so there’s little need for additional lighting during the day, an idea that underscores R+B’s commitment to incorporating sustainability into every project. Says Broughton, “There is no wasted space.”

Simplicity and elegance are immediately evident during the approach to the home, as the corrugated metal’s horizontal lines draw your eye to the front door. Inside is a foyer punctuated by the floating staircase, which is encased in abundant natural light. Two identical guest bedrooms on the lower level, each with large windows, offer selectively framed views of the adjacent hillside.

At the top of the stairs, the clean, crisp interiors give way to a panoramic view to the east of low-lying meadows merged with distant ridgelines and, at the horizon, the Continental Divide. To the south, floor-to-ceiling accordion-style glass doors open onto a cantilevered deck, creating a seamless indoor-outdoor living environment. The master bedroom, made more spacious by high ceilings and light-colored surfaces, is located in the westernmost end of the home—away from the sun’s earliest rays—a decision that was a high priority for the owners



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given the husband's arduous and frequent late-night work schedule.

Admittedly, staying within the client's budget posed a challenge. "The simpler we could make the building, the better," says Broughton. "We were able to distribute the budget, which is very important. You never want to spend it in one area and compromise the rest of the structure. Here, we had a singular palette, and we did not stray from that concept." The architects also sourced wisely. In the kitchen, for example, the owners wanted countertops with the characteristics of marble but without the cost. The architects were able to find an engineered porcelain product that looks every bit like the real thing.

# The house's minimalist structure makes a bold statement in all seasons.

Not that any cost-cutting measures are evident in the stunning new space. Instead, the homeowners are reveling in the luxury of their mountain aerie, where they are now living above the trees instead of in them. Says the husband, "This home has changed the way we live. We can sit inside and feel like we are outside. There isn't that immediate need to get outside to go for a run. Now we just sit here—and we love it!"

A paradigm shift, indeed. ●