

SUMMER TRAVEL: PADDLING, FISHING AND HIDING OUT AT CANADA'S NIMMO BAY WILDERNESS RESORT

MOUNTAIN LIVING[®]





DESIGNING THE WEST: ROWLAND+BROUGHTON

INTERVIEW BY LAURA BEAUSIRE

With offices in Aspen and Denver—or as they like to say, “one office with a long hallway”—the versatile team at Rowland+Broughton can tackle just about any architecture, interior design or urban design challenge, from reviving beloved historic landmarks to devising unexpected solutions to new building situations. Says the firm’s co-principal Sarah Broughton: “The more flexible you can be in life, the more life can take you in really great places.” And “really great places” just happen to be a Rowland+Broughton specialty.

MOUNTAIN LIVING: Does Rowland+Broughton have an underlying philosophy that guides your work?

SARAH BROUGHTON: Our philosophy is to provide thoughtful, timeless design. We have a rigorous and fun pre-design process, and through that fact-finding and emotional journey of discovering what the project wants to be, a style emerges. It’s just fun to be really open-minded and let the design process take the project where it should go.

ML: You’ve designed a hugely diverse array of projects—residential, commercial, hotels, a custom Airstream trailer and even entire villages—while also spanning the stylistic spectrum, from traditional to contemporary. Where do you get such breadth and versatility?

SB: I think that each design opportunity needs a specific solution. I am agile as a designer, and flexibility is part of our culture at R+B. We are a high-energy group of designers made up of mainly Gen X and Gen Y team members, and we give special attention to every project in our studio. I believe this attracts our breadth of clients.

ML: Why do you choose to be based in Colorado?

SB: I love the Wild West attitude that we have in Colorado. There’s a reason why people come here, and it’s to feel free. Mountain design should express our environment and culture.

ML: You’ve done a lot of design and remodeling of high-profile and historical buildings in Aspen and around Colorado—from restaurants and shops at Denver International Airport and suites at Coors Field to Aspen’s Hotel Jerome and The Little Nell. Is it daunting to take on such well-known spaces?

SB: I am very passionate about historic preservation. We seek out local projects where we think we can make an impact on the community—retaining history yet also allowing for the future. I’m also very passionate about remodeling. Not only is it environmentally conscious, but it is so fun to make things better. The Hotel Jerome was an intense all-encompassing remodel and preservation: We breathed new life into the building, and it is now stronger than ever.

Design is never daunting; it’s thrilling and complex. The more you have passion, understanding and preparedness, the more fun and rewarding it is! ○

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FACING PAGE: Architect and principal Sarah Broughton. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: The firm's redesign of this Colorado residence transformed dated spaces into open, bright and modern living areas. The R+B team gave the Little Nell hotel's Montagna restaurant a fresh contemporary look to go with its new name, Element 47. Aspen's inviting White House Tavern is the result of the firm's award-winning restoration of two historical buildings, including an 1883 miner's cabin. R+B's renovation of Aspen's Hotel Jerome included the historical property's restaurant, pictured here.

