



opposites attract

words by ALISON GWINN • photography by BRENT MOSS



A NEO-VICTORIAN HOUSE IN ASPEN GETS A MINIMALIST RETHINK, AND THE SUM PROVES TO BE GREATER THAN THE PARTS

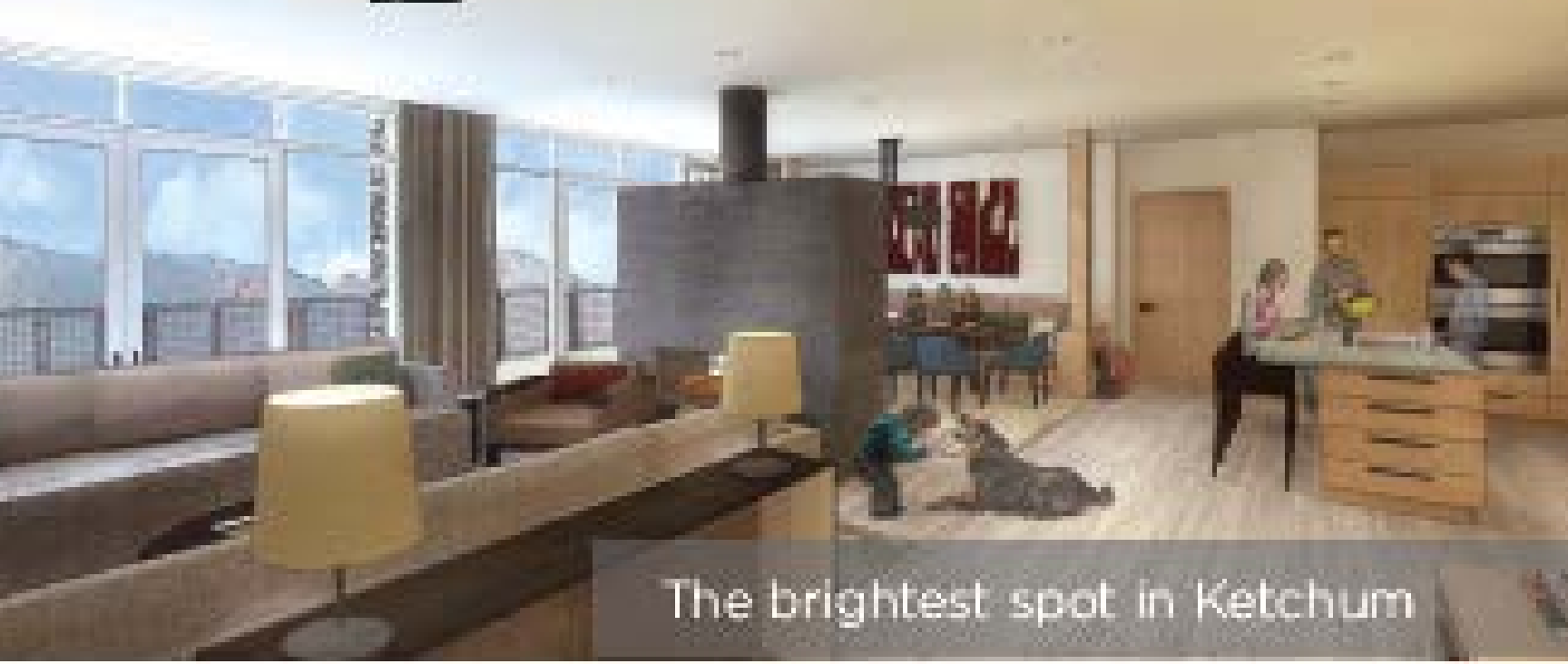
THE MISSION? Turning a neo-Victorian into a contemporary home.
THE CHALLENGES? Adhering to Aspen's strict building codes and fitting into a neighborhood of historic homes and miner's cabins.
THE INSPIRATIONS? Minimalist 20th-century artist Donald Judd and Japanese architect Tadao Ando.
THE RESULT? A home that is a clever study in contrasts: Victorian but modern, industrial but natural, sleek but warm, and utilitarian but artistic.

When the architects at Aspen's Rowland + Broughton were first asked to rethink this 1990s faux Victorian in Aspen's West End, they had to put on their proverbial scrubs. "There are rules in Aspen that allow you to demolish only 40 percent of a home's exterior walls and roof," says Sarah Broughton, a principal in the firm. "It's basically like surgery to create a new house with that constraint. You have to distill a house down to its good bones, its fundamental elements, and build off of that. Because you're limited by zoning and setbacks, there's a bit of push and pull."

In this case, what the architects most wanted to save was the original home's large gabled roofs, which contribute to its Victorian silhouette. To play them up, they added two large perpendicular scrims on the upper level that go all the way from



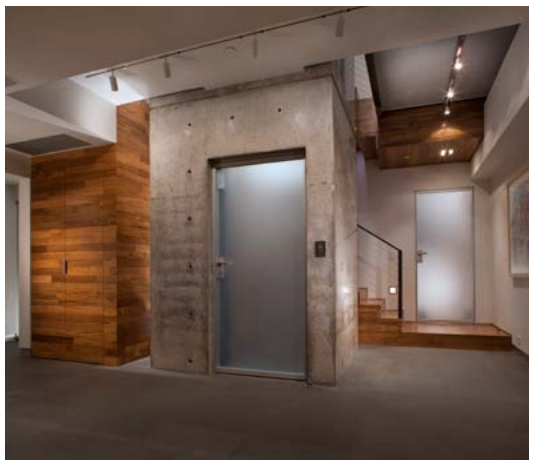
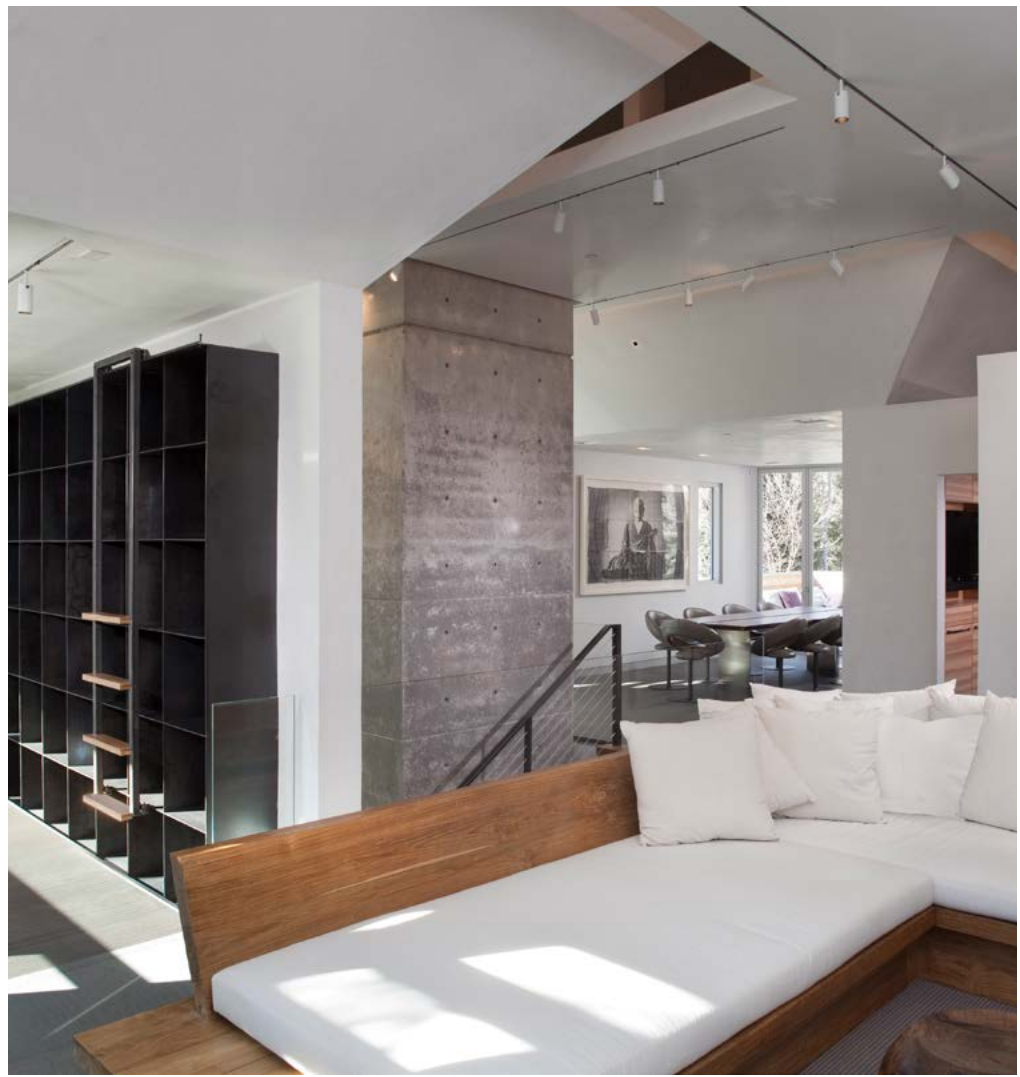
ABOVE: Leather swivel chairs from Brazil surround a custom metal-legged dining table. The folding NanaWall doors open up to a large second-story entertaining deck, with views of Red Mountain, "so there's this really great free movement between the spaces," says architect Broughton. The vertical windows on either side of the large piece of art provide what she calls "balanced light." OPPOSITE: The exterior of the 5,750-square-foot home features horizontal teak siding trimmed in zinc. Rowland + Broughton kept the home's original gables but moved the entry door from the corner to the middle of the façade. Scrims, a major architectural feature of the place, create horizontal projections that run on multiple sides, including over the front door.



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the kitchen through the living room and then project outside (including one over the front door, which was moved from the corner of the house to the center). “The scrim was not only an architectural feature that tied together these gable volumes,” Broughton says, “but also a way to hide all the mechanical and incorporate the interior lighting.” They also clad the exterior in teak and zinc, a low-maintenance material that looks contemporary but nonetheless fits in with the surrounding clapboard homes, and used pre-weathered Galvalume metal on the eaves. Because the homeowners were avid art collectors, the Rowland + Broughton team wanted to make the three-bedroom house (whose public rooms are all on the second floor because of the superior views) a piece of art in itself, and establish a uniformity of materials, including two-foot-square flamed black granite

floors throughout the public spaces, to create a neutral canvas for the owners’ collection. They found their primary inspiration in the work of Donald Judd, the influential American minimalist artist (a term he eschewed) whose work was much admired by the homeowner, who even had a bumper sticker on his car reading “WWDJD,” as in “What Would Donald Judd Do?”. Ultimately, the architects were influenced by Judd’s belief in the rationality of design and “the simple expression of complex thought” through the use of pure, industrial materials and geometric shapes. Judd is well known for his series of metal boxes informally known as “Stacks” (you may have seen one of these at New York City’s Museum of Modern Art). In homage, Rowland + Broughton created “stacked” mullion windows (visible on the front exterior); custom, geometric

furniture; and large, spacious interiors like those Judd had designed at the Chinati Foundation, a contemporary art museum in Marfa, Texas. Even something as seemingly utilitarian as the home’s elevator is a work of art. When the Rowland + Broughton team was asked to include an elevator in the home (a fairly common element these days in houses of more than two stories, they say), “We wanted to make a feature out of it,” says Broughton. Far from being hidden on the edge of the home, it juts up prominently

ABOVE (clockwise from left): The platform seating area was custom built out of teak, which matches the exterior siding; to create the concrete elevator, the Rowland + Broughton team was inspired by the work of Japanese architect Tadao Ando, which emphasizes the beauty of simplicity. It travels from the basement, which houses two bedrooms, up to the second story; Unfussy, custom stainless-steel cabinetry by Bulthaup, with integral drawer pulls and countertops of either Caesarstone or stainless steel, is highlighted by a David Weeks mobile lighting fixture. The lower windows both bring in light and act as a backsplash.

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ABOVE (clockwise from top): Blackened raw steel shelving in the double-height library space is both "very utilitarian and humble," says Broughton. "The owner really wanted a floating bed, and we agreed," says Broughton of this custom oak creation, which has built-in sconces, bedside lamps, and a desk (tucked in behind it). The large headboard is two pieces of oak, with a lighting detail sandwiched in between; A custom stainless-steel Diamond Spa tub, silver travertine tiles, and a granite floor are offset by an organically shaped wooden chair.



clean lines and pretty cold materials, so there was a desire to bring in organic materials," says Broughton. "So, many of the kitchen cabinets are made out of applewood, and the living room sectional is made out of teak." They also tried to balance light throughout ("we always try to have light coming into a room from two different sides"), even adding in horizontal windows as a backsplash in the kitchen.

"We call this the Form House because it was really all about distilling the house down to its strong forms, and then layering in the inspiration of Donald Judd," says Broughton. "All houses are about forms, of course, but in this one the architecture is so exposed. It's really beautiful." 

through the center, puncturing the horizontal scrim. For inspiration on its look, they team turned to the work of self-taught Japanese architect Tadao Ando, whose ultra-clean style is said to be like a haiku: spare and yet beautiful. "He was one of the first architects to use concrete in an architectural way, as an exposed material," Broughton says. To achieve the effect they were looking for, the architects spent six months courting a particular concrete subcontractor and then made custom forms to create the concrete's shiny, almost melamine-like texture. Inside, the elevator is all teak.

But the architects didn't want to overemphasize the industrial feel. "It's a modern house with a lot of

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