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Designing a Ski Home For Year-Round Living

Decorating your abode to dazzle for all seasons

BY JENNIFER TZESES

Coming home to your own alpine refuge after a day on the slopes is a luxury any skier covets. But the real trick is figuring out how to decorate it to feel timeless no matter the season.

All About the Architecture

“The natural elements of the outdoors become the focal point of each room,” says William Peace, owner and principal of Peace Design in Atlanta and Bozeman, Montana. He suggests using expansive windows throughout the main gathering areas along with perfectly framed views from each bedroom.

Sarah Tiedeken O’Brien, an interior designer with Vertical Arts Architecture, which has offices in Colorado, in Denver, Steamboat Springs, and Vail, considers how foliage will look in winter versus summer, and allows for an open view to let in sun in winter and create shade and privacy in the summer.

“Make sure your roofs can properly divert snow piles and melting snow throughout the year to avoid icy spots at entryways and driveways,” she says.

And Rachael Celinski, director of interior design at Gallatin Valley Design Group in Bozeman, recommends considering natural light.

“We look at sun angles for glare and opt for motorized window treatments to prevent discoloration of flooring and furniture,” she says. She also prefers corner windows to enhance views, as well as accordion or pocket doors to accentuate as much of the view as possible.

Materials Matter

The key is combining the right materials, adding texture, and layering.

“Think textured wallcoverings, faux-fur pillows mixed with leathers, linens, and cashmere throws,” says Sari Mina Ross of Sari Mina Ross Interior Design in Denver.

Hearty and natural materials are best, Mr. Peace says. “Reclaimed wood that has lasted generations has already proven it can hold up.”

You can get the look of wood with porcelain tile that will be impervious to moisture and scratching, says Joe Berkowitz, founder and designer at JAB Design Group in Philadelphia.



When it comes to upholstery, he goes for a mix of leather and fabric; “We try not to get too heavy, so it feels hot or scratchy in the warmer seasons.”

Storage Is Essential

“We love to create an entire sports storage room when the space allows,” Mr. Berkowitz says.

Otherwise, Mr. Berkowitz finds clever storage under a staircase,

A design by Sari Mina Ross, shown above, uses layered textures to feel cozy. A house by William Peace at Moonlight Basin in Montana, shown on opposite page, uses large windows to frame incredible views.

Photography by Ty Cole



Storage space is key in a mudroom at Moonlight Basin in Montana, designed by William Peace, shown at left. At right, a living, dining, and kitchen area at Moonlight Basin designed by Rachel Celinski.

builds closets in nooks, or cuts into the dead space behind eaves. And building a mudroom to store skis and boots as well as mountain bikes and fly-fishing equipment can be one of the best investments.

Timeless Touches

With a mountain home, it can be tempting to go for expected touches, such as ski-themed decor, hanging antlers, or hide rugs, but try to mix in modern accents.

Ms. Celinski aims to balance mountain features such as wood timbers, tongue-and-groove ceilings, reclaimed corral-board siding, or decorative metals with lighting, cabinetry, slabs, fireplace features, wallpaper or murals, and fine art. "We love a consistent blend of neutrals, textures, and clean lines mixed with 'wow' moments like stair treads



waterfalling down the wall, rounded edges of furnishings, and bold fabric, textiles, and art," she says.

She suggests using ski-themed decor in unique ways, such as a vintage chairlift as outdoor seating, or hanging a vintage ski poster or map.

Keep It Cozy

Think large comfy couches, soft blankets, tufted ottomans, fireplaces, big kitchen islands, and fire pits for après-ski, says Robin Strickler, founder and principal of Design Works, an interior-design firm based in Irvine, California. "These design elements are what make a ski home so sought after."

She also loves incorporating beautiful stonework, large wood beams, vaulted ceilings, wool rugs, and textural throws as well as a color palette with neutrals, blacks, grays, and dark

greens for a cozy, comfortable, and chic vibe.

Including some substantial pieces that can hold their own alongside dramatic views helps further the warm feel, says Alex Casey, senior designer with Abby Hetherington Interiors in Bozeman. "Fabric has so much to do with it, too—you can make any piece feel warm and cozy with alpaca, fur, or bouclé."

Bring the Indoors Out

With views for days, designing the outdoor space for year-round use is all but a prerequisite. Ms. Casey likes to create different smaller spaces within a larger outdoor space, making it more flexible for year-round living. "A fire element can make any space feel more usable in winter but also create a great aesthetic near a dining table in summer," she says. ■

Gibeon Photography (2)



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