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OF HIGH-COUNTRY DESIGN

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JULY 2009

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THE FUTURE OF
HIGH-COUNTRY DESIGN

Meet the West's next generation of talent. From Bozeman to Aspen, Steamboat to Santa Fe, these 20 young pros have a fresh perspective that's changing the way we live. Think you love high-country design now? Just wait until you see what's next.



Sarah Broughton
Rowland + Broughton
Architecture & Urban Design
Aspen & Denver, Colorado
970-544-9006
rowlandbroughton.com

For Sarah Broughton, great design is all about collaboration, whether she's designing a custom home, reimagining the guest suites of a luxury hotel or planning a new retail space. "It's our philosophy that architecture, landscape, planning, interior design and urban design are all interdependent," she says. "For many projects, we do it all, not because we're control freaks, but because we enjoy it and we think that way. We think about a stand of cottonwood trees when we're laying out spaces, and we think about furniture scale and layouts from a project's very beginning, to ensure that the spaces we design will actually work." These days, great design is also about sustainable design, says Broughton. "When potential clients call us, one of the first questions we ask is if they're willing to go down that path with us. And we've made a pledge that when it comes to showing plans or materials to clients, we're only showing them really sustainable choices." Broughton's varied talents, which allow her to have a hand in everything from designing lighting to custom furniture, also allow her to take on a wide variety of projects. On the boards now: The expansion of Aspen's Wheeler Opera House; the renovation of the Little Nell's guest suites, a collaboration with Holly Hunt; and a remodel of Aspen's DerBerghof Condominiums, the very first condominium building in the state of Colorado.





Joe Herzog
Merz Project
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It was 2004, and Joe Herzog had just spent the past four-plus years working for prominent Phoenix architects Will Bruder and Wendell Burnette. "My neighbor, Chris Nieto, and I had talked about starting an architecture firm," Herzog recalls, "and one day he called and said, 'Quit your job and let's do it.'" Now, just five years later, Merz Project enjoys a strong presence in downtown Phoenix, though commissions have taken Herzog as far away as Abuja, Africa. "We really don't have a vernacular," says Herzog of the firm's lack of a signature style. "Our design process requires us to deeply analyze the context of our buildings. We create a thesis statement for [each project], and we ensure that our decisions along the way are matching up with that." It's this discovery process that fuels Herzog's passion for his craft. "I love that I learn so much every day, not only about my life and architecture, but about other people's lives too."

JOE HERZOG: PORTRAIT: MATT WINQUIST / BEDROOM: MATT WINQUIST

REID SMITH: COURTESY REID SMITH ARCHITECTS | MEGAN GILMAN: PORTRAIT: DAVID FOXHOVEN / EXTERIOR: PV SYSTEM DESIGN BY CONJUNDRUM ENERGY; AUDREY HALL



Megan Gilman
Active Energies, Inc.
Avon, Colorado
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activeenergies.com

When Megan Gilman and her husband, Jason Weingast, founded energy consulting company Active Energies in 2006, "there was a total lack of information available to consumers," Gilman recalls. "Back then, we were telling people what they could do and why it was useful. Now we're not selling the idea; people are coming to us." What they're coming for ranges from energy consulting to photovoltaic system design to help achieving LEED and ENERGY STAR certifications. "We'll often partner with a design team to evaluate a project while it's still on the boards so we can help owners make the right decisions the first time around," says Gilman. While she acknowledges how perfectly timed her entrance into the marketplace was, Gilman emphasizes that her goal is not to win a race. "I'm excited to play a role in moving everyone forward," she says. "It's not about getting there before everyone else. It's about making sure that everyone gets there."

Reid Smith
Reid Smith Architects
Bozeman, Montana
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reidsmitharchitects.com

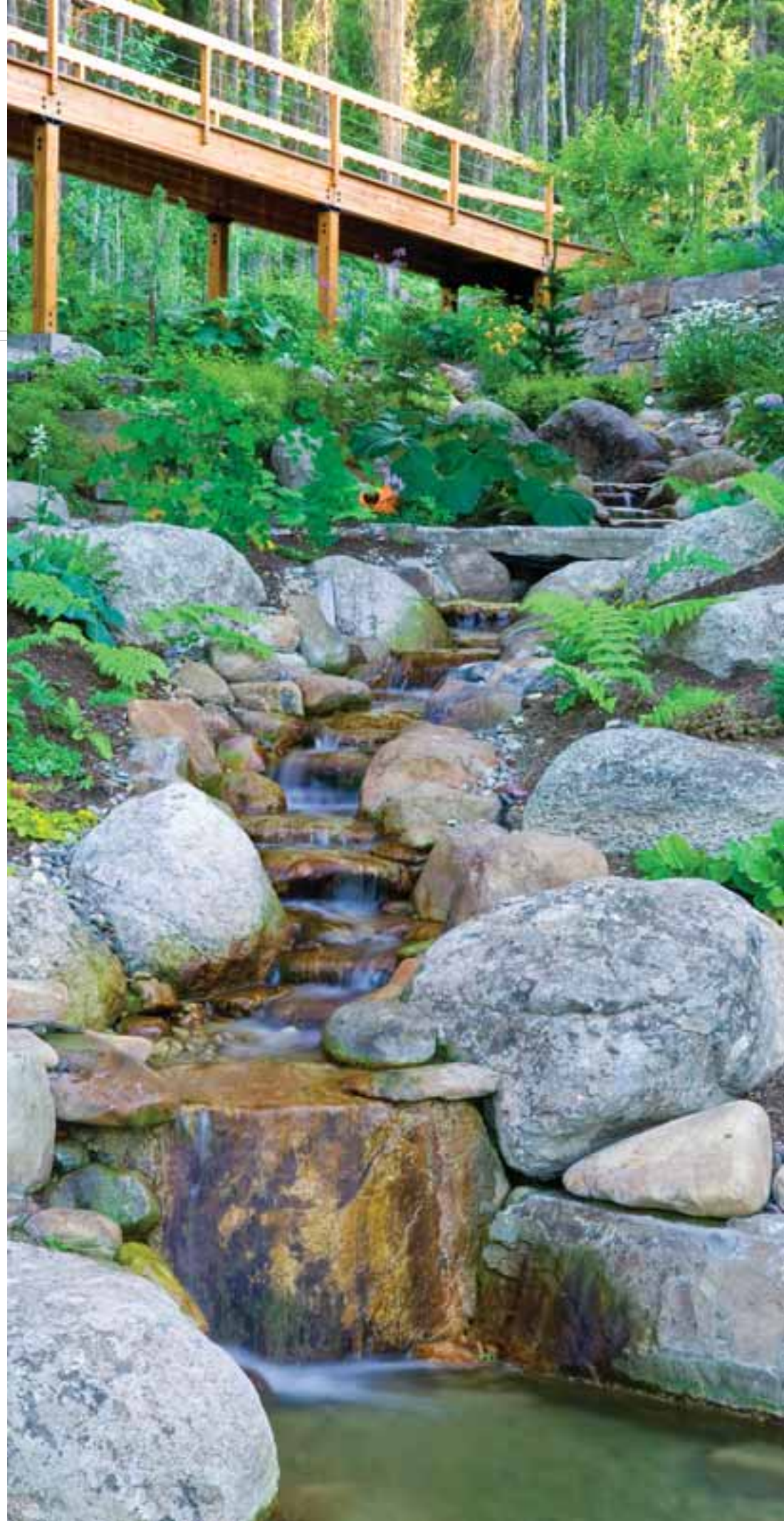


When Reid Smith was in high school, his parents hired architect Ellis Nunn to design a new home for the family. "While we were touring his projects, it just hit me," Smith recalls. "I knew that I wanted to create something." Today, after six years at the helm of his own architecture firm, he's doing just that, playing an integral role in the design of each project, from custom homes to a multi-family condominium to a LEED-registered commercial project. (These days, about 80 percent of Smith's residential clients are asking for sustainable options and he's delivering with solutions like passive solar design and geothermal heat systems.) "Design is where my passion is," he says. "I've literally camped out on clients' sites just to take it all in, from wildlife patterns to views to the native wildflowers. I'm always thinking about incorporating elements into my designs that will make clients say, 'Wow, how did he come up with that?'"

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Johnny McDonald
White Cloud Design
Whitefish, Montana
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whitecloudsdesign.com

Landscape architect Johnny McDonald's design sensibility has a simple source: a love for the outdoors. "Over time, you start to appreciate your environment and the natural systems that exist there, and that's what it really comes down to," he says. "Sure, I've gone to school and studied landscape architecture, but in the end, for me, it comes down to the natural elements." McDonald applies that inspiration to a wide variety of projects, from the restoration of native landscapes to elaborate water features to outdoor living rooms and gardens, all with a focus on low-impact design, sustainable practices and, perhaps most importantly, working with the project's design team from the get-go whenever he can. "You can't just have an architect or builder," he explains. "You need a complete team to make a project work. In the building industry, there's a real lack of communication between design and construction and my goal is to bridge that gap."



JOHNNY McDONALD: PORTRAIT: GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY / LANDSCAPE: GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY

Andrea Schumacher
O Interior Design
Denver, Colorado
303-458-6462
ointeriordesign.com

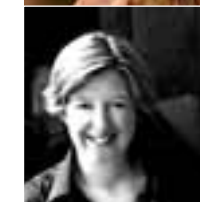
Behind Andrea Schumacher's bold and fresh style, there's some drama. While working in set design for the daytime drama "Days of Our Lives" and for Columbia Pictures in Los Angeles, she found a parallel that sparked her interest in home interiors. "With interior design, it's still a set in a way, but you're trying to personalize it to the way people live their lives," she says. Schumacher brought her creative energy to Colorado and started O Interior Design in 1999. Later came her own lighting company, Metro Cowboy Lighting, known for its fresh take on mountain style. "I feel like I brought a little bit of Los Angeles to Colorado," she says. "I get sick of seeing all those heavy rock fireplaces. I like changing it up, maybe pairing a big rock fireplace with a chrome antler chandelier, so it's not so over-the-top 'cabin.' I love pairing anything antique with modern or Asian with French—it's about mixing it up rather than having one look."

ANDREA GEORGOPOLIS: PORTRAIT: NANCY COLE / BEDROOM: MATTHEW MILLMAN, COURTESY SLIFER DESIGNS | ANDREA SCHUMACHER: PORTRAIT: DANA MCGRATH / LIVING ROOM: RHONDA GRIMBERG DOUGLAS



Andrea Georgopolis
Slifer Designs
Edwards, Colorado
970-926-8200
sliferdesigns.com

For interior designer Andrea Georgopolis, a good design is one her client is happy with. "I don't believe in 'it's my design or the high-way,'" she says. "It's not my house, and I'm not going to live there." Georgopolis stumbled upon the industry when, at age 18 and in need of extra money, she began working for a family friend who designed assisted-living facilities. "Starting out in that industry was interesting because I was dealing with public spaces," she says. The experience proved invaluable when she joined the team at Slifer Designs, where her first project was designing the public spaces and guest units of the Ritz-Carlton Club at Aspen Highlands. In the decade since, Georgopolis has completed projects everywhere from Martha's Vineyard to Hawaii. "It's been a wild ride," she says. "I never expected to be designing projects all over the country, but it makes my job so much more fun. It would be boring to do the same old thing every single time."



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Keira Ritter
Keira Ritter Design Co.
Boulder, CO
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krdesignco.com

Keira Ritter was raised in a home where the craft table was always well stocked. “The act of making things was part of my upbringing,” she recalls. “I was only 10 years old when I understood that I wanted to be an architect.” Years later, at the Rhode Island School of Design, Ritter studied architecture and fine art, a pairing that has informed her design approach ever since. “I love to offer services in architecture, interior design and furniture design because to me, it all falls beneath the design umbrella. You’re just using different palettes.” These days, whether she’s designing a custom furniture piece or the interiors for an entire home, Ritter defines her inviting contemporary style as a unique blend of industrial and organic with a mountain-modern twist. “It’s one thing to have a beautiful sleek, stark space,” she says, “but people also need to feel happy and rejuvenated there; to feel truly at home.”



Robyn Woodhall
Towne Interiors/Evolve Living
Missoula, Montana
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In her early twenties, Robyn Woodhall spent three years assisting an interior designer in San Diego, learning the ropes from behind the scenes—and quickly falling in love with the trade. When she moved to Montana in 2004 to open her own firm, Towne Interiors, her work was a reflection of her personal tastes: “really California-esque with clean classic lines and a lot of texture and contrast,” she recalls. Over time, that style has evolved, a process Woodhall honors with her new showroom, Evolve Living. “It’s my new story, and it has quite a different philosophy,” she says. “I’ve grown and the shop reflects that.” These days, Woodhall’s focus is on creating sanctuaries for busy couples. That means lots of natural materials, a calm monochromatic palette and a true sense of comfort. “I try to stay true to myself while letting my clients have their own vision and guide me,” she says. “At the end of the day it’s about helping them create their idea of home.”



ROBYN WOODHALL: PORTRAIT: COURTESY EVOLVE LIVING / DINING ROOM: ROBYN WOODHALL | KEIRA RITTER: PORTRAIT: BEN TREMPER / DINING ROOM: DINING ROOM: BEN TREMPER



Heather Van Luchene
HVL Interiors
Santa Fe, New Mexico
505-983-3601
hvlinteriors.com

It wasn’t long after graduating from interior design school that some big projects landed in interior designer Heather Van Luchene’s lap—among them, Dooney & Bourke’s Dallas flagship store. Next came freelance work, which evolved into HVL Interiors, a firm known for its “organic contemporary” designs. “When I got to Santa Fe there was a new desire for more contemporary architecture and design, which fit me perfectly,” says Van Luchene. “From the get-go, I had clients who wanted minimal contemporary interiors that still felt a bit Southwestern.” Van Luchene marries the two styles by incorporating the work of local artisans into each of her designs and taking inspiration from her clients, many of whom bring to the table fascinating collections of art and artifacts. “The people who come to live in Santa Fe are often well traveled and have such varied interests,” she says. “It’s fun to incorporate those elements into my designs.”

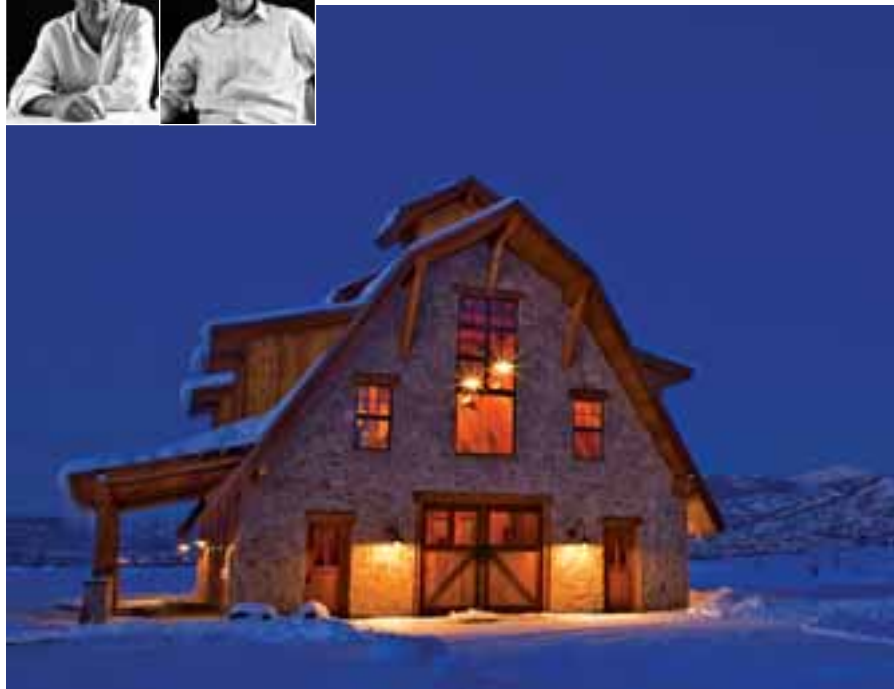
Stuart Brummett and Ken Bridges
Blue Line Architects
Minturn, Colorado
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bluelinearchitects.com

In the third grade, when Stuart Brummett sketched his dream home, his teacher told him that he should be an architect, and the rest is history. Ken Bridges’ story is a bit more serendipitous. “When I applied to college, I made the mistake of checking the ‘architecture’ box,” he explains. “I’m very happy I made that mistake.” Today, the principals of Blue Line Architects are busy creating designs inspired not by the latest trends but by their inhabitants’ needs. “The green buzz is everywhere,” Brummett says, “but we think it’s about more than solar panels and reclaimed glass. It’s about living in smaller spaces and living close to where you work.” It comes as little surprise that the duo favors high-density mixed-use spaces that allow owners to live and work in the same building. It’s a practice that was common a century ago, when Main Street was the hub of everyday life, and forward thinkers like Bridges and Brummett are bringing it back.



STUART BRUMMETT/KEN BRIDGES: PORTRAIT: AXEL ROD PHOTOGRAPHY; AXEL PHOTO.COM / EXTERIOR: ERIC LINDQUIST | HEATHER VAN LUCHENE: PORTRAIT: HEATHER VAN LUCHENE / LIVING ROOM: HEATHER VAN LUCHENE

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Keith Kelly and Tim Stone
Kelly & Stone Architects
Steamboat Springs, Colorado
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ksaarch.com

In a short period of time, architects Tim Stone and Keith Kelly have managed to achieve many of the milestones of architectural success, from logging time at big-name firm Charles Cuniffe Architects (where the two first met) to successfully launching their own firm and securing commissions across the West to, most recently, achieving LEED accreditation. But when this duo is working, they aren't looking for ways to incorporate their personal style into a design. On the contrary, what gets the principals of Kelly & Stone Architects excited is mixing things up. On the boards now is everything from a Lake Tahoe home that physically interacts with the surrounding ponderosa pines to a "parkitecture"-style house in Bachelor Gulch to Steamboat Springs' sleek new Apple store. "We think it's fun to mix up the design style from mountain modern to traditional and our portfolio demonstrates that diversity."

ASHLEY CAMPBELL: PORTRAIT: TODD NAKASHIMA / EXTERIOR: GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY



Brett Nave
studio.bna
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"Humans are messy," says architect Brett Nave. "We're the only species that actively destroys our own environment. So, if architecture can do anything, it should focus on minimizing that impact." These days, Nave is doing just that. After designing as a principal of Ryker/Nave Design for nearly 10 years, in 2007 Nave changed partners and changed names—to *studio.bna*. And while it's still easy to recognize his distinctive style, it has evolved, Nave says. "Sustainability is now an integral part of every project we take on. We started way back when 'green' wasn't on everyone's T-shirt. We were trying to figure out how to do it in 1998 in Montana, right smack in the middle of a five-state void of anything sustainable." Now that going green has become more mainstream, Nave finds that clients come to him for sustainable solutions. "Even if a client doesn't ask for it, we push them to do it," he says. "And when they do ask for it, we push them even further."

BRETT NAVE: PORTRAIT: COURTESY STUDIO.BNA / RYKER/NAVE EXTERIOR: MATTHEW MULLMAN | TIM STONE/KEITH KELLY: PORTRAITS: TIM STONE / EXTERIOR: TIM STONE



Ashley Campbell
Denver, Colorado
303-996-6195
ashleycampbell.com

Interior design is in Ashley Campbell's blood. At age 14, she was answering phones, opening mail and shredding paper at her parents' large design studio and retail store in the Midwest. Now, just 12 years later, this mother of two is at the helm of one of Denver's premier full-service design studios—and a 5,000-square-foot showroom filled with stylish furnishings, art and accessories. Moving from the Midwest to Denver meant allowing her style to evolve from something quite traditional to what Campbell describes as "organic contemporary" and eclectic. "I'm very up-front with clients that I'm not into 'matchy-matchy' or even sets of any kind," says Campbell. "Designs can feel a bit trite if you go too far down one road, so I like to mix styles. If a client asks for a contemporary look, I may mix in a few antique Asian pieces and a transitional-style sofa. My mother always told me to not get so hung up on making things work perfectly. Anyone can order a matching bedroom set, but it takes a really creative eye to successfully pair things that weren't intended to go together."





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Alix Kogan
Kogan Builders
Durango & Pagosa Springs, Colorado
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koganbuilders.com

Don't expect to drive past a home designed by Alix Kogan and be able to say, "That looks like a Kogan Builders home." That's just not the point, says the owner of the Durango-based design/build firm. "Whether the style is Craftsman, prairie or contemporary, our goal is to articulate what our clients want; to design a home that's appropriate to them and to the setting." But while Kogan's projects may be diverse in style, there are a few constants. First is the firm's commitment to quality craftsmanship and attention to detail, evident in everything from major structural elements to thoughtful finishing touches. "We look at the broader design theme and carry that throughout the house in details that are often quite subtle," Kogan says. The second constant: sticking to the budget. "Because the design is done in-house, I can sit with each client and design to their budget," says Kogan. "Creating a great design is about making the most of the budget you have, whether it's \$25,000 or several million dollars."



ALIX KOGAN PORTRAIT: CHRIS GILES / EXTERIOR: CHRIS GILES

CHRIS PARDO PORTRAIT: ESTHER SIMS / EXTERIOR: DIGITAL SAVANT | JEFF DAHL PORTRAIT: COURTESY GREEN LINE ARCHITECTS / EXTERIOR: BRENT MOSS © BRENTMOSS.COM

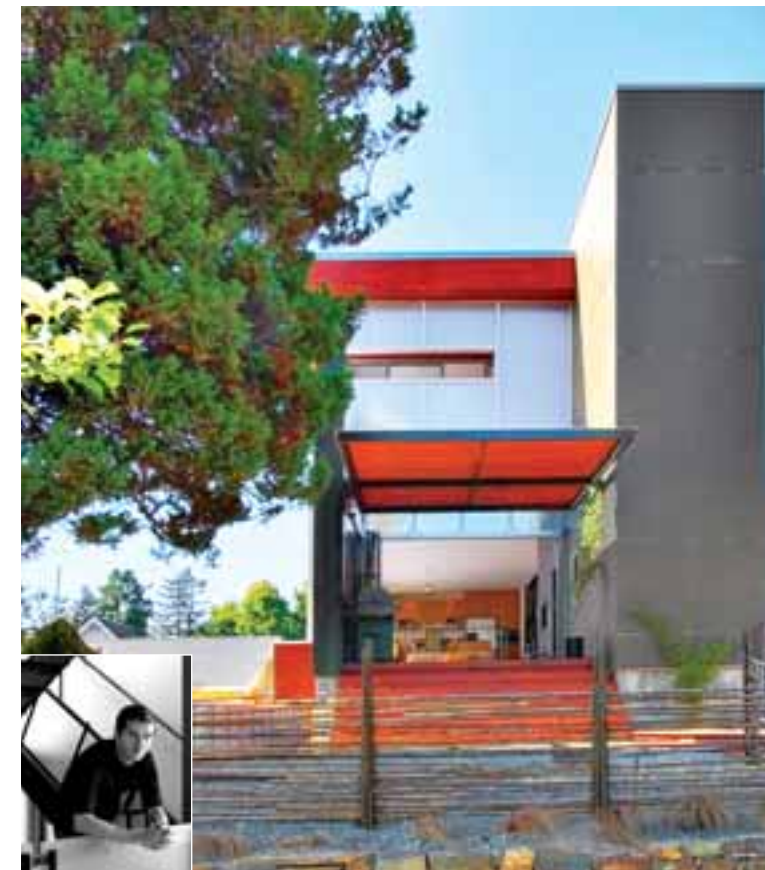
Jeff Dahl
Green Line Architects
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Jeff Dahl is on a mission. "We're trying to get as efficient as we can, to the point where our homes use zero net energy," he explains of the mission he's embarked upon with partner Steven Novy. And although he's found that "greenwashing" has diluted the impact of the term "green building," his firm is doing its best to do things right. "As far as we're concerned, energy efficiency is probably the most important aspect of green design," Dahl says. Building smaller, ultra-durable homes that will last for generations is also a priority. The trick, says Dahl, is marrying sustainability with aesthetics. "If it doesn't look good, then it's not worth it," he says. And although the firm's architectural style is faithful to Colorado's mountain vernacular, but with a modern twist, each design is a unique solution with a look that's one-of-a-kind. "We don't want to get pigeonholed into any one style," Dahl says. "We always try to create timeless designs for real people."



Chris Pardo
Pb Elemental Architecture
Seattle, Washington
206-285-1464
elementalarchitecture.com

Chris Pardo met his partner, David Biddle, in the masters of architecture program at the University of Washington, and in 2004 the two embarked on their first project. "We decided that instead of drawing some fake convention center for our thesis project, we'd build a house," Pardo says. As it turned out, the pair built two townhouses that sold immediately, both for about \$100,000 more than expected. Now, just five years later, Pardo's firm is turning out as many as 120 projects a year, from single-family homes in Seattle to hotels and office buildings around the globe, all in its signature modern style. A focus for Pardo now is building on urban infill spaces that would otherwise remain vacant. "For me, the ultimate level of sustainability is building inside the city," he says. "We're reducing commutes and creating more of a walkable community. And modern design fits really well into the urban fabric of Seattle. It's nice to see the contrast of one of our buildings next to an authentic bungalow."



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Brandt Vanderbosch
Vertical Arts
Steamboat Springs, Colorado
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vertical-arts.com

According to Brandt Vanderbosch, founder and principal of architecture firm Vertical Arts, the success of his nearly five-year-old company has everything to do with the people behind it. "I have a vision of how I'd like to see things," he says, "but I count on a team of people to implement them." That team, which includes everyone from land planners to interior designers, represents "the integration of our whole field of work," says Vanderbosch. "The idea of being diverse and taking on any type of project is exciting to us." From the start, environmentally sensitive design has been a priority at Vertical Arts, and Vanderbosch is dedicated to practicing what he preaches; the firm's new offices stand to be among the first LEED-certified buildings in Steamboat. What excites this entrepreneur most, though, is conceptual design. "There's nothing greater," he says, "than creating the story which the entire design is based upon." ●



BRANDT VANDERBOSCH - PORTRAIT: JESSICA MAYNARD / STAIRWAY: DAVID PATTERSON