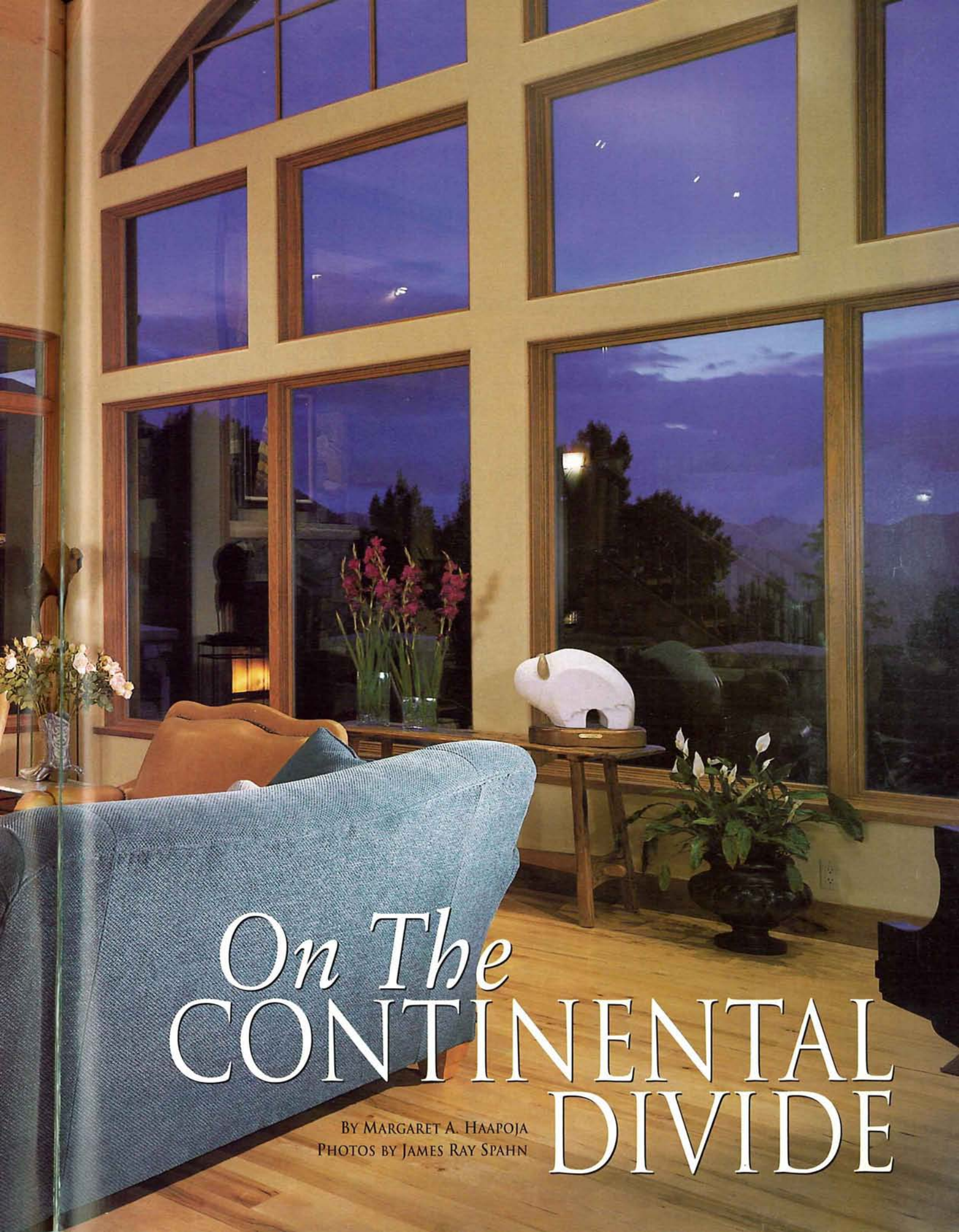


*Discovering recycled timbers*  
LED TO A STRIKING THREE-STORY  
TIMBER FRAME HOME WITH VIEWS  
FROM EVERY WINDOW.



Rhonda commissioned John Ingham of Crested Butte to do the painting over the fireplace.



*On The*  
CONTINENTAL  
DIVIDE

BY MARGARET A. HAAPOJA  
PHOTOS BY JAMES RAY SPAHN

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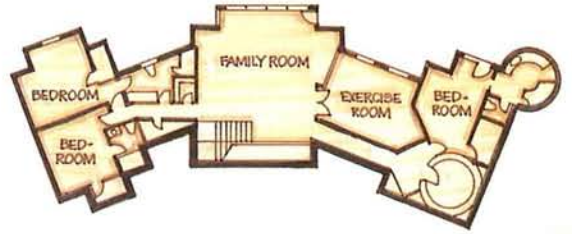
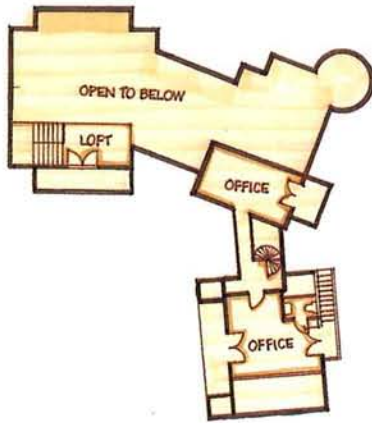
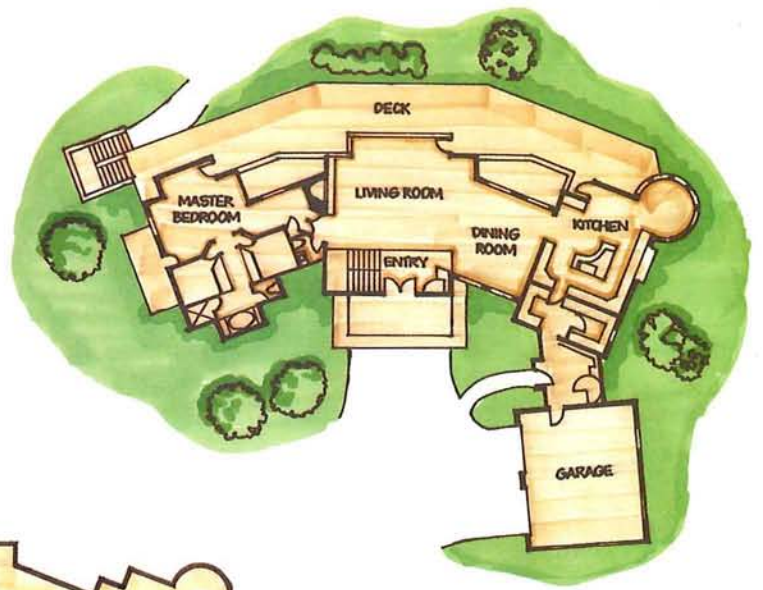
**ABOVE:** Stone from several states forms the distinctive façade of the McCay's mountainside home near Crested Butte, Colorado.

**OPPOSITE:** The deck that extends the length of the house affords panoramic views of the Rocky Mountain Range including the Crested Butte ski area.

**N**amed Wildhart for the bronze stag that guards their driveway, Rhonda and David McCay's mountainside home is angled to capture spectacular views of the Continental Divide. The home's stone façade is one of its most distinctive features. David and stonemason Dave Dennis of Rocky Mountain Masonry in Gunnison, Colorado, searched far and wide for the perfect materials to achieve the look the McCays envisioned. The stone is laid in a method called dry stack, which means each stone has been chipped and matched to meet the edges of the next one so that no mortar shows on the exterior. "The cut arch stones in the entryway are real keyed stones of granite," says builder Scott Hargrove, "and we had them cut by a company out in New York." The

huge blocks are 14 inches deep and had to be lifted into place with a crane to form the segmented, self-supporting arch in the entryway.

When the McCays bought their 35-acre property perched at 10,000 feet outside Crested Butte, Colorado, they knew what the shape of their house should look like, and they knew they wanted vaulted spaces. "We had looked at lots of houses, and I took lots of pictures," says Rhonda. "We got ideas from books, magazines, and from traveling." They brought their ideas and pictures to Bob Brotherton of Sunlit Architecture, who designed the home of their dreams. "Bob is a listener," says Rhonda. "He went through all my pictures and he paid attention. He remembered things that all of a sudden showed up in one of the drawings. He heard what we had to say and made





**ABOVE:** A painting by Pablo Milan hangs over a bed David Treadway of Gunnison built of cherry based on a picture Rhonda brought back from Europe.

it all work.”

When David and Rhonda learned about recycled timbers salvaged from railroad pilings for the trestle that once crossed Great Salt Lake, they were intrigued. “Using old wood, rather than cutting down more trees, appealed to us,” says David, “and it was a big part of our decision. When we chose to use that wood, it lent itself to a timber frame home.” The Douglas fir timbers were skip-planed to give them the appearance of having been draw-knifed, and

they’re fastened together with dovetail connections. Saturated with salt after more than a hundred years under water, they didn’t shrink or crack, and their unique staining gives them wonderful character. Although Hargrove admits the timbers were hard on tools and unpleasant to work with, he agrees they’re gorgeous. He used them in his own home.

Brotherton designed the three-level home to nestle into the site and capture the magnificent views from every



100-200 inches of snow, we need to arrange the roof forms so they don't dump snow on the decks, in the entry, or in front of the garage. We design homes here for 150 pounds of snow load per square foot—three times the load for a floor. When the snow is sitting on the roof, it adds a lot of insulation value as well." He chose fire-retardant cedar shakes to hold the snow on the 12:12 pitch roofs rather than allowing it to slide off.

**BELOW: A circular bathroom below the breakfast nook has a green marble tile floor and shower walls of glass block.**

**R**honda knew she wanted a large kitchen with a round breakfast nook, so Brotherton designed a circular turret that forms the nook and visually anchors that end of the house. On the lower level the turret becomes a unique guest bath. The kitchen is Rhonda's favorite room with its floating island and wood-burning pizza oven. She loves to entertain guests at pizza parties where she lines up balls of dough and dishes of toppings on the granite countertops.

David's favorite feature in the home is the wine cellar on



room. "My partner and I have this philosophy here in this beautiful creation of God's that the best we can do as architects is not to blemish it," he says. "We just strive to design homes that fit into nature and bring nature into the living space. I like to expose the structure in all the houses I do, so it gives them a sense of the strength, the ruggedness that we have here in the Rocky Mountains."

Brotherton explained all the separate rooflines by saying, "In designing homes in the mountains where we have



the lower level. "The cellar has two rooms," says David. "It is built of old, unfired brick using arches within arches reminiscent of early European wine cellars. One room has a unique mural painted by local artist Peter Stallard."

With the help of Jackie Kingsbury of Crested Butte, Rhonda gave the interior of the home a minimalist look. "I like light and bright and clean contemporary lines," she says. "I wanted it to reflect our personalities and our love of the mountains." She chose to use few window treatments to maintain unobstructed views. Her furnishings are eclectic, a combination of western and contemporary with plenty of bright colors.

**A**rtist Kevin Clark of Hotchkiss, Colorado, created a stunning fountain in the entry. He etched the six-foot glass panel and painted fish on it. In the foreground, three bronze trout leap out of a pool made of chunks of blue glass. The dining room table is crafted of a massive slab of alligator juniper from a 2,000-year-old standing dead tree from New Mexico. Because she and David love to ride, Rhonda chose a light fixture with horses on it by Alison Dearborn of Boulder to illuminate the table.

Windows, an important element in the home, frame the mountain views in every room. The McCays selected Pozzi windows, metal-clad outside with wood on the interior. Large picture windows in the great room are topped with transom windows and above those are flat-arched, true divided-light Palladian panes. "I chose the flat arches to blend with all the arches in our home," says Rhonda.

Hargrove and his crew built a barn with an upstairs apartment before they tackled the main house, so the McCays were able to be on site during much of the construction process. "When you're building a house, the contractor is having to make a thousand decisions a day that haven't been addressed in the plans," says David. "If you're there, you get to have input on that. If you're not, the builder or the architect is making those decisions." Rhonda remembers the three of them making many choices on the spot using a voting system. Hargrove agrees the couple was very involved and very helpful. "We worked together and came up with ideas," he says. Among them was a solarium off Rhonda's office, a bathroom accessed through a bookcase panel in David's office, a spiral staircase to access both offices, a cedar shake roof over the breakfast nook, and the entry fountain.

A deck of poured and tinted concrete runs the length of the structure overlooking the horse corral and the Rocky Mountains in the distance. "The concrete surface won't warp and crack like wood sometimes does," says Hargrove, "and it keeps the moisture and snow from



dribbling through and hanging icicles to the lower level." Stone columns are faced with the same rock as the home's façade, and Hargrove's crew poured, colored, and sloped the caps to set atop the columns at the site.

Another important construction detail of the combination timber frame and traditional stick-frame home is spray-on expanding foam insulation. "The house performs phenomenally in cold temperatures," says Hargrove. "Their heating bill is much less than other homes we've built without that type of insulation, and it also increases the strength of the house." David believes the foam insulation is partially responsible for the fact that the house has shown no signs of settling after three years.

David and Rhonda are perfectly content in their mountainside home. "The house has made me more of a homebody," says Rhonda. "I'm comfortable with the whole house, and I like just hanging out here. We don't have any plans of moving." *fa*

**ARCHITECT/DESIGNER:** Bob Brotherton, Sunlit Architecture, Crested Butte, Colorado; **BUILDER:** Scott Hargrove, Hargrove Construction Company, Crested Butte, Colorado.

**ABOVE:** Guests pass the fish fountain to enter the dining room where a table crafted of a slab of a 2,000-year-old alligator juniper tree is illuminated by a lighting fixture by Alison Dearborn of Boulder.

**OPPOSITE:** Rhonda and David love to entertain in their kitchen at pizza parties where guests make their own from dough and toppings lined up on the granite countertops.