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# WINTER PARK

MOUNTAIN LIVING

## FAT BIKES!

The Making of Colorado's  
Newest Winter Sport Craze



A Mountain-  
Modern  
Family Home







The image shows a modern interior space with large windows and a stone patio overlooking a mountain landscape at sunset. The title "Inside OUT" is overlaid on the left side of the image. The text "In the beginning, Maggie and Rich had simply wanted a space that would let them relax and entertain friends. What they ended up with was a modern-industrial mountain retreat so welcoming nobody's ever going to want to leave." is overlaid on the right side of the image. The text "By Christine Lejeune" and "Photographs by Nelson Alley Media" is overlaid at the bottom right of the image.

# Inside OUT

In the beginning, Maggie and Rich had simply wanted a space that would let them relax and entertain friends. What they ended up with was a modern-industrial mountain retreat so welcoming nobody's ever going to want to leave.

By Christine Lejeune

Photographs by Nelson Alley Media





## Rich and Maggie

had known and loved Winter Park for years before they finally decided to plant serious roots here. The South Denver-based couple had actually owned a condo in town for seven years, taking a break from their jobs as an ER doctor (Maggie) and a cable/communications executive (Rich) to trek out with their kids as often as they could to soak up what Rich refers to as “that amazing small mountain-town vibe.” He explains: “That feeling that you’ll probably run into a buddy when you’re skiing, when you’re biking, when you’re on a trail. We love that. We also love the ski program for kids. We love the access to the best trail system in the country. We just love it here.”

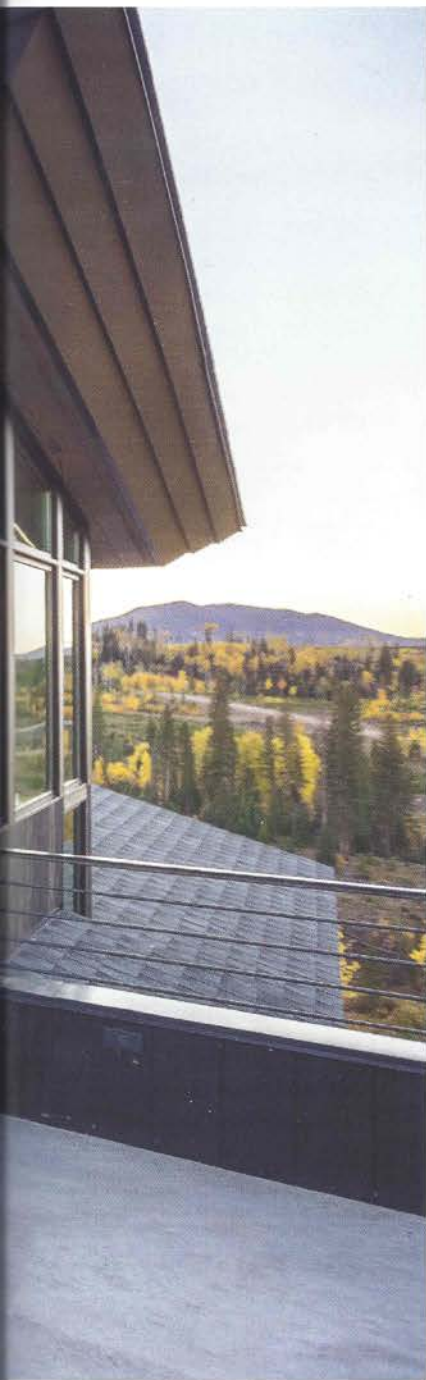
So when about three years back they started to outgrow the condo, a house seemed like the next natural step. Not only did they have two growing kids and another on the way, Rich says, but they wanted room to host

friends. “Plus,” he adds, “we’d gotten to the point in our lives where neighbors playing hip-hop at 1 a.m. was sort of obnoxious. We’d hit that ‘we’re done’ moment with the shared space.”

But what began as a vision of a simple mountain cabin quickly morphed into a much larger project. The pair hired renowned Boulder-based architect Carl Rohde, who sketched out for them a modern, almost industrial-style home featuring lots of glass, steel and concrete, as well as a sleek spire they dubbed the “Whiskey Watchtower” that afforded the eastern views of the Continental Divide and stunning western views of the sunset. The couple fell in love with the place.

Sadly, though, Rohde passed away shortly thereafter. The family, who had Rohde’s vision in their hearts and his drawings in hand, went to Boulder-based architect Matt McMullen, who agreed to help bring Rohde’s vision to life, along with Winter Park’s Steffen Builders West and designer





Sue Steffen of Steffen Design Consulting. "We all wanted to honor Carl's preliminary design," McMullen says. "I was able to come in and embellish it—it was mostly sketches at that point—and to help figure out how to blur that distinction between the inside and outside in what can be a really severe environment, what with the winds and the weather." The end result, completed last May, ended up a breathtaking meshing of earthy and industrial design, with views from all sides and space enough for a whole crew of friends and family. "The





truth is that there are a lot of beautiful homes up here," says Steffen Builders West's Tyler Huber, the project manager. "But there's nothing quite like this house." (In the end, as a tribute to Rohde, the Rich and Maggie had his signature etched on one of the home's steel beams.)

Throughout the process, Huber says, the couple—particularly Rich—were deeply involved in steering what the house would become: a four-level, five-bedroom, five-and-a-half-bath house with a large basement (equipped with bedrooms and a game room), a fantastic entertaining space in the Whiskey Watch tower, a spacious mudroom, multiple decks and patios, a fire pit, a hot tub, a custom-made stainless steel bikewash in the garage and loads of other customized touches designed to make the house fun and livable for the active family.

Along with priorities like livability, easy trail access and plenty of room for guests, the homeowners also knew they wanted unbroken flow from room to room on the main floor, as well as from the indoors to the outdoors. (Maggie, the resident foodie, wanted to be able to be connected to the rest of the action and the views while prepping food for the crew.) The answer? A kitchen, great room and dining room that seamlessly connect to one another, as well as immense folding glass doors that open at a full wide angle onto the main deck.

Keeping the whole area so open and uncluttered by furniture, support beams or even lighting was a challenge, admits designer Sue Steffen, but the overall effect was well worth it. The homeowners agree. From the beginning,



they'd emphasized the importance of great common spaces. "I'm not going to lie," Rich says. "I didn't want some big, beautiful hearth at the expense of a TV. We're not embarrassed by our love of football, and in so many fancy homes, the TV is an afterthought." Not so with his house. "We engineered the fireplace to be flush to the ground so you wouldn't have to look too high above the mantle at the TV. Because on weekends, we like to go out and ski,





come home, make food, watch football and relax,” he says.

Indeed, comfort and real life were top of mind throughout the process, Steffen says. Things like the line of vision from the kitchen island to the TV, washable fabric for the bar stools, and an overall feeling of hominess played at least as much of a role in her job here as creating the sleek, open aesthetic. “And I think we nailed it,” Steffen says.

Rich agrees. “It could have easily been cold and sterile, but it’s not. It’s the opposite of that. This isn’t a museum—we didn’t want it to be. It’s a house with three young kids, and they beat the hell out of it. We don’t

want our guests to be worried about spilling. We wanted a place to relax, and a great entry point to the outdoors.”

And speaking of the kids: One thing everyone involved in the project noticed, McMullen says, was the way Rich talked about growing old in the home they were building, about his kids one day bringing their kids back to enjoy the place, too.

“That idea was one reason we were so committed to making the house great,” he says. “It wasn’t just a cool project, but also this sense that the home will be cherished by the family for years to come.” **WP**