

INSIDE: THE OFFICIAL GUIDE TO COLORADO'S SUMMIT COUNTY PARADE OF HOMES

MOUNTAIN LIVING[®]



*GREAT
DESIGN*
ACROSS THE WEST

PROS TO KNOW
TOP MOUNTAIN
ARCHITECTS &
INTERIOR DESIGNERS

Sept/Oct 2012





REFINED RUSTIC

A FAMILY'S UTAH HOUSE TRANSLATES SOPHISTICATED EUROPEAN
STYLE WITH RUGGED WESTERN MATERIALS

STORY BY CAREN KURLANDER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRYAN ROWLAND & SUSAN BEDNAR LONG

Eric and Shauna Varvel wanted their Deer Valley, Utah, residence to speak to its mountain site but with a sophisticated European vocabulary. They brought in French architect Jean-Yves Lacroix to establish the direction they had in mind. Lacroix designed a two-story house and then clad the entire structure with pale Utah limestone. Copper tiles crown the roof and metal windows punctuate the façade. "You don't see many houses like this around here," Lacroix says. "But it works very well for Utah."





For the home's interiors, Connecticut-based interior designer Susan Bednar Long created an atmosphere that balances European elements with Western tradition. Long divided the spacious great room into intimate sitting areas. A leather-upholstered Ralph Lauren sofa pairs with two Ralph Lauren armchairs covered with Holland & Sherry's County Tweed fabric. A custom-made, round low table, wrapped with raffia and lacquered a bold green hue, adds texture, while Oly Studio's goatskin Neta bench hits a Western note.



CONNECTICUT DESIGNER SUSAN BEDNAR LONG HAD NEVER WORKED IN UTAH.

But when her longtime clients Shauna and Eric Varvel asked her to take a look at their summer residence near Deer Valley, she was pleasantly surprised. "The house had a modern quality to it, which I really liked," says Long, who honed her sophisticated sensibility working for Ralph Lauren before establishing her own firm, S.B. Long Interiors. "I knew I didn't want to do anything hokey or in-your-face Western."

The Varvels weren't interested in that look either, and were hoping instead for an environment that reflected both their family ties to Utah and their years spent living abroad. "We decided we wanted it to feel like the house in the movie *A River Runs Through It*," Long says. "The narrator's Montana home was furnished with elegant English antiques and evidence of a well-traveled life in an otherwise rustic setting. That set the tone."

That tone proved a good match for the structure itself. The Varvels worked with French-born, Swiss-trained and Park City-based residential designer Jean-Yves Lacroix of Lacroix Design, and they gave him a similar directive. "They didn't want a traditional mountain home," Lacroix says. "They wanted something more European with a lot of stone." To honor that request, Lacroix devised an upside-down floor plan, placing the bedrooms on the first floor and the expansive public spaces above. He vaulted the ceilings for a feeling of loftiness and left the wood-and-metal ceiling assemblies exposed. "I don't like to hide structural elements," says Lacroix, who clad the house with a light-colored Utah limestone on the exterior façades and interior walls. "We wanted to give it the feel of a masonry-built home," he adds. "What you see outside, you see inside."

The stone backdrop provides a rich counterpoint to the tailored interiors. In the great room, Long divided the large space into intimate sitting areas, which she appointed by walking the line between a formal English aesthetic and textured mountain style. "Though plaid is very indicative of England, you could also imagine a cowboy wearing a plaid shirt," she says. "Using things that are specific to both aesthetics ties it all together." A leather Ralph Lauren sofa and armchairs covered with a Holland & >>



MATERIAL WORLD "The goal was really to push the texture," designer Susan Bednar Long says of her approach to creating the interiors of Eric and Shauna Varvel's Deer Valley, Utah, house. "I wanted it to feel Western without looking so obvious."

She accomplished this through a strategic use of materials. Long avoided using traditional hide rugs but covered ottomans in zebra hide or goatskin to hit the same note in a subtle way. She chose woods with character, like the wormy chestnut used in the mudroom, pantry and parts of the kitchen, to lend "a beautiful old feeling," and worked with classic Western elements in surprisingly tailored ways. In the master bedroom, she topped an antler-base stool with rich cut-velvet and used an embossed leather from Rose Tarlow to upholster the headboard. "It's very much about using natural, tactile materials in a way that has a familiarity without being literal," she says. "You don't want your guests to say, 'Oh, look at that saddle!'"

TOP: Long softened the master bedroom's palette with grasscloth-covered walls and a bed canopy made from two wool fabrics. **BOTTOM:** Wormy chestnut wood gives the mudroom character. **FACING PAGE:** An armchair from Rose Tarlow Melrose House stands near a carved cabinet from Formations in the master bedroom's sitting area.





"I DESCRIBE
MY STYLE AS
MODERN
TRADITIONAL.
IN THIS HOME,
I USED A LOT OF
TEXTURED AND
TACTILE THINGS,
BUT IN A VERY
TAILORED WAY."

SUSAN BEDNAR LONG



Sherry tweed marry both influences, as does the pairing of a turned oak side table with a goatskin bench.

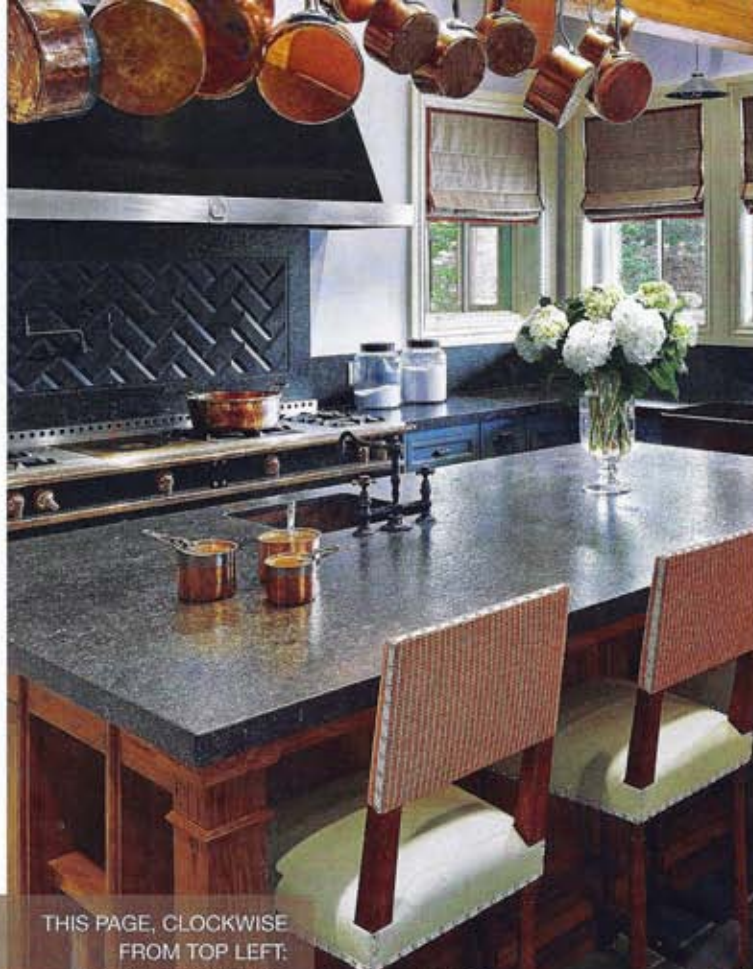
Long chose accessories that strike a similar balance. Leather flanges and buckles on pillows lend a Western touch, while clean-lined oil-rubbed bronze-and-leather lamps cut a modern silhouette. "It's a push and pull," Long says of the mix.

The breakfast room's blue-and-red Navajo woven pillow fabric inspired the palette of the adjacent kitchen. For the kitchen cabinetry, the designer chose a military-blue hue and applied striae and umber techniques to the finish so that "it feels like it's been around for awhile," she says. The La Cornue range and copper pots suspended from a ceiling rack make the kitchen feel like "it could be in the south of France," Long adds. That international motif is picked up again in the media room, where Long painted the wall paneling with Benjamin Moore's Essex Green for an "English men's club vibe." Against the formal backdrop, she grouped a U-shaped leather sofa with an antique Bavarian antler chair and a vintage Ralph Lauren trunk.

Blue paneled walls define Eric Varvel's office, where Long centered a dramatic antler chandelier above two hunter-green tufted-leather chairs and a zebra-skin ottoman. A painting Eric acquired while working in Singapore creates a striking focal point. "That painting is a departure from the West," Long says. "And because the room feels kind of exotic, the zebra skin seemed an appropriate addition."

In the master bedroom, Long's point of reference turned back to the Continent. "The inspiration for that room was the Hotel Zur Tenne in Austria," the designer says. "The hotel has a mountain feel, but there's a softness to it." Long translated that Tyrolean sensibility with a muted color palette and lots of texture. An embossed-leather headboard is crowned with a canopy of two coordinating wool fabrics, while an antler mirror plays off a Rococo-style bedside table. She arranged elegant nineteenth-century Spanish chargers on a grasscloth-covered wall and chose a leather studded chest of drawers for its "rustic yet refined" look.

The home's artful blend of European influences, Western materials and the client's own collected pieces creates an atmosphere that speaks to far-flung destinations while honoring its mountain locale. "Though well-traveled, this is a quintessentially American family," Long says. "Their Utah roots run deep." ○



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE
FROM TOP LEFT:

Formations bar chairs, covered with fabric from Twill Textiles, pull up to the kitchen's granite-topped island. A willow bed from La Lune Collection is dressed with a Pendleton blanket and shams. An antler chandelier from Crystal Farm and a zebra-skin ottoman from Galart International give the office an exotic feel. The kitchen's cabinetry, by Cottonwood, was painted a military blue hue to complement the adjacent rooms. **FACING PAGE:** Photographs from Adam Jahiel's series *The Last Cowboy* hang above a Hancock & Moore sofa in the breakfast room.



more 

Visit mountainliving.com/refinedrustic for a guide to this home's products and pros.