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# set APART

An all-star design team, led by David Johnston of David Johnston Architects, came together to create this Aspen architectural beauty, dubbed “Riverfront Masterpiece.”

The result is a home that stands out from the rest on the market, worthy of being called “Best of the Best” for its stunning architecture.



*CH&L:* This house is located in one of Aspen’s most coveted areas—Snowmass Canyon. And on top of that, it stands right along the Roaring Fork River. How does your design celebrate this setting?

*David Johnston, principal of David Johnson Architects:* Given the fact that the site itself is so magnificent and the river is so close to the house, it was very important to bring as much of the outside into the inside as possible. That put us in a position to create open spaces with a lot of glass, so there was a very thinly veiled distinction between interior and exterior. One of the ways we accomplished that was when you walk in the front door, the stone pattern on the floor actually carries out through the exterior doors [on the other side of the house] and into the backyard.

By **CAROLINE EBERLY**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **STEVE MUNDINGER AND JASON DEWEY**

PHOTOS ON THIS SPREAD BY STEVE MUNDINGER



"We wanted to get away from the traditional Aspen style of rough timbers and rustic stones," John Hufker, project manager, says. The home's facade shows a mission accomplished: Spanish cedar and zinc siding, tightly-cut limestone around the entry and anodized aluminum for the windows.



(above) Standing in the home as a functional sculpture, the stairway is meticulously made of custom-formed steel, bamboo treads and Plexiglas panels. The wine cellar is also a work of innovation, made of leftover materials with the help of builder John Olson. Dining table and matching chairs from Via Viva.

Designer Elizabeth Holway calls the great room a multi-functional space, with its fireplace for entertaining, small drinking bar to the right and open feel. Don't miss the dynamic asymmetrical ceiling, dressed in cherry panels, that conceals lighting and has a hidden pocket from which window shades suspend.

Some design challenges also cropped up because of the setting, like making the most of daylight in the narrow canyon, for example. What was your solution?

Because the narrow valley runs north-south, we wanted to bring natural light and warmth into the house; the valley can get very cold very quickly. We designed an L-shape to capture the sun and warmth from the south and capture views upriver. It almost designed itself.

The outdoor living space is another way you addressed the daylight challenge.

Because the site is in shadow relatively quickly during the day, we created a bit of a sheltered space that would maintain some warmth during the evening—something that was adjacent to the hearth room and kitchen, so you could extend your outdoor experience even longer during the day. It's very subtle. We didn't try to create an outdoor living room per se; it was important to keep it integral to the exterior architecture.

Take us inside the house. What was your vision for the architecture indoors?

We have very few interior walls, which is great; it maintains the open space and clean look. Most of the forms are sculptural. Take the staircase, for example, which is made of steel, bamboo treads and Plexiglas panels. We tried to make it visible from both the interior and the exterior. We created subtle curves in the architecture outside [on the second story], so we wanted to pick up that softness in the interior as well.

Even inside, the presence of the river becomes an important design element.

How does the river come into play indoors?

The living room windows are oriented on a direct axis [of the L-shape] with an upriver view of the water. As you're standing there, you literally see the river running at you. The master bedroom wing was oriented directly to the river in a much more private way.



Tell us how you define the home's overall style.

It's a unique home, and the idea of "contemporary" was to more or less upgrade a design beyond traditional Rocky Mountain design, and try to put forth some new language into the architecture. We don't like to overuse the word "contemporary"; we just think it was appropriate architecture for the site, and it represents forward thinking in creating architecture for architecture's sake.

Walk us through some examples of that "new language."

One of the design moves that is really clear when you come in [to the home] is the non-traditional entry experience. We cantilevered an office in 3-D form out over the front door. The palette of materials—square-cut, dry-stacked limestone; Spanish cedar siding; zinc roofing, anodized aluminum windows—is also non-traditional, along with using shingle panels on some vertical spaces on the master bedroom wing.

Any closing thoughts you'd like to share?

What I like most about the home is the simplicity of its form and how it actually complements the site itself. The quality of the architecture, in my mind, will be the home's greatest selling point. The conscientious buyer understands [this quality], whether it comes in a contemporary or traditional form, and that's what we as a firm try to do—maintain the quality of the architecture no matter what vernacular it comes from.

## ON THE MARKET

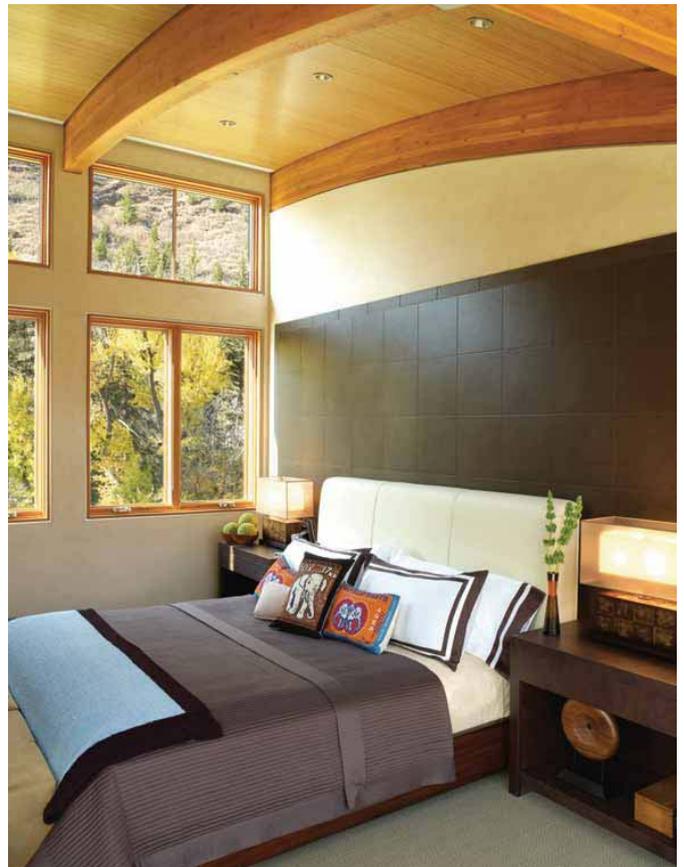
IN ASPEN, THERE ARE FOUR PREMIUMS that give a for-sale property an edge, says Gary Feldman, managing partner at Joshua & Co. and listing agent for the Riverfront Masterpiece. These advantages include water frontage, direct ski access, golf access and lots with views. "Of those four premiums," Feldman says, "waterfront seems to be the biggest hot button. If someone's been fortunate enough to experience living along the water, then they're going to want that and nothing else."

For those looking for waterfront access in Pitkin County, the supply is tight. The County's latest ordinance for stream setbacks requires that homes be built a minimum of 150 feet away from water's edge. This home falls under the old building code, making its location so close to the banks of the river a rarity.

And that's not all it has going for it. Other selling points include a design that makes entertaining easy (including an outdoor living space), 19.5 acres of Snowmass Canyon land, a solar-panel-heated snowmelt system built into the driveway and the striking architecture. "There's always a demand in Aspen for unique contemporary design," Feldman says. "More so than any other type of property we see. Maybe it's just the scarcity."

Plus, summer is coming. Though the home has received a lot of interest due to its design and its location along the Roaring Fork River, it went on the market at the end of the summer of 2008, making this its first full selling season. "Buyers come back [to Aspen] year after year and don't pull the trigger, and then they spontaneously stop in during the summertime and write a check," Feldman says. "The summer is really the gem."

For more information on the home, priced at \$7,950,000, contact Gary Feldman at (970) 205-2222 or gary@joshuaco.com. □





*(opposite, left)* The master bath was Holway's favorite space to design. "You can sit in the tub and you feel like you're sitting next to the water," she says. Faucets by Brizo and tub by MTI Whirlpools.

*(opposite, right)* In the master bedroom, the curved Glu-lam beams and bamboo veneer panels are fit with unbelievable craftsmanship. Though the material behind the bed is standard tile, "You can walk right up to it and it appears like leather," Hufker says.

*(above)* For the kitchen, Holway and Hufker carefully chose a palette of beautiful materials: light and dark Caesarstone for the countertops, stained concrete for the floor and lots of warm woods throughout. Bar stools and rug from Montecito Loft & Home.

*(left)* Expansive panels of windows are one of the many ways this home's design welcomes natural splendor inside.

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