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APRIL – AUGUST 2006

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Andy Stonehouse, a literary jack of all trades and *Mountain House & Home* Editor, has lived in Colorado since moving here from British Columbia in 1998. He has worked at publications including the *Vail Daily*, the *Summit Daily News*, the *Glenwood Springs Post Independent* and the *Boulder Daily Camera*, as well as contributing stories to *Relix Magazine*, the *Rocky Mountain News*, the *Boulder Weekly* and the *Vail Trail*. His ever-transforming career sees him currently striking an interesting balance between automotive journalism, music criticism and the world of home planning, building and renovation. Andy lives in Golden with his wife Lisa and their remarkably intelligent dog Blu.



Nate Abbott is a locally-based photographer with international experience, traveling around the world doing what he loves to do: photography. Whether in Europe or Alaska, he is shooting photos of skiers, snowboarders, interesting people and the lives we all live. Nate enjoys steep and deep powder turns with his wife Christine, and hanging with his 12 pound chihuahua mix, Lil' Louie Sperbot.



H. E. Sappenfield writes everything from freelance articles and essays to technical manuals to fiction. She has written for *Velo News*, *Women's Sports & Fitness*, *Mountain Flyer*, and *Mountain House & Home*, and she recently won the short story division of the Paul Gillette Memorial Contest. Writing for *Mountain House & Home* lets her combine writing with her love for architecture, interior design, and home improvement.



Janet Thrasher writes a weekly column for the *Eagle Valley Enterprise* and recently wrote for the newly re-launched Vail.net website. Janet enjoys music, fresh powder, and pedaling her mountain bike. A lover of language and literature, she dreams of living on the Mediterranean and perfecting her Italian. Janet lives with her husband and two children in Eagle, volunteering time for school and community causes.



Eva Hunter bought her first camera with Christmas money, and then horrified her mother by commandeering the only bathroom in their apartment for a darkroom. She earned her MBA in Lodz, Poland in 2000, moved to the U.S. that same year, and again turned her attention to photography. Eva brings her fresh and discerning perspective to both the creative and administrative sides of *Mountain House & Home* and other titles.

FUNCTION

*How Deborah and
Trey Warren created
a model of design
and innovation.*

BY H. E. SAPPENFIELD

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROBERT GREGG

In July of 2003, Deborah and Trey Warren combined their talents as entrepreneur and architect to build a home that is a contemporary, functional gem in the Vail Valley. Meticulous planners, constant innovators and relentless adherents to their original vision, the result for the Warrens is a uniquely cozy modern home with a wow-factor of 10.

Deborah's entrepreneurship brought them to the Vail Valley when she started Mountain Valet in 1996, providing concierge-style services to clients. At the time, Trey was working for Fentress Bradburn Architects, Ltd., a large firm in Denver, but when it became obvious that Deborah's business was a go, the Warrens moved to the mountains. They bought a duplex in Singletree, Trey landed a position at Morter Architects, and Deborah's business grew. And so did their family. By 2003, they had two daughters, and needed more space.

Using mahogany decking wood for the exterior siding proves to be a stunning, innovative and cost-effective tactic.



= MODERN





The custom-made oversized table invites a large family crowd during the holidays but still maintains the balance of the kitchen space year-round.







ABOVE: The master bedroom with its awe-inspiring views.

LEFT: This mudroom is both modern and practical, including the stained concrete floors which were finished before the interior walls were framed.

It was post-9/11, and there was a housing slump, so Trey took six months off work, took on the job as general contractor, and the Warrens dove into the design and construction of their custom-build home, a decision they had been contemplating for two years.

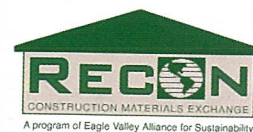
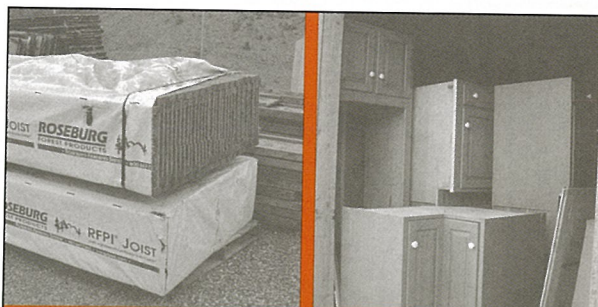
They had a firm budget, a timeline of six months, and were dogged about remaining within both. Told it was an impossible feat to accomplish within those constraints, they proved the critics wrong, coming in under budget and moving in within seven months.

"We were careful in finding our contractors," Deborah explains. "You have to be sure to find someone you can work with. For instance, our framer Austin Thomas of High Mountain Homes was a great guy. His bid was a little higher, but he was so good, that in the end he saved us time and money."

They also saved a lot of hassle through careful preparation of the design plans.

"Most people don't plan enough before they start, and they end up having to change things during construction. That's where dollars add up and schedules get behind," says Trey.

"People tend to think about architecture as a product, not a service," Trey explains, "as if there existed an architecture aisle at a store where we could stroll down and peruse various home styles



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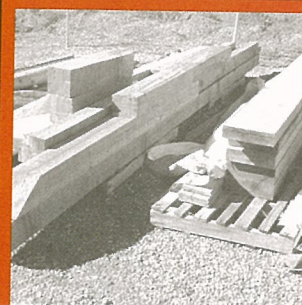
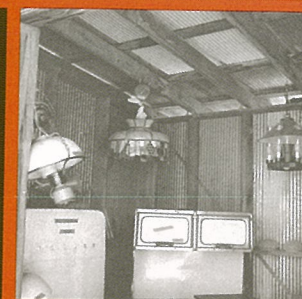
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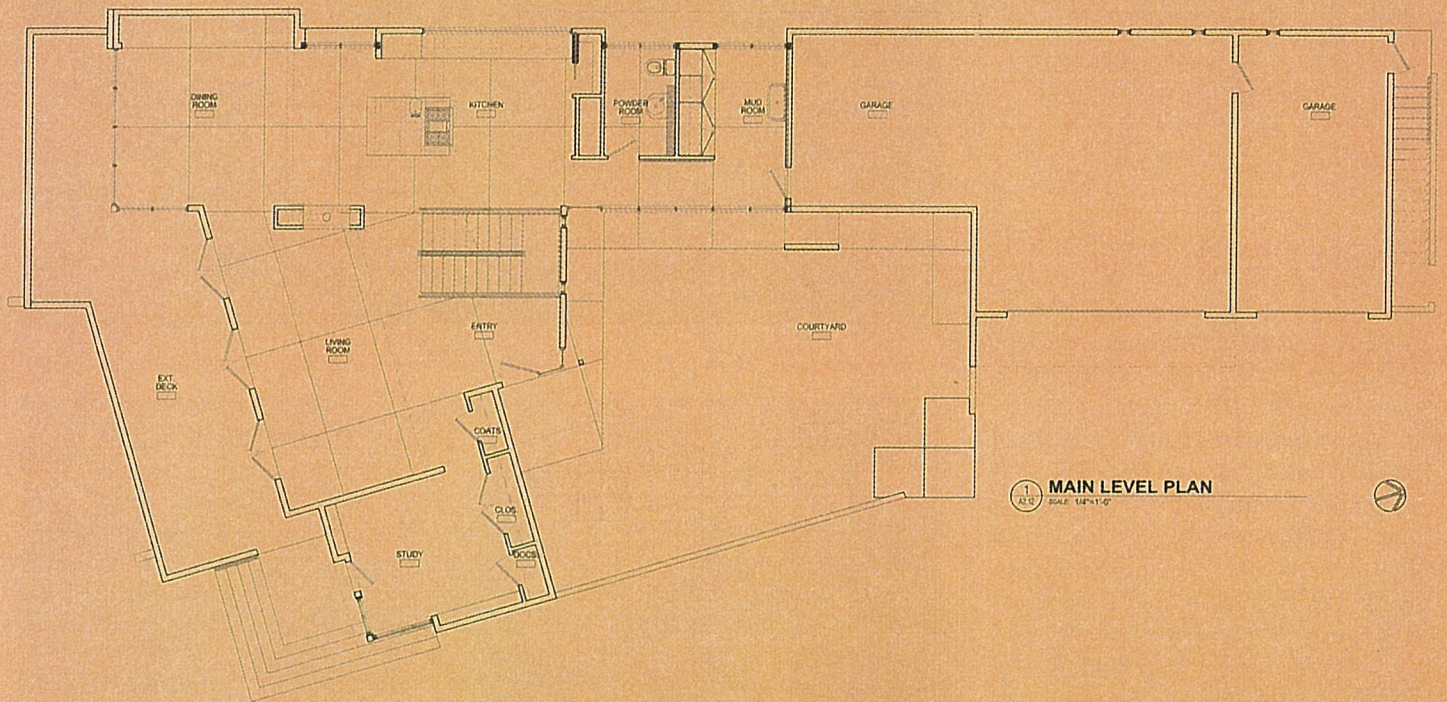
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“Think about what you want. Not what you’ve seen.” — Trey Warren



LEFT: The spacious main level floor plan is surrounded by the home's construction photos, from the start of the project to near-completion.

until we found the one we liked. I have encountered many people who say 'I just love French Country. That's what I want. Here's a picture.'

"Rare is the person who says, 'I want to hire you to help me translate my lifestyle, my needs, hopes, fears, aspirations for family or otherwise, into a house,' or 'I need a house that can help me complement my life.' Really, the prescription for these people is rarely French Country," Trey says with his characteristic wry humor.

Throughout planning, Trey instructed Deborah, "Think about what you want, not what you've seen."

"We really thought about where we wanted things," Deborah recalls. "We would make a decision, then live with the idea for a while. For instance, I knew I wanted the kitchen close to the garage, so I wouldn't have to schlep groceries too far. As for the girls' rooms, I knew I wanted them upstairs, removed from our room, and I wanted them to walk past the laundry room, so they'd put their dirty clothes in more often. I didn't want a TV anywhere too convenient, so the home theater is in the basement."

The result is a completely comfortable and livable floor plan.

A few months prior to construction, the Warrens had purchased a homesite at the top of June Creek Road in Singletree. The views of Arrowhead Mountain and the New York Range were spectacular, but it was a challenging lot—long and narrow. It was also on a corner. This meant there were two setbacks of 25 ft. to the south and east, and two of 15 ft. to the north and west. The result was a buildable space 200 ft. long and 45 ft. wide, with a narrow orientation facing the primary view. They also had a 35 ft. height restriction. Trey applied their thoughtful planning and capitalized on the site's challenges, designing flowing lines that define the exterior and interior of the home, and continue throughout the house's 4081 sq. ft. and 200-plus windows.

"The windows are a relatively inexpensive commercial storefront product," Deborah says, "and they are carried throughout the house."



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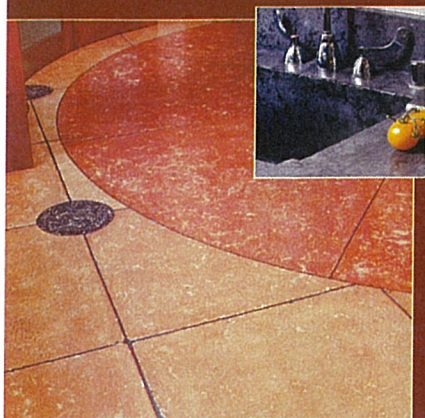
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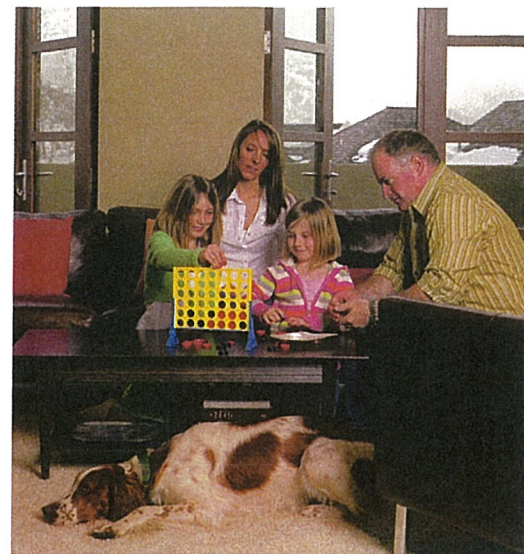
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The Warrens enjoying family time in their living room. Note the modern approach to the classic French doors.

The moral of the Warrens' story: a firm commitment to a vision and a willingness to innovate brings about achievement. The Warrens achieved a lot.

It took many trips to the design review board to get their plans approved. When construction began, neighbors wrote letters complaining about the height.

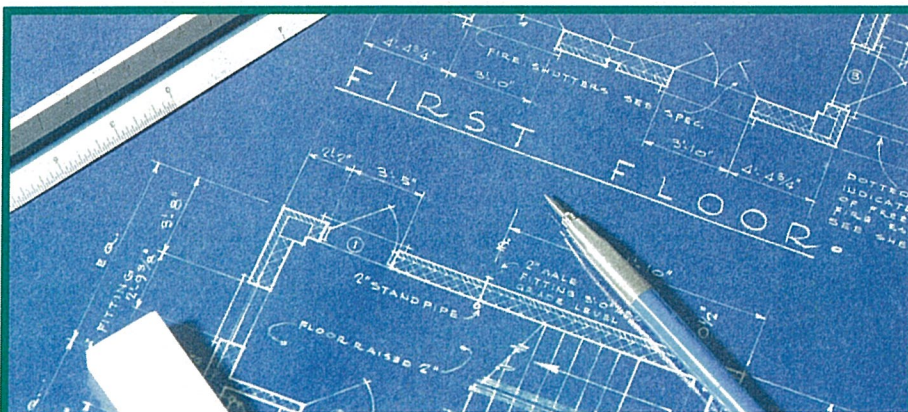
"It didn't look like a 'normal' house," Deborah reflects. "There were these high walls, people didn't know what we were doing. When it was finished, they loved it, but in the beginning ..."

The Warrens were not afraid to challenge their contractors either. For example, the home's floors are stained concrete with in-floor, radiant heat. They didn't want wood trim, rather a two-inch, aluminum strip recessed at the base of the drywall. In order to make this detail look clean, all of the floors were poured before the interior walls were framed.

"In a typical house, so much time and money is spent in leveling floors, say from wood, to carpet, to tile, and you need a different contractor for each," Trey explains. "We saved a lot of time and money by doing it this way."

The drywallers were challenged, but to their credit, stuck with it. Similarly, when it came to exterior siding, the Warrens couldn't find a product they liked.

"I was looking at clear cedar, but it was expensive. Then Deborah found a decking product, mahogany wood from Indonesia. We had it milled as siding, and it's gorgeous, not a knot in it. And it



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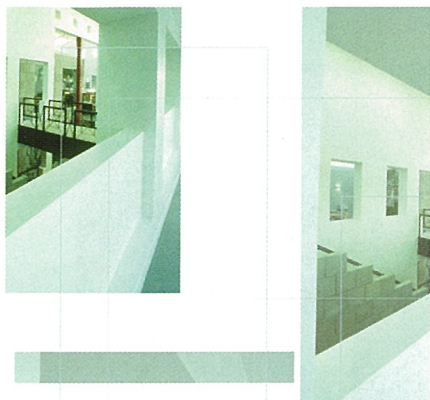


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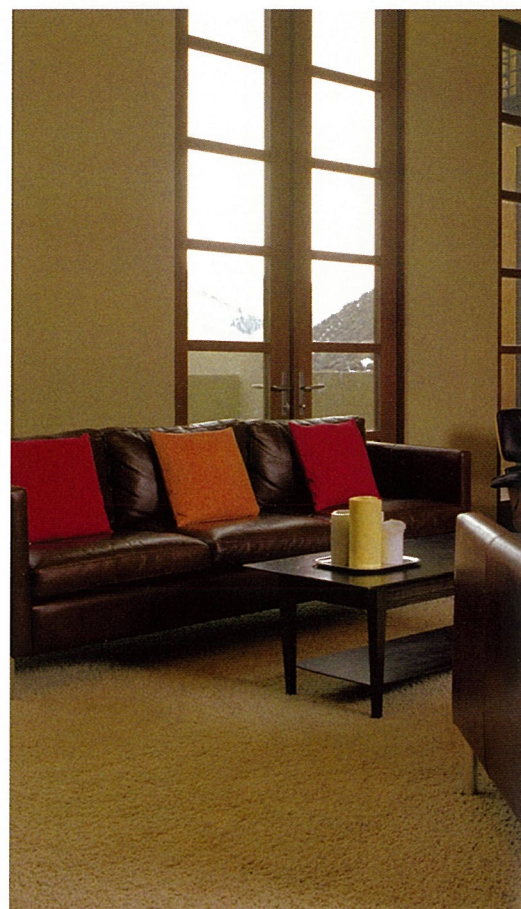
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was less than cedar," says Trey.

In fact, their neighbor, a woodworker, stopped by to be sure his eyes weren't deceiving him, that they were putting furniture-grade mahogany on their home's exterior. The result is an extraordinary brown, which balances the tan stucco.

Other details make the home stand out, like the staircase, which Trey designed himself, and was painstakingly constructed of clear, vertical-grain Douglas fir and raw steel. In the kitchen, a window runs the length of the room between the brown granite countertop and the bamboo cabinets, through which natural light floods in. There's split-face, stack-stone tile in the powder room, which brings a sense of outdoors in. The courtyard, borrowed from California homes, is used as an outdoor living room in summer and there's an entire wall of windows on the south side of the master bedroom, which frames a jaw-dropping view of Arrowhead Mountain.

Most every room was custom-detailed for the Warren's lifestyle. "People ask about Christmas," Trey muses, "and I say, 'Well, we're having Deborah's family of

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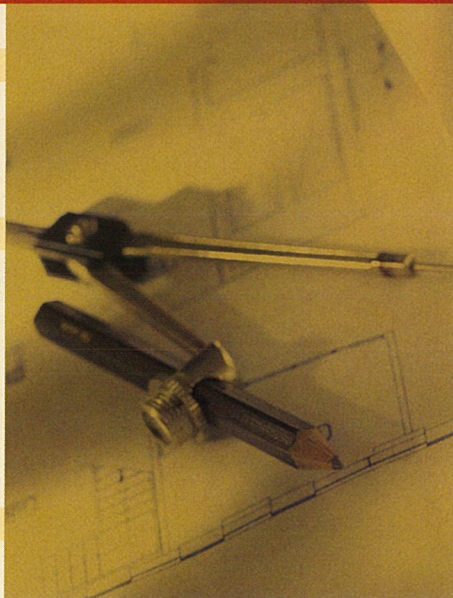
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22, and mine of four.” He laughs. Their dining room was designed to accommodate their enormous family holiday gathering. The long table down the center of the room was custom-made for little cost through good research, another sign of why this house is such a gem.

In addition, Deborah and Trey invested hours of sweat equity beyond the work as general contractor. Trey did all the finish carpentry, even earning Deborah the nickname “Sweepo,” for her constant toil as gofer.

Two years have passed now, the girls are bigger, and Trey started his own firm, DDC West, Inc., in January, but the Warrens still reflect fondly on the experience. Unlike most couples, they thrived under the pressure of construction.

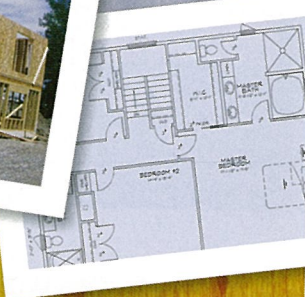
“We complement each other well,” Deborah explains. “We do best when we’re working on a project.”

“In construction, there will be issues,” she reflects. “You can’t avoid mistakes. The challenge lies in finding a solution which absolutely works for you.” 🏠

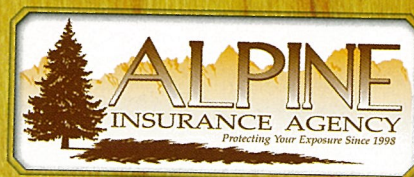
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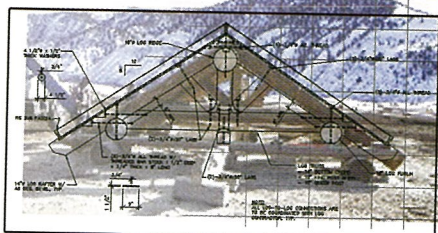
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