

TREETOP FANTASY

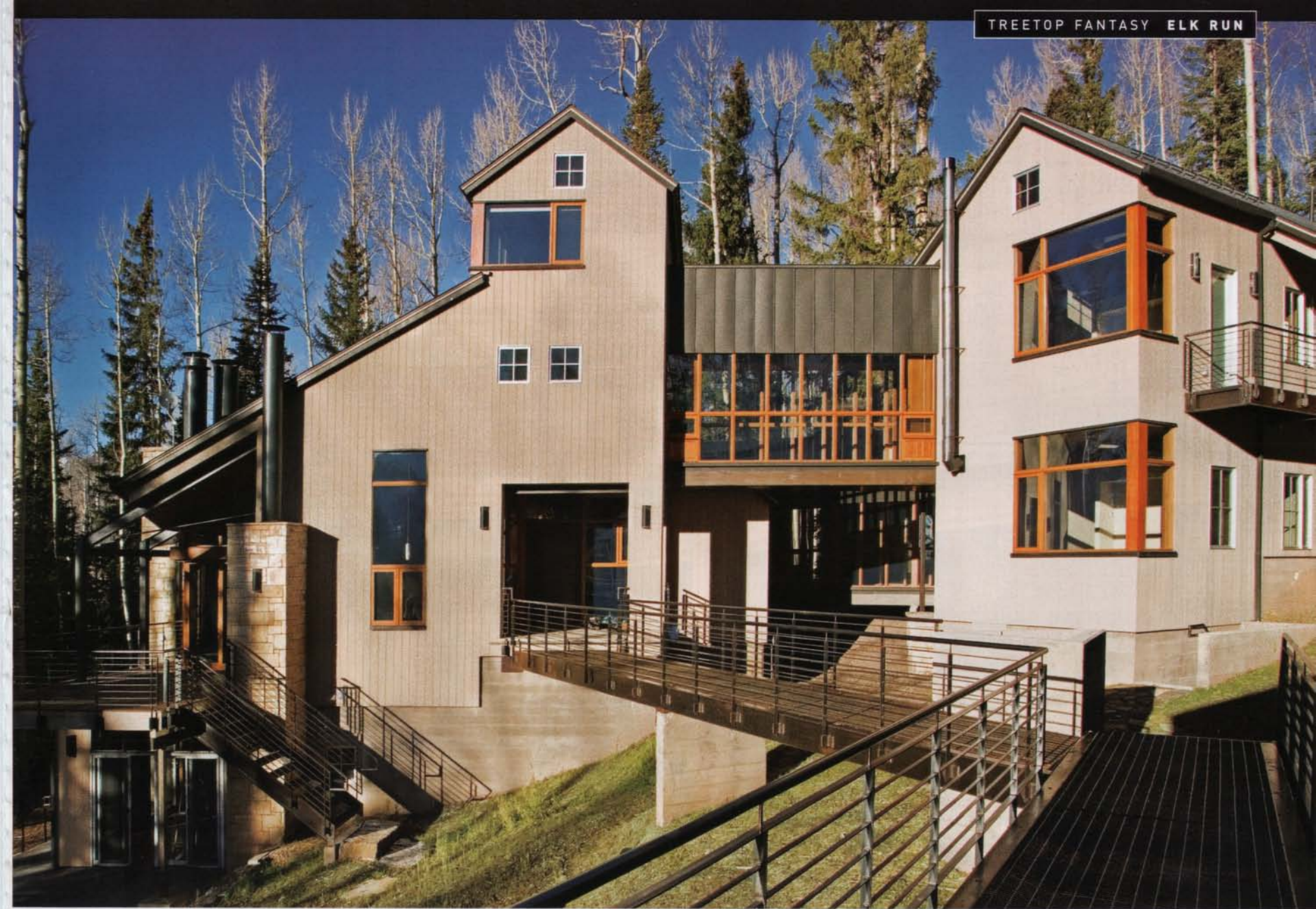
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER MARONA

ONE HALLMARK OF GOOD DESIGN IS THAT IT MAY SIGNIFY DIFFERENT THINGS TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE. For Elizabeth Gillenwater—who owns this residence near Telluride with Mark Howells—the home represents a tree house. “It has wonderful nooks and crannies rising into the forest,” she says. But for architect Tommy Hein, of Tommy Hein Architects in Telluride, it’s a 21st-century extension of local design ideas from 100 years ago, “an expression of the mining vernacular.” They might both be right.

ARCHITECT Tommy Hein | **HOME BUILDER** Tim Hild

INTERIOR DESIGNER Haley Balzano

BEDROOMS 6 | **BATHROOMS** 7 | **SQUARE FEET** 7,500



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Tree house or not, it certainly lives among the treetops. The house is arranged as a layering of volumes climbing skyward. Gillenwater and Howells wanted it to have a retreat-like feel so that their blended family would have places to be together without getting under each other's feet. Hein accommodated by dividing the 7,500 square feet of housing into several masses—a garage block; two master suites conceived as a glorified bunkhouse; and the main house itself, thought of as a mill with living, dining and kitchen areas, plus many nooks and crannies. Atop the whole is

that special place we reserve just for ourselves in our childhood tree house fantasies: in this case, office space for Mark and Elizabeth.

The “bunkhouse” and “mill” terms are no mere coincidence—the compound is conceived as an evocation of history. Mine designers built metal-roofed, wood-sided



STYLE SELECTION

With an elongated base that can fit even the narrowest of spaces, this lamp was inspired by those of the early 1900s, which were made of real mercury glass. *Extra Large Apothecary Jar Table Lamp, \$620; jamieyoung.com*





NICELY NESTED

Because of the bay window, the dining room seems to sit right among the pine trees, an illusion perpetuated by the use of natural materials inside.



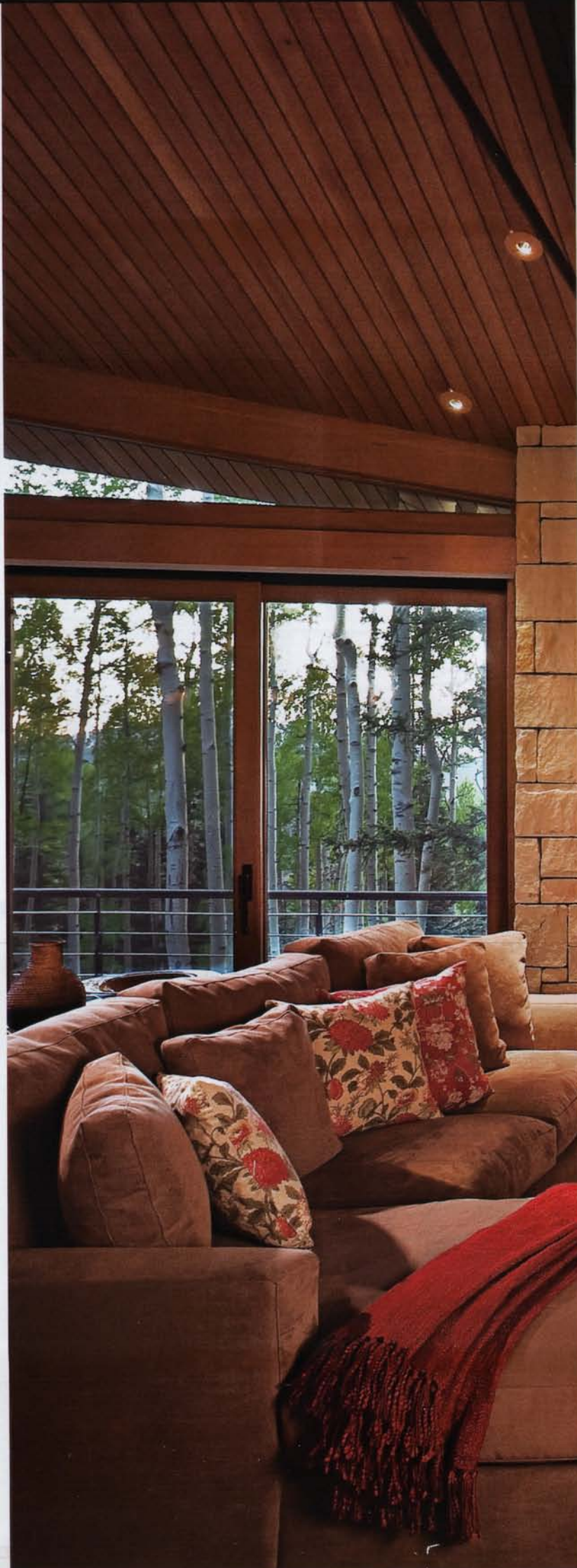
ARTISTIC FRAMEWORK

The building frames the view of the mountains. The enclosed bridge connects the two major components of the home—the bunkhouse and the mill.

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shed boxes gathered into groupings. Hein followed their lead, but with layers of contemporary architectural insight. Those engineers wouldn't care a whiff about the views, for instance, but the Wilson and Sunshine Mountains are carefully framed vistas nowadays. On the corners of the structures Hein crafted a more modern fenestration to open the interiors to light and ventilation. In the past, mine designers built long, sloping rooflines encasing large volumes; Hein embraced that idea, but fitted the volumes with up-to-date functions and finishes. "This kind of design moves the mining vernacular forward," Hein says.

To complete the concept of a compound, a truly antique, hand-hewn log cabin was transported and rebuilt on the site—often used by the homeowners for morning meditation or writing. Giving further respect to the past, when no one thought twice about wildlife on the property, Hein built the human compound around a "sacred knoll" that an elk herd has used as a bedding location for generations.





LOCAL COLOR

The rug was selected to pick up the color of the regional Olathe limestone used on the fireplace. Red accents pop on their natural backdrop.



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While the home's concept is complex, its execution is simple. It consists of a steel skeleton sheathed with a variety of appropriate materials. The exterior is covered with sawn cedar and small areas of Olathe limestone. The roofing is zinc, which lasts a lifetime and defers to both history and the blizzards that winter brings. The roof structure of the main building is a series of thoughtfully detailed steel trusses exposed to the inside. Interior materials are integral-color plaster walls, clear fir ceilings and reclaimed oak floors. Stair and guardrails form elaborate patterns using clear-cut geometries.

The property also made use of local materials. The Olathe limestone employed throughout comes from Olathe, Colorado, only a few miles north of Telluride. Hein used it split-faced on fireplaces both inside and out, and cut into slabs for countertops and showers. Consistent materials throughout bring unity of design—along with environmental benefits.

CLOUD NINE

The master bath sits among the clouds above the roof of the guest cabin. Materials are kept simple to keep the space uncluttered.



MINING FOR MAGIC
The steel stair and bracing create intimate areas for gatherings of two or three people. The dark, recycled oak floor anchors the light-filled space.