

EUROPEAN CHALET

Stunning home in Cordillera Valley Club includes European elements and modern touches

by KIMBERLY NICOLETTI • photos by GIBEON PHOTOGRAPHY



Illumination is key to the home's design, including large windows for natural light as well as unique chandeliers and light fixtures.

ORIGINATING FROM France, Pepette Mongrain and her husband wanted to build a modernized European chalet in Cordillera Valley Club.

“The couple has lived all over the world, but their first date was in Vail 35 years ago, and now, after all these years, they call the Vail Valley home,” says Adam Harrison, principal of Shepherd Resources, the architectural firm for the home.

Plenty of architecture in Vail mirrors European aesthetics, but having grown up there, Mongrain

wanted design elements you’d actually find in Europe.

“I wanted a specific mountain contemporary that you’d find in Austria or Switzerland, so I wanted to make sure that the architect really understood where I was coming from, what look I wanted. There are a lot of times where houses in the United States — for example, they want to look Mediterranean — but they put things in that just don’t really belong. Because I grew up in France, it’s in my blood,” Mongrain says. “I was pretty specific this isn’t our first rodeo doing houses — not necessarily in Colorado but just

building a house or renovating — and Adam and his partner Bert Willemse really listened to what I wanted.”

She desired large overhangs and didn’t want a high roofline, so the architects created three gable forms with a Tyrolean influence: a large one over the main living area and two smaller ones on each side, over the primary suite and attached garage.

She also wanted large balconies while still maintaining a light, contemporary look, so rather than adding traditional, heavy-looking wooden balconies, they opted for metal.

Gorgeous wood adorns the exterior, with modern, dry-stacked stone, as opposed to more traditional river rock of yesteryear, anchoring it. And, of course, huge JELD-WEN windows open to stunning views of the golf course, Vail’s Game Creek Bowl and the farther New York Mountain.

Inside, she definitely wanted that mountain cozy chalet feel, which is where reclaimed wood from Europe came in. Modern wood was installed between reclaimed ceiling beams, and the flooring is grounded in new wood.

“I didn’t want it to be 100% contemporary because it gives it a

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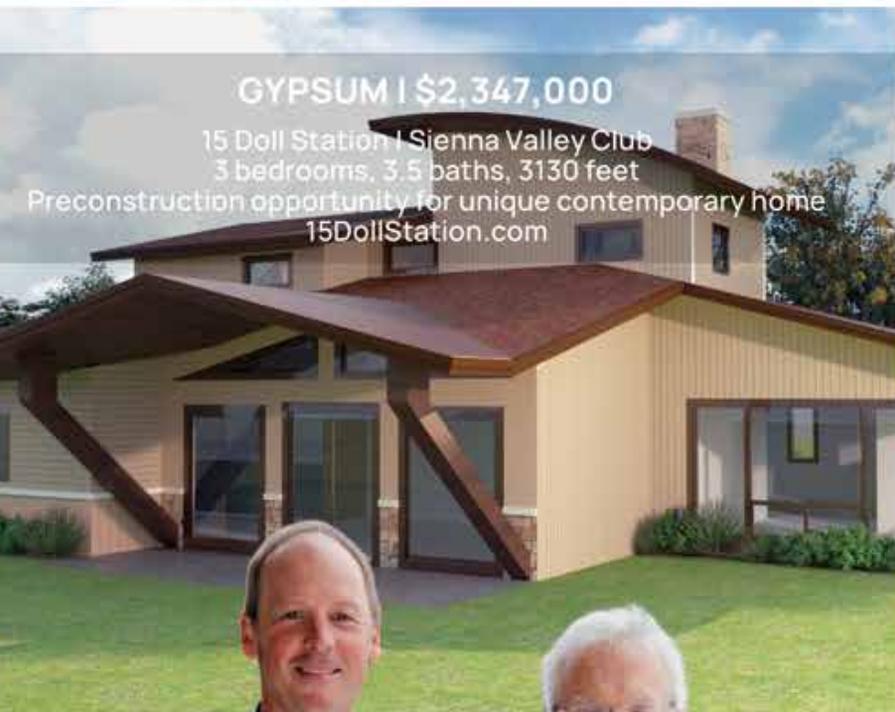
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cold look,” she says, adding that she owns centuries-old family antiques and enjoys blending them with contemporary furnishings like a sleek sofa. “This (home) is a great blend of contemporary and chalet.”

For instance, she found lamps made in the Czech Republic that look like the cowbells so popular at European alpine races but that have a modern slant.

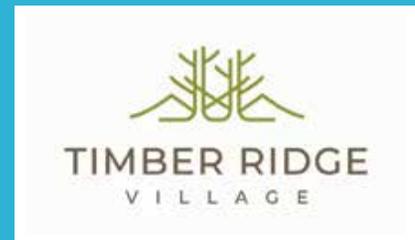
Some strict neighborhood building codes required more modern elements, such as a prominent entrance. She chose a contemporary door that pivots, rather than opens with regular hinges and features horizontal windows.

The large foyer includes a sloped ceiling, with floor-to-ceiling glass delineating it from the open floor plan. Over the stairs hangs a Bocci glass pendant.

“It gives the illusion of room, but you can see through to kitchen/living room area, (which) is under 18-foot-high cathedral ceilings with reclaimed beams,” she says.



Contemporary elements blend seamlessly with the European chalet style.



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The wood ceiling in the dining room, with its more traditional chalet inlay, drops about 11 feet, contributing to a more intimate feel. Hand-painted wallpaper gives a sense of luxury.

The kitchen island is unique; she nicknamed it the “coffee bean,” because it’s a rounded freeform, which gives it more of a formalized look, as opposed to a more informal, traditional rectangular bar aesthetic, she says. The rounded pattern allows people to see each other, rather than sitting in a line while eating. Underneath, the team illuminated the approximately 5x10-foot island.

The kitchen extends into a large pantry, where chefs can prepare meals with their own oven and other appliances, including a washer and dryer. Throughout the home, custom cabinetry came from New Box Cabinets from Edwards.

She loves to cook and discovered the LaCornue induction stove while living in Houston.

“I had previously used gas, but this is our retirement house, so I wanted to plan ahead to grow old with this house and make it convenient as we age. They’re fantastic because you can just clean them up,” she says.

She also asked the metal workers to extend the stove hood all the way up through the ceiling, an element found in traditional European homes but not in many American homes.

“I wanted to make it a very authentic chalet,” she says.

Weiland sliding patio doors, which disappear into the walls, open from the living room revealing southern views, as well as from above the countertop in the kitchen. The latter creates a bar opening to the patio for the perfect indoor-outdoor environment.

She opted for a Stellar Heat & Glo Enlight Pier fireplace with its unfinished steel. The three-sided fireplace separates the living and dining rooms, the latter of which features hand-painted wallpaper from New York that complements the living room’s shimmering chandelier. The wood ceiling in the dining room, with its more traditional chalet inlay, drops about 11 feet, contributing to a more intimate feel.

Beyond the dining room, she helped design a 500-bottle wine room, made by a craftsman in Houston. There’s also an office with his and her desks and a master bedroom with a smaller cathedral ceiling and felt wallpaper beyond the dining room. The bed features the same felt fabric as the wallpaper, though the wallpaper is adorned with designs.

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The spa-like bathroom includes a double tub and a double steam shower. The shower flooring matches the single-sheet quartz within — the team numbered every tile on the floor so it would look just like the wall.

She says most people thought they were installing a kitchen in the closet area; she needed an especially large closet to accommodate clothing from their home in Martha’s Vineyard and their Houston penthouse. It neatly organizes their golf, ski, casual and fancy clothing and features “happy” wallpaper with deer, as well as a quartz-topped island with storage and a crystal chandelier.

Lighting plays a predominant role in the home. She discovered the Aspen Leaf Arboreal chandelier from an Australian company, Yellow Goat Designs, when they owned their penthouse because they had 24-foot high flat ceilings and needed something that acted as an art piece.

“It had thin gold and silver leaves that shimmer and move around a bit. I wanted to recreate that piece here in Colorado,” she says.

While most of the ceiling fixtures are Nora lighting, the exterior wall sconces are Hinkley Atlantis, and the bedside fixtures are Holly Hunt Kolom sconces.



The primary bathroom includes many spa-like elements.



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“Chris is an excellent realtor to work with. He took plenty of time acquainting us with the Vail valley and sharing his extensive knowledge of the area. He helped us understand the market and ultimately found us the place perfectly suited to us. Once under contract, Chris was meticulous with the details and ensured we closed on time without any surprises. He is well connected and provided many recommendations for local resources. We will definitely work with Chris on all future real estate in Colorado!”

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Downstairs, four bedrooms, including a custom-made bunkroom with desks and cabinetry, accommodate plenty of guests, as well as their son and daughter. Each bedroom has king beds and its own bathroom, though they built two bathrooms, one with a steam shower, for the number of people the bunkroom sleeps.

They planned on installing a gym, but the Cordillera Valley Club just renovated theirs, so they changed course and incorporated a golf simulator.

A Marguis Bentley fireplace contributes to the warm feeling in the lower level, while a shuffle board, pool table and "Jaws"-themed pinball machine that her husband designed while living in Martha's Vineyard rounds out game time.

"It does not feel like a lower level because there's so much light and so many views," Harrison says.

Located in between the fifth and sixth tees, the back patio landscaping stands out in summer.

"People say we have the most beautiful landscape," she says.

They hosted a Bravo! soiree last summer; it began at the bar on the front terrace and then moved into the living room area, where they

removed all of the furnishings except for the 14-seat dining room table, for the concert. Then guests moved to the back patio while caterers set up the five-course dining experience inside.

"I've got a friend who works for Bravo! He's the vice president, and he said if he didn't know any better he would have thought that we had an acoustical engineer involved with the space because it sounded so good during the concert," Harrison says. "We had no idea that we were building a house that would be (so acoustically sophisticated)."

Harrison thoroughly enjoyed working on the project, in part due to its connection with Vail's European-influenced architecture.

"When Vail was founded in '62, they wanted to base it on a European chalet style village, so when it comes to Vail — and Beaver Creek for that matter — it had a lot of European flavor and language," he says. "I love modern architecture, but I love the chalet and I love those principals of Vail and to see how we're starting to do more modern chalets 60 years after Vail opened and to look at the combination of modern and chalet is really cool." **VH**

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