





SHELTER

Cabin Fever

Powder is addictive—so when a Wisconsin couple got a taste of Steamboat's fluff 10 years ago, they needed a permanent fix.

By Kate Bailey



TUCKED UP ON HER LEATHER AND CHENILLE SOFA IN FRONT of a fire after a day of snowshoeing through Steamboat Springs, Colo.'s legendary champagne powder, 51-year-old Cath is glowing. She's describing her and husband Tom's new getaway just steps from the lifts, and she keeps repeating two words: "dream home." That's what happens, she says, when you spend the past decade of your life, well, dreaming. "Our realtor kept his eye out

Location Steamboat Springs, Colo. **Elevation** 7,410 feet **Closest skiing** Steamboat, steps away **Square footage** 8,200 **Lot size** .31 acres **Architect** Joe Robbins, Joe Patrick Robbins & Associates, Steamboat **Builder** Gary Cogswell, Cogswell Construction Inc., Steamboat **Materials** When possible, the owners

chose sustainable or recycled materials, including reclaimed fir, purple moss rock from Central Wyoming, reclaimed hickory barn board and native Colorado buff flagstone. **Design strategy** The homeowners wanted to create a home that is relevant to its location, taking cues from old mining structures.

BLUEPRINT

for a ski-in/ski-out property for four years before he discovered this lot," Cath says. "And I just purchased the property sight unseen, without having a chance to consult Tom," who works as an orthopedic surgeon in Wisconsin.

"The lot was small, only .31 acres," admits architect Joe Robbins, of Joe Patrick Robbins & Associates in Steamboat. "But my team was interested in building a home that didn't have too large a footprint, one where we could use sustainable techniques such as passive solar heating and materials that would keep the clients happy and healthy."

Though final plans called for a not-so-modest 8,200 square feet, Robbins and general contractor Gary Cogswell of Cogswell Construction Inc. stacked the home on the lot to make it compact. They employed recycled wood in every capacity—doors, flooring, siding, cabinetry.

Large Douglas fir beams from a 19th-century gold mine in Oregon frame the house, and reclaimed-fir barn boards were stripped and refinished for the flooring. Native buff flagstone paves the entryway.

"We envisioned the home looking like an old mine," says Cath, gesturing to the wall of purple moss rock that dominates the entry. Masons hand-fit each stone into place like pieces of an intricate puzzle. The result is striking, but not overwhelming—a testament to Robbins's ability to design a large home on a comfortable scale.

To the left of the entry, the dining room, kitchen and living room are deco-

rated in an understated Western aesthetic. "I didn't want our home to be a bastion of Old West relics," says Cath. "I wanted it to be comfortable for our teenagers, their friends and our countless visitors."

'I DIDN'T WANT OUR HOME TO BE A BASTION OF OLD WEST RELICS. I WANTED IT TO BE COMFORTABLE.'

WELL WEATHERED This page: The kitchen is a study in recycled materials, including antique cabinets and wide-plank hickory floors salvaged from the side of a Midwestern barn. Interior designer Lynne Bier crafted a window seat for Cath to rest her feet on while browsing through cookbooks or taking respite from the day's activities. "It took several trips back to the drawing board to get the layout just right," Bier notes. Opposite: In the living room, the color palette—plum-hued browns, muted reds and mossy greens—is inspired by the variegated hues of the purple moss-rock fireplace. Bier's goal was to create a Rocky Mountain aesthetic while avoiding Western clichés.









MIX MASTER Opposite: The master bedroom is Cath's favorite space. With a deft combination of textures and colors, Bier made the room come alive. A coral-hued Oriental antique sideboard adds an unexpected twist. "I try to mix different pieces from different periods," says Bier. Above: "I had to include an indoor 'outhouse,'" says Cath, referring to the barn board-clad powder room. Authentic touches—gas lamps, a washtub sink and a faucet reminiscent of a mining spigot—maintain the clever theme. Top right: A bedroom nook provides a window seat overlooking Steamboat Mountain Resort. "Every bedroom has a view to the slopes," says Robbins. "After all, the family waited 10 years for this piece of land, and I wanted to make sure they could appreciate it every day."

The home sleeps up to 16 people, and each of its six bedrooms is equipped with a full bath and offers plenty of "quiet space" where guests can escape. "Each room has its own character," says interior designer Lynne Bier, of Home on the Range in Steamboat. Room by room, Cath and Bier spent years searching for the perfect furnishings, fabrics and one-of-a-kind pieces. A powder room, for example, resembles

an old mine-shack outhouse, with a corrugated steel ceiling, a washtub sink and old mining lanterns hanging opposite an antique mirror. The home also employs a distinct divide between the adults' and kids' areas, with a sophisticated living room on the main level and a bunkroom and theater in the basement.

A towering, double-sided fireplace separates the living room from the open



WIDE-PLANK FLOORS AND ANTIQUE CABINETS MAKE IT FEEL AS IF IT'S BEEN THERE FOR 100 YEARS.

kitchen/dining area, where wide-plank floors and antique white-oak cabinets make the home feel as if it's been there for 100 years. Window seats and a breakfast bar give guests—who tend to gather there—a place to relax and talk while Cath cooks. A custom copper hood pulls out the gold flecks in the granite countertops. But Cath's favorite feature is the built-in cappuccino machine hidden in the dry goods pantry. "I rarely pass by without grabbing an espresso," she says with a laugh.

No doubt both Tom and Cath need a few jolts of caffeine to keep up with their three teenage children. The couple learned to ski in their mid-30s at Whistler, B.C., but for the past 13 years, the family's been hooked on Steamboat's glades and powder. In the basement, Robbins designed a ski room complete with boot drying racks, a tuning and waxing bench, ski and snowboard racks and storage cubicles.

"We had so much fun designing this home. We all wanted it to be a reflection of our love of the West," says Cath. "The home is much better than any one of us could have pictured it on our own," adds Robbins. "We definitely struck gold." ♦