

August features

Five Under 40

THIS YEAR'S DESIGN WINNERS

Three Mountain Homes

EDWARDS > BASALT > ASPEN/SNOWMASS

**FIVE
UNDER
40**



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ANDREW POORE, EMILY WINTON REDFIELD, D.A., HORCHNER/DESIGN WORKSHOP, INC., D. I.A., HORCHNER/DESIGN WORKSHOP, INC.

**FIVE
UNDER
40**

CREAM OF THE NEW CROP

Introducing the 2016 recipients—their work, their quirks and why we think they're swell

STORY BY ALISON GWINN

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY BY JENNIFER OLSON

SET STYLE BY NICOLE DOMINIC

BACKDROP ART BY LEXIS KRIEG



ASHLEY ALLIS



SHAWN LOWE

DEVON TOBIN

WES FISBECK

NEAL EVERS



“The main personality trait that helps me as a designer? I like people, and people like me. I can connect.”



DEVON TOBIN

Interior designer, co-founder of Duet Design Group
DUETDESIGNGROUP.COM

“I always say I’m not a designer by profession,” says Devon Tobin. “It’s who I am, not what I do. I can’t turn it off. I can be at a brewery on a Sunday afternoon with my husband and be thinking about how the space could work differently.” A fourth-generation Coloradan who has a BSA in painting and a minor in art history from the University of Colorado Boulder, as well as a BA in interior design from The Art Institute of Colorado, Tobin co-founded Duet Design Group in 2011 with partner Miranda Cullen. In designing high-end residential spaces, she has two main rules: “No. 1: Listen, because clients will always tell you what they want. And No. 2: Be willing to take risks.” Emily Harvey, who hired Tobin to do the interiors on her 1935 Hilltop home, says: “Devon is amazing. She made the house flow. She knew how to articulate our design tastes even though we didn’t necessarily even know what they were.” In November, Duet Design launched a new à la carte design business called Duet Design at Home that focuses on individual spaces rather than entire houses. “We had to turn away 70 jobs last year,” Tobin says. “Everybody deserves a designer, and we wanted to try to meet that demand.” With so many clients, does Tobin feel like she has arrived? “No,” she says, “and I hope I never do. Because then I’ll feel like I’ve settled, and I want to always continue to get better.”

Saying “I do”: “Miranda is my work wife. She and I are like yin and yang. I’m the extrovert; she’s the quiet one. But we balance each other’s energy, we’re both insanely Type A, and we were born with the gift of design—we can both see a space and know how to change it. When we design together, the results are better.”

It’s in her DNA: “When I was a kid, I could take my bedroom or a friend’s bedroom and redesign it. In college, I customized my dorm room, retrofitting the standard, heavy furniture to make a loft bed and then building custom bookcases.”

They’re playing our song: “My favorite projects happen when the clients know why they need an interior designer. I respect them, and they respect me. The

result is this beautiful, cohesive, balanced, on-time design, and the whole process is fun. Then it’s harmonious, like music.”

Design mantra: “Our biggest rule is to never allow a distinct style of our own to come through. Miranda and I never, ever, ever want someone to walk into a space and say, ‘Oh, Duet Design must have done this’ because in our minds that means we’ve become cookie-cutter and are working by formula. Every project, every client, every situation and every environment should be different.”

Soup to nuts: “Miranda and I like to complete projects to the very end. The spaces that turn out truly epic are the ones where we’ve done them literally down to the coasters on the coffee table. Those final layers—the



artwork, the accessories—are really what make a house a home. If you take them out of the equation, the home never looks done. Ever.”

Paging Dr. Freud: “Designers are like psychologists. You have to have a good EQ [emotional intelligence quotient] because you need to analyze your clients and figure out how they function. It goes beyond whether someone likes red or pink. You need to know really personal details—do they cuddle on a sofa, or do they both lie straight?—so you can dissect how clients will live or work in a space.” »



Opposite, right, and this page, left: “I wanted to keep the integrity of the home,” says Tobin of a young couple’s circa-1920s Denver Square home in the Country Club District. The breakfast nook was originally a formal living room, but Tobin wanted to create a space for casual dining. “We balanced the home’s ‘collected antique’ look with a settee in a fabric that was more youthful. The cowhide rug is for durability; they have small children.” For the powder room, Tobin designed a mosaic tile floor in shades of taupe and added a new pedestal sink and a vintage mirror. “The house is traditional without being stuffy. It’s very comfortable,” she says.

Above: This bedroom was created for a townhome in Cherry Creek North. “The owner had recently divorced after being married for 40 years, and she wanted a woman’s bedroom, where she would feel safe and protected and pretty.” The client always wanted a makeup vanity, so that was the first piece of furniture that Tobin bought; she designed everything else to play off of it. The chandelier (also a top priority for the client) is simple but elegant, says Tobin. Photos of kids and grandkids surround the bed, so the room “exudes a sense of serenity.”



ASHLEY ALLIS

Landscape architect, Design Workshop, Aspen
DESIGNWORKSHOP.COM

Innovator. Leader. Environmental steward. That's how colleagues describe Ashley Allis of Design Workshop, an Aspen-based landscape architecture, urban design and planning firm with offices all over the world, from Chicago to China. Since starting at the firm in 2005, Allis has worked on everything from the historic preservation of the Hunter Creek Garden near Aspen to the planning and project management of a 100-acre private compound near the ghost town of Ashcroft. "With each project, she strives for excellence in crafting context-sensitive solutions," says Mike Albert, a partner at Design Workshop. For Allis, who has a master's in urban and environmental planning from the University of Virginia, it's all about "telling compelling stories of a certain time through design." She is grateful for the support at Design Workshop: "At a lot of firms, there's one person's name on the door, and everything trickles through that person. But as our name implies, we're based on a standard of collaboration. Everyone has a meaningful say in the process. And the sum is always greater than the parts."

Like father, like daughter:

"In junior high, I started helping my dad, who was a teacher during the year, with construction in the summers. He's a woodworker and craftsman, and we would build little vacation cabins. I liked seeing how buildings came together, and I slowly realized that landscape architecture—the combination of the environment, architecture and design—was a good fit for me."

The best advice she ever got:

"The best way to learn is by doing. I get to do something absolutely different every single day. I'm in Design Workshop's next generation, and just as the firm's leaders made mistakes, they've given us permission to make mistakes, too."

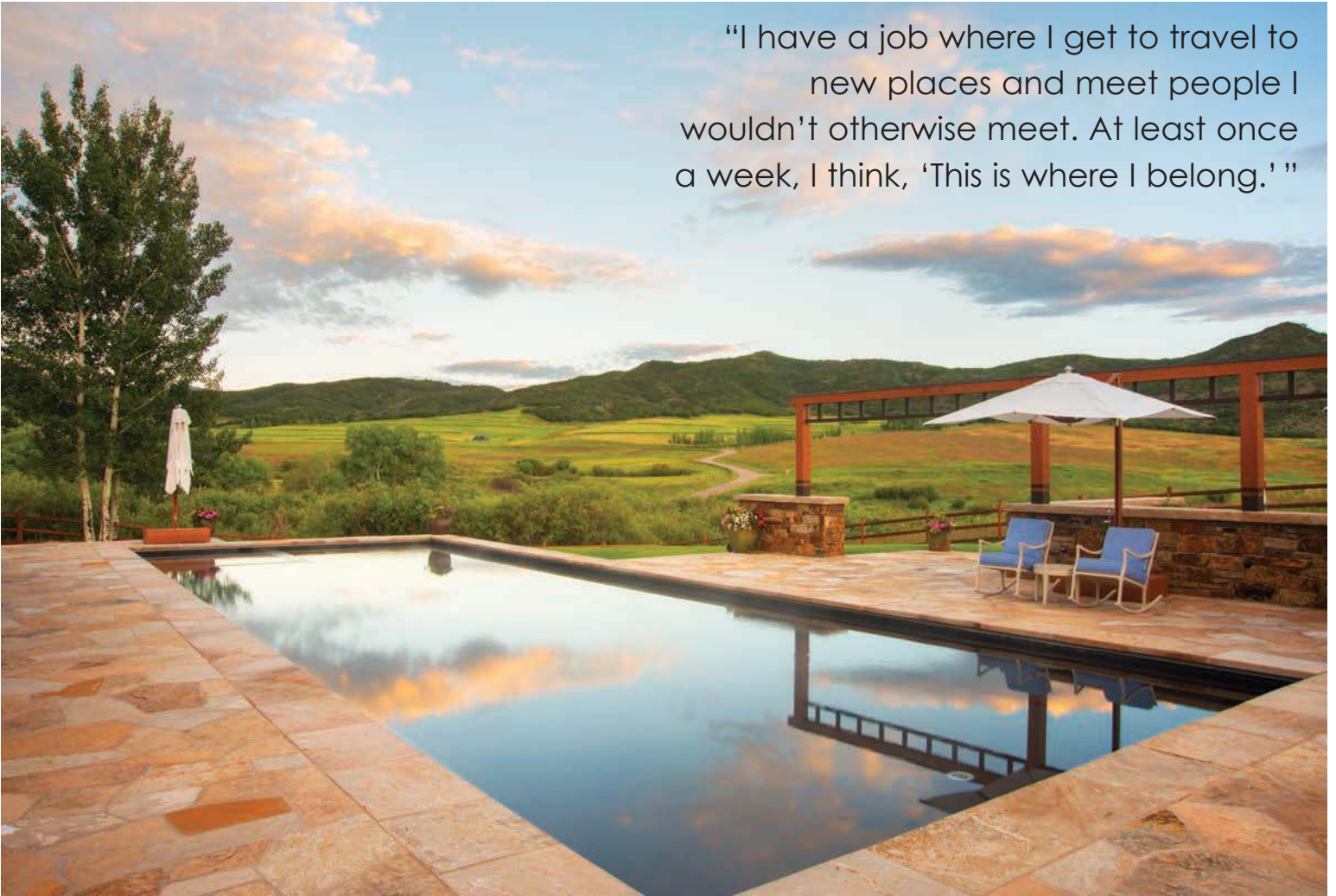
Design crush: "The Fallingwater house [in Mill Run, Pennsylvania] by Frank Lloyd Wright. I worked

there as a landscape intern when I was an undergrad majoring in landscape architecture at Penn State, and I got to really experience the house beyond what a normal visitor could, to climb up the sides of the walls and see where the flaws were. Wright had the guts to make big decisions and do things no one had done before."

Working with the public:

"I get inspired by working with communities and being on the ground talking to people about what their vision is, then creating special places that can be enjoyed by a lot of people. While working on a park project in Bozeman [Montana], I held a workshop for kids where we made a board game and told them to design their playground on that. That was really fun." »

“I have a job where I get to travel to new places and meet people I wouldn't otherwise meet. At least once a week, I think, 'This is where I belong.' ”



Opposite, right: For the renovation of an Aspen residential garden, originally designed by renowned landscape architect Richard Haag, the Design Workshop team “took inspiration from the surrounding mountains,” Allis says, adding boulders from Wyoming, surrounding the pool with Colorado buff limestone, and recladding the rectangular arch at the far end in Cor-Ten steel. They also created terraces and added a man-made pond (left) off the pool area, with views of Buttermilk Mountain.

Above: Design Workshop designed and built a swimming pool with a lap lane and built-in hot tub at this Owl Creek home, near Snowmass. “We added a wooden trellis to make it feel like an outdoor room that was an extension of their inside living area,” Allis says.



Designed by architect Chad Holtzinger of Shopworks Architecture, this Denver home is clad in cedar shakes and hand-picked recycled brick.

SHAWN LOWE & WES FISBECK

Co-owners, Pinnacle Properties of Colorado, Denver
PPOFCO.COM

Mr. Outside and Mr. Inside—that’s the team of Shawn Lowe and Wes Fisbeck. Lowe, an Illinois native with degrees in engineering and construction management, is in the field all day, overseeing the construction of new single-family builds or remodels in the Denver area. Fisbeck, who grew up in Loveland and has a degree in business management, is the office guy, doing estimates, permitting, ordering materials and accounting. The two, whose parents also worked in construction, met on the job in Las Vegas and founded Pinnacle in 2007. Their motto: “We don’t build houses. We build new homes with old souls.” They pride themselves on “self-performing” as much of their work as possible, using a team of their own longtime employees rather than subcontracting out. “One thing that makes them unique is that their team has a multi skill set,” says Kathy Jones, AIA, president of the architectural design firm ArchStyle Inc. “If someone is framing your house, they will be much more particular about how they do it if they are also going to do the interior trim. And ultimately the results will be better. Honestly, I can’t say enough good things about them. If they could do every job for me, I’d be happy.”

The art of camouflage:

Wes: “We always try to build homes that fit in well with the neighborhood, that don’t stand out.”

Shawn: “We do that by using the same materials on the outside as were used 100 years ago. Our houses are all brick, all stone.

They look like historic homes, but they were only finished yesterday. We’re actually working on a house right now where the appraiser is having a hard time with the appraisal because he didn’t realize it was a brand-new home.”

What makes them good at their jobs:

Wes: “It’s mainly my attention to detail. Whether it’s estimating, budgeting or accounting, I always try to put together a good proposal that is easy for people to understand and makes it clear what we’re including and not including. The more detail in the proposal, the better.”

Shawn: “For me, it’s that any job on a house I am managing is something I specifically know how to do myself. So I can break things down and know if someone working for me knows how to do his job or not.”

Favorite builds:

Wes: “What is a lot of fun for me is trying to figure out everything we need for a job six months before it’s actually built and then watching how the project starts to come to life, how some things I thought of early on turn out.”

Shawn: “Building houses is not rocket science, so for me, the more complicated and the more detail, the better—like one continuous curving banister on a stairway from the top floor all the way down. We did a house in Belmar recently that includes a lot of details you can’t buy off the shelf; almost everything is custom made. That’s what I like.” »

BEN EYSTER



“Our main philosophy is having good relationships with customers and building durable, low-maintenance houses that people can live in for a long time.”

Left: The bathroom from the Grandview house features multiple tile materials, sizes and geometric shapes.

Above: Lowe and Fisbeck did the total gut and remodel of this Greenwood Village home, keeping the shell but removing interior walls, expanding the kitchen, and creating the clean, modern style that the owners wanted. The crew added steel supports on the kitchen island to allow for a 6-foot overhang that makes the countertop appear to float.





NEAL EVERS

Architect, HMH Architecture + Interiors, Boulder
HMHAI.COM

What makes a good architect? To Neal Evers, it all comes down to one important trait: empathy. “Some of the best architects I’ve ever worked with were anthropology majors as undergrads,” says the Oklahoma native, who creates residential designs along the Front Range. “You have to be able to put yourself in the shoes of the person who’s going to be in the building, especially houses, because they are very, very intimate. If you can’t empathize with the clients—whether they have young kids or pets or have an amazing watch collection they want to display—and visualize yourself in this imaginary space that is yet to be built, it won’t be successful.” Evers, an avid cyclist (he rides 2,000 to 3,000 miles a year) and musician (guitar and upright bass), also teaches the advanced architecture studio at University of Colorado Boulder. “Teaching requires you to be very solid yourself. When I’m telling students how to do architecture, I’m constantly reviewing myself: Am I following my own rules? Am I walking my own talk?”



Most admired architect: “[Japanese architect] Tadao Ando. His work is so simple, and he uses really humble materials, but he expects perfection from them. One of his most famous buildings, the Church of the Light in Osaka, is made out of concrete. The building is a simple box, and there’s only one slit in the concrete where light comes through, so that one architectural move has to be so purposeful, placed correctly and proportioned correctly.”

Music vs. architecture: “Music elicits emotion in the way only music can; architecture elicits emotion in the way only it can. But they are similar: A slow violin song is very delicate, and all the notes are exposed. If you make one mistake, it’s glaringly obvious, but if you’re playing a very fast, noisy song, one mistake can be covered up quite easily. Architecture is the same way.”

Favorite type of project: “This might sound weird, but the residential projects where the site and location are the most stringent are actually the most interesting, because you have to be creative in new ways—if there is a really strict height requirement or zoning law, it forces your hand to fit things into a smaller area, so you might have to open up the floor plan in a way you wouldn’t normally.”

Why modern architecture rocks: “Designing a modern building is more challenging. There is no room for error when you are designing from one edge of a modern structure to the other. In a traditional house, you might have a punched window opening, and if it’s off by 2 or 3 inches, no one will ever know, but in a modern house with a full-height window, if it’s off by a couple of inches, it won’t work and you have to start over again.”

"I really liked Legos as a kid. When I was 5 or 6, someone told me I should become an architect, and it just stuck. I had no choice from that point forward."



ANDREW POGUE (BOTTOM); DAVID LAUER (TOP)

Biggest design peeve: "When people design homes that are too big for them and dilute their resources. If you design a house that is too big, you might be able to afford \$300 a square foot; design it a little smaller, and you can spend \$400 a square foot—putting that money into better design, better materials and cooler stuff—and get a more spectacular result."

Trend he'd like to see retired: "Reclaimed barn wood. It's beautiful, and if you're someone who really values the reuse of material, it makes a lot of sense, but if you just like it because you've seen it a lot, that's not a good reason to use it—a lot of other materials make more sense than old wood." ❖

Opposite, right, and this page, above: For the remodel of a 3,800-square-foot midcentury house in Boulder, Evers opened up the floor plan by removing a central fireplace, added a new indoor-outdoor fireplace, reoriented the living room, and designed a new guest room and office wing. The homeowners, who have two small children, can now enjoy the home's indoor-outdoor spaces more easily.

This page, top: For a 3,500-square-foot new build in Boulder, Evers included a band of windows with views south toward the Flatirons. The garage at left has a rooftop deck; inside the hilltop home, the family, who enjoy entertaining, have an open kitchen, dining and family room space with capacious views over the city of Boulder.