

Patience Makes PERFECT

Sophisticated comforts and a Vail Village location are a winning combination in this clever condo remodel

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ARCHITECTURE VALERIE KIRSTEN, RAL COMPANIES
INTERIOR DESIGN DUET DESIGN GROUP CONSTRUCTION RA NELSON

An ottoman and a pair of Roger lounge chairs by Thayer Coggin are upholstered in cozy Dalston Woolen Peat fabric by Ralph Lauren to create a relaxed conversation area.



Patience is a virtue, especially when it comes to designing a home that's a perfect fit. When this Denver family first encountered the brand-new 3,000-square-foot Vail condo, they loved the village location and mountain views, but the décor was disappointing. "It was always sort of dark, and it had reddish-brown trim that wasn't really our style, and it ended up making the unit very dark overall," the homeowner recalls. With three very young children, the homeowners didn't know what kind of space would suit their long-term needs, so they made a wise decision: to wait.

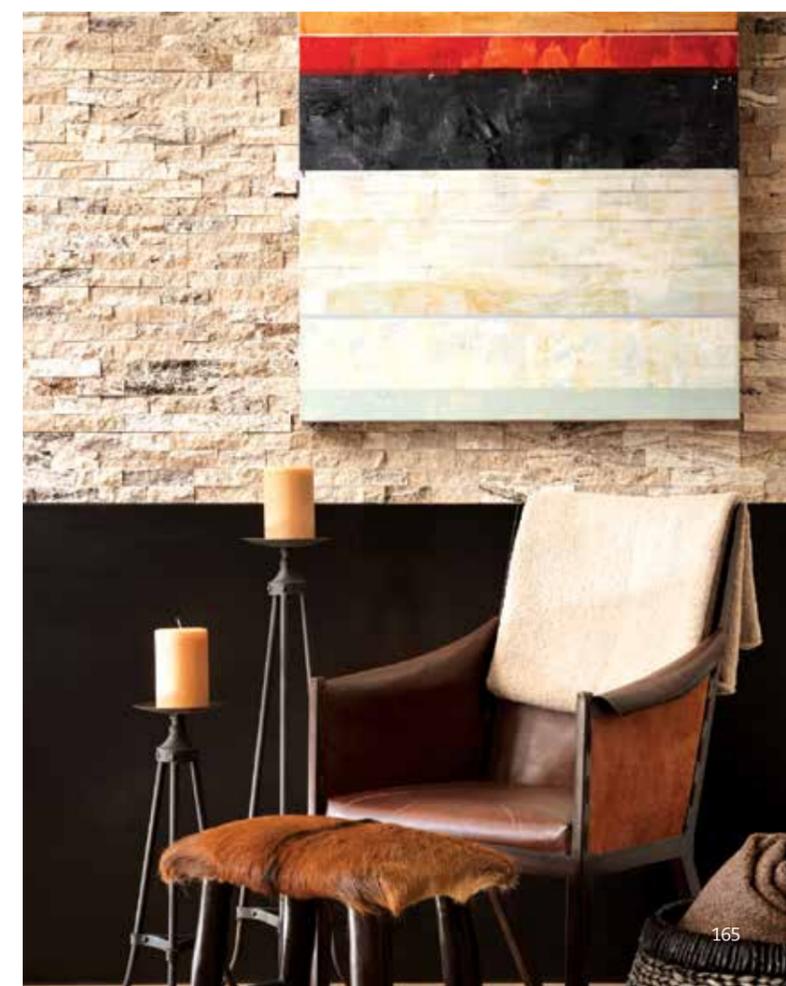
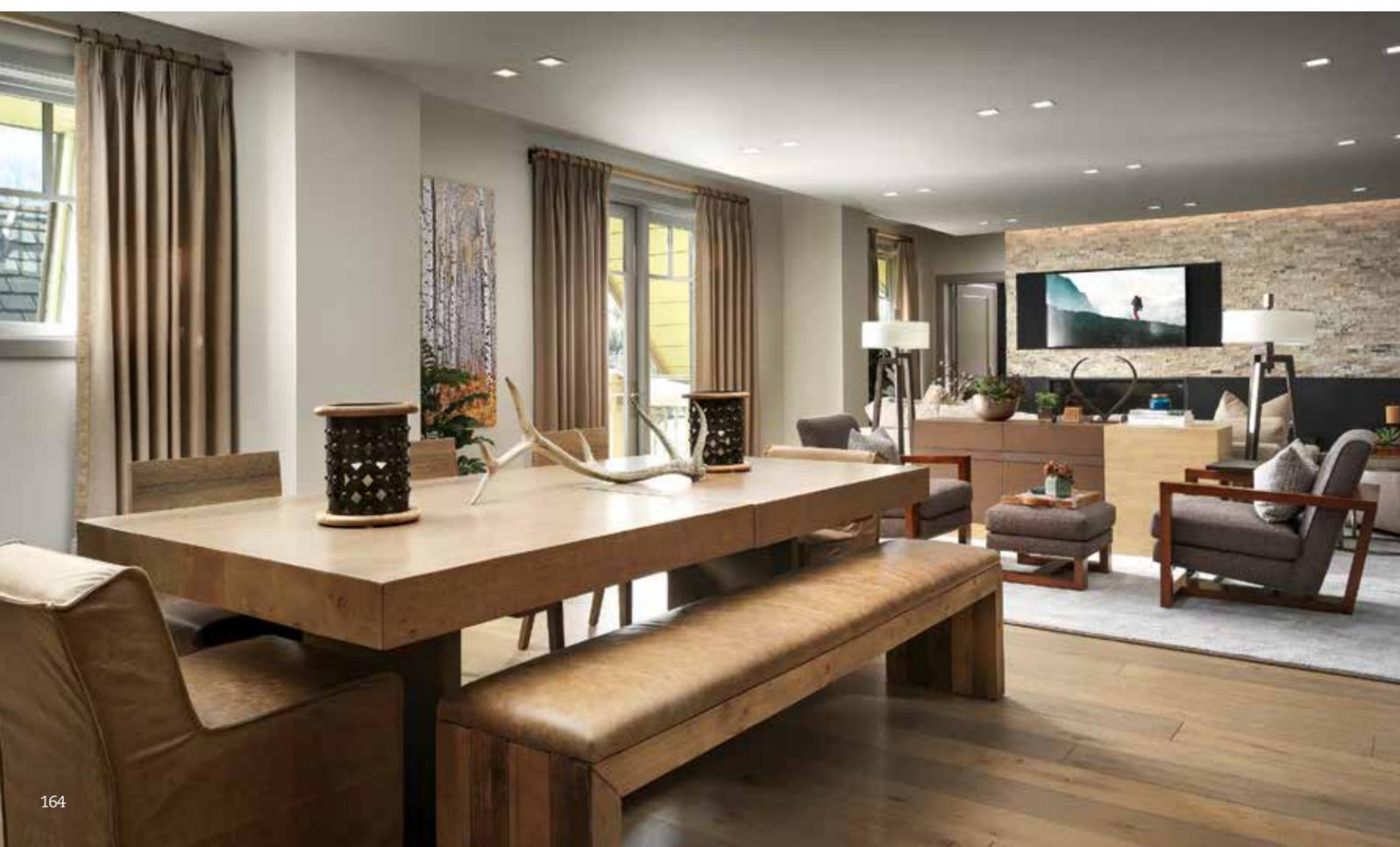
"We knew at some point in time we would want to make a bigger change, but we really thought it made sense to live there for a period of time and think about how we would want to use it," the homeowner explains. "We thought: Let's be patient and see what we really think about this." And so they did. For the next 18 months, the family evaluated the space with each visit. "We found that we'd have people over after skiing and the adults would hang out in the kitchen and have cocktails and appetizers and the kids would want to sit on the couch and play games or watch a movie," the homeowner recalls. "So, the ultimate goal was to make a better passageway through the unit and open up the main area big-time."

Help came in the form of the Duet Design Group team led by Miranda Cullen, principal and co-founder, based in Littleton, Colorado. She had worked with the family on various projects before, and they shared a great rapport. Valerie Kirsten, project architect and project manager at CDA-NY, an affiliate of RAL Companies, was brought in to orchestrate the architectural changes, and RA Nelson managed the construction. "The existing layout was segmented and made the unit feel smaller than the square footage would dictate," Kirsten explains. "And a separate media room with no natural light was seldom used as it felt disconnected from the rest of the living space." The solution? Relocating the kitchen to the former media room and opening up the walls created a spacious and airy main living area. "It's a more welcoming and flexible space for the whole family to eat, work and play together," says Kirsten.

The rooms are lighter and fresher, with a modern, Scandinavian-inspired aesthetic. "The base palette is very tonal, very textural, and it's light," Cullen explains. "We did a modern mountain take on what a Scandinavian palette would be—with washed-out woods, everything is lighter and brighter." They chose pale gray walls to maximize light reflection, and "the furnishings are all about comfort," Cullen says.

Tailored to a perfect fit, the refreshed condo proves the old adage that good things come to those who wait. "We get all the sunshine in the mornings, so when we wake up we just open the drapes and say, 'Is it going to be a powder day, or a bluebird day?'" the delighted homeowner explains. "It gets us really close to the outside and enjoying all the things we love to do." >>

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM, LEFT: A Magnus expanding dining table and Modernist Oak chairs by Taracea are combined with Seville chairs and a Ruskin bench by Four Hands. In the kitchen, cabinetry and vent hood are by Exquisite Kitchen Design. The Duvall 4-Door sideboard and hutch from Restoration Hardware stands beside a Lennon armchair from Palecek; the Gunnison chair by Hickory Chair accompanies *Cherokee* by Clay Johnson.



A SMART APPROACH TO ART

Slope-side ski condos need to be durable adventure outposts, but that doesn't mean they can't have a sophisticated approach to artwork. Interior designer Miranda Cullen offers expert advice on creating just the right mountain mix.

BE REALISTIC ABOUT BUDGET If there is money available for fine art, make those pieces the focal points of the room. Then we mix in giclée or printed canvas so it's not obvious that we are mixing 'fine jewelry with costume jewelry' and our clients' homes feel complete. **TRUST YOUR GUT** Don't ever be afraid to mix genres of artworks if they are pieces that 'speak to you.' **MIX AND MINGLE** I always like to mix size and quantities when it's an option, to be able to visually separate each space with artwork. **PLAY AROUND** Have fun in kids' spaces. Pieces with interesting movement and color always help to add character when needed. ○

BELOW: The powder room's Maldives Weave wallpaper in Blue Reef by Phillip Jeffries provides a backdrop for bold art pieces by Eugene Newmann and Sam Scott from Denver's William Havu Gallery. The Edie sconce is from Visual Comfort. RIGHT: A bedding set by Caracole makes a comfy nest in the master bedroom, with slate-gray drapery in Bennett Plaid by Robert Allen Duralee Group framing a Vail view.

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—THE HOMEOWNER