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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2016  
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# GATHERING IN THE GULCH

A somber Beaver Creek log home is converted to an airy getaway with crowd appeal

BY MICHELLE JOHNSON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIMBERLY GAVIN

## BEFORE

LIKE MOST HOMES built in Bachelor Gulch in the early 2000s, this 8,515-square-foot log home was a product of quintessential Parkitecture—a play on the words “national park” and “architecture” used to describe traditional mountain rustic design schemes. The ski-in ski-out space’s interiors were dark, dramatic, and masculine with a heavy Texan influence. With seven bedrooms and 9½ baths, the home’s closed-off areas felt disjointed and secluded. When the new homeowners purchased the house as a weekend getaway, they quickly decided the interiors needed to be updated to suit their lifestyle.

## AFTER

ARCHITECT BRIAN Judge, interior designers Lucy Oesterle and Eddy Dumas, and project manager Robyn Boylan teamed up to create a contemporary living space with lighter hues and pops of color without deviating too far from the log cabin foundation. The majority of the renovation focused on three main areas: the kitchen, master bedroom and bath, and recreation room. A wall dividing the kitchen and dining room was taken down to create one central great room, while vaulted ceilings in the master bedroom and bath were lowered to facilitate a more intimate setting. Heavy drapery throughout the house was removed to incorporate more natural light and show off stunning views of the Gore Range. Reimagined as a hub for extended family and friends, the new functional design supports the demands of a crowd. »



In the kitchen (above), clunky cabinetry was replaced with sleek European Larch cabinets and Taj Majal Quartzite countertops and backsplash. A light gray Cone Simple Design Chandelier hangs above the reconfigured island complete with Nuevo swivel barstools. The hardwood floors were restored with a darker finish, while the black walls were painted white to reflect light.

NOW THEN





After a wall between the kitchen and living room was removed, the design team furnished the great room (above) with plenty of guest seating outfitted in cool blue and orange hues. A Krista Shiner painting—that inspired the color scheme of the home—hangs above the reconstructed kitchen fireplace (right). A coffee station was added to encourage guests to serve themselves.

**W**hen a Denver-based family purchased this fully furnished Bachelor Gulch vacation home, they loved its substantial size and picturesque setting, but wanted something that felt less log-traditional and projected a sunnier disposition. “Bring in the light” would have been a worthy mantra. So in early 2013, the new homeowners hired a team of designers to execute a more modern space where they could effortlessly entertain extended family and friends—all in time for Thanksgiving dinner. “[The homeowners] were very much focused on a style that was open, airy, and bright,” says Brian Judge of VAg Architects. “They wanted more contemporary, more functionality, and more family.”

With a limited budget and a ticking clock, Judge made it his priority to reconfigure the kitchen, dining room, and living room into one seamless great room by taking down a wall.

“The hurdle was that a considerable amount of kitchen function—such as the refrigerator and pantry—were integrated into that wall,” he explains. “In order to keep the functionality of the kitchen, we rotated it 90 degrees, lengthened it, and added windows.” »



“The house is there to help you take care of yourself and entertain and be part of the environment.”

—BRIAN JUDGE, ARCHITECT



**NOW** **THEN**



The downstairs recreation room (above) now has a playful spark with PB Teen bean bags and a curved Lampa chandelier above the pool table. Beige carpeting was replaced with dark wood flooring, and heavy window treatments were removed to show off the home’s mountain views. A fully functional wet bar (left) was added off the upstairs living room for guests to use at their leisure.



The master bedroom (above) was simplified by swapping out cluttered furniture with a powder blue Benchmade by Brownstone chaise. Ceiling-to-floor window treatments by Tabors of San Angelo are controlled by remote. The master bath (opposite page) now includes a modern, freestanding tub from Ferguson, two mirroring vanities, and Selene Marble tile by Ann Sacks. Both the master bedroom and bathroom's original vaulted ceilings were lowered to create a more intimate environment.

NOW THEN



A wet bar and coffee station were also added to allow guests to help themselves to a morning mug or an après-ski cocktail. The resulting great room is a space where guests are encouraged to participate—whether it's through cooking, cleaning, or conversation.

“There’s nothing worse than owning a vacation house and feeling like you’re working the whole time while everyone else is on vacation,” says Judge. “No one is taking care of you here. The house is there to help you take care of yourself and entertain and be part of the environment.”

A primary focus of the renovation was to incorporate the homeowners’ request for more light and function, while staying true to the home’s log cabin foundation. Some rooms were partially renovated, while others underwent selective cosmetic updates. The design team’s challenge was to find a coherent style between the untouched rooms and the renovated spaces.

“We didn’t want one part of the house to look like it was renovated and contemporary while another part looks like the year 2000,” says Judge. “It was very important to pull those things together, and that was the largest challenge by far.”



NOW THEN



The crew found balance by keeping structural elements in place—log beams, log ceilings, original flooring—but toned down the Western aesthetic by adding youthful hues and updated cabinetry, appliances, furniture, and décor. Vaulted ceilings in the master bedroom and bath were lowered to create a more intimate, human-scale setting, and windows in the great room were uncovered to bring in more natural light. Lucy Oesterle of Worth Interiors integrated a color palette of pale blue, persimmon, and a smoky gray inspired by Denver artist Krista Shiner’s painting *Aerial Roots*, which hangs above the great room fireplace.

Down to the wire, the final furnishings were completed the day before Thanksgiving, and the homeowners ushered in the troops for a celebratory meal. As the sun escaped behind the surrounding mountains, adults gathered around the 14-seat dining table and children crowded into the kitchen nook to enjoy the revamped home, a bountiful feast, and each other’s company. ❖

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