

Good things come
in small packages
when landscape,
light, and low-key
luxury combine in a
contemporary aerie
amidst the pines

Of Sunshine
and Simplicity





(previous page) The open kitchen and dining space is awash with natural light. Rusted metal accent walls echo the home's exterior cladding and provide a mellow blaze of color in the heart of the home. The one-of-a-kind dining table was made from an old maple tree that once graced the grounds of Boulder High School. The homeowner explains, "A guy named Billy worked with us to build the table, which is based on a classic Nakashima design. We call it our Billy Nakashima table." It is surrounded by Niels Møller chairs from Design Within Reach and topped with Fungi vases from HW Home. (above, left) "We did not want any cabinetry above counter level in the kitchen," the homeowner explains. "Instead, we opted for open shelving. This makes it very practical to reach for glasses and plates that are in use every day." A wood floor surface is easy on the cook's legs, and a Blue Star range packs a lot of BTUs. (above, right) The refrigerator is tucked into the pantry, along with a bar sink that's often used to soak garden greens. "It's easy to draw inspiration from the jars of grains and nuts and dried fruits that are on the shelves," the homeowner says. (opposite) The family keeps oak and local locust logs to fuel their wood-burning oven.

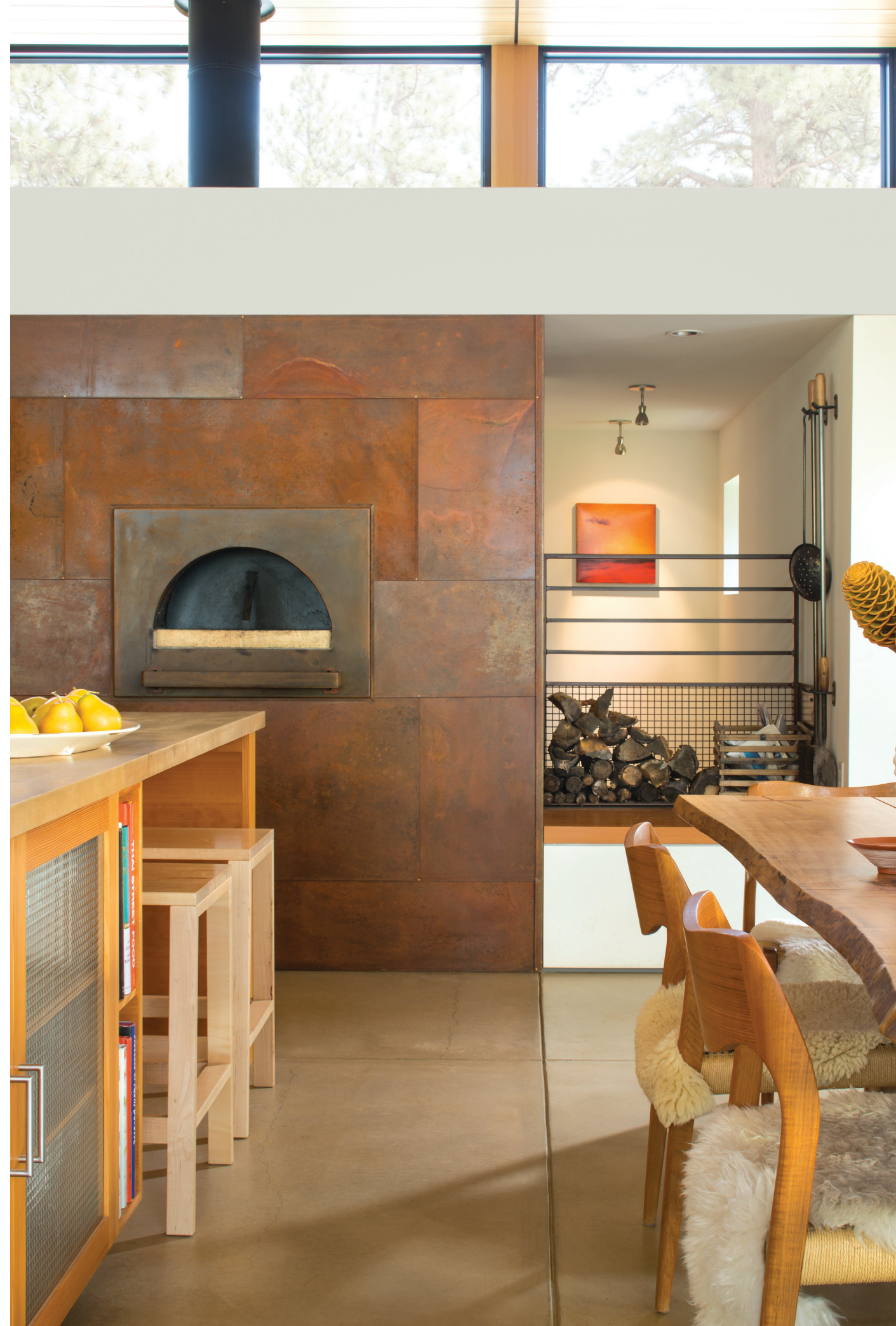


BY LAURA BEAUSIRE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIMBERLY GAVIN

In the foothills high above Boulder, on the crest of a ridge near Sunshine Canyon, there's an elegant gem of a house tucked into the woods. While the land may be raw and undeveloped, this small home with great big views is an exercise in sophisticated simplicity.

Architect Stephen Dynia, of Denver- and Jackson Hole, WY-based Dynia Architects, designed the house, and he was happy to help his clients realize their request for a restrained aesthetic: "This house has a monastic modesty to it," he says. And that's just what the homeowners had in mind. While the clean lines of modern design inspired them, they also felt drawn to the warmth of natural materials and time-honored Western motifs. So the home's oxidized steel cladding is an elegant reference to the rusted sheds of the Old West, and the rough, corrugated exterior walls recall the weathered bark of ponderosa pines.

Blending into the landscape was a priority from the start. The homeowners were adamant about respecting their natural surroundings, and they felt that having a well-integrated



house with a compact footprint was an important aspect of living lightly upon their 35-acre property. With eastern, southern and western exposure, the site offers views of the plains, the city of Boulder and the Front Range foothills, and even the frosty peaks of the Continental Divide.

Inside, the home is filled with light. “We wanted light from every time of day to reach virtually every room in the house,” the homeowner says, explaining, “The simple geometry of the house—one large volume enclosing a smaller interior volume for private rooms and storage—allows light to pass through the house as if it were transparent.” The effect is magical, creating what the homeowner describes as “a lovely projection of sunlight and tree shadows on walls.” Dynia framed the spectacular views and welcomed the Colorado sunshine with generous rows of high-quality, energy-efficient windows. “You feel like you’re outside,” the architect notes.

Since they live in the middle of a forest, the homeowners made some commonsense (and down-to-earth) decisions: the home is heated by a wood-burning boiler; the living room is warmed by a wood-burning stove; and the family—and friends—are often fed by a wood-burning oven.

When a home is this unadorned, the choice of materials needs to be meticulous. Here, the floors are concrete, which is beautiful and functional at once, allowing radiant floor heating and providing a large thermal mass to maximize passive solar gain. The ceilings are finished with a handsome, clear-coated hemlock. As the homeowner explains, “Instead of putting beautiful wood on the floor,

The airy and bright living room keeps cozy in winter thanks to a stylish Italian wood-burning stove. Built-in bookshelves climb one wall, while huge windows open up the home’s interiors to the light and the forest. An Arco lamp bows down above a color-splashed Rex Ray rug from Shaver-Ramsey, and pillows from HW Home jazz up a sofa from Room & Board.





where it would get worn down and would interfere with the thermal functions of the underlying concrete, we put it on the ceiling.”

Dynia designed the narrow, 2,300-square-foot home as a series of eight 12-foot bays, and that strict governing geometry lends a serene clarity to the open and airy interior spaces. “The order of the house is comforting compared to the disorder of nature,” Dynia observes. The home’s private areas

are divided into three modestly-sized “chambers,” comprised of the master bedroom, study and child’s room, each measuring “barely 12-by-12.” The living room, kitchen and pantry flow together as a unified and functional space.

The homeowners love to cook, and they had clear ideas about their work area, so the kitchen was the focus of intense design discussion. “They wanted simple functionality,” recalls Stephen Dynia, “to see

stuff and have it available.” Open shelves hold essential items that are frequently used, and an enormous island affords an expansive butcher block surface above and ample storage below, leaving room for a couple of stools as well. Unadorned maple cabinets and honed Carrara marble provide a fresh counterpoint to the rusted metal accent wall behind the cooking area.

Though its sleek minimalism may look effortless, there’s a great

deal of calculation behind the home’s clean, contemporary design. “Simplicity gets there through a very busy process,” Dynia notes, praising the homeowners’ clarity of communication as an essential tool for building a fruitful collaboration. “The simplicity of the house highlights the eccentricities of nature,” he remarks. And with a Colorado landscape this extravagantly beautiful, it’s a worthy tribute. □

(*opposite, top*) Architect Stephen Dynia designed a big overhang to shade the large windows and the patio. “We eat dinner out there all summer long,” says the homeowner. (*opposite, bottom*) With a passion for food and cooking, the homeowners keep an abundant garden filled with greens, beans and all sorts of wholesome veggies. The high fence keeps out deer, and the chicken coop nearby provides a stylish home to four hens. (*this page, top*) The home’s oxidized steel cladding recalls vintage Western sheds and barns. The walkway connecting to the front entrance is actually a kind of bridge that allows water to pass beneath it during storms. (*this page, bottom*) Calling the setting “uncivilized,” Dynia says, “We left the landscape as unaffected as we could.” The homeowners worked with R Design Land Architects and Nettle Landscaping to restore topographic swales and ridges, original wildflowers and grasses.

DESIGN DETAILS

Architectural Design
STEPHEN DYNIA
DYNIA ARCHITECTS
dynia.com

{ MORE @ }

coloradohomesmag.com/Simplicity