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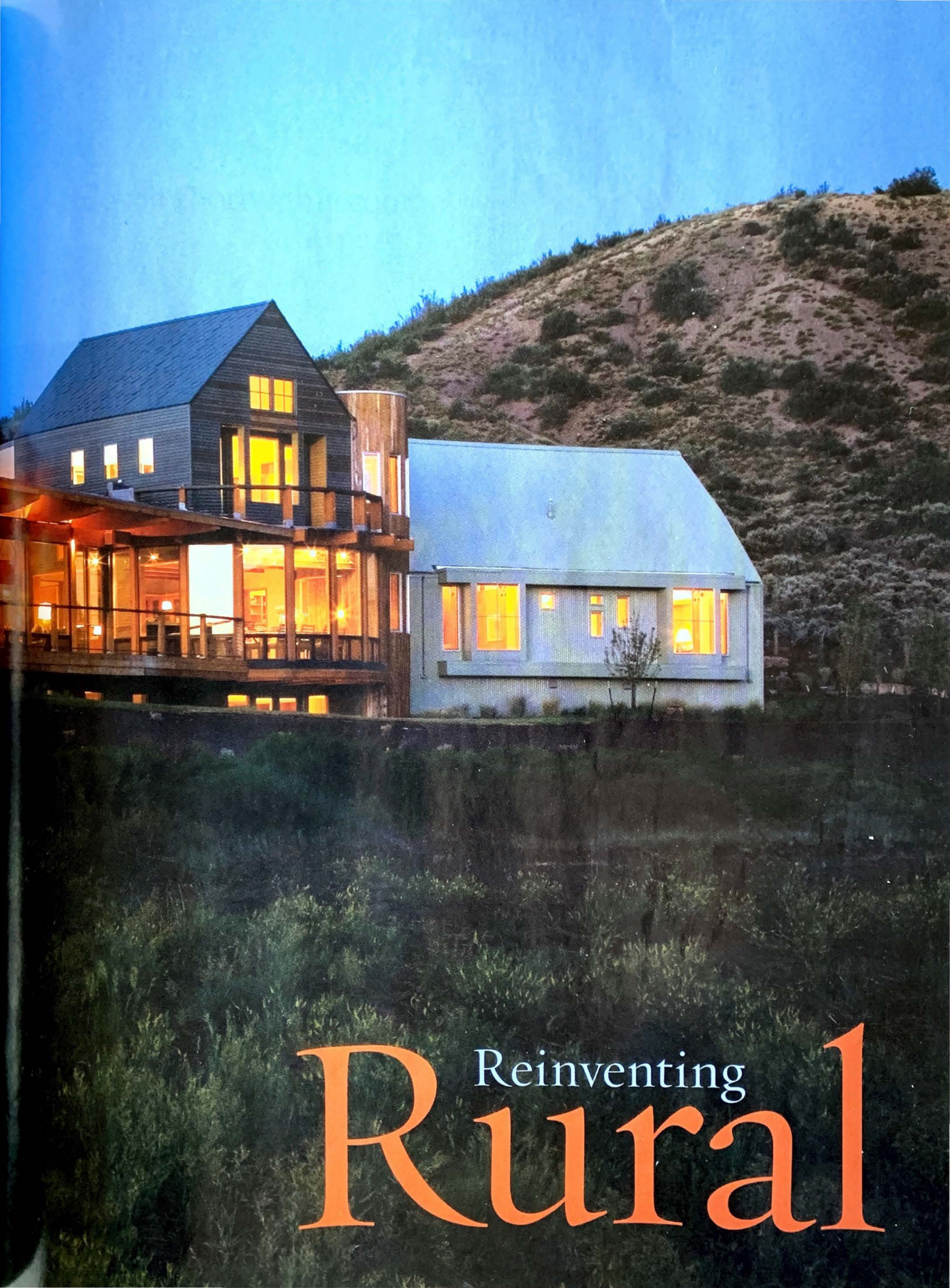
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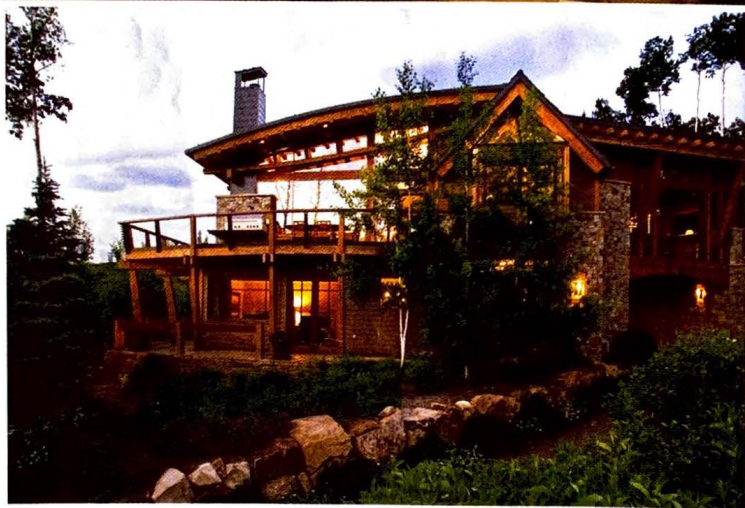




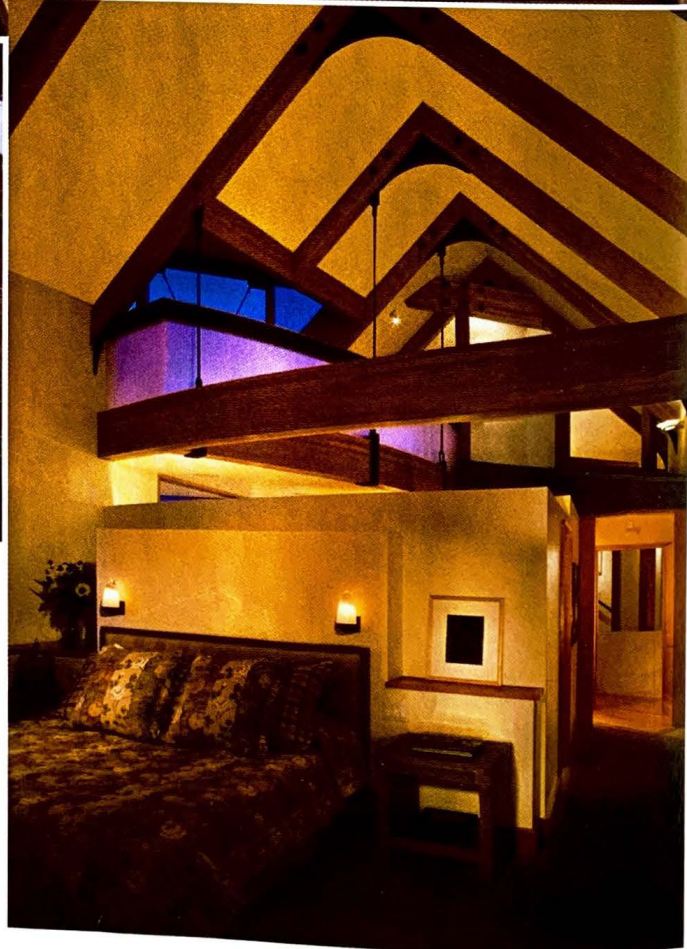
Illuminating design: An exterior view of Hagman Architects' Lazy O Ranch project.



Reinventing
Rural 1



Pieced together: (clockwise from top left) Walkway; living room; bedroom; exterior view.



How a thoroughly contemporary ranch house speaks to the past in Old Snowmass.

by Linda Hayes

"It was a 'Eureka!' moment," says Hagman Architects associate partner Tony Major of the inspiration behind the contemporary 8,200-square-foot home he designed for clients in Old Snowmass's pastoral Lazy O Ranch. "The area has so much history as a ranching community. It suddenly made sense to pick up on that and take it to the next level."

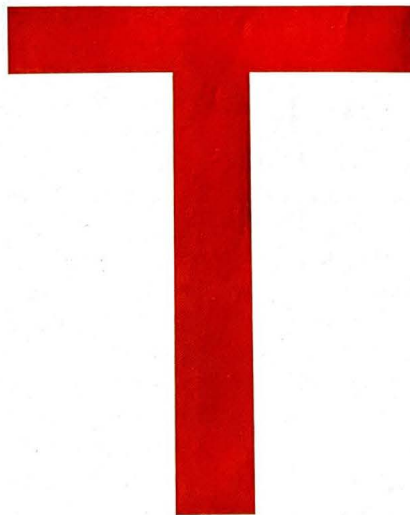
Getting the idea of a modern-day-ranch-as-second-home down on paper was more complicated than a "eureka" moment, however. Close attention had to be paid to the needs and desires of the clients, a Houston-based couple with three grown kids, who were far from newcomers to the area. "We'd had a home in Snowmass Village for 19 years, so we had a clear idea of how we wanted to live," explains the wife. "We wanted plenty of private space for each of us, but to still be connected. And we wanted something *different*."

To that end, Major designed a village-like collection of buildings that, in their most basic shapes, resemble old ranching structures—barns, toolsheds, and silos. Each building has its own function. One houses the kitchen, another a two-bedroom children's wing. The garage and master suite are also housed in separate buildings.

Each of the buildings is joined by what Major refers to as "contemporary transparent space," which means walls crafted of light-diffusing corrugated polycarbonate panels supported by curved Parallam beams (superstrong wood beams designed for supporting long spans) and Glu-Lams (load-bearing glue-laminated timber beams). "It's as if these individual structures existed before the connectors went in, and then

we simply added onto it and brought the outside in," Major explains.

A low 18-inch-wide board-formed concrete wall runs through the length of the house like a spine. It looks surprisingly natural, like one of the old tumbled-stone versions you might stumble across on a hike through the surrounding fields. The twist? Its passive-solar design principles contribute to the heating and cooling of the home's interior, which, in turn, help keep energy use down.



The first glimpse of the house comes from a rural road that winds through fields of native grass and sage and leads to an entry drive lined with nonfruiting crabapple trees. "It was part of our effort to connect with the area's agricultural history," explains Valerie Alexander, project manager for the property's landscape architecture and owner of the Aspen-based landscape architecture firm Bluegreen. "The area was traditionally hayed and used for

cattle. We took a spin on that to provide an orchard." Other notable landscape-design details include the planting of low-maintenance native plants and ornamental grasses.

The closer you get to the house, physically speaking, the clearer Major's vision of the reinvented ranch house becomes. "We spent a lot of time walking around and studying the setting," he says. "The layout was based on the views from the site and how it fits into the land. Different parts of the house are aimed at different views." The sweeping curved wall of the dining and living areas, for instance, follows the panorama of fields and distant ridgelines, while the master suite is aimed directly at Mt. Sopris.

Pulling into the drive, the entry is tucked away amid an understated courtyard where the use of varied yet complementary materials (beveled cedar board-and-batten siding, recycled barnwood, painted corrugated metal, and "bitterroot" stone veneer, a different type for each of the buildings) comes into play.

Beyond the pivoting front door, the home's interior gradually unfolds. "There's no 'great room' feel," Major says. "It's a slow reveal, accented by the spectacular views." While the exterior materials are repeated inside, especially in relation to the face of each building, the overall effect is softened by a sage-green-and-sand color palette and warmed by highly polished woods.

Major acknowledged his clients' lifestyle preferences at every turn, with the most obvious example being the co-joined kitchen, dining, and living areas. "We wanted the spaces to be separate but still connected and com-

A low concrete wall runs through the length of the house like a spine. It looks surprisingly natural, like one of the old tumbled-stone versions you might stumble across on a hike through the surrounding fields.

fortable," the wife says. "The ideas kept flowing forth."

Warm and inviting, with beamed ceilings and cherrywood floors, the open kitchen owes its contemporary edge to zinc-and-polished-concrete countertops, dry-stack travertine-tile backsplashes, Hagman-designed fir cabinetry, and commercial-style stainless-steel appliances. A cozy breakfast silo—complete with recycled-barnwood walls, a built-in bench, and a shiny copper ceiling—does double duty as a private kids' table at dinnertime. "The round shape also works as a punctuation mark to the more linear layout," Major points out.

The living room is particularly dramatic. A custom-designed double-sided sculptural fireplace that Major describes as "a freestanding piece of art" is flanked by curved floor-to-ceiling windows and a wall design that features oversized X-braces that are both structural and decorative. A small sitting room is tucked away on the other side of the fireplace. The slanted roofline overhangs the wraparound deck.

Faced with sage-hued cedar board-and-batten siding, the living room's far wall extends beyond the interior walls and marks the entrance to the building that houses the master suite. "The buildings push through one another," Major says. "When you think about

the function of space and how it interconnects with other spaces, it evolves into something really fun."


Open and airy, the master suite features a soaring, straight gable-ridge roof and suspended beams that appear to float above a built-in bed wall designed to separate the bedroom from the bath. Up in that labyrinth, a small office overlooks a glassed-in triangular shower. "It's architecture within architecture," Major says. "That you could see down into the shower from above didn't seem to bother anyone."

A sense of playful creativity also pops up in the curved stairway, which leads to a contained upper level. Heavy wood treads are braced by an even heavier inch-thick steel pipe that had to be dropped in through the roof. A series of light-box-style windows invites light to shine in on an elaborate glass-pendant chandelier created by Houston interior designer Julia Blailock, who is also credited with the majority of the home's furnishings.

A guest-bedroom suite is located up the stairs and includes a sitting area in the upper level of the silo, while a fourth bedroom sits off the main level beyond the master suite. A separate kids' "barn" features a 20-foot-high Gothic-arch roofline and houses a pair of bedrooms with open ceilings, closet-top loft spaces accessed by ladders, and roomy bathrooms with niche windows

to catch the views.

While Major was the lead architect for this singular project, he is quick to point out that its success was the end result of the collaborative effort of everyone involved, clients included. "The clients were great," Major adds. "They were open to ideas, some of which were a little over-the-top. They gave us freedom to create the perfect home for them and their lifestyle."

Whether or not this newcomer to the Lazy O landscape will pass muster with its predecessors, it's a sure sign that everything old is new again in these parts and that there's hope for preserving our heritage. As for the future generation? Well, that's up to them. 

Project Architect

Tony Major, associate partner of Hagman Architects, Basalt

Landscape Architect

Valerie Alexander, owner of Bluegreen, Aspen

Structural Engineer

Jack Albright of Peightal Engineers, Basalt

General Contractor

Ken Baldwin of Boyd Baldwin Construction, Aspen

Interior Designer

Julia Blailock, ASID, Houston

Lighting Designer

Kevin White of White Lighting Design, Wheat Ridge



On the rise: A stairwell accented by a glass-pendant chandelier by interior designer Julia Blailock.