

# the house on the hill

Modern house filled  
with contemporary and  
street-inspired art

By Brenda Himelfarb

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRENT BINGHAM



*Paige and Michael Hill in their master suite, which cantilevers out from the structure.*





**T**hink edgy. Think modern sophistication. Think outside the box. That's what

Paige and Michael Hill were thinking when they approached architect Christopher Brandon to build their dream home high on the mountain in Vail. After walking the site, Brandon soon told the couple that he had a sketch. He called it Levitating Cubes, as he envisioned cube-shaped forms ensconced in the mountain that would capitalize on magnificent views that never end.

If you were to look up the characteristics of a modern home, you'd find that the Hills' home has it all — in spades. Clean



*The indoor and outdoor spaces have a seamless transition, thanks to the large, glass walls and doors.*



lines, little ornamentation, large expanses of glass, innovative building materials, expansive interiors and open floor plans, reliance on technology, energy efficiency and use of eco friendly materials. In fact, when it won the National Home Builders Association's 2019 Home of the Year Award, "Best of Mountain Region," the judges said, "This home is jaw-dropping at every turn. From the cantilevers to the well-detailed glass box concept to the way the home nestles into the site, what's not to love?"

"The imagination of the architect was spectacular," says Paige. "Christopher called me and said, 'This is what I'm thinking — levitating cubes.' And I was so excited. I hadn't even seen the drawings, but I knew it was going to be awesome. I can't believe I live here."

Built by Alex Dammeyer and Bo Wood of Meadow Mountain Homes, the structure is a duplex home, totaling 10,063 square feet and separated by a concrete wall 30 feet tall and 12 inches thick. The Hills' larger unit, 5,046 square feet, is a signature piece of the home, cantilevering 12 feet from the main structure, creating a covered loggia, an open area, that's adjacent to the great room below, essentially immersing the Hills in each of our valley's glorious seasons. The home's mix of materials includes glass, structural steel and concrete.

#### MICHAEL FIRST SKIED VAIL IN

1991. "My friend from Chicago has a place in Edelweiss and I stayed with him," he says. "After ten years, I decided to get my own place. And then Paige and I remodeled it after we began dating in 2006. Just the basics: the bathrooms and kitchen."

Until 2007, Michael had been a commodities trader with the Chicago Board of Trade. "When the real estate market fell apart, we bought three lots in Corona del Mar and transitioned into real estate developing," he explains.

At the time, Paige had a private jet charter business — she was not an interior designer by trade. "I just stumbled into it," she says, demurely. "We built a duplex on one of our lots and someone came along and said, 'I know you're selling the back, but I want the front.' And I said, 'Well, we live here, so you can't have it.' So he said, 'I'll buy them both.'"

So the Hills moved out and started again. "And we did another one and another one and the architect said, 'You're selling all your projects for the highest price going in the village. You have to do this.' So I started a

DBA in my jet business as Ultra-Mod Home Concepts. I began taking clients and I was doing both. Eventually, I shut down the jet business and have done this for ten years. So, now it's so easy for me. It's like going to the mall and shopping for an outfit.

"I discover a lot of things in mid-construction," admits Paige. "For instance, If I don't want to have a particular wall, I omit it. It is really good to walk a job site and feel the space, as opposed to just looking at the plans. I lose walls and doors all the time. I'm all about opening things up. Bigger. Brighter. Indoor. Outdoor."

And so began the Paige's new career, which brings us to the couple's extraordinary Vail home.

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*A bronze torso by Nimrod Messeg is the living room's centerpiece.*





*The live-edge sycamore dining table was designed by Tony Clark, and is complemented by Kevin Cobonpue's artistic chairs.*

**ONE ENTERS THE HOME INTO** a great room, the main kitchen and a dining room. The spacious living area includes a leather sectional with contrast stitching by Roche Bobois and a Lotah easy chair by Kenneth Cobonpue, an industrial designer known for integrating natural materials through handmade production processes. He also designed the Hive C-U C-ME pendant that

hangs above. A cedar ceiling and other treatments were added to soften the concrete. Close to the XLight porcelain fireplace, a bronze sculpture of a woman's torso, by Nimrod Messeg, is the living room's centerpiece.

Scattered throughout the house are pieces of art that the couple have given each other for anniversaries. Personal pieces. Personal remembrances. They

add warmth and character to this ultra-modern home.

In the kitchen, Porcelanosa, a ceramic and porcelain tile, is used throughout. And everything from the cabinets and drawers to coffee and smoothie centers are cleverly hidden. A totally modern, clean look.

"We've used Krion, from the Porcelanosa Group, on every countertop in our home, from

the kitchen to the bathroom to the shower surroundings," says Paige. "It's UV resistant, heat resistant, stain resistant. It's basically bombproof! And if you cut it, you can use a liquid Krion and vice-grip it together, sand it out — and it will be completely seamless. That's why our island kitchen is so big and has no seams. It is seven pieces of Krion. It's matte finished, and if it got





Let's just say, in addition  
to art, the woman  
collects shoes.





Instead of doors, the closet's shelves and racks are set apart by a shimmer screen — turning the closet interior into another art installation.

stained, I could simply sand it out with sandpaper. It's one of my favorite things in the house."

However, Paige's choice appliance is probably the innovative Mila oven. "It's amazing," says Paige, excitedly. "For instance, if I'm cooking salmon I'll be asked, 'How do you like it baked? Are you using frozen or fresh?' If I'm adding a veggie, it'll ask, 'How do you like your broccoli cooked? Is it whole? Florets?' It's just a terrific oven. And makes cooking a piece of cake!"

The kitchen's sapphire blue custom, full-height lacquer cabinets and the island's matte-white counters are, too, by Porcelanosa. "We wanted an organic feel in the kitchen," continues Paige. "It's so modern when you have steel and glass, concrete and organic elements with the right lighting. The cabinets reflect the outside and I had the front door custom-made to match the cabinets."

And Paige also spiced up the home with dashes of unexpected color. "Everyone thought I

was nuts putting in bright blue kitchen cabinets," Paige told Luxe Architecture & Design, "but it turned out great. Some of the bedroom furniture is done in a fuchsia color, and one of the guest bedrooms has a green upholstered platform bed."

The dining area, open to the kitchen, features an exquisite sycamore-based table made by designer Tony Clark. And the stunning, artistic chairs, once again, designed by Kevin Cobonpue.

Adjacent to the kitchen is a wine wall — essentially, the wine room. Or the "party wall," as Paige aptly named it. "The wall divides both sides of the duplex," explains Paige. "It's 12 inches thick, 45 feet tall and 65 feet long. It looked very strange when the house was under construction. However, because it goes up to the exterior, the wall is always cold. And for that reason, nothing has to be refrigerated."

Tall, slender stainless steel balusters support the staircase that leads you upstairs to the couple's master suite. Their

retreat. And, as you ascend, you're joined by a bronze rock climber — a sculpture created by Guadalajara artist Claudia Rodriquez.

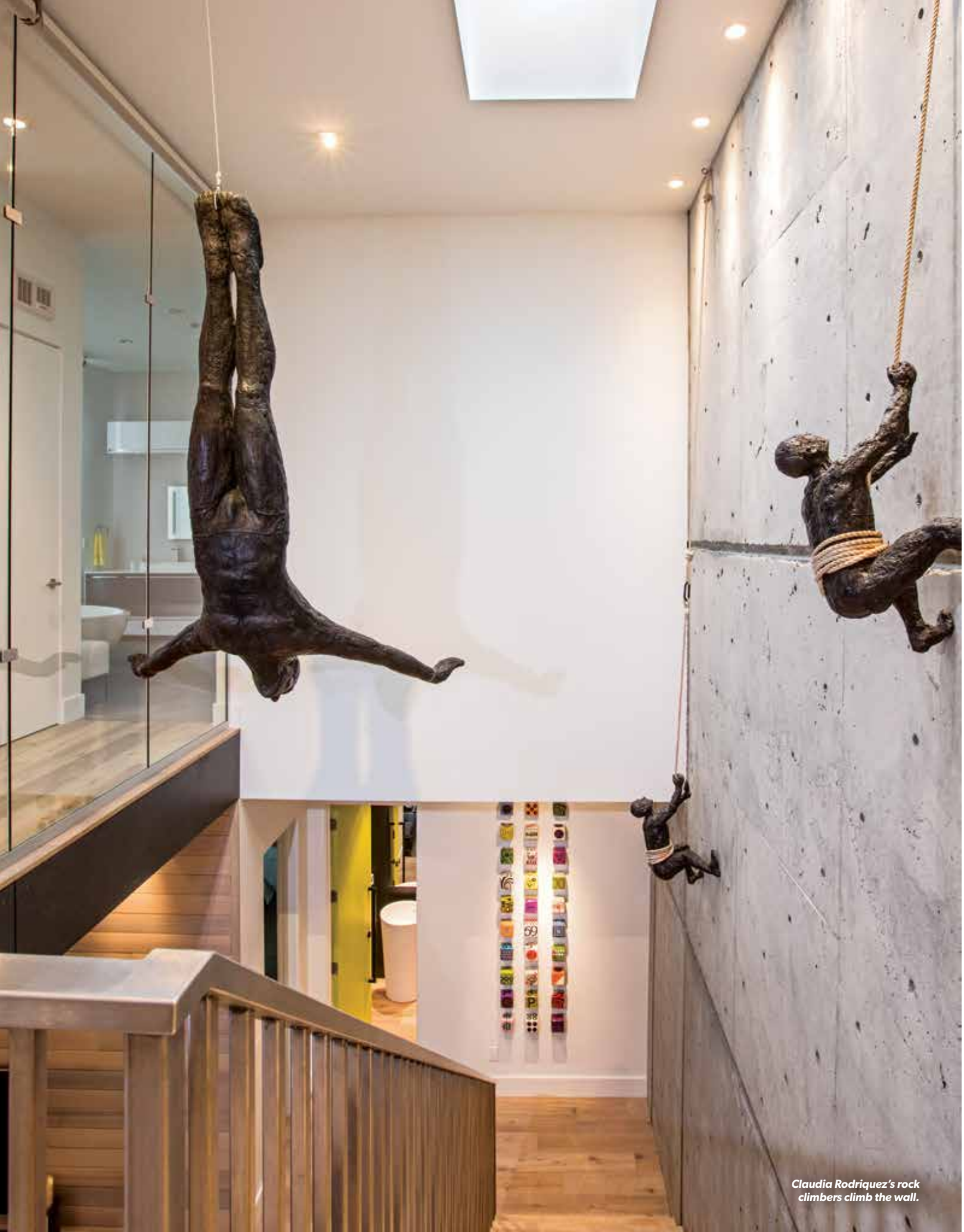
The couple's private quarters include a master suite, which cantilevers out with glass walls on three sides that create a sense of, not just being in but, being *with* nature. A kitchenette, roof-deck hot tub and fire pit complete the suite — truly a getaway, should they have a houseful of guests.

The room highlights a white leather Calligaris bed on a custom wooden platform. A coffee table, also by Calligaris, and lounge chairs complete the serene look. The Aviation ceiling fan is distressed koa wood.

In the master bathroom, with its views of the surrounding forest, is a triangular tub by Aquatica. With the tranquil view the room offers, one can only imagine relaxing in the luxurious tub, not a care in the world.







*Claudia Rodriguez's rock climbers climb the wall.*

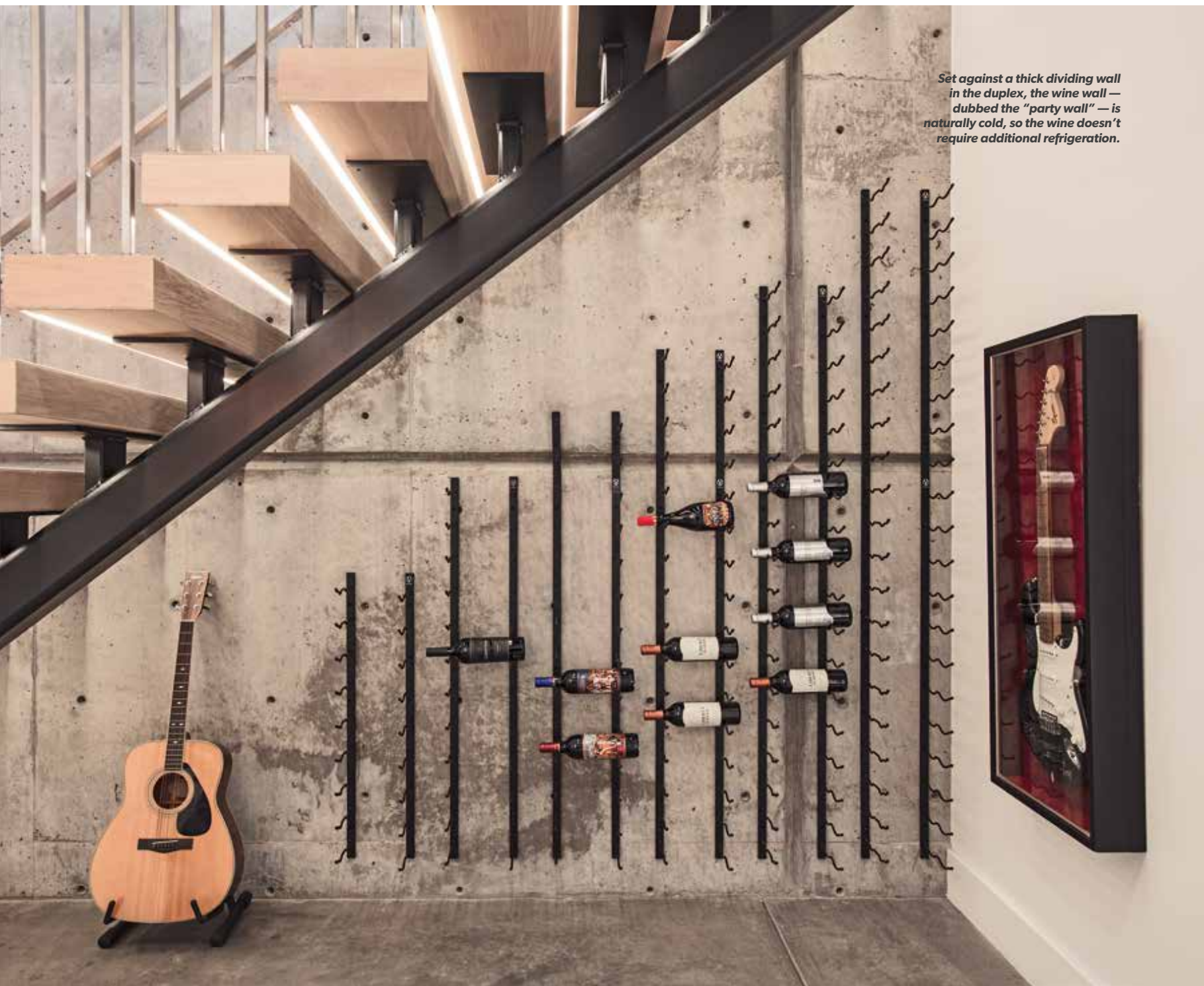




*The wild, mountainous view is as much a part of the home's design as any of the home's walls or decor.*

"I lose walls and doors all the time.  
I'm all about opening things up.  
Bigger. Brighter. Indoor. Outdoor."





*Set against a thick dividing wall in the duplex, the wine wall — dubbed the “party wall” — is naturally cold, so the wine doesn’t require additional refrigeration.*

and Sheryo have painted a piece in the home’s elevator.

And all of the art is strategically placed — unexpectedly in some areas. Yet all adding to the creative personality of this imaginative home.

Landscape architect Ric Fields used a number of design elements to extend the interior spaces to the outdoors. “The plant massing was intended to soften

the corners of the building and also frame the view,” he explains. Snowberry, aspen and spruce are just some of the flora he planted.

#### **RIGHT NOW THE COUPLE**

is taking a pause. They’re ensconced in the eight acres of heaven, and looking out for the wildlife that run by their home each day and night. “It takes about two to three years to buy

something, get it permitted and sold — and a lot can happen,” says Michael. “So our methodology right now is sitting on our hands for awhile and see what happens and take advantage of some of the success we’ve had and be able to travel while we’re young and still healthy.

“We see fox and deer, in addition to the mountains.

We’re only a mile and a half to Vail Village, yet we feel like we’re out in the woods and nobody can see us.”

Adds Paige, “It really is a private setting. A new, modern, stand-alone home. You don’t see a lot of this architecture in Vail.

“We’re living right in the forest in a glass house and we’re completely private.” **VVM**





“The piece is a play on Adam and Eve. There’s an apple and a snake and a lair of mischief.”





Glass garage door provide an industrial look, and an unobstructed view of the painting on the retaining wall.

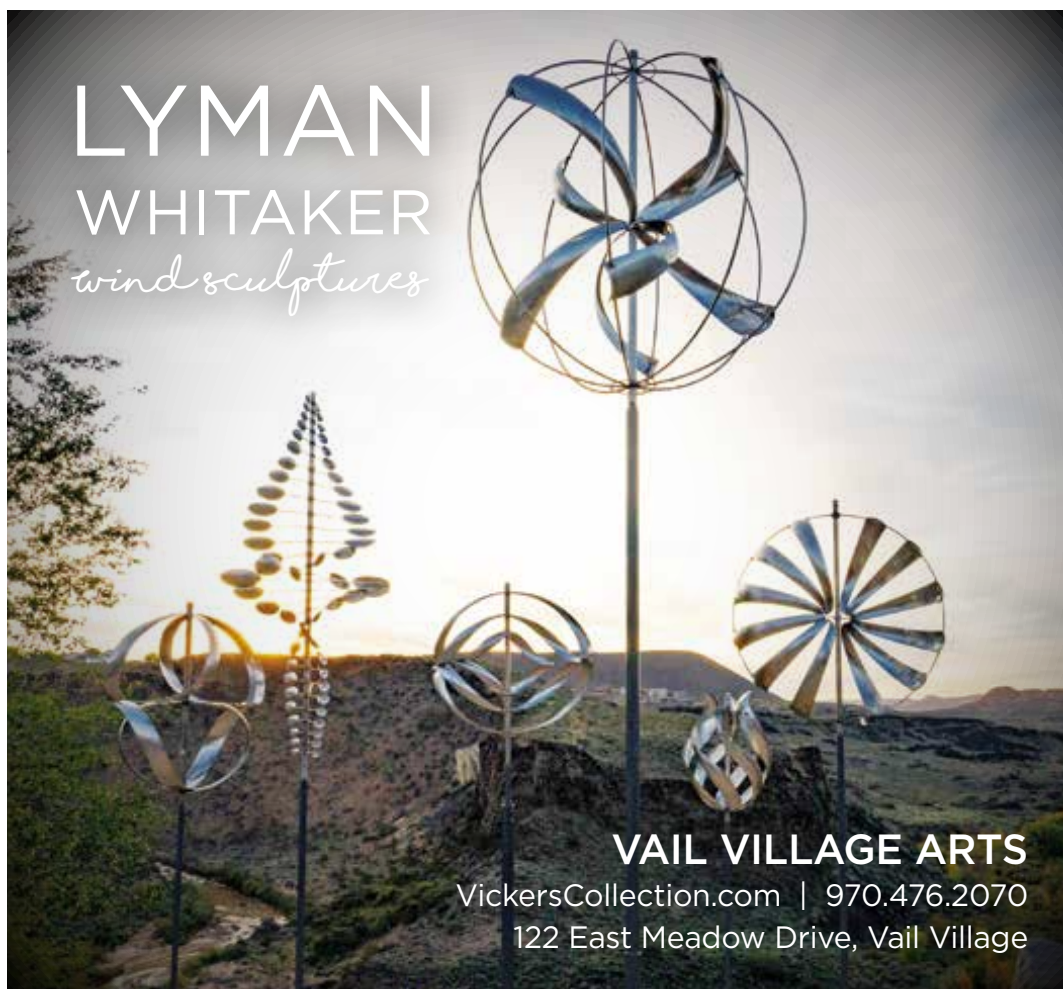


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302.893.0703  
[indenmatt@hotmail.com](mailto:indenmatt@hotmail.com)

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