

INTERIORS COLORADO

home design



SITE-WISE With big, folded wings, the sculptural project is stylistically unique. Architect Will Bruder likens it to a 'shadow in the woods.'

ANGLES OF REPOSE

Aspen's Blackbird residence reveals thoughtful interiors beneath its sleek exterior.

By Linda Hayes
Photography by Bill Timmerman

"It's all about the senses," notes architect Will Bruder of the sleek mountain home, dubbed Blackbird for its bird-like appearance, that he designed near Aspen's ski slopes. "It captures the energy of light and lets you observe the world around you from a different perspective. The detailing of the wood and architectural metal makes you want to touch it. It's the perfect scale and proportion and feels right to the body—and the locale."

Set at the end of a quiet cul de sac, the 5,829-square-foot, five-bedroom home takes its shape from the curve of the street—its smoothly arching facade and sloping rooflines disguising the grand scale of the living spaces within. Exterior materials and detailing, including shou sugi ban-charred cypress siding, Anthra-Zinc cladding, standing-seam copper-clad roofing and black metal-framed windows, seem surprisingly at home in the surroundings. "We wanted it to be contemporary yet timeless, and have a strong reverence for the history and character of the community," Bruder says. "It's like a shadow in the woods."

While Bruder is based in Phoenix, he notes a long-standing relationship with Aspen, citing visionary architect John Lautner (designer of Aspen's iconic Turner house, with its sculptural landscaped roof) as a mentor, as well as various stays at The Aspen Institute and participation in design charrettes with local architects. His involvement with the project was the result of another long-standing relationship, with developer Frederic Horne, whose intention was to sell the home as a turnkey vacation retreat—complete



HIGH POINTS The dramatically curved and angled exterior features shou sugi ban cypress siding and black metal-framed windows.

with everything from furnishings down to tableware and bed linens. "He wanted it to be magic," Bruder says.

Beyond its custom-crafted, white oak and cobalt-blue glass front door, the home opens to a grand view, its three levels anchored by a handwrought blackened steel and wood stairway. (There's an interior elevator as well.) Throughout, high ceilings add drama to uniquely angled living spaces, and striking mountain views are captured via a combination of clerestory, slot and floor-to-ceiling windows.

"It was an interesting sculptural project, with the big, folded wings, and a design style unique to the Valley," says Ants Cullwick, contractor on the project. "We had to rethink our approach from a Craftsman perspective."

To temper the grand scale, furnishings were thoughtfully chosen or custom-designed. "We wanted the interiors to be intimate, human in scale and rich in texture and feel," says Bruder. "We selected pieces with good proportion, and strong sculptural forms that were both contemporary and comfortable." Original artwork was specially curated to further soften the effect.

The upper-level great room is the perfect example of how well the concept works. Beneath what Bruder calls a "folded, origami-like" ceiling of richly waxed white plaster, the open living, dining and kitchen areas are subliminally organized. The core, of course, is the ample kitchen, which features a handcrafted, white oak Henrybuilt cabinet system with plates of stainless steel for countertops and top-of-the-line Miele and Sub-Zero appliances.

DESIGN DETAILS

ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DESIGN

Will Bruder Architects LLC
 Design Lead: Will Bruder
 Project Team: Kent McClure, Jacqueline Twardowski, Craig Chappel, Marjorie Whitton
willbruderarchitects.com

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

Rudow+Berry Inc.
rudowberry.com

GENERAL CONTRACTOR

Ants Cullwick
 Koru Ltd.
korultd.com

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Bluegreen
bluegreenaspen.com



STEPPING UP The home's three levels are connected via a naturally lit, blackened steel stairway.



EASY LIVING
Clockwise from top: The open great room combines living, dining and kitchen areas, each with custom-designed or crafted finishes and furnishings; deep blue chairs add a pop of color to the dining room; a Wenge coffee table pairs with the custom sectional sofas.



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—WILL BRUDER, ARCHITECT »

The adjoining living area is purposefully furnished, with key pieces including Italian chairs and sectional sofas by Flexform and Poltrona Frau, upholstered in soft saddle and glove leather, and accented with brightly colored throw pillows and ottomans. A series of 15 small-format, gold-leaf paintings by Bernd Haussmann capture the spirit of the surrounding peaks and valleys. A nest-like deck offers direct connection to the real thing.

The master suite is on the upper level as well. There, furnishings, including a custom Flexform bed with a wraparound leather headboard and a pair of overstuffed gray leather chairs by Poltrona Frau that Bruder says are “delicious to sit in,” were chosen to complement the highly textured “quilted” stone fireplace mantel.

Rounding out the home’s optimal program, the ground level includes three bedroom suites, one of which is called the nest and set within a fully appointed, attached nest-like pavilion. All three have access to the backyard hot tub and spa area. The below-ground level includes a media room, a glass-walled wine cellar and tasting room, and two light well terrarium-style gardens.

About the finished product, which is now owned by a New York City-based couple who, along with their three daughters, greatly enjoy it during their seasonal stays, Cullwick notes: “It was a high-energy, engaging process, a coming together to bring forth the architectural intention.”

“It’s just like I had envisioned,” Bruder adds. “Everything is related. The house grows from the outside in and the inside out, and you’re always enjoying new experiences and discoveries. It’s greater than the sum of its parts.” ■