



MOUNTAIN
homestyle

SUMMER | FALL 2003

A SCULPTOR'S
SANCTUARY
HOME OFFICE
HAVENS
XERISCAPING IN
THE ROCKIES



CERAMIC SCULPTURES FLANK THE ENTRY AND AN
INSTALLATION CREATED BY BARBARA SORENSEN ADORNS
A NOOK ABOVE THE COPPER FRONT DOOR.



Courtesy of Barbara Sorenson

A SCULPTOR'S SANCTUARY in Snowmass

— BY LINDA HAYES
— PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON JUNG/ESTETICO

Set on a steep Snowmass hillside, Barbara and Gary Sorensen's contemporary mountain home is a work of art. But it didn't start out that way ...

"When we bought the house two years ago, it was typical '70s construction, with wood paneling, moss rock fireplaces and small, closed-in rooms," explains Gary. "But I knew that with a lot of work, it had incredible potential."

The house was cantilevered over the hill like a tree house and had sweeping views of all four Aspen ski mountains and several peaks beyond. But, most of all, at 4,500 square feet, it offered plenty of room for Barbara, a nationally renowned ceramic sculptor, to display both her work and the formidable collection of work by other artists that she and her husband had acquired over the years.

The challenge of creating a space that would allow both the Sorensens and their artwork to co-exist comfortably fell on the couple's daughter, interior designer Robyn Scott. "My parents have very modern tastes, but they wanted to maintain a mountain feel in the house as well," Robyn says. "In the end, it





“WHAT THE ARCHITECTS DID FOR ME WAS TO CREATE THIS MARVELOUS SENSE OF SPACE THAT IS REALLY DRAMATIC—AND YET CLEAN ENOUGH TO SHOW OFF THE ART.” — Barbara Sorenson



(ABOVE) THE SLEEK CHERRY WOOD AND GRANITE KITCHEN WITH CONTEMPORARY DROP-LIGHTS SHOWCASES HANDMADE PLATES BY TWO LOCAL ARTIST FRIENDS.

THE SLATE AND GLASS WALK-IN SHOWER OPENS TO DRESSING AREAS ON EITHER SIDE.

A GLASS-TOPPED TABLE HOSTS A COLLECTION OF DALE CHIHULY GLASS WORKS IN THE DINING AREA.



was more like building a whole new house than a remodel.”

Organization and planning were key. Although Robyn has since relocated her business, Robyn Scott Interiors, Ltd., to Aspen, she was based in Denver at the time the Snowmass project began. Relationships with specialists around Colorado led to the selection of a project team, at the core of which was Morter Architects of Vail and 186 Lighting Group of Denver.

The first step was to hold a “design charrette”—an intensive work session used to quickly formulate a design concept—at the house with Robyn, her parents and the architects. “We

looked at everything together, including some of my mom’s artwork and images I’d collected, and shared ideas about materials, function and space,” says Robyn. The architects then did a series of sketches that were reviewed by the group. Details were accepted or rejected, and the sketches were revised. After two days of this process, a rough working draft that everyone was happy with had emerged.

The components of the plan were simple. Materials—stone, steel, wood and glass—were chosen because they provided a clean and simple backdrop for the art and, at the same time,



"IT'S AN ARTIST'S DREAM TO HAVE THIS VIEW AND BE ABLE TO WORK OUTSIDE IN THE FRESH AIR." — Barbara Sorenson



(ABOVE) THE SUNKEN LIVING ROOM IS DOMINATED BY A COPPER-FRONTED FIREPLACE THAT MATCHES THE FRONT DOOR.

CUSTOM-DESIGNED CABINETS AND HEADBOARD IN THE MASTER BEDROOM DISPLAY A COLLECTION OF WORKS BY BARBARA SORENSON AND OTHER LOCAL ARTISTS.

offered a connection with the outside environment.

While the footprint of the house remained the same, the interior design became dramatically different. The architects opened up the floor plan, moving walls, reshaping and streamlining interior details and replacing windows to expose the views and allow for a constant flow of natural light. A complex interior lighting system was designed to further enhance the gallery effect. "I'm all about sense of space," says Barbara. "What the architects did for me was to create this marvelous sense of space that is really dramatic—and yet clean