

# Dream



# House

Attends to Detail

By Ingrid Spencer

Photography by

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Materials on the exterior, pictured on previous page, include metal roofing, clear-cut granite and Indiana limestone. The extra long eaves, seen outside, hang over the living room windows, above, to shade the blinding sunlight.

Despite the lure of the mountains, Casey and Lisa, pictured at right in their Denver loft, can't quit their day jobs, yet. The open, contemporary space where they spend their weekdays features a custom steel and glass closet that provides extra storage.



# A professional couple invests financial resources and **creative energy** into their home away from home in Fraser, Colorado

Some call the town of Fraser, Colorado, "the icebox of the nation." Others call it "Freezer," Colorado. Lisa Steen and Casey Padgett just call it home. There, with the help of Lawrence Gomez Architects, the couple built a richly layered 3,900-square-foot home in which years of dreams and planning manifest in wood and stone, glass and tile. Although their primary residence is a loft in downtown Denver, just 45 minutes away, the four-bedroom, five-bath home in Fraser is where Lisa and Casey's hearts lie. Overlooking the Winter Park Ski Area and the Indian Peaks Mountains to the east, the house is a study in elegant and comfortable mountain living.

Lisa, a graphic designer, and Casey, an environmental lawyer, were introduced to their architects, Philip Lawrence and Juana Gomez, by a mutual friend and a creative collaboration was instantly born. "Lisa has a great eye for design," says Gomez. "She had collected images and magazine pages of European houses, Tudor-style manors, and other homes and materials she liked." Over the year-and-a-half-long planning and design phase (construction took about 14 months), the architect-client relationship gelled, with Gomez spending two or three days meeting with her clients every six weeks. "We just clicked," says Lisa. Gomez agrees. "It's a unique relationship. The level of attention to detail that Lisa was willing to involve herself in took an incredible amount of focus."

With the site in mind, the architects refined Lisa's ideas. While she had brick in mind, Gomez showed her how field stone for cladding and cedar for framing would be more appropriate to the area. "I introduced her to the work of James Cutler in Seattle, and Greene and Greene from California," says the architect. "We translated her ideas into an

Arts and Crafts-style home that would have a real relationship to the environment."

The stunning end result is a house with three wings rotated to form a courtyard in the front, and open toward the back to reveal a grassy meadow and the mountain passes beyond. The building comprises two stone-exterior wings—one with the kitchen on the ground floor and the master bedroom above, the other with three guest suites—to either side of the cedar and glass great room. The architects began an exhaustive search to find just the right rough, field stone for the exterior but couldn't find any for sale. Most of the local stone was buffed, red in color,

The same stone used on the outside of the house is repeated on the custom fireplace that warms the great room where the floors and trim are walnut.





Walnut clad columns line the entry hallway, pictured left, where the architect and owner collaborated on the floor pattern: a mixture of tumbled marble, tumbled green slate, and beach pebbles.

and too porous. When they finally found the perfect granite, much to their dismay, the quarry was crushing it to export as gravel. The tenacious duo convinced the quarry to sell them the gray stone that ultimately became the cladding for the house.

A stained cedar colonnade extends into the trees to form the main entrance, where exposed steel lintels (horizontal structural pieces) and connectors, painted black, add functional decoration. A lightweight, durable metal roof covers the main house, while a sloping sod roof above the garage blends smoothly into the landscape. Outside the dining area, a trellised stone porch provides the perfect barbecuing spot for summer nights.

Inside, walnut floors and walnut cladding on columns and beams reflect the rhythm of the outdoor colonnade and add to the country manor feel. Throughout the house lighting was a critical variable. Besides the natural light that flows in from four sides, there's a carefully selected mixture of indirect lighting, wall sconces, decorative fixtures and task lighting.

"Lisa wanted the space to be welcoming," says Gomez. That translated into an eclectic mix of antique and contemporary furniture, family heirlooms, commissioned art, and tile, tile, and more tile. The homeowner and architect set about exploring patterns, colors, and textures of Italian tile, glass tile, and beach pebbles, and placing varieties of it all over the house—in each of the five unique bathrooms, in the kitchen, as trim along the sides of hallways, and in an intricately patterned mosaic on the foyer floor. "It was a new experience for me to design mosaics in stone," says Gomez, "and it was really fun."

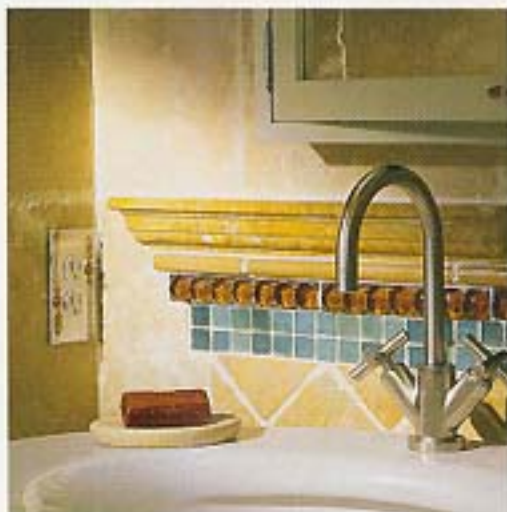
For Lisa and Casey, the real fun happens every Friday after work when they load their cats, Willie and Waylon, into their truck and head for the hills. "We can't wait to live there year-round," says Casey. And with that end goal in mind, a 1,200-square-foot clubhouse with a home office addition is already under construction. The couple hopes it won't be long before "Freezer," Colorado, is upgraded from getaway status to a full-time home.

*Managing editor of Architectural Record magazine from 1999 until mid-2004, Ingrid Spencer now resides in Austin, Texas.*

Architect Lawrence + Gomez Architects  
Builder Boxwell Construction  
Landscape Gary Rooster



Details up close: Pictured from top, a custom stair rail matched to an antique iron grill found at a flea market; a mixture of tumbled travertine and glass tiles in the master bath; and a whimsical stone blend in the hallway.





Pictured above, a bold blend of yellow Italian tile, cobalt blue bars, and red glass tile create an eye-catching backsplash for the butcher block counters and walnut kitchen cabinets. At right, the dining room opens to a trellised stone patio and views of the mountains beyond.



Upper Level



Main Level

#### ARCHITECT JUANA GOMEZ

"It goes both ways," says Juana Gomez of the best possible client-architect relationship. "Both parties must be open-minded, willing to explore the possibilities, and very, very patient."

While Gomez and her partner, Philip Lawrence, enjoy the back-and-forth, she says that this particular collaboration worked because Lisa Steen was the kind of client who was willing to devote serious time and energy to making her vision of the house coalesce with the architects' knowledge of what makes a functional, livable space.

To that end, they met regularly throughout

the entire year-and-a-half design phase. "Lisa brought in images and objects that she liked, and we visited showrooms and workshops to find furnishings and materials that would bring her visions to life," explains Gomez.

Lisa admits that her years as a graphic designer may have refined her eye for color and design, and because of that, the architect never had to reign in her client. "There was never a question of imposing boundaries on Lisa, even when it came to tile," adds the architect, referring to her client's desire to incorporate the material in an array of ways. "There was a mutual respect there that went a long way."



