

# MOUNTAIN House & HOME

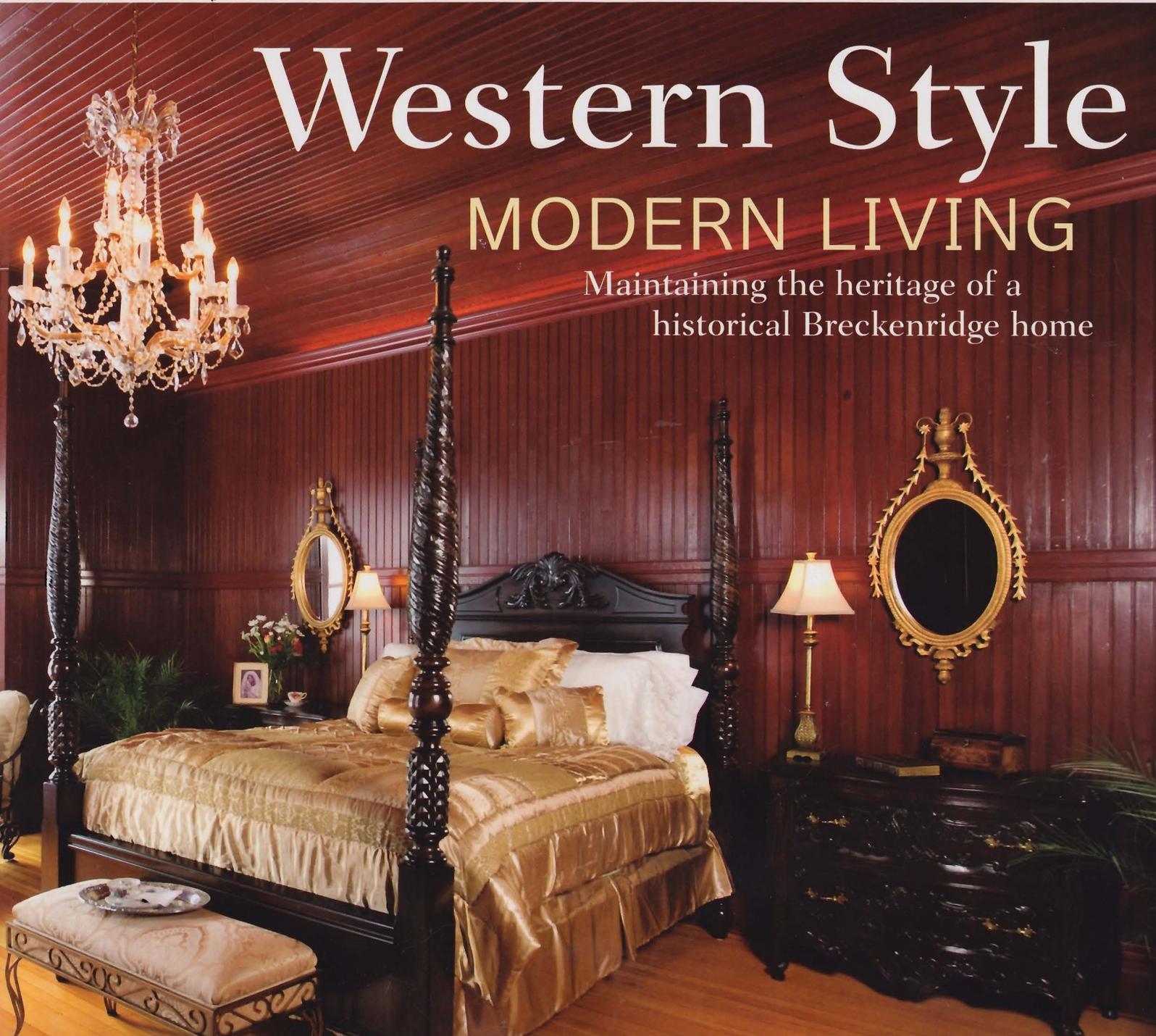
Planning, Building & Remodeling Your Mountain Home

Summer 2010 | [www.MountainHouseAndHome.com](http://www.MountainHouseAndHome.com)

## Western Style

### MODERN LIVING

Maintaining the heritage of a  
historical Breckenridge home



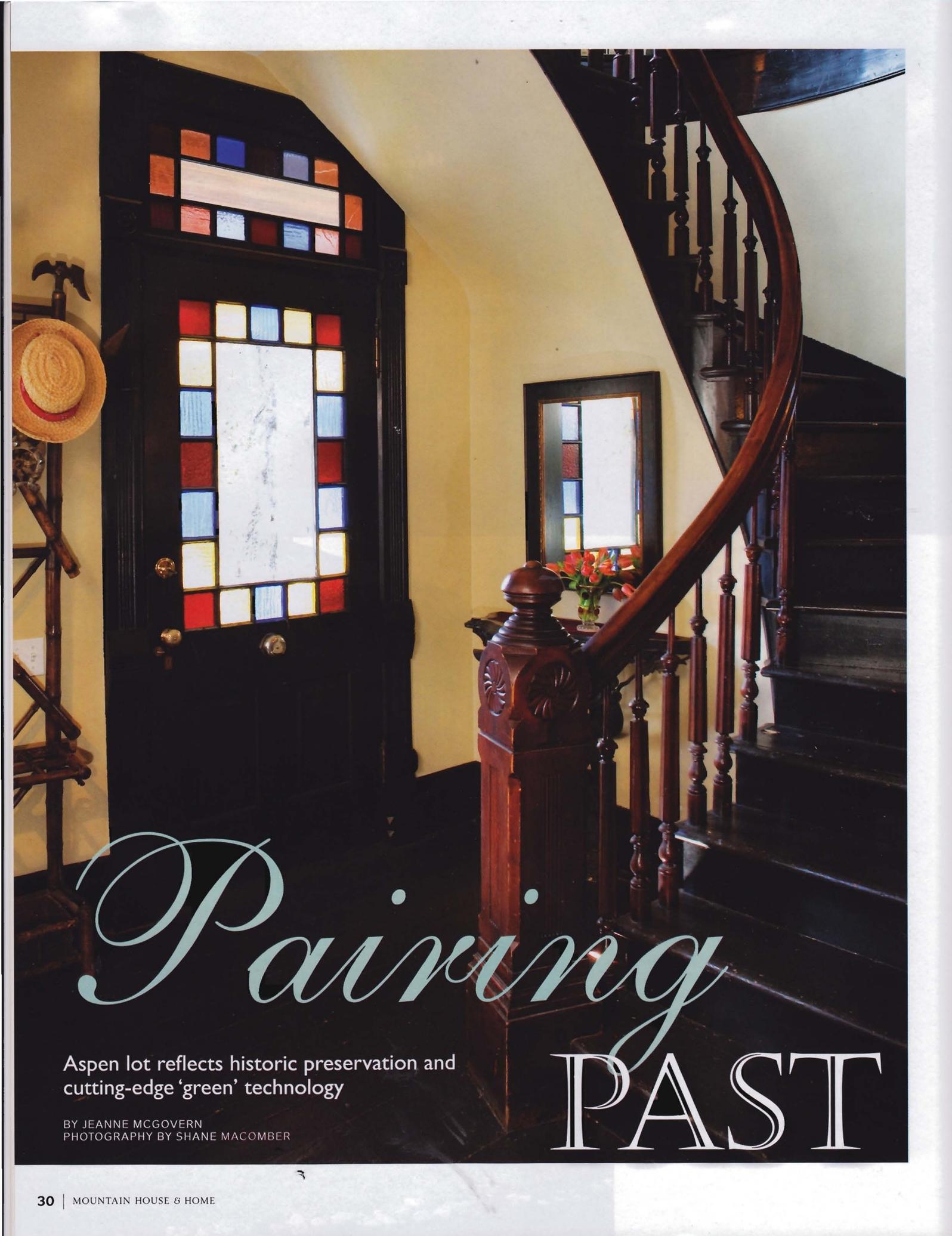
SUMMER 2010 \$4.95



**BLUE RIVER  
BLUE STAINED**  
Sustainable building  
with beetle-kill wood

**PAIRING PAST  
AND PRESENT**  
The tale of two homes  
in West End Aspen

**BIG HOUSE  
LOW IMPACT**  
Eco-friendly living  
in Eagle Ranch



# Pairing

Aspen lot reflects historic preservation and cutting-edge 'green' technology

BY JEANNE MCGOVERN  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY SHANE MACOMBER

# PAST

**RIGHT:** Owners relocated the historical Blue Vic to one portion of the 15,000-square-foot lot, in order to make room for Aspen builder Tim Semrau to construct a complementary, and contemporary, home.

There are myriad ways to tell a tale: literature, film, art, the spoken word. On a corner in Aspen's historic West End, just blocks from the resort town's bustling downtown core, is yet another: architecture.

**H**ere, at the intersection of Monarch and Bleeker streets, stand two homes. They tell, in no uncertain terms, the tale of Aspen's storied past and promising future.

One is a historic treasure. The other, a modern marvel. But sharing a single 15,000-square-foot lot, they are designed to live in harmony. And they do.

"This project is a great example of how to preserve Aspen's past while allowing new, yet appropriate development," says Amy Guthrie, Aspen's historic preservation officer, who has followed the re-development project from its inception in the mid-1990s through today, as renovations continue. "The city — and I believe the community — is very pleased with the end result of this project. But it wasn't necessarily an easy road to navigate."

In fact, the fate of the "Blue Vic" — as it became known to many in Aspen (so named for the bright blue hue that then-graced the historic home's exterior) — and the land on which it sat was a complex, consuming and, at times, controversial issue.

### Historic treasure

At the heart — both literally and figuratively — of this unique development undertaking was the Blue Vic, a grand Queen Anne built in 1884, at the height of Aspen's boom as a silver mining town. Now painted white and restored with painstaking attention to detail, as well as to historic accuracy, the house is home to Sallie Golden and Carlie Siemel.

It is more than a home to the couple,

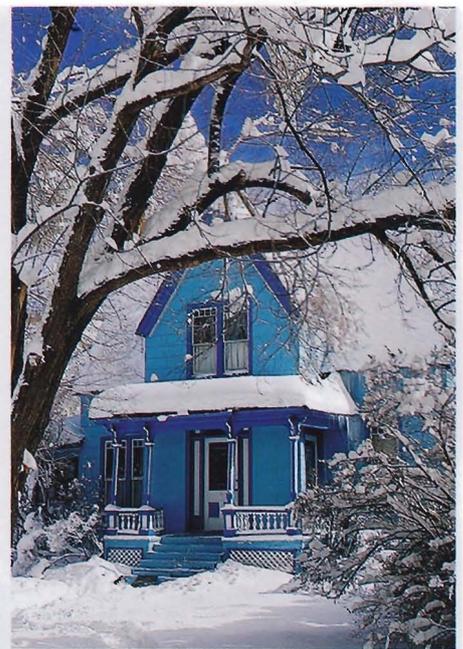
however. Purchased in 2007, 202 N. Monarch St. is their life's work: As principals of Constructs, Inc., Golden and Siemel are well-known and highly respected for their innovative building ventures, with their restoration and renovation projects receiving accolades from homeowners, industry insiders and preservationists alike.

The project is also their passion: "This house is a true gem, one-of-a-kind," says Golden, sitting on the overstuffed couch in her living room, surveying the ongoing renovation work surrounding her and the historic markers that

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remain. "The uniqueness of this home stems from its unspoiled character. We are only the third family to have lived in it; we are now custodians of this house, and we felt an obligation to honor its heritage."

To that end, Golden and Siemel took great care when relocating the house from the back of the lot to its front corner. They re-poured the foundation — adding a complete below-grade level that will be fully modernized with guest rooms, a media room and other state-of-the-art amenities. And they gave similar attention to the renovation of the



home's existing interior.

"Our greatest enjoyment has come from creating beautiful, expansive spaces with all the modern-tech amenities, in a house which is an architectural gem," says Golden, pointing out such unique features as high ceilings, a grand staircase and a second-floor, which is being converted from several small bedrooms to a large master suite with walk-in closets, a luxurious bathroom and private office. "Compared to other historic Aspen homes, this is one of only a handful of the 'grand houses to have survived into the 21st century.'"

Surviving the decades took its toll on the old home, though. But with the help of Texas-based architect Don McDonald and a team of quality craftsmen, Golden and Siemel have managed to peel back the layers of time, literally.

"Believe it or not, there are 30 trim profiles on this home," explains Siemel, who uncovered the various architectural accents firsthand or in old photographs and worked hard to re-create them in the home's current exterior profile. "In essence, this home is a time capsule of Aspen's past."

Indeed, Golden and Siemel's dwelling is an ode to Aspen's past, but with a modern twist. In addition to the new garden-level construction, a two-car garage and plans for a carriage house, the couple has completely updated the home's entire infrastructure, taking great care to be environmentally conscious in all respects.



Western-themed accents highlight the Blue Vic's rich heritage.



“Our location is walking distance to Aspen’s core, and urban redevelopment by nature is ‘green,’” says Golden, noting that Constructs, Inc., has been incorporating sustainable and energy-efficient building practices in their homes since 1976. “As such, this home is correctly sited to take advantage of solar gain, and the finished product will have high-efficiency utilities and appliances, maximized insulation and weatherproofing.”

And it is here — with the blending of the historic and the modern — that this grand old home and its newly constructed lot-mate find common ground.

“Our homes draw on the heritage of

Aspen’s silver rush days; one a living example of a Queen Anne-style home and the other as a modern adaptation of that style.”

### Modern-day marvel

Golden’s take on how her and Siemel’s home meshes with the neighboring house is perfectly on-point, both to the casual passerby and to the professional architect.

“It’s a 21st century version of a Victorian,” says Bill Lueck, president of Basalt-based Mountain Contemporary Architects, which designed the modern home. “We knew this contemporary home had to be a good fit for Aspen’s historic core, and it had to blend with the Blue Vic. But we did not want to

create a historic façade with a McMansion in back.

“In short, the two homes had to be related, yet distinct. They needed to look like they belonged together, while remaining unique and true to their roots,” he said.

Situated just a few yards from the stately Queen Anne, the new construction at 204 N. Monarch St. achieves this goal.

The exterior, in rich wood with massive windows, certainly complements its historic counterpart: the scale is smaller, yet not diminutive; there is a street-facing entry porch, also smaller in scale than its historic neighbor; and the roof pitches shadow those next door.



Sallie Golden and Carlie Siemel, the owners of the historical Aspen home, kept the original flooring and furnished the dining room and kitchen with items that complement the home.

But the feel is much different. This house is clearly modern; it does not attempt to replicate, nor even imitate, the older structure. This becomes even more apparent upon entering the home, where the low-slung sofas, modern art and state-of-the-art fixtures await.

“Everything about this home’s interior is modern, cutting edge,” says Tim Semrau, the Aspen builder who purchased the Blue Vic (house and lot), envisioned the land’s future, and now lives in the modern home. “It has been so amazing to be able to build, design and decorate this modern home while ensuring it works with Sallie and Carlie’s home. And it really does.”

Still, more than anything, Semrau’s home is a look into Aspen’s future. With a laundry list of amenities on the cutting edge of environmental consciousness — solar systems to heat the radiant floor and solar photovoltaic for electricity (with computer monitoring on both), automated solar shades, a concrete foundation comprising 20 percent fly ash, American Clay interior wall finishes, an electric car charging station that actually generates energy, and so much more — this home may well be the epitome of “green” construction.

“It’s so environmentally advanced, so on the leading edge, that sometimes I wonder if we can make it net zero, if we can make it

actually give back to the grid,” says Semrau, clearly enthused about what the future might hold for “green” building, and about the idea of using his home as a testing ground. “Who knows what we can accomplish?”

In this case, Semrau, along with Golden and Siemel, have accomplished what many in Colorado resort town development have been unable to: the perfect pairing of storied past and promising future through carefully designed architecture.