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RAVENSWOOD

[THE VIEWS MAKE IT HOME] STORY BY MELISSA RUCH

Bill and Margie Abraham describe themselves as “high change” people. They have never lived in a house longer than nine years. But their new place, nestled high in the Reserve, definitely feels like a home they will have for a long time. “I feel safe here,” says Margie. “It feels like home.”

PHOTOS BY
JAMES RAY SPAHN

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And Marge says that when they build again, "Everything will have to be like this from now on." That's how happy she is with the house.

Five years ago, the Abrahams bought their lot with a natural meadow that served as the perfect building envelope. The expansive views, the aspens, the waist-deep delphiniums made them realize this was the spot for their new mountain home. While the house was under construction, Bill and Marge asked builder Jack Huckins to leave the bright-orange aspens next to the breakfast room, and they drew an imaginary line in the meadow at the back of the house. "We wanted it natural and totally undisturbed," Marge says.

The only true full-time neighbors the Abrahams have are animals, whether it's migrating elk, strolling bears, baby foxes or nesting ravens.

When naming their new house, they came up with two ideas: Fox Meadow or Ravenswood. While the house was being built, a family of foxes took up residence near it—thus the name Fox Meadow. The genesis of Ravenswood was that during construction, while the intricate trusswork was being installed by crane, ravens came and perched on the new beams and trusses. "They thought it was for them," Bill says. Then one day, Bill and Marge were on a walk at the Reserve when they happened on a group of ravens in the trees. "I called up to them and said hello," explains Marge, who used to raise birds. "And one said hello back to me, in English. We just said hello to each other for 15 minutes," she says.

"We knew then that name had won the contest," says Bill, and the house became Ravenswood.

Builder Jack Huckins says his crew enjoyed the solitude while constructing the Abraham's house. "It's very pristine up there," he

says. "We saw a lot of wildlife. Foxes would come around at lunchtime."

As welcoming as the property is for animals, the house is just as welcoming for friends and family. "We wanted a minimalist home, but still a mountain look and feel," says Marge, who did the interior design on her own. "It's a real simple house, and very livable," explains Bill. "That's how we like it."

As soon as you walk through the front door, your eyes go directly to the large windows in the living room across from the foyer. It's an unobstructed panorama of peaks.

"We wanted a glass house, and we got it," says Bill. It's obvious that the design of the house took advantage of every opportunity for views.

The kitchen and dining room share the same panorama. Standing behind the island at the stovetop, you can't help but become engrossed in the expansive vista.

Another aspect you catch yourself being fascinated by is the trusswork. Several large trusses and structural beams intertwine above the living room, trailing into the kitchen, the dining room, ending in the breakfast room adjacent to the kitchen. "People who come visit us are obsessed with the trusses," explains Bill. "They sit back on the sofa and just stare at them."

The Abrahams decided to leave the reclaimed trusses and beams their natural color, creating a light and airy feel to their living area. Beneath, the floor is made from gorgeous reclaimed oak planks stained a dark brown, complementing the dark custom cabinets made by Dan Treadway. The cabinets are rustic with a hint of arts and crafts. The kitchen is simple. The countertops are dark grey slabs of pietra del cardoso. They look very similar to soapstone, but don't require the oiling, which was important to Marge.



Small details in the kitchen, like the double iron brackets under the island countertop, tie the room to the open floorplan. The brackets were handmade by local blacksmith Ben Eaton, who also created the banisters on the staircases. Finally, a large, single-basin stainless steel sink completes the kitchen, with its pounded metal exterior.

A wonderfully warm breakfast room is next to the kitchen, with a round kitchen table and antique chairs that Margie thinks look like they could be at Hansel and Gretel's house. Two chaise lounge-type chairs with upholstered cushions are perfect for reading. It's a room to spend time in.

There's a screened-in porch off the living room that the Abrahams use daily in the warmer months. A deck wraps around the porch as well. One highlight of the deck is that it connects the exterior of the house with a bridge between a smaller deck and

the larger deck on the other side of the screened-in porch. It's the details like this that make the house so special.

The master bedroom is on this floor. It's a gorgeous room with a stone fireplace and big windows on two walls. In the summer, the Abrahams open all the windows in the room, "and it feels like we are camping out," says Margie.

The master bath has a large soaking tub with a picture window above it looking out over an aspen grove. There are no window coverings—there's only the occasional bear that might peer in. All the tile in the bathrooms of the house is Jerusalem limestone. It varies in color, but emits a warm glow wherever it is used. All the cabinets in the bathrooms are handmade by Treadway; some are hand-painted by Sarah Huckins. Treadway also built free-standing pieces of furniture for the bathrooms, mixing stained vanities

with painted pieces for extra storage.

There are three bedrooms downstairs in the garden level of the house. The 10-foot ceilings and eight-foot doors create an open feel. The Abrahams have only one hallway in the whole house. They aren't fond of them, thus the total openness of their home.

Overall, the Abrahams, their architect Dan Murphy and builder Jack Huckins achieved a gorgeous, open, and comfortable home. "This was a wonderful experience," says Huckins. "It was a creative process where everyone got involved. We enjoyed the challenges and it was great to put something forward that was special for the Abrahams because they were so appreciative."

Recently, as Bill and Margie were returning to Crested Butte and were driving up their driveway, Margie said, "I'm home—this is where I belong." ▲

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