
Living It Up

AvidLifestyle

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There's home design, and then there's Home Design. "I don't think people realize the psychological power that design can have on them," says Gina D'Amore Bauerle of D'Amore Interiors. "There are so many subconscious things that happen when you're around a design that makes you feel good." You know the instinct—it's the one that decided your favorite quarantine home hangout. We interviewed local designers on key areas that work, and sussed out the reasons why homeowners love them so much. Call it a new kind of happy hour.

À La Alfresco

Man's need for fire is as primal as it gets: gathering around dancing flames has, for centuries, buoyed conversation into the wee hours. So it's no surprise a gas fireplace takes center stage for the homeowners of this patio, part of a modernist home in Highlands Ranch's BackCountry, bordering Cherokee Ranch and Castle land. What better place to gather round with a glass of your favorite tippie for an evening of storytelling?

In a place where the Front Range meets the plains, being able to enjoy the simple pleasure of taking in the surrounding panorama was a big item on the wish list for these locals. This challenged the outdoor space's designer, Joshua Ruppert of Denver-based landscape architecture and design firm **Lifescape Colorado**, to let nature speak for itself. "Sometimes less is more," the designer says, adding that the house was rotated and raised on the lot to capture the best views. "Everything should have a purpose."

The homeowners made their outdoor haven complete with a sculptural duo of chairs and a sofa from Vondom to flank the sleek firepit. The furniture echoes the contemporary home's asymmetrical lines and provides prime perches for relaxing. "The homeowners did a wonderful job with the furniture selection, along with subtle

landscape,” Ruppert says. “The ball court is recessed below a gabion rock wall and is encompassed with native grass and trees.” Having it there is like leaving a deck of cards on the coffee table—it encourages both the family and their guests to have fun and a sense of play.



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Soft, warm outdoor lighting sets a magical mood that sprinkles every evening in proverbial fairy dust. The varied heights of sconces on the outdoor walls and garden paths look a bit like fireflies; encouraging the eye to wander the skyline of the space, while still flitting both high and low.

EARTHY ELEGANCE

To suit the terrain and give the homeowners a mostly fuss-free garden they could feel easy in, Ruppert selected regional plants like aspen trees, Rocky Mountain sumac, rabbitbrush and leadplant. “We peppered them along with the native grass and wildflowers,” he says. “The idea was to blend the back portion of the yard with what was already there.”

BEAUTIFUL BALANCE

Placing furniture and accessories symmetrically is a timeless tactic that’s inherently pleasing and calming to the eye (partly because humans are mostly symmetrical themselves)—something these homeowners can tell you all about.

EYE CANDY

Choosing a restrained, streamlined firepit draws the homeowners’ eyes to the flickering flames themselves, making them the star of the show. This particular sleek, American-made firepit was hewn of glass-fiber-reinforced concrete from Denver-based Nisho.

TEXTURAL TREAT

Even patio flooring can be pretty enough to bring joy to those who use it. Underfoot in this sitting space, Ruppert created a graphic base where parallel lines juxtapose against earthy stones in varying shades of gray. “I liked the contrast with the raw concrete and Mexican beach pebbles,” he says. “The pebbles helped give a softness to the area.”

LIFESCAPE COLORADO

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Kitchen Confidential

It’s not easy to merge timelessness with modernity, but the results can be as comforting to home cooks as a kitchen in a Nancy Meyers movie. So is the case with the homeowners now basking in this Greenwood Village cook space designed by Corinne Ekle, owner of Greenwood Village’s **c2Design**. Built by John Reither of Castle Rock’s Reither Construction, Inc., it combines the classic (sky-high cabinetry trimmed with crown molding) with the cutting edge (pendant lights that appear to float dreamily, almost like blown bubbles, above the island).

And while the kitchen is as worthy of a magazine spread as any, the look goes way beyond beauty: the space is newly functional, thanks to some layout swaps that would