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JULY/AUG 2016 | DISPLAY UNTIL 09/05/16

A BRIGHT IDEA

AIRY ROOMS, CONTEMPORARY LINES AND COMFORTABLE OUTDOOR SPACES MIX TOGETHER IN A COUPLE'S ASPEN HOME.

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Richard and Hildegard Christian Wax have the art of building houses down to a science. In addition to constructing close to 50 homes in the Aspen area over the past two decades through his construction firm, Richard and Hildegard, who handles the interior design side of things, have also built houses for themselves in places from California to Mexico. And although they already owned a small house in Aspen, the couple felt ready to build a larger, more permanent home for themselves in the area. But, ironically, they didn't arrive at that decision until they had already purchased another house. "It was a great site, with southern exposure, very nicely treed and with big views," says Richard. "It had an existing structure on it that we had decided to remodel and fix up." But after making the purchase, the couple had a change of heart. "My wife asked me what I thought of the house," says Richard, "and I said, 'Honey, I hate it.'" So, the couple hired architect Jamie L. Brewster McLeod, knocked down the house and got to work building exactly what they wanted.

Enlisting Brewster McLeod was a natural move. "We had built five houses together," says the architect, "and every one of them had a different soul, site, context and message we were trying to relay. Getting to build their personal home was a privilege." The architect began by working with the couple to establish the aesthetic of the structure. "It was a little bit of a departure for us, because

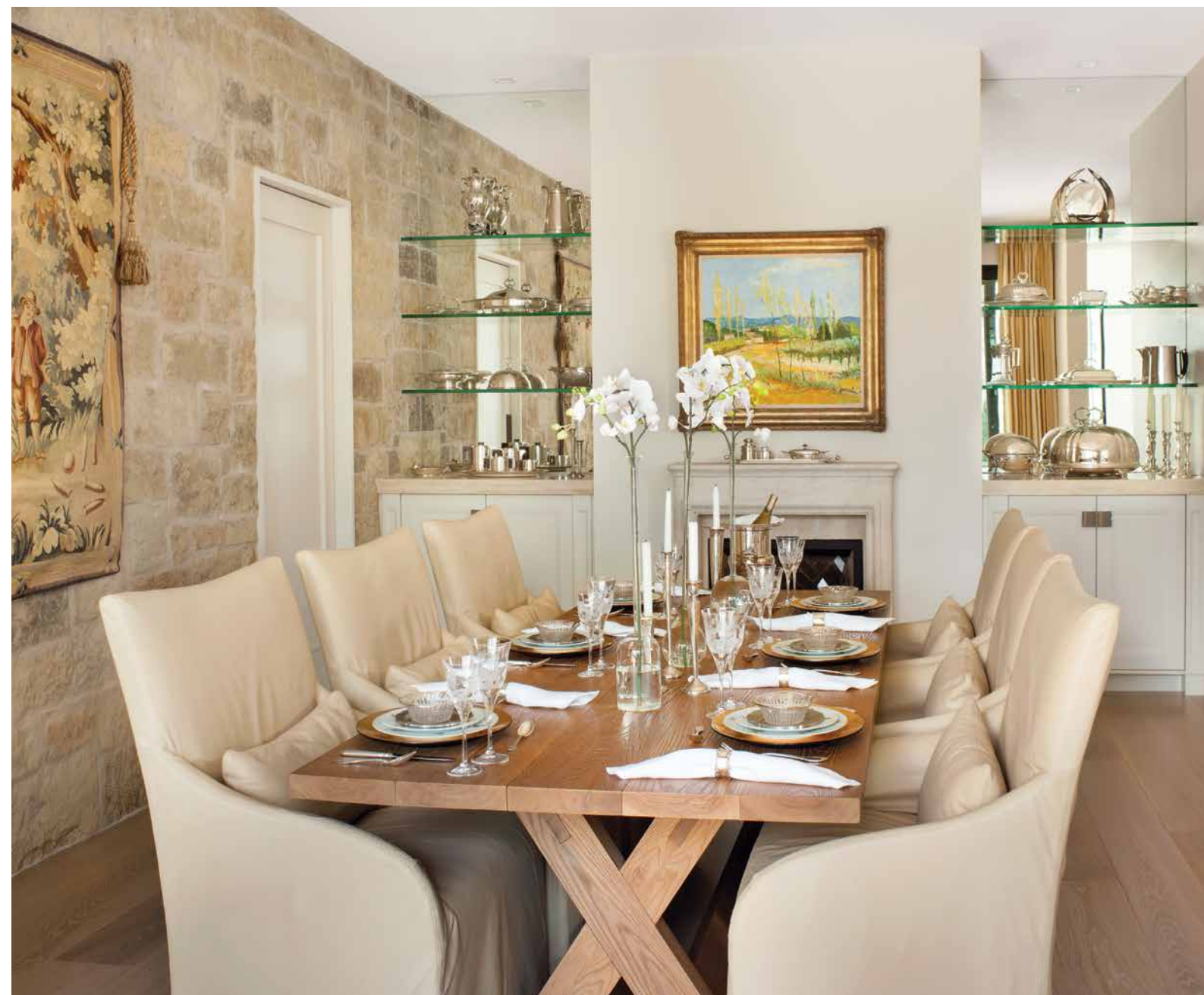


Left: Builder Richard Wax and his wife, designer Hildegard Christian Wax, worked with architect Jamie L. Brewster McLeod on creating their contemporary Aspen home. A hallway just off the living room looks out through a Kolbe window to the terrace's outdoor dining area. The structure's standing-seam metal roof was installed by Umbrella Roofing.

Opposite, top: In the living room, linen-covered Verellen sofas pair with a chrome-and-glass coffee table and tub chairs, all by Ralph Lauren Home.

Opposite, bottom: Brewster McLeod designed the entrance with a gabled roof crowning an aluminum-and-glass door by Kolbe. Richard's company applied the façade's 4-inch-thick limestone supplied by Cobra Stone in Florence, Texas.

White-oak floors from Heppner Hardwoods in Azusa, California, ground the light-filled kitchen. Caesarstone countertops put the finishing touch on custom rift-sawn white-oak cabinetry by Eurostyle Woodworking. Sub-Zero and Wolf appliances were purchased from Mountain High Appliance.



we usually do a lot of stone and wood," Brewster McLeod says of the past houses she designed for the builder. "For their own home, Richard and Hildegard had a very specific style they wanted. This house was to be more contemporary, stone and stucco, really light and bright, with a huge play on interior-exterior spaces."

Working closely with the couple, Brewster McLeod set the tone for the exterior with a 20-foot-high entry and gabled roof forms that give a nod to the surrounding mountains. Inside, the architect devised a three-level floor plan tailored to the couple's lifestyle. "They wanted to live on one floor that had everything they needed while still offering privacy," says Brewster McLeod, who situated an office for Richard near the front door for easy client access and placed the master bedroom toward the rear of the house near the kitchen. A bathroom was designed to open directly to an indoor swimming pool, which was a specific request of the couple, along with a tennis court, a pond and a vegetable garden.

"We wanted to fill that bucket list," says Richard. Rounding out the floor plan, a trio of bedrooms was set on an upper level, while wine, art and storage rooms were placed a level below.

To amplify a relationship with the outdoors, Brewster McLeod kept the ceilings high and the windows large. The living room is framed with glass on three sides, including sliding doors that open onto a spacious terrace. The dining room, kitchen and master bedroom also spill out onto this generous outdoor area. "I believe every house should have a strong connection with the exterior space," says the architect. "We live our lives indoors, but the outdoors is what grounds us." The terrace is finished with a pergola-shaded dining area, complete with a fireplace and barbecue.

In appointing the light-filled interiors, Hildegard drew inspiration from the natural Aspen landscape in creating interiors with, as she says, "a sense of restraint and clarity." She mixed pieces from her favorite designers with items gathered during the couple's travels and her youth in

A 17th-century tapestry hangs against a stone wall in the dining room, which Hildegard appointed with a walnut-and-iron table from Guinevere Antiques in London. Leather slipcovers sheath custom Verellen chairs; a John Ash painting hangs above the fireplace.

Shaded by an overhead pergola and warmed by a stone fireplace, the alfresco dining area features a table with a Crema Marfil marble top custom-made by Centerpoint Stone in Salt Lake City. The Tivoli chairs are by Kingsley-Bate.



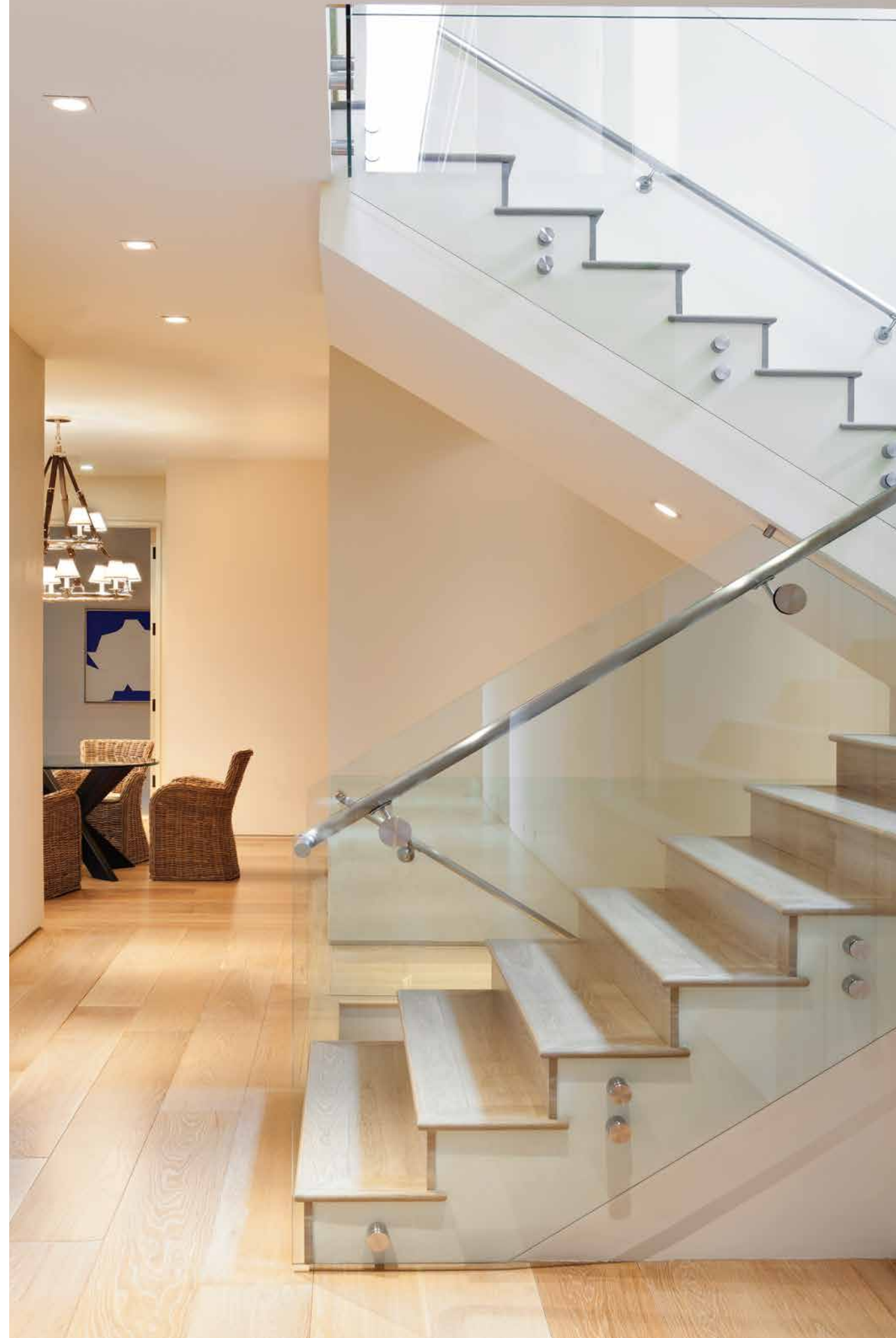


The property's existing tennis court was completely revamped to include a new surface by Renner Sports Surfaces. A new dining pergola was added nearby to make the most of the site's impressive views.



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-RICHARD WAX



Left: A sculptural stairway, which leads to the lower level, is marked by glass railings from Aspen Custom Glass and stainless-steel handrails. The white-oak treads are by Heppner Hardwoods.

Opposite: A cowhide rug and glass-topped desk lend warmth and a modern edge to Richard's office, which is on the main level near the entry. The wildlife photographs are by David Johnston.



Above: In Hildegard's bathroom, a polished-chrome Grohe tub filler spills into an engineered solid-stone tub with a matte finish by MTL. The rift-sawn white-oak cabinetry was crafted by Eurostyle Woodworking.

Left: Crowned by a high-peaked ceiling, the serene master bedroom opens to the terrace and verdant surroundings. An acrylic-and-hide bench by Zentique sits at the foot of the leather-upholstered Ralph Lauren Home bed. The upholstered armchair and chaise lounge are by Verellen.



The house was designed to encourage indoor-outdoor living, with the main rooms opening onto the ample terrace. Comfortable furnishings, including a sofa, armchairs and café set—all by Frontgate—appoint the spacious alfresco area.

Light-hued stone and stucco help to give the home the contemporary aesthetic that the Waxes were after. Richard, in addition to handling the construction of the project, also designed the landscaping.



Europe for a sophisticated and collected feel. In the living room, she paired antique tapestry-covered chairs with linen-upholstered Verellen sofas and Ralph Lauren Home tub chairs covered with raw silk. A fireplace surround salvaged from a château in France anchors the calming space.

For the intimate dining room, Hildegard selected a Baroque-style walnut table and Verellen chairs slipcovered with soft leather. Here and throughout, she kept patterns to a minimum, preferring instead, as she explains, “the look and feel of calming textures and subtle hints of color.” Open glass shelving displays silver collected long before she and Richard were married, and a 17th-century tapestry from France hangs against the room’s stone wall. Hildegard carried the muted palette into the master bedroom, as well, with a buttery leather-upholstered headboard.

Richard, alongside project managers Jeff Davis and Vincent Coghlan, oversaw the structure’s meticulous construction, which involved excavating and building a retaining wall at the back of the house to support the lower

level. In addition to handling the build, Richard, who had owned a landscape company and nursery in California years ago, also designed the landscape. Next to a stream that flows through the property, he enhanced an existing pond by using boulders from the site “to create a gorgeous double waterfall that spills into the pond,” he says. For the front of the house, he ensured privacy by planting large spruce trees and 6-inch-caliper aspens along the 1/4-mile-long drive. “We didn’t want to wait for things to grow,” he says. “We wanted to see them now.”

For both Richard and Hildegard, building the home was a rewarding experience. “We did a lot of pre-planning and spent a lot of time putting things on paper to make sure they’d work,” says Richard. “We wanted the house to fit on the site, to be understated and have all the things we wanted.” That unique and personal approach is evident in the final product. “From the design to the palette to the blend of old and new,” says Brewster McLeod, “the house is a great reflection of who they are.” ■

An indoor swimming pool was at the top of the couple’s wish list. Brewster McLeod realized the design by including it in the main level of the floor plan, just off Richard’s bathroom. The pool was installed by Timberline Pools and Spas.