

2005 | SPECIAL MOUNTAIN HOME ISSUE

TAHOE

QUARTERLY

MOUNTAIN HOME AWARDS: Spectacular Homes of Tahoe

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UNIQUE



02: Folk Art Living

STORY kimberly pryor

PHOTOS dino tonn photography inc. and
greg faulkner

year completed: 2002

architects/designers: Faulkner Architects,
Darrell Linscott, AIA;

Mike Norris, Richard Szitar

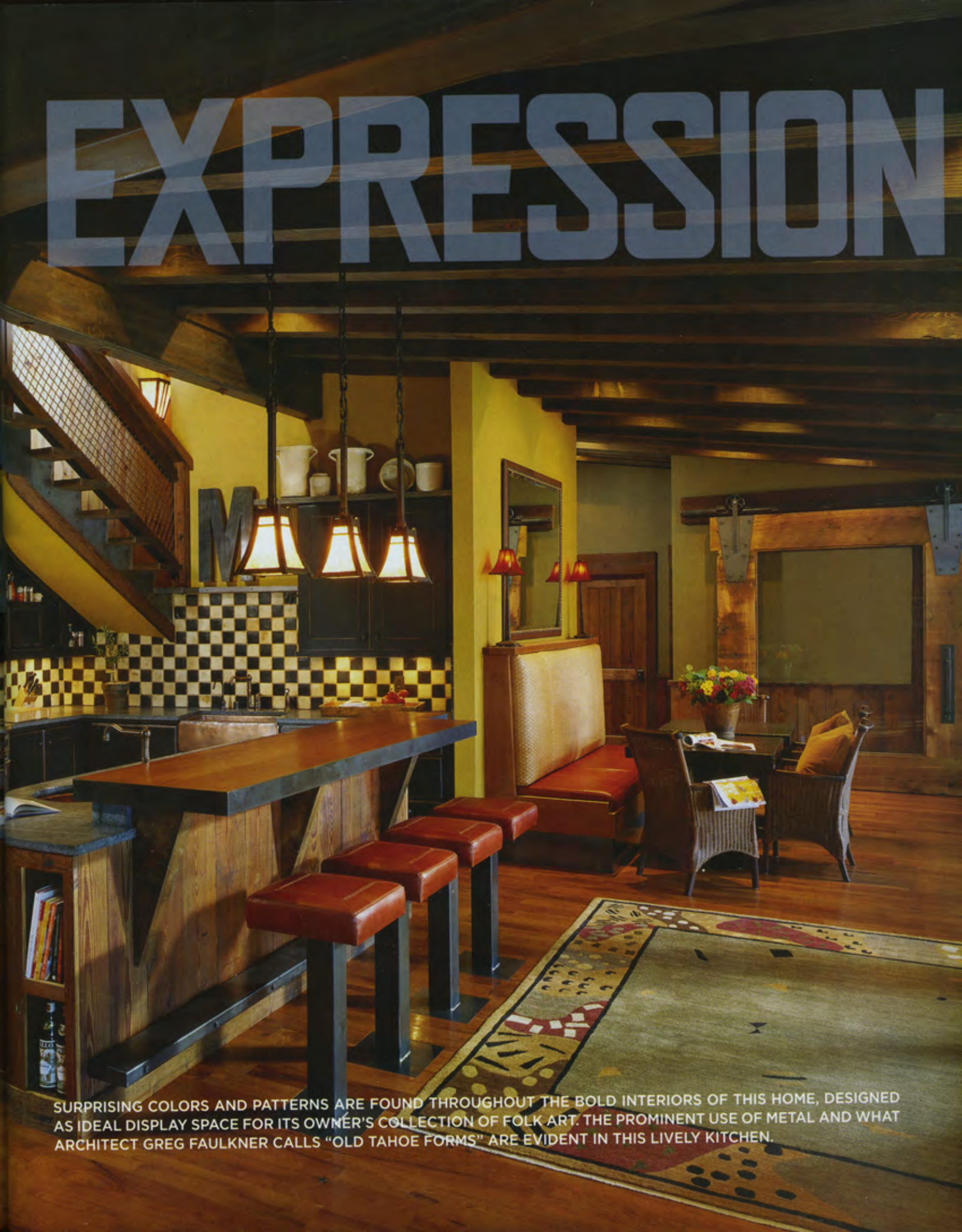
builder: Sitecraft Construction,
Mike Yankin

interior designer: Vallone Design

landscape architect: Owner

square footage: 4,050

EXPRESSION



SURPRISING COLORS AND PATTERNS ARE FOUND THROUGHOUT THE BOLD INTERIORS OF THIS HOME, DESIGNED AS IDEAL DISPLAY SPACE FOR ITS OWNER'S COLLECTION OF FOLK ART. THE PROMINENT USE OF METAL AND WHAT ARCHITECT GREG FAULKNER CALLS "OLD TAHOE FORMS" ARE EVIDENT IN THIS LIVELY KITCHEN.



THE WALLS OF THE HOME SERVE AS WONDERFUL BACKDROPS FOR FOLK ART. AN OLD MOVIE POSTER (TOP LEFT) HANGS ON PANELS OF HEART PINE RECLAIMED FROM A KENTUCKY TOBACCO-DRYING SHED, CUT TO EXPOSE ITS ORIGINAL NAIL HOLES. A STAMP LEFT VISIBLE ON ANOTHER PLANK (LEFT) IDENTIFIES IT AS COMING FROM HOBART MILLS, THE HISTORIC LUMBER COMPANY THAT USED TO OPERATE JUST NORTH OF TRUCKEE. A LARGE CENTRAL ROOM (ABOVE) INCLUDES AN INFORMAL DINING SPACE AND SITTING AREA.

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THE HOUSE'S RAW YET WHIMSICAL SPIRIT IS CAPTURED IN ITS FRONT ENTRANCE - NOT WHAT YOU'D NORMALLY EXPECT AS A "FIRST IMPRESSION" OF A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR HOME!

02:

What award do you give to a house that mingles cobblestones from a salami factory, wood from a tobacco-drying shed and metal once used by miners used to sift ore? For our judges, this house, described as both quirky and beautiful, was a "unique expression" of the architects' and builders' crafts. Whimsical, understated and unpretentious, this very livable home is a successful assemblage of modest Old Tahoe vernacular forms and the owner's enthusiasm for folk art.

What struck our judges about this outstanding home were the unusual materials utilized by architect Greg Faulkner and builder Mike Yankin of Sitecraft Construction, and the way in which they cohesively created an overall mood.

"Out of all the Mountain Home Awards submittals," said architect and judge Dennis Zirbel, "this is the one that is truest to having a concept and sticking with the concept. You actually have the feeling that the home is folk art."

On the outside, the house whispers rather than screams. It sits modestly on its lot, beautiful in its simplicity. The home emanates Old Tahoe appeal with its array of rooflines and reclaimed redwood siding. The wood was logged a century ago on the California coast, shipped by rail to Truckee for milling and then back to the Bay Area



THE HOME'S MULTIPLE ROOFLINES HELP IT BLEND INTO ITS WOODED ENVIRONS (ABOVE). METAL USED ON THE ROOFS IS DESIGNED TO PARTIALLY RUST, GIVING THE STRUCTURE AN AGED LOOK. AN INSIDE-OUT LOOK IS CREATED BY SHINGLES USED INSIDE THE GUEST QUARTERS (LEFT) AND ELSEWHERE IN THE HOME.

for use on a barn. The original stamps on the wood from Truckee's Hobart Mills are still visible, as are tar marks on pieces once used on the barn's roof.

The roof, which already looks weathered even though the house was completed in 2002, is a cantilevered collection of corrugated Corten metal, a material which rusts to a certain degree to give the house an aged look, but which has a protective coating to prevent the roof from entirely rusting over. The broken-up roofline fragments the building, turning it into a collage of forms.

"We wanted the house to be modest," says Faulkner. "Very anti-iconographic and with a lot of familiar Old Tahoe forms added together. Stone was used sparingly only as retaining walls because Old Tahoe houses didn't use stone veneer."

The front entry is a curious collection of materials that beckon visitors to step inside. The custom pine door is built with ironwork

made by Yankin. The oversized Douglas fir floorboards on the porch, from a mill in Weed, California, rise from cobblestones salvaged from the torn-down Gallo Salami factory in San Francisco.

On the interior, attention is drawn to the roofline which allows for a series of cozy spaces unexpected in a 4,000 square foot house.

"That cantilevered roof helps create an intimacy in a sitting area," says Zirbel. "It's done in a very creative way that is, at the same time, somewhat sculptural."

All materials have been used in a way that complements the owner's folk art collection. In the living room, a giant Western movie poster promoting Hoot Gibson *Chip of the Flying U* hangs on a wall of horizontal paneling made from oiled, reclaimed long-leaf heart pine. The paneling, which resembles exterior siding and offers the illusion that the house has been turned inside-out, came from floor joists in a



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dismantled Kentucky tobacco-drying shed. The joists were ripped down the centerline to expose all the old nail marks. In addition, exposed cut nails with irregular heads from Tremont Nail Company, America's oldest nail manufacturer, add an interesting dimension.

"We try not to use gun nails too much," Faulkner explains. "I think it's more interesting to show how things are assembled. It's more honest and not so stylistic."

Across from the sitting area, an antique cash register that originally sat in the owner's father's store is tucked into a nook next to a gazebo-shaped fireplace. A screen from Reno Salvage, which miners once used to sift ore, serves as the fireplace screen. Yankin polished the mesh screen, then left in pieces of gravel.

"When the fire's going you get this great pattern of light through the gravel," says Faulkner.

In the kitchen, black and white tiles create a lively checkerboard pattern along the walls above dark gray soapstone countertops. Built-in steel barstools provide spots for guests to relax while the cook is in the kitchen. Meals are served in the adjacent banquette, which replaces a formal dining room, by the owners' request. The area originally designed as the dining room was transformed into a sports viewing area with four televisions embedded in the custom cabinets designed by Brad and Debbie Copesey of Shingletown, CA.

To shield his-and-her offices from any commotion in the sports lounge, Yankin crafted a glass and pine sliding barn door. A number of judges were particularly impressed with the office spaces of the owners: a window between the two offices allows for communication between the couple and the convenience of a shared fax machine.

The upstairs is as consistently imaginative as the downstairs. In the children's guestroom, Faulkner designed stairs instead of a ladder to provide safer access to the bunk beds. The narrow planks covering the

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room's ceiling are sticker boards from the mill in Weed.

Throughout the house, splashes of muted colors are an unexpected departure from the usual wood, rock and earth tones prevalent in mountain homes — a kaleidoscope created in part by interior designers Donna Vallone and Caroline DeCesare of Vallone Design, in Scottsdale, Arizona. Purple and red fuzzy pillows accent brown couches in the living room. Walls the color of goldenrod interrupt the paneling throughout the main floor. Orange, cranberry, lime green and black tiles cover the sink cabinet in a guest bathroom. The plank ceiling of one upstairs guest bedroom hovers above deep red walls.

"It's a nice mix between the old wood and the intense color," says Faulkner.

This interplay of color and wood is also present in the guest cabin. Scattered patches of the original paint on the guest cabin's weathered pine siding, from a barn in Illinois, drove the decision to use red window trim.

The cabin's door, like all exterior doors in the home, is reclaimed pine from the mill in Weed. Yankin and his crew applied latex paint to the custom doors, washed it off, then covered the doors with black wax. According to Faulkner, "It really deepens the color."

The guest cabin is connected to the main house by a flat metal grated bridge located between two tall Jeffrey pines. Railroad tracks that once carried ore carts through mine shafts act as supports underneath the bridge's grating.

While our panel was unanimously impressed by the home, some were bothered by the darkness of its interior spaces. Other judges felt that the dark atmosphere was a successful tribute to Old Tahoe, when homes had few windows and used dark wood.

"It was dark, but very entertaining inside," summed up judge Eric Larusson. "There are a million interesting things to catch your eye."