

Architect **Hans Berglund** does



not shy away from extremes. A bicycle ride for him, for example, can mean a 450-mile sprint across his chosen home state of Colorado, as he did the week of this

interview. And when recent clients explained their desire for a green home by saying, “If you’re not willing to eat it, don’t put it in our home,” Berglund embraced the challenge with tremendous enthusiasm. The result is a LEED-certified, stunning guest house and an airy art studio tucked into the Vail Valley.

Berglund, who earned his architecture degree from Cornell and worked for major firms in California and Colorado before opening Berglund Architects in 2004, has a passion for building and a deep respect for highly detailed craftsmanship, both of which are evident throughout his portfolio of residential work. He takes on only a couple of projects each year — the firm has completed homes across Colorado, in Montana and even the British Virgin Islands — and although he espouses simple designs that are spatially contemporary, Berglund’s style is far from Minimalist. He is a fanatic for details. In the Lake Creek project, Berglund and his team of two designers did all of the architecture, lighting, fixed finishes and interiors. For Berglund, the opportunity allowed him to be “hands-on” and make absolutely certain that the owners realized their dreams.

Sustainability and energy efficiency are standard throughout the firm’s



**Clockwise from left:** The Lake Creek Residence is an Energy Star and LEED-certified guest house that functions as a creative retreat for the owners, an artist and a poet. The home’s design utilizes straightforward construction techniques, substantial timber detailing and large areas of windows and doors to capture the spectacular views. | In addition to this cozy writing nook, a covered writing porch off the kitchen is an inspiring place for the couple to work. | This 1,500-square-foot art and music studio is incorporated into a new “green” barn. Downstairs, a 1,500-square-foot fireproof equipment storage garage with 8-inch concrete ceiling and walls and heat-activated fire shutters at all windows and doors provides fire-safe storage for the couple’s art and pianos. Photos: Ric Stovall



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body of work. The Lake Creek guest house, just 1,800-square feet, incorporates reclaimed wood — floors, doors, millwork and cabinetry are all reclaimed chestnut, while the timbers are standing dead or blown-down fir — fire-resistant materials and a photovoltaic solar system that generates most of the power for both buildings. The home utilizes 57 percent less energy than a code-built home of the same size. It is one of five LEED homes, in various states of completion, Berglund has designed.

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In addition to efficiency, Berglund promotes healthy indoor living practices amongst his clients by specifying natural, local materials, often with

hard flooring surfaces and low or non-VOC paints, stains and sealers to prevent off-gassing. But he's quick to point out that the "if-you-can't-eat-it-don't-use-it" philosophy does not mean homeowners have to compromise, or settle for eco-chic.

In fact, Berglund's design for the Lake Creek project is every bit as beautiful as it is sustainable and efficient. The strong expression of structure and rich natural materials gave Berglund a stunning palette. And the relationship between the structures is inspired: The guest house is a sophisticated mountain cabin with exposed structural elements throughout while the nearby art studio reflects the region's agrarian heritage with a contemporary barnlike structure. Just 100 yards apart from each other, the two buildings have a playful and unexpected conversation, something that delights the architect. Given the homeowners' decision to make the guest house their *own* retreat whenever guests fill their primary residence nearby, it's safe to say that the delight is mutual.

— C.G.W. ■



**Clockwise from top left:** The house's large high-performance Low-E windows and doors opening up to the outdoor rooms create a strong indoor-outdoor connection. They provide passive solar heating in the winter, while the large overhangs shade the glass in the summer. | Reclaimed chestnut was used for all the wood floors, cabinetry and doors throughout the house, while standing dead and blown-down Douglas fir trees were milled for all the timbers and interior trim. | Situated on more than 100 acres, the site is incredibly private allowing expansive windows in the master bathroom. Photos: Ric Stovall