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H O M E S T Y L E



Domestic Bliss

An artist and a lawyer find their
paradise in Woody Creek



Halfway House

SHE WAS DOWNVALLEY. HE WAS UP. SO THEY MET IN THE MIDDLE AND BUILT A DREAM HOME IN WOODY CREEK.

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/// PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROSS KRIBBS



/// Only large panes of glass separate indoors from out in this all-season home. The family enjoys entertaining, playing lawn games, or simply watching the sun set over the distant peaks from their south-facing porch.





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When Kevin Patrick and Andrea Wendel were looking for property on which to build a home, their needs were very specific. “We had a kid in the Aspen School District and three horses,” says Wendel. “There aren’t many properties in the upper valley that fulfill those requirements.”

They found one in a somewhat unlikely spot: adjacent to the trailer park in Woody Creek, where Wendel and Patrick are living the western dream. He’s a lawyer known for driving a hard bargain on one of the West’s most precious commodities: water. An eastern transplant, she’s an artist who competes in cutting horse competitions, wields a chainsaw and a welding iron, and just happens to resemble a supermodel. While their professional and personal interests couldn’t be more different, their union is a mix of mutual admiration and respect and a lot of fun. Says architect David Warner of Lipkin Warner Design, “They understand each other’s needs. Everything about them is seamless.”

It may be seamless now, but their life in this house has not been without its challenges. Wendel and Patrick spent their first year of married life living separately: she in Carbondale with her horses, he in Aspen’s historic West End. “We built this house right when the economy tanked,” Patrick says, “and we couldn’t sell either of our other houses.” So they went on their honeymoon and came back. “And then we said, ‘See you next week.’ 2008 wasn’t the best year for us. We had three houses within thirty miles of one another.” Eventually, though, the market did conspire to let Wendel and Patrick sell their other homes and move into the one they built together. “We didn’t want to rush things!” laughs Wendel.

/// The interiors, always in flux, are a blend of collected works by contemporary local artists and Wendel’s own creations. A James Surls piece hangs in the window, complementing the mantel, candlesticks, and coffee table, all products of Wendel’s furniture line, Andi-Le.



The home sits quietly in a neighborhood of eclectic vitality. “Everyone is an old-timer, and there’s a post office and a tavern,” says Patrick. “What more do you need?” Blending in with those local environs was a consideration for the architect. While the home’s interior reflects a very modern sensibility, its exterior relies on familiar Western forms.

“We didn’t want to design something that turned its back on the existing community,” Warner explains. “We deferred to simple architectural styles reminiscent of rural Colorado to make this place look like it belongs here.” Warner opted for a barn-like shape, incorporating a big gable and dormers, and he and his team relied on the colors and textures of natural materials—wood and stone—for additional detail.

Though Wendel and Patrick could not be more different in their interests and professional pursuits, they are masters when it comes to envisioning a design.

“Kevin and I knew exactly how we wanted this house to flow,” says Wendel. “We drew the squares, and David put all the details together.”

The couple envisioned a collection of buildings that would be a contemporary version of a ranch compound: a live-work environment made up of a barn, a studio, and the home, where the kitchen is the center of all activity, art is

integral to everyday life, and horses are part of the family.

Patrick and Wendel, ever the creative thinkers, used the strict confines of the Pitkin County code to their advantage. “We thought about this house like a boat. Everything must be incorporated as a built-in,” says Patrick. And, in this case, every leftover space has a purpose. The area under the stairs, for example, typically used for storage in most homes, was converted into a mini-bar, complete with a honed black granite counter, sink, glass shelves, and refrigerator.

The couple lives on the first floor, where a single door separates the living areas from the master suite. Space flows naturally between partitions, and there’s an indoor-outdoor relationship created by sliding glass doors that open from the dining and living rooms onto a deep south-facing porch with a fireplace. It’s a space that sees a lot of use during the summertime.

Upstairs are two south-facing bed-

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/// The dining room features a table by Wendel. The process of designing her own house was fun because, as she says, “it was a blank canvas for all my creations.” In the background is Patrick’s creation: a temperature- and humidity-controlled 1,200-bottle wine room.



rooms with individual balconies, one for Harrison, Patrick's thirteen-year-old son, and one for guests. Between the two is a large family room that accommodates a little bit of everything: kids' TV and game station, Wendel's office and design space, an exercise area, and Patrick's drumset.

While Wendel's work centers around her studio and the horses, Patrick's affinity for fine wine and audiovisual equipment is incorporated into the primary living spaces. A seventy-inch television, generally reserved for a dedicated home theater space, is so subtly hidden in a living room bookcase that it requires a second look to discern where the dark shelving ends and the television begins. Hidden beneath a fine inlay of alder ceiling slats is acoustic padding that renders a rich surround-sound quality through a high-tech but almost invisible speaker system. And, in yet another depar-

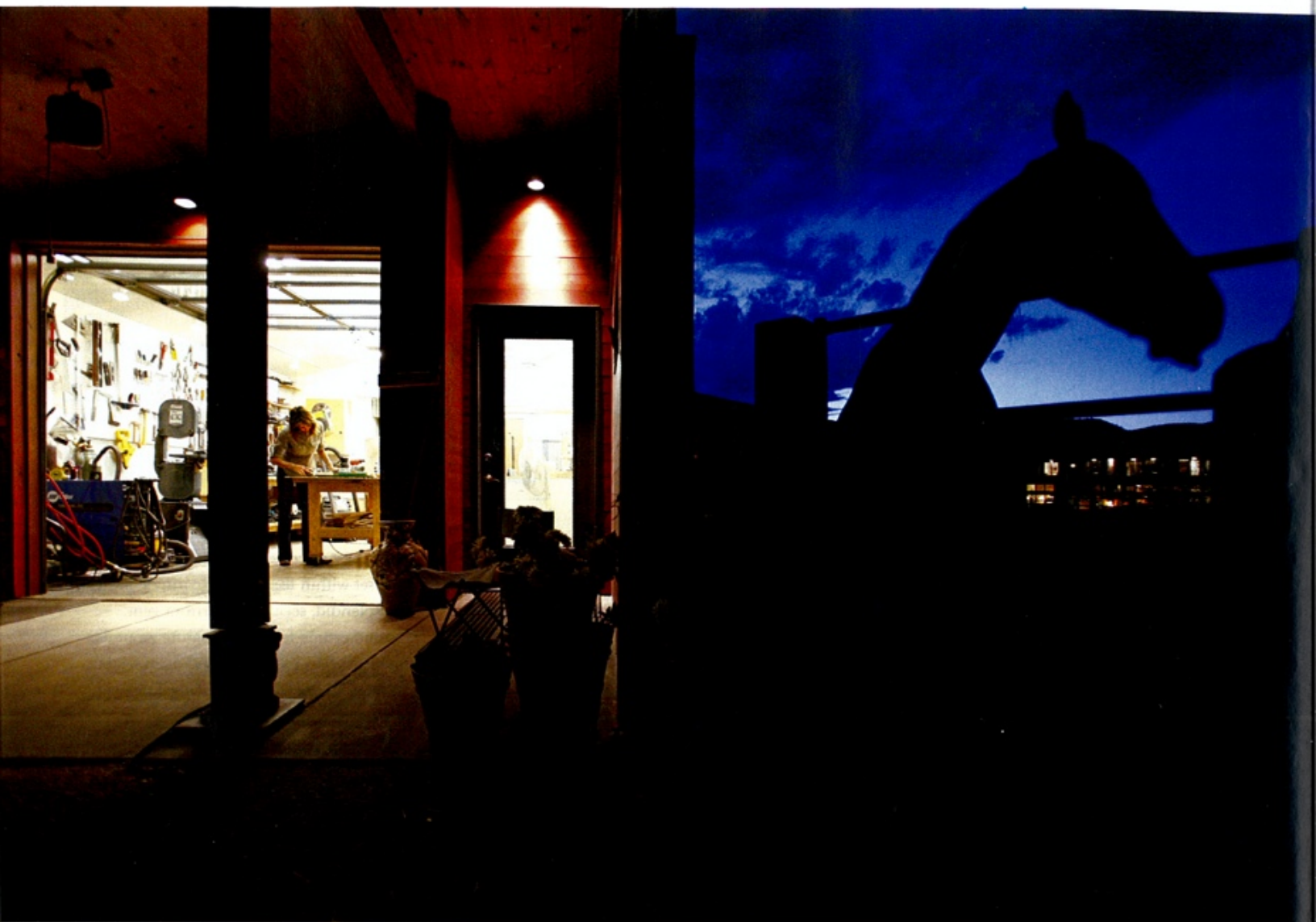


ture from traditional home design, the wine "cellar"—a 1,200-bottle, temperature-controlled room—is located adjacent to the dining room and kitchen, a testament to the couple's desire to share their passions with their friends and family.

In the kitchen, both Wendel and Patrick feel right at home. Noelle Hernandez of NCH Design helped them to create a space that reflects their distinct personalities. Hernandez knows how much Patrick and Wendel like to cook; she's worked with them on other houses. "We concentrated on efficiency. Who's chopping, who's cooking, and who's cleaning up," she says.

What really distinguishes this home, however, is the incorporation of art in every room. Even Wendel's collection of cowboy hats is artfully presented in the mudroom. Works by local artists, many of whom Wendel met during her years as a student and a trustee at Anderson Ranch, are on display, including an assemblage of steel by Mark Cesark, a cast-lead and beeswax piece by Kris Cox, and an abstract photograph of water by Jim Baker. A small steel James Surls sculpture of a flower hangs in a window.

/// The open plan of the home centers on the kitchen as the hub of all activity. A Joe Andoe painting of horses hangs over one of Wendel's stacked lamps in the master bedroom.



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The home also serves as a constantly rotating exhibition gallery for Wendel's own pieces, whether a fur-covered cottonwood stool or a fireplace mantel of steel and glass. Having recently expanded her business, Andi-Le, to incorporate functional art, Wendel is quick to admit that she loves using her home as a canvas for working on the prototypes for her furniture line: "I like to live with things first to see how they work in a home environment." Case in point: the dining room table, also an Andi-Le design, is covered with prototypes for a new line of acrylic-painted wooden candleholders. "I have so many pieces everywhere. There's never enough room for everything."

Many local designers bring their clients to Wendel's home, and she loves to show off her studio. "Men come in here and they just drool," she says. Hand tools—grinders, trimmers, and anything that makes an interesting

texture—are organized in a box below a worktable. A band saw, a table router, a table saw, and a mig welder line the walls. Outside the south-facing garage door is an anvil and a metal bender. Patrick, ever the encouraging and supportive partner, interjects an amusing reference to the popular TV show *Home Improvement*: "I love it when she gets out the chainsaw. I feel like I'm married to Tim Allen!"

Ever-present with Wendel while she works are her three horses, nickering softly over the fence as she carries on with her creative process. "Everybody has their thing that they like to do," she says. "My stuff just happens to take buildings and more land than a regular house. We were so lucky to find it here." ●

/// Late night finds Wendel busy in her studio, her four-legged friends watching over her while she works.