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**Berglund Architects, LLC,
creates homes that are green,
inside and out**

BY KATIE COAKLEY
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RIC STOVALL



There are many different ways to design a home: Some people start with the building, some people start with the place. For Hans Berglund, AIA, president of Berglund Architects, LLC, the inspiration for projects come from the land. Berglund Architects has designed homes throughout the Vail Valley, creating living spaces that incorporate the best aspects of the property with green technology that reinforces the love of the environment.

The resulting custom home, commercial building or renovation is a creation that is built to last, with an eye to the future.

bringing the outside in

When beginning a project, Berglund explains that they start with the land. The design begins with the charrette: the intense first days that include walking the lot, meeting with the owners and discussing where it feels right to place the home. Every decision is made to integrate the home into the landscape, not only to capture the views but also to create a sensation of belonging.

Focusing on where the living room, master bedroom and other living spaces will be situated to designing outdoor living spaces, the home takes shape first in site sketches, then floor plans, then staking out the approximate rooms. The design continues to grow, with a focus on integrating the outdoors into the indoors — one of Berglund's specialties.

"We achieve that (indoor outdoor living) through really large floor-to-ceiling windows, large doors and covered outdoor spaces that rooms flow out into," Berglund says.

One recent project, the Chiming Bells residence in Avon, is a perfect example of Berglund's aesthetic. The home has a large outdoor living room with a fireplace, generous sitting area, a dining table for family meals or entertaining plus extra touches like heaters in the ceiling to take it into the cooler months.

"It's a really fantastic space and, over the years, we've always had elements like that, but those become the spaces that clients are most interested in," Berglund says. "It's one of the highest priorities. People want to be outside."

Chiming Bells, Mountain Star

Architectural Design Team:

Hans Berglund, Stephanie Lord-Johnson, Amelia Kraft
Berglund Architects, LLC, Edwards, Colorado

Builder:

Ted Leach, Benno Schoeldegger, Chris Lammers
Vail Custom Builders, Edwards, Colorado

Interior Designer:

Sarah Carr, Sarah Carr Designs
Edwards, Colorado

This home, known as Chiming Bells, is a synthesis of traditional mountain vernacular with contemporary detailing such as exposed steel beams supporting heavy timber beams. Rustic reclaimed siding by Specialty Woods contrasts the cleanly detailed dry-stack stone by Avignon Stone and modern large floor-to-ceiling windows and doors by Welland Doors and Jeld-wen Windows.

A signature element of Berglund homes is an outdoor room such as this generous covered deck with Colorado buff flagstone walking surface, refined steel guardrails and the warm toned wood beams and ceiling with lights and heaters, which makes it feel like a room instead of a deck. The living room flows out to the deck through large lift-and-slide Wetland Doors to create indoor-outdoor living.



stewards of the environment

While Berglund's aesthetic focuses on incorporating a home into the land, it goes beyond positioning the building within the property. Since his first projects, he's tried to promote green building as well as creating buildings that are as energy efficient and sustainable as possible.

"I researched techniques that had been used in Canada in the '80s and, in the early '90s, designed homes with continuous insulation, the best windows that you could find and clean paints and sealers," Berglund explains. "It was really hard — manufacturers didn't list ingredients — it wasn't the same sensibilities."

However, it seems that the industry is now catching up. Continuous insulation is now part of the building code and it's much easier to find low-toxin paints, stains and sealers.

"We try to make sure that everything in the interior environment is as clean and nontoxic as is available," he says. "Our homes are usually about 50 percent better insulated than code. It's the best investment you can make — it pays itself back in six to eight years and creates a more comfortable environment."

Being more energy efficient makes sense to Berglund and he incorporates it into all aspects of his projects, from using energy recovery ventilators (ERV) and conducting energy modeling to figure out how much energy a home will use to incorporating solar energy.

"It's a phenomenal investment," Berglund says. "We can make the solar panels pretty discreet. Even clients who don't want to see them, we can make them integrated into the home, not these glaring, stuck-on things."

For Dr. Larry Allen and his wife, Lori, Berglund's focus on sustainability was a factor in choosing him to design and build their home on the Vail Golf Course from 2010 to 2012. Lori spoke to 19 architects before she chose Berglund.

"We wanted to be very good stewards of the environment and create a home with minimal maintenance and upkeep," Dr. Allen says. "We wanted the house to fit the surroundings and have natural landscaping. Hans agreed and got us very interested in LEED certification, then designed it to meet the requirements for a LEED certification."

Building homes that qualify for LEED certification is another element for which Berglund is known. He's in the midst of designing a home that will be LEED certified and has



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designed four others; he's also built a platinum-certified home.

Berglund says that building to the LEED certification code was a great learning opportunity. He and his team now incorporate those best practices in their work on all their homes, even if the homeowners choose not to pursue the certification.

'green design is really great design'

But Berglund's homes are more than just efficient boxes designed with only function in mind. They're also beautiful, bringing in the elements and merging with them.

"The most fundamental tenet of green design is just great design," Berglund says. "If you design an awkward building, something funny looking that doesn't live well, it doesn't matter how sustainable it is. Someone's going to renovate it or change it around. If you make a beautiful building that works well, they (the owners) will take care of it and it'll last longer."

Berglund describes his design aesthetic as "Western modern architecture with modern sensibilities." Some clients lean more to the mountain side, while others are more in the modern camp.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A stone wall with a fireplace, boulder hearth and stone niches with built-in shelves and cabinetry is the focal point of a sophisticated yet cozy family room on the walkout lower level. Patinaed steel panels and a structural header surround the fireplace and integrate the TV into the overall fireplace and stone accent wall design. A steel bridge frames the entry space and provides dramatic vistas through the living spaces. The kitchen is open to the living room and has a large island well suited for cooking and entertaining guests. Elegant cabinetry by Cutting Edge Cabinetry is finely crafted and rich in color and grain while being cleanly detailed.

A cozy bunk room has beds and bunks in niches wrapped in beautiful reclaimed wood by Arizonal woods. Even the adults want to curl up in these bunks.



For example, the Chiming Bells residence in the Mountain Star community is designed with more of a mountain sensibility, with traditional gables, shed roof forms and a more traditional Western mountain arch.

However, to inject some of that modern sensibility, the interior includes larger windows than would have been typical and exposed steel elements, from steel railings to columns and beams.

Berglund says incorporating steel is one way he keeps his design interesting. It's practical, and in large areas that you need the strength to hold up a roof or large windows, steel is a good choice. However, instead of cladding them in wood or other materials, he leaves them exposed.

"It's an interesting part of the aesthetic," he says.

This industrial element is softened with wood, either on the ceiling, on other beams, on the floor or on a fireplace.

"When you see it as a whole, it doesn't feel at all industrial — but there are accents that are subtly industrial," Berglund says.

And while incorporating all of the wants and desires for a client can be difficult, it seems as if Berglund has a knack for creating the perfect home.

"The surprise was how Hans was

able to meet or surpass all of our wants and requests in the design of the house," Dr. Allen says.

"I told Hans, 'I don't want to go to a window and look out to see a view. I want to stand in my home and have the view come to me,'" explains Lori. "He understood and made it happen. Our home has spectacular views across the Golf Course into Vail. The views are all around us."

But a home is more than the beams that support the roof, the type of tile in the foyer or the solar panels tucked discretely on the roof. It's all of the elements put together and the people who inhabit the structure that really make the difference. Berglund understands that; it's a quiet comfort emanating from the homes that he creates.

"I feel like architecture has the power to really positively affect how people feel, their emotions and life experiences," Berglund says. "Think about walking into a church or an academic building. It can be calming or inspiring or energizing. We try to bring those elements into our homes. Regardless of the size... there's an emotional quality to spaces and architecture. We work really hard to capture that."

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— LORI ALLEN, CLIENT



Soft-toned plaster walls and ceiling with dark stained wood windows, trim and beams create a cozy master bedroom with dramatic south and western views through the floor-to-ceiling windows which wrap the corner.