

MODERN LUXURY

ASPEN

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2015

INSIDE
**ASPEN
WEDDINGS**

**FEAST ON
SUMMER'S
BOUNTY**
FARM TO FORK:
THE ULTIMATE
LOCAVORE'S GUIDE

**FRESH
FASHION**
EASY, BREEZY
WARM-WEATHER CHIC

**HOMETOWN
HEROES**
MOUNTAIN RESCUE
ASPEN CELEBRATES 50
YEARS OF SAVING LIVES

The
Food & Wine
Best of the Season **Issue**

EAST MEETS WEST

A WOODY CREEK REFUGE BLENDS JAPANESE AESTHETICS WITH THE COLORADO OUTDOORS.

By Sarah Chase Shaw
Photography by Raul Garcia

Space is a luxury in any location. Outdoor living areas, views and privacy are an added bonus, particularly in crowded urban environments where windows look into other windows, sidewalks require alert navigational skills and being alone is more a state of mind than a reality.

For the U.S.-born, Japan-based Toppinos, finding a place near family in Aspen and in an environment rich with space to recreate and entertain was a high priority. Discovering a 5-acre lot with creek frontage in the upper Roaring Fork Valley was a stroke of luck and one that promised a startling and refreshing alternative to their daily lives in dense and dynamic Tokyo.

Once they had purchased the lot, located in the community of Woody Creek, Stephanie and J-P Toppino hired Rich Carr, principal of Basalt-based CCY Architects, to design a home that would comfortably accommodate the needs of their three growing children and allow for hosting friends and family. When Carr began the process, one element in particular stood out. "Being able to incorporate the creek made this a very unique project," he relates. "The Toppinos really wanted to take advantage of the site, fully engaging in the privacy and intimacy afforded by the creek's proximity."

The property includes approximately 450 feet of Woody Creek frontage as well as a significant section of flat area on a bluff above. The location of the 5,500-square-foot house may seem counterintuitive at first, but it spoke to the homeowners' desire for a secluded refuge. "We made the decision not to build the house on the upper bluff, where obviously there is more sun

and tremendous views," says Carr. "The existing cottonwood bosque and the accessibility of the creek became central features to this private and intimate space, which is almost treehouse-like."

The serendipitous ability to build close to the creek was made possible because of a previous home that was subsequently removed. "Current code requires a hundred-foot setback from the creek," says project architect Simon Elliot. "Because there was an existing house and vested rights that were secured at purchase, we were able to build to within 20 feet of the creek's high-water line." The new house follows, almost to a T, the footprint of the original home.

A 50-foot swimming pool, since rebuilt, and a deck that cantilevers out over the creek were an additional bonus, particularly because neither could be replicated today, thanks to the revised zoning regulations. For the family, however, this outdoor environment was almost mandatory, especially considering the tight quarters of their neighborhood in Tokyo. "We live in a very busy and crowded city most of the year," says Stephanie. "We wanted to feel enveloped by the trees in a way that allows us to connect with nature. I think we definitely succeeded."

The family, which includes two boys and a girl, is very sporty. "We enjoy the home [during] our summer and winter holidays," says Stephanie. "We spend our time inside in the winter, with occasional runs out to the pool and hot tub. In the summer, we practically live in the pool, and we ride our bikes on the [nearby] Rio Grande Trail." She adds, "For the kids, the fields and even the driveway are places to run and play,



WELCOME
TRANSPARENCY.
Glass doors in the family room open onto a multitiered patio and hot tub, while exterior materials like steel, glass and stone make their way inside, creating a true indoor-outdoor living environment.



CROSSING OVER
 From top: The glass-railed entry bridge unites the exposed landscape above with the creekside sanctuary below; intimate pockets of space, such as the dining room, exist within the larger open plan of the home's upper level.



“Building a home with a modernist aesthetic was intimidating, but from the beginning, we were enthralled with the idea of living under a floating roof with endless glass.”

—STEPHANIE TOPPINO, HOMEOWNER

a luxury that we simply do not have in Japan.”

Carr and his team recognized the desire for a house that engages the land but also employs an appropriate balance of adult entertainment space with playful and unexpected architectural features customized for the whole family. “For them, having an eclectic, multitiered space really works,” he says. “It’s a hybrid design of the more typical big, open living area. It’s still open but has intimate cubbies for specific use.”

Stephanie agrees: “We had a general feeling of how we wanted the house to live, and we really wanted to incorporate some elements from our life in Japan into the overall design. Building a home with a modernist aesthetic was intimidating, but from the beginning, we were enthralled with the idea of living under a floating roof with endless glass. What we ended up with is a home that is designed well and expresses distinct architectural elements that reflect the various cultures in which we live.”

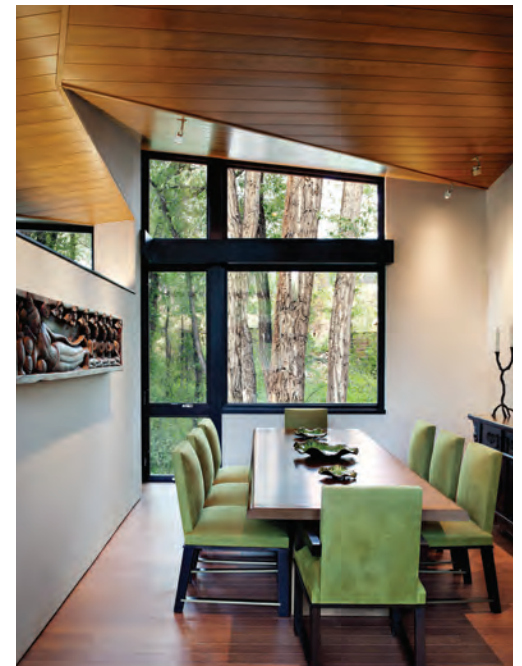
To enter the home, completed in 2013, guests

must park their vehicles on the upper bluff and cross a bridge to the front door. A frameless glass railing, used on both the bridge and the decks, creates an immediate sense of intimacy with the surrounding environment and reinforces the dynamic playfulness found throughout the home. The bridge also draws immediate attention to the home’s signature folded roof plane, which appears to hang effortlessly in the shadow of a deep canopy of cottonwood trees.

“This unique roof system felt a bit like origami to us,” says Carr, “and it seemed like a fun and appropriate way to incorporate their life in Japan.” More importantly, the folded plane emphasizes the site’s intimacy while also elevating sections that introduce light and capture carefully curated glimpses of the sky and surrounding ridgetops—concepts that are otherwise hard to bring to fruition on a site that sits so low in the river bottom.

The two-story home mimics the creek, literally cascading from the living room—a glass-enclosed, perch located at the house’s highest

CONTINUED...





PRIVATE AERIE
In the living room, glass doors pull back to create an indoor-outdoor space that extends quite literally into the treetops.

DESIGN DETAILS

ARCHITECTURE
CCY Architects
970.927.4925
ccyarchitects.com

INTERIORS
Luis Ortega Interiors
310.358.0211
luisortegainteriors.com

CONTRACTOR AND CABINETRY
Elevate Construction
970.309.7685

LANDSCAPE DESIGN
Mt. Daly Enterprises
970.963.9896
mtdaly.com

LIGHTING DESIGN
Robert Singer & Associates
970.963.5692
robertsingerlighting.com

...CONTINUED point—to the family room, where it meets the existing grade at lawn level. Public spaces, all located on the upper level, are unified by the dynamic ceiling form. At the same time, cozy counterpoints to the bigger gesture exist in the form of intimate pockets of space for dining, cooking and living.

On the lower level, all four of the bedrooms are positioned creekside for maximum exposure. “Indoor/outdoor living is integral to my work,” says Carr. “Even the living room, which is on the second floor, feels like it is on grade. The terrace extends out into the treetops, and you really feel like you’re on the creek.”

Los Angeles-based interior designer Luis Ortega worked closely with the Toppinos to integrate their collection of Asian antiques with the home’s clean, contemporary lines. His use of color and texture is well-suited to the home’s picturesque setting, while the furnishings are comfortable yet sophisticated, a nod to the team’s desire to reflect the Toppinos’ cross-cultural lifestyle. Says Ortega, “The color of the home’s interiors and fabrics

were directly derived from the colors of the setting that you see through the windows. The family’s Asian pieces and art were used as accents throughout the interior. The overall effect was meant to be a modern interior with an Eastern influence.” In addition, J-P and Stephanie requested specific features, including shared family bath spaces and Toto toilets, both elements that are less common in the United States but the norm in Japan.

The Toppinos are quick to credit their design team and builder for the time and energy that went into creating their home away from home. Notes Elliot, “The challenge of accommodating time-zone differences between Japan and Colorado made for more than a few late-night conference calls, but the collaboration went smoothly, and we all had fun.”

Those late nights more than paid off. Adds Stephanie, “The first time we stayed in the house, the leaves were in their full autumn glory, and the house just seemed a perfect extension and reflection of all that was going on outside. It was exactly what we had all been hoping to achieve.” **A**