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## CUBIC EQUATION

WRITTEN BY **CAREN KURLANDER**  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **PETER AND KELLEY GIBEON**

THE SPARE, MINIMALIST WORKS OF SCULPTOR DONALD JUDD ARE GENERALLY ASSOCIATED WITH THE FLAT TEXAS DESERT—NOT THE MOUNTAIN PEAKS OF COLORADO. But, when a couple was looking to renovate their 1970s chalet-style house in Vail to align with their contemporary tastes and collection of late-20<sup>th</sup>-century art, they looked to those pared-down forms and elemental materials for inspiration. “Donald Judd was a big influence on the design,” says the couple’s design architect Jim Dayton, of Minneapolis-based James Dayton Design. “We weren’t trying to mimic his work, but the mentality was to create a simple, very clean box sitting on the landscape.”

Though the aesthetic of the existing house didn’t meet the couple’s requirements—“It was like an overcooked A-frame,” says Dayton—its layout did. Remodeling the structure, but retaining its floor plan of five bedrooms on one floor and public rooms above, seemed the best solution—until construction began. “We started demolition and found cracked concrete walls with water coming through them, and joisting that was not up to standards,” says the general contractor’s project manager Bill O’Neill, of George Shaeffer Construction in Vail. With the decision to tear down and rebuild came the freedom to design, without restrictions, the house the couple had envisioned. “We wanted to build a contemporary house,” says the husband, “but we wanted to utilize a vocabulary that was compatible with the mountain neighborhood.”

Dayton, who spent five formative years working for Frank Gehry before establishing his own practice, accomplished both of those goals. Keeping a similar layout to the original house, with the addition of a master suite and a third-floor library, he designed the new structure in cube-like volumes, which interlock in a sculptural composition.

INTERIOR DESIGN Alan Tanksley, Alan Tanksley, Inc		
DESIGN ARCHITECTURE Jim Dayton, James Dayton Design		
PROJECT ARCHITECTURE Kyle Webb and Millie Aldrich, K.H. Webb Architects, PC		
HOME BUILDER Bill O’Neill, George Shaeffer Construction Company		
BEDROOMS 6	BATHROOMS 8	SQUARE FEET 8,850





#### GLASS APPEAL

Sunlight penetrates deep into the home's entry, where a glass staircase framed in stainless steel, designed by architect Jim Dayton and fabricated by Paragon Architectural Products in Scottsdale, serves as the focal point. Light fixture by McEwen Lighting.

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The choice of materials—Cor-Ten steel, cedar siding, Castleton black stone and cement—animate the façade and connect it to its locale. “The materiality is very much a part of the language of the town, without necessarily being linked to a chalet or an old mine,” says Dayton. “We wanted it to be contextual, but in a unique way.”

“There was so much care put into the application of the exterior materials,” says project architect Millie Aldrich, who began work on the home with the architect of record, Kyle Webb, of Vail-based K.H. Webb Architects, and later started her own firm in Wolcott, Pure Design Studio. “But it wasn’t just about what these materials look like from the outside. It was about how they flow



#### CLEAN SLATE

A cozy seating area in the living room features chairs from Philadelphia's Usona Home, Holly Hunt lamps and a custom blue leather ottoman positioned next to a massive slate fireplace manufactured by The Gallegos Corporation in Vail.





#### REST STOP

The outdoors are visible through expansive windows by Point Five Windows & Doors from virtually every spot in the house. Select walls clad in cedar siding add warmth. A Cliff Young sectional, upholstered A. Rudin swivel chair and ottoman from Design Within Reach form a quiet conversation nook in the media room. The Noon Suspension chandelier is from Suite New York.



#### LIGHT LUNCH

The palette for the bright, open kitchen was kept neutral, with reverse-painted glass cabinetry by Alno, terrazzo flooring, leather B&B Italia chairs and a custom breakfast table. Appliances by Sub-Zero, Viking, Wolf and Gaggenau.

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to the inside as well.” Boundaries were kept loose as materials reach from outside to in, following the sculptural forms of the architecture. “We don’t just give up on the material inside,” says Dayton. “The geometry is completed in a way that gives a sense of the whole.”

The interior design was another important part of that holistic approach. New York designer Alan Tanksley, who established his own firm after working for venerable designer Mark Hampton, collaborated with Dayton from the beginning of the project. “The owners wanted to be comfortable and warm, but they didn’t want any references to typical regional decoration,” says the designer.





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“They own two Donald Judd desks, and the sensibility of those desks was to dictate how simple everything was to be around them.” Tanksley kept things understated but strong as he crafted an environment that would complement the “grand gestures” of the architecture rather than compete.

Working in a tonal palette of creams, browns and ambers, the designer paired an A. Rudin sofa with low-slung Roman Thomas chairs in the living room. An imposing dry-stacked stone fireplace visually divides the space from the dining room, where Tanksley hung a custom Bocci light fixture over a dining table by Bryan Hunt. “There’s a ski lodge feeling that should be enhanced,” he

**SCULPTURAL FORM**

The materials palette for the exterior, consisting of cedar trim, Castleton black slate and Cor-Ten steel, was the basis for that of the rest of the home. The pond and landscape were custom-designed and installed by Eagle-based Land Designs by Ellison.



**OPEN TABLE**

Holly Hunt chairs and a custom mahogany table by fine artist Bryan Hunt ground the dining room, which maintains a deep connection to the living room via the open fireplace. The chandelier is by Bocci, and the artwork is from the owners’ collection.





#### SLEEPING QUARTERS

The master bedroom offers an inviting array of textures, featuring a silk Tai Ping rug, leather-upholstered beds, walnut bedside tables and blackened steel cabinets. The artworks on the back wall are by Fred Sandback.





#### HOT SPOT

The intimate terrace, located off of the dining and living areas, provides a warm spot for the owners to lounge on chilly nights. The black stone fireplace with black optic glass chips is custom by Land Designs by Ellison.



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says, “but rather than use cabin club chairs in overscale plaid, we kept the emphasis on architecture, clean lines and art.” The designer continued the pattern-free palette in the master suite, where silk rugs and taupe hues create a quiet backdrop for artwork by Fred Sandback.

Despite its stark departure from the area’s traditional vernacular, the house reflects its surroundings and its owners. “I think this is a really comfortable house,” says Dayton. “It’s warm and inviting, and the spaces are really well scaled. It doesn’t have to look how you’d expect a house in this location to look. There are so many ways to look at the world. I’m just trying to provide one.” **L**

#### STUDY TIME

One of two Donald Judd desks that largely informed the design of the home rests in the wife’s study, adjacent to the owners’ library of design and architecture books. The wood chair is an antique by Dutch designer Gerrit Rietveld.