

## A Perfect Fit



The owners of a Colorado ski resort turn an old barn into an environmentally friendly home that suits this historic mining and ranching community

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Photos: James Ray Spahn

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and Tim Mueller are determined to leave as small a carbon footprint as possible, is evident in the way they power their three ski resorts—Crested Butte Mountain and two resorts in New England—with clean, renewable wind energy. And it's in how they honored the past and the planet when building a new home in Crested Butte. "Tim and I have a long commitment to environmental responsibility, both at our ski resorts and in our homes," Diane says. "It's in our blood."

When the couple bought the Crested Butte Mountain Resort four years ago, they took time deciding where to build a home, considering the benefits of the mountain, the town, and the valley. The upper East River Valley won out, with its spectacular 360-degree view of Paradise Divide, Whetstone Mountain and Crested Butte. The 70-acre site had a

and space for Tim to train dogs  
er retrieval. It also had an old,  
etal barn at the top of a rise,  
hing of an eyesore. "We  
ered tearing down the barn,"  
says, "but we liked the location  
ch and felt we could transform it  
home. It didn't make sense to  
seem responsible to totally start  
cratch."



*left to right:* Members of the Marr Corp. crew: Erik Iverson, Chris Meyer, Corbin Marr, Victor Zermeno Tapia, Doug Fowler and Brent Strauss.

arn housed a small apartment,  
lready had the necessary  
ructure: a road, well water,  
ation, electricity and a septic  
γ, all big-ticket items. "We  
to recognize that this junker  
g had some pretty handsome  
nd a shape that fit into an  
rtic Western landscape," says  
r/contractor Corbin Marr.



ng up with local talent, including  
architect Jennifer Hartman,  
r designer Raye Malzhan and  
il craftsmen, the Muellers put  
er a like-minded team  
itted to green building. Hartman,  
r architectural firm has expertise  
:ainability and environmental  
ousness, had done some design  
at the ski area. Marr, who Diane  
never throws anything away,"  
re homeowners' ideas and ran  
rem, making suggestions such  
ling photovoltaic solar panels to  
ce electricity. Even the furnishings were selected with an eye for green or recycled  
als.

side of the barn was completely gutted except for the main staircase and  
ors, and the windows were reconfigured to bring in more natural light and  
lize on the mountain views. The space was reorganized for a two-story dwelling  
large garage. "Tim and I wanted something livable but not so big that we can't  
ch other," Diane says of her 2,955-square-foot home.

itect the home from the intense sunlight and harsh winter weather at an altitude of  
feet, the Muellers' team had to build an energy-efficient home. The barn's original  
walls are now encased in 15 inches of layered insulation and wood siding. New  
framed windows are energy-efficient, and two different types of solar panels  
ed near the home provide electricity and supplement hot water for household use  
diant in-floor heat.

am chose materials and patinas indicative of old mining and farm buildings. "We  
rmed the barn into a building that looks like it could have been here for 100  
" Diane says. "It's so important to us that a building fits into the context of the  
ape and the community." Cor-Ten steel roofing with a rusty surface, aged and -  
ised board siding, and barn-style cupolas define the exterior. Inside, the walls are  
d in recycled barn wood. "We wanted the barn to read through on the interior as  
s the exterior," Hartman says.

of natural materials, such as reclaimed wood, iron, stone and American Clay, bring an earthiness to the space. A massive sandstone fireplace anchors the great room and warms the home, while hefty vertical timbers and ceiling beams give a feeling of solidity to the interiors. “We basically built a timber-frame house inside a barn,” Marr says.

and interior designer Raye Malzhan decorated the home with colorful accents and rich texture: chenille and crewel upholstery fabrics and Turkish carpets. Some of the furnishings are handmade; others are family pieces or antiques. “Bringing in lots of different types of furnishings creates more intellectual interest and artistic tension,” Marr says.

Craftsmen created more interest with custom stone masonry, ironwork, wood paneling, furniture and art. “I knew we had good talent in the area, and we wanted to support and encourage our local creative community,” Diane says. “We benefitted from wonderful and unique work in our home.”

The abundance of wood in the house is counterbalanced with natural light during the day and a well-designed system of can lights and hidden rope lights that make the house warm at night. “The house feels good. It’s warm and inviting, definitely,” Diane says.

Relative newcomers to Colorado and part-time homeowners—the Muellers divide their time between Crested Butte and New England—Diane and Tim have adjusted well to the mountain lifestyle. “The people here are part of the landscape—from real sports fans to artists to those connected to the land,” Diane says. “Tim and I are those few people, so we just fit right in.”

#### Salvage

Contractor Corbin Marr made sure that nothing was wasted as the Muellers’ team transformed the old metal barn into a comfortable new home:

**RECYCLE IT UP.** Marr hired a subcontractor to grind up the concrete and linoleum from the barn apartment. This process drastically reduced the number of truckloads sent to the local landfill, which accepted the ground-up material as useful structural fill and didn’t charge a tipping fee.

**RECYCLE IT AROUND.** The barn’s metal roof was salvaged and offered to a local rancher, who used it for animal shelters. Insulation and doors were given or sold to companies in Gunnison and Montrose that recycle construction materials. Marr found a place for the debris in his own workshop.

**RECYCLE IT.** The original metal barn walls add support and are embedded between insulation (spray foam and cellulose insulation creates a hybrid insulation system) and exterior siding. Wood from old partition walls was reused as studs for the siding.

**RECYCLE IT.** Very little new material went into the construction of the home. Exterior siding was milled from standing beetle-kill pines. Interior wood floors, doors, walls and even crown molding are all reclaimed.

**GO GREEN.** The designer selected furnishings and fixtures from green companies, including Eleek, Inc., a lighting manufacturer that recycles aluminum and bronze,

#### DESIGN DETAILS:

##### Contractor:

Corbin Marr  
Marr Corp. Construction  
(970) 349-5593

[marr-corp.com](http://marr-corp.com) (<http://marr-corp.com>)

##### Architect:

Jennifer Hartman  
Sunlit Architecture  
(970) 349-5311

[sunlitarchitecture.com](http://sunlitarchitecture.com)  
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##### Interior Design:

Raye Malzhan  
Raye Design  
(970) 349-5837

South Cone Trading Company, which uses sustainable forestry practices and employs indigenous people in Peru. For her own furniture designs, Malzhan specifies either reclaimed or sustainable wood.

