

APRIL - JUNE 2021
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ON THE COVER

ASPEN MASTERPIECE: A UNIQUE COLORADO HOME

INSIDE

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More than 120 exquisite properties from around the world

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Architect Q&A

CCY Architects

The Colorado firm's partners, John Cottle and Rich Carr, talk about their shared love of connecting architecture with landscape, and how they seamlessly blend digital and analog when designing homes

Did you always want to be an architect?

JC (pictured above left): In the rearview mirror, yes, but before getting my master's in architecture I completed a B.A. in English literature, so the route was a bit circular.

RC (above right): As a child I was always designing and sketching ideas for new inventions and art was natural. By high school, architecture had piqued my interest and I attended Cornell's Summer Architecture program.

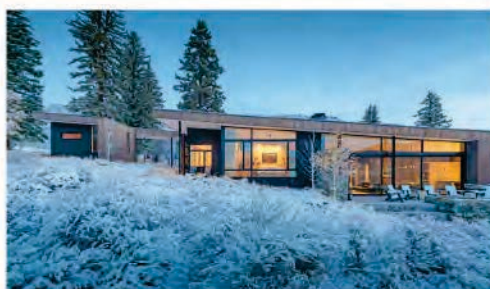
Tell us about an early building that impressed you...

JC: Growing up I spent a lot of time in the West—southern Idaho and western Wyoming—and the agrarian buildings and compounds of the region are very humble. They have a poetic sparseness and power to them that moved me at a very young age, and still do today.

RC: Our family cabin in the Sierras, designed by Bay Area architect Donald MacDonald. Powerful in its simplicity—strong, timber bones, an A-frame-like structure perched above the mountainside—it was accessed by a bridge that allowed the massive, sometimes 15-foot (4.6 m) snowpack to accumulate below. It was a magical place to escape to.

How has technology changed how you work?

Both: We have very sophisticated software that allows us to integrate our buildings into a site and have our clients walk through their houses virtually. At the same time, we spend a lot of time hand drawing—it's important to be able to sketch an intention in real time with a client.



DIAPER WHITE, JEREMY BITTERMANN

Innovative designs: The Music Box (above), a Victorian home that incorporates an aluminum skin, with perforations that correspond to a score by Chopin and let filtered light

into the recital room; Meadow House (top and center right), intended to be an extension of the landscape; Gammel Damm (left and bottom left), an award-winning family cabin.

How do you approach a residential commission?

Both: We listen to our clients and assess the site. Our goal is to get rid of preconceptions and identify the guiding principles for that site and that client. We are really passionate about connecting architecture to the landscape, and people's lives are enriched when it happens.

Why do you think people come to CCY?

Both: We are collaborative in how we think, work, and communicate. Our clients are brought into our charrette process (an intensive on-site work session with the CCY team, owners, and stakeholders) early on, and that allows us to put forth some sophisticated concepts in a comfortable environment. The work gets better because of that. This might be one of the reasons that so much of our work comes from referrals.

How big is your team and what are your offices like?

Both: We designed our office space 20 years ago as if it were a semi-finished loft. The work on the walls, material samples, and mock-ups are what finish the space—it



incubates creativity. We've never believed in private offices, it's a truly open studio, a space that welcomes dialogue, design pin-ups, and "drive-by" desk critiques. As a firm we have almost 50 years of experience and also a ton of young energy with the authority to make a difference. The combination of the two is powerful. We're half women, half men, and it is a great group of active, engaged people who make the firm an inspirational, fun place to work.

Tell us more about the design charrette—what happens?

Both: We begin all of our projects with a three-day design charrette. Our clients check in a couple of times a day while we work kind of around the clock. It's a real-time, iterative process with lots of quick sketching. It is incredibly powerful and also effective—we get to know our clients over early morning coffees and late-night glasses of wine, and we establish a shared vision, guiding principles, site diagrams, and the conceptual basis for architectural massing and character. More is accomplished in those three days than months of working in isolation!

What one commission would you really love to work on?

Both: A regenerative retreat in a spectacular natural setting—a place that regenerates and transforms the visitor, and gives back more than it takes. It is net positive both in its construction and its operation and creates lasting inspiration for its visitors long after they leave.

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