

Meadow House by CCY Architects

Aspen, Colorado

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Wendy Moonan



The Meadow House. Photo © Jeremy Bittermann

“Many houses in Aspen are overwhelming in scope and mass,” says Mark Iola, the owner of this year-round house. “We wanted a [contemporary house](#), but the environment had to be a priority.” The setting was five acres of grassy meadows that slope down to a confluence of two rivers. To design their house, Iola and his wife, Sarah, found a kindred spirit, John Cottle of CCY Architects (Cottle Carr Yaw) of Basalt, Colorado. “The idea was to get the architecture to nestle into the meadow,” Cottle says.

The only part of the house visible from the driveway is the entry structure and a volume for the home office that protrudes from a mound above. Not seen are two additional floors below the office, which are embedded in the slope. Over 75 percent of the 14,000-square-foot residence is tucked below grade.

The upper of the two levels, where the living and dining areas and the main bedroom are located, takes advantage of the spectacular mountain views with glass walls facing south and east. (The occupants cannot see the rivers, but can hear them.) Also facing south is a large heated terrace with a glass roof for year-round dining and lounging.



1

2



The levels (top) spill down the hillside. A living/dining room sits atop the sleeping level, (1); adjoining is a heated terrace (2). Photos © Jeremy Bittermann, [click to enlarge](#).

The floor below, for the most part submerged into the site, contains a game and “rec” room, screening room, and bowling alley. Five guestrooms, sitting along the eastern perimeter under a cantilevered portion of the main level above, do have windows.

The structure is steel-framed, with a poured-in-place base and precast concrete panels. The earth-toned concrete complements burned, brushed, and sealed cedar cladding inside and out. Ceilings are sheathed in pale hemlock. “Our forms are very spare,” says Cottle. “But the materials are textural and tactile.”

The house may have an ambitious program, but, in its massing and choice of materials, it is deliberately unpretentious. “We are so fortunate to have this landscape,” says Cottle, who enhanced the surroundings by planting native vegetation around protruding parts of the house. “The best we can do is highlight its natural features, to get the architecture to fit in.”

