



↳ The home's front door is the stainless-steel "Racerback" model originated by architectural designer Kenneth Hepburn for California-based NeoPorte.

A two-tiered chandelier adorned with 34 clear, crystal glass pendants was designed by New Mood Design and Atlanta's C Lighting and hangs down from the top to second floor near the steel staircase that wraps the elevator column.



# Chic Peak!

An art curator-turned-interior designer creates a stunning Breckenridge ski home for an Atlanta couple. | *By Wendy Bowman-Littler* | *Photography by Darren Edwards*

For most of her professional life, Donna Grace McAlear managed building projects and exhibitions for art museums from Canada to Louisiana. In 2003, friends familiar with her curatorial design work bought a home in Baton Rouge and asked her to repaint and completely refurnish it. "It reminded me of the work I did in museums," says McAlear, who acquired a business license to be compensated, juggled both museum work and interior design for the next six years, before founding New Mood Design in Atlanta in 2009.

She did more design work on her Baton Rouge clients' new home in Denver. Then the same family hired her again in late 2009 when they decided to build a contemporary ski getaway in the mountain town of Breckenridge, Colo. For a year, McAlear chose the home's finishes, fixtures, lighting and furnishings to create a harmonious design.

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↳ A sofa and loveseat by Ligne Roset of Atlanta used in the living room can be easily rearranged and reconfigured for entertaining. Other functional pieces include a "Puzzle" coffee table in two sections from Atlanta's Pedini Showroom and swivel chairs by Minotti from Lines Modern in Atlanta.

The whimsical Iron Joe Polar Bear bookshelf by Benoit Convers was found at Atlanta's SWITCHmodern. →



↗ The stone veneer used on the exterior, elevator column, wine cave walls and fireplace was one of the inspirations for the home's earthy color palette.



← Unlike most homes that feature living spaces downstairs and private spaces upstairs, the Breckenridge home's layout has been reversed to include an open-plan living/kitchen/entertaining space on the third level (to maximize the spectacular views, like a penthouse apartment).

↳ These inviting Togo by Michael Ducaroy chairs and couches were designed in 1973 and found at Ligne Roset in Atlanta.

...CONTINUED Working with Breckenridge architect Michael F. Gallagher, McAlear completed the three-story, 6,000-square-foot home—nicknamed "Peak 8 Penthouse," for its position near the base area of one of the resort area's four mountains—in December 2010. The clients—an active family with four children ages 7 to 14—wanted a minimal design that was functional and easy to maintain (because the home would mainly be used just for weekend ski trips), yet elegant (for large dinners, gatherings and entertaining).

Maximizing the surrounding natural landscape also was paramount.

"A designer's job is to hear what the client has to say and understand their dream," says McAlear, who took inspiration from the home's stone veneer, blue sky and mountain ranges to create a warm, earthy color palette of brown, gray, ochre, bronze and black.

In keeping with the minimalism theme, modular furniture can be easily rearranged and reconfigured, and hidden storage spots range from large walk-in bedroom closets with drawers, shelves and cupboards to a buffalo hide accent table with a removable lid and space inside for a blanket.

In lieu of abundant accessories, McAlear added "life and playfulness" through edgy, sculptural lighting and artistic furniture. "The mountain views serve as artwork," she says.

For the museum curator-turned-interior designer, it's all about creating the visitor's interaction. "Whether you're designing an exhibition or a home, you have a vision of the whole experience," says McAlear. "When you see it finished, you know the vision was realized and it all came together... and that's an exciting feeling." ▣