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BIG SKY, ON HIGH





Floor-to-ceiling windows merge a panorama of snowy ski runs with a vast vaulted great room rich in elegant florals and warm textures. Coffee tables, David latesta. Velvet ottoman fabric, Kerry Joyce

Inside a soaring condo at the top-flight Yellowstone Club, designer **Palmer Weiss** strikes a winsome accord between elegant old-world polish and the rugged spirit of the American West.



INTERIOR DESIGN BY
Palmer Weiss

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Though inspired by a Moroccan silhouette, the kitchen's custom bronze hood is designed with straps and rivets that lend a Western sensibility. Cabinetry and ebony finish, Provincial Store Fixtures. Silicon bronze brushed pulls, Rocky Mountain Hardware. Dual fuel range, Wolf



A grand oil on canvas by William Skilling, circa 1900, brings playful antiquity to the entry. Settee fabric, Jasper Showroom. Chandelier, Coleen & Company



△ A Paul Marra chandelier “feels like an old bobbin bed, but with a modern attitude,” says Weiss. The 19th-century portrait of Pocahontas is by Victor Nehlig.

▽ Bar cabinetry faced in brass diamond-patterned grilles and espagnolette references agrarian metalwork. Wine refrigerator, Sub-Zero

WHERE DOES URBANE EAST COAST decorating end and western gusto begin? For Palmer Weiss, who recently designed a Montana ski condo for a young family, there's no need to follow geographic formulas exactly. You can import elements of both and mix them with aplomb. Forgive her, Rudyard Kipling, but the twain *can* meet and even have fun together.

She should know. After all, Weiss grew up in Charleston, South Carolina; spent her summers in the neighboring mountains of North Carolina; and later wound up in San Francisco. Her clients, too, live in the Bay Area by way of the East Coast. And their customized condo at the Yellowstone Club in Big Sky, Montana, is part of a fabled enclave that fans across 15,200 acres of rippling Rocky Mountain scenery, all of it so private that a family can ski on powdery slopes or hike alpine trails all day without laying eyes on another resident.

“She loves chintz, lively wallpaper, and all the fun details of Southern and English decorating,” Weiss says of the wife, with whom she's decorated several houses. As for the designer, she's a classicist at heart, “but I like fresh, sunshiny rooms with no clutter or claustrophobia.”

Once the wife fell in love with a captivating Pierre Frey floral linen called Mortefontaine, a scheme for the living room was off





△ In the powder room, an 1880s Black Forest carved mirror brings dimension to a wilderness wallpaper by Lee Jofa. Sink fixture, Waterworks



△ An ocher faux-bois wall finish by Willem Racké "speaks to the rustic setting in a fresh way," says Weiss. Engravings (1731-1804), François Nicolas Martinet

▽ Copper lanterns (Urban Electric) light a narrow, 40-foot hall. Hand-colored lithographs of Native American tribespeople, McKenney and Hall



▽ A patterned linen valance (Peter Fasano) crowns a Federal-style bed. Sconce, Visual Comfort. Drapery fabric, Holland & Sherry





In the owners' bedroom, a four-poster hickory-log bed with a woven rush headboard (Rusticks) balances delicate Ottoman-inspired florals (Robert Kime). Bench upholstery fabric, Clarence House



“The owner loves chintz, lively wallpaper, and all the fun details of Southern and English decorating.”

—DESIGNER PALMER WEISS

Weiss railroaded Pierre Frey's Indo-Persian medallions across a guest bed. The botanicals are hand-colored copper engravings, circa 1840. Drapery trim, Samuel & Sons

and running. Weiss covered two swivel chairs and several pillows in it, then distributed its nutty aubergine, soft brown, navy, and olive tones around the room to play off walls of shiplap paneling.

The trick in decorating vacation great rooms like this one is creating a space for heavy use without sacrificing an ounce of prettiness or drama. As magnificent as it is, the leopard carpet can be tromped on by ski boots. The brown chenille sofa is ultra-soft and extra deep because the owners like to lie side by side to watch TV. Ceresed white coffee tables are a singular opportunity for lightness—if she'd used white upholstery or rugs, those things would have been instantly destroyed.

But the question remains: Could anyone but Weiss have predicted that a decorous button-tufted sofa upholstered in aubergine velvet with cream fringe would look so right against the view of a Montana ski run swirled in snow and evergreens? Maybe it

works so well because she carefully layered on counterpoints, such as rough wire-brushed oak paneling overhead. Then there's her ability to choose art that subtly deepens the sense of place rather than bonking you over the head with geography. “I always love portraiture, especially of strong women,” Weiss says. She points to a 19th-century oil painting of Pocahontas hung just to the right of the ski run. “It signals to me that we're in the West.”

The sweetness of the living room begets a much more masculine kitchen, handsome in its coursed wood ebony paneling. “I'm a big fan of repeating a color so there's continuity, and there's so much black language in the mullions of the windows, which travels across the whole building,” she notes.

The conversation between East Coast refinement and Wild West rusticity, in fact, is a continuous murmur throughout. Beyond a hallway enlivened with McKenney and Hall



Elemental and unpolished. Wire-brushed white oak paneling wraps the bunk room. Bedding, Serena & Lily



▽ A deep green guest room channels the natural hues of the pine-and-spruce forest (RAL #6008, Fine Paints of Europe). Spindle headboard, Beautiful Bed Company

▷ In the office, an early-19th-century portrait of a Spanish gentleman guards a cozy built-in daybed. Cushion fabric, Perennials. Ottoman, Lee Industries



lithographs of Native Americans are five bedrooms, each as individual as the faces in the portraits. The grandest guest room is lavished in a red Pierre Frey floral print, its complicated *suzani*-like repeats and borders painstakingly railroaded to create pageantrics across the headboard, valance, and curtains. Another bedroom with smoke-green walls has a charming folk art painting depicting a clergyman on horseback above the bed. Folk art, too, conjures a mountain setting, says Weiss, who was a Brown University art history major before she segued to finance and finally into decorating.

Opening onto its own balcony is the otherworldly main bedroom, where Weiss used a log four-poster bed, a handmade North Carolina item. She loves its sylvan spirit, how it keeps a Robert Kime linen bed skirt sprigged with lilacs along with matching drapes and valances from feeling fussy. Austrian antler trophies and Chinese exportware plates are arranged together on the wall.

Of the Alpine reference, Weiss sees mountains in mountains, whether they're in Europe or North Carolina or the Western United States. And to her eye, their looming peaks have plenty of room for lilacs, velvets, and unusually captivating colors. "Here, it's the untamed wilderness with polished European traditions—that's everything we wanted." ♦