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*the latest
local
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trend*

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ON THE COVER

The mountain modern trend is becoming increasingly popular in the mountains.

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MODERN



An analysis of an increasingly popular trend in home design

Photo courtesy
Allyce Elise Interiors

MOUNTAIN

BY JASMINE LISTOU BIBLE

There's a new trend in home design that's captivated the West. Referred to as "Modern Mountain" the trend has been rapidly gaining popularity in Summit County. But what is it exactly? We chatted with four local experts — an architect, an interior designer, a real estate broker and a homebuilder — to get a better understanding.



Michele Hart, a broker-associate with Slifer, Smith & Frampton Real Estate, suggests incorporating steel elements, "like ceiling beams or steel tiles around a fireplace."

"THE AESTHETIC THAT MOUNTAIN MODERN CONJURES UP FOR ME IS SOMEWHERE BETWEEN A CITY LOFT AND A LOG CABIN,"

said Suzanne Allen Sabo, owner of Allen-Guerra Architecture. It's seen as a progression from heavy, rustic elements, in favor of clean lines and simplicity in design.

Christine Romano, an interior designer with homebuilder Pinnacle Mountain Homes, said, "It's a departure of the typical mountain aesthetic of moose and bear decorations and getting back to a more straightforward connection to the environment." In its simplest explanation, it's a fusion of a traditional mountain home mixed with modern elements.

So what are those elements? Michele Hart, a

broker-associate with Slifer, Smith & Frampton Real Estate, lists "concrete countertops or floors, minimal trim, lots of glass and steel elements, like ceiling beams or steel tiles around a fireplace." These elements, mixed with traditional mountain home features like rustic wood floors and high ceilings, create the overall aesthetic. Allen Sabo feels that less is more — "Less trim, fewer material changes in the same wall plane, fewer roof planes, more glass, floor-to-ceiling glass."

When scaling back on the number of materials used, the focus is shifted to the details of the ele-

ments that remain. Wendy Yates, an interior designer with Abigail-Elise Interiors, explained, "Design is all about details. In the modern mountain aesthetic, the details outline the space. The stone and wood textures, in contrast with clean lines and a simple color palette, create balance."

Finding that balance, the yin and yang, can be hard to achieve. Too many modern elements can feel cold or sterile, too few, and you wind up with a rustic mountain lodge. Yates shares a tip: "For every textured surface or patterned fabric, incorporate two solid colors or two smooth elements as the yang."

Hart prefers the term "Modern Transitional" to explain the trend: "A mountain lodge fused with industrial, loft-like vibe."

Photo courtesy
Abigail-Eise Interiors.



Photo courtesy Pinnacle
Mountain Homes,
www.pinnaclemtnhomes.com



Photo courtesy
Abigail-Eise Interiors.

as "more of a lifestyle of wanting to be involved with your environment whether you are inside or out."

What's the catalyst for this new direction in design? First, there's the desire for something unique and different. People view their homes as an extension of themselves, and want to inject a bit of their own personality into the space. Yates attributes part of the appeal to a certain color. "Gray is at the center of it all. Gray is the easiest color for the eye to see. It's neutral and pairs well with everything from bold modern mountain to monochromatic mountain modern to eclectic mountain. It can be interpreted and mixed with someone's personal style."

Secondly, the options have become more vast. The progression of technology has allowed unique materials to become more accessible to a larger audience. "There are now tiles that replicate the look of hardwood," said Hart. She gives another example: "People are transitioning away from the speckled granite countertops that were so popular in the last decade, and veering more towards solid colors in contemporary materials, including concrete."

Allen Sabo points to another reason for the acceleration. "We have designed homes on remote ranches in the past that no one saw, but now that pictures are posted online, these images become available to anyone instantly. The internet has given our clients design options that they might not have considered in the past."

How long can we expect to see this Modern



Photo courtesy Pinnacle
Mountain Homes,
www.pinnaclemtnhomes.com

Romano agrees. "The word 'modern' tends to throw people, thinking it means ultra-contemporary and cold," she said, "but when done right is actually very warm and inviting."

The trend has really emerged in Summit County over the last two to three years. Hart has seen a dramatic increase in interest from her clients. "The percentage of homebuyers asking to see modern mountain homes has gone from 50 percent to 90 percent," she said.

The design is seen in new construction homes, and also in Summit homes from the '80s and '90s that are being remodeled. Homeowners are swapping out light fixtures, changing the flooring, opening up floor plans. Beyond physical location, Romano sees it

Mountain trend? Allen Sabo shares her thoughts:

"The latest trends always are in flux. Architecture, similar to other design fields, is constantly redefining itself. Architects, like clothing designers, are always searching for something new."

Romano looks at the style and its integration into our mountain landscape. "All trends are ever-changing and evolving, but a connection to the environment is something that all people crave. When you live in such a beautiful place, a style (like Modern Mountain) that is straightforward and connected to the surroundings is something that people will continue to desire."

Hart views the aesthetic as more than a trend, but a lasting style. "The simplistic design will continue to be refined, and the style will continually be improved upon."