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SUN VALLEY PROPERTY NEWS

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LOCAL REAL ESTATE

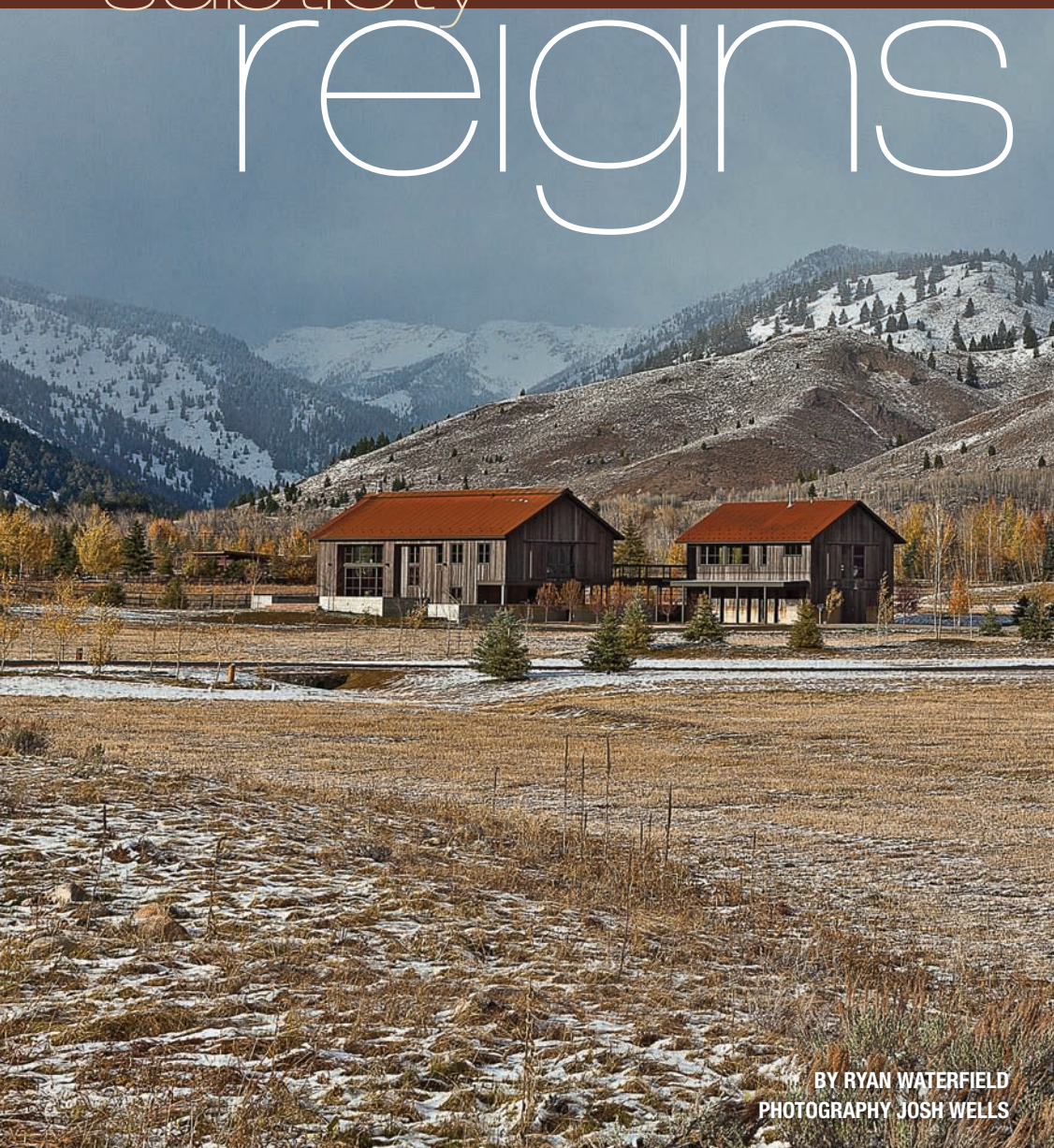
MAGIC IN THE
MOUNTAINS
a love affair
with skiing

ARCHITECTURAL
HEIGHTS
subtlety
by design

festive
feast
culinary delights by cristina

WINTER
sports
EDITION

subtlety, reigns



BY RYAN WATERFIELD
PHOTOGRAPHY JOSH WELLS



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The Grassi home, designed by Juancarlos Fernandez, is a pitch-perfect blend of the rustic and the modern; one of the core design principles, the merging of the exterior and interior worlds, is elevated by the disappearing walls.

Jami and Mark Grassi's Ketchum home situated just north of Chocolate Gulch is exactly what you might expect from people who build high-end custom homes for clients with discerning tastes—it's stunning. But it's also full of surprises; it's the sort of house that unfolds for you the longer you're there—a place where subtlety reigns—well that, and the views!



When Jami and Mark Grassi, decided to buy a second home in Ketchum, they thought they'd buy something in town for the sake of convenience. And because in his everyday life in Napa Valley, Mark, owner/operator of Grassi and Associates Construction, spends his days tending to the ins and outs of high-end custom-home designs, the couple resisted the idea of building. Jami recalls, "I told Mark that our second home

should be about relaxing. Building is what he does, and I thought if we took on such a project, he would never relax." But when they began looking seriously at real estate, they surprised themselves with a directional shift. After seeing the lot north of Ketchum and the panoramic views of the stunning Idaho landscape, they enlisted the help of a long-time colleague and friend, Mexican architect Juancarlos Fernandez, to help give



TOP TO BOTTOM: The cedar of the exterior and the weathered steel of the roof echo the rural setting while the use of concrete, glass, and clean lines elevate the design to the realm of the sophisticated; the loft above the kitchen serves as a yoga studio, and the dark ceiling adds to the warmth of the main living area. OPPOSITE: The kitchen at the Grassi home is open and centered around a large island that is perfect for culinary preparations and social gathering.

Napa area including CADE Vineyard and a smattering of private homes. When Mark approached him about designing their Ketchum home, Juancarlos had just left his long-time employer Lail Design Group and was freelancing while he put together his own architectural firm. The Grassi home is the perfect calling card for Juancarlos's versatility and vision.

While each of Juancarlos's projects is distinctive, there is a common vernacular in his Napa Valley designs because they make sense in the landscape they live in. Given that our Idaho landscape is different from Napa's lush and rolling green hills, Juancarlos dealt with a different palette. As he familiarized himself with the landscape and the architecture of Sun Valley, he knew that he "wanted to do something unconventional for the area." Unconventional, yes, he achieved that, but he also managed to pay homage to the landscape and the rural heritage here.

When you drive north from Ketchum and pass Chocolate Gulch, it's hard to resist the urge to turn into the driveway and knock on the door to see what's going on behind those tall, dramatic cedar walls. The drama stems from the convergence of two worlds: the cedar and the weathered steel roof of the exterior hint at the barns dotting the landscape

of south-central Idaho, while the simple sophistication of the design suggests a different time and place altogether. The two buildings, a guesthouse/garage and main house, are connected by concrete patios hemmed in by steel rails. The main house is punctuated by walls of glass on the west-, north-, and east-facing aspects. The master suite sits on the upper level on the southern side of the house and boasts its own window onto the world. The cedar offers an innate verticality to the house that gives you the sense it is reaching skyward. It's a phenomenal effect, this grounding a building so thoroughly in the place but leaving room for that building to reach beyond it.

Knowing Jami and Mark as well as he does, Juancarlos knew that he had the good luck of having clients who understand architecture and would "have the patience to try to understand" his design. Speaking to Jami and Mark about their home, I ask them what their favorite detail about the house is. Mark laughs and sheepishly admits that it's the steam shower in the master bathroom. Knowing that they spend as much time as possible Nordic skiing out their front door, his response was understandable even though a bit surprising considering the magnificent architectural details that abound.

Upon further reflection, Mark shares a

shape to their vision. For people who make a living helping others realize their dream homes, this was their chance to literally construct their own dreams.

Standing alone just north of Chocolate Gulch, the Grassi home testifies to the wisdom of merging smart architectural design with a reverence for the natural surroundings. It also speaks to the benefits of teaming up with someone who knows you well. Juancarlos, well-known for his architectural contributions to Napa Valley, has worked with Mark on a number of projects in the



word “spectacular,” shares this humility. When Jami speaks of the home as spectacular, it’s not in a self-congratulatory way—no, it’s with a sense of awe for the way the house seems to be in its element. It’s a house that frames their appreciation for the things about the valley that drew them there in the first place.

Juancarlos admits to being “surprised” by people’s responses to the house. When I ask if he was surprised if people “liked” the house, he says, “It’s not my concern whether or not people like the house. I’m curious about whether or not people ‘get’ what I’m trying to do. But my main concern is always the

client.” He laughs knowing that his response is only going to elicit another question from me, a question I’m embarrassed to ask but that I can’t resist—a question that sounds something like, “Do you want to tell us what it is that you were trying to do?” Juancarlos responds, “There’s a word in Spanish that

means something between simple and basic, but I can’t think how to say it in English. I’m not trying to work in a particular style of architecture. I aim for something that is basic and has a function.”

Knowing that it must be frustrating or tedious for an artist to explain his work, I let him off the hook. Truth is, I’d rather read it for myself anyway. When I stand in the Grassi home, taking in the stunning late autumn views, I understand that a reverence for function gave meaning to the form. I see that the design mirrors the way of the natural world—there’s nothing extraneous, nothing superfluous. But I also know that a prioritizing of function doesn’t mean that the home is sparse and utilitarian in its simplicity. No, all you have to do is pick any one of the amazing views that Juancarlos’s design frames and you can see that a respect for function is anything but sparse. The nearby hills are dotted with a late autumn flurry of color, and the mountains further north remind me of the intricate connection between form and function. Overall, it’s clear that the home is *of* the elements and *in* its element.

story of an experience they had in the late summer. Lying in bed with the expansive window open to the south valley, they watched a early evening storm roll in. Mark admitted to being awe-struck by the storm as well as the way the house invites the natural world in. Mark continues to say that, “there’s a subtlety to the house” that allows them to discover new reasons to love it the longer they live there.

Jami’s favorite aspect about the house is that it doesn’t overwhelm the natural environment, rather it, “integrates and meshes with the beauty around it.” They wanted a house that seamlessly transitions from the outside world to the inside world—a house that doesn’t seal them off from the nature they had come here to live in. The liberal use of glass contributes to that effect but so does the thoughtful and consistent use of, as Juancarlos says, “functional, durable, and appealing materials” throughout the property, like concrete for the patios as well as the floors and countertops. Moving from outside to inside the house, you sense a continuity. The architectural language that gives meaning to the exterior also informs the interior, and the result is a clean, authentic experience.

The home offers some insight into the couple that lives there. Mark shies away from the word “spectacular” to describe the house. He resists anything that is “over the top,” and Jami, although a bit more inclined to use the

the pro’s picks

Mark is no rookie when it comes to building. He’s the founder of Grassi and Associates, an award-winning construction firm that has been building residences, wineries, and estates in the Napa and Sonoma Valleys for more than 20 years. When it comes to building his own dream home, here are his picks.

ARCHITECTURE

Juancarlos Fernandez | Signum Architecture | Napa Valley, California

1104 Adams Street, Suite 2038 | St. Helena, California | 707.963.8831

info@signumarchitecture.com | www.signumarchitecture.com

When Jami and Mark decided to build a home north of Ketchum, they had one architect in mind to help them design their dream home—their good friend, Juancarlos Fernandez. Born and raised in Guadalajara, Mexico, Juancarlos worked at Lail Design Group for eight years before opening Signum Architects with Jarrod Denton in May of 2011. He lists the likes of Herzog, De Meuron, and Kundig as influences. But since his designs are meant to be lived in, it makes sense that he also includes “life” as a major influence. If you like what you see and you’re looking to build, call him up—you won’t be disappointed.

CONSTRUCTION

Brian Burrell | Class 5 Enterprises Inc. | Hailey, Idaho


P.O. Box 3552 | Hailey, Idaho 83353 | Phone: 208.788.6344

Although Mark acted as general contractor for their Idaho home, to oversee day-to-day operations on the jobsite, Jami and Mark hired Brian Burrell from Class 5 Enterprises. Brian and his crew also handled all the carpentry for the guesthouse and main house. Mark had nothing but praise for Brian saying, “He was invaluable to me through the course of the construction.” High praise from a man who runs such a successful company of his own.

BY RYAN WATERFIELD
PHOTOGRAPHY HILLARY MAYBERY

festive feast

Jamie and Mark Grassi graciously opened their home to *SVPN* and friends for a holiday feast catered by Cristina Ceccatelli Cook, owner and visionary behind Cristina's Restaurant in Ketchum. Serving a traditional Thanksgiving meal, Cristina took American favorites and made them her own for an unforgettable experience. The setting was stunning, the food and wine were fabulous, and the conversation engaging—the perfect festive feast to inaugurate the holiday season.



Cristina, working her magic, whipping up an unforgettable meal.

Cristina is a legend in the Sun Valley area where she only needs one name—our foodie version of Madonna or Cher. She's been in the restaurant business for over 20 years and is as involved today with the day-to-day operations of her valley-wide favorite restaurant as she was when she was the only cook in the kitchen. Yes that's right, "cook" is the way Cristina refers to herself (and it's not just because her married last name is actually Cook)—she refuses the moniker "chef" because, as she says, "[I] have no formal training, no education in cooking. Just experience."

Italian through and through, Cristina espouses an Italian's attitude about food—for her, food is about pleasure and ritual. Her restaurant's success is due to many factors, and the caliber of the food is certainly one of them. But the warmth with which Cristina receives everyone who walks through the door, and the inviting ambiance of her small restaurant certainly keep people coming back. In the summer, there's an expansive patio and in the winter there's a flickering fire.

As I sit with Cristina discussing her history and her career, she greets everyone who walks through the door, friend or stranger, with a gracious smile; it's evident that she's pleased to share her passion for food and the ritual of the meal with anyone willing to take the time—a fact that makes Cristina the perfect person to cater a holiday feast. Cristina notes, "The holidays are a time to gather with family and friends, linger over a meal, and drink memorable wine."

The event at the Grassi home fit the bill perfectly. Friends gathered to talk about the year's adventures and share their excitement about adventures to come. They gathered to remember all the reasons to be thankful, and it was certainly mentioned a dozen times or so that people were thankful for Cristina's cooking!

Honoring the Italian at the helm of the meal, the evening was not rushed; people enjoyed a luxuriously long cocktail "hour" complemented by a sumptuous selection of cheeses and some of Cristina's famous flatbread crackers. Comforted by the smell of a

turkey roasting and stuffing as good as you've ever dreamed of cooking in the open kitchen, guests roamed the expanse of the living/dining area and marvelled at the views. In between bites of salmon appetizers and sips of Grassi Cabernet Sauvignon, guests shared their love of the lingering fall and the excitement for the upcoming winter season.

The main course did not disappoint; rather, it elevated everyone's expectations for all Thanksgiving meals to come. All the usual suspects were there: turkey, cranberry sauce, mashed potatoes and gravy, sweet potatoes complete with the mini marshmallows that we all secretly love at least once a year, and stuffing. Cristina, in a bold move, also sautéed and served up Brussels sprouts, a vegetable that gets little play in most American kitchens. Needless to say, they were a hit. Cristina is the kind of cook that you don't argue with. If she says something will be good, you try it—and you won't be sorry.

It was the sort of evening that's dangerous because evenings to come might fail to compare.



Gathering around a beautifully appointed table with great friends is an annual holiday favorite.



TOP TO BOTTOM: A fire glowing in the background sets the stage for a warm evening full of good cheer in a beautiful home. The guest list included Terry and Mike Murphy, Vince and Rochelle Sisilli, Andrew and Sonya Johnston, Josh Wells and Stephanie Olson, Taylor Sturges, Kerri Everett and Justin Williams, Gretchen and Terry Palmer, Britt and John Johnston, Ryan Waterfield, and Hillary Maybery; Brussels sprouts offered a pleasant surprise to the holiday menu.

cristina's

HOLIDAY MENU

appetizers

- ❖ Olives and spicy nuts
- ❖ Blini topped with Scottish smoked salmon, crème fraîche, and chives
- ❖ Cheese puffs
- ❖ Crudité of sugar peas

the main course

- ❖ Roasted turkey from A+ Ranch—organic and free range with herbs, citrus, and roasted Richfield apples
- ❖ Gravy, cranberry-cherry sauce with rum
- ❖ Traditional stuffing with apples and chestnuts
- ❖ Candied yams and root vegetables
- ❖ Sautéed green beans, chard, and kale
- ❖ Mashed potatoes with celery root
- ❖ Brussels sprouts with pancetta and parmigiano
- ❖ Biscuits and rolls



dessert

- ❖ Plum and cherry tart with an almond crust
- ❖ Pumpkin pie with clotted cream
- ❖ Thanksgiving cookies
- ❖ Coffee and tea

books

Cristina is not only popular in our fair valley; she is the visionary behind two popular cookbooks with a third one in the works. *Cristina's of Sun Valley* and *Cristina's Tuscan Table* feature some favorites from the restaurant menu and some enticing surprises. You can pick up one of her cookbooks at the restaurant or local bookstores.

cristina's restaurant

LOCATION

520 Second Street East

PHONE

208.726.4499

BREAKFAST

Monday - Saturday 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.

LUNCH

Monday - Saturday 11 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.

SUNDAY BRUNCH

9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

the team

Cristina credits much of her success to her “team” at the restaurant. Patrick Jam and Raylene Ward have been a staples in her kitchen for 17 and 13 years respectively, and having long ago learned her ways, Patrick and Raylene are invaluable members of that team. Diane Hull is the woman behind the breads that are valley-wide favorites. And front staff manager Magaly Estrada makes sure that everyone who dines at Cristina's feels welcome and wants to come back. Being a part of Cristina's team is more than knowing her recipes—it's about embracing her attitudes about food and meals. Cristina describes her kitchen as a throw-back to days gone by. “I don't have any gadgets—there's nothing fancy in there—just an old-fashioned stove, pots and pans, and knives.” But this team doesn't need a state-of-the-art kitchen; they just need fresh, seasonal food, inventiveness, and a belief in the meal as ritual.



holiday spirits

GRASSI WINE

The perfect drink to help you welcome the holiday season is a Grassi wine. Mark and Jami own a vineyard in the Atlas Peak region in Napa Valley, and since 2003 they have been producing a delightful Cabernet Sauvignon. The Grassi Vineyard, a small operation that embraces sustainable farming practices and careful attention to detail, believes in quality over quantity. Visit www.grassiwines.com for more details.

RIVERA WINE

We can't help ourselves—we were seduced by Rivera wines when we covered Marilyn and Steve Rivera and their philanthropic causes for our August issue. It only made sense to treat ourselves to some Rivera wine on this auspicious occasion. In case you missed that issue, Rivera Vineyards donates 100% of the proceeds from its delectable Cabernet Sauvignon Magnanimous to charitable organizations. For more information visit www.riveravineyards.org.



style

It's not just great food and wine that gets you in the holiday spirit, it's also the decor. Ketchum's own Taylor'd Events and Bellissimo teamed up to style the evening. Taylor Sturges, owner of Taylor'd Events says, “With such an elegant house with clean and modern lines, we didn't want to overwhelm that with traditional holiday decorations. Instead, we wanted to blend the modern with the traditional. For flowers we used cream roses in a tight mount; instead of a plain glass vase, we used cranberries to give a pop of red on the table. And to bring in a touch of the traditional, we used clear antelope horns and plaid napkins on the table and garlands on the mantel with red and gold bows, pinecones, and red glass balls. On the stairwell, instead of traditional garlands, we put simple votives running up the stairs.” Elegant and festive, the decorations hit the mark.

Bellissimo | The Galleria | Ketchum, Idaho
208.726.0702 | www.shopatbellissimo.com

Taylor'd Events | 221 Northwood Way, Unit 600 | Ketchum, Idaho
208.725.2027 | www.taylordeventssv.com