

MILLEU®

WINTER 2021



FEATURED DESIGNERS



Thomas Hamel

Thomas Hamel is the author of *Residence* and is well known as one of Australia's leading tastemakers. Born in Virginia, Hamel came to New York during the 1980s to study design at the Fashion Institute of Technology, and he continued his studies at the American College in London. He moved to Sydney in 1991 to found his own design firm and since that time has become a fixture of the international design community.



George Massar

George Massar is the entrepreneurial and creative head of Gregorius|Pineo. He is also the owner of the Kneedler Fauchère Group, encompassing the Kneedler Fauchère showrooms and Gregorius|Pineo product groups. Massar cut his teeth on the early magic of Robertson Boulevard in Los Angeles and became President of Kneedler Fauchère in 1994. Under his leadership, he ushered in a renaissance of the showrooms.



Bobby McAlpine

Born in an Alabama sawmill town, Bobby McAlpine designed his first house at the age of five and hasn't stopped since. Architect, romantic, poet, and entrepreneur, he envisions home as a timeless, graceful, and emotionally evocative place. From the time he founded the firm in 1983, McAlpine has realized this ideal through a diverse array of traditional styles and regional vernaculars for clients all over the country and abroad.



Valerie LeGras

Valerie Legras is a native of Epernay, France. She earned her master's degree in interior and product design from the École Camondo in Paris. In addition to her creative work as an interior designer, she also attended the Institut Paul Bocuse in Lyon, France, where she completed a course in culinary arts training. Family life brought her to New Orleans, where she has been a prolific practicing interior designer.



Marcus Mohon

Marcus Mohon and his wife, Autumn, founded Marcus Mohon Interiors in 2001. The firm has assembled a broad portfolio of work acclaimed for its distinctive fluency in architecture and harmonious application of form and function. With offices in Austin and Houston, as well as projects from coast to coast, Mohon's unique perspective allows him to deftly unite urban with rural, majestic with humble, and refined with rough-hewn.



Isabel López-Quesada

Based in Madrid, Isabel López-Quesada says that what she does in life is make spaces more beautiful. She is an interior designer not only in her native Spain, but also in such destinations as the United States, France, and Japan. "A house, as a person, must combine tradition and modernity," she says. Her work has been featured previously in issues of *MILIEU*.



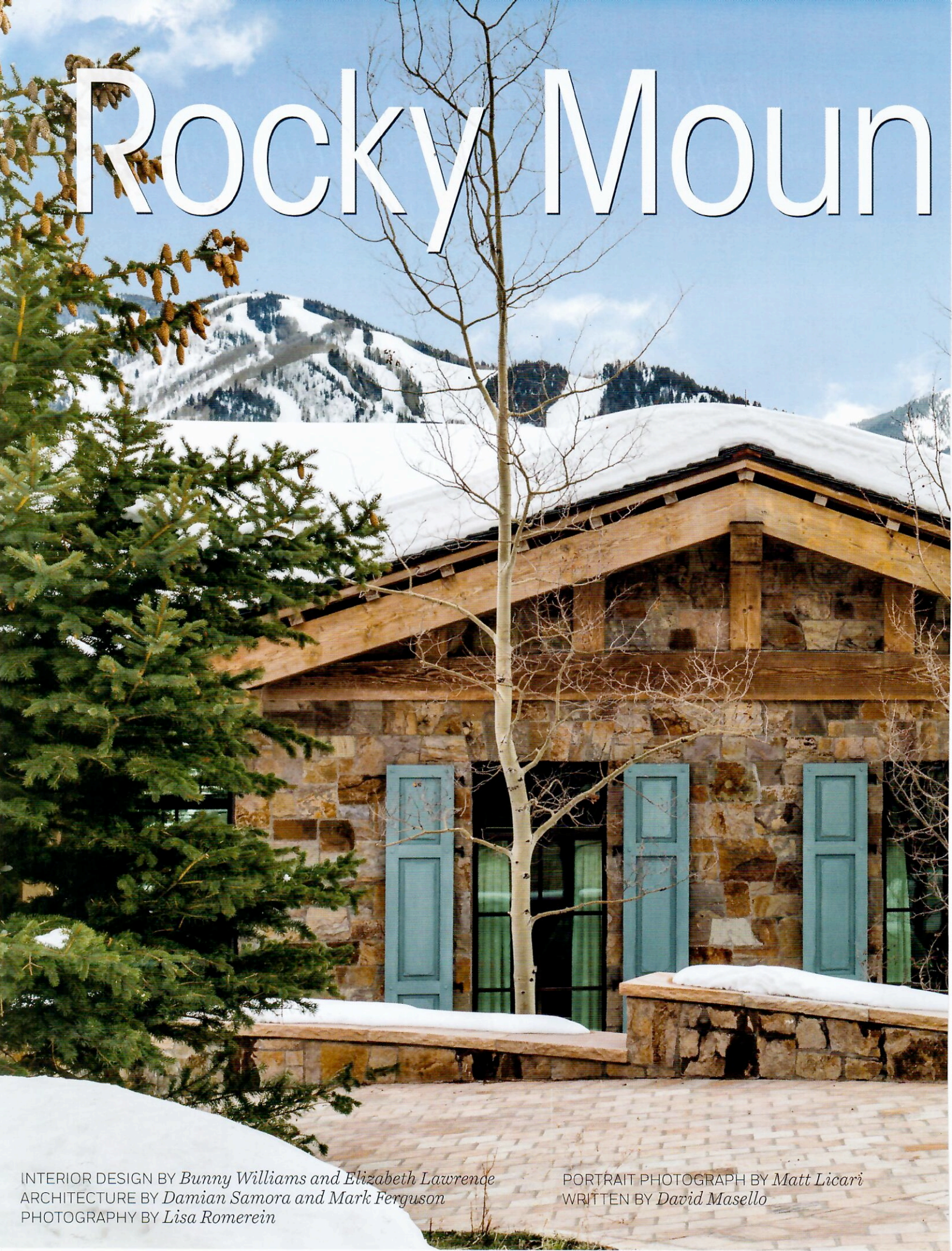
Elizabeth Lawrence

Elizabeth Lawrence was named partner of Bunny Williams Associates in 2017 after a fourteen-year tenure with the firm, which began with a coveted internship. Lawrence notes, "These days, it's rare to rise from intern to partner while under one roof. In my case, I found my calling through the apprenticeship tradition much the way Bunny did when she began her long association with the revered Parish-Hadley Associates."



Damian Samora

Originally from Colorado, Damian Samora joined Ferguson & Shamamian Architects in 1999, after receiving his bachelor's degree in architecture from the University of Notre Dame and then starting his career in London. Now a principal at the firm, having practiced in London and New York, Samora has been exposed to a diverse range of building traditions and lifestyles.



Rocky Moun

INTERIOR DESIGN BY *Bunny Williams and Elizabeth Lawrence*
ARCHITECTURE BY *Damian Samora and Mark Ferguson*
PHOTOGRAPHY BY *Lisa Romerein*

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPH BY *Matt Licari*
WRITTEN BY *David Masello*

tain Heights

A scenic winter landscape. In the foreground, a stone house with a teal door is partially visible on the left. Several bare, light-colored trees stand in front of the house. To the right, a large, dark evergreen tree is covered in snow. The background shows a vast, snow-covered mountain range under a blue sky with scattered clouds. A small town is visible in the valley between the mountains.

A Texas couple built a stone house near Aspen, a dwelling meant to both stand out from the landscape and also be a part of it



Opening page: A new house in Aspen, designed by architects from Ferguson & Shamamian, evokes venerable Provençal and Belgian architectural forms. Above: Recognizing that first impressions are everything, the interior designers positioned a bench with sinuous lines at the entry, upholstering them in Cowtan & Tout fabric. An iron lighting fixture from Profiles looms above. The French limestone flooring is from Exquisite Surfaces. Opposite: The beams on the living room ceiling are structural, not merely decorative. A pair of Lawson-style sofas from Schneller, each upholstered in Romo fabric, are set on a custom handwoven rug.





Above: A hallway reveals the house's enfilade arrangement of rooms. Ironware's Eden light fixtures, characterized by a brown patina, hang along the expanse. Right: The dining room table by David Iatesta is surrounded by John Rosselli side chairs. The mirror frame is antique.



Ferguson & Shamamian designed windows with multiple muntins as a way to take in the majestic Rocky Mountain views, while minimizing their effect inside the rooms. A Merrill chair and ottoman by Schneller feature a blue-green floral pattern fabric by Lee Jofa. Julia B. created custom bedding in percale and linen for the Ironies bed. Visual Comfort's three-tier Cleo chandelier hangs above. The mahogany table is a French nineteenth-century antique, fitted with a marble top.





Guests are welcome in one of the home's bunk rooms. The custom-built beds use Lapis twin-sized quilts with stitched indigo sheets and pillowcases by John Robshaw. The adjacent bath is equipped with mirrors sporting an antique bronze finish. The custom soapstone sinks are fitted with Barber Wilsons polished nickel hardware.





WHEN TRYING TO MAKE a design statement in Aspen, it's hard to compete with the Rocky Mountains—for scale, grandeur, effect, or sheer beauty. Damian Samora, a principal architect at Ferguson & Shamamian, was commissioned to design a large stone house, part of which would have to figure into the side of a steep mountainous outcropping. Meanwhile, interior designers Bunny Williams and Elizabeth Lawrence were responsible for furnishing the five-bedroom house in such a way that their design work would answer the clients' simultaneous appreciation for both modern and traditional design. "The concern and the goal was to make the rooms timeless," says Lawrence, partner at Bunny Williams Design. "It was about striking the right balance, creating interiors where no one could ever say that these rooms were done at a certain time."

Samora emphasizes that when building in Aspen, one needs to start first with the site and the location. "In Colorado, topography is always your first challenge." He and his firm designed a house that he calls "upside down," in that the public living areas, as well as the master suite, are on the first level, with all of the other bedrooms and private rooms downstairs, though not below grade. "The mountains themselves deserved an equally grand gesture of a house," he says, "and on a grand scale."

While a site could be fashioned for the house, with the prudent use of dynamite and heavy construction equipment, Samora emphasizes that the inherent "tension" of working in the region is that Colorado, in general, is deeply respectful of its nature. "When building, there are a lot of regulations to follow, from the light fixtures to the height of a structure. Those restrictions informed the shape of the house from the beginning." The home embodies the adage that creative restrictions often result in more expansive creative solutions. Douglas fir and multi-colored stones quarried from the Napa Valley create an effect that echoes Provençal and Belgian forms, as well as distinctly American Western ones. "The clients, from Texas, were great partners in design," says Samora. "They came to our firm with a clear idea of what they wanted their stone house to be, something that referenced European forms as well as local ones."

With snowy peaks looming all around and equally big skies filling the spaces between the mountains, scale was a key consideration. Houses designed by Ferguson & Shamamian

are noted for many features, among them their dedication to substantial scale and their detailed ceilings—some coffered, others coursed by massive beams, yet others rhythms of barrel arches. Lawrence and Williams knew that the right furniture would not only respond well to the tall interior spaces, but also keep them warm and inviting.

Just as a house makes a first impression from the curb, so, too, does it beckon from the threshold of the front door. Lawrence and Williams have long recognized that first moment in the house as the one to exploit to its fullest. "That first moment in a house is exciting," Lawrence says. "We always say, too, that the other place in which to make a strong statement is in the powder room. After all, a person goes inside and closes the door and really has the chance to look at everything closely." With this house, Lawrence and Williams positioned a pair of benches with sinuous lines on either side of the front door, items of furniture that are at once modern and traditional. "A person walks in and sees those benches and the whole tenor of the house is understood."

While distinctive furnishings and artworks, sculptural lighting fixtures, and floral prints figure into the interiors, perhaps the most conspicuous design element came with the house: mountains. Most mountain houses are designed with large windows to capture as much of the outdoors as possible. But Ferguson & Shamamian understood, too, that by designing windows composed of multiple muntins and mullions, the views outside would be amplified without overpowering the feeling inside. "We were proponents of having windows with lots of divisions as a way to give those views some scale," says Samora. "While some would think divided windows would obstruct, instead, they amplify."

Lawrence guided the homeowners to design possibilities they likely would not have explored on their own. "When the client first came to us, she wanted everything much more traditional," says Lawrence. "The more things we showed them, though, that were a little more modern and fresh, the more they would say, 'We like that, let's go with that.' The fact is, you want each of your clients to have something different, to have their rooms be different from anyone else's." ■

Architect Damian Samora and interior designer Elizabeth Lawrence worked collaboratively from the outset of the project.

*“We wanted the materials to
honor local building traditions.”*

—Damian Samora

