

STORY PAULA M. BODAH

HIGH SPIRITS

IN COLORADO MOUNTAIN HOMES, BARS ARE EVOLVING FROM SIMPLE WET BARS INTO STYLISH GATHERING SPACES DESIGNED FOR APRÈS-SKI ENTERTAINING

Designer Yvonne Jacobs, Jacobs + Interiors, collaborated with Mikal Otten and the team at Exquisite Kitchen Design on this Beaver Creek home's bar, pairing illuminated Cristallo onyx with walnut cabinetry and bronze detailing. >>



By late afternoon in Ellie and John Landon's Beaver Creek, Colorado, home, the bar begins to fill.

Friends gather with cocktails after a day on the slopes while dinner simmers nearby. The Cristallo onyx bar top glows from within, lighting bronze trim, crystal glassware and walnut cabinetry at what has become the center of the house.

It wasn't always that way.

What was once an oversize dining room is now the home's social heart—and part of a broader shift designer Yvonne Jacobs, of Jacobs + Interiors, has noticed in Colorado's mountain homes. "I've seen a growing trend where people want actual bars where they stand behind

the bar and serve people," Jacobs says. "In the past, they just wanted a little wet bar."

"There's more of a party scene—après-ski, people socializing," Jacobs says. "People don't necessarily want to go out a lot. They're recreating that fun atmosphere in their own homes."

At the Landons' home, removing walls between the kitchen and dining room opened the space to light and >>

A seldom-used study in the Beaver Creek home became a handsome wine-tasting room, where walnut cabinetry, twin wine refrigerators, and blue velvet chairs echo the quartzite's subtle blue undertones.



For this space designed to serve kids' sodas as well as grown-up drinks in Vail's Cordillera community, Jacobs paired modern ebony-stained built-ins and a custom wine rack with rustic barnwood and playful steer horns for family entertaining. >>

drew attention to the home's structural log beams, while a sculptural new bar became what Ellie Landon calls "the crown jewel" of the renovation. Jacobs + Interiors senior designer Kristin Censullo collaborated closely with Mikal Otten and the team at Exquisite Kitchen Design, who developed the custom cabinetry and helped shape the bar's furniture-like presence.

"At first I was not too keen on the bar there," Ellie confesses. "But we use it so much. While dinner is being

prepped, everyone sits there having cocktails. It really has made the space very social."

Wrapped in glossy walnut cabinetry with bronze trim, the bar balances the rusticity of the log home with a sleeker sensibility. The dramatic countertop glows from within thanks to concealed lighting, while custom leather stools invite guests to settle in. >>

Moroccan tile in shades of green shimmers behind this Vail Valley bar, while stools sourced from a Mexico City maker and leather-paneled cabinetry reinforce the room's tailored Western character.



PHOTO ERIC LUCERO



In a lower-level Vail Valley lounge that Yvonne Jacobs created in collaboration with designer Luis Lopez, a compact former kitchen became an après-ski gathering space with a fire pit and pool just outside. Handmade Moroccan tiles in layered shades of green bring shimmer to the backsplash, while leather-paneled cabinetry and Ralph Lauren barstools lend a tailored Western feel.

For another Vail-area residence, Jacobs and senior designer Katherine Gallagher created a quieter, more

refined bar with cerused oak cabinetry, gunmetal-framed glass uppers and softly illuminated shelving. Black quartzite flecked with gold and silver adds movement, while integrated refrigeration and concealed storage keep the compact space functional.

Display has also become part of the appeal. Jacobs says many clients now want space for showcasing >>

A mirrored back bar reflects mountain views in this Estes Park home. A zinc countertop will patina over time, and a nearby back kitchen supports effortless entertaining.

PHOTO EMILY MINTON REDFIELD

whiskey collections, wine, crystal and specialty glassware rather than hiding everything away behind closed doors.

A newly built Estes Park, Colorado, home takes a different approach. There, vintage barnwood and a curved zinc countertop that will develop a lived-in patina over time create a more casual mood, while a mirrored back bar reflects mountain views from across the room. Beer taps, a concealed television and generous seating reinforce the space's role as a social anchor.

"I can take more risks with materials in a bar," Jacobs says. "Have fun with it."

That freedom may explain why today's mountain bars feel less like secondary amenities and more like destinations. In homes designed for gathering, the bar has become a place where hospitality and personality intersect. ○

Bronze-finished Gessi plumbing, integrated refrigerator drawers and softly illuminated metal-framed upper cabinets elevate this Vail bar, while cerused oak lower cabinetry and gold-flecked quartzite feel quietly luxurious.

jacobsinteriors.com, myekdesign.com

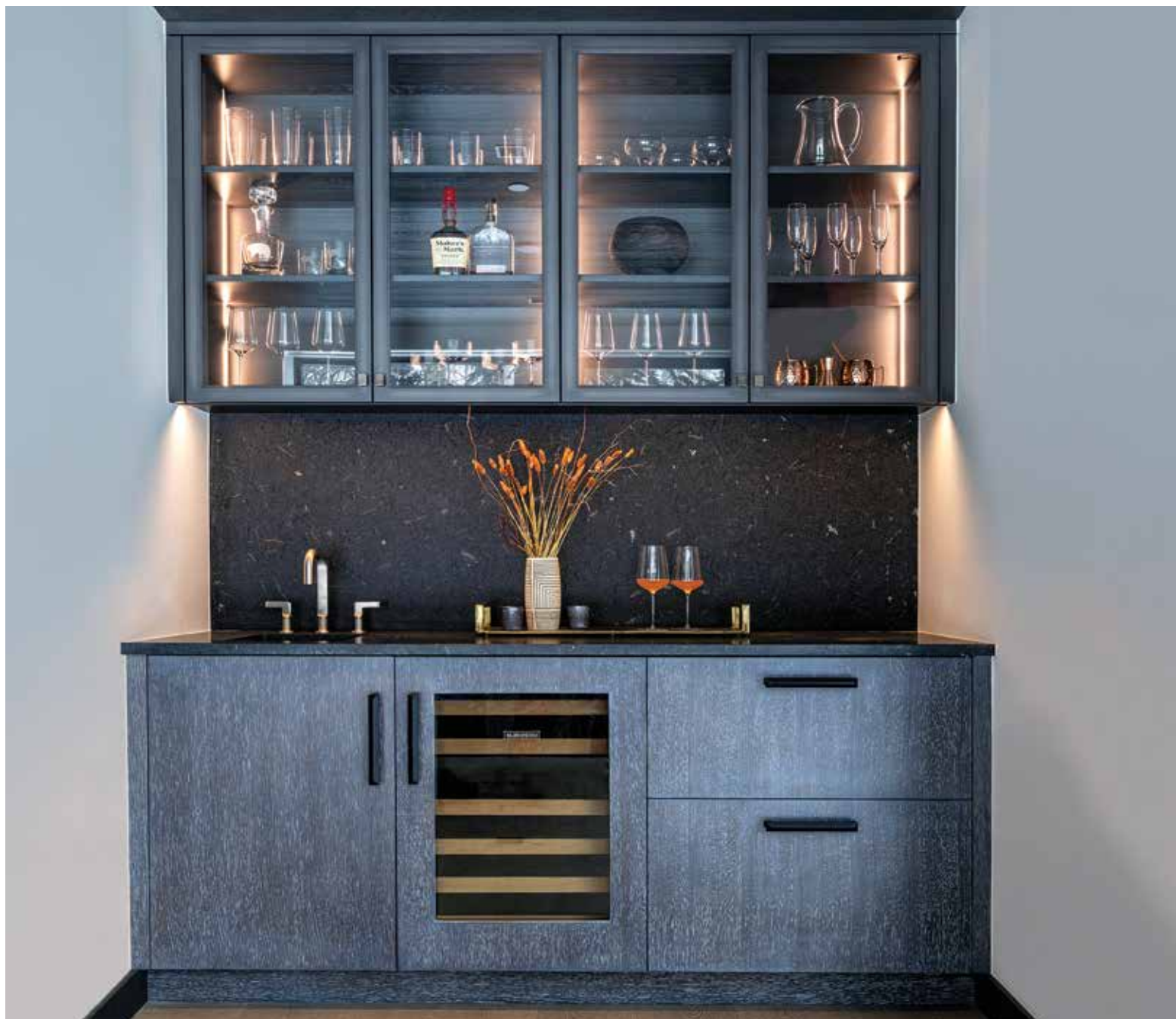


PHOTO DOMINIQUE TAYLOR