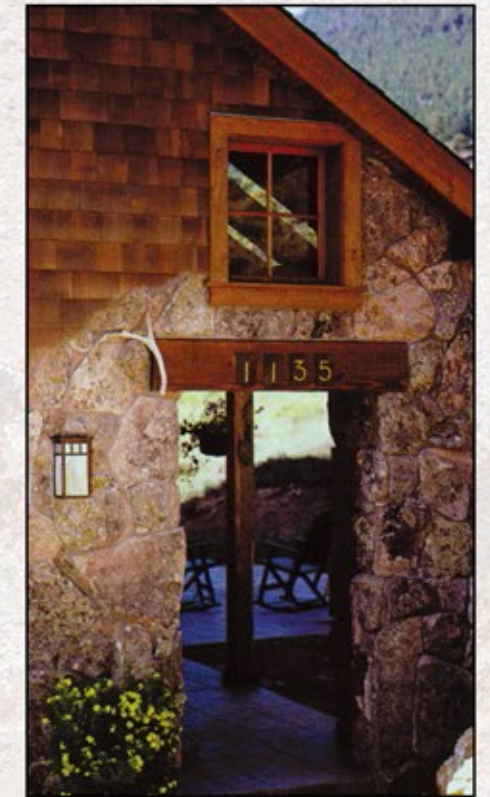


# Vernacular Mountain Architecture



The **Portfolio** Group, Inc.

Residential Design & Construction  
[www.portfoliogroup.us](http://www.portfoliogroup.us)

## *Rustic Arts & Crafts*

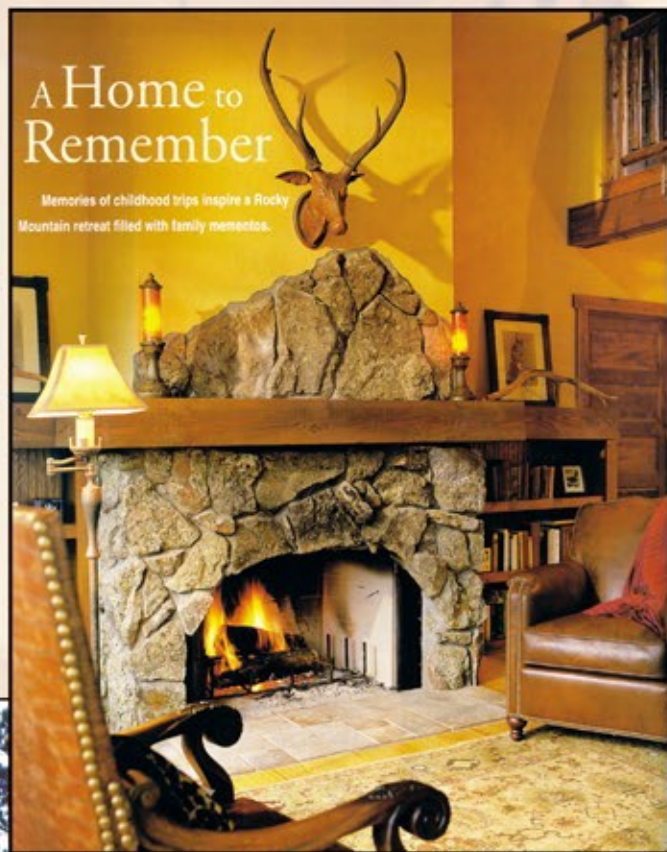
*According to “A Field Guide to American Houses”, the Arts and Crafts style was the dominant style for smaller houses built throughout the U.S. from 1905 to the early 1920’s. The style was spread quickly by home magazines and pattern books offering plans and/or completely pre-cut packages of lumber and detailing to be assembled by local labor.*

*Gustav Stickley was a key proponent of the “Rustic” Arts and Crafts. In his 1912 book, “More Craftsman Homes”, many of the floor plans and illustrations that appear (see opposite, lower left) are rustic shingled and log cottages. The Estes Valley was in the middle of this revival. Many lumpy and rambling Arts and Crafts cottages are sprinkled throughout the Estes Valley, looking as if they were copied directly from Stickley’s book.*

*Opposite along the left are examples in Estes Park and the Big Thompson Canyon.  
At center and right are Portfolio’s modern translations...*

- *Top left: 2369 Big Thompson Canyon*
- *Bottom center: 2367 Big Thompson Canyon next door...a rambling and asymmetrical form resembling additions built over a period of time.*
- *Top right: First National Bank Building, designed as a 1920’s-Era Summer Residence “renovated” for modern use.*
- *Center and right: A Stickley-inspired Family Retreat (A Home to Remember) contiguous with Rocky Mountain National Park.*

# Rustic Arts & Crafts



## *Logs & Timbers*

*Another outgrowth of the “Rustic Revival” was the rise of log, timber, and stone structures which characterized the architecture of Grand Lodges, Summer Camps, and other buildings of the Western National Parks... “Parkitecture”.*

*The Estes Valley area was certainly in the middle of this “Logs & Timbers” revival. Some twenty rustic lodges and numerous cabins were built in and around Rocky Mountain National Park between 1905-1940. Opposite along the left are existing examples from Rocky Mountain National Park, the historic Cheley Camp, and the Allenspark area.*

*At center and right are Portfolio's modern translations...*

- *Top center: “A Craftsman's Cabin”.*
- *At right (top & center): “A Mountain Bungalow”, where the log entry veranda establishes a theme of rusticity carried inside with Log & Timber structural members and details.*
- *Center and right: A combination of timber ceilings, log posts & trusses, and a chinked hewn-timber exterior recalls the Western Lodge look.*

# Logs & Timbers



## *Mountain Eclectic*

*The Architectural Context of some Mountain Properties may not lend themselves to a straight translation of a historical style. In these cases, a “Mountain Eclectic” approach is more appropriate.*

*The examples opposite attempt to combine familiar Vernacular Mountain elements (stone, timbers, dormers, wood detailing, etc.) in a more “Contemporary” manner...*

- *Center: A traditional Palladian window is echoed in the Great Room by two massive curved timber trusses.*
- *Left (top & bottom): An otherwise “contemporary” window wall and Great Room are articulated with timber posts, lintels, and trusses.*
- *Left center: Traditional dormers, gables, a timber veranda, stone wall & chimney are blended with a modern window, wall and finely crafted alderwood interior (upper right).*
- *Right center: “A Shower with a View” won Mountain Living magazine's Bath of the Year award.*

# Mountain Eclectic



## *Awards & Credentials*

*Portfolio's projects have won design competitions, and have been featured in a number of national, regional, and local magazines. These include Custom Home, Traditional Home, Colorado Homes & Lifestyles, Mountain Living, Log & Timber Style, The Lake Forester (Lake Forest, Illinois) and San Diego North County (Rancho Santa Fe, California).*

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*In September of 2004, the National Association of Home Builders and Custom Home Magazine awarded Portfolio a Pacesetter 2004 Award... "honoring the best and brightest of the Country's home builders".*

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# Awards & Credentials

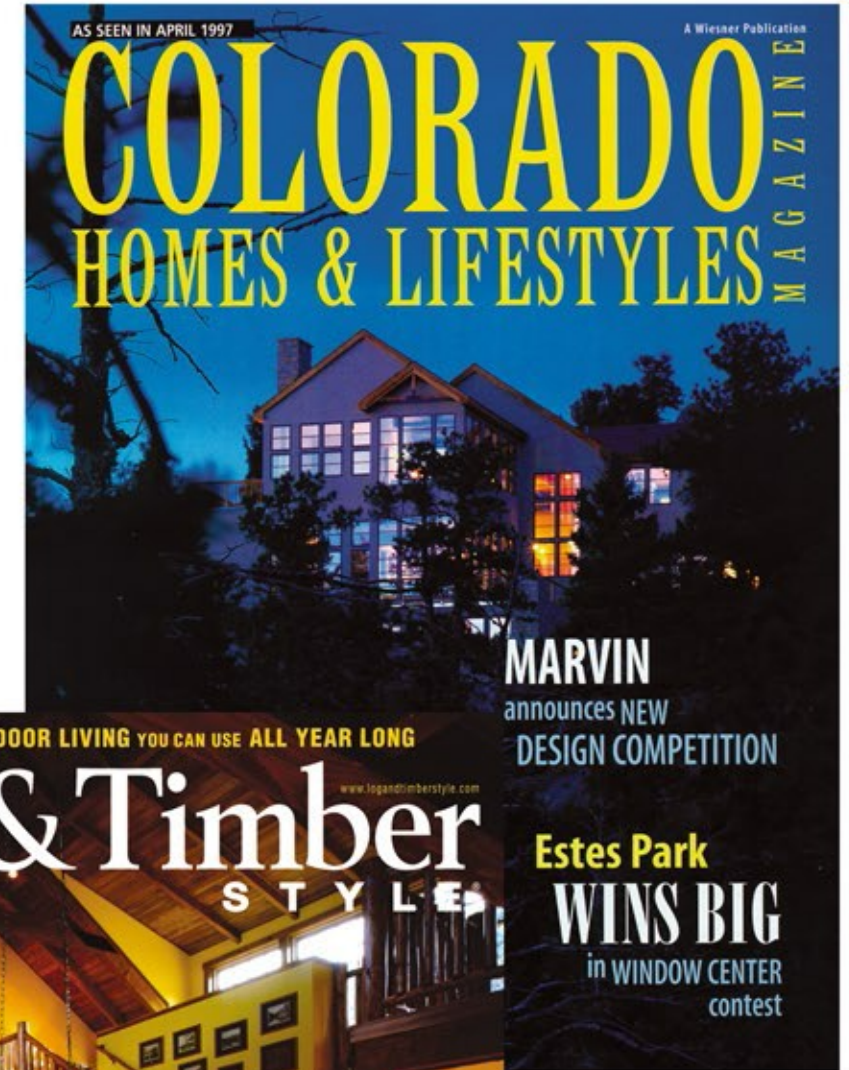


2004 Pacesetter Awards Design

For Steve and Betty Nickel, the task of designing a house and the task of building it have always been inseparable. Their affinity for the design/build approach goes back to their first project, a spec renovation they did in the mid 1980s, with Steve holding down a day job as a management consultant. A pair of subsequent spec houses drew enough positive attention that the Nickels could begin working with clients' money rather than their own, and they launched themselves full-time into the custom home business. Sixteen years later, the couple still design every project they build. More importantly, they have leveraged their talents in a way that suits both their clients and their business to a T. ■ Betty, who pursued architecture as a second career after teaching and raising children, takes the lead in plan development and has final say on livability issues. "I have an architectural background as well as a physics background, so I do all of the structural work," says Steve, who also works out most elevations and details. Betty designs all the kitchens and baths. "We don't bill by the hour," Steve says. "It's a fixed fee. If it takes 50 hours or 100 hours it's the same thing." Unlike builders who offer such services as a loss leader, though, the Nickels have made design a profit center. "We try to understand what our competition is getting and charge accordingly," Steve says. And unlike architects, the Nickels can concentrate on a small number of projects—three to five per year—within a small geographical area. Maintaining that focus over a period of years has given the Nickels a unique depth of expertise in designing for the local climate, topography, and architectural context. Running a lean operation minimizes the company's overhead and lets the principals do the work they do best. ■ With their top-notch production crew, led by construction vice president Garry Saepplinger, the Nickels are confident enough to let clients bid their plans with other builders if they like. And while some have taken them up on the offer, virtually all have built their homes with the Nickels. "They understand how invested we are in the project and how well we understand the house," says Betty.—B.D.S.

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[www.customhomeonline.com](http://www.customhomeonline.com)



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