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THIS CONTEMPORARY HOME IN BOULDER PIONEERS THE WAY IN ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN.

BY MISTY MILIOTO REAGIN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. CURTIS

HERE ARE BEAUTIFUL HOMES; there are functional homes; there are sustainably built homes. But it is on the very rare occasion that all three of those qualities can be found in one house. This Boulder home is just such a place. Dubbed the "Edge House" because of its modern design aesthetic and perch on the edge of City of Boulder Open Space, this 5,200-square-foot masterpiece is LEED Platinum-certified and on the cutting edge of the sustainability movement.

For starters, the Edge House is a near-net-zero home (meaning that, during the course of a year, it uses about the same amount of energy that it produces). To achieve this goal, Boulder-based Rodwin Architects incorporated several green features into the design.

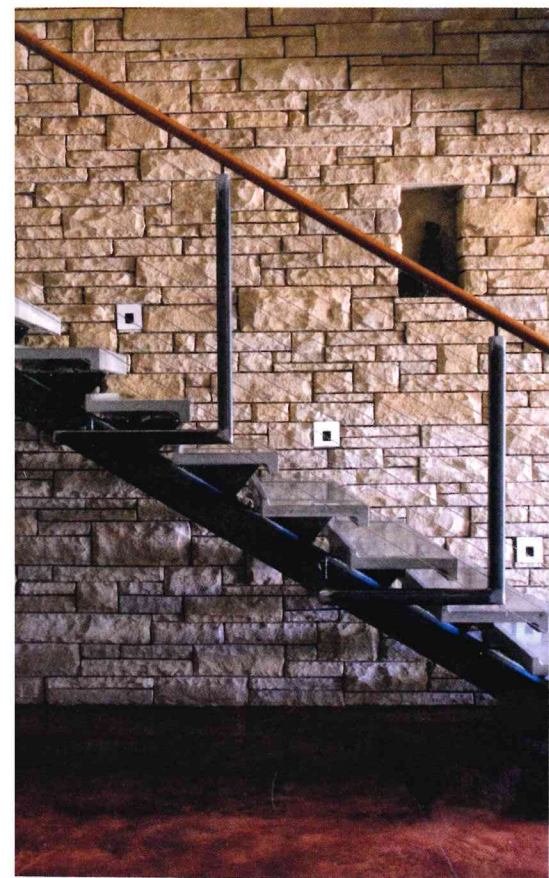
The "reading corner," as the homeowners refer to this space, is a favorite spot to gather with friends, family and colleagues. The soft edges and surprising shapes of the European furniture provide a smart contrast to the home's architecture—a bit of design fun the homeowners love.



The home includes a 10-kilowatt photovoltaic array, a ground-source heat pump, ultra-high performance fiberglass windows, LED and compact fluorescent lighting, an energy recovery ventilator, radiant flooring and a super-insulated thermal envelope. Furthermore, all building materials are free of formaldehyde, and the design team eliminated nearly all other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for exceptional indoor air quality.

The home's most notable green feature, however, is its grey-water system, the first ever legally permitted in Boulder. During the construction of the project, the homeowner started his own company—which he named Water Legacy—to develop and improve upon this new technology. The system collects used sink and bath water, filters and disinfects it, then sends it to flush all of the toilets, saving about 12,000 gallons of water per year.

But sustainability is only the half of it, because the Ge House is also rich with striking architectural details. The exterior is composed of clean lines, visually interesting cantilevers (that also provide passive solar protection), and a palette of sandstone, wood



The dining room features a 10-foot-long table made from exotic reclaimed wood from Indonesia, while the retractable glass accordion wall provides spectacular views of the Flatirons. (left) A three-story floating staircase, designed by Concrete Jungle, features a single metal spine and textured concrete steps, set against stained concrete floors and a natural stone wall.



and stucco. "We knew that the [design] would be unconventional for the neighborhood, but we wanted to contextualize the house in some way," says Scott Rodwin, principal at Rodwin Architecture. "We thought that using materials that are commonly found in the neighborhood would be a good way to help integrate the home aesthetically."

Inside, concrete kitchen countertops provide sculptural interest while adding to the natural feel of the space. "Concrete plays well with everything in this house, because it works well with whatever you put next to it," says Cade McKee of Colorado Springs-based Concrete Jungle. The company also created a floating steel-and-concrete staircase that hovers over a three-story atrium. The result is clean, airy and beautiful.

So is the retractable glass accordion wall that opens the back of the house to a flagstone and rock patio beyond. This detail offers gorgeous views of the foothills to the west and brings the outside in.

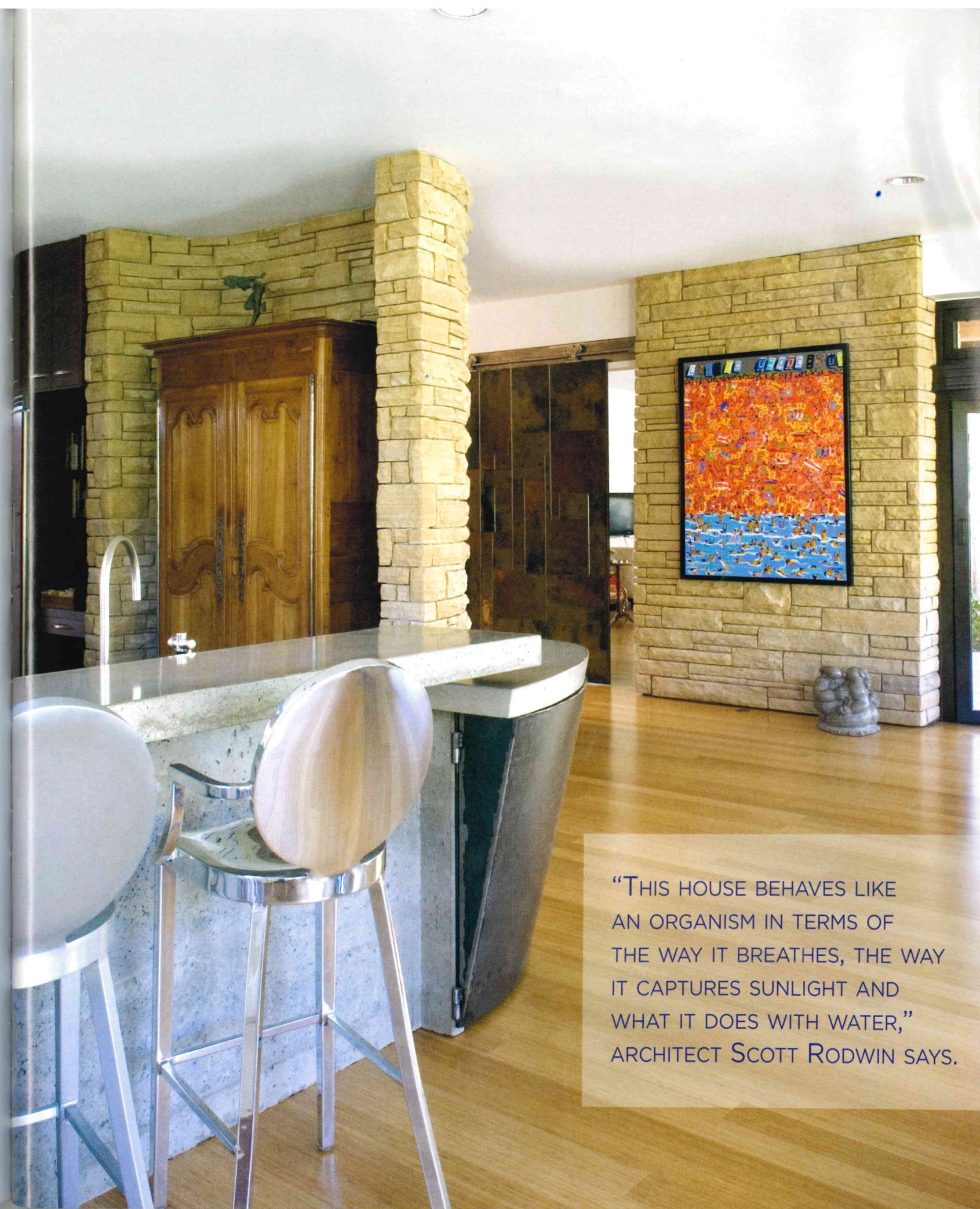
Such austere materials could make the home feel cold and impersonal, but interior designer and feng shui consultant Eiko Okura of Denver-based Eiko, Inc., created a cohesive design from surprising elements. Fine European furniture stands beside modern art; a sparkly light fixture adds a touch of glam to the clean-lined dining table and chairs; the rough texture of natural stone walls is an ideal backdrop for the soft edges of the living room's unique modern furnishings.

Okura also used thoughtful space planning to create a home that's dynamic and livable. "The traffic flow—and how we move through the space—is a flow of chi," she says. "There is a lot of steel and stone, but it is all vibrating with life."

While Okura did most of the interior design, Margie McCulloch, principal and owner of Boulder-based American Loft Cabinetry, designed all of the cabinets for the kitchen, baths and laundry room using sustainable materials. The kitchen cabinets are made from a VOC-free Lyptus veneer (a hybrid of two types of eucalyptus trees).



(left) The contemporary and environmentally friendly home exhibits a unique design aesthetic for its Boulder neighborhood, but the use of local materials helps connect the residence to the area. *(left, above; right)* The kitchen features artfully designed countertops and bar by Concrete Jungle, accented with clean-lined barstools by Philippe Starck. The 19th-century armoire gives this otherwise contemporary kitchen an antique European flair.



"THIS HOUSE BEHAVES LIKE AN ORGANISM IN TERMS OF THE WAY IT BREATHES, THE WAY IT CAPTURES SUNLIGHT AND WHAT IT DOES WITH WATER," ARCHITECT SCOTT RODWIN SAYS.



(left) The cherry cabinets in the master bath, designed by American Loft Cabinetry, are free of formaldehyde and VOCs.

(clockwise, from top left) Each floor features a Mondrian door—seen here beyond the stairs—displaying the floor plan for that level of the home. The elevated bathtub, by WETSTYLE, heightens the clean and contemporary look in the master bath.

Pretty touches include a natural slate backsplash and gleaming Dornbracht fixtures.

A solar tube provides natural daylighting in the master shower, enhancing the natural stone and slate.

Nearly everything about this home supports the health of the environment—and the health of the homeowners. “This house behaves like an organism in terms of the way it breathes, the way it captures sunlight and what it does with water,” Rodwin says. “That organism supports the healthy lives of the people who are living in it.” As the epitome of eco-living, the Edge House raises the bar for other green homes to come. □

DESIGN DETAILS

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Interior Design

EIKO, INC.

Eiko Okura, Denver, (303) 777-5135

Concrete Design and Installation

CONCRETE JUNGLE

concretejungledesign.com

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