



finding balance in the mountains

Neoclassical Meets Zen in a Main Street Victorian

FEATURE
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The ancient Chinese philosophy of feng shui divides the universe into positive energy and negative energy, which can be directed through the careful use and placement of objects in one's living space. A practitioner of this complex body of knowledge (feng shui literally means "wind water") seeks to create harmony by balancing the energy in a space to attract and assure health, wealth and good fortune. Those entering a space that has been tuned by feng shui practitioner feel tranquil, inspired and energized.

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In one glance a visitor stepping inside the front door takes in entry, dining and kitchen. At the entry are a tufted, black leather sofa and two tufted, black-and-white houndstooth fabric-covered ottomans. On the floor is a Mick Bocchini-designed black cowhide rug. In the kitchen Bocchini prepares dinner over a Carrara marble countertop.



Mick Bocchini, a long-time Telluride local, has a knack for finding and creating balance in a space, most recently showcased in the remodel of his modest-sized historic Victorian on main street Telluride. On the outside, the house is classic Victorian, with its gable roof line, clapboard siding, white trim and neatly manicured lawn.

Inside the home has been transformed. There the calm of a Buddhist monastery meets an eclectic blend of neo-classical and contemporary.

The house, which dates back to 1891, has been the Bocchini family's second home since his parents bought it in the winter of 1978.

"We were staying next door for the holidays," in what was then the Johnstone Inn," Bocchini said. "This house was for sale so my parents went to meet the realtor and take a look around. They fell in love with the place, made an offer, signed the papers on the spot and we drove back to Phoenix that afternoon."

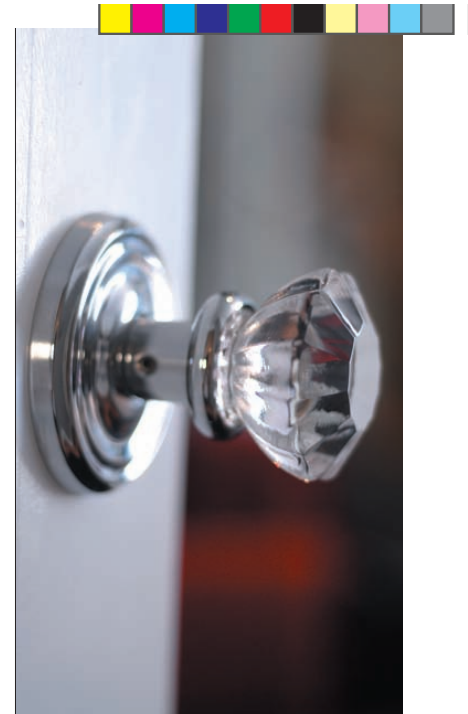
The Bocchini family was so taken with the house and its surroundings that they moved to Telluride, shortly after purchasing the house. That fall, young Bocchini was enrolled in Telluride High School and making friends.

"The snow and the lifestyle was a welcome adjustment for me after the warmth and heat of Arizona, and I felt an instant connection to the nature here. I loved skiing and the rugged beauty of the area," he said.

But the family's time in Telluride didn't last long. While Bocchini and his younger brother Brandon loved their new mountain home, his parents had a more difficult time adjusting. His mother missed her life and friends in Phoenix; for his father, the weekly commute for business proved too much. Before the year was out, Bocchini's parents returned to Arizona and left him – a 16-year-old enthralled with his new life in the mountains – to look after the house and finish high school.

"My father sent me a check each week to cover expenses, so I wouldn't blow one month's money all at once," said Bocchini – who, although he got himself to school most days, did skip the occasional class to take advantage of a powder day. "Telluride is where I was first exposed to being independent and self-sufficient, and I loved it," he said.

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On this page, on the outside the main street Victorian is modest and traditional. On the inside, Mick Bocchini has transformed a family bungalow into a sophisticated mountain getaway. On opposite page, left, bar seating at the kitchen island allows one to eat an informal breakfast or watch a guest chef prepare the evening's dinner. Right, tiled from floor to ceiling, the guest bathroom is itself a shower stall.

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Being on his own, Bocchini learned how to discipline himself, a practice that has served him well since.

"I think my time here certainly taught me that the more you become independent, the more you discipline yourself, and this helps you develop a sense of balance in life," he said.

searching

Bocchini counts his mother as his main source of personal, creative and spiritual awareness. During childhood he watched and learned as she hand-picked antiques to decorate the Telluride house. To this day, Bocchini vividly recalls the

grass cloth wallpaper, brown carpet, and bamboo shades of his childhood.

"She was beautiful, inside and out, and had many talents," Bocchini said of his mother, who died in 2002 of breast cancer. A designer, writer, model and actress, "she was extremely glamorous and obsessed with antiques. She always chose a piece of antique furniture over jewelry. She'd be up until all hours rearranging the furniture downstairs when we were kids. She loved beauty, and as much of it as she sent out into the universe, it came back to her."

In the early 80s, Bocchini left Telluride and moved to Phoenix where, in 1984, he decorated a family condo. With his mother's help, he chose an eclectic blend of antiques and modern

art deco accents.

"It was pretty basic," he said, adding that initially he wasn't sure it would work.

But his mother pronounced it "perfect."

"Are you sure?" he asked. Yes, came the reply, and an interior designer was born.

For the next several years Bocchini lived between Telluride and Phoenix, working for his father. When a serious relationship blossomed in early 1997, he followed his heart to Los Angeles where he juggled a successful career as a yoga instructor, fitness model and freelance designer. He worked for an array of interior designers and event planners, which plunked him in the red-hot center of Hollywood.

It was fun, but something was missing.

"I loved my time in Los Angeles and totally loved living by the beach in Malibu," he said. "I found such a great, creative and nurturing family there. We went to all the parties and totally lived life," he said of his eight years on the West Coast. "However, the Hollywood life can be addictive and shallow, a life of 15-minute friends and crushed dreams. I knew it wouldn't last forever and that I had to move on eventually. I knew I would not grow as a person if I didn't."



After losing a close friend to pancreatic cancer in 2005, Bocchini reevaluated his life and found his way back to Telluride.

“I realized I wanted to get back to the beauty. I experienced and learned a lot of life in L.A., about being my own person and embracing my individuality,” he said. “I was ready to give up the social scene. It might be a cliché, but life is short and I realized I wanted new experiences and that what matters to me are deeper fundamentals.

“While I left good relationships in L.A., I knew they will be there if I decide to go back.”

In addition, he had a business opportunity.

“One of the biggest incentives to moving was to help my father sell his Telluride properties.”

finding balance

While a Friday night on main street Telluride might not hold the glamour of Hollywood premieres and award parties, Bocchini says he has returned to a more inspiring and balanced life in the San Juans.

“I wanted to regroup, reevaluate life and what I was doing with it. Remodeling my old family home felt like the

right path to take. “This house has a lot of soul and history. I wanted to respect the period of this house and I feel like I’ve done it justice. The whole project has been a very cathartic experience for me,” he said.

Bocchini’s father, Michael, was a fulltime Telluride resident from 1988 to 2004 and served on Telluride Town Council during the early 1990s. In 1999 he made an unsuccessful bid for town mayor. These days, Bocchini père divides his time between Telluride, South Africa and Florida.

“He loves the Telluride of the past and was passionate about affordable housing in his campaign,” said Bocchini. “If it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t have been able to do this house.”

reshaping a childhood space

Mick Bocchini transformed a family bungalow into a cosmopolitan mountain getaway, one perfectly suited for entertaining and socializing. He subtly balanced a primary color palette of masculine whites, grays and blacks with strong feminine accents of red. The neutral white and pale grey walls create a sense of space in the modest-sized house and provide the perfect backdrop for a wide-

ranging collection of art. In the entry hang two black and white prints from yester year Telluride, one Joe Zoline and company cutting a ribbon to open the ski area in 1972, another of main street Telluride in the early 1990s. In the drawing room hangs a bold diptych made from black watercolor painted on white rice paper. The painting, on loan from local artist Jarred David Paul, frames the view of Colorado Avenue and the mountains in the background.

Custom touches from Bocchini stand out as well against the designer’s neutral palette. As you step inside a custom black cowhide rug from Spain warms the wood floor; a custom Tibetan lambs wool throw covers the master bed; and a lipstick red cashmere blanket makes the guest bed inviting. Under Bocchini’s watchful hand signature period pieces keep the sumptuous remodel from spilling over the top.

Just inside the front door a tufted, black leather sofa and two tufted ottomans upholstered in black and white hounds tooth fabric welcome guests. Under the ottomans and sofa a black cowhide rug warm cold feet. To the side in the drawing room two custom side chairs covered in grey boiled-wool beckon a visitor into the living room for a cocktail.

“I love incorporating tactile, sensual fabrics – whether it’s in a drape, bed

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