

after a two-decade reign in Vail as "the" designer for commercial properties and *fabuloso* ski chateaus for the ultrawealthy. Born in Cleveland, Ohio, Nelson was the daughter of a well-known radio personality (mother) and an executive with Johns Manville (father). And while this independent rebel probably should have become an architect, the tenor of the times didn't allow females to interpret themselves in such a manner, preferring safer terms such as "decorator."

Nelson attended the University of Colorado, graduating in 1964 with a degree in interior design. In 1966 she started her own company in Boulder, and in 1970 she moved to Vail to become the administrative assistant to the town manager, a job she describes as amazing.

"Lionshead was just being developed, our parking lot was mud, the post office was in the basement of the hardware store, and everybody knew everyone else. This was a wondrous time to live in Vail and raise kids, and we were all pioneers working three jobs just to exist. We had a blast!" she recalls.

During her time in Vail, Nelson established her interior design business, working for the town of Vail and eventually working full time as a designer. She held the distinction of being Vail's only ASID designer for several years. Some of her more notable clients included former senators, billionaires and local Vail dignitaries.

In 1998, Nelson was selected to design an enormous home in Evergreen, which turned into a five-year project. "This was a dream job," she recalls, in which she was working for "a fabulous guy who insisted on the best of every-

**Left: Andrea Schumacher of O Interior Design takes an avant-garde approach to interior design.**



**Kristi Dinner's eclectic design style melds the feel of the home with the client's taste.**

thing and who wanted to end up with a house that could accommodate parties that I can't even imagine. For example, I believe [rock band] Kiss performed there."

The home's swimming pool room has a ceiling painted by internationally acclaimed artist Karen Kristin of Sky Art, whose firm just completed the world's largest casino in Macao. The ceiling was fitted with 4,000 twinkling fiber optic lights, including four shooting stars. All doors open upward, giving people the sense of being outside. This job earned Nelson the 2006 Colorado Institute of Art Electronic Lifestyles National Award for best theme theater.



personal taste onto a client. Rather it's about a client and designer coming together to create a unique space and helping the clients develop their vision while fulfilling their designer requirements."

## KRISTI DINNER

### Company kd

Walking through the doorway of the prosaic Sixth Avenue craftsman duplex in Capitol Hill, one feels a bit like Dorothy when she realizes she is no longer in Kansas, and this is definitely not her grandfather's vintage home. The startling black-and-white paisley wallpaper, highlighted by crystal sconces and vermilion-covered chairs, is nothing short of breathtaking.

These are the offices of Kristi Dinner, founding principal of the kd design team. And team is definitely the magic word. Born in Denver and educated in New York, Dinner is a committed Francophile, with Paris being her favorite place for so many reasons.

In her business, Dinner has assembled talents ranging from senior designer Beth Armijo, recently voted "Top Up and Coming Designer" by California Home; design/project coordinator Erin Fowler, a ski buff turned professional planner; business manager Kim Goscha; intern C.C. Creech, formerly of Oz Architecture; project manager Sherri Winterfeldt; and design associate Rebecca Kaufman. Keeping the group in line is Yukon, the office dog, who oversees pet residences.

Together, the group uses its collective expertise to bring innovative flair to clients.

Currently on the drawing board is a 10,000-square-foot new construction project being done in conjunction with neighbors Scott Parker and Dean Lindsay of Nest Architectural Design. Work also is being completed on Scribbles, a new stationery store in the bohemian Platte Street area on 15th Street.

Commenting on her projects, Dinner says she strives to "get a read from what the house tells you, and then what the client tells you." She has spent 23 years successfully following her own advice. Clearly, it works.

## MELINDA DOUGLAS

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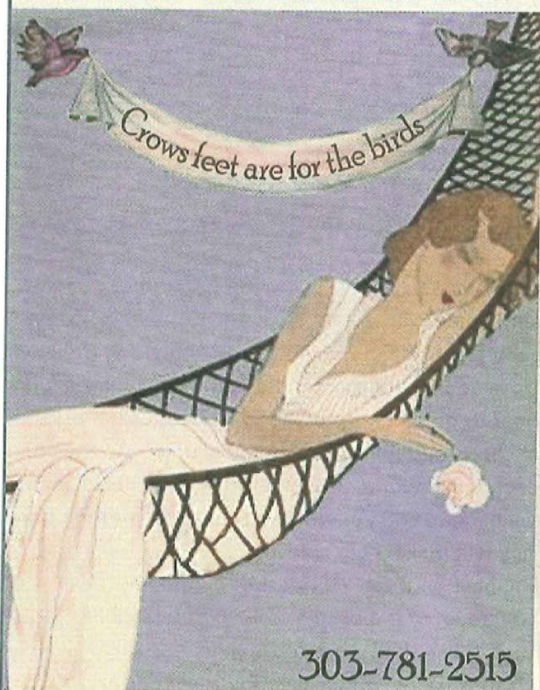
When you meet Melinda Douglas, the old phrase "to the manor born" springs to mind. Elegant style, no pretense. The real thing.

Her designs have a timeless quality, reflecting good taste, durability and meticulous attention to the tiniest detail, from fabric choice to just the right shade of pillow trim, accented by a surprising new or antique artifact or treasure that becomes an unexpected focal point.

Such ingrained talent, the result of countless childhood visits to museums and exposure to travel and music, coupled with a well-trained reporter's eye, has made Douglas the dean of the Denver decorating community for the past 15

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