

MOUNTAIN LIVING
DESIGN SPOTLIGHT

A SKI-IN, SKI-OUT ALPINE RETREAT

THE STEEP GRADE OF THIS SPACIOUS SLOPE-SIDE HOMESITE PRESENTED CONSTRUCTION CHALLENGES—AND EXTRAORDINARY ADVANTAGES.

By Kate Carter



Photo by Kate Carter

The next time you're coming over the Adventure Triple ski lift, you'll notice several slopeside homes that are nearly as breathtaking as the views. Although the newest one, dubbed the Sky House, was only recently completed, the property owner purchased the land 10 years ago during a visit to Mansfield.

The Spruce Peak community was still in the early stages of development then, yet he was struck by Stowe and its beauty. "I put one of the best lots under deposit and waited a decade to build," he says. Meanwhile, he found an architectural firm whose style suited his vision.

The Connecticut-based firm Shope, Reno & Wharton has an affinity for the Adirondacks, and much of their work embraces the circa-1900 Great Camps style, defined by massive granite fireplaces and copious native materials in their natural state—like logs, rough-hewn stone, heavy timber, and knotty wood. "I studied Shope, Reno & Wharton's mountain houses for years," the owner says. "They do amazing shingle-style work—very striking, but not over the top."

John Gasset, the principal architect with Shope, Reno & Wharton who designed the house, suggested that the owner consider local builder Sisler Builders, because he was familiar with their work and recognized a symbiotic construction style.

Building the 7,500-square-foot, 5-bedroom house did not come without obstacles—primarily the topography and steepness of the site, combined with the small triangular shape of the lot. "The project team modulated that well, and it's nice to see how the house grows out of the topography," Gasset says.

There's immaculate attention to detail inside and out—including curved soffits, curved pilasters buttressing outside corners, curved trim on front entry windows, an interior staircase with one single uninterrupted run of handrail spanning two full flights of stairs, three floor-to-ceiling fireplaces, and a spectacular balcony off the master suite with panoramic views from Smugglers Notch through the Mansfield range. The site is oriented towards Mansfield and its location directly on the Inspiration slope offers plenty of open space and an

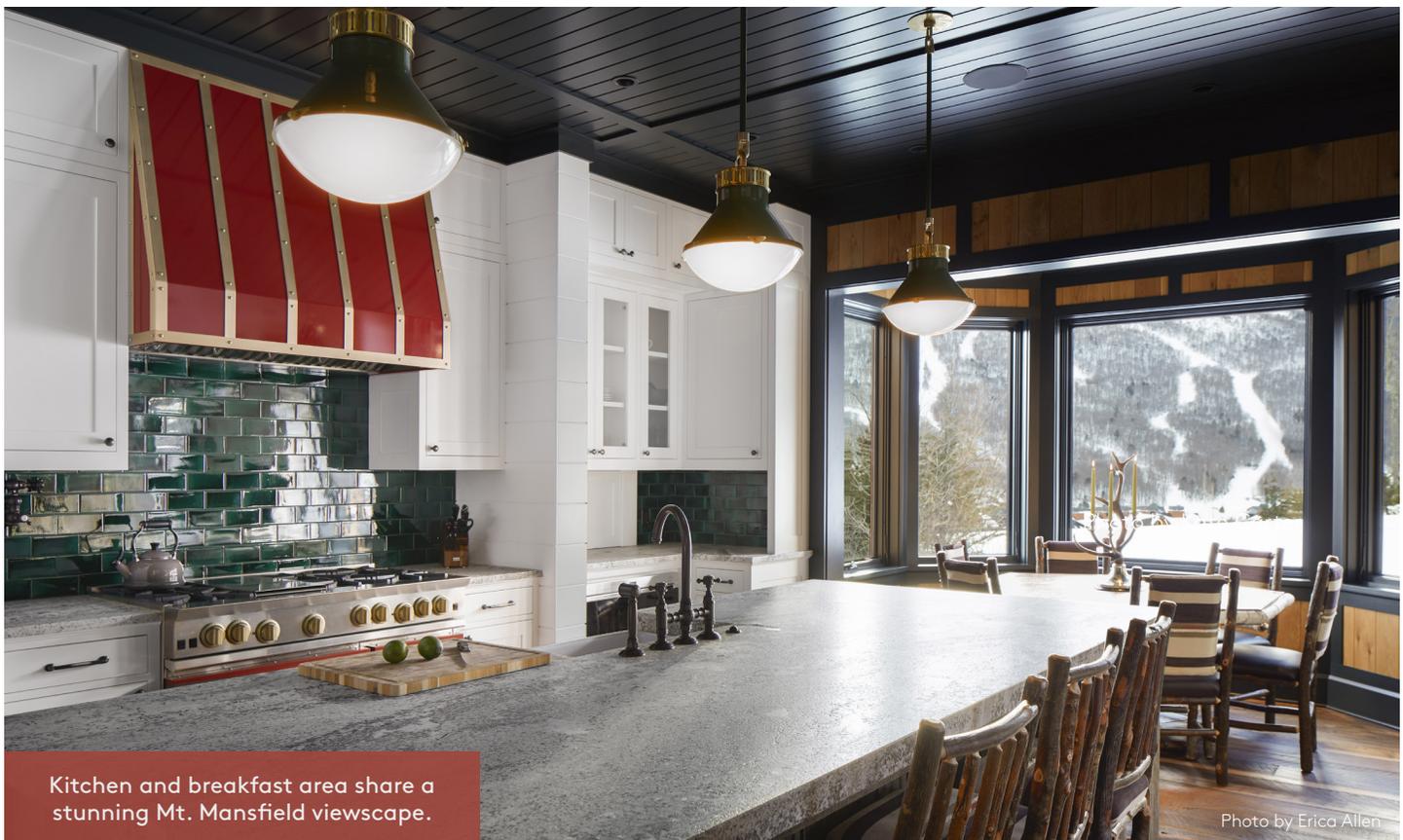
unimpeded sightline.

Sisler Builders' woodworking shop created dozens of custom cabinets and doors. The interior design firm Tracker Home Decor, out of Martha's Vineyard, played an important part in the aesthetic, blending the mountain-house feel with modern touches.

From the onset, energy efficiency was a priority. "The home is more than four times tighter than the national energy code, with no substantial leakage," says Mike D'Muhala, Sisler Builders' BPI-certified energy division manager. "It's an amazing achievement for a house that size."

"It was a great collaboration," says Steve Sisler, owner of Sisler Builders. "The owner was hands-off, yet enthusiastic and supportive. All players stayed consistent with the architect's theme and came together to yield a home the owner is really pleased with."

"The level of quality blew me away," the owner says. "Everyone worked well together and my involvement was limited; they only communicated when they needed input from me. The house exceeded my imagination and I am thrilled with it."

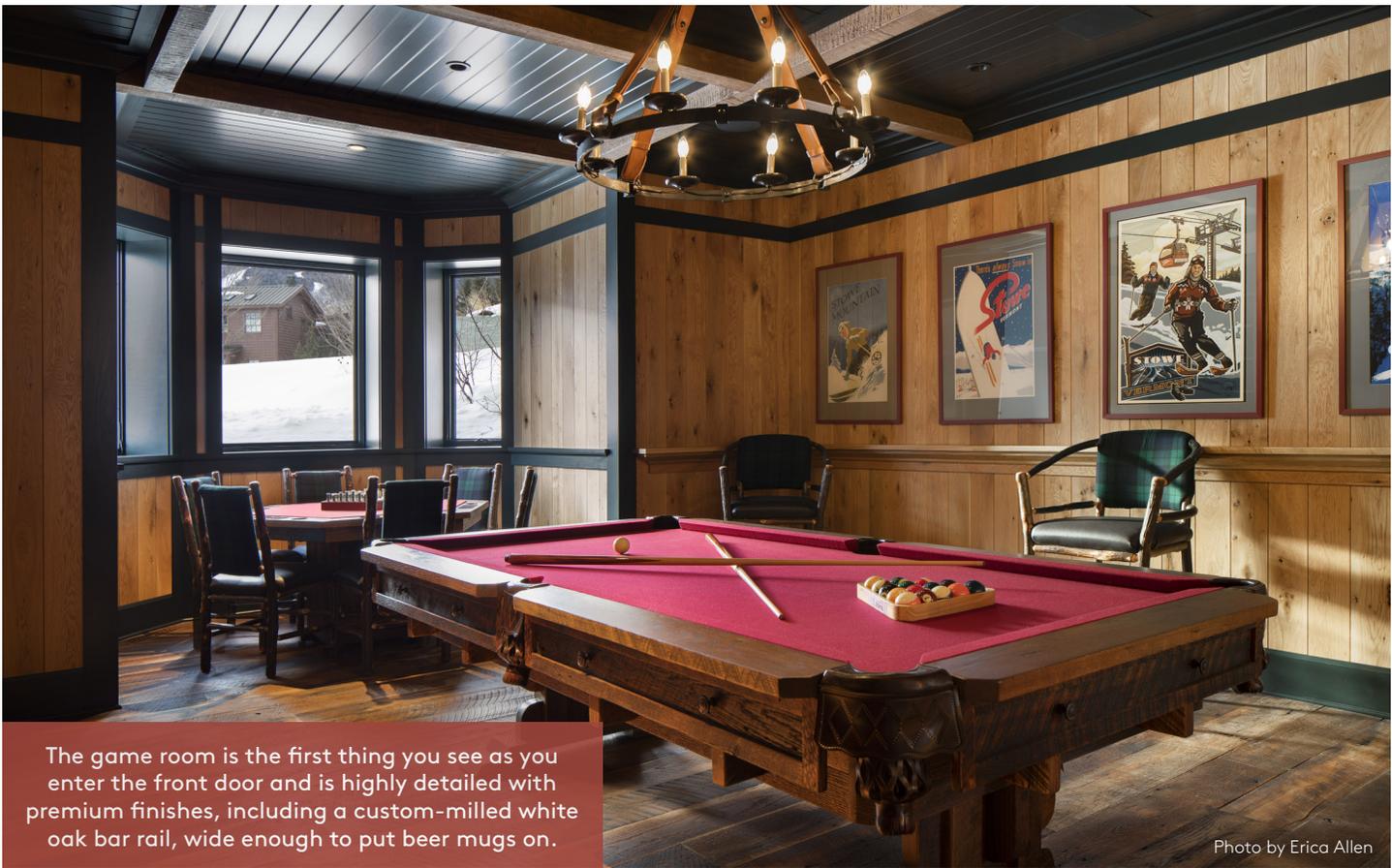


Kitchen and breakfast area share a stunning Mt. Mansfield viewscape.

Photo by Erica Allen



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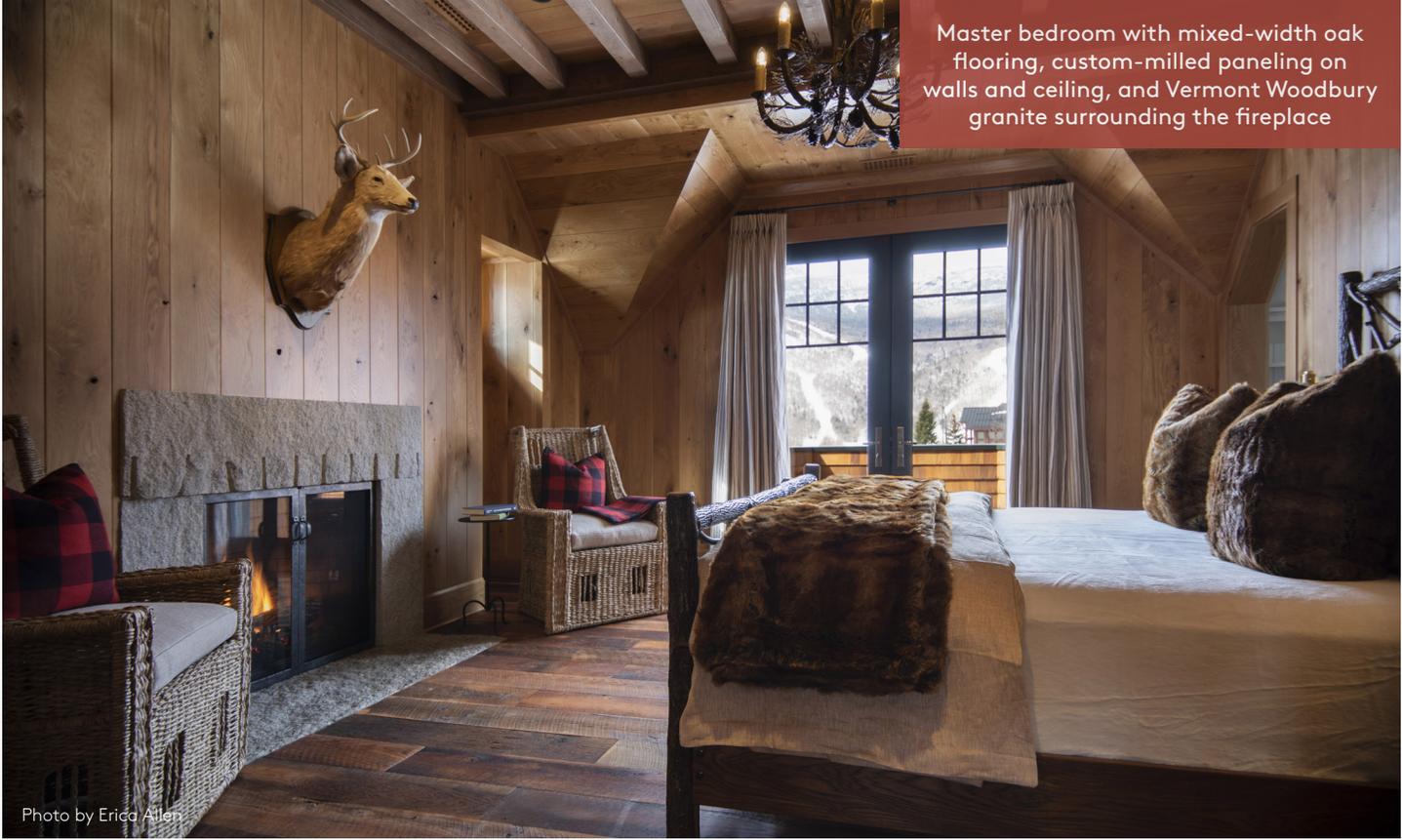
The game room is the first thing you see as you enter the front door and is highly detailed with premium finishes, including a custom-milled white oak bar rail, wide enough to put beer mugs on.

Photo by Erica Allen

Stained timbers high in the great room's vaulted ceiling mimic the timber rafter tails on the house's perimeter. The lintel hearth stones were sourced from Barre, Vermont, while the antler chandelier was crafted by nearby Mad River Antler.

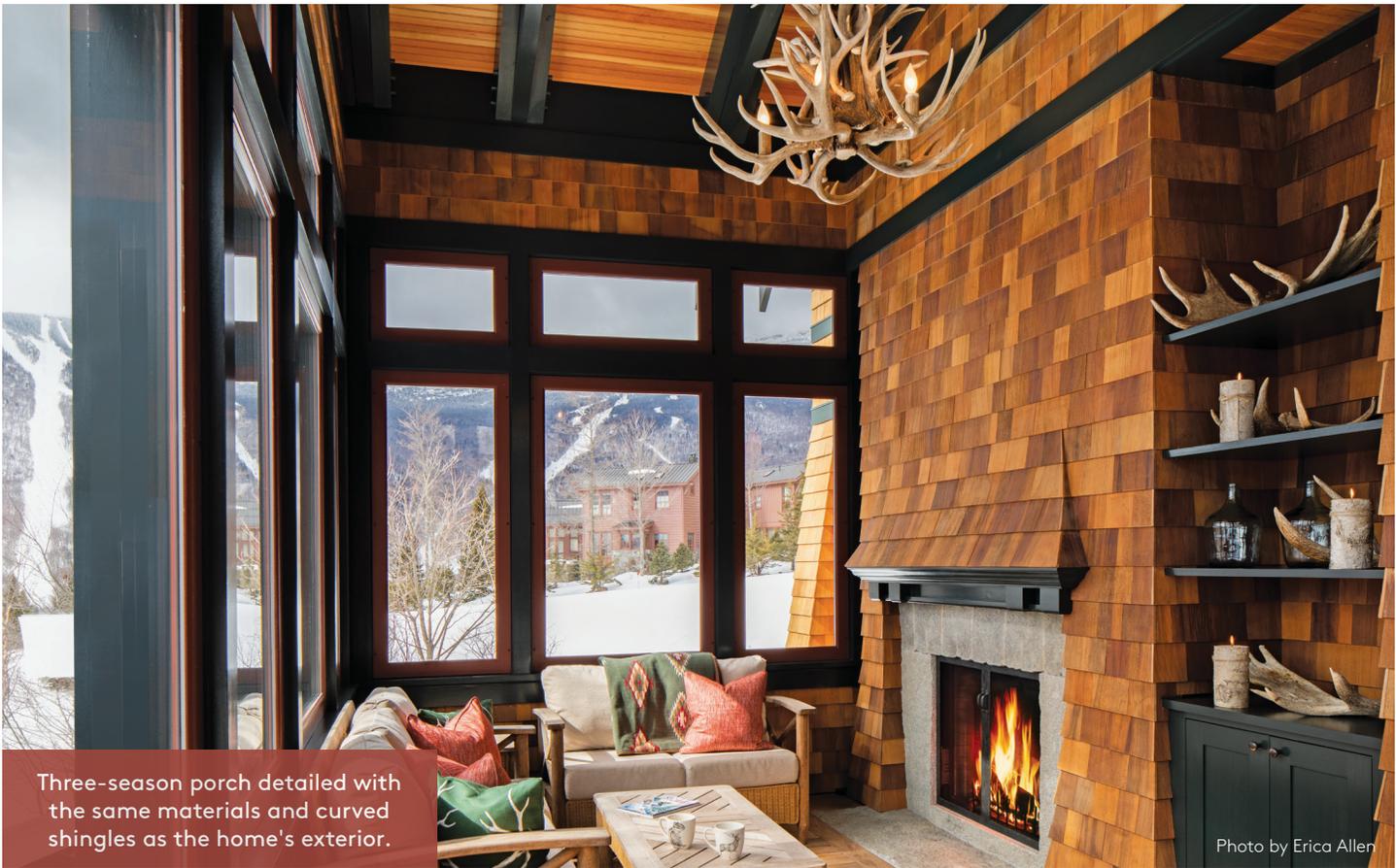


Photo by Abe Weintraub



Master bedroom with mixed-width oak flooring, custom-milled paneling on walls and ceiling, and Vermont Woodbury granite surrounding the fireplace

Photo by Erica Allen



Three-season porch detailed with the same materials and curved shingles as the home's exterior.

Photo by Erica Allen