

COLORADO HOMES & LIFESTYLES

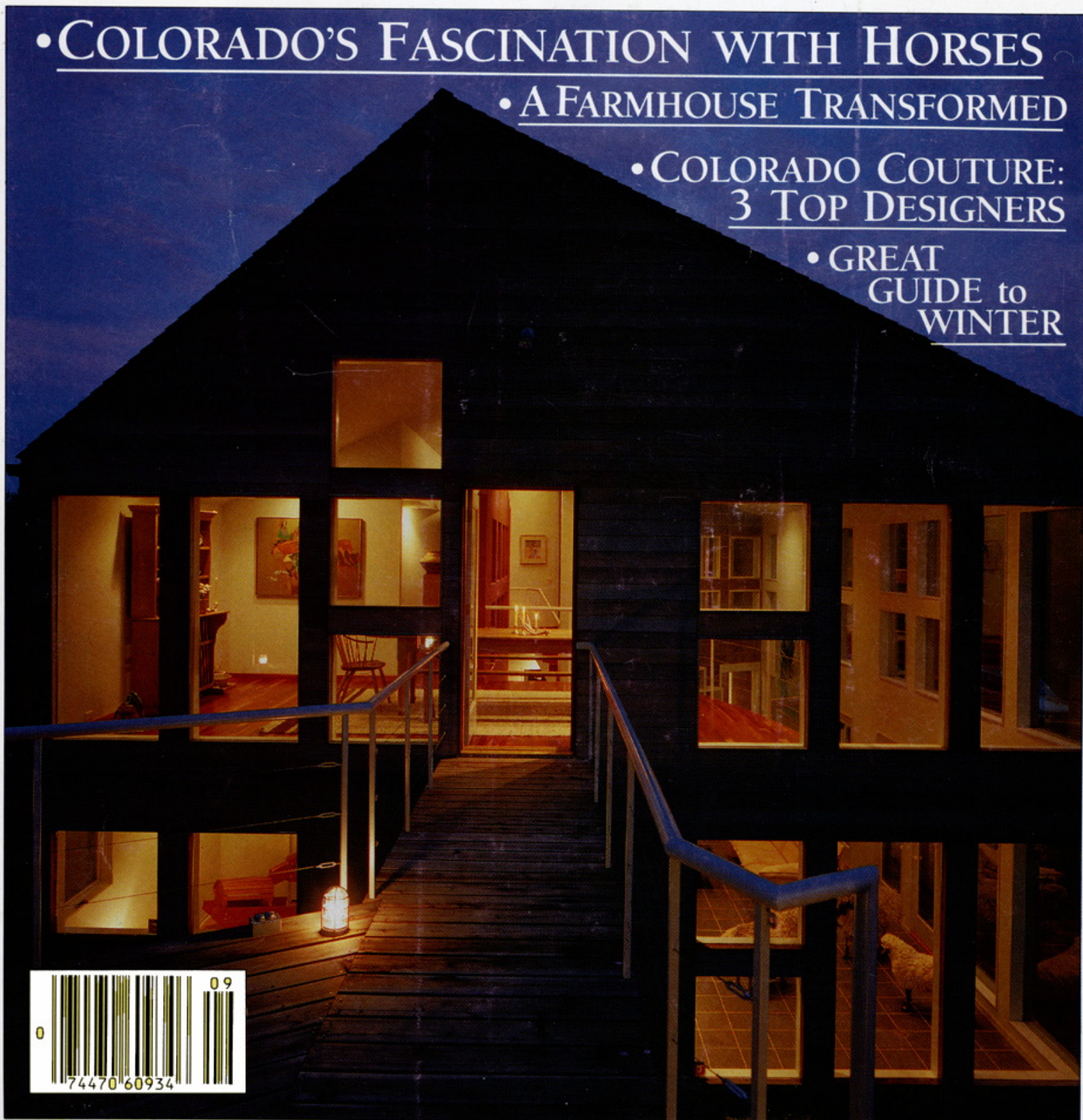
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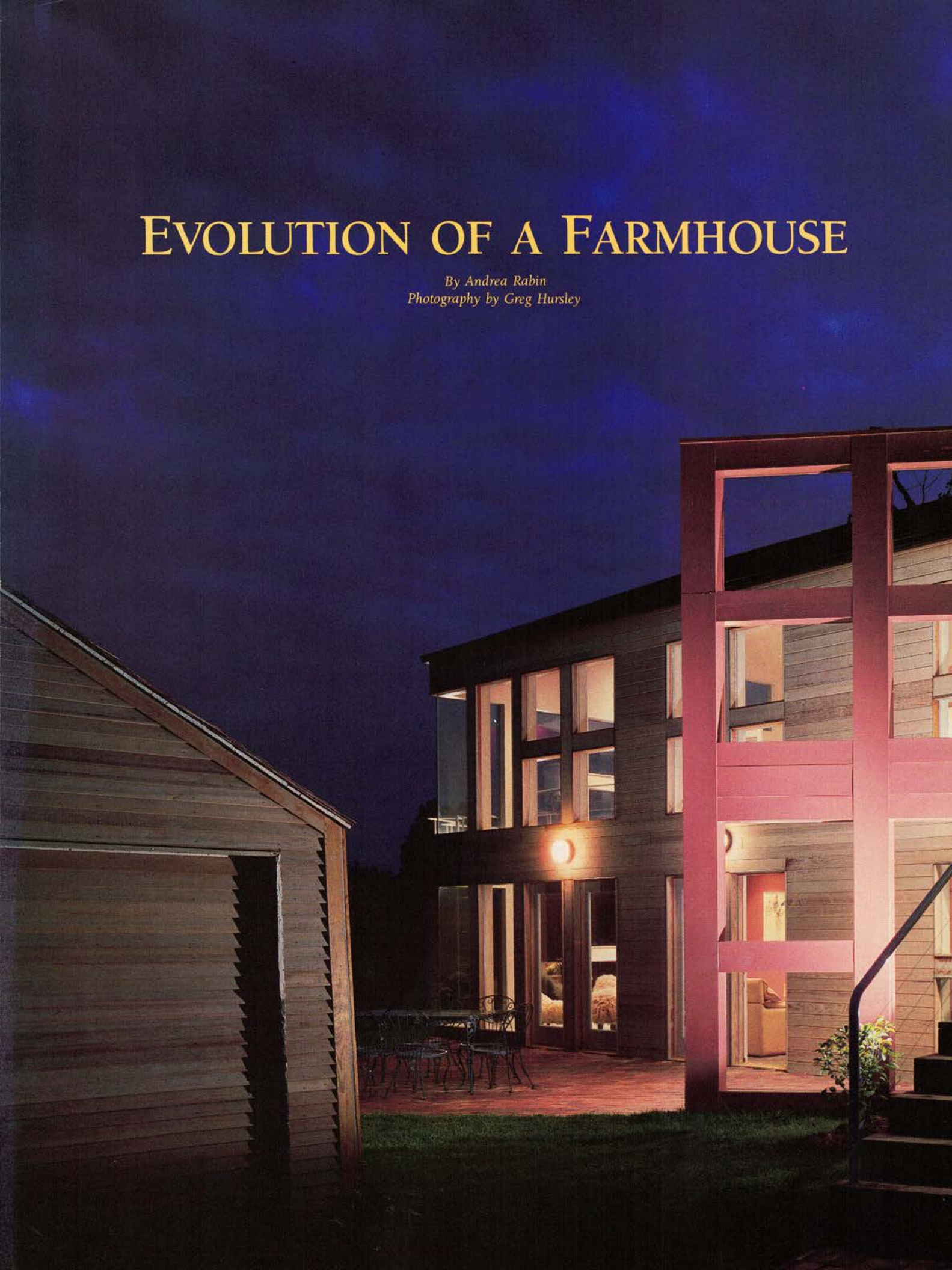
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EVOLUTION OF A FARMHOUSE

By Andrea Rabin
Photography by Greg Hursley



A Touch of Whimsy



Previous Page: Architect Michael Brendle devised a special lighting plan to create this nocturnal splendor. Right and Opposite Page: The designer of a cruise ship might well envy this ship's rail walkway leading to a deck that's perfect for evening entertaining.

The owners of this spectacular 2,200-square-foot home, a professional couple in their mid-30s, are an architect's dream. After careful consideration, they chose 29-year-old Michael Brendle to design their house, and having made that decision, they allowed him considerable artistic license. The reward was well worth the risk. Brendle produced a unique and wonderful home in Cherry Hills: contemporary, but with a touch of vintage farmhouse; full of light, space, imagination, and a bit of whimsy. The house is a progression of spaces, glimpses, and views.

"We gave him a very vague idea of what we liked and pretty much left everything up to him,"

says the husband, an artist who owns a lumber brokerage firm and is married to a school administrator. "We interviewed a number of architects and Michael seemed to have the criteria we were looking for—interesting ideas with a realistic sense of cost."

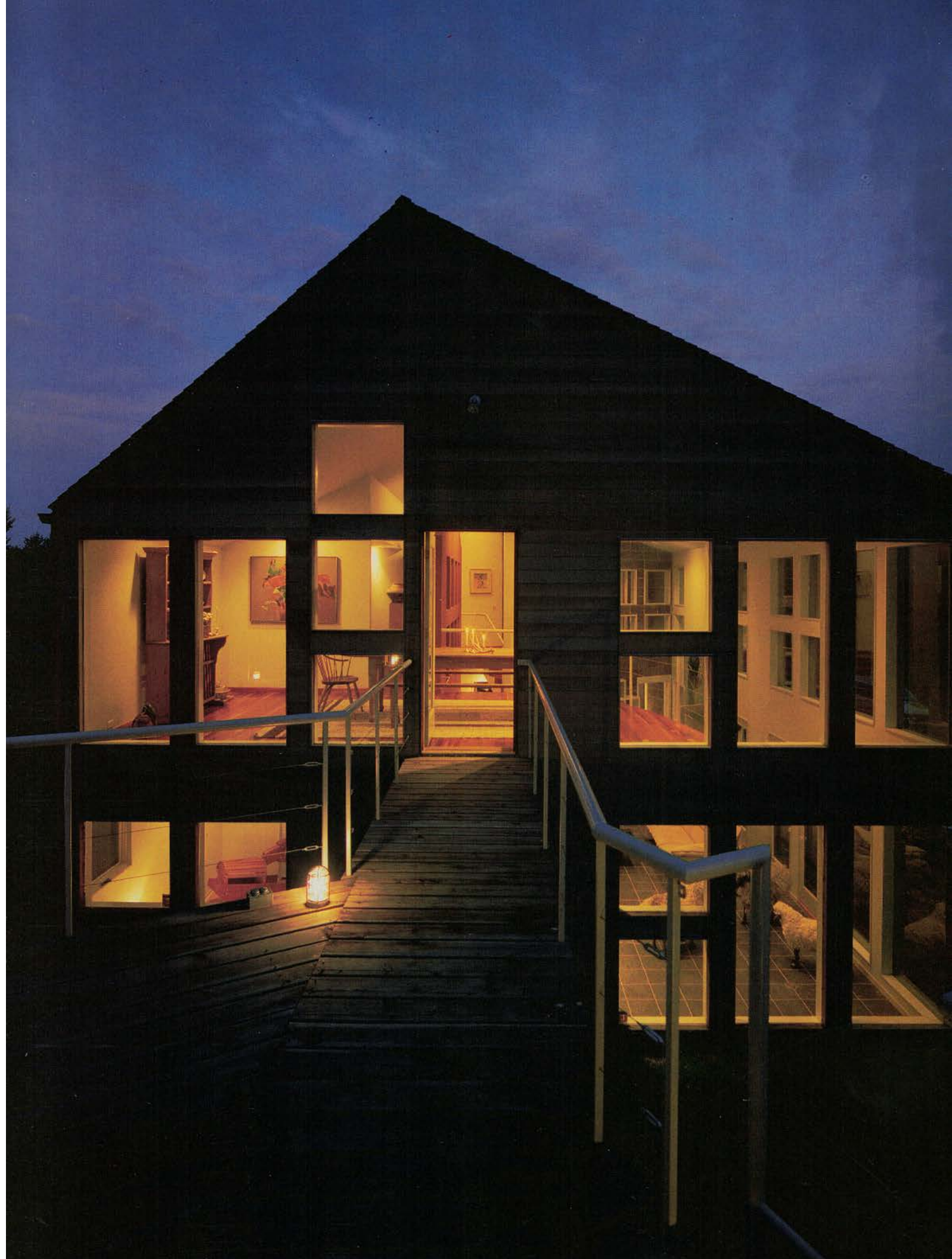
The husband had been living on the same site before his marriage—an acre and a half with a small house once used by a tenant farmer. On the property there was also an existing tool shed and stable. The couple wanted to keep the old farmhouse, and they wanted the new design to incorporate a passive solar system. In addition, a Cherry Hills Village code required that the old building and the new residence be part of one structure. A new focal point to visually assemble

this collection of disjointed buildings was required. Brendle decided to convert the old farmhouse into an artist's studio and secondary sleeping areas and to connect this conversion to the new structure via a greenhouse cum walkway.

According to Brendle, "The problem was how to get people from what was the old front door to the new front door. And we wanted to preserve the quality of the old house which was originally covered with shingles." With these objectives in mind, Brendle covered the old house with one-by-four-inch beveled redwood siding. On the new structure he used one-by-six-inch redwood tongue in groove panels, creating both beauty and continuity between the two buildings.

He then sealed the front door to the little house and connected it to the big one with a greenhouse/solar collector which flows into a skylight-topped tower. Heat from the greenhouse rises in the tower, from whence it is recirculated through the house in the winter or exhausted outdoors in the summer. On the outside, the tower's flag of bent stainless steel rotates in the wind like a weather vane—a reminder that this site was once a farm.

To enter the home one skirts the smaller house to reach steps which climb to a covered bridge that leads onto the second floor. To the right is a bright, old-fashioned-style kitchen where the family can eat in front of a cozy fireplace. An interior wall which is identical to the exterior wall





separates such private rooms as the kitchen and the powder room from the public areas. This same interior wall creates a hallway leading from the kitchen to the dining room. The formal dining room is warmed with custom cherrywood floors, and looks over the living room below. It leads out to a spectacular deck with a nautical feel, like the top deck of a luxury liner adrift on an azure sea. Both the dining room and the deck offer panoramic views of the surrounding areas and of the mountains. The dining room window serves as a perfect frame for Mount Evans. A railing made of aircraft cable wraps around the dining room, further enhancing the sense of openness. Add glass-to-glass corners, and this area of the house appears to fly out toward the mountains.

Vermont slate floors cover the living room. Warmed by the sun during the day, they radiate heat at night. The rest of the first floor, including the master bedroom, is covered with pegged maple that the owner rescued from an old bowling alley.

There is a second fireplace in the living room and a third in the master bedroom. In contrast to the rest of the house, the master bedroom is decorated in a country-antique style, cozy and full of French country prints, with antique chests and the domi-



Opposite Page and Right: An upper-level walkway enhances the home's aura of open space and provides a pleasing perspective on the living room below.



nating fireplace. This intimate room stands apart from the rest of the house by virtue of its old-fashioned, yet timeless country flavor.

"These are very outgoing people," Brendle says of his clients, "and they love the outdoors." This led him to create a very open space with views through big, uncovered windows. Sunlight through the windows generates a changing kaleidoscope of shadows and patterns throughout the day. Brendle installed outdoor lights, so that at night the light can play on either falling snow or the surrounding landscape. The effect is one of splendor.

To counteract the feeling of exposure in that large, glass-enclosed space, the architect also created secure little corners "that you can crawl into to read a good book." These same corners serve as storage space for everyday household items such as stereo equipment, which otherwise would create too much clutter in this house where the lines are the design.

The owners are clearly enchanted with the results. The wife says: "What I like most is the contrast with the old house. It's whimsical but it works, and it's functional. I must say the whimsy is mostly the architect's. We felt if we were going to spend the money, we wanted to live in something fun as well as interesting."

Right and Facing Page: A variety of shapes and angles in this attractive living room diffracts the light from large, uncovered windows.

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