

Will Bruder  
Bernard Tschumi  
Snow Kreilich

New Typologies  
Geoffrey von Oeyen  
Healthcare Products  
Eileen Gray's E-1027

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## Kennedy & Violich

Tozzer Anthropology Building  
Harvard University



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### Residential: Blackbird House Aspen, Colo. Will Bruder Architects

TEXT BY DAVID HILL  
PHOTOS BY BILL TIMMERMAN





Aspen has no shortage of spectacular single-family homes, many designed by some of the world's leading architects. If you know where to find them, you can spot houses by John Lautner, Robert A.M. Stern, FAIA, Antoine Predock, FAIA, Renzo Piano, HON. FAIA, and Bohlin Cywinski Jackson.

Time to add Will Bruder, FAIA, to that list. The Phoenix-based architect recently completed Blackbird House, a dramatic 5,829-square-foot structure clad in shou-sugi-ban cypress. Unlike many of the Aspen area's high-end houses, it's set right in town, on a quiet cul-de-sac just three blocks from the main ski lift. What's more, Bruder designed and built Blackbird as a multimillion-dollar spec house, complete with furniture, flatware, linens—even art on the walls. The house sold in just four days to a New York family looking for a second home.

Bruder conceived the house with friend and business partner Frederic Horne, who sensed that Aspen was ready for a modern "urban mountain retreat" in the town's urban core. They found a 0.21-acre property in a neighborhood of relatively modest single-family homes and apartments. Bruder then faced designing a house that would conform to Aspen's form-based zoning code, which includes design standards to preserve the town's established scale and character, and he was game for the challenge. "I'm a devout modernist," Bruder says, "but I thoroughly believe that cities are made better by form-based zoning."

Aspen's design standards do not prescribe any particular architectural style, but they are quite specific when it comes to elements such as building orientation, volume, fence height, and the like. Blackbird is a far cry from Aspen's historic cabins or ornate Victorians, but its size and scale fit the neighborhood. "It's very modest and quiet," Bruder says.

Indeed, the burnt-wood exterior allows the house to almost disappear when viewed from the street, particularly at dusk. "It's a dance between the positive and the void," Bruder says. A copper butterfly roof gives the house a birdlike quality (it's no wonder Bruder's wife came up with the "Blackbird" moniker).

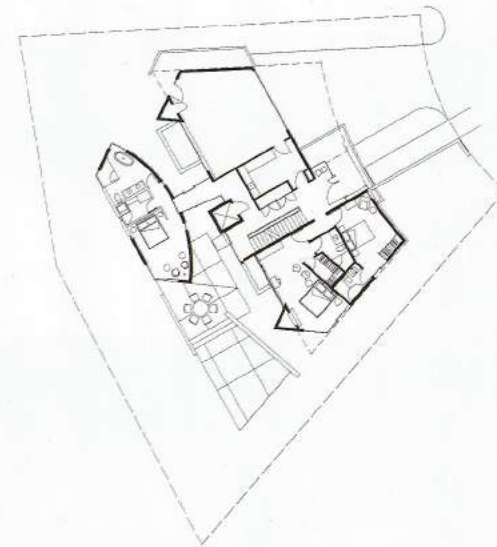
Inside, Bruder and his team used rustic yet luxurious materials, such as white rift-sawn oak for doors and cabinets, walnut planks for floors, and textured gray stone for the master-bedroom fireplace. There are five bedroom suites and three levels. Large windows take advantage of stunning mountain views.

Bruder calls Blackbird House "a place-appropriate, sophisticated, rustic, comfortable house," and he and Horne are already looking for another lot to build a second high-end spec house. "There's clearly a market in Aspen for this kind of venture," Bruder says.

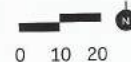
Second-Floor Plan



Ground-Floor Plan



Basement-Level Plan



*Previous Page:* A view from the west showing the ground-floor patio and lower-height guest wing (at left).



The house is clad in shou-sugi-ban, or burnt cedar boards. Natural cedar lines the deep soffits at the front of the house, which were designed to meet regulations dictated by Aspen's form-based codes.





Inside, plaster work on the stairwell wall catches and reflects light into the second-floor hallways. The art on the wall was selected by Bruder as part of a complete interior design for the spec project.



*Top:* The second-floor master suite features a sloping ceiling, which is the result of a butterfly roof, the "wings" of which give the house its name.  
*Bottom:* Much of the second floor is open-plan, featuring a living area, dining area (seen beyond), and kitchen.

#### Project Credits

*Project:* Blackbird House, Aspen, Colo.  
*Client:* Frederic Horne  
*Architect:* Will Bruder Architects, Phoenix - Will Bruder, FAIA (principal and design lead); Kent McClure, Jacqueline Twardowski, Craig Chapple, Marjorie Whitton (project team)  
*Structural Engineer:* Rudow + Berry  
*Mechanical Engineer:* Otterbein Engineering  
*Interior Designer:* Will Bruder Architects  
*Landscape Architect:* BlueGreen  
*General Contractor:* Koru  
*Size:* 5,829 square feet  
*Cost:* Withheld