



INTERIOR DESIGN BY KATHY BEST, SAN FRANCISCO
ARCHITECTURE BY JOHN MALICK & ASSOCIATES, EMERYVILLE • PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID DUNCAN LIVINGSTON



Tyrolean Perfection

San Francisco-based interior designer Kathy Best conjures an elegant Alpine-style escape in the High Sierra.

When Kathy Best's longtime clients called her to let her know that they were ready to build a ski house, she leapt at the opportunity. "They had just returned from a marvelous trip to Austria and knew that they wanted to create a home with a Tyrolean feel," recalls Best. She introduced her clients to the award-winning architects at John Malick & Associates and set to work on crafting the ultimate mountain house.

The three-story home's intricate exterior features traditional Tyrolean elements: the ground floor is clad in stone, the center floor is clad in stucco, and the top floor is embellished with marvelous shingles and exquisitely fasciated woodwork. The exterior windows are copper clad. A double-sloped roof is embellished with a curling soffit. The interiors are equally beautiful.

As soon as you enter through the front door (whether by foot, ski, or sled), you are astonished by the home's thoughtful details. Stone floors are kept toasty through radiant heat, two elegant

The living room features a dramatic two-story pine ceiling with trusses and spectacular windows overlooking the mountain. Interior designer Kathy Best selected a worsted wool twill by Holland & Sherry with an embroidered lead edge for the room's wonderful draperies. Best designed the *cinquefoil leimotif* herself and had Holland & Sherry embroider it in Germany. Susan Lind Chastain then fabricated the drapes in San Francisco.







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built-in armoires are set up to receive skis and poles, and special boot dryer compartments ensure that you’ll be ready to hit the slopes in comfort. Leaded glass windows lend the space an authentic European feel.

The grand living room boasts vast windows to capture the mountainscape beyond, and a fitted stone mantle supports a colored plaster chimney that climbs two stories and tapers toward the elaborate pine ceiling with massive trusses. “We covered the floors with antique Chinese elm reclaimed from ancient temples in random widths,” relates Best. “They have a rich Old-World patina

that truly suits the home.” To that end, Best ensured that the interiors mixed antique Tyrolean elements with sumptuous modern conveniences. Sofas and chairs are deep and welcoming, upholstered as they are in fine wools and velvets. “A mid-18th century Austrian “Rent table” that Best discovered at Foster Gwin Antiques is a favorite piece. “The family can gather around it in the living room and play games,” says Best. “Or, it can be used for entertaining. The family loves to throw parties and the house needed to accommodate up to 80 for a gathering, yet still remain intimate when just the family was using it.”



A wrought-iron pot rack with a vine motif by Naos Forge tops a large island with outstanding millwork in the kitchen. "The kitchen is very versatile," notes Best. "It works well for just the family or with a catering team in place cooking for dozens of guests."



The master bedroom suite (this page) is on a floor of its own and features some of the best views in the house. Elegant pale blue wools and silks lend a sumptuous and soothing feel to the space. The family room (opposite) features a custom pool table and seating area and has an adjoining home theater—perfect for relaxing after a day on the slopes.



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Classic Tyrolean homes often feature a family’s crest as leitmotif throughout the home. Since this modern family of five did not have a crest, Best was inspired to create a leitmotif. “We discovered a beautiful flower with five petals that grows on the Tahoe hillside, so we incorporated this cinquefoil in everything from cut-outs on the stair railings and living room rug to fabrics, wall hangings, decorative paintings, and window treatments. The family indicated an affinity for blue, so Best selected a color palette with neutral creams to enhance several shades from royal to navy.

The dining room features a spectacular barrel-vaulted pine ceiling from which Best hung a wrought-iron chandelier crafted by Naos Forge. “The chandelier features a horse and a stag,” points out Best. “I loved the idea of incorporating a deer motif without hanging lots of antlers.” A trestle table is surrounded by Por-

tuguese armchairs from Michael Taylor Designs and upholstered in a Bergamo fabric from Kneeder-Fauchere.

On the ground floor, the family room includes a pool table and a large seating area. A home theater comfortably seats 10. Multiple bedroom suites feature bunk beds so that the children can bring friends. “They are all different,” says Best. “It was so much fun to play with the Austrian theme in each.” The master suite features the Flandes bed by Ebanista—a gorgeous hand-painted piece in black and gold. Best topped it with a McRoskey mattress for extra comfort. For drama, Best added a classic baldacchino (canopy) to crown the bed, and draped it in cornflower blue silk from Old-World Weavers, and lined it with a butter yellow Jim Thompson silk. A curved wooden staircase reaches all three floors. “It’s simply sublime to run your hand along its buttery soft bannister,” notes Best. “The entire team on this project was outstanding.” It shows. ♦