

# A Serendipitous Discovery



*(left)* Liane Clasen and her husband make good use of the home's commodious outdoor space on sunny Denver days. "The front patio is almost like another room," Clasen says.

*(right)* With its sleek stucco-and-wood exterior and well-apportioned lot, this contemporary home in Denver's Cherry Creek North neighborhood won over the homeowners immediately. The home was designed by Brooks Bond & Associates and built by Paragon Homes, both based in Denver.

Recognizing that some things are meant to be, a Denver-based couple trades in their traditional style for a contemporary home they just couldn't resist.



TWO YEARS AGO, LIANE CLASEN AND HER HUSBAND ROBERT happened upon a house that had been built on spec but appeared tailor-made for them: a perfect kitchen, an open floor plan well-suited for entertaining, enough yard space for a rose garden, and amenities that felt completely and utterly theirs. It was kismet.

The Clasens, Southern Californians who once favored a more traditional aesthetic, moved into the contemporary four-bedroom house in Denver's Cherry Creek North neighborhood last summer. With interior design help from the West Coast, they've made this house a home with sleek furnishings, soft textures and a bit of sparkle.

BY ELISABETH SULLIVAN

PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY MINTON REDFIELD





**CH&L:** So this is your first contemporary home. What attracted you to it?

**Liane Clasen:** We fell in love with it at first sight. We were just out for a walk early one morning and we walked by this house and said, "That's it." And then when we saw the interiors, it was a double "that's it." We knew right away.

A major selling point for us was that my husband is CEO of an entertainment media company, and after we looked around the whole house, we went down in the basement and it had a home theater. We love to be able to invite people over to see the movies that his company is making and then follow that up with a dinner.

**It was meant to be.**

Absolutely. It was so meant to be that I asked for the closing date to be February 14th. We had the closing on Valentine's Day and had a big celebration here with red heart-shaped balloons, chocolates and a bottle of champagne, so it was perfect.

**Did you start from scratch with furnishings to match your newly contemporary tastes?**

We did. It was really part of the appeal because we'd worked with an interior designer in California, Jan Turner Hering, over the years, and it was an opportunity to do another project with



In the living and dining rooms, the open floor plan coupled with a muted color palette gives the home an airy, elegant feel. Soft upholstered seating and a weighty pedestal dining table encourage gathering—and lingering. "It's a great party house," Clasen says. The orchids on the piano and fresh gardenias throughout the house are from Twisted Tulip in Denver. (opposite) The living room, a study in softness and symmetry, is Clasen's favorite room in the home. "It has wonderful morning light and a great feel in the evening when you want to curl up in front of the fireplace," she says.





her. In terms of the style and scale of furnishings, what we had just wouldn't work. This is a very soft version of contemporary. There's a lot of texture, a lot of wood and almost, maybe to sound clichéd, a Zen-like feel to it.

You seem to have brought a bit of California with you, with the peaceful blue tones and serene sandy palette. Yes, it's like the ocean coming in or something. But we also get a lot of blue sky in Colorado, so it works!

Let's talk about the kitchen because I think I could live in it. It's just beautiful.

It's beautiful and it works. I don't know how else to say it. The layout is so well done. I love to cook and it's a great kitchen to cook in. The builder did all of the right appliances, the Sub-Zero fridge, a nice, big stainless-steel sink and the traditional windows over the sink so you can be working and hear the birds singing outside.

And it's got that huge center island. You can be there preparing something and still visit with friends and family. It's a good perching place. We eat most breakfasts and even a casual dinner there because it's just so easy.

#### Finding a Place for Everything

CONTEMPORARY KITCHENS are designed with style and function in mind. They're sleek, they're minimalist and they work. In other words, the traditional kitchen's "everything drawer" has evolved into separate, designated drawers that hold everything from spices to stock-pots. In place of lower-level cabinets—which inevitably force at-home chefs to get down on all fours and dig for the double boiler—many contemporary kitchens feature pull-out storage.

Denver-based homeowner Liane Clasen is a big fan of her drawer-heavy kitchen storage scheme. "Drawers are easy," she says. "In some ways, they're easier than cabinets because you just pull a drawer out and everything's there. Your pots and pans, your big serving pieces—they're easy to access and easy to see."



An avid cook, Clasen enjoys this well-appointed kitchen. Sleek cabinetry, modern hardware, stainless steel fixtures and polished concrete countertops come together for a stylish, urban feel. And a double wall-oven, deep under-mount sink, cavernous Sub-Zero refrigerator and expansive island make the room an efficient hub for entertaining. The breakfast nook's shiny, spherical chandelier is a kooky touch in the streamlined kitchen; it softens the room's right angles and adds a bit of sparkly glamour. Seemingly endless storage—much of it in drawer form—hides clutter and keeps the homeowners organized.





To echo wood accents elsewhere in the family room and adjoining kitchen, designer Jan Turner Hering installed a warm wooden wall of cabinetry and desk space. "Even though we have our own office upstairs, when our kids and grandkids come to visit, they can sit there and go online or I can look up recipes," Clasen says. "It's just very convenient."

Tell me about that chandelier in the breakfast nook.

When we first saw it, we couldn't decide if we loved it or not because it has almost a '60s disco ball feel to it and we wondered if it rotated. But very quickly we decided that we loved it. It brings that corner to life. It's on a rheostat so you can make it bright and sparkly or turn it way down so it becomes almost like candlelight.

From an enviably efficient and stylish kitchen to clean-lined, cozy furnishings, this house really came together.

Actually, we compare it to my husband's business, where you could have a great script, a great director and great actors, and the magic doesn't happen. You can have the same thing with a house—a great lot, a great architect and a great builder—but it doesn't always come together. In this case, it felt like it really did. Whatever that magic is—that sort of chemistry that makes a house really work—this one has it. □

#### DESIGN DETAILS

Architect

BROOKS BOND & ASSOCIATES

Denver, (303) 355-3429

Builder

PARAGON HOMES

Denver, (303) 629-9751

Interior Design

JAN TURNER HERING

Jan Turner Hering Interior Design,  
Corona Del Mar, CA, (949) 640-6512

For more information about the products in this home, visit [ColoradoHomesMag.com](http://ColoradoHomesMag.com)



(clockwise from top left)

When the party ends and the guests depart, Clasen and her husband can retire to this cozy refuge, where deep armchairs beckon the tired hosts to rest. "It's a nice, quiet, serene master bedroom," Clasen says.

The master bedroom uses the home's palette of beiges, creams and blues to great effect. Dreamy colors and soft textures ensure a peaceful night's sleep.

Lucky guests will find themselves ensconced in this guest room's luxurious fabrics and soothing symmetry.

With its sleek vanity, modern sconces and shiny vessel sink, the powder room is suggestive of a boutique hotel.





AT HOME WITH LOCAL CHEFS | STEMWARE TO MAKE YOUR TABLE SPARKLE

# COLORADO HOMES & LIFESTYLES™

**HOT  
KITCHENS**  
Where function  
meets fabulous

\$4.95US

10>



ColoradoHomesMag.com  
SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2009