

Living History: Architecture Tells the Story of Colorado's Settlers in New Book *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch*

*Creating a fictional story based on Colorado's Vail Valley pioneering settlement patterns gave Knapp Ranch's architects and builders a blueprint for creating a built environment based on history, craftsmanship and the natural setting. New book, *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch*, explores how architecture can bring history to life.*

Vail Valley, Colo. (August 1, 2018)—Building a dream home always takes great care and attention to detail, but Knapp Ranch owners Betsy and Bud Knapp, former publishers of *Architectural Digest* and *Bon Appetit* magazines, wanted more than a picture-perfect dwelling in the Colorado Rockies—their ideal was an environment that would enhance the valley in which they lived with structures based on handcrafted design and heritage. The soon-to-be-released book *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch*, through exquisite photography, renderings and words, showcases how they managed to create a place that lives and breathes history in the high country.

“The Knapps’ penchant for quality and their desire to protect a pristine watershed valley are apparent in everything they have achieved at Knapp Ranch. There’s a charming old-world style evident throughout the property that is so expressive of people who have devoted their lives to elevating craftsmanship and design,” Jeffery Gorsuch, President of Gorsuch Ltd. in Vail, said.

To execute their vision, the Knapps hired Gordon Pierce, the architect who helped design Vail Village and imbue the Colorado resort with its iconic European ski town aesthetic. Having spent the night camping on the Knapp property, Pierce came up with the idea of creating a fictional story about what it would have been like to homestead this land over a hundred years ago. The story of “Adam Fisher” and his extended family immigrating to the Vail Valley became the template that guided the design team in realizing the Knapps’ vision.

The five structures on Knapp Ranch, four cabins and the main lodge, reflect building traditions and construction techniques that mimic the real-life stories of Colorado’s earliest settlers.

- **Silver Sal** was the first to be built and is the smallest. It is an authentic reproduction of an original mining cabin.
- **Anglers** features piece-en-piece log construction. In the storyline, its two-room floorplan was designed to accommodate Adam Fisher’s growing family.
- **MacPherson** displays evidence of a lighter and more sophisticated hand, indicating that the fictional family’s fortunes are improving over time.
- **Marmot Guest Lodge** is the largest of the cabins; Marmot Guest Lodge merges rustic construction with sophisticated Swedish style.
- **Main Lodge** is designed to reflect the historic influences of the waves of Northern European settlers to the region. The Main Lodge is an aggregation of European and American log cabin architectural styles.

“Every visitor reacts differently to this place. Some prefer the Main Lodge because they love a big view of the Rocky Mountains. Others love Silver Sal because they want to feel ‘tucked in.’ What we created here is based in the learning and the process of creating environments that are true to the evolution of the original settlement pattern of this region. How people experience it is based on their interpretation of this concept,” Betsy and Bud Knapp said in *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch*.

The hand of the architect was never intended to be visible; rather, each building showcases superb craftsmanship creating a sense of timelessness. The structures were deeply influenced by “Parkitecture,” the architecture of the US National Parks in the early part of the 20th century. Visually appealing, Parkitecture-

style buildings appear to grow organically out of majestic American landscapes. Outdoors, landscape architects designed a system of naturalized trails complete with rustic bridges, fences and wayfinding that wind sinuously through the forest connecting the cabins, stream, lake and the main lodge. Interiors rely heavily on locally-sourced materials, with a focus on central gathering spaces for conversation and shared meals.

Author Sarah Chase Shaw is a landscape architect and an Aspen-based freelance writer whose expertise includes landscape architecture, land planning and design in the American West. She is the author of two previous books on those subjects. The Knapp Ranch book features the photography of Todd Winslow Pierce, a Vail-based award-winning landscape and fine art photographer whose images have appeared in national and regional publications, advertisements and fine art galleries.

Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch is an 11” x 13” hardcover book with 288 pages and over 200 photographs, drawings, maps, historical pictures and an index. Retail price, \$70. ISBN 978-1-4236-5096-6. It will be available for sale beginning Sept. 11, at [Gibbs Smith](#), www.KnappRanch.com and at online sellers, independent bookstores and other quality retail outlets.

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About Knapp Ranch

[Knapp Ranch](#) is situated in the Vail valley of Colorado. Its owners, Betsy and Bud Knapp fell in love with the property on first sight. As their knowledge of and affection for the land grew, the Knapps expanded their vision beyond building an informal country retreat for family and friends. Twenty-five years in the making, Knapp Ranch is now a thriving working farm using sustainable practices; it is an exemplar for land management and water conservation, an inspiration for architectural design and traditional craftsmanship, a contributor to climate science studies, a lab for horticultural experimentation, a US Forest Service partner, an educational center for environmental studies of all kinds and it continues to evolve. Encouraged by friends and professionals to document their journey and share their knowledge with others, the result is *Living Beneath the Colorado Peaks: The Story of Knapp Ranch*.

About Distributor Gibbs Smith, Publisher

[Gibbs Smith](#) is a Utah-based publisher, founded in 1969. Its trade and special interest division publishes high-end quality products on a variety of subjects including non-fiction, home and design, cooking, regional titles, as well as distribute for select publishers. Additional information about the book is available at www.GibbsSmith.com and www.KnappRanch.com.

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