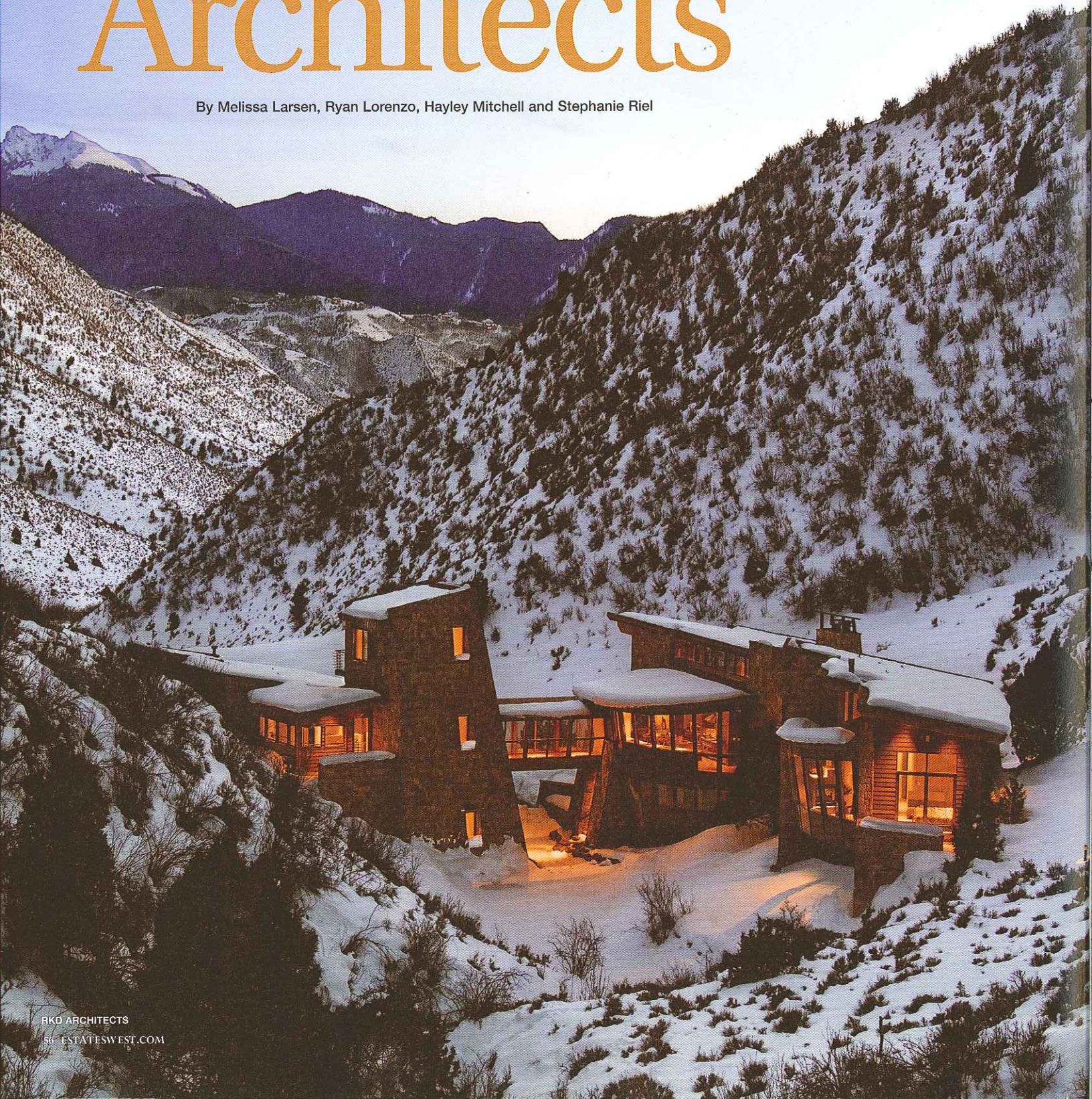


# THE WEST'S Best Architects

By Melissa Larsen, Ryan Lorenzo, Hayley Mitchell and Stephanie Riel



# From cutting-edge contemporary abodes to rugged-but-regal residences, the West is peppered with superior design—thanks in part to these 10 top architectural firms. Read on to learn about our favorite architects making their mark in their home states—and abroad.

## **RKD Architects**

Jack Snow, who founded Colorado's RKD Architects 19 years ago with his wife Sally Rich Brainerd, isn't one for labels when it comes to his jaw-dropping designs. "I keep trying not to call it a style," he says. "The [projects] we're most proud of are sculptural. It keeps falling into categories like 'contemporary Western mountain.' I hope we don't have [a style] because each project demands something different, a different response."

One thing is for certain, though, when it comes to RKD's varied projects that span from Minnesota to Montana: each residence or commercial building acts as an extension of the landscape. For example, the Waterstone residence, located in Snow's home state, is a stunning medley of natural-inspired materials like stone, wood, patinaed copper and weathered steel. "We have been pretty lucky that we have bounced around different resort areas that tend to have spectacular sights and environments," Snow says. 866.480.3071, [www.rkdarch.com](http://www.rkdarch.com). —M.L.

**HOME BASE:** Edwards, Colo.

**WHAT'S NEXT:** Hopefully designing museums and perhaps a project or two in the Grand Canyon state. "Arizona has such awesome landscapes," he says.

**BEST PART OF THE JOB:** "It is a creative process—a collaborative creative process, not just within the office but with the client. We often end up being really good friends with the client. And more and more people are coming to us for what we do. We aren't trying to sell our weird architecture to clients; they already know what we do and what we can do."

