

# BIG Renovations

Interior design for massive homes happens in an intimate way.

By Katie Shapiro

According to local real estate power couple Lori and William Small, mega-spec homes—large projects primarily built by developers for immediate resale—have everything... except buyers. While the Aspen Snowmass market outperformed 2018 in terms of sales volume by 5% so far this year, the supply for high-end luxury homes valued at over \$10 million has reached a six-year supply at the current absorption rate.

Instead, new buyers of homes falling into the 10,000-square-foot-plus range are tackling large-scale residential renovations as an often less expensive and more customizable workaround. Enter Pembroke & Ives ([pembrokeandives.com](http://pembrokeandives.com)), the Manhattan-based interior design firm that specializes in overhauling massive residences into bespoke multigenerational secondary homes.

We talked to Francis Nicdao, one of Pembroke & Ives' design directors, to see how the firm approaches such mammoth remakes, two of which were recently completed nearby.

## What is the typical timeline for projects of this scale?

Preconstruction is usually six months, with anywhere between 18 to 24 months of construction.

## Where do you begin with the renovation process?

Both of these homes were renovations for new buyers. In approaching the design process at this scale, it is really important to understand how the client wants to use the house, their lifestyle and [their] overall wish list. We also examine how they are currently living in their existing home(s) and start the personalization process from there.

## What interior strategy is essential when sourcing accessories and furniture?

Scale is critical. You need furniture CONTINUED...



From top: Outdoor sofas and dining table by David Sutherland, and chairs by Janus et Cie; in the living room, Ferrell Mittman sofa and lounge chairs, a custom coffee table by Pembroke & Ives, a Hudson Furniture nickel side table and a sculpture by Fernando Botero.





Kelly Wearstler custom chairs accent the dining room and surround the custom P&I table.

...CONTINUED that does not feel dwarfed by the architecture. Oftentimes, in these cases, bigger is better. Aspen lends itself to furniture that has texture and that is made from natural materials used in a modern application. Because there is such an indoor-outdoor connection in these homes, we also have to be sensitive to the fact that the home will feel different in the summer versus the winter, and that the furniture and finishes should feel relevant and appropriate in all seasons.

#### What do you love most about working on homes in Aspen?

It's such a special place, and the view of Aspen Mountain from both homes on Red Mountain is spectacular. Working in this setting is an exciting challenge for us; with a large focus of our business on urban residences and buildings, it is a great opportunity to be able to infuse our style and expertise into a mountain-specific home. We also always appreciate working alongside the local contractors and architects here who we have found to be incredibly professional and proficient.

#### What was the inspiration behind each project?

Willoughby Way (nine bedrooms,

20,000 square feet) was for a couple who live in a formal, more traditional way. They wanted a contemporary design that felt glamorous, and we wanted to pay respect to the architecture by using clean lines and very luxurious materials. We used a beautiful onyx stone throughout, alongside warmer tones of wood and metal, and soft lighting to create more intimate spaces. The home is both comfortable and elegant, with layers of materials and textures that give it a certain richness.

Aspen Modern (four levels, 14,000 square feet, sleeps 28) was for a young family that loves to entertain in a more casual way. They wanted every space to feel comfortable and easy to live in. We really stripped everything back and installed larger windows to take in the expansive views. We used what would traditionally be used in mountain homes, but in a more refined and tailored fashion. The thoughtful juxtaposition of materials was also crucial—using chiseled stone against polished marble. Natural materials like the stone and wood beams brings an element of the outdoors in, but the strong geometry and clean lines keeps it modern. ■

From top: Cobalt Mark Albrecht pendants accent a Kenya black stone bar and backsplash; the master bathroom tub in polished Taj Mahal stone; a custom bed by Pembroke & Ives in the guest master bedroom sits next to the existing fireplace.



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