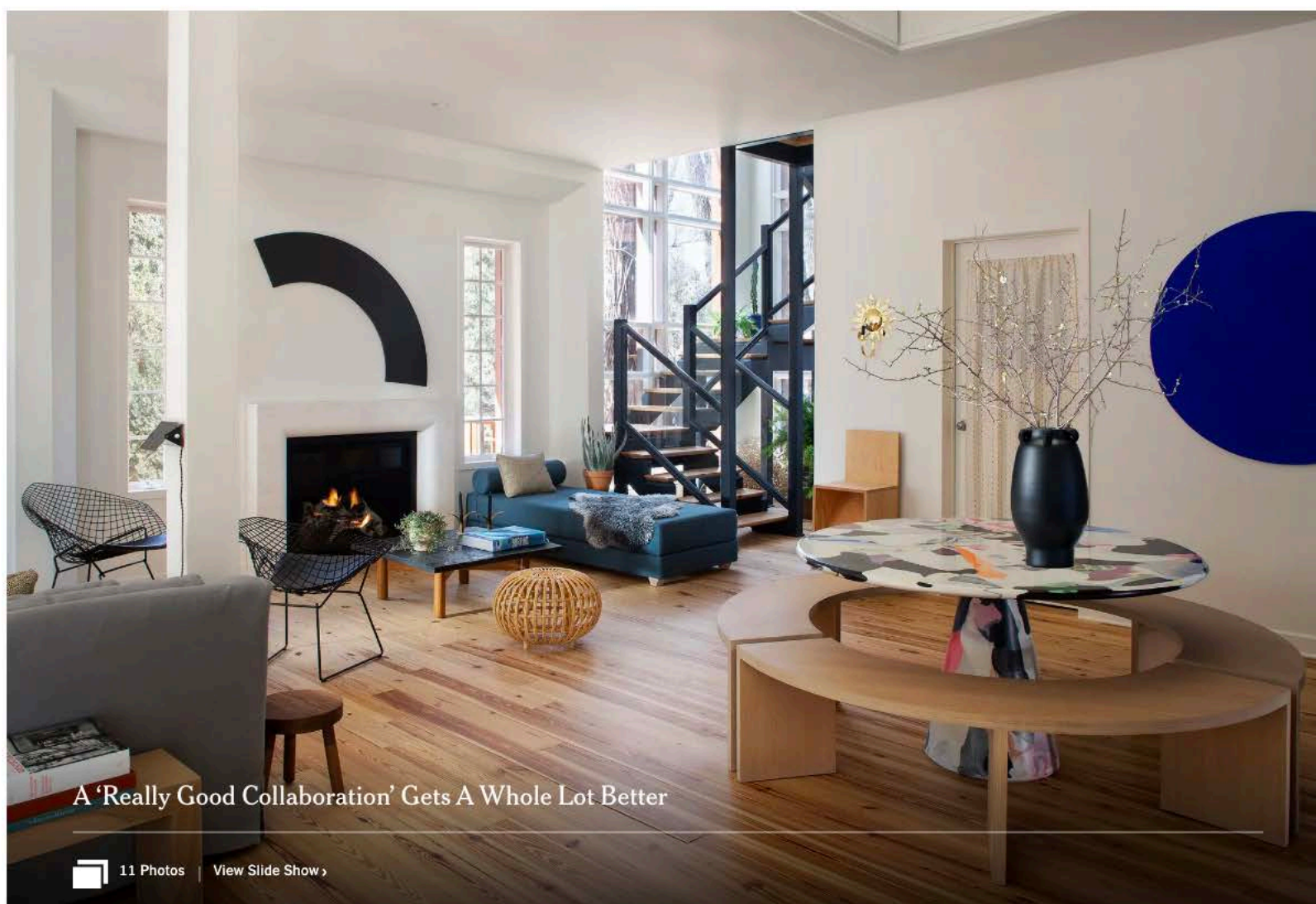


ON LOCATION

For Two Designers, a Onetime Collaboration Wasn't Enough

When they first worked together, renovating a home that had once been a church, they never imagined they'd eventually get married there.



A 'Really Good Collaboration' Gets A Whole Lot Better

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Emily Minton Redfield



By [Tim McKeough](#)

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When [Kimille Taylor](#) agreed to design the interior of a home in Telluride, Colo., in 2013, she expected the job to be business as usual. That was before Ms. Taylor, a New York-based designer, met [Steve Morton](#), the local architect working on the project.

“We got along right away,” Ms. Taylor, 50, said. “It was a really good collaboration, professionally.”

But as the project — the renovation of a church converted into a residence — neared completion in 2016, their conversations about space planning and millwork took a personal turn, and they discovered that they shared more than just a passion for design: They were also crazy about each other.



Kimille Taylor, an interior designer, and Steve Morton, an architect, met while collaborating on a job, fell in love and renovated a house for themselves in Placerville, Colo. Marsha Lebedev Bernstein

Over the next couple of years, they embarked on a long-distance relationship and, by 2018, decided it was time to get serious. “Our relationship was really strong by that point,” Mr. Morton, 57, said. “We started talking about a future together.”

For the couple, that meant marriage, and buying a house together in Telluride.

Both had children from previous relationships. Ms. Taylor’s daughter, Georgia, is now 11, but Mr. Morton’s sons — Mitch, 27, and Everett, 22 — had grown up and moved away. He was looking to downsize from his house in Telluride, but not that much.

“We wanted to make sure we had enough room for all the kids — my daughter and Steve’s boys — when we’re all there,” said Ms. Taylor, who planned to keep her Manhattan apartment, so they could split their time between New York and Colorado. “But we also didn’t want too much house.”



The walls in the entry vestibule are covered with an Overgrow wallpaper mural by Calico. The Malibu Woven bench is from Pottery Barn (\$899). Emily Minton Redfield

At first, they looked at condos, but felt uninspired. Then they noticed that a quirky little postmodern house they had admired for years in nearby Placerville, designed in 1992 by an architect named James Bowen, was on the market.

“It’s unlike anything else around,” Ms. Taylor said. “Every time I would drive by, I was like, ‘Oh, my God, I love that house.’ I have to say I freaked out when I saw it on the realtor’s website. I was so excited, and so was Steve.”

Mr. Morton, an avid fisherman, was especially pleased with the location, as the home backs directly onto the San Miguel River. “That’s what really sort of sunk the hook in me,” he said. “The walk down to the river, and ability to fish right out of our backyard, was super intriguing.”

The couple bought the 2,200-square-foot house that July, for \$737,000. They moved in immediately, but with minimal furniture, as they began planning a renovation. Although they were smitten with the exterior of the house, they found much about the interior problematic.



The couple stripped and waxed the original heart-pine floors and added a gas fireplace with a custom travertine mantel in the living room. Furnishings include a rattan Franco Albini ottoman (from \$636) and black Bertoia Diamond lounge chairs (from \$1,507). Emily Minton Redfield

“It was in good condition, certainly, but just not our taste, not our style,” Ms. Taylor said. “And there were some functional issues we had with it, too.”

To open up the ground floor and create a larger living-and-dining space, they moved the kitchen from the center of the home to a corner. They also opened up a sightline from the entry straight through the house to the new gas fireplace in the living room, which makes the compact structure feel more expansive.

Upstairs, they were surprised to find that the primary bedroom had only small windows facing the river, and that the closets were another level up, accessible by way of a spiral staircase. So they reconfigured the primary suite, enlarging the window at the foot of the bed for a better river view; adding a dressing area at one end of the bedroom; and moving the spiral staircase to Georgia's room, where it now climbs up to a play loft.



Upstairs, an Akari light sculpture by Isamu Noguchi (\$2,000) hangs in the atrium. The paintings are by Katie Heffelfinger. Emily Minton Redfield

The interior finishes were chosen to create a clean envelope of white paint and natural wood that would set off a few special features. “It was about minimizing the visual confusion of the house,” Ms. Taylor said, noting that the home previously had orangy heart-pine floors and dark wood trim that seemed to cut things up.

They sanded and waxed the floors for a natural look and painted out all the woodwork. Then they added touches like a leafy wallpaper mural from Calico in the vestibule; a table made from melted waste materials by Dirk van der Kooij, a Dutch designer, encircled by custom-made benches in the dining area; and an elongated Akari light sculpture by Isamu Noguchi that hangs in an atrium at the center of the home.



The house was originally designed by James Bowen in 1992. The 1975 Ford Bronco Sport “has been in the family for years,” Mr. Morton said. “I’m currently the caretaker, until I pass it down to my boys.” Emily Minton Redfield

Work on the big architectural changes began in March 2019 and was completed that June, at a cost of about \$250,000. But the couple took longer to finish the interior, and have spent an additional \$75,000 collecting furniture and accessories since then.

Although Mr. Morton and Ms. Taylor have now collaborated on numerous projects, they recently found themselves back at the converted church that started it all: They were married there on July 10.

“Our venue fell through, and this client stepped in and was like, ‘You know what would be great? Why don’t you guys get married here?’” Ms. Taylor said. “It was the fun, full-circle moment.”

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