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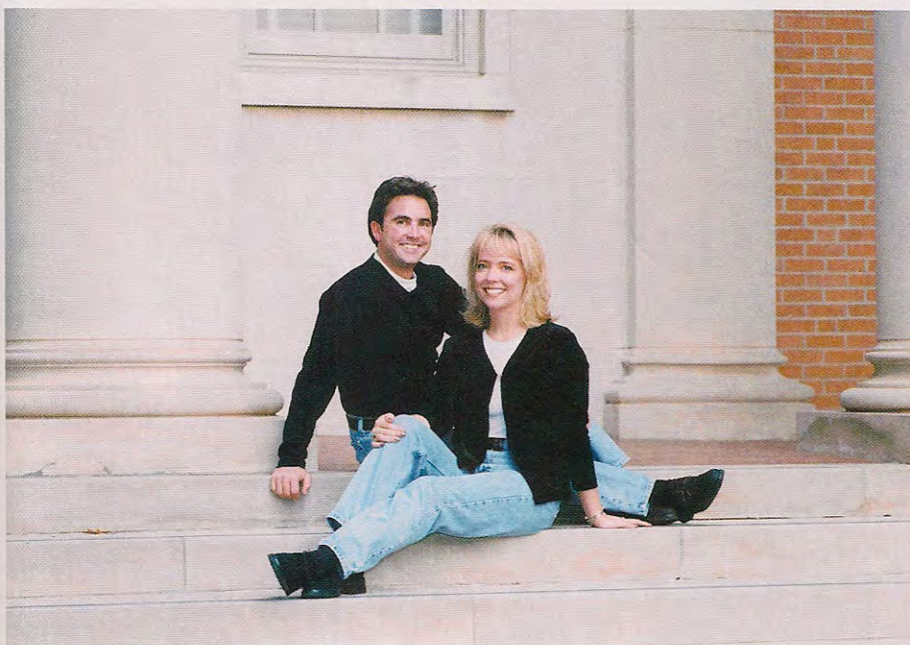
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This page: The fun-loving owners sacrificed a second bedroom to create this streamlined entertainment/casual dining area. The idea was to design a lively space in which they could entertain guests and mix their three loves: food, socializing, and music. *Opposite:* A portrait of the satisfied couple, John and Kelly. See *Resources*, p. 185.



By Elizabeth Train

Photography by Jason Jung

JOHN AND KELLY WYATT'S BOULDER LOFT WAS A TRUE LABOR OF LOVE. THE COUPLE BEGAN PLANNING THE SPACE TOGETHER WHEN Kelly was still living in Dallas and they were dating long distance. John, a contractor, had purchased the property from a developer long before he met Kelly (although she had always dreamed of living in a loft). He saw the loft, located on the top floor of one of the first multi-use buildings in Boulder, as a very modern space with hard lines and contemporary flavor. Three months into their relationship, John faxed the floor plan to Kelly for input.

"He needed my help," she recalls, and she immediately added two closets to the plan. As their relationship progressed, ideas, plans, and color swatches were e-mailed, faxed, and overnighted—and before they knew it, John and Kelly were engaged. The couple spent the following weekends in design studios and showrooms looking for colors, fixtures, and furniture to enrich, but not overwhelm, the unique, minimal space. "The Loft," as they came to call their 1,250-square-foot project at the end of the Pearl Street Mall, was shaping up to be quite different from what they had expected.

Because they were part of the space planning and construction from the start, John and Kelly were able to make choices that suited their own tastes and needs. Their primary goal was to keep the loft open and clean, as John had envisioned since he first saw the award-winning building. He and Kelly intentionally designed the interior walls so that they stood free of the ceiling, making the loft feel like one seamless space.

The walls also were built above the floor so that rooms could be added or altered with minimal cost and construction if tastes or family needs changed. John and Kelly had a wonderful group of craftsmen who worked with them. "Lots of the people who worked on the loft had done very traditional work in the past, so it was a fun challenge for them, too," Kelly says. They are both very grateful to everyone who devoted time and talent to the project.

The pair did about 90 percent of the finishing construction themselves on evenings and weekends, and, once Kelly moved to Boulder, she began spending all of her time on the loft. She trimmed the windows, painted the ceiling above the ducts, and did much of the staining. Having been a successful publisher in Dallas, she entered new territory on a daily basis, but thoroughly enjoyed the adventure. However, she and John both feel that the biggest challenge they faced was choosing the furniture to fill their carefully crafted spaces.

Living on Cloud Nine

A young Boulder
couple is
walking on air
after completing
a lofty project





Despite the openness of the loft, the rooms served specific purposes, and needed to be intimate yet functional. The furniture defines these spaces, and choosing just the right pieces was tricky, particularly because John and Kelly gravitate towards different styles of decor. John has quite a contemporary eye, while Kelly's taste "is more Martha Stewart," he says. They both wanted a juxtaposition of clean lines and a classic "cozy cabin" feel. The result is "more eclectic than we thought it would be and better than we ever imagined," John proudly admits. But it took a great deal of time and searching to reach this point.

John and Kelly chose most of the pieces in their home from local showrooms, including Timberline Studios, Trios Home Gallerie, and Mecca Modern Interior. What they couldn't find after weekends of searching, they simply created themselves. "When you build something from scratch, you can do whatever you want," Kelly says. "And she wouldn't take 'no' for an answer," adds John. He designed the cherry wood suspended shelves in the living room to keep the 15- by 15-foot area light and uncluttered and to give a sense of transparency to the functional storage space. The shelves handsomely display Kelly's prize Pez candy dispenser collection as well as treasured books and sculpture.

John also designed many other elements to suit the rooms and highlight the textures and colors he and Kelly enjoy. He drew over 20 patterns for the surface of the floor (they chose a burnished concrete with broad, wood detailing). John painted the artwork above the fireplace and in the dining area and Kelly designed and tiled the floral mosaic over the front door. "There is a surprise around every corner," she says proudly.

A curved wall of glass block allows light to pass through the loft's only bathroom while maintaining privacy. Minimal space gives the room a cozy feel without hindering its functionality. John

John designed the burnished concrete and broad wood floor himself, and also painted the art in the dining room. An exposed brick wall and concrete floor give an industrial feel to the space that is personalized by loving details such as brightly colored dining chairs and a wood and glass display case.



Opposite, top and bottom: Buttery yellow walls give the elegant master bedroom and bathroom a cozy ambience without disrupting the minimalist simplicity. Dark mahogany furniture in the bedroom and graceful plumbing fixtures in the bath are brilliant fine points, highlighting the owners' exquisite taste. *This page:* Metal, brick, and wood combine perfectly to create a kitchen that is as eye-pleasing as it is efficient.

and Kelly chose plumbing fixtures from Delta and Kohler, and designed the white cabinets and shelves themselves, blending classic style with contemporary sophistication.

The beauty of the master bedroom lies in its elegant and uncrowded simplicity. The mahogany furniture from Storehouse and a sisal rug complement the exposed brick and natural wood of the window frames and beams.

The Wyatts chose to sacrifice a second bedroom for a dining area, and haven't regretted their decision for a moment. They envisioned a social space with the comfort of their frequent dinner guests in mind and with room for John's grand piano. They both love to cook and entertain, and designed the kitchen to encourage the mingling of culinary arts with music and good conversation. Wide countertops, which John designed, and a nine-foot island, make the kitchen highly functional as well as elegant. "The kitchen is the focal point when you walk in the door—it has to present well," says John. "And we cook *a lot*," Kelly adds. They have entertained more than 40 people in one evening, hosted charity benefits, and invite friends to dinner regularly.

Metal wall sconces and Italian cable lighting in the kitchen/dining area lend a sparkly glow after dark and enhance the exposed brick and yellow walls. "I really wanted yellow," John remembers, and Kelly chose a hue that would warm the rooms without competing with the other elements of the space. However, "she had to trust me on the purple," he laughs, gesturing toward the trim around the windows and doors.



in the living room. Kelly nods approvingly. They agree that they “learned a lot about trust,” and about each other, during this project.

They also had to make a transition into a very minimalist lifestyle when they moved into the loft, consolidating two households into one limited space. “Simplify, simplify, simplify,” became their motto, and both admit that the change has been refreshing. “Less really *is* more,” Kelly notes.

The simplicity and efficiency of the decor reflect the couple’s lifestyle as well. “We walk everywhere,” Kelly says, and both she and John take frequent advantage of their close proximity to the art and culture of Boulder. They love to hike and bike, and enjoy spending lots of time on the patio, gazing at their beautiful view of the Flatirons. The loft also mirrors John and Kelly as individuals. John is an adventurer and a risk-taker, with the flair of an artist. His influence shines through the clean lines and daring mix of wood, concrete, granite, and metal.

Kelly describes herself as more “conservative and practical.” Her southern hospitality shows in the gracious furniture, the warmth and cheer of the place, and her attention to detail.

One of the elements the couple loves most about their loft is that they actually feel it is finished. “We got this done and we stopped,” says Kelly with satisfaction, “and people really love it and comment on it.” ■

