

FIVE UNDER 40

Now in its second year, our Five Under 40 Design Awards celebrates the finest, most innovative young designers in Colorado

BY NORMAN KOLPAS
PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY BY EMILY MINTON REDFIELD

The response last year to our first-ever Five Under 40 Design Awards was so overwhelmingly positive that we decided to do it again. This year the mass and magnitude of talent that arrived in *CH&L*'s inbox was both exciting and inspiring. We called on last year's winners (see p.113) to help us with the difficult task of selecting five of the finest (well, actually six, with one designing duo among the recipients) from a pack of worthy contenders.

And the winners are...



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Mary Knape & Kelly Zibell

Interior Designers
Knape & Zibell Interior Design, Littleton;
knapeandzibell.com

Why they were selected: In addition to their meticulous attention to detail and the seamless way their work interweaves traditional and contemporary styles, over their eight years in business together the duo has built a sterling reputation for the impeccable and highly ethical service they offer to their clients in Colorado and across the country.

Fun facts: New Jersey-born Zibell (left) grew up in Morrison, Colorado, from the age of two, while Knape (right) was born in Charleston, South Carolina, and grew up in Alabama and Arkansas, “but I came to Colorado for college in 1994 and fell in love with the state.” Both attended the University of Colorado at Boulder—Zibell studying finance, Knape pre-med—at the same time, but their paths never crossed. They finally became friends while both worked for respected designer Lynne Lyon.



What early signs pointed toward your becoming interior designers?

Knape: I remember wanting to redo my bedroom with complete control when I was 6 or 7. I had recurring nightmares that someone would come in and undecorate it.

Zibell: I was always very particular about what was going on design-wise in my bedroom. As a child, I loved touring models of million-dollar homes with my mother.

What have you considered your biggest design challenges?

Knape: It's not uncommon for a wife and husband to have different tastes. We feel it's our job to navigate that and make sure there's some compromise on each side and that everyone feels listened to, validated, and happy, and can love their home together and be comfortable. We want to be the peacemakers.

What's your favorite space or structure in the state?

Knape: The Broadmoor in Colorado Springs is mine. Both the grounds and the buildings are beautiful, and so many amazing people have spent time there. Just to know you're in a place where presidents, English royalty, and movie stars have all come to, you just feel honored.

Zibell: Mine would be Red Rocks Amphitheatre. I love that we get to have that place here in Colorado. In my mind, God was the original designer.

How does working in Colorado play a part in what you do?

Knape: We're often asked to help design the exterior living spaces of homes. People here in Colorado love being outdoors, and we love to help them capitalize on the beauty of the state.

Zibell: And we love to help them bring the outdoors in, from the beautiful blue of the skies to the greens and purples of the mountains to the textures of wood and stone.



PHOTOS BY KIMBERLY GAVIN