

EIGHT QUESTIONS WITH

Mountain Home's Alexa Cowley

compiled by KIMBERLY NICOLETTI

MOUNTAIN HOME'S historical, mid-1900s barn in Evergreen, Colorado has been a landmark for over a century. These days, it's home to a unique retail shopping experience. From furnishings and art to design services, it's a one-stop shop for mountain-inspired style.

VAIL VALLEY HOME: How can you help homeowners design a space, stage their space for resale or "pull a room together"?

ALEXA COWLEY: We love helping clients turn their houses into homes. The trick is to use a lot of texture and layer the rooms. For instance, when we design a space, whether it's for resale or just to pull an existing room together, we like to start with the pieces our client may want to keep and work from there. Say they have an existing comfy brown leather chair (we come across those a lot) that needs to stay in the room: We'll use a sofa with a soft neutral performance fabric (because a spill always happens) with a few toss pillows in a tonal pattern or pop of color. Then depending on the room size, we'll pull a fabric chair or two into the grouping that relate to the sofa fabric but have different texture or some movement, lay down a tribal rug with color, add some wood, metal or stone coffee/end tables (woods to relate to floor color), top with a few different interesting lamps, pull in some art (either existing or help to find new) and fun new accessories (sculptural pieces, books, greenery — nothing too contrived). And boom — your house now feels like a home.

VVH: How can texture and organic design elements add a timeless aesthetic to homes?

AC: The biggest rule in design these days is that there are no rules! Gone are the days of matchy-matchy. Using organic



Alexa Cowley

and textural elements like the ones listed above creates more of a global and timeless feel. It's one that doesn't date itself, one that feels like you want to sit and stay awhile — curl up on the sofa, have a glass of wine, visit with friends.

VVH: How would you summarize "design psychology" and how do you put that into practice?

AC: The psychology piece of interior design is all about relationships: The relationships with our spaces and the people in our spaces. Once we understand how you live in your home — do you have a big family, smaller family, are you single; do you use the space for relaxing, entertaining, working etc. — we then help design rooms around how you use them. Selecting aesthetically pleasing things is actually the easy part. Making the rooms functional, where everyone who uses them feels included, seen and heard, is the trickier part.

VVH: What are some of your favorite items currently in the store?

AC: Wow, that's a tough question. My store manager and I personally curate every single piece in the store. If we both don't love it, it doesn't hit the floor. We go to the big furniture market in High Point, NC every year to see what's new and build custom furniture for the store. We go to the big outdoor antique market in Round Top, Texas, too, to find fabulous old pieces that add extra texture to the store and ultimately find their way to their forever homes. We have several fabulous local artists that also show in Mountain Home, some pieces of which I personally own. So you can see why that's a tough question!

COURTESY MOUNTAIN HOME

VVH: Tell us about some of your favorite lifestyle components.

AC: We introduced our Lifestyle section to the store about two years ago. The idea was to carry a few key wardrobe pieces to enhance our clients' experience at Mountain Home. What started as carrying a few classic styles of Old Gringo boots, some cashmere wraps and a few suede and leather jackets has now expanded to BedStu sandals and boots (men's and women's), Pendleton shirts, sweaters and hats for men and women (think "Yellowstone"), as well as handmade jewelry from several Denver jewelry makers and silversmiths. My favorite thing in the world are my Old Gringo boots, but I might have a bit of a cowboy boot problem.

VVH: What is your customer service philosophy?

AC: I think our mission statement sums it up nicely: "The mission of Mountain Home is to help people maximize their furniture and accessory shopping and design experience in the most efficient, fun and professional manner possible. We do this by committing to building lasting relationships based on our reputation of integrity, product knowledge, customer communication."

VVH: You're more than just a "store." Many of the experts on your team have interior design degrees; how does that benefit your clients?

AC: You're right, Mountain Home is much more than just a store. First off, we're in a huge barn that's about a hundred years old. We have 6,000 square feet of space on three levels, and all the old original beams and woodwork are still intact throughout. The floors are original concrete and brick, from back when it was a working barn, and the thick old wood stairs have been softly worn down by years of use. However, our store designers are the piece that makes Mountain Home way more than just a store. They both hold design degrees and have solid backgrounds in the world of custom furniture. They offer in-home design consultations to site measure and help clients figure out what works best for

their spaces. Then they put a personalized design presentation together, showing clients multiple options of furnishings, rugs, décor etc. that will work. They use a drafting program for the room layouts called Chief Architect, which allows them to maximize the rooms and ensure everything fits. People often fall in love with a piece on the floor that isn't quite right, and instead of just selling it to them, our team works with the client to create the perfect, custom piece. Our goal is not to just sell someone a piece of furniture. Our goal is to help design timeless spaces that work perfectly and feel magical.

VVH: Last thoughts?

AC: The last thing I'd like to add is often the hardest to get across to new clients. Though our furniture is 100% available for purchase off the floor, what they see on the floor is just the tip of the iceberg. We carry over 100 furniture, accessory and lighting lines and have a large sample room in the back, full of fabrics, leathers, wood samples, catalogues, bedding samples etc., that we use to create a bespoke furniture experience that fits their space, vibe and budget. So, if clients don't see what they're looking for on the store floor, not to worry. We can design it with them. And for them. ☺



TRIUMPH
MOUNTAIN PROPERTIES

Your mountain property is a significant asset and should be professionally managed.

Triumph Mountain Properties provides services that preserve value through care and maintenance, as well as vacation rental services to generate revenue and defer the cost of ownership.

Vail's Most Trusted Property Managers

Exclusively Serving Residential Properties Since 1999

970.479.9990
TriumphMountainProperties.com/HOME
info@triumphmountainproperties.com

Stop by our office:
4184 US Hwy 6, Suite 195
Avon, CO 81620