

# MOUNTAIN LIVING<sup>®</sup>

A modern mountain cabin with large glass windows and a stone chimney, set in a snowy winter landscape with evergreen trees. The cabin is illuminated from within, showing a warm interior. The scene is captured in a cool, blue-toned winter light.

## WINTER WONDERLAND

BIG SKY, SNOWMASS, VAIL, SUN VALLEY

**ML LIST**

TOP MOUNTAIN ARCHITECTS AND INTERIOR DESIGNERS

WILDLY MODERN AND STUNNINGLY BEAUTIFUL, MIDCENTURY GLASS ATTRACTED COLLECTORS IN THE 1950S AND 60S—AND STILL DOES TODAY.

# BEAUTIFUL EYE CANDY

STORY **IRENE RAWLINGS** PHOTOGRAPHY **AUDREY HALL AND SAUL CREATIVE**

*Josh and Cherie Barr started collecting midcentury art glass in 2013 because of its futuristic shapes and brilliant colors. They grouped the collection by color for an eye-catching display. "Yellow ones are the most difficult to find," says Cherie.*

**On a road trip to Vancouver, Canada, six years ago, Josh and Cherie Barr saw a small display**

of midcentury art glass in a shop window. The light shone through the brilliantly colored vases and decanters, making them gleam like a Christmas kaleidoscope. The Barrs were charmed, intrigued—and hooked.

On the drive home, they stopped in Hayden, Idaho, where they bought their first piece. “We bought a beautiful blue piece before we even made it home,” recalls Cherie Barr with a smile.

Their collection, most of it from the 1950s and 60s, now numbers about 200 pieces, and each one has a story. A label on the bottom of each records the purchase price and location, allowing the Barrs to reminisce. Picking up a graceful candy dish, Cherie says: “We were driving along a road near Seeley Lake (near Missoula), and I saw

a stunning Viking swan vase in a shop window. Of course, I yelled ‘stop.’”

The couple finds pieces in antique and junk shops along the back roads of Montana, Idaho and even into Saskatchewan. Bargains can be found on Craigslist, eBay and in thrift shops, where midcentury glass can sometimes be purchased for as little as \$1.

“When we first started collecting, some of our vases were as tall as our kids,” says Cherie. Eventually the children joined in the thrill of the chase. “On our way to Glacier Park last summer, the kids discovered a two-foot-tall >>

*“Many of our pieces still have the original stickers,” says Cherie. “This identifies the maker... but we buy what we love rather than hunting for a particular style or manufacturer.”*





decanter... sitting in a corner and covered with dust," she says. It turned out to be an impressive piece by Empoli, an important Italian glass manufacturer.

Sometimes they'll buy an Italian or Scandinavian piece, but the Barrs mainly collect American art glass. Viking, Fenton, Blenko and LE Smith were just four of the many glass companies located within a few hours of each other in West Virginia and southern Pennsylvania along the Ohio River—which, at the time, provided easy access to shipping and to coal. "Because it burns at a constant high temperature, coal is the ideal heat source for working with glass," says Josh.

The Barrs' home, a mid-1960s ranch extensively remodeled by Josh—a partner and principal architect at Bozeman-based Pearson Design Group—is the perfect place to display their growing glass collection. There are smaller vignettes of glass throughout the home, but the largest display is in the den/office, where they are spectacularly grouped by color. "I call it our eye candy," says Josh. >>

*ABOVE, LEFT: The Barrs sometimes buy an Italian or Scandinavian piece, but they mainly collect American art glass. ABOVE, RIGHT: Josh Barr is an architect. Cherie Barr teaches second grade. "The glass collection and the home remodel came together as one," says Josh, who built shelves in the office/den space especially to showcase the glass.*

The Barrs' retro-chic home, with white walls and concrete floors, is the perfect place to display their growing collection. The glass adds a pop of color against the home's white walls. ◦

