

Western Interiors

AND DESIGN

JULY/AUGUST 2003

special art issue

AGNES MARTIN in Taos
Montana ART WALK
DEBORAH BUTTERFIELD
art school in **ASPEN**
SANTA FE Indian Market
summer **ART GUIDE**

and...
CALIFORNIA cubism
modernism in **SEATTLE**
WYOMING cabin style
fresh for **COLORADO**



\$5.95US \$7.95CAN 08>



contents

July/August 2003

Special Art Issue



features

64 **Deborah Butterfield and John Buck**

photography by Audrey Hall
text by Todd Wilkinson

72 **California Cubism**

architecture by Steven Ehrlich
photography by Benny Chan
text by Christopher Finch



82 **Agnes Martin**

text by Robert Goff
photography by Alexander Vertikoff

88 **Far East in Colorado**

architecture by Michael Fuller
interior design by Andrea Jovine
photography by David O. Marlow
text by Mindy Pantiel

96 **Darren Waterston**

photography by Richard Barnes
text by Glen Helfand

100 **Hollywood Confidential**

interior design by Jenny Armit
photography by Tim Street-Porter
text by Hunter Drohojowska-Philp

for subscriptions call:
1.800.477.5988

visit our web site:
www.westernid.com

letters to the editor:
5410 Wilshire Blvd.,
Suite 200 West
Los Angeles, CA 90036
editorial@westernid.com

108 **Clyde Aspevig**

photography by Audrey Hall
text by Todd Wilkinson

114 **Northwest Exposure**

architecture by Miller/Hull Partnership
photography by James F. Housel
and Art Grice
text by Sheri Olson

122 **Santa Fe Indian Market**

photography by Dominique Vorillon
text by Joshua Brockman

128 **Wyoming Memory Cabin**

architecture by Ward + Blake Architects
photography by Mark Darley
text by Elizabeth Clair Flood

cover: The dining area of a Bellevue, Washington, house by Miller/Hull Partnership. Photography by Art Grice. See page 114.
above: The property of artists Clyde Aspevig and Carol Guzman in Montana. Architecture by Larry Pearson. Photography by Audrey Hall. See page 108. **left:** Artist Deborah Butterfield. Photography by Audrey Hall. See page 64.

photography by Audrey Hall / text by Todd Wilkinson



above: Juniper Ridge, Clyde Aspevig and Carol Guzman's property, sits along the Shields River north of Livingston, Montana. The main residence (center) and the couple's studio (right) were designed by Montana architect Larry Pearson. **opposite:** Aspevig's *Thunderhead*, 2000, is of a view behind his house.

Clyde Aspevig



Courtesy of Juniper Ridge Studios

The West's premier landscape painter at home near the Crazy Mountains of Montana

The tiny speck on the map known as Clyde Park, Montana, wasn't named after Clyde Aspevig. But considering Aspevig's chronicling of the rural West and his love of the lonely swath of geography stretching east of Clyde Park into the Big Open, it might as well have been. In the same way that Wallace Stegner shaped appreciation for twentieth-century western literature, Aspevig's landscapes have spawned a new breed of plein-air painters in the Rockies.

"Without question, Clyde Aspevig is the single most collected landscape painter in the country," says Bozeman art dealer Thomas Nygard, who has had a professional association with Aspevig for a quarter century. "Despite the fact that he's prolific, every new piece he does is hotly anticipated by a wealth of collectors. In my humble opinion, there's nobody better."

Aspevig and his wife, Carol Guzman, who is known for her still lifes and portraits, reside on the outskirts of Clyde Park. Like Stegner, Aspevig champions a sense of place—quite often the overlooked vistas that do not find their way onto picture postcards. As he does every morning when he's not somewhere else painting on location, Aspevig rises to watch the reddish gold touch of alpenglow raking the Absaroka summits to the south. "When I see the light on those mountains, it speaks of the eternal," he says. He gazes at the Bridger peaks toward the western horizon, then east to the towering ridgeline of the Crazy Mountains and northward to the Big Belts. His



view takes in the topographic buttress of Juniper Ridge, where a herd of mule deer spends the winter, and the whirling trout waters of the Shields River. In Aspevig's mind, there are symphony notes playing, perhaps a melody from Rachmaninoff or Mozart, and he's applying the sonorous structure of one medium to another. By the time he lifts the first brush to paint, he's merely channeling a vision he can no longer hold in.

Aspevig grew up on a farm near the Canadian border, and his work is synonymous with his native Montana. And though he continually ventures into the Rockies to sketch, it's the depopulating prairie that keeps tugging at his poetic impulses.

Today, there are parallel movements of plein-air painting in the East and West, notes Tim Lawson, a native of Sheridan, Wyoming. Lawson resettled in Maine after being part of a distinguished group of western landscape painters who identify Aspevig as their artistic leader. "The difference between the movements is that out west the social atmosphere is fraternal and much more sharing," Lawson says. "People like to get outside and paint together. Clyde himself learned from older painters, and he now commands

his own sphere of influence. He's at the top and has been for quite some time."

"The historical allegations about landscape painters in the West have a certain validity," Aspevig says. "The artists who evolved in the West got a bad rap because of their inability to infuse good training into their work. I relate to the Russian artists who were told they had to draw for five years before they touched color. I'm from the school of hard knocks and have a trail of bad painting that I don't even want to think about. But we all have the ability to learn from our mistakes."

Aspevig has a high standard for the works that leave his studio. He completes hundreds of dazzling field studies every year as reference material for large easel paintings, though they will never be seen by collectors. "Galleries and collectors don't understand how an artist would give up an opportunity to make a sale," Lawson says. "They think that everything you do must have a commercial motivation, but for us, making studies is part of a bigger process of experimenting, of painting for reasons that have little to do with money." Aspevig, he notes, uses a different standard to measure a rich life. "Clyde is interested in the complete aesthetic, and because of that, you'll never find a contradiction in his work or in the way he lives."

Aspevig refers to a new "lifestyle vernacular" emerging in Montana that is based on the idea of living within the limits of the land and trying not to subordinate a setting by asserting a massive presence over it. When he and Guzman decided to create their own house and studio, they enlisted Bozeman architect Larry Pearson. "The philosophy at our firm revolves around a commitment to an environmentally integrated style of architecture," Pearson says. "What that means is selecting materials and designs that are not only of the landscape but an extension of the landscape. If we use rock, then it's regional rock. Timber, the same thing. And if we use older wood, so much the better. It's a very regional style I work with."

From the moment they first discussed the project, Aspevig, Guzman and Pearson felt a kinship. "Clyde and Carol are both exceptional people with a great sense of material, texture, scale and color," Pearson says. "It was an honor to be able to work alongside such gifted artists."

Once the schematic design was finished, they tapped Yellowstone Traditions to carry out the construction. The final product is a home modeled after the tasteful simplicity of country cottages in Norway—a tip of the hat to Aspevig's ancestors—with a heavy emphasis on recycled materials. The roof is made of rusted tin, which blends in with the willow bottomland; the exterior uses barn siding, and the interior features old timbers dating back to 1872. Not including the adjacent studio space, also designed by Pearson, the home encompasses just fifteen-hundred square feet.



The house sits on two-hundred-fifty acres in what was once a residential subdivision for twenty-five-acre “ranchettes.” Aspevig and Guzman have steadily purchased adjacent lots one at a time, and not only did they prevent another fifteen homes from dotting the uplands along the Shields River, but they were able to place a conservation easement on their property through the Montana Land Reliance, ensuring that the development footprint will never grow.

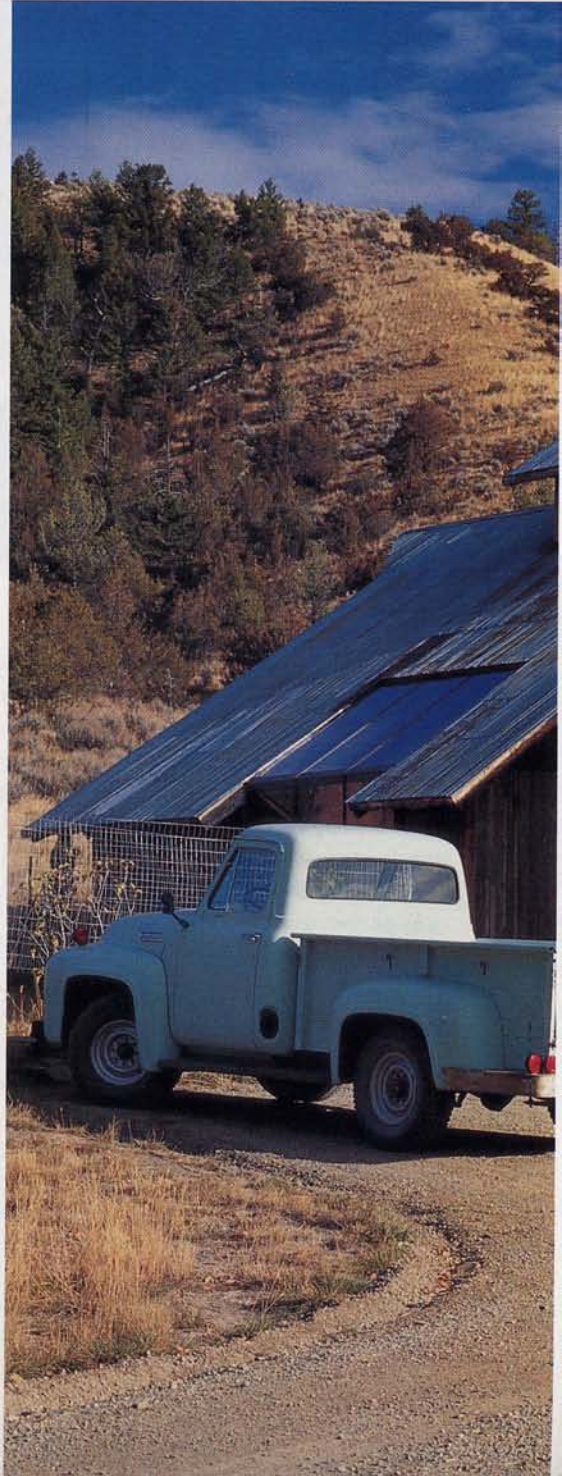
Aspevig has received his share of formal honors, among them the Prix de West Award and the Robert Loughheed Memorial Award from the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum, formerly known as the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center; the Red Smith Award at the National Museum of Wildlife Art’s annual miniature show; and the Frederic Remington Award at the National Academy of Western Art, now the art show and sale known as Prix de West. But for Aspevig the real rewards of his work lie elsewhere. “There’s a poetry that originates within our natural surroundings. That’s the absolute beauty of representational landscape painting, because when you do it right, the power is so strong that people can take it to the next level and relive a personal experience over and over again—the most pleasant and powerful sensations as well as the ones that mark the profound changes in our lives. As Joseph Campbell said, living is the joyful participation in the sorrow of life.”

Aspevig doesn’t presuppose any importance in his work, though he does feel he is in a race to bear witness to aspects of nature that are threatened by sprawl, neglect or global warming. He makes no apologies for attempting to preserve the rural aesthetic of the West.

“Great art always manifests itself in the artist’s conviction,” Aspevig says. “In my travels I’ve stumbled upon some things that need a closer examination. A century from now, people will go through our work and hopefully have a better understanding of the events and chronology that led up to their own time. That’s when the true meaning of the present will be revealed.” ←

above: *Missouri River Cliffs*, 2000, was done on “the wild and scenic white cliffs of central Montana while I floated the river,” says Aspevig. **opposite:** Clyde Aspevig and his wife, Carol Guzman, outside Juniper Ridge Studios.

JUNIPER RIDGE STUDIOS
 1250 15th Street West,
 Suite 204
 Billings, MT 59102
 406.294.5677
www.clydeaspevig.com



opposite, top: The art studio where Aspevig paints. The floor is made of etched and stained concrete. **opposite, bottom:** A sampling of Aspevig's works, from sketches to complete paintings. **below:** The art studio doubles as a guesthouse. All the wood and the tin corrugated roof are reclaimed materials from local nineteenth- and twentieth-century buildings.

