

*‘Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out going to the mountains is going home...’*  
—John Muir

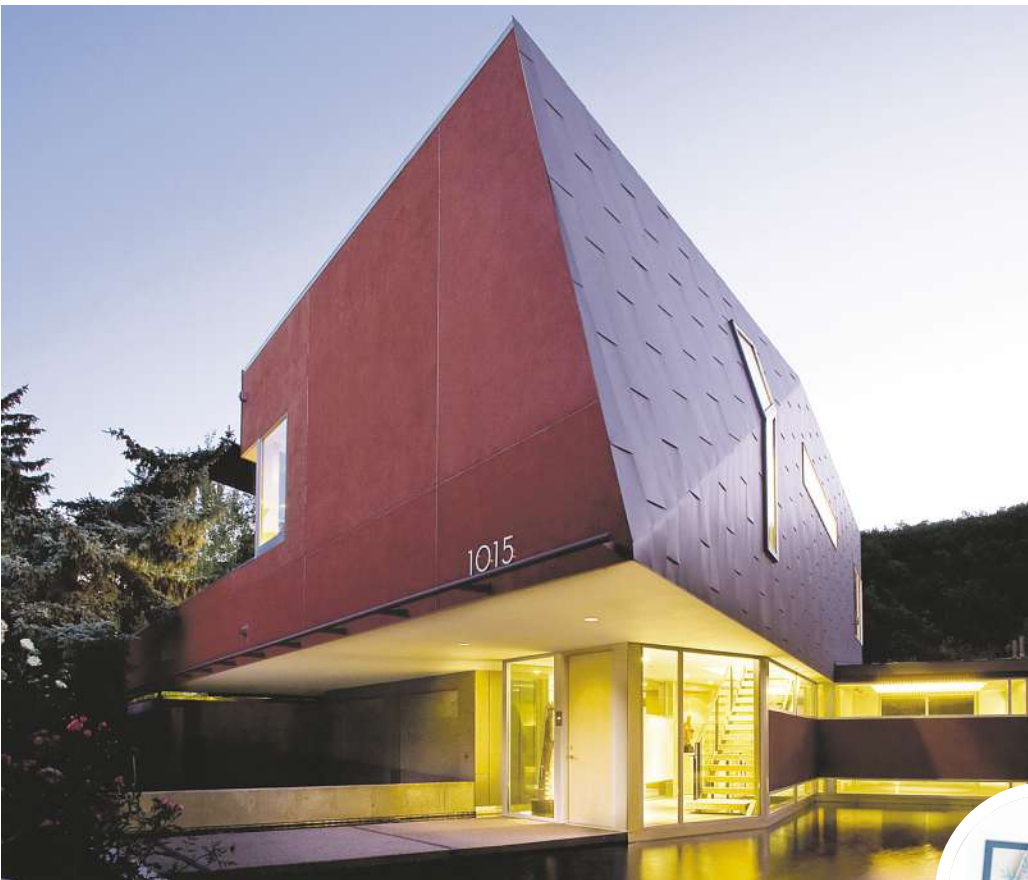
MANSION

*‘And down we went. In the mountains, there you feel free.’*  
—T.S. Eliot

HOMES | MARKETS | PEOPLE | UPKEEP | VALUES | NEIGHBORHOODS | REDOS | SALES | FIXTURES | BROKERS

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**ASPEN, COLO.** This 7,500-square-foot duplex cost about \$3.8 million to build.



**PARK CITY, UTAH** Newly constructed, this home is on the market for \$3.6 million.



**WHISTLER, B.C.** With views of the Olympic rings, this home is listed at \$11.5 million.



**TELLURIDE, COLO.** The 10,000-square-foot home was auctioned in July for \$13.2 million.

# The New Anti-Ski House

In ski-resort areas around the world, growing numbers of homeowners are shunning traditional chalet designs and erecting more modern, high-tech alternatives; banning logs and the antler chandelier

BY ALYSSA ABKOWITZ

**WHEN KAREN SIMON**, a banking executive in Houston, decided to build a custom vacation home in Snowmass Village, Colo., the last thing she wanted was a replica of a Swiss chalet. “I didn’t want one gable in the entire house,” says the contemporary-design enthusiast.

Armed with pictures of modern homes, Ms. Simon asked for curves, open space and the maximum amount of glass allowed within the town’s building codes. Her architects, David Johnston and John Hufker in Aspen, Colo., designed a 4,950-square-foot home with barrel-vaulted

roofs, stone exteriors and clear cedar siding more akin to a California contemporary than a Rocky Mountain retreat.

To combat the stark look that’s often associated with modern architecture—85 beams of steel support the home’s unconventional style—Ms. Simon chose soft creams and warm browns for the interiors. “There’s a lot of stone inside, but the feeling is soft and user-friendly,” she says.

After decades of traditional mountain design—heavy overhangs, a plethora of pine wood, a deer’s head hung in the entryway—ski homes across the globe are shedding the antlers. Homeowners once



enamored with dark and cozy rustic retreats that shielded them from cold winter nights are now opting for sleek architecture that lets in lots of light, a look that has gained momentum in the past five years.

Modern designs have dominated recent big-ticket mountain-home sales. Last month, Fred Smith, the CEO of FedEx, bought a contemporary chalet in Utah’s Deer Valley for \$11.2 million. This past spring, a modern, 6,372-square-foot ski-in, ski-out chalet with five bedrooms, a Turkish bath and massage room in Courchevel, a town in the

Please turn to page M8

## DO YOU FEEL LUCKY?

In Vegas, home sellers love listings with 7’s, but in Asian neighborhoods, beware of 4’s. When pricing in residential real estate is purely a numbers game

BY SANETTE TANAKA

**JOE DEVITO**, a real-estate broker in Brooklyn, N.Y., has 18 active listings in ZIP Code 11219. Half of them have an eight in the asking price. Only one has a four.

“They are priced for the luck and sold for the luck,” Mr. DeVito says of homes in the Sunset Park neighborhood, where many of the residents are Asian. In Chinese culture, eight is considered to be a lucky number while four is believed to bring bad luck.

Just like the lottery, real estate can be a numbers game in which superstition plays a role. According to research by real-estate website Trulia, “luck” is frequently linked to the last nonzero digit of homes for sale (the eight in \$528,000, for example). In Asian-majority neighborhoods, 20% of listings end with a lucky eight, compared with 4% of listings in areas



**PLAYING FAVORITES**  
In Las Vegas, 4% of listings have “7” as the last nonzero number, compared with 2.8% in the rest of the U.S.

where Asians are a minority.

It’s not just Asians who rely on luck. Home-sellers in Nevada—especially Las Vegas—look to lucky seven to unload their homes. Listings with a seven before the zeros are 37% more common in Nevada than in the rest of the U.S.

In the Bible Belt, defined as the Southeast and south-central U.S., homes are 27% more likely to include 316 in the listing price, a nod to John 3:16, a touchstone New Testament verse. Surprisingly, the numbers 666—considered to represent evil—are 39% more common in the Bible Belt than elsewhere in the U.S. And throughout the country, the number 13 is about 15% less likely to appear than either 12 or 14.

But the listings superstition appears to be strongest in neighborhoods where Asians make up more than 50% of the population, according to Trulia

Please turn to page M10

**INSIDE**

**PRIVATE PROPERTIES**

The Versace mansion in Miami Beach gets a 20% price cut, to \$100 million **M2**

**A DOG’S LIFE**

New designs for four-legged family members, from a walk-in bath to a pet-friendly kitchen renovation **M12**

**PLUS: MORE SLIPPERY SLOPES**

**Ski Report**  
Market (and snow) conditions in eight global ski cities **M3**

**The Global Buyer**  
Why Vail brokers are advertising in Spanish **M6**

**What’s In, What’s Out**  
Changing trends in ski-home décor **M8**