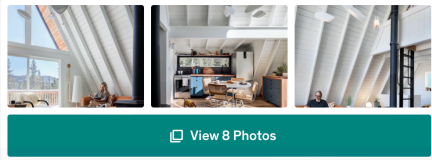


Dwell+ Exclusive

Budget Breakdown: A Couple Roll Up Their Sleeves to Revamp a Colorado A-Frame for \$164K

Amy Pigliacampo and Corey Szopinski brave snow, fire, and falling trees as they transform a '70s cabin into a Scandinavian-style retreat.

Text by
Kelly Dawson



When interior designer Amy Pigliacampo first picked up the keys to this cabin in a remote enclave of Alma, Colorado, she knew that referring to its neck of the woods as a "neighborhood" would be a stretch. "To be honest, we saw more moose than humans," she jokes.



"One visit over the winter, and we drove up to find four feet of snow covering the driveway and stairs down to the cabin," interior designer Amy Pigliacampo says. "There was no way to even park the truck!" The most expensive part of the renovation was updating the roof and siding, at a total cost of \$56,953.

Photo by David Lauer

Photo Categories: exterior, metal roof material, a-frame roofline, metal siding material, house building type

But Amy was still intrigued by the property, particularly because she and her husband, Corey Szopinski—who also works as her namesake firm's general contractor—were looking for a place where their two young kids could roam.

"The house is located at 11,000 feet on Mount Bross," she says. "The area around it is known as South Park, which is where the show *South Park* is set. It's charming and remote, and it requires a 4x4 to access it in the winter."



The living room sofa is from Article, and the coffee table is from Burke Decor. The rug is vintage, and the couple found the fur chair at Urban Outfitters. It cost \$10,228 to fully furnish the cabin.

Photo by David Lauer

Photo Categories: living room, end tables, light hardwood floors, chair, coffee tables, sofa, wood burning fireplace

The cabin itself had potential, too, given that its sharp A-frame had been mostly preserved since it was first built in 1976—although the interior had a rickety wood spiral staircase, a dark kitchen, and classic builder-grade finishes Amy describes as "shabby." The couple dreamed of updating the space with a clean, Scandinavian palette and contemporary touches. They knew that it would take a lot of work, but they were also sure that their determination would be worth it in the end.

\$1,709 HVAC System	\$8,529 Electrical	\$51,266 Labor
\$56,953 Roof & Siding	\$10,533 Windows	\$1,327 Doors
\$10,228 Furnishings	\$3,247 Appliances	\$8,111 Cabinetry
\$8,189 Tile	\$2,396 Spiral Stairs	\$1,568 Lighting
Grand Total: \$164,056		



The family dog, Bruno, "loves to nap by the fireplace," Amy says. The Reform kitchen cabinets are painted a custom blue by Sherwin Williams.

Photo by David Lauer

Photo Categories: kitchen, wood counters, pendant lighting, wood cabinets, range, subway tile backsplashes, refrigerator, light hardwood floors, drop in sinks

"The classic A-Frame shape had to stay," Amy says. "It has a cozy, nostalgic vibe—but we knew it needed a refresh to make it ours. We wanted to find a way to create a beautiful space that was warm and stylish, with nothing that is expected in a cabin—on a very tight budget."

The couple quickly discovered that updating an old cabin in a remote area would be challenging, simply because they had to coordinate how to get there regularly themselves—and find seamless ways for supplies and workers to arrive, too.



Amy decided to paint the interiors white—the most cost-effective detail of the renovation—and add a ladder to the second level.

Photo by David Lauer

Photo Categories: living room, sofa, light hardwood floors, ceiling lighting, end tables, coffee tables, wood burning fireplace

"The cabin was not safe for our kids during the renovation, so we had to adopt a divide-and-conquer mentality," she says. "Furthermore, it's almost impossible to get quality trades to do work in remote spots on small projects. Luckily, we found a few."

They kicked off many weekends with ambitious plans, which were quickly derailed when they realized that they didn't have the necessary tools and needed to drive 45 minutes to the nearest hardware store. They also had to contend with snow—which sometimes grew to be so high that there was nowhere to park. And then there was the time a tree fell on their power line, which halted work entirely.



"The concrete Clé tiles have light- and dark-blue colors to match the kitchen, with white triangles that match the slope of the roof and the color of the sky," Amy says of the powder room.

Photo by David Lauer

Photo Categories: [bath room](#), [ceramic tile walls](#), [wall mount sinks](#)

"That was pretty scary," Amy remembers. "Imagine a 100-foot-tall pine being held up by an electrical wire—the force of it nearly pulled the mast and service panel off the house. In the end it worked out well, though, because we got an electrician to drive up from Denver to help us. Now, the house's electricity is safe and up to code."

As work progressed, the team installed a seam roof and siding, a new spiral staircase, and a window in the kitchen, which they painted a custom Sherwin Williams shade of blue that's echoed in the geometric powder room. Amy also made the tough decision to paint the interior wood planks white, given that they were so beat up from neglect, and then leaned on a navy-and-black palette to provide a fun yet moody contrast.



A bedroom is tucked into the tip of the A-frame.

Photo by David Lauer

Photo Categories: [bedroom](#), [pendant lighting](#), [night stands](#), [bed](#)

"We also had wildfire threats in the area during construction—nothing super close yet, but there were enough warnings that we knew we needed to take action," she says. "We spent a small fortune clearing away all trees within 30 feet of the house. Now, we have a ton of firewood—and our views have improved!"

The project started in January 2021 and finished in March 2022, just in time for the family to enjoy the last of the season's snow before spring. Looking back, Amy is happy to have come across this cabin's listing, even though she also jokes about how hard the project was.



The primary bathroom's terrazzo finish is from Daltile. Amy and Corey replaced the original rickety wood spiral staircase with a metal one, for a sleeker (and safer) finish.

Photo by David Lauer

Photo Categories: bath room, light hardwood floors, stone tile walls, pendant lighting, wall mount sinks

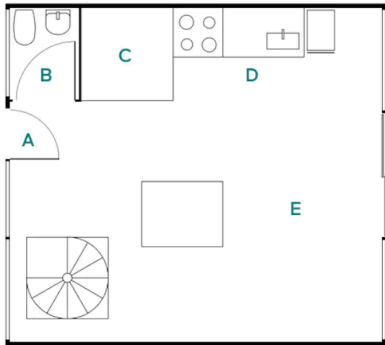
"My advice would be to start marriage counseling the day you sign the deed," she says, laughing. "Kidding aside, we're proud of what we accomplished and it feels like we gave this cabin a new life."



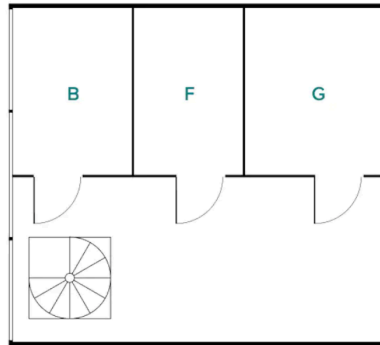
Camp Altezza

DESIGNER Amy Pigliacampo

LOCATION Alma, Colorado



Upper Level



Lower Level

- A Entry
- B Bathroom
- C Pantry
- D Kitchen
- E Living Area
- F Mechanical Room
- G Bedroom

