

INTERIORS COLORADO

profile

DESIGNING WOMEN

These three principals of local architectural firms—all who happen to be women—mean serious business.

*By Sarah Chase Shaw
Photography by Chris Cottrill and Emily Chaplin
Shot on location at Nello Alpine*



GREAT MINDS Jamie Brewster McLeod, Andrea Korber and Sarah Broughton represent a rare breed of women architects.

They are creative problem-solvers, hand-holders and visionaries. They are captains, coaches and cheerleaders. Most importantly, they are entrepreneurial visionaries who have distinguished themselves in Aspen's highly selective and innovative design microcosm. Three architects. Three women. Three success stories.

Jamie Brewster McLeod
Brewster McLeod Architects,
Aspen and Telluride, brewstermcleod.com

At the impressionable age of 11, a visit to Frank Lloyd Wright's Taliesin West forever changed Jamie Brewster McLeod's life. "I realized right then and there that architecture isn't just about building," she says. "It's about personal expression. It's about creating something that affects people spiritually, emotionally and physically." Given this epiphany, it's not surprising that McLeod, whose firm celebrates its 10-year anniversary this year, specializes in luxury residential architecture.

"Our design hinges on comfort," McLeod says. "How can we create a house that feels like a home, regardless if there are 20 people living in it for two weeks, or two people living in it for 20 years? Everyone inhabits their space a bit differently and understanding how a house works is one of our specialties."

Brewster McLeod Architects was founded by McLeod in 2006 at the age of 31 and has since expanded to include a tight-knit staff of architects and project coordinators. Even so, she says, she is committed to keeping her business intimate and client-focused. "I am involved in every aspect of a project," she explains. "And, because most of our homes take between three and four years to complete, I develop a fairly close relationship with my clients. When my clients call the office, they get me. And, if they have a question, I know the answer. I'm 100 percent invested in their project."

On the Boards A 20,000-square-foot mountain contemporary home on a legacy family property in Telluride; a Georgian-style residence in Old Snowmass; and a modern design in Aspen's West End

On Being a Woman in Architecture "In the world of architecture, gender is unimportant. What matters more is a designer's ability to be a citizen of the world and incorporate personal experiences in creative, innovative and sensitive design solutions that capture their client's desires and dreams."

Andrea Korber
Land+Shelter, Aspen and Carbondale,
landandshelter.com

Together with business partner Gavin Brooke, Andrea Korber, 39, has developed an impressive list of built projects in the eight years she has been with Land+Shelter. "No concept is worth its salt unless the client loves it too," Korber says. "It's our job as architects to communicate the big ideas before we broach the little ones. If the client doesn't buy the big idea, I am not doing my job."

Much of her work, she says, is focused on the science of architecture and the long-term performance of a building. One of her current projects is a

multigenerational compound for a family who is committed to resiliency (off-the-grid capabilities) and zero-toxicity. "They know that the availability of resources is not guaranteed forever, and they are thinking about this as a forever home."

Korber credits her architectural peers with spurring her professional growth. "There's a huge freedom of expression that appears when you're with a group of peers, in that we continually raise the bar for one another," she says.

On the Boards Korber recently completed several equestrian facilities, which, she says, are a building science unto themselves. "We don't often consider humidity to be an issue in Colorado; however, equestrian buildings are different. Horses create a lot of moisture; it's very similar to designing an indoor swimming pool." She is currently working on some commercial remodels.

On Being a Woman in Architecture "I hear that my style of communication is more typically male: I look for a direct path, and I'm analytical. Luckily, my partner's communication style is different from mine. We make a good team. In order to be a good communicator, you have to listen to and respond to the person you're working with, man or woman."

Sarah Broughton
Rowland+Broughton, Aspen and Denver,
rowlandbroughton.com

For Sarah Broughton, architecture is about team work. In partnership with her husband, John Rowland, since 2003, Broughton, 41, is quick to credit her almost 40-person team with their incredible success and growth. The couple is already developing a succession plan for their firm, which, she says, is actually quite early considering that they're only in their 13th year. "We're dedicated to the long-term success of this firm," Broughton says.

Being an architect is also about being an expert at many things. "It takes years to hone the craft, and you have to keep cultivating it," Broughton explains. "Just like any other professional—a lawyer, an athlete, a chef, a musician—it's about working really hard and practicing." Known for its award-winning residential and commercial projects, R+B has an impressive résumé of work. In 2015, Broughton and a team of experts successfully guided the redevelopment of the Sky Hotel through the City of Aspen's challenging approvals process. Her favorite recent project, however, was the remodel of Aspen Highland's Cloud 9 restaurant. "This beloved on-mountain dining spot has so much character and legacy for people, and it was important that we maintain that while considering how it can function better moving forward."

On the Boards A Matsuhisa restaurant in Denver's Cherry Creek neighborhood (in collaboration with acclaimed chef Nobu); a handful of historic residential remodels; and an interior design package for Aspen Skiing Company's Limelight Hotel in Sun Valley, Idaho

On Being a Woman in Architecture "I am an architect, regardless of gender. I take that very seriously. We cultivate our professionalism, and it's something I work hard at to keep improving and excelling." ■