

MANSION

BY NANCY KEATES

BEFORE WORK EVEN STARTED on the blueprints of her Park City, Utah, home, Julie Chahine called a meeting with an architect, a contractor and an energy engineer. She wanted a home with a modern design, which meant lots of glass. But she wanted the house to be energy efficient at the same time.

Architects John Sparano and Anne Mooney hiked around the 3½-acre lot for days and created a computer model of the site to ensure the house was “lined up with solar orientation,” Ms. Mooney said. That means that in December, when the sun is lower at midday, the house is positioned to capture maximum light and warmth. But by summer, when the midday sun is higher, the rays are blocked by the 6-foot-wide roof overhang.

What survived this solar scrutiny is the view: The salient feature of Ken and Julie Chahine’s home is the enormous, 14-foot-high, 40-foot-long glass wall in the living room that faces the Wasatch mountain range.

The couple paid about \$1 million in 2012 for the 3½-acre lot, perched on the side of a mountain that overlooks the mountains and valley below. They then spent about \$2 million to build the 5,500-square-foot, four-bedroom house, finishing in 2014.

Flat-roofed, with concrete and glass, it is the kind of contemporary home more typical of hip neighborhoods in Los Angeles. This unorthodox house belongs to mavericks in their own fields: Mr. Chahine, 51, has a doctorate in biochemistry and a law degree; he now runs the DNA-testing service of Ancestry.com, a genealogy website. Ms. Chahine, 52, was a speech therapist before opening an interior-design business in Park City.

“We wanted something with clean, simple lines that was not like an Apple Store,” says Ms. Chahine.

The home strives for energy efficiency—with a geothermal system, radiant floor heating and cooling, and a vegetated rooftop to keep the house cooler in the summer.

Space efficiency was another priority. The bedrooms are relatively small but have big closets. There

INSIDE STORY

A Home With a Sunny Outlook

A modern Utah home features a 40-foot-long glass wall facing the mountains



SCOT ZIMMERMAN (7)

POINT OF VIEW Ken and Julie Chahine’s home has a long window facing the mountains, below and below right. Bottom left to right, the Chahines with daughter Julia and dog Bart; a bathroom; dining area and bedroom.



are lots of hidden storage areas, like a bar in the living room behind a sliding door and a pantry in back of the kitchen that holds all the appliances. When not in use, the large, flat-screen TV is concealed in a compartment in the ceiling. There are two laundry rooms, one upstairs and one downstairs.

The couple moved from the San Francisco Bay Area to Park City in 2004 because of their love for skiing and biking, and to put their daughter, who is now 17, into a high-quality public school. They built a traditional home near town. It wasn’t energy efficient, they say, and they had to keep turning up the heat in the wintertime.

Mr. Chahine credits his background in science as driving their quest for energy efficiency.

Architect Anne Mooney says the project couldn’t have been done without Ms. Chahine’s design sense and Mr. Chahine’s openness to new ideas. “Ken solves problems,” she says.