

The Swartzes' unique C-shaped home. The focal point of the structure is an aspen tree, which is visible from every room in the house. Shown at left is the living room; the painting of aspens is one of Susan's pieces.

Susan Swartz

## Good Natured

After spending many vacations with their family in Park City, Susan and Jim Swartz collaborated with Salt Lake City architect Von White to transform their vision of a contemporary house atop Bald Eagle in Deer Valley into an architectural marvel. The C-shaped house was built around a tree that inspired the unique form and layout. The Swartzes' artistic perspective contributed to a harmonious blend of what could have been disparate elements of architecture and furnishings.

"Because the house is modern and the architectural lines are so strong," Susan muses, "I concentrated on softening the sharp lines of the house." She also did not want the house to compete with the magnificent vistas outside. "I wanted to create a feeling of serenity," she explains, "so I chose limestone for the floors, and pickled the woods. For colors, I knew that I didn't want the greens to be stronger than the leaves of the aspen trees outside our windows." The beiges that predominate in the living room provide a backdrop for one of her most beautiful paintings, a large acrylic study of aspen trees, completed after the house was finished.

Susan regards her work as part of the impressionist-realist school of painting, and delights in capturing scenes from nature on canvas and paper. The mountains of Utah and the

gardens of San Francisco and Princeton, where the Swartzes maintain residences, have been instrumental in giving life to her works of art. They reflect the ambiance of the scene from a local's eye and are imbued with a freshness of color, light, style, and composition. Her paintings have received critical acclaim and are represented in corporate and private collections throughout the United States, France, Germany, and Japan. Wishing to share her work with a larger audience, she has produced a number of limited edition prints, available locally at the Kimball Art Center, where she recently had a one-woman exhibit.

In Utah, Susan has been inspired by native fauna and flora—a daisy before it reaches full flower, a rabbit pausing on a winter morning, a bald eagle sailing over snowy mountain tops. "I like to paint what God created," she says. "I can go out every day, and the sky is different, the flowers are different. There are birds in flight, the first snowfall. With a heavy snow there is such stillness." Swartz paints in her studio overlooking the tree that the house was designed around; the spot captures the best light of the day.

In planning the decor, Susan approached each room as a painting, seeing its elements as part of a composition with the walls as a canvas.