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### Big Sky's increasingly competitive housing market

#### BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

The topic rears its head at every gathering in Big Sky: the community is growing—quickly.

The draw for visitors, new second homeowners and fulltime residents is multifaceted. Untapped growth and economic potential, epic skiing just minutes away—sans the epic lines and crowds seen at other large resorts—and a population bent on building up a community and its values from scratch have magnetized increasing numbers of visitors with an eye for property ownership in Big Sky.

However, prospective homeowners find themselves facing an increasingly competitive buyer's market, with the median sales price for residences jumping more than 46 percent from February 2016 to February 2019, from \$477,000 to \$697,000. Meanwhile, properties are snapped up with escalating fervor, with median days for a listing to remain on the market dropping nearly 45 percent from 117 days to 65 days over the same period.

Inventory in the community continues to shrink. From 257 homes on the market three years ago, 142 occupied the market last month, almost a 45 percent decrease. With commodities like concrete at near-record high price points (according the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics), lumber prices more than double those of 10 years ago (according to NASDAQ commodities market reports), and several ongoing, largescale projects such as the Montage Big Sky shrinking the available labor pool, current building costs are becoming prohibitive for new projects.

Big Sky's housing market, while unique in many instances, still abides by the simple principles of supply and demand, so it comes as no surprise that decreased inventory has ramped pricing, rendering the point of market entry increasingly selective.

Still, strong local interest is encouraging for future community development, and several years of steady sales is undoubtedly favorable for Big Sky.

"We have seen some good traction over the last six years, especially over the last three," The Big Sky Real Estate Company Vice President of Sales and Founding Broker Ania Bulis said. "It's no secret we have more tourism, more mentions in the national press, exciting new resort installations like the 8-person lift, and projects like the Montage coming out of the ground. People want a piece of that."

Bulis notes a relatively unique phenomenon in the Big Sky market, where buyers see real estate purchases less as an investment and more as a seedling for long-standing roots in the area.

"Investment is not the driving purchasing factor here," Bulis said. "A percentage of every real estate purchase decision is investment, but it's really marginal in Big Sky in comparison with other communities around the nation, and even in comparison with other resort communities."

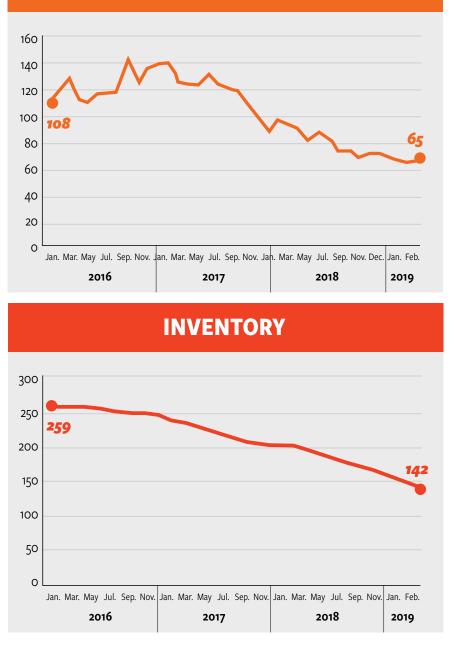
#### **MEDIAN SALE PRICE**





#### **MEDIAN PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT**

#### **MEDIAN DAYS ON MARKET**



While fully developed ski towns such as Jackson, Wyoming, and Vail, Colorado, are in stages of rehabilitating existing constructions, in Big Sky, the sky's the limit—for the foreseeable future. Bulis said incoming residents and potential buyers find the opportunity to participate in the formation of the community enticing, a major selling point.

Interest in locales around Big Sky remains varied, with relatively equal numbers seeking property in many of the area's offerings.

"There are 79 pending sales in Big Sky (excluding the Yellowstone Club) which represents \$113 million in volume," said Tallie Lancey, a broker at Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty. "In terms of units, a third of today's buyers will purchase property on the mountain, another third at Moonlight Basin, 11 percent at Spanish Peaks, and about 25 percent in the meadow."

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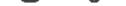






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### Hardwood floor maintenance: a feat for the sake of feet

#### BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

Metaphorically speaking, to "walk all over" something suggests a lack of importance, relegating said object to the ranks of afterthought. But as human society splintered and spilled into every corner of the globe, evolving in alien ecosystems that fostered unique histories and cultures, the floors beneath our feet began to warrant a special interest.

Early human dwellings sported dirt, cow dung, straw and hay bases, among others, packed hard by the movements of inhabitants and the oils of bare feet, which is still seen today in many homes around the world. Yet, the foundations of modern flooring practices began to materialize around 7,000 years ago, with stone and brick floorings popularized in Ancient Egypt, and hand-woven rugs carpeting Asia, the Middle East, and Asia Minor.

Wood floors didn't enter the scene in force until the Middle Ages, which saw roughly cut planks of local woods laid for rudimentary finishing practices, scraping away imperfections with crude hand tools followed by rubbing down the timber with handfuls of sand. This arduous and timeconsuming practice was reserved only for the ultrawealthy.

In the United States, even since the earliest colonial times, hardwood flooring has been commonplace, a luxury taken for granted somewhere along the march of technological progress. But make no mistake, they are a luxury, and as with most luxury products, require attention and maintenance.

Given their underfoot positioning and role in literally supporting our domestic lives, hardwood floors eventually lose their luster and succumb to the effects of time. Have no fear: according to Jarren Golay, general manager and product specialist at Four Corners-based Harbour Hardwood Floors, there are several measures to preserve the quality of this chic instillation, extending the lifespan of the wood for generations. "The most important thing for all hardwood floor owners to understand is that they require maintenance to support longevity," Golay said. "They need to be aware of the type of finish and make informed cleaning decisions."

Harbour-recommended cleaning products include Basic Coatings' "Squeaky" wood floor cleaner and Bona Hardwood Floor Cleaner when persistent messes call for detergent based products. For everyday cleaning needs and the do-it-yourself crowd, use a solution of distilled white vinegar and water, an ounce of vinegar for every gallon of water. Never use abrasive materials when cleaning, and bear in mind that the frequency of cleanings accelerates the breakdown of finishes.

Golay reminds hardwood floor owners that measures such as taking off shoes can reduce the number of scuffs and scratches—which can accumulate into larger damage. He added that keeping socks on is paramount as the oils our feet produce can wear down finishes.

"Oils from the feet and cooking oils break down finishes very quickly," Golay said. "That's why you see kitchen areas, particularly those in front of a sink or stove, with more wear than any other place in the house."

According to Golay, maintenance should take place every 5-10 years in most homes, particularly those supporting larger families that include parents, kids and pets. However, with proper care and attention, a single maintenance event can last up to 20 years before another is needed.

Golay admits hardwood floor care isn't glamorous, but emphasizes its essential nature: "I hope people take a serious interest in this as it will be one of the most beneficial and informative bits of advice for keeping their wood floors looking good longer, which will help them avoid costly repairs and added maintenance expenses in the long term."

#### **HARDWOOD FLOOR CARE & MAINTENANCE**



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DAILY CLEANING TIPS



**DEEP CLEANING TIPS** 

Remove shoes whenever possible and wear socks or non-abrasive house slippers when walking on the floor. If shoes are worn then remove all debris from the soles such as wood and gravel. High heels and boots may dent the wood. Bare feet can leave oil residues from your skin causing dull smudges and footprints on the finish. For daily or frequent clean up of the floor you should mostly just vacuum with a non-abrasive hardwood flooring attachment (no beater brush) and/or dry dust mop when needed. \*Clean up all spills and liquids immediately to avoid damage.\* When deeper cleaning is needed to remove dirt, we recommend that you use a solution of Distilled White Vinegar & Water in a ratio of approximately 1 ounce to 1 gallon water or 1 cap to 1 quart water: When using a 1 quart spray bottle just apply a fine mist of vinegar and water solution to a 5' x 5' area, or so, then buff dry with the direction of the grain using a microfiber mop.

#### BY MICHAEL SOMERBY

As German bombers strafed Churchill's London, Lucy—a child refugee evacuated to the English countryside to live under the care of Professor Digory Kirke with her siblings—happened upon a grand, wooden wardrobe. Curiosity compelled her through the furs and coats behind its ornate doors until she spilled into a hidden world: the land of Narnia.

As we age, we shed much of the imaginative richness of childhood, traded in for more pragmatic approaches to life. Imaginary friends, tea parties with anthropomorphized stuffed animals, full-scale battles fought by plastic figurines and secret worlds under a bed become crowded out by interpersonal relationships and societal duty. Eventually, most forget they ever had such capacity for illusory invention.

Despite this shift, certain themes persist even into our twilight years, never failing to pique interest and wonder as they are promoted by works of literary fiction such as C. S. Lewis'"The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe," by lore shared next to cackling fires, and by film.



In keeping with the mineshaft décor at 228 Altman Lane, a simple wooden trap door leads thirsty patrons into the depths of an earthy, cool wine cellar. PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT ALTMAN

Trap doors, hidden worlds and secret passageways stand as example of the fantastic and mystic that weave throughout our various story mediums.

When an adult moviegoer winds down the veiled stone labyrinths of The Temple of Doom with Indiana Jones, or when a reader steps through unassuming doors and into raucous prohibition drinking scenes with Jay Gatsby, they can't help but relish in the magic of it all. Though these ensconced passages often seem left in faraway lands, sometimes they're right under your nose, as is the case in Big Sky.

Many homebuilders in the community have elected to integrate these wonder-inspiring designs right into their homes. The homes located at 128 Moosewood Road and 228 Altman Lane in Big Sky boast such sly additions. One look at the blonde-stained, flush-with-the-wall bookshelf at the Moosewood Road location raises no eyebrows, but a little forward pressure placed on the unit exposes true colors, sliding it along a greased track. Behind the door: a 4-bed bunkroom clad in multicolored linens, carpets, and wall paints.

Listing broker Tallie Lancey of Big Sky Sotheby's International Realty notes the awe the feature inspires in prospective buyers.

"You really just see them light up, it's pretty incredible," Lancey said. "It's one of those unique things you don't expect."

The 228 Altman Lane house is built with reclaimed materials of an Anaconda, Montana gold mine and a Big Sky crystal mine. The final product is an industrial-chic living space, replete with steel chains, fist-sized bolts, massive timber beams, and corrugated metal ceilings.



Tucked behind an old-school wooden corner bar, adjacent to a tin washtub and wooden crates, lies a thick, hoopshaped metal handle surrounded by

An unassuming bookshelf glides open, effortlessly, on a set of greased metal tracks, revealing hidden wonders. PHOTO COURTESY OF BIG SKY SOTHEBY'S INTERNATIONAL REALTY the faint outlines of an entryway.

A tug uncovers a subterranean wine cellar.

"When I set out to have this built, I thought having a trapdoor leading to a cellar would work well with the mine décor," said owner Scot Altman. "It makes getting each bottle a part of the experience."

Countless other trap doors, sliding walls, and clandestine passes populate the homes of Big Sky, but you'd be hard-pressed to find them. The owners seek to keep them as they were intended to be: secret.



## Big Sky | Sotheby's

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#### 47 properties sold since January 1, 2019. CONTACT JEFF HELMS, 406.539.0121 OR JEFF@BIGSKY.COM, FOR MORE INFORMATION.

Address	Price	Close Date	Address	Price	Close Date
21 SITTING BULL ROAD, #1290	\$159,000.00	1/4/19	TBD BIG PINE DRIVE	\$165,800.00	2/6/19
1 BARRAMUNDI LOOP , #1455	\$799,000.00	1/4/19	13 RED CLOUD, , 9A LOOP , #9A	\$1,125,000.00	2/7/19
LOT 29 TWO MOONS	\$225,000.00	1/4/19	4 MANITOU LOOP, FRACTION H	\$185,000.00	2/8/19
149 JUNIPER BERRY DRIVE , #E	\$342,000.00	1/8/19	TBD WHITE OTTER ROAD	\$349,000.00	2/12/19
155 AURORA LIGHTS DRIVE , #B14	\$295,000.00	1/14/19	1 HIDDEN TRAIL	\$1,825,000.00	2/15/19
5 SILVER STAR	\$1,750,000.00	1/14/19	2755 LITTLE COYOTE ROAD	\$699,000.00	2/15/19
48 BIG SKY 48 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD	\$325,000.00	1/15/19	50 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD	\$159,000.00	2/15/19
1970 YELLOWTAIL ROAD	\$1,480,000.00	1/16/19	2B SUMMIT VIEW ROAD , #403B	\$825,000.00	2/19/19
365 ANTLER RIDGE ROAD	\$1,150,000.00	1/16/19	TBD UPPER WHITEFISH DRIVE	\$186,000.00	2/19/19
<b>39 HOMESTEAD CABIN FORK</b>	\$1,789,000.00	1/17/19	2078 LITTLE COYOTE ROAD	\$1,079,000.00	2/20/19
1053 TURKEY LEG	\$385,000.00	1/18/19	742 SUNBURST DRIVE	\$472,000.00	2/22/19
9 MANITOU LOOP, LAKOTA CABIN 45F	\$179,000.00	1/18/19	1284 HILL CONDO	\$164,900.00	2/26/19
60 BIG SKY RESORT RD, #10607	\$495,000.00	1/23/19	21 SITTING BULL #1296	\$274,000.00	2/28/19
12 RUNNING BEAR ROAD , #40	\$650,000.00	1/25/19	353 FIRELIGHT DRIVE	\$430,000.00	2/28/19
48 BIG SKY RESORT ROAD , #284	\$305,000.00	1/30/19	TBD CIEL DRIVE, LOT 1	\$395,000.00	2/28/19
11 SADDLE RIDGE ROAD , #G3	\$849,000.00	1/30/19	98 PHEASANT TAIL LANE 1	\$912,500.00	3/1/19
239 BEAVER MOUNTAIN TRAIL	\$699,000.00	1/30/19	169 SILVERADO	\$1,245,000.00	3/1/19
TRACT 5, 595 OUSEL FALLS VIEW ROAD	\$4,900,000.00	1/30/19	2061A LITTLE COYOTE RD	\$405,000.00	3/1/19
68 SPOTTED ELK ROAD	\$850,000.00	1/30/19	168 WILDRIDGE FORK	\$3,995,000.00	3/4/19
2695 LITTLE COYOTE ROAD	\$997,000.00	1/30/19	21 SITTING BULL ROAD , #1350	\$185,000.00	3/4/19
120 CRAIL RANCH ROAD	\$865,000.00	1/31/19	1481 TOWERING PINES ROAD	\$169,000.00	3/7/19
2 LOWER MOUNTAIN HOME ROAD , #20	\$1,825,000.00	1/31/19	TBD WILDRIDGE FORK	\$665,000.00	3/8/19
2350 TWO GUN WHITE CALF	\$1,425,000.00	1/31/19	173 SPRUCE CONE DRIVE	\$350,000.00	3/8/19
40 EAGLEHEAD DR D4	\$425,000.00	2/6/19			

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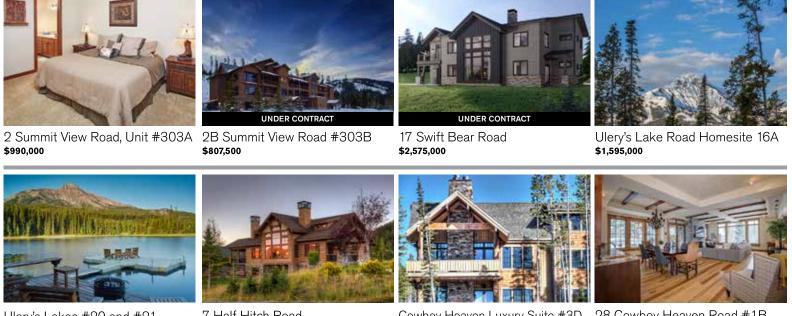
2 Summit View Drive #101C \$1,208,000

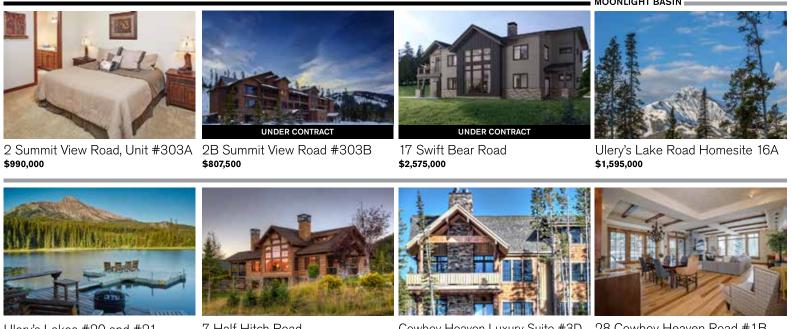


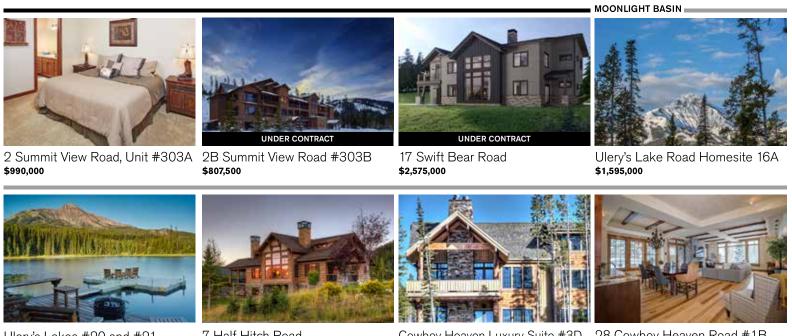
2B Summit View Drive #301B \$880,000

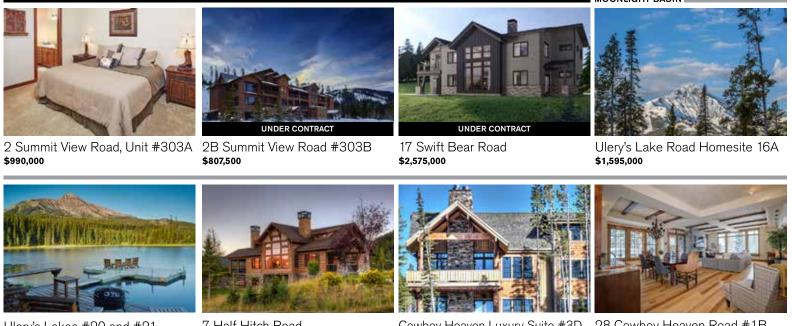


2 Summit View Drive #301C \$1,089,375









Ulery's Lakes #20 and #21 \$2,450,000

7 Half Hitch Road \$4,600,000

Cowboy Heaven Luxury Suite #3D 28 Cowboy Heaven Road #1B \$2,265,000 \$1,845,000

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### 49 years later, Town Center continues growth

#### EBS STAFF

In 1968, NBC newscaster Chet Huntley conceptualized Big Sky with a dream that required vision and character to see it though: harnessing the rugged beauty and power of 11,166-foot Lone Mountain into a worldclass resort, with a unique blend of European access and elegance paired with the spirit of the Rocky Mountain West. Thanks to that dream, Big Sky has sprung to life.

Bob Simkins of Bozeman knew he wanted to be part of the Big Sky life, so in 1970 he purchased six square miles of land with former partners the Taylor family from Bozeman – some of this land would help form the Big Sky Meadow Village area. Over the next two decades, the Simkins family visited their property for weekend adventures to hike, fish and picnic where the Town Center is today. When Bob passed away in 1993, he left his family the land and a dream of making a difference in Big Sky.

Today, the Simkins family and the Town Center development team work each day to help Big Sky fulfill its potential. As their father had done since the beginning, the Simkins look forward to maintaining their stewardship of Town Center because they enjoy being involved in the evolution of this community.

"We appreciate all of our businesses, especially the early visionary business owners and entrepreneurs who took a leap of faith on our vision," said Bill Simkins, Town Center's master developer and managing partner. "We feel that the best is yet to come."

This vision has taken root as Town Center continues to grow with purpose. The Wilson Hotel, Big Sky Town Center's first branded hotel, is on schedule for a grand opening in early summer along with the adjacent mixed-use Plaza Lofts building. Both projects will bring additional restaurants and retailers to Big Sky. More residential development in Town Center is on the horizon, along with the potential for a nightclub and bowling alley.

The county approved Town Center's master plan in 2000, and a hotel has been a key aspect of that plan.

According to Town Center Project Manager Ryan Hamilton, 491 total residential entitlement units are currently approved for Town Center, which includes multi-family and single-family housing, and upper story



An aerial view of Big Sky Town Center taken in January shows completed and future development along Ousel Falls Road and Town Center Avenue. OUTLAW PARTNERS PHOTO

"apartments" in the commercial district. Approximately 235 of these residential units are either built or under construction in Town Center.

More housing is likely to come online over the next two years, Hamilton said, depending on what project developers propose to Town Center. Some residences are expected to end up in the rental market and others will be up for ownership.

Over the past four years, Town Center has seen the completion of Roxy's Market, the Big Sky Medical Center, the mixed-use Peaks Building, residential condos, 25 Town Center Avenue on the corner of Ousel Falls Road and Town Center Avenue, and the adjacent 47 Town Center Avenue building.

Additionally, Town Center completed the central plaza—an engaging and unique public gathering space in front of the Wilson Hotel—and two parking lots are on the horizon that together will hold about 475 vehicles, among other projects. Most recently, the Big Sky Community Organization purchased 3.3 acres from Town Center in mid-December with the help of the Simkins family and the Len Hill Charitable Trust.

To inquire about commercial or residential development opportunities, call Town Center at (406) 586–9629 or visit bigskytowncenter.com. An early version of this story appeared in the winter 2016 Real Estate Guide.





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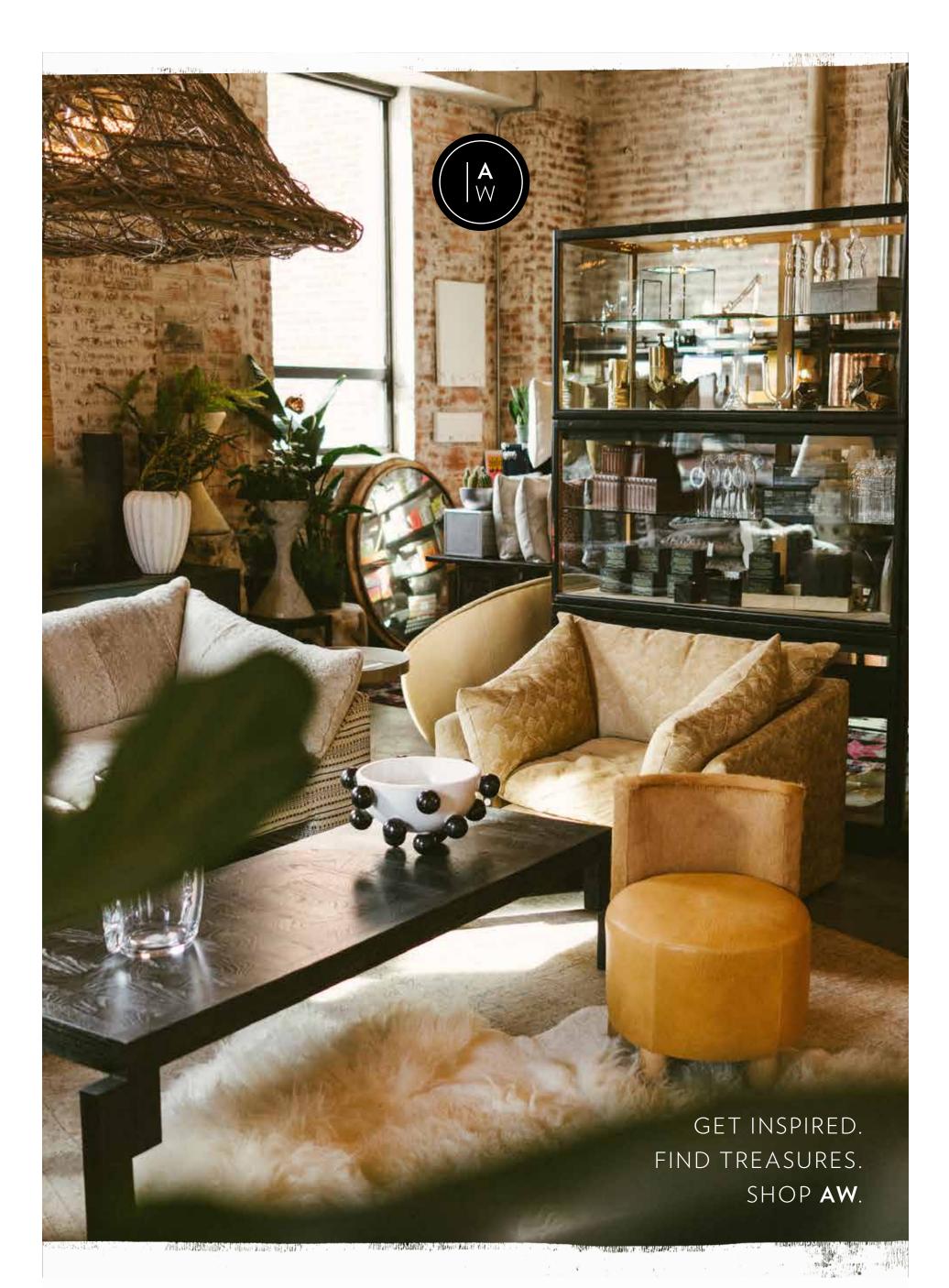


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