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# Truth and honesty

Simple raw materials enhance the sense of permanence and integrity in this newly remodeled home

**Along with a growing awareness of sustainable design,** today there is a noticeable trend toward a back-to-basics approach to material selection. Simple, raw materials, such as concrete, wood, steel and glass, are finding favor over more highly manufactured products and finishes.

This was exactly what the owners of this house wanted when they commissioned architect Scott Allen of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects to design a major remodeling project.

"The owners wanted natural materials that would impart an enduring quality and a sense of permanence," says Allen. "It was almost a search for integrity, which came down to the use of simple materials and a very honest architectural style."

Allen says the owners also wanted one large open space where all the family could gather yet still be involved in a range of activities. This space needed to have a close connection to the outdoors.

The house was effectively gutted, and a series of small rooms opened up and extended. The space is now defined by the strength of its materials, which include heavy steel beams and tongue-and-groove boards on the ceiling, concrete flooring and Venetian plastered walls.

"There is now almost a public scale to the height of the ceiling and the proportions of the space," Allen says. "To bring the scale down a little and create intimate areas, we introduced transom windows with a soffit below. The fireplaces and pot rack also help reduce the scale."

In keeping with the honest design approach there are no veneers – the cabinetry features solid oak boards, crafted to provide a refined look.

A cast glass wall between the entrance and living room not only provides borrowed light for the main space – it also creates an air of mystery as to what lies beyond the entrance. Additional light is provided by a glazed stairwell.

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*These pages:* Two fireplaces are provided in the large, open-plan living area of this remodeled house. Designed by architect Scott Allen of Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects, the interior provides space for a variety of family activities. The simple material palette includes colored concrete flooring and Venetian plastered walls. A cast glass wall separates the living room and entrance.







*Above:* Large floor-to-ceiling pocket doors open up to the rear garden, which is landscaped to provide a very natural setting. The garden is home to a variety of wildlife, including kingfishers.

*Right:* The dining table was custom made from a slab of American walnut. A subtle stenciled and glazed mural is painted on the plastered wall beside the table.





**Architect:** Scott Allen, with Gladys Ly-Au Young, Wing-Yee Leung Wilson, and interior designer Debbie Kennedy, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects (Seattle, WA)

**Structural engineer:**

PCS Structural Solutions

**Kitchen consultant:**

Tom Douglas

**Builder:** Schultz Miller

**Windows and doors:** Fir by Quantum Windows and Doors

**Flooring:** Concrete in custom color

**Wallcoverings:** Venetian plaster by Creative Finishes

**Paints:** Sherwin-Williams

**Lighting:**

Scott and Michael Rodenzki

**Heating:** Radiant floor and forced air by Cardinal Heating and Cooling

**Furniture:** Holly Hunter from Jennifer West

**Blinds:** MechoShade Systems

**Dining table:** Custom design by Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects, fabricated by Steve Clark

**Kitchen cabinets:** Oak by Seattle Custom Cabinets

**Countertops:** Black granite from Lambert Stone and Tile

**Backsplash:** Stainless steel

**Sink:** Franke

**Faucets:** KWC Suprimo

**Oven:** Miele

**Cooktop and ventilation:**

Dynasty

**Dishwasher:** Fisher & Paykel

**Ceramic pitcher:** Laguna

Vintage Pottery

**Refrigerator:** Sub-Zero

**Story by** Colleen Hawkes

**Photography by**

Eduardo Calderon

**Right:** This fireplace was designed to be an anchoring element within the space. To provide a sense of intimacy, the architect introduced a soffit line a few feet below the ceiling. Uplights within the soffits add ambient lighting and highlight the massive steel beams. The beams have been sealed to retain their raw texture and color, which would be difficult to replicate with paint.

