


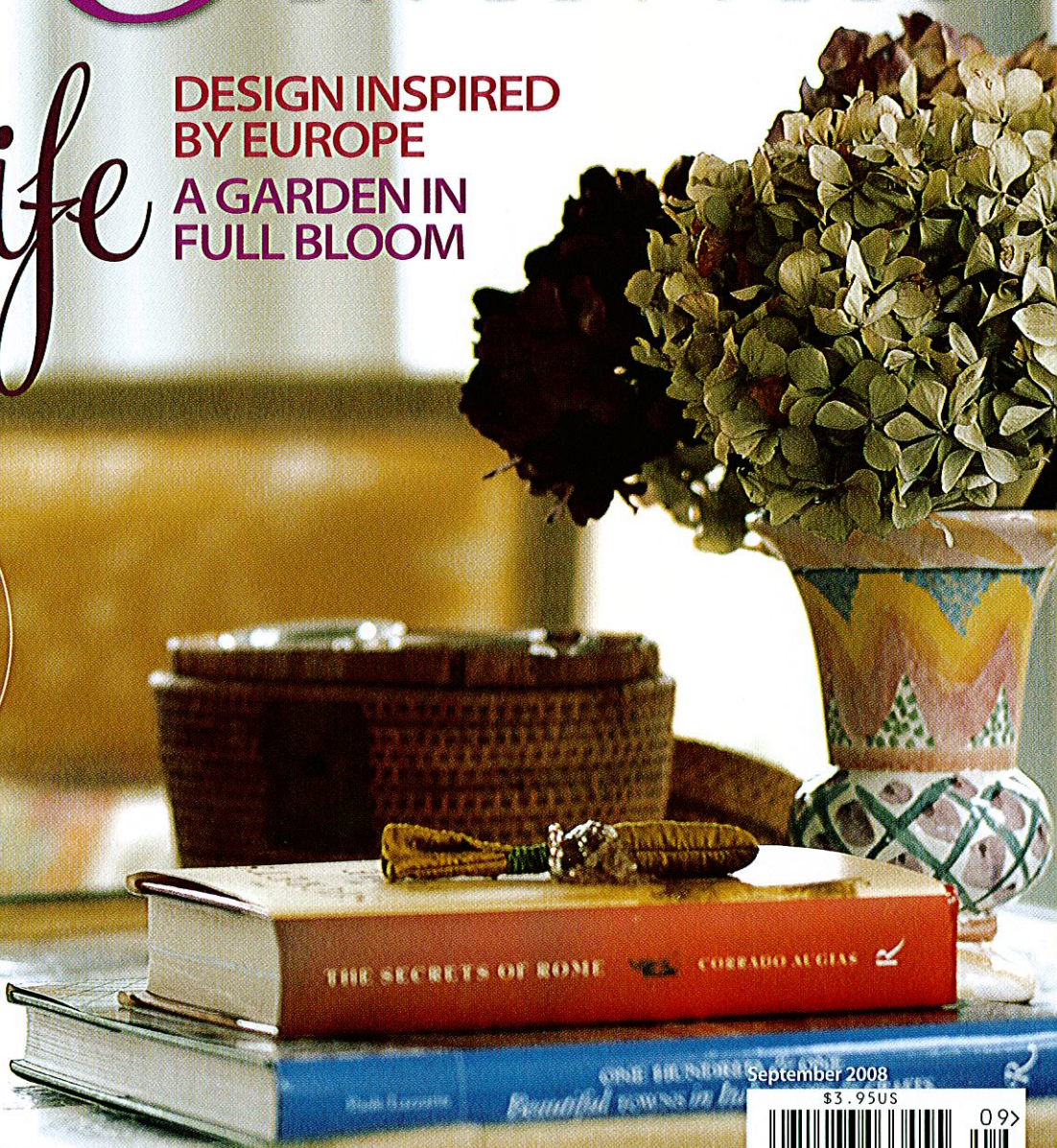
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A Capitol Hill remodel  
has Europe in its veins

# bon voyage

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For resource information,  
see page 110.



FURNISHED WITH TREASURES FROM THE OWNERS' TRIPS TO EUROPE, THE ROOMS OF THIS CAPITOL HILL HOME ARE WOVEN WITH A THREAD OF ELEGANCE. OPPOSITE: AN 18TH-CENTURY TABLE INLAID WITH DELFT TILES SHARES THE ENCLOSED SUN ROOM WITH RUSSIAN ART. THIS PAGE: THE DINING ROOM'S KALEIDOSCOPE OF GRACEFUL FRENCH AND ITALIAN STYLE WOWED JUDGES AT THE 2005 NORTHWEST DESIGN AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE.



**OPPOSITE:** PARIS ARMCHAIRS IN THE LIVING ROOM WEAR THEIR ORIGINAL 17TH-CENTURY SILK, BUT THE OWNERS GROUND SUCH SPECIMEN FURNISHINGS WITH THEIR OWN PERSONAL TOUCHES: AN ARTIST PAINTED THE CREST ON THE BACK OF THE ARMCHAIR TO CELEBRATE THEIR WEDDING; AN OLD BULGARIAN INSTRUMENT LEANS AGAINST THE HEARTH. **BELOW, LEFT:** BREAKFAST IS SERVED ON A STUNNING 1700S MARBLE AND STONE TABLE; THE NOOK CASTS A COZY INN AMBIENCE, EVEN WHEN CABINETS ABOVE THE FIREPLACE OPEN TO REVEAL A TV. **RIGHT:** A REMODEL RAISED THE KITCHEN CEILING AND YIELDED MORE SPACE FOR SERIOUS COOKING. CUSTOM CABINETRY HIDDEN IN THE ISLAND HARBORS EVERY MIXER AND GADGET.



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very alcove, archway and armchair in this house points to roads less traveled.

Remodeling their north Capitol Hill home led one adventurous couple across seas, down European cobblestone lanes and into quiet piazzas.

"Everything has a story," the wife says, and joy spills over in the telling. There's the time they pressed their noses against a Florentine shop window, begging the shopkeeper to open up—and came home with a treasure and a friend for life. They recall the sisters in Venice who made shades for their Seattle dining-room sconces—and served them a marvelous tiramisu and espresso. And Antonio Seguso himself, from the famous Italian family of glass artists, visited and chose light fixtures for this home that sits on a crest above Husky stadium and the Seattle Yacht Club, looking out to the horizon.

Walking through this house is like reading a design travelogue.

Chairs came from Paris; a tea table from Copenhagen. After the owners spent a year and a half of wandering and, yes, spectacular fun, their project is complete. The home, like its owners, follows its own design compass. Painted a bright umber, it stands out among neighboring 1920s-era regal homes. Interiors of gilt and pastel floral silks defy the Northwest mantra of solid gray, brown-gray or green-gray.

But the road to here from there started like most challenging remodel projects. First, there was the couple's five-year search to find the right house. Once they discovered it, they needed remarkable vision to look beyond a warren of rooms cobbled together in three previous patchy remodels. But graceful coved ceilings and original wood floors with crooked rows of nail heads intact won the wife's heart. "If I can see the bones, I can see the plan," she says, drawing on her years as a design professional. The moment she set foot in the house, she saw how moving the entry from one side to the other and reconfiguring the stairway would expand the home's grace.

After construction, the decorating process summoned up memories of all that overseas traveling, many days of which were arm-in-arm with longtime friend and designer Paula Devon Raso. "We've always had similar taste," says the wife, meaning they both know that baroque can partner with Asian *and* share a room with Russian art. Anything can mix, as long as there's a persona of formality and reverence for fine antiques and scrumptious fabrics: Scalamandre and Fortuny—rich with texture and stitchery.

The home now has a villa mien. Ancient stone tiles, once a tabletop, are embedded in the entryway floor. Hand-painted Venetian doors from a villa in northern Italy look indigenous in the dining room and library. "I faxed a photo of them to [architect] Keith [Kodat] and Paula to get their OK," the wife says. "Then Keith reconfigured the doorways for the old doors."

Seventeenth-century Parisian chairs mingle with newer pieces painted to look old. Raso commissioned a crest, designed especially for

the couple, painted on a chair that now looks beautifully faux-cracked and aged. The dining-room table, an Italian reproduction, is swathed in rust and gold, colors that blend with the couple's china. Tassels were painted on the legs of dining chairs from France.

Raso has left behind another of her trademarks: an uncanny flair for precise, creative storage. Secret panels, TVs hidden behind shutters, beautiful drawers—they're her gift of organization-cum-art form. Banks of cabinets in the kitchen include one equipped with dowels where pressed tablecloths neatly hang. It's enough to bring tears of delight to any hostess.

And hosts these people are. Both love to cook—he's the saucier and head chef; she's the baker. An impressive line of pots gleam along one kitchen wall. The couple often sponsor events here, sharing the *joie de vivre* they've collected along the way. They sit at the kitchen's early 18th-century marble and stone table and toast life's fortuitous journeys. ■

Kathryn Renner writes about beautiful homes all over the country from her Kirkland office.