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PACIFIC NW

RE:
FALL
HOME
DESIGN

WASHINGTON PARK
REFRESHING
BAINBRIDGE ISLAND
REMEMBERING
QUEEN ANNE
RETHINKING



Stuart Silk Architects (principals Silk and Mike Troyer, and project manager Michael McFadden) teamed with builder Schultz Miller, Amy Baker Interior Design, landscape architect Land Morphology and a passel of craftspeople to create this contemporary-yet-traditional waterfront home for Craig and Lisa and their family.

ABOARD HER PADDLEBOARD, Lisa has logged a lot of nautical miles navigating the waters of Lake Washington — and reflecting on the lakefront homes encircling it.

So when she and her husband, Craig, decided to move their family from Riviera Beach (on the lake) to Washington Park (also on the lake), Lisa had a pretty specific vision — or, more accurately, *feeling* — of the home they should build.

“I’ve been all around the lake, and I’ve seen the houses that pop out to me the most,” she says. “They were always the bright, white houses — pretty. The term I used was ‘a happy house.’” ▶



Under a wood-beamed ceiling, the living room brings in light, and lake views, through three walls of windows. The rift-cut white oak plank floors are cerused. “It’s a neat, unusual finish,” Lisa says.

FALL
HOME DESIGN

A HAPPY MEDIUM

In a joyful expression of collaboration, a lakefront home in Washington Park merges contemporary and traditional design

BY SANDY DENEAU DUNHAM | PHOTOS BY STEVE RINGMAN



A HAPPY MEDIUM



In the kitchen, says Lisa, "The only thing I chose was the baby-blue (Lacanche) stove; everything was about the stove. The previous home had light-blue laminate cabinets, and I really liked it; it was a happy feeling. This is a nice compromise."

"The embedded stair detail is pretty memorable," says Silk. "That was, I thought, a really great way to bring another level of detail to the wall. In trying to figure out how the handrail worked, it never worked until we came up with the embedded detail. It's part of that next layer of information in the house."



The dramatic floating staircase rises in the grand entry hall, with French limestone floors, a textured steel wall crafted by Decorative Metal Arts and the perfect lounging/lookout niche for Daphne the dog. "The challenge to design the stairs was to keep them as open as possible through the window," says McFadden. Adds Silk: "We always wanted a center spine of steel, so the stair was floating and kind of wrapped up and around that."

Craig and Lisa adored their classic, walkable new neighborhood and its close-knit sense of community. Their new waterfront site, tricky but lovable, radiated waves of joy. But its existing 1940s-era home had seen happier days.

"It was very basically a summer cabin built a long time ago," says the architect of happiness, Stuart Silk. "The ceilings were very low. Some of the floors were sloped and didn't line up. It had been added on to three or four times, incrementally. From a cute standpoint, if you went and had a weekend getaway, you'd think it was really cozy. It wasn't the kind of home you'd want to live in full-time."

It is now.

First, though, design principal Silk, Stuart Silk Architects principal Mike Troyer and project manager Michael McFadden — along with builder Schultz Miller, interior designer Amy Baker and a raft of custom craftspeople — had to turn a couple potential frowns upside down: Pressing setback and sightline requirements necessitated the retention of "one section of the (original) wall," Silk says, and the melding of traditional (Lisa) and contemporary (Craig) design preferences at one point ▶



A HAPPY MEDIUM

The master bathroom "is my favorite room," says Lisa — not only is there a TV (and a lock on the door!), but also a soaking tub overlooking the lake (with drop-down blinds), integrated sinks, a toilet room on the way to a big closet, a double shower with Carrara marble, and a sliding barn-door-like mirror over operable windows. "It's like a traditional home, but every once in a while, something says, 'Hey — modern,'" she says.

The second-floor master bedroom, facing Lake Washington under a vaulted ceiling, "is just a great room," Lisa says. "There are views from every window, and the Venetian plaster really shows. I've never felt the need to decorate more. There's enough life in it."

called for a return to the proverbial drawing board. "We merged both into a distinctive expression and a unique reflection of each of them," Silk says. "We created a traditional feel with white painted wood siding and traditional gabled roofs. To create a fresh, contemporary feel, we stripped key details, such as eaves, to their bare essentials and used modern materials, including painted steel windows and zinc roof shingles." It's hard not to beam in appreciation of this gleaming, gabled beauty, but there's even more blended delight inside — once you've found the custom hidden handle in the entry's huge, textured, stainless-steel pivot ▶



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A HAPPY MEDIUM

door. (Delivery people sometimes cannot, Craig says.)

"We brought in oak, very traditional, but treated it in a contemporary way: cerusing," Silk says. "We brought steel in from outside, with detailing in the stairs and the fireplace surround. The walls aren't just drywall with a coat of paint; they have a specialized Venetian plaster, a luster to it. And we used wood beams in the ceiling, which give it a more informal quality. An all-white room starts to feel a little too contemporary."

This, though, feels minimal *and* warm, exquisitely brightened by light through towering bay windows. It also feels as refreshing as an October dip in the lake: This home is designed for, and filled with, a vibrant family that really *lives* here.

"It's nice to have a nice house, but the reality is, we have kids and pets (a 13-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son, plus Daphne the dog, a kitty, a rabbit and guinea pigs)," says Lisa. "I was really adamant it had to be livable."

“

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The wood-burning fireplace in the living room is gas-fed to light, Craig says: "I'm sort of not totally bought into fake fireplaces yet." Amy Baker Interior Design handled the home's interiors; Metal Solutions fabricated the fireplace's surround, hearth and screen doors.

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With 5,300+ square feet, five bedrooms, three full baths and two powder rooms ("There's no fighting for a bathroom here," Lisa says), there is purposefully designed real-living room (and rooms) for everyone.

"The kids each have a room. There's a playroom, to keep all the stuff in there," Craig says. At the top of the amazingly detailed floating staircase, a pocket door shuts off a family room, so everyone "can watch movies and eat popcorn."

Up another level ("the attic," but at its loveliest): a mirrored workout room, storage galore and a craft room for Lisa. "Over the years, I've learned to cut hair, make jewelry, skin care, all these little hobbies," she says. "It's for all the things I don't know what to do with."

Off the wide-open kitchen, anchored by a baby-blue Lacanche stove inspired by the original home's light-blue laminate cabinets ("a happy feeling," Lisa says), stretches her other hub: the pantry.

"I need a place to be a mom and a family," Lisa says. "They built me a long magnetic wall; we sort of collect magnets. I really like to cook and make projects, and Craig likes everything out of sight, so our compromise was a very large pantry."

It's a very happy compromise. Which is not only the goal of the home, but its theme.

"Lisa is number one a mom; she doesn't want something that's so precious that she doesn't feel comfortable in it," Silk says. "She was not interested in designing a showpiece. She tried to make it happy and spontaneous and maybe slightly less serious. She knew if the architects got too serious, it might end up being too precious." 📺

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