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THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Overlooking Lake Washington,
a family property becomes the site
of a young couple's dream home.

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Architecture: Jim Romano and Suzanne Findley, Conard Romano Architects
Interior Design: Susan Marinello, Susan Marinello Interiors
Home Builder: Paul Vassallo and David Broder, Schultz Miller
Landscape Architecture: Brooks Kolb, Brooks Kolb LLC Landscape Architecture



The house is beautiful, the family is beautiful, and the setting is beautiful. It's a true Northwest gem," says interior designer Susan Marinello of this property on the banks of Lake Washington. It's also one with a very special history for the homeowners. Along with several others in the immediate area, it has been in the wife's family for decades, and she has fond memories of swimming from one family residence to another. "This couple had the patience and the dream of one day being able to build here," Marinello says. "It's meaningful."

Helping to make the dream a reality were architects Jim Romano and Suzanne Findley. "They brought images, thoughts and direction," says Romano of the couple, "and consistent within all of it was the comfort of a traditional form with a contemporary design that let them embrace the outdoor lifestyle." Its waterfront location made the spot particularly compelling. "It sits on a bluff, but you enter through a dense grove of trees," explains Findley. "Retaining those was central as we nestled the home into the landscape."

One enters the residence through a covered porch that opens into a foyer, which continues into a long central hallway that forms the spine of the house. Off of it spring the kitchen at one end, the husband's office at the other, and in between, the main living and dining areas. All the rooms are open and bright, with strong connections to the outdoors. A central staircase crafted by Gauge Design Group balances light throughout the house—upstairs to the bedrooms and downstairs to the media and guest spaces—with a few notable additions along the way. "There's a custom wine cellar under the basement flight, and when the clients asked for an attic playroom for their girls, we developed an automated retractable stair that folds perfectly flush to the ceiling," explains senior project manager David Broder, who built the house with general contractor Paul Vassallo and superintendents Troy Robinson and the late John Kindblade. "There's a really strong organization to the house, but it doesn't feel rigid," notes Romano.

Marinello concurs. "These are family-friendly rooms used by the little ones, so the homeowners didn't want anything off-limits. They needed it

to be light and ethereal, a calm and supportive background for a very busy family." Her focus was also on creating hybrid spaces that land somewhere between traditional and modern, so she began with "an edited palette of medium to light woods and lots of white paint," she explains. "The people and the art are the color here, and everything is meant to be textural: rough-hewn stone, the raised grain of the floors, woven fabrics."

Working with project interior designer Amy Kazen, the duo sourced a mix of custom and showroom pieces, along with the occasional heirloom, like the wife's grandmother's armchairs in the dining room. "The whole dining area is the heartbeat of the house," Marinello continues. "They move around it every day, so it's become central and grounding. And the lighter, more modern table and chairs balance the traditional cabinets and case goods." Another key component is the couple's painting collection, including new works by artists Casper Brindle and Bo Joseph.

The art continues outside with a trio of totems by Steve Jensen just off the rear terrace on the waterfront side. Designed to reflect the activities going on inside the home, the terraces change along the length of the house, moving from herb and vegetable beds at the kitchen end to a covered terrace with skylights and heaters off of the office, all with direct views of the lawn and the lake. "This is one of the most beautiful sites I've ever worked on," says landscape architect Brooks Kolb. He tasked David Ohashi of Ohashi Landscape Services with relocating several large rhododendrons, two Japanese maples and a magnolia from other spots on the site. "He's a specialist in saving large plants," Kolb explains. And in a sweet nod to the generations, Kolb also incorporated roses from the wife's late grandmother's nearby home.

"Anytime we get to help build a family home, it's special, but it's meaningful to me to know the family will be here for generations. The little girls get to grow up in this house," says Marinello. "I love the design process, from the dream to the barstools, and all the decisions to be made—it's like knitting; you miss a stitch, and it unravels—but furnishings really are just things. It's the family that matters. Creating a home is the most important part." ■



A painting by Bo Joseph welcomes residents and visitors alike in the entryway of this Seattle home. Interior designer Susan Marinello mixed a Palecek console with a custom stool in a C&C Milano cotton blend from Kelly Forslund, adding a rug from Driscoll Robbins Fine Carpets and a McEwen pendant from Trammell-Gagné.

In the living room, custom armchairs in a Mark Alexander fabric join two pieces from A. Rudin—a sofa upholstered in a Holly Hunt performance fabric from Jennifer West and a lounge chair in a C&C Milano linen. Arranged at the Marvin windows from Puget Sound Wood Windows are Palecek chairs and a Noir table. The painting is by Casper Brindle.





Above: Marinello opted for a Meyer Wells table, a Noir armchair fitted with cushions in a Rose Tarlow Melrose House fabric and a Moooi light fixture from Inform Interiors for the kitchen's breakfast nook. The Blanco sink and Kallista pull-down faucet were sourced from Best Plumbing. The Schotten & Hansen flooring is brushed and cerused European oak.

Opposite: Allied Maker globe lights illuminate the island, where the designer placed barstools by Thomas Hayes with Spinneybeck leather seats. The cabinetry features stone countertops from Meta Marble & Granite and Rocky Mountain Hardware fittings from Chown Hardware. The Wolf range is from Albert Lee.





Right: Marinello chose two Benjamin Moore colors for the husband's study: Vanderberg Blue for the walls and Boca Raton Blue for the ceiling. Flanking the custom desk are an Eames chair from Design Within Reach and an A. Rudin lounge chair. The rug, which the clients already owned, is by Jan Kath.

Opposite: The central stairway, above which hovers a Bocci chandelier from Inform Interiors, leads up to the family bedrooms and down to guest and entertaining areas. In the hallway beyond is a runner from Driscoll Robbins Fine Carpets.





Above: Shining down on the main bathroom's Victoria + Albert tub from Best Plumbing fitted with Rohl fixtures is a Giopato & Coombes fixture. Ann Sacks mosaic tiles define the floor. On one wall is Benjamin Moore's Classic Gray; on another is stone from Meta Marble & Granite.

Opposite: Benjamin Moore's Nimbus provides a serene backdrop for the main bedroom. Hickory Chair armchairs with a Rose Tarlow Melrose House floral and an ottoman upholstered with a Pierre Frey pattern from The Dixon Group comprise the sitting area. Framing the view are draperies in an Arabel Fabrics linen. The Studio Bel Vetro chandelier is from Kelly Forslund, while the Stanton carpet is from Michael Donnelly & Co.