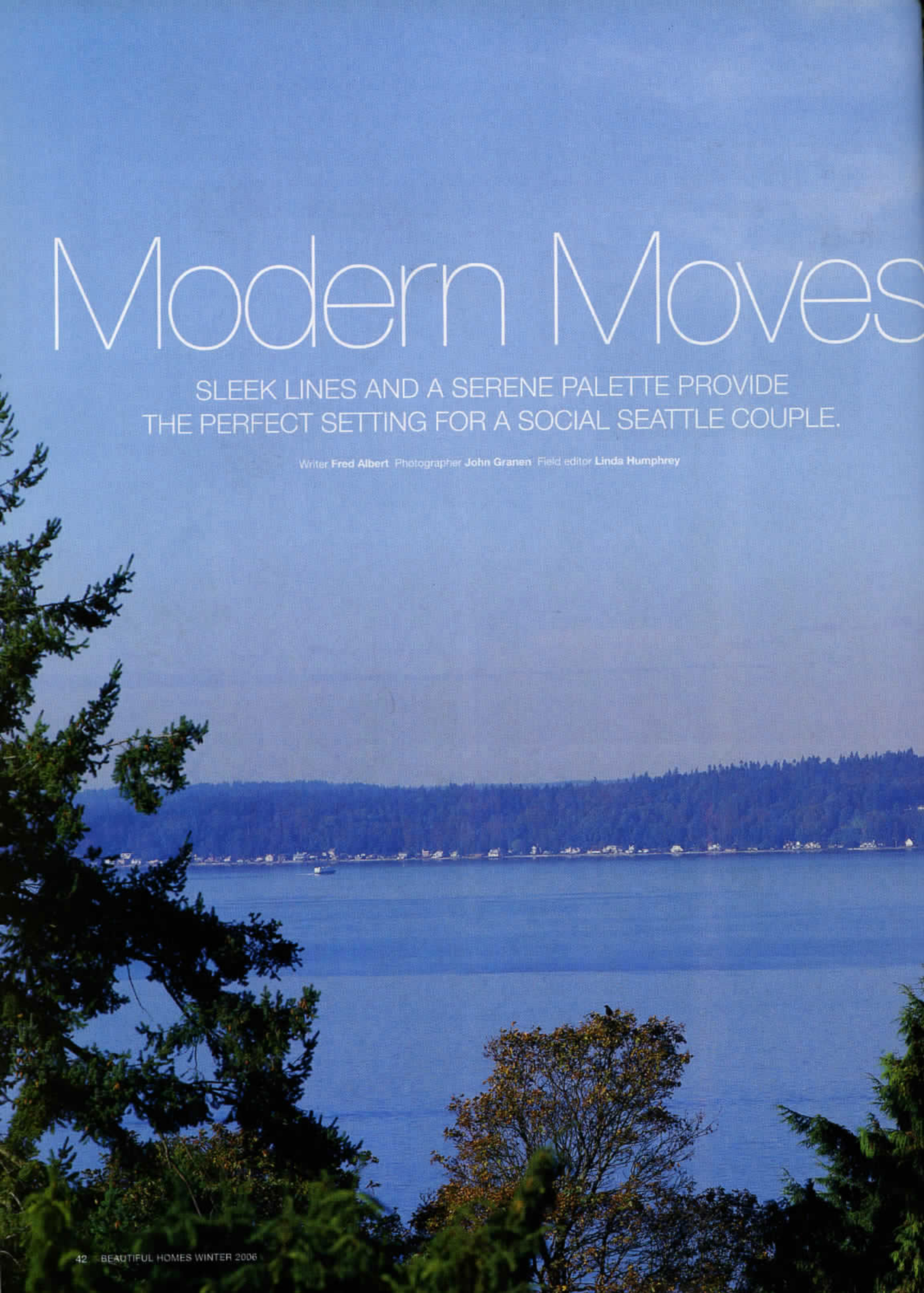


Modern Moves

SLEEK LINES AND A SERENE PALETTE PROVIDE
THE PERFECT SETTING FOR A SOCIAL SEATTLE COUPLE.

Writer Fred Albert Photographer John Granen Field editor Linda Humphrey





For 26 years, Bobbe and Jon Bridge lived in a dark, cloistered Tudor that no amount of remodeling could fix. Parties always felt congested, and the walls defied large works of art. "It was no longer the kind of house we wanted to live in," says Bobbe, a Washington State Supreme Court justice.

With their children grown and a full roster of civic groups vying for their hospitality, the Seattle couple went searching for a new house where they could entertain groups of as many as 100 without bottlenecks around the kitchen or conniptions from the caterers. They found what they were looking for just a mile away, in a 1950s contemporary with an open floor plan and magnificent Puget Sound views. Thinking the house mainly needed an update, Bobbe and Jon enlisted the services of architects George Suyama and Chris Haddad of Suyama Peterson Deguchi. But once

the plans were drawn up and construction costs were calculated, everyone realized the results would still be a compromise. For a bit more money, the Bridges decided to build a new home on the site and get everything exactly the way they wanted it.

Bobbe and Jon, the co-CEO of a family jewelry business, admit they wanted a place that would dazzle their visitors—but with quality, not quantity. "I didn't want a megamansion," Bobbe says. "I wanted a house that would

ABOVE The fireplace's manganese ironspot brick is an update of a brick used heavily during the 1950s and '60s. Asian artifacts and touches of velvet and silk temper the concrete hearth and steel furnishings. OPPOSITE A 19th-century rolling storage chest from Japan nestles up to the fireplace in the living room.



OPPOSITE Transom windows illuminate the dining area, which is dominated by a custom walnut-and-bronze table. Rift-cut oak cabinets lining the room keep clutter out of sight and counteract the home's cool lines.

LEFT Because the kitchen is open to the surrounding area, it was designed to look understated. Appliances are concealed in cupboards or camouflaged behind panels to match the cabinets; Asian artifacts provide welcome organic accents.

make somebody go 'wow' because it was really beautiful, not because it was a huge monster."

Although the new home was going to be contemporary, Suyama wanted it to fit in with the neighborhood, a manicured enclave of ranch houses dating from the 1950s and '60s. To bridge past and present, he anchored the new house with walls of Roman brick—an Eisenhower Era staple updated here in a smoky-gray finish. A wall built from the material stretches across the front of the property, linking the house with its surroundings while affording a measure of privacy from the street.

A gate ushers visitors into a courtyard that acts as a transition between the lively streetscape and the tranquil interior. "This is a foyer, but in a different form," Suyama says of the space, which is indicative of his signature understated

and protective style and a strong indoor-outdoor connection inspired by homes in Asia.

By consigning the entry hall to the exterior, the architect was able to eliminate it inside, reducing the main floor to a single space containing the kitchen, dining, and living areas. "We wanted it open and light," Bobbe says. "We didn't want a lot of rooms." Cabinets and level changes define spaces while preserving views to the venerable spruce tree anchoring the yard and Puget Sound in the distance. Clerestory windows and slits of glass introduce light from every direction, framing vistas and forging connections between indoors and out. Physical outdoor access is never more than a few steps away, either, thanks to sliding doors opening to a deck and an expansive patio and reflecting pool below.

RIGHT The suspended steel staircase barely touches the lower-level floor, where its slender profile preserves views. OPPOSITE The library is enclosed by bookshelves, save for a single window that provides a way to monitor activity outside. Books are organized alphabetically by category, and by author within each category. "Arranging the library was a challenge," interior designer Pamela Pearce says.



To encourage those connections, the architects did everything they could to minimize distractions, hiding the powder room behind a wall of blackened steel (Bobbe turns on a light and leaves the door ajar so guests can find it) and camouflaging kitchen appliances under panels of rift-cut oak. "We wanted the kitchen to be as functional as possible, but as invisible as possible," Suyama says. Oak storage walls preclude the need for upper cabinets, while the sublimely understated island could almost pass for a table. Even the living room lighting is built into an elegant Asian-style arbor structure that lines up with the room's window trim.

Interior designer Pamela Pearce integrated the furniture with the architecture, creating custom pieces that echo

the home's lines and materials so faithfully it's sometimes hard to tell where architecture ends and furnishings begin. Graphic bronze inlays trace the surface of the ebonized walnut dining table—the sole touches of pattern in a house that mines Zen-like serenity with unadorned finishes and subtle shifts of color. A built-in buffet faced in blackened steel cradles the living room sectional behind it; ebonized-walnut tables on either side seem to mirror the profile of the brick-and-concrete fireplace and its steel mantel.

Soft, luxurious fabrics, such as chenille, velvet, and silk, counteract all of those muscular materials, as do antique area rugs and museum-quality Asian artifacts acquired specifically for the house. "I laughingly say I have





OPPOSITE A sheltered patio extends the lower level of the house. Between the seating area and the house is a reflecting pool fed by a scupper that extends from above the master bath's large window. The small accent window, also in the bathroom, frames a tight view near the tub. LEFT Laminated fir ceiling beams extend outside, supporting eaves edged in zinc. Walls of glass alternate with rough-sawn cedar siding and taupe-color stucco.

a 30-year collection of Asian art that we did in about six months, says Bobbe, who initiated the assemblage with the 19th-century rolling storage chest next to the fireplace. A carved-wood temple bell in the shape of a fish sits atop the chest, which is paired with stoneware jars dating back to about 300 B.C. Other artifacts line the top of the kitchen cabinets and adorn tabletops throughout the house. "Several casually displayed Asian pieces, both Japanese and Chinese, are over 2,000 years old," Pearce says. They offer a hand-hewn counterpoint to the home's ascetic lines and the Bridges' burgeoning collection of contemporary art.

Architectural features practically serve as extensions of the contemporary art collection. The living room staircase, for instance, coaxes visitors into the library and media room

below. "The staircase is broader than normal and also a little more gracious, so the transition between the upper (main) floor and the floor below was very seamless," Suyama says. The stairs were fashioned from steel plates suspended from steel rods, so the steps seem to float down from above, preserving views and light across the lower level.

Bookshelves wrap the downstairs walls, pausing outside Jon's office to accommodate a window so he can gaze out to the patio and garden while he works. The site drops off steeply in back, allowing the master suite and Bobbe's office, both at that end of the house, to feel as if they hover in the treetops.

It's from the lower-level patio, however, that the natural experience is strongest. Walled in on three sides and



sheltered by foliage that includes a magnificent cedar tree, it's a private respite that still features a peek of Puget Sound. A teak-and-aluminum furniture set complements the home's architecture, and a reflecting pool with waterfall offers a contemporary take on nature.

Shortly after they moved in, Bobbe and Jon hosted an open house for friends, neighbors, and the crew from R.A. Setting Construction, which built the house. As they watched the throng spill outside and wander up and down the suspended staircase, the couple realized they'd succeeded in their mission. Now they had a house that was perfect for a crowd of 200 or just a party of two. **BH**

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ABOVE Windows upstairs and down wrap corners whenever possible, breaking down divisions between interior and exterior. In the master bedroom, a window seat perched on the sill provides a relaxing spot. **LEFT** Tiny squares of tumbled slate cover the master bath's floor and tub. Subtly sleek fixtures carry through on the modern Asian look.

UNDERSTATED MODERNITY extends throughout this home, from the living room to the lower-level patio. A desire for high-quality materials and a strong indoor-outdoor connection influenced the design, as did the owners' request that the home be cozy yet able to accommodate a crowd.



LOWER LEVEL SQ. FT.: 3,516
MAIN LEVEL SQ. FT.: 1,665 (plus garage)
BEDROOMS: 3
BATHROOMS: 2 full, 2 half



Architect **Suyama Peterson Deguchi** Interior designer **Pamela Pearce Design** Builder **R.A. Setting Construction**