

## ***The Beauty of Basic- Made with respect***

Rebecca Teagarden, *The Seattle Times Pacific Northwest Magazine*, May 18, 2008; pages 20-24  
[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/pacificnw/2004416612\\_pacificpsuyama18.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/pacificnw/2004416612_pacificpsuyama18.html)



We tried to maintain as much of the original structure as possible," architect Jay Deguchi says. "When we pushed the kitchen out to create more space we extended the trellis that stretches across the front out a bit more to make it feel still like a lower box, in keeping with the original house."



The skylights (seen on the right and left) were the biggest challenge, Deguchi says. "The upper floor needed to be larger than what the original skylights allowed. So we devised a system where we encroached the floor over the existing skylights." The Neo sofas are by Niels Bendtsen. The blackend-steel end table was designed by George Suyama. The painting over the fireplace is by Seattle artist Mark Rediske.



The cabin features design elements found in traditional Japanese residential architecture, including two screened porches that flank both sides of the main living space and run the length of the house.

The house sits directly on the spot where Richard Lindstrom put it in 1979. A cabin cradled beneath a translucent fiberglass gabled roof. Heavy timber columns bracing brawny beams beneath that ethereal cover — vertical veins meeting horizontal arteries. Cedar and fir, decks and skylights. Asian and American Indian influences. The view of Puget Sound dead ahead on one end; forest and expansive lawn squarely presented on the other. Stunning in its simplicity. But simple isn't easy. And this house, which the architect calls the Umbrella House, has the papers (and honors) to prove it.

"The Lindstrom house manages to do what many houses of our time have attempted but few have achieved. It goes beyond the narrow limits of orthodox modern architecture in a way that is truly original, yet never loud or vulgar . . . Ultimately what distinguishes it is its lack of self-consciousness — it is not studied or precious at all, and in an age when such qualities seem to predominate in even our most inventive architecture, their absence here comes as a breath of fresh air."

Writing for *The New York Times*, that was distinguished architecture critic Paul Goldberger's take on architect Lindstrom's family home then. Awards came easily, from both the national and local chapter of the American Institute of Architects for the place Lindstrom, formerly of Morgan and Lindstrom Architects, designed. But this is now. Another young family has taken up residence on the Bainbridge Island bluff. The house is a classic, but the family felt it needed refreshed. And respect. So they turned to Suyama Peterson Deguchi Architects.

"We went into this eyes wide open, but I was nervous about committing to the changes," Josh says. It was George Suyama and Jay Deguchi's recommendation to live in it for a while "so we



The Seattle horizon appears as a peaceful flatline across the front of the home. "I think that's one of the main reasons why Josh and Amy bought it," Deguchi says. "It felt like a vacation house, yet it was their main house. They wanted to maintain a sense of a vacation place."



A soaking tub in the master bathroom sits at the head of the bed.



Deguchi says the blackened-steel stairs were added, for one, "to keep all that open so you get a sense of the greenery outside. And, two, because the house is so heavy we wanted anything we added to be much lighter and to keep it sleek and modern." The floors are oak with a new, darker stain. The table is from Brad Cameron of furniture store Level Design in Vancouver, B.C.

would know what we wanted. We were on a well, and it was slowly running dry. We needed new electrical and plumbing, heating."

"We loved the house, but even if we fixed things up it wasn't going to be enough space," says Amy, a lawyer and mother of a 1-year-old boy and 4-year-old girl.

The couple bought the home in spring 2005, and by October 2007 the update was complete: 1,100 square feet of new space for a total of 3,500 square feet with three bedrooms, a library and 2 ¾ baths.

Deguchi, principal architect on the project, along with project architect Alex Rhode and site superintendent Glenn Otani of Fairbanks Construction, crafted a sleight-of-hand transformation that seems, at first, as if not much has changed at all; just a new, almost invisible box under that cloud-white gable.

But indeed there is now an entire second-floor master suite where once had been a children's play space. The entry area was opened, interior stairs added, the kitchen moved, updated and enlarged, a laundry room and den added, skylights reduced, lighting installed, blackened steel introduced in the stairs and a central fireplace, and children's bedrooms created off the living room. There is also a separate carport designed by Suyama.

"We didn't want to micromanage. We didn't want to tell the artists how to paint it," Josh says. "But that was their goal, that you don't know old wing/new wing."

The architects had the couple create a wish list and tailored it to fit their budget, and their lifestyle. "In Seattle you don't get as much for your money; not much yard, there's traffic, congestion," says Josh, a doctor. He and Amy grew up around here. His parents live straight across the water.

This is Goldberger again: "The best architecture is almost always old and new at once. It absorbs influences from older styles and periods, then transforms them into something that is not at all of the past, something that speaks not only of the architect's knowledge of other architectures but of his ability to expand the perspective of his own time."

True 29 years ago. True now.