

NORTHWEST ZEN

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DAVID PAPAIZIAN

HIGH ON A HILL IN BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON, IN SIGHT OF MOUNT BAKER, THERE'S A HOUSE WITH ITS HEAD IN THE CLOUDS. Deer wander through the back yard, seagulls drop seashells on the drive and hawks circle the sky, making memories for the family that calls this enchanting place home. "The house makes you feel like you are suspended in mid-air," says the husband. "It's so close to the view that you feel like you can touch it, but it's high enough so you feel like you're hovering."

INTERIOR DESIGN Pamela Pearce, ASID, Pamela Pearce Design, LLC

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE Thomas J. Kyle, Thomas Kyle Landscape Architecture

HOME BUILDER Paul Mocerl, Mocerl Construction Inc.

ARCHITECTURE Bob Ross, AIA, LEED AP, Ross Architecture NW LLC

BEDROOMS 4 **BATHROOMS** 6 **SQUARE FEET** 8,300







OFF-THE-FEET RETREAT

Rhodes Architectural Stone's reclaimed Chinese-granite fireplace, an oil painting by William Slater and casual furnishings with textured upholstery—an A. Rudin sofa and lounge chairs from Trammell-Gagné, and a wood-framed chair by John Hutton for Holly Hunt—provide a comfortable entertaining space in the living room. Designer Pamela Pearce custom-designed the tables, fabricated by Stewart Wurtz Furniture, and the lamps from Jennifer West are by Solis Betancourt for Holly Hunt.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 186

The homeowners so loved their 15-year-old West Coast contemporary house that, when more room was needed, they never entertained the notion of moving. Instead, they bought the lot next door and set about designing what the husband calls “a house that has a strong sense of being perfect.”

So special is the 1.5-acre site that a design team spearheaded by landscape designer Thomas J. Kyle, of Thomas Kyle Landscape Architecture in Vancouver, Canada, and designer Pamela Pearce, of the eponymous firm in Bellevue, put their heads together with Bob Ross, the original architect and principal at Ross Architecture NW in Bellingham, to create a living space that communes with nature.

A swimming pool, guesthouse and a second two-car garage were designed to merge with the landscape, which is dotted with native plants to attract the wildlife on the property. “Because of the way we designed it—we started with the outside and then leveraged the inside—you become one with the hill,

GOING FOR GREEN

An expanse of grass at the front door helps the house merge with the landscape, which is filled with native plants that encourage wildlife to visit. It leads to the swimming pool, which is on a slightly lower elevation. Landscape designer Thomas Kyle set out to integrate the home into its site and marry the interior and exterior spaces.



YOU'RE INVITED

The guesthouse, in plain view of the main house, is tucked by the side of the swimming pool, designed by Kyle and built by Northwest Hot Springs. Teak chaises have front-row seats overlooking the panoramic view of the mountains, and glass railings designed by architect Bob Ross complete the feeling of total transparency.



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 191

you become one with the water, you become the site,” says Kyle, who served as master planner, project manager and lighting designer for the remodel. “The seamless integration of inside and outside spaces is not noticeable; it looks so natural that it seems as though no design was done.”

Inside, the space was opened up with banks of floor-to-ceiling windows that soak in the view. To accommodate entertaining, a gym, third-level office, billiard/game room and media room were added. “We wanted to create a ‘teen magnet’ where our children and their friends could hang out,” the husband says. “It worked—it has become a nucleus for neighborhood congregation.”

By using the same neutral, earth-tone color scheme and repeating materials, Pearce wove together the interior and exterior spaces. Granite was one of her main threads—it is on the outside façade, the living room fireplace surround and the kitchen countertops. And the exterior stain, a warm shade of light mushroom, was repeated inside in a complementary, less opaque hue that reveals more of the wood. “We created a calm Zen feel and an aura of relaxed elegance,” Pearce says. “We gave the home a quieter central space by creating new multifunctional rooms like the game room.”

The very elements that the family loves—the wild, whipping winds and the steep slope that provides the unparalleled views—complicated the process. “It was difficult to get materials to the site,” says Tony Mocerl, whose father, Paul, is president of Mocerl Construction in Bellingham. They helmed the build with project managers Saul Whitworth and Kenny Nichol. “Most houses here don’t have swimming pools because the season is so short, so the pool



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 193

The wife loves to curl up in the living room and read with the scenery as her background, and the husband passes the time watching the clouds form. "I never tire of the view," he says, "because it changes dramatically through the day. I can see the deer standing on their hind legs eating the leaves of the willow tree, and sometimes the young bucks duke it out on the lawn." He plans to plant the backyard with clover so the deer family that is so dear to his family keeps dropping by.

The work the design team and owners have done is meant to last a lifetime. "My wife has made it clear that if we ever move," the husband says, "we're taking the house with us." **L**

KITCHEN CONNECTOR

Walls painted a light mushroom color, Hertco cabinetry designed by Domistyle and honed cedar-granite countertops from Scrivanich Natural Stone merge the kitchen with the adjoining dining room and living room. Stewart Wurtz designed the walnut, maple and blackened-steel counter stools, and the Eastern-influenced accessories above the cabinets are from Glenn Richards. Wolf and Liebherr appliances from Albert Lee Appliance blend in with the cabinetry.



CONVERSATION PIECE

A sculptural dining table made of eucalyptus and walnut wood provides a pretty setting when viewed from the living room. Designed in collaboration by Pearce and Wurtz, the table wears an Asian-inspired inlaid pattern on its surface. The oil painting by Patricia Lesick is the focal point of the room, which also features Wurtz's dining chairs and a Kenchiku fixture by Satori Light Sculptures made of resin-fused washi paper and steel.