



A window seat at the end of the loft provides the perfect perch for reading. The bookcases were designed to blend into the built-ins.

BY FRED ALBERT
 PHOTOGRAPHED BY BENJAMIN BENSCHNEIDER

One For The Books

In every room, open walls were lined with shelves stretching from floor to ceiling

WHEN A SOFTWARE ENGINEER and his artist-wife began hunting for a home two years ago, bookshelves were foremost in their mind.

The husband's father had died three years earlier, leaving a book collection that totaled 13,000 volumes – about half the size of the average B. Dalton. "He bought books at rummage sales, garage sales, auctions and the like," recalls the husband. "He typically bought them for nickels and dimes. But he knew what was good."

Selling the collection was out of the question. So the husband and wife began searching for a house

with enough wall space to give it the showcase it deserved.

They ended up with an Eastside home with lots of possibilities.

Although it was designed in the mid-1960s by respected architect Ralph Anderson, the home wasn't finished to Anderson's specifications. The original owner added bizarre, arched doorways fitted with textured amber glass, and Bavarian-style railings that looked like something out of a Leavenworth souvenir shop.

The white walls and matching shag carpet were overshadowed by brown wood ceilings, making the interior feel dark and top-heavy. "It strained your eyes," recalls the wife.

"It wasn't a calm house to me."

Happily, most of the shortcomings were cosmetic. The long, low form, sheltering eaves and extensive use of wood reminded the couple of an updated Adirondack lodge. Level changes helped divide the open interior into clearly defined "rooms." And the unbroken expanse of walls looked large enough for the husband's literary inheritance.

The couple asked architect Luther M. Hintz, AIA, and interior designer Pamela Pearce, ASID, to remodel the house. Both had worked in Anderson's office earlier in their careers and were familiar with the architect's detailing. At the same time, they

weren't afraid to add a few touches of their own.

Hintz squared off the door tops and replaced the amber insets with sheets of clear, rippled glass. He designed sinewy railings that echo the horizontal lines of the house, and introduced sliding doors that resemble Japanese yoshido – shoji screens fitted with solid panels instead of rice paper. The Far Eastern overtones reflect influences in Anderson's work, and the owners' personal interest in Asian design.

Hintz kept most of the existing walls, confining his major changes to the master bath. There, two smaller rooms were joined to form one



Glass partitions divide the marble-covered master bath. The owners can see eagles through the skylights.



Japanese textiles adorn the bed, which backs up against a storage closet designed to conceal a seldom-used loom. Paneled closet doors echo the home's Asian theme.



Above – Custom cabinets crafted by Stewart Wurtz keep kitchen clutter out of sight. Wall ovens are concealed behind the sliding doors at right, while spices are stored behind the stainless-steel panels on either side of the cooktop hood.

Right – Honed granite covers the custom-designed dining table. The storage chest next to it was newly crafted from 19th-century Japanese warehouse doors.



light-filled space divided by freestanding glass panels.

Nearly every room features built-in bookshelves. To make the units feel like part of the home instead of just an afterthought, Hintz had furniture maker Stewart Wurtz stretch the shelves from floor to ceiling or make them extensions of the furniture: cradling a windowseat in the balcony or protruding to form nightstands in the bedroom.

The book bindings provide the primary touches of color and pattern in the home. To eliminate the harsh contrasts that the owners found unsettling, Pearce bathed the interior in a monochromatic palette of gray, beige and taupe.

Pearce lightened the chocolate-brown ceilings and trim with an overglaze of semi-transparent stain. The treatment altered the color of the wood without concealing the grain. New wood floors provide a warmer anchor for the interior, and help balance the wood ceilings above.

"It's a much calmer place to be," notes the wife. "It's a napping kind of house."

The neutral palette provides a stunning backdrop for the owners' collection of handcrafted artifacts. A Chinese canoe rests on the soffit over the couple's bed, while an Indonesian one is perched outside the living-room window (where it doubled as an ice chest for a party last summer). The expansive storage chest sitting next to the dining table is actually a new piece fabricated from a set of 19th-century Japanese warehouse doors. Antique Japanese merchant's baskets rest on top, alongside a pair of beaded West African hats.

The chest holds some of the wife's textile collection, other parts of which adorn chair backs, railings, pillows and beds throughout the house. "My wife believes in the adage, 'She who dies with the most fabric wins,'" quips the husband.

Except for the stainless-steel hood over the kitchen cooktop, there are no shiny finishes in the house. Pearce wanted every surface to feel textural and hand-worked, in keeping with the emphasis on craftsmanship. The designer honed the surface of the custom granite dining table, and repeated the treatment on the granite counters in the kitchen. At the wife's request, the design team hid the wall ovens behind sliding wood panels, so they're out of sight when not in use. Pearce repeated the idea in the guest bath, concealing the shower behind floor-to-ceiling panels so the space could double as a powder room.

The home used to be entered through a long, dark passageway poised between the carport and the house. Hintz enclosed the carport, creating a courtyard between the two structures. He illuminated the passageway with skylights and custom-designed wall sconces, and added a gate halfway down so the corridor wouldn't seem so long.

Landscape designer Terry Welch underscored the home's Asian vocabulary by installing a Japanese garden in the courtyard. A bed of raked gravel is flanked by azaleas and a border of black stones. Copper rain chains from Japan hang from the corners of the surrounding walkway.

Raymond Fuller of Spectrum Building Services in Seattle supervised the remodel, which took about a year to complete. Despite all the changes, the finished home had space for only about 6,000 books (the rest went into storage). Nevertheless, the owners aren't complaining. What they lack in shelving, they more than make up for in comfort. ©

Seattle writer Fred Albert reports regularly on home design for Pacific and other regional magazines. Benjamin Benschneider is a Seattle Times photographer.

CLASSIC

HOME
FURNISHINGS

◆
Unusual,
High Quality
Home
Furnishings
At Reasonable
Prices

◆
Located in the heart
of downtown Ballard just
north of Market Street
on 24th NW
Open 7 days a week

5514 24th N.W.
789-5112

Remodeling
Your Kitchen
or Bathroom?

Reface it
KITCHEN SYSTEMS



Reface It can reface or renovate your old kitchen or bathroom to look better than new quickly, efficiently and at a fraction of the cost.

CALL FOR A FREE
IN-HOME ESTIMATE

Lynnwood
778-9336
Bellevue
869-0456

Seattle
783-1930
Kent
946-0889

- ◆ Manufactured Locally
- ◆ Custom Designs
- ◆ Wood or Laminate
- ◆ New Doors, Drawer Fronts & Countertops
- ◆ New Drawers & Guides
- ◆ Wide Selection of Styles & Colors

Cont. Lic. # REFACE10099JK

S
A
L
E

Sale Prices On
Techline Everyday
At Del-Teet!



Now you won't have to wait for special prices on Techline! Del-Teet stocks hundreds of Techline furniture combinations for your bedroom, office, and storage needs. Let us assemble Techline for you or do it yourself and save everyday at Del-Teet.

DEL-TEET

Phone: 462-5400

10308 N.E. 10th, Bellevue (2 Blocks North of Bellevue Square)
Hours: Mon-Sat 9:30-6:00, Sunday 12:00-5:00 p.m.