

TREND WATCH: THE SEASON'S "IT" COLORS & THE CONDO CRAZE

SEATTLE HOMES & LIFE

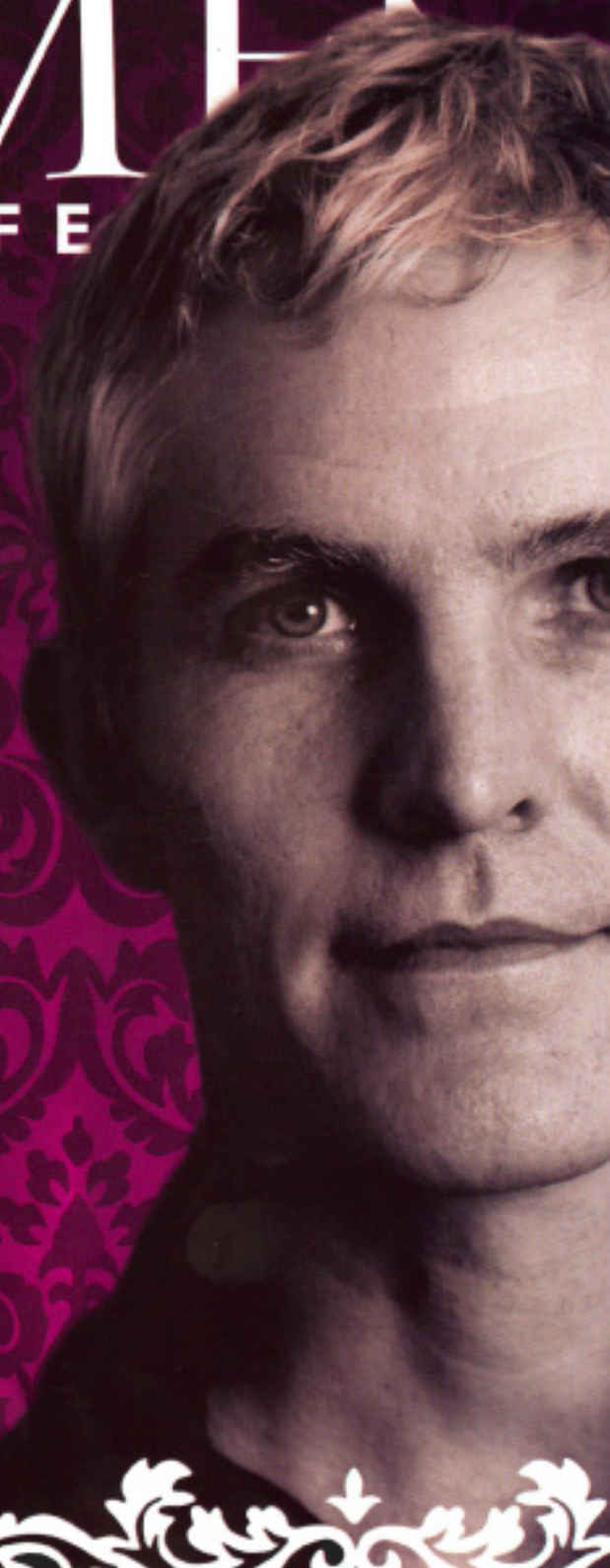
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*Find out Who and What
defines local design*

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Turning Over New Leaves

Welcoming in the new year is a perfect time to celebrate new beginnings, like the one created for a formerly unfinished house in **Washington Park**. New homeowner Sumi Stevens, architects Stuart Silk and Anne Adams and interior designer Kay Fleenor took the partially constructed shell from forlorn to fabulous, and expertly fit the new design into the framework of its older neighborhood. Also in these pages, we reveal our **Next 10**—people, places and things that are experts at new starts. Read on to find out who made the cut as Seattle's design-definers.



SECOND *chance*

WRITTEN BY HEATHER J. PAPER PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHAEL JENSEN

ABOVE: A CLOSE LOOK REVEALS THAT INTERIOR DESIGNER KAY FLEENOR FOUND A WAY TO PLAY LINES AND SHAPES OFF ONE ANOTHER, AS EVIDENCED BY THE STRAIGHT LINES OF THE FIREPLACE, THE CURVACEOUS BACK OF THE CHAIR AND THE SQUARE MOTIFS IN THE DRAPERIES BEYOND. OPPOSITE: THE HOMEOWNER'S DESIGN PREFERENCES ARE IMMEDIATELY EVIDENT IN THE LIVING ROOM. "SUMI LIKES VERY NICE MATERIALS," FLEENOR SAYS. "NOT TOO TRADITIONAL BUT NOT TOO CONTEMPORARY, EITHER, AND ALWAYS UNDERSTATED."

BELOW: THERE'S VISUAL INTEREST AT EVERY LEVEL IN THIS DINING ROOM, RIGHT UP TO AND INCLUDING THE COFFERED CEILING FROM WHICH A STUNNING LIGHT FIXTURE FROM BAKER KNAPP & TUBBS IS SUSPENDED. OPPOSITE: THE TEAM AGREES THAT THE BUILDING AND DESIGN PROCESS WAS A TRUE COLLABORATION. "WHENEVER WE PRESENTED SOMETHING, SUMI DIDN'T JUST GO ALONG; SHE WAS ALWAYS VERY HONEST ABOUT WHAT SHE THOUGHT," ANNE ADAMS SAYS. "WE HAD HER INPUT EVERY STEP OF THE WAY."

An unfinished project gets new life from a homeowner—and an architect—with the vision to see it through

The Washington Park home stood empty for nearly two years, half finished, while the Seattle rain took its toll. It needed someone with vision to see beyond the soaked framing, someone like Sumi Stevens. She purchased the property, not knowing what pros she would call on to see her dream through to completion.

Then, as it happened, she met architect Stuart Silk.



"I recall telling her that she should strongly consider hiring me," says Silk, who was familiar with the home's original plans—though he considered them less spectacular than the site deserved. "I knew how damaging a poorly designed home on this prominent corner would be for the whole neighborhood. It got all the way to framing, then it stopped because of financial problems."

And so it happened that Sumi didn't have to search for an architect; he found her first. But nothing could be done until the house had been wrapped and completely dried out, rendered void of mold and capable of being a healthy house. That wouldn't have been necessary if Sumi had opted to start over, but she didn't want to do that. Besides, Silk and senior associate Anne Adams had seen the bones of the house and knew they could do something with it.

"They wanted to make the house look like it had been there for a while," says the homeowner, "and that's one of the reasons the relationship worked. I'd done some renovation in the past and was really interested in keeping up with the historical nature of Seattle and its houses."

The vision for the house evolved as the architects got to know Sumi better. They started by looking at the existing floor plan to see how they could make it suit her needs. Then, to keep the budget down, they explored how they could reuse as much as possible of the existing framing. "Working as a team, we were able to find the vision that was most appropriate to the neighborhood—and to Sumi's tastes," Silk says. "We settled on a vocabulary that borrowed from a combination of sources, including Mediterranean, neoclassical and federal."

As it turned out, the architects also made the process of hiring an interior designer easy. "We started working on the interior elevations of the house and, at that point, told Sumi that it would be a good time to bring in an interior designer," Adams says. "She didn't have one in mind, but Stuart had worked with Kay [Fleenor] on a number





ABOVE: THIS HOME'S ORIGINAL STRUCTURE INCLUDED A SMALL BALCONY OFF THE MASTER BEDROOM. ELIMINATING THE BALCONY ALLOWED SPACE FOR A COMFORTABLE SITTING AREA. OPPOSITE, TOP: THIS INFORMAL LIVING AREA GETS A LOT OF USE, THANKS TO ITS CLOSE PROXIMITY TO THE KITCHEN—THE HUB OF MUCH FAMILY ACTIVITY—AND THE BACK YARD, WHERE SUMI HAS BEEN KNOWN TO SET UP A GAME OF CROQUET. OPPOSITE, BELOW LEFT: ONE OF THE BEST VIEWS IS FROM THIS MASTER BATH WINDOW, WHICH FACES LAKE WASHINGTON. OPPOSITE, BELOW RIGHT: USING THE COLOR PALETTE FROM THE SLATE FLOOR, A MIX OF PAINTED AND WOOD CABINETS HELPS CREATE A MODERN SPIN ON A MORE TRADITIONAL SPACE.

of projects and thought she would be a good fit." After meeting with the designer, Sumi agreed that this pro could translate her style preferences.

Fleenor immediately determined that Sumi didn't want anything too ostentatious; instead, she was looking for interiors that were calm. Fleenor chose neutral hues to establish that soothing ambience, with lights and darks doing a dance throughout and textures providing the rhythm. Nowhere is that more evident than in the formal living and dining rooms. Located across from each other at the front of the house, they take entirely opposite tacks, inspired by the creamy white fireplace in one and its black counterpart in the other.

"We needed to select stone for the fireplaces, so we were in Stuart's office looking at what we could get in Italy," Fleenor recounts. "There was a light one we really liked and a dark one we really liked, so we decided to use one in each place and create these different atmospheres. I think your first inclination would be to do the dining room lighter and the living room darker—at least, that's

what I would think. But we decided it would be more interesting to do what you don't expect."

That philosophy resonates throughout the house. There are surprises at every turn, whether it's small slabs of marble jutting out from the kitchen wall to form shelves, or light fixtures that catch your eye because of their high style. But the bottom line is that everyone is happy with the results, and no one more so than the homeowner herself.

"Whenever you immerse yourself in something, it's hard to evaluate it objectively when it's done," Silk says. "But that being said, Sumi likes it. And many neighbors have said how much they like the way it fits into this important Seattle neighborhood. In the end, I do feel we achieved the goals we set for ourselves: The massing, proportions, materials, colors and landscaping have all come together to create a distinctive, timeless whole. The house is, at once, a part of the fabric of the existing neighborhood and its own unique expression." ■

Hostler, Paper is the author of the Decorating Ideas Book (Taschen, \$24.95).



design details

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General Contractor
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For resource information, see page 87.

