

CRIME PAYS: A visit with author Ann Rule

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# SOMETHING *for* EVERYONE



THE HOME'S GEORGIAN FACADE (opposite) GIVES WAY TO AN INTERIOR THAT'S MORE MODERN AND OPEN, WITH CONCRETE FLOORS AND A FAMILY ROOM (this page) THAT'S THE HEART OF THE HOME.

## A Lake Washington home satisfies a couple with contrasting tastes

By Mia Nicholson    Photographs by Laurie Black

Some say compromise is the key to a successful marriage.

Few, however, would argue the same for architecture. Then again, not everyone has visited the Lake Washington home of Stuart and Mary Silk.

"My wife is pretty much a traditionalist, and I tend to like a lot of contemporary stuff," explains Stuart, a prominent Seattle architect. Once known almost exclusively for his modern designs, Stuart's current work frequently melds the old with the new.

When he found a piece of property on Lake Washington and proposed building a new home, Mary balked. The couple and their children shared a lovely old house in Broadmoor, next to the golf course. It was a traditionalist's natural habitat. "I didn't want to move," admits Mary.

But Stuart had other plans.

One New Year's Eve she found him huddled over his drafting table. "I asked who the house was for. He said I didn't know them. Did they have kids? He said yes," recounts Mary. "It took me about five minutes to figure it out. Of course I fell in love with the floor plan right away."

The savvy architect sweetened the move with capacious closets and bathrooms—commodities notoriously absent from the old Broadmoor residence. The result was a design that would satisfy Mary's traditional tastes and Stuart's architecturally adventurous pen. His approach?

"Mary was my client. It's a lot easier to design something for a client than for myself. There are just too many options," confesses Stuart.

The Silks agreed that the neighborhood demanded something with a historic mien. For inspiration, Stuart looked to a dignified style of historic shingled homes he'd admired in San Francisco's Pacific Heights. To mimic the distinctive blackish color of the old shingles, he consulted with interior designer Bill Padden, who suggested soaking





the shingles in umber-tinted ebony stain. The effect is graphic and arresting.

"The shingles look soft, like velvet, and the light millwork just pops," notes Padden. Wholly authentic looking, the Georgian-inspired façade belies its 1998 vintage.

"I had an argument with a window washer once, because he didn't believe that the house was only two years old," remembers Mary, chuckling.

The traditional mood carries through into the formal entry. Illuminated by a large bronze lantern, the gracious foyer contains a generously spindled staircase, quartersawn oak flooring and several of Stuart's favorite paintings. Opposite the stairs, Mary's library—complete with

beamed ceiling and comfy, classic furnishings à la Padden—conveys the atmosphere of a retired professor's study.

"It's my favorite room," says the delighted Mary.

But beyond the entry and Mary's office, the house segues to a more contemporary style. Oak flooring gives way to acid-etched concrete so subtle in color, it nearly matches the flickering blue-gray of the waves outside.

"If the floor was something more dramatic, like stone, it would have drawn attention to itself instead of the view," notes Padden, approvingly. Mary hedged at concrete floors at first, fearing they might be too cold, but radiant heat won her over.

"Now she loves them," say Stuart, citing concrete's resistance to sand tracked in from the beach.

The living room's centerpiece—a mixed-media wall sculpture by Dennis Evans—also signals a more modern aesthetic. A pair of enormous mirrors underscore the effect. Opposite, a slate shelf poised on pine corbels salvaged from a 19th-century ship neatly unite present and past. A table and four chairs commissioned from William Switzer & Associates provide formal dining space.

Faux-finished walls create a timeless atmosphere that unites all the pieces. The effect was hard-won. After several tries, the Silks arrived at a wash of soft, custardy color, courtesy of On the Wall.

PANELED ARCHES FRAME THE ENTRY TO THE DINING ROOM (opposite and this page).

TRADITIONAL FURNISHINGS ARE PAIRED WITH CONTEMPORARY ART HERE AND IN THE FAMILY ROOM, VISIBLE THROUGH THE OPENING AT RIGHT.





THE KITCHEN (far left) OFFERS A CONTEMPORARY TAKE ON AN ITALIAN FARMHOUSE. ARTWORK BY DENNIS EVANS DOMINATES THE LIVING ROOM (left). THE MASTER BEDROOM (this page) IS DISTINGUISHED BY A VAULTED COFFERED CEILING.

A wide archway unites the living room with a family room and open kitchen. "We wanted the downstairs really open and informal in feeling," says Stuart of the contemporary floor plan. "It's just two big rooms that are open to each other."

The kitchen/family room is the home's heart. "We normally dine here," says Stuart, pointing to a long Indonesian hardwood table. Buttery walls, and cabinets painted French blue, infuse the room with a casual coziness. Soft seating in the center focuses on another hearth. A long island topped with mustard-yellow marble separates the cooking area from the living space.

"Marble isn't recommended for kitchens, because it stains and doesn't keep a high finish," notes Stuart. "But

that's what we wanted. It's getting worn, and we like that."

Behind the counter, a precast concrete arch inset with bricks forms a cooking alcove to contain smoke and smells. The total effect is at once rustic Italian farmhouse and slightly edgy.

French doors extend the informal atmosphere outside, to the barbecue and yet

**"I HAD AN ARGUMENT WITH A WINDOW WASHER ONCE, BECAUSE HE DIDN'T BELIEVE THAT THE HOUSE WAS ONLY TWO YEARS OLD," RECALLS MARY SILK.**

another fireplace. "In the summer, you can sit out on the patio and eat there, with the fire going," says Mary. A self-proclaimed water person, her favorite thing about the house is its proximity to the shore.

But it's the master suite that wins the most applause. Sun-washed by windows

on three sides, the bedroom boasts a high, peaked ceiling with pronounced coffers. Decorated in pale apricot and turquoise, with sisal carpeting, a canopied bed—and, yes, a fireplace—the room is at once simple and luxurious. The adjacent bathroom, complete with Thassos marble floors and an extraordinary marble tub veined in sky blue, jade green and pale lavender, elicits envy. And next door, a large walk-in closet fulfills Mary's old longing for storage space.

As for Stuart, he loves the light, the informality and his hidden reading spot in the garden. Which is a good thing.

"He's never getting me out of this house," says Mary. ■

*Contributing Editor Mia Nicholson writes about Northwest homes, travel, food and fashion.*