

# STRIKING BALANCE

A DAZZLING TEAM EFFORT HELPS A SEATTLE HOME EMBRACE ITS LUSH SETTING, WHILE STRADDLING THE DIVIDE BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN.

WRITTEN BY LISA BINGHAM DEWART PHOTOGRAPHY BY BENJAMIN WOOLSEY

**ARCHITECTURE** Stuart Silk, Stuart Silk Architects | Limited PS  
**INTERIOR DESIGN** Christian Grevstad, Christian Grevstad Inc. | Interior Design  
**HOME BUILDER** Michael Brooks, Schilperoort & Brooks Inc.  
**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE** Keith R. Geller, Keith R. Geller Landscape Design  
**BEDROOMS** 5 | **BATHROOMS** 7 | **SQUARE FEET** 7,400



A cerused finish on the entry's walnut paneling and a glass globe chandelier by John Pomp, from De Sousa Hughes in San Francisco, offset the traditional bones of the home. The door was custom-designed by Stuart Silk Architects.



In design, as in life, it all boils down to balance. For a Seattle couple, this meant creating a new home that would bridge aesthetics while serving the needs of the adults and three growing children alike. "I didn't want a high-maintenance house," the wife remembers. So to achieve that perfect blend of sophistication and family-friendly ease, they tapped the talents of architect Stuart Silk and designer Christian Grevstad, who found a balance of their own while collaborating on the project.

From the start, the homeowners were "looking for traditional bones but were open to some modern influences," recalls Silk. Together with architect and project manager Anne Adams, who worked for Silk at the time, he created a floor plan arranged on a horizontal axis, taking

A Pande Cameron area rug grounds a group of furniture from the Christian Grevstad Collection at Terris Draheim in the living room. Hair-on-hide textiles from C.C. Leathers and Keleen Leathers on the ottomans bring a textural richness to the space. A Corbin Bronze sculpture stands guard in one corner. French doors let the outside in.



In the family room, sinuous armchairs add a punch of Art Deco curve to the bold forms of the Christian Grevstad Collection sofa and the Christian Liaigre ottoman from Susan Mills Showroom. Dressed in durable fabrics and open to lush views, the elegant space, adjacent to the kitchen, is a key spot for the family.

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advantage of the wide site beside a golf course. A covered outdoor room at the rear serves “as the nexus of the house and knits together the primary spaces,” explains Adams—and overlooks a 75-year-old cherry blossom tree whose natural beauty was an inspiration to all.

Despite the rooms’ formal progression, the effect reads light and open, since the architects avoided enclosing the central spine to create a traditional hallway. Instead, “We maximized every square foot,” says Silk, so nearly all the space is usable. The dining room, for example, takes a bite out of the open main circulation path, which gives it a gallery-like feel and sense of connectivity. “We talked a lot about maintaining visual connections,” says Adams, both across rooms and into the landscape. The living, dining and family rooms all have direct access out to the gardens via glass doors, and doors in the living and family rooms open into that loggia, uniting the spaces even further.

As the work progressed, Grevstad joined in to provide perspective on the functionality of the interior and exterior spaces, and to serve as the lead in the selection and specification of materials and finishes inside and out. For the interiors, “I wanted to enhance the scale and volume of the rooms using natural textures and neutral colors that were high in contrast,” says Grevstad. So in the double-height entry, he opted for cerused walnut wainscoting stained with a custom cinder color and zinc-hued undertones: a rich experience when set against the warm, pale shades of the walls, ceiling and wide-plank stair treads (the installation of which, along with the overall construction, was helmed by builder Michael Brooks). “The project moved at an intense pace and required a lot of coordination,” notes Brooks, who was able to tackle the specialty finishes with the help of superintendent Dean Haven.



Guy Anderson's *Purusa* hangs in the dining room, overlooking Christian Grevstad Collection chairs arrayed around a table from Kirk Albert Vintage Furnishings. Concealed from the street by a hedge, the space opens onto a small garden. Natural light again filters in through French doors.



One of the most popular places to gather in the house, the kitchen is open, bright and airy thanks to natural light and an elongated Christian Liaigre light fixture from Susan Mills Showroom. The central island, topped with Caesarstone quartz, offers seating space by way of Ted Boerner stools from Terris Draheim.



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The organic Northwest palette of creams and grays continues into the rest of the house, staying away from color changes that would interrupt the architectural flow. Furnishings were kept neutral, as well; Grevstad went in a contemporary direction, “looking for clean and simple—less is more,” he says. “I wanted to create visual continuity throughout the open plan, allowing freedom for the eye to move without a lot of clutter.”

Unexpected pieces break from tradition, like the modern glass pendants in the entry, while others were chosen to harmonize with the architecture. “I didn’t want to throw in a brightly colored sofa that would create tension. Large pieces should balance and complement the spaces they’re in,” Grevstad says, so he populated the rooms with refined yet comfortable furnishings covered in fabrics to hold up to the boys and their friends.

Sandstone pavers extend from the covered outdoor room to the terrace beyond. The space, a request of the owners and the organizing element of the main floor plan, can be used nearly year-round, providing the residents with a sheltered spot to take in the landscape and, especially, a decades-old cherry blossom tree.



Above: Grouping Christian Grevstad Collection chairs and a Christian Liaigre bench hearthside makes for a cozy respite in the master bedroom. The Archie Held Studio occasional tables are from Terris Draheim. Right: Kohler sinks with Hansgrohe faucets fill the master bath's vanity, by Northwest Custom Cabinets.

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Landscape designer Keith R. Geller sought balance in his piece of the puzzle, too, with plantings that respond to the structure's strong horizontal lines and graphic exterior palette of bone, white and zinc. "I wanted to create vertical forms," he says, "so I used a lot of Italian cypress trees in groupings," as well as round boxwoods for contrast. Softness comes from maple trees that create canopies around the garden.

In the end, the collaboration yielded just the home the couple wanted. "The whole team enjoyed the working process, and the clients were really wonderful to work with," says Grevstad. Adds Silk, "We worked as a unit, and everyone was a good listener." And the client agrees. For her and her family, she says, the result is "a house that will grow with us." **L**



A wall of glass separates the shower area from the freestanding, sculptural tub by Victoria + Albert in the master bath, clad in an off-white crema beida quarry stone.

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