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A 21ST-CENTURY RENAISSANCE TRANSFORMS THIS HOME INTO A STately DWELLING FILLED WITH TEXTURE AND WARMTH. By Sara Anderson

Originally a clean-lined contemporary house with little detailing, this home near Seattle now features many subtle European nuances. New stonework and stucco give the exterior a warm, old-world feel.



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Separated from Europe by an ocean, a continent, and a culture, this Seattle-area home breathes an air of old-world refinement while basking in the glow of warm West Coast sunsets. The property, not the house, had driven the sale: highly prized waterfront on Lake Washington east of Seattle, with glorious southwestern exposure. The home's stoic origins belie its now dynamic appearance. Transforming the stark dwelling into one inspiring warmth required a design team up to the challenge.

Fortunately, the owners had worked with architect Dennis Marsh of AOME Architects and interior designer Pamela Pearce on previous projects. Quickly in step, the duo crafted a plan and molded the home into a stately manse with sophisticated European flair.

The proportions of the home and its steep waterfront site reminded Pearce of the grand homes on Italy's Lake Como. With that image and the owners' European antique collection in mind, Pearce and Marsh embellished the home's more than 7,000 square feet with detailing. On the exterior, a classic stone-and-stucco treatment in the homeowners' favorite warm earth tones lends a sense of timelessness and lasting beauty.

opposite The sandstone cap framing the entryway formalizes the stone exterior. Layering stucco, stone, and sandstone gives the house texture and a sense of strength and permanence that it didn't have before.

left These sandstone corbels, made in China, were imported by a Seattle company. A finishing process renders them nearly smooth to the touch.

above Tall wood wainscoting on the stair wall of the two-story entry breaks up the space and brings it into scale.





Direct southwestern exposure affords the living room an abundance of light. Exterior screens shade the room, automatically descending when light is most extreme.



CRAFTING TRADITION

Typical of villas dotting the European countryside, this home is oriented to beautiful views.

The home's western exposure is among its greatest assets, says general contractor Bill Alexander of Edifice Construction Co., Inc. "Between the light reflected from the water and the high ceilings, the entire house just fills up with light," he says. "This is crucial in Seattle, where we get so many cloudy days."

Taking cues from Renaissance architecture, wherein shapes diminish in size as the eye travels upward, effectively scaling down volume, Marsh reduced the scale in many rooms by adding coffers to high ceilings and wainscoting and stone to stark walls.

This technique works particularly well in the living room, which serves as the main gathering space. Painting and glazing the ceiling in a golden hue provides a soft glow to the room at night and a subtle reflection from the water during the day. It's a perfect spot for the family to enjoy vivid sunsets and stunning views of the lake.

left Surrounded in tumbled travertine, the two-tier fireplace helps balance the living room's volume and height while providing a display area for artwork.

above Tucked under a balcony library, the music room's one-story ceiling makes it the ideal alcove for the baby grand. A nearby spiral staircase connects upper and lower levels.

A wall of stone becomes the rustic backdrop for the fine oil paintings that hang in the dining room. A hand-carved dining table and antique French chairs emphasize the balance between rusticity and formality, a theme throughout the house.



Artwork adorns practical living spaces with vitality befitting old-world-inspired interiors.

Originally, the home's interiors had very little texture or trim, and finishes were smooth and contemporary. Marsh and Pearce added layers of visual interest and depth to the home's cavernous spaces with a carefully selected palette of natural materials.

"You define any house in terms of layers," Marsh says. "Layers are the best part of architecture, which is why the most interesting architecture must be explored over time, rather than the type you walk in to and can instantly perceive in its entirety."

In the kitchen, Marsh and Pearce created a feeling of timelessness with a spacious granite-topped island large enough to accommodate friends and family. A stone wall in the dining room is now a suitable place to display chosen pieces of the owners' art collection. The dining table, specially commissioned for their former home, is a work of art in itself. With a cherry parquet top, the sides feature carved flowers from each of the four seasons.

With no formally designated family room in the house, the designers created several intimate gathering spaces. In the kitchen, for instance, a seating area with a fireplace provides a cozy spot to watch the news or relax after work.

above The kitchen's center island boasts a six-burner range for everyday cooking. Granite counters and white-oak cabinetry are easy-care surfaces.

below Just opposite the island sits a hearth area complete with a fireplace and television.





A blend of old and new, treasures collected over time find appropriate niches for display.

The homeowners brought with them all they loved from their previous residence, a 20,000-square-foot French country home. Pearce used most of the owners' existing antiques, primarily 18th- and 19th-century French country pieces, purchasing new upholstery, some tables and chairs, and Oriental rugs to christen the new space. Most of the paintings in the home are by 19th- and 20th-century American and European artists.

In an effort to enhance the desired look of an instantly honed patina, the hand-troweled plaster walls have been painted, then glazed and stippled to create yet another aged surface.

Although the homeowners were interested in the location "initially because of the lake and all the activities the waterfront provides," Pearce says, the home's detailing and old-world ambience perfectly complement the location. "They thoroughly enjoy the light and the dramatic views the property affords," she says.

opposite An antique baker's rack nestled into this stone alcove showcases the homeowners' assortment of pottery, copper, and pewter.

above Family dining takes place just steps away from the lake-view terrace. When the weather permits, the French doors swing open for alfresco dining.



Reinvigorating this home meant articulating voluminous spaces with layered detailing.

The master bedroom, like the living room, posed the challenge of too much volume and not enough detail. "The room felt so huge initially that the king-size bed was absolutely lost in it," Marsh says.

Rich European-style details create a space at once warm and restful. Wood paneling and trim were stained with a pickled finish to complement the antique furnishings. The gold marble fireplace and wood flooring further contribute to the feeling of quiet luxury. The sumptuous earth-tone palette ties the varied materials.

The coffered ceiling and wood wainscoting help draw the eye down into the room and allow the large French armoire and bed to hold their own in the space, enhancing the sense of human scale. Custom silk linens lend texture to the serene room.

Opposite the bed, a private seating area in the master bedroom serves as a quiet oasis, with silk-upholstered chairs and an antique desk astutely positioned for the best view of Lake Washington and the Seattle skyline beyond.

opposite The handsome four-poster creates a sense of enclosure in the large master bedroom. Interior designer Pamela Pearce designed the silk-and-wool Tibetan rug.

above The homeowners can relax away from the public areas of the house in this cozy sitting area opposite the bed. French doors open to a small balcony with panoramic views of the lake and mountains.



Custom cabinetry in the master bathroom borrows details from antique furnishings.

above The master bath features dual brushed-nickel sinks, plus furniturelike cabinetry and detailing. A lowered marble-top makeup table, complete with its own silk-upholstered antique bench, separates the sinks. A skylight casts light on sumptuous golden-hued counters and wainscoting.

"What you can achieve in a home is often a function of the original constraints you're given," Marsh says. It's those constraints that spurred some of the design team's most innovative thinking, he adds. Through subtle nuance, fine detailing, and dimension through layering, Pearce and Marsh transported the home to another era. Even before stepping inside, one has the sense that this home has long occupied the site. As part of the redesign, Marsh reconfigured the home's entry, giving it a courtyard feel typical of gracious homes found in Europe.

"To my mind, the entire house is a bit like a French chateau," Alexander says. "Yet even with this formality, it's still a very welcoming home."

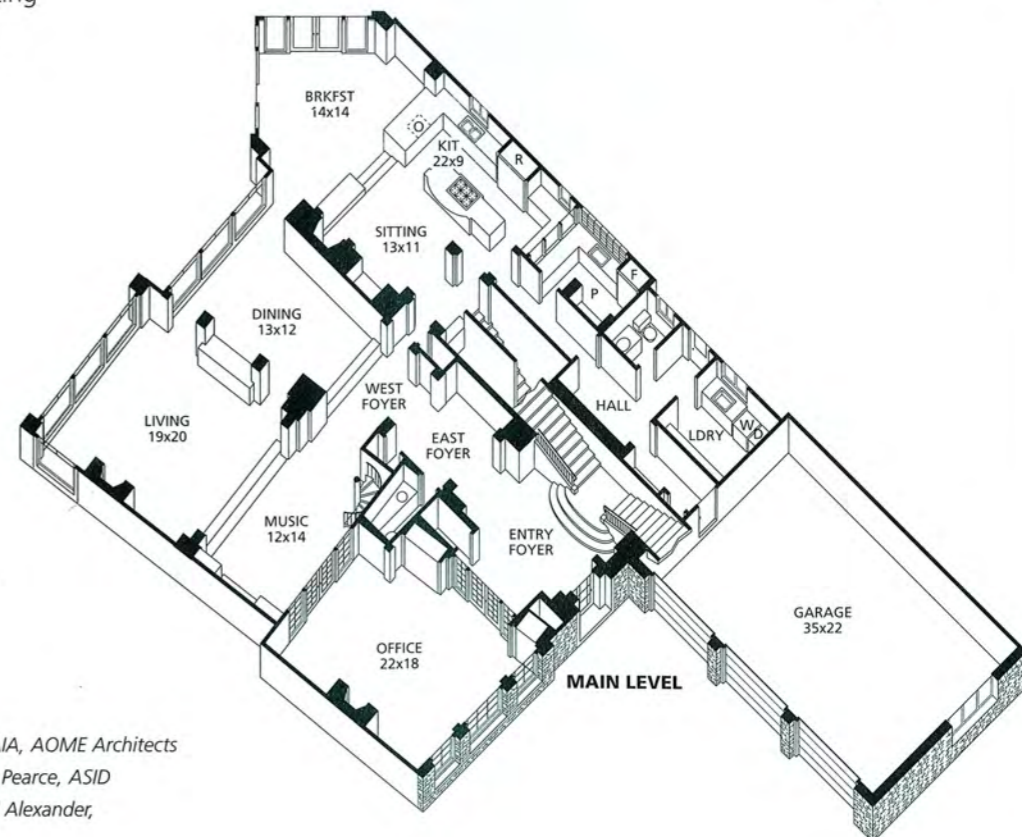
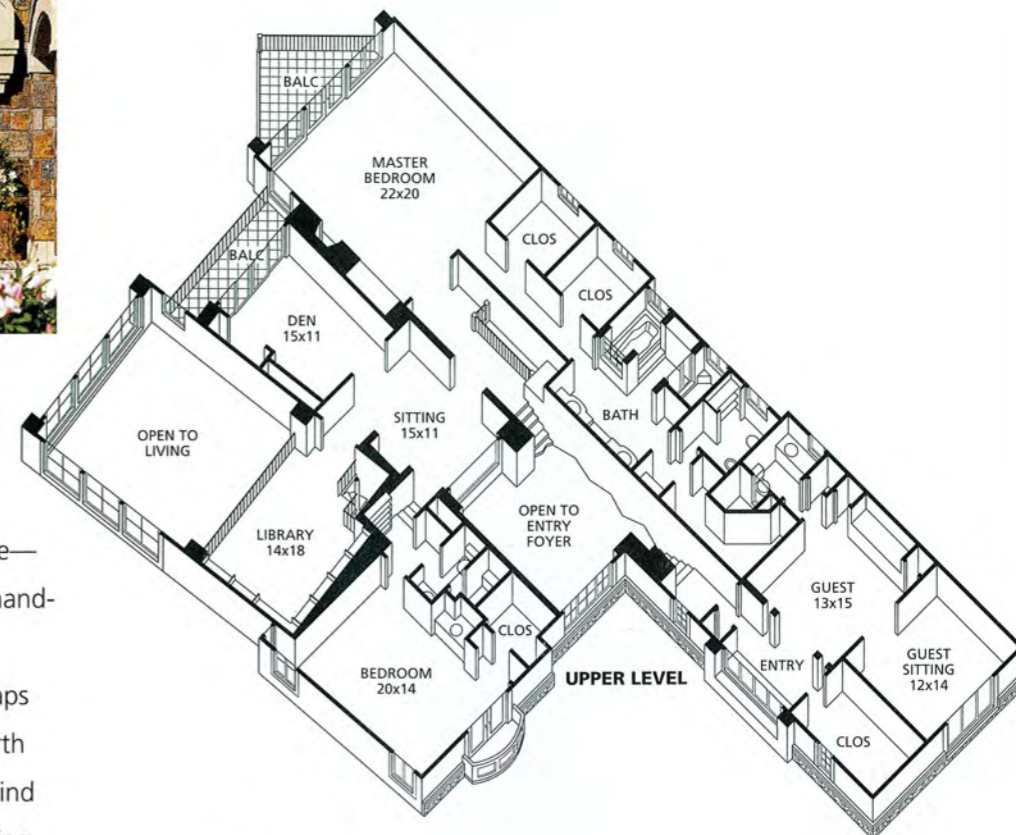
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Photographer: Michael Jensen Floor plans illustrator: Carson Ode
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WHAT MAKES THIS HOME BEAUTIFUL

A rich materials palette—imported sandstone, hand-troweled stucco, and variegated stone—wraps the home in warm earth tones. The selections find their way inside, creating a truly cohesive look.



UPPER LEVEL SQ. FT.: 3,380
MAIN LEVEL SQ. FT.: 3,700
BEDROOMS: 3
BATHROOMS: 3 full, 2 half

ARCHITECT: Dennis Marsh, AIA, AOME Architects
INTERIOR DESIGNER: Pamela Pearce, ASID
GENERAL CONTRACTOR: Bill Alexander, Edifice Construction Co., Inc.