

# Custom Comfort



▲ The Winn home, overlooking Lake Washington, captures a Euro-Mediterranean mood with a “salon”-style living room and expansive top-floor terrace. ▼

*Building a personalized luxury home can be an intensely rewarding experience, if you hire the right professionals and go into it with your eyes open. ■ by Jo Brown*

IT'S NO WONDER that building a custom home has often been compared to the birth of a child: both experiences involve a mixture of intense pain and extreme joy. Like a child, each custom house is unique and individual, the first of its kind and the only one of its kind. Its creation is almost always the product of months, sometimes years, of hard work. But by choosing the right professionals and going into it with their eyes wide open, homeowners can look back on the experience with relief, certainly, but also with an overwhelming sense of accomplishment and gratification.

Just ask Larry Winn, CEO of Winn Art Group, a highly successful art publishing and distributing company based in Seattle. What's the first word that comes to mind when he recalls the planning and building of his lovely, expansive home on north Lake Washington three years ago? “Painful,” he laughs. “But we're very happy with it.”

Inspired by its waterfront location and influenced by the European travels of Winn and his wife, Susan, the home resembles hillside villas along the Mediterranean—clean and crisp, with open terraces and decks facing onto the lake. Landscaping was designed to perpetuate the Mediterranean mood of the home; except for a pair of palm trees, it was executed with foliage indigenous to the Northwest. The view from the top-floor deck reveals water as far as the eye can see, giving the feeling, says Winn, “of being aboard a beached oceanliner.”





▲ This Woodinville home, designed by Anderson Olason Marsh Architects, was divided into three parts. The main house incorporates a comfortable family room and elegant living and dining areas for formal entertaining.

#### AT HOME IN WOODINVILLE

When a Woodinville family decided they needed more space, they asked Anderson Olason Marsh to design a nearly 25,000-square-foot, shingle-style house on eight acres near their current home.

The owners' goal was to create a setting where family and friends could gather, with an emphasis on strengthening community and family ties. Because the scale of the project was so large, incorporating a recreational sports wing with a multipurpose gymnasium, an indoor swimming pool, a little-league baseball field, and a tennis court, the owners were concerned that it not overwhelm the site but fit smoothly into the existing rural neighborhood. To help achieve this objective, the home was divided into

three distinct parts: the main house, which includes both formal and casual spaces; the recreational sports compound, with its separate kitchen and locker/shower rooms; and a detached carriage house with guest quarters above a garage/workshop. Viewed from the surrounding community, the main house presents a relatively modest face.

The home's interiors reflect the owners' desire for warm, friendly spaces. French country furnishings and accessories complement the peach tones of the architectural materials: sandstone floors, a sandstone and marble fireplace, oak woodwork and floors. Interior designer Pam Pierce helped the owners integrate 18th- and 19th-century French country antiques with custom-designed upholstered pieces, antique rugs, and decorative painting in several rooms.

The family spends most of its time in, you guessed it, the family room, which is adjacent to the main kitchen. The design of this sunny, airy room was an attempt to carry forward the vocabulary of the home's exterior, with oak flooring and a

comfortable, lodgelike feel. "A lot of decisions were made from a practical standpoint," explains Marsh. "Materials were chosen for durability and easy maintenance, since people today are so busy that they don't want to build a house that creates more work for them to keep up." The open, sunny terrace is constructed of Arizona sandstone, as is the area surrounding the pool. Hardwood floors in the living room echo the sandstone's herringbone pattern, and the entry-hall flooring blends wood and sandstone in the same pattern for continuity and flow.

Though the time frame for such an extensive project was by no means short—it took six months to design and was under construction for two years—the end result is a comfortable house that exudes a sense of permanence. Only about two and a half years old, it gives the reassuring feeling of having been there a long time.

#### LAKEFRONT LUXURY

With completely different goals in mind, Anderson Olason and Marsh designed a home on the east side of Lake