

HOME GARDEN TRAVEL AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE

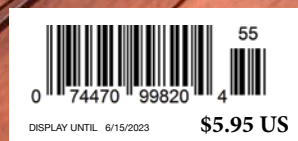
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A GIG HARBOR HOME
EMBRACES NATURE

Transforming an Urban
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DRIFTWOOD COVE

written by MELISSA DALTON photography by MIRANDA ESTES

A GIG HARBOR HOME, DESIGNED BY S9 ARCHITECTURE AND AM INTERIOR DESIGN, EMBRACES THE NATURAL WORLD IN WAYS BIG AND SMALL, IN ORDER TO PROVIDE DAILY INSPIRATION FOR THE ARTIST HOMEOWNER.



THE FIRST IDEA FOR THIS HOME'S DESIGN CAME TO BRETT LINDSAY WHILE WALKING HIS DOG ON THE BEACH. "My dog started chasing sea gulls and they just took off, running and flying," remembers Lindsay. The architect's attention was caught by the flock's wing formation in flight, which ultimately inspired the vision for the home's alternating shed rooflines. It was a fitting start to a project that is an ode to nature for its homeowner, who's an artist. "One of her inspirations is nature," says interior designer Aimee Meisgeier. "So, we wanted to invoke the sense of the natural world throughout the house."

The pair – Lindsay runs S9 Architecture and Meisgeier founded AM Interior Design – collaborated with contractor Magie Wolf of Konzept Builders throughout the three-year design and build process to do just that. They wove together sweeping architectural gestures, like the roofline, with smaller detailed moments, to foster an environment that would bring its owner closer to her favorite source of creativity.

This started with an excellent one-acre site in the Driftwood Cove neighborhood of Gig Harbor, Washington. It's accessed by a long driveway lined with towering old growth Fir trees, and has private beach frontage. "It's a pretty magical place," says Meisgeier of the lot. "The last time that I was there, it was dusk and I could hear owls hooting in the trees, and the cove is so calm."

Once the house was sited, the design process for both architect and interior designer drew on the four elements of nature – including earth, air, fire, and water – as reference points inside and out. This begins at the front, where visitors are guided through a small open-air entry court between the driveway and front door. A glass awning protects from the elements, while underfoot, there's a path of custom concrete pavers with water flowing around their base. Landscaped garden beds anchor the tableau, while the sound of bubbling water gurgles from a nearby rock sculpture fountain.

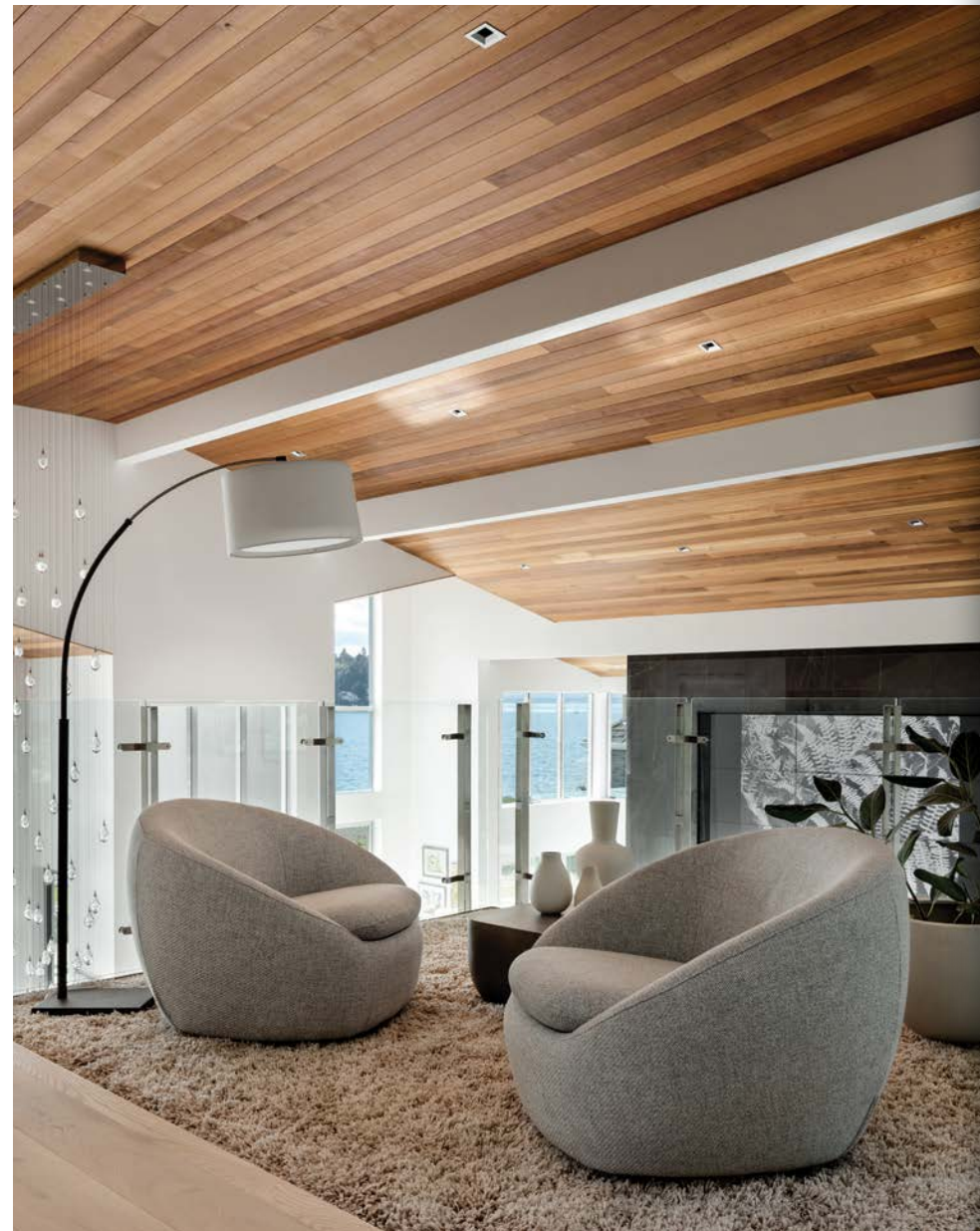
The entry then feeds into the main living spaces, which are all combined together at the center of the 5,792 square foot plan. Once inside, a plethora of windows capture immediate views of the peaceful cove. Overhead, the alternating ceiling planes, clad in clear cedar tongue-and-groove

S9 Architecture and AM Interior Design recently completed this Gig Harbor home infused with nature. ABOVE Exterior finishes include Porcelanosa Age Dark Nature tile and Americana Bingaman Thermally Modified Poplar siding. RIGHT In the kitchen, the waterfall quartzite island is "Silky Polished" from Architectural Surfaces and populated with Restoration Hardware stools. Above the Miele cooktop and range, find an Olympia Tile and Stone Stilio Wave Blanco back splash by Thompson Tile.





"We didn't want anything obstructing the view," says Meisgeier of the fixtures and furnishings. To that end, the clear glass raindrops of a custom chandelier by Studio Bel Vetro from the Kelly Forslund Showroom at Seattle Design Center maintains transparency. Low-lying furniture picks, like the Crate and Barrel leather chairs in the living room and Restoration Hardware chairs around the Williams Sonoma Home table, promote further connection to the cove outside. A custom DaVinci see-through fireplace is surrounded by Porcelanosa Savage Dark Nature tiles with subtle veining. Walls were painted Sherwin Williams High Reflective White to showcase the art.



throughout, further open up the interiors. “It reminds me of sitting under a tree and looking up into the canopy,” says Lindsay of the ceiling. “Like branches going in different directions.”

High windows follow the roofline and bring in lots of natural light, as well as an airiness, further complemented by wide stacking glass doors that open to the backyard, a cantilevered loft hovering over the main space, and the suspended wood tread of the elegant staircase. Material choices riff off of the earth element, says Meisgeier, in everything from their color palette, like the primary bathroom tile that evokes the tones of beach sand, to their materiality, as in the thick quartzite slab that covers the kitchen counters. “That looks like the waves during a storm,” says Meisgeier. “We always wanted to bring nature indoors in any way that we could.”

The focal point in the main room is the inky charcoal fireplace façade covered in porcelain tile that soars from the floor to the double-height ceiling. “I wanted it to be dramatic,” says Meisgeier. “We had the tongue and groove on the ceiling, and mostly white walls, because that will showcase art the best. So, I wanted something that grounded the space.” The tile wraps a three-sided fireplace down below, and higher up, forms an alcove for a cluster of nine television screens. The assemblage can act as art display for the owner’s work – with pictures featured on

ABOVE LEFT A custom staircase with white oak treads inset with LED lights, a stringer by Splice Welding and Design, and railing system by Missoula Blacksmith, lends airiness to the room. ABOVE RIGHT The cantilevered loft has two cozy swivel chairs from West Elm. RIGHT The guest bathroom is outfitted in a medley of stone and wood, including the vanity with custom black walnut Huntwood cabinets by Aimee Meisgeier and a waterfall counter in “Sea Pearl.”



each screen, or across all of them – as well as an excellent large-format television screen, viewable from all different directions due to the overall connectivity of the floorplan.

Since the homeowner likes to entertain family and friends, it was important that the open layout encourage flow, especially between the interior and the backyard, but be balanced with various alcoves that offer extra seating, or spots to retreat. To that end, furniture groupings form easy conversation clusters, dominated by the large living room sectional that can seat a lot of people at once for movie nights.

In the windowed nooks, Meisgeier then placed swivel chairs that let the owner sit comfortably to engage in her favorite pastimes, like reading or putting together a puzzle, or just taking in the view. “She can either swivel to the left and see the sunrise, or swivel to the right and see the sunset,” says Meisgeier. “I’m a huge proponent of the multifunctionality of swivel chairs.”

LEFT In the primary bathroom, the custom feature wall separating the soaking tub from the shower was built on-site, and wrapped in Porcelanosa Tile, Ice Nebraska in ‘Tea.’ The freestanding bath is a Kohler Veil from Keller Supply Kitchen & Bath Showcase, and above it, there’s a Livex Lighting branch light. ABOVE LEFT In the guest room, an Article bed sits with Room and Board pendants. ABOVE RIGHT Landmark Tile, Attitude in ‘Warm Sand’ covers the primary shower walls.



The entry court at the front of the house is an open-air affair, with artful landscaping, plants, water elements, and illuminated by Tech Lighting Model lighting. On the exterior façade, there are Fleetwood windows and cedar siding, and a privacy screen conceals the outdoor shower. Ribbons of high windows tucked under the flaring rooflines bring in light, but don't sacrifice privacy.

The cantilevered lounge on the second-floor is another cozy place with sight lines to everything from the cove, to the living room's movie screen. "That's one of the family's favorite spots to go with a cup of coffee, to relax and enjoy the view," says Meisgeier. The primary suite on the main floor, as well as the upstairs bedrooms and bathrooms, provide even more space to withdraw, with one bathroom even boasting a luxe steam shower. "The owner wanted her guests to be as comfortable as possible," says Lindsay. In the primary bathroom, high windows create a view to the trees, and two varieties of tile differentiates the soaking tub from the shower tucked behind a feature wall. "It's a moment in time being in each area," says Meisgeier. "But they all work nicely together."

Exterior spaces were deftly woven so as to extend the comfort outside, including an outdoor kitchen accessed from the main kitchen by a pass-through window, a patio off the primary bedroom with a hot tub and firepit, and even an outdoor shower off the primary bathroom. All of which combines into a home that will never cease to both inspire and comfort its owner.

"We all wanted the same thing," says Meisgeier. "A beautiful house for the owner to enjoy, to be with her family, to be creative, and get inspired every day when she walks out of her bedroom."

PROJECT SOURCES

CONTRACTOR
Koncept Builders, LLC
konceptbuilders.com

ARCHITECT
S9 Architecture
synthesis9.com

INTERIOR DESIGN
AM Interior Design
aminteriordesign.com

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
Lyon Landscape Architects, Inc
lyonla.com

SELECT FURNISHINGS
Seattle Design Center
seattledesigncenter.com

PLUMBING
Keller Supply
Kitchen & Bath Showcase
kellersupply.com

Describe your design style or philosophy.

A home should reflect the people who live inside so I make sure my clients know that they are being heard throughout the design process and that I have their best interest at heart. A trusting client-designer relationship is the foundation upon which a beautiful, unique home is created. I assure my clients that I respect their lifestyles and design boundaries when I am helping them make decisions. I want them to feel confident in their choices for years to come because when a project ends for a designer, it is just the start for the clients and their new homes.

What's the first thing you notice when you walk into a room?

The furniture layout and how it makes a room feel. Is everything pushed to the far walls creating a big awkward empty space in the middle? Is there too much furniture crammed into the room obstructing the flow of circulation? Is the scale of the furniture appropriate for the space? I also notice lighting or lack thereof. Is there an opportunity to add more decorative lighting such as wall sconces or a statement chandelier to elevate the space? Do the bathrooms have adequate lighting especially in the vanity area? Lighting can make or break the design of a room.

What is your dream project?

I would love to design a home in the Methow Valley which is located just outside the North Cascades. It is one of my favorite areas in Washington state; in fact, I got married there. I love how the homes in the area strive to blend seamlessly into their environment with their material selections, not disrupting the natural beauty of the valley.

What part of the design process do you find most rewarding?

I love seeing all the selected finish materials such as architectural wall features, tile, flooring, and counter tops get installed. It is the greatest feeling walking into a job site and seeing that progress happening. Those materials really start to add the personality and the flair to the project.

In your opinion, what is the most fundamental element of interior design? Where do you start on a new project?

In my opinion, proper use of space and scale are the most fundamental elements of interior design. Rooms that do not flow properly or items that are too large or small for the space really stand out to me when I enter an area. I start with space first, seeing how all areas transition with one another. Then address the scale of selected items to make sure they feel right for the space.

Was design something you've always felt strongly about or was it a gradual process of finding your voice?

I have been interested in design ever since I was little. I remember my parents redoing a childhood bedroom of mine and asking for my opinion. My dream bedroom at age eight consisted of yellow wallpaper with white flowers on it, ruffled white valances on the windows, a white brass day bed with yellow floral bedding and a ruffled bed skirt. Even at that early age, I had a clear vision of a design direction and I remember being so proud of the result.

Favorite era of design?

Hands down, the Mid-Century architecture of 1960's Palm Springs.

Favorite detail of your childhood home?

A wood burning stove fireplace we had in the downstairs den. It made the room so cozy.

Three words that most appropriately sum up your approach to design are...

Ambience, function and patience...lots and lots of patience.



Aimee Meisgeier, Owner and Principal
AM Interior Design