

home
of the
year
2002

Call it Christmas in May.

That's when our jury sits down and starts sifting through the projects submitted by you, our readers, as part of *Seattle Homes and Lifestyles'* annual Home of the Year contest.

You never know what you'll find when you tear open those envelopes. Last year's top homes all measured less than 2,000 square feet. This year the jury gave the nod to two waterfront houses that are several times that size. Could this be a trend?

Hardly. Each project is judged solely on characteristics such as design, originality and story potential. The Fortun and Peabody houses that follow scored high on all three, and offered inspiring responses to their settings and their owners' particular needs. Our hats are off to the winners—and to everyone who took the time to enter.

Thanks, too, go to our intrepid jury, which this year included (left to right) interior designer Andrea Gibson, ASID, of Gibson Design Group; *SH&L* editor Fred Albert; *SH&L* art director Marcy Stamper; and architect Stephen Sullivan, AIA, of Sullivan Conard Architects.



SCOTT HORNES AND LIFESTYLES

Heart & Sol

A SAN JUAN ISLAND HOME
CAPITALIZES ON
SUN AND SCENERY

By Fred Albert

Photographs by Laurie Black



A stone fireplace anchors the covered terrace, which is furnished like an interior room. Windows rise on cables to block southerly winds.

Most homeowners would balk at neighbors who drop by uninvited morning, noon and night. Not Mike and May Fortun. As often as three times a day, pods of killer whales bound past their San Juan Island home in a breathtaking ballet of leaps and dives.

"I see them all the time and it still amazes me," sighs May, who also counts seals and otters among the household "pets."

The Fortuns asked Kirkland architect Curtis Gelotte to design a home for the site that would take full advantage of this Animal Planet aquacade, while melding Mike's love of lodges with May's preference for contemporary design. The resulting home, built by Lowe Construction, consists of two perpendicular pavilions framed by rugged timbers fitted with airy expanses of glass. One wing features a great room containing the living room, dining room and kitchen, while the other is dominated by a cathedrallike master bedroom.

The two wings are joined to the garage by a cylindrical tower containing the guest room, office and wine cellar. Both the tower and the auto court in front are framed by eroding stone walls—a contrivance suggesting the ruins of some long-abandoned barn.

French doors line the west and south façades, offering easy access to a succession of covered terraces. "We wanted a lot of outdoor living space where we could entertain," explains May, a Venezuelan-born beauty who dubbed the 5,400-square-foot house "Casa del Sol" in honor of its sunny southwest exposure.



The water side of the home (*opposite*) consists of two perpendicular wings. The left-hand wing is dominated by the pavilionlike master bedroom (*this page*), which features recessed shades and a plasma screen TV over the fireplace. The twigs crowning the headboard help break up the space so it feels more intimate.



Eroded stone walls—suggesting the ruins of an old silo—encircle an illuminated globe in the tower. In the great room (opposite, above) stocky furnishings and a rugged stone fireplace contrast with walls of glass. Comfortable all-weather furniture makes the terrace (opposite, below) feel like an extension of the interior.



An expansive covered porch on the south side of the house gets most of the sun, but also the brunt of the wind, so Gelotte fashioned glass wind screens that rise at the press of a button. A generous fireplace and overhead heater keep the space toasty well into November, while a dining table and full complement of easy chairs provide plenty of comfort.

Comfort was, in fact, one of the chief attributes the owners sought when they brought interior designer Steven Hensel onto the project. Hensel's décor takes its cues from the architecture, pairing brawny custom furnishings (scaled to fit Mike, a youthful retiree who once played college football) with an earthy palette and supple, durable fabrics. In the great room, warm fir beams and rugged blue-stone floors establish a solidly masculine backdrop for a bouquet of boxy leather lounge chairs, a sage chenille sofa and a ruddy Tibetan carpet. A massive coffee table crafted from steel and *sen* (a Japanese softwood) echoes the architecture's components, while curvaceous Donghia chairs and a serpentine iron table lighten the equation by the windows, so as not to block the view.

"It's primarily a masculine house," explains Hensel, "but we were still able to get some feminine touches in."

Rising 19 feet from floor to ceiling and wrapped with windows on three sides, the master bedroom is about as close as you can get to sleeping under the stars while remaining indoors. "There's an eagle in that tree every morning," says Mike, gesturing to a nearby fir, "and we see ships go by all night long."



Hensel floated a custom bed in the center of the room and crowned the headboard with a row of salt-cedar twigs—a stunning *coup de théâtre* that obscures the view when you first enter the room and gives the voluminous space a greater sense of intimacy. Alongside the bed are a tub and shower—touches inspired by the Fortuns' visit to a Las Vegas hotel.

While furnishing a bedroom is pretty straightforward, the tower's cylindrical main floor left Hensel a bit puzzled. "It needed some sort of sculpture that could be viewed from all angles," he says. Finally, in a nod to his well-traveled clients, he

installed a large globe that lights up when you touch it.

Now the Fortuns have the world at their fingertips—in more ways than one. ■