

*In the living room a patinated bronze hearth is the backdrop for three Japanese roof tiles that reflect the owners' interest in Asian art and antiques. A book-lined study is through the doorway left of the fireplace.*



BY LAWRENCE KREISMAN  
PHOTOGRAPHED BY BENJAMIN BENSCHNEIDER

'99 FALL  
HOME  
DESIGN

# GRACIOUS PRACTICALITY

► Remodeling creates  
a Newport Shores home hospitable  
to both children and art

IT'S COMMONPLACE in the Northwest to watch as houses expand upward, sideways, even underground to accommodate change. And most of the time, owners bring in new architects and builders to accomplish this.

Brian and Suchada MacDonald chose another route for the Newport Shores home they bought in 1997.

They were attracted to the home by its waterfront and by the spatial relationships of convex and concave curves, the lantern above a spiral stair in the entry, and varied ceiling heights that made for dynamic architecture at every turn. But the 4,000-square-foot house didn't have enough bedrooms for two growing children.

For a solution, the MacDonalds turned to the architect of the original design, John Anisoglu of Anisoglu Associates, who created a 700-square-foot second-floor addition for children's bedrooms, an exercise room and a media room.

The couple also remodeled the first floor, living on their boat during the work, then optimistically moving into the first

floor when it was time to remodel the second. The realities of daily construction work put an end to that idea and they rented an apartment until work

was finished in August 1998.

Steven Hensel of Hensel Design Studios was commissioned to develop new finishes and furni- ➤



*French doors open the kitchen and den to an outdoor cooking area.*

## ► GRACIOUS PRACTICALITY

ture for the interior and exterior. He turned the "very beige" home into a canvas of warm, rich, earthy colors — natural tones combined with sage green, gold, copper and bronze. Creatively used bronze and glass harmonize with the owners' Asian art and antiques.

Hensel and R. David Adams designed new garden and outdoor living areas as well. Adams Construction was general contractor, and Karl Mayer fabricated metalwork and patinated surfaces.

Suchada MacDonald, who is Thai, wanted the house to express her back-

ground. She and Brian Adams travel to Asia often and had purchased a number of artworks and antiques that set the serene tone of the rooms.

Their former home had been done in white and cream colors that no longer seemed practical with active youngsters.

The challenge was to make the new house work both for formal entertaining and informal family life.

"The owners want to be able to use things," Hensel said. "That drove the deeper, richer palette. Texture was also important. These fabrics are



A large terrace has been divided into several functional spaces with furniture, including a dining area in the foreground and sitting area and fire pit beyond.

'99 FALL  
HOME  
DESIGN



A dining-room table with a top of fused and etched glass is paired with Chinese wedding chairs and contemporary chairs by Dakota Jackson.

touchable."

Hensel's signatures are everywhere, in furniture, fixtures and fabrics of his own design or by other designers whose work he appreciates.

In the curving entrance hall, which had a beige floor and beige columns, Hensel brought in marble for floors and wrapped the columns in bronze with a rusty brown patina that is repeated in the living-room fireplace front, which rises approximately 18 feet to the roof.

Steel and bronze are basic to custom furniture throughout the house. The dining-room table, for example, combines a steel base with a tabletop designed by Gerry Newcomb from cast-glass components mounted to the underside of an etched and bronze powdered-glass surface. Metal wall sconces are by George Kovacs.

In the living room, the curve of the window wall inspired a Donghia sofa and chairs and a wood-and-bronze coffee

table by Hensel. These are paired with a Dakota Jackson leather sofa. But an antique tansu chest nearby is equally at home, with its simple geometries and subtle ornament. It relates to custom-sewn pillows that incorporate antique Chinese coins attached with an Asian knotting technique. Sara Johnson did all the custom sewing, pillows and draperies in the house.

The drapes posed challenges because of their long drop — nearly 18 feet. Instead of >

► GRACIOUS PRACTICALITY

opting for one fabric, Hensel took cues from the horizontal line of window mullions by piecing the drape together from two contrasting fabrics that meet at these lines.

Hensel and his clients wanted the extremely tall metalwork hearth to be a backdrop for some sort of sculptural element. The MacDonalds found the perfect solution at a local Asian antique store when they came upon ornamental slate-black Japanese house tiles.

Corridors and connectors are as important to Hensel as large rooms. For a passageway and small alcove adjoining the living room, Hen-

sel designed sconces and a console table with mirror that reflects the west-facing view from the great windows.

The den adjoining the kitchen was dominated by a green tiled hearth. Floral fabric and geometric chair fabric carry some of its copper-patina-like colors, along with rust, taupe and beige. As Hensel says, a "rich warm palette is always welcome to Seattle."

With the den's French doors leading to an outdoor food-preparation area, the relationship between interior and exterior is firmly established. Adams also created a spa and fountain there, one of three.

Heated pavers near

the dining and sitting areas extend outside entertaining time well into the evenings in spring and fall. The MacDonalds found the back yard somewhat bare when they bought the house, with identical planters throughout. Now planting beds have been added near the house and uniformity has been replaced by real outdoor living and dining areas. There are even outdoor reading lights.

Upstairs, a hallway showcases Hong Kong temple doors in a niche created where originally there was an opening to an antechamber off the master bedroom. At both ends of the hall, the additions are seamless. >



In the media room, acoustical-tile panels have been disguised by a Japanese calligrapher's interpretation of the seasons.

► GRACIOUS PRACTICALITY

One end leads to the children's rooms, where Hensel has used hand-painted fabrics for fantasy and whimsy. In the daughter's room, the theme is "secret garden," with a tree and an island just for her. There's a screen that does double duty, designed so she can snap in pictures and scrapbook stuff on one side and draw on the other. The son's room is themed for a budding space explorer, with a rocket in one corner and the bedspread and draperies hand-painted with planets and stars.

The media room at the other end of the hall looks like a film-screening room. It is appointed with mohair-upholstered recliners in a first row and barrel chairs in the slightly raised second row. In this room, the

equipment and the location of speakers set the design. To disguise the necessary acoustical panels, for instance, Hensel went to Japanese calligrapher Yoko Murao, whose brushwork on fabric interprets the four seasons. Woodwork for the bar, open shelving and storage has mahogany finishes.

For Suchada, who found the family's earlier house too formal, this one is perfect. "We use every room in the house." ☐

*Lawrence Kreisman is program director for Historic Seattle and director of "Viewpoints," the tour program of the Seattle Architectural Foundation. Benjamin Benschneider is staff photographer for Pacific Northwest magazine*



The master-bedroom fabrics and colors continue themes used throughout the house.