



ngisab tneqiletni

Holding Court

OLD-WORLD ARCHITECTURE INSPIRES THE DESIGN OF A NEW COURTYARD HOME NEAR PUGET SOUND.

Writer: Sandra S. Smith | Photographer: Laurie Black | Editor: Debra Humphrey



BAY WATCH Gardens, top, about the garage and wine room extension, which features an exterior fountain that caps a view down a pathway. **TRUE TO TIME** Though built in the 21st century, the home's design, above, by architects Stuart Silk and Michael Troyer, is based on an 18th-century European manor house built in the courtyard vernacular.

MAGNIFICENT MATERIALS ARCHITECT MICHAEL TROYER TALKS ABOUT WORKING WITH STONE.

Q What type of limestone is used, and did you use traditional building techniques?

A The limestone is from Texas, and it has warm honey hues that range from white to caramel. We've used it on a number of projects with great success. We modulated smooth, cut stone with rough stone to create a traditional look. Corner pieces also add a level of detail and authenticity.

Q Are you worried about water damage, given the damp climate here?

A We constructed the home with an airspace, or weep space, behind the stone. This 1-inch gap allows any moisture the stone might absorb to drain down the wall back and prevents molding. There's really no need to finish limestone, though many people do. It's better to let it breathe.

Grand plans "It's nice when your client has a clear vision," architect Stuart Silk says of these homeowners who knew from the beginning exactly what they wanted for their new home. "It might seem counterintuitive—that it would be more difficult to fulfill a specific vision—but it makes it easier because you've got a place to start instead of having to spend time finding that common vision."

Sight lines The view at the top of the stairs is intended to draw the eye through the French doors of the sitting room, past the balcony, and out to the rear gardens and the water beyond.

Key position A grand piano at one end of the living room sets the formal tone for the view from the front entry.

Gracious space The master suite's collection of rooms occupies an entire wing of the upper level.



UPPER LEVEL
3,727 sq. ft.



MAIN LEVEL
4,065 sq. ft.

Eat in, go out French doors on both sides of the dining room's marble fireplace lead out to terraces facing the waters of Puget Sound.

Relaxing room The family room off the kitchen is in keeping with the elegant tone of the rest of the house but is decidedly more casual.



to do a tasteful house that isn't pretentious. When you're dealing with stone, it can be hard to maintain simplicity, rigor, and scale."

Carefully selected antique materials and accessories were used throughout the house to meet this end. The hardwood floor, for instance, was pieced together in the classic Versailles pattern by an artisan in the French countryside. "We sent drawings to him and he constructed the floors in a field and shipped them over," Troyer says. "He used reclaimed French oak and finished it with beeswax. It was all a very green process."

When antiques and vintage construction weren't used, the past was still carefully considered. In the kitchen, five coats of paint on the upper cabinets suggest the passage of time. Though the room is used for serious cooking and has, the homeowners say, "enough Buns to melt the snow on nearby mountains," you don't see all the high-tech equipment because much of it, including five specialty refrigerators, hides behind those layered cupboard doors.

In the end, that elegant old-world look is the secret to the home's success. Its stony facade suggests a land—and a sensibility—found oceans away.

Architects **Stuart Silk and Michael Troyer**
RESOURCES ON PAGE 112



SERENE RETREAT The upper-level master bedroom, top, features a rare antique marble fireplace with its original cast-iron lining; it is centered between French doors that lead to a small terrace overlooking the formal gardens, woodlands, and Puget Sound.

ROOM TO RELAX An 18th-century *bibliothèque*, above, adds architectural interest to the small sitting room between the master bedroom and master bath.

IN PLACE

Gardens give the grounds instant age befitting the home's reverent architecture.



ORDERED BEAUTY The side yard is designed as a formal parterre garden and holds more than 60 types of roses and 30 varieties of perennials. Boxwood hedges define the space.

IN UNISON

The earthy tones found in the island, chandelier, and backsplash tile key off of the rustic ceiling beams.



ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

The limestone on the walls of the breakfast room, left, comes from Texas and the reclaimed beams started life in an East Coast warehouse, but the room's rustic feeling is true French countryside. The iron lighting fixtures throughout the home are antiques the owners found on travels to Europe.

EVERYTHING IN ITS PLACE

Though the kitchen, opposite, needed to accommodate the cook, it also needed to look like it belonged to the rest of the house—and its imagined age. Most of the appliances, including refrigerator and freezer drawers, are hidden behind richly finished woods.

picture of a small 18th-century French museum they had loved during a trip to Europe.

Then the newly retired couple simply watched their dream home come true, feature by feature. The courtyard layout of the residence mimics many French country homes: The residence consists of three structures that form a U shape around a large square gravel forecourt. The main structure contains the essential daily living areas and is connected to the garage, which also houses an office above. Facing the garage is a separate structure that features a studio and spacious guesthouse. Subtle details, such as the use of a rougher, more relaxed stone style on the studio/guesthouse than on the main structure, add to the home's beauty as well as its authenticity.

The shift of stone, plus details such as hand-wrought iron and a simple portico lend a sense of age and humility to the home. "Varying the buildings' materials adds modulation for interesting balance and softness," Silk says. "Without textural details such as the mix of stone, arched windows,

balconies, and gardens, it would have been a much more stark and imposing structure."

The home's lush and layered landscaping also borrows its beauty from classic European notions. "The landscaping is organized in the front of the house and inside the courtyard," Troyer says. "On the remaining three sides there is a natural transition to the rough, natural vegetation surrounding the home. The house is enclosed to the inside and completely open to the outside."

Inside, the floor plan of the main house draws on a classical past but doesn't succumb to it. "A historical layout might have had a number of walls and partitions," Troyer says. "But we wanted more open spaces." Still, the plan is traditional in its symmetrical, cross-axial setup. The entry opens to a grand living room but is intersected by a hall that is anchored at either end by the kitchen and library.

Even the staircase was considered carefully to meet the goal of a classic house scaled for living. "We didn't want a *Gone with the Wind* kind of staircase," Silk says. "We tried



BEAUTIFUL BACKDROPS

The golden light and saturated colors of southern Europe inspired the home's toned-down schemes and warm neutrals.

WORK OF ART Welders in Los Angeles crafted the curlicue iron balustrade of the stone staircase and shipped it to the Puget Sound home; grillwork replicates that found in France.



T

The centuries-old villas that dot the French countryside suggest long and storied histories: narrative detail of new wealth and new additions, of abandonment and rebirth, feast and famine. So when the owners of this home—lovers of Europe's rural architecture—had the chance to build from the ground up, they decided to give their new home an old soul by imagining its evolution.

The muse they envisioned was a 1750s house that had been remodeled many times, resulting in shifts in finishes and materials as well as sophisticated formal rooms and more rustic private and working areas. To communicate that vision, the owners gave Seattle architects Stuart Silk and Michael Troyer of Stuart Silk Architects a copy of Betty Lou Phillips' *French Influences* and showed the design team a

AT THE CENTERPIECE An intricately detailed marble fireplace, above, anchors the living room. It was hand-carved in the Louis XIV style by an Italian artist who lives in the hills above Florence.

PALETTE POINT In the formal dining room, right, the golden hues of the fireplace's Siena marble inspired the walls' rich coloration, which provides a warm contrast to gray Seattle days.

