

SH&L
HOME OF
THE YEAR
(CONTEST WINNER)

WINNING Retreat

A second home on Lopez Island was our judges' choice for SH&L's 2010 Home of the Year

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THIS LOPEZ ISLAND HOME FEATURES LANDSCAPING OF PROUDLY LOCAL NATIVE GRASSES (THIS PAGE) AND A WALL OF WINDOWS (OPPOSITE). THIS LITTLE GEM IS ARCHITECTURALLY PERFECT. NOTED HOME OF THE YEAR JUDGE EINDA THOMPSON





above: THE KITCHEN SITS IN THE CENTER OF THE HOUSE, AT ONE END OF THE GREAT ROOM. OPEN SHELVES HOLD GLASSES AND DISHWARE—AND A SPACIOUS PANTRY ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL PROVIDES ADDITIONAL STORAGE.

The 33 acres of Lopez Island encompass almost everything people love about the San Juans: 1,200 feet of waterfront, acres of evergreens, elegant madrona trees with peeling red bark, an open meadow, a bluff with views over Puget Sound and nearby islands—even an eagles' nest. A few years ago, the only thing missing from this perfect site was a welcoming cabin.

The clients approached architect Stuart Silk in 2004 to talk about building a cabin on the land. "We were thinking knotty pine," the woman recalls. "We wanted something simple."

They asked Silk to include two bedrooms, two bathrooms and a great room. "The client wanted low maintenance, and, of course, they wanted to take advantage of the view," Silk recalls.

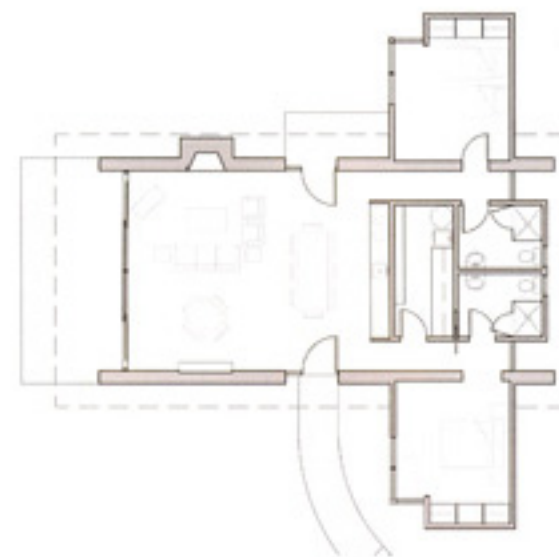
Silk and project manager Lisa Sidlauskas met with their clients to talk about what they envisioned for this slice of Northwest heaven. The woman was the primary driver, the architect says. "As we got involved in the process, it became more and more clear that she was leaning toward a modern house with more minimal design elements," Silk says. "She was shying away from a traditional cabin in the woods. She wanted to do something special."

As the client remembers it, viewing the initial floor plan was love at first sight. "[The architect] brought us the first plans and we were just bowled over," she says. "I loved them."

The resulting symmetrical, modern home has a sloping roof plane that almost seems to rise from the earth, sheltering a 14-foot-high wall of windows at the west end. On either side of the main volume

THE GREAT ROOM IS A COMFORTABLE GATHERING SPACE FOR THE CLIENTS, THEIR FAMILY AND FRIENDS. ON CHILLY DAYS, A FIREPLACE IN THE NORTH WALL WARMS THE ROOM. ON SUMMER DAYS, THE SLIDING GLASS DOORS CAN BE THROWN OPEN TO BREEZES OFF THE SOUND, AND THE ROOF, WHICH EXTENDS OVER THE FRONT PATIO, HELPS SHADE THE ROOM FROM THE SUN.





opposite: A SIDE VIEW OF THE HOUSE SHOWS HOW ITS PROFILE RISES UP OUT OF THE MEADOW INTO THE TREES. CLERESTORY WINDOWS FILL THE HOME WITH NATURAL LIGHT AND VIEWS. **above:** THE SYMMETRY—AND SIMPLICITY—OF THE ARCHITECT'S DESIGN ARE EVIDENT IN THE FLOOR PLAN. **right:** A PATH WINDS ALONG THE NORTH SIDE OF THE HOUSE.

HOME OF THE YEAR Judges
1. Architect Allan Farkas 2. Interior Designer Dixie Stark 3. Landscape Designer Scott Eckley
4. SFR/L Market Adviser Linda Humphrey



are two small towers, which contain sleeping rooms and also feature tall west-facing windows. The cabin is just 1,300 square feet, much of it in the great room, where kitchen, dining and living areas share one open, high-ceilinged space with clerestory windows on the north and south ends.

"When you're in the kitchen, your eye is directed out and up as the roof lifts up," Silk says. "So there's a nice kind of spatial thing that happens there."

Two thick, masonry walls run the length of the home, and the towers are sided in corrugated metal. These exterior materials—as well as birch veneer plywood—extend inside to further blur the lines between interior and exterior. Short hallways on either side of the kitchen lead from the great room to separate bedrooms and bathrooms, and a window at the end of each hall offers a nicely framed, intimate view of the garden.

Another vision that the clients had for the house was that of a cabin nestled in a meadow of tall grasses with exposed boulders. Because the property included a large open space at the top of the bluff that offered a stunning western view, it was a natural homesite.

"We didn't want to have to pull down any trees," Silk recalls, noting that none of the big evergreens on the site were cut down for construction. The home sits at the north end of the clearing, away from the bluff edge. "They

wanted to look through the trees to see the water," Silk says.

The client designed much of the exterior plan, choosing rocks and ground cover for the slight slope in front of the house. Most of the meadow is planted in native grasses that are gradually filling in—just as mother nature might have planned it.

Though the local deer are a bane to many islanders, the residents here take them in stride, noting which plants seem to attract four-legged diners and which appear to be less tasty. No fences bar their hoofed passage across the meadow. "It's their place, and we're just using it," the woman says.

In keeping with the clients' request for a low-maintenance cabin, the corrugated metal siding, concrete and aluminum windows were chosen for their durability, and the native grasses are drought-tolerant.

The people who live there couldn't be happier: "The house plan—with floor-to-ceiling glass walls in the living room and hallways—allows us to look out over the San Juan Channel, the grass meadow and into the woods," the woman says. "If we had this to do all over again, we would!" ■

For resource information, see Sources, page 70.