





# A EUROPEAN CLASSIC ON THE LAKE

THIS TIMELESS GARDEN AND HOME  
MAKE THE MOST OF THE WATERFRONT LOCATION

WRITTEN BY ROBYN ROEHM CANNON  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY ANDREW BUCHANAN

**You know what they say about not throwing the baby out with the bathwater—or, in this case, the lake water.** The retired Seattle couple who own this extraordinary 350-foot expanse of waterfront on Lake Washington took those words to heart when they decided to tear down their mid-century contemporary residence and rebuild to better suit the contour of the land and create more outdoor space for entertaining their family and friends.

In the process, they worked some existing features into the new design of the residence and extensive garden. “We saved the swimming pool and a number of retaining walls,” comments Linda Attaway, landscape architect for the project. “They would not have been able to rebuild the pool due to new restrictions on placing it so close to the waterfront.”

The walls were structurally sound but were unadorned concrete. “By facing them with a warm-toned Chinese Sandstone—the same stone as the residence—we were able to create a feeling that the house and the garden are one, allowing the home to be nestled into the hillside and have a harmonious appearance with the landscape,” says Attaway.

She worked closely with the couple’s architect, Tom Kuniholm, to explore classical design concepts that complemented the site and resulted in a series of outdoor rooms for quiet personal use, family fun, and more level lawn space for erecting tents needed periodically for entertaining on a grand scale.

“Our clients wanted a design based on a European-styled lakefront villa, like something you would see in the Italian Lake District or on the French Riviera,” says Kuniholm. “They wanted this house and garden to be around for generations.”

The couple favored natural materials in a warm, neutral palette that was permanent and authentic. The honey-colored sandstone is four-inch-thick slab, custom cut, cleft, and numbered in sequence. It took nearly two years to install. The roof is natural black slate, and all windows and wood trim are custom-milled of natural mahogany in the finest available grade.

Although they gave the design team wide latitude for creating this twenty-first-century design with classical elements, there was one thing that the husband and wife couldn’t live without.

“Their previous home had a stunning lanai, and the owners loved that space,” Kuniholm says. “So we decided to make a giant veranda sweeping the length of the house to take full advantage of the western exposure and beautiful sunsets. Its low, wide ceiling serves as a great filtering device and keeps the glare down to a minimum.”

Some of the spaces that Attaway developed include an entry courtyard, a “secret garden” with a patio of small tumbled bluestone cobblestone accessed from the master



suite, a dining patio, a covered portico on the home's lower level facing lavish perennial beds and—in center stage—the pool deck, backed on the water side with an elaborate classical trellis planted with intertwined roses and clematis. The wife's fondness for bright color is carried out in all planting schemes with a hot-pink and bright-blue palette.

This was not a project without substantial challenges, notes Jim Sander of Sander-Groves Landscape Services, who coordinated the barge import of massive quantities of soil, mulch, and plant material. A dozen stone urns were set in place with a crane and are seasonally planted with extravagant designs by his firm.

Kevin Woehrlin, of Light Crafters in Seattle, developed a

lighting program to complete this dramatic landscape design. He used computer-preset lighting schemes, as well as path and “up” lighting, to highlight key architectural elements and plant material. The interplay of these two elements is important, he notes. “During a party, we want a high level of brightness both indoors and out. But when [one is] strolling the grounds or sitting outdoors, the light should be much dimmer.”

To cancel reflection in the windows and give the illusion that the indoors extends to the outdoors, the lights are dimmed indoors while being brought up on the outside. “One of our favorite scenes is how this vision extends to the water and the city beyond,” he says. “No matter what the season, this is a magical place after sunset.” ■

