BRIAN BRAND GAVE HIS WIFE A QUESTIONNAIRE. As with any other homeowner, the architect wanted to measure Katie’s stylistic preferences before he began plans for their new Kirkland home. And, because the two had married just the year before, the house represented both a literal and figurative fresh start, in which they wanted to balance the wife’s traditionalist leanings with her husband’s signature modern aesthetic.

ARCHITECTURE  Brian Brand, AIA, Baylis Architects
INTERIOR DESIGN  Robin Luchsinger, Robin Luchsinger Interior Design
HOME BUILDER  Donald W. Bender, Bender Chaffey Corp.
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE  David McNeal, FASLA, JGM Landscape Architects
BEDROOMS  3  BATHROOMS  4  SQUARE FEET  4,160

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MARRIAGE OF EQUALS
“All of the homes I’ve lived in during my career have been different, and this reflects our new marriage and new life together,” says Brand, principal and vice president of Baylis Architects in Bellevue.

The project got off to a charmed start with the acquisition of the site, atop a bluff and featuring endless views of Lake Washington, Seattle and the Olympic Mountains. When Katie and Brian were still dating, the two visited friends who live just north of the site. “Katie said, ‘If I could live anywhere, I’d live in this area,’” Brian recalls. “When the lot became available, we were able to purchase it. It was a dream for my wife to live on this site.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 176

**STYLE SELECTION**

Williams-Sonoma Home twists the classic club chair with sophisticated details such as windowpane-carved feet, chunky rolled arms and a padded back embellished with nailhead trim. **Chatelet Chair**, from **$1,850; wshome.com**

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 176

**LOFTY PROPORTION**

In the two-story living room, the homeowners’ matching club and love seat sit center stage, surrounded by a limestone top from Designs Ten & Harlem in Seattle. The sleek, modern fireplace was purchased from Kirkland Fireplaces, while the Chinese tables were found at Honeychurch Antiques in Seattle. The **Ancient Mesa oil-on-canvas** is by Bellevue artist Susanne Werner.
The atrium is a central design feature of the home and offers a glimpse of the water feature, behind a bench created by Russell’s Custom Cabinets in Tacoma. The staircase, designed by architect and homeowner Brian Brand, comprises carpet-topped oak treads and a railing of stainless steel and white oak caps, by Stageplan in Enumclaw.

However, the lot is quite narrow, and the home is accessed via a shared driveway that snakes down the property line—which makes the structure somewhat unassuming from the approach, says builder Donald W. Bender, president of Bender Chaffey in Kirkland. “It’s a difficult lot to build on and have the house really come off wonderfully well, because you don’t have the opportunity to enter it from an area that makes it look bigger,” he says. “The surprise is inside: the view, the orientation, the materials.”

Mitigating the size of the site was one of Brian’s primary goals in designing the home, which the couple decided would be a meld of...
mid-century modern and Northwest modern styles. To maximize light and views as well as privacy, Brian planned the two-story house around an atrium. “We wanted our master bedroom to be isolated from the guest areas for privacy, so the atrium also splits those spaces,” Brian says. Those guest areas were another priority, as the Brands often entertain their children and long-term guests. The solution is an accessory dwelling unit that features its own entry; the home also contains a guest suite and a multipurpose computer/guest room.

While Katie deferred to her architect on the layout, she was set on creating a warm interior that recalled the homes of her youth. To ensure that both homeowners’ voices were expressed, Brian brought in longtime collaborator Robin Luchsinger, of Robin Luchsinger Interior Design in Woodinville. “They both have very good design sensibilities,” she says. “It was a matter of trying to blend.”

That blend resulted in a streamlined, Asian-inspired décor that utilizes modern forms with traditional materials. Shoji screens allow rooms to be opened up or partitioned off, while a neutral color palette as well as plenty of wood—a must for Katie—exude warmth. “We have so many gray, cloudy days that it was important to counteract that,” Luchsinger says. Existing furnishings and art were supplemented by a handful of new finds,
such as the Korean tansu chest from Del-Teet Furniture in Bellevue. It was chosen for its presence and weight, which counterbalances the modern, linear staircase (designed by Brian) under which it rests.

Because the lot didn’t allow for landscaping on the sides of the house, Brian and landscape architect David McNeal, of JGM Landscape Architects in Bellevue, focused on opportunities in the front and back, including an entry courtyard with a koi pond and a waterfront patio that “becomes an extension of the main house,” Brian says.
McNeal says he chose native plants, such as Douglas fir, mahonia and kinnikinick, for practical reasons: “We’ve got to be water conscious, and they deal well with minimum water in our dry summers.”

No matter the time of year, Katie enjoys relaxing in the living room, admiring the sunsets and vistas. “Everybody who comes over has to stand there for 15 minutes to enjoy the view before they can sit down,” she says. But did her modernist husband succeed in creating a home that pleases his traditionalist wife? “I asked him to design a house as warm as possible for me,” she says. “He definitely accomplished that.”

SIMPLE SANCTUARY
The serene master bath features French limestone flooring from Michelangelo Fine Marble and Granite in Seattle, as well as anigre cabinetry and granite countertops from Western Tile & Marble. Toto faucets and Kohler sinks are from Keller Supply in Redmond.