LAKESIDE LUMINANCE

A WARMLY MODERN SEATTLE MARVEL DESIGNED TO CAPTURE LIGHT AND WATER VIEWS DOES SO WITH EASE AND SUBTLE ABANDON.

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San Francisco couple were looking for a second home in Seattle where they could enjoy the Northwest’s natural beauty while waiting out foggy Bay Area summers. “We were looking for someplace new to explore,” one of the homeowners recalls, “and Seattle has the best of both worlds: a vibrant city with interesting culture and food, but natural beauty to explore, as well.” Yet no properties they visited seemed up to par—lacking a view, the high ceilings they were used to, or the right locale.

When a rare lot overlooking Lake Washington became available, the couple decided to make Seattle their primary place of residence and set out to create a new house of understated elegance and crisp lines; a place designed from the inside out with voluminous ceilings and a bounty of light. Its interior would set off their art collection, but the house would turn its greatest attention to the masterpiece of a view outside.
Right: Natural light floods the home through ample windows and 12 skylights. Below: In the kitchen, sleek white Caesarstone counters and painted cabinetry continue the subtle and elegant minimalism.

Matteograssi stools pull up to the island in the kitchen, featuring appliances from Albert Lee Appliance. Warm rift-sawn white oak flooring is from Emerson Hardwood Floors.
San Francisco-based architect Cass Calder Smith persuaded the couple to place public areas (including the open kitchen, living and dining room with an adjacent media room) on the second floor and nestle bedrooms on the lower level. As one enters, “It’s really about being led up this fluid flight of stairs into the main space full of light,” says Smith, who collaborated with Dera-Jill Pozner and Bjorn Steudte on the architecture. As if the main room’s floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors weren’t enough, the house also has 12 skylights to ensure sunlight reaches the home’s deepest interiors.

The homeowners sought a kind of graceful minimalism born of exacting detail. Instead of a stairway railing, for example, the drywall itself curves out from the wall to form a natural guide, which also acts as a more organic framing device for an entryway sculpture. The living room fireplace is also tucked seamlessly inside a wall. “When you walk into a contemporary house, it’s the absence of trim that makes the house look really unique,” explains builder Eric Kormondy. “Elements like the recessed fireplace and the face of the tile ended up being flush and done so with exacting detail.”

To add warmth, the interior (particularly the second floor) makes ample use of wood via matching white oak floors and cabinetry. The palette is largely muted shades of gray, silver and blue, letting the most vibrant continue from page 238.

The dining room enjoys water views and is anchored by a custom table, with pendant lighting by David Weeks Studio and chairs by Matteograssi. The painting is by Paul Horiuchi. Furniture by Richard Schultz sits on the terrace.
hues pop from the collection of abstract paintings—as well as from the Northwest light itself. “The clients were aiming for a well-crafted and naturally textured appearance: a clean, tailored, light, subtle modernism,” says San Francisco-based designer Kelly Lasser of ShelterDesign, with whom the owners consulted on the interiors. “The palette is inspired by the nautical sensibility gleaned from being on the lake.”

The residence’s exterior form—a rectangular box with portions added or taken away—makes it eye-catching from the street. A study juts outward from the second floor, for example, to create cover outside, and to give the room better access to the views. In back, a covered deck feels carved from the architecture rather than simply attached. The roof also slopes gently upward to expand the rear vantage point.

Architect Cass Calder Smith persuaded the homeowners to place public areas such as the living room, kitchen and dining room on the second floor in order to maximize access to views through Loewen windows. The outdoor deck, which overlooks Lake Washington, is outfitted with skylights.
At the same time, landscape architect Ken Philp transformed the front yard into a lush garden of evergreen magnolias, coral bark maples and hinoki cypress that also (given how the house pivots away from the street and the lot slopes upward) helps embrace the street and neighborhood, while rainwater carries through a runnel and spills into a garden planter that meets the sidewalk. Concrete walls support the modern architecture and provide privacy. “We wanted a wonderful entry procession, and to create a private nook where you could catch some sun and greet friends,” Philp explains, “all in a way that felt nestled into the landscape.”

Indeed, while the home is impressive for its pristineness and orderly architectural lines, it is also a place that feels alive: a setting from which to observe and embrace nature up close and in the distance.