

Patience Pays Off

Time and careful study results in a savvy remodel for the midcentury Mount Baker home.

TEXT: LISA KENNEDY

PHOTOS: [MICHAEL SEIDL](#)

SH&L MARCH 2006



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Rick Baye's contemporary Mount Baker home exemplifies what dazzling transformations can be achieved with a savvy remodel.

After purchasing the home in 1996, Baye patiently studied the space and light for five years before finalizing his design. Then, working closely with contractor Joseph McKinstry, he pared down the existing 4,300-square-foot jumble of rooms to six main living spaces. His art-filled house is now sleek, flowing and thoroughly modern, while retaining the best of its midcentury spirit.

"I tried to make everything as uniform and large scale as possible without throwing it out of balance," says Baye, a Seattle textile and interior designer and owner of the retail store Designer Fabric Liquidations.

The entry courtyard accomplishes this while setting the mood with its poured concrete walkway channel cut into chunky blocks that appear to float on the rectangular goldfish pond. One of the exterior walls, sheathed in standing-seam roofing material used on the reverse, continues into the house, dramatically intersected by the entry wall with its 10-foot door of African ribbon mahogany.

The stunning interior entry and its adjacent art gallery, which doubles as a bar for parties, serve as the connection between the home's two main axes. The central stairway to the lower level is encased in glass, playing an almost sculptural role, while allowing the eye to travel across the sweeping expanse of Australian ash flooring.

Throughout, the lines are clean and materials are restricted to wood, stone, glass and brushed stainless steel. The elements are consistent, and details are kept to a minimum.

In the immaculately minimal kitchen, warm-toned custom anigre cabinets by Euro Concepts in Los Angeles are made uniformly to look like drawers (even though some are doors), and the Turkish slab limestone used on the counters also runs up the backsplash.

In the dining area, an ebony-stained walnut table, by Christian Liaigre, and cognac leather Italian dining chairs make a strong statement against the light floors. A massive custom concrete fireplace anchors the far wall of the living room, and a seating group in soft neutral tones welcomes visitors without breaking the flow of the space.

In the master suite, the walk-through closet looks more like the men's department of Barneys than an ordinary mortal's wardrobe, with exquisitely organized mahogany cabinets and drawers and a strict palette of black, gray and white.

In the carpeted master bedroom, the Donghia bed covered in jute-colored baby alpaca, from Baye's own line of textiles, is softly framed by nutmeg-hued baby alpaca draperies. A charcoal armchair adds comfort and contrast, and a Harry Bertoia sculpture gently animates one wall.

A sense of calm pervades. "I live with color all day long in my shop, and I wanted my house to be restful," Baye says. "It's simple and straightforward and all about comfort."

Lisa Kennedy is a contributing editor for Seattle Homes & Lifestyles and an interior designer.

This article originally appeared in the March 2006 print edition of Seattle Homes & Lifestyles.

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