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Roland Terry home rebuilt and renewed

The real beauty of this second-generation family home in Sheridan Beach is the functionality, found in every nook, each cranny.

By Rebecca Teagarden



THE HOUSE hugging the shore of Sheridan Beach is pure Roland Terry; from the terrazzo floors up the peeled logs to the peaked ceilings and right out the long wall of sliding-glass doors facing Mount Rainier. All the influences that make us Northwesterners who we are — Indian, Asian, forest, beach — gracefully yet casually woven into one architectural design.

So peaceful, so solid.

You would never know what happened here on that terrible day in November 1990. The day a hot light met lacquer thinner.

"Bruce's parents had the house built in 1960, and they lived here 28 years. Bruce bought it from them," Linda Olson says of her husband. "The woods had kind of yellowed. So I was working with (interior designer) Whitney Hines to make them more beachy.

"Because of the fumes, I was leaving with my 4-month-old son to go to my sister's. I heard a popping sound; I came downstairs and saw a fire in the living room. I couldn't believe it. Before the fire trucks came, all the waterside windows blew out. I ran out back, but I was trapped in the yard. I couldn't get out. I handed the baby to the neighbor.

"We lost everything. Our clothes, pictures, everything. We'd been married a year and a half."

But here it stands. Rebuilt with the determination that comes from knowing your place in the world. That this is, and always will be, home.

"Bruce's dad was very meticulous," says Linda, who grew up two blocks away. "He had all the plans. We couldn't have rebuilt it without them."

The Olsons handed those over to architect Rick Sundberg of (then) Olson Sundberg, and he got to work remaking the Northwest masterpiece. Tweaks are subtle and functional (new below-ground

space for a craft studio, media room, wine). Whitney Hines designed most of the furniture. All was restored in 1992: 3,692 square feet, four bedrooms, 3 ½ baths. The aggregate patio provides natural solar heating; the large eaves shade.

"Rick went and talked to Roland Terry. And he said, 'Think driftwood, fellas. Think driftwood,' " Linda remembers about the color choices.

The marvel of the home is that, as Linda says, "there's nothing about it that's for show except that it has beautiful lines."

The real beauty is the functionality, found in every nook, each cranny: built-in bathroom clothes hampers; walls of bookshelves; a firewood bin (with an exterior loading door); cabinets for china and a wet bar; a carport tool closet, another off the front door for skis and other play gear; what Linda calls "sneaky storage" in overhead clear-vertical-grain cedar cabinets.

Then there is the kitchen. Briefly, a trip around the U-shaped island goes like this: washer and dryer, laundry sink, mail slot (deposits hit the Formica counter), hampers for light and dark clothes, built-in barbecue and blender, butcher-block pastry surface, spice rack, oven, cooktop, sink, dishwasher, refrigerator, freezer and pantry.

The Olsons' son and daughter have left for college. Linda has lots of time for her art. But it's tough to concentrate with Lake Washington and Mount Rainier out every window.

"Everywhere you're going to do something there's a fabulous view," Linda sighs. "Whether I'm folding towels, putting away the groceries, even parking the car. When Bruce and I go on trips, we just can't wait to be here."

Rebecca Teagarden writes about architecture and design for Pacific NW magazine. Benjamin Benschneider is a magazine staff photographer.