

## AIA Home of the Month: The 360° Effect

By Juliette Guilbert

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The dwelling's eye-catching eastern face reveals two wings eloquently expressing complementary functions: the "night pavilion" (on the left) emphasizing privacy and restraint and the "day pavilion" exuberantly opening up to the world (and to stunning natural vistas). (Photo by [Lara Swimmer](#))

*A new Vashon Island dwelling offers varied views*

When they first saw the property high on a bluff overlooking Puget Sound, on the eastern edge of Vashon Island, Laura Baker and Suzanne Craft knew that this was where they wanted to be, to the point of announcing "We'll take it," even before setting foot in the house. Once they ventured inside, Laura's brother and sister, along for the ride, were amazed that the couple intended to live in the tiny, frill-free ranch house, originally built in the 1940s for use as a Boy Scout camp. However, that house was beside the point: Laura and Suzanne, both research psychologists, had been searching for a view of such breathtaking magnitude for a year. "We were kind of our realtor's nightmare," Suzanne recalls. "We wanted no wires anywhere, no views of any other structures and open and sunny, because we love to garden." They snapped up the 600-square-foot camp house and resided there for two years, all the while dreaming up the home that would replace it. "The roof was quite leaky, there was carpenter ant damage and the windows were single-pane vinyl," Suzanne says.



(Photo [Lara Swimmer](#)) *The home's main entry is made via its lower-key south side.*

Enter Hutchison & Maul Architecture, an eight year-old Seattle firm known for its creative exploration of architectural forms and resourceful approach to unusual sites. After meeting with firms large and small, Laura and Suzanne felt that Tom Maul and Robert Hutchison could realize their vision of a warm, contemporary eyrie that would feel like a natural part of the cliff-side habitat they had grown to love. They knew, too, that it would be a challenge to site the house where they wanted it: on the raised berm that separates the meadow at the front of the property from the bluff, and the view, at the rear.

As confident as they were in Hutchison & Maul's capabilities, these women left nothing to chance. Laura confesses to coming armed with a 10-page wish list. "It was a fairly intense program," says Maul, including a private master suite, an open-plan great room, a "bird room" for the couple's miniature parrots, two home offices, a formal entry, an exercise room and lots of view-maximizing windows. In addition, every room had to be "100 percent usable."

The architects neatly solved the conflicting requirements for privacy and openness by splitting the design's 2,300 square feet into two zones: an expansive "day pavilion" contains the great room, while a more intimate "night pavilion" encloses the bedrooms. The two are linked via the "gasket space" of the entry. Both zones access the view, but the day pavilion is sheathed in glass and opens to patios with deep overhangs that blur the distinction between indoor and outdoor space. The night pavilion takes the form of a snug box with punched windows.

Aesthetically, the design resides at the intersection of architects' and clients' sensibilities. "They wanted texture and patina, and we wanted Modernist restraint," Maul says. A good-natured process of give and take led to modern bones clad in warm, sensuous materials that offer visual intrigue without diluting the home's modern essence: a copper roof (creatively sourced by Suzanne and Laura from surplus material from the remodeling of

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the Federal Courthouse in downtown Seattle), vertical rough-sawn tongue-and-groove cedar siding with a dark stain, diamond-polished black concrete floors, untreated steel overhang braces meant to rust and a massive poured-concrete fireplace. Suzanne and Laura are particularly enamored of the roof, a portion of which is visible from their bedroom window and, they report, much easier on the eyes than composite. The couple's mini parrots—and Suzanne's orchids—got their space, too, a glass enclosure in the great room. Both humans pick the main living area, with its Baker-to-Rainier view, expanses of glass and austere fireplace, as their favorite spot in the house. "Sitting in front of the fireplace with the huge bank of windows is just an amazing feeling," says Suzanne, "and there's not a wire anywhere to be seen."



*(Photo Lara Swimmer) In the kitchen, honed black granite countertops set off simple birdseye maple cabinetry.*



*(Photo Lara Swimmer) The bank of alder-framed windows blends beautifully with the cedar ceiling. A glass room-within-a-room is part of the great room's main space, but is enclosed to protect the couple's parrots.*



*(Photo Lara Swimmer) The owners' original vision of the fireplace, cast in place by contractor Reid Kruly (whom Laura describes as a "concrete genius"), was a heavily patinaed piece, studded with embedded fossils.*

**Tour this home:**

Sunday, March 15

Noon–3 p.m.

**Open House Tour**

Our ongoing partnership with the American Institute of Architects Seattle Chapter (AIA Seattle) continues our commitment to bring the experience of Puget Sound–area residential design to our readers. Each issue, we showcase an architect-designed home, selected by AIA Seattle and Northwest Home, which will be open to the public for a Sunday-afternoon viewing. We invite you to tour this issue's featured home, designed by Robert

Hutchison and Tom Maul of Hutchison & Maul Architects, located on Vashon Island at 19120 Ridge Rd. SW, on Sunday, March 15, between noon and 3 p.m. For more information on the tour and the Open House program, please visit [nwhome.com](http://nwhome.com) or [aiaseattle.org](http://aiaseattle.org); 206.448.4938. **Architectural Firm:** Hutchison & Maul Architecture

**Cost :** \$213 per square foot for a 2,300-square-foot house (total project cost includes a variety of additional fees for other services, such as landscaping, not reflected).

**Tour it:** Sunday, March 15

**NEWS FLASH:** Hutchinson & Maul Architecture was just selected as a "2009 Emerging Voice" by The Architectural League NY. For more information, visit [archleague.org](http://archleague.org).

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