

Metropolitan

20th ANNIVERSARY 1981-2001

Home

NEW CLASSICS

THE
SOFTER
SIDE OF
MODERN

**COMPANY'S
COMING:**

JOYOUS
ROOMS

GIFTS AND
GLITTER

FANCY
FEASTS...

AND ALL THE
TRIMMINGS

NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER 2001
USA \$3.95
CANADA \$4.95
UK £2.75
Display until
December 10, 2001
www.methome.com

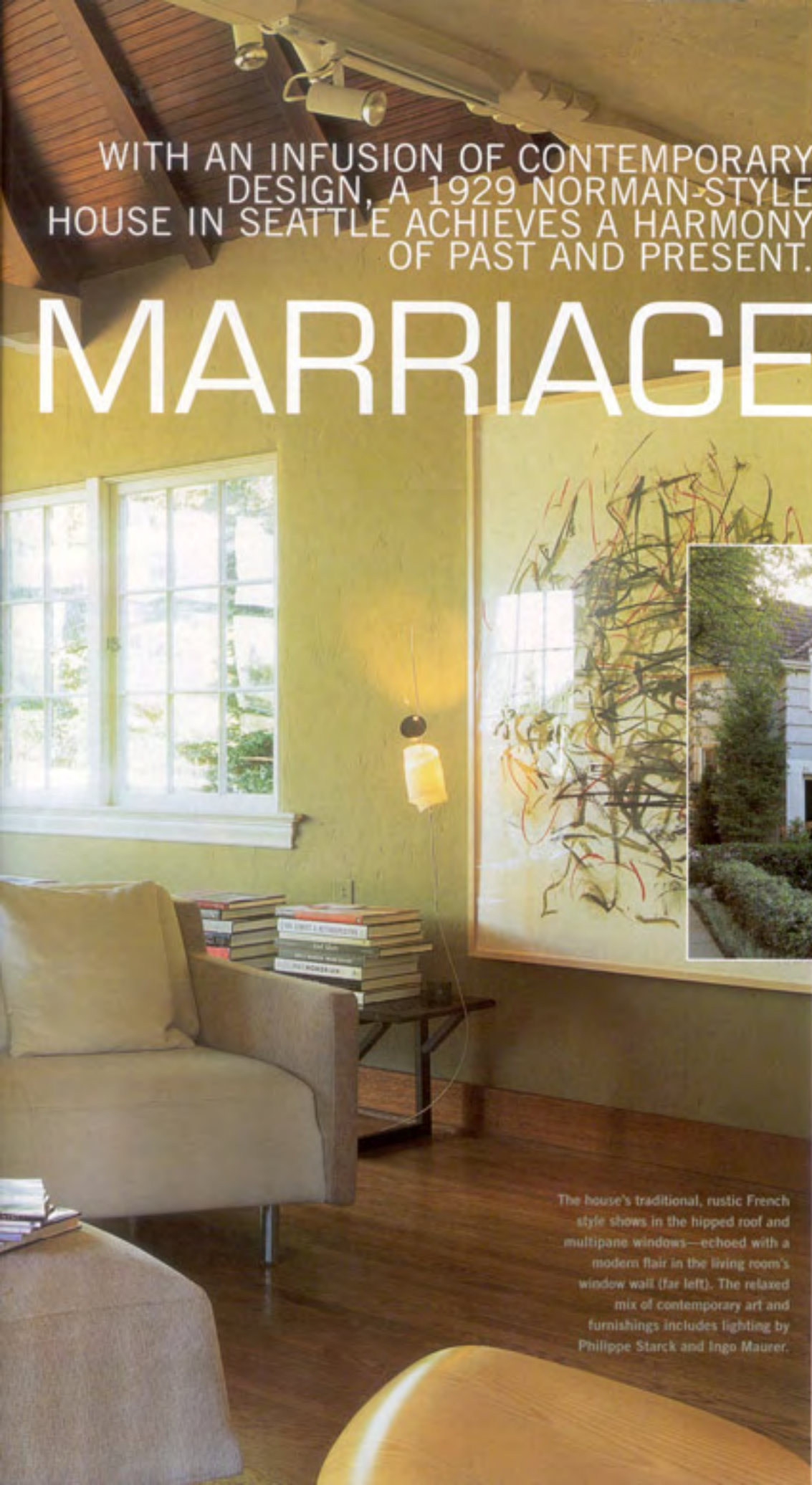


A MODERN



WITH AN INFUSION OF CONTEMPORARY DESIGN, A 1929 NORMAN-STYLE HOUSE IN SEATTLE ACHIEVES A HARMONY OF PAST AND PRESENT.

MARRIAGE



The house's traditional, rustic French style shows in the hipped roof and multipane windows—echoed with a modern flair in the living room's window wall (far left). The relaxed mix of contemporary art and furnishings includes lighting by Philippe Starck and Ingo Maurer.





The reconfigured kitchen (opposite), with new birch cabinetry, is open to the outdoors (left) and the dining room (below), where a contemporary table and stools mingle with 1930s Zanotta chairs. Chell and Bruch relax on the dining terrace (below, right).



Artist David Chell and Robin Bruch, an interior designer and designers' rep, discovered their mutual appreciation for modernism when he bought a vintage Aalto chair from her. Today, the chair resides in the master bedroom of the deftly updated Norman-style house they share in Seattle. It's an early (1929) design by Paul Thiry, who went on to become principal architect of the 1962 Seattle World's Fair.

"The house shows what a good designer he was in any style," declares the renovation architect, Christopher Keyser. The original boasted many graceful details, like the living room's striking window wall. A scaled-up version of the traditional multipane windows, it seemed contemporary yet complementary—just the effect that Chell and Bruch wanted for the entire house.

That meant remodeling the kitchen and adjacent dining

room. "They were dark, with no direct access to the backyard," recalls Chell. "It was the style of the time—houses were oriented inward, and kitchens were minimized." To open up the two rooms to each other and to the outdoors, the back wall of the house was extended and given new metal-frame windows and French doors that open onto an expansive terrace, which replaced a rickety wood deck.

View-blocking cabinets gave way to open shelving and increased under-counter storage. The door between kitchen and dining room became a pass-through after removal of a wall created a more open connection. Clean lines and basic materials (concrete counters, stainless-steel hardware, wood floors and limestone floors) prevail.

PRODUCED BY DORETTA SPERDUTO AND LINDA HUMPHREY.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARTIN TESSLER. WRITTEN BY JEFF BOOK.



The house could have been redone in the faux-rustic manner of 18th-century French paintings, but Chell and Bruch are dedicated minimalists. "The art is all what I call elemental abstraction, the furnishings modern but not glitzy, with an emphasis on natural materials," he says. Rugs and window coverings are almost nowhere to be found. "We like everything pared down, which seems to suit the house," says Bruch, noting that it's about the same age as their vintage Aalto and Reitveld chairs.

The careful choice of materials and colors is one reason new and old blend together smoothly. "Also, the original style is particularly forgiving, since it's fairly informal and eclectic," says Keyser.

He and Chell researched Norman architecture and gardens before choosing stone and (chimney-matching) brick for outdoor walls like those around the patio. "They look like they've been here forever," Chell says. Reflecting the design's subtle balance of modern and traditional, the new balcony off the upstairs master bedroom has steel railings and beams resting on brick pillars. A bulldozer helped make the overgrown, underused yard a nearly blank canvas. Chell turned it into an inviting, parklike setting with lushly planted terraces.

"Now it feels like we have as many rooms outside as in," says Bruch. "David's garden is so lovely that we decided to get married there." Inside, the additional glass brightens the house on gray winter days. "The project involved relatively small changes with dramatic payoffs," says Keyser. Adds Bruch, "I think the original architect would take one look at what we've done and say, 'Bravo!'"

See Resources, last pages.



Restful color marks the master bedroom. One of Chell's paintings hangs over the streamlined bed, flanked by two Tolomeo lights from Artemide. The vintage Aalto chair and stool make a favorite reading spot, lit by French doors to the balcony.

