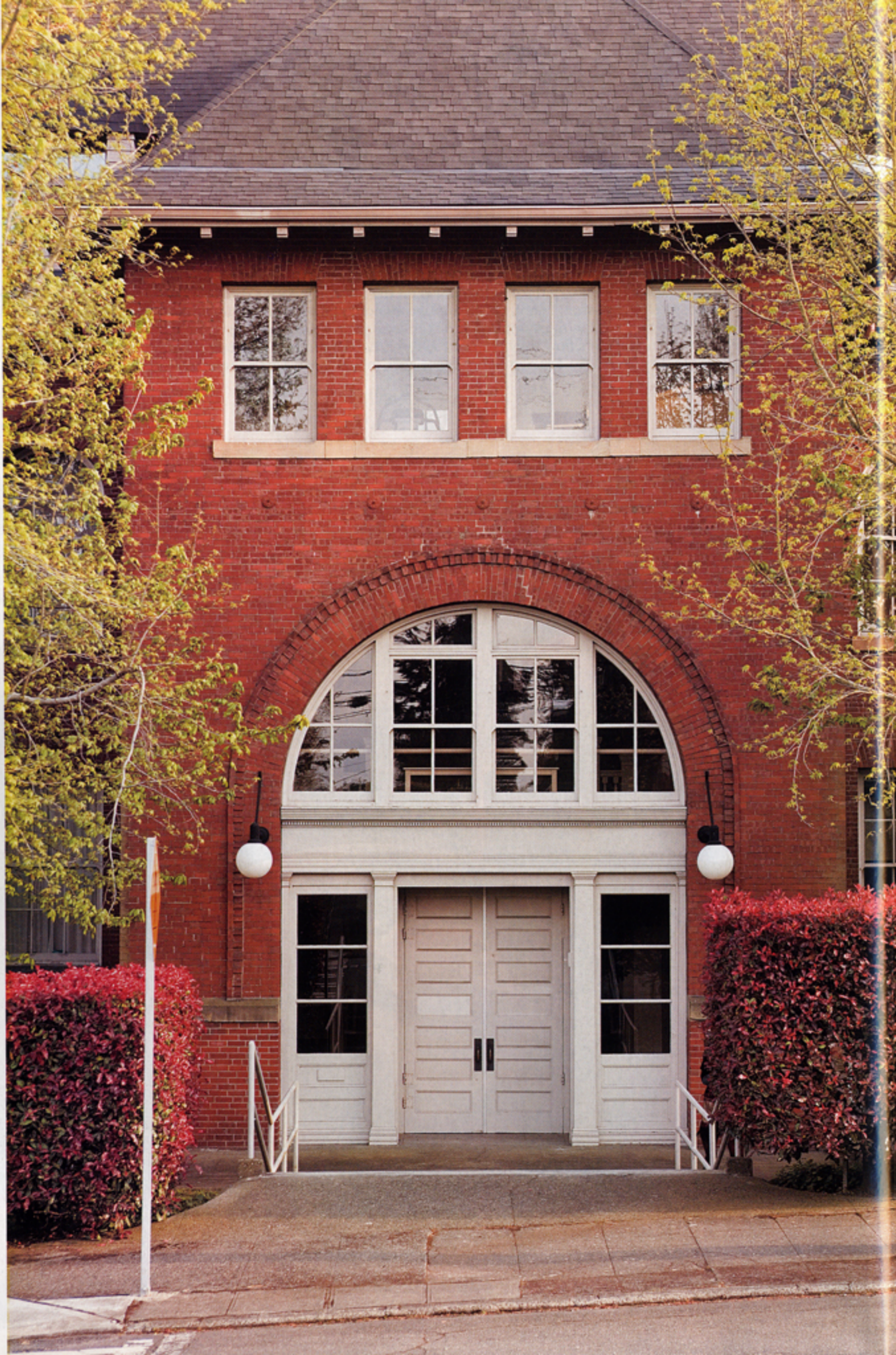


CLASS ACT



The disused Victorian-era brick school that Larry and Susan Winn now call home was originally built in 1896; the inside—thanks to Eric Cobb's graceful renovation and A+ furnishings—embraces the past while living comfortably in the present. The great room features a massive pivoting stack of wood-framed windows that contribute to the room's colorful take on modernism circa 2006. A T. L. Lange watercolor hangs on the wall beside the window.

MET HOME OF THE MONTH TO CREATE A HOME FOR THEIR ART, SEATTLE COLLECTORS LARRY AND SUSAN WINN WENT BACK TO SCHOOL IN THIS QUIRKY CONDOMINIUM CONVERSION.



LARRY WINN VOWED HE WOULD NEVER LIVE IN ANOTHER CONDOMINIUM. He'd had it with testy neighbors, endless meetings and tiptoeing around after dark. But when a real estate agent showed Larry and his wife, Susan, a unit in a historic elementary school in Seattle, they bought it without hesitation. Originally the school's auditorium and gym, the 3,000-square-foot condominium offered soaring ceilings, eight-inch-thick concrete walls and a private entrance off a tree-lined street. This was as close as you could get to living in a house without having to mow the lawn.

Although the 110-year-old school was converted to residential use more than 20 years ago, Larry, the founder of an art publishing and licensing company, wanted to peel away those '80s improvements and return the structure to its original materials. "Larry envisioned a big, light-filled space for enjoying art," says architect Eric Cobb, who collaborated on the project with architect Jacek Mrugala and contractor Eric Stelter. The team stripped drywall and plaster from ceilings and

columns to expose the craggy concrete underneath, then sandblasted the finish, revealing the random scraps of wood and brick that had been tossed in the slurry when the building went up. Since light was limited, Cobb fitted the great room and bedroom with floor-to-ceiling stacks of wood-sash windows. In both rooms, a single stack pivots open to form a mammoth, 16-foot passageway to a garden.

Cobb divided the interior with partitions that stop short of the ceiling, aiding the flow of light and making the walls look like easels for the owners' oversize canvases. Smaller works are propped on shelves or sprawl casually across tabletops.

Above: The seating area of the great room, where Susan Winn (left) chats with *Met Home's* Linda Humphrey, is dominated by a custom Minotti sofa covered in Spinneybeck leather. **Opposite:** Canvases by Laddie John Dill (left) and T. L. Lange overlook an 18-foot table fabricated from a slab of reclaimed redwood set on limestone piers that were salvaged from the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. The light fixtures are fashioned from crab pots.

PRODUCED BY LINDA O'KEEFFE AND LINDA HUMPHREY. PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN GRANEN. WRITTEN BY FRED ALBERT.



IN KEEPING WITH the art-gallery spirit, furnishings feel more curated than coordinated. Midcentury pieces from Knoll and Noguchi are combined with newer classics like Toyo Ito's wooden *Ripples* bench for Horm and a coffee table crafted from bound birch branches. Quixotic touches, like the antique tortoise shell over the fireplace and the baroque chairs upholstered in baby-blue faux ostrich (included in part, Larry chuckles, to irk his architect), cast predictability to the wind, so that each piece is perceived as an individual work of art.

While vacationing in Sonoma, California, Larry spotted an 18-foot-long table crafted from a rustic redwood slab set atop limestone piers salvaged from the 1906 San Francisco earthquake. It took six men and a forklift to move the piece into the house, but now that it's sitting in the center of the great room, it's hard to imagine the space without it.

"I wanted it as a foil to the sweetness and restraint of the architecture," says Larry. The hanging lights above—looking for all the world like vintage Eames or Bertioia—are actually Portuguese crab pots retrofitted with lanterns.

Since the front doors open directly into the great room, Cobb designed a screen that serves as a kind of foyer, preserving the Winns' privacy while offering visitors a veiled view of the living spaces beyond. The screen's steel armature extends into the two-story library; to reach the library's upper shelves, you climb a ladder and step out onto a laminated-glass floor. "It's a little eerie walking around up there," admits Susan, "but my grandkids love it."

Left (from top): A slatted mahogany screen by E. Cobb Architects separates the entry from the living area; Larry and Susan Winn rest on the stairs to the guest quarters. **Opposite:** The entry screen's steel frame extends into the adjoining hallway, which doubles as a stacked library with a laminated-glass catwalk. A Donald Sultan screen print, "Smoke Rings," hangs at the end of the hallway.





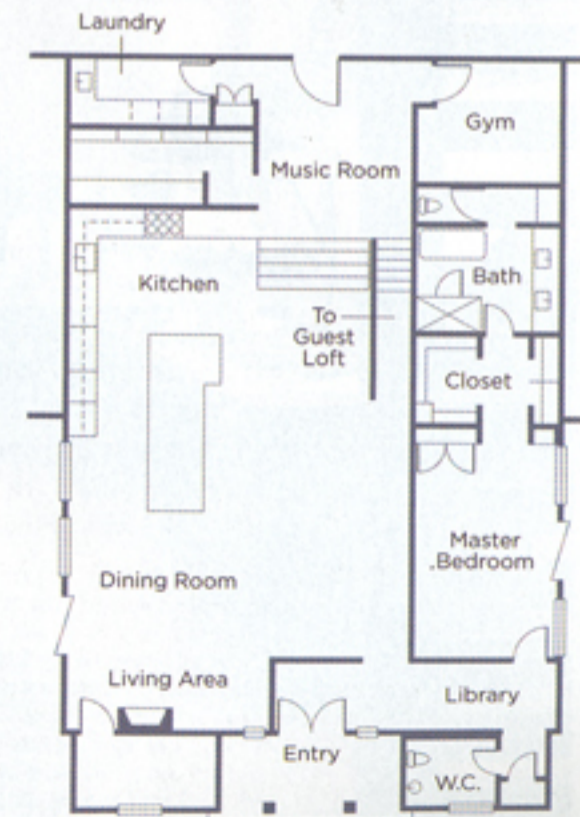
A STARKLY MODERN handrail marks a set of floating black terrazzo steps (designed to double as seating at parties) that lead from the great room up to the auditorium's former stage, where a '40s Steinway holds court. Taking advantage of the three-foot elevation, Cobb made the kitchen counters an extension of the stage floor and covered both with a continuous plane of ivory terrazzo. "By using the same material, it makes the kitchen less dominant in the space," says the architect. Flush white cabinets are similarly understated, deferring to the artwork and dishes congregating on open shelves above. The island top is clad in lustrous blackened steel—the same material used to form the stairs to the lofted guest room (limiting the materials palette is a salient characteristic of modern design).

The master bedroom compensates for its small footprint with a lofty ceiling and a generous bath dominated by a sunny Filippo Ioco floral. (Most of the artists on display are represented by Larry's com-

pany, Grand Image.) The painting is just one of several dramatic gestures—like the redwood table and the pivoting doors—used to anchor areas within the open floor plan. Such flourishes, Cobb notes, succeed best when used in moderation. "Where you go for it, go for it," he says. "Just don't go for it everywhere."

Although the Winns have moved eight times in the last 14 years alone (Larry buys houses as readily as art), the homeowner predicts he'll be staying put for a while. "The idea of living in a gym is a perfect metaphor for my life," says the one-time basketball jock. For this reluctant condo owner, the move turned out to be a slam dunk.

Above (from left): A vintage Knoll table (with Segesta chairs from Alias) and a dramatic Noguchi pendant lamp anchor one end of the kitchen, which features white cabinets and yellow appliances (the island top is blackened steel); the former stage floor extends to become the kitchen counter, while steps to the guest suite are hidden behind a partition displaying a Malcolm Hill sculpture; barstools by Billiani sit at the island.



Modern Made Easy: Spice the White with Wit

Just because a house is modern doesn't mean it has to be humorless—even if it is all white. The Winns are serious about design, but they wanted a home that would be fun to live in, too. Generally speaking, they avoided archetypal modern furnishings in favor of an eclectic mix that includes colors—butter yellow, baby blue—that would have made the Bauhaus bunch blanch. Giant-size doors make stepping outside an Alice-in-Wonderland experience, while an orange shower wand brings a bit of cheek to the bath. Finally, to add a touch of levity to their white kitchen, the Winns purchased appliances in a color called Lemonade. "We were bored with stainless-steel appliances," Larry says. "The kitchen is a gathering place where people should relax and enjoy." (The appliance dealer checked the order four times to make sure he heard the color correctly.) Chunky wraparound shelving that soars out of reach from the ground may not be practical for everyday cookware, but it's perfect for art.



DETAILS


1 The Winns' vintage grand piano sits next to a T. L. Lange artwork on what was once the stage of the school auditorium. Eric Cobb recovered the floor in terrazzo, a material that fit the building's vintage but still feels contemporary. The piano holds Dale Chihuly glass. Stairs at the rear lead to a loft outfitted as a guest suite.

2 An orange *Kaa* hand shower from Agape stands out against Cloud White glass mosaic Waterworks tile in the master bath. *Tara* fixtures are from Dornbracht.

3 The hand shower's color is echoed in the Filippo Ioco painting, hanging above a *Happy D* Duravit bathtub. Exposed floor decking allowed the Winns to squeeze a guest room into the loft above the bath. Since the floor between the two was too thin for ductwork, an exhaust fan was concealed behind the gap in the corner.

4 The screen around the entry diverts guests to the side, so their first view of the interior isn't staring straight down the center table. The hanging lights humanize the space's scale; walls stop short of the ceiling, helping to distinguish the new construction from the historic shell.

5 Even plumbing fixtures get the gallery treatment. In the powder room, Alape's understated "pedestal" washstand is paired with a toilet by Philippe Starck.

6 A Tom Wesselmann screen print dominates one wall of the master bedroom, which makes up in height what it lacks in floor space. An extra-tall door acknowledges the disparity and reveals the glass catwalk in the adjoining hallway-cum-library.  See Resources, last pages.

