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INSIDE.

DIVINE DESIGN

small Kirkland space feels like a mondo condo >>

BY ROBIN AVNI | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANE MEYER





AT FIRST GLANCE
IT DOESN'T SEEM

POSSIBLE THAT SCOTT AND SANDRA GJESDAHL'S WELL-CRAFTED AND BEAUTIFULLY DESIGNED KIRKLAND CONDOMINIUM IS ONLY 1,500 SQUARE-FEET. FOR THAT MATTER, IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE UPON SECOND GLANCE, EITHER.

Perhaps what's misleading is the spacious island kitchen, with an adjunct prep pantry and adjacent dining space, which could comfortably host a very large dinner party. Then again, maybe it's the well-appointed master bath that includes a large two-headed shower, two floating vessel-sink consoles, two built-in closets and a large soaking tub. Oh, and there's a guest bedroom and comfortable living room with built-in seating and a sizeable sofa from which to view the large flat-panel TV, too.

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As guests, or even homeowners, gather around the center island, the space feels more drawing room than kitchen because of the furniture-like quality of the cabinetry, including the custom finish on the Vent-A-Hood over the Gaggeneau professional stove.



"We always remind ourselves of how lucky we are to be in a relationship with each other, but to also have all this great work we can accomplish together and how our design intentions are aligned."



<< What's clear is the husband and wife, who also own Bristol Design and Construction, an award-winning design and building team in Kirkland, definitely have a little magic going on when they work a space.

"It is magical," agrees Scott. "We always remind ourselves of how lucky we are to be in a relationship with each other, but to also have all this great work we can accomplish together and how our design intentions are aligned. It's a really powerful thing."

Taking a page from the approach of master architects such as Frank Lloyd Wright and Greene & Greene, the Gjesdahls believe in a holistic and cohesive approach to home design. "They didn't just design the house, they designed the furniture, the doors, the cabinets," says Scott, who builds original custom cabinetry and furniture and built all the cabinets and several pieces of the furniture in their residence. The couple's shared >>



<< aesthetic and appreciation for history is evident in the rich wood built-ins, cabinetry and thoughtful use of color throughout the condominium. "We design together," says Scott. "We each have our real strong points on what we bring to the table and we check each other's thought processes."

perfectly for both purposes. It's a very comfortable way to live, but you need to respect the use of each space." For example, their expanded butler's pantry, or what Scott calls their "villa pantry."

"The dishwasher is back there, the food storage is back there, prepping the meal starts there," explains Scott.

love pull

It was that way from their very first collaborative design effort they affectionately call their "love pull" – a custom fused-glass cabinet pull created for the Seattle Cooks Show five years ago. "We met through the hardware industry and then realized we had all these other great interests in common," says Sandra. The pull has a special place of honor on a prominent kitchen shelf.

Since that time, when they bring their collective skills to a project they always look for ways to effectively maximize, utilize and add beauty to every square-inch— just as they have done with their own previously confining quarters.

"So many rooms serve dual functions these days," says Sandra, who is originally from Spokane and studied architecture in California. "Our living room is our media room and it functions

"It's very utilitarian. It's the work space," adds Sandra. "But we can easily close it off and use the kitchen space as an entertaining space."

Indeed, the Blue California granite slab counters alongside the deep, stainless steel Kindred and Blanco sink can be piled high with dishes and remnants from meal preparation, yet hidden away with the simple closing of a built-in door. The kitchen layout is well-thought out and enhances both every-day use and a modern-day, hang-in-the-kitchen entertaining style.

As guests, or even homeowners, gather around the center island, the space feels more drawing room than kitchen because of the furniture-like quality of the cabinetry, including the custom finish on the Vent-A-Hood over the Gaggenau professional stove.

"I always use at least two different types of wood in our cabinetry compositions," says Scott. In this original design the >>





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"main body of the cabinetry is Sapeli and the accent wood is Wenge." The elements of the cabinet and hood design are echoed on the other side of the open space in the large living room built-in that provides additional seating. It is also the media center cabinet hosting stereo components and a sizeable TV that can be hidden from view by closing the shoji-like screens acting as functional doors and decorative panels.

bathroom paradise

Scott and Sandra also leveraged the idea of concealing shoji screen doors in the design of their master bath. The amazing reconfiguration of the 190-square foot space is bathroom, spa, mechanical room and laundry room all rolled into one. Situated on either side of the large, two-person tiled shower are closets housing a stacked washer dryer and the condominium's heating cooling system. "Once again we have a room sharing functions," says Sandra. "That's what enables the space to feel so much bigger."

However, fitting all the necessary amenities and creating a serene, spa-like space— with concrete and Carrerra slab marble countertops, Gasgogone Blue Limestone tiles on the floor, and a Bain Ultra tub— was quite a challenge.

"We struggled, we sketched together and talked while we were sketching," says Scott, describing their process. "Then we figured out there was enough space. Having the bathtub as the centerpiece made it work."

"Also, having the vanities off the floor gives you more floor space," says Sandra. They used the LaCava vessel sinks to keep the countertops lower and installed custom mirrors to keep the backsplash simple, building all the faucets and sconces into the mirrors.

The creative solutions are just part of the process for the pair, but also a part of the joy, especially designing their own home. "When you're doing it for yourself," says Sandra, "you know what your favorite woods are, your favorite tile and your favorite colors. You trust you're making a good decision."

And creating a little magic. ✨

WOODSHOP WONDER

Scott Gjesdahl's high school shop teacher should be very proud. Scott credits his early interests in custom wood design back to his days spent in the Bellevue High School woodshop. It was during an end-of-year student show that the then-teenage woodworker received his first commission — from the school principal. It began a lifetime love affair with woodworking, custom furniture and cabinetry.

"I actually built an inlaid teak table for the principal of my school," remembers Scott, who was born and raised in Bellevue. "I had built one for my mother and gave it to her for a gift. When the principal saw my table that I made for her on display he commissioned the same table."

It was right then and there a new, young entrepreneur was born. "I think I made it for \$125," he recalls, "which seemed like an awful lot of money at the time!"


Therefore, it's really no surprise that right alongside the Bristol Design and Construction offices and showroom, located in Kirkland; there is a 2,000-square foot, state-of-the-art woodworking facility. The "wood" shop allows the firm the opportunity to build custom furniture, mill custom architectural detail and create custom-built cabinetry for all their projects. "We design all our own cabinetry and architectural elements," Scott notes. And, while their offices are located down the road a bit from Bellevue, it's really not too hard to imagine how Scott got from there to here.


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