

# Victorian REVOLUTION

WRITTEN BY ANGELA CABOTAJE PHOTOGRAPHS BY ALEX HAYDEN



THE HAND-PAINTED BACKSPLASH TILES IN THE KITCHEN ARE FROM ANN SACKS. **opposite:** THE LIVING ROOM IS A MIX OF OLD AND NEW. "MY FOCUS WAS TO CREATE A LANGUAGE BETWEEN THE OLD HOUSE AND THE PERIOD ARCHITECTURE AND MORE CAREFULLY SELECTED MODERN FINISHES AND FURNISHINGS," INTERIOR DESIGNER LAUREN FERRARO SAYS.



**opposite:** INTERIOR DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE INTERSECT IN THE LIVING ROOM. THE SOFA'S CURVED BACK MIRRORS THE SHAPE OF THE BAY WINDOW AND THE WOOD FIREPLACE SURROUND. **below, left:** THE HOME'S NEW EXTERIOR IS GRAND AND WELCOMING. **below, right:** THE DESIGN TEAM RESTORED THE EXISTING STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS DURING THE REMODEL.



## A turn-of-the-century Capitol Hill home finds new life as a modern-day charmer

**T**he home on the corner lot of this Capitol Hill street is stately and refined—everything you might expect from a 1906 Victorian. Yet the leaded-glass windows, picturesque turrets and charming front porch suggest little about the playful, relaxed vibe inside.

Homeowners Randy and Sage had outgrown their previous house in the Green Lake area and were searching for one that would fit the needs of their two young children. After searching for two months, they discovered *the one* on Capitol Hill, but it wasn't love at first sight.

While the home had the space they wanted and was big on character, it also had a few less-than-desirable features that made Randy and Sage hesitate. An overgrown hedge outside seemed standoffish and obscured most of the windows on the first floor, giving the main living area the feel of a dimly lit basement. The home's

closed-off floor plan lost points for lacking functionality, and the décor was as Victorian as could be with lace, heavy drapes and dark, gothic wallpaper.

"We were nervous about it," Sage recalls. "We were wondering if we could make it our own or if it would always be fussy and Victorian."

Fortunately, Randy and Sage had a good friend who could help: architect Matt Hutchins, principal of CAST architecture. Hutchins had helped them remodel their previous home, and they knew that if anyone could make this house work for them, it was him.

"I went out there and took a look at it and gave them an idea of what would be involved and what the real opportunities and possibilities were," Hutchins says. "It was obviously a classic diamond in the rough."

With that reassurance, Sage and Randy went ahead and purchased the house and contacted interior designer

THE NEW KITCHEN IS FRESH AND MODERN WITH TRANSPARENT UPPER CABINETS, A CLEAN COLOR PALETTE AND FUSS-FREE FIXTURES. **opposite:** THE KITCHEN AND DINING ROOM ARE RANDY AND SAGE'S FAVORITE SPACES IN THEIR REMODELED HOME. THEY KEPT SOME CHARMING FEATURES FROM THE ORIGINAL HOME AND WENT WITH WHIMSICAL DESIGN ELEMENTS ELSEWHERE TO ADD A MODERN FLAIR.

Lauren Ferraro of Gregory Carmichael Interior Design and contractor Dave Arnold of Mt. Si Construction to round out their dream-home team.

"The goal of the design from early on was to update it and suit the modern sensibilities and the needs of a young family," Ferraro explains. "We also wanted to preserve the character of the house but not have it be stodgy and seem old-fashioned," Hutchins adds.

With help from Avalon Northwest Landscape, they uprooted the monstrous, 12-foot-tall hedge, which wrapped from the front of the house around one side. They also added a covered porch in back, perfect for grilling outside even on rainy Seattle days. A white-painted arbor and wrought-iron fence look much more inviting than the hedge wall but still provide some privacy in the side and back yards.

Then attention turned to reworking the cramped, turn-of-the-century floor plan to better fit Randy and Sage's family-oriented lifestyle. A wall between the kitchen and dining room was knocked down to create an open living space that easily flows from one area to the next. Randy and Sage both enjoy cooking, so Hutchins enlarged the kitchen to triple its original size and added a set of French doors for easy access to the porch out back.

Ferraro heeded the homeowners' request for clutter-free, kid-friendly décor. In the living room, the bay-window bench seat has pullout drawers underneath for easy toy storage and white cushions covered in resilient and washable outdoor fabric. A Lapchi floral area rug adds graphic appeal and is also durable ("Whatever we've spilled has come up so far," Sage says). Even the paint was tested and chosen for its resiliency (Randy and Sage's son demonstrated this by drawing on the walls with red marker, which came off after a bit of scrubbing).

The dining room and kitchen are equally livable. Ferraro found a lightly scratched Gulassa dining table at a secondhand furniture store and bought it on the spot. Randy and Sage opted not to refinish it so they wouldn't have to worry about adding extra dings or marks over the course of daily life. Aqua leather on the dining chair seats is easy to wipe, and the Love Letter pendant lamp above the table is youthful and customizable—Randy and Sage hang their children's artwork from it. In the kitchen, white cabinets and dark counter tops keep the look clean and understated,



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—SAGE, HOMEOWNER

except for a show-stealing cherry-blossom mosaic backsplash.

"They both have their own great sense of style, but they also don't take anything too seriously," Ferraro says of the homeowners. "They are so gutsy and playful."

The homeowners mixed modern and traditional elements without fear: graphic pink wallpaper with wainscoting in the dining room, a glass-orb Bocci light with a curved wood fireplace surround in the living room and a faux bison head with stained glass in the entryway. In homage to the previous incarnation of their home, Randy and Sage opted to leave the powder room on the first floor—brass fixtures, floral wallpaper and all—untouched.

"We wanted to honor as many of those little things that the owner took care in preserving," Sage says. "The funny nooks, the little window seats just make it a different place but add some character that is hard to come by these days."

Now, more than a century after it was first built, the Victorian on the corner still has all the charm and character of its original form. For Randy and Sage, it's the perfect mix of modern and traditional, refined and relaxed, whimsical and functional. Most of all, it's the perfect home. ■

For resource information, see Sources on page 94.

