

WHAT WE DO » WHERE WE EAT » HOW WE LIVE

Bainbridge

Island

tree retreats

- › Time
for Wine
- › Ba-BAM!
- › Ace of
Lace

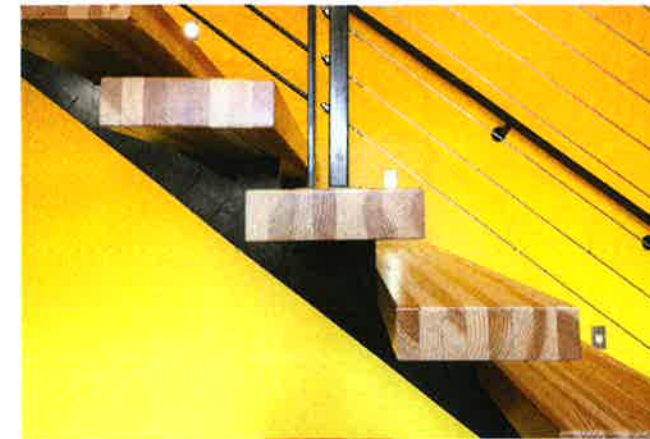
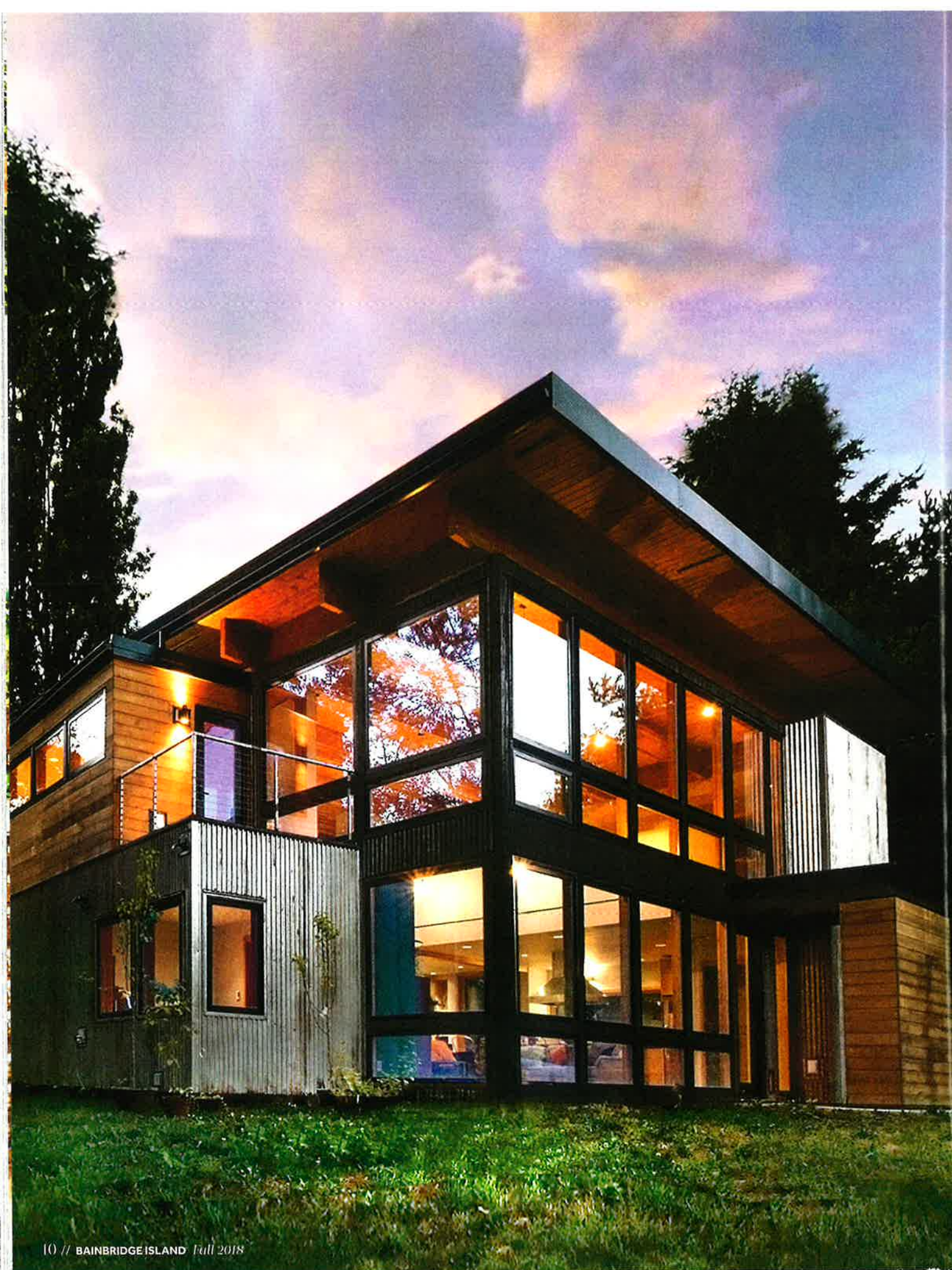
CLEAN HOUSE

Letting the engineering shine is key to the uncumbered spirit of Ann Strickland and Eric Parker's 2,626-square-foot home. For example, six simple lightbulbs hang from the ceiling, a deliberate departure from "industrial-inspired" fixtures. Using leftover corrugated steel from the exterior was an ideal solution for the sliding barn doors.



ISLAND COUPLE KEEPS AN EYE ON SIMPLE DESIGN

Sweet Spot



MUSIC TO THEIR EARS

The high notes just sound sweeter against a cheery yellow wall in a house that was made for music. Musician and teacher Ann Strickland (with her harmonium) and her husband Eric Parker (a lover of the 80s new wave movement) are at ease in their minimalist two-bedroom home off Lovgreen.

A

N AD FOR A PAIR OF JEANS interestingly described as “Americana workwear” recently made the rounds on social media. Brand new—but in order to look as if the wearer had just dug a ditch or some such labor, the distressed denim actually came smeared with reddish faux mud. The suggested retail price was \$245.

The jeans clearly fall near the point-of-no-return on the absurdity spectrum. But it was this same vein of ersatz design that Eric Parker and Ann Strickland pointedly wanted to steer clear of when building and outfitting their new home.

Their list of must-haves was uncomplicated. They didn’t want to hide the home’s engineering and they didn’t want more house than they needed. Knock-off finishes were a no-go. They didn’t want pseudo gaslights that looked like they were from a warehouse, or rust-colored siding that appeared weathered—they wanted actual work lights and corrugated steel siding that would oxidize and tarnish in its own time with the elements.

“There’re a lot of things that you can do that feel industrial; we wanted to be as honest as we could,” said Strickland about achieving their preferred style.

The couple eventually got their home, but in the process learned that creating something elegant and genuine, sans frills and replicas, can be harder than it seems. Simple does not mean easy.

Knowing Parker and Strickland’s goals, their friends Matthew (a woodworker) and Dura (a screenwriter) Curry recommended architect Matthew Coates, owner of Coates Design Architects, to design the residence. The couple hoped that



PRIMARY VALUES

Functionality first was the rule when designing the home and choosing its finishes. Finding a range hood with lots of power, no frills and that didn't cost a fortune was no easy task. After an exhaustive search, Strickland discovered theirs from Proline Range Hoods in Salt Lake City. Throughout the main floor, the concrete floor is a cool counterbalance to the home's pops of color.

taking their friends' advice would help them achieve the simple, clean home they'd envisioned. The design collaboration kicked off with Parker's desire to build the home from used shipping containers. The clean industrial lines, plus the idea of reusing perfectly good but no longer needed materials, checked lots of boxes for the couple's aesthetics and values. "Eric came into our very first meeting with a bag of scale-accurate shipping containers," Coates recalled. "We played around with them and created multiple design scenarios using the containers as the base structure."

Coates set out to find the sweet spot—how to capitalize on the containers' structural integrity and to maintain their intrinsic form with minimal alterations. But as formidable as shipping containers are when in tact, cutting in windows and doors quickly compromises their strength. And in order to route plumbing and electrical, Coates explained, the interior would have needed to be furred out, reducing their livable space and adding cost and complexity to the build.

As intriguing as the concept was, in the end, "they just don't pencil," Coates said. Ultimately, the Coates team conceived a plan using traditional wood framing that captured the configuration of two sets of two stacked containers, which serve as bookends, bridged by a simple span roof. The two opposing stacks contain the functional elements of the house—its kitchen, bathrooms and utilities—and the open space between holds the two-story living and dining area, loft and two bedrooms. "After we shifted from using actual containers we didn't change the design much," said Coates. The switch kept the design aesthetic alive and saved money too.



In addition to building the home with a clear view of an old Mimosa tree abuzz with hummingbirds, Coates' team was charged with creating a spot for Strickland's baby grand piano. The accomplished musician and teacher (Strickland just retired after a 20-year tenure at Grace Episcopal Church) wanted a beautiful, acoustically pleasant location for her instrument as well as a space to bring students. The piano now inhabits the loft at the top of the open wood and steel staircase.

Next to the piano, along the loft's edge, runs a horizontal cable railing that frames a commissioned metal inset made by metalwork sculptor Garth Edwards. The whimsical piece suggests a forest scene of plants and birds. It casts shadows and adds texture to the upper level and living room below.

Strickland described Edwards' process. "He sat in the building as the walls went up and imagined the second story and designed the beautiful railing piece, sketching preliminary design drawings right here in the house," she said. "We left the design to him and we are so in love with the piece. We told him we like birds."

Strickland said that Edwards' partner, Pegge Ashcroft, had an important influence on the home too. "She was the inspiration for our yellow wall. She came to the place while it was being built and said, 'You'll want yellow here in the winter to warm up the space.' She was totally right. The yellow got us down 'The Thunderbirds' color trail," Strickland said, describing the idea of using strategically located, bold primary colors throughout the home, a nod to the 1960s British sci-fi television series. "I love that wall."

The influence from friends didn't stop there. The house is filled with art from local artists and friends, including Elizabeth VanDuine, Pamela Wachtler-Fermanis, Elizabeth Reed Smith, Michael Pontieri, Alex Stanyon, Susan Marie Andersson, Mary Kay Thompson, Amanda Devine and Thomas Schworer.

Strickland has owned the property the new house sits on for years. It's a pretty piece of rolling land she bought from a friend

two decades back. Strickland, then a single mom with a high school-aged daughter, moved onto the property in an existing singlewide trailer. Although her daughter initially hated the idea, the two fixed it up—gutting it, tiling, painting and laying wood floors—making the trailer a home they grew to love. Years later, after Strickland and Parker got married, the couple continued to live in the modest dwelling. They thought about moving but the spot was too good to give up.


When construction began on the new home, Strickland recalled how she was away when the trailer was demolished. "It was bittersweet, oddly, because it was a dilapidated mess at the end and had far outlived its life expectancy," she said. "Still, it was our home."

After the new home was finished Parker revealed three items from the trailer he had secretly stowed away: the door from Strickland's daughter's closet, a section of the wooden floor and a taillight.

"The closet door is a painted wood-paneled door covered with a collage of images of Frida Kahlo, Mary and many other women—a reminder of my daughter's creativity and how she is inclined to make beauty out of anything," said Strickland. "The floor had our blood, sweat and tears in every board. We cut, secured, drilled plugs, hammered, placed, sanded and varnished every inch. That floor was the foundation of our place and it was a labor of love that created it. And the taillight keeps us humble. We lived simply for a long time. The trailer housed us soundly while we dreamed about this beautiful house."

It's summertime and the house off Lovgreen is calm and cool. Bird, one the couple's Siamese cats is curled up on their bed. Boogie, her sister, is asleep on a shelf in the closet. Earlier in the day some neighborhood dogs stopped by for treats and Strickland is expecting a new music student to arrive before long. Life in the now seems simple and satisfying.

"It's not a house for everyone," said Strickland. "But we're so happy living in this space. There's not much we'd do differently." ■

Kimco Plumbing, Inc.

As seasons grow cooler, get comfy indoors.
Fall into some of this season's fine products.

kimcoplumbing.com | 360.394.7702 | info@kimcoplumbing.com

Your Local Independent Insurance Agency

THORNBURGH
Insurance Agency



188 Ericksen Ave. NE
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110
206-842-7692 www.thornburgh-insurance.com



Proudly Serving Our Community Since 1980



5% OFF
★ MENTION THIS AD ★


Got **MOSS**?

KMR

KITSAP **MOSS** REMOVAL Services:

- Roof Moss Removal
- Window Cleaning
- Gutter Cleaning
- Pressure Wash
- Preventative Maintenance
- Ground Surfaces

206-855-5608 kitsapmoss.com



Residential Design-Build
A KITCHEN THAT WORKS, LLC
206.780.1906
akitchenthatworks.com

KITCHEN, BATH, CLOSETS, AND MORE

