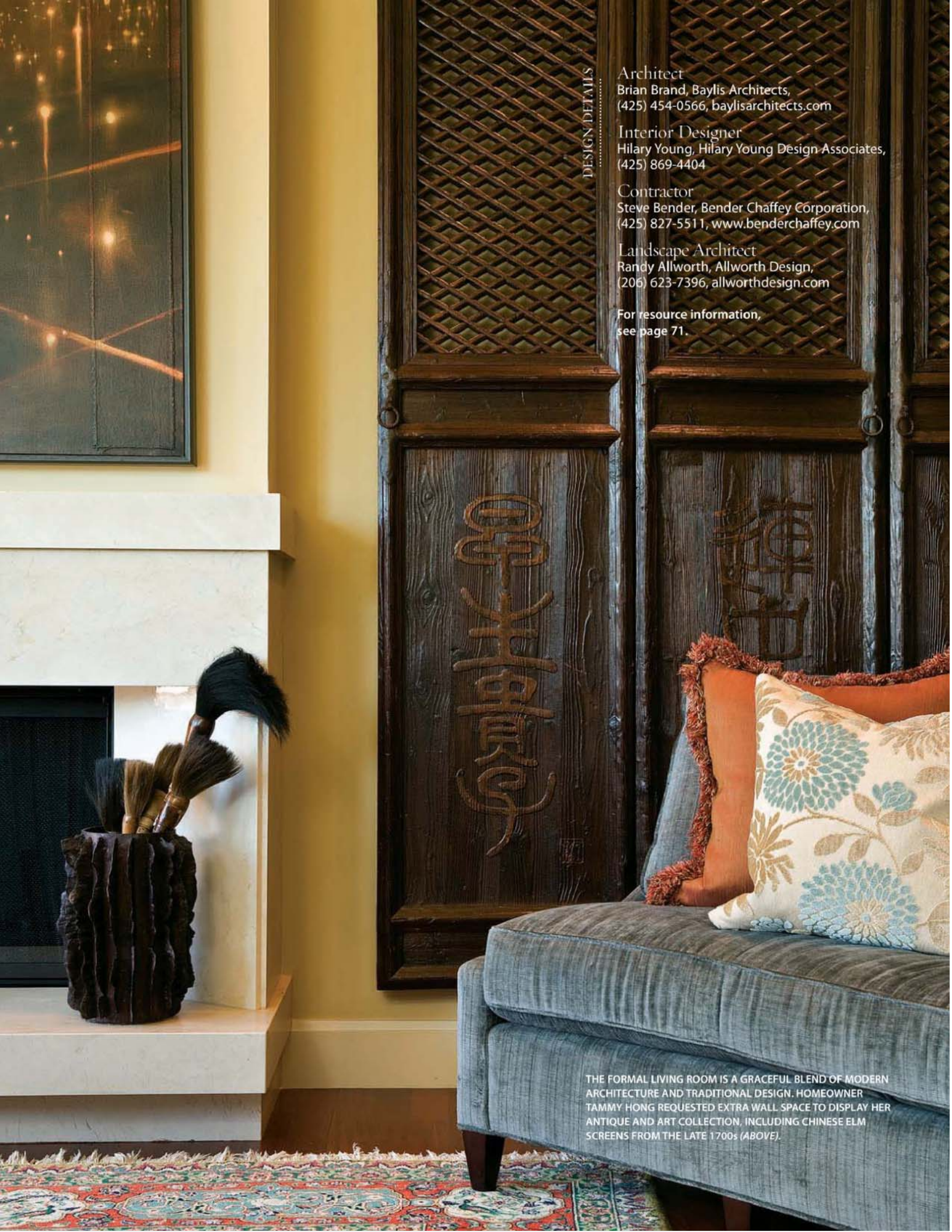




travelers' treasures

NORTHWEST NATIVES RETURN TO THEIR ROOTS FOR A DREAM HOME THAT BRIDGES MODERN AND OLD-WORLD DESIGN

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DESIGN DETAILS

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Contractor
Steve Bender, Bender Chaffey Corporation,
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Landscape Architect
Randy Allworth, Allworth Design,
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For resource information,
see page 71.

THE FORMAL LIVING ROOM IS A GRACEFUL BLEND OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE AND TRADITIONAL DESIGN. HOMEOWNER TAMMY HONG REQUESTED EXTRA WALL SPACE TO DISPLAY HER ANTIQUE AND ART COLLECTION, INCLUDING CHINESE ELM SCREENS FROM THE LATE 1700s (ABOVE).





LEFT: THE COURTYARD CONNECTS THE FORMAL LIVING ROOM AND THE FAMILY ROOM. DURING LARGE GATHERINGS, THE DOORS ARE USUALLY LEFT OPEN SO GUESTS CAN MINGLE OUTSIDE AND FLOW FROM ONE SIDE OF THE HOUSE TO THE OTHER.

it takes a village to raise a child, according to an African proverb. Tammy and Monte Hong have found that the same is true about building a house from the foundation up. With help from a talented design team, the Hong family was able to rear their very own dream home—a striking Balinese-inspired house in Bellevue that overlooks Meydenbauer Bay. “It’s the home that I want for forever,” Tammy says.

Tammy and Monte both grew up in the area, but Monte’s job as an IT consultant has taken the family around the world. They spent seven years in Germany, and now Tammy, 13-year-old Spencer and 6-year-old Sophia live part time in Singapore while Monte works out of Australia and Southeast Asia. When Tammy started searching for a house where the entire family could spend summers and where they will live permanently when she and Monte retire, she decided to return to their roots.

In late 2003, Tammy selected the nearly one-acre hillside lot in Bellevue and turned to Baylis Architects principal Brian Brand to design her dream home. Soon after, interior designer Hilary Young, contractor Steve Bender and landscape architect Randy Allworth joined the team. Her goal was to create an open and inviting house that required minimal upkeep, had room to host large gatherings and could seamlessly incorporate dozens of the artifacts and antiques that Tammy had collected from around the world.

“It’s basically Tammy’s project,” Brand says of the homeowner’s dedication. “Tammy had a huge passion for this, and she poured her soul into it.”

Just as parenthood does, this baby presented a few challenges. Half of the property could not be developed because it contains a city-protected greenbelt. In addition, Tammy wanted to be involved throughout but was only in town over the holidays for the initial meetings with Brand; the rest of their planning had to be done long distance.



HOMEOWNER TAMMY HONG ADMITS THAT HER ANTIQUES DON'T ALWAYS FIT WITH HER HOME'S DESIGN. "I DON'T WANT IT TO BE PERFECT," SHE SAYS. "I LIKE TO INCLUDE THINGS BECAUSE THEY REMIND ME OF THE PLACES WE'VE LIVED." OPPOSITE TOP: A BLUESTONE FIREPLACE SURROUND AND MAHOGANY CABINETS CONTINUE THE INDOOR-OUTDOOR THEME IN THE FAMILY ROOM. WINDOWS OFFER SPECTACULAR VIEWS OF MEYDENBAUER BAY AND A WOODY GREENBELT. OPPOSITE RIGHT: A BUDDHA STATUE IN THE ENTRYWAY SETS A SERENE TONE.



The Honges and their design team persevered. Hundreds of e-mails were exchanged, a numbered photo catalog of Tammy's 150-piece antique collection was created for easy reference and Tammy logged eight flights back and forth across the Pacific. In the end, Tammy and Monte got their perfect home—and a few more people to invite over for dinner.

"I've become such good friends with them," Tammy says of her continuing relationships with the architect, interior designer and builder. Since the home was completed, Tammy has toured other projects by Brand and Bender, and Brand even visited the Honges in Singapore. "They are just awesome people," Tammy explains. "It's become like this love friendship."

THE HONGS' 6,920-SQUARE-FOOT HOUSE is set back from the street—to shield it from traffic noise—with a driveway that climbs a gentle slope and ends in a paved auto court. The architecture, though Asian-inspired, is Northwest in style.

The home, with its Pennsylvania bluestone and dark-stained cedar siding and Honduran mahogany front door, fits in nicely with a backdrop of towering greenbelt trees. Two stone elephants stand guard in a lighted alcove next to the front door—a nod to the Asian belief that the pachyderm brings good luck—and a gentle murmur rises from a bluestone-lined water feature.

The entry level has two parts: The formal side contains Monte's office, a powder room, the dining room and living room; the informal side holds the mudroom, kitchen and family room. Upstairs are three bedroom suites, one for Tammy and Monte and two smaller ones







OPPOSITE: ARTECH FINE ART SERVICES INSTALLED MUCH OF THE ARTWORK AND ANTIQUES, INCLUDING THE PALM LEAF BRONZE WHEELS BY SINGAPOREAN ARTIST CHRISTOPHER NOTO. **ABOVE:** THE EXTERIOR OF THE HOME IS COVERED IN ASHLER-PATTERNED PENNSYLVANIA BLUESTONE.

for Spencer and Sophia. The lower level houses the media room and the “Wii room,” as well as a private guest suite. In true Northwest fashion, the house lives well inside and out. A casual deck off the kitchen overlooks the greenbelt, and doors leading to a partially heated courtyard are flung open during large gatherings.

Exterior materials continue inside the home for a seamless transition. The effect is especially noticeable in the atrium, where gray bluestone tiles continue underfoot before giving way to rich mahogany flooring.

Two of Tammy’s special requests during the design process were ample wall space and built-in recesses to display her treasures. Chinese calligraphy brushes and a sleeping Buddha decorate a hallway; a crystal chandelier from Prague hangs above dozens of gilded bowls on the dining-room table. In the powder room, the vanity is made from a 19th-century cabinet from Singapore, and in the living room, Chinese wooden screens provide a stunning backdrop for a gray-blue loveseat.

Elaborate and ornate pieces mix comfortably with the restrained furnishings and finishes. A Cambodian stone figure poses on the bluestone hearth of the family room’s double-sided fireplace. And a marble mosaic that Tammy purchased at the Taj Mahal is inlaid in a kitchen wall.

Spencer Hong seems to have the antique-collecting gene too. He has already gathered an impressive array of Naga tribal pieces displayed in his room. “It’s fun for me and my kids to see things from all the places that we’ve lived,” Tammy says.

To make sure that Brand’s modern architectural design didn’t clash

with Tammy’s antiques, the Hong’s interior designer went with a soft look for the interiors. Young chose single-recessed doors instead of flat panels and selected traditional Conrad shades and bronze hardware to gently bring the contemporary and old-world styles together on middle ground. “Our job was to tone down a lot of the formality of those antiques,” she says. “We tried to make it friendlier for a young family and step it in a direction that worked with the architecture.”

In other rooms, design elements were considered for their function and ease of maintenance. Brand and Young hid the big-screen TV behind a built-in cabinet with retractable doors and added two sofas in the family room to maximize seating. In the kitchen, an extra closet is perfect for storing dishes, and honed granite counter tops create a simple, understated look. Brand even created a miniature Zen garden with gravel and hollowed-out rocks to disguise a flat portion of roof that is visible from a second-story window. During the holidays, Tammy tosses a few lighted Christmas spheres up there to create a festive mood.

TAMMY AND MONTE NOW HAVE THEIR DREAM HOME, but a parent’s work is never truly finished. “I’m constantly doing things to the house,” says Tammy, who still consults with her design team about the ever-evolving project. In fact, she shipped over several new pieces in December to add to the home and has more antiques arriving in June. “It is like another child,” Tammy jokes. “It’s never done!” ■

Angela Chang is Assistant Editor of Seattle Homes & Lifestyles.