

Composed vignettes and interior views distinguish a modest Portland bungalow

BY MARIA LAPIANA

Scenes and



EVER-CHANGING DISPLAYS *The homeowners constantly rotate tabletop arrangements like this one in the living room. Their steadfast rules for buying (see sidebar, p. 58) keep their collections under control.*

Bryce Dugan's heart didn't exactly skip a beat the first time he saw the house—a 1920s bungalow burdened by '80s updates. He could tell it had been attractive in its day, but it wore its bad remodel like an ill-fitting, out-of-season suit. It had a pink and gray kitchen, tract-house trim, a burgundy-and-green-tiled bath, and it was squeezed onto a miniscule corner lot.

And yet, the house had some disarming features, among them a wonderful quality of light and an easy flow between small, well-defined rooms. Since Bryce wasn't looking for his dream home anyway (he'd moved to Portland for a job and was planning to stay only a short time), he decided the little bungalow would be fine, so he bought it. That was 10 years ago.

"As I spent more time in Portland, I grew to appreciate my neighborhood for its architecture, convenience, and community of neighbors," remembers Bryce. "My job required a lot of travel, and the house became a place I was always happy to come home to."

Designing with a shared aesthetic

By the time he met Charles Froelick in 1998, Bryce had made quite a few home improvements, mostly on the outside. Stone walls were built, courtyards established, trees and shrubs planted. He'd created an inviting landscape.

"Bryce and I have similar ideas about space, design, and living," says Charles. "My move into the home was logistically easy: I had art, Bryce had furniture." Thus began the partnership and design collaboration between two people who are, in Bryce's words, "driven by, inspired by, and employed in the business of aesthetics." Charles owns Froelick Gallery, a contemporary art

A photograph of a modern living room. In the foreground, a brown leather ottoman with metal studs holds a bamboo tray with three glasses and a silver pitcher. Behind it is a brown sofa with a textured throw and two patterned pillows. To the right is a wooden side table with a small sculpture and a bowl. A tall, white, paper-covered lamp stands in the background. A large window with a black frame looks out onto greenery. The title "Sight Lines" is overlaid in large blue letters.

Sight Lines

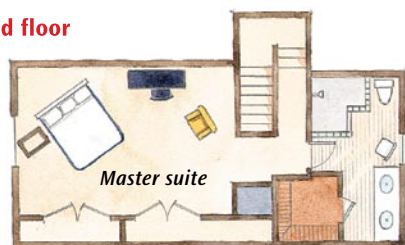
***ORGANIC MODERNISM** is what the homeowners call their style of decorating. By keeping the palette neutral and the furnishings of an era, they say that textures take on an added dimension.*

LONG VIEWS THROUGH A SMALL HOUSE

Careful placement of furniture and furnishings allows your eye to travel the length of the house in several directions without obstruction.



Second floor



It's all about the

THREE SPACES READ AS ONE The first floor of the house is a series of framed views through arches and doorways. Here, you look through a "stand-up" bar in the kitchen, beyond the nook, and into the sunroom.

gallery in Portland; Bryce is a visual presentation director at Nike and occasional interior designer.

"Bryce and I both compose spaces, everywhere, all the time. I don't know if that's a sickness," says Charles.

The first floor of the house is essentially a series of small rooms, so there are framed views through arches and doorways—punctuated by bold, period moldings—everywhere you look (see floor plan, above).

Using light, line, materials, texture, color—and of course, art—they have created carefully styled vignettes throughout the house. "It's all about the sight line," says Bryce.

The color palette is neutral, the furnishings contemporary. Even if its rooms are deliberately "staged," the use of natural

materials, collectibles, and original art attests to the home's authenticity. The place is not a set; it's livable, comfortable, and warm. Bryce says if they had to give its style a name, it would be organic modernism.

"We love this little house," he says, "and we're always thinking of how it could change."

A simple color palette in the kitchen

The pink tile counters and gray vinyl floor were hard to come home to, so they were among the first vestiges of the '80s to go. Because they wanted the kitchen and sitting nook to read as one with the sunroom, the homeowners laid matching terra-



INSIDE OUT
Terra-cotta tile and greenery smooth the transition from the side yard into the casual sunroom.

VISUAL INTEREST OVERHEAD The hanging lights in the master bath were originally designed for a display case.

sight line.

—Bryce Dugan, homeowner

cotta tile. They added earthy materials like cherry wood and colored concrete for the countertops. The soft edges and a warm tint keep the concrete counters from feeling rigid and cold. A floating “stand-up” bar was added to smooth the transition between kitchen and nook.

They refinished the original fir cabinets and installed floor-to-ceiling white subway tile to amplify the small space. By matching grays—the grout, counters, and floor tile—they kept the color palette simple. Can lights were added, all on dimmers, with switches and electrical outlets moved from visually dominant walls. An oversize Chinese paper lantern commands attention in the sunroom, and a mirrored door leading to the garage reflects light, deepening the space.





LIGHT AND DARK Were it not for the white-painted trim and delicate wire chairs, this room could be overwhelmed by the rich wall color and dark teak table.

SIMPLE RULES FOR ROOMS WITH A VIEW

Don't block a sight line. Position things in such a way that guests will get a glimpse of the overall room through a doorway.

- Don't overdo art. We have a spare approach in the presentation of art and tend to move things around often so nothing becomes invisible.

- Provide lighting options—overhead, task, ambient—and use dimmer switches wherever possible.

- Use related materials and colors for rooms in the same sight line, to help make a home feel less chopped up.

- Avoid having too many “interesting” things together, because they can give the impression of clutter if they're all vying for attention.

- Mix things up. I love combining modern design with something rustic or perhaps more traditional. It keeps the setting from taking on a showroom quality that looks nice but lacks soul.

- Let color inspire you. For example, I had a white Raymor glass bottle, and Charles had a white Frankoma amorphous ceramic piece. The two nestle well and make a strong statement without distracting from each other.

- Have fun. Charles found a white plaster lamp of a squirrel climbing a log at a junk store and had a white chenille lampshade made for it. While it's one of our oddest possessions, it looks great on an old garden bench.

—Bryce Dugan, homeowner

GOING WITH THE FLOW The house may be small, but the floor plan allows for movement through the living room and a glimpse into adjoining spaces.



Don't overwhelm a small room

Charles and Bryce both enjoy collecting furniture, lighting, and art—and they'd have even more if they had the room. “The challenge is filling our need to have it all without overwhelming a small space,” says Bryce. Beyond a heavy olive-velvet drape hung in the arched doorway of vestibule, the living room is filled but not cluttered. It's clean and orderly, within a tight, neutral palette.

Texture—not color or pattern—imbues the room with warmth. Charles describes the thoughtful combination as “a conversation” between contrasting elements. The room is grounded by deep, bouclé-upholstered chairs, a gray sofa draped with a vintage Mexican blanket, a chocolate mohair club chair, and pair of leather ottomans.

Piece by piece, the living room takes on an air of mid-century sophistication, thanks to striking Andrée Putman lamps, a walnut plywood Eames lounge chair, a Glo-Ball light by Flos, and a vintage Noguchi table.

The fireplace surround, made of turquoise tiles from Ann Sacks, provides a pop of color and contrasts with the mantel, which was stripped to the bare wood. A custom-framed mirror hangs above.





PLAYFUL VIGNETTES From left: A vintage Noguchi table holds a changing collection of models, toys, and books; some of the couple's more amusing period finds are displayed in the guest bath; intriguing vintage globes are always a good conversation starter.

KNOW WHAT AND WHEN TO BUY

Having a strong sense of our aesthetic simplifies decision-making and helps us avoid the “catch and release” syndrome of ill-planned purchases. We don’t acquire anything by chance. Here’s how we go about making our purchasing decisions:

HAVE A CLEAR OBJECTIVE. After deciding that we had wiped the last fingerprint from our cold glass dining room table, we set out specifically to find a thick wood table that invited folks to gather. The table’s lines had to be clean so that it would work with our favorite vintage Bertoia and Goodform chairs. We found just what we were looking for in Seattle when we came across a 700-pound trestle table made of reclaimed teak.


KNOW WHERE IT WILL GO. Many times, we’ll stumble across something that catches our eye. But before the credit card is laid down, we play the furniture shuffle in our minds—where will it go, and where does the displaced object land? If we solve the puzzle (even if it means a current possession ends up in the garage sale pile), then the prize comes home. If not, we admire it and walk on.

COMBINE STYLES. We love the clean lines of modern design, but not all our things need to be modern. In fact, we find it more interesting when they’re not all from the same era or region.

FIND BEAUTY IN IMPERFECTION. Many of our objects show their history and are not pristine. However, we strive to maintain a balance of objects old and new, shiny and matte, smooth and textured.

—Bryce Dugan and Charles Froelick, homeowners





We don't acquire anything **by chance.**
We're always thinking, Where does
that go and how will it live in our home?

—Bryce Dugan, homeowner

A table inspires the dining room


The dining room is all about drama, and yet restraint is perhaps its most striking feature; a handful of statement pieces is all it really needs. A heavy teak table takes center stage, filling the view beyond an arched entrance. Rough-hewn and imposing, its mass is the perfect foil for vintage Bertoia wire chairs.

The table inspired the rich brown wall at the far end of the room, and on that wall, a triple window frames the garden beyond. The hanging light fixture (on a dimmer, of course) illuminates the space appropriately and dramatically for dining and conversation.

What calls attention to the room—as if the grand table and dramatic lighting weren't enough—is a fanciful and intriguing assembly of vintage globes. The unusual collection evokes travel memories and sparks conversations whenever they're taken for a spin.


An evocative paint color for the den

The same deep shade of gray covers the ceiling and walls in the den, which was a rather dark room to begin with. The paint effect was inspired by one of Bryce's family friends whose den was completely covered with dark wood. Bryce remembered the sheltering room fondly, so painting this one was his "fiscally manageable solution" to creating a similar feeling.

One wall is filled with artwork, family photos, and found objects. This salon wall is "the free-associative onslaught of our art collection," Charles says, while the opposing wall holds only a large framed mirror. The filled bookshelves, leather sofa, Mexican rug, and vintage schoolhouse light add to the room's layered feel. 

Maria LaPiana is an associate editor.

For more information, see Resources, page 82.



GALLERY ROOM The cocoonlike den is painted a deep shade of gray—even the ceiling. One wall is filled with artwork, family photos, and found objects.