

Ian Jones and Debra Peat enjoy fresh fruit grown in the backyard of their Seattle, Washington, home. Relocating from a rural community, the couple brought their passion for gardening to their new urban setting. Sliding doors from Quantum wrap around the kitchen and open to an expansive courtyard and deck, which is furnished with armchairs from Crate and Barrel. Smith pendants from Resolute hang above the PentalQuartz and marble island; the oven and dishwasher are from Miele.

# Greener Grass

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Craving the conveniences of city life,  
a couple sidle over to Seattle  
from the countryside without compromising  
their love of the outdoors.

A builder by trade, Ian served as general contractor, working with designer Eric Walter of mw|works. Three box volumes, conceived as “spaces within spaces,” are configured around the open courtyard; local firm Wittman-Estes designed

the hardscapes (below). Opposite, clockwise from top left: In the kitchen, an elongated window breaks the custom walnut cabinetry by Contour Woodworks. The metal backsplash and drawer pulls were fabricated by 12th Avenue Iron; the cooktop

is by Miele. Personal keepsakes, like a mobile by Anne Siems, soften the slightly industrial aesthetic. A rocking chair that once belonged to Deb’s grandmother sits next to the plaster fireplace in the living room; concrete floors were poured on-site.



**As the setting sun shines on the Cascade**

mountains in the near distance, Debra Peat and Ian Jones’s Seattle home catches the last rays of light. A soft hum of voices filters through the central courtyard and open living spaces. Ian grills a fillet of salmon, adding sprigs of rosemary and thyme from the garden, and dinner guests mingle under generous overhangs and covered breezeways. “The home is really exciting, because you don’t usually see this kind of outdoor space in an urban setting,” says designer Eric Walter of local firm mw|works. “And certainly not in the Pacific Northwest.”

Before beginning construction on the house in 2012, Debra and Ian had spent the previous seven years living on three-quarters of an acre in the countryside in Fall City, a small community about 26 miles east of Seattle. Ian, a contractor, had built a capacious contemporary home there, with four bedrooms and 23-foot-high ceilings, surrounded by fruit trees and hemlock hedges. But all that greenery required tremendous upkeep, and the couple didn’t use much of the square footage. They also found that they missed the amenities of city life.

So they decided to move back to Seattle for a more urban lifestyle and planned to downsize to a condo, >

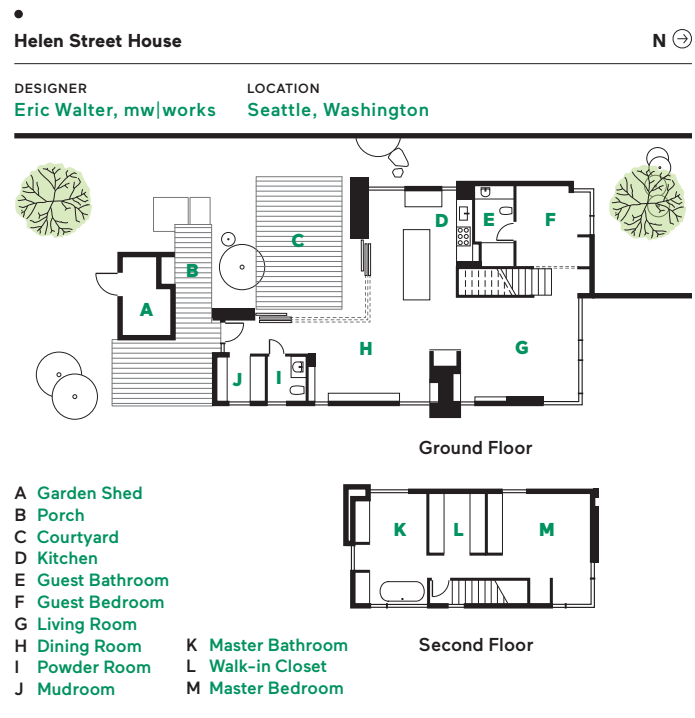
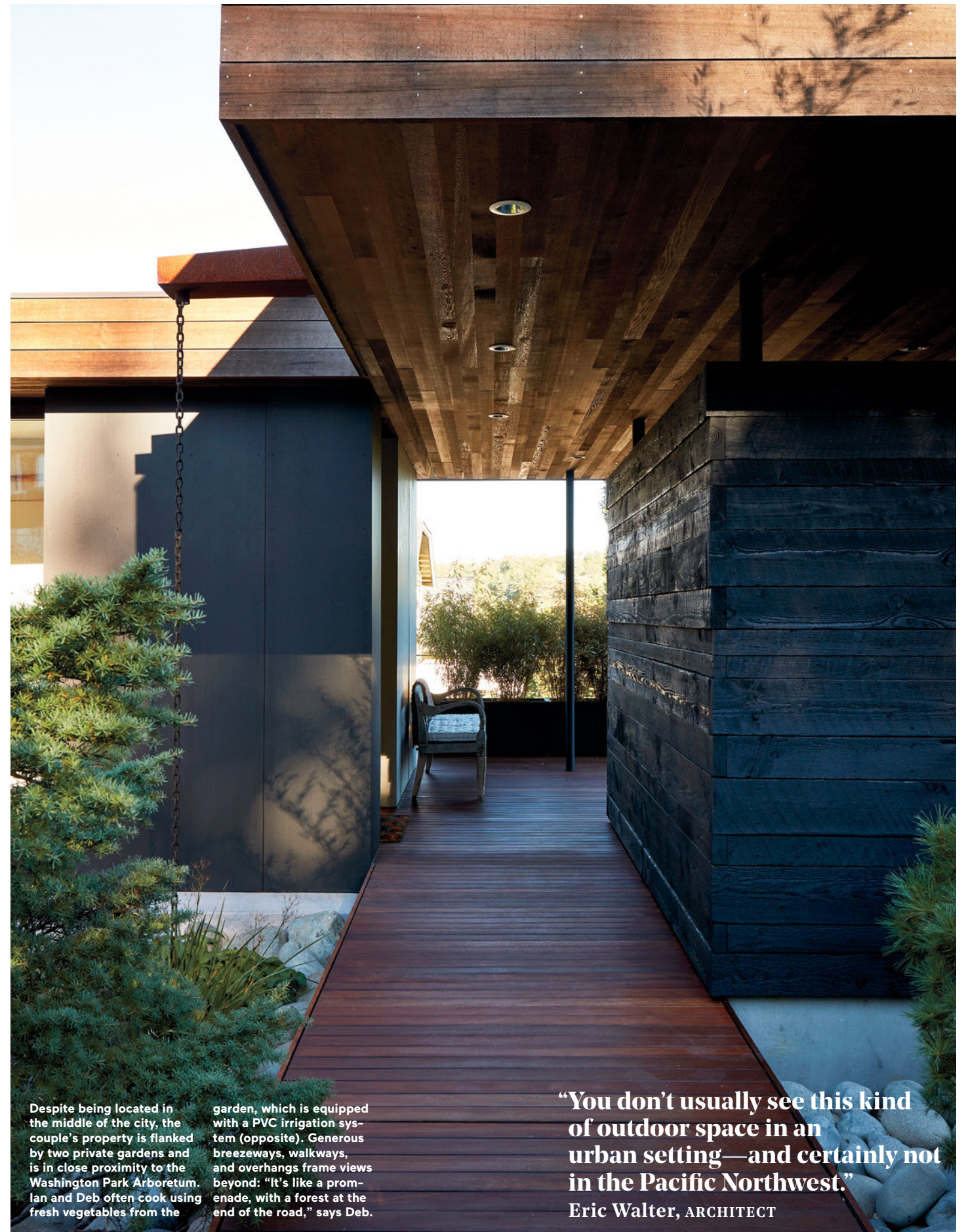


ILLUSTRATION: LOHNES + WRIGHT



Despite being located in the middle of the city, the couple's property is flanked by two private gardens and is in close proximity to the Washington Park Arboretum. Ian and Deb often cook using fresh vegetables from the

garden, which is equipped with a PVC irrigation system (opposite). Generous breezeways, walkways, and overhangs frame views beyond: "It's like a promenade, with a forest at the end of the road," says Deb.

**"You don't usually see this kind of outdoor space in an urban setting—and certainly not in the Pacific Northwest."**

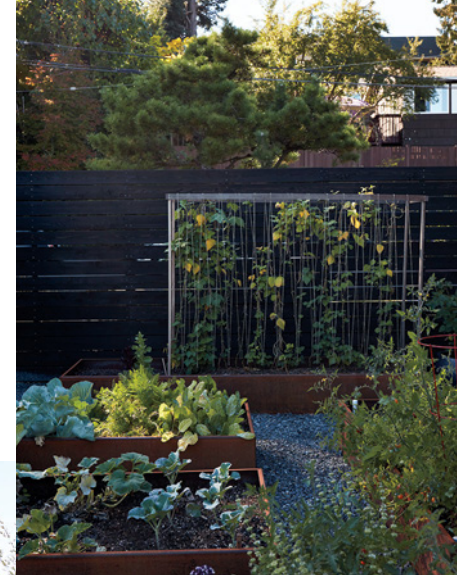
Eric Walter, ARCHITECT

The home's exterior is clad in a rich material palette of locally sourced salvaged barn wood, three types of Richlite cement board, milled cedar, and steel. Ian and Deb specified most of

the plantings throughout, adding a variety of grasses, evergreen vines, and mature trees from Emery's Garden, including a Japanese black pine that sits alongside the entrance on the west facade

(below). The structure is sited on a slope (opposite, top left) that dips to the east, allowing for a generous basement that Ian uses for his business, Treebird Construction. In the garden,

vines of honeysuckle are intertwined on a steel-mesh trellis (opposite, top right), and Cor-Ten steel planters host a bounty of fresh herbs, fruits, and vegetables (opposite, bottom).



**“There’s something calming about materials that you don’t have to maintain or make look like something else.”**  
Eric Walter



but when they happened upon a FOR SALE sign on a corner lot, they quickly called the realtor. The site had easy access to downtown, yet it was bordered on two sides by sprawling private gardens and was just one block away from Washington Park Arboretum, a 230-acre park designed by Frederick Law Olmsted.

“The location was central to everything,” says Deb, a technical program manager, though a run-down 110-year-old house sat on the lot. With a poor foundation and crumbling structure, “it needed to go,” she says. The couple met with mw/works and immediately established an aesthetic connection, which was helpful, as the project required a somewhat unorthodox working relationship. “Since Ian is a builder, he told me, ‘Just give me a couple of sketches and I’ll take it from there,’” Walter recalls with a laugh.

Indeed, the entire design process turned out to be more fluid than usual. “Half the time, instead of drawing something, we’d come to the site and I’d explain the idea, and then Ian would build it,” Walter says. Moving from the country, the couple had been specific about wanting an open-plan house with outdoor areas a key part of the design, but otherwise they deferred to Walter to craft a modernist style.

Linear, lean, and tightly held to the site, the new

home centers on an open courtyard, with all of the rooms arranged around that core. “We wanted the architecture to fall away; it’s about framing spaces and views,” Walter explains. Nine-foot-high sliding walls of glass separate the living areas from the courtyard and are easily pushed aside in pleasant weather. Each part of the living space is articulated by separate box volumes defined by diverse siding materials. They include hundred-year-old barn wood sourced from nearby Skagit Valley, three types of Richlite cement board, custom-milled cedar, and steel—all of which continue inside to further blur boundaries between the interior and exterior.

Inside, a flexible use of space belies the relatively modest square footage. The top two floors, totaling 1,700 square feet, include the main living areas, the master suite, and a guest bedroom and bath; the basement floor provides an extra 1,000 square feet and houses Ian’s business, Treebird Construction, along with a second guest room and bath.

Throughout, the vibe is unfussy and simple. A white oak custom dining table, designed by Jon Gentry of local firm goCstudio, is paired with slim Montis dining chairs. A rocking chair that once belonged to Deb’s grandmother *continued on page 129*

### How Does Her Garden Grow?

*An inveterate green thumb, resident Debra Peat shares her favorite picks from the Seattle region and beyond.*



MARIGOLD AND MINT

“This flower shop sits in Melrose Market, with a second location in Pioneer Square. With flowers, books, and the owner’s line of candles and soaps, both locations are sweet spots that invite you to linger.” [marigoldandmint.com](http://marigoldandmint.com)



WHITE FLOWER FARMS

“On a more exotic note, the Cafe au Lait dahlias from White Flower Farm, based in Connecticut, are sublime. Pale, beautiful, and majestic, they have to be in the ground before Mother’s Day and always sell out.” [whiteflowerfarm.com](http://whiteflowerfarm.com)



SEATTLE SEED COMPANY

“We buy our seeds from various places, but our neighborhood spot is the Seattle Seed Company—good people dedicated to delivering goodness to the people.” [seattleseed.com](http://seattleseed.com)



CHRISTIANSON’S NURSERY

“Roses are my favorite. The best resource north of Seattle, in the Skagit Valley, is Christianson’s Nursery and Greenhouse. They host an event each July with the local Rose Society to further the public’s appreciation of these beauties.” [christiansonnursery.com](http://christiansonnursery.com)



NICHE OUTSIDE

“Niche Outside carries a thoughtful selection of plant-related accoutrements, like Fruitsuper’s Anywhere Vases, which allow you to make a vase out of any glass or jar.” [nicheoutside.com](http://nicheoutside.com)

ILLUSTRATIONS: PETER OUMANSKI

sits alongside a Restoration Hardware couch; a black-and-white IKEA rug perfectly matches the couple's Havanese dogs, Pippa and Dash. Deb's found natural objects—including a dried-out wasp's nest from their previous house, a pair of owl's feet, and magnolia bud blossoms—adorn the walls and shelves.

Likewise, the landscaping feels integral to the architecture. Local firm Wittman Estes designed the hardscapes, including the steel-mesh fence that's intertwined with tangled vines of clematis and honeysuckle to form a green living wall that also provides privacy from the street. Mature black pine trees were acquired from a friend's nursery, roses tumble against one side of the house, and a river of stones hand-placed by Deb runs along the courtyard. In back, raised metal beds host an array of vegetables and herbs, ringed by native flowers. Everything is connected by breezeways and overhangs, so that even in the region's wet winters, the couple can linger outdoors.

Despite living in the middle of Seattle, Ian and Deb feel like they're in a bucolic setting. "Really, this home is the best of all worlds, because if we want to go to a lecture, a film, a play, it's all here—or we can just stay home in this sanctuary, with greenery all around us," says Deb. "It's a respite from city living."

PHOTOS: TKT/TKTK

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