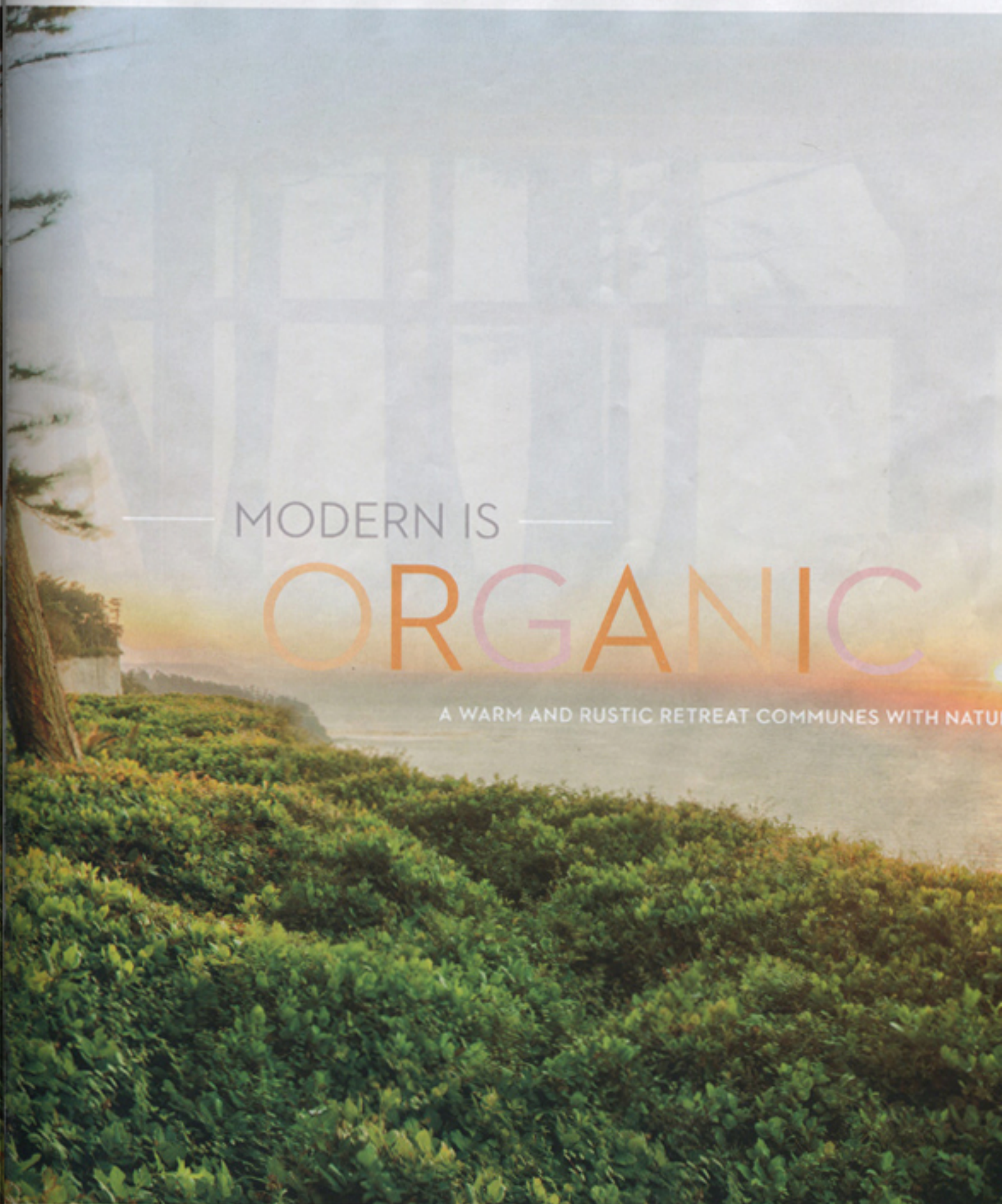




The house overlooks the Strait of Juan de Fuca, northwest of Seattle, from a lush ledge on the Olympic Peninsula. Respect for natural beauty and ecological balance is the hallmark of architect James Cutler, who designed the house. Its cedar shingles look right at home amid majestic Douglas fir, madrona, and cedar trees. That arcadian spirit also informed New York-based designer Markham Roberts's interior decoration.



— MODERN IS —

ORGANIC

A WARM AND RUSTIC RETREAT COMMUNES WITH NATURE

For an air of calm seclusion, "almost everything in the master bedroom is hushed," Roberts explains. He hung an antique Persian camel saddlebag above an Edelman suede bolster at the head of the built-in platform bed. An antique textile from Jordan acts as a coverlet. **OPPOSITE:** Pillows in Galbraith & Paul's Links, John Robshaw's Chiang Mai, and Suzanne Tucker's Sophie rest on a window seat cushion in Jed Johnson's Ikat. The telescope offers a closer look at passing ships. **FOR MORE DETAILS, SEE RESOURCES**





Roberts grouped warm-hued wood furniture and natural textiles to reinforce the sense of cozy shelter within the panoramic living room. Custom sofas in Holly Hunt's Thick as Thieves velvet anchor two seating areas atop the Moroccan rug. A mid-century leather-slung chair from Aero, far left, partners with a rustic coffee table and a Franco Albini round bamboo stool. Twin Hans Wegner woven folding chairs have pillows made from antique saddlebags.

Cool evenings make fires a must, even in summer. "There's a camping-out feel that's very attractive," Roberts says. At rafter height, galvanized-steel light fixtures with botanical cutouts, designed by the original architect James Cutler, cast a gentle glow on Douglas fir timbers. The custom corner table holds an antique vintner's bottle lamp from James Sansum Fine and Decorative Art—also the source for the African drum between the chairs—while a Cedric Hartman swing-arm lamp hits a classic modern note. Chaise, B&B Italia.



DOUGLAS BRENNER: No need to ask why your clients call their property *Land's End*.

MARKHAM ROBERTS: It's like the edge of the Earth—the most spectacular site I have ever seen. Ever. Acres and acres of lush old-growth forest. Views across the Strait of Juan de Fuca to a snow-covered volcano. A 300-foot drop to the beach. Bald eagles cruising along the cliff.

Was it a stretch for this couple to fly a designer to Seattle from New York?

No. I vacation near here with James Sansum, the art and antiques dealer, who has a family cottage in nearby Port Townsend. The four of us are close friends. James and I have nice long dinners at their house. All of our minds were sparking on this project. It's fun working with clients who are smart and creative. One of them is a philanthropist. The other is an artist. They have a lot of opinions, and they've collected a lot of beautiful things. I've never wondered here, as I sometimes do, "Where are their books?"

How long have they lived here?

They've had the place for 15 years, but it was designed a decade earlier by Jim Cutler, one of the architects for Bill Gates's house. It was interesting to work on a style of house I had no firsthand knowledge of, and to learn from the architecture. I talk about that in my book *Decorating: The Way I See It*, which comes out in September. This place is modern, but it's not a cold glass box you have a hard time warming up. The stone fireplace and all the Douglas fir help make the interior cozy.

The gnarly tree-trunk columns literally bring the outdoors in.

When there's an incredible view everywhere you look, you want to work with nature, not compete with it. The green of this landscape and the blue of the water and sky are so strong that we weren't about to throw in colors that mess with them. The browns, beiges, ivories, and other muted shades that go with wood and stone can make for such a rich palette. We added blues in the poolhouse, but very subtly, so it would feel different from the main house.

Where did you hunt down these remarkable hand-made fabrics?

The clients had toyed with the idea of re-covering their furniture in new fabrics, until I started going through all the textiles they had brought back from trips to Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. They're on safari right now. These are worldly, sophisticated, well-traveled people. With so much extraordinary stuff lying around here, I could just say, "I love this old camel saddlebag. Let's hang it over the bed!" I didn't need to go far to find layers of pattern, texture, and different cultural elements.

Couldn't that have led to a global mishmash?

Whether it's from the Pacific Northwest or Africa, tribal art often has a similar feel. This is not a museum, and we've mixed in new materials where the colors and designs felt compatible. We're not stuck in one category.

Which goes for styles and periods, too?

Out in the studio there's a Louis XVI-meets-Deco bergère that belonged to the artist's grandmother. It's great! To me, the house itself has a midcentury feel—I keep thinking of *North by Northwest*—and we've used some Wegner and Nakashima furniture from that era. My clients already had the white Saarinen table, which they'd put with the caned Moser chairs. I like how the chairs tie in with other woods, but at the same time, they're sort of the opposite of the table. I love when things pull at each other that way.

Even so, picking what to use where—and what not to use—must have caused some friction.

I'm much bossier than our friends, but it's hard to tell anyone to get rid of things they've chosen or thought about or had for whatever reason. One of our few hot-button topics was the Oriental rugs that a previous decorator had convinced them to buy. The rugs were expensive, but they were wrong for the house. I kept saying, "They look like a shrink's office on Manhattan's Upper West Side. These have to go. Don't feel guilty. Donate them." They finally did, and that made them happy. So did buying this big Moroccan rug, which looks great and feels so soft under bare feet when people are hanging out.

Modernists like to say that an open floor plan is ideal for casual entertaining. True?

It's perfect here. This is not a giant house, but there's an economy of space and room to move around. The two long sofas are built in, and there's a seating area in front of the fireplace, so they can easily handle a crowd. Or if it's just a couple of us playing backgammon by the fire, we can talk to someone at the dining table or in the kitchen. My clients are wonderful cooks—everything seems effortless. The open kitchen lets them prepare a delicious meal and not leave the conversation.

I guess parties must spill over to the outdoors when the weather's good.

They just open the barn doors on the poolhouse. The first time I came over, that was their gym. I said, "This could be the greatest room. Let's do a huge sofa here. We can watch movies, have dinners." There was so much equipment in there that they never used. I was like, "Get rid of it!" I say that all the time. One of the batik screens was made to hide a kitchen. But it's not as if our friends have gotten out of shape. We stuck an elliptical trainer behind the other screen.



ABOVE: While making the most of expansive vistas that surround the house, the ground floor's open plan encourages easy movement and communication from space to space. A white laminate-top Knoll table, Eero Saarinen's 1958 modernist update of traditional pedestal designs, anchors the dining area. Here, though, instead of ringing the table with look-alike Saarinen Tulip chairs, the owners brought in neoclassical-inspired cane wood chairs by Thos. Moser. An African necklace and Indian oil lamps are displayed on a custom sideboard. **LEFT:** Madrona tree-trunk columns bring the forest outside into the kitchen. The lower kitchen cabinets continue the warm spirit of wood. A larger version of the living room's galvanized lights hangs above a honed-granite counter and a Dacor oven. Stove top by Thermador.



ABOVE: The addition of a garage and studio, both by Lawrence Architecture, created a pool courtyard. Barn doors open onto the patio from the poolhouse on axis with the pool. **RIGHT:** Roberts splashed the poolhouse interior with blues that reflect the shades of water and bluestone paving. With wet bathing suits in mind, he used only outdoor fabrics. Perennials' Chenille Number 5 covers the Crate & Barrel sectional, which has pillows in R. P. Miller's Le Witt Loom, Lee Jofa's Castille, and Perennials' Hello, Sailor! One of two custom batik-upholstered folding screens creates a backdrop for a Hollywood at Home rattan chair and a George Nakashima wood-frame armchair. The antique coffee table, from James Sansum Fine and Decorative Art, is centered on a Pottery Barn abaca rug. **OPPOSITE, FROM TOP:** Visitors cross a footbridge over a ravine before climbing to the breezeway-entry for a first glimpse of the sea. Teak patio furniture from Sutherland's Poolside collection has Sunbrella cushions and patterned pillows in China Seas' Flores II.

