

Alternative Space

At one time the exuberantly patterned and colored sofas and pillows of Melissa's out-building acted as padding to falling climbers. Originally furnishings from husband Peter's former rock-climbing gym/bachelor pad, they now offer comfort for an early-morning read of a favorite inspirational book, *Goddesses: A World of Myth and Magic*. Opposite page: The north-side ornamental garden, with contemplative stone paths, a sitting area, lavender bushes, cedars and blueberries, builds upon the building's meditative purpose.



PHOTOGRAPHY
JULIA KUSKIN

Healthy Hideaway

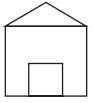
A multitasking Mount Baker backyard retreat provides relief from, well, multitasking. By Anna Joe Savage

MELISSA ADKISON, 33, RISES BEFORE THE URBAN ROOSTER CROWS. AS EARLY AS 4 IN THE MORNING SHE WAKES, PADS DOWN THE STAIRS OF her Mount Baker home, quietly exits the house through the kitchen's double French doors and walks a mere 10 feet across a covered stone patio to her "health pod," as she likes to describe it. An impressive combination of hot-tub therapy room, Pilates studio and lounging area, the 1,100-square-foot space, which includes a basement for storage and garden projects, is Melissa's sanctuary. Stressed from long, busy hours at Gen Con, a Seattle-based convention management company owned and run by Melissa and her husband, Peter, she retreats to the space for an exhilarating workout on the "Cadillac"—the Peak Pilates exercise machine—or a purifying soak in the three-person hot tub.

Adkison tapped Seattle architect David Neiman of David Neiman Architects to realize her dreams of a "next-door vacation cabin." The description focused Neiman's vision during the year-and-a-half-long project, leading to a high-ceiling, open-rafter multi-purpose outbuilding with encircling bay windows and a wood-burning fireplace. Step into the getaway space and a wave of calm and serenity hits.

Troubled by back pains from multiple car accidents, Melissa no longer has to travel across town to chiropractor appointments.





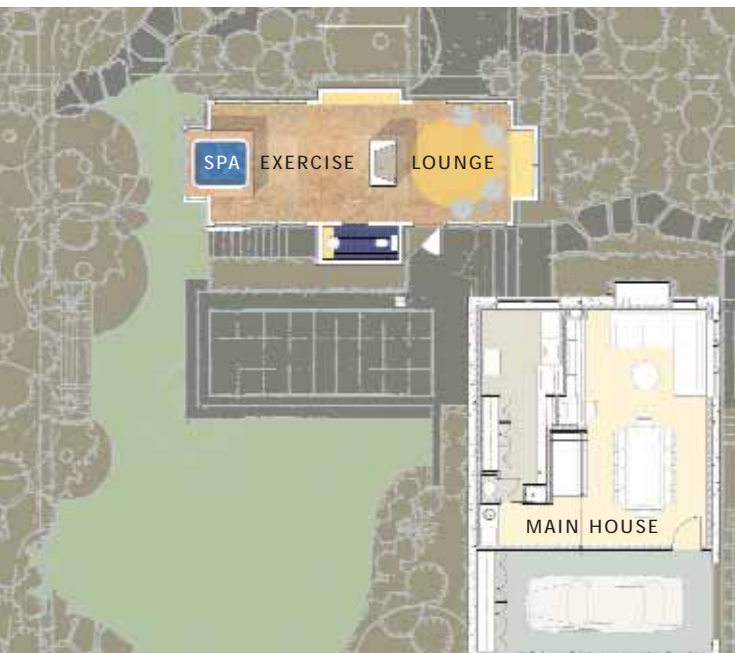
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Her backyard urban oasis is her physical, as well as mental, relaxation center. The full-spectrum lighting, which imitates natural outdoor sunlight, and large windows offer respite from dreary weather without secluding the San Diego native from nature's surroundings.

Other gray-weather combatants are the bold tropical orange and people-eater purple foam futon couches and throw pillows—originally from Peter's old bachelor pad. Cement wall and fireplace panels are painted deep purple to match, as are the vibrant orange walls of the petite bathroom. The felt gray cement floor is topped with tiles, and birch plywood and white maple cabinetry mellow and

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Clockwise from above: Surrounded by cement tiles colored an electrifying royal purple by artist Lee Andre, the fireplace divides the sofa area from the workout/hot-tub space; the custom-made pullout ladder leads to an intimate rooftop deck with a view of Lake Washington; a quiet moment spent relaxing tired muscles with bubbling water and jet massages is enhanced with views of lavender bushes, apple trees and birds feasting at the feeder; floor plans illustrate the simple rectangular division of exercise studio and spa at one end and a lounging area at the other.



Urban Relaxation

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complement the stronger colors. Beyond aesthetics, the building design is eco-friendly, with a similar environmentally conscious landscape. As Melissa says, “You have to make a choice to be a healthy person.” Structural insulated panels in the roof and a 3-inch-thick concrete floor with radiant heating help conserve energy, as does a heat-recovery system that circulates air and controls the humidity caused by the hot tub. Outside, garden retaining walls and a water-runoff drainage system help control the excessive water flow from the neighbors on the hill above. Also, animal-friendly plants abound. There are blueberries and evergreen huckleberries for the birds and catmint for Owio (O-we-ash-tay) the cat. (No worries: Invisible electric fencing keeps the collared feline separate from the feathered friends and their turf.) To further entertain the birds—and unavoidably vex the cat—Melissa, a recreational bird-watcher, rotates a freestanding feeder to different areas in the garden outside the cat-fence perimeter.

The landscape, designed by landscape architect Ken Philp, comfortably divides the pavilion between the north garden area and a courtyard to the south. From inside the rectangular building, which is positioned east to west, a view of pear trees and a granite rock sitting area are displayed on one side; on the other side is an open lawn area with a patio of Pennsylvania blue stone. From there, a custom-made pullout ladder leads to a recessed rooftop sundeck. Melissa insisted an electrical outlet be added to this robin’s nest so summer-night parties could turn it into a deejay booth or cocktail bar.

Besides also serving as a guest cottage for visiting loved ones, twice a month Melissa hosts “Goddess Nights,” a gathering of four to six girlfriends. With refreshments in hand and only relaxation on their minds, the women bond through talk, laughter and the occasional attempt to show prowess on the Pilates equipment.

“It’s my birdhouse,” Melissa laughs while nestled warm inside the cozy residence—the sound of happy tweets faintly heard from the outside feeder. The difference is that Melissa’s birdhouse comes with a cat door. ✦

Anna Joe Savage is a Bainbridge Island-based freelance writer.