

## Arbol House

Verner Architects

One of the first things Stephen Verner learned about his clients is that they are serious gardeners. Design centered around creating the largest outdoor space possible and preserving an existing apple tree. Starting with a modest kitchen remodel, the project slowly began to address other aspects of the existing home, such as the garden being visible from only one room. The clients wanted a stronger connection to the outdoors, which led to big folding doors or large windows in all of the main spaces. Tying the flow together is a custom stairwell structural element extending three stories—water-jetted functional art that was craned in and welded on site. In the kitchen, teak cabinetry with a Heath blue tile backsplash and stainless accents surround an island with a cantilevered counter, supported by another water-jetted design, a companion piece to the stairwell.

### WHAT'S THE VALUE OF SEEING FINISHED HOMES VERSUS PHOTOGRAPHY?

*"I always recommend when interviewing architects and builders that clients go tour projects. Photos are really beautiful but at the same time I want them to touch and feel and experience the home because the scale in a photo is very hard to discern. If you're going to do a project, you're going to be spending a lot of time in it, so it needs to be comfortable. When you're in a space, see how it talks to you. Do you feel comfortable? Listen to your body's response. That, to me, is the most important thing you can get out of visiting homes—your visceral reaction to the home. You can see the level of detail and quality that goes into the design and execution. That's the final piece of the puzzle for you to know you are in good hands."*



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