

# Bainbridge Island

## Be in Bloom



**Adventure  
Running  
Dentist**

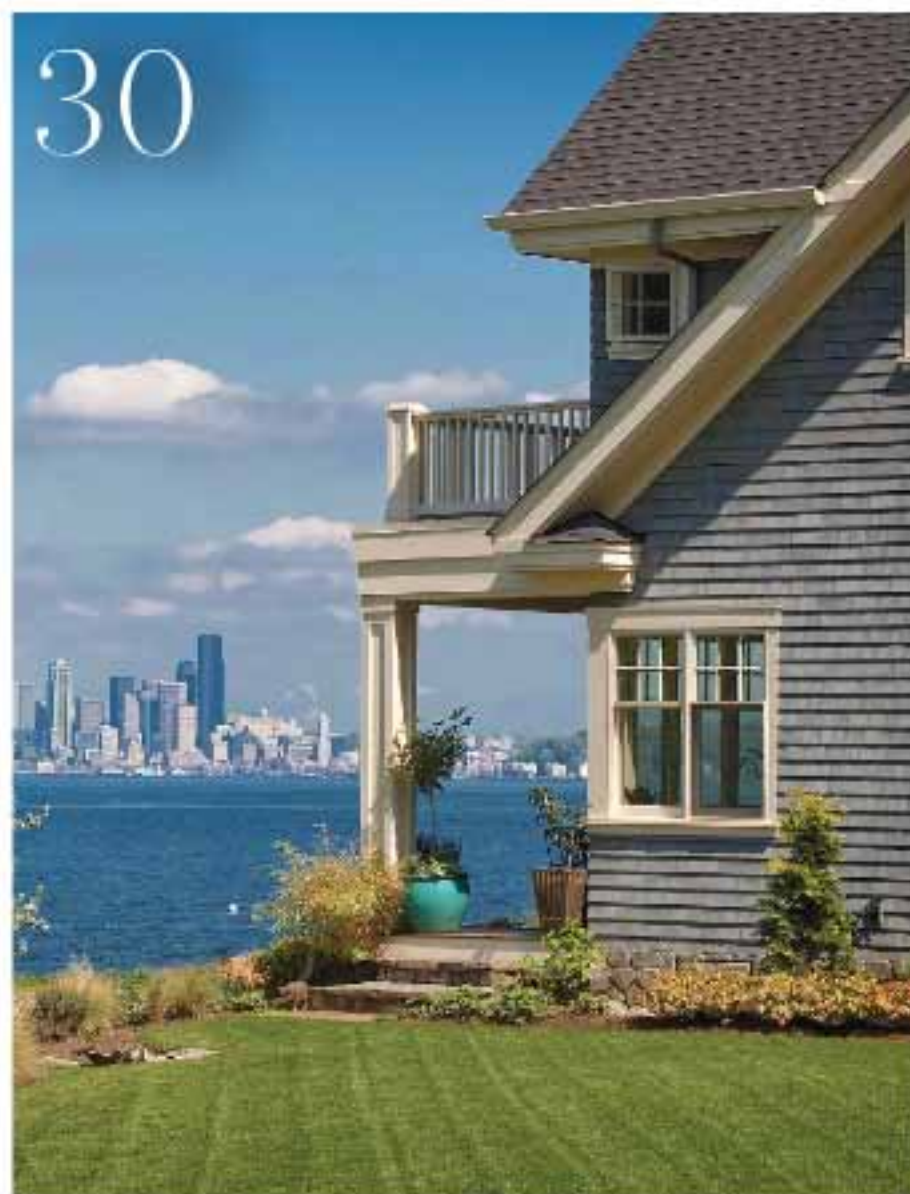
**This Place  
We Call  
Home**

**Writing  
With a  
(Fabulous)  
View**

## Bainbridge Island

SPRING 2013

30



### *It's Your Party*

Planning a celebration? Bainbridge is replete with caterers who make entertaining a snap, whether your soiree is at a private home, in a church hall or on a chartered boat. Turn to Eats on page 46 for a helping of our favorites.



*features*

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### **Writer's Retreat**

Words can hardly describe the stunningly serene home of local author Caroline Flohr.

By Wendy Wallace

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### **The Place We Call Home**

Longtime residents and recent newcomers share their perspectives of why they love life on The Rock.

By Susan Brandzel

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### **College Bound**

Seven Bainbridge High School seniors tell us which schools made the grade for early decision.

By Vicki Wilson

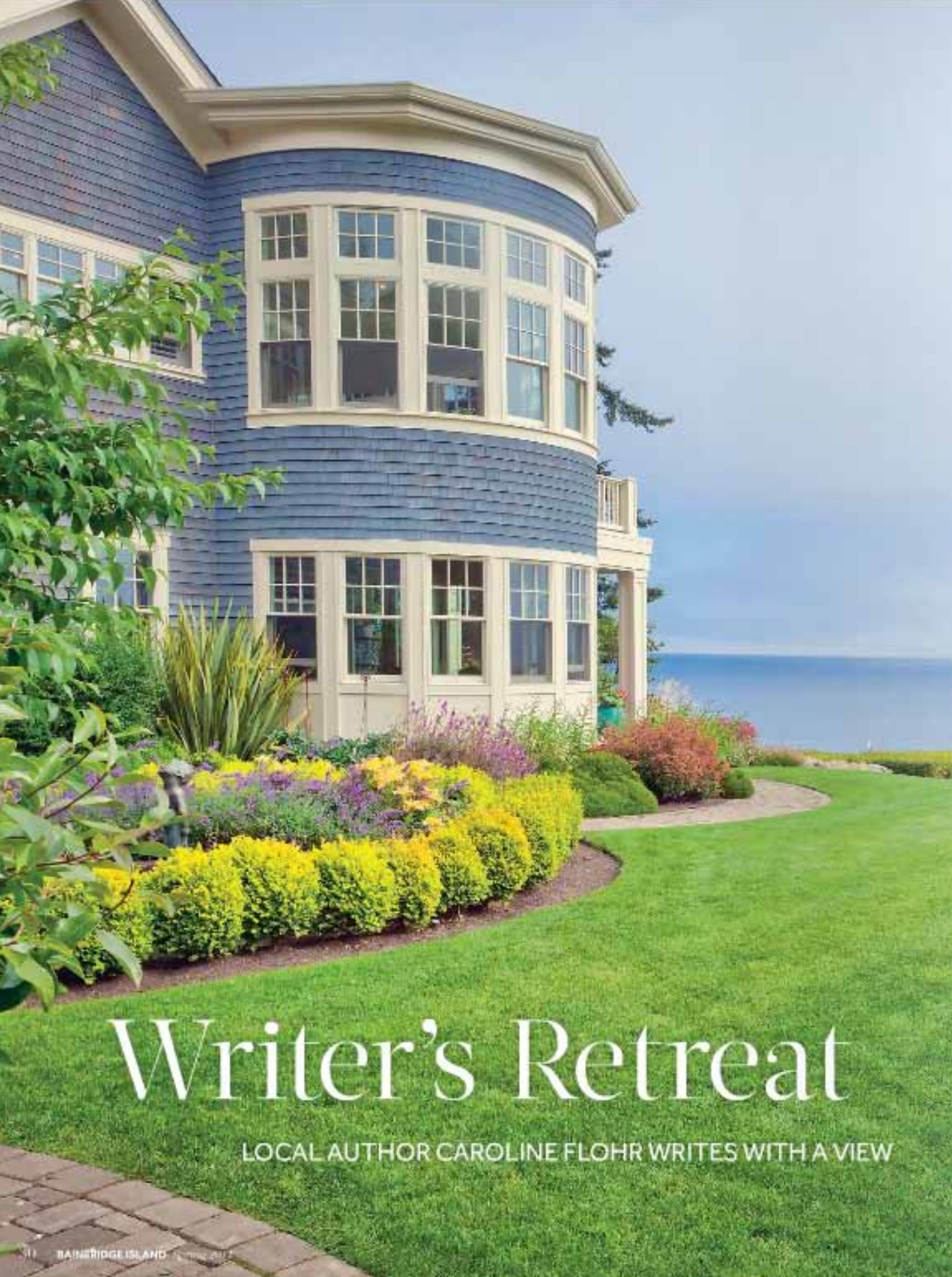
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### **Catch and Release**

A local nonprofit has a line on serving seafood to the hungry.

By Dani Hannay





# Writer's Retreat

LOCAL AUTHOR CAROLINE FLOHR WRITES WITH A VIEW



By Wendy Wallace

Photographs by Mel Curtis, Aaron Leitz and Steve Stoller



#### POINT OF VIEW

Whether you're perched on the expansive porch, strolling the sandy beach or ambling through the glorious gardens, the view is the thing that captivates your eye. Homeowner Anson Brooks acted as general contractor, and his wife Caroline Flohr, a master gardener, worked closely with architect Devon Johnson to incorporate their dreams into the design.



### Perched in a cozy alcove

beneath the stairs, Caroline Flohr taps away at her laptop, her feet gently resting on her steadfast companion, Brooke, a Labrador retriever. Two walls of windows and French doors surrounding the kitchen and family room offer Flohr a spectacular view of Puget Sound in those thoughtful moments when she glances up from writing. In this glimpse, her life seems idyllic—living in a comfortably elegant, waterfront home with her husband, two young daughters and loyal dog. But as is often the case, appearances can be deceiving. Designs for this house were born after the tragic loss of Flohr's 16-year-old twin daughter Sarah in a 2004 car crash.

"I couldn't go downstairs to Sarah's room. I had moved [her twin sister] Caiti upstairs and realized that we had to move from our then-current home as part of our survival as a family," Flohr recalled. The couple, through their residential construction company, Anson Brooks Development, worked with Bainbridge architect Devon Johnson of Johnson Squared to craft their dream house, which includes myriad local sustainable materials and technological efficiencies.

"We wanted a traditional but modern home, like something you would find on Long Island, with 10-foot ceilings and lots of light," Flohr said. Keeping busy with house plans gave the family something to look forward to and helped Flohr navigate the darkest days.

"For me, building the house was like therapy. It occupied my mind and gave me the creative outlet that I needed. It also gave me energy to focus on my children and family," Flohr said. Feeling a stronger desire for family bonding after the accident, Flohr intended certain areas of the home to invite gathering. The open floor plan of the kitchen and casual living room, with abundant natural light, a high, coffered ceiling and a 5-by-10-foot absolute black honed granite island, is a natural spot for homework, snacks, crafts and entertaining.







**SUITE OF DREAMS**  
Closing your eyes would mean missing the view in this master bedroom wrapped in windows. Of course, you can always settle in with a furry friend and daydream, dawdle or divine inspiration for your next book.

After over a year of writing, she still kept her memoir secret, telling only one trusted friend who read the manuscript while recovering from breast cancer surgery and then encouraged Florio to publish the book to help others going through difficult times. After much considering and re-writing, Florio agreed, and "Heaven's Child" was published in 2012. A soft-spoken, naturally private woman, Florio felt exposed by her own candor in the book and even avoided shopping for groceries at Town and Country Market immediately following publication. But the outpouring of gratitude from readers experiencing similar sorrows has fueled Florio to promote her book and speak publicly on the topic of love and loss.

"It's been a humbling experience that I'm very grateful to be able to share," she said. Florio has been startled by an unexpected group of readers—teenagers and college students—and hopes her family's tragedy, the result of a teenagers' joyride, will act as a cautionary tale for young people to be aware "that what we do affects not just us, but ripples out to others... and those consequences aren't just your consequences, they are a ton of people's consequences." Although she has begun working on a fictional story about the first class of girls to attend a traditionally all-boys boarding school (based on her personal experience), Florio remains focused mainly on promoting "Heaven's Child" because this book, she acknowledged, "is the most important thing I'll ever be able to write." She has two engagements this spring to speak on the spiritual journey of loss and love at the Seattle Women's Show and at Seattle University's Search for Meaning Conference. Moving toward a more mindful life perspective, Florio recognizes that what really matters in the end is the intimate, human connections we create. "Whether it's a joyous moment or a sad moment," said Florio, "the more we reach out and share, the more our hearts fill up." ■

