Residents and shoppers in Chicago’s Lake View neighborhood may some day be able to walk under the Brown Line L tracks along a planted path connecting the area’s two commercial corridors. This proposed “Low-line” is one of the highlights of the Lake View master plan by Moss Design and Place Consulting, commissioned by the neighborhood’s chamber of commerce. The Low-line would connect Paulina and Southport and create a new green space for the area. The designers envision a heavily planted and well-lit path that will draw walkers to the area and offer an unusually pleasant vantage point to view the underside of the elevated tracks.

continued on page 4

The construction of a streetcar system in Cincinnati, which was all but certain just months ago, might be in jeopardy after attempts by newly-elected Ohio Governor John Kasich to strip

continued on page 5

After less than a year on the job, urban planner Toni Griffin appears to have left Detroit Works Project. Her appointment had been announced in March 2010 amidst great fanfare in connection with charting Detroit’s future. An initiative of Mayor Bing’s office, Detroit Works is crafting a so-called “right-sizing” plan for the city, supported by the Kresge Foundation.

continued on page 2

A new chapter is unfolding in the ongoing saga of a new Chicago Children’s Museum. On March 23 museum officials stated that they were investigating the possibility of staying at Navy Pier, although they would not say the museum had abandoned its controversial plan to move to a site in the city’s Grant Park.

continued on page 7
sizes and income levels, as well as retail and villa-sized units, to capture a variety of family types. The first of three buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. The first of the buildings will contain 1,068 naturally-undifferentiated urban field. 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NO SCHOOL LEFT BEHIND

When the Kansas City Missouri School District (KCMSD) closed 26 schools last year to “right-size” its surplus of facilities with attendance, it was seen as just another casualty of the Great Recession. Yet when the KCMSD Board created the Director of the Repurposing Initiatives position last January, this radical policy shift became a massive economic and community development opportunity. Shannon Jaax, the KCMSD Repurposer, explained, “This will be a give-and-take community-wide effort to ensure this is a success.”

In addition to the schools shuttered in 2010, the repurposing plan includes a round of closings in 2009 after years of deterioration when $2 billion in desegregation money ordered by a federal judge in 1985 ran dry in 1997. The unprecedented program was unable to increase achievement and lure students away from private schools and surrounding suburban public school districts. In total, KCMSD is soliciting development proposals for 39 school facilities, ranging from Romanesque revival to mid-century modern. Before the position was filled, three facilities had already been repurposed; two to local non-profits that have been repurposing facilities left for repurposing. The KCMSD Board at its March 9 meeting agreed to consider the sale of properties, a departure from its original policy that left some older facilities in squalor for decades. Regarding the change in policy, Jaax said, “Where we identify surplus sites, the Board will entertain proposals for purchase.”

Starting in the Spring, the Repurposer will begin site tours of all the facilities before a series of public meetings to generate interest and collect community input. A Call for Ideas was launched on March 8 as a way to engage the public and provide a forum for innovative repurposing on an ongoing basis. A meeting with local government agencies is planned in August to discuss a variety of potential reuses, which may include parks or public works facilities.

The Repurposer will have a final proposal for the KCMSD Board by the end of 2011, at which time the Board will begin the work of site disposition.

GUNNAR HAND

LOOK, MA, NO COLUMNS!

The Chicago Architecture Foundation knows how to party—and we hope—raise a little bit of money. Last month, they threw a party called “Icon: A Celebration of Design,” on a vacant upper level floor of the Inland Steel building. The space was the show-striker, a completely gutted floor that perfectly showcased the structural beauty of the column-free interior. Jaw-dropper number two: the patrons. Who were all of the attractive, young attendees? Eaves was really wishing for some name badges, as lame as that sounds. The party was well-attended and dark, so spotting familiar faces from Chicago's design community was not easy. And to complicate matters, there was an area roped off for VIPs. Eaves was on the wrong side of the velvet rope!

Not sure who was in there, but Eavesdrop did fantasize about the one in a million chance that Frank Gehry would make an appearance, as he has a five percent ownership stake in the building. More likely was the presence of members of the building's original design team, SOM, who happen to be leading the renovation currently underway. Were you in attendance? If so, you may have spotted my date twirling me around on the dance floor towards the end of the night. Somehow my two left feet managed not to trip over any of the Herman Miller furniture scattered around the room. Whew!

GET A (BIGGER) ROOM

Eavesdrop tried to make an appearance at the book release party for Reveal: Studio Gang Architects, but the space was cram-packed with friends and followers, even out onto the street. The weather was nasty so we did not stick around. The most revealing thing about the night was that Eavesdrop was again not getting VIP treatment! We’re hoping for better parties and perks for the spring. Stay tuned.

Eavesdrop, 2011.
DRIVE REDUX
NORTH LAKE SHORE
CDOT SEEKING TO REVAMP SEVEN-MILE
SECTION

When it comes to the cost of major highway reconstruction, $16 million may seem a pittance, but it’s a start. With the Illinois Department of Transportation recently completing a $162 million reconstruction of South Lake Shore Drive, city officials started looking north. The Chicago Department of Transportation (CDOT) has already allocated the money and is shopping around for consultants to help redesign the stretch of the drive from Hollywood to Grand Avenue.

Brian Steele, a spokesperson for CDOT, said the segment of the highway built in the mid-twentieth century was well-constructed, but 60 years on officials want to prepare for a future that melds the needs of pedestrians, bicyclists, and 21st-century motorists. “We need to improve access to the lake, to make it safer and more enjoyable for pedestrians and for motorized traffic,” said Steele.

Three challenging sections of the highway top the list for reconstruction. The largest problem being an S-curve at Oak Street, where the highway suddenly careens from a north/south direction and turns west at roughly a 60-degree angle. Next up, the northern terminus at Hollywood swings back into the city grid at an equally abrupt turn. Finally, the intersection at Chicago Avenue brings congestion problems for motorists and pedestrians alike.

The Oak Street S-curve may present the most exciting design opportunity. There, the city is considering pulling the sacrosanct Oak Street Beach further out into the lake and placing it atop fresh landfill. The new surface will also provide an area to reroute the highway and smooth out the severe curve. But Steele was careful to point out that any designs would need community input and approval. “We haven’t technically begun this,” he reiterated. “Any design would not impinge on one of the city’s main beaches.” A spokesperson from the Chicago Parks District said the department was open to ideas, but it was far too early to comment on any particular aspect of the plan.

The redevelopment of the southern portion of the highway will inform design and reconstruction of the northern section. “We’re looking for the same opportunities we found in the south, where we were able to include five new pedestrian accesses (to the lakefront) as well as five acres of new parkland,” said Steele. The highway will be open during construction to allow access to 100,000 daily commuters, although there will be significant lane closures.

The southern portion received city, state, and federal financing with the city overseeing construction, but overall financing for this project has yet to be determined. Fund acquisition is not part of the initial study. The winning firm would be announced in 2012, and designs could be unveiled by 2014, but construction would not be complete until sometime near the end of the decade.

TOM STOECKER

Is Wright Wrong On Chandigarh?

On March 31, the Wright auction house gingerly dipped into controversy with its sale of 23 lots of office furniture from Chandigarh even as the Indian government launched a belated international campaign to recover the pieces designed by Pierre Jeanneret for the masterwork by cousin Le Corbusier. The mid-century furnishings, many made of teak, had notoriously been neglected on site, stashed away in storage or, even used as scrap. Since the 1980s, restored pieces have started to show up abroad and attract high prices, garnering as much as $54,000 for a pair of chairs. Corbusier biographer and historian, Jean Louis Cohen, called such sales “sad for history” and tantamount to “looting.”

In Chicago, the sale attracted an international crowd, but no museums. A pair of upholstered teak chairs from the High Court (estimated $15,000–20,000) sold for a record $104,500. As for how it felt to court controversy, auctioneer Richard Wright, said “What I hope will come out of all this is that India will take steps in the future to protect these pieces but, even more important, the architecture.”

JULIE V. IOVINE

PATH TO SUCCESS continued from front page

Connecting the two commercial corridors will encourage pedestrian activity and benefit area businesses. And just south of the Paulina L stop, the plan calls for a community garden on a vacant lot.

Sidewalk extensions, bike lanes and racks, a permanent farmers market, a community-based composting center, and a renewable energy facility are also in the plan that calls as well for murals and planted walls to enliven blank facades.

The plan also calls for the creation of a separate non-profit entity to solicit grants and additional public funding for sustainability and economic development measures in the area.

The plan grew out of a lengthy and varied public process, which included everything from community meetings and business surveys to house-party charrettes and scavenger hunts. The chamber’s emphasis on public space and sustainability might not at first seem related to the work of a Business Improvement District, but, according to the designers, it is part of a place-making strategy that will benefit residents and businesses and will help make the neighborhood more of a destination and a place to linger.

“We live and work in the neighborhood, so it’s great to be able to work here,” said Matt Nardella, a principal at Moss Design. Nardella said that the Lakeview Chamber of Commerce approached them following a “Park-ing Day” event. The firm had created a temporary park for bicyclists and pedestrians in a public parking space. “Some might see that as a nuisance, but the Lakeview Chamber is pretty progressive.”

The masterplan was unanimously approved on March 16. Nardella said the firm has since been in touch with the CTA about implementing the Low-line plan. “They seem open to it,” Nardella wrote in an email. “It’s all happening very fast.” Phasing and implementation for strategies

The plan calls for sustainable agriculture on open lots (left) and added bike lanes and widened sidewalks (right). For other portions of the plan are also in the works.

The Lakeview chamber is one of the dozens of special service districts throughout the city, so their green masterplan could serve as a model for generating place-specific, sustainable infrastructure citywide.
CINCY STREETCAR DERAILED? continued from front page portions of its funding.

According to Randy A. Simes, the editor of the influential blog UrbanCincy, the staunchly anti-transit Republican is attempting to lay claim to $52 million of federally-funded, state-administered grants on the pretense of reducing Ohio's $8 billion budget deficit.

But Kasich's attempt to redirect funds violates the state's protocol for awarding transportation dollars, possibly leaving them according to a score intended to prioritize the distribution of ODOT funding. TRAC awarded the streetcar a best-in-state 84. By comparison, the I-75/I-71 Brent Spence Bridge Replacement, which many transit advocates believe would receive the Cincinnati Streetcar's diverted funds if Kasich is successful, received a 44.

Some transit advocates believe strategic political appointments are being used to advance the governor's anti-transit agenda. When asked how the governor was justifying his dubious claim to the money, Simes said that the new head of TRAC—Kasich's lone appointment to the council—is opposed to the streetcar project, and "Kasich claims that the committee rarely goes against the will of its head.

Regarding the governor's opposition to the streetcar, Melissa Ayers, Deputy Director of Communications for ODOT cited the budget: "At this time there is not enough funding for all of the projects currently on the Transportation Review Advisory Council (TRAC) list. The TRAC is working to bring this program back into fiscal balance." She added that TRAC "received an unprecedented number of public comments, more than 3,400, with a majority opposed to the project," and pointed to an excerpt from the TRAC Policy & Procedures document explaining the council's final discretion on funding: "The ranking is a means to help the TRAC generally prioritize and rank projects in order of their transportation and community/economic development benefits... It is explicit TRAC policy that projects can be selected regardless of their score, ranking, cost, or functional class."

It was not clear from her statement whether Kasich or ODOT had any reason to dispute the merit of the streetcar according to TRAC's project evaluation criteria.

Opposition to the streetcar is nothing new in Cincinnati. Introduced by anti-transit groups, a 2009 ballot initiative would have amended the City Charter to require a vote on all future expenditures on any passenger rail project. It was defeated by a sound majority of Cincinnati voters. Widely seen as a referendum on the streetcar itself, the initiative's defeat was a major victory for a dedicated group of transit advocates in the city, and for Cincinnati Mayor Mark Mallory who has been an enthusiastic supporter of the project from the start.

Historically, Cincinnati had an extensive streetcar network, including five inclines that allowed the system to negotiate the city's steep hills. The last line was decommissioned in 1951. The city is considered a prime candidate for modern streetcars because of its dense population and urban fabric. Phase I of the system would connect the city's two largest employment centers—Downtown and Uptown—as well as the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood between them. An independent study commissioned by the city predicted nearly $1.5 billion in economic development along the streetcar's proposed route. To date, nearly $150 million in local, state, and federal support has been allocated to the streetcar, enough to fund Phase I of the project.

Asked about the viability of the project given the threat of funding cuts, streetcar project manager Chris Eilerman said, "We are moving forward with the project." TRAC plans a final vote and public hearing on the fate of the streetcar funds on Tuesday, April 12 in Columbus.

Kasich's meddling might not be the last hurdle for the streetcar: anti-transit groups are vowing to introduce this year a second ballot initiative in yet another effort to block construction. According to Simes, these groups are as out of touch with Cincinnati voters as Governor Kasich. But, he adds, "Public opinion does not seem to be of much concern to newly elected Governor Kasich whose approval rating now stands at 35 percent." TRAVIS R. EBY
When the technology industry association CompTIA relocated their world headquarters to Downers Grove, Illinois, the leadership told their designers they wanted the new office to represent a break with the old way of doing things. “They wanted a transformative space that was different than where they came from, that was forward-looking and not traditional,” said Jason Rosenblatt, the senior interior designer at Perkins + Will. Formerly a conventional corporate setting, the new 35,000-square-foot office boasts abundant daylight and 24-foot ceilings, creating a loft-like environment. The re-design illustrates the company’s emphasis on openness and communication. White and gray walls maximize brightness, and pops of saturated color identify functional spaces, like the cafeteria in green and the conference room in teal. The reception area is a bright red space equipped with flat screens for greeting visitors and displaying the CompTIA brand.

A wide walkway cuts diagonally across the entire floor connecting private offices, open workstations, meeting rooms, and eating areas. Rosenblatt compared it to a main avenue that branches off into different neighborhoods. Natural light is also visible at the end of every pathway, so that “everyone can feel daylight and openness when they’re walking to the copy room or lunch,” he explained. Private offices line the edges of the space, while low workstations occupy much of the floor, providing privacy when employees are sitting and visibility across the office when standing up. Three small circular meeting rooms with clear glass walls and marker board walls for impromptu gatherings also promote transparency. According to Rosenblatt, the motivation behind these experimental spaces was to foster collaboration and capture the ideas that come from casual conversation outside conference room settings. “They always talk about being a community and doing things like eating together, so that led us in our design to create spaces that they would share,” he explained.

While general lighting was salvaged from the former office for sustainability and cost savings, the volume of open space allowed new lighting arrangements to be playful, such as the crisscrossed fluorescent tubes in the cafeteria. The rectilinear shape of the offices and workstations is contrasted by furniture with soft lines. “What came out of the working session was that people were drawn to furniture in curved forms, that was forward-looking and not necessarily referencing the past,” Rosenblatt recalled. “Because they saw themselves as a tech company, they wanted to imply something that seemed more modern.”

KATHERINE FUNG
The museum announced in 2008 that it had purchased the Wheeler Kearns Architects-designed space it has occupied at Navy Pier since 1995, and intended to build a new, primarily subterranean, home designed by Krueck + Sexton (K+S) Architects in the northeast corner of Grant Park. Fevered debate ensued, with opponents voicing objections on many grounds. Residents adjacent to the park complained about increased congestion. Parks and planning groups argued that building in the park violated the city forefathers’ mandate that the lakefront remain “forever open, free and clear.” The Tribune’s Blair Kamin mounted an ongoing campaign against both the architecture and its location, although he softened his objections a bit on the third or fourth design scheme.

The relocation had its supporters, however, with Mayor Daley chief among them. And after numerous revisions of the design, a divided City Council approved the plan in 2008. Since then, although various opposition groups have threatened lawsuits, not much has happened. Last April the museum extended its lease at Navy Pier for an additional year—its lease technically ended last September—with options to renew through 2013, 2014 or 2025, as it continued to consider location possibilities.

Museum officials issued a terse statement that they had “agreed to discuss whether the plans for a revitalized Navy Pier could support our goals for a new museum” while continuing to plan for a new home in Grant Park; they declined to grant interviews. The architects on the project acceded to the museum’s request to do likewise but remained confident that K+S would be working with the museum, irrespective of where it eventually situates itself.

One source suggested that the renewed negotiations might be connected to the new regime at Navy Pier, which last year was “divorced” from its uneasy 15-year alliance with the Metropolitan Pier & Exposition Authority (McPier). The museum, which at times had a difficult relationship with McPier, hopes the new management might create a more comfortable set of circumstances. PHILIP BERGER

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STAY OF EXECUTION

Bertrand Goldberg’s Prentice Hospital is safe for now. The 42-ward alderman Brendan Reilly convinced Northwestern University to hold off filing for permits to destroy the undulating masterwork. But the 60-day delay, which began on April 2, may not be enough time to convince the university to halt plans on building a research center at the site for the Feinberg School of Medicine. Regardless, they can’t begin demolition until the current tenant clears out in September. There will be plenty of preservationist nail-biting come June.

LIKE A TURTLE

According to AIA’s Architectural Billings Index, the Midwest is leading the pack, at least this month anyway. With an index reading of 55.3, the area outperformed the rest of the country, particularly the Northeast with its 46.4 reading, but dropped ever so slightly from January’s 56.4. The overall national number stayed afloat, but just barely, shifting from 50.0 in January to 50.6. The overall national reading, but dropped ever so slightly from January’s 56.4. The overall national number stayed afloat, but just barely, shifting from 50.0 in January to 50.6.

STATION STYLING

Would you like a Prada wallet to go with your CTA card? Well, things may be looking up for retail along the L stations, but not that up. CTA officials are trying to fill at least 40 vacancies at train stations with a swankier brand of coffee, juice drink and/or vending machines selling iPods and digital cameras. The Tribune’s transit reporter Jon Hilkevitch writes that the agency is pulling back from the day-to-day managing of its retail real estate and ceded a bit of control to developers Jones Lang LaSalle back in 2008. Within the next couple of months the firm is accepting bids from retailers; riders should start seeing the results by the end of this year and early 2012.

NO RIGHT OF WAY

While Loop train stations get a retail spruce up, another multimillion-dollar train project in the suburbs is getting the short shrift. The Tribune reports that Bellwood officials set their sights on a $43 million Metra station to cure the ills of a changing economy. Without clearing right of way with Union Pacific, officials plowed ahead with plans, loans and ceremonial shovels. Now, instead of condos and boutiques, the west suburban township will have to forge white collar commuters for loan payments totaling $24 million. Apparently the officials thought they could push the plan through without wooing the railroad giant. And what does Bellwood Mayor Frank Pasquaile have to say about the mess? No comment.
The stated purpose of the Pritzker Architecture Prize is “to honor a living architect whose built work demonstrates a combination of those qualities of talent, vision, and commitment, which has produced consistent and significant contributions to humanity and the built environment through the art of architecture.” Widely held to be the world’s most prestigious architecture award, the Pritzker now shares a hometown with another significant award, the Richard H. Driehaus Award, which advocates for classical architecture and urbanism. Each year the jury evaluates bodies of work, often traveling extensively to visit sites as a group. The notion of architecture as art is meant to be the guiding force behind the deliberations and accounts for the diversity of Pritzker laureates.

Martha Thorne, executive director of the Pritzker Prize, insists the jury works to uphold the prize’s mission and appraise candidates according to the broad criteria of its mission statement, not according to an aesthetic bias. “The Pritzker family is invested in having esteemed professionals of varying outlooks serve as jurors,” she said. “The jury discusses architecture in the broadest sense. You can’t put boundaries around architecture.” Each year the jury evaluates bodies of work, often traveling extensively to visit sites as a group. The notion of architecture as art is meant to be the guiding force behind the deliberations and accounts for the diversity of Pritzker laureates.

“Modernism versus classicism; avant-garde versus derriere-garde; progressive versus reactionary. The organizers of both these recent winners equally under...
scores a shared commitment to an architecture that reflects the present. The question remains as to how much the bent of the jurors influences the selection. The current jury includes architecture patron Lord Peter Palumbo as jury chair, architects Alejandro Aravena, Carlos Jimenez, Glenn Murcutt, Juhani Pallasmaa, Renzo Piano, and editor and writer Karen Stein. Jurors serve a minimum three-year term but may stay as long as they wish. Next year Yung Ho Chang, the director of the architecture program at MIT, will join the jury. Selection of jurors in many ways mirrors the selection of laureates, a process that is somewhat opaque. “The Pritzker family is tremendously supportive of the prize—both financially through the Hyatt Foundation and through their belief in the importance of architecture—and they want the jury to be completely independent,” Thorne said. “They believe the jurors should be fully empowered to make their own decision.” Aside from the cachet of being associated with the award, jurors receive no remuneration for their work, though their travel expenses are covered. Thorne stresses the “openness” of the Pritzker nominating process—any registered architect can nominate someone, or, as in the case of 1988 co-laureate Gordon Bunshaft, they can even nominate themselves. Nominations are also sought from leading academics, critics, and former laureates. And while many associate the prize with some of the biggest and best-known names in the field, lesser-known and underappreciated architects have also consistently been tapped. Such is the case with this year’s winner, Eduardo Souto de Moura, one of Portugal’s leading architects who is nonetheless little-known to much of the architecture world and virtually unknown to a wider public.
Richard Driehaus is more directly involved in his namesake prize than the Pritzker family is in theirs. He attends the jury deliberations, though Lykoudis says he never weighs in on the decision. While the prize may emphasize importance of traditional design and continuity, Lykoudis touts the Driehaus for having a progressive agenda, especially in regards to urbanism and sustainability. Under his leadership, Lykoudis has deepened Notre Dame’s investigation of urbanism, working, he says, as a descendant of Colin Rowe. With the prize “we are making an argument, redefining what classicism means,” Lykoudis said. “We look at building practices that remain consistent across time and speak to the humanity in common across cultures.” The jurors look beyond Greco-Roman classicism to include Romanesque and Gothic traditions, and traditional techniques, he argues, create a shared architectural language, due to structural limits of materials like wood and stone, while the compact nature of traditional urbanism suggests ideas for a more sustainable development model. Lykoudis argues that the prize has a broad, international perspective, in comparison to the Pritzker. The Pritzker has come with a $100,000 purse since its inception. The Driehaus began with the same amount, but soon doubled the ante to $200,000. And yet, the Driehaus prize remains closely tied to a much narrower group of architects, linked to an overlapping series of relationships, movements, and institutions including New Urbanism, Yale, Oxbridge, the Prince of Wales, and various developments in Florida. Laureates Stern, Duany and Plater-Zyberk have all designed Oxbridge, the Prince of Wales, and urban design. Driehaus juror and inaugural laureate Plater-Zyberk sits on the jury.

The clubby Driehaus has a distance to go before it can match the Pritzker in global influence and reputation. And while the Pritzker may be critiqued for following fashion in the name of the forever now, only time will tell if the Driehaus can escape its agenda to move from architecture’s margins to the mainstream.
TRENDS: Sleeker kitchens are better, but integrated systems trump all.
COMPANIES: Spotlight on Valcucine, GD Cucine, SieMatic, Aster Cucine.
PRODUCTS: Cooktops, outdoor kitchens, new flexible vents and more.
It's safe to go back into the kitchen. According to a recent survey by the National Kitchen and Bath Association (NKBA), 82 percent of kitchen and bath professionals anticipate an increase in kitchen remodels and sales volume in the first quarter of this year. Optimistic about the outlook, American and European manufacturers are unveiling new designs with never-before-seen technology and material options, hoping to capture the imaginations of a growing legion of at-home chefs across the country.

As Americans spend more time cooking at home, they want the results to prove it. It's no longer enough for the kitchen to look like a lab, it must function as if it were approved by the aeronautic industry. Bosch's induction cooktop with a new AutoChef Sensor can gauge the temperature of specialized cookware and can even beep when your steak is medium-rare or your pancake reaches perfect fluffiness. The cooktop boasts results that are more like those of a gas range while using a fraction of the energy. For gas-cooking devotees, new models like Dacor's new 36-inch Distinctive Series cooking, developed with BMW DesignworksUSA, have bigger burners and more ergonomic designs, allowing large pots to slide around cast iron grates with ease.

While it may be difficult to keep an 18,000 BTU burner under wraps, other appliances are going incognito. Once the eyesore of any kitchen, new ventilator technology is quieter and sleeker than ever. Unveiled late last year, Bulthaup's new winged air extractor or Elica's Victor model could be mistaken for expensive lighting fixtures. Ventilators are no longer just for the range. Put one over the dining table and a host can prep fondue, raclette, or teppanyaki to guests' amazement.

In a world that has now met the second-generation iPad, kitchen manufacturers are trying to keep up by installing touch screens and wireless connectivity in cabinet fronts and refrigerator doors. Instead of pasting kiddie art projects to the fridge, parents can monitor their Twitter feeds on Samsung's new LCD touch screen refrigerator, due out in June.

But along with electronic technology, material technology has moved to the forefront. Designers and architects with environmentally savvy clients are asking for recycled and recyclable content, but consumers also demand durability as often as good aesthetics for their money.

Educating American customers about new, lower cost, longer lasting laminates has been a challenge for the U.S. branch of German kitchen company SieMatic, who calls them only "select surfaces" on its web site. They wait until the customer is in the showroom to explain that it's a laminate, said Hans Henkes, the company's general manager of marketing and sales. "Their first reaction is usually, 'Wow,'" he said.

Offering finishes and styles in a range of price points has helped luxury kitchen companies stay afloat during the economic downturn. In the suffering multi-family residential market, they are an attractive option for developers who want a brand-name kitchen to help market their units.

American company Henrybuilt captured a new market in 2009 when it launched the Viola Park brand as a lower-cost ($15-$20,000) alternative. Since then, it has also found that customers who could easily afford higher-priced lines were equally interested in Viola Park's design and manufacturing quality.

At SieMatic, a new category called "IndividualDesign" describes systems for unlimited budgets, versus a "SmartDesign" category for styles suited to smaller budgets and floor plans. At the end of the day, said Henkes, the distinction is almost like comparing first class to business class on a Lufthansa flight. "You’re all on the same plane," he said. "You are getting the same quality."

JENNIFER K. GORSCH
1 ELLITICA
FALMEC
Manufactured in high-grade 304 stainless steel with polished steel features, Falmec’s Ellittica vent hood is available in 70 cm wall-mounted or island versions that provide ducted or recirculating air. Etched tempered glass hides functional fluorescent lighting for the workspace below. The unit’s North American launch is slated for May or June.

www.falmec.com

2 ARCHITECT SERIES II
VENTILATION
KITCHENAID
KitchenAid’s new Architect Series II ventilation systems include the Commercial-Style Series, the 600 and 400 Series, and the Specialty Series with wall-mount, under-the-cabinet, and island-mount canopy hood options. Designed to suit a range of cooking surfaces and space requirements, the collection features ambient halogen lighting, automatic turn-on, timed auto-off, and tempered glass canopies.

www.kitchenaid.com

3 30-INCH GAS RANGE
SMEG
Smeg’s new 30-inch series includes a stainless steel freestanding gas range with continuous heavy-duty cast iron grates to enable easy movement of large pots and pans. The central burner has an output of 17,000 BTUs, while the oven below has a usable capacity of 3.4 cubic feet with a triple-glazed removable door and halogen lights.

www.smegusa.com

4 BESPOKE COOKERS
STEEL CUCINE
(Also on opposite page)
Italian appliance manufacturer Steel offers bespoke cookers to suit a chef’s specific needs. The new Derby range features two sizes and four color options, in addition to customizable features like a rotisserie and matching ventilation hoods. Genesi models can integrate barbecue plates or lava stone grills, deep fryers, and induction cooktops (see left). Lavoro (above) is one of Steel’s new outdoor kitchen options.

www.steel-cucine.com

5 COMBISET GRILLS
MIELE
Designed to match the existing 12 elements of Miele’s CombiSet series, two new barbecue grills have been introduced for indoor use. Available in 12- or 15-inch widths, the grills offer dual heating zones so that different foods can be seared, cooked, or warmed simultaneously. Cast iron grates over lava rocks evenly distribute heat to mimic outdoor grilling.

www.mieleusa.com

6 CI 491/492
INDUCTION COOKTOP
GAGGENAU
Gaggenau’s new 36-inch induction cooktop is designed to fit large cookware, with five cooking zones configured for fast preparation of a range of dishes. A booster function enables even faster cooking, reducing energy loss. The cooktop is available with a stainless steel or frameless, flush-mounted design with a magnetic knob that can be removed for safety or cleaning.

www.gaggenau-usa.com
COMPANY PROFILE: VALCUCINE

Italian kitchen manufacturer Valcucine has had a lot of firsts since its founding in 1980. The company designed the first colored wood door and the first invisibly framed aluminum kitchen cabinet before it was 15 years old. In 1998, it created the Dibus Association, the first environmental protection association for manufacturers, and a little more than 10 years later introduced Invitrum, the industry’s only 100 percent recyclable glass and aluminum base unit. The popular unit uses recycled aluminum parts and a single 10 mm thick structural side panel to reduce raw material usage. Last year, the design won the company a Green Good Design Award from the Chicago Athenaeum.

The company uses an anthropological design approach, carefully studying human behavior to make smart kitchens that seem to anticipate a place for everything. As its designers continually explored new functions for the kitchen, the company saw an opportunity to design for the entire home and last year introduced Valcucine Living. The designs are based on the idea that furnishings are replacing walls in contemporary homes, creating an opportunity for new pieces to divide spaces without shutting them off completely. The Living system designs aim to make large spaces more comfortable, while making small spaces more versatile.

Valcucine remains focused on being an innovator in the kitchen, first and foremost. Its latest introduction, the New Logica system, is the second generation of a design introduced in 1996 and touted as Valcucine’s “new kitchen ergonomics system.” Its offspring has many of the same carefully measured features—an 80 cm counter depth, large removable drawers, and Ala and Aerus lift-up door designs—but also includes a newly equipped back section capable of storing or concealing almost any piece of modern kitchen equipment, from small appliances and storage jars to a computer monitor or ventilation hood. The system also contains material advances to ensure its longevity, including a nanolayered top that resists scratches. Like Invitrum, the unit has recycled/recyclable components and a dematerialized design. Even with the company’s focus on recycled content, Valcucine knows its customers are not looking for disposable kitchen; they are looking for an heirloom.

TECHNICAL SPOTLIGHT: GLASS BASE UNIT

After lengthy material research, Valcucine created the industry’s first fully recyclable glass base unit with additional parts made of recycled aluminum. The production process consumes only one-twentieth of the energy needed to use raw aluminum. Part of the design’s intelligence is that it also cuts down on material usage by eliminating the side-by-side base unit traditionally found in kitchen cabinetry. Instead, the Invitrum’s structure is supported horizontally, using a single circular pipe 36 mm glass in place of the 10 mm thickness found in many chipboard designs.
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All glass cabinets
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design: Gabriele Centazzo

na.valcucine.com • 800-311-0681 • info@valcucinena.com
www.recyclablekitchen.com • Dealership opportunities available
COMPANY PROFILE: 
GD CUCINE

Founded in Treviso, Italy, in 1969, kitchen manufacturer GD Cucine opened their first United States showroom last year in Chelsea. The new 8,000 square foot, two-story flagship has the allure of an exotic car dealership, a racy orange model called Argento Vivo at its center.

Grounded in the traditions of fine cabinetmaking but keen to explore new technologies, GD Cucine frequently introduces new finishes to enhance wood textures and grains. The new Seta line and established Velvet collection both include heat-treated wood and tactile (“seghettato”) wood. These kitchens’ contemporary lines combined with more traditional materials, wood in particular, still inspire consumers, said the company’s chief of operations, Alberto Paderi. The company has based several of its lines on this trend, including the classic Treviso line and forthcoming collections Kate and Gioiosa, featuring textured wood painted in warm countryside-inspired colors.

As the kitchen has become a second living room, and in some cases the primary living space, consumers have also asked for finely crafted metal and glass to complement their home’s modern furnishings. To meet the demand, GD sought to match the higher technology content of appliances with highly technical material fabrication. In 2009, Argento Vivo received the Chicago Athenaeum’s Good Design Award as the first kitchen in the industry to use curved glass. The island’s circular dining table takes the material a step further, integrating a recessed wine cooler/fruit bowl and internal LED illumination.

TECHNICAL SPOTLIGHT: CURVED GLASS & BUILT-INS
GD Cucine’s Argento Vivo kitchen, shown with white back-lacquered frosted glass doors and countertops, and a central worksurface and sink in black Corian, was an industry leader with its curved glass design. The island’s circular dining table takes the material a step further, integrating a recessed wine cooler/flute bowl and internal LED illumination.
COMPANY PROFILE: SIEMATIC

In 1931 a company called August Siekmann Möbelwerke exhibited its first products at Germany’s Leipzig Trade Fair. By 1953, they had sold more than one million of their “kitchen dressers.” The same year, Siekmann presented its version of a reform kitchen, with interconnected cabinets and functional interiors. The company SieMatic was born in 1960, bringing with it the world’s first completely built-in kitchen design.

Last year, SieMatic celebrated its 50th anniversary with a reincarnation of the 6006 model it introduced in its first year. The company credits much of its success to the kitchen’s handle-free design, a revolutionary idea at the time. It has worked to tweak the continuous grip-channel design for better ergonomics and visual appeal, maintaining tight control of the machining of that one element as it has reappeared again and again over the decades.

The company is also forging ahead with completely new designs, based on the idea that the traditional family home has evolved into one big entertainment center. “The home is being more and more professionalized,” said a release about two of SieMatic’s newest kitchens, the S1 and S2. These are designed to integrate all of the high-tech components modern customers have come to rely on, including television and Internet.

While SieMatic’s newest kitchen takes a step back in time for inspiration, it is still determinedly forward-thinking. The BeauxArts.02, on which the company collaborated with Chicago designer Mick De Giulio, has a lighter, more linear look than its original 2006 design, also by De Giulio. Though the system has already been released in the European markets, it is in the larger U.S. kitchens that its many design elements come together best. The look is sophisticated, too, with dark ebonized walnut doors contrasting with stainless steel drawer fronts and polished sterling grey glass.

With the BeauxArts.02 look, where you’ve got symmetry and asymmetry, gloss veneer, matte lacquer, and other finishes—to put all of that into one design you need more room,” said Hans Henkes, the SieMatic USA’s general manager of marketing and sales. It also takes a strong eye for design. In that area, the company sees itself as a leader. “That is what traditional American kitchen manufacturers miss,” said Henkes. “They are manufacturers, not designers. Leadership in design is where we want to position ourselves.”

TECHNICAL SPOTLIGHT
MULTIMEDIA CABINET

SieMatic’s S2 Multimedia Cabinet features an integrated flat screen TV that projects on a swiveling arm to suit the user’s needs. With a line that can connect to an outside media center, the cabinet provides full connectivity to the rest of the home. It can play a Food Network cooking show, stream Internet radio, or provide an iPod docking station with hi-fi audio. A “smart grid” function allows wireless communication with other devices, and the panel’s control strip can activate any appliance in the house. When closed, the screen conceals useful storage space for “technical utensils.”
SieMatic BeauxArts.02

the next generation

Everything you want in a kitchen. Everything you expect from a SieMatic original. The stage is set. Coming soon in 2011.
COMPANY PROFILE:
ASTER CUCINE

Last year at Eurocucina, kitchen manufacturer Aster Cucine debuted the Timeline kitchen, the Italian company’s first collaboration with New York-based firm, Workshop/apd. Such collaborations between a major Italian kitchen manufacturer and a U.S. designer have happened rarely, if ever, but point to exciting potential for the future in kitchen design.

Jacob Kindler, U.S. managing director of Aster Cucine, was a longtime friend of Workshop/apd principals Matthew Berman and Andrew Kotchen, but it took years to persuade his nearly 30-year-old company that hiring an American team would give Aster a new insight into what American consumers want. The collaboration considers the larger scale of U.S. kitchens and the more traditional tastes of consumers here, while maintaining strict Italian manufacturing standards. The team used vintage European materials that could be rendered with modern lines, a combination that should please buyers considering the resale value of their home and fearful of being over-the-top modern, said Kindler.

New York-based Berman and Kotchen drew upon historical craftsmanship and the importance of material selection in those trades to design the collection, combining sixteenth-century Venetian ceruse finishes, chemically patinated stainless steel, oxidized mirror glass, and wire mesh inspired by French country cabinetry. “It’s a modern interpretation of traditional detailing,” said Kotchen, “plus an Italian understanding of knowing how to put it all together.”

The kitchens also showcase manufacturing techniques not usually seen in Italian cabinetry. Doors are built with inset handles, a style common to prewar American designs, but unfamiliar to Italian manufacturers. Aster also altered the manufacturing process by which they usually round the edge of a curved half-inch border at the base of the cabinetry to give it a cleaner line.

Because kitchens have become extensions of the living area, the Timeline series can be personalized with art panels by Toronto artist Murray Duncan. The etched pieces are incorporated as the customer desires, including as a backsplash or stand-alone cabinet. Their coatings of metallic paints, oil crayons, and resin, add another layer of complexity to the kitchens. The Timeline series is now exclusively on view at Urban Home New York.

TECHNICAL SPOTLIGHT:
VENETIAN CERUSE
The Timeline collection’s white oak cabinetry is treated with a technique that has stood the test of time. Ceruse originally referred to an ingredient known as “white lead.” Mixed with vinegar, it was a popular form of makeup during the 16th century. Also used in paint, the term ceruse now refers to a (lead-free) finish for wood that reveals grain lines while leaving the overall base color of the wood intact. The result is a soft, ghostly patina that brings out the best of oak cabinetry.
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an object," wrote Muecke in an artist’s statement. 

The sculptor’s practice, as Muecke described it in his artist’s statement, is an exploration of the concept of flight through architecture and design and capturing the concept of flight through architecture, a theme that runs through many of Muecke’s works. The artist’s practice involves a critical examination of the history of architecture and design, and how these concepts are applied in contemporary contexts. Muecke’s works often challenge the traditional narratives of architectural history, and his sculptures are characterized by a sense of playfulness and unexpectedness.

In conclusion, Muecke’s sculptures at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport are a testament to the power of architecture to engage and captivate visitors. The works offer a unique perspective on the history of architecture and design, and provide a fresh and innovative approach to the concept of flight through architecture and design. Muecke’s works at Lambert-St. Louis International Airport are a clear indication of the artist’s commitment to pushing the boundaries of architectural design and creating works that are both visually striking and conceptually engaging.
After The Readymade is a good example of a questionable curatorial exercise: assembling disparate works from an institution’s collection under a fuzzy banner. While it purports to show contemporary artworks that draw inspiration from Marcel Duchamp’s Readymade works of the early 20th century, most of the pieces fall way outside his notion of presenting a commercially manufactured object as a work of art. The organizers might have been better off describing the small show of about a dozen works as one about appropriation and assemblage, as well as Conceptualism—themes that have played similarly large roles in postwar contemporary art.

The works, presented more or less chronologically, start with one of Duchamp’s own. A folio from a faux corporate bond issue that promises to pay out on maturity in artworks, it isn’t ready made at all; it’s a lithograph that, in the mode of Dada, satirizes both the art world and the financial markets. A sheet of Andy Warhol’s Cows wallpaper and a shopping bag imprinted with a Campbell’s soup can are likewise not ready made, but do speak to Warhol’s importance as a progenitor of Pop Art. The curators seem to have missed one point that separates Warhol’s work from Duchamp’s: Warhol’s Brillo cartons were not actual Brillo cartons but hand built, silkscreened, unique objects. Along with the issue of co-opting commercial branding, they raise a consideration of what it is that allows us to deem something “art.”

The show was organized as part of a University of Chicago graduate course, Materialities of Modern Art; students prepared object labels to accompany the works, some of which are more illuminating than others. Among the more astute is this observation about the Warhol shopping bag: that the museum, in matting and framing it for display, has discarded its original purpose—elevating its status “from disposable packaging to untouchable work of art.”

Twenty years ago, before the Internet democratized access to the international stock of used books, I spent a good deal of time combing the aisles of the late, lamented Barnes and Noble Sales Annex on Fifth Avenue and 18th Street. There I cobbled together an enviable library of canonical books on architecture and urbanism at a price even a poor graduate student could afford. With the arrival of Anthony Vidler’s new collection of essays, I was transported back to the day.
Seeing other works in the show—Man Ray's photograms, Richard Hamilton's affectionate rip-off of Lichtenstein's Ben-Day dots—as "readymade" is similarly unconvincing. The show's real highlight is Duchamp's Box in a Valise; again, not readymade but nevertheless a fascinating collection of the artist's "greatest hits" in miniature, including Nude Descending a Staircase, The Large Glass, and tiny versions of all the original Readymade items.

In the gallery next to the show is a companion exhibition of several large-scale pieces from the Smart's collection—featuring Dan Peterman's Excerpts from the Universal Lab, plastic spheres filled with detritus from the University's science labs, and Donald Lipski's Water Lilies, a long glass tube of water with brown eggs suspended inside, that actually illustrate the show's hypothesis better than the intellectual strands that bind them arise with tiping alertness.

As an architectural historian with feet firmly planted in social history, Vidler (like his contemporary, the late Reyner Banham) departed from the formalism of his mentor, Colin Rowe, in order to eschew the intellectual, social, and aesthetic foundations of modern urbanism. In a text from 2000 entitled "Photourbanism: Planning the City from Above and from Below," Vidler draws on the work of geographer-ethnologist Paul Chombard de Lauwe whose aerial photography from the 1940s confirmed for Le Corbusier his persistent belief in the primacy of the view from above. As Vidler writes, "The aerial view of a city, indeed, is, in Chombard's terms, the only means of developing a synthetic vision of its social space." Here, Vidler brilliantly uncovers the intertwined logic of social relations and their invisible yet implicit mapping onto the conventionalized bird's eye view of the urban designer.

While The Writing of the Walls (1987), on the architecture of the late Enlightenment, and his excellent monograph on Claude-Nicolas Ledoux represent the superb quality of his scholarship in the long form, Vidler's essays have always been, for me, his most captivating and substantial contributions to architectural discussions on the topics of the last 250 years. The popularity of The Architectural Uncanny (1994) revealed to a larger public what many of us already knew, namely that he was likewise a contemporary critic of the highest order (and not just an 18th-century French scholar). Warped Space (2000) confirmed this suspicion and gave us, in its long first section, one of the most important social histories of the urban experience as it radically altered under modernization.

The new collection contains only a small part of that discussion and yet provides the reader with an equally valuable compendium of texts drawn from Vidler's urban histories, with a range of topics stretching from Blaise Pascal's horror vacui to Guy Debord's detournement. He has arranged these essays (some of which are better known than others, such as "The Idea of Unity and Le Corbusier's Urban Form," his attempt to situate Corbusier in the long legacy of French social utopianism) chronologically not by publication date but by subject matter, thus allowing the reader to consider them anew, in the context of an extended inquiry into the principles of modern urbanism.

I hesitate to end with a quibble, yet in a certain respect it seems apt: the book has no index. What does this omission say about the epistemology of received forms, of the topographies of information, with a range of topics stretching from Blaise Pascal's horror vacui to Guy Debord's detournement? Or did it arise from the sense that more people than not will encounter the text in an infinitely searchable digital version, rendering the conventional index obsolete? What does this say about the epistemology of received forms, of the topographies of information, with a range of topics stretching from Blaise Pascal's horror vacui to Guy Debord's detournement? Would a good deal to say about that.

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THE ARCHITECT'S NEWSPAPER APRIL 13, 2011
mer president Hosni Mubarak didn't do.

of mark, such as the swelling ring of brick

bold statements like Muhammad Ali's

cityscape by Egypt's rulers. Some made

history through the marks left on the

buildings. The urban plan follows the patterns of the

already half-century-old Ismailia district—

large residential blocks that wrap around the

perimeters of city blocks. The build-

ings in Qattawi’s plan were to continue to

shore of the Nile. In addition to

the symbolic value of imagining the area

without the British barracks, Qattawi’s

plan attempted to solve two main issues:

creating an appropriate context for the

urban fabric of the Ismailia district to fill

what until then had been an urban void

in a key location in the city. This plan

was never realized, as there were no plans

to demolish the barracks. However, in 1947,
after the exit of British troops from the
district, demolition of the massive building
was imminent. And again there was a

fervor in the media, with journalists and

architects scrambling for ideas of what to
do with the area.

Muhammad dhul-Faqar Bek published
a plan to redesign Qasr el-Nil area in
al-Musawwar journal in April 1947. The
upholstered design was to create a cultural and
political center for the city. This translated
into administrative buildings for various
ministries and government agencies and a
plethora of museums, in addition to a series of commemorative statues, all
imposed by vast public pressure. Furthermore, the plan included a new
parliament building modeled after the
United States Capitol. The proposed
parliament building was to be situated on the site of the barracks (with a
casino extending into the Nile), the demo-

lition of the Egyptian museum and replac-
ing it with a massive multi-level structure
that would be the Museum of Egyptian
Civilization, new buildings for the ministry
of foreign affairs and the radio and televi-
sion administration, and finally, a series of monuments including a commemorative
sculpture for the 1952 coup and, perhaps
most dramatically, a massive monument
to the unknown soldier designed by artist
Fathy Mahmoud. Karim’s vision, like
others before it, was never implemented.

The ongoing Egyptian revolution that
topped Hosni Mubarak after a 30-year
rule has given Tahrir Square a new place in
Egyptian collective consciousness.

As the political landscape shifts, Tahrir
Square continues to capture the imagina-
tion of politicians, architects, and urban
planners eager to come up with a master
plan and complete what they recognize is
an unfinished urban space. Former
Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq, in an effort
to appease protesters in Tahrir Square,
suggested that the square be transformed
into Cairo’s Hyde Park. And architects
continue to hold meetings in a race for
who will come up with the most popular
plan first. Cairo has always been a city of
great works of architecture and intelligent
city planning. It is also a city marked by
many failures at the hands of hasty
architects and even its own Home guards.

Yet no one politician or architect has been
able to lay claim over the design and sym-
drome of Tahrir. Hoping to impress the new
regime, Karim published in his magazine
al-Imara—‘‘Egypt’s leading architectural
journal at the time—a redesign for the area of the former Qasr el-Nil barracks.
Karim’s 1953 plan called for constructing
a hotel on the site of the barracks (with a
casino extending into the Nile), the demo-

lition of the Egyptian museum and replac-
ing it with a massive multi-level structure
that would be the Museum of Egyptian
Civilization, new buildings for the ministry
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