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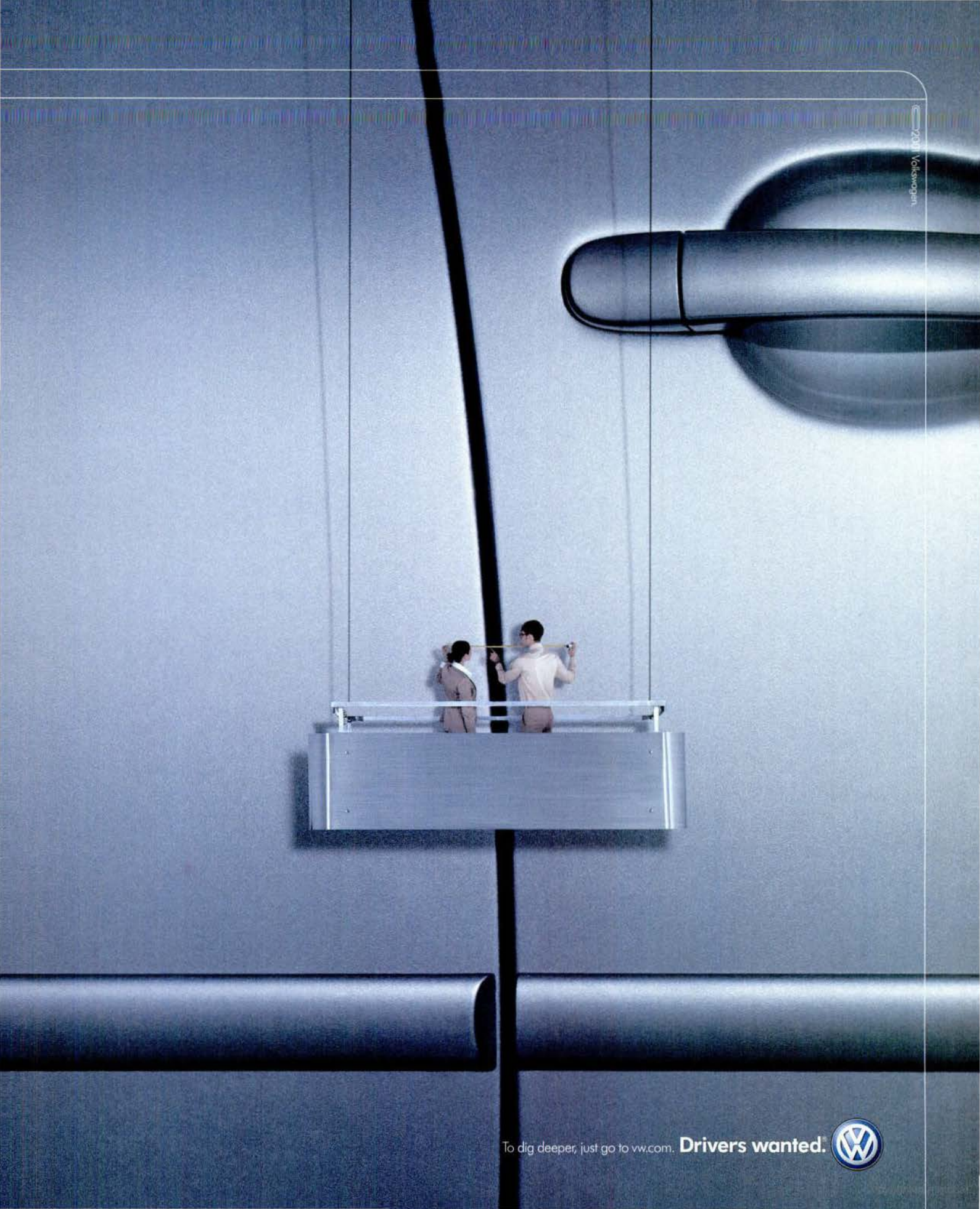
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COVER

Even viewed from its perimeter, Prospect, Colorado, looks like no other subdivision. Its strong colors and variegated forms set it apart from all the standard beige housing developments. Photo by Jeff Minton

APRIL 2002

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The People Next Door

In this issue, dwell asks, "Does good architecture make good neighbors?"

"I realized that the chicken provides a good model for us. It makes a lot from almost nothing; it's much more effective than a cow. Architecture should be like that."

—MIKKO KOMONEN, PAGE 24

Coming in June
The Highrise Issue: dwell goes to New York, Chicago, and Vancouver to check out life in tall buildings. Plus: A Field Guide to American Independent Furniture Design and How to Build a House for $135,000 or Less.

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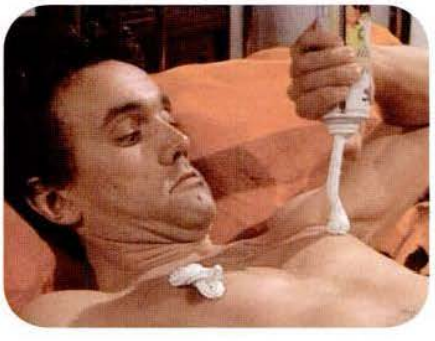
You know it's a sitcom

because they've all had sex with each other



and they're still friends.

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So many magazines seem to exist to pay homage to their advertisers or to their own design whims. While either of those aren't bad, they do contribute to a mediocre read. Your magazine, thus far, seems to be right on the mark because you've developed a voice. A voice that appreciates art and design but doesn't have a Swiss bank account and bid via telephone at Sotheby's. If you write quality copy then advertisers will follow. Just don't let them lead. Thanks. You're a staple in my periodical diet (alongside *The Surfer's Journal*).

JIM MORIARTY
Solano Beach, California

I have enjoyed your magazine thus far but the photo in the February 2002 issue of a woman (other descriptions would be more accurate—but crude) sitting on the toilet was unacceptable for public consumption. It is not cute. She looks ridiculous. I realize you are attempting to be hip and cool but that is taking it too far. There are some activities that should remain private and defecation is one of them. If this type of explicit display continues in your magazine, I will cancel my subscription. I am offended.

SCHUYLER HARRIS
Cincinnati, Ohio
Editors' Note: Point taken. But what makes you think she was defecating?

What a great issue (October 2001) and a nice surprise that you featured my father's New Jersey Performing Arts Center in your introduction. It's wonderful to see that people across the country are still trying to build innovative, elegant, and individual housing, despite the prevailing corporate, generic cultural forces. Really, very inspiring. This is my second issue, and I'm looking forward to the next (just dumped my *I.D.* subscription in favor of yours).

SUZANNE MYERS
New York, New York

I've been reading dwell since the launch and was dismayed to find that the mid-century-modern craze has infected your magazine, too. You were really heading in a great direction but appear to be poised for derailment. It's not that I dislike Mid-Mod (hey, I live in a 1953 house designed by a Frank Lloyd Wright apprentice, okay?), but if I have to read about one more retro-modern house described as a "gem" ("Lautner vs. Lautner," February 2002), I think I will tie my neck to my Eames hang-it-all.

Please stay on course and show us what's new and wonderful. We don't need another vehicle for turning great postwar design into a vapid cliché.

CRAIG HOLMES
Hartford, Connecticut

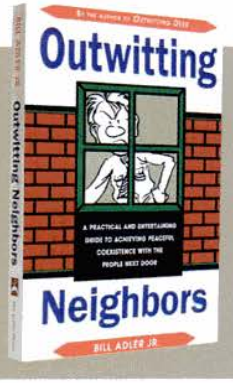
I was a little surprised by your backhanded compliment regarding the architectural value of the Twin Towers (December 2001). You seemed to be mourning their loss while at the same time belittling their modern, elegant beauty (any time of day, not just in the morning light). Not to mention the engineering brilliance that made them possible.

The Towers were a symbol of their architectural moment. A moment I believe your magazine celebrates, even in the very issue that your editorial appeared (for example, page 86, "What Was Dad Thinking?").

I don't know if the WTC towers were my "favorite" buildings, but they were up there.

STEVEN HALIN
New York, New York

I was surprised to read in M.G. Lord's article ("Mars Needs Architects") in your August 2001 issue that I had "left the Johnson Space Center." Although I was on maternity leave at the time of publication, I was and am still very much employed on NASA projects at JSC, including a concept for the next-generation space shuttle. M.G.'s omission particularly sur- ▸



BOOK OF THE MONTH

Bill Adler, the celebrated author of *Outwitting Mice, Outwitting Squirrels,* and *Outwitting Critters,* also has written the intriguing *Outwitting Neighbors.* Rather than dull his prose with paraphrasing, here we have an excerpt from the chapter "Horrible Pets": "Take action against the pet's owner, never the pet. Better yet, take pictures. Start a poop collection for the pet's owner. Drop off your gift when the neighbors are entertaining."

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prises me in that we did meet and talk last spring; perhaps it was from that conversation that she derived my exoskeletal/endoskeletal analogy about the design significance of TransHab (I find this analogy the best way to describe the vehicle, and have published it in more than one place, so I think it's unlikely that she invented the description out of nothing).

In your correction on page 12 of that same issue, regarding Rocio Romero, you say that "nothing makes [you] happier than a woman doing terrific architectural work"; however, I can't help being a bit skeptical on that point. It's not that women don't do terrific work all the time; it is that the press—including yourselves, apparently—all too rarely give us credit for the work that we do, and all too often hand that credit to whatever male designer appears to be near at hand. What is most disappointing is that this should have happened in this case at the hands of an intelligent and personable woman like M.G., who certainly knew what I was doing and how to reach me to double-check, had she wished to do so, and in a new journal which otherwise holds such promise as a record of contemporary design.

The TransHab configuration and detailing was in fact principally my work, at which I am still employed despite the death of that project; and if I take three months off to do the work of childbearing, this should not be interpreted as retirement.

CONSTANCE ADAMS
Houston, Texas

M.G. Lord responds: The thrust of this piece was not to diminish the important contributions that many thousands of contractors have made to the space program since NASA was founded in 1958. But Ms. Adams, an employee of Lockheed Martin, has no cause for complaint. The focus of the article was Kriss Kennedy, the only NASA-employed architect at the Johnson Space Center doing space architecture.

Imagine my surprise leafing through the June 2001 issue of dwell and encountering a swimming pool in which I often frolicked as a youngster, with the moniker "The Swimming Pool That Changed the World." Little did we know we were cavorting in an architectural icon to be. For us, it was the cool house with the monkey (Mrs. Donnell had a pet gibbon), the statue in the pool that you could swim through underwater, and the commercial-grade ice cream fountain in the pool house.

Yet the photographs of that pool triggered what I can only explain as design archetype flashbacks. I felt my spatial sense being formed. Likewise, the oak trees growing through the decks, the Sonoma heat, the tawny rounded hills. Like Richard Dreyfuss in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, building the Devil's Postpile out of mashed potatoes, it made me think about how our aesthetics are mysteriously formed by the spaces we encounter as children.

JOHN ROGERS
San Francisco, California

NEW AT WWW.DWELLMAG.COM

In honor of the neighbors issue, we've decided to revive the dwell online discussion board. The topic: How innovative design does or doesn't fit into your neighborhood. And what you can do if your neighbors hate your house.

I stumbled across my first copy of dwell earlier this year. I have it on order now and every Saturday I walk into town for a coffee and to see if the latest issue has arrived yet.

I have a joinery/furniture business; we do a lot of interior design work so I am interested in domestic architecture and find the magazine a refreshing breath of fresh California air in what can only be described as a heritage county. If it's not red brick and flint country-cottagey style it won't get past the planners.

It's also really good to get feedback from people like Meagan Smith ("Letters," February 2002), who visited London and stayed at the Westbourne Hotel. We worked on this job and did all the feature joinery and furnishings in the reception/bar area and the downstairs bedrooms. We get used to journalists saying nice things and seeing pictures in books and magazines but I was prompted to write by her glowing report as an actual paying guest.

SIMON CASS
Norwich, Norfolk, England

As I was reading the article "I Was a Child Modernist" (December 2001), I realized to my delight that the author was talking about "our" house, the house my late father, Donn Emmons, designed and where I lived until the age of nine. My earliest memory is of my father arguing with the contractor. Imogen Cunningham's son Gryffyd Partridge and his family, who were my parents' best friends, lived next door.

We still own the house, and my brother lives there and in Brazil. My sister and I both have houses with views of the water, an early influence of growing up in that house. I live in lower Manhattan next to the East River, and feel completely at home here because it jibes with my early memories of light and water so well, despite the apparent lack of similarity between this dense urban environment and 1950s Marin County!

Thanks for bringing back those memories.

ZETTE EMMONS
New York, New York

Ladies and Gentlemen, there is no "Baja, California" ("Microsoft Explorer," December 2001) just as there is no "South, Dakota (or Carolina)," nor "North, Dakota (or Carolina, if you like)," nor "New, Mexico (York or Jersey)." There are two Baja Californias, one Norte the other Sur, and certainly no "Baja" by itself in the United States of Mexico (just as there is no "New" or "South" or "North" state in the United States of America).

GERARDO BROWN-MANRIQUE
Oxford, Ohio

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WE WON!

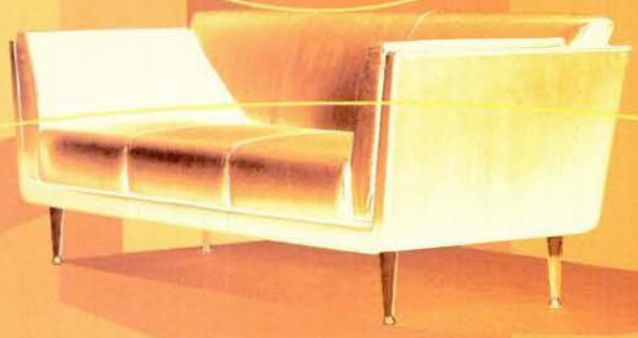
We are pleased to report that dwell was the recipient of Folio's 2001 Editorial Excellence Award in the Home/Gardening category and the 2001 Ozzie Award for Best Design of a New Magazine. Above, the awards (center) and some other things that make us happy.

PHOTO BY TANYA ZANI ENGSTRÖM

HermanMiller for the Home

goetz sofa

classic design by Mark Goetz



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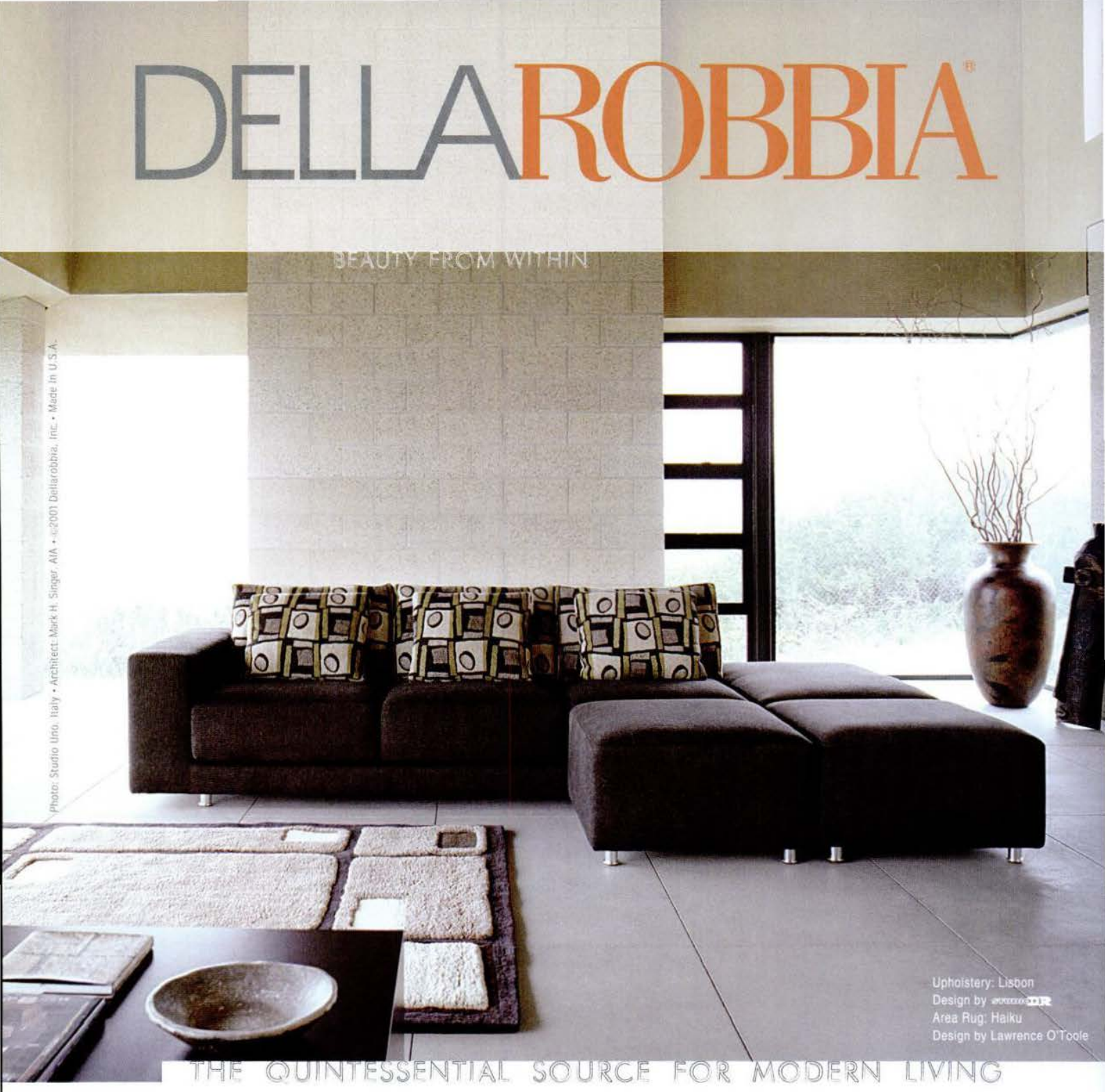

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KNOW ANY NICE MODERNISTS?

This issue of dwell, the neighbors issue, feels to us like an event. The idea that home is more than an isolated place where we can hide from the world, that home is a component of the urban (or suburban) fabric, that home is part of a network, is implanted deep in dwell's DNA. As is the idea that innovative architecture can thrive in a dense urban or suburban setting. The neighbors issue is one of those things that dwell exists specifically to produce.

Back in the fall of 2000, dwell sponsored a lively discussion on our website in which we invited architects and developers to help us fathom why commercial home builders were so risk-adverse, so unwilling to break the mold. We were trying to figure out how modern architecture could find its way into that most ubiquitous feature of the American landscape, the subdivision. One developer whom we'd invited to participate, Kiki Wallace, wrote us a terse email:

"I have been following your discussion on your web page and would like to contribute but it is a much longer discussion than I presently have time for. We are implementing what is being talked about and it really is not that difficult."

Me, I didn't pay much attention. It was just another piece of email, quickly read and forgotten. A year later, after I returned from Prospect, Wallace's development, a computer search for something else sucked this ancient email out of the depths of my electronic inbox. I read it and felt a little sheepish.

What I discovered on my visit to Prospect was that Wallace was, in fact, implementing what most people on our Web discussion were assuming would never happen—something I would have realized if I'd only read my email more carefully.

In the intervening year, I'd been off making speeches to home-builders conventions about how it was—theoretically, maybe—possible for an American subdivision to consist of something besides faux Mediterraneans. Wallace, in the intervening year, had been building.

When I finally found time to do something in Colorado other than change planes in the Denver airport, I visited Prospect. With its strange juxtapositions of neotraditional and neomodern, with its crazy exuberance, the place left me feeling behind the curve, and wildly optimistic. Here was a development that looks like what dwell would look like if it were a subdivision (except that dwell, the subdivision, would boast a café that served nothing but coffee, mojitos, and Cadbury bars*).

The lesson is this: At dwell we sometimes think we know what's going on out there, but it's a big country, and an even bigger world, and, in truth, we know very little.

Which brings me to the concept of nice modernism.

"Here at dwell, we think of ourselves as Modernists, but we are the nice Modernists." This sentence was in the introduction to the first issue of dwell. The essay is called "The Fruit Bowl Manifesto," and you can still find it on our website. "One of the things we like best about Modernism—the nice Modernism—is its flexibility," states the Fruit Bowl Manifesto. "Rather than being an historical movement from the first half of the 20th century, left over and reheated, we think of Modernism as a frame of mind. To us the M word connotes an honesty and curiosity about methods and materials, a belief that mass production and beauty are not mutually exclusive categories, and a certain optimism not just about the future, but about the present."

Optimism about the present lately has been in short supply. That's the other reason why we decided to pull the notion of nice modernism out of storage, dust it off, polish it up, and put it to use.

Here's what we're going to do. We are going to establish an award, the dwell Nice Modernist Prize. We're going to give out one per issue in every future issue of dwell. In our December 2002 issue, we'll publish a section dedicated to nice modernists everywhere.

So, what is a nice modernist? "Pleasing, agreeable, delightful" is the first definition of "nice" in my Random House dictionary. These are words that are not usually used to describe modernism. But we think that's an oversight.

Nice modernism, simply put, is modern design that is humanistic and accessible. Sometimes it can be challenging or even a little abstruse, but nice modernism always somehow fits into the fabric of its community. It is modernism that engages the present moment and the future with intelligence and élan.

We know that "nice" is often perceived as a milquetoast kind of word, but we prefer it to overused superlatives such as "fabulous" and "brilliant." Think of nice, not as something bland, but as the word that would pop out of your mouth watching Venus Williams rocket a serve past her opponent: "Nice!"

We could offer more etymology, but we'll stop here. What you should do is check out the Prospect story (page 52) for inspiration and then go to our website: www.dwellmag.com. There you'll find a form.

What have you seen lately that has made you feel wildly optimistic? Nominate your favorite nice modernist; he or she could be an architect, a designer, a builder, a developer, an artist, or just some normal human being who's done something, well, nice.

Who knows? Maybe there's another Prospect out there waiting to be discovered.

KARRIE JACOBS, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
karrie@dwellmag.com

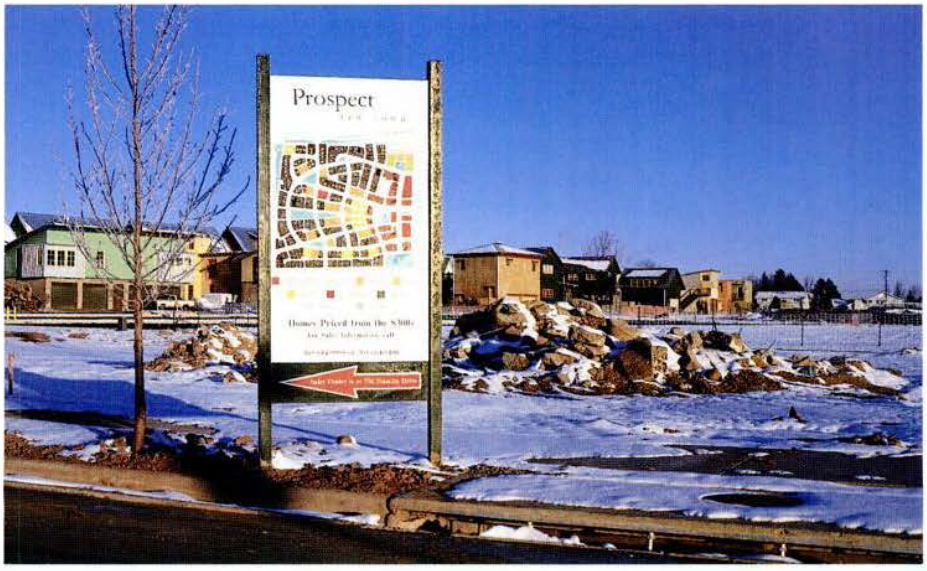
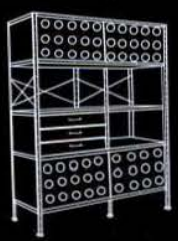


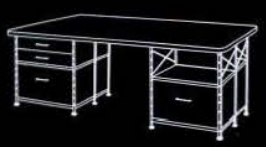
PHOTO BY JEFF MINTON

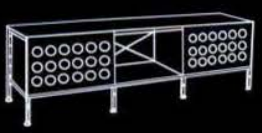
*Or whiskey and bacon-cheeseburgers. Or Tofutti Cuties. Depending on who you talk to.

case study modular shelving

component configuration by individual order







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Kwaku Alston in his newly renovated office, where vintage modern pieces mix with custom designs like this walnut and red Formica desk by Ilan Dei.

PHOTO BY KWAKU ALSTON

KWAKU'S NEST

Photographer Kwaku Alston's new home on Abbot Kinney Boulevard—the SoHo of Venice, California—is the kind of house where people awkwardly crane their necks at the front gate to try and catch a glimpse of what's happening inside. A terra cotta–tiled passageway dotted with flowers, trees, and a fountain leads in to the house. The 1920s building is set back from the well-traveled sidewalk and separated from it by a wrought-iron gate imported from Morocco. The architectural style of the house is modern with Spanish and Moroccan flourishes—almost as if Gropius had designed a villa in Tangiers.

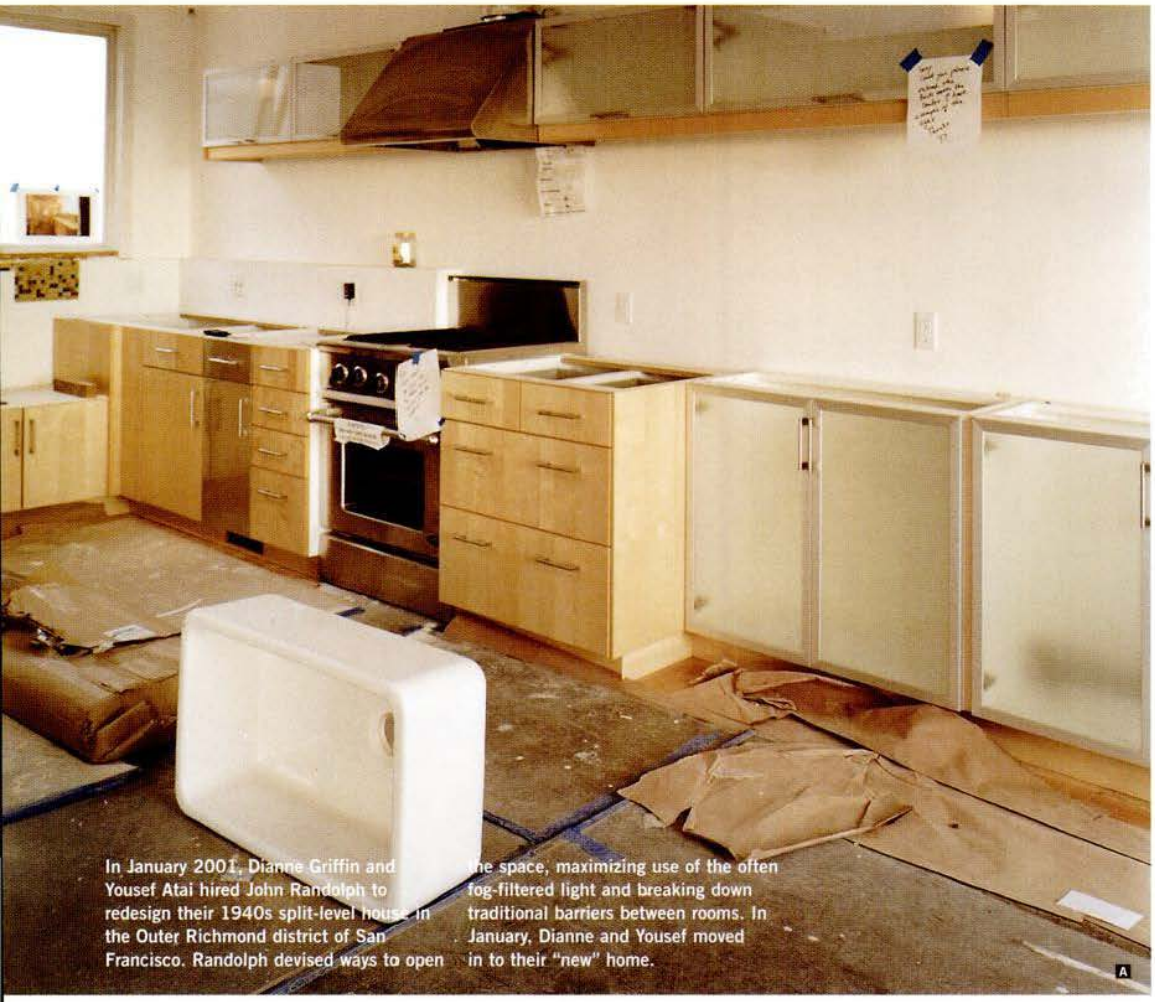
The 30-year-old transplanted New Yorker, who shoots celebrities ranging from Hugh Grant to Mohammed Ali for publications like *Marie Claire*, *GQ*, and the *New York Times*, was happy living just a few blocks away in a great loft designed by local architect William Adams. Alston had only been there a year and a half and wasn't really looking to move, but he was definitely feeling the need for more space.

A friend urged him to take a look at the house on Abbot Kinney (which was originally built as a store in the 1920s and had been converted into a live/work space in 1999). Alston found the architecture irresistible but was equally seduced by the building's square footage: Adjacent to the living space is a 500-square-foot office with 200 square feet of closet space, plus a 1,200-square-foot photo studio with four skylights on the upper floor. Alston decided that relocating wasn't such a bad idea after all and moved in on August 1.

Once he had his boxes unpacked, Alston was eager to make the place his own. Ilan Dei, who had designed the Oliver Peoples eyewear stores in Beverly Hills and SoHo as well as woodwork for Alston's previous residence, was commissioned to design several custom pieces for the office and studio. Architect Selina Boxer Wachler of bw:s architecture + design was brought in to transform the raw studio space upstairs into a functional and stylish environment to be used not only for photography but to entertain clients. Boxer Wachler's design for the kitchen, dressing room, and bathroom area incorporates sandblasted glass, Plexiglass, and stainless steel.

Renovation of the office was completed at year's end. It was an eye-opening experience for Alston: "I don't understand how people afford to do this stuff. It's so expensive!" But cost be damned, he plans to renovate the living space later this year. His enthusiasm for the house is boundless—and visitors seem to love it, too. "This house," he says, "it's probably going to get me married soon."

—ALLISON ARIEFF



In January 2001, Dianne Griffin and Yousef Atai hired John Randolph to redesign their 1940s split-level house in the Outer Richmond district of San Francisco. Randolph devised ways to open the space, maximizing use of the often fog-filtered light and breaking down traditional barriers between rooms. In January, Dianne and Yousef moved in to their "new" home. A

B

C

PHOTOS BY EMILY NATHAN

PHASE 1.5: DO IT YOURSELF

Mid-September 2001

John: Dianne and Yousef cut me out of their budget. Because of the economy, and the nervousness that comes on the brink of war, they're hunkering down—like most people.

Dianne: We're thankful for John's ideas. Bringing light into the space, creating an interior character—neither would have happened without him. The ideas that we came up with at early meetings will follow through to the finished product, and open up—or decompartmentalize—the old '40s design.

Yousef: The new kitchen skylight is beautiful—so is the one in the bathroom. And the skylights are next to places where we opened up walls between rooms, so we get maximum light from the sky. Light comes into one room, but also crosses through into the next room, between the remaining studs. That's probably the most exciting element of the redesign.

John: Dianne and Yousef hired me to give a directive for this house. I did that, and I empowered them to realize some exciting changes with a minimal budget. I'm happy about the moves we made. I'm happy that opening the walls is working magic. But I'm sorry that I don't get to see the baby born.

October 2001

Dianne: We have wood-fronted cabinets in the kitchen A. Glass-fronted cabinets from IKEA went into the adjoining room.

Yousef: We're going to fill the spaces we cut into the walls with a new transparent paneling called Lexan. It's like Plexiglas but much better. It doesn't get yellow over the years. And you can vary its thickness easily—so we can make it flush with the wall, rather than having it a little too thick.

Dianne: B In the kitchen, we'll install tiles from Bisazza. I adore their translucency. John suggested the colors. I never expected to like orange, but it's beautiful. The tiles give the kitchen personality C.

John: To design a good home, you try to perceive things through the mind of the clients. I've always been an advocate of design not imposing itself on the user. The designer shouldn't come in and say, "You have to do everything differently. Do it all the way I tell you." Every client needs something different, and that's what makes the work interesting. Which is why I'm glad that in this project, the design process empowered the clients to take the ball and run with it.

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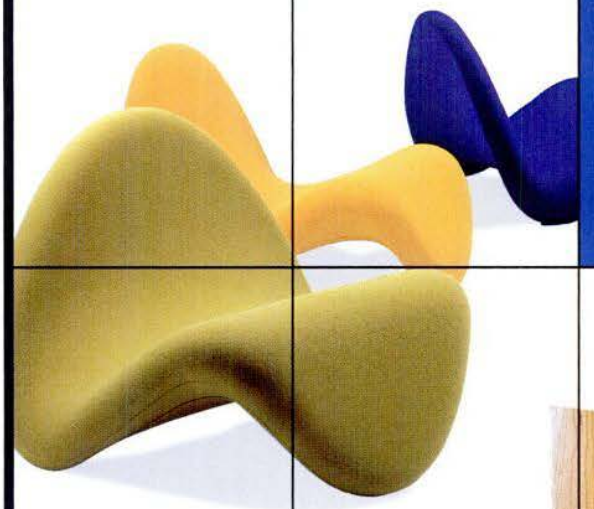

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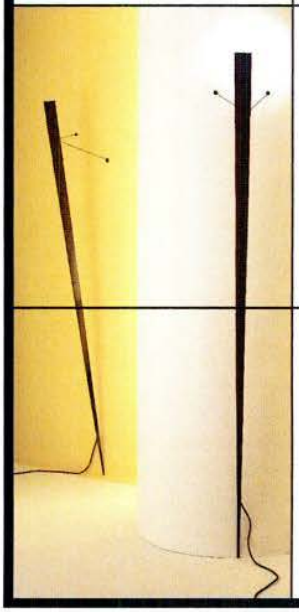

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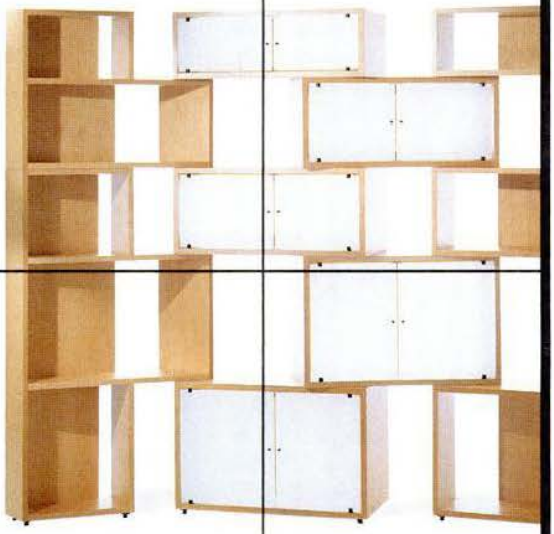
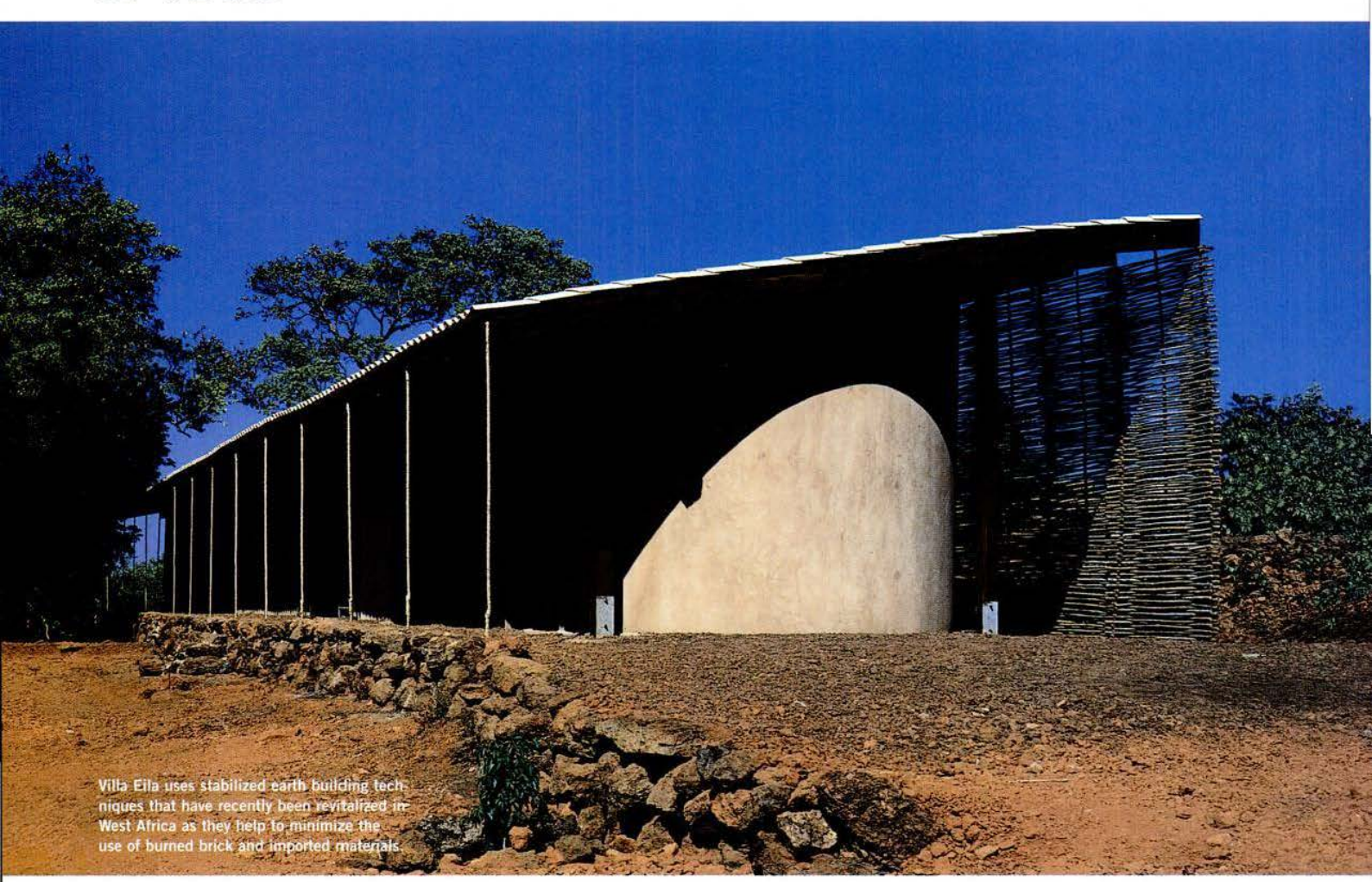




Villa Eila uses stabilized earth building techniques that have recently been revitalized in West Africa as they help to minimize the use of burned brick and imported materials.

FINNS IN GUINEA

In Guinea, one of the poorest countries in Africa, many inhabitants have no electricity or running water. Outside of the cities, there's not much of a grid to get off of. So when Finnish philanthropist Eila Kivekäs sponsored efforts to build a health clinic, schools, and other buildings in the remote town of Mali, getting energy from solar panels wasn't just eco-friendly, it was necessary.

In 1995, Kivekäs commissioned the architecture firm Heikkinen-Komonen, who had worked on her house in Finland, to design several projects that would be both cost-effective and chic models for sustainable development.

In Helsinki, Mikko Komonen and Markku Heikkinen had made their names as architects of the Finnish Science Center, a study of sleek geometric forms, and, more recently, the Finnish headquarters of McDonald's, a luminous glass cylinder striped with wooden slats.

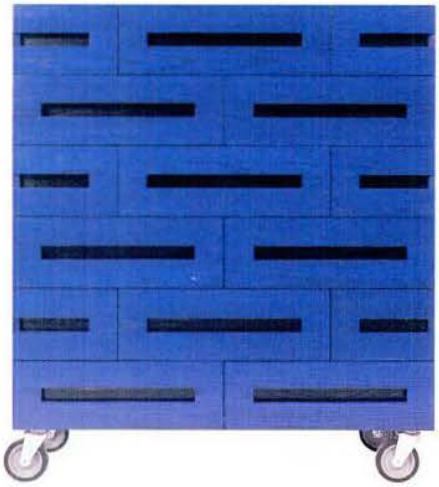
But in Mali, the pair needed to use building materials that were available locally. Brick was ruled out, since firing requires wood-burning kilns and contributes to Guinea's growing deforestation problem. They decided to use stabilized earth, a technique similar to rammed earth, where soil is mixed with a tiny amount of cement and manually pressed into blocks. The thick earthen walls provide excellent insulation, and stand up ably to Guinea's monsoon season.

Villa Eila, Kivekäs' private home in Mali, was designed like a small-scale African village. Each of the four rooms is like an independent house, with terraces in between for dining and socializing. The guest quarters on each end are cylindrical—a form echoed by the semicircular bench outside, which provides a place to rest in the shade of a big tree. On the eastern side of the house, a bamboo wall filters out the wind and the morning sun, creating vibrantly striped wall patterns. The western façade is open to the expansive views of the valley.

Kivekäs passed away two years ago, but she was very pleased with her house, Komonen recalls. "She loved it. When she first saw it, she cried." Kivekäs' son, Antti Utriainen, now lives there part of the year, and continues to carry out some of his mother's aid work.

After Villa Eila, Heikkinen and Komonen went on to build other stabilized-earth buildings in Mali, including a school for poultry farmers. "After building the 'chicken university,' as we like to call it," says Komonen, "I realized that the chicken provides a good model for us. It makes a lot from almost nothing; it's much more effective than a cow. Architecture should be like that."

—LYDIA LEE



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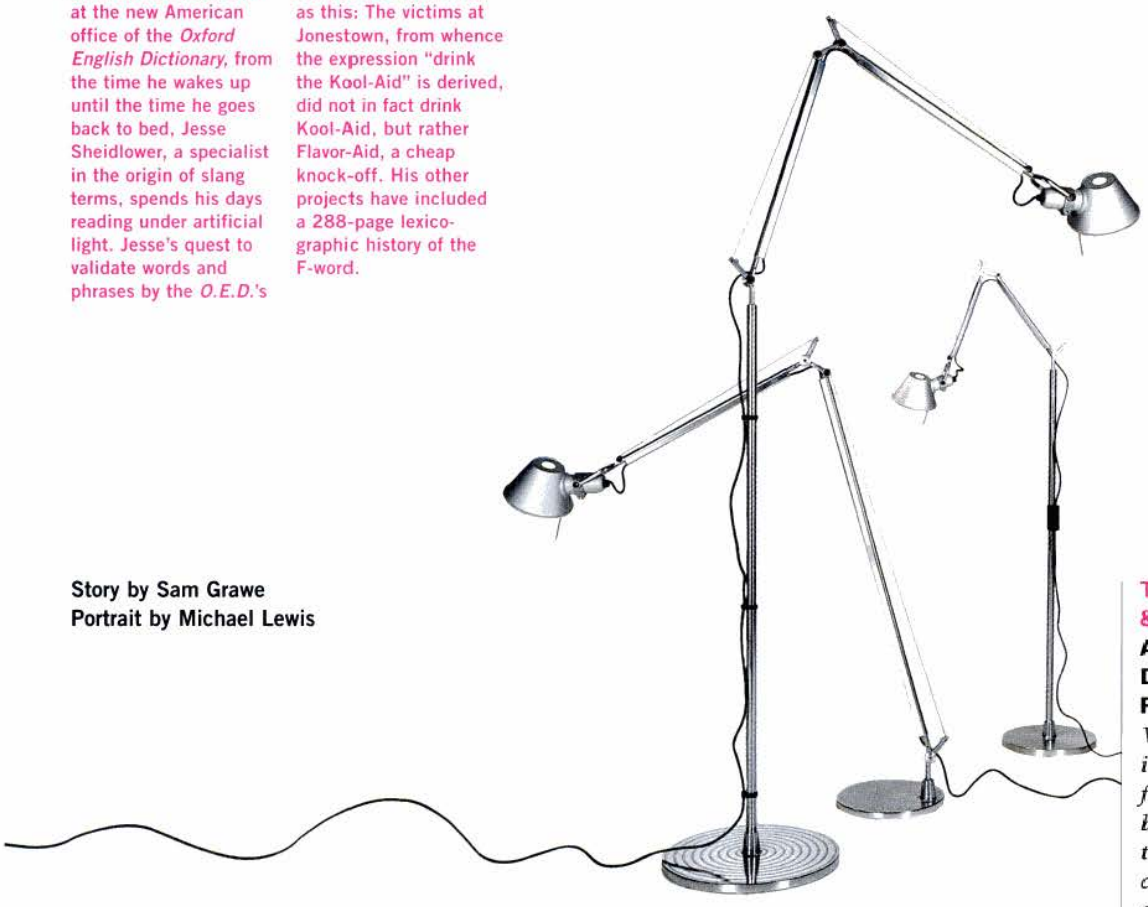
A note on our expert: As the principal editor at the new American office of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, from the time he wakes up until the time he goes back to bed, Jesse Sheidlower, a specialist in the origin of slang terms, spends his days reading under artificial light. Jesse's quest to validate words and phrases by the *O.E.D.*'s stringent rules leads him to such odd facts as this: The victims at Jonestown, from whence the expression "drink the Kool-Aid" is derived, did not in fact drink Kool-Aid, but rather Flavor-Aid, a cheap knock-off. His other projects have included a 288-page lexicographic history of the F-word.



Story by Sam Grawe
Portrait by Michael Lewis

LET THERE BE LAMP

Our first introduction to floor lamps came at that crucial moment when we realized that the neon ceiling fixture of the college dorm room was going to further contribute to seasonal affect disorder, yet we had no more than $20 to spend on an alternate lighting solution. Enter the halogen torchiere, ubiquitous dorm room object number three (just behind the computer and minifridge).

During the halogen torchiere boom days of the mid-'90s, students across the country enjoyed doing everything from writing theses to tapping kegs under the bright clean light provided by these seemingly innocuous and helpful objects. At the same time, many college administrators cracked down on what they considered to be a dangerous and wasteful product. A U.C. Berkeley study showed students used their torchieres from 7 to 18 hours a day, with exposed 300-watt bulbs reaching temperatures of 900 degrees Fahrenheit. Not only do the lamps eat up colleges' power costs, but according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, since 1992 they have caused more than 100 fires and ten fire-related deaths.

With years of higher education (and college housing) safely behind us, and a new budget that allows for food, beverages, and fine furnishings, it was time to consider replacing our torchiere with something more refined. We enlisted the help of a man with a full command of every expletive you could ever possibly utter whilst burning yourself changing a hot light bulb, Jesse Sheidlower.

Tolemeo Floor, Reading Floor, & Micro Floor
Artemide
Designers: M. De Lucchi, G. Fassina
Price: $320–$475
Varying in heights between 87 3/4 inches (floor) and 48 1/2 inches (micro floor), the Tolemeo floor lamps are a branch of the greater Tolemeo family tree. The head is supported by a die-cast aluminum base and posable steel stems. A 100-watt incandescent bulb provides strong directed light.

Expert Opinion: This lamp is great if you're going to sit in a chair and read a book, but if you need a floor lamp, it's a disaster. It gave very nice directed light but I'd probably prefer to have it as an actual desk lamp. It's a little odd because it looks too large for what it is—like something small blown up. But still attractive. I loved the finish.

What We Think: A veritable franchise, there's a Tolemeo for every occasion. A refined update of the classic Luxo lamp (itself derived from George Carwardine's 1932 Anglepoise lamp), Tolemeo straddles the line between practicality and elegance. We like that the lamp's head can be trained like a prize-winning poodle; however, no matter how much it begs it could never light up the whole room. ▸

GloBlow
Snowcrash
Designers: Vesa Hinkola, Markus Nevalainen, Rane Vaskivuori
Price: $350

Designed for a 1996 exhibition about design and humor, GloBlow's minimal yet kinetic approach incorporates a 12-watt fan, keeping the shade inflated during use. The lamp's designers explain: "We liked the idea of a shade without a physical structure. It takes shape as it fills with air, like a hot-air balloon. And it takes a different form every time it deflates."

Expert Opinion: I thought this would be silly, but in person, I love it. It throws a lot of light, it's got visual appeal without being distracting, and the business with the internal fan to fill the bag is undeniably cool. It does hum, which is a drag. But it wasn't too bad. I liked the tripod base and thin stem. It complemented the shade but didn't assert itself too much—like a balloon on a string.

What We Think: Witty yet attractive, bulbous yet sleek, it's hard not to like GloBlow. The 30-second inflation and deflation process is 30 times more exciting than flipping a switch (even a three-way). We could live without the fan's hum, but really, what's a little more noise pollution anyway?

Cilindre
Acordesigno
Designer: J. M. Magem
Price: $245

One of Design Within Reach's recently launched Spanish designs, the Cilindre is deceptively simple. Two 60-watt bulbs are housed within a 53 1/2-inch-tall white polycarbonate shade shaped like an upright roll of paper towels. A barely noticeable white enameled aluminum top and base cap off the 12-inch-wide column.

Expert Opinion: While I could see this being an attractive lamp in some very aggressively stylized spaces, I think it's a dud for practical purposes. In almost any setup which is likely to occur in someone's house, like next to the gym bag on my couch, it would look terrible. Moreover, it's not a good lamp for sitting and reading by.

What We Think: While we agree that perhaps the Cilindre isn't going to shed much light on "zoonosis" through "zygote," it's not a total illuminating disaster. The antithesis of the angular black monolith in *2001*, the white and curvy Cilindre would fit right in among that film's Pierre Paulin Djinn chairs and zero-gravity surroundings. With a little discretion, the Cilindre could look equally at home in 2002.

Chichibio
Luce Plan
Designers: A. G. Cavalchini, D. Perrucci
Price: $490

A spring-loaded pogo stick of a floor lamp that masquerades as a ceiling fixture. Chichibio's telescopic stem allows the cone-shaped opal polycarbonate diffuser to reach heights between 7 and 11 feet, while the shock absorber–like base keeps it from hopping off to the next room.

Expert Opinion: It gives me the impression of one of those cheap plastic shower-corner shelves—something that you get because you didn't have the time or money to get something attractive and solid. I can't quite figure out the reasoning, either—why would you want a lamp all the way on the ceiling, unless it's a ceiling lamp?

What We Think: We imagine this low-impact fixture doing well with the rental set (no need for new holes or hooks in the ceiling). Chichibio proves that floor lamps need not have a Shaq-sized footprint, or live too close to ground level. Not one to read by, but certainly effective for lighting a room evenly. Plus, how many ceiling fixtures can easily be moved from one corner to another when you decide to rearrange the furniture?

Tripod Lamp
De La Espada
Price: $695

Like all of De La Espada's products, the Tripod lamp has no single designer but was created by committee, with input coming from parties as diverse as a design director and the finance department. Available domestically, this sturdy European edition features a base formed by three lacquered rods, topped by a large cylindrical shade in either pumpkin or black.

Expert Opinion: Of the lamps I saw, the Tripod was the one I would like to have in my house. I thought it had a very attractive look—more traditional, but with flair. I particularly like the orange shade, which could go well with a wide variety of Oriental rugs. The intersecting base is just complicated enough to provide visual interest, but without being distractingly "designed." A very nice lamp.

What We Think: Finally, a lamp that could make Philip Johnson as happy as it might Martha Stewart—which is not to say that this lamp wouldn't be popular outside of Connecticut. The Tripod calls to mind everyone's idea of what a floor lamp is, but at the same time is innovative enough to stand out from the competition. ■

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Murray Moss, purveyor of "industrial design" at Moss, his tasteful SoHo emporium, contemplates the Beyond after a visit to Bed, Bath & Beyond's Manhattan location.

PHOTOS BY KEN SCHLES

MURRAY MOSS AND THE GREAT BEYOND

Whenever "Bed, Bath & Beyond" is mentioned, invariably someone wants to know exactly what the "beyond" truly means. Is it the kitchen? The garage? The fourth dimension? This mystery of branding and corporate identity enticed dwell to look deeper. A visit to the corporate website told us that the steadily growing chain of over 370 stores sells "predominantly better quality domestic merchandise and home furnishings," which translates roughly to anything you need to have in your house. We were still "there" but not yet "beyond."

A brief visit to the store—endless aisles sprouting bacon-flatteners, automatic foot massagers, curtain rods, and jellybean assortments—inspired us to have someone else figure it out. dwell turned to one of New York's most savvy retail anthropologists, Murray Moss, whose own retail establishment, Moss, is not unlike a museum of design—well-curated, beautiful, exclusive. What, we wondered, would he make of this domestic-retailing juggernaut?

Murray: It's a very entertaining shop. Which I say in a positive way. You go look at things which explain to you on their package what they're for, which makes you realize you have a need for something which you hadn't ever realized before. Part of the setup of a shop is to determine what you want people to look at, and here what they want people to look at are categories—which are not the usual categories based solely on function. They have a category for all household cleaners, for example, some of which I would never have known that I needed. But when you see them here you think you do. They sell an Iron Cleaner, which cleans the sticky stuff that builds up periodically on the bottom of your iron. I didn't even know I needed to clean my iron. I bought it!

1 Pizza Plate

The Ullman Company **99¢**

This is an individual pizza slice serving plate, roughly the size of an American slice of pizza. It's plastic, with a lip to give it some depth. It's a food-specific plate, which I found interesting, because ironically, it follows an aristocratic tradition, which is to have very specific kinds of tableware geared toward very specific foods. In the history of cutlery, these pieces, and the ability to decipher and maneuver them, were a way of delineating between the aristocracy and the commoner. This is the sort of thing that today would be considered a great luxury item, like what one uses to eat escargots, a kiwi fruit peeler, or an ivory caviar set. I think an individual pizza slice plate ▸

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follows that same kind of thinking, though it's not considered a luxury item.

2 Menorah Oven Mitt
Ritz **$3.99**
This is an oven mitt with a white menorah on a blue background. I always find it interesting when religious iconography is applied to products which are not in and of themselves religious or ceremonial. Because a crucifix or menorah is such a powerful image, putting it on something that we consider so mundane caught my attention. In this case, it does extend the idea of what ritual is into the opening of the oven and taking out the fresh food. That's a stretch, but it is kind of an interesting take on what you decide religion and established ritual are. I like the fact that at first it seemed inappropriate—religious iconography applied to a secular object.

3 Reliable Alarm Clock
Kirch **$19.99**
A metal quartz alarm clock that looks exactly like the iconographic alarm clock that's in cartoons where they zoom in on a nightstand and there it is jumping up and down with bells and a hammer. What I like about it is that it's very old-fashioned—1940s, clearly. The fact that the manufacturers in Taiwan took the initiative to package it with three different languages was curious, since it's pretty obvious what it is. A real-life version of a cartoon image. Truly generic. The receipt said it best: "clock table retro."

4 Healthy Jump
Tanita **$19.99**
This jump rope has a gizmo on the handle where you can enter your weight and then, as you exercise, it accurately calculates the calories you burn. It also tracks how many jumps you've made. Basically you ask yourself, "Why do I need this?," and they answer that question for you on the package: "The Healthy Jump is for those who expect more from their equipment. Now you can skip the counting, and focus on the quality of your workout."

5 Kaboom
Orange Glow **$9.99**
"'Kaboom'... and the stain is gone." I like this because its name tells you exactly what the product does—removes a stain like magic. They cram so much information on the package, like things it can remove, including blood! As if that weren't enough, on the back it shows you in three slightly lurid black-and-white photographs somebody with a glove removing stains. One of them could be blood!

6 TaxiWand
Wandworld Inc. **$4.99**
This has a quote on the package that I loved, "Hail Without Fail." It also explains that it's good to use from up to 1,000 feet away, but the idea of hailing a taxicab that's 1,000 feet away is insane. Even at five feet away I don't think a cab driver would know what it is. What also got me is that it's the "NYC official" taxi-hailing device. Does that mean the city licensed it? It also instructs not to look directly into the bulb, yet you're supposed to shine it directly into traffic. ■

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The concrete and steel in Gary Langsford's New Zealand house have had great influence on local architecture. These days, concrete frequently appears in the new houses that pop up among the old Victorians.

NEW ZEALAND: SERIAL DWELLER

The two South Pacific islands that make up New Zealand are not often thought of as the place to go for innovative art or architecture. But Auckland-based art dealer Gary Langsford is well known for both. His gallery, Gow Langsford, is located in the heart of downtown Auckland, the largest city in New Zealand, with more than one million residents. Langsford and his gallery play a central role in the cultural life of the city, but Langsford lives a little further out, in the suburb of Herne Bay, a hilly enclave on the western side of the city that gently slopes toward the sea. Langsford's current residence is the second he has built in Herne Bay with the help of New York architect David Howell. Both houses share the same modernist aesthetic and the same driveway. Langsford has loved living in the Howell house, but his unyielding obsession with architecture recently inspired him to sell it and begin work on yet another new house down the street in collaboration with Spanish architect Juan Molina. We recently talked to Langsford about life in Herne Bay and his ongoing love affair with art and architecture.

Tell us a little about the Howell house.

The Howell house was my main residence and I lived there with my wife, Martina, and nine-year-old daughter, Ella. One of the main considerations in the design of the house was its capacity to exhibit large paintings. For example, the two hallways are much wider than a standard hallway so they could become gallery spaces. Wherever possible, the ceiling height was kept to a maximum. The floor is Canadian maple and all of the walls are painted white, giving the sense of actually being in a gallery. I've had several other houses that were designed with art as a focus. This house was by far the most successful in that regard.

It is furnished with items that have been collected over a number of years, items as diverse as a French Art Deco sideboard by Marjorelle, a chest of drawers by Italian Piero Fornasetti, two chairs by Frank Gehry, a collection of 1950s Venini glass. Every item has a story attached.

What is your neighborhood like?

Herne Bay is, for me, the most desirable place to live close to Auckland. It has a much more eclectic cross-section of residents than most suburbs and is generally more funky in many respects. Residential architecture is more extreme and progressive in Herne Bay than in most other areas of Auckland.

Apart from the other David Howell house ▸

PHOTOS BY SIMON DEVITT

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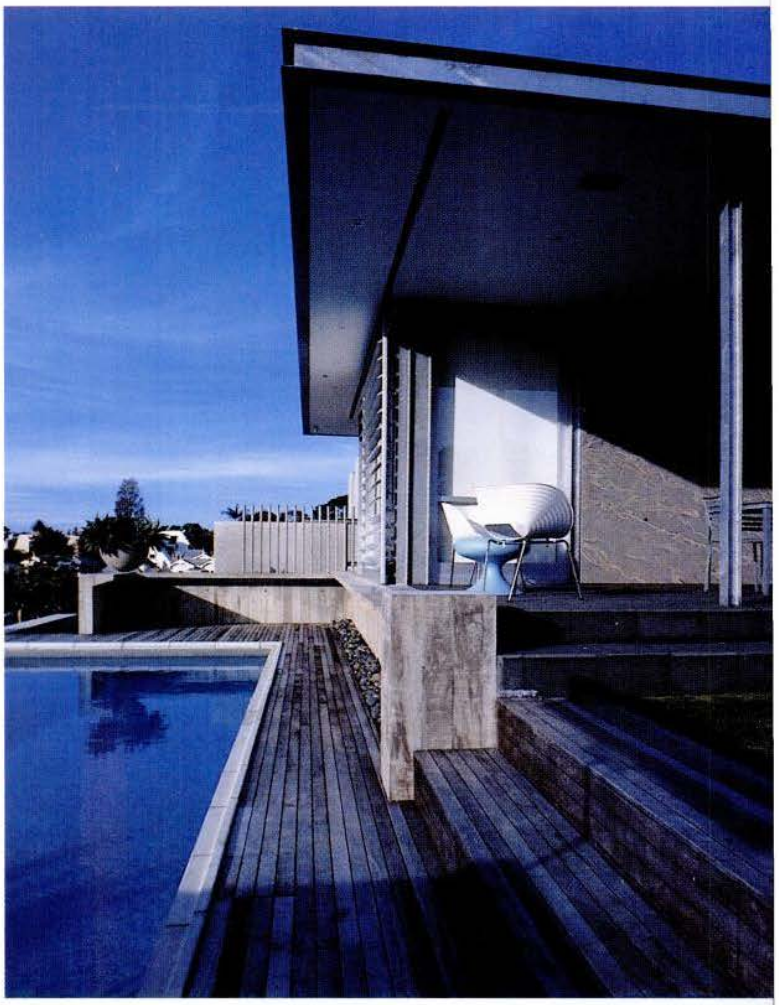

The Langsford hallways (above left) are nearly twice as wide as a typical hallway, providing gallery space. Two sliders (above right) separating the deck from the kitchen/dining area stay open much of the year, thanks to the mild weather.

in front of this one, the neighboring houses are mostly Victorian wooden villas—typical of those seen in the inner suburbs of Auckland. The two Howell houses are both located at the end of a long driveway, and it is this separation from the more traditional houses on the street that enabled us to build this style of architecture. I'm sure local council regulations would not have allowed us to construct this style of house had it been directly on the street and therefore surrounded by more traditional styles of architecture.

Briefly describe your daily routine.

I'm up at 6 A.M., and after getting ready for the day, I drive my daughter to school on the other side of town. Then I head back to Cafe Bambina in Ponsonby (the suburb next to Herne Bay) for coffee, and then I'm usually at the gallery sometime between 9 and 10 A.M.

What are the advantages/disadvantages of your house and Herne Bay?

The house has nearly all advantages—it's close to both the city and the life in Herne Bay and Ponsonby; it faces north so it gets the sun all day; it's elevated so it sits above the surrounding houses; it flows neatly between indoor and outdoor, in effect creating large outdoor living areas, and so on. The only downside is that some visitors to the house find it a little too much like a gallery. For me, however, that's a bonus.

One of the things I most enjoy about this house is the way in which the outside deck and pool areas are essentially extensions of the kitchen/dining area. For half the year the two large cavity sliders that separate these areas remain open most of the time. The ability to display large artworks both inside and out and have them lit successfully is also an important aspect that works well. One sacrifices much to live in a small country like New Zealand, but the lifestyle is fantastic.

The house sounds great. Why move?

Apart from art, which is also my business, my next great passion is architecture. So many houses, so little time. The new house will be different. The two concrete houses I have done with David Howell have had a huge impact on the local architecture, with the use of concrete in residential housing becoming more frequent. I like to keep moving forward and to be unpredictable. Although there will no doubt be some concrete in the next house, it will be treated in a very different way. However, that said, the essential language of minimalism will always be present. No pitched-roof house for me!

—ANDREW WAGNER

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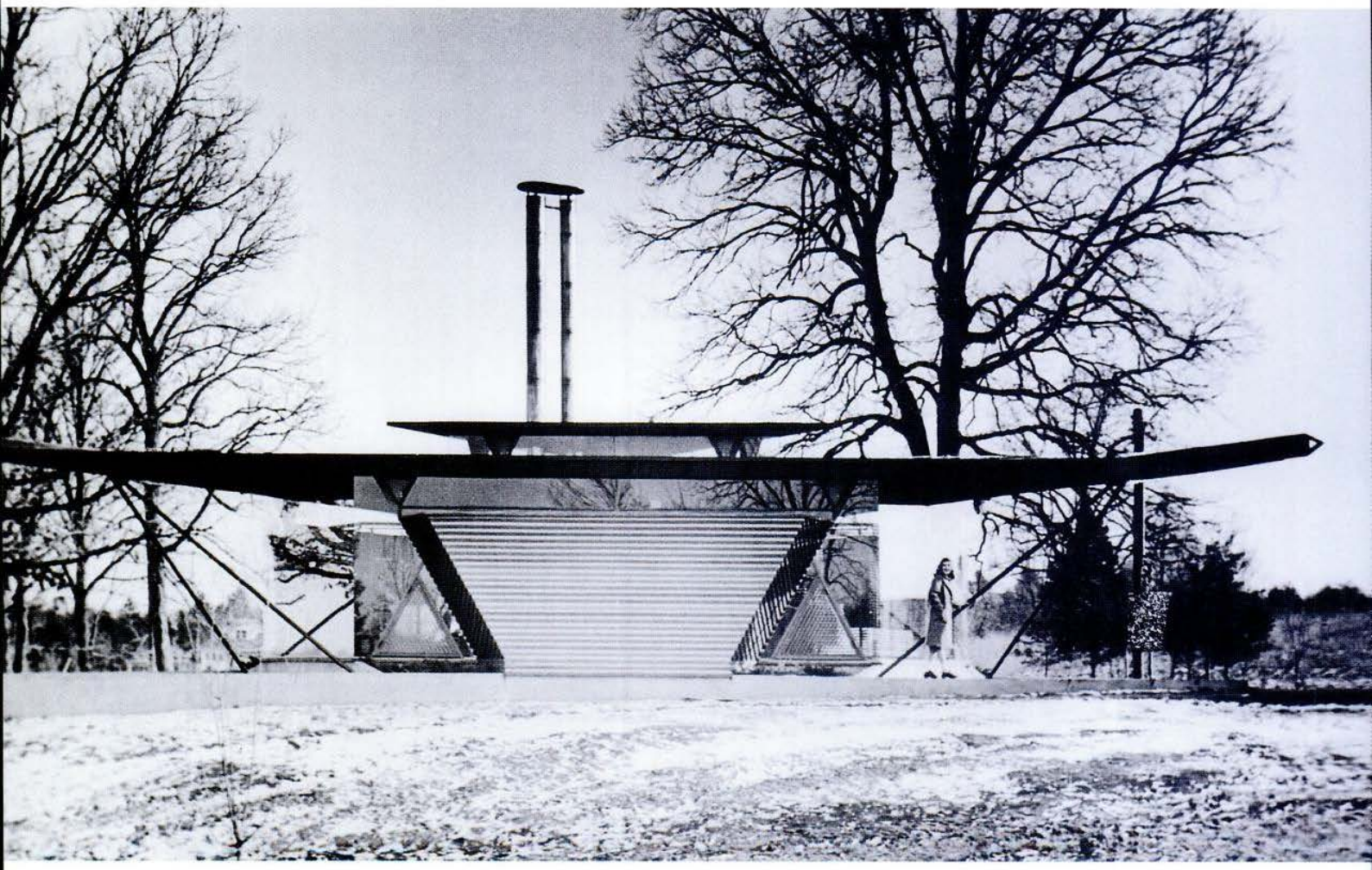

AN OLD KENTUCKY HOME

Goff's radical glass triangle in 1941 (top) and today. It predates Mies' Farnsworth house by several years.

In 1940, architect Bruce Goff was commissioned by Irma Bartman, a philanthropist and flower arranger, to design a small weekend house on her property in Fern Creek, Kentucky. Inspired by a natural clearing that was triangular in shape, Goff came up with the concept for Triaero, a radical glass structure clearly influenced by his longtime friend Frank Lloyd Wright. Goff was thrilled when Bartman accepted his original design, and even more so when she went ahead with the project. It was more than $10,000 over her budget of $4,500.

Completed in 1942, Triaero is essentially one triangular room, its roof cantilevered from three steel columns in a central service core. An accordionlike door separates the living room from the tiny three-sided bedroom. Originally, two-thirds of the building's exterior was floor-to-ceiling plate glass complemented by walls sheathed in copper alternating with strips of redwood. The furniture was custom designed by Goff and included a triangular dining table and angled storage units.

Sadly, in 1959, while occupied by renters, the house was struck by fire—a disaster from which it has never fully recovered. When it was put on the market, Louisville architect Jack E. Neuschwander and his wife, Mary, couldn't resist the allure of living in a modernist treasure. In 1992, they rescued the house from a neglectful tenant. "Two days after we moved in, we had a four-inch rain and it leaked like a sieve!" laughs Neuschwander, who put on a new roof two years ago and is now hard at work restoring the glass walls. "It's a very unique custom design from a creative genius and a complete challenge to maintain. Impossible to live in some days but very exciting."

—ALLISON ARIEFF

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STORY BY ROBERT FERRIGNO / ILLUSTRATION BY JED MORFIT

WON'T YOU BE MY NEIGHBOR?

Mr. Rogers has retired, and it's probably just as well—the neighborhood had changed, and so had the neighbors. It's happened before and it will happen again. The concept of neighborhood is more than just physical proximity—it's a shared set of values, goals, and beliefs. Sorry, Mr. Rogers, but the decline of bowling leagues and the vanishing cardigan are no cause for alarm, at least not where I live. In Mr. Gates' neighborhood, we believe in software, stock options, and soccer. At least we did.

I live on the Eastside of Seattle, east of the lake, as we say up here. It used to be a blue-collar neighborhood, but property values have tripled in the last ten years. This is Microsoft/Amazon/Starbucks country, home of the geek with a Porsche he can't shift and children who carry Palm Pilots so they can keep track of their many lessons and orthodonture appointments. I work out at a fancy gym with a $3,000 membership fee that's part of the fringe-benefits package of Microsoft and Nintendo. It offers auto detailing and valet parking, and has the usual NASA-quality fitness equipment and virtual-reality recumbent bicycles, but it's the locker room that really tells you that you're not in Kansas anymore. Three of the four TVs in the men's locker room are tuned to the financial channel. One is tuned to ESPN. The day that federal judge Penfield Jackson ruled that Microsoft was an illegal monopoly and should be broken up, men with thick glasses and no muscle tone screamed and threw their towels at the set.

The Seattle area was originally settled by Nordic types, who found the rotten weather better than ice storms off the North Sea. These emigrant Vikings were loggers and miners, fishermen and farmers, frugal, hard-scrabble people who followed the rules and didn't flaunt their wealth or their intelligence. Good neighbors, too. They loan you their power tools and buy two-dollar candy bars from the kids at the Boys and Girls Club. They don't get mad waiting in line, they don't worry about fat grams or cholesterol, and according to the obituary page, they all seem to live into their 80s and 90s. The old-timers hate what's happened to their neighborhood in the last ten years. Too much money, too much flash and trash—too many Californians.

The old-timers across the street from me have lived in their house for 40 years. They have never watered their lawn. Never. Not once in 40 years. When it rains, the grass is green; when it doesn't rain, the grass is brown. All the new people moving onto the block—landscaping, putting in exotic shrubs and hybrid grass, adding timed sprinkler systems—perplexed them to no end. They would stand on their porch, watching the construction trucks rumble past, and shake their heads. This summer, in the middle of a rare drought, they bought their first garden hose and started watering their front lawn. I knew something was up. A few weeks later a "For Sale" sign was stuck into the green grass. By owner, of course. The neighborhood had changed too much for them, and they were moving on.

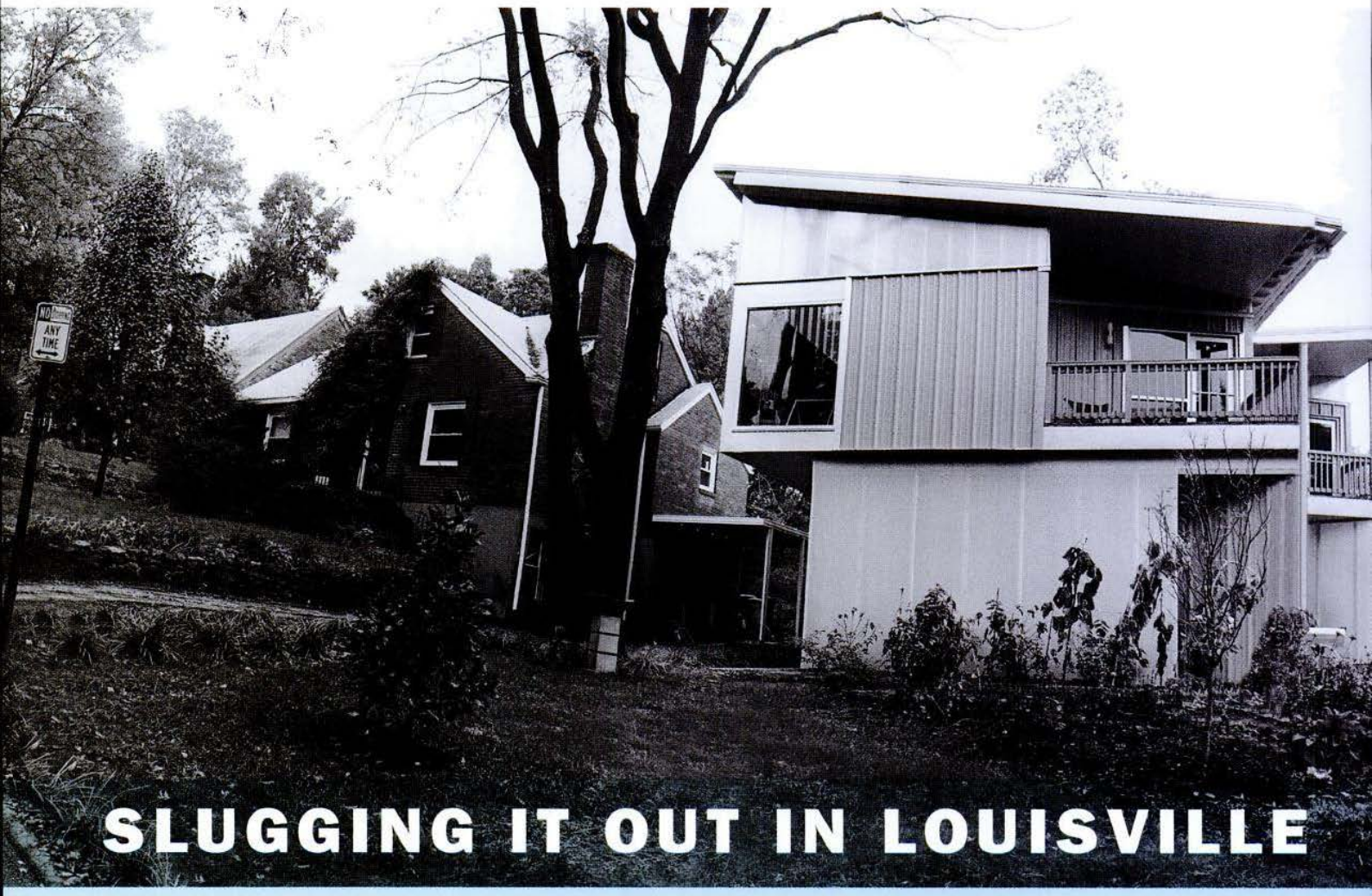
There had been a change in the fireworks, too. Up until about 1988, Seattle had no official fireworks display; the city felt it wasn't in its mission statement. Into the breach stepped Ivar Haglund, founder of what grew to be a chain of Ivar's Fish and Chips restaurants, and archetypal old-timer. Haglund, who used to appear in goofy TV commercials for his restaurants wearing a skipper's hat, had the exploded nasal capillaries, walrus mustache, and slack smile of an amiable drunk, but he also possessed that rarest of combinations, class and soul. So, one Fourth of July, Haglund, whose corporate motto, and I am not making this up, was "Keep Clam," decided to spend about $20,000 on fireworks shot off from Gasworks Park near downtown Seattle. It was free, of course. For years, people went to the park, spread out their blankets, popped open their coolers, and watched fireworks.

By the mid-'90s, the Seattle area was flooded with cash. Starbucks, Microsoft, and Infospace (remember them?) were running at warp speed, tossing out stock options like beads at Mardi Gras. Suddenly, every geek who was fully vested decided he needed his own private fireworks. Bill Gates' pyrotechnics display in 2001 featured a huge barge anchored off his lakefront estate, lighting up the night for 45 minutes. It would have been impressive, and it was—I could see it from the cheap seats at my house—but three or four of his immediate neighbors had barges out there, too. Lake Washington looked like some Civil War diorama with all these Monitors and Merrimacs floating offshore, sending up skyrockets and starburst roman candles.

In the last year, though, the neighborhood has changed again. My kids' elementary school auction raised $50,000 in 1999. Last year, it pulled in less than $10,000. This year, they called it off. Boeing has announced 40,000 layoffs. Microsoft stock has fallen by 60 percent, Amazon's by over 95 percent. All those options are useless now. According to a U.S. Census survey, Washington is one of three states in which household income declined between 1998 and 2000. The other two are Alabama and Louisiana. So we're no longer the capital of the exciting World of Tomorrow. Welcome to Dogpatch.

I now see people at the hardware store that I never saw there before. Software workers are actually mowing their own lawns, painting their own houses, building their own decks. I've heard database engineers actually use the word "grout." Potlucks are back in style, and they're fun. Who knew my neighbors could cook? No one is talking about their day-trading successes on the sidelines of the soccer games. No one brags about considering quitting their day job. I think we're turning into the old-timers. If Bill Gates shows up at a corporate conference in a cardigan sweater, it will be official.

Robert Ferrigno is a former journalist who has just published Flinch, *his sixth humorous crime thriller set in Southern California.*



SLUGGING IT OUT IN LOUISVILLE

To the Wyatt family, a modern house clad in Polygal was a dream come true. To their neighbors, it was a nightmare.

Story by Allison Arieff
Photographs by Michael Wilson

"I want to die in Kentucky," Mark Twain reputedly said, "because they always do things 20 years later." Indeed, Louisville is a town rooted in tradition, from the mint juleps served at Churchill Downs to the sleek pine bats handcrafted at the Louisville Slugger factory downtown. Apart from a small concentration of steel Lustron homes, the occasional downtown loft renovation, and structural anomalies like the Triaero house designed by Bruce Goff 60 years ago (see page 38), Louisville hovers architecturally in the prim American version of the 1920s.

The city's devotion to tradition was, it seems, underestimated by the Wyatts—Ruth, an art therapist, and Kevin, a graphic designer—when they set out to build their dream home in the Frederick Law Olmsted–designed subdivision of Lakeside. Longtime Louisville residents, the Wyatts are actively involved in the cultural life of the city. Their first home, with its blue, red, and yellow trim, livened up a block of row houses in the Highlands section of Louisville—as did the Quonset hut they erected in their garden. That backyard structure raised some eyebrows (Kevin recalls the time a neighbor kid strolled up the driveway to tell him "My dad thinks your garage is tacky") but also earned the couple a two-page spread in *Metropolitan Home*. The couple dreamed of moving into the nearby Lakeside neighborhood, which features intimately scaled, tree-lined streets and the Lakeside pool, a spectacular swimming hole created from an abandoned

Some call it a masterpiece of modern architecture, others think it looks like something from a junkyard. Now, after nearly two years of conflict, it's up to the court to determine the fate of the Wyatts' home.

rock quarry in 1924. This is where the Wyatts wanted to settle and raise their children Evelyn and Urban, now six and four.

But as much as the Wyatts loved the neighborhood as it was, they were also keen to bring new life and vitality to it. Though many young families had moved to the area in recent years, the place seemed frozen in time. Diversity—racial, cultural, religious, or otherwise—was a non-issue. New construction, on the rare occasions it occurred, simply replicated the homes already standing, many built at least half a century earlier.

Ruth and Kevin would have been happy rehabbing an old house, but when they happened upon an empty lot at the corner of Ravinia Avenue, they were elated at the thought of building their dream home on it. "We'd been looking for lots for ten years, but they were few and far between," Kevin recalls. "This was just serendipitous that one rainy night I was walking down the street and there was this 'For Sale' sign. It was like a dream." The Wyatts immediately purchased the lot and then contacted the architectural firm of Mockbee/Coker. They'd long admired the firm's commitment to affordable design and their use of unconventional materials like corrugated metal, hay bales, and cardboard, which the architects used to put their own distinctive stamp on Southern vernacular architecture.

Coleman Coker and Samuel Mockbee went their separate ways in 2000, but Coker, under the auspices of his new firm, Building Studio, continued work on the project. In the spring of 2000, architect and family picnicked on the Lakeview site to celebrate the completion and presentation of the model. The foundation was poured soon after.

The lot, empty for several years, had served as a recreational spot for the cul-de-sac residents. So when construction began, the neighbors became concerned about what was being built on what essentially had been their private park. Their worst fears were confirmed when this writer, after talking to Ruth about how the neighborhood would react to the unconventional nature of Coker's architectural style, quoted her in the December 2000 issue of dwell as saying, "I don't have the heart to tell them about the corrugated metal." This quote ▸

Radiant heating and passive solar technology help the house to be energy-efficient. "We want to have as low impact on the environment as possible," explains Kevin Wyatt. Some of their neighbors, however, don't quite see it that way.

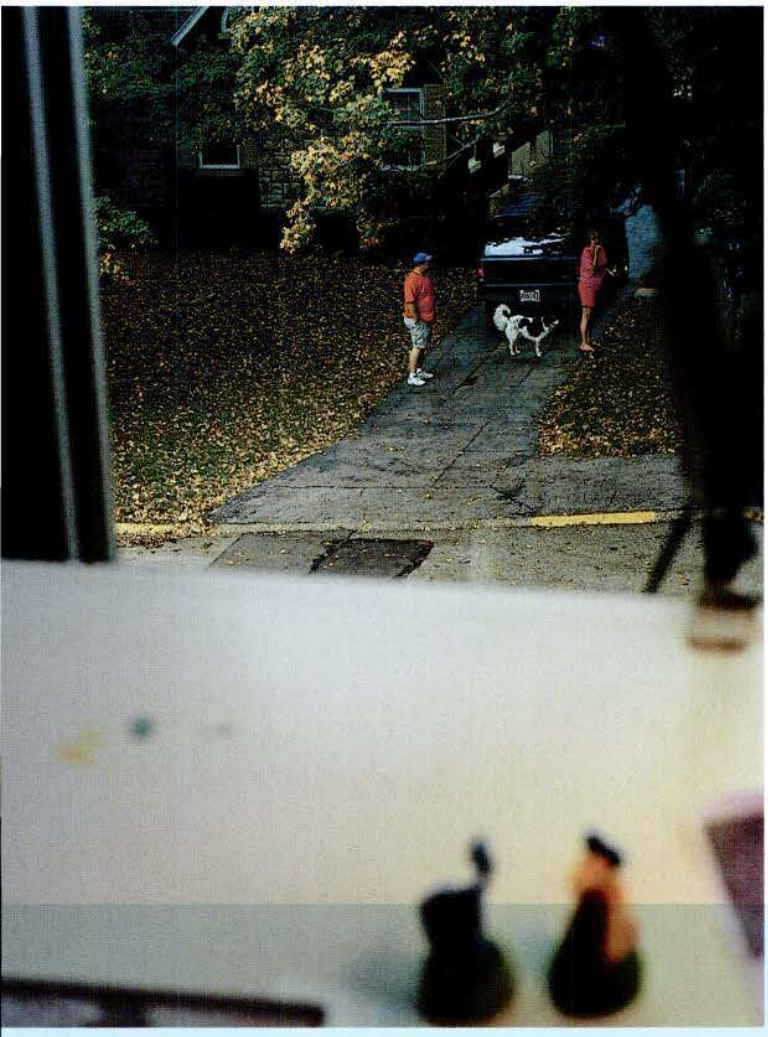
was also printed on the spine of the magazine.

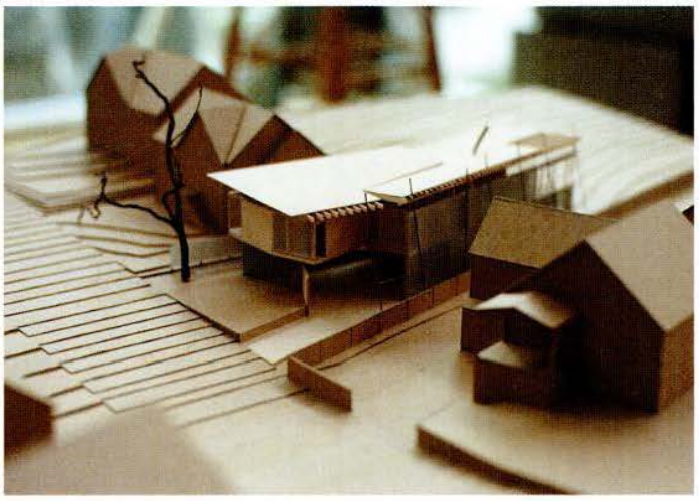
What was intended as a celebratory story helped galvanize local opposition to the project. That small article in dwell became exhibit A. Brenda Burchett, who lives directly across from the Wyatts, had been complaining to the neighbors for months but, fueled by the dwell article, she began to organize in earnest. A talkative sales and marketing manager, who brings to mind the character Mrs. Kravitz, the nosy neighbor from *Bewitched*, Burchett hired an attorney and, with her husband, Dale, convinced five other couples on the Ravinia Avenue cul-de-sac to take legal action against the Wyatts.

Jefferson County (where Louisville is located) does not have an architectural review process. There is a code review of plans and specifications in order to obtain a building permit, but aesthetics (except in historical districts) are not subject to city or county jurisdiction. The Wyatts' neighbors, aghast at the prospect of metal in their midst, needed a legal angle. And by digging through the deed restrictions for the Lakeside subdivision—written about 80 years ago—they found one. "The lot had been empty a long time and the neighbors liked it that way," explains David Kiser, the genteel Southern attorney representing the Wyatts. "The fact that the home was not 'traditional' gave them a legal peg to hang their hat on."

The neighbors' strategy was to ask that the offending materials be removed and replaced with materials consistent with the deed restrictions. "I met with the clients at the site and saw the house under construction," explains Michael Maple, the attorney for the group of 12 filing suit. "It was about 65 percent complete. I reviewed the deed restrictions with my clients and it was suggested that the Wyatts were not in compliance with them. We wrote a letter to the Wyatts, with a copy of the restrictions, urging caution. It suggested that we meet to discuss the exterior materials."

The Lakeside subdivision's deed restrictions stipulate that homes in the neighborhood be built with so-called traditional materials: brick, brick veneer, stucco, or stone. Coker's design incorporated industrial materials that have long been accepted in the canon of residential architectural practice, but included ▸





One plaintiff described the house (seen above right in the context of the original architectural model) as *"three times* as large as the rest of the houses on the street." Several other neighbors complained of the way the house "glows" at night (bottom left). Past rumblings about the Quonset hut (bottom right) the Wyatts built in the backyard of their old house pale in comparison to the current controversy.

Above, the view from the Wyatts' home. "If the design took into consideration the neighborhood, it did so from a perspective from within the house," the plaintiffs' attorney asserts. "A person inside the home can enjoy the neighborhood without the neighborhood enjoying any reciprocal treatment."

"It was a surprise when our next-door neighbors joined the suit," explains Kevin. Earlier, the two families had talked of creating a communal garden.

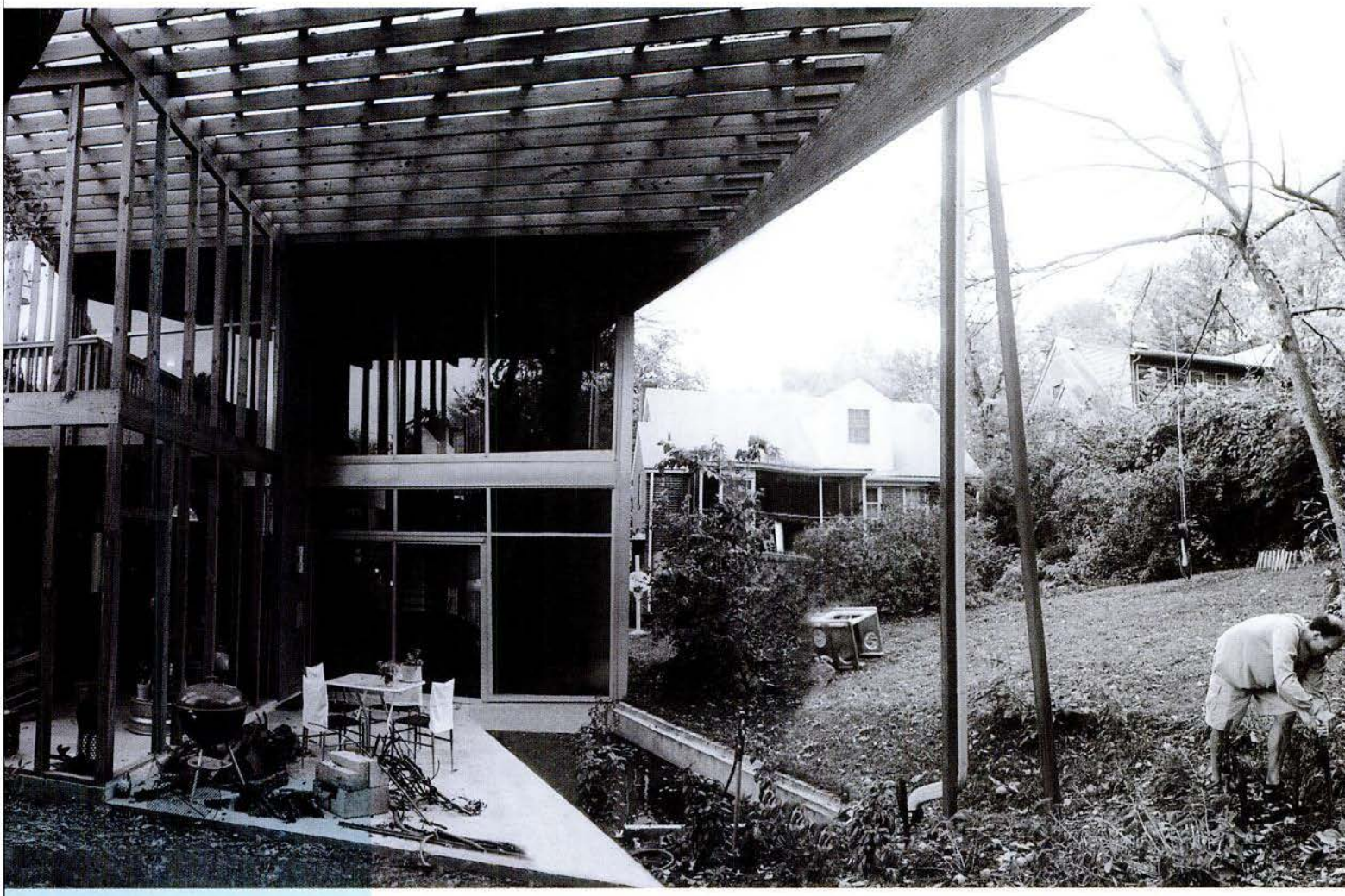
none of the specified materials. (Whether or not Coker and the Wyatts were aware of these restrictions is still subject to debate.) What the house did have was corrugated metal and polycarbonate plastic, and according to this newly formed neighborhood coalition, their use violated the deed restrictions (and, by extension, tradition). To comply with the deed, the exterior needed to be changed. But these same deed restrictions also stipulated that African Americans could not live in the neighborhood.

So how enforceable was this document?

Deed restrictions, as Kiser explains, are not written into law. They constitute an agreement among landowners that doesn't carry the weight of criminal statutes. "Almost every house in the neighborhood has additions or siding that violate the restrictions. The plaintiffs have ignored all the other houses to focus on the Wyatts'. A lot of their complaints have nothing to do with the deed restrictions," Kiser says, "reinforcing my belief that they don't want the house there, that they don't like it."

John Gilderbloom, a professor in the University of Louisville's Department of Urban and Public Affairs and an advocate for the Wyatts' cause, agrees. "That lot was for sale and those people could have bought it themselves and built yet another German 'cave-style' house. But they chose not to. Ruth and Kevin are law-abiding citizens and they don't deserve this."

Ruth and Kevin, the kind of people who organize potluck picnics, paint kids' faces at the neighborhood festival, and tend to their organic garden, were floored by the lawsuit. Not wishing to deepen the rift, they offered to make several design concessions. They repositioned the house on the lot, reduced the roofline, and changed the siding color to terra cotta. The neighbors were not satisfied with these changes. The Wyatts then changed the finish of the metal from gray to a pale sea-foam green and offered to make the polycarbonate plastic opaque rather than translucent. Still the neighbors were not mollified, and they continued to move forward with their legal action. "The first day we met with them they told us, 'We're not concerned with what you put on the house. We're just concerned about the glare,' " Kevin explains. "We offered to put a sample up on the house to show them [what

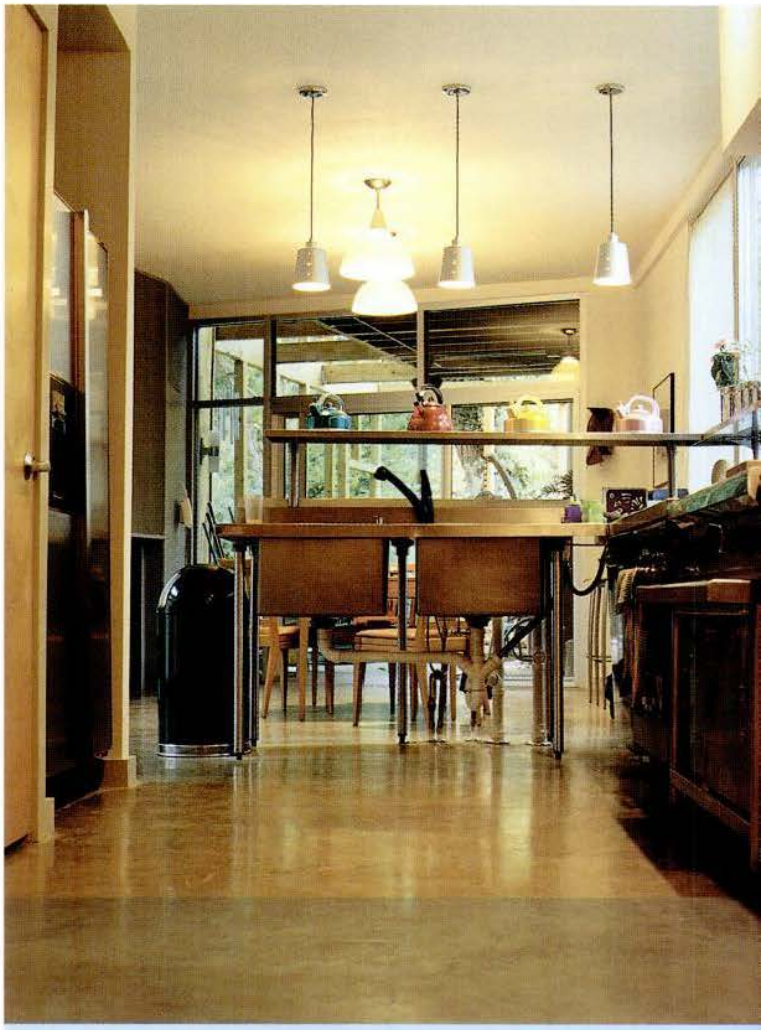


it would look like]. But then they said, 'We don't care about the plastic. We just want it to be brick.' They combined forces and spread the gospel. One guy [who joined the suit], he's a copywriter for an ad agency. How can you sue someone if you're a creative person? How can you do that? We get so tired of trying to explain and rationalize when it falls on deaf ears. They've got their minds made up."

Coleman Coker, learning of the Wyatt-initiated design alterations from his office in Memphis, Tennessee, disassociated himself from the project and eventually removed the house from his website. (He respectfully declined to be interviewed for this article.)

Plaintiffs' attorney Maple recalls the initial meetings with the Wyatts a little differently. "I'm not sure we ever really got much in the way of concrete proposals for mediation," recalls Maple, a sturdy man who favors short-sleeved shirts with ties. Somehow, he sees this dispute between neighbors within a global framework. "After the events of September 11th, I'm firmly convinced we should fight terrorism, but at the same time I'm not always in agreement about how we should go about it. Likewise, as I view the fight between the Wyatts and my clients, I'm reminded of the extreme positions taken on both sides, although I believe my clients are the Americans in this battle. It may be an overstatement but, ideologically, we are at such odds. And that's why our attempts at mediation were unsuccessful."

The battle played itself out in community meetings, online chat rooms, and in the local press. In January 2001, the Louisville *Courier-Journal* published an article, "House plans spark a feud in Lakeside area." In response, one reader wrote to the editor: "I have seen really old, beat-up trailers that look better. I hope the neighbors win their suit." Another reader took the opposite tack, arguing that "this is a house which everyone should know about, appreciate, and ultimately love." Days later, a columnist for *LEO* (the *Louisville Eccentric Observer)* weighed in, describing the house as a "soaring contemporary with balconies, metal siding, and all matter of affectations too boastful for the neighbors . . . it has no sense of place and has changed the tenor of this peaceful ▸



The house is filled with an eclectic mix of art, modern furniture, and collectibles. Counterclockwise from top left: Artwork, family photos, and other personal mementos are displayed on the second-floor landing. A Medusa lamp by Lumisource lights

neighborhood from sanctity to acrimony."

Eager to galvanize support for their cause, the Wyatts organized a home construction tour in early February. Their "Save the House!" flier urged the community to come and support a number of issues that ran the gamut from "Louisville as an innovator in architecture and the arts" to "sustainable urban living through gardening." About 50 people attended. "Most people are really supportive," explains Kevin. "There's no particular reason a house should have Palladian windows and be made of brick, but it's tradition. And we're questioning tradition. For Ruth and me, it was just a natural thing. Unfortunately, people don't have the perception or mind-set that we do and we're penalized because of it."

Over the next several months, the level of tension died down a bit. For a time, the Wyatts believed that the neighbors might relent. In late summer, the possibility that the case might be thrown out hung in the air.

And then vanished.

In September, the plaintiffs filed their interrogatories. The Wyatt house was the subject of a witch-hunt, blamed for every possible malady. In the documents presented to the court, the plaintiffs were asked to "describe how the home constructed by the respondents on Ravinia Avenue has injured, damaged, or been a nuisance to you." The group of 12 claimed that the Wyatts and their house annoyed them, intimidated them, scared them, caused them mental and emotional distress and/or physical illness and financial hardship, kept them from getting job promotions, ruined the neighborhood, and/or decreased property values. The style of the house was described as experimental, offensive, intimidating, a "source of concern," or something that looked like a "Convenient [sic] Store."

"I feel that the courageous plaintiffs took the high road on this issue," neighbor Kelly Middleton asserted in her deposition. "We have also voluntarily taken on the onus of protecting our neighborhood. . . . [The Wyatts] have no respect for our neighborhood or their neighbors. Interestingly, it seems that their personal integrity closely resembles their house—cheap and unconventional."

The plaintiffs also complained about a ▸

up the foyer. In the kitchen, Ruth's collection of teakettles adds warmth to the stainless steel appliances. In the home office at right, Urban Wyatt gets creative next to *A Thousand Points of Light*, a sculpture by two friends of the Wyatts.

After a morning of cartoons and soccer, Urban and Ruth (above) relax on the second-floor balcony. "When the politics came in it put a lot of stress and financial strain on us," Kevin admits. "But it's also made us closer than ever." Local stores like this Walgreens (above right) are viewed by the plaintiffs as exemplars of new development as they "enforce the vocabulary of our beautiful neighborhood . . . by constructing places of brick and stone." By leaving the brick

steady stream of curiosity seekers and gawkers on their once quiet cul-de-sac. Most claimed that the house glowed at night, forcing them to—horror of horrors—keep their blinds closed after dark.

"It is beyond my understanding why a house would be designed to GLOW at night," reads Dale Burchett's deposition. "It is a continuing insult to those of us who have no choice but to endure it."

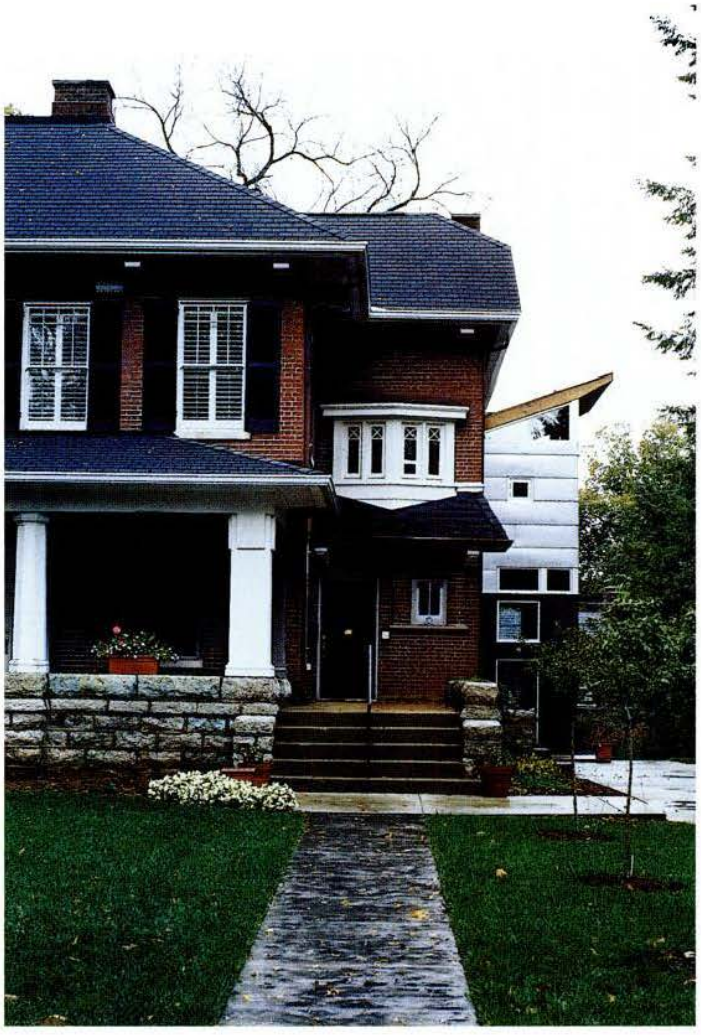
So what's going on here?

Strangely, the very changes the Wyatts made to appease their neighbors may have had the opposite of the intended effect. The metal in its original state would actually have been far less noticeable than the light-green shade the Wyatts selected. The terra cotta panels were originally planned as charcoal gray, but an alternate color was substituted in an attempt to accommodate the neighbors' desire for a brick exterior. But the contrast of the orange-brown with the pale green is, in fact, disconcerting.

The charge of glare reflected off the windows? This problem is easily remedied by window shades, blinds, or drapes. As for the assertion that the house "glows" at night, well, it does—but only on the rare occasions when the Wyatts choose to light it from within. When they do, it's breathtakingly beautiful.

The most serious problem with the Wyatt house, and one that would not be solved by any change to exterior materials, is its scale in relationship to its location. It is large for its lot. A slightly less obtrusive structure perhaps would have created less of a stir.

A recent project by Louisville architect Michael Barry bears this theory out. Barry, an adjunct professor at the University of Kentucky, is doing his best to make a case for modernism in the region and views the Wyatts' plight as a "sad day for architecture." The modern addition he completed last year for his sister's old masonry house in the Olmsted Park area of Louisville initially had met with some local resistance. "We got a nasty note saying we had more money than taste. That we were trying to show off. And that we had turned a lovely traditional home into the entrance of a German compound," Barry's sister Barbara Banta explains. "Now,"



alone in nearby Olmsted Park, Louisville architect Michael Barry avoided controversy over this modern residential addition (right) he designed for his sister and her family.

she insists, "it's starting to grow on people."

Barry's innovative addition astutely references the neighborhood vernacular without being derivative or nostalgic. Integral to the design's success is its understated presence—barely visible from the street, the charcoal-gray volume emerges not as a shock but as a pleasant discovery. Louisville can, it seems, tolerate modern architecture if it's well hidden.

Still, the law seems to be on the Wyatts' side. The Lakeside community usually does not try to enforce the deed restrictions. Aluminum and vinyl siding abound in this neighborhood, as does the use of wood and other non-approved materials. Suing the Wyatts for this "materials infraction" is, at best, disingenuous. The neighbors are simply using legalese to express the shock of the new. As attorney Kiser explains, "It is very unusual to be litigating deed restrictions. The neighbors' ultimate relief would be an order to tear the house down. And that's never going to happen. At most the court would order that the exterior portions be changed to brick, stucco, or stone. The best result for us would be a termination [of the suit] by the court."

Maple concurs that his clients would like to see the home removed, but concedes that "you're talking about fanaticism at that point. Compromise is always in order in the practice of law in almost all circumstances. But unless some compromise is reached, the court will find that the materials used are not in compliance and the court will be directing that the structure be made of, as the restrictions call for, brick, brick veneer, stone, stucco."

"My clients and I are all college-educated," Maple continues, unintentionally revealing what is truly at issue—a lack of familiarity with contemporary design that often generates a defensive response. "We may not have gone to Harvard or Columbia or Yale. Nonetheless, we're not adverse to good architecture. But it doesn't mean we're necessarily excited about Coleman Coker or Mr. Mockbee."

At press time, the court date had been postponed, and the outcome undetermined. Kevin and Ruth remain optimistic. They have no choice.

Allison Arieff is the senior editor of dwell.

SOMETHING HAPPENED

It could have been just another New Urbanist development, all picket fences and clapboard, but somehow Prospect, Colorado, changed course and became a laboratory for a new generation of American modernism.

Story by Karrie Jacobs / Photographs by Jeff Minton

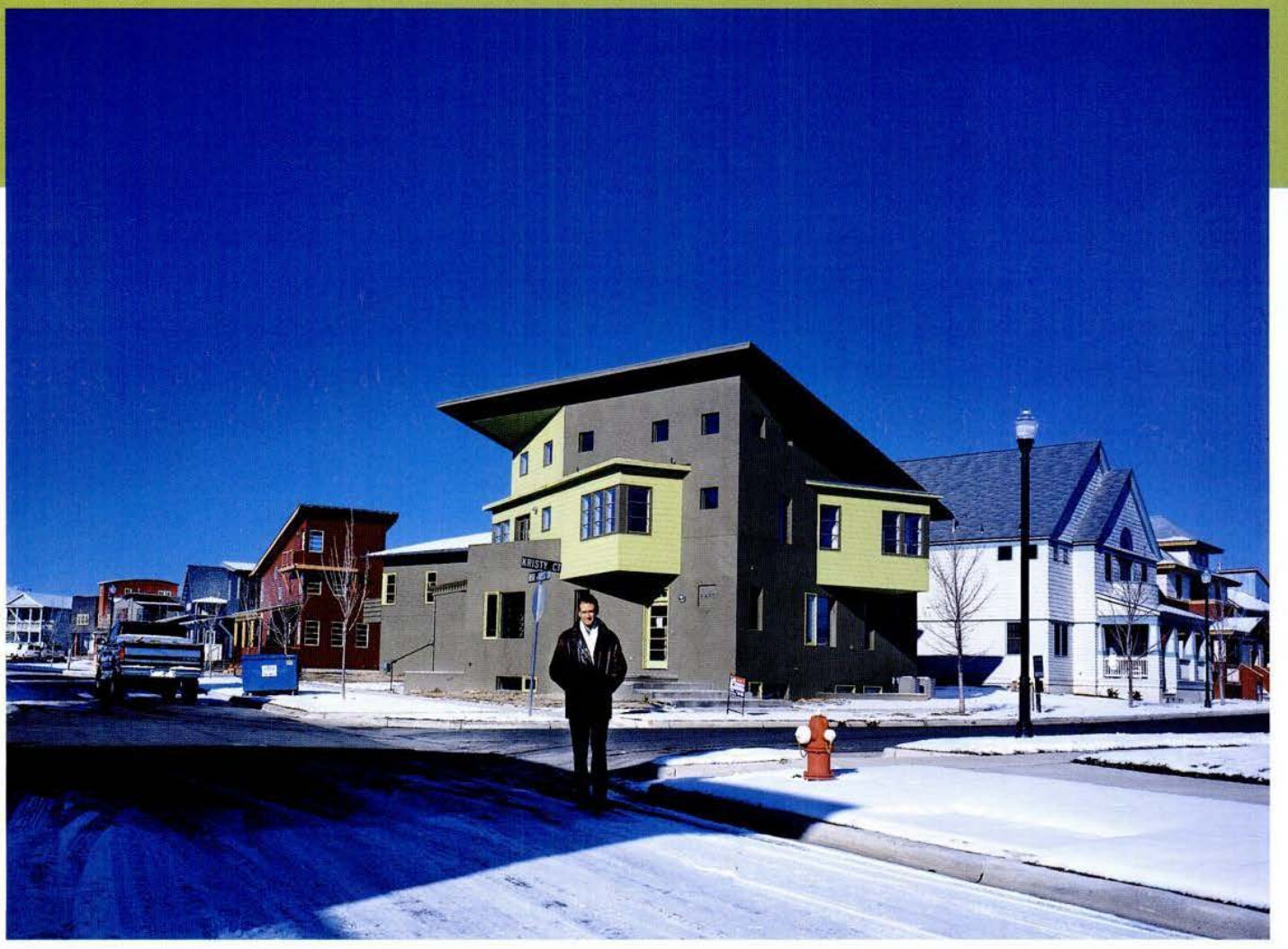
After spending four solid days in Prospect, an 80-acre subdivision on the rapidly developing southern edge of Longmont, Colorado, I begin to forget why I'm there. I lose sight of the things that make this small territory of neatly planned streets and eclectically styled houses extraordinary. I start believing that Prospect is normal.

All I have to do to disabuse myself of this notion is drive out of Prospect and cross Longmont's South Main Street, a four-lane highway lined with tire shops and drive-in liquor stores. Across the road is another subdivision in the making, Quail Ridge. There I visit model homes with names like the Chesapeake and the Shenandoah, which make me feel as though I am visiting a down-market version of the town once inhabited by Dick, Jane, Spot, and Puff.

The dullness of neighboring subdivisions is a reminder that Prospect is a highly unorthodox place.

On my first Prospect visit, in July of last year, I kept grasping for metaphors. This is like the Village in the TV show *The Prisoner*, I thought. This is like something out of Ray Bradbury's book *Dandelion Wine*. It felt at once so familiar and so alien that I couldn't quite frame it.

By the end of my more recent visit, I came to understand that Prospect doesn't lend itself to easy comparisons because it's not like anyplace else. It resembles less a fictional place than a theoretical one. It's the subdivision that should exist, given that a new generation of young professionals—many of them loft dwellers and urbanites—are settling down and making families. Logically, there will ▸



have to be an alternative to cul-de-sac subdivisions full of Velveeta neocolonials and papier-mâché Mediterraneans. Prospect, with all its well-educated, thirty-something homeowners, is this subdivision.

Developer Kiki Wallace, a 45-year-old Texan whose previous business venture involved onions, is light-years ahead of America's home-building industry. He figured out something that most residential developers can't seem to grasp: Change is inevitable.

Prospect, where homes typically sell for upwards of half a million dollars, currently consists of 121 completed houses and over 300 residents. Eventually, when all 337 lots are built out, it will consist of as many as 570 units (including retail and commercial space). Roughly half the houses being built will be modern in style, ranging from understated minimalist sheds to complex arrangements of form and color that might be recorded in future guides to American domestic architecture as examples of the Deconstructivist Revival. In other words, this small development is emerging as a unique proving ground for architectural ideas. Subdivisions are not usually the venue where new architecture is tested; there is no Guggenheim Museum footing the bill here. There is no wealthy client shelling out top dollar to satisfy his whims. Rather, Wallace and his town designer, Mark Sofield, are bringing a range of architectural experiments—some more successful than others—directly to the marketplace.

One bright October morning, I sit in on a builders' meeting at the Chef Extraordinaire barbecue, currently the only retail establishment (unless you count the mortgage company) in Prospect. Sofield, 42, soft-spoken and deliberate, is presenting the architectural regulations he's written to replace the ones originally drafted for the project by the firm that more or less invented New Urbanism, Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ).

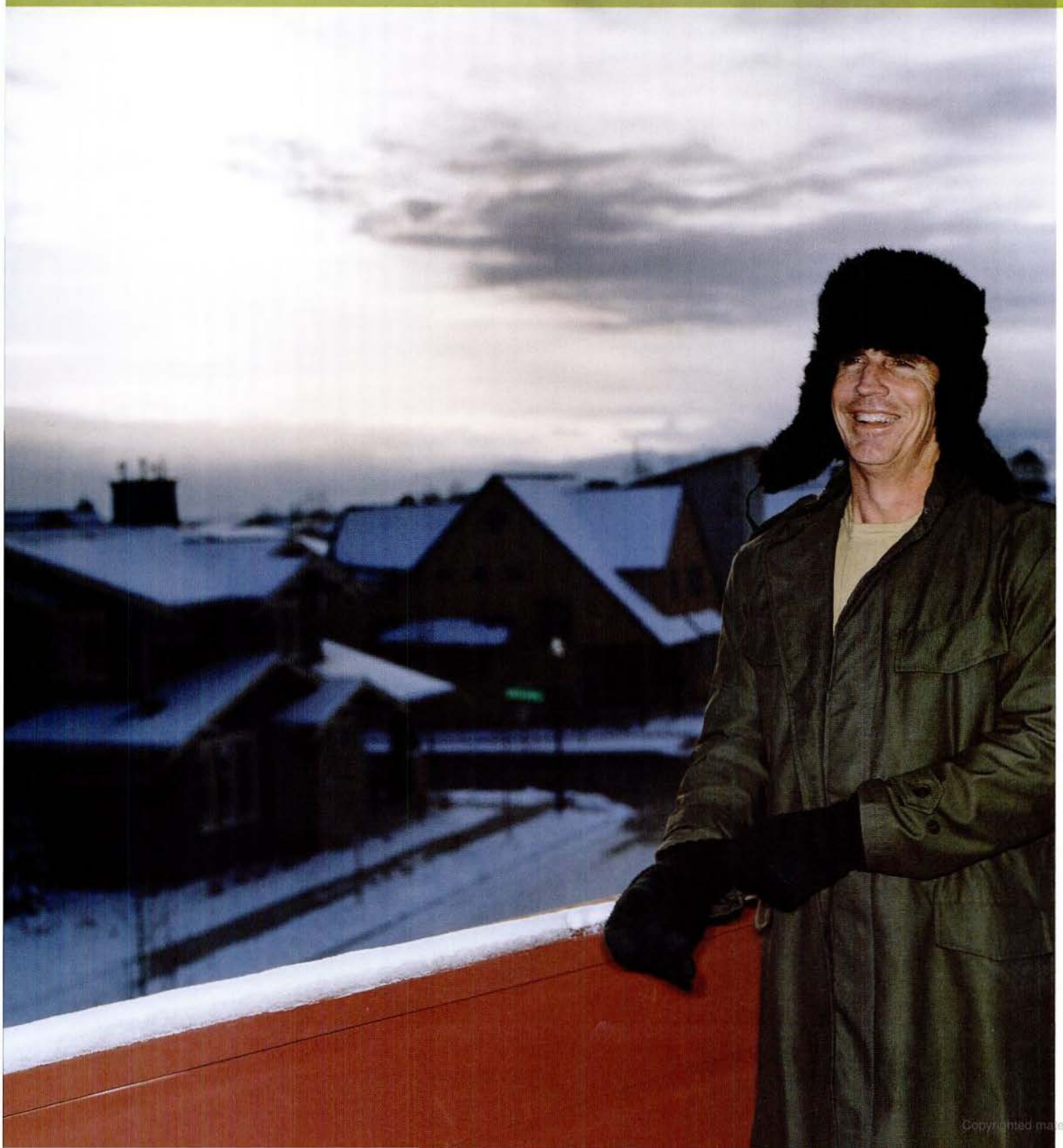
The DPZ regulations are, essentially, the DNA for New Urbanism as it is most commonly known. Think Seaside. Think Celebration. "Porches, balconies, posts, railings, spindles, brackets, and balusters shall be made of wood," say the rules. "Columns if used shall be of the Tuscan or Doric orders . . ."

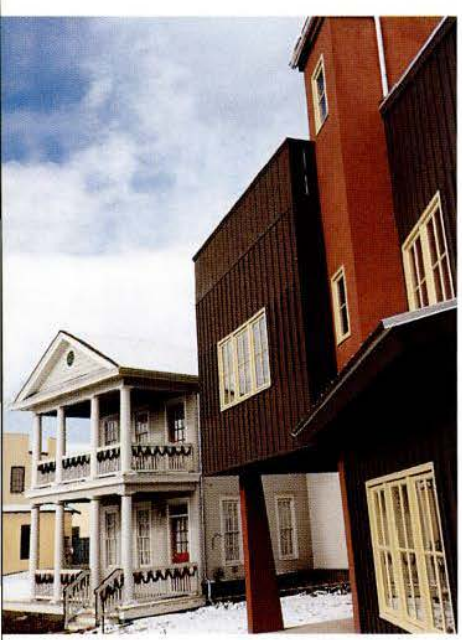
Sofield's document also addresses issues such as acceptable materials for cladding and roofing, but it begins as a manifesto. Sofield turned the regs into Prospect's declaration of independence, a statement that separates this New Urbanist enclave from all the others, and, moreover, that distinguishes this subdivision from all the other subdivisions.

"Real places, we believe, accommodate the real differences in the ways that people conduct their lives," Sofield wrote. "To this end, individual architectural expression of those differences is essential to the idea of Prospect, as is the tectonic invention necessary to achieve it." ▸

Prospect's town designer Mark Sofield (opposite page) pauses in front of a house he designed, known locally as the "Rubik's Cube." The skewed plan is intended to hold the corner in a very literal way: "I wanted the building to address both streets." The colors were chosen by interior designer (and Sofield's wife) Kelly Feeney, Prospect's resident color czar: "We love idiosyncratic colors here," she notes.

Developer Kiki Wallace (below) stands on the balcony of a modern house on Incorrigible Circle, overlooking some of the more traditional Prospect homes. Prospect, with its wacky street names, and its refusal to embrace the airless conventions of subdivision architecture, is very much a reflection of the developer's personality.





Prospect's streetscape is characterized by startling juxtapositions. On Incorrigible Circle, an imposing colonial-inspired home coexists—peacefully or not—with an example of latter-day deconstructivism.

Sofield delivers this admirable document to a long table full of guys in dusty jeans and T-shirts, who are eating brisket sandwiches and fielding endless cell-phone calls. No one seems to have much to say about the new regs, disappointing Sofield, who hopes for a consensus-building session.

Finally a builder pipes up: "Can you elaborate on tectonic invention?" He doesn't seem to be looking for a serious answer.

The truth is that Prospect doesn't really need Sofield's written document to set it apart. In Prospect, individual architectural expression is everywhere.

Phase One, begun in early 1997, looks pretty much the way you'd expect a New Urbanist village to look—tidy neotraditional homes with porches and white picket fences. But the homes of Phase Two, begun in 1999, are far less predictable: A Carpenter Gothic–inspired house sports an extra broad porch with a funny tweak in the overhang that echoes the exaggerated pitch of the roof above. Boxy little houses with roofs tilting at odd angles begin to appear in colors like black and olive drab. A rambunctious row of townhouses looks like it escaped from the Crayola box. Within the space of a block, the white-picket-fence village of yesteryear morphs into the subdivision of the future. Just like that. Or maybe not just like that.

What is truly unique about Prospect, the thing that gets played out in the motley nature of its architecture and the eccentricity of its street names—Neon Forest Circle, Incorrigible Circle, Tenacity Drive—is that Prospect has what no other town in America has: It has a Kiki.

Wallace's name is mentioned by the people of Prospect with the regularity and the range of emotions with which some primitive peoples might invoke the name of their temperamental volcano god.

"Kiki is a maniac," observes one of Prospect's builders, "but only a maniac can do a project like this."

"Kiki does what he wants to do," sighs a homeowner who has tried mightily to influence Prospect's future architectural direction, but has given up.

"My god! That's all I can say," exclaims builder Don Lucas, who is otherwise brimming with enthusiasm about the ("way cool") experience of building in Prospect, recounting how Wallace obsessively oversaw the construction of Lucas' first house there. "I still don't think he likes my dormers," he adds.

Indeed, Wallace's early years as a developer were fraught with tension, in part because he was determined to get tract house builders to unlearn their tract house ways.

"I was approached by a particular builder here," Sofield recalls, "and he tried to recruit me for a takeover. I mean, they couldn't have been stupider. The place would fall apart in a second if Kiki were not involved, but they actually said, you know, 'Would you be interested in working in Prospect in a situation where Kiki was not involved?' And obviously I would not be, and I said so."

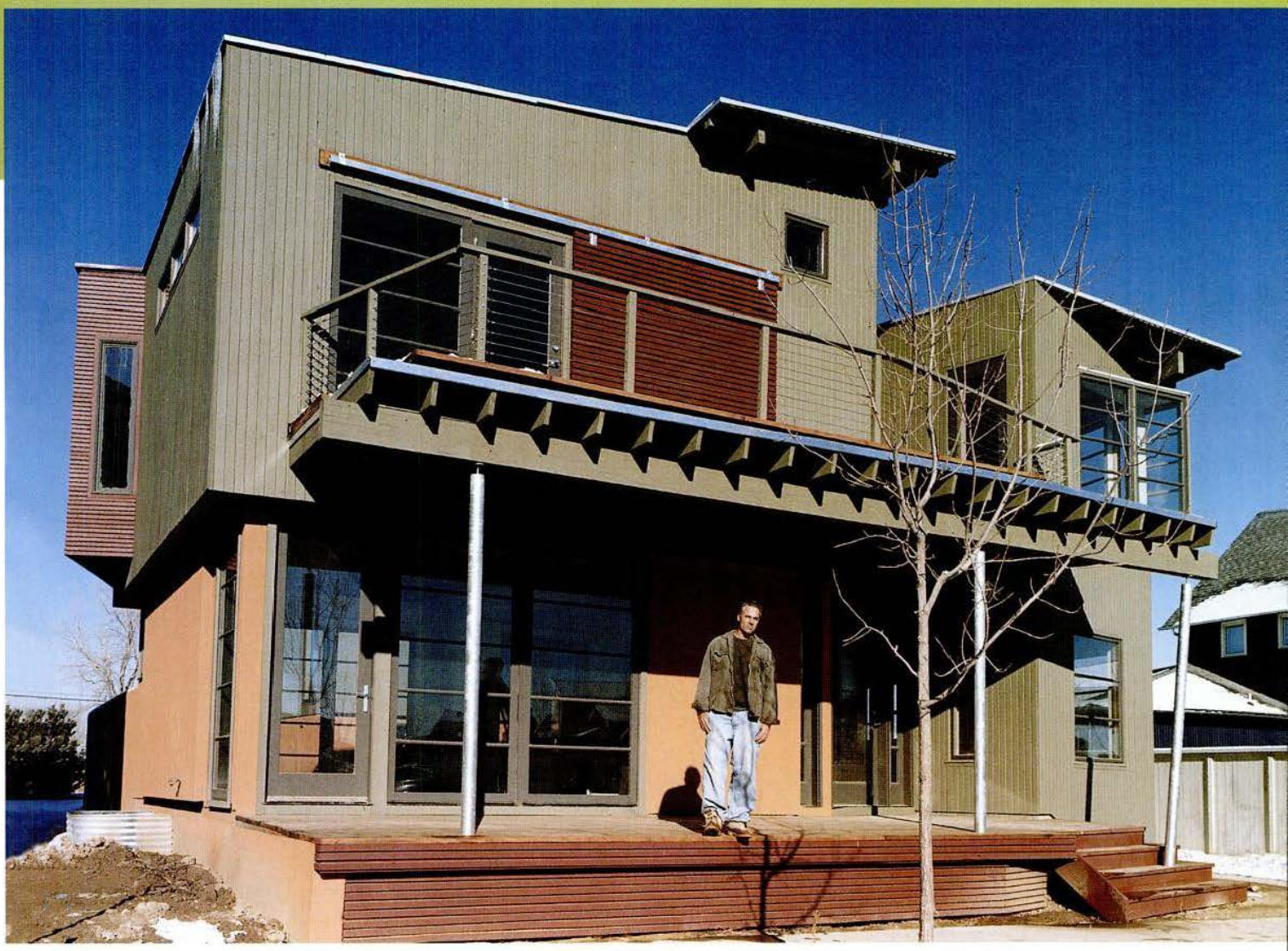
Wallace lives on the edge of Prospect, in the property's original farmhouse. This piece of genuine traditional architecture is distinguished from the updated traditional homes by virtue of the fact that there is nothing tidy about the place. The backyard and outbuildings are filled with exotic cars—two Alfa Romeos, a Checker Aerobus, a Super Beetle—in varying states of repair. His house serves as a reminder that the history New Urbanism strives to re-create is largely a fiction. And, perhaps for that reason, DPZ tried to get Wallace to bulldoze his own home. "Andres [Duany] and his team, when they designed the project, put tennis courts there, then put greenhouses there," Wallace recollects. "They kept on trying to put something on it and I kept telling them, 'I live there. Don't design anything there.'"

Raised in the Texas border town of McAllen, Wallace projects a certain Lone Star nonchalance, and his personality veers toward the anarchic. To hear him tell it, Prospect happened more or less by accident (never mind that he'd been dreaming about developing the land since he was 18). He says that during the real-estate bust of the late 1980s, he decided to buy out his siblings' interest in a family-owned tree farm as a sort of personal insurance policy. "I thought, eventually, when I was 65, the depression would be over—it was that bad—and I'd have some land. I could just sell it and have some money after doing everything else wrong."

By the early 1990s he was living in Mexico farming onions—where he wound up after a business venture exporting Washington apples south of the border fell apart—and saw a Denver newscast about a construction-worker shortage in Colorado. Wallace decided that it was time to develop the tree farm.

He traveled north, proposed building a subdivision of big luxury homes just like the ones in nearby Rainbow Ridge, and was sent packing by the Longmont town council.

"They questioned what I was going to do and it really pissed me off," Wallace remembers. "I was very anxious that whole night ▸



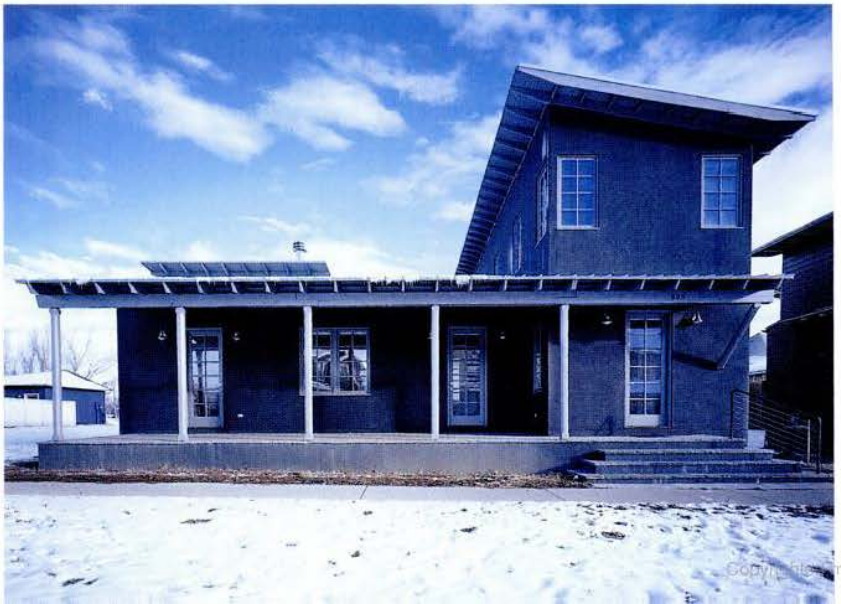
Builder Don Lucas poses on the front porch of a house he recently completed (above). It was designed by the New Haven firm Gray Organschi Architecture to emphasize, says Organschi, "the tectonic distinctions among parts." Lucas takes pride in the fact that he had the skill to build a home so loaded with concept and so devoid of right angles.

Rayme Rossello and Pam Proto, proprietors of Longmont's Proto Pizza, live in a house designed by Boulder architect Kimble Hobbs. "A primal gabled shed," Hobbs calls it. "That's the ugliest house," Rossello recalls thinking when she first saw it. "I thought it was awesome," counters Proto. The couple admits being baffled by some of the house's family-oriented features, like a second laundry room. "What we'll use it for is a wine closet," Rossello figures.

"The Death Star. The Bat Cave. The Black Hole. The Stealth House," says homeowner Ben Beierwaltes, listing the nicknames the neighbors have given his house.

Ben Beierwaltes, 23, the director of marketing for Colorado Time Systems, bought his house just as the walls were going up. It was designed by Mark Sofield, and Beierwaltes worked with him to get rid of unwanted touches such as interior windows, and get things he did want, such as a fireplace mounted flush with the wall.

Sofield sees the house, with its low-slung front façade, as a nod to the simple houses typical of the isolated mountain communities outside Boulder. The long one-story stretch also allows sunlight to reach the backyard. As for the exterior color, "That was my idea," notes Beierwaltes. "Kiki had decided he didn't want a blue house. Kelly [Feeney] suggested mint. I came back with black."



The minimalist interior is unusual in Prospect, where residents of even the most architecturally radical homes prefer cozy décor. The sofa is a Happy Hour model from B&B Italia, and the bed is mounted on a broad black band of slate, a continuation of the backyard patio.

when I went back to the hotel room. And I tossed and turned and tossed and turned, and somewhere in the middle of the night, it just dawned on me: They're right. I'm going to do exactly what I've always protested, what I've always screamed and yelled about in South Texas, just another typical development."

So Wallace retreated. On his way to catch a plane from McAllen to Mexico City, he picked up a *Wall Street Journal* and read a front-page article about Andres Duany and New Urbanism. "And I called him the next day and said, 'I want you to do this.' "

Wallace came in knowing next to nothing about architecture or, for that matter, development. He took the DPZ plans and, working with a DPZ-affiliated architect based in Miami, began to build an archetypal New Urbanist town, one that looks to the past in both its pedestrian-scaled street plan and in its dependency on certain historic American housing types.

But he knew from the outset that he wanted it to go someplace different, and he recalls telling the original home buyers so. "I'd always go through the spiel with them that the idea was not to re-create some historic setting here," Wallace says, "but to try to evolve the architecture into something that was more appropriate for the day that we were in. It was not going to look like Disneyland."

Wallace, however, didn't quite know how to extract himself from the past. On the recommendation of Duany, he hired Sofield as town designer. The Yale-trained Sofield had worked for a "rabidly traditional" firm and had, in the process, picked up the skills of an Ecole des Beaux-Arts grad. He knew his column orders and understood classical approaches to rhythm and proportion. He'd even worked peripherally on some of the Seaside houses. He seemed like a safe choice.

When he arrived in Prospect, Sofield began by designing a sober row of colonial townhouses with a pediment affixed to each roof. But then, something happened.

"When we started," Sofield explains, "Kiki didn't let on as directly as he might have that he had this interest [in modern architecture] because he really wanted to test me first, to see if I could, you know, whip everybody into shape here, but also design some traditional buildings that he liked." Then, Sofield and Wallace got to talking about their mutual enthusiasm for modern architecture. "And then we just took off running," says Sofield, "and we haven't looked back."

The result is a series of streetscapes that look like nothing else in suburban America. On Incorrigible Circle, an imposing gray classical revival mini-mansion with a double-decker columned porch is next door to a deconstructivist shed, with a red central tower that projects a story higher than the adjacent pine volumes. Then there is the dark green house in which there are no right angles, and the low-slung, Western-inspired house designed by Sofield and painted black at the request of its 23-year-old owner.

"The Death Star. The Bat Cave. The Black Hole. The Stealth House," says homeowner Ben Beierwaltes, listing the nicknames the neighbors have given his house.

Prospect is, like any small town, a place where people talk. And in Prospect, unlike most small towns, the subject of local gossip is often architecture.

During the spring and summer of last year, the architectural debate began to take on the contours of a feud. Instead of the Hatfields versus the McCoys, it was the traditionalists versus the modernists. The debate took place in a number of settings, including an online community bulletin board. One participant's posts got so prolific and so venomous that the board was eventually shut down. Among other things, the anonymous (but no one in Prospect can really be anonymous) poster bizarrely equated modern architecture with an imagined influx of gay home buyers: "I am afraid to have my children walking around the neighborhood being exposed to the 'alternative lifestyles' that have been attracted by the recent rash of wild construction."

Others tried to channel their concerns about the shift away from traditional architecture in more constructive ways. Keith Jaggers, a social scientist who moved into his home, a bungalow with a spacious porch, in summer of 1998, wrote a seven-page single-spaced typewritten letter to Andres Duany, arguing that Prospect should be, at most, 10 percent modern. His premise is that modernism, born out of a desire to reject traditional architecture, would undermine Prospect's sense of place; that the architecture, and the people attracted to it, would somehow be anti-community. "[T]he small, oddly placed windows that seem to be a signature of the modernist application in Prospect are particularly reviled," Jaggers argued in his letter. "What these windows say to the community at large is that its residents really don't want to engage the public realm and would prefer that the public realm not infringe on them."

The letter was written in April, in anticipation of a Duany visit. In May, Duany answered Prospect residents' questions at a town meet- ▸

ing. Although Duany is known for planning communities in which the houses are nearly as homogenous as those on a Monopoly board, he seemed, at the meeting, to endorse Prospect's pronounced eccentricities. He addressed concerns that the modern homes were in some way disharmonious by pointing out that even the original traditional houses represented a potluck mix of styles. "Right off the bat, Prospect was fantastically eclectic," Duany told the crowd. "This child took off that way from birth. It just went that way."

By fall, the controversy had quieted, perhaps because there were suddenly more pressing problems in the world than the advent of shed roofs, or maybe because the majority of residents are more like Rob and Lianne Tengler, Prospect's first occupants, than the vitriolic Web poster. They live in a traditional home with a broad front porch. And they seem to have approached the whole thing—New Urbanism, living in a construction site, the shift of architectural direction—as an adventure. In 1997, when the Tenglers moved in, Prospect consisted of three houses. Lianne recalls going out with a video camera, like a proud parent, to document the progress.

"I had this image that it would be all traditional," says Rob. "The first modern houses were shocking." His response was to read up on architecture. "It's funny, when you become educated on a subject, you become more tolerant."

So, how did this place happen? That's what I keep asking myself as I survey the weird variety of houses on Incorrigible Circle, or walk Prospect's perimeter, staring in wonder at the development's variegated silhouette. The easy answer is that Prospect is a byproduct of the surrounding area's overheated (until recently) technology-driven economy. But mostly that economy produced standard beige ("Band-Aid-colored," says Prospect's color czar, Kelly Feeney) subdivisions, notable mainly for the sheer square footage of the houses. Clearly the X-factor, the thing that sets Prospect apart, is that it has a Kiki. What makes it work is that it also has a Mark. There is a dynamic. There is a balance. Wallace shoots from the hip and Sofield supplies the underpinning.

One morning, Wallace and Sofield have a meeting with Tom Obermeier, a principal of the large Denver-based firm Oz. Obermeier has designed a pair of houses for Prospect's third phase. Sofield has looked at the plans and is not entirely happy. But Obermeier is also poised to become the builder of Prospect's first "superblock," a 13-unit compound of live/work lofts and commercial space. So the idea is for Sofield to critique Obermeier's drawings for the smaller project before Wallace gets there. If Obermeier gets angry, it won't be at the developer. It's Wallace's day to play good cop.

Obermeier arrives with his friend, Tina Poe, at Sofield's architecture studio, an airy second-floor space directly upstairs from Prospect's real-estate sales office. Sofield pulls out Obermeier's plans, lays a sheet of tracing paper over them, and outlines problematic details in red pen.

Sofield begins by stating the positive. He likes that the houses wrap around a courtyard and that three-story towers mark the corners.

"It works for us urbanistically," he says, "because it holds those corners. Third-story space," Sofield adds, "is money well spent. You get great views once you're that high and views sell. You get that 'oh wow' moment."

"That's what we're trying to do," Obermeier concurs.

But then, gradually, gently, Sofield begins to address the problems he has with the overly fussy form of the building. He pulls out a book about Schindler to nudge Obermeier toward a more pared-down aesthetic. The Denver architect thumbs through the pages and says, "I love these. If we were doing these houses for ourselves. . . ."

"But we want to sell them," interjects Poe.

Obermeier adds that they don't want to design for "the lowest common denominator, but we want them to appeal to a broad spectrum. Tina and I have discussed what we'd do if it were ours."

"More edgy," she says.

By this time, Wallace has slipped in and the mood in the room shifts. Sofield's careful critique is leavened by Wallace's native insouciance and, suddenly, it seems like anything is possible. Somehow an elder statesman of Denver architecture is being recast as a renegade. Here is a true Prospect moment, an insight into how this little subdivision has become a laboratory for a specifically American brand of modernism, generations removed from the Bauhaus, informed by architectural theory, but driven, like any American brand, by the spirit of hucksterism.

"Edgy's not bad," Wallace comments.

"Grain elevators are beautiful," Poe says, echoing remarks made earlier in the meeting.

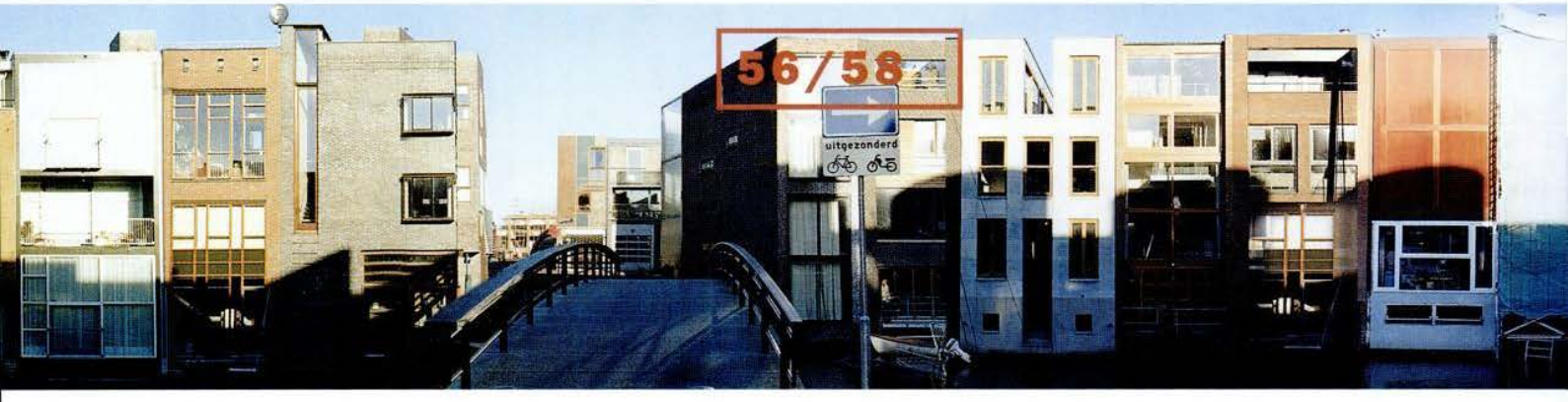
"You're talking grain elevators?" asks Wallace, suddenly enthusiastic. "Grain elevators are perfect."

Karrie Jacobs is the editor-in-chief of dwell.

Lianne and Rob Tengler, standing on the front porch of their Katy Lane home (right), were the subdivision's first residents. Their traditional house, designed and built by John Spitzer, is typical of Prospect's first phase of development, and of New Urbanism in general. Says Rob of community life in Prospect, "I sit on the front porch and start drinking a beer. People show up."

Stop at the point where Incorrigible Circle and Neon Forest Circle meet (opposite page) and you'll see a line of houses unlike any in suburban America. It's a good spot to stand, pivot 360 degrees, and take in Prospect's brand of eclecticism. It's a good spot to stand and imagine what this country would be like if every subdivision looked like Prospect.

"The idea was not to re-create some historic setting here," says Wallace. "It was not going to look like Disneyland."



STRAAT OF DREAMS

On Borneo Island's Scheepstimmermanstraat, in old Amsterdam's newest neighborhood, it's modern architecture's Golden Age.

Story by Jane Szita
Photographs by Martien Mulder

Back in 1989, the Docklands of eastern Amsterdam were desolate stretches of windswept, polluted ground, dotted with derelict industrial buildings—not the most promising setting for new residential neighborhoods. Nevertheless, that same year the city began an ambitious scheme to regenerate the area, with what would become Amsterdam's biggest postwar building project.

The Eastern Docklands (or Oostelijk Havengebied) now house about 17,000 people in stylish developments that are exceptionally high-density even for the Netherlands, where land (often reclaimed from the sea) has always been at a premium. Its unique environment—two-thirds water and one-third land, comprising four peninsulas, known as "islands," that jut into the water—has become a sought-after part of the city for those hoping to find some peace and quiet, space and security, without taking themselves too far out of the urban area.

"It's a bit of a long way from the center, but that's relative," says Hans Apma, a resident of Borneo, one of the four islands. "The distance would be nothing in London—after all, it's just a 15-minute cycle ride to Central Station from here. I love the restful atmosphere of Borneo—there are hardly any cars, and no problems with the neighbors. When I first moved here in 1999, it was very low-key, but the islands are improving all the time, with new bars and restaurants opening."

The Eastern Docklands were constructed at the end of the 19th century, during the heyday of the Netherlands' colonial era. The four ▸

Lidewejde's bed (opposite page) currently rests on a free-floating platform—"Quite alarming!" she says. The railings Niek designed for the open platform have not yet been installed.

Lidewejde's father (top left) is a frequent visitor—in part because he likes fishing from the floor-length windows while perched on a wheeled IKEA ottoman. The view from the living room into the kitchen of Lidewejde's flat (top right) shows how well the architect has maximized the limited space available. Above, Niek's "dynamic light"—a plastic tube containing numerous small lights. It was a bargain buy from a household store and gives "a smooth, effective light."

NUMBER 56/58

Architect: Niek van Slobbe, Amsterdam

On a corner halfway down the street and next to the arched pedestrian bridge, Number 56/58 stands out from the other houses in the row: Its exterior is clad with a screen of industrial glass panels in aluminum frames. A narrow opening revealing a patio garden inside is topped by a jutting aluminum balcony, part of a walkway at the top of an aluminum spiral staircase. Number 58 is at the top of the stairs; number 56, below. "I don't see this place as flats, but as two houses closely linked together," says architect and co-owner Niek van Slobbe.

"Though the specifications called for brick, Adriaan Geuze made an exception when he saw the maquette," says van Slobbe, who lives in number 58. The co-owner, Lidewejde de Smit, is on the Board of Directors of the Hague Art Academy. The pair are old friends and worked together on the project from the beginning in 1996. After dealing a lot with bureaucracy, they moved in this year.

"The façade screen uses industrial materials, and was inspired by the shipyard history here—the shape is boatlike. With the stairs and balcony," van Slobbe explains, "I call it the oil platform. Glass was a cheap solution, and the big advantage is that it lets the light through. For the real façade behind, I used wood, because it's warm and contrasts well with the brick [of the next house] and glass."

The corner plot for 56/58 was an awkward wedge shape that narrows as it meets the water, but van Slobbe turned it to advantage by creating unobstructed views throughout the house, focusing attention on the water. "Side windows were possible here because of the corner location, and I used long, shallow ones so as to add extra light effects while not distracting from the water. The light is my favorite thing about the house—sunlight or moonlight, reflected from the water, has an almost spiritual quality."

The top house has a simple, stainless steel kitchen at the front, which harmonizes with the aluminum outside. The main living space has a raised concrete floor, painted gray. "I'm also a musician, and because of the acoustics I'm going to have to carpet the place," says van Slobbe. "Otherwise, I'd leave the concrete floor as it is."

Wooden stairs lead to the bedroom, which is on a floating concrete platform that does not meet the back windows, and an office space at the front, with the bathroom—very sober with white tiles—neatly tucked in the middle. It's all compact, but with a spacious feel.

Downstairs, de Smit's kitchen opens onto the patio, "which I love," she says. Her house, which she shares with a small black cat and a large stuffed fox, closely follows the layout of the one above it. "I like the way Niek made the house so stark and modern, yet so friendly," she says. "The garden outside the kitchen isn't what you'd expect of modern architecture, but I enjoy it every day."

artificial peninsulas were built between 1874 and 1927 to increase the capacity of Amsterdam harbor and to accommodate bigger oceangoing ships operating services to Indonesia, Suriname, and the United States—hence Borneo's exotic name. After the Second World War and Indonesia's independence, the Eastern Docklands began a long, slow decline, falling into decay until their recent spectacular revival.

Because each island has its own historical character, the developments vary: Monumental housing blocks tower over the water on KNSM Island, while newly cut canals reflect Amsterdam's architectural heritage on Java Island.

Planning for the twin islands of Borneo and Sporenburg (always viewed as one urban entity) started in 1993, with the aim of creating a low-rise environment to differentiate the area from the mostly stacked apartments of the other Docklands developments. However, subsidies from the national government required that the same level of density be maintained. Urban designer Adriaan Geuze, of Rotterdam's West 8, was chosen to develop the plan. On Borneo, he opted for 80 percent low-rise buildings (1,550 units) and three sculptural high-rise volumes. The latter are carefully positioned anchors linking the sea of low-rise buildings with landmarks on the other islands and the city itself.

"High-density low-rise building is a paradox," says Geuze, who solved the problem by incorporating front and back gardens into the houses in the form of patios and roof ▸

The spacious kitchen of Number 106 (above) makes the most of the street views. "I think our house is fairly unique in this street," says Gerrita, "in that everything isn't focused on the water-side perspective only. I like the way Jaap Puisters has brought the street into our kitchen, so to speak. I enjoy the view because it's lively, there's always something going on."

The wood—warm Oregon pine—harmonizes with the lime green walls (below), white vintage Raymond Loewy units, and appliances. There's plenty of room to accommodate the dining table and chairs—and lots of play space for Lotje and her friends.

Silver walls in the living room (left) make the most of the light reflected from the water, and peacefully coexist with the warm bronze tones of the floor. After taking Lotje to school by boat, William (below) can go straight to work. His home office opens directly onto the water.

NUMBER 106

Architect: Jaap Puisters, Haarlem

With a façade of dark blue glass panels framed by wood and criss-crossed with galvanized steel branches, all forming what the architect calls a "symbolic boundary fence," Number 106 is easily the most decorative house on the street.

Owners Gerrita van der Veen and William Bertrand are both psychologists. She works in market research, he's a training consultant, and they have a four-year-old daughter, Lotje. They moved here in May of last year, when Bertrand started working at home and their loft-style apartment in central Amsterdam was no longer suitable.

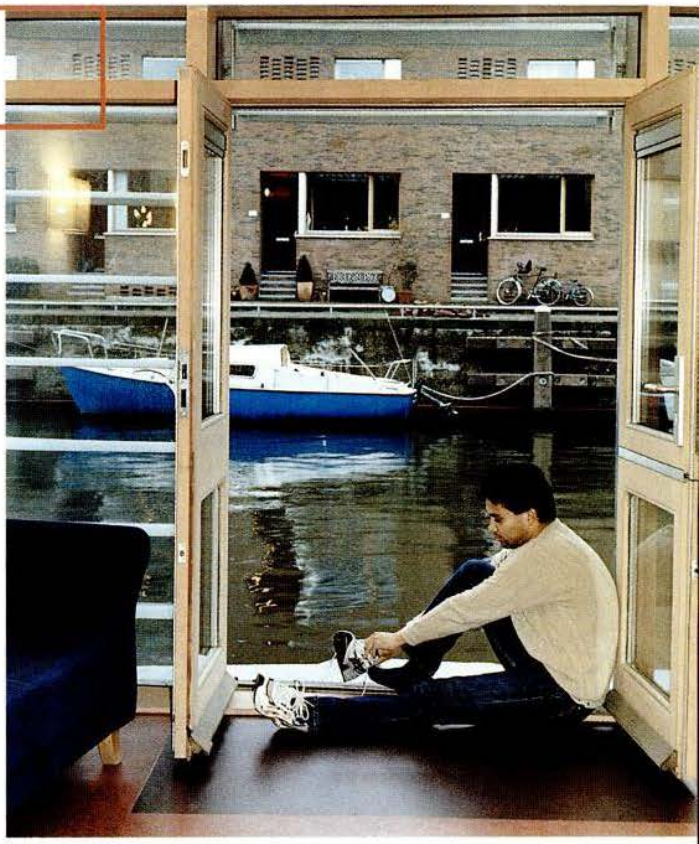
"I love the playfulness of this house," says van der Veen. "I think the special character of the place comes from the fact that Jaap Puisters studied at the Rietveld Academy, not an architecture school. His work on this house was carried out with an artist and an interior designer."

The unusually decorative nature of the house strikes you immediately when you walk in through the front door: The hall floor is tiled with a beautiful mosaic of a bird of paradise and aluminum ship doors conceal a hall cupboard. "We have our own boat moored out back," says Bertrand. "Lotje goes to school in it every day. I love boats, so I'm at home with the nautical theme of this house—we have portholes, ship supports on the stairs, and the ship doors, of course."

"This house has a wonderful feeling of transparency," says van der Veen. "Although you have different rooms with specific functions, you still have the feeling of being in one single space because of the glass partitions and sliding doors."

A favorite room with the family is the large, street-facing kitchen, which has original American Kitchen units by Raymond Loewy, the curvy but streamlined shapes in ice-cream white looking luscious against the lime green wall. The master bathroom—extremely opulent by local standards, with mosaics, whirlpool bath, and glass washbasins—is another.

Number 106, like the other houses in the street, attracts a lot of attention. "This summer, a student from Barcelona turned up on our doorstep asking to look at the house," says van der Veen. "It turned out he'd spent a year doing a project on it, and he had practically written a book on it. Of course, we let him in."



terraces. The result: inwardly focused houses with a high degree of privacy. The façades are directly on the street, which is just wide enough to allow movement of traffic. "Our solution had to be innovative," says Geuze. "And now it's a prototype for Dutch housing."

A major theme on the islands is the relationship with water. On Borneo, there's contrast between the seclusion of the low-rise buildings and the openness of the water, which essentially takes the place of public space. "Blue is our green here!" jokes Borneo resident William Bertrand. Thirty-six different architects were called in to develop patio housing in line with a prototype devised by West 8 with architect Rudy Uytenhaak.

On the northern quay of the narrow dock at the end of Borneo, a street called Scheepstimmermanstraat (Ship's Carpenter's Street) was selected for a special experiment. "In the Netherlands, houses are typically built in sets of 80 to 120 in the same design," says Geuze. "We wanted to try out the American model, in which each and every house can look different—something that had not happened here since the Golden Age [in the 17th century]."

In 1996, 60 plots of land were advertised in the national papers for sale to private individuals, who could then commission an architect of their choice to build a house. At 100,000 guilders (roughly $50,000), the plots were a bargain, and given that land is almost impossible to obtain in central Amsterdam, the sale represented an unheard-of opportunity.

There were guidelines, of course: The houses must be no taller than 36 feet, have a ▸

A wall of glass bricks (opposite) separates the bathroom, with its huge terrazzo bathtub, from the kitchen.

Light floods the living room (right), even in winter. The painting is by Amsterdam artist Peter Keyser; the painterly rug is from the Bijenkorf, a famous Amsterdam department store. Below, the living room doubles as a workspace for Henk. The wheeled desk is a Spanish design: "I bought it ten years ago," he says, "so I no longer remember who it's by!"

NUMBER 122

Architect: Henk Duijzer, Amsterdam

Number 122 has a commanding profile, with strong verticals formed by the windows that rise from the top of the garage door to the roof, contained within a U-shape of iron-colored brick imported from England. "I changed the façade when it didn't harmonize with our neighbor's, but this solution was far better," says architect and owner Henk Duijzer, who lives here with Roos Cobben (who works in a women's refuge in Haarlem) and their two children (Jeroen, aged eight, and Noortje, four). "When you're an architect, you always dream of building your own house—but this seemed an impossible dream in Amsterdam. When we heard about the plot sale, we had to go for it—it was a bit scary, but now we have a house that's perfect for us."

The family wanted a garden, and they are one of only seven houses out of 60 to boast a tiny patch of grass at the back of the house. The children's playroom is right next to it, with wonderful views of the water and distant harbor buildings.

"The garage on the ground floor was the biggest constraint, so we decided to put the living room at the top of the house," Duijzer explains, "for the light and the view. The big windows and partly glass ceiling mean we never need to put the lights on in the daytime, even in winter. The screen wall, pierced by light bricks, was a structurally necessary supporting wall, but I'm glad we have it now—it provides a division in the space. For the floors throughout, we used concrete, which was then oiled—this gives it warmth and sheen, rather like stone."

The front of the living room stops short of the outside windows, so you can look down on the kitchen below. Fire regulations meant that inner windows had to be used, but, says Duijzer, "We're glad of these now, as they screen out cooking smells."

The kitchen is fitted with dark blue IKEA units and the straight lines are broken by the curves of the bathroom wall, constructed from glass bricks and decorated with drawings by the children. "The bathroom is possibly my favorite thing—when the light is on, with the glass walls it looks like a jewel in the center of the house."

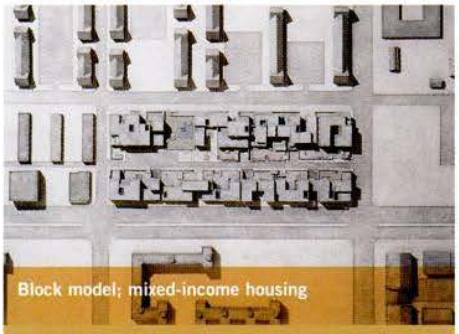
built-in garage on the ground floor (though one or two eventually didn't), at least one story with a height of 11.5 feet (Geuze: "Low ceilings are the curse of Dutch architecture!"), and a flat roof. Geuze chaired workshops in which the maquettes of the 60 planned houses were examined and vetted for unwelcome features: "I ruled out cheap color effects and cheap concrete panels—the kind of details that just don't age well."

The result is a row of 60 houses of uniform size but astonishingly varied impact. "The Scheepstimmermanstraat experiment was a great idea that has now been copied all over the Netherlands," says architect Rowin Petersma, who built two houses on the street. "What makes it really successful is that the specifications were really strict—this creates a harmony among the different styles, where otherwise you'd get a jungle of competing buildings." Geuze thinks that "the result is a contemporary version of the canal house—Amsterdam meets Venice in the modern age, if you like."

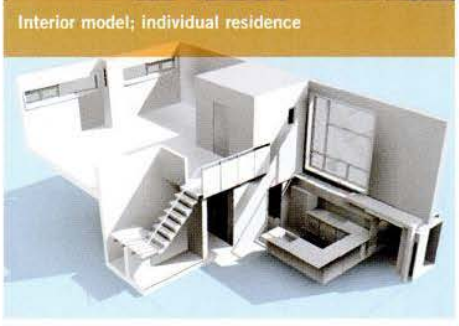
All the islands have an easygoing, community atmosphere, but the Scheepstimmermanstraat has even more of an everybody-knows-everybody feel about it. "I love the fact that I know all my neighbors," says resident Lidewejde de Smit. "The center of Amsterdam can be so anonymous. But I think we all get on because we have the shared experience of working hard to realize our dream homes."

Jane Szita, based in Amsterdam, is managing editor of the Doors of Perception *website on the future of design (www.doorsofperception.com).*

HERE COME THE NEIGHBORHOODS

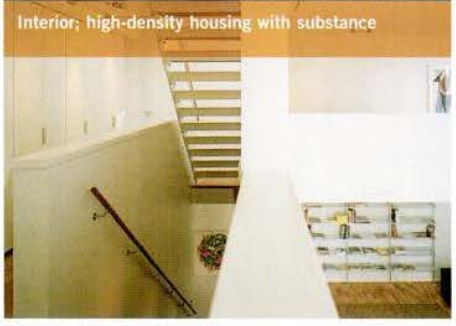


Block model; mixed-income housing

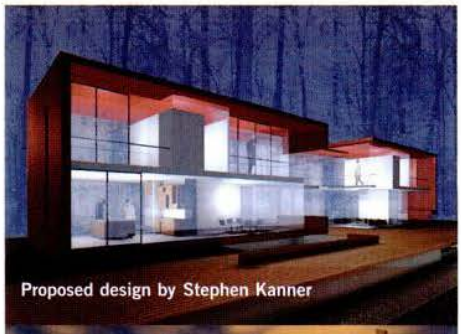


Interior model; individual residence

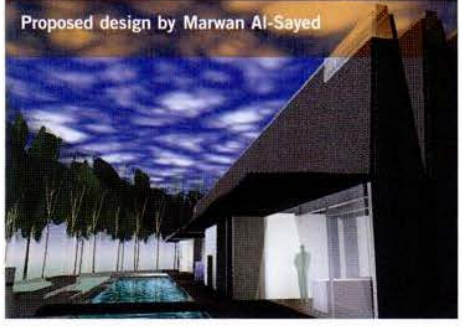
Making the most of the surroundings



Interior; high-density housing with substance



Proposed design by Stephen Kanner



Proposed design by Marwan Al-Sayed

Project:
Chicago Housing Authority Design Competition

Location:
Chicago, Illinois

What it is: Proposed design of mixed-income housing (market-rate, affordable, and low-income) on a vacant 220-by-600-foot square block in the ABLA neighborhood—a community defined by four separate housing projects (the Adams, Brooks, Loomis, and Abbott developments) built between 1937 and 1962. Entrants in the competition had several guidelines, the most crucial of which was that the income level of each unit be indistinguishable from the outside. Additionally, each type of unit had to be evenly distributed throughout the site, and each had to have its own entrance. Last August, a winner—architect Brian Healy of Boston—was announced.

Why: Chicago is well-known for its architectural wonders, but in recent years its blunders have gained significant notoriety as well. Recognizing this, the Chicago Housing Authority launched the national competition.

How: Brian Healy's design aims to bring dignity to housing without pretension. According to Healy the development consists of townhouses and flats based on 25-foot modules—the typical dimension for traditional Chicago lots. The design brings continuity to the block through the use of modular units, while the interiors provide spaces for personal expression.

Why it might work: The city of Chicago may have finally learned something from its past experience with low- and mixed-income housing—at least that is what the selection of Healy's proposed design seems to suggest.

Project:
Gåshaga Brygga

Location:
Lidingö, Sweden

What it is: In 1997, the company Bonver Videodata approached the Stockholm architecture firm Sandell-Sandberg to plan a residential development on industrial waterfront land it owned on Lidingö, an island just outside Stockholm. The land—and the plan—were then sold to the developer NCC Boende, which took on SandellSandberg to begin construction documents on the project in 1999. The 40 units of two- to three-level houses are to be completed in April 2002.

Why: In creating a large-scale housing complex in the ever-developing Swedish modern style, the SandellSandberg complex will most assuredly add yet another stopping point to any architectural tourist's visit to the Stockholm area.

How: Gåshaga Brygga embraces the waterfront. Most units hang gently over the water and come with their own docks. The buildings are subtle so as not to compete with the surrounding beauty, but their generous use of color, streamlined wood, and concrete decks make it impossible not to notice the addition to the Lidingö waterfront.

Why it works: Sweden has always been a leader in architectural innovation. Gåshaga Brygga seems to be merely the next step in the development of the architectural heritage—from Skansen, the historic section of Stockholm, to the Icehotel, the now famous working hotel made completely of ice—cherished in this part of the world. The houses' style, views, and gracious amounts of interior and exterior space will likely keep residents happy for a long time.

Project:
Houses at Sagaponac

Location:
Sagaponack, New York

What it is: Screenwriter turned real-estate mogul Harry J. Brown (a.k.a. Coco) came across 200 acres in the Hamptons in 1994 and decided to build a development in the famed getaway for the glamorous. Brown enlisted the services of Pritzker Prize–winning architect and old friend Richard Meier to act as curator. Brown and Meier divided the acreage into 34 lots and invited 34 cream-of-the-crop architects, including Sir Richard Rogers, Lindy Roy, Eric Owen Moss, Samuel Mockbee, Philip Johnson, and the Hariri sisters, to design 34 spec houses.

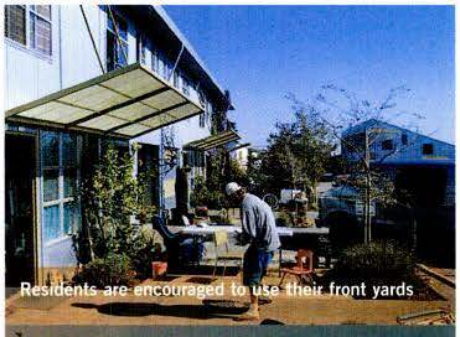
Why: Brown, a wizard at finance and development, has an artistic streak that runs deep. In a *Los Angeles Times* article about the development, Brown said, "The mansionization we've seen in Beverly Hills and the Hamptons is wrong from a number of perspectives. It is aesthetically, emotionally, and economically a disaster." Brown's disdain for the distasteful led to his latest adventure in architecture.

How: Architects were given cash and loose guidelines to follow (budget and size limitations, and the character of the rural area was to be respected). Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2002.

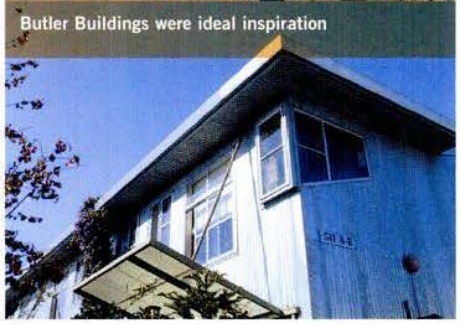
Why it works: In the '80s and '90s, development in the Hamptons took off, real-estate prices ballooned, and McMansions began to reign supreme. However, if there is any part of the country where a housing development featuring plenty of steel and concrete will succeed, the Hamptons, with its moneyed and artistic roots, may be just the place.

MODELS COURTESY OF BRIAN HEALY ARCHITECTS (CHICAGO). PHOTOS COURTESY OF SANDELLSANDBERG (LIDINGÖ). RENDERINGS BY KANNER ARCHITECTS © THE BROWN COMPANIES (SAGAPONACK TOP). MARWAN AL-SAYED ARCHITECTS © THE BROWN COMPANIES (SAGAPONACK, BOTTOM).

When it comes to residential developments, dollars are showered on traditional architecture and building systems, leaving buyers and renters with few choices. While there are developers, architects, and community leaders taking the financial and social risks necessary to advance housing, it remains to be seen whether these exceptions to the rule will withstand the test of time. **Text by Andrew Wagner**

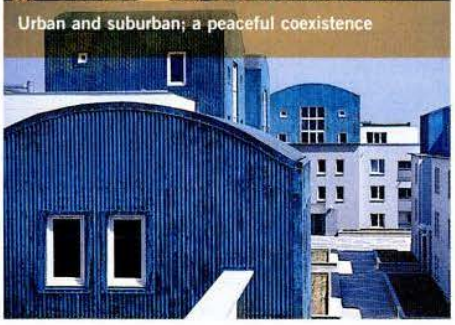


Residents are encouraged to use their front yards



Butler Buildings were ideal inspiration

Interior corridor



Urban and suburban; a peaceful coexistence

J. Mandle Performance studio interior

J. Mandle Performance on rooftop

Project:
Swift Street Work/Live

Location:
Santa Cruz, California

What it is: The Swift Street Work/Live is the brainchild of architect turned zoning board member turned city councilman Mark Primack and developer Gordon Pusser. It consists of five buildings and 41,000 square feet of housing, warehouse, and office space on a two-acre site.

Why: Driven by the idea that Santa Cruz was losing its creative and industrial soul due to rising housing costs and a city council unwilling to address these issues, Primack and Pusser set out to build live/work lofts that artists could actually afford.

How: Pusser purchased the property, which consisted of two Butler Buildings housing a printing plant and plenty of weeds and garbage. The first new building is a replica of the Butler Buildings. The other buildings are essentially extensions of that replica. The units are kept affordable by the separation of space. The bottom floor is completely raw, proudly displaying untreated plywood with nail heads plainly visible. On top of the raw industrial workspace sits a studio apartment concealed by a separate door. This setup allows the developer to be taxed the less costly industrial rate on 1,000 square feet of each live/work unit and pay the residential tax on just the 500-square-foot studio apartment.

Why it works: Pusser and Primack are both idealists who believe in the importance of the presence of a true artistic community. They are also businessmen and politicians who understand zoning, building, and bureaucracy, allowing them to bring a community to life without throwing money away.

Project:
Condominiums at Villejuif, France

Location:
Villejuif, a southern suburb of Paris

What it is: A condominium complex consisting of 104 flats of rented "social housing" completed in 1996. The developer, Logirep SA HLM, worked with Dominique Montassut Architects to create a village within a village.

Why: Both architect and developer felt it important to reconcile the desires of the potential residents with the realities of space constraints and urban living.

How: By taking the residential urban forms already existing in Villejuif (single-family homes and high-rise apartment complexes) and combining them in this 23,129-square-foot project, Montassut Architects created a virtually seamless extension of the city while providing the residents of the complex with an almost collegiate atmosphere. The complex is composed of stucco and Tuscan stone apartment blocks with corrugated-oxidized-copper-clad single-family cottages perched on top. Both housing types share a common entrance and leafy courtyard. The complex opens directly onto the street, directing one's view toward the Eiffel Tower in the distance.

Why it works: The mix of housing types allows for the diversity of a city and many of the comforts of the suburbs. The landscaped interior of the complex provides kids who live here with a safe place to play and lets the parents keep a watchful eye without overwhelming them. The project strove to combine the best of both city and suburb, and in many regards succeeded.

Project:
Gowanus Canal

Location:
Brooklyn, New York

What it is: Originally a creek, the Gowanus Canal gained its unflattering reputation as soon as it was built in the 1850s and '60s to ease transportation of materials to the expanding city. In the process, a neighborhood—industrial and unsightly, full of rooming hotels, bars, and brothels—was created.

Why: To improve the image of the highly populated area, the Douglass Street pumping station was built in 1911 to move fresh water from the East River into the Gowanus. By the end of World War II, however, Brooklyn was losing its luster. The canal quickly dissolved into a putrid backwater and earned the deceivingly pleasant moniker "Lavender Lake."

How: Residents have been clamoring for the beautification of the neighborhood since the '80s, when nearby neighborhoods like Carroll Gardens and Park Slope began gentrifying. In 1999, the Douglass Street Pump, which had been broken for years, was fixed and the canal started to look less and less like a toxic dump. Flowers began blooming and now even oysters are being grown in the canal. A full-blown Gowanus revival seems to be underway and its relative obscurity makes for an excellent invitation for architectural experimentation, like some of the Artist in Residence (A.I.R.) buildings scattered throughout the neighborhood.

Why it might work: With forward-thinking community activists and a highly visible artistic presence, the area appears to have the internal support and open-mindedness to nurture adventurous architecture *within* a traditional neighborhood structure. ■

PHOTOS BY SAM GRAWE (SANTA CRUZ), DOMINIQUE MONTASSUT ARCHITECTS (VILLEJUIF TOP), JACQUES ROSTAND (VILLEJUIF BOTTOM)

Resolute owner Douglas Varey with a Gordon table fixture, one of his company's 20-plus designs. At left is the Mary pendant lamp, which, like the Gordon, was designed by Varey.

In the second installment of an occasional series, we visit Resolute, the Seattle lighting factory and glass shop run by industrial designer Douglas Varey.

Story by Emily Hall
Photographs by Jeffrey Braverman

WHEN A DESIGNER OWNS THE FACTORY

The atmosphere in Resolute's glassblowing shop is deceptively easygoing. There's funk playing on the stereo, and one of Luca Rattazzi's assistants dances in place while rolling a white-hot bubble of glass at the end of a pipe. There's a lot of banter today about Rattazzi's sugar addiction. But this is a precision operation: They're making a variation on "Gordon," a popular model of light fixture that has a graceful, bulbous shape and a beautiful pale and slightly iridescent green-brown color they call "tea." Today, the studio will produce about 30 fixtures, both for retail stores and a large corporate order. And because this is a factory, there's no room for artistic temperament or happy accidents.

"You learn a lot in production work," Rattazzi tells me, as he sweeps a large quivering bubble in circles in front of him. "When you make the same thing again and again and again, you learn every single thing that can go wrong." He inserts the glass, still trembling slightly, into a wet wooden mold and begins to blow it into shape, spinning the pipe all the while. Two assistants hold the mold closed; one cuts a neckline into the bubble while the other cools the glass with compressed air so it doesn't wiggle in the mold. Before sending the glass into the annealing oven, Rattazzi will break the piece off the pipe right at that neckline juncture with one precise tap.

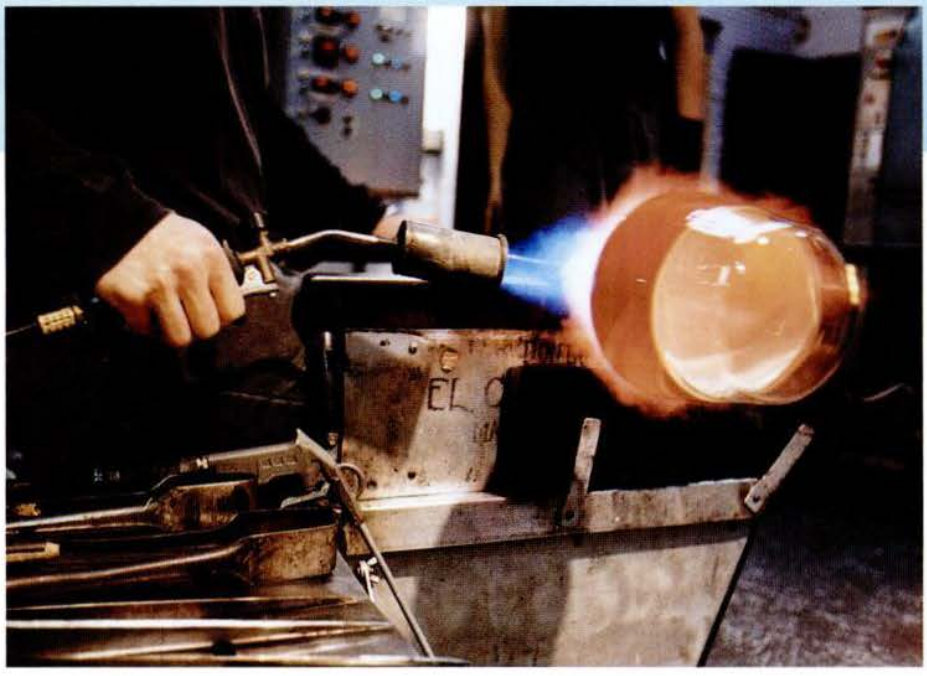
And when he does, another molten bubble will be ready for his attention. This is a factory, after all.

The Resolute brand of light fixtures was born in the mid-'80s, when industrial-design consultants Douglas Varey and Brent Markee decided they wanted to move away from working with clients and make their own product. "We chose lighting because it had a technical component that wasn't overwhelming," Varey says. "The product is small and reasonable to make. It's tremendously easy to design a product, but making it work as a business is much more difficult." With Andrew Elliott, another designer, they began with a set of parchment-colored paper lights (actually constructed of Avamid, a synthetic fiber) that have the delicate sensibility of Noguchi lamps, but with a crisply modern air.

A decade later, Resolute's paper shades were being copied all over the place, and Varey began to cast around for another product, something more difficult that his company could perfect. Joined by Rattazzi, one of his former students, the company began to produce its own glass fixtures, using standard hardware that could be adapted to many different styles. With the advice and guidance of one of the world's premier glass artists, Lino Tagliapietra, they built the hot shop near downtown Seattle.

Because of the presence of such well-known glass artists as Tagliapietra, Dale Chihuly, and Benjamin Moore, as well as the nearby Pilchuck School, Seattle has a high profile in the world of glass art. And Tagliapietra's influence is everywhere at Resolute, not just in the *chiuso* ("closed") sign that hangs on a full annealer, but in the traditional Italian-made tools and molds and the techniques Resolute uses to produce one perfect fixture after another. Rattazzi studied with Tagliapietra (who was in fact born on the Venetian island of Murano, the center of the Italian glass industry for over a thousand years) and quotes ▸

Luca Rattazzi (center) and two assistants begin work on one of Resolute's Anon lights. The simple form of the Anon, reminiscent of a traditional fabric lampshade, is actually quite difficult to fabricate, requiring two incalmo joints, a process in which glass bubbles are joined together.



him frequently, sometimes in Italian. This is the pedigree of Resolute's strict standards, and it's taken very seriously.

Not every glass shop mixes colors from scratch; it's much easier to buy premixed color canes and melt them down. Tagliapietra bequeathed to Rattazzi an old glassmaker's notebook, with Murano color recipes, some of which date back to the 1930s, listing proportions of sand, soda, calcium, and the chemicals that create the tints. With corporate orders, there's not a lot of tolerance for great variations in color, nor for bubbles or scratches or other imperfections. A tea-colored Gordon, for example, requires four gathers, or layers, of glass (first clear, then white, then tea, and a final layer of clear), and each one has to be immaculate. I watch Rattazzi excise a speck from a still-soft bubble with a pair of shears and drop it on the floor. Another bubble has a strange-colored spot, so he blows it up to the size of an old-fashioned medicine ball to see if the piece is salvageable. He examines it and shakes his head. "It's iron oxide," he says, "from glass left over on the pipe from the last piece. It'll turn into a bottle-green spot, and we can't have that."

"A lot of commercial lighting glass has sandblasted surfaces," Rattazzi says, "or frosted, or etched. It's easier to hide imperfections that way. You can also use shortcuts, like blowing the glass into the mold with compressed air. But I don't take those shortcuts—it makes the process boring." A lot of this effort is hidden in Resolute's simple, beautiful fixtures, which are designed by Varey, Rattazzi, Markee, and Elliot, in forms that contrast organic shapes with clean lines. Some surfaces are milky and opaque, others sharply transparent, and some, like the "Anon," mix the two: a traditional lampshade shape with a serene, warm amber body and a perfect crystal band. This simple shape is one of Resolute's most time-consuming products, requiring two incalmo joints, a technique of joining two bubbles together. They produce about 25 Anons per day.

Resolute's success lies at the juncture of art and production, an understanding of technique that looks fluid and intuitive but is actually scientific and specific. Rattazzi is full of figures—the temperatures required for different colors, the necessary proportions of gas and oxygen in the furnace—and is attuned to variations of technique as subtle as where the gather for each layer sits on the bubble and how it will affect the structure of the piece. Watching him work in the shop, however, you'd never guess at the amount of calculation that goes on. His three assistants seem to know what he wants right when he wants it, and talk about the work at hand is minimal. I watch him examine another faulty bubble, this one with an elliptical crater at its tip. I tell one of his assistants that the mistake looks quite beautiful to me.

"I know," she says. "Some people would make a whole career out of that."

Emily Hall is the visual arts editor for Seattle's more alternative weekly, The Stranger.

Creating light fixtures at Resolute is a relentlessly hands-on process, from hot shop (top left and right) to cold shop (above, center images), from mixing batches of color to inspecting each work for imperfections, color, shape, density, and scratches. The rejects are thrown unsentimentally into a large trash barrel in the cold shop, and those deemed acceptable are taken to another part of the factory to be assembled with the systemic hardware Varey designed to be flexible and multipurpose.

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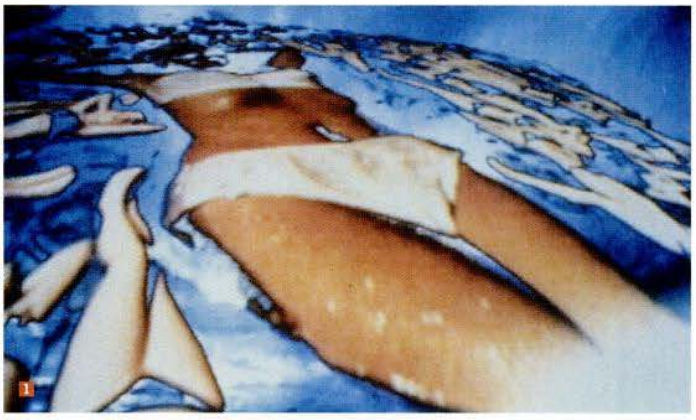
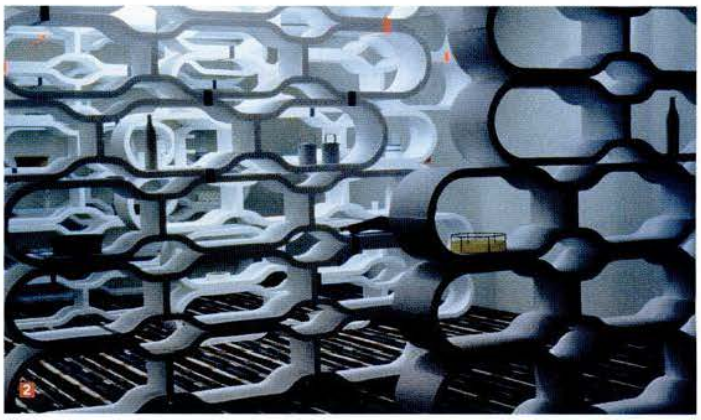
Furniture "made to be handed down to future generations" – *The New York Times*

IN THE MODERN WORLD...

Bodyshower Mobile
By Michel Perthu
$800

At long last, a shower that collapses to be as portable as a hatbox—ideal for "small flats without a shower or bath." A sturdy vinyl zipper releases the curtain for washing. Rough black circles make the floor non-slip. For the minimalist zealot (maximum weight 242 pounds), this compact appliance could make the traditional bathroom obsolete. A dual-tubed attachment to the sink faucet carries water up to the showerhead and back out to the sink's drain. It is well sealed to catch condensation, and emits minimal steam. Try using it on an airplane and see what happens. Available at www.bodyshower.dk.





EXHIBITS

Emerging Architecture 2: Ten More Austrians
6 Dec–15 Apr
ArchitekturZentrum Wein
Vienna, Austria
At the turn of the 20th century, Vienna's Secessionist movement was at the cutting edge of modern design. One hundred years later, Austrian architects are equally progressive (albeit less flowery), as evinced by this gathering of ten young firms. The pieces on view range from a sleek wood-slatted day care center in Salzburg to a jagged high-rise department store in Innsbruck—public works with a refined aesthetic that's rare in comparable American projects.
www.azw.at

Arcade: Industrial Panels by Andrew Neumann
19 Jan–17 Mar
DeCordova Museum
Lincoln, MA
The government dropped the ball and didn't manufacture an operational HAL by 1991 (Hilton never made it into space either). Taking matters into his own hands, Andrew Neumann, that guy who skulks around back aisles of Radio Shack, has constructed a wall-mounted machine that reenacts the final exchange between HAL and Dave in *2001, A Space Odyssey.* "Dave, I don't understand why you're doing this to me. I have the greatest enthusiasm for the mission. . . . You are destroying my mind."
www.decordova.org

1 Outer and Inner Space: A Video Exhibition in Three Parts
19 Jan–18 Aug
Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, VA
Video art has been known to cause more excruciation than watching camcorder highlights from your neighbor's trip to Epcot Center. Not so with this rotating exhibition featuring the work of Pipilotti Rist, Shirin Neshat, and most eerily, Jane and Louise Wilson's *Stasi City,* in which the gallery's walls reflect ghostly images of the abandoned East German secret police headquarters.
www.vmfa.state.va.us

2 The Fabulous Bouroullec Boys
1 Feb–16 June
Design Museum
London, England
These guys don't play four-hands-piano with Michelle Pfeiffer, but they are two of the world's most popular designers under age 30. In this exhibition, the first devoted solely to the brothers' work, visitors get a chance to examine almost a decade's worth of pieces produced by big name manufacturers like Cappellini, Habitat, Ligne Roset, and Vitra, in addition to studio artifacts documenting concepts and working process.
www.designmuseum.org

3 UN Studio/Matrix 146
2 Feb–28 Apr
Wadsworth Athenaeum
Hartford, CT
UN Studio, the radical Dutch duo who created the Möbius House and Rotterdam's Erasmus Bridge, might traumatize the average clapboard-happy Connecticut resident. But soon they'll head up a team, which includes Maya Lin and Fox & Fowle Architects, to renovate the Wadsworth Athenaeum. A "layering of projected animations and large-scale images" will prepare viewers for the large-scale digital architecture soon to hit New England.
Tel: 860-278-2670

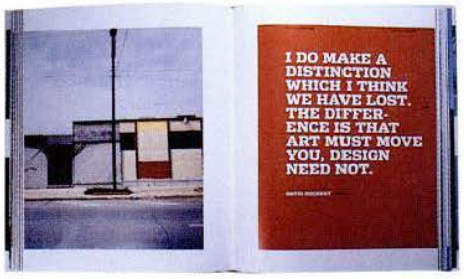
The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa, 1945–1994
10 Feb–5 May
P.S.1
Long Island City, NY
Okwui Enwezor, the Nigeria-born and New York–bred poet, critic, and curator, has created a multimedia show that traces recent politics in over 20 African nations. Through art, film, photography, and 3-D models, the show traces independence wars and movements such as Negritude, Pan-Africanism, and Pan-Arabism. Enwezor has an avid interest in urbanization in Africa; one section of the show is devoted solely to architecture and space.
www.ps1.org

Windshield
15 Feb–14 Apr
The RISD Museum
Providence, RI
Rarely has an architect as visionary as Richard Neutra found clients to match him. Anne and John Nicholas Brown, building "Windshield" (their 1938 house on Fisher's Island, NY), used huge aluminum-cased glass windows and two Dymaxion bathrooms. When a hurricane leveled the place six months after completion, they rebuilt it—gracing the project with two extra years of drawings and correspondence. The house burned down in 1973, but remains Neutra's best-documented project.
Tel: 401-454-6500

U.S. Design 1975–2000
23 Feb–26 May
Denver Art Museum
Denver, CO
After five years of curatorial digging and fishing in this big, messed-up country, "U.S. Design" demonstrates that we have some positive forethought and happy creations to show for the last quarter-century. From the Venturi post-modern-in-denial years to today's "expanding" modernism (the world of fluid

VIDEO STILL OF *SIP MY OCEAN* BY PIPILOTTI RIST, 1996, COURTESY OF LUHRING AUGUSTINE (1)

BOOKS



DESIGN IS Words, Things, People, Buildings, & Places
Princeton Arch. Press, $30
On the occasion of the design magazine's 20th anniversary, past and present *Metropolis* contributors (including our own Karrie Jacobs) consider, attack, or extol the design of everything from billboards to Bilbao, yam pounders to Intelligel.

The Modern House Today
By Kenneth Powell
Black Dog (distributed by Ram Publications), $60
Taking the lead from FRS Yorke's highly influential book, *The Modern House,* published in 1934, architectural historian Kenneth Powell reconsiders Britain's quiet but enduring contribution to early modern architecture.

Poems for Architects
An Anthology Compiled By Jill Stoner
William Stout Publishers, $29.95
Poets included here run the gamut and more so—Auden, Plath, Milne, and Corso. These poems may inspire architects to dream; or ditch renovation projects and—*carpe diem!*

You Have to Pay for the Public Life: Selected Essays of Charles Moore
The MIT Press, $45
Moore's ideas espoused a central concept—architecture's ability to improve public life. This collection of essays reveals a builder who challenged the norms of architecture both ancient and contemporary.

trash cans and porous walls), the exhibit shows how American design has gone "from crisis back to the vanguard."
www.denverartmuseum.org

Leopold and Rudolf Blaschka: The Glass Aquarium
1 Mar–28 June
Design Museum
London, England
Inside a tiny studio in Dresden, Leopold Blaschka (originally trained to make glass eyes for taxidermists) modeled thousands of glass-and-wire sea creatures with his wan son Rudolph. For a 19th-century audience that bathed rarely and swam fully clothed, the Blaschkas presented naturalistic and sometimes gruesome submarine dioramas that included sea squirts and dead men's fingers. Their finest wares will moisten London.
www.designmuseum.org

Jack Stauffacher: Selections from the Permanent Collection of Architecture and Design
2 Mar–26 May
SFMoMA
San Francisco, CA
Jack Stauffacher makes alphabet soup not with broth and noodles but the old-fashioned way—with woodblock and letterpress. He uses letters not merely as functional elements to make words, but as pure form (building blocks for his floating graphic constructions). Comprised entirely of works from the museum's collection, this exhibit draws together over 30 years of work from the founder of San Francisco's Greenwood Press.
www.sfmoma.org

2002 Biennial
7 Mar–26 May
Whitney Museum
New York, NY
Material for lots of Upper East Side cocktail conversation and plentiful commentary in *Artforum* has a cyclical way of showing up at the Whitney. The promises of unprecedented diversity, new technology, and "a resurgent interest in traditional media" are this year's harbingers, although it's possible that this Biennial will blur with the last for those viewers who aren't grad students. All that said, the Whitney's notoriety will surely draw the best American artists.
www.whitney.org

4 Paul Rand: A Retrospective
12 Mar–31 Aug
Eisner Museum
Milwaukee, WI
In a time when the word "logo" calls to mind bold italic text surrounded by a drop-shadow swoosh, it's amusing to relive a time when the world didn't have "art directors" (or, for that matter, computers) and originality and clarity were the benchmark of corporate design success. What better to illustrate this point than the work of Paul Rand, creator of some of the most recognizable logos of the 20th century, including those for IBM, Westinghouse, and ABC.
www.eisnermuseum.org

Directions: Ernesto Neto
21 Mar–23 June
The Hirshhorn Museum
Washington, DC
Using materials well suited to curvilinear organic shapes—Styrofoam, polyamide fabric, pantyhose, and tubes—and olfactory-enhancing ingredients such as lavender and tamarind, Neto creates plush, overstuffed uterine environments and pendulous udderlike forms intended to invoke the senses, enlisting the viewer as part of the creation. Go and touch.
hirshhorn.si.edu

The Alliance of Art and Industry: Toledo Designs for a Modern America
24 Mar–16 June
Toledo Museum of Art
Toledo, OH
A shipping town (whose name rhymes with libido) on the mouth of the Maumee River was birthplace to many icons of 20th-century industrial design. This exhibition of objects mass produced in Toledo, Ohio, includes examples from Libbey Glass, Champion Spark Plug, Owens Illinois, and Calphalon.
www.toledomuseum.org

5 Gene(sis): Contemporary Art Explores Human Genomics
6 Apr–28 Aug
Henry Art Gallery
Seattle, WA
Anyone looking to cross new frontiers in the world of gross mutations will be ecstatic at the Henry, where the works of almost 50 international artists are on display. The show addresses several species of tortured human dilemmas, from DNA's potent trait-bearing structure to the ability to clone living beings. *Chimera Obscura,* a site-specific installation by Shawn Brixey, Rick Rinehart, and Fabian Wagmister, might cause confusion.
www.henryart.org

FAIRS

1 Mar–1 Apr
Fotofest 2002 The Ninth Biennial: International Month of Photography
Houston, TX
www.fotofest.org

Preview 13–16 Mar, Auction 17 Mar
20th-Century Furniture and Design Auction
Los Angeles, CA
www.butterfields.com

10–11 Apr
Neocon South
Atlanta, GA
www.merchandisemart.com

10–15 Apr
Salone Internazionale del Mobile
Milan, Italy
www.isaloni.it

12–15 Apr
New York Home Textiles Show
New York, NY
www.glmshows.com

BIRTHDAYS

6 March 1475 **Michelangelo**

7 March 1872 **Piet Mondrian**

1 April 1919 **The Bauhaus**

1 April 1943 **Mario Botta**

9 April 1918 **Jørn Utzon**

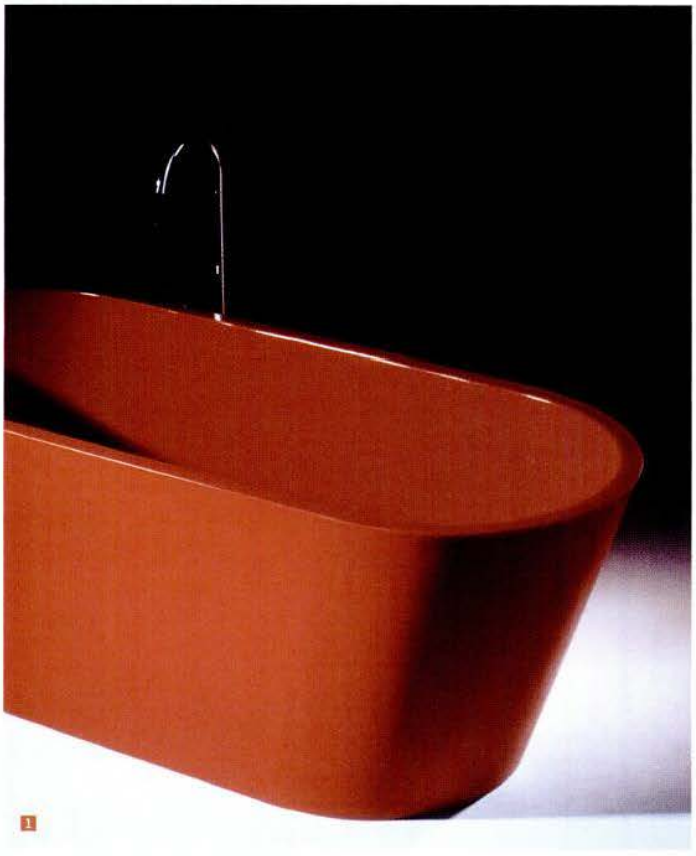
10 April 1743 **Thomas Jefferson**

18 April 1937 **Jan Kaplicky**

DISTURBING TREND

Right now your refrigerator is filling up with a dangerous gas. Dangerous for lettuce, celery, and snap beans, that is. The culprits behind this noxious release? Bananas, peaches, avocados, and other miscreant fruits lurking in neglected crisper drawers, churning out ethylene. With the help of $225,000 in research grants from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jim Dooley, president of Silverbrook Ltd., and hired guns from the University of Georgia's biological engineering staff hope to create controlled-environment pantries, with different drawers for different types of produce, and sets of electronic fruit bowls, one programmed to ripen, the other to crisp and freshen. Prototypes for the preprogrammed and self-contained units are still under wraps, leaving the innocent head of Boston or Red Leaf to fall prey to ethylene-exhaling avocados.

PHOTO OF ERASMUS BRIDGE #3 COURTESY OF UN STUDIO (3)



PRODUCTS

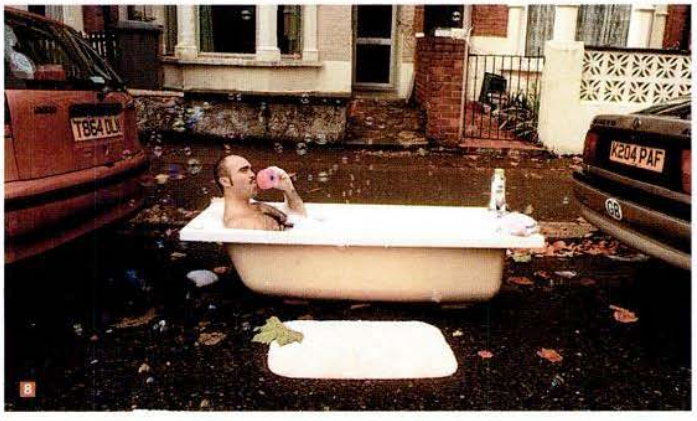
1 Soikko Bathtub
By Ulla Koskinen
$3200
This big red basin never would have worked for *Psycho*'s drain shot, but it sure is elegant. Koskinen designed this and much more out of Durat, a revolutionary Finnish material. Durat comes in over 60 custom colors, is 50 percent recycled plastic, and is fully recyclable. Carpentry tools can shape it, but its durability exceeds the hardest woods. Durat's creators claim it feels "warm and silky" to the touch—a great alternative to porcelain on cold nights in Lappland. Available at **www.durat.com.**

2 Oscar Shelf with Mirrors
By Ayse Birsel for Merati
$583
In name-your-baby books, Oscar comes up as "both philosophical and creative, meaning divine strength." The name is apt for Ayse Birsel's bathroom system, which is no-nonsense, but gracefully amusing. Best known for her "Resolve" office system for Herman Miller, Birsel also did time at Toto, the great toilet empire of Japan—so she knows bathrooms. Oscar's two round mirrors appear joined in a celestial orbit like the earth and moon. The gently sloped shelf of molded translucent resin, available for your soap and cotton swabs, hangs from the mirrors on anodized aluminum tubes. A friendly little cone, like an upside-down clown hat, holds your toothbrush. Available at **I.L.Euro Inc.: 212-625-1494.**

3 KL Washplane
By Joseph Licciardi for Vetrosystems
$1500
Who said a sink had to be a basin? According to designer Joseph Licciardi, "The first thing people think when you talk about using water on a flat area is that it will splash everywhere. But it's the opposite. Water becomes extremely flat and runs away, which allows us to change the whole design approach." The minimalist curved sink has a subtle slot drain for the water to run away into, and is made of Corian, which resists dirt and build-up better than any other material known to man. Available at **www.vetrosystems.com.**

4 eMOTE Faucet
By Sieger Design for Dornbracht
$845
When, one too many times, the toilet made a splashy, unsolicited flush in your stall at a movie multiplex, you might have experienced sensor trauma. Dornbracht hopes to ennoble bathroom sensors with this smart residential version for faucets. The intelligent eMOTE tap looks as sensitive as its insides are; if this were a guy, he'd be wearing glasses and a sweater vest. The faucet has temperature control and can operate conventionally, but when in automatic "read" mode, it never issues a superfluous drop. Available at **www.dornbracht.com.**

5 Diapson
By Marco Zito for Agape
Price not yet listed
Marco Zito invented this elegant storage mechanism for up to four rolls of toilet paper. A tuning fork inspired the satin-finish steel dowel, bent and draped over a hook. Examining Diapson's workings, the slight tension of paper clips and the resilient boing of springs also come to mind. The long piece lifts off the wall-mounted hinge for easy reloading. And when you pull the cardboard bare on that penultimate wipe, Zito's invention spares you from calling to a friend, "I'm in a fix." Further information at **www.agapedesign.it.**



FLUSH

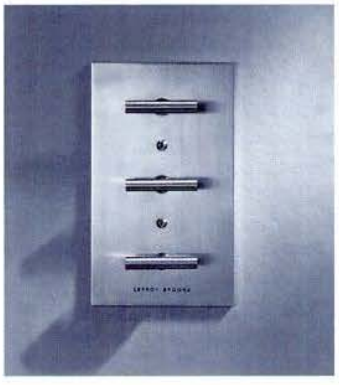
This cutaway from Toto, the world's leading toilet manufacturer, shows how certain design elements get the most out of 1.6 gallons of water. When depressed, the flush lever raises the red valve, whose extra width (3 inches) allows water to plummet from the tank into the siphon jet A with extra force. Toto's siphon jet—in which rushing water sucks soiled water down from the bowl—is angled for extra force and velocity.

6 Pipe
By Marcel Wanders for Boffi
$2477
As a shower, this simple, oversized U-pipe is a refreshing break from "customized" multiple nozzles and high-tech massage showerheads that stare back blankly like stainless steel sunflowers. Water in your house usually comes up from the ground, not from a lake behind the bathroom wall; plumbing can look complex, but rarely involves more than basic mechanics. The Pipe acknowledges those simplicities and delivers, in the words of the designer, "a waterfall . . . a thick stream of cleansing fresh water." Available at www.boffi.com.

7 M13 Bathroom Set
Modus Design
$35
Inspired by industrial lab equipment, Marek Cecula and Daga Kopala designed this affordable six-piece bathroom set—a must for anyone nostalgic for intimate times with beakers. Sober, practical, and Swiss-looking, the high-fired porcelain pieces will bring on a clean feeling, even if your toiletries (unlike those pictured here) consist of a mushy Lever bar, teal toothpaste drippings, and bent Q-Tips. In fact, that sort of contrast is advisable, because in this tidy set, an array of matching Neutrogena products might be scarier than the mildly biohazardous stuff. Available at www.dmd-products.com.

8 Sorry, Bubble Engaged
By Hector Serrano & Lola Llorca
Approximately $7 (Beloved swarthy Manolo not for sale)
At the outskirts of the "100% Design" exhibition in London, Lola Llorca and Hector Serrano deconstructed household activities in the show "Manolo Is Gonna Have Fun." Beloved swarthy Manolo threw food around on a Frisbee/plate and jumped on his coffee table/trampoline. Here in his bath, he plays with a sponge that is good for bubble-making. The product is not yet on the market but might be soon. Note this disclaimer: "Use only as directed. Intentional misuse can be excellent, even more fun." For information, email lolallorca@latinmail.com.

9 Braille Tiles
By Dennis Lin for Klinik
$25 per tile
Legible bumps are wonderful in all sizes. Small ones, for Braille neophytes, are intriguing and mysterious; big ones are friendly and potentially instructive. Dennis Lin's 6-by-12-inch white Braille tiles are available as blanks and as every letter in the alphabet. They are molded from a cast polymer—stuff that starts as a goo but dries harder than ceramic—and covered with gel coat surfacing. Unlike most ceramic, they are strong enough to walk on. At a recent design show, Lin used the tiles to write Zen phrases. But whatever they spell on the shower walls, most people will never know. Available at www.openklinik.com.



CONTROL

What lies within this minimalist "JO Shower" faucet by Lefroy Brooks? Answer: a thermostatic valve. Popular demand for temperature precision (down to degrees Fahrenheit), and a greedy desire to carry more water (up to 18 gallons per minute), have ushered the invention of a multi-valved mega-valve, at the heart of which is a sensitive paraffin thermo element that carefully adjusts flow of hot and cold.

HOW SWEDE IT IS

It may be cold and it may be dark, but in design-savvy Stockholm, even the McDonald's is an architectural landmark.

Story by Raul Barreneche / Photos by Fredrik Sweger

Design, we sometimes forget, is as much a formal response to a functional problem as it is a reflection of a culture, place, and time. Modernism's founding fathers—Mies, Corbu, and company—tried to universalize design and eliminate cultural quirks in favor of a sanitized style equally at home in Paris, Pretoria, or São Paulo. But no matter how much the International Style tried to neutralize expression, contemporary design never lost its ability to transmit inherent national values. Italian modernists like Franco Albini and Gio Ponti, for instance, conveyed a sense of glamour in objects that never strayed too far from classical motifs, while German and Dutch designers stuck by hard-core rationalism.

The Swedes, by comparison, remained focused on creating modest everyday objects and shied away from super-sleek creations, even more than their neighbors in Finland and Denmark. Sweden's longstanding tradition of social democracy, along with its affinity for simple materials and utilitarian solutions, imbued its design output with clean lines and a strong sense of purpose. The propeller, zipper, and wrench all hold Swedish industrial patents; and, of course, IKEA and its clothing cousin, H&M, are synonymous with Swedish design. "IKEA is the quintessence of what Svensk Form has been promoting for 150 years," says editor of *Form* magazine, Ulf Beckman, referring to the Swedish Society of Crafts and Design. Svensk Form was founded in 1845 to preserve waning Swedish handicraft traditions, but it's now a 7,000-member organization that "defends the role of design in culture and industry," organizes exhibitions and design awards, and helps designers and companies with copyright issues. It's the world's largest organization of its kind.

Johan Huldt, the director of Svensk Form, believes that his country's attention to everyday objects and environments has helped make design a national preoccupation. "Design plays a big role in the day-to-day life of all Swedes. If it weren't for design, no Swede would choose to live in Sweden, with the cold winters and the lack of light," he says. Architect Martin Claesson, principal of one of Sweden's hottest firms, Claesson Koivisto Rune, puts a more positive spin on Huldt's words: "As a designer, I can't imagine working anywhere else in the world."

To visit Stockholm is to experience how sensible modern design permeates every aspect of daily life, not to mention the Swedish psyche. It's also a chance to enjoy one of Europe's most pleasant and photogenic capitals, with colorful buildings (to combat the long, dark winter doldrums) filling a series of tiny islands in the sprawling Baltic archipelago. The city is relatively compact and boasts a navigable subway (*tunnelbanan*), tram, and bus system.

Architectural Landmarks

It's impossible to visit the Stockholm Central Library 1, or Stadsbiblioteket, designed by Nordic Classicist Erik Gunnar Asplund in 1921, and not see shades of Michael Graves. In fact, Graves' work and a 1978 MoMA exhibition helped reinvigorate interest in Asplund's work, which is characterized by spare, muscular volumes and Tuscan undertones. The library's spectacular central drum holds a vast, three-story reading room ringed with book stacks.

Stockholm's city hall 2, the Stadshuset, designed by Ragnar Östberg and completed in 1923, is one of its most celebrated buildings. The Stadshuset represents another strain of architecture that battled with Nordic Classicism and straightforward modernism for primacy in early 20th-century Sweden: the so-called National Romantic style, which combined rationalist forms, such as the city hall's hefty brick base and campanile, with historicized frills.

Skeppsholmen, one of the islands comprising central Stockholm, was transformed from a Swedish navy base to a museum island. Among the highlights of this small, hilly island are Spanish architect Rafael Moneo's 1998 Moderna Museet, or modern art museum, which adjoins the Architecture Museum, and the headquarters of Svensk Form, which often exhibits the latest in Swedish design. For die-hard architecture buffs, it's worth the short *tunnelbanan* ride to the cemetery at Skogskyrkogården (green line to Skogskyrkogården station), a masterful architectural and landscape collaboration between Asplund and Sigurd Lewerentz, two of Sweden's great 20th-century architects and major influences on Alvar Aalto. The Woodland Cemetery 3, as it's known in English, was built between 1914 and 1940 and outlines an important transition from National Romanticism to streamlined Functionalism. Note: Poor ventilation systems necessitated the closure of the Moderna Museet and Architecture Museum last December. Please call before visiting.

Houses

Asplund and Lewerentz loom large in Sweden's architectural past, and they designed many of the country's most important 20th-century houses. Among Asplund's best-known homes are his 1918 Villa Snellman, a spare, wood-framed structure finished in light-gray stucco that distills the rustic Swedish vernacular to clean, simple forms, and his own summer home in Lisö, which he built in 1937. The house is a long, pitched-roof bar that seems to grow out of a rocky outcropping.

Lewerentz's residential masterpiece is a summer house he designed for the Edstrand family in Falsterbo, in southern Sweden, a meticulously constructed, functionalist structure rendered in stucco and brick that draws on Le Corbusier's villa designs, especially his Villa Savoye outside Paris.

The British-born architect Ralph Erskine moved to Sweden in 1939 and built a reputation for quirky, environmentally sound buildings with odd geometric forms and exposed structures. His own one-room house (1942) 4 in Lissma, south of the city, put him on the map with its simple volume clad in strips of wood and a stone fireplace. The Swedish Museum of Architecture later bought the house and moved it to Ekerö Island, to the west of central Stockholm, where it is available for public tours.

Hotels

Like most major cities, Stockholm has joined the boutique hotel revolution. Lydmar Hotel, close to the center of town, is the destination of choice for the fashion set (Jimi Hendrix stayed here in 1968). Hotel Birger Jarl was a blocky 1970s construction until it was recently transformed into a design-savvy Scandinavian case study. A new rooftop annex, opened last year, features nearly a dozen rooms by Sweden's top designers, including Anya Sebton, Jonas Bohlin, and the prolific architect and furniture designer Thomas Sandell. The Berns Hotel 5 was a pleasure palace built in 1863 for Stockholm's well-heeled; it's now a five-star Terence Conran–managed hotel with a swank bar and dining room in the gilded ballroom.

Shopping

Stockholm's numerous design shops reflect the Swedish penchant for bold but subdued furnishings. The newest store in town is David Design, which, in addition to espresso, housewares, and furniture, features felt slippers and bowls by local designer Pia Wallén and compilation CDs. Don't be turned off by the name Pukeberg, where you'll find a sleek selection of glassware, lighting, and furniture by Sweden's top designers. Asplund and Nordiska Galleriet are the top shops for sleek European furniture by the likes of Cappellini and B&B Italia. Asplund

has a good selection of pieces by leading Swedish designers such as Thomas Eriksson, Thomas Sandell, and Jonas Bohlin. Klara offers a good excuse to tour the newly hip Södermalm neighborhood in southern Stockholm, which is filled with antique shops selling vintage mid-century furniture. (Sorry, don't expect any bargains, even with a strong dollar.)

If you're bored with cool Nordic minimalism, head to tony Svensk Tenn, which has the exclusive on the swell mid-century graphic textiles and highbrow furniture of Viennese expat Josef Frank. Or visit Christina Sundquist at A la Carte Antik and marvel at her roomful of Swedish ceramics and other vintage goodies from the 1940s, '50s, and '60s.

Restaurants and Bars

Bon Lloc serves—believe it or not—a fusion of Swedish, Spanish, and Latin classics it calls "nuevo Euro-Latino." The results are tasty (and there's a fantastic Spanish-heavy wine list) but expensive. Every bit as fabulous is the swank, Michelin-rated Fredsgatan 12, which serves delicate bleak roe "tacos" and "lamb three ways" in a hushed, sophisticated dining room overlooking the water. Though it's more than a decade old, PA & Co. still reigns as Stockholm's "in" place. There is plenty of velvet-rope attitude, but if you can get in, the subdued atmosphere is enjoyable, as is the changing menu of standard bistro fare, hearty Swedish dishes, and even a burrito or two. O-baren at Sturehof, redesigned by local architect Jonas Bohlin with a black-and-white color scheme, is where young Swedish designers go for cocktails. And make sure not to miss Claesson Koivisto Rune's elegant minimalist renovation of the very first McDonald's restaurant 6 in Sweden.

For info and addresses, see pg. 90.

Raul Barreneche is co-author of House: American Houses for the New Century.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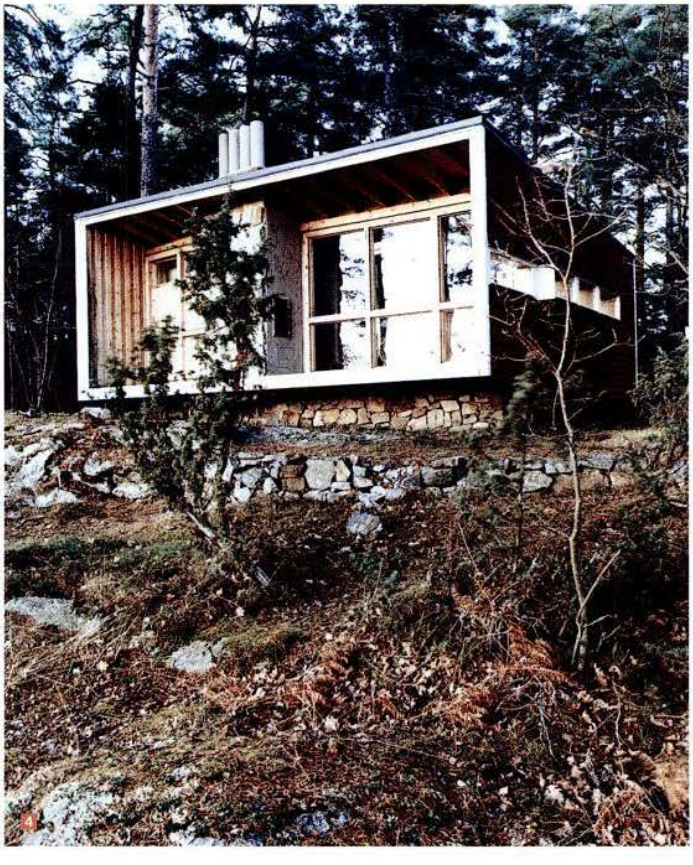
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Edited by Deborah Bishop

Illustration by Craig Bromley

JUST DIG IN

"I am not the type who wants to go back to the land; I am the type who wants to go back to the hotel." —Fran Lebowitz

The world is divided into those who garden and those who would prefer to sit in the yard doing anything else. But at some point (often coinciding with your first home) the horticultural clock starts to tick and you think there might be something to this business of putting stuff in the dirt and watching it grow. Problem is, that initial eagerness to till the soil is often chased by the weary feeling you get when contemplating learning Italian: Surely, it must be too late?

What with the science (is the soil acid or alkaline? limey or loamy?) and the art (arranging plants is a bit trickier than placing furniture, in that it's harder—though not impossible—to move them if things don't work out), it can be daunting to heave yourself out of the chaise longue. And then there's all that Latin.

Well, according to the experts, the best way to begin gardening is to follow the credo of a certain athletic shoe company, and just dig in. Go to some nurseries and look at the plants (it's no more intimidating than wandering around the wine shop trying to select a Merlot based on the label) and talk to the staff, most of whom are rabid soil muckers eager to share their passion with a potential convert. You might also consider getting your feet wet with a container garden, which lets you flirt wildly with many cultivars without the more serious commitment of breaking ground.

Like most things worth learning, gardening is a trial-and-error kind of endeavor. But unlike more hazardous pastimes (rock climbing, hang gliding, knife throwing), the dangers of misplacing the fig tree or crowding the fritillaria rarely hurt for more than a season, while the rewards are self-propagating.

—Deborah Bishop

WHAT'S MY ZONE?

Before you get your hands dirty, you need to know where you live, climatically speaking. Or, more precisely, where your plants will be living.

The USDA Zone Map parses the country into 11 major plant-hardiness zones and gives the approximate range of minimum temperatures for each. (If a plant is described as hardy to zone 7, for example, it is likely to survive in that and most higher zones.)

That said, knowing your zone is a sound starting point for figuring out what will thrive and what will perish, what can go directly into the ground (and when), and what should be cultivated in a container—especially when you factor in environmental features such as sun, snow, rain, wind, and elevation, and the drainage capabilities of your soil. —D.B.

Zone 10

Ron Lutsko, principal, Lutsko Associates, Landscape Architects, San Francisco, California

San Francisco–based landscape architect Ron Lutsko is that rare entity within his profession: a true plantsman. His quarter-acre home garden and nursery in the East Bay is his living laboratory.

What goes on in your own garden?

My garden is very experimental and rich in species. I travel extensively throughout the West, collecting seeds of native plants, many rare and endangered. I grow them in my nursery and try them out. Once something succeeds in my garden, I can integrate it into our projects.

What are you doing during a typical March and April?

Given the Mediterranean climate, our peak bloom time is February through the first part of April, and we're enjoying the results of work done in the fall. Out here, ideal planting times are between October and January, which many people don't realize.

Any advice for people just starting to get into gardening?
Before you plant, evaluate the sun and shade patterns, and establish a place that you're going to water regularly and those you're going to water infrequently. I see people getting so frustrated. They put a drought plant next to a wet plant next to a sun plant. . . . You can't just stick things in the ground and hope for the best.

Zone 8

Dan Hinkley, director of collections, Heronswood Nursery, Kingston, Washington
Dan Hinkley founded Heronswood Nursery, a mecca for gardeners throughout the Pacific Northwest, 13 years ago. He is the author of *The Explorer's Garden: Rare and Unusual Perennials* (Timber Press).

Let's fast-forward to March and April. What's going on?
Our garden is pretty much a continuum here in the Northwest, and we're very into winter plants, so our garden has interest year-round. I'm actually sort of jealous of people who live in zones where you get to put it all to bed and retreat inside! We're fertilizing. Staking our perennials. Doing heavy pruning.

What thrives up there?
Ours is a modified Mediterranean climate. Drought-tolerant plants love it, as long as they can resist the cold—we get some hard freezes. But for the most part it's quite temperate. I do think the palette of available plants vastly underestimates our capabilities, and at Heronswood we're always working to expand that palette.

Any advice for people who feel intimidated about starting to garden?
Whether it's tap dancing or drinking wine, you're not going to learn the subtleties until you get your hands dirty, so just start. If it brings satisfaction, then continue. The process is meant to make you happy—if you're doing it out of worry, then you're doing it for the wrong reason.

Zone 9

Jeanette Hardy, garden writer, New Orleans, Louisiana
The co-author of *The Gardens of New Orleans* (Chronicle Books), Jeanette Hardy built her garden from scratch in the historic Faubourg St. John neighborhood.

What was your garden like when you moved into your house?
There was a laundry shed, a fig tree, and a clothes line. I was working for the city desk of the *Times-Picayune* and I asked to switch to the garden beat so that I could learn on the job. And I got very interested in native plants and what went into old New Orleans' gardens.

For many of us, a Southern garden is a scented garden.
Oh, yes. I have a long row of sweet olives, these little white flowers that give off the most fabulous perfume. And night-blooming datura, with the big white flowers. And I'm mad about gingers, especially the old varieties. Butterfly ginger is the most historical because it was planted in patios in the French Quarter. And masses of old garden roses, with a fragrant peppery scent.

What are you doing in early spring most years?
If we've had a hard freeze, I'm up to my knees in muck in March cleaning up. But by late April things are looking fabulous and blooming away. Most of my actual work takes place in fall.

Any advice for people who want to embark on a garden, but have more desire than experience?
Think about the history of the place—visit gardens and learn from what you see. And do try to work alongside an experienced gardener. I spent hours helping a friend of mine who is just a wonderful gardener, and I probably learned more from that than anything else.

Zone 9

Mary Irish, garden writer, Scottsdale, Arizona
Mary Irish ran the plant introduction program at Phoenix's Desert Botanical Garden and wrote the book—two, actually—on creating arid Edens. Her first book with husband Gary, *Agaves, Yuccas and Related Plants* (Timber Press), was followed by *Gardening in the Desert* (University of Arizona Press).

What is spring like in the desert?
March is high spring—a color explosion. Everything is blooming. And that continues into April, when the native trees and all kinds of cacti come into bloom.

Are you doing any planting?
We mostly plant in the fall, but this is when we put in the subtropicals, because they are a little cold-sensitive. And we start working on warm season vegetables in early April, like melons, okra, black-eyed peas, eggplant. Tomatoes are planted in the first week in February and they're ready to harvest in May! By June it's too hot. It's the summer that's challenging, not the winter. Using well-adapted desert plants that thrive all year long—succulents, agaves, yucca, cacti—has finally caught on. I'm a crusader for summer-dormant, winter-blooming bulbs—they're considered pests out on the West Coast. And we grow a lot of things as winter annuals that are used for summer color elsewhere—things like snapdragons and sunflowers. So our timing is very different. Although at the garden shows all you see are the same ten plants, there are hundreds of things that do wonderfully here.

What's your best advice for gardeners new to the desert?
Garden where you live! Just accept the place and go with what works, because you *can* build gorgeous gardens here. So many people fight it and do it the way they're used to, and that's a recipe for disaster.

Zone 5

Katherine Whiteside, garden writer, Garrison, New York
The author of *Classic Bulbs* (Villard) and *Forcing, Etc.* (Workman), Katherine Whiteside is as famous for her spectacular indoor winter garden as for her organic ornamental garden, which has been featured in numerous publications.

You get some real weather where you live?
Yes. We're in the Hudson River Valley, zone 5. Our frost happens at the end of September and we can't plant tomatoes until after Memorial Day. Having said that, in November my garden is full of flowers. I can always pick fresh flowers at Thanksgiving, even if there's snow on them.

What about March and April?
My indoor bulb garden is totally exploding. Narcissus, early-blooming-species tulips, tiny sapphire blue scilla, antique crocus, and amaryllis in water, so I can see the roots go down. It's like an antique botanical print, with the roots, bulb, stem, and flower. And I also force all kinds of fruit branches.

And outdoors?
I'm out in the garden by Easter. Although the ground is still frozen, there's a lot you can do, like pruning. And there's about 500 bulbs coming up, and it's just incredible.

Any advice on how to embark on the gardening life?
Start small, and build from there. My gardens have gotten progressively larger and I don't have a gardener; I do every single thing myself. And look for a really good nursery, where you're made to feel welcome. Don't just rush in and decide that you're going to buy this and that. Really look at everything and then tell the person, "I'm just starting out. I have an area that's ten feet by ten feet, I love bright colors, and I'm willing to learn." And read the plant catalogs!

THE OBSESSION by Ken Druse

Although many visions of domestic paradise include a velvety sweep of emerald lawn, these are not home-grown fantasies but colonial imports. England's native grasses luxuriate in their lush, maritime climate—neither too hot nor too cold. In America, the closest thing we have to "natural" lawn is the short-grass prairie of the plains states, which left to its own devices turns straw brown. What we think of as lawn is actually pasture, and it is this pastoral scene that we equate with "natural"—even if it does require massive quantities of water, fertilizer, and effort.

William Kent began creating lawns by design in England early in the 18th century, a practice popularized by his protégé, Lancelot "Capability" Brown. At estates such as Blenheim Palace, Brown obliterated formal gardens to create a "natural" landscape: irregularly shaped ponds surrounded by soil-mounded hills and scooped-out dales flocked with lawn. Sheep did the mowing and fertilizing; the lush climate did the rest.

Until the lawn mower forced them into retirement, sheep also maintained the great lawns of America, such as Monticello, Mount Vernon, and the Sheep Meadow in New York's Central Park—whose designer, Frederick Law Olmsted, took his nod from Capability in leaving no stone unturned. Far from simply preserving open green space for the park, Olmsted created it, estimating that if all the earth moved during construction were spread evenly over the park's 843-acre surface, it would be more than four feet deep. But it was with his 1868 design for Riverside, a planned community outside of Chicago, that Olmsted sparked the suburban lawn obsession by setting each house back 30 feet from the road with no dividing wall in between. Instead, the front lawns converged into a seamless river of green, at once breaking down barriers and creating new demands for maintenance and conformity.

During the post–World War II building boom, the new democratic optimism called for mirror-image dwellings fronted by an uninterrupted swath of green. I am not sure how achieving the most perfect lawn became a status symbol, but the competition might have been fueled by a need for homeowners to express some vestige of individuality in a cookie-cutter environment. A friend of mine remembers growing up on Long Island, New York, and being told never to walk on his family's—or any other—lawn. The lawn was like the living room, kept perfect for very special occasions, as if a foreign head of state might visit a home in Massapequa.

Of course, a huge industry feeds on the frenzy to maintain these mini-fairways: Per acre, more fertilizers, fungicides, and pesticides are dumped on American lawns each year than on any other agricultural crop. And it takes about 300 million gallons of gasoline just to mow these grass "crops" every year. The more you feed a lawn, the faster it grows, the more water it needs, the more it requires mowing: a life sentence of perpetual care and toxic waste. I shudder whenever I see a sign posted by a lawn care company warning children, pets, and pregnant women not to walk on a treated lawn for at least two days.

So, is there some quick-fix, indestructible ground cover that requires no maintenance but allows us to walk, sit, and sprawl upon it? AstroTurf, I suppose. For there really is no such thing as *no* maintenance when it comes to living things, which explains why so many magic-bullet grasses have come and gone.

At many garden centers you can now find "endophyte-enhanced" grass seed—fungus-infected seeds that become vigorous plants despite minimal fertilization and irrigation. Available in the same grass vari-

PHOTOS BY JOHN D. CUNNINGHAM / VISUALS UNLIMITED (GRASSES); WALLY EBERHART (CRABGRASS); STEPHEN JERROM (GLASS GRASS)

LAWN THEORY

The American Lawn
Georges Teyssot, editor
Princeton Architectural Press, 1999
Historians, theorists, and architects leave no blade unturned in examining the lawn from various perspectives and situating it "on the boundary between utopian ideal and dystopian nightmare."

Redesigning the American Lawn
F. Herbert Bormann, Diana Balmori, Gordon T. Geballe
Yale University Press, 2000
Americans plant, weed, water, spray, and mow some 31 million acres of lawn; this book offers some serious sustainable alternatives without sacrificing a grassy place on which to picnic, play, roll, and loll.

The Lawn: A History of an American Obsession
Virginia Scott Jenkins
Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994
Traces the rise of the lawn from colonial times to the

eties we favor now, the plants compete with weeds, are resistant to insects, and recover quickly if damaged. Even more promising are "dwarf" lawn grass varieties being developed, which would require less frequent mowing. And many places, including Austin, Texas, are enjoying varieties of native Buffalo grass *(Buchloe dactyloides).* But alas, this beautiful, low-maintenance plant will not stand up to foot traffic, and thus is not a candidate for an impromptu soccer field.

Two of the most frequently recommended "alternative" lawns, English ivy and *Vinca,* or periwinkle, are on many states' environmental hit lists of noxious weeds. In any event, ivy, *Vinca,* and that plastic, army-green favorite of suburbia, *Pachysandra,* can't be trod on—grass lawn is the only living thing that can take the use and abuse of a family picnic or the Green Bay Packers.

Having said that, at my house in northwest New Jersey I *do* have a sort of lawn—a curious admission, given my railing. But far from a velvet putting green, my 90-foot-diameter shag rug of a lawn could best be described as a cropped meadow. It's composed of many kinds of native and exotic grass species and plenty of weeds—broadleaf thugs such as clover and plantain—all duking it out for space (people spend a fortune killing what I put into my lawn). This mélange would erupt into a full-blown meadow except that I mow it about once a week. I never feed the lawn, use any synthetic chemicals, or even water it, and yet it stays green to the end of summer. It doesn't stain clothes like some grass and clover. It is not damaged by Scout, my dog. And kids can play on it all they want—and do. I love it. And there is no need to post any warning signs.

Ken Druse is an award-winning writer and photographer whose current best seller is Making More Plants *(Clarkson Potter).*

SPLENDOR IN THE GLASS

There's a ground cover that requires no watering, weeding, feeding, or mowing. It sparkles as it catches the light and is hardy in all zones. It can stand up to footsteps, rainfall, droughts, snowfalls, and freezes. And it even comes in a flotilla of brilliant colors. But not only that, it's recycled, too!

Glass Garden, Inc. was founded a few years ago by landscape designer (and recent Rome Prize winner) Andrew Cao and his partner, Stephen Jerrom, whose original glass garden at their home in Los Angeles' Echo Park caused quite a stir. Seeking to capture some of the images from his childhood in Vietnam—the rice terraces, banana groves, and surrealistic fields of mounded salt—Cao found that recycled crushed plated glass proved the perfect counterpoint for the lush plantings of succulents, agaves, orchids, and banana trees. On either side of an earth-colored bottle-glass path rise subtly shaded yellow-green mounds that catch the light. Glass glints from the concrete walls in which it is embedded, appears as garden sculpture in the form of large cobalt-colored clumps, and is peaked into pyramid shapes to evoke the salt mounds of Cao's youth.

Since then, he and Jerrom have designed gardens and created installations for the Chateau Marmont Hotel, Mandalay Bay Hotel, the Los Angeles County Museum, Chaumont Sur Loire, and many private commissions. At one residence in the Hollywood Hills, a river of frosted glass cuts a swirling ribbon through the property until finally it disappears into the distance.

Today, in addition to designing gardens, the company sells recycled glass by the 50-pound bag or ton. While price depends upon color (red, for example, is more scarce and thus more expensive), it's the freight that really adds up. A ton of glass will cover a 200-square-foot area about an inch deep; 45 tons went into Cao and Jerrom's garden. And in case you're wondering, it's perfectly safe to walk on, even with bare feet. The glass has been tumbled to a smooth finish and feels quite lovely underfoot.

—D.B.

For more information on Glass Garden, Inc.'s projects and products, which include glass pebbles, tiles, and pavers, check out www.landscape2go.com.

über-industry it is today, and how a well-tended (read: tortured) lawn came to be a badge of good citizenship.

Landscape Design: A Cultural and Architectural History
Elizabeth Barlow Rogers
Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2001
For those with grander aspirations than just making their front lawn green, Rogers dishes the dirt on landscaping. This in-depth overview takes the reader from prehistoric caves to avant-garde earthworks, providing the inspiration and information for any aspiring Fredrick Law Olmsted to push his or her garden to a (much) higher level.

Home on the Range
Rick Miller
Public Access Press, 2000
This nifty little book takes a humorous look (tinged with a healthy dose of amazement) at America's obsession with the lawn. The self-portraits of the author at the driving range make this a must-have for any library.


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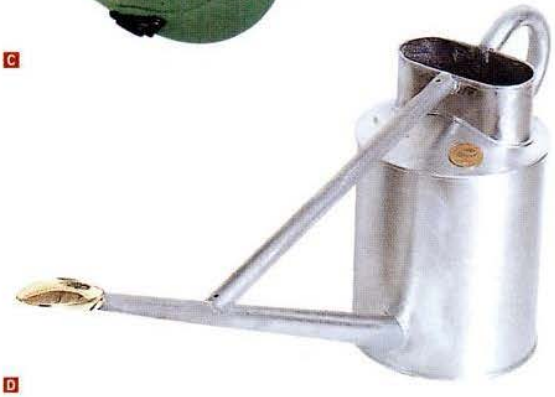
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WHAT YOU REALLY NEED

Some of the best cooks we know create magic with a few basic pots, some wooden spoons, and a lot of intuition. So it is with gardeners and their own *batterie de jardin.* In both kitchen and garden, the best way to determine whether you need a new tool is to come up against a task that requires more than what's at hand. And when you go looking for, say, that poacher's spade, you'll find that options, prices, and quality vary widely.

The better hand tools have solid forged (rather than stamped) heads that won't break or bend when the going and the soil get tough, and which attach to ash or hickory handles with double-strapped or forged sockets rather than being driven in with a tang. These tools do cost more, but they are less likely to end up in a landfill after their first bout of double-digging some clay-plagued soil.

Speaking of which, before you spend a dime on tools or plants, you must take a serious look at your dirt! Asking a plant to move into dead, slow-draining soil is a sure way to kill a relationship before it's barely off the ground. The best way to find out what is lurking, or lacking, in your soil (and thus what amendments will rally it back to life) is to call your local extension agency, usually affiliated with a university. They will give you instructions for sending in a soil sample and respond with a detailed analysis and suggestions for turning your dirt into rich, fertile, loamy soil—the ideal balance of clay, silt, and sand—a place a plant can put down roots and call home. —D.B.

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A Solid-Forged Border Fork
This smaller, more wieldy version of the traditional English garden fork is brilliant for preparing most beds and borders and digging up root crops.

B Thorn-Resistant Gloves
Impervious to outdoor hazards, these latex-coated gloves repel water while the emerald color screams winter formal.

C Knee Pads
These slightly pornographic strap-ons take the strain off the knees during extended kneeling on the hard, wet ground.

D Haws Watering Can
English design by Haws distributes weight evenly when full, and the long neck works into tight spots with ease.

E Felco #2 Pruners
They're so damn Swiss—precise, efficient, beautifully machined, and ultra-ergonomic—and no self-respecting gardener should be without a pair.

F Hand Fork
The angled head is Japanese in origin, and a nifty design for cultivating in close quarters.

G Biostack Composter
Gardens love leftovers, which this plastic box handily converts into organic matter that feeds your soil and helps it drain better.

H Sandvik Bypass Lopper
When the branch is too large for the hand pruners and too small for the saw, bring out the loppers. These shear through branches up to two inches in diameter.

I Hand Trowel
Many gardeners manage 90 percent of their work with a single solid-forged trowel—cultivating, planting seedlings, patting down soil, weeding dandelions, and adding soil amendments.

J Wizard Rake
This whisper-quiet rake doubles as a broom and is gentle enough to use under plantings without fear of dislodging shallow root systems.

K Silent Reel Mower
Because it doesn't run on fossil fuel, this sturdy Midwestern product is not only P.C., it helps keep one's swath of grass reasonably scaled.

L Poacher's Spade
This light, deft tool goes by many names, including Perennial Spade and the rather wonderful Rabbiting Spade, due to its ability to slip into the soil and pop out plants. ■

THE SOURCING PAGE (TAUPE)


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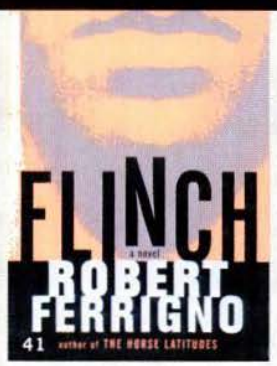

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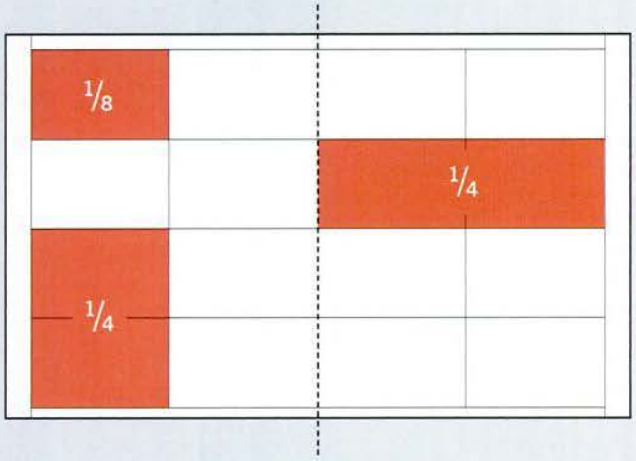

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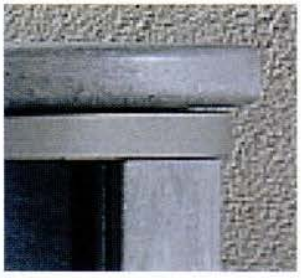

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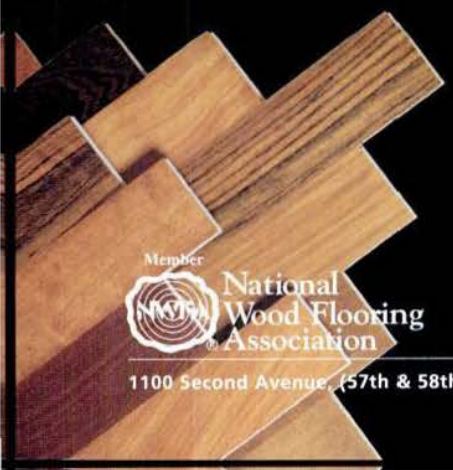

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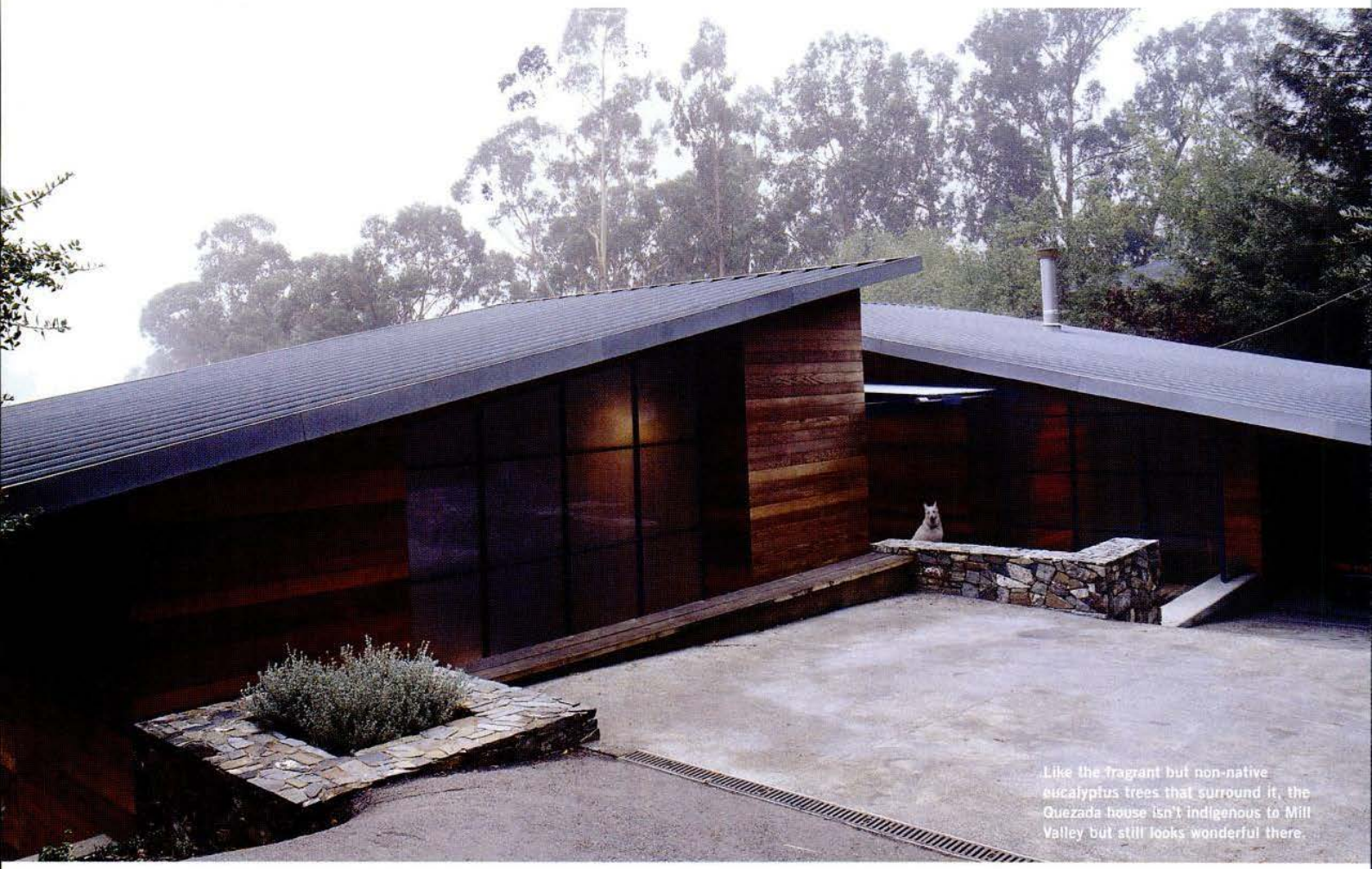


Like the fragrant but non-native eucalyptus trees that surround it, the Quezada house isn't indigenous to Mill Valley but still looks wonderful there.

PHOTO BY KELLI YON

THE UN-CRAFTSMAN

When I first caught a glimpse of the metal shed roofs installed on this house in Mill Valley, it was raining out, and I just stood there clapping.

You might think that in such a liberal Northern California town there would be plenty of innovative architecture to celebrate, but truth be told, there really isn't. Bungalows and Mediterranean villas prevail in Mill Valley, and the tendency is to engineer quaintness by favoring these styles. Despite this fear of the new, architects Fred and Cecilia Quezada have managed to build a modern dream home that illustrates how innovative architecture can be beautifully contextual.

In 1995, the Quezadas bought what the neighbors referred to as "the tear-down" and slowly began work on a rigorous remodel. Before they began, Fred recalls, "you could see through the walls, and when it rained, water would stream down the inside of the windows." Yet the house still had a certain charm. So instead of starting over, they opted to expand and refine what was there. "It was really important for us to keep the integrity of design and materials of the original house," Cecilia explains.

A master plan began to take shape that preserved the foundation, concrete floors, fireplace, and general layout of the original house. What the couple added was a second room that houses a master bedroom and studio. The space in between the two structures functions as a deck and the two volumes make the house seem less massive. "It was all about roof architecture," says Fred of the way the two roof planes interact with one another, and relate to the gently sloping wooded site.

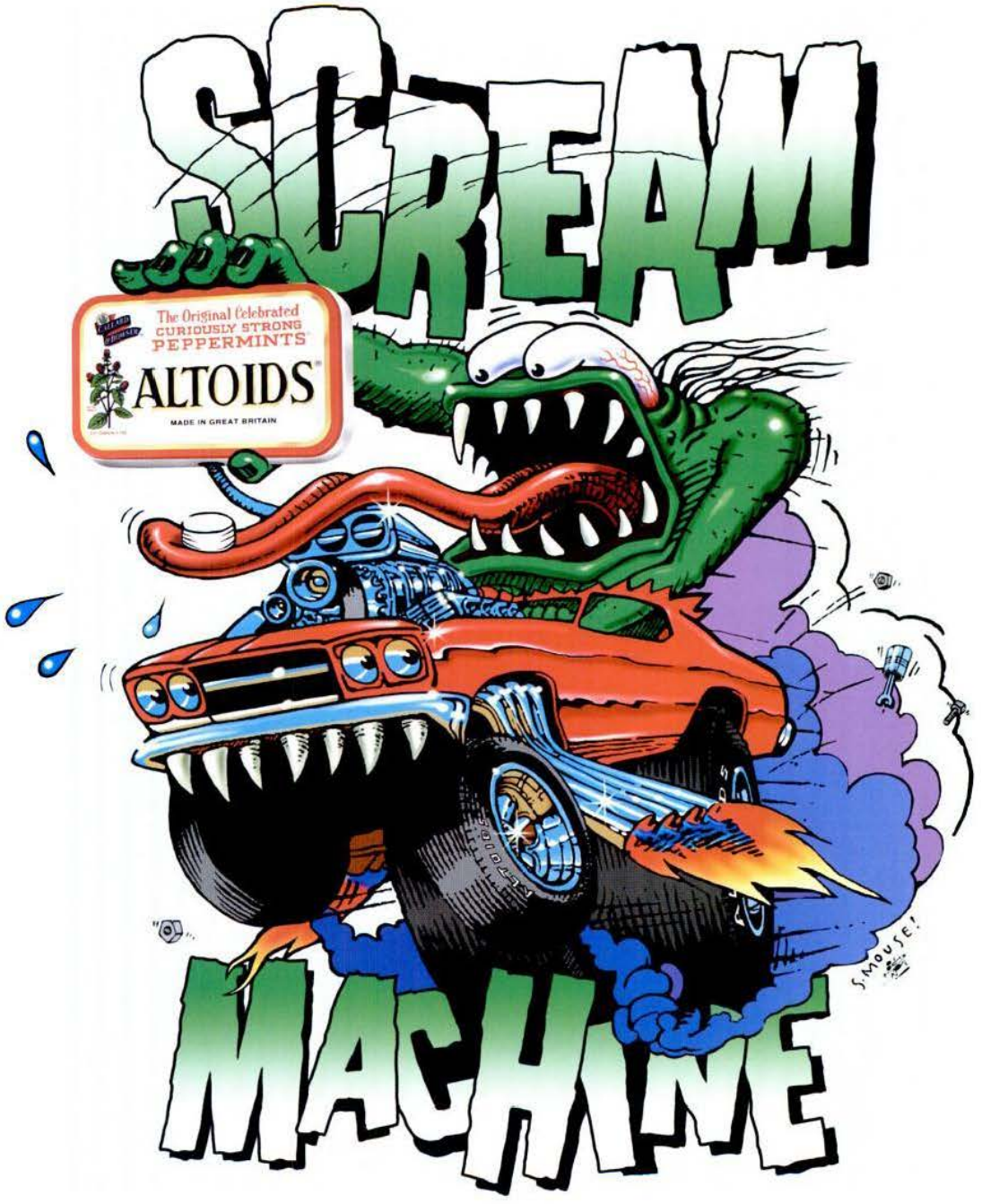
The Quezadas' attention to detail is evident through what is absent. You don't see any of the vents or plumbing stacks that spread like measles across a typical roof, for example. (They've been concealed in the eaves.) And there are no trim boards at the corners of the siding, giving the house a crisp appearance. The roof material, Galvalume, will develop a beautiful patina as it ages.

Still, one neighbor recently asked if the house would eventually be painted.

Fred and Cecilia take these types of questions in stride. Now that the home is complete, most people respond favorably to their decidedly un-Craftsman-like home. "People are frightened by modern design," Cecilia explains—until they see it well done.

Then, they too may just stand in the rain and applaud.

—LARA HEDBERG DEAM



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