

dwell

AT HOME IN THE MODERN WORLD

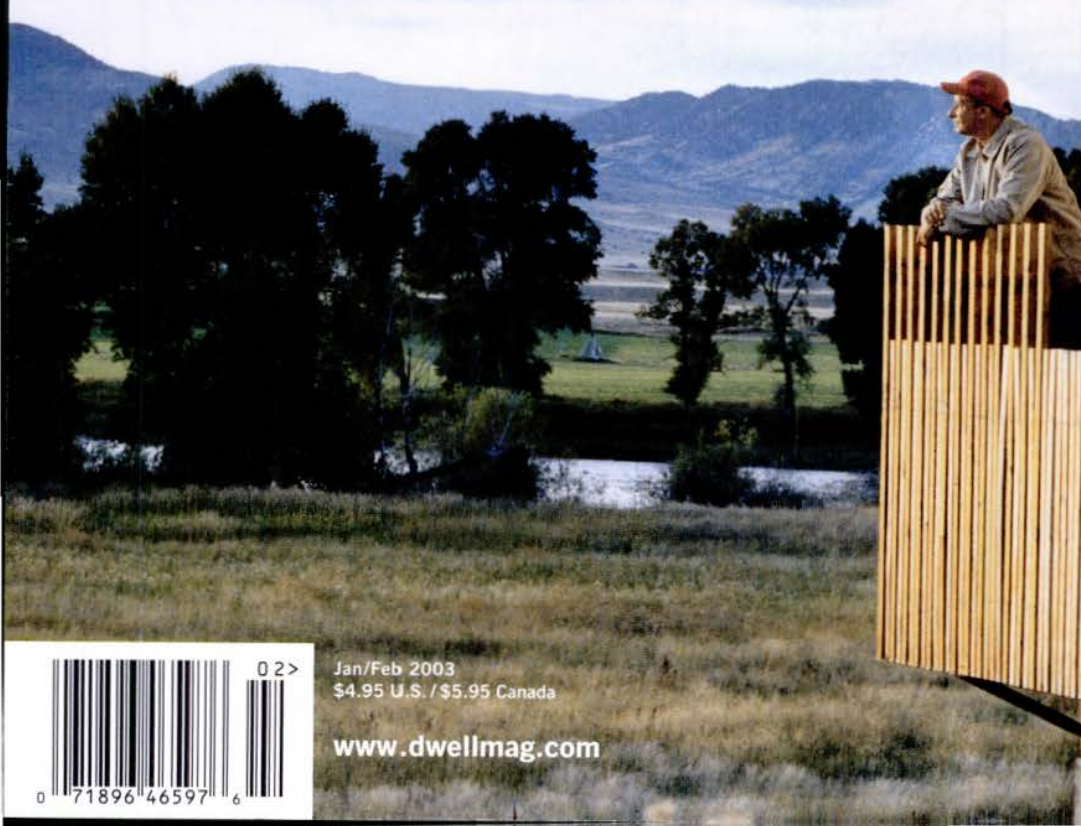
How to Find
an Architect

Introducing the
Dwell Home

Spectacular Settings

10 Houses with a
Point of View

Home Entertainment 101



Jan/Feb 2003
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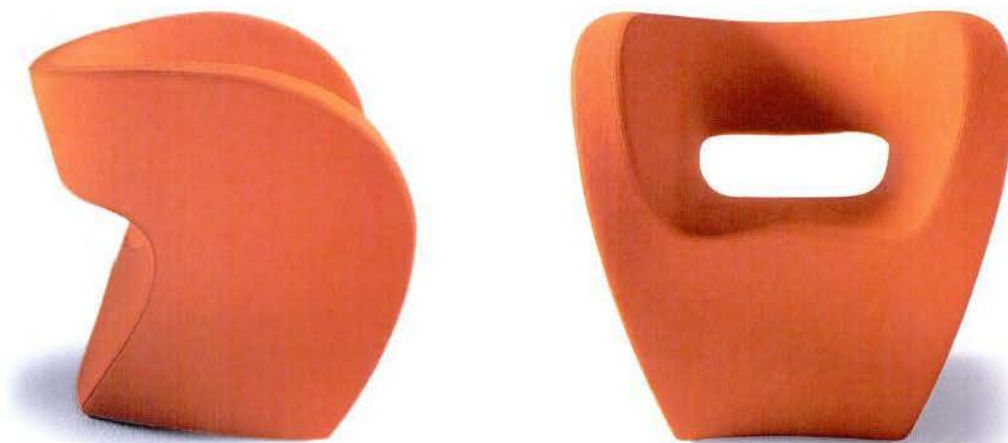
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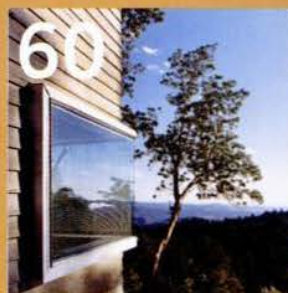
Editor's Note

With its poolside precipice and ingenious engineering, Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #22 inspires further prefab dreams when our new editor-in-chief, Allison Arieff, pays a visit.

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Whose Woods Are These?

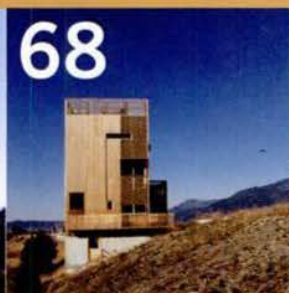
Lucien den Arend, a Dutch-Finnish sculptor of landscapes that are unsettlingly natural yet unnatural, elucidates the undefinables of his rare trade.



Woodside, CA

Deep in the Merry Prankster forests of Woodside, CA, Bill and Karin Moggridge inhabit a structure that blends in among conifers, ocean breezes, and things that go bump in the night.

By Andrew Wagner / Photos by Catherine Ledner



Livingston, MT

Now a record executive, Ron Gompertz has also been a ski instructor. Yet nothing prepared him for the vast Montana landscape outside—and framed by—the windows of his unique retreat.

By David Hay / Photos by Chris Shipman



Vancouver Island, BC

In the frequently moist Northwest, architects Daly, Genik were inspired by precipitation in its most explosive form—an avalanche—to create a house seemingly born from boulders.

By Emily Hall / Photos by Misha Gravenor

Cover

Transplanted New Yorker Ron Gompertz enjoys the view from his unique tower in Livingston, Montana: "There was a protracted calm here. I found myself saying, 'I could feel at home in this beautiful place.'" Photo by Chris Shipman

**January/February 2003
Contents:
Spectacular Settings**



The Exurban House

Mitchell Schwarzer reports on houses' liaisons with their landscapes, and explains how architects Fernau & Hartman and Stanley Saitowitz are revolutionizing that rapport.



The Bouroullec Brothers

French designers Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec embrace unconventional materials and no small amount of ingenuity to create everything from a plastic portable kitchen to a hut made from wool.

"Designing for land use means solving a different puzzle every time. But no one is doing it. Not realtors or ranchers. It's a great opportunity for architects and planners." —Clark Stevens, page 75

dwell

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Five pages of exhibits, books, products, and tidbits only a liberal-arts major could love—all designed to help you become a more well-rounded individual.

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The earnest work ethic in Ben Franklin's home state is inspiring—especially for two architects who designed and built their own house in Mechanicsburg, PA.

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Introducing the Dwell Home Design Invitational. See what develops when ten leading designers and architects create a prefab prototype for \$175,000.

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In the lush, well-watered woods of Washington State, architects Eggleston Farkas built a peacefully isolated cabin where winter snow skis off the roof.

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Dwell is a great new sexy mag that's not only cool but also has content. This content is something that used to be a European topic. Housing, be it single-family housing or social housing on a large urban scale, has always been part of public culture, linking architecture to everyday society. The awareness of this specific condition and the principally different relationship between architecture and society in the U.S. is something we think about a lot.

Felix Claus
Amsterdam, the Netherlands

First, I love the magazine! I was hoping that your magazine might have information on prefab homes. If you have any information on this subject, please forward it to me. Maybe it would be an interesting story.

Alesia Reynolds
via email

Editor's note: You'll be hearing a lot more about prefab homes in Dwell in the coming year. See page 56.

Having spent two weeks living in a ger far from electricity, telephones, and roads, I can confirm that a ger is one of the world's best tents—but that is as far as it goes. The Mongolians have a saying: "The three best things are a Japanese wife, Chinese cook, and American house!"

Michael Schub
Garrison, New York

Rotenberg—isn't that German for "rotten village"? I call for March 19 to be designated national Rotenberg Day, to keep our architectural gems preserved and appreciated. Thanks for a great magazine and inspiration.

Scott A. Maurer
Denver, Colorado

What a deceitful transaction and accompanying tragic loss ("Showdown at Rancho Mirage," December 2002)! One can only imagine that Mr. Rotenberg will build some obnoxious "faux chateau" or other palatial dwelling to impress his neighbors and residents of Rancho Mirage—to the detriment of the landscape. Perhaps consid-

eration of a permit to replace this priceless structure should be given extremely thorough review by the appropriate city agency to ensure that the replacement edifice will fit in the community!

It is tragic that Rancho Mirage had not taken steps before now to preserve the incredible architecture of the mid-century. My city may not be on the cutting edge; however, our architecture is preserved at all costs.

Sandra Patin
New Orleans, Louisiana

I recently purchased the December issue of Dwell. I was particularly taken by Virginia Gardiner's story on Page Hodel ("Get on the Bus," December 2002). My wife and I are recent transplants to the Upper West Side of Manhattan from Ft. Worth, Texas. Your magazine has sparked new ideas about the simplicity of our former existence once laden with wide-open spaces. Thanks for producing an eye-catching visual publication supported by solid content.

Bob Griner
New York, New York

I recently read your magazine and think it's great. We don't have anything like it in Sweden. Every magazine we have is either very highbrow with no sense of humor or extremely posh for wannabes. Dwell really picked me up! I was very impressed with the quantity of Swedish stuff—from Bo01 to the Skeppshult bike (December 2002)!

Elisabet Näslund
Editor-in-chief, *Möbler & Miljö*
Stockholm, Sweden

I think white has been around for quite a while longer than Karim Rashid's ego ("At H&M, White Is Still the New Black," October 2002). A note to Mr. Rashid: Check out the life and times of Coco Chanel, and while you're at it, buy some new white shoes. Your three-year-whatever Miu Mius or Pradas look way beat.

Dwell, I hope you keep your eyes on what you do best, which is deliver consistently original, insightful, and enjoyable content that stays clear of the design-weenie PR machines.

Michael Shea
Burlington, Vermont

One Giant Leap for Dwell

With this issue, Dwell takes the step readers have been waiting for—we're increasing our frequency! Readers can now look forward to Dwell eight times a year: January/February, March/April, May, June, July/August, September, October, and November/December. Keep your eyes peeled for the same great content on a more frequent basis.



Eames Storage Unit



Aalto Dining Chair



Meinecke Collection



Eames Molded Plywood Chair



Eames Lounge Chair & Ottoman



Goetz Sofa



Capelli Stool



Nelson Coconut Chair



Aalto Lounge Chair



Eames Chaise



Eames Walnut Stool



Nelson End Table



Noguchi Table



Eames Sofa Compact



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Letters

On page 60 of the October issue ("Which House Costs \$120,000?"), you talk about steel construction versus wood construction. I have to say I found it a little misleading. Though it is true steel studs may be a little lighter than two-by-four studs, steel structures generally need cranes to lift support beams and posts into place. Steel buildings have also received considerable criticism as they attract and conduct electromagnetic waves into your home. As for fire-resistance, a steel beam may not burn, but it does lose its structural integrity quicker than a wooden beam. So, as you can see, there are many different views on the subject. It might even make for an interesting article.

Chris Weiss
Oakland, California

I often hear complaints about an apparent lack of culture in Calgary ("Behind the Bungalow," October 2002). If people want to change a city, they have to get involved. Richard Davignon will not create culture in Calgary, as he claims in this article, by renovating his house.

The irony of his opening line, "yogurt has more culture than Calgary," is that Davignon was noticed because he lives in Calgary, an "unlikely city" for this kind of project. Calgary gives him the freedom and opportunity to get noticed. There is both the appetite and money for fresh ideas in this city. I would bet that Davignon would have a lot of success here if he changed his tune and didn't insult his future client base.

Mieka West
Calgary, Alberta

As a charter subscriber, I find *Dwell* to be informative, exciting, and exceptionally well written. I was especially impressed with your coverage of the now infamous Louisville, Kentucky, situation (April 2002) and the follow-up coverage on *dwellmag.com*'s discussion boards. Never have I been more engaged in a story and its particular effects. I implore you to keep up this level of editorial effectiveness and design elegance.

My only concern is that you sometimes fail to give interior details on many of the wonderful projects that you feature. For instance, in "How to Build a House for \$145,000" (August 2002), many exterior shots and production shots were shown, but there were no shots of the interior.

I'm sure many people are intrigued by this project, and would like to know more about this option, but it was impossible to get a functional sense of the interior space and how it relates to how its occupants will live.

Byronn Wilson
Birmingham, Alabama

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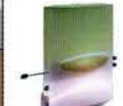
Le Corbusier chair



Rugs



Glass vanity



Color adjustable sconce



Chia stool



Tine sofa bed



Barcelona chair and ottoman



Expandable glass table / leather chairs



Techno leather sofa



Brushed nickel platform bed



Le Corbusier sofa



Net PC desk



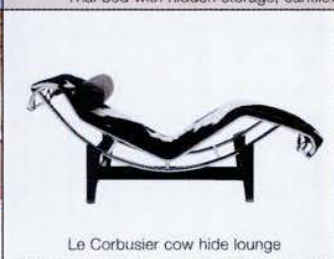
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Letters

Contributors

Iain Aitch ("What We Saw at 100% Design") is Dwell's London contributing editor. Aitch has written for the *Guardian*, the *London Evening Standard*, and the *Independent on Sunday*. He is at work on a travel book about England titled *A Fête Worse Than Death*.

New York-based design editor and writer **Raul Barreneche** ("Ant Chairs and Artichoke Lamps") is a frequent contributor to Dwell. He is coauthor of *House: American Houses for the New Century*, and is at work on a new book on tropical modernism, due out from Universe next fall.

Trained at Art Center College of Design, photographer **Misha Gravenor** was awarded *Photo District News'* 30 Under 30 award in 2000. His client list includes Hewlett Packard, *Fortune*, *Worth*, and *Details*.

David A. Greene ("Better Viewing Through Chemistry") lives in Los Angeles, where he writes for Dwell and *Modern Painters*, and performs sketch comedy on TV's *Talk Soup*. He has contributed to numerous publications, including *Artforum*, the *New Yorker*, *Spin*, and the *Village Voice*, as well as *The American Art Book* (Phaidon).

Emily Hall ("The Rough Edge of the World") is visual arts editor of the Seattle weekly paper the *Stranger*. She wrote about Resolute Lighting for the April 2002 issue of Dwell.

David Hay ("Big Dog. Big Sky.") is a Los Angeles-based playwright and journalist. He recently completed the restoration of Richard Neutra's 1942 Bonnet House.

Pasadena-based photographer **Catherine Ledner** ("Just South of the City") is a regular contributor to Dwell, *Fast Company*, *Worth*, *Vanity Fair*, and *GQ*, and has worked for IBM, MetLife, 3M, Goodyear, and Ocean Pacific.

Mitchell Schwarzer ("The Exurban Landscape") is a professor of architecture and visual studies at California College of Arts and Crafts in San Francisco. He is currently completing a book titled *Zoomscape: Architecture, Transportation, and the Camera*.

Photographer **Chris Shipman** ("Big Dog. Big Sky.") shot last month's cover story on Andrea Zittel. His clients include Nike, Apple Computer, and Kate Spade.

Just wanted to offer a brief reflection on my own recent field trip to Detroit. While much of the article "Not Quite New York" (October 2002) describes buildings and places in the city's suburbs, downtown Detroit was my destination.

Jim Rendon is right in pointing out some of Detroit's great old buildings, such as the abandoned railway station and Mies's Lafayette Park redevelopment plan (which, by the way, is still very well occupied), but he forgot to mention that barely any new residences are being built within the city.

While people are moving into the suburbs, Detroit is becoming a destination city. Casinos and entertainment centers supplement the existing office buildings, while the problem of abandoned residences and neglected neighborhoods remains.

Rendon's statement that "despite its crumbling façade, Detroit is a vibrant home to many" seems to reflect more on the suburbs than on

Detroit itself, for I doubt he went too far into the residential areas of the inner city.

Sabine Corpuz
Chicago, Illinois

I feel bad that Neil Chapman thought our ad was shameful ("Letters to the Editor," October 2002). I am not apologizing; rather I am simply saddened that he is so disturbed at the thought of a couple where one person might be older or younger than the other by more than a few years. This is yet another kind of discrimination that my company and I do not subscribe to.

Mitchell Gold
Taylorsville, North Carolina

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Correction: In the December 2002 article "Perpetual Motion: A Modern Nomad's Guide to Life," we somehow omitted Jane

Szita, one of our regular contributors, from the story credits.

Jane wrote all the pieces ending in "J.S." We regret the error.



ARIK Sofa.
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The challenge of creating affordable modern homes cries out irresistibly for elegant solutions. Forty-two years ago, Pierre Koenig came up with a great one (at left). The architects and designers invited to participate in the Dwell Home Design Invitational are sure to deliver many more.

I've Got an Idea . . .

Before I started writing about modern homes, I wrote from an ivory tower. While in academia, I published near impenetrable, jargon-laden tracts on cultural politics that were read by precisely 13 people. If and when I heard from any of them, it usually had something to do with endnotes—or hermeneutics.

Here at Dwell, things couldn't be more different. One of the great things about the magazine is that we've developed not just a subscriber base but a true community of readers. And nothing makes writers and editors happier—and a magazine more vital—than an engaged readership.

A few months back, I heard from a particularly enthusiastic subscriber. He'd just seen Dwell's review of my book on prefab houses and was calling because he was interested in creating a company that would build modern prefab homes in the United States. "Hey," I said excitedly. "I've got an idea. . . ." And the Dwell Home Design Invitational was born (see page 56 for details).

We'd been talking about launching some sort of housing competition at Dwell for awhile, and over the past several months my conversations with architects, developers, builders, and readers helped bring the idea into focus. The invitational was inspired by a lot of things, not least the groundbreaking Case Study House program launched by *Arts & Architecture* magazine in

1945. The impetus of that program was to reinvent the house as a way to redefine living—a concept we think is worth taking up again.

While putting this issue together, I had the opportunity to visit the Stahl house (Case Study House #22), designed by Pierre Koenig. All windows and angles, the ingeniously designed #22 has the whole of Los Angeles at its doorstep. Visitors often ask Carlotta Stahl, who has lived in the house with her husband, C.H., since its completion in 1960, if she misses being able to hang artwork on the walls. She replies, "Look outside! *That* is my art collection."

Koenig designed the Stahl house to highlight not only a view that *Arts & Architecture* called "an expansive and spectacular panorama" but also the possibilities steel prefabrication held for the future of housing. Indeed, Koenig said that his desire "was to make affordable housing for as many people as possible. I live for the day to see these houses popping out of a production line—what a joy that would be!"

We are similarly joyful about the Dwell Home. I look forward to sharing its progress with you in the coming year—and to hearing from you about it.

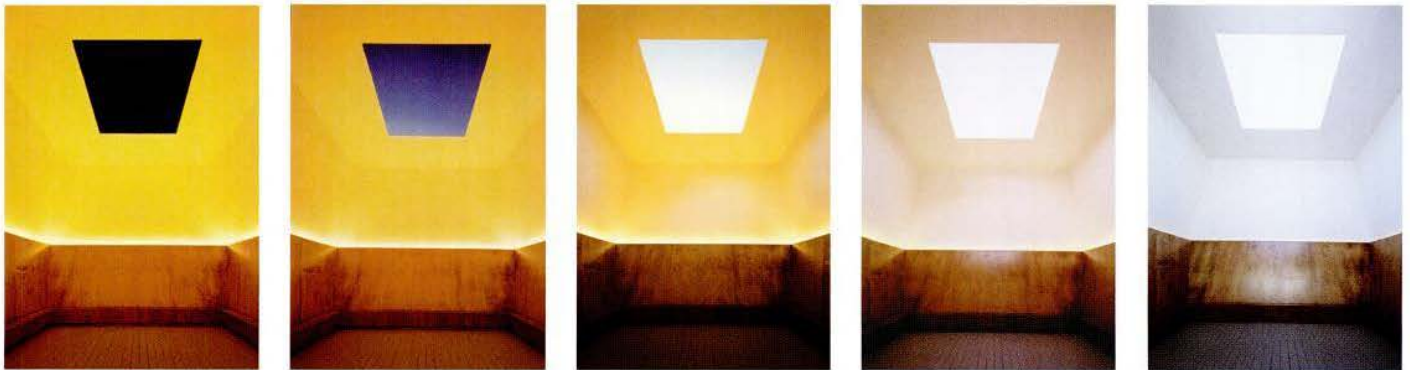
ALLISON ARIEFF, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
allison@dwellmag.com

Vessel's Candela Rechargeable Lamps / By Duane Smith and Stéfán Barbeau, USA

The next time the power goes out, grabbing a Candela off its charging station will surely beat fumbling for that pack of matches you thought was in the drawer next to the stove. The plastic lights illuminate when lifted off the charging station, which operates through magnetic induction (that means no exposed circuitry). You can enjoy their ambient glow for up to five hours—the length of a very respectable dinner party. www.designobject.com

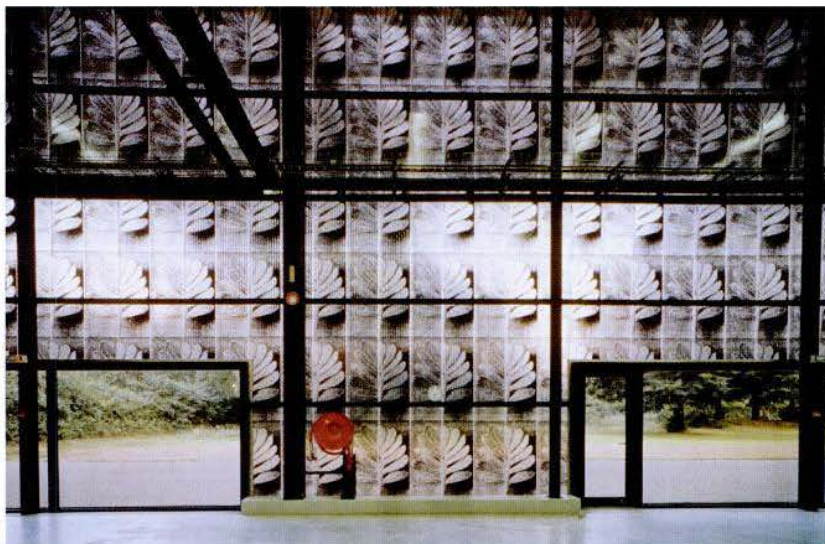


James Turrell: Into the Light / 2 June–30 Apr / Mattress Factory / Pittsburgh, PA / James Turrell has yet to finish his massive *Roden Crater* in Arizona's Painted Desert. But in Pittsburgh, you can subject your eyes to his retinal manipulations, and recline in his *Skyspace* at sundown.



Away from Home / 1 Feb–20 Apr / Wexner Center for the Arts / Columbus, OH

Diehard curatorial elbow grease brings together art from five continents to address concepts of home, peregrination, and sense of place. Among at least ten artists, Franz Ackerman will paint a wall with images of home, expatriation, and maps, and Lee Mingwei will present eerie architectural forms. Lectures and a conference will promote further polemic, while Gregory Green's VW Westfalia van with interactive TV and pirate radio (left) avails itself to the weary. www.wexarts.org

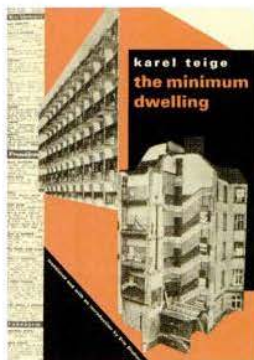


Herzog + de Meuron: Archaeology of the Mind /
 23 Oct–6 Apr / Canadian Centre for Architecture /
 Montreal, Quebec

Designers of the oft-mentioned Tate Modern (“if you’re going to be in London, you *have* to go”), Swiss architects Herzog + de Meuron here shift roles from curatorial backdrop to subject. Guest curator Philip Ursprung employs an approach more closely related to the less fashionable British Museum. The CCA presents Herzog + de Meuron’s work as an “archaeological” catalog that ranges from literal fossils to works of art by Donald Judd and Gerhard Richter to enormous full-scale material models by the architects. Experienced together, these pieces assemble an informative natural history—a physical manifestation of the evolution informing the architects’ ideas. www.cca.qc.ca

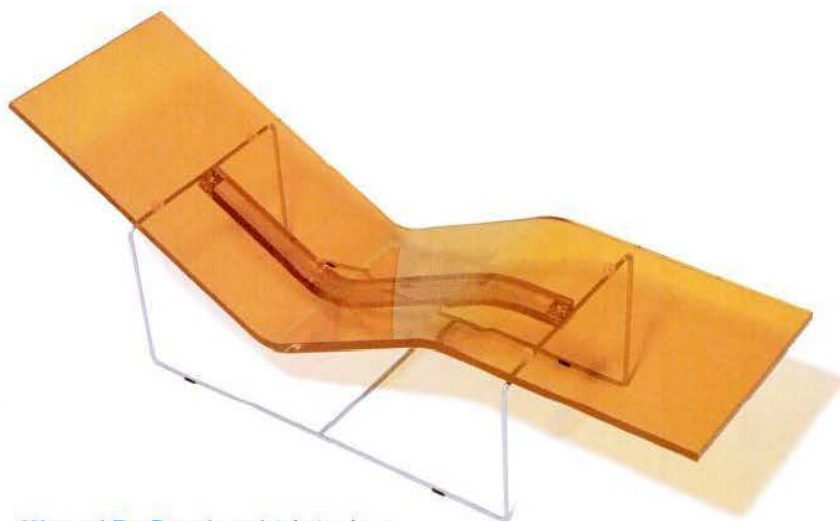
The Minimum Dwelling / By Karel Teige / Introduction and translation by Eric Dluhosch / The MIT Press / \$59.95

Not a book for the faint of heart: First published in Czech in 1932 and only now translated into English, even the cover screams socialist tome. But inside you’ll discover a still-radical theory of modernist living. Dedicated to solving the housing needs of the proletariat, Teige provides a detailed examination of architecture’s relationship with geography, sociology, politics, and economics. Well worth the read—especially to see the Gropius project disparaged as “a boarding house for affluent married couples.”



Tracy Kendall Wallpaper

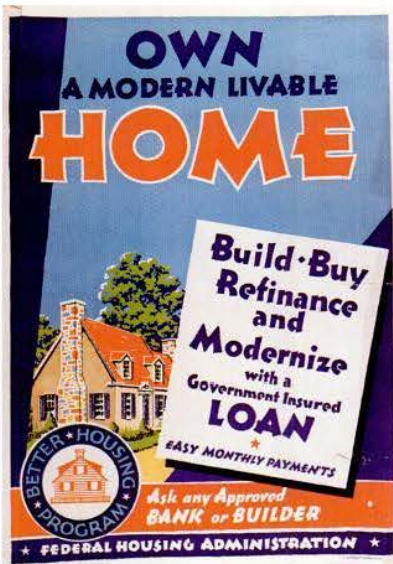
While Tracy Kendall was setting up her booth at last year’s ICFF, she accidentally kicked a sheet of product and left a giant boot mark. “Normally, I try not to kick the wallpaper,” she says, “but I was glad it happened, because it proved the paper’s durability. I got the whole mark off with an ordinary eraser.” Kendall buys top-quality plain wallpaper from European suppliers, then morphs it with printing, sewing, or some combination. Shown above is the subtly textured “In the white room,” also available with multicolored threads and paper. www.tracykendall.com



Wave / By Dornbracht Interiors

This cantilevered chaise lounge is all angles. Although Wave is part of Dornbracht’s line of bathroom furnishings, it’s hard to imagine having the necessary tub-side real estate. That said, why not park it by the pool? The transparent orange acrylic will stand up to the elements, and match your slick Ambervisions to boot. www.dornbracht.com

PHOTO BY MARGHERITA SPILUTTINI (HERZOG + DE MEURON)



Do It Yourself: Home Improvement in 20th-Century America / 19 Oct–10 Aug / National Building Museum / Washington, D.C.

As the national obsession with Bob Vila attests, do-it-yourself isn't a new concept, but more of a multibillion-dollar industry, with Home Depot and Lowes setting up camp on every available tract of American real estate. This exhibit traces how—especially after the Second World War—homes and hardware evolved to accommodate a growing trend of self-reliance in consumer culture. www.nbm.org

Memorex Sphere TV Video-Ball

This television, in an ideal world, would be your second TV. It's not fit for the digitally remastered DVD of *Gandhi* but it's charming for casual programs. A translucent visor hood slides down to prevent dust build-up on the screen. The bright color-coordinated remote won't elude its owners as easily as the plain, slablike ones that master under-your-nose evasion whenever a MasterCard commercial bales too loud. Info at www.target.com.



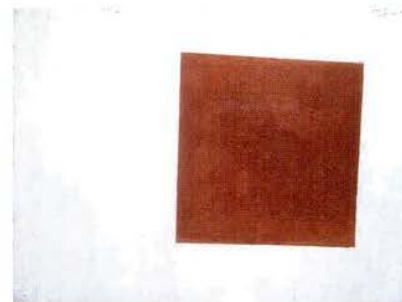
One-Color Graphics: The Power of Contrast / Selected by Chen Design Associates / Rockport Publishers / \$50

In our pixel-obsessed society, it's nice to see a little ink on paper. In this case, very little ink on paper. *One-Color Graphics* features work by graphic designers who see a paltry budget as a challenge, not a burden. They respond with minimalist solutions in which meticulous—or ridiculous—type placement, quirky photography, and cleverness take the wheel away from the sometimes reckless driver that is four-color process.



Bronzeville: Black Chicago in Pictures, 1941–43 / 28 Feb–8 June / International Center of Photography / New York, NY

An epicenter of African-American culture since the early 1900s, Bronzeville was home to the crucial pulse of Chicago's South Side, with great socioeconomic diversity, phenomenal jazz and blues, and lively newspapers such as the *Chicago Defender* and the *Chicago Bee*. Photographs by Russell Lee, Edwin Rosskam, Jack Delano, and John Vachon document a fascinating era of urbanization. www.icp.org



Kazimir Malevich: Suprematism / 3 Oct–11 Jan / The Menil Collection / Houston, TX

Kazimir Malevich created a utopia with his drawings, paintings, models, and written work. He overturned "the ubiquitous icon of the Russian home" (which might not yet be so ubiquitous in Texas). A contemporary of Piet Mondrian and Vladimir Kandinsky, Malevich made his pictures' narratives more accessible sometimes. His structurally disarming "architectons" are fundamental to his arcane "Suprematism." Huh? How? Here's a chance to find out. www.menil.org

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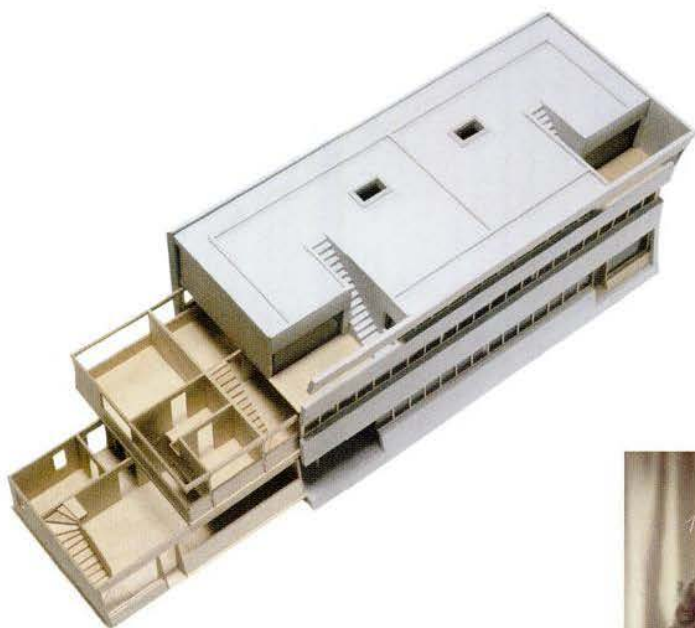
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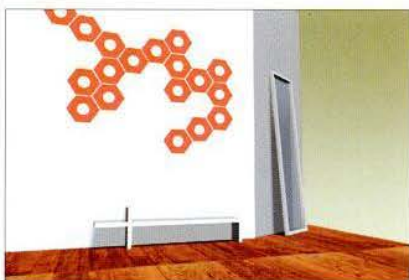
The Cityscape Project / By Ryan Hoagland

Bored with staring at gloomy San Jose, California, through his kitchen window, Ryan Hoagland, a 27-year-old computer engineer, decided to make a change without even leaving his apartment. Armed with two 7-by-11-foot planes of plywood and about 700 twinkling Christmas lights, Hoagland reconstructed the Manhattan skyline outside his window. After a rather complex series of design processes (which only an out-of-work computer engineer would have the time and expertise to orchestrate), his inner New Yorker once again felt at home. Hoagland has detailed the design/build process right down to the type of drill bit he recommends at www.hoagy.org/cityscape.



9=12 New Housing in Vienna / 13 Sept–27 Jan / Architekturzentrum Wien / Vienna, Austria

For a concept housing block in Hütteldorf am Mauerbach, a Vienna suburb, 12 German, Austrian, and Swiss architects have designed freestanding but densely populated buildings, based on a subsidized-housing typology and master plan by Adolf Krischanitz. Concrete plays the major material role in their displays, right down to the poured 1:25 scale model. www.azw.at



blik

Remember when almost every home had at least one wall painted with abstract swirls, stripes, or arrows? During that same era, vinyl footprints and flowers made America's bathtubs a safer place to shower. Owing to both of these traditions, blik's adhesive vinyl decals—available in a range of geometric shapes and colors (red blik LUGS shown here)—bestow any blank wall with a little personality. www.whatisblik.com



Photobooth / By Babbette Hines / Princeton Architectural Press / \$19.95

In the movie *Amélie*, a man finds the love of his life by way of his photo-booth obsession. One imagines that art collector and dealer Babbette Hines has found similar rewards in the pursuit of these enigmatic images. Invented in 1925 by Siberian immigrant Anatol Josepho to allow people to have fun photographic experiences on the fly, the once-ubiquitous photo booth is now most often found in back corners of subway stations. The genre continues to indulge our curiosity, as this selection of over 700 photographs of husbands, sisters, sailors, and sexpots will attest.

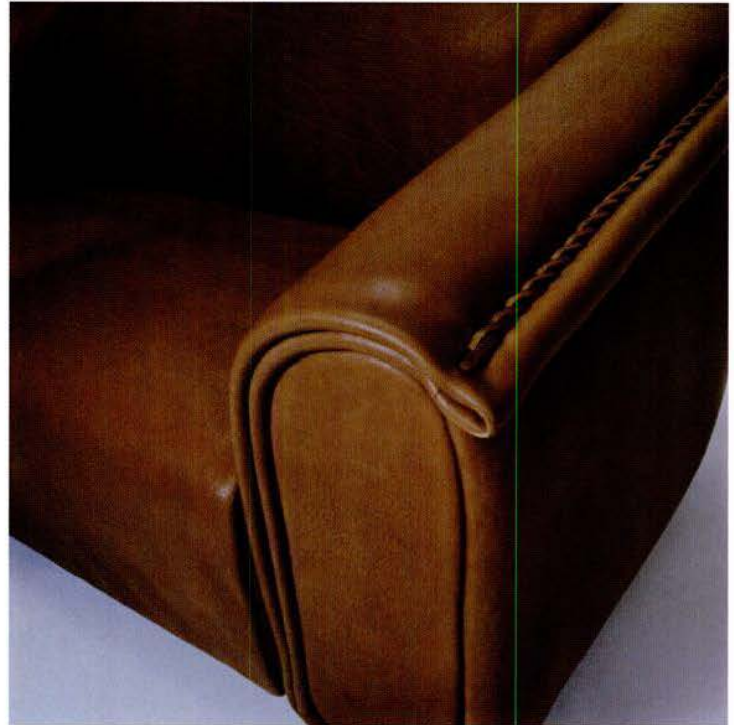
Unknown Quantity / 29 Nov–30 Mar / Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain / Paris, France

Guest curator Paul Virilio applies Aristotle's theory that accidents are "imminent to the thing in itself" to technological advancement—citing disasters from the *Titanic* to Chernobyl. With a wrinkled brow, Virilio watches today's electromagnetic revelations, which could theoretically backfire at the speed of light. Accident-prone installations and disaster-ridden video footage illustrate the Virilian woes. www.fondation.cartier.fr





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Le Citta In/Visibili / 5 Nov–9 Mar / Triennale / Milan, Italy
Invisible Cities, Italo Calvino's mosaic of metropolitan apparitions, has only gained credibility since its publication in 1972. One must only consider Leonia, the city that relishes prodigal generation of rubbish, or Chloe, the city of glances, where no one actually knows each other. For the book's 30th anniversary, Triennale has commissioned a group of Italian artists to build their own visions of an Invisible City. At left is Teodora, the city of "the return of the repressed," by Bonelli Comics. www.triennale.it



Materialism: Alusion

Looking like a slice of Limburger cheese that spent the better part of last year unrefrigerated, Alusion is in fact a metal tile made from recycled aluminum foam. The distinctive look comes from gas bubbles that form in the molten alloy. The resulting foam is then skimmed off the top and formed into tiles. The lightweight but solid Alusion is available in a range of finishes, and there are a wide number of potential applications for it—a one-inch-thick tabletop can support up to 4,000 pounds. www.alusion.com



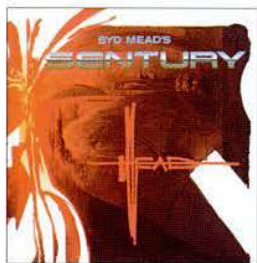
The VW 1-Liter Car

One mizzing day in April, Dr. Ferdinand Piech of Volkswagen broke an uncommon world record on the autobahn. His tortoise-like jet-black car consumed less than one liter of gas per 100 kilometers—239 miles per gallon. A concept car last spring, the 1-Liter is embarking on new developments. The two-seater is not a hybrid, but conserves through engine redesign, weight-saving measures, and aerodynamics. Why do we fight wars over oil? For updates, visit www.vwvortex.com.



Retrofuturism: The Car Design of J Mays / 17 Nov–9 Mar / MOCA / Los Angeles, CA

Car design too often falls into a trap of mediocrity (consider the Aztec). Not for Ford's vice president of design, J Mays. His new Beetle has become a design icon (and has spawned many a lesser imitation—the PT Cruiser, for instance). Through models, drawings, and actual concept vehicles, this fast-paced exhibition explores Mays' contribution to companies like Audi, Volkswagen, and BMW. www.moca-la.org



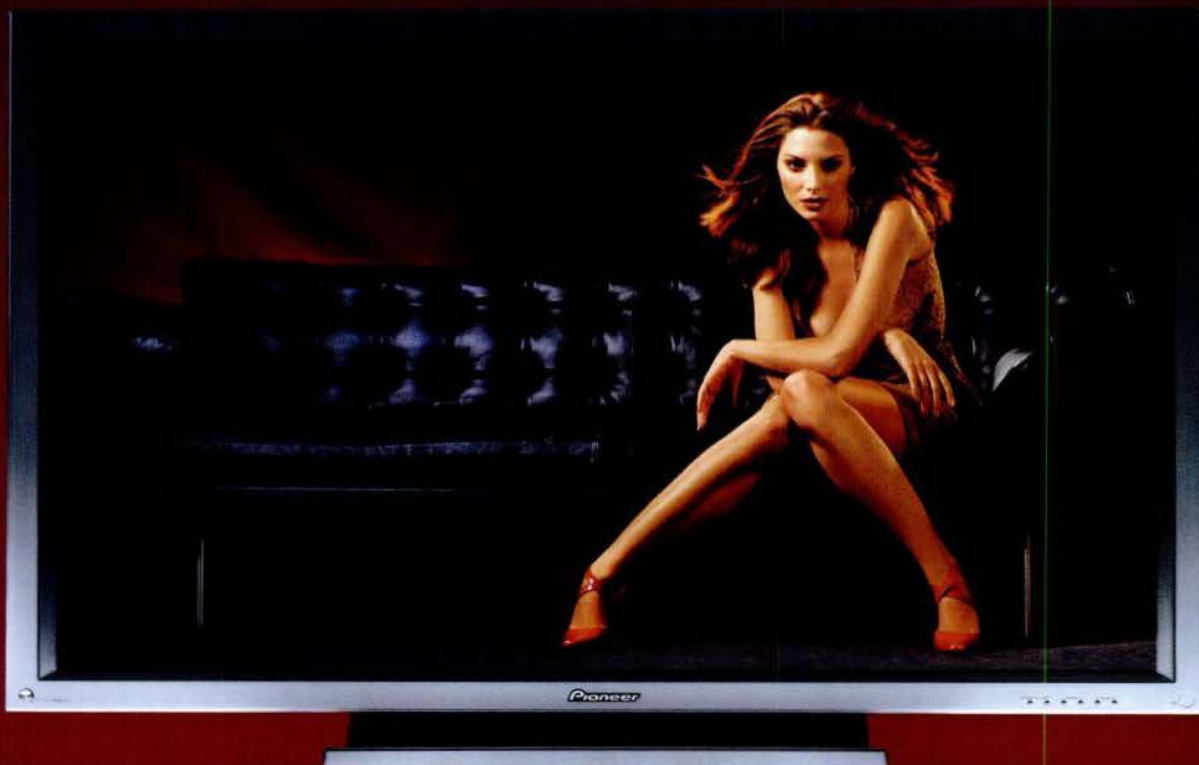
Syd Mead's Century / By Syd Mead / Oblagon, Inc. / \$50

Syd Mead isn't a household name, but there's a good chance you've seen his work in films like *Blade Runner* or even at Euro-Disney. As the title implies, Mead, a tireless visionary, has long been churning out designs for every imaginable thing. This book, with text by Mead himself, roughly documents his last 20 years of work through full-color paintings, drawings, and sketches. Though much of Mead's output remains conceptual, he reminds us that "imagination will create the future."

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Kid-friendly modernism meets rural Mechanicsburg. Architects Suzanne Brandt and Barry Ginder read to their son Matteo, age three, while baby Gabriel takes a nap.

Room(s) to Grow

No one answered when I knocked at architects Suzanne Brandt and Barry Ginder's door in rural Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania (he was picking up lunch, she was feeding their two-week-old son). Not that I minded: The modernist-meets-vernacular structure, atop a ridge on two and a half acres of former farmland, exuded a stillness equal to the tranquillity of the landscape. Like most examples of elegant simplicity, the couple's home had evolved from forethought, hard work, and smart moves—abetted, in this instance, by a talented family.

The smartest moves were made prior to design, first among them the choice of land. Brandt and Ginder's

acreage overlooks a pasture belonging to the neighboring farm and, beyond that, protected wetlands. A line of trees obscures the other adjacent property, blessing the couple with permanently unobstructed views. Smart move number two: recruiting Brandt's mother, Katherine, a real-estate broker, to craft an advantageous property-into-construction mortgage, which enabled them to postpone groundbreaking for a year. This proved crucial, Brandt says, "because we wanted time to design something suited to the site."

As they lived and worked in Philadelphia, the pair spent lunchtimes, evenings, and weekends visiting and ▶

My House

observing. "We'd build little models and carve and turn them, trying to figure out how to frame the views, but also how the sun would travel through the different spaces," Ginder recalls. Their efforts paid off spectacularly: In the finished house, the sun enters the upstairs bedroom and bath through a 40-foot-long clerestory, moves through the first-floor kitchen and dining room (presently their older son's bedroom), floods the double-height living room, and finally streams back through the clerestory and fills the entire space with late-afternoon light.

"We wanted the house's color and depth to come from the materials, rather than from paint and applied finishes," says Brandt. This intent also dovetailed with the couple's interest in using materials and motifs reflective of regional traditions. The architects chose a slightly oversize, handmade brick, produced locally from indigenous clay and finished with a traditional grapevine joint. Then they filled in the house's two cutouts—the front porch and rear deck—with Philippine mahogany, a material that complements the brick in both color and surface animation. Atop it all, they placed a standing-seam metal shed roof, resulting in a brick-and-wood "farm" building that's more Aalto than American Gothic.

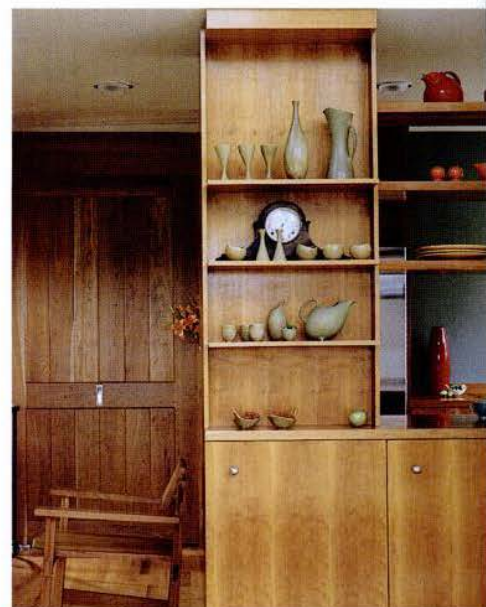
Following the agrarian tradition of building in clusters, the architects opted to begin with a small structure, then add on as their children, needs, and bank accounts develop. "We wanted to spend more on less square footage, so we could build at a higher level of quality," explains Ginder, estimating that, in each of roughly 1,925 square feet, they invested an impressive \$85.

Building small was also a stone thrown at local McMansionizing, yet the thoughtful design makes the house feel much larger than it is. The living room's western wall soars 24 feet, while the elevation opposite, at 18 feet, is almost entirely glass; the porch and deck, both recessed, at once push the interior outward and draw the landscape in. Most stunning are the overscaled windows, with their hypnotizing views. Pointing out the glass rectangle visible from the loft bedroom, Brandt grins: "People call that our Hudson River Valley painting."

Though the architects did substantial work themselves, they benefited immeasurably from the Brandt family's seemingly limitless building skills. One of Suzanne's brothers, Christopher, built the entire house single-handedly, in just over a year of spare time; her brothers Marc, an electrical engineer, and Edward installed the power system. The couple worked with Domnick, Suzanne's dad, to mill and craft the kitchen's cherrywood cabinetry. The price was right: Though Christopher got paid—"not much," Ginder admits—the other Brandts exchanged labor for the couple's design services.

"The house has really been an experiment for us," Brandt observes. It has enabled them to research and test methods, materials, and concepts. Melding modernism and Mechanicsburg, however, wasn't always easy. "We got some not-nice anonymous letters during construction," she admits. "But now, the people who visit love it."

"Especially the FedEx guys," Ginder adds, both pleased and amused. "They all want to have a look." ■



Clockwise from top left: Matteo shows off the finished house; elegant cabinets double as room dividers; and a mahogany ceiling dips to meet the top of the windows. **p. 114**

Make My House Your House

Prefab Foundation

The architects opted for a prefab foundation. Superior Walls of America built made-to-measure panels of Styrofoam-insulated concrete, fused to reinforced-concrete studs with holes for wiring and plumbing and with preattached wood nailers to accommodate drywall. These were trucked in and craned into place in four hours, as opposed to the traditional two weeks. With no curing time required, construction began the next day. www.superiorwalls.com

Heywood-Wakefield

The dining table (preceding page) is a vintage 1949 "Triple Whalebone" from Heywood-Wakefield, which produced solid maple Streamline Modern furniture, finished in "Champagne" or "Wheat," from the 1930s through the '60s. H-W's clean, elegant designs remain enduringly popular. Though original pieces can be expensive and hard to find (the architects got theirs, on the cheap, at a local auction), reproductions are available from the reconstituted company, based in Miami. www.heywoodwakefield.com

Cabinetry

Rather than relying exclusively on walls, the architects used multisided millwork "figural compositions," both to divide spaces and to manipulate the transitions between them—thereby altering perceptions of scale, separation, and directionality. An example: The kitchen shelves reinforce the room's horizontal orientation; glimpsed through a slot from the double-height living room, however, they form a "ladder" that enhances a strongly vertical volume.

Splayed-Leg Chair

The splayed-leg chair was created by Gabe Smith of nodesign, whose New Orleans studio specializes in custom-made wood furniture. The tension produced by the split, torqued legs holds the chair's horizontals in place, resulting in a piece that's handsome, comfortable, and exceptionally solid. Smith and partner Nick Marshall see each design as "an experiment in construction, surface, scale, and function"—making the chair a natural for Brandt and Ginder's home. www.nowarehouse.com

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PHOTOS BY CHRISTINE CAPATILLO / CAMBROOK EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY, JEFF ROYER / CROSSINGS ARCHITECTURE (INSET)

Meals on Wheels

“The intention,” Theodore Galante says, “was to allow everything to happen.” That was the Zen-like challenge facing the architect, the principal of Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Galante Architecture Studio, in designing tables for a room at the Brookside Elementary School in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, in 1996. And it’s a concept that’s present in some of his most intriguing work today. Galante turned to an unlikely inspiration at Brookside—the austere structures of Shaker furniture—and he continues to draw on the Shakers’ unconventional ideas in his new projects.

Galante, working with Crossings Architecture, came up with a table design that marries the ideals of Shaker furniture—asymmetrical balance, functionality, durability, simplicity, and a maximization of space—with a playful nod to the tricycles Brookside’s students ride. The result is plywood tables that efficiently fold out of the way when not in use so the room can function as a dining area, a chapel, a gymnasium, and a space for students’ dramatic productions. During mealtimes, the tables, which seat 12 students and two adults, roll out on bicycle wheels. Besides its space-saving virtues, the design

has a lighthearted quality, one that Galante says encourages kids to remain in “play mode,” even when they’ve left the playground behind, and has enough personality and flair to harmonize with the school’s individualistic approach to education.

The original plan for the seating borrowed directly from a hideaway Shaker laundry rack and called for the tables to slide out along a metal track in the floor. School officials were concerned about the safety of the tracks (“there are a lot of little feet running around the room all the time,” Galante notes), but the final concept still retains a quality the designer loves in the Shaker approach: what he calls the “delight of application.”

Even minor details on the Brookside project follow this philosophy. The tables open and close with the help of small gas shock absorbers—hardware typically found on the hatchback door of a car. To Galante, the automotive influence feels right for a school so close to Detroit. “It’s about using the industry at hand and capitalizing on what’s at your disposal,” he says. “If [a design] can be communicative and expressive, that’s ultimately where we’d like to get to.” ■



In a residential project in Cambridge, Galante is following many of the techniques he employed at Brookside. Hardwood tables rise out of and sink into the floor to respond to flexible needs. He is also putting benches on hydraulic scissor lifts and has created a table that folds down from the wall.

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Dirt Comes Clean

Considering that most suburban development ravages nature, laying down turf and asphalt in its wake, it is uncommon to find new construction that fosters flora and fauna. And then there's the Tucson Mountain House, designed by architect Rick Joy—it may have a minimalist aesthetic, but it is teeming with life.

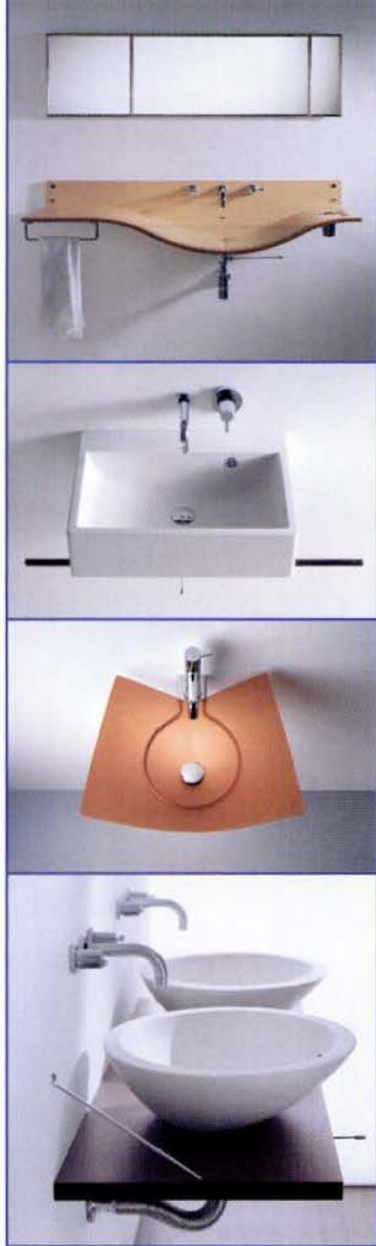
"Rabbits, 60 kinds of birds, two owls, a red-tailed hawk, a gray hawk, javelina (20 or 30 of them), kit foxes, bobcats, white-tailed deer, mountain lions, coatimundi, raccoons. . . ." Tucson artist Kevin Osborn runs down a list of the wild things found around his Sonora desert home. "Skunks," he continues, "all sorts of snakes, Gila monsters, lizards, tarantulas, scorpions." The list is seemingly endless and just as it is about to draw to a close, 20 wild pigs pass in front of the expansive glass window.

The experience is epic—and protracted gazing out the window is impossible to resist. Midway through his description of the construction process of the Tucson Mountain House, Osborn pauses to admire an approaching storm in the distance. "There are thunderheads on the horizon," he exclaims. "The sky is orange and yellow, with blue spots in between."

Joy's philosophy—in keeping with such simple and satisfying pursuits—is to shape the quality of living in the architecture, not to impose his will on the land. The site and the needs of the client, not the architectural signature, inform the design. "It is tough to look at such a beautiful landscape and think about putting a house there," Joy says. "The desert is so rich and vibrant a place that it requires you to keep the design simple."

Joy is characteristically understated when asked to describe the residence. "We tried to be respectful of the land," he says. He's more poetic when discussing materials. He loves the texture of the walls, for example, and the way the corrugated-steel roof oxidizes. In the living room, the earthen surfaces give way to a panoramic view. The massive, two-foot-thick walls outline a simple floor plan, and a butterfly roof gently hovers above the heavy walls. An open living/dining room, a large covered porch, a guest area, and a support space divide the house into four quadrants. The support space is the nucleus: It holds all the house's functional elements, such as a 300-gallon water tank, filter, pump, and wine cellar—necessities for a property that sits two ▶

"I love the desert and I have an inherent respect for it," says Rick Joy, an architect well known for his innovative work with rammed earth. "That the plants out there are just weeds hasn't been drilled into me."



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miles down a dirt road on the outskirts of town. "It sets the stage for major amounts of aesthetics," says Osborn of his favorite room in the house.

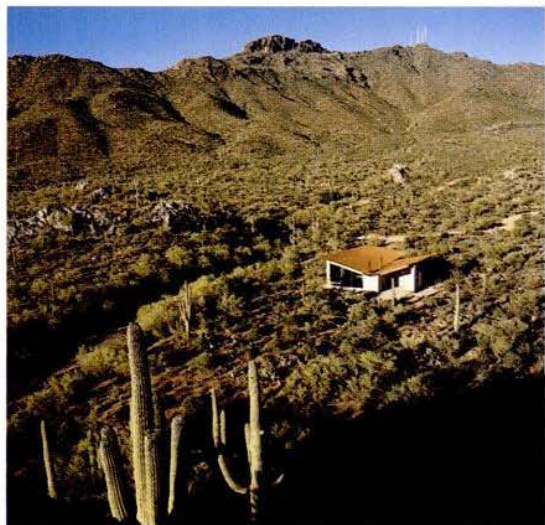
The 2,200-square-foot house (with a 400-square-foot porch) was constructed from 425 tons of rammed earth that was imported from areas around Tucson. Spotted with roots, rocks, and dead animals, in situ earth isn't clean enough for construction and must be combined with other elements. Like mixing paint on a palette, the color came from combining three different piles of earth, a small amount of Portland cement, and red pigment until it matched the color of the site.

Like its sister material, adobe, rammed earth helps regulate the incredible temperature swings in the desert, which can sometimes vary by nearly 50 degrees between day and night. The walls create a thermal lag: They absorb heat during the day and radiate at night; overnight, the walls cool and help keep the house moderate during the day while it bakes outside. Because of Tucson's climate and stable ground, using rammed earth for building is cost-effective.

Osborn, a potter, has his own personal connections to the material as well. "Dirt, whether earth or clay, is organic," he says. "The process of firing a clay pot turns organic material into inorganic material. It's amazing to come home to walls built out of what you do for a living." For Joy, limiting the environmental impact that building materials have on terra firma is crucial—more important than the artistic expression of any architect. "It is almost an endless resource," Joy says of building with earth. "When the structure is obsolete, it will dissolve back into the Earth's landscape." ■



The master bedroom, at left, and living room, below. Generous windows and strategically placed openings throughout the house frame the owner's favorite views and let him follow the movement of the sun throughout the day. **E** p.114



Treading Lightly

The desert ecology around Tucson Mountain House is fragile. Hardly a barren terrain, the land fosters hundreds of plant and animal varieties. The arid abundance was a key reason Osborn chose the remote site, despite the need to dig a well and septic tank. "We hiked over a hill and there were three deer grazing right where we are sitting," he recalls. Preserving as much of the native habitat as possible was critical when Joy and Osborn undertook the task of building the house.

Construction sites are notoriously destructive to local environments. Bulldozers, 4-by-4 trucks bringing in supplies, and workers tromping around the site create a dead zone, sometimes yards wide, around the project. In

order to preserve the landscape, Joy erected a chainlink fence around the building's footprint, creating a three-foot-wide space that was off-limits to subcontractors, pickup trucks, and stacks of drywall. This wasn't always easy, says Joy. Things got pretty dicey when the crew was installing large plates of glass in the living room—from the inside out; normally, this task, which requires precision, is done from the outside. It can be awkward for some contractors used to doing things a certain way and can add a bit of cost.

In the end, for both Osborn and Joy, it was worth the hassle. Prickly pears and other native plants flourish right up to the edge of the house. —M.Z.



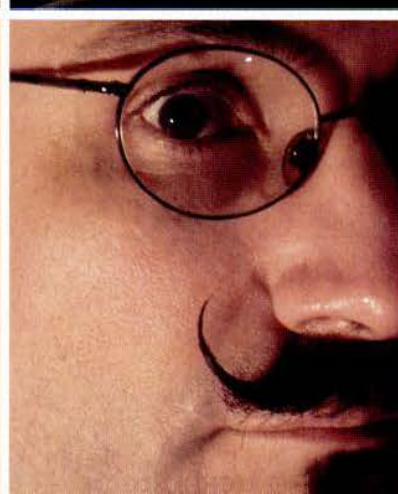
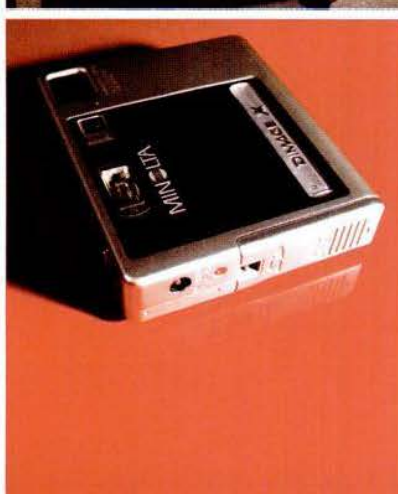
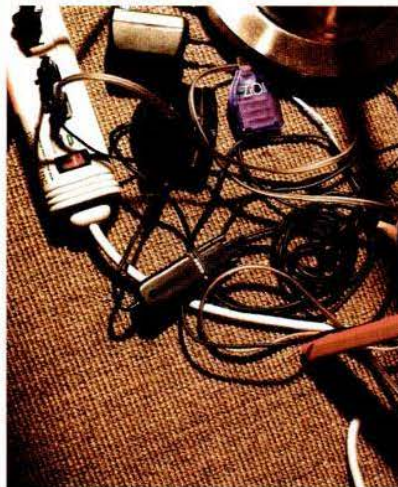
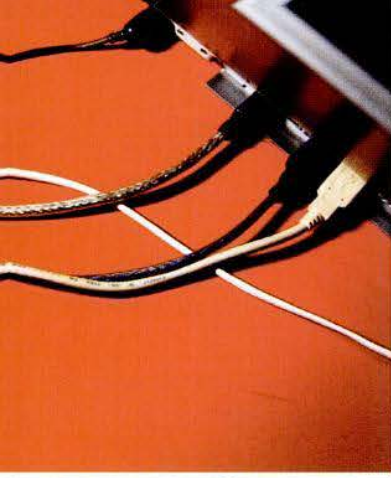
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Expert Opinion: The Leica is beautiful but sports an unfortunate Soviet styling—like having a big shoebox in your hands. It's got a lot of the classic camera controls—f-stop, aperture, and speed—all translated into digital. It really captures the decisive moment—

the camera I have is terrible about that. The boxiness is disappointing, but it's an impressive product—with the extra perk of a little awning to cut outdoor glare on the display.

What We Think: If we had to hang on to one of these cameras, it would be the Leica. The Digilux brings back the feeling of our 1960s 35mm SLR without having to resort to sound effects—take note, Olympus and Sony. We especially enjoyed the audio recording mode that captures up to five seconds of audio with an image. As with cars, Germans just do it better.



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A Note on Our Expert:

Jorge Colombo has worked as a professional photographer for the last three years without using a single roll of film. “I haven't shot negatives since the last century,” he declares. Arriving at photo shoots with only his pocket-size camera, Colombo has created grids of photos for publications including *Folio*, *YM*, the *New York Times*, and the *Village Voice*.

Photos in grid taken by the following cameras (from left to right): Sony, Minolta, Olympus, Leica, Leica, Nikon, Minolta, Leica, Olympus, Leica, Minolta, Olympus, Nikon, Leica, Nikon, Sony. Dwell did not retouch any of these images.

Have you ever shot a roll of film only to realize that the exposure was set for the wrong film speed? Or that the film didn't catch properly on the take-up spool and thus never advanced? Even professional photographers are bound to make mistakes taking pictures. And with film, those mistakes get expensive.

With the advent of the digital camera, however, the margin for error and expense is significantly reduced, enabling you to easily capture the image you want. We're not ready to ditch our old Rolleiflex—after all, we still prefer long-playing records to MP3's—but having a digital camera is a liberating experience. There's no guilt in wasting your next shot (or the next 40 after that), as the LCD viewfinder lets you know exactly what your picture looks like—instantly. You can store hundreds of images on the same memory card, download them to your PC, and then organize, copy, and email them ad nauseam. You don't have to shell out major cash for film, developing, and printing. And, as long as you keep its batteries charged, taking pictures with a digital camera (and sharing them) is no harder than using an ATM.

Digital cameras do have their limitations, of course, but sometimes those limitations can inspire creativity. This is certainly the case for our expert, photographer Jorge Colombo. Because the resolution on his older digital camera wasn't high enough to allow photos to print legibly at larger sizes, he started working with grids of images instead, a creative solution that has come to characterize most of his photographic output. Colombo describes his technique as “loquacious—I don't think I can say all I want to say with just one image.” As a card-carrying member of what he calls the “JPEG generation,” Colombo is well aware that “all the action takes place in the computer and over the phone lines” and sees no reason for photography to be any different.

So forget about ASA, f-stop, and trying to find the right film for shooting outdoors in overcast conditions. Instead, read up on megapixels (roughly, the number of pixels, in millions, a camera can shoot) and optical zoom (just like lenses on a regular camera) versus digital zoom (the camera's internal computer enlarging what's already in the frame), and start shooting. ▶

Nikon Coolpix 4500
\$699.95



The 4500's 4x optical lens can be augmented with additional lenses and the 4.0 megapixel resolution results in high image quality.

Expert Opinion: Jack Kerouac talks about how Robert Frank handled his Leica with just one hand—you can't really do that with the Coolpix. Before the thing is ready to shoot, you need to work it like a Rubik's Cube. Every finger is put to work. The design is daring, but it's a little too complicated for the user. However, I do like that you can add additional lenses. Most of these cameras

have intuitive interfaces, but the Nikon leaves me a bit stumped.

What We Think: We applaud Nikon for coming up with a design that goes beyond the traditional camera form, but we, too, found the controls a little frustrating. The array of buttons and switches—which vary from a toggle wheel to miniature joystick—are scattered, seemingly at random, all over the camera's body. That said, once you've figured out the operation, the macro feature is one of the best available.

Olympus Camedia D-40 Zoom
\$599



The D-40 Zoom offers high image quality with 4.0 megapixel capability. At 3.4 by 2.7 inches, and weighing only 8.4 ounces with battery and media card installed, the D-40 is a powerhouse that can go anywhere.

Expert Opinion: First of all, it doesn't feel good in your hands. You have the feeling you're holding some sort of Tupperware or a muffin. All the controls are bunched together, but not in an integrated way. Also, the interface requires too much jumping from menu to menu. It's got all sorts of colors and typefaces and drop shadows and logos

and diagrams—too fussy! I'm very pleased with the pictures, though.

What We Think: While the D-40 does indeed offer high-quality images, we agree with Colombo: It's way too persnickety. From the Microsoft Windows-style chime that signals powering up to the overtly anachronistic shutter-clicking noise it makes while capturing an image, the camera just seems to call too much attention to itself. The clamshell design, which involves sliding the lens cover to turn on the camera, also seems cumbersome. But it does take AA batteries.

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-P7
\$499.95



The Cyber-shot P7 features 3.2 megapixel resolution and a 3x optical lens. It utilizes Sony's exclusive Memory Stick interchangeable media storage, so you can load your images directly to a number of Sony peripherals, including photo printers and TVs.

Expert Opinion: This design handles very nicely in terms of weight distribution and placement of the lens in relationship to the rest of the body. However, the controls are a bit too resistant—you have to press them really hard. The images are less impressive

than the others. They have a bluish overcast that is hard to get rid of.

What We Think: The Sony's image quality is a little lacking (especially on the grainy LCD), but it has a number of features we find handy, such as the onscreen battery level (measured in remaining minutes) and multiple focal points. The physical controls are well laid out, and ergonomically sound. The internal menus also seem rather intuitive, which is exactly how a digital camera should be.

Minolta DiMAGE X
\$399



Minolta's palm-size entry is less than an inch thick but, thanks to its brushed aluminum and stainless steel shell, still feels substantial. It features a 3x optical zoom lens and shoots images at 2.0 megapixels.

Expert Opinion: This is my biggest crush. Every time I use it, I think, When are they going to make the higher-end model? I would buy its \$800 sibling in a heartbeat if it existed. It's like when you want to work with someone and the most brilliant person you find is a kid, so you just have to wait for him

to grow up. This is what a digital camera should be—a slim, no-fuss box.

What We Think: While the Minolta doesn't live up to the rest of the pack in terms of features and resolution, it is definitely the most fun—and the best value. If you want an easy ticket to beginning digital photography, this is it. While the design owes a nod to the maligned Kodak Disc cameras of our youth, what's not to love about something this cute that fits in the palm of your hand? It even shoots MPEG video! ■

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"We try to bring sustainability to the mainstream by making it fun, accessible, and hip," explains Earth Pledge's Leslie Hoffman, shown here with her staff. "Sustainability can be incorporated, and needs to be incorporated, into every aspect of daily life."

Sustainability Can Be Fun

It's a rough time for environmentalists. It seems the only green people want to hear about these days is the kind that's flat and fits in your wallet.

That's why we're glad there's the Earth Pledge Foundation in New York. Founded by Theodore W. Kheel in 1992 to support the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Earth Pledge proves that strength can come from adversity. With a staff of 15 and an annual budget of just over a million dollars, the foundation is busy, executive director Leslie Hoffman explains, "cranking out programs" that highlight the connection between everyday choices, personal well-being, and a healthy world.

Earth Pledge addresses sustainability by focusing on

issues close to home. Its programs include the Green Roof Initiative, which aims to broaden awareness about the social and environmental benefits of greening rooftops in New York City, and the FoodWaste=Fuel program, which is geared toward facilitating an infrastructure that would convert food waste into fuel, thus enabling the city to generate electricity, heat, and steam.

"We want to incorporate an understanding of the impact of each and every decision," explains Hoffman. "You have to ask, Where did it come from and where is it going? We need to focus on all the interconnected elements that go into sustaining life. And the more people that become aware, the better." ■

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Bangkok Unfolded

Until the mid-1800s, Bangkok was a city of amphibious architecture. The Chao Phraya River, making its way south toward the Gulf of Thailand, once filled hundreds of canals that operated as streets and avenues. Patches of dry land were reserved for temples and palaces; ordinary people built homes on top of bamboo rafts. But when Rama IV became King of Siam in 1851, he reconstructed his capital, filling the canals and laying numerous European-style boulevards.

A century later, Bangkok embarked on another transformation—the explosive postwar growth that has brought the population to almost nine million and the square mileage to 626. Postmodern skyscrapers dwarf 18th-century temples in height more than majesty. Where boats once filled the busy commercial canals, today four-fifths of Thailand's automobiles inch along streets at an average speed of six miles per hour.

Mongkon Ponganutree, the editor of Bangkok's premier design magazine, *Art/4/d*, describes Bangkok as “a city of multi-dimension—a superimposition of old and new, order and disorder, planning and lack thereof.” The coexistence of traditional and contemporary, he says, presents unique challenges to perception and, in turn, design and architecture.

In 1993, architects Raveevarn Choksombatchai and Ralph Nelson of Loom Studio, a firm based in Berkeley, California, designed a new house in Bangkok for Raveevarn's family. The middle of five sisters, Raveevarn knew that her family wanted to stay in their home city,

but needed a peaceful refuge from its noisy streets. The “Unfolding House,” completed at the end of 2000, is conceptually based on an Asian folding screen. The painted screens present series of events—often domestic ones—on single geometric surfaces, linking disparate time intervals in a way that seems applicable to the vicissitudes of family as well as city. In the house, the rooms echo a painted screen by expanding inward like a nautilus of right angles, sheltered behind a broad wall that faces the street.

Unable to travel the 10,000 miles but eager to know more about life in the Unfolding House, Dwell got on the phone with Raveevarn's youngest sisters, Ruchdaporn, and Rapeeparn, known respectively as Lek and Pun, who share the house with their parents.

How do you fill most days?

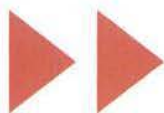
Lek: I work from home as a freelance translator. I can make my own hours as long as I meet the deadline for each job. In the afternoons I go to the health club and swim. In the evenings, Pun and I often have dinner together in the living room at around 9 P.M., when our parents are already in bed.

In Thai culture, it's very common for grown people to live with their parents. It saves money, and we like to look after our parents. Luckily, our house is big enough so everyone has enough personal space.

Late at night, when there's plenty of silence, is when I get most work done. Though the house is remarkably ▶



Loom Studio's concrete exterior, seen from the backyard (top), unfolds onto its lot behind a broad, street-facing façade; 2,816 square feet of interior space is wrapped around a lawn. Inside, light pours into the tall living room windows.



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Elsewhere

quiet, during the day there's sometimes cacophony from neighbors, traffic, and stray dogs. And sometimes pickup trucks pass by selling things and blasting loudspeakers.

Pun: I'm a dentist. I work at a government hospital during the day, and then I work some nights at Thainakarin Hospital, which is private. Dentists are overworked here, and almost all who work for the government need moonlighting jobs. Saturday is my day off, and I usually go to the park to get some exercise—but not too much exercise. I just love being outside in the fresh air.

How do you spend your leisure time?

Lek: We both love outdoor sports. As much as we can, we try to escape from Bangkok for activities like diving, kayaking, climbing, and trekking. We also like to walk around old-town Bangkok and Chinatown.

Pun: When I have time at home, I spend much of it in the living room with my feet up, reading, chatting, napping, or watching TV.

Lek: On Friday evenings, we like to go out to dinner and try new international foods. There's a tremendous variety to choose from.

How does the house suit your needs?

Lek: The house isn't enormous, but it's generous. It looks bigger from outside, because of the wide, street-facing façade. We each have our own bedroom and our parents share one big bedroom. We all use the living room, which is spacious and comfortable. Then there are two spare bedrooms for when our sisters, who live far away, come to visit.

Pun: Our house is in the eastern part of Bangkok, practically in the suburbs. Bangkok is very spread out and there hasn't been much city planning. The suburban area where we live is getting more crowded, with lots of traffic. But we can go out to the eastern provinces really easily from here—toward Cambodia, where there are spectacular beaches on the Gulf of Thailand.

Lek: Our house is unique, which we enjoy. It's completely different from the traditional ones on the block. Friends who come to visit are always curious.

What are your favorite things about the house?

Lek: Well, as the Unfolding House, it has many angles and turns in various directions. So there are many openings for windows that face in disparate ways. The wind finds paths for cross-drafts quite nicely, and the ventilation is excellent.

Pun: Our old house was more typical and we used the air conditioner every day. Now we rarely need it. The living room is also very pleasant—quite beautiful with all those windows.

Lek: I love the way the rooms are laid out; it makes for surprising spaces. For instance, there's a little outdoor area next to the laundry room where we hang clothes to dry. It has walls on all sides with rectangular openings for the wind to pass through. In the evenings and at night, it gets a lovely breeze. It's like a secret little peaceful deck for sitting and cooling off. ■



The dark red window frames are Xylia wood, a species cultivated throughout Southeast Asia from India to Cambodia. The glass is insulated, mostly to keep hot air out. Charcoal-colored Thai slate floors are shined to a glossy finish.

Places Rapeeparn and Ruchdaporn Choksombatchai like to go:

Lumpini Park

Hailed as “the green lung of Bangkok,” the giant park in the middle of the city is always bustling with activities. You can rent paddleboats, or mats for lounging in the shade.

Dining

“Our favorite places to go on Friday nights are Yong Lee (old-time Chinese-Thai-Western food), in the Sukhumvit area; Hualampong Food Station (real local Thai taste); Chicken Noodle on Ratchawit Road (sidewalk food cart, nighttime only); I Berri (homemade ice cream); Starbucks (everywhere); and outdoor nighttime food

areas on Yaowarat Road in Chinatown and on Udomsuk Road in our neighborhood.”

Saxophone Pub on Phayathai Road

Lek and Pun occasionally have drinks at this pub, frequented by Thai university students, which often has live local bands—T-Bone is a house favorite. www.saxophonepub.com

The Chatuchak Weekend Market

On an average Saturday or Sunday, 200,000 people stroll the world's largest weekend market; sometimes Lek and Pun are among them. Everything imaginable is for sale, from antique talismans to barnyard animals. —V.G.

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Sleeping Beauty

King Louis XIV, a connoisseur of sleep, spent his entire waking life collecting beds. He had 413 in all, yet none of them could compare, for comfort or health, to a Somnium bed.

Introduced in America earlier this year, the chic and sophisticated Austrian sleep system applies advanced engineering and the latest medical advice to address such age-old issues as how to provide adequate back support—and even what makes the bed bugs bite. In fact, Somnium co-owner Rainer Wieland can be such a persuasive proselytizer that many of his customers, worried about damage done to their backs by ordinary beds, often run from his Los Angeles showroom straight to the nearest chiropractor.

The 100 percent recyclable bed rests on 66 adjustable shock absorbers—rather than springs—with what Wieland calls “spot elasticity.” In other words, the shock absorbers move independently with you as you toss and turn. More important, they can be arranged to suit the shape of any body. The mattress is no less compromising. Divided into different firmness zones for head, shoulder, waist, and pelvis, the lightweight EMC foam is

coated with a layer of Euphora, which was developed by NASA to evenly distribute the weight of astronauts strapped into their seats during a space shuttle takeoff.

The bed business has made Wieland intimate with not only gross anatomy but also bodily functions unmentionable in polite company. He’ll tell you, quite frankly, that the average person loses a pint of moisture a night, and that this sweat feeds the mites whose droppings give people allergies. A synthetic hollow-fiber mattress cover puts a halt to that—it also helps mitigate sneezing and sometimes even snoring—by absorbing perspiration and allowing it to evaporate throughout the day.

“Just because something is good for your health doesn’t mean it has to look ugly,” Wieland says. Seeking a contemporary minimalist style, he commissioned Harald Hatschenberger, a virtuoso of ergonomic office furniture, to design two elegant bed frames, handmade from wood and leather and available in finishes from maple to cherry, oak to ash. “I tell people we can even paint the frame the color of their car,” Wieland laughs. “You shouldn’t always have to be concerned about your health. I want you to smile when you go to bed at night.” ■



Looks good—and is good for you, too. The multitasking Somnium, available in an electrically adjustable or basic flat model, is kind to your back and easy on the eyes.

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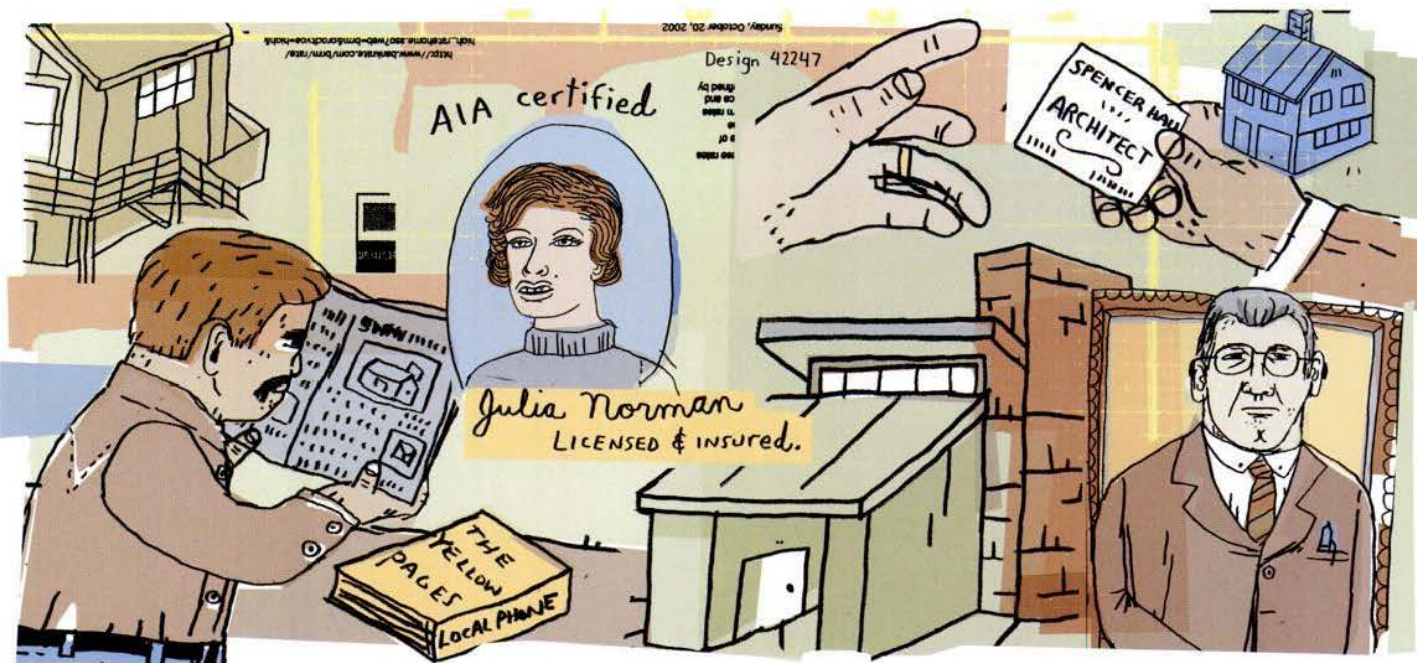
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Dear Dwell,

I have a simple question but yet I'm struggling. I need a good architect. Any suggestions on how to get someone I like? Where should I go for some resources? Please help.

—Jeff Kolodny

Dear Jeff,

Remember, finding an architect—much like finding a life partner, the perfect martini, or the ultimate veggie burger—is a social undertaking. You've got to ask the right questions and you have to venture out into the world. But before you do, there are some steps you might want to take in order to figure out exactly what it is you're looking for.

Why not begin with the Internet? At www.aia.org, you can search the "Architect Finder"—an enormous database sorted by city, state, and type of service. Take a look at the architects who have links to their websites. If the work looks interesting, take a chance and drop them a line or pick up the phone. It sounds ideal, but there is a catch: Not all architects are associated with the AIA, and not all AIA-certified architects are listed in the Architect Finder. There are some great architects doing great work who will never pop up on the AIA's radar. So, take a look at some other sites, including the Architectural Review (www.arplus.com) and Archinect (www.archinect.com).

Or you could put down the mouse and make a visit to your local architecture bookstore (if you're lucky enough to have one in your city). Try browsing at Hennessey Ingalls in Santa Monica, William Stout Architectural Books in San Francisco, Peter Miller Architectural Books in Seattle, or Urban Center Books in New York City, and

take a look at the books and monographs. Concentrate on architects in your area, so as not to get hopelessly entranced by gorgeous glossy pages only to realize you're not prepared to fly the architect you've fallen in love with back and forth from Estonia. If monographs aren't doing the trick, flip through any number of magazines, concentrating on ones that suit your style and taste—like Dwell.

This is the route that Los Angeles-based architect Lorcan O'Herlihy recommends. "Eighty percent of my work comes through publications," he says. "Clients have seen my work in the paper or a book. Keep an eye out for work that you are interested in and keep a record of it. Then approach those architects and have that initial conversation, discussing the scope of the work, budget, etc." O'Herlihy claims that "generally within 30 minutes of talking" it will become clear whether there's a match. "And if there's not," O'Herlihy says, "I can usually recommend someone who would be more appropriate for the job."

During these initial conversations, it's crucial to have a good idea of what you want and what your resources (monetary and otherwise) are. You can find some helpful hints on what to ask your architect at the rather clunky but practical www.architecture.about.com or from the AIA site's list of 20 questions to ask your architect. Usually, like O'Herlihy says, one conversation will allow you to eliminate candidates rather quickly, and, if all goes well, the right one will rise to the surface. So what are you waiting for? Time to hit the streets. ■

Got a question? Send it to:

Dwell Labs, 99 Osgood Place, San Francisco, CA 94133.
Or email labs@dwellmag.com.

"I've always loved this miracle material
that you can mold into whatever you want."

— David Pettigrew, Diamond D Concrete



Concrete: New Product of Choice for Countertops, Floors

It's a trend that's taking the country by storm - concrete is leading the charge as the product of choice for kitchen countertops, floors, fireplace surrounds, even bathroom counters and vanities. Concrete is popular because it's durable and versatile. Countertops offer a warm, natural-looking material that corresponds with the popularity of more natural materials like wood, stone, and brick.



Chemical stains, coloring pigments, aggregates, and epoxy coatings can give concrete the look, texture, and feel of quarried stone such as marble, granite, and limestone. Or it can be used in its natural state. Homeowners who have indulged in concrete like creating their own colors, textures, and edges. They can even incorporate objects like broken tile, seashells, or glass into the countertop's surface.

"Most clients do their own designs," said Buddy Rhodes,

known in the industry as the father of the concrete countertop.

And that, he says, is perhaps the most appealing aspect of concrete. It's hands-on and it's handcrafted. It cries out "this is all mine." Concrete countertops offer the warmth of the material without any grout lines associated with tiles. Also, there is a natural, earthy look that complements a range of kitchen styles.

Homeowners are also turning to concrete to grace their floors.

"We have stamped concrete, slate, stain, overlays, Spanish tiles, Arizona flagstone," said David Pettigrew, owner of Diamond D Concrete. "It's just amazing what technology has done," he said. "And we have no idea where it's going. It's advancing all the time."

And as the technology advances, so do the design options.

"With concrete you can use a different material that produces an old-world look - or you can make it high-tech," said Steve Eyler, owner of Eycan Surfacing.



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...at 100% Design

Each year, the London show draws an international array of exhibitors and buyers. It's beginning to attract a design-conscious public, too.

Now in its eighth year, 100% Design has firmly established itself as *the* UK trade show for architects and interior designers to seek out the latest innovations from renowned names (SCP, TwentyTwentyOne, Coexistence) and newcomers alike. The addition in 2002 of a Design Museum shop and mini-golf course, with holes designed by such luminaries as Brit artist Sarah Lucas, complemented the well-stocked 100% Bookshop and will no doubt help establish the 400-stand show as an annual pilgrimage for style seekers.

Satisfied with the knowledge that their show attracts more visitors per square foot than any similar international trade event, the 100% Design organizers put as much emphasis on getting visitors away from the exhibition hall as luring them there. There were architectural bus tours led by designers, architects, and television presenters, as well as a good deal of effort expended on promoting the 40 satellite events that have sprung up to coincide with 100% Design. The largest of these, and the most brimming with young talent, is Designers Block. Rapidly becoming a stand-alone show, this fringe event took place in two crumbling industrial buildings to the east and south of the city. As one would expect, there was a good deal of experimental folly, but a number of designers, notably those under the umbrella of Prototype UK, showed the potential to make the leap to the main event.

Polo Chair

Day is to British seating classics what Eames is to American chair design. Many attempts have been made in recent years to reproduce Robin Day's best-loved pieces, but Loft's cheerful and versatile polypropylene Polo chair comes closest to Day's vision in both price and spirit. With prices starting at \$46 and a range of 12 colors, the Polo is currently doing the rounds at trade shows.

Robin Day / www.thepolochair.com

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Baleys

Until Gusto's Baleys came along, re-creating that barn-dance atmosphere in your lounge was a high-maintenance option involving a good deal of air freshener and a large amount of sweeping up. Each Baley is a regular bale of barley straw harvested from the farm home of designer Neil Barron and encased in a ring stud-sealed clear PVC sleeve. Six to eight Baleys should be enough to seat the local line-dancing troupe for supper, indoors or out.

Neil Barron / www.gusto.co.uk

Pigeon Light

Described by designer Ed Carpenter as an "urban souvenir," this Perspex shell light comes with a gripping foot made from a wooden clothes peg, which nicely imitates the large number of mono-ped pigeons that grip the statues and fountains in London's Trafalgar Square. The light comes in grimy city gray, a bright white, and the altogether more lawn flamingo-influenced hot pink.

Ed Carpenter / info@thorstenvanelten.com

m-house

Architect Tim Pyne's m-house unintentionally became an offsite event when a faulty tire blew during transport. Pyne was forced to display his much-heralded double-wide loft apartment on wheels in the countryside rather than at Earls Court. Technically a mobile home, the 907-square-foot m-house is actually a very clever planning dodge that the houseboat-dwelling Pyne came up with when he found an idyllic plot with permission for trailer parking only. A fully fitted m-house puts even the most heavily chromed of its trailer-park predecessors into the shade, and its sturdy construction with self-supporting roof means that an "if she's a-rockin' don't come a-knockin'" bumper sticker need not come fitted as standard.

Tim Pyne / www.m-house.org



The paintings may be for sale,
but the style is all my own.



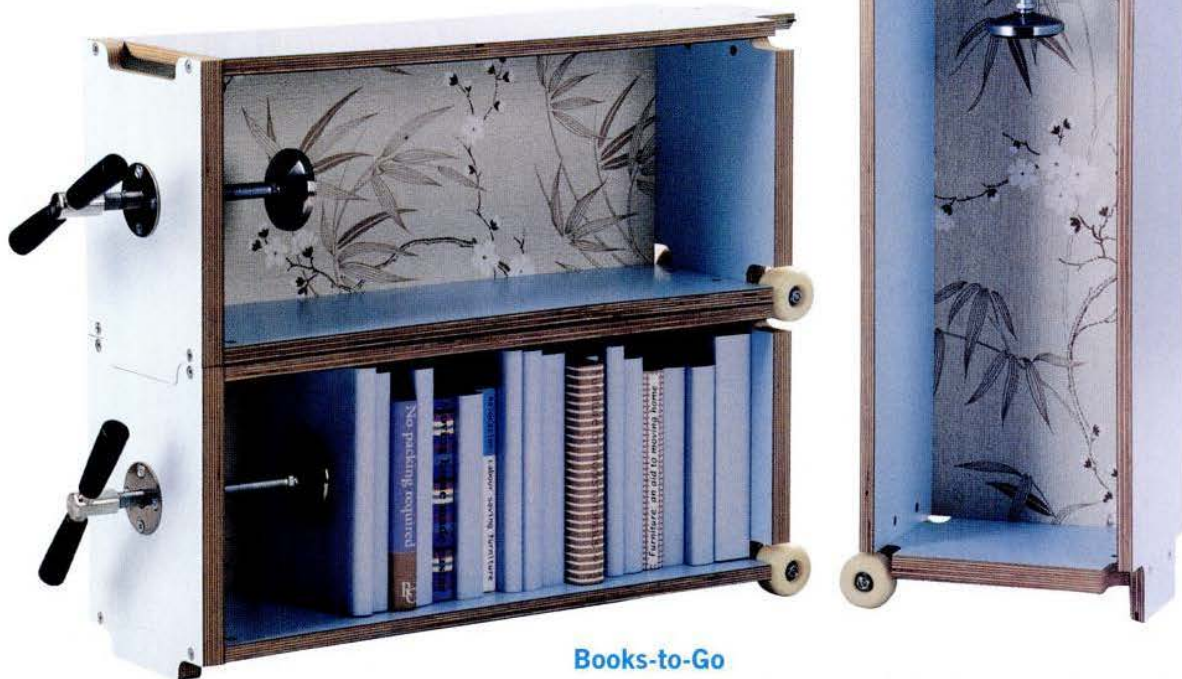
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...at Designers Block



Books-to-Go

Rose Cobb's Books-to-Go shelving system is a great storage solution for young urbanites who find themselves switching apartments every few months. Fitted with skateboard wheels and a clamp that secures the books in place and doubles as a bookend, the units stack for maximum use of space and are easy to wheel off to your new home. Also ideal for taking to the park to start your own lending library or book group.

Rose Cobb / contact@designbyrose.co.uk

Laundry Rug

If your partner is a clothes thrower, then the Laundry Rug is perhaps the one thing that can save your relationship from inevitable breakdown. Designed for the dual purpose of allowing students to cover wine-stained carpets whilst maintaining some pretense of sartorial order, Lisa Klingspor's woven cotton rug provides a fun target for both underwear and outerwear that becomes airborne come bedtime. When the rug is picked up by its handles, it transforms into a neat laundry bag. Brilliant.

Lisa Klingspor / lisaklingspor@hotmail.com





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Going Cheep

After presenting a friend with a stylish bird house as a gift, designer Luke Morgan was inundated with orders from his friends for similar creations. The chic aviary has a reversible sign that lets other birds know whether the nesting box is full or vacant and even has a heliport-style landing deck with a big "B" painted on it to make it easily visible to your returning feathered friends. The cantilevered roof completes a modernist look that will complement condo, country house, or caravan.

[Luke Morgan / www.herhouse.uk.com](http://www.herhouse.uk.com)

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The Dwell Home Design Invitational

In 1945, a housing program was introduced that would become the standard by which all other attempts at well-designed, affordable homes were measured. Launched by *Arts & Architecture* magazine, the Case Study Program was pivotal in making modern design what it is today. Inspired by that effort, we are pleased to introduce the Dwell Home Design Invitational.

For reasons ranging from the aesthetic to the economic, we believe that prefabricated architecture is a terrific—and feasible—option for home building in the 21st century. And Dwell wants to help realize its true potential.

To that end, Dwell has issued a unique challenge to a select group of architects and designers: Design an innovative prefabricated house for \$200,000, one that bucks the status quo and embraces all the benefits—aesthetic, environmental, economic, technologic—that prefab construction has to offer.

Throughout the year, we'll update you on the progress of the Dwell Home. In April, Dwell will receive submissions and all designs will be published in the magazine. Working with a team of advisors, we'll select the winning design for our prefab prototype.

In the fall, we'll sponsor the construction of the first Dwell Home for a young couple in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Early next year, we'll present the finished product in our pages. Then, in partnership with Burnett Companies and David Shearer of Totem Design Group, we're going to create a community of modern prefab homes in Palm Springs, California.

The ultimate goal of the Dwell Home Design Invitational is to put a well-designed, affordable modern house into production. In doing so, we hope to change the way people think about prefab—and are excited to share this new venture with our readers. ■



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In *Trajectory for Rembrandt* (2002) in Baarn, Netherlands, Lucien den Arend planted 100 pollard willow branches and painted their tops white. The willows form an arch directing the viewer's eye to three oaks, whose presence "evokes Rembrandt's 1643 etching *Three Trees*," says den Arend.

Whose Woods Are These?

Lucien den Arend is a Dutch landscape sculptor who has completed major projects in over 50 cities and towns across the Netherlands and Scandinavia. His work has been exhibited widely in galleries and museums, including the recent show at Amsterdam's Stedelijk Museum of Modern Art.

"I'm interested in taking objects out of their original context and putting them in a new one, and, in doing so, creating something completely different. I like contrasts in the environment, but I don't want my work to contrast like cursing—it should be subtle. It should be part of the environment but not dominate it. I try to use material that is already on the site [grass, willows, water], but I use it in another way because I want people to see that something different has happened there.

"In projects in urban areas, this process is extremely complicated. There are urban planners, architects, the provincial road building department, the national forestry department, the highway department, the water department, and they all have something to say. I usually cope with about 15 different disciplines when

working in cities. Because of this, there is a lot of compromise, and unfortunately, usually only about one-third of what I originally envision is realized. If you are an architect or landscape architect, the officials take you very seriously, but if you are an artist, like me, they just look at you like you are crazy.

"When working in rural locations you have a lot more freedom. But still, you always have to fight to convince people of the value of your idea. Working in rural places has its own set of problems—it's much more difficult to distinguish the work from its surroundings without it screaming, 'Look at me, I'm art.' I don't want to make art that is holy, but I do want people to see that there has been someone struggling to bring an idea to life.

"I want to prompt people to think a little bit differently about where they are—to think. There is more here. These projects are meant to be experienced by everyone, every day, and they can change with people and time. They are not static and neither are their surroundings." ■

Nestled in the hills overlooking the Pacific, the Moggridge house settles neatly into the surrounding landscape, providing a restful retreat for its busy occupants. Bill and Karin's bedroom window lets the couple take in the view from bed.

Just **South** of the City

After years of living the intercontinental life, Bill and Karin Moggridge finally found their home in the middle of the woods, just an hour from downtown San Francisco.



Project: Moggridge Residence
Architect: Baum Thornley Architects
Location: Woodside, California

Dwellings

The house is divided into two main areas (living/dining and working), which are connected by a central corridor (right). The shelving system, designed by Baum Thornley and manufactured locally by Kanda Alahan of Rivendell Woodcraft, provides ample display space for Bill and Karin's collection of design objects from around the world. "We didn't want too much closet space," Karin explains, "because that would encourage us to collect more stuff."

Heading south from San Francisco on Interstate 280, the "little boxes made of ticky-tacky" (made famous by singer/songwriter Malvina Reynolds in the '60s) that line the hillsides of Daly City and South San Francisco rapidly give way to rolling green hills that turn a smoldering gold in the summer. Twenty minutes down the road, you can take any number of exits and creep farther away from civilization. As you turn onto Skyline Boulevard and drive through towering redwoods, the city and surrounding suburbs become a memory.

Here, deep in the woods, about an hour from downtown San Francisco, Bill and Karin Moggridge found the land that would become their home. "When Karin found this place, she did a little dance," says Bill, a cofounder of Ideo, the international design consulting firm. "From that moment, I knew it was all over." "It was just so incredible to see it," continues Karin, a fiber artist and clothing designer from Copenhagen. "I'm not a religious or spiritual person in any way, but it was as if something had said, 'This is it. This is where you should put down your roots.'"

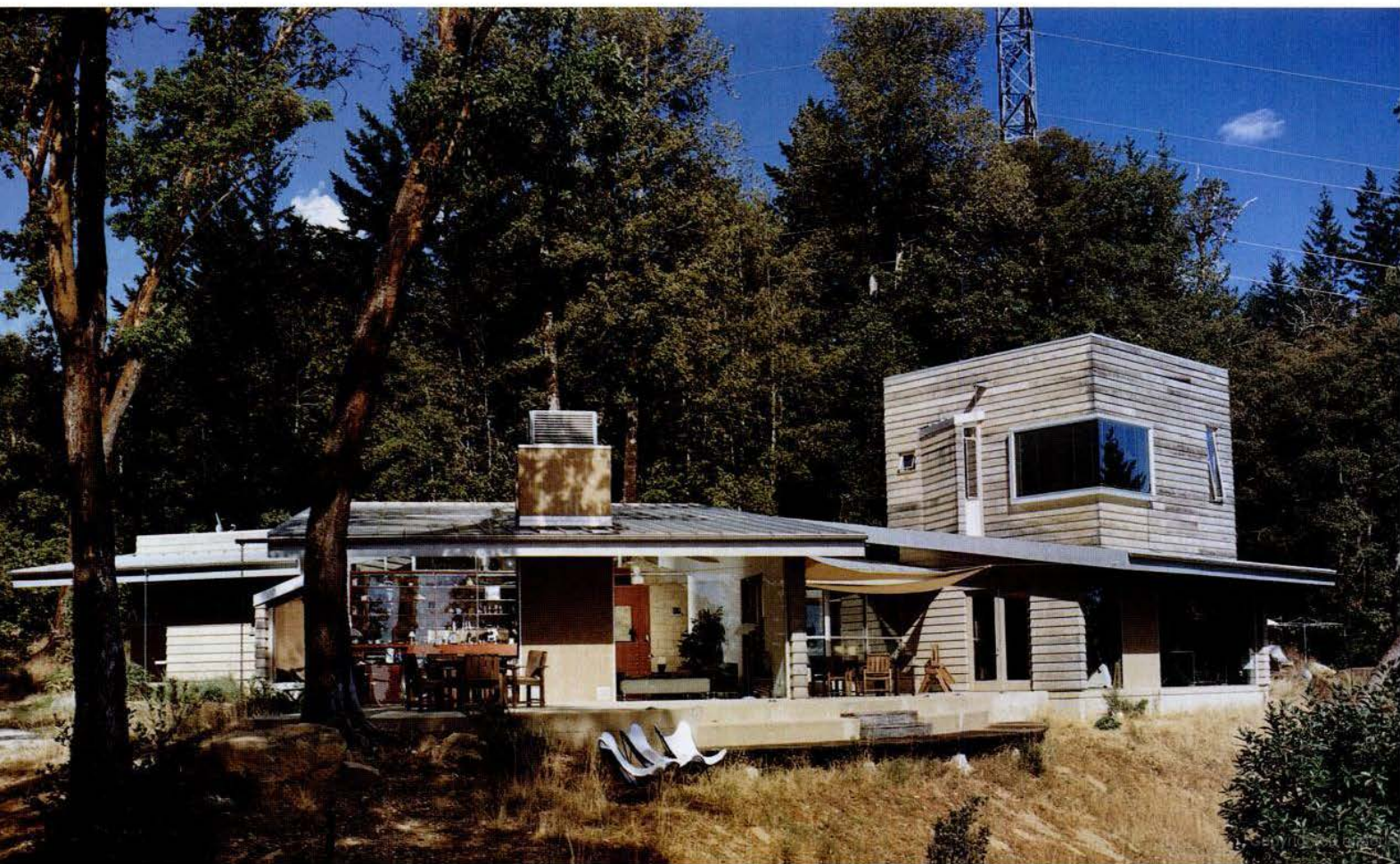
High above the Silicon Valley smog and sloping toward the distant Pacific, the land captivated the Moggridges from day one. Eccentric neighbors (including a helicopter-flying, horseback-riding, earth-moving-equipment-obsessed emergency-room doctor and a Cadillac-driving Neil Young), attracted by the area's seclusion and beauty, are hidden at a safe distance among the manzanitas.

After Ideo took off in the '80s, the Moggridges found themselves living the intercontinental life, splitting their time between London, where they owned a flat, and Palo Alto, where they owned a small house. "But everything had to be sacrificed for this," Bill says of their new house.

The Moggridges had long thought about building their own house but hadn't seriously considered the possibility until 1994. "Basically, our freedom started with the kids leaving home and Ozzy passing on," Bill says, referring to their two grown sons and now-deceased dog, named after the infamous Black Sabbath singer Ozzy Osbourne.

With their freedom granted, the couple quickly staked their claim. Just 70 days after Karin first saw the land, the Moggridges were the proud owners of 17 acres of trees, dirt, wildflowers, and their fair share of poison oak, spiders, and mice. The two creative forces quickly got to work on their dreams, setting up a tent in a clearing and spending as much time as possible imagining what could be. "The first thing we did was to try and understand the land," Bill says. "So we got maps and an aerial photograph from the USGS. Then we started exploring the land, surveying the edges to find out where the periphery was, putting little flags every hundred feet."

"We were hoping to design the house," Karin says. "We made this little book in order to find out what we liked. The book got some of the desire to actually design it ourselves out of the way." "It also allowed us to work out our ▶





Dwellings

In the living room (below), a coffee table designed by Hans Wegner, Greg couches by Zanotta, and dining room chairs by Arne Jacobsen.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: The Moggridges have kept their bedroom simple, decking it out with just a television, Eames rocking chair, exercise machine, dresser, and bed.

Karin designs all of the clothes for her clothing line, KarinM, in her studio just off the living room. Bill designed the pulley system to store the couple's bikes. The tables are restaurant kitchen tables from Economy Restaurant Fixtures in San Francisco.

Bill designed the desk, also manufactured by Rivendell Woodcraft, that wraps around the hallway. The Maui chairs are from Kartell and the filing cabinets are by Steelcase.

The view from Karin's studio.

differences and discover what we each wanted," says Bill.

With the idea of designing the house on the back burner, the Moggridges made a short list of five architects whom they were interested in working with, including the small San Francisco firm of Baum Thornley. "We knew Doug [Thornley]," Bill explains, "from having worked with him on Ideo's San Francisco office."

The Moggridges sent their 62-page book—containing chapters titled "The Land," "What We Want," "First Ideas," "Where We've Lived," and "Planning"—to the five firms and waited to see how each responded. "Most of the well-known ones sent us a copy of the book that they had published. They didn't try particularly hard, but Doug and Bob [Baum] came to us with a portfolio and then finally presented us with the biggest proof of their interest in doing the job," Bill explains.

Thornley and Baum had been so moved by the site at their initial meeting that they snuck back to it without the Moggridges' knowledge. They scoured the land, collecting dirt, tree bark, flowers, shed snakeskin, and leaves, putting them in test tubes and constructing a wooden box to safely hold them all—a crafty presentation of the hues and textures that the architects saw playing a crucial role in Bill and Karin's home.

"It was the first ground-up residential project for the firm," Thornley says, "so we really wanted to do it. Having worked with Ideo, we knew this house had the

potential to be special. We looked at their book and thought, Wow, they're ready to go. They really thought it through, and it wasn't just a matter of how many square feet they wanted in the bathroom. It was a whole other level of how they lived, and how they wanted to be."

At the final meeting, the architects placed their creation in the center of the table and told the Moggridges they couldn't open it till the end of the presentation. When they finally did, the deal was done. "It proved that they understood what we liked about the place—because we really felt that the house needed to have everything to do with the natural qualities of the place, the foliage, the earth, the trees," Bill explains.

Baum Thornley was awarded the commission and began work almost immediately. The first issue was to figure out where to place the house on the 17-acre site.

"It's a lot of land," Thornley explains, "but a lot of it is not buildable." The architects walked and studied the large plot for weeks to get a good feel for the land before coming up with six sites to present to their clients.

"It was a logging area," Baum says, "so there were skid trails left by trees that had been cut and dragged out. You'd move through wooded areas and suddenly have clearings with huge vistas. There were moments of walking through a path of trees, with filtered light, and then you'd come to a bluff with [bright] sun. It was framed views versus the horizon. You can see that in the circulation of the house: It's like you're moving through the forest."

In the end, the site for the house was determined by the Moggridges' reluctance to give up one of the nicest spots on the land—a clearing where the couple had been camping and where all the design meetings had taken place. "We'd sit at that spot for every meeting, fully thinking that was where the house would be, and I'd just think to myself, This is great," Thornley says. "But then I had to say to Bill and Karin, 'Do you really want to give this up? This is your only outdoor space. Is this really where you want the house?'"

In the end, the house was situated about 100 feet east of the clearing, and now the living room gazes out to the wild grass encircled by manzanitas, pines, and redwoods. With the site finally set, the architects began the design process, which proved to be more complex than they had imagined. "Working in urban and suburban areas is just so different," Thornley explains. "There are so many planning and zoning controls in the city. Out here, on a rural site, there is no containment—you can make it however big and however high. Of course, there are some limits, but you can build an 8,000-square-foot house out here. There are virtually no controls."

There were also no neighboring houses, or streets for that matter, to base the design on. The only thing guiding the process was the natural environment—and "a hint of Eichler," Thornley says. Trolling the forest, searching for color cues, material choices, and organizational hints, Baum and Thornley were able to create what they like to call "a house belonging to the landscape" and, in the process, a home for two people looking to put down roots. ■





"We had always wanted to move up here. When the real-estate agent showed me this place, I just knew this was the place. It was instant."

Before the House, There Were Trailers

On their annual week-long bike ride from Palo Alto to Lake Tahoe, Bill and Karin Moggridge would stop to admire the dilapidated farmhouses that line the side of the road. "We'd stare at these sad-sap farmhouses and notice many of them had glistening, gorgeous trailers in their yards," Karin says. "That's what sparked our interest."

The Moggridges began scouring the classifieds, and within a week came across not one but two trailers. "We found this guy who was selling a 1949 Vagabond and a 1951 Spartanette manufactured by the Hughes Aircraft company," Karin explains. "We couldn't resist—we bought them both."

Researching the restoration of vintage trailers, the couple quickly found Craig Dorsey of Vintage Vacations. Dorsey, one of the country's premier restorers of vintage trailers, politely declined the Moggridges' restoration request due to time constraints, but he couldn't resist their Vagabond. He offered to trade the couple an already restored 429 Southland Run-About, manufactured by the Mathison Aircraft Company, for their precious Vagabond. "It broke my heart [to trade the Vagabond], but the Run-About isn't half bad," Karin says.

Now the Run-About (not half bad indeed) has taken its place in the Moggridges' favorite clearing in their yard. "It's where our guests stay," Karin says. And the Spartanette? "We're trying to find someone else to restore it," Bill says. Whenever that happens, the Moggridges' guests are sure to be pleased: "It's complete with a bathroom and shower and everything," he adds. —A.W.

"We found our awnings in the Coolaroo catalog from Australia for only about \$75 apiece," Bill says. The awnings (pictured here) are strung up with wires and S hooks bought at Home Depot.

Bill and his son Erik enjoy another beautiful day in the woods. Erik usually stays in the Run-About trailer (pictured) when he comes down from San Francisco to visit his parents.



The only experience New Yorker Ron Gompertz ever had with architecture was building a bird house in seventh-grade wood shop. Then one day he found himself in Montana

Big Dog. Big Sky.

Wrapped with cedar slats whose hues match the tones of the surrounding high grass, the striking "View Silo" (designed by architect Clark Stevens) becomes a natural part of the Montana plain—as does the owner's dog, Keeper.

Project: Gompertz Residence
Architect: Clark Stevens, RoTo Architects
Location: Livingston, Montana



Tucked into an upper bank of the Yellowstone River, the tower gracefully merges with the sky, thanks to its light-filled "crown"—a rooftop viewing platform fenced with slats set two inches apart.





Ron Gompertz is not the settling-down type. Career changes—buying housewares for Bloomingdales in Manhattan, marketing the Alessi kettle to San Franciscans, and moonlighting as a ski instructor in New Jersey—kept him on the move for years. Then, in 1993, he found himself in Livingston, Montana. Having taken yet another career turn to establish Heyday Records, Gompertz was in Livingston to convince a store there to carry his indie releases. Upon discovering the extraordinary views in nearby Paradise Valley, Gompertz recalls, he got a strange feeling. “There was a protracted calm here. I found myself saying, ‘I could feel at home in this beautiful place.’”

Gompertz was not alone. Many artists and writers had already settled in Livingston, a town of about 6,800, which promotes itself as the gateway to Yellowstone

National Park. Seven years later, when he decided to build in Paradise Valley, the idea that serenity could be found under Montana’s fabled big sky remained foremost in Gompertz’s mind. “When we started talking, Ron kept going on about being in the sky,” remembers architect Clark Stevens, a partner in the Los Angeles firm RoTo, which designed Gompertz’s 1,600-square-foot house. “At first I thought this was an abstraction, but it soon became clear that his intentions were quite literal.”

Stevens, who was intent on promoting housing harmonious to this flat valley floor, was initially wary. “I proposed a horizontal form that sat on the alluvial riverbank and peaked over the ridge,” he says. “But Ron convinced me that a relationship with the sky was just as valid as one with the river.” And so the idea for the Gompertz “tower” was born. ▶

Ron and Michelle love to spend time in their living room, located halfway up the tower. The space wholly succeeds in bringing the outside in—even when the windows are closed.



Furniture with clean lines, like the Alvar Aalto C chair and the Blu Dot table, lets the view take center stage. From the windows in the master bedroom, Ron and Michelle can catch an early morning glimpse of the spectacular Absoroka Mountain range.

Although such structures have been part of the Montana skyline for decades—many neighboring towns are home to aging grain silos—Stevens was insistent that this tower would float in the atmosphere, not dominate it. Now, the first view of Gompertz's \$300,000 home from East River Road testifies to the success of that vision. From the highway, the house appears unexpectedly diminutive. As you approach it, the elements responsible for the tower's fragile stance on this grassy plain become evident.

Thanks to Stevens' deft window placement, it's possible to see through the house, right out to the sky beyond—the tower exhibits little of the weight of its agrarian forebears. The rooftop viewing deck, surrounded by two-by-two-inch slats that are the vertical continuation of the house's siding system, resembles a light-filled crown. These slats hide the weatherproofing, a red

asphalt roofing material, thereby adding motion to the exterior. Further enhancing this lightness is the home's small slab—a 24-foot square—and, on the river side, an exterior wall that curves inward not only to the northeastern corner but as the tower rises. Thus, the top of the house narrows as it rises to the sky, a feature even more evident when the house is seen from the river. Along with the rich cedar color, which is weathering to a light chocolate brown with silvery highlights, these design elements produce a wonderfully subtle relationship between the 40-foot-high house and the glorious land that surrounds it.

Inside, the house operates as a multilevel viewing platform. An elevated walkway leading to the front door immediately introduces new arrivals to the sensation of being high above the ground. Visitors enter an

interior tailored to the house's pronounced vertical form. Below the entryway, a door opens, revealing a steep ladder that leads down to guest quarters. The rest of the first floor houses Gompertz's bedroom and office, which are two feet below the entry level. More stairs lead up to the living room and again to an airy mezzanine that houses the kitchen/dining area. Off this, another door opens to an exterior ladder that heads up to the viewing platform.

The verticality of the house—it's a long way up to the kitchen when you're carrying heavy grocery bags—would be a problem, if it weren't for the views. Visitors are too busy looking outside to be concerned about the stairs. At a recent party, guests sitting on the living room sofa set their gaze on the fast-running Yellowstone River. In the kitchen, other friends—Hollywood refugees,

decrying the state of the industry—stared at an elongated window resembling the letterbox frame used on TV for widescreen movies.

It's fair to say that in the Gompertz house, life and nature have become one, but achieving such fusion was not easy. Unspoiled views are hard to come by in Montana, and Gompertz's 14-acre site is no exception. Egregious examples of the contemporary suburban home are common on the small parcels of land nearby, so Stevens deftly mapped out the location of the remaining uninterrupted views and placed the windows accordingly. Inside the house, you still feel as if you're surrounded by unspoiled Montana: In the distance you can see Emigrant Peak rising about eight miles away.

These windows, unfortunately, come with one-inch-thick wood frames, which work to make the views ▶

Clever window placement gives the impression that there's nothing outside but unspoiled Montana scenery. The view competes with the crossword puzzle for Michelle's full attention.





The Cinerama-style window above the kitchen sink makes dishwashing a much more intriguing task.

Stevens placed the narrow exterior cedar slats (at right) at different distances from each other, creating a variable texture that diminishes the massing effect of the tower.

outside appear two-dimensional, almost as if they were framed paintings. Without the frames, the difference between inside and outside would verge on the imperceptible.

Since the house's completion in 2001, Gompertz has been drawn back to the Bay Area to oversee the construction of a large office space for his new company, Mosaic Mercantile. Yet he remains dedicated to the idea of spending half the year in his Paradise Valley tower, along with his fiancée, Michelle Gantt, an art director for Barclays Global Investors Web Services Group. Although they like to take advantage of nearby Yellowstone, the couple comes to the house mostly to relax. "Who knows," he says, "we may even be here all the time." Enveloped in this spectacular sky, Gompertz may finally get to feel truly at home. ■





New West Land Company

Clark Stevens hopes that the Gompertz house's complementary relationship with nature will inspire others to follow suit when designing houses here. Indeed, he's going one step further: The architect wants Montanans to "design the land" as well.

Driving through towns like Billings or Bozeman, the results of the state's unplanned subdivisions are sadly evident. Houses, rarely designed with any sensitivity to landscape, stand exposed on lots ranging in size from 20 to 40 acres—too small for agricultural exploitation, yet too large to be replanted in a way that might encourage the return of the natural habitat. What remains is a series of giant but arid backyards.

But in the Livingston storefront that houses his New West Land Company—a far cry from RoTo's offices in a converted brewery in downtown Los Angeles—Stevens is busy promoting planning strategies aimed to keep in check the suburbanization of vast tracts of this state. Local ranchers, ecologists, and others worried about the future of Montana love to wander in and discuss these issues with the 39-year-old Michigan native.

"New West strives to find the best possible outcome for the landscape," Stevens explains. "Generally, that's a mix of healthy and base, economic productivity, and 'tural viability and vitality." Stevens

endorses conservation easements—parcels of land bought for tax write-off purposes and returned to nature—but he also wants people to mix with nature. "Humans belong on the land," he asserts. "We're not distinct from it."

Spreading plans out on a table, Stevens shows off his latest design for landscape development, covering 10,000 square acres outside Billings. The land nearest the mountains, which now serves as an elk calving area, will become a habitat preserve protected by conservation easements. But a corner parcel of 400 acres near the town services provided by Billings is slated to become a town site. About 280 acres will be actual development, with the balance used as urban parks and habitat corridors.

"This is a strategic move," he explains. "The sale of town lots will finance the purchase of enough land between it and the conservation easement to block any other development." Thus, 9,600 acres can be saved, thanks to the 400-acre development, and the town itself gains commercial value, thanks to its proximity to a natural habitat.

"Designing for land use means solving a different puzzle every time," argues Stevens. "But no one is doing it, not realtors or ranchers. It's a great opportunity for architects and planners." —D.H.

The Rough Edge of

Most of the Northwest's landscape has long been domesticated, but there are still places that remind you that to tame the land, you actually have to *move* it.



Project: The Genik Residence
Architect: Daly, Genik Architects
Location: Vancouver Island

the World

In *The Living*, a novel about white settlers in the Pacific Northwest in the mid-1800s, author Annie Dillard describes the landscape as “the rough edge of the world, where the trees came smack down to the stones.” The trees, Douglas firs, were “17 feet through the trunk,” one of her characters notes, “and they all grew right close together, so you needed to turn sideways and tamp your skirt to pass between them.” In the Northwest, it’s hard to forget that taming the land means moving it.

You don’t have to tell that to Gerry and Anna Genik. Their house—designed by their son Chris’s architecture firm Daly, Genik—comprises a set of light wood-framed cedar-clad boxes that are elevated above a rough field of granite boulders so that they appear to float. “Placing the foundations required cutting a series of terraces into the hillside,” Chris explains. “A lot of rock was blasted, and we were left wondering what to do with it. As we roamed around up there, we noticed that there were a lot of embankment and pier projects built out of benched rock. And it dawned on us that it was possible to think about a kind of landscape that included something like that.”

So instead of trucking out the blasted rock and dumping it, the architects brought in rock that had been dug out for other projects and created an avalanche of enormous boulders that became the setting for the house, a kind of landlocked embankment, with the house hovering above it. To approach the house, you descend through the boulders to a poured-concrete bridge that leads to the front door; the field of boulders continues under the house to the other side. The boulder field anchors the house to the site, instead of simply surrounding it. In different lights, the house’s rich gray exterior picks up varying hues—violet, green, pink, blue-gray—from the granite, basalt, limestone, and shale.

The rocky setting turned out to be a natural choice ▶



A field of rocks runs from the slope above the house down under the boxlike structures and ends in the backyard. It’s a striking design element, adding a subtle range of colors to the landscape. Gerry Genik, a former Exxon geologist, can tell you exactly what kinds of rocks are used.



Dwellings

for Gerry, a retired geologist who worked for Exxon. "My dad has a real love for stone and rock," Chris explains, "and when the house was developing it became a natural part of the narrative." There are other signs of Gerry's passion for rock throughout the house, such as an enormous fireplace, the anchor of the interior living space, designed like an asymmetrical crystal.

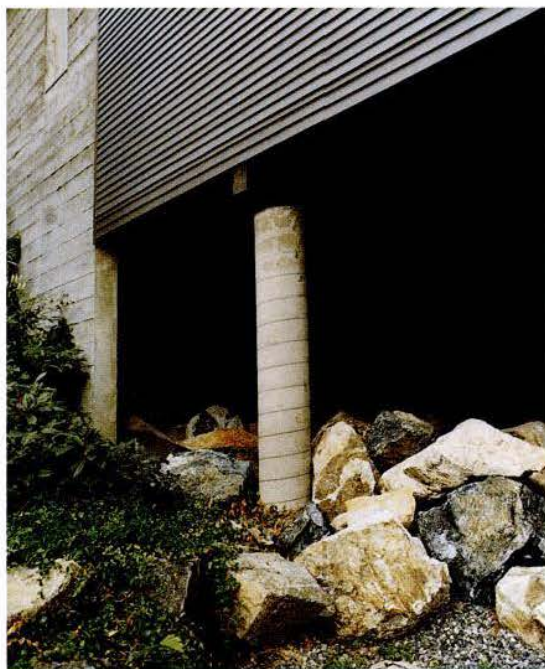
The series of accidents, experiments, and decisions that led to Daly, Genik's design was the result of a process that, to hear Chris describe it, sounds like a kind of architectural dialectic: There was what his parents wanted, what he knew about how his parents live, and then a triangulation of these ideas by his partner, Kevin Daly. "Within a family, there's a kind of shorthanding," Chris explains. "Kevin doesn't know my family that well, so he was able to interject in ways that were helpful, ways that opened up the discussion." His mother is more direct: "It was wonderful."

Located in Sidney, British Columbia, just across the bay from Bellingham, Washington, the site of the Whatcom settlement brought to life in Dillard's novel, the house is both artful and specific. It's in a subdivision at the top of a steep hill that affords a sweeping north-easterly view of the Straits of Georgia and the San Juan Islands, and its contemporary design—as well as the boulder field—provide a sharp contrast to the ranch houses and manicured lawns around it.

Inside, the house feels light, seemingly weightless. One of the living room walls is entirely glazed with uninterrupted windows looking out, tree house-like, over a patch of densely wooded area—another unexpected element in the suburbs. Here, you can see rabbits darting down the hill, and small birds swooping from tree to tree. A large panel of the window-wall slides open, dissolving the division between indoors and out. This ►



The Geniks' house both reflects and echoes its environment. Vancouver Island sits more or less in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains. The mountains divert the region's considerable rainfall, but it's still gray much of the time. The overcast skies just make the island's flora all the more startlingly green.







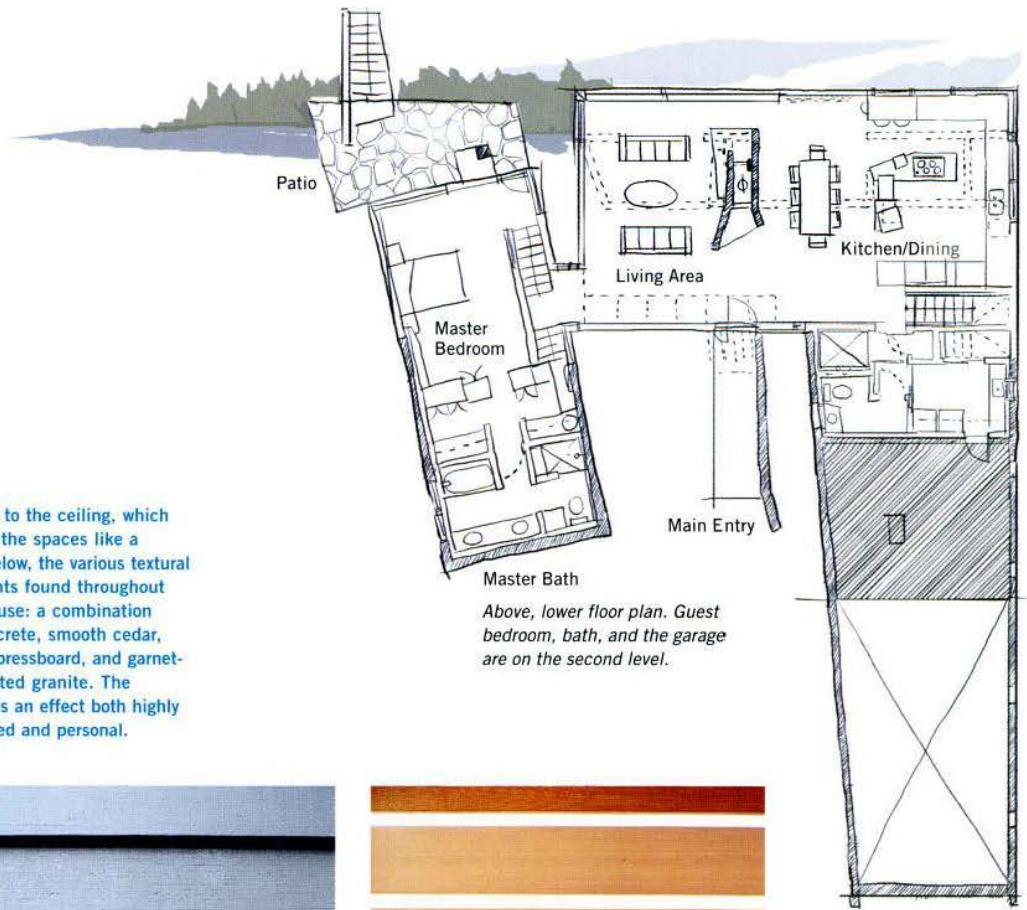
For 40 years, Gerry and Anna Genik moved their family around the world—to London, Morocco, Houston—and in retirement have come back to Canada. Gerry's African masks, acquired during the family's years in Africa, cover the walls of the downstairs sitting room. Upstairs, at son Chris's urging, Anna's many paintings have been wrapped up and stored.



floating quality, achieved in part by cantilevering the structure, is something Daly, Genik use frequently in their houses—a kind of gravity-defying element that prevents the austere architecture from feeling too weighty. The architects kept the interior of the house minimal, with the focus on the view. “I have a lot of paintings,” Anna says, smiling, “but Christopher told me I couldn’t put them up.”

The streamlined interior serves another purpose, which is to bounce light around the house. Most of Daly, Genik’s residential projects are in California, where retaining sunlight isn’t as obvious a need, but it’s no small consideration in the Northwest, where the winters are harsh. Kevin and Chris came up with a number of ways to make the most of what light there is, with bands of skylights and reflecting walls. “We developed a series of roof and stairwell openings,” notes Chris, “so that even when it’s gray out, light floods into the room and animates it. It never seems gloomy. And it’s tempered, so even in the summer the house never gets blasted with sunlight.”

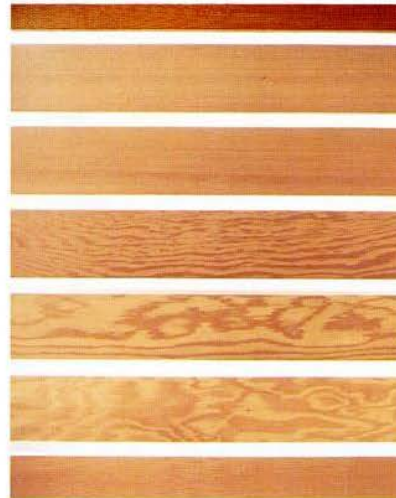
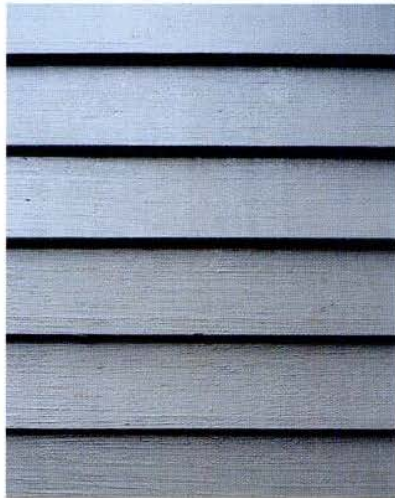
Three distinct boxes are set within the field of boulders to form the body of the house: a large open space for living room, dining room, and kitchen, and two side wings, one of which contains the master bedroom and a study/guest bedroom downstairs, and another bedroom upstairs. The other wing consists of a sitting room (where Gerry keeps his collection of African masks and can often be found sketching), a storage space, a garage, and a modest deck with an excellent view. Despite the clear divisions between these spaces, there’s a tremendous feeling of openness; part of the impetus behind this was Anna’s frustration at feeling cut off from things in the kitchen. “When I’m entertaining, I hate being shut in the kitchen when everything’s happening in the living room,” she explains. ▶



The natural flow of light and air through the house belies its distinct three-box structure. Movement between each box can be unexpected—as from the large open spaces of the living/kitchen area to the intimate bedroom/study area—but never illogical, largely because the walls don't fully

extend to the ceiling, which unites the spaces like a sky. Below, the various textural elements found throughout the house: a combination of concrete, smooth cedar, rough pressboard, and garnet-encrusted granite. The result is an effect both highly designed and personal.

Master Bath
Above, lower floor plan. Guest bedroom, bath, and the garage are on the second level.



Only partly screened from the living room by cabinet units piled like children's blocks, the kitchen is laid out to allow both participation in the life of the house and concentration on the task at hand (don't let the asymmetrical randomness fool you; Anna keeps the kitchen supremely organized and clutter-free). In the same vein, the upstairs study has large sliding panels that foster a sense of privacy but don't go all the way to the ceiling, allowing for the exposed roof framing to be uninterrupted. Many of the house's angles are either tight and acute or open and obtuse, which makes walking through it a more engaging activity than if everything were at right angles. Chris likens this to "repositioning yourself on the bed of boulders, walking through landscape, even when you're inside the house."

The main living space features beams made of compressed wood chips that give a rough textural contrast to the sleek clear-stained wood used throughout. For the bedroom wing, Daly, Genik chose cedar beams salvaged from a 75-year-old military airplane hangar that had recently collapsed in a snowstorm. The ceilings are framed with a rib structure that resembles the hull of an inverted boat (and also has echoes of a Native American longhouse), which is an eminently practical way of diverting the region's considerable rain.

These sets of negotiated contrasts are what make the Geniks' house both engaging and comfortable: floating and anchored, sleek and rustic, open and tight. It's a house that allows for both generous entertaining and necessary privacy. In the main living area, life revolves around the great fireplace—another large structure built deep into the earth, like the boulders that surround the house, reminding you that the house is of the ground, not just sitting on top of it. ■



Above and bottom right, an enormous concrete fireplace fashioned in a crystalline shape nominally separates the kitchen from the living room, keeping the spaces distinct but connected. In the kitchen (opposite), square units are piled in a way that seems random but gives a sense of order to the enormous room. Daly, Genik designed the kitchen cabinets and the shelving in the upstairs hall (bottom left), which were made from aspen by Citta, a local cabinetmaker.

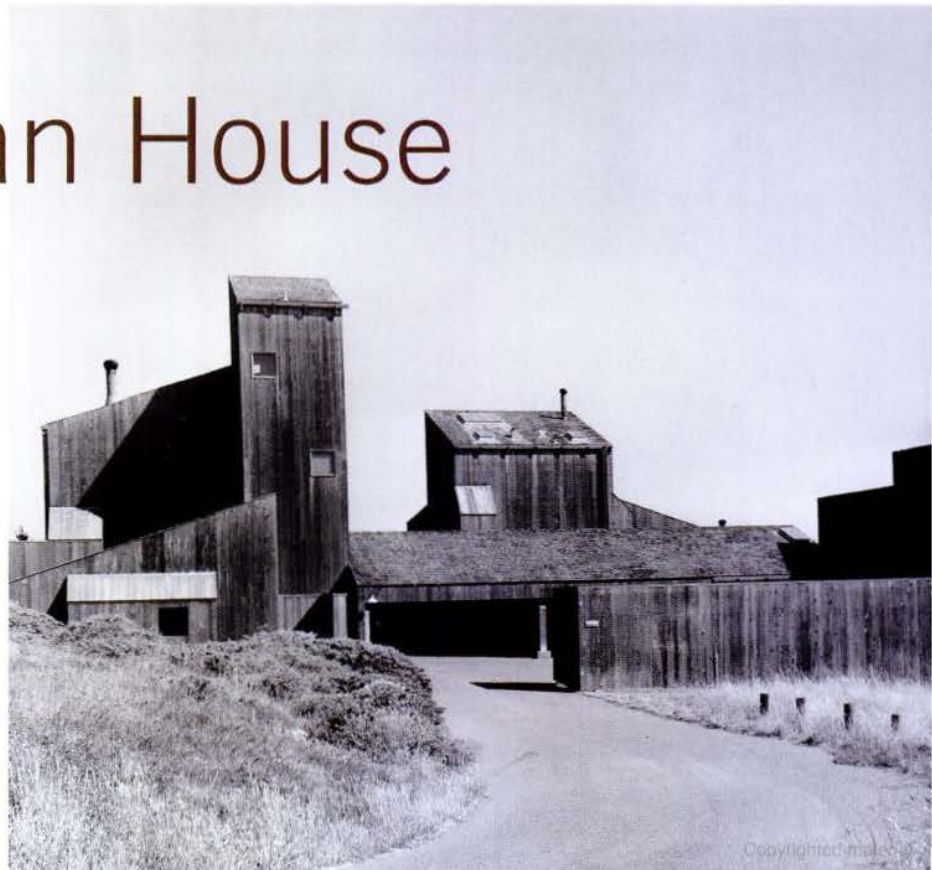






Built in 1965, Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull and Whittaker's Condominium I at Sea Ranch on the Northern California coast (bottom) struck a chord in people's yearning to get away from it all. California modernists like Richard Neutra and Craig Ellwood merged the indoors and the outdoors, enabling residents to feel like they were getting away from it all just by stepping out on the porch. At left, Ellwood's Case Study House #17 (1954-55) is one example.

The **Exurban** House



Today, our world's largely domesticated nature has become just another element in architecture's arsenal.

The exurban house is in. Or, rather, out. Far out, at road's end, beyond freeway and subdivision. Neither rural nor suburban, exurban houses lie deep in the countryside, yet within striking distance of chic eats and leisure-time activities. Their extra-large lots, usually far in excess of two or three acres, encourage privacy, yet include chef's kitchens and media rooms for entertaining. Enjoying the affluence of contemporary times, exurban residents strive for a pleasurable and provocative style of landscape living. Recent house designs by Northern California architects Fernau & Hartman and Stanley Saitowitz are typical of the exurban phenomenon, where the experience of setting is taken to the outer limits.

While exurban houses aim to dance with nature, their designers must contend with one of architecture's oldest challenges: how to adapt a building to the different rhythms of nature and society.

For thousands of years, houses resembled their landscapes, but not out of aesthetic intent. Houses sprang out of the particularities of local agricultural tasks, building tradition, terrain, and climate. Their materials—be they wood or stone—came from nearby. Each design decision, from the thickness of walls to the pitch of a roof, was all part of a struggle for survival.

During the Renaissance, rising affluence allowed architects to subvert a house's dependence on its natural setting. Beginning with Raphael and Palladio in the 16th century, the design of houses for the elite reveled in the strictness of geometry and the freedom of art. Designed landscapes began to resemble ideas and drawings, and emanated from a house's straight lines and right angles. Eyes replaced hands as, for the elite, landscape became a field of viewing rather than sowing, something to be gazed at musingly from a veranda. By the 20th century, as championed by architects like Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier, industrial materials—steel, reinforced concrete, and plate glass—further struck home the aesthetic (and technological) relationship between house and landscape.

As early as the 19th century, however, this aesthetic approach to the landscape provoked negative reactions. Certain architects, most notably those involved with the British Arts and Crafts movement, began to argue for a reintegration of domestic building with landscape, for houses that snugly settled into place. But as architects dove back into the intricacies and constraints of nature, the socio-economic conditions of a working relationship between house and landscape were vanishing. During those same years of the industrial era, for

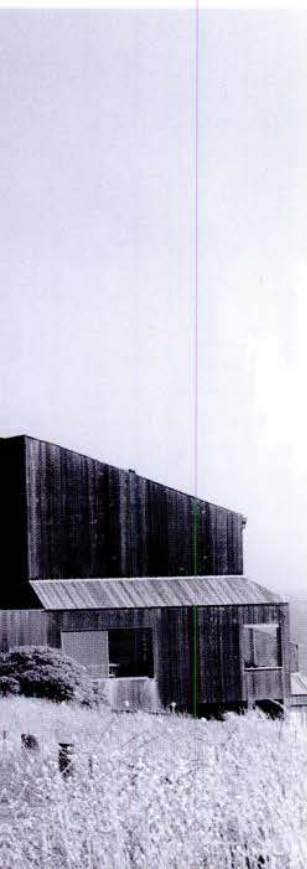
the first time in human history, wilderness became attractive. Freed from the toil of the fields and the dangers of wild animals, people began to embrace long-feared feral lands. This love had less to do with an all-out immersion in wilderness than with a casual, predominantly visual appreciation of its striking attributes.

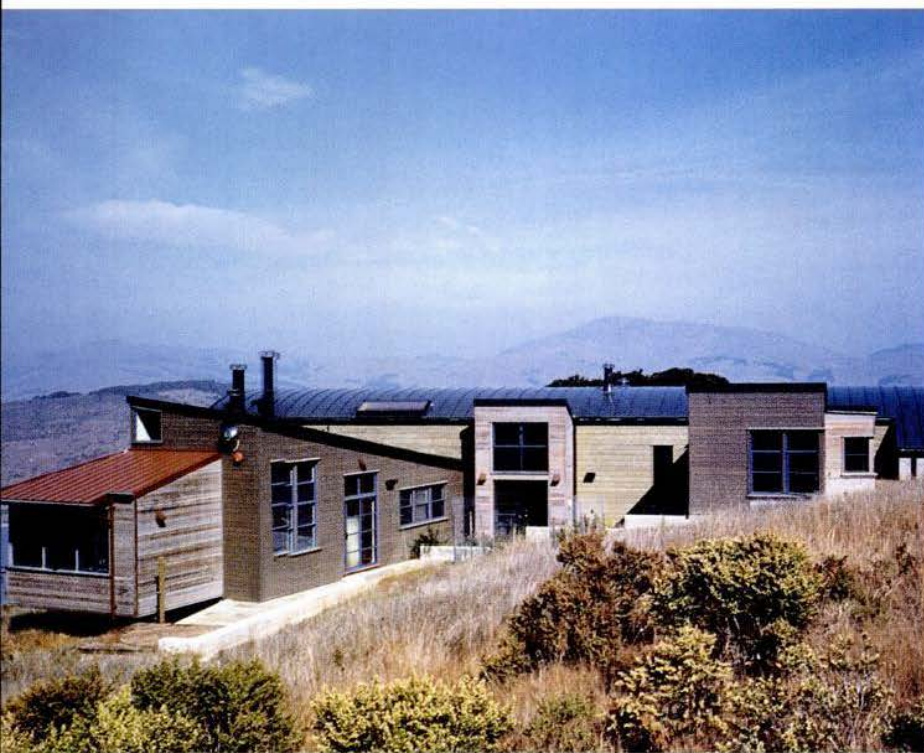
Perhaps it's no wonder, then, that today's houses designed for the countryside and wilderness—or, more realistically, exurbia—approach nature boldly. Nature is no longer something that needs to be contended with, as with agrarian building, or vanquished by pure artistic forms. These days, our world's largely domesticated nature has become a flexible element in architecture's arsenal.

Moore, Lyndon, Turnbull and Whittaker's Condominium I (1965) at Sea Ranch, on the coast of Northern California, epitomizes the ways architects have embraced wild and agrarian landscapes only to squeeze out bold iterations of form and space. The unique appearance and site of the building—poised between abstract art and grainy vernacular, on a peaceful meadow above a rocky ocean cliff—struck a chord in people's yearning for an alternative to city or suburb. Sea Ranch may very well have spawned the idea of exurban houses, spread over the landscape at low densities, like the working American farms of old, yet stamped with an aura of astonishing sensory experience.

To this day, exurban architecture flourishes, especially in California. In a series of houses completed over the past decade, Berkeley-based architects Richard Fernau and Laura Hartman have furthered domestic communion with landscape and continued traditions of San Francisco Bay Area architects from William Wurster to William Turnbull. While Fernau & Hartman's preference for bright colors and angular projections might seem to be unrelated to site, almost all their decisions emerge from an inspection of landscape attuned to client desires. Generally, their houses are situated to maximize beautiful panoramas and minimize the visual intrusion of blight. For instance, at the von Stein residence (1992), in Sonoma County, California, the west side of the house becomes an opaque wall so as to close off the presence of neighbors and the afternoon sun. All the primary viewing corridors from rooms and terraces look out on the prized vineyards of the Valley of the Moon.

But exploiting stunning long-range views is only part of how Fernau & Hartman encourage a closer interaction between house and landscape. Reflecting the clients' desire for outdoor living, site plans alternate ►





Fernau & Hartman's Anderson Ayers house in Nicasio, California, is woven into its landscape, promoting a host of sensual experiences. The rooms under the wooden barrel roof offer long-range views of

a reservoir and the rolling Marin County hills (top). But by diving into the hillside (above), the house also confronts its inhabitants with the grains of the earth.

interior rooms and exterior patios. The architects take full advantage of topography, and their houses seem to hop up hillsides or skip across the creases of valleys. The von Stein house, for instance, is organized around a central spine, which links a series of alternating indoor and outdoor rooms (including a tower) that step up the hillside. While encouraging al fresco dining, socializing, and contemplation, this division into discrete zones also separates public spaces, workspaces, and sleeping quarters. Exurban dwelling comes with social interaction—but only when you want it.

The encounters encouraged by Fernau & Hartman's designs correspond with the sensory overload characteristic of contemporary life. Akin to the myriad channels offered by digital cable packages, these houses present a wide range of experiences, available at the turn of one's eyes or a short walk down a flight of stairs. Encompassing extreme long shots as well as close-ups, panoramas of fields and ocean, brushings with stone and grass, the houses are like a cinematic lens for probing the landscape. But in this case the experience is all around, palpably local, and teeming with texture.

Although Stanley Saitowitz's practice is based in San Francisco, his exurban houses don't stem from the Bay Area tradition, but rather come from Southern California modernism, reaching from Richard Neutra to Craig Ellwood and the Case Study House movement. Influenced by the experiments of land artists like Michael Heizer, Saitowitz's razor-sharp houses expand modernism into a geologic and topographic dimension, exposing the layers of landscape by building into, out of, and across them. At the Byron Meyer house (1990–2000), in Sonoma County, the design reshapes both its site and its inhabitants. A ravine separates the master bedroom suite, atop a hill, from the main living area, on a separate promontory. The bridge that joins them, tartly expressed by red steel trusses, connects discrete realms of landscape and occupants.

Over the past couple of years, Saitowitz has embarked on an experiment that he calls the bar houses. The flat-roofed houses are built as thin glass-and-steel shafts, varying from 22 to 25 feet in thickness. This linear plan type allows Saitowitz to wrap each house into the landscape in a different way. Bars cross over each other at right angles, loop up in spirals, or crisscross to fashion internal courtyards. The twists and turns of the bar houses correspond largely to topographic conditions. And, as in most exurban houses, private and public spaces are separated from each other. In one of the bar houses, located in Marin County, the private zone sits directly atop the public zone. So far nothing new. But their separation is accentuated by the fact that windows on each floor open out in different directions. Above, the private rooms afford a medium-range view of the hillside; below, the living quarters tender long-range panoramas of the oak-studded hills. By closing off the opposing views from each zone with opaque walls, Saitowitz focuses public and private space as divergent landscape encounters. ▶



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As the bar houses snake and slither, going straight along, suddenly ramping up into a half circle, or crisply turning a 90-degree corner, they rearrange the state of affairs on the land. Describing the bar houses as ribbons or rulers, Saitowitz conceives of them as instruments for taking the measure of a landscape. In one sense, the bars continue landforms and vehicular routes, as earthen slopes become asphalt driveways, interior corridors, and eventually terraces outside bedrooms that look back at the land. But rather than imitating or continuing natural features, the bar houses often buck the current of their sites. They cut across the grain of land, much as the San Francisco city grid reveals a precipitous topography by crashing into it. Saitowitz's houses are sharpest when their artifice reveals the complex scope of landscape, when straight steel edges cut into the earth to uncover its ancient strata, or when rectangular pools of water float shifting pictures of structure, site, and sky. The bars might be described as stealth architecture, curiously probing at every detail of landscape, but skulking all the while. Because of the bar houses' thinness and transparency, the landscape is often seen through them. Houses are more frames than forms.

As the different approaches of Fernau & Hartman and Stanley Saitowitz show, the exurban house gets its jolt from a confrontation with remote and amply sized landscapes. It is a restless refuge, at one moment curling residents into site and seconds later rocketing their eyes toward far horizons. Most exurban houses wear their design casually but those same houses also climb hillsides and ford uneven ridges. The experience for residents is a storm of sensations—intricate and scattered, restful and dramatic. And yet one of the casualties of the exurban house seems to be that worked zone of landscape emblematic of country houses of old: the garden. Nowadays, perimeters around exurban houses are blended in with the "wilds," their artifice disguised to promote a pristine, almost primal engagement of occupant with landscape.

The exurban house follows a long tradition of wealthy people fleeing the ills of the city for the glories of the country. The chief difference today lies in the significantly larger number of people able to afford grandiose second or third homes. Many formerly rural regions of the country are becoming elite exurbs—like parts of California's Marin, Napa, Sonoma, and Mendocino counties, but also Cape Cod, eastern Long Island, the Berkshires, areas around ski resorts throughout the Rocky Mountains, and long stretches of ocean and lake coastline. Hidden by the exurban house's designed encounter with landscape is its dubious battle with the gray boundlessness of the metropolis. America's economy of sprawl now spews forth estate escapes, vast acreages of land sequestered into private preserves, utopias of the privileged individual. Inviting the sounds and sights of nature, yet not of the public, the exurban house represents a mass movement of affluent Americans away from the mass culture they themselves produce and control. ■



Influenced by Southern California modernists and contemporary land artists like Michael Heizer, Stanley Saitowitz's razor-sharp houses expose the layers of landscape by building into, out of, and

across them. In the case of the Byron Meyer house (1990) in Sonoma County, California (top), the design reshapes both its site and its inhabitants. In the design for the I-House (bottom), bold volumes cross

over each other and intertwine with a large pool and pond, creating striking visual interest on an otherwise flat and unimposing site.

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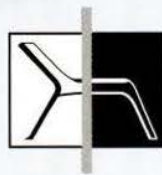
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Brothers Gonna Work It Out

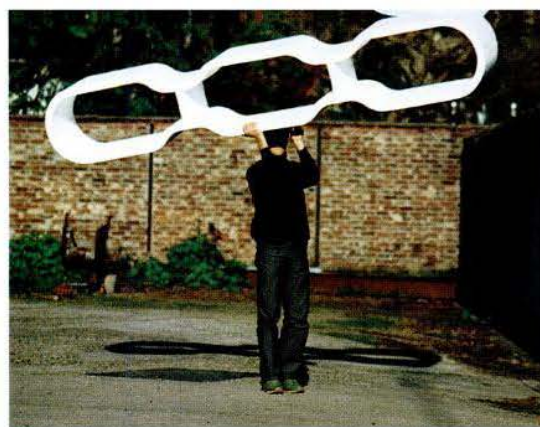
Ronan Bouroullec demonstrates the lightweight *Étagères Polystyrènes* originally developed for an exhibition of French footwear. Opposite, Ronan basks in the glow of the Bouroullec brothers' *Parasol Lumineux* (or, as Erwan Bouroullec calls it, "Big Lamp"). Both the lamp and carpet (*Tapis Grappe*, or "Cluster Rug") were produced in limited editions for Paris's Galerie Kreo in 2001.

"The best thing about *Star Wars*," Erwan Bouroullec muses, "was that they always had to fix things. Everything was always breaking." The comment echoes a statement the young designer made a week earlier in the studio he shares with his older brother and partner, Ronan. "In rural culture you don't need any decor. Somebody doesn't want to buy a new handle for the door. They'll take an old one and [fix it] with a screw that doesn't match. Inside practical things there is always a lot of poetry."

A malfunctioning Millennium Falcon and a makeshift country doorknob seem a far cry from the ultrarefined furniture, housewares, objects, and environments that the Bouroullec brothers have designed for the likes of Cappellini, Magis, Habitat, Vitra, and Issey Miyake (among others). However, behind their deceptively minimal designs one finds the same "poetry" from the ramshackle *Star Wars* universe and decor-deprived countryside.

Raised in a small rural village near the town of Quimper in Brittany, Erwan, 26, and Ronan, 31, have quietly taken the design world by storm (a path Erwan sarcastically claims was caused by constant rain forcing them to stay indoors and draw). The Bouroullec brothers have made their home in the northern Parisian suburb of St. Denis—where buried 13th-century kings coexist with African sunglass vendors. Invitations to Paris's most exclusive parties and applications to France's *Who's Who* pile up in the mail, while the pair work day and night at their craft. With none of the ego and bravado expected from designers of their generation (take note, Karim Rashid), the Bouroullecs are a unified team—both philosophically and in practice. Erwan, who speaks better English, explains: "It's not easier to do something when you are two, but it's better for the project. When we don't agree, or when a project is in the middle of nowhere, we can tell each other. It can be difficult, but it gives us some distance from the work and helps make it grow."

The variety of their work—from big-budget long-term projects like Vitra's new office system Joyn to quicker small projects like perfume bottles for Issey Miyake's *L'eau d'Issey*—demonstrates Erwan's and Ronan's ability to transcend both medium and context, creating objects that are distinctly "Bouroullec." Outwardly their designs share an aesthetic of spartan cleanliness and a Loos-worthy dedication to the reduction of forms. However, they are unified more by the brothers' passion for achieving the poetic than by physical similarity.



"Poems are usually quite simple," says Erwan, who interrupts himself midway through his next sentence to elaborate on the strict nature of haiku. "We always try to reduce the number of materials. To reduce the number of shapes. We don't like objects that speak too much." If there's beauty to be found in the Bouroullec world—like a well-worded haiku—it's essential to the design's entire purpose, not an afterthought.

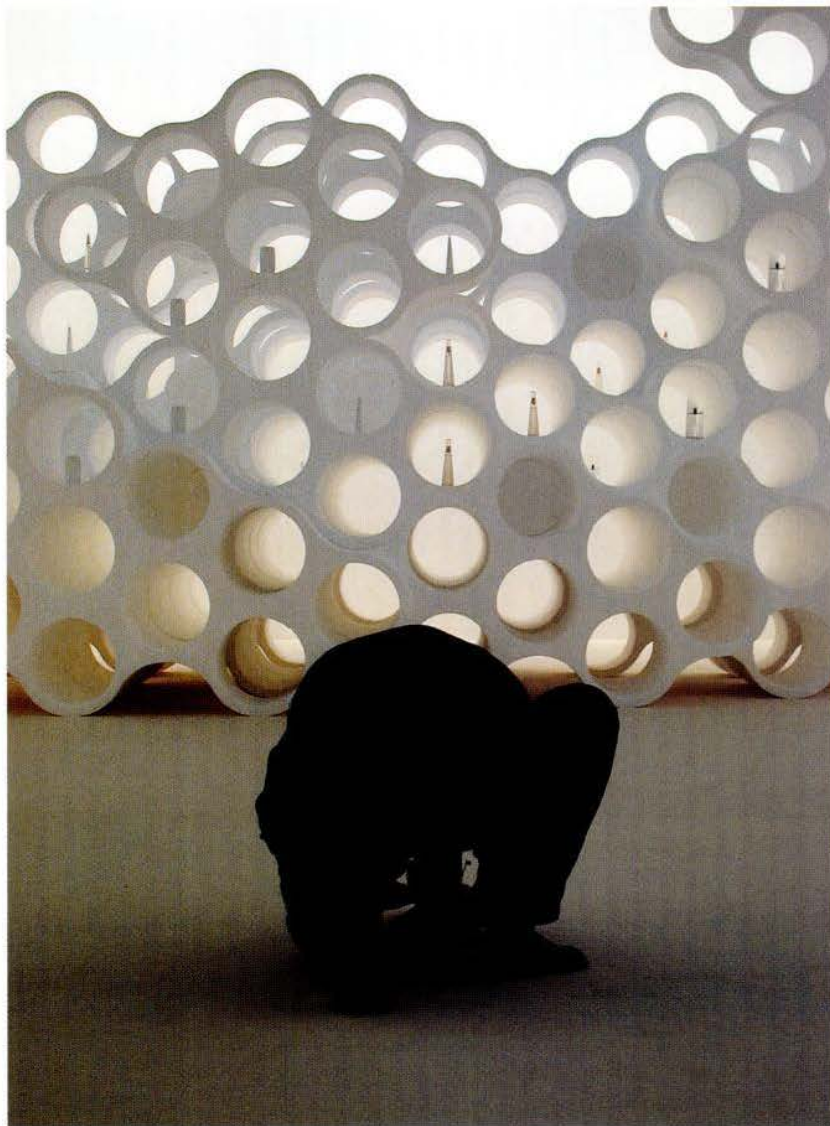
"Poetry can also mean that you can link some things that [don't] link together usually." Walking across the room to a low folding seat, called *Outdoors*, which is covered in soft rubbery waterproof upholstery and was designed for the French manufacturer Ligne Roset, Erwan adds: "When you put this in front of a swimming pool, someone says, 'Oh, it looks comfortable.' But if you take the chair inside, they'll say, 'It's not so good. I'm used to seeing an armchair with tons of foam.'" By creating designs that can fulfill different roles, the Bouroullecs hope to blur the lines of context—leaving the user to define an object's final purpose.

This open-ended approach also employs one of the most ephemeral tools in the Bouroullec design palette, the human memory. Erwan, in furthering his definition of poetry, explains that they aren't just making "futuristic" designs (reportedly, the set designer for Steven Spielberg's *Minority Report* found the Spring Chair appropriate seating for the year 2048). Rather, by referencing and subtly manipulating what people already know about objects and their history, a design can provoke new sensory reactions—as best demonstrated by their *carafe* created for Galerie Peyroulet, a friend's gallery. The design strips one of French culture's most recognizable icons, the wine bottle, of its color and form, adding a spout where one might normally hold the bottle to pour.

While the brothers' commercial designs have been constrained by a number of factors, some of their most free-thinking work has resulted in what Ronan and Erwan call "micro architecture." "It's a bit bigger than furniture, but much smaller than regular architecture."

Imagine if building a house were as easy as assembling an IKEA bookshelf (assuming you can follow a pictogram). Or if moving a bedroom to the other side of the house were as easy as rearranging the living room furniture. With micro architecture, the Bouroullecs scale down buildings and their stagnant guts to designs that blindside architectural tradition—allowing people to radically change and shape their living space. ▶





The plywood-and-metal structure acts as both an overgrown bed frame and a bedroom on stilts—with room inside for a mattress, bedtime reading, and, Erwan jokes, “a box of condoms.”



Thanks to CNC (computer numerically controlled) cutting machines, the Bouroullecs have created a number of designs in inexpensive polystyrene. Above, *Un Nuage* (“Cloud”) was created for Issey Miyake’s tenth anniversary. The vaguely UFO-shaped pieces interlock and stack to form an interior landscape. Left, *Lit Clos* (“Enclosed Bed”) blurs the lines between architecture and furniture.

The first work they undertook in this area was a portable kitchen for Cappellini—a plastic-molded, sink-equipped, completely modular shelving system. The design was conceived so homeowners could freely move their kitchen—even to their next apartment.

The following project, *Lit Clos* (“Enclosed Bed”), espouses a similarly nomadic rationale, but for the bedroom. The plywood-and-metal structure acts as both an overgrown bed frame and a bedroom on stilts—with room inside for a mattress, bedtime reading, and, Erwan jokes, “a box of condoms.”

As micro architecture evolves, the Bouroullecs, true to their notion of the poetic, have shied away from creating products with obvious functions. Pointing to the set of capsule-shaped polystyrene shelves in the middle of their studio, Erwan claims, against the nature of rhetoric one normally hears from designers, “they are not perfect shelves or a perfect wall.” Despite the fact that the curved shape doesn’t lend itself to storage—the material isn’t strong enough to support heavy books—and the large openings negate employment as an effective space divider, the shelves are not completely pointless. “It’s just giving people the ability to do whatever they want with it. It becomes more like a problem of landscape.”

The polystyrene shelves were exhibited in 2001 at Galerie Kreo, in Paris, with two other pieces that further explore the notions of domestic landscape: the *Cabane* (or “Wool Hut”) and *Parasol Lumineux* (“Big Lamp”). Erwan describes the grass-green hut, which looks not unlike a sort of Teletubby-inspired soccer goal, as an “affective skin.” It doesn’t matter what someone decides to put inside the loosely woven structure—he suggests “a sofa, desk, or playground for your children”—the design’s concern is to create a new zone, with its own set of emotional triggers.

The Big Lamp elicits a similarly emotive response. “We discovered that when you put the lamp in a room,” Erwan explains, as though presenting a psychological study, “when someone enters they just go directly under it. Like when you enter a house in which there is a fireplace—you just go to the fireplace.” As with the hut, the lamp—which looks like an outdoor umbrella—is almost completely open to the space it inhabits, yet carves out its own sensory territory. Erwan sarcastically hypothesizes that perhaps people just feel better with a second roof over their head.

A visit inside the Bouroullecs’ studio, which contains dozens of their pieces—chairs, sofas, shelves, vases, dishes—and telltale scraps of work currently under way, feels almost like a trip to a showroom. Seeing all the Bouroullecs’ designs together, one is awestruck by what the pair have accomplished in so little time. If everything were for sale, you could outfit an entire home (from the living room sofa to the contents of the kitchen cabinets). But Erwan and Ronan, ever aware of the world outside their whitewashed walls, wouldn’t have it that way. Contemplating how their work eventually reaches the public, Erwan adds: “It’s interesting that people mix everything. They’ll get some old plates from grandmother and next to them sits a mobile phone. It’s totally uncontrollable. And I think this is quite good.” ■



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Micro Architecture Journal

"There is one field that we are currently particularly interested in investigating. Located somewhere between object design and architecture, it involves dreaming up light, transient, transportable structures. The objective of the workshop is to design and realize micro constructions to offer protection from the sun and the rain, sensual caves where people can sleep, eat, and drink."—Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec, 2002

Every summer, the Vitra Design Museum hosts a series of workshops with internationally renowned designers and architects, from Shigeru Ban to the IKEA design group, at their French chateau and farm, Boisbuchet. Last July, designer Erwan Bouroullec took a week away from his studio (but not his cell phone) to lead a workshop in "micro architecture." As the Vitra Design Workshops are open to anyone, I decided to tag along and see if one week was enough time to become a micro architect.

Sunday, July 28

The trip from Paris to Poitiers, on one of France's high-speed train lines, takes just over an hour. Waiting at the station for the bus to Boisbuchet, it's easy to pick out the other workshop participants—why do designers always have cool shoes? Wine and beer are served upon our arrival, and most of the night is spent relaxing and meeting people. Participants have come from as far away as Japan, but the majority are European design students. This year's staff, it turns out, is largely from the University of Kansas—Dan Rockhill ("Nice Modernist," October 2002) was not a name I'd expected to hear while on a farm in the south of France.

Monday, July 29

Monday's activities begin with a tour of the grounds, including the interior of the dilapidated chateau Vitra hopes to renovate in the future. Erwan gives a presentation of the concept of micro architecture and explains the week's brief. Our only materials will be PVC pipes and tape, and we are to incorporate an existing site into our project. My group consists of Leonora and Polly, both design students from England; Stephanie, a Swiss woman studying interior design in Barcelona; and Julia, a product designer living in Paris.

After deciding on a site along the banks of the Vienne River, we spend the rest of the afternoon sketching, talking over ideas, and experimenting with the PVC.

Tuesday, July 30

Unlike some of the groups, which are already splintering, we agree on a design that incorporates all of our ideas. We decide to build three shells of descending size, each attached to a large tree by the river. By applying pressure to the top of our structure—which, when laid out flat, resembles a tripartite set of dragonfly wings—the sides bow outward, creating a dome-like shape. The largest shell will sit on the upper bank, with one below, next to the water, and a third sitting in the water itself. Each will have a unique skin: long strands of grass on the largest, tape woven into a fabric for the medium-size one, and for the smallest, sheets of variously sized PVC rings, which we will cut with the band saw and lash together. It's clear from the repeated, almost mechanical motions my fellow group members use to create the kit of parts now needed for our design—heating, bending, pressing, and setting the PVC—that I am very much in the company of product designers.

Wednesday, July 31

Erwan suggests making the smallest shell—the one with the PVC skin—a lamp, but after seeing the sheets of rings hanging from Boisbuchet's barn, decides they are worthy of an entirely different project altogether ("like clothing for houses," he suggests). Later, by the river, Erwan debates whether we should even have a third shell. Tired from arguing after a day of manual labor, nobody notices when the smallest shell takes off in the current downstream—a decisive conclusion to our debate.

Thursday, August 1

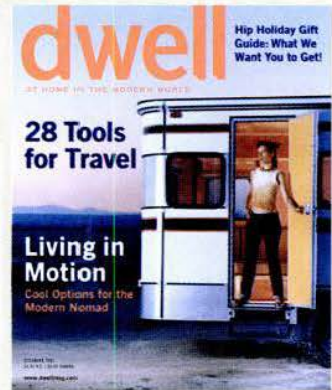
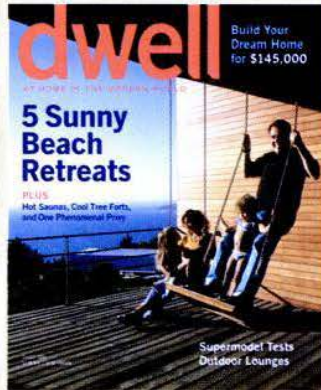
Our project is proving to be a little more ambitious than we initially estimated. Making the sheets of PVC rings is painstaking, and we're still not quite sure how they'll fit into the design. We gather two wheelbarrows' worth of long grasses from the riverbank. After dinner and a soccer match (Erwan made goals from PVC the day before), with the woven sheets complete and the *Virgin Suicides* soundtrack on repeat, we set about making the large shell's grass skin. Even with the five of us—and Erwan—the last grass sheet isn't completed until 3 A.M. French wine comes in boxes, and we celebrate with one by the fire until the first glimmer of dawn.

Friday, August 2

The weather takes a dreadful turn. As we begin to assemble the structure by the river, the wind doesn't make anything easier. Due to the weight of the grass sheets and the turbulent gusts, the outer shell droops and buckles. While I stand on a ladder halfway up the tree holding onto the top of the shell, Erwan perches even more precariously in the tree beside me; he and I rig the shell with fishing line between the bank and the trees. It holds for a few hours until we present the design after lunch. Later, in his critique, Erwan focuses on the little design elements that made the whole structure possible—an inside-out clip made from bent and flattened PVC and the joints that held it all together. He concludes there were small parts that were very good, but a week wasn't enough time to create something quite refined enough for his taste.

Saturday, August 3

After another late night, our last, we bid a fond farewell to new friends and Boisbuchet. Having open-ended plans (back to Paris? on to Barcelona?), I opt for the former, if only to keep Julia company in her stereo-less Fiat and make the week last that much longer. —S.G.



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as well as architecture in motion. To learn more about leading projects, visit the panelists' websites, listed below.



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Architect, Syndesis, Inc.
www.syndesisinc.com



Ron Radziner
Architect, Marmol & Radziner
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Jennifer Siegal
Architect, Office of Mobile Design
www.designmobile.com



Richard Holbrook
Founder & CEO, dna
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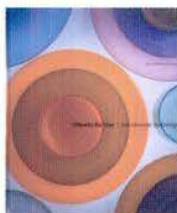
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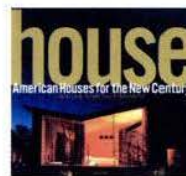
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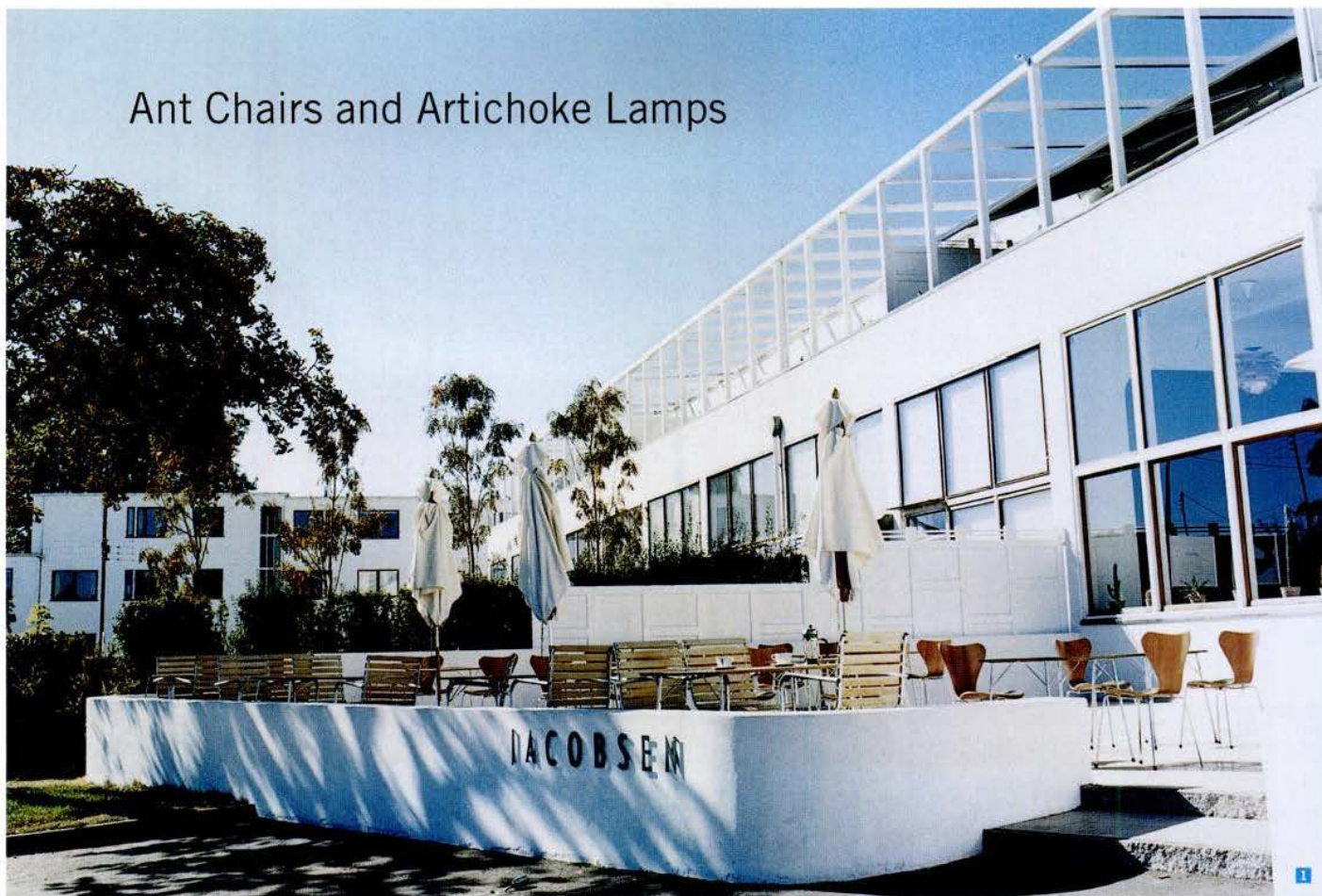
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Ant Chairs and Artichoke Lamps



The cookies lied. All those royal blue tins of Danish butter cookies my grandmother brought me when I was a kid were covered with photos of a statue of Hans Christian Andersen's Little Mermaid lounging beside rows of colorful buildings in what I assumed to be Copenhagen. So I grew up thinking that the Little Mermaid was an intimate part of the city's architectural landscape, and that Danish buildings were awash in bright colors.

Wrong on both counts. As I learned on a recent trip, there are just three blocks of really colorful houses in Copenhagen, located along the touristy Nyhavn canal. And the Little Mermaid is little, all right: She's a tiny, underwhelming bronze sculpture sitting alone atop a granite stone along a waterfront promenade, a 20-minute walk from Nyhavn. The most impressive thing about this putative symbol of Copenhagen is how many visitors swarm around her while angling for a photo op. No wonder she looks so melancholy.

Although I grew up with Danish modern furniture, an Arne Jacobsen tea set, and those butter cookies, the real inspiration behind my

visit to Copenhagen was a layover at the airport there several years ago. During an involuntary rerouting from Reykjavik to London (don't ask), I spent three hours at Kastrup airport and instantly fell in love. For a design nut—or any traveler, really—the airport is heaven. The lighting, the sleek furniture in the boarding lounges, the shops filled with Stelton housewares, the jaw-droppingly handsome people speaking mellifluous Queen's English—the tourist board couldn't have drafted a better promo for Denmark.

How could Denmark not be a hotbed of design? It's the home of modernist giants such as Jørn Utzon, Hans J. Wegner, Verner Panton, and Arne Jacobsen, but like most sophisticated European cities, Copenhagen has a healthy attitude toward history as well as modernity. Everywhere you go, from the most dazzling high-tech office to the simplest shop, you see two modern icons: Jacobsen's bent-plywood Ant chair and Poul Henningsen's sensational Artichoke ceiling lamp. Their ubiquity is great proof of the Danes' belief in modern design as an integral part of everyday life.

Houses

Almost exactly halfway between Copenhagen and Humlebaek is the elegant seaside community of Klampenborg, where Arne Jacobsen built his first major work, the Bellavista Housing Estate, in 1934. The train station is located just behind this functionalist Bauhaus-style apartment complex, in which every home has a view of the water. For the complete design experience, dine at the aptly named restaurant Jacobsen (Strandvejen 449; 011-45-39-63-43-22; www.restaurant-jacobsen.dk), located within Bellavista. All the furniture and the cutlery were designed by the master himself. Nearby are two later Jacobsen housing complexes: the Sjøholm Housing Estate (1955) and Bellevue Bay (1961).

Jørn Utzon, best known for designing the Sydney Opera House, built his own house in the coastal town of Hellebaek (1952), introducing the open plan to Danish architecture. Closer to Copenhagen is another

lovely Utzon design, the lakeside Middelboe house in Holte (1955).

Hotels

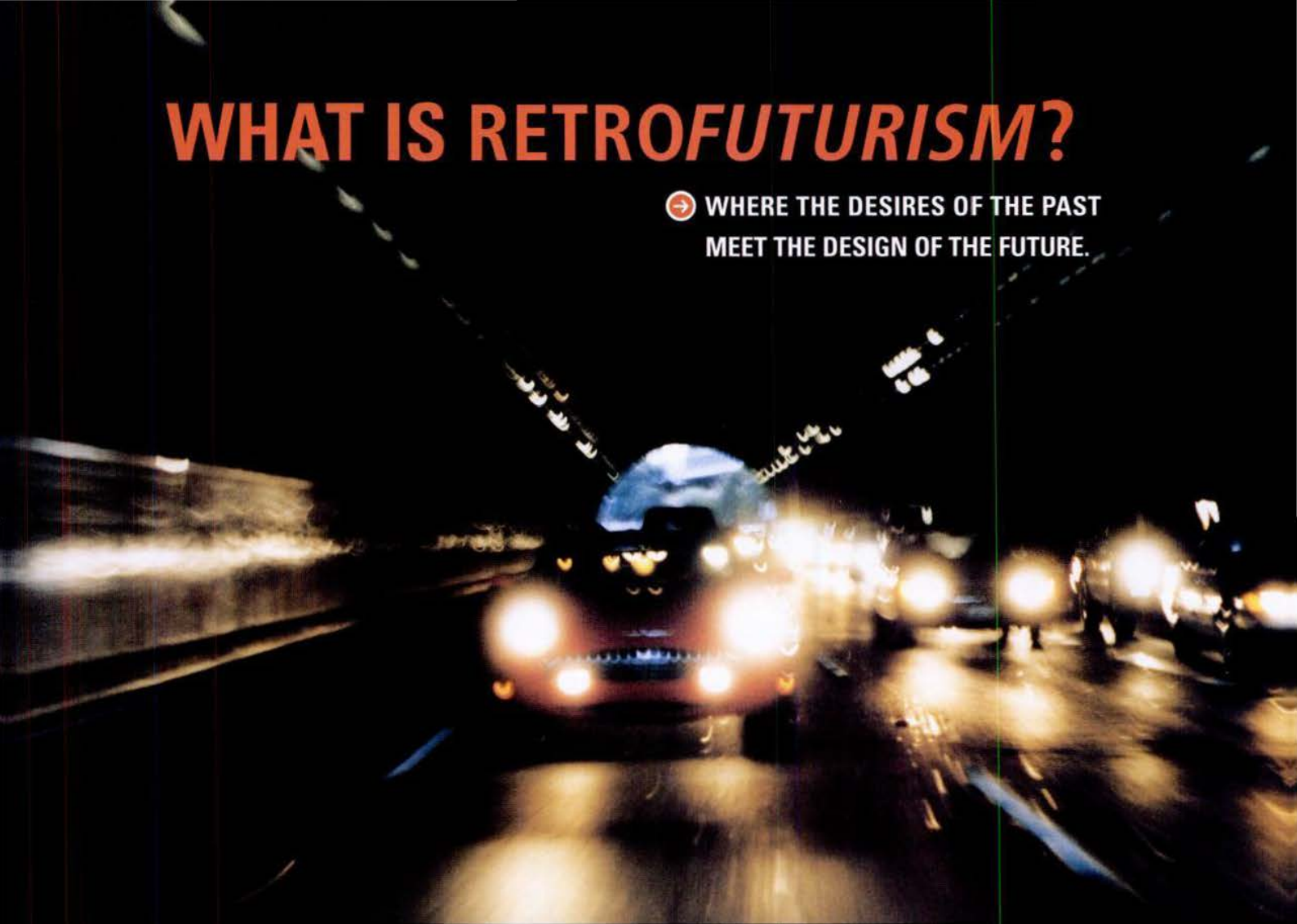
How better to get in the mood for Danish modernism than by checking into the Radisson SAS Royal Hotel (Hammerichsgade 1; 011-45-33-42-60-00; www.radissonsas.com), designed soup to nuts by Arne Jacobsen in 1960? The swank, marble-clad lobby is awash in Egg chairs, Swan chairs, and Artichoke lamps. Copenhagen's newest hotel is the stylish First Hotel Vesterbro (Vesterbrogade 23-29; 011-45-33-78-80-00; www.firsthotels.com); one of its oldest and most luxurious is the francophile Hôtel d'Angleterre (Kongens Nytorv 34; 011-45-33-12-00-95; www.remmen.dk).

Design on Display

The Dansk Design Center (HC Andersens Boulevard 27; 011-45-33-69-33-69; www.ddc.dk), designed by prolific architect Henning Larsen, puts design ▶

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front and center in the city with a slick glass building overlooking Tivoli Gardens. The center mounts exhibitions on Danish industrial design and, occasionally, architecture. For more focused architectural exhibits, as well as a great café and bookshop, stop by the Dansk Arkitektur Center (Strandgade 27B; 011-45-32-57-19-30; www.gammeldok.dk). The Kunstindustrimuseet (Bredgade 68; 011-45-33-18-56-56; www.kunstindustrimuseet.dk) is Copenhagen's decorative and applied arts museum, focusing on Danish craft and design through the centuries.

Restaurants

Don't even try to pronounce the name of the restaurant Tyven Kokken Hans Kone og Hendes Elsker (Magstroede 16; 011-45-33-16-12-92), which takes its title from Peter Greenaway's 1989 film *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*. Its owners recently opened a hipper, more casual outlet, Delicatessen (Vesterbrogade 120; 011-45-33-22-16-33), in Copenhagen's trendy Vesterbro neighborhood.

One of the most stylish restaurants of the moment is Konrad (Pilestroede 12-14; 011-45-33-93-29-29), home of Scandinavian/French cooking.

Shopping

The sine qua non of Danish design shopping is Illums Bolighus (Amagertorv 10, Strøget; 011-45-33-14-19-41; www.royalshopping.dk), a branch of the nearby Illums department store. This vast four-story home emporium is organized by floor, with silverware, cutlery, and the like on the ground floor, and furniture and lighting upstairs.

The city has countless antique shops specializing in 20th-century furniture and decorative arts, most clustered on tony Bredgade Street. Two of the better stores are Dansk

Møbel Kunst (Bredgade 32; 011-45-33-32-38-37; www.dmk.dk), with classics by Hans J. Wegner, Finn Juhl, Kaare Klint, and others, and Permanent Design (Bredgade 34; 011-45-33-15-13-50; www.permanentdesign.dk).

Museums

The city boasts a handful of top museums, including the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek (Dantes Plads 7; 011-45-33-41-81-41; www.glyptoteket.dk), with a new Impressionist gallery by Henning Larsen, but make sure to visit the Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst (Gammel

Strandvej 13; 011-45-49-19-07-19; www.louisiana.dk) in Humlebaek—an experience well worth the 36-minute train ride from Copenhagen's Central Station. Delicately woven into the woods of the so-called Danish Riviera by architect Jørgen Bo and others, the Louisiana has a small but spectacular collection of Giacomettis and a delightful sculpture garden overlooking the Øresund Strait and the Swedish coast. Adjoining the children's wing is the Kolonihavehus, a collection of tiny architectural follies by the likes of Aldo Rossi and Dominique Perrault. ■

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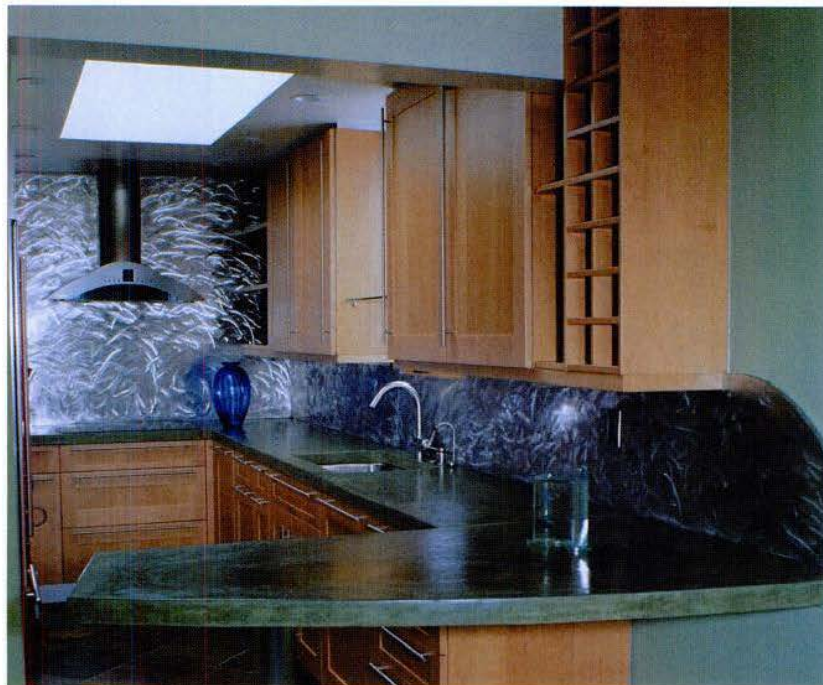
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Better Viewing Through Chemistry

Born in New England and living in Los Angeles, I'm often told I exhibit a niggling combination of Yankee frugality and L.A. finickiness. I'm proud to own the same 13-inch TV I bought in 1989, yet I refuse to attend movie theaters without stadium seating, wide screens, and the latest in THX surround sound.

Sopranos potluck dinners are never held at my pad. And spur-of-the-moment movie outings must be planned like Rommel's push into the Sahara.

I also scrupulously avoid the home-theater section of consumer-electronics stores, lest I (and my wallet) be sucked in. My aversion to the very idea of "home theater" has a socio-political aspect, too: The notion of a room dedicated to anything other than sleeping, eating, or bathing seems decadent, an inexcusable luxury. My home office is a laptop computer on the nightstand. My home gym is a pair of running shoes by the back door. Who needs a home theater?

Apparently, comrades, plenty of people do. If one has the cash, and the space, installing an audio/video setup that allows for the most enjoyment possible from DVDs, CDs, and high-definition television is not too extravagant an idea. Especially considering that A/V hardware is slower to go obsolete than, say, laptop computers and USB cables.

Setting aside for a moment what home theaters actually do, there's the contentious issue of how they look. Stereo speakers and TVs—the backbone of any home-theater system—have always been predicated on the notion that bigger is better. Yet aesthetes have an aversion to bigness. We buy little foreign cars because they're efficient and elegant. We read little magazines with terse, witty prose. Sure, we restore classic trucks and enjoy patriotic spectacles and read thick mysteries at the beach. But we partake of these prosaic pleasures sparingly, and not without a hint of irony.

Okay, okay—"we" in this case means me, but you get the idea. Can aesthetes have home theaters, too? The answer, I found, is yes. But you have to shop carefully, because there is no Volkswagen Beetle of home-theater systems, except for the one you build yourself.

My first foray was to my local home-theater specialist—the Geek Guys, we'll call it, founded by a couple of Caltech students in 1977. I'd heard a lot about the new flat-panel plasma TVs, and I wanted to check one out.

"Don't carry 'em," was the reply—"too trendy." The people who purchase them are interior designers and civilians, not the hardcore audio- and videophiles who are the geeks' best customers. Besides, plasma screens don't approach the movie-screen quality of the good old CRT (cathode ray tube) projector, that ceiling-mounted beast that shines red, yellow, and blue light onto a screen as wide as eight feet. CRTs, and the new DLPs (digital light processing unit, the same kind used in theaters to show digital prints of *Star Wars*), can create an image of a hockey game so sharp that my salesguy could "see three generations of scar tissue on the players' faces." Cool, I guess.

The next hour's conversation about aspect ratios and alternating-current hum-reducers reminded me of the time I spent a week traversing the Alps with a monolingual German truck driver. Just nod and smile, and nobody gets hurt. But I learned a lot. Not only did I discover that many so-called high-definition televisions (HDTVs) aren't any better than my 13-inch Sony, I observed that the life of a high-end home-theater salesperson is pretty sweet. In fact, if they weren't so self-effacing, these guys would call themselves "consultants."

The people who do call themselves consultants manned the oily gauntlet at the big-box retailer I tried next (let's call it the Good Guys). The straightest talk I got there was from a young guy, who was obviously so low on the commission totem pole that he thought being polite and honest might get him a sale. He answered all my questions: What's the difference between LCD TVs and plasma TVs? "The LCD has liquid inside, the plasma has plasma inside." What's plasma? "Some kind of gas." Fair enough. (Technically, plasma screens work like this: Instead of refracting light from a CRT, plasma pixels generate their own color and luminescence when the gas is excited by electricity.) And what about that sea of giant, rear-projection TVs behind him, with their wood-veneer consoles and rippled plastic screens? "They're crap," said he.

And he's right. The average viewing angle—meaning the widest angle at which one can

stand and still be able to see the image on the screen without it becoming fuzzy or dark at the edges, or both—of rear-projection TVs is 30 degrees. Meaning they're fine for a room in which they dominate, ideally one with a Naugahyde couch and perhaps a ceramic black panther on the coffee table. So why do people buy so darn many of these video orcas? Cost. They're cheaper, and bigger, than anything else on the market.

But ah, the (relatively) petite plasma screen. It pushes all the buttons in this aesthete. Hang one on the wall. Lean it in a corner. Beam ESPN wirelessly to the bathroom. And the picture—every corner is as bright and crisp as any other, due to the internally illuminated magic of pixels. And while a similarly detailed image smoothed by the soft light of a projection system in a darkened room may approach movie-screen quality, who's to say that a movie screen is the desired touchstone? I don't want to get too Marshall McLuhan here, but I was raised on Saturday-morning cartoons, not Saturday-afternoon matinees. Plasma is more TV than TV itself.

Plus, you don't need a special room to house a plasma screen, or a specially placed sofa to see it. And yes, Virginia, porn looks fantastic on a plasma screen—almost too vivid, in fact. Remember those hockey players?

So, for me, a 43-inch Hitachi plasma TV and a discreet Bose surround-sound stereo system with a bass booster comprise the perfect home theater—since they'll make any room I choose into my own personal videodrome. For you, I offer this humble shopping advice: Trust your eyes, and your ears—and let your wallet be your guide. Don't get wrapped up in the hype about how one receiver or video system is more technologically advanced than another, or able to handle a certain amount of watts with ease. What sounds best to your ears, in your crib, is what's best for you. Always buy at a place that allows for an in-home audition period. And if it's offered, take the store up on their in-home setup service. If you're gonna spend as much on a home theater as some people do on a car, you'll need a good mechanic.

GEEKGUYS



The Ultimate Aural Refuge

Andreas Stevens, or DJ Greyboy, as he's known at your local record store, has been Ubiquity Records' most ubiquitous artist for over ten years. Having initially gained fame as America's premier acid-jazz producer, Greyboy has outlasted that ill-fated musical trend and gone on to forge a unique sound of his own (he's currently mixing his new album, due out in early 2003). In the process, he's become Ubiquity's best-selling artist.

In addition to music, Greyboy's other passion is collecting mid-century furnishings, art objects, and, recently, even architecture. In October 2002 he acquired a second home, in Long Beach, California, designed by Case Study architect Edward Killingsworth.

Greyboy doesn't see his approach to music as being any different from collecting design objects. "The more you investigate, the better it gets. You really just have to dig past the mainstream to get to the good stuff."



Background

Greyboy bought his 1960 Compact House, designed by J. Herbert Brownell, in La Jolla, California, "entirely on vibe." It wasn't until an architect friend showed him a "book with houses like [his] that were full of Eames-style furniture" that he realized what he had. Because he spends so much time working from home (when he's not out searching for rare records or DJing around the globe), he says, "being surrounded by the right vibe is important. It's like dressing yourself. This stuff isn't the best thing for everybody, but for me it's just right."

The CSS System

While there are countless modular shelving options currently available, George Nelson's CSS (Contract Storage System) is the timeless granddaddy of them all. Modular shelving offers flexible combinations of parts for a good reason: The best home-entertainment systems, like the best collections, are constantly evolving, being added to and fine-tuned. The modular CSS gives you the option to change things around as often as you like, as Greyboy can attest: "I've had this CSS, in the short time I've owned it, set up about four or five different ways." He's also

attracted to it because, in his 990-square-foot home, "the CSS takes up so little space." Nelson's design remains fresh with brilliant details such as the removable cylindrical sconces (the most expensive of the CSS's individual parts).

Greyboy's CSS houses his high-fidelity system, a complete studio setup (the drawers contain all the loose stuff like headphones and blank CDs), turntables for DJing, design objects to attract the eye, music- and design-oriented reference materials, a healthy ivy plant, and just a fraction of his extensive record library.

Artwork

Part of fashioning the ultimate listening space is creating visual focal points. The hand-silkscreened print on linen, at the far left, is, appropriately, a 1972 Alexander Girard "Environment Enrichment Panel" titled *Jar of Pebbles*. Housed within the CSS unit's glass case is a collection of vintage Girard pillows and dolls by Marilyn Neuhart, who worked in the Eameses' graphics department. Neuhart established her reputation as an artist through Girard's New York Textile and Object store and Herman Miller outlets,

which sold her charming dolls among their furniture and textiles.

The Picasso-esque hand-and-flower print between the speakers is also Girard. Although mounted and framed, it is in fact the front of a large pillow.

The top of the CSS is home to vintage Architectural Pottery ashtrays, a planter, and a rare ceramic polar bear designed by Gordon Newell.

Furnishings

While a black Eames Compact sofa is just out of site, Greyboy's seat of choice is his 1967 Girard



Group lounge chair **B** with orange-and-green-checked upholstery. Originally designed by Alexander Girard for Braniff International Airways, and produced commercially by Herman Miller for only one year, the Girard Group, which also includes a range of seating options and the extremely rare bruno scuro marble-topped side table seen here, is one of the most sought after series of mid-century furnishings.

B Stereo System

Like that of jazz legend Orrin Keepnews (see page 112), Greyboy's audio system is

powered through a 1970s Marantz 4415 receiver (in fact, he, like any good collector unable to pass up a deal, has three of them). It's actually a "low wattage quadraphonic amplifier," he explains. Units like this have a warm and crisp sound, and can usually be found on eBay for a reasonable sum (for a contemporary equivalent, try Harman Kardon's HK3370). For speakers, Greyboy uses a pair of industry-standard Yamaha NS-10 studio monitors. Not pictured is a pair of lower fidelity 1960s Grundig speakers "in the coolest teak cabinets." He further

explains: "I like to use them as a reference for what my music is going to sound like in an average environment." A new Marantz CD recorder/player rounds out the set.

D DJ Setup

While Greyboy's turntables and mixer are the requisite Technics and Vestax **E** models, respectively, Stanton's Final Scratch "actually manipulates MP3s off the computer with regular turntables and needles."

E Studio

Greyboy's studio consists of one instrument—an Akai MPC2000

sampler and sequencer **F**. The Akai is a vastly evolved, distant relative of the 1979 Linn Electronics LM-1, the first drum machine to feature samples recorded from a real drum kit.

G Library

Greyboy's record collection **G** is his livelihood. Although the majority of his 8,000 discs are housed in a separate room, he keeps certain records here with his studio and stereo. On the bottom row: records with open drum breaks (the birthplace of hip-hop); next up: a row of funky 45s; middle row: his finest mint-condition

collectibles; top row: records with instrumental segments to sample. Many of Greyboy's days are spent trying to track down scarce vinyl—such as his recent acquisition *Damn Sam the Miracle Man and the Soul Congregation*—and his collection is likely to grow well past the CSS.

E p. 114

A Home for Your Entertainment

Mortice & Tenon Ruby Entertainment Unit

Like a little bit of Stonehenge on your living room floor, Australian manufacturer Mortice & Tenon's Ruby Entertainment Unit may look imposing, but the company's use of exotic and luxurious woods, ranging from Tasmanian myrtle to Brazilian mahogany, softens the blow. The Ruby Entertainment Unit consists of two adjustable sections that incorporate drawers for CD and DVD storage as well as shelving for LPs and other items. The spacious top of each unit provides ample room for your television, CD player, and record player. www.morticeandtenon.com



Eames Storage Unit by Herman Miller

An old standby but still hard to beat. This modular system, with its dimpled plywood, zinc-coated steel legs and crossbeams, and painted hardwood casing, still looks more original than its competitors and can accommodate any storage challenge, from a wide-screen TV to a graphic equalizer. Despite the fact that it was introduced in 1952, it will update even the most up-to-date living room. www.hermanmiller.com



nARCHITECTS Window-Box-Wall

This may be massive (and may never be available to the masses), but it sure is cool. Created for France's ArchiLab exhibition and conference, the Window-Box-Wall was conceived as a form of "domestic compression"—a way to fit all the amenities of a Manhattan apartment (desk, lamps, TV, etc.) into a series of window boxes lining one wall. Made of 1,600 pieces of environmentally certified hardwood and stainless steel mesh front panels, the unit can be customized for any apartment—not just ones in New York City. www.narchitects.com



Ron Arad TV/VCR Stand

If you live in a 600-square-foot apartment and your home-entertainment system consists solely of a television and a VCR, there may be no better product for you. This unit certainly has looks that will draw attention, but, with its minimal platforms and oversize base, it may be the wrong kind. Made of tubular and sheet steel, Arad's piece comes complete with hidden casters and can accommodate TVs up to 34 inches wide. www.dwr.com



Kallax Coffee Table/TV Bench by IKEA

Looking for something a little less extravagant? IKEA always seems to have a range of options. In Kallax, a design by Annika Grotell, simple particleboard, paper, and foil team up with fiberboard, polypropylene, and plastic casters to provide a surface on which to rest your entertainment of choice. Underneath, there's ample space for a fair-sized CD or DVD collection—but not LPs. www.ikea-usa.com



Elfa Shelving Unit available from the Container Store

If stability and cost-consciousness are your priorities, Elfa is worth checking out. The simple cantilevered design provides strength and ease of installation. With just one horizontal bar, you can create a flexible and customized system. Walnut shelves and platinum-colored epoxy-coated steel supports turn this otherwise proletarian design into a living room centerpiece to be proud of. www.containerstore.com



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Stan Shaff is an electronic-music composer whose "sound sculptures" are performed each weekend in total darkness at San Francisco's Audium, a circular 49-seat theater outfitted with 169 speakers.

I see the computer as a really rather provocative item—there are just worlds within worlds. Aside from being a compositional tool for my own work, as a sheer entertainment medium the computer is a lot of fun, thanks to the Internet.

Frankly, the computer is going to be the heart of all home entertainment. When we develop a broad enough bandwidth, just about everything will come that way.

Orrin Keepnews is a certifiable jazz legend, having produced sessions for, among others, Thelonious Monk, Bill Evans, Julian "Cannonball" Adderley, Milt Jackson, and Wes Montgomery.

I endeavor to run my life in ways that do not make me consistently dependent on electronic devices of any kind. Is there anything in the entertainment-equipment world that I think is the greatest thing since sliced bread? The answer is no.

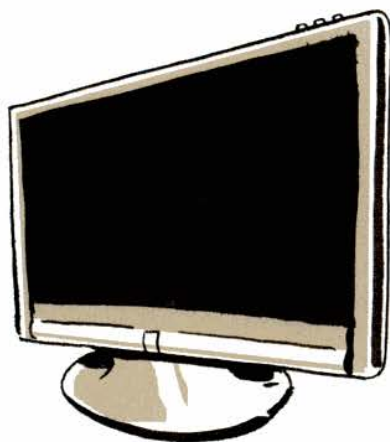
But being able to listen to recorded music has been the centerpiece of my professional life for, God help me, 50 years, and of my personal life for even longer. I guess the point is that it's so ingrained, I don't even think of that equipment as an adjunct. I think of my arms, my legs, and my playback equipment as being part of me.

Jody McFadin is co-founder/owner of Ubiquity Records, the umbrella label that includes Luv n' Haight Records, Cubop Records, Ubiquity Clothing, and Radio Ubiquity, based in Newport Beach, California.

The one piece of audio/visual equipment I can't live without is our Panasonic CX-DVP292 Mobile DVD Player. It keeps our daughters (Ella and Lucy) entertained on long car rides to Palm Springs or on airplane flights—making such trips a lot easier. It also plays music for Michael and me when we arrive.



Dwell asks eight people who help create your entertainment what entertains them...



Tim Baxter is the senior vice president of the Visual Network Products Division of Sony Electronics, Inc.

As someone immersed in technology, I had a tough time selecting one home-entertainment product, but I narrowed it down to our 42-inch plasma screen Wega television. The KE-42TS2 comes with a built-in TV tuner, speakers, and a stand, so you can literally bring it home, plug it in, and start watching TV right away. Of course, if you want to mount it on a wall, you can do that, too. I think even the Jetsons would agree—the future of home theater is already here.

Scott P. Murphy is a New York-based art director and set designer. His credits include *The Sopranos*, *Spider-Man*, *The Sixth Sense*, *Men in Black*, and *The Road to Wellville*.

I couldn't live without my pocket-size audio equipment and headphones. While working at my drawing table or computer, I nearly always listen to my iPod. It helps me tune out the chaos and focus on the task at hand. I can also listen to music without objections from others in my office.

Walking the streets of Manhattan is like being in a movie, but with my iPod, I get to create my own soundtrack.

New York-based music producer Edgar Betelu is the president of Circular Moves, whose most recent CD release was *Live in Buenos Aires*, by Vinicius de Moraes.

I got this little \$15 transistor radio that I listen to news and music on, usually while cooking or shaving, or in the background while reading. It reminds me of a radio my father had when I was a kid that he used to take to the *futbol* stadium to listen to the games. It's no iPod or Nakamichi and it doesn't sound great, but Coltrane still kicks ass on it. My baby daughter loves it, too. She grabs it with both hands, dances, and smiles at the sounds coming out of it. Sometimes she puts it against her chest and literally feels the music vibe.



Erlend Øye makes up one half of Norwegian pop duo Kings of Convenience. His first solo album, *Unrest*, will be released soon on Source and Astralwerks.

I couldn't live without my portable DAT recorder (Sony TCD-D8). It's small, battery-driven, and convenient. So when the magic moment happens, chances are, it's there to capture it (and with a quality level high enough for releasing records).

Kevin Farnham is the founder and CEO of Method, a multidisciplinary design firm based in San Francisco. Over the past decade, he has been involved in the development of hundreds of brands.

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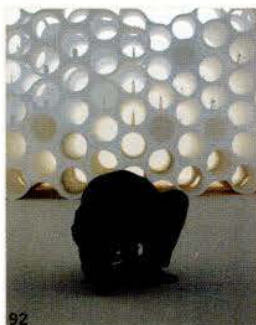
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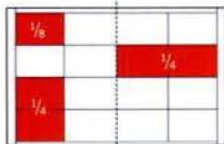
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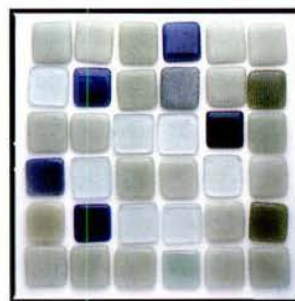
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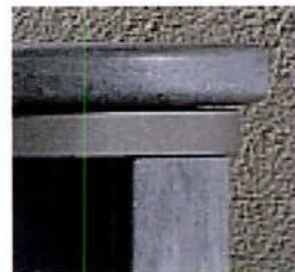
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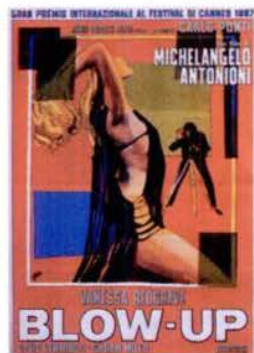
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Prefab houses have done a lot to earn their reputation for being cheap and ugly, and indeed, the prevailing vision of prefab—endless rows of shabbily constructed cookie-cutter structures built with cheap materials—is, unfortunately, fairly accurate. But now and throughout prefab's history, there have been many exceptions to the rule, as evidenced by groundbreaking projects from architects and designers from Le Corbusier to Buckminster Fuller, the Eameses to Philippe Starck. *Prefab* takes a look at prefabricated housing's fascinating history and imagines its promising future by presenting a group of innovative homes and concepts from over 30 contemporary architects and designers, including Shigeru Ban, Thomas Sandell, David Hertz, Greg Lynn, and KFN. By showing how far this much maligned building technique has come, and how far it can go, *Prefab* endeavors to inspire a change in the way people think about housing, and the way architects, builders, developers, and financial institutions approach it—and, ultimately, the way individuals live in it.

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I certify that all the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (signed) Michela Abrams, Publisher

Walking in a Winter Wonderland



The Methow Valley, in northeast Washington, is one of the great cross-country skiing meccas in the United States. Up to four feet of snow can fall in a winter—great for schussing, but hard on rooftops. So when Seattle architects John Eggleston and Allan Farkas were commissioned to build a vacation retreat here, they created a house that the snow would slide right off. The pitch of the roof is not only functional but pays subtle homage to the great outdoors, mirroring the slopes of the nearby foothills.

“We realized that a more traditional form was causing complications in both cost and details,” says Eggleston, “and that the client wanted something much more essential, with a minimal amount of nostalgia.” Inspired by the simple farm shed—“a place where you’d put chickens or hay,” adds Eggleston—the house employs the most basic design language possible.

Although cozy, the cabin’s interior gives the residents, a couple from the Seattle area and their grown children and families, privacy when vacationing together. Above

the great room, under the peak of the roof, the owners sleep in an enclosed loft. Meanwhile, their guests inhabit the entire natural-light-filled basement level. The spacious bunk room is a happy confluence of wants and needs: The clients wanted to keep the house’s footprint small, so the foundation had to be dug four feet deep in order to get past the frost line.

Eggleston and Farkas also worked to keep the view unobstructed. A half-day’s drive from Seattle, the Methow Valley is becoming more heavily developed. The architects placed windows strategically: The cabin presents a blank visage toward the road, with the two ends open to the valley’s expansive vistas. Seated at the dining table, the residents have a view, framed by a long horizontal window, of a ski trail across an alfalfa field.

“Inside the house, you feel completely isolated,” the client explains. “You can’t see anything but the mountains and trees—you could be sitting in the middle of a thousand acres of wilderness.” ■

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