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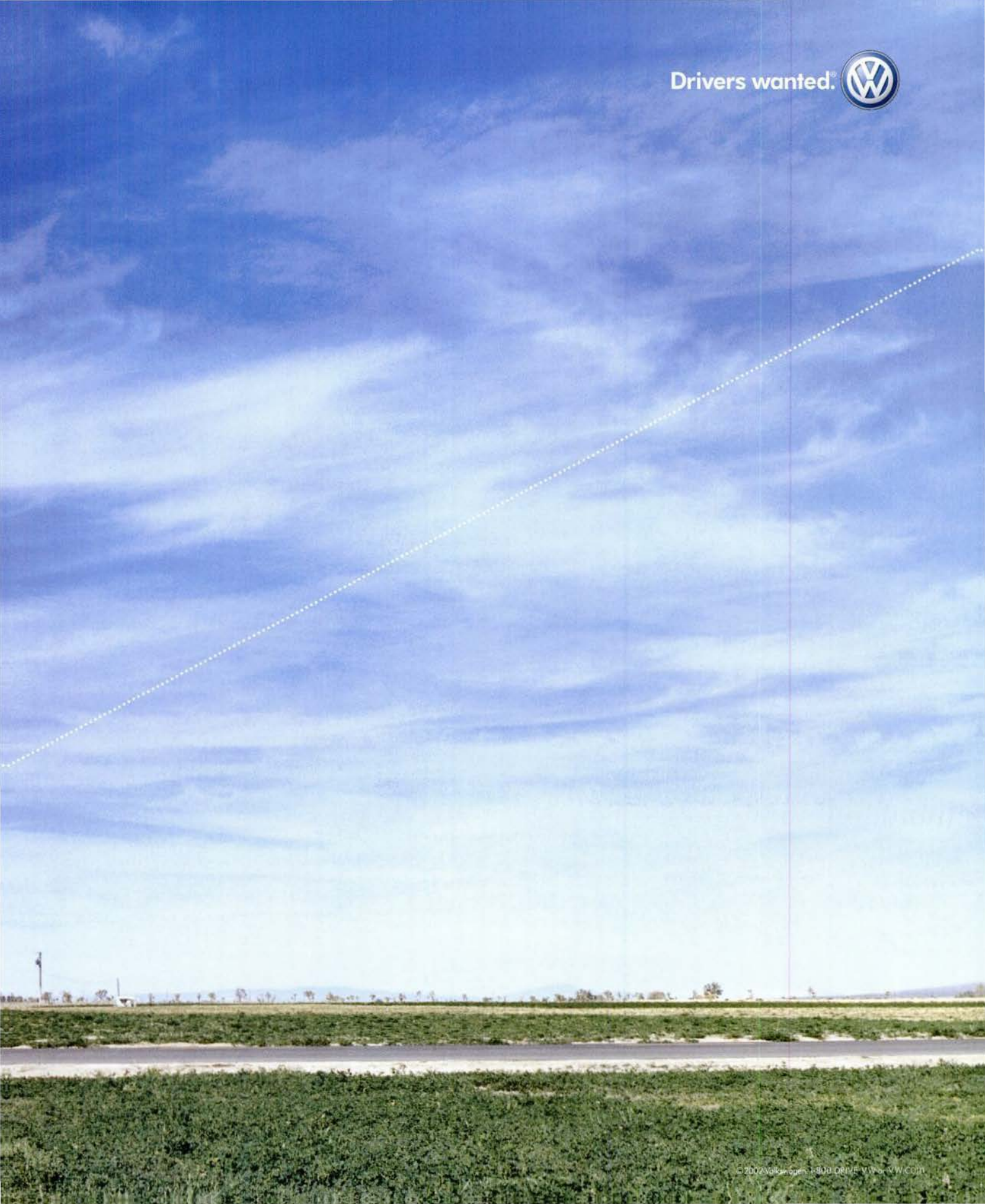
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Editor's Note

Editor-in-chief Allison Arieff wonders what real luxury is, and if it isn't attainable for us all.

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The Potential of Simplicity

Cass Calder Smith, better known for his design work in the homes of millionaires, shifts gears to create a house for Habitat for Humanity.

March/April 2003 Contents: Affordable Luxury

"It is useful to have a wild card come in and challenge our ingrained habits."

—Ian Laight, page 114

Dwellings



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Austin, TX

The dream of living large on a small budget came true for two couples when they found a firm whose guiding principle is "give the public credit when it comes to their desire for good design."

By Jeanne Claire van Ryzin / Photos by Catherine Ledner



92

Milanville, PA

When building a modernist dream home, less may be more—but it can cost a lot more, too. In the end, two erudite urbanites still got a great deal on a gorgeous weekend getaway.

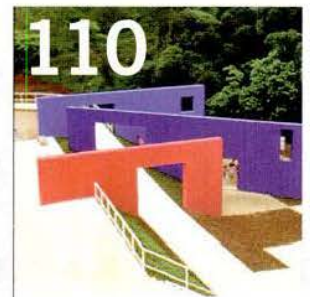
By Alastair Gordon / Photos by Anthony Cotsifas



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Rowayton, CT

As Walter and Gwen Briggs found out, having family (in this case, a lot of family) pitch in on construction helps bring projects to fruition on a reasonable budget. By Marc Kristal / Photos by Michael Edwards



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More for Less

Phillip Davis scanned the globe for innovative and affordable projects that aim to bring good design to underserved communities. He reports back that the prospects look good.

Cover

Dawna Ballard and Joe Harper couldn't be happier with their architect-designed home, purchased for just \$122,000. "We were conceiving of houses for a couple or a small family who wanted to embrace life in the center of Austin," explains architect Chris Robertson. Photo by Catherine Ledner

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In the Modern World

In five action-packed pages of the latest exhibitions, products, books, and fascinating facts, Dwell sets out to focus your radar on what really matters.

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My House

When it comes to decorating, what's more important—cash or creativity? A Chapel Hill, NC, couple chimes in with a resounding vote for the latter.

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Detail

With his ingenious use of aluminum, Toyo Ito brings his flair for the fantastic to bricks and mortar—minus the mortar.

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Off the Grid

With their new concept for a sustainable and modern house, these two architects hope to convince the masses that there's no place like M:OME.

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Dwell Reports

In mid-century vacation land (a.k.a. Palm Springs, CA), a hotelier offers expert advice on finding a platform bed that's stylish and can stand up to a honeymoon.

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Nice Modernist

Architect Anne Fougeron's thoughtful work for Planned Parenthood proves that security doesn't have to come at the expense of aesthetics.

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Elsewhere

Mauricio Rodriguez Anza and his family bid a conflicted farewell to Mexico City and build their dream hacienda in a suburb just [30 minutes away](#).

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Invention

Is the K2 a versatile kitchen unit, a sculpture, a mystery wrapped in an enigma, or just a mountain in Pakistan?

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Archive

An author and his wife transform *Woman's Day* magazine's 1966 Vermont Vacation Cabin into a pad for all seasons.

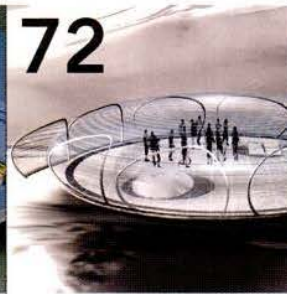
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Dwell Labs

Too many CDs? Dwell offers advice on preventing your living space from looking like a badly organized record store.

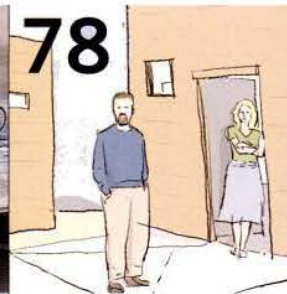
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What We Saw at the Venice Biennale

In between cappuccino, caprese, and Chianti, editor Virginia Gardiner samples the best of the Venice architecture biennale.

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The Dwell Home

We proudly introduce the [16 architects and designers](#)—and the lucky homeowners-to-be—of the Dwell Home Design Invitational.

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Travel

DC may be awash in monuments, but a surprising smattering of modernism dots Pierre L'Enfant's vast grid of numbered and lettered streets.

124

Bathrooms 101

In today's bathroom, even the lowly toilet brush has been elevated to high art. Plus five cool tubs, unconventional materials, and a brief history of bathing.

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Sourcing

After reading Dwell, there are probably some people you want to contact or some products you'd like to buy—here's where you find out how to do both!

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Houses We Love

A retired dentist builds his own home in Zachary, LA, and the results are as satisfying as hearing the words "no cavities."

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Letters

I am a "recuperating" (a.k.a. unemployed)

Silicon Valley software sales rep who waits lustfully for my copy of Dwell to arrive every two months or so. With each issue I see more of myself and my family in the new kinder, gentler modernist lifestyle your magazine documents—it's nice to know we're not alone out here in the land of the McMansion.

When not tending to our new daughter, Mykha, or working on our 1953 SilverStreak Clipper trailer, I have been giving a lot of thought as to why exactly there are no architecturally satisfying prefab/manufactured housing alternatives for us modest modernists. I have concluded that it has not been for lack of trying, but that these attempts have failed chiefly due to poor business planning and overestimating the market size. Therefore, it was with great encouragement and some healthy skepticism that I read page 56 of the January/February 2003 issue. The prefab design competition that Dwell is sponsoring will surely yield some creative groundbreaking design work in this area, and at the very least, one house for that lucky couple in North Carolina. I am hopeful that it can do even more: spawn a new, sustainable segment in the prefab/manufactured housing industry that caters to "us."

Jason Latimer
Redwood City, California

It was such a delight to read "Get on the Bus" (November/December 2002). I'm a bus maniac. I drive for Royal Coach Tours in San Jose and I have loved buses ever since I was five years old. Converting a school bus has always been a dream of mine. Most of my friends thought I was crazy and a lot of people discouraged me from going through with it. Now, I can throw your article in their faces!

Andrew Chung
San Jose, California

I found the article "Home With(Out) Walls" (November/December 2002) quite intriguing. It appears that the artist Kimiko Yoshida spends approximately 14 days of the year making her art. I find it curious that Ms. Yoshida would identify herself as an artist given her time utilization. Indeed, it seems that most of her time is spent in the installation of her work, or else in networking among the art world community. In other words, her career as an artist seems to actually involve a diverse range of skills beyond simply making her art. Thank you for the glimpse into the actual life of an accomplished artist as well as providing a more fluid definition of that vocation.

Monte Bartlett
New York, New York

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Contributors

After writing her second piece on bathrooms for the magazine, frequent Dwell contributor **Deborah Bishop** ("Bathrooms 101," p. 124) has developed a serious case of bathtub envy.

Photographer **Anthony Cotsifas** ("Critics' Choice," p. 92) has worked for a range of clients, including Calvin Klein, Coach, Neiman Marcus, and Sony.

In his ten years as a correspondent for National Public Radio, Miami-based **Phillip Davis** ("More for Less," p. 110) has reported from Brazilian favelas to Buckingham Palace.

The work of New York-based photographer **Michael Edwards**

("8 Is Enough, But 40 Fit," p. 102) appears regularly in the *New York Times Magazine*, *Esquire*, *GQ*, and *Index*.

Alastair Gordon ("Critics' Choice," p. 92), Dwell's New York contributing editor, is currently writing and producing a six-hour documentary series for public television about American architecture in the 20th century.

Marc Kristal ("8 Is Enough, But 40 Fit," p. 102) has written 27 screenplays, two plays, and an opera libretto. Most recently, he contributed the foreword for *Framed: Tales of the Art Underworld*, a memoir by art dealer Tod Volpe.

Catherine Ledner ("Texas Two-Step," p. 84) shot the home of Bill and Karin Moggridge for the January/February 2003 issue of Dwell. Ledner's work appears regularly in *Fast Company*, *Worth*, *Vanity Fair*, and *GQ*.

Sculptor and photographer **William Noland** ("My House," p. 33) is associate professor of art at Duke University. His book, *Cuban Voices: Stories of a Divided Nation*, will be published this fall.

Jeanne Claire van Ryzin ("Texas Two-Step," p. 84) is an arts and architecture critic for the *Austin American-Statesman*. She has also written for *Architecture* and the *New York Times*.

I appreciate how Dwell supports efforts to promote affordable, well-designed dwellings but I would like more information on the materials used. For example, the May/June 2001 "Houses We Love" shows a house with Zincalume steel siding. It would be helpful to know where something like that could be obtained and how much it would cost. An article or a regular feature on alternative materials, costs, and usage ideas would be helpful for all of us out here trying to create afford-able yet stylish homes. I live in Cleveland, Ohio, and I'm surrounded by vinyl-sided boxes. How about an article that shows other creative exterior cladding options like steel, fiberglass, or concrete? I know you have done this to an extent. I would like to see more.

Stephen Duda
Bedford, Ohio

Editor's note: Great idea, Stephen. And for more information on that Zincalume home, see www.rociromero.com.

I could echo the already numerous accolades for Dwell's highly aware editorial content stance on real living, practical solutions, or quintessential

microecture, but I would also like to thank you for the tactile quality of your cover stock. It certainly drives home the point!

Jeff Nigrelli
Narragansett, Rhode Island

With regard to your article ("Dwell Reports," January/February 2003) about digital cameras, you may want to warn your readers about a problem found in many models. As an architect who often shoots interiors, I purchased an expensive Nikon a while back because of its wide-angle-lens option. Unfortunately, no one told me that the add-on lens blocks the light sensor and renders the flash useless. It doesn't appear that the industry is producing digital cameras in the \$1,000 range to serve architects and those in related professions.

R. Crawford
Syracuse, New York

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Correction: In our January/February 2003 issue, we stated that the Polo chair ("What We

Saw in London") retails for \$48. The correct price, however, is \$135. We regret the error.



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Concept and Styling: Collage Studio. Photo: Fabrizio Bergamo

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A Possible Dream

Thanks to KRDB's resolution to build beautiful *and* affordable urban houses, people who never thought they'd be new homeowners—like Chia Guillory (above)—now are. With this issue, we hope to inspire more architects, builders, and developers to follow the Austin firm's lead.

Affordable luxury—an oxymoron on par with friendly fire and jumbo shrimp. Luxury is, after all, defined as precious, extravagant, and, well, *expensive*.

I must admit I struggled with how to convey exactly what we mean by this popular but somewhat dicey descriptor. Having just read a bio of inimitable *Harper's Bazaar* editor Diana Vreeland, I thought I might artfully paraphrase her irresistible "Why Don't You" proclamations by exhorting you, my dear readers, to "Wrap yourself in (faux) mink" or "Rinse your child's blond hair in flat champagne (perhaps Miller Lite?) to keep it golden." But I couldn't climb that far over the top, and even Vreelandesque declarations started to veer painfully close to the blatantly obvious self-help salves in women's magazines—as in, a bubble bath is a luxury we *all* can afford.

Then I got the following email from one of our readers, Cindy Morrow of Los Angeles:

I have come to realize that what I like best about Dwell is that it seems to focus on ways of achieving good design at an affordable price. How fun and exciting is it to read about a home that was built for \$85 per square foot or a really cool chair that you can buy for a mere \$50? My point is that you really have something amazing here. Your magazine makes it possible for us to have dreams that are achievable.

And suddenly my problem was solved. Because that is exactly what we mean by affordable luxury.

We profile a lot of expensive homes in *Dwell*, but we also feature many houses that prove good design doesn't have to come with a high price tag. It may not be easy to do more with less, but the payoff is worth it. Just take a look in this issue at the Frampton/Kolbowski weekend home, or the cute pair of spec homes by KRDB that sold for under \$125,000 each, or the slick dogtrot John Atkinson built for himself for just \$45,000.

In a perfect world, a well-designed modern home wouldn't be a luxury; it would be the norm. And rather than embarking on cookie-cutter housing developments that are more about the bottom line than livability, home builders would talk to prospective residents and find out what was important to them in a home, what details would enhance their lives. And then they'd find ways to incorporate at least some of those things into the houses they build.

As Wayne Hemingway, a fashion designer working on—and bringing a fresh perspective to—affordable housing in the U.K. (see page 114), observes: "We've all lived in houses. Therefore we've got a right to think what a house should be like."

Simply put, *real* luxury is having the freedom and means to shape your own environment. And that's something we should all be able to afford.

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

Marjetica Potrc: Extreme Conditions and Noble Designs /
22 Sept–2 Mar / Orange County Museum of Art / Newport
Beach, CA

As global populations grow at frightening speeds, so grows the global need for housing. Since governmental solutions tend to be inadequate (what a surprise), some people have taken matters into their own hands, building homes out of common city detritus. “Urban anthropologist” Marjetica Potrc creates installations that celebrate these grassroots, cross-cultural housing communities. From shantytowns to favelas, this exhibition will remind you that only in America is a 2,000-square-foot home considered small. www.ocma.net



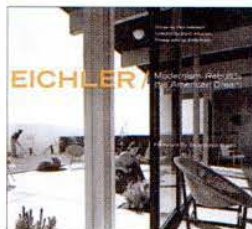
Materialism

Giovanni Pagnotta’s 2002 furniture collection—including a lounge chair, garbage can, and lamp—appears ready to soar into the stratosphere. Why on earth? Because it’s all made from carbon fiber—the organic high-tech of spaceships and Formula One cars. In cahoots with a manufacturer of F-22 fighter planes and the space shuttles, Pagnotta created highly streamlined, strangely translucent, jet-black pieces, which we pray will descend from their prototype stage. giovannipagnotta.com/home.html



Philtex-x Mobile House / MMW Architects
Norwegian architects MMW have made an especially palatable contribution to the recent trend of equating “home” with “steel shipping container.” They converted a pair of 20-by-40-foot containers into an attractive and sustainable prefab dwelling equipped with solar panels and tanks for drinking and wastewater. The durable house can be packed up and relocated anywhere at a moment’s notice. www.mmw.no

Fantasy Underfoot: 47th Biennial Exhibition /
21 Dec–10 Mar / Corcoran / Washington, DC
Despite a title that evokes images of scampering woodland sprites, the Corcoran Biennial maintains its self-described status as “a barometer of major trends in American art.” Thirteen contemporary artists will display their work. Tim Hawkinson’s ten-foot-high sea creature will create syncopated rhythms with dripping water. If you look too long, you’ll spring a leak. www.corcoran.org



Eichler: Modernism Rebuilds the American Dream /
 By Paul Adamson and Marty Arbunich / Gibbs Smith / \$50
 During the '50s and '60s, at a time when Jell-O molds and suburban tract housing were endemic to the American lifestyle, Joseph Eichler built more than 11,000 manufactured homes throughout California (and three in Chestnut Ridge, New York). Easily distinguished by their flat roofs, clean lines, and boxy stylings, Eichler homes, Adamson writes, were "marked by a consistency, purity, and elegance almost unique amid the bland predictability of ever-spreading middle-class tracts." Nostalgic black-and-white photos of happy mid-century families at work and play in their brand-new Eichler dwellings complement the narrative of this book, which contextualizes Eichler's California modern style and contemplates his illustrious (and prodigious) career.

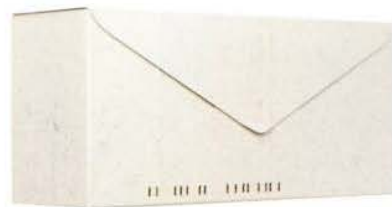


Shopping: A Century of Art and Consumer Culture / 20 Dec–23 Mar /
 Tate Liverpool / Liverpool, England / Is unfettered commerce mankind's greatest achievement? Are we only the sum of what we buy? Artists considering consumption include Eugène Atget, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, and Tom Sachs (above). www.tate.org.uk/liverpool



Duo tables / Umbra

Umbra shouldn't gloat too much about rediscovering the joy of rattan. Anyone who has suffered a weak moment browsing dead people's housewares at Goodwill probably went home with a wicker tchotchke shelf that subsequently collected dust and ended up in the street. But Umbra deserves props for its new Duo coffee tables. They are hardly ragged relics, yet they quietly emanate the warmth of wicker. Available in natural or espresso color, they are lightweight and equipped with slots for magazine storage. Best of all—and appropriate for anything made of woven grasses—they nest. www.umbra.com



No. 10 LetterBox / TODA

Nothing says "ubiquitous" like a white No. 10 envelope. Known around the world for its efficient transport of bills, marketing surveys, and pleas for charitable contributions, this symbol of standardized uniformity has been cleverly exploited by TODA to form the new envelope-as-mailbox. Playing on the theme of the extraordinary in the ordinary, this letterbox masquerading as an envelope is a stylish way to bring a morsel of irony into the wonderful world of postal delivery. www.toda.net



Robomower / Friendly Robotics

Sometimes we wonder what happened to the future—we're not yet inhabiting geodesic bubbles on faraway planets, cars are road-bound, and our energy still comes from crude oil. Just when we're ready to give up hope entirely, Friendly Robotics' Robomower eases us back into a 21st-century state of mind. No bigger than a regular lawn mower and, at \$499, not even much more costly, the battery-charged Robomower will keep your lawn trimmed without you having to lift a finger (except perhaps to press a button on the remote control). www.friendlyrobotics.com



Pig Pencil / By Massimo Giacon for Alessi

The snout of a pig is a highly sensitive apparatus—just ask the old men of Provence who employ porcine emissaries to snuffle hard winter dirt, diligently retrieving those homely and heavenly nuggets called truffles. But if you can't discuss snouts with pig-keepers the world over, Massimo Giacon's sweet-faced abstraction Pig Pencil is almost as cosmopolitan as the animal it celebrates. The holder and sharpener (choose the correct nostril for your needs) are good for all kinds of pencils, be they charcoal, Chanel, or something in between. www.alessi.com



Under Construction: The Architecture of Marmol Radziner + Associates / 28 Jan–20 Apr / University Art Museum / Cal State Long Beach, CA

Marmol Radziner + Associates' remodel of Neutra's 1946 Kaufmann House in Palm Springs was proclaimed to "look better now than when it was originally constructed." Known for their renovations of buildings by Neutra, Frank Lloyd Wright, and R.M. Schindler, and for such structures as the TBWA/Chiat/Day headquarters in San Francisco, the firm's design process and philosophy are detailed in this exhibition through models, renderings, drawings, photographs, and the occasional piece of furniture. www.csulb.edu/uam

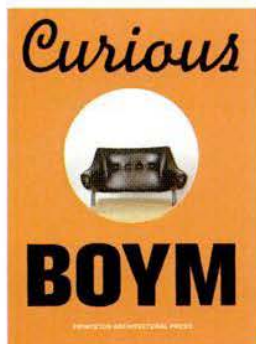


Raphael Soriano / By Wolfgang Wagener / Phaidon / \$59.95

With Southern California's earthquakes and fires making quick work of most of his buildings, Raphael Soriano (1907–1988) was an oft-forgotten architect and pioneer in the construction of the steel-frame home. His work contributed vitally to the evolution of the modern California house. This book is the first comprehensive story of Soriano's career. It contextualizes his architectural period and delves into houses without sparing any details. For those with wheels and some time, the volume provides a handy road map to still-standing Soriano projects.

Curious Boym / By Constantin Boym / Princeton Architectural Press / \$40

From Searstyle to Strapp style to thrift-store art, industrial designers Laurene and Constantin Boym relentlessly reinvent everyday items. Creating vases out of PVC plumbing, clocks out of cardboard and staples, and coffee cans out of stainless steel, these self-titled Curious Georges of the design world have an approach that begins "not with an identifiable, saleable style, but with a curiosity about process." Through essays, photos, random quotations, and a cocktail coaster, this book presents a fascinating history of a favorite First Family in contemporary design.



Fairs

Architecture and Construction Materials / 4–7 Mar / Tokyo Big Sight / Tokyo, Japan / www.ac-materials.jp

Daily Mail Ideal Home Show / 13 Mar–6 Apr / London, England / www.idealhome-show.co.uk

Salone Internazionale del Mobile / 9–14 Apr / Milan, Italy / www.isaloni.it

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ROY/design series 1 / 19 Apr–24 Aug / SFMOMA / San Francisco, CA

There is often a tongue-in-cheek cultural metaphor hidden in the sleek 2- and 3-D renderings by architect Lindy Roy. In a bar she designed in Manhattan's meatpacking district, seats will hang from the building's original meat hooks. Her Alaska heli-skiing hotel boasts some built innuendos that pander to its guests' machismo. SFMOMA provides a sneak peek at her latest work, much of which will be completed in the coming decade. www.sfmoma.org

Antony Chair / By Jean Prouvé

Vitra's renewed interest in reissuing mid-century designs prompts the question, what are they trying to Prouvé? Judging by the geometrically concise chairs, tables, and lamps they've selected to bring back, the answer is: that French designer Jean Prouvé's work is as relevant today as it was half a century ago. While 1954's institutional Antony chair is eerily reminiscent of Cold War-era classrooms, the elegant simplicity of the intersecting beech bell-curve seat and Calderesque underbody warrant present-day dinner-table use. www.vitra.com



Merz to Emigré and Beyond: Progressive Magazine Design of the Twentieth Century / By Steven Heller / Phaidon / \$75

For nearly 100 years, where the "job of the rebels is to make trouble," avant-garde publications have rushed to the scene. From *Merz* to *Fetish*, from *Bauhaus* to *Rau*, magazines and newspapers of the avant-garde have helped provoke people to social and political action. Through gorgeous visuals and discussion of the political and artistic thrusts of the decades, this book narrates the history of these publications—and might even tempt you to dust off your own revolutionary ideals.



Lunch Box Memories / 2 Feb–31 Mar / Headley-Whitney Museum / Lexington, KY

Until they were banned in 1985 as potential schoolyard weapons (who knew?), metal lunch boxes were an integral part of growing up in America. While providing the obligatory historical background and design referents, this exhibition lets you wax nostalgic over your favorite childhood icons. Bring your lunch. www.headley-whitney.org

Coosh Ripple Egg Chair / By Andrea Valentini

While foam furniture—best observed in out-of-the-way reading rooms in unrenovated public libraries—has been relegated to the design world's back burner for a good 30 years, we're glad to see it back in stylish effect. Valentini's rippling Coosh Egg Chair, with its interlocking ottoman, reminds us of the great foamy works of Panton and Pesce, but at \$325 it won't drain the bank account. www.andreavalentini.com



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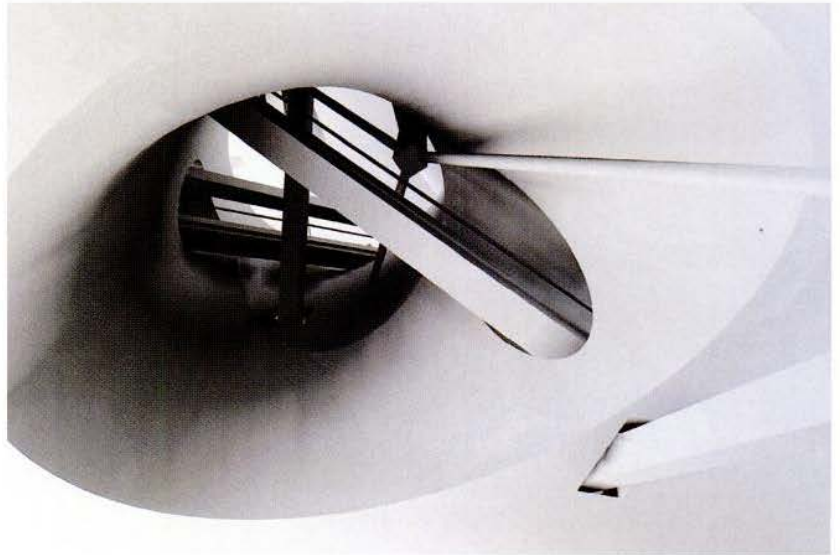


In the Modern World



Matrix Otto Lamp / Lumina Italia s.r.l.

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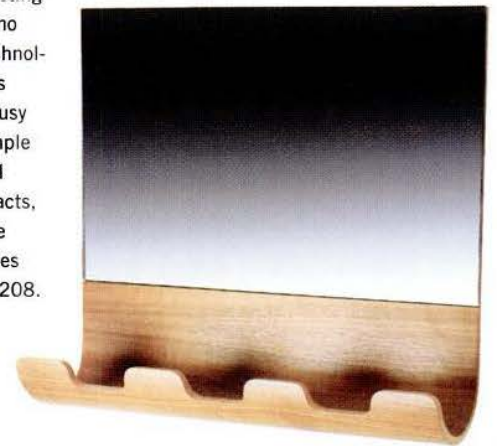


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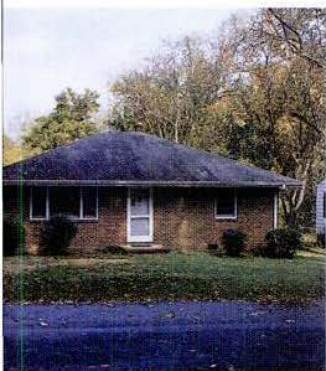
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Desiree DeLong in the living room of the home she shares with Mike Schmidt. The architect of their unassuming little house (below) could have used a little of the residents' creativity.



Phat on \$50 a Month

When Desiree DeLong and Mike Schmidt spot a cool lamp or sofa in an upscale furnishings store, they check it out carefully. And then they figure out how they could make it for a lot less.

Using "crazy-cheap" items scrounged from the broken and returns corner at IKEA and the wood-remnants section of Home Depot, they've transformed an innocuous brick box in suburban Chapel Hill, North Carolina, into a temple to stylish living.

The interior exudes retro chic. Walking into the living

room is like entering a tunnel—the far wall is covered with convex mirrors that reflect the space as a spherical tube. They created this effect by combining 30 \$5 mirrors from IKEA. Facing the front door is a funky mirror with flame-shaped cutouts and glowing light bulbs flying in front, like moths homing in on a flame. "We went to Michaels [a craft store] and found these wedding doves," says DeLong. "Then we pulled off their wings and attached them to light bulbs."

For DeLong and Schmidt, it's thrilling to pull off ▶

My House

minimalism for the bare minimum. Scrimping is a necessity for the young couple, who upgraded to this \$700-a-month, 1,100-square-foot rental in August of last year. An aspiring fashion designer, DeLong, 25, grew up in a relatively poor family and learned to sew her own clothes. "I went to Catholic school and had to wear the same uniform for years," she says, "so I learned how to do alterations and fix the holes in my skirts." Local boutiques have started carrying pieces of her clothing line, Ammunition, which includes a saucy pink vinyl skirt and a dramatic Asian-inspired wrap dress with red sleeves.

Schmidt, 27, spends his days trying to stretch a small budget as the producer of a new TV show called *Hip-Hop Nation*. According to both of them, he is the sobering influence in the household. "I like my environment to be bright, loud, and colorful, and if I had my way there would be red shag carpet wall to wall," says DeLong. "Mike is more conventionally minimalist—concrete floors and gray walls and stainless steel furniture." Schmidt adds: "She'll want something, and I have to think about how it will work, so I can live in the space, too—I can't live in a purple room."

So far, the pair has built a custom coffee table and a

bookcase with doors, and are planning to construct a padded bed frame. "It's always cooler to have something that comes from your own ingenuity and sweat rather than going out and buying something," says Schmidt. "I think the experience of making something far surpasses going into a store and putting down a credit card. That doesn't seem an authentic way to go about populating your house with things."

The designing duo has only had one disaster. The purple velvet couch in the living room cost \$50 to start, but ended up raising their laundry bills. "It was beige, and we hated the color," says DeLong. "So I was like, 'Dude, let's just dye it.' We used four bottles of Rit dye and sponged it on. But the upholstery was polyester and didn't soak up the dye, so when it dried, the couch was covered with purple powder. For the first three months, our backs and asses were purple."

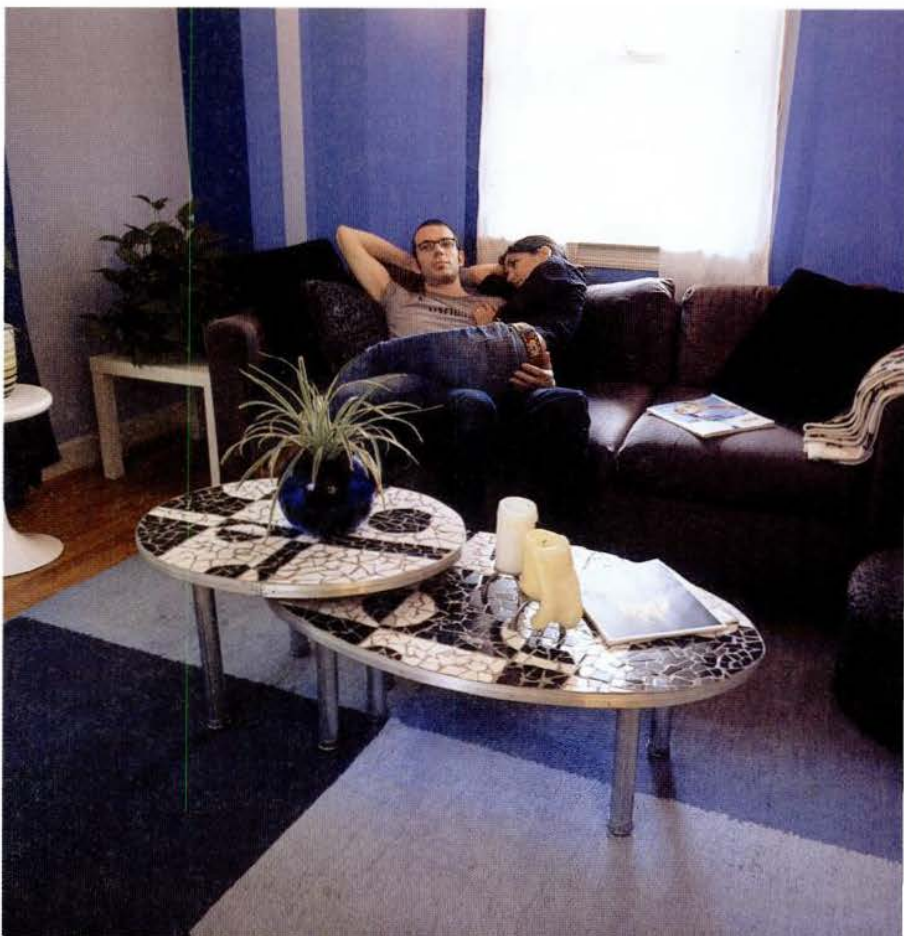
Now that the dust has settled, DeLong and Schmidt are thinking about building a new sofa. "The nice thing about making your own stuff is that you have the freedom to modify it or throw it away," says DeLong. "Don't underestimate yourself and the idea of being a thrifty homemaker. On a budget of 50 bucks a month, you can have a pretty phat house." ■



"The nice thing about making your own stuff is that you have the freedom to modify it or throw it away."



Who needs expensive renovations? A bright color palette, inventive wall treatments, and well-chosen accessories like the colorful shower curtain (top) and well-placed candles help make the most of the couple's interior spaces. **E** p. 136



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How to Make My House Your House

1 Mondrian-esque Mural

DeLong gave the wall of her sewing room a makeover. The raised blocks are actually sheets of Styrofoam used for packing material, which she cut into rectangles and painted red and purple with a foam roller. Then she stuck them on nails jutting from the wall. The jewel-like tones recall her latest designs for Ammunition, which are available at www.wearammo.com.

2 Coffee Table

To make this split-level coffee table, DeLong and Schmidt used a jigsaw to cut round and oval shapes from particleboard, then used a hacksaw to cut legs from metal fence posts. They covered the table's sleek edges with aluminum flashing, and formed the table-top's mosaic pattern with broken pieces of black-and-white tile, filling in the areas between the tiles with grout. Then they put a couple coats of polycrylic on top to give it a nice sheen.

3 Wall Garden

The DeLong-Schmidt kitchen is like a greenhouse, with yellow walls and many plants. DeLong bought the plastic grass mats for around \$9 a piece and hung them on the wall. They were sprouting flowers of all colors, but she picked out most of them to keep the color scheme simple.

Plastic grass mats from www.earthflora.com.

4 Retro '60s Lights

To wire up these glass globes (available from Home Depot for about \$5), they bought a thick plastic sheet, cut a square slightly larger than the opening of the globe, and fit it through. Then they drilled a hole for the cord and cut a thin slice to the edge of the sheet, so they could slip the cord through to the center and attach a socket and bulb. "If you bumped into one it would probably fall off," says DeLong, "but it's really fun to make something super-cheap that looks much more expensive." www.homedepot.com —L.L.





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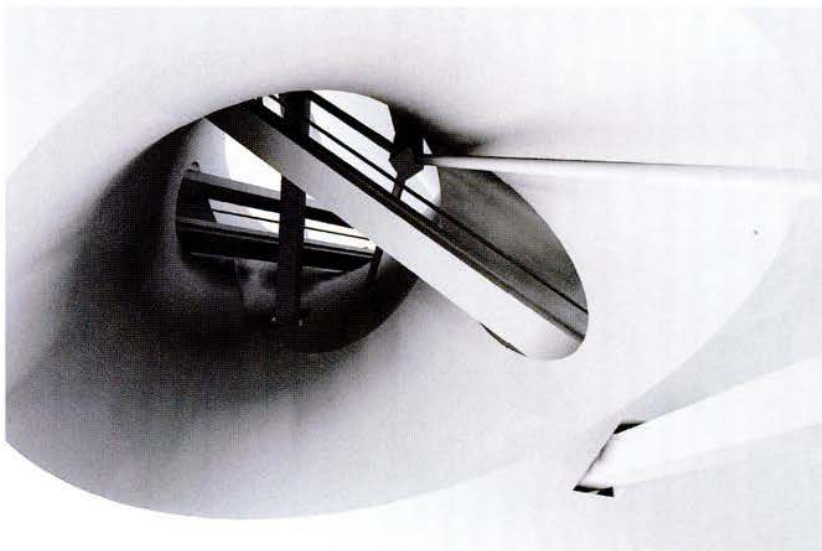


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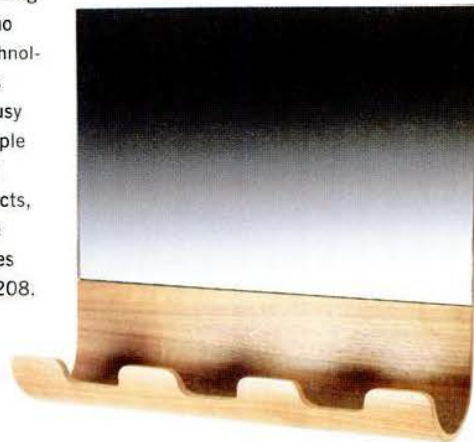


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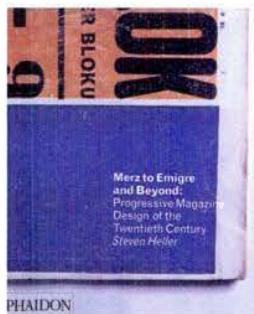
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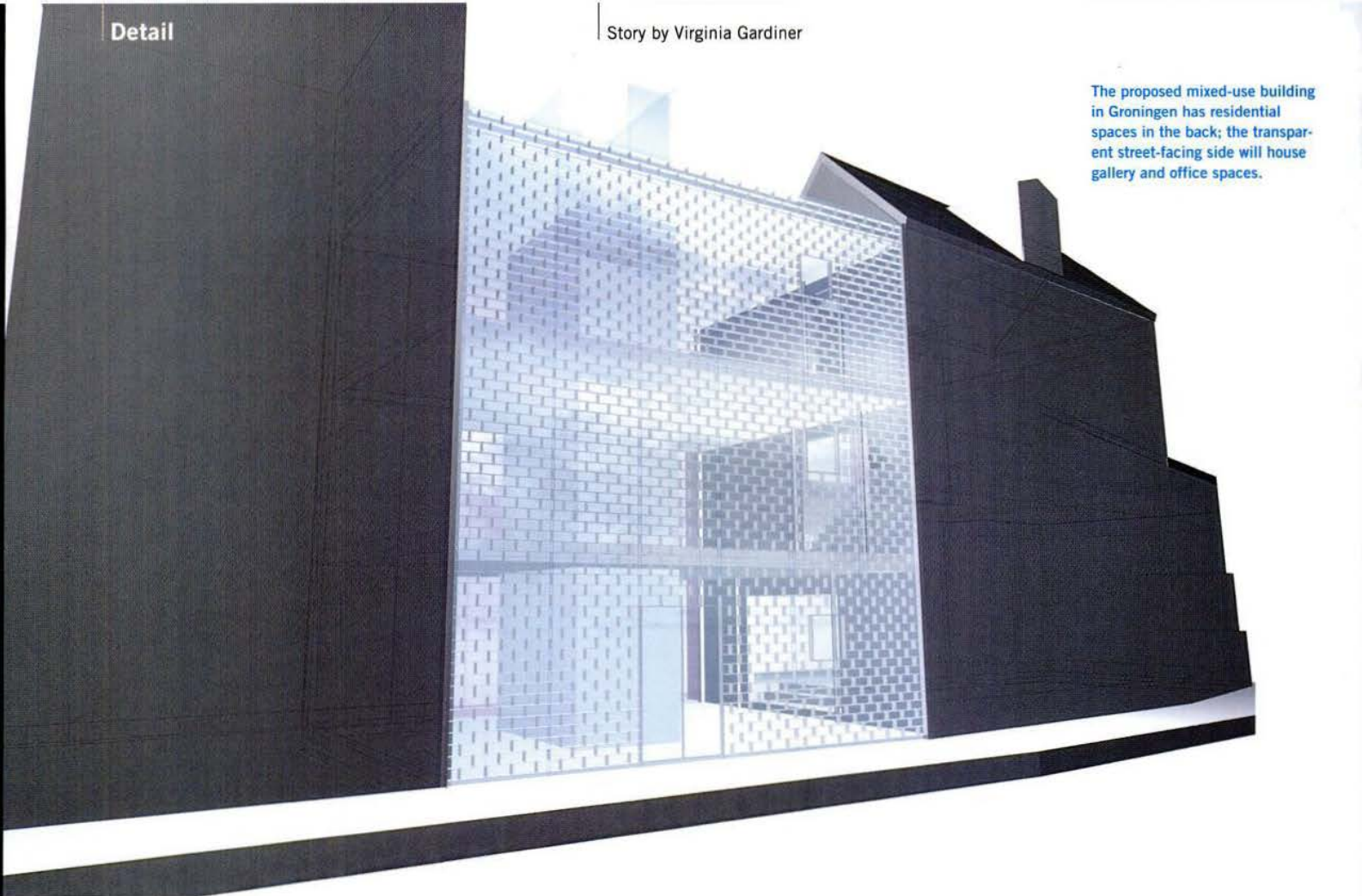


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The proposed mixed-use building in Groningen has residential spaces in the back; the transparent street-facing side will house gallery and office spaces.



Heavy Metal Is Out

Toyo Ito has been fond of aluminum ever since his first project, a house in Japan's Kanagawa Prefecture, went up in 1971. Over the course of a couple weeks, his construction crew clad the house's angular wood frame with broad, shiny aluminum sheets, as if it were a leftover ham headed for the fridge. Now, in the 21st century, he makes aluminum ethereal in ways no one would have imagined back in the '70s.

"I have always been fascinated with this material," Ito explains, "because of the visual lightness of the space it creates. It is a soft metal well suited to extrusion, so you can manufacture it with the highest accuracy." Ito exploits these traits to their fullest in his aluminum "bricks," which he devised in cahoots with engineers from Nippon Light Metal for the façade of a mixed-use student-housing building in the Dutch city of Groningen. Central Groningen is a quaint, carefully preserved district that dates back to medieval times. Its red brick buildings will be provocatively interpreted by Ito's silver-hued metallic building blocks.

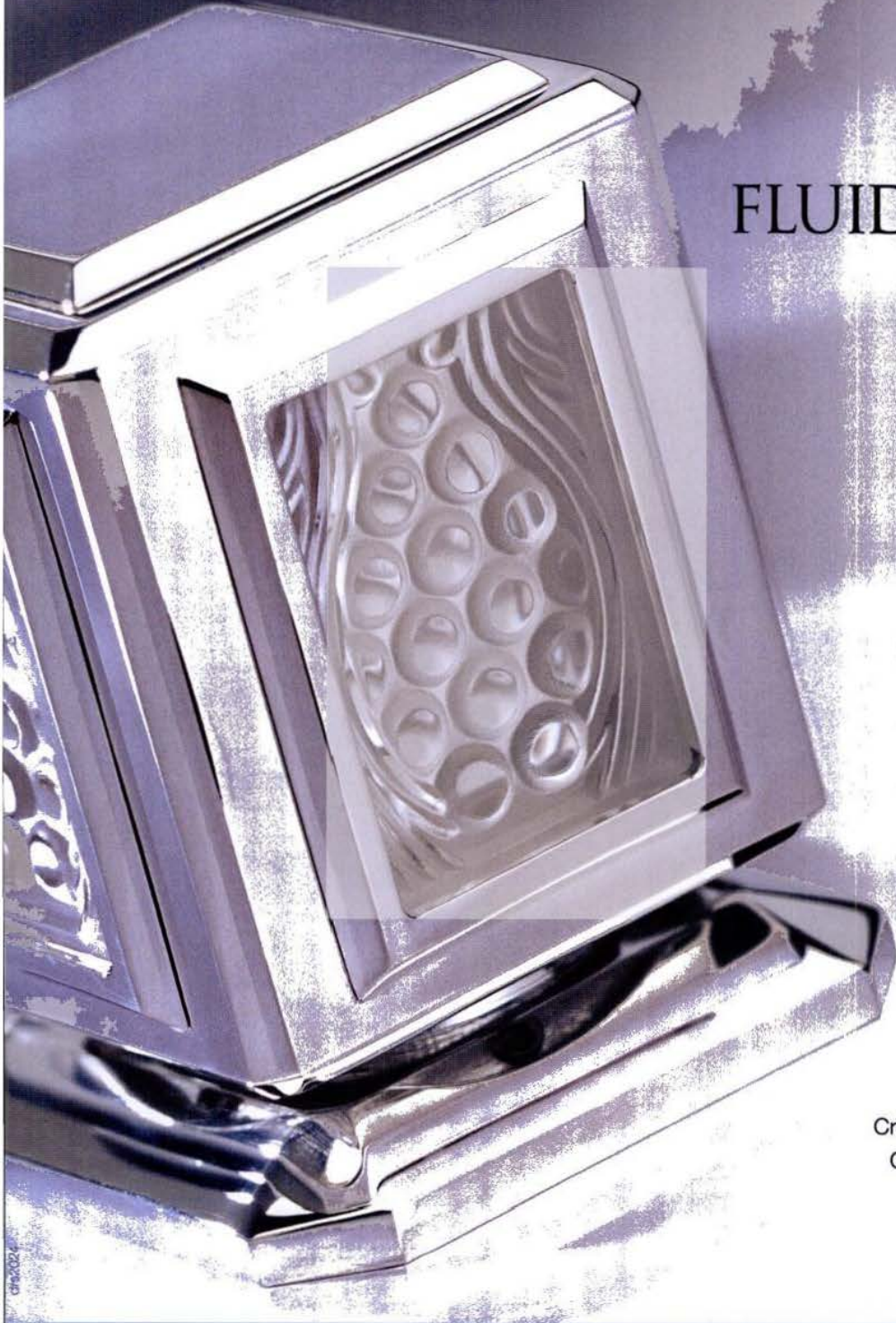
In the initial proposal, the aluminum bricks were intended to fully support the building. As it stands now,

they will simply support their own weight, no small feat in itself. The glass façade's transparency will be tempered by the bricks' three-inch depth, which makes them act as louvers, depending on the onlooker's distance and angle. The bricks, Ito explains, are a piece of cake to build with: "Their joints are manufactured with high accuracy, and they lock together by knocking with a wooden hammer. You don't need any adhesives. A façade of three-by-three meters can be assembled in half an hour. And they're lightweight."

The critic Andrea Maffei uses the term "de-composition" to characterize Ito's recent architecture. "The sole objective of Ito's process of de-composition," Maffei wrote in the architect's 2002 monograph, "is a simple abstraction and dematerialization of the result." Ito has never shied away from showing structure, but as the Groningen bricks demonstrate, he is the master of freeing structure from its materiality. In fact, the aluminum units are hardly bricks—they merely trace the mortar lines that, on a real brick wall, will eventually crumble away. With subtlety and tidiness worthy of a Dutch town, they combine strength with evanescence. ■



The building blocks receive structural inspection at the competent gloved hands of an engineer from Nippon Light Metal Company.



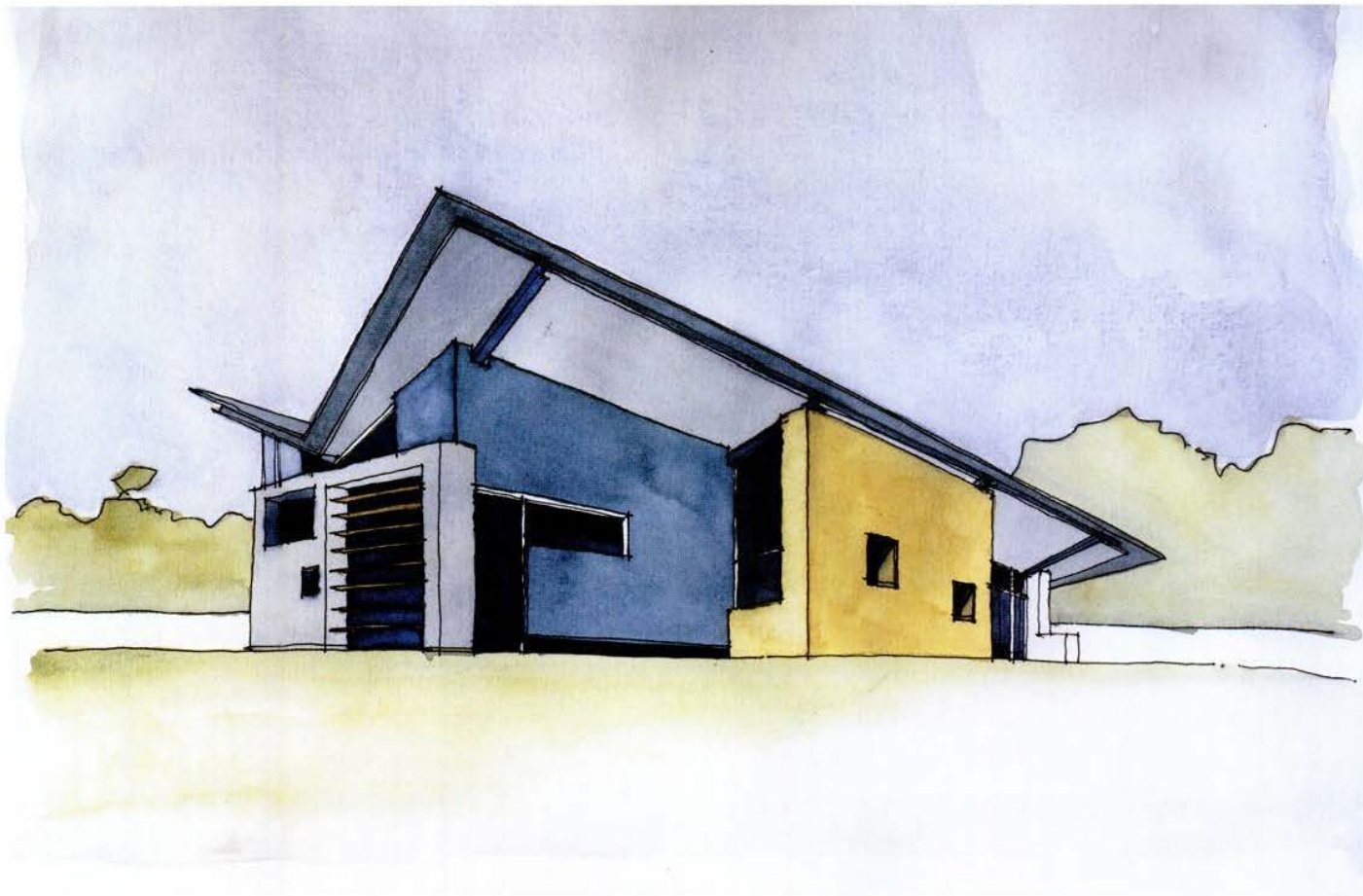
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Revolution Begins with Homes

Architects Laura Joines-Novotny and Tom Di Santo's concept for sustainable modern homes makes buying a home a lot like buying a car: You choose a basic model and decide on the options (colors, materials, finishes) that make it your own.

"It's a quiet revolution—most houses don't look like this," states architect Laura Joines-Novotny of the M:OME prototype house she and her partner, Tom Di Santo, have designed. Most houses don't function like M:OME either: This house is green—both sustainable and self-sufficient.

There is something insidious about this house. Hidden within Di Santo and Joines-Novotny's design is a strategy to sneak environmental building technology into the suburbs. The concept is simple: Design a structure that is, as Joines-Novotny says, "a tract house, but not a tract house." Engineered as an affordable spec house available to a broad public, it falls in the category of developer home. But unlike the standard tract home, it is modern in its design.

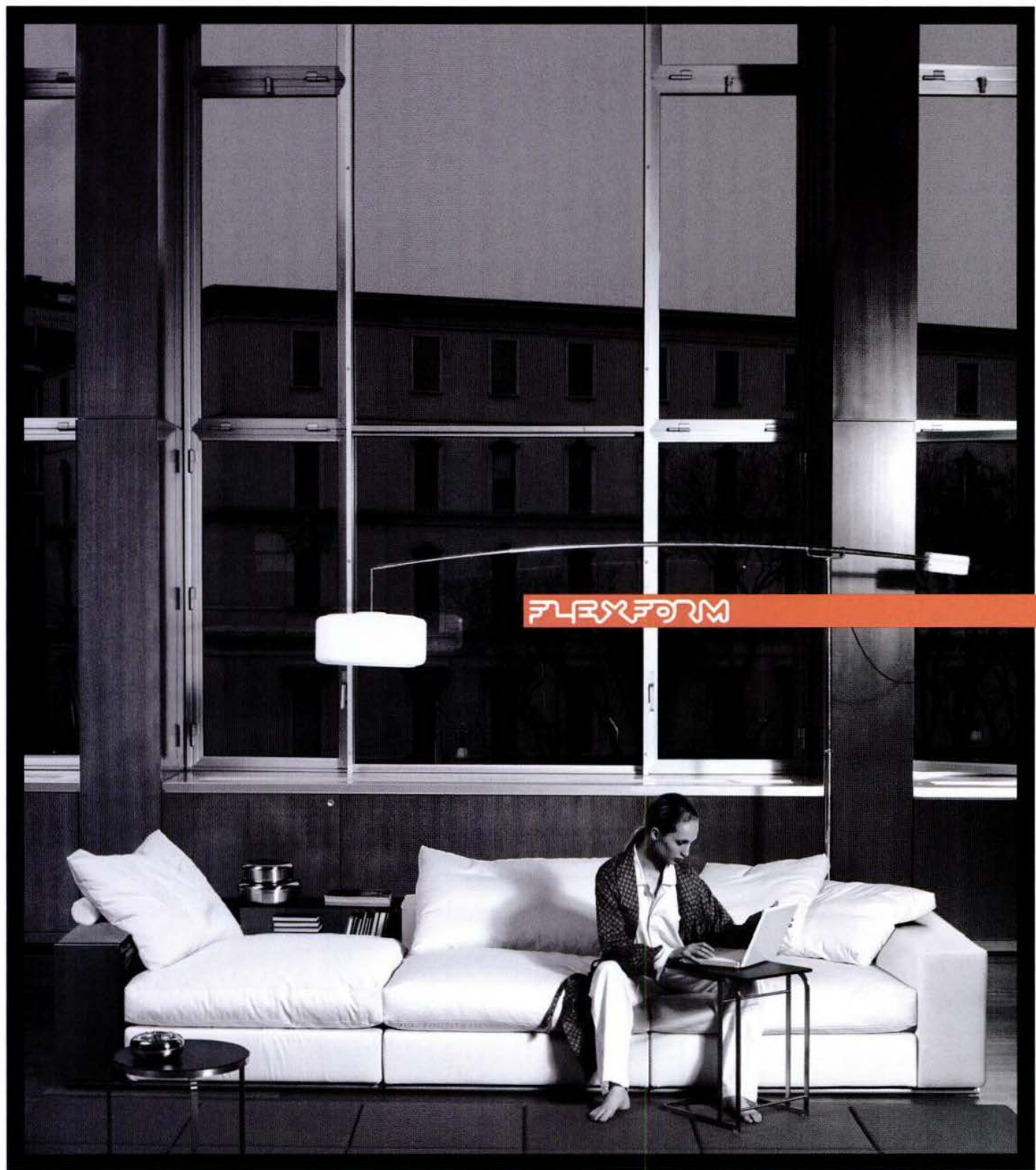
"Why is it modern?" Joines-Novotny asks. "Traditional construction is about decoration. You put on a Tudor sticker. M:OME is not about a style but about technology." Di Santo adds, "The house is a collection of proven sustainable technologies, brought under one roof." For example, thick straw-bale walls, used to create thermal insulation for the heating system, wrap around three

sides of a modular steel frame. The fourth side opens up into large windows.

Both Joines-Novotny and Di Santo teach in the architecture department at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. As a result, each facet of their design responds to the Central California climate in which they live. "Theoretically, you should be able to look at the house and know where it is," Joines-Novotny explains. "It is shocking to me that the ranch house, which was meant for a particular region, the Midwest, is found from San Luis Obispo to St. Louis. The west side of a building here needs to look different from the west side of one in Montana."

If the gabled roof and sprawling plan of the ranch house illustrate the Midwest, then M:OME, with its loft-like spaces and outdoor kitchen, responds intuitively to its proposed western site. In a dramatic gesture, an inverted gable roof tops the structure. "The thing I like most about the design is the roof. It provides so many features in one place," Di Santo reflects. "In California, there are so many beautiful ridgelines and hills that the standard gable roof cuts off." ▶

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In addition to opening up the double-height great room, the architects' design incorporates passive solar technology and photovoltaic panels. The site determines the roof angle: Depending on where the house is located, the roof slope can be shallower or steeper. This allows the house to generate its own electricity and pre-heat the hot water, which, in turn, cuts utility bills.

Reducing building and operating costs is a big part of the M:OME vision. An unfortunate stereotype of green building is that it is prohibitively expensive. But with M:OME, the architects hope to appeal to a diverse home-buyer market. Di Santo cites IKEA and Design Within Reach—retailers of affordable design products—as influences. Joines-Novotny and Di Santo envision their project as workforce housing.

"It is for everyday people who want to help out with the environment and feel part of the community," Di Santo says. "There is a certain elitist quality to

sustainable homes, since they are so customized."

In shedding the snobbery from sustainable architecture, the M:OME design is adaptable to a variety of residents. The great room, for instance, could serve as an artist's studio, or as a home office for a family with dual income providers. The flexibility of the rooms extends the life of the house—and ensures that most essential of domestic qualities, resale value.

Like Frank Lloyd Wright's utopian Broadacre City, which prophesied suburban development, Joines-Novotny and Di Santo's design anticipates a future of environmentally friendly suburbs. The architects are now designing a housing project that is a dense collection of several M:OME units. Ultimately, these communities are meant to be a defense against the adverse ecological impact of sprawl. "This should have happened ten years ago," Di Santo keenly intones. "We are already late." ■



When all the pieces come together, the M:OME architecture and building package will include permit-ready construction documents, materials specifications, engineering, and landscaping. All the owner needs to worry about is moving in.

Utility Commissioned

M:OME housing features at least a dozen environmentally savvy strategies. "We're the assimilators of technology," explains Joines-Novotny. Some elements operate on a micro-scale, while others shape the entire design.

Reducing energy usage is a prime design generator. Conservation is built into the architecture, since lighting, heating, and cooling are wasteful. East/west orientation is key to the passive solar heating. Low winter sun comes in through the large windows. The thermal mass of both the concrete floor and the trombé wall radiates the heat back into the house. During the summer, expansive roof overhangs block direct sun from overheating the house. The shading, combined with through-house ventilation, eliminates the need for air conditioning.

By placing rooms needing morning sun on the east side and rooms used in the afternoon on the west, the architects cleverly reduce the need to turn on lights during the day. Sixteen 150-watt photovoltaic panels on the roof generate enough energy to run the house. "This building is aware of its environment," touts Di Santo. "It changes the house from a static energy consumer to a dynamic energy producer."

M:OME is also set up to limit household dependence on other utilities. The roof is designed to collect rainwater, and recycled gray water (clean wastewater from sinks and tubs) provides water for landscaping.

Joines-Novotny sums up the total effect of these sustainable technologies: "If everyone is doing these little things, the repercussions are huge." —M.Z.



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Maly Bed by Ligne Roset / Designed by Peter Maly / \$3,385–\$3,495

Originally designed in 1983, the Maly bed has easily outlived that era's black leather and neon aesthetic. Available in light oak, dark brown oak, natural and dark brown beechwood, and pearwood finishes, the Maly also features pillow and table attachments (not included in the above prices) that plug into its generous platform frame.

Expert Opinion: If I ever had the opportunity to take a vacation from life and just hang around in bed all day, this would be one hell of a bed to do it in. It's like being on an island. As a violent sleeper who loves to thrash around, I've always wanted to have a

room that had cushioned walls and pillows everywhere—I could come pretty close by surrounding the entire bed with Maly's pillow attachments. Liability-wise, that would be good for a hotel, too—you wouldn't have to worry about anyone falling out of bed.

What We Think: If you were only allowed one piece of furniture for your whole house, it would be hard to argue against the Maly bed. Day and night, it could take care of all your needs—although we're still waiting for the refrigerator and charcoal grill attachments. We're always fond of modularity, and when the urge to rearrange the furniture arrives, this bed can adapt to your needs.

Bedlam!

From ecstatic outbursts to lumbering slumber, like an old friend, your bed knows you best. Today's beds have more personality than ever. Dwell chooses five that could be your new favorite pal.

For decades, the humble fortune cookie has accompanied checks in Chinese restaurants around the world. While the authors of these small turns of phrase remain as anonymous as Hallmark card writers, every now and then, like a good astrologer, they'll hit the nail on the head (as when Homer Simpson took on the career of fortune writing—"you will become aroused by a shampoo commercial"). Regrettably, the average fortune isn't nearly that clever or true. Due to lifeless and dull entries like "Your financial condition is sound and will remain so," restaurant-goers have long been spicing up their fortunes by adding the words "in bed" to them: "Friends long absent are coming back to you in bed" or "You are the center of every group's attention in bed."

It's true that almost any activity is a lot funnier or more fun when undertaken in the confines of bed. Like sleep, for instance. Taking the whole "in bed" notion further, a crazy Italian hippie named Mario Bellini even thought traveling could be better in bed, and thus invented the Kar-a-Sutra for a 1972 exhibition. More recently, designers have catered to people who can't stop multitasking—even after they hit the sheets. In 2001, Droog Design's Hella Jongerius created the installation *Bed in Business*, which features monitors mounted at the foot of the bed and

pillows that double as keyboard, mouse, and speakers.

Current trends feature beds that look less and less like the four-poster and canopy models of the past, adopting instead a flatter, more geometric look, with room for Vitamin Water bottles and a collection of remote controls. We chose five of these platform beds and contacted our expert, Patrick Richardson, manager of Palm Springs' Orbit In hotel. We thought platform beds would perfectly suit the Orbit In's mid-century stylings, but Richardson says otherwise.

"Personally, I love platform beds. From a purist standpoint, they would be more in keeping with the tenets of modern design than the massive beds and mattresses that we use. However, from a hotelier's standpoint, comfort and life span are key. All of our rooms have bulbous, double pillow-topped mattresses, and in order to get any decent life out of a mattress, you must have a box spring. Being in a resort community, vacationers put much more stress on our beds than they do at home. Oversleeping and, shall we say, aggressive lovemaking are the rule. A bed really gets put through its paces every single weekend. We've already had to resupport beds that have split and bowed out, and the hotel hasn't even been in operation for two years." ►

A Note on Our Expert: During a visit to his newly retired parents in Palm Springs, California, in January 2002, Patrick Richardson, a college student and modern design enthusiast from Chicago, told a friend who remodels modern homes, "You should buy one of those old low-slung mid-century motels, clean it up, fill it with period furniture, and let me run the place." His friend pointed out a brochure for the then-brand-new Orbit In: "Somebody already did." When Richardson, who had worked various luxury-hotel jobs from bellhop to concierge, landed the manager's position at the new hotel, he left the Midwest behind.

📍 p. 136



1



1 Wood Platform Bed by West Elm / \$499 (queen)

West Elm, Pottery Barn's younger, more attractive sibling, offers this solid hardwood bed. Finished in "warm chocolate," the bed is designed for use with a mattress only. West Elm is a catalog, so there is a \$125 shipping charge (in addition to the price above). But they will arrange for assembly of the bed upon arrival.

Expert Opinion: This bed has an Asian-mid-century-modern fusion that appeals to me. It makes me feel like I should be sipping green tea, sniffing sandalwood incense, and eating out of a bento. I think the W Hotel line would really like it—they're into that melding of Asian simplicity and modern lines. The dark finish would be good for a hotel because the bases of beds take a beating with people knocking their shoes and suitcases into them.

What We Think: The Platform bed, with its simple wood plane set atop two perpendicular supports, reminds us of an overgrown Japanese geta (sandal). While we would be happy to share our bento with the matching overgrown geisha, we might grow tired of always having to tuck in the sheets like a perfectly folded obi. Unmade, the Platform bed isn't much better than that old box spring.

2



2 Platform Bed by De La Espada / Designed by De La Espada / \$2,725 (queen)

Available in both oak and walnut finishes, De La Espada's Platform bed sits low to the ground, with a ledge all around. The bed ships in four pieces, and requires assembly.

Expert Opinion: De La Espada uses quality materials, including this gorgeous wood (it would take a beating in the hotel, though—and the thought of that wood being damaged almost makes me weep). This is along the same lines as West Elm's bed, but way more deluxe. Though they're similar, I don't get quite as much of an Asian feel from this one. Maybe because the headboard appeals to my Western sensibilities. Mom and Dad always had headboards.

What We Think: No frills here: wood, mattress, sleep. At first glance the Platform bed may come across as slightly proletarian, but that notion can be easily refuted by the price tag, not to mention the high-quality timber employed. While we would use our platform for everything from Tolstoy to TiVo, we're a little afraid of what those sharp corners might do to our shins on the way back from the bathroom in the dark.

3



3 Metropolitan Bed by B&B Italia / Designed by Jeffrey Bernett / \$6,500

The latest addition to Bernett's Metropolitan line, this cold-shaped, polyurethane-foam bed is available in a range of leather or fabric coverings. The contoured shape is supported internally by a steel frame and rests atop nickel- or graphite-varnished steel legs.

Expert Opinion: This bed makes me feel like I'm in the warm embrace of my mother's bosom. Everything's taken care of—with little side tables built into the bed for my glass of warm milk, cookies, and bedtime story. I don't have much time to sit around on the sofa and watch TV. If I do, it's right before I go to bed and this has a nice high back so you can sit up and not feel like you're in an Adjust-A-Bed. It's a bit unconventional, which is why I think it would be great for a hotel—people want to see something they're not going to see in their own home.

What We Think: Simply put, we can't get enough of Bernett's Metropolitan line. If we were bankrolled like the Rat Pack, we'd outfit our entire cabana with his lounge chairs, sofas, and beds. What we really appreciate about the Metropolitan bed is that the design recalls classic mid-century pieces, like Saarinen's Womb chair, without resorting to blatant plagiarism.

4



4 Flat by Mobileffe / Designed by Christophe Pillet / \$3,500

The manufacturer describes Flat as "female, because the bed is soft, sensual, [and] French." The padded structure is upholstered in fireproof, 100 percent wool and features chrome steel footings.

Expert Opinion: If I were going to have a bed in my office in the Seagram Building, I might want this. But to be honest with you, I wouldn't want it in my home. I want my bed to offer a little more of an embrace—more romance and sensuality. As the name implies, this is just a little too flat. I do, however, appreciate the functional spaces at the ends. You could put a lamp there or push the bed against the wall and make it a bookshelf. This bed's strictly for sleeping.

What We Think: While Flat, with its Marcel Breuer-inspired legs, does recall some sort of bedtime for the Bauhaus, we think it would work equally well outside an office environment—even at home in a bedroom. We agree that the built-in storage space hinders sitting up to read or watch TV, but we'd gladly trade that defect for the opportunity to keep all our bedtime needs within arm's reach. ■



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flexus design: *Paolo Rizzatto*

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"Health care is the forgotten child of architecture," architect Anne Fougeron explains. "Risks are not encouraged." But her work for Planned Parenthood, including the Eddy Street offices in San Francisco, shown here, prove her contention that "you don't need to disassociate good design from politics."

Security by Design

In 1995, frustrated by a national surge in violence against abortion clinics and providers, architect Anne Fougeron contacted her local chapter of Planned Parenthood to see how she could help. Planned Parenthood Golden Gate said they needed an architect to deal with security issues, and without hesitation Fougeron began working for them pro bono. Her first project, a lobby remodel of the MacArthur clinic in Oakland, California, was such a success that Fougeron Architecture became the organization's affiliate architect.

"Initially, this wasn't about design but how they could protect themselves," explains Fougeron. "I said to the client, 'You can turn your clinic into a fortress surrounded by barbed wire or you can do something different. We can use this opportunity to upgrade not only the security but also the look and the feel of the place.'"

It's not easy to reconcile bullet-resistant glass and video monitors with a comfortable and well-designed environment but, as Therese Wilson, vice president of external affairs for Planned Parenthood Golden Gate, explains, "Anne managed to integrate security into our clinics and offices without sacrificing aesthetics. She's created spaces that are colorful, modern, and inviting—all within the budget of a nonprofit."

Most of Fougeron's work isn't as overtly political yet she feels that just being a woman architect allows her to be political every day. "You don't need to disassociate good design from politics. The work we do for Planned Parenthood proves that. I have a 13-year-old daughter and I want her to have as many choices as I've had. That motivation keeps me going." ■

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21st-Century Hacienda

Leaving home is hard to do, especially when home is Mexico City—as intriguing, mysterious, and full of life as any hometown could ever hope to be. But D.F. (Distrito Federal, as it is commonly called), the second-largest city in the world, with a population of over 18 million, is not always all it's cracked up to be (cosmopolitan, friendly, and flamboyant); or perhaps it is too often all it's cracked up to be (hot, dangerous, and filthy).

In 1997, Mexico City got to be too much for architect Mauricio Rodriguez Anza and his family. So they packed their bags and bid a fond farewell. “The city had turned into a difficult place to live,” Anza explains, “and I had two small children to raise.

“Mexico City doesn't have suburbs like most American cities,” Anza continues. “What used to be suburbs in the '40s and '50s, like Lomas de Chapultepec where I grew up, have been transformed into complicated mixed-use neighborhoods that are sometimes very dangerous, and since they are so crowded there are not many options for outdoor activities.” But Anza knew that if he ventured a bit further from D.F., he could find what he was looking for—a plot of land in a relatively calm setting.

Moving to Hacienda Jajalpa, just 30 minutes from Mexico City, was the next best thing to moving to the suburbs. The Anza family put their urban 2,000-square-foot, three-bedroom apartment in the Bosques de las Lomas neighborhood up for sale and bought some land in Jajalpa, where Mauricio got to work designing a new home for his family. The 4,106-square-foot house was completed in 1997, for a construction cost of a mere \$158,000.

Anza and his family have lived stateside in Houston since 1999, while the architect has worked on various projects, including a residential development in Missouri City, Texas, and a mixed-use development in Miami. Dwell recently talked with Anza about the house in Jajalpa, which he still keeps for his family's eventual return to Mexico, and the secluded little town itself.

Describe the town of Hacienda Jajalpa.

It's located between Mexico City and Toluca. The development was built in the 1990s around the 18th-century hacienda of Jajalpa. The original hacienda, which was in use until the beginning of the 20th century, has been carefully restored. The whole area has become an ►



The cobblestone street and brick house (inset) characterize much of the town of Hacienda Jajalpa. The Anza House (top), despite its departure from the vernacular, manages to carry on “a dialogue with the original Mexican hacienda.”

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attractive option for those who want to leave the city.

Most of the people who live there are families with small children, like us. The entrance of the development is next to the Mexico-Toluca Highway. Over the years the highway has brought a mix of development, but restaurants are the most popular business around. The landscape is beautiful, but it's changing rapidly.

Describe the process of building the house. What were some of the issues that arose, and how did you deal with them?

I decided to build the house using a mix of concrete and steel. There's a lot of humidity in the area and the winters are very cold. With all this in mind, I decided on a U-shape, with sleeping areas and bathrooms in one section, social areas (kitchen/dining/living) in another, and, in the center, a garden to bring it all together.

The bedroom section was built of Covintec, which is essentially a wire-frame panel with insulation (polyurethane) in the center; you apply enough concrete mix over the panels to make the walls as thick as you need. The windows are small and double-glazed in order to protect these areas as much as possible from the violent climate changes. The social areas have a steel-frame structure and large windows, most of which look out to the center of the property. We closed the sections above the windows with panels made in situ, as if they were precast.

What were your main goals in the design of the house?

I tried to make the spaces as clean as possible by avoiding any kind of ornamentation, and to let as much sunlight in as possible. The house is very well integrated with the landscape—a different version of the surrounding houses, but loyal to functionalism.

What is your favorite part of the house?

My studio. It is really a workshop (830 square feet, double height). When I built this house, I was doing large-scale objects and installations in galleries and museums. Most of that work was assembled in the studio before the shows. For that purpose I built a big box with large walls, but every wall is highlighted with natural light.

My kids spend a lot of time in the garden, which is the center of the house. It is surrounded with corridors, and although we have around 130 trees on the property, the garden gets sunlight all day.

How was the house received by the neighbors?

Most of the houses in Hacienda Jajalpa are built with Mexican red brick, with different kinds of stone applied to their façades, red tile roofs, and corrugated walls—most of them look like ranchos with contemporary colors. Others look like medieval fortresses.

Ironically, our house is the only house in the area that has a dialogue with the original Mexican hacienda, which is built around a plaza with all activities flowing from there. The hacienda is intended to work like a small city and has a similar layout to most Latin American colonial cities—just like our house! ■



In Anza's studio (above), the double-height ceiling allows for major art projects to be built and assembled right on the premises. It also functions as a more standard office space. The living room (left) features ample wall space to display the family's extensive art collection.

Margaritas, Museums, and More

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With pristine white walls, polished copper, extensive displays of primitive art, and distinctive guacamole and margaritas, it's no wonder this Mexico City standard has played host over the years to everyone from Diego Rivera to Mick Jagger. Liverpool 166, Zona Rosa, Mexico City Tel. 011-52-5-5-5207-2732

The National Anthropology Museum

The massive museum, designed by Pedro Ramirez Vasquez and completed in 1964, is worth checking out not only for its amazing collection of Latin American artifacts spread over 26 exhibit halls but also for its architecture. sunsite.unam.mx/antropol/

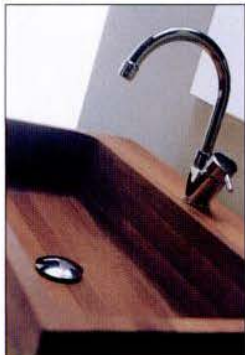
kurimanzutto

The roaming gallery that is kurimanzutto holds events and exhibitions throughout the city (a stall in a local market, an old rug store, etc.) and around the world, representing the cutting edge of Mexico City's modern art scene. Recent exhibitions have included "Barfly United," held at four bars, complete with architectural tours of the bars themselves. Tel. 011-52-5-5-5286-3059

Teotihuacan (City of the Gods)

Teotihuacan lies an easy 30-mile bus ride outside of Mexico City. The "lost city" is a remarkable study in ancient building and city-planning practices. www.mexicocity.com.mx/teoti_i.html —A.W.

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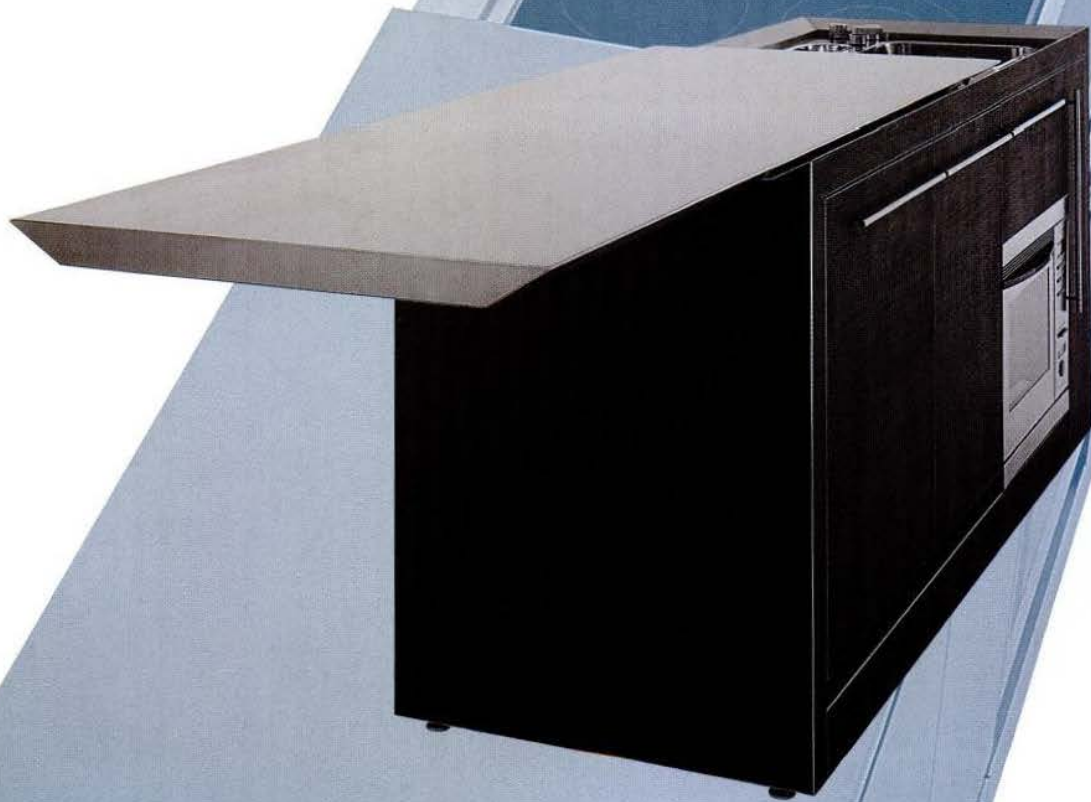
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But Where's the Pantry?



When Charles Eames said, “[Design is] a plan for arranging elements in such a way as to best accomplish a particular purpose,” German designer Norbert Wangen wasn’t listening. And the result of this missed connection is no more apparent than in the K2 kitchen system. Here, Wangen reverses Eames’s maxim, arranging a broad array of purposes—kitchen, dining room, “avant-garde room sculpture”—into one element, a self-contained kitchen block.

This kind of audacious adventuring in a home appliance is both impressive and annoying. Impressive in an amphibious-vehicle kind of way—“Whoa! It’s a car *and* a boat!”—and also annoying in an amphibious-vehicle-trying-to-do-too-many-things-at-once-and-doing-none-of-them-well kind of way—“Pfff, a car that goes only 20 mph? A boat that barely floats?” It’s this balance between the “whoa” and “pfff” factors, however, that makes the K2 so intriguing.

Closed, the K2 is a 7.7-by-2.3-by-3-foot stainless steel box, more than slightly resembling a space-age coffin. This, according to Wangen, is its “avant-garde room

sculpture” function. But it’s only when you start opening it up that the real art of this piece becomes apparent. A sliding door on top exposes a four-burner electric range and sink. The side cupboards swing out to display an oven, dishwasher, and refrigerator. (Whoa!)

Not only does the sliding door transform the K2 from a room sculpture to a kitchen, it also creates the dining table. If work space on the K2 is cozy—only 3.9 feet long and 2.2 feet wide, including a teeny sink—the dining space is an I-can-see-your-nose-pores-cramped ledge masquerading as a dining table. (Pfff!) The K3 and K4 models are even shorter than the K2, offering only a two-burner range. Its versatility is also tested by the fact that placing the K2 anywhere but in a dedicated kitchen space would require a lot of messy and expensive plumbing reroutes.

But what the K2 lacks in function it more than makes up for in form. This kitchen is all about creating a new experience, eliciting as many “whoas” per dinner party as possible—not an easy task in a world where mind-boggling gizmos are already de rigueur in most homes. Pfffs aside, it’s in the *whoa* factor that Wangen triumphs. ■

Norbert Wangen’s elegant free-standing kitchen units illustrate “the beauty of disappearance.” But forget about cooking (or serving) Thanksgiving dinner.



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AN ALL-YEAR-ROUND VACATION CABIN

It has all the charm for all seasons. It's a beautiful, two-story rustic that comes with a hot tub, a big living area, a deck, and a master bedroom.

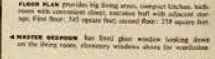


EXTERIOR OF CABIN with big deck for outdoor living and dining, perfect spot for snow sleds, a hot tub, and a hot tub.

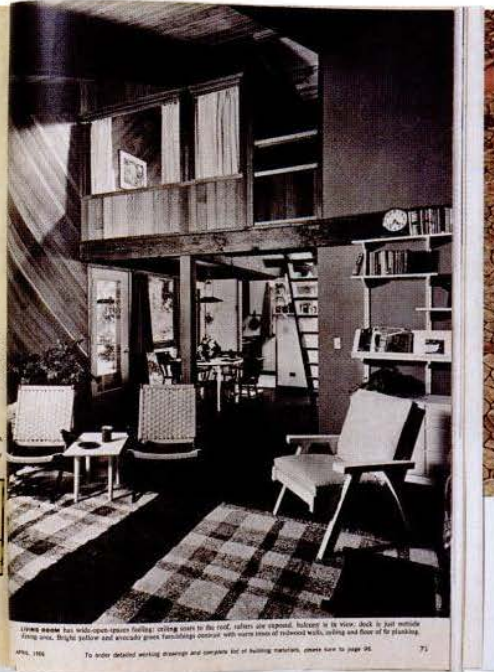
It's a compact country cabin that makes the most of every one of its 800 square feet. It has high ceilings to add vertical space and windows will flood the place with light. The floor plan provides storage space for the entry, convenient for all equipment or many books, for example, dark chairs and dining set, a big living room and dining area, a bathroom with tub for relaxing and soaking after a day's sport, a well-equipped kitchen, two family bedrooms, nicely tucked away on the upper balcony level. We built it in the hills of Halifax, Vermont, but it can be built in any part of the country, mountain, lake, or seacoast, wherever you enjoy outdoor holidays.

Outside, landscape treated walls are regularly provide for snow slide in winter. Inside, there is the same attention to materials and details. For example, major walls are paneled with 6" strips of varnished, polished and easy to maintain, and applied diagonally to accent the pitch of the ceiling.

Architect Heyward Cutting comments that all important elements of the design work with nature for living close to nature while being well sheltered at the same time. On any day, snow or sun, you can enjoy a big view through the window wall of the living room. On many days you can move out and enjoy every view from chairs close to the edge of the room, or look down from the balcony bedroom onto the greenery below. All which is the stuff of a year-round vacation cabin should come true.



FLOOR PLAN provides big living area, compact kitchen, bathroom with central closet, master bed with adjacent dressing. First floor: 743 square feet; second floor: 718 square feet.



LIVING ROOM has wide-open-space feeling; ceiling opens to the roof, rafters are exposed. Balcony is in view. Deck is just outside living area. Bright yellow and avocado green furnishings contrast with warm tones of treatment walls, ceiling and floor of the plantation.



From Color-Blind to Cool

In 1966, architect Heyward Cutting's "All-Year-Round Vacation Cabin" was featured in *Woman's Day*. The magazine commissioned the home's design and furnishings, and readers could purchase the plans. The original canary-and-avocado color scheme is long gone, but the house's new owners cherish its colorful history.

When *Pad and Pad Parties* author Matt Maranian and his wife, Loretta Palazzo, met with a real estate agent in 1999, their domestic wish list—1950s or '60s modern, rustic, a nice parcel of land, something like a low-rent Frank Lloyd Wright—proved demanding.

After a year of searching, the couple stumbled upon a listing in the local newspaper: "Featured in *Woman's Day* 1966, Architect-designed house, Modern, Contemporary, Views." It sounded perfect, but according to Maranian, the picture running with the ad looked "like a bad 1980s tract home." Unswayed by the horrible photo, the couple decided to investigate further.

When they arrived at the redwood-clad house in Halifax, Vermont, Maranian and Palazzo were pleasantly surprised—the photo in the paper was of the wrong place entirely. Without keys to the house, Maranian stood on the shoulders of his real estate agent to get a look inside. That's when the couple knew they had found their dream home. "We actually made our offer before anyone unlocked the front door," Maranian recalls.

Once inside, they discovered an interior that had been largely untouched since the home's photographic debut in the 1966 issue of *Woman's Day*. The former occupants provided a great link to the house's past, presenting

Maranian and Palazzo with the original article, which explained that *Woman's Day* had financed the home's construction and published architect Heyward Cutting's plan for its readers. Even better for the kitsch-obsessed Maranian and Palazzo, the original inhabitants also shared old photo albums with pictures of their kids scampering around in bathing suits at weenie roasts.

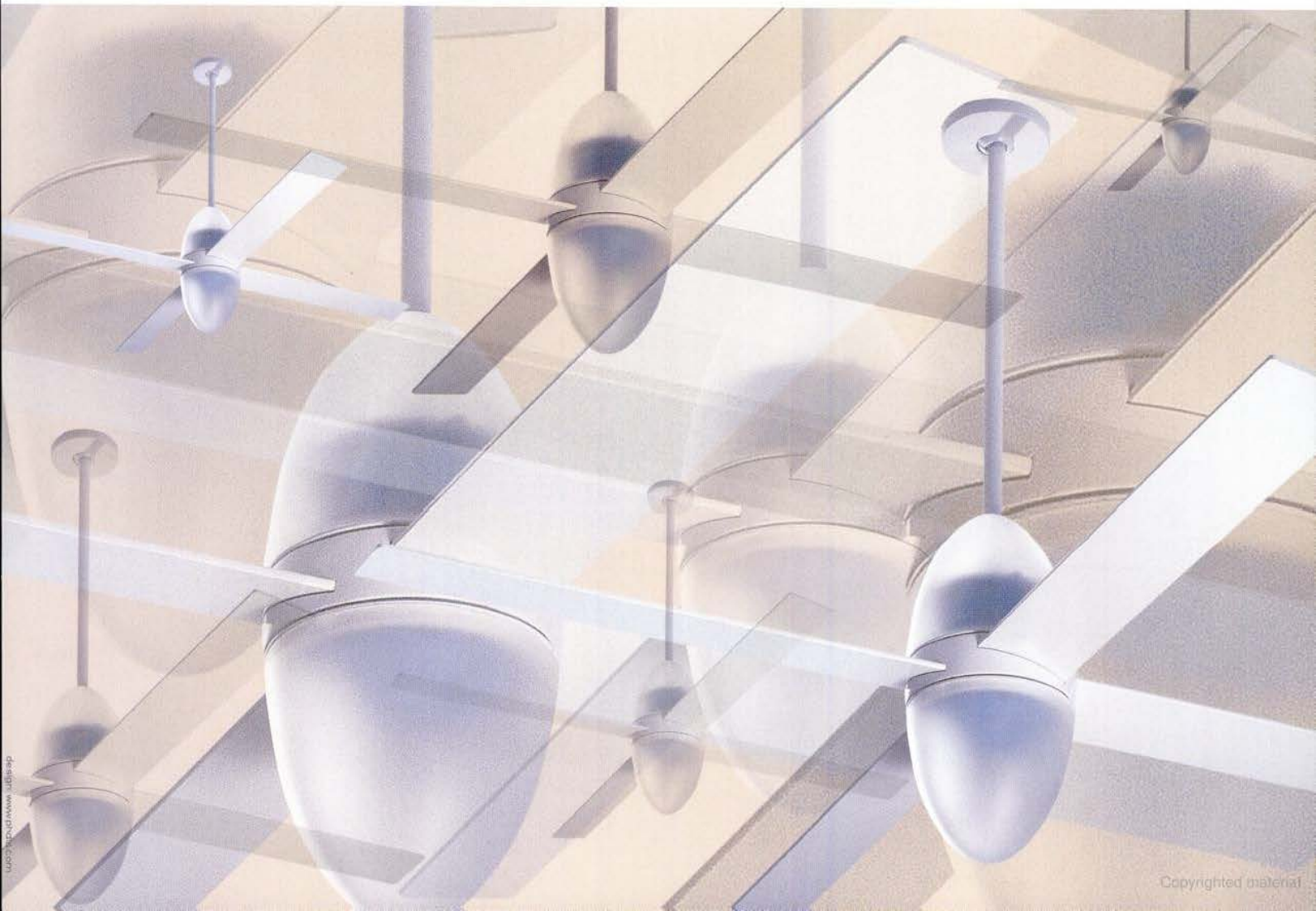
The former owners also solved the mystery behind the home's rather unique canary yellow-and-avocado color scheme—it had been the least offensive of three choices offered by an interior decorator they suspected was color-blind. According to Maranian, *Woman's Day* was so displeased with the results that they fired the decorator and put off running the story for three years—and then only showed black-and-white photos.

Like the eccentric spaces featured in Maranian's books, the couple's home is "a personal multimedia work in progress." The pair maintains their friendship with the home's original occupants, who, Maranian explains, "are amused by our take on the house and are always interested to see what we've done, added, or painted." But the most exuberant review came from one of the previous owners' children. "The first time he walked in he said, 'Oh, my god. You've made it cool.'" ■



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Dear Dwell,

I've got too many music CDs—probably 1,500, maybe 2,000. And it's a mess. They're stacked on the floor and in unattractive shelves. The storage solutions I have seen are ugly and don't hold nearly enough. I bet I'm not the only person with this problem. —David

Long-Term CD (Storage)

You are indeed not alone in your modern media malady. Luckily, Mother Nature is coming to the rescue: A Spanish scientist recently identified a CD-eating fungus that for the last year has spread throughout Central America and Mexico. Although it's only been identified in tropical climates, it could encroach on the rest of the world any day now. If this fungus with a taste for aluminum doesn't take care of your Zeppelin boxed sets, technology will. The current pace of media trends suggests that CD players might be obsolete in 15 years.

Okay, so the ebb and flow of technology is what keeps America Open for Business. But as long as you have those unsightly stacks of CDs, rather than letting them clog up your living room floor, you may as well give them a handsome home.

For a no-frills way of getting your CDs out of sight and out of mind, try the leather-textured steel MC2D/MC3D cabinets from Can-Am, which store 1,350 CDs. Additional drawers (each of which holds 270 discs) can be stacked to suit your expanding collection. For mobility and added industrial chic, all cabinets are rigged to hold casters.

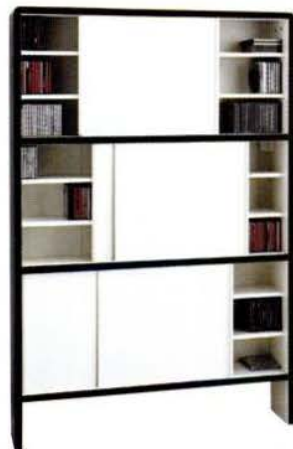
Equally functional, and a whole lot prettier, is IKEA's Drömme. This five-and-a-half-foot-tall black-and-white cabinet designed by Monika Mulder stores 882 CDs and costs a mere \$89. Place one Drömme next to another and

you'll have enough 21st-century cabinetry to store all your musical goods.

A more adventurous approach would be to purchase a few of Ron Arad's Bookworms. These bendable shelving units can be mounted to the wall in a series of loops and waves, creating ample room for CDs while doubling as wall sculpture. Plus, if you get bored with looking at your Bookworms in one formation, you can always rearrange them. They come in six colors, and the largest model holds about 740 CDs.

If you have the wall space, Blu Dot's clever, Eames-inspired Chicago 8 Box Wall Unit holds over 1,100 CDs. A more functional option by Blu Dot is the Modulicious #5, which is similar to Can-Am's MC2D/MC3D but with much more flavor. Each cabinet holds about 1,000 CDs and comes with powder-coated steel door covers, available in a combination of ice-creamy colors.

Last but not least, bear in mind that in other parts of the world, CDs themselves are coveted design items. Various world travels have revealed CDs shimmering on the dashboards of public buses, hanging as ornaments on Christmas trees, and laid out in Mercedes symbols on the hoods of taxis. If you ever tire of listening to your 2,000 CDs, you could always follow suit and hang them from your ceiling like holographic Technicolor bats. ■



Clockwise from top: Ron Arad's versatile Bookworm; Can-Am's functional MC2D; the expansive Chicago 8 Box from Blu Dot; and IKEA's Monika Mulder-designed Drömme. [p. 136](#)



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For those who aren't in the water-taxi echelon, a visit to the city of canals entails a ride on the vaporetto. Always stuffed with locals and tourists, the 24-hour mass-transit waterbus lines are among the most successful results of the city's urbanization. But as the boat chugs through the iconic Grand Canal, you forget that the 20th century ever happened. Well, almost. There is a disconcerting thrill upon seeing the ornate Rialto and Piazza San Marco, especially for an American who's only been to the Vegas Venice or can't shake memories of the kitsch oil paintings of gothic arches and teal-green lapping waves that adorned the office of a garrulous orthodontist. Off the vaporetto's stern you are finally seeing the real thing and, though it defies all imitations, it doesn't look real.

This uncanny experience was an apt preamble to last fall's Venice Architecture Biennale, which was curated by Deyan Sudjic, editor of *Domus* magazine. Held in the island's 700-year-old-and-crumbling military Arsenale and 19th-century exhibition gardens, the show, titled "Next," aimed, in Sudjic's words, "to offer a picture of what architecture will be in the next decade—of who will be making it and what they will be making it with." Showcasing models, renderings, and construction photos, an international selection of prominent architects displayed their upcoming projects. By focusing on works projected for completion (a sometimes-rash prediction), the show proclaimed a footing in one kind of reality.

Just as the impeccable pages of *Domus* are often revelatory, the selected exhibitors presented fascinating eye candy. Sumptuously assembled models were

dramatically lit, and supplemented with touchable material samples. For a new department store in Birmingham, England, Future Systems built a life-sized sample wall of their peacock-blue pointillist-medallioned façade that visitors were welcome to lean against. Jean Nouvel illustrated his designs for Musée du Quai Branly with a spread of construction materials on the floor.

But among enthusiastic crowds of opening-weekend visitors, some were ambivalent about the exhibit's version of reality. Their objections were best described by Luca Molinari, who is curating a series of unorthodox exhibits at Italy's leading architecture gallery, the Triennale, in Milan. "The Biennale was excellent as an event that showed perfect architecture," says Molinari. "But on the other hand, it was too what the French would call *gentil*—remiss to show any problems. I am more interested in architecture made dirty by reality than in the perfection of renderings and models."

Especially in this day and age, where three has become a pedestrian number of dimensions, new possibilities for displaying architecture seem endless. The Biennale could have been riskier—perhaps with more interactive and untraditional media. It could have addressed problems in architecture, instead of dotting so unilaterally on projects that promise a Bilbao-quality impact on the future. But, in a way, the exhibit's taunting perfection complemented the dreamy city it inhabited—albeit disparately, both sidled at the edge of a kind of unreality. And, as any worthwhile artistic event should, the Biennale generated its share of controversy.

The wonderful fluid skylights of Ingenhoven Overdiek and Partners' Main Station Stuttgart (below) were in the Biennale's "Communication" section.

...at the Venice Architecture Biennale

Last fall, an international roster of architects displayed their latest and greatest building projects in Italy's canal city.

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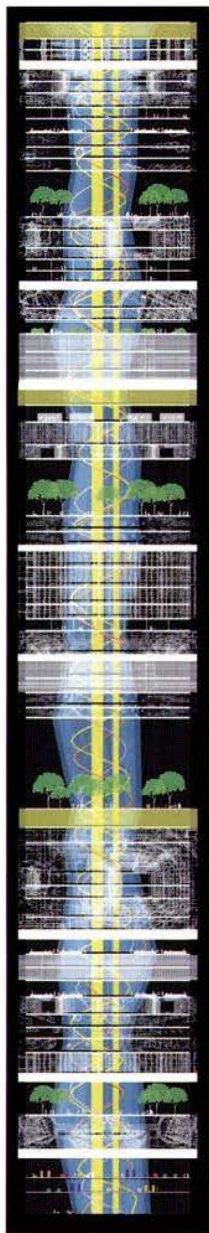


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The City of Towers

One of the only exhibit portions dedicated to purely conceptual forms was the “City of Towers,” sponsored by Alessi. Typically coy, Alessi contrasted the proudly tall and hard models with a series of tea sets commissioned for the same room. The towers, whose architects included Zaha Hadid, MVRDV, and Toyo Ito (left) were excitingly high-tech; multicolored lighting effects often scampered around within refractive layers of finished Plexiglas.

In keeping with Alberto Alessi’s well-known mantra that “design is one of the sons of architecture,” 16 architects loosely interpreted the tea set. Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa’s fuzzy white kettles and creamers softly evoked egg and mango forms, while Tom Kovac’s undulating blobs intriguingly disregarded function. Alongside some unfettered rethinking of skyscrapers—floundering to free high-rises from the late-20th-century aesthetic of cultural imperialism—the tea sets’ light-hearted M.O. was different, but not out of place.



Futuristic Glass

Werner Sobek and Maren Sostmann presented House R129, a clear lenticular spheroid no less perfect than the lens you’d find in a lamb’s eye in a biology-class dissection. Its low-e skin (for low-emissivity, meaning it radiates heat only at will) sends hot air out in summer and brings it inside in winter, and the transparent electrochromatic foil can become opaque in select sections at the flip of a switch.



Garden Glass

On the vitreous skin of a subsidized-housing apartment building in Vienna, architects Delugan-Meissl reversed convention by applying opaque door elements to clear walls. They conceived a trellis-like steel exoskeleton to support the glass exterior, with built-in balcony planters so that vines might someday cover the façade. Light will pour into the apartments (left), filtered through the controlled-spaghetti steel pattern and, possibly, leaves.

New Versus Old

At the hands of Tadao Ando & Associates, a startling penthouse (right) will protrude from the roof of this 1920s Manhattan apartment building. Subverting tradition (not to mention possibly some building codes), archetypal 20th-century materials—steel, glass, and concrete—are reincarnated in a form whose icy hue and general newness make for a healthy visual conflict.



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The Anti-Biennale

According to Emanuele Piccardo, a critic who promotes an interdisciplinary approach to architecture through his webzine, www.archphoto.it, "Next" was too much about presenting perfect, freshly made models and didn't promote enough discussion. Together with the student association at Venice's renowned architecture university, IUAV, Piccardo organized a series of symposia that convened at the university courtyard. Entitled "14_02," the series ran concurrently with the Biennale. The debates each hosted a pair of architects, who presented their latest work and discussed issues with a moderating critic. Here was a chance for the Italian public to ask questions about new architecture in their own country and consider its ramifications actively instead of passively. Piccardo intended the debates to counterbalance what he describes as the Biennale's "indifference" toward sociopolitical effects of architecture in Italy today.

At left are projects from two of the symposia speakers: Cliostraat (Owl Youth Center, Quarrata, Italy, 2001) and Boeri Studio (Geothermal Station, Santafiore di Grosseto, Italy, 2000). Most participants were entertaining, unpretentious, and socially minded. Though Piccardo deviated from the glossy international scope of "Next," his same-city rebellion served as an augmentation, in the form of a vital undercurrent.

Communication

The showcase for architecture of high-speed travel was an excellent place to see buildings break into unusual relationships with the sky. For the new terminal for the Madrid airport (below), currently under construction, Richard Rogers designed an undulating I-beam roof, with canyons angled to allow maximal natural light and views of surrounding mountains. Ingenhoven Overdiek and Partners presented their miraculous new railway station for Stuttgart, Germany, slated for completion in 2013. Its roof, which doubles as a street-level plaza, has numerous wavelike skylights (see page 60). They will provide amusing birds-eye views of loiterers with baggage carts.





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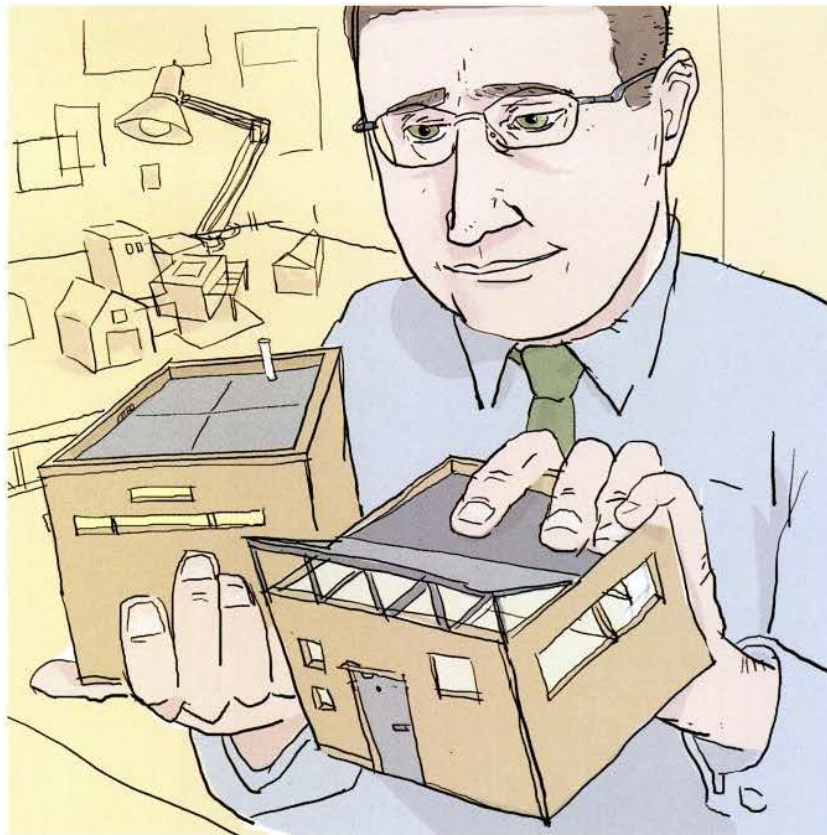
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Introducing the Dwell Home Architects

In January, we introduced the Dwell Home Design Invitational, a competition for a modern prefab prototype home designed for mass production. The subsequent response has been tremendous—we've heard from builders, developers, venture capitalists, architects, and no small number of potential homeowners hoping to be next in line for the Dwell Home.

Now, we are pleased to introduce you to the Dwell Homeowners-to-be: Nathan Wieler, an entrepreneur, and his fiancée, Ingrid Tung, a former corporate attorney who is pursuing her dream of opening a Suzuki-based preschool and elementary school. Wieler contacted Dwell last summer, and his enthusiasm for the potential of prefab—and his willingness to be our guinea pig!—led to the creation of the Dwell Home Design Invitational. At press time, the couple had just closed the deal on a 12-acre plot of land in Pittsboro, North Carolina, just outside Chapel Hill.

Sixteen firms and individuals will submit designs for the Dwell Home. We've selected a diverse group of practitioners, from Anshen + Allen, original designers of the first Eichler prototypes in the late 40s, to Rocio Romero, who recently designed and built a sleek, 950-square-foot prefab prototype from aluminum, glass, and concrete for around \$50,000. The individuals and firms have been chosen because their architectural work focuses not just on prefabrication for its own sake but on ways to use the parts, processes, and philosophies in a way that successfully reconciles mass production with the needs and desires of the individual. We look forward to receiving their designs in April and to sharing them with you this summer.

We'd also like to take this opportunity to thank the sponsors of the Dwell Home: Concrete Networks, Loewen Windows, Maharam Textiles, and Modern Fan Co.

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—Joseph Rosa

Helen Hilton Raiser Curator of Architecture and Design
San Francisco Museum of Modern Art

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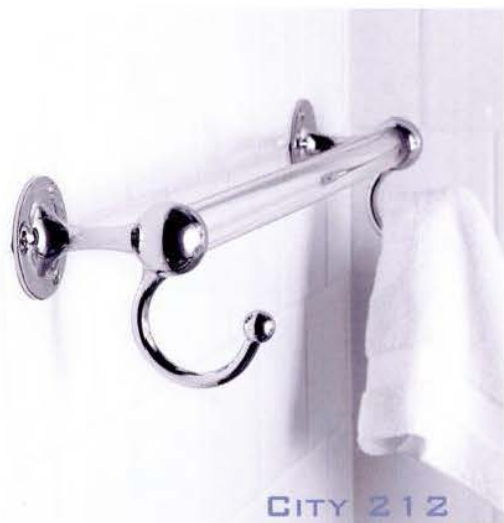
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The Potential of Simplicity



"The homes on the Starhill commune had taught me that there's more than one way to build a house," explains Smith, shown at age 12, at right. An artist's rendering of Smith's new concept for Habitat for Humanity is shown above.

San Francisco-based architect Cass Calder Smith is known for his work on upscale restaurants, including LuLu and Rose Pistola, and high-end homes throughout the Bay Area.

"When I was 12 years old, my mother and I moved onto a commune in the Santa Cruz mountains called the Starhill Academy for Anything. After living in a VW bus for a year, we built a small house with one entire wall made from recycled windowpanes. That gave us rudimentary solar heating, but there wasn't a whole lot else. We lived completely off the grid, and ate our meals with everyone in a big shed. After a few years, the whole experimental living situation fell apart. I think that gave me my first notion of the division you need between private and communal space, the importance of having your own home.

"When my mother became involved with Habitat for Humanity several decades later, I offered to design some ultra-low-budget houses for her. What interested me was the potential of simplicity. If a space is handled correctly, you don't need exotic references to achieve sophistication, or fancy materials to create a sense of luxury.

"The homes for Habitat were going to be built in a rural area so I started looking around for an appropriate architectural vernacular. What I found were farm buildings. Most had been constructed inexpensively, and without skilled labor. Habitat would be operating under similar conditions: a budget of \$75 per square foot and a volunteer workforce.

"Still, you can't avoid many of the big expenses. There's so much fixed infrastructure. These homes are supposed to have no special amenities but that didn't mean they had to appear low-income. I realized that one thing I could do that wouldn't add to the cost was to spend time thinking about the siting, rotating the homes on their rectangular plots to provide optimum light and functional outdoor space. Also, I saw that the houses could be built more cheaply and quickly by buying everything off the shelf from Home Depot. If you think of a house as an act of assembly, instead of an act of building, you can make it conducive to simplified labor. But the important thing is that you can also, because of the material constraints, end up with something that looks unusual." ■



Are unique, well-designed houses at an affordable price an impossible dream? Not at all, say two Austin architects who designed two on spec and made four first-time homebuyers very happy.

Project: 1404 & 1406 Cedar Avenue
Architect: Krager Robertson Design Build
Location: Austin, TX

Texas Two-Step



“All we wanted,” Chia Guillory says, “was an amazing house.” And is that such an outrageous demand, even in Austin, Texas? After all, Guillory, a self-employed clothing and accessories designer, and Javier Arredondo, a musician and DJ, are both part of the newly defined “creative class”—the very essence of what’s putting Austin on the international map as a hip city of the future, one built on the new ideas and creative capital that its artists, educators, engineers, performers, architects, writers, and scientists produce.

But here’s the conundrum: It’s precisely the growth fueled by innovative types like Guillory and Arredondo that has sent the real estate market through the roof, leaving them out in the cold as first-time home buyers.

Still, it didn’t keep Guillory and Arredondo from

hoping. And looking. The native Austinites (a rare thing in this city of transplants) had a neighborhood pegged, one they had grown deeply attached to. For years, the couple had rented in East Austin, the traditionally African-American and Latino neighborhood filled with modest bungalows, historic churches, and generations-old family-owned barbecue restaurants—and also blessed with unrivaled access to Austin’s happening downtown. But East Austin is also vexed with an aging housing stock and the potent political cocktail brought on by the clashing forces of gentrification and the needs of its modest- to low-income population.

“We were resigned to finding a real fixer-upper so that we could do the work ourselves,” says Guillory. “But leveling a foundation and building a roof on our own? ▶

Before discovering these houses on Cedar Avenue, “things looked really hopeless,” explains Chia Guillory. The four happy homeowners are, from left, Guillory, Javier Arredondo, Joe Harper, and Dawna Ballard.



"We furnish by sale," says Ballard (above, in the living room with Harper). The lamps and wicker chaise by IKEA mix with a vintage mid-century-modern couch and tables that Harper picked up at secondhand stores in California.

A little geometry and a lot of color bring design sophistication to the simplest surfaces and objects, as evidenced by the wall that separates the kitchen from the hall. The table from Cost Plus World Market is surrounded by Karim Rashid's plastic Oh chairs.

That left us with not much to consider. Things looked really hopeless."

Which is why, when Arredondo took an exploratory route home from his day job at a record store last summer, he couldn't quite believe what he saw as he cruised through the Chestnut Street section of East Austin: the foundations and framed-out beginnings of two sleek modern homes.

"The architect's renderings on the 'For Sale' sign alone sold me," says Arredondo. "I knew right away it was the house for us." And it was within their price range. Arredondo and Guillory made an offer on the house within days.

Credit Chris Krager and Christopher Robertson for making Guillory and Arredondo's dream come true. The two architects, who met at the University of Texas School of Architecture, had solved a seemingly unsolvable architectural dilemma in Austin: They found a way to build affordable modern housing in a central Austin neighborhood—at a profit.

For Krager, 34, and Robertson, 33, such a project was a matter of principle. "Austin has a lot of upscale yet very homogenous 'soft lofts' being built downtown by developers who receive substantial incentives from the city," says Krager, who originally hails from Detroit

and worked as a manager of a mortgage brokerage firm before heading to architecture school. "But those types of projects don't address the huge need for well-designed, affordable housing in Austin."

So one day two summers ago, over a game of golf, the two decided to take charge of change. Forming KRDB (Krager Robertson Design Build), they set out to build beautiful, affordable urban homes. Their guiding principle? "Give the general public credit when it comes to their desire for good design," says Robertson, a Houston native who interned at Renzo Piano's Building Workshop in Genoa, Italy.

After looking at dozens of empty lots, Krager and Robertson settled on a neighboring pair on Cedar Avenue, paying \$15,000 for each. The corner of Cedar Avenue and East 14th Street, with a convenience store and a handful of retail buildings, had all the right New Urbanist buzz words going for it: mixed-use, walkable, compact, urban. Urban amenities aside, the intersection has weathered many storms. Though Daniel's, an air-conditioning and car repair shop, continues to hold onto the northeast corner, as it has for years, a music store recently came and went and other storefronts remain unoccupied. Several houses on the street have been abandoned or torn down altogether. And there are persistent problems with ►



“The architect’s renderings on the ‘For Sale’ sign alone sold me,” says Arredondo. “I knew right away it was the house for us.”



“We’d resigned ourselves to finding a real fixer-upper so that we could do the work ourselves,” says Guillory. “But re-leveling a foundation and building a roof on our own?”



drugs and crime. Still, Krager and Robertson felt the location was perfect for the kind of houses they wanted to build. "We saw a vitality to the neighborhood," says Krager. "And so we sought to respond to that kind of active urban fabric and create houses that are not static in their relationship to the street."

On one lot KRDB built a 1,000-square-foot, two-bedroom, one-bath home, which Guillory and Arredondo bought for \$105,000. Next door they placed a 1,250-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath house with a butterfly roof, which was purchased by Dawna Ballard, an assistant professor of communication studies at the University of Texas at Austin, and Joe Harper Jr., a barber, for \$122,000—a whopping 23.7 percent less than Austin's \$159,900 median house price.

So how did KRDB do it? First, they built on spec, opting to buck the usual client-commissioned, architect-as-designer-only model that architects tend to espouse. "Collapse the hierarchy into an integrated design/build mode, and you don't have to await invitation to effect change," explains Krager. Second, they did so under two publicly funded programs: Austin's Small Builder Program, which provided them with no-interest construction loans, and the SMART Housing Program, which offers down-payment assistance to first-time home

buyers making 80 percent of Austin's median income. This meant Krager and Robertson could market their houses to exactly the underserved clients they wanted to. Once completed, the Cedar Avenue houses netted Krager and Robertson a Citation of Honor in the 2002 AIA Austin design awards. And now, their office has plenty of work on the boards, including four commissions for houses priced at \$150,000 or less, and an entire residential subdivision near Waco, Texas (see p. 91).

The two young designers take issue with the notion that good architecture only occurs at the behest of a client, and their recent projects bolster that argument. "Well, there really was a client from the beginning," says Robertson with a shrug. "After all, we were conceiving of houses for a couple or a small family who had a specific financial profile and who wanted to embrace life in the center of Austin."

Kind of like Ballard and Harper. The two native Californians had lived in Austin only a year when, tired of the city's high rents, they started house hunting. They looked at downtown condos built in converted commercial buildings, new homes, and anything in the city center, but they still couldn't find anything they liked or could afford—until they saw the Cedar Avenue homes on the Internet. "Both of us grew to love the ►

The houses both have enviably large and highly functional kitchens. Most materials came from Home Depot. The simple cabinets are fronted with cherry-stained MDF doors, and KRDB polished and sealed the concrete floors with Johnson's Traffic Wax.

The definition of affordable luxury? Lots of closet space! KRDB designed this six-foot-tall storage closet (above left) to run the length of the hallway. "I'm an organization freak," says Ballard. "This closet is a dream come true." The couple is fond of their stylish bathroom, too.

Dwellings

Once they moved to 1404 Cedar, Guillory (below) gained an office from which to run her design business, which specializes in faux-fur hats. The greatest thing about finally having a room of her own? "I don't have fake fur in my kitchen any more!"

The only new piece of furniture Guillory and Arredondo (with dogs, below) purchased specifically for the house were cube cabinets by IKEA. Everything else is secondhand. They admit to having unusually good karma when it comes to scoring finds at thrift stores or on Bulky Item Collection days.

mid-century-modern houses of Palm Springs and other places in California," says Harper, a die-hard design fan who confesses to having stockpiled a decade's worth of design magazines. "It was a type of architecture we knew and loved. The design of these houses made sense to us."

The L-shaped Cedar Avenue houses mirror each other. Particular attention was given to solar orientation of both: The two structures maximize natural light while minimizing the impact of the blistering hot Texas sun by having limited windows on the south and west façades. Two-by-six studs in the exterior walls left room for extra insulation, and outside laundry hutches on the porches curb energy expenses by keeping heat- and humidity-generating appliances out of air-conditioned spaces.

Krager and Robertson, with the help of project team member Eric Standridge, made the most of the relatively small square footage with open, flexible floor plans, and they stuck with low-cost materials: concrete block, Hardiboard siding, concrete floors, laminate countertops, fiberboard cabinetry. Yet astute design touches give each house an elegantly minimalist vibe. Ceilings soar to 11 feet in the great rooms. Narrow vertical and horizontal windows punched out of various walls offer surprising views. Bathroom tile runs up to the ceiling in the shower stalls and some window ledges are trimmed

with smooth-cut Lueders limestone, a subtle yet luscious native Texas material.

Thoughtful window placement washes the interiors of both homes with natural light. Guillory and Arredondo's house features a 56-foot-long gallery-like hallway with a continuous lighting cove running the entire length. "From dawn to dusk, we almost never use artificial light," says Guillory, who uses the second bedroom as her studio workspace. "Even when I'm working in my studio." And at Ballard and Harper's, two skylights grab natural illumination and diffuse it through an interior window to the master bathroom. The extra cost for such a dramatic feature? "About \$300 for the skylights and installation," says Krager.

KRDB's creative interior details are a perfect complement to all that efficient design. At Guillory and Arredondo's, for example, a Formica kitchen island rotates around a steel leg and doubles as a table. A vertical street-facing window is covered by a panel of back-lit awning fabric. During the day, it offers some privacy; at night, an interior light makes it glow. And at Harper and Ballard's, a pergola frames a view to the backyard.

"This isn't the house we thought we'd be able to afford at this stage in our lives," says Guillory. Which, to her, is amazing. ■



“Collapse the hierarchy into an integrated design/build mode, and you don’t have to await invitation to effect change,” explains architect Chris Krager.



Best Little Houses in Texas

The buzz surrounding KRDB's approach to modern and affordable homes emanated out of Austin last summer and was heard 100 miles up Interstate 35 in the small town of Robinson, Texas, just outside Waco. That's where developer Eddie Gummelt Jr. plans to build Surrey Ridge, a 1,500-home subdivision on 330 acres of rolling Texas prairie. Gummelt was looking to build houses in the 1,300- to 1,500-square-foot range that would sell for \$97,500 to \$107,500, so he called KRDB.

At first, Krager and Robertson were hesitant about embarking on a subdivision project—it was exactly the sort of sprawl they were trying not to contribute to. Then they gave it some thought. “If developers are going to build on the periphery of cities, they are going to do so for a variety of reasons that we can’t change overnight,” says Krager. “So if you’re going to build such a development, how do you do it right?” They decided to go for it.

But this was McLennan County, home to the conservative, Baptist-run Baylor University and President Bush’s 1,600-acre ranch. Could there be a market for reasonably

priced, slightly ahead-of-the-curve homes?

When Gummelt first approached Krager and Robertson last August, he handed them a plan that dictated the development’s streets and lot lines. The architects took that conventional neighborhood design and imbued it with a smart, humane, and environmentally sensitive touch. They gave much of the neighborhood an alley grid and joint-access driveways to relieve the street façades of garages and mega-driveways. They sited houses in a system of varied layouts close to the street and on lot lines to create more amorphous—and therefore more usable—public and private space. And they conceived of a series of trails that would connect public amenities like parks and ponds.

The houses themselves—with open and flexible floor plans, careful placement of windows, sustainable materials, and simple finishes—were riffs on what Krager and Robertson did with the Cedar Avenue homes. They also proposed smart environmental features such as rainwater collection systems, on-demand water heaters, and proper solar orientation—all critical

in the hot, water-short Texas climate.

Gummelt liked all that. But when KRDB proposed a varied yet simple architectural language for the roofs—one composed of graceful butterfly and angled shed profiles—he got cold feet. “We had been looking for something different,” Gummelt says. “But this is country—it’s not modern country. I think people will go for more of a country-living style—a more historical roof line.”

The developer did, however, stand by the progressive ideas Krager and Robertson proposed for the neighborhood plan and the architectural essence of the houses themselves. And he’s not ruling out the possibility that someday he might build houses with the modern roof lines KRDB originally proposed. But for the time being, KRDB will have to adapt the roofs to variations on the traditional gable.

Plans call for the first houses to emerge from the ground this spring, with more to be built in phases as demand grows. “I think we have a gung-ho winner here,” Gummelt says. “We’re going to give people the best little home they can buy for the money.”
—J.C.v.R.

Critics' Choice

Project: MAXmin House

Architect: Smith-Miller + Hawkinson with Kenneth Frampton and Silvia Kolbowski

Location: Milanville, Pennsylvania



A collaboration between two New York architects, a prominent architectural historian, and an artist/critic, this 1,000-square-foot weekend house provides an instant antidote from city stress while remaining a purely urban artifact.



The history of the modernist, minimalist house is a history of anguish, divorce, bankruptcy, and litigation. Didn't Ms. Farnsworth sue Mr. Mies van der Rohe after he completed his masterpiece for her? Wasn't Howard Roarke forced to destroy his housing complex in *The Fountainhead*? No good architectural deed goes unpunished. The idea of the Frampton/Kolbowski house was to build a simple modernist getaway in the weekend tradition of Breuer and Blake for about \$100,000 in a rural area of Pennsylvania. Despite a restrictive budget, sometimes unsympathetic builders, and hesitant mortgage agents, Kenneth Frampton and his wife, Silvia Kolbowski, were able to achieve their goal. But it took patience and perseverance.

The project was conceived as the "MAXmin House," a play on the name of the clients' son, Maxim. The name was also meant to imply the idea of a house that would contain both maximum and minimum elements. In other words: a minimum square footage but with maximum design features; basic materials but lots of glass.

Because of their tiny budget, certain decisions were simple. The house would be an elongated box or, as collaborating architect Henry Smith-Miller says, "a shipping container on stilts with a shutter-box view of the Delaware River."

The property is situated on the upper reaches of the Delaware, not far from the home of Western novelist Zane Gray. The grade is steep, a little mountain, with a five-acre meadow that slopes toward the river. Larch trees stand guard along the road; farther up lies a forest of pine and shagbark oak. Views are spectacular as you look all the way across the river and beyond to the hills of Sullivan County, New York.

Despite Smith-Miller's assertion, however, this was not going to be just another box on stilts. Working within a simple framework and collaborating closely, clients and architects created a surprising degree of complexity. The house is fully loaded and has more architectural theory packed into its thousand-square-foot frame than any mega-size McMansion. What else would you expect ▶

Above: An all-glass end wall is aimed, like the lens of a camera, toward the best possible view of the Delaware River and the rolling hills beyond. The black leather couch is by Arne Jacobsen; the Tabogon cart was designed by Alvar Aalto.

At right: God is in the details: Glass meets glass without mullion at the entry point of the house; a custom-made railing combined with a grid of industrial-steel decking. Inside, the fin-tube radiator element is exposed.





from a design team consisting of a prominent architectural historian (Frampton), an artist and critic (Kolbowski), and two progressive architects (Henry Smith-Miller and Laurie Hawkinson)—all with their own strong opinions?

“For such a small house it was highly scrutinized,” says Smith-Miller. “Different parts were put together by different protagonists,” adds Frampton. Every ingredient was pondered and prodded. Even the clients’ ten-year-old son got into the mix. He would come to design meetings and make little models out of cardboard. At one point, he complained to his parents: “I don’t think I’m involved enough in the design of this house.”

During one of the early meetings, the team sat in a coffee shop in Narrowsburg, the town across the river from the site, and discussed design strategies. Frampton (who was trained as an architect) took a paper napkin and sketched his idea of how to adapt and reconfigure the basic box. “Ken felt it should open up in plan to respond to the view in a spatial sense,” says Smith-

Miller. The roof would be a simple mono-pitch shed roof that was further articulated with a sloping skylight. But the most distinctive feature of the original design was to have been a broad, barnlike door designed to slide out from the front of the house on a steel-framed outrigger. This flying door could be closed when the house wasn’t being used.

Design direction established, the group borrowed an 18-foot stepladder and set it up onsite. They each took turns climbing to the top of the ladder and eyeballing the views. They oriented the angle of the house using string and spikes. This was how they decided on the lines of sight and the angle at which the house would be placed—to gain the most desirable views while blocking out neighboring houses.

But when the first bids came in from builders, the clients were shocked. “They went way over our budget,” says Kolbowski. In fact, some of the bids came in at double the anticipated price. The team had to find ways to scale back, and the first items to be cut were the skylight and

Above: An open kitchen with galvanized-metal backsplash and stainless steel shelving and appliances. The dining table is a Palazzetti reissue of a Scarpa design, surrounded by Jacobsen stacking chairs. A Rodchenko poster hangs on the all-plywood wall that carries through the entire length of house.

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the outrigger door with its costly superstructure. Instead of custom steel windows, they would settle for standard aluminum frames, the kind used for storefront windows. "The minute we started eliminating, there wasn't much left," says Kolbowksi. "Instead of the MAXmin, it became the MIDmin," and then, after further cuts, "it became the MINmin."

Budget cuts notwithstanding, the layout of the house remains more or less the same as originally designed. The front half, facing the river, consists of a living/dining space with an open kitchen. The back half has two bedrooms and a bathroom connected by a narrow hallway that contains a long storage wall. The house flares out at the river end—it's only 12 inches wider, but the house feels much bigger from the inside and looks less boxy from the outside. "You increase the perception of the internal space, which makes it feel much larger," explains Frampton, and this is true since the living area feels more expansive than other parts of the house. This is also true because the largest window in the house, the

primary lens of the box, looks out from the living room and frames a particularly balanced composition of trees, river, and hills worthy of a Hudson River School painting. The wall along the north side, which was made from four-by-nine-foot sheets of standard plywood, extends the full length of the house, further unifying the interior spaces.

Even though the materials were standard, the architects' plan called for exacting details. Exterior walls were clad in shiplap cedar siding stained gray. Interior joints and corners were designed with reveals. There would be no baseboards, molding, or seam compound to hide mistakes. Local builders and carpenters were not used to working with such simplicity and detail. "Most architects are willing to accept a one-quarter-inch to half-inch tolerance," says Kolbowski. "Henry and Laurie work with a one-sixteenth-inch tolerance." The fact is, it's easier and cheaper to slap a house together and cover up sloppy seams with baseboard and molding than to take the extra time to get it right. Precision takes time and costs more. The politics and economics of the building ►

Elemental forms: The house is cantilevered out from a concrete foundation block and rests on three metal columns. The entrance is reached by a combination ramp/stairway—what the owners refer to as a "stramp"—that angles away from the house.



Dwellings

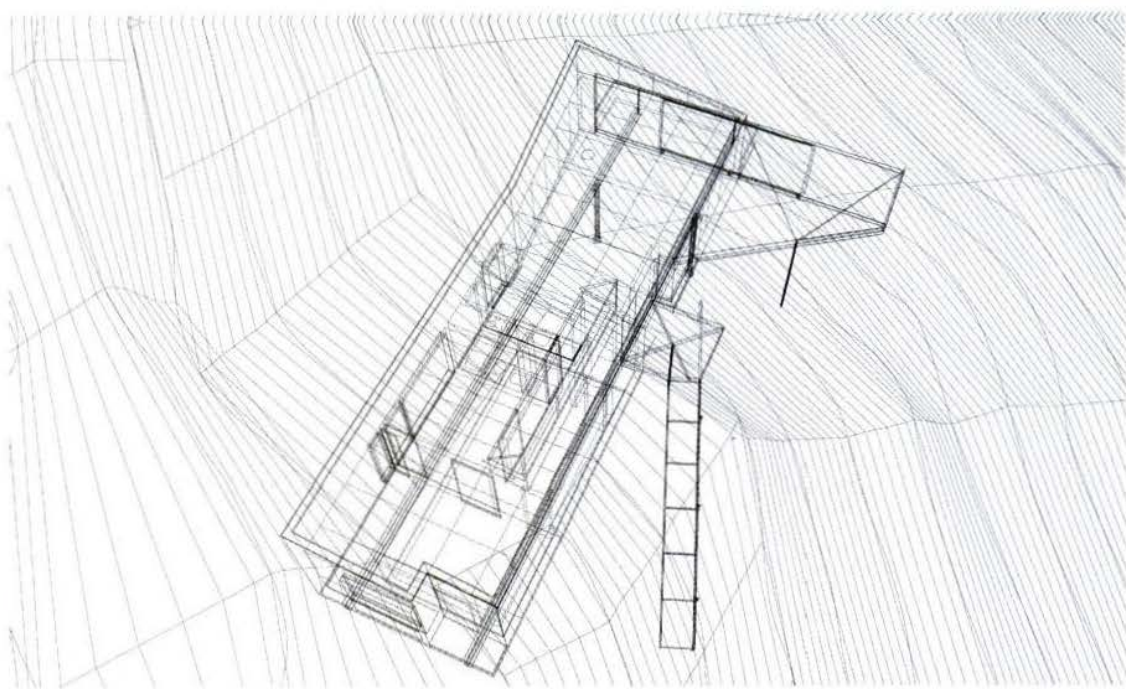
The muted gray tones of the siding and structural components serve as a counterpoint to seasonal changes in foliage, grass, and snow. The house rests on steel I-beams that project beyond to support a small sun porch made from industrial safety decking.

The full wall of glass in the bedroom (opposite) becomes a screen for pine-tree reflections. Simple monklike furnishings include a small Aalto table.

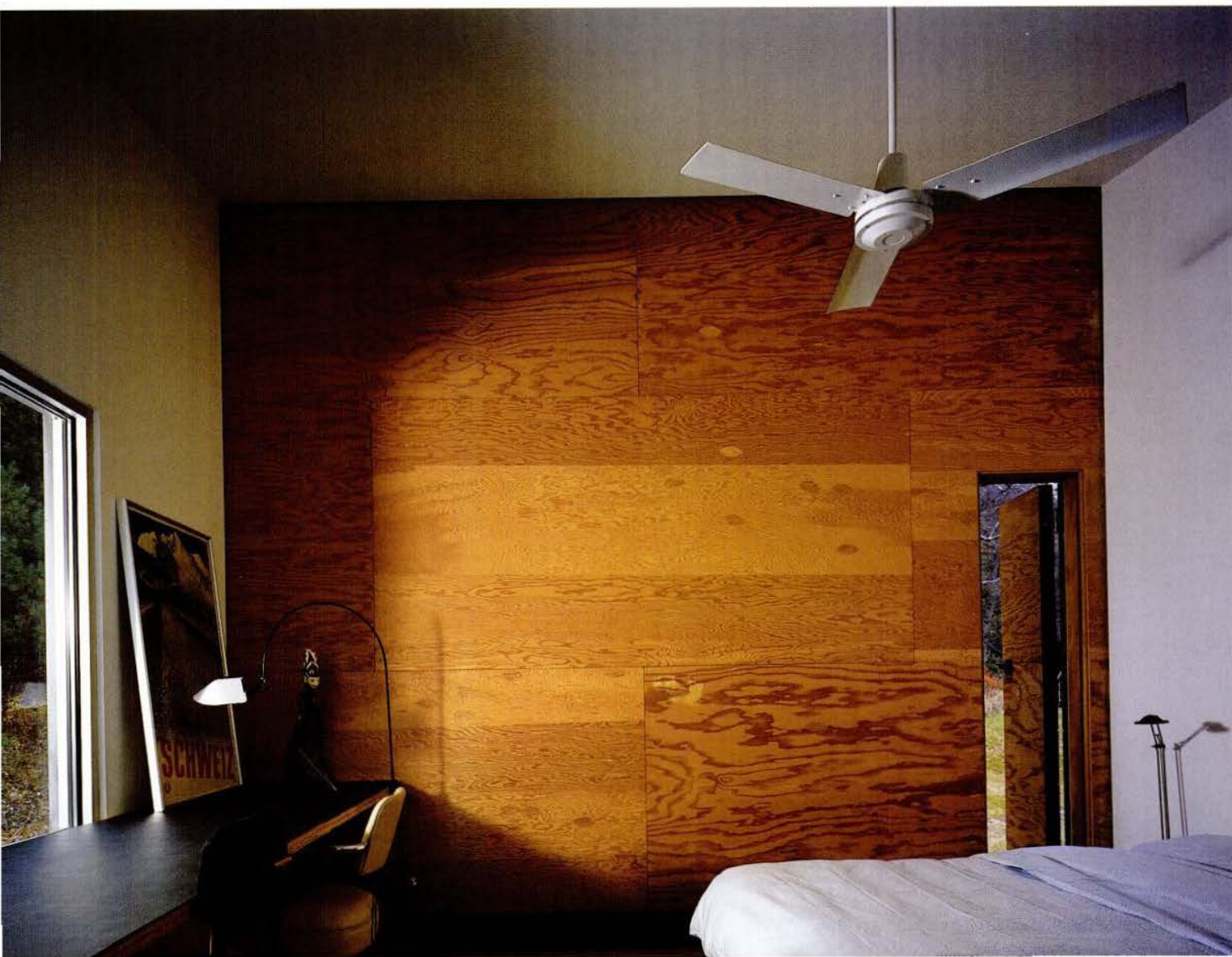


“There’s a lightness to this house,” says architect Laurie Hawkinson. “When you leave for the weekend, you aren’t taking much with you. You leave all the burdens of the city behind.”





At right: An early computer rendering of the house before the large sliding wall at the end was cut for budgetary reasons. In the master bedroom, below, a narrow slit door can be opened in the plywood wall for cross ventilation. The built-in desk is covered with black rubber.





trade have dictated those terms. When the house was finished, the contractor confessed that the work was like doing cabinetry, even though they were just using Sheetrock and plywood.

When homeowners dare to go against the status quo, they usually pay the price. Literally. Mies's adage of less is more takes on a different, cash-and-carry twist, and the Frampton/Kolbowski weekend getaway ended up costing nearly twice their original budget.

One of the special features that wasn't cut for budgetary reasons was the long steel ramp that leads up to the front door. (Frampton refers to it as a "stramp.") "We wanted to have a smooth and effortless approach," says Hawkinson. "It's a big move on something small." Because the ramp is cranked away from the body of the house at an angle, it forces you to look out toward the river and hills. "The ramp is this extenuated threshold," says Hawkinson. "It's about slowing down after you've been driving at 70 miles per hour. You decelerate on the ramp as you find yourself in Arcadia."

Originally, the house was to sit on eight slender steel columns, like a pristine object hovering above the slope. But because the ground was so wet, with runoff and underground springs, the contractor worried that the house might slide down the hill. So the structure was anchored in place with a concrete foundation block that contains space for utilities and storage. Part of the house is still cantilevered over the slope, supported by steel I-beams and two columns. (A third column supports the entry ramp.) "If we had just built it on grade with a simple slab, it would have been much cheaper," admits Frampton. By extending the length of the I-beams, they were able to add a porch that projects from the end of the house with perforated steel decking.

In the end, Frampton and Kolbowski got an elegantly refined synthesis of the modern escape pod. "The house is neutral enough and it's calm enough so it's a background for your life," says Kolbowski. "But it also has a presence. Everything is so thought out and every space is beautiful. Every angle is a pleasure." ■

A view from the back of the property: The side wall of the house angles slightly to direct attention toward the object of desire—the river view. In such carefully wrought minimal treatment, even common objects like the metal boiler chimney and propane tank are given sculptural identity.

To convert a beach shack into a handmade modernist dream home, Gwen and Walter Briggs turned to their daughter and son-in-law—and got not only great architecture but a real bargain too.

Project: Briggs Residence
Architect: BriggsKnowles Architects
Location: Rowayton, Connecticut



Picture this: a stockbroker and an artist/real estate broker, ensconced in a private beach association in Rowayton, Connecticut, on the tony shores of Long Island Sound, in a home designed to accommodate visits from the couple's eight children—and their eight spouses and 22 kids. The mind conjures up a pricey sprawl on the order of the Kennedy compound. But with the help of their daughter, architect Laura Briggs, and her partner/husband, Jonathan Knowles, Gwen and Walter Briggs realized this dynastic fantasia in a mere 2,200 square feet—and for a construction cost of only \$332,000.

They did so, moreover, in a handmade modernist style that owes less to Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, than Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, literally: The Briggses, both 67, hail from the hometown of the Cranbrook arts academy designed by Eliel Saarinen, and an early exposure to that legendary modernist work imbued these traditional Michiganders with an untraditional devotion to innovative forms of living. Always architecturally adventurous, they built a dune-shaped house on Lake

Michigan, designed by Midwestern modernist William Kessler, in the 1960s; after moving to Connecticut, the couple planted a first-generation solar collector on the roof of their Cape-style home. But it wasn't until they reached Rowayton and began the collaboration with BriggsKnowles that their sensibility found its fullest expression.

Rowayton, a community of roughly 2,000 families, began as a pre-Revolutionary fishing and clamming center, where the streets were paved not with gold but with shells; by 1992, when the Briggses arrived, it was home to an economically diverse assemblage of professionals who sought the relaxed charms of waterside living just an hour from Manhattan's Grand Central Station. In this dream location, they found an ideally situated home, within a beach association established in 1924. An enclave of 100 residences comprises the association, which owns a stretch of private beach and a boathouse. Members can close the gate to the hoi polloi if they choose (though they don't—"That's not ▶

8 Is Enough, But 40 Fit

The unassuming exterior of the house offers little evidence of what lies within. Below, architects Laura Briggs and Jonathan Knowles contemplate their creation.



the way people are around here," Walter says).

The house itself, however, was a hodgepodge, "a fishing shack that had been turned into a Dutch colonial," says Jonathan. It was built in 1927 as a two-story, 1,000-square-foot cottage with a 24-by-24-foot footprint, featuring an open-plan living/dining space on the ground floor and three postage-stamp bedrooms and a bath upstairs. Over time, sloped-roof extrusions were added front and back, and a two-car garage, with a bedroom/bathroom suite above, was stuck to one side.

But the Briggses realized much of the house would have to be not only redesigned but reconstructed—it was falling apart. They had a vision of what might stand in its stead: "Not an elaborate, finely finished, slick place," Gwen explains, "but a building with a lot of craft, a feeling of people having worked in and on it." The program was simple yet challenging: a home small enough to easily maintain, but with enough room to shelter 38 relatives (though not all at once).

Choosing an architectural team, at least, was a no-brainer for the couple. "I would never have gone to anyone else," Walter proudly declares. Rather than inhibiting everyone, the blood ties facilitated a spirited, often surprising collaboration. "My parents pushed us to keep going on the design, to make it better," Laura recalls. "They knew their decisions were not always good

for resale purposes. But they wanted something unique."

The selection of BriggsKnowles proved to be a good style choice, too, given the clients' desire to bring light into the house and the firm's guiding principle, which Jonathan describes as "the control of light to make space." The architects began by creating a series of axes that define the house as (to paraphrase Le Corbusier) a machine for viewing. Downstairs, they positioned windows and walls so passersby checking out the property (a local habit) could look directly through the house's transitional spaces to the garden in the rear. Upstairs, they cleverly reversed the idea, placing windows so that Gwen and Walter, looking out, see only water or the green easements that gentle the association's dense development.

The renovation also enabled the architects to intensify the house's character by foregrounding and enhancing its signature elements. A case in point: Creating a new staircase let Briggs and Knowles expose the cottage's original balloon frame, with its 18-foot-high studs that ascend unbroken to the second-story ceiling. To this, the architects added an industrial staircase, with horizontal steel rods notched into the studs (as childproofing) and an aluminum handrail. The result integrates old and new—and establishes the house's style—by stressing the quality and simplicity of both material and craft.

The final plan, executed by a work-hungry contractor ▶



Opposite page: When the panels that divide the TV room aren't in use, they slide into the guest bedroom to form a decorative element (lower left). In the master bath, the architects placed a sink and toilet on the other side

of the shower/vanity area (above left) to separate the public powder room elements from the private space. The layered transition from the living room ceiling to the wall conceals unsightly original construction (left).

This page: Gwen and Laura in the attic. The architects exposed the living room's original fir floor and pine ceiling. Furnishings include hand-me-downs from Walter's mother and modern classics, including a rug the

Briggs commissioned from a Cranbrook artisan in the 1960s. Outside, the sloped roof of the rear extrusion was replaced with a deck. (BriggsKnowles converted the front extrusion to an open porch.)



Gwen and Walter's grand-nephew Jack Brill tries out the Murphy bed in the TV room. Rather than using doors that open horizontally—which would have covered the bookshelf and collided with the banquette—the architects designed a panel that swings upward, to form a canopy supported by two poles. Rings built into the bed's frame hold the poles in place at their lower ends.



for only \$200,000, reversed the original, inserting a bedroom, bath, TV room, and kitchen/dining room downstairs, and demolishing the little rooms above to create an open living room off the master bedroom/bath/office suite. But it was the effort that followed that made the house both truly luxurious and a real deal. Working with three of Laura's former students, Troy Ostrander, Erik Schultz, and Anna Henton, the architects personally designed, crafted, and installed a broad range of elements—"everything that slid, moved, or required hardware," Jonathan recalls—that make the house feel like a comprehensively customized, handmade object far more expensive than the additional \$132,000 the architects spent. (If that doesn't seem like a bargain, consider that Troy and Erik actually lived onsite, designing and fabri-

cating countless elements, from the stairway handrail to the medicine cabinet in the master bath; and Anna hand-built the cloud-shaped light fixtures, melting the glass and welding the frames. "If we'd drawn and contracted out their work, it would have been four times as expensive," Jonathan says.)

There are many notably elegant details. To conceal the closets and utility spaces built into the ground-floor hall, the architects crafted a 30-foot-long suite of floor-to-ceiling sliders, using a thin cherry veneer they allowed to warp into a shimmering, undulant delicacy. The sunny dining room reveals an equally refined gesture: an arrangement of eight custom-crafted glass blocks set into the southern wall, each of which catches the light uniquely. Says Gwen: "In the afternoon, ►

The hallway, which runs from the front to the rear doors and connects the major ground-floor rooms, was fashioned from one of two pre-existing garages. Cherry-veneered sliding doors conceal closets and utility spaces. The stairwell dramatically combines old and

new elements, including an aluminum grid and railings, an industrial stair, and the house's original balloon frame, which the architects exposed. Right: When not under Walter's intent gaze, the TV disappears behind custom-built doors.



Sliding Panels

With Troy Ostrander, BriggsKnowles built the five-by-eight-foot sliding panels that enclose the provisional bedroom in a low-tech fashion that even an amateur could replicate. Each panel features three layers of one-eighth-inch-thick plywood—two on the outside, one in the middle—separated by half-inch wooden framing members and with corrugated cardboard in between. (Plexiglas inserts were set into place prior to the addition of the skin.)

This seemingly flimsy sandwich gets its surprising strength from wood glue, of all things. "You apply glue to both surfaces, wait a half hour before you bring them togeth-

er, then clamp 'em," Laura explains. "We used clamps every foot or so, to get good adhesion." The chemical connection, reinforced by pressure, fuses frame and skin together into a single, solid entity called a stressed-skin panel.

"These would cost a fortune to have drawn and made by a carpenter," Jonathan observes. "We did about five of them, and threw two away—a lot of it was trial and error." If you don't want to do it yourself, Jonathan advises finding someone who will. "A good architect will get his hands dirty trying to figure things out." —M.K.

when the sun dances on them, it's fabulous."

In the kitchen, mother and daughter collaborated, painting each cabinet door a different shade of green or blue, adding complementary accents to destabilize the colors' relationships. The impact of this strongly rectilinear canvas is that of an Albers color study—executed in three dimensions.

Perhaps the architects' cleverest handiwork appears in their space-making solution downstairs. Into one half of the TV room, BriggsKnowles built a full-size canopied Murphy bed and a window seat big enough to sleep two children. Then they designed and built two five-by-eight-foot screens of Plexiglas and ultra-thin plywood, which slide out on tracks to divide the room. Though not soundproof, the panels provide instant privacy; and with the Aalto sleep sofa on the other side of the TV room, and the permanent bedroom, three visiting

families can camp out in relative solitude and comfort.

So, is this cost-effectiveness strictly a nepotistic bargain? Not entirely, according to Jonathan. "It's basically a research question," he observes. "Is your architect willing to discover alternative materials and ways of getting things done?"

Bold architects, of course, require good clients, and Gwen and Walter—with their appealing mix of Grant Wood looks and Eliel Saarinen attitudes—fit the bill. Interestingly, they see no contradiction between being a traditional couple in a modernist house, because to them, modernism is tradition—while "traditionalism" spells hypocrisy. "It's just so annoying," says Gwen, "that people want to build old-fashioned houses so they can live the dream of a life that never was."

Walter puts it another way: "Ye gads! You gotta have some growth in your life!" ■



Gwen designed the kitchen island and cherry sliders that conceal a walk-in pantry. Below: A Jean Nouvel table is paired

with 1950s chairs in the dining room. Opposite: Walter's niece Dorothy Brill, with husband Randy and son Cooper.



Painting Techniques

Rather than using a standard paint treatment on the plywood cabinet doors in the kitchen, Laura and Gwen brewed a 50-50 mix of flat acrylic wall paint and semi-gloss acrylic polyurethane clear finish, which they applied with a sponge. This technique delivers a double benefit, at once saturating the wood with color without obscuring the grain and protecting it with a sealed finish. (An additional plus: Unlike many stains, the compound is nontoxic.)

Laura reports that the application proved tricky. "Make sure it's a thin coat of paint. Put it on and almost immediately try to take it

off—otherwise, it'll cake." After applying the soupy mixture, mother and daughter used a clean, dry sponge to quickly remove as much as possible. "It took a couple of practices to get it right," Laura recalls.

To further vitalize their overall design, the Briggses varied the finishes they applied to the cabinet doors. "Sometimes we used translucent colors, sometimes solid colors," Laura explains. "Or we went back and forth between dull and reflective."

And don't be afraid to try this at home—that's the whole point. When asked where she discovered the technique, Laura releases an unabashed cackle: "Martha Stewart!" —M.K.



Six projects prove that “design on a budget” doesn’t have to look it

More for Less

Irolo Elderly Housing

In a new 47-unit building in Los Angeles’s Koreatown, the traditional colors of a Buddhist temple are combined with de Stijlian rigor to create a light-filled, serene environment for low-income elderly residents.

“We are bringing modern architecture to people who had never experienced it before,” says Alice Kimm, of Los Angeles–based John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects, Inc., the architects of the Irolo project. “I believe that everyone, no matter how disadvantaged, deserves to have an inspiring space in which to live.”

Working on a limited budget of about \$73 per square foot, the architects took a site with many limitations (a building next door had to be incorporated into the plan, city rights-of-way constricted the front entryway, and neighborhood security was problematic) and created a space that is filled with light and views of the street, while remaining self-contained and secure.

Kimm used a series of layered spaces and surfaces to give what could have been a plain vanilla box a varie-

gated exterior that stands out in the streetscape. A vertical notch carved out of one corner rises all the way up to the top floor and opens up as a terrace, giving the feeling of a stepped façade without sacrificing interior volume. Pocket terraces on different levels overlook the street, allowing residents to watch the goings-on from the safety of the building.

Inside, there’s a village feel, with an interior courtyard that features an indoor-outdoor fireplace for communal gatherings. The exterior is splashed with bright colors from a palette known as *Danchung*, which features the oranges, reds, blues, and greens found in traditional Korean temple painting and decoration.

“It’s sophisticated and very functional,” says Soo-Young Chin, a director at the Korean Health, Education, Information, and Research Center, which runs the project. “The residents love the brightness and the colors, which are very traditional and Korean. They may not say it’s *Danchung*, but it resonates somewhere inside.” ■

Working within the confines of the extremely tight budget of \$73 per square foot didn’t deter John Friedman Alice Kimm Architects from taking some risks when designing the Irolo Elderly Housing project in Los Angeles. “I believe everyone deserves to have an inspiring space in which to live,” says Alice Kimm.

According to the World Bank, some 300 million people—more than the population of the United States—live in urban slums. In São Paulo, Brazil, these squalid, informal settlements, called favelas, have spread far southwest of the city center and now surround the Guarapiranga Water Basin, threatening the source of water for three million residents.

Decades ago, authorities might have responded by relocating thousands of favela families far from the city, with high social costs. But today in Guarapiranga, municipal authorities are trying something called “in-slum upgrading,” which is bringing needed open space, fresh drinking water, and buildings with sanitary facilities to the area. As the government begins to install such basics, some of Brazil’s most adventuresome architects are using this opportunity to bring sophisticated urban design to some of the world’s poorest neighborhoods.

Take the Morada do Sol Plaza, designed by young Brazilian architects Marcos Boldarini and Stetson Lareu.

Like most of the new spaces in the favela, the plaza is multifunctional: It protects fragile, easily eroded slopes, gives the area badly needed open space, and provides a place to play. The area is set off by angled slopes and brightly painted rectangular arches that help define a long vista that ends in a fountain with potable water.

In nearby Parque Amélia, the plaza was designed around a storm drainage system, but the architects broke up its utilitarian nature with several small “waterfalls” and inlaid brightly colored tiles on the bottom to give it the spirit of a streambed. The surrounding concrete houses feature well-designed second stories, as well as running water, sewage connections, and electricity.

When the plazas opened, something unusual happened, says Paula Pini, a World Bank official who helped manage the project. “People who didn’t even live in the favela, who lived in somewhat better neighborhoods nearby, started to come by with their children. They’ve become lively spaces, filled with people.” ■

In São Paulo, urban renewal has led to upgraded parks like the Morada do Sol Plaza, as well as new and improved housing for more than 17,000 families in the poorest neighborhoods, like those surrounding the Guarapiranga Water Basin. Remarkably, most of the new development has been completed without uprooting families in an attempt to bring stability to the often dirty and dangerous favelas.

Guarapiranga, São Paulo, Brazil





Mount Rainier Artist Lofts

U.S. 1—the East Coast’s ramshackle, strip-mall spine—lies half forgotten in the shadow of Interstate 95, a place where so-called mature suburbs that are neither historic nor brand-new struggle to maintain their cachet against newly constructed exurban residential developments and revitalized historic city centers.

In the Maryland suburb of Mount Rainier, nestled between Baltimore and Washington, DC, residents are reinventing their bit of Route 1 by creating an artists’ haven, which they hope will help restore the sense of community that has been lost as the housing stock has aged and traffic patterns have bypassed the town.

Clustered around the town center, several new projects aim to offer artists a place to live, work, and perform. The most distinctive is the Mount Rainier Artists Live/Work Project, which is being built on a vacant lot that until recently served as an open-air drug market.

The developer, Minnesota-based nonprofit Artspace Projects, Inc., has renovated many former industrial

buildings for artists, though this is their first new-construction project. The project’s design partner, Tim Carl, of Minneapolis-based Hammel, Green, and Abrahamson, Inc., has worked with his team to create a distinctive building that respects the built environment that preceded it—the long stretch of U.S. 1, the nearby railroad, and the patchwork quilt of architectural styles in the area—while trying to add something new.

The long silhouette of the Mount Rainier artists’ space features a single row of double-height windows and a ground level with columns and glass storefronts with varying setbacks. The building’s bulk is also broken up by the use of repeating blocks of different colors of brick and corrugated steel, and anchored by brick on the corner. The 44 units average 1,700 square feet each, and will rent for just \$650 to \$875 a month.

In 2004, 44 artists and their families will move into the building, and the developers of Mount Rainier hope a new sense of community will move in with them. ■

The brick-and-corrugated-steel structural components of the Mount Rainier artists’ lofts recall both the row houses of Baltimore, half an hour north-east, and the airy brick warehouses that more traditionally have become artists’ lofts.

Drivers heading into New Haven, Connecticut, on Route 34 may be excused for doing a double-take as they head toward Yale University and see a barn red house peeking through the early spring foliage. It's the latest example of the work being done at one of the longest-running laboratories of architecture design in the country—the Yale First-Year Building Project.

For more than three decades, first-year students at Yale School of Architecture have taken to their desks to design structures and spent the summer building what they envisioned in the classroom. In recent years, the school has concentrated on designing low-cost modern houses for urban working-class neighborhoods in New Haven.

The 2002 project is a 1,500-square-foot home recently bought by a young couple for about \$110,000. The house, explains Yale architecture dean Robert A.M. Stern, “shows that if you keep it simple, take note of the way the wind blows and the way the light falls, and use a few strong design elements in an imaginative way, you

can make a tiny house seem much bigger than it is.”

“I think it is a good example of a kind of modernism [that is accepting of its circumstance], in that it is in a neighborhood filled with vernacular, early 20th-century housing,” Stern continues. “Though the students elected to paint it red, the basic form and the use of materials like wood make it a good neighbor while still being modern.”

Many of the students had wanted the house to have a flat roof, but they opted for an angled plane instead when they were told by neighbors that a flat-roofed structure would never sell. They used stress-skin panels (load-bearing, laminated foam-core panels) in the place of traditional framing, which saved money on installation and help make the house ultra-insulated against the cold New England winters.

The Yale project also points to a little remarked-upon fact—that many older inner cities still have vacant lots on which to build. Urban redevelopment doesn't always have to mean tearing other buildings down. ■

The Yale house is positioned so that one can view the sun set in a park across the street. Windows on both sides and on the top floor allow enough ventilation that air-conditioning isn't necessary.

Yale First-Year Building Project





Staiths South Bank

Hip London fashion designers Wayne and Gerardine Hemingway—the original forces behind the provocative Red or Dead line—caused quite a stir last year when they bemoaned the state of housing design in Great Britain. Pointedly targeting one of the U.K.'s biggest developers, they declared that the British countryside had been “Wimpeyified”—saturated with cookie-cutter cottages designed by companies like George Wimpey PLC.

So no one was more surprised than the Hemingways when executives from George Wimpey invited them to help design a \$112 million, 688-home development on the banks of the River Tyne in Gateshead, just up the road from Newcastle. Thus began what Wayne calls the most difficult but most rewarding project of their lives, one accepted with hardly a nod to the fact that neither had any architecture or urban design experience. “We’ve all lived in houses,” Wayne says matter-of-factly. “Therefore we’ve got a right to think what a house should be like.”

The most radical idea in the project is its diminution—though not banishment—of the car. As you get farther into the lanes and byways of Staiths South Bank, cars are increasingly left behind in car parks, and pedestrians and bikes take over. The houses themselves are designed to have larger than normal windows and, unlike most British projects, will come in a variety of exteriors and floor plans. Town homes will start at about \$112,000.

“The houses aren’t frightening,” Wayne says. “They don’t look like something Libeskind or Koolhaas would design. But they take things a stage further.”

“Over here, they build the same house and repeat it, repeat it, repeat it,” says Wayne Hemingway, seen here with his wife, Gerardine, at the ground-breaking for Staiths South Bank. “What most house builders have done over the last 25 years is just build identi-kit rabbit-hutch houses.” The Hemingways hope to change all that.

The big battle is to make it affordable for the regular middle-class person who earns an average of \$57,000 a year, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research.

But that’s not the only battle that’s been brewing. Wayne explains that the couple has continually challenged the developer when the suits say things like changing PVC pipe colors “can’t be done.” For his part, George Wimpey’s development director, Ian Laight, says both sides have “had to stretch.”

“Wayne and Gerardine are lay people who have had no involvement in the business,” he says. “Development is a difficult process in the best of times. With Wayne and Gerardine we have an additional layer of complexity. But it is useful to have a wild card come in and challenge our ingrained habits.” ■





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8th and Howard Affordable Housing

"Jack Kerouac lived not too far from here, when he was working for the railroad, eating dinner for 15 cents," architect David Baker points out when discussing San Francisco's South of Market neighborhood, where his firm has designed a new residential development. Meant to bring affordable housing to a rapidly gentrifying neighborhood, the project pays 21st-century homage to a long overlooked part of the urban residential mix: the single-room occupancy hotel (SRO).

Today, SROs are an endangered species in San Francisco—hundreds of units were torn down after being damaged in the 1989 earthquake. The remaining few have been kept alive by nonprofit agencies like the Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation (TNDC) and Citizens Housing Corporation, which over the past 21 years have bought or renovated more than 20 buildings, providing housing for more than 3,000 lower-income San Franciscans.

Using city money earmarked to preserve this fast-fad-

ing housing type, TNDC urged Baker to push the idea of what an SRO could be with his design. Senior project manager Craig Adelman says the project "bridges the gap between a traditional SRO and a studio apartment." And it does it with forward-thinking modern architecture that brings good design to a clientele that once was forced to settle for cramped quarters and a bathroom down the hall. Rents begin at \$520 per month.

The most striking elements in the building are the narrow rectangular windows in a jaunty multicolored concrete façade. Inside the \$23 million development are 162 apartments, ranging from studios to three-bedrooms. Some feature sinuous, curving family rooms that wouldn't look out of place in the million-dollar lofts that dot the neighborhood. In lieu of a space-eating parking garage, a much-needed grocery store will be installed on the ground floor.

"It is," Baker says hopefully, "going to be a landmark for the neighborhood." ■

There was a time when young down-and-out Jack Kerouacs could find shelter in SROs, paying small sums by the week for 250 square feet of privacy. Today, architect David Baker and TNDC are exploring ways to revitalize that housing type.



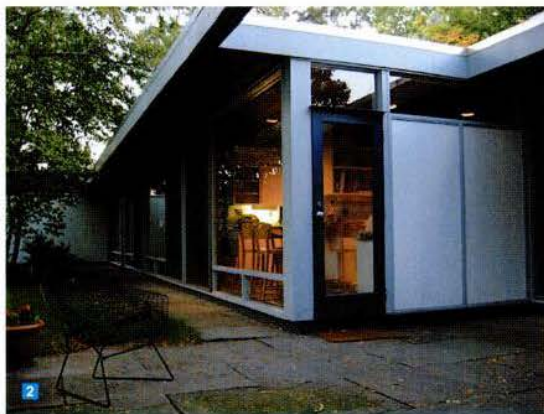
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A Capital Idea

Foibles of government complicate DC's relationship with modern architecture. But a little dysfunction can be exciting.



Off-season at the Mall in Washington, DC, you can count the people on your fingers. There might be a jogger running along the path by Constitution Avenue, two men in suits talking on a bench, and a half-dozen tourists tromping toward a memorial. This is the Washington of Pierre L'Enfant: the orderly but pastoral 18th-century vision that was fully completed in 1902. To residents of the District of Columbia, the surrounding 62-square-mile city with a population just shy of six hundred thousand people, it is the "White City"—the core of marble that juxtaposes itself, daily and dramatically, with their metropolis of brick, brownstone, and occasional concrete.

But there is further depth to the disjunction between the city and its monumental core. The District of Columbia is the only place in the United States that lacks elected representation in Congress, its cohabitant. According to Andrew Altman, head of city

planning for the District, Washington's duality can be difficult. "This city is unique," he says, "because we live with a dynamic tension between the federal city and the residential city. Not having a vote, we're always at a disadvantage in terms of how much pressure we can bring to bear."

Joe Sternlieb, another city planner who in 1998 co-founded DC Vote, an organization devoted to the lobby for franchise, is more adamant. "We have an unequal relationship with both the regional jurisdictions and with the representatives in Congress. It creates a chilling effect in city planning. Federal organizations like the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Planning Commission are focused on formal monuments and, these days especially, security. They've designed a city that is devoid of spirit. They aren't keen on interesting advertising, expressive retail, creative use of streets . . . a lot of things we feel strongly about." ▶

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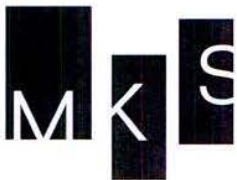
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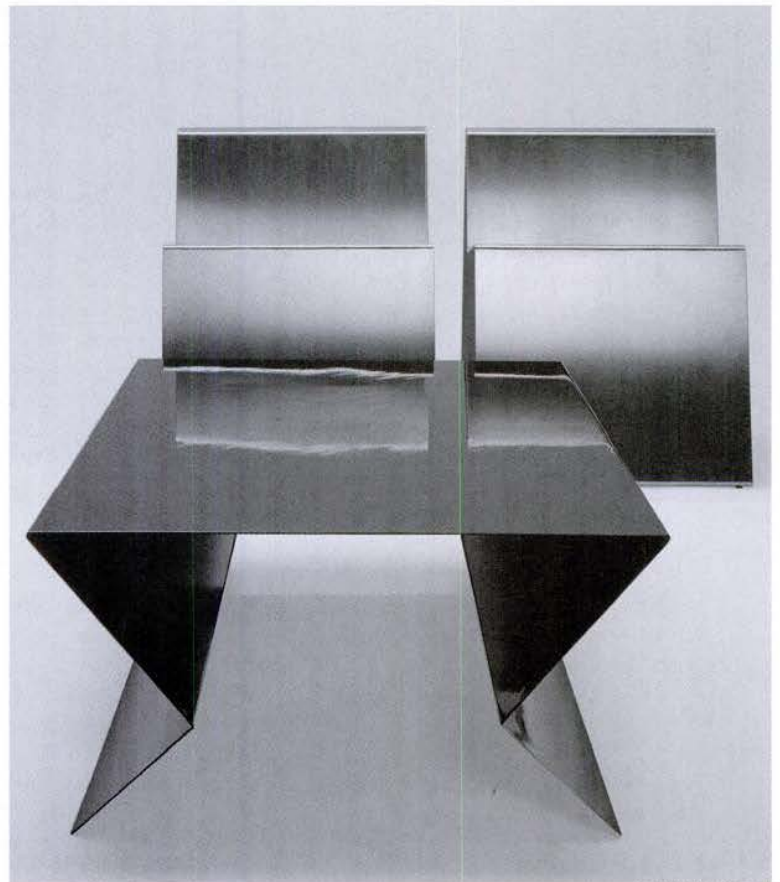
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To obtain representation in Congress, DC residents will need an amendment to the Constitution. Resistance comes largely from Republicans in Congress, who fear losing their handle on local decisions in a city where 77 percent of the registered voters are Democrats. The issue affects city planning in major ways, like appropriation of funds, and more minor ways—for instance, Nebraska congressman Lee Terry is insisting that a branch of the Omaha-based Girls and Boys Town open on Capitol Hill, even though the neighborhood would prefer a different solution for its needy youth. “For U.S. Congressmen,” says Sternlieb, “this sort of minutia seems like a huge waste of time. It creates delays and throws planning out the window.”

No one should visit Washington without visiting the monuments and mulling over the brief but tremendous history of the U.S. government. But a visitor in search of modern design has a more puzzling itinerary. Due

mostly to struggles between the District and the federal government, modern architecture has a troubled presence here. In the 1960s, federally funded neo-Corbusian development led to the demolition of the city’s Southwest region and the building of modern housing and plazas that turned out to be mistakes. Other modern federal buildings around the city are, in Sternlieb’s words, “basically hostile to the street.” On a broader level, the federally enforced 12-story height limit, meant to keep monuments in view, sometimes frustrates architects, and inherently pushes the city toward sprawl.

Nonetheless, modern buildings in DC are worth visiting—some as lessons in imperfect planning, others because they thrive against the odds, and still others as emblems of the city’s complex relationship with the federal government. For best results, try to come in the early weeks of spring, during cherry blossom season.

1 Robert C. Weaver Federal Building / Marcel Breuer, 1968 / 7th and D St. SW

Part of the 1960s demolition and megablock building, the vast, sweeping façade with a grid of windows framed in angled concrete is Breuer in a heavy-handed mood. Critics call the building menacing; in the 1998 movie *Enemy of the State*, the structure played the FBI headquarters. Nonetheless, the plaza’s playful, ring-shaped pavilions and diagonal supporting columns, which resemble pigeon-toed elephants’ legs, merit a visit.

2 Krieger-Katins House / Marcel Breuer, 1959 / Brigadoon, at the end of Massachusetts Ave. / Bethesda, MD

The subtle volumes and site sensitivity of the Krieger-Katins house make it an excel-

lent contrast to the Weaver building. This house was conceived as a variation of the 1951 residence Breuer built for himself in New Canaan, Connecticut. Both are rife with carefully scaled rectangles and skirted with irregular gray stone reminiscent of the rocks that glaciers left strewn across Appalachian forests.

L’Enfant Plaza / I. M. Pei and Partners, 1968 / 10th St. and Independence Ave.

L’Enfant Plaza is a lesson in misguided urban planning. Andrew Altman’s planning department is currently lobbying to add more retail and activity to this area where DC residents say usually nothing is going on. Nonetheless, Pei’s buildings in the plaza are amusing. Touches like the presumably underfunded, sickly green glass pyramid operate as ▶



"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 Eyster, owner of Eycan Surfacing.



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parodies of the architect's familiar aesthetics. (For some good-quality public Pei, visit the East Building at the National Gallery of Art.)

3 Slayton House / I. M. Pei and Partners, 1962 / Ordway St. at 34th St. NW

Like Breuer's Krieger-Katinas house, this Pei home offers insights about the difference between federal and private commissions. L'Enfant Plaza misses its mark, while the Slayton house conveys no such struggles. Voyeurs must bring a ladder or periscope to see over the garden wall. Peek into the parlor's broad windows and you get a sense for Pei's fearless experiments with natural light. Without sacrificing classical integrity, the roof's concrete-barrel vaults form an attractive departure from Pei's obsession with triangles.

United States Tax Court / Victor Lundy, 1976 / 400 2nd St. NW

The windowless, cantilevered black block of this federal commission sits across the street from a homeless shelter. In a classic example of an architect's poor regard for context, the building's severe but dramatic façade is not accessible to pedestrians—the main entrance faces a plaza that runs alongside the freeway.

Pan American Health Organization / Roman Fresnedo Siri, 1965 / 525 23rd St. NW

Having beat a large pool of international applicants for this commission, Uruguayan architect Siri was exasperated by the height limit—who knows what the building would have looked like without it. Nonetheless, delicate zigzags on the cylindrical council chamber

nicely set off the bold verticals on the facing office building. Don't miss the nighttime lighting effects.

4 The Watergate / Luigi Moretti, 1965 / 2500-2700 Virginia Ave. NW

When driving by Moretti's toothed curvilinear verandas, it's impossible not to think of Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman smoking cigarettes at their typewriters in a news office. Retail, residential, and hotel flourish in harmony at this Foggy Bottom complex—though other, shadier endeavors have been less successful. The Italian architect became famous at age 29 when he designed the fencing hall at the Foro Italico, Mussolini's sports center for Rome. Moretti seems to have had a knack for politically charged, heroic structures, but to today's eyes,

his detailing sustains just enough humor and humility.

The Studio Theatre / Russell Metheny, 1997 / 1333 P St. NW

Here is a public building that's utterly independent from federal funding (which District planning officers usually just call "federal pork"). The Studio Theatre, formerly an auto showroom circa 1920, was excellently redone at the artistic and no-nonsense hands of a set designer. A case of organic urban renewal, the theater has revitalized Logan Circle, its neighborhood.

Vega and Apartment Zero / 819 7th St. NW; 406 7th St. NW

Near the center of DC by the Gallery Place/Chinatown Metro stop, two furniture stores reveal a local interest in contemporary design. Apartment Zero carries Vitra chairs, Blu Dot

shelves, Jonathan Adler vases and the like, and may well have some sort of chardonnay-serving event the week you visit. Just down the street, Vega displays art and sells attractive chairs and sofas (likely with an ample supply of felt).

The Metro / Harry Weese Associates, 1976 / everywhere

A splendid example of public transit design, the Metro experience alone is worth the price of your plane ticket—especially the expanding, rounded-sky view as you exit Dupont Circle station. Notice how the circular, frosted platform lights glow when a train approaches. The federal versus District input in Metro construction merits a book; suffice it to mention that the coffered vaults were required by the Commission of Fine Arts. Fortunately, they also look great. ■

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Water, Everywhere

I have always had a weakness for good plumbing. It's invariably what comes between me and camping, despite my sporadic urges to get down with nature. And it's what sent me packing when I tried the peripatetic expat life (around the time Godard stopped making the kinds of films that inspired such wanderings). For despite doggedly Europhilic opinions on everything from American imperialism to fast food, I've always had an insatiable lust for gushing torrents of hot water.

I inhabited apartments in Paris where the shower was wedged between stove and fridge and gave forth only a sad, tepid trickle (far more disturbing than the hole down the hall that served as the communal toilet). When I complained to friends, the reply was always a sing-songy variant of "Oh, you Americans!" (Happily, I discovered the steamy pleasures to be had at the hammam a few Métro stops away.) I shared London flats with huge claw-foot tubs that taunted with their capacity—for even if you remembered to switch on the water heater, they always ran cold somewhere between thigh and rib cage. Not very conducive to either romance or reading.

Although the English were the first modern Occidentals to entwine the concepts of private bathing and comfort—producing both the large, insulated porcelain tub and the gas-fueled water heater—it's the Yanks who ran with it. The mass-producible (and thus affordable) arrangement of basin, tub, and toilet that we take for granted is a distinctly home-grown product.

Which is not to say that it received a universally warm welcome. Visitor response to the

crisp, no-furbelows, technically superior American bathrooms at the 1900 Exhibition of Hygiene in Paris ranged from "total incomprehension" to "outright rejection," writes Françoise de Bonneville in *The Book of the Bath*. They were dismissed as mere "factories to get washed in."

But it didn't take long before the addition of a product-intensive room gave architects and decorators something new to chew on, and they haven't stopped ruminating. By the mid-1980s, we were taking our inspiration from hotels, where designers such as Philippe Starck (the Royalton) and Andrée Putman (Morgan's) helped kick off the concept of the architecturally correct bathroom fixture. Out with the sunken tub and in with the trough.

Just as cultures move on to more esoteric culinary concerns once most of their basic nutritional needs are met (wheat-free bread and decaf soy lattes come to mind), so has cracking the riddle of hot water, enameled tubs, and flushing toilets allowed for a galloping hedonism in the washroom. We want more, we want it hipper, and we want it bigger. (Oh, and don't forget the steam.)

We have a hard time relaxing unless it's in the comfort of our own "home spa." Like our gas-guzzling vehicles, our bathrooms are on steroids. A recent survey conducted for the National Kitchen and Bath Association found that "more elaborate and luxurious bathroom styles have been emerging and are likely to continue as people are taking refuge within the confines of their homes." Among the listed trends were columns, to lend the room that expansive "Roman spa feel."

"Our interpretation of home spa elicits four 're' words—relax, refresh, rejuvenate and retreat," reads a press release for Kohler (a company that manufactured cast-iron horse troughs until the ingenious addition of four supporting feet and a layer of enamel launched what is now perhaps the world's largest bathroom-fixture empire). "To retreat" used to carry intimations of going outside the familiar provenance to return somehow enlightened. Now it's as simple as shutting the bathroom door. Well, it is a scary world out there. (And don't think that September 11th hasn't been used as a pretext by at least one fixture company. I've read *all* the press releases.)

There's nothing wrong with wanting a nice place to chill out at the end of the day—and believe me, nothing creates bathroom envy like researching a feature on bathrooms. Yet in the search for relaxation we might be slightly missing the point. Not only does the relentless pursuit of the (currently) iconic object risk bestowing upon the master bath all the chilly charm of a boutique hotel, but there may also be a danger of becoming too hermetically sealed inside our homes.

Bathing, once a communal, social act (which it remains in some cultures, particularly Eastern ones), is now billed not only as a way to get clean or meditate but as essential for recovering from the stress of having to exist in a world populated with other people. Given that, I suppose we should find a note of optimism in the recent trend toward two-sided tubs. It can only encourage some degree of togetherness, after all.

Great Moments in Bathing

1800 BC

First oblong earthenware bath is installed in the palace of King Minos at Knossos in Crete.

1868 AD

First functional gas water heater hits the market.

1880

The English cast-iron bathtub appears.

1920

First solid-forged bathtubs in enameled cast iron.

1937

Le Corbusier shows a self-contained, multifunctional "cabine sanitaire" for use in hotels at the 1937 World's Fair.

1966

Roy Jacuzzi designs the first massaging bath.

1968

Hansgrohe introduces the first showerhead with an easily adjustable flow.

1972

First advanced mixer tap introduced by Ideal Standard.

Mid-'80s

The Royalton and Morgan's Hotel usher in the era of the boutique hotel and the rage for residential designer bathroom fixtures.

1994

Starck's Edition 1 freestanding bath for Duravit comes home, making soaking à deux de rigueur.

1999

Claudio Silvestrin's elliptical limestone Po bath for Boffi ups the ante on architect-designed tubs.

2001

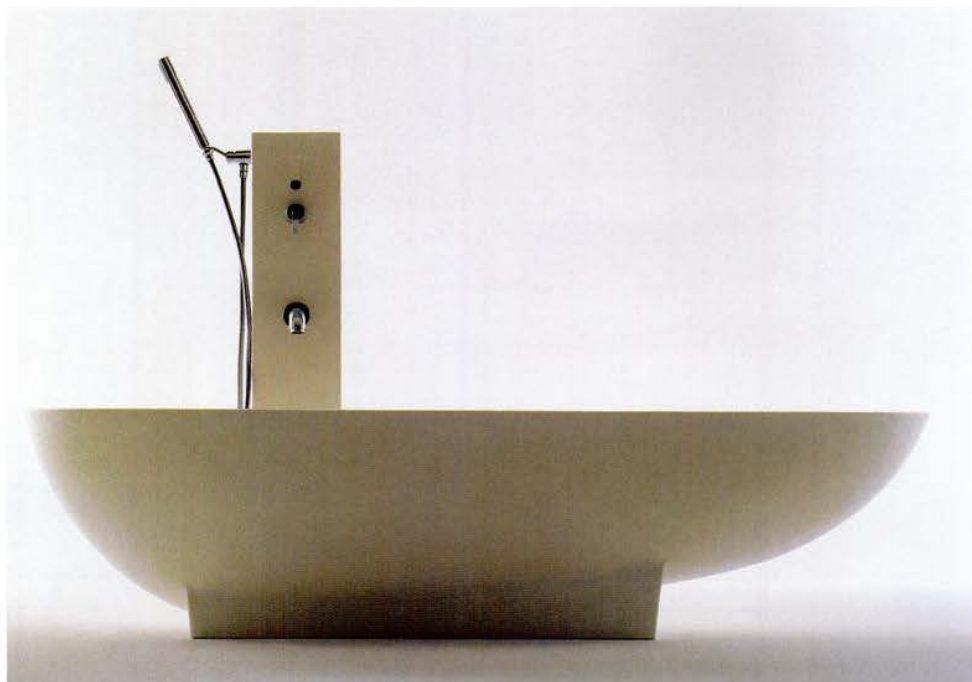
Kohler's Laminar Flow Bath Filler takes the air (and splash) out of the water, decreasing turbulence in these trying times.

2003

It's no longer a bathroom, it's a sanctuary.

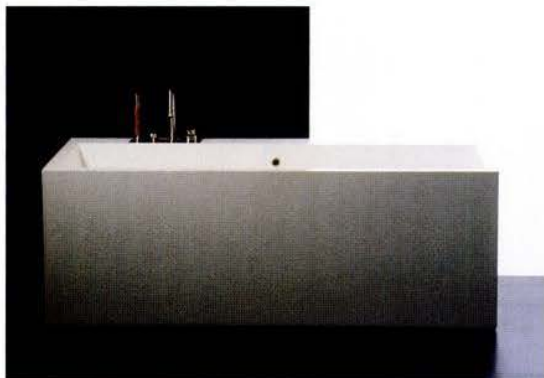
Primary source: *The Book of the Bath*, Françoise de Bonneville (Rizzoli, 1998)





Five Hot Tubs

Do you prefer the brisk efficiency of showers or do you crave the languorous ritual of the bath? In America, where homes have long satisfied both urges, it often comes down to gender. (It's been estimated that women spend more than ten hours a week in the bathroom.) Even now, when so many prominent bath designers are men, one wonders how men prefer to soap up. Carter J. Thomas, a designer for Kohler, readily confesses to being a shower man—although he will get immersed in the lab when necessary, all in the name of science, of course. —D.B.



Spoon

Agape, \$7,750

Some reveries on bathing seem obsessed with returning to the womb. Far nicer to slip into the Spoon, an ovoid tub designed by one of Agape's founders, Giampaolo Benedini. This freestanding and curiously appealing bath is curved just so, to lull the body into a relaxed position and provide optimal water distribution. Made of Exmar, a material composed of resin and quartz powders, the Spoon holds court in the bathrooms of Loft 523, a New Orleans hotel that—as the name implies—is more Tribeca than French Quarter.

Mood

Boffi, \$14,804

Boffi's Mood bathtub made its debut in a private townhouse in central Stockholm, courtesy of its designers, Eero Koivisto, Marten Claesson, and Ola Rune: "We wanted the tub to have a solid appearance, like a piece of architecture of its own." Loosely based on wooden Japanese soaking tubs, the monoblock made of Pral, a synthetic material, looks austere but is most accommodating: Angled inside for comfort, it's designed to submerge occupants right up to their shoulders.

Your Underwater Film Festival



Was Cecil B. DeMille in cahoots with Kohler? Almost every movie made by the epic director features a bath scene, including Gloria Swanson gliding down the steps of her bath in *Male and Female* (1919) and Gary Cooper reading the newspaper in the tub in *The Story of Dr. Wassell* (1944). According to Françoise de Bonneville, the director believed he was having an effect on American sociology, influencing "not just the numbers of bathrooms installed in homes but also their comfort and elegance." Looking for more movies to watch while underwater?

Duck Soup (Leo McCarey, 1933): Revolutionary War hero Harpo Marx unwittingly shares a bath with a cuckolded husband.

The Women (George Cukor, 1939): Joan Crawford holds court on the phone from a crystal tub fitted with a satin headboard.

Laura (Otto Preminger, 1944): A journalist (Clifton Webb) writes from the comfort of a marble tub in the middle of his office, a practice we'd like to encourage.

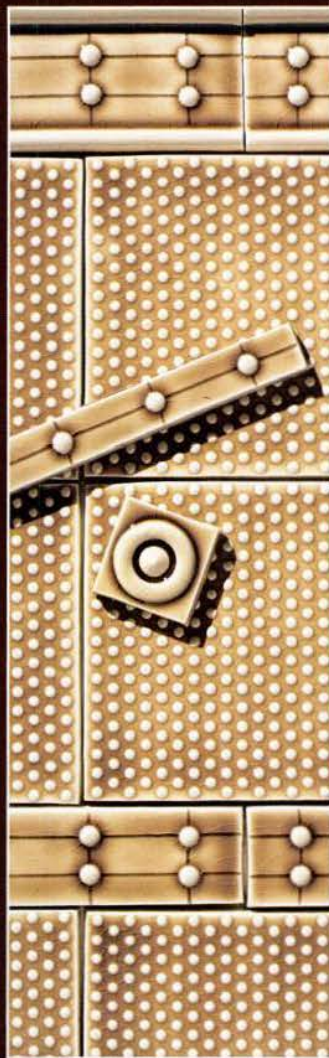
The Seven Year Itch (Billy Wilder, 1955): Marilyn Monroe is barely camouflaged by bubbles while a plumber trains his eyes on the taps.

Performance (Nicolas Roeg, 1970): Warner Brothers execs almost pulled the plug after seeing rushes of the communal wash with Mick Jagger and friends.

Little Big Man (Arthur Penn, 1970): Faye Dunaway, playing a religious nymphomaniac, gives Dustin Hoffman a bath that's more than he bargained for.

What Lies Beneath (Robert Zemeckis, 2000): Michelle Pfeiffer tries in vain to do for baths what Janet Leigh did for showers.

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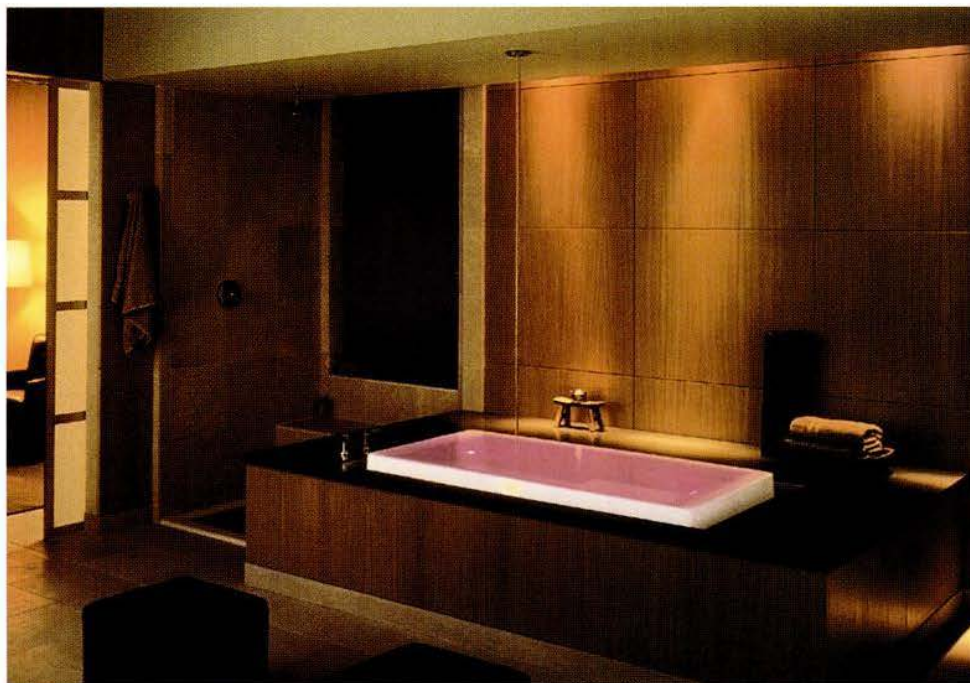
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sök Overflowing Bath, Kohler, \$5,000

If this tub were a car, it could only be described as fully loaded. First, no more unsightly goose bumps—this baby fills right up to the top, with the excess overflowing into a recirculating channel. Next, eight “effervescence ports” purr as they emit caressing

champagne-like bubbles. But that’s not all! A laminar-flow bath filler removes the air from the water for a splashless entry (rather like that of an Olympic diver). And finally, through the miracle of Chromatherapy, you can bathe in a pool of colored light—from “energizing” red to “harmonious” green.

Clothilde Waterworks, \$13,100

While the mantra for most modern bathtub designers has been “streamline, streamline, streamline,” this hand-hammered tub from Waterworks adopts the high, sloping profile of French copper tubs from the 19th century (when personal hygiene had not exactly reached its zenith). According to custom, the interior is lined with tin to protect the purity of the water. In keeping with the times, the bath has been enlarged and made double-ended for group scrubs.



Woodline Agape, \$13,086

“Like a chaise longue in a box” is how Giampaolo Benedini describes his newly enlarged bath for Agape. All right angles on the outside, the curvaceous interior supports two side-by-side soaking bodies ergonomically. One of the few indoor tubs hewn from wood (layered marine plywood and either natural oak or stained wengé), the Woodline is ideal for catching up on beach reading, especially on rainy days.



Bathroom Bookshelf



Cathedrals of the Flesh: My Search for the Perfect Bath, by Alexia Brue (Bloomsbury): A kind of *Baedeker's* for the bath obsessed, Brue's book began as research for a Turkish bath she hoped to establish in Manhattan but evolved into a trip to the great watering holes of the world, exploring soaking traditions from Russia to Japan, Greece to Finland.

Undesigning the Bath, by Leonard Koren (Stone Bridge Press): A look at bathing by an architecture M.A. and bath connoisseur who finds the current mania for slick tubs, fancy fixtures, and exotic tiles as antithetical to a truly satisfying soak.

Eloise Takes a Bawth, by Kay Thompson (Simon & Schuster): The Plaza-dwelling mischief maker's final fling is released 40 years after its inception, with this sage advice: “Let that water gush out and slush out into that sweet old tub tub tub and fill it up to the absolutely top of its brim so that it can slip over its rim onto the floor if it wants to.” (Well, there's always the Mercer. . . .)

Waterworks: Inventing Bath Style, by Barbara Sallick (Clarkson N. Potter): From the co-founder of the Waterworks boutiques, eye candy to fuel the wet dreams of any bath-fixture fetishist.

The Bathroom, by Jean-Philippe Toussaint (Obelisk): This novel by the “Belgian successor to Beckett” commences: “When I began to spend my afternoons in the bathroom I had no intention of moving into it; no, I would pass some pleasant hours there, meditating in the bathtub, sometimes dressed, other times naked.”

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Paradise Regained

Phoebe Atwater had lived in her house, an Edwardian in San Francisco's tony Presidio Heights, for eight years before addressing the third floor, "a big, dark, cramped space with bad wainscoting and cheap molding." Opening up the roof was the first step in transforming the attic into a clean and spare light-drenched aerie, with a master bedroom, bathroom, dressing room, and office.

Lighting

There's little point in spending the annual operating budget of a small island nation on a bathroom if the lighting isn't as flattering as it is functional. The designers eventually hit the ideal combination of halogen fixtures, which includes

recessed lighting. Nessen brushed-nickel sconces have machined details that help break the monotony of the tiles. The original overhead fixtures, which proved too "hot and spotty," were replaced with Vibia "Ice" glass squares that act as light-diffusing prisms.

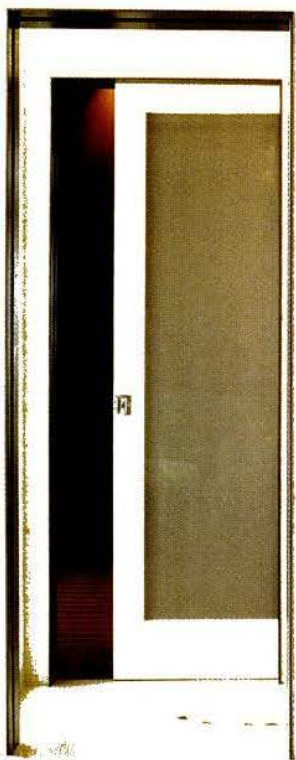
Windows

Japanese washi paper was embedded between panes of clear Bendheim glass and framed with aluminum storefront windows, creating a sort of urban shoji screen that filters out an unattractive alley. The diffused western light changes throughout the day, while at night exterior uplighting evens out the light sources and creates an otherworldly glow.

Very important to Atwater—a mother of three children (ages four, six, and eight) and an accomplished horsewoman—was the bathroom: "I wanted somewhere to escape to." These days, when Atwater does get a moment to herself, she heeds the siren call of the Dornbracht taps and heads for this monochromatic, visually soothing oasis. The renovation was overseen by Jonathan Staub

and Charles de Lisle of Your Space, whose projects include another temple of ablutions, the nearby Kabuki Springs and Spa. And the budget? We'll just call it very, very elastic.

"More than anything specific, I told Jonathan and Charles how I wanted to feel," explains Atwater. "I craved a magical, peaceful, ethereal space. I love hanging out in here. It's calm and serene, and some of that rubs off."



Water Closet

A one-piece toilet from Toto.

Towel Warmer

The proper English towel warmer from Bolton takes the chill off chilling out.

Vanity

A simple slab of limestone is fitted with deep, stainless steel sinks by Just.

Heating

Radiant floor heating eliminates the need for fuzzy slippers.

Entertainment

Quadrophenia: two Bose speakers in the bathroom, two more in the shower, and acoustics that could convince amateurs to go pro. "I get through entire CDs sitting in the tub," admits Atwater. "It's very therapeutic."

Shower

Two (Dornbracht) heads are better than one. For deeper relaxation, a flick of the switch on the Mr. Steam releases billows of cleansing vapors. A skylight lets in natural illumination, and a mirror is treated to resist fog during shaving or meditative bouts of navel-gazing.

Bathtub

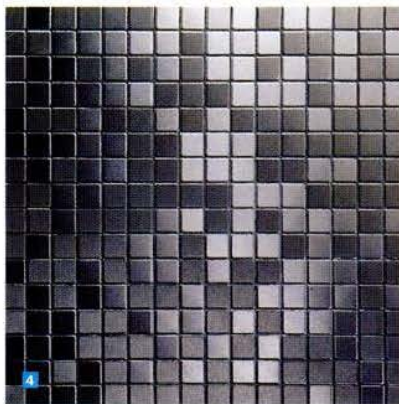
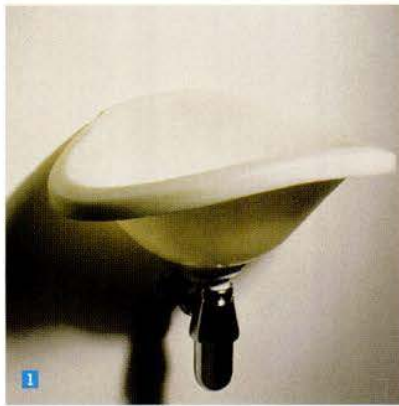
Philippe Starck, the man who launched a million bubble baths, designed this freestanding, ultra-deep, two-sided tub for Duravit. The basic shape recalls washtubs pulled out in the kitchen for the weekly

Sunday scrub, but instead of being filled by boiled water, this one is fed through a sleek Dornbracht chrome spout. Staub steered Atwater away from spa jets, which he thinks distract from the meditative soak.

Walls & Flooring

About 92,000 one-inch onyx tiles, hand selected for uniform pallor, shimmer on the walls and underfoot. "The tiles are like snow with a warm undertone of amber," says Staub. "We wanted to match the quality of

natural light." The lack of variation actually made the project more challenging. Working with 12-inch-square sheets, the tile layers labored to make it look as if each tiny piece were lovingly hand placed. "I heard a lot of cursing," recalls Atwater.



Beyond Porcelain: Alternative Materials

While most Americans still prefer to get wet in the presence of glazed, fireproof porcelain, there are alternatives for those who choose to scrub outside the box.

1 Soft Washbowl

When the Amsterdam Art Foundation commended Hella Jongerius for her polyurethane basin, it cited her "lust for experimenting and her lack of inhibition." Created for a Salone del Mobile installation called *Dry Bathing*—Droog translates to "dry," so this is more about wordplay than washing in a drought—the ten-inch-wide sink slips nicely into small spaces, which is perhaps why it finds itself on a fair number of boats.

2 Glass Drop Floor Tiles

Out, damn spot. Permanent water drops, randomly placed on ceramic and glass tiles, help massage bare feet as you pad around. Conceived by Arnout Visser and Erik Jan Kwakkel for Droog, the six-inch squares come in terra, black, green, blue, and white and also make excellent trivets in a pinch.

3 Concrete Trough Vanity

The man who's done for concrete what Pamela Anderson did for silicone, San Franciscan Buddy Rhodes was a ceramist until he realized that cement didn't need to be fired (no more all-nighters!). Over the past 20 years, he's applied his recipe of cement, sand, and water to everything from bathtubs to garden benches, while watching his work migrate from the niche of "edgy urban" to the creative mainstream. Trowel marks and variations of light and dark enliven the slabs of this trough vanity—a pared-down profile that has made the trek from farm to boutique hotel to a bathroom near you.

4 Alloy Tiles

At once Gilded Age and Space Age, or a little bit Versailles, a little bit *Barbarella*, Ann Sacks's metallic alloy tiles are wrought from sheets of high-gauge stainless steel. Placed en masse, they make even tiny washrooms appear palatial. Available mirrored or brushed—we prefer the latter's softer reflection in the harsh light of morning.

5 Pond

Shaped like a gently sloping birdbath, the Pond sink has properties not found in nature.

Melbourne-based designer Joseph Licciardi's circular vessel is wrought from Corian, which possesses an ingredient that inhibits the spread of most common bacteria. Like all Corian, it's seamless and nonporous, and thus tends to retain its hygienic luster for epochs.

6 Global Gumbo

"A creative, contemporary terrazzo" is how David Hertz, founder of environmentally attuned architecture firm Syndesis, Inc., describes Global Gumbo, a variety of Syndeconcrete (Hertz's precast concrete surfacing material made with recycled aggregates). Global Gumbo can, in at least one case, also be seen as a form of music criticism: While working on a project for Rhino Records, Syndesis found a better use for 15,000 unwanted albums, cassettes, VHS tapes, and CDs than feeding the landfill. Two rival South Central gangs went to work breaking up the vinyl and other materials as part of an intervention program. Included in other spicy stews are screw shavings, glass, and colored plastic bits of Ford Taurus bumpers, all rendered into a Kandinsky-like pattern that has been used to form monolithic tubs, tiles, and sinks with a bit of history.



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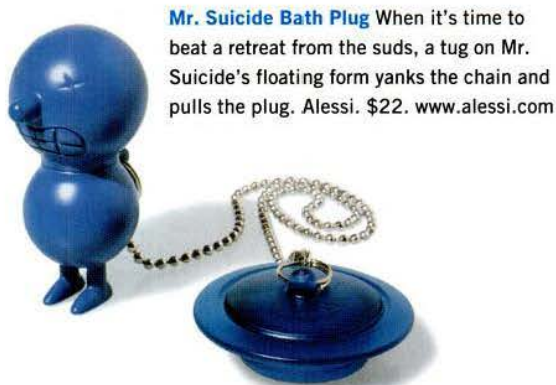
Just Add Water

When it was revealed that former Tyco CEO Dennis Kozlowski spent more than \$135 million of company money on items including a mansion and furnishings, every news clip honed in on the shower curtain—a \$6,000 gold-and-burgundy floral affair. We didn't even come close to that when compiling our list of bathroom desirables, but we'd still love to see what a \$6,000 shower curtain looks like.

Rubber Duck Search the Web for a basic rubber duck and you'll be confronted with dozens of mutations (e.g., "Celebriducks" such as Shakespeare and Mr. T) that are as disturbing as, say, cheddar-jalapeno bagels. The good news: a classic quacker can be had for a five-spot. www.rubberduckland.com; www.captainquack.com



Narcissus Mirror with Magnifying Mirror Two square feet of self-reflection is violated by a magnified circle for those who aren't afraid to stand up to their pores. \$195 at Design Within Reach. www.dwr.com



Mr. Suicide Bath Plug When it's time to beat a retreat from the suds, a tug on Mr. Suicide's floating form yanks the chain and pulls the plug. Alessi. \$22. www.alessi.com



Toilet-Brush Holder Designed by architect Michel Boucquillon, this "*porta scopino a terra*" (freestanding toilet brush) surrounds its raison d'être with a display-worthy edifice of chrome and white ceramic. Part of a full collection of bathroom products, ranging in price from \$120 to \$308. www.vallivalli-us.com



Manor Lav Set We enjoy twisting these old-fashioned cross taps with raised white porcelain indices that read "Hot" and "Cold." \$485–\$590 for taps and spout, from Soho Corp. www.sohocorp1.com



Health-o-Meter Large Analog Dial Scale Digital accuracy is commendable when taking your temperature but strikes us as overkill in other arenas. Where sleek, flat scales scream the latest news via LED, the Health-o-Meter delivers it gently and with a reassuringly medical air. \$30. www.healthometer.com



Function Tiles Under the auspices of Droog Design, Arnout Visser, Erik Jan Kwakkel, and Peter van der Jagt designed a series of wall tiles that bend the concept of ceramic to integrate a variety of functions from towel hook to chalkboard. \$50–\$150. www.droogdesign.nl



Lathe-Turned Stools An excellent place to shave legs in the shower, take a steam, or perch for a chat. Sculptor Alma Allen turns these chunky, tactile stools from birch plywood, as well as scavenged eucalyptus and sycamore logs, in shapes ranging from drum to jigger to elongated hourglass. \$450–\$1,600

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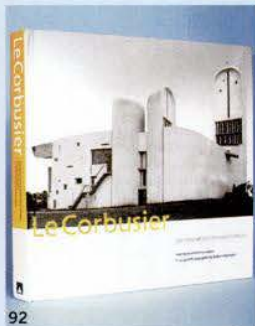
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Photos courtesy of Marvin Rand. Top: Capitol Records Building; bottom: the Los Angeles Music Center. Both designed by Welton Becket and Associates.



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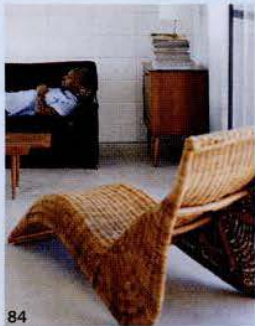
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Dwell Bucks the Status Quo

In our January/February 2003 issue, we introduced the Dwell Home Invitational—a unique challenge to a select group of architects and designers to design an innovative prefabricated house for \$200,000. The ultimate goal is to put a well-designed, affordable, modern house into production—one that realizes the aesthetic, environmental, economic, and technologic benefits of prefabrication.

The Dwell Home will be built for a young couple in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Look for these highlights and updates in every issue:

Late summer: All designs published

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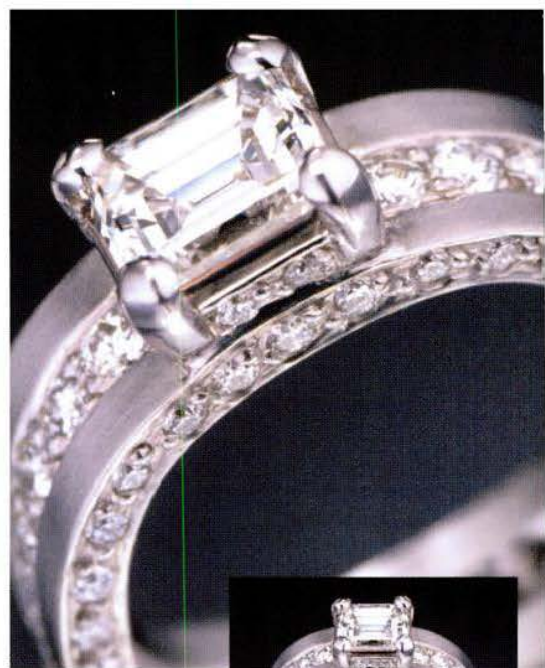


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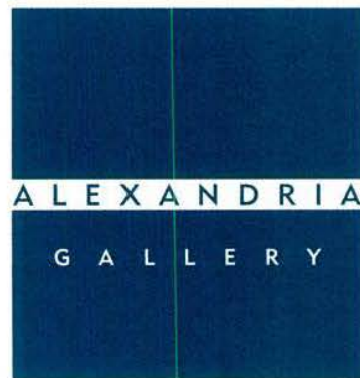


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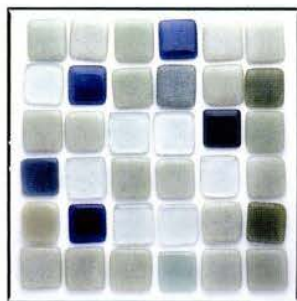
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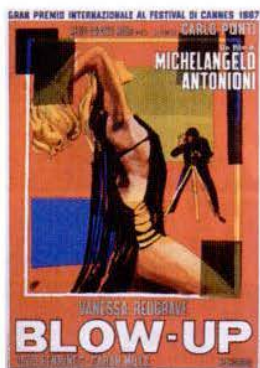
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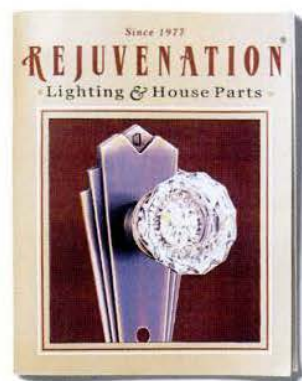
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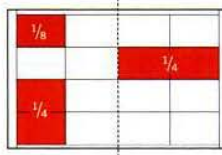


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DIY Dogtrot

From the get-go, the Zachary house was a family affair. In 1995, when Stephen Atkinson was just out of architecture school, his folks asked him to come up with a design for a family retreat on a pasture outside Zachary, Louisiana. They'd owned the land since Stephen was six months old. "The house," Stephen explains, "became an exercise on my life experience from childhood on."

Stephen's design is a reinterpretation of the dogtrot housing type, in which an exterior covered breezeway keeps the house cool and elongates the visual axis. The shedlike metal shell is a nod to frontier do-it-yourself—and in that spirit, Stephen's father decided to build the 550-square-foot house himself.

Newly retired from dentistry, John Atkinson worked from dawn to dusk for nine months (with occasional help from a contractor), spending \$45,000 on materials. The biggest expenses were the detached concrete brick chimney and the four custom doors, each with exterior

corrugated metal shutters and a pocket screen.

How did it turn out? "Amazingly, the house is almost exactly as I'd envisioned it," says Stephen. "It's like a novel: slightly autobiographical, slightly stylized, deeply immersed in the particulars of a locale." Dogs Sophie and Sherlock love the dogtrot, and it's a nice place for human beings, too. "It's so peaceful out there," says John. "We light the fireplace on cool evenings and sit before it with glasses of wine."

The mood of the Zachary house is always changing. With all the doors open, the pecan-tree landscape outside is framed like a moving picture. Doors closed, the deck has an abstract, Zen garden feel. The two rooms are pristine white cubes, part mod, part Quaker. "We have had to become minimalists," explains John. As for their neighbors, says John, besides the odd cow or deer wandering by, "we don't know if anyone knows the house is here." ■



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