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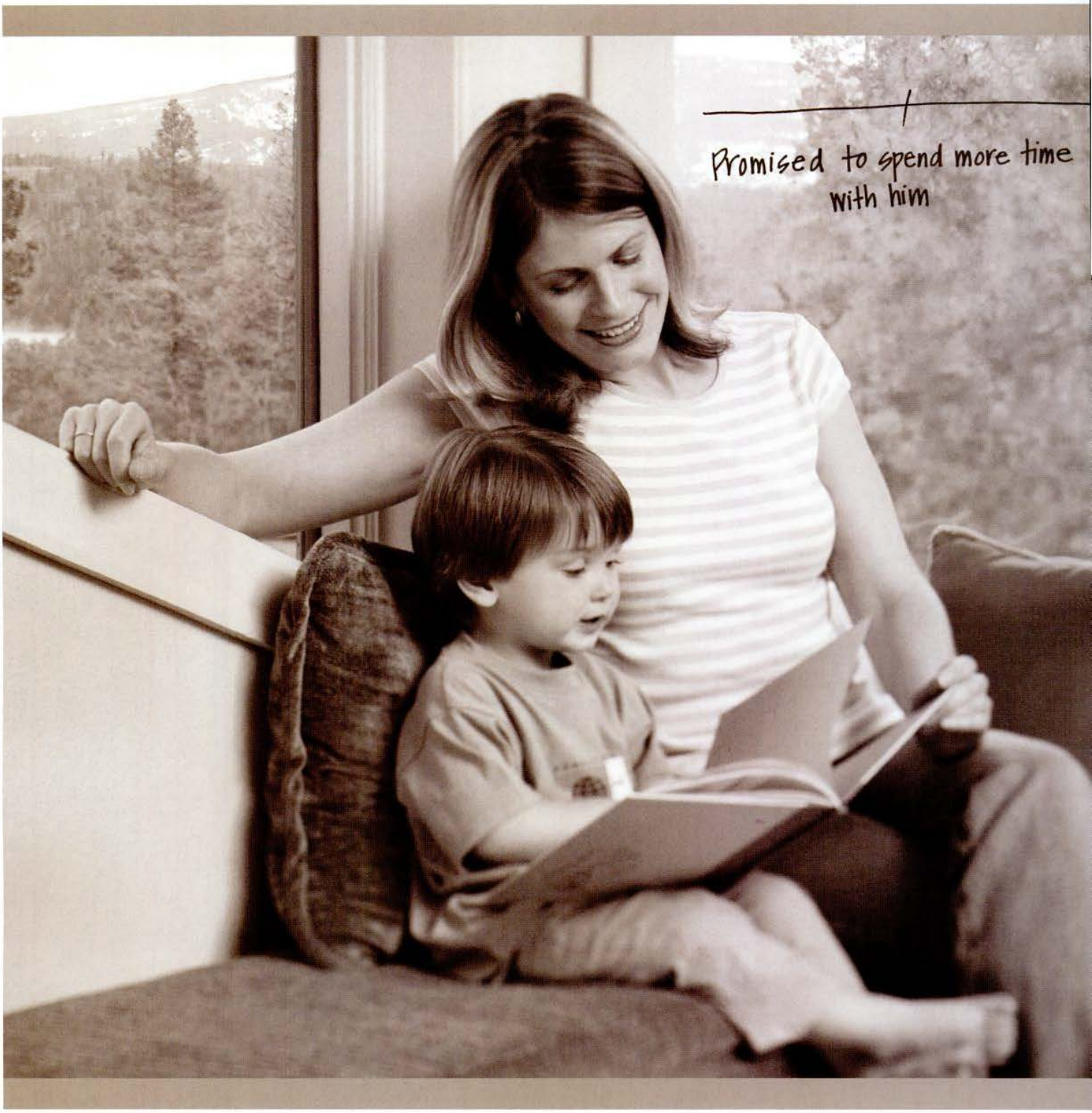

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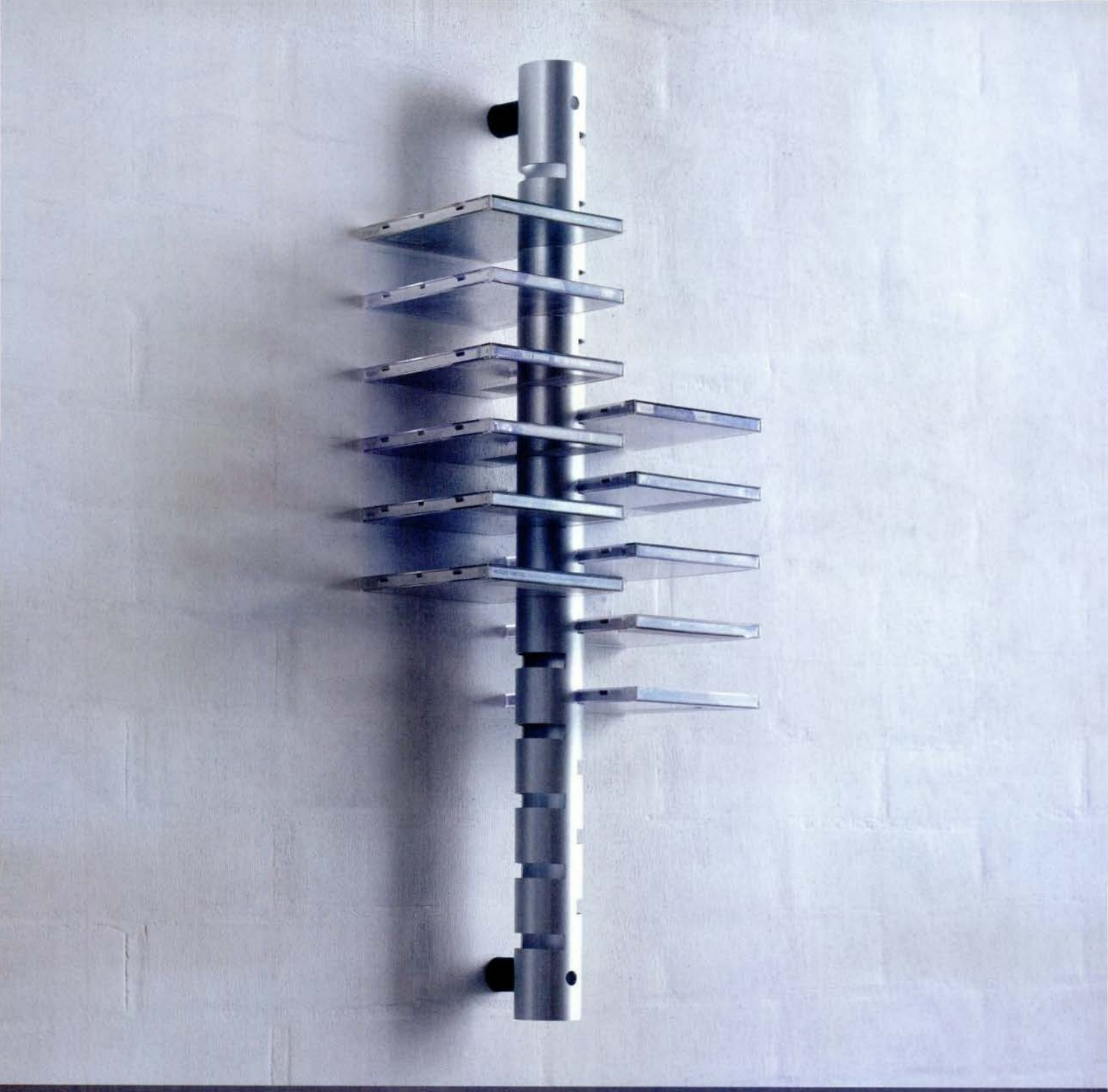

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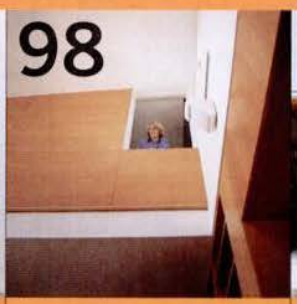
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"Other than a couple little kids who rode up on bikes and hoped we were building a nightclub, we've had zero issues with unhappy neighbors. Most people are just happy to see something new and interesting in the neighborhood." —Shawn Moseley, page 108

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Cover
Proud homeowner Shawn Moseley shows off his new digs and demonstrates what is possible for inner city development across the country. **Photo by Mark Steinmetz**

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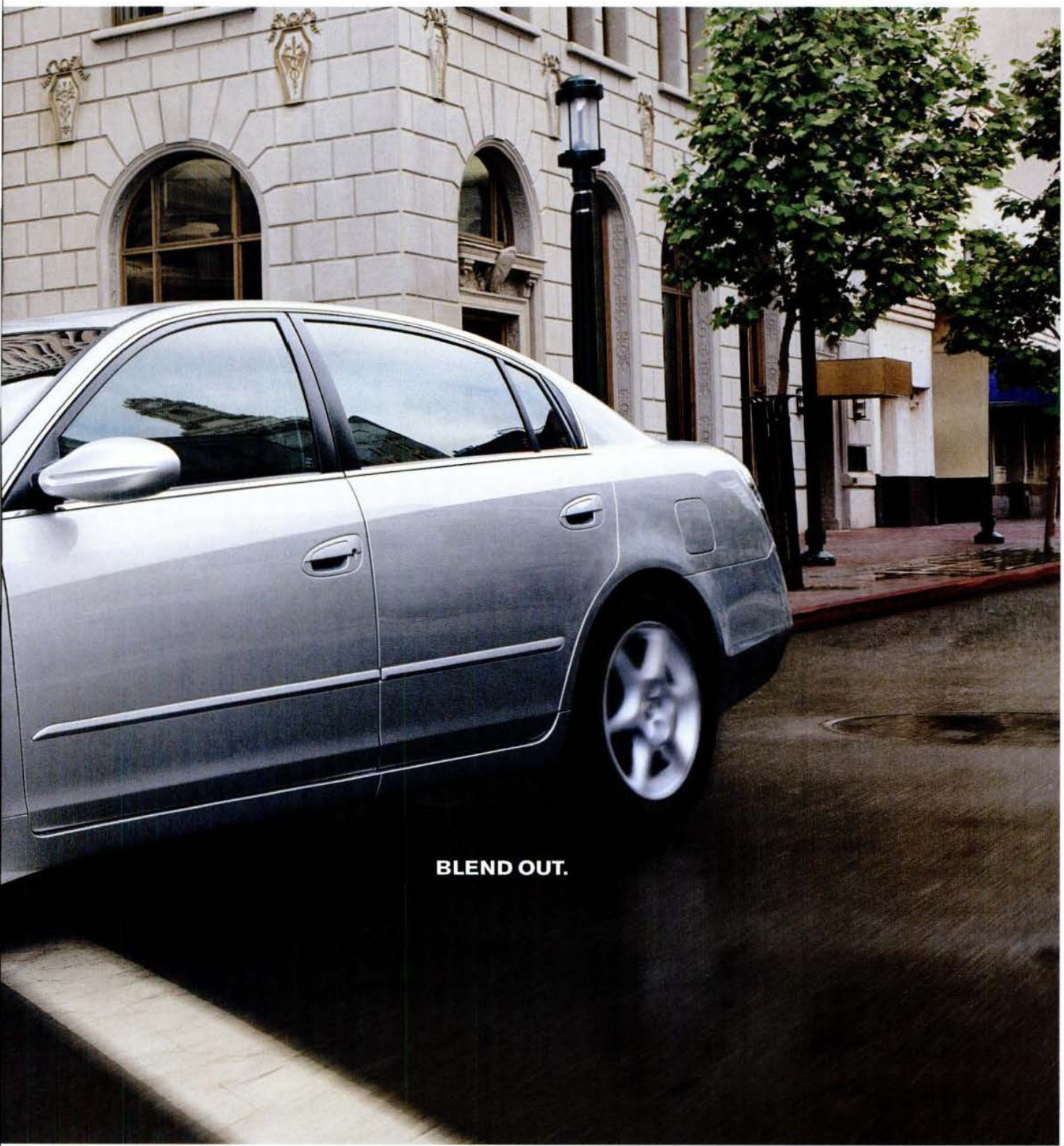

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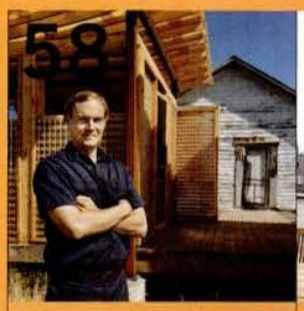
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PHOTO BY PETER KOOIMAN (ELSEWHERE)

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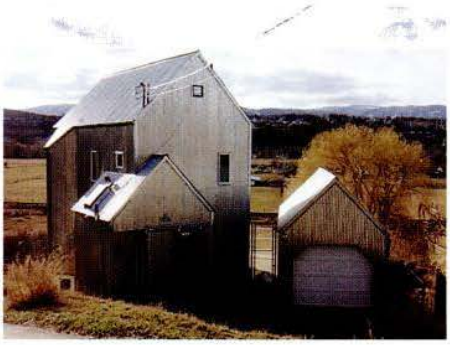

I always enjoy getting each new issue of Dwell. I find the content consistently interesting and well presented. Enclosed are pictures of my "metal" house (photo above) completed in 1992 at a cost of $85,000 (Canadian). It is just under 1,000 square feet, easy to maintain, and just about an ideal living space for my single self.

Hope to continue seeing great coverage of attainable housing in your future issues.

Richard Suarez
Canada

I sympathize with you [Allison Arieff] on letting go of your couch ("Editor's Note," June 2003) and admire you for pretending to be asleep instead of bidding your couch farewell. Three years ago my fluffy white couch drowned in the intrusive flood waters of Tropical Storm Floyd. Swallowed by nearly 12 feet of water, there was nothing I could do to save it. I moved like a robot up and down the stairs rescuing as much of the furniture as I could. If only my husband would get here, I kept thinking. My inner Incredible Hulk took over as all 105 pounds of me moved a heavy marble coffee table up a flight of stairs but my high adrenaline level and the super-carb power of my macaroni-and-cheese dinner were no match for the couch that became waterlogged dead weight despite my desperate tugging and towing. And so, there it sat, submerged like a sunken ship.

I remember the day I bought it. My eyes scanned the showroom and then fixed on this beautiful damask sofa in the distance. I beelined right to it and settled in. I signed the sales contract without ever leaving my seat and hastily scheduled a delivery date to ensure delivery before my wedding (just in case, once married, some obligatory feelings compelled me to consult with my husband on the purchase).

I still regret the loss of that couch. It was my last big purchase as a single woman and, as such, it had significance attached to it. It was a dutiful sofa, providing comfort and solace and a place to flip through my favorite catalogs. It was a commitment without compromise or convincing—just me and the love of the furnishings I invite to share my home.

Julie Damiano
West Paterson, New Jersey

Reading "On-Site Insights" (June 2003) seemed like a direct connection to my brain. We, too, have searched and searched and searched. We have looked at many more houses for many ▸

Contributors

Deborah Bishop (Flooring 101, p. 124) is Dwell's San Francisco contributing editor. Despite working on two books simultaneously and chasing after twins, her feet are planted firmly on the ground.

Donovan Finn ("Mid-City Modern," p. 108) is a part-time music journalist and full-time graduate student in urban and regional planning. After visiting Georgia, he saw there is hope for older cities like Atlanta that is not the urban renewal of the '70s nor a blanket denial of all things new, but a way of thinking that incorporates the ideals and ethics of the past with the technology of today.

The work of photographer **Kyoto Hamada** ("Opryland Overhaul," p. 90) has appeared in *Flaunt, Fast Company, Fortune, The Washington Post,* and *Newsweek.*

Jonathon Keats ("The Art of Architecture," p. 116) is a novelist, artist, journalist, and critic. He is the author of *The Pathology of Lies* (Warner Books), and is currently at work on a new novel about an art forgery.

Country-music journalist/author **Paul Kingsbury** ("Opryland Overhaul," p. 90) lives in a 20s bungalow in Nashville but he covets the Webbs' cool, uncluttered 1950s modern. He agrees with local architect Price Harrison's observation on modern architecture: "You're creating a world that's a little more organized than the real world."

Eric Lawlor ("Building a Bond," p. 98) lives in Houston and is completing a book about colonial Africa. His conversations with Eric Robinson convinced him that architecture is a lot more fun than writing.

The work of South Carolina–based photographer **Craig Cameron Olsen** ("Building a Bond," p. 98) has appeared in *Outside, Men's Journal,* and *Forbes.*

Although photographer **Danielle Rubi** ("O Canada!" p. 83) calls Oakland, California, home; her portfolio, like her taste for fine cheeses, is decidedly international. Her recent endeavors include an art installation at the High Desert Test Sites and promotional photography for musicians everywhere from Norway to Nor-Cal.

Guggenheim fellow **Mark Steinmetz** ("Mid-City Modern," p. 108) is a photographer based in Athens, GA. After his photo shoot for Dwell, he feels a lot better about Athens's colossal neighbor, Atlanta.

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Letters

more years than your young North Carolina couple has! Many realtors have given up on us, too, through the years. We found that mass-publicized floor plans seem to be drawn by folks who simply haven't "lived" in a house or even imagined a workable, sensible, utilitarian, and efficient housing structure.

Modern is an anathema in our Mid-Atlantic region, it appears. We are stuck with endless red brick colonials, Cape Cods, and 1960s ranch contraptions that are both illogical and unattractive. Lots are difficult to find in convenient places, but we are coming to the same conclusion that we must ultimately build someplace. Prefab seems a blessing. I regret that we were unable to participate in your experiment, but I hope that your attention to this need will awaken the sleeping builders and developers in our midst.

Joan Carol Poor
College Park, Maryland

I am a bachelor and I'm often in need of your expert opinion. Right now, Dwell is helping guide me through the renovation of my loft in New York City. I'm converting it from a one-bedroom/one-bathroom into a three-bedroom/two-bathroom place and Dwell has been my bible. I never would have thought that I could have an opinion about tile and toilets and appliances, but with the help of articles about space, examples of creative executions, opinions of what appliances to buy, and where to save money and where to spend, I'm getting it done.

Brian Gordon
Norwalk, Connecticut

I'm writing to tell you how important Dwell and the book *Prefab,* have become to me in the last few months. They have completely reshaped my thinking about the house I want to live in.

We live in Garrison, about 50 miles north of New York, on the Hudson. My partner and I have been renting houses here for many years and have decided it's time to buy. Our preferences have always been for traditional Victorian wood houses with lots of character, and at some time or other we've both owned this kind of house. For many reasons we've decided that we want to stay in Garrison and started thinking about buying land and building a house, the theory being that proportionately we'll pay more for the land and less for the house, and the total will be less than the cheapest available existing house.

We started by looking at modular colonials and quickly became depressed and desperate with the lack of choice and the poor quality. Through a friend at work I was introduced to the March/April issue of Dwell and Suzi and I were utterly inspired. Within ten days I'd bought a ►

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copy of *Prefab* from which my inspiration continued to grow. Our dream is now to build a modern expandable house with a prefab component and some sustainable-living properties if we can afford them. A far cry from a wedding-cake Victorian!

Paul Bonnar and Suzi Tortora
Garrison, New York

Just putting a bug in your ear about the sprinkles of modernism in Mississippi, like my own home, which we are now renovating. Yep, modernism is spread like crunchy peanut butter on white bread (in other words, not too well) in Mississippi. However, the state does hold smatterings of the late "Sambo" Mockbee, Bruce Goff, Frank Lloyd Wright, and even our local versions of modernism like N. W. Overstreet. In areas not particularly replete with "magazine" architecture, the exciting part is tracing the blurbs of modernism throughout the neighborhoods. All in all, it's at least worth some research, eh?

Andrew Liles
Jackson, Mississippi

Editor's Note: *While we didn't make it to Mississippi this time, you will find three fantastic projects in the South in this very issue. Perhaps a visit to Mississippi next year. . . .*

I love your magazine as a human as well as a designer. By human, I mean to say that in a medium choked with fad-based, ego-directed editorials in glossy ad–packed mags, it is wonderful and somehow healing to open your wonderful magazine and be told some real stories and be informed in an earth- and spirit-based way. As a production designer in the film industry, I look forward to the amazing design information, all of which is attainable by anyone with an imagination and drive. It opens one's eyes to the possibilities and pushes us to not only develop and design our own work, but to do so with a conscience for others and our planet. Thanks.

James Hazell
North Vancouver, British Columbia

I just caught the end of the radio piece that was done on the Dwell Home on NPR's *Talk of the City*. I am excited to hear that you guys are on the cutting edge of tapping into current movements in architecture. I am also excited to see lots of movement in this direction by local competitions as well. What I am concerned with and interested in probing are issues of defabrication: How can architects design modern homes based on flexible and modular prefab concepts and also build into them an expiration date? While the methods of building are changing to a modular system, I think some questions need to be addressed regarding the sustainability of the land that they are going to occupy. I think it is important to consider that if a building is going to be built by number, it doesn't follow that it should stand forever. What kind of plans are being considered to determine the life expectancy and recyclability of the structure?

Sean Thomas
Altadena, California

Editor's Note: *You bring up a good point that we will continue to explore as we move forward with the Dwell Home project.The NPR program, which aired on May 15, 2003, can be found at www.kpcc.org/programming/talkofthecity/*

I am hoping you can help me. I live in the Santa Cruz area and am looking for an exterior designer (if there is such a thing). I am looking for someone to help us redesign just the exterior facing of our home with a modern design. I am having trouble finding someone. Do you know of a resource guide or can you recommend someone in our area? I am not looking forward to the daunting task of calling everyone in the phonebook. Looking forward to your response.

Diane Carver
Santa Cruz, CA

Editor's Note: *Diane, you're in luck! Check out the innovative new exterior cladding options in this month's Dwell Labs on p. 78.* ►

Coming in October

Dwell celebrates its third anniversary! We present "Elsewhere ," an international celebration of great architecture on seven continents. Plus stylish suitcases, haunted houses, and Hotels 101: great design, unique services, luxurious products, and hot tips on beating the mini bar.


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The Dwell Home Booth / ICFF / New York, New York / May 17-20, 2003
We couldn't keep the crowds away when we displayed the architectural models for the Dwell Home Design Invitational at ICFF. We couldn't keep the press away either—the invitational was covered in the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal* on the same day! For the latest news on the Dwell Home, see page 80 or log on to www.thedwellhome.com.

When I saw the item about the dollar coin (July/August 2003, p.30) I had mixed emotions. While I agree that the coin has not circulated well, I can hardly blame the coin itself. If the Canadians can successfully use a dollar coin of the exact same size and color as ours for over a decade then we could certainly learn to do the same. Add the Euro coins of similar design and it really puts us to shame! Nobody I've talked to ever admits to mistaking a dime for a penny and yet the relationship between the dollar and the quarter are very similar. Blame the government for not discontinuing the paper dollar. Or blame our conservative culture for being afraid to try something new. But don't blame the coin.

Glenn Koenig
Arlington, Massachusetts

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In Memoriam: John Petrarca and Doug Michels
Dwell is extremely saddened to report the loss of two respected colleagues this past spring.

John Petrarca, a talented New York architect whose Reade Street residence featuring innovative geothermal technology, appeared in our June 2003 issue, succumbed to a difficult bout with lung cancer in May at the age of 51.

Architect, artist and Ant Farm co-founder Doug Michels, whose trip to Petco for Dwell's "Big Box" feature resulted in the publication of some of the most outrageous items to ever appear in Dwell (including a modular ferret cage he likened to the work of Archigram), died while climbing to a whale observation point in Australia in June, just a few weeks shy of his 60th birthday.

We had just barely skimmed the surface of what Doug and John had to offer and we are left wanting so much more. All of us here at Dwell would like to express our deepest condolences to the families and friends of John and Doug.

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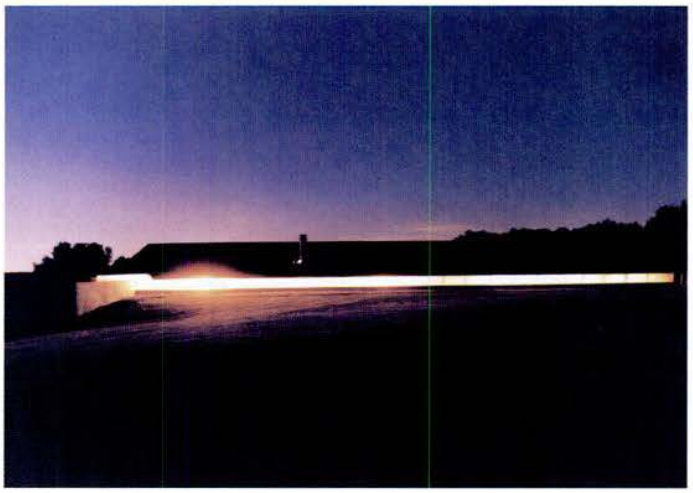

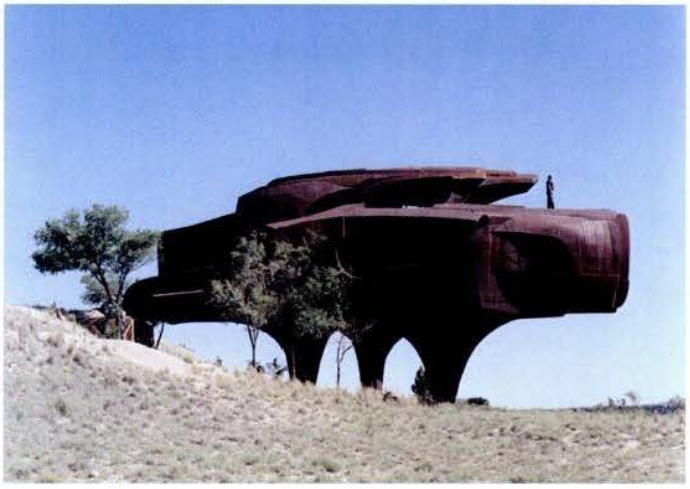

PHOTOS BY JULIANA SOHN (BIRMINGHAM, MI), MIRANDA LICHTENSTEIN (HARTFORD, WI), CHAD HOLDER (ONTARIO, NY), PETER BROWN (LUBBOCK, TX)

Clockwise from top left: elegant modernism in Birmingham, Michigan (Oct. 2002); barn-meets-Bauhaus in Hartford, Wisconsin (Dec. 2000); sleek minimalism in Buffalo, New York; and visionary sculpture in Lubbock, Texas (Oct. 2001).

There There Is Everywhere

In the fall of 2000, we published an issue called "There Is Too a There There." The theme, unwieldy wordplay on Gertrude Stein's assessment of Oakland, California, was a mouthful but the premise was inspired. Contrary to conventional wisdom—and nearly every design magazine—Dwell set out to demonstrate that great architecture was happening not just on the coasts but all over the country.

Our editorial staff sat down that year with a big atlas and no small amount of preconceived notions about the state of design across the ol' U.S. of A. We came up with a list of the more unpopular cities we could think of—Omaha, Dubuque, Cleveland, and the like—and were dispatched to find examples of innovative houses from each. "We'll *never* find anything in Reno!" we joked.

Now, before all you residents of Omaha, Dubuque, and Cleveland launch a boycott against Dwell, let me explain what happened next. After much exhaustive research, we were excited to discover—and publish—great houses in places like Detroit and El Paso, and even that city of Stein's deep disaffection, Oakland. When the issue hit the stands, we began to hear from architects from those unsung locales, and by the third year of "There There," we realized that finding good design in unexpected places wasn't so extraordinary—it was the norm. We used to report on those homes in a sort of "Holy Calatrava! There's modernism in Milwaukee!" fashion, but not anymore.

The truth is, a lot of the best design and architecture is happening not at the presumed cultural centers but at the margins, where design-review boards are less restrictive, land is more attainable, construction is less costly, and no small number of free spirits and risk takers are to be found. Some of the most inspiring Dwell stories have sprung from these places, from the Bauhaus-inspired home of a retired detective in rural Wisconsin to a sculptural steel fantasy in Lubbock, Texas.

We hope you enjoy this year's exploration of Modern Across America—including our venture up north to Canada—as much as we loved putting it together.

ALLISON ARIEFF, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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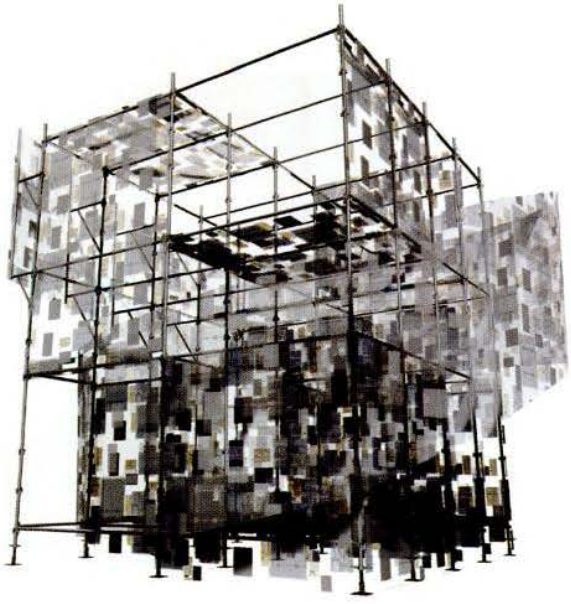
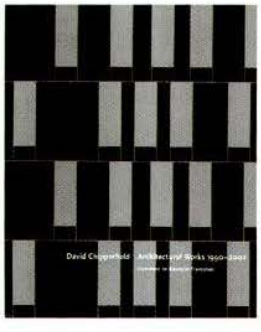
From sacred areas to Japanese-American concentration camps, Hayashi's collages explore the meaning of history-laden panoramas. www.janm.org



Solos: SmartWrap / 5 Aug–10 Oct / Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum / New York, NY Over the summer, the Cooper-Hewitt inaugurated "Solos," an outdoor series of exhibits that allows architects and designers to test new ideas on an unsuspecting public. The first piece, SmartWrap (at left), is a large-scale model by Kieran Timberlake Associates, who have developed a conceptual polyester film cladding that incorporates solar panels and smart technology within a single membrane form. www.ndm.si.edu



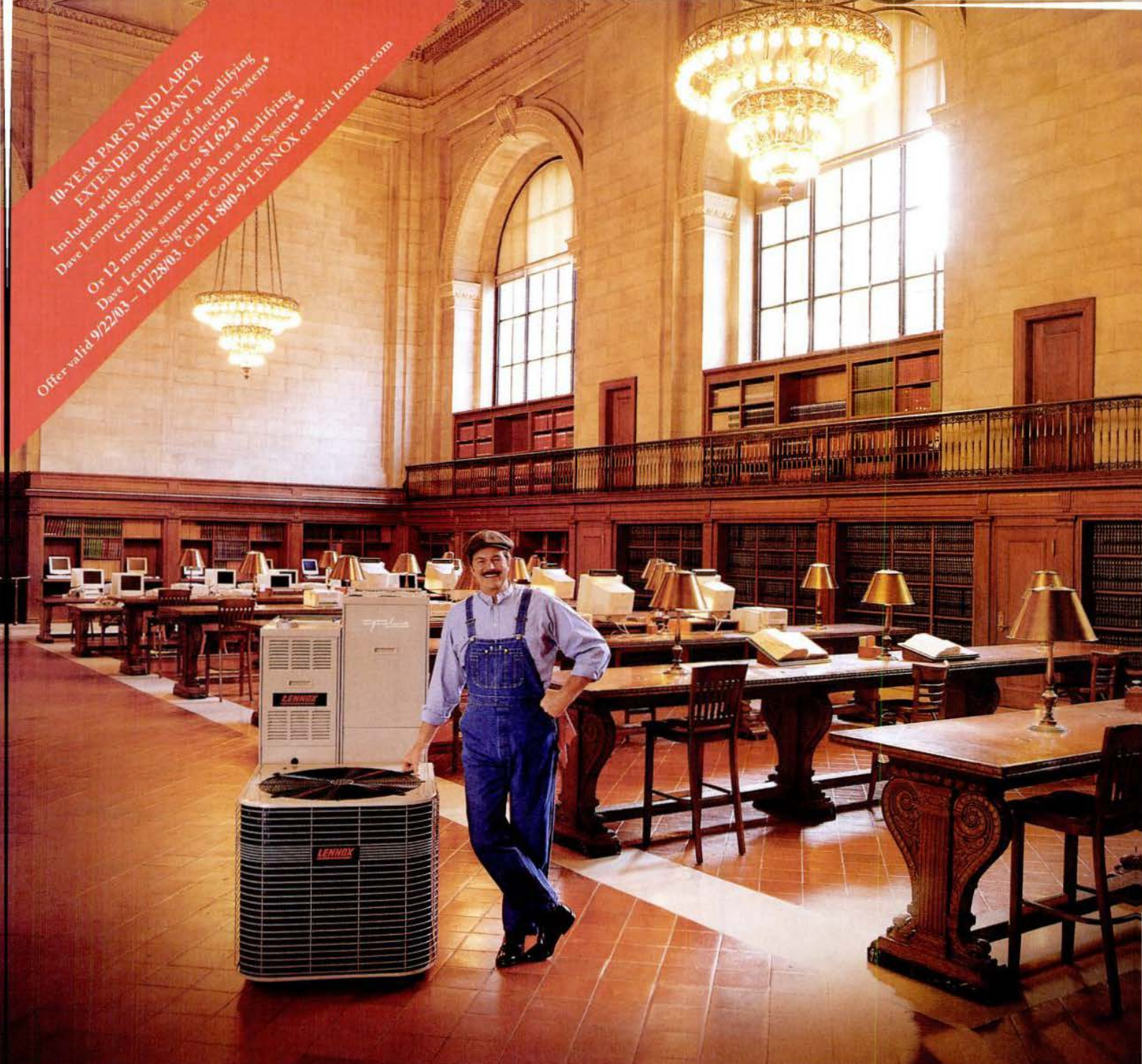
David Chipperfield: Architectural Works 1990–2002 / Edited by Thomas Weaver / Princeton Architectural Press / $85

"The most interesting buildings are the ones where there is a synthesis of purpose, space, and form," says David Chipperfield. Following Tadao Ando's example of spare sensuality in his buildings, one of Chipperfield's most notable works is the River and Rowing Museum at Henley-on-Thames. Though the text at times leans toward academic opacity, the stunning color plates make this a worthwhile buy. www.papress.com

Mathiessen Cot / Coffee Table by Richard Wrightman Design

When traipsing through the hinterlands of Africa, it's easy to get tired in the search for the Big Five (rhino, leopard, etc.). Now, whether waiting for a lion on the plains of the Serengeti or simply looking for a place to lie down in your living room, Wrightman's design does the trick. It's collapsible, lightweight, and comes in a variety of hardwoods and natural materials. www.rwrightmandesign.com

COURTESY OF R. HAYASHI FAMILY (SIGHTS UNSEEN)



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OPEN: New Designs for Public Space / 11 June–31 Oct / Van Alen Institute / New York, NY

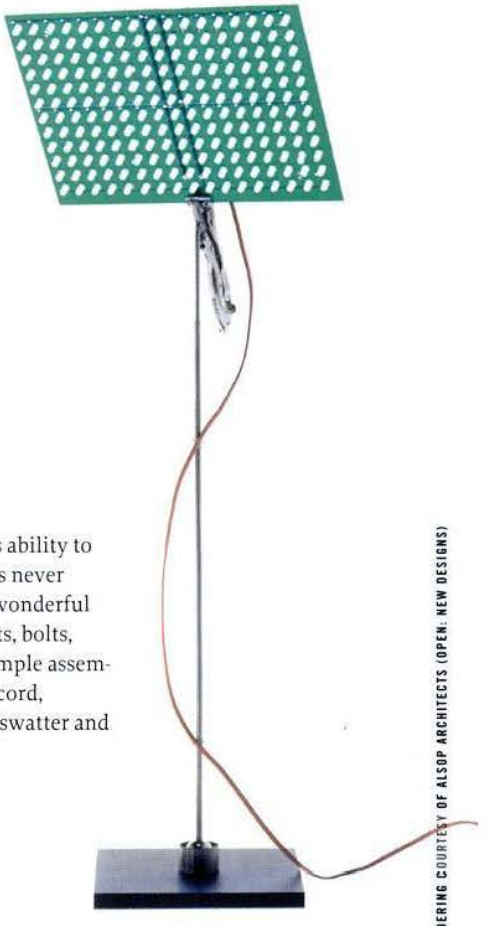
Far from the iconic ideal of Main Street U.S.A., with its corner soda fountain and tree-filled parks, many urban areas have become asphalt-filled spaces with few places for reflection. But some architects and planners are working against this trend, designing public spaces that "contribute to a thriving, creative metropolis." From waterfront parks to city center plazas, this exhibition highlights exciting new directions in urban planning from around the world. www.vanalen.org

Moby / By Poliform

Though we saw plenty of felt at the 2003 Milan furniture fair, not enough of it was intended for the bedroom. The soft, inviting material of pressed woolen pulp that wraps this platform bed holds so much color, it's a feast for the eyes and provides a cozy environment in which to rest your weary head. Another neat trick is the ample under-mattress storage space—perfect for stashing cash while the market sorts itself out. www.poliform.it

Strangely Familiar: Design and Everyday Life / 8 June–7 Sept / Walker Art Center / Minneapolis, MN

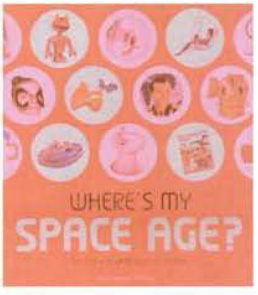
There's nothing new about design questioning our habits, but there are always new ways of accomplishing the effect, which can be irksome or thrilling, depending on whom you ask. At the Walker, an international selection of youthful designers will display their status quo topplers, including the grass easy chair by Nucleo and Droog's "Do" series, which includes a metal chair you hammer into shape (above). www.walkerart.org



El.E.Dee Lamp / By Ingo Maurer

You have to hand it to Maurer for his relentless ability to surprise people. His mad-scientist aesthetic has never stopped mixing nicely with his vocation; it is wonderful when lamp designs aren't ashamed of their nuts, bolts, circuits, and filaments. The El.E.Dee lamp, a simple assembly of metal base, LED-covered circuit board, cord, and wrench, evokes a robotic concoction of flyswatter and solar panel. www.ingo-maurer.com

PHOTO BY BIANCA PILET (STRANGELY FAMILIAR). RENDERING COURTESY OF ALSOP ARCHITECTS (OPEN: NEW DESIGNS)

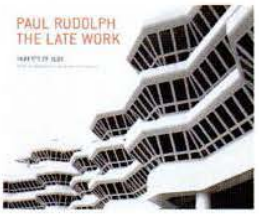


Where's My Space Age?: The Rise and Fall of Futuristic Design / By Sean Topham / Prestel / $35

When the space race began as a result of Cold War tensions, historians could hardly have imagined the frenzied outpouring of pop culture by-products that would ensue. From plastic toy rockets and government poster propaganda to Eero Saarinen's Tulip chair and Lot/EK's current creations, this book explores the rise (and fall) of future-mania and examines how man's forays into the great beyond inspired it all. www.prestel.com

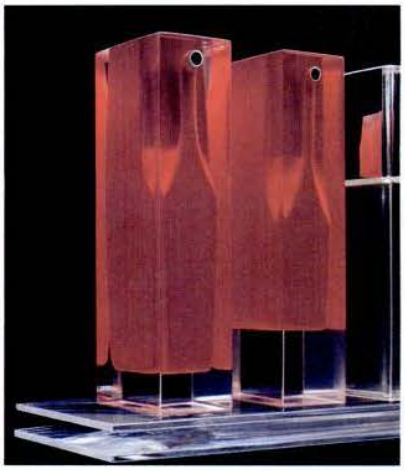
Industrial Strength Design: How Brooks Stevens Shaped Your World / 7 June–7 Sept / Milwaukee Art Museum / Milwaukee, WI

Entrepreneurial pragmatism characterizes all of Stevens's creations, whether in the lofty ether of theory (he coined "planned obsolescence") or the cheerful den of phallic marketing (his Oscar Mayer Weinermobile). In the course of his 60-year career, 2,000 of his streamlined designs were manufactured, from cars to cutlery, tractors to steam irons. "An industrial designer," Stevens said of the profession he helped invent in the 1930s, "must be a businessman to understand the inherent problems of the client and the client's history." www.mam.org



Paul Rudolph: The Late Work / By Roberto de Alba / Princeton Architectural Press / $40

Here's an admission: Rather than using any serviceable jargon, it's easier to call some '60s architects "weird stackers." People like Moshe Safdie classify, but Paul Rudolph had already started it back in the '50s, finding unusually dynamic ways to assemble prefabricated units into megastructures. From the devoted and conscientious eyes of one of his students, this new volume explores how weird stacking, and the rest of Rudolph's mantra, matured in the '70s, '80s, and '90s. www.papress.com



Superstructure

Last winter in Hoofddorp, outside of Rotterdam, a bus station made history as the world's largest polystyrene building. Created by architecture firm Nio, the polystyrene is blasted into computer-shaped molds and then coated with fiberglass. The resulting surface feels, in the words of Nio's Joan Almekinders, "like an orange," though the color is greenish white. Nio's form, something between a giant soaring marine invertebrate and a brutalist import from Brasília, adds mystery to the industrial scene. www.nio.nl

Tea and Coffee Towers / By Alessi

In 1983, Alessi challenged 20 architects and designers to envision new types of teapots. Out of that program sprung the product-design career of Michael Graves, now a doyen of domestic objects. Twenty years later, Alessi has invited 20 more architects to create tea and coffee "towers," for sale in limited editions. Watch for the next product-design impresario to emerge from a group that includes Zaha Hadid, Greg Lynn, and Weil Arets (whose design is pictured here). www.alessi.com

Traces of India / 15 May–14 Sept / Canadian Centre for Architecture / Montreal, Quebec

Magnificent architecture from the Indian subcontinent has survived the trials of colonial and postcolonial history, but not always in its original form. See all kinds of photo documentation in an exhibit of six phases, designed by renegade architect Lindy Roy. Beginning with engravings and aquatints, and wrapping up in Bollywood, these images are sure to inspire every caste. www.cca.qc.ca

COURTESY OF BORTZ AUTO COLLECTION. PHOTO BY MICHAEL TROPEA (INDUSTRIAL STRENGTH)

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Roots and Seeds of the Garden City / 3–5 Sept / Espoo Cultural Center / Tapiola, Finland

After Sir Ebenezer Howard first uttered the term in 1902, garden cities—urban areas that incorporate natural elements with low-density dwellings—became all the rage. Developed in 1953, Tapiola Garden City celebrates its half-century mark in September with a month of Finnish festivities, including an academic conference that promises to be a fascinating debate on the merits—and drawbacks—of Tapiola and other garden cities. www.hut.fi

Sushi Set / By Studio Becker

Most of us scarf down our takeout sashimi directly from Styrofoam containers, chomping the tasty morsels without any regard to serving style. In lieu of splintery chopsticks, Studio Becker's new design offers eight enticing sushi place settings. The smart set fits perfectly in kitchen drawers, and includes beech sushi trays, crystal dipping bowls and soy sauce pitchers, and sleek stainless steel chopstick rests. www.studiobecker.com

Disturbing Trend

Picture this: In a "red alert," you calmly grab the Human-scale Safety Kit in your office. You peel off the lid, gulp down the contents of the sterile water packets, use your flashlight to scope out the scene, and sound the battery-operated personal alarm. Here's a better idea: Don't picture it. In such a scenario, that kind of equipment seems as useful as your seat cushion in a plane crash. The evacuation graphics are less egregiously lame than the ones on our nation's Homeland Security website, but the messages of both—fear and isolation—bear sorry testament to this period of history. www.safety-kit.com

Structures of Utility / By David Stark Wilson / Heyday Books / $45

It shouldn't be a surprise that a lot of the "latest" in modern architecture bears an uncanny resemblance to the fading farm buildings of California's Central Valley. But Wilson's intense black-and-white, large-format shots still catch the viewer off guard by showing these buildings in such a pristine manner that they wouldn't look out of place in *Abitare*. As Wilson says, "It is the value of form generated by function and place that is embodied in these structures of utility." www.heydaybooks.com

Musa Chair / By Habita

Habita company reps touted Davide Varotto's Musa as "the chaise of the new millennium," as Corbu's was for the last century. While this comparison may be too brash for Musa's profile, which is better from some angles than others, the light frame of multilayered birch does have great legs. The fine shape and organic material combine into a glamorously Italo-Scandinavian look. Nicest of all is the veneer surface, which comes in numerous woods, including light cherry and dune oak—because napping is always lackluster without some quality wood. www.habitacollections.com

PHOTO BY ANU ALLT (ROOTS AND SEEDS)

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Verner Panton Bedding / By Signoria di Firenze
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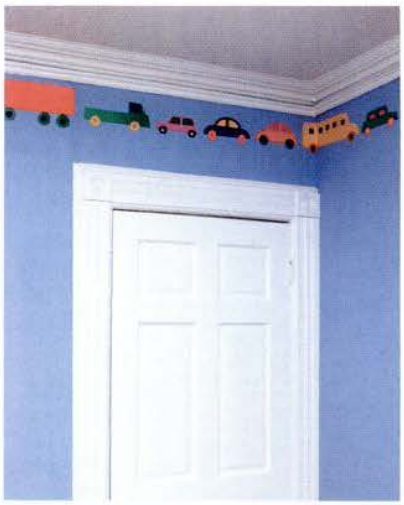

Wall Candy / By Wall Candy Arts
These easily removable wall decals are intended for children (or adults) who might prefer Donald Judd to Donald Duck. While Wall Candy offers a series of endearing farm animals, the real treats are their designs licensed from Finnish textile house Marimekko. These peel-and-stick updates of Katsuji Wakisaka's playful "Bo Boo" vehicles and Maija Isola's classic "Unikko" flowers (in either red or blue) will turn even the drabbest playroom into a colorful play pad. www.wallcandyarts.com

New Material as New Media / By Marion Boulton Stroud / The MIT Press / $50
Twisted and suspended mattresses, primary-colored stuffed bunnies, and a paper trombone are all featured in Stroud's book, as she lays out 25 vibrant years of art exhibited by contemporary artists with passions for fabrics and unconventional media. The book is a collection of essays, interviews, and artist and exhibit profiles, focusing on such luminaries as sculptors Claes Oldenburg and Louise Bourgeois, as well as Roy Lichtenstein, Ann Hamilton, and Felix Gonzalez-Torres. mitpress.mit.edu

ADDFNCT Glasses / By Mobach
Intriguingly caught in identity crises, Chris Kabel's ADDFNCT designs are part cocktail glass, part household accessory/kitchen necessity. One pours. Another measures. The next cradles a cigarette. With their stylish utility, they hearken back to undergrad days of Top Ramen, cinder-block bookshelves, and gin and tonics on blissfully empty afternoons. It's no wonder they were Kabel's graduation project. www.mobach-groothandel.nl

Mini Cooper Accessories
The original Mini Cooper has long been admired for its super-cute design (but it was banned in the States for failing emission standards). Happily, the car was relaunched in the U.S. in 2002 by BMW, to great popular acclaim. Now, Mini motoring enthusiasts can buy matching mod gear as well: Industrial designer Yves Behar has created the new MINI_motion line that includes jackets, shoes, and the very slick watches shown here. www.miniusa.com

Photo, Gionata Xerra. Artwork, William Xerra Concept and Styling, Ravasi Silenzi Studio **designwork**
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"It was like hurricane Andrew had hit it," says Emma Chung about the site prior to rebuilding (inset). The completed house (above) was an exercise in perserverance and vision.

Building Your Own Home: Priceless

In late 2001, Stephen and Emma Chung were living happily in a 1,600-square-foot loft in Somerville, Massachusetts, when thoughts about family and a home in the suburbs moved to the forefront of the couple's discussions about their future. If the 'burbs were calling, Stephen knew he wanted to design a new home and that the couple's financial constraints would demand that he build it, too. But neither prospect scared the young architect, a principal at his own Boston-based firm. "My office does lots of design work, but we also manage some construction projects, so I have lots of contacts in the trade," Stephen says. "I called in every favor and promised everything to everyone. I was ready to take it on."

But the Chungs soon found out that buying a lot and building a house was not as easy as it might seem. "When you go to a bank asking for a loan to build a house and you don't have any collateral, the chance of your getting a loan is zero. But if you buy an existing house, the bank can at least say, 'Well, there's something,' and your chances are much better." With this realization, they took a new approach. Stephen contacted a real estate agent friend and asked her to find "the worst ▸

disaster she could," Stephen says, "because I really wanted to do a lot of work on it."

Following Stephen's instructions precisely, the agent phoned one day to inform him that she had found the perfect place—a house that was such a wreck, in fact, that she was a little embarrassed even to show it to him. "The house had not really been kept up in the past 30 years," Stephen explains, "and most people were really turned off by it, but I told her it was perfect."

But like all home purchases at the real estate–crazed turn of the century, an offer had to be made immediately. With Emma away on business, Stephen took a gamble, and the offer was accepted. "I came back to my hotel room late in the evening," Emma says, "and there was a message that said, 'Your husband has bought a house,' and all I could think was, What?!"

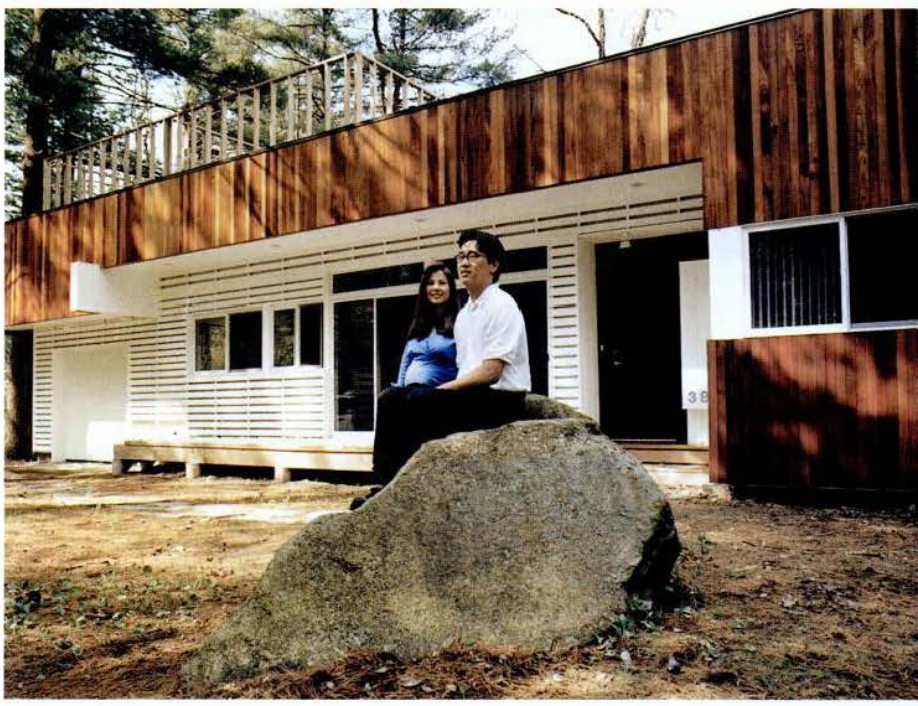
After Stephen's many sketches demonstrating the "'50s-ish ranch-burger's" potential and his massaging of her bruised ego, Emma came to see the light. "There was this beautiful boulder in the front yard that helped me imagine that if that ugly house was gone and this beautiful house was in its place, this could be something."

The first task at hand was the almost complete demolition of the old house, leaving only the foundation. "After they finished taking down the old structure," Emma says, "it was like hurricane Andrew had hit it. The day I went to see the site, all I could think was, Oh my god, where did my investment go?! There it was, sitting in the Dumpster."

With the old house gone, construction was set to begin. Armed with how-to books from Home Depot and working like madmen, Stephen and his assembled crew set out to bring the Chungs' dream to fruition before the ▸

"Stephen's sketches for the new house helped me see past the hideous house sitting in front of us," Emma says.

The low-grade mahogany that Stephen chose for the floors (above) was perfect. "The wood is very irregular but it is very **cool in that way," Stephen says. "I look at it and see this incredible spectrum. It jumps** from light to dark." The boulder **(below) is the lone remnant from the days when the lot was dominated by a sprawling** "'50s-ish ranch-burger."



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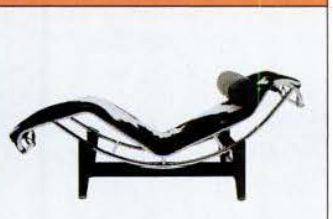
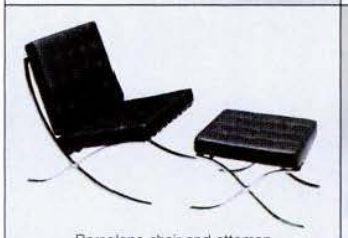
Le Corbusier sofa


Le Corbusier cow hide lounge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September deadline. The furious pace kept everyone on their toes and, in a few cases, living a life of danger. "I fell out of a tree and a beam fell on my head," Stephen says.

Then suddenly, in the late summer of 2002 the momentum started to fade as money ran out. Stephen and Emma, however, were determined to keep on track. "The recession helped us in a strange way," Stephen explains. "Everyone kept offering us credit cards with no payments for six months and no interest for a year." Emma, spying an opportunity, suggested taking them up on their offers, finishing the house, and refinancing upon completion, paying off the debt before interest could start piling on. "We didn't really have a choice," Stephen says, "so we got nine different credit cards."

Newly fortified with credit from everywhere from Home Depot to the Boston Red Sox, the project team sped toward the completion date. "I was pretty nervous about it," Emma now admits. "But Stephen said he'd get it done in three months, and he did. I still can't believe it."

Standing in place of what was once a ramshackle ranch house is now a low-slung 1,300-square-foot mahogany structure inching its way ever so gracefully into the surrounding evergreen trees. The Chungs are starting to feel very much at home. "I'm really happy with the end result," Emma says. "A lot of the excitement comes from having a unique and beautiful creation. My friends are all buying houses now, and they really have had to settle. We didn't, and that feels pretty special." ■

"I would flip through books of Schindler's work and go back to the site bolstered by his example," Stephen says.

Make My House Your House

1 / Birch casing with mahogany stain for the refrigerator

Even the nicest of refrigerators are often bulky beasts that have the potential to mar the look of a kitchen. As Stephen says, "They are just too cumbersome." More savory solutions are out there, however, and can be as simple as building a shelter for the hulking mass of steel. "We used birch with a mahogany stain so it is actually reasonably priced," Stephen says, "but the stain really makes it look nice." Mahogany stain available at www.epaintstore.com.

2 / All the kitchen appliances

Stephen went to several appliance stores in the Boston area and ended up getting nice appliances like a Thermador slide-in stove and Bosch dishwasher by asking for the floor models. A trick of the trade, this enabled the Chungs to equip their new home with the highest quality at more reasonable prices. www.themador.com / www.boschusa.com

3 / The "inside-out effect"

Stephen explains, "We used the same wood for the inside and the outside of the house. It's a very low-grade mahogany that's inexpensive because it is considered so irregular. There is this very cool, white, modern aesthetic inside that extends outside to the front, and the wood on the outside reverses and comes inside."

4 / Find the cool little vintage shop in your city

New England isn't the easiest place to get your modern fix, but a little searching on the streets that spawned Paul Revere will yield some tasty mid-century treats like Machine Age. "We used to go there and that's how we filled up our loft," Stephen says. "The couch is a Knoll, and though I don't want to rely too much on architect-designed stuff, we do have the requisite Alvar Aalto stool and some other cool stuff from that store." www.machine-age.com

Story by Lydia Lee

Photos by Richard Eastwood

Sustain-a-Mania

By taking full advantage of its site—and all that sustainable technology has to offer—this self-sufficient and stylish home allows its adventurous owners to live almost entirely off the grid. The exterior cladding (inset) is celery top pine, a locally sourced timber.

Jen Fry and Andrew Wirtz already know how they're going to keep their future kids from being inundated by mass media: "We'll say, 'No, you can't watch TV tonight because we don't have enough power.' It's a great excuse," says Wirtz.

Fry and Wirtz live almost entirely off the grid, on 40 acres of forest and pasture in Tasmania, an island off the southernmost tip of Australia. While the land that they live on is only 20 miles outside of Tasmania's capital city of Hobart, when they moved there it had no utilities other than a phone line.

"The site had a few acres of cleared land, but there was nothing here," says Fry. "It was a clean slate, and the idea of starting from scratch appealed to us."

Their new house, a striking steel, wood, and concrete structure, seems to float above a slope. Like some of the most innovative architecture to come from Australia, it combines modern design with sustainability.

Fry, who is a naturalist for Tasmania's parks and wildlife service, and Wirtz, a primary school teacher, always wanted to live off their own bit of land. To save money to build the house, they spent their first two years on the property living in an old hay shed, fixing it up with some modern improvements (solar panels) and some not so modern (an outhouse).

In January of 2000, they took their requirements for self-sufficiency to local architect Cath Hall of 1+2 Architecture. To keep the house warm during Tasmania's chilly winters, when temperatures can drop to the mid-30s, Hall came up with a design in which every room is heated directly by the sun. The long, thin house faces north—the side that gets the most sun in the southern hemisphere. Tall windows bring light in, along with panoramic views of the surrounding forest and local peak Mt. Wellington.

The house, completed in mid-2001, also integrates a modest number of solar panels, which supply electricity and hot water. Angled for maximum exposure to the sun, the panels form a dramatic roof over the entryway. The covered entry also serves as the laundry area, so Fry and Wirtz can toss their muddy things straight into the wash before entering the house.

Raised on steel posts, the house "touches lightly on the land," says Hall, echoing a favorite saying of compatriot ►

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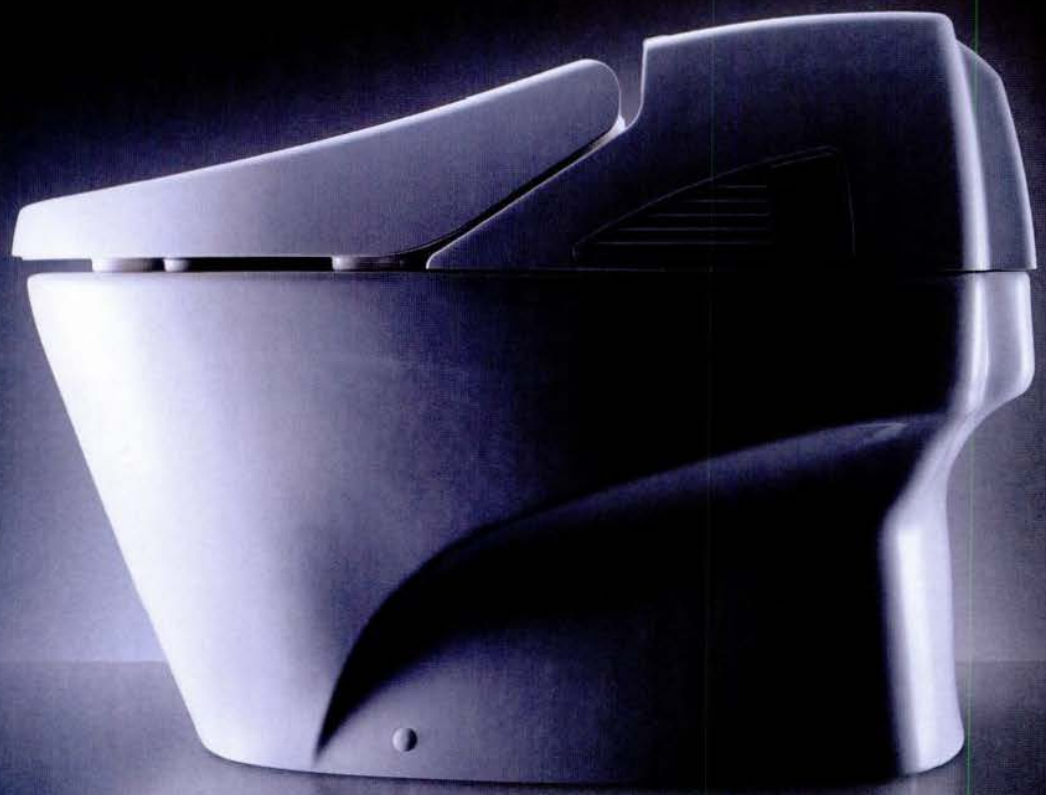

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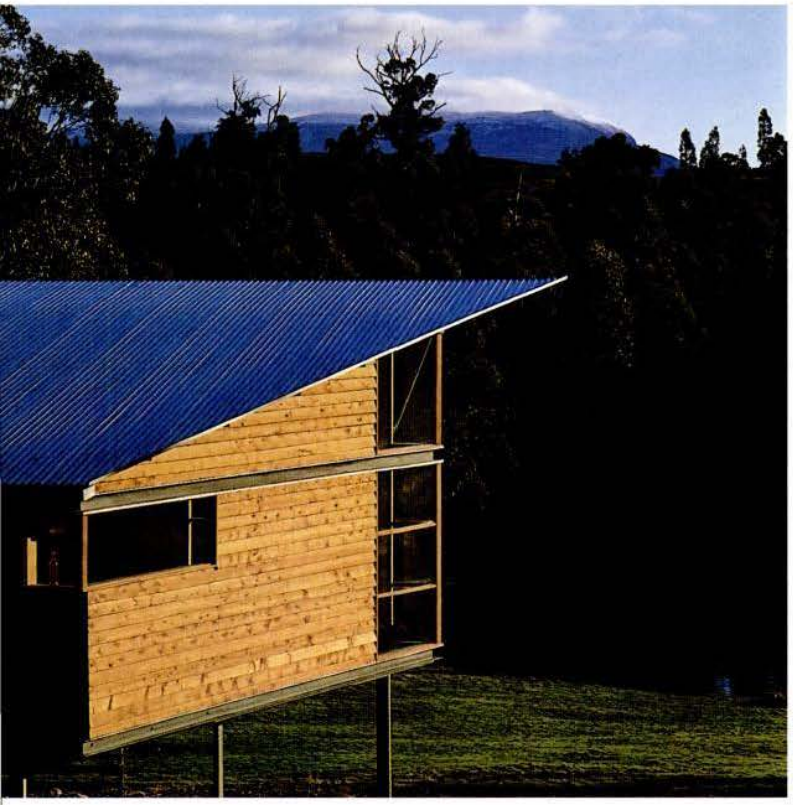
and celebrated environmental architect Glenn Murcutt. The house-on-stilts approach, also used by Murcutt to great effect in some rural designs, is quite popular in Australia. "It makes a lot of sense in this wooded context," she explains. "You get natural drainage of the site, there's no need for excavation, and the house doesn't look so imposing."

And there's another added benefit: Since the solar panels can't handle the energy drain of a dryer, Fry and Wirtz use the sheltered space to hang their clothes to dry, in both good and foul weather.

Rain is always welcome, since it supplies all the couple's water; it's collected off the roof and pumped to storage tanks farther up the hill, then gravity-fed down to the house. Graywater from the sinks, shower, and laundry goes into a series of gravel-lined drains. A Nature-Loo composting toilet rounds out the sewage system.

"We're self-sufficient in our power usage, and able to run on our own apart from food. That's a nice feeling," says Wirtz. He goes on to describe their nascent food production: eggs from the chickens, and raspberries, cherries, and black currants from a small orchard. "When we have kids, we'll have a better garden—we'll have slaves!" he jokes. At press time, Baby Fry was just weeks away. ■



The roof's deep overhang, and an additional set of sun shades (left and bottom), shield the interior from the high rays of the summer sun while also allowing the lower angles of the winter sun to enter.

The simple yet expansive open kitchen (below) provides a perfect setting for preparing food gathered from Fry and Wirtz's own small orchard.

A House That Heats Itself

The solar panels on Fry and Wirtz's house provide enough electricity for basic appliances but not enough for electric heating. However, thanks to the home's passive solar design, the couple stays cozy without central heating. Occasionally, they fire up the wood-burning cookstove, but most of the heat comes from the house itself.

Acting a bit like an asphalt parking lot, the black concrete floor absorbs heat through the nearly 12-foot-high, floor-to-ceiling windows. The thick concrete slab provides substantial thermal mass, absorbing heat during the day and releasing it throughout the night. (Two-thirds of the floor is concrete; the last third along the house's main walkway is wood planking, which is easier on the feet.)

"In the winter, I look forward to coming home from work in the dark, knowing it will be 75 degrees inside," says Fry. "I don't like opening the door to a cold house." —L.L.

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DISHWASHERS · KITCHEN APPLIANCES · LAUNDRY

Story by Virginia Gardiner | Portrait by Chad Holder

If you had to choose an emblematic designer for 1970s opulence, it would be Verner Panton. His richly colored, curvaceous interiors, most famously epitomized by the Visiona II installation at the 1970 Cologne Furniture Fair, beckoned a new generation to lounge with sophistication and sensuality.

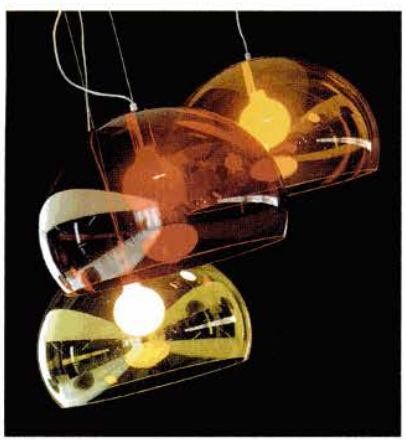
Crucial to all of Panton's interiors were moody, modular systems of lighting, which frequently employed the newly popular pendant lamp. In the postwar technology boom, the greatest innovations in lighting came from the use of plastics. Finally, a lightweight, inexpensive, moldable material could resist heat. It was thus much easier to manufacture a graceful sculpted shade and fixture that wouldn't hang too heavily off a cord. Aesthetically, the lamps' pendulous nature endowed them with a romance that complemented the sexual revolution. Panton wasn't the only designer who embraced pendant lamps—so did the American Eameses, the Italian Joe Colombo, and the Danish Simon Karkov, among many others.

Those designers never met Don Diebel, the author of hundreds of articles about how to romance women, but they all experienced professional self-discovery in the same era. "My God-given talent for dating really hit me in the '70s, when disco took off," explains Diebel. "Women were wild and free. It was a period of excessive promiscuity, if you will. So that got me interested in the dating scene. And I wanted to write about it. There's so many men out there that need help. So many shy ones, and so many jerks who make mistakes."

When we called Diebel to talk about pendant lamps, it seemed easiest to discuss them within a traditional, gender-stereotyping framework. After all, back in the '70s—Diebel's heyday—that's how life was. Men seduced ladies with romantic dinners, and lamps were feminine. As Diebel says, "I really don't think men are that seduced by lamps. Lighting, yes. But the lamps themselves? I've done a lot of dating, I've been to a lot of women's places, but I was never influenced by any lamp."

Turn On

The pendant lamp, a modernized version of the chandelier, nonetheless speaks from a bygone era—the sensual '70s. Here in the 21st century, a host of pendulous options helps keep the romance alive.



Icon / By Ferruccio Laviani / Kartell / $195
Available in light blue, red, yellow, and orange, the shade of transparent methacrylate creates iridescent reflections meant to convey "light and airy soap bubbles."

Expert Opinion: To make this romantic, you'd have to keep it dim. You turn it low, to where you get that kind of cozy glow. It's hard to define; I just know it when it's there. If this lamp didn't have a dimmer, I'd suspend it low where I could get to it, so I could switch in a low-wattage bulb if I were going out, in case I might bring somebody home.

What We Think: Just the way soap bubbles are entertaining, the Icon might be nice to stare at if you're tired of looking at your date. Kartell's techniques for molding transparent plastics are the best on the furniture market. Dimmers are a good idea—indispensable, actually. How many libidinous bachelors does it take to change a light bulb?

Light Shade Shade / By Jurgen Bey / moooi / $1,010–$1,150 (opposite)
The shade, a semitransparent mirror film, reflects when the chandelier is turned off and creates a dark silhouette when lit.

Expert Opinion: The Victorian look is always, in my opinion, on the romantic side. And the way this is encased, it gives off an interesting glow. It's got an attractive mystique. The crystals could throw patterns of light onto the wall or ceiling—a nice special effect. But I think this is too formal. It looks as if it might appeal to older women, but not to, say, women in their 20s.

What We Think: In a way that can't be replicated in pictures, Bey's Light Shade Shade gives crystal chandeliers the ghostly, spectacular aura that's also prevalent inside Disneyland's Haunted Mansion, a place with no dearth of romance. And the effect, as a matter of fact, appeals to all ages. ►

A Note on Our Expert:
Among Diebel's recent articles, seen on his website, www.get-girls.com, is "How to Seduce Women with Romantic Lighting." When asked to recount highlights, Diebel recommends: "You create a soft, romantic atmosphere by using dimmers and/or low-wattage bulbs. And if you have the right amenities, make a nice table setting with fresh flowers, champagne, soft music, and roaring fireplace. Candles are a must—I recommend vanilla, which most women find appealing."

Moon Lamp / By Verner Panton / Sold through Unica / $600

One of Panton's earliest designs, the Moon lamp first cast its iconic shadow in 1960. Mounted on movable bearings, the rounded metal blinds fan out into a nautilus. Light beams out through the openings.

Expert Opinion: I don't like this one at all. It almost looks like an eyeball looking down at you. I don't know where I would put this. I just wouldn't want that eyeball looking at me. I'm sure that somebody out there would love this lamp. But if you're playing the odds, you can bet most people won't. It's too weird. You don't want anybody to think you're weird, unless they're weird, too. Then it will be the perfect match.

What We Think: The whole eyeball comparison seems off. This really looks more like some abstract representation of the moon, offering different lunar phases from different angles. And like other of Panton's early designs, the lamp's shape has a beautiful way of harkening back to '50s functionalism. Perhaps Diebel's dating experience has made him oversensitive to the hairy eyeball.

Crosslight / By Jan Melis and Ben Oostrum / Dark / $210

Melis and Oostrum have created a lamp in the form of intersecting crosses. The Crosslight can be purchased in clusters, and the crosses interlock end-to-end. Colors are white, off-white with phosphor (glows in the dark), and red-orange.

Expert Opinion: I don't recommend this. The orange one reminds me of a red cross for emergency, and the white is too plain. I see how you can snap them together like big Tinkertoys. I liked Tinkertoys as a kid, but if I still liked them now. . . . I don't know about that. You don't want to reveal too much second childhood when you're dating. If this were in my house and I were having a date, I'd try to hide it in the closet.

What We Think: It seems like some second childhood might be a good thing for dating, and for all activities. And didn't *Our Bodies, Ourselves* teach us to keep everything out of the closet? This glowing cross isn't just playful, it's enigmatic and intriguing. But there may be something overdesigned in the heft of the plastic pieces.

Light Frame / By Stephen Burks / David Design / $630

While echoing the whirling shapes of a Spirograph, David Design's assembly of 18 laser-cut Plexiglas trapezoids takes advantage of the material's quality of refracting light to its edges.

Expert Opinion: This isn't romantic. It's too ultra-modern, and the material looks cheap. To women in general, it would come across as cold and masculine. You don't want to convey too much of that. It looks like propellers on an airplane or something. Like you could put your head up there and maybe get a free haircut. It's not going to ruin the date—you can do that on your own, without a lamp. But it won't help, either.

What We Think: This looks as much like a zinnia as it does a propeller, and isn't particularly masculine. The refraction promises stellar effects—a lovely combination of organic and space-age that certainly does not come cheap. As for lamps and dating, Diebel is right: You can't ruin a date with a lamp. Vanilla-scented candles, however, are a different story. ■

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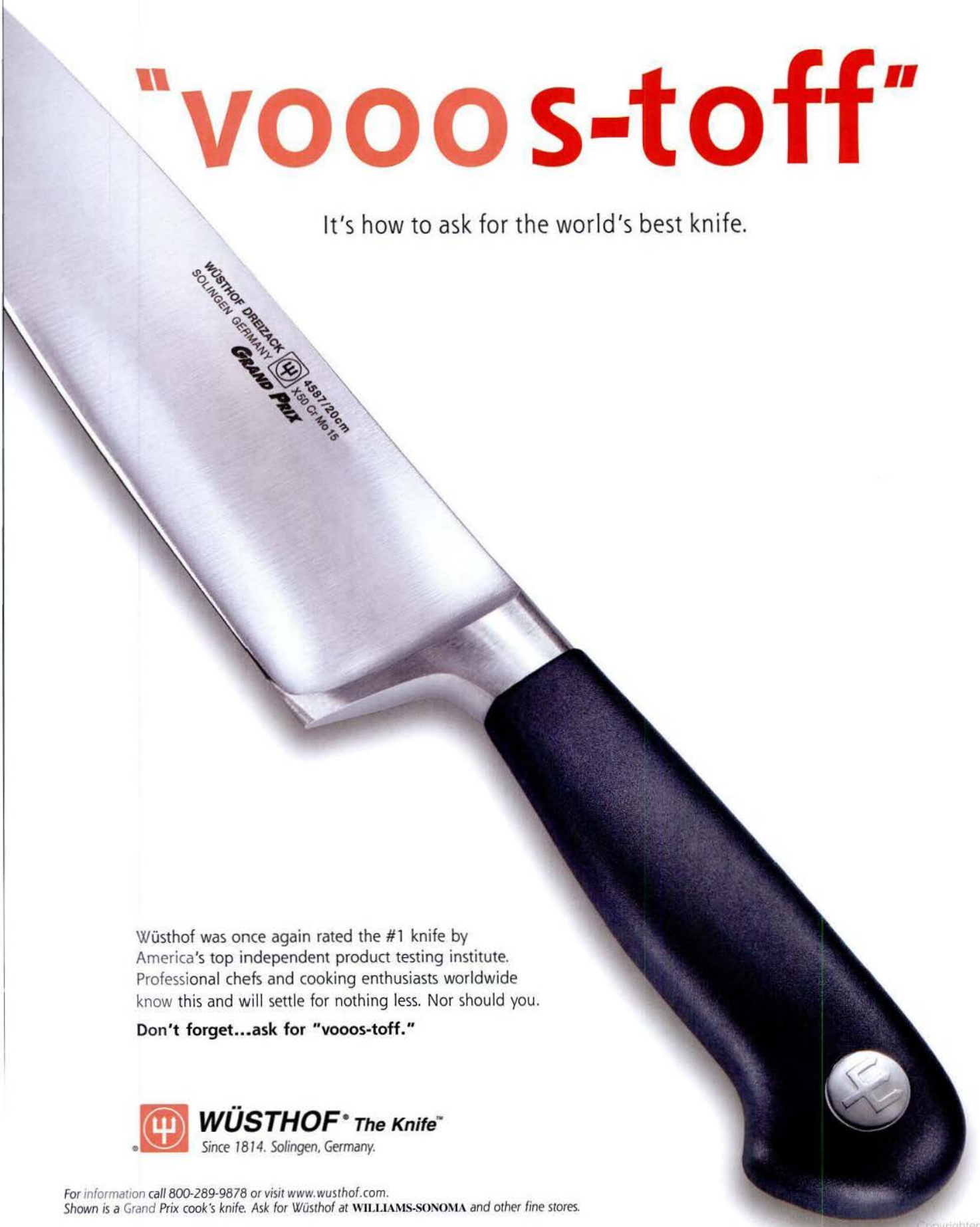

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Story by Amara Holstein | Photo by Alex Harris

Bell's Mission

In 1989, architect Bryan Bell was frustrated with his job at a high-profile firm in New York City and had, he says, an "early midlife crisis right out of school." At the time, one of Bell's sisters was working as a building inspector, evaluating migrant-farmworker housing for code violations. "She told me about some of the terrible housing conditions," Bell explains, "and I realized that this might be a place where my education and talent would be useful."

Determined to revolutionize the substandard model of migrant-worker housing, Bell moved to Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. There he established a nonprofit organization, Design Corps, through which he began tackling the challenge of building good housing for migrant workers. Design Corps asks farm owners to foot a percentage of the construction costs; the rest of the bill is paid through grants and private donations.

Design Corps creates housing that's custom tailored for workers' time in the fields. For each project, Bell and his interns meet with the future residents multiple times in order to discuss their preferences and needs. "In architecture school, I was taught how to design a great house from a tennis shoe that I found in the street, but no one taught me how to talk to someone about what their housing should be like. It's been a steep learning curve—but for me, that's the real pleasure of the work," Bell says. As a result, each house is slightly different: one with a large living room for relaxing after work, another that lets in plenty of morning sun. But all the structures are light-filled and cheery, and more than triple the building code's paltry requirements of 50 square feet per person.

With ongoing projects in five states, Design Corps has added houses for low-income immigrant families to its roster. So far, more than 50 units of housing have been built through Bell's initiative—and countless workers and families are thankful for his tireless dedication to his mission. ■

Nominate Nice Modernists at www.dwellmag.com.

Standing next to a project he built with students from North Carolina State University, Bell explains that "architects can provide the access for people to be involved in decisions that shape their lives."

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Story by Jane Szita

Photos by Peter Kooijman

Red-Light Renovation

When Mik Moody and Isabelle Nadrai first saw their future home in 1996, the cellar was full of water and the sleazy-looking upper floors had just been vacated by 12 hookers. Oh, and the whole building tilted alarmingly—a sure sign that the foundations needed replacing (a common problem in Amsterdam, where geography means that building on sand, however ill-advised, is the norm).

In spite of all this, the 1926 brick building, which was originally a garage, had a certain utilitarian charm, a wide, south-facing façade, a great corner situation, and was a steal at 160,000 guilders (about $85,500). "It was exactly what we were looking for," says Moody. "An affordable urban space in need of renovation."

"Renovation" is an understatement for a project that involved renewing the foundations and adding two floors, but Moody is an interior architect as well as a furniture designer, so the couple was undaunted. A very limited budget meant they had to do as much as possible themselves, including most of the foundation work (the professionals came in only for the technical bits). Nadrai cheerfully alternated the heavy labor with her day job as a flight attendant for Swiss Air.

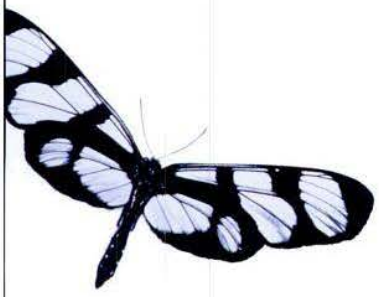
Moody sold off most of his valuable vintage jukebox collection to help pay for unavoidable skilled labor, like the three bricklayers who built the top two floors—a job that took three weeks. A six-meter-tall, inverted L-shaped window (Nadrai's idea) was added at this stage. It floods the top levels in light and provides great views of both the skyline and the lively street below.

Recently, we spoke with the couple, who live in the four-story Amsterdam School (1910–1930) building with their three-year-old son, Mo.

The original building you bought was a nightmare. What most attracted you to it?
Moody: The corner situation means that, uniquely in this street, the long side of the house faces south—that means lots of light, of course.

For a modernist interior, you have quite a few decorative things—who's the magpie?
Nadrai: Well, as I travel a lot for work, I tend to pick ▸

Alias



OUTDOOR *design: Giandomenico Belotti*

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things up. I found the antique hatbox and shoebox, the buddha, and the lacquer pot in Beijing. The spice-grinding bowl and musical instruments are from Africa. The red glass candlesticks are from Finland. And lots of things are by or from our friends—the twin sculptures and etchings are by artist Jeanine Theunissen, for example. People just tend to give us things.

Moody: I'm responsible for the huge dollhouse—my grandfather made it. And there's the last of my jukebox collection. I've decided I'm only going to keep three: the Wurlitzer 2000, the Wurlitzer 24, and a third I haven't chosen yet.

What's your favorite thing about the house?

Nadrai: The rooftop kitchen. We really spend most of our time here. I think it's mainly because of the light—having windows running the whole length of this floor, plus the roof garden just outside the kitchen, gives a great feeling of transparency and connectedness. People thought we were mad to put our kitchen at the top of the house, but, because it's next to the roof garden, we use the garden all the time.

What was the most difficult thing to get right?

Moody: The shell-shaped shower room next to the living room. We needed a freestanding solution, because we wanted to keep the perspective effect of the space as a whole. It's six meters at one end, four at the other, and if you put a wall in, you lose that effect. We decided on a shell shape, but drawings didn't work. I had to make several full-size cardboard models to get the right contour. The final result looks ugly viewed from above, because it isn't perfect geometry, but it works in 3-D. ▸

The couple bought this 1920s building and then completely gutted it to create a highly livable contemporary space with five floors and a roof garden with great city views.

Furniture designer Mik Moody and flight attendant Isabelle Nadrai (shown with son Mo on preceding page) spend most of their time in the rooftop kitchen and garden.

Moody designed the interior himself and made a lot of the furniture in the house, including the white oak dining table and the couple's bed. The 30s dining chairs are by Rotterdam designer Smit.

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The shower room details were also hard, because we wanted a very pale green mosaic tile, which we couldn't find. We created it ourselves by using white glass mosaic on green adhesive. We also couldn't find the pale green matte glass bricks we wanted, so we sandblasted them ourselves. You could say we went a bit far, but we didn't want to compromise.

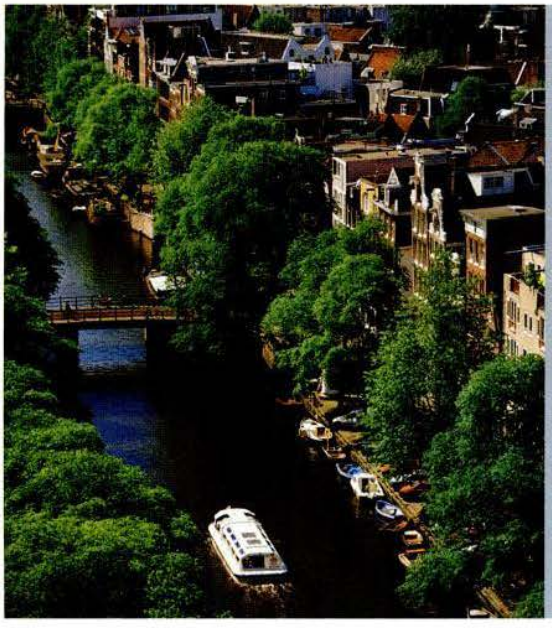
How did you cope with living on a building site?
Nadrai: The first thing we did was renovate the first floor, so we could always shower and cook while we worked on the rest of the house. I could always escape to my job when I got tired with things. We didn't tend to disagree or argue, so that helped, too.

Did the design of the house change as work progressed?
Moody: We started off with a firm idea of what we wanted, and tended to stick to that. In the kitchen, though, we ended up switching the black stone work surface from the blank wall side to the window side—definitely the right thing to do, because when you're cooking you can enjoy the light and the view, and it emphasizes the feeling of space.

How do you like the neighborhood?
Nadrai: Apart from the fact that we're not on a canal, I love it here. It's called the Diamantbuurt [Diamond Quarter] because diamond cutters used to work here, and it's both quaint and central. There's a nice mix of private and social housing, which makes it pretty vibrant. And there are quite a few art and design ateliers around us.

Would you do it all over again?
Moody: Yes! In fact, I'm thinking of doing a new project in the neighborhood. I've got my eye on the place around the corner. I know I do this stuff for a living, but my clients never let me have everything my own way. ■

The Eames chair came from Moody's uncle, who was about to throw it out. "It needed a new leather cover, so I got one made in Bombay—much cheaper than buying here," says Nadrai. The couch is from Moroso, the coffee table from B+B Italia. p. 136



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Amstelkring Museum, Oudezijds Voorburgwal 40
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The lower floors of this museum are well-preserved 17th-century Dutch interior design, featuring splendid chambers straight out of a Vermeer painting. Upstairs, there's an unexpected loft conversion: a concealed but full-scale baroque chapel, constructed by the city's secret Golden Age Catholics.

De Negen Straatjes
That's the Nine Little Streets to you—a cluster of cute alleys, starting off Dam Square and crossing the canals up to Prinsengracht, packed with 190 independent stores featuring interesting design, vintage and couture clothes, cool cafés, and other goodies.

Deco Sauna, Herengracht 115
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Warm up from chilly weather with a visit to this superbly preserved Art Deco unisex sauna (once a Parisian department store). When in Amsterdam, do as the Amsterdammers do: Go totally nude—hiding behind a towel is okay, wearing a swimsuit looks prissy. —J.S.

Story by Sam Grawe

For better or for worse, when it comes to seeking out the latest modern home furnishings in the United States, New York's International Contemporary Furniture Fair is the only one-stop shop around. But don't come expecting the design-cognoscenti glamour of Milan, or the sheer square footage of Cologne—prepare yourself for a much more intimate affair. With just 461 exhibitors, and only one day of public admission, the ICFF feels more like a family reunion for the domestic design world.

Housed in the thoroughly unspectacular Jacob K. Javits Convention Center (where the concurrent, and much larger, National Stationery Show provided a wry reminder that to the public at large, good design is less important than "get well soon"), the four-day show was a varied affair. At one end of the main hall, the Italian Trade Commission's exhibitors were tastefully separated from the rest of the show—creating an effect not unlike when a flight attendant draws the curtains between first class and coach. Nearby, students proudly exhibited thesis projects. Regulars like Blu Dot and Lolah showed off new designs and prototypes. At the other end of the fair one sensed a decline in booth rental fees, but there was no lack of inspired work on hand. One of the ICFF's greatest assets is that an independent designer can come and show his or her work to a savvy audience of over 17,000 people. This year, there were 167 new exhibitors, Dwell among them.

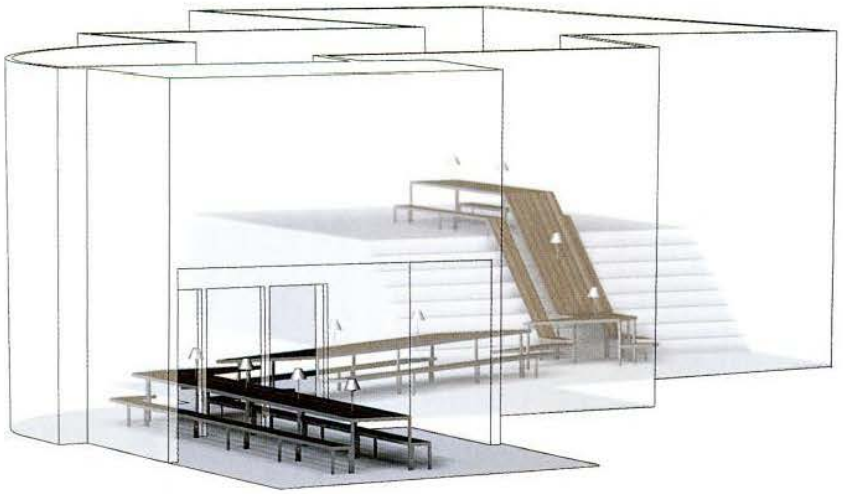
The Dwell Home booth saw an endless stream of visitors, all keen on judging the 16 entries for themselves. Between answering questions, handing out magazines, and nipping out for free gin gimlets, we found a little time to take in the best of what the ICFF has to offer.

...at ICFF

New York nevers sleeps, and neither does our associate editor when he's in search of good design.

22 Ways to Sit / To22

Waiting in line for your badge in the Javits's main foyer, it was hard not to miss this elongated tapering Plexiglas wing transforming itself into a chair. Designers Todd Bracher, Efe Buluc, and Mark Goetz hatched the idea for 22 Ways to Sit after they asked themselves, "What if one piece of furniture could accommodate all our different moods and activities?" From fully reclined to fully upright, 22 Ways to Sit has all of the bases covered. www.to22.net



Furniture as Conduit / Release1

Asked to design a piece that would link the Javits's main hall with the tented annex, Release1 came up with the Furniture Conduit. Fitting snugly between the fire doors and winding its way up a small staircase and out through the other set of doors, the Conduit at first appeared to be merely a clever solution for an otherwise dull space. With the addition of graffiti (Release1 provided graphite sticks with which to deface their pristine tableau), it began to take on the personality of the ICFF itself, with everything from shameless self-promotion to existential ramblings (i.e., "I don't know what I'm doing with my life"). www.release1.net

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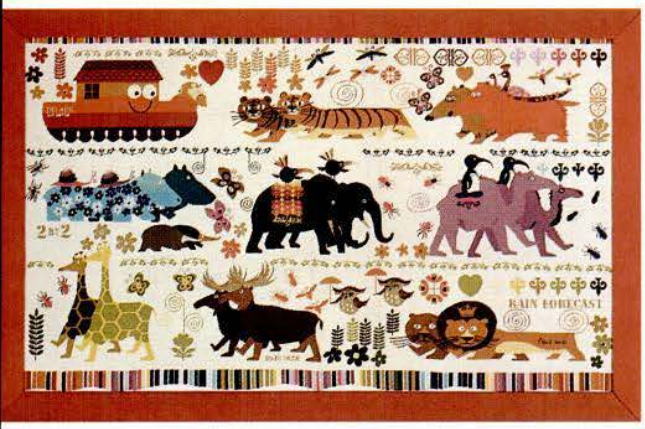


Paul Smith Ark Wall Hanging / The Rug Company

When designer Paul Smith was commissioned by the Rug Company to create a needlepoint wall hanging, he "decided to make something children could lie in bed and look at, imagining wonderful stories." As far as the Ark wall hanging is concerned, we think the Bible has never looked better. Children won't be the only people losing themselves among the fauna pairings (our favorites are the umbrella-toting owls). Smith has also created a more mature line of hand-spun wool rugs for the floor. www.therugcompany.info

Zumi Stool / Offi

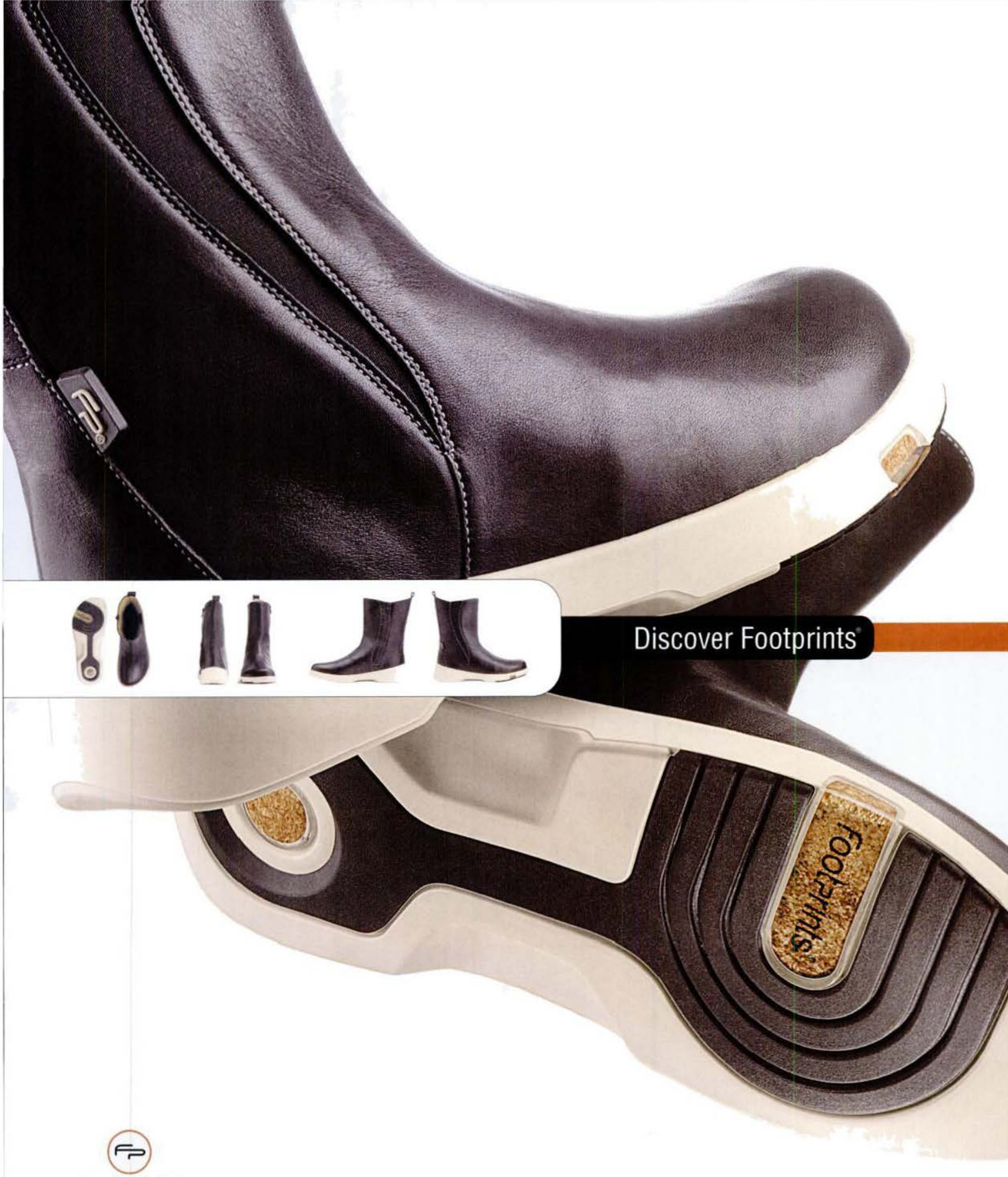
A lone flower petal is often more sad than beautiful, and so too are the "petals" that make up the Zumi stool. However, when the three identically shaped pieces of molded plywood interlock, origami-style, to create a hexagonal stool, you have a design as beautiful and noble as any flower. www.offi.com

Ponyboy / Veyko

With the launch of VH1 Classics, we once again have justification for forgoing formality and dining on the sofa with the television blaring (preferably videos for "Heat of the Moment" or "Owner of a Lonely Heart"). But surely the rock of our youth will induce a certain degree of plate-wobbling excitement, so how best to the keep quiche crumbs out of the cracks? Leave that to Ponyboy. The vaguely saddle-like molded-plywood design provides a stylish surface for our edibles, and lifts off the stainless steel base to accommodate easy transportation. www.veyko.com

Davis Screen / By Rodolfo Dordoni / Venini

Venini Space, the glassmaker's furnishings line, debuts with architect Rodolfo Dordoni's Quintet collection. Influenced by the spontaneity and improvisation inherent in working with blown glass, Dordoni named the pieces in the series after jazz masters like Davis, Mingus, Coltrane, and Baker. Framed in stainless steel, Davis's interlocking black or white lacquered-wood panels alternate with glass panes (available in either gray, tea, or amethyst) to create a room divider that won't leave you "kind of blue." www.venini.com



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Punch Pattern Screens / dForm

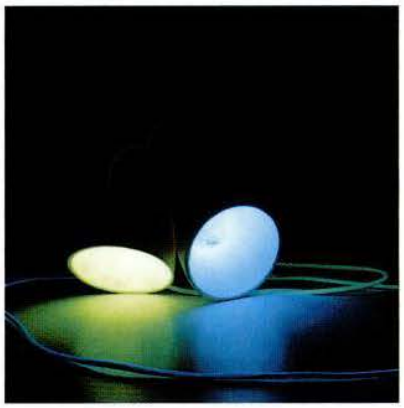
Just as M. C. Escher's infinitely interlocking tessellations always warranted hours of daydream-inducing gazes, dForm's Punch Pattern screens possess a similar captivating quality. All of the layered designs can be custom ordered in any size, to any scale, in either wood or plastic. www.dformdesign.com

Nemus Table and Benches / Bulthaup

This was Bulthaup's first year of exhibiting at the ICFF, but it wasn't beginner's luck that snagged them the Editor's Award for Body of Work. For years, their high-tech, precision-built kitchen furniture and architecture has performed on a level akin to the BMWs one pictures parked in an adjacent three-car garage. The solidly crafted Nemus table and benches sport an almost proletarian minimalist look, and are the perfect complement to Bulthaup's line. www.bulthaup.com

Water Coolers Tower / Lolah

If only they could talk! Over the last 20-odd years, the humble water cooler has undoubtedly eavesdropped on more conversations of import in the workplace than any employee (or spy) could have possibly managed. Finally stripped of its ungainly beige camouflage, this radically overhauled, elegant design from Peter Stathis and Christopher Deam won't be relegated to the back corner of the staff lounge. www.lolah.com



Memo / Seen the Light

Leaving a light on isn't always a bad idea. Sure, it's a waste of precious natural resources, but it could also ward off a thief, or save you from stubbing your toe as you fumble to the bathroom in the night. The good news is that Memo stays on even after you turn it off. Thanks to glow-in-the-dark technology, the white flexible shade remembers how long the light was on, and can glow for up to 12 hours. www.seenthelight.org

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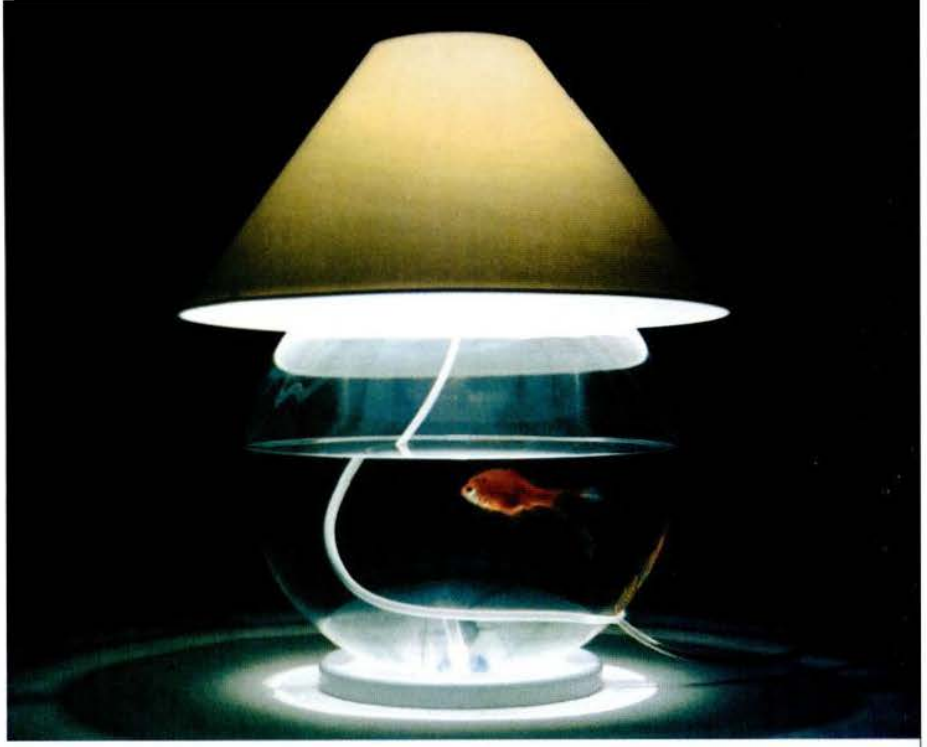
Story by Henrietta Thompson

(Re)Appropriate Behavior

Throughout Western Europe, enterprising young designers are giving new life to old objects. Call it adhocism.

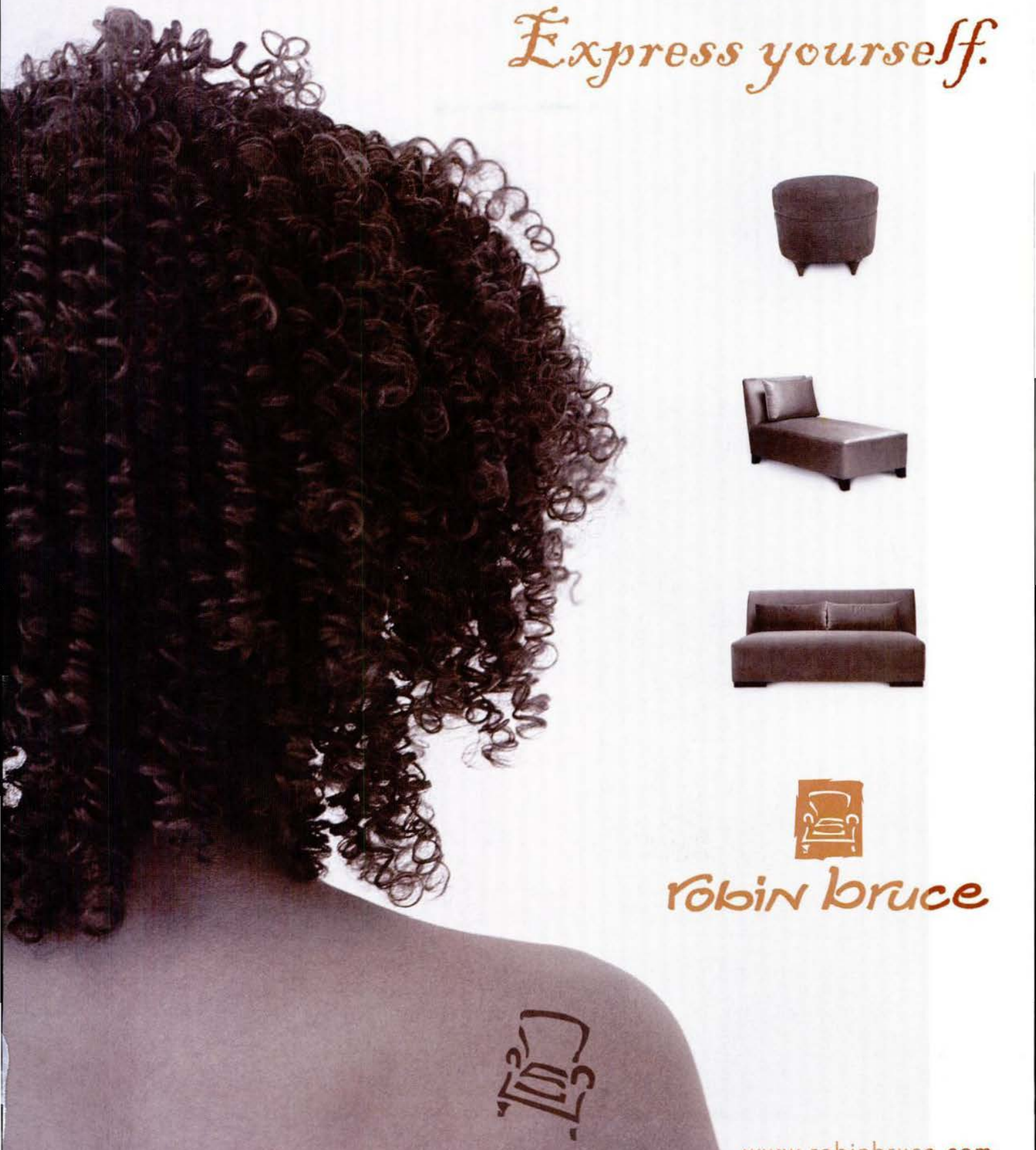
In Western Europe, a practical human tendency is making its way up the style charts. Several years ago, designers Droog, Moooi, and Tom Dixon all started experimenting in reappropriation—salvaging old products to create amusing new ones. Their designs were good at getting publicity but tended to remain prototypes. Now, the impending global recession, combined with the *Adbusters* generation's war on consumerism, means that the time is right for creative adhocism to hit it big. (The term "adhocism" was coined by Charles Jencks, in 1972, to describe this sort of adaptive reuse.) Young European designers today are subverting sustainability in ways that see an old cheese grater begin a new life as a perforated lampshade, or the head gasket from an Audi become an adorably different sort of wine rack.

Many might consider adhocism to be recycling, but these designers are a far cry from the Dumpster-diving eco-warriors of the mid-'90s. By giving a commonplace product an entirely new context, dictated only by its existing form, the new adhoc designers create objects that represent an altogether distinct set of values. The whole-meal worthiness normally associated with sustainability is replaced with savvy irony. Ideas come not from a desire to save the planet, but from circumstance, humor, and attention to detail.



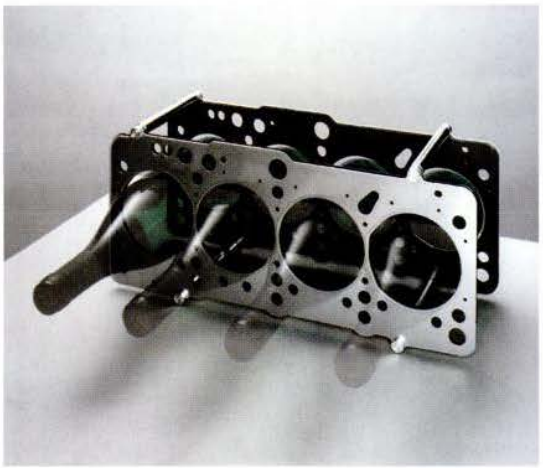
Designer Paul Yuille, a London-based Scot, uses subversion to draw attention to the consumer's lazy habits: "I sit in front of a sketch pad and consider the opinion society has on a subject," he explains. "For example, they say that goldfish have a poor short-term memory. So I consider a situation where that idiom would benefit a product, like remembering to turn off the light." Yuille transformed a goldfish bowl, live fish included, into a working table lamp with the wire running precariously through the water. Practical or not, the lamp was a hit at last year's 100% Design, and Yuille is now in talks with several U.S. manufacturers about its production. pyuille@hotmail.com

John Flinn of the U.K. produces his own range of low-cost products by taking household items and undermining their familiar function. In one of his designs, Flinn exalts the humble scrub brush to the status of a coatrack. The brush rack not only baffles visitors but functions surprisingly well: Its bristles grip and support your coat while the hooks avail themselves to keys and umbrellas. "I can only work with what I know, and draw inspiration from the things I am familiar with," explains Flinn. "For me, a hardware store is a treasure trove of ideas just waiting to be unearthed." www.johnflinn.co.uk ►



We have Munich-born Florian Kremb to thank for the cheese-grater lamp (left). Last year, Kremb founded his own company in London, Amplifier, to "amplify the little things in life." Amplifier's recent successes also include the champagne-cork coat hook (far left). Kremb collected champagne corks after an Yves Saint Laurent party and adapted them to make commemorative coat hooks for the party guests. Now, people mail him their used corks on a regular basis. Kremb returns the corks individually boxed and ready to screw into the wall. Discounts apply for multiple corks. sales@myamplifier.co.uk

The British group Jam has proven that adhocism can be big business. Large international companies have hired them to give new significance to their brands. For Sony, Jam made a stool from an old television screen. For Whirlpool, they devised a cupboard unit by stacking surplus washing-machine drums. In 2001, Jam landed a huge commission from Audi: a widespread advertising campaign to emphasize the design quality of every component of Audi cars. Jam duly transformed the car's petrol cap into a light (far right) and the head gasket into a wine rack (right). The dipsticks reliquished their oily days and became a table lamp. www.jamdesign.co.uk



The PowerPizza laptop case from Human Beans shows that ubiquitous low-value objects can provide protection through disguise. Though many might covet the new iBook, few would pilfer a used pizza box. Chris Vanstone, one of the company's founders, explains, "The very fact that something is designed to be desirable makes it vulnerable to theft." Vanstone is unfazed by the idea that anybody could easily copy his design. "It's a sort of open-source innovation," he says. "It's fascinating what you can do when you remove the ability to say, 'I designed this.' As a practical solution, PowerPizza starts to enter into a type of nondesign. Design that solves problems but without the form-giving." www.humanbeans.net ■

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Story by Annie Tucker | Photo by Warren Reynolds

Binuclear by Breuer

Above: Primary color–adorned porches on either side of the house have stairways that lead to the surrounding landscape. A plethora of windows (inset) facilitate nature viewing and achieve Breuer's ongoing goal of "transparency."

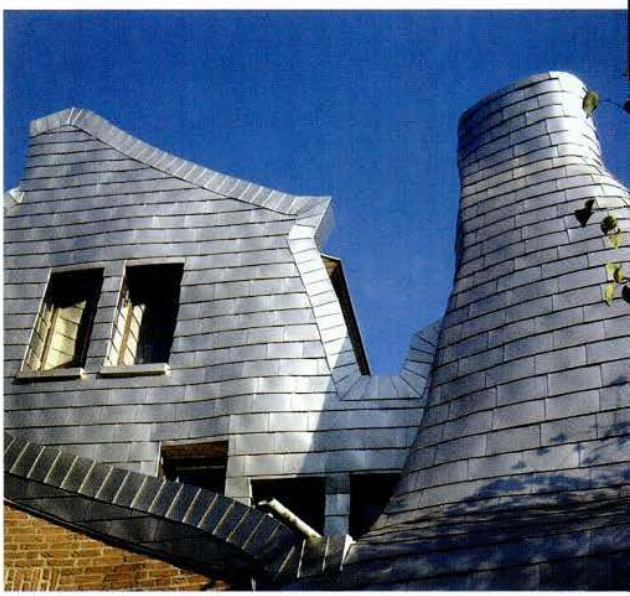
Not so much looming as holding court over Lake Superior in Duluth, Minnesota, Marcel Breuer's Starkey House dares naysayers to suggest that the Midwest lacks architectural vision. Breuer, with Herbert Beckhard, conceived the 4,200-square-foot residence in 1954 and it has since become a leading example of his "binuclear" home template, which centers on demarcating distinct boundaries between living and sleeping areas.

From the road, the one-story house is grounded and neatly horizontal. Go around back, however, and you find a weightless mass jutting out over a waterfront hillside. The house makes physical contact with the ground at an ambitiously minimal eight points, where laminated wood posts descending from the building's underbelly sprout steel pins that appear impossibly slender yet anchor the construction to its foundation. Home and earth enter a truce, and the structure's geometric precision engenders dramatic tension with the organic complexion of its surroundings.

Breuer believed that nature and architecture are separate entities that should develop a complementary apposition based on their differences. But he also recognized that only love is eternal and, in that spirit, mated his creation and its natural habitat for life. The necessity of entering the waterfront residence exclusively on suspended ramps that look like gangplanks hardly seems coincidental.

What is perhaps most remarkable about the Starkey House is that, even after nearly 50 years, it looks like it was designed yesterday. Neal and Iola Vanstrom, the house's owners since 1983, deserve no small amount of credit for its longevity. Although the couple wasn't familiar with Breuer's work, their reverence for contemporary architecture made the property a perfect fit with their sensibilities—even though the house wasn't exactly in pristine condition. "It needed some TLC, and we felt sorry for it," says Iola. The Vanstroms did modify the house somewhat, and while they acknowledge that these renovations weren't purist, they tried to respect Breuer's parameters when they could. "The house is very livable," Iola observes. "It's also gorgeous and unique. We've tried to take good care of it, because we know how special it is." ■

PHOTO BY EZRA STOLLER / ESTO (INSET)



Rubber was the perfect siding solution for architect Tom Pritchard's design (top left), molding itself smoothly onto the frame of the house without need for drains or window frames. The fluoropolymer cladding produced by German company Covertex (bottom left) is a transparent contrast to the dark hues of gray rubber. A house clad in titanium (below) is another interesting option. "It's very expensive and labor intensive," explains Randy Kober of Garofalo Architects, "but it has an infinite life span." p. 136

Don't Get Mad, Get Clad

Dear Dwell,
My husband and I are building a new home and are wondering how to clad the exterior. Can you suggest some interesting options? —Sarah Walker, Madison, WI

In the 1950s and '60s, aluminum-siding mania swept across America. Touted by leering salesmen as the height of homeowning style and an alternative to the traditional cladding of wood, stucco, or brick, aluminum was claimed to have fantastic properties of insulation and resistance to rust. The downsides of the material—including a propensity to dent, tear, and scratch—appeared only after the siding had created a landscape of cookie-cutter suburban communities across the country.

Today, there's a whole spectrum of creative siding options from which to choose. If you're looking for the aesthetic appeal of metal, you might consider the super-sleek choice of titanium shingles. In addition to being quite beautiful, titanium is completely recyclable and relatively inert. Timet, the primary supplier of architectural titanium, can even anodize the material to create a rainbow of colors if the natural silver-gray hue doesn't strike your fancy.

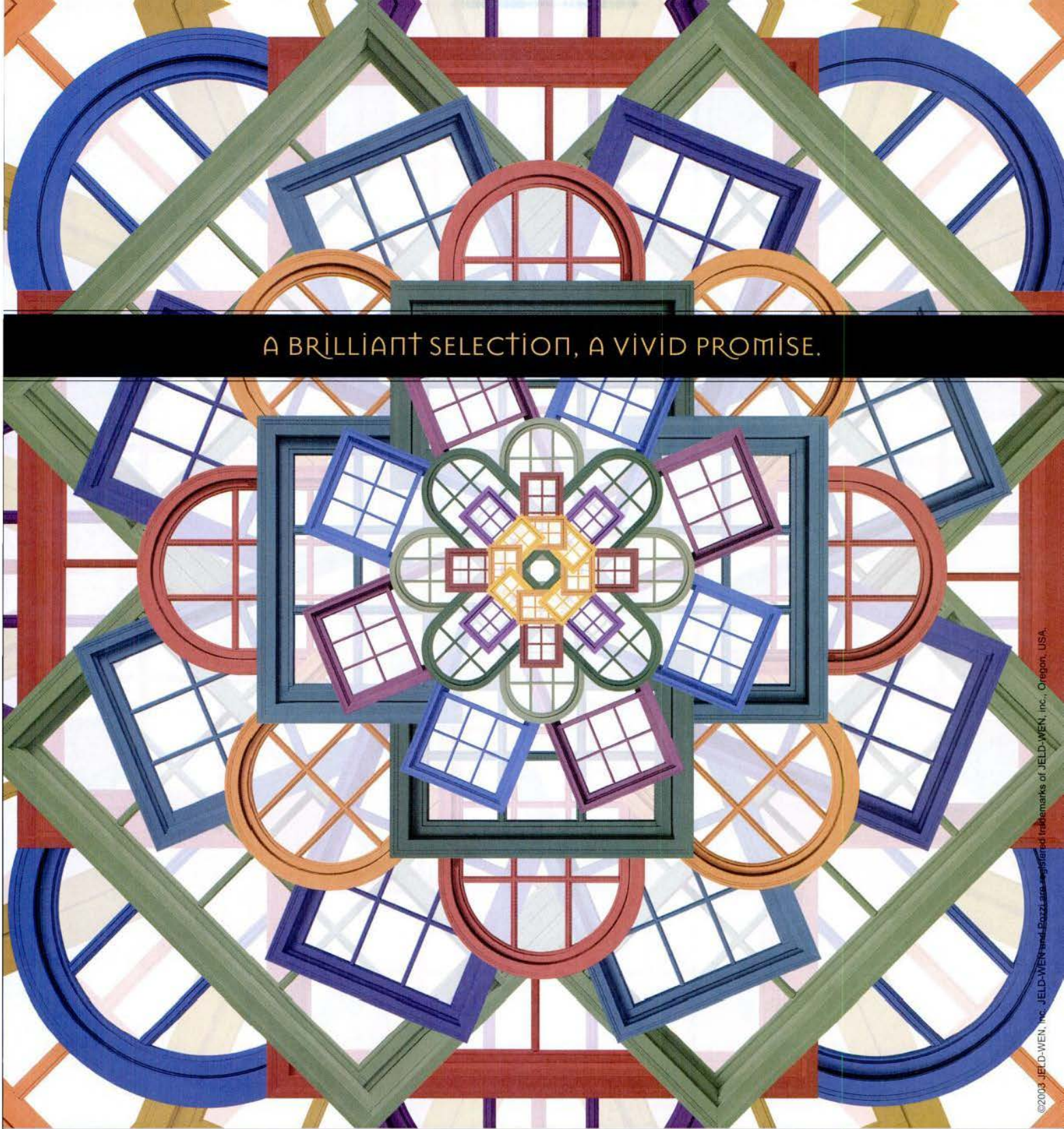
Waterproof and inexpensive, industrial-strength rubber is another unique cladding option. Tom Pritchard, of Madderlake Designs, used single-ply sheets of gray rubber membrane to clad a house he designed and built in the Catskills in 1979. "I wanted to create monolithic surfaces," he says of his choice of siding material, "and, essentially, to 'Saran Wrap' the project." Pasted onto plywood backing with adhesive and sealed with neoprene caulking, the rubber gives the structure a seamless exterior.

Also worth considering is Covertex's flexible and transparent pneumatic plastic membrane, which is continually inflated and deflated by an electronic device based on outer loads such as wind and snow. UrbanLab's Sarah Dunn—an architect who is "personally obsessed with inflatables"—is designing a project that will incorporate Covertex along a 50-foot length of wall. It's not an ideal siding choice if your home fronts onto a major freeway (or anywhere else that privacy might be an issue), but if your home is in a secluded spot, Covertex might be right for you.

Above all, as you contemplate your cladding options, keep in mind the words of an aluminum-siding salesman spoken to an unwitting customer in the film *Tin Men:* "This house will be a monument to your good taste." Choose wisely! ■

Got a question? Send it to:
Dwell Labs, 99 Osgood Place, San Francisco, CA 94133.
Or email labs@dwellmag.com.

PHOTO BY ADAM BARTOS (RUBBER CLAD HOUSE)



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Above: A rendering of Modern Modular, winner of the Dwell Home Design Invitational. For more information on the Dwell Home, please log on to our new site: www.thedwellhome.com. Join our online discussion on the Dwell Home and prefab in general at www.dwellmag.com.

Now that the winning design has been chosen, the Dwell Home enters its next phase: construction. Since announcing Modern Modular by Resolution: 4 Architecture as the winner of the Dwell Home Design Invitational in the spring, architects Joseph Tanney and Robert Luntz traveled to Pittsboro, North Carolina to site the house with clients Nathan Wieler and Ingrid Tung. At press time, the architects were in discussion with several potential housing manufacturers.

Meanwhile, as if the building of his own house wasn't exciting enough, Nathan, inspired by developer Joseph Eichler, has founded a new company, Wieler Homes. In June, Nathan acquired land to develop and build a community of modern prefab homes in Chatham County, North Carolina that will utilize designs from the Dwell Home Design Invitational. We'll keep you posted....

A special thank you to our Dwell Home sponsors: Artemide, Birkenstock, CaesarStone, Fisher & Paykel Herman Miller for the Home, Home Director, Inc., Jenn-Air, Kohler, Lennox, Loewen Windows, Maharam, Microsoft Office for Mac, The Modern Fan Co., Neoporte, Rosendahl, Sears, Volkswagen, and West Elm. ■

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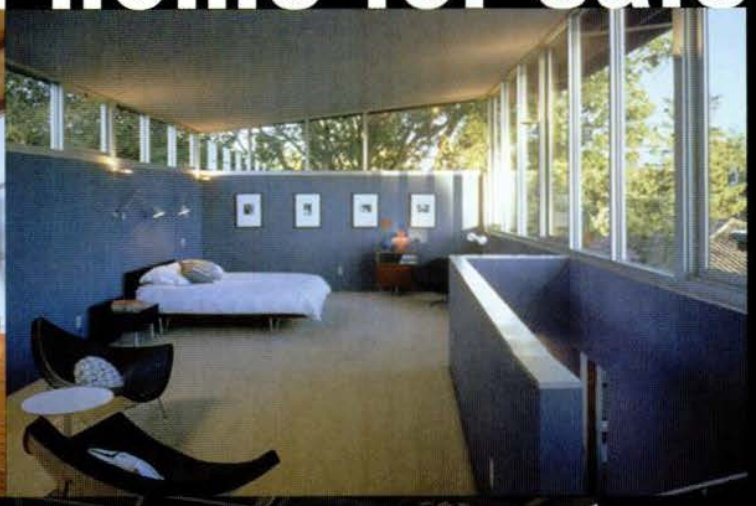
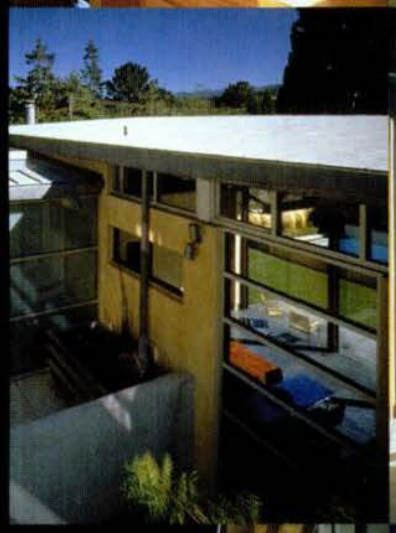


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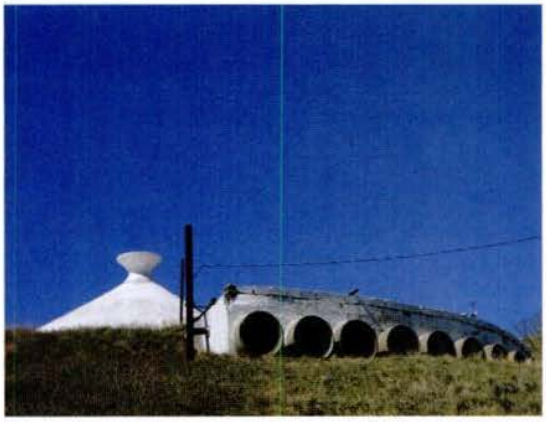
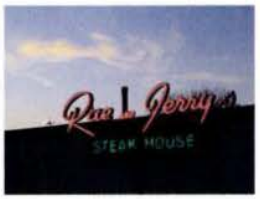




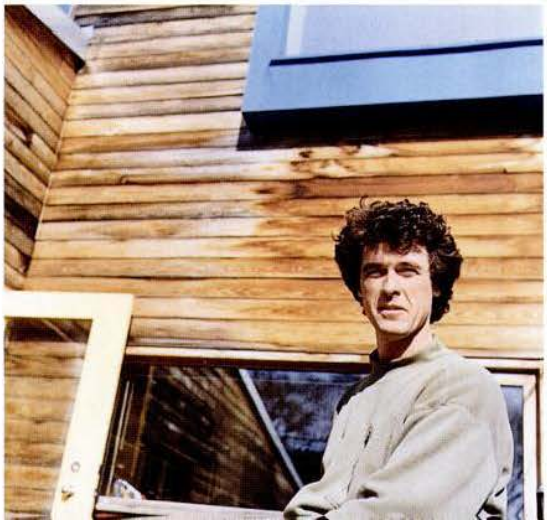
O Canada!

For years, on our maps and in our minds, Canada was just an enormous pink crown sitting atop the U.S.A., stretching inconceivably northward to the Pole. However, after spending nine days traversing the transcontinental highway from Winnipeg to Vancouver, we found a vastly more intriguing place than popular American opinion generally allows. This was no doubt due to our ambassadorial experience of meeting Canada's casually well-spoken architects, consuming its unique cuisine, and taking in its vast and magnificent landscapes. While the *Strange Brew* stereotype rings true—yes, it's usually cold, and both hockey and beer are very popular—Canada's surprising diversity and slightly quirky approach to everything from governing to gravy is nothing short of enviable.

Take for instance *poutine*, Canada's most uniquely Canadian edible. This delicious fast-food treat—a bowl of fries mixed with melted cheese curds and topped with gravy—puts everything at our burger joints to shame. Maybe there's a little *poutine* in every Canadian—a hearty surface that gives way to a subtle, remarkably sophisticated flavor.

In the small town of Lumsden, Saskatchewan (you could miss it if you blinked), we encountered an architectural wonder that was imbued with the same characteristic. Designed by one of Canada's most elusive modernists, Clifford Wiens, this 1965 hilltop foundry with its handcrafted concrete Mt. Fuji-meets-UFO roofline (photo, top right) was definitely at odds with the otherwise conservative surroundings. The building looked a bit worse for wear, but nonetheless resonated with all of the progressive and creative spirit in which it was conceived, and never felt the slightest bit out of place.

Today, a similar adventurous spirit fills the houses we visited in Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver. Contemporary architecture, we've found, could have no better friend than Canada. Here it seems all things are truly possible—from the limitless canvas of Manitoba's prairie to resource-rich Alberta's hidden natural potential to British Columbia's lavishly verdant wealth. ▸



Project: Ruby House
Architect: DIN Projects

Winnipeg, Manitoba

Located in the heart of what architect Neil Minuk and resident John Wyndels jokingly refer to as Winipeg's "Granola Belt," the Ruby House was Minuk and Chon's graduate thesis project. One of the house's most unique features is that it has no stairs. A platform elevator provides access to the second-floor office, the open-plan ground-level living area, and the bunkerlike basement that functions as Wyndels's laundry room and wine cellar.

From the taxi out of Winnipeg International Airport, remnants of Manitoba's winter chill are everywhere. Ruddy salt and sand streak the sidewalks. Three-pronged outlets—where extension cords plug in to warm up frozen engine blocks on especially cold mornings—hang out of car hoods like cartoon tongues. Still, it's short-sleeve weather, people are outdoors, and a burgeoning green hides in the flat brown landscape.

Architect Neil Minuk and DIN Projects partner Jae-Sung Chon pick us up from the Fort Garry Hotel, our towering faux-chateau lodging from the heyday of railroad expansion. "Don't mind the transmission," Minuk chortles when his rusty Volvo sputters in second gear.

After a martini at Rae & Jerry's Steak House, we head north to the Exchange district, an area filled with early-20th-century warehouses, and attend a collage party hosted by artist Paul Butler. The upstairs annex of Plugin, a modern-art gallery of which Minuk is president, is filled with magazine scraps, X-Acto knives, glue, and beer. A jovial group scraps together informal but informed artwork. Artistic people, Minuk tells us, have been flocking to Winnipeg. "The city's concentration of inexpensive warehouse space," he says, "makes it a cultural capital."

The night ends with a 2 a.m. visit to the Salisbury House, where the burgers are called "Big Nips." Minuk and Chon tell us about the Ruby House, which we'll visit the next morning. "It was a good first house," Minuk says. "The small budget and John's unusual way of life compelled us to experiment."

John Wyndels, who is Minuk's friend and brother-in-law, became paraplegic in a 1982 accident. But for his house on Ruby Street, he wanted nothing of the conventional universal-design aesthetic. "We came up with a lot of ideas on afternoons like this, drinking beers and talking with John about the house," Minuk says. "Rather than build an architecture of accessibility, we wanted to find ways to privilege John's condition, while making the house experientially rich for everyone."

They achieved this, perhaps most notably in that the house's lack of a staircase is a boon rather than a concession. Minuk explains of the front entrance, "As opposed to having both a staircase and a ramp, we decided to make only one way to enter. We even went so far as to scallop out the ground beneath, to make it a viable bridge, not just a handicap-accessible ramp."

To reach the second floor and basement, DIN constructed a unique elevator. A wood platform mounted on steel I-beams, the elevator is a fascinating centerpiece to the living area. Originally, they had considered mounting the elevator on a counterweight crank, so that Wyndels, with his impressive arm strength and low center of gravity, would have the advantage of being able to pull himself upstairs. "We decided on an electric motor in the end," Wyndels says, "because I wouldn't want to have to crank myself upstairs if I was tired or had been drinking wine."

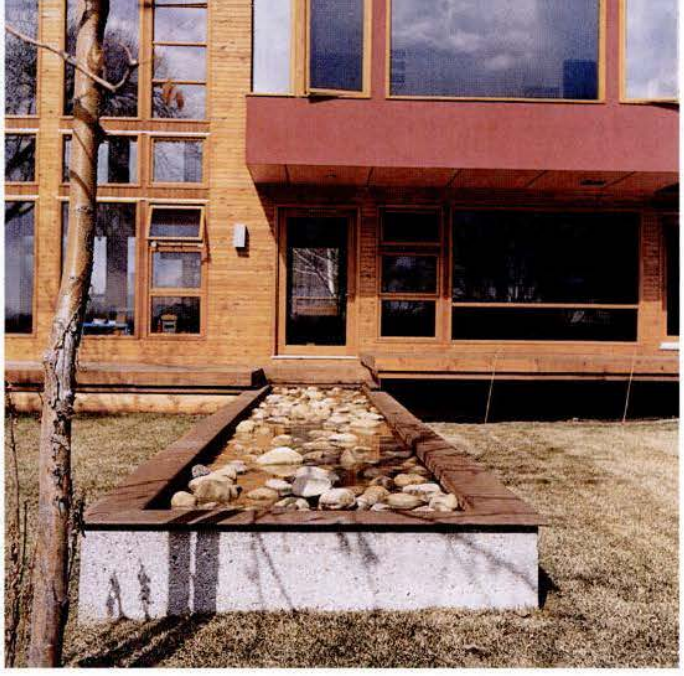
The budgetary constraints and what Wyndels calls "sweat equity" (DIN was responsible for most of the construction) make the house exceptional. Everywhere, clever touches embellish ordinary elements like walls, windows, and doors: Light plays off reflective painted surfaces, unusual compositions of windows frame edited pictures of neighboring houses, and a sliding pocket door does double duty for the bedroom and bathroom. The design reverberates with a sort of unabated curiosity one imagines resulting from all-night work sessions fueled by coffee, beer, and Winnipeg's traditional velvet cake.

Inasmuch as the Ruby House shuns universal design, it proffers a deeper kind of universality. DIN designed Wyndels's space with a sensitivity and intuition that are visible throughout. And the house's slightly rough exterior that gives way to an artful, conscientious, and pleasing interior is not unlike the Winnipeg we enjoyed the night before (not to mention the *poutine*).

The next morning, we set out for the plains in a Beetle convertible for a two-day drive across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. ▸

Project: House on a Ridge
Architect: Sturgess Architecture

Calgary, Alberta



Sturgess Architecture won approval for their plans from the city and neighborhood by calling the house's exterior color "crimson red or sienna." Seabird Urtasun, an artist (shown at left with husband David and daughter Jasper), loves the color: "When the sky is blue, and the grass is green, it just bounces."

Around Medicine Hat, eastern Alberta, we begin to see the occasional oil rig. These are mere tokens of the province's bread and butter—the petroleum extraction hub is up north, and most of its money is in Calgary. Night falls as the prairie climbs onto a plateau at the foot of the Rockies. Hours later, when the Trans-Canada Highway turns into a boulevard of traffic lights and mini-malls, and a rash of nondescript 1980s high-rises looms to the left, we are in Calgary.

"I've been here 30 years, and I've watched this place change," architect Jeremy Sturgess says the next morning, as we view the downtown from David Crockford and Seabird Urtasun's living-room window. "The downtown went up and the suburbs expanded in a hurry, when oil was booming. My work has been about bringing back a sense of community through planning, on the micro and macro levels. People need big, dynamic communal spaces, and smaller ones for privacy. This same principle applies to houses, apartment complexes, and even cities."

The house's communal space—a high-ceilinged room where steps separate kitchen from dining from living—is certainly dynamic. As Urtasun unloads a bag of Clodhoppers, irresistible Canadian cookies that resemble white-chocolate–covered dog food, onto a plate, we look around the big room, from which the eye is simultaneously directed to all the smaller spaces Sturgess described. Crockford's study and the master bedroom are walled mezzanines, and a bridge connecting them leads to the wing for Jasper, their two-year-old daughter, and her sibling-to-be. Outside the north expanse of glass, Urtasun's painting studio sits adjacent to the courtyard. The shocking fuchsia, a color Crockford extols as "ludicrous," flashes in at angles from exterior walls.

"We love the skies in Calgary. They can be anything from a great blue expanse to a boiling turmoil. The house has a great relationship with the sky, where the pink sets off the color, the roof mirrors its presence, and the large windows allow it to permeate the interior." Chito Pabustan, the project architect, points out how the house is transparent. From the street, we can see through the front and back windows, to the sky behind. "It stretches across the site like a membrane," Sturgess adds.

Sturgess's sense of community infuses the house, "ludicrous" color and all, with humility. The system of combining a big common area with small bedrooms enables the residence to function with 2,700 square feet, covering only a quarter of its modestly proportioned lot.

To the eye of a minimalist, the house's busy fenestration and wild color might seem garish. And its setting—the bright, clean, suburban-seeming hillside overlooking the generic city skyline—feels bizarre: somehow aloof, though technically urban. The scene, unsettling as it is, might just be quintessential Calgary, which boomed in the 1980s, rising and expanding in the bumbling wake of postmodernism mixed with oil money.

Later, our unsettled feeling is corroborated by a nocturnal visit from Andrew King, a friend of Neil Minuk's who is an architectural designer, teacher, and critic. King, wearing a cape-like sweater, swoops into the room and reluctantly accepts a scotch. "This is the most American-seeming city in Canada," King says, "like a combination of Denver, with the mountains, and Houston, with the oil money. For a Canadian city, it lacks the cultural distinction prevalent in Montreal or Vancouver. But at the same time, Calgary is a very open place; if you really want to, you can build anything. Jeremy is becoming the old guard, but his work has made sense here. Meanwhile, plenty of new influences are brewing."

The next morning over brunch at Diner Deluxe, a hip establishment filled with young people and '60s decor, we mull over what those influences will be. Then, as we eat leftover Clodhoppers from Urtasun, the thoughts pass, and our Beetle carries us through the ravishing Canadian Rockies. ▸

"Yellow cedar is extremely durable in the elements," Battersby explains in the backyard, "because of its high oil content. The same is true for red cedar. Cedar is a classic British Columbia wood—native carvers used it. You see it in Haida masks and totem poles."

Project: Mid-Block House
Architect: BattersbyHowat

Vancouver, British Columbia

After the Oz-like fantasy of driving through majestic country for two days—from glacial peaks lifted from J.R.R. Tolkien to the blooming flora of Summerland's lake country—it isn't surprising to arrive in what appears to be the Emerald City. Green-glass skyscrapers rise over the mountains and inlets to dominate the view.

That night we meet up with Trevor Boddy, an architect and critic. Boddy—who brings to mind Michael Caine playing Gene Wilder—drives us around the city, proclaiming that the best time to see buildings is the middle of the night. "No one is around, and somehow the constructions are more tangible." We go to the University of British Columbia, a campus littered with modern buildings, including an art gallery by Peter Cardew and an anthropology museum by Arthur Erickson, which opens its dramatic glass-and-concrete post-and-lintel façade to a garden of totem poles.

Erickson's museum emerges as a kind of archetype for local architecture, as it strikingly combines indigenous and modern building styles. A similar harmony—in an altogether different package—confronts us the next morning when we meet David Battersby, of Battersby-Howat. (His partner, Heather Howat, is out of town.)

Battersby and Howat went to the University of Manitoba, where, incidentally, they knew Neil Minuk as the cafeteria pizza guy. After university, they married and moved to Vancouver, starting an architectural practice. The marriage ended but their friendship and professional partnership continued. In what sounds like a pilot for an updated *Too Close for Comfort*, now they live in the same building, which houses both of their apartments, their new respective boyfriends, and their office.

The BattersbyHowat office/home introduces us to an architectural vocabulary not unlike that of the house we visit later, the Mid-Block House, lived in by Patricia Rogers, Paul Ohler, and their three-year-old daughter, Sophia. Both are assemblages of bare concrete, cedar siding, and glass doors opening to small gardens of bamboos and grasses. In both, one senses West Coast influences of Erickson, Richard Neutra, and Rudolf Schindler.

When we reach the Mid-Block House, Ohler is listening to Brahms in the main room. Rogers arrives shortly thereafter with Sophia, in a tutu from dance class, and Ohler fixes excellent avocado-and-cheese sandwiches to eat in the backyard. When we comment that the kitchen is immaculate, Ohler explains how the house suits him. "I'm a combination of relaxed and obsessive-compulsive," he says. "This place, with its ample storage for clutter but big, open, casual living area, fits me to a tee."

"We try," Battersby adds, "to be sure that for our clients, we don't build a formula house, but something that fits them, like the clothes they would wear. Paul and Patricia are very refined people, so we made a design with the yellow cedar and the subtly proportioned volumes."

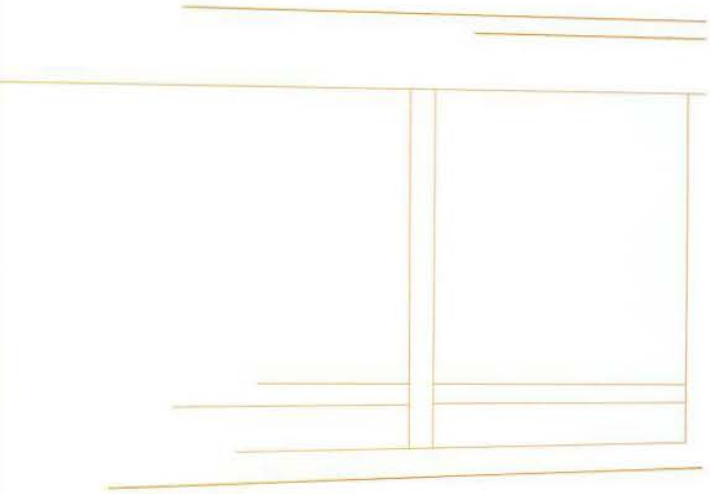
We eat our sandwiches, Sophia having a bowl of noodle soup at her kid's table, which Ohler sets up, saying, "Here you go, dear, al fresco." The conversation returns to gardens. They are a favorite topic here, maybe because so many plants can thrive in this rainy and temperate city.

"What frightens people about modernism is that there won't be diversity of experience," Battersby says. "But in this house, the back garden, with southern exposure, has a roomy terrace with towering bamboo. The little room in the front is proportionally similar, but completely different because it faces north and looks into the sunken, mossy garden. So you can have a diversity of scales and experiences, all of that, in a simple, modern building."

And there's as much diversity of experience when it comes to architecture in Canada. Sixteen hundred miles on the road, and we've only scratched the surface. ■

Perched on a hill near the manicured greens of a Nashville country club, Becky and Jimmy Webb's 1950s flat-roof modern is as classic as a Hank Williams song, but its new addition is a little more refined.

"Nashville's changing," says architect Price Harrison. "In the last ten years it's been totally revitalized." In that spirit, Harrison designed a bedroom addition for this classic modern, marrying '50s style with 21st-century convenience.



Opryland Overhaul

Story by Paul Kingsbury | Photos by Kyoko Hamada

Project: Webb Residence
Architect: Taylor & Crabtree (1955)
Renovation: Price Harrison (2002)
Location: Nashville, Tennessee

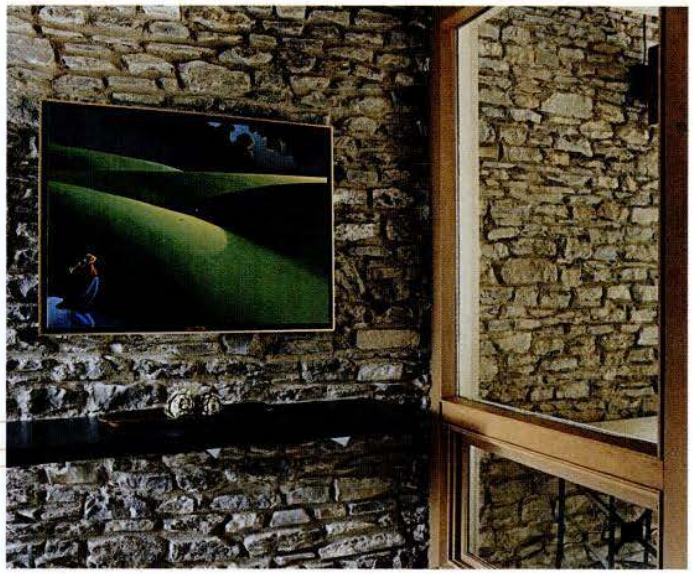
This is the story of a Nashville family who saved a '50s modern (flat roof and all) and, with the help of a very sympathetic architect, turned it into a showpiece that seamlessly blends classic mid-century style with millennial convenience and luxury.

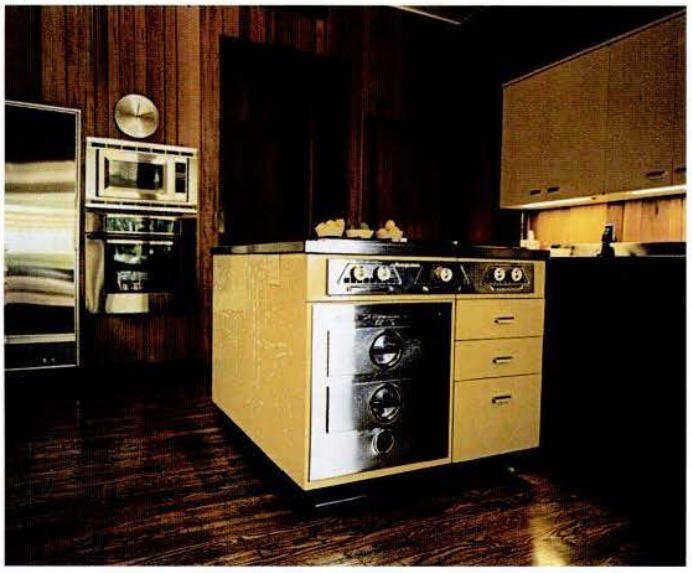
Flat-roofed houses generally haven't fared well in the South. For one thing, the clean, spare style of a classic modern hasn't been widely accepted in a region where tradition and traditional styles reign. But perhaps even more than the style, the flat roof itself can intimidate potential owners. Fifty years ago, most architects and contractors simply hadn't figured out how to build a durable and dependably drainable flat roof for a home. As Nashville architect Price Harrison explains, "Most people just tear them down because they don't want to deal with them."

But not Becky and Jimmy Webb, who bought their home in 1993. It had been on the market for over a year, despite its prime location on the edge of the Hillwood Country Club in the 1950s-era, large-lot suburb of Hillwood. No one wanted the house, it seemed. But Becky, an interior decorator, and Jimmy, who owns a real estate management business, fell in love with it.

It's not hard to see why. Designed by the small Nashville firm of Taylor & Crabtree and built in 1955, the Webbs' home is a comfortable marriage of the International Style's ordered geometry and the "natural house" materials and detailing of late-period Frank Lloyd Wright. Gray Tennessee limestone forms the exterior walls and interior piers, which bear the load of exposed hardwood roof beams. Large expanses of floor-to-ceiling windows abound, particularly in the long, front-facing

The L-shape of the house encloses a serene, secluded backyard. As part of the expansion, the architect reoriented the master bedroom (at right in photo below) to take advantage of the verdant view.





"I like it all being on one level. It's not a typical ranch. And I love the details. I love the rock walls. I love the beams."

living/dining room, which has a commanding hilltop view of the wooded neighborhood. ("The best thing in the whole house," says Becky, "is to sit in the living room and see the full moon come up through the front windows.") The original floors of oak and terrazzo tile have aged well and add to the earthy feeling of the house. With its rustic building materials and low-slung profile, the house fits snugly into its tree-shaded setting.

"It was just a feeling," Becky replies when asked what first appealed to her about the house. "I like it all being on one level. It's not a typical ranch. And I love the details. I love the rock walls. I love the beams."

In addition, she says, because they have three sons (then aged 7, 8, and 11), the L-shaped open plan of the house, its five bedrooms, large yard, and spacious 5,000 square feet suited the family well. So the Webbs were willing to look past a few major issues: a leaking roof, lack of a proper master suite, and the encroachment of a nearby gated community.

When it was built, the Webbs' house was beautifully isolated atop a small hillock, adjacent to the golf greens of the country club. But in the late 1980s, a little do-si-do between a previous owner of the home, a neighbor, and the country club created a parcel of property sandwiched between the country club and the house. Today that property is a small gated community of which the Webb house is now part. Next to the outsized ersatz colonials, federals, and regencies, the Webbs' modern looks distinctly discreet and tasteful—a beautiful iconoclast on the edge of a crowded hodgepodge. ►

Among the home's amenities are (clockwise from bottom left) an original 1950s St. Charles kitchen, limestone rock walls, a dining room with a commanding view, sleek new built-ins designed by Price Harrison, and a Cassina Cab chair by Mario Bellini. p. 136

Despite the new development, the Webbs grew more attached to their house and suffered through roof repairs, electrical upgrades, and rerouting of exposed ductwork.

Enter Price Harrison, who had apprenticed in the New York offices of Paul Rudolph, Richard Meier, and I. M. Pei during the 1980s and 1990s before moving back to Tennessee in 1998. The Webbs had an inside track to Harrison, because the architect's mother and Jimmy's mother are close friends. Harrison was taken with the Webbs' house from the moment he saw it.

"I would always talk about it whenever I would see Jimmy and Becky or Jim's mom," says Harrison. "I tend not to do a lot of additions, because it's hard for me to do an addition to a traditional house without it looking alien to the original house. But I felt like I could do something that wasn't a slavish imitation and yet be consistent with what was basically a '50s idiom." ►

"There's a certain abstraction and serenity that you get with these spaces," says architect Harrison. "You're creating a world that's a little more organized than the real world."

The new master suite addition is a luxurious oasis of calm. Details include French limestone floors and fixtures in the bathroom, mahogany trim, cherry floors, and an artful headboard/shelving unit.

"I didn't want a big bedroom. I wanted a big closet," says Becky Webb. In fact, she got a huge bedroom, two bathrooms with adjoining shower, and two walk-in closets. Her closet is pictured.

When the Webbs first moved into the house, Harrison had designed built-in desks and cabinets for the boys' rooms that the Webbs were very happy with. By 1995, he and the Webbs had begun brainstorming about the possibilities for building them a proper master suite.

The existing master bedroom was deficient in a few major ways. An addition to the original house, it seemed very much a poorly arranged afterthought—a make-do floor plan, with the entrance to the room running past the master bathroom and small closet. What's more, the bedroom was exceedingly dark, with only a small array of windows on one side.

Rather than present the Webbs with a pat solution, Harrison discussed the addition in conversations that spanned several years—construction didn't begin until May 2001. "We built models of different schemes," says Harrison. "It was very interactive. It wasn't like I went to an office and came back and said, 'This is it!'"

The Webbs wanted more natural light, more bathroom space and storage, and a more sensible layout. What they got was a 1,400-square-foot master suite, complete with his-and-hers bathrooms tied together with a shared shower, roomy his-and-hers walk-in closets, and a cozy workout room. The addition is of a piece with the rest of the house, yet at the same time it's a thoroughly modern space that is a clearly demarcated refuge from the boys' rooms just down the hallway. It's a spacious retreat bathed in natural light on three sides, thanks to large banks of windows on the north and south sides and east-facing clerestory windows that were Becky's idea. The new windows reorient the bedroom's focus away from the south (and the new development), and instead toward the relaxing view of the secluded, grassy backyard and courtyard formed by the shape of the house.

Among the suite's luxurious appointments are mahogany trim, cherry floors, cream-colored French limestone floors in the baths, glass sink bowls that light up, a stylish built-in headboard cum shelving unit, and bathroom pocket doors that open and close with the wave of a hand—thanks to electric eyes and a pneumatic mechanism originally designed for buses.

On the exterior, Harrison smoothly integrated the addition with the existing house by continuing the limestone walls and adding a new ribbon of deep brown copper fascia rimming the roofline across the entire house. The horizontal continuity allowed Harrison to raise the master suite's roofline to make way for the clerestory windows and a ceiling height of 11 feet, matching the height in public rooms such as the front living room. During construction, it was determined that the deteriorating roof had to be replaced, which allowed the copper fascia to be consistent all around the house.

Today, the Webbs are so pleased with their new bedroom, finished in May 2002, that they are planning more projects with Harrison, including a remodeled front door with more windows to brighten a dark foyer and a glass-and-mahogany enclosure on the edge of their backyard that will allow for a screened-porch area.

"I didn't want a big bedroom. I wanted a big closet," Becky says with a laugh. "And I got it. I really did. . . . I got lucky. It's just such a wonderful peaceful feeling to have everything focused out that direction," she says, pointing out her new windows to her lush, sun-dappled backyard. "It makes me a lot happier." ■

Right: To blend the exterior of the original house with the addition, the architect extended the limestone rock walls and trimmed the roof with a new, broader ribbon of copper fascia.

Story by Eric Lawlor

Photos by Craig Cameron Olsen

Building a Bond

These days, there may be some five or six modern homes in southern Georgia. But with a new home as striking as the Robinsons' on the scene, can a baker's dozen be far off?

Project: Robinson Residence
Architect: Eric S. Robinson
Location: Tybee Island, Georgia

Larkin, 12, and Rob, 15, take a break from Georgia's sultry summer heat in this Mies' inspired home designed by their half-brother, architect Eric Robinson.

There is something very reassuring about a house that, for all intents and purposes, slaps you on the back when you cross the threshold and extends a hearty welcome. The house that architect Eric S. Robinson designed for his father, Paul, on Tybee Island, some 20 minutes east of Savannah, Georgia, is such a place. "Pull up a chair," it seems to say. "Make yourself at home."

Which, when I visited recently, was precisely what I did. I was fortunate in that not only did the Robinsons take me on a tour of this splendid house, but they also offered to give me sole possession of it for the better part of three days. Naturally, I said yes. I'm usually diffident in other people's homes, but not this one. In fact, I became so fond of it, I acted as if I owned the place. One morning, I made myself a nice breakfast, on another, I ended up polishing the bathroom mirrors. It's a good thing I left when I did: Such is the power of this structure that had I stayed much longer, its residents might have had trouble getting rid of me.

From the outset, Eric wanted the home to function as a viewing platform from which to enjoy, he says, "the changing qualities of the river." Accordingly, the views are stunning. Beyond the estuary lies a deep swath of marshland, and beyond that, the Atlantic Ocean. Among the species that feed in these waters are herons, their legs echoing the pylons of the raised beach houses that line the riverbank, solemn pelicans, and playful dolphins (who swim in for a fish dinner in the evenings and frolic about gleefully in the surf afterwards).

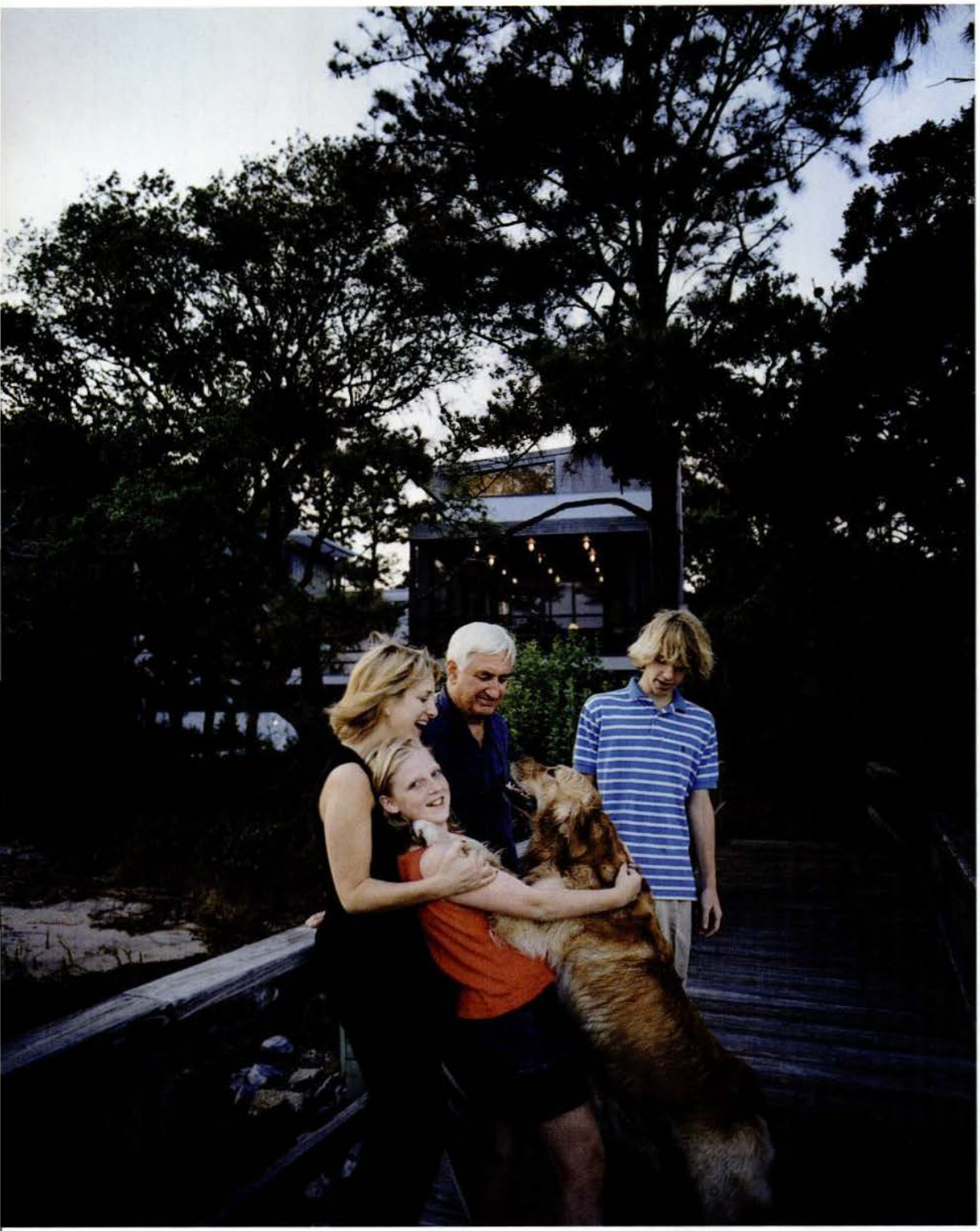
The building, bordered on the south by the Back River, echoes somewhat Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House. It wasn't Eric's intention to invoke Mies, but once he'd made up his mind to use a steel frame, he explains, the influence couldn't be disregarded. The T-shaped house, which stands in a floodplain, is raised eight feet off the ground. Savannah's building code requires six feet of clearance in this area, but Eric opted for the extra space in order to utilize the structure's underside.

What Eric wanted to capture, he says, was the serenity of the place. To achieve this, he was abetted by what he calls the "horizontal extension" of the river. The trees—mostly oaks, pines, palms, and cedars—also helped. Unlike most people, who cut down trees when they buy land, Paul and Eric preserved every single one—and even planted more. The decision was an enlightened one, because the foliage provides this half-acre site with much of its character. Virtually surrounding the house, the trees shelter it and provide privacy. Looking back from the water, the house is barely visible.

When Paul Robinson purchased the lot in 1995, it was occupied by a rectangular, one-story ranch house. He asked his son if he'd care to renovate it for him. When that proved unfeasible—the structure was in very poor condition—Paul decided to raze the bungalow and replace it with what he calls a "bachelor pad." Eric started work on a set of designs that would take him some five months. In the interim, however, Paul, long divorced, decided to remarry. And because his new wife, Lori, has ▸

The Robinson house is entered through a main door on the second floor, which is reached by an exterior steel staircase with cedar handrail. Photo by Richard Leo Johnson. A notated plan of the first floor is shown at right.

In the sitting room, concealed air-conditioning ducts allow the ceiling to soar to an impressive 18 feet, making this the brightest room in the house. A wall of glass and clerestory windows offer an expansive view of the estuary. Barcelona chairs by Le Corbusier, coffee table by Poliform. $ p.136

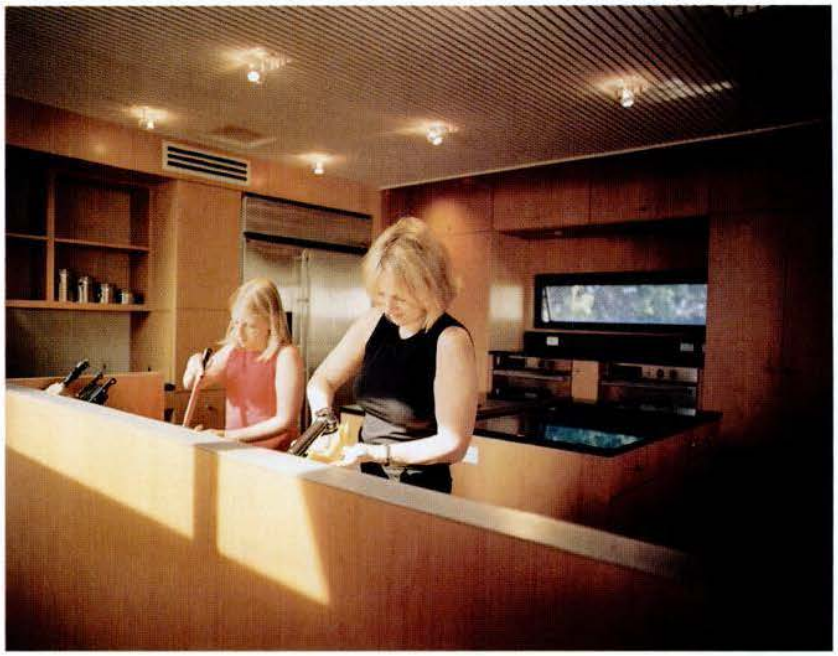


Above: Lori, Paul, Larkin, and Rob cavort with Solomon, the family dog, on the pier leading out to the estuary. Opposite: The house's somewhat unconventional exterior cladding materials include tern-coated stainless steel, cedar siding, and fiber-cement panels.

two teenage children, it was determined that the original plan would need to be reconceptualized. Instead of a bachelor pad, what Paul needed now was a year-round house big enough to accommodate a family of four.

The younger Robinson began anew and, six months later, came up with a set of designs to which Paul and Lori gave their approval. There is nothing ostentatious about the building that resulted. The materials used to clad the exterior are understated: tern-coated stainless steel, cedar siding, and fiber-cement panels. In appearance, the panels suggest compressed cardboard, but in Eric's design, screw fasteners, shop-painted aluminum storefront windows, and neoprene gaskets have been added. "It's a way of showing how the building was put together," he says.

The heart of the home is the second floor, where the family cooks and eats and relaxes. Lacking lines of demarcation, one room leads naturally to the next. The kitchen, which has cherry-wood floors and honey-colored cabinets designed by the architect, opens out onto the dining area. In the sitting room, a polished black-granite fireplace complements two leather Barcelona ►



The kitchen cabinets (above) are made of honey-colored beech veneer plywood. The counters are granite. At left, the family gathers for a game of Scrabble in the dining area while Rob (opposite) looks on from the second floor.

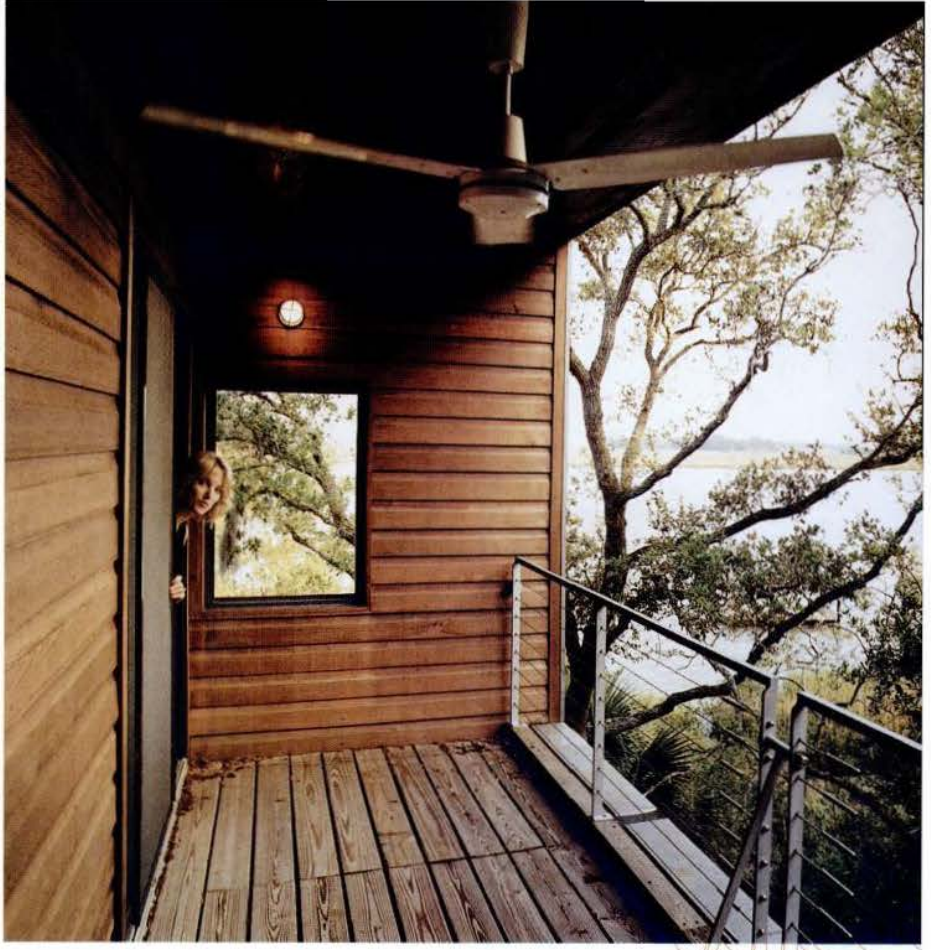
chairs. This is, without a doubt, the brightest room in the house. Not only does one wall consist entirely of glass, but the space also has two clerestories. This is not a house that shuns the outdoors.

A separate wing on the second floor houses the master suite, which consists of a large bedroom, a dressing room with no fewer than 50 drawers, and a bathroom as big as a badminton court. The third floor's most interesting feature is the atelier, in which Lori, a talented artist, paints portraits and nature studies. The room has a modified bitumen roof and exterior walls clad in tern-coated stainless steel. And for those moments when fatigue sets in or the muse is being willful, the studio has a balcony where the artist can take her easel.

The Robinson house is a family project that worked. Eric claims his dad was a great client. Early on, there was some resistance, but they are father and son, after all. A further complication was the fact that, though he hasn't practiced in many years, Paul is also an architect.

In the project's early stages, Eric says, his father would fax sketches to him. (His response was always a diplomatic "Thank you.") But as Paul's confidence in him grew, the faxes ceased, and the two of them, who have always been close, grew even closer. His father continues to consult him even now. Just recently, for example, he called his son in Berkeley just to ask him to recommend a towel hook for the outdoor shower.

"I thought that was very nice of him," Eric says. ■



Above: Lori peeks out onto the balcony from her third-floor painting studio. At left, the couple relaxes in the master bedroom, which features exposed cherry-wood bedroom furniture by Jensen. One of Lori's landscape paintings can be seen on the left. The Wassily chair is by Marcel Breuer. p. 136

The enviable screened porch is just one of the ways the house can function as a viewing platform from which, the architect says, "to enjoy the changing qualities of the river." Photo by Richard Leo Johnson.

The shower/bath is made of polished limestone and there's lots of blue-colored tile here, too—a reference to the sky and water beyond the window. The shower fixtures are by Grohe, the tub fixtures by Dornbracht.
p. 136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Story by Donovan Finn | Photos by Mark Steinmetz

Shawn Moseley (left) helped design his new home in central Atlanta. The decidedly nontraditional structure includes a front wall that opens the living room onto the front yard—and to the rest of the neighborhood, which has enthusiastically welcomed the house and its owner.

Project: Moseley Residence
Designer: M. Scott Ball
Location: Atlanta, GA

Mid-City Modern

In the heart of the city, Shawn Moseley worked closely with designer Scott Ball to design and build his new house not ten minutes from downtown.

The house is designed like an urban loft. Even elements such as the staircase and second-floor railings are almost transparent, so natural light floods the structure from dawn to dusk. Moseley's friend David W. Prasse (right) and designer Scott Ball take it all in.

Atlanta is known for many things—Coca-Cola, cotton mills, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., to name a few—but modern architecture has surely never been one of them. In fact, mention of the city usually calls to mind the sprawling suburban developments that ring the metropolis and threaten to turn all of rural Georgia into one massive cul-de-sac. Contrasting with the legacy of sprawl is something of an architectural renaissance percolating in Atlanta's older neighborhoods within the last few years: a host of urban infill projects and loft conversions that are slowly altering the suburban-wasteland image. A recent and none-too-bashful addition to the city's modern pantheon is Shawn Moseley's dramatic new home in the McDonough/Guice neighborhood.

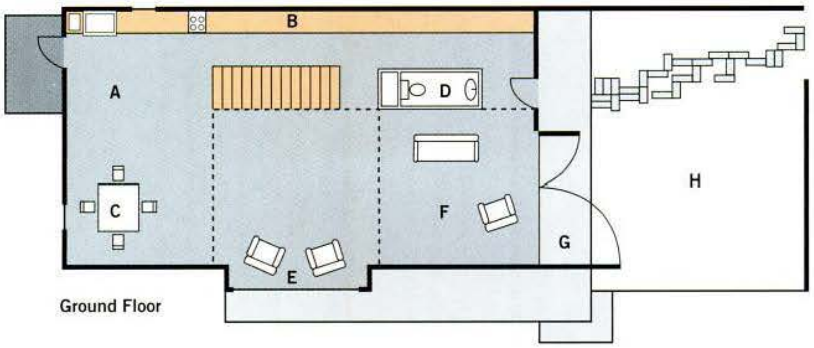
Moseley, a 34-year-old longtime Atlanta resident, hadn't considered building a house when he started looking to buy his first home. Tired of renting but disdainful of most flimsy new construction, Moseley figured he could find an unrenovated loft or an older house to serve as a blank canvas for his ideas. But instead of an anonymous loft in a converted warehouse, he is now the proud owner of the kind of house that inspires Sunday-morning drivers to stop in the middle of the street, car idling, as they take in the slightly alien silver box.

Seven years in a rented bungalow followed by a year in a flood-prone loft had convinced the young music-industry executive, amateur furniture designer, and former architecture student that he would be happiest buying a solidly built industrial space he could redesign himself. His realtor took him to see downtown and midtown lofts, which were disappointing. "I quickly realized how limited my options were," says Moseley. "Every place I looked at was going to require an $80,000 renovation just to be habitable. What was available was just way overpriced, and didn't exactly fit my needs."

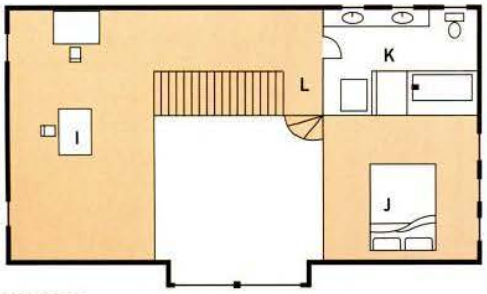
After months of searching for a suitable space, Moseley was lamenting his fruitless hunt over a Saturday-afternoon beer with his realtor—and old friend—David Prasse, who had bought a converted turn-of-the-century trolley station in a quiet neighborhood southeast of downtown Atlanta. As the afternoon wore on, Moseley suddenly remembered having gone with Prasse on a walk-through of a house in nearby McDonough/Guice the previous year, a house that now stands next to Moseley's. The designer of that house was also responsible for Prasse's trolley station conversion, and Moseley wondered aloud if he was still looking to develop the lots adjacent to the house they'd seen. "Dave picked up the phone, made a call, and we drove over within 15 minutes to look at the lot," recalls Moseley.

The designer was M. Scott Ball, who has a local practice and is co-executive director of Atlanta's Community Housing Resource Center. Ball was hoping to develop a ►

Opposite page: The bedroom overlooks an office, which floats above the kitchen and dining room. The railing and banister were fabricated by a local metal worker a few miles away.

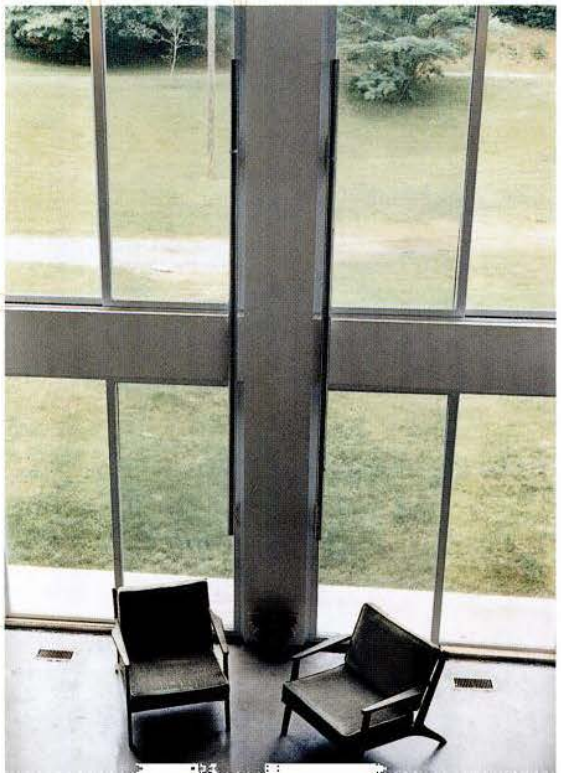


Ground Floor



Loft Floor

A / Kitchen
B / 40-foot kitchen counter
C / Dining room
D / Bathroom
E / Clerestory windows
F / Living room
G / Front wall that swings open
H / Exterior terrace
I / Office
J / Bedroom
K / Master bath
L / Stairs



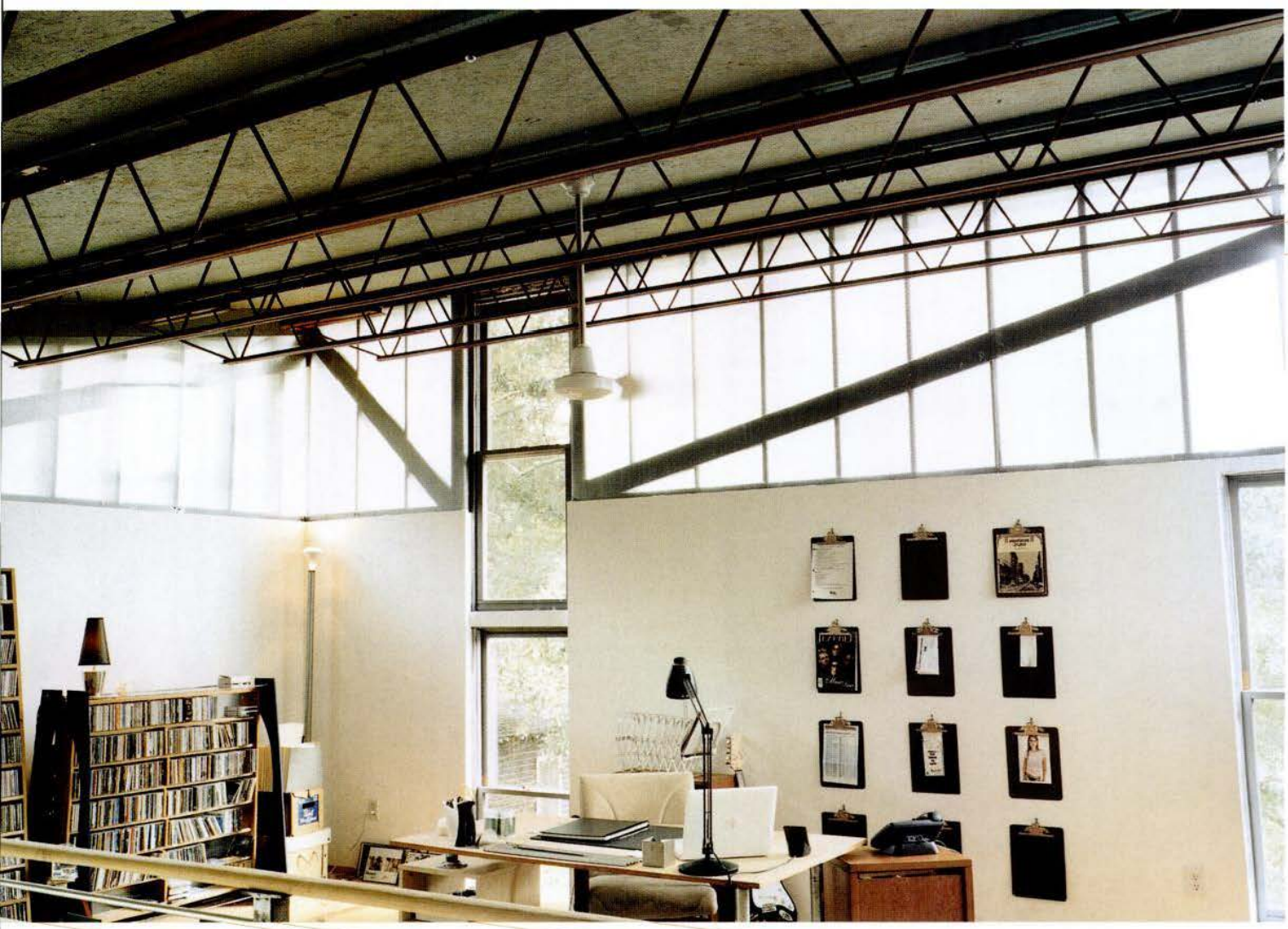
group of houses on land he owned in the racially and socioeconomically mixed neighborhood to use as showcases for intelligently built, moderately priced housing. While Moseley was looking for a particular kind of modern aesthetic that was also within his price range, Ball was more interested in practical issues. "The CHRC's largest program is a housing repair and rehab program for low-income homeowners," explains Ball. "In the nearly subtropical climate of Atlanta, there are many environmental forces hostile to the stick-built, Sheetrocked, carpeted boxes in which we have grown accustomed to living." Southern heat and humidity simply don't work well with hollow-walled cavities, which trap moisture and wreak havoc on Sheetrock and wood framing. The same kind of homes that work quite well in California or Michigan become maintenance nightmares in the sticky Georgia heat, especially for older residents. The CHRC hoped to use their experience to research, design, and build a home that would challenge community expectations of housing design and suitable materials and serve as a laboratory for Ball's sustainable design ideas, yet still maintain a connection to the architectural traditions of the region.

"What would a house look like," Ball says he hoped to discover, "if we eliminated wall cavities, Sheetrock ceilings, interior bearing walls, and other items that typically create problems as a house grows old and the use patterns change?" The overarching goal was a design that worked better and was more grounded in Atlanta's particular set of needs than a "traditionally" built home. The freedom for designer and client to let their imaginations run wild and build something interesting and unique was icing on the cake.

With Moseley and Ball's joint efforts (with assistance from architecture students at Southern Polytechnic State University, where Moseley studied design in the late '80s), the house was finished in less than a year and emerged as exactly the type of urban space Moseley had envisioned, but situated on a quiet residential street ten minutes from downtown Atlanta. The 2,000-square-foot structure (plus an 1,100-square-foot basement workshop and garage) is essentially a freestanding loft, defined chiefly by its gull-wing roof, clerestory windows and the home's most dramatic feature, a front wall that swings open onto an exterior terrace.

Eschewing the stick framing that CHRC inspectors have seen cause such trouble for many homeowners in Georgia's year-round humidity, the walls were erected from structurally insulated panels (SIPs) built off-site, delivered, and raised into place. The exterior of the house is clad in a mixture of corrugated and flat sheet metal. It requires little to no maintenance as the house ages and is an overt nod to vernacular metal-roofed architecture ►

At left, the 40-foot countertop melds seamlessly with off-the-shelf kitchen cabinets and stainless steel appliances, creating an unbroken line along one side of the house.



Sitting in the second-floor office, one has the feeling of being at the command center of a powerful battleship or futuristic spacecraft. Desk, floor lamp, and CD racks were all designed by Moseley.

common to the region—from corrugated farm buildings to industrial warehouses to the standing-seam metal-roofed bungalows that dot inner Atlanta. Likewise, the house's dramatic eaves are reminiscent of the deep awnings and large front porches that have long been the perennial design solutions for escaping oppressive Southern summer heat.

"One of the most important things about the design was fitting the house to the site," recalls Moseley when discussing how the structure took shape. "When you move from conception to final design, you start to realize what kind of impact things like budget, building codes, timeline, and especially the site have on a project." Preliminary sketches showed one-story buildings with flat roofs, but upon continual examination of the site, the designers realized that a horizontally oriented structure was not right for the location. The final vertical, concave design relates to the topography in a way that restrains and tempers what is otherwise an undeniably bold structure. A tree- and kudzu-filled valley just beyond the house is echoed by the butterfly-shaped roof. And the height of the building actually complements the sloping site more gracefully and unobtrusively than the original low-slung designs would have.

Inside, clean lines give the light-filled space a sense of dignified composure without seeming stark or cold. Minimal trim and finish work, use of salvaged or off-the-rack materials, and a lot of work by Moseley and Ball on nights and weekends served to keep costs low and to create the simple beauty and drama the designers were hoping to achieve. These decisions also reflected Ball's original intent to show that smart, livable design need not necessarily be unattainable. With construction costs of just over $110,000, the house was built for only $32 per square foot.

The open-plan layout flows unencumbered from room to room and level to level, allowing Moseley to live in the entire house as if it were one large living room, a system

Hotlanta

Arising alongside Atlanta's graceful bungalows and cotton mills cum loft conversions are an array of coolly modern residential and commercial projects that wouldn't look out of place in Scandinavia or the hippest San Francisco enclave. Some of the best examples are located in the West Midtown neighborhood bordered by Marietta Street, Howell Mill Road, and Northside Drive. A recent neighborhood master plan was designed by local design hot shots Plexus r+d.

A full day of Atlanta's stylish best would not be complete without the following stops:

Commune is hard to beat for a combination of décor, great service, and tasty grub, with slickly dressed waitstaff and a lacquer-and-glass interior straight out of a 1950s Russian sci-fi flick.

In Decatur (just outside Atlanta proper), check out Stanton Designs, a home-décor store that mixes some Asian-influenced pieces with mostly modern Asian and South American furniture, original art, lighting, jewelry, and more. Owner Jimmy Stanton also carries vintage furniture and framed fabrics from the 1950s. Even the building it's located in has a hip, postindustrial vibe.

For nightlife, try Halo Lounge, which is owned and was designed by Allen Godfrey of East Atlanta's Fountainhead Lounge and Thom Williams of Associated Space Design. Halo's unmarked doorway might make you think it's a place where the fabulous go to see and be seen. But it's actually a very comfortable place, with a friendly, approachable staff, potent cocktails, and a rotating roster of world-class DJs. The interior is an out-of-this-world mix—think Eero Saarinen meets Nine Inch Nails—with custom-designed polymorphous seating and lighting, a backlit white onyx bar, and enough concrete to pave a parking lot. —D.F.

Commune

No alarm clock needed here. The highest point in the house is the bedroom, bathed in light from two walls made predominantly of windows and a third completely open to the rest of the house.

that fits his hectic and nocturnal lifestyle quite nicely. Several design elements emerged as construction progressed, most notably a custom staircase that seems to float above the concrete floor and a 40-foot-long kitchen counter that Moseley jokes would make a great Internet café if he's ever strapped for cash. The staircase was designed after owner and designer fell in love with the four-by-ten wood joists they had ordered to support the second floor, and the counter was inspired by (and built from) glulam beams that arrived to form a load-bearing wall that would span the patio doors.

Although the house is unapologetically modern, and starkly so, it has elicited interest and excitement from local homeowners. "Other than a couple little kids who rode up on bikes and hoped we were building a nightclub, we've had zero issues with unhappy neighbors," notes Moseley with a grin. "I think most people are just happy to see something new and interesting in the neighborhood." ■

The painter John Register expressed a full range of emotions by way of empty motels, diners, and apartments. Shown here is *Office*, 1982 (oil on canvas, 40" x 50").

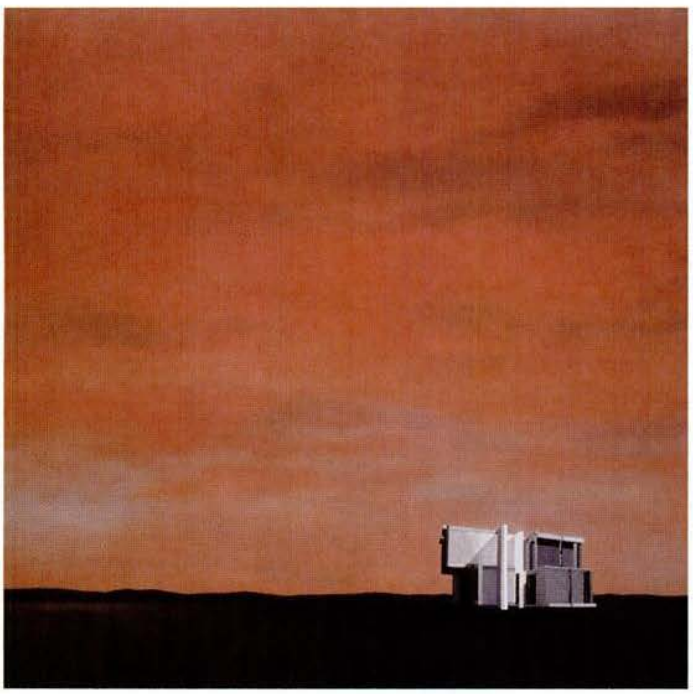
Julie Langsam was never meant to practice architecture. Even small sculpture confounds her: Whenever she worked with wood or metal in art school, she'd become so absorbed in one surface that she'd forget all the others. "I don't have a good idea of three-dimensional space," she admits. "I think only illusionistically."

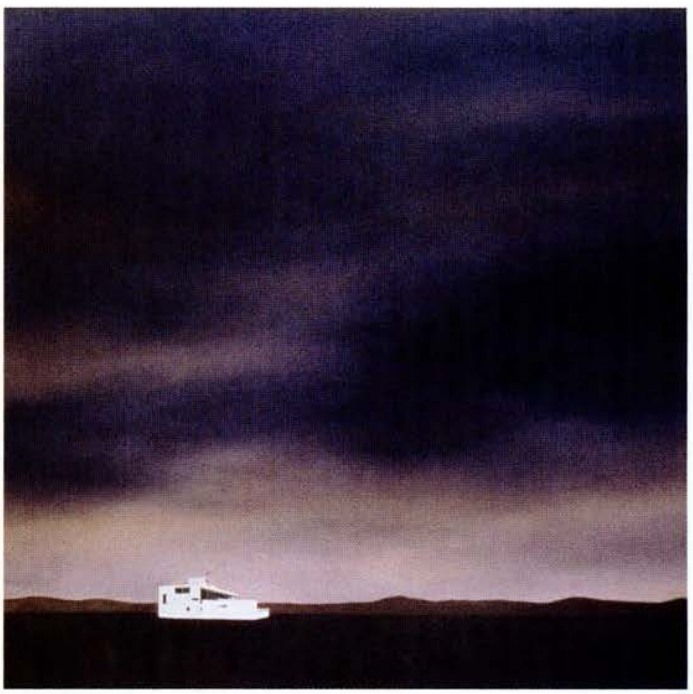
That may explain why her paintings of residential landmarks by Mies, Neutra, and Eisenman look nothing like your average building elevation. For the 43-year-old Langsam, as for a growing number of young painters—from Brian Alfred, 29, to Eberhard Havekost, 36, to Sarah Morris, 36—depicting architecture isn't about bricks and mortar: It's a means of rendering in real terms our increasingly amorphous contemporary culture.

Of course, depicting buildings is almost as old as architecture itself. Drawings on ancient scrolls and walls give us a view of archaic dwellings. Gilded medieval church panels telegraphed the glory of God from the great spires of gothic cathedrals. Modernist painters from Charles Sheeler to Edward Hopper used architectural space to evoke the ambience of their age. In the 1980s and '90s, the late Los Angeles painter John Register went even further, expressing a full range of emotions (mainly alienation) simply with images of empty motels, apartments, and diners. Register pursued what he called "a refinement of the commonplace," using snapshots and adapting only the essential to convey a particular mood. Yet, while Register communicated through architecture, ▸

The Art of Architecture

For a growing number of young artists working today, the painting of architecture is less about depicting buildings than it is making sense of our contemporary culture.





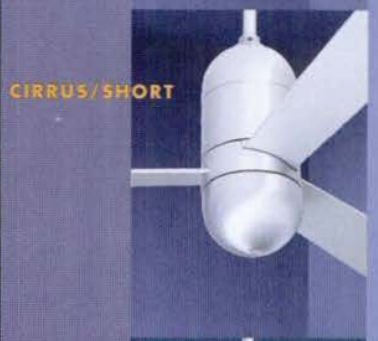
The iconic modernist homes represented in Julie Langsam's paintings represent, for her, a desired yet unattainable ideal. Shown are (at left) *Eisenman Landscape (Frank House)*, 2000 (44" x 44"), and *Gwathmey Siegel Landscape (Haupt House)*, 2000 (24" x 24"), both oil on panel.

COURTESY OF MODERNISM INC. (JOHN REGISTER)


BALL


NEW AURORA


HALO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Brian Alfred's oil painting *Wrecking Ball*, 2001 (60" x 72"), offers a critique of strict modernist ideology by depicting the venerable Bauhaus receiving a direct hit from a wrecking ball.

he left it to the following generation to take the next step, making the buildings in their paintings carry conceptual weight.

Langsam's explanation for the way she came about her subject matter is indirect. An interest in female sexuality led her to search 1950s-era magazines for images of women. "They were all running around in high heels and nice clothing, building families in these machines for living," she recalls. "I started to wonder what these idealized pictures meant, if there was anything worth resurrecting, whether we'd really come so far." She found herself nostalgic for a past that she knew was illusory.

Merely painting those women, though, failed to adequately express that schism. For her generation, she believes, the split went deeper. "By the time I came of age as a painter," she says, "all of us knew that, as artists or architects, we were supposed to fulfill the ideal of modernism, to find the perfect form, but also we were already aware that there isn't an ideal to be achieved." The stunning austerity she'd once encountered as a guest in a classic Neutra house stood in stark contrast to the easy comfort of her own anonymous Cleveland clapboard. "[Modernism is] a rigorous aesthetic," Langsam observes, undeniably appealing yet also forbidding.

So Langsam picked up the temples of modernism and put them where, for her, they naturally belonged. More specifically, she set them out in the middle of nowhere. Langsam chose as her backdrops the flat expanses of the American prairie first romanticized in the 19th century by the Hudson River School. Yet, while those grounds are products of her imagination, artfully landscaped and illuminated, the buildings are portrayed in painstaking detail. Working from color photographs found in textbooks, Langsam selects a suitable view to project as a transparency onto a wooden panel. From that, she makes a line drawing, adding colors in oil. "The homes are almost pasted into the landscape," she elaborates. Unoccupied and lacking even road access, they are the embodiment of her ambivalence. "I want them to be accurately depicted, but displaced." Quite literally an ideal that can be desired yet never reached.

Brian Alfred's large-scale canvases offer a somewhat different attitude toward modernist architecture. One painting even depicts that holy of holies, the original Bauhaus, receiving a direct blow from a wrecking ball. "With the Bauhaus, there was a very strict ideology," ▸

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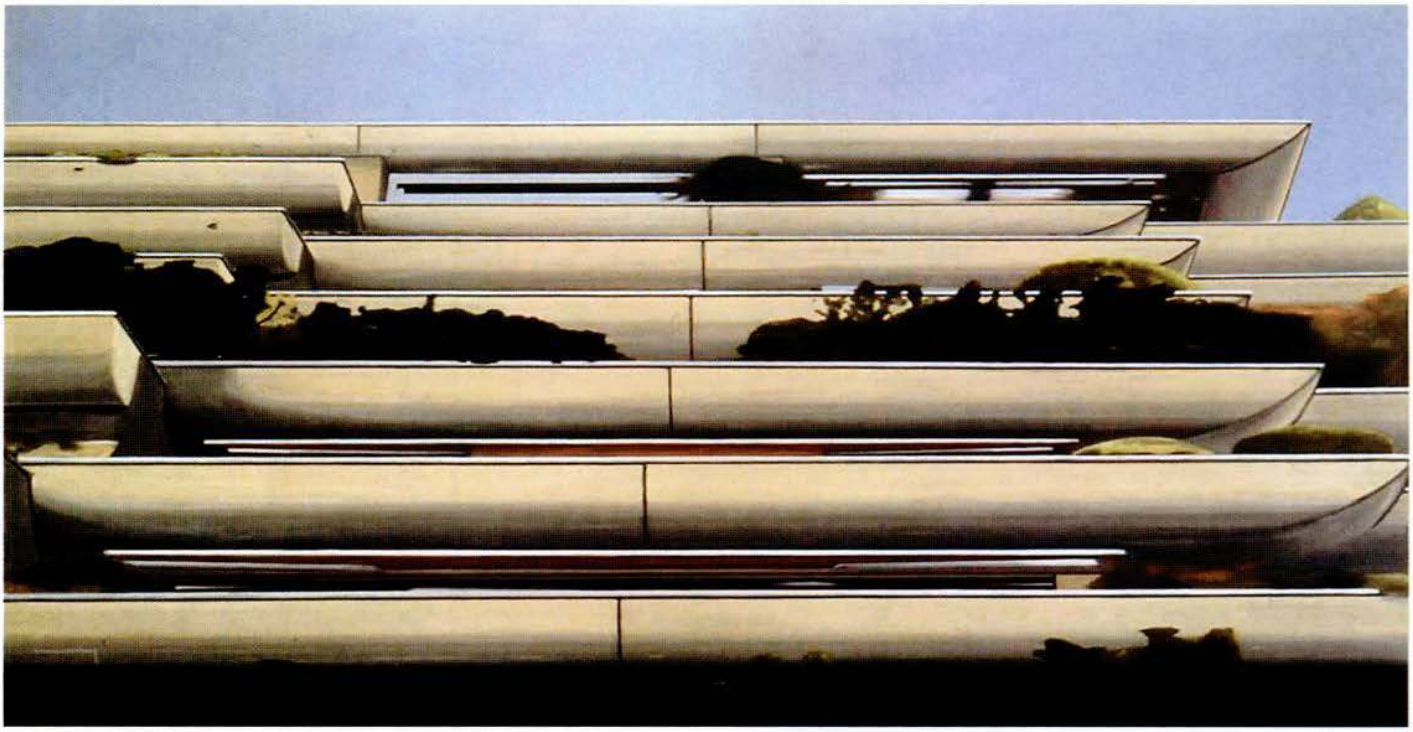

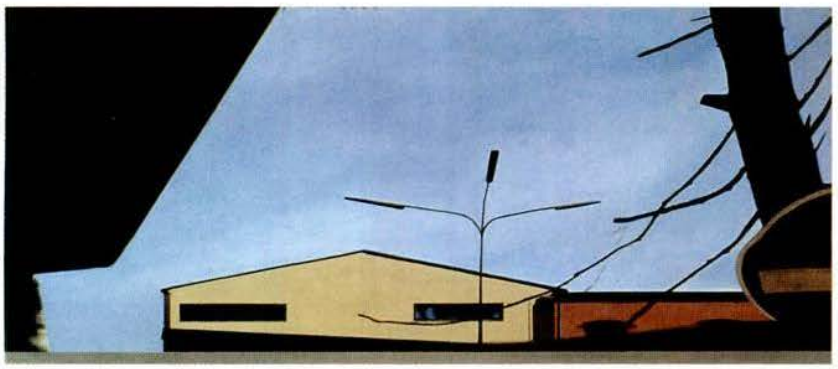

Scanning found images of buildings, trailers, and interiors into his computer, Eberhard Havekost crops all context and accentuates visual distortion in his graphic oils. Shown here are *User-Surface 5*, 2001 (67" x 130"), and *User-Surface*, 2002 (59" x 137-5/8").

Alfred explains. "Now it's exploded and anything can be a viable idea."

Alfred is interested in architecture for the great range of concepts it allows him to express. His foundation in what he calls the "built environment" evolved out of his work in fractals, the use of mathematics to model nature. "Eventually I abandoned the whole formula aspect because all the work was looking very similar," he says. "I was more interested in the broader things in the world." He turned his attention to the media and observed that TV news shows often illustrate stories with images of architecture. "I became interested in how buildings are a substitute for things not readily visible to the media," he recalls. "It's hard to get footage of what the FBI is doing behind the scenes, for example, so the FBI building becomes a metaphor for how you get kept in the dark. Or, for a while, the glass Enron building became a stand-in for corruption." If architecture could broadcast all that, Alfred recognized, it could provide him with a visual language both more culturally relevant and more aesthetically open-ended than fractals.

Browsing the Internet several hours a day, Alfred finds raw news photos to render in Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop. Reducing buildings to their basic shapes and manipulating them (by, say, drawing in a wrecking ball) to impose his own commentary on their standard iconography, he creates stencils and cuts them out with an X-Acto knife. Then he builds up the painting in layers, each form absolutely flat, abutting the others. And all the while, in his Brooklyn studio, a TV tuned to CNN plays on mute, a 21st-century muse flickering with imagery.

Like Alfred in Brooklyn, Eberhard Havekost uses the mass media to watch the world from his home in Dresden, Germany. But unlike Alfred, he's often drawn to images on TV and photographic reproductions for their anonymity. His work tends toward the suburban, and ►

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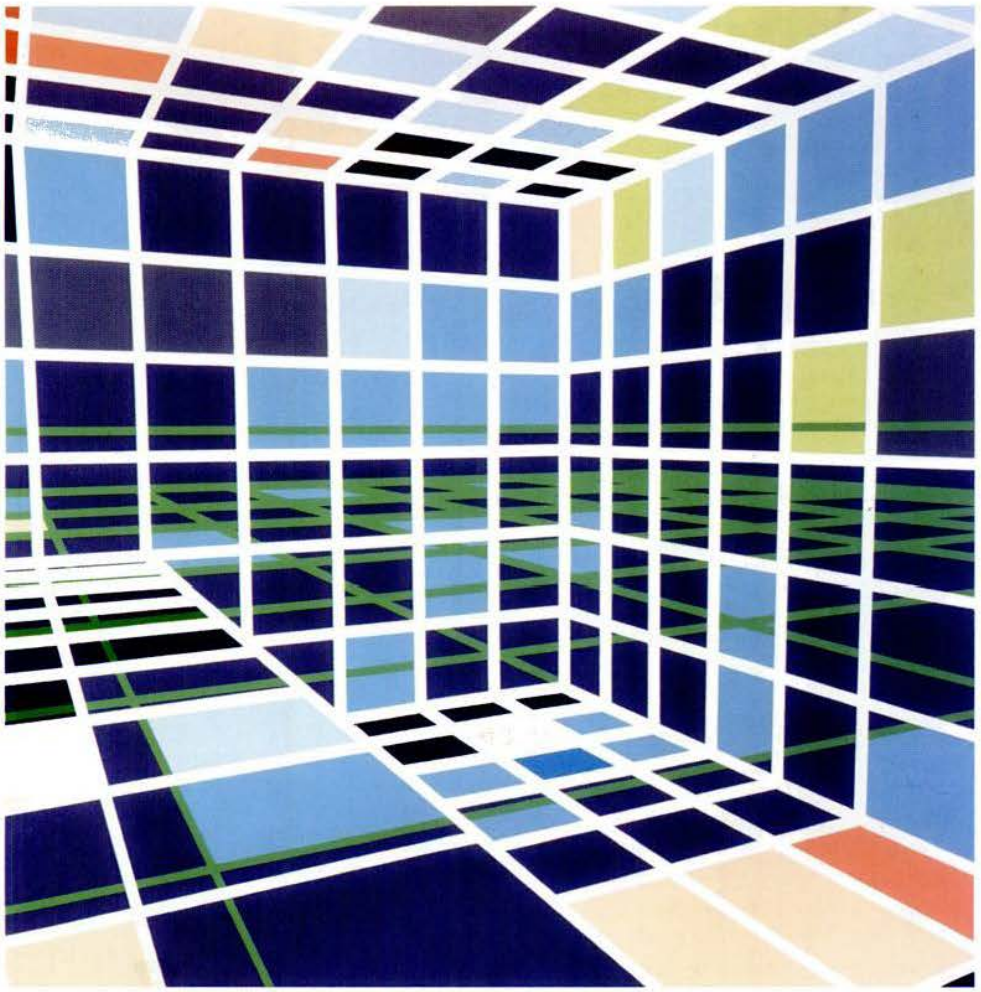
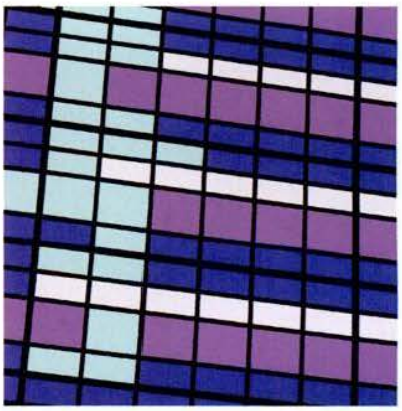
has drawn comparison to the fiction of John Cheever and A. M. Homes. Scanning found images of houses, trailers, skyscrapers, and office interiors into his computer, he crops all context and accentuates visual distortion—what he calls the formal "flaws." His smallest canvases even tempt illegibility. Strangely, the refusal of his buildings to explain themselves, their impenetrability and interchangeability, reinforces the symbolic resonance of Alfred's and Langsam's more explicit sources, and even justifies their denial of subject matter. Havekost suggests, by the counterexample of his buildings stripped of meaning, how disconnected from actual architecture iconic buildings can become.

Painter Sarah Morris offers a different perspective. She denies that architecture is her subject matter, describing it instead as a means of communication. "I use architecture to create situations in space," she says. "I'm working with the strategies building designers use to distract people, or to make them concentrate." As a result, her paintings, inspired by Las Vegas hotels, Miami swimming pools, and Washington monuments, as well as New York skyscrapers, are more abstract than those of her peers. She takes snapshots compulsively, using the images for references in her work. She doesn't work directly from them but rather focuses on the colors, scale, and emotive qualities of buildings, not their technical details.

As a result, her spare paintings are not "accurate" in any conventional sense but people often imagine otherwise. Viewers frequently tell her that her painting *Midtown—Revlon Corporation* is a perfect depiction of architect Der Scutt's landmark. "Because of the perspective and the way the painting dominates you with color and scale," she says, "people perhaps have the same feeling as [they do when they're] around that structure."

Morris compares architecture to film, and even shoots movies in and around the cityscapes that inspire her paintings. "Like good cinema, successful buildings place you in a fantasy," she says, citing the way that malls compel us to shop and casinos inspire us to gamble. Morris's minimalist geometric canvases may be aesthetically antithetical to John Register's nearly photorealist renditions, but their work has an important quality in common, stretching back to Hopper and Sheeler. Both exploit the expressive potential of architectural language, manipulating space on a flat plane to evoke multidimensional emotion. Both are architects of illusion. ■





Painter Sarah Morris describes her work as a means of communication rather than the architectural representation. Shown here are her paintings *Pools—Crystal House (Miami)*, 2002 (household gloss on canvas, 84-1/4" x 84-1/4"), and (above) *Midtown—Revlon Corporation*, 1998 (household gloss on canvas, 84-1/4" x 84-1/4").

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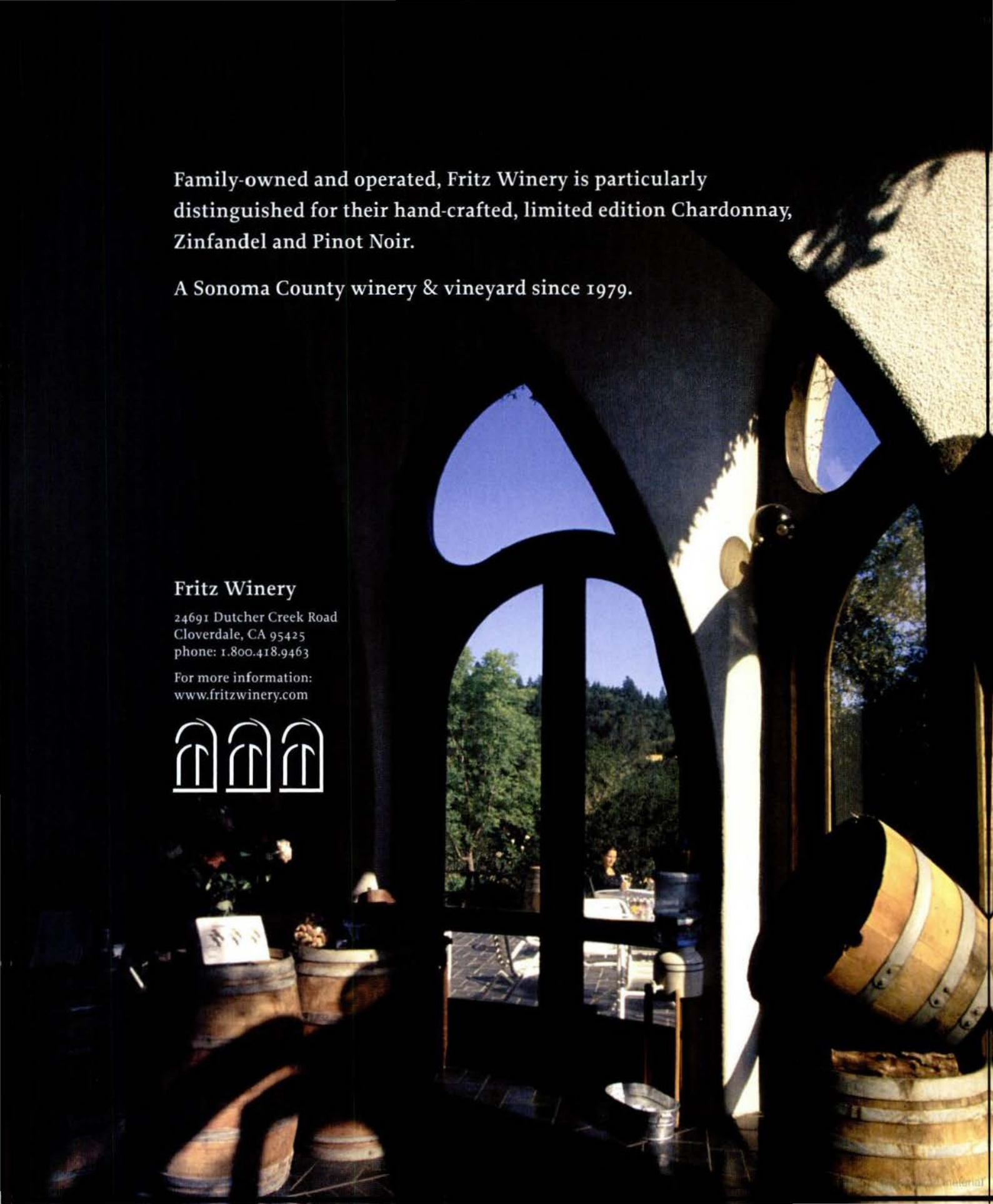

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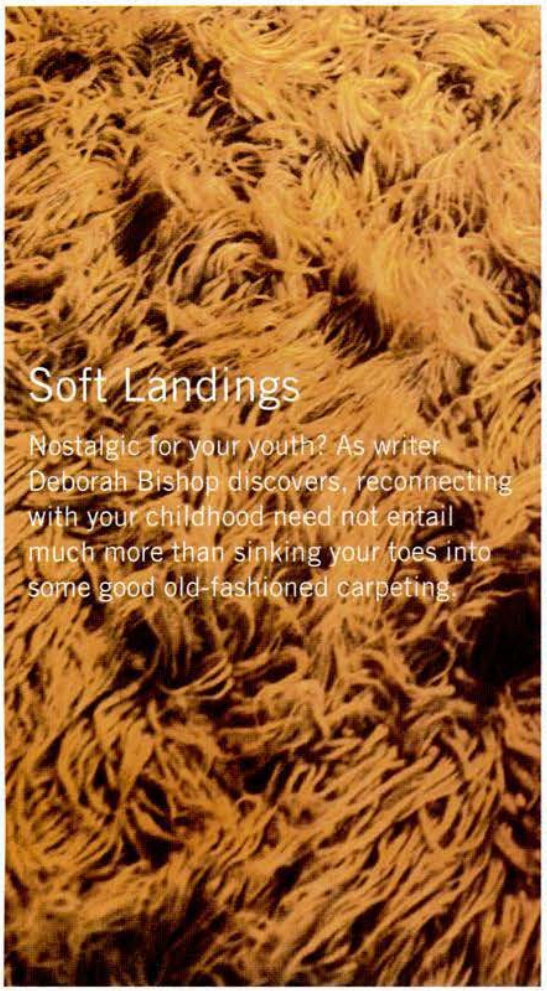
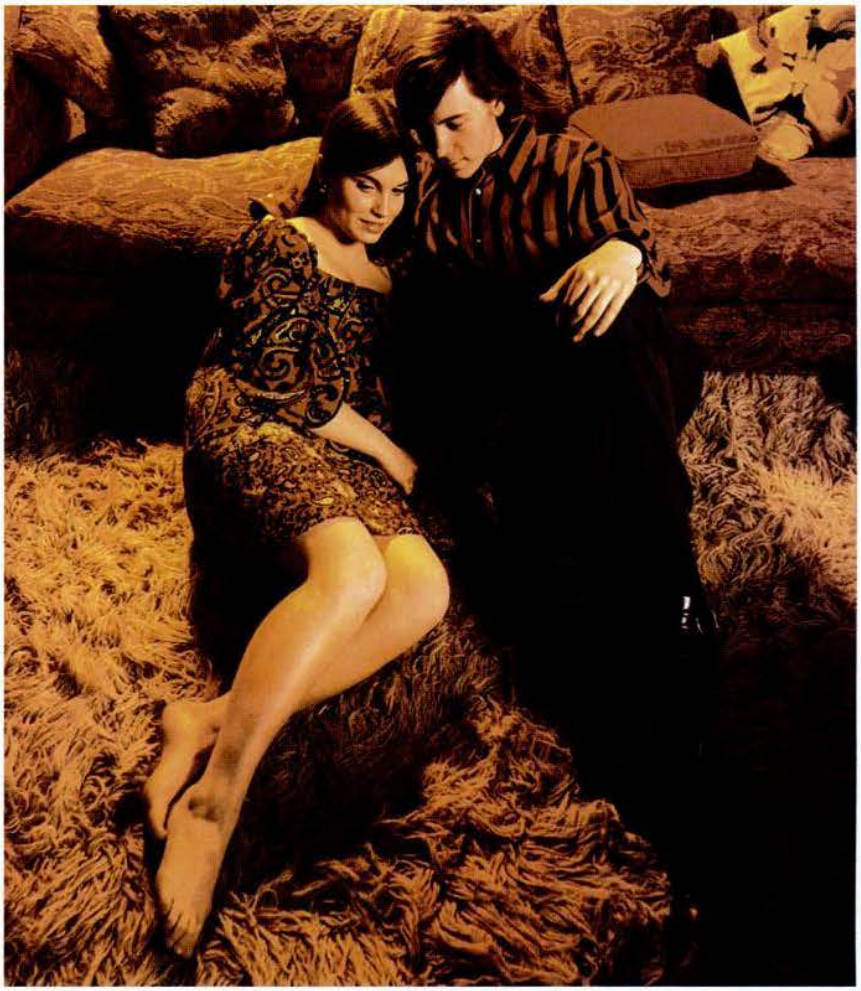


Soft Landings

Nostalgic for your youth? As writer Deborah Bishop discovers, reconnecting with your childhood need not entail much more than sinking your toes into some good old-fashioned carpeting.



I don't know how old you are, but if you're anywhere near my age, which is to say, *very* late baby boomer (squeaking in just under the limbo bar, really), and spent your formative years in the 'burbs, there's a good chance you took your first wobbly steps on wall-to-wall carpeting. (You may be exempt if your parents were design visionaries or made you live in a commune.)

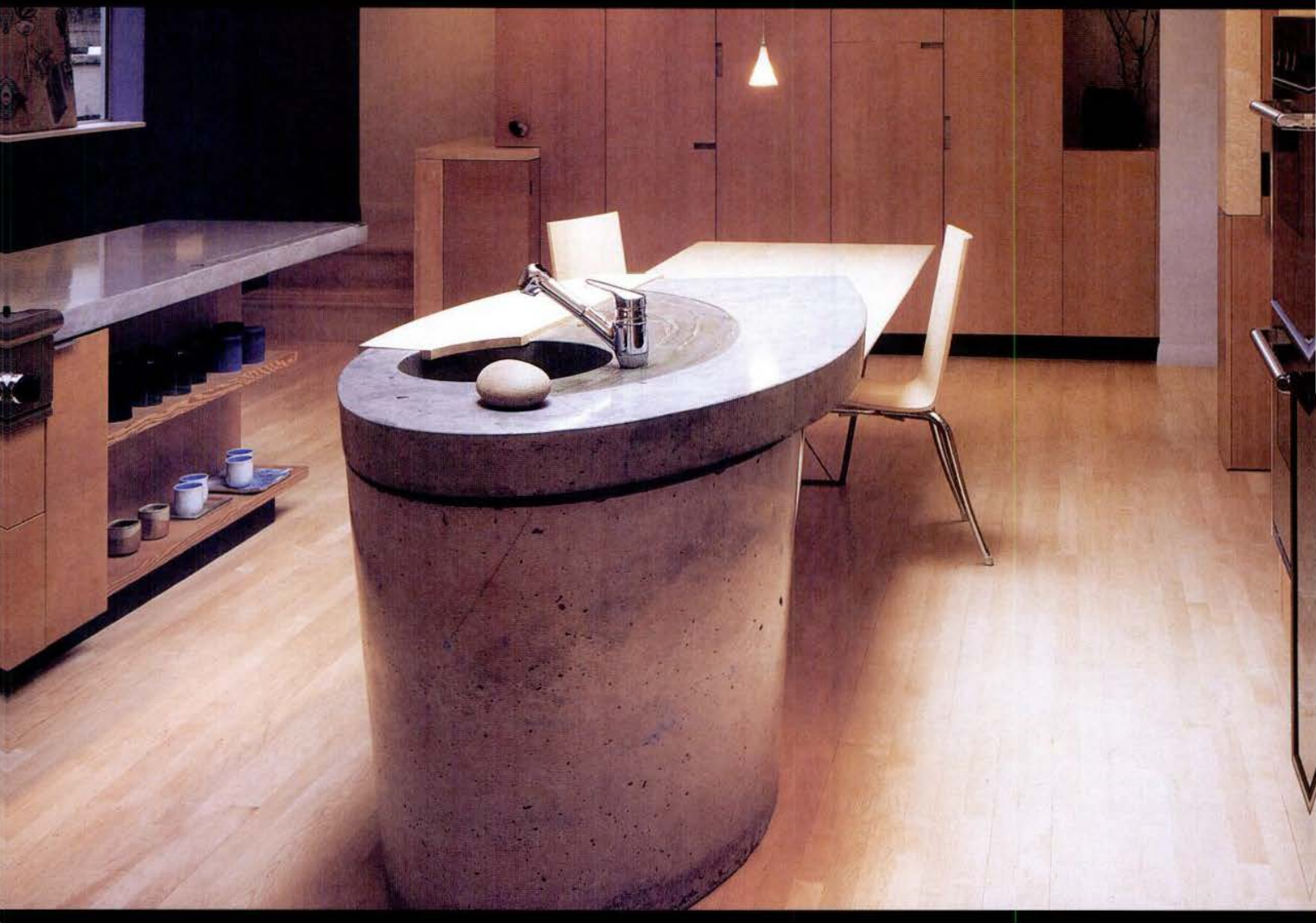
I vaguely remember a week in the '60s when all the low-pile, neutral-hued carpeting in our North Hollywood ranch house was replaced with meadows of synthetic shag. The living and dining rooms sprouted inter-twining oranges that redefined earth tones for a post-nuclear age and served as a backdrop for some era-defining events. Like the time Allen Ginsberg sat cross-legged on our tangerine thicket and read poetry as his friend pinged finger cymbals and I cowered behind the built-in stone planter filled with fake philodendron, stifling giggles. (Now I just wish I had a photo.)

In the next decade (the one with its own television show), I roamed between the room shared by my brothers, whose incense and illicit joints left a constellation of burn marks on their purple-heathered haze, and the aquamarine embrace of my own retreat, where the azure/citron/green loops gave me rug burns as I went about the usual adolescent courtship rituals to Bowie blaring in the background. (Shag. Which came first, the noun or the verb?) When I fled for Berkeley, California, my housing requirements were simple—big closets, hardwood floors—even as I came to curse the clomping of Frye boots on the bare planks overhead.

In a dozen apartments and two houses since (one built in 1906, the other in 1996), an absence of wall-to-wall has been the com-mon denominator. And then, a few months ago, I came *this* close. My infant twins were becoming mobile—Sasha cruising and Wes flinging himself into an amphibious belly crawl—and each tumble onto the play-room's ecologically harvested wood floor made me fear the arrival of Child Protective Services.

At first I put down a huge Flokati (ideal for those ambivalent about the rumored shag renaissance), but Sasha kept eating the fluff and tripping over the bunched-up ends. At a local design store, I became enamored of textile artist Hansine Pedersen Goran's dense, hand-tufted, and brilliantly dyed New Zealand wool carpets, but feared becoming annoyingly dirt phobic, considering the price. I ended up with a workmanlike plot of ruby-toned, industrial-strength DuPont Stainmaster by Masland that manages to simultaneously repel and absorb everything from applesauce to coffee without losing its cheerful synthetic luster. (In the end, I surged the edges and left a healthy frame of wood.) I imagine trying to send it off to college some day with one or other of the kids, who will likely roll their eyes and respond with some variant of "Are you *insane*?"

PHOTO COURTESY OF PHOTO MEDIA / ROBERSTOCK.COM



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If Jay Gatsby and Lady Chatterley were ever to hook up, they might consummate their passion atop a sea of Ralph Lauren's Aran Isle Knit wool broadloom in a smoky marriage of brown and gray called Game Keeper. Cable Sweater ("inspired by actual cashmere sweaters") gives one the cozy feeling of stretching out upon the world's largest pullover. Ralph Lauren Floorcoverings dealer info: 800-334-1181

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Even More Rugs

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Clean, crisp, and pleasantly thick underfoot, Duetto's geometry is woven from an ingenious combination of cotton and strong paper cord (for which Finnish textile designer Hanna Korvela received the German Der Rote Punkt prize). www.hannakorveladesign.fi; available through www.bonitasnordicimports.com

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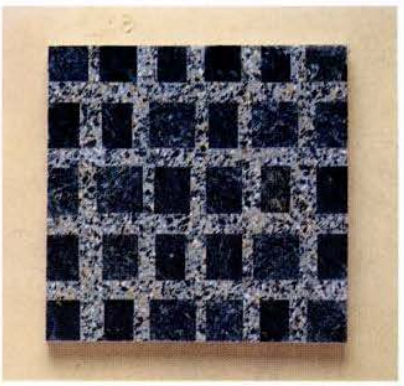
Inspired by one-of-a-kind artisan rugs, PMB Designs offers customizable hand-painted canvas rugs. In keeping with the current trend toward mass customization, PMB allows you to choose your own shape, your own size, and best of all your own groovy geometric pattern. www.pmbdesigns.com

Animal, Vegetable, and Mineral

Leather / By Edelman
While it might give PETA members a migraine, leather makes for a surprisingly resilient, warm, and sound-softening floor that only gets richer the more it's trod on. The European farm-grown hides (wooden fences, no barbed wire) used for one flooring type from Edelman were tanned in a solution drawn from the bark of mimosa and chestnut trees, emerging strong, shiny, and rigid enough to be die-cut into tiles of all shapes and sizes. Carnauba wax creates the grout. www.edelmanleather.com

Marmoleum / By Forbo
This is one floor you'd be happy to eat off of. For starters, it's organic: made of linseed oil, wood flour, and pine resins, backed with jute, and installed with solvent-free adhesives. The oxidation of the oil bestows bactericidal properties that prevent the spread of itty-bitty organisms with long names. And the naturally warm surface brightens indoor picnics with 150 colors—in sheets or 13-inch tiles (tiles have polyester backing, not jute). Each new hue resembles many melted crayons. It's like you left your Crayolas on the radiator. www.themarmoleumstore.com



Miscela Mosaic Terrazzo
"It knocked me out," says Michael Fay of a Carlo Scarpa floor he once saw at the Olivetti showroom in the Piazza San Marco. A decade later, Fay (whose Bay Area company Area Code was among the first to import and install fine Italian plasters) set about creating his homage. Miscela is composed of marble, onyx, or travertine tiles that are laid upon a concrete base and filled in with a terrazzo resin grout. The result is a smooth, hard, and beautiful floor that looks as if it's been around for eons. "We imagine it seamless," says Fay, "but we could also create tiles, if that's what someone wanted." www.artisanfx.com

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Old barns and mills made of woods like pine, chestnut, ash, and oak are ripe for reincarnation, with a range of grades including antique distressed—the knots and worm holes saving the labor of hand scraping (used to imbue new floors with that antebellum allure). According to Jeff Horn, president of Yesteryear Floorworks, going the recycled route can cost up to twice as much, but if your arboreal philosophy differs from that of a certain current president, it's a small price to pay to save some trees. www.agedwoods.com

Parqcolor Fiber Floor

This industrial-strength Italian laminate designed by Paola Navone for Abet Laminati gains soul from recycled burlap coffee sacks (and the occasional ground-up bean), whose randomly placed fibers create an effect not unlike rice paper. The dense fiberboard core makes the tiles impervious to foot traffic, scraping chair legs, roller skates, and stilettos—ideal for foyers, kitchens, playrooms, and, well, dungeons. Comes in 28 wood-grain designs. www.abetlaminati.com

Palm

Coconut palms have a long and prodigious nut-producing life—80 years—after which they make really good floors and help prevent at least some rain forest marauding. Medium to dark mahogany in color, palm is available under the name DuraPalm from Smith & Fong. www.durapalm.com

Roppe Rop-Cord

Huarache sandals were once a prime destination for old Michelins; today, worn-out tires are a key ingredient in floors such as the oddly named Roppe Rop-Cord. Consisting of 90 percent post-consumer waste, the 12-inch-square tiles have a texture reminiscent of wide-wale corduroy and can be laid any which way. It comes in four colors: pine, crimson, earth-tone, and indigo. Good for use in often wet or damp high-traffic areas. www.roppe.com

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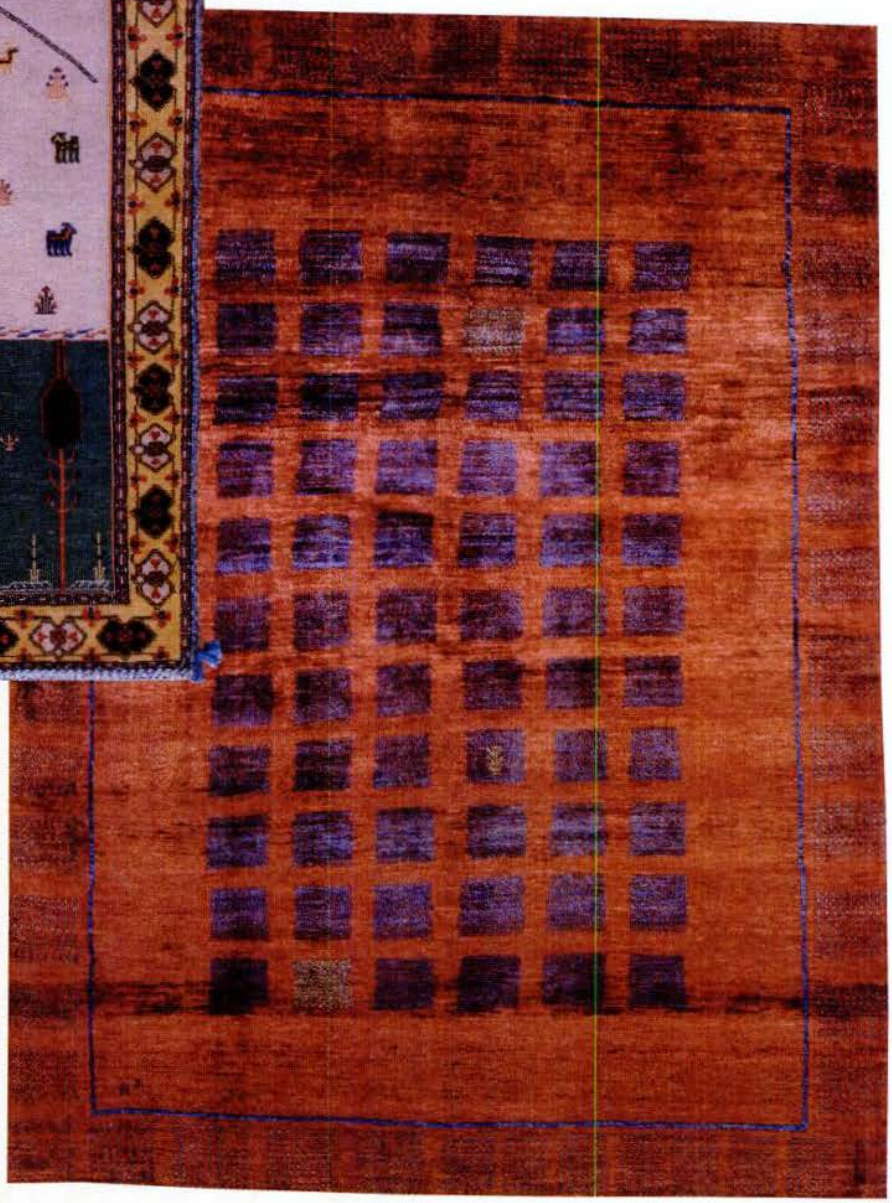

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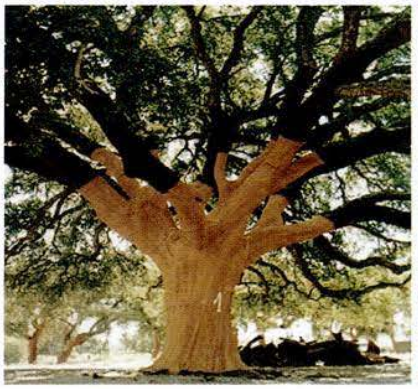

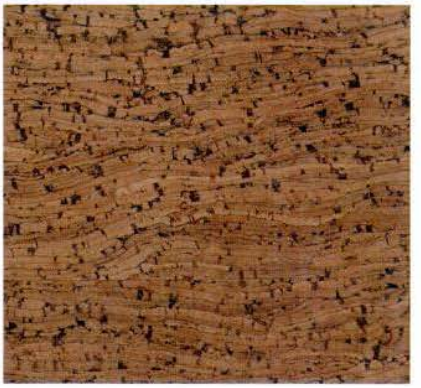

Cork

There's a reason the cork floors in old Eichlers are holding up better than their original owners. Since about 50 percent of cork is air, it recovers quickly from the trauma of footsteps and furniture, while providing a pleasant, shock-absorbing spring. It's indifferent to damp and termites, and won't rot out from under you. The outer bark of cork oak trees in Portugal and Spain is stripped every nine years with no ill effect and rendered into tiles that range from the toasty color of a wine cork to colors definitely not found in nature. www.corkfloor.com

Bamboo

It's not a wood but a grass. It's harder than oak. And it grows like a weed—up to 40 feet in four years, merrily self-propagating all the while. Due to its P.C. cred and pleasant demeanor, bamboo flooring is fairly ubiquitous. Seattle's Bamboo Hardwoods offers a Vietnamese variety that is even harder than rock maple and arrives at your house laminated onto boards. Both solid and engineered bamboo come in a choice of grains and finishes—or even unfinished, in case you have your heart set on a Schiaparelli-pink bamboo floor. www.bamboohardwoods.com

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Into the Woods

"A soft mosaic of undulating grains" is how John Couch, founder of Oregon Lumber, describes end-grain block flooring, one of the oldest, if more uncommon, wood floor options that also utilizes the shorter lengths left from the milling of windows and doors. The appeal is in the warm, nonrepeating texture of the wood (usually Douglas fir or hemlock) and the end result is a supremely durable and noise-dampening surface with insulation equivalent to about 23 inches of concrete. Because the end-grain is seven times more absorbent than the rest of the plank, it guzzles oil and color deep into the grain, allowing the hard annual growth rings to carry the wear (much like a butcher's block). Such floors can bear a million pounds per square foot, which is why they tend to be popular in armories as well as living rooms. It's comfortable and resilent. www.oregonlumber.com

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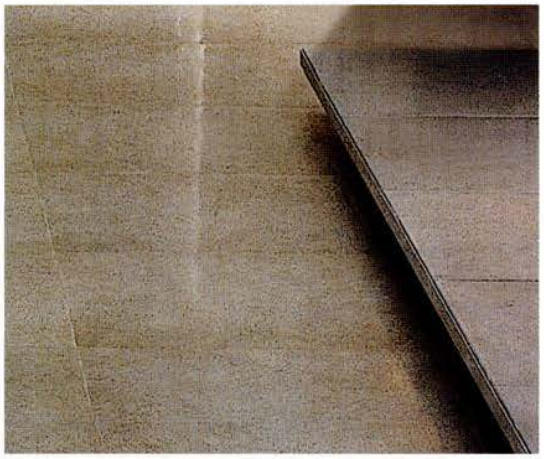
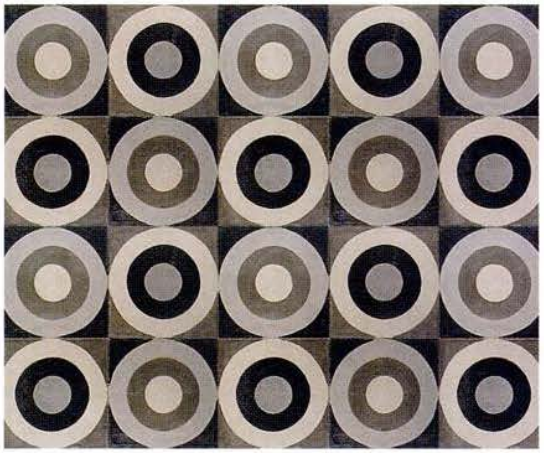
Fade to Gray

Have you ever noticed how a grayish day calms the nerves while giving colors a jolt—be it the bougainvillea spilling over the neighbor's gate or that chrome yellow Dumpster that's (still) parked across the street? Indoors, a gray floor radiates harmony upward while acting as a foil for all the other stuff in the room. —D.B.



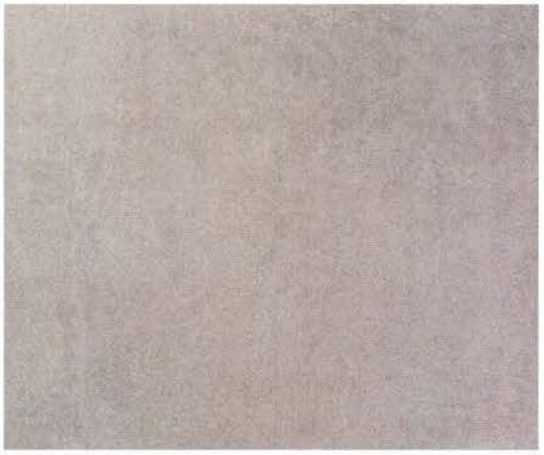
Avantgarde

With these new monolithic unglazed porcelain tiles from Refin Ceramiche underfoot, we're convinced we could finally toss the tchotchkes and go minimal. While all seven shades—even the white—are tinged with gray, "Glace" is a truly dreamy cross between a dove's wing and a rat's belly. Available in 12- and 18-inch squares or a 12-by-24-inch version. www.refin.it



Todd Oldham Concrete Tiles

"All colors look better a little grayed down," declares designer-at-large Todd Oldham, whom we imagine custom-blending his own finger paints in kindergarten. His handmade Moroccan tiles riff on the traditional dusky Maghreb hues, "but we goosed up the intensity to get shades like lime and avocado." Pigments are embedded into the concrete, lending depth to the dots, squares, squiggles, chains, and Oldham's favorite Brother series, inspired by computer circuitry. Available at Artisan Workshop, 212-260-6700. www.toddoldhamstudio.com



Wilsonart's Classic Flooring Collection Tiles

High-pressure laminates are the chameleons of the flooring world, impersonating everything from mahogany to marble. Wilsonart's Classic Flooring collection resin tiles in Greystone convincingly channel the essence of concrete, with an uneven surface and irregular mottling of light and dark that suggest years of wear (kind of like those whiskered jeans). Comes in 15-and-a-half-inch-square tiles and 18 different tiles, including Sunstone, Fieldstone, and Luna Roca (for that living on the moon look). www.wilsonart.com

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Fill out the form below or download it from www.dwellmag.com.

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I think this person (or firm) deserves a Nice Modernist Prize (please fill in as much information as you can):

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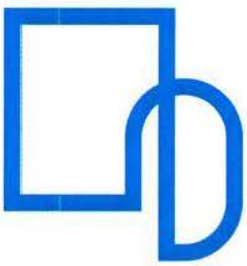

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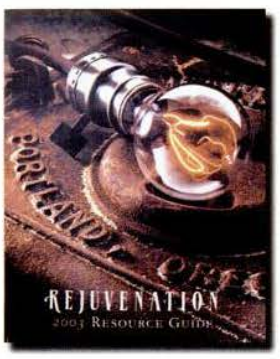

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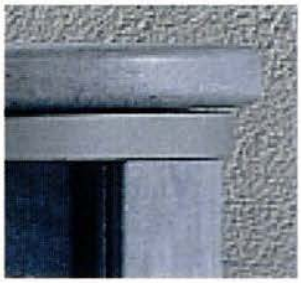

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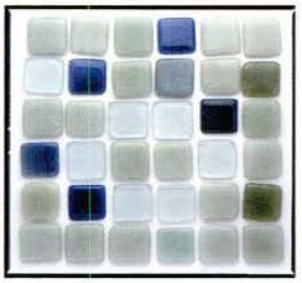

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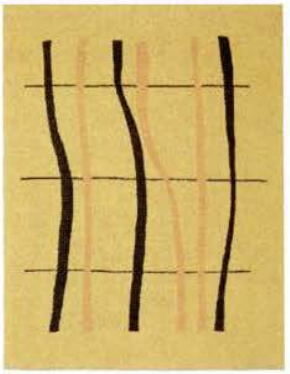

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Story by Allison Arieff

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