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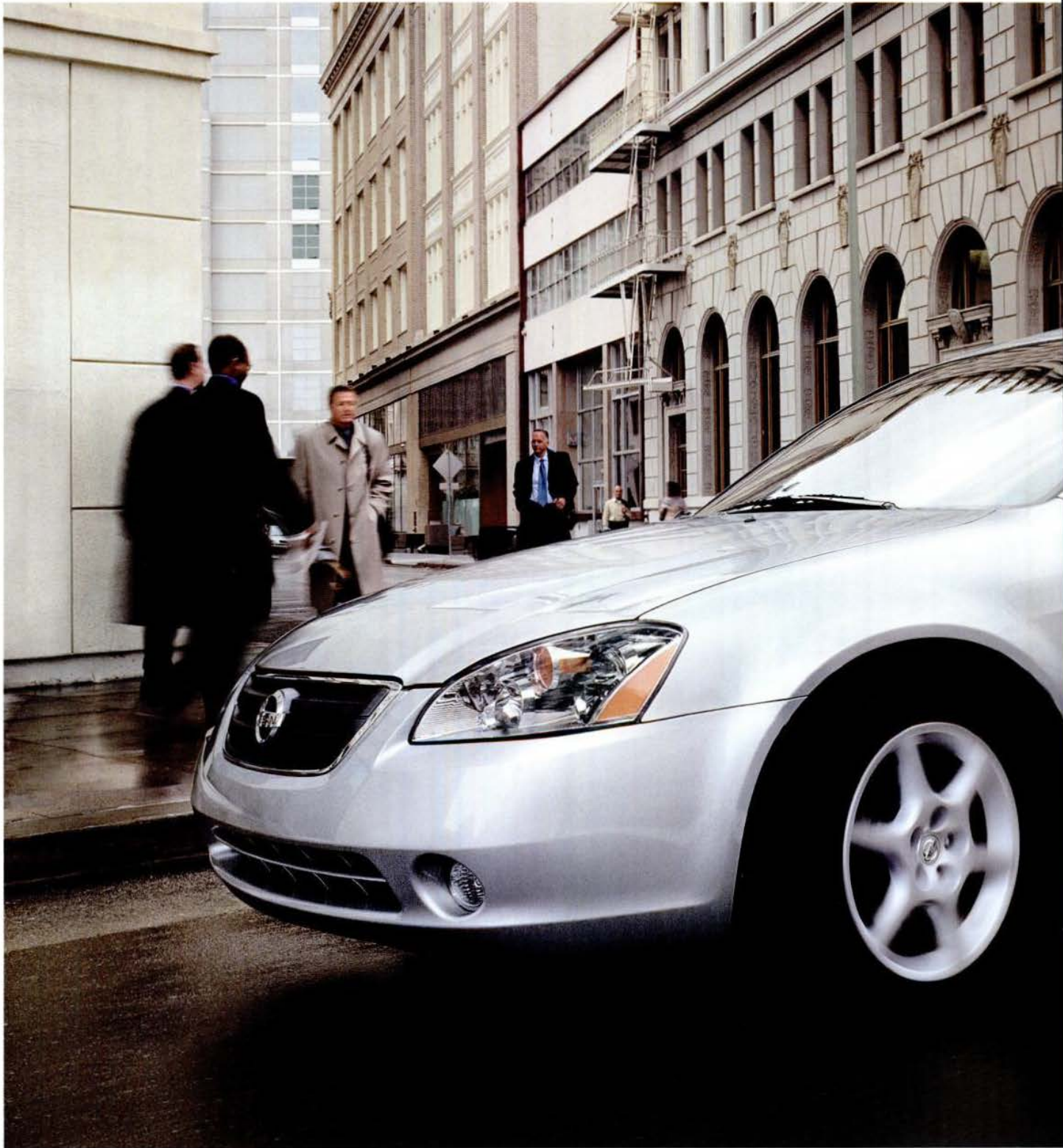


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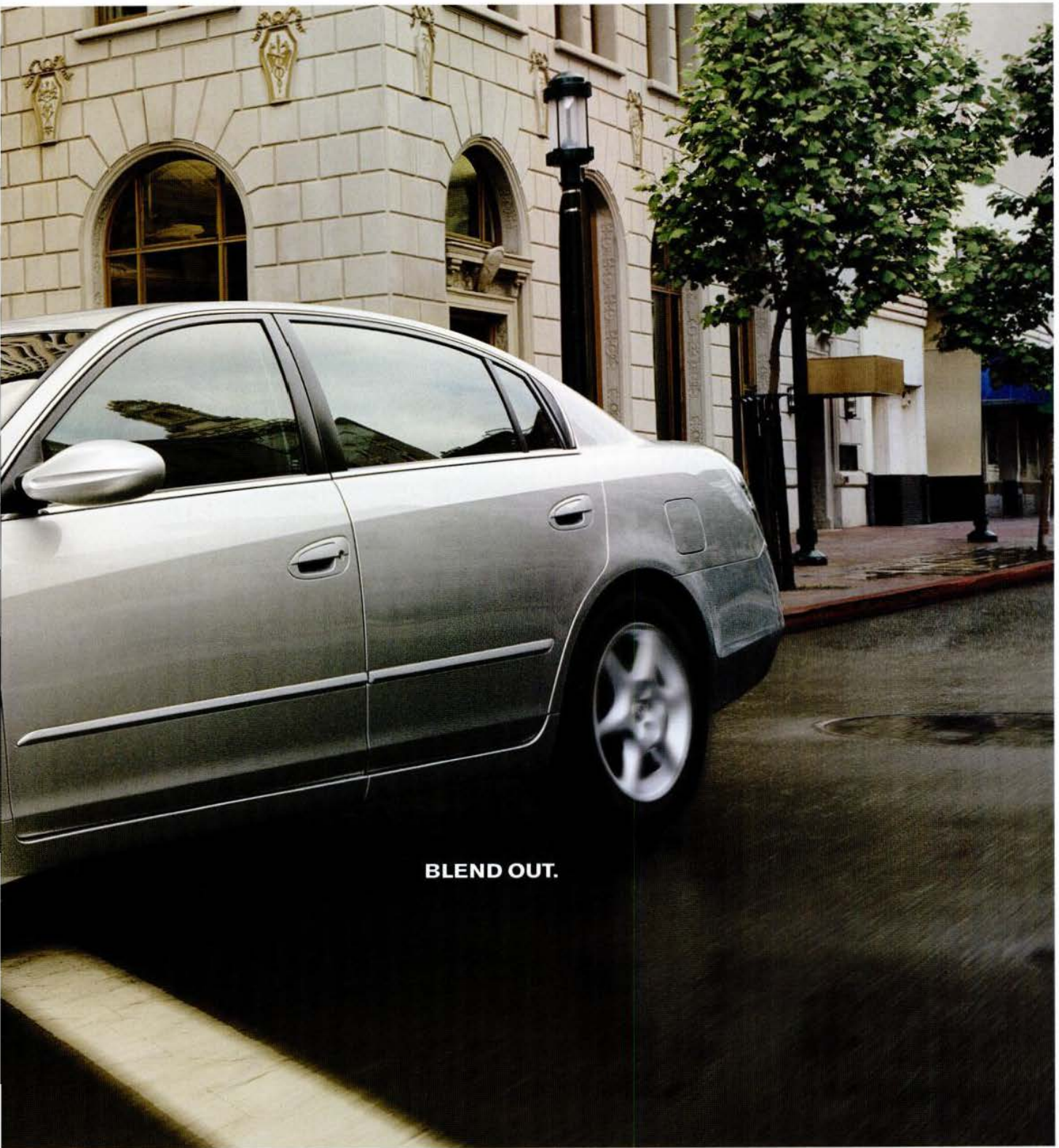
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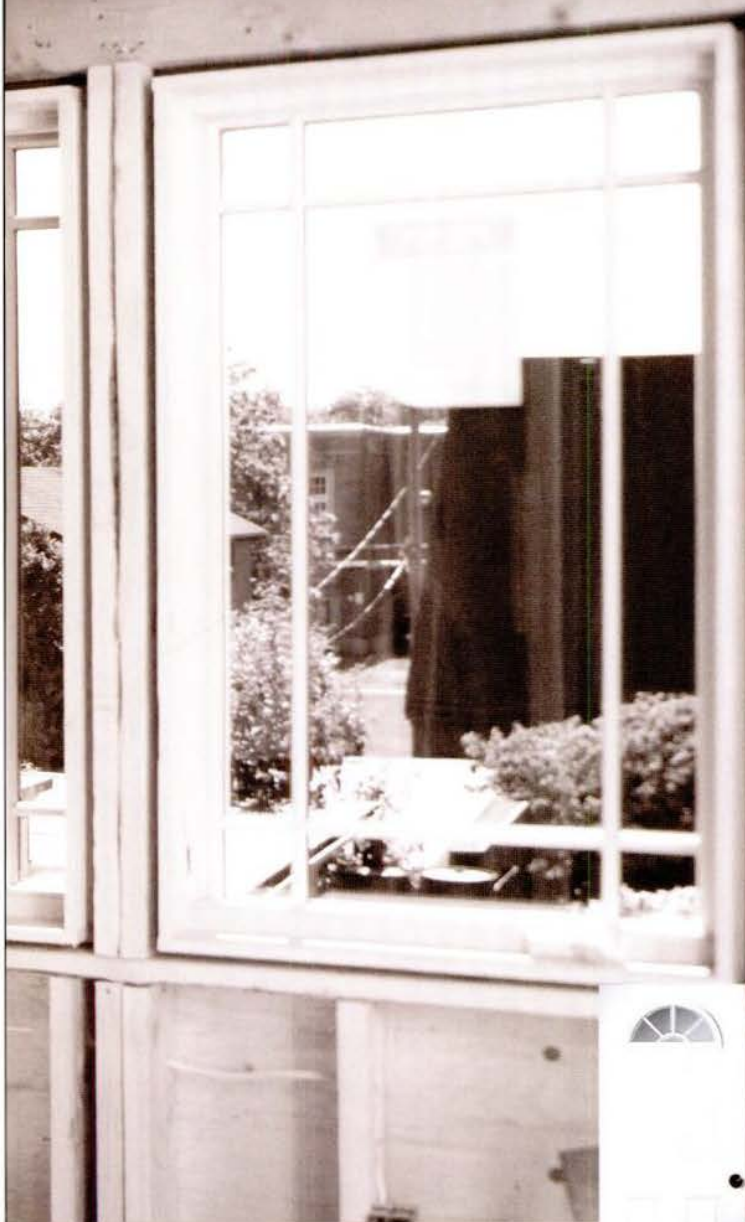


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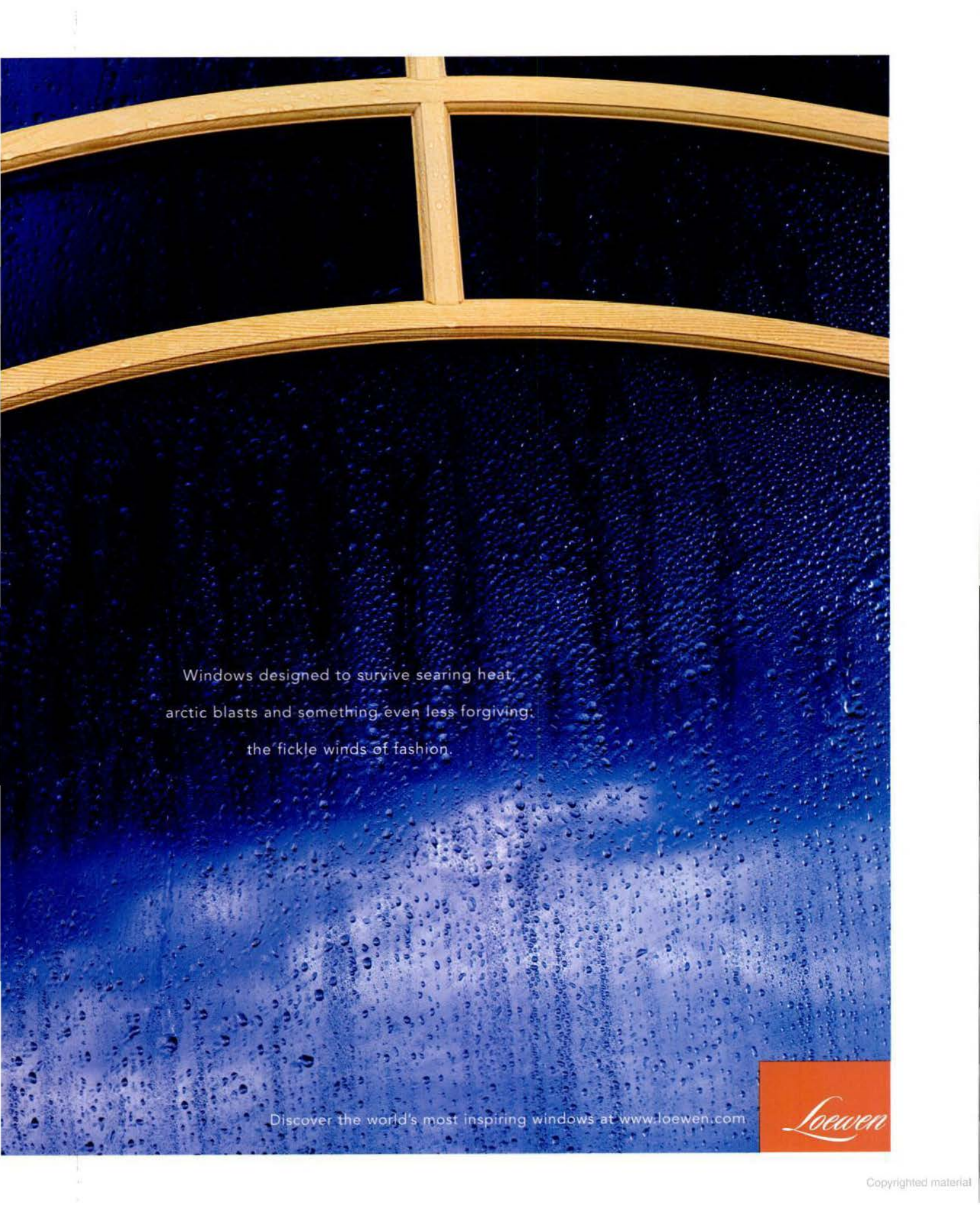


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“It’s when you disperse people throughout downtown that it starts to become vibrant.” —Dutch MacDonald, p. 114

# March 2004 Contents: Urban Spaces

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## Editor’s Note

What are we without our cities? Nothing, argues editor-in-chief Allison Arieff. And in the coming months, Dwell is poised to do something about their decline.

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## The City Revealed

As Hong Kong continues to scrape the sky at a historic pace, photographer Michael Wolf trains his lens on the intricacies of the mammoth structures that have come to dominate the city.

### Dwellings

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#### The Penthouse Has Landed

When Too Short rapped, “Get in where you fit in,” the architects of this gravity-defying structure in Vienna were listening. **Story by Alastair Gordon / Photos by Hertha Hurnaus**

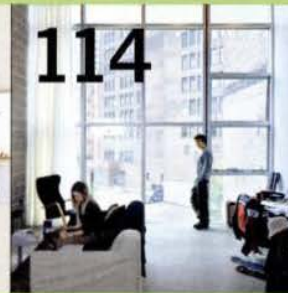
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#### Making Sense of the City

The Mariscal residence in downtown San Diego is just one surprise in a city rarely associated with innovative urban structures. **Story by Andrew Wagner / Photos by Randi Berez**

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#### Steel Life

Edge Studio’s apartment building with its glass-and-steel façade is a glowing example of the urban renaissance that’s gripping Steel City. **Story by William Lamb / Photos by Roger Davies**

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#### Dense and Denser

Cities are complex, individual organisms and reviving them is a complex, individual process. **Marc Kristal** looks at Detroit, Miami, and New York and finds that no matter the size, a city always needs a plan.

# dwell

### Cover

Taking in the view from the dramatic penthouse that architects Elke Meissl and Roman Delugan designed for themselves in Vienna, Austria. **Photo by Hertha Hurnaus**

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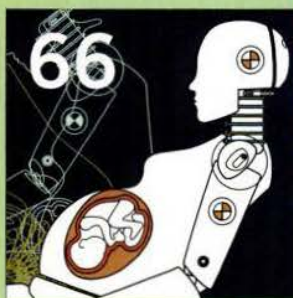
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Letters

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**In the Modern World**  
It's a mad, mad world out there and we aim to tell you about it—from must-see exhibits to must-read books to the occasional disturbing trend.

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**My House**  
For men of the cloth, architecture has always been one earthly delight they've been encouraged to indulge. In Arizona, DeBartolo Architects continues the tradition in a rather unorthodox manner.

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**Off the Grid**  
Fifteen minutes from downtown Seattle, architects Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo transformed the neighborhood dump—a lot that had been vacant for 30 years—into their dream home.

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**Dwell Reports**  
A cell phone/PDA can change your life—or at least allow you to replace your raggedy old date-book. Private investigator Miriam Ponzi assesses the new technology that's hit the market.



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**Nice Modernist**  
As Volvo crash-test engineer Laura Thackray knows, dummies—even virtual ones—can teach us a thing or two about safety.



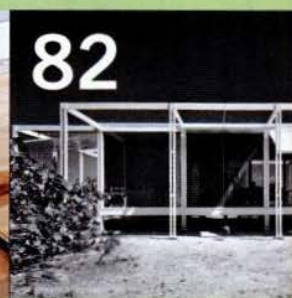
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**Elsewhere**  
With far more to offer than hot springs and Björk, Iceland is becoming a design destination for visitors from both Europe and America. The parental home David Pitt designed in Reykjavik is further proof.



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**What We Saw**  
Editor Sam Grawe learns there's more to the tabletop than meets the eye, but he still won't try the tablecloth trick. Editor Virginia Gardiner lives in the lap of the Luxury Kitchen and Bath Collection.



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**Invention**  
Where to put all the furniture when clearing a dance floor for your next party? If you lived in an Optibo, it would be as simple as collapsing your chairs and tables into the floor.



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**Archive**  
A small, white, Paul Rudolph-designed cube on the Gulf Coast of Florida reminds us that sometimes simple is superior.



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**Dwell Labs**  
Kids are always complementary components to your life. Unfortunately, furniture for them usually isn't. There is some hope out there, though, as our research demonstrates.

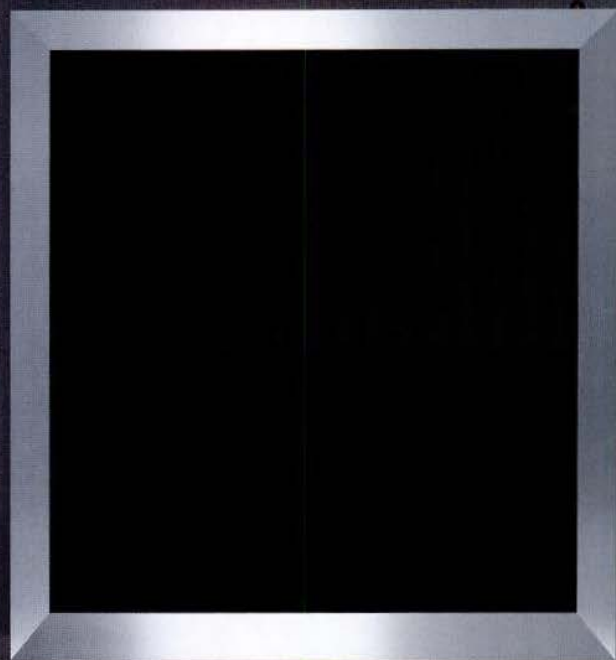
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**Outside**  
Something's lighting up the skies—and the roof deck—high above Milwaukee. Check out a colorful addition that's bringing a bright spot to chilly Wisconsin winters.

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**Construction 101**  
Ready to build your own home? This arduous task can seem daunting, but advance preparation and research can go a long way toward minimizing the pain and quickening the path to new-home ecstasy.

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You know you want it—and so do we. That's why we put this page here to help you get it.

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**Houses We Love**  
While Rubik's Cube was the must-have present for the '80s, one German architect hopes his Loftcube will be equally big in the oughts.

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I wanted to nominate some friends of mine as Nice Modernists but they are failing to produce any art/photos/cool stuff for me to submit because none of them seems to understand what a Nice Modernist is. It's a baffling situation for them and I am wondering if you could sum it up for us.

**Barbara Feldstein**  
New York, New York

**Editors' Note:** To answer your question, a Nice Modernist is simply someone whose work embodies Dwell's beliefs. To quote our "Fruit Bowl Manifesto," "Modernism connotes an honesty and curiosity about methods and materials . . . and a certain amount of optimism not just about the future, but about the present." Now send us those recommendations!

I love your magazine. I respect your magazine. But being an Italian, I have one correction that must be made: On page 86 of "Have You Been Naughty or Nice?" (November/December 2003), you begin with "The panini was nestled. . . ." The correct Italian word for the singular form of this sandwich is *panino*. Panini is the plural version of this sandwich. Since you are a respected magazine in the design world, and since tons of great design

comes out of Italy, it is important that you edit correctly. Perhaps in printing my letter, you may be able to assist the throngs of Americans who have adopted this word from the Italian language and are misusing it daily.

**Sandra Scamardella**  
via email

**Editors' Note:** Thank you for pointing out our error. We did indeed realize this, but thought that average Americans (meaning ourselves) wouldn't understand the singular usage "*panino*." We should never have underestimated our readership!

When I open the pages of Dwell I know I am going to be provoked into some emotion—often I am inspired, occasionally I am appalled, but I am never bored. Dwell rose to a new level of connection with me when I opened to page 84 of the November/December issue ("Have You Been Naughty or Nice?") and found Wally, Dwell's cairn terrier. She is a magnificent twin of my own JoJo (Champion Redcoat's Braveheart). I just wanted to congratulate the Dwell crew on such a fine mascot.

**Ernie Slone**  
Santa Ana, California



The Future Lancaster Residence

As a Dwell subscriber, I thank you and your staff for providing a forum and inspiration for enthusiasts of modern design and architecture like us. This is an early picture (above) of the house my wife and I are building near Grand Rapids, Michigan. The main structure is entirely precast concrete, structural steel, and glass. The concrete is exposed on both the interior and exterior. The structural steel will be painted and also exposed. The rough square footage is around 8,400, including the indoor basketball court on the lower level.

**Scott Lancaster**  
Ada, Michigan

A challenge for you: As my wife and I look to the future, we dream of casting away apartment life and owning a home. As we tumble through life ever closer to this dream/reality, the potential of designing our own home is a favored possibility. I am a registered architect with some years of experience, so the implications of design and construction are tangible for us. The problem we are presently experiencing is an utter lack of knowledge of how people like us finance ground-up construction. I have had the somewhat insulting experience of having designed homes and additions (both modern and traditional vernacular) for a number of fairly wealthy couples, but I have no idea how a couple just starting out financially would go about this.

Perhaps this is incredibly easy, no more complex than taking out a mortgage for the necessary amount, and I just need to be told that. In any case, if I need to ask this question, others might actually benefit from the answer as well.

**Matthew A. Heckendorn**  
New Orleans, Louisiana

**Editors' Note:** Please take a look at our Construction 101 section in this issue, starting on page 128. It offers some good insight into the complex and sometimes intimidating job of financing, renovating, or building your own home. Good luck! ▶

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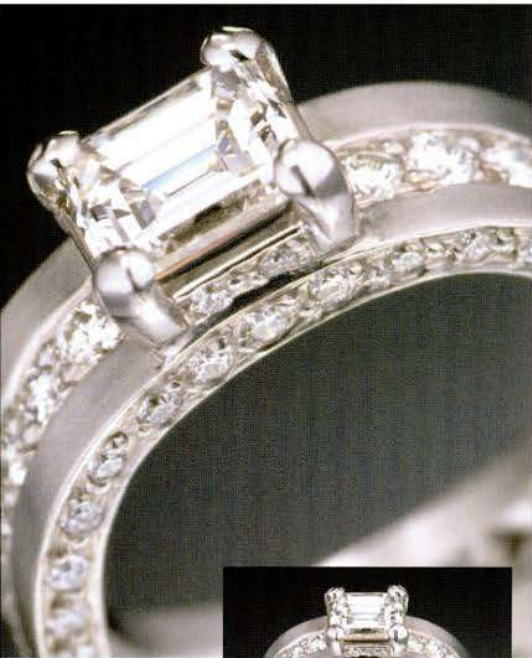


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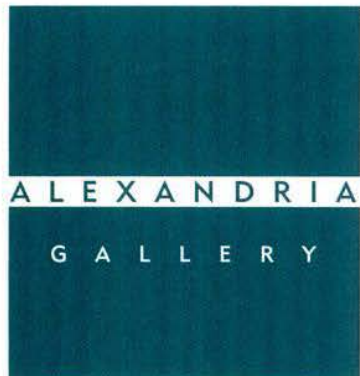
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## Letters

### Contributors

Despite living 4,310 miles away, Los Angeles-based **Charlie Amter** ("Northern Exposure," p. 68) is a frequent visitor to Iceland. He has written for *Travel & Leisure*, *Spin*, and *Wired*. And yes, he likes Sigur Rós—thanks for asking!

Photographer **Randi Berez** ("Making Sense of the City," p. 104) took a hit on this story, shooting it in San Diego on the weekend of the fiercest wildfires in California history. In addition to *Dwell*, Berez's photos have appeared in *GQ*, *Fortune*, *Work, House & Garden*, *Guitar World*, and many others.

**Roger Davies** flew straight to Pittsburgh from Tokyo to shoot "Steel Life" (p. 114) and got bitten in the bum by the pitbull shown in the pictures. Davies, a Brit, has lived in New York for ten years and shoots for *Details*, *Traveler*, the *New York Times*, and *British Elle*, amongst others.

Vienna-based photographer **Hertha Hurnaus** ("The Penthouse Has Landed," p. 94) studied photography at Grafische Lehr- und Versuchsanstalt Vienna. She photographs people and architecture for national and international magazines and books.

**Marc Kristal** ("Dense and Denser," p. 122) curated the fall 2003 exhibition "Absence Into Presence: The Art, Architecture, and Design of Remembrance" at Parsons School of Design in New York. He contributed the essay "Active Memory," about the integration of memorials into urban landscapes, to the Van Alen Institute catalog *OPEN: New Designs for Public Space*.

**William Lamb** ("Steel Life," p. 114) lives in St. Louis, where he works on the metro staff of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. After casing out Pittsburgh for *Dwell*, Lamb reports that the fare at the Original Hot Dog Shop on Forbes Avenue is as delectable as it is inexpensive, and that efforts to revive downtown are starting to pay off. His work has also appeared in the *Washington Post* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

**David Proffitt** ("Houses for the Holy," p. 49) lives around the corner from the Mariposa residence in Phoenix, Arizona, that he writes about in this issue. He's not sure this helped him write the story in any way—he's just in shock that such a thing could happen in his car-crazy hometown. Proffitt is contributing editor at *Metro* magazine.

**Hope Reeves** (Construction 101, p. 128) has been renovating her Brooklyn brownstone for what seems like years. "It's been an incredibly rewarding experience but it just never seems to end," she says. A freelance writer who also writes for the *New York Times Magazine*, *Lifetime* magazine, and *The Bark*, she is now concentrating the work on a nursery for her first baby, due in February.

**Robert Sullivan** ("This New House," p. 128) is the author of the forthcoming *Rats: Observations on the History and Habitat of the City's Most Unwanted Inhabitants*, to be published by Bloomsbury in March. He lives in the woods in Hastings-on-Hudson, New York, where there are a couple of old houses he has his eye on.

Munich-born, U.S.-raised photographer **Michael Wolf** ("The City Revealed," p. 89) has been living and working as a freelance photographer and writer in China for nine years. Recently, his project "Sitting in China" was exhibited at the Kestner Museum in Hannover, Germany.

### I am very glad I happened upon this mag of yours.

I am once again inspired to create and contribute to the design world. I am particularly into prefab construction, so your articles on the *Dwell* Home had me smiling ear to ear.

**Ian MacGillivray**  
Montreal, Quebec

### In your October article "Finding a Factory,"

Joseph Tanney says, "What we've been learning is that this is an entrenched industry and no one thinks it needs to grow or evolve. Many manufacturers are suspicious of who we are and what we're trying to accomplish. The industry is fine, they say, why are you trying to change it? So we're trying to identify the companies that get it and are willing to work with us."

The modular industry as a whole may be entrenched, as he states, but there are a few of us out there that are able to think outside the box. The first step in understanding modular buildings, though, is realizing that just because they are modular does not necessarily mean that they will be cheaper than conventionally framed

buildings. Custom builders such as Blazer Industries, Inc., the company I work for, do not wish the industry to stay mired in a "wobbly box" mentality and have a mild disdain for builders who are just out to make a buck. While we realize the need to turn a profit, we also realize that there is an opportunity out there to enhance the modular industry and to show folks that modular does not necessarily mean cheap.

**R. Alan Duer**  
Aumsville, Oregon

**I was interested to read that *Dwell* is renovating its offices.** Will there be room for a dictionary or a place to put an AP Stylebook? Your Editor's Note (January/February 2004) mentioned a "trembler." The correct word for earthquake is "temblor."

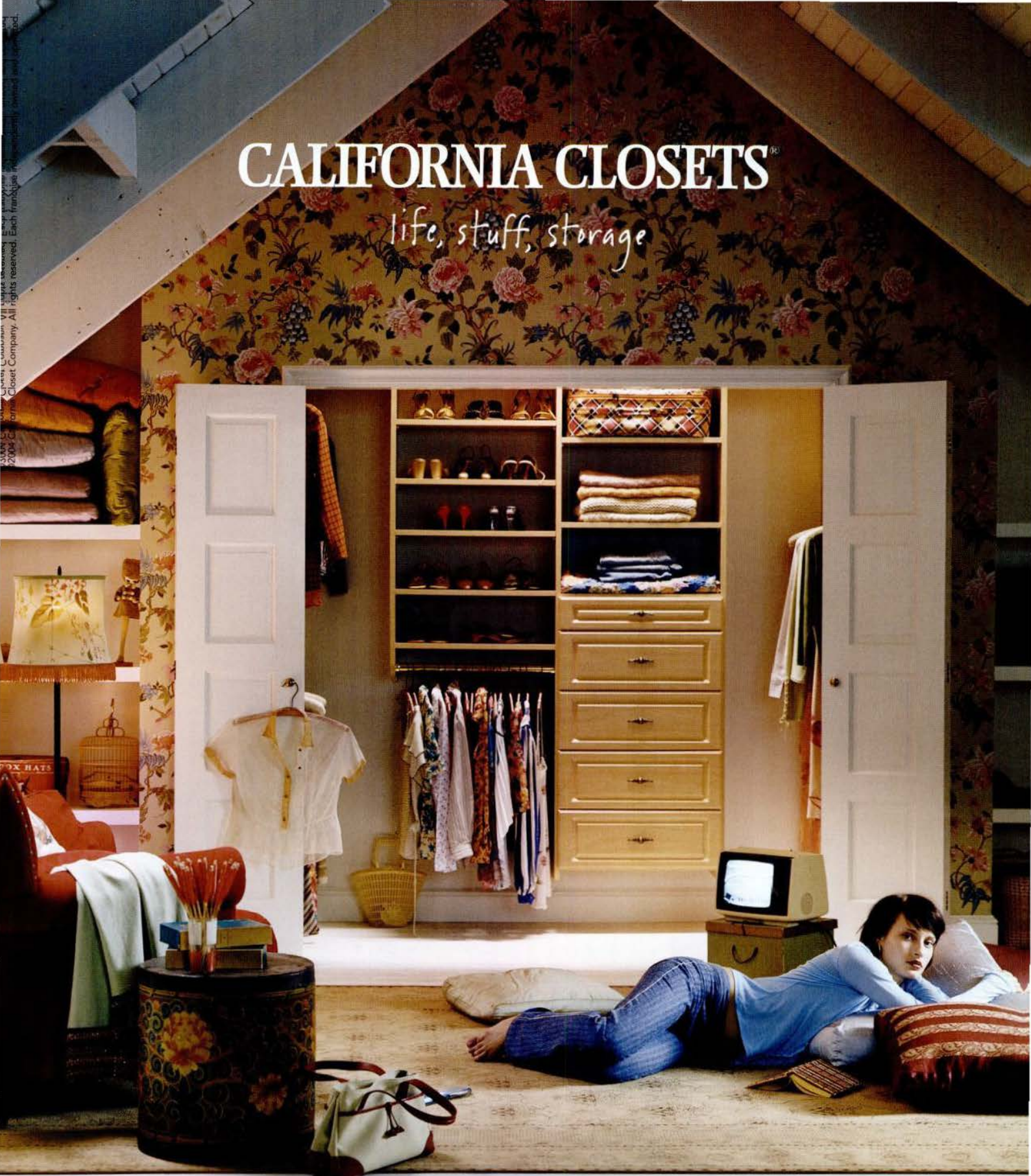
**Nance Chase**  
Boone, North Carolina

**Editors' Note:** Your letter made us tremble. Earthquakes do, too. And in earthquake-prone San Francisco, "trembler" is an accepted part of the local lingo. ▶

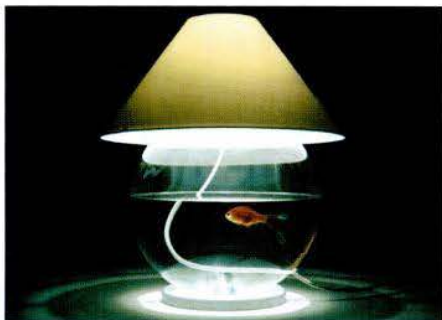


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In your November/December issue, there is a letter to the editor that refers to a lamp with a goldfish in it. Curious, I went back to the issue in which you featured this lamp (“(Re)Appropriate Behavior,” September 2003), and was disturbed by the fact that such an environmentally correct publication would not also have concern for all creatures big and small. I think it displays a lack of sensitivity on the staff’s part for giving publicity to this type of creation. I do hope that the above comment will be taken into consideration when something of the same nature comes your way again.

**Elissa B. Rubin**  
Santa Barbara, California

**Paul Yuille, designer of the Goldfish lamp,** responds: I’m concerned that you found the lamp offensive. However, to respond to your concerns of the piece not being right for such an “environmentally correct publication,” I’m sorry if you missed the main aspect of the design, which is actually based on concern for the environment and sustainability.

First, it is assumed that the lamp will not be left on for excessive periods of time so the owner can allow the fish to sleep—ergo, less electricity is wasted. As the design being viewed all the time, emphasis is placed on the general hygiene and appearance of the fish, as it would not be aesthetically pleasing to have dirty water and an unhealthy fish; surely this is a good thing. Second, I am of the opinion that there is very little new design available to consumers. It is either a redesign or a disposable version of something. I created a new design by taking things that were already in existence. The result is a synergetic product, unique and innovative. As nothing new is produced, there is no new waste. I am only converting what is already with us, with a little imagination of course. To close, the fish in the picture is called Findus, and he is still alive and well and loving all the attention!

I will not be renewing my subscription and doubt that my reason not to renew will matter to you but it makes me feel better to voice my opinion. I am a designer and have enjoyed many things about your magazine. However, I see no need for a design magazine to broadcast its political leanings, i.e., “but if your arboreal philosophy differs from that of a certain current president, it’s a small price to pay to save some trees” (Flooring 101, September 2003). Fact is, there are more trees than when Columbus first arrived and the logging industry replants the forest. But I suppose those of your political persuasion don’t want to believe the truth. I resent spending money for a magazine about design and paying to have it cluttered with your politics. Had I realized that, I would never have subscribed to your publication in the first place. It’s your magazine and you can do as you wish, but I can do as I wish, too, and not renew.

**Susan Hays**  
Napa, California

**Editors’ Note:** We seem to have a fundamental disagreement here about the meaning of design itself. Dwell was founded on the notion of modernism not as a style but as a way of life. For us, design is about far more than the way something looks: It’s a way of thinking about the world we live in, and we endeavor to present design in all its wonderful complexity. All of the things that go into the design and building of houses—from materials to city planning to individual aesthetic preferences—cannot, in our estimation, be removed from the larger cultural conversation and, by extension, from politics.

Let me first say that I’m a huge fan your publication. I just thought I’d inform you of an error in your current issue. The wine country home in Sonoma County is quite stunning. However, Dwell identifies the home in the Table of Contents as being in the Napa Valley. The article itself correctly says it’s in Sonoma County. Being a fourth generation Sonoma County native, the last thing we want is to be associated with the Disneyland to the East of us, Napa Valley. We like to be known as the wine producing region that is awarded more medals and press for its wines than Napa. Thanks for understanding. We are rather provincial.

**Tom Traverso**  
via email

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## New and Improved Urbanism

Architects, planners, and theorists have conceived of edge cities, shrinking cities, disappearing cities, cities of the future, cities of tomorrow, and cities of bits. We're just looking for one where you can walk out the door, get a cup of coffee, pick up the dry cleaning, rent a DVD, and buy the coffee filters you ran out of this morning all within a few block radius. In this issue we found several places that fit the bill, but Hong Kong's Tseung Kwan O district (below) still has some stuff to work on.

**The city has always been an obsession for modernists.** Modern architecture and the city are inextricably intertwined in a relationship that has had more ups and downs than the post-Clinton economy. In 1925, when Le Corbusier envisioned the city in his book *Urbanisme (The City of Tomorrow and Its Planning)*, he conceived of a core of concrete and glass skyscrapers at its center. Major corporations, cultural institutions, and the elite would be housed there, while the working class would live far on the outskirts of town. The middle class, appropriately, would take up residence somewhere between the two, joined by a zone of offices and shops.

Of course, Corbu's urban idyllic theorizing made for lousy practice, and the plan he envisioned was dumped on its bespectacled head. Indeed, many urban housing attempts that followed, like St. Louis's infamous Pruitt-Igou project, were misguided interpretations of decent ideas that ended up sending modern city planning back into the dark ages. In the United States, Corbu's vibrant central cluster was given over to low-income housing, while the rich fled ever farther from downtown. Increasingly, since the mid-20th century, cities have

struggled to keep people downtown, with mixed results, as the seductive call of bedroom communities beckons. But the reality is, there's no time to spend in those bedrooms because people are stuck in traffic trying to drive back to them. I visited a so-called master-planned community in Scottsdale, Arizona, last year that was over an hour from the nearest grocery store. Sure, the mountain views are great, but what about that quart of milk you forgot to pick up on the way home?

I'm not a huge fan of forced neighborliness (i.e., New Urbanist front porches and mandated cheerfulness), but sheesh, whose idea was this degree of decentralization? There is nothing wrong with seclusion, bucolic views, or peaceful distance from strip malls and on-ramps—but most subdivisions don't offer those things. Putting down roots in planned communities so tightly regimented that a quirky mailbox is grounds for litigation is just depressing. In the end, is a faux brick two-bedroom developer home sited within something called Mystic Pointe Estates really delivering on the American Dream?

There is a dynamic alternative. As we show in this issue, in cities as diverse as Vienna, San Diego, Pittsburgh, Miami, Detroit, and New York, architects, individuals, and communities are re-envisioning urban living and have in our estimation exceeded all expectations of what a city dwelling can be. By integrating a café into their loft project's ground floor, developer Eve Picker and architects Edge Studio smartly created a gathering place to foster community. By realizing the potential of unused space (an urban rooftop), Viennese architects Roman Delugan and Elke Meissl enjoy many of the things that a suburban home offers—luxury, a view, privacy, even a pool—while gaining all the benefits of daily life in one of the world's great cities. And in San Diego, a young family gets creative, designing two houses on one corner lot so they can finance their dream home.

Good urban planning and development can breathe new life into city centers, while easing the mounting pressures of sprawl—which causes things like longer commutes, road rage-inducing traffic, and the loss of open space. Ideally, new city homes, whether single or multifamily, can create living environments where residents can work, shop, and play within walking distance.

Jonathan Raban has written that "living in cities is an art." Me, I'm looking forward to a 21st-century renaissance. Stay tuned: In the coming months, Dwell will announce a plan to help that renaissance along. ■

ALLISON ARIEFF, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
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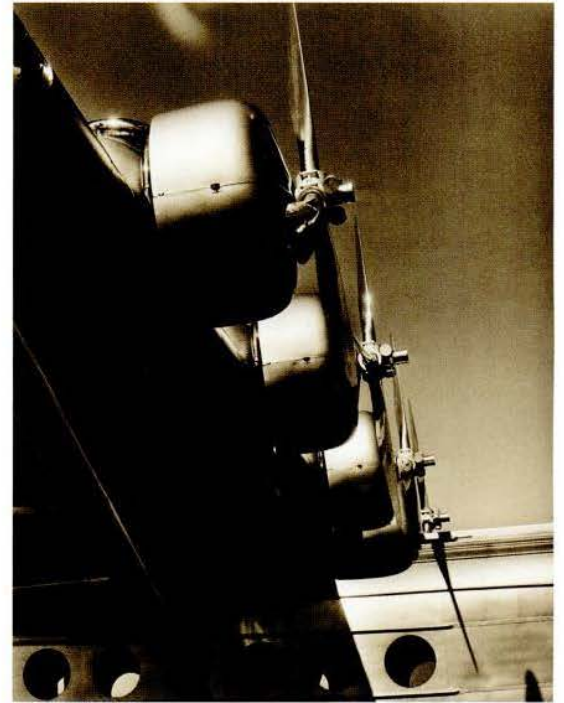
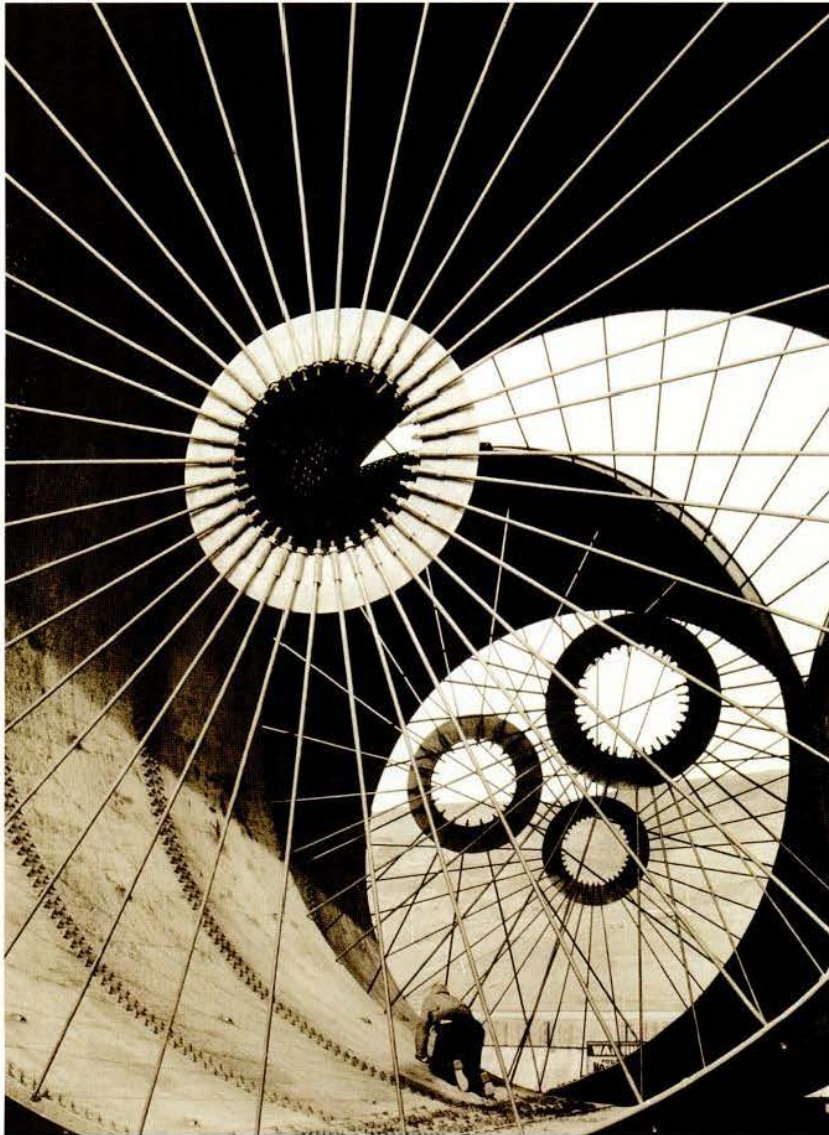
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**Margaret Bourke-White: The Photography of Design, 1927–1936 /**

14 Feb–2 May / Mint Museum of Art / Charlotte, NC / Through the eye of photographer Margaret Bourke-White, enormous dam turbines take on the seductive appearance of geishas' tilting parasols, and Sikorsky airplane engines convey the essence of flight as clearly as a diamond-shaped flock of migrating birds. A photojournalist who recorded images of everything from a Campbell's factory production line to Nazis in action, Bourke-White imbued her work with historical import without ever compromising compositional mastery. On view are 150 images, focused on the emerging world of design and technology. [www.mintmuseum.org](http://www.mintmuseum.org)

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Hmmm. Perhaps we should do this sort of thing more often.

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**Coussin de Sol Cushion** / By Janie de Kalbermatten and Josée Lepage for Zweimineral

Though most commonly associated with elementary school arts-and-crafts projects, felt has taken on a new persona in contemporary furniture design—most recently with Janie de Kalbermatten and Josée Lepage, who weave together thick strips of fabric to create a fabulous felt cushion. A splendid compromise between the lowly floor and lofty chair, Zweimineral's pillow is easy on the eyes—and on the rear. [www.zweimineral.com](http://www.zweimineral.com)



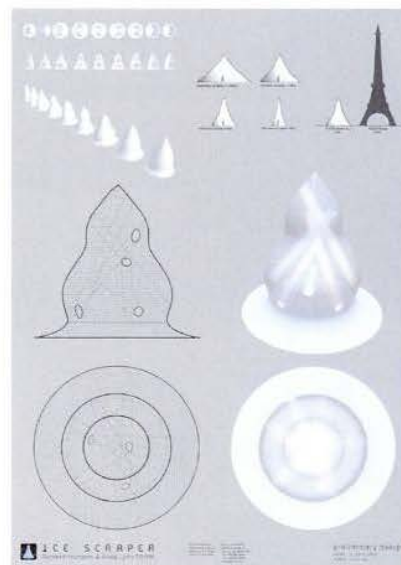
**Magis Wagon**

The past few years have seen a few too many tables that are also carts on wheels. But this one's too pretty for tedium. Its colors are intoxicatingly evocative of a vodka cranberry cocktail. The frosty bin, made of an injection-molded plastic called ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene), looks like the surface of a Grey Goose bottle fresh from the freezer. [www.magisdesign.com](http://www.magisdesign.com)



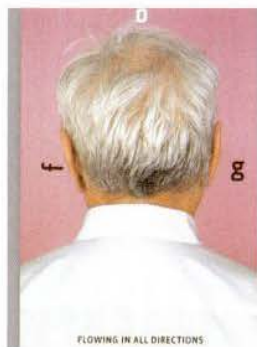
**Dolmen Couch** / By Enzo Berti for Ferlea

The crisp contours of the Dolmen couch take shape in a geometric configuration of rectangles and cubes. Differing pieces can be arranged to your fancy, plugging into one another like electrical conduits. The minimalist form emphasizes negative space and expresses the sheer whiteness of the upholstery. Red wine connoisseurs rest assured: This piece comes equipped with a fully removable cover. [www.ferlea.com](http://www.ferlea.com)



**Snow Show** / March through Early April / Finnish Lapland

This winter, the power and potential of snow will be realized by teams of artists and architects in the towns of Kemi and Rovaniemi. For their entry (above), Greg Lynn and Richard Humann have devised a hose that will climb inside a structure at the rate of about two feet a day, with the water freezing into a naturally shaped ice scraper. Sounds good enough to make you forget about your sad-sack snowmen of yesteryear. [www.thesnowshow.net](http://www.thesnowshow.net)



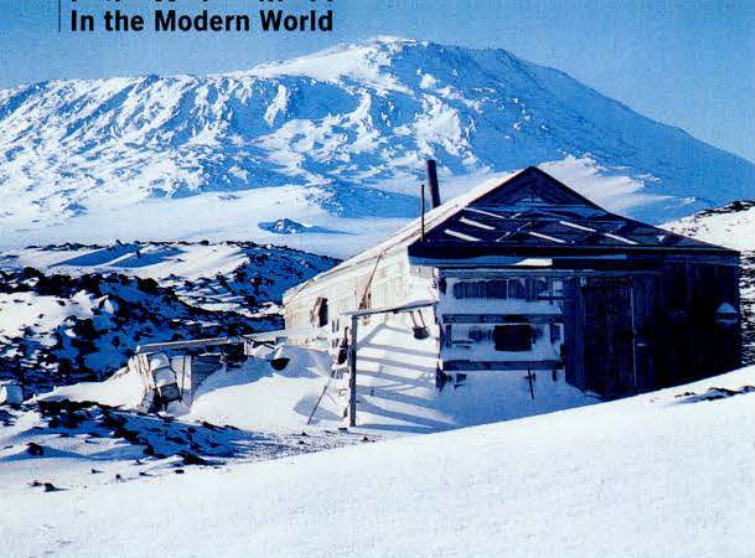
**FOG: Flowing in All Directions** / CIRCA / \$75

Frank Owen Gehry seems to like his initials; this book's subtitle, "Flowing in All Directions," not so subtly refers to fog. On the cover, which you can't judge the book by, both are written around the life-size portrait of Gehry's balding head. After you get past Gehry's head, and his self-conscious introduction—"I don't like books about my work," he writes—you'll find a unique visual account of his design processes. Beginning with yearbooklike portraits of all of his employees, the book moves into a montage of drawings, 3-D models, and photography. [www.circa.la](http://www.circa.la)



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### 2004 World Monuments Fund Watch List

Historically and culturally important places around the world continue to be demolished to make way for new parking lots or are slowly destroyed by tourists. To combat this architectural annihilation, the World Monuments Fund issues a biennial list of the 100 most threatened sites. From the Tamansari Water Castle in Indonesia to Shackleton's hut in Antarctica (above), this year's list, for the first time, encompasses every continent. [www.wmf.org](http://www.wmf.org)



### Wiener Werkstätte: Design in Vienna 1903-1932 / By Christian Brandstätter / Abrams / \$40

A century ago, the Viennese Secessionists started their workshop under the leadership of Josef Hoffman and Kolo Moser. In collaboration with renegades like Gustav Klimt and Egon Schiele, the Vienna Workshop turned Art Nouveau into something more modern, anticipating the Bauhaus with their convergence of art and design. This book documents the workshop, its people, and their prolific output. [www.abramsbooks.com](http://www.abramsbooks.com)

### Elevators, Escalators, and Moving Sidewalks / 12 Sept-18 Apr / National Building Museum / Washington, DC

When you're standing in a dusty European hotel lobby, faced with climbing five flights of stairs with overstuffed luggage, pangs of longing often arise for an American elevator. Ubiquitous in malls, airports, and skyscrapers, elevators (along with escalators and moving sidewalks) are the most common forms of transportation in the U.S. This exhibition looks at the impact of these machines on building design and urban planning. [www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org)



### Isola Chairs / By Enrico Franzolini for Lampa + Möbler

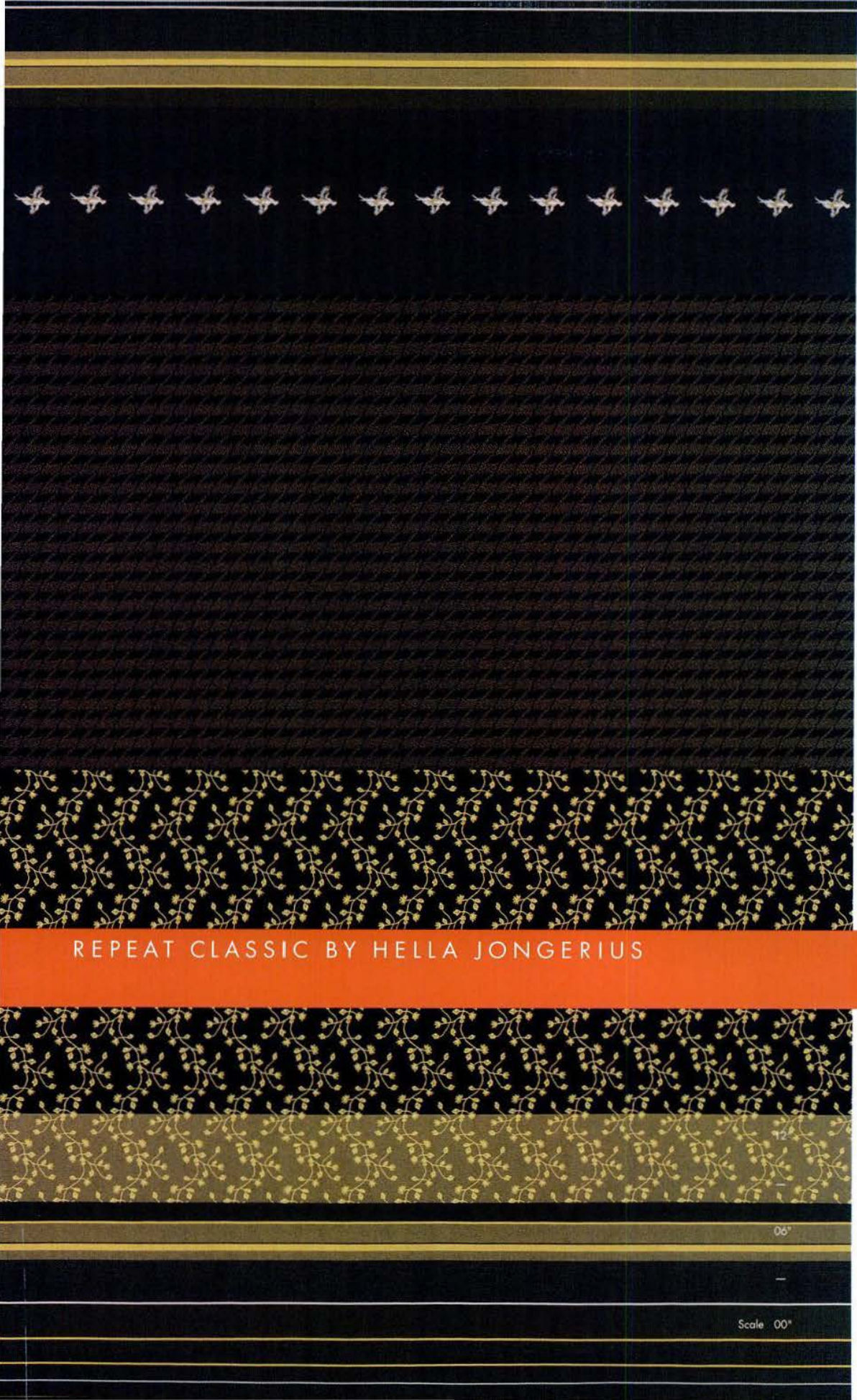
In the vast world of high-end chairs, finding one for the roof deck can be remarkably difficult. Enter the unpretentious Isola. Brought to us by Enrico Franzolini, who was born in Friuli, Italy's chair-production region, the Isola, with its organically curvy wood atop rectilinear metallic legs, looks as Scandinavian as its manufacturer. The soft, wan-colored birch seat comes in chaise, lounge, bar, and basic versions. [www.lampamobler.com](http://www.lampamobler.com)



### Disturbing Trend: SkyBox Personal Beverage Vendor / Maytag Appliances

Touted as the ultimate addition to every "Man Cave," this appliance comes custom-designed for any brand of die-hard sports fan. As if holding up to 66 12-ounce cans or 33 long necks weren't enough, the SkyBox even offers storage for potato chips and peanuts. Americans can finally enjoy a cold brew and their favorite munchies without moving. Has Maytag found the key to the ultimate Super Bowl party or are they just perpetuating national obesity? [www.maytag.com](http://www.maytag.com)

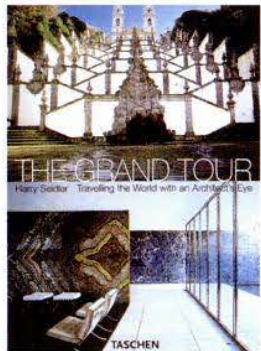




REPEAT CLASSIC BY HELLA JONGERIUS

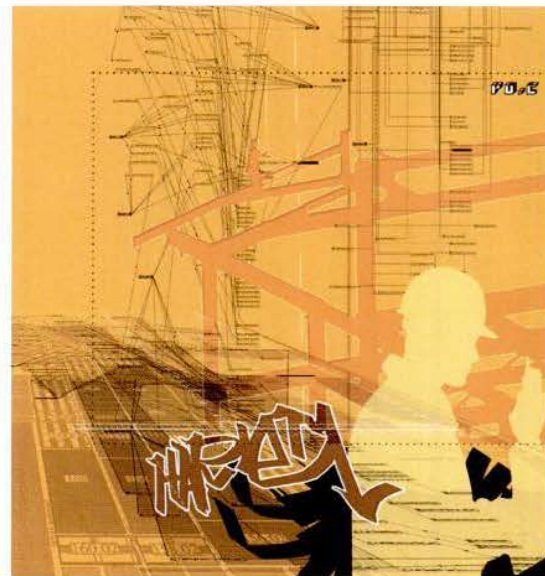
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**The Grand Tour: Travelling the World with an Architect's Eye / By Harry Seidler / Taschen / \$29.99**

Over the last 50-some years, architect Harry Seidler and wife Penelope have visited most of the world's great architectural sites. Armed with a Leica, Seidler documents structures both ancient (Jerusalem's Wailing Wall) and recent (Niemeyer's Niteroi Museum). Flipping through the tome's 704 pages is like taking an armchair Flight 001 with Seidler in the window seat next to you. [www.taschen.com](http://www.taschen.com)



**Harlemworld: Metropolis as Metaphor / 26 Jan–4 Apr / The Studio Museum in Harlem / New York, NY**

At "Harlemworld," the changing landscape of Harlem is personified by the cultural evolution of African-American artwork throughout the past two centuries. Over a dozen contemporary black architects were invited to propose structural solutions for multiple sites throughout Harlem, articulating their ideas with models, plans, photography, video, and installation art. Following postmodernist tendency, "Harlemworld" proposes inner-city revitalization with style. [www.studiomuseum.org](http://www.studiomuseum.org)



**TwistTogether Lamps / Glide Inc. /** TwistTogether lamps could be the Legos of the lighting world—although you might have trouble creating a 1/32 scale Mt. Rushmore. These small (4.25" x 4.25" x 2.75") LED-powered blocks, which come in sets of four to eight, interlock in endless combinations. [www.glide-inc.com](http://www.glide-inc.com)



**Lombrico / By Marco Zanuso for B&B Italia**

Perhaps the most memorable artifact of the 1980s sitcom *My Two Dads* (other than Paul Reiser) was the cartoonish, car-shaped sofa that lingered in the background of almost every shot. The recently reissued limited-edition Lombrico sofa, while infinitely more appealing, gives off a similar automotive air—like the oversized back-seats we easily napped on as youths. Designed by one-time *Domus* editor Marco Zanuso in 1966, the Lombrico features a gray wool polyurethane foam seat atop a fiberglass frame. [www.bebitalia.it](http://www.bebitalia.it)

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**2004 Biennial / 11 Mar–30 May / Whitney Museum of American Art / New York, NY**

The phrase “in these troubled times” has become a sales pitch for everything from SUVs to war—with little consideration for what might be the root of the troubles. It’s no coincidence, then, that the art featured at this year’s Whitney Biennial is steeped in anxiety and uncertainty—or that one of the overarching themes is an engagement with the art, popular culture, and politics of the late ’60s and early ’70s, a similar era of upheaval. Works in almost every imaginable medium, by 108 artists and collaborative groups (including a video by Marina Abramovic, shown here), will provide a one-stop shop for contemporary American art. [www.whitney.org](http://www.whitney.org)



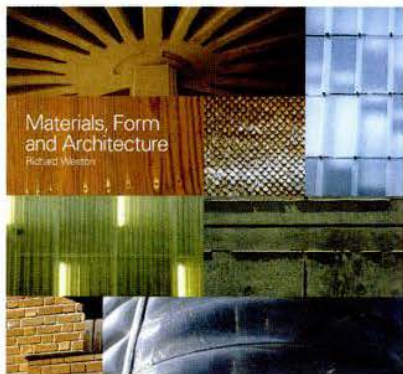
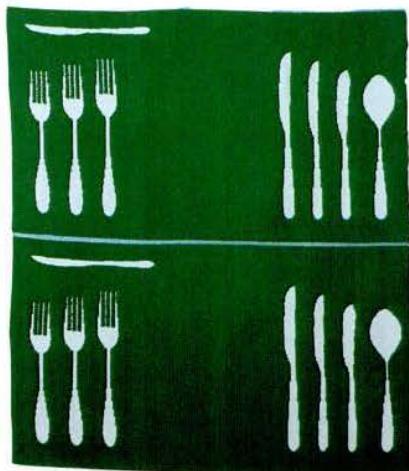
**Good Vibrations**

The sex toy as a design object of desire? Dixon’s Bone vibrator, in hand-cast black resin, like Mari Ruth Oda’s ivory or slate resin Pebble (above) and Marc Newson’s UFO-like Mojo in brightly colored silicone, have an intriguing sculptural presence that you won’t want to hide under the bed. Oh, and we hear they work really well, too. [www.myla.com](http://www.myla.com)

**Slow-Fast Luncheon Mats and Coasters / By**

**Nana Kikuchi / Available at Ribbon Project**

It took nine laborious months of coiling and bundling for Ribbon Project’s designers to formulate a method of 3-D construction with ribbon that typifies the dainty textile. Accordingly, Ribbon’s Slow-Fast Luncheon mats possess the classic elegance of gift-wrapped presents while satisfying childhood nostalgia for paper doll cut-outs. Whether it’s service for one or for ten, unroll the number of mats needed and cut along the solid line. Imprinted with a full set of silverware, the place mats can go gourmet or casual. [www.ribbonproject.net](http://www.ribbonproject.net)



**Materials, Form, and Architecture / By**

**Richard Weston / Yale University Press / \$60**

Rebelling against rigid ordinance, Richard Weston examines architecture as a “material art.” *Materials, Form, and Architecture* surveys the relationship between building materials and structural form throughout history. Weston magnifies the utility of material and the influence of texture within contemporary architecture. If you’ve ever considered how the tactile qualities of your home characterize the way you live, feel out Weston. [www.yale.edu/yup](http://www.yale.edu/yup)



**Sublime**

Emerging from the throes of post-9/11 recovery, Tribeca is the new frontier for design stores. Even if you’re not in the market to buy, Sublime’s uniquely well-curated furniture collection merits a browse. On the basement level, a gallery (the “sub-lime”) hosts rotating exhibits of furniture that classifies as art. [www.sublimeamericandesign.com](http://www.sublimeamericandesign.com)





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**Paul R. Williams: A Legacy of Style** / 1 Feb–31 Mar / Doheny Memorial Library, USC / Los Angeles, CA

After establishing his own firm in 1922, Los Angeles architect Paul Williams wrote of meeting with prospective clients: "In the moment that they discovered they were dealing with a Negro, I could see them 'freeze.' Their interest in discussing plans waned instantly and their one remaining concern was to discover a convenient exit without hurting my feelings." Williams nonetheless went on to become one of the area's most prolific architects, creating much of what we consider quintessentially L.A.—including the *Jetsons*-esque building at the center of LAX. This exhibition will present documentation of his more than 3,000 projects. [www.usc.edu](http://www.usc.edu)



**Flux Rug** / By Chris Baisa for Delinear

Chris Baisa first made a name for himself with his Gridloc table, now produced for Limn Furniture in San Francisco, but has since expanded his repertoire to include accessories and hand-knotted Tibetan wool rugs for manufacturers like Elson & Company. With his new collection of rugs, Baisa has ventured out on his own to sell his products under the Delinear name. If pieces like Flux (above) are any indication, Baisa is moving in the right direction. [www.delinear.net](http://www.delinear.net)



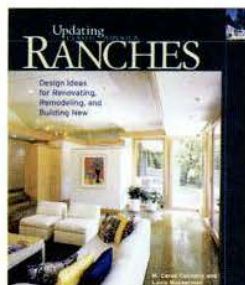
**Made in Mexico** / 21 Jan–9 May / Institute of Contemporary Art / Boston, MA

Mexico's international cultural influence, already well-established by the mid-20th century, is on the rise again. An impressive roster of international artists, from Francis Alÿs to Yasumasa Morimura to Sebastian Romo (above) will reveal commonalities and disparities between work made in Mexico and work inspired by Mexico. [www.icaboston.org](http://www.icaboston.org)



**Sucro & Crema (Sugar & Creamer)** / By Octate

If a piston hooked up with a cylinder, their offspring might resemble these smooth aluminum forms. However, Octate's machinelike metal cylinders won't be the hottest things on your table—literally, they stay cool, as the thick walls insulate the half-and-half fresh from the fridge. But you'll certainly feel warm inside as you stare at the careful nuance of their contours. [www.octate.com](http://www.octate.com)



**Updating Classic America: Ranches** / By M. Caren Connolly and Louis Wasserman / Taunton Press / \$29.95

These days folks are finding ranch houses reasonable alternatives to shoddy McMansions—with some necessary updating. This book offers a glimpse into a number of renovated houses and provides ranch house-owning readers with numerous ideas for their own renovation projects. [www.taunton.com](http://www.taunton.com)

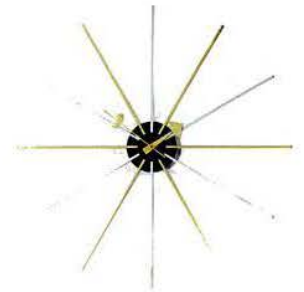
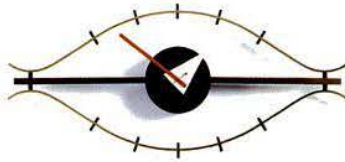
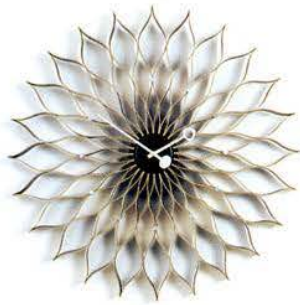


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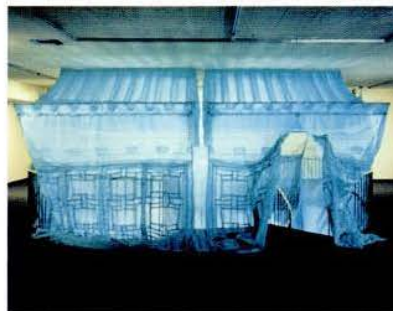
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**Nelson Clocks / Vitra /** If classic modern designs were offered on a menu, George Nelson's famous Ball clock would be steak and potatoes (a grass-fed steak with organic fingerling potatoes, mind you). For those seeking a more adventurous entrée, Vitra faithfully reissued four of the Nelson office's oversized and under-exposed designs. We'll take the Sunflower clock (far left) and a side of broccoli rabe with toasted pine nuts. [www.vitra.com](http://www.vitra.com)



**Home / By Lars Tunbjörk / Steidl / \$35**  
Although photographer Lars Tunbjörk is no feng shui guru, he has spent his fair share of time contemplating the abstract meaning of inanimate objects, but then, haven't we all? This quirky series of photographs explores the deeper meaning behind ordinarily bland objects such as walls, mailboxes, and staircases from his childhood hometown in Sweden. In the introduction, Tunbjörk describes the complex existence of the objects as "the absence of presence and the presence of absence." It doesn't get much deeper than that, folks. [www.steidl.de](http://www.steidl.de)



**Sittings / 12 Oct–13 Sept / MOCA / Los Angeles, CA**  
We've all seen installation art and wondered, Why? Seemingly in response to our concern, "Sittings" outlines the evolution of installation art over the past 30 years. The exhibit indicates the acute influence this movement has had on a variety of emerging artists and includes works from practitioners like Vito Acconci and Do-Ho Suh (left). Attend "Sittings" a confused member of the masses, emerge an informed art aficionado. [www.moca-la.org](http://www.moca-la.org)



**Mori on Wright / 18 Oct–14 Mar / Albright-Knox Art Gallery / Buffalo, NY**  
Completed in 1906, the sprawling, five-building Darwin D. Martin house in Buffalo is considered one of Frank Lloyd Wright's greatest Prairie Style homes. Marked by long, low lines and looming eaves, the estate is undergoing a multimillion-dollar restoration. This exhibit displays models by five architects for the new visitor's center, featuring Toshiko Mori's winning design (above). [www.albrightknox.org](http://www.albrightknox.org)

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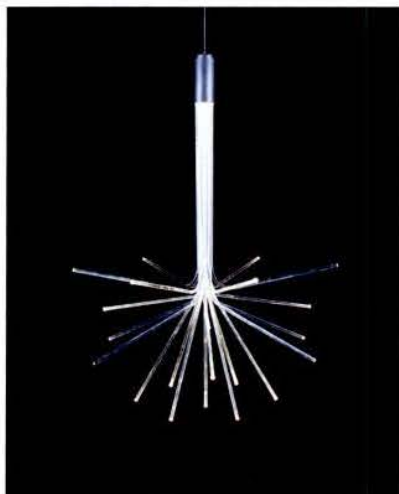
 **HermanMiller**

## In the Modern World



### Kristall Chandelier / By LYX

For a pendant lamp to find its true self—as a glowing object that floats beneath the ceiling and titillates with its luminescence—it must create both direct and indirect light. The latter is that which hits the floor; the former diffuses around the upper parts of the room and onto the ceiling. The somewhat zoomorphic, somewhat starlike Kristall has found its true self, its halogen bulb beaming through acrylic rods. The rods' shafts create indirect light; at the tip of each rod, a spotlight shoots direct light all over the room. [www.lyx.com](http://www.lyx.com)



### Fuel Warehouse / By MBF Architects

Once upon a time in America, during the heyday of Route 66, the roadside attraction held a special place in the architectural lexicon. Buildings oozed personality and the wares within—be they fast food, gasoline, or tourist trinkets—were readily identifiable by the structures' exteriors. Somewhere along the way, these unique structures were replaced with dime-a-dozen designs. MBF Architects' design for the new gasoline franchise Fuel Warehouse offers a welcome reprieve. With an exploded quonset hut-like profile, the unique structure (an adaptation of agrarian and military models) hopes to attract customers fed up with their local Kwik-E-Mart. [www.mbfarchitects.com](http://www.mbfarchitects.com)



### How to Live in a Flat / 9 Sept–28 Mar / MoDA Middlesex University, London

Inspired by William Heath Robinson's 1936 book, *How to Live in a Flat*, this exhibition highlights an architectural phenomenon that took London by storm during the 1920s and 1930s. Flats were outfitted with a variety of multitasking elements, like side panels that folded into kitchen tables. Furniture that did not alter function was horizontally inspired: low and wide. By providing a middle-class alternative to the family home, these cost-efficient urban dwellings redefined living for the city. [www.moda.mdx.ac.uk](http://www.moda.mdx.ac.uk)



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## Houses of the Holy

To pave the way for their modernist intentions, DeBartolo Architects gave their clients (a community of Jesuits) copies of Tadao Ando's *The Colours of Light* and John Pawson's *Minimum* as Christmas gifts. The architects were surprised when the priests started quoting the books back to them, and copies of both still sit out on a coffee table.

Jesuit priests have a long history of building in the American Southwest, but nothing they've done over the past five centuries looks, or feels, quite like the Mariposa residence in Phoenix, Arizona. The concrete-and-glass school compound, built to house priests teaching at a Catholic school in Phoenix, is a far cry from the stuccoed Spanish missions that marked the Jesuits' earlier forays into desert architecture.

The small community of Jesuits at Brophy College Preparatory wasn't trying to buck tradition, though. They just wanted something away from the hustle and bustle of campus that would help them live out their ideals of community and service.

"I loved the old building," says Jim Flynn, rector of the community of ten Jesuits, but he admits the dormitory-style building had more than a few drawbacks: "Sharing

the bathroom was a little much," he says with a chuckle. The old residence, a 1928 Spanish colonial revival building in the middle of campus, left its current crop of Jesuits feeling isolated from each other and harried by the classroom bells and the crush of 1,200 students that surrounded them.

So the priests started thinking about a new house that would enable the group to improve their interactions with each other and be more quiet retreat than middle of the storm. "We had some vague ideas," says Louis Bishop, one of the Jesuits. "We wanted somewhere we didn't have to run all over the place . . . but we didn't really know how to do that."

Enter DeBartolo Architects. Michael Gilson, one of the newer priests at the school, says the Phoenix-based firm impressed the Jesuits during the initial interview by ▶





taking their desire to improve the way they lived seriously. After getting the commission, the architects even spent a night in the old residence to get a better sense of how the priests worked and relaxed.

Jack DeBartolo (known as Jack 3), the younger half of the father-and-son firm, says feeling the emptiness in the dormitory's long hallways and hearing the noise of students outside their bedroom windows at 6:30 in the morning sparked visions of open, light-filled spaces made of simple materials like concrete, steel, and glass.

Both architects agreed that such a plan would not only cut down on the visual clutter in the house but would also keep costs down, an important thing when dealing with clients who've all taken vows of poverty. Convincing the Jesuits that a sleek, modernist building was the way to go would be another matter entirely.

"Most people think modernism has no sense of scale, [that] it's cold and inhuman," says the younger DeBartolo. "We had to show that we can reduce to essentials and still be comfortable."

To that end, the DeBartolos gave the priests a little homework of their own. They handed out books on minimalism and light theory and prepared for the worst—but it never came.

Pleasantly surprised, the architects developed a plan calling for three rectangular buildings set parallel to the street and divided by tree-shaded courtyards. The first, which the priests have dubbed simply "Number One," contains spaces for dining, conversation, and ▶

The architects kept the furniture simple, light, and off the floor. "We really saw this as an opportunity to soften some of the edges of the house," Jack 3 says. The result is a space filled with both mid-century

classics and newer selections in the same vein. The Neo sofas (above left) and Ronde outdoor stacking chairs (below left) are from Design Within Reach. **➤ p. 146**





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## My House

watching TV. The open kitchen, offices, and library are off to one side of this axis, while a north-facing window wall overlooks a courtyard on the other and floods the space with indirect sunlight (no small matter in a climate where summer temperatures top 115 degrees). The other two buildings contain bedrooms for the eight residents (two priests live in a school-owned house next door), a guest room, a small meeting room that doubles as an alternate media room, and a storage and utility room.

Jack Jr. (the older DeBartolo) says the design is aimed at giving the residents multiple spaces they can use collectively or privately, a mantra that also extends into the bedrooms. Each one has its own bath, office, and sitting area levered into just 270 square feet. Flynn says he was surprised that cramming so many uses into one space doesn't make it feel cramped. This bit of architectural wizardry is matched only by Mariposa house's chapel.

Accessible by a door off the main courtyard, the 400-square-foot chapel is shockingly stark. Half the wall space is composed of translucent glass that allows light to spill onto the white walls and polished gray concrete floor, a muted color palette that only accentuates the brightly colored liturgical pieces by Arizona sculptor Mayme Kratz and the thin, brushed-aluminum cross hanging on the wall.

"I like the lack of clutter," Bishop says. "[It] allows me to pray the way I want. . . . It's so simple."

It's an aesthetic that takes some getting used to, Gilson says, but it's worth the effort in the end because, he feels, it has drawn all the residents of the house closer to God. "For the first time in my life, I've become really aware of how the space in which we live and what we see every day can have an impact on our lives and how we relate to each other," he says. ■



## How to Make My House Your House

### Incorporate water

The DeBartolos wanted to keep the desert tradition of incorporating water near the entrance of the house as a sort of welcome mat, but they skipped the faux hacienda fountain found throughout Arizona in favor of twin sheets of four-by-eight-foot steel plates that water pours over. Making the unusual fountain from standard-sized materials, which will weather naturally over the years, kept the cost down, too.

### The correct furnishings

The house is outfitted with elegant modern pieces, but it almost didn't happen that way. The Jesuits' original plan was to move in the furniture from their old residence. However, after carting over La-Z-Boys for their bedrooms, the priests realized they looked hideous in the clean, modernist space. To further their cause, the DeBartolos created a digital mock-up of the space filled with images lifted from catalogs and convinced the clients to change course. [www.dwr.com](http://www.dwr.com) / [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com) / [www.roomandboard.com](http://www.roomandboard.com)

### Translucent panels

Walls of channel glass, an industrial material that comes in long strips shaped in a shallow U, help preserve the residents' privacy, while allowing only soft, filtered light inside. In the chapel, the DeBartolos paired and staggered the narrow panels so that only the most opaque light comes through. Obscure views and the most basic shapes and colors from outside create a glowing, ethereal quality indoors. Holy water is held in an elegant blue glass cylinder (above).



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## Brand-New Secondhand

Amidst a tangle of blackberry bushes and decaying tires, architects Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo of Lead Pencil Studio saw the perfect site for their future home. "The lot was vacant for 30 years and was kind of the neighborhood dump," Mihalyo explains of the small space a mere 15-minute walk from downtown Seattle. "There were several cars' worth of car parts and 25 or 30 pickup-truck loads of debris that we had to haul off the lot. Just clearing away all the stuff that was sitting on the land took us about a month."

This exercise in manual labor—rare for most architects, who supervise projects and don't usually wield hammers or drive Bobcats—became an everyday task ▶





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## Off the Grid

for the couple. With a materials and construction budget of just \$70,000, Han and Mihalyo did all the design and almost all the building themselves, since they couldn't afford to hire extra hands.

Despite their financial constraints, the architects seamlessly incorporated sustainable building design into their dwelling, disproving the stereotype that environmentally conscious materials are costly or complex to use. "Most of the things we did are simple, low-cost additions to what we would have done anyway. They're doable on nearly any structure," says Mihalyo of the couple's matter-of-fact approach to green architecture. "It's like buying organic fruit. If there are two apples sitting side by side and one's organic and one's not, you buy the organic apple unless it's much more expensive," Han explains.

Their house — 1,350 square feet that combine the couple's architecture and sculpture studio with their living space — is a box of unfinished wood, steel, and concrete. The couple had wanted to live in an industrial-type space, but when they were unable to find a building to renovate in their price range they simply transplanted their sustainable urban ideal into a quiet residential neighborhood within view of downtown high-rises.

The bottom level of the home is poured concrete mixed with 30 percent fly ash (a waste product), a combination that both increases strength (you can do more ▶



Inside the open, loftlike space, the temperature is kept comfortable year-round through energy-efficient solutions.



All of the plywood, concrete, and steel surfaces inside the house (top) were left unfinished. "We like to use natural materials in their raw state and minimize the use of synthetic surfaces and drywall," says Mihalyo.

Even in ever-gray and gloomy Seattle, the 24-by-10-foot front window (left) lets in enough light that the couple rarely needs to turn on any lamps inside the house.

"There's nothing fancy about it," explains Mihalyo of how the south-facing second-story window (above) helps to both cool and heat the house. "It's just good placement of the window with a canopy over it."

The kitchen countertops (previous page) are covered in a thicker version of the same mild steel that clads the house and coated with beeswax to protect from scratches and stains.

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with less) of the concrete and decreases harmful emissions. The 15-foot-tall walls were built with the help of a small company of five friendly and strong Tongan brothers—the couple's one financial indulgence in their cost-cutting regime of self-build. Wood-framed walls comprise the second story, clad with sheets of recyclable hot-rolled steel (see sidebar).

Inside the open, loftlike space, the temperature is kept comfortable year-round through energy-efficient solutions. "Compared with our neighbors', our energy bill is puny," boasts Mihalyo. Thick walls densely packed with fiberglass batting provide excellent insulation, and a radiant heating system under the cement first floor keeps the place warm. The walls, roof, and floor are insulated at twice the value required by code. On the second floor, the architects designed a 5-by-20-foot south-facing passive solar window with a canopy for shade, providing heat in the winter and a cooling effect in the summer.

Plundering the local salvage yards provided most of the doors, sinks, and bathtubs in the home. The old cast-iron tub upstairs and a pair of old working double doors at the entrance give the house "a mark of history that you can't fake with new materials," says Han. As a nod to the local airplane-manufacturing industry, aluminum sheeting scrounged from Boeing surplus was used for the solar canopy and covers the roof deck.

And those neighbors who used their yard as a dumping ground? "While we were doing the work hauling stuff away, the neighbors walked by sheepishly waving at us as they saw the tires they threw out," Han says. "But everyone has been really supportive and happy that we did something with this empty lot that was an eyesore," Mihalyo interjects. And as it turns out, the couple still helps haul away trash—the neighbors often borrow their '67 Chevy pickup for trips to the dump. ■

To stay within budget, Han and Mihalyo (right) spent seven months and all of their free time building the house. As a result, the couple is well-

acquainted with every square inch of their home. As Han says, "If there's a nail in the wall, we know exactly what's behind it."



### The Steel Deal

Sheets of hot-rolled steel were used as exterior cladding—as well as for parts of walls and countertops indoors—to heighten the industrial effect. "When hot-rolled steel comes out of the factory, it's a very even-toned, blue-gray color," Han says. "But we wanted to have a pattern. So we stacked the sheets of siding outside in the rain, and let it sit there so that the water would create texture."

Putting up the siding was messy, since each sheet had to be carefully dried before installation and then covered with a water-

based clear coat to prevent surface oxidation. The result, though, is a quietly mottled surface that Mihalyo says "looks like slate" and will change color over time as dark brown tones begin to appear beneath the basic steel gray.

Like the circular windows that seem stolen from the airplanes flying over the house, the steel siding is an architectural element made possible on a small budget only by Han and Mihalyo doing it themselves. As Han exclaims, "Can you imagine specing this out for a contractor?" —A.H.

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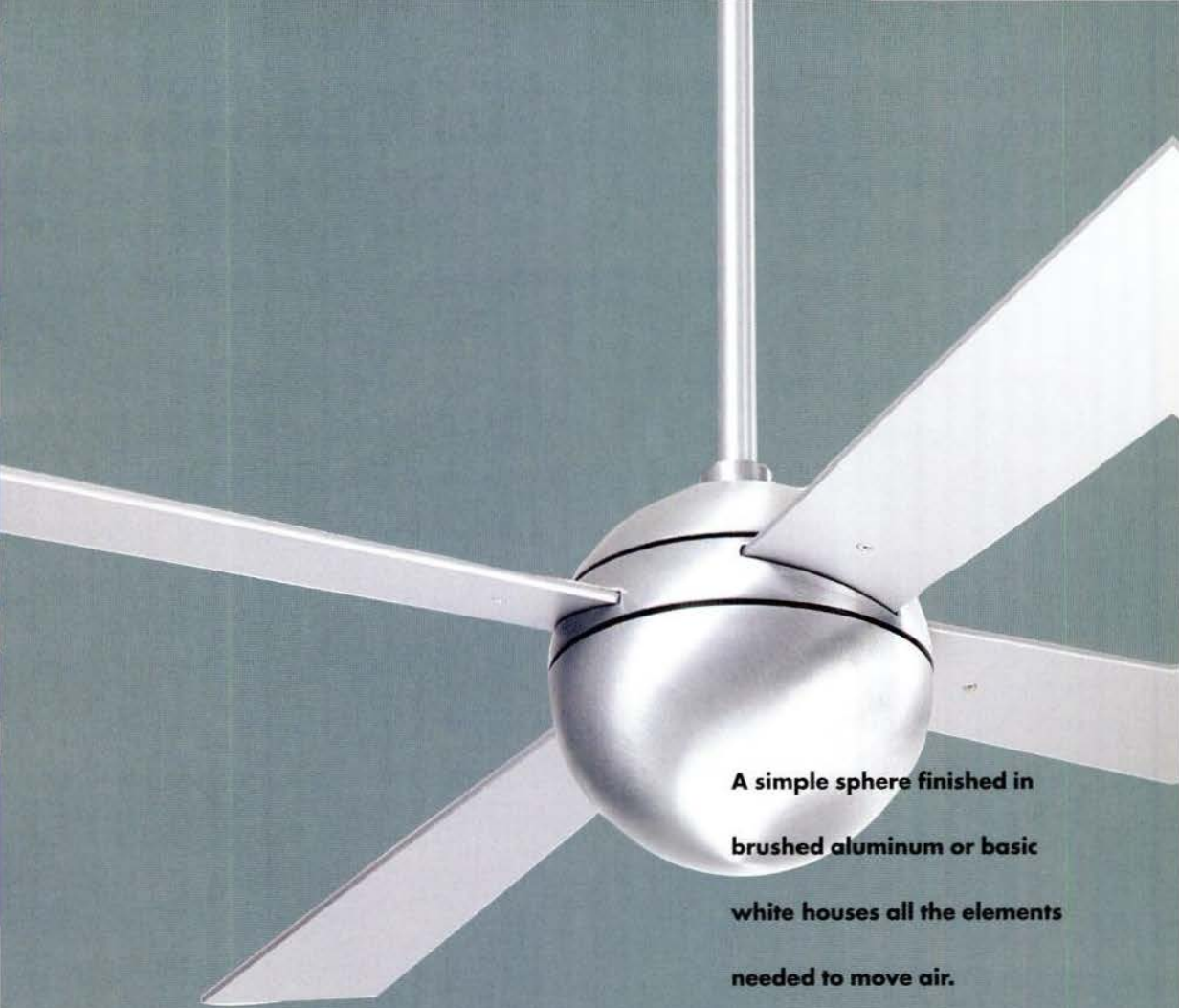
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# Inspecting Gadgets

These days, a growing number of gizmos contain both a cell phone and a PDA. With help from a private eye, Dwell tests out a few “converged devices.”



**A Note on Our Expert:** Miriam Ponzi, whose father, Tom Ponzi, was a famous private investigator, has always been on the cutting edge of technology. “I grew up playing with gadgets,” she says. Ponzi now runs Tomponzi Investigations, an international outfit with over 2,000 employees. She is a fan of PDA-phones: “Their two-in-one capacity is irresistible,” she tells us. Her profession sometimes requires more devious communications equipment, which she didn’t tell us much about; suffice to say, she’s “always in search of the latest infernal gadget.”

**Once upon a time in the U.S.A., the popular acronym PDA meant only "public display of affection."** But in 1992 there came a rival meaning. For any hapless soul who doesn't already know, it's the more solitary and clean "personal digital assistant." Here in our puritanical, capitalist culture, the first kind of PDA is an object of scorn, while the second is expensive.

In keeping with the entropy of communications technology, another change has complicated things since the rival's arrival: PDAs now engage in PDA. That is, your personal digital assistant can be a cell phone, too. It can make a booty call on the bus and—if it's fancy—beam over some booty for viewing pleasure (sadly, the Transporter is still relegated to *Star Trek*—though maybe not for much longer). PDA and PDA are coming together in what techies would call "converged devices."

But according to industry analyst Todd Kort of Gartner, Inc., an information technology consulting company, fewer than 0.5 percent of the U.S. population are early adapters to these converged devices. Why? As Kort explains in Luddite-friendly words: "The functions of the PDA are still making sacrifices for the cell phone's, or vice versa. Smaller screen size, apt for the cell phone, isn't big enough for quality PDA activities, while combining cell phones with operating systems taxes battery life."

Nonetheless, Kort sees improvements afoot. Last year, telecommunications companies invested billions to improve PDA-phones—and Kort expects the market to double next year (to a whopping 1 percent). Eager to keep up with technology's wild run, Dwell tried out a sampling of today's converged devices, in consultation with Miriam Ponzi, an Italian private eye. Ponzi has been tracking the role of converged PDAs in PDA. In other words, she's seen affection displayed between adulterers through text messaging. A technology aficionada, she believes that converged devices might be ubiquitous in as few as five years.

**Treo 600 smartphone / starts at \$499**

Includes speakerphone option, organizer, built-in camera, backlit keyboard, five-way navigation button, wireless Web and email. Operates on Palm OS 5.2.1. 6.2 ounces, 4.4 x 2.4 x 0.9 inches.

**Expert Opinion:** This one's my favorite. It has a good phone, a simple camera, and an excellent calendar with memory storage. It contains the latest Palm operating system, which I think is the best. All the functions integrate gracefully, and the whole device fits into a solid, sturdy package. It looks like

it will last a long time—it won't break easily, because there aren't any moving parts.

**What We Think:** Once you get past this thing's silly name (why must tech branding be pointlessly oblique?), the Treo presents no further challenges. The user interface is so intuitive that we didn't even have to read directions. Though the keyboard is the smallest in our test group, the lentil-sized buttons have magic ergonomics that make them easiest to type on. And the design manages a compact nuance that means we wouldn't be embarrassed to use the camera at a party. ▶





#### Siemens SX56 / starts at \$499

Touch screen and stylus, organizer, wireless Web and email capability, memo recording and MP3 capability. Operates on Microsoft Pocket Phone 2002 software. 6.93 ounces, 0.70 x 2.86 x 5.08 inches.

**Expert Opinion:** This phone comes from a family I've seen before, with everything in the little window; the letter-recognizer supposedly makes a keyboard unnecessary. The PDA seems functional, and Siemens always makes an excellent cell phone. This probably splits its two functions 50-50. Others

might be more phone than PDA, or vice versa. But here we have a no-nonsense hybrid.

**What We Think:** This little handheld is elegant and durable, with its minimal buttons and streamlined metallic shape. But unfortunately, the SX56 operating system is based on Windows CE—nicknamed "Wince" by some geeky friends of ours. (The SH-G1000, below, also runs on Wince.) This spawn of Microsoft is notoriously slow, but what's more bothersome is its goofy and unsophisticated interface design. Listen up, Bill Gates: Fake green grass and blue sky are depressing.



#### T-Mobile Color Sidekick / starts at \$199

Works closed with scroll wheel and navigation buttons; color screen swivels open to reveal backlit keyboard. Wireless Web and email capability, phone, organizer, camera attachment available. Operates on Hiptop OS. 6.2 ounces, 2.6 x 4.6 x 1.1 inches.

**Expert Opinion:** The way the top slides around and up to expose the keyboard has a nice 007 effect. These controls are unique and attractive. Something about the look seems teenage, but that can be good. Let's remember, in Europe and maybe everywhere,

the majority of cell phone users are kids. This is an appealing gadget.

**What We Think:** Teens might be too cool for the design's teenage elements, which include cartoons of cyber-hipsters and assorted built-in games reminiscent of Atari, with names like "Rock and Rockets." But we know the folks at Danger, Inc., Sidekick's Northern Californian designers, are probably also skateboarders in their early 30s. Props go to the swiveling screen. Skaters or not, these designers took a risk and executed it well, and the price is right.



#### Hitachi SH-G1000 / starts at \$649.99

Speakerphone option, organizer, rotating camera, built-in keyboard, MP3 capability, touch screen and stylus, wireless Web and email. Operates on Microsoft Pocket Phone 2002 software. 8.4 ounces, 5.8 x 3.3 x 0.9 inches.

**Expert Opinion:** This is huge—though not as heavy as it looks. It seems powerful, and the screen and stylus are nice and big. The memory card can store plenty of information, and the built-in camera is high quality. But this design is bulky and cumbersome, by

far the ugliest. It says "old maid" to me. It might work for a secretary, who is organizing lots of things at once—it won't ever be difficult to locate in your bag, and, if you have long fingernails, it would be easy to type on.

**What We Think:** If you're going to stream this many megahertz through a processor, shouldn't the device also look good? There's nary a trace of sexiness here. Perhaps they're embracing a market niche of people with no style—this seems a safe bet, judging from the soft case and belt attachment that came in the box.



#### PalmOne Tungsten W / starts at \$419

Built-in keyboard and five-way navigator button, stylus and high-res color display. Organizer, headset phone, wireless Web and email capability. Operates with Palm OS 4.1.1. 6.5 ounces, 5.4 x 3.1 x .7 inches.

**Expert Opinion:** This is a decent PDA, with an excellent operating system—it comes from a good family. But aesthetically, it's lacking. There's more bulk than is necessary, and the design looks like an old model, a bit passé. The device is certainly functional, but not much fun—there's no

camera, and no speakerphone. Nonetheless, people who feel affection for the PalmOne company might want one of these.

**What We Think:** This gizmo is inoffensive but for one thing—you have to use a headset to make a phone call, which requires fiddling with a cord and grossing out any Luddites you pass in the street. Still, between the key pad, navigator, stylus, and Palm OS interface, the Tungsten W gets points for ease of use. There aren't any frills—no games, no camera—but there's reliability. It's the Toyota Tercel of the group. ■



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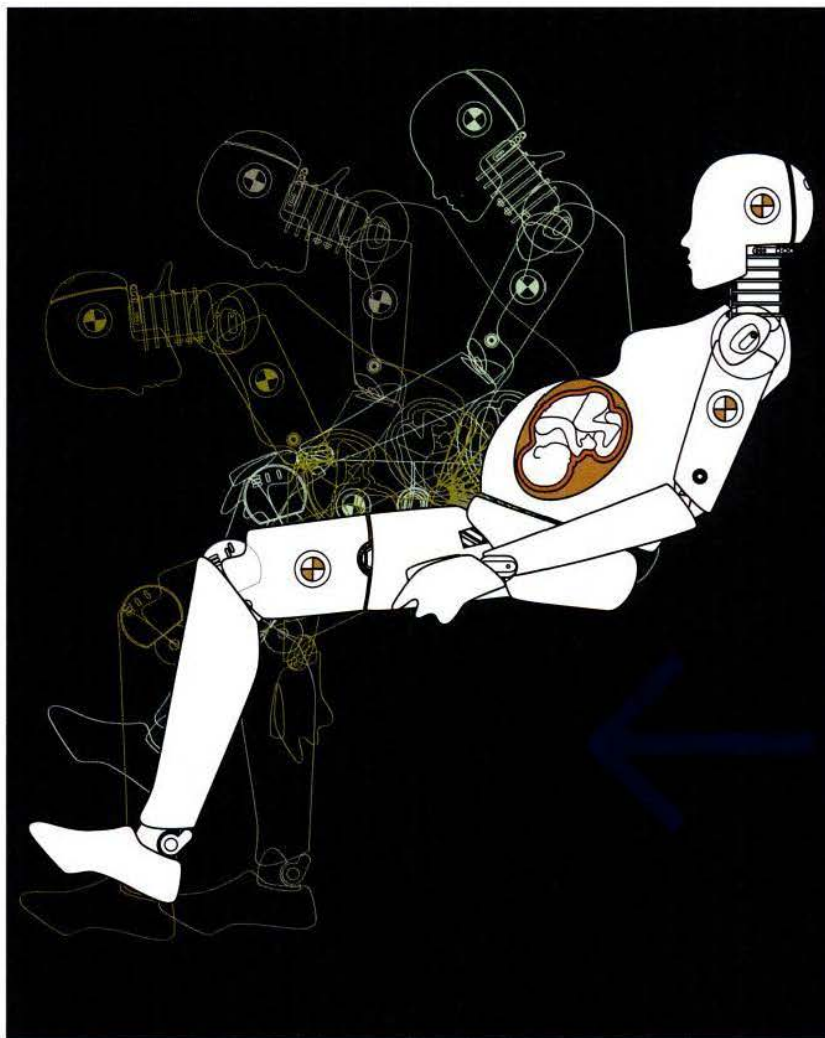
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Laura Thackray (above), a mechanical engineer for Volvo, with a traditional crash-test dummy. Thackray developed the world's first virtual pregnant crash-test dummy, Linda.



(illustration at right). With the ability to represent every stage of pregnancy at the push of a button, Linda is helping to research and improve automotive safety standards for pregnant women.

## She's No Dummy

If you asked us to describe an iconic image of Swedish design, you might not expect to hear about crash-test dummies. Those metal-and-rubber, sensor-wired fake people who are experimentally mangled in chassis were really in vogue in the 1980s, when images of their slow-motion swaying looked futuristic. Though still in use, today they seem alternately silly or sinister, low-tech drudges in the grim business of automotive safety. The avant-garde ones live in the world of bitstreams.

But at Volvo Car Corporation, crash-test dummies are revered symbols of the company's highest priority, preserving human life. And now, Volvo's newest virtual ones are reproducing. Meet Linda: the world's first-ever virtual pregnant crash-test dummy. With Linda's advent, we see crash-test dummies getting not only better-looking but smarter. Linda is three-dimensional, with color-coded anatomy and a gracefully curved belly that has a definitively super-human capacity to change its phase of pregnancy in a flash, growing or shrinking to anywhere between zero and nine months.

Linda owes her existence to Laura Thackray, a 27-year-old mechanical engineer for Volvo who might be the existential opposite of Dr. Frankenstein (all they have in common is the smarts). Thackray's maternal, benevolent character helps research a pioneering topic: auto safety for pregnant women. Linda, who came to be in 2002, generates meticulous data about the effects of high-speed impact on the womb, the placenta, and the fetus.

The male-dominated auto industry has been remiss to study risk factors for pregnant drivers. "I had solicited car companies all over the U.S.," Thackray remembers. "They all thought my proposal was interesting but wished me luck elsewhere." But at Volvo, almost 50 percent of the Safety Centre employees are women and they were more willing to take on the issue.

Thackray is convinced that her employer's values are intrinsically Swedish. "Here there's no race for prosperity," she says, "but a motivation for attaining a high quality of life for everyone. Our goal at the Volvo Safety Centre is that no special situation be overlooked." ■



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## Northern Exposure

Located in the Skerjafjordur, one of Reykjavik's most popular (and highly unpronounceable) neighborhoods, the house at #40 Skildinganes was designed by architects David Kr. Pitt and Kristján Gardarsson for Pitt's parents.

No longer simply a northern Atlantic flyover zone, Reykjavik has in recent years become a true destination. The Icelandic capital's newfound popularity is due in part to cultural exports like Björk (did Iceland actually exist before Björk?), the chance to glimpse and enjoy otherworldly geothermal activity, and the city's increasingly legendary nightlife. Although Reykjavik's population is small, only 110,000, the city feels as vibrant as Bourbon Street or the Bastille—particularly on late weekend nights as one stumbles through its packed, narrow streets. Located surprisingly close to North America (it's a mere five-hour jaunt from New York's Kennedy Airport), Reykjavik comes across as having been influenced as much by the United States as by Europe. The architectural manifestations of this unique hybrid can be seen throughout the city—from mid-century ranch

houses (albeit with traditional Icelandic grass roofs) to the recent, decidedly post-loft-industrial Reykjavik Art Museum.

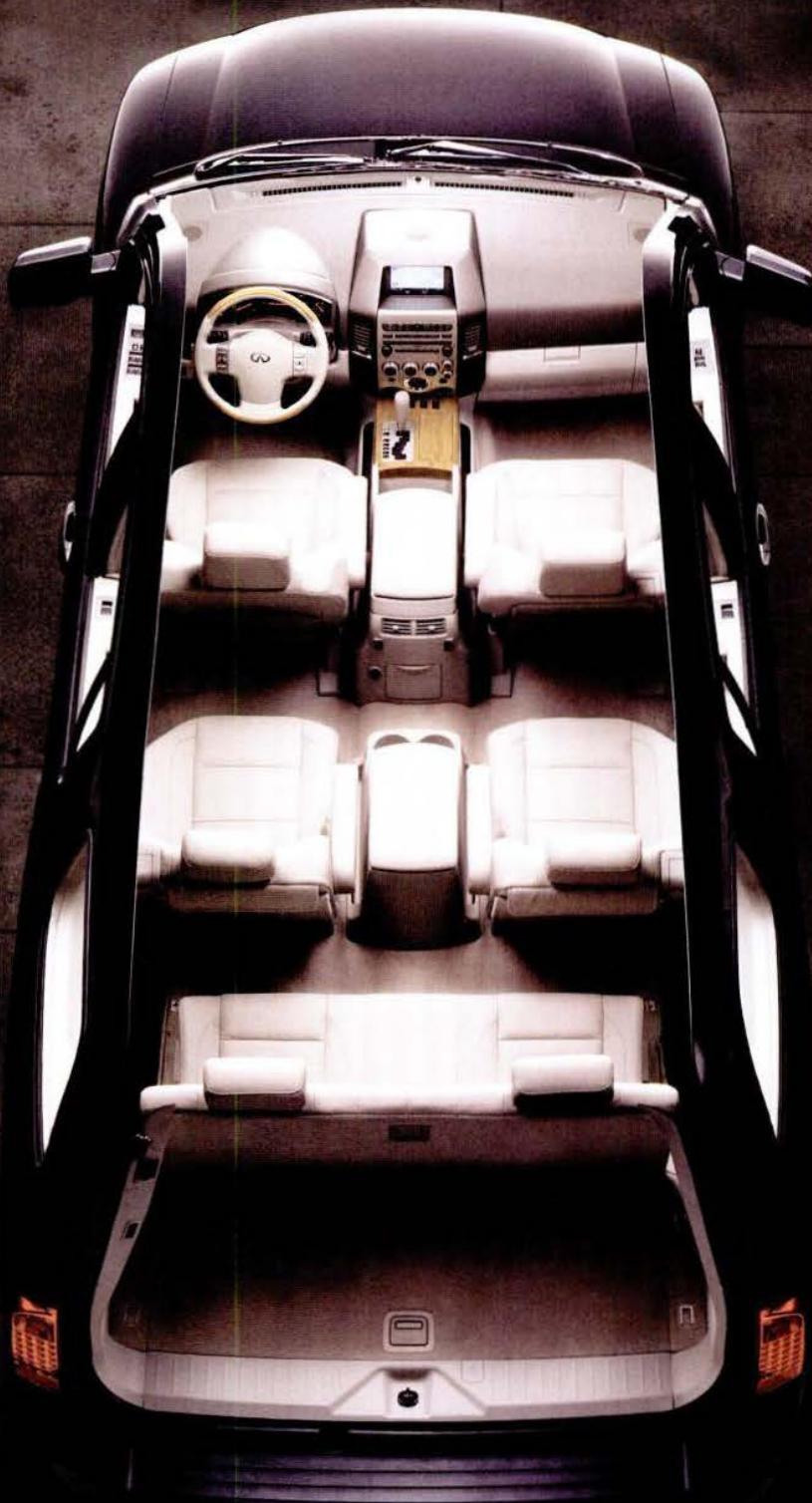
Thanks to booming software and biotech enterprises, the city shares another phenomenon with its distant neighbors: the emergence of a class of well-to-do 30-somethings. Many folks within these circles are investing in housing, particularly in the Skerjafjordur, one of Reykjavik's more popular and more architecturally diverse neighborhoods. It is here that architects David Kr. Pitt and Kristján Gardarsson, along with Pitt's mother, interior designer Svala Lárusdóttir, designed the house at #40 Skildinganes.

Recently, we spoke with Pitt and Lárusdóttir about the understated 3,660-square-foot house he built for her and his father, who's also named David. ▶



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The understated exterior of the house, clad in stone imported from Brazil, will weather naturally over the next 20 to 30 years.

#### How did you get started in architecture?

**Pitt:** I was born in England, and I returned there to attend Oxford Brookes University, where I got a B.A. I practiced architecture for a year before I decided I needed to go back for more education. After I got a graduate degree, also at Oxford Brookes, Kristjan Gardarsson, my partner at our firm Andrúm, and I did a house for a friend of ours. Now we're being commissioned like crazy after winning a few awards. We've been very busy for the last three years.

#### What was the overall concept for the design at #40 Skildinganes?

**Pitt:** It was very much about being really low-key from the exterior, while for the interior we opened all the spaces toward the sea—you can see the ocean from the kitchen, the laundry room, the master bedroom, almost everywhere. Even when you approach, you can see the ocean through the house.

#### The stone that lines the outside of the house looks typically Icelandic. What is it?

**Pitt:** The original idea was to have Icelandic stone. But that proved to be too expensive, so we imported it from Brazil. Such a shame! It's similar in terms of color and texture to what we wanted, however: something that gives you the feeling that the house is very protected. Despite the cold temperatures and winds, it's nice to know that this stone won't have to be touched for the next 20 to 30 years. It's low-maintenance.

#### What do you like best about your new house?

**Lárusdóttir:** This house happens to be in such a lovely location. That's why I really like it. It has big rooms—the old house we lived in downtown was really lovely as well, but we felt a little closed in because the rooms were much smaller.

#### Do you miss living downtown?

**Lárusdóttir:** No, I don't. I can walk downtown from here in half an hour. This neighborhood is one of the oldest in Reykjavik and we really like it here.

#### What is your favorite thing in the house in terms of the interior?

**Pitt:** My mother used to run a well-known gallery in town, so she has lots of art in the house. My favorite is a sound sculpture by Finnbogi Pétursson. It is a piece of aluminum hung on the wall with a speaker that sounds every five minutes or so, rumbling it ever so slightly. She put it next to an antique piano from Denmark, and I think the contrast is striking.

#### What is a normal day in the house like?

**Lárusdóttir:** I usually leave the house at 9 a.m. I've been quite busy lately with a new job, but in the summertime it's just great. Even now, in the winter, I just opened the door outside of the kitchen and I saw the sunset. I can walk outside with no overcoat or anything like that. It's so still and it's really quite warm. It was a beautiful moment. ▶



The home's minimal and spacious dining room is furnished with a mix of old and new.

As with much of the house, the windows in Lárusdóttir's study open to views of the north Atlantic.

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## Rockin' in Reykjavik

**A** **101 Hotel** / [Hverfisgata 10](http://Hverfisgata 10) / [www.101hotel.is](http://www.101hotel.is)  
Designed and owned by Ingibjörg Pálmadóttir, the vivacious heir to an Icelandic grocery-store fortune, the profoundly minimalist 101 Hotel rivals the austere stylings of famous boutique hotels like New York's Mercer or Berlin's Art'otel. From the spacious bar replete with glass ceiling to the stark rooms with frosted-glass showers and warm American oak floors, everything at the 101 is played for the illusion of space (something hard to come by in Reykjavik's other claustrophobic hotels). Pálmadóttir also helped remodel the slightly more staid Borg Hotel ([www.hotelborg.is](http://www.hotelborg.is)).

**Reykjavik Art Museum and Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum** / [www.listasafnreykjavikur.is](http://www.listasafnreykjavikur.is)

One of the highest-profile public structures reflecting Reykjavik's new style is the Reykjavik Art Museum at Harbor House, which opened in April 2000. The design team of Margrét Hardardóttir and Steve Christer drastically transformed a 1930s warehouse into a

two-story steel-and-glass showpiece. The museum's warm interior of brushed-steel columns and black walnut floors creates a distinctive and inviting atmosphere.

Built between 1942 and 1950, the Arabian-inspired Ásmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum was originally the private home of the artist and sculptor Ásmundur Sveinsson. While the domed roof and crescent-shaped building must have seemed out of place at the time, thanks in part to a 1991 renovation and expansion by architect Manfred Vilhjálmsson, now it fits right in among Iceland's prevailing modernism.

**B** **Perlan** / [Oskjuhlío](http://Oskjuhlío) / [www.perlan.is](http://www.perlan.is)

One of Reykjavik's most distinctive sites is the Perlan restaurant. Located atop four huge water tanks that hold the city's hot water after it's pumped from geothermal wells, the revolving restaurant is a de rigueur stop for visiting foreign dignitaries and tourists alike. Naturally, the food is a bit overpriced, but where else are you going to score traditional

Icelandic fare like roasted puffin or grilled reindeer while taking in a panoramic view?

**C** **Kaffibarinn** / [1 Bergstadastræti](http://1 Bergstadastræti)

If you make it to Iceland, chances are you'll be encouraged to imbibe more than you have in years. A landmark of the Reykjavik pub crawl is Kaffibarinn. Owned in part by Damon Albarn of British band Blur, this typically packed bar/café in a small two-story house has the feel of an English pub. On crowded Friday nights, the narrow staircase leading up to the second floor is a fire marshal's worst nightmare, but the overall dive-y feel is a revelation compared with Reykjavik's trendier, more expensive nightclubs.

**Apótek** / [Austustraeti 16](http://Austustraeti 16) / [www.veitingar.is](http://www.veitingar.is)

For the more sophisticated epicure, Apótek is a must. Located in a former pharmacy, Apótek features a seafood-laden Icelandic-Asian fusion menu. The historic shell with 1930s marble columns is juxtaposed by a contemporary kitchen seen through plate glass. ■





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**Kids' Stuff** / Designed by Alfredo Häberli for Iittala / [www.iittala.com](http://www.iittala.com)

The problem with children's dishware is that it's generally poorly made—because the little guys will soon outgrow it or break it—or adorned with Pokémon, Digimon, or Whatevermon. Häberli takes a different approach with actual glassware, porcelain plates, and metal silverware—so kids become more confident and mature by dining with real materials. That doesn't mean there's no fun to be had. Miniature details, such as a hole in the knife blade, create anamorphic forms, and a small bird, which leaves a trail of footprints, is hidden in various places throughout the set.

## ...at the Tabletop Show

While most trade shows sprawl horizontally, New York's Tabletop Show, housed within Emery Roth's 1974 Merchandise Mart tower, is a vertical affair. Twenty-three floors of showrooms displayed the newest wares, and between slices of thin-crust pizza, editor Sam Grawe tracked down the "top" picks for Dwell's "table."



**Debox** / Designed by Lena Bergström for Orrefors / [www.orrefors.com](http://www.orrefors.com)

On a recent outing to the Ridge Vineyards, our wine-tasting vocabulary was limited to "mmm . . . nice/great/superb/tasty." Despite completely lacking connoisseurship, we still made off with a few bottles of their 2001 Grenache. Had we been equipped with the Debox decanter and pair of stemless glasses (packaged in a handy portable case), we would have been tempted to enjoy the view and have a picnic right then and there. After decanting, perhaps we would have been able to detect the "raspberry bouquet."



**Moon iO** / Designed by Jasper Morrison for Rosenthal / [www.rosenthalchina.com](http://www.rosenthalchina.com)  
 NASA's website describes Io, Jupiter's third-largest and highly volcanic moon, as "looking like a giant pizza covered with melted cheese and splotches of tomato and ripe olives." Very scientific, no? We would hate to see Jasper Morrison's new tableware, with its pristine lines and delicate lunar-inspired pattern (a series of diminishing raspberry-colored dots), awaiting dish-washing after the aforementioned meal.



**Orbital** / Designed by Harri Koskinen for Venini / [www.venini.com](http://www.venini.com)

Finland is an extremely chilly place. This could perhaps explain why some of the country's most famous design exports tend to exude a frozen mien (for example, Tapio Wirkkala's Finlandia bottle or Harri Koskinen's Block lamp—where a light bulb appears to be suspended in an ice cube). However, for these designers, working with Venini's Murano artisans seems to bring out a more colorful and cheery approach. Using the *incalmo* technique, where hot glass is inserted into a cooled piece, Koskinen's Orbital seamlessly merges two identically lipped cylindrical forms to create a vase with the image of a perpetually spinning satellite.



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**Kadan Modular Storage**

What used to be grassroots America might better be described today as garage-roots America—after all, the garage is where we keep the leaf blowers and the lawn mowers to groom the grass. Doug Kadan, of Raleigh, North Carolina, is a garage-roots inventor: He spends so much time in the garage, he devised his own stylish system to organize the space. It seemed curious seeing Kadan's system at a kitchen and bath show—but if you're always in the garage, you'll want a toilet and a fridge down there. [www.kadangroup.com](http://www.kadangroup.com)



**Axor Citterio**

Antonio Citterio's new tub, sink, and fixtures for Hansgrohe's high-end line, Axor, seems destined to redefine bathing space. "If you believe in the future, you believe in modernity," Citterio said over an espresso at the Tribeca Grand Hotel, the day before presenting his modular line at the show. His designs form an autonomous bathing space with or without walls—they create a room unto itself. The rectilinear bathtubs and sinks are made of mineral resin that's impossible to stain and smooth to the touch. The faucets' mix of squares and circles hearkens back to fine forms of classical architecture, and the mechanics within are impeccable. [www.axor-citterio.com](http://www.axor-citterio.com)

# ...at the Luxury Kitchen and Bath Collection

Last November, a selection of kitchen and bath companies demonstrated their newest offerings in a windowless New York City showroom. Overall, the luxury was lacking, though a few nice designs stood out.



**Omnia Stainless Steel Latchsets**

Woe be the days when the steel grip wobbles off the door into your hand, or breaks completely, leaving you locked in the bathroom. Omnia, an eastern-seaboard company that's been making reliable hardware since the 1960s, but with a weakness for neocolonial style, has introduced a more contemporary stainless steel line. In a showroom often prone to bathroom claustrophobia, the sight of these trusty handles conjured a way out. [www.omniindustries.com](http://www.omniindustries.com)



**Gaggenau AH 360-720**

How do you sell a stove hood for almost three grand? Make the consumer feel smart with a little physics. Gaggenau's hood employs the Coanda effect, the same principle that causes rainwater to run along the curves of a drainpipe: Fluids and air tend to follow along surfaces they touch. In Gaggenau's new hood, two fans create an air current running front to back, guiding away vapors. Thus, the molecular grease capsules set afloat by whatever sizzles your fritters don't form a film on your face, but follow the air current away. If this isn't luxury, what is? [www.gaggenau.com](http://www.gaggenau.com)



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## Warmth and Mechanics

In Walt Disney's animated short *Mickey's Trailer*, Goofy, Mickey, and Donald Duck bumble their way through a raucous vacation in Mickey's Airstream camping trailer. The short, originally drawn up by Disney and his minions in 1938, embodies the exuberant futurism of machine-age entertainment. Buttons control the furnishings, which appear from hiding places in the walls and floors, then stow away when not needed. In the context of Disney's dogged anthropomorphism, the "smart" trailer's moving parts also seem human, sweetly accommodating if sometimes officious.

Bö Larsson, an engineer at the energy company in Göteborg, Sweden, cites Mickey's trailer as his biggest inspiration for Optibo, the prototype flat he finished building last summer. Inspiration struck Larsson one Christmas Eve years ago. Like almost half the households in his country, he was practicing a national rite little known to non-Swedes: In 3 p.m. darkness, he tuned into the Disney Christmas special. Watching the scene in Mickey's trailer, he imagined that a real-life apartment version might help alleviate the urban housing crunch.

Larsson named his brainchild Optibo to suggest, alliteratively, optimum and options. He built the flat in collaboration with several partners, including Bostads AB Poseidon, a local housing company, and White Design. The inaugural site is a 268-square-foot room in a 100-year-old transformer building. Owned by Göteborg Energy, Larsson's employer, the restored Swedish Art Nouveau building is an amusingly ponderous shell for this futuristic flat.

Through the thick-walled entrance and up a small staircase is Optibo. A key card opens a sliding door, and once inside, one is faced with a touch screen in a compact foyer. To the left is a small bathroom, and ahead is the central space, with a high ceiling, cherry-wood floors, and a kitchen in one corner. The touch screen furnishes Optibo upon command. A sofa, chairs, dining table, and queen-size bed are all contained in a 24-inch-deep space beneath the floor. Just a tap on the screen's table icon triggers a hydraulic hum. A cherry-wood rectangle rises out of the floor to become a tabletop. Then comes the sofa. Before reclining, one might adjust the video projector (which plugs into the computer or television) to hit the screen, which descends on the opposite wall when needed. The Electrolux Trilobite, a robotic vacuum that's more the size of a box turtle, is parked beneath the touch screen. The Trilobite was the last thing to roam Optibo, having automatically embarked ▶

Above: A would-be tenant gives Optibo a test run. Right: With just a few taps on a touch-screen computer, Optibo's cherry-wood floor transforms into a table, divan, and chairs, all contained in a 24-inch-deep space under the floor.



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Top: Residents can customize Optibo's space by varying the color of the ceiling lights. When all of the furniture is stowed, there's ample room for dancing.

Bottom: On either side of the living space, screens descend when needed to project images from a video projector.



upon the last person's departure; it vacuumed the floor in a spiral motion and returned to its place.

Such was life for Carl Johan Käck and Pia Borg, who lived in Optibo for one week last fall. To evaluate its livability, Bostads AB Poseidon offered several tenants from their various Göteborg apartment properties a month's free rent in exchange for a weeklong trial in Optibo. Based on data from the trial period, the company will decide whether or not to build a ground-up apartment complex filled with Optibos.

"I saw the advertisement in the Poseidon customer magazine, and was intrigued," says Borg. "So we signed up. After our stay, they asked our opinions and they asked us to think up complaints." Borg and Käck had few. "We tried hard to think of problems," Käck remembers, "but we couldn't, beyond tiny details like making the shower curtain more enclosed."

"When we first got there," he continues, "I thought it seemed small. But after a week, I'd consider moving there. We sensed that the designers put a lot of thought into the logistics of living. The flat's transitions from room to room make sense. When you get up in the morning, you just lower the bed to be in breakfast mode. When you leave for the day, the dishwasher makes tidying easy, and you can set the vacuum. It's nice to come home to everything shipshape." Borg adds that atmospheric touches like the multichromatic lighting (you can vary the colored ceiling lights) and contrasts between cool and warm (bluish-white kitchen appliances versus cherry wood) help Optibo live up to its motto: Plenty of room in a limited space.

In Sweden, where the average citizen enjoys a whopping 508 square feet of living space, urbanists like Larsson are preparing nonetheless for housing shortages. There's also an incentive to build with fewer resources, since the Swedish government aims to honor Agenda 21, a plan of action for sustainable development conceived at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro. An objective associated with Agenda 21 requires halving the environmental impact of building within the next 30 to 50 years. Optibo, explains Larsson, addresses both needs by being so small.

The intent is noble. If Poseidon follows through with an Optibo complex, the unit's mix of warmth and mechanics—irresistably reminiscent of Mickey's trailer—will surely attract domestic pioneers. Meanwhile, Larsson has achieved something that's arguably more important: fulfillment of a childhood fantasy. ■



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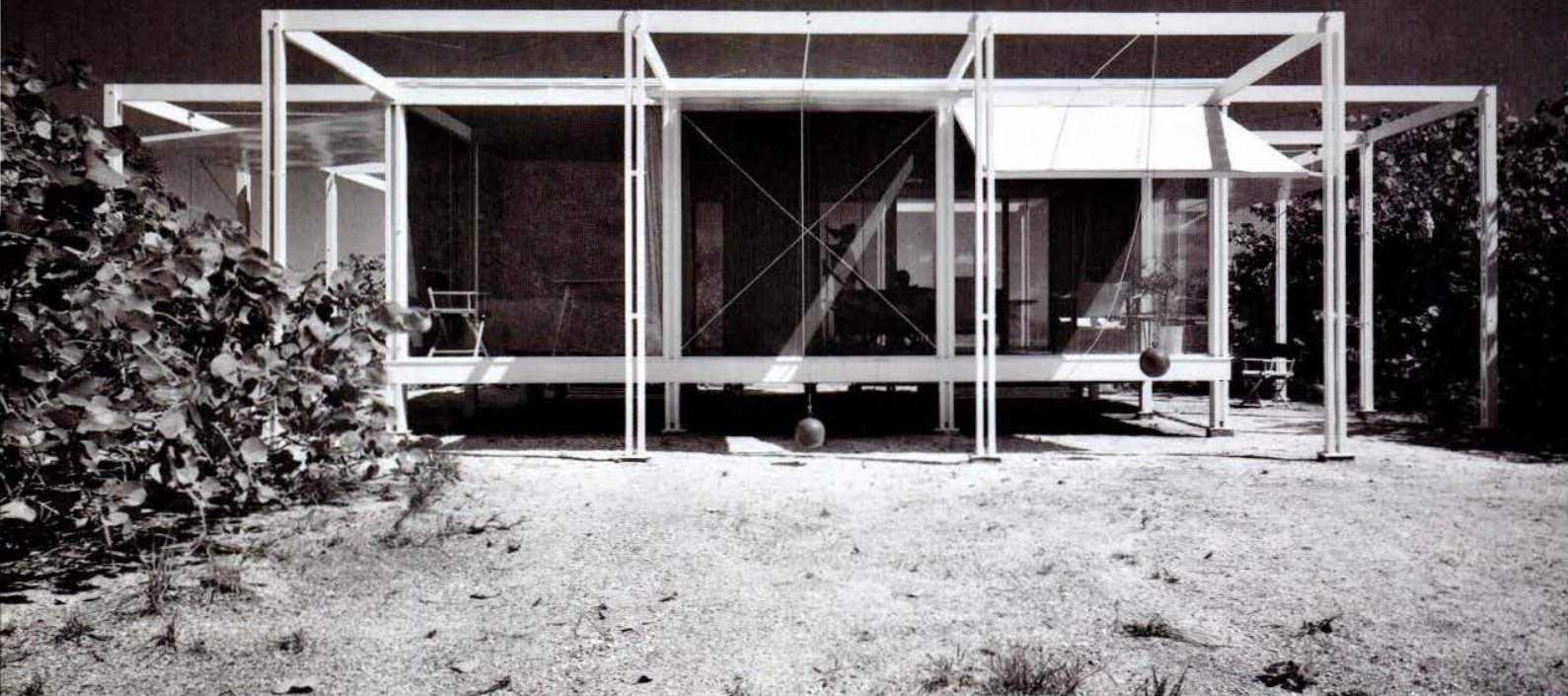
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## The Lonely Little Cannon Ball

In 1954, *McCall's* featured Paul Rudolph's Walker Guest House in an article called "Open to All Outdoors," describing the structure "as nearly sky, sand dunes, and sunshine as a house can be." An apt description to this day.

Paul Rudolph's Walker Guest House on Florida's Sanibel Island almost looks as if it's trying to hide among the surrounding overgrown trees and bushes. Large vacation villas of the Spanish colonial and Mediterranean variety have crowded the small white structure to the point that its stark, angular form seems out of place. It wasn't always so. When the house was first built, it commanded unobstructed, majestic views of the ocean on a beach world-famous for its beautiful shells.

In 1952, the young Rudolph was commissioned by a Minneapolis couple to design a refuge from the bitter Midwestern winters. At that time, the only way to get to Sanibel was by ferry, necessitating the use of lightweight, easily portable construction materials. The size of the house—which was constructed entirely from standard building supplies such as plywood sheets, two-by-fours, and brass boat maker's hardware—was determined by the dimensions of its materials. Each of its four sides consists of three bays measuring approximately 24 feet (the width of six standard sheets of plywood). On each

side, two bays are occupied by hinged panels that can be pulled up or down using pulleys, cables, and spherical, cast-iron counterweights, thus explaining the family's nickname for their house, Cannon Ball. Floor-to-ceiling glazed windows provide light and views on all sides. This ingenious kinetic wall/window structure not only ventilates the interior, it provides shelter and shade on the sand terrace surrounding the house. These same cantilevered panels, when battened down, provide protection from the regular tropical storms and occasional hurricanes that lash the small island.

Over the years, Sanibel has become a well-known—and very expensive—resort community. A causeway connecting the island to the Florida mainland helped precipitate the development that now surrounds this early Rudolph masterpiece. Cannon Ball's glorious, unencumbered ocean views may belong to its past, but in every other way the house functions just as it did back in the '50s, demonstrating the aesthetic and structural possibilities of prosaic building materials. ■

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—Joelle Baker, Minneapolis, MN

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### Moderne and Loft Cribs / By David Netto Design

A far cry from the intricately carved pillars and posts of traditional cribs, architect and designer David Netto's clean-

lined white lacquer and ash cribs complement any parent's Barcelona chairs. Both cribs have handy storage space and adjustable-height mattresses. [www.nettocollection.com](http://www.nettocollection.com)



### Nest / By Mozzee

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Nest high chair is an attractive polyethylene bubble that is perfect for tot-sized tushes. [www.mozzee.co.uk](http://www.mozzee.co.uk)

### Kid Q Chaise / By Karim Rashid

Chair manufacturers have built empires around Americans' love of lounging, but their overstuffed designs, although comfortable, are not the sleekest-looking seats. In 2000, Rashid came to the rescue with his curvilinear foam Q Chaise that encourages reclining sloth while easily folding into a taut cube if space needs arise. Now, this miniature version of the Q Chaise also lets the Playstation generation put their feet up. [www.umbra.com](http://www.umbra.com)



### Loft Bunk Beds / By Room and Board

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### Pebbles / By Marcel Wanders

There's seemingly no end to the detritus accumulated by children. Now, instead of looking at Legos, blocks, and Barbies strewn about the room, teach your kids smart housekeeping habits and have them hide all their toys in these stackable plastic Pebbles. [www.magisdesign.com](http://www.magisdesign.com)

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## Mood Swings

The Rewolinski rooftop patio enjoys a low-tech but colorful solution. Under a trellis of I beams, transparent plastic has the effect of abstract art, superimposed over the Milwaukee skyline.

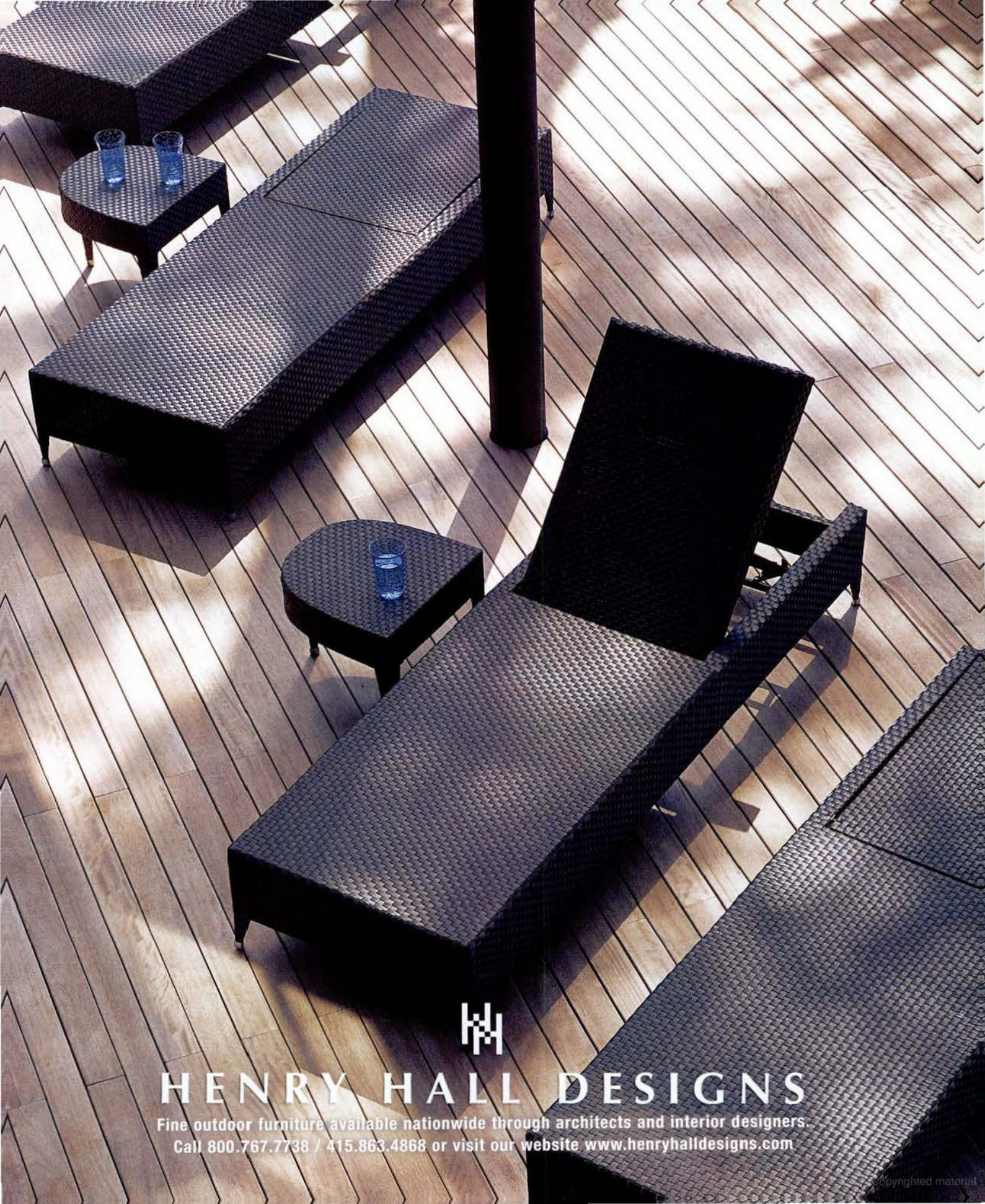
When Joe and Cindy Rewolinski sold their house in the Milwaukee suburbs and moved to a downtown loft, they were looking for the dynamism of the city. But they didn't expect to become such a part of it, with a traffic-stopping kaleidoscopic roof pavilion.

"We've had the good fortune of always thinking that working with an architect was a good idea," Joe says. The condo loft in a renovated 1920s industrial building came with private access to 1,550 square feet of roof with 270-degree views of Milwaukee's downtown, but to get something more than the usual tar beach they knew they needed to enlist experts. Their brief to local architects Brian Johnsen and Sebastian Schmalming was simple: "When we open the door to the rooftop, we want to be surprised," Joe recounts.

Johnsen Schmalming Architects—who established their name in Milwaukee with a whimsical postcard campaign that half-jokingly proposed new civic landmarks like an eight-story building tall and skinny enough to resemble a vertical bowling alley—responded with a

trellis-like metal structure supporting a curtain of movable multicolored transparent plastic panels. The effect is a psychedelic play on the staid curtain wall: Mondrian meets disco-Mies. The panels provide shelter and privacy, but they also act as frame, filter, and neighborhood beacon. Looking outward from the roof, different color combinations shift the views of the city, framing the skyline and changing Milwaukee's somber skies to shades of yellow, red, and blue. "It's like a mood enhancer," Schmalming says. But seen from the street or Interstate 43, which rushes nearby, spotlights project a changing pattern of colors on the brick wall behind.

What started as a deck has, in newly design-conscious Milwaukee (smitten with its Santiago Calatrava–designed art museum), become a symbol of urban vitality. Cars flash their high beams and neighbors call from the street asking the Rewolinskis to turn on the lights and shift the panels. They're happy to oblige. "Joe's up there all the time, moving them around," Cindy says. "I feel like I'm a rooftop widow." ■



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Photographer Michael Wolf's daunting images of Hong Kong offer a glimpse of humanity's uncanny ability to adapt to even the most overwhelming and surreal of landscapes.



# The City Revealed

In *The Aesthetics of Density*, Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani writes of Hong Kong, "The imploding city with a new, unintended beauty is also the city of a new, robust urbanity . . . it is a city in which the vast number of people living in extremely close proximity offers a breathtaking spectacle, at once fascinating and distressing."





In 1847, six years after becoming a British province, Hong Kong had a population of 23,900. Today, six years after the return to Chinese control, 6.8 million people call the 80-square-kilometer island and surrounding areas home. Opposite page: Block Eight of the Kwai Shing government housing complex. This page: The Pinnacle Estate in the Tseung Kwan O district.



Signs of human existence pop up with surprising frequency in the amazingly uniform structures. In the 38-story Hau Tak Estate (this page), flats are between 200 and 460 square feet, while in Block Six of the Kwai Shing government housing complex (opposite page), apartment dwellers make due with 200 to 300 square feet.



# The Penthouse Has Landed



Sweeping diagonals cut across the façade of House Ray 1 to provide privacy and a modicum of safety for a dramatic outdoor terrace.

**Project:** House Ray 1  
**Architect:** Delugan Meissl  
**Location:** Vienna, Austria

In Vienna, a dazzling penthouse by Delugan Meissl has boldly inserted itself between traditional rooftops of the city's Wieden district like a recently landed alien intruder.





**House Ray 1 (as in ray gun) projects from the roof of** a Viennese apartment building like an exploding stealth bomber. It was designed by Elke Meissl and her partner/husband, Roman Delugan, as a penthouse addition for their family, but it feels more like a prosthetic device that has attached itself temporarily and will move to a new destination as soon as it gets what it wants.

This *Alien* sense of glomming is particularly evident in a cantilevered section that sticks out the back of the penthouse and looms above the building's courtyard. It connects to the home's main stairwell and contains the entry foyer. From there the apartment unfolds not in a conventional hierarchy of rooms but rather in a sequence of vectors that rush in and out toward the surrounding roofscapes of Vienna's Wieden district, combining a sense of perpetual motion and vertigo.

Architects Meissl and Delugan like to talk about the "speed" of a space rather than its shape or function, but there's a hint of something else going on here. While the design has characteristics of blob/digital deconstruction (think Zaha Hadid on ecstasy), there is a lightness that makes it all work: "There's a touch of James Bond," says Delugan, a dark and slender Italian who loves Hollywood action movies.

Converging lines of sheer glass, sloping floors, and ceiling planes create the impression of multiple perspectives and vanishing points. Floor-to-ceiling glass walls enhance the illusion of total transparency. There are no interior walls except for those around the bedrooms. ▶



The biggest challenge for the architects in building House Ray 1 was to create a home for themselves. They transformed the ideas of their architectural philosophy into the architectural reality of each detail, designing each element of or within the house on their own, ranging from door handles to the light switches to the furniture.

Top: The view from daughter Nora's bedroom down the length of the penthouse interior.

Bottom: A narrow terrace—one of three—hangs precariously over the street.

The engineering of House Ray 1's load-bearing structure was extremely complex. Since the house had to be built on top of an old building, the architects opted for lightweight steel skeleton construction.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: The living/dining area with sliding glass walls that open to the back terrace and pool; the stair and entry module bulges out over the back of the seven-story building; a view of the home's smaller terrace, which is adjacent to the work area; and Roman and Nora standing on the terrace, looking out over the reflecting pool and beyond.







Most of the furniture is built-in and plays its part in the spatial continuum. Ramps lead up to the living zone, while the kitchen sits on a central plateau, which the architects refer to as their “culinary cockpit.” A long white bar stretches down the center of the apartment and serves as both kitchen counter and visual continuity for the exterior. In the “relaxation zone,” a broad, pillow-laden platform—a kind of updated conversation pit—appears to be suspended between planes of glass.

The living area wraps around a back terrace with a precariously positioned pool—a mini version of the pool and terrace that John Lautner used at the Arango House (1973) in Acapulco, Mexico. On an earlier visit to House Ray I, about a year ago, I watched as Meissl clambered onto that precipitous railingless ledge and wondered how it would work for a family with a young child. Now the answer seems, if not obvious, a little more reassuring. Water rises flush to the level of the larch floors and creates a strong visual as well as physical barrier. Nora, the architects’ six-year-old daughter, is allowed to take cautious toe dips in the pool, but it’s primarily there as a buffer to the seven-story drop, as well as adding another reflective surface and extending the sense of horizon.

The penthouse was always intended as a daring move, one calculated to challenge the existing codes and counteract Vienna’s museumlike character. Within the city’s arcane building code, there are provisions for rooftop/attic expansions, but they are exacting: a mansard-style silhouette with a 45-degree slope. ▶

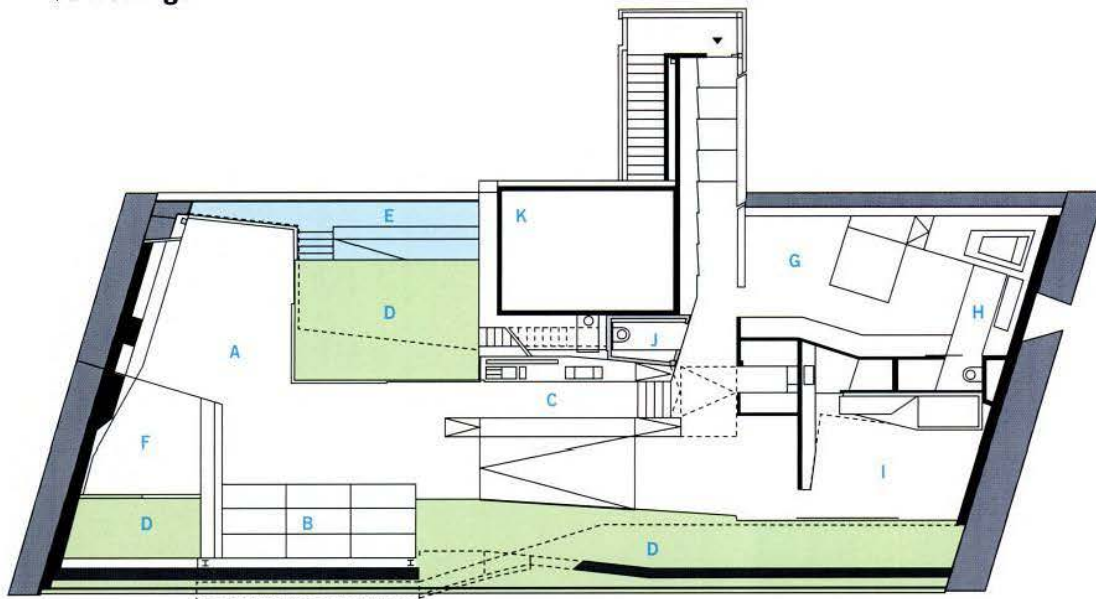
**Top:** The “culinary cockpit” (a.k.a. the kitchen) stands at the center of the apartment on a raised platform. A long, white slanted counter contains hi-fi speakers and a BUS-system panel of 18 buttons for controlling lights, curtains, heating, ventilation, etc.

**Bottom:** The kitchen window looks out to stairs that lead up to a small roof terrace. The kitchen faucet is by Dornbracht. The recessed lighting is by Guzzini. **➤ p.146**

**Opposite:** The long floating counter is a sculptural element that continues the line of duct-like exterior elements. The sloping floors are made from a rich-looking African cherry wood called Doussie. The metal disks beside the ramp are smoke and heat vents.

The architects aimed to create an interior without any barriers or columns in order to have an uninterrupted spatial continuum. They appear to have succeeded in their efforts.





- |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| A Living Area     | G Sleeping Room |
| B Relaxation Zone | H Bath          |
| C Kitchen         | I Child's Room  |
| D Terraces        | J Toilet        |
| E Reflecting Pool | K Machine Room  |
| F Work Space      |                 |

A sense of perpetual motion and extended site lines run throughout the plan (left), from the cantilevered entry space (top), past the bedrooms (G, I), to the "up" ramp, past the open kitchen (C), the hovering relaxation zone (B), and the three terraces (D). Converging lines of sheer glass, sloping floors, and ceiling planes create the impression of multiple perspectives and vanishing points.

Below: Architect and homeowner Meissl considers the eight-story drop to the street.

Opposite: At night, glowing voids of glass and water give House Ray 1 an otherworldly quality. The elevated work zone is visible on the left. Delugan and Meissl designed the pendant lamp. The dining table and chairs by Jean Prouvé were recently reissued by Vitra.

● p. 146



Taking extreme liberties, the architects still managed to stay within the strict letter of the building code but pushed it to the nth degree by shifting planes of glass and metallic sheeting. Their penthouse follows the existing ridgeline of neighboring roofs, and the terraces were set back to evoke the impression of a standard gable roof.

The building faces Platz am Mittersteig, a small triangular plaza created by the odd intersection of several streets. The architects' own office is located above the plaza directly across from their penthouse. Along this street elevation, House Ray 1 presents a dizzying array of extruded and folded lateral barriers, with metallic surfaces that appear to be scooping air and light for internal consumption. One is reminded of air-intake systems and jetways. (It's no coincidence that while working out the intricate interfaces of their own penthouse, the architects were designing an extension to the Vienna International Airport and a proposal for the Italian Space Agency.) The flow and force of House Ray 1's forms also derive from the urban traffic patterns on the converging streets below. One section of the roof juts out much farther than the rest and extends beyond the envelope required by city zoning laws. To achieve this elevation, the architects exploited a certain *gaube* (dormer) law so that their addition could stick out beyond the prescribed envelope.

The building to the left of the penthouse is quaintly roofed in terra-cotta, while on the other side is a ▶





'70s-style building with small balconies. House Ray 1 stretches between these two roof treatments like a recoiling apparatus. It whimsically plays off the Cold War modernism of the existing apartment building while reviving and refreshing the outmoded architecture of its neighbors. (Good design can do that: stand independently while transforming the surrounding context.) The outer skin of the roof is made from Alucobond, a thin manufactured panel of coated aluminum. From inside the home, these panels act as blinders, allowing a degree of privacy within the all-glass apartment, while at the same time blocking or directing attention toward the enviable panoramic views. You can stand in the middle of the penthouse and see all the way to the snow-capped mountains, St. Stephen's Cathedral at the heart of the old city, and even the brash new high-rises of Donau City.

Though a relatively young firm, Delugan and Meissl have already made a substantial mark on the Viennese skyline. Their 35-story Mischek Tower in the new Donau City area was not only one of the first high-rise apartment buildings in all of Austria, but also remains its tallest. The Beam, an apartment complex that overlooks the Danube River, is raised above the ground on narrow pilotis. More recently, they finished work on the seven-story Stadthaus on the Wimberggasse that has seductively folded roofs covered with real grass. And now here, in the birthplace of psychoanalysis, we find this new hybrid for domestic adventure, what its designers have cryptically referred to as a "placeless point of entry." ■

**Top:** The walls of the toilet room are decorated with an abstract composition of overlapping black lines printed on a screen that is lit from behind.

**Bottom:** The cavity for the bathtub is part of the same continuous form-world as House Ray 1's sloping roofscape. The white tub is made from Corian; the faucet is by Dornbracht. **p.146**

**Opposite:** Meissl and Delugan's favorite part of the house is definitely the "relaxation zone," which features a black leather plafom of their own design that appears to float between layers of tempered glass. The pillows are by Herman Miller.



# Making Sense of the City





Opposite: Sebastian and Maricarmen Mariscal take in the sweeping western views from the balcony of their new downtown San Diego home, all the while keeping a watchful eye on Mateo and Olivia playing on the sidewalk below. This page: The family enjoys the first-floor patio, which Sebastian calls their "exterior room."

Project: West Date Street  
Architect: MS-31  
Location: San Diego, California

"Needs and challenges are specific and are always changing, and architecture has to respond to that."

“A city is about diversity, so shouldn’t its architecture be, too?” asks 33-year-old architect, developer, and builder Sebastian Mariscal. An architecturally diverse city is exactly what you see in the immediate vicinity of Sebastian’s home on West Date Street in downtown San Diego. Pomo buildings by Rob Wellington Quigley and generic faux Spanish developments sit next to multi-unit buildings by San Diego stalwart Ted Smith and single-family residences like the Mariscals’, which bump up against corporate high-rise hotels such as the Radisson. “I might not like those shopping center buildings you see over there,” Sebastian says, pointing west toward the harbor, “and those people probably don’t like my buildings, but to me, that’s what a city is—we tolerate each other and get along quite well; that’s why I’m here.”

That’s why a lot of people are here. Downtown has seen a construction explosion in the past ten years. In the past three years alone, 32 new residential projects have gone up in the 2.2-square-mile downtown area. In 1975, downtown’s population was estimated to be 11,000; now it numbers upwards of 20,000, and continues to grow. Sebastian may have gotten into the game a bit late, coming to San Diego from his native Mexico City via Barcelona only six years ago, but it was this architectural freedom and opportunity that drew him.

Sebastian has always been around architecture, learning the trade through his father, a Mexico City–based architect, and the ideas have been sprouting ever since. “I started my own firm when I was 18,” he explains, “and the first building I did was on top of a mountain for a television station. It was really hard to get all the supplies and all the people to the site, so we built the components of the structure in another city and then loaded everything on trailers and put it together.”

The experience proved to be formative in many ways and has led Sebastian to a unique approach to design and building which has begun to crop up in his structures. “I think people used to be more patient with architecture,” he says. “But we can’t tell people anymore, ‘Hey, the construction on your house is going to last two years.’ It doesn’t make sense for the client and it doesn’t make sense for us, the architects, developers, and builders. And on an urban site this is particularly important where permits and parking and everything are much more complicated. Wood deliveries, the crane, it gets crazy, and the longer it takes the more it costs. You have to think of time as the enemy—the challenge—and then you can come up with something really interesting.”

With time standing as his opponent, Sebastian put his plan into action with his own home. When Sebastian ▶

“I might not like those shopping center buildings you see over there,” Sebastian says, pointing west toward the harbor, “and those people probably don’t like my buildings, but to me, that’s what a city is—we tolerate each other and get along quite well; that’s why I’m here.”



Left and opposite: MS-31 designed and built all the kitchen cabinetry, as well as the dining table, in collaboration with Archkinetics. The frosted-glass backsplash offers easy cleaning.

The dining chairs are Yolanda side chairs by Ukao. Below: Mateo and Olivia lounge in the living room that doubles as a screening room. **E** p. 146







and his wife/business partner, Maricarmen, bought their 1,550-square-foot plot of land a little over two years ago, their first challenge was clearing the land. "There was this little house on the site and this guy wanted to buy it from us, but we just said, 'Move it and it's yours,' so now someone is living in that little house in Lemon Grove, California, which is pretty cool."

The next step in the process was the design, and this is where MS-31 (the Mariscals' design/build firm) spends the most time on a project, because in their method, everything must be perfect right from the start. "You cannot make changes once construction starts," Sebastian explains. "Building this way is kind of like building cars. Imagine being on a production line and deciding that you want to change the cut of a window mid-production. The whole process is screwed up and goes big-time backwards and the expenses go way up."

With their house, the Mariscals' design challenge was to fit everything they needed into a tiny space; they also needed to create two houses on a single lot to make the project work financially. On one 775-square-foot lot is a 2,800-square-foot house that serves as home and office for the Mariscals and their two kids, Mateo (six) and Olivia (four), and on the other 775-square-foot lot is a 2,800-square-foot house that is the home of the

Mariscals' business partner. "The two houses are completely separate," Sebastian explains. "They don't share a wall or anything, but because we're in the middle of the city, I wanted to make it look like one building for continuity." The Mariscals were able to get enough space by building up and taking advantage of the no-setback regulations downtown, allowing them to utilize the entire lot, all the way to the property line. "Design-wise, we could pretty much do whatever we wanted," Sebastian says. "The city really allows people to take chances."

After five months on the table, the design was settled and permits issued. Redwood siding would reflect the historic neighboring houses and provide some context, all load-bearing walls would be placed on the outside to allow for future flexibility inside, and one trombe wall would keep all plumbing issues contained. The next step was to begin the key component to MS-31's time-saving building technique: shop drawings. "We do very detailed drawings for every part of the house; every single wall gets its own shop drawing. That way, everything can begin at the same time," Sebastian explains. "When we start laying the foundation, we also start building the walls, cabinets, and tables, as well as ordering all the windows and doors. When we finish the foundation, the walls are also finished and ready to fall right into place." ▶

**Opposite:** The kitchen transitions into the living room, which transforms easily into a home theater when the heavy red drapes are pulled tightly shut. The home theater system features a projector by Sharp.  
p. 146

**Right:** All the west-facing windows frame the church across the street.

Bookcases, also designed by MS-31, line the back wall. When the chairs and couch from Restoration Hardware face each other, it's a cozy little living room. Turn the chairs around and it's a full theater complete with an 11-by-17-foot image projected on the wall.  
p. 146





Left: The closet creates order in a space that has potential for disaster. Six-year-old Mateo's bedroom (below), which he calls his "office," provides an interesting contrast. His talents are evident in his paintings, including "Dalmatian" (a white sheet of paper with a single black dot in the center).

Opposite: Maricarmen takes in the view from her and Sebastian's bedroom window, which frames the church's cross. White curtains and a flokati add a welcome layer of calmness in a house that's also home to their office and two young children.



Most design/build projects follow a construction sequence of foundation, framing, roofing, and interiors and can take up to nine months. MS-31's process cuts construction time considerably. This is not as easy as Sebastian makes it sound, as it requires 100 percent perfection with every component and absolutely no change orders—all design elements must be completely predetermined. "When you make a change in the middle of construction," Sebastian says, "it always comes with another change—[if] you make the wall bigger, you have to make the window a little bigger, and then the structural elements need to change, and then suddenly you're building in ten months instead of four." But if this is done successfully, this process can trim up to three months off the construction time, Sebastian estimates.

MS-31 also aims to simplify the entire procedure and incorporate that simplicity into the design of the structure. For instance, in his house, all nail and screw heads are left exposed and set in a pattern that becomes part of the design. "If I tried to eliminate the heads or to cover them, it would take forever and be more expensive," Sebastian explains. "Leaving them exposed obviously saves time and money, but they actually look great, too."

All of this effort put into his family's home bears out a design philosophy that Sebastian believes is the future of architecture. "In the old castles," he says, "there was an enemy that wanted to get inside, so a moat was put around the structure and there were long, skinny windows for arrows so they could protect themselves. All of this was an architectural expression of the time. Needs and challenges are specific and are always changing, and architecture has to respond to that. I think architects too often think architecture is just about beauty and art, which it is, but it is also about timing, especially now. You have to give people what they need, so the more you give people, the more they will come to request modern architecture. I'm interested in making architecture something that people need."

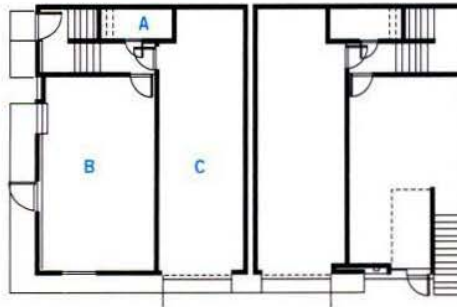
As tiny downtown San Diego continues to grow, architecture is certainly something people need—and the lively group of architects and designers, like Sebastian, that are also acting as developers are looking to shape the future of their city. "Developers don't care about the city," Sebastian says, "they care about numbers. Architect/developers need to give them some competition and provide buildings that make financial sense and aesthetic sense," he continues. "And I'd like to do that. It's fun to be part of a city under construction." ■



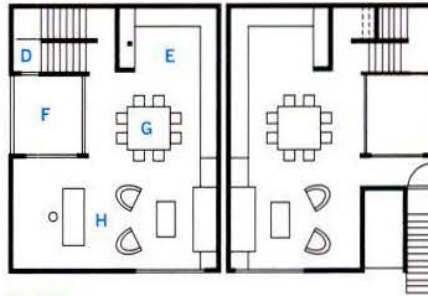




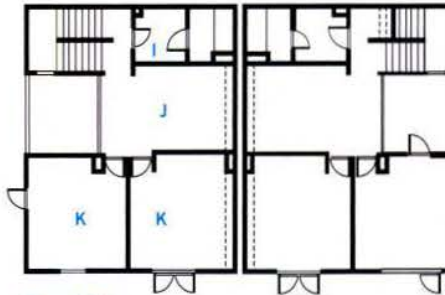
Opposite: Both houses, viewed from across State Street. All walls were built in the empty lot next door as the foundation was poured, cutting down on costly construction time. The hazy skies in this photograph can be attributed to the Southern California fires of 2003.



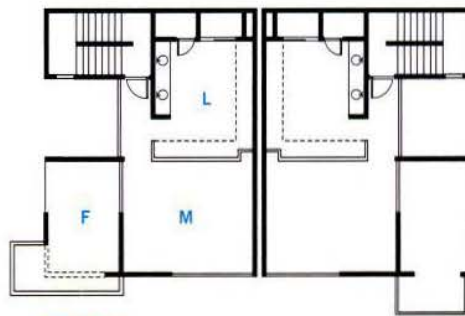
Basement



First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor

- |               |                            |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| A Bathroom    | H Living Area              |
| B Work Space  | I Children's Bathroom      |
| C Garage      | J Den / Play Area          |
| D Stairs      | K Children's Room          |
| E Kitchen     | L Dressing Room / Bathroom |
| F Terraces    | M Bedroom                  |
| G Dining Area |                            |



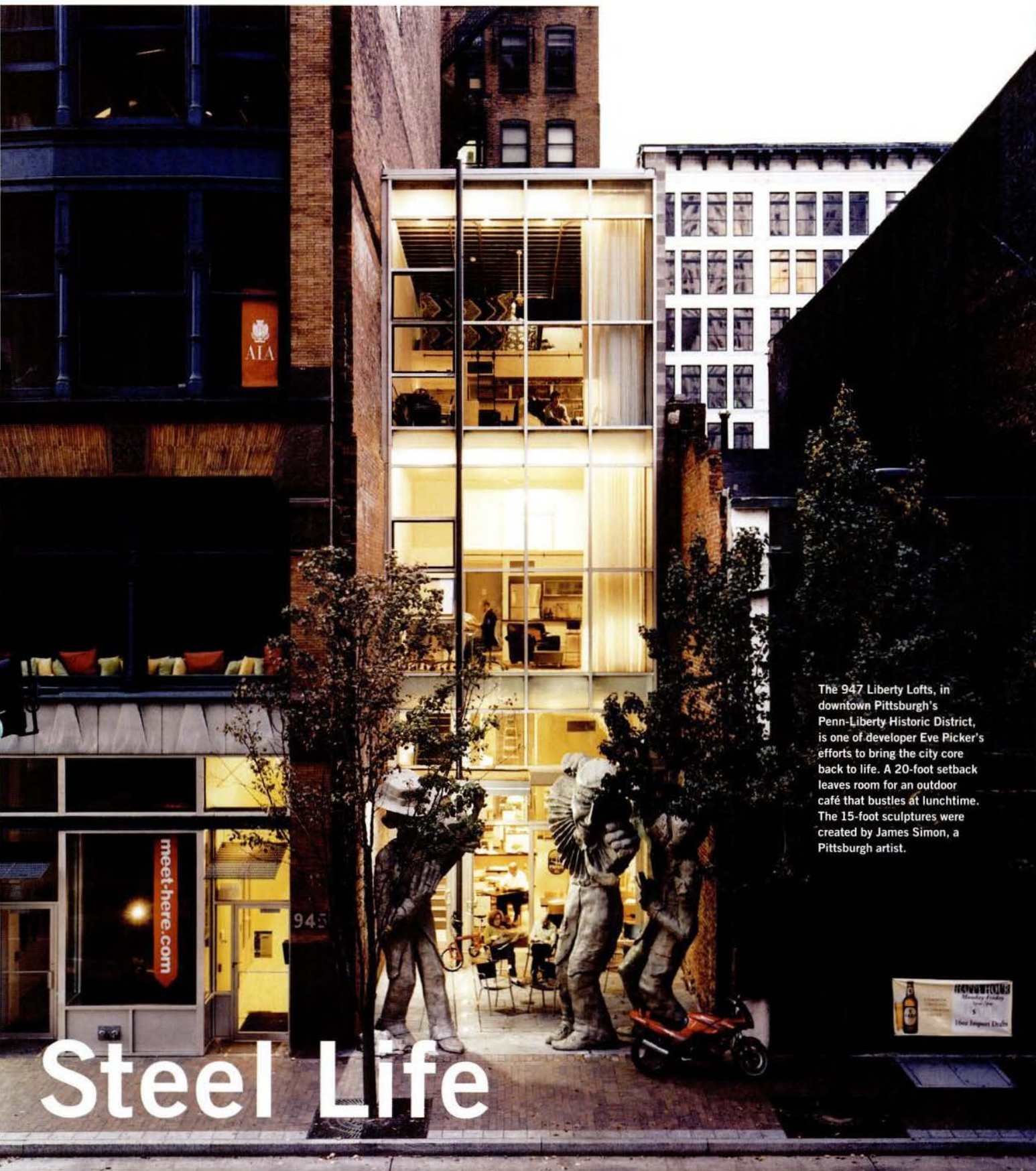
San Diego city model at CCDC headquarters

## Saving the City

Every city should have a Centre City Development Corporation (CCDC). Formed in 1975 to encourage smart, pedestrian-friendly development in downtown San Diego, CCDC has helped see through the construction of over 7,000 new homes—including the Mariscals'—as well as four million square feet of office space, 4,500 hotel rooms, and the showpiece, Horton Plaza retail and entertainment complex. The CCDC estimates that another 100 projects slated for completion in the next five years will produce an additional 9,000 homes, and more office, retail, and entertainment space, including the new Antoine Predock–designed San Diego Padres baseball stadium set to open in April.

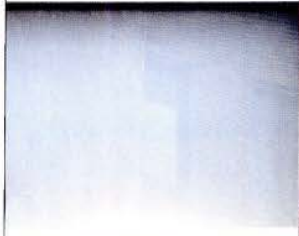
Not long ago, downtown San Diego was a crumbling, tired collection of sparsely populated structures in car-obsessed Southern California. Today, thanks in large part to the CCDC, with its cash investments and experienced and connected staff who guide projects through the complexities of public approval and city restrictions, downtown San Diego is a bustling and sought-after neighborhood.

Walking the streets, the incessant construction, with cranes constantly hovering overhead, is at times overbearing, but the results have been, and should continue to be, impressive. The building activity is so great that locals, like architect and developer Kevin deFreitas, can casually mention, in the midst of one of the country's worst recessions, that "things should be better when there's not so much going on." All cities should be so lucky. —A.W.

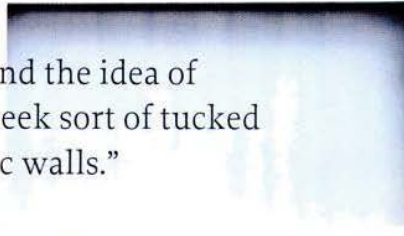


The 947 Liberty Lofts, in downtown Pittsburgh's Penn-Liberty Historic District, is one of developer Eve Picker's efforts to bring the city core back to life. A 20-foot setback leaves room for an outdoor café that bustles at lunchtime. The 15-foot sculptures were created by James Simon, a Pittsburgh artist.

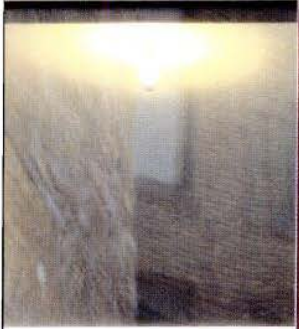
# Steel Life



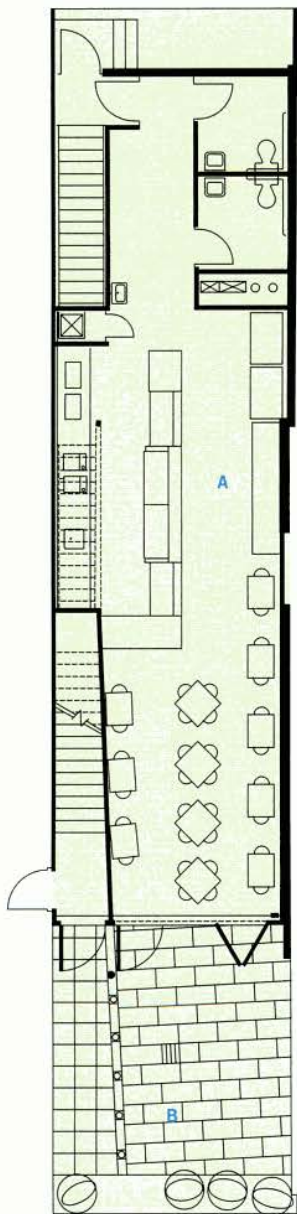
“I love the old brick walls, and the idea of something very new and sleek sort of tucked back between these historic walls.”



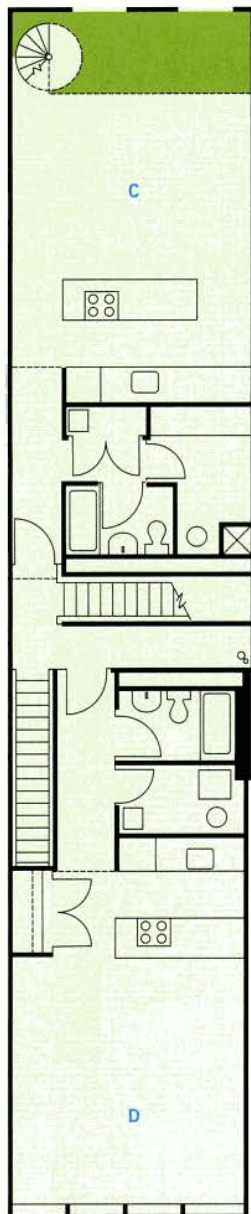
**Project:** 947 Liberty Avenue Loft  
**Architect:** Edge Studio  
**Location:** Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania



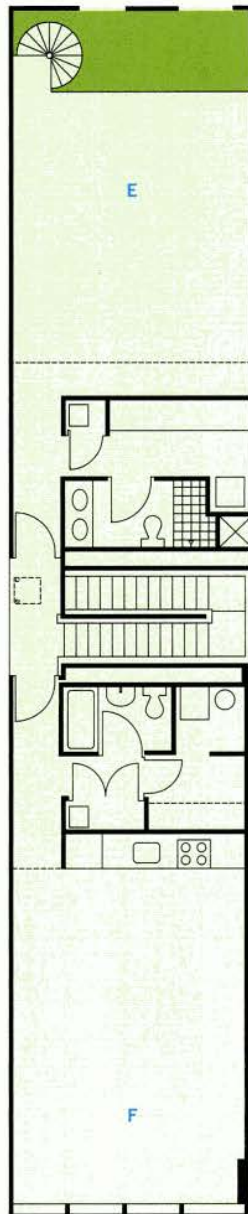
## Dwellings



First Floor



Second Floor



Third Floor

- A Café
- B Courtyard
- C Unit 2
- D Unit 1
- E Unit 2
- F Unit 3

Opposite: For rents ranging from \$900 to \$1,500 per month, residents of 947 Liberty, such as Alena Roberts and Jon Norton, get a clean, minimalist space, bracketed by white dry-wall on one side and unadorned gray cinderblock on the other.

If Eve Picker knew how to take no for an answer, the sleek, three-story loft building that she slipped into a narrow lot in the heart of downtown Pittsburgh would be quite a different place. The 20-foot setback would be gone, and with it a bustling courtyard café. A second staircase and an elevator would have consumed living space that, given the building's 18-foot width, was already at a premium. Plans for an arresting glass façade would have been scrapped in favor of a faux-historical front done in standard-issue brick.

When Picker, a developer who specializes in loft conversions, brought her design proposal to the city, she was faced with a substantial list of changes to satisfy Pittsburgh's housing code and to appease its Historic Review Commission, whose members fretted that the

building would clash with neighboring structures in the city's Penn-Liberty Historic District. Convinced that a daring design would help bring a struggling stretch of downtown streetscape to life, Picker simply refused to go along. She recalls a meeting in July 2001 during which the commission's chairman read a laundry list of modifications that he said would have to be made before the project could earn the body's approval. The changes amounted to a "Disney-fication" of the building that Picker says she could not abide.

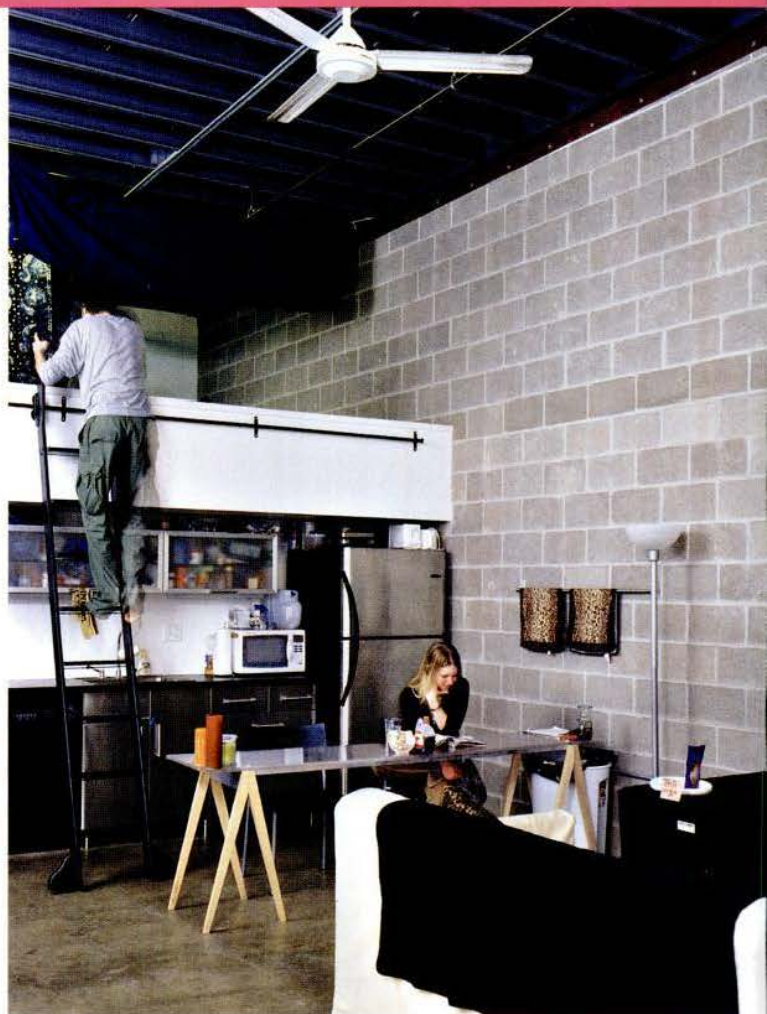
"I was done with the design, and by this point, I was fuming," says Picker, 49, who speaks in the lilting, accented English of her native Sydney, Australia. "I looked at him and I said, 'You know what, this is the second time I've been back here. There's no mucking around with ►





**Above left:** Burnished concrete floors complement the stainless steel doors, refrigerators, and kitchen cabinets.

**Above right:** Sleeping space is adventurously tucked away in an alcove above the kitchen, accessible by a track ladder that slides along a rail mounted above the counter.



this, and shifting it here, or shifting it there. This is my entire vision. This is it. This is what you get, or I'm going to go away and do something else."

"He said that he was speaking for the board," Picker recalls, "and then one of the board members said, 'Well, you're not speaking for me.'"

Picker and her partner, architect Dutch MacDonald of Pittsburgh's Edge Studio, had somehow won over Lela Burgwin, an elderly commissioner. Opposition to the project crumbled and the commission eventually voted 4-1 in favor of Edge's original design.

"That was our movie moment," MacDonald, 35, says. "Lela saved the day, and totally changed the tone of the meeting."

And so the \$1 million 947 Liberty Avenue loft project opened last March, much as Picker and MacDonald initially envisioned it. The building peers out onto Liberty Avenue from between a pair of brick walls that are still speckled with aging concrete from the neglected eyesore that previously occupied the space. The Pittsburgh Presse Deli, which rents the ground-floor storefront, serves gourmet panini to customers in the small courtyard that Picker created by insisting on the 20-foot setback.

"I was completely determined, and that's when you run into trouble with me," Picker says. "Think about it. People arrive at the convention center, or at the hotel, and this is the first block they see and there's nothing here. So this was a very important thing for me. I love the old brick walls, and had this idea of something very new and sleek sort of tucked back between them."

MacDonald used an aluminum-and-glass curtain-wall system for the building's façade. Enormous floor-to-ceiling windows frame impressive views of the pyramid-topped Gulf Building and the boxy, rusted elegance of the 64-story U.S. Steel Tower to the south. On weekday mornings, when the neighborhood comes to life, the din of traffic and sidewalk chatter wafts up from the street.

The lofts do stand out from the office buildings and warehouses that surround them, but it's the statues out front that first turn heads in the building's direction. The cartoonish musicians—one strumming a guitar, another squeezing an accordion, the third tooting on a trumpet—were created by James Simon, a Pittsburgh sculptor whose work Picker admired. "I had seen James's work—I actually own one of his pieces—and started talking to him about how quick he could make something." ▶

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'Zoom' by Sam Turner

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**Below left:** Architect Dutch MacDonald and developer Eve Picker relax at the Pittsburgh Presse Deli in the building's ground-floor storefront. Designed by MacDonald's Edge Studio, the restaurant serves gourmet panini six days a week.

**Below right:** Edge Studio used an aluminum-and-glass curtain-wall system for the building's façade. Enormous floor-to-ceiling windows frame impressive views of Pittsburgh's skyscrapers to the south.

"Quick" ended up being about 15 months. The statues, which were installed last June, approximate the height of a storefront and, Picker says, provide a critical transition from the sidewalk to the courtyard and building beyond.

Of the 2.4 million people who live in the six-county Pittsburgh metropolitan area, only about 335,000 reside within the city limits. Of these, just 3,200 live in the Golden Triangle district of downtown Pittsburgh—so called because it occupies the triangular area where the Allegheny and Monongahela rivers converge to form the Ohio. Picker sees the 947 Liberty building as an incremental but essential step toward attracting a critical mass to make downtown bustle around the clock.

"I think it's actually the smaller-scale housing that's more interesting," says MacDonald, who, over the course of several loft conversions, has learned how to transform Picker's ideas into finished projects. "It's one thing to have a 200-unit apartment building, but it's when you disperse people throughout downtown that it starts to become vibrant."

Patty Burk, program director for Pittsburgh's Downtown Living Initiative, agreed with Picker that the new building would help attract more residents

and services to the city's center. "Financiers see that developers are building these projects and they're getting rented," Burk says, "and feel more comfortable with the market."

The building's three units were fully occupied by last October, when Brad Reynolds, the chief executive of a Cleveland-based Internet service provider, moved in. Reynolds, 24, needed a Pittsburgh pied-à-terre for frequent trips to keep tabs on a newly acquired subsidiary.

"This was the only unique place I found," Reynolds says. "Everything else was a cookie-cutter loft like you'd find in any other city trying to emulate New York, or they were faceless, corporate-type apartments with four white walls and carpet. And it's funny, but when I take people there they all say they didn't know this type of thing existed in Pittsburgh. That's a lot of fun."

Picker gets a kick out of delivering that sort of surprise. "I liked the challenge of that funky little lot," she says. "I love how that street looks, so it wasn't hard. I think that other people see a lot that size and see a liability. I see it as a challenge. I don't know why I'm motivated that way, but I like the constraints. I think that's what makes cities interesting." ■





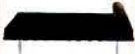
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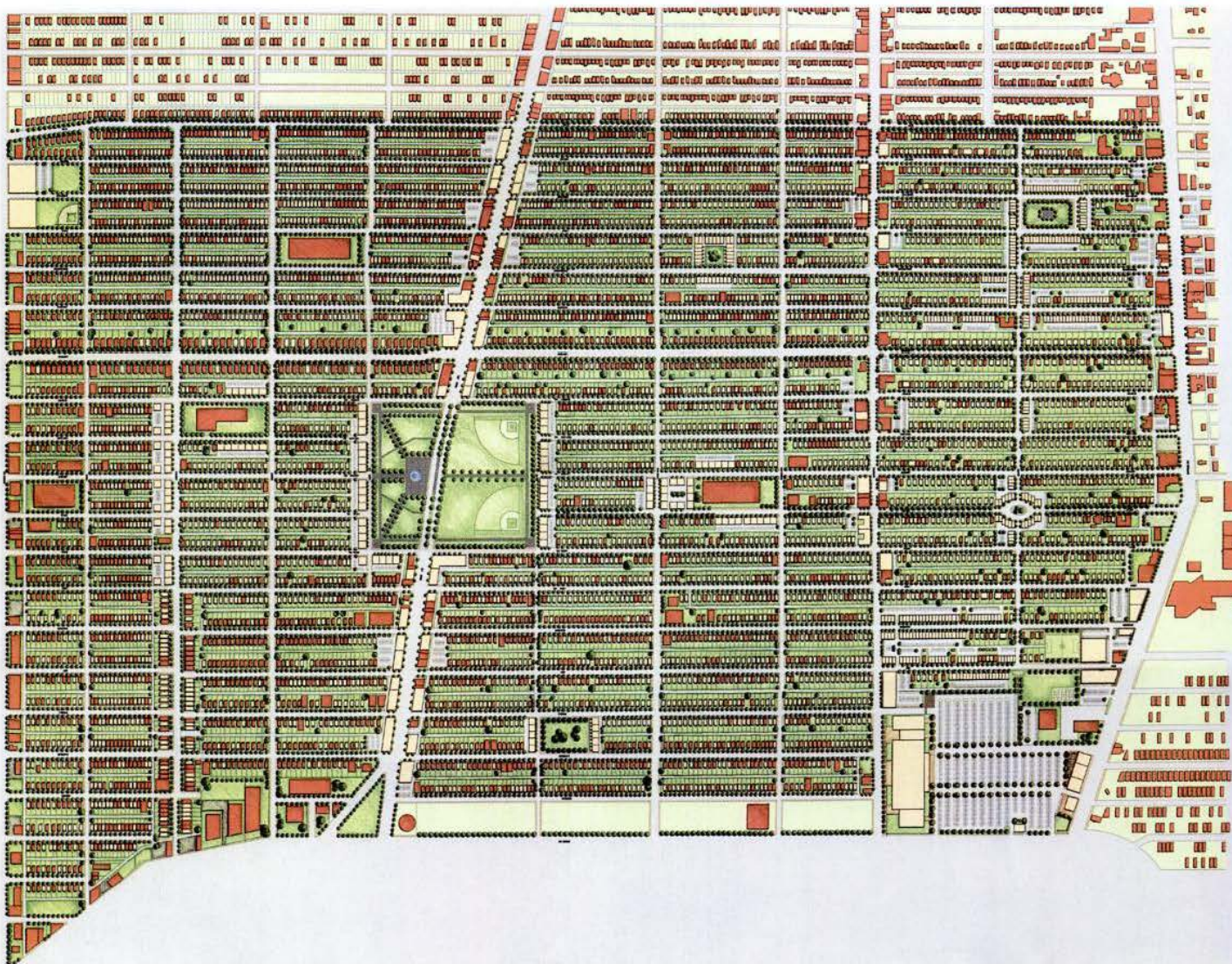


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# Dense and Denser

Three unique approaches to urban planning all hope for similar endings—lively neighborhoods that will help put the center back in the city.

“Urban redevelopment”—unlike its predecessor, “urban renewal,” with its grim intimations of the wrecking ball, mass displacement, and architectural inhumanity—is a flexible term with multiple definitions. As current projects in Detroit, Miami, and New York suggest, a new generation of architects, planners, and developers is creating imaginative new strategies for reweaving the frayed fabric of America’s cities. Collectively, they point to an embrace of New Urbanism’s old-fashioned faith in walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods—even as the complexities of power,

profit, and identity pluck at the threads of that fabric.

Of the three projects, Detroit’s Far East Side plan is the most ambitious. A 15-year initiative scheduled for completion in 2015, involving the reconstruction of 1,200 devastated acres in one of the U.S.’s most devastated cities, it is the largest such project in the nation. Recognizing its own lack of expertise, the city turned the job of master planner over to the Detroit-based architecture/urban design office Archive DS. The firm’s name reflects its method of documenting what president Mark Nickita describes as “proper and prosperous urban areas ▶

The 1,200-acre redevelopment of Detroit’s Far East Side focuses on infill housing, green space, retail nodes, and mixed-use corridors. The master plan leans heavily on New Urbanist principles, hoping they can be as effective in rough-and-tumble big-city America as they’ve been in the suburbs.



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from around the world” and using these examples to develop regeneration strategies for blighted cities. In Detroit, Nickita and partners began by minutely documenting the two-square-mile zone: They videotaped blocks to capture their condition, photographed different housing typologies, and measured street widths to determine how big structures could be. Thus armed, the team designated nearly 5,000 new housing units at different price points, established design guidelines that preserved the area’s historical precedents, and even sketched streetscapes as inspiration for developers.

Archive DS also rejected past redevelopment precedents. Rather than a single zone with one commercial district, the firm shaped nine distinct communities, each featuring accepted components of a successful neighborhood, including a center and an edge, multiple uses, and different types of housing. And instead of evicting the roughly 4,000 souls who’d endured through decades of decay and bulldozing their homes, Archive DS designed the new project around them.

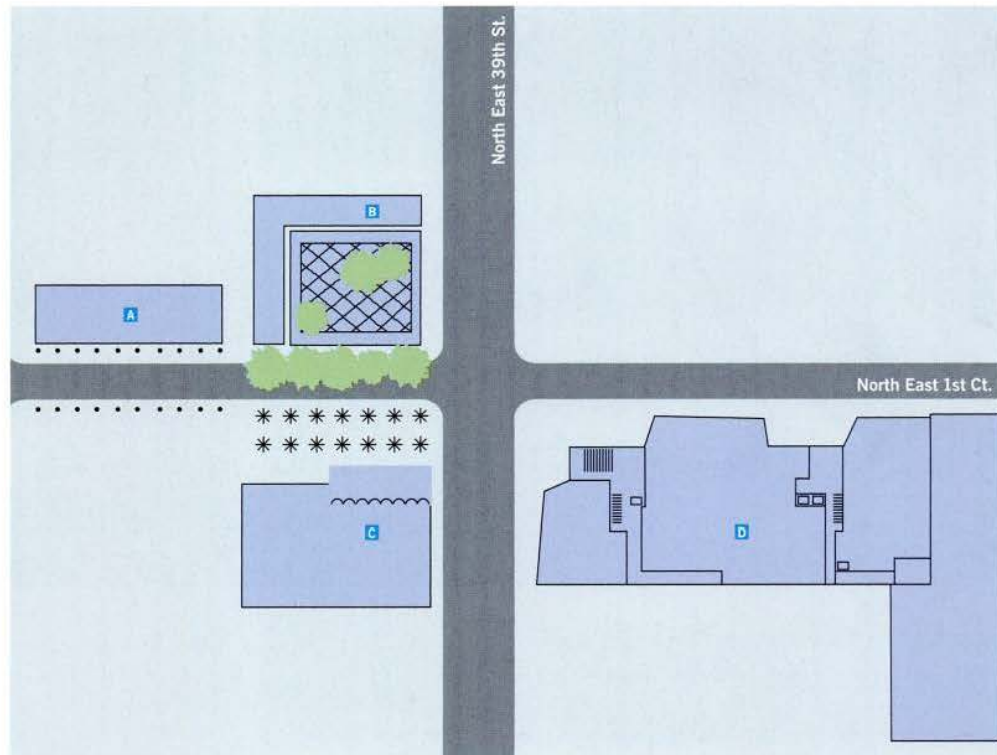
In Miami, the \$100 million revitalization of the city’s 18-square-block Design District suggests that a similar approach can work within a very different set of circumstances. The vision of developer Craig Robins, owner and president of Dacra, the project includes dividing an overlong city block with a new street and inserting an

oak-lined plaza, a ten-story design showroom/office building, and a pair of what Robins describes as “Miesian courtyard house prototypes,” all designed by a slate of forward-thinking architects and planners. The aim is to reinvent what one writer called “a blighted industrial landscape” as a hip live/work/play zone, driven by design and architecture, its long-term viability ensured—as in Detroit—by sound planning.

Like its Midwestern counterpart, the Miami project—which should be completed by the end of 2005—focuses on the design of the entire area from a strong New Urbanist perspective. “I always realized South Beach was a movement as much as a place,” Robins says of the district he helped to redevelop. “It was a way of thinking about neighborhoods that had gotten lost—especially in the ‘80s, when we got away from interesting downtowns, and began to build vertical and horizontal suburbs.” Unlike Detroit, however, Robins is betting on modernism, Miami-style. Using contemporary design to express the district’s aspirations, he believes, “immediately makes it into a neighborhood that has an identity.”

Robins’s efforts have attracted many arts-related businesses and launched a process that is transforming not only the area but the city itself. The district’s urbane stew of art, architecture, and design suggests that culture, if thoughtfully supported, remains a reliable catalyst for ▶

In Miami, New Urbanist ideals are tempered with modernist design flair. After helping revive South Beach’s Design District by creating high-end retail space in once-dilapidated buildings, developer Craig Robins believes the area is ready for new construction, including housing.



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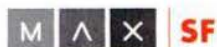
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## Astor Row, Four-Story Townhouse on West 130th Street, Harlem



The Abyssinian Development Corporation is working to restore the façades of two four-story Harlem townhouses (one of which is shown above) while opening the interiors up to include duplexes for those buying the properties. The group hopes to spark a bout of home ownership and keep Harlem from going derelict.

redevelopment. "People respect and value creativity," Robins says. "It's not just about manufacturing commodity space."

Unless, of course, it is. Both Detroit and Miami are second-tier cities, in which the need for creative strategies to attract money and interest, and the willingness of local governments to step aside, helped produce dynamic solutions for areas that were nearly blank slates. In a world-power city like New York, however, where the bureaucracy remains active, the market is hot, and any intervention can release a hornet's nest of issues, things are different.

In Harlem, one such project, intended to create affordable housing for people already living in a neighborhood where only 13 percent of residents are owners, is under way. The Abyssinian Development Corporation, a nonprofit dedicated to the revitalization of Harlem, formed a partnership with the city's Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD) to restore four townhouses, scheduled for completion in the next few weeks, for lottery-selected ownership, two of them on Astor Row, a street of gracious brick homes distinguished by their wooden front porches and wrought-iron fences. Because these properties are landmarked, their exteriors were restored and the interiors redesigned to include duplexes for the owners as well as two rental properties.

The story's particulars reveal a set of challenges entirely different from those faced elsewhere. New York's HPD mandates that structures rehabilitated under its aegis be restored to their previous levels of quality and

occupancy; as the agency mostly deals with once-derelict properties meant to be "affordable," this can translate into utilitarian fixtures, cheap finishes, and tiny rooms. In the case of Astor Row, the intended results were homes suitable for middle-class buyers; but, according to Zevilla Jackson Preston, the Harlem-based architect who planned the interiors, HPD was reluctant to break with policy, objecting to the large rooms and inclusion of such modest luxuries as a hot tub. "People actually said to me, 'You're making this too nice,'" Preston recalls.

Nor are the complications confined to policy. Though hardly exorbitant, the rents on the leasable units within the Astor Row houses, Preston observes, "will exclude most of the neighborhood population. So you're an owner in your own community, but the people who rent from you are not from the neighborhood. Then it becomes, What is Harlem, who is Harlem, who should and should not be here, and what does all of that mean?"

Harlem is, of course, what the Far East Side and Design District aspire to be: a walkable, mixed-use neighborhood, with an exceptionally distinctive personality. The challenge is to improve it without erasing Harlem's character and culture and leaving nothing but a generically pretty urban visage of chain stores and multiplexes.

"Do they want the cultural aspects of it?" Preston asks of the many boho-riche newcomers to her neighborhood. "Or is it just about the real estate: 'We want the land, we'll take the buildings, and goodbye?'" It's a question that America's architects, planners, and citizens must ask, and ask again, as we remake our cities. ■

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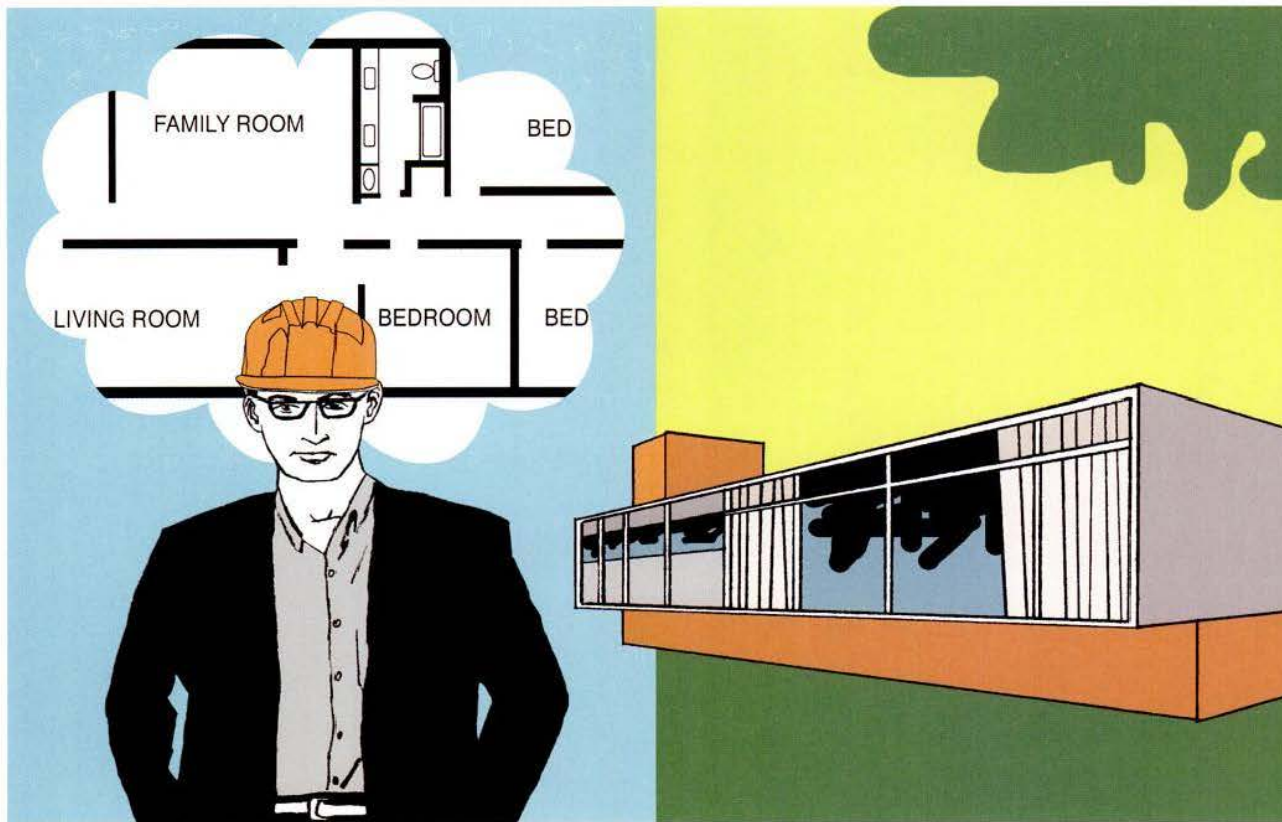
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## This New House

Robert Sullivan wonders if a dream home might not be better than a real one.

I used to think that building a dream house would be a nightmare. I pictured myself, in a hard hat, on a hole-riddled second floor, stirring a can of soup on a hot plate as the children crawled out of their plastic sheet-covered “rooms,” which, in my dream-home nightmare, are not so much rooms as two-by-four pens. Detailing includes pipes running from the basement to nowhere, large blue tarps, and barbed wire.

More recently, however, I’ve had a mental dream-house conversion. You see, my wife and I are looking for a house in a town with a river and lots of woods, and I’ve seen all of the so-called architectural wonders and the quaint country hideaways. I’ve seen beat-up old warehouses with roofs caved in, with things growing on the walls that make you wonder about secret government nuclear projects. I’ve seen ruins that make ancient things in Egypt look doable rehab-wise, and it all makes it seem like time for something completely different.

Besides, have you seen the houses most of the country has to offer? The new “gabled estates” that have more rooms than prairie gopher communities do? Or the genuinely old and graceful houses that unfortunately have to be completely revamped anyway, for my sake and the sake of the world? (You’re talking to a guy who finds high insulation R-values extremely sexy.) Slowly, we’re realizing it might be a good idea to actually build a home.

If we do it the right way. And what’s the right way? Well, I’m not certain, but I think it involves not building in your local nearly pristine watershed. Or maybe it has to do with replacing a home that impinges on the potential purity of that potentially pure watershed with a home that barely impinges at all. When I think of building a new home, I think of building a home that would hardly be there in the traditional sense.

Anyway, there’s also this house, this old house. The way I see it, we reuse what we

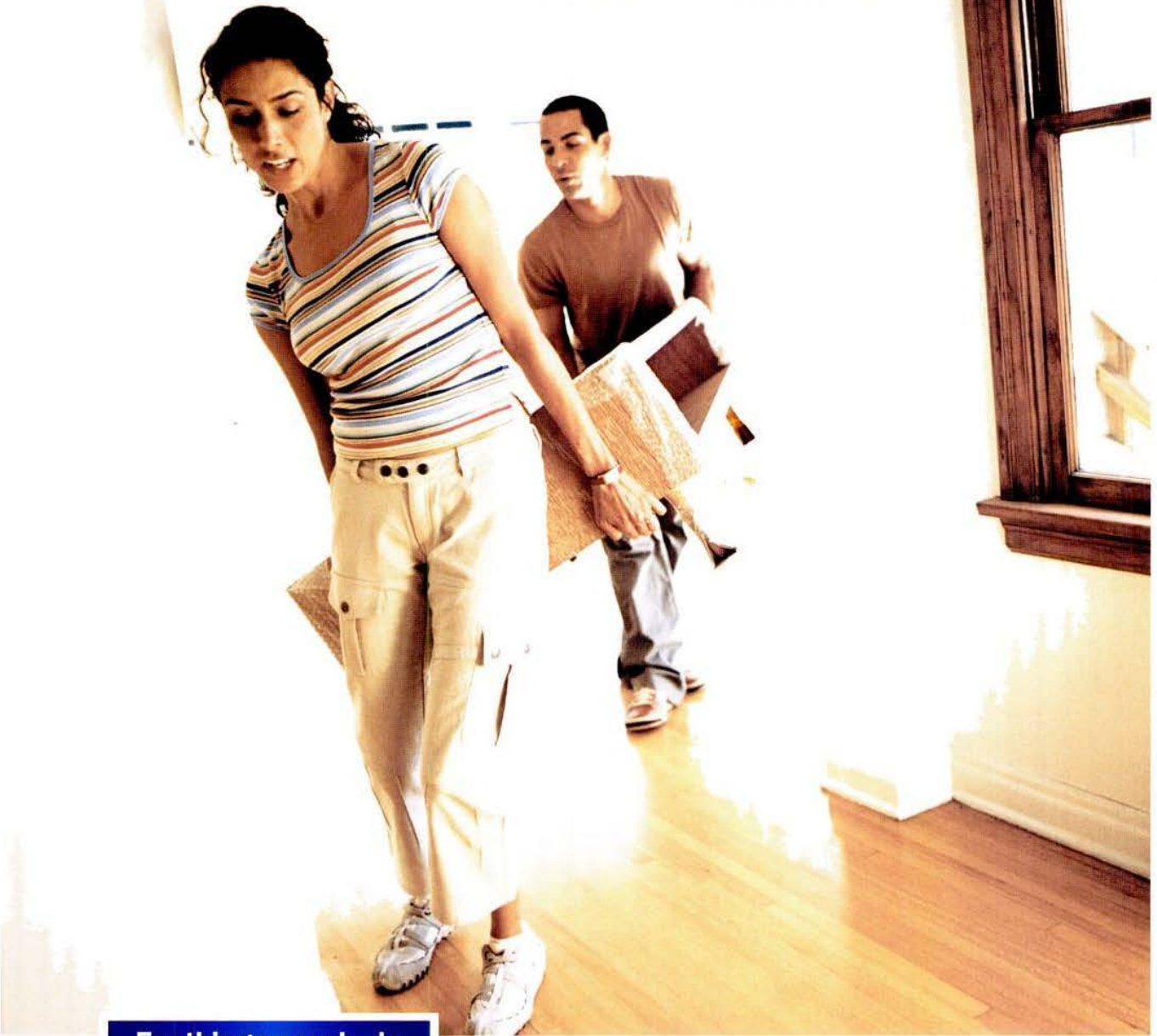
can. We incorporate the old fireplace, salvage flooring, maybe make a new electric recharging carport out of the old garage. There will be no blacktopped driveway. In lieu of gutters connected to the outdated storm water sewerage system, the roof corners will disperse the rainfall into the land around us with these cool little plastic dispersion devices, which are the kinds of things that I can build a house around.

If, that is, we even have a “roof.” This is something we are already arguing about. Which is a good sign for the neighbors: While sadly not as turned on by insulation as I am, my wife has aesthetic principles, so in addition to not being there, our new home is going to look great, too. Assuming it ever happens, I mean, because as my architect-in-law might remind me, building a dream house—with all the code inspections and concrete-pouring mishaps that will surely happen—could be more than my emotional load-bearing wall could handle.



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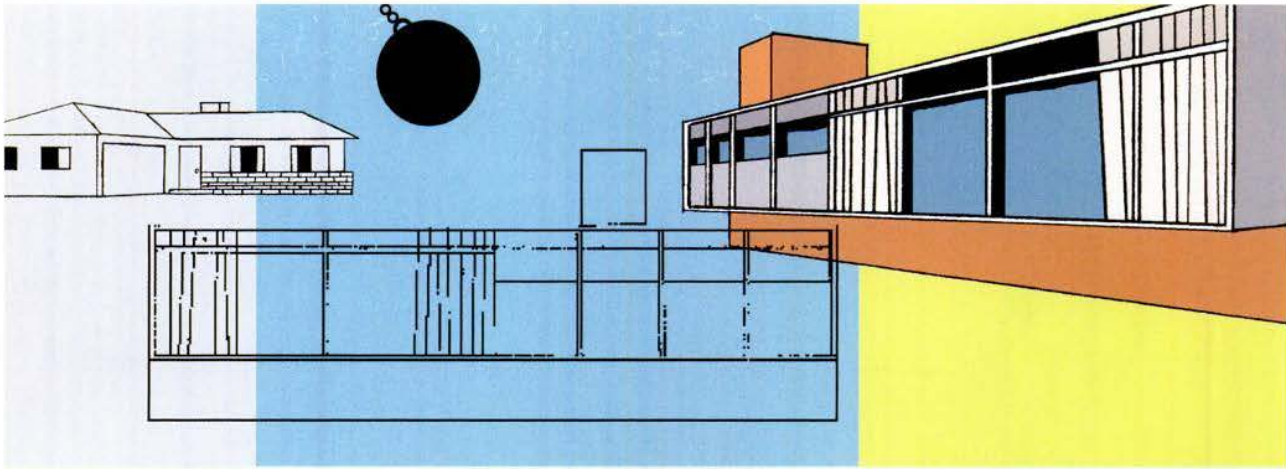
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## 16 Steps to (Almost) Painless Construction

Before knocking that wall down, educate yourself on what you're in for—and for how long.

### Determine a preliminary budget.

Be conservative: The final cost will be at least 10 or 15 percent higher than expected; make use of budget calculators provided on home-improvement websites.

**Choose the types of design, details, materials, and finishes you'd like to use.** Scour magazines and compile a folder of stuff you like; visit showrooms.

### Plan alternative living arrangements.

With whole-house renovations, consider living elsewhere; if this is impossible or the job is small, try confining yourself to a manageable part of the house.

### Select an architect.

Ask for recommendations, check references, and view previous and in-progress work. Ask about the fee—it shouldn't be more than 10 or 15 percent of the job cost, including building department filing and engineering.

### Develop schematic designs and general scopes of work with your architect.

Keep your desires in mind, but remain open to new ideas—as long as they're within your budget.

### Approve detailed plans and project specs.

**Let your architect send them out to bid.** Make sure you understand what the final plans and specs include; seek at least three

bids from contractors recommended by your architect or experienced friends.

### Review bids for the price and the items included.

Interview every contractor before deciding, and work with the contractors to reduce the price if it's over your budget. Be skeptical of any contractor who lowers a bid by more than 5 percent without reducing the scope of work.

### Accept a bid and choose a contractor.

Meet with the finalists and make sure you see things eye-to-eye.

### Sign a contract. Issue a deposit.

First, have your architect review documents carefully to ensure that all desired work is included; then issue a deposit based on the advice of your architect—it shouldn't exceed 15 percent of the total job cost.

### Apply for permits.

Let your contractor handle this; he or she knows the ropes and will get it done ten times faster than you will.

### Let the demolition begin.

Explore the amazing changes taking place, but be sure to wear a dust mask in work areas. Remember that this is the quick and easy part—you'll never see this much progress in such a short time again.

### Get set for construction . . . and construction and construction.

Be patient, but don't be a sucker: Request a detailed project schedule at the start of the job, and make sure that everyone is sticking to it throughout.

Arrange weekly site meetings with your architect and contractor, and if things are falling behind, demand a plan for catching up.

### Make payments.

A payment schedule will be outlined in the contract and based on the percentage of work completed; depend on your architect to approve any payments before you issue them; retain enough money at every stage so that you could finish the job with another company if you had to.

### Keep a punch list.

Maintain a running tally of items completed—and not completed.

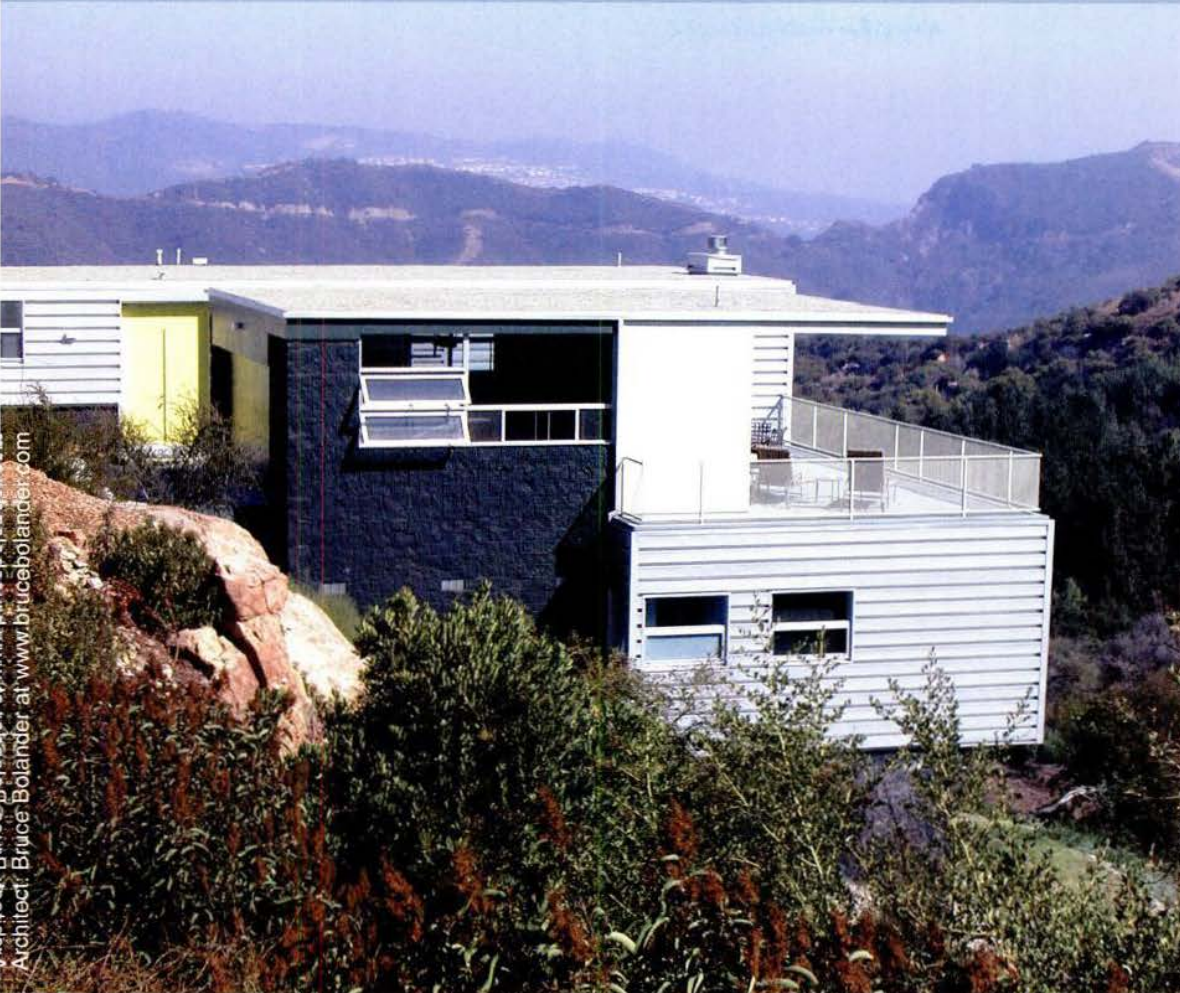
### Do a walk-through.

When the work is almost finished, walk through the job with your architect and make a thorough and final punch list of any items that are outstanding; give yourself at least a few hours to do this.

### Make the final payment.

Do not issue it until you are completely satisfied that all the work agreed upon has been done to your approval.

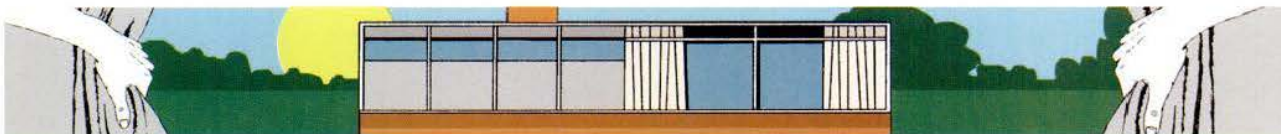
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## Taking the Mystery Out of Financing and Permits

One of the first considerations before embarking on a project is figuring out the funding. The best choice, finance experts say, is saving money until you've got enough for the job—thus avoiding interest payments, which can increase the overall cost exponentially. But if that just isn't an option, take a look at the variety of loans available. The one you choose, says Tracey Mills, a spokesperson for the American Bankers Association, should depend on a careful consideration of your situation—and a lot of research.

### Home Equity Line of Credit

**What it is:** A borrow-as-you-go, prime-based (variable rate) loan with a credit limit determined by the value and amount of equity in your home.

**Term:** Generally 10 years of borrowing with 30 years to pay it back.

**For whom it works:** Anyone with an open-ended or yet-to-be-determined project in which a final budget cannot be fixed.

**Pluses:** Lowest interest rates available; no closing costs; you pay only for what you've borrowed so far; you don't need to reapply when you need more cash; the interest is tax-deductible.

**Minuses:** You must have equity in your home to qualify; because you're using your house as the collateral, the bank could seize it if you default; a varying monthly bill; the potential to borrow more than you intend (or can easily pay back).

### Home Equity Loan

**What it is:** A fixed-amount, fixed-rate loan up to an amount determined by the equity in your house.

**Term:** Anything up to 30 years.

**For whom it works:** Those with "one-shot" projects such as adding on a room or installing an in-ground pool; those who feel more comfortable with nonfluctuating rates.

**Pluses:** Low interest rates because your house is the collateral; a predetermined monthly bill makes budgeting easier; interest is tax-deductible.

**Minuses:** Again, established equity is necessary for a home-equity loan, and the bank can take your house if you fail to pay; you have to pay closing costs.

### Cash-Out Refinance

**What it is:** A new (ideally lower-interest) loan to replace your existing mortgage.

**Term:** Normal mortgage terms—up to 30 years.

**For whom it works:** People whose houses have increased in value or who are interested in taking advantage of a lower interest rate.

**Pluses:** One (and again ideally smaller) monthly bill; the possibility of going from an adjustable rate to a fixed rate while rates are still low.

**Minuses:** Loan closing costs; the likelihood of extending your loan for years to come.

### Credit Card

**What it is:** Using your credit card to pay for the job.

**For whom it works:** Those with small, short-term projects who are confident they can pay their credit card bills on time.

**Pluses:** You don't have to apply, and it can be as easy as going to the ATM or bank and making a withdrawal.

**Minuses:** High interest rates; your debt will go through the roof if you miss a payment or—worse—are chronically late with payments.

### Construction Loan

**What it is:** A short-term, adjustable-rate loan (up to a maximum amount determined by the estimated future property value) that is issued in disbursements or "progress draws" on a predetermined basis (usually every two, three, or four weeks). Some can include a land-loan component.

**For whom it works:** People with or without pre-purchased land who are building homes from the ground up.

**Term:** Typically 9 to 18 months, and then replaced by a permanent loan—that is, a mortgage.

**Pluses:** Covers all the costs of new home construction, including the soft costs of architect, engineer, predevelopment, and permit fees; only interest is due, and only on the amount drawn to date, until the loan is repaid.

**Minuses:** Lenders will stick their noses into everything, wanting to see loads of documentation, including plans, a cost breakdown, and invoices; they may conduct periodic inspections and want a hand in the process. Unless you go with a onetime closing package that wraps the mortgage into the construction loan (usually with slightly higher interest rates), you pay closing costs twice.

### Permits and Approvals

Getting a permit from your local building department is another bureaucratic hassle that seems to serve no purpose except avoiding a fine. Still, it's a good idea, especially if you have cranky neighbors. While codes vary by city and town, a permit is generally required when doing structural, electrical, heating, or plumbing work. It's also safe to expect some governmental paperwork when creating additions or making any changes to the footprint of a dwelling.

We recommend having your contractor apply for the permit in his name, leaving him liable for any mistakes. Approvals come at the end and are usually required for the electric, heating, and plumbing work, among other things. Make sure your contractor arranges for the inspections when work is completed, and hold him responsible for any fixes the government recommends.

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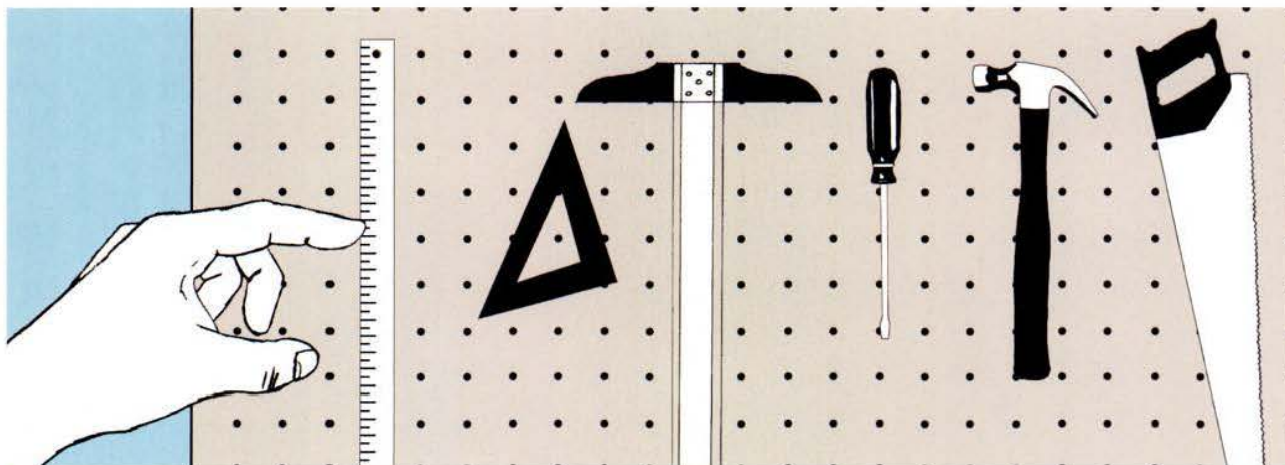
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## Constructive Advice

Know what you want, who you're working with, and how much you can spend. And be patient.

### The Architect

In 12 years of running her own firm, San Francisco-based architect Cary Bernstein has designed countless residential projects and worked with dozens of contractors. She knows well the difficulties of architect-contractor-client relationships, and while she has no magic formula, she's developed a pretty good system for making them work.

**What are the first steps a client should take when starting a new construction project?**  
The most important thing clients can do is know themselves. They should spend time looking at buildings and spaces that they like, building their visual literacy, and try as best as possible to figure out why they like them. Once clients have a head start on understanding their priorities, they're in a better position to pick the right architect and make the most informed decisions.

**Is an architect always necessary?**  
It depends on the size and complexity of the project. Two of the most important things an architect can provide are a great design and an organized set of construction documents. Great design speaks for itself. The more organized the construction documents are, the better—financially and emotionally—the construction process is likely to be.

**What's the most important thing a client, an architect, and a contractor can do to ensure**

**a smooth construction process?**  
The most important thing a client can do is select an architect and contractor with the highest degree of professionalism and commitment. The most important thing an architect can do is listen to the client and prepare a thorough set of construction documents. The most important thing a contractor can do is read the drawings and specs!

**How do you guide your clients into selecting the right contractor?**  
It's an interesting dilemma. Since many homeowners don't know contractors, they rely on their architect to put them in touch with a good one. This puts us in an awkward position: If the contractor doesn't perform, we're guilty by association.

I try to help clients feel comfortable with their choice, and that means encouraging them to do diligent research. I recommend client-to-client conversations, speaking to other homeowners who've worked with the contractor before and asking questions like: "What was the relationship like between the contractor and the architect?" "Did you find the contractor responsive and respectful?" "Did you have frustrations with him or her and, if so, what were they?"

**What are your clients' biggest frustrations with contractors?**  
The first is schedule overruns, then higher costs, and then performance. I try to minimize disappointment by managing

clients' expectations from the beginning. Without being overly pessimistic, I tell them to anticipate delays and to expect some increase in cost. That means building a 10 to 15 percent contingency into the initial price. There are always going to be issues you can't predict—all of a sudden, the foreman is getting a divorce or one of the subcontractors' mothers gets sick—and it's good to get your head in the right place from the beginning. Construction, especially at the residential scale, is a very human endeavor and is vulnerable to all of life's surprises.

**Do your clients' personalities help determine which contractors you recommend?**  
Absolutely. I have clients who have very high expectations of professionalism. For them, I would never recommend a contractor, no matter how good, who has less of a backup office and whose paperwork isn't going to be as tidy or as timely. That guy might be less expensive because he's not paying as much overhead, but for someone who is very demanding and expects service when and how they want it, he is the wrong contractor.

**Can a client negotiate with a contractor?**  
Sure, but it should be treated as a collaborative, not an adversarial, process. A client could say, "Your bid was for \$30,000 and we have \$20,000 to spend. How do you think we could make it a \$20,000 job?"

It's good to keep in mind that being a contractor can be a very unpleasant job. ▶

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## The Contractor

Tom Silva, the general contractor for PBS's *This Old House* for the past 17 years, says on the record that homeowners never make his life harder. But he isn't hard-pressed to come up with a list of things they could do to make his life—and the job at hand—easier.

### Who is your ideal client?

One who knows what they want in every stage of the job. Not knowing what you want just slows things down. It means that the contractor is standing around mocking stuff up for you and the architect is back at his or her office drawing pictures for you and it's costing you money. Look through magazines and mark the things you like, because a picture is worth a thousand words. And if you're going to make a change, be prepared to pay.

### What should a client's first steps be?

Make sure the contractor has a license and insurance, with both liability and workers' comp. And that her or she gets the proper permits needed for the job.

### What is the biggest mistake people make when undertaking a construction project?

Not getting a recommendation, or not following up on the recommendations given to them. And paying too much money up front before any work has begun.

### What are some specific things homeowners can do to help things run more smoothly?

Be prepared for the unknowns, because there are going to be plenty of them. You might find rotted wood behind the wall, or it might turn out that the electrical wiring you thought was all right is no good anymore. There are going to be hidden problems and you've got to be ready for them.

### Does that mean being prepared to spend more money than you think you'll have to?

Yes, and if you can't afford it now, wait until you can, because you want to be able to do the job right. That means not picking the cheapest guy to do the work and not cutting corners on the things you can't see for the things that you can see. You don't want a Mercedes on a Chevy chassis. I also tell people to follow the vision they had in the beginning. Otherwise, you'll hate yourself forever. You'll always say you wish you'd done it the right way.

## The Client

In 2000, Phyllis Richardson was a full-time work-at-home architectural writer and recent mom with a second baby on the way when she and her husband decided to remodel their 18th-century London house. It was a huge job—adding a kitchen, living room, and dining room—that took almost three years to complete.

### Three years of construction with two babies and an in-house office?

That really was the impetus for doing the work, but it was hard. The workmen were always there, hauling dirty things around, making noise, coming up to use the toilet. At one point they had dug quite a dangerous hole in the back and laid gangplanks across it—of course my son wanted to play on them. You try to remind yourself that this is going to make your life much better, but in the meantime, it's much worse.

### What did you do to stay sane?

I discovered early on that trying to keep the house clean was a mistake. Every morning I would wipe the dust off everything—my books, my keyboard—because it was just so disgusting. But almost immediately it would come back again. I learned I just had to push things aside.

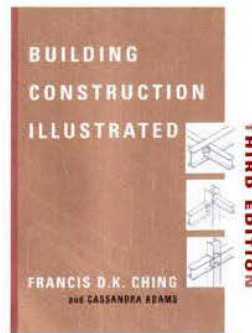
### But isn't there only so much of living on a job site a person can handle?

Yes, and that's why we tried to get out as much as possible. We started taking those invitations for the weekend, taking vacations we might otherwise not take. It's also good to leave the house, because you really notice the progress when you get back. You can lose perspective if you're home all the time. I remember I went out to do some Christmas shopping once and came home to find that the gap between our house and the extension had been bridged. What an exhilarating day!

### Any other advice?

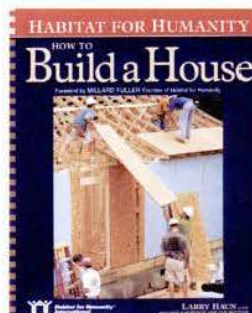
I found it really helped when my husband would bring out the plans so we could remember what we were trying to achieve. Because part of the frustration is that you're borrowing money all over the place and there's no tangible improvement—just the opposite: Your quality of life has disintegrated quite rapidly. It's good to be reminded why you're doing this.

## Building Books



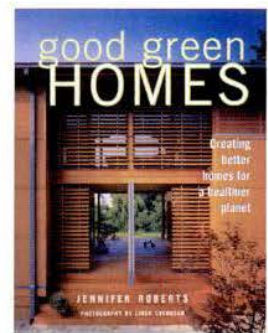
**Building Construction Illustrated** / By Francis D. K. Ching with Cassandra Adams / John Wiley & Sons / \$40

This book is nothing short of exhaustive. In this virtual *The Way Things Work* of construction, Ching and Adams tackle everything from site analysis and soil mechanics to HVAC systems and acoustics, with simple line drawings and concise text. If you've ever wondered about the inner workings of metal windows or how a curtain wall was made, this is the place to find out. [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)



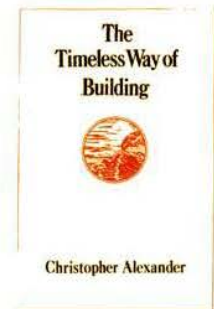
**Habitat for Humanity: How to Build a House** / By Larry Haun with Vincent Laurence and Tim Snyder / The Taunton Press / \$24.95

There's no false advertising with this bad boy. From chapter 1 ("Getting Started"), where the first step is how to obtain a site, to chapter 11, "Final Details," this book does exactly what its title purports: It tells you how to build a house. The information provided is essential and gives you a grasp of what you're getting yourself into. Get ready! [www.taunton.com](http://www.taunton.com)



**Good Green Homes: Creating Better Homes for a Healthier Planet** / By Jennifer Roberts / Gibbs Smith / \$39.95

Whether you're buying a new house, remodeling an old one, or starting from scratch, you'll not only need lots of green but you should also think about being green. With plenty of photos, this book covers the environmentally sensitive approach to the aforementioned areas, while also providing a superb introduction to the concept of green building. [www.gibbssmith.com](http://www.gibbssmith.com)



**The Timeless Way of Building** / By Christopher Alexander / Oxford University Press / \$38.50

Alexander has been ruffling the architecture world's feathers for a good 30 years, and it all began here. If you're going to embark on the mammoth undertaking of building your own home, it's probably not a bad idea to ask yourself why. This book might bring back memories of stoned late-night conversations in college about the infinite vastness of the universe, but those were always the best conversations anyway. [www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com)



# March Madness

In February, the Dwell Home went “online” at the Carolina Building Solutions facility. It was then shipped and set in March. Onsite

work should be completed in April. For more info about the Dwell Home and sponsorships, please email us at [info@thedwellhome.com](mailto:info@thedwellhome.com).



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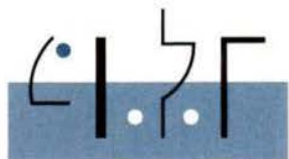
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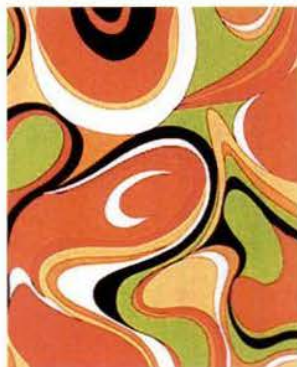
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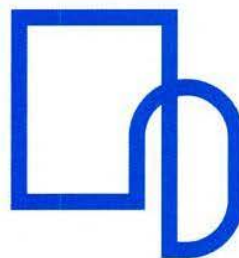
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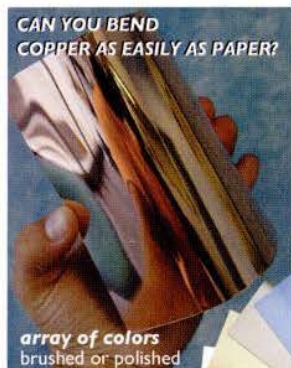
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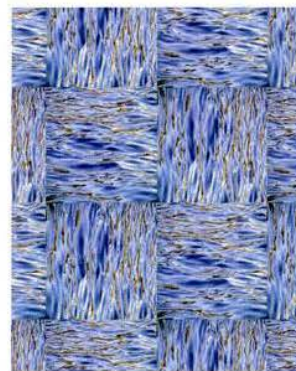
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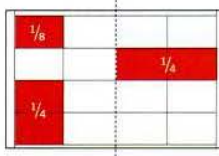
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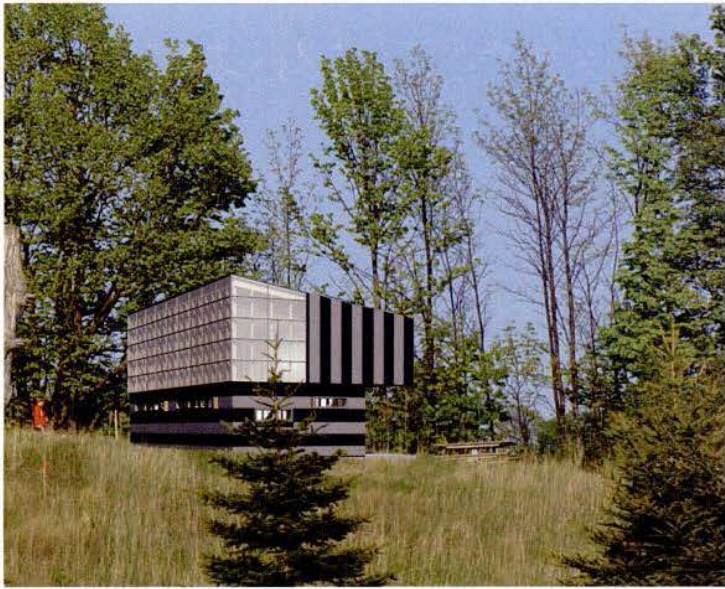
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## Look Up With Envy

Few buildings capture the zeitgeist of the current design-led mobile-home revival quite like the Loftcube. The structure, by German industrial designer Werner Aisslinger, is a one-room micro-masterpiece, a sleekly sculptural 21.5-by-21.5-foot portable house that is as compact, elegantly proportioned, symmetrical, and human-scaled as the Le Corbusier and R. Buckminster Fuller buildings that inspired it.

But this cube isn't just cute: It's part of a cunning plan to colonize the dead space on the rooftops of our cities, reclaiming moribund corporate high-rises for living on, not in. Brought forth when a German magazine asked him to design "a future utopia," the Loftcube, Aisslinger insists, "isn't about minimum living environments—the average one-person apartment in Berlin is about this size after all—but about a vision of people living on rooftops. Rooftop communities might form a special social sphere, a city-to-city network for nomadic living."

The concept of siting Loftcubes on inner-city rooftops, rather than on, say, empty bits of Bavaria or Nevada,

makes it especially appealing to city dwellers of all persuasions. This is plug-in architecture, using the facilities of its host building. And, at \$65,000 plus roof-space rental, it's an affordable way to live the high life in just about any overpriced urban center. "There's both a business and an alternative-lifestyle application," says Aisslinger. No surprise, then, that preproduction orders are flowing in, and an Officecube is already planned.

Practical considerations aside, even the most hardened realist might entertain fantasies of a perfect future when faced with the Loftcube's curvy white plastic contours, set off by expanses of tangerine-tinted glass. In an elegant update of sci-fi futuremania, Aisslinger applies restrained modernist proportions to the cult pop atmosphere created by Matti Suuronen's 1968 Futuro house and Stanley Kubrick's 2001: *A Space Odyssey*. "For me, there's no escaping the influence of that film," says Aisslinger. "No one has ever made a more detailed vision of the future. I have to confess that I've watched it hundreds of times." We'd never have guessed. ■

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