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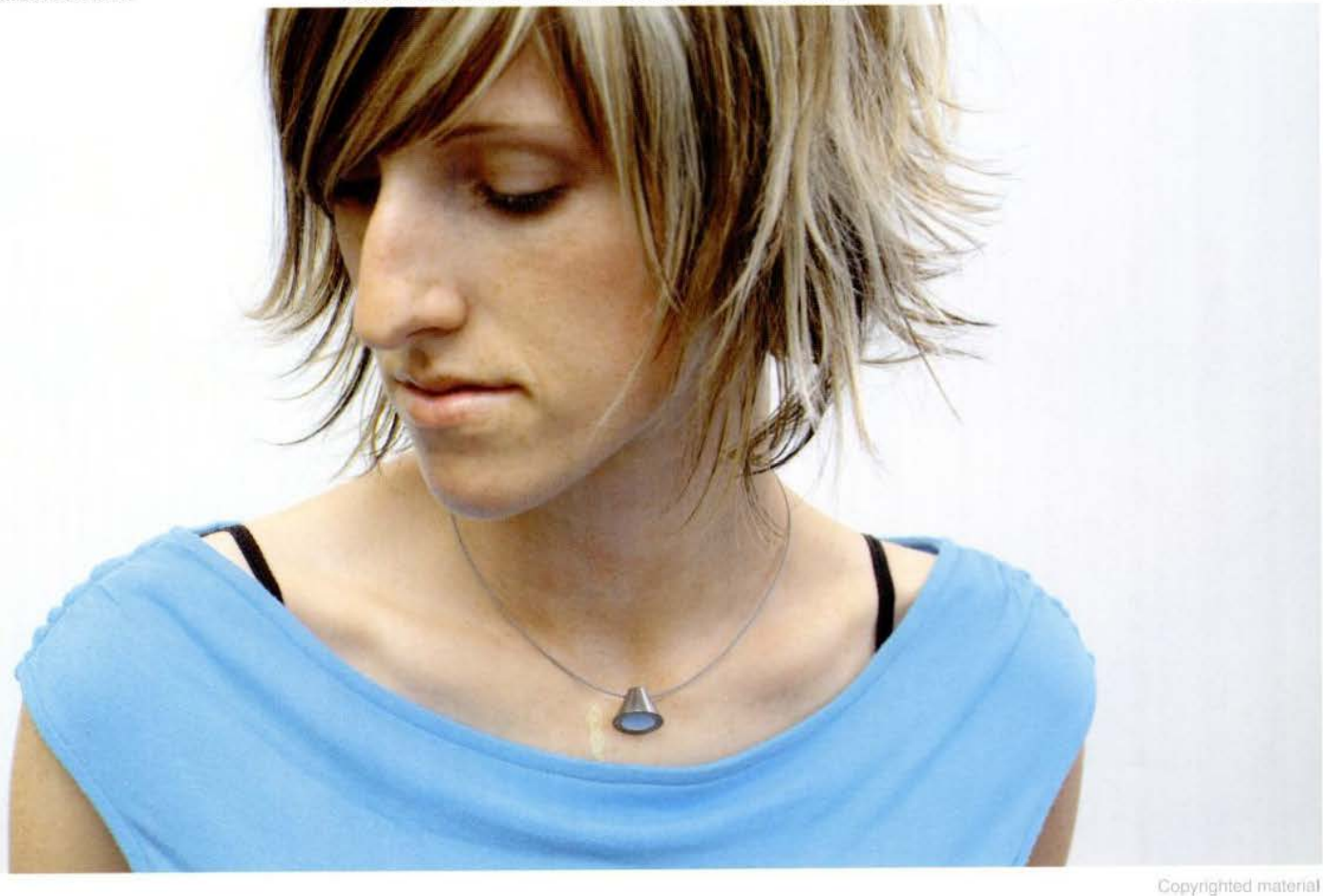


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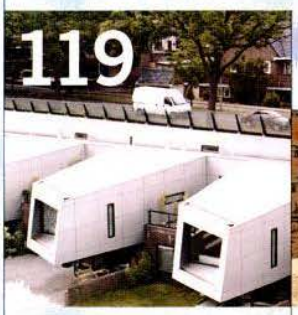

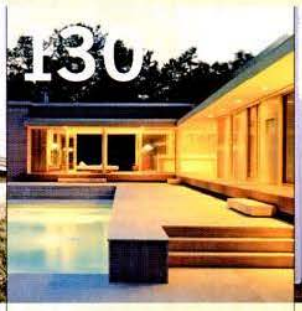

"To really insist on facing challenges is a difficult way to work, because you are not repeating solutions. But it does mean you eventually travel much further." —**Maurice Nio**

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Cover: The House of Earth + Light, page 122
Photo by Daniel Hennessy

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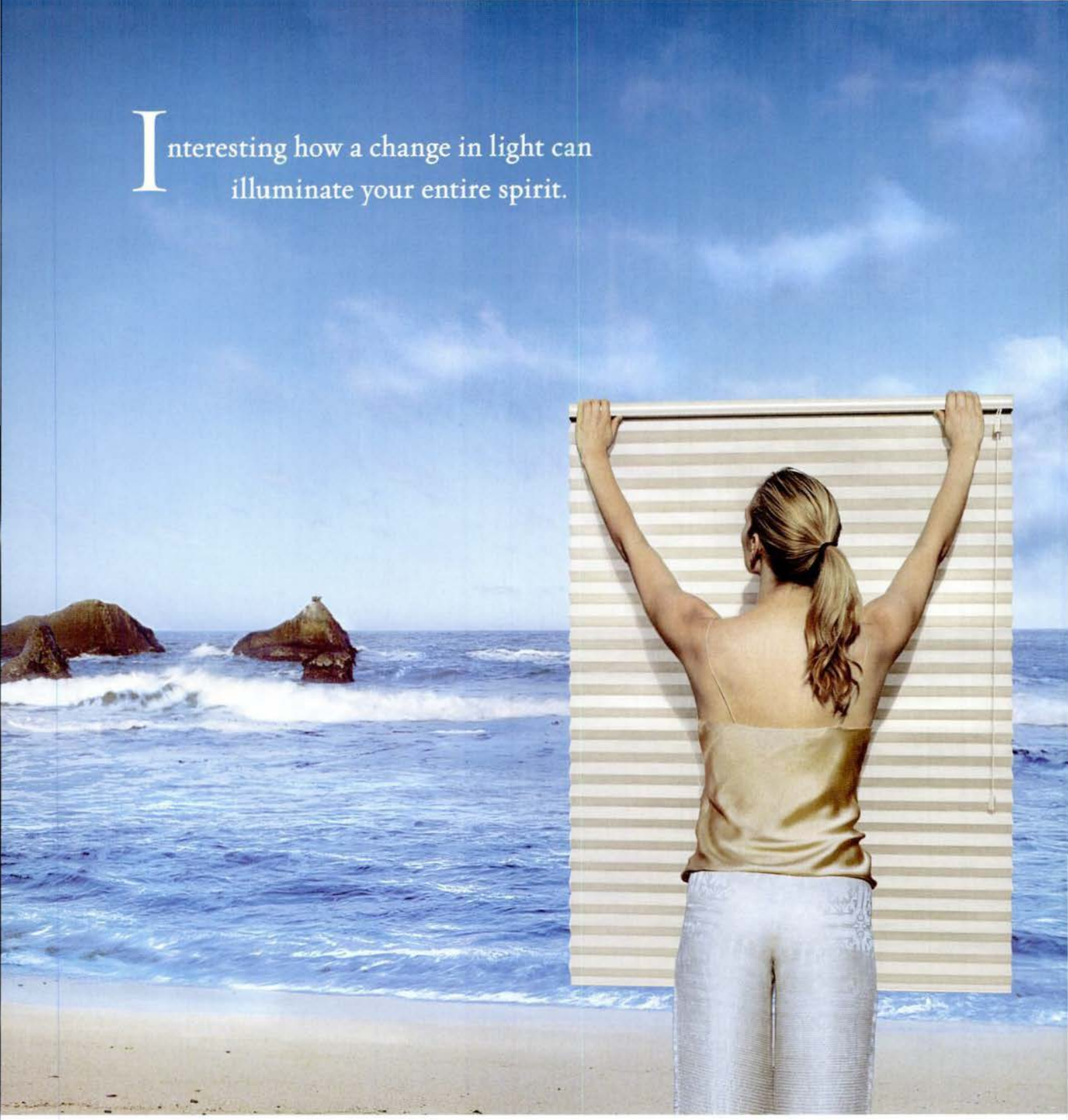

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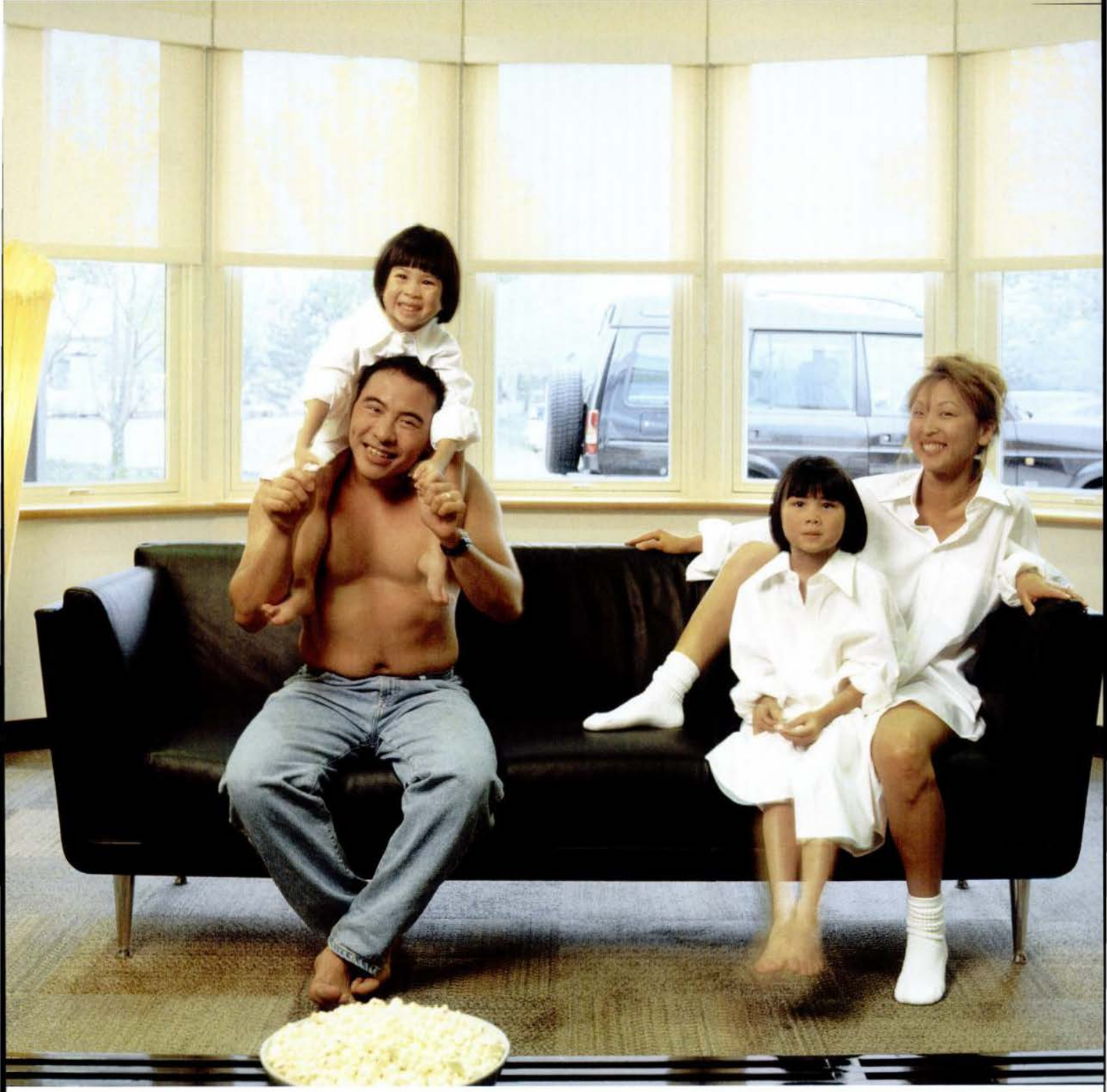

Herman Miller supports a family of four. | Goetz Sofa. One potato, two potato, three potato, four.

HermanMiller

My wife and I spoke with editor-in-chief Allison Arieff while she was in Minnesota last November. We told her about our totally spherical home (above) designed and built by local engineer Don Anderson, and thought your readers might be interested as well. We do have a question about it, though: How can we find the balance between making this a more livable space and maintaining the essence of the original form and function? If any of your readers have any suggestions, we'd love to hear them.

Josh Hanson
Northfield, Minnesota

Editors' Note: *Any ideas for Josh? Send them to letters@dwellmag.com.*

The January/February issue was a stunning example of what makes Dwell great. Thank you for featuring more than one home under 1,000 square feet. It's so important to consider how we can minimize our personal impact on the world's resources and small homes help accomplish that. I was especially impressed with the smallest home, at a mind-boggling 400 square feet ("One Room Fits All"). You did more than tell a good story about this small home. Thanks to the detailed floor plans and large photos, it was practically a "how to" for adopting this home's innovative strategies for minimal living.

Speaking of minimal living, kudos to James Nestor's intelligent article, "A Little Is Enough." After living in a 650-square-foot space, I have gained a new perspective on a life of even exchange where there's no room for overconsumption and one must give back exactly what one takes. You have to hold onto only what makes a life—not fills it up. This issue summed up how scaled-down spaces can help us live less taxing, yet more fulfilling lives.

Jeannete Ward Smith
Atlanta, Georgia

I am in my 60s and am looking forward to designing and building my first home. I look to your magazine for inspiration. The January/February 2005 issue had such fine examples of "less is more" with the Houston shot/trot ("The Lowest Utility Bill on the Block") and the New York studio ("One Room Fits All"). I do have some reservations about some of the other designs that incorporate ladders, stairs, and varying levels as they are restrictive to a maturing population. Part of our current wasteful lifestyles includes a move every seven years. Instead, shouldn't our homes build in more flexibility with less complexity?

Norine Fisher
Modesto, California

I was disappointed by the project you chose for Off the Grid ("Pod Living") in the March 2005 issue. In a city as thirsty as Phoenix, the homeowners have a lawn? I am excited they are trying to transform the suburbs architecturally, and hope they are planning on transforming their yard into one more appropriate to the desert. We should all be concerned about the shortage of water in this country, even if we aren't affected by it every day.

Emily Magnaghi
Burlingame, California

The inspiring story of Murray Siple ("The Siple Life," March 2005) and the symbiotic relationship between him and his architect should stand as a precedent for designing a meaningful and functional space. Living life in a wheelchair produces an entirely new set of rules in design. Rather than accept the necessity of assistance from others, Murray's determination to live independently forced the architects to focus exclusively on the most important aspect of any project—the needs of the client. The result is an astoundingly functional and beautiful space that caters to Murray's every need.

Whether designing a home for wheelchair accessibility or for a client without mobility limitations, fulfilling the needs of the client is the number-one priority of the architect. There are countless examples in the built environment of designs that reflect the architect's own aesthetic ideals rather than on the functional needs of the client. Unfortunately for these designers, the true rewards of architecture will never be understood. Experiencing the true rewards of architecture comes not from the praise of critics or other designers, but from the happiness of those who use the space and their appreciation for the time and respect given to their needs.

Dennis Morelli
Bristol, Rhode Island

I enjoyed the featurette on train travel in this country ("Back on Track," March 2005). Could you please pass along the info to your readers ▸

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Dwell Editorial Offices
99 Osgood Place
San Francisco, CA 94133
Phone (415) 743-9990
letters@dwellmag.com

Subscription Inquiries
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that there is a groundswell of support for fast and efficient train travel? The Midwest High Speed Rail Association (www.midwesthsr.org) is pushing for development here, and I encourage readers to find out more about similar efforts in their areas.

Brian Pinke
Champaign, Illinois

I am developing an organizing and redesign business and am forever searching for ideas. Unfortunately, the world of storage is often relegated to cutesy baskets lined with ticking. I would be most grateful for a Dwell-researched article on modernist storage/organizing solutions.

Kerry Armour
Pepperell, Massachusetts

Editors' Note: *You are in luck. Look for "Storage 101" in our July/August 2005 issue.*

I am a builder/contractor in the Bay Area, and have spent much time remodeling and restoring Victorian homes in San Francisco. I was recently fortunate enough to purchase my first house here. It needs a lot of TLC, as it was built in the late 1800s. The problem is that I am much more interested in modern architecture, and frankly, I am sick of crown molding and wainscoting.

I am currently drawing some plans to begin the remodel and I am trying to figure out how to get a modern feel from this space that currently has plaster rosettes, a wide fluted door, and window casing. The good thing is I have 12-foot ceilings to work with, and can open up the floor plan to make it flow better. I am stuck on the details, however. It would be great if you could devote an issue or article to projects that have faced similar problems. I am sure I am not the first person to try to create something modern out of an antique.

Svi Peters
San Francisco, California

Editors' Note: *Thank you for the great idea. We plan to present valuable ideas for creating modern interiors within traditional exteriors soon.*

In looking at the Dwell Home II (January/ February 2005), I immediately noted a bitter incongruity that was only amplified by the next issue, when it was noted that the winning design now has to go up against the California Coastal Commission ("A Sea of Paperwork," March 2005).

What is sustainable about a house, no matter how it's built or what it's built with, if it's built out in a wild animal habitat? Sure it's a nice idea for the owners ("Look, Dolores, a mountain lion ►

Letters

is eating the Pomeranian!"), but as our cities spread out over farmland and bulldoze into wilderness, we are faced with a situation where one national monument, Joshua Tree, is approached by driving through a housing development. Our freeways are choked, our air is filthy, and our quality of life is declining. This is not sustainable.

I think the focus should be on designing second-generation, transit-oriented development intended to be set into, and to transform, older first-generation suburbs at the inside edge of sprawl, and not on freestanding homes, especially freestanding homes in wild places.

Paul Tominac
San Francisco, California

Editors' Note: *Please see page 114 for an interview with the Dwell Home II homeowner and architect that sheds some light on these issues.*

I enjoy every issue of Dwell—it is cutting edge, it is "green," and it is a great teaching tool. As part of teaching political geography, my students get a lesson or two on what is happening in cities today, the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Dwell is a great way to teach high school students about all the new innovations in architecture and design worldwide. There is something in each issue for every student, something to catch their eye. And I always remind them: It won't be too long before you have a place of your own; start learning about design now.

Barb Wasko
Castle Rock, Colorado

I read the March 2005 issue from cover to cover. What caught my attention this time was the article on the search for affordable modern furnishings ("Cheap Seats"). My first reaction was, Where? I live in Miami, Florida, and we do not have IKEA. We do have dozens of high-end modern furniture stores with furnishings that cost as much as an SUV. What I am finding is the major furniture retailers are now beginning to carry modern designs at down-to-earth prices. Hopefully this will enable us "real-world modernists" to finally afford what we like.

Jose Cal
Miami, Florida

Welcome to Topanga Canyon. Permit process ("A Sea of Paperwork," March 2005) and rock slides aside, I think you will benefit from building your Dwell Home II in our arts-rich community. Topanga is always willing to lend a hand and embraces the one-house-at-a-time development approach (no subdivisions here).

Rebecca Catterall
Topanga Canyon, California ▶

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Regional Manager Kathryn McKeever
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HIGHLANDS, design Patricia Urquiola. Picture taken inside the PALAIS DE TOKYO, site de création contemporaine, Paris.

MOROSO

Letters

Your article ("A Sea of Paperwork") sheds light on the reality of the practice of architecture. The design process that is taught in schools doesn't address the administrative hurdles, and new professionals often get frustrated with the paperwork, dealings, and compromises required. The seductive forms and great ideas must get past the realities of height restrictions, neighborhood associations, and local codes. Unless it's addressed in schools, future architects will have a hard time succeeding in the real world.

Sunil Sakhalkar
Santa Fe, New Mexico

Please write to us:
Dwell Letters
99 Osgood Place
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letters@dwellmag.com

Corrections: No doubt because we were pressed for it, we erroneously referred to architect Tim Alt of Altus Architecture + Design as "Time" rather than "Tim" in "Prefab Perspectives" (April/May 2005). One of Alt's structures at the Mayo Woodlands development is shown above. In "Sao Paulo: Calm in the Chaos" (January/February 2005) we showed an image of the Address Executive Flat building instead of the Banespa Tower. We neglected to credit Marc Heldens for producing "Pursuing Perfection" (March 2005). We regret the errors.

Contributors

Peter Belanger ("Interior Design 101," p. 144) has been shooting images professionally for more than 14 years. Shooting for this month's issue was great inspiration for him as he is currently remodeling his house in San Francisco, California.

Deborah Bishop ("Worth the Wait," p. 136) is Dwell's San Francisco contributing editor. While writing about a house once purported to be the smallest in San Francisco, she gained a real enthusiasm for compact living—but fears she might have trouble stashing her collection of shoes, sailor ephemera, and children's toys.

Daniel Hennessy ("Love's Labors Found," p. 122) was honored to photograph the house featured in the very first issue of Dwell and then revisit it for the 36th issue.

Marc Kristal ("Castles Made of Sand," p. 78) is Dwell's New York contributing editor. He was initially skeptical of Nader Khalili's plan to build houses out of sandbags but became increasingly impressed not only with the architect's solution to the challenge of creating inexpensive and sustainable housing, but with his commitment to building a better world.

Eric Lawlor ("Escape from New York," p. 57) so liked the Copper House he wrote about in this issue that it left him with a bad case of house envy. Lawlor's book on the British Imperialist Cecil Rhodes will be published by HarperCollins later this year.

Brian Libby ("Nagoya: Renters' Paradise," p. 80) is a Portland, Oregon–based writer who has written for the *New York Times*, *Salon*, and *Premiere*. Visiting Nagoya, Japan, was no existential *Lost in Translation* moment, but a revelation that's left him yearning for another voyage across the Pacific Rim.

Shonquis Moreno ("Interior Design 101," p. 144) is a contributing editor to *Frame* and *Surface* and writes frequently about architecture and design. Researching and writing this month's "Interior Design 101" has left her looking for a 67-room house where she can spend the rest of her life dressing and redressing every blank surface.

David Proffitt ("Love's Labors Found," p. 122) is a Phoenix, Arizona–based writer. He longs to bicycle by the House of Earth + Light, but he can't find enough Supertherm to make going out in Phoenix's summertime sun a safe proposition.

Jane Szita ("Breaking the Sound Barrier," p. 119), Dwell's Amsterdam contributing editor, knows the "challenge of architecture" quite well, since she's been busy renovating an old canal-side apartment in Amsterdam for longer than she cares to remember. For this issue, however, she covered the shockingly new Cyclops roadside complex of Maurice Nio in nearby Hilversum.

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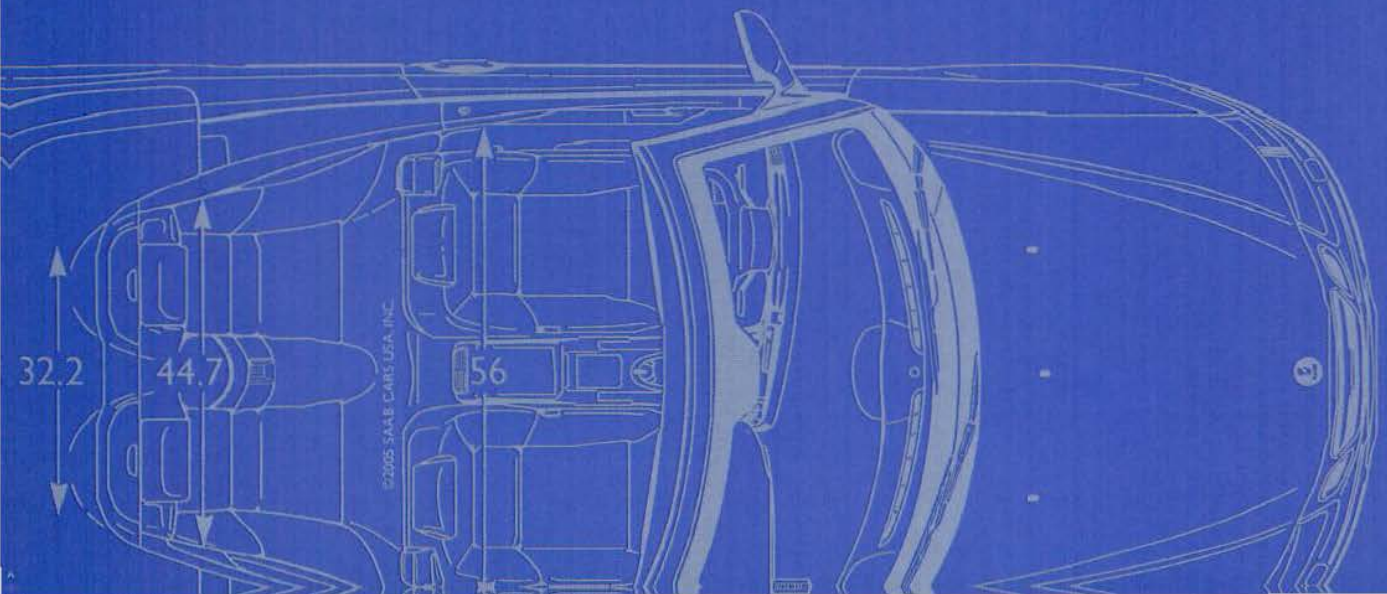

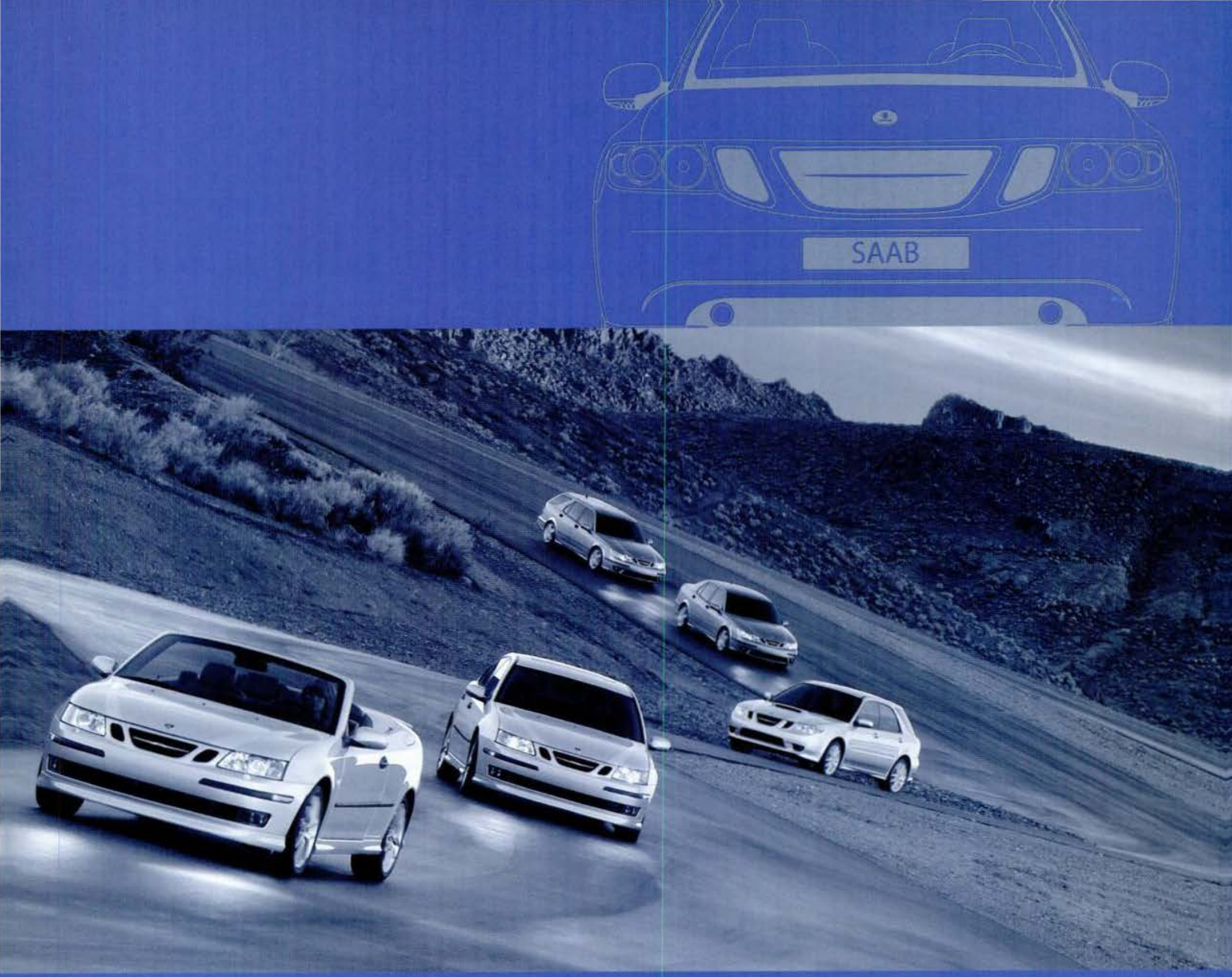

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The Challenge of Architecture

To paraphrase a Dan Ratherism, the process of building one's dream home could give aspirin a headache.

Whether it's a ground-up building project, a major renovation, or even a bathroom redo, we've all heard the horror stories of litigious neighbors, narrow-minded planning commissioners, contractors who never finish, interminable delays caused by weather or weariness, and cost overruns that bring to mind the Tyco exec's infamous $6,000 shower curtain. Yet the allure of creating a home of one's own persists, perhaps because we all secretly think that none of this stuff will ever happen to us.

The typical shelter magazine rarely reveals the true travails of the dream-home building process, showcasing instead the gleaming end result wherein the most difficult design dilemma seemed to be the wall sconce selection. Idealized representations have their place, but if you're going to undertake such a project on your own, it is essential to understand that the reality is more complicated than an eight-page spread in *Architectural Digest*. Architecture presents particularly tricky challenges, being the only form of artistic expression that must serve not only an audience but occupants. Painters can follow their muse, writers their bliss, but architects must reconcile their desires with far more practical concerns, including but not limited to the client, the budget, the bank, and the neighbors.

Even the most high-profile building projects face significant constraints from all sides. Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall took 18 years to be realized, cost $274 million to build, and required consensus-building efforts worthy of post–World War II NATO. Just a year and a half after its opening, it's not out of the woods yet. Earlier this year, residents of a condominium complex across the street from it won their battle to have the shiny architectural icon made matte. Consultants had reported that the glare from Gehry's signature shimmering panels generated enough heat to melt plastic. A woman who worked near the hall was quoted in the *Los Angeles Times* as saying, "It's about time. We feel like ants under a magnifying glass."

Sunburned pedestrians notwithstanding, this latest conflict won't diminish the concert hall's luster (pardon the pun), nor will it limit other star architect commissions in the foreseeable future. The same holds true for the trials and tribulations experienced with building projects on a more intimate scale—that is, the aforementioned dream home. We all know that anything worth having is worth working at, or fighting for. The goal is not to deter you from your castle in the air (or modern glass box in the mountains), but rather to share stories, experiences, and, we hope, a bit of wisdom. And rest assured, all the dreams pursued herein ultimately came true. ■

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

A sterling example of the lengths to which people will go to make their dream home a reality: All of the components of this house by Resolution: 4 Architecture were assembled in a factory, loaded on a barge (circled) at Port Elizabeth, New Jersey, and shipped up the East River for a 30-hour journey to the house site on Martha's Vineyard.

Up & down Bertola

Linea leather sectional

Modern classic chair

Mies Van Der Rohe day bed

Modern classic leather platform bed

Oasis sofa bed

Thai bed with hidden storage, cantilevered night stands and a built in light

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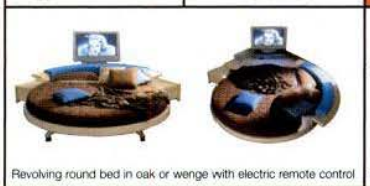
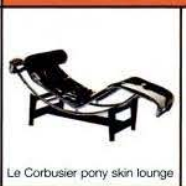
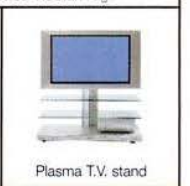


Revolving round bed in oak or wenge with electric remote control



Le Corbusier pony skin lounge

Freedom sofa with removable backs / arms converts to chaise or bed



Plasma T.V. stand

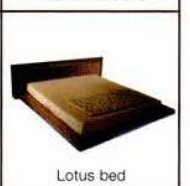
Le Corbusier sofa

Ginger chair bed

Ultra granite table

Milan Onda

20th century lounge



Lotus bed

Corbusier table

Milano coffee table

Saarinen chair

Saarinen table

Modern sofa bed

Glass wheel table

Gyro sofa bed

Wassily chair

Vitra desk

International corner sectional

Zen coffee table

Le Corbusier chair with ottoman

Pasquilina leather chair

Expandable bookcase

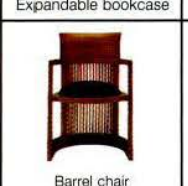
Expandable glass table

Philippe Starck chair

Lyra Bombo

Freedom bed with moveable head/foot rests and tables

Frank Lloyd Wright table

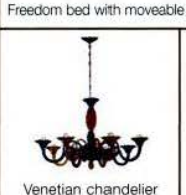


Barrel chair

Ferrari chair

Modern coffee table

Mies chair



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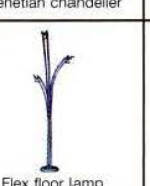

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There's a lot more to Braun than fumbling bathroom memories of your father's electric shaver or your lover's electric toothbrush. The company was started in 1921 by Max Braun; however, it wasn't until his sons Artur and Erwin took over in 1951, that a distinctive minimal and regimented (read: German) style came to the forefront. Professor Wilhelm Wagenfeld and the Ulm Academy of Design were responsible for re-creating the entire Braun line in 1954, with a simple directive: to create radios that were "honest, understated, and functional units." From this program, classic designs, such as Hans Gugelot and Dieter Rams' SK4 (also known as "Snow White's Coffin," above), emerged. In an era when industrial design was barely a profession, and design, in general, merely an afterthought, Braun's attention to detail and integration of form and function made the brand instantly recognizable—and a regular in the design collections of the world's great museums.

This exhibition features items from Braun's past, present, and future, in addition to concept models, photographs, and drawings. It will open at London's Royal College of Art before traveling to Kronberg, Germany (Braun's present-day headquarters), Tokyo, and Boston. www.braun.com

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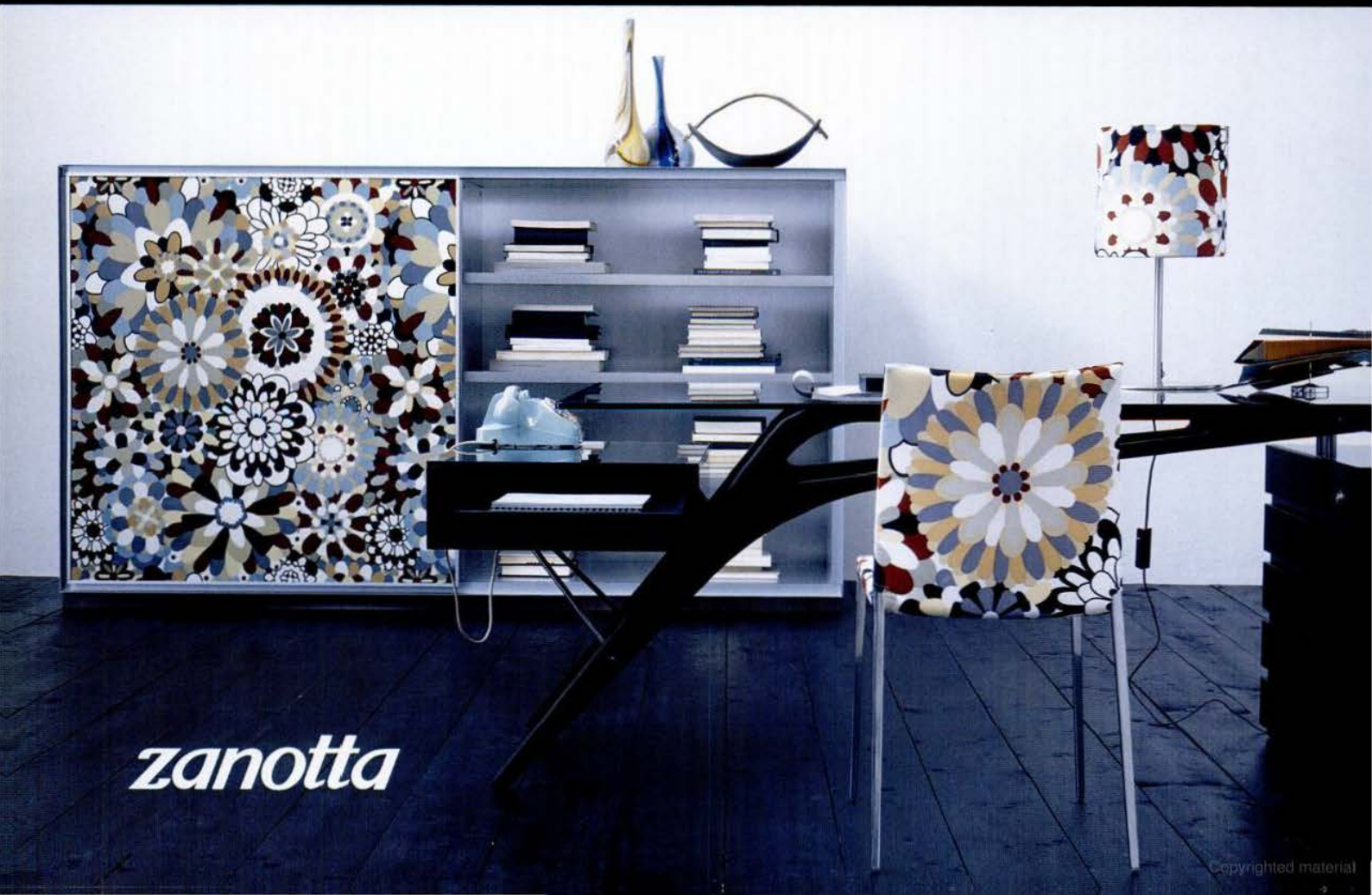

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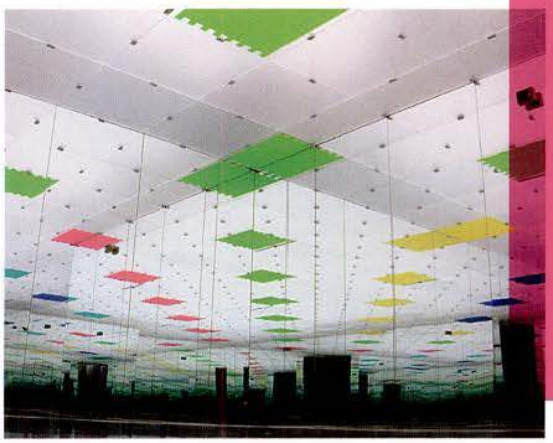

The Eye of the Storm: Works in Situ by Daniel Buren / 25 Mar–8 June / Guggenheim Museum / New York, NY

Daniel Buren's predilection for appropriating exhibition spaces is not always appreciated, particularly by those expected to share that space with him. In the 1971 Sixth Guggenheim International Exhibition, Buren's inclusion was met by protests from fellow artists. Luckily, this time Buren will have sole command of the floor to fully engage Mr. Wright's iconic building in New York, which created quite a stir itself when it was first unveiled. www.guggenheim.org

DVD 22 / By Ashcraft Design for Harman/Kardon

When you're walking down the aisles of your local electronics big box store, the pimpled employee demonstrating stereo systems with Kelly Clarkson CDs is likely to be of little assistance. So take our advice: Harman/Kardon's new DVD 22 not only looks good (it won an International Forum Design competition, and avoids the trappings of too many bells and whistles) but also features precise images and sound. www.harmankardon.com

Designers on Design / By Terence Conran and Max Fraser / Conran Octopus Ltd. / $39.95

If you yearn to discover designers' "true personal characteristics," then this book's for you. One hundred designers—including both the obscure and the ubiquitous—spill their secrets, from inspirations to frustrations to secondary career choices. Though some tidbits are less tasty, others are priceless, like Ron Arad's break-dancing dream. www.conran-octopus.co.uk

Omni Long Chair / By Eliumstudio for Quid Novi

Eliumstudio may not be a household name, but their rubber-coated Tykho radio for Lexon entered hundreds of thousands of homes when it appeared on a 2000 *Time* cover proclaiming the return of design to American shores. Five years later, designers Marc Berthier, Gilles Caillet, and Elise Berthier have traded FM for p.m. (the time of day we can best imagine kicking back in this leather-and-steel lounger). The chair owes a debt of gratitude to Mies and Marcel, while also managing to turn a forward-looking corner. www.eliumstudio.com

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (BOOKS)

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Select, Arrange / By Vitra

Vitra's new At Home book is divided by an unusual butterfly binding. *Select* features the company's extensive At Home line in a straight forward manner. *Arrange* is where things get more interesting. A diverse group of photographers and graphic artists, including 100% Orange, Juergen Teller, Ari Marcopoulos, and Lizzie Finn, depict Vitra's output with the Eameses' mantra of "select and arrange" (a low-key approach to curating all the stuff in your life) in mind. The results are playful, beautiful, and unexpected. www.vitra.com

Universal Experience: Art, Life, and the Tourist's Eye / 12 Feb–5 June / MCA Chicago / Chicago, IL

These days, Western trappings like Starbucks and Nike pop up from Bangalore to Rio. But as Bill Murray's whiskey-shilling *Lost in Translation* character found out while slowly suffocating in a sterile Tokyo hotel, strange spaces still breed unfamiliarity for tourists. This show focuses on travelers' displacement. www.mcachicago.org

Birzì / By Carlo Forcolini and Giancarlo Fassina for Luceplan

For those dissatisfied with the fixed nature of most lighting fixtures, Luceplan offers a chimeric alternative. Made of pressed silicone and available in three colors, Birzì can be bent, folded, and shaped into a variety of forms, ensuring that you never get bored. www.luceplan.com

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK)

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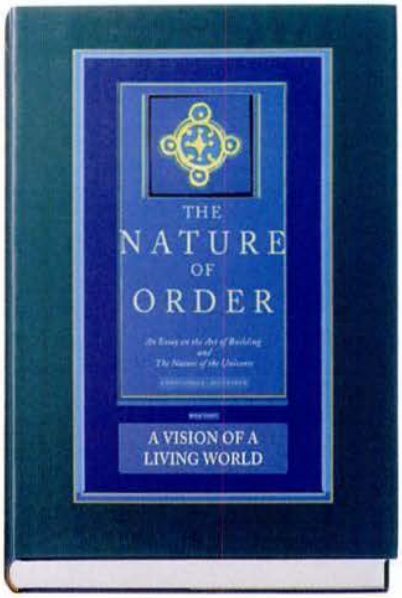

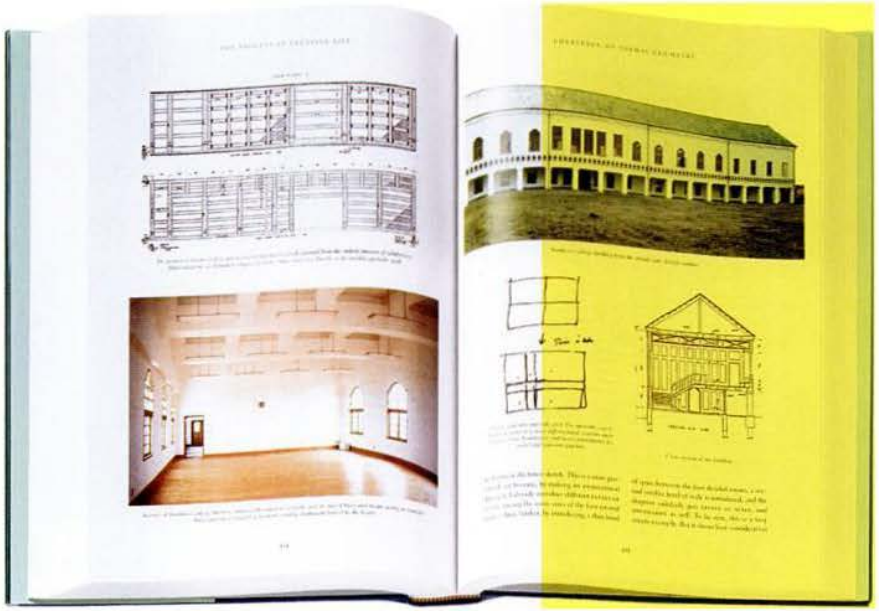

The Nature of Order: An Essay on the Art of Building and the Nature of the Universe / By Christopher Alexander / Center for Environmental Structure Publishing / $250 for set of four

Writing a review of Christopher Alexander's latest work is a nearly impossible task. Not only do you need to take a month-long vacation to wade through the four tomes (this is as far from bedtime reading as it gets, folks), but you also need to shift your entire outlook on life to accommodate Alexander's propositions. But for all the U.C. Berkeley lecturer's headiness, the book flows from chapter to chapter with a marked, conversational ease. You might find yourself reading a sentence three times, but the revelatory nature of the material makes it worthwhile. *The Nature of Order* discusses the immense problems we face today in the built environment (Alexander claims that "the processes needed to create life were damaged in the 20th century") and, eventually, through countless examples and a proposal to see degrees of life in everything around us, reveals the details of generating "living structures"—and devastating the mechanical-scientific view Western civilization has held for centuries. Alexander challenges our beliefs and assumptions, forcing readers to rethink the nature of good and bad, and the basis by which humans judge these factors (as an example, why do 100 percent of respondents find "more life" in an image of a Bangkok ghetto than a million-dollar post-modern home?). Alexander's quasi-mystical work was 27 years in the making and is vast in its scope, from DNA to the boundless universe, but what makes it truly compelling is that it is focused through the lens of architecture and building. www.natureoforder.com

PHOTOS BY PETER BELANGER

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Singing Birds / By Tsutomu Suzuki for Design Within Reach

There's nothing like waking up to the sound of the garbage fleet, a high-heeled upstairs neighbor (who apparently runs early morning laps around her apartment), or better yet the power company fixing what seems to be a perennial infrastructure problem. But just because we city dwellers have forsaken the luxury of animal sounds for public transport and takeout doesn't mean that we wouldn't mind hearing the birds sing now and again. These sculptural birds are endowed with sensory microchips that simulate real-life feathered friends, making you feel every morning like Mr. Bluebird's on your shoulder. www.dwr.com

Bottles / By Jerry Kott

Some wine bottles are simply too pretty to toss, but the prospect of sticking a candle in the opening seems more college decor than adult aesthetics. Which is why we're so drawn to Kott's graceful vessels: Recycled and reassembled glass bottles are turned into frosted sculptural objects that can be placed on any tabletop with pride. www.jerrykott.com

This Is Not an Atlas / By Warren Hutchinson and Nick Foster / Mark Batty Publisher / $19.95

Just as adding *e*'s (à la Ye Olde Shoppe) provides faux antiquation, the simple addition of "world" connotes an all-encompassing abundance. As this book of storefront photos shows, it can be applied to most any goods and services the world over. www.markbattypublisher.com

In Focus: Contemporary Photography From the Allen G. Thomas Jr. Collection / 3 Apr–17 July / North Carolina Museum of Art / Raleigh, NC

There is a certain camaraderie that goes along with art appreciation—or at least the appreciation of art's proliferation in society. Like Isabella Stewart Gardner or Henry Clay Frick, Allen G. Thomas Jr.'s passion for art will enable many to see work that they might otherwise have not from world-renowned contemporary photographers such as Todd Hidō and Loretta Lux (at left). www.ncartmuseum.org

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK), COURTESY ALLEN G. THOMAS JR. COLLECTION (IN FOCUS)

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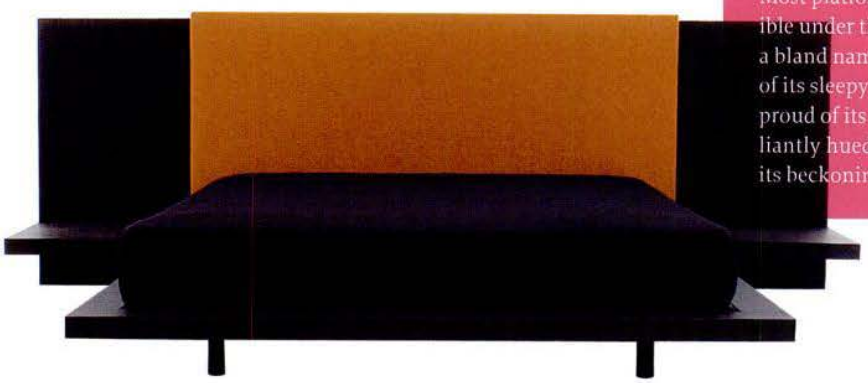
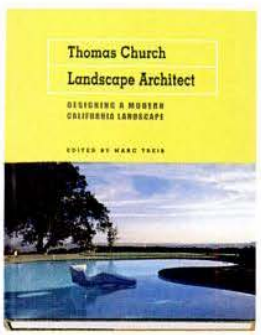
Standard Bed / By Piero Lissoni for Porro
If the bedroom is where "the magic happens," then it seems a shame not to feature the center of the action. Most platform beds sink close to the floor, almost invisible under their low profiles. While the Standard Bed has a bland name, it is anything but ordinary. Unlike most of its sleepy siblings, this bed stays sleek while standing proud of its function: A towering headboard and brilliantly hued middle panel make it impossible to ignore its beckoning presence. www.modernliving.com





Thomas Church, Landscape Architect /
Edited by Marc Treib / William Stout Publishers / $75
"Gardens are for people" was the catchphrase of mid-century-modernist landscaper Thomas Church. This was a revolutionary maxim in the 1930s, when most greenery had prescribed forms and function. This book illuminates the man behind the transformation of many a Northern California backyard. www.stoutbooks.com

Modern Smoke Detector / By Architectural Devices
It doesn't take an aesthete to know that smoke detectors are ugly, clunky, temperamental nesting grounds for shifty arachnids; an alternative is long overdue. The Modern Smoke Detector, which recesses into the ceiling and employs magnets to ensure a painless battery change, is as attractive as a siren—mainly because it is one. www.architecturaldevices.com

International Architecture Biennale Rotterdam / 26 May–26 June / Rotterdam, Netherlands / This show explores future threats from the country's omnipresent waterways, as well as more pleasant topics like coastal tourism and urban waterwide planning. www.biennalerotterdam.nl

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK)

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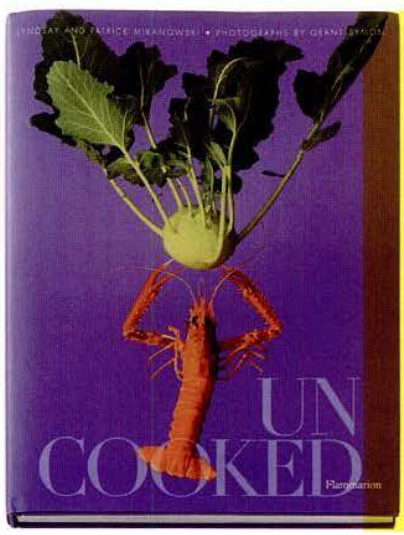
In the Modern World

Alyson Shotz: Light, Sound, Space / 23 Jan–22 June / The Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum / Ridgefield, CT

Many artists concentrate on introspection; Alyson Shotz prefers to focus her gaze outward. Shotz, who is somewhat obsessed with the properties of reflection and refraction, uses mirrors, prisms, and glass to create massive sculptural installations. On display here are a shimmering wall of 18,000 hand-cut plastic Fresnel magnifying lenses that melodically sway in museumgoers' breezes, and a 130-foot-long picket fence faced entirely in mirrors. Whether you check out yourself or the art is your own decision. www.aldrichart.org

Ti Collection / By Michael Heltzer for Heltzer, Inc.

We've always been suckers for the springy feel of silicone, from ergonomic computer products to more, well, personal items. This chair lets your body sink into the soft silicone gel pads of the cushion and back; you can rest easy knowing that the design's hardy titanium frame will support a wide range of posteriors. Accompanied by an equally pliant ottoman. www.heltzer.com



Uncooked / By Lyndsay and Patrick Mikanowski / Flammarion / $45

The next time you're supersizing your Happy Meal, chew on this: Your liver isn't hungry anymore—it's busy turning those excess proteins into love handles. *Uncooked* provides the evidence that eating raw at home is a good idea (if not taken to the extreme). With oversized glossy pages and macro-lens photographs that border on pornographic, the book espouses the health benefits of leaving the stove alone, and provides a number of superb recipes. Just pretend not to notice that the bright red lobster on the cover appears to be well done. www.editions.flammarion.com

PHOTOS BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK), SM NEEDHAM (ALYSON SHOTZ)

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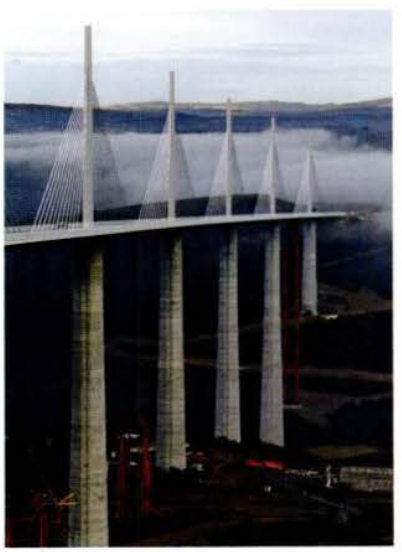
Cribs Home Collection / By MTV

If you haven't yet considered commissioning a life-size portrait of yourself on the bedroom wall or upholstering everything in leopard velour, you soon might. Since its inception, *MTV Cribs* has consistently stunned audiences with the egregious decorating sensibility of the rich and famous (save for the Redman episode). Now, with the eponymous home collection, *Cribs* is taking its trademark style to the street, and by "street" we mean JC Penney. www.jcpenney.com/mtv

Egg Bird Feeder / By J Schatz

Who says bird-watching isn't a modern sport? This bird feeder puts a fresh façade on a backyard basic. Available in nine bold colors, made of handcrafted ceramic with an aluminum base, the feeders are both weatherproof and squirrel-proof. To answer the age-old question: Get the Egg first; the birds will follow. www.eggbirdfeeder.com



Superstructure: Viaduc de Millau

Driving on traffic-clogged roads can take the fun out of any road trip—a problem that plagued Parisian motorists heading for the Mediterranean until the Viaduc opened early this year in southern France, shaving four hours off the travel time. Designed by architect Sir Norman Foster, the steel-framed Viaduc is the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world and stands taller than the Eiffel Tower. The delicate spires and swags of this structure threading through the clouds seem an appropriately stylish tribute to this art, wine, and Brie-centered country. www.viaducdemillau.com

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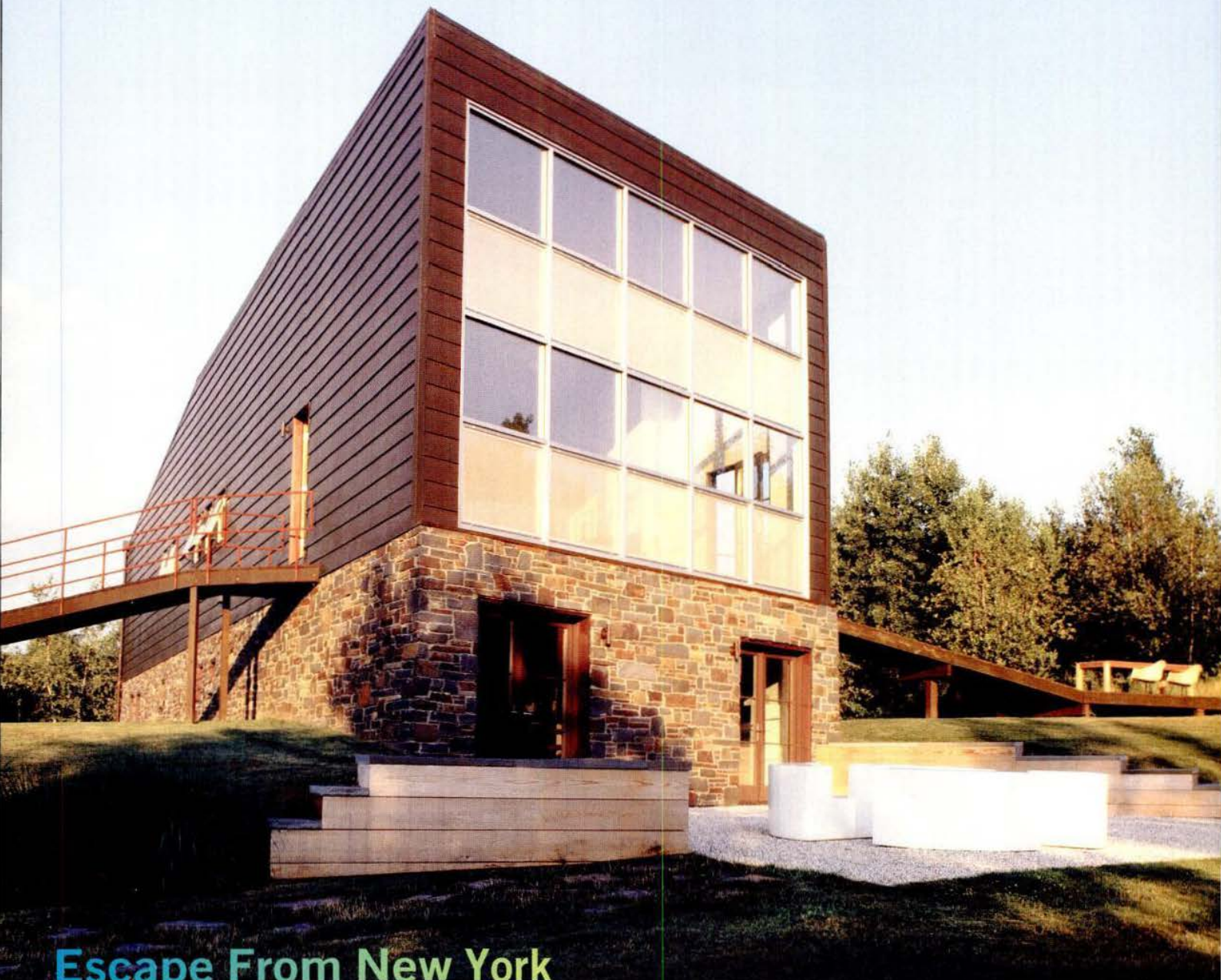


Escape From New York

The copper-clad house stretches out to the scenic Hudson Valley. Its floor-to-ceiling windows allow for views of the Catskill Mountains.

It was no exodus, of course, but when Kathleen Triem quit her job at a Manhattan design firm in July 1996, her associates were thunderstruck. Triem had decided to practice architecture in the more leisurely atmosphere of upstate New York and, as her colleagues saw it, she was shooting herself in the foot. One man went so far as to say that she'd be back in TriBeCa before you could say "Poughkeepsie." Triem, though, had had her fill of the Big Apple. Years of dealing with cost overruns and belligerent clients had taken a toll, and now she sought to pursue her career in a place that was more to her liking. Naturally, she had qualms, but when she chanced on Omi, a small town in the Hudson Valley, she knew that she'd found a home. Triem so liked the hamlet, in fact, that four weeks into her tenure, she sent word to the man in her life to come and join her. Peter Franck, who was as disenchanted with Manhattan as Triem was, jumped at the chance. One month later, the architect found himself on the Henry Hudson Parkway heading north. The two never looked back.

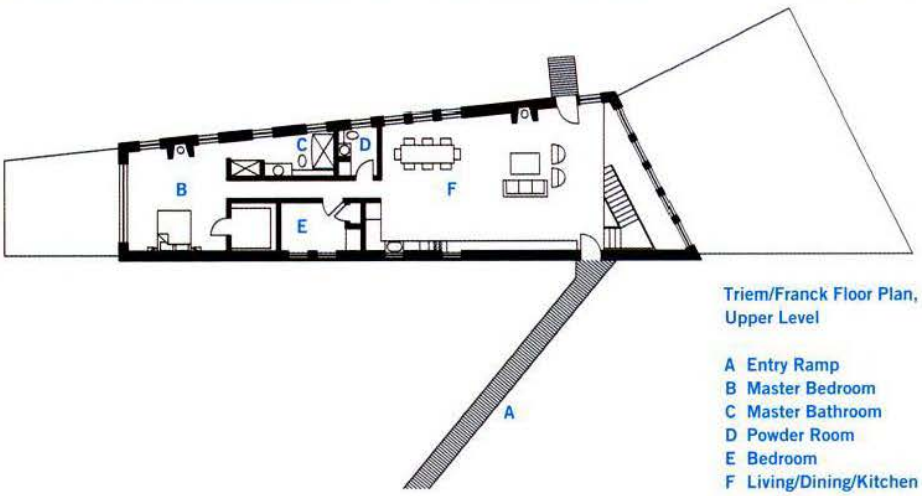
Triem quickly landed a job at Art Omi, a residency program for painters, writers, and musicians and, for the next three years, the couple worked assiduously at building up a clientele. And 12 months after they moved to Omi, the two enjoyed a stroke of luck. Art Omi, which encompasses 300 acres of farmland, ▸

decided to build a sculpture garden and asked the couple if they would work on the master plan. Their enthusiasm for the project was such that not only did they design the garden, they ended up becoming curators as well.

With their practice rapidly expanding, the two decided to build a house of their own. Many of the homes in the Omi area date from the 1800s. Franck, though, is no small fan of Richard Serra's, and drew on the artist's early works for design inspiration. In particular, Franck and Triem were quite fond of the monumental 90-ton steel sculpture *4-5-6*, which stands at the entrance of the Colby College Museum of Art in Waterville, Maine. "We wanted [the house] to work the way sculpture works, continuously unfolding as you walk around it," Franck explains. "Serra talks about sculpture as something that can only be put together in the mind. And that's the feeling we aimed for in the house."

The trapezoidal structure, nicknamed the Copper House, sits on a hillside overlooking the Catskill Mountains. From a distance, it draws to mind the monolithic figures lining the shores of Easter Island. Adding to the ambiguity are two access ramps that give the impression they might be wings. The building's exterior is a combination of blue stone and copper cladding. The house, Franck says, "is contemporary in form, very clean, and obviously modern in spirit." What he was looking for, ▸

A sculpture (top left) at the nearby Art Omi sculpture garden. The house was inspired by Richard Serra's sculpture 4-5-6—a 90-ton behemoth at Colby College in Waterville, Maine. Outdoor meals are a frequent occurence in good weather (bottom left).



Triem/Franck Floor Plan, Upper Level

A Entry Ramp
B Master Bedroom
C Master Bathroom
D Powder Room
E Bedroom
F Living/Dining/Kitchen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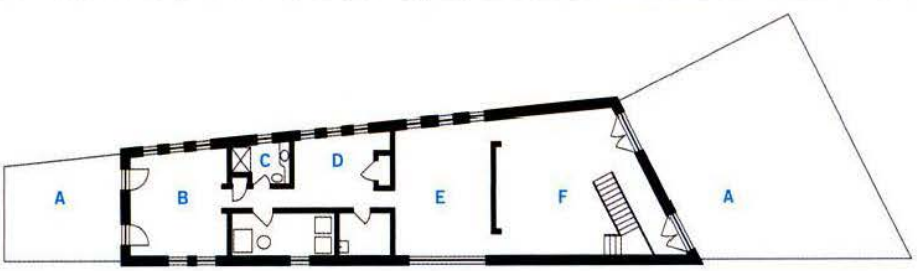
though, was the tactility that the copper and stone provided. The two materials are certainly traditional, says Triem, "but we enjoyed mixing the two in modern forms." And there was a bonus: The stone and copper make for a maintenance-free exterior.

Inside, the two-story, 3,000-square-foot structure is no less epic. The space constituting the living, dining, and kitchen areas is quintessentially loftlike. The ceilings rise to a dramatic 14 feet and the open floor plan engulfs 800 square feet. And to top it off, white is very much the theme throughout: white walls, white ceilings, white floors, and white sofas. The Lucite coffee tables and wooden chairs that dominate the floor space were designed by the couple, the chairs drawing on the amoebic forms of Joan Miró.

Triem took charge in the master bedroom, breaking from the stark white walls in the rest of the house by adding one wall of soothing Mediterranean blue. She also covered the façade of the fireplace with mirrored tiles; using nothing but place mats, she fashioned a unique rug for the living area. But trumping all of this are the breathtaking views. Gaze out any window, and all you see are trees and mountains.

In addition to designing the house themselves, Triem and Franck also acted as the general contractors. "That saved us quite a bit of money," Triem says. "We hired ▸

O chairs by Karim Rashid (top left) surround the dining table while the chaise, found at a flea market and reupholstered in pink velvet (bottom left) adds texture to the decor. Sebastien and Adrienne (below) find new uses for their parents' bed by West Elm. p.174



Triem/Franck Floor Plan, Lower Level

A Patio
B Bedroom
C Bathroom
D Library
E Playroom
F Painting Studio

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the subs directly, and we used a lot of people who had worked for us on other projects." The structure, which took one year to build and cost $350,000, proved something of a bargain. "We did some of the work ourselves," Triem says. "I painted the entire interior to save some money, and Peter did some minor framing work. But basically, we called in an awful lot of favors."

When two architects work on a project, the result can often lead to strife. Not in this case, though—despite the fact that the principals in question are husband and wife. "We have different ways of approaching form and design," Franck says, "but typically we don't proceed unless both of us are on the same page."

Upon its completion in 2001, the home, it seemed, could do no wrong—the space fit the busy duo's ways perfectly. The house, however, was built before the couple's three children came onto the scene, necessitating a slight lifestyle—and design—change. "Because of the kids," Franck says, "we had to give up Kathleen's painting studio and my workshop." Not that either minds—the house (and their kids), both agree, is a dream come true.

All of this is well and good, but one still has to wonder if the family ever visits the metropolis they left behind. "We do," Franck says. "Manhattan is much better now that we don't have to live there." ■

Adrienne takes a dip in the master bath (top left). Triem and Franck (bottom left) relax on the staircase. The main living area (below) is dominated by a massive wall of windows and white tile floors. The couch is by M2L and the wooden chairs are by Triem and Franck. p.174

How to Make My House Your House

Fluorescent Lighting
Triem and Franck used a fluorescent lighting system for ambient light in conjunction with accent lighting and wall washers to illuminate artwork. www.elliptipar.com

Radiant Heating
The couple raves about their radiant heating system, which pumps hot water through tubes concealed in the floors of the house. It's ideal for rooms with high ceilings and stone floors. They walk around barefoot all winter long and still manage to stay warm.

Cross-ventilation
Linear spatial organization is great for encouraging air movement in homes with large windows at the front and back. Smaller windows along the length of the house also enhance the cooling effect of the wind.

Kitchen Range
Triem and Franck love their Viking pop-up range vent (not shown). Just by touching a button, it allows them to have expansive countertops without a huge vent suspended from the ceiling. www.vikingrange.com

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Story by Catherine Franklin | Photos by Peter Hyatt

Black, Red, and Green All Over

A two-hour drive from the metropolis of Melbourne, Australia, diverts one from busy freeways to minor roads that lead deep into the Victorian hinterland. This is old country—diggings from the 1850s gold rush pockmark a landscape now devoted to beef cattle, olive trees, and grapevines. Several miles of dirt track running through the dense bush give way to a clearing, and there, against a striated backdrop of old messmate trees (an Australian timber similar to oak), a caravanlike dwelling appears to hover, its rich timber tones and black framework setting up a powerful graphic resonance in this heavily forested context of soft grays and greens.

Architect Jesse Judd designed this house as a weekend retreat for his family. On one level it's a sleek, modern home, but on another it's a utilitarian bush shack that celebrates the spirit of the Aussie holiday: Cricket is on television, the adults sit around chatting, and the children scoot around the deck on their bikes. Miesian echoes aside, this is a robust house built for family fun.

Given the remote location, Judd decided to keep construction as simple as possible. In order to minimize the workers needed onsite, for example, he had eight steel portal frames prefabricated—skillfully curved to the desired degree—then trucked through the bush to the clearing. Once these "bones" were erected, the builder filled in the gaps using plywood sheeting, metal decking, corrugated steel, and insulation. "A friend likened the building to a whale, with a rib cage of black steel and flesh of red plywood," the architect adds, grinning.

The house is self-sufficient except for the power supply it shares with a scattering of farms and bush dwellings in the district. (When the house is unoccupied, the power is shut down altogether.) Rainwater is collected from the roof and stored in two of the largest tanks Judd could find. "We had 30 people here over Christmas and everyone had a shower," he says with satisfaction, adding that solar power was deemed impractical for hot water, given that the house is either completely empty or teeming with people. The water tanks are raised so that gravity forces water to slosh continually through the ▸

With this curvy, glowing form, architect Jesse Judd has rendered the sometimes-harsh Australian bush habitable for his friends and family.

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It looks dramatic, but the building has very little physical impact on the landscape. "It's anti-monumental," Judd says. "There's no reason why you couldn't pick it up and move it elsewhere."

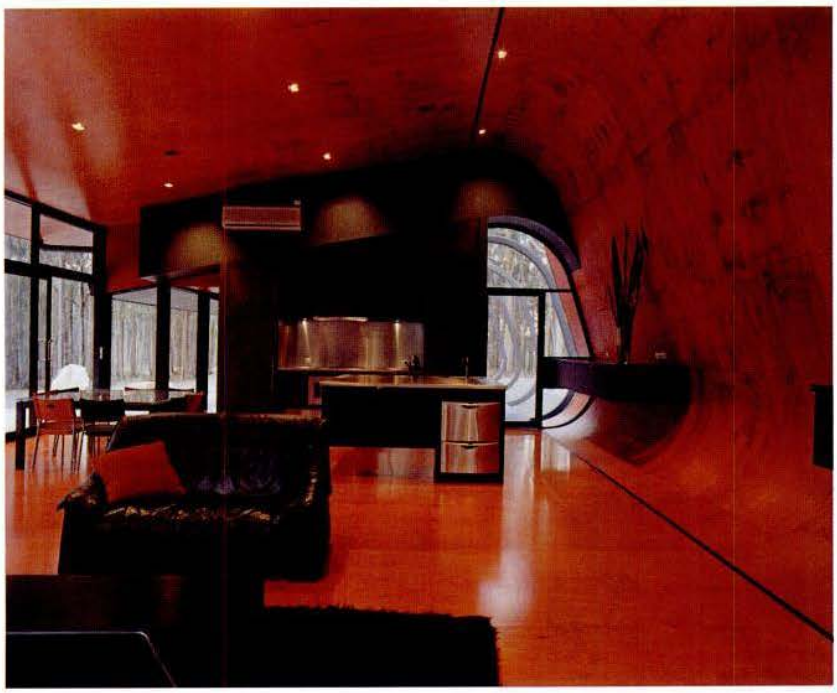
covered gutters and downpipes, providing some protection against bush fires.

When planning the house, Judd dug deep into Australia's cultural memory of lean-to tin sheds and verandas designed for lazy afternoons. With its slanted corrugated-steel roof and timber deck, the bedroom wing recalls the makeshift sleeping quarters of nearby farmhouses. Internally, the plan is very simple: bedrooms and bathroom in a line, linked to the passage via sliding panels. External glass doors slide away to merge the interior hall with the deck and invite cooling breezes. "People have trouble telling which is deck and which is hallway when the house is opened up," says Judd. The roof continues beyond the extensive north- and west-facing glazing to provide a measure of shading from the sun.

Safety precautions also had a bearing on the design. This area is prone to bush fires—the blackened trunks of nearby trees are a constant reminder—and the forest undergrowth has its fair share of poisonous snakes and other creatures that bite. In response, the building is raised off the ground, hovering above a sea of blue metal gravel strewn around and under the house and along the driveway to act as a firebreak and to prevent the forest undergrowth from encroaching. The wide deck surrounding the house provides a safe, elevated space for the children to play when they're not going on supervised rambles through the bush.

Refreshingly, Judd has departed from a prevailing school of thought that insists rural dwellings blend sympathetically with the Australian bush. Instead, he imagined his building as a bold insertion, rather than as a sly intruder that must be camouflaged. The glowing interior palette of bright pinks and reds is sharpened by jet-black steel frames, water tanks, and roofs, while black window frames and joinery bring out the red glow of the internal plywood lining. "I asked the people who mixed the red stain to imagine tomato sauce!" he says.

With its bold, hovering form and clean graphic lines, this is a no-nonsense house for a no-nonsense environment. ■



Tempting Timber

Building with timber is an Australian tradition. Architect Jesse Judd honored this heritage, but selected recycled or plantation timbers instead of nonrenewable hardwoods from old-growth forests. The house's interior floors and walls are clad in rotary-cut hoop pine plywood—thin sheets of plantation timber that the builder could bend to fit the curve of the steel portal frames.

Hoop pine is a native Australian timber that's being planted and harvested as a sustainable building material. It's very versatile, serving as a durable floor surface as well as a veneer for walls and kitchen joinery. Other joinery elements in the house feature eco-friendly medium-density fiberboard (MDF), which is made from plantation-grown radiata pine, recycled paper, bamboo, and scrap wood.

The deck required a lot of timber, too. Judd used reclaimed turpentine timber from the demolished piers of the old Woolloomooloo Wharf in Sydney. Under the hot Australian sun, the rough-sawn planks have weathered to a soft gray, and after years partially submerged in the blue waters of Sydney Harbor individual planks have warped and swelled to some degree. Judd says it will take a while to settle—and he's quite happy to wait. —C.F.

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Throughout my childhood and most of my adolescence, our patio furniture consisted of a series of throwaway dining-table-and-umbrella sets. While these discount designs often entered their autumn years before the summer even began, two pieces of patio furniture stubbornly remained. "The Jeanettes," inherited from and lovingly named after my great-great-aunt, were sturdily crafted aluminum chaise longues with a tendency to outlive; by the time they'd made their way to my mother, the cushions' jaunty chartreuse-and-mustard flowers had long since faded to a whitewash of yellow vinyl. But even though their overall design was about as attractive as a great-great-aunt, the Jeanettes evinced a characteristic paramount to any piece of quality patio furniture: durability.

Outdoor furniture must do more than simply exist in nature, it must endure nature so that man, being the fair-weather bon vivant that he is, may enjoy it in favorable conditions. Taking this into account, Dwell sought the counsel of a professional orderer and balancer of nature, landscape architect Pamela Burton, to help us discern which patio furniture would hold up in bad weather and good taste. "You have to have either stainless steel or aluminum to be outside," says Burton. "Chrome will not work. It doesn't last." Composite materials provide a sustainable alternative to the more traditional wood, steel, and aluminum. Teak, having long been the hardwood darling of outdoor furniture, has lately been superseded by ipe, a dense, earth-friendly wood that naturally resists rot, decay, insects, and mold without the use of toxic chemicals and is often harvested from naturally sustainable forests. While stainless steel can be expensive, some companies, like Modern Outdoor, offer an alternative powder-coated steel option, which mitigates hefty material expense.

In order to critique the designs, Burton visited several Los Angeles retailers. Her distinctive approach to analyzing each piece was both insightful and playful (she often lingers on the sound of things, particularly names, and whimsically forgoes English for Spanish). At the end of our conversation, she suggested that we pick the beverage we could imagine drinking at each patio set. While I do not feel there is a direct correlation between Extremis's Gargantua and the Jeanettes, they do share one important attribute: They are (and were) best enjoyed with family and a frosty beer.

A Note on Our Expert: Pamela Burton established her eponymous landscape architecture firm in 1975. She teaches at USC and has published several books, including most recently *Private Landscapes: Modernist Gardens in Southern California* (Princeton Architectural Press). She is currently working with Maya Lin on the Claire Trevor School of the Arts plaza at the University of California, Irvine. Her firm is involved in numerous university, commercial, residential, and institutional projects in the United States, the Ukraine, China, and Taiwan.

Dining Out

It is rare to find a pensive picnicker; who could be sad spitting watermelon seeds? Dwell set out to discover which patio sets could match such a pleasant afternoon pastime.

Globus chair by Jesús Gasca and Pinot bistro table / Design Within Reach / www.dwr.com
Globus chair: Stainless steel frame, plastic seat and backrest, plastic glides (3 colors): $218; Pinot bistro table: Powder-coated steel; $258

Expert Opinion: Well . . . *Je-sús Ga-sca.* Beautiful work, I'm so glad to see that it can be outside. It's exquisite, and look at the price! I think it's very comfortable and has a great exuberance. Globus, what a great name—and of course it takes a Spanish designer to come up with something like this—it's Picasso-esque. I could see this in a café or on somebody's balcony.

What We Think: DWR recently released the plastic version of Globus, to the delight of café owners and café dawdlers alike. These stackable and weather-resistant versions bear all the classic design features of their indoor counterparts. The Pinot bistro table does not vie for attention—it is the perfect counterpoint to this affordably stylish chair.

Illustrations by Michael Gillette

1966 Collection and Petal table / Richard Schultz / www.richardschultz.com
1966 dining chair: Various color options, cast and extruded aluminum, white polyester powder coat, woven vinyl-coated polyester mesh: $1,280; Petal table: Machined high-density polyurethane, sand-cast aluminum, stainless steel: $2,100

Expert Opinion: Tremendous effort goes into constructing an environment that looks effortless. And I think that Richard Schultz has really achieved this and so [his work] demands that kind of environment. It doesn't want to be compressed into a space that has too much going on. It demands a kind of effortless space. I think the Modern Outdoor piece is probably going to last longer, but if you take a look at the flexible weave of the fabric, in terms of comfort, I think it's a very wonderful dining chair.

What We Think: Either matched with the Knoll Bertoia chair or with a 1966 chair, the Petal table is a classic. Richard Schultz has limited quantities of its wood petals and is sourcing alternative options in wood, so we suggest that you buy them while you can. These chairs and tables are timeless. ▸

Watershed / 54Dean / www.54dean.com
Teak and stainless steel. Full set (table, 4 chairs): $9,650

Expert Opinion: I could picture Watershed in a residential patio on the East Coast or in a place where it rains more than in Southern California. It has a really wonderful personality to it. I think the angle of repose of the chairs with the angles of the table legs is an interesting compositional idea. Sometimes you're looking out at the furniture, you're not always sitting in it, you know? "Provocative" is a good way to describe it.

What We Think: Based on the simple act of resting chair backs against the table to protect them from the elements, 54Dean designed Watershed to easily assume this resting position. The choice of material ensures a standard degree of longevity, and having a chair that is inclined to tip forward rather than backwards will put a lot of nervous dinner guests at ease, though we have a sinking suspicion that this table looks best unoccupied.

Gargantua / Extremis / www.extremis.be
Teak, galvanized and stainless steel: approximately $5,800 ($7,200 with 4 backrests)

Expert Opinion: The idea is that the seats can slide up to form a table with twice the diameter. It's really innovative, but you have to be careful; you don't want a chair and table to do too many things because it will never do any of them well. I am a bit worried about the backrest running into that angle of the table, I think that might be kind of a *problema*. The materials are good; however, the bench is a little—not flimsy, but if I sit on one end of the bench it kind of rocks back and forth a little bit, so I don't know how long it's going to last.

What We Think: Gargantua has taken on the huge responsibility of being both chair and table, and while we are also not convinced of the stability, we like the execution. The adjustable chairs allow the seats to be raised to varying heights, which can act as a booster seat for children. This table is rowdy and exciting.

Etra / Modern Outdoor / www.modernoutdoor.com
Stainless or powder-coated steel with choice of ipe or polyboard (6 colors); choice of 4', 5', 6', 8', or 10' tables and benches; optional cushion feature. Large armchair (not shown): $869 stainless steel, $439 powder-coated steel; 6' bench: $1,839 stainless steel, $919 powder-coated steel; 6' table: $2,659 stainless steel, $1,329 powder-coated steel

Expert Opinion: Etra gets an A+ from me, in the design and development of something that is enduring. It's sophisticated, crafted, thought through, and sturdy. Of all the products I've looked at, this is really substantial. It's going to last longer than anything because of the materials. There's added comfort with the cushion [option] and the incline of the back is appropriate for reclining.

What We Think: Each piece in the Modern Outdoor collection upholds a standard that is hard to beat. The use of materials and impeccable craftsmanship make for a noteworthy product. With the added bonus of a cost-friendly, powder-coated-steel alternative, they're also widening their consumer range. ■

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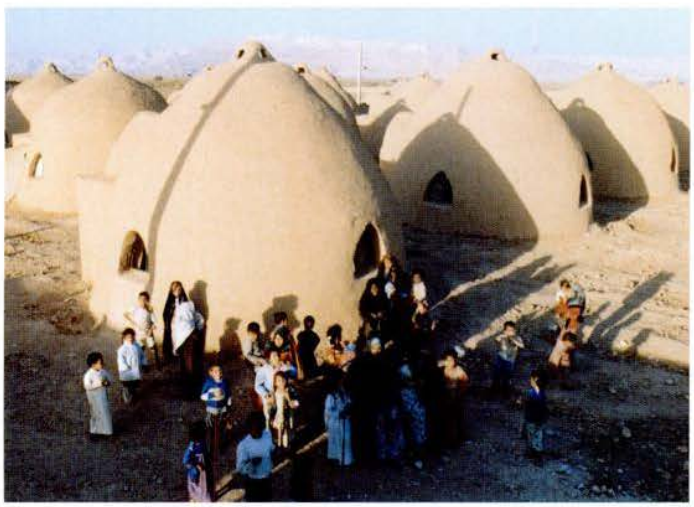

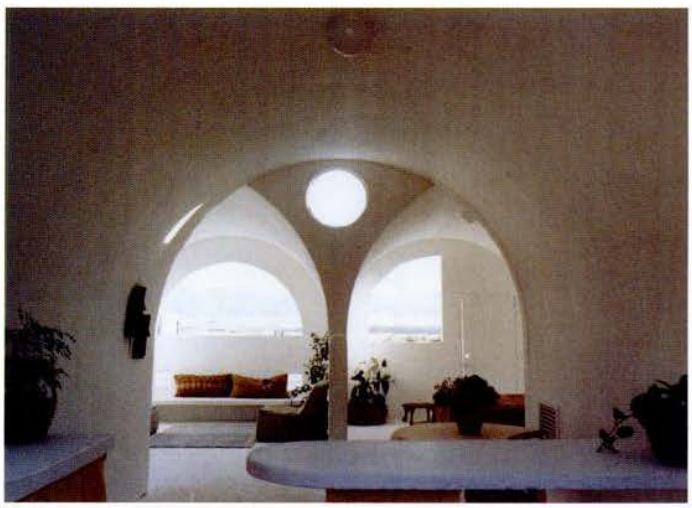

Castles Made of Sand

In 1976, Nader Khalili shuttered his Tehran design office, boarded a motorcycle, and—like an architectural Che Guevara—set off on a five-year odyssey, traveling the countryside and studying Iran's ancient adobe construction techniques. "I was searching for a way to create a building that was totally in harmony with nature, that could be available to everybody around the world," Khalili recalls. "The adobes were environmentally harmonious. But one earthquake would destroy them." Khalili's initial solution? "Ceramic houses—I set them on fire and glazed them." Using this novel strengthening technique, the architect successfully rebuilt old dwellings and constructed new school buildings in a number of desert villages.

What worked in Iran, however, where clay-rich earth and hot-burning oil were plentiful, didn't necessarily travel well. In 1983, Khalili was in California pondering the problem when NASA called, seeking ideas for building on the moon. The tirelessly imaginative architect proposed Velcro-coated bags that could be filled with lunar dust and coiled into cylinders. "I thought, Why not apply this idea to housing on earth?"

The result is the "superadobe" structure: layers of sandbags set in a circular plan, with a strand of four-point barbed wire between each level to provide stability, and corbeled at the top into a dome-shaped roof. This simple design offers multiple advantages: The buildings are earthquake-, hurricane-, and flood-resistant. Khalili's basic unit, a three-room, 400-square-foot house he calls the Moon Cocoon, can be erected by five laborers—four of them unskilled—within weeks. They are sustainable, adaptable, and literally dirt-cheap.

Khalili, founder of the California Institute of Earth Art and Architecture (Cal-Earth), is proud that superadobes have proliferated throughout the Americas, Asia, and Africa, and received the approval of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. But he seems proudest of their appearance. "You can never build one of these that doesn't look beautiful," Khalili says. "Just as you have never seen an ugly tree or an ugly flower." ■

Nader Khalili's lunar-inspired "superadobe" homes are suitable virtually anywhere on earth. In emergency situations, they can be erected in a matter of days.

PHOTOS COURTESY NADER KHALILI / CAL-EARTH

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Story by Brian Libby

Photos by Andy Boone

Nagoya: Renters' Paradise

The city of Nagoya dates back to early 17th-century feudal Japan, when the famous shogun Tokugawa built the Nagoya Castle. Since then, the city has grown to become the industrial heart of the country with automobile, aviation, high-tech, and other corporations headquartered here. At the same time, Nagoya is surrounded by hundreds of square miles of farmland, thus maintaining a small-town hospitality amidst big-city cultural amenities. This is only enhanced by Nagoya's position in the geographic center of Japan, which has helped the city incorporate a diverse array of regional cultures and traditions. Kabuki, the traditional Japanese drama, has a long history here, and the city has long been known for its artful fabrics and ceramics.

Because an overwhelming majority of Nagoya's buildings were destroyed during World War II, the city's urban fabric is decidedly mid-century, with both positive and ill-fated results. Planning-wise, however, modern Nagoya has successfully added wide boulevards and an easily navigable street grid. And since its hosting of the 1989 World Design Expo, the city has increasingly become known for architecture, with famous names like Tadao Ando, Yoshio Taniguchi, and Fumihiko Maki designing buildings here.

It is an American-born Nagoya architect, however, whose work first caught the eye of Yuji Otakeyama, a local trucking company president who was looking for a second home and office nearer to Nagoya's city center. The M/F House, a crisp and contemporary nine-unit apartment complex designed by Michel Weenick and his firm, Architecture W, represents a new trend in Japan toward higher-end rental properties. For decades after the war, Japanese developers dictated the composition of rental apartment buildings, which were largely banal and utilitarian. But after ten years of economic doldrums, a new generation is looking more than ever to rent instead of buy, and good design no longer must be accompanied by a mortgage.

Dwell spoke with Otakeyama and Weenick about the M/F House and Otakeyama's experience of living there.

The M/F House is a modern building in an old, not-so-desirable inner-city neighborhood. How has it fared?

Weenick: When we were asked to come up with a concept for the site, we realized that its location was more convenient for more people than the developers were giving it credit for. We thought if we could do something more downtown-ish, something with a little bit more style to it, then people would pay to live there. And that turned out to be true. It was full from the day it opened, ▸

"Japanese developers will say 'put in lots of glass so it will be bright,' but what they have in mind is one eight-foot sliding door," says architect Michel Weenick. "We did entire walls of glass."

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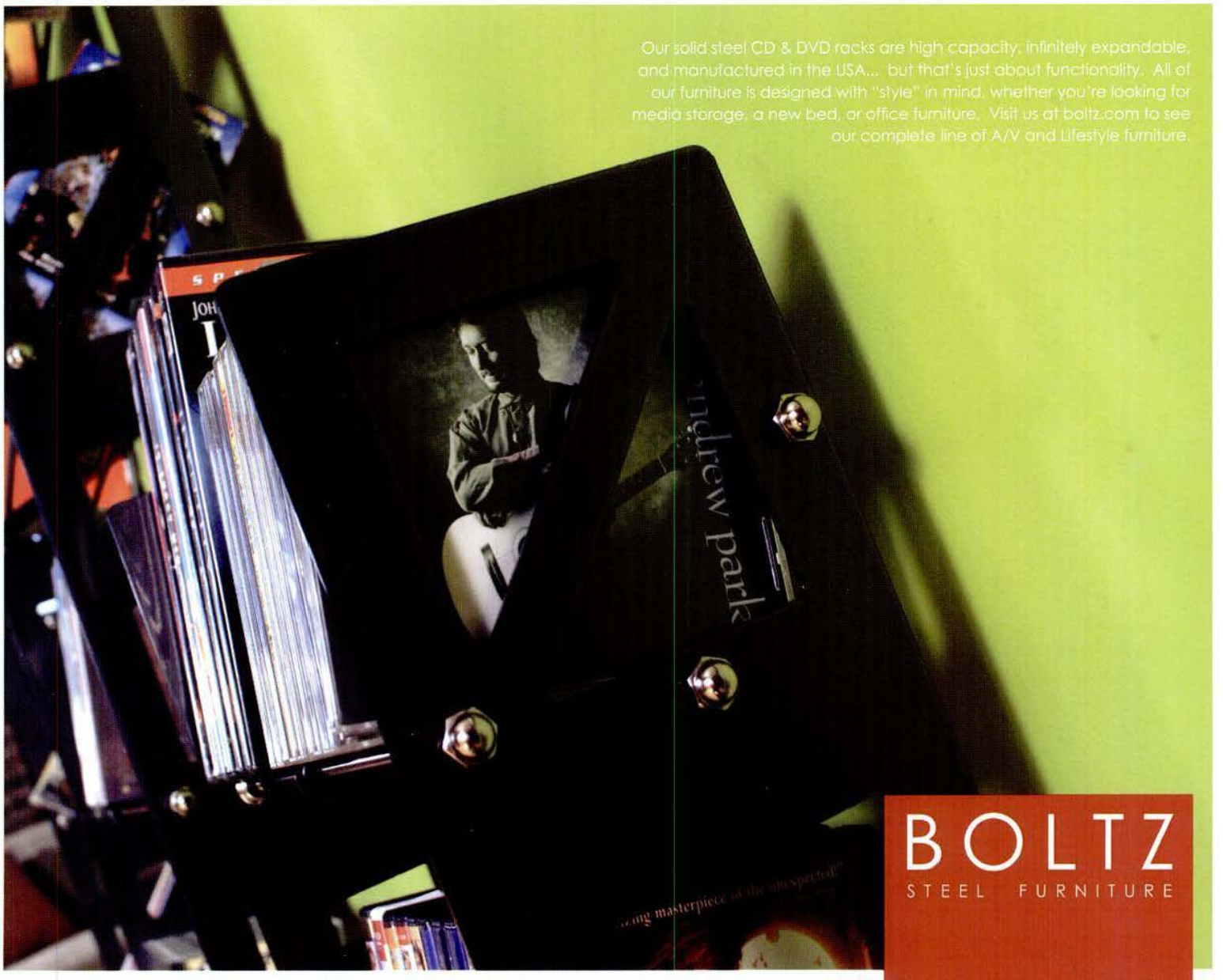

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and when somebody moves out there are people waiting to move in.

What's the best part about living in this apartment?
Otakeyama: I like the combination of spiral stairs and two-story space on the south side of my apartment. There is a feeling of connection between the two floors and yet both are independent spaces. I also love how the light shines through the spiral stairs from above at night. This place gets much more sunlight than normal apartments.

Along with glass, the other primary material in the building is concrete. That's very much in keeping with the work of great Japanese architects like Ando, but what's it like to live with every day?
Otakeyama: I appreciate the starkness of the concrete walls. I can put any of my stuff in the apartment without having to worry if it fits or not. All the apartments I had lived in previously were so standardized that I was pretty excited about the chance to live in an interior space that was different. After I started living at M/F, I began to think, more than ever, that uniqueness of design is really important. All of my friends tell me how unique and cool the place is. And I'm surrounded only by things that I like: my pachinko machines and my miniature car and toy collections. I can do whatever I want inside because it's such a simple space to relax and live in.

From the front this is a relatively bulky building, but it appears very nimble because of how the second and third floors are cantilevered over the first. Was that by accident or by design?
Weenick: I've had a growing interest in cantilevers, mainly out of disgust and frustration with the standard Japanese way of designing things. Usually you can see all four corners go straight down to the ground, which seems a more sturdy way to meet Japan's rigid seismic codes. But it doesn't always have to be that way. I've long been trying to get my architecture to be a little bit more dynamic and show a little bit more movement. And luckily there was good reason for the cantilevering here. Because it's a rental apartment building, you can't ignore the economics. By splitting the top two floors, it created a central space in back that was open to the sky. That way the back units were able to get that ideal southern exposure.

What do you think of the neighborhood?
Otakeyama: I like the Nakamura area because it's close to Nagoya Station and Sakae, the central part of Nagoya. It's convenient to get around. And unlike other centrally located neighborhoods, it's fairly quiet.

Is there untapped potential for the central part of the city?
Otakeyama: Yes, I think so. It's just that people in Nagoya still don't know how to bring out the city's potential. But the ongoing Expo 2005 Aichi [a world exposition on sustainability] may help accelerate that. ▸

The entrance to Otakeyama's apartment (top). The orange doors help brighten the concrete exterior. The glass-enclosed bathrooms (left) provide excitement if not the most privacy. Otakeyama and friend (above) enjoy the new digs.

"After I started living at M/F, I began to think, more than ever, that uniqueness of design is really important."

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A Nagoya Castle / www.japan-guide.com/e/e3300.html
Nagoya was one of the most important "castle towns" in Japan from the 15th century on. The Nagoya Castle is one of the best spots to learn about this history.

B Atsuta Shrine / www.atsutajingu.or.jp
Atsuta, one of the most important Shinto shrines, is situated in a wooded park in southern Nagoya. The shrine was remodeled after the Ise shrines in the Japanese Shinmei-zukuri architecture style.

C Toyota Municipal Museum of Art / www.museum.toyota.aichi.jp
Nagoya's premier art museum was designed by Yoshio Taniguchi, who is also responsible for New York's new Museum of Modern Art. You can see some of the same architectural exploration in the Nagoya museum, with a poetically simple series of floating walls and layering planes.

D Toyota Automobile Museum / www.toyota.co.jp/Museum
Nagoya's signature company is Toyota, and the museum bearing its name is home not just to Camrys and Corollas. There is a vast collection of historic European, American, and Japanese cars, too.

Osu Kannon Temple / www.ohsu.co.jp/kan_e.html
Located just south of Sakae and Fushimi, Nagoya's main shopping centers, is Nagoya's oldest temple, Osu Kannon. The surrounding area is home to a vibrant fusion of old-style arcades selling everything from discount electronics to secondhand kimonos.

Nanzan University and Nagoya International School / www.nanzan-u.ac.jp
Designed by Antonin Raymond, a Frank Lloyd Wright disciple who came to Japan to work on Wright's landmark Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, the Nanzan University campus brought some of the first modern Western architecture to Nagoya in the mid-1960s.

Tokugawa Art Museum / www.cjn.or.jp/tokugawa
Holdings include art, books, and treasures from one of Japan's last shoguns. The grounds were renovated in the late 1980s and there's an extensive shogun museum there. ■

PHOTOS BY KENNETH HAMM / PHOTO JAPAN (CASTLE), ANDREAS KUNERT / ARCHITEKTURPHOTO (TOYOTA ART MUSEUM).

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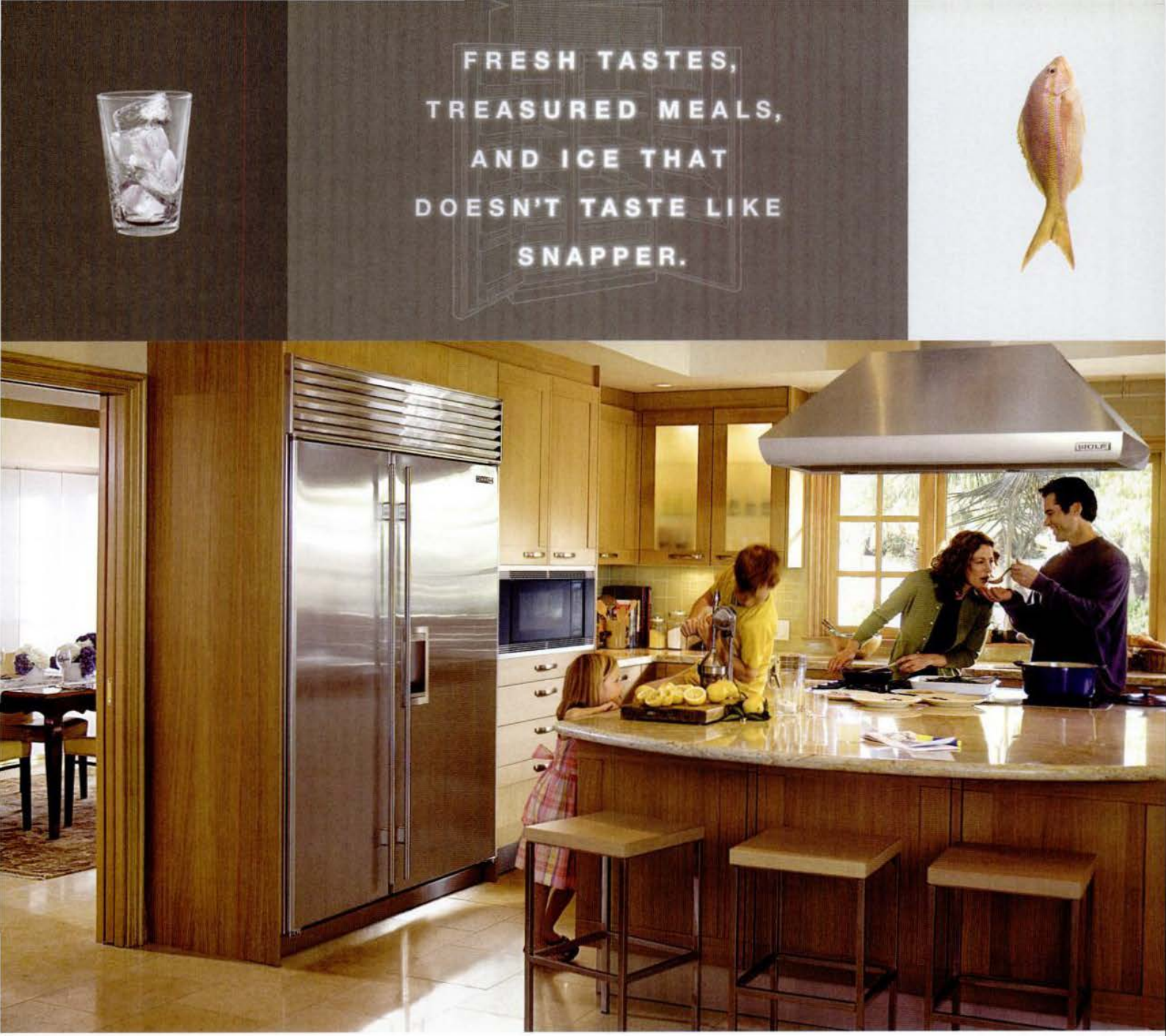

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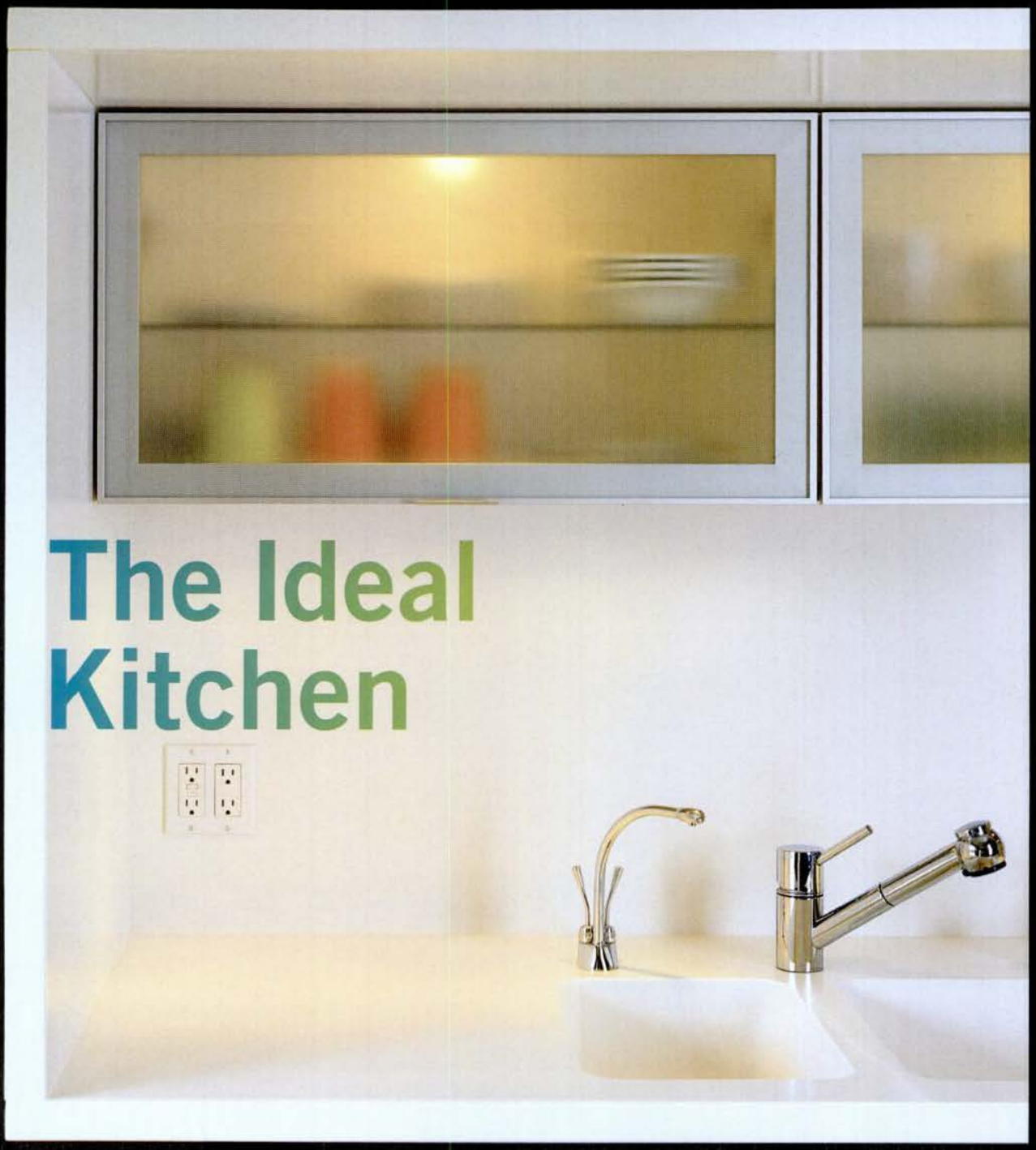

The Ideal Kitchen

If the projects in this special kitchen section speak to anything, it is the individual's ability to define and shape his or her domestic space. And, as the kitchen is the space in which people generally spend the most time, it should reflect something personal, be it a lifestyle choice or a pervading aesthetic or architectural vision.

Dwell deemed the following kitchens ideal in part for their overall functionality but more so for their ability to express the unique character of each resident. From plastic colored panels to earthy Mexican tiles, each of these projects simply builds upon an already established quality of life. ▸

Story by Amber Bravo

Photos by Joe Fletcher

A Deam Kitchen

Project: Cohen Kitchen
Architect: Christopher C. Deam
Location: Palo Alto, California

After accepting a position at Stanford's literature department, Margaret Cohen and her two sons moved from New York City to Palo Alto. "Margaret wrote one of the most poetic program briefs I've ever read," says Christopher C. Deam. Said program was atypical in that Cohen did not ask for specific functional requirements for the space; rather, she focused on its character and how she wanted to feel within it. She even enlisted her children in the process. Six-year-old Max requested that he be able "to eat cereal with the sun on his face so he could wake up in the morning." This directive inspired the architect to create transparent layering throughout the space to allow light to filter in through colored "veils." Deam chose a stark color palette to create an outlining effect. The dark-stained oak cabinetry was meant to recede into the background so as to enhance the presence of those inhabiting the space; the result combines both setting and character to create an atmosphere that is utterly concise. ▸

Project Specifications:

Custom cabinets: City Cabinetmakers, www.citycabinetmakers.com

Kitchen hardware: Forms + Surfaces, www.forms-surfaces.com

Oven/cooktop: Miele, www.miele.com

Oven hood: Sirius, www.siriushoods.com

Dishwasher: Miele, www.miele.com

Refrigerator: Viking, www.vikingrange.com

Faucet: KWC, www.kwcfaucets.com

Counter/integral sink: Wilsonart International, www.wilsonart.com

Coco chairs: Fratelli Tominaga, Design Within Reach, www.dwr.com

Dining table: Mistral vetro, www.kristalia.it

Lighting: Moooi, www.moooi.com

Flooring: Vertical stack bamboo

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Story by Amara Holstein

Photos by John M. Hall

Shaker Industrial

Project: Hovland/Lawrence Residence
Architect: Goolrick Architects
Location: Wilton, Connecticut

In the small Connecticut town of Wilton sits a 1940s house that architect Page Goolrick describes as being a "very honest, simple house with a Shaker feel." Unfortunately, the original kitchen didn't have quite the same charm as the home, and owners Pamela Hovland and Steve Lawrence decided that the dark, tight space was due for replacement. The new kitchen is flooded with light and, at 448 square feet, has ample room for the couple and their three sons to congregate. Long tables provide a place for the youngest to create butcher-paper masterpieces, and stone floors easily withstand the family's foot traffic and mess. Factory-inspired sash windows maintain the indoor-outdoor feel of the room and help achieve Goolrick's goal for the homeowners to "feel like they're stepping out of the house into the nearby woods." To ward off the infamous New England winter chill, double-glazed insulated glass and efficient forced heat keep the space warm. And the old kitchen? It's now the master bedroom suite. ▸

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Project Specifications:

Custom cabinets: Great Jones Creations, (718) 609-1623

Hardware: Omnia Industries, www.omniaindustries.com

Dishwasher: Asko, www.askousa.com

Refrigerator: Sub-Zero, www.subzero.com

Faucet: Gemini, www.geminibkp.com

Steel counter/integral sinks: Bowery Restaurant Supply, www.boweryrestaurantsupply.com

Dining table: Custom, Bowery Restaurant Supply, www.boweryrestaurantsupply.com

Fluted pendant lamps: Bone Simple, www.bonesimple.com

Globe pendant lamps: Louis Poulsen, www.louispoulsen.com

Bertoia chairs: Knoll, www.knoll.com

Storage cabinet: Sonrisa, www.sonrisafurniture.com

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Story by Amber Bravo

Photos by Paúl Rivera

Swiss-Mex

Project: Buehler/Schiller Residence
Architect: Aardvarchitecture
Location: New York, New York

The architects at Aardvarchitecture had the difficult task of integrating a Mexican-inspired kitchen into the modern aesthetic that runs throughout the rest of this New York City loft. The clients, two Swiss-born artists, associated their time spent in Mexico with a specific material sensibility, like rough textures, but, as Lynette Widder of Aardvarchitecture says, "those elements taken out of context start to look like a Mexican restaurant pretty quickly." In order to resolve this incongruity, the designers altered traditional Mexican elements, like the Talavera tile (which they mitered into circles), to be more in sync with the prevailing aesthetic. The designers found choosing a color palette especially challenging because, as luck would have it, the clients have drastically different color sensibilities: He's a painter who works with vibrant hues; she's a ceramicist who works predominantly in a neutral gray. In the end, the initially competing elements melded perfectly into a kitchen full of personality.

Project Specifications:

Custom terra cotta: Yu Morishita, formyu@yahoo.com

Decorative painting: Yves Tessier, yvestessier@geoide.qc.ca

Drawer pulls: Siro, www.siro.at

Cooktop: Thermador, www.thermador.com

Oven: Explorer Appliances, www.explorerappliances.com

Dishwasher: Miele, www.miele.com

Refrigerator: Northland, www.northlandnka.com

Sink: Kohler, www.kohler.com

Faucet: KWC, www.kwcfaucets.com

Countertops and floors: Talavera tile, Artesanos, www.artesanos.com

Track lighting: Licht + Raum idee, www.lichtidee.ch

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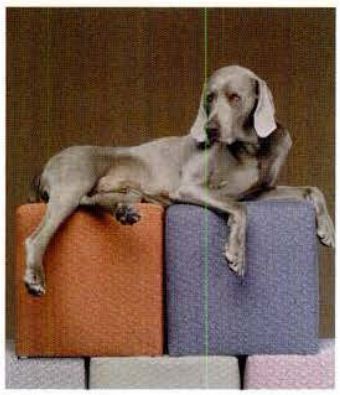

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Story by Amber Bravo

Photos by Sarah Blee

Gray in the U.K.

Project: Studio A
Architect: Jenny Lovell
Location: London, England

Jenny Lovell first met Jo Gibbons back in 1990, when Gibbons and her husband, Luke, offered her a position at their thriving London-based architecture firm. "I came through architecture school when there were very few female role models," explains Lovell. "Jo was a huge inspiration to me; I learned how she gained enormous respect as a landscape architect in a very male-dominated environment." Lovell and Gibbons maintained a close relationship over the years. After Luke passed away in 1995, Gibbons maintained the firm but wanted to consolidate work and home spaces; she asked Lovell to design the refurbishment and extension of the Victorian row house she'd purchased in the Islington neighborhood.

In order to create a manageable live/work space, Lovell unified the flooring, blinds, and shelving treatments throughout and established viable work surfaces in both office and home. A ten-foot-long table in the kitchen accommodates both large meetings and family gatherings. A storage wall running along the west wall in the kitchen and bathroom cleans up the irregular edge of chimneys and redundant recesses and reduces clutter. The resulting space is one in which clients are able to enter without feeling like they are intruding into a domestic zone but, most important, one that feels like home to Gibbons and her two sons.

Project Specifications:

Kitchen cabinetry: SieMatic, www.siematic.com

Stainless steel integral countertops/sink: Nicholas Anthony Ltd., www.nicholas-anthony.co.uk

White-laminated splashback: Glass Express Ltd., Tel: 011-44-(0)-20-7828-6046

Faucets: KWC, www.kwcfaucets.com

Oven/stovetop: Siemens, www.siemens.com

Oven hood: Elica, www.elica.it

Jasper Morrison Glo-ball lamp: www.jaspermorrison.com

Floors: Khars oak, www.flooringsupplies.co.uk

Chairs: Hans Wegner (vintage)

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Story by Amber Bravo

Photos by Elizabeth Felicella

Bright White

Project: Vanalstine/Shein Residence
Architect: Messana O'Rorke Architects
Location: New York, New York

Prompted by the birth of their son, Peter Vanalstine and Meagan Shein hired Messana O'Rorke to redesign their 1,300-square-foot New York City loft. The original space needed to be divided into three distinct volumes (two bedrooms and the common area). To do this without compromising the loft's only natural light source, the two south-facing windows, the architects enclosed the additional bedrooms with frosted Plexiglas. The modestly sized kitchen is nestled between three walls containing built-in shelving and cabinetry for seamless storage, and is partially enclosed by a bar, which defines the space but maintains openness. In choosing white and stainless steel surfaces, the architects were able to enlarge the space and reflect light. This effect is particularly strong in the evening. When the lights are on, Vanalstine and Shein's room glows like a lamp, illuminating the architects' master plan: to add spaces within, without taking away the feeling of spaciousness.

Project Specifications:

Custom cabinetry: Quality General Construction, Inc., (201) 998-1836

Cabinet pulls: Sugatsune, www.sugatsune.com

Pantry hardware: Häfele, www.hafeleonline.com/usa

Oven/cooktop/dishwasher: Miele, www.miele.com

Refrigerator: GE, www.geappliances.com

Custom stainless steel counter/integral sink: General Sheet Metal Works, Inc., www.gsmw.com

Faucet: Dornbracht, www.dornbracht.com

Lighting: RAB, www.rabweb.com

Flooring: Stained oak

Barstools: Karim Rashid, www.plushpod.com

Dining table: Custom oak and zinc, The Conran Shop, www.conran.com

Kids' dining set: Gulliver by IKEA, www.ikea.com

Orange pendant light: Verner Panton (vintage)

Pendant lights (dining area): Refurbished French streetlamps

Dining chairs: Vintage arrow back chairs

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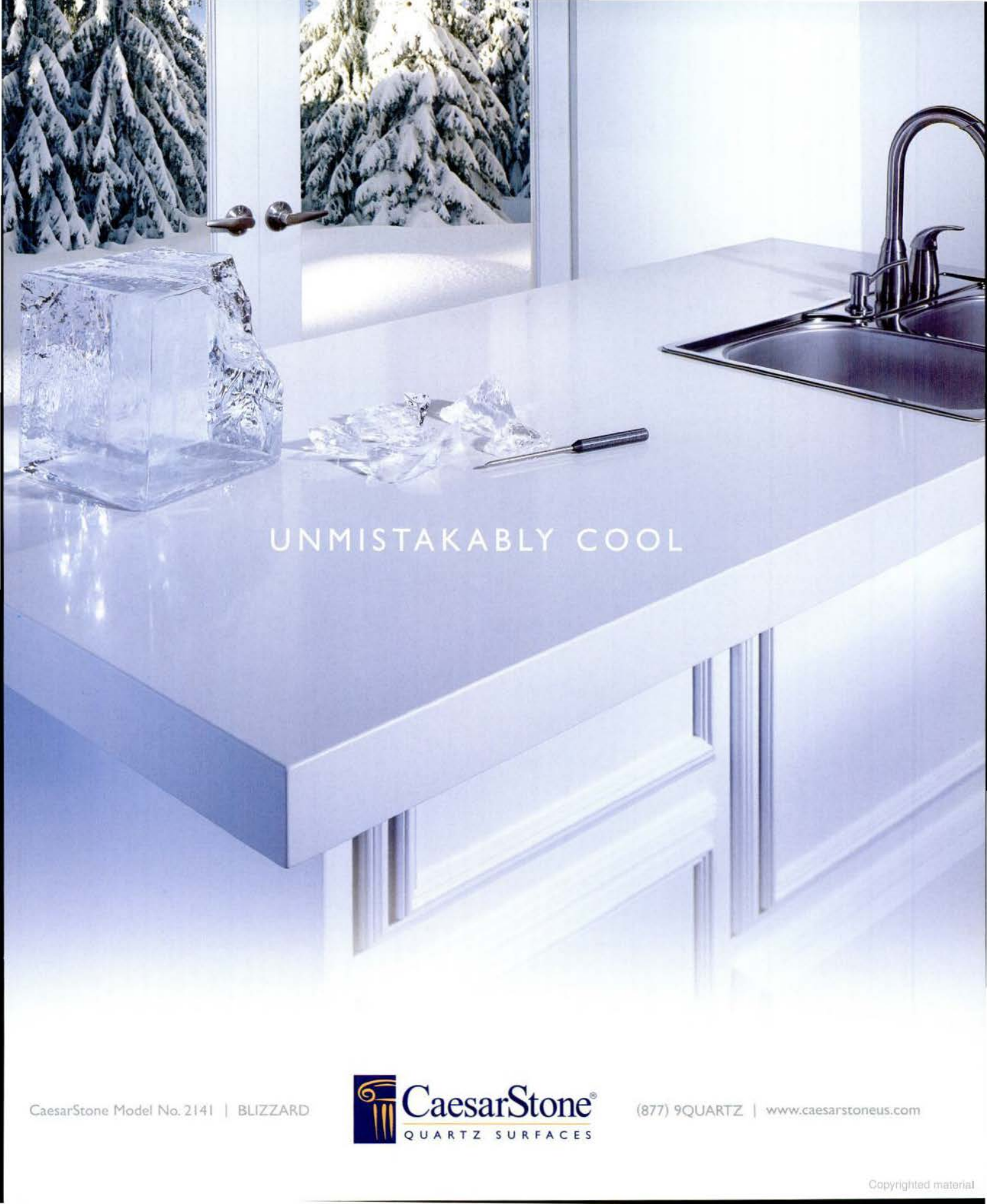
Story by Sam Grawe

Hangin' in the Kitchen

Erika / By Storno for Nils Holger Moormann / www.moormann.de

Stuffed with everything from oats to spatulas, kitchen cupboards all too often end up more like Dr. Caligari's cabinet. However, Erika, a modular system of interlocking wall-mounted panels, leaves no creepy cabinet corner unturned. Designed by Storno, a collective of four Berlin-based designers, the system features panels—each with a rather specific purpose—that can be purchased individually to create your ideal kitchen. (Roughly half the available panels are shown in the configuration here.) A *kuratorium* consisting of Volker Albus, Konstantin Grcic, Alfredo Häberli, and Axel Kufus selected the various implements—everything from the Bialetti espresso maker to the Tivoli radio to the Steinberg faucet—and the units were shaped accordingly. (Most everything is available from www.kustermann.de, or can be sourced on Moormann's site.) While Erika might not exactly be compatible with Costco shoppers, this is one wall that does it all. p. 174



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Cologne Furniture Fair

With the German economy back on track, the mood for manufacturers seemed upbeat, although fewer new pieces were presented. The Ideal Houses by Hella Jongerius and Patricia Urquiola were popular destinations for those seeking inspiration between business meetings.

Ideal House / By Patricia Urquiola
"Whimsical" would be the *ideal* word to describe Urquiola's eccentric yet immensely approachable house design. Largely inspired by her childhood bedroom in Spain, the house, though unmistakably contemporary, radiates the warmth of folk art and handmade crafts. Here, the designer's Fjord chairs for Moroso are gussied up in limited-edition fabrics. www.imm-cologne.de ▸

Turtle / By PearsonLloyd for Walter Knoll
Available in lounge and dining-table variations, the swiveling Turtle revisits the iconic bucket seat. The wraparound upholstery results in a pleasing diagonal with the shell's exterior, and sets the design apart from its predecessors. www.walterknoll.de

Miura / By Konstantin Grcic for Plank
Miura caused a stir in the press corps, as one of the few prototypes on view. The stackable stool, made from reinforced polypropylene, reveals new facets with each viewing—such as the row of teeth to keep your feet in check. www.plank.it

Easy chair / By Jerszy Seymour for Magis
If it were up to us to furnish a restaurant patio or back deck, Seymour's Easy chair, available in a wide range of upbeat colors and looking not unlike preschool furniture for grown-ups, would be the natural choice. www.magisdesign.com

Between Two Chairs / By Louise Campbell for Hay
Realized for a competition to design a chair for the crown prince of Denmark, Between Two Chairs has a water-cut rubber seat that brings to mind folded paper snowflakes, and—not unlike Urquiola's Ideal House—walks the line between folk craft and ultramodern design. www.hay.dk ▸

Salon du Meuble de Paris

Inside this oft-overlooked fair's Métropole pavilion, exhibitions of modern imports from Lebanon and Africa stood alongside new pieces from students, government-funded experiments, and French manufacturers.

Facett / By Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Ligne Roset
One of the few globally recognized French furniture makers, Ligne Roset used the home-court advantage to present the latest from Paris's most celebrated and unimposing designers. www.ligne-roset.com

Vases Cœur / By Julia Maendler
At the Galerie VIA as part of a show called "HierAujourd'huiDemain," Maendler exhibited two heart vase prototypes. *Gray's Anatomy* provides a point of departure (note the extra ventricles) for a design that looks great with or without flowers. www.opos.fr/julia

Nok table / By Pascal Bauer for VIA
It's hard to imagine all American companies donating a percentage of their earnings to promote innovation in their sector, but that is exactly how and why VIA exists. The clever Nok table transforms from circle to square with a twist of the top. www.via.fr

Vormgeving / By Gijs Kaayk for Espace Recherches
Created from 14 polyurethane sections, Kaayk's seating harkens back to the futuristic work of Pierre Paulin and Olivier Morgue, and stood out from the other prototypes exhibited in the "Research Space." www.kaayk.nl ▸

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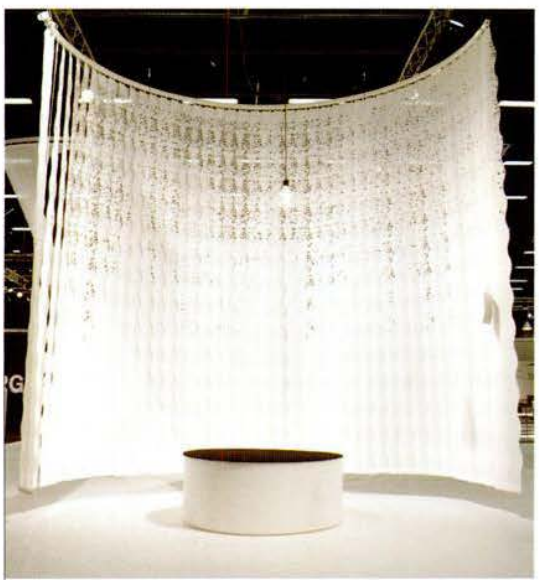
Stockholm Furniture Fair

In case you hadn't heard, 2005 is the Year of Design in Sweden. What the Swedes—who gave the world IKEA, Electrolux, and meatballs—seem not to realize is that every year is the year of design in Sweden.

Cuba chair / By Alexander Lervik for Johanson Design
The Cuba chair should be called Sybil. Its sweetly-rounded seat can be matched with various bases to take on multiple personalities. www.johansondesign.se

Three pendant / By Mattias Stahlbom for Zero
This birdcage-like, black metal mesh pendant is a Spartan combination of a Swedish shoemaker's lamp, a traditional ceiling light, and a fabric shade. www.zero.se



Filippa / By Eva Marmbrandt
Eva Marmbrandt's soft wall, Filippa, features lacily perforated strips of laser-cut polyester. If you can't slam a door, you can always swish dramatically behind the soft wall. eva@marmbrandt.se

Accessories / By Offecct
Offecct commissioned products softened, rounded, and warmed (with wood instead of metal, for instance) for the home. The echt-Swedish, blondwood K-Line wastebin (at right) stood out. www.offecct.se

Stol 69 chair / By Fedrik Mattson for Blå Station

At first glance, Blå Station's slim-line stacking chair looks fairly average—that is, until you click it closed and it becomes a stool. www.blastation.se

Metropolis fabric / By Claesson Koivisto Rune for Varveriet

The prolific Claesson Koivisto Rune studio modified a city map to create the endlessly intriguing Metropolis fabric. www.claesson-koivisto-rune.se ■

Paul Cezanne, Curtain, Jug and Bowl of Fruit 1893-1894
Private Collection, U.S.A.

Shades of Green

In our January/February 2005 issue, we announced the winner of the Dwell Home II design competition. Los Angeles homeowners Glen Martin and Claudia Plasencia offered up their plot of land in Topanga Canyon as the testing ground, and Escher GuneWardena Architecture was selected to design and build them a house with the goal of establishing a model for sustainable home building in the 21st century.

As the project winds its way through myriad permitting and design reviews with a hopeful eye toward a fall ground-breaking, questions have begun to arise as to what exactly makes a project green. Can a structure built on virgin land in a fire-prone area really be considered sustainable? Can a house that requires its owners to drive miles to the store for a quart of milk really be considered environmentally friendly? We decided to sit down with architect Frank Escher and homeowner Glen Martin to discuss these and other issues that have emerged as the second Dwell home begins to take shape.

A number of our readers have brought up interesting points concerning the house's feasibility as a truly "green" project. Some argue, for example, that only a multifamily dwelling in a dense urban setting can truly be sustainable.

Glen Martin: In regards to the transportation issues that have been raised, those really touch on much larger urban-planning problems, stuff that's pretty macro in every sense of the word. But even when it comes to transportation, there are things we can do—and are doing—to address our impact on having made a decision to move to Topanga. First of all, my current commute from Silver Lake to Santa Monica, which is the epicenter of a lot of the work that I do right now, is only 18 miles but it can be an hour and a half on the 10 freeway. From Topanga, the commute is 25, 35, maybe 45 minutes tops. Second, I do a lot of telecommuting, so if that infrastructure advances to the point where I can actually do a lot of work from home, I will likely do that and we are taking that into account with the design of the house.

Frank Escher: One thing to remember is that there are pockets of development in Topanga Canyon that consist of fairly old, established communities. The Dwell Home II site is actually in one of these pockets—it's not somewhere in the middle of nowhere. There is a bus line that runs past the site, for example.

Transportation issues aside, it's important to show what you can do regardless of the site, and there are environmental questions that need to be addressed when building in any location. What we are proposing here is a house that cools itself. A house that doesn't need air-conditioning, and generates its own electrical power. A house that uses about a quarter of the water that a conventional house uses, and treats its own waste water. These are issues that are valid in any context, whether we're redeveloping a brownfield or building on virgin land.

The phase we are in now has presented some other issues that reinforce why a project like this is important. We are trying to address a lot of technical issues within the design with Los Angeles county—in particular the water systems we would like to use. The county has very conservative ideas about how to use graywater or what to do with waste water. So it all comes down to: What do the administrators understand, what do they allow, what terminology do we have to use to help them understand? ▸

"Transportation issues aside, it's important to show what you can do regardless of the site, and there are environmental questions that need to be addressed when building in any location." —Frank Escher

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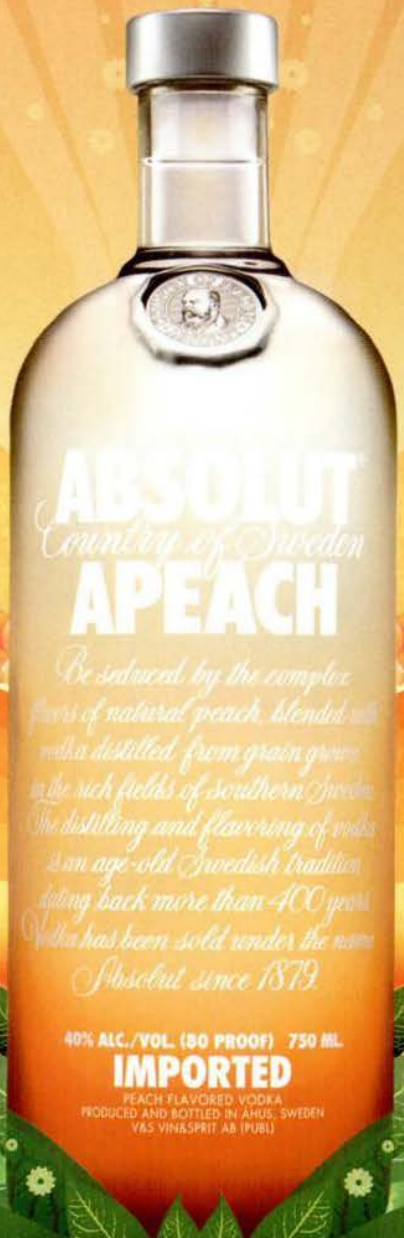

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Ray Smith

"Thousands of new houses will be built in the U.S. in the next 10 or 20 years, and how those houses are going to be built is extremely important—living lightly on the land, really trying to build differently from most of what is getting done today." —Glen Martin

Many building department officials—rightfully so—have a tendency to cover themselves, so they are reticent of anything that might get them into trouble. The whole mind-set is, "Let's stick to what we know." Which is the opposite of what we need: Let's figure out a better way of doing things.

Martin: We're building a new house, yes. But thousands of new houses will be built in the U.S. in the next 10 or 20 years, and how those houses are going to be built is extremely important—living lightly on the land, really trying to build differently from most of what is getting done today.

Escher: It would be great to establish systems that would provide tax incentives for green building. To some degree, these programs exist, but they really only work if you're a huge company. It doesn't help the small, single-family-home developer. We really need to get to the point where green building and green thinking would be encouraged.

It is our hope that the Dwell Home II can help change perceptions about green building in this country.

Escher: We are not the first people to propose these ideas. But because we're doing this with such a visible project, I hope that this can help the county or other officials understand that sustainable building is not such a bad thing, and that we should really be promoting it.

Another problem, of course, is that building this way is simply more expensive. There is a very small market for green sustainable products right now because people don't want to use something that they think is untested. This lack of demand leads to higher costs.

Martin: Again, I'd like to think we are presenting a very real-world example, not something extremely idealized and extremely conceptual.

Yes, one that would inspire people to think, Hey, I can do that.

Escher: I grew up in Switzerland, and in the '70s, central Europe was going through what we are going through in California now. There were some people who were really interested in more intelligent use of resources and sustainable design, and everyone thought they were a little loony. But what happened was that governments started to develop environmentally friendly guidelines, and you would actually be fined or taxed if you didn't follow them. Central Europe now is at a point where environmentalism is almost second nature. We in the States just simply have to catch up.

We are starting to see a lot of positive things in regard to sustainable building in the United States. We just hope this continues.

Escher: I think it will really take off when the government gives people a financial incentive. It really comes down to that, because the average home builder has a certain amount of money and they have certain priorities. Anything above those priorities—including environmentally friendly additions—is, unfortunately, seen as a luxury item. ■

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Story by Jane Szita | Photos by Ralph Richter / Architekturphoto

Breaking the Sound Barrier

Dutch architect Maurice Nio's Cyclops development of 12 houses embedded in a sound barrier looks like a dozen sleek, aluminum-skinned vehicles emerging from a subterranean speedway. Nio created Cyclops for the purely utilitarian purpose of financing the sound barrier, which was needed to dampen noise for further housing development along the busy road leading to Diependaal, in the woods of Hilversum, a 20-minute drive south of Amsterdam.

With its shiny surfaces, relentless horizontals, and thrusting angles paying homage to speed and technology, Cyclops is a gritty modernist take on streamline moderne. On the other hand, its name refers to a cave-dwelling giant, and inside the houses there's a curiously cave-like quality. A kind of primal domesticity has been inserted into a totem of technology.

Architects have generally not risen to the challenge of building houses attached to sound barrier walls, ▸

preferring to pretend that the whole undignified situation doesn't exist: "Sound-barrier houses all look suburban," says Nio. "But our inspiration was the road. That's why the houses are like cars. Also, we wanted a strong contrast between the technical solution—the sound barrier and the houses, which we treated as one element—and the surrounding nature, the woods." The aluminum houses are anchored by the curved, tilted sound barrier, made of a translucent, light-green polycarbonate. "It's almost like a work of art," says Nio.

The essential, challenging deformity of the site—its "blindness," backed up against the uncompromising sound barrier—allowed for opportunities such as cantilevering the first floor to catch the light in a single massive eye of window (hence "Cyclops"), and puncturing the floor with portholes so light can reach the dark lower level. "Even the aluminum cladding was a challenge," says Nio, "because we wanted it glued on, not screwed in place—cars don't have screws. To really insist on facing challenges in this way is a difficult way to work, because you are not repeating solutions. But it does mean you eventually travel much further." ■

Most Americans are used to ugly concrete sound-barrier walls alongside freeways and roads. In welcome contrast, this Dutch wall is made of packed earth and a light-green polycarbonate, with gently sloping grassy sides.


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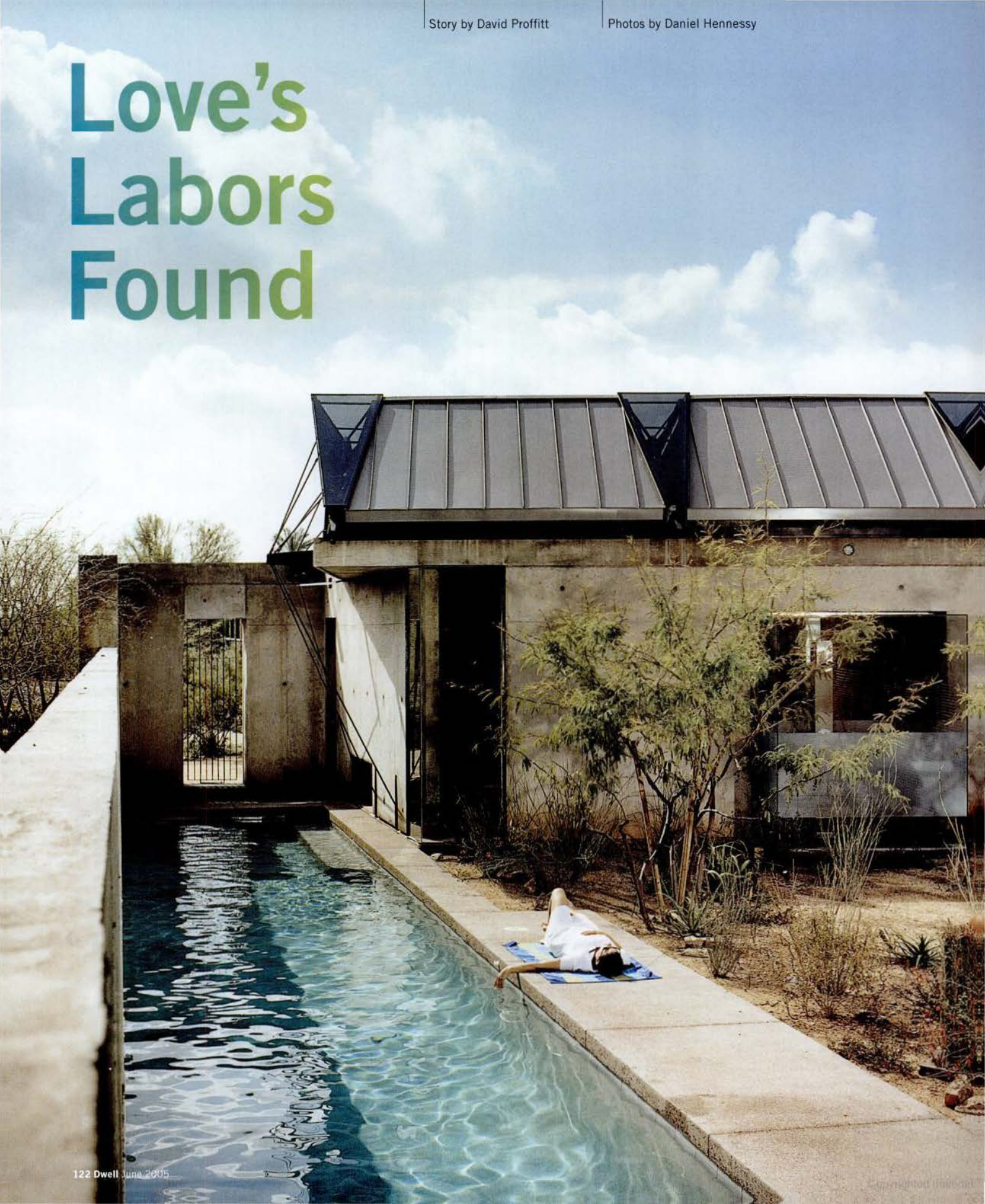


After months spent researching solutions to make her home's fabric roof functional, Lisa Sette (opposite) can finally relax. The metal shed, where she and her husband lived temporarily, was featured on the cover of Dwell's first issue.

Project: House of Earth + Light
Architect: Marwan Al-Sayed
Roof Design: The Construction Zone
Location: Phoenix, Arizona

Though the obstacles they faced were formidable, this couple's perserverance brought them closer together and made their dream home a reality.

In the original design, steel structural elements were meant to support a distinctive fabric roof but the material was not weather-resistant.

The alternative (above), a standing seam metal roof consisting of steel panels coated with corrosion-resistant coating, has solved the problems.

Lisa Sette and Peter Shikany's house is a love story that started with the decision to move in together that turned into a decision to buy a place together. Soon after, the pair of design professionals—she runs an art gallery and he runs a graphic-design firm—stumbled onto one of Phoenix's architectural superstars right as it went on the market two years ago.

The House of Earth + Light had been featured in the pages of the *New York Times* and on the cover of Dwell's premiere issue, so the couple knew it was something special when they saw it for the first time. But as soon as they stepped inside, Sette says, they fell in love.

"You kind of know it at a gut level," she says. "We were just seduced by the design and how beautiful it was."

They aren't alone in that assessment. Shortly after moving in, Shikany watched from their new bedroom as a busload of Japanese tourists on an architecture tour poured into the street and started snapping pictures of the house. The experience was a little unsettling—it inspired the couple to complete a privacy wall that screens the bedroom windows a little sooner than expected—but Shikany says he was also tickled to discover that their new home exudes such a wide appeal.

The exquisite house is composed of three minimalist boxes fused into a single structure—two poured-earth "bookends" connected by a steel-and-glass bridge that spans the desert wash bisecting the lot. It sits at the foot of one of the steep, craggy hills that pop up at regular intervals from Phoenix's otherwise-level grid in a neighborhood dotted with houses by Frank Lloyd Wright, Will Bruder, and Tod Williams and Billie Tsien.

The glass-walled bridge holds the open dining and living area, while the bedrooms and kitchen rest on solid ground between thick, earthen walls the color of the gray granite found on the site. Expansive windows let in views of Piestewa Peak and glimpses of the coyotes, jackrabbits, and other creatures that venture into the neighborhood from the nearby Phoenix Mountains Preserve. But the first time Sette and Shikany walked into the house, what really amazed them was the soft glow that suffused the interior, thanks to the translucent fabric roof.

The roof, which is similar to that of the Denver International Airport, was an experiment designed by the house's architect, Marwan Al-Sayed, and installed by the original owners, a Phoenix firefighter couple who built the house themselves (with a little help from their buddies in the department).

Unfortunately, the experiment didn't quite work as planned. The way the fabric was joined to its steel support trusses let in rain, and a lack of insulation meant the house got hot during the searing Arizona summers. Really hot—triple-digit hot.

The roof wasn't the only issue. Money problems ▸

House of Earth + Light Floor Plan

A Guest House
B Art Studio
C Family Room
D Bedroom
E Laundry
F Powder Room
G Bathroom
H Living/Dining Area
I Kitchen
J Study/Library
K Entrance
L Master Bathroom
M Dressing Closets
N Master Bedroom
O Courtyard
P Lap Pool
Q Carport

The plan is simple: Two rectangles are connected by a bridge that traverses a desert wash. The effect of the light shining into the glass-walled living room is what first attracted Sette and Shikany to the house.

An elegant palette of materials defines the open kitchen. The rear counter is sanded stainless steel; the island counter is Purpleheart (an exotic hardwood) with a range by Dacor.
1 p. 174

kept the original owners from installing double-glazed windows or fully insulating the bottom of the bridge. As a result, the air-conditioning just couldn't keep up.

Sette and Shikany were warned about these performance issues by both the previous owners and Al-Sayed, but they really, really loved the house, so they crossed their fingers and signed on the dotted line. After closing, they called Al-Sayed to enlist his help and set about transforming the huge, steel-skinned workshop behind the main house into guest accommodations because they knew they'd need a place to stay during renovations. However, they didn't anticipate they'd live in what Sette calls the "big Richard Serra shed" for a year.

Sette and Shikany brought in expert after expert, and while the process helped them discover interesting things about their new house—like the fact that the floor of the bridge was reaching temperatures of 92 degrees and that their windows were too hot to touch on summer days—they weren't making much progress on finding a way to seal and insulate the roof. After months of trawling fabric-construction trade shows and reading everything they could find on the topic, the couple found a company that guaranteed a fix. Unfortunately, the cost totaled well into six figures, and that's when they came to a troubling realization.

"We didn't want to be known as the people who ruined the House of Earth + Light," Shikany explains, but they didn't feel like they had a choice anymore. Their budget forced them to look at alternatives. That also forced them to find someone other than Al-Sayed to help do it. Not wanting to compromise the integrity of his original idea for the house, Al-Sayed bowed out of the process at this point. "If I were to change the roof, it would be like admitting that the concept doesn't work, and I know it can work," he says. "I know that pains them because they wanted to pursue the project, and it pained us because we obviously wanted to see it stay the same concept."

However grateful Al-Sayed is that he got a chance to break new ground with the design of the house, he says in the end, the experience was bittersweet. He compares trying to retrofit his design to being an artist who is asked to go back and change his work. "Architecture is a different thing because it's kind of a functional object people live in, but at an emotional level, it's not different," he says.

So with their options dwindling, a roof that still leaked, and a house that still got unbearably hot in the summer, Sette and Shikany called in yet another team of experts, the Phoenix design and contracting firm The Construction Zone. Andy Byrnes, the company co-owner, and Wesley James, one of its head project managers, presented the couple with three options. The first was retrofitting a new fabric roof, an idea Sette and Shikany had already rejected as too expensive. The second was ▸

In the entryway (top), what at first appears to be a rug is actually cut blue glass terazzo designed by Marwan Al-Sayed.

In the office are Metropolitan chairs by Jeffrey Bernett for B&B Italia. Most artwork hung throughout the house comes from Sette's art gallery.

In the study, an oil painting by David Kroll, one of the artists represented by Sette's gallery hangs above a Le Corbusier daybed. In the master bedroom is an installation by Italian artist Maurizio Pellegrin. The custom leather platform bed (above) was designed by Shikany's firm, PS Studios.

replacing the whole thing with a standard roof, but the couple only wanted to do that as a last resort. The third option was somewhere in between, and, like Goldilocks's porridge, it turned out to be just right.

Instead of relying on fabric to keep out the rain and heat, The Construction Zone's design called for a standing-seam metal roof consisting of steel panels coated with Kynar, a corrosion-resistant coating. The magic ingredients for this plan were the trusses the previous owner had built with steel salvaged from the baseball stadium downtown. They were incorporated into the new plan as frames for the 11 skylights that now pierce the roof in a regular march across the length of the house.

James describes it as a compromise in the best sense of the word because it fixed the leak problem while preserving two of the couple's favorite features of the old design: the shadows cast onto the floor by the trusses and the flood of light the fabric let in.

"It's a little different quality of light," Shikany says. "It's a little harsher and not that translucent glow, but now you can see clouds and birds fly over."

James and Byrnes made several adjustments to the house to address the heat issue. They replaced most of the single-paned windows in the house with better-insulating double-glazed ones, for example. They coated the metal window seams on the bridge with a ceramic insulator called Supertherm to keep them from radiating so much heat into the interior. They replaced the clerestory windows on the west side of the house with opaque, low-emission glass. And finally, they pumped up the air-conditioning by adding a third unit to the house and reconfiguring vents to spray air across a wider area.

"On the hottest day in the summer, it's still not perfect," says Byrnes, but he and James are proud of the work they did and the way they were able to strike a balance between the needs of the owners and the original design of the house.

After nearly six months in the renovated house, though, Shikany admits that he still habitually checks for leaks when it rains. But despite what they went through to get here, the couple almost trip over each other's words as they talk about how much they love the house now: "It's a really magical space, just really well designed," Sette says. "It's warm and inviting."

"And miminal at the same time," Shikany interjects.

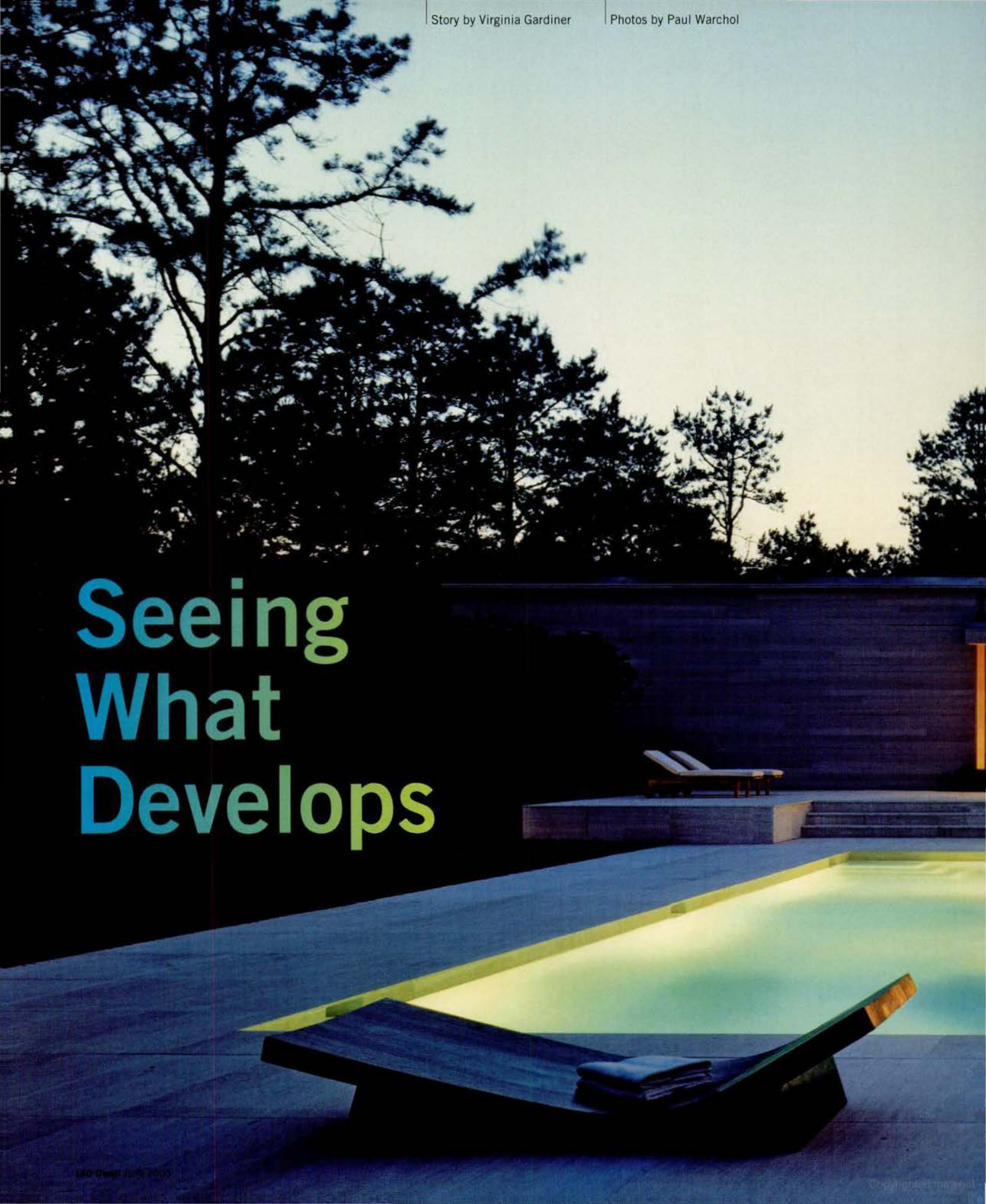
"People don't think of architecture like this as family and eating and drinking," Sette says, but they insist that it's the only place they've ever lived where they could imagine hosting a get-together, as they recently did, that included dinner and tango lessons for 15.

And while neither want to repeat their saga, Shikany says the long journey to make the house their own might have been for the best because it "kind of tested our relationship . . . in a good way." ■

The dramatic bathroom features a glass sink designed and cast by Mies Grybaitis of OIA. The etched glass shower is accented by green glass tile.

Story by Virginia Gardiner | Photos by Paul Warchol

Seeing What Develops



House 43's modernist elevation is both monumental and inviting. These shots show the Hariri design in its spec stage, before the first residents, Heide Banks and Howard Lazar, moved in.

Project: Sagaponac House 43
Architect: Hariri and Hariri
Location: Sagaponack, New York

Last year, The Houses at Sagaponac—a controversial development on eastern Long Island—celebrated its first completed house. This year, the first residents move in.

Along the Montauk Highway on a cold December day, fog obscures dead tree trunks that guard the marshlands like a line of ghosts. Driving to eastern Long Island's Hamptons in light traffic, windshield wipers and headlights on, it's easy to forget the frenzied summers here, when people from Manhattan's higher tax brackets try to relax on beaches, sailboats, and golf courses. This could be any sandy stretch of the Northeast coast, until the highway thins to an avenue lined with Bridgehampton's boutiques, salons, and gourmet food stores.

Heide Banks and Howard Lazar sold their beach bungalow last year, trading the duney getaway for something more unique: They became the first homeowners in The Houses at Sagaponac, a development that stirred up controversy among locals, summer people, and architecture buffs long before anything was built. The development sits on a woody parcel between the Montauk Highway and the East Hampton Airport, and is named for its neighborhood, Sagaponack (inexplicably dropping the *k*). It's seven miles west of East Hampton and three miles north of the ocean. Banks awaits me at their house, which she and her husband bought for $2.95 million.

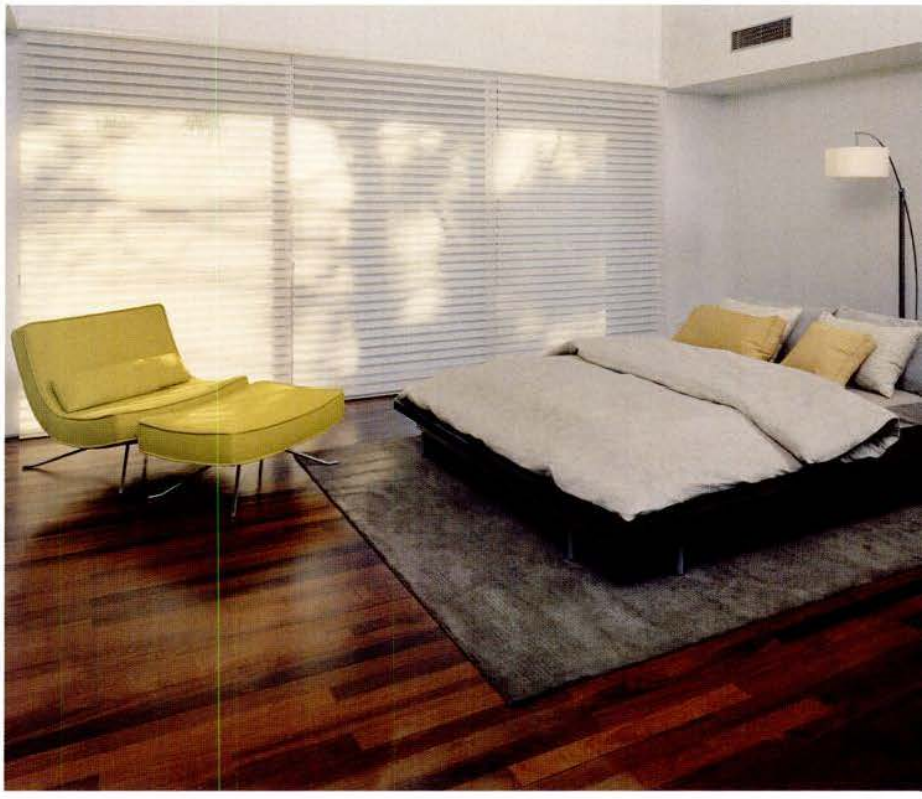
The Banks-Lazar residence, also known as Sagaponac House 43, was designed by the Iranian-born and U.S.-based architects (and sisters) Gisue and Mojgan Hariri, who signed on to the project in 1994. "It started when Richard Meier sent us a letter citing the developer's good intentions," says Gisue. "We'd had a long-standing interest in doing a spec house with a developer, and this seemed like an important opportunity."

Meier is a friend of Sagaponac's developer, Coco Brown, whom the press has portrayed as everything from a visionary to a cheapskate. Brown purchased the 150-acre tract for a bargain $1.6 million back in 1991, and partitioned it into 35 lots. With Meier's help, he hired world-renowned architects to design each house. He convinced them to work for low fees, enticing them with the project's lofty intent. "These days the majority of houses in the U.S. are built by developers, with no architectural input," says Gisue. "Brown's project could show developers that architects are a good investment—that building well-designed houses is highly profitable."

"It's going to be an unprecedented place," Brown says of his development. "Every house is distinctive, like a work of art." When Brown's gallery is complete, houses by hotshots like Philip Johnson, Zaha Hadid, and Lindy Roy will sit adjacent to the Banks-Lazar residence.

"The development makes a social statement," Brown adds. "Everyone here in the Hamptons is from New York, but their houses pretend they just came in on a whaling vessel. We wanted to bring back contemporary architecture, and I see a new generation of buyers. The art market is indicative—young collectors today are much more interested in [Jean-Michel] Basquiat than [Camille] Pissarro. We hope that Sagaponac will become like an art market, which will increase the property values. That would be good for us."

Brown's fans say the houses set a new standard for high-end developments, bringing good architecture ▸



A view through the kitchen/living area (opposite), with the door to the master bedroom at the far end. Blinds in the master bedroom (top) provide privacy from the street. A translucent wall (above) silhouettes a Duravit bathtub by Philippe Starck in the master bathroom.
p. 174

Viewed from the street (opposite), the house's kitchen/living area, raised on a platform with massive picture windows, resembles a stage. Banks and Lazar plan to enhance privacy by planting trees and shrubs.

back to the Hamptons, where mid-century modernism gave way to rabbitlike McMansion proliferation from the 1980s onward. Critics accuse him of using architects' fame to sell property that's otherwise undesirable, frequently trembling under the airport's low-flying private jets, far from the ocean. But in today's winter mist, the din of praise and criticism feels remote, while those jets are far from earshot, probably parked in warmer climes.

Driving into a large cul-de-sac, I easily locate the Banks-Lazar home, as it's the only one finished. (A nearby house by architect Henry Cobb is fully framed and, according to Brown, already sold.) The Hariris' design is both spare and luxurious—a rectilinear L-shaped plan set around a sculptural patio and pool of travertine. Clad in huge glass curtain walls and bleached red cedar, the house's warm gray hue gently offsets the reds, browns, and occasional lichen greens of the damp surrounding scrub.

Last September in the *New Yorker*, architecture critic Paul Goldberger made a frank assessment of these houses. "What you are getting, if you choose to buy into Brown's project," he wrote, "is not a house designed specifically for you, but a slice of contemporary architectural culture." A reasonable point, though Goldberger's qualm seems precious if one considers that some 95 percent of new houses in the U.S. are not "designed specifically" for the residents—let alone by an architect.

Besides, Banks and Lazar are satisfied consumers. Banks, a psychotherapist and author who has appeared on *Oprah*, explains that the house "complements my dichotomous desires for socialization and quiet." Lazar, a real estate consultant with a passion for abstract art, appreciates what the Hariris cite as the house's inspiration: Alberto Giacometti's *Figure in a Box Between Two Boxes Which Are Houses*. The sculpture, in which a gaunt figure stands in a void between two rectangular solids, is clearly mimicked in the L-shaped plan's rectangles, both of which are centered by glass-walled voids. The layout enhances the public-private dichotomy. "It feels very open," Lazar says.

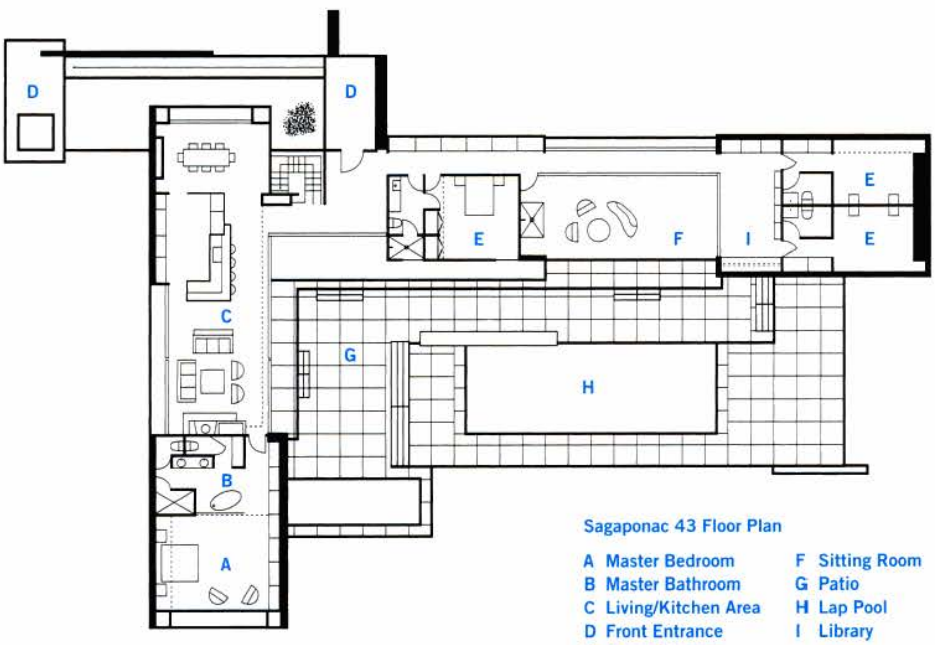
In the backyard, plans for a painting studio for Lazar are underway, which the couple commissioned the Hariris to design. "Once we decided to spend the money and build the studio and outdoor bathroom, the decision to use the Hariris was easy," Banks says. "We were as committed to the addition as we were to maintaining the integrity of the entire project. We knew in the end it would greatly increase the value of our property."

Banks's hope echoes Brown's expectation that raising the architectural bar might increase the development's prices. They seem to be onto an idea—one that, unfortunately, undermines the notion of altruism in Brown's work. Critics complain that the houses cost more than the project's mission stated they would, and Brown himself has said that he hopes they'll get more expensive.

Perhaps the critics are loath to accept that today's Hamptons aren't those of the 1950s, when scrappy abstract expressionists like Robert Motherwell and Jackson Pollock fled New York City in search of quiet (and cheap) places to create. These are the Hamptons where Billy Joel marries a 23-year-old and sells his $32 million mansion to Jerry Seinfeld without a broker, and Paris Hilton parties with P. Diddy in his 12,500-square-foot PlayStation 2 Estate. Brown's houses may be modest by comparison, but they reside in a real estate climate where taste, bad or good, has become a commodity.

There's no telling how a successful high-design community in the Hamptons will influence the average American developer, whose target house price is about a twentieth of what Banks and Lazar paid. As for whether the nearby airport and three-mile drive to the beach will taint life in Brown's houses—the sorts of questions Hamptonites fret about—only summertime will tell. ■

The architects' floor plan has remained almost unchanged since Banks and Lazar moved in, but they did change one translucent wall into a solid one (between letters F and I), turning the foyer to the guest rooms into a library.



Sagaponac 43 Floor Plan

A Master Bedroom
B Master Bathroom
C Living/Kitchen Area
D Front Entrance
E Guest Rooms
F Sitting Room
G Patio
H Lap Pool
I Library

Worth the Wait

Tucked into the side of a scenic San Francisco hill, one of the city's more diminutive houses battles everything from dry rot to obstructionist neighbors in order to grow up.

Project: The Lantern House
Architect: Holey Associates
Location: San Francisco, California

Story by Deborah Bishop | Photos by Zubin Shroff

This is the story of a tiny house that overcame mansion-sized hurdles in its quest to become a wee bit more commodious (97 square feet were added to the existing 806) and a lot more hospitable. Built as an infill shack between two larger buildings at the turn of the last century, the warren of small, light-blocking rooms on split levels was more conducive to claustrophobia than California dreaming, despite its idyllic locale.

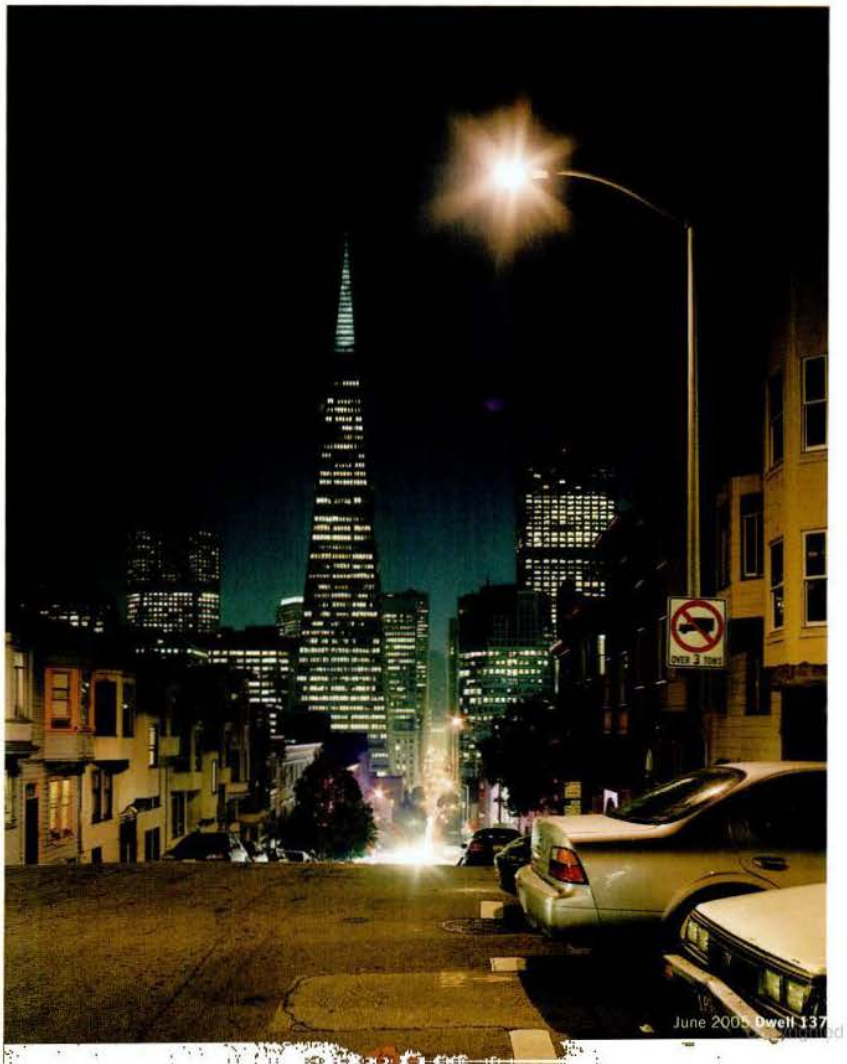
"I'd always wanted to live on Telegraph Hill, and when I saw this house, I knew I had to have it," recalls Susanna Dulkinys, of falling in love with the fixer-upper she likens to a doll's house (identified erroneously on some maps as being the smallest house in the city). The view from this steep street of secret alleys and garden-shrouded stairways is so rife with iconic signifiers—the swoop of the Bay Bridge, gulls cruising the water, palm trees lining the Embarcadero, and the tip of the Transamerica Pyramid—it could be identified as San Francisco by a Martian.

Dwell first reported on the renovation travails of Dulkinys, a graphic designer and former *Wired* creative director, and her partner, typography guru Erik Spiekermann (who together run United Designers Network, a global design consortium), back in 2000. Although the house had survived the great quake of 1906, its future was nearly undone by litigious neighbors who used their favorable easements to try to stymie construction; the local Telegraph Hill Dwellers association, whose members never met a bay window they didn't like (despite the original house's having none); and a backlogged planning commission. Against these obstacles, the dry rot, lack of foundation, and solid bedrock were but mere speed bumps on the road to renovation. It didn't help matters that the couple was also remodeling their Berlin apartment, where they spend half the year.

"We had two homes and nowhere to live! These neighbors simply didn't want any work to happen at all," exclaims Dulkinys, recalling the frustration. "Our house in Germany was completed in half the time, despite being twice the size—and all the drawers and doors open and shut properly," adds Spiekermann, with just a touch of hometown pride. But six years, two architects, and assorted attorneys and soil and structural engineers later, the couple has moved back into an open, light-filled, two-story house that resembles nothing so much as a junior ▸

Homeowner Susanna Dulkinys (opposite) and her architects toyed with the idea of replacing the Edwardian-era façade with a less traditional design. The cleaned-up, refined front (below) that was approved by the planning commission would be easily recognized by the house's original inhabitants.

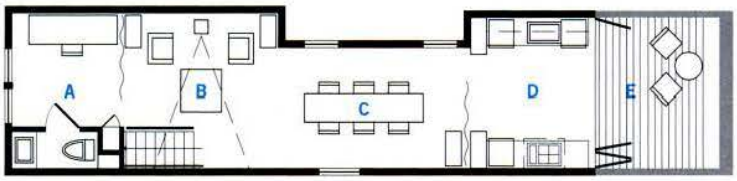
This stretch of Telegraph Hill gazes one way toward the Transamerica Pyramid (right), and leads in the other to cafés, bars, and bookstores.



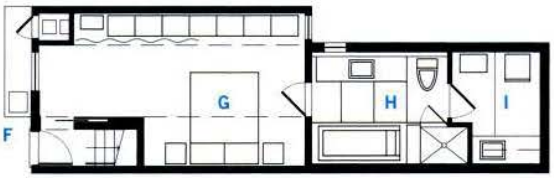
Once a split-level jumble of small, dark rooms, the main floor now offers a clear sight line from the patio straight through the kitchen, dining room, sitting area, and spare room to the street-facing window (with two skylights for added illumination). Although there are no doors to truncate the space, the kitchen and guest room close off with translucent fabric panels that filter natural light by day and glow like lanterns at night.

Six Years, Two Architects

More than half a decade elapsed between the purchase (December 1998) and housewarming (November 2004) of Dulkinys and Spiekermann's hillside house. When architect Nilus de Matran's trilevel plan for a modern makeover (above, 2001) came up against the obstructionist politics that defines construction in San Francisco, the house sat in limbo until architects Chris Wendel and John Holey (with Spiekermann, above) devised a less radical renovation that involved a lot of excavating but preserved much of the house's original demeanor.



Upper Level



Lower Level

The Lantern House Floor Plan

A Spare Room/Office
B Living Room
C Dining Area
D Kitchen
E Patio
F Entry
G Bedroom
H Bathroom
I Utility Closet

suite in the hotel of your dreams: bathtub by Starck, wireless media center, large deck, gourmet kitchen, and even room to put up a guest.

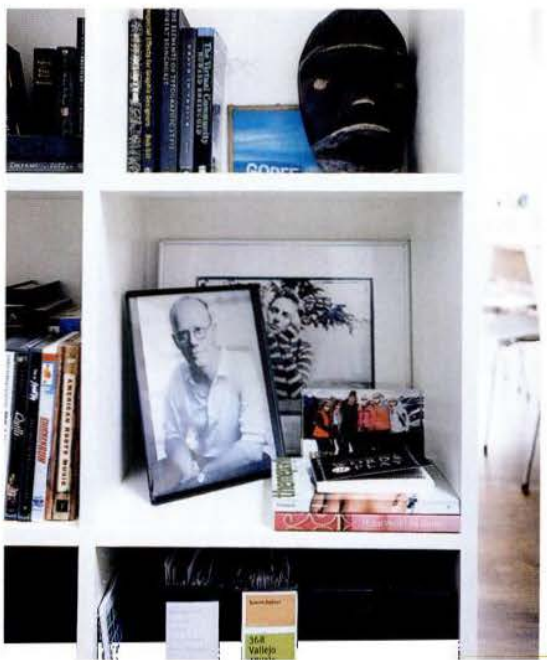
After the original architect was ground down by the friction that met his plans for demolition and a radically modern makeover, Dulkinys and Spiekermann turned to their then-officemates, John Holey and Chris Wendel, who had served as testifying architects on behalf of the project (and fortuitously happened to be neighbors of one of the adjacent buildings' owners). Holey Associates, whose other projects range from Apple's corporate headquarters to the chic Berkeley tapas bar César, offered a design that placated some of the opposition by preserving the house's façade (although they swapped out the stucco for crisp wood slats). "At one point we discussed doing a flat metal front, but it would have created so much more grief," explains Holey, grimacing slightly at the memory. So they focused on the inside. "Rather than playing to its Victorian heritage—small rooms, lots of doors, bitty tiles—we aspired to design a modern translation of the house, one that suits the way Erik and Susanna live." Says Spiekermann with admiration, "John's a pragmatic modernist, not an ideological modernist. The house isn't barren or austere—and he was able to get it approved."

While there's not an iota of wasted space, one doesn't get that cramped, slightly depressing, über-utilitarian sense of being on a boat, for example, despite the house measuring a mere nine and a half feet across. With a mantra of "How small can it be, how large can it feel?," the architects managed to slot ten rooms (or functions) in about 900 square feet, thanks in part to replacing doors with translucent scrims of fabric that open up to let in light or pull closed to confer privacy. "If the classic Victorian house is a railroad flat—a long corridor sprouting tiny rooms—we think of this as more of a matchbox," Holey explains. "It can extend or condense to suit your need."

On the main floor, a guest room/office just big enough for a bed to unfold overlooks the street and has direct access to the powder room. When it's time to turn in, a diaphanous pocket panel of pale blue pinstripe fabric from Knoll Textiles draws shut. The sitting area is a wireless media room, with a wall doubling as a movie screen. And in the dining room, the long German worktable surrounded by Arne Jacobsen chairs is sized ▸

Wireless wonderland: One way to reduce clutter is by stashing most of the media hardware downstairs and jettisoning the television. When it's time to show a DVD (opposite), the wall does double duty as a movie screen.

The architects made less into more by designing rooms that multitask. When no guests are in town, the spare room (right) easily reconfigures into a cozy home office, complete with its own powder room.



to accommodate a crowd. During parties, another fabric panel can be closed to foster intimacy (and hide the mess in the adjacent kitchen) or left open for a view straight to the back of the deck.

Downstairs, in the master bedroom, the couple's storage-concealing Flou bed faces a 15-foot-long closet whose contents are concealed by a swath of sea green fabric that looks lovely when illuminated from within. A few steps away, Dulkinys's "dream bathroom" was carved out of the side of the hill by a Bobcat and is equipped not only with the aforementioned Philippe Starck soaking tub but also a steam-emitting shower spa. A washer and dryer are tucked into the adjoining utility room.

Because the house affords so many opportunities to manipulate light—especially at night, when the dining area is framed by the softly glowing scrims—the architects have dubbed this the Lantern House. Unlike in a typical large, open-plan room, these changing layers of transparency and intimacy have the desirable effect of making the house feel both larger and moodier, and skylights over the sitting room and dining area—what Holey jokingly calls the "great room"—create an aura of openness. Says Spiekermann, "You know, not every architect understands how to bring in light without creating unwanted visibility. We have our privacy, but the house is not dark."

The space also gains stature from restraint. Instead of a hodgepodge of finishes and details, a few materials—full-slab Carrara marble, walnut floors and cabinets, and white walls—are used throughout, almost monolithically. When the glass doors at the back of the kitchen are fully unfolded, the kitchen floor seems to flow seamlessly into the slats of ipe wood on the deck, making the house feel that much longer. It also helps that Dulkinys and Spiekermann are not packrats. With two apartments in Berlin (one used as a library) and two offices, Dulkinys says, "we have enough other places to stash our stuff."

As for the neighbors, after all the Sturm und Drang, the construction actually ended up helping them, seismically speaking, when a concrete retaining wall was poured to frame the new energy-absorbing mat slab foundation. Says Spiekermann, with perhaps a soupçon of irony, "We're helping to shore up the neighborhood—real air raid shelter material! This is definitely where you want to be in an earthquake." ■

"Because it's a small space, it was possible to make everything pristine," says Dulkinys, standing in her dream bathroom (left), outfitted with full-slab Carrara marble, a Duravit sink, and fixtures by Dornbracht.

The contents of the 15-foot-long closet (below and opposite) are concealed by a long swath of calming blue-green fabric that glows like a light box when illuminated from within.
p. 174

Story by Shonquis Moreno

Photos by Peter Belanger

What an Interior Designer Does

Although the design of interiors is as old as shelter itself, interior design as a professional practice arose only in the mid-20th century. For most of modern history, interiors were the purview of architects and artists. It wasn't until 1905 that New Yorker Elsie de Wolfe accepted the first fee for her design services and earned the title "society decorator." At first it was a woman's profession with little opportunity for formal training outside the pages of ladies' magazines like *House Beautiful*. But this changed rapidly and by 1931, the American Institute of Interior Decorators was founded; splinter groups would eventually form today's American Society of Interior Designers. In 1974 the profession's first certifying exam was established by the National Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ).

Some unlicensed practitioners call themselves interior designers, but to earn certification professionals must study building systems, energy efficiency, acoustics, safety codes, construction, and materials as well as aesthetics. Interior designers differ from decorators and architects, although their roles overlap, particularly in cities where more renovation than ground-up building is done. A licensed interior designer can help you make cosmetic changes to your home by applying finishes to surfaces and selecting and arranging furniture and ornamentation. But they can go much further than a decorator can. They can't build at the structural or load-bearing scale as an architect can, but they can significantly alter the structure of a space.

When to Hire an Interior Designer

It is not advised to renovate your kitchen or bath without hiring a licensed interior designer or architect because of all the elements involved (plumbing, specialized lighting, ventilation) in making them function smoothly. If you want to alter access routes or acoustics, make your space more energy efficient or safe, or create anything that pushes the family tool chest in the garage beyond its humble limits, it would be wise to hire a professional.

These days, with keener awareness of environmental concerns, growing reliance on technology, an aging baby-boomer population, the blurring of living and work space, and the shifting character of the family, interior designers face a number of practical and technical issues that reach far beyond the relative niceties of color, composition, texture, pattern, and light. They can do everything from eliciting relatively intimate information from the client to determining who those clients are and how they live to ordering or even custom-making furnishings, researching materials and finishes, and coordinating the bidding, hiring, and contracting of other licensed professionals. An interior designer will provide comprehensive drawings, documentation, budgets, schedules, and carefully written specifications that can help avoid unnecessary change orders, time delays, and budget crises. Not least, they will be able to speak the same language as contractors, builders, and other tradespeople.

PHOTO COURTESY ELSIE DE WOLFE FOUNDATION

"[Interior design] projects are always journeys and the best clients take you to places you've never been."

How to Work With an Interior Designer

Beyond their familiarity with codes, contracts, and the best painters in town, interior designers are creative people. Good designers want an interior to emerge from a dialogue with the person who will live in it. "To me, the best client is always someone who becomes part of the process," says designer Stephen Roberts. "Projects are always journeys and the best clients take you to places you have never been."

Working with a designer or architect does not mean dropping the blank canvas of your home into the lap of a taste maker. You are seeking guidance and expertise and before embarking on a project, your first job as a client is to consider what you want, what you need, and who you are. Get familiar with your habits, affinities, and peeves. Consider how you use each room or area in detail and how you would like to feel while in it. Your second task is to research designers carefully in order to find one whose aesthetic appeals to you and with whom you can easily communicate. Know what you need but be open-minded. "Design starts with human beings, and it's a complicated process," says Nader Tehrani, co-principal of the architecture and design studio Office dA. "It's not formal qualities like color or lighting or texture that are paramount; it's a client who understands the process. You can't do good design with a bad client." ▸

Special thanks to Charles deLisle of Your Space Interiors for material tableaux.

For More Information

American Society of Interior Designers
www.asid.org
International Interior Design Association
www.iida.org
Informe Design
www.informedesign.com

Small Fixes That Feel Big

Get Organized

There are surprisingly easy ways to reinvent your home without knocking out walls—or eyes. The simplest way to change the look and feel of an interior is to straighten it up. "Most of us are crazy in some form," says Todd MacAllen of the architecture studio Forsythe-MacAllen Design Associates. "Being organized is a way of being mentally fit." So weed out the clutter, move on from the past, unsubscribe from unread magazines and catalogs. Place as little on the floor as possible. Make sure you have enough storage on hand or, if that's not possible, rent a locker. MacAllen suggests maximizing space in an open living area by minimizing the private spaces to the point where they could function like drawers—closed when not in use. Designer Juan Carlos Arcila-Duque takes a less-is-more approach: "Always leave space for something else. Don't try to finish the project right away."

Go With the Flow

Even in a one-room apartment, you can create flow. Designate areas within a room with a rug, or by hanging a curtain that you open when guests arrive and then close at night to define a bedroom. Even on a budget, layout can be defined with color or texture. It should, however, always be determined by function, so arrange your interior according to your habits.

Accessorize

Think beyond pillows and cashmere throws. Wall coverings, for example, have never been more compelling than they are today. Coverings, which come in fabric or flock, with iridescent sparkles, multimedia collages, and paint-by-numbers patterns, can be used in sparing and strategic ways. You can cut shapes out of vintage papers or drape entire walls with wallpaper or fabric. ►

For materials sourcing, see p. 174

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Be Colorful—But Not Too Colorful

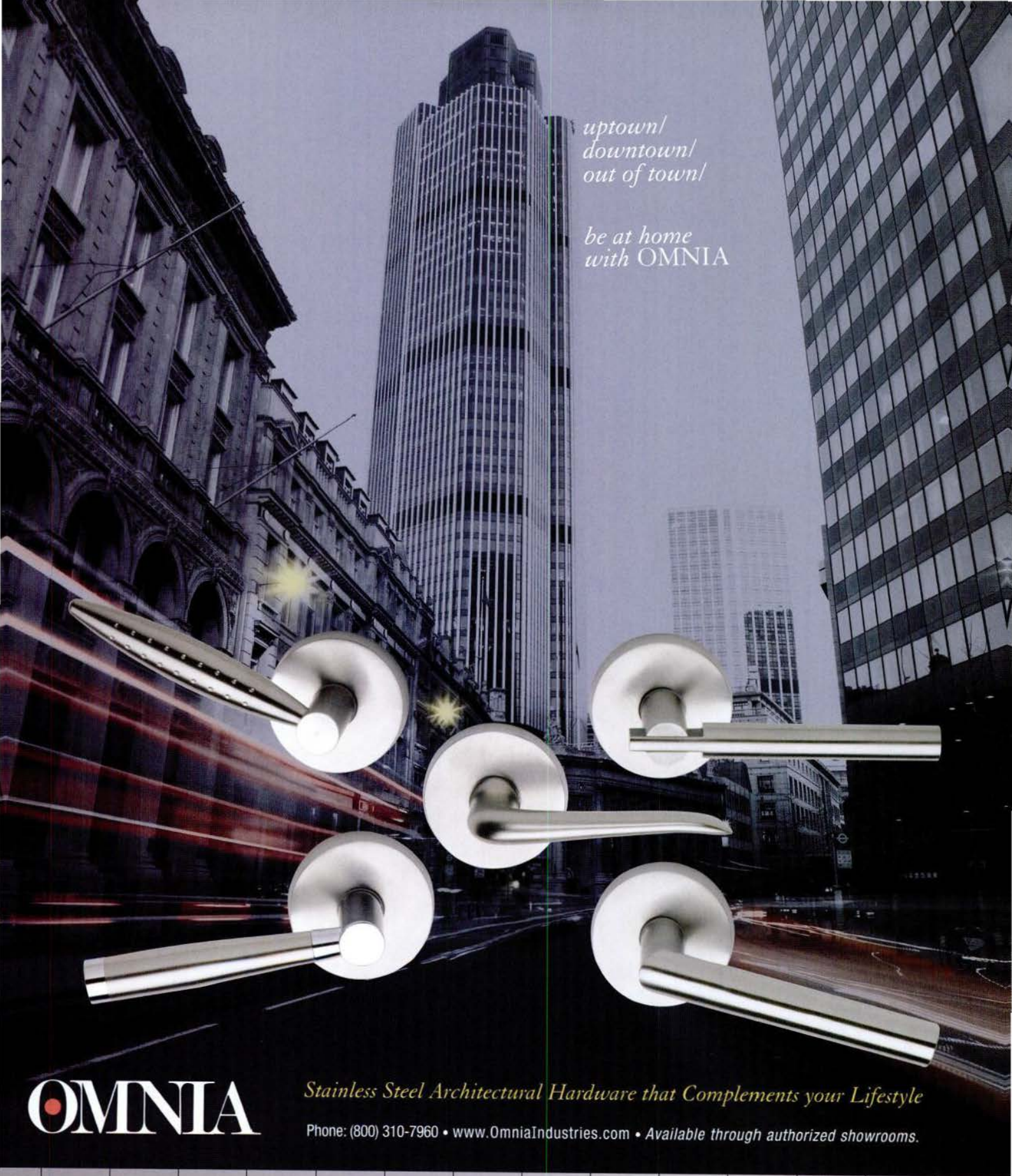
Most designers agree that it's important to know the mood you want to project before introducing color into a space. Some choose colors that complement the objects in the space; others insist there has to be a contrast between the architecture and what you put inside it. Stefan Boublil restricts his color and texture palette as much as possible by limiting himself to three shades and three materials for each interior, believing that too much color can create visual noise.

A new coat of paint is one of the easiest and most expressive changes that you can make. Keep in mind, however, that paint tempers light and can actually diminish the sense of spaciousness. White walls bring light in and are a good canvas to start with. Start with white, live with it a while, and then gradually layer it with other shades or by adding a hint of blue, green, red, or gold to a tub of white paint. Boublil likes to paint whole interiors in high-gloss paint. It's easy to clean and feels bold. "It introduces reflection everywhere," he says. "Light one candle and you have a star field."

Plant It

Interior designer Shashi Caan uses big, leafy plants to generate better air quality in the room—but these also become a source of character. "Don't just plonk them in a corner," she warns. "Position them in groups, bearing in mind that plants, too, provide color. You want the shape and color of the plants to work with your room." ►

For materials sourcing, see p. 174



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Light Up Your Life

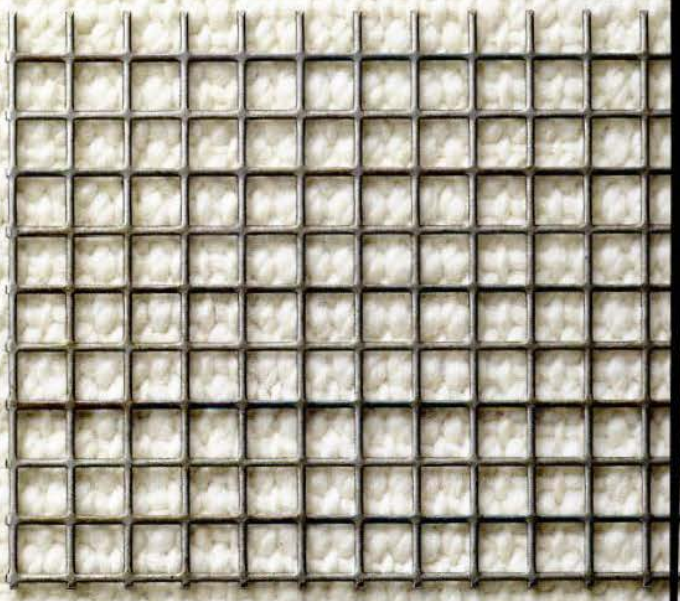
Stephen Roberts's work emphasizes light to the point of transforming a room into a light box. He avoids clumsy downlighting, instead using backlighting, white glass sliding panels, and lights that focus up from the floor and from low on the walls. Roberts has even transformed a kitchen bench into an illuminated object. With dimmer switches, light can define a space in flexible ways.

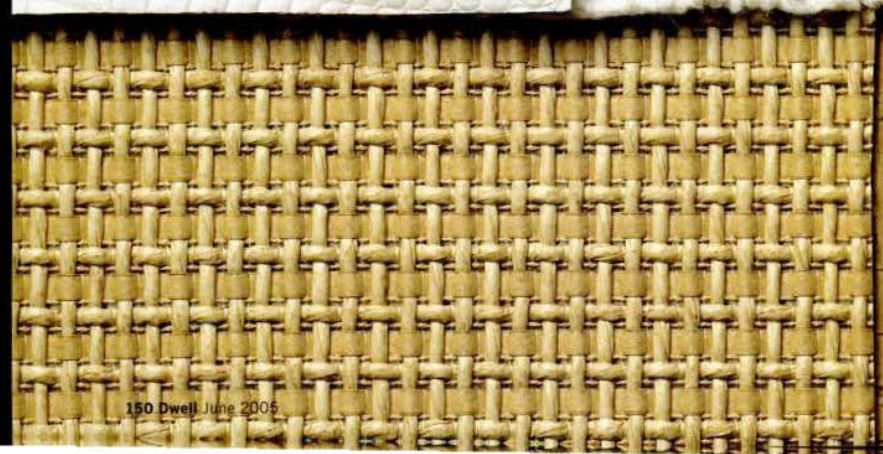
Kelly Wearstler of Kelly Wearstler Interior Design, favors skylights to fill corridors with natural light. She also likes chandeliers or pendant lamps and wall washers to highlight art or wall treatments. "You should try to create a room that has many layers," she says. "A room that contains different scales of furniture, or uses various materials and lighting elements, has layers."

Think Globally, Act Locally

As you plan, get intimate with both your home and the resources in your area. Seek out local materials, such as wood torn up during a nearby demolition or milled in the area; recyclables and products that don't off-gas (as most plastics and many carpets do), like wood, paper, and felt; or inert secondary manufactured materials like glass and concrete. Find local tradespeople by browsing the phone book, poring over the classifieds, or just walking around. Look for well-made products and find out who made them. "Often, designers work by creating the form of the project and then finding people who can make it happen," says architect Stephanie Forsythe. "Try finding out what the local people can do first. If you live somewhere where there are great Italian plasterers, then make a wall." ▸

For designer contact info, see p. 174





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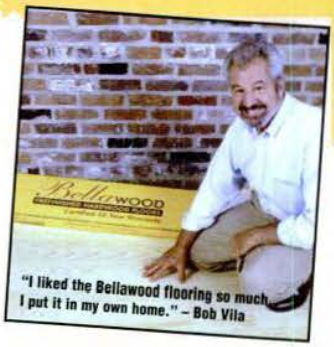

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MOCA

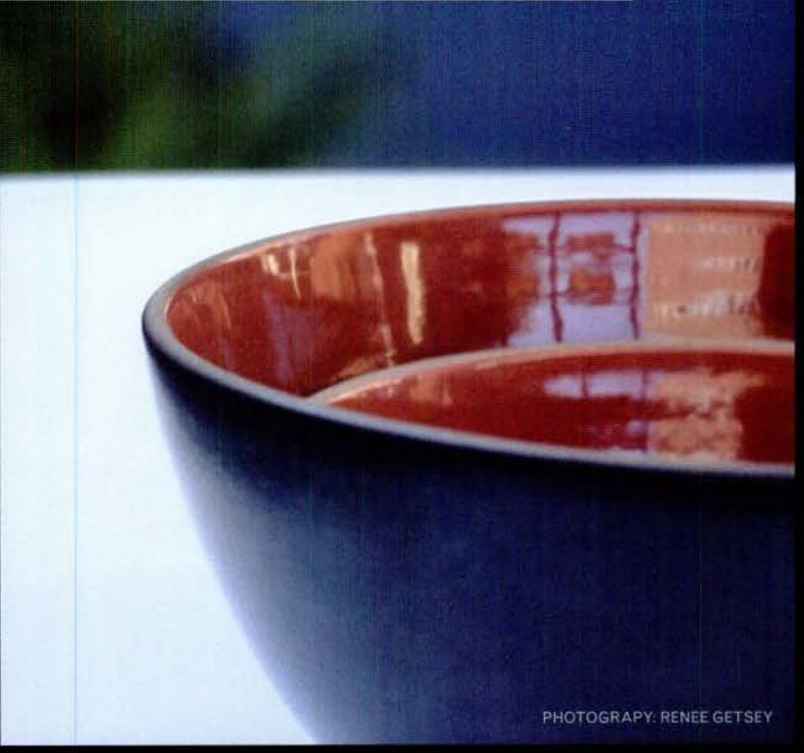
Story by Virginia Gardiner

Color Me Classic

Last year, Knoll Textiles decided to recolor a fabric series it calls Current Color, Classic Constructions. Since its founding in 1947 by Florence Knoll, who studied with legendary designers Walter Gropius, Marcel Breuer, and Eero Saarinen, the company has aimed to make timelessly functional textiles. But nothing lasts forever, and by the new millennium, the 50-some fabrics were due for an update. Knoll's self-made assignment—to rethink the entire color group, altering most of its hues—wasn't easy. Senior designer Ashley Short, who spearheaded the project, makes an easy analogy: "It's like putting together a good dinner party. You want to bring together distinct personalities who get along."

Like King Arthur's knights, colors dine well at a round table. "A wheel provides continuity that a line doesn't have," says Short. "A line's beginning and end alter one's perception of how each part interacts with the whole." In an early '60s marketing catalog, Florence Knoll used color wheels to illustrate the newly introduced fabrics. As appealing as pies, the wheels reveal gradations of color and texture. "The color wheel is, in ►

Above, one of the original Florence Knoll color wheels in shades of red, orange, and yellow. One of the new color wheels, at right, travels from mustard to blue.



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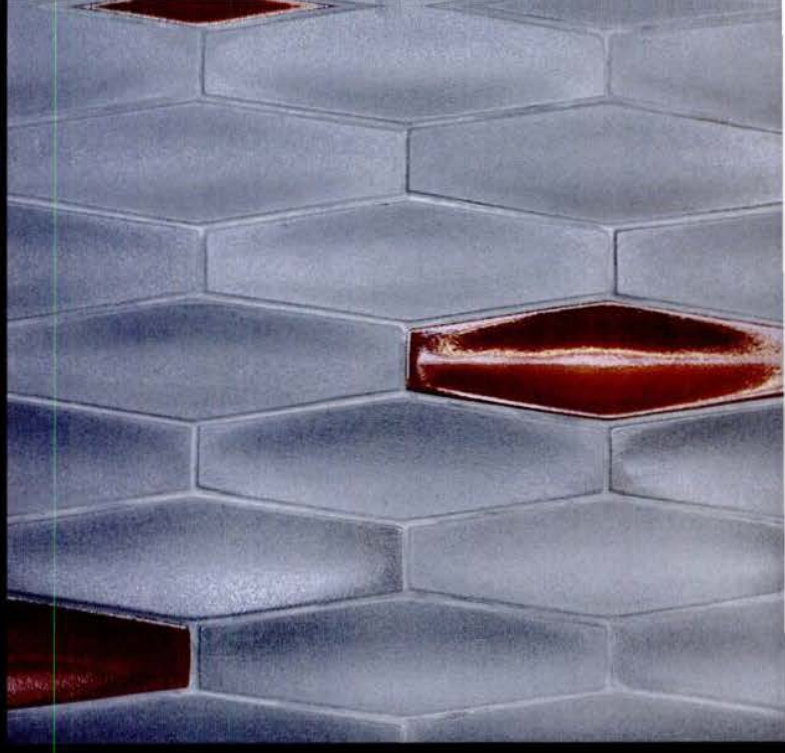

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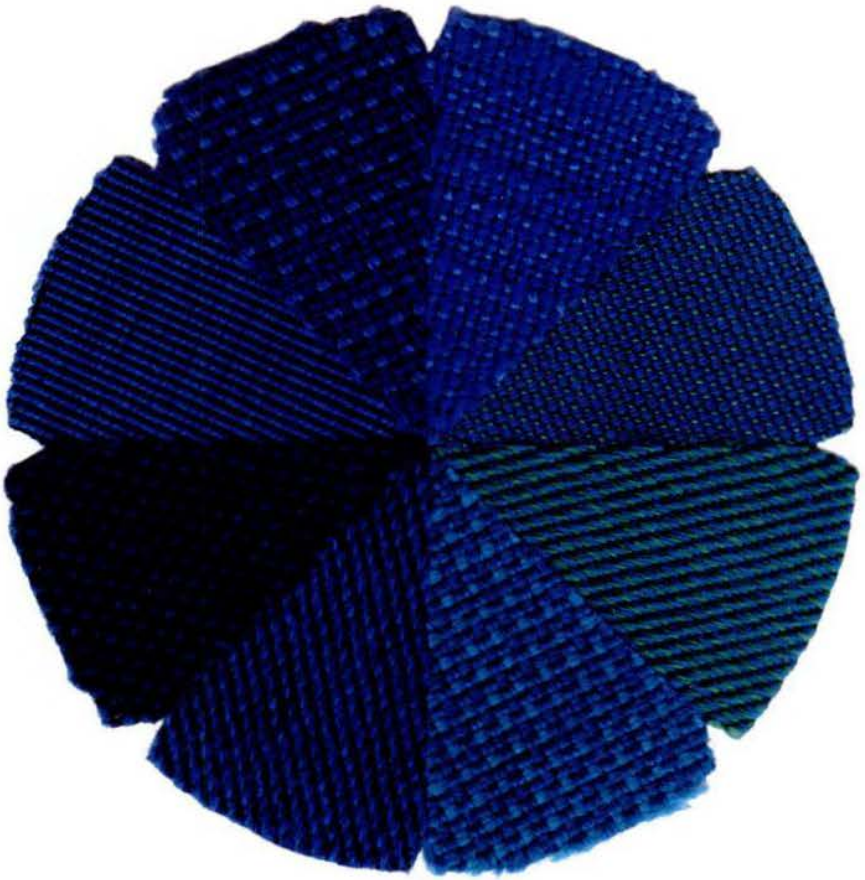
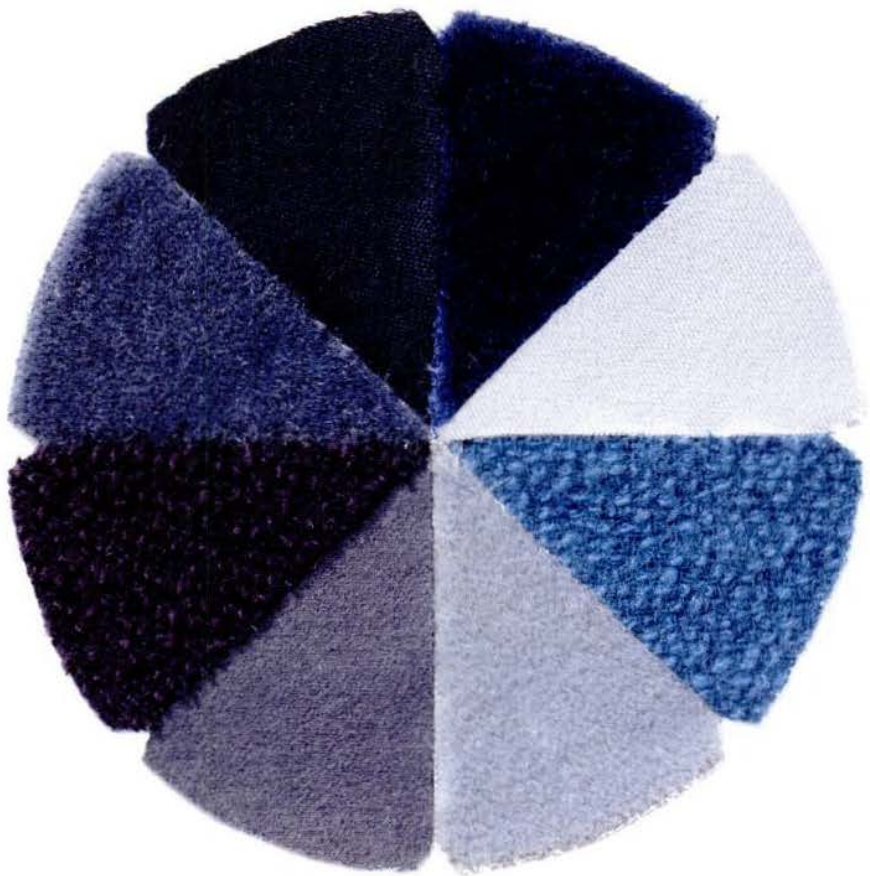
itself, a kind of classic construction," says Short. "Painters have used them for centuries. I think that's why Florence Knoll made them—in that way, they express our character." This year, Dwell asked Short and her colleagues to assemble color wheels (shown here) with the new hues. The Current Color, Classic Constructions series comes in four textures: a matte wool sateen, a smooth mohair velvet, a supple wool felt, and a nubby boucle. The different textures notably affect the wattage and quality of color.

Only 25 percent of the original color palate survived since their initial introduction in the '60s. "Rethinking the colors, we looked at trends, in the serious sense of the word, as opposed to fads," explains Short. "We took cues from fashion, interior design, cars, paints, pictures in magazines." In the colors that have lasted decades and survived the recolor, she sees a Darwinian survival of the fittest. "We found the most enduring ones to be burgundies, blacks, oatmeals, beiges, and taupes. The browns have gotten less red, and the blues have gotten more green." Happily, Knoll Red—a crayon-bold shade that's been on vacation since 1972—is back in action. ■





Another example of the original Knoll Textiles color wheels, this one in shades of blue. The newer version (below right) offers a different assortment of textures and cooler hues.

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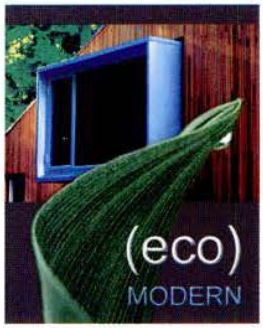

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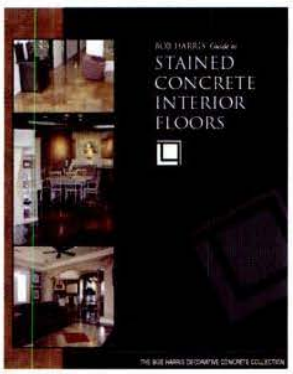

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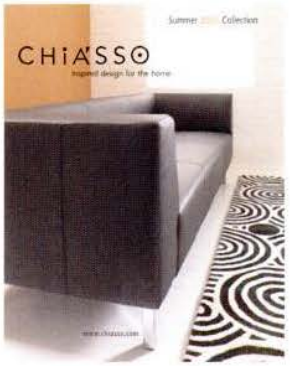

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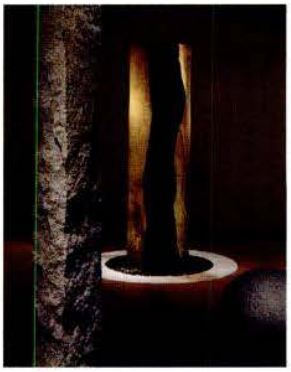

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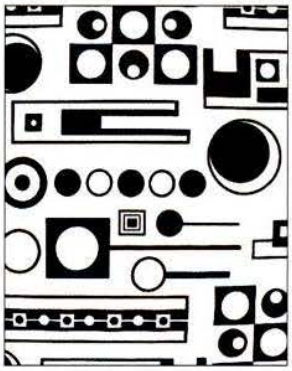

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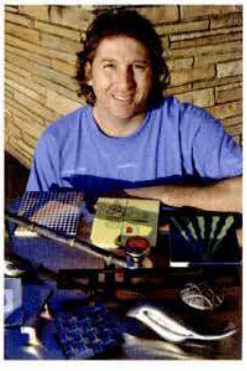

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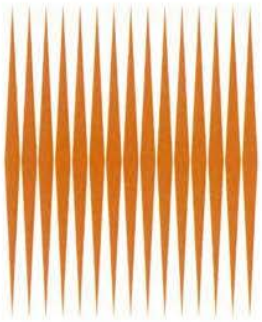

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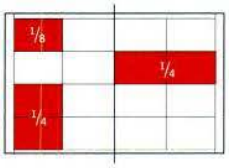

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Contact:
Lauren Dismuke, Marketplace Director
lauren@dwellmag.com
Tel. (212) 382-2010 x25
Tracey Lasko, Marketplace Manager
tdlasko@nyc.rr.com
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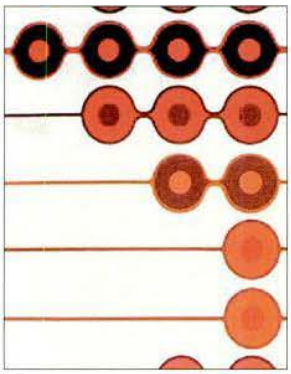

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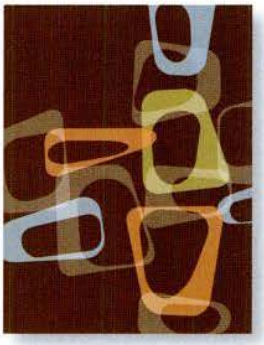

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Piece shown: Modu #22

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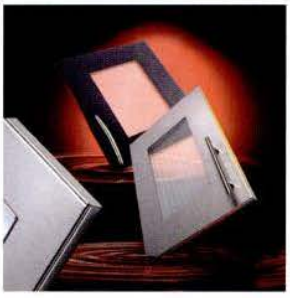

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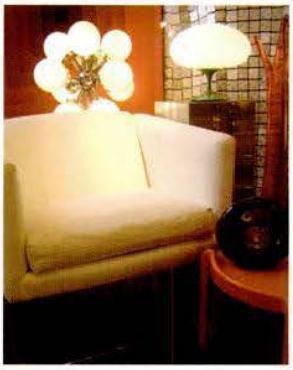

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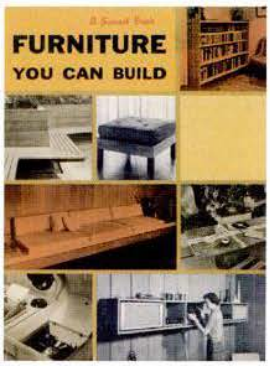

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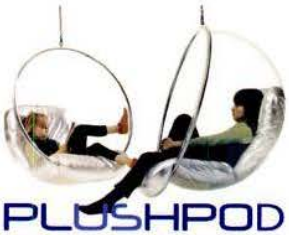

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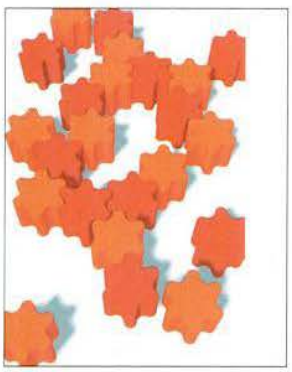

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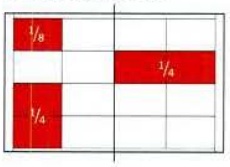

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106 What We Saw

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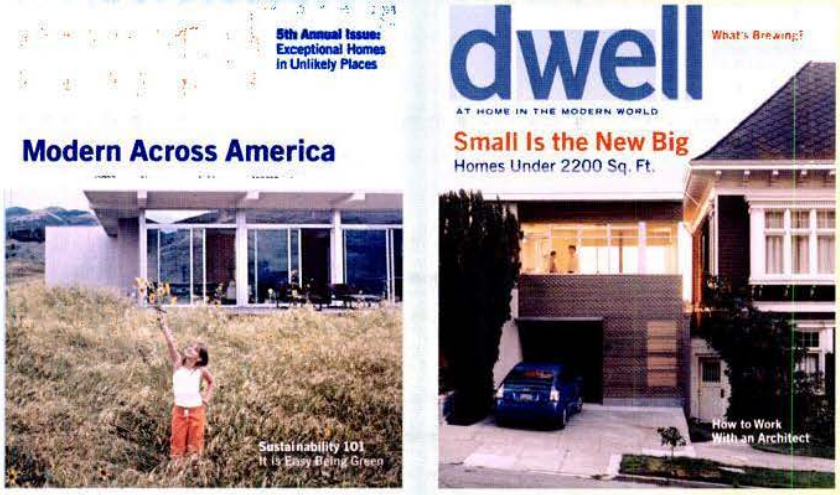

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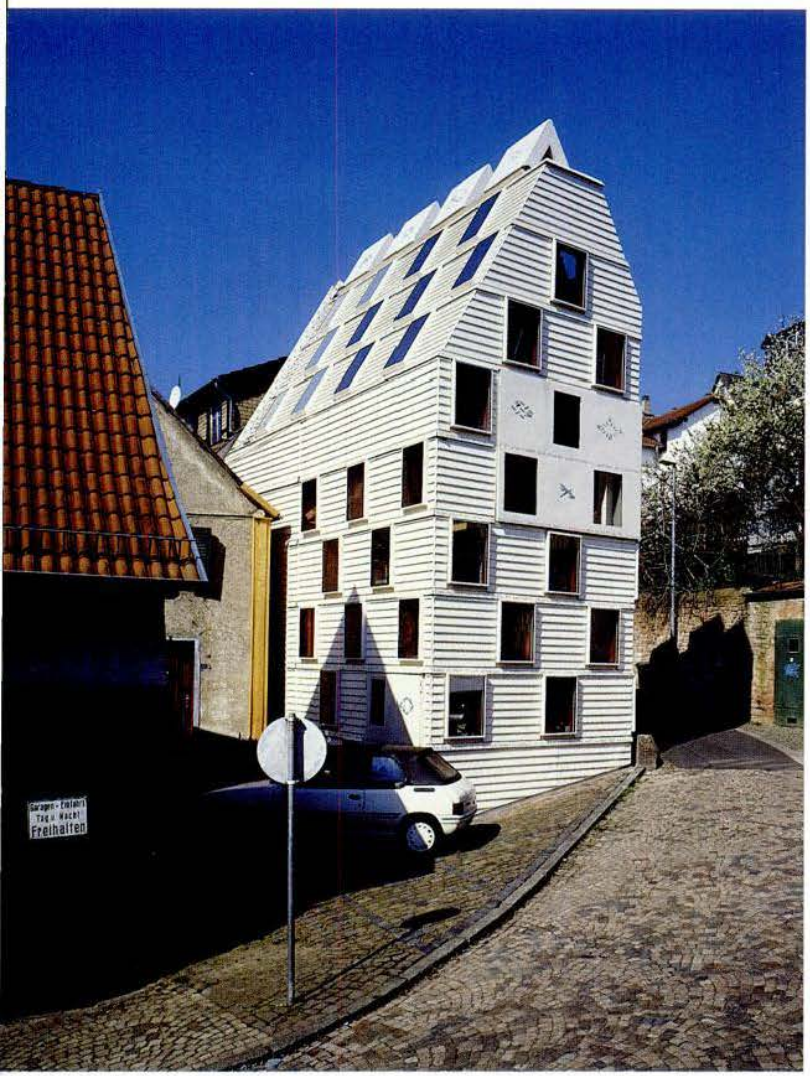

Open House

"How can we breathe new possibilities into modern architecture?" was the question the German architect duo Gabriela Seifert and Götz Stöckmann of Formalhaut posed when designing their new home. Rallying the help of six artists and a poet, they struck pay dirt, creating an interdisciplinary solution to stand in the footprint of a crumbling 300-year-old cottage affectionately called "the Little Lemon House."

Located in a historic district of Gelnhausen, outside Frankfurt, the Living Room, as the new house is dubbed, rethinks the roles of private and public life, while injecting ornamental and natural elements into modern architecture. Clad with a powder-coated-aluminum skin, the house is perforated by 52 windows set in a checkerboard pattern. Peering through one of the windows you are greeted by a rocky ground-floor landscape, as if the house has grown up around a giant quarry stone nestled in gravel. Suspended in space over the living area, the bedroom hangs in a sliding drawer that can be opened over the street for alfresco sleeping. In each instance the interior elements escape their traditional boundaries as the house playfully thumbs its nose at convention.

A sound installation by artist Achim Wollscheid elegantly resonates the conceptual spirit of the project. Noises from outside can be electronically manipulated and transferred indoors—think of traffic sounds becoming John Cage–esque ambient noise. The reverse is also possible, with external speakers projecting sounds of daily life outside. Life becomes art becomes sonic architecture, and even nightly dish-washing rituals are elevated to performance.

As Seifert explains, the house responds to the exterior environment in a way that's akin to breathing. Every cloud that scoots across the sky is felt as its shadow changes the light and mood inside the house. Like a cell wall that allows only certain information to pass through, the Living Room rethinks the glass house, shaping how the outside is felt inside, and the inside out. ■

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