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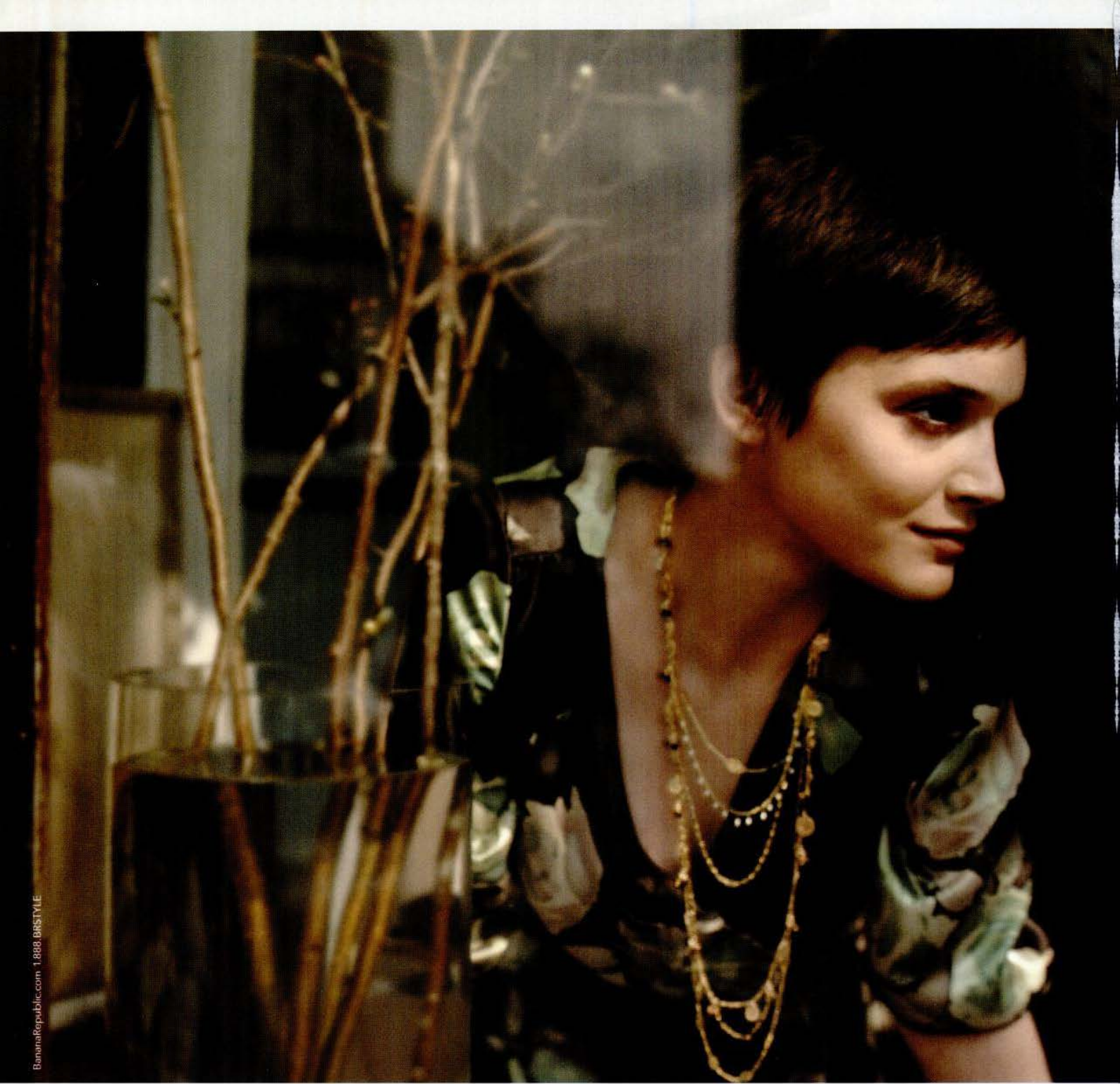
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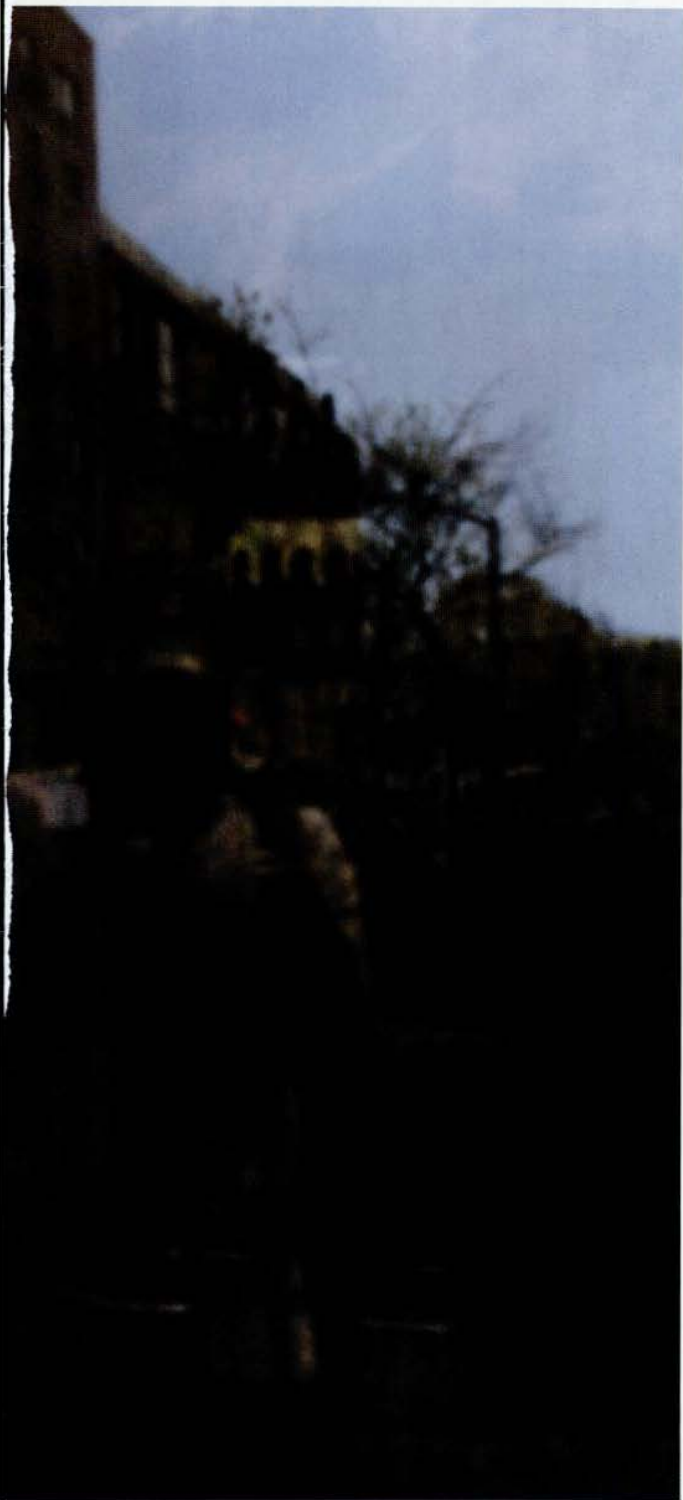


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Photographer David Maisel's near-noir aerial views of Los Angeles explore the disconnect between nature and our urban environment.

Cover: The Rucksack Haus, page 192

Photo by Claus Bach

“The atmosphere as well as the architecture is fantastic; it’s a real community. We have a local market, events, socials where everyone aged 3 to 83 turns up, and the 13th restaurant in the neighborhood has just opened.” — Carsten Cox, page 138



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The new rush.



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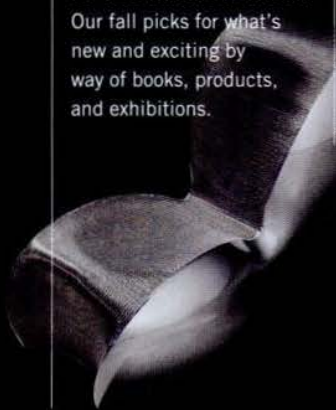
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A Colorado couple handles their freeway-facing lot with flair, and incorporates a long list of sustainable features to boot.

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Music critic Sasha Frere-Jones tests out five MP3 players, and swears only one of them begins with an "i."



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Nice Modernist

Joshua David and Robert Hammond are leading the charge to turn an abandoned industrial relic on New York's West Side into a glorious public park.

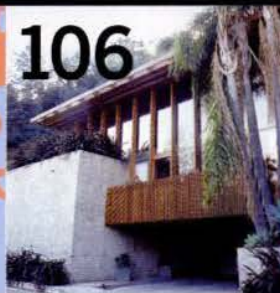
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Houses We Love

We don't know how they got away with it. All we know is we want one of these crazy cubes dangling outside our window.



Interior design: John Barman. Armstrong laminate floors featured: Stone Creek Sage L6526 & Stone Creek Sand L6525

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First off, let me say that I admire architects who choose to take risks, because they have defined what we know today as modern architecture (i.e., Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier). However, I must admit that it is appalling to know that an architect would try an “experiment” on a hard-working client where budget issues seem to be a major concern.

If Marwan Al-Sayed is so confident that the concept for the House of Earth + Light (“Love’s Labors Found,” June 2005) could work, it would seem to me that he would have been able to come up with a solution to fix this residence at a reasonable cost. Al-Sayed refers to architecture as “kind of a functional object people live in,” but it is not “kind of a functional object,” it is the most functional object that one could experience. A residence is a sanctuary: a place to raise a family, a place to call home, and, most important, it is shelter from the elements. An architect has an ethical responsibility to provide not only aesthetically beautiful spaces but also spaces that function. Maybe Mr. Al-Sayed should have tried this experiment on himself before imposing it on clients who depended upon his professional abilities to ensure that they receive a functional, livable space.

Michael Jason
Scottsdale, Arizona

Marwan Al-Sayed replies:

I feel I need to correct the following which appeared in your article (“Love’s Labors Found,” June 2005) on a house we designed some years ago. It simply is not true that the fabric for the house is not weather-resistant as your article incorrectly states. This fabric, manufactured in France by Serge Ferrari, is Kynar-coated and completely weather-resistant. It carries roof warranties that equal and in some cases exceed

that of many conventional roofing materials.

The only reason the roof leaked was solely a result of an owner who insisted on building the roof himself (with no prior experience) instead of hiring licensed professionals who specialize in the construction and engineering of tensile fabric structures, and from whom we had received bids that met budget.

I enlisted the services of one of the country’s most esteemed tensile-fabric engineers to work on this design. Together, we developed a concept and set of construction details that are based on industry standards for this type of fabric application. In fact, the detail we specified has been used in countless applications around the world and, if properly executed, creates a completely weather-resistant roof. When the fabric roof was removed, inspections of how the original owner fabricated the fabric clamp assembly clearly showed that he did not follow our very detailed and professional specifications. Any roof, anywhere, no matter what it is made of, is capable of leaking if not properly fabricated and installed.

Additionally, the roof, as executed, did not perform to our specifications because the original owners took shortcuts, not only in the fabrication of the roof but also in the mechanical system we designed: They did not install the third inner layer of the fabric roof as originally conceived to create a six-inch dead airspace cavity; they did not install the fabric ducts that were to run the length of the house; the “clerestories” at the east and west ends were never intended to have glass but were originally designed to be insulated steel panels; the bridge was originally specified to have insulation, which was also not installed; and finally, as your article points out, they did not use the thermally insulated glass we originally specified. All of the above items were essential to the proper functioning of the house as a total system.

It is important for the record to note that all of these items were in our original design and thus the “experiment” was never even close to being fully tested, as it was both never completed as designed and improperly executed by the owner. Your article leaves the false impression that the “experiment” as we designed it was a failure, whereas in reality, had our design been completely and properly executed by licensed professionals, as we intended, the house would still be supporting a fabric roof.

Marwan Al-Sayed
Marwan Al-Sayed Architects, Ltd.
Phoenix, Arizona

My partner and I are planning a development project in Nicaragua. We are in the very

beginning stages—finalizing land acquisition, legal docs, design concept, etc. What we do know is that we are going to be building approximately 30 “prefab glass pads” tucked into the hills of San Juan del Sur, overlooking the Pacific Ocean. These units will be about 1,000 square feet with green components—as green as we can be—and, ideally, off the grid. We are beginning a dialogue with several architects and it would be really helpful if you could help us locate prefab manufacturers in Central America, or perhaps even South America, so as to keep our costs down, thereby making this project financially viable for us.

Patrick Radoci
Baltimore, Maryland

I have a question and I believe your magazine would be the ideal resource for an educated answer. I’m considering relocating with my family to Central or South America. We were considering buying property to build upon, and, after talking with different people about their experience building in countries like this, I’ve decided that some sort of prefabricated dwelling would be an ideal choice for us, at least initially. In addition to a living space for my family, we’ve also considered doing some sort of small beachfront hotel that would utilize prefabricated buildings as dwellings for guests. I’m curious if you have found or created a list of prefab resources that might make my research a little easier. I would appreciate any advice you could provide.

Burk Jackson
Portland, Oregon

Editors’ Note: *Though we have done extensive research on prefabrication in the U.S., Europe, and Asia, our knowledge of the prefab world in Central and South America is admittedly lacking. Perhaps our readers can help?*

Reading “The Ideal Kitchen” (June 2005), I looked at the “Swiss-Mex” kitchen and, honestly, kept searching for the “after” picture, until I realized that was it. Granted, it’s nice to have a relief from the endless parade of catalog in-stock modern furnishings and brushed stainless vent hoods—but Swiss-Mex? It looks as bad as it would taste, I think.

Oh well, Dwell is still far better than what *Architectural Digest* dishes out regularly. I’m hoping for a feature on real modern-era neighborhoods that are being revitalized. (Like mine, in Las Vegas.) I suppose I’ll just forget about Swiss-Mex.

Angela Kallus
Las Vegas, Nevada ▶



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I have been a regular reader and booster of *Dwell* since the second issue. All articles have been right on the mark up until "The Ideal Kitchen." I am no expert in kitchen design; however, as a homeowner/user I have managed to remodel three kitchens in the past nine years. All of the kitchens reviewed in the article are attractive; however, only the "Deam Kitchen" seems functional—the others all have inadequate storage and counter space. I love *Dwell* and want you to keep doing what you're doing—just have a user/cook look at kitchens before they are labeled "ideal."

B. Frank Mackey
New York, New York

It would really be nice to see a regular "Careers/Day in the Life" section in *Dwell*. I am 26 and am interested in a career in sustainable development, but I don't have much input on what fields of study and work lead to what career paths. I am finally applying to landscape architecture grad school after wading through endless murky info on what architects, planners, landscape architects, civil engineers, and developers actually do on a daily basis. I think even highly educated people don't know much beyond the Ayn Rand cliché of an inspired architect. Whenever I tell folks I have decided to pursue landscape architecture, they look at me a little funny and say, "Oh, I love gardening too!" It is so much more complex than that. I think other readers might also like to be shown around the multitude of careers and professions that are involved in the *Dwell* ideal.

Ben Pershouse
Broomfield, Colorado

I've subscribed to your magazine since February 2001 and have every issue saved with plenty of pages dog-eared for future reference. In fact, I take my time and savor each issue, reading every word. Unfortunately this has led me to miss several events mentioned that I would have liked to attend. Since travel is sometimes involved, would it be possible to list events earlier?

Sharon Ashton
Carmel Valley, California

Editors' Note: Advance listing information is not always available. However, we do our best to list shows and events as far in advance as possible.

I can read article after article in *Dwell* about smart prefab houses, but when most people think prefab they think classroom portables—those awful buildings that now litter our public-school sites. Isn't anyone working on better prefab classrooms—or even thinking about it?

This seems like a major issue. Child-care centers are using prefab classrooms to make child care affordable, public schools are renting space to put up portables to bring extra income into the districts. I've been looking for nice modern portables online and can't find anything. Certainly our children deserve some aesthetic consideration.

I know *Dwell* is mostly about dwellings, but I feel I dwell in my community as well.

Alison Hicks
Mountain View, California

Editors' Note: We agree, and are planning a series of articles in 2006 that explore nonresidential spaces and how people relate to, and function within, them. There are a number of prominent architects who have designed innovative schools and day-care centers, including Jennifer Siegal, Morphosis, and Marmol-Radziner.

I am enjoying my subscription to *Dwell*. Yet, as I look at all the fabulous modern interiors I am struck with the recurring observation that there is very little sign of life in any of these spaces. They are clean, often elegant, usually well-furnished and expensively appointed spaces, but who lives there?

You showcase beautiful spaces, you stimulate ideas, but how realistic are these spaces in the long run? And if they aren't realistic, then what's the purpose? Many of us would like to live in a glass box, but how many of us could do so with so little evidence of our being there? And why would we want to? In the end, while it's beautiful to behold, and inspires wishful dreams within much of your readership, if exposing and encouraging good design is the goal, how good is a design if it is diminished when confronted by life?

Paul Tominac
San Francisco, California

I've got a quick question, which I hope you can help me out with. In several articles I've noticed house owners using "polished concrete floors" for kitchen. I'm curious and interested to find out more. How do you finish a concrete surface?

Roland Huu
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Editors' Note: There are many ways to finish a concrete floor: painting, laquering, and polishing. Polishing concrete is based on the same principles as sanding wood: Floors are gradually ground down until you get the desired look. There's a wealth of information on concrete and its various uses at www.concretenetwork.com. ►

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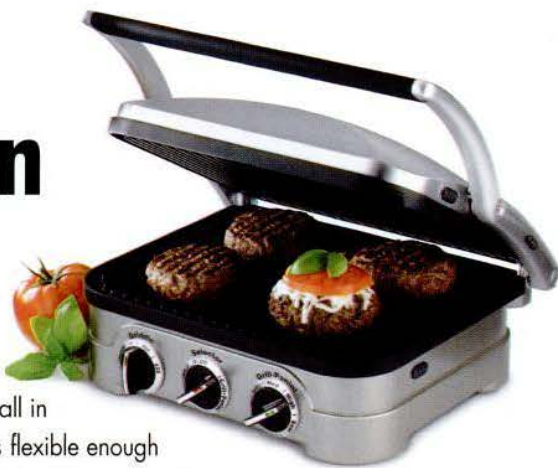
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Letters



We very much appreciate the comments about water usage and our house in Phoenix ("Pod Living," March 2005, shown above). When we bought the house, we had the full intention of removing the lawn. As it turns out, the only ways to make the switch involve a lot of expense and non-environmental products. We ruled out poison, which might not allow other plants to grow. We ruled out scraping and removing the seed-infested topsoil. We ruled out a black plastic layer across the entire lawn and bringing in many tons of foreign gravel. None of these seemed satisfactory, and none are considered 100 percent effective. So, instead, we decided to use the lawn as a design determinate, and use it for its cooling properties. We allowed the neighborhood to continue the monthly irrigation of our yard. We do not use sprinklers or other water-wasting devices. Sustainability is often about weighing tough choices.

Matthew and Maria Salenger
coLAB Studio
Phoenix, Arizona

With regards to Emily Magnaghi's letter suggesting that Matthew and Maria Salenger ("Pod Living," March 2005) were irresponsible for having a lawn in Phoenix ("Letters," June 2005), it's important to recognize that not all Phoenix properties come with water-conserving Xeriscape already established. Xeriscape was simply not the plan for many mid-century subdivisions in Phoenix. I imagine that coLAB Studio would spend a good amount of time and gallons of herbicide fending off the encroachment of neighboring rhizomes after removal of the lawn that came with their vintage lot, since their irrigated subdivision is regulated by the local water utility.

I congratulate coLAB for using the lawn as passive cooling for the sleeping pods. Anyone who has slept outdoors on a Phoenix lawn in the summer can appreciate the cooling effect that grass has. With daytime temperatures rising toward the 100s, balancing electric bills versus water bills is taken quite seriously by design-conscious homeowners.

For further information on removing mid-century lawns in favor of Xeriscape and resources about mid-century and contemporary modern living in Arizona, visit www.modernphoenix.net.

Alison King
Phoenix, Arizona

Editors' Note: We'll be covering Xeriscape in *Dwell* later in the year.

Dwell is great, though I must tell you I am continually surprised by basic code violations shown in many of the homes featured. I often find myself asking, How did they get away with that?

I would love to see *Dwell* include cross-sections of walls and details of intersections between materials, particularly to highlight some of the nontraditional construction, new materials, and use of existing materials in a new way.

The portion of your "My House" section called "How to Make My House Your House" is nice but I feel a feature called "What We Learned" could benefit us readers too. This could include what an owner or architect may have done differently, things that did not work, what did work, or cost-saving ideas. The addition of floor plans is a good tool—how about including a scale so we can get a feel for size?

Patrick Melley
Moss Beach, California

I really enjoyed reading "The Challenge of Architecture" in the June 2005 issue. The point about the reality of the dream-home building process being much more than the "eight page spread in *Architectural Digest*" is right on the money. I've also wondered why more publications just focus on the fantasy and not the reality. In practice, lots of great and interesting projects go sort of badly and the people involved in the process don't have many places to turn to. I've seen this over and over. Recently, I came across an eye-opener article in *People* (May 30, 2005) that presented the kinds of things that homeowners go through in building and remodeling their dream homes. The horror stories are troubling, to say the least.

The article was particularly timely for me because last summer I was involved in the process of turning a very old cottage into a very modern one for myself on an island (Peaks Island, Maine), and everything that could go wrong did. We put so much into the design and planning, even traveling to other countries to have some of the artwork produced, but when it came to the execution of the building plans, things really fell apart. We ended up having to fire the contractors and complete the project ourselves on an island where we had no car, ►

A man and a mermaid are swimming together in a clear blue ocean. The man is on the right, and the mermaid is on the left. They are both looking towards each other and holding hands. The mermaid has a long, dark, scaly tail. The man is shirtless and wearing dark shorts. The water is bright blue with some white foam from the surface. The overall mood is romantic and serene.

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Letters

no tools, limited experience, and very few resources to draw on. It's amazing what you can do when you don't have plumbing and a kitchen sink. In the end, we were able to complete our dream house by sheer hard work and the passion we had for the design. You're very right that "anything worth having is worth working at, or fighting for."

Keith Weiskamp
Phoenix, Arizona

I must take exception to Frank Escher's statement that "building this way is simply more expensive," in the June 2005 "Shades of Green" interview. It doesn't have to be. I had a 750-square-foot, pueblo-style, strawbale house built near Taos, New Mexico, for \$85,000. Building with this agricultural waste product proved to be inexpensive, fast and easy to construct, and extremely energy-efficient.

Which brings me to my second point: While my strawbale house is off the grid, my town house in Colorado Springs is not. Yet I still made a conscious effort to choose a unit with south-facing windows. Because of this simple step, my heating bills are lower than those of my north-facing neighbors. And because I selectively close shades and open windows for cross breezes in the summer, I don't need air-conditioning, even on 90-degree days. Overall, my unit costs me less money and the planet less fuel than comparable ones across the street.

Most of my neighbors are unaware of solar principles of heating and cooling—but my builder should have known! Why didn't he angle all of the town houses in this direction? Why don't all builders of new homes do so? Perhaps Dwell could help pave the way to complete green building by showcasing on-the-grid homes that have taken advantage of this baby step.

Priscilla Eagye
Colorado Springs, Colorado

Correction:

In "Escape From New York" (June 2005) we neglected to mention that the sculpture on page 58 was created by Charles Ginnever. We regret the omission.

On the cover of our July/August 2005 issue, we claimed to review "The 5 Best Blenders." We reviewed five, but only printed four. To read the fifth review, please email andrew@dwellmag.com.

Please write to us:

Dwell Letters
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Prefab Now / 28–30 Oct / Hammer Museum / L.A.

This fall, Dwell and the Hammer Museum are bringing together a distinguished group of prefab experts for an exploration of the groundbreaking ideas, opportunities, and challenges of modern prefab. The three-day event will include an opening-night cocktail party at Jean Prouvé's prefab masterpiece, Tropical House; a full day of fascinating lectures on prefab's past, present, and future; and an exclusive tour of L.A.'s most noteworthy modern prefab homes. Speakers include Robert Rubin on Jean Prouvé, Alastair Gordon on Leisurama Homes, Jay Baldwin on R. Buckminster Fuller, Michelle Kaufmann on the Glidehouse, Charlie Lazor on the FlatPak House, and Wes Jones on shipping-container architecture. For more info and to register, please log on to www.dwellmag.com/community/events.

Contributors

Randi Berez ("The Jonathan," p. 122) is a photographer who has always been interested in architecture and how a functional environment can affect quality-of-life issues. Therefore, she enjoyed spending time at the Segal house, with its ingenious ways of masking traffic noise and creating a more peaceful living environment.

Deborah Bishop ("Real Estate 101," p. 158), a contributing editor to Dwell, explores home ownership and new construction in this issue. Although her first house was a classic San Francisco Victorian and her current cornice-free one is barely a decade old, she says they do share one common annoyance—"a dearth of closet space!"

David A. Greene ("The Jonathan," p. 122) is Dwell's contributing editor in Los Angeles. He not-so-secretly wants to be considered an auteur. Instead, he is the writer/director of the *Secret Childhood* series on VH1.

Hertha Hurnaus ("Industrial Evolution," p. 138) works as a photographer in Vienna, Austria. For this month's issue, she traveled to Duisburg, Germany, to document Foster and Partners' restructuring of the harbor area. The unstable weather forced her to take frequent breaks, in the course of which she depleted the entire coffee and chocolate supply of her charitable host, Carsten Cox.

Raimund Koch ("Village Green," p. 63) studied at the Bavarian Academy for Photography, then moved to Berlin where he began specializing in architectural photography. He lives in New York and enjoys shooting

unusual spaces like Cathryn Barmon and Mark Deutsch's apartment in this issue.

David Maisel ("Living in Oblivion," p. 149) has been taking aerial photographs of landscapes that have undergone extreme transformations for the last two decades. His aerial imagery of Los Angeles featured in this issue, called *Oblivion*, was a coda to a previous work, *The Lake Project*, which explored the massive changes wrought upon Owens Lake, which was drained to bring water to Los Angeles in 1913.

Todd Selby ("Listen Up!," p. 78) is a portrait and fashion photographer who lives in New York City. For his first shoot for Dwell he photographed music critic Sasha Frere-Jones listening to his favorite MP3 player, the iPod, which is coincidentally—and perhaps not surprisingly—also Todd's favorite MP3 player.

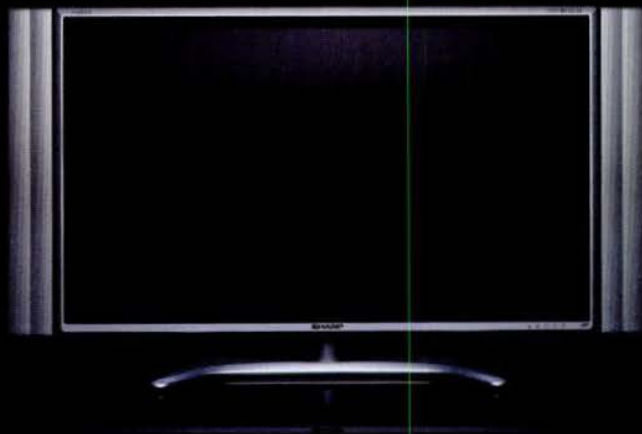
Jane Szita ("Industrial Evolution," p. 138) is a contributing editor to Dwell. For this issue she visited Germany's Ruhrgebiet to see how the once-industrial region is using architecture to reinvent itself—with a little help from Lord Norman Foster and Rem Koolhaas. She was tempted to relocate before remembering that she already lives in Amsterdam, which is quite a nice place itself.

Chloe Veltman ("Unreal Estate," p. 168) is a British arts and technology writer living in San Francisco. With house prices ever rising in the Bay Area, she took to drawing pictures of her ideal home on used envelopes until she realized that for the fraction of the cost of buying a one-bedroom apartment in the real world, she could build a gilded palace in the virtual one.

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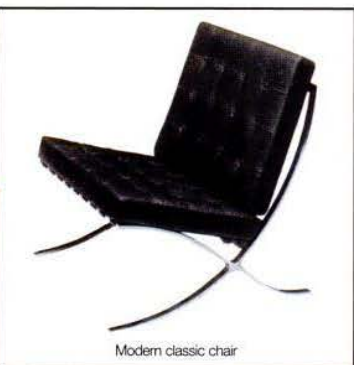
Le Corbusier pony skin lounge



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Time sofa bed



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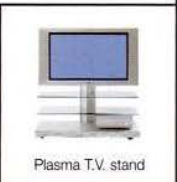
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Milano coffee table



Plasma T.V. stand



Le Corbusier sofa



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Verona granite table



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Zen coffee table



Le Corbusier chair with ottoman



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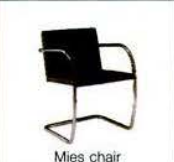
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Street Smart

Recently in *The New Yorker*, architecture critic Paul Goldberger mourned what he perceives as the failure of the Ground Zero rebuilding effort, surmising that the end result will simply be “a huge amount of office space”—space for which there is currently no real demand. “Ground Zero doesn’t need simply to be rebuilt,” he writes. “It needs to be reimagined as a new district of the city, one that is both inspiring and useful. And what lower Manhattan needs now, more than anything, is housing.”

Goldberger goes on to explain how new housing in lower Manhattan has led to the creation of restaurants, stores, gyms, and day-care centers as well as new office space and even a Whole Foods market. This mixed-use development sprouted up somewhat organically; how great it would be, Goldberger muses, if a Ground Zero scheme could actually plan for this sort of future diversified growth.

Sadly, Goldberger’s call will most likely go unheeded. While it’s doubtful that Ground Zero will turn into a duplicate Twin Towers site (as proposed by the increasingly insane Donald Trump), it will more certainly be occupied by a skyscraper-by-committee that does nothing to revitalize a splintered community or provide a proper memorial of the tragedy that occurred there.

Poorly conceived urban development and redevelopment plague our country, and in many ways, the Ground Zero dilemma is just one more example of the dire lack of innovative city planning and community fostering in the U.S. The examples are plentiful: incomprehensible traffic in cities like Los Angeles and Atlanta; the dearth of housing initiatives in San Francisco that have made it the city named worst bang for the housing buck by *BusinessWeek*; the abandoned streets and derelict buildings that characterize once-booming cities like Detroit and St. Louis. The solutions, however, don’t seem that difficult, and it’s endlessly frustrating that more dynamic ones aren’t applied. Combine housing with essential services—something that happened organically in my own urban neighborhood, which consists of single- and multi-family housing within walking distance of

a dry cleaner, a café, a market, a flower shop, and a park—and voilà, a community begins to form, small businesses spring up, streets are cleaner and safer.

It was this frustration with the current direction of cities that compelled us to tackle the problem of urban planning and regeneration this issue, and we come away inspired by what we’ve discovered from as far as Europe and as near as Southern California. As Jane Szita reports in her story on Foster and Partners’ design revitalization of Duisburg, Germany, a virtually abandoned industrial city on the Rhine, significant government investment resulted in a highly livable city, one that addresses sustainability, community, and profitability all in equal measure.

Alas, this sort of social and economic commitment is far more prevalent in Europe than in the U.S. The examples of proactive urbanism in this country come from motivated individuals like Jonathan Segal, an architect who grew tired of waiting for developers to embrace his vision and set about building affordable modern housing in San Diego, California, and the team of architect Edward Baum and developer Diane Cheatham, who worked together to build McMansion alternatives in downtown Dallas. By creating thoughtful and well-designed urban housing, all of these renegades take a small step toward addressing the problems that plague cities worldwide: homogenization, sprawl, pollution, traffic, spiraling housing costs, declining human interaction, and, ultimately, a lack of civility.

I’m not suggesting that modern architecture is the only solution to urban renewal; however, it is a signal to residents and visitors alike that a significant investment of not just money but thought and time has been made. Further, modern architecture functions as a symbol of innovation and change. Our cities are integral to our future—for better or worse, depending on what gets built. Here’s to spirited architects like Foster, Segal, Baum, et al. for leading the charge. ■

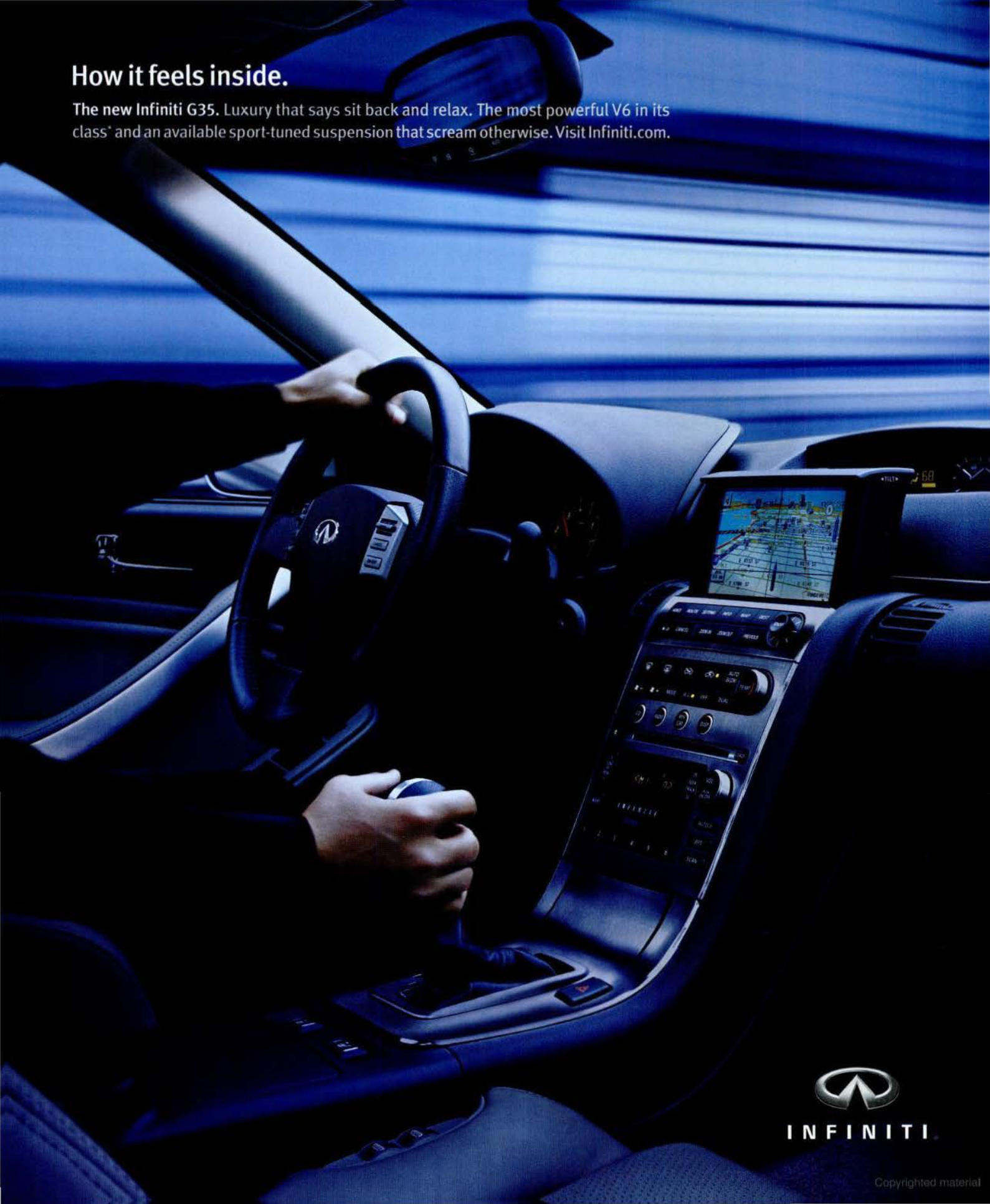
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Romantic Modernist: The Life and Work of Norman Jaffe / 24 July–18 Sept / The Parrish Art Museum / Southampton, NY / Establishing an architectural niche for himself, Norman Jaffe designed over 50 homes on eastern Long Island, from small weekend retreats to sprawling summer estates.



Jaffe studied architecture at U.C. Berkeley, but it was his work on the East Coast that gained him renown. Struck by the landscape of eastern Long Island, Jaffe visited the area often before establishing a permanent practice in Bridgehampton in 1973. This exhibition, curated by Alastair Gordon, examines Jaffe's work in the context of American residential design through the development of his personal style and distinct mark on the Long Island landscape, which is commonly referred to as "Hamptons' style." Various documentary materials are shown, including photographs, drawings, models, and personal artifacts.

Particular focus is given to a few standout designs, including the Becker House, in Wainscott, and Sam's Creek, Jaffe's holistic subdivision plan of six houses built on standard one-acre lots on an old potato field, completed between 1973 and 1983. The exhibit also features residences throughout Long Island, like the Perlbinder House in Sagaponack (top right), the Seidler, Osofsky, and Jacobs houses on Shelter Island (bottom), and the Krieger House in Montauk (top left). A full-color 240-page catalog, co-published by the Parrish Art Museum and the Monacelli Press, complements the exhibition. www.parrishart.org

COURTESY SARAH JAFFE TURNBULL (PAINTING, EXTERIOR), PHOTO BY MARIS/SEWEL (BEDROOM)

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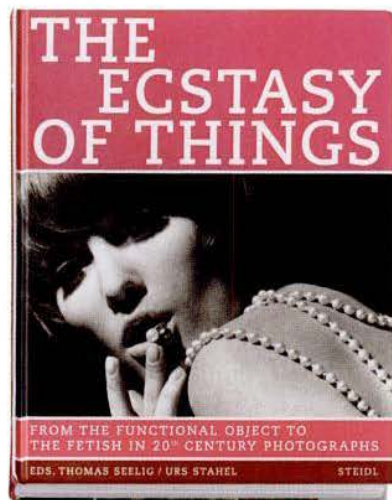


The Biographical Landscape: The Photography of Stephen Shore, 1968–1993 / 25 June–16 Oct / Hammer Museum / Los Angeles, CA
At an age when most of us were playing with Legos, Stephen Shore was teaching himself darkroom processing techniques. It's no surprise, then, that the precocious youngster who sold his first print to the Museum of Modern Art at the age of 14 grew up to become one of the country's greatest living photographers. Shore, who is best known for his careful renderings of vernacular architecture and American life, once noted, "My theme, I suppose, is the observation of culture." More than 120 of Shore's works are on display here. www.hammer.ucla.edu



1-Line spice rack / Desu Design

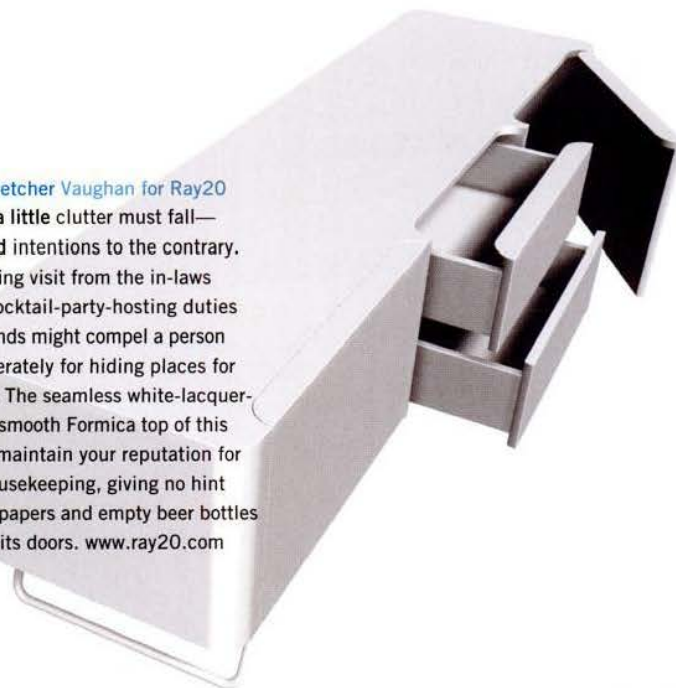
Are you tired of digging through your awkward, anything-but-ergonomic cabinets to find that olive-oil bottle smugly lording over your lowly spices? Isn't it enough that it can make or break sauté, that it is the most used and most beloved ingredient—what about parsley, sage, rosemary, and thyme? This spice rack not only makes finding your spices that much easier, it also puts olive oil in its place—as a prominent, not superior, ingredient in a functional kitchen. www.desudesign.com



The Ecstasy of Things: From the Functional Object to the Fetish in 20th-Century Photographs / Edited by Thomas Seelig and Urs Stahel / Steidl / \$60

Twenty researchers traveled around Europe and the U.S. to investigate the design, production, merchandising, and use of things; that is, they set out to analyze the Western fascination with, and fetishistic relationship to, the object. This collection of photographs is interspersed with academic essays, creating a tautological epic replete with references to Benjamin and Freud. If you haven't yet considered the aura of your iPod, perhaps this book will compel you to. www.steidl.de

Frontier / By Fletcher Vaughan for Ray20
Into each life, a little clutter must fall—despite all good intentions to the contrary. But an impending visit from the in-laws or upcoming cocktail-party-hosting duties for upscale friends might compel a person to search desperately for hiding places for unsightly stuff. The seamless white-lacquer-MDF lines and smooth Formica top of this sideboard will maintain your reputation for immaculate housekeeping, giving no hint of the old newspapers and empty beer bottles hidden behind its doors. www.ray20.com



PHOTOS BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK), COURTESY APERTURE (STEPHEN SHORE)

ORAKELBLUME BY KOLOMAN MOSER 1901

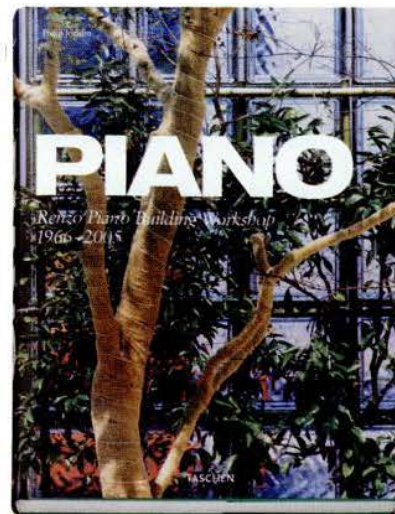
Box / By Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Vitra

The small spaces in which many of us live just don't fit many accoutrements and accessories. We're always on the lookout for multipurpose storage products that don't look like oversized Tupperware tubs. The Bouroullec brothers have created Box with that purpose in mind: Foam polyurethane sides encase plentiful goods, while the smooth white top steadies our drinks nicely. www.vitra.com



Hella Jongerius for Royal Tichelaar Makkum

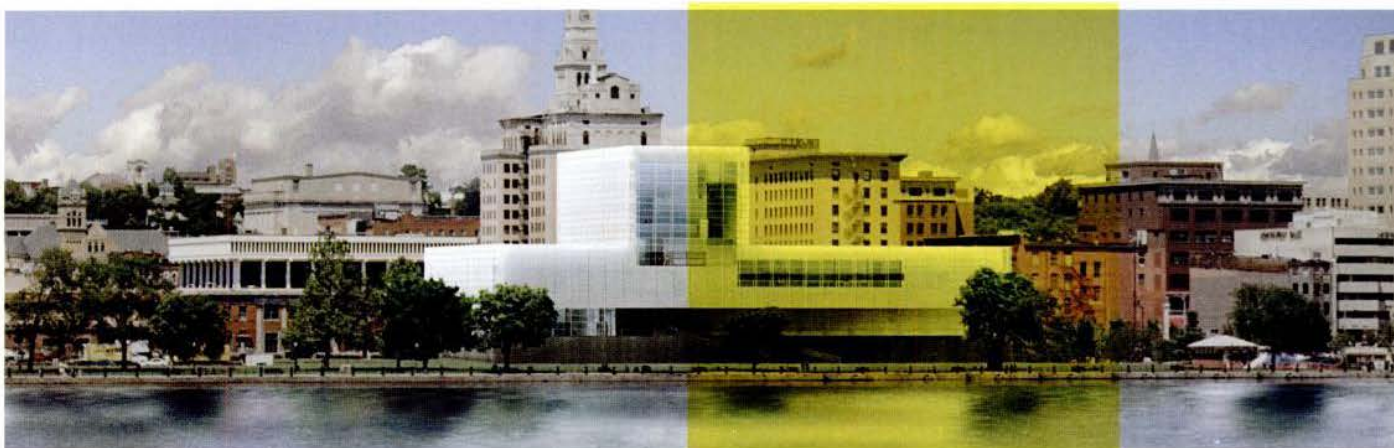
As a world-renowned maker of Dutch faience, Royal Tichelaar Makkum's annual collaboration with designers like Studio Job and Marcel Wanders has contemporary appeal—despite its eminence as the oldest company in the Netherlands (established in 1594). This year, Hella Jongerius reveals the majolica-making process by leaving her wares partially unglazed to expose the stone-colored clay that lies beneath the traditional tin-oxide glaze. www.tichelaar.nl



Piano: Renzo Piano Building Workshop 1966-2005 / By Philip Jodidio / Taschen / \$125

The operative word for Renzo Piano is "light," though the book chronicling his nearly 40-year career is anything but. This hefty volume elucidates the lightness of space, material, and atmosphere that characterize his numerous legendary works, from Paris's Pompidou Centre to the New York Times Tower. Even his name brings to mind a certain ethereal music. www.taschen.com

Figge Art Museum / Davenport, IA / Before the new Figge Art Museum was built, Davenport was best known in tourist guides for Happy Joe's Jungle Bungle and the Rhythm City Casino. With the arrival of this shimmering glass structure, by British architect David Chipperfield, the city can finally stand architecturally proud. www.art-dma.org

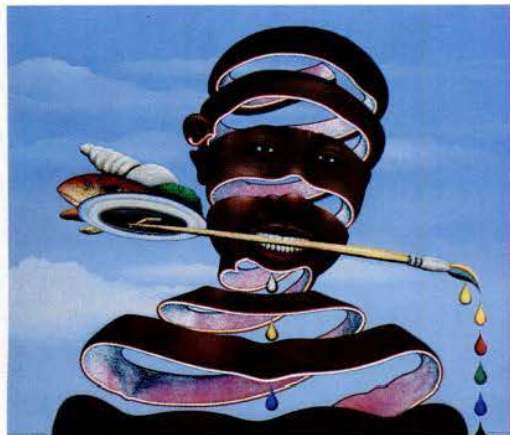


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Linn, Sacramento - Limm, San Francisco - Current, Seattle - Centro Modern Furnishings, St. Louis - Inform Interiors, Vancouver



Arts of Africa / 16 July–4 Sept / Grimaldi Forum Monaco / Monaco
 Trapped in the egocentricities of the Western world, it's easy to forget that civilizations in Africa were flourishing long before the ancient Greeks had begun their philosophizing. A vast collection of more than 500 works of art from the African continent is presented here, spanning over 6,000 years. From earthenware and bronzes made in the Nubian region that predate dynastic Egypt to contemporary works by Ghanaian, South African, and Bengalese artists, among others (such as the painting by Congolese artist Cheri Samba, at left), it's a comprehensive exhibition that was thousands of years in the making. www.grimaldiforum.mc

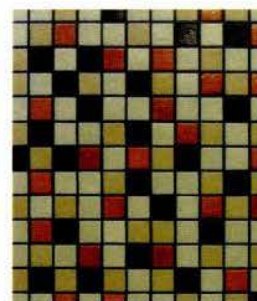
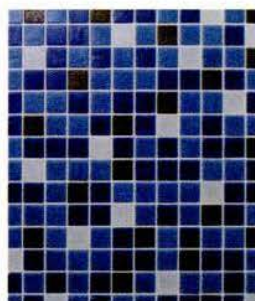


Mix Tape: The Art of Cassette Culture /
 Edited by Thurston Moore / \$22.50 /
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CDs deliver a more expedient mix, but it is the mix tape that remains peerless in its ability to imbue meaning and convey a personality through choppy transitions, bleeps, and affective delays. This book by Sonic Youth's Moore combines playlists, cover art, and editorial commentary from the most-beloved mix tapes of a variety of artists, writers, designers, and musicians. www.rizzoliusa.com

Lo-Void chair / By Ron Arad

In an ingenious fusion of old-fashioned furniture and futurism, Ron Arad has designed a limited-edition rocking chair using rocket science. The Lo-Void, a bulbous rocker, is made of polished super-inflated aluminum, a technology employed more commonly in aerospace design. No two seats are the same. The Lo-Void will be accompanied by a nonrocking friend, the Oh Void, forming an intergalactic pair. www.barryfriedmanltd.com



ModWalls / By Mosaic Tile Market

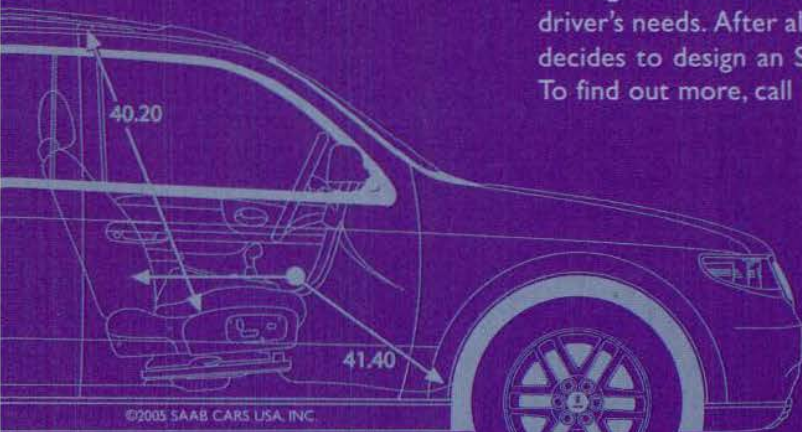
Picking the right colors for your bathroom tiles can be like meeting your soul mate: In a sea of overwhelming choices, it's hard to find the right match. Enter ModWalls, a dating service for your home's surfaces. From over 200 colors and 14 lines of tile, the company has picked attractive pairings of colors and styles that would be appropriate in any modern house. Even if your personal life is abysmal, at least you'll have stylish countertops. www.mosaictilemarket.com





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In the Modern World

Light fixtures / By Jeremy Pyles for Niche

In botany, a flower is considered perfect if it contains both male (stamen) and female (pistil) reproductive organs. And while Mr. Pyles was definitely focused on the masculine character of both his Stamen (right) and Bell Jar (middle) designs with their elongated bulbs, the delicate structure of the surrounding glass is unmistakably feminine. His Terra Quattro fixture (left) contains a corresponding number of standard bulbs. Each is available in smoke, dark gray, and a particularly stunning amber tone. www.nichenyc.com



Marais / By Paola Navone for Molteni & C

Admit it. You've always wanted one of those automated massage chairs; you just couldn't bear their La-Z-Boy looks. Thanks to Molteni, never again will you have to steal into a Brookstone for a clandestine kneading. This daybed is not only stylish but it also administers a gentle, remote-controlled massage so that you can relax and read a good book, instead of pining over back issues of *Sky Mall*. www.molteni.it



Tape dispenser / By Scotch

Practical and purposeful, the ubiquitous Scotch tape dispenser has been found in desk drawers and kitchen cabinets across the U.S. since it first hit the market in 1930. To celebrate its 75th anniversary, the company has updated the innocuous-looking product and created a friendly little snail that comes in berry, lilac, lime, or mango. Finally, good design for \$2.99. www.scotchbrand.com



Menos / By Peter Maly for Behr International / For low and lean living spaces, it makes no sense to have chunky cabinets that float high overhead. Architect Peter Maly, a proponent of Germanic functionalism, has created a storage system that lets you reach the remote without getting up from your chair. www.behr-international.com



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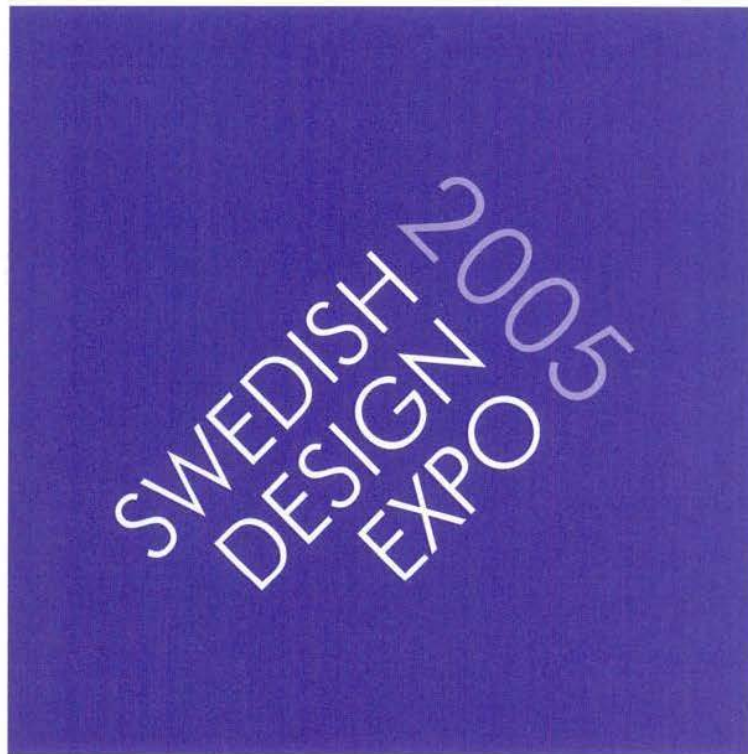
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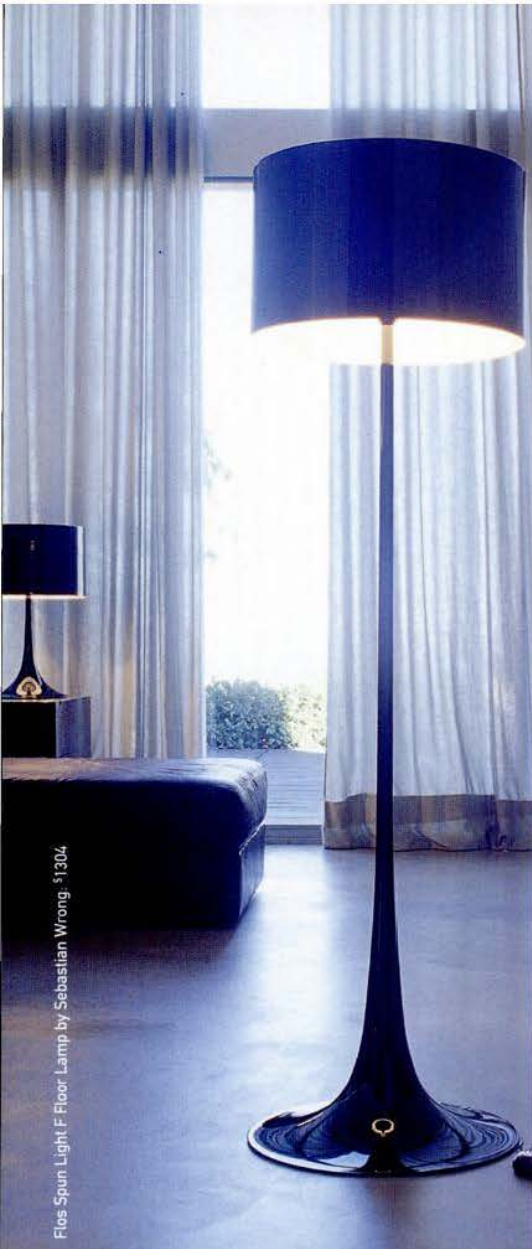
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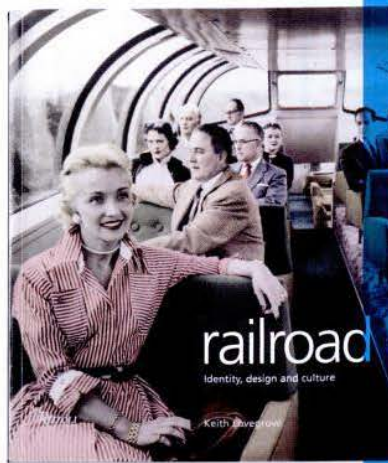
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In the Modern World



Railroad: Identity, Design and Culture / By Keith Lovegrove / Rizzoli / \$29.95
Stuffed into aluminum tubes and seatbelted into submission, many Americans fly when they travel. But far below the planes chug various types of trains, traversing the country with passengers far more comfortable than their airborne compatriots. Lovegrove details the rise, fall, and rebirth of trains through a design lens, illustrating his points with plenty of photos. Everything about the aesthetics of trains—from dining cars and exteriors to ticket stubs and timetables—is carefully examined. www.rizzoliusa.com

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK)

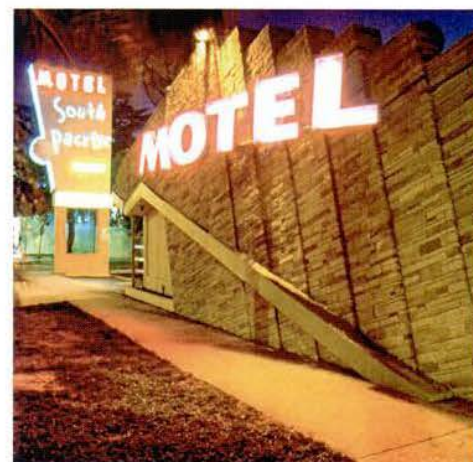


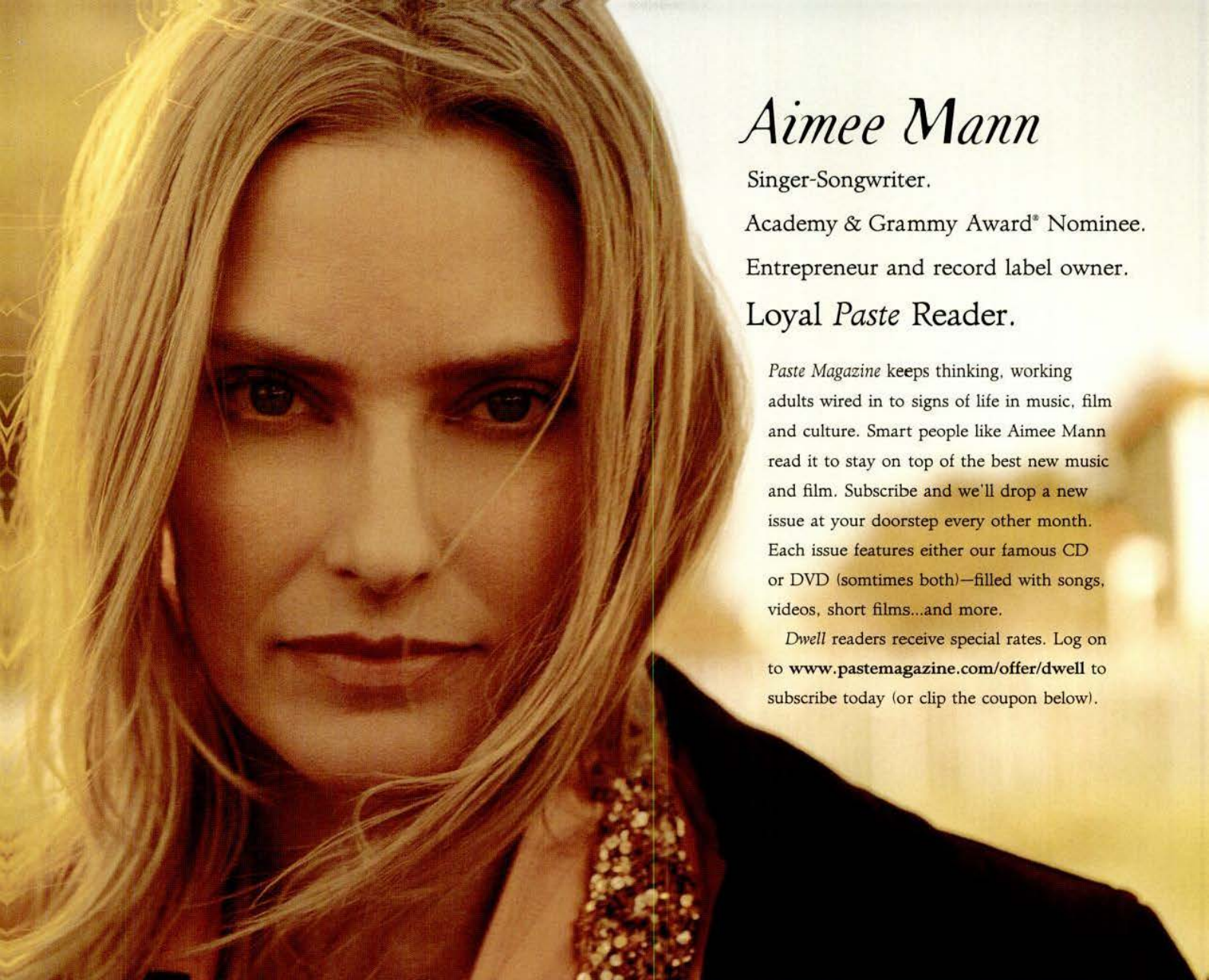
United Nude

Look out Manolo, Rem D. Koolhaas (nephew of Koolhaas the elder) and Galahad JD Clark have developed a new shoe company: United Nude. Throwing seasonal trends, traditional form, and standard packaging to the wind, the creators have set out to design a brand founded on creative integrity and kooky heels. Each United Nude design comes with its own storybook revealing the origin of the product's concept and is specifically packaged to reflect its design. www.unitednude.com

Going, Going, Gone? Mid-Century-Modern Architecture in South Florida / 8 July–30 Oct / The Museum of Art / Fort Lauderdale, FL

This exhibit, which showcases the outstanding and endangered architecture of Broward and Miami-Dade counties through the photography of Robin Hill, is both celebratory and cautionary: Many of the historic mid-century-modern and Miami Modern (MiMo) buildings in South Florida are being threatened by renovation and complete demolition. By highlighting the gems of South Florida's postwar architectural boom, curators and appreciators alike hope to raise awareness and preserve these historic buildings. www.moaf1.org





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In the Modern World



Bük / BükAmerica / \$1.49

Pamphlets have always been the beloved medium for religious and political zealots, but a new Los Angeles-based publishing house believes that leisure is an equally viable arena. Each five-by-seven-inch Bük retails for \$1.49 and may contain a persuasive essay or some other bit of ephemera based on one of six categories: Arts, Idea, People, Picture, Story, and Word—the latter includes such gems as “The ABCs from Grossman’s Glossary of Every Humorous Word in the English Language,” a pamphlet that has made this cardiphonist slightly cebocephalic. www.bukamerica.com

Jewelry / By Gualti

Venice can often appear to be a solid mass of teeming T-shirted tourists, all hell-bent on accessorizing themselves with Murano glass beads and gaudy costume masks—a far cry from the glamorous crowds of the city’s heyday. In welcome contrast, Gualti’s colored-resin creations bend and swirl in ethereal patterns and gleam in the light, evoking a time when lingering laughter and the noise from glittering parties echoed through the city’s meandering canals. www.gualti.it

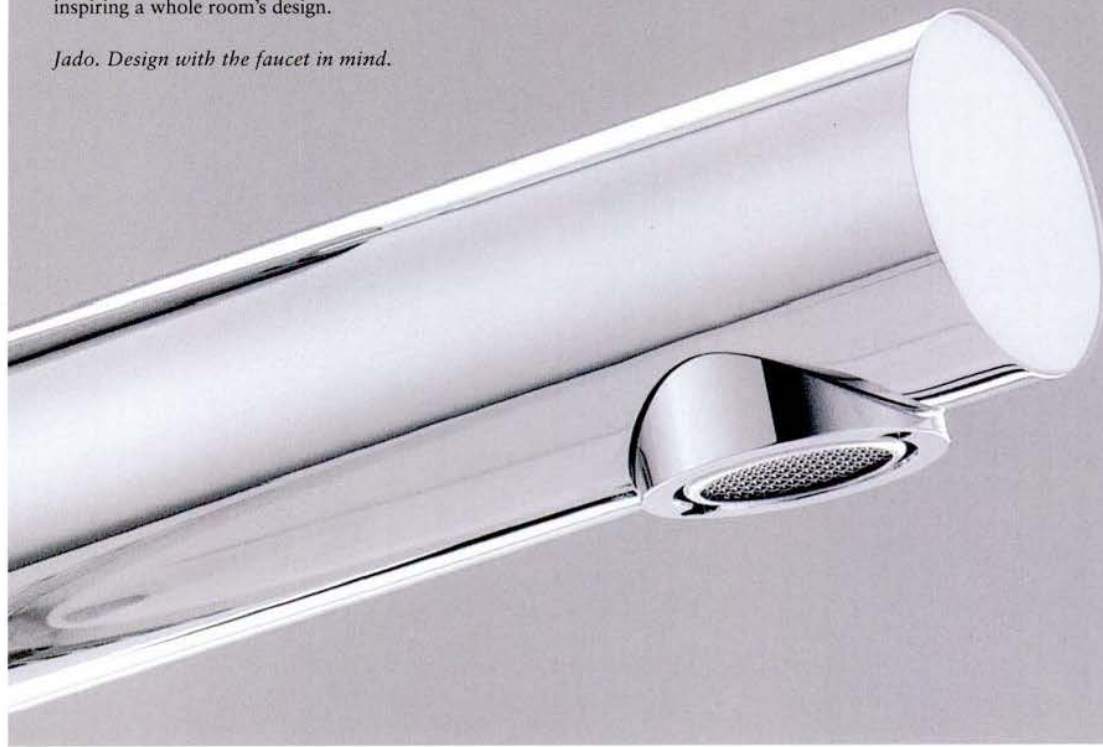


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Air Lines / 14 May–23 Apr / Peabody Essex Museum / Salem, MA

Architect, pilot, and photographer Alex MacLean has spent the past 25 years flying his Cessna over the U.S., taking pictures of what he sees. Fences, railways, roads, and fields of tomatoes are all likely candidates for images. This display of photographs is both startling and thoughtful, presenting landscapes that are sometimes pristine, sometimes marred by overdevelopment—but always reorienting our view. www.pem.org

Electrolux innovations

The world of domestic appliances—arguably the design category most tethered by commercial constraints—is a great place for students, whose creative forays aren't so inhibited. Three Australian students designed this dishwasher prototype, which won first prize in an Electrolux-sponsored competition. It washes without water, instead pressurizing carbon dioxide into a mighty solvent fluid that strips away grease. The machine's environmental zeal also has some Zen appeal: To turn it on, the user simply moves a small black rock from one empty pool to another. www.electrolux.com



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Bird Branch pillows / By Variegated, Inc.

When peering through a semisheer window shade at the landscape outside, objects appear in silhouette: Avian forms float through trees, grass stalks stand in rigid form, and leaves look almost ghostly. Variegated has imprinted these shadowy impressions onto their pillows, then layered brilliant colors on top. We're especially fond of their birds, with beaks partially open to catch the first worms. www.variegatedinc.com



Sydney Designers Unplugged: People, Process, Product / 6 Aug–9 Oct / Powerhouse Museum / Sydney, Australia

Have you ever paused to consider the carefully thought-out design that enables you to make such delicious icing and killer cake batter in your Sunbeam mixer? "Sydney Designers Unplugged" explores the world of product design, focusing on Australia's best design firms as well as in-house designers for companies like Sunbeam and Electrolux, among others. www.powerhousemuseum.com



Scrapile / By Bart Bettencourt and Carlos Salgado / This design duo uses their collective conscience to create environmentally friendly furniture. Using remnants from a variety of wood types, Scrapile's composite pieces have distinct striations that are not only visually appealing but also allow for seamless coordination with whatever grain dominates your décor.

www.vivavi.com



Whimsical Works: The Playful Designs of Charles and Ray Eames / 22 July–11 Sept / Arthur Ross Gallery / Philadelphia, PA

No one can doubt the commanding mastery that husband-and-wife team Charles and Ray Eames had over their craft. The couple became famous in the 1940s for their introduction of now-ubiquitous molded-plywood and plastic furniture and soon revolutionized the cultural—and stylistic—meanings of product design. Their reach went far beyond designing houses and chairs for adults; the Eameses were also renowned for their creative and intellectual toys, games, and furniture for children. "Toys are not really as innocent as they look. Toys and games are the preludes to serious ideas," Charles once said. After viewing their diverse array of films, toy trains, and plywood kids' furniture, we're inclined to agree. www.upenn.edu/ARG





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Houses of the Future / 19 Feb–30 Oct / Sydney Olympic Park / Sydney, Australia / Building on the historical precedent of idealism in architecture—from Corbu’s utopian fantasies to Frank Lloyd Wright’s intricate mile-high city—this exhibit presents concept houses for the 21st century.



Each house had to be prefabricated, modular, sustainable, and designed by an architect. The result is a set of dwellings that are both aesthetically appealing and intellectually innovative. The lineup includes Stutchbury and Pape and Col James’s Cardboard House (above right), a fantastically low-cost shelter that is easily recycled and reused, and runs on 12-volt car batteries. The Clay House (above left), by Tone Wheeler and Jan O’Connor of Enviro Studio, incorporates photovoltaic cells in its inverted roof; the Glass House (at left), by architect James Muir, cleans itself and can become opaque at the push of a button. The other three homes, which are made of steel, concrete, and timber, respectively, are equally interesting.

Although it’s unlikely that any of these homes will go directly into mass production, it is hoped that they will have a widespread impact on future housing development and technology. www.housesofthefuture.com.au

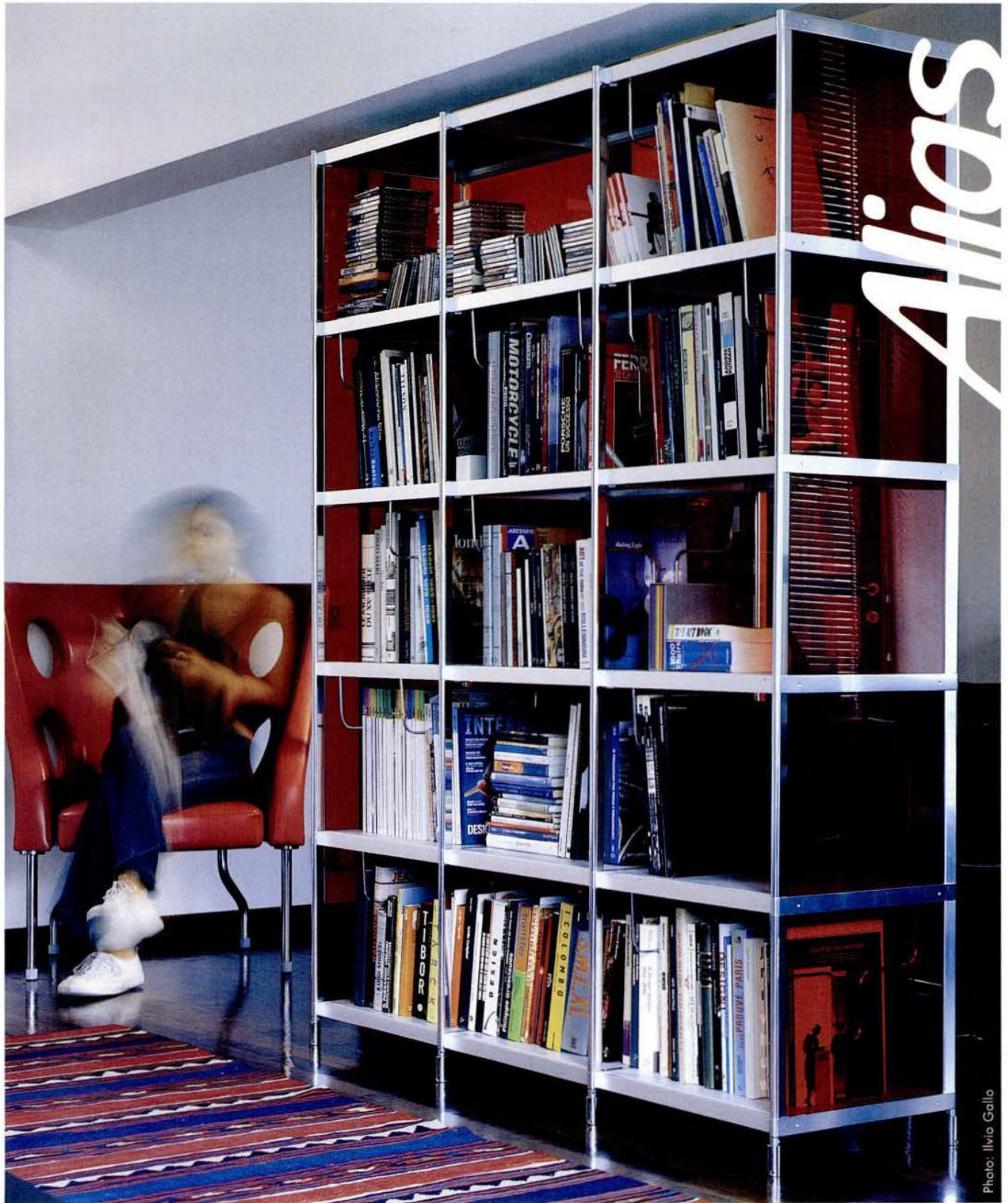


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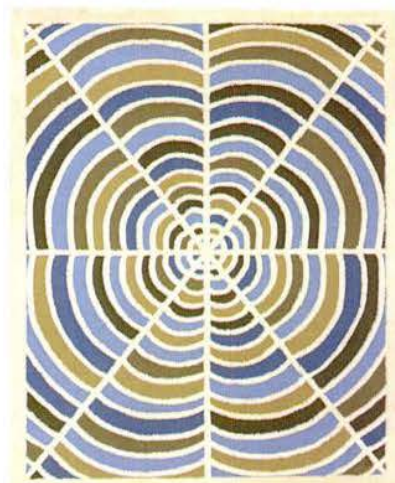
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Thick Top table / Sandback / After decades of being relegated to the realm of more pedestrian uses, concrete is currently enjoying a period of popularity. These tables—consisting of a concrete veneer around a lightweight core—come in over 40 colors and are lightweight enough that your coffee table won't fall through the floor. www.petersandback.com



Zuff table and stool / By Arik Levy for Serralunga

Serralunga is known for its inventive flowerpots, but its furniture line is of equal merit, putting a modern spin on the traditional idea of outdoor furniture with its innovative materials and minimal form. With an appealing Candylandesque aesthetic, the Zuff table and stool come in a variety of bold colors and two heights (with or without footrest), making them a totally sweet addition to any outdoor living space. www.serralunga.com



Ruthie rug / By Angela Adams

In her new series of hand-tufted New Zealand wool rugs, Angela Adams tempers the usual flower-mania with geometry. Ruthie (left) highlights both her love for nature (particularly the petalled variety) and her modern sensibility to form a sort of pansy-meets-astral design, or maybe a pansy-meets-unfortunate-death-by-astral design. At any rate, the result is lovely. www.angelaadams.com

Pandemonium / Opens 12 May / Eastern State Penitentiary Historic Site / Philadelphia, PA

"Slick Willie" Sutton and Al Capone once hung their hats inside the imposing gates of this 150-year-old prison. Today, artists Janet Cardiff and George Bures Miller have created a sound installation inside the now-decrepit Cell Block Seven, which has been closed for more than 30 years. Banging, clanking, and tapping noises will prompt visitors to relive the sordid memories of this massive penitentiary. www.easternstate.com

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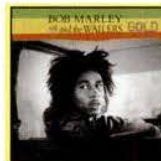


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**Dear Ketel One Drinker
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Village Green

"This place was a filthy dump when we bought it," says Cathryn Barmon, sipping tea in a knockoff Le Corbusier chair. "I didn't want to go barefoot until we'd redone the floors. Mark knew it was a good thing, but I thought it was horrible, sad, and depressing. I couldn't believe we'd put all our hard-earned savings into this."

Barmon and her husband, Mark Deutsch, are in their mid-30s, and run a graphic and web design business. This apartment in New York City's West Village was their first real estate investment. Deutsch corroborates: "We felt like we'd been suckered. Cathryn agreed to buy it, but the deal was we had to gut it right away."

As luck would have it, they hadn't been suckered. Deutsch and Barmon bought their apartment five years ago for \$240,000. The seller, whom Barmon remembers as "a super-fastidious-looking guy dressed all in Gucci," hadn't been as fastidious as he looked. "The 'before' pictures we have don't show the dirt as much as I wish," she adds, going on to describe how the apartment was ▶

In New York City's West Village, two creatives transform a dump of an apartment into an urban oasis (four floors up, pictured at far right).



crumbling and caked in dust, mold, and those creatures that outnumber, outrun, and sometimes outperform Manhattan's human population. If Deutsch and Barmon had left their space as is, it would nonetheless have doubled in value by now. But they didn't, and they don't plan to sell it anytime soon.

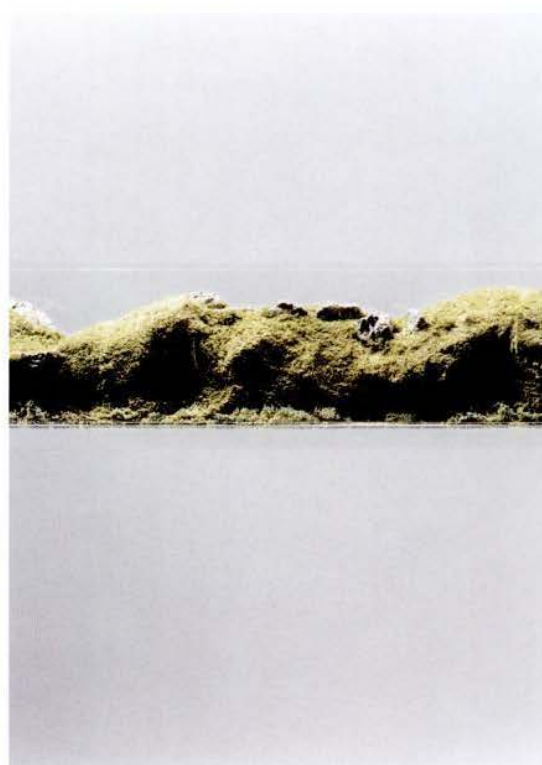
Common sense underlay all their decisions in the renovation. "We just put the place together in a cost-effective way," says Deutsch, who borrowed power tools from the superintendent to install retrofitted IKEA cabinets in the kitchen and living room. All told, their renovation cost about \$50,000. "Living in New York, you want your home to feel relaxed and comfortable," says Barmon, "not dirty and agitated. There's plenty of opportunity for that outside."

Before they moved in, they hired a contractor to gut the apartment in one day, scraping up old linoleum in the kitchen and bathroom and tearing down some drywall that had concealed structural columns and beams.

"Before it went co-op, this building was a General Electric warehouse," Deutsch explains. "These columns were covered in dark green paint, so we wrapped them in stripping material and tore it off, but it didn't strip evenly, so this textured layer was left. We decided to keep it." The molded-steel columns and beams, circa 1900, are smooth and speckled with layers of old rust and paint.

The effect sets off the spare evenness of most surfaces in the apartment. The 600-square-foot space—which encompasses a galley kitchen, a nook for the bed, a living room, and a bathroom—boasts only one other dappled surface: a fake "terrarium" in a 3-D rectangle of Plexiglas suspended from the ceiling in front of a white wall. The diorama (as Barmon calls it, more accurately) measures six feet long, six inches tall, and six inches deep. Barmon sculpted the verdant hills inside, and designed a suspension system. "I wanted a slice of green," she relates.

The terrarium, like the renovation itself, also owes its existence to constraints. "The big blank wall was ▶



At left: Deutsch and Barmon in their apartment. Above: Inspired by the patches of green she saw throughout Japan, Barmon created this "slice of green" that works as both nature and sculpture.

The delicate influence of fashion is breathed into every Brizo faucet design. One strengthens the other, as relationships often do.

For 2005, some of the industry's top designers have created Brizo-inspired fashion for DIFFA, MICHAEL KORS, TORY BURCH, and NICOLE MILLER will be among the featured designers.

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depressing,” Barmon says. “At first we were going to put our desk there, but then the apartment next door came up for sale, and we were lucky enough to get a loan and buy it for an office. Then our dog, Pooh Bear, was getting old and sick, so she had her bed set up by the wall. When she died, there was just a big void.”

After Pooh Bear died, Deutsch and Barmon went on a trip to Japan, where they saw many of what Deutsch calls “controlled slivers of nature.” Like New York, a metropolis they both adore, Japanese cities can be stifling in their density. “But then you’re looking into a busy, merchandise-packed storefront, and all of a sudden you notice there’s a little planted area behind, a breath of oxygen,” Barmon says. She remembers seeing a tidy countryside of pruned trees, rocks, and moss outside train windows. “I like the combination of nature and sculpture.”

The diorama suspends in a delicate balance between functional object and art form. Barmon stayed away from the kitschy “plasticky-looking shrubs and trees” that

sometimes fill mini-landscapes, and opted to include only rocks and moss; the result looks almost real. Providing a “slice of green” without requiring any maintenance, the diorama is highly functional, but its nature-inspired enigma also hearkens to mushroom dioramas by artist Roxy Paine.

With its artful practicality, the diorama seems to epitomize Deutsch and Barmon’s design approach. At the same time, it makes the place unique. “I made it for our pleasure,” Barmon says, “but then we found out everybody who visits loves it, and Mark was like, ‘You have to keep doing this.’ Dioramas aren’t too sophisticated or particular, and you don’t have to be artsy. Kids, elderly people, everyone can appreciate them.” Barmon might be on the brink of a career change; she already has a commission for another diorama, which will soon adorn the office of luxury travel agency Artisans of Leisure, who likely plan escapes for stifled New Yorkers craving more slices of green. ▶

The floors were sanded and painted a deep matte black. “The black makes the apartment look much bigger than it is,” explains Barmon.

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Small kitchen appliances

"We do a lot of cooking," says Deutsch, whose galley kitchen's appliances (below) are all quite small. "The smaller and better-looking ones tend not to be American," he adds. They include a FlashBake halogen convection oven from Viking, a Bosch four-burner gas range, and a Fisher & Paykel drawer-style dishwasher. www.fisherpaykel.com, www.viking.com, www.boschappliances.com

Dog portrait

Pooh Bear, who was a mix of border collie and chow, lives on in a picture (shown on p. 64) that Barmon and Deutsch painted together. "It's actually a paint-by-numbers,"

Barmon says. "We sent her photo to 1-2-3 Art and they mapped it out for us. But we kind of embellished it—otherwise it would look sort of formulaic. We got creative with the colors and added gold leaf around her face. We got the gilding at Pearl Paint." www.pearlpaint.com, www.easy123art.com

Custom plastic cover

Below the living room window is a Manhattan necessity: an air conditioner. "It's really ugly, and we couldn't move it, or the outlet, because it's in a brick wall," Barmon says. So they designed a white panel with tidy ventilation slots to cover the air conditioner (lower right). "We just gave the pattern to

Canal Plastics, and they cut it for us," she explains. www.canalplasticscenter.com

Space-saving cabinetry

In 600 square feet, every inch counts. Deutsch and Barmon opted for an affordable DIY storage solution for their kitchen and living room: IKEA cabinets. The stained-wood version in the living room (below) complements the furniture while the white version in the kitchen creates a feeling of openness within close quarters.

www.ikea.com ■ [p. 190](#)





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Roadside Attraction

On seemingly every list of the best places to live in the U.S., the bucolic town of Boulder, Colorado, consistently ranks in the top five. Fortunate locals enjoy inordinate amounts of sunshine, surrounding mountains offer skiing and climbing, and the city's location in a greenbelt ensures a thriving landscape year-round.

It's no surprise, then, that residents take pains to preserve their environment, seeing as they spend so many hours frolicking in it. According to architect Joseph Vigil of local firm VaST, "Boulder was the first city in the nation to install the Green Points Program about 15 years ago, meaning that there are certain sustainability requirements for every new and residential remodel job in the city." Points are given for each sustainable-design element homeowners choose—from recycled flooring to solar panels to tankless water heaters—and a building

permit is issued only when a certain number of points have been met.

Such rigorous measures enable the city to maintain its reputation for clean air and healthy living, creating an extremely desirable place to settle down but also making it difficult to find housing at a reasonable price. So when Vigil and his wife, artist and designer Brandy LeMae, decided to build their home "as sustainably as we could afford," Vigil says, the first hurdle was to find land in their price range.

"Most lots were around \$450,000, for just the lot. And we knew there was no way we could pull that off," LeMae explains. Eventually, LeMae stumbled across a site that was a relative bargain at \$157,000. The only problem was that, like many good deals, it came with baggage. "One downside was the traffic and noise from the neighboring ▶

A combination of well-planned siting and a concrete-block wall ensures outdoor livability for the family, despite the fact that the house butts up against a busy road.





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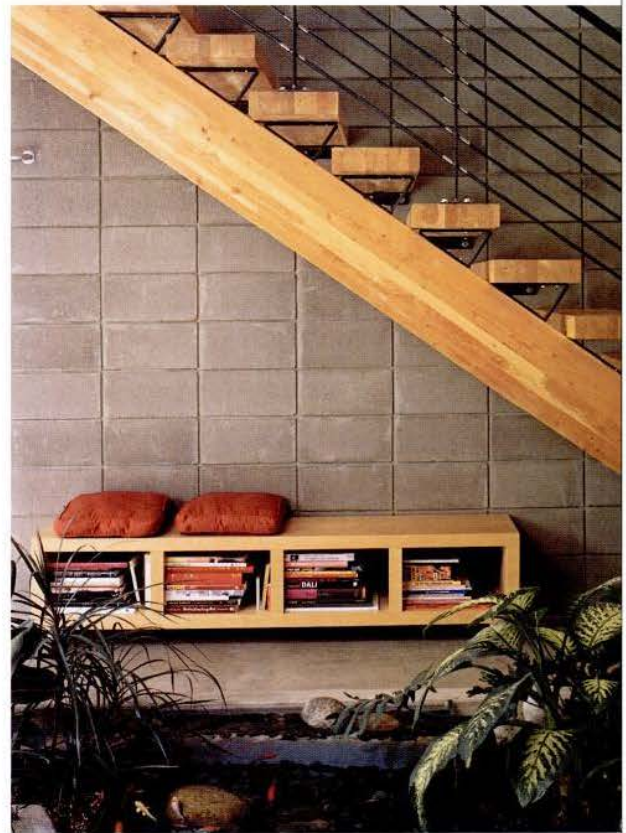
parkway; the other was that it's a very awkwardly shaped lot," states LeMae. But the price was right so they bought the space. As an added measure to preserve their modest budget, LeMae—who proudly admits to being "kind of a control freak"—decided to take on the job of general contractor herself.

As many of their design decisions revolved around budgetary concerns, initially LeMae and Vigil were concerned that going green would prove too expensive. In the end, however, the 3,000-square-foot, three-bedroom house (plus a home office and LeMae's design studio) ended up costing only \$91 a square foot to build. Vigil asserts that some of their environmentally conscious decisions—such as the structural insulated panels—actually helped defray costs. The panels—solid slabs of Styrofoam sandwiched between two layers of engineered wood product used in place of stick framing—showed up onsite pre-cut and ready to install. Besides providing excellent insulation, they also allowed for very

quick construction with minimal waste, helping to accelerate LeMae and Vigil's building schedule and thus saving money in the process.

Other building materials were equally carefully considered: The wood for the Sierra Pacific windows was sustainably forested, Forbo countertops are made of natural linoleum, radiant heating sits under the concrete floors, and all the landscaping was done with low-water and native plants. Where insulation was needed around window and door frames, instead of using the usual pink fiberglass they employed a cotton insulation, a denim industry by-product made up of trimmings that Vigil describes as having a texture "just like a Q-tip." The quality of the house's insulation, combined with windows placed high on the walls, modulates airflow in the house and passively cools the space when Boulder heats up.

LeMae and Vigil both felt there was an easy blend between their green ideals and their Case Study-inspired aesthetics. "The whole concept of the Case Study ▶



The indoor pond (above) maintains a flora-filled interior even when it's snowing outside. Inspired by a project Brandy LeMae saw in San Francisco, the front entry (left) is covered in glass mosaic tiles and "brings a little bit of California to Colorado."



- 1. taps. Fez.
- 2. bathtub. Deep.
- 3. shower. Chiocciola.
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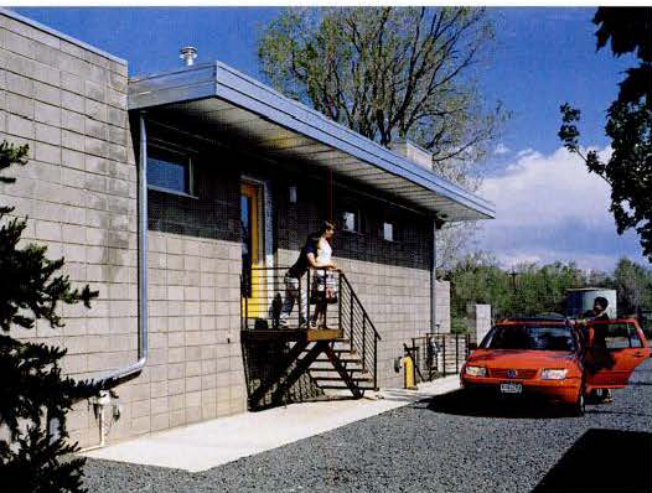
Off the Grid

program," notes Vigil, "was to design houses inexpensively and simply using over-the-counter, standard materials. And that really makes sense with green design philosophy. Because the more complicated a house is, the more it costs and the less money you can put toward things that environmentally make sense."

Instead of outfitting their home with expensive Case Study-era design icons, however, LeMae and Vigil bought most of their furniture from big-box stores such as Target and IKEA. Innovative nods to mid-century modernism were instead made spatially and structurally. In homage to Richard Neutra's merging of interior and exterior spaces, a small pond where a koi and a few big goldfish swim in lazy circles sits embedded in concrete, surrounded by a small planting area—an ideal place for the couple's curious four-year-old daughter to roam. Other touches, like an open floor plan and a sunken living room, borrow from Charles and Ray Eames.

The result is a lean, green home in which the small family takes obvious pride. "We wanted to show that sustainable building does not limit you," Vigil says. It's a nice reminder that values-oriented design can indeed come cheap. ■

LeMae and Vigil extended their environmentalist leanings outdoors. "In landscaping, we thought a lot about low-water and native plants," LeMae explains. "The lawn we selected needs 50 percent less water than a normal Kentucky bluegrass lawn."



Wall of Silence

A 15-foot-high berm helps cushion the house against sound from the busy freeway that abuts it. But when you're dealing with semis roaring by your backyard on a regular basis, every little bit of noise protection helps. So architect Joseph Vigil designed a foot-wide concrete-block wall (visible near the red car at left) that comprises the whole west side of the house and is stuffed full of foam insulation. "When you're in the house, the sound impact is nil; you wouldn't know that you weren't on a country road," says Vigil.

The wall also helps regulate the interior temperature. As Vigil explains, "The biggest solar impact on a house is from the late-afternoon sun in the summer months, and the wall acts as a huge mass that protects the house from that heat gain. In the winter, it gains heat to radiate back into the house when the sun goes down." Plus, the family appreciates the smooth cinder-block aesthetic that the wall provides, both inside and out. —A.H.

"...a touring sedan on the highway and a mountain goat off-road!"

Diversion Magazine

"The Touareg is a design pearl in a morass of chunky inelegant hulks."

Ski Magazine

"2005 Four Wheeler of the Year"

Four Wheeler Magazine

"There are few other vehicles on the road that can put really big grins on a reviewer's face like this Touareg."

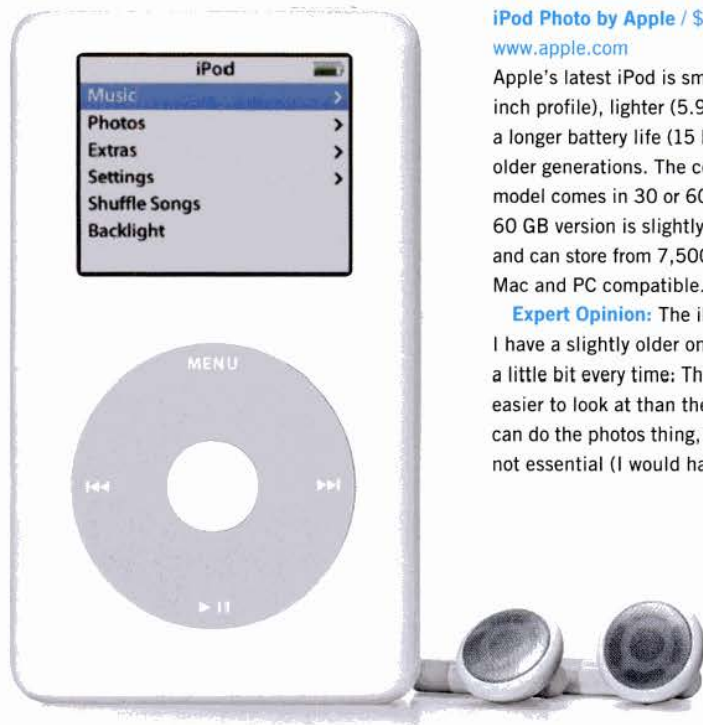
Go Boating Magazine 2005



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iPod Photo by Apple / \$349–\$449 / www.apple.com

Apple's latest iPod is smaller (a mere .63-inch profile), lighter (5.9 ounces), and has a longer battery life (15 hours of music) than older generations. The color-display photo model comes in 30 or 60 GB versions (the 60 GB version is slightly larger and heavier), and can store from 7,500 to 15,000 songs. Mac and PC compatible.

Expert Opinion: The iPod is the don. I have a slightly older one—they improve it a little bit every time: The white screen is easier to look at than the old gray one; you can do the photos thing, which is cool but not essential (I would have pictures of my

kids on it); the wheel is easier to see and to use; and it's a bit thinner. The only problem with the iPod is the battery issue. I've had mine for about a year and I have to send it back to replace the battery, which won't hold a charge.

What We Think: Our dinosaur iPod has been going strong for over two and half years, and we can't imagine going anywhere without it. As Frere-Jones points out, the new models have their advantages, but we prefer the classic Kubrickesque 2001 look of the second generation. While we would happily add another 40 GB of capacity, we'd prefer to keep pictures on our camera and music on our iPod. ▶

Listen Up!

No more flipping over the tape or popping in a new compact disc: The MP3 player is not only a music lover's new best friend, but here to stay.

A Note on Our Expert: Before scribing the Pop Music column at a nine-to-five gig with the *New Yorker*, Sasha Frere-Jones played bass in the band *Ui* (pronounced oo-ee) for more than a decade and five albums. Music-crit stints for the *Village Voice*, *Spin*, the *New York Post*, and the *New York Times* led to Frere-Jones's current position at the upper echelon of rock journalism. "I never applied for a job anywhere," he tells us. "The whole time I thought, I'm a guy in a band. But when I started having kids in '97, the band starting slowing down and the critic thing picked up—at a certain point I realized, Wow, most people think I'm a music writer." For a daily dose of Frere-Jones, his well-maintained blog is www.sashafreerjones.com.

From Thomas Edison's 1877 phonograph cylinder to the compact disc, recorded music has always existed in two realms: as ethereal sounds captured in another time and place emanating from a playback device, and as a present physical object in need of packaging and a place to be stored. For a century this relationship served us well enough—a wall of hefty albums is no fun when you move house, but it's impossible to imagine the Blue Note catalog without the brilliant album covers, or *Tommy* without the triple-gatefold sleeve. While the introduction of new mediums has always signaled improvements in convenience (no more flipping the record over) or sound quality, no medium has presented such a radical shift in how we listen as the MP3. The idea of having a searchable database of 10,000 songs in your pocket is nothing short of a revolution.

Of course change is never easy. The short history of the MP3 is riddled with controversy and lawsuits—most of which boil down to the fact that the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) has had a hard time figuring out what to sell when there's no record to put in the

record sleeve. But in 1977, long before Metallica's memorable campaign against Napster, a pair of German scientists were working on a way to compress audio so that it could be transmitted through telephone lines—research that by the mid-'90s would yield the MP3. In 1999, the first portable MP3 players appeared, thereby freeing the music from the depths of one's hard drive into the world at large. Commuting would never be the same.

"A few weeks ago, I got on a subway train and there were seven people all listening to iPods," reports Sasha Frere-Jones, the popular-music critic for the *New Yorker*. "The subway is a very democratic place, with all types of people. One car, seven iPods—it must mean something."

In 2005, the MP3 player is ubiquitous, and the ubiquitous MP3 player is Apple's iPod. As Frere-Jones explains, "We're not facing a VHS-versus-Beta thing where there are advantages to both. To me this is like Kleenex—they got it right. Now you have to compete on Apple's terms." To find out if the case is closed, or if the rest of the field has something to offer, we recruited Frere-Jones to look at the latest iPod and four other new players.

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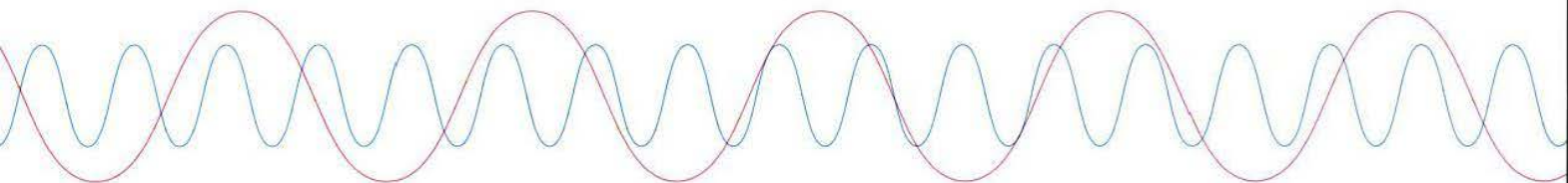
Mica by Asono / \$160-\$210 /
www.asono.com

Designed by the multidisciplinary Norway Says, the wearable Mica features unique styling whereby the headphones also act as a neckband. A mere 0.7 ounces, the unit is available in black or white, and in 512 MB and 1 GB versions. Mac and PC compatible.

Expert Opinion: The Mica has a lot of appeal. It's cute and light. Of course the iPod Shuffle is cute and light and easier to use, but this is a really attractive-looking thing. The headphones are both too short and too long—too long to let the player hang (if you try, it'll pull the headphones out of your ears), but not long enough to put in your pocket, so you kind of have to hold the thing. The huge problem is this joystick: You

basically do everything with it—starting a song and turning the machine off and stopping a song are different lengths of pushing, and you spend all your time turning it off by accident.

What We Think: This featherweight contender has both pluses and minuses, but there's more good than bad. The bad: You have to use the built-in headphones (there's no 1/8-inch jack included), which don't have the bass punch we'd like; the joystick works, but it takes some getting used to. The good: Norway Says designed a stylish, unique-looking machine, which Asono backs up with solid hardware (a 1 GB hard drive that weighs less than 0.7 ounces—thank you). As with your Atari 2600, you'll get the hang of the joystick after a while.



SV-SD 100V by Panasonic / \$199.95 /
www.panasonic.com

With a mirrored silver 1.7-inch-square body, the SV-SD 100V is about as compact as MP3 players come. The player accepts SD memory cards and includes a 1 GB card; it has a microphone jack for recording audio, and an FM tuner with 20 presets. PC compatible only.

Expert Opinion: Now this is almost really cool, because it's tiny and wicked cute. You turn it on and get this beautiful little green '70s Pong video display. I got it to play, but the problem is, I couldn't figure anything else out. They were smart by trying to make a cute object. These mini players are where

the cool shit is going to happen. If you're going to go for the size and functionality of an iPod, you're not going to touch it, but the little stuff will be interesting and sexy, like jewelry.

What We Think: When we reviewed the SV-SD 100V, it hadn't yet been introduced in the U.S. Without instructions, we found it challenging to navigate (apart from getting it to play music). But, like Frere-Jones, we find it impossible not to fall for the miniature player's square good looks. With memory cards always growing in size, the SV-SD 100V can adapt to your needs, or you can store different mixes on different cards. ►

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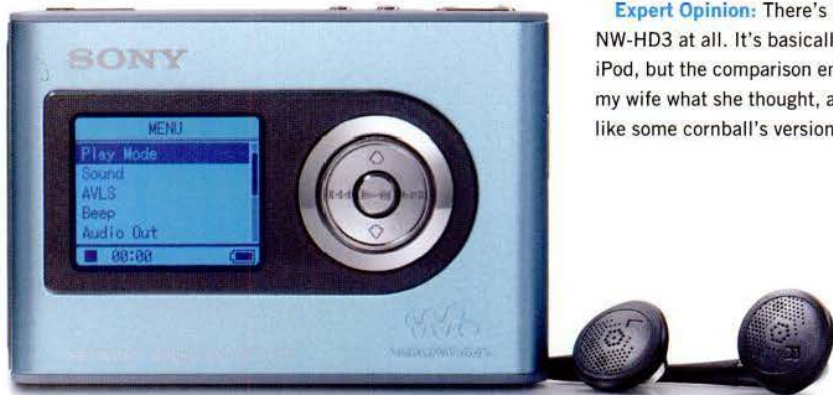
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NW-HD3 by Sony / \$299.95 / www.sonystyle.com

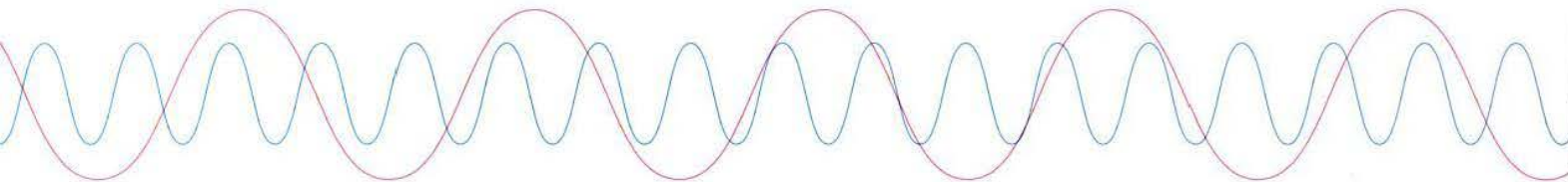
Available in five colors and about the size of a pack of playing cards, the NW-HD3 has a built-in 20 GB hard drive and a battery life of up to 30 hours. Sony's SonicStage music-management application is bundled with the player. PC compatible only.

Expert Opinion: There's nothing to the NW-HD3 at all. It's basically the size of an iPod, but the comparison ends there. I asked my wife what she thought, and she said it's like some cornball's version of what cool is—



the worst part of the '80s come back to haunt us. There's no panache to it whatsoever.

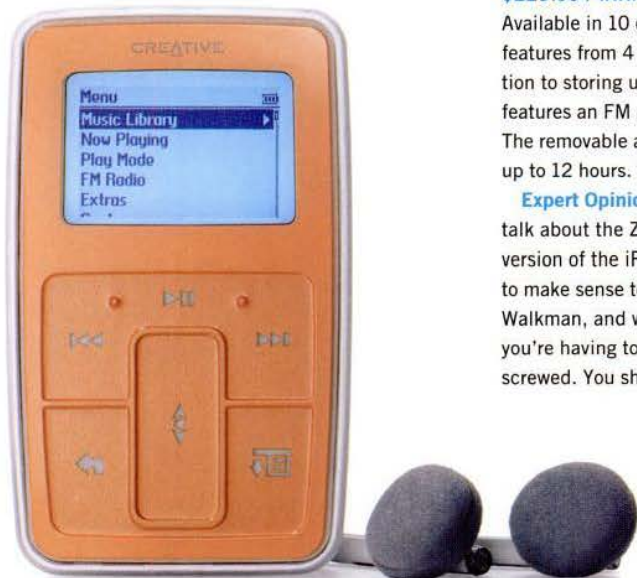
What We Think: Considering the iPod's battery-failure rate (at least half of the people we know who own one have had to send it in for repair), a player that boasts up to 30 hours of charge is hard to resist. But we weren't impressed with the overly complex music-loading software, or the small fumbly buttons. Also, considering that 20 GB of storage was top-of-the-line almost three years ago, Sony needs to up the ante.



Zen Micro by Creative Labs / \$179.99–\$229.99 / www.creative.com

Available in 10 different colors, the Zen Micro features from 4 to 6 GB of storage. In addition to storing up to 3,000 songs, the player features an FM radio and a voice recorder. The removable and rechargeable battery lasts up to 12 hours. PC compatible only.

Expert Opinion: There's no reason to even talk about the Zen Micro—it's just a bad version of the iPod. I couldn't get the menus to make sense to me. This is mimicking the Walkman, and what I thought is: The minute you're having to reach for a manual, you're screwed. You should be able to pick the thing



up and get it to play music. I could get it to play, but it's got this weird menu button that's impossible to figure out.

What We Think: We were initially charmed by the Zen Micro's wee appearance and rainbow of fruit flavors. However, after negotiating the user interface we were slightly dismayed. The up-down touch scroller is a poor substitute for the iPod's wheel, as it reacts a little too sensitively—while scrolling it would often select things we didn't want. The removable battery, however, is a plus (especially if you pack a backup for that transpacific haul). ■

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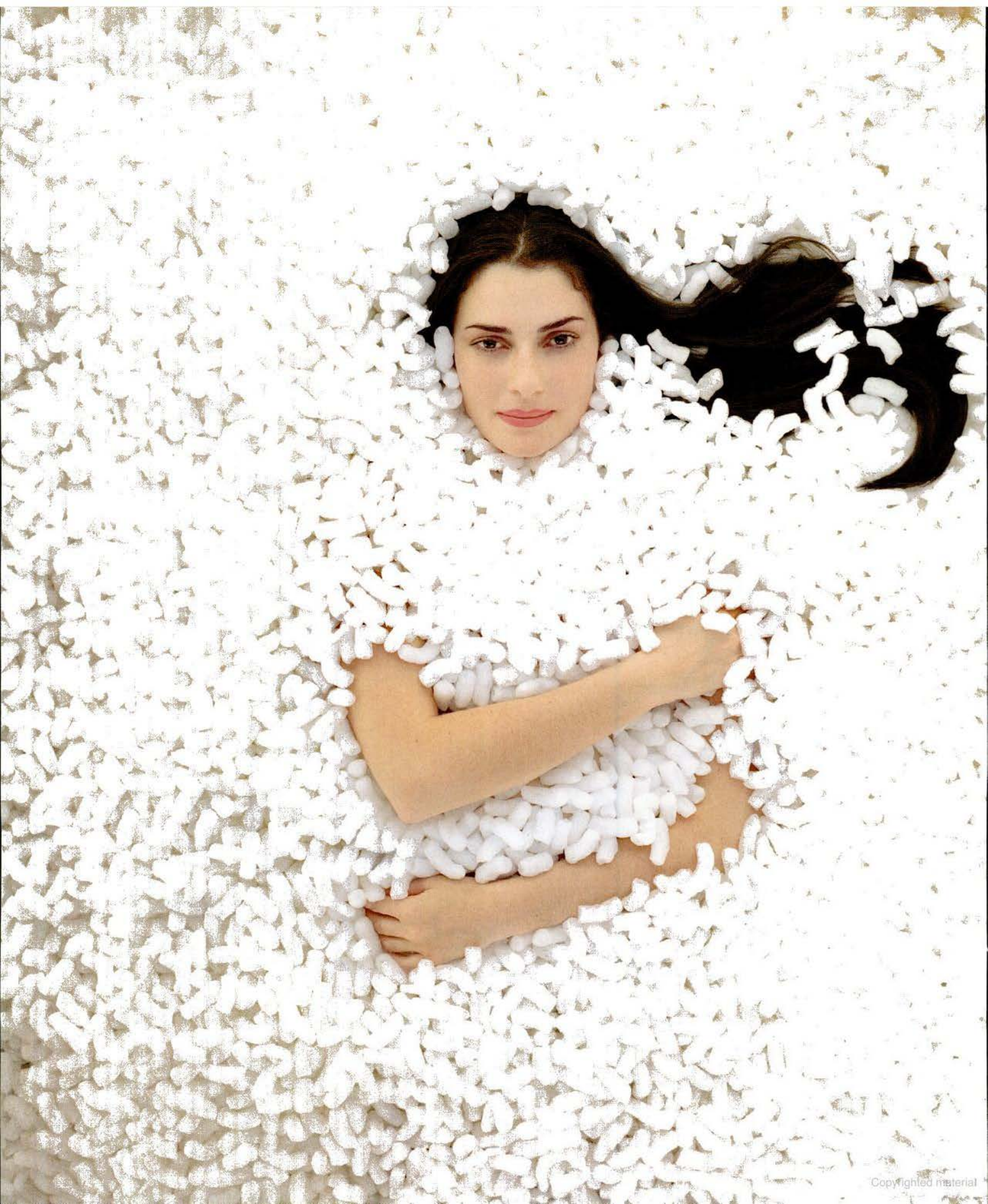
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Taking the High Road

Meet **Joshua David and Robert Hammond**, a travel writer and painter, respectively. A few years ago they were strangers, both searching for the same thing: a way to help save the High Line, the abandoned elevated rail line that runs along 22 blocks of Manhattan's West Side. Fast-forward six years and they are business partners occupying a sleek office in the Meatpacking District. They hobnob with socially conscious celebrities like Edward Norton, Kevin Bacon, and Kyra Sedgwick, and have the enthusiastic financial support (more than \$51 million) from the City of New York necessary to complete one of the city's most ambitious and far-

reaching urban-redesign schemes in years. It's not exactly what David and Hammond were expecting when they sat next to each other at a 1999 community meeting about the future of the High Line.

"If you asked me five years ago if I would be doing this full-time, I wouldn't have believed it, nor would I have wanted to," says Hammond. "We were both just looking for a way to be supportive—stuff envelopes, give a hundred bucks," adds David.

But what they discovered that evening, and during the following year, was that there was no formal organization set up to preserve this slice of New York's ▶

Currently overgrown with weeds and wildflowers, the High Line offers a tantalizing bit of greenery on Manhattan's West Side. With help from Friends of the High Line, this abandoned rail line may soon provide a bit of natural respite from the city.



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industrial history. Worse yet, the end was imminent, with then Mayor Giuliani signing a demolition order. So with absolutely no relevant experience, the two neighborhood activists put their careers on hold and formed the nonprofit Friends of the High Line (FHL) with a simple goal: "To spark a dynamic public debate," says David. "And more importantly, to see people up there."

By late 2007, if all goes as planned, they will get their wish. After overcoming a number of hurdles—including taking the Giuliani administration to court in 2001 and winning—the FHL hired the landscape architecture firm Field Operations and architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro to create a plan to convert the structure into a public park.

The first stage of their "agritecture" proposal, which includes a series of flexible planks interspersed with wetlands, sunken overlooks, and floating ponds, is currently on display through October at the Museum of Modern Art. "The team is incredibly intelligent, creative, and thoughtful," says David. "They have a unique approach to the High Line as a structure and a landscape that is a single functioning entity. One doesn't dominate the other."

When completed, the new and improved High Line will add much-needed green space to a city that's desperate for it. According to the Trust for Public Land, New York City averages only 4.6 acres per 1,000 ▶

Seen below in 1934, the High Line opened to allow freight trains to deliver their goods without disrupting pedestrian and street traffic. With the decline of rail in the 1950s, the High Line fell into disrepair. The last train ran on the tracks in 1980.



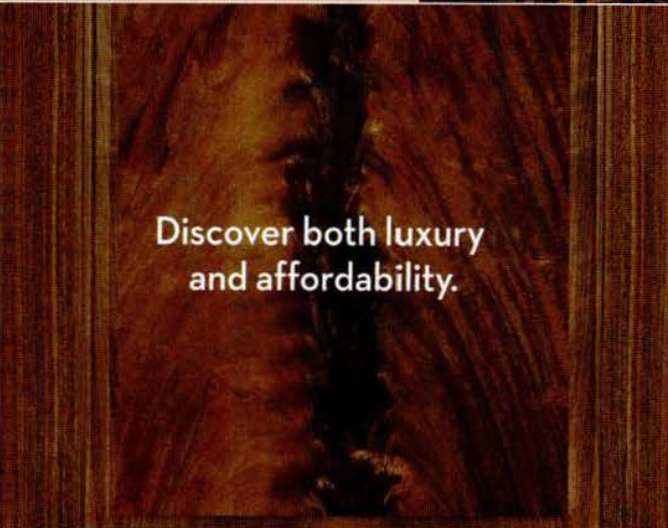
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Nice Modernist

residents, compared with the national average of eight. More important, at least according to David, the completion of the High Line will bring about “a level of architectural innovation unlike any other urban condition in the city, the country, the world.” Already in the works along the High Line are the André Balazs Standard hotel, a gallery designed by Deborah Berke, and a Frank Gehry residential complex.

While unusual, the High Line isn't the first project of its kind to be undertaken by a major city: In the early 1990s, Paris unveiled the Promenade Plantée, which also occupies the site of a former elevated railway. With this

as a model, the High Line organizers learned how to get people up and down from the site in a safe and appealing way, and also to plan for extremely high levels of pedestrian traffic—something, according to David, that the designers of the Promenade Plantée didn't anticipate. But the most crucial lesson David and Hammond learned from their predecessor, according to David, is, “If you build a park in the sky, somebody will come.”

For more information on Friends of the High Line, visit www.thehighline.org. Groundbreaking is scheduled for later this year, with the first phase scheduled for completion late in 2007. ■

Landscape architects Field Operations and architects Diller Scofidio + Renfro have created what they call “agritecture” to bring the High Line back to life. It's hoped that by 2007 the plans will become reality.



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While this vast furniture fair in High Point, North Carolina, is not yet a mecca for modern design, we remain forever hopeful as we sense the shifting winds of change.



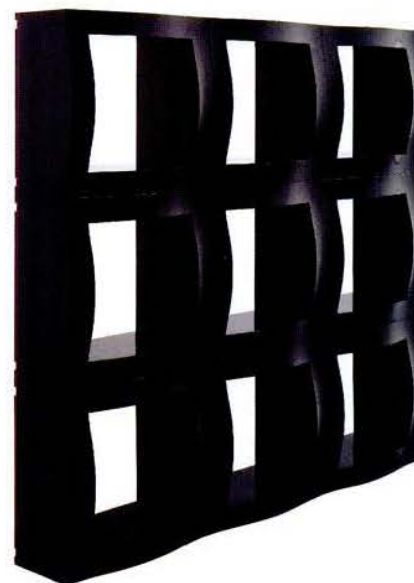
Keaton sofa / Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams

Mitchell Gold recently added the name of its co-founder and design director to its company name. In a similar salute to years of indispensable and loyal service, we'd like to take a moment to recognize MGBW's simple sofas, such as the Keaton, for their classic, understated elegance. www.mitchellgold.com



Robinson table / Jonathan Adler Furniture

Jonathan Adler branches out with his new furniture line consisting of a variety of upholstered pieces and complementary tables, including this groovy arachnid beast, that hint at the ceramicist's darker side. www.jonathanadler.com



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What We Saw

Brooklyn Designs

A boon for those seeking good design minus big names and starchy attitudes, this spring show featured young designers showing eclectic wares in DUMBO.



Sway table / By DESU Design

L.A.-based DESU Design began in 1994 as a small architectural metals shop. Now designing and manufacturing innovative products, the company is growing by leaps and bounds. The Sway table would be a happy place for any design mag (or tabloid) to rest its weary head. www.desudesign.com



Artwork / By Amy Helfand

Amy Helfand realizes her interpretive landscapes in a variety of mediums, like the archival giclée prints featured above. Her Tibetan wool/silk rug designs capture this same spirit and bring a touch of the outdoors into a unique floor/wall covering. www.amyhelfand.com ▶

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International Contemporary Furniture Fair

At New York's ICFF held this spring, prefab took a prominent role, thanks to the FlatPak House and Target's offsite Prefabulous exhibition. These projects focused on the home itself, but of course the fair offered aisles of options for beautiful and functional stuff to put inside the home as well.



Sprout / By Jeanette List Amstrup for Crafts Collection 9

Amstrup's porcelain vessels in pleasing neutrals may evoke the physiology of the human heart, but they also have almost as much personality as your beloved pet. www.craftscollection.dk



Usame low table / By John Houshmand

John Houshmand's urban organic furniture—like the Usame wood-and-steel low table—summons the spirit of George Nakashima, and to quote the designer, "the eternity of trees." www.johnhoushmand.com



FlatPak House / By Charlie Lazor

In collaboration with Deck House, InterfaceFLOR, and Dwell, Lazor installed a mini version (576 square feet) of his component-based prefabricated housing system at ICFF, luring in an endless stream of visitors eager to kick the tires. www.flatpakhouse.com ►

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There was little in the way of avant-garde design at this year's ICF. The focus instead was on a kindler, gentler modernism as evidenced by a plethora of new companies catering to kids and pets with loft-worthy cribs and architect-designed doghouses.



Dylan crib / By ducduc

Responding to the increasing demand for hip baby and kids' furniture, ducduc offers an extensive product line of sleek and simple cribs, storage units, and changing tables, many of which are convertible or customizable. www.ducducnyc.com



Emi / By Emi Fujita for Bernhardt Design

Student designs like Fujita's elegant steel-framed chair are the result of a successful partnership between Bernhardt and Art Center College of Design that intersects the worlds of design education and business. www.bernhardtdesignpress.com



Bendant lamp / By MIO

A refreshing new pendant option, the Bendant offers leaflike, lightweight steel shades that are packed flat and then personally shaped by the owner to achieve unique light and shadow compositions. www.mioculture.com ▶



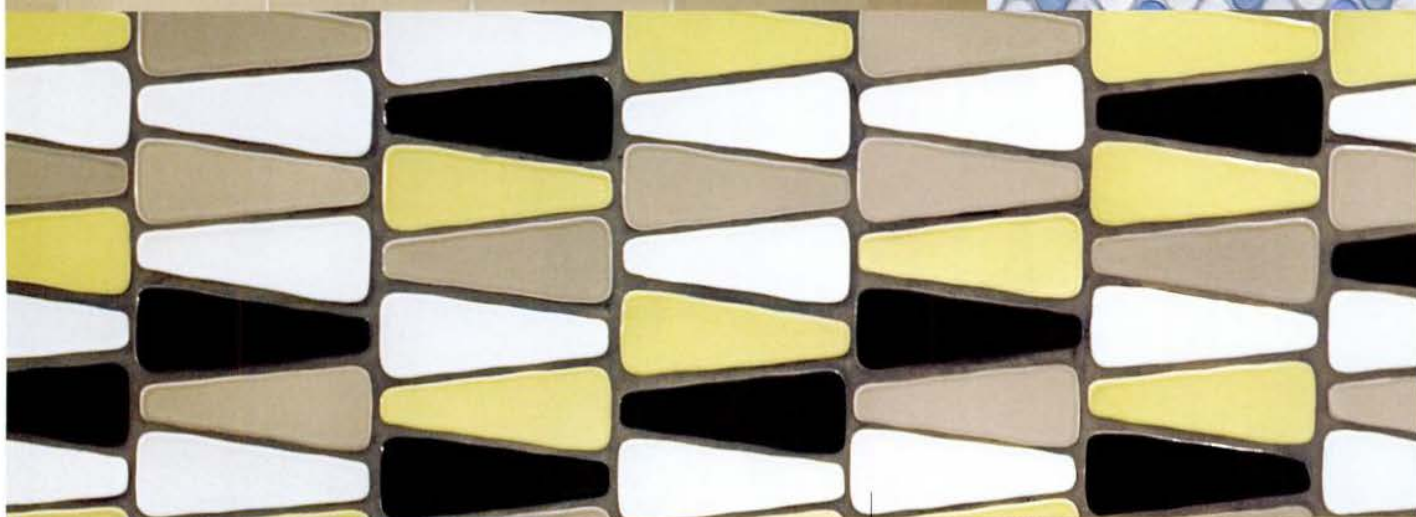
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Kitchen-Bath Industry Show

In arguably the greatest trade show on earth, the kitchen and bath industry's best took Vegas by storm with enough running water to put out even the most fantastic pyrotechnics display.



Various tile designs / Ann Sacks

Ann Sacks's new collection featured some appealing tiling options. Particularly exciting were rug maker Angela Adams's recent designs that feature colorful, inventive configurations (like the black, yellow, and white pattern above) evoking all nature's splendor through a minimalist lens.

www.annsacks.com ►



Convivium, kitchen from The Arclinea Collection. Designed and coordinated by Antonio Citterio



Arclinea. Living space.

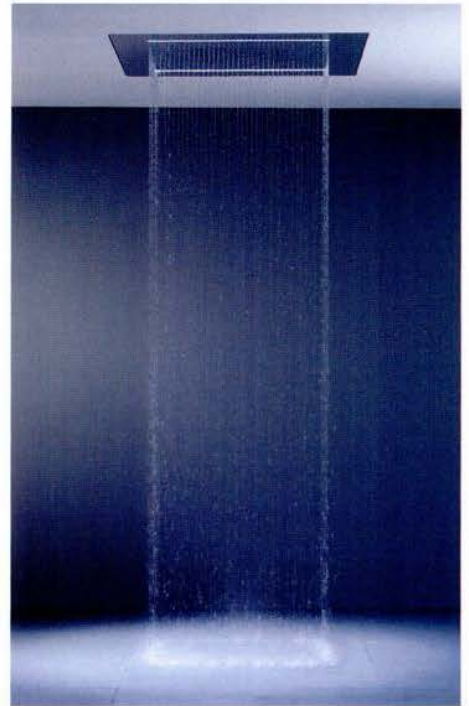
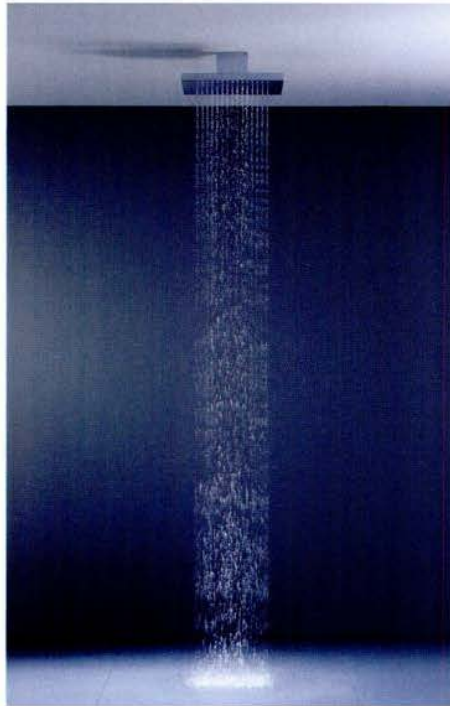
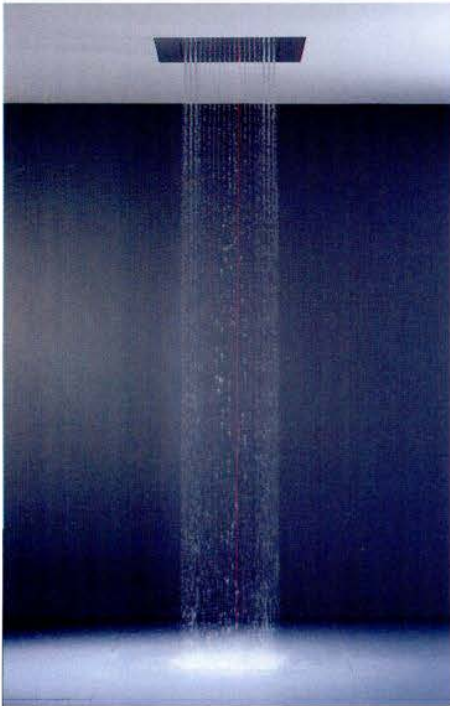
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BigRain, JustRain, RainSky / By Dornbracht
Dornbracht's latest trio of rain showers (shown left to right) are integrated into the ceiling—allowing those standing below to experience a warm summer downpour without the ugly aesthetics of a protruding showerhead above. www.dornbracht.com



Axor Starck by Philippe Starck and Axor Uno2 / By Hansgrohe
Starck's latest fixture (left) is taller and more streamlined, and comes equipped with a joystick cartridge. Axor Uno2 (right) is available in both standard and wall-mounted configurations. www.hansgrohe-usa.com



PRO 48 / By Sub-Zero
For culinary types for whom nothing less than professional grade will do, the new Sub-Zero is full of attractive options such as LED lighting and extension drawers. Just be sure to keep your shelves tidy if you buy the glass-fronted version. www.subzero.com ▶



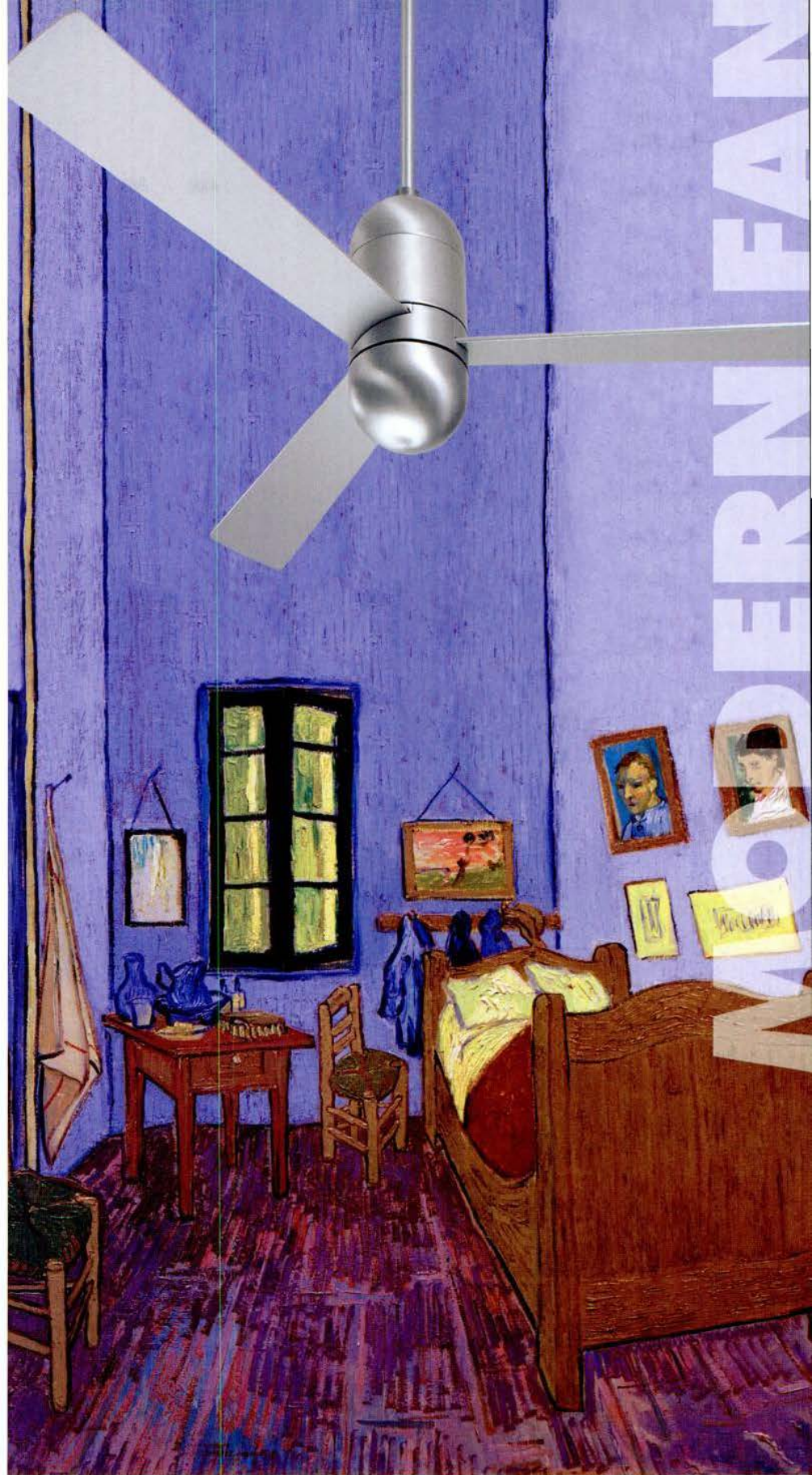
Chord tub and .25 fixtures / By Waterworks

As relaxing as baths are, there's something altogether uninviting about cold shiny enamel. Waterworks has gone the extra step, designing a tub and fixtures that are as soothing aesthetically as they are physically. www.waterworks.com



Atrezzi toaster / By Jenn-Air

The angled Atrezzi allows you to peek at your bread while it's browning, eliminating any confusion as to whether or not your bagel is properly crispy. Plus, a special "keep warm" feature will preserve your breakfast until you're ready to eat. www.jennairattrezzi.com ■



Vincent van Gogh, The bedroom of van Gogh at Arles 1889
Musée d'Orsay, Paris, France

www.modernfan.com

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Modern technology—such as concealed ducting and venting and new wiring and plumbing—was incorporated during the renovation, helping the Hillside residence prepare for a bright future.

Maston Remastered

The problem with old houses is just that—they're old. So, while we're indebted to our architectural past and enamored with the seeming simplicity of mid-century homes, the reality of rusted pipes, outdated electrical systems, and worn-out wood remains.

This is the dilemma that presented itself to David Gold when he came upon a masterwork of mid-century modernism by oft-overlooked architect Carl Maston. While Maston the man may have slipped under the radar, his body of work, consisting of over 100 structures, has left an indelible mark on Southern California. Maston's unique solutions to structural issues and frequent use of concrete define many of his buildings, and the 1,600-square-foot Hillside House—often said to be his greatest accomplishment—is a prime example of both.

Also known as the St. Ives House for the street on which it sits, Hillside was designed by Maston in 1962 for his own family. The three-level house is sited on a steep slope. However, rather than level the land (a costly endeavor), Maston molded the house to fit the hill using concrete retaining walls that define the overall aesthetic of the home. This relatively simple but ingenious idea embodies (in the extreme) the tenet form follows function. The palette of concrete, wood, and glass created a house that was stunning to everyone except for one crucial party—Maston's wife at the time.

Ray Kappe, founding director of the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) and a Maston protégé, says, "I think that house is the best work he's ever done, but the family never lived in it." Instead, they stayed in their Maston-designed home in Hollywood and put the Hillside House on the market. It sold quickly—and often: Maston's masterwork changed owners three times before Gold happened upon it in 2002.

At that point, the home had been severely neglected and altered almost beyond recognition from the elegant photos from the '60s splashed across the pages of magazines like *Arts & Architecture* and *House Beautiful*. In its place stood a structure whose defining characteristic—its clean concrete interiors—was clad in T1 panels or coated in paint. Here was a house whose original redwood ceilings and douglas fir exterior cladding were dying a slow death from neglect and whose concrete and hardwood floors had been tiled, painted, or varnished many times over.

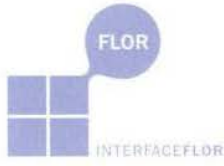
But Gold was determined to uncover the beauty of the original and quickly retained Studio o.ro Architects to get the restoration under way. However, returning the home to its original glory was not the only goal—Gold and project architects Andrew Liang and Li Wen wanted the house to function well in a world that had changed drastically since 1962. Now, after three years of careful modernization, restoration, and renovation, the pristine home is perfectly suited for Gold, and in such a good state that perhaps even Mrs. Maston would approve. ▶



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National Boulevard Apartments



Valley Ice Skating Center



Pandora Apartments

Ten Things You Should Know About Carl Maston

Though he was a key figure in the Southern California mid-century-modern movement, Carl Maston evaded the kind of attention heaped upon his peers. With invaluable assistance from historian Shelly Kappe, one of the founding faculty members at SCI-Arc, *Dwell* offers the following snapshot of the architect and his work:

1 / Carl Mastopietro was born in 1915 in Los Angeles to an Italian father and English mother. He changed his name to Carl Maston early in his career.

2 / Maston attended the University of Southern California from 1932 to 1937, where he had trouble deciding whether to pursue the piano or design. During his senior year, he finally chose architecture.

3 / After graduating, Maston worked with Floyd Rible, A. Quincy Jones, Fred Emmons, Phil Daniel, and Arthur Mann at Allied Architects before setting off on his own.

4 / Maston served in the Air Force in World War II from 1942 to 1945, quite possibly where he picked up his pipe-smoking habit.

5 / In 1946, Maston returned to Los Angeles and opened his first office in Beverly Hills. That year, he was commissioned to build the Pandora Apartments, marking the beginning of his experimentation with garden-apartment design.

6 / In 1954, Maston completed his portion of the quintessential California apartment complex, the National Boulevard Apartments. Maston designed one building, architect Ray Kappe the other.

7 / Maston struggled with diabetes his whole life—and also, apparently, with wives. He was married three times; his third wife, Edith, was part owner of Musso & Frank's Grill in Hollywood.

8 / In 1960, Maston designed the now-demolished Valley Ice Skating Center in

Tarzana, California, showcasing his inventive use of concrete structural solutions.

9 / Maston completed one of his largest projects in 1971—the College of Environmental Design building at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

10 / In 1992, at the age of 77, Maston passed away, succumbing to colon cancer. ■



PHOTOS BY JULIUS SHULMAN

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Beyond the Barrio

Urban Think Tank's "City Lifter" project (above) proposes raising the runway of the airport in Caracas so the surrounding property can increase in height and value. The collage also demonstrates the increased train and transport infrastructure the scenario would allow.

In 1993, Alfredo Brillembourg founded the Caracas, Venezuela-based Urban Think Tank, an independent nonprofit group focused on the research and practice of architecture; Austrian-born Hubert Klumpner joined him as codirector a few years later. Urban Think Tank's most recent project, Caracas Case, was initiated with the Federal Cultural Foundation of Germany. For the project, Urban Think Tank started a residency program where artists, architects, filmmakers, photographers, and philosophers from all over the world would study different aspects of the city of Caracas. Prestel recently published *Informal City: Caracas Case*, a book that documents the project.

I first met Alfredo Brillembourg while living in Caracas in the mid-1990s. This past June, I caught up with him in New York, where we met at the Mansion Diner. Over a burger and fries and many sodas, we engaged in a nearly two-hour-long discussion about Urban Think Tank's approach to Caracas and the role of the architect in the world today.

A lot of Urban Think Tank's work focuses on the Caracas barrios. What have you learned?

While they are often great communities, the barrios are facing major problems. We are working in that area because it's a great opportunity to really change the largest portion of the city. You could say we are documenting and trying to assist in how the barrio communities are being built in Caracas. We believe the barrios are highly experimental, and yet they present the proto-architecture of great urban forms. They are both ancient and modern, [sort of] a mix between an ancient village settlement and the modern metropolis.

The barrios have come this far without architects. Isn't it possible that the communities could come up with solutions for infrastructure on their own?

The architecture critic Kenneth Frampton asked us the same thing: "Why do they need architects?" Fifty percent of Caracas is now built informally. Urban Think Tank works very closely with the members of the barrio ►



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communities because it is part of our city. One shouldn't consider the barrios as something separate from the rest of the city. To not help, to not find a way to work with those living in the barrios, would be closing our eyes to one of the greatest urban challenges.

Some people have said we romanticize the barrios. [But] we simply are not confirming the existing view of crime-infested slum areas. Our goal is to increase awareness in Caracas, as well as in the world, of the conditions of the barrios. There are some serious problems—security, water and sewage, electricity, access—but we can help in finding and implementing solutions. If that's a romantic view, then we are hopelessly romantic architects.

Do you see examples of successful urban renewal anywhere in the world?

Successful urban renewal, in my opinion, is being done in the Netherlands. The Dutch are incredibly conscious of the wealth of their land; they don't have a lot of it, so they have to maximize what goes on there. There are examples of areas where city planners have let the Dutch [architecture] offices follow a program where the designers are involved with the projects from the start. Rather than have a developer come in and focus on a dollar/square foot equation, the designers are there with the city planners figuring out how to best design the city.

What's next for Urban Think Tank?

The future of Urban Think Tank is to bring the knowledge we've acquired from our work in Caracas and take it to other parts of the world. We see Urban Think Tank as a necessary organization that can connect the ideas in Venezuela to the so-called developed world, to connect the cultures and continents.

Our latest project is what we call a "vertical gymnasium" for Spanish Harlem in New York. We want to take an open asphalt area at a public school and build a gymnasium, similar to one we designed in Caracas, where sports facilities and learning centers are stacked vertically and distributed within a simple steel structure, therefore maximizing the use of the land. This is the type of idea that we think, and hope, could be applied anywhere in the world. ■



Urban Think Tank's "vertical gymnasium" (above and left), proposed for Harlem, takes many of the ideas conceived of in Caracas and applies them to New York City.

Growing House: Vertical growth is concentrated in a pre-constructed lower structure with triple heights.

A common roof covers about 60 percent of the barrio, offering sports fields, green areas, urban agriculture, and common water collection, and keeps the houses at a maximum height of four to five floors.



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Private Screening

My boyfriend and I recently moved into a loft. We enjoy the high ceilings and copious light, but sometimes we need a little privacy. Could you suggest some room dividers? —Martha Clifford, Washington, DC

In *The Brady Bunch* episode "My Brother's Keeper," Peter and Bobby divide their room with a piece of tape—a futile act that fails to resolve fraternal drama and leaves Peter without a bathroom. While this makes for wholesome comedy, real people tend not to function as a Brady might: We can't always resolve space issues with canned laughter and group hugs. Instead, we recommend a few practical room partitions that will add style to your space and, we hope, preserve your relationship.

Molo Design softwall / www.molodesign.com / \$590–\$890

Now a part of MoMA's permanent collection, softwall is a movable, light-filtering partition made from 400 layers of honeycombed translucent white paper. The malleable, fire-retardant material is bound by natural wool felt ends that bend to form handles. Softwall expands from a mere 1.5 inches to over 25 feet and comes in both 46- and 78-inch height options—perfect for small spaces.

Twig / By Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec for Vitra / www.vitra.com / \$200 per 50-piece set

For those design nerds coveting the Bouroullecs' *Algue*, Vitra offers yet another screen system for us to drool over. Twig is composed of interlocking pieces (available in red, black, and white) that join together to make a perforated screen. While it requires a woefully large number of components to create a decent scrim (there are 175 pieces per square yard), the result is spectacular.

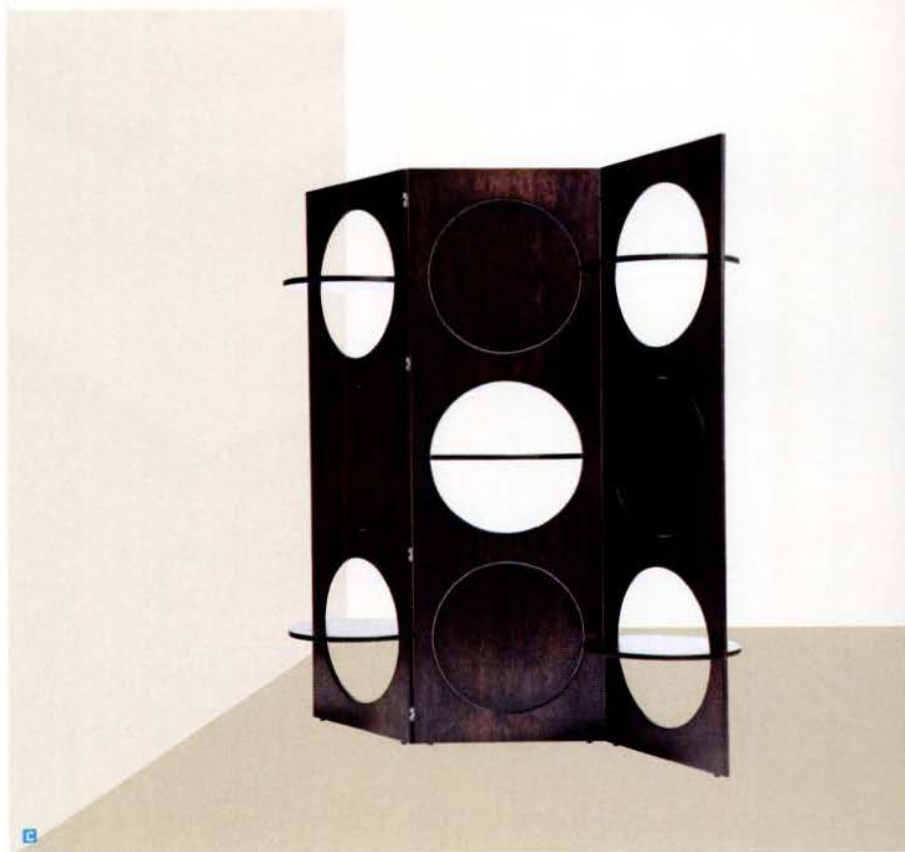
Flipper / Material Furniture / www.materialfurniture.com / Available in maple (\$1,800) or dark walnut stain (\$1,950)
The circular cutouts adorning this six-by-six-foot (when fully open) divider are mounted on pivots, allowing them to close flush against the panel or lock open to form extra shelving space.

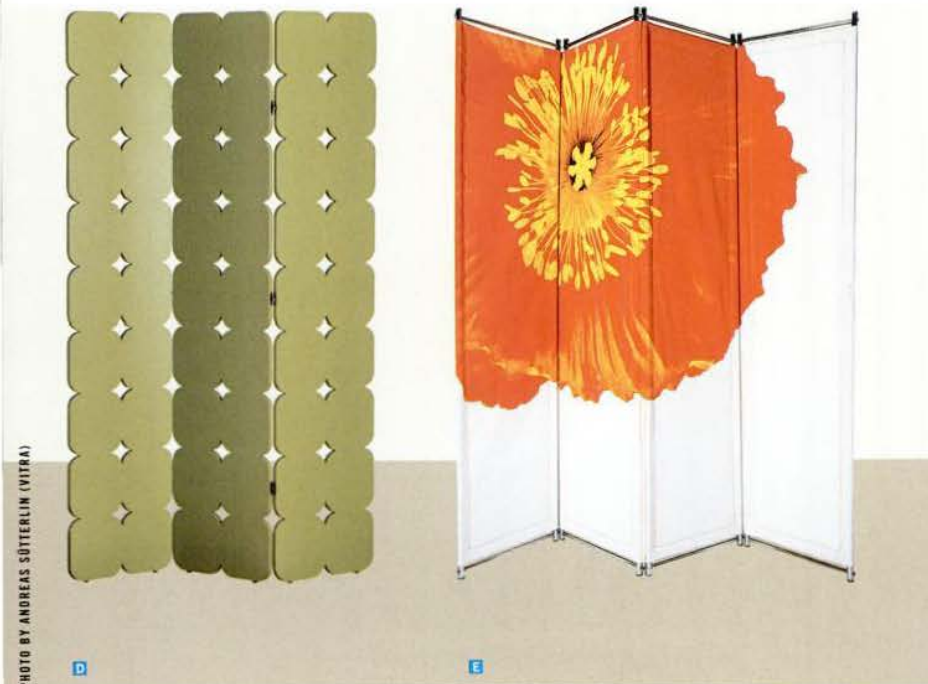
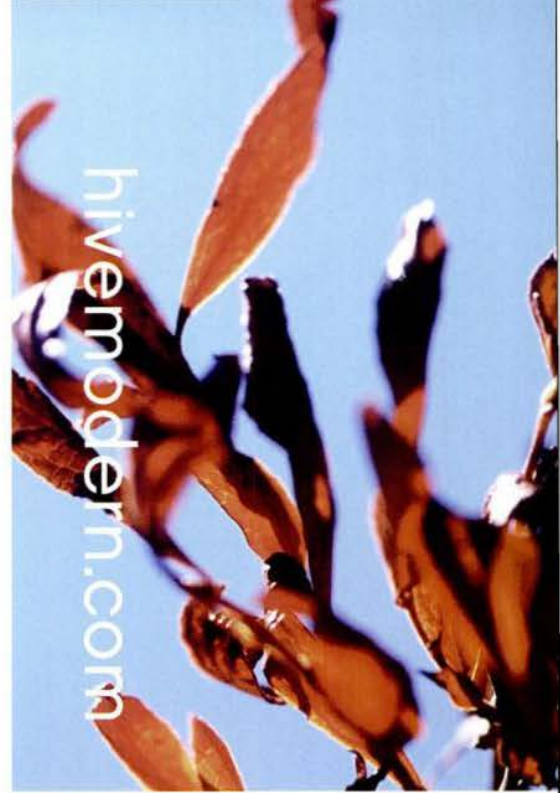
Bubbles room divider / cb2 / www.cb2.com / \$199

Made of lacquer-finished medium density fiberboard (MDF), this partition offers glimpses into the other side via rounded diamond cutouts. Available in green, black, or white, these four-by-six-foot screens promote visual privacy without making a dramatic aesthetic statement.

Isaac Mizrahi 4-panel screen / Target / www.target.com / \$99

Isaac Mizrahi's folding fabric screen would brighten any room with its graphic, anything-but-girly bloom. While the 5.8-by-5.3-foot screen coordinates with the rest of his home-furnishings line, it's important to remember that there is such a thing as too much color coordination. ■





Getting Tanked

In January 2005, we announced the Dwell Home II Design Invitational, with the aim of establishing a model for sustainable home building in the 21st century. Intrepid Angelos Glen Martin and Claudia Plasencia offered up their plot of land in Topanga Canyon as the test site. Escher GuneWardena Architecture was selected from a group of five architects to build the winning design: a 2,000-square-foot home with a budget of approximately \$500,000 exclusive of land costs.

Unrelenting rains this winter caused delays in permitting, as several required tests were unable to take place. Escher GuneWardena thus turned their undivided attention toward one of the less glamorous but most critical components of making this house as self-sufficient and energy-efficient as possible: water usage.

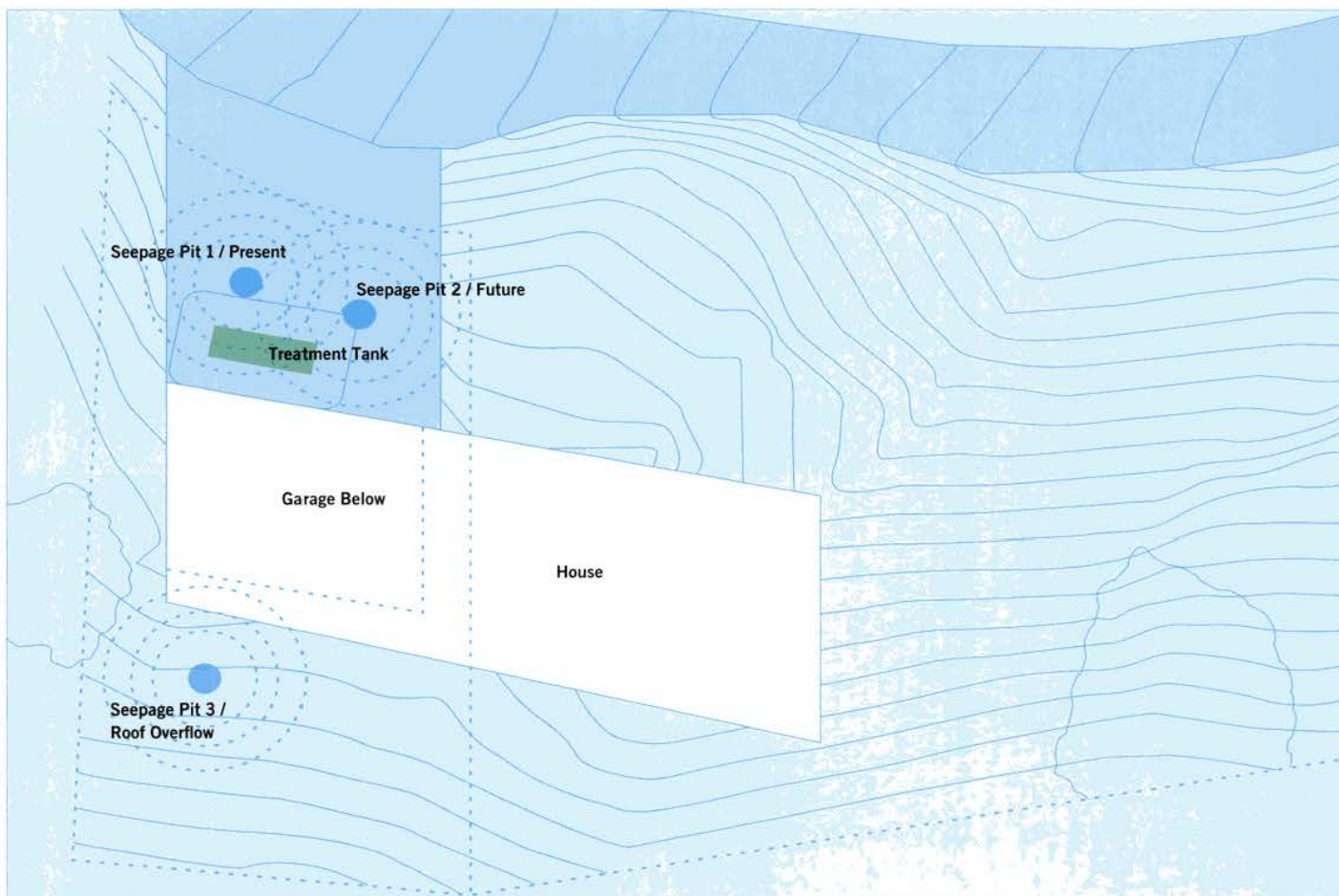
The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California estimates that a family of four uses approximately 163,000 gallons of water a year. Supposing that 60 percent (98,000 gallons) of that water consumption is for the outdoors and 40 percent (65,000 gallons) is used indoors, low-water-usage plumbing fixtures and appliances should reduce indoor water use by about

25 percent (16,000 gallons). Understanding that decreasing the level of water consumption is key to the house's sustainability, the architects devised a plan to separate and reuse the domestic graywater (from showers, washing machine, sinks, and dishwasher) both to irrigate the green roof and to flush the toilets. If the house's toilet flushing accounts for about 6,800 gallons per year, utilizing graywater for this activity has the potential to reduce the indoor water use to 42,200 gallons a year.

"The environmental issues relating to the heating, cooling, and water management are some of the most interesting but highly complex aspects of this house," explains Bojana Banyasz, the project architect. "Right now, the project is in a stage where most of the development is taking place on a more technical level in collaboration with our consultants."

The first of these developments was deciding which septic system to use. The team opted to go with a MicroSepTec tank—a top-of-the-line septic treatment tank—and the architects devised a scheme that plants the tank under the future driveway. Cameron Church, a consultant from Los Angeles-based Environmental ▶

The Dwell Home II will be a self-contained unit as far as sewage is concerned. With no connection to city sewer lines, all water will be treated and disposed of onsite.





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Planning and Design (EPD), explains that the septic system is crucial because "all the wastewater from the home will be treated onsite in a four-stage treatment process. There is no connection to a municipal sewer, which is important to making the project as green as can be."

The treatment process (see illustration below), says Church, "comprises primary settling and anaerobic (without oxygen) digestion, two stages of aerobic (with oxygen) digestion, and ultraviolet light disinfection. The treated, disinfected water will provide irrigation to the home's planted roof and toilet water."

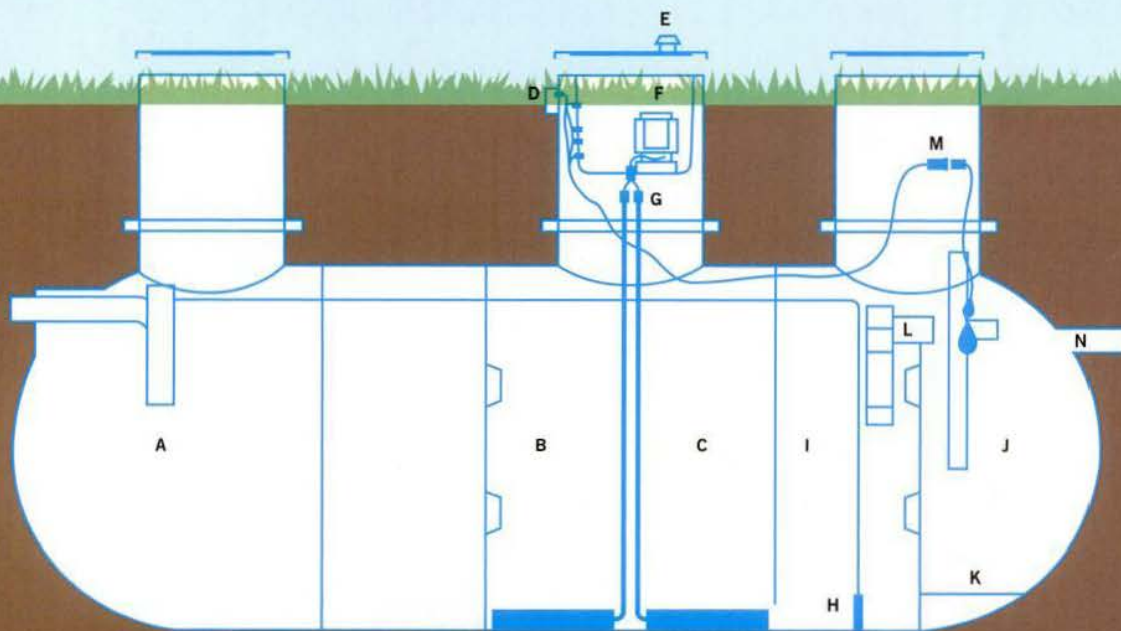
Two seepage pits, where unused treated wastewater will be deposited, rest 6 and 16 feet, respectively, from the septic tank. A third seepage pit is at the southwest corner of the house. This pit will collect the water runoff from the roof, since the county requires that any treated water, even if it's only irrigating the roof, must be collected to avoid possible contamination of the surrounding land.

According to Church, "Any extra water from the roof's irrigation will gravity flow into the seepage pit [see

illustration, page 116] on the south side of the house, from which it will percolate into the ground. In rainstorms, the first inch of overflow from the roof will also be directed to the seepage pit." Architect Frank Escher says, "As far as we know, this type of system has not been attempted, at least not on the residential scale and certainly not in Topanga Canyon. So it's really a learning process for us all."

Part of building a good structure is building a good team and, as Ravi GuneWardena explains, "EPD are experts in sustainable water systems and solutions for environmentally friendly buildings. They were consultants for the Audubon Center in Los Angeles and the Natural Resources Defense Council regional office in Santa Monica, both LEED Platinum-certified green buildings. We're very happy that they're on our team."

After reaching agreement on the direction of the water treatment, drills were called in to conduct the necessary percolation testing of the seepage-pit sites. With the tank installed, the home site is ready for further surveying in preparation for groundbreaking in early 2006. ■



The MicroSepTec tank (at left), is odorless, noiseless, and produces clean, environmentally safe water that can be reused for onsite irrigation. The unit is a compact and self-contained fiberglass body, installed in the ground with no visible tanks or mounds.

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- | | |
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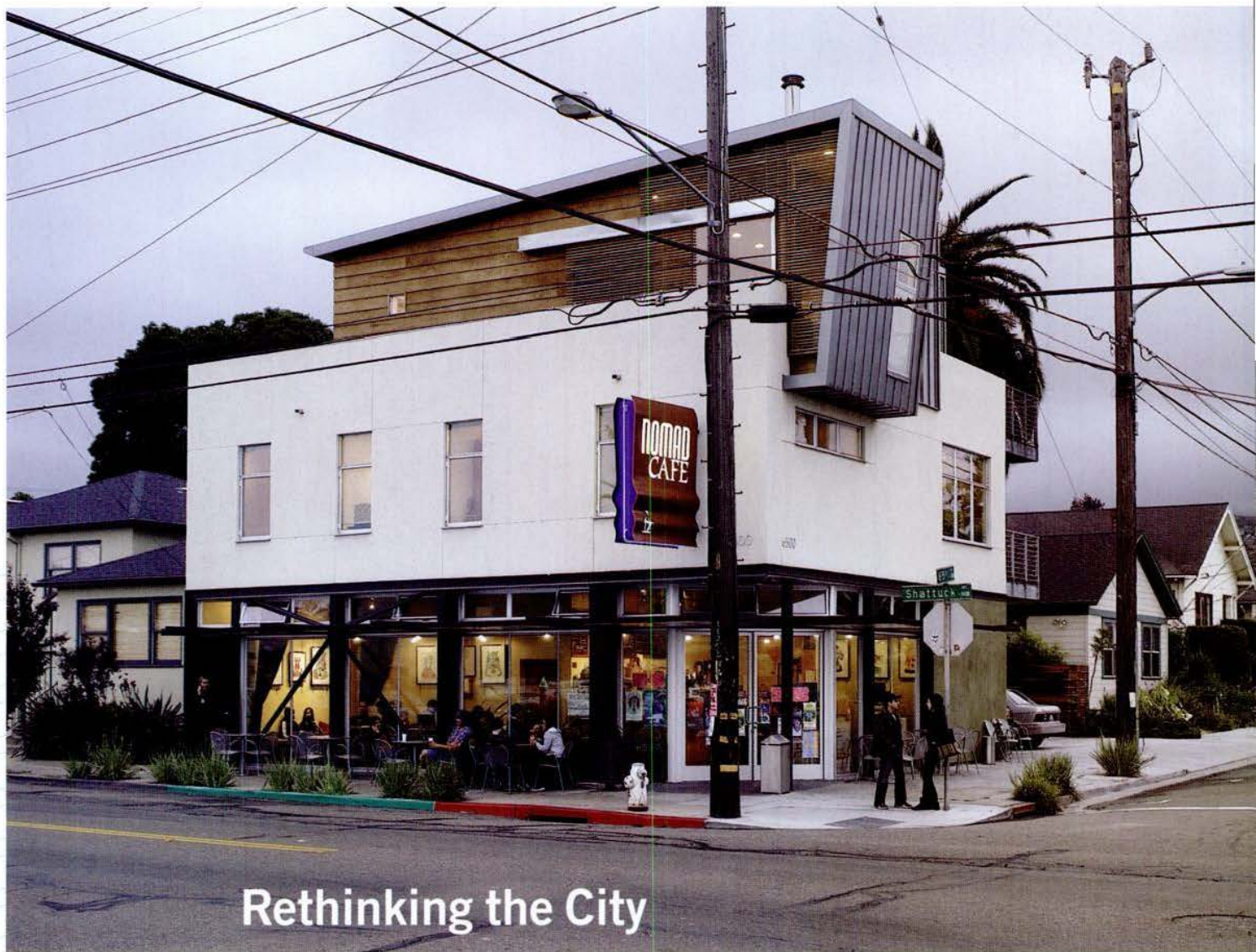
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Rethinking the City

From early-morning commuters to night-owl students, the Nomad Café serves a diverse clientele at all hours, bringing a much-needed hub to Oakland's Shattuck Avenue.

From Bilbao to Pittsburgh, declining urban centers have risen up to combat inconsequence through architecture. In California, Oakland's Shattuck corridor is seeing a positive kind of resurgence, thanks to photographer Ian Martin, who recognized potential on an overlooked corner and purchased a tumbledown building, intending to establish a community space. Living in the city is about interaction, he says, "communicating with your neighbors, people who you haven't necessarily chosen as your friends, but who are your larger community."

Because the region is known for its stalwart activism, Martin felt it was imperative to forge connections with these accidental acquaintances, so he went door to door, sowing neighborly seeds and reaping nearly unanimous encouragement in return.

With approval secured, he hired John Ware and Ian Young of Endres Ware, an engineering and architecture firm in Berkeley, to design a mixed-use building. Because the city was dedicated to development on Shattuck, they

weren't faced with constrictive design codes. "That gave [us] a real opportunity, because [city planners] were more open to us taking an aesthetic risk and pushing the design envelope," Ware says. The result is unarguably modern, yet it integrates remarkably well into its surroundings.

Martin lives on the top floor with his wife and child in a compact yet airy apartment surrounded by roof decks. The two residential units below feature bamboo floors and walls of windows. At street level, the Nomad Café has quickly become the beating heart of the neighborhood. Owner Christopher Waters runs a business committed to local interests, and it has enjoyed tremendous success—packed with a lively clientele that reflects the area's diversity. As green as it is diverse, Nomad composts everything down to the coffee cups.

Amid the bustle of a Nomad morning, Young reflects on the dynamic interplay of the architecture with its occupants. "[This is] more than just a physical building of glass and wood and steel," he says. "It's really more of an urban phenomenon." ■



The Jonathan

Tired of waiting for innovative architecture to come to San Diego, this proactive architect added developer to his job description, and brought it there himself.

Project: Segal Residence

Architect: Jonathan Segal Architecture

Location: La Jolla, California



Segal's urban-infill units (like the Titan at left) eschew typical features like dysfunctional balconies and underground garages. His "convertible units" (above) are one-bedroom rental apartments with hydraulic lifts in their single-car garages, which allow two cars to be parked in one space.

Jonathan Segal's message is clear: Keep it simple.

Segal's cut-the-middleman, screw-the-red-tape philosophy is straight out of Ayn Rand, and his fervor for urban infill development is flat-out evangelical. After a few minutes of listening to the 43-year-old architect/developer's spiel, whole new vistas open up: You know that weed-choked lot across from your favorite coffee-house? With a little imagination and elbow grease, it could be a gold mine.

Segal's fiefdom is the formerly blighted section of downtown San Diego known as Little Italy (conveniently near the newly minted East Village). Since 1988, the native Californian has designed and built 245 smart, modern, and relatively eco-friendly rental units on odd and otherwise undesirable lots in and around the area, then turned them over to his wife Wendy to manage. "Control is everything," says Segal about their landlord duties—and his aversion to private clients: "I'm making this wonderful widget. And when the day is done, I don't want to give you the widget. I want to profit from it." ►



Jonathan and Wendy Segal on their master bedroom deck (opposite). The street-facing façade is shown below. "We're the developer, contractor, superintendent," he explains. "We're trying to go back to when the architect was the master builder and controlled everything. If I knew how to do plumbing and pour concrete, I'd do that too."

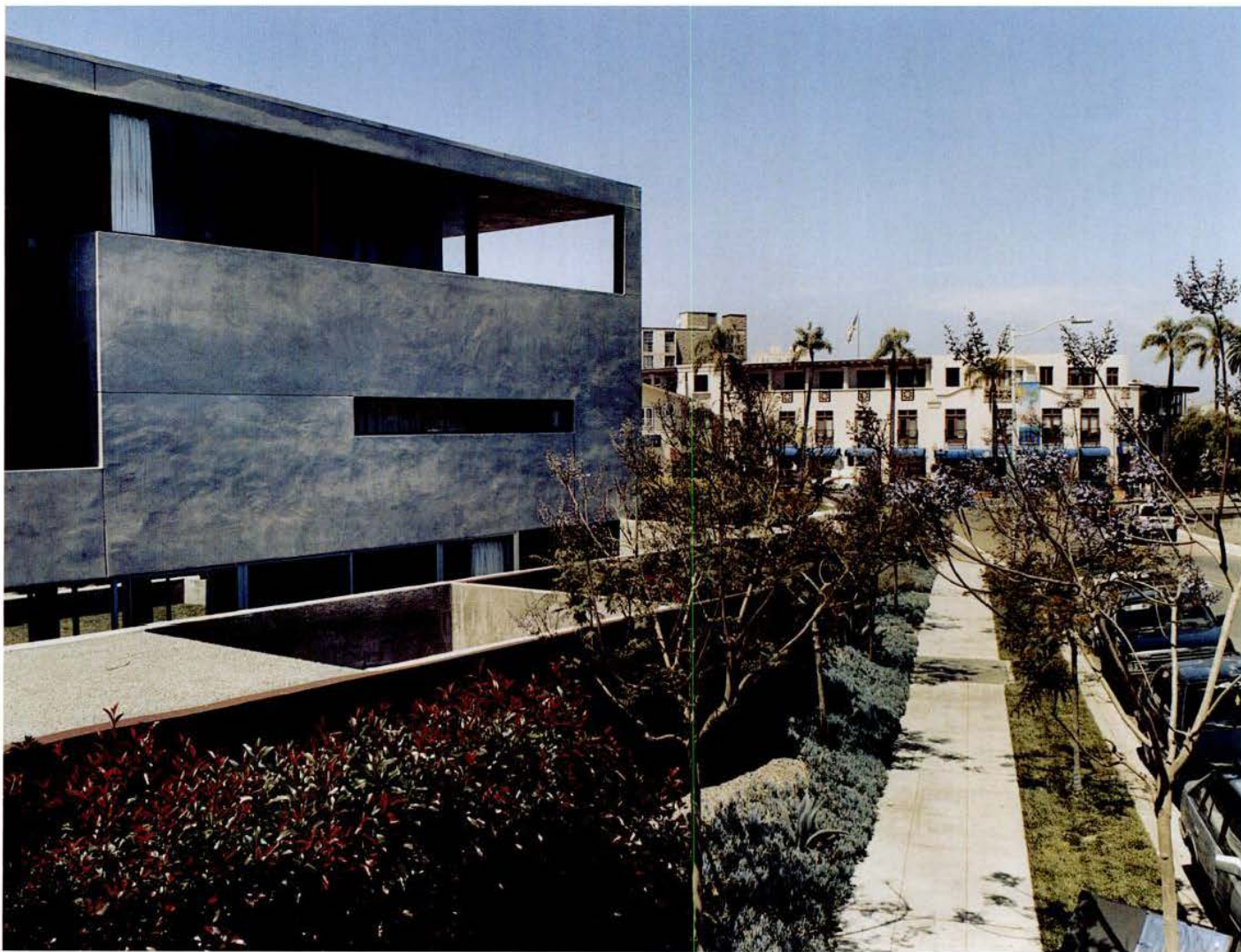
As we tool around the neighborhood in Segal's convertible, a beefy fellow developer in a big, black SUV leans out his window and shouts, only half-menacingly, "I thought we got rid of you!" as Segal smiles and waves. It's an interesting turnabout. Segal was among the first to build here, when the area was all but abandoned by local land barons. Now that their soaring high-rises and Disneyfied condo blocks dwarf Segal's airy lofts and two-story row houses, one of those same developers is buying him out—for a sum Segal would rather not publicize, but which is mighty enough to add "banker" to his list of roles. (All but a few of Segal's rentals will be turned into condos. Control may be everything, but cash is king.)

Some call Segal the Tony Robbins of urban infill, but he's more like a mini Donald Trump with a conscience. Segal's units brim with money-saving and socially progressive ideas, in equal proportion: Grassy courtyards replace "stupid balconies." His row houses are "convertible housing," meaning their bottom floors can also be used as granny flats (one-bedroom, low-income rentals)

or retail space—a nifty bit of social engineering that also guarantees tenant stability. In his Lusso Lofts, some street-level flats are used as Pilates studios or furniture workshops, creating the very environment that makes Segal's other nearby buildings attractive to young urbanites. It's a viral business model, and it works.

Segal ticks off a laundry list of money-saving, better-living elements of his urban designs: "Eliminate stair towers, eliminate elevators. The whole idea of underground parking is sacrilegious to us." Case in point: Right next to one of Segal's larger loft buildings is a similarly sized condo box by a rival developer. Whereas Segal's tenants enter from the street into a sunny parking court lined with crushed gravel, their neighbors descend into a dank underground garage, a barred steel gate guarding its maw. "Think of the creepiest person you've met," says Segal, "then imagine being stuck in a four-by-six-foot box with them. It's called an elevator."

Of course, Segal didn't invent lofts, row houses, or infill—which is kind of the idea. He's adamant that ▶





smart, simple housing can be built for a lot less than big, bad apartment blocks, which makes him more than a little frustrated. "Our stuff is less expensive than sucky architecture," he fumes, "but you can't mandate good design." And what about the arcane zoning regulations, obstreperous NIMBYs, and bureaucratic molasses that usually cut progressive urban architecture off at the knees? Segal is appropriately vague when asked how he gets the copious variances and permits that allow his more interesting ideas to flourish; one suspects it's a combination of architect's charm and developer's clout.

Segal also designs and builds his own home/offices, and sells them off when the next generation rolls around. His most recent—version 5.0—tackles the unique challenges of its site: the tony seaside community of La Jolla, just north of San Diego. In La Jolla, there's no such thing as affordable housing and, one would think, no lot so undesirable that it fits Segal's infill criteria. Yet in 2002, he found exactly that on the site of a former Shell gas station, a mucky, triangular brownfield that jutted



The industrial aesthetic of the Segals' lounge area (below) is softened by a white shag rug and the generous sunlight that streams through its ceiling of thick glass. The seating is by Poul Kjaerholm. Upstairs, the clutter-free bedrooms of Segal's teenagers (below right) reflect their father's less-is-more ethos.

Segal designed the kitchen cabinets (opposite). The oven and cooktop are by Gaggenau; the sink is by Franke. In the humidior-like living room, modern classics like the off-white armchairs by Hans Wegner complement pieces of Segal's own design, such as the coffee table and long leather seating. **E** p. 190

into La Jolla's most heavily trafficked intersection.

From busy Prospect Street, which funnels cars down to La Jolla's shoppe-clogged main drag, Segal's house—completed in June 2003 and dubbed the Prospect—is a blur. But as seen from the more neighborhoody south side, it's an elegant modern presence in La Jolla's clunky mix of Spanish-style mansions, block-long malls, and incongruous single-family bungalows.

"We tried to make some sense of the strange geometry," says Segal of the isthmus, which he filled with rectangular stucco and Cor-ten steel volumes that utilize as much acreage as possible, without resorting to unusual (and expensive) custom shapes.

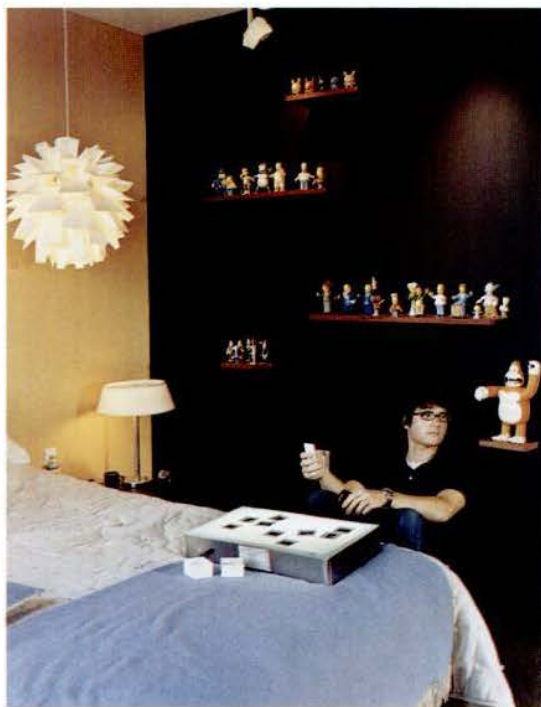
A series of bulwarks protects the living areas from street noise and looky-loos: First are the nine-foot outer walls. The city of San Diego wanted Segal to knock them down to the civic standard of three feet, but after some gentle arm-twisting, they agreed to accommodate the walls behind landscaping that reached the 36-inch limit. Though Segal finds even this regulation "stupid," it

turned out to be an improvement, as the sloping berm and drought-resistant plantings soften the building's silhouette.

Behind the Prospect Street wall is a separate guest house, accessed from the main house by a path that leads past a narrow pool. The quarters are monklike in their privacy, and feature a tiny, high-walled outdoor courtyard that provides visitors a personal open-air space for meditation, yoga, or a furtive cigarette.

Segal installed the reflecting/lap pool as another sound barrier—the gurgling water cancels out traffic noise. The walkway past it feels like a drawbridge into the main house, an open, L-shaped volume of living/dining/kitchen sheathed in dark Sapelli wood panels—including the ceiling. "There's no drywall," notes Segal. "It's all supposed to feel like one big cabinet." The live-in humidior effect is softened by a shag rug in the living area and walls of thick glass on both sides that fill the room with light.

The lower level of the house includes a family room, with a projection TV and pool table. It also contains ▶



Dwellings

Segal's former office space, a subterranean room with a tempered-glass ceiling that looks up to a sun-filled side yard. The former office is being transformed into a '70s-style "love lounge," complete with a wet bar.

The grassy yard on the quieter south side of the house leads to a perfectly square stand of pear trees near the lot's narrowest point that, when fully grown, will provide a shady, Italianate canopy. On one stucco wall of the yard, Segal projects movies in the summer; on another is an outdoor gas fireplace of his own design. Segal's nods to environmental responsibility include drought-tolerant landscaping, solar water heating for the pool, and photovoltaic cells on the roof.

Outside the master bedroom is a deck where you can enjoy the ocean view—if you can ignore the traffic noise. "I'm not a big view guy," admits Segal. "But at night it's great to sit up here and have martinis."

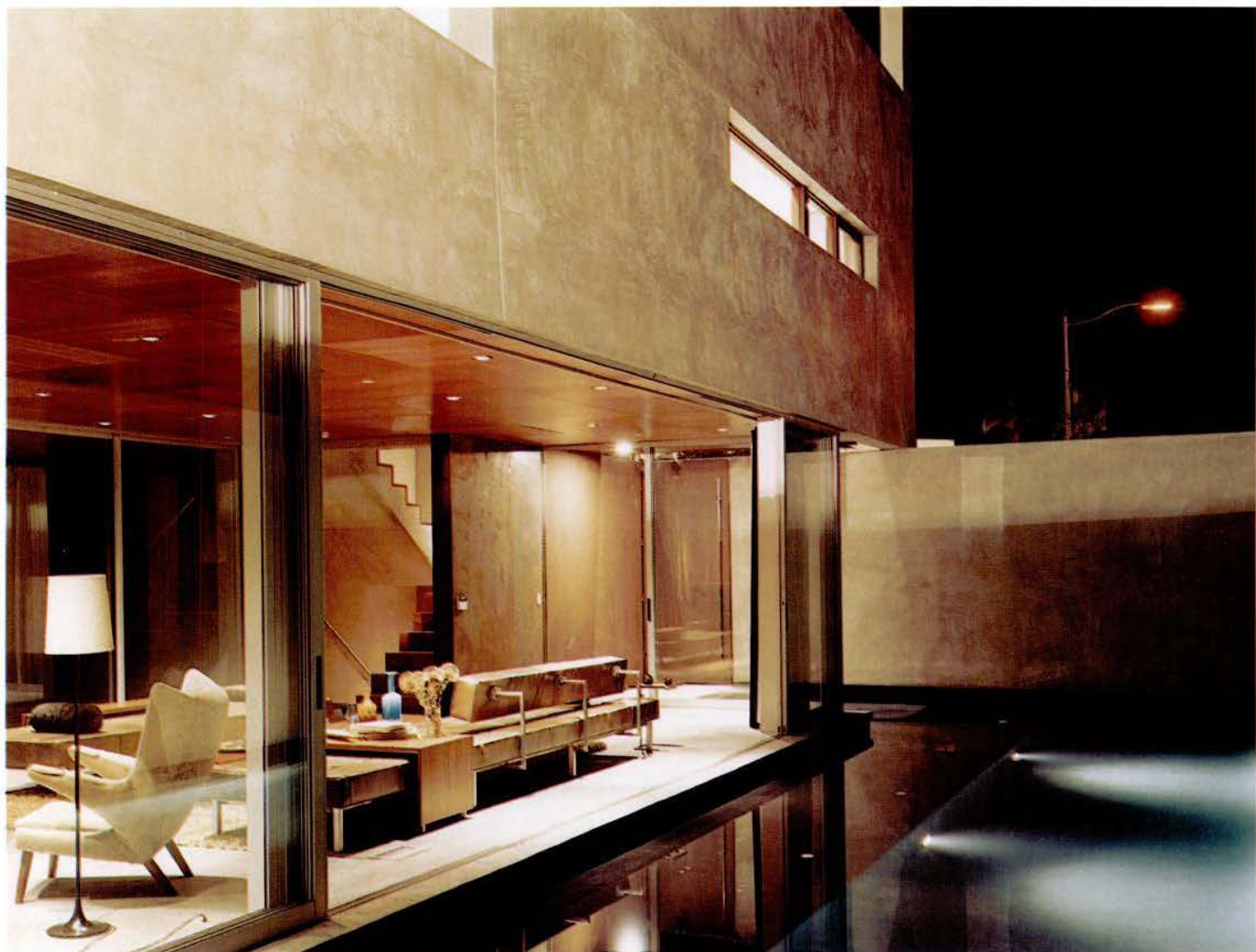
Affixed to the prow of the Prospect is an abstract metal sculpture by Malcolm Leland, an 82-year-old artist who also worked with Los Angeles architectural icon Richard

Neutra in the 1950s. To an Angeleno, the bauble is ironically reminiscent of the dingbat style of L.A. apartment buildings, those mid-century stucco boxes with names like Ultra Encino and the Galaxie that augment their sculptural titles with retro doodads, recalling overgrown Nelson clocks or metallic macramé.

But Segal doesn't quite get the reference, and seems uncomfortable with it. He's not about thumbing his nose at stuffy, old-money La Jolla, nor is his architectural practice ironic in the least. Segal enjoys the rewards of his success: a Porsche in his garage, a couple of motorcycles, armloads of awards for his contributions to the San Diego skyline. But what he craves most are architectural kudos. For all his business triumphs, Segal not so secretly wants to be considered an artist.

But there's no Pritzker Prize for balancing a checkbook. Segal's greatest gift to contemporary urban architecture is his empirical proof that smart design can be good for people—and even better for the bottom line. ■

Apart from being visually stunning, the reflecting pool just outside of the living room (below) also acts a sound barrier—the gurgling water cancels out traffic noise. Opposite: Matthew sets about finishing his latest knitting project while lounging on furniture of his dad's design. A sound system and lighting by Halo are recessed into the ceiling. **E** p. 190





Outside their homes on Throckmorton Street in Dallas, architect Edward Baum (right) and his neighbor admire the fruits of Baum's labors.



Developer Does Dallas

Diane Cheatham and Edward Baum team up to try to make the Dallas of their design dreams a reality.

Project: Prototype Infill Housing

Architect: Edward M. Baum

Developer: Diane Cheatham

Location: Dallas, Texas



If you've never been to Dallas, it's difficult to imagine anything other than the infamous grassy knoll, dusty oil wells, big cowboy hats, or buxom blonde cheerleaders trying to kick their way right through your television screen. The city's oversized image easily eclipses the actual urban landscape. While other towns might bask in their glorified—if misguided—public perception, in Dallas's case, it's a disservice. Lush, green, densely packed neighborhoods filled with single-family homes and high-rise apartment towers snuggled into gently rolling hills are not what most visitors expect to find. But driving through downtown and its immediate outlying neighborhoods, that's exactly what you'll see.

Backed by gobs of oil money and local architects and developers intent on expanding the city's architectural legacy, Dallas has a lengthy history of engaging forward-thinking planners and architectural visionaries. In a city covering a sprawling 343 square miles, where the car is king, this hasn't translated to urban-planning perfection, but it has fostered a surprisingly open-minded architectural atmosphere in a historically conservative city. Gems like Louis Kahn's Kimbell Art Museum and Tadao Ando's Modern Art Museum in nearby Fort Worth, the Nasher Sculpture Center by Renzo Piano, and landscape architect Daniel Kiley's public park, Fountain Place, provide a solid core of signature structures that have attracted world renown. But it is the neighborhoods that branch out from the corporate-skyscraper-dominated downtown that provide the most hope for a future Dallas—ruled not by the car but by vibrant streets and the complex social fabric of a healthy city. ▶



The living room of Baum's 1650-square-foot home features a poured-concrete floor as well as many vintage finds and artifacts from his travels. The sidechairs in the foreground are by Ib Kofod-Larsen and the leather chair is by Gilbert Rohde.

Moving northwest along Maple Avenue, away from Pei Cobb Freed and Partners' 1980s prismlike Fountain Place office tower, the houses and offices become low-slung, punctuated every so often by a '60s- or '70s-era high-rise. In this way, Dallas starts to look not unlike Los Angeles. Farther along Maple, the Oak Lawn neighborhood continues the city's metamorphosis, this time into a largely Hispanic quarter. Turning right off Maple onto Throckmorton Street, architect Edward Baum and developer Diane Cheatham's most recent experiment in Texas-style urbanism comes into view.

Baum, a professor of architecture at the University of Texas at Arlington, and Cheatham, a true-blue Texan who's the president and founder of Urban Edge Developers, have known each other for years, but this is their first foray into business together. Four years ago, Baum purchased two lots for about \$80,000 each. Though some consider Oak Lawn less than desirable, Baum saw wide sidewalks shaded by fully developed trees and jumped at the chance to make his urban ideal a reality.

"I'm very interested in bringing the single-family home back to the urban infrastructure," Baum explains. "This neighborhood and these lots presented the perfect opportunity to create single-family homes that are still somewhat affordable and could tempt young families and singles into returning to the city."

Baum's inspired thinking caught Cheatham's attention, and she signed on to help get the project under way. With an architect and developer working in cahoots, equal importance was given to their individual desires, and a unique piece of urban infill began to take shape in 2002.

The two developed an approach that yielded four town houses, each with approximately 1,700 square feet of living space, that would slide easily onto Dallas's standard residential lot of 50 by 150 feet. The key to the courtyard houses, however, was the price: Each unit would be sold for around \$275,000, putting them within reach of the middle class.

For Baum's part, he looked east, to the patio houses of the Mediterranean and Asia, and then west, to the open



The house is organized around three courtyards. The largest (above) serves as an outdoor room between the living space and Baum's office, which he calls the "flex room."

floor plans of the Case Study Houses of the Eameses, Ellwood, and Koenig. For Cheatham's part, she observed the market demands of the metropolitan region: compact, one-level dwellings with covered parking, plenty of security and privacy, lots of storage, room for a guest bedroom or home office, and energy-efficiency—all with an affordable price tag.

Baum describes the project as a "replacement part" for Dallas's fractured urban form pockmarked with vacant lots throughout many neighborhoods. "Since it is based on the standard city lot," Baum explains, "it can be used to incrementally fill lots and replace existing single-family housing as need arises." He goes on to say that "much like a person's teeth, the urban fabric can be patched, supplemented, and renewed selectively. When repeated, the design belongs to the 'mat' or 'carpet' housing typology—low, tightly assembled, and porous."

The completed homes resemble a hybrid of the classic California ranch house and early Eichler designs. Nothing about them screams "Look at me," though they are

definitely good neighbors. Walking down Throckmorton Street, the sidewalk is cracked and worn, but as you reach Baum's homes, the newly poured concrete glistens and the tongue-and-groove cypress-siding exterior provides evidence that this cavity has been elegantly filled.

In order for the houses to remain within reach of the middle-income person, Baum and Cheatham approached the project with an off-the-shelf philosophy. To demonstrate the opportunity for consumers to take advantage of the low prices offered at massive retailers like Home Depot and Lowe's, Baum and Cheatham made a conscientious effort to purchase everything they could from big-box retailers like these. The catch, however, was that the homes were constructed by skilled professionals. "By saving so much on materials, we were able to spend a bit more on quality craftsmanship," Cheatham explains. "It's not a bricolage by an amateur or naive user," Baum continues. "Here the flexibility of the market system and the construction system have been used to build quality dwellings at comparatively low costs." ▶



Stepping behind the carport doors—covered gracefully by slightly slanting roofs to keep the sun and rain out but let the fresh air and light in—and into the foyer of Baum's unit, this off-the-shelf philosophy becomes more evident. The hallway stretches the entire length of the house, and from the front door you have an unobstructed view all the way to the bedroom. Running the length of the hallway are 80-inch-tall closets from Home Depot that provide the home's storage space.

In the kitchen, just off the foyer, cabinetry, sinks, and hardware all come from Home Depot as well, while the counter provides a unique spark. "We chose a bamboo countertop to add some pop to the space," Cheatham explains. "It is high quality and very ecological. Again, by saving in one area, you can splurge in another."

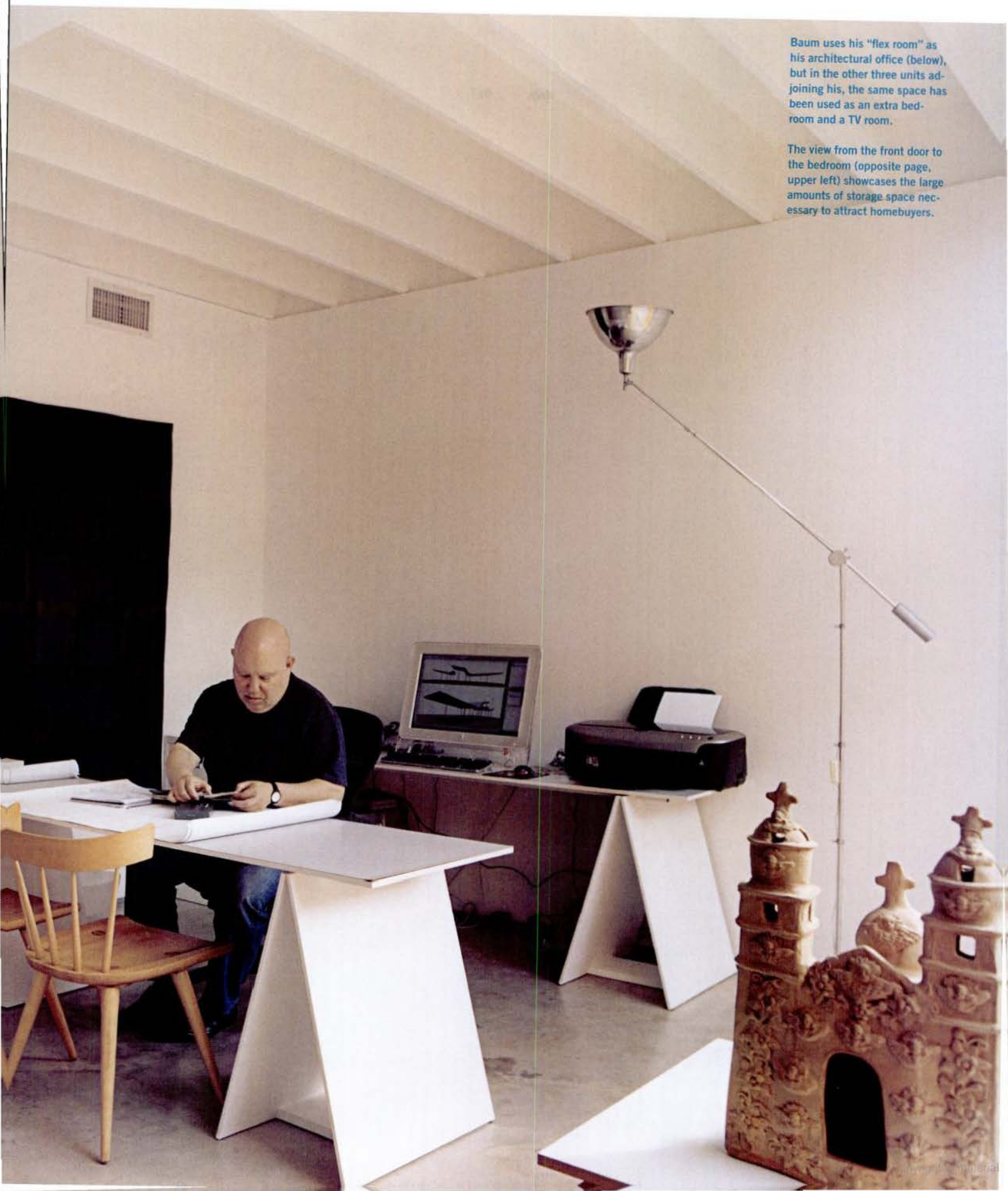
The extra bedroom or office that Cheatham signaled as a key market demand—the "flex room," as Baum calls it—lies just off the main hallway. The room, and the rest of the house for that matter, has no traditional doorway. Instead, a 13-foot opening, which can be sealed off by a sliding screen consisting of six standard 80-by-32-inch doors fastened together by metal mending plates at the top and bottom, serves as the entryway. Similarly, the master bedroom appears open to the rest of the house unless the door, which is a nontraditional width, is pulled from the weight-bearing wall separating the bedroom and the bathroom. All of this is key to Baum's idea of creating a smart open living plan.

Upon completion in August 2003, all of the units sold in a matter of weeks—and the residents, including Baum, couldn't be happier. "They're just simple little wonders," ►



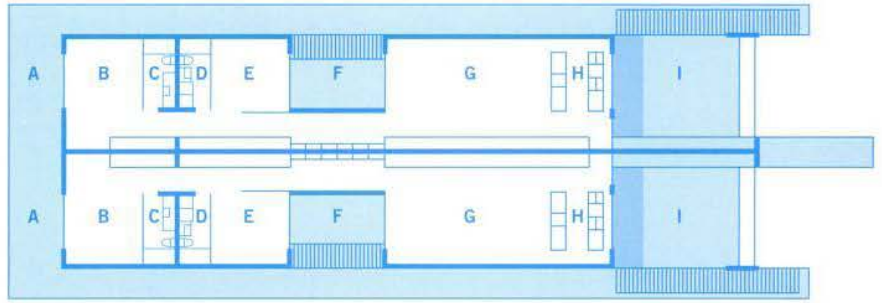
Baum uses his "flex room" as his architectural office (below), but in the other three units adjoining his, the same space has been used as an extra bedroom and a TV room.

The view from the front door to the bedroom (opposite page, upper left) showcases the large amounts of storage space necessary to attract homebuyers.



Floor Plan for Two Identical Side-by-Side Units

- A Backyard
- B Master Bedroom
- C Master Bathroom
- D Bathroom
- E Flex Room
- F Courtyard
- G Living Room
- H Kitchen
- I Carport



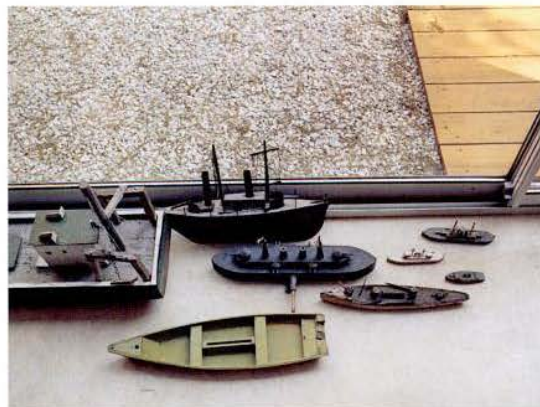
Baum relates. "They're minimal but capable of maximum living potential. We're hoping to see them all over the city. A diverse housing stock is key to a city's vitality."

The real question is whether housing alone can reinvigorate a city, making it a place people want to live in again. Baum clearly believes it's one part of the equation but likes to tell a story that relays his true feelings and the often overwhelming complexity of city planning. "A while back, Andrés Duany [of New Urbanism fame] was in town and city leaders asked him, 'What can we do to bring people back to inner-city Dallas in meaningful numbers?'" Baum smiles slyly before continuing. "Duany said to them, 'You can hire me and pay me thousands of dollars for advice and plans that you'll never use. Or,'" and at this point Baum can't help but chuckle knowingly, "'you can build two elementary schools and a high school right downtown and staff it with good people and the rest will take care of itself.'" If Dallas ever does take Duany's advice, Baum and Cheatham have just the plan to house any returning urban expats. ■

Baum's bedroom (above left) features his many photos and other memorabilia (below) collected over his years of teaching and working throughout the country.

The kitchen (above) is lit with plenty of natural light from the open-air carport directly in front of it. All appliances and cabinetry are off the shelf from various big-box stores.

The backlighting Baum included above the storage units lining the hall (opposite page) is revealed at dusk. The lighting provides a warm glow throughout the house.





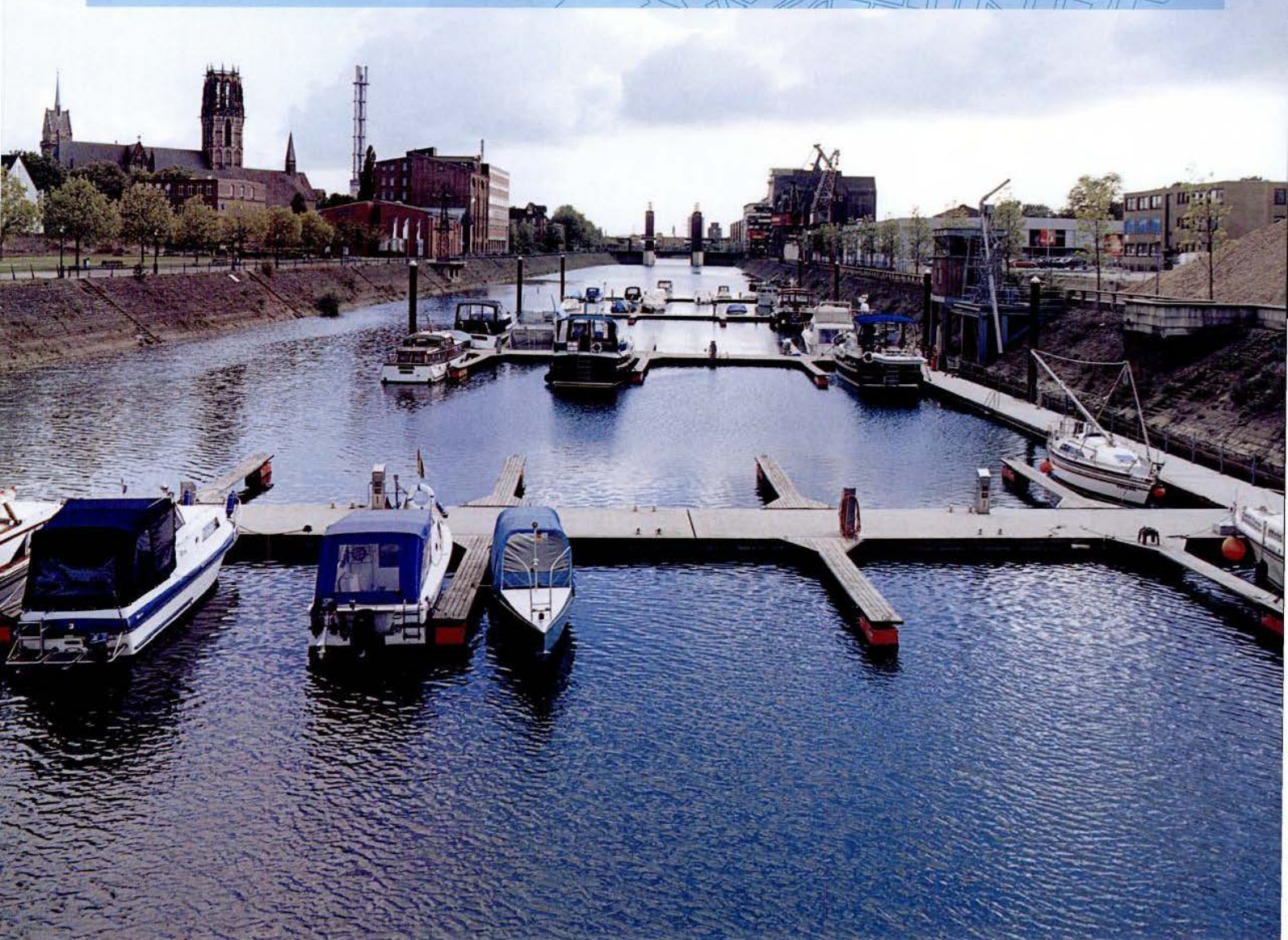
Industrial Evolution

A Norman Foster master plan has transformed a decaying German industrial port into a vibrant neighborhood. It's not about a single dramatic image, but what Foster calls "incremental change" using plenty of "urban glue."

Project: Inner Harbor Redevelopment

Architect: Foster and Partners

Location: Duisburg, Germany



"I'm a local boy," says Carsten Cox, gesturing at what he calls "my own backyard"—the enviable panoramic view from the terrace of his Norman Foster–designed penthouse, with its wide sweep of water and landmarks both industrial age and modern. But Carsten is no Londoner, and Foster's NFI apartment complex is not in the English capital, where he has arguably made the biggest architectural mark since Sir Christopher Wren, but in the obscure German town of Duisburg, about 36 miles from Düsseldorf.

Duisburg isn't that well known, even in Europe. For those who have heard of it, it's synonymous with the Ruhrgebiet—the former industrial heartland of Germany, now mainly remembered for the hard times of the 1980s, when it seemed to be sinking under the weight of ecological degradation, economic crisis, and soaring unemployment.

"In the late 1980s, the young and well-educated were leaving Duisburg in droves," explains Rolf Fehr, the managing director of the Duisburg Inner Harbor Development

Company, which is responsible for Cox's penthouse and for the entire 89-hectare Inner Harbor redevelopment site. "The point of building apartment buildings like NFI, creating public space and revitalizing the neighborhood, is to persuade them to stay—and new businesses to come. We are using architecture to encourage the kind of economic restructuring that will keep Duisburg alive."

Cox is living proof that this plan may be working. Although he was raised in the Ruhr, he spent most of his adult life in Stuttgart and Frankfurt before returning to his roots to live in the Inner Harbor—despite the fact that his job, as a structural engineer, is a two-hour drive away. (He does have a pied-à-terre in Stuttgart to lessen the toll of the commute.) "I saw this flat, and I just wanted to live in it," he explains. "It's not only the superb quality of my apartment, which would be unaffordable in other German cities. It's the whole Inner Harbor thing. The atmosphere as well as the architecture is fantastic; it's a real community. We have a local market, events, ▶

"We addressed the need to reconnect the inner city with the water's edge," says Foster. Accordingly, the Steiger Schwanentor jetty (opposite) was the first project completed. The pontoon-and-ramp system provides mooring facilities for sightseeing boats.

The NFI apartment building (right) where Carsten Cox lives has an inner garden, in which fanciful Park Guell–inspired structures utilize the rubble of the buildings demolished to make way for it, as with the Garden of Memories (below).





socials where everyone aged 3 to 83 turns up, and the 13th restaurant in the neighborhood has just opened.”

All this new life was a distant dream back in 1989, when the Inner Harbor—once the world’s biggest inland harbor—was decaying rapidly, along with the rest of the Ruhrgebiet. “There were 200 jobs left in the [harbor] area,” recalls Fehr. “Whereas today, there are 4,000. And back then, only a handful of people lived here. In fact, the situation in the entire region seemed so hopeless that the Land of Westphalia decided to take radical action to encourage the restructuring of the old industrial cities.”

Using architecture and planning as its starting point, the Land of Westphalia (the equivalent of a state in the U.S.) set up the regionwide International Building Exhibition (known in Germany as the IBA), a cross-disciplinary think tank. It united regional and local governments, planners, and architects, created new administrative structures with a decade-long life span, and organized seminars, forums, and international competitions to generate ideas.

The IBA devised an ambitious urban and ecological regeneration program that became Europe’s biggest such project, stretching across several cities to encompass the entire Ruhrgebiet. A major environmental cleanup was undertaken, and plans were drawn up for the conversion of industrial wastelands into mixed-use community and cultural resources, including offices, housing, museums, and performance areas.

These postindustrial urban centers were not viewed in isolation, but were planned as parts of a coherent whole: Today, they are linked together by an impressive regional park system, which includes thematic tourist routes for cyclists and hikers, such as the Route of Industrial Culture. “The IBA focused on preserving the identity of the Ruhr Valley, not on tearing everything down,” recalls Marie Mense of THS (TreuHandStelle GmbH), the development company that funded NFI and many other residential developments in Duisburg and the surrounding area. “If you destroy your history, you have no memory—and no identity.” Mense believes preserving ▶

Cox enjoys the view from his penthouse terrace (opposite). The steel used for the terrace, and the brick-colored cladding of the building, echo the industrial architecture of the area. The angles suggest a ship, a nautical link with Duisburg’s past as a major port.

Wall-to-ceiling glass panels on the two exterior walls maximize the views and flood the apartment with light. The interior wall panels can be entirely removed to create a single loft space (right). The neighbors’ balconies provide an interesting perspective (below).



the past is vital to local morale. Moreover, she points out that widespread demolition is not an option in the dense urban conglomerations of the Ruhrgebiet, where the cost of decontamination pushes the price of site clearances sky-high.

Accordingly, Duisburg Inner Harbor has retained between 30 and 40 percent of its old warehouses and mills, refurbished into offices, museums, and restaurants along the lines of Foster and Partners' master plan, which was chosen in an international competition held under the auspices of the IBA in 1991. Their plan, which remodels a two-kilometer stretch of the harbor channel and its surrounding area, was chosen for its elegant solution to maximizing the waterfront, and for its intrinsic mixed-use approach. Foster himself calls Duisburg "a new, 21st-century paradigm of mixed use in the inner city."

"The whole idea was to bring the water back into Duisburg," explains Fehr. "To give it a new role in the life of the city. So three new canals were cut, which literally

carry the water further into town, and a variety of public space was created on the waterfront." Lining the harbor are walkways, bike paths, lush green spaces, sculptures, a skateboard park, and café terraces. But the new paths are a mosaic of salvaged bricks and tiles, and while many old buildings were demolished to create these well-used public spaces, the Garden of Memories, for example, designed by Israeli sculptor Dani Karavan, poignantly preserves certain segments of them.

Set back from the water, energy-efficient office buildings like the nautical "Five Boats" adhere to a strict five-story limit, ensuring a human scale and the preservation of the waterfront view for the residential buildings behind them. Currently there are 420 apartments in the Inner Harbor; when the project is completed, there will be 700. (Siting apartments directly on the main waterfront was determined to be too expensive: "No one in Duisburg is going to pay a million euros for a waterfront loft conversion," says Fehr.)

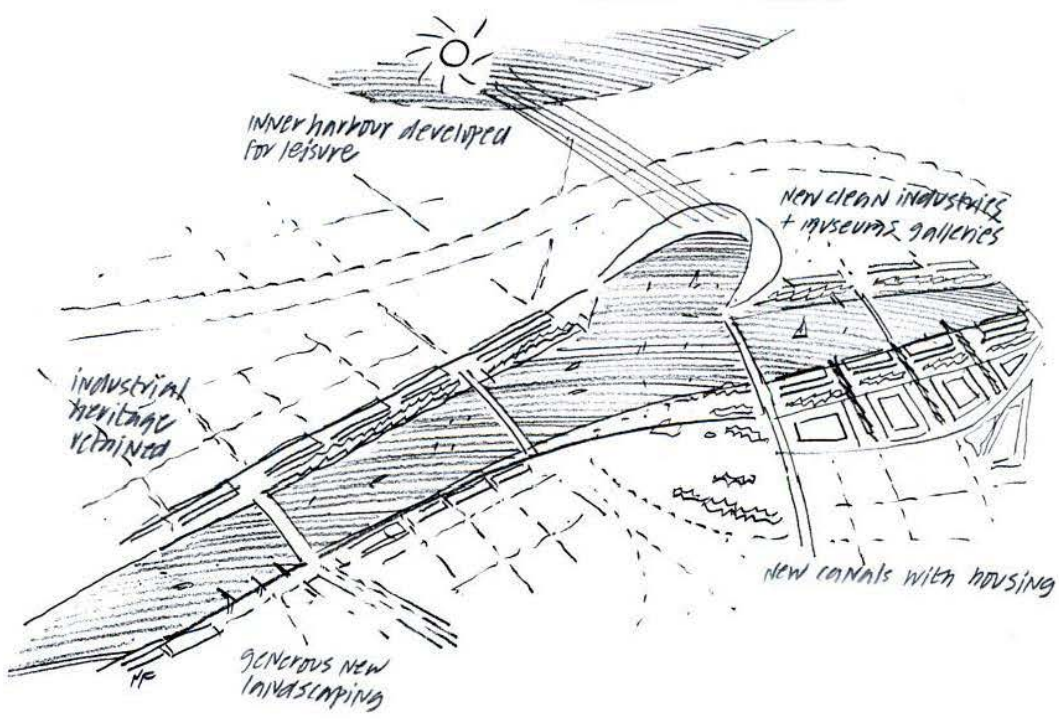
The most striking feature of the development is the ►



The overhanging roof of Cox's terrace (opposite) adds to the visually intriguing play of angles, and provides a spot of shade—or even shelter from the rain). It also helps to reduce glare in the interior (below).

Opposite: One of the three new canals that were cut to carry the water into the heart of the city. Features like the elegant Movable Bridge (right) invite pedestrians to linger on the waterfront.





Lord Foster's Duisburg harbor plan, as he explains, "is not about the dramatic single image. Instead, it works at a more discreet level, quietly demonstrating the potential to reinvigorate declining urban areas to build richer, more sustainable communities for the future."



Artist Dani Karavan's Garden of Remembrance uses the form of waves, and the debris of demolished buildings, to evoke Duisburg's harbor history. "We avoided breaking with the past, and instead chose to create an environment that would resonate strongly with it," says Foster.







many-sided reclamation of water for public use. The beautifully spare Movable Footbridge—an engineering first that recalls the traditional skills of the Ruhr—invites walkers to cross it; boats can moor at Foster’s breathtakingly ingenious Steiger Schwanentor jetty, which rises and falls with the water level; and a new dam has provided a more scenic stretch of water as the backdrop for the restaurant terraces, as well as a place to swim. The jewel in the crown of Duisburg Inner Harbor will be its landmark Eurogate building—a terraced five-story office and public services building (not yet built), sheltered under a photovoltaic canopy, symbolizing the new sustainability of the Ruhrgebiet.

“New infrastructure and public amenities were put in place first to establish the harbor as an attractive place in which to live and work,” explains Foster. It has been a wise move. Fehr notes that the public investment in the infrastructure, made possible by European Union grants, was some 65 million euros. “We spent this on the public spaces,” says Fehr. “And that investment has attracted

some 400 million euros of private investment so far. By the time we’ve finished the project, we will have raised 10 euros of private money for every single euro of public money we’ve spent.”

Fehr attributes the success of Duisburg Inner Harbor to the excellence of Foster’s master plan—and the development company’s faithfulness in following it: “Lord Foster is extremely proud of us in Duisburg for never deviating from his master plan, not once in ten years,” says Fehr with a wry smile. With a 2010 slot as European Capital of Culture looking almost certain, the Ruhrgebiet as a whole seems well on the way to a truly extraordinary urban transformation.

“When I first moved here,” says Carsten Cox, basking in the sun on his terrace, “my friends all thought I was mad. Now, people say, ‘Oh, of course, the Inner Harbor!’ Duisburg has always had a lot going for it—the mentality is different from the rest of Germany, people are more open, friendlier, always ready to try new things. The Inner Harbor project is allowing that to blossom.” ■

Opposite: Foster and Partners’ master plan facilitated important works by others, including Dani Karavan (whose Garden of Memories is shown at left), Zvi Hecker (the Jewish Community Center), and Herzog + de Meuron (the Küppersmühle Museum).

Continued by Koolhaas

The faith in good architecture’s ability to revive a city, and the use of public space to engineer an urban regeneration, has proved a success in Duisburg, and is being adapted widely throughout the Ruhrgebiet. Just a few minutes’ drive down the road in Essen, the Zollverein coal mine, an iconic Bauhaus industrial complex and UNESCO World Heritage site, is just embarking on realizing its own multifunctional master plan, this one done by Rem Koolhaas.

The Koolhaas plan sketches out three main components: an industrial-design park for design-related businesses, a business and design school, and a new visitor center in the refurbished coal-washing plant. Hotels and apartments will also be part of the plan. “The idea is to invest public money in the public part of the infrastructure, and attract private money for the rest,” says Oliver Schwan of the Zeche Zollverein Development Company. “The goal is a mixed-use development, part old, part new, based on design as an economic motor.”

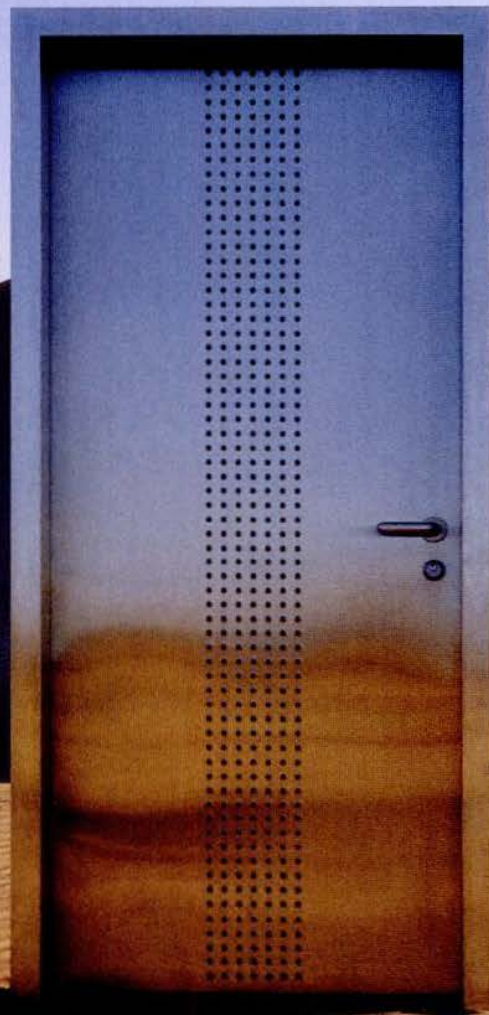
To achieve that goal, in 2006 Zollverein will host Entry, an ambitious international forum for art and design. —J.S.





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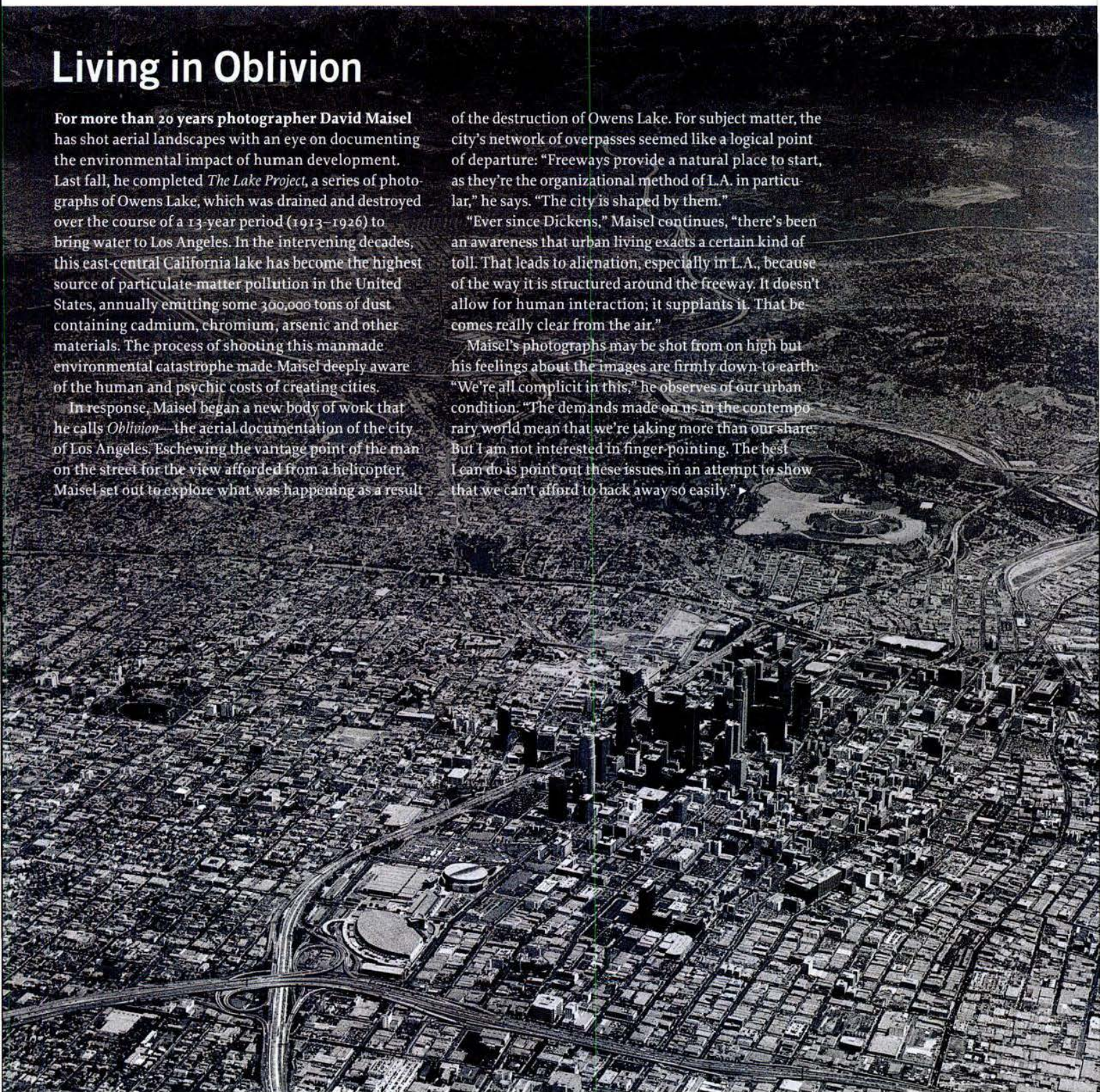
For more than 20 years photographer David Maisel has shot aerial landscapes with an eye on documenting the environmental impact of human development. Last fall, he completed *The Lake Project*, a series of photographs of Owens Lake, which was drained and destroyed over the course of a 13-year period (1913–1926) to bring water to Los Angeles. In the intervening decades, this east-central California lake has become the highest source of particulate-matter pollution in the United States, annually emitting some 300,000 tons of dust containing cadmium, chromium, arsenic and other materials. The process of shooting this manmade environmental catastrophe made Maisel deeply aware of the human and psychic costs of creating cities.

In response, Maisel began a new body of work that he calls *Oblivion*—the aerial documentation of the city of Los Angeles. Eschewing the vantage point of the man on the street for the view afforded from a helicopter, Maisel set out to explore what was happening as a result

of the destruction of Owens Lake. For subject matter, the city's network of overpasses seemed like a logical point of departure: "Freeways provide a natural place to start, as they're the organizational method of L.A. in particular," he says. "The city is shaped by them."

"Ever since Dickens," Maisel continues, "there's been an awareness that urban living exacts a certain kind of toll. That leads to alienation, especially in L.A., because of the way it is structured around the freeway. It doesn't allow for human interaction; it supplants it. That becomes really clear from the air."

Maisel's photographs may be shot from on high but his feelings about the images are firmly down-to-earth: "We're all complicit in this," he observes of our urban condition. "The demands made on us in the contemporary world mean that we're taking more than our share. But I am not interested in finger-pointing. The best I can do is point out these issues in an attempt to show that we can't afford to back away so easily." ▶









“Neighborhoods seem to go on forever in L.A. There’s an infinite grid with no scale differentiation over this vast swath of domestic architecture.”





“L.A. wasn’t made through the most wonderful planning and it’s apparent. What’s resulted is really a wasteland, but it must have been a paradise at some point.”





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Love in the Time of Real Estate

I stumbled into home ownership—or rather was dragged toward it, not unlike a balky mule—by my former husband, R, and our accountant, at the waning of the Age of Reagan. Shelling out more than a quarter million dollars for 1,100 square feet cobbled together around the time of the Great Quake in an “up-and-coming” San Francisco neighborhood seemed not only like a sound investment, but critical to our future. For then, as now, the real estate train seemed poised to roar out of the station—miss it (the feeling went) and you’d be more likely to end up riding the rails than sinking into supple leather seats the color of single-malt scotch.

So I swapped my rent-controlled crib (with fireplace and garden) for roughly the same amount of space at three times the price and a variable mortgage that imbued Alan

Greenspan with the powers of an ancient oracle. Not only did this keep me tethered to a job I loathed and ensconced in a marriage that had seen better days, it required a few adjustments to my sense of self.

Most of my close friends were renters—scraping by with odd jobs and quirky flats so they could dance or travel or paint—and there was a whiff of selling out about the enterprise, even if I had heretofore demonstrated little affinity for suffering for art’s sake. Now that I’d become a stolid member of the bourgeoisie, fretting over termites and boilers, I could no longer aspire to become one of these “martyrs of the Bohemian value system” described by Alain de Botton in *Status Anxiety*, for whom “what mattered above all else, and certainly above the ability to pay for an elegant home or chic clothes, was openness to the wider world and devotion...to the primary repository that was art.” (Sadly, by the time of the dot-com invasion, many friends had either bought or been priced out of the city, dreams of the bohemian life fading like the last embers at Burning Man. But that’s another story.)

My personal housing drama resolved along the lines of a Feydeau farce. The marriage collapsed at the height of the recession, our Victorian gray elephant dropped in value, and R moved out. When a fire destroyed his flat a few years later, he built himself a sort of bed-sit in the house’s capacious garage as we waited for the market to rebound. The grinding noise of the garage door going up and down at delicate moments was by turns hilarious and untenable, as was my new fiancé’s geriatric standard poodle, who—testing his own trickle-down theories—relieved himself on the wooden floorboards just above the spot where R made his (now sodden) bed. Unable to take it any longer, I moved in with my fiancé and sold out to R and his mate for a relative song. Within a year, the house doubled in value.

Today, driving past my former home on my way to the playground, I’m reminded of the time I almost made a killing in the housing market, but instead ended up lucky in love. And then I can’t help but wonder, But why on earth did they paint it that hideous color?



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Realtors Who Choose Modernism over McMansions

If it seems like lately everyone from the Incredibles to the people in allergy-medicine commercials is living in a modern house, it's because they are. Pop culture's fascination with modern design has become so pervasive that it's helped raise demand—and prices—for properties ranging from mid-century tract houses to masterpieces by the latest big-name, big-deal architects.

But before frustrated house hunters start cursing the good people at Flonase for helping fuel a bidding war on their dream home, consider that increased demand has also made room for a new kind of real estate agent who specializes in finding and

selling architecturally significant properties, and who might very well save you time and money.

"We're seeing the market for architecture look more and more like the market for art," says Crosby Doe, a partner at one of the country's oldest architectural realty companies, Mossler Deasy & Doe. "It's just reality. If a Greene & Greene sconce is worth \$50,000 [at a recent Sotheby's auction of 20th-century design], why isn't a house worth a few million?"

While this might be bad news for anyone outside Bill Gates's tax bracket who hopes to acquire an icon like Richard Neutra's Singleton House—which recently sold for about \$6 million—it's good news for architects trying to create tomorrow's classics.

"There are a lot more modern homes being built," says Dallas real estate agent Douglas Newby. "People know they can immediately turn around and sell them for a profit."

Atlanta, Georgia

Cindi Sokol / Atlanta Intown Real Estate Services
www.northcrestmodern.com

Tel: (770) 849-8346

The mod market: \$180,000 to \$1 million
Modern architecture in ultra-traditional Atlanta tends to go to extremes, price-wise. Bargains abound for mid-century houses scattered around the inner suburbs and can still be found on lofts and condos near downtown. But newer houses are scarce, and commissioning a high-end design from the likes of local firm Mack Scogin Merrill Elam Architects can run into the millions.

Chicago, Illinois

Joe Kunkel / Baird & Warner
www.jetsetmodern.com

Tel: (312) 371-0986

The mod market: \$200,000 to \$5 million
Chicago has been an epicenter of modern design for decades. Its real estate market offers everything from lofts and stylish townhouses to houses by Bauhaus veterans, Frank Lloyd Wright, and some of the country's best contemporary architects. And best of all, it's not as pricey as you'd think. "Relative to other cities, Chicago is affordable and pretty wonderful," says Joe Kunkel.

Cincinnati, Ohio

Susan Rissover / Huff Realty
www.cincinnati-modern.com
Tel: (513) 886-7841

The mod market: \$130,000 to \$4 million
Susan Rissover's motto, "Cincinnati: Modern where you'd least expect it," probably says it all. Though the city is still under the radar as a design destination, its hilly terrain and the University of Cincinnati's art and architecture school give it a respectable supply of interesting and affordable homes.

Dallas, Texas

Douglas Newby & Associates
www.dougnewby.com
Tel: (214) 522-1000

Claire Dewar / Briggs-Freeman Real Estate Brokerage
www.briggs-freeman.com
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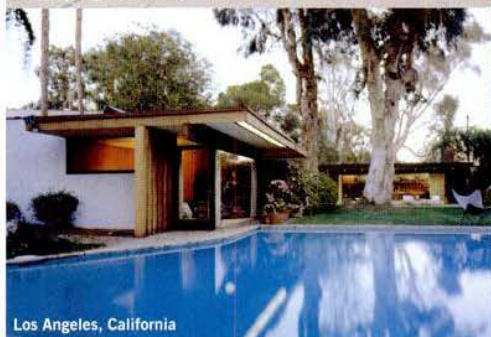
The mod market: \$200,000 to \$10 million
There might be something to the fact that Dallas's buildings by I. M. Pei, Philip Johnson, Richard Meier, and Antoine Predock didn't figure into its eponymous soap opera during the '80s. "Ten years ago, ▶



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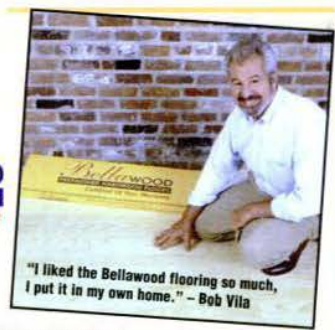
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Real Estate 101

a lot of the modern homes sold at a discount, and people were complaining they couldn't get a Georgian," says Realtor Douglas Newby. But these days, people are searching for modern architecture almost as desperately as for Texas Tea. "I've never seen as much thirst and hunger to find out more about it," he adds.

Denver, Colorado

Craig Mayer / RE/MAX of Cherry Creek

www.milehimodern.com

Tel: (303) 331-4508

The mod market: \$150,000 to \$3 million

While Arapahoe Acres—the first postwar neighborhood in the U.S. to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places—remains Denver's best-known modernist address, Craig Mayer says it's not all the city has to offer. New downtown loft and condominium developments (one by Daniel Libeskind is in the design phase) open almost every month, and new houses and townhouses are rising in close-in suburbs almost as fast as demand. "I have a lot more buyers than I have listings," he says, a situation that is pushing some modern properties to appreciate at rates approaching 20 percent a year.

Houston, Texas

Robert Searcy / Karpas Properties

www.glenbrookvalley.com

Tel: (832) 279-5332

The mod market: \$100,000 to \$3 million

"This is big-hair, big-house country. If Tuscan McMansions have a headquarters, it's here," says Robert Searcy. But renewed interest in mid-century properties and a boom in down-town loft and townhouse construction led by architecture firms like MC2 Architects and Urban Lofts Townhomes are expanding modernism's footprint in Space City. "I think the market has yet to be answered completely," he says, but at least it's going in a more interesting direction.

Los Angeles, California

Mossler Deasy & Doe

www.architectureforsale.com

Tel: (800) 920-4005

Brian Linder / Keller Williams Realty

www.thevalueofarchitecture.net

Tel: (800) 684-8862

The mod market: \$550,000 to \$12 million

So many big-name designs crowd the hills and valleys of L.A. that the real estate listings read like a who's who of modernist architecture. Living in a landmark doesn't

come cheap, however, and bargains are scarce even for smaller properties. (For example, a Venice Beach cottage renovated by Moore Ruble Yudell recently went on the market for \$1.5 million.) MDD partner Crosby Doe says that architect-designed properties currently fetch a 20 to 100 percent premium, adding, "As you head east, that trend is just delayed by a few years, so watch out, rest of the country!"

Los Angeles / San Fernando Valley, California

Craig Terrien

www.valleymodern.com

Tel: (818) 312-3930

The mod market: \$300,000 to \$3 million

Making less than a movie-star salary? Head to the Valley to find bargains on everything from experimental, prefab houses to one-off masterpieces in the hills. "Most people are hoping they don't have to spend a million dollars," says Craig Terrien, "and the good news is, they don't."

Miami, Florida

Andy Casas / Esslinger-Wooten-

Maxwell Realtors

www.ewm.com

Tel: (305) 672-1300

The mod market: \$1 million to \$10 million

Lots near the water have gotten so expensive in Miami that the old saw about its weather now applies to architecture: Wait five minutes, and it'll change. Teardowns abound, so Andy Casas works hard to buy and renovate vintage properties. For stylish new homes likely to last awhile, look no further than a wave of Latin American architects flooding the city with sleek, minimalist designs and developers like Dacra, whose Aqua on Allison Island is one of its more recent projects with name architects such as Duany Plater-Zyberk and Alison Spear.

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Scott Acker / Coldwell Banker Burnet

www.isellarchitecture.com

Tel: (612) 928-8627

The mod market: \$400,000 to \$2 million

Modernism remains a four-letter word to many Minnesotans, Scott Acker says, but nonetheless, a coterie of local architects and the recently completed Walker Art Center renovation by Herzog & de Meuron are creating demand and opening minds to more innovative design. Recent examples include prefab houses by Charlie Lazor (see "How to Play FlatPak," April/May 2005) that will

soon be selling for less than \$200 a square foot, lofts designed by Minneapolis architect Julie Snow that are going for more than \$700,000, and an entire modernist subdivision where houses designed by Charles Stinson average about \$950,000.

Nashville, Tennessee

Allen DeCuyper / Broker South Real

Estate Partners

www.brokersouthrealty.com

Tel: (615) 300-5971

The mod market: \$200,000 to \$4 million

Nashville's demand for modernist real estate proves that Yankees don't have a monopoly on common sense. Many of the singers, songwriters, and musicians who flock to this city don't think much about architecture until they see the views captured by the smattering of modern houses studding the high hills surrounding downtown. "But once they get in there and see it and get excited," says Allen DeCuyper, "they realize, Oh, it's a good thing."

New Canaan, Connecticut

Susan E. Blabey / William Pitt Sotheby's

International Realty

www.williampittsir.com

Tel: (203) 966-2633

The mod market: \$800,000 to \$2.5 million

A group of architects known as the Harvard Five made New Canaan famous 50 years ago by filling it with modernist masterpieces. Now, only 18 of the houses are left, and rising land values have made some of those a tough sell "even here in the home country of moderns," Susan Blabey says. "People have been tearing them down to build McMansions." Marcel Breuer's own house was in danger recently before Blabey found an "end user" who bought it earlier this year.

Palm Springs, California

Paul Kaplan / Classic Homes, Inc.

www.paulkaplanrealtor.com

Tel: (760) 285-8559

The mod market: \$450,000 to \$2 million

Renewed interest in Palm Spring's wealth of modernist architecture has ignited something of a renaissance here. "Summers used to be dead," says Paul Kaplan, but things have turned around so much in the past five years that the locals now complain about traffic in July. Coastal refugees are paying prices that have gone up 30 to 40 percent annually over the last three years and have made the town more happening than it's been since the Rat Pack left.

Phoenix, Arizona

Jarson & Jarson Real Estate

www.azarchitecture.com

Tel: (480) 425-9300

The mod market: \$200,000 to \$3 million

A client who'd never heard of Frank Lloyd Wright helped convince Scott and Debbie Jarson that architecturally significant real estate was their true calling when she bid on a house not because it was built by the master and his son-in-law but "because of the light and the design—the right reasons," Scott says.

Portland, Oregon

Bob Zaikoski / The Realty Network

GMAC Real Estate

www.portlandmodern.com

Tel: (503) 381-3115

The mod market: \$220,000 to \$1.5 million

On the last frontier of West Coast affordability, demand for modernist houses has gotten so great recently that Bob Zaikoski is ready to commit real estate blasphemy and hope that things slow down. Houses often go for tens of thousands of dollars over their asking price and many clients have to make offers on dozens of properties before getting one. Be warned.

San Diego, California

Boris Buecker / Real Estate Specialists

www.liveinarchitecture.com

Tel: (877) 246-4912

The mod market: \$500,000 to \$10 million

Decades of downtown redevelopment efforts have made infill projects the front line for new housing in San Diego. All kinds of lofts, condos, and town houses are selling as quickly as they go up, and architectural innovation is even spreading to formerly traditional suburbs that are rebuilding after a series of devastating wildfires. "People never took San Diego quite seriously as a city," Boris Buecker says—until now.

San Francisco, California

Zack Anawalt / Designer/Realtor

www.anawaltrealestate.com

Tel: (707) 292-3152

The mod market: \$400,000 to \$35 million

Modern is hard to find in San Francisco, a city where Victorians and less-than-remarkable loft developments occupy the most real estate. In Zack Anawalt's perfect world, everybody who wanted to build or renovate a house would hire local talent as a way to remedy that and build up the city's design community. Accordingly, the

trained architect is spending half his time convincing his real estate clients to do just that and the other half as a working designer.

San Francisco / Marin County, California

Catherine Munson / LVPMarin

www.lvpmarin.com

Tel: (415) 883-0555

The mod market: \$700,000 to \$1.3 million

Catherine Munson started working with famed California builder Joseph Eichler in 1958 as a sales and subdivision manager, and she's still selling his houses today. Interest in the properties—which typically employ floor-to-ceiling windows and an atrium to blend the line between indoors and out—has grown so much over the past few years that she says it's rare to have more than one on the market at a time.

Sarasota, Florida

Martie Lieberman / Coldwell Banker

www.modernsarasota.com

Tel: (941) 724-1118

The mod market: \$450,000 to \$3 million

Martie Lieberman says she became a Realtor for two reasons. The first was to get her city's architecture into the hands of people who can preserve it, and the second was to make a living—but Lieberman still donates half her income to the Sarasota Architectural Foundation, a nonprofit education group. "What I've learned is that if you bring people into these spaces, they really learn about them, and if one is threatened, they really come to save them."

Seattle, Washington

Tom Holst / Western Associates Real Estate

www.seattlemodern.com

Tel: (206) 841-0003

Richard Corff / 360°Modern

www.360modern.com

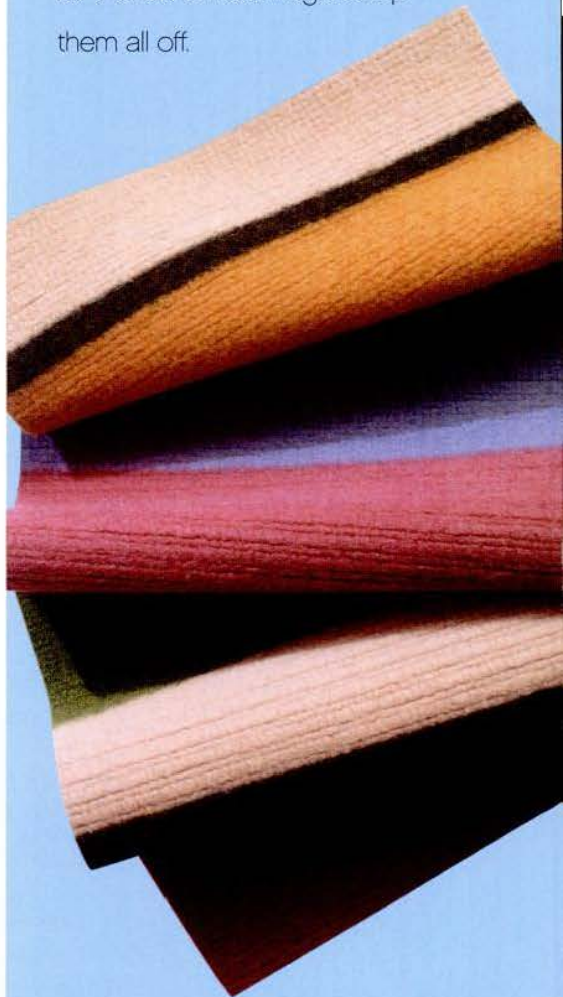
Tel: (425) 941-8113

The mod market: \$250,000 to \$25 million

About the only good things to come out of economic recessions are places like Seattle. The city's succession of downturns left many of the unique Northwest Regional Modernist neighborhoods untouched while the real estate market recovered, a situation that's changed only recently. "Our biggest problem right now is demolition," says Richard Corff. But that's something both he and Tom Holst hope to remedy by getting the masses of young professionals looking for modernist architecture into homes they'll appreciate and preserve.

EXPO INTRODUCES MISSONI

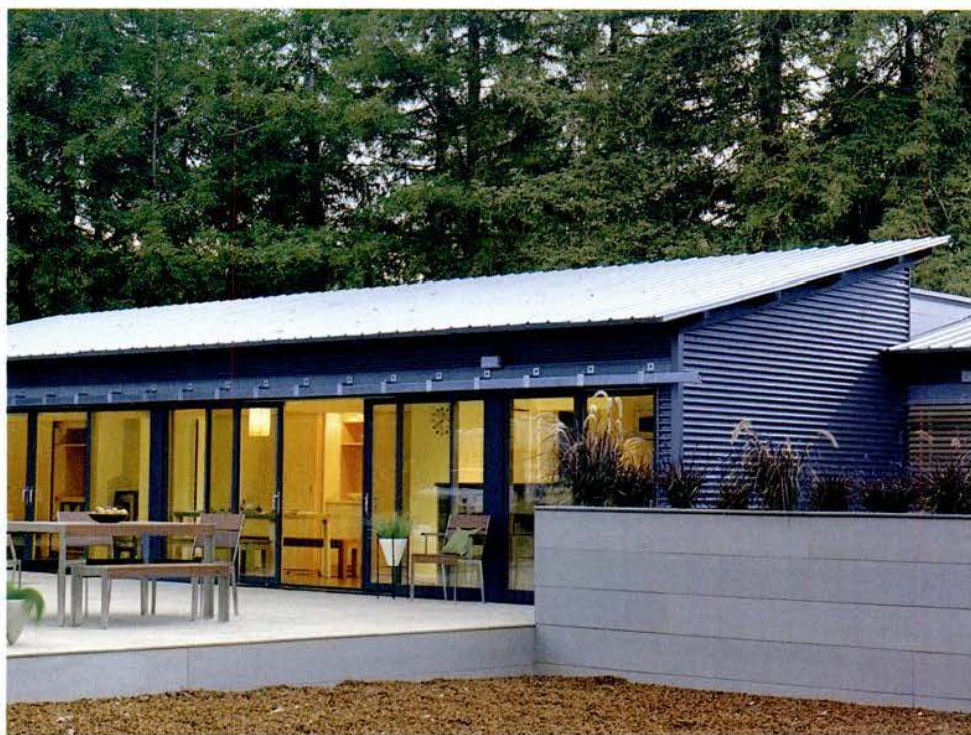
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Architect Michelle Kaufmann designed the Glidehouse as an aesthetic and economic alternative to the existing housing stock in her area.



So, You're Thinking of Building a House from the Ground Up

If renovating is an exercise in correcting the mistakes of others, building from scratch offers the chance to make several of your own. No wonder the prospect can be paralyzing—how to corral so many aesthetic choices into a coherent whole, without incurring pangs of builder's remorse (closets too small, floors too dark, lighting too harsh)? And then there's the cost. Not much has changed since Galsworthy's *The Forsyte Saga*, set in the 1880s, in which the brooding genius architect Bosinney pours his heart and soul into creating a beautifully spare and original home for a man of property—who promptly sues when the project goes over budget. While there are interactive programs that can assist with predicting budgets (see *Sourcing*, p. 190), there's really no replacement for having a good rapport with your architect and contractor—although a winning lottery ticket never hurt.

Michelle Kaufmann / The Glidehouse, Novato, California

Demoralized by the search for an affordable house in San Francisco, architect Michelle Kaufmann and her builder husband, Kevin Cullen, found a lot outside the city and built their dream home instead—a graceful, light-filled bungalow with Japanese and Eichler influences. “It was easier to buy a lot for \$200,000 and get approved for a construction loan through IndyMac than to get the money to buy a house outright,” explains Kaufmann. Having experienced the building process from both sides now, Kaufmann shares a few of her insights.

Audition several architects. “At least three—and call for references. This is an intense relationship—more like dating—and if it goes sour it can be very traumatic for both sides. I would say the rapport is just as important as the aesthetics, although you should bring pictures of houses you like, to see if you share a common language.”

Invest more time up front, even if it costs a bit more. “I learned from working with Frank Gehry that there's a lot to be said for making tons of really big, detailed models. Some people understand drawings well, but for many, renderings don't translate

to an actual living space until the house is already half built. And it's never cost-effective to work things out during construction.”

Pad your budget expectations. “You should probably expect to go 10 to 20 percent over budget, especially in urban areas. In our case, the fire marshal informed us that as the end lot, we were responsible for the fire truck turnaround—there went \$80,000. And after we did our budget, the price of steel went through the roof. But the biggest issue is clients changing their minds—change orders kill the budget. It may start small—moving the door four inches, picking a higher-end fixture or tile—but it always snowballs.”

Consider hiring a construction manager. “Even adding 10 percent to the budget, it can pay for itself to have an advocate show up at the weekly meetings and act on your behalf—kind of like a building coach! If that's not possible, then try to attend the meetings yourself. It can be deadly, but will definitely cut down on some of the more shocking surprises.”

Go prefab! “Our house has become the prototype for a customizable modular home, of which 36 are now in process—one couple even moved into their Glidehouse before ▶

Nickel Creek Why Should the Fire Die?

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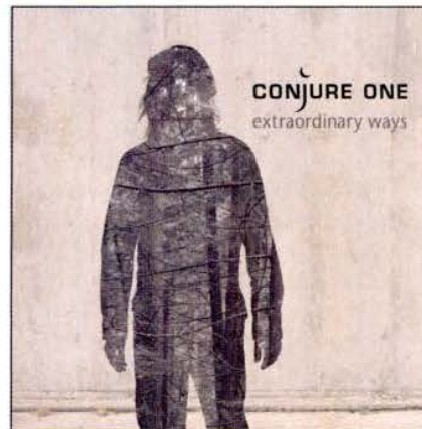


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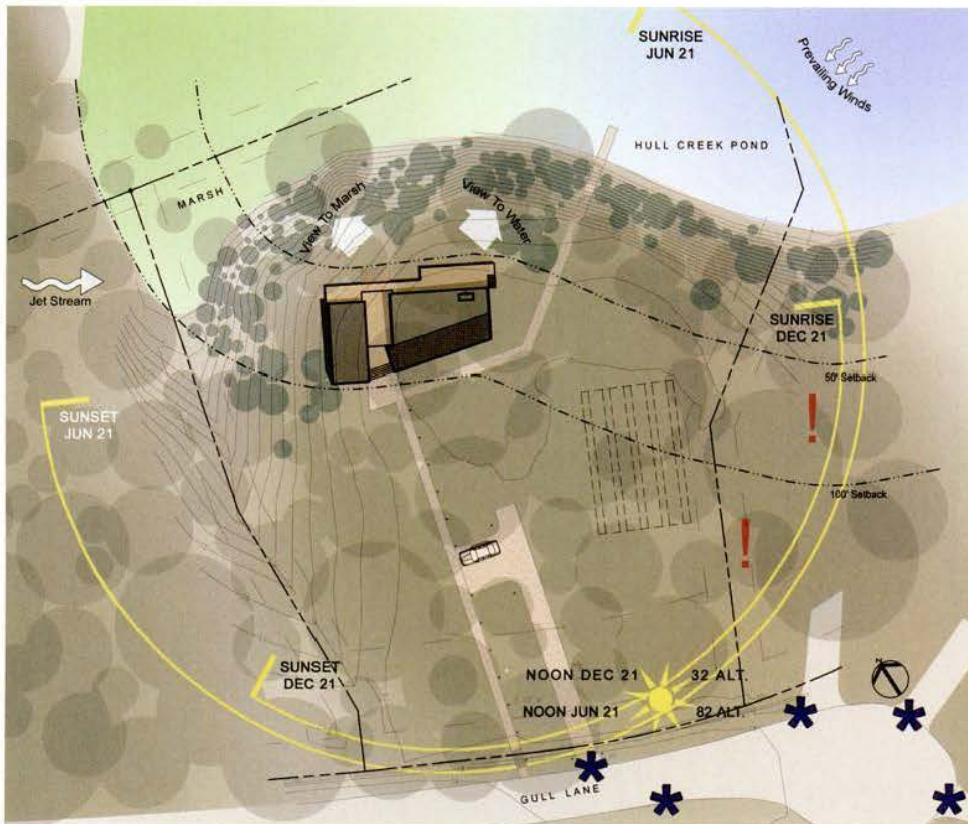
After years of working as part of the highly successful group Delerium, and producing artists such as Josh Groban, Rhys Fulber turns inwardly for his most personal project to date.

Fulber's second album, EXTRAORDINARY WAYS
A mix of electronic and acoustic texture, atmospheric soundscapes,
haunting melodies and reflective lyrics.



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The Clean Water Cottage by Inscape Studio takes careful account of all the particularities of its building site. Lessening the home's environmental impact was a top priority.



ours was finished. It takes 24 days in the factory, and at \$130 a square foot (plus shipping, foundation, and site work) works out to about two-thirds the cost of the site-built version. This also cuts out a lot of the classic construction conflicts, because you can tour a life-size model to get an actual sense of how the space feels, and a lot of the choices about finishes, materials, and so forth are narrowed down." (For information, see www.glidehouse.com.)

Rick Harlan Schneider (Inscape Studio) / Clean Water Cottage, Northern Neck, Virginia
Rick Harlan Schneider, principal of a design firm known for its environmental sensitivity, collaborated with project architects Greg Dumont and Petros Zouzoulas on the Clean Water Cottage to "embrace" rather than trample on its surroundings. The dwelling, which is nestled among trees and overlooks an estuarial creek that empties into the nearby Potomac, sits on piers to maximize air flow and minimize impact. It features sustainably harvested cedar siding, passive heating and cooling, and Energy Star windows and appliances, and has a butterfly roof to catch rainwater for all potable and nonpotable needs. In order to best marry the

needs of people to those of the landscape, Schneider makes note of everything from his clients' childhood memories to the dappled patterns of the trees before putting pencil to paper. Here are a few of his thoughts about keeping things in balance.

Do no (or little) harm. "Most of the houses in this waterfront development replicate the usual suburban model: Remove trees, plant lawns, build garages. But what's the point of destroying the very thing that attracted you? The name 'Clean Water' reflects our desire to not muddy the waters. This is a fragile, estuarial ecosystem and we didn't want to remove a lot of earth (hence the piers) or increase runoff with an impermeable asphalt drive—we used gravel. The walk from the parking area to the house puts you into nature rather than shutting it out. And the light-colored roof helps cut down on the 'heat island' effect so common in cities."

Work with nature. "We look for ways to graft ourselves onto the natural cycles, to make houses that are both comfortable and energy-efficient—kind of like a hybrid. Big windows provide natural light and passive solar gain during cooler months, and the concrete floor acts as a thermal mass that radiates heat up to the master bedroom. In

summer, the tree canopy cools things down, aided by fans and cross-ventilation and the sloping ceilings that help pull warm air up and out. On extreme days, radiant heating and air-conditioning offer extra support."

Get dirty. "Before we think about design, we tromp all over the site to get a sense of its location, climate, vegetation, geology, and the relationships between the trees, creeks, sunlight, ground litter, and so forth. Documenting the site, we found several trees that weren't included on the civil survey, and we were able to save five of them just by moving the house ten feet."

Talk. "We start by drawing stories out of our clients. People bring all kinds of memories to a place, and it has an impact on whether they will feel happy there. Investing time up front can alleviate the kinds of problems that are hard to put your finger on down the road. This client talked about his childhood home, and the hours he spent building model planes with his dad in a workshop that was separate but not isolated from the house. Now he builds ultralights, and we realized that he still kind of yearns for that kind of space, and we designed it into the house."



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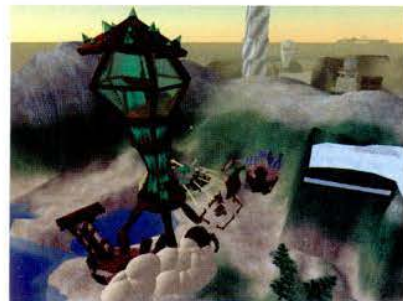
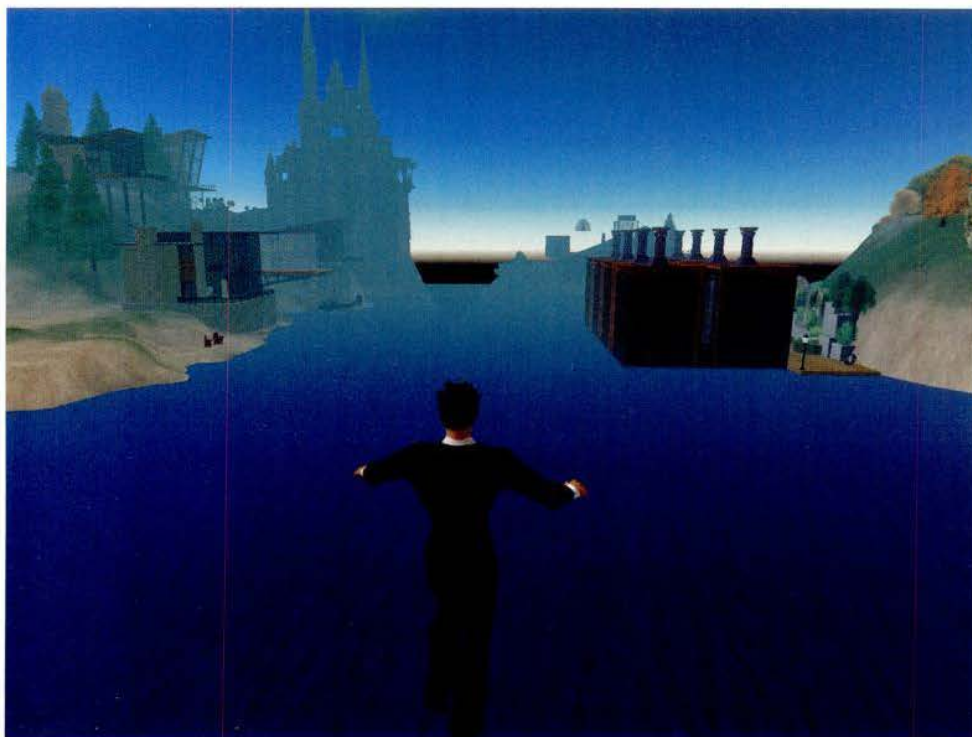
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“To design a virtual world is perhaps the greatest act of creative imagination there can be. The possibilities are limitless.”



At left: Virtual designer Troy Vogel navigates a world of his own devising. Above and below: Virtual worlds created within the context of *Second Life* and *Project Entropia*, respectively.



Unreal Estate: Building a Dream Home on the Digital Frontier

Troy Vogel is having an open house. I meet him at the art gallery he conceived as a venue for his own paintings and sculptures to tour the space and the artworks on display. Vogel's Gallery V is an airy, rectangular atrium built on a grand industrial scale with shimmering red metallic walls and a ceiling made almost entirely of glass. Dressed in a tuxedo, Vogel shows me around the gallery, which he designed and built himself in October 2004. Immense canvases hang from the walls, depicting Cubist abstractions of Manhattan neighborhoods with titles like *Upper East Side* and *Hell's Kitchen*. Vogel's collection also includes an elaborate scale reproduction of the World Trade Center and a three-dimensional timepiece with a floating pointer inspired by the clock on the Musée d'Orsay in Paris.

Despite my best efforts, I'm having trouble keeping up with the tour. Vogel has vanished; he's gone up to the roof, which, though

transparent on the inside is, according to Vogel, an eye-catching solid metallic red when viewed from above. I can't wait to see it, but there's one tiny problem: I haven't yet mastered the art of flight.

Most of the people who design buildings in *Second Life*, a 3-D digital world hosted by San Francisco-based developer Linden Lab, don't bother with silly things like stairs or elevators. Because all of the online environment's inhabitants—the avatars (or online graphical personae) of the 20,000-plus real human beings who each pay Linden Lab a one-time \$9.95 fee to join *Second Life* (plus a monthly rental rate if they choose to own land)—can fly. As a result, some buildings aren't even located on solid ground: One popular nightclub is a bubble-shaped construction suspended some 200 meters up in the cyber ether. Thankfully, for motor-skill-challenged neophytes like me, flying isn't the only way to explore the architectural wonders of *Second Life*. After watching me flail about like a baby bird for several minutes, Vogel, the nom de plume of 31-year-old Austin, Texas, computer programmer Emin Sağlamer, obligingly whisks me up to the roof via *Second Life's* teleporting service.

Second Life's beta release trial began in November 2002, and the game was released commercially in June 2003. (Linden Lab, the parent company, was founded in 1999.) The software is part of the booming massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) community. MMORPGs are computer-based role-playing games (RPGs) that enable thousands of players to interact simultaneously in an evolving virtual world over the Internet. The roots of *Second Life*, along with other popular games like Sony Online Entertainment's *EverQuest*, Forterra Systems' *There.com*, MindArk's *Project Entropia*, and Electronic Arts' *The Sims Online*, can be traced back to the nongraphical, text-based computer games of the 1970s, as well as pen-and-paper role-playing games like *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Thanks to technological advances in graphics, processing speeds, and bandwidth, as well as changes in Internet pricing models from per-minute usage fees to flat-rate subscriptions, today's MMORPGs attract hundreds of thousands of users, many of whom spend upwards of 20 hours per week in their chosen virtual environment. “For a while, *Second Life* was competing with my real life,” says Sağlamer, who on occasion ▶

Prefab Now

Conference and Home Tours

Presented by Dwell and the Hammer Museum

Friday, October 28–Sunday, October 30, 2005

Hammer Museum

Los Angeles, CA

Dwell and the Hammer Museum are bringing together a distinguished group of prefab experts for a three-day exploration of the groundbreaking ideas, opportunities, and challenges of prefab. The event will include an opening night cocktail party at Jean Prouvé's prefab masterpiece, Tropical House; a full day of fascinating lectures on prefab's past, present, and future; and an exclusive tour of L.A.'s most noteworthy modern prefab homes.

Weekend Overview:

Friday, October 28

Opening Party at Jean Prouvé's Tropical House
Hammer Museum Courtyard
Cocktails & Light Hors d'oeuvres

Saturday, October 29

Continental Breakfast at Hammer
Presentations & Panel Discussions
(see list of participants below)
Boxed lunch
Cocktails & Light Hors d'oeuvres

Sunday, October 30

Private Home Tours of L.A.-Area Prefab Houses
(shuttle service provided to and from the Hammer Museum)
Potential Manufacturer / Prefab House Tour
Palm Springs tba

Participants-to-Date:

Introduction and Overview:

Allison Arieff, Editor-in-Chief, Dwell, author, *Prefab*
Shigeru Ban (to be confirmed)
Robert Rubin on Jean Prouvé's Tropical House
Alastair Gordon on the Leisurama Homes
Jay Baldwin on R. Buckminster Fuller
Michelle Kaufmann on the Glidehouse and Breezehouse
Charlie Lazor on the FlatPak house
Leo Marmol on desert prefab
Lloyd Alter on prefab manufacturing
Jennifer Siegal on mobile design
Wes Jones on shipping container architecture
Joseph Tanney on the Dwell Home

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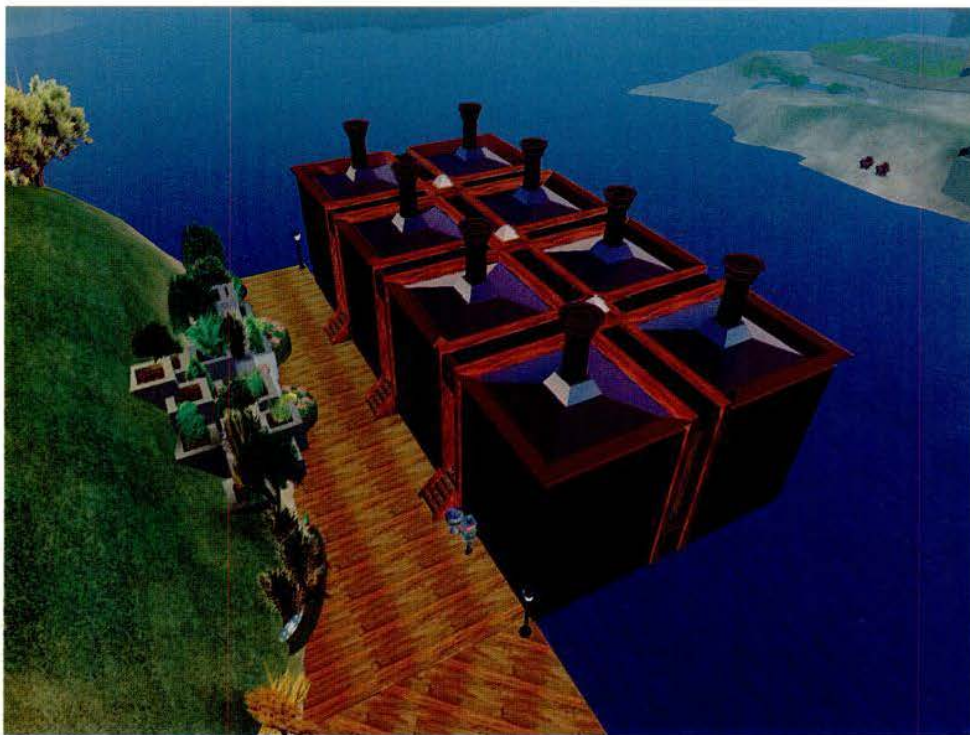
Questions?

Email prefab@dwellmag.com
Feel free to send questions for participants to address during Prefab Now.

Presented by:



“Although there are incredible experiments in architecture out there, the most common thing you see is the big lakeside house with the huge patio.”



With real estate so far out of reach for many, the online world offers a virtual alternative, complete with speculation, appreciation, and land grabs. The three views here are of Troy Vogel's online empire.



feels like he works two jobs: that of a programmer in Texas and of a gallerist in *Second Life*.

Time isn't the only resource being invested in games like *Second Life*; players are also shelling out increasingly large sums of money to explore the digital frontier. For years, players of competitive games like *EverQuest* and *Ultima Online* have bought and sold everything from magic powers to weaponry to help them increase their power and status within the game. With the surge in popularity of more social environments such as *There.com* and *Second Life*, where the goal has less to do with defeating one's enemies than creating a community, players are spending money in other ways, buying and selling everything from designer T-shirts to mining rights. Linking virtual currencies such as "Linden Dollars" and "Therebucks" to real-world currencies facilitates trade—for example, 1,800 Therebucks is equivalent to one U.S. dollar. Despite the fact that some companies, such as Sony, forbid the buying and selling of virtual goods with real money, the market is thriving. According to Edward Castronova, an associate professor of telecommunications at Indiana University who specializes in studying the economies

of virtual worlds, the secondary market for virtual goods stands at close to \$100 million per year globally.

In response to the needs of these growing communities and economies, game developers have gradually begun to allow players to buy or rent land as well as build on it. The virtual real estate market is proving to be a big source for potential revenue generation. According to Philip Rosedale, founder and CEO of Linden Lab, the biggest earners in *Second Life* are "land speculators"—or virtual real estate agents. Houses in *There.com* have sold for as much as \$750. Meanwhile, last December, a 22-year-old Australian gamer paid \$26,500 for an island in *Project Entropia*, the biggest expenditure of real-world cash on any single item in an MMORPG. While this seems like an exorbitant outlay for something that, from an outsider's perspective, doesn't even exist, the new owner is likely to reap a healthy real-world profit from his virtual investment, both from the sale of lots (there are 60 parcels of land on the island, with an average price of \$500 apiece) and from taxing other players who wish to hunt on or mine the land.

In some virtual worlds, buildings are a means to an end: financial profit, social

prestige, or a place to store or trade goods. In these kinds of games, construction tends to be more utilitarian, with an emphasis on function over form. Players either buy or rent buildings designed by the game developers or customize their own from a limited number of pre-set objects.

In other environments, buildings are an end in themselves. *Second Life*, for instance, contains a vastly eclectic range of buildings, from mock-Tudor villages to aquarium dance clubs. For now, *Second Life* operates a very open platform, architecturally speaking. There are no zoning laws, structures don't have to observe the principles of physics, and users own intellectual property rights to all of the creations they construct using basic building blocks called "primitives" ("prims" for short). "You are only restricted by your imagination," explains Rosedale. That being said, building projects are limited by their size in relation to the amount of land owned and the number of prims used in the construction process. Complex designs can be prim-heavy, so many players economize by designing their buildings in programs like Photoshop and importing flexible, lightweight surface textures rather than building solely with prims. ▶



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BRIZO

Reflection and Renewal: Garden Design at Ground Zero

After nearly two years of deliberations, the World Trade Center Memorial jury selected "Reflecting Absence" by New York architect Michael Arad and Berkeley-based landscape architects Peter Walker and Partners as the most appropriate design to memorialize the events of 9/11. Be among the first to preview their plans with a special exhibit previewing the World Trade Center memorial gardens, titled *Reflection & Renewal: Garden Design at Ground Zero*. The exhibit includes models, drawings, and digital rendering of the site in Lower Manhattan.

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Sophisticated software doesn't necessarily translate into sophisticated design online. Avatars seem to resort to clichéd design tropes, and postmodernism is alive and well in the virtual world.



Today, the majority of people building structures in MMORPGs aren't doing it primarily for financial gain or for pure aesthetic joy. People construct buildings in virtual worlds in order to create a sense of community, to socialize and communicate with other players. "It's not about this being a medium to just create," *Second Lifer* Jauani Wu is quoted in the blog *New World Notes*. "It's that we can share it, too."

In his book *Designing Virtual Worlds*, veteran virtual-world developer Richard Bartle writes, "To design a virtual world is perhaps the greatest act of creative imagination there can be." As MMORPGs move increasingly toward player-generated content, with a tangible commercial value attached to many aspects of that content, the trappings of the real world constantly threaten to compromise the limitless creativity of its virtual counterpart. *There.com*, for instance, has instituted a PG-13 standard for all player-created content in order "to keep things clean," according to senior economy designer Bruce Boston.

Meanwhile, in *Second Life*, players have been voicing concerns about the increased "mall-ification" of the environment. With trade a cornerstone of virtual society, every

object in *Second Life* tagged as a potential item for sale, and buildings springing up everywhere at the click of a mouse, it's only a matter of time before chain stores arrive. Rosedale isn't particularly concerned about the invasion of McDonald's. "There will be some chains," he says. "But in *Second Life* you don't need megastores to achieve economies of scale because of the greatly reduced costs of raw materials. So [there's] no real need to franchise." However, evidence already suggests that *Second Life's* highly creative community is warming up to the idea of one-stop shopping for all its basic needs. *Second Life* already boasts huge malls, and it's probably only a matter of time before big companies set up shop within the virtual realm.

Despite the general openness of the virtual real estate market in terms of design, affordability, and availability, people's aspirations generally remain tied to the real world. It might be easier and cheaper to colonize an island and build a wild dream home on it in an MMORPG than it is in reality, but the desires of virtual communities are often solidly rooted in reality. "I've always wanted to live in a place like San Diego," says Paul, a 39-year-old Web,

database, and applications developer whose *Second Life* avatar is a waterfront-property owner named Paolo Portocarrero. "This is my chance to pretend I live in a warm, semi-arid landscape near water."

For every diamond-encrusted synagogue or chocolate giraffe-shaped cottage out there in cyberspace, there are at least a hundred realistic-looking homes. "Although there are incredible experiments in architecture out there, the most common thing you see is the big lakeside house with the huge patio," says Rosedale. This phenomenon isn't all that surprising when you consider the fact that the incorporation of commonplace objects that mimic reality is important for creating a sense of immersion in any virtual world. Nick Yee, a Stanford University-based researcher specializing in the study of the psychological and sociological aspects of virtual worlds, goes further by drawing a parallel between architectural trends and the prevalence of role-playing in virtual worlds. "One might imagine that most people would want to try out new personalities and role-play to explore new identities," said Yee. "But when people are given the opportunity to re-create and redefine, they simply choose to cling on to what they are used to." ■

San Francisco Living: AIA San Francisco Home Tours Weekend



Regan Bice Architects—Crumpacker Residence

AIA San Francisco's popular home tours program offers design enthusiasts an inside look into distinctive modern residences in San Francisco. Showcased projects will range from state-of-the-art single-family residences to newly completed lofts in Twin Peaks, Noe Valley, Potrero Hill, and the Marina District. Don't miss exceptional examples of prefab housing on display at the Home Tours Headquarters.

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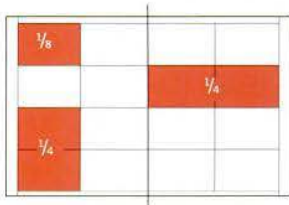
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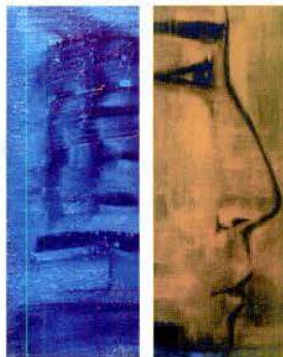
Shown: *Village by the Sea*
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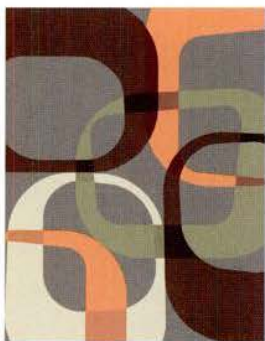


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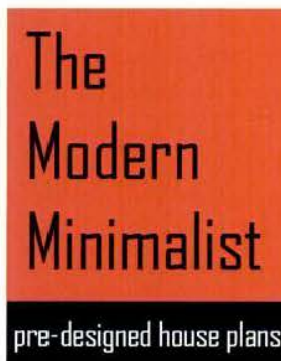
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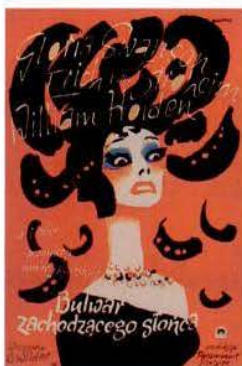
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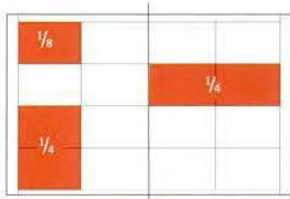
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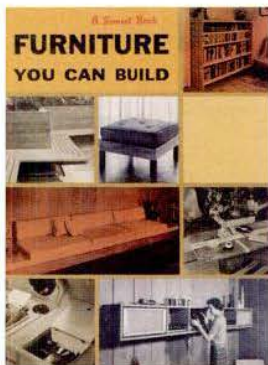


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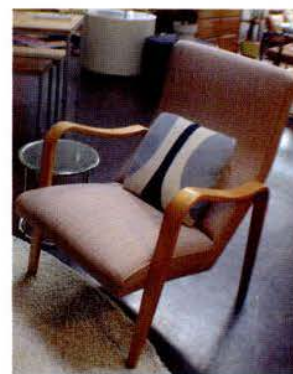
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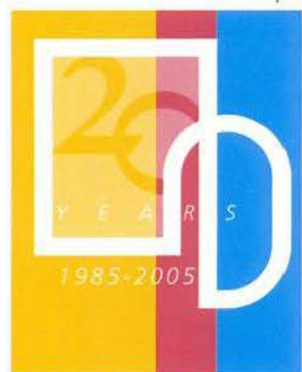
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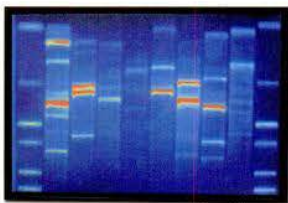
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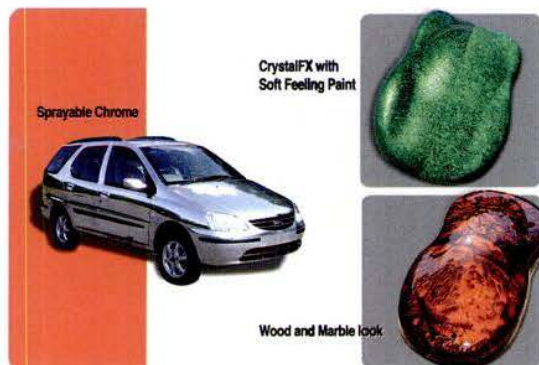
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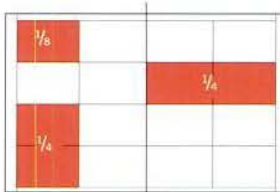


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"A New Beginning," by Paul Goldberger in the *New Yorker* (May 30, 2005) www.newyorker.com

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International Contemporary Furniture Fair (ICFF)
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The Informal City
by Alfredo Brillembourg and Hubert Klumpner
(Prestel Publishing, July 2005)
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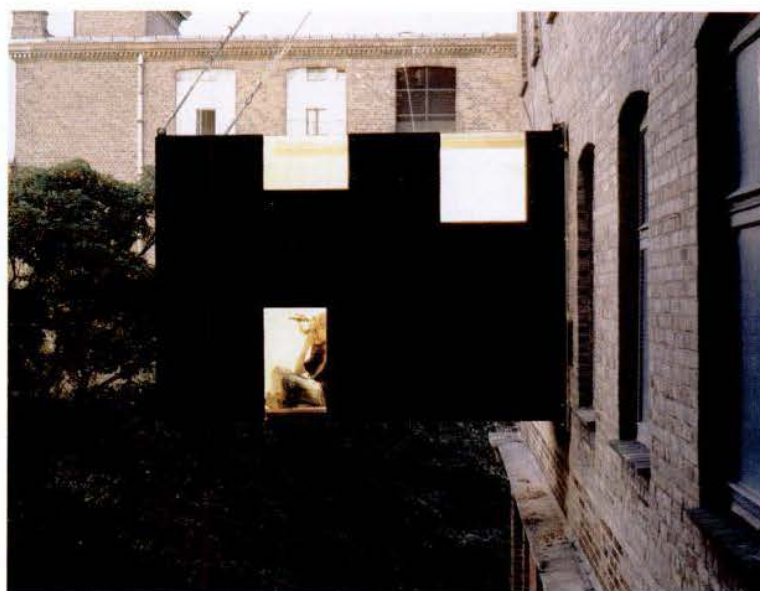
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Suspended Habitation

Stefan Eberstadt was living in a tiny New York apartment when the idea for the Rucksack Haus first hit him: "I imagined a space [outside] of the window—a walk-in space to extend my room."

Rucksack Haus is a portable extension that hangs from steel cables fastened to its host building. Eberstadt, an artist now based in Munich, Germany, worked with engineer Thomas Beck to build the house last fall. "Hanging it was the biggest challenge," Eberstadt says, "but we did it in under a day." He claims the parasitic addition can be suspended from most buildings as long as they are structurally sound. The cables take the weight of the house—just under 1.5 tons—plus the weight of up to ten people, and anchor it to the roof or far side of the host building.

"So many people live in these dark, cave-like apartments with only one window," says Eberstadt. "I wanted the Rucksack Haus to be as open as possible." Although it is a mere 97 square feet, the high ceiling gives it a tremendous feeling of space.

Expounding further on the motivation behind the Rucksack Haus, Eberstadt states that he wants to "irritate" our perception of city streets. He explains that in many of Europe's more formal cities, nothing disrupts the clean building façades, but elsewhere in the world life literally spills into the street. "I want to get a vision started," says Eberstadt, "to make people think about where they live. Can I imagine hundreds of Rucksack Hauses hanging everywhere? Yes, why not?" ■

The spacious feeling of the Rucksack Haus is enhanced by furniture that folds out from the birch-veneered plywood walls. The positions of the retractable bed, table, and stool are determined by the windows, which cut across all the corners and even the floor.



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