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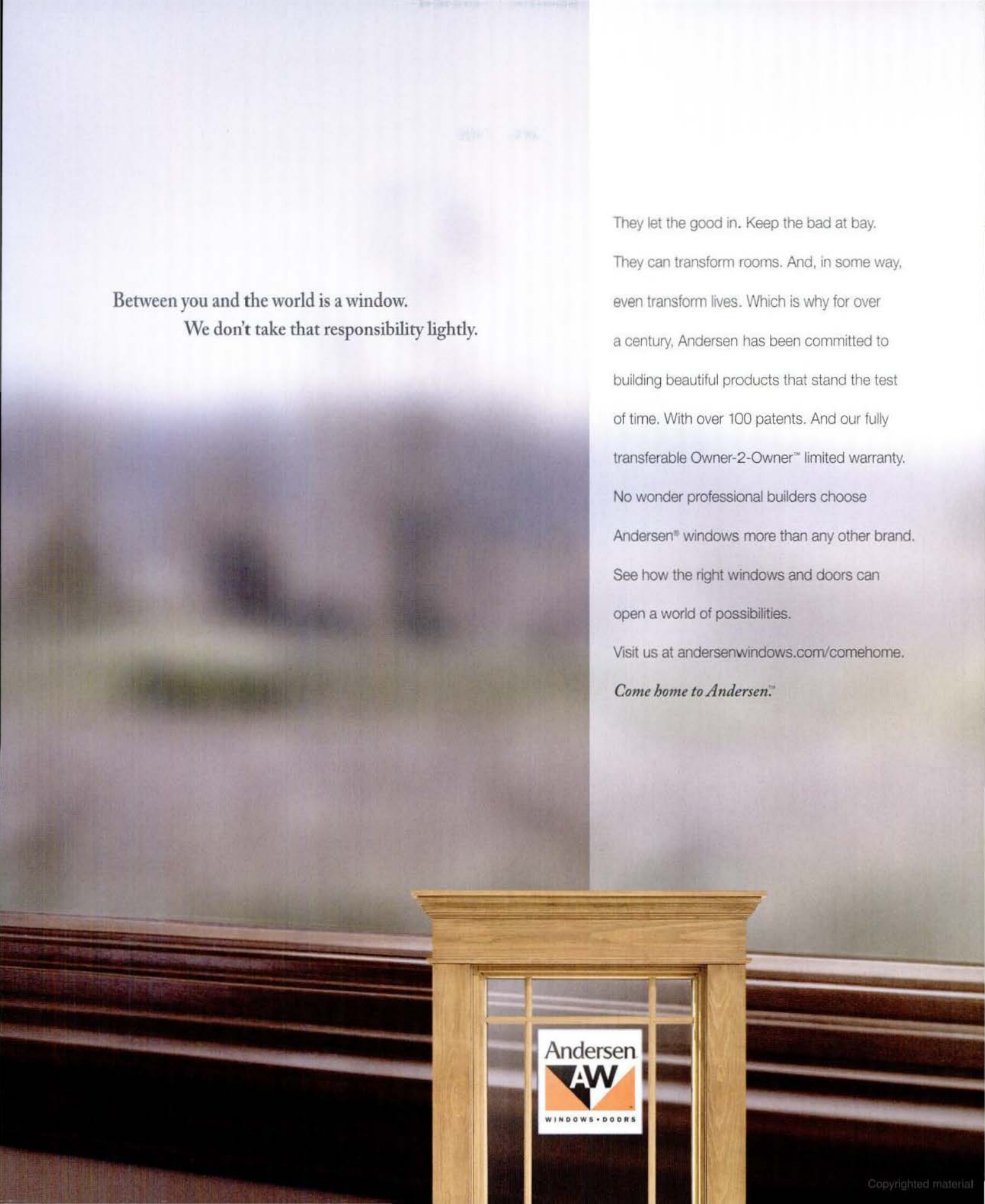

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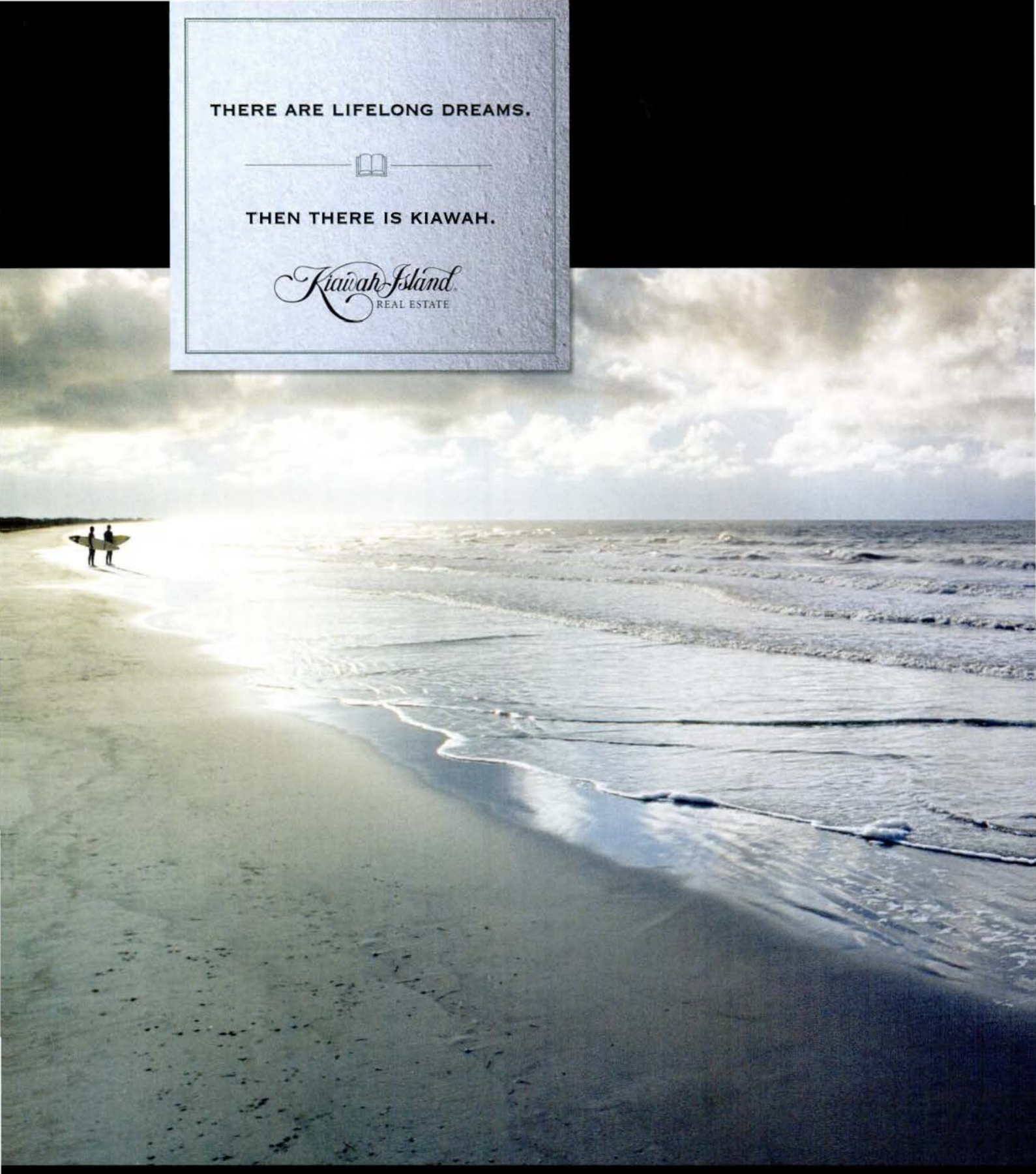

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RADICAL IDEAS IN ARCHITECTURE

July/August 2006

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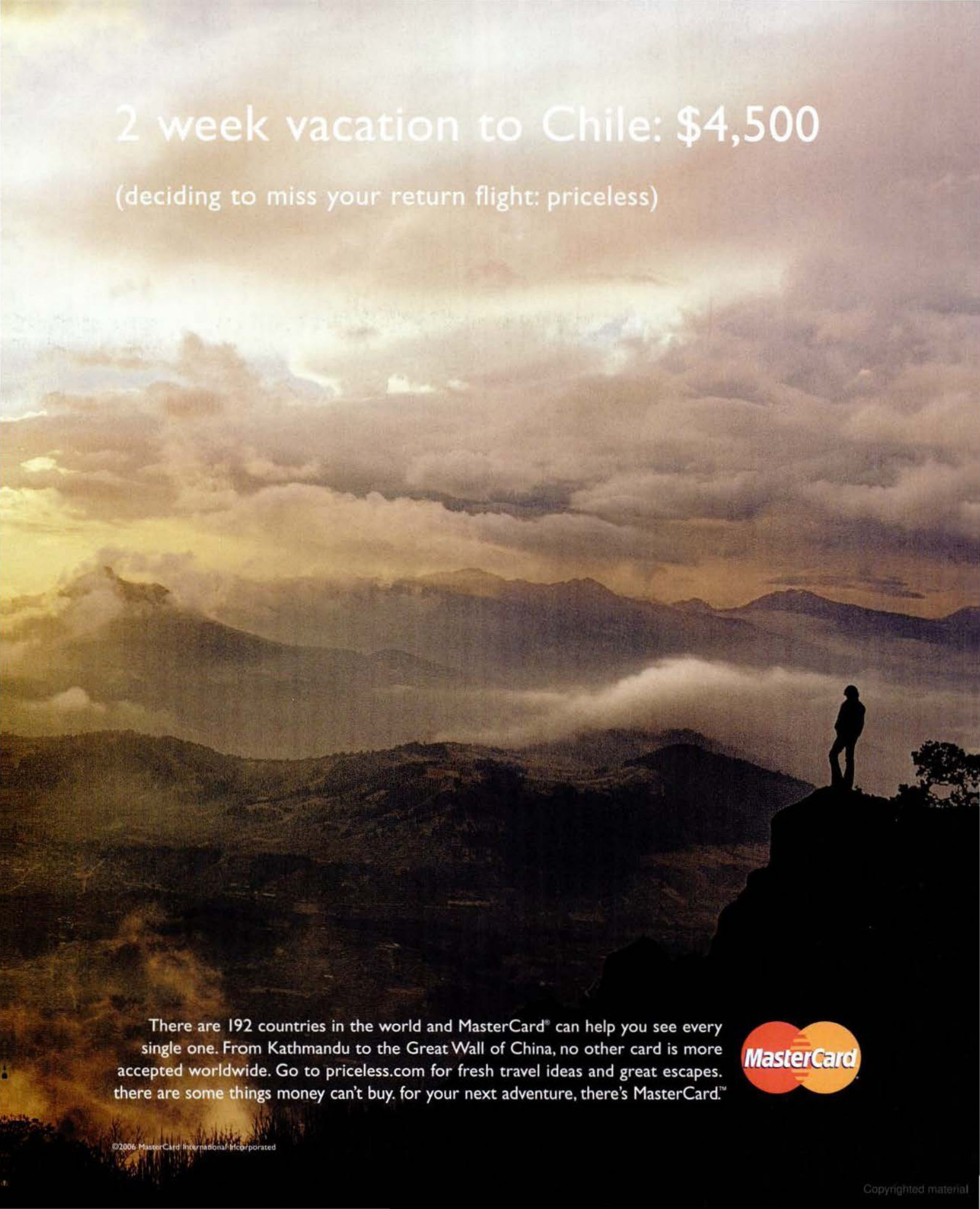
Cover: House of the Century, Ant Farm, page 160
Photo by Doug Michels

Architect: McClellan Architects **Project:** Waterfront Residence



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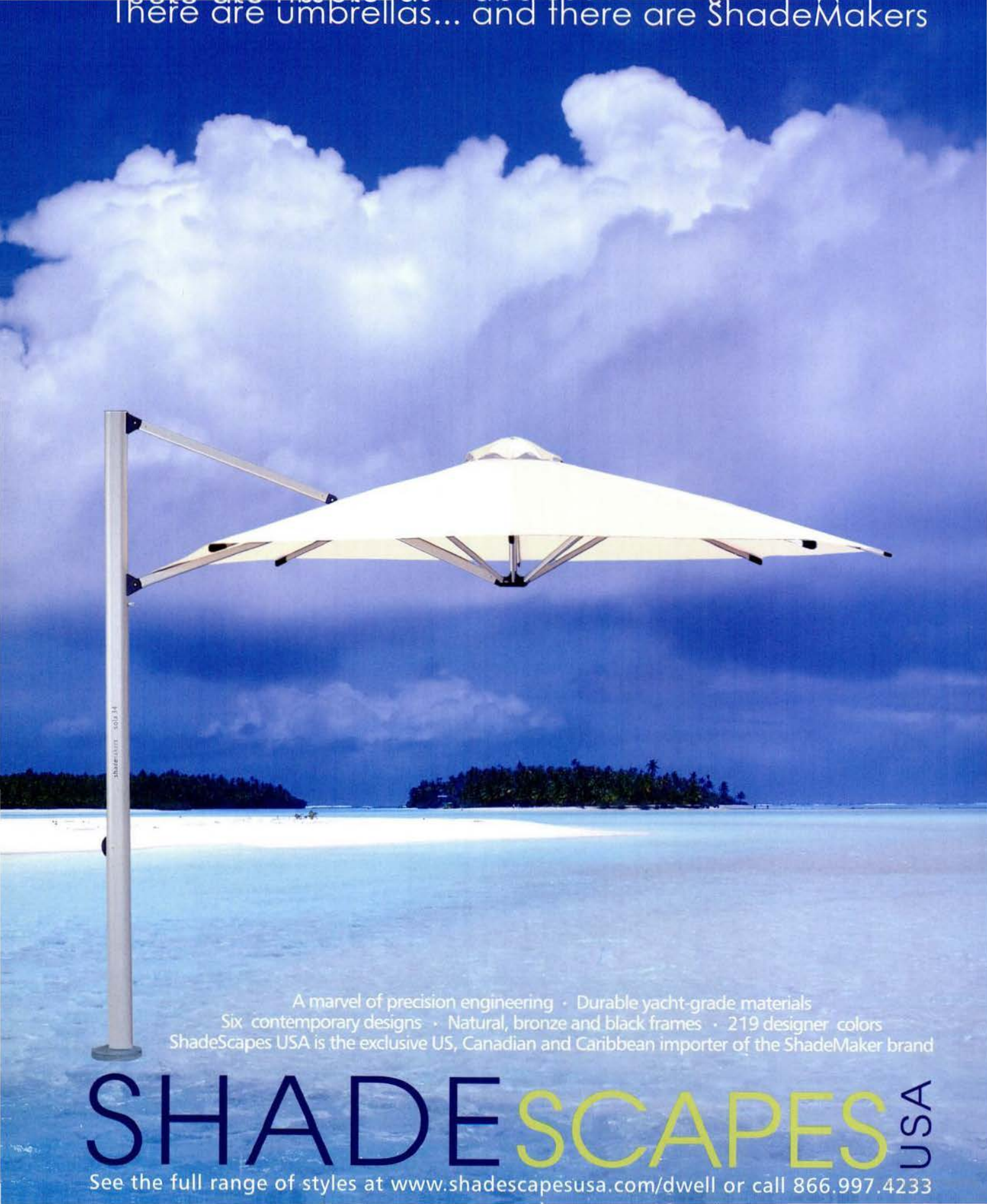

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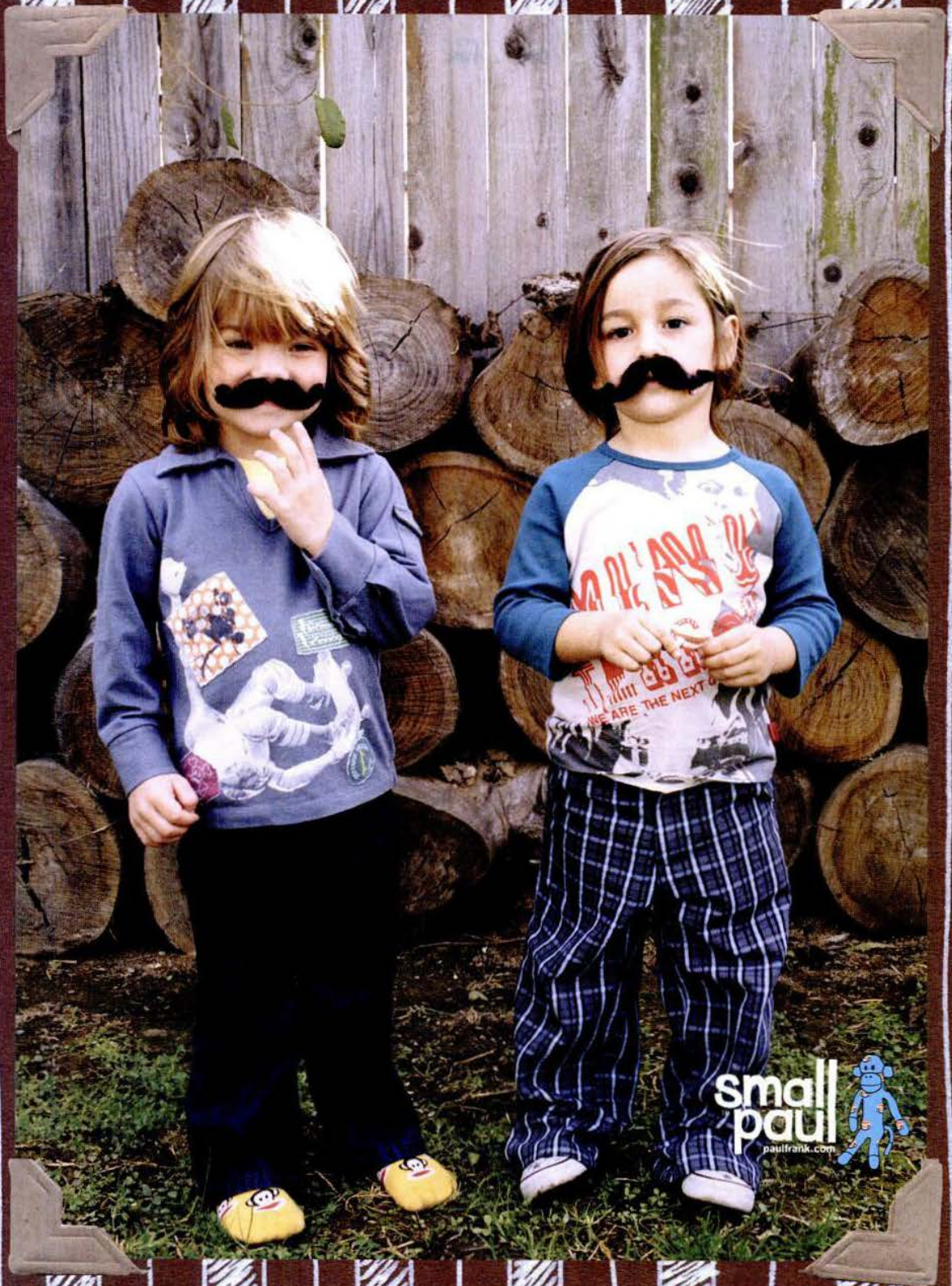
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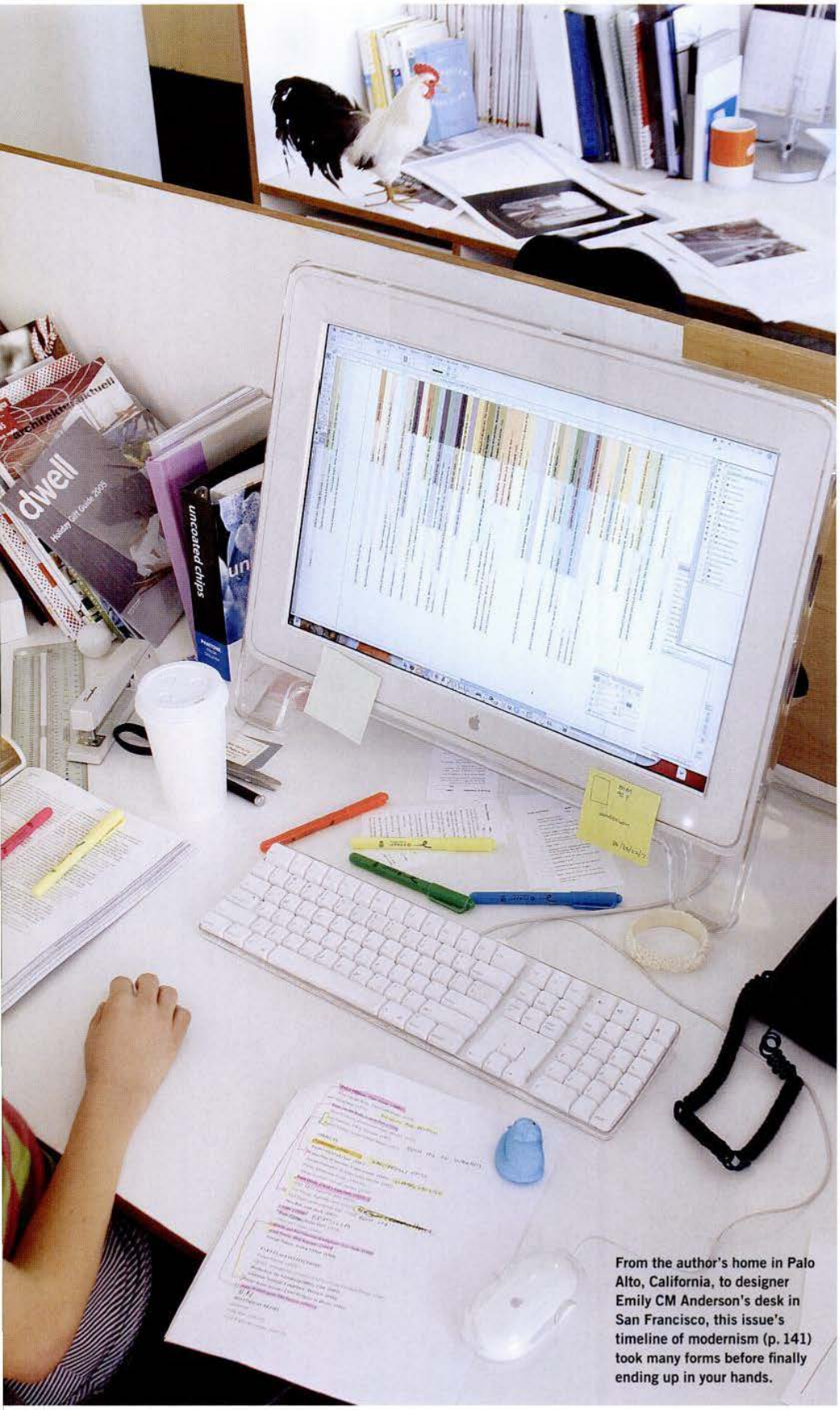

From the author's home in Palo Alto, California, to designer Emily CM Anderson's desk in San Francisco, this issue's timeline of modernism (p. 141) took many forms before finally ending up in your hands.

PHOTO BY AYA BRACKETT

Your May issue was fantastic. As a New Yorker, I appreciated the pieces on apartments rather than zillion-dollar residences in remote luxury locations. Hooray! Something on small offices would be great, too.

It is my hope that someone there can help me with a sourcing problem. There is some kind of material library in New York where designers and architects can check out samples of different materials they might like to work with. Do you know the name or have any contact information?

John Roberts
Brooklyn, New York

Editors' Note: *You must be talking about the excellent New York–based Material Connexion. Check out www.materialconnexion.com for more information.*

In your article on cooktops ("Over the Top," May 2006), the Viking VCCU165-6BSS was described as requiring cast-iron cookware in order to work properly. The truth is that many types of cookware can now be used on induction cooktops, even stainless steel. Traditional 18/10 stainless cookware does not contain enough magnetic material to work with induction. The key is that with current stainless, the manufacturers increase the amount of iron in the cookware in order to make it magnetic. Examples of cookware that is safe for use include Viking Stainless, All-Clad Stainless, Emerilware Stainless, and 212 Stainless or Nonstick (blatant plug here, as I designed it). If you are in doubt about whether or not a cookware is suitable for induction, just bring a magnet along to the store. If the magnet sticks, you're fine.

Adam Marland
Nashville, Tennessee

I read your May cover story, "Big City, Little Loft," with great interest because a friend of mine used to live in that building in an apartment with the same layout. It didn't have a lot of storage space before the renovation, but the fact that you would feature an apartment on your cover that has one closet, thereby suggesting that it's a realistic living situation, is totally absurd. Now that apartments in Manhattan cost an average of $1,000 a square foot, it's important to live sparingly here. But the fact that the homeowner is able to fit all of his clothes, shoes, coats, linens, vacuum, broom, or mop and important papers into one closet does not mean it is a clever design, even if there's blond wood everywhere, a Sub-Zero fridge, and a Viking range. Every apartment sells quickly here, but whoever buys this place is going to have to do some work to find a place for everything. I am ▸

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much more impressed when you feature small apartments that are actually livable, even if they don't let in quite as much light.

Jennifer Jarett
New York, New York

How pleased I was to see an article titled "Art Collecting 101" listed on the cover of your May issue. How disappointed I was to actually read it. In general, your magazine is painfully devoid of showing much serious contemporary art, and while congratulations are due for recognizing this vacuum and attempting to correct it, you missed out on a terrific opportunity. Out of 16 photo images, 10 were from Louise Lawler's work of interpreting how art is displayed. Could you not have done more extensive research and offered your readership a far more diverse perspective of contemporary art?

New York alone has at least 400 bona fide contemporary galleries. I would have been pleased and would have found it appropriate had you been more proactive and exposed your audience to a wider world of contemporary aesthetics. The smallness of the window you depicted was indeed disheartening.

Barbara Baruch
Brooklyn, New York

As an advisor, curator, and consultant, I was pleased, amused, and puzzled by your "Art Collecting 101." No mention at all of professionals who specialize in leading the safari through the jungle of ego, kitsch, and mediocrity—for acquisition, not inquisition.

Proceed with caution, Dwell reader with discretionary income!

Joanna Burke
Venice, California

Thirty years ago I drastically remodeled my Seattle residence, including a stair very similar to the Sartis' ("Halving It All," May 2006). The city inspector wouldn't approve my stair until I had raised the 36-inch railing to 42 inches. I see that Seattle's railing requirements have been significantly reduced since then. Cute, but dangerous, and obviously not child-safe.

Ralph Hueston Kratz
Richmond, California

I'm a Phoenix-based movie critic and an avid reader of Dwell. In the last week, I've seen a couple of new movies that prominently feature modern design in architecture and furniture. The first is the Colombian-produced *La Mujer de mi Hermano*, released domestically by 20th Century Fox and Lions Gate. It's a story of marital infidelity beautifully shot in Santiago, Chile. ▸

Contributors

Frances Anderton ("Space Odyssey" p. 160) is Dwell's Los Angeles editor and host of KCRW's *DnA: Design and Architecture* radio show. During her '60s and '70s childhood in hippie Bath, England, she developed a taste for inflatables, pop art, and experimental environments that made the writing of this piece a guilty pleasure.

Fred A. Bernstein ("Hueless," p. 186), who writes about his ambivalent relationship with color for this issue, attended New York's Jericho High School (yellow and blue). He then studied architecture at Princeton (orange and black) and law at NYU (violet), and writes about both subjects. His work appears in the *New York Times* and many other publications.

Deborah Bishop ("Barely There," p. 81), a Dwell contributing editor, isn't sure she'd react as sanguinely to an uninvited bear as architect Herb Enns and his family, who head to their hand-built pavilions on a wild and remote island in Canada every summer. "Still," she says, "I hope to take them up on their kind offer to visit, despite the fact that 'outdoorsy' is perhaps the last word that many would use to describe me."

Aaron Britt ("Miami Advice," p. 108) works in Washington, D.C., as a freelance writer and as the researcher and reporter for the *New York Times Magazine*'s "On Language" column. He was eager to get out of the gloomy capital for a visit to Miami, a trip that made his yen to appear on *The Amazing Race* all the stronger.

Anita Calero ("A Little Light Reading," p. 88) is a New York–based photographer who originally hails from Cali, Columbia. When shooting this month's Dwell Reports, she couldn't help but think back to days past, when reading was done by candlelight. "That warm feeling that candlelight provides is so nice and always reminds me what it's like to get lost in book."

Thomas S. Hines ("Knowing Neutra," p. 148) is a professor of history and architecture at UCLA, where he teaches cultural, urban, and architectural history. His books include *Richard Neutra and the Search for Modern Architecture* and *Irving Gill and the Architecture of Reform*. His article in this issue was inspired by living in two of Neutra's garden apartments in Westwood.

Barry Katz ("Mapping Modernism," p. 141) teaches courses in the history of design at California College of the Arts and Stanford. He likes to take his history in 5,000-year gulps, so he figured that thinking about a timeline for modernism would only take him a few moments. He was wrong.

John King ("Columbus Explored," p. 170) is the urban-design critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*. He first encountered Columbus, Indiana, in the 1980s—that gaudy postmodern era when the precise simplicity of buildings such as Eero Saarinen's Irwin Union Bank looked hopelessly plain.

Marc Kristal ("Tracing an ARC," p. 98), Dwell's New York contributing editor, heard about the Atelier de Recherche et de Création from furniture dealer Suzanne Demisch and could scarcely believe his ears—the French government had been commissioning cutting-edge design work for 42 years? Kristal wanted to know more—and uncovered a unique history of creative collaboration between the arts and the state.

Catherine Ledner ("Knowing Neutra," p. 148) is a photographer living and working in Los Angeles. For this month's issue, she photographed four Neutra buildings in West Los Angeles. "I was greatly inspired by the pristine architectural lines and utilitarian message behind them. I think Neutra would be happy to know there are people living in his apartment community who continue to be inspired by his design for living. Not many TVs here. Simple living. It felt good to be there."

Tim McKeough ("A House Grows in Brooklyn," p. 69) is a New York–based writer. Although he and his wife currently live in a one-bedroom apartment in Manhattan, talking to Darcy Miro and Lars Weiss about their hands-on approach to building their Brooklyn townhouse, which maximizes the space offered by a narrow lot, has given him some big ideas.

Jennifer Roberts ("Dwell Labs" p. 136) is a San Francisco–based freelance writer and the author of *Good Green Kitchens, Redux*, and *Good Green Homes*. Researching eco-friendly cleaning products prompted her to toss out some of the products she had been using for years. "Most companies don't disclose all the ingredients in their cleaning products," she says. "From now on I'm only supporting those companies that do."

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The second film is the disturbing two-character drama *Hard Candy*, also distributed by Lions Gate, who this time last year had on their hands a little something called *Crash*. Though the story in *Hard Candy* is certainly an acquired taste, the photography and the modern look are worth recommending.

Colin Boyd
Phoenix, Arizona

Editors' Note: *Thanks for the tip! We are always on the lookout for good design wherever one may find it.*

The article on Malcolm Wells ("Notes from the Underground," April 2006) was really fascinating. I'm no architecture aficionado, but I am very interested in the location of the Hess house mentioned in the article. I used to live near a similar house as a child, and I'm wondering if there is any significance to the "underground" beach dwelling.

Mark Wright
Atlanta, Georgia

Editors' Note: *To learn more about underground architecture, check out Malcolm Wells's website, www.malcolmwells.com.*

In the last year or so, when I have visited my daughter and son-in-law in Boston, I have found such pleasure in reading your magazine, to which my daughter subscribes. I couldn't justify subscribing myself, I rationalized; I can barely find time to get through the magazines to which I already subscribe.

However, I have increasingly been impressed with your growing promotion of sustainability. The December/January 2006 issue ("Green Is Good") has made it impossible to resist the call to subscribe any longer. I have ordered that back issue and will be subscribing immediately. One question: How can I get in touch with Portland's ReBuilding Center ("Re: Building Community," December/January 2006)? Living in New Jersey, I know there is a crying need for such an operation here—and an abundance of supply what with all the constant upgrading of perfectly fine kitchens, bathrooms, etc.

Linda M. Clark
West Orange, New Jersey

Editors' Note: *Your best bet for getting in touch with the ReBuilding Center would be to give them a call at (503) 331-1877, or check out their website at www.rebuildingcenter.org.*

While you gave a generous nod toward the designed landscape ("Landscape Architecture 101," April 2006), the gesture pointed to what seems to me to be the more pervasive truth: The relationship between modern architecture and modern landscape architecture is not as easy as it might—and perhaps should—be. A glance through the pages of Dwell will show that the most photographed setting for modern homes is not the garden, but wild nature. For us landscape designers, this is troubling, not least because in the natural setting these buildings look so good! It's hard to imagine a planted setting looking nearly as good and, sad to say, this is also borne out in the photographs. It is rare to see a new landscape and a new house that work together. What comes to mind are the endless ranks of phormiums or worse, a sad little row of purple fountain grass photographed in the wrong season. I think what works about the "house-in-the-woods" pictures is that the wild, mature, irregularity of nature makes a perfect foil for the architecture.

Despite this, it is not often that you see a modern landscape designer who will appropriate the strategy and use irregularity of plant forms ▸

as a juxtaposition against regularity of building forms. More often, the modern landscape designer will use the same modus operandus as the architect and try to bend nature to geometry by using repetition, by planting in rows, by training, by pruning, or by eliminating plant material altogether. The exterior becomes an extension of the interior aesthetic—regular and clean. But not always so interesting.

Robin White
San Francisco, California

Thank you for the informative article about St. Louis architect Harris Armstrong ("The Spirit of St. Louis," April 2006), who designed our former home in Creve Coeur, Missouri. We were pleased that attention was finally being paid to one of the three important modernist architects practicing in St. Louis during the mid-20th century (the two others being William Bernoudy and Isador Shank). But we were also saddened to learn how the new owners of our former home had irrevocably changed what we had labored for three years to preserve, namely, the design and spirit of a Usonian-style house that had been so perfectly positioned in its natural landscape.

When we sold the house, we accepted at face value the new owners' praise of our work and delight in the home, and thought we were leaving the property in good hands. In hindsight, we should have attached a preservation covenant to the contract of sale, which would have protected the property from subsequent unsympathetic owners. For more information on preservation covenants, Dwell readers can contact the National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.nthp.org), which helps to preserve the architectural history and fabric of this country.

We are happy to report that we are now at work updating a circa-1960 home in the thriving city of Providence. We continue to look forward to Dwell arriving every month with ideas for living happily in the modern era.

Anne Bergeron and Steve Wellmeier
Providence, Rhode Island

It was good to see your coverage of some of the work of the late Harris Armstrong. I had to laugh when I saw him described as a "fop"! If there was anything Harris was not, he was not "a man excessively concerned with clothes or fashion" (*Collins Dictionary*). He was, however, highly concerned with design, and had the historic distinction of being the first so-called modern architectural designer in St. Louis and the central Midwest.

Harris was a singularly protean designer; several of his most memorable works are pure American colonial residences, right down to cypress wood floors, for instance, in Kirkwood, Missouri, yet some of his finest design was well beyond residential, including efforts for the Medical School of Washington University and massive airplane factories for J. S. McDonnell, the aerospace builder.

I recognize his architecture at a glance just by the proportioning, and I never saw him do a really bad piece of work—though for the record, he was not the great cook your writer suggests. As his son-in-law, I ate frequently with the Armstrongs for two decades. Louise was the cook, and a good one; Harris was all about cookouts at their country cabin, the Rockpile, where he loved to serve rather crude hors d'oeuvres, and grilled meats and vegetables, all consumed with plentiful wine. As a personality he was not tactful, perhaps insisting on having his way more than the clients liked, yet was so creative and productive he remained for a long career one of the Midwest's most respected designer/architects.

J. A. Van Sant
Santa Fe, New Mexico

I have been a reader of your magazine for a while now and love the inspiration I find in it. I was pleasantly surprised to see a home my husband and I lived in featured in your February/March 2006 issue ("Taking Liberties"). We knew it as the "Susan B. Anthony house" and lived in the upstairs rear unit when there were two apartments upstairs and the owners lived downstairs. This was in 1984. The owners, Tim and Bill, had begun the process of stripping away the damage that had been done to the home in the past. Bill owned a company called San Francisco Victoriana, and they made reproductions of the Victorian pieces needed to restore homes authentically. Bill and Tim tried to bring this glorious home back to its original beauty but mixed it with classic contemporary touches as well. They loved that home and did so much of the work themselves. My husband and I moved to our own home and went through withdrawal as it was nowhere near as grand as our apartment on Liberty Street.

I am thrilled that someone purchased that home and was able to make it into such a beautiful place. I know Tim and Bill would be pleased as well.

April Matthews
Orinda, California

I am renewing my subscription to Dwell, as the past year I have found a lot of useful information relating to new construction. I am not an architect, but I do have a sense of how much space we will need for our final home. Before we hire an architect, I am drawing a couple of sche- ▸

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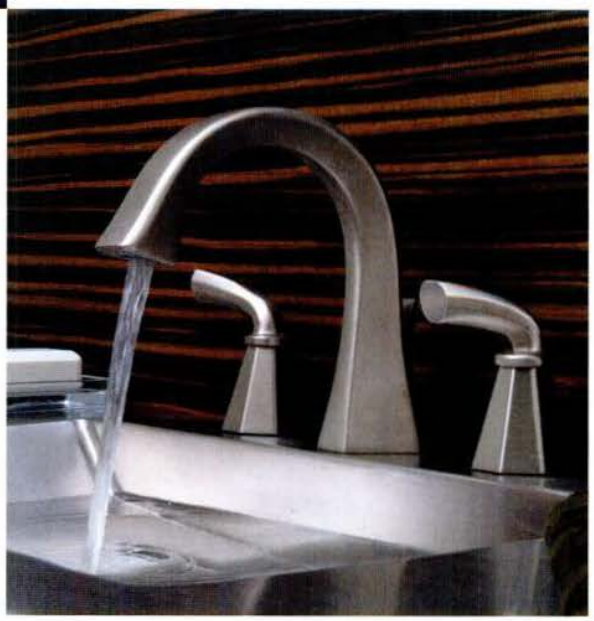

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Letters

matics based on a one-level, no-basement home, under 1,800 square feet, with features that will allow handicapped access if we should need it. The floor plans in Dwell have helped me gather ideas for traffic patterns and how to place public and private areas. The final schematic will not be finished until we find a lot and can fit the plan to the site and the direction of light. It sounds like a challenge, but I am finding ways to locate rooms and traffic areas that fit our lifestyle.

One thing I have trouble with on the floor plans you print is that the mechanical spaces and utilities are not indicated. Would it be much trouble to put a few little locator symbols showing how these are incorporated into the plan?

Rena Langille
Seattle, Washington

Editors' Note: *We are always looking for different ways to present our floor plans and will keep your recommendations in mind.*

I am a sophomore architecture major in D.C.
I'm struck by the attention you pay to green architecture, and am very excited by and appreciative of it. I feel it is an important part of architecture and will be more so in coming years. I wanted to know if you could run an article featuring fully sustainable housing to mildly sustainable housing. I think it would be very interesting to see how a fully sustainable building would be designed, how much extra it would initially cost, and what the cost and environmental benefits of the building are in the short and long term.

Sara Lotz
Washington, D.C.

Editors' Note: *We hope that you've been following our "Off the Grid" section, where we feature many different levels of sustainable homes—from the totally off the grid to the city home in a dense neighborhood featuring photovoltaics. We also encourage you to keep an eye on our ongoing articles featuring the construction of the Dwell Home II, being built in Topanga Canyon, California, where many green elements are being employed.*

Correction:
On page 156 of "What We Saw" (May 2006), we stated that the vases by Justin Parker were for Christian Tortu, when in fact they are part of the Esque Design line. We regret the error.

Please write to us:
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Looking Back, Thinking Forward

Ettore Sottsass's "Rafts for Listening to Chamber Music" from the "Planet as Festival" series of drawings (1973) offer a new way of looking at the world.

"Respect your elders." For the first two decades of my life, this adage didn't hold much weight. But this quickly changed when, in my early 20s, I was doing research for a gallery exhibit featuring a time-tested member of the old guard—Ettore Sottsass. Truth be told, the 88-year-old architect and designer's furniture drove me crazy with its funky angles and often repugnant color schemes, and did little to diminish my distrust of the powers that be. That is, until I delved into a somewhat obscure but amazingly deep well of work Sottsass has been compiling over the years: his writing.

Immersing myself in his words, I discovered an exciting world—a Sottsassian cosmos that simply accepted the many differences that existed on the planet and openly learned from them rather than conforming to them. In the world according to Sottsass, one could be wholly idealistic, living in a utopian universe of one's own creation while still remaining firmly planted in reality. Finally, it seemed some sense was being spoken by the older generation. That wisdom I had heard so much about was coming through loud and clear.

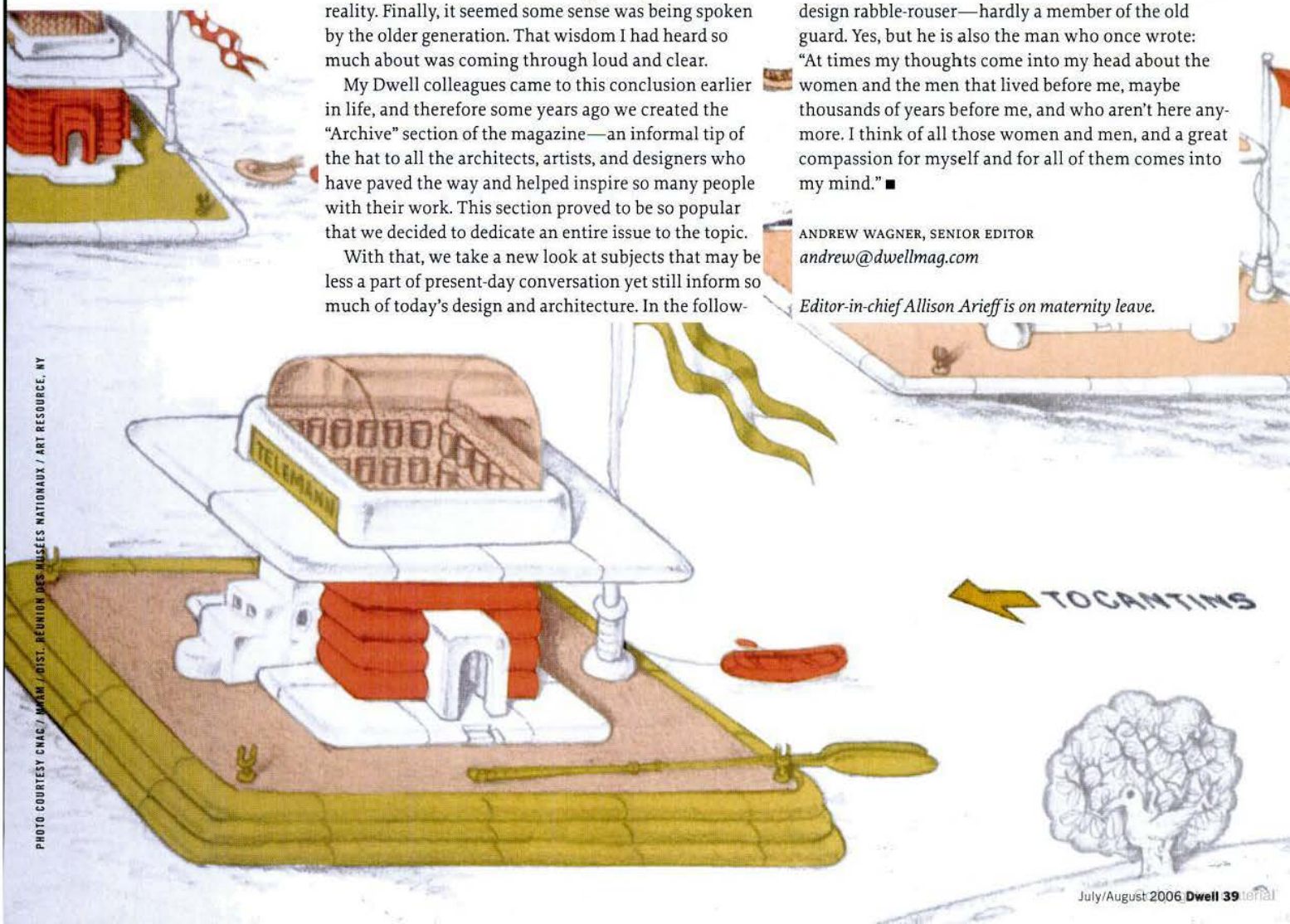
My Dwell colleagues came to this conclusion earlier in life, and therefore some years ago we created the "Archive" section of the magazine—an informal tip of the hat to all the architects, artists, and designers who have paved the way and helped inspire so many people with their work. This section proved to be so popular that we decided to dedicate an entire issue to the topic.

With that, we take a new look at subjects that may be less a part of present-day conversation yet still inform so much of today's design and architecture. In the following pages you'll find a personal exploration of Richard Neutra's multifamily buildings and the role they've played in shaping the life and work of author Thomas Hines. From there we visit the work and the legacy left by some contemporaries of our friend Sottsass—the visionary collectives Superstudio, Archigram, and Ant Farm. And finally, we jet to the Midwest for a tour of Columbus, Indiana, the factory town spurred to architectural greatness by J. Irwin Miller, the former chairman of the Cummins Engine Company who believed good design was good for people and good for business.

As anyone familiar with architecture and design will surely point out, these exemplars of the vivid architectural past are exceptions to the often drab and dreary design normalities that pervade much of the landscape today—norms still well worth rebelling against. And I'll undoubtedly hear from many people politely pointing out that Sottsass is the quintessential architecture and design rabble-rouser—hardly a member of the old guard. Yes, but he is also the man who once wrote: "At times my thoughts come into my head about the women and the men that lived before me, maybe thousands of years before me, and who aren't here anymore. I think of all those women and men, and a great compassion for myself and for all of them comes into my mind." ■

ANDREW WAGNER, SENIOR EDITOR
andrew@dwellmag.com

Editor-in-chief Allison Arieff is on maternity leave.



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Take a Line for a Walk, design Alfredo Häberli, picture taken inside the PALAIS DE TOKYO, site de création contemporaine, Paris.

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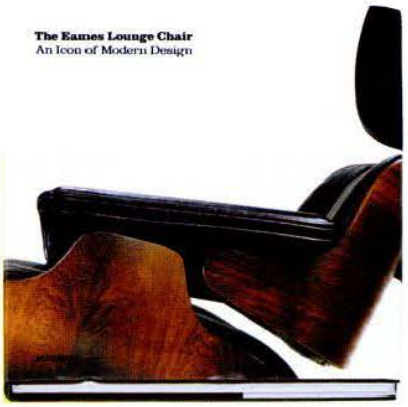


The Eames Lounge Chair
An Icon of Modern Design

The Eames Lounge Chair: An Icon of Modern Design / By Martin Eidelberg, Thomas Hine, Pat Kirkham, David Hanks, C. Ford Peatross / Merrell / $45 / www.merrellpublishers.com

The Eames Lounge Chair: An Icon of Modern Design / 18 May–3 Sept / Museum of Arts and Design / New York, NY / www.madmuseum.org (This exhibition will be traveling to two other venues afterward.)

Santos Palisander sustainable rosewood edition Eames Ottoman / www.hermanmiller.com

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK), NICK MERRICK/HEDRICH BLESSING/COURTESY OF HERMAN MILLER (EXPLODED CHAIR)

Few chairs are revered equally among design aficionados and neophytes alike, but the universally appealing Eames lounge chair and ottoman transcend most boundaries—including time. This year, the chair celebrates a half-century of turning design skeptics into believers and believers into proselytizers.

It's hard to imagine a chair being newsworthy enough to debut on the set of NBC studios in NYC on the program called *The Home Show*, but that is just what the Eames lounge chair did in 1956. While our nation's design appetite isn't nearly as great as its appetite for reality television recaps in the morning, it is safe to say the Eames lounge continues to captivate—this is definitely a chair with legs. To celebrate its 50th anniversary, the lofty lounge has been rereleased by Herman Miller in its original rosewood finish, which was discontinued in 1990 due to ecological concerns. The new veneer, harvested from sustainable sources, offers a guilt-free alternative to the classic design. If you're not financially equipped to spring for new seating, you might want to recline vicariously at the Museum of Arts and Design's exhibition, which explores the structural nuts and bolts of the lounge as well as its cultural significance (further expounded upon in a 192-page monograph).

Urs Fischer: Mary Poppins / 13 May–5 Aug / Blaffer Gallery / Houston, TX

This site-specific exhibition inspired by P.L. Travers's classic *Mary Poppins* uses the contrast between the wholesome children's tale and the less-known story of the author's tumultuous life to investigate the nature of truth. The Disney film stood in stark relief to the harsh sensibility of Travers's original work, which was based in part on her own life. Mixed-media pieces, supplemented by drawings, paintings, and sculptures, focus on the place where reality and fantasy collide through the combination of disparate worlds. www.blaffergallery.org

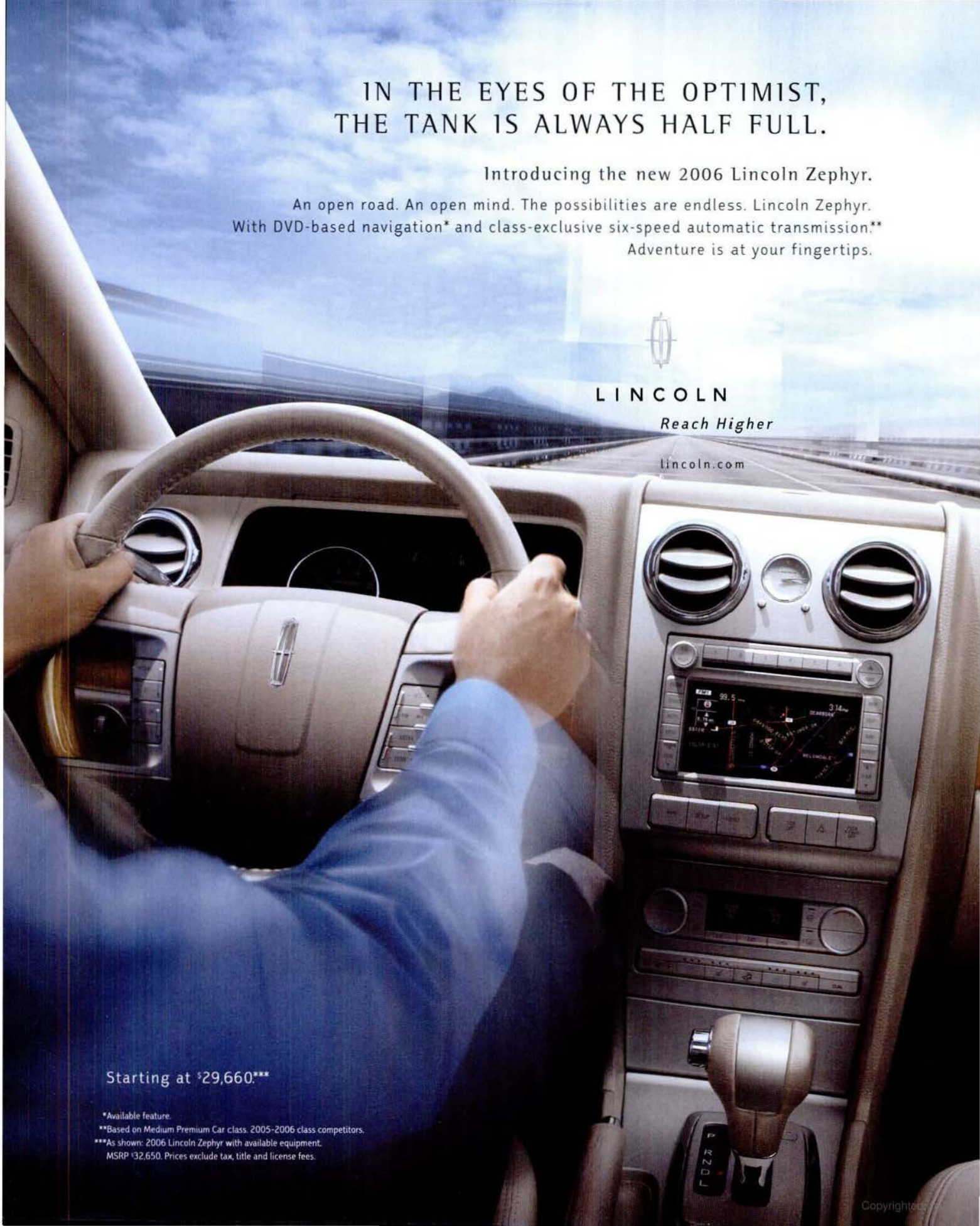
Kattbank / By Kattbank

For any cat owner living in a small space, the placement of the litter box is a true conundrum. The kitchen is unsavory; the closet too cluttered; the bathroom too small—and certainly, kitten doesn't appreciate being on full display in the living room. The Kattbank was developed with this in mind, melding a fully functioning, pro-feline bench with a concealed litter box that blends seamlessly into your modern decor. www.kattbank.com

Banana fiber rugs / By Chris Baisa for Delinear

Now bananas are not only delicious but deliciously warm and comfortable components to your home decor. While searching for an eco-friendly material from which to make his new line, Chris Baisa happened upon the fiber from the trunks of banana trees. With a textural quality like that of silk—but a price tag that's much more appetizing—banana fiber is harvested from wild banana plants that are used for both textiles and food. www.delinear.com

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (RUG)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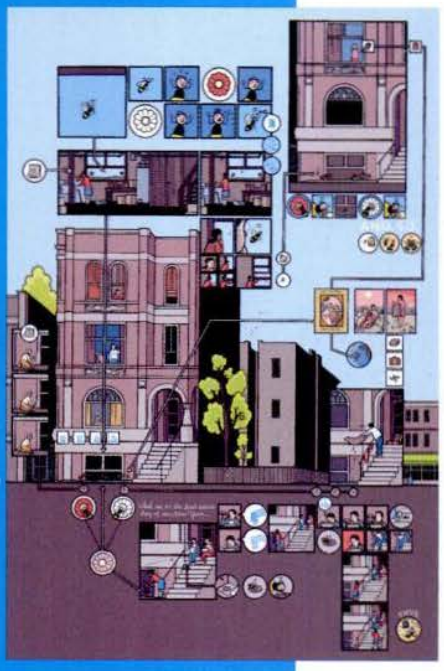

Chris Ware / 6 May–27 Aug / MCA Chicago / Chicago, IL

If the last comic book you read was *The Green Lantern* and the price was accompanied by a cent symbol, it's time to take another look. The work of Chris Ware, with its dulcet palette, heavy line, and scientific merging of narrative structure and design, has proved particularly revolutionary. This show presents work from a decade ago (when Ware first moved to the Windy City), in addition to recent stories about Chicago apartment life. www.mcachicago.org

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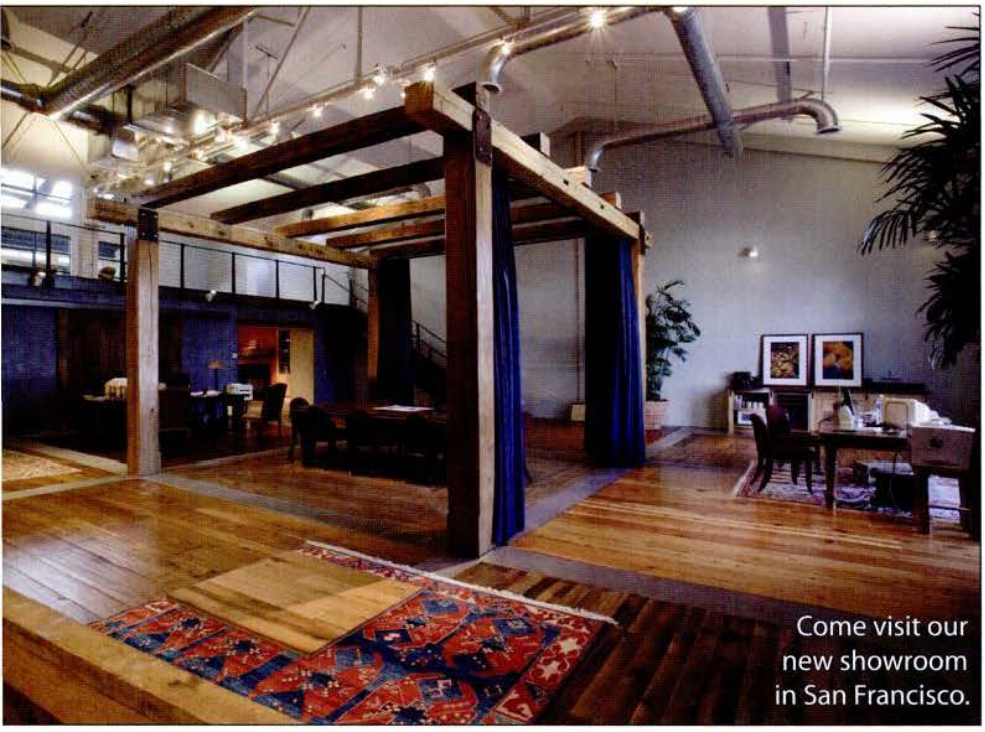

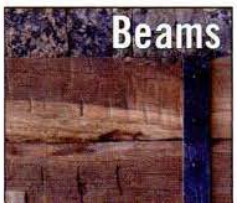

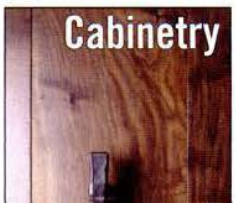

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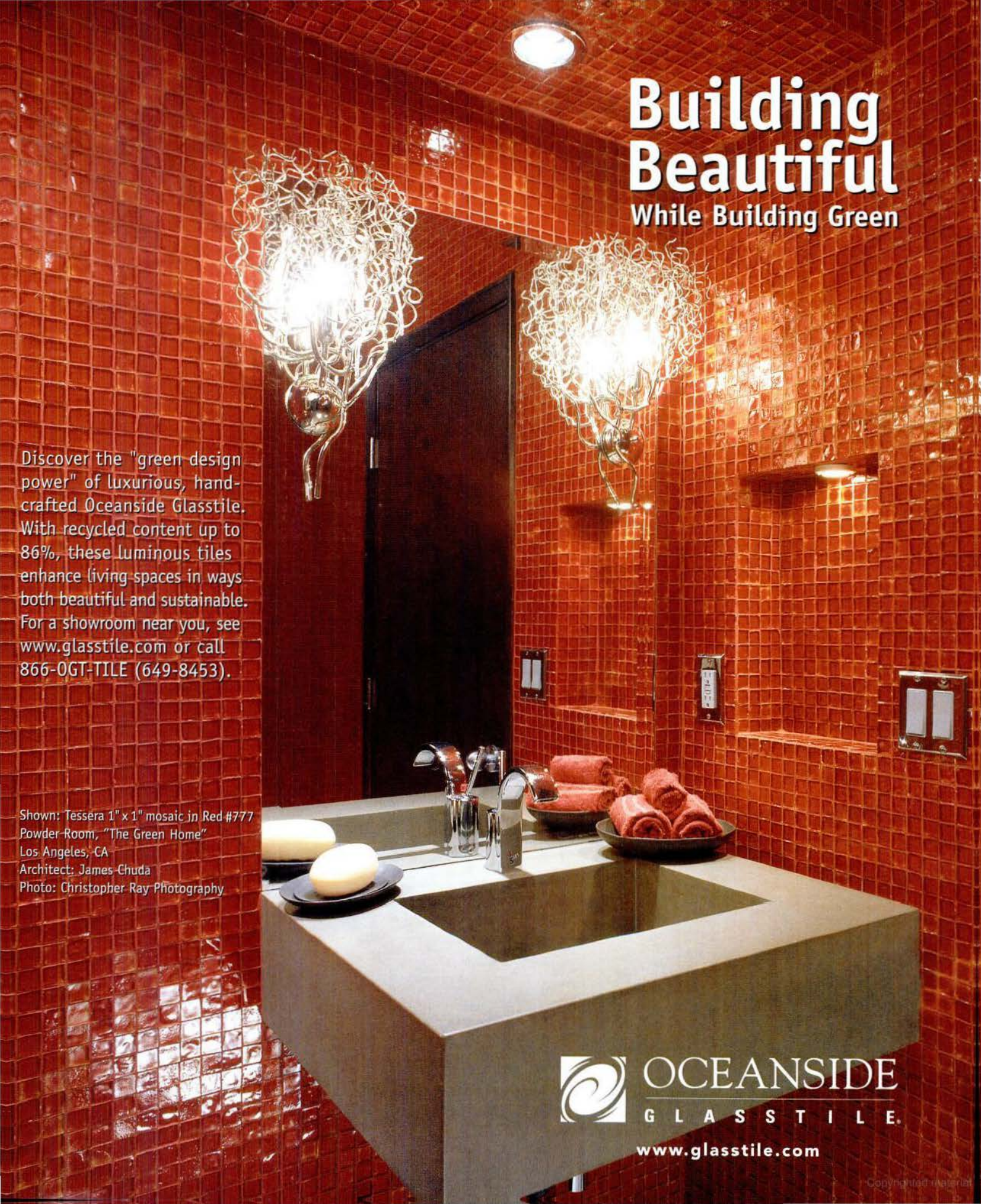

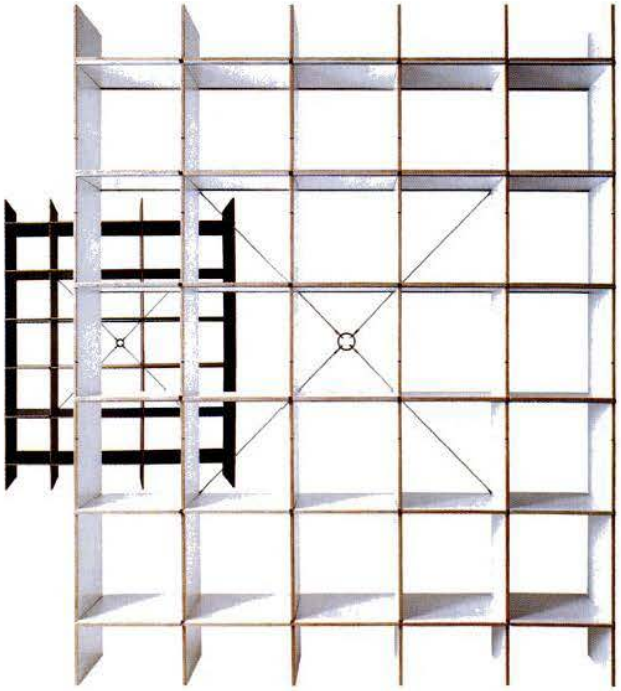

FNP12 / By Axel Kufus for Nils Holger Moormann / Instruction manuals for shelving often appear to be written in Esperanto—intended for the masses, indecipherable to all. If you just want a pretty place to display your Pez collection or architectural monographs without hassling with nails, screws, and tools, the FNP12 is easy to install and even easier on the eyes. www.moormann.de

Lost and Found:
La Linea / By Osvaldo Cavandoli
In our world of instant access and real-time updates, classics are often overlooked in favor of the latest and greatest. Osvaldo Cavandoli's animated series *La Linea* from the early '70s is just one of these underappreciated archetypes. The minimal aesthetic, jazzy soundtrack, and timeless humor can be appreciated by adults and children alike.

Poul Kjærholm / 23 June–24 Sept / Louisiana Museum of Modern Art / Humlebæk, Denmark
Kjærholm starting making cabinets at age 15 and went on to study with master chair-man Hans J. Wegner at the Danish School of Arts and Crafts. His graduation piece was the PK 25 lounge chair (shown here), which is still in production to this day. This and the many chairs that followed will be on view. www.louisiana.dk

PHOTOS BY TOM VACK (SHELVING), PETER BELANGER (DVDS)

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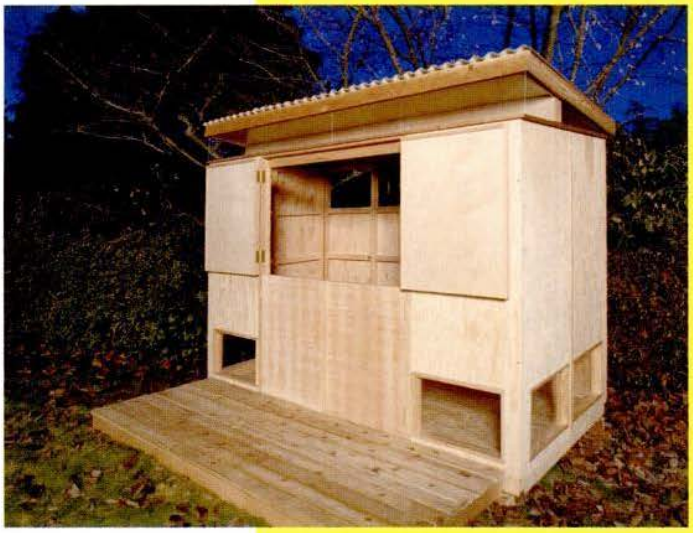

The Cabana / By Modern Cabana
The Modern Playshed / By Velocity Art and Design / Not everyone can build a modern prefab home of their own, but that doesn't mean there isn't room for a little make-believe.

The Cabana (top) is a modest prefab structure useful for augmenting your living space or providing a venue for guests and outdoor soirées. The Modern Playshed (bottom), like the Cabana, adds a little extra space, with an emphasis on little—this scaled-down dwelling is perfect for your backyard and the little people who play in it. www.moderncabana.com / www.velocityartanddesign.com

PHOTOS BY BRUCE DAMONTE (TOP), CHAD HOLDER (BOTTOM)


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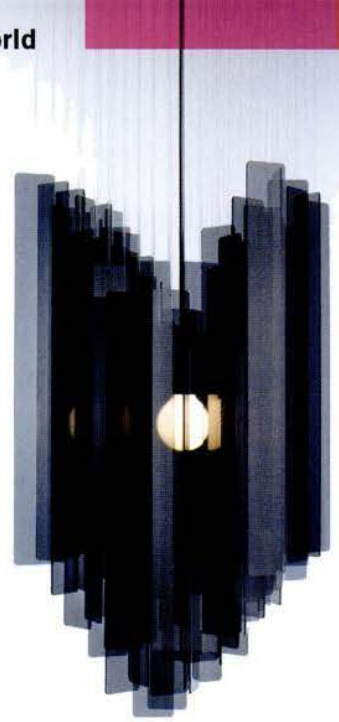
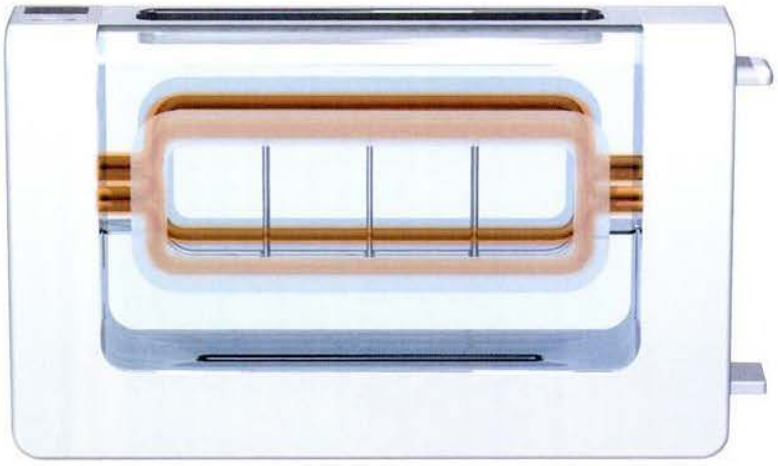


Fall chandelier / By Miranda Watkins
Designer Miranda Watkins has mastered things that hang out. Her work includes mobiles and chandeliers crafted from aluminum (that's "aluminium" in British) and Perspex (that's "Plexiglas" in American) by hand with machinelike precision. www.mirandawatkins.com



Clear toaster / Study By Elium Studio for Rowenta
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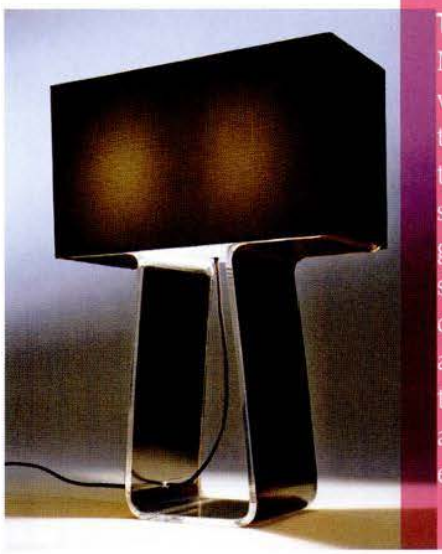
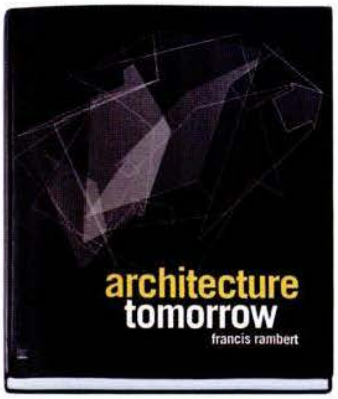
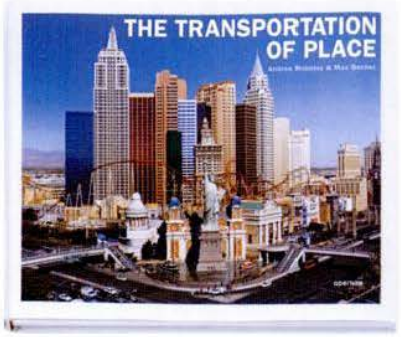


Tube Top / By Peter Stathis for Pablo
Mentioning tube tops usually elicits visions of spandex and cutoff jeans, but this innovative lamp design is more than just a playful quip. As its moniker suggests, the strapless lampshade is given its form by stretching fabric over a sprung-open acrylic body. The tension created by the opposing pressure traces an attractive figure, and complements the purposeful use of materials with an adroit juxtaposition of humor and elegance. www.dwr.com





The Transportation of Place / Photographs by Andrea Robbins and Max Becher with essays by Lucy Lippard and Maurice Berger / Aperture / $31.50
What really makes a place? The landscape? The architecture? The people? Usually it's a strange confluence of all these things. For years, photographers Andrea Robbins and Max Becher have been exploring these questions with their cameras. In their new book they focus on the phenomenon they call "the transportation of place—situations in which one limited or isolated place strongly resembles another distant one." The result is a remarkably rootless but surprisingly hopeful look at the rapidly globalizing world. www.aperture.org

Architecture Tomorrow / By Francis Rambert / Terrail / $55
Forget the past—this book is about looking forward. Experimental design darlings like Rem Koolhaas and Herzog & de Meuron are championed for their use of leading-edge technology and interdisciplinary application of contemporary art. Renderings and photos illustrate this decidedly optimistic book, which aspires to galvanize architecture's role as a cultural institution. www.stoutbooks.com

Log / By Naoto Fukasawa for Swedese / Log—which includes benches in three sizes and a storage table—quite convincingly resembles a felled tree. Completely hollow, Log should come in handy the next time you're building a living-room fort and need an escape hatch. www.swedese.se

PHOTOS BY PETER BELANGER (BOOKS)

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Julio Cesar Morales
Informal Economy Installation,
2005; clay, wood, paint, vinyl

Strange New World: Art and Design from Tijuana / 21 May–17 Sept / Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego / San Diego, CA (Also exhibiting at their La Jolla location until September 3.)

An assemblage of science fiction, political commentary, and cultural critique, this exhibition showcases the expansive range of work indigenous to the second-largest city on the West Coast. The complexities of living in Tijuana are manifested in the breadth of media on display, which includes street-level video, product design, musical movements, and architectural proposals. "Strange New World" compares Tijuana's current landscape to Aldous Huxley's classic science-fiction satire and its transformations through the effects of globalization, mass media, and issues of national identity. The recent influx of money, rapid growth, and haphazard expansion has made Tijuana a conduit for current sociopolitical talking points, and an epicenter for provocative art in the process. Marcos Ramírez ERRE, Julio Morales, and generica have been selected from the large list of participating artists to create installations specifically for the show. www.mcasd.org/strangenewworld

PHOTO BY PABLO MASON (MORALES)

Salomón Huerta
Untitled House, 2003
oil on canvas on panel

Alida Cervantes
The Housekeeper Series, 1999
oil on canvas

PHOTOS BY PATRICIA FAURE GALLERY (HUERTA), PABLO MASON (CERVANTES)

Herman Miller rocks out. | Eames Shell Rocker. An oldie but a goodie.

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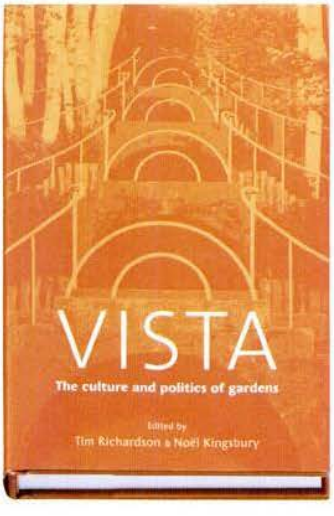
Executive Mother and Child Desk / By Charles Rose Architects Inc.
Even the most devoted parent yearns to be able to check email and enjoy an espresso without sticky little fingers grabbing at the keyboard. Architect Charles Rose's design allows for some personal parental space while still letting Junior color and scribble within arm's reach. www.charlesrosearchitects.com

New Chairs: Innovations in Design, Technology, and Materials / By Mel Byars / Chronicle Books / $24.95
Superstars like Frank Gehry are seated next to the fresh new faces of the design world in this survey of contemporary chairs. Concept drawings, prototypes, and manufacturing information supplement rich color photographs of the soon-to-be symbols of our era. Readers in search of progressive designs will appreciate the focus on new materials and clever application of emerging technologies. www.chronicleboooks.com



Vista: The Culture and Politics of Gardens / Edited by Tim Richardson & Noël Kingsbury / Frances Lincoln / $29.95
Although petunias and begonias are indeed alluring, it's refreshing to find a landscape book that strays far from the usual well-manicured path. In *Vista*, 16 essays by various academics and garden designers tackle topics from ethnicity to tea gardens to sustainability. Educational without being ponderous, it's an informative read perfectly suited for both sunbathers and urban idealists alike. www.franceslincoln.com

PHOTOS BY LIZ LINDER (DESK), PETER BELANGER (BOOKS)

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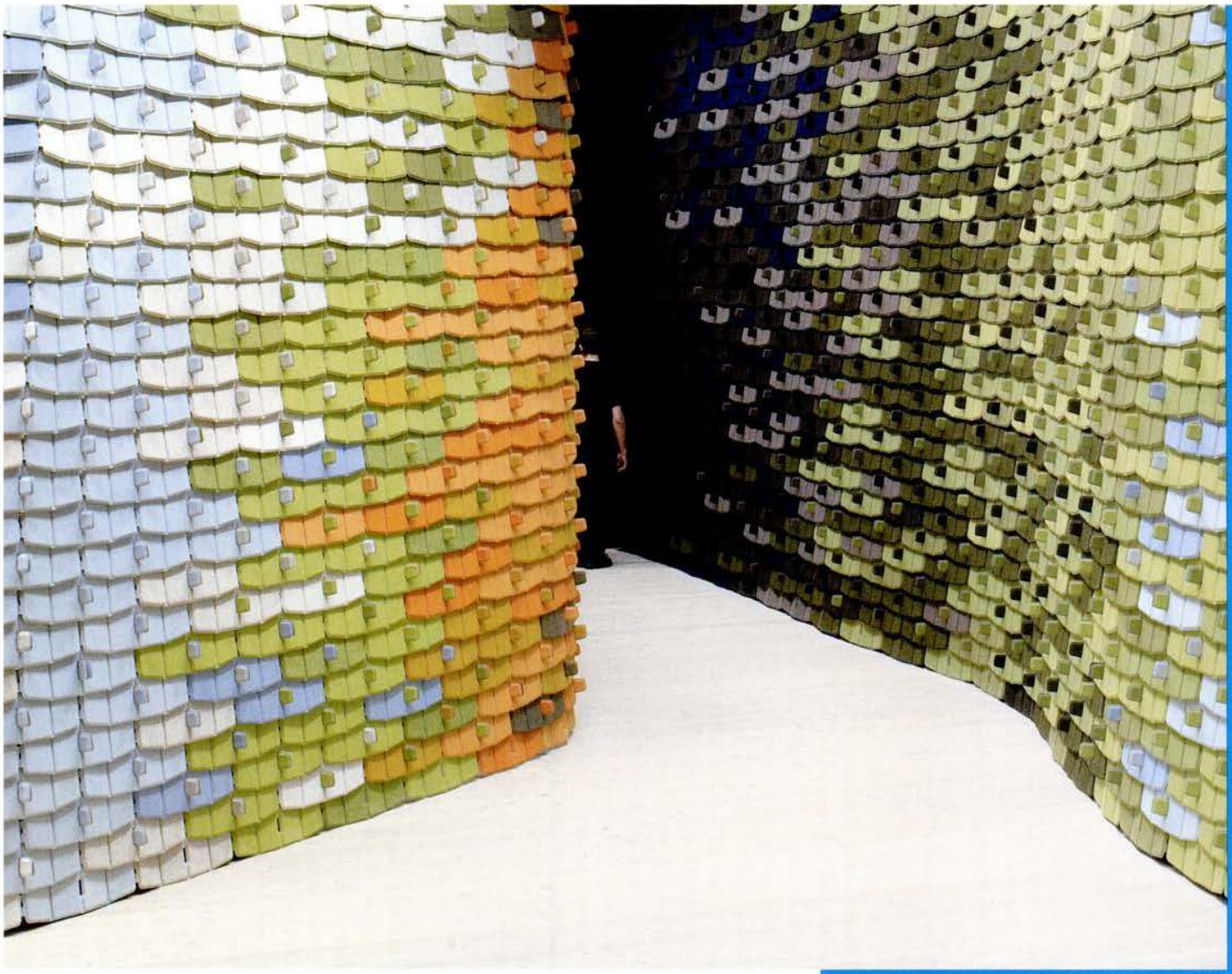
Textile Tiles / By the Bouroullec Brothers for Kvadrat
Looking a little like extra padding from Han Solo's costume, Ronan and Erwan Bouroullecs' Textile Tiles (or Les Tuiles) were developed for fabric manufacturer Kvadrat's showroom in Stockholm. Like much of their work in the field they dub "micro-architecture," the Bouroullecs' tiles are modular interlocking pieces that require no tools to assemble and allow the user (currently limited to Kvadrat, as the tiles are not yet available to the public) to create whatever he likes from the singular scale-like pieces. For Kvadrat, this means easily reconfiguring the walls and showing off new fabrics as they become available. www.bouroullec.com



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A House Grows in Brooklyn

Darcy Miro and her son, Lucien, enjoy a moment in their new double-height living room. The Charlotte Perriand wall sconces are vintage finds.

While most people living in the Fort Greene neighborhood of Brooklyn didn't see much to love about an abandoned, weedy lot squeezed between two old town houses, one couple couldn't help but see it as an opportunity to finally build their own home. "I used to walk the dogs around here all the time," says Darcy Miro, relaxing in the airy living room of the four-story town house she and her husband, Lars Weiss, have since built on the site. "I kept walking by this empty lot that had a little wooden 'FOR SALE' sign. And I thought, How amazing would it be to actually build a house?"

Miro, a 32-year-old jewelry designer, and Weiss, a 35-year-old music producer who runs the record label Home Style Cooking, had fallen for the neighborhood long before. They already owned a one-bedroom apartment nearby, and rented a studio on the same block as the empty lot. "I came to this neighborhood and fell in love with how real it felt," says Miro. "It was so incredible ▸

Even the family dogs have a comfortable resting spot just off the kitchen on the second floor of the house. Though the couple's house is much younger than its immediate neighbors, it manages to fit right in—adding to, rather than detracting from, the neighborhood's historic character.

because it was Brooklyn—very urban—but it had trees and was still amazingly diverse."

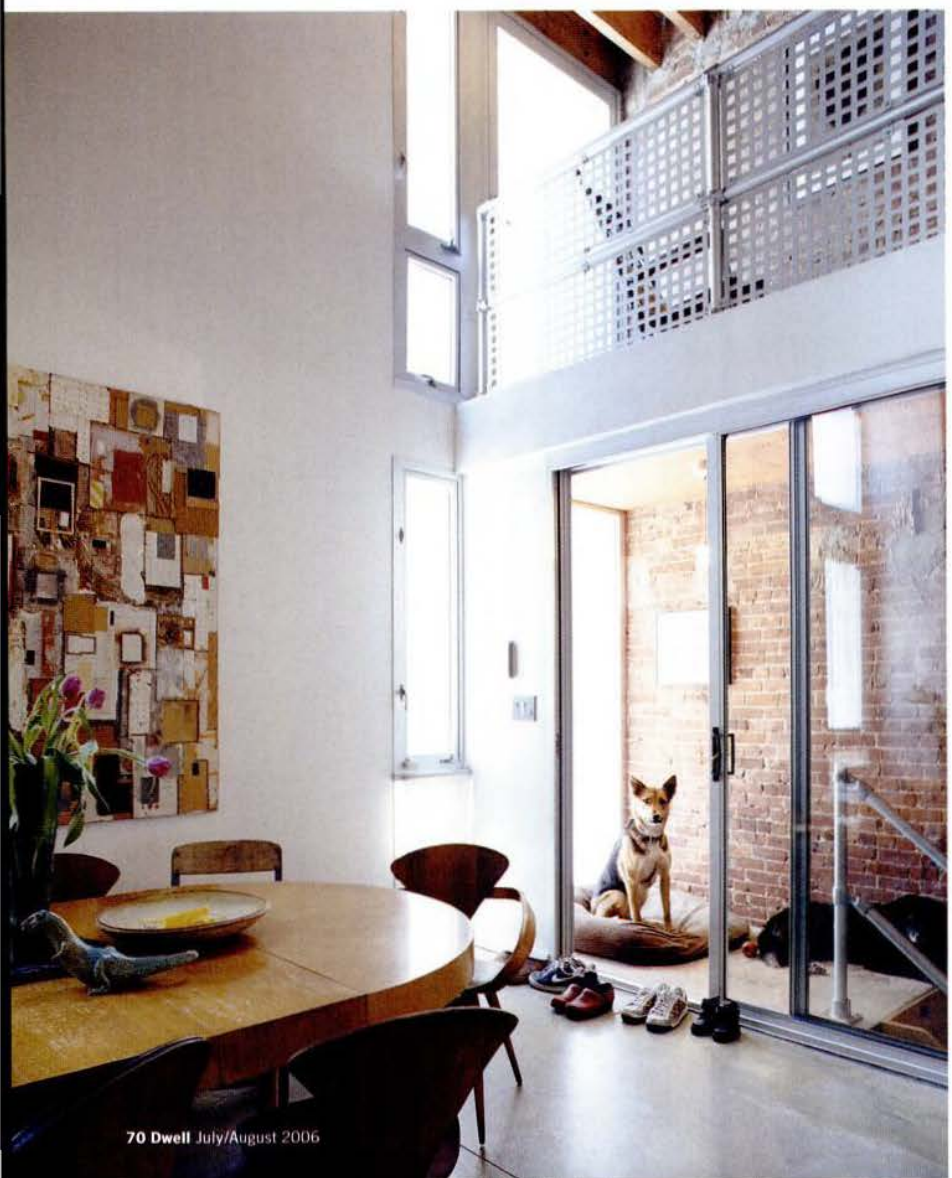
After eyeing the 20-by-80-foot lot for more than a year, the couple finally decided to make some inquiries. They learned that the city had demolished the old town house occupying the site in 1993, and that the owner of the remaining land was eager to sell. They bought the lot soon after for $180,000.

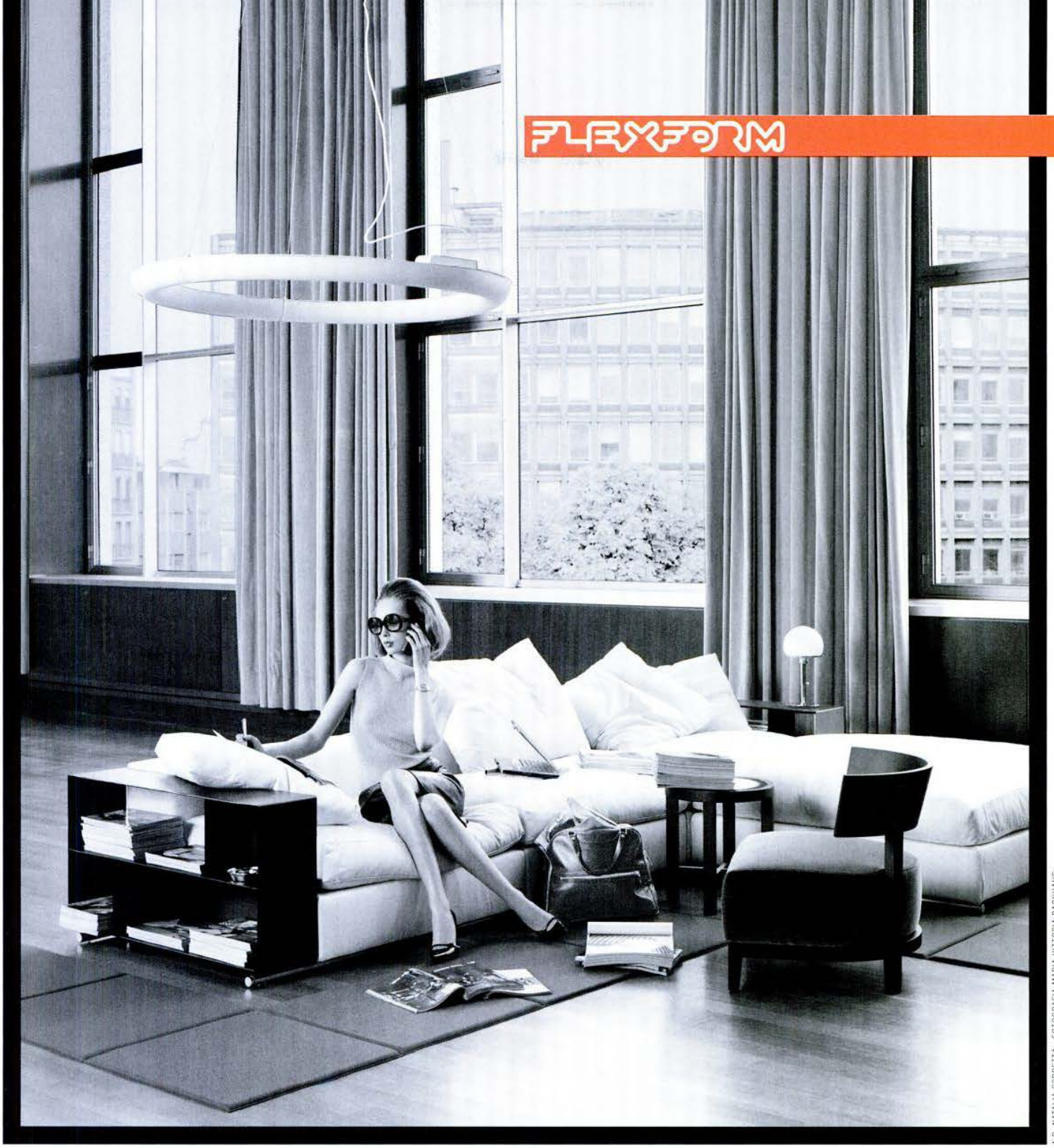
The next step—finding an architect—was easy. Miro had collaborated on the bronze façade of the American Folk Art Museum in New York with architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, so she asked them for a recommendation. They put her in touch with a former employee, Martin Finio, who had since launched his own practice, Christoff:Finio Architecture, with his wife, Taryn Christoff.

But even before meeting the architects, Miro and Weiss had specific ideas about what they wanted: The house would have to include studios for both of their businesses. They also wanted to preserve the exterior walls of the adjoining buildings as their own interior walls by hanging floors between them. "Those two walls felt like they had so much history," Miro explains. And to keep costs down and give the house a personal touch, they decided they would complete the vast majority of interior work—tiling, painting, and even framing some of the bedroom walls—themselves.

When construction began in early 2002, Miro and Weiss were so optimistic that the house would be completed before the end of the year that they invited their families to have Thanksgiving dinner there. But they had to cancel those plans when construction dragged on, then had to do the same in 2003. It wasn't until 2004 that the house was finally ready for guests.

Still, they were well rewarded for their perseverance. The resulting 4,200-square-foot town house gives them ▸





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By leaving the exterior walls of the neighboring structures exposed on their interior, Miro and Weiss guaranteed that the neighborhood's history would be a part of their new home. Raw plywood and industrial-strength steel railings are balanced with custom finishes and signs of domesticity.

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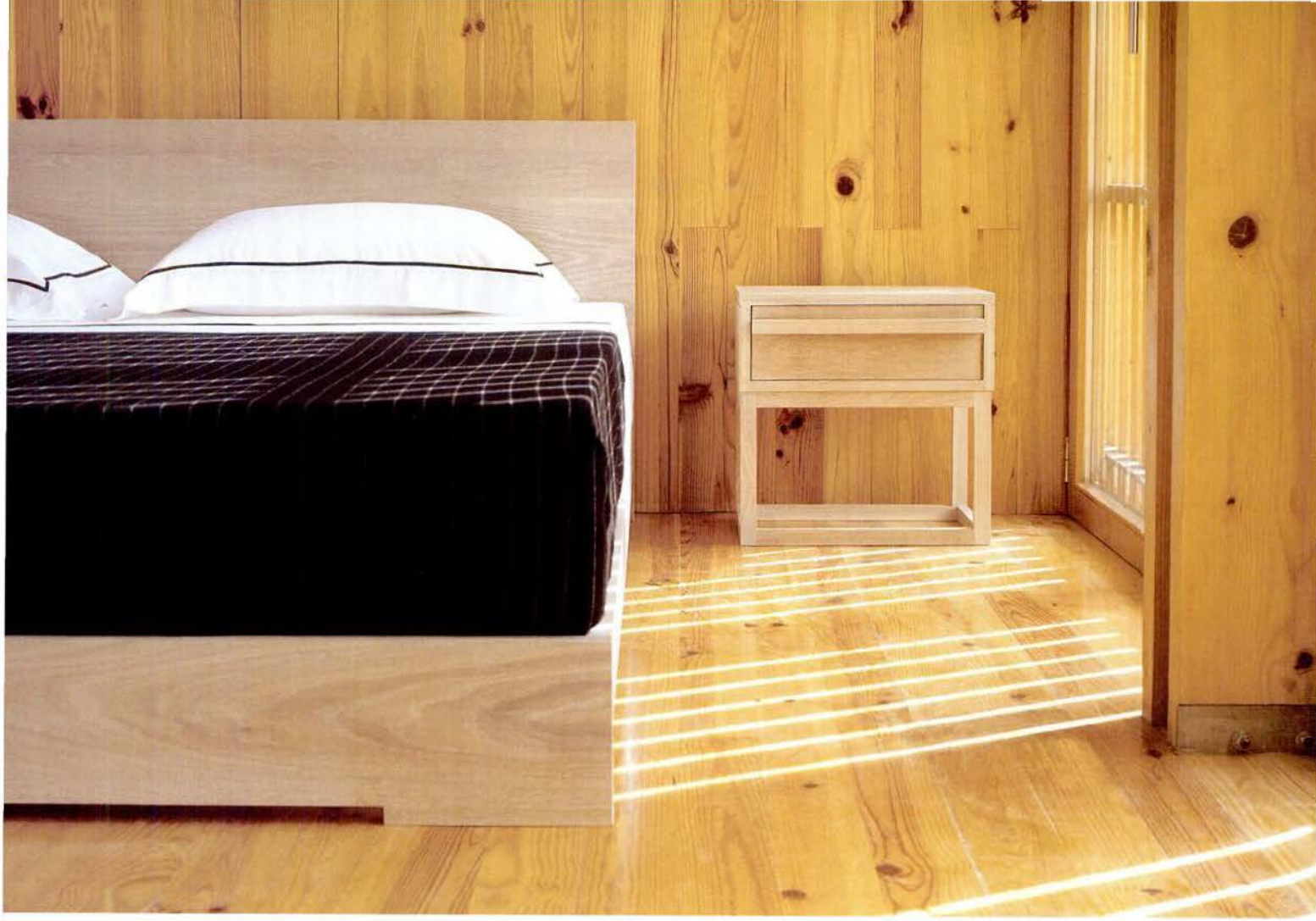
In the family room, Lucien gets an early start on his music career with his father's help. The space, technically the third floor of the structure, overlooks the central living area below.

an extraordinary space in which to live, work, and raise their one-year-old son, Lucien. The ground floor and basement are dedicated to a jewelry workshop and a recording studio, and the living quarters begin on the second floor with a dining area, kitchen, and high-ceilinged living room. The third floor is a loftlike reading room that overlooks the living and dining areas, and the fourth floor has three bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a laundry room.

Throughout the house, Miro and Weiss selected commercial products like metal railings, boxy industrial baseboard heaters, and a mix of concrete and wood-plank flooring. They also left many ducts, pipes, and electrical conduits exposed because there were few interior walls in which to hide them. But in the end, they warmed up the overall feel of the space with their own labor-intensive finishes and a collection of mid-century-modern furniture. Miro cast the bronze handles for the vanity in the master bathroom herself. They sanded and sealed the construction-grade floorboards and painted the bedroom walls a comforting off-white (Benjamin Moore's Limestone). Downstairs, they equipped the dining table with a slightly mismatched collection of chairs by Norman Cherner, and anchored the living room around a long, low coffee table topped with a piece of antique wood recovered from a 15th-century Italian monastery.

"It's a lot of love," says Miro, summing up the many years of work the couple poured into the house. "You can continually throw a lot of money at a house, or you can put in more love and really get something out of it." With total construction costs running around $500,000, Miro and Weiss were able to build their own house in an area where similar town houses sell for well over a million dollars. Love, it seems, has given them not only a very personal home, but one that might otherwise have been out of reach. ►



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How to Make My House Your House

A Commercial railings

For the banisters and railings around the reading loft, Miro and Weiss selected aluminum-magnesium Speed-Rail. They liked the "inexpensive industrial" look it provided, explains Miro, and that it seemed "smooth, sturdy, and honest." The system consists of lengths of pipe and prefabricated brackets that simply slip together and tighten with set screws. www.hollaender.com

B Custom countertops and doors

Calling in the help of friends is rarely a bad idea. Miro and Weiss turned to Tom Edmonds, a furniture designer in Brooklyn. As well as giving them a unique front door made from marine-grade mahogany, he provided heavy slabs of cherry and burred maple for their bathroom countertops. Miro finished and sealed the countertops herself in Edmonds's studio. "He's such a stickler, he wouldn't let me leave until it was done properly," she says. Tel. (718) 522-6445

C Storefront windows

Rather than installing standard residential windows, Miro and Weiss followed their architects' advice and used windows intended for storefronts. The sleek aluminum casings work well with the industrial finishes in the house. At the front of the building, the windows are positioned along either side of the façade, instead of in the center, which provides improved privacy from the street without interfering with the flow of natural light. Some of the windows on the first two levels are also frosted. www.rebcoinc.com

Vintage lighting

Is it light or is it art? In the living room, the couple adorned a wall with a series of sconces by French designer Charlotte Perriand (shown on page 69) in a seemingly random pattern. "They're nice in the evenings," says Miro. "You can turn them on and they give this ambient light." The sconces were a vintage find from DeLorenzo 1950 in Manhattan. Tel. (212) 995-1950 ■

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Barely There

Though Herbert Enns and his family would probably prefer to sleep in tents on their land on Shoal Lake in Manitoba, the bears who also call this land home made them reconsider.

If not for the dawn appearance of the bear, which came loping toward Maem Slater-Enns and her then six-month-old daughter as they sat contemplating the water, the Enns family might still be residing in tents at their remote island summer home on Shoal Lake, which straddles the borders of Manitoba and Ontario. Instead, they are lightly sheltered by graceful pavilions hand-built by her husband, Herbert Enns, a professor of architecture at the University of Manitoba, where he also directs the experimental media program.

The couple purchased the 24-acre island soon after returning from a trekking stint in Ethiopia, Kenya, India, and Nepal, when they experienced a classic traveler's epiphany: "Canada's greatest aspect is its landscape—and having this wild, remote place was more important than owning a house," says Herbert. Dubbed Blueberry Island by the family (Herbert had favored the moniker "Manhattan"), the island is two hours from their home in Winnipeg and a three-mile boat ride from the mainland. The family spent several summers camping happily atop wooden platforms before the bear's cameo prompted more permanent digs.

"And it wasn't only bears," adds Maem, a rehabilitative therapist. "At night the beavers gnaw down trees, which could have crushed us. At the same time, we didn't want to shut out the wilderness. This was a rare chance for Herbert to experiment and build whatever he wanted—provided it didn't cost more than $1,000." ▸

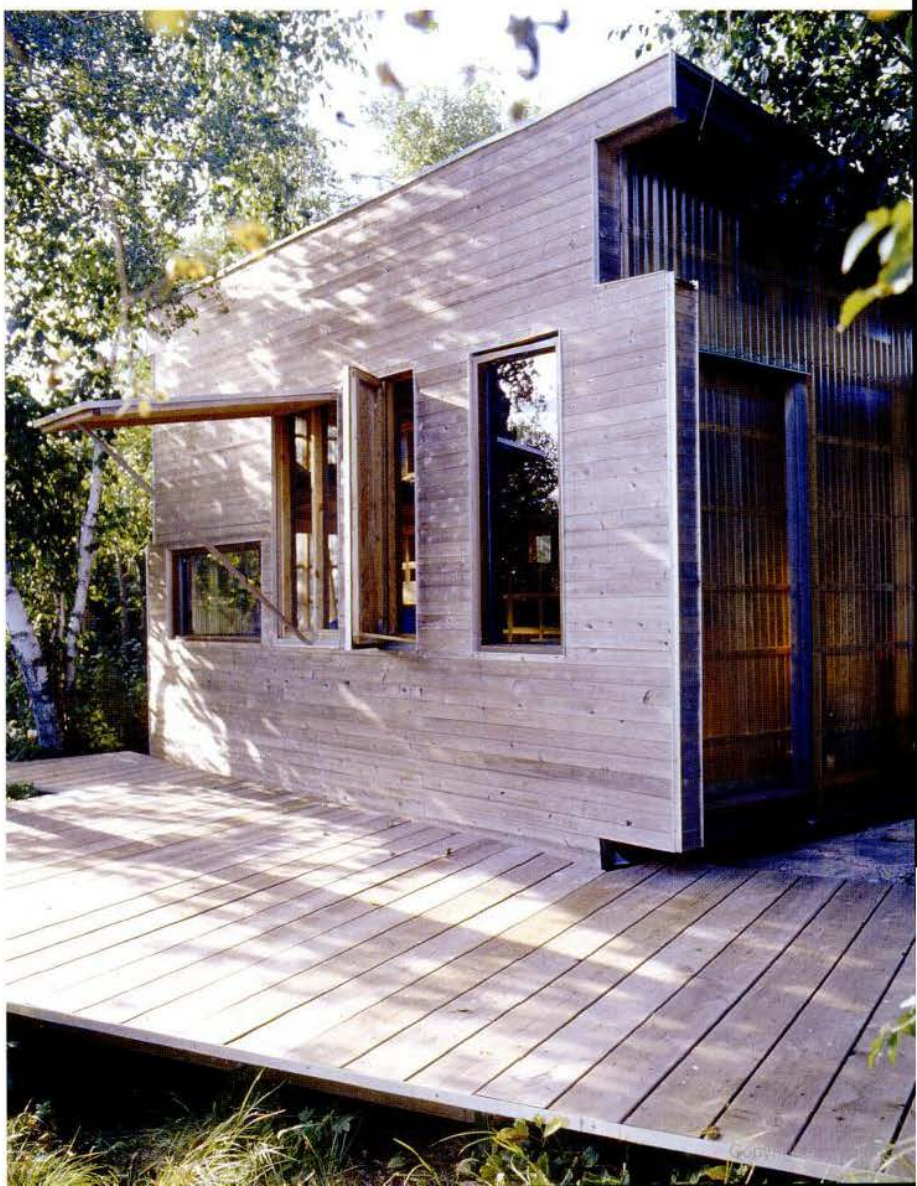
In the dining and cooking pavilion (below) some creature comforts, like Karim Rashid Oh chairs, a stove, and a dining table made of a felled tree propped on sawhorses, do exist. The exterior (below right) is clad in an elegant mish-mash of cedar, plywood, glass, and fiberglass panels. p. 226

"At the time, I was reflecting on the work of Hans Scharoun, and Tadao Ando's courtyard house, where you had to negotiate the weather and walk under the stars to move between the buildings," says Herbert, who built the compact structures as "stepping-stones to the natural world." Made mostly of recycled materials without benefit of power tools, the 10-by-21-foot sleeping pavilion is shared by Herbert, Maem, Sara, now 16, and 13-year-old Jamie, who sleeps up on a loft. A few years later, when another *Ursus americanus* appeared at the kitchen tent, Herbert borrowed a generator and added a 12-by-24-foot dining pavilion/guest cabin across a 25-foot mass of deck and boardwalks. The master bath and powder room consist of the lake (just add biodegradable soap) and a prefab pit latrine.

Midway between tents and cabins, the buildings discourage critters great and small while remaining permeable to the landscape—in part through the preponderance of clear and opaque windows. Hinged plywood panels open out to let in the breezes, and there is no insulation: "It's basically a wood frame of vertical two-by-fours wrapped with horizontal two-by-twos, embellished by a herringbone pattern of wooden bracing and clad with cedar, plywood, glass, and fiberglass panels to absorb sun and rain," explains Herbert. A skylight oriented to the North Star slices through the dining pavilion, which has an eight-foot-square corrugated fiberglass wall that slides open. The nine-to-ten-foot sloped ceilings also make the rooms feel more expansive, critical for this preternaturally tall family of former and current basketball players.

In some ways, the cabins feel more embedded in the surroundings than the tents ever did. "There's nowhere to ride out a storm," says Maem. "You can't hide from the lightning unless you put your head under the pillow, and then you still feel the buildings shake." Light pours in (as early as 4:30 a.m. and as late as 11 p.m. on the summer solstice) and the fiberglass screens project shadow-puppet images of trees, plants, and animals.

Some creature comforts come courtesy of a 45-watt ▸

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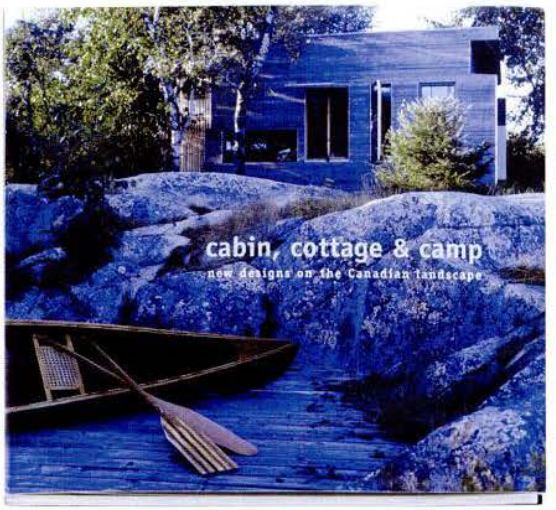
Near the Enns' encampment, Sara Enns and friends enjoy a lakeside fire (below). The eating and sleeping quarters (below right) have settled easily onto the shores of Shoal Lake.

solar panel mounted on the roof of the dining pavilion, which feeds low-wattage halogen and fluorescent light fixtures and outlets for music and laptops via a single 12-volt deep-cycle battery. Clean, clear water is pumped from the lake into the kitchen and drains into a gray-water leaching pit. When the propane fridge broke down, it was replaced with two Coleman steel coolers, which are filled with ice and replenished on the weekly trip for groceries.

Although some teenagers might balk at a summer bereft of video games and malls, Sara and Jamie crave the change of pace. "I used to long for TV," says Sara, "but now I can't wait to get back to the land." For Jamie, the island offers infinite possibilities: "In the city, I can see the end of my backyard. Here, you're more independent and resourceful by a billion. A lot of my friends have summer cottages with satellite TVs and microwaves; we have a 50-year-old stove. I like it much better."

Gatherings revolve around the 1955 white porcelain propane-fueled stove that is, Herbert points out, identical to one in the Eames house in Pacific Palisades. "Within this primitive environment, there's an overlay of civilization—we're not eating berries and roots!" Friends can often be found sharing five-course meals and sipping wine out of old Bohemian crystal around the ten-foot cedar-plank table. "People boat and cycle from one camp to another. It's more like a farming community—we keep an eye on each other." ■



Natural Habitats

The experimental buildings on Shoal Lake are featured in the recently published *Cabin, Cottage & Camp: New Designs on the Canadian Landscape*, a thoughtful compendium of contemporary "homes away" that—despite wildly different scales and budgets—all share an intimate relationship with the wilderness. Herbert Enns used the opportunity to write an accompanying essay that explores, among other things, the psychic and environmental costs of even the gentlest intrusion on the land:

"To cut Douglas fir plywood—to cut down a Douglas fir tree, to clear-cut first-growth forest, to cut down the coastal range—in order to configure a place of serenity in the wild is barbaric, unsophisticated, primitive, and violent. Construction is violent in almost every possible dimension. Some think it to be the spiritual essence of architecture. I do not. Its violence may be natural and necessary . . . but at incalculable costs. . . .

"Thankfully, violence is scalable. I made the buildings small, using as many recycled materials as possible. First comes necessity, then comes morality: a stand-alone off-the-grid solar energy system for power and light further reduces the scale of construction/destruction violence. When the batteries run down at night, we go to bed." —D.B.

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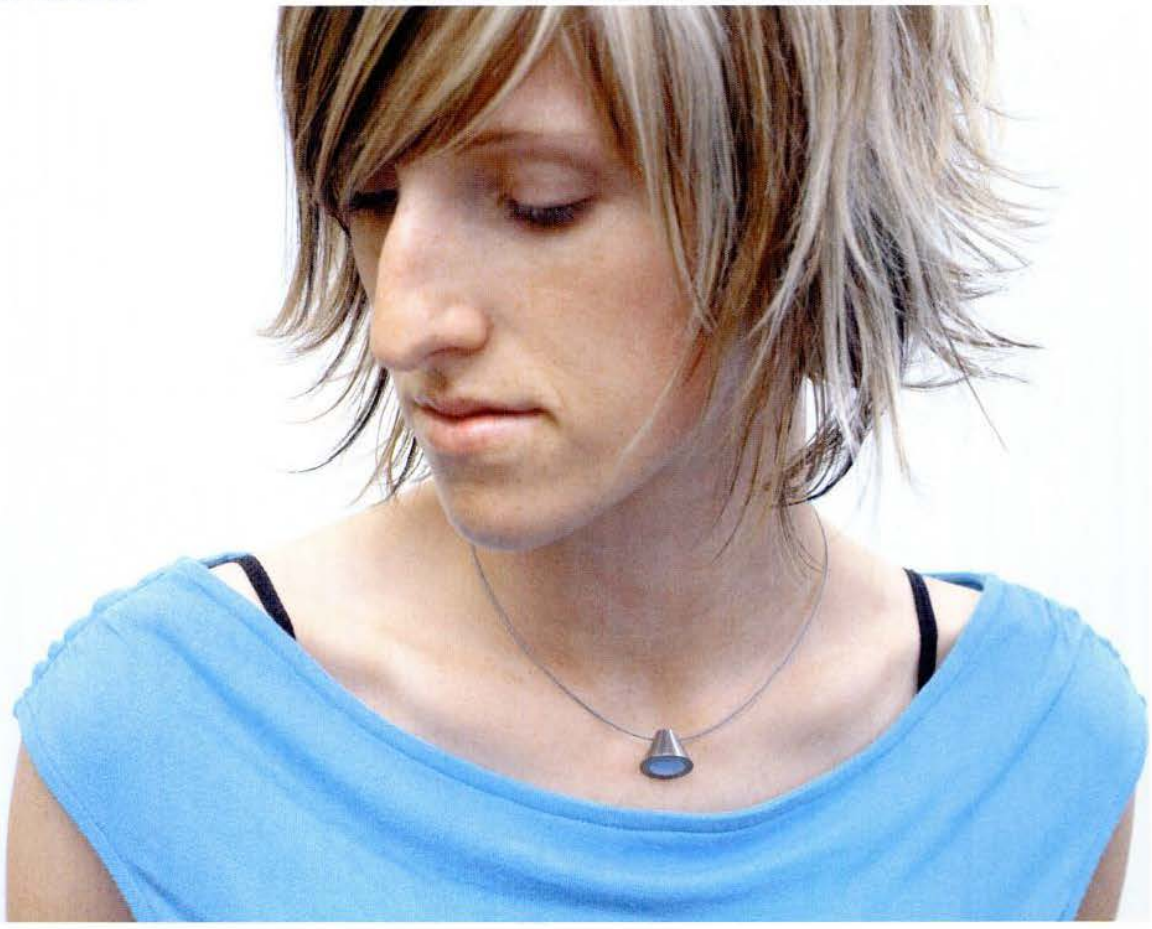

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Taste is recognized for their work in the community with organizations such as Meals on Wheels, The San Francisco Aids Foundation, Strike Out Breast Cancer, Academy of Friends, Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, AmFar, and The San Francisco Film Festival to name a few. The Taste philosophy is to "give back to the community that feeds you."

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A Note on Our Expert: Stephen Van Dyk's interests include American architecture, 18th- and 19th-century ornament and pattern books, 19th-century children's books, and world's fairs. As chief librarian at Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum Library, a branch of Smithsonian Institution Libraries, Van Dyk manages an estate of books located in Manhattan's landmark Andrew Carnegie mansion. The third-floor library, framed in dark wood and carpeted with red shag, contains more than 75,000 volumes, 4,500 trade catalogs, and 6,000 rare books about design, decorative arts, and architecture. Van Dyk arrived here in 1988 and has since penned his own tome, *Rare Books* (Scala, 2001) and curated exhibitions, including "Walter Crane: Design for Children" (1993), "Arquitectonica: The Times Square Project" (1997), and "Shock of the Old: Christopher Dresser" (cocurated, 2004).

A Little Light Reading

If your manuscript is far from being illuminated, it's time to drop the task at hand and find a new lamp to read by.

Light a candle to make light; read a book to become enlightened, quoth the ancient Chinese. The fact is, you need a little of both to get anywhere in this world.

If, like us, you spend a certain amount of time reading, you want enough illumination to bring the page into focus but not so much that you feel as if you're having your teeth cleaned. Which brings us to the question: What makes a good reading lamp?

Truth be told, we had a hard time determining exactly what a "reading" lamp is. This is a gray area in the lighting industry, which officially identifies only four types: ambient, decorative, accent, and task. This leaves a conspicuously dim spot somewhere between lamps that work and lamps that simply sit, hang, or perch there looking pretty. Dispersing the darkness—without flipping on any grim overhead flourescents—we decided that pivoting, arachnoid, cubicle-climbing task lamps were a tad technical for the home, and too (for lack of a better word) task-oriented for tranquil flights into literary landscapes from the generous embrace of our favorite armchair. Though there are some crisp, leggy beauties out there (Italian manufacturer Artemide could single-handedly provide the content for an article on this topic), task lamps feel uptight and chilly. Indeed, it is in their nature to do so. They exist, as the Sylvania website so pragmatically describes it, to help you "perform a specific activity, such as reading or playing games, by concentrating light in a particular place." Yawn.

We enlisted Stephen Van Dyk, chief librarian at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum Library, to help evaluate lights that can multitask while making us forget that there is, in fact, any task at hand. These aren't working lamps. They are lights that illuminate the kind of reading that is not a chore but an enchantment, a nourishment, succor, and a delight. Lights that might actually lead to enlightenment, of a sort. ▸

Clockwise from left:

Bague Piccola by Patricia Urquiola and Eliana Gerotto for Foscarini / $629 / www.foscarini.com
Bague is available in aluminum, black, or white. Its perforated, metal-net body is sheathed in silicon resin and it takes one 100-watt E27 bulb. 15" H x 6.75" W x 11.5" L
Expert Opinion: A distinctive form gives a honeycomb quality to this lamp's ambient light, but it feels tippy. Bague is less successful for reading, since the light shines down to the base of the lamp but fails to push outward.
What We Think: Looking like an upended handbag, Bague cuts a lovely figure that looks simultaneously soft and hard and has a hand-hewn look along the edges. But the light is poorly directed, and the seams and orphan plug on the sides are unsightly.

Tripod table lamp by Christophe Pillet for Tronconi / $567 / www.ylighting.com
The Tripod table lamp's base is gray-painted metal, and the fabric shade comes in mocha or ecru. It requires three 40-watt candelabra base E14 bulbs. 12.5" H x 19.5" W
Expert Opinion: This is the most successful lamp for reading. It gives a warm, focused light. Its design is functional and adds to the ambience of the room but without having to announce itself loudly. I love that it's of a particular height. If you have other things going on in the same room, this won't diminish them.
What We Think: Three bulbs eliminate shadow and hot spots on the page, which is easier on the eyes. The strong tripod shape rendered at a small scale is unexpected and appealing. No Blanche DuBois here, just a good light.

Miss K by Philippe Starck for Flos / $192 / www.flosusa.com
Miss K comes in clear, red, yellow, blue, or silver and has a plastic frame, an opaline, polycarbonate internal diffuser that resembles a chalice, and an aluminized shade. She takes a single 100-watt E27 bulb. 16.8" H x 9.2" W
Expert Opinion: This lamp gives directed light to read by while also generating ambient light. The shade and stem are high enough that you don't get glare in your eyes. My only reservation is that I have to sit pretty close to the lamp itself in order to read.
What We Think: Like Philippe Starck, this little gal does work out of proportion to her size. For better or worse, kids will like its scale, which makes it feel more like a toy. ►

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Clockwise from left:

Bourgie by Ferruccio Laviani for Kartell / $287 / www.kartell.com
Possibly the first light made completely of polycarbonate in transparent or batch-dyed black. It takes three 40-watt E14 bulbs. 26.5" 28.5", or 30.4" H x 14.4" W
Expert Opinion: A lamp reminiscent of Italian Renaissance or baroque styles. In an academic way, someone has molded this old form into a modern medium. Its height and focused light make it a good reading lamp, but its ornateness demands its own special space—I can't imagine with what kind of décor this would be successful.
What We Think: Laviani's modern-retro conceit works, especially because the shade refracts while the lamp amplifies nicely. Dusty neoclassicism balances just so with plastic fantasticness.

Glo Ball T2 table lamp by Jasper Morrison / $930 / www.conran.com
Glo Ball's shade is made from a matte, hand-blown, opaline glass that perches atop a thick gray-painted steel base and stem over a die-cast aluminum support. Takes one 250-watt bulb to glo. 31.5" H x 17.7" W
Expert Opinion: This is a prominent lamp. It has a dimmer and distributes an even light over reading material, but it is a big, heavy piece of furniture that doesn't give you the confidence that it is stable. The unevenness of the globe, on which light is reflected, is attractive, but the gray stalk is anticlimactic and the switch a bit chintzy looking.
What We Think: We love the GloBall's lunar good looks—and the wax and wane of its seven-station dimmer and the strong, even light it sheds—but would hate to have to lift the weighty glass shade to change the bulb. We also agree the base looks tinny.

Nesso by Giancarlo Mattioli for Artemide / $279 / www.artemide.us
This injection-molded thermoplastic standing table or wall-mounting lamp is available in either white or orange. Nesso takes four 25-watt E12 bulbs. 13" H x 21" W
Expert Opinion: This beauty gives real character to a room; it's not shy. The biomorphic form is combined with a machine aesthetic, which is intriguing. It gives off a lot of ambient light, but you have to sit close to read by it, and because it's low, you might bump into it as you stand up.
What We Think: This icon, designed by Giancarlo Mattioli 40 years ago, holds firm on its truffly ground. Nesso gives a warm light to read by, so we don't mind snuggling our snouts up close to the source. ■

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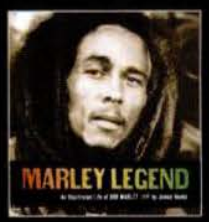

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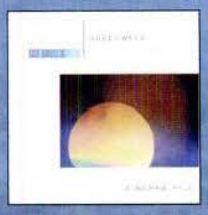

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Pallets to the People

Houses like the one shown below are being built by volunteers and residents during weeklong workshops organized by the World Hands Project, a nonprofit organization that provides housing for those in need around the world. Find out more information at www.worldhandsproject.org.

Nominate Nice Modernists at www.dwellmag.com.

In 2000, architect Alfred von Bachmayr and a group of builders ventured to the border town of Anapra, Mexico, to help design and build a home for a family whose house had burned down—a common occurrence in this area where noninsulated concrete-block and wood-pallet structures, sometimes finished with cardboard, are the norm. Von Bachmayr, one of the cofounders of Builders Without Borders and the founder and current director of the World Hands Project, initially thought straw-bale buildings would offer a practical alternative. But after constructing a few prototypes, he started to sense that the local community was not receiving this idea with open arms. He recalls, "I knew something was very wrong when I heard that kids were being made fun of for living in this new type of house."

Soon after, von Bachmayr called a community meeting with the locals he had befriended. "They told us that the straw-bale building process did not completely work for them. Incremental building is the norm there—adding on as money or supplies are found, sometimes taking up to ten years. A house that requires building in a finite amount of time just does not work for their culture." He continues, "The second reason for the lack of enthusiasm is getting the resources is a lot harder than it sounds, due to transportation issues." The meeting opened up a dialogue that led to the development of a new prototype that fuses pallet and straw construction. This system also allows for some existing buildings to be modified over time by stuffing the pallet walls with a clay and straw mixture to insulate them.

Von Bachmayr runs a firm specializing in low-cost, energy-efficient, sustainable design in Santa Fe, New Mexico, but his true passion lies in finding ways to apply his skills to the volunteer efforts for the residents of Anapra, who are mostly refugees from small villages trying to find work. "Our asking questions empowered them to be an integral part of the solution and it enriched our experience as well. When we started here we thought we were doing good for the world by building them homes, but really the houses ended up being just a vehicle to join our cultures and support each other as humans. When that happened, all our differences disappeared." ■

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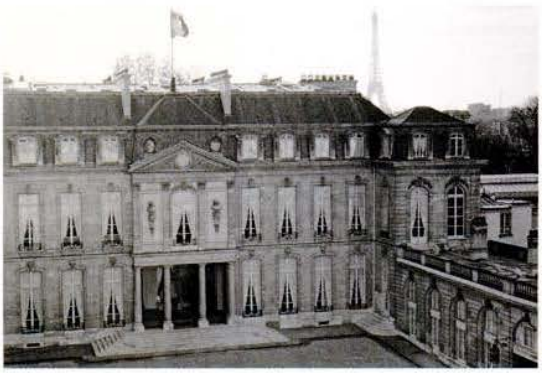
Story by Marc Kristal

Tracing an ARC

Is government sponsorship of design a recipe for mediocrity? Not in France, where the Atelier de Recherche et de Création has produced 42 years of innovative design and helped revive the French furniture industry. Who says big government is bad?



In 1964, Minister of Culture André Malraux (left)—a distinguished novelist with a lively interest in contemporary culture—proposed the ARC to Jean Coural, director of the Mobilier National, the institution that commissions France's official furnishings. President Georges Pompidou (center) loved the idea, and called upon the ARC's services to design his apartment in the Élysée Palace (right).

It was 1964, and André Malraux, the French minister of culture, had an idea.

Jean Coural, director of the Mobilier National—the institution that conserves and commissions furniture for some 600 public buildings in France and abroad—had just led the nation to a grand prize at the Milan Triennale, where he'd presented strikingly modern design work. In that heady moment, Malraux proposed that Coural create a special workshop that would infuse the Mobilier National's historic mission with new vitality by bringing in France's most innovative designers and encouraging them to experiment freely. He also suggested that these creations be made available to furniture companies, which could market them commercially.

Such a workshop, Malraux believed, would reinvigorate both French style and the country's design industry, which, according to Paris furniture dealer Stephane Danant, had been in the doldrums since the end of World War II. "Mostly, we were importing a lot of Scandinavian and American furniture," he says. "We didn't have big companies like Herman Miller or Knoll, and there was no policy for export."

So Malraux's proposal was smart—and not a little audacious. The Mobilier National was begun by Jean-Baptiste Colbert, Louis X IV's finance minister, and in many ways is about preserving the past. It holds roughly 200,000 furnishings, all meticulously maintained in seven restoration studios and, although available for use by government officials, the exclusive property of the state. The notion of placing this august institution at the service of the avant-garde—and mass-producing the results—was, at the least, counterintuitive.

Yet Malraux was simply updating what Colbert had done, which was to bestow royal patronage on the state's design houses, thereby increasing their business and establishing France at the center of international style. Coural embraced the idea, and the Atelier de Recherche et de Création (ARC)—the workshop of research and creation—was born.

The result, in the words of designer Mattia Bonetti, ▸

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Cathédrale dining table, 1980
designed by Pierre Paulin

Chauffeuse, 1994
designed by Christophe Pillet
for the French consulate,
Ho Chi Minh City

Fauteuil, 1971
designed by Pierre Paulin
for the apartment of Georges
Pompidou, Élysée Palace

Desserte (sideboard), 1971
designed by Pierre Paulin
for the apartment of Georges
Pompidou, Élysée Palace

Though the furniture can be edgy, the ARC development process remains traditional: A designer is selected by committee; technical drawings are submitted; the materials and production methods are agreed upon; and artist and artisans create a prototype.

"is an incredible legacy—not only for France, but for the world." The ARC has completed some 550 commissions across 42 years, furnishing presidential residences, embassies, and ministries, producing projects for lesser official settings, and using design for social benefit. It has encouraged the application of new forms, techniques, and materials—including polyurethane foam, carbon fiber, and industrial glass—to the art of furniture-making. And the atelier has given incomparable creative opportunities to over 100 designers, architects, and artists—a virtual Who's Who of postwar French style.

What's more, the ARC does it the old-fashioned way, producing approximately 12 pieces a year, with a staff of nine craftspeople, in a workshop within the Mobilier National's Paris compound. "It's quite traditional," says Erwan Bouroullec, who with his brother Ronan designed furnishings for use at international summits. "Except that you don't have to think about selling it."

That, of course, is a big exception—especially as it's combined with unlimited financial support and complete creative carte blanche. "I know it sounds shocking, but the Mobilier National, the only thing they have to do is to spend money," Bonetti says. "You can do all the fantasies and research you want." Even institutional vanity plays its part. "These craftsmen are the best in France," Bouroullec observes. "They have the ego, if they make something new, to find the right way to do it, to spend a long time if they need to." This unique mix of unrestrained innovation and *la belle ouvrage*—old-fashioned excellence—has been deeply beneficial. "It's morally and artistically rewarding," Bonetti says. "We are very lucky."

The designers have repaid the favor by shaping the look and life of France. A very partial project list includes the furnishing of embassies in Moscow, Washington, and Berlin and expositions in Osaka and Montreal; designs for the SNCF Corail train; a hospital bed, modular apartments for low-income housing, a prototype prison cell, vitrines for the Louvre, and, most famously, Pierre Paulin's 1971 Élysée Palace apartment for Georges Pompidou, a trippy fantasia of rooms within rooms ▸

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Context

A partial list of ARC designers and projects includes:

Édouard Albert
Baseball chair, 1968

Francesco Binfaré
Minotaure table, 2004

Ronan and Erwan Bouroullec
Furniture for international summits, 1998

Jacques Carchon
Modular bathroom, 1978–1979

César
Daybed, 1968

Marie-Christine Dorner
Furniture, Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity, 1991

Sylvain Dubuisson
Furniture, Ministry of Culture, 1991–1992

Étienne Fermigier
Chair (prototype), 1968

Olivier Gagnère
Furniture for a ministry, 1997–1999

Elizabeth Garouste and Mattia Bonetti
Furniture, International Exposition, Lisbon, 1996–1998

Kristian Gavoille
Transformable table, 1993

Pierre Guariche
Dagobert chair, 1968; Furniture, prefecture, Essonne, 1969

Kim Hamisky
Table nappe, 1978

Isabelle Hebey
Furniture, Ministry of Finance, 1987

Marc-Henri Hecht and Jean-Claude Dumas
Floral Silène chair, 1968

Axel Kufus
Furniture for an office, 2003

Claude and François-Xavier Lalanne
Transformable table, 1967

Roger Legrand
Furniture for a ministry or embassy, 1964

Serge Manzon
Secretary, 1978

Bernard Moïse
Prototype furniture for a prison cell, 1994

Lionel Morgaine
Escargot chair, 1968

Joseph-André Motte
Furniture, Val d'Oise, 1967

Olivier Mourgue
Furniture, International Exposition, Montreal, 1967; Caddy chair, Maison de la Culture, Rennes, 1968; Modular apartment project, 1969–1971

Pierre Paulin
Furniture, International Exposition, Osaka, 1970; Furniture/interior design, Élysée Palace, 1971

Richard Peduzzi
Furniture, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, 1989; Library chair, Opéra Garnier, 1990

Christophe Pillet
Furniture, embassy, Ho Chi Minh City, 1994

Elizabeth de Portzamparc
Furniture/interior design, embassy, Berlin, 2002

Andrée Putman
Furniture, Ministry of Finance, 1988

Alain Richard
U 86 chair, table with cigar humidor, 1968; Furniture/interior design, embassy, Moscow, 1979

Frédéric Ruyant
Desk and organizer, 2004

Martin Szekely
Furniture for international conferences, 1999–2000

Roger Tallon
Cryptogamme furniture, Grand Palais, 1968

Olivier Védrine
Furniture for a reception room, 1993, Vlanng table, 1993

Jean-Michel Wilmotte
Vitrines, Louvre Museum, 1998

Sofa and side table, 1972
designed by Pierre Paulin for the apartment of Georges Pompidou, Élysée Palace

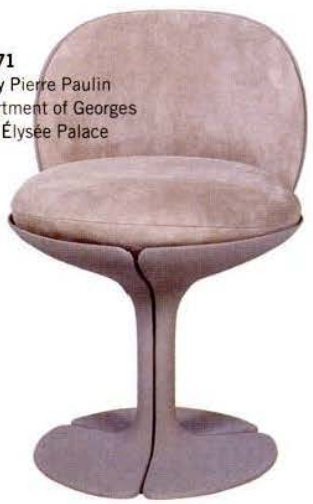
PHOTOS BY MARK HEITOFF/COURTESY DEMISCH DANANT

Chauffeuse "pouf à dossier," 1971
designed by Pierre Paulin
for Georges Pompidou

Desserte, 1971
designed by Pierre Paulin
for Georges Pompidou

Table basse lumineuse, 1971
designed by Pierre Paulin
for Georges Pompidou

Chaise, 1971
designed by Pierre Paulin
for the apartment of Georges
Pompidou, Élysée Palace



The French tradition of official patronage, says designer Mattia Bonetti, "leaves artists a bit sleepy, because they are not so confronted by economic reality." Yet according to Danant's partner, Suzanne Demisch, "Furniture companies couldn't afford to develop prototypes, and the designers would not have been able to do this work on their own."

furnished with Paulin's high-style take on the beanbag chair, which the president commissioned by saying, "There is no reason to allow the Italians a monopoly on innovation."

To be sure, the insouciant, revolutionary ARC of the '60s—wherein designers like Paulin and Olivier Mourgue investigated new materials, production techniques, and modes of living—has passed. "That was the most creative period," Danant says. "It was about creating models for people and industry, not furnishing an embassy's living room." Later, he believes, "the utopian goal of the atelier was lost"—a point reinforced by Bonetti when he says, of the elegant pieces he designed with Elizabeth Garouste in the '80s, "Our furniture was meant to represent power." Nor did the industry connection really take hold. Some ARC designs, notably by Paulin, Mourgue, Étienne Fermigier, and Joseph-André Motte, were issued commercially, but—no surprise—they were too costly to produce in quantity. And, says Danant, "The group of people who wanted modern, expensive design was very limited."

But popular taste caught up—and that is due, in some measure, to the influence of the ARC oeuvre. "You can't go directly from the Mobilier National to IKEA," observes New York furniture dealer Charles Fuller. "It takes two generations before these concepts become viable. But the seed is there, and ultimately new ideas and forms get incorporated into life." Indeed they do: Forty-two years after Milan, French design is once again preeminent, and its influence is comprehensive. Malraux—and Colbert—would be pleased.

Could an ARC happen here? It's unlikely, given that the arts in the U.S. are largely supported by private money. As for official taste, well, Frank Gehry won't be lining the Oval Office with titanium anytime soon. Still, one dreams of what an alliance between a home-grown atelier and American industry might produce. After all, observes Danant, "the Mobilier National helped two generations of designers move forward, to do things they wouldn't have been able to do. And," he adds reasonably, "these are not utopian projects—you can sit on them!" ■

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Story by Aaron Britt

Photos by Roy Zipstein

Miami Advice

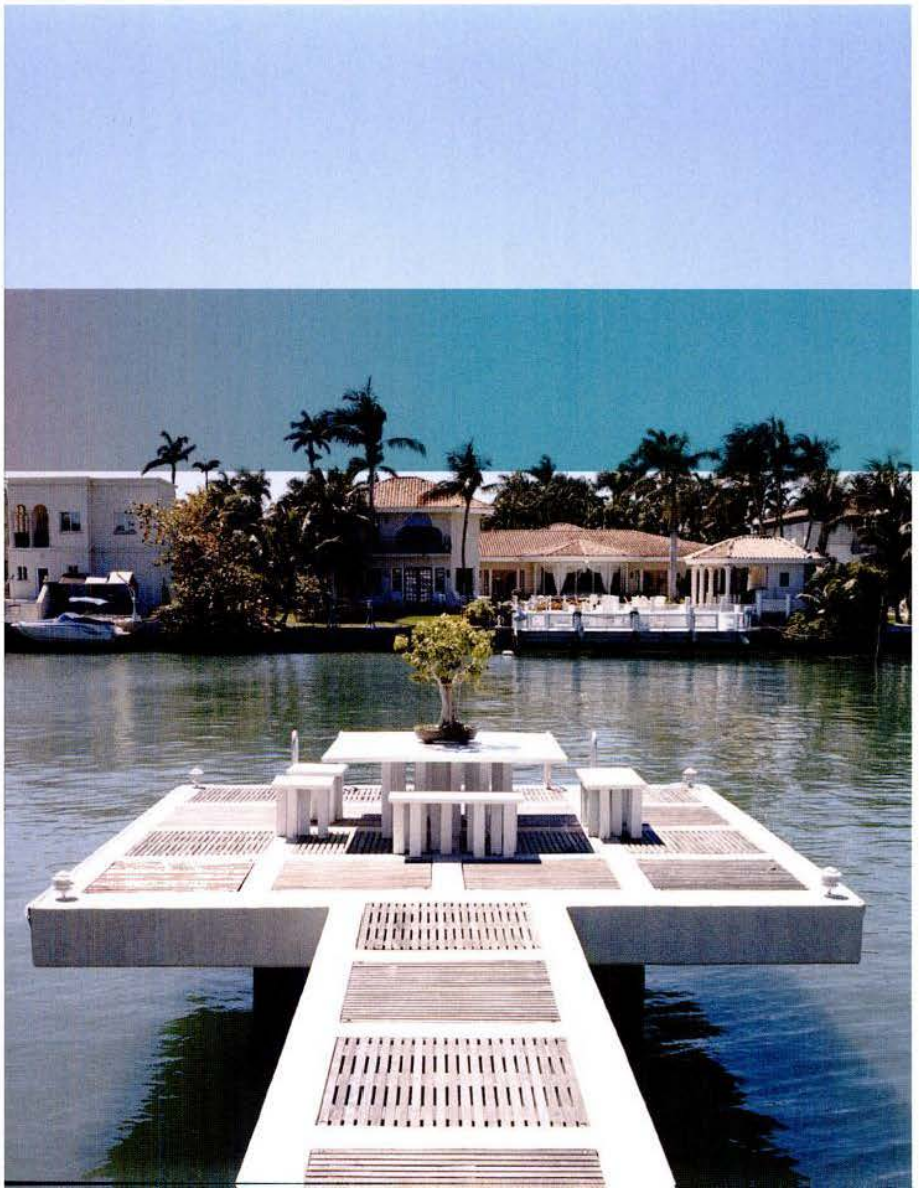
Beginning the tour in North Miami, at the recently opened permanent space of the Cisneros Fontanals Art Foundation (opposite), Cathy Leff (far right) readies her tourists for a long day of cycling and sight-seeing. A pier at the private Hochberg residence (below) typifies Miami's complete embrace of the outdoors during the warm spring months. In Miami, even the supermarkets have flair (below right).

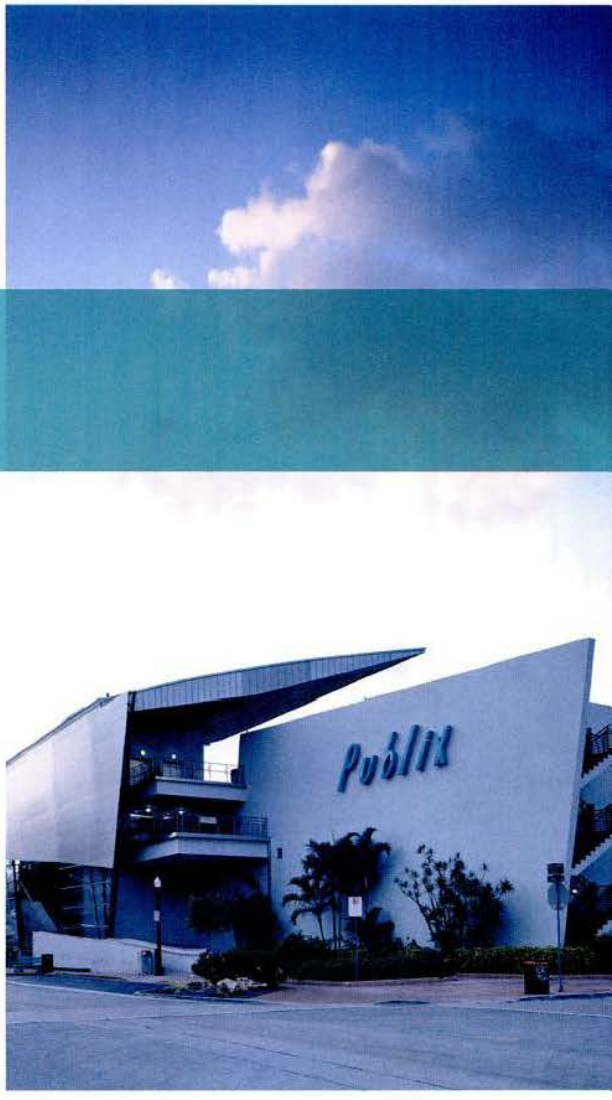
Miami is a matrix of man-made islands, causeways, and paved-over Everglades that has gotten by on a desirable climate, a thriving pan-Caribbean culture, and some of our nation's finest hucksterism. Born as a high-class playground—the original polo fields are now golf courses—Miami first boomed at the beginning of the 20th century. Wondering how to attract vacationers and residents to a place without a history, Miami's developers lit upon a grand idea: Build the place like it had one. Mediterranean revival abounds, Spanish colonial holds court, and swimming pools are cut to look more like Pompeii than Palm Beach. Even the oranges were imports, cultivated to convince railroad baron Henry Flagler to extend the rails all the way to Florida's tip.

Cathy Leff, director of Miami Beach's Wolfsonian–Florida International University Museum, loves Miami in part for all its flashy invention. But she says that big bucks and big construction are adding some serious substance to her subtropical city. Miami was, and for some still is, a winter destination, but this current boom is about more than just another faux-Deco hotel.

The city of Miami, located on the Florida mainland, sprawls inland from its downtown waterfront as city neighborhoods eventually bleed into the first ring of suburbs. The more urban Miami Beach is actually a separate city. Just one of the many islands in Biscayne Bay, it is connected to the mainland by a web of causeways and is home to some of Miami's most fabulous hotels, Art Deco architecture, and beaches.

Defying conventional Miami wisdom, and its prestige-loving car culture, Leff convinced us to join her on a two-day bike tour exploring the city streets, galleries, delicious dives, one-stop Haitian voodoo shops, and even a night club still bumping at nearly noon (we're 99 percent sure we spotted Vanilla Ice). We covered 40 miles and 11 islands, and used up an entire tube of sunblock. ▸





Miami, Florida

The Bacardi Building (below) is one of Leff's favorite buildings in Miami. Designed by Enrique Gutierrez of the Puerto Rican firm Sacmag International, with ceramic murals by the Brazilian artist Francisco Brennand, the Bacardi Building, built in 1963, houses offices, a restaurant, and a museum open to the public. Behind the tower is a 1973 addition designed by Ignacio Carrera-Justiz, with glass tapestries by Frenchmen Gabriel and Jacques Loire.

Miami isn't really a cycling city—half the time the streets had no bike lanes. Why did you have us risk life and limb to see it this way?

While there are pockets of the greater Miami area that are urban and very walkable (i.e., South Beach), it is a city that is mostly experienced in an automobile with the windows up and air-conditioning on. The cultural tourist or curious resident knows how to access the great cultural and natural resources we have to offer—museums, gardens, parks, beaches—but there is so much more to discover [and bikes are an ideal way to do so].

Tell us about the Wolfsonian Museum.

The Wolfsonian's collection mirrors the period during which Miami developed. We're interested in the multiple stories that architecture, decorative, design, and propaganda arts tell us about social, cultural, political, and technological history. We try to see what objects can tell us about cultural change and the times in which they were created. One current exhibit tackles 20th-century propaganda posters; another is the hotel designs of Schultze & Weaver. The Miami Biltmore and the Waldorf-Astoria are just two of their contributions to the luxury-hotel industry. ▸

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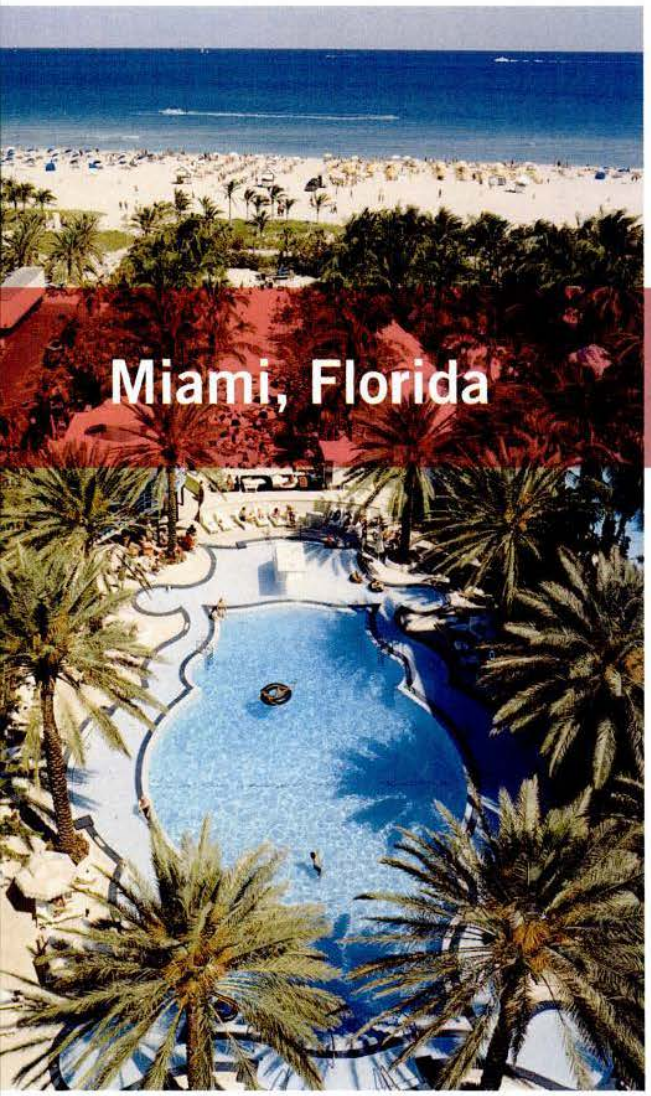
The Raleigh Hotel (below) was originally designed and built in 1940 by Lawrence Murray Dixon. It is renowned for its Art Deco elegance and its pool just a short walk from the beach. André Balazs recently completed a thorough renovation, and the Raleigh is now a sister hotel to the Chateau Marmont in Hollywood and the Mercer in New York.

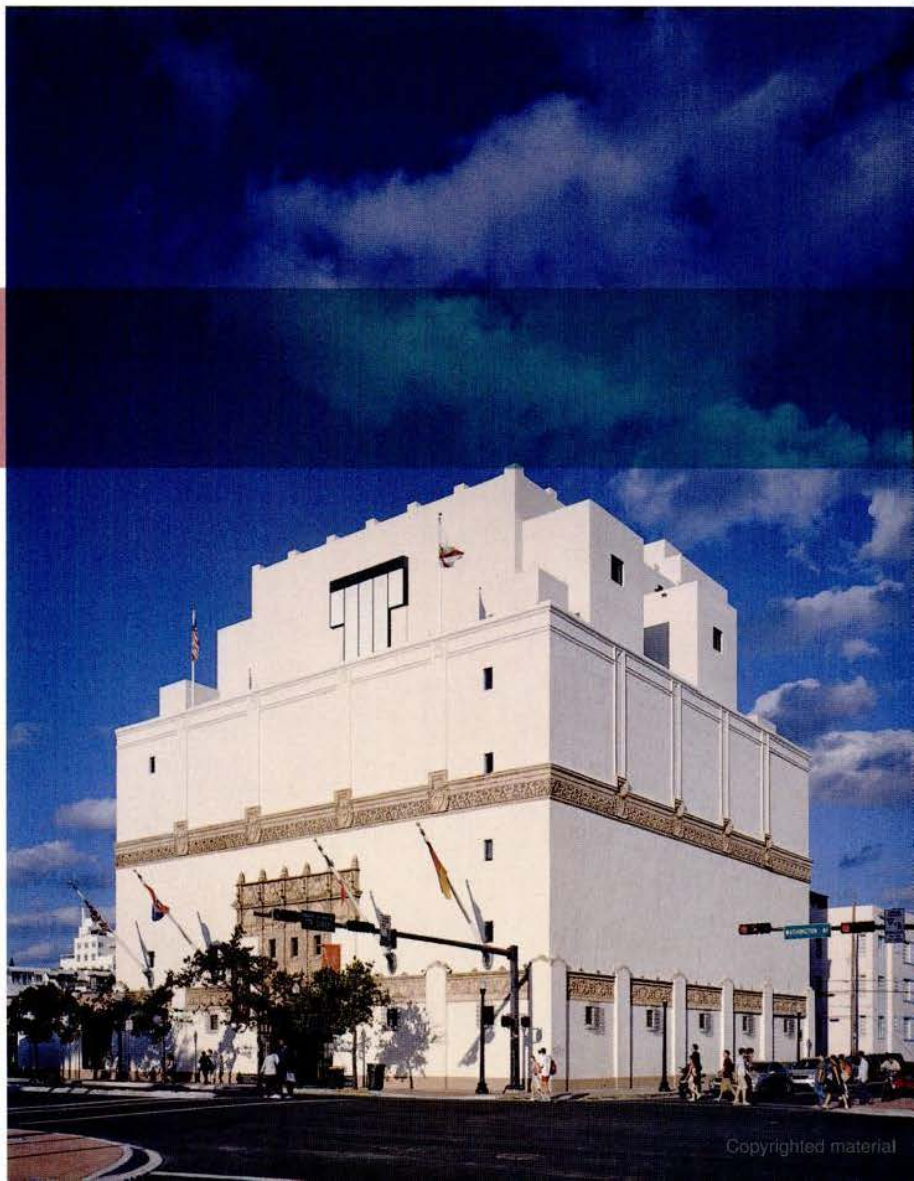
The Wolfsonian Museum (below right) in Miami Beach was founded in 1986 to display Mitchell Wolfson Jr.'s huge collection of decorative and propaganda arts—including furniture, paintings, prints, books, and other decorative and industrial objects. In 1997 it became part of the Florida International University and is now a full-blown research center as well.

What are your favorite buildings here?
One of my favorites is the Bacardi Building north of downtown Miami, at Biscayne and Northeast 21st. Bacardi has always realized the power of architecture in branding both a product and a company. They have built great buildings in Havana and Santiago also. The Bacardi Building is the best example of the International Style meets the subtropics.

And the famous Art Deco hotels?
The "famous" buildings are the authentic Art Deco buildings, the Art Deco historic district, and what we call MiMo (Miami Modern). I'm a modernist and a preservationist, and I believe we should protect the buildings of the past, but new architecture should reflect our own times and aspirations. The good is that the change we are now starting to see is the recognition that contemporary architecture really can be compatible within a historic district. I think architecture has been (and will continue to be) less successful when we have tried to emulate or reinvent the past, and Miami definitely has its fair share of faux Art Deco and Mediterranean revival architecture. But I do love the real deal like the Fontainebleau and Eden Roc hotels on Collins Avenue in South Beach, both by Morris Lapidus. ►



Miami, Florida



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The three-story outdoor cutaway living room by Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt (below) announces the entrance to South Beach's design district.

Miami, Florida

Miami has some funny moving architecture—the cruise ships that come into town. My apartment overlooks the Port of Miami, and I love getting up early on Saturday and Sunday to watch the cruise ships—or horizontal skyscrapers—as they arrive, completely dominating the downtown landscape. They are great visual additions to the skyline and contribute to the excitement of this growing urban activity.

The sandwich I had at Enriqueta's was great. I'd love to eat my way through Miami. Enriqueta's is a delicious little Cuban spot just north of downtown, and just one of hundreds of small, fun, and mostly family-run restaurants. A great way to experience Miami's cultural diversity is through its culinary culture. We have incredible Cuban, Nicaraguan, Peruvian, Brazilian, and Argentine food.

The Cuban influence on Miami is well documented, but the Little Haiti neighborhood struck me as pretty vibrant itself. Miami is such an extraordinary confluence of cultures, but sometimes you have to get out of South Beach to see it. By exploring the neighborhoods and the specialty shops within them, you learn so much ▸

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The Aqua development on Allison Island (below and below right) is the brainchild of South Beach's development impresario Craig Robins. A kind of modernist, New Urbanist experiment, the eight-and-a-half acre island features structures by Emanuela Frattini Magnusson, Duany Plater-Zyberk and Company, Hariri and Hariri, Alison Spear, Alexander Gorlin, and Walter F. Chatham, among others.

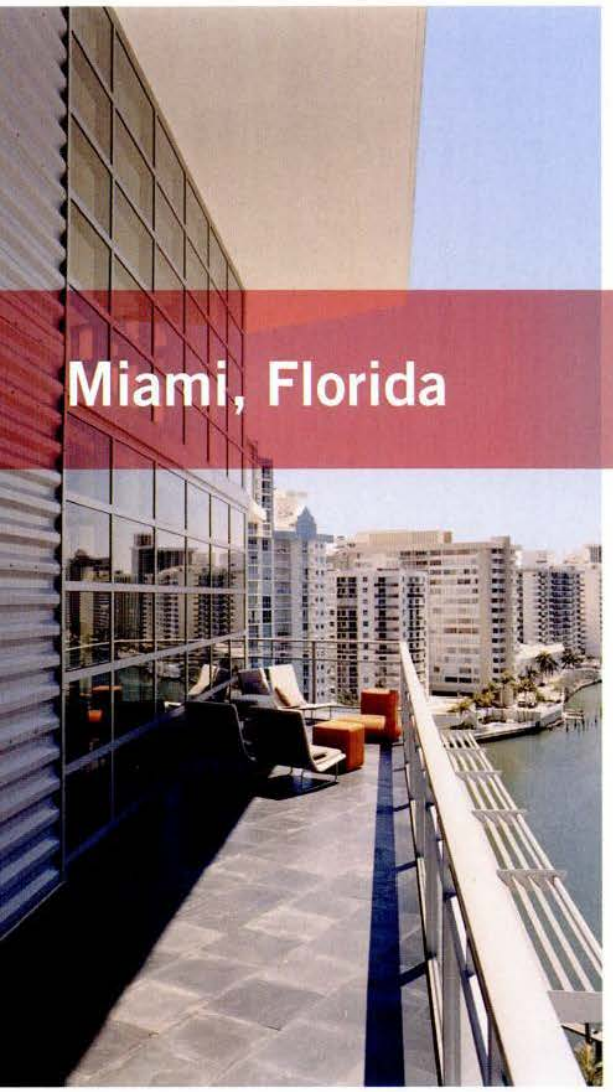
about the cultures that populate the city. The botanicas in Little Haiti, the heart of which is around Northeast Second and 54th Street, are just an example for getting a sense of the rich Haitian culture here. I've collected religious objects, so I love shops where you get the saints right alongside the Haitian voodoo.

The Wynwood neighborhood and the Design District in Miami are hot spots for contemporary art. What should we see?

The Rubell and Margulies collections are great in Wynwood, as is the Bakehouse Art Complex, Emmanuel Perrotin Gallery, Rocket Projects, and MOCA at Goldman Warehouse. Try Placemaker and the Moore Space in the Design District. I also like the Fred Snitzer and Bernice Steinbaum galleries.

It seemed like everywhere we went we ran into some type of event or festival. The massive Winter Music Conference throughout Miami and Miami Beach and the many street fairs in Little Haiti come to mind. Is Miami always so bustling?

There is always a party or festival going on—we just happened to run into those two, but I would bet there were others we missed. It seems like there's a lot starting to ▶



Miami, Florida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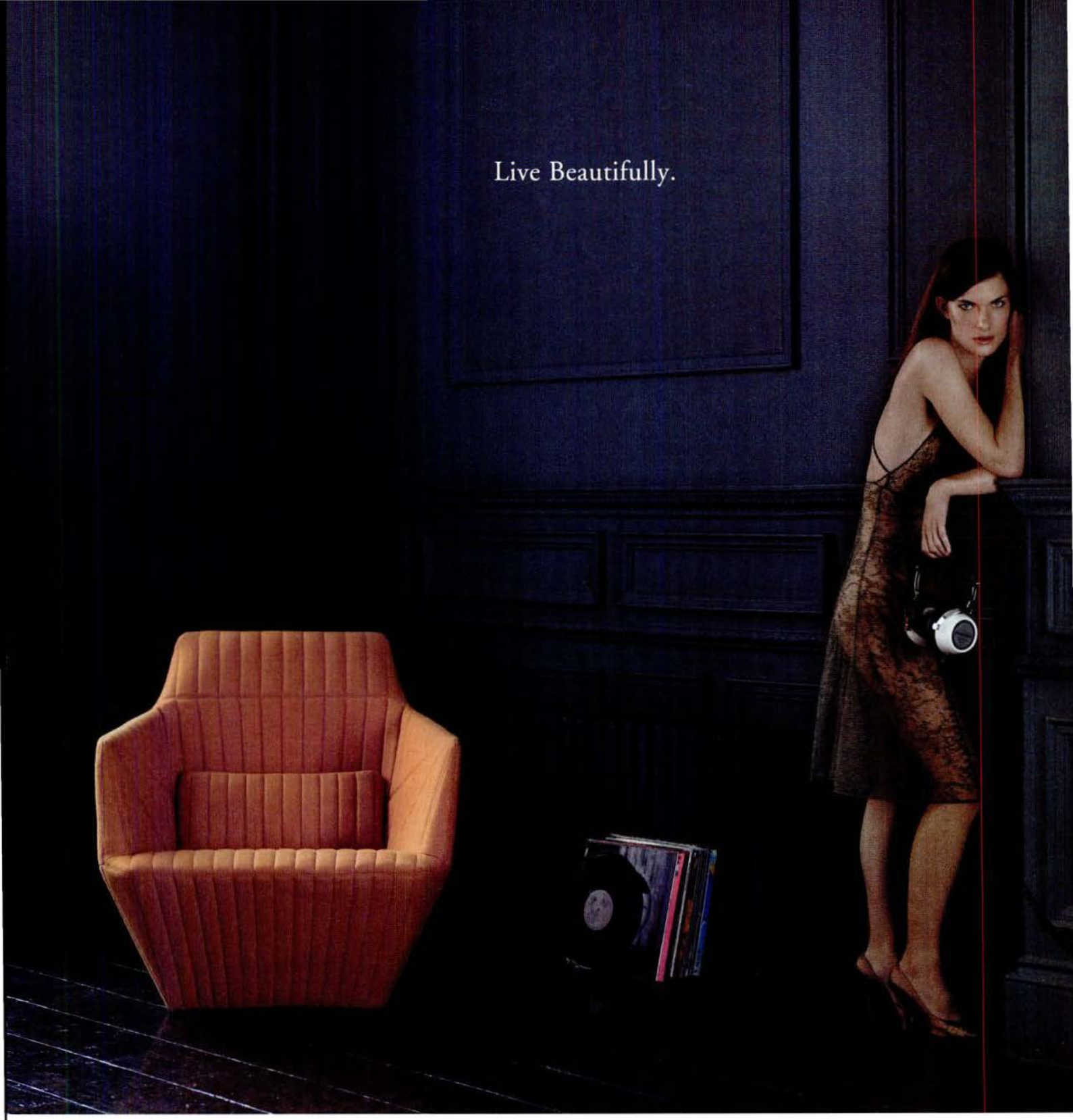
Miami, Florida

The soon-to-be-completed Performing Arts Center designed by Cesar Pelli in downtown Miami provides a fitting end to Leff's tour and a perfect beginning for a re-energized business district.

happen downtown too. For the first time, there is massive residential development in the downtown area that will transform what was once a dark working center into a great downtown. In addition to Museum Park (the new Miami Art Museum/Museum of Science complex) and the Performing Arts Center, over the next several years we will see a new Frank Gehry Soundspace for the New World Symphony and new Herzog & de Meuron and Enrique Norten buildings here in Miami Beach. And our own architects—Arquitectonica, Chad Oppenheim, and Rene Gonzalez, to name just a few—continue to add to the skyline.

Miami is a pretty young city. It didn't really take off until the 20th century.

Though we have the oldest European settlements in the U.S., the state only took form when Henry Flagler extended the railroad to Miami in 1896. Florida understood the need to promote the state's image to lure tourists and investors. This can be seen in the invention of new architectural styles that communicated centuries-old appeal in then-new cities like Coral Gables or Palm Beach, or through the images the state exported at the 1933 and 1939 World's Fairs. They came, they built, and they are still coming. But this time there is substance behind the images. ■



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ICFF EDITORS AWARDS

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I SALONI MILAN

At this year's I Saloni in Milan two topics repeatedly came up: the election (Silvio Berlusconi, the incumbent, ended up losing in a tight race) and the debut of architect Massimiliano Fuksas's new fairgrounds. Daily, thousands packed into Milan's subway for the 40-minute ride out to the glass-canopied halls. Once there, they found a staggering 5,704,872.5 square feet of the latest in design.

A Panier by the Bouroullec Brothers for Kartell We're not sure if the Bouroullecs' new "basket" is bigger than a bread box, but given its ribbed structure, this is no place to store baked goods. However, we do imagine that this storage bin cum table cum tray will offer a litany of other uses. www.kartell.com ►

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A Pavo Real
by Patricia Urquiola for Driade
Although it looks like the chair your grandparents might have brought back from Uruguay in 1934, Pavo Real is an updated take on classic wicker craftsmanship. The expanded cross section, with its geometric weave, has a unique op-art–like quality. www.driade.com

B Antibodi
by Patricia Urquiola for Moroso
Shown as a chaise or lounge chair, the prototype Antibodi was a hit across the board—thanks in part to its reversible cover constructed from triangular cells. Facing upward, the cover creates a feminine floral pattern. Reversed, it reveals the chair's geodesic form and severe masculinity. www.moroso.it

C T Table
by Patricia Urquiola for Kartell
Urquiola tells Dwell that "T-Table stands for transgenic table. It is a technological fossil." In Kartell's massive, museumlike booth the T-table's irregular organic form stood out amid the decades of classic Italian plastic on display. www.kartell.com ▶


A

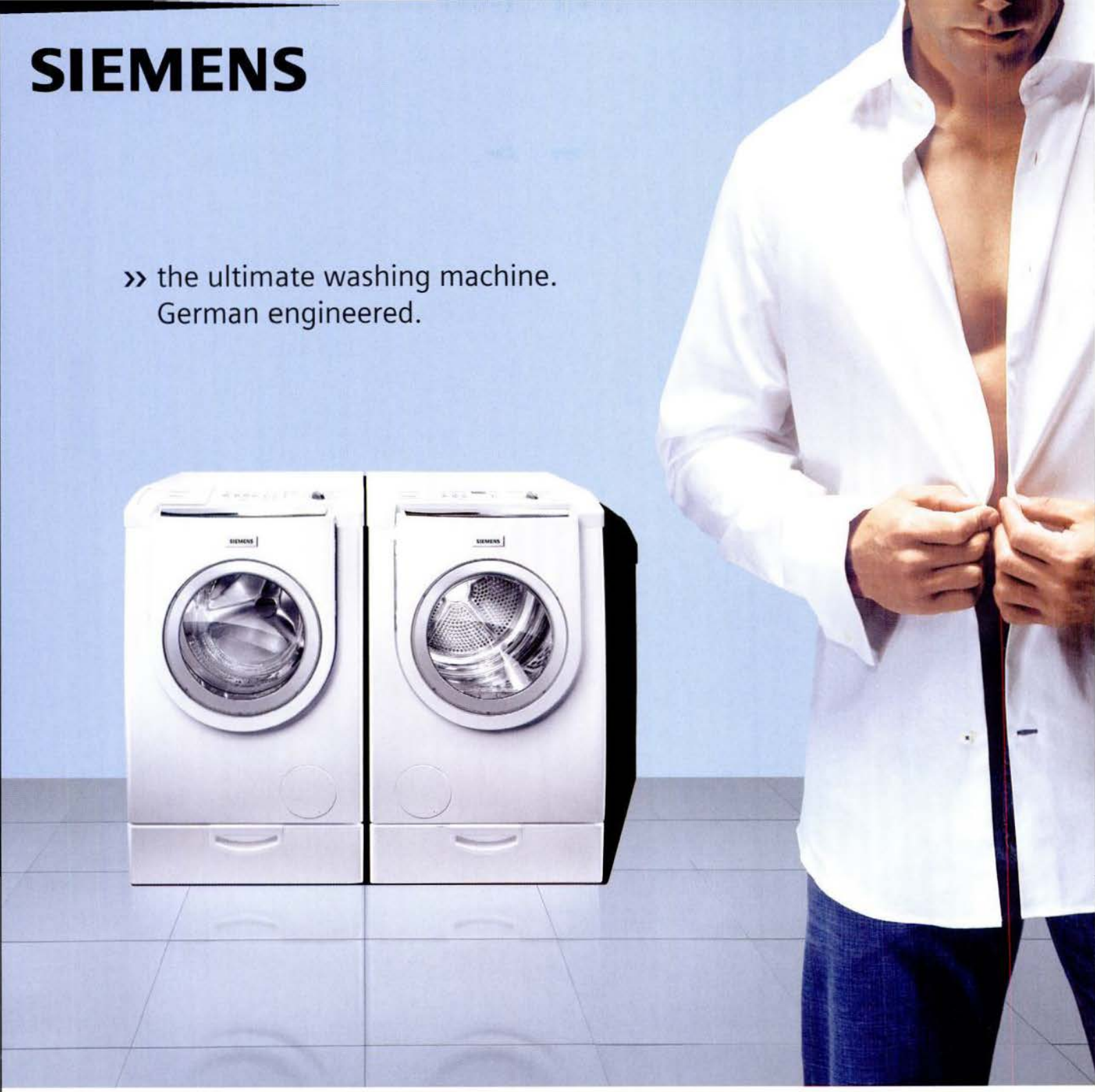
In Milan, you couldn't turn around without running into Patricia Urquiola (well, one of her designs at least). In addition to the items pictured here, she also designed Moroso's booth (the trippy "Starship Dragonsuite") and new sofa "Shanghai Tip," a chaise lounge for Molteni & C, "Pear" sanitary ware for Agape, the "by Side XL" folding screen for Bissaza, and the Hollow chair and Shift shelving for B&B.


B


B


C

SIEMENS



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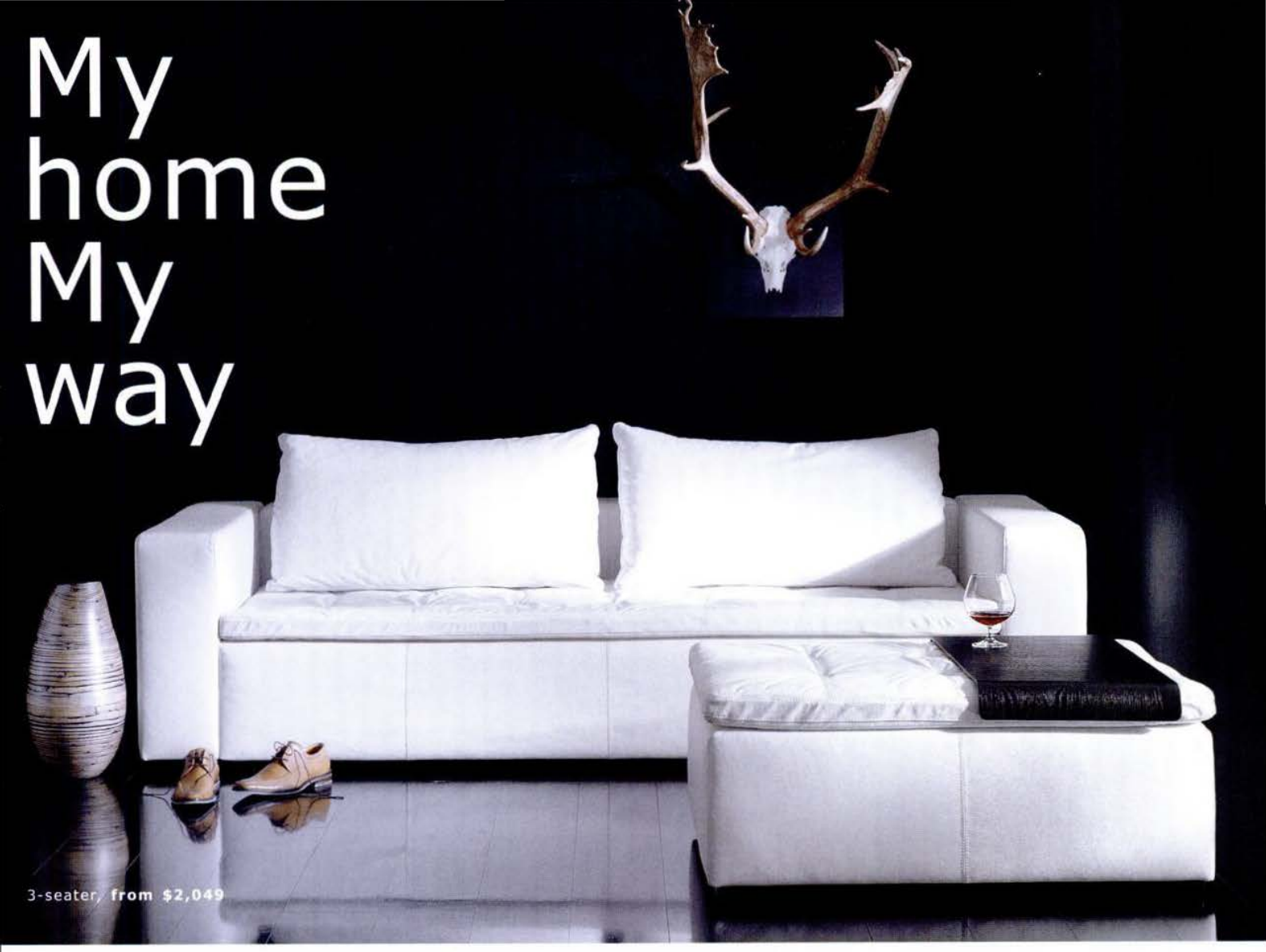
A Biscuit
by Studio Job for Tichelaar
Away from the bustling fair, we found Biscuit—the new ceramics collection commissioned by the Netherlands' oldest company (Tichelaar, established in 1594)—from some of the country's youngest designers. Studio Job created nine plates with unique relief patterns (featuring everything from clowns to the White House to sperm) and five centerpieces, each with a unique function (vase, box, candleholder, cake plate, and lantern). www.tichelaar.nl

B 12 Armchairs
by various for Nextmaruni
Yes, there are only ten armchairs in this picture, but Jasper Morrison and SANAA were still hard at work on the last two at time of writing. These chairs—made from maple, oak, and beech—demonstrate Nextmaruni's remarkable craftsmanship and, with the collaboration of Japanese, Italian, English, and Thai designers, the new world order of design. (Is there a true "international style"?) www.nextmaruni.com ▶

My home My way



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A Trampoline and Ripple Chair by Issey Miyake and Ron Arad for APOC and Moroso
What could be better than to have Issey Miyake create a piece of clothing that either the Ripple chair or you can wear, obscuring the somewhat unremarkable Arad design underneath? www.moroso.it

B Polar Tables by Nendo for Swedese
Featuring varying patterns created by polarized glass, Nendo's neatly nesting Polar tables are more fun than one would ever expect a set of tables to be. www.swedese.com

C Perished by Studio Job for Dilmos
Riffing on extinction, the piquant Studio Job presented an exquisite furniture collection made from laser-cut tropical hardwoods. The symmetrical skeletal inlay patterns (check out the hornbill) that adorn the bench, table (shown), screen, cabinet, and lamp are at once distinctively historical and pre-scient. www.dilmos.com

D The Rocs by the Bouroullec Brothers for Vitra
The Vitra booth was largely constructed of these enigmatic Rocs, fabric-covered cardboard constructions that snap together like a kit of parts and further the brothers' exploration of micro-architecture. What, you ask, exactly are they for? We'll get back to you. www.vitra.com ►


A


B


C

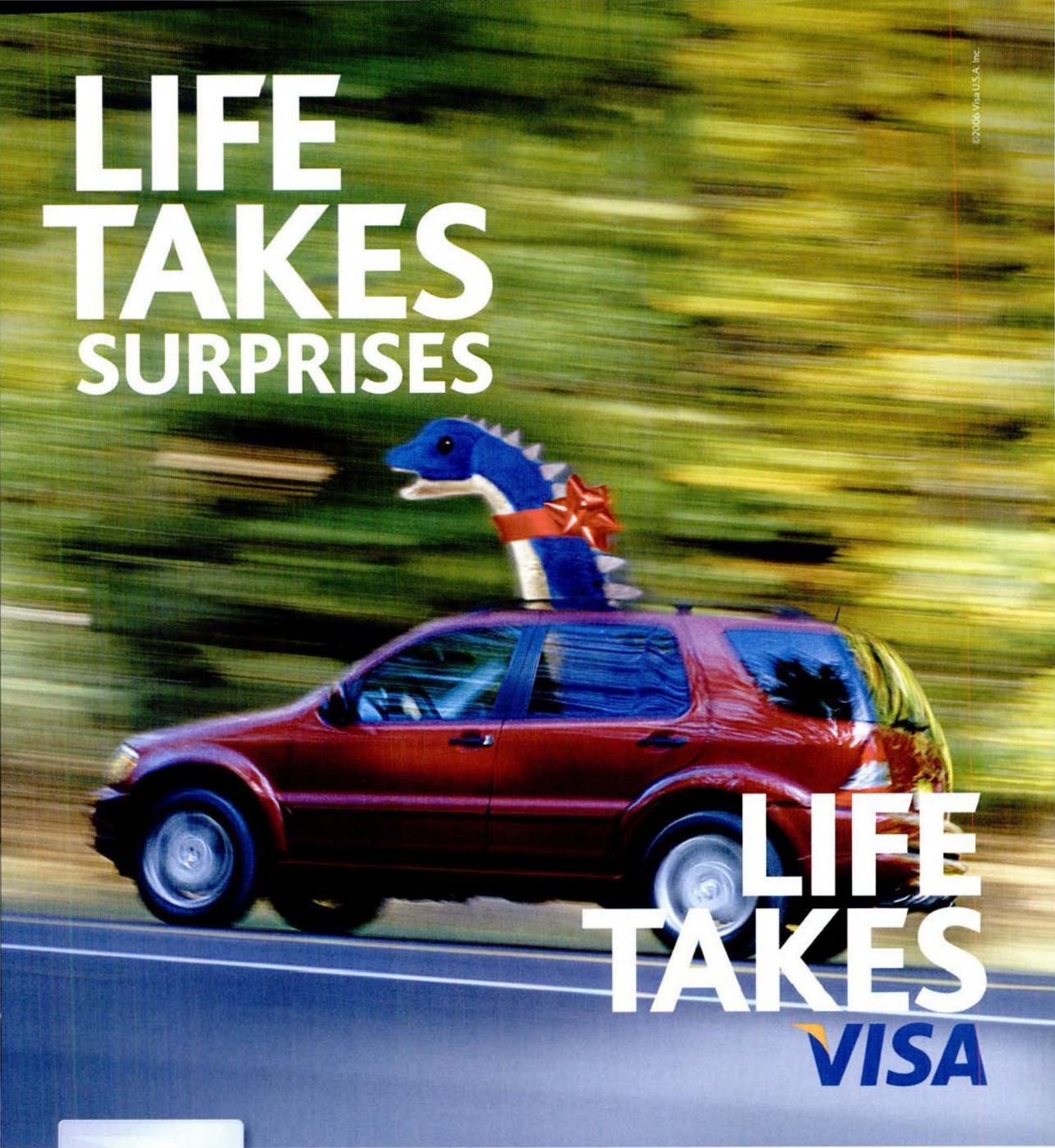

D

What We Saw Milan

A Z. Island by Zaha Hadid for DuPont Corian
We thought blobitecture had gone the way of acid-washed denim, but Hadid's Z. Island Corian kitchen proves it has just been lingering in some dark corner. We tried to see if the faucet was operational, but it came off in our hand with no sign of plumbing. The integrated iTunes did seem to work, however. www.corian.com

B Brasilia Tables by the Campana Brothers for Edra
Introduced last year as prototypes and now in production, the Campanas' latest tables (available in three different colors and sizes) are made from shards of irregularly cut glass. Looking sharp! www.edra.com

C Box by James Irvine for MDF
Available in three configurations (Media, Office, and Multi), Irvine's Box struck us as a pleasant, uncluttered way to deal with clutter. Day-Glo Plexiglas dividers bring a splash of color to the white rotating cabinets. www.mdfitalia.it ■



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Untitled, 2002 (construction site), 4 x 7 feet
This massive man-made site seemed much larger in Roth's memory than his first photo showed, so he mirrored the image and filled in bits and pieces. The perspective has three vanishing points, discernible on close inspection, which create a strangely oversized impression.

More Than Meets the Eye

German photographer Lukas Roth lives with his wife, painter Divna Omaljev, and their four children in a blocky house designed by now defunct b&k+b,m architects in Cologne's up-and-coming Ehrenfeld neighborhood. When I visited the family at home one evening last January, Omaljev was slicing fresh mushrooms in the lime-green custom kitchen designed by their friend Joep Van Lieshout, and the children were fully absorbed in making pencil drawings.

Roth took me on a little walkabout between the study and the studio, where several of his large-format photographs hang on the bare concrete walls. His pictures are made possible by the not-so-new technology of Photoshop, though it takes a keen eye to realize that they have been manipulated. After studying photography at the École Nationale Supérieure de la Photographie in Arles, France, he worked for a decade as an architectural photographer, but recently began making art photography based on the notion that the true atmosphere of a given place can best be captured by combining many images into one. In 2004, Roth won the prestigious Otto Steinert Award, and nowadays his photos are represented by Cologne's Martin Kudlek Gallery.

How did you go from architectural photography to the sorts of pictures you make now?
In my studies I was interested in urban scenes where people look like tiny stage actors. There'd be one corner of a streetscape that was really interesting, but in another part something was happening that was going to destroy the whole image, like a big truck backing up. I sometimes worked with cutouts and things like that—I took lots of pictures of the same place at the same time of day and then pulled bits together in one composition. In a sense it was a condensation of time. But back then, there wasn't a way to do it digitally, and I couldn't get the right level of illusion.

Your artwork must have really benefited from the '90s technology boom.
When all this computer stuff, Photoshop and whatever, came into play, I immediately started using it. But there was a financial problem: In the '90s it was still very pricey to get scans done. For instance, if I wanted to put a picture together out of 20 scans, I had to pay the lab over 2,000 euros. In the end I had to buy a good scanner for my commissioned work because everyone wanted scans. ▸

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Untitled, 2005
(library), 5 1/4 x 10 3/4 feet
Roth raised a ground-floor Cologne library to great heights by placing a view of a modified version of Frankfurt's skyline out the windows. About ten pictures comprise this image, not including the hundreds used to make the cityscape.

Untitled, 2002
(woods), 4 x 8 feet
These woods are inaccessible to service vehicles so a lot of cut lumber has been left there. Roth was attracted by the juxtaposition of the green lichen on the trees and the lines of discarded lumber, so he exaggerated them.

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Untitled, 2005
(Pont du Gard), 5 x 6 1/2 feet
This view of bathers beneath an aqueduct in France was made from over 400 individual shots. The angle of view, looking down to the horizon, would require a wide-angle lens to capture, while the scale and detail of people would require a telephoto lens. Montage effectively brings these two lens capacities into one picture. The shadow of the bridge's arc, not really present at this time of year and day, is constructed.

After I got the scanner in 2002, I really started to chomp into my own work.

I think my work was also informed by a deception I'd noticed [when] taking architectural pictures of certain places. There was a very strong atmosphere I'd feel in a place that the picture would miss. So I was trying to find a technique to get back that impression. Being able to capture any architectural environment can be difficult, because while we are there we are constantly in motion—looking around, crossing, walking. So we get many impressions that add up together in our memory. One picture might record a particular aspect of the scene, not the whole thing like we would remember it.

So how do you actually record your memory of the place? How do you decide what a picture should look like?
Often, after I notice that a photo of a place didn't capture what I thought it should, I go back and make sketches with a digital camera. I take many pictures, and then on the computer I mount them together quickly to get an idea. Then I compare that image with my memory of the place, and think about what I should change. I figure out which parts of the image I forgot in the first go. For example, when I photographed the bathers from the Pont du Gard, I learned from the sketch phase that I needed more photos looking down on people from the bridge above, to montage with images looking straight ahead.

I try to make the montage look like it might be a real, unmanipulated picture. I want the spectator to trust the image—which exacerbates his irritation when he finds out it's manipulated. If he knows the place or is extra-observant, he might realize that some element can't be correct. It's important to me that the photos make people think about the picture and their perception.

You once said you don't like it when, upon seeing your photos, people ask, "Where was that taken?" Why?
Because what matters to me is the feeling of the place, not where it is. And nowadays photos are often conglomerations of different places. Many people still believe photography is always authentic. Even though people know that in advertising, photos are usually manipulated, most still have a subconscious idea that they document something real. But my children, because they see how the pictures are done here, they are always questioning photos. It may be a process of change of generation. This feeling that a picture is a document from a specific place might fade with time. ■

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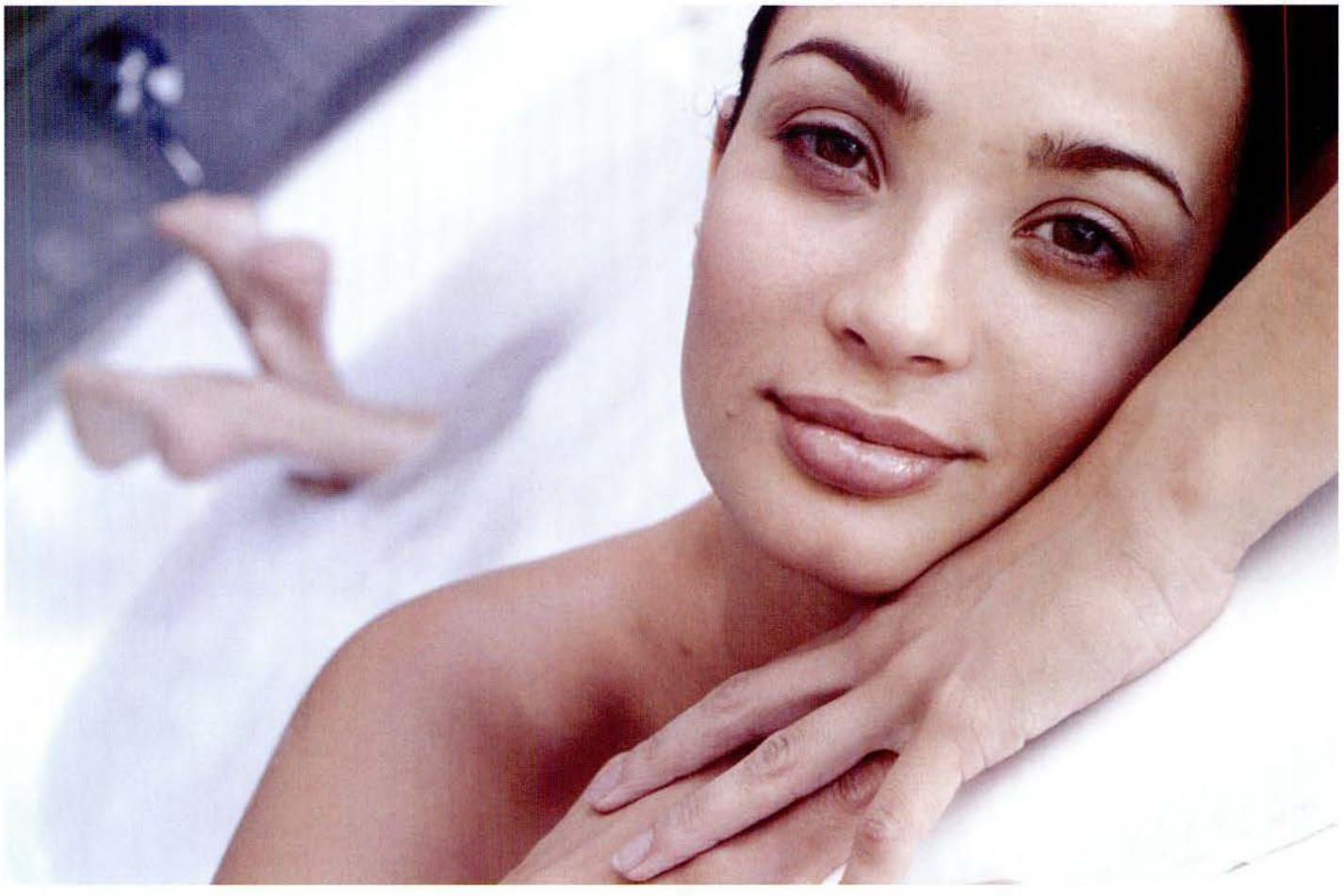

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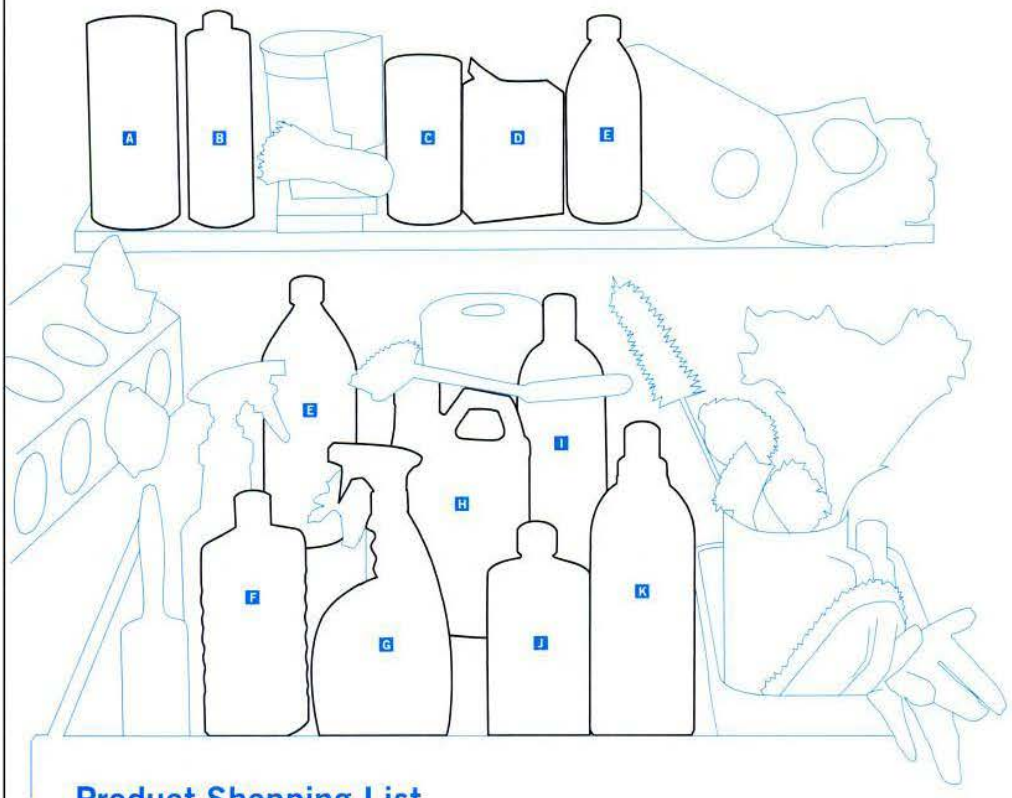
—Sarah Coughey, Madison, Wisconsin

Whether you shop at Piggly Wiggly or Whole Foods, it's tough to resist the promise of better living through modern chemistry implied by the cheerful packaging of household cleaning products. But having a clean home doesn't require you to have an arsenal of industrial-strength chemicals. You can safely and effectively clean almost every surface with three simple ingredients: baking soda, distilled white vinegar, and liquid castile soap.

If you prefer the convenience of ready-made, brand-name products, check out *The Housecleaner's Guide to Eco-Friendly Cleaning*, available online from the nonprofit group WAGES (www.wagescooperatives.org). It includes a list of the top 20 toxic ingredients in everyday cleaning products. Not surprisingly, chlorine and ammonia make the dis-honor roll, as do butoxyethanol and petroleum distillates. Your best bet may be to head to a natural-food store that screens its goods for safety and is more likely to stock brands like Seventh Generation and Ecover, both of which disclose all ingredients.

One last thing: If cleanliness is next to godliness, disposability is the devil's handiwork. Resist the seductive lure of single-use mops and pretreated disposal wipes—those use-'em and lose-'em products will be hogging space in landfills long after we have turned to dust. ■



Product Shopping List

A SafeChoice Safety Clean
www.afmsafecoat.com

B Liquid castile soap (Trader Joe's, Dr. Bronner's, or any brand of pure castile soap)

C Bon Ami cleanser
www.bonami.com

D Arm & Hammer Baking Soda
www.armandhammer.com

E Distilled white vinegar (Heinz or any brand)

F Earth Friendly Creamy Cleanser / www.ecos.com

G Seventh Generation Free & Clear All Purpose Cleaner
www.seventhgeneration.com

H Mrs. Meyer's Clean Day
www.mrsmeyers.com

I Vermont Soapworks Liquid Sunshine
www.vermontsoap.com

J Citra-Solv Multipurpose Cleaner / www.citra-solv.com

K Ecover Natural Floor Soap
www.ecover.com

Breaking New Ground

In the late fall of 2004, the Dwell Home II Design Invitational was announced, with the goal of establishing a model for sustainable home building in the 21st century. Los Angeles residents Glen Martin and Claudia Plasencia offered up their plot of land in Topanga Canyon as the testing ground, and Escher GuneWardena Architecture was selected to build the winning design: a 2,000-square-foot home two miles from the Pacific Ocean.

Upon receiving design approval from the California Coastal Commission in late 2005, we were hopeful for a spring 2006 ground-breaking. But as the process stalled in the plan-check phase, and time-consuming corrections were anticipated, it became clear that summer was a more realistic target. Still, everyone involved was ready for a party. So, rather than bringing people to the building site in Topanga Canyon, we decided to bring the site to the people—sort of.

Working with the Haworth showroom in Los Angeles, we invited Dwell readers to come and learn more about the project and meet the architects and homeowners. Over 400 people showed up on a Sunday evening to take in all the information and enjoy some amazing food and drink. After the screening of a five-minute film (www.dwellmag.com/dwellhome) that presented the concepts behind the design (and the people behind the concepts), there was a panel discussion with the architects and homeowners—led by Dwell's Los Angeles editor Frances Anderton—followed by questions from the guests.

Most queries centered around various design concepts, including the green roof, the sun screens, and the wastewater treatment system—and the feasibility of these design elements becoming a normal part of American residential building in the future. While the team wasn't able to definitively answer whether or not all future residential design will be inherently green, Frank Escher did offer the following in the film, summing up everyone's hopes for Martin and Plasencia's new home: "Anytime you are building something you are destroying. Every architectural intervention is a destruction in a way. And I think it's the obligation of the architect to make sure these interventions happen as intelligently as possible, and as carefully as possible." ■

In Dwell's film, *Breaking New Ground*, Frank Escher points out the entrance to Glen Martin and Claudia Plasencia's future home (above left) and explains how the home will fit on the site in Topanga Canyon (left).

Views of the site looking west (top) and northeast (above) reveal the rural feel. "Topanga is gorgeous," Plasencia says. "It's naturally beautiful and Escher GuneWardena's design integrates that into the plan."

PHOTOS COURTESY BRIAN POLLZZIE

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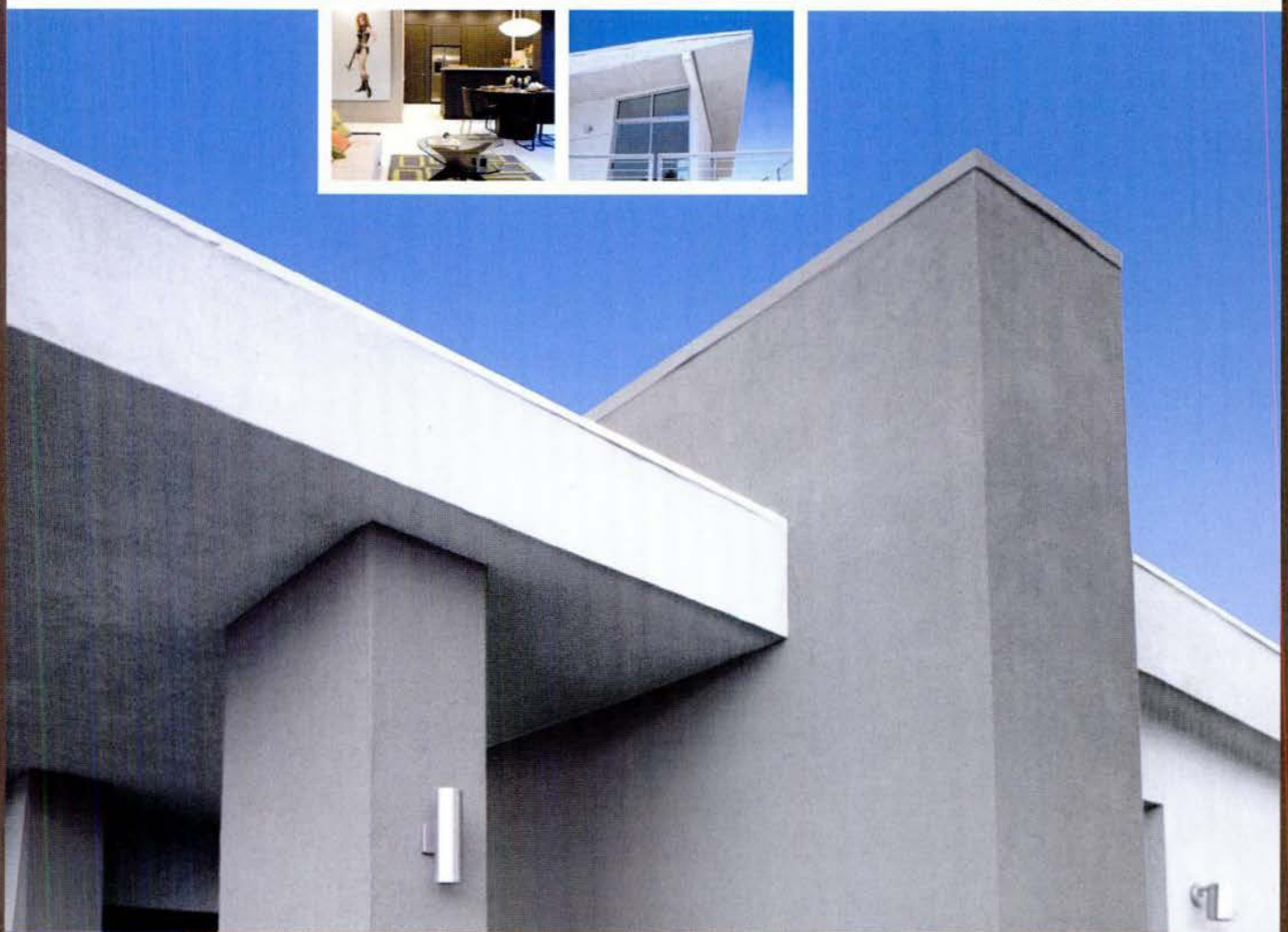

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Story by Barry Katz

Photos by Aya Brackett

MAPPING MODERNISM

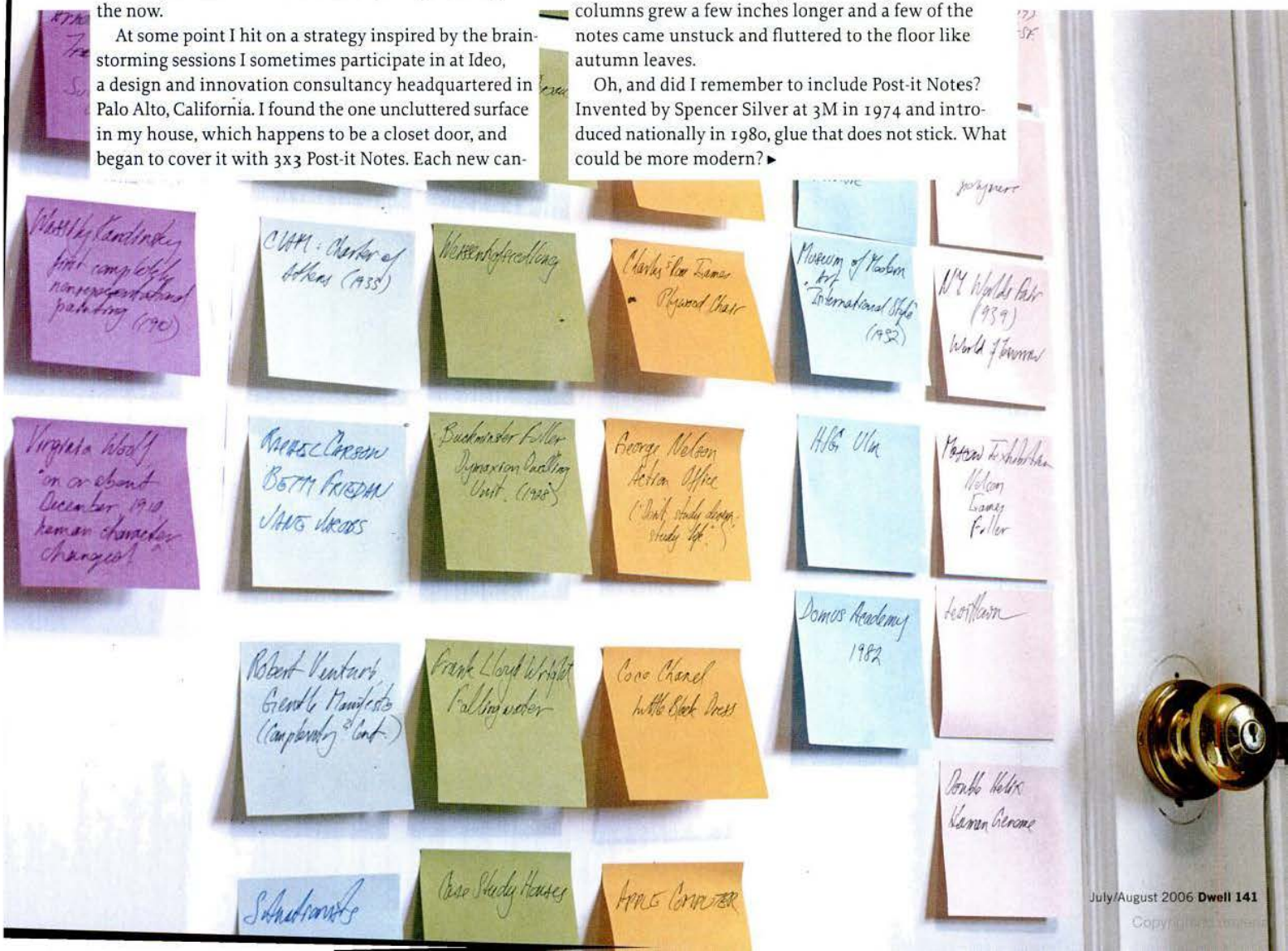
More than just an historic survey, tracing modernism proved to be an exercise in pinpointing the ideas, designs, and events that broke from tradition and continue to propel us forward.

When I began to think about creating a timeline of modernism, I had to deal with two big problems: First, deciding when to begin and when to end, and then deciding what to put in and what to leave out. If "modernism" were a nicely demarcated era (such as the "Antebellum South") it would be easy; likewise, if it had been a narrow subject like "surgical instruments," no problem. But modernism is not a tidy historical period with a clean beginning and a precise end. It is a habit of mind, an orientation toward life, a way of living in the now.

At some point I hit on a strategy inspired by the brainstorming sessions I sometimes participate in at Ideo, a design and innovation consultancy headquartered in Palo Alto, California. I found the one uncluttered surface in my house, which happens to be a closet door, and began to cover it with 3x3 Post-it Notes. Each new candidate that occurred to me got its own note, and before long I found myself color-coding them: green for the classic Manifestos that laid out a new agenda; yellow for those signature Objects that gave us a new sense of what a chair, a typeface, or a car might look like; turquoise for Structures, from Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House to the International Space Station; pink for Events; blue for Institutions; and purple for those Ideas that helped make us modern, like psychoanalysis, relativity theory, or civil rights. Each day the colored columns grew a few inches longer and a few of the notes came unstuck and fluttered to the floor like autumn leaves.

Oh, and did I remember to include Post-it Notes? Invented by Spencer Silver at 3M in 1974 and introduced nationally in 1980, glue that does not stick. What could be more modern? ▸

In the author's house (opposite and below), the form of a modernism timeline starts to take shape.



Meiji Restoration (1866–1869)

Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865)

Karl Marx, *Das Kapital* (1867)

1870

Frederick Law Olmsted, Central Park completed (1873)

Richard Wagner, *The Ring of the Nibelung* (1876)

Telephone (1876)

Incandescent lightbulb (1879)

1880

Perforated toilet paper (1880)

William Morris, *Hopes and Fears for Art* (1882)

The Berlin Act (1885)

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1885)

Kodak camera (1888)

Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society (1888)

Gustave Eiffel, Eiffel Tower (1889)

Machine Hall, Paris Exhibition (1889)

1890

Safety bicycle (1890)

Wilhelm Röntgen discovers X-rays (1895)

Daniel Burnham, Reliance Building (1895)

Louis Sullivan, *The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered* (1896)

Glasgow School of Art (1897)

1900

Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900)

Hector Guimard, Paris Metro stations (1900)

Frank Lloyd Wright, *Art and Craft of the Machine* (1901)

August Perret, Rue Franklin Apartments (1902–1904)

Vienna Secession (1902)

Wassily Kandinsky, nonrepresentational paintings (1903)

Wrights' Flying Machine (1903)

Wiener Werkstätte (1903)

Albert Einstein, special theory of relativity (1905) / Alfred Stieglitz opens Gallery 291 (1905)

Arnold Schoenberg, *Second String Quartet* (1906)

Deutscher Werkbund (1907)

Cubism (1908)

Adolph Loos, *Ornament and Crime* (1908)

Model-T Ford (1908)

Diaghilev, *Ballets Russes* (1909)

Filippo Marinetti, *Founding & Manifesto of Futurism* (1909)

Peter Behrens, AEG electric kettle (1909)

1910

Frank Lloyd Wright, Robie House (1910)

Hermann Muthesius, *Aims of the Werkbund* (1911)

1890–1915

By the end of a tumultuous century, the modern industrial system was securely in place, and artists, writers, designers, and architects were taking sides in a vibrant war of ideas. Inspired by John Ruskin and William Morris, members of the English Arts and Crafts Movement argued that the "lesser arts" of everyday life were equally deserving of artistic attention. But impatient with their nostalgic medievalism and stimulated by the opening of Japan, others soon began calling for an Art Nouveau, a new art that expressed the speed and energy of the new century.

The ability to say no to compromise is a rare thing these days. Many companies would like to be able to say it, but so few have the autonomy to actually do it. As an independent company, BMW can say no. No, we will not compromise our ideas. No, we will not do it the way everyone else does it. No, we will not factor designs down to the lowest common denominator. No, we will not sell out to a parent company who will meddle in our affairs and ask us to subject our cars to mass market vanilla-ism.

Because we can say no to compromise, we can say yes to other things — such as building our vehicles with 50/50 weight distribution for superior handling and control, despite the fact that it costs more to build them that way. It's thousands of little things like this that separate BMW from other car companies. By maintaining our autonomy and ability to say no, we can make sure great ideas live on to become ultimate driving machines.

Jane Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) / *Archigram* no. 1 (1961)

Dieter Rams becomes chief designer at Braun (1961)

Fluxus (1962) / Suicide of Marilyn Monroe (1962)

Eero Saarinen, TWA Terminal (1962) / Robert Venturi, Vanna Venturi House (1962)

British Invasion (1964) / Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (1964)

George Nelson, Action Office (1964)

Ralph Nader, *Unsafe at Any Speed* (1965)

National Endowment for the Arts (1965)

Archizoom Associati (1966–1974)

Louis Kahn, Salk Institute (1966)

Premier of *Star Trek* (1966)

R. Buckminster Fuller, Geodesic Dome (1967)

Gay rights movement (from 1969)

Woodstock Festival (1969) / Apollo 11 lunar landing (1969)

Ettore Sottsass, Valentine typewriter (1969)

1970

Earth Day (1970)

Shiro Kuramata, Furniture in Irregular Forms (1970)

Victor Papanek, *Design for the Real World* (1971)

Intel 4004 microprocessor (1971)

Otl Aicher, pictograms for Munich Olympics (1972) / Richard Sapper, Tizio light (1972)

City of St. Louis, controlled demolition of Pruitt-Igoe (1973)

Roe v. Wade (1973)

Post-it Notes (1974)

Design Management Institute (1974)

Bill Gates and Paul Allen found Microsoft (1975)

Bill Gates, *Open Letter to Hobbyists* (1976)

Frank Gehry, Gehry House (1978)

IDSA, Ahmendabad *Declaration on Sustainable Development* (1979)

1980

Philips compact disc (1980)

Memphis, Milan (1980)

Ingo Maurer, Ya-Ya-Ho lighting system (1981)

Maya Lin, Vietnam Veterans' Memorial (1982)

Emigré magazine (1984)

Apple Macintosh (1984)

Gianni Vattimo, *The End of Modernity* (1985)

Corporate Design Foundation (1985)

Explosion of Chernobyl reactor no. 4 (1986)

Explosion of space shuttle *Challenger* (1986)

April Greiman, scanned imagery for *Design Quarterly* (1987)

Prozac (1988)

I. M. Pei, Pyramide du Louvre (1989)

Exxon Valdez oil spill (1989) / Design Museum, London (1989)

1990

Americans With Disabilities Act (1990)

Photoshop (1990)

World Wide Web (1991)

Santiago Calatrava, El Alamillo Bridge (1992)

Toni Morrison, Nobel Prize in Literature (1993)

Bill Stumpf & Don Chadwick, Aeron chair (1994)

Theodore Kaczynski (aka Unabomber), "Industrial Society and Its Future" (1995)

Human Genome Project (1990–2003)

Frank Gehry, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao (1997)

International Space Station (1998)

Pine and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy* (1999)

2000

Millennium Dome (2000)

Bruce Sterling, *Viridian Manifesto* (2000)

Tate Modern (2000)

Destruction of World Trade Center (2001)

Apple iPod (2001)

ApproTEC, deep water pump (2002)

Voice-Over-Internet Protocol (2004)

Daniel Libeskind, Design for Freedom Tower (2005)

Morphosis, San Francisco Federal Building (2006)

1966–1980

Most of the '60s happened in the '70s—at least if we take 1968 as the catalytic year: the Tet Offensive in Vietnam, the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis, massive popular uprisings from Prague to Paris, the explosive birth of an international counterculture. The design world was upended as well: Whether in furniture design, architecture, or typography, modernism had preached the universal affinities among people; now, designers had to contend with the competing claims of women, blacks, gays, elders, and the poor both at home and abroad.

1981–2006

It's almost impossible to take the coordinates of the time we're living in, or to know which of the movements that animate our lives today will be remembered tomorrow. Postmodernism? Deconstruction? Evangelical Christianity? The "experience economy"? The War on Terror? Who would have predicted that a college dropout from Seattle would become the richest man in the history of the world? That genetics would find its way into industry? Or that Mick Jagger would ever become a grandfather?

MODERNISM TIMELINE

ART & IDEAS | MANIFESTOS | STRUCTURES | OBJECTS | EVENTS & INSTITUTIONS

35,000 BCE–1839 CE

Humans have always been modernists. Look at the minimalist interior of a Neander Valley cave or the clean lines of a mud-brick hut in western Anatolia. How about the structural purity of a *tipi* (Lakota for "they dwell") on the Great Plains or an *iglu* (the Inuit word for "dwelling") in the central Arctic? They're characterized by efficiency, economy, and elegance; the bold expression of structure; innovative use of appropriate materials. And they're outfitted with state-of-the-art domestic appliances like clay pots, woven baskets, and stone hearths.

1840–1889

One of the telltale signs of being modern is the search for telltale signs of being modern. By this measure modernism begins with the Greek poet Hesiod, with the Renaissance, or with the endless quarrels between the "Ancients and the Moderns" that tormented 17th-century philosophers. By the Industrial Revolution, however, the "dark, Satanic mills" immortalized by William Blake were churning out cheap, mass-produced goods and the debate began in earnest: How should we live? What should be the character of modern houses, objects, and art?

Daguerreotype (1839)

1840

First advertising agency (1843)

Telegraph key (1844)

Rotary press (1846)

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (1848)

1850

Joseph Paxton, Crystal Palace (1851)

Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations (1851)

Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Philosophy* (1851–1854)

Levi Strauss 501 jeans (1853)

John Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic" (1853–1855)

Singer sewing machine (1855)

Otis elevator (1857)

Isambard Kingdom Brunel, *Great Eastern* steamship (1858)

Charles Darwin, *Origin of Species* (1859)

Philip Webb, Red House (1859)

Thonet, Chair No. 14 (1859)

1860

Georges Haussmann, rebuilding of Paris (1853–1870)

Charles Minard, graph of Napoleon's march to Moscow (1861)

American Civil War (1861–1865)

Cocaine patented by Merck (1862)

Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life* (1863)

Salon des Réfusés (1863)

“No.”

1916–1932

On the eve of World War I, the German Werkbund held its annual exhibition in Cologne. Henry Van de Velde showed his sinuous Art Nouveau furniture, Peter Behrens presented domestic appliances of the new electrical industry, and Walter Gropius displayed his factory style of architecture. Should the modern age strive to preserve the rights of individual expression, or should it yield to the insistent logic of the machine? The controversy was enlivened by the antics of Futurists in Italy, Constructivists in Russia, and the De Stijl movement in the Netherlands.

1933–1944

The dream world of the 1939 World's Fair was positioned at the center of a period marked by the rise of Hitler in 1933 and the atomic bombing of Japan in 1945. American industrial designers set out to streamline the world and the exiled Bauhaus carried the International Style to Chicago, Rio de Janeiro, and Tel Aviv. Gradually, curtain walls, tubular steel furniture, and sans serif typefaces joined atonal music, expressionist cinema, epic theater, and stream-of-consciousness writing as emblems of what increasingly came to be known as "modernism."

1945–1965

After the war, designers in Italy, Germany, and Japan set about the task of rebuilding everything "from a teaspoon to a city"; in the U.S., the affluence of the '50s and the cold-war standoff prompted a surge of consumer spending and popular culture. But there were rumblings of the themes that would dominate the rest of the century: Rachel Carson's warnings of a coming "silent spring," Jane Jacobs's analysis of the crisis of America's cities, Betty Friedan's demystification of "the feminine mystique," and Ralph Nader's challenge to the auto industry.

Story by Thomas S. Hines

Photos by Julius Shulman and Catherine Ledner

KNOWING NEUTRA

Historian Thomas S. Hines has written about architect Richard Neutra from the perspective of critic but also of resident. For not only did Hines write the seminal monograph on the iconic modernist's buildings, he's lived in them for decades.

In 1938, after living for just a short time in Richard Neutra's recently built Strathmore Apartments in Los Angeles, the Oscar-winning Austrian-American actress Luise Rainer confessed to the architect that she had hesitated to live in such modernist buildings because she feared that she "could never feel warm and at home inside of one of them.... Bit by bit," she said, "I went closer to such modern places, just like one comes to examine a wild animal, with jitters and a certain curiosity. In the process the revelation came over me that I was all wrong and I felt attracted more and more.... The clearness, the long lines of windows which allow the light to enter and the eye to rove out far, far, all of this gives you a strange sense of happiness and freedom."

Indeed, Neutra brought to his modernist apartment buildings many of the elements he had used in his single-family dwellings—white walls, flat roofs, ribbon windows, crisp detailing, and generally orthogonal shapes—and which in 1932 had been labeled the International Style by the Museum of Modern Art. Yet while exhibiting such identifiable stylistic features, the layout and personality of Neutra's small, relaxed, nature-accessible, low-rise apartment structures differed markedly from the taller and blockier apartment houses he had known most of his own life. In my several decades of living in Los Angeles, I have been privileged to live in two of these buildings—the Strathmore and the Kelton—and to admire at close range the Landfair and the Elkay, all located within a three-block radius in the Westwood district of Los Angeles.

Richard Neutra (1892–1970) arrived in Los Angeles in 1925 after a comfortable, well-educated youth in Vienna and architectural apprenticeships in Berlin with Erich Mendelsohn, in Chicago with Holabird & Roche, and at Taliesin with Frank Lloyd Wright. During most of the preceding decade, Neutra had corresponded with ▸

Actress Luise Rainer (opposite) in 1937, at home in the Strathmore apartment that she shared with playwright Clifford Odets. The Strathmore as it stands today (below).

Neutra (shown here with Luise Rainer at the Strathmore in the late 1930s) created a series of comfortable, easy-to-inhabit apartment buildings in Los Angeles. Saskia and Anouk Brose (opposite) demonstrate the livability of the Strathmore today.

his Viennese friend, Rudolph M. Schindler, who had emigrated in 1914, working for Wright in Chicago, Wisconsin, and Los Angeles, where he moved in 1920 to supervise construction of Wright's Hollyhock House. In 1922, Schindler built his own studio/house in Los Angeles, and encouraged Richard and his wife, Dione, to join him; in 1925, they did. The Schindler studio/house would be an important model for Neutra in his later search for alternatives to the single-family dwelling. Other iterations of low-rise garden apartments also appeared in tandem with tall skyscrapers in Neutra's Rush City Reformed, the visionary metropolis he conceived in those years.

Throughout the late '20s, Neutra and Schindler worked in a loosely structured alliance in which each man usually designed the buildings he brought into the office. Typical of this was the massive four-story Jardinette Apartment House, built for a Hollywood developer in 1927 and largely designed by Neutra. It was one of the first International Style buildings in the U.S. The structure's concrete façade was strikingly modernist, but its internal layout, as required by the client, contained the usual long corridors leading to individual apartments. Yet by the mid-1930s, in the developing Westwood district near the new campus of UCLA, Neutra achieved a significant breakthrough in his design of smaller, low-rise garden apartments.

The Strathmore complex (1937) was commissioned as an investment by a family who already owned the land and who allowed Neutra to acquire a half interest in the project. Staggered back into the hill as it rises from the street, the Strathmore is a modernist updating of two of Neutra's favorite buildings: the ancient Taos Pueblo in New Mexico and Irving Gill's Horatio West Court in Santa Monica (1919). The Strathmore includes six two-bedroom, two-bath units and two smaller ▸

The walls of the Strathmore (below) have sheltered over a half-century of luminaries—from Orson Welles to Fritz Lang to the Eameses. Current residents of the complex pay homage to this storied past with iconic mid-century furniture (opposite).

studio units, arranged in two groups on either side of a central stairway. Neutra owned the four rental units to the north. As in L.A.'s traditional bungalow courts, each apartment opens to the central garden courtyard as well as to private porches or balconies.

The first tenants at the Strathmore were Dione Neutra's sister, Regula Thorston, and parents, Alfred and Lilly Niedermann, who had emigrated from Switzerland to retire in Los Angeles. Yet for months, Thorston recalled, they were the only inhabitants, as other prospective tenants found the buildings too "cold" and "industrial" for their tastes. "Moon architecture... hospital architecture," she remembered hearing them mutter. Ultimately, the apartments attracted a number of discerning people, including film star Dolores del Rio and her lover Orson Welles, as well as Luise Rainer and her husband, playwright Clifford Odets. Lily Latte, companion of director Fritz Lang, kept a Strathmore apartment as a private retreat from her demanding life with Lang and the social whirl of Hollywood. The Strathmore became the first Los Angeles residence of Charles and Ray Eames, who used their second bath and bedroom as a lab for producing their first bentwood prototypes. John Entenza, editor of *Arts & Architecture*, was a Strathmore dweller, as were the photographer Eliot Elisofon and the composer Vernon Duke.

Though not quite in league with Welles and Rainer, my wife, Dorothy, and I lived at 11005 Strathmore in the early 1970s, shortly after I became an assistant professor at UCLA. It greatly affected our view of Los Angeles, and the world. We loved both the openness and the sense of privacy afforded by our second-story perch above the street. The large expanses of glass made the two-bedroom, two-bath flat seem larger than it actually was. I've toured many great buildings in my professional role as architectural historian, but I was never sorry to ▸

A dense cropping of trees is perhaps the only clue as to the current vintage of this photograph of the Kelton apartments (opposite); the area was relatively barren when the building was first built. An original living room of the Kelton complex is shown below, circa 1939.

return home. At the Strathmore we had our first child and, in 1971, suffered our first California earthquake, which the structure admirably rode out. There we enjoyed visits from such architecture people as Pauline Schindler, Rudolph's former wife; architect Charles Moore; critics Paul Goldberger and Reyner Banham; and especially Richard and Dione Neutra, who dropped in unannounced one Sunday afternoon as we were recovering—with shades pulled low—from an overly festive Saturday night.

At 77, Neutra was as handsome and commanding as photographs suggest. He seemed puzzled at first by our spare but committed use of Stickley Craftsman furniture instead of orthodox Neutra modern, but he accepted my argument of its kinship with the Wiener Werkstätte products of his youth—and hence a strong example of early modern design. Our talk turned to music and I asked him which composers he most identified with and would most want people to think of when they experienced his buildings, and he quickly replied: "Schoenberg and Bach." However calculated that answer may have been, it clearly evoked both the modernist and classical qualities that his best work conveys. As they were leaving, I mentioned a small leak in the living-room ceiling. Neutra drolly replied that he would make sure the roof got repaired, but that if the leak persisted, he would personally provide us with a "Neutra-designed bucket" to catch the rainwater. The roof was repaired, but I later regretted that I had not asked for that bucket.

An early photograph of the Strathmore looks north over the building's crisp flat roofs across the rolling and virtually empty hills to one of the few other structures on that then-lonely Westwood landscape: Neutra's contemporary Landfair Apartments (1937), whose still-unaltered exterior evokes an image of closely packed urban row houses, but whose interior configuration ▸

Surrounded by art and Stickley furniture, author Thomas S. Hines has enjoyed decades of well-designed living in his Kelton apartment (shown here and on opposite page).

was radically changed over the years to accommodate the needs of a UCLA student cooperative. When Arthur Drexler and I cocurated the Neutra retrospective at MoMA in 1982, our budget allowed for only two scale models. One had to be the great Lovell Health House (1927–1929). The other, we determined, should be something other than a single-family dwelling, and we happily chose the Landfair Apartments. The model was one of the show's most admired items.

After living at the Strathmore for several years, Alfred and Lilly Niedermann decided to buy a lot around the corner on Kelton and have son-in-law Richard design a triplex containing a modest apartment for them along with two rental units. Theirs was the first building on the street. The two ground-floor one-bedroom units form the base for the larger, second-floor two-bedroom "penthouse" whose front and rear roof decks reach out into the trees. Less tautly dramatic than the Landfair or the Strathmore, the Kelton looked ahead to Neutra's more relaxed work of the '40s and '50s. While many of Neutra's houses were featured on magazine covers, the Kelton was the only one of his apartment complexes to attain that distinction, appearing in 1946 on the cover of a special Neutra issue of the prominent French journal *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*. Beyond its architectural distinction, the Kelton also harbored a rich cultural life. Besides being a renowned civil engineer, Alfred Niedermann was a gifted violinist and was able to summon practically anyone he wished to play with in his various string quartets. After he retired to Los Angeles, his chamber-music colleagues included such family friends as Arnold Schoenberg, who played piano at the Kelton, and whose ghost still happily inhabits it.

In 1975, after five years at the Strathmore, my wife and I decided that, with another child on the way, we needed a dwelling with a regular backyard and moved ▸

Across the street from the Kelton sits the Elkay Apartments (shown here in 1949), in which a true cross section of Angelenos has resided, from renowned musicians to UCLA undergraduates (opposite).

to a pleasant, if decidedly non-modern, house in L.A.'s Rancho Park. When our marriage ended 12 years later, I discovered that the top-floor apartment at the Kelton was available and I moved there as a bachelor. When my children spent nights with me, I enjoyed driving them from Neutra's Kelton to his nearby Ralph Waldo Emerson Middle School, which he had designed in 1937. I also enjoyed installing the Stickley furniture in its second Neutra environment. It still seems quirky to certain purist visitors, but it strikes me as working even better at the Kelton than at the Strathmore, especially as I have mixed it with pieces by Otto Wagner and Alvar Aalto. As at the Strathmore earlier, I never mind returning to the Kelton from more auspicious architectural sites. The living room especially welcomes the light, but is equally sustaining when the winter rain beats against the glass. Another pleasure of living at the Kelton has been to admire its neighbor to the north: Neutra's Elkay Apartments (1948), built for renowned violist Louis Kievman and his family. One of his daughters still lives in her family's apartment while offering the other four as rental units.

For 20 of my 38 years in Los Angeles, I have lived in Neutra's garden apartments, whose light-filled openness, regard for privacy, and easy access to the out-of-doors have shaped my view of the life-enriching possibilities of architecture—and of Los Angeles. Built at a time when land seemed to be indefinitely plentiful, Neutra's four Westwood apartment buildings presciently predicted the needs of the denser city to come when both land and single-family dwellings would become more difficult to find and more expensive to build. They thus offer models of how to combine the nature-surrounded virtues of the single-family home with the imperatives of designing for what Neutra liked to call "humans in groups." ■

Story by Frances Anderton

SPACE ODYSSEY

"In science fiction we dig out prophetic information regarding geodesic nets, pneumatic tubes and plastic domes and bubbles.... Our document is the space comic; its reality is in the gesture, design and natural styling of hardware new to our decade—the capsule, the rocket, the bathyscope, the Zidpark, the handy-pak."

PHOTO COURTESY ARCHIVE SUPERSTUDIO AND © COURTESY OF FRANCIA

These words, excerpted from editorials in *Archigram* 3 and 4 (1963 and 1964) and penned by Peter Cook, cofounder of the now-defunct London-based architecture collective Archigram, express the excitement of a period beginning in the early '60s when renegade architects around the globe questioned the very fundamentals of architecture, from its relationship to society to the production of buildings.

Influenced by the roiling movements in art, media, politics, and technology, they had names and group identities that bring to mind rock bands rather than architecture firms: the Metabolists, Superstudio, Ant Farm, and Archizoom. Instead of designing buildings, they more often created fantasy utopias, entire cityscapes on paper that were never built but which excited an entire generation and encouraged a wholesale reevaluation of the built environment.

In different ways and through different media—from gonzo graphics to film to performance art—many of them explored the impact of new materials, production processes, and the mobile lifestyle promised by the auto and aeronautical industries and information technology. "All of them were dealing with different modes of communicating architecture," says David Erdman, cofounder of the design collaborative Servo. "And they were developing new languages of architecture that dealt with the new things it contained."

Analyzing and critiquing the pervasive corporate modernism and overly rationalist urban planning of that period, these architectural outcasts seized on irony and wit to make their point. "This was a breakthrough moment when the explosion of new materials and radical lifestyles were driving a vision of architecture that was vaguely nomadic and not oriented toward ▸

Striking poses reminiscent of rock stars, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Alessandro Magris, Roberto Magris, Gian Piero Frassinelli, and Adolfo Natalini of Superstudio (opposite) were never ones to shy away from making dramatic gestures in the architecture world of the '60s and '70s. Ant Farm also knew how to push the envelope, particularly with projects like "Media Burn" (below).

PHOTO COURTESY CHIP LORD

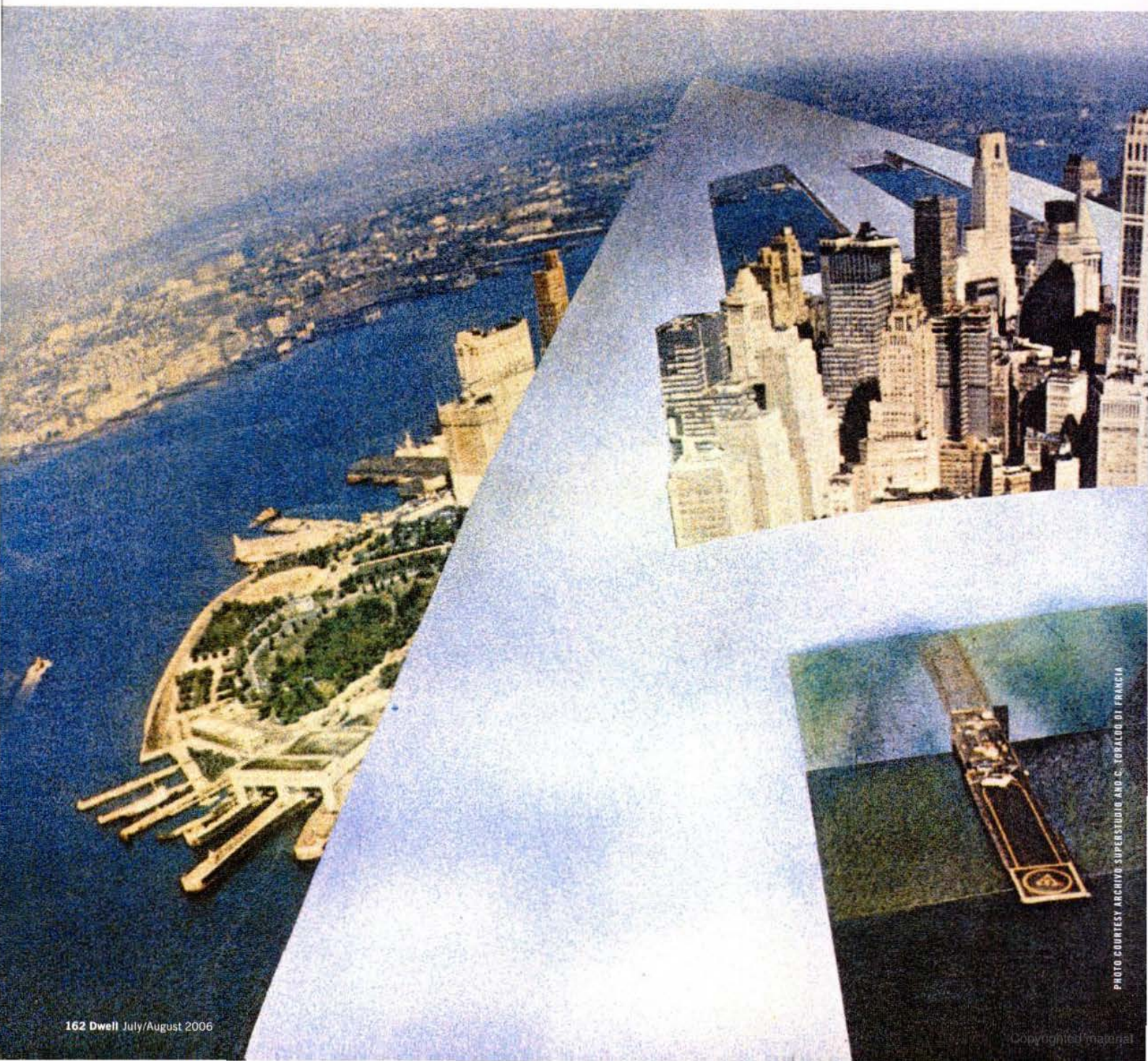


PHOTO COURTESY ARCHIVO SUPERSTUDIO AND C. TORALDO DI FRANCIA

Photo montages like Superstudio's "Continuous Monument" helped expand the idea of what constituted architecture and what the built environment could look like.

Ant Farm's "Cadillac Ranch" in Amarillo, Texas, is perhaps the most iconic of the group's work. Consisting of 12 Cadillacs buried facedown alongside Route 66, the project is both a roadside curiosity and a critique of a car-obsessed culture. As with all the groups, presentation of the work was as important as the work itself. Opposite: Superstudio's "Superprojects: Objects, Monuments, Cities."

the acquisition of possessions," explains Craig Hodgetts, architect, professor of architecture, and longtime friend of the Ant Farm group. "The ideal was not the luxury bath we see today but the airplane bathroom."

These collectives "introduced whimsy and subjectivity and insolence and irony back into architecture," says Stephen Nowlin, director of the Williamson Gallery at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. "At the time it was almost sacrilegious that they would do this. But that constructive insolence is one of the most important things you can teach in a design school." In recent years there's been a renewed interest in these counter-movements with numerous traveling exhibits and academics doing weighty scholarship on their work.

The most influential and productive collective was Archigram, the eldest of the renegade groups. Its members (Peter Cook, Warren Chalk, Dennis Crompton, David Greene, Ron Herron, and Mike Webb) created an astonishing 900 drawings of pen-and-ink and collaged images between 1961 and 1974. The six met in the late '50s while holding down day jobs at a large construction firm in London. Their nights, however, were spent feverishly drawing imaginary, mobile, temporary environments with electronic-age names like the Capsule Home, the Plug-In City, and the Walking City, a megastructure that could plod across the land like a vast robotic animal.

They published their projects, along with essays and poems and the work of other designers they considered to be coconspirators against the establishment, in nine issues of an underground magazine they collaged together called *Archigram*, first published in May 1961.

Today, Cook explains the group's goal succinctly: "We wanted to put the zap back into architecture." ▸

These collectives "introduced whimsy and subjectivity and insolence and irony back into architecture," says Stephen Nowlin, director of the Williamson Gallery at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena. "At the same time it was almost sacriligious that they would do this. But that constructive insolence is one of the most important things you can teach in a design school."

PHOTO COURTESY ART FARM

Archigram, he says, was driven by a passion for technology and art, while some of the other groups were motivated by politics. "Three out of six of us had been to art school before architecture school," Cook says. "We were all mixed up with art students. Our ladies were art students. I can't speak for the Italians, they always have political layering that doesn't interest me."

For groups like Ant Farm and Superstudio, however, which formed when students worldwide were in revolt, politics was central. Architecture grads Chip Lord, Doug Michels, and Curtis Schreier founded Ant Farm at a time and place ripe for rebellion—San Francisco in 1968. "The year I graduated was the time of the antiwar movement, so we embraced wholeheartedly a form of radicalism," Lord explains. "At the beginning we were a kind of commune, and people came and went, like a lot of bands, the Grateful Dead or Jefferson Airplane."

Meanwhile in Florence, Italy, Superstudio, an Italian gang of five—Adolfo Natalini, Cristiano Toraldo di Francia, Alessandro and Roberto Magris, and Gian Piero Frassinelli—rejected the optimistic view of technology's ability to improve the world. Instead, they attacked architecture and politics with ironic commentaries in the form of photo montages, sketches, and storyboards for having aggravated the world's social and environmental problems. They created what they called "negative utopias," home to an "anti-design" culture in which everyone would be given a sparse but functional space to live in, free from superfluous objects.

Despite the frenetic force and boundless enthusiasm with which these groups delivered their messages of architectural rebellion, the radical architects of the ▸

The interior of Ant Farm's "House of the Century" (opposite). The house now lies mostly submerged in a Texas swamp but remains a perfect home for vultures and other swamp-dwelling creatures. Superstudio's "Superexistence: Life and Death" (below) is a sure sign of the times.

PHOTO COURTESY ARCHIVO SUPERSTUDIO AND C. TORALDO DI FRANCIA

PHOTO COURTESY ARCHIGRAM ARCHIVES

'60s and '70s slowly petered out with the advent of the oil crisis, Reaganism, and a subsequent decade of kitschy postmodern architecture.

Some admirers of these countercultural architects wonder where the radicalism is today. Maybe it has diminished because the visions of these groups came to pass or because it's no longer clear who the adversary is. "Popular political themes today are less discernible and much broader and more nuanced," says Servo's Erdman. Adds Ant Farm's Lord, "The new generation has many more options of how to define an architectural practice," referring to the multidisciplinary, nonhierarchical firms that exist today. He adds that design possibilities for building have exploded: "Today there is more access to different styles, and more technological freedom."

On the other hand, some say that architects who question the fundamentals of design and society haven't vanished at all, they've merely morphed. The radicalism may not be in unbuilt, paper utopias but in actual buildings, by a new generation of quiet revolutionaries. "Today's counterculture architects," says Nowlin, of Art Center's Williamson Gallery, "are those who are really exploring green architecture and radical new ways of how we shelter ourselves in new situations. They are challenging relationships with the whole machinery of how architecture gets made." You won't see spectacular drawings of fantasy techno-whizzy cities, like Archigram's, or poetic images critiquing civilization like those of Superstudio, or subversive performance pieces like Ant Farm's. "It's a different sensibility, not whimsical or ironic," Nowlin says, "but nonetheless it does at the same scale challenge what has come before." ■

Archigram's "Living Pod" model by David Greene from 1966 (opposite) demonstrates the collective's willingness to try to make their ideas a functional reality. Most of the time, however, these ideas—like Superstudio's "Superprojects: Objects, Monuments, and Cities" series (below)—were more compatible with pen and paper.

Story by John King

Photos by Martien Mulder

COLUMBUS EXPLORED

Columbus, Indiana, is just another bucolic Midwestern town with the usual strip malls and chain restaurants. Quite unexpectedly, it also happens to have one of the country's most prized collections of buildings by modern masters.

The standard architectural tour of Columbus, Indiana, starts at the visitors center on Fifth Street, an 1864 home with a 1995 addition by Kevin Roche, 1982 winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. It sits next door to the library by I.M. Pei, 1983 Pritzker winner, and across from the First Christian Church by Eliel Saarinen, designated a National Historic Landmark in 2001 as "one of the first Modern religious buildings in America."

But if you want to see how contemporary design fits within the Columbus of today, a better place to begin is on Tenth Street near Marr Road. There you'll find a new branch of the Irwin Union Bank designed by architect Deborah Berke of New York: a study in precise minimalism where a nine-and-a-half-foot high and 20-foot-wide box of structural channel glass forms a translucent bridge above the drive-through lanes to an office that's a cube of subdued brown brick. It may be the most refined bank branch in the world—and it sits on a commercial strip that begins with a Wal-Mart and ends with an Italian chain restaurant housed in a mock Tuscan villa that looks like it arrived by way of Las Vegas.

"That's Columbus in a nutshell," says planning director Jeff Bergman, with a grin. "We have our elements of sophistication, and there are just as many people who think a monster truck rally is a good thing."

Architectural purists might cringe, but Bergman's right: The 39,000 residents of Columbus find nothing incongruous in the notion that their small city is both a modernist mecca and Anywhere U.S.A. The classics that draw tourists are venerated, and striking new works such as Berke's bank are still on the rise. But as residents of this city 43 miles south of Indianapolis search for ways to revive their downtown, they also see potential development sites in land covered by the work of highly ▸

In downtown Columbus, Henry Moore's *Large Arch*, 1971, dominates the plaza outside of I.M. Pei's 1969 Cleo Rogers Memorial Library.

Eliel Saarinen's First Christian Church, 1942, was the first building completed in J. Irwin Miller's ambitious scheme for Columbus. The light fixtures, screen, and furniture, were designed by Eliel's son Eero and Charles Eames.


COLUMBUS FIRE STATI
NO.

lauded architects. And in a city renowned for its architecture, design guidelines don't even exist.

"My colleagues in other cities find themselves debating architecture standards, but the discussion in Columbus is a lot different," says Bergman, who's been in his post two years. "They'll call asking me for our guidelines, and I don't have anything to give them."

Modern architecture gained a foothold in Columbus thanks to J. Irwin Miller, alumnus of Yale and Oxford, moderate Republican, longtime head of Cummins Engine Co. and the family (Irwin) bank. It was Miller, the story goes, who nudged his mother to call Eliel Saarinen down from the Cranbrook Academy to design a new home for the church to which the family belonged. And when the fast-growing city needed to build schools in the 1950s, Miller said Cummins would pay the design fees if officials agreed to select an architect from a list prepared by Cummins's foundation.

That offer still holds—and 48 public projects later, Cummins has written checks to a roster of architects ranging from Robert Venturi (a fire station) and Richard Meier (an elementary school) to James Polshek (a public health facility) and Edward Charles Bassett of Skidmore Owings & Merrill (the city hall). The pace slowed as Columbus matured, but Boston architect William Rawn designed a firehouse that opened in 1998—it's an amiably abstract riff on a barn—and a middle school by the Chicago firm Perkins+Will is now under construction.

Miller, who died in 2004 at the age of 95, wasn't just another rich guy with an edifice complex. Far from it. Decades before Richard Florida began touting the gospel of the creative class, Miller understood the wisdom of nurturing a well-rounded community where intelligent people wouldn't mind settling down. ▸

William Rawn's Fire Station No. 6 (opposite) sits just off Indiana Highway 450 South. Columbus's newspaper, *The Republic*, is based in this 1971 building by SOM's Myron Goldsmith (below).

He summed up his philosophy at the 1964 opening of a Cummins-funded project that tourists rarely visit but locals still cherish, a golf course designed by Robert Trent Jones: Columbus should be "the very best community of its size in the country... a community that is open in every single respect to persons of every race, color and opinion; that makes them feel welcome and at home here."

Forty-two years later, Columbus has a stable and self-contained prosperity that's rare in today's America. There's no obvious blight; downtown may be sluggish, but it hasn't emptied out like so many other small-town centers. Without the crutch of being either a suburb or a college town, Columbus stands on its own just fine.

Architecture is part of the reason: As many as 10,000 people a year pay $10 to take a two-hour bus tour led by volunteers, who first take a 12-hour course on how the civic landscape came to be. Other guests pay $2 for the self-guided tour map. Local architecture is featured on refrigerator magnets, T-shirts, videos, souvenir pencils, and coffee mugs—many bearing the city's official slogan, "Different by Design."

Still, an outsider who hits town expecting a black-clad oasis is off the mark. Yes, inside the glassy pavilion of the main branch of the Irwin Union Bank—an Eero Saarinen masterpiece from 1954 that would do Mies van der Rohe proud—a plaque proclaims its National Historic Landmark status as "an important work in the development of modernism." But when you step inside the Kevin Roche–designed addition next door, the worker who walks by is wearing a sweater decorated with cute little lambs.

You see the same collision of high design and Middle America when driving through Columbus's soft terrain, ▸

Eero Saarinen's 1964 North Christian Church, with its distinctive 192-foot-tall spire and hexagonal plan, was the last structure completed before his untimely death.

The trees surrounding Eero Saarinen's 1954 Irwin Union Bank & Trust Company were conceived as part of the architectural design. The interior was intended to be a dignified modernist take on the old-fashioned general store.

its canopy of trees soon giving way to farmland. Look beyond the Hollywood Video on National Road, and there's Eero Saarinen's North Christian Church, with its impossibly deft 192-foot-high spire. The red arch by Jean Muller that marks Columbus's presence on I-65 is preceded by a Holiday Inn with fake Western storefronts.

But after 50 years, it all works out: The collision is the context. In Columbus—perhaps more than anywhere else in America—modern architecture has proved it can be a good neighbor. While some buildings are better than others, none are abrasive or antisocial in the way that detractors once claimed. And the presence of thoughtful 20th-century design has left an imprint on Columbus residents who would never think of living in a house with a flat roof.

Certainly that's the experience of William Rawn. His recent work includes a much-acclaimed residential tower at Northeastern University, yet he considers his fire station near an industrial park on the south side of Columbus to be one of his best buildings.

"Working there was incredibly satisfying," Rawn says. He recalls exactly two design requests. The mayor wanted glass walls perpendicular to the street so residents could see there were fire trucks inside, and firefighters wanted spacious quarters to rest in during the 24-hour shifts. "There were serious questions, but no second-guessing," Rawn recalls. "The earnestness of the people really impressed me.... I grew to love them for their respect for what architects did."

That is J. Irwin Miller's legacy in Columbus: He genuinely believed serious architecture could improve the civic realm. And the results are such that residents remain open to the idea—whatever their own personal tastes might be. ▸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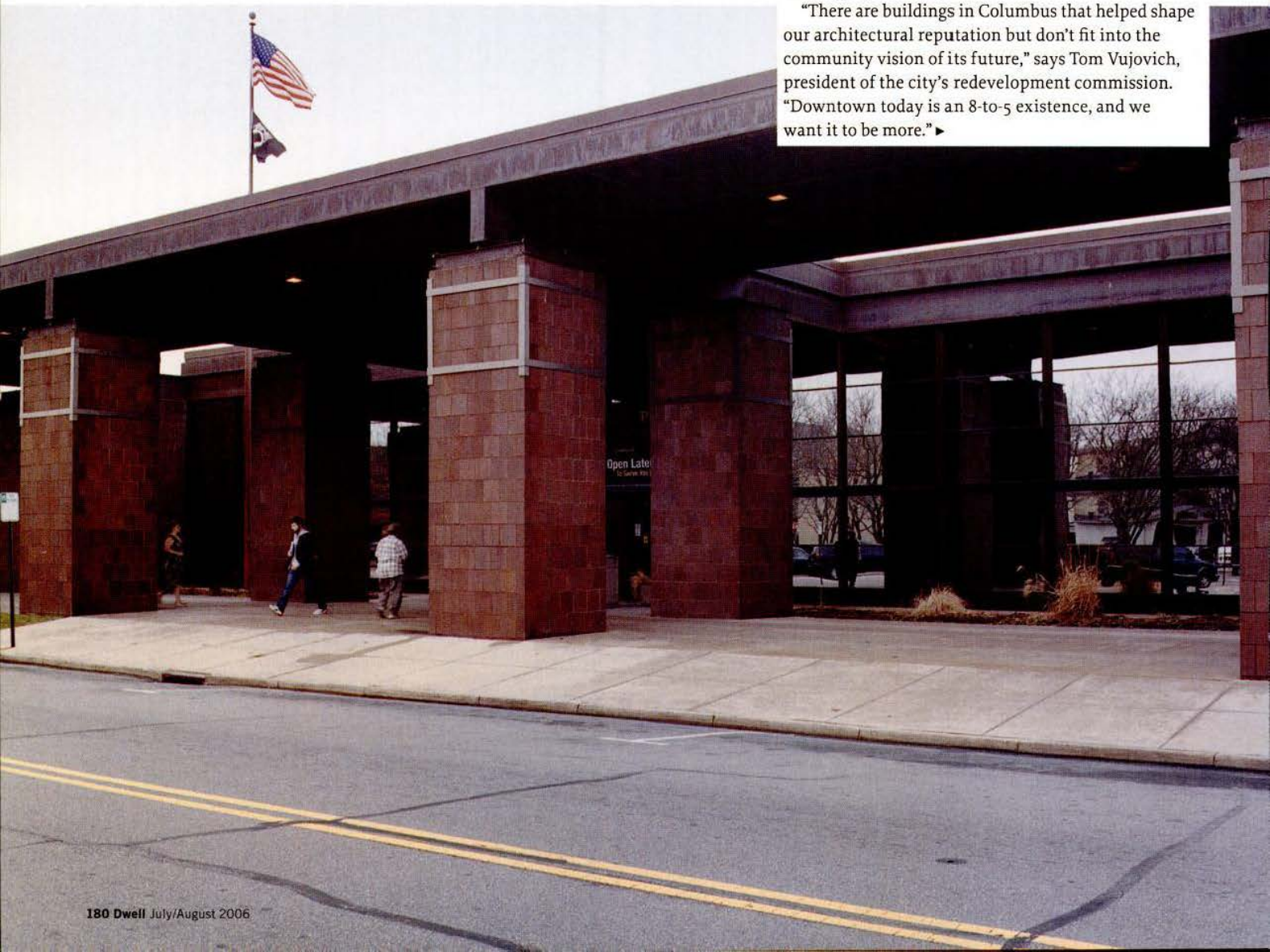
Kevin Roche's 1970 post office was the first in the nation designed by privately paid architects. The Pritzker Prize winner's building is now being considered for demolition.

GOODBYE, COLUMBUS?

Here's how long big-name architecture has been in Columbus: Some of it may be torn down in the name of progress. The most likely candidate is a post office by Kevin Roche from 1970 that fills a block just off Washington Street, the city's traditional main drag. But many storefronts now are filled with offices or community programs, and Columbus leaders are intrigued by the sort of mixed-use projects that other cities have used to lure people downtown.

"There are buildings in Columbus that helped shape our architectural reputation but don't fit into the community vision of its future," says Tom Vujovich, president of the city's redevelopment commission. "Downtown today is an 8-to-5 existence, and we want it to be more." ▸



A far cry from the light-filled arcades of Reagan Airport, Cesar Pelli's 1973 Commons provides indoor shopping for Columbus's chilly winters. Sadly, though, many of the storefronts are now empty.

Even if this means demolishing the work of a Pritzker Prize winner? But consider: the city of Columbus has four other buildings by Roche, a favorite of J. Irwin Miller. Nor is the post office a bureaucratic jewel. Meeting the street with massive columns covered in salt-glazed tiles that match the Cor-ten steel roof, it's a leaden exercise in funereal pomp. As far back as 1976, *Chicago Tribune* architecture critic Paul Gapp dismissed it as "a grim, oppressive building that would be ugly in any setting."

Downtown's enclosed shopping mall is also on the long-term endangered list—even though it's by Cesar Pelli, one of the nation's best-known architects. The Commons is a two-block complex developed in 1973 by Irwin Management Co. It has its good points, such as an enclosed public plaza that gets heavy use in winter, but except for the Sears at the back of the mall, most storefronts are empty. And the design—a long shoe box cloaked in brown glass—is about as alluring as it sounds. The downtown strategic plan approved by the city last year that calls for developing the post-office block also suggests "redefining" the Commons as a dining and lifestyle retail destination.

So far, there haven't been complaints locally about thinning out the stock of high-profile buildings that put Columbus on the architectural map in the first place.

"I think it's progress," says architect Nolan Bingham, whose work includes a discreet addition to the First Christian Church. "There are only a few buildings that will last a truly long time." ■

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Story by Fred A. Bernstein

Photo by Peter Belanger

Hueless

Most modernists find color as attractive as traditional Tudors. Fred Bernstein, a resolute lover of neutrals, attempts to expand his horizon of hues.

Last year, a travel magazine sent me to Japan to write about a new museum by the great Osaka architect Tadao Ando. Ando's architecture is about a lot of things—space, light, form—but color isn't one of them. When the story came out, there were small photos of the museum surrounding a large photo of a (hideous) sculpture that stands outside the building. The artwork, shaped like a pumpkin, was the yellowest yellow I'd ever seen.

Forget space, light, form, proportion. The art director needed color on the page.

Graphic designers, after all, spend their lives combating white space. But in architecture, it's possible to build an entire career without ever shifting out of neutrals. Ando, the master of unpainted concrete, isn't alone. Richard Meier has a shock of white hair that matches every one of his buildings and (like Ando) a Pritzker Prize to prove that the key to success doesn't have to be hue.

I've always been vaguely embarrassed by color, associating pastels with kitsch and primaries with kindergarten. I'm not even sure I agree with Meier, who claimed, in his Pritzker Prize acceptance speech, that he likes white "because within it you can see all the colors of the rainbow." I like white because within it I can't see all the colors of the rainbow.

But have I been depriving myself of the warm embrace of color? Even the Pritzker jury has swung toward architects, Aldo Rossi and Luis Barragán among them, whose work is every shade but white. More recently, Rem Koolhaas used his new student center at the Illinois Institute of Technology to give Mies van der Rohe's black-on-black campus a jolt of orange.

Contemporary architects who love color have plenty of precedents to draw on. Gerrit Rietveld, one of the great early modernists, made primary shades a hallmark of the de Stijl movement. Frank Lloyd Wright gave many of his houses motley decorations—including stained-glass windows that resemble birthday-party balloons. And Le Corbusier, the architect most associated with pure white forms, created a color-selection system for a wallpaper company in 1931. Corbu's "color keyboards"

still have devotees after 75 years, offering, as they do, hues "approved" by the master.

In the art world, however, white still rules. A museum that wants colors on its walls has generally had two options: Hire Sol LeWitt, who, for hundreds of thousands of dollars, will send a team to paint one of his "wall drawings." Or hire James Turrell, who, for hundreds of thousands of dollars, will install programmable LEDs. To the folks who wear black, colors are fine, as long as they have art-world pedigree.

Yet there are signs that gallery walls are beginning to blush. When New York's renovated Museum of Modern Art opened in 2004, it was as white as a building could be. And the reviews were appropriately pallid. The following year, Herzog & de Meuron unveiled their de Young Museum in San Francisco, with its copper-colored façade and gallery walls that range from soft taupe to deep blue. The reviews were as hot as the colors. Herzog & de Meuron had brought color back to the museum world, the way sex brought color back to Pleasantville.

If Herzog & de Meuron can find room in their hearts for color, I figure I can, too. After moving to a new apartment in Brooklyn, I decided to experiment with shades of blue and green. I studied up a bit, immersing myself in color systems, including a delightful tutorial by Moritz Zwimpfer: *Ordering Colors, Playing with Colors.* And I downloaded an e-book, *Color Voodoo,* that is full of useful insights into how colors affect moods.

Here's how colors affected my mood: I was overwhelmed by all the choices.

Luckily, I have three-year-old sons, who've never heard of Mies and who complain that chickens' eggs aren't as colorful as robins'. At two, my boys were debating the difference between teal and aquamarine. So when I took them to a paint store, they had no problem picking out colors for our home. More colors, in fact, than we have walls and ceilings.

To children, color is exciting. I would never deprive my sons of the stimulation, the emotional rainbow connection. So why should I deprive myself? ▸

Story by Amara Holstein

Chipping Away

Most designers, be they graphic or interior, consult their Pantone fan guide when considering hues. Founded in 1963 by Lawrence Herbert, Pantone provides color reference and standardization in over 100 countries in a variety of markets, from textiles to architecture to interiors. Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, author of numerous books on color, and a color consultant for her own group, the Eiseman Center for Color Information and Training, discusses Pantone and her work for the company.

Scattered over this page and the next are just a few hues out of the 72 overall that comprise the Pantone View home forecast for 2007, created by Eiseman.

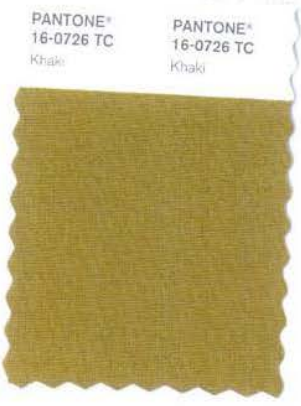
Pantone has traditionally been known for its fan guide. But it seems to be extending its reach beyond simply providing a color reference for graphic designers.
Pantone has become the worldwide color communication company. Using Pantone chips, people are able to get across the idea of the color they want to someone who may be 3,000 miles away.

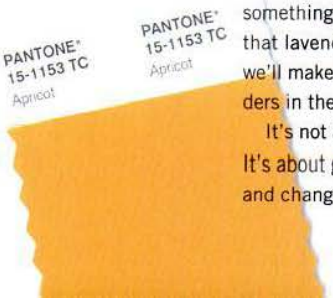
But so many people make the assumption that Pantone must know all there is to know about all aspects of color, like forecasts and trends. So I now go to Europe a couple times a year and work with other color consultants, and we create a forecast that comes out twice a year.

What inspires your forecasts?
I look at the world of entertainment, such as upcoming films that might have specific colors attached to them. The art world is important as well. And sometimes two (or more) trends converge, such as the movie version of *The Da Vinci Code*. The logo and attention-getter for that film is the Mona Lisa—it's appearing in ads and feature stories. The colors and sensibilities of that piece of art converge with many designers' thoughts about using more painterly touches in their designs.

The best example of how influential films can be, especially in children's markets, is *Shrek*. When I first read about this film and heard that the main character would be an acidic yellow-green, that caught my eye. *Monsters, Inc.* was also a vibrant green. Kids will always follow the color trends of their favorite characters. Yellow-green filtered into every other area of kids' lives—bedspreads, wall coverings, clothing, notebooks, and even the packaging of Skittles and other foods.

Are there other areas, besides entertainment, that influence people's color predilections?
Social issues and their emblematic color can create trends. Green is the obvious color as symbolic of preservation of nature and sustainability. The economy can also come ▸





into play. When people are concerned about spending money on high-ticket items with longevity, they often want to resort to neutral colors. That does not mean that vibrant colors go away, but it does mean that they have to be used more judiciously, perhaps in accessories as opposed to the bigger-ticket items. Fashion, of course, is always important. The 2005 fall shows featured blues and blue-greens heavily, especially in combination with brown. That has now transitioned into home furnishings.

How do your forecasts affect designers and consumers?

We don't update the Pantone colors based solely on trends, although that does have something to do with it. But if people feel that lavender is going to be a strong color, we'll make sure we have a selection of lavenders in the color offerings.

It's not about reinventing the color wheel. It's about getting the color wheel to evolve and change slightly. That's really what forecasts are about—how to use colors that resonate. Every designer isn't going to rush out and do what they saw in my forecast—they don't want to do what everyone else is doing. But it does help inspire them, or help them to look at a palette and say, Wow, I'd never thought about combining that shade of rose with this shade of blue-green, but I like the way that looks together. Forecasts are simply a guideline; they're not dogmatic.

How many colors are currently available in the Pantone pantheon?

In the textile system, for example, there are 1,925 colors. Every couple of years, we survey the market and when the designers say they need more white, or yellow, or darker greens, we pay attention to what they want and we introduce new colors to the system. That's why the number of colors keeps going up—because designers are like greedy kids: There's never enough color out there and they're always going to want the nuance of a color that doesn't exist. ►

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Brand New Color

The fact that your car is tinted a subtle silver or that your running shoes have vibrant orange stripes flaring up their sides is hardly a design afterthought. Indeed, the shades of products are considered every bit as carefully as their shapes. Color designer and graphic artist Beatrice Santiccioli, a renowned expert in her field, whose client list includes Swatch, Herman Miller, Biomega, Gilbert Paper, and Nike, talks about what it means to be professionally awash in hues.

Shown here is the idea book that Beatrice Santiccioli created for Gilbert Paper. Each spread shows the final color palette and the inspirations behind those colors—all personal objects culled from Santiccioli's home.

Do clients approach you with certain colors in mind for their projects or are you presented with a blank canvas?
Generally, when I start working on colors, the product itself is already to a good level of development. Most of the clients I work with have such a strong vision and idea of the market already that I don't have to show them images—it's more about discussion.

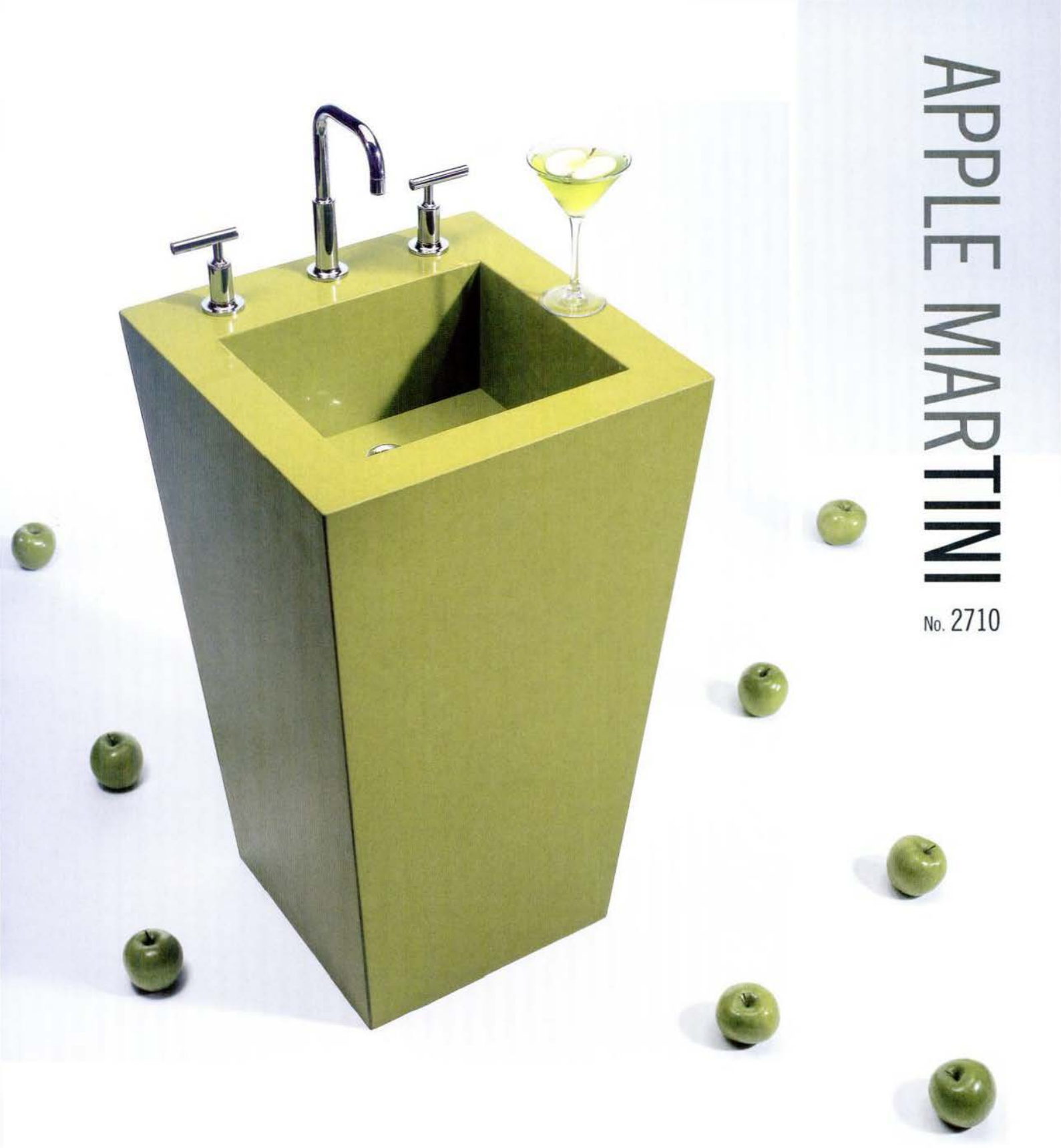
How does that discussion translate into a palette, say with your work for Gilbert Paper?
Besides using samples from color companies like Toyo or Pantone, I also like to mix my own hues—to mix gouache or use dyes in water and vials. And for this project, when I was asked to design colors for a paper company, I definitely couldn't bring paper samples from other companies! So I had reason to do a very basic and more artistic investigation of hues; the first samples were all handmade, as were the hues.

Of course, Gilbert Paper was also giving me direction, like their request for a pearlescent finish for some of the paper, which turned out to be the best sellers in the line.

It sounds like you are as much of an artist as you are a colorist.
Well, yes, an artist in the sense that I did a lot of studies in school about color theories and mixing. I studied at the Polytechnic School of Design in Milan and we didn't have access to computers. It was very manual. So that's a base of my work, and a very important aspect, because otherwise I wouldn't be able to create hues.

Does your approach to creating colors vary based on your client?
They're all different projects, because the strategies and the platforms are different. At Swatch, for instance, there are two collections a year and they produce maybe 20 pieces in each collection. Both the colors as well as the graphics were precisely thought ▶

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER



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out. For example, when we were introducing the scuba watch, we were using beautiful, bright fluorescent color to make it more visible underwater.

Could you talk about your work with Biomega bicycles? That subdued palette is a real departure from your vivid colors for Swatch.
The colors have been designed for the new line of bicycles they just added to their collection. It focuses on city style. So I created a more sophisticated palette in that it's not about really bright hues and bold colors, but more about warm, muted colors and intense tones. These are bicycles from Denmark, and [they are] based on the culture of the cities there, where people ride to and from work—that's what drove the development of the new palette. They are deep colors, like a beautiful dark suit.

Clearly, you've created shades for a wide variety of media. Does your work vary from discipline to discipline?
It does, because you think about the usage, the final application, and the diverse meanings that people give to what they build with paper or the value they place on a bicycle. Plus, the way the color is presented in each process is different. For example, with paper, the quality of the paper itself is another temperament and voice that is added to the project. You can't avoid the porosity or the flatness or the shine of paper. All these aspects are like little hints of personality.

It seems that you view the world from the perspective of color.
Yes, I'm very visual. When I look at colors, it's like a language that I can speak easily. I learn it, I tune it—it's like when you know how to sing well; it's very spontaneous. If I were to have a table in front of me of things that are all messy and disorganized, the first thing I would do is rearrange everything by color. And I love that. ▶

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER


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Paola Lenti / Furniture

Italian designer Paola Lenti's color sensibilities can be seen in her selection of the Nido armchair designed by Patricia Urquiola and Eliana Gerotto and filled with cushions covered in Lenti's signature Bliss fabric. p. 226

Created from Color

There are endless choices to be made in the world of color, as anyone who has tried to paint a room plain white knows. Even more variation is introduced when materials, use, and application are all considered, as illustrated by the work shown here by five designers who were asked to show how they're currently using color.

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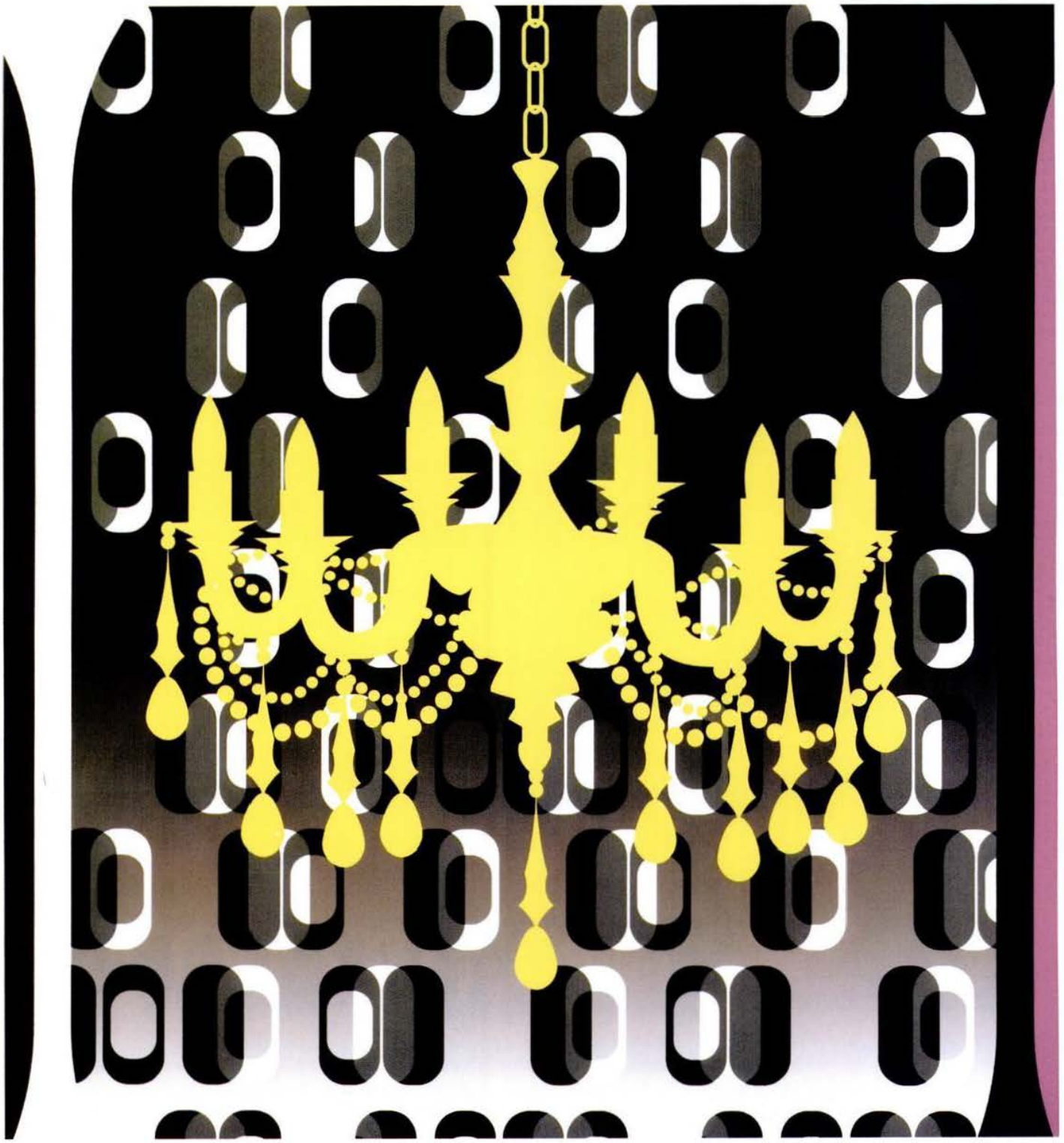
Jean Orlebeke / Paper

Geometric designs and bold colors—often veering toward psychedelic—mark the papers designed by Jean Orlebeke for eiei-o studio.



Denyse Schmidt / Quilts

Denyse Schmidt creates small fabric mosaics the way most of us jot down notes—as inspirations for her intricately designed quilts. p. 226

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER

Yolo Colorhouse / Paints

Poster-sized sample swatches, a host of attractive colors, and nontoxic paints let pint-sized paint company Yolo Colorhouse handily compete with their mega-sized corporate competitors.

PHOTO BY AYA BRACKETT

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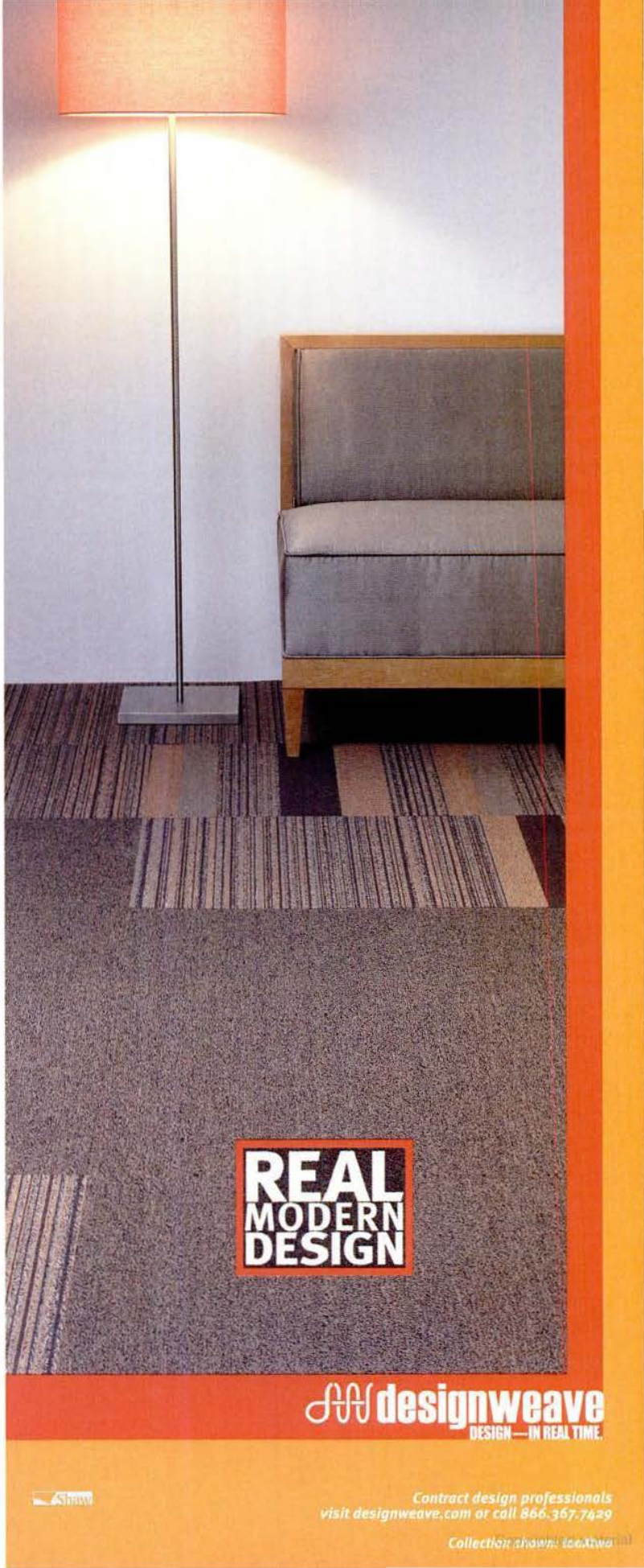

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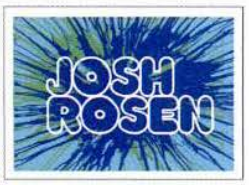

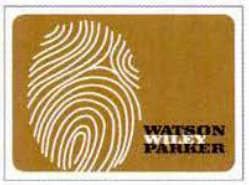

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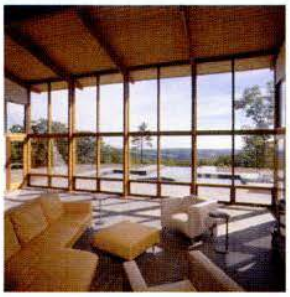

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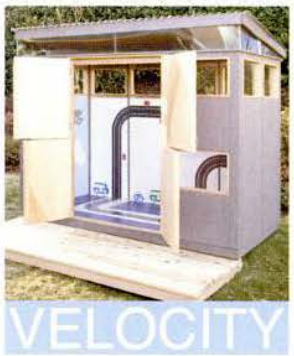

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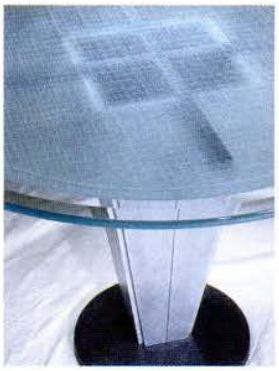

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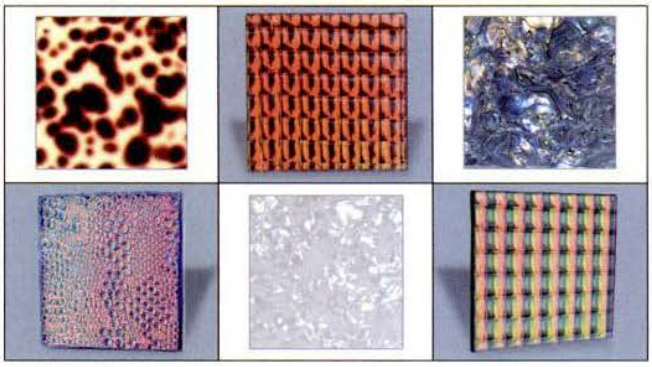

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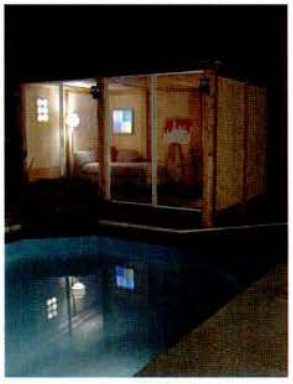

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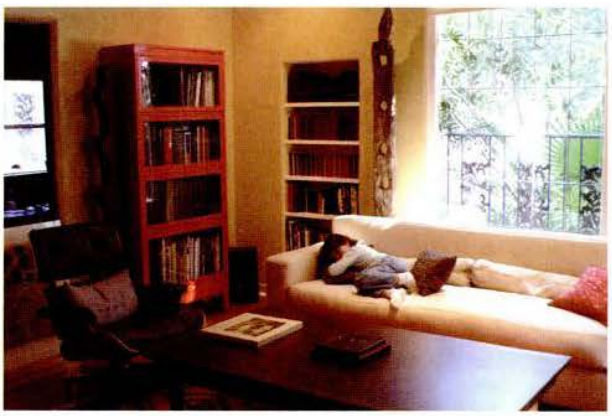

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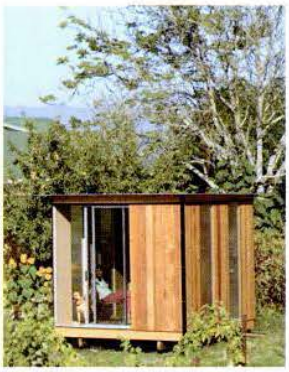

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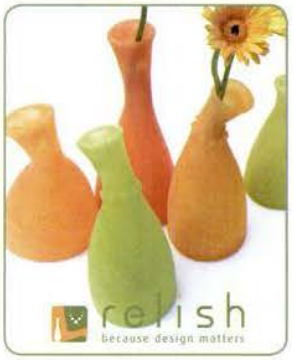

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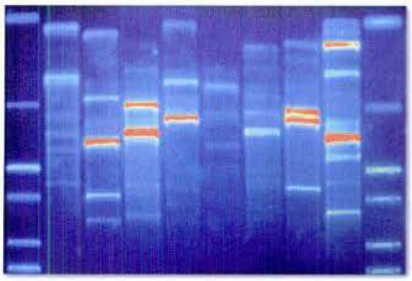

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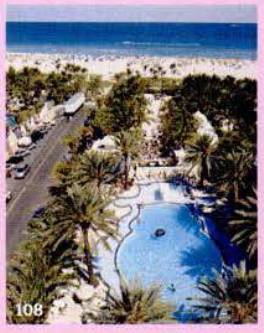

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The Curious Mr. Sottsass: Photographing Design and Desire
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www.stoutbooks.com

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Cabin, Cottage, and Camp: New Designs on the Canadian Landscape by Christopher McDonald and Jana Tyner (Simply Read Books/Blue Imprint, 2005)
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Story by Virginia Gardiner

Next to Kin

In the backyard of his parents' house in Linz, Austria, architect Ulrich Aspetsberger built a 700-square-foot hideaway for his wife and daughter. Though the house is far enough away from the parents' house to give the young family some privacy, it's close enough to share the electricity and plumbing.

Architect Ulrich Aspetsberger of the Vienna-based firm Caramel recently created a pint-sized house in Linz, Austria, for his wife, Andrea Bina, and their daughter, Lina. Aspetsberger, meanwhile, works in Vienna, two hours away, and spends weekends with his loved ones in Linz. Though it's named the Lina House, the yellow, 700-square-foot shoe-box-shaped structure owes its existence to Bina's job as a curator at the Lentos Museum of Modern Art in Linz, where Aspetsberger's parents also live. During their first few years in Linz, Bina and Lina lived with the Aspetsbergers, but soon needed more personal space.

Not wanting to completely abandon his parents, Aspetsberger built an outbuilding on their property. In his design, the architect cleverly created a glass passageway connecting the two buildings. On paper, the corridor enabled the new structure to classify as an addition. The passageway, however, was never built and now the Lina House sits a bit aloof from the main building, which dates back almost a century. The two are not entirely disconsonant, sharing electricity and plumbing and thus avoiding the hassle of connecting a new property to the Linz utility grid.

All the Lina House components were partially prefabricated offsite and mounted onto the steel framework in the course of a week. "Andrea wanted her own space quickly," says Aspetsberger, "so we devised a very rapid construction." The prominent glass window literally defined the house's shape—it had been cut to the wrong dimension for another Caramel job, and had been sitting around the office. Though the whole house only cost $68,000, Aspetsberger is especially proud of the bargain glass. "We built the house around that window," he says with a smile. ■

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