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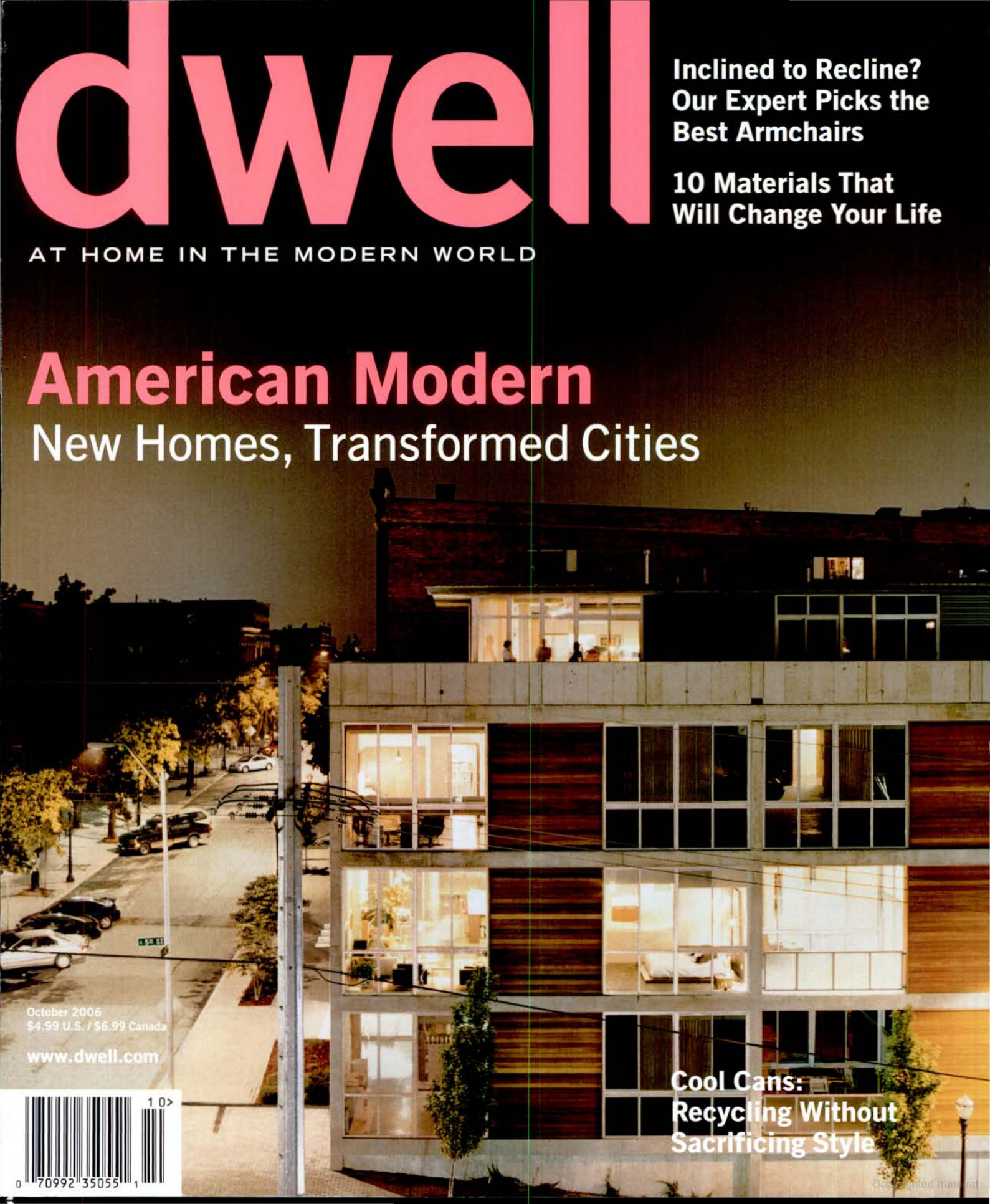

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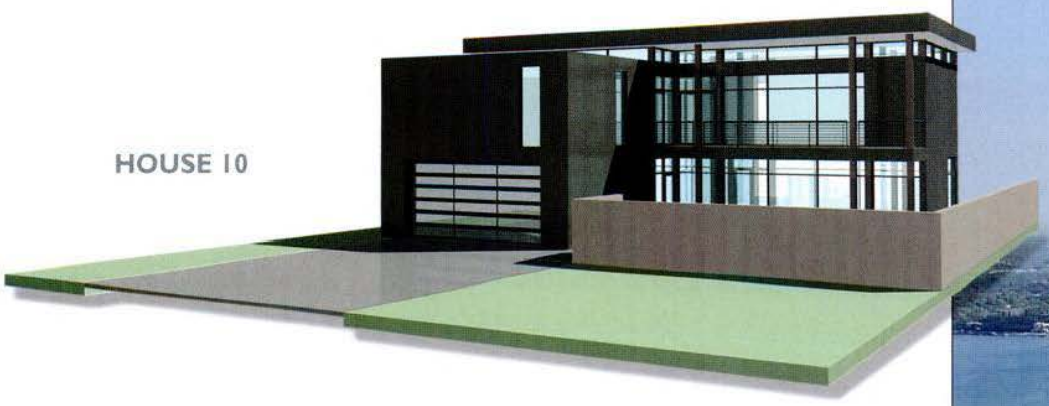

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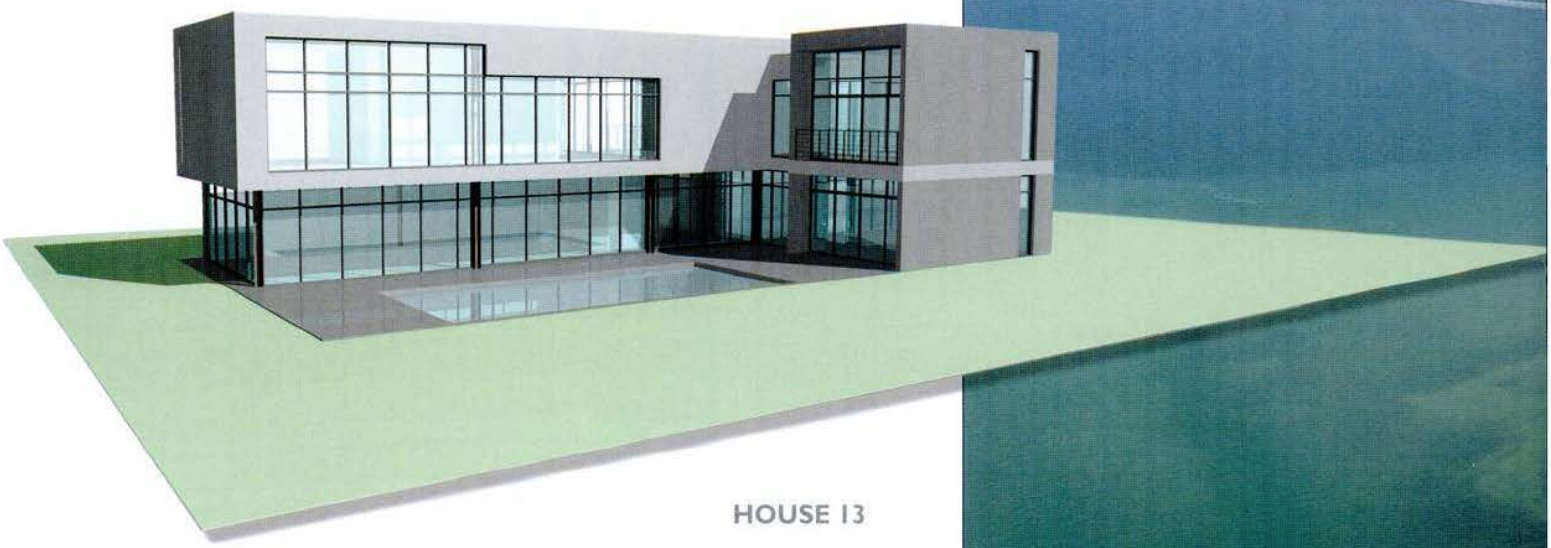

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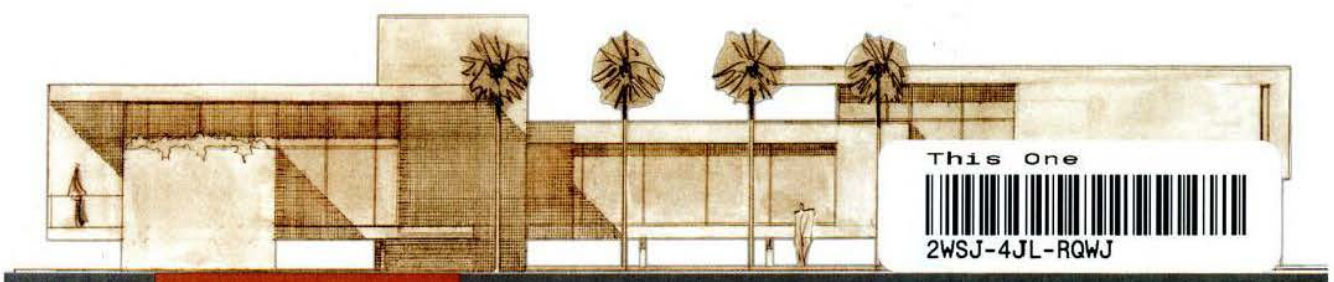

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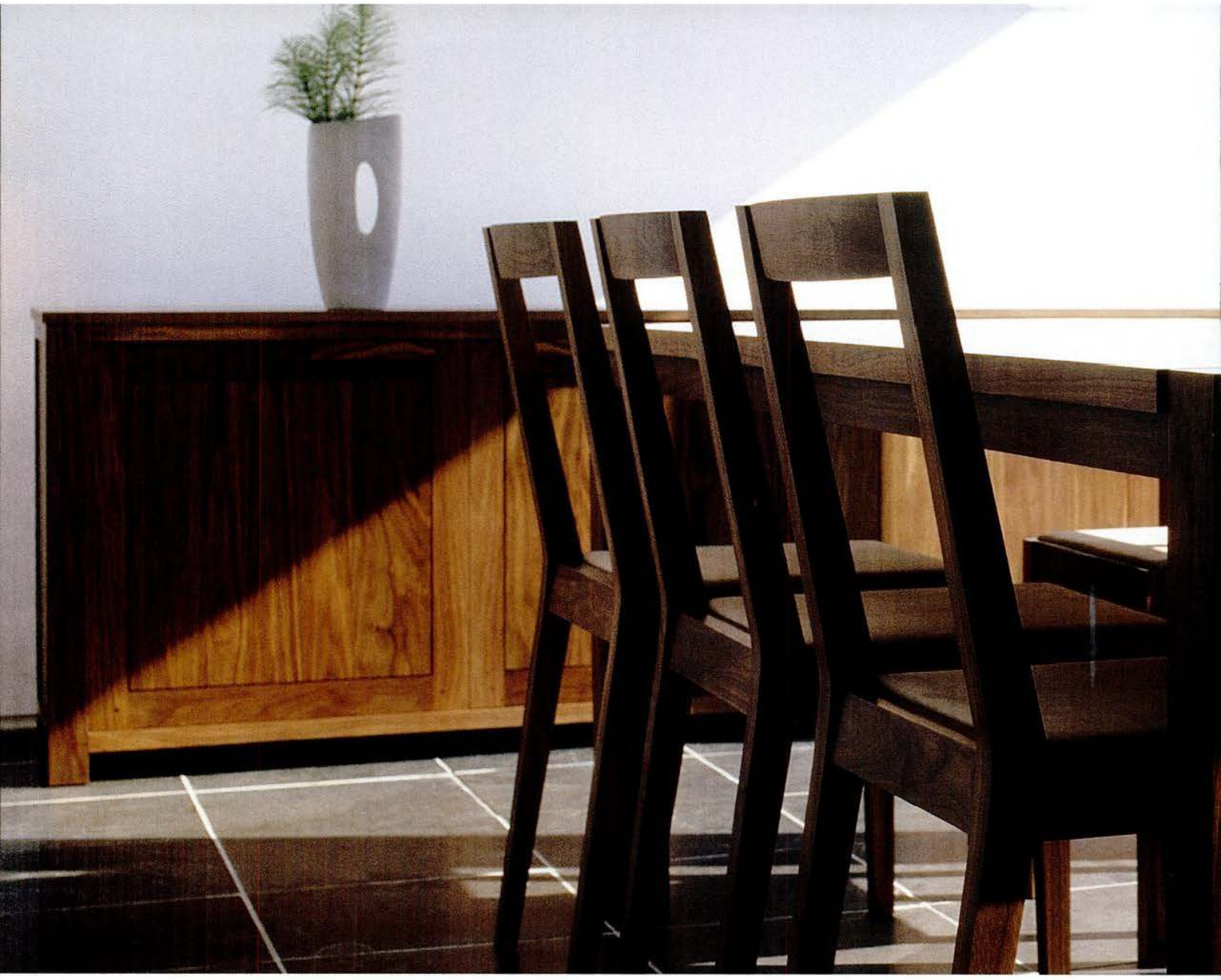

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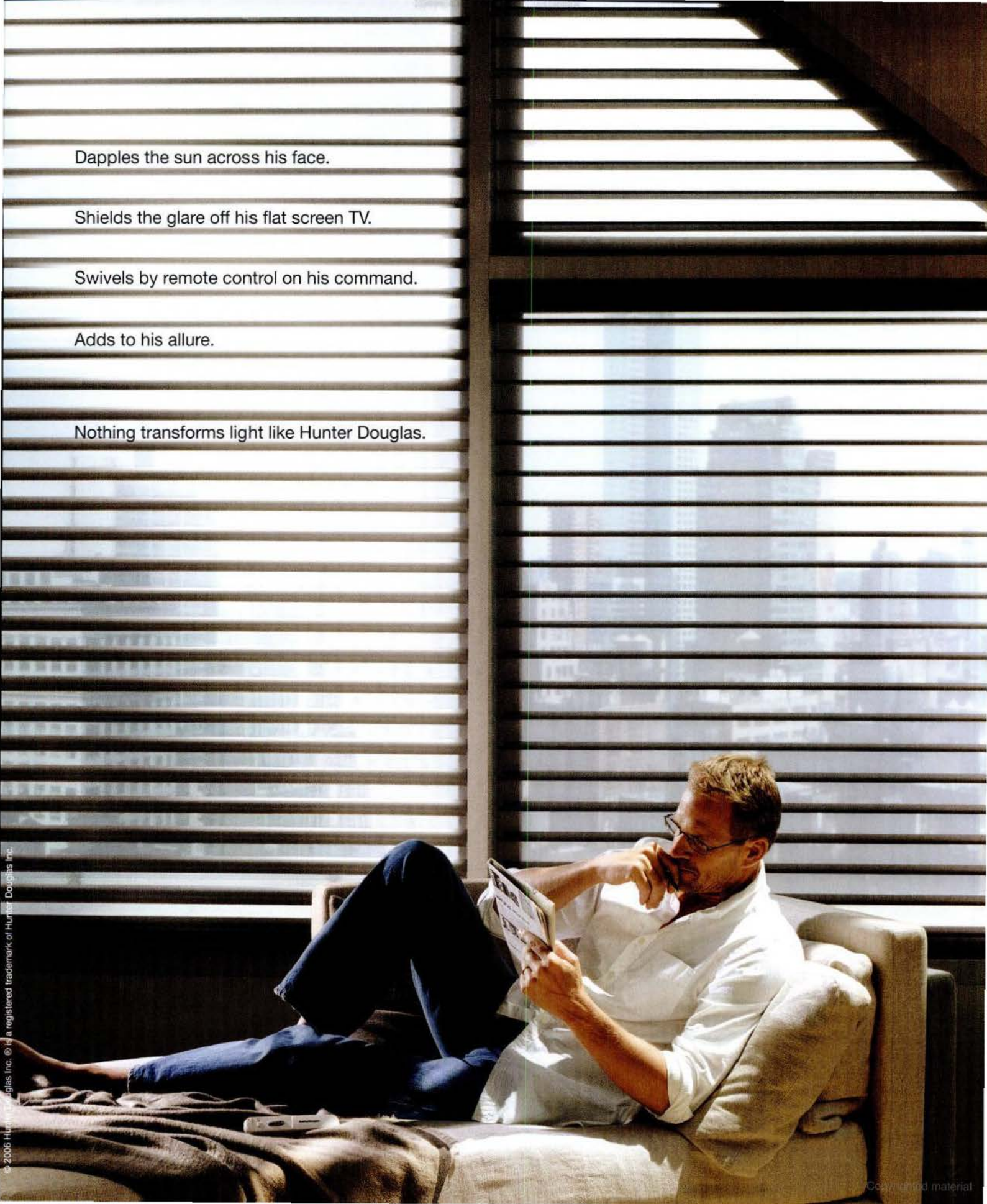

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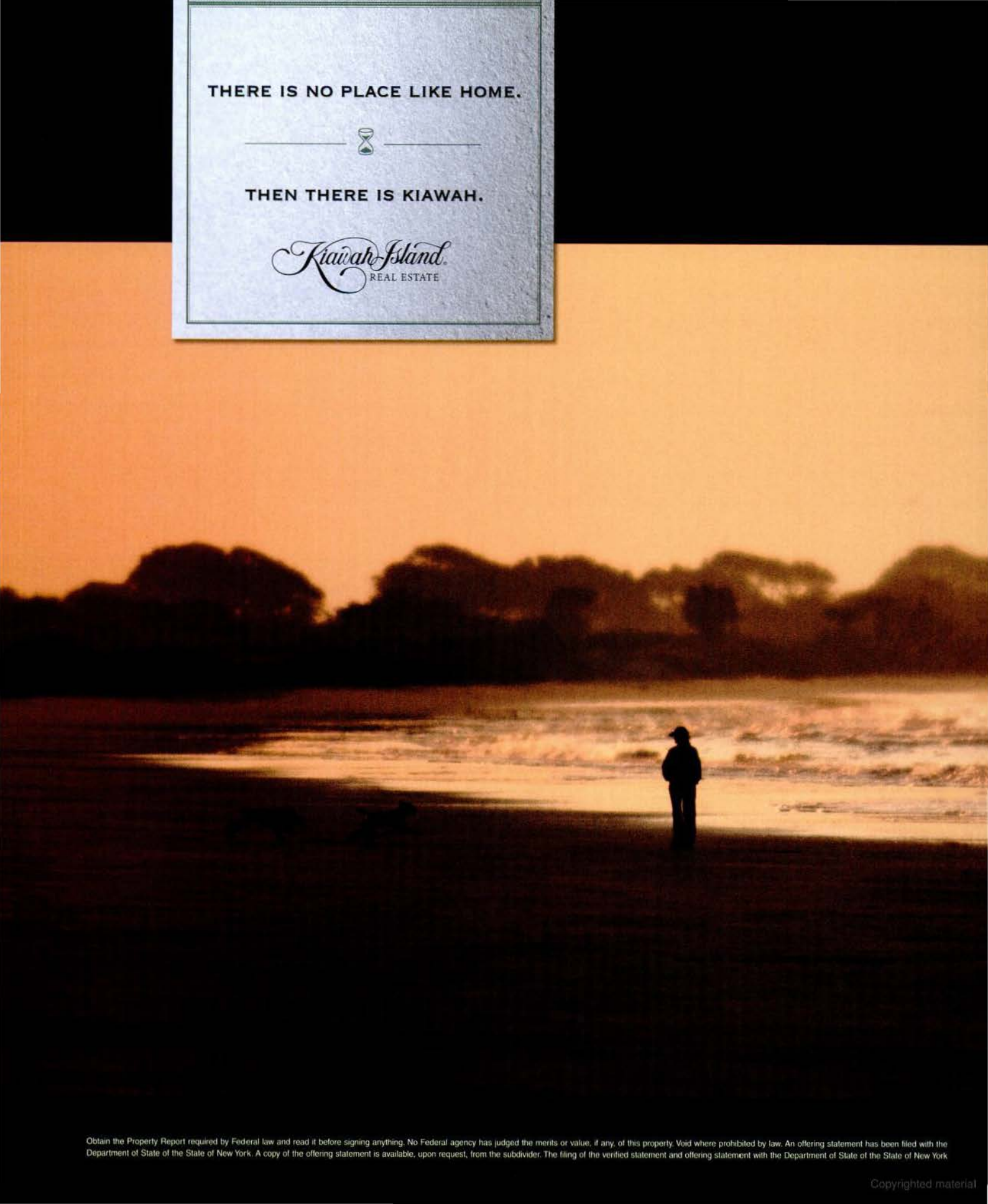

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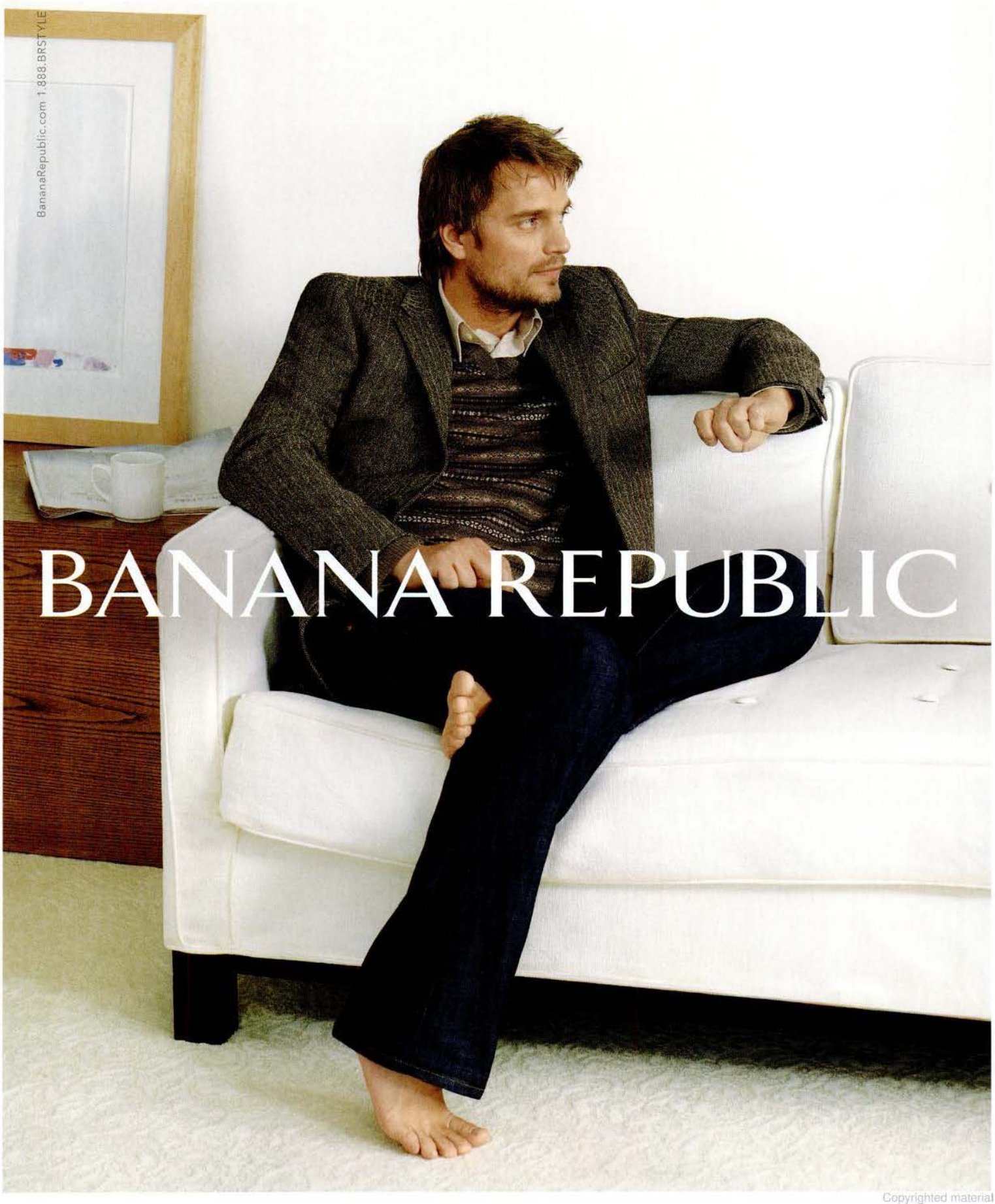

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American Modern
October 2006

"We didn't want to do anything too controversial, but we didn't want to do anything safe." —Chris Sally

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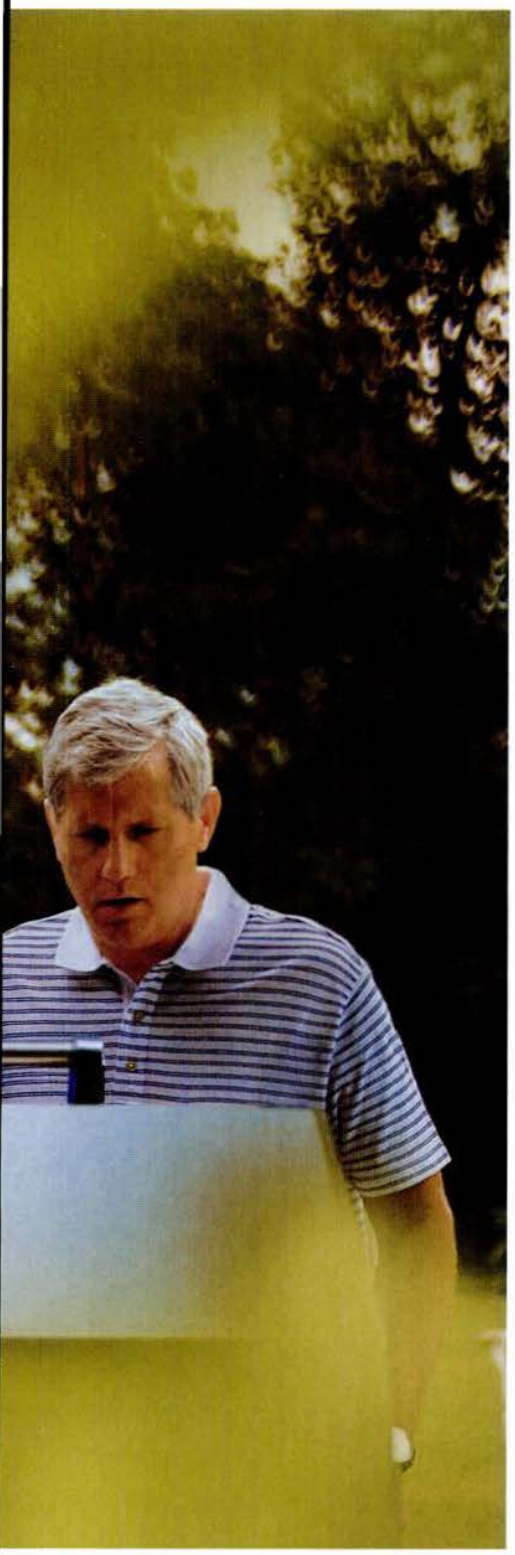

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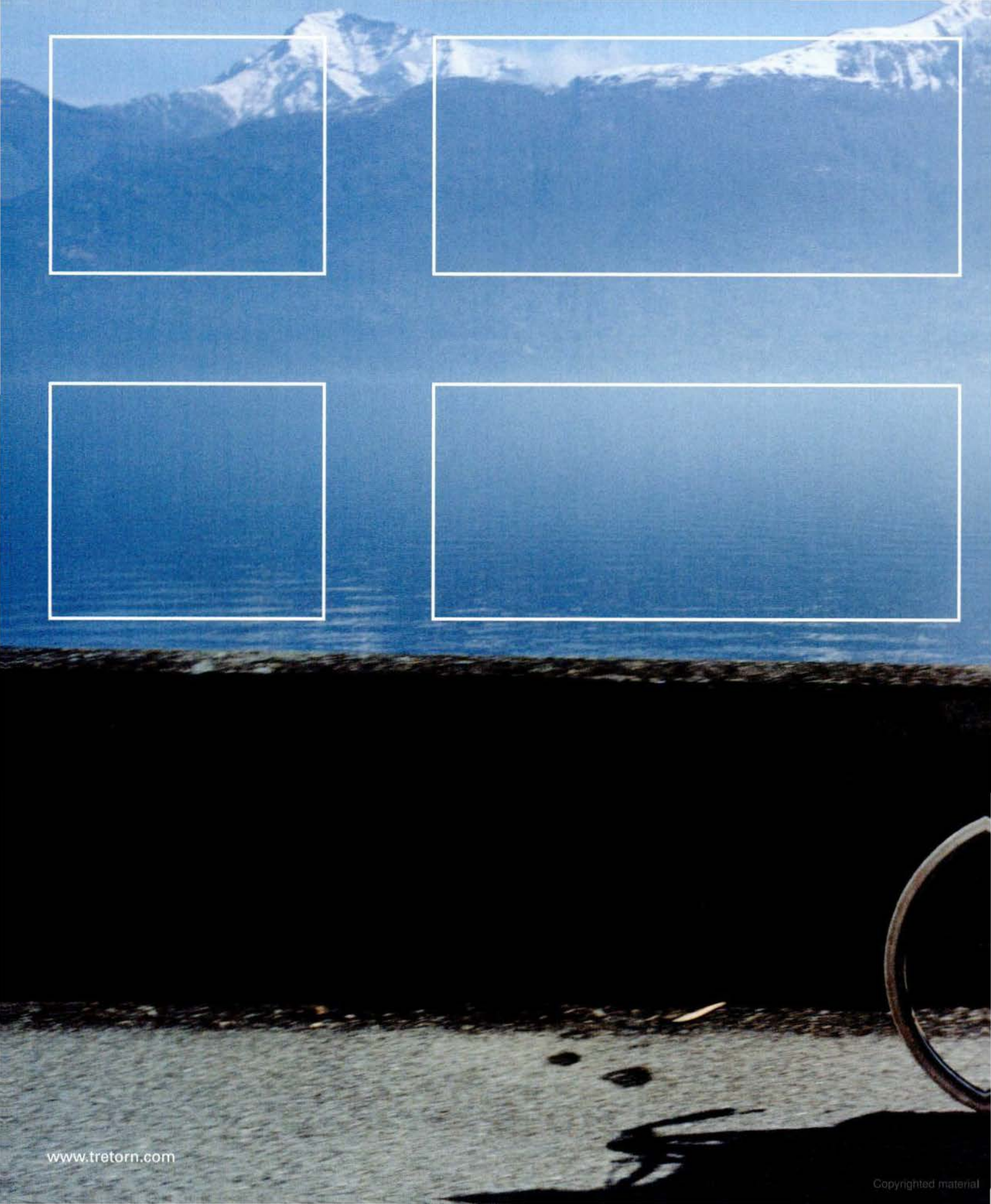

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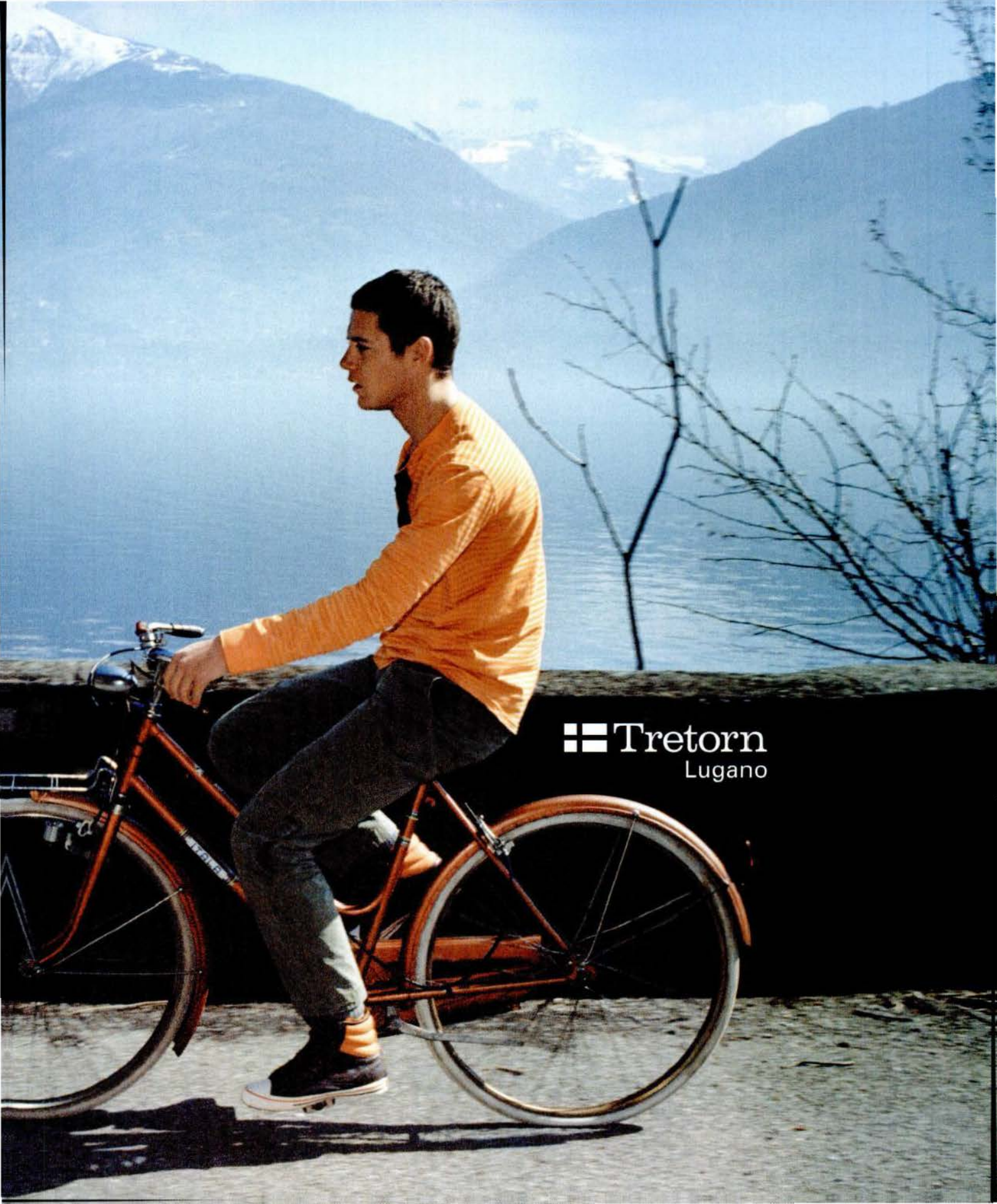
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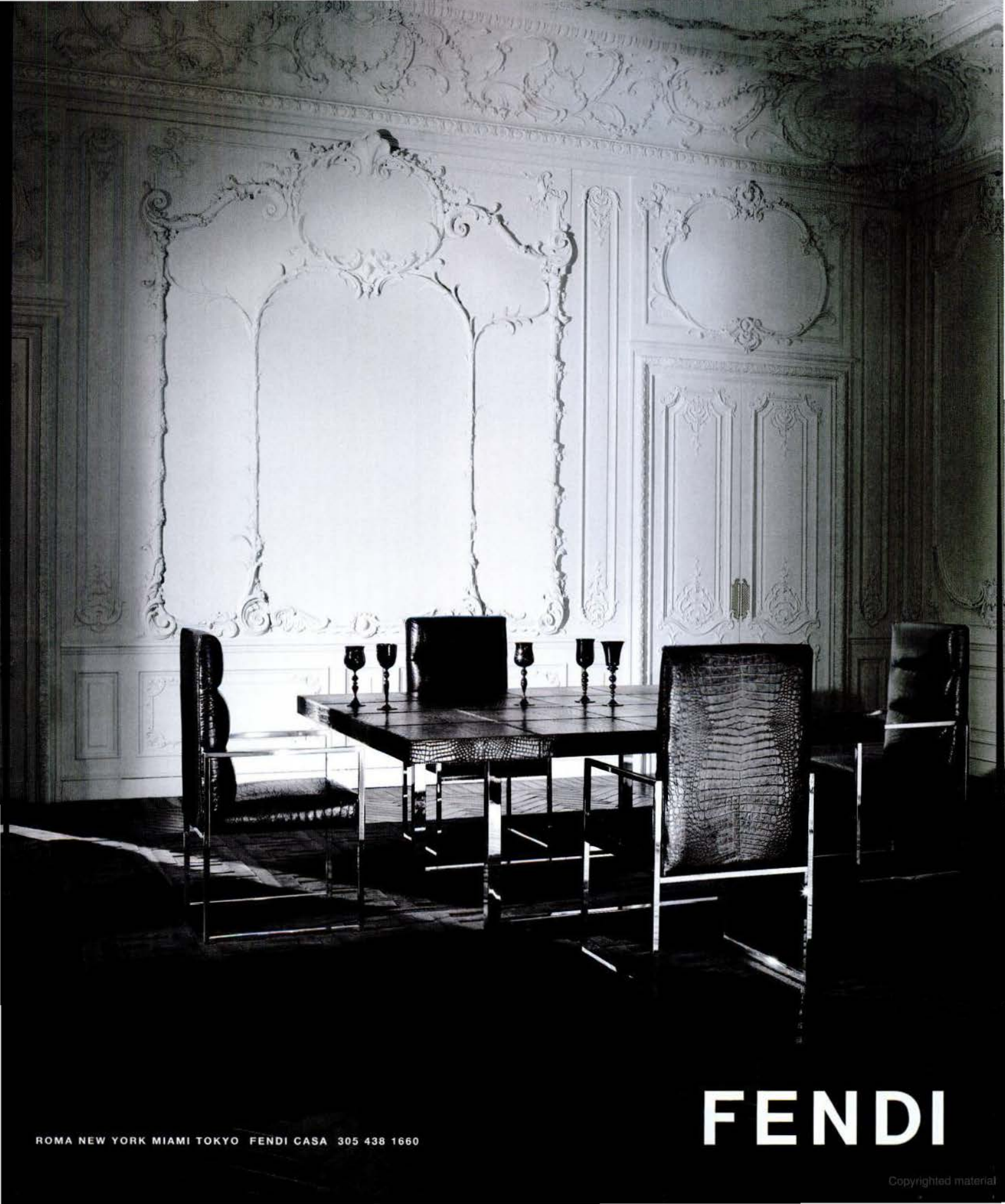

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Dwell's beloved taco truck at the corner of Pacific and Sansome in San Francisco. Are three burritos a week too much?

PHOTO BY ANDREA LAWSON

I accidentally let my subscription lapse, so I picked up a copy of Dwell at Henry's Market-Place, and was browsing through it. I assume the July/August 2006 cover house is the one that is mentioned as now being partially submerged in a Texas swamp? I would like more info on this house, how it was built, and whether there is any effort to save, possibly relocate, or build this house again.

Dennis Faulkner
Lakeside, California

Editors' Note: *Your best bet for additional information would be to pick up the book* Ant Farm: 1968–1970, *published by the University of California Press (www.ucpress.edu). Or you could also keep reading and hear from one of the original members of Ant Farm.*

In your July/August 2006 cover story, "Space Odyssey," you failed to credit Richard Jost, who was part of the design/build team for Ant Farm's House of the Century, along with Doug Michels and I. The House of the Century does not "lie mostly submerged in a Texas swamp," but is actually undergoing a restoration supervised by Richard Jost working with the owner, Marilyn Oshman. Hudson Marquez, who was on the artist team for Cadillac Ranch—1974 by Ant Farm (Lord, Marquez, Michels), is also omitted. The ten cars of Cadillac Ranch continue to be visited by uncounted thousands and we expect to celebrate the 40th anniversary with a party on June 21, 2014. Like each of the architectural groups, Ant Farm's membership was somewhat fluid, with associates added for specific projects. It's important to give credit where credit is due.

Chip Lord
Santa Cruz, California

I enjoyed Tom Hines's description of his sojourns in two Neutra environments in Westwood (July/August 2006, "Knowing Neutra"). Having managed his half of the Strathmore apartments for many years after my aunt, I had some direct experiences with the types who were attracted thereto. During my time, there were two tenants who had been there 30 and 50 years, one almost from the beginning. Once in, people tended to want to stay; they were indeed unique.

Earlier this year, through efforts of the then-tenants, the complex of our four-unit half of the court was converted to condominiums and one has just sold for close to $800,000—more than I received for the whole four units in the early '90s! Shows you what real estate values have done here in the past decade.

I have a couple of small corrections to Tom's account: My grandfather Alfred was more of ▸

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a mechanical engineer than a civil engineer. Design of municipal gasworks became a specialty. His instrument was the piano; I was the violinist in the group! He did assemble a string quartet, but it was most often to play Schubert's *Trout Quintet*. I remember playing piano trios with Alfred and my mother on cello. His mantra was "Keep the *time*; never mind the notes!"

My father redesigned Al's beloved piano, a Buesendorfer that had been shipped from Zurich. He removed the ornate legs and substituted three-inch polished-chrome pipes, which gave the black body a "floating modernist look."

One of my childhood memories was when we visited Louise Rainer in her apartment. Somehow, while we were supposed to be waiting for her appearance, I wandered down the hall and opened a door. There was Louise, stark-naked, just getting ready to decide what to wear! I'll always remember her exquisite delicate figure (not to speak of her consternation). I must have been about 11.

Dion Neutra
Los Angeles, California

I know you are probably going to get a fair amount of feedback about "Mapping Modernism" (July/August 2006). The timeline probably would have worked much better as a horizontal. Having text at 90 degrees makes people have to switch back and forth. Also, it was disappointing to see significant modernist design movements such as de Stijl and Constructivism referred to as "antics."

Mark Eastman
Palo Alto, California

It was quite a surprise to see the manifestos of Marx and Engels in "Mapping Modernism." I didn't realize modernist principles included war, starvation, ecological devastation, and murder, the natural consequences of the movements that followed from these works. Whatever vague inspiration these documents contributed to modernism should be completely overshadowed by the dark legacy of this thoroughly discredited and failed philosophy.

Rick Surles
Waxahachie, Texas

Okay, I have to know. Was the placement of Wilhelm Reich's Orgone Accumulator in the pantheon of modernist milestones, nestled between the 1939 World's Fair and the Pentagon, a joke aimed at finding out how attentive your readers, are or does it reflect some fringe-Dwelling aspect of the editors' psyche? I realize that in any list of greatest hits the aftermath of "how could you not include so-and-so" must be deafening, but to omit, say, Eileen Gray, in favor of a quack like Reich, whose contribution to anything at all, much less modernism, is rigorously zero, is embarrassing. If it was a joke, do I get a free subscription for catching it?

A.E. Stiegman
Tallahassee, Florida

Editors' Note: *No joke, Mr. Stiegman. Sorry to disappoint you. All we can say is that there were many people involved in moving the modernist agenda forward. Some contributed in obvious ways (Eileen Gray) while others contributed in not so obvious ways (Wilhem Reich). The cuts we had to make to this piece were especially painful. If we had our druthers, the timeline would have constituted an entire issue.*

Thanks so much for "Mapping Modernism." I bet a number of folks will write in with additions. I have two: 1871 dry-plate photography and Eadweard Muybridge's 1898 studies relating to the persistence of vision, which paved the way for motion-picture photography.

Would you consider adding some of the suggestions from readers to your modernism timeline, and posting it on your website? I am currently teaching a class called "Fine Art Meets Digital" and have been attempting to create my own list of 20th-century innovators and schools of thought to share with the students. (I have included Alexander Girard and Herman Miller, font men Neville Brody and David Carson, theorist Marshall McLuhan, music video and filmmakers Michelle Gondrey and Chris Cunningham, and websites such as we-make-money-not-art.com and Wikipedia.org.)

Karen Slobod
Missoula, Montana

Editors' Note: *Thanks for the suggestion. We'll be publishing an expanded version of the timeline on www.dwell.com.*

Humans have long attempted to do Mother Nature one better—from failed levees in New Orleans to the cloning of sheep. Your article "Hueless" ("Color 101," July/August 2006) walks the same path, damning with faint praise the notion that color is okay, really, it won't hurt you! Designers and architects the world over seem to think that only with the "color" white can we truly appreciate shape and form. If that was the case, I imagine natural selection and evolution would have thought of it millennia before we upright monkeys did. Richard Meier's and Peter Eisenman's buildings (while surely products of genius) terrify me with their precision and disdain of nature and setting. I am confident that someday this fear or disdain will pass, imbuing us with some lessons and leading the way to a more evolved view of the greater whole.

Quinn Brant
New York, New York

Since 1979, when I founded The Color People, a national architectural color consultancy, I've been waiting for a serious discussion in the design presses of color and architecture in the contemporary environment. Thus, you can imagine my delight when I saw the July/August issue of Dwell ("Color 101").

Sadly, however, I'm still waiting: The Pantone system does not lend itself readily to the coloring of buildings and you still have not explored the concepts and history of architecture's intense, varied, and defining relationship with color. With color, one can transform perceptions of architectural form and dramatically enhance the emotional resonance of any given space. Dwell should consider returning to this topic and providing its readers with a sustained look at the art and history of coloring buildings—including considerations of scale, form, site, light quality, and simple livability.

James Martin
Denver, Colorado

I just want to take a minute to compliment you on your new website. Remarkable—just like your magazine. I rush every month to see if there is a new issue on the stands and now I can appreciate the beauty of your website as well. Thanks.

Jimmy Doyle
Kingsport, Tennessee

Editors' Note: *We hope everyone will have a look at the new and improved www.dwell.com. Be sure to try our new search engine.*

I was excited to see your cover story on reading lamps ("A Little Light Reading," July/August 2006), as I just acquired an Eames lounge chair and need a reading lamp to pair with it. Imagine my disappointment when you gave a review of table lamps that were chosen for form rather than function.

Would it be possible to try again, this time reviewing lamps that are suitable for reading by first, and fabulous-looking second?

Bridget Hayes
Pueblo, Colorado

Compared to so many other lighting articles, your look at reading lamps was great and benefits enormously from the comments of Stephen Van Dyk and Dwell. But while it would complicate ▸

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the task somewhat, is it asking too much to publish all lighting fixtures illuminated? However inaccurate the studio image, the reader might gain at least some visual hint as to lighted appearances and performance.

Peter Coxe
Marblehead, Massachusetts

I am a big Dwell fan, if only for the fact that in one of your early issues you showed one of the designers sitting on the throne reading in her house ("My Bathroom, Myself," February 2002).

But I do need to point out a missed opportunity in "A Little Light Reading." All the designer lamps you presented, priced between $192 and $930, had incandescent bulbs in them.

In times of global warming, pollution, and excessive coal mining, incandescent lightbulbs are an unnecessary splurge on our environment and our resources, only one step above a candle or torch. The lamps all had between 100W and 250W bulbs, where it would only need 22W maximum with a much more efficient compact fluorescent light (CFL) that lasts ten times longer (10,000 hours) than the lamps proposed in your article. Not only that, each saves a minimum of $40 on your energy bill, so you could even go for the pricier designer light to begin with, if you are on a budget.

Compact fluorescents are now available for as little as $2. If you want a specific light color, you can spend as much as $15 for a light where it matters, and still save much more than that in electricity. We retrofitted our entire house with 25 CFLs four years ago and have had electricity bills as low as $8 and have not had to change a lightbulb since. Oh, and we saved $1,000.

Anja S. Caldwell
Washington, D.C.

On page 76 of the July/August issue ("A House Grows in Brooklyn"), under the title "Commercial Railings" you reference the manufacturer of the railing, but do not provide info about the grille attached to the railing. Can you tell us what the grille is and a contact for the manufacturer?

Jim and Donna Krupp
Amherst, Massachusetts

Editors' Note: *The screens were designed by homeowner Darcy Miro and manufactured by Milgo Bufkin (www.milgobufkin.com, [718] 388-6476), an architectural metal company in Brooklyn, New York.*

I was excited and pleased to read your piece on biodiesel in the June 2006 issue ("Greased Lightning"). I would like to know who you would recommend online for purchasing conversion kits for diesel vehicles to run on waste vegetable oil. The information will help me decide on my next car purchase. Keep up the good work on keeping our planet's welfare on the forefront.

Jennifer Lane
Long Beach, California

I certainly agree with the idea in "Being Green 101" (June 2006) that "making environmentally responsible choices has always involved uneasy tradeoffs." I am eager for more information in that respect on a few issues you wrote about.

First, I had stopped using compact fluorescent lightbulbs because we are required to recycle them separately, along with other toxic products like batteries. I figure we may someday have a breakthrough in green energy, but that poisonous waste is with us forever. Am I overreacting? How toxic are they?

While I'm at it, we have recently gotten a bid for solar electric panels: $32,000 for a system with battery backup that would almost meet our needs. Except for my interest in being self-sufficient, it seems it would be more ecologically efficient to pay that money into one of those green-energy funds and simply keep making the electric company rich. Any thoughts?

Finally, I want to run my '82 Mercedes on biodiesel, but, except for the reduction in pollution, I wonder how it can be better. I thought standard agriculture in the U.S. was highly dependent on petroleum for fertilizers, machinery, transport, etc. and that agriculture is the single worst contributor of greenhouse gases. So, unless you use recycled oil, isn't your footprint about as bad as if you went straight to the tank? What's the cradle-to-grave on this one?

Pamela Dorrell
Portola Valley, California

Editors' Note: *Author Jennifer Roberts responds to your first questions: "CFLs contain a trace amount of mercury but using them actually reduces mercury pollution. That's because much of our electricity comes from burning coal, which releases mercury into the air. According to a U.S. EPA analysis, over a five-year period an incandescent bulb is responsible for 10 milligrams of mercury emissions, while a CFL, which on average contains about 4 milligrams of mercury, is responsible for only about 2.4 milligrams of mercury emissions. So when it comes to mercury pollution and energy savings, CFLs beat incandescents hands-down.*

"As for solar electric panels, my advice is to first invest your money in energy-efficiency improvements—the unsexy stuff like better insulation, weatherstripping around windows and doors, and replacing energy-guzzling appliances with super-efficient models. There's no sense spending a lot of money to generate solar electricity only to turn around and waste it because you have a leaky, poorly insulated house or inefficient appliances. Once you've got your energy footprint as low as possible, you might consider offsetting your remaining carbon emissions by donating to a group like carbonfund.org."

Author James Nestor handles the response to the biodiesel questions: "For every one unit of energy needed to produce biodiesel, 3.24 units of energy are gained. This is the highest energy balance of any fuel. U.S. agriculture is indeed highly dependent on petroleum—like every other industry, we're all 'addicted to oil!'—but as biodiesel continues to grow in the farming and freighter sectors, this problem can be lessened. See biodiesel.org for more information. In regards to recycled vegetable oil, this is the most eco-minded option, and a number of smaller biodiesel producers use it. Ask around. You'll know it by its delicious scent.

"As far as conversion kits go, there are many, but any one will do the trick. From experience, I'd spend a little more and get a system by a proven manufacturer like GreaseCar (www.greasecar.com), Frybrid (www.frybrid.com), or Elsbett (www.elsbett.com). If you're not a proficient mechanic, get the kit installed by a professional who has done it before. Check around local email listservs, talk to biodiesel co-ops—you'll find someone. This may seem like a pain, but it is essential to ensure years of trouble-free veg burning... and you'll recoup the cost in no time."

I rent an apartment in New York City that is on the top floor and gets full southern exposure. Keeping it cool is a challenge, and despite our best efforts to close the blinds during the day, living without window air conditioners is difficult in July and August. What solar solutions are out there to help put my conscience to rest? Hasn't anyone created small solar stations that renters of small apartments can put to use?

Eric Wintermuth
New York, New York

Editors' Note: *If there are, we'd love to learn about them. If any readers have any suggestions, feel free to weigh in at letters@dwell.com.*

Recently, I was scanning through a past issue of Dwell (October/November 2005) and came across the article "Hip(per) Hotels," which I had previously overlooked. Since my husband and I were planning a trip to Seattle and needed to make hotel reservations, I saw this article with ▸

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new eyes. So, upon your recommendation, I made reservations at the Ace Hotel in downtown Seattle for our own "less-is-more" experience.

Not only were we impressed with the Ace's modern design, but we also enjoyed their no-nonsense approach to room decor. (No fussy bedspreads and heavy drapes here.) The hotel's staff was gracious and helpful with even the tiniest of travel needs: Ed's directions to a locally owned café for breakfast (the Cherry Street Cafe, for those of you interested in good coffee and bagels) were exactly what we were looking for. And finally, we were so impressed with how immaculate our room was. Our stay at the Ace Hotel was exactly what we had hoped for.

Thanks, Dwell, for being in-the-know and passing this information on to your readers.

Janie Cobb
Pensacola, Florida

I am writing to commend Dwell on several excellent articles that put modernism in historic context, and vice versa in your July/August issue. As a Boston-based developer of historic and commercial properties, we consult to municipal leaders on how heritage assets can be powerful economic catalysts. While we typically work with 18th- and 19th-century properties, "Goodbye, Columbus" ("Columbus Explored," July/August 2006) was a moving reminder that modernist landmarks can also suffer this fate in the name of progress.

I admire the efforts of Tom Vujovich and Columbus's redevelopment commission to convert downtown from a 9-to-5 schedule into a vibrant destination with nightlife. But I would like to respectfully challenge them to reconsider their approach of doing so by demolishing architectural landmarks by luminaries such as Kevin Roche and Cesar Pelli.

Please consider adaptive reuse of these modernist buildings, and heed the lessons that we learned from demolishing many of our landmark buildings in Boston, Salem, and New Haven during urban renewal. One of the qualities that makes Columbus distinct is its concentration of modern architecture, and these buildings can be critical heritage assets for future generations and a connection to the town's mid-century vision.

Constantine Valhouli
Bradford, Massachusetts

Editors' Note: *Look for an issue devoted to adaptive reuse in 2007.*

I love your magazine and its innovative approach to architecture and its unlimited possibilities. Having long since graduated from a school of architecture, it reminds me of the refreshing ideas that run rampant in a studio of students staying up all night trying to transfer their concepts to scale reality. "What can be conceived can be created..." Thanks for even thinking about re-creating the feel, love, vision, and fearlessness of architectural academia that can be experienced in one convenient place.

Kevin E. Hobbs
Richmond, Virginia

As a longtime reader of Dwell and a lover of road trips, I've always hoped you would do a late-spring or early-summer article on a modern road trip. If it were well received, it could be stretched into a yearly series of articles or an entire issue outlining routes through different areas of the country highlighting suggested sites, restaurants, and hotels along the way, or even tips on where and how to rent an Airstream trailer or hybrid vehicle for the trip.

I may be a bit biased as a Chicago resident, but what a great place to start a trip: Mies van der Rohe's Farnsworth House is less than two hours away; Columbus, Indiana, isn't far either. Frank Lloyd Wright's buildings are everywhere, and of course, Chicago itself has a ton of great modern and contemporary architecture, including our new Gehry building. Well-publicized sites like these are easy for the average lover of modernism to find on a map, but things like tours of the Blu Dot or Herman Miller factories, or entire neighborhoods designed by lesser-known modernists, could be more difficult to find, and Dwell might be able to get would-be travelers info that we wouldn't scout out on our own. Plus, your writers and photographers could have a blast with the research!

Jaci Rivera
Chicago, Illinois

Editors' Note: *We hope you've been following our Detour articles, including this month's guided tour of Chicago led by architect Brad Lynch (page 232).*

On page 92 of the May 2006 issue of Dwell ("Urban Vessel"), my wife and I saw kitchen cabinets we would like for our own home. Unfortunately, no reference was made to them in the article. Can you give us information about these cabinets (material, how to purchase, etc.)?

James Wrenn
Chicago, Illinois

Editors' Note: *Please contact the architect, Page Goolrick (www.goolrick.com), for information.*

I've been meaning to write in with this concern for some time, and now that we're facing home ▸

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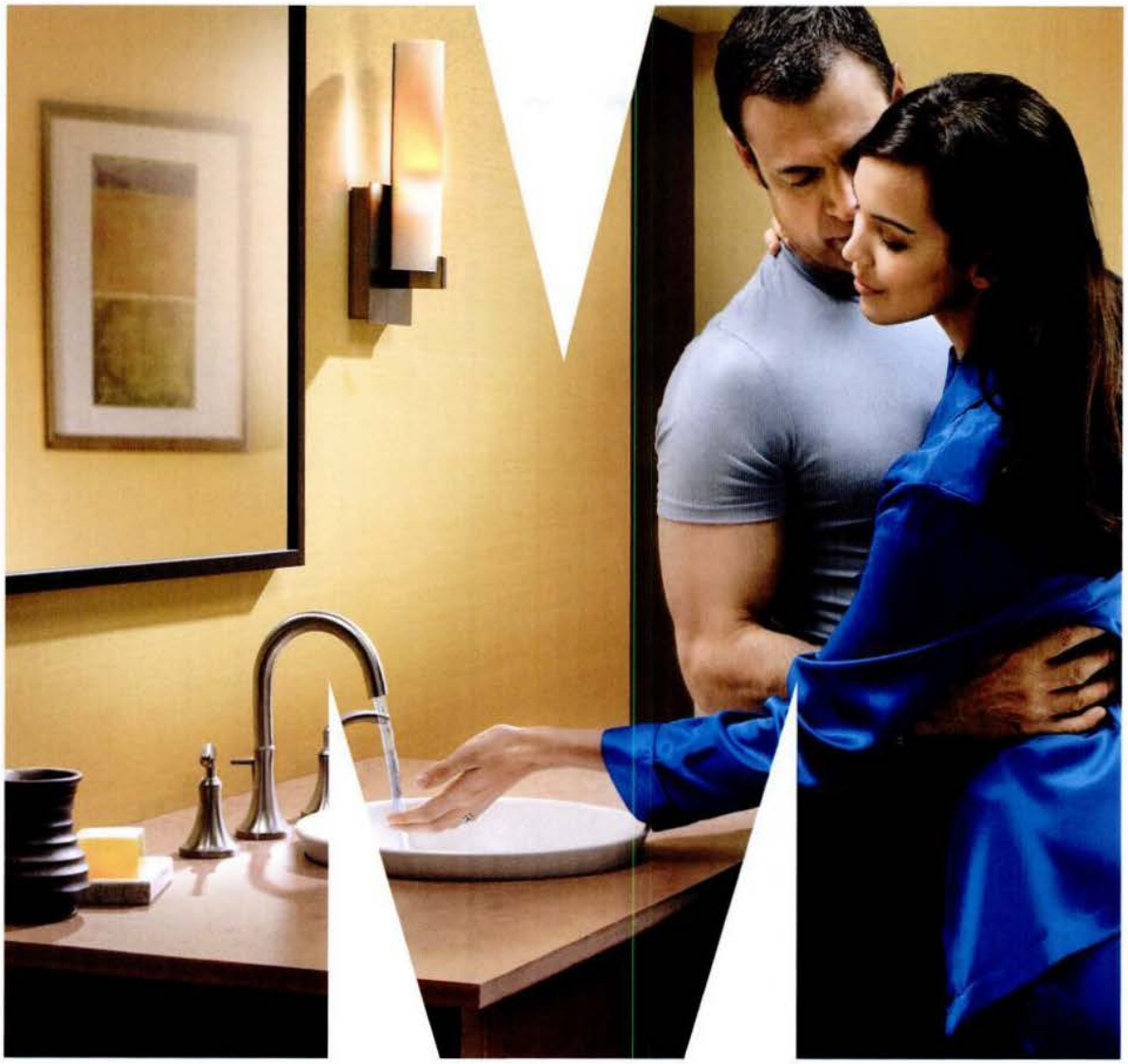

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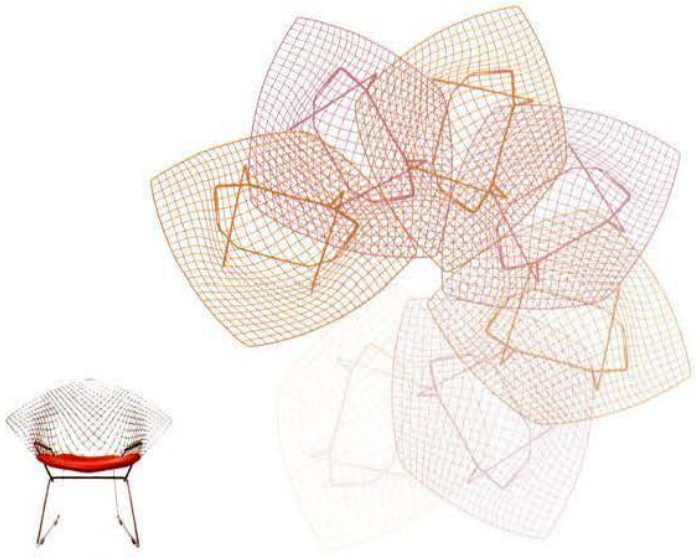

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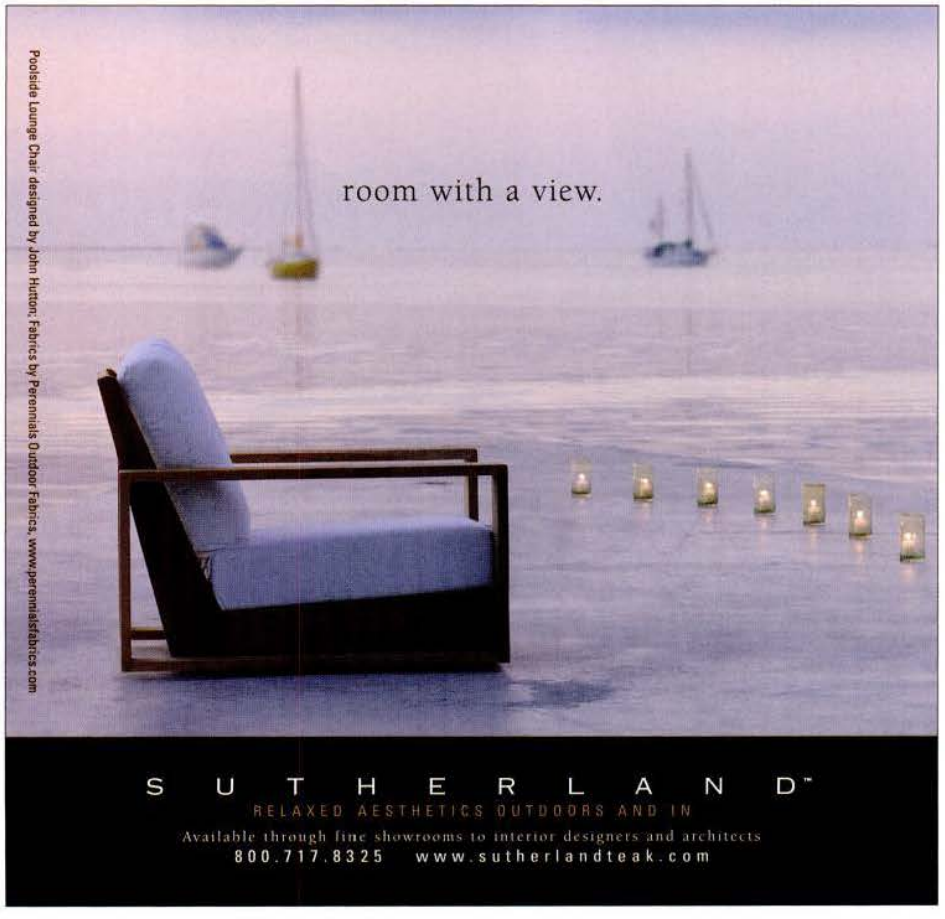

Letters

ownership I feel it's time to act. We anticipate new issues of Dwell arriving, and most of the time we enjoy thumbing through them. In fact, we keep them all for future reference!

What troubles me is that none of this seems really doable for the layperson. While we are fans of modern architecture and design, most of the homes we see featured in your magazine are designed (and often built) by the architects who end up living in them. We certainly appreciate your features on the more modest homes, and are inspired to see what can be done with imagination, some reclaimed materials, and a small budget—but I'm not an architect, don't know any architects, and am fairly certain this situation will not change anytime soon.

I feel like there is little hope for someone like myself and get discouraged by all of the architect-owned houses featured in your magazine. What can I do? Where can I turn for resources?

Eric Bullock
Rockville, Maryland

Editors' Note: *You may want to look at any number of companies selling house plans. There is a lot of discussion about this very topic at www.livemodern.com. Please also take a look at our "My House" article on page 97 of this issue for some inspiration and additional ideas.*

Corrections:
In "Knowing Neutra" (July/August 2006), we made some mistakes with our captions. First, we described the Kelton Apartments as "c. 1939"; however, it was not built until 1941–42. On page 156, the furniture is referred to as Stickley—only the chairs on page 156 are Stickley; the chair on page 157 is by Otto Wagner. The article describes the Elkay Apartments as being "across the street," but they are in fact on the same side of the street.

And in "Miami Advice" we stated that the three-story cutaway outdoor living room by Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt was in the Design District in South Beach. The Design District is not, in fact, in South Beach. It is in Miami. We regret the errors.

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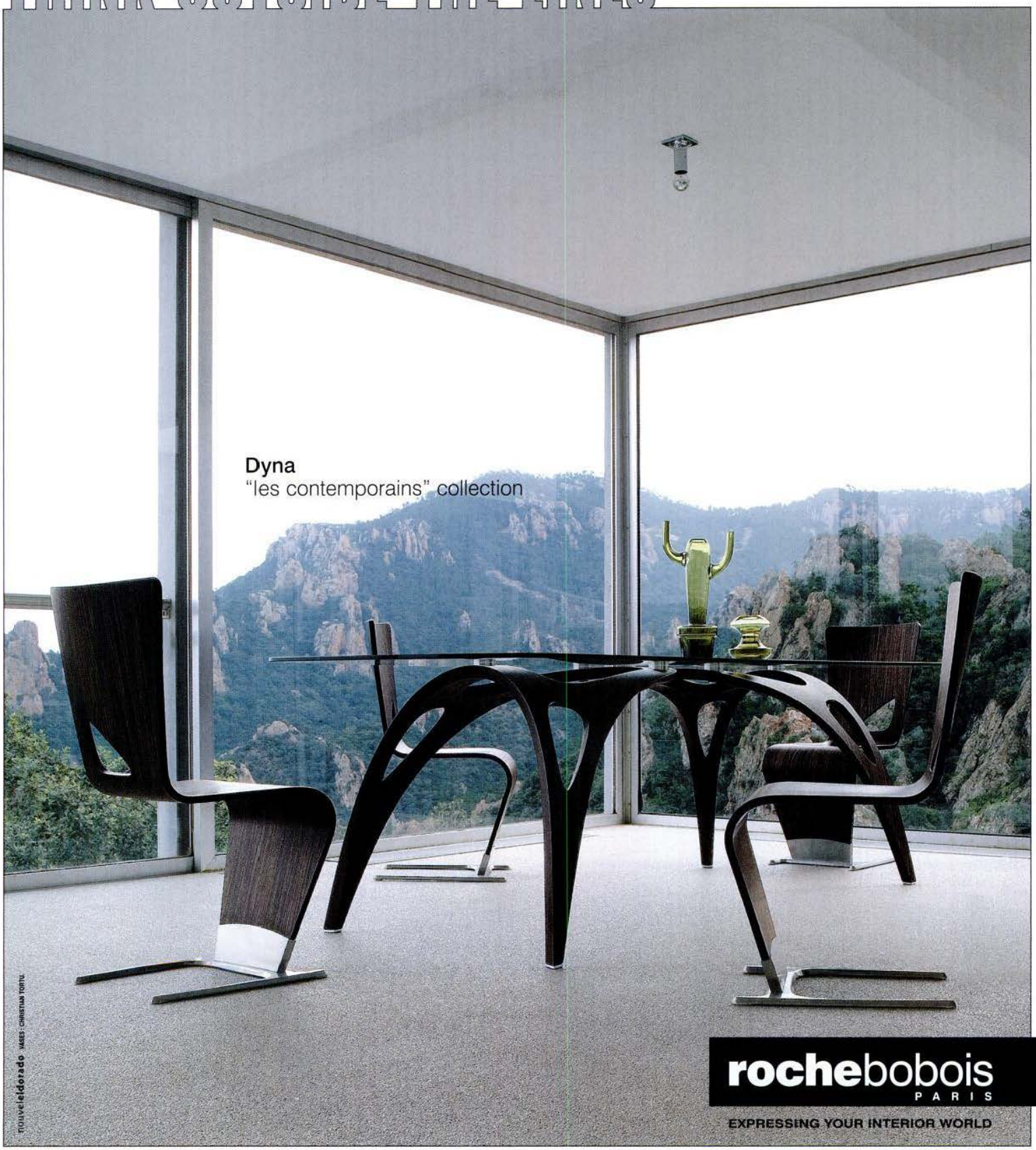

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Kansas City, MIssouri—home of good eats and healthy obsessions with flamingo lawn ornaments—and the focus of our cover story this month.

Contributors

Iain Aitch ("What We Saw," p. 126), Dwell's contributing editor in London, found himself contemplating his place in the greater scheme of things when he joined a crowd blindly following a herd of sheep that was being driven through the city to mark the opening of the second London Architecture Biennale this summer.

Lee Bey ("The Real Chicago," p. 232) is a Chicago writer and architecture critic. Writing this month's Detour left him pondering the possibilities of becoming a food and wine critic because then at least you get to take your work home with you.

Deborah Bishop ("The Garden State," p. 145), Dwell's San Francisco–based contributing editor, wasn't sure what to expect when she embarked at Penn Station for her journey to Ridgewood, New Jersey, to check out the mid-century home built by James Rose, one of landscape architecture's most important—and colorful—modernists. "It's amazing. There's this seamless rapport between the buildings and the landscape, and especially next to all of the cookie-cutter houses, it felt like some handcrafted country enclave that took a wrong turn, got stuck in the suburbs, and decided, What the heck, I think I'll stay."

Hunter Freeman ("Dwell Labs," p. 156), a San Francisco–based photographer, has been sorting through garbage and recycling for many years, in hopes of finding just the right *objet* to turn into something lasting. "I never know when something will fall into my path and be just the right thing to photograph," Freeman says, "but I'm always looking."

Daniel Hennessy ("Part of the Plan," p. 97, and "Kansas City, Missouri," p. 166) is a photographer based in Los Angeles whose worked has also appeared in *Elle*, *GQ*, and *Gourmet*. Of his shoot in Berryville, Arkansas, Hennessy says, "The Kieslings were such a nice and down-to-earth couple, but being so secluded in the Ozarks, I have to admit when I was shooting out on the balcony, every time I looked out to the view of the river through the trees I had the music to the movie *Deliverance* going through my head. Kansas City, on the other hand, had some great little up-and-coming areas full of new studio lofts, and the best part is, they are actually still affordable compared to L.A. real estate prices."

Chad Holder ("The Real Chicago," p. 232) loves to travel and so the quick tour of Chicago to photograph this month's Detour was a blast. He was most surprised by Tekla: "I have never heard of an underground grocery store for the elite, who would have known?"

Catherine Ledner ("New Orleans, Louisiana," p. 182) is a Los Angeles–based photographer who shot her original hometown of New Orleans for this month's issue. The Modern Across America theme definitely hit home for her: Having been raised in a '50s modern house that was engulfed in the waters of Katrina, seeing and experiencing the good in New Orleans was heartwarming. Catherine's father was able to visit the location and see what is modern now. She feels hopeful that New Orleans will recover, and she can't wait to return.

Jane Szita ("Cover Story," p. 134), an Amsterdam-based writer, interviewed Irma Boom, one of the world's most influential book designers, for this issue. Boom did not, however, design the book *One Architecture!*—about one of the most interesting architecture offices in Amsterdam, or anywhere else—on which Jane has just collaborated with Dutch architect Matthijs Bouw for Korean publisher Damdi.

Cameron Wittig ("Modern? You Betcha!" p. 288) currently resides in Minneapolis and works for the Walker Art Center as staff photographer. According to Wittig, the image of the Eddy house should be viewed with the sound of freight-train whistles played in the background, an omnipresent element of any Fargo experience. ■

PHOTOS BY DANIEL HENNESSY (TOP) AND STEVE MCAGHON (BOTTOM)

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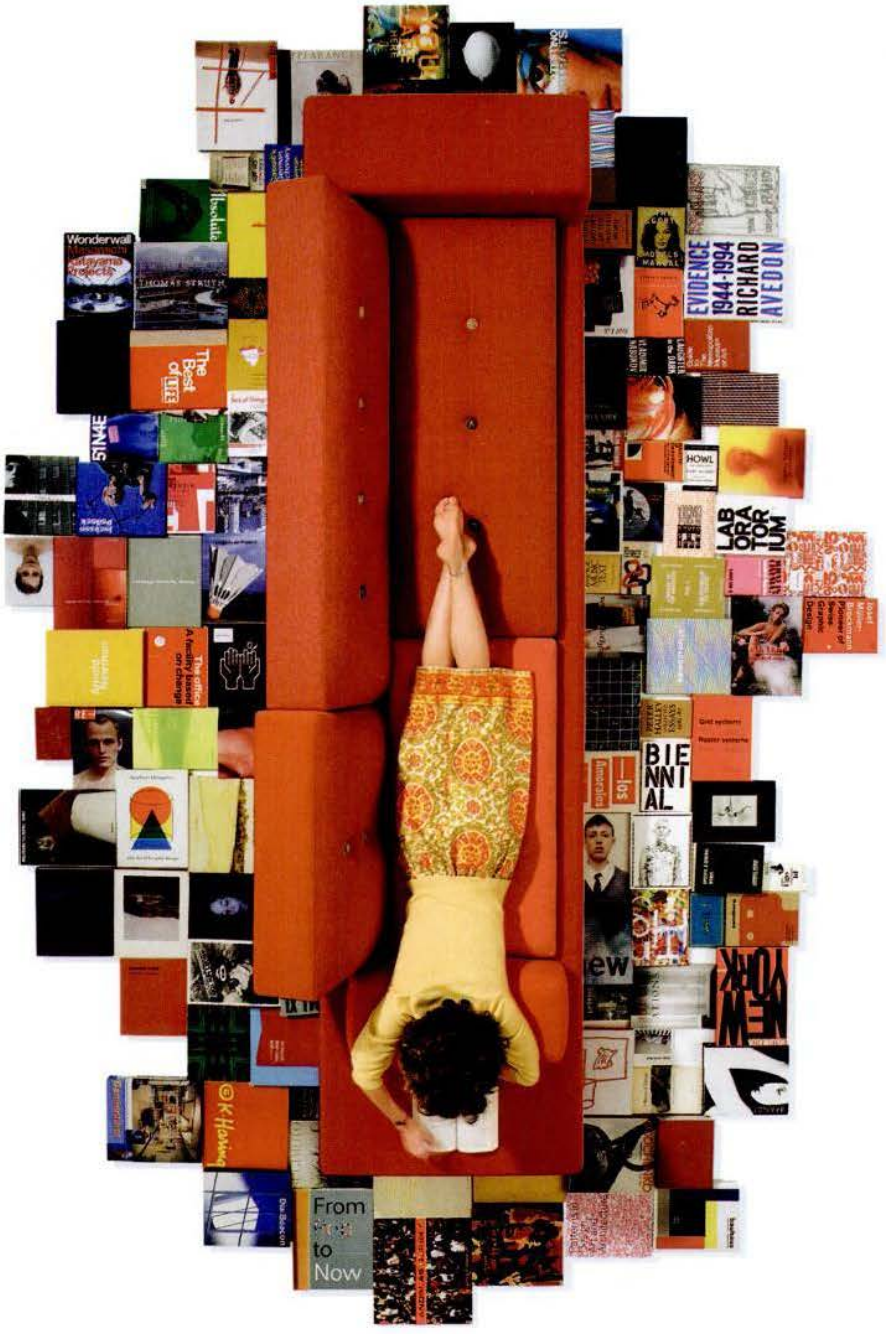

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Here, There, and Everywhere

Projects like this house in New Orleans by Bild Design demonstrate how good design can help foster community spirit.

There is the most perfect little street in my San Francisco neighborhood. Every conceivable paint color, square footage, and architectural style is represented on this languidly twisting lane called Laidley. There's the three-story, all-windowed-façade modern house with its owner often visible reading the paper in his Eames lounge chair; a wacky '70s dark-wood thing with painted blue stripes and a strange assortment of colorful spheres crowning its roof; a low-slung Japanese-inspired house peeking out above its wood fence and sheltered by an exploding pink cherry blossom tree; an assortment of circa-1960s apartment buildings; and a hacienda-meets-postmod house that looks better than it sounds. There are teeny one-story cottages with enviable views of the city's eastern waterfront, and a classically colorful Victorian that functions as a B&B.

Voyeuristic peeks in the window when I walk my dog down the street reveal a similar broad spectrum of interiors from ultra-modern renovations to veritable time-machine dioramas of the '50s, '60s, or '70s. There are baby boomers living in these houses, some aging hippies, some Lexus-driving execs; also families with young children, families with grown children, and even many people who were born in these very houses. My love affair with Laidley was complete when I discovered that it even has its own Fourth of July parade.

This organic, idiosyncratic, kaleidoscope of community seems to me near ideal yet, sadly, something we'll never see happen again. As populations spread out from city centers not just to suburbs but to exurbs and even to extra-exurbs, neighborhoods don't evolve into dazzlingly complex quilts but rather, if I may force the metaphor, into itchy polyester blankets. Master plans begin with an analysis not of views or amenities but of how many homes can be crammed into X amount of square footage. Even in those subdivisions where potential residents can opt to have their own homes built, nosy neighbors and CC&Rs guarantee homogeneity.

The task of presenting an alternative model, as with most creative endeavors, falls to enterprising individuals of the sort we profile this month in our annual look at modern residential architecture across America. In 2000, when we first explored this topic, we assumed we'd never find modern homes in states like North Dakota or Louisiana, and we reported on the ones we did find as if we'd discovered the Golden Ticket. Years later, as we celebrate our sixth year of bringing modern design to everyone, we've come to discover that good design can happen in any locale—provided there are intelligent, ingenious individuals there, too.

There are in Jackson, Wyoming, where clever tactics by the folks at Carney Architects allowed for unique home building within a less than adventurous development. There are in Kansas City, Missouri, where affable El Dorado Inc. are building a successful design-build strategy to revitalize downtown. And perhaps most amazingly, there is Bild Design in New Orleans, which battled not only bureaucracy but Mother Nature to finish building a heck of a house post-Katrina. This triad has succeeded in bringing not only the aesthetic inherent in modernism but the ideas and passion, too. It gives me hope that little Laidleys might still bring themselves into fruition some day. ■

ALLISON ARIEFF, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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A Common Connection

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Recently, I sat down to talk with our senior editor Sam Grawe, after he'd returned from his trip to Kansas City, Missouri, to write about the multifamily building by El Dorado Inc. (p. 166). During his visit, the architects had taken him on a tour of several houses in the area and to a couple of great barbecues (it being Kansas City, after all). On every coffee table, Sam told me, he was pleasantly surprised to see Dwell magazine.

Having come from the Midwest myself, I know that most people there probably don't read Dwell, and many may not be that interested in modern design. But the fact that this small sampling in Missouri was interested, and had a magazine that helped foster that bond, really struck me. I'm so gratified that Dwell is helping to connect people and engage them in the ongoing dialogue of what it means to be "at home in the modern world."

After hearing Sam's story, and many more like it from other Dwell editors and contributors, we started thinking about how our readers could connect more with us, and with each other. With the launch of our new website, dwell.com, we hope to create more vital ways to interact with our readers. Beyond that we are working to bring Dwell readers together, in the hope that local "chapters" will form, creating alliances that make living, working, and embarking on modern building projects a little easier. We also wish to help bring local groups together to volunteer with nonprofit organizations to make a positive difference in their communities. We aim to formally announce this effort by the end of this year.

In addition, from September 15 to 17, we will present Dwell on Design, a conference in San Francisco about a range of subjects from prefab to sustainability. We'll continue with Dwell on Design in 2007 and beyond.

In the past six years, Dwell has grown beyond my wildest dreams—especially in the sense that people are really looking at modern design not as a style of the moment but as a philosophy that can be individually interpreted to better one's connection to the world. I want to thank all of you for helping us get here. ■

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Clive Bridgwater, Architect
Promontory, Park City, Utah

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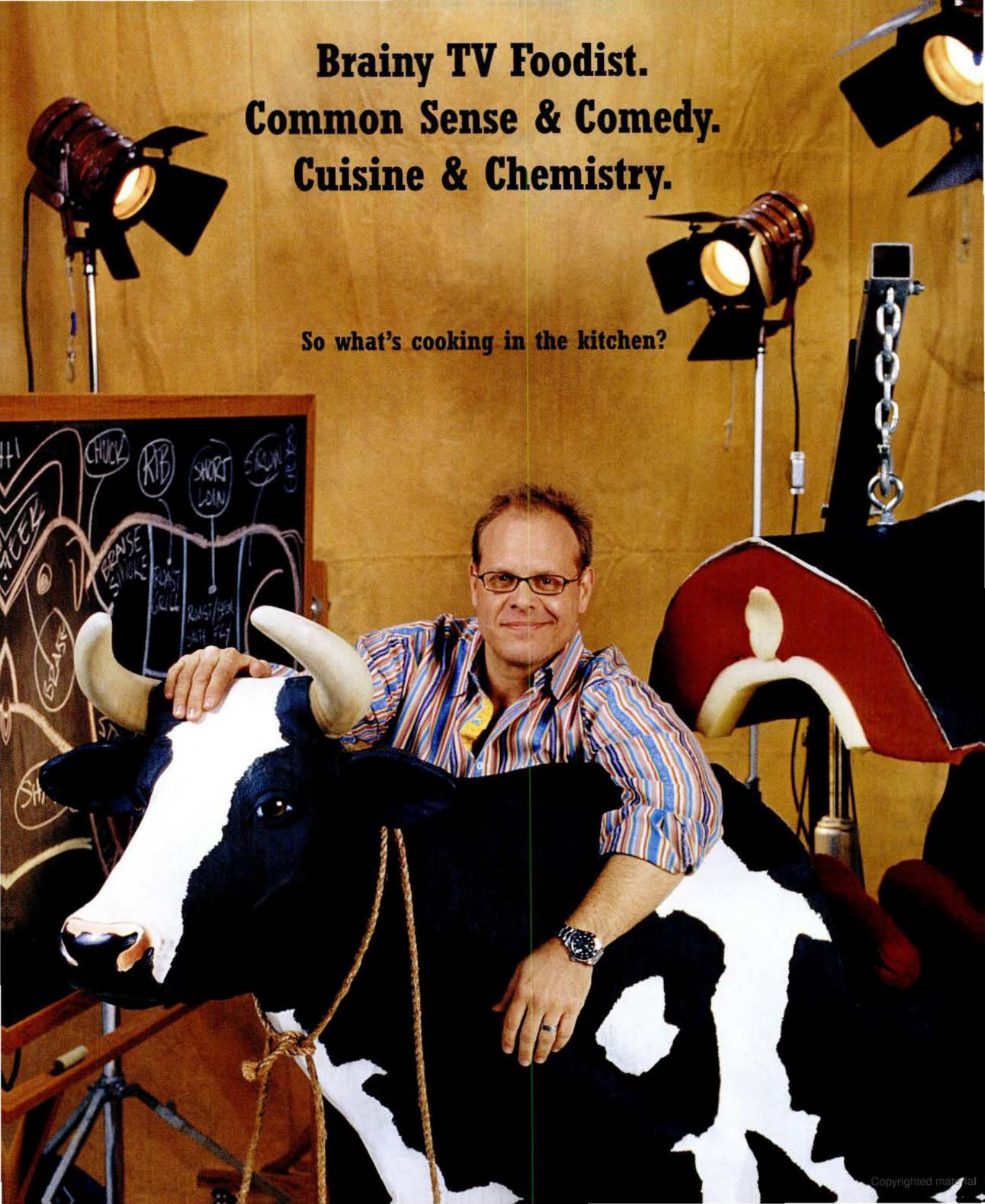

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"It's not rocket science. It's food science," says Alton Brown, as he whips up a batch of protons and porterhouses. Before this scientist, author and entertainer records his national TV show he tests everything in his scientifically advanced Atlanta kitchen. And what makes it all taste just right: great chemistry from GE Monogram.

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TANGIBLE ART

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Two Birds, 2006

Fred Tomaselli: New Paintings / 6 Oct–11 Nov / James Cohan Gallery / New York, NY / Best known for his techno-colored compositions constructed from magazine clippings, foliage, and pharmaceuticals, Fred Tomaselli presents new work this fall.

Tomaselli's quixotic, variegated view of the natural world is the sum of many parts. His collaged, mixed-media pieces entrance viewers with swirling colors but are grounded in identifiable forms and iconic images, like the *Untitled 2000* depiction of Adam and Eve (the figures are skinned replicas of Masaccio's 15th-century Adam and Eve in the Brancacci Chapel). In *Hang Over* (above), a tree is wrapped with garlands of butterflies, eyes, and hands. The effect is as eerie as it is ethereal. Tomaselli has been featured in recent collaborative shows like "Ecstasy: In and About Altered States" at MOCA Los Angeles and the 2006 Whitney Biennial. www.jamescohan.com

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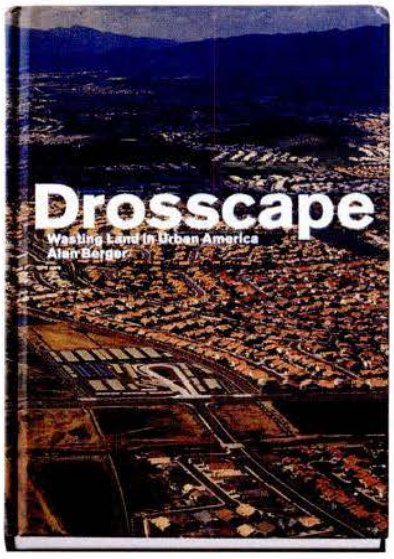

Drosscape: Wasting Land in Urban America / By Alan Berger / Princeton Architectural Press / $34.95

Landscape architect, associate professor at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, and all-around wicked-smart guy Alan Berger proselytizes the "productive integration and reuse of waste landscapes" in this informative new book. The prose is dense, but important ideas about the redevelopment of toxic waste sites and how they are handled are nevertheless brought into focus. An enlightening smattering of illustrations—from aerial photography to charts to maps—forces readers to understand the frightening impact of unfettered urbanization. www.papress.com

Spaceframe / By Novaform

If you're looking for a cool new addition to your home but can't decide what to buy next, Spaceframe may be the answer. These well-engineered panels from Austrian company Novaform can be used for anything: as sliding or hinged doors, freestanding dividers that can be rotated or folded according to your needs, or perhaps even window shades. www.novaform.com

PAWS

While we can't help but think that if Corbu were a dog he'd be a Lucerne hound, the Chihuahua on top of this mini Villa Savoie is pretty dang cute (and what taste!). PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support), a San Francisco–based nonprofit devoted to caring for the pets of people with HIV/AIDS, holds a number of fundraisers throughout the year—including the annual Petchitecture competition, in which local design firms try their hand at creating doggy domiciles that are then auctioned off for charity. www.pawssf.org

PHOTOS BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK), LORI A. CHEUNG (PAWS)

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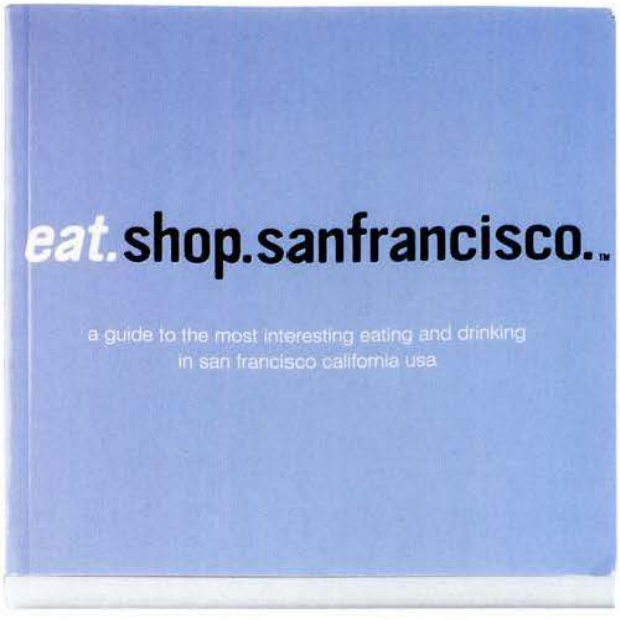
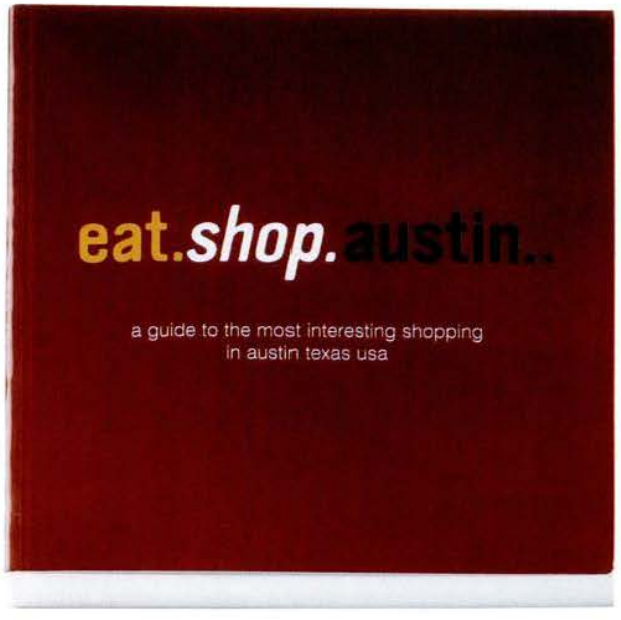
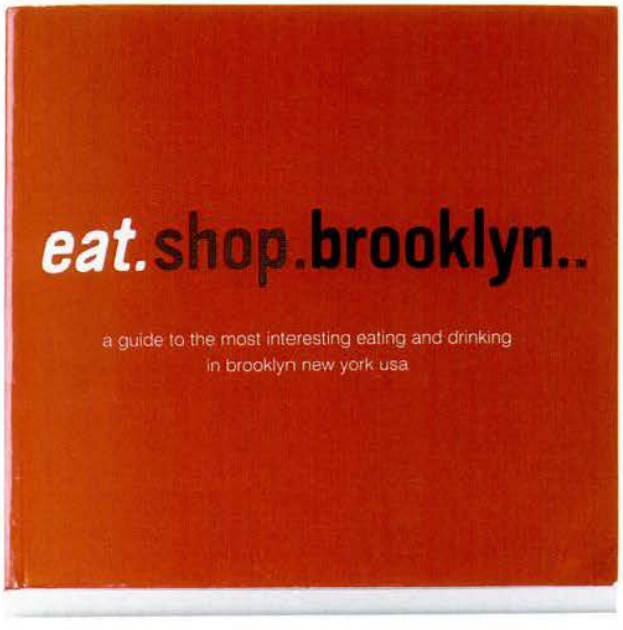
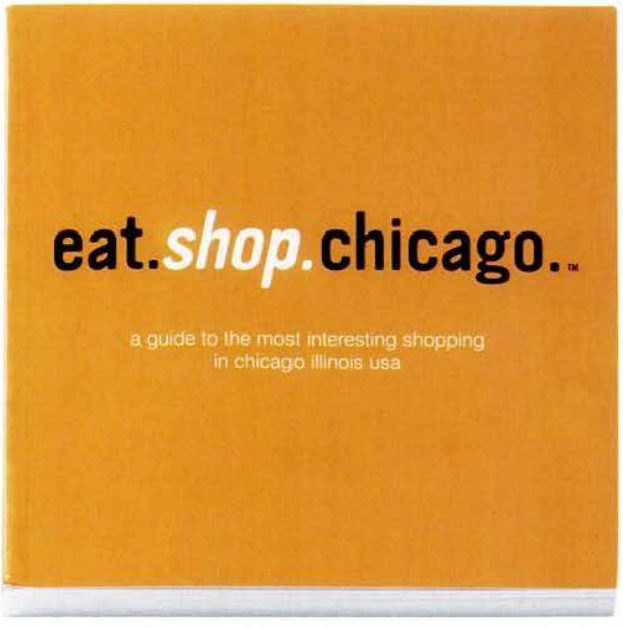
eat.shop.guides / Cabazon Books / $12.95
Some people visit museums when they travel. Others prefer a historic approach to a place. These books aren't for those folks. Instead, the collections of snapshots and chatty text focus solely on shopping and eating, curating a careful selection of boutiques, cafés, and bistros to enjoy while on vacation. With no pretense toward intellectualism (the entirely lower-cased text occasionally grates), they're a fun, frothy look at some of our favorite urban areas. www.eatshopguides.com









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Marion Cage Jewelry
It's good to have hobbies, but while most of us fritter away our free time knitting scarves or trying to will persnickety orchids to bloom, architect Marion McCollam designs jewelry. Really nice jewelry. McCollam's restrained architectural sensibility makes for a line of clean, elegant pieces that are both understated and refined. www.marioncage.com

Valenki / By Valenkis Rus

The company claims that these 300-year-old wool boots were "produced for the people, by the people. Worn by peasants, royalty, Lenin, and Russians digging missile silos in Siberia." We predict that this year, in America, these boots will be worn by plebes and celebs alike. www.valenkisrus.com

Square changing table / By Nurseryworks
Any new parent who's ever fled a Pottery Barn Kids screaming for mercy from pastels and chunky pine should appreciate the subtle simplicity of Nurseryworks' furnishings. These handcrafted products are very appealing—as long as you've got the cash to spare. Case in point: this endearing changing table that happily hides diapers and wipes from view. When the tot is too old for the tabletop, the unit can cleverly store all those cloying *Baby Einstein* videos. www.nurseryworks.net

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Aernout Mik: Refraction / 17 Sept–31 Dec / Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center at UCLA / Los Angeles, CA

The third exhibition in the Three M project, a series of newly commissioned works from artists not yet well known in the U.S., features Dutch artist Aernout Mik. Mik is known throughout the world for his video installations of staged catastrophes, documenting the ways in which people respond to trauma. For this three-screen, 30-minute continuous-loop projection, Mik stages a bus accident—apparently without injury or victims—in the Romanian countryside. The piece follows the medics, police, and rescue workers as they go through their routine motions of response and action, maintaining an odd sense of normalcy throughout. www.hammer.ucla.edu

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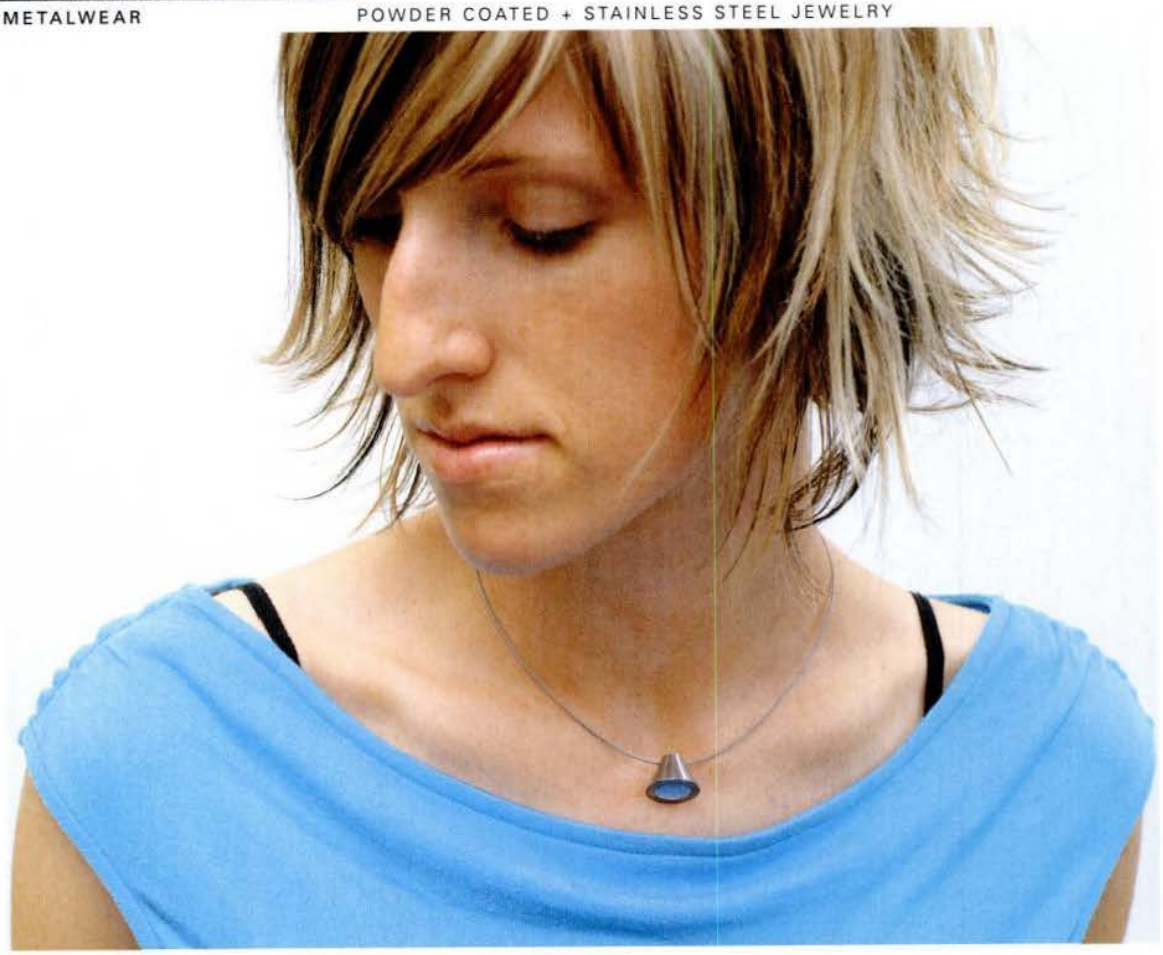

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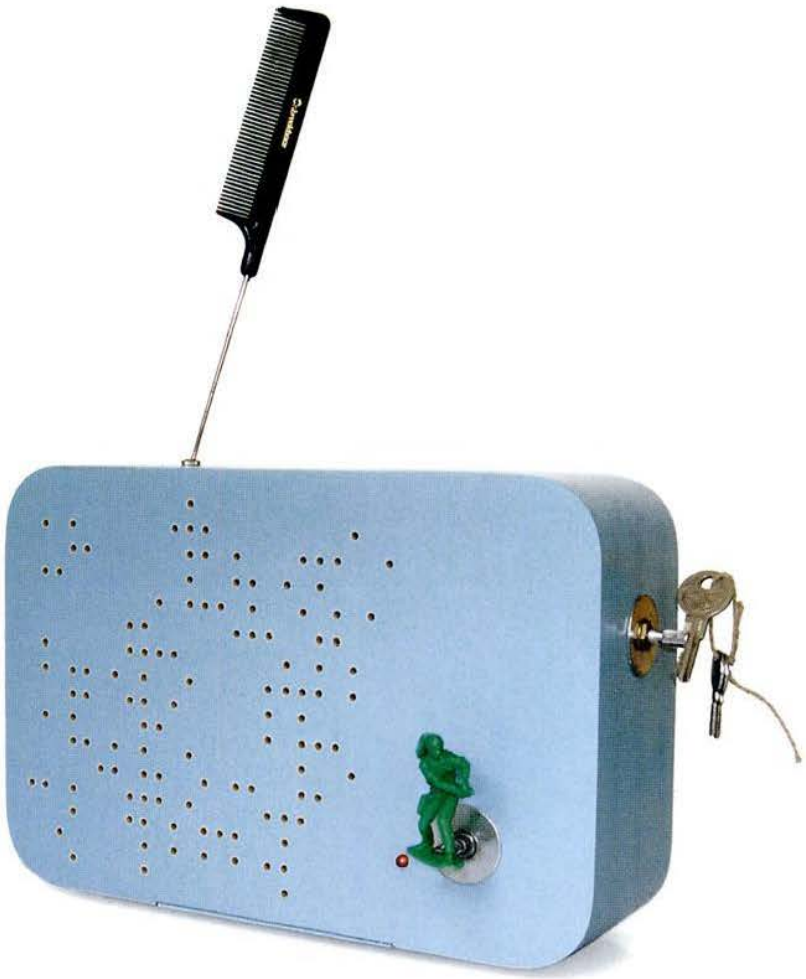

Tune 'N Radio /
Wouter Geense Design Studio

The folks at Dutch design studio Wouter Geense have figured out how to make a line of FM radios that are individual works of art: They make the customer add the finishing touches. An antenna must be discovered and attached, perforation holes need to be punched or drilled, and the volume and tuning knobs are incomplete until you stick those treasured tchotchkes on. The Tune 'N Radios, which are available on demand in limited series, take a new approach to sustainability by creating a personal connection with the user. The added value of this sentimental bond transforms everyday squawk boxes into instant heirlooms new owners are more likely to hold on to, and less likely to throw away. www.woutergeense.nl

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Vest Collective / Like avian imagery and starchitect high-rises, craft is everywhere—and the collaborative of Canadian designers that make up Vest Collective are a great example of why. The Toronto-based group balances quality craftsmanship with contemporary design, and illustrates the breadth and impact that an interdisciplinary emphasis can have.

Vest's Shannon McLeod blends traditional imagery with modern form by using a 19th-century wallpaper pattern on the Acorn lounge chair (above). The seat and back, which feature a design by craft movement godfather William Morris, are balanced by the contemporary aesthetic of the body. Sally McCubbin updates a classic potluck standby with the Chip n Dip (left) set through the integration of clean, graceful lines and a pleasing color palette. www.vestcollective.ca

has it been a month already? man. we're exhausted. so much is going on, it might actually be easier to list what hasn't changed. we've got a new stripe, a new catalog, moved into a new office... carter even got new glasses. but most importantly, we have a new line, built ny electric. we're so excited about it we had difficulty putting it into words, so instead we made this game - www.builtny.com/electrica.

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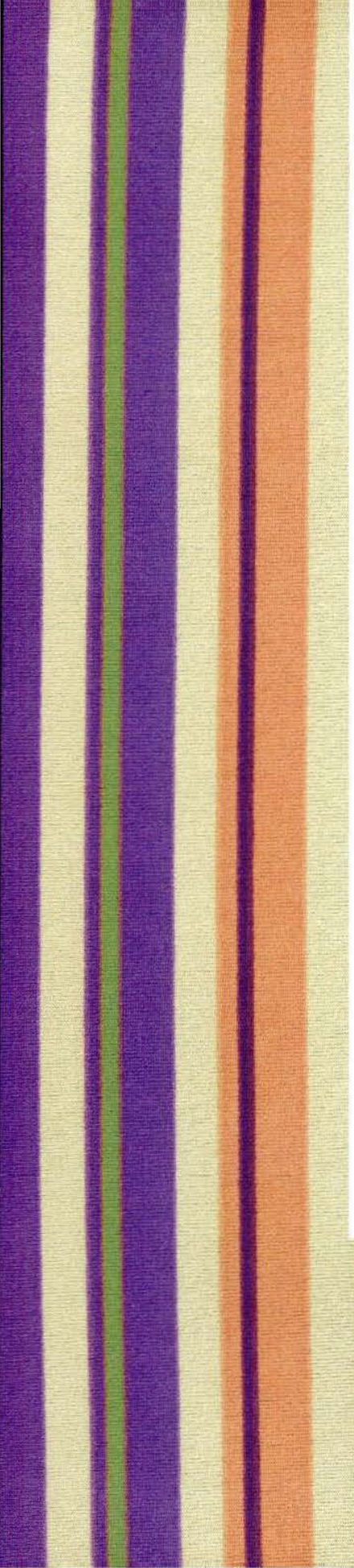
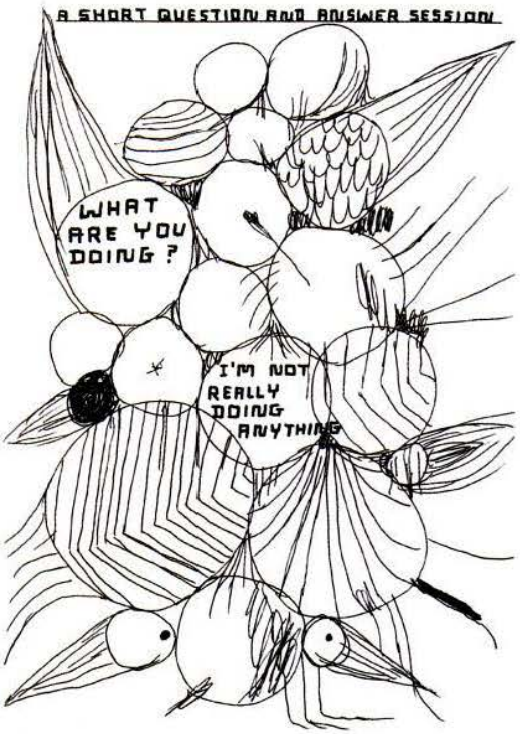


Yayoi Kusama
Dots Obsession, 2000



David Shrigley
Untitled (A Short Question and Answer Session), 2004

Frieze Art Fair / 12–15 Oct / Regent's Park / London, England

The Frieze Art Fair is the young up-and-comer in the heady world of must-see cultural events. The fourth-annual installment of this UK-based fair promises to be bigger and better than the last, as 140 contemporary art galleries from around the world gather to exhibit their artwork, network with museum directors and noted collectors, and test their will in the perilous arena known as English cuisine. Eventgoers can take their pick from an international list: Acquire a Chris Johanson from the Jack Hanley Gallery in San Francisco, or snatch up an Eva Hesse at Zurich-based Galerie Hauser & Wirth. www.friezeartfair.com

Solar Lampion / By Damian O'Sullivan
The Solar Lampion is composed of 36 standard-size solar cells held together by an open frame. Each cell is connected to an LED bulb. The result is a chic-looking lantern that is fed by the light and not nearly as dangerous as the open flame/paper Chinese lantern it's modeled after. It's an elegant alternative to the flashlight, and a classy way to cut down on your electrical bill.
www.damianosullivan.com

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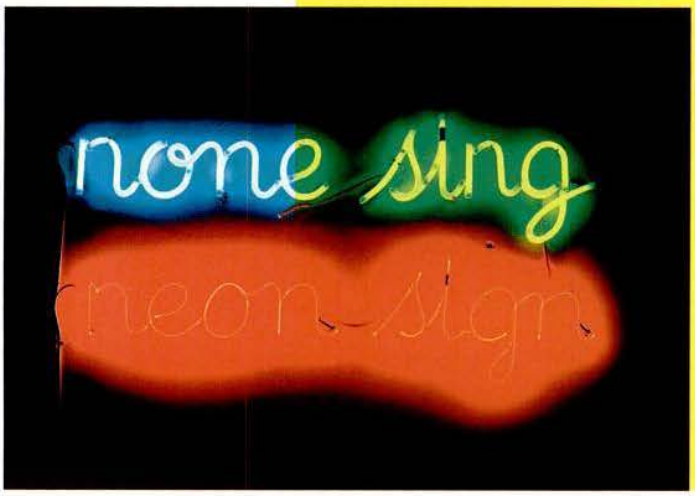

Elusive Signs: Bruce Nauman Works With Light / 13 Oct–7 Jan / Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami / North Miami, FL

Unlike Dan Flavin, who uses neon to transform contained environments, Nauman has long used signs and figurative installations to elicit new perspectives about the cultural landscape. Eschewing the experiential for more contemplative issues, his works tackle topics such as identity and the human condition. The word games indicative of his later work can be quite poetic, using color and prose to offer a smart twist on an old adage. www.mocanomi.org

Good Wishes fabric / By Sina Pearson

Kids tend to know what's up, and they're not afraid to tell you. This new line of fabric by Sina Pearson takes kids' depictions of what's good (pizza, vacation, love) and weaves them into a Crypton-blend fabric that meets stringent standards for stain, moisture, and odor resistance, as well as antimicrobial properties. As an added bonus, 10 percent of the fabric's proceeds (and all the proceeds from the Quilts for Kids Accessory Collection) will go to the Quilts for Kids charity. www.sinapearson.com / www.cryptonfabric.com

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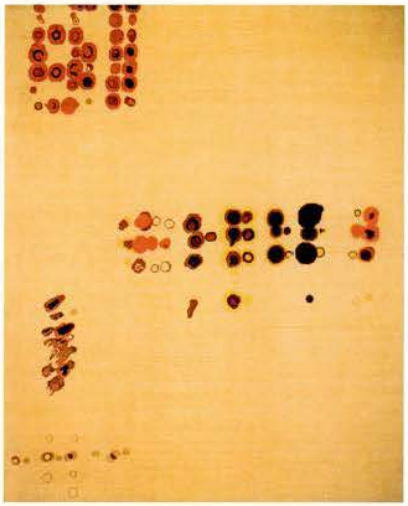
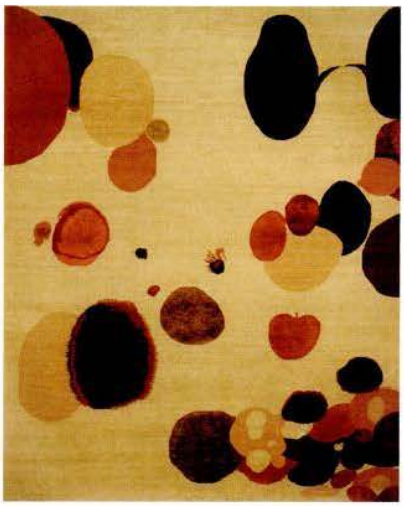
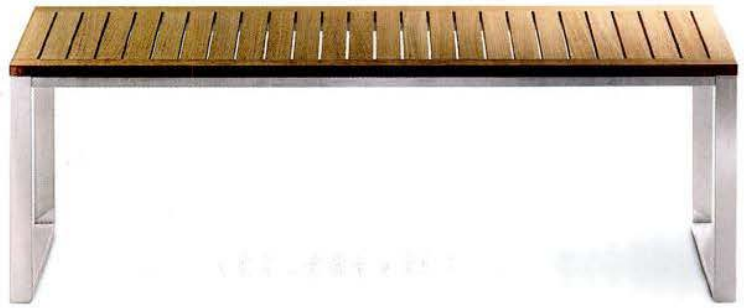




Special limited-edition rugs for Limn

The unconventional and ever-stylish West Coast furniture retailer Limn will celebrate its 25th anniversary by doing two things it does very well: exhibit contemporary art and purvey furnishings—in this instance, rugs. A series of rugs have been commissioned to replicate works of art by artists like Derrick Buisch, Catherine Courtenaye, and Jaq Chartier (left). www.limn.com



Taji bench / By Jane Hamley Wells

It's hard to find outdoor furniture that combines style with durability. Sure, that folding lawn chair you got at a garage sale is pretty, but has it held up? Made from grade-A teak and electro-polished stainless steel, the Taji bench is not only attractive but is built to withstand hot summer days and rainy-season deluges. www.janehamleywells.com

Take Out / By Klaus Aalto

Living out of a suitcase is a dreary endeavor, often involving endless red-eyes and a succession of supersized convention centers. Should this be your lot in life, at least make packing easy on yourself with Aalto's design. Nine suitcases comprise the drawers of this dresser, looking spiffy at rest but ready to be whisked away at a moment's notice, full of underwear and socks, on yet another overnight excursion. www.imudesign.org

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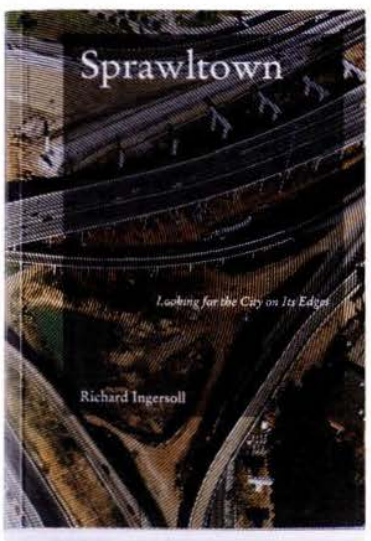
Aorta vase / By The Design Can
Hallmark cards and love songs abound with puffy, symmetrically shaped hearts entwined with crimson roses. But those who know that the pounding organ isn't shaped like a cartoon and who think red roses are predictable might appreciate the basic functionality and spry style of the Aorta vase. Just make sure to clean the stem—clogged arteries are ugly. www.thedesigncan.com



Sprawltown: Looking for the City on Its Edges / By Richard Ingersoll / Princeton Architectural Press / $19.95
For a city dweller, the opening page of Ingersoll's inquiry into the nature of sprawl will either be cringe-worthy or woefully germane. The truth of the matter is, most cities today can encompass 42 municipalities (like Los Angeles) or be more populous than the continent of Australia (like Mexico City). Ingersoll condemns the tendency for people to simply throw their hands up in despair, and advocates a more thoughtful approach to dealing with sprawl. www.papress.com

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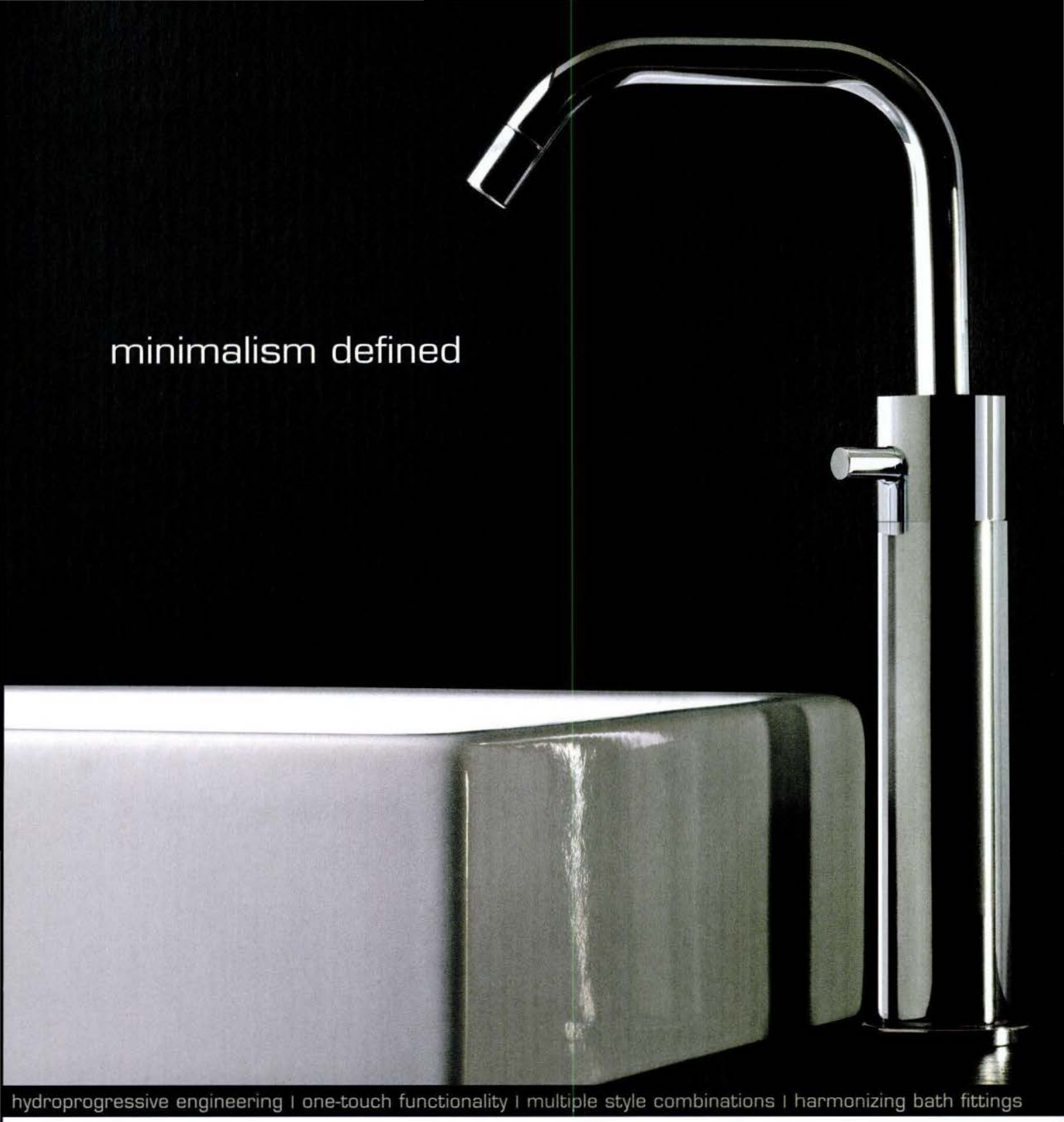

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Light / By Corinne Ulmann and Isamu Kanda
Finally, you can stand living in your dark, depressing, practically windowless studio—that is, you can if you snatch up a few bolts of Light wallpaper, which rather cleverly mimics the effect light has on the walls when it's refracted through windows. www.wolf-gordon.com

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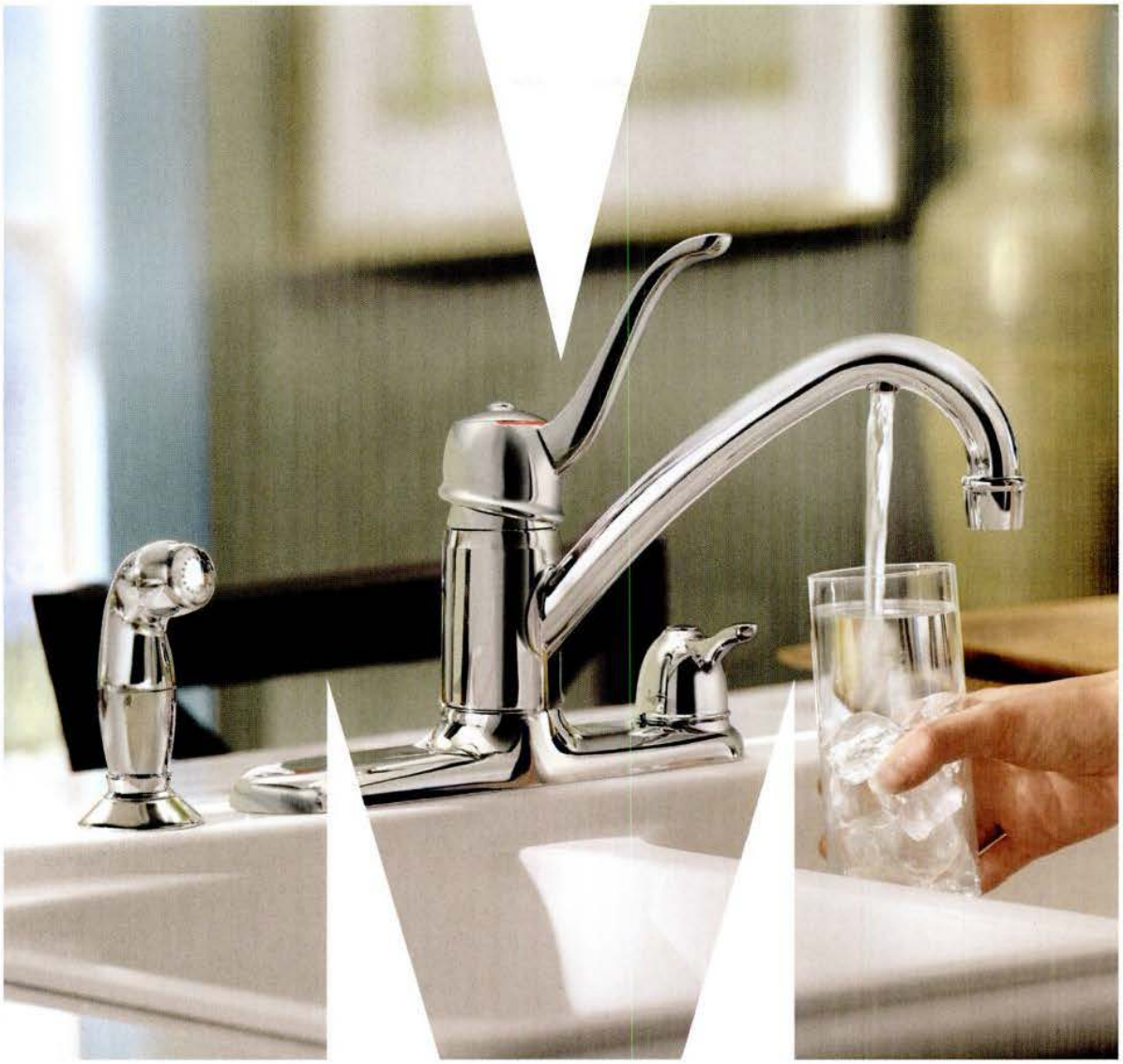
Bix system / By Metro Furniture
Many a great idea has been scribbled on a cocktail napkin over aperitifs. The Bix collection of office furniture takes cues from this phenomenon, basing its style and functionality on the ubiquitous experience of dining booths. We applaud the idea of creating a happier and more interactive work environment, but just make sure you designate a driver before making that conference call. www.metrofurniture.com



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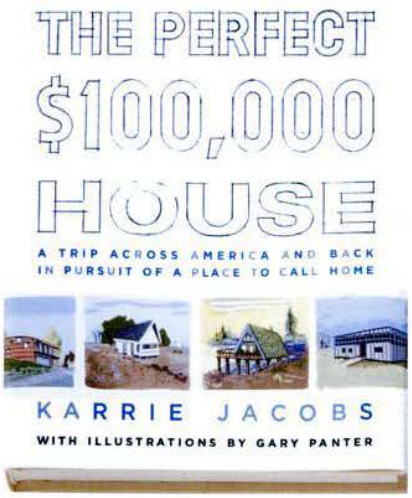

The Perfect $100,000 House: A Trip Across America and Back in Pursuit of a Place to Call Home / By Karrie Jacobs / Viking / $25.95

Architectural critic (and Dwell's founding editor) Karrie Jacobs travels across the U.S. to find a dream home for the dreamy price of around $100,000. Jacobs's provocative prose sheds a bright light on America's apparently unquenchable appetite for that elusive place to hang one's hat on budget, and in the end leaves the reader with the feeling that the seemingly impossible just might be plausible.
us.penguingroup.com

PHOTO BY PETER BELANGER (BOOK)

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2006 National Design Awards / Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum / New York, NY / Established to heighten design awareness, the seventh-annual event recognizes individuals for exceptional achievement and contribution to the discipline.

Every year architects, designers, and supporters gather in New York to anxiously await the announcement of the newly anointed darlings of design. Eleven categories cover individual accomplishments, ranging from communication to fashion to product design. This year's Design Mind award went to Paola Antonelli, curator of architecture and design at the MoMA, for putting a spotlight on the practice and changing how people think about it. In particular, her "Humble Masterpieces" exhibition (and book) stands out for revealing the elegance of everyday objects. www.nationaldesignawards.org

Clockwise, from top left: *Glowing Topiary Garden* by Ken Smith, *Cherry Blossom* by Antenna Design, *Children's Garden* by Andrea Cochran Landscape Architecture

PHOTO COURTESY KEN SMITH (TOP LEFT). PHOTOS BY RYUZO MASUNAGA (TOP RIGHT). KEN GUTMAKER (BOTTOM)

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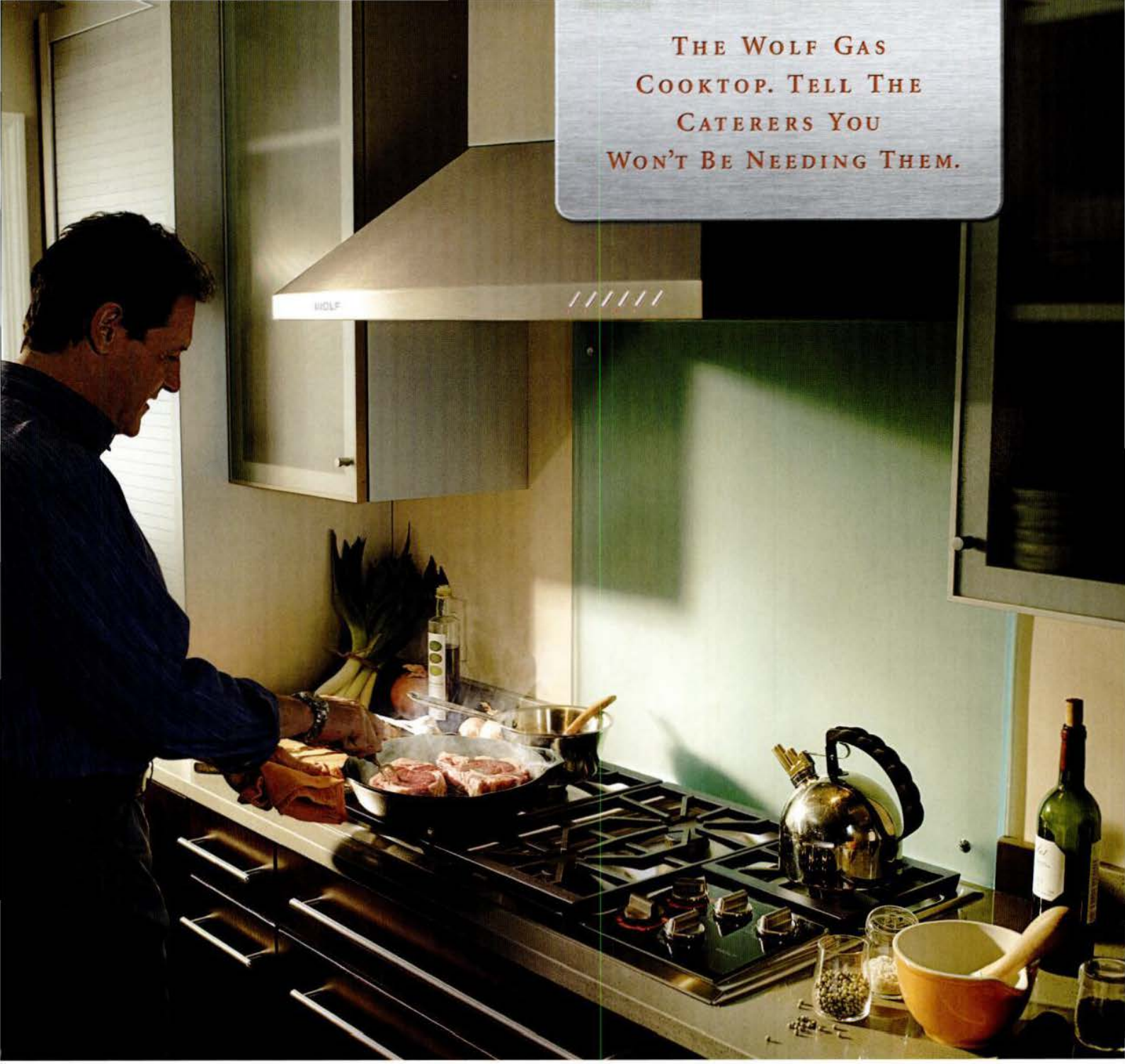

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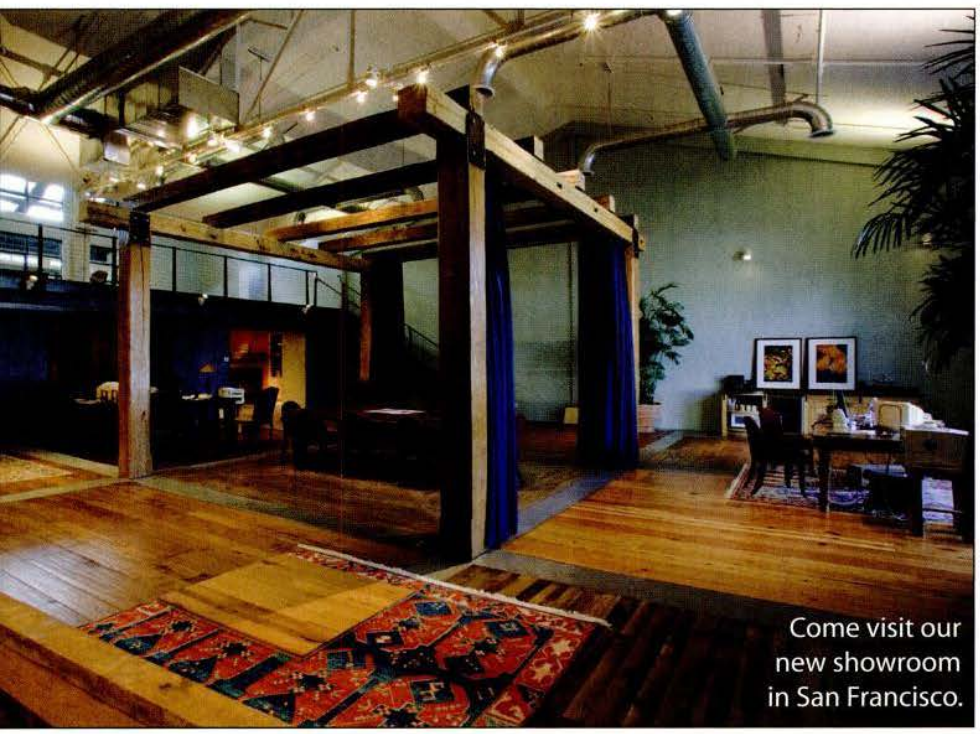

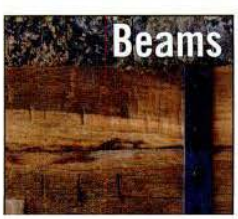

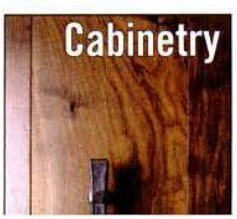

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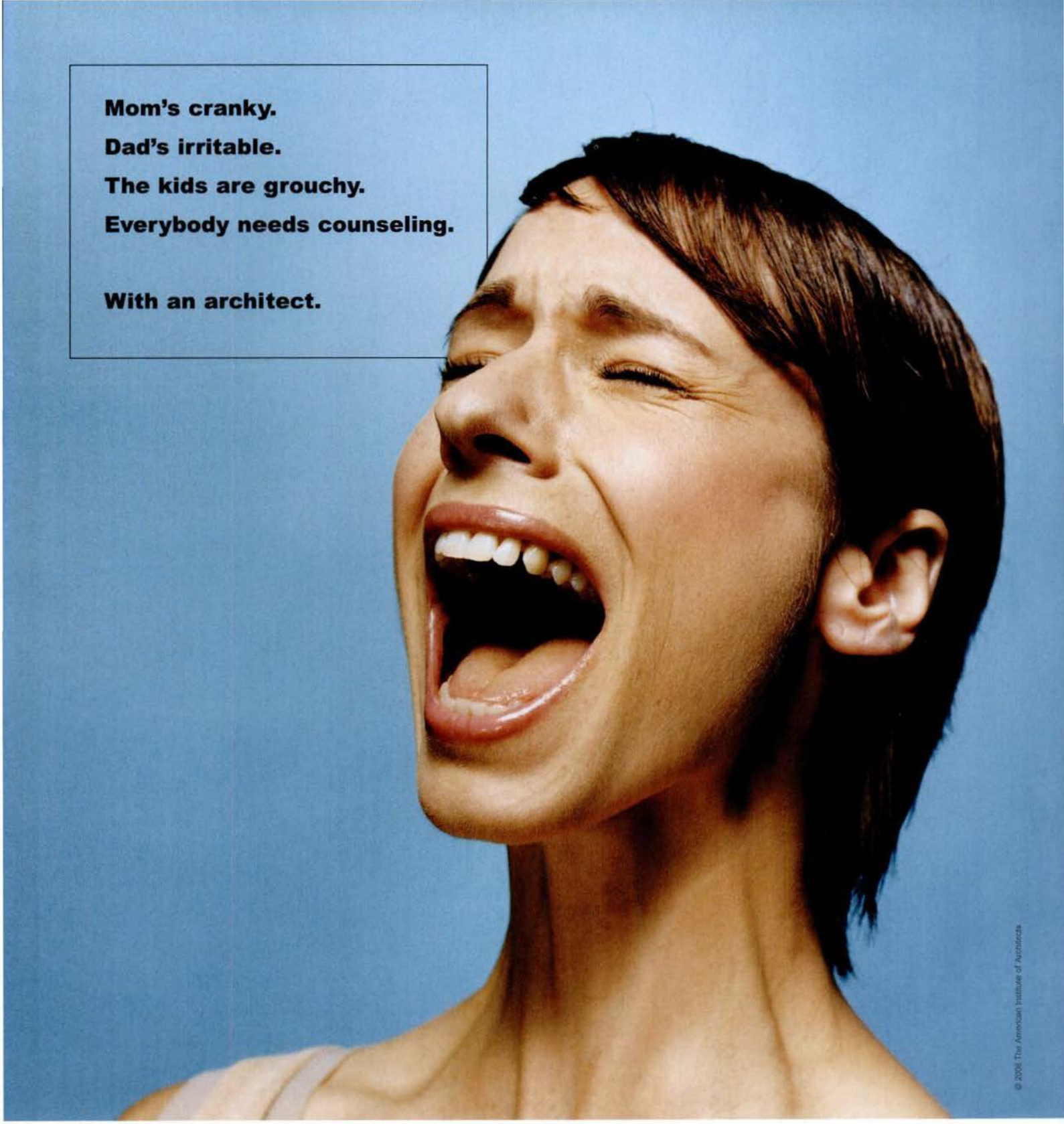

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Part of the Plan

For years, Eileen and Jelle Kiesling spent much of their time in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East, she as a teacher, and he as a manager for Royal Dutch Shell. Reaching semi-retirement, the couple, who live in the Netherlands, were looking for a vacation home back in the United States, specifically northwest Arkansas, where Eileen grew up .

Their search had been difficult. "What we wanted," Eileen says, "was a house that was both modern and affordable and based on a stock plan. And when it turned out that we couldn't find anything modern, we decided that the only way to get the kind of house we wanted would involve an architect, which, inevitably, was going to be expensive." Then, one day, while on the Web, Eileen chanced on architect Gregory La Vardera, and the couple found a design that fit all of their requirements. ▸

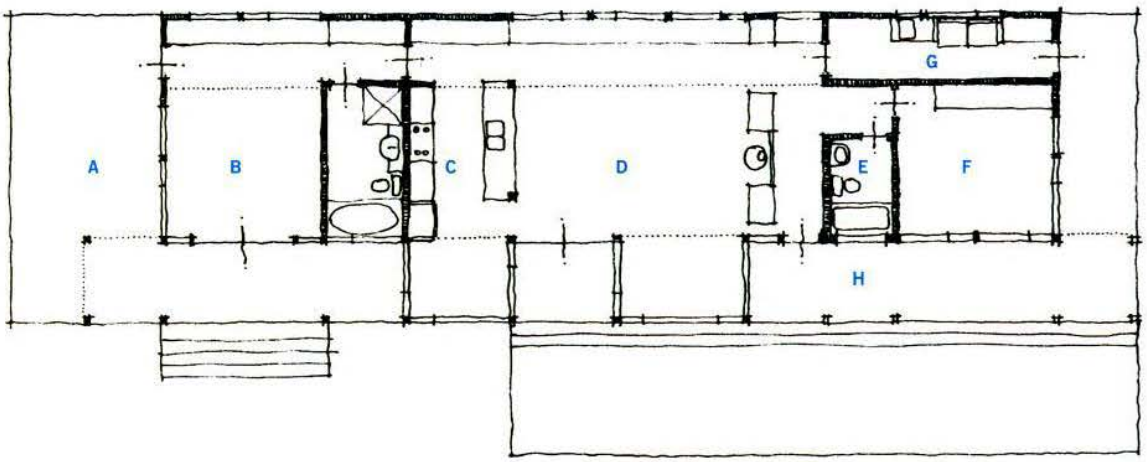
Berryville, Arkansas, where Jelle Kiesling's vacation house is located, may be the self-proclaimed turkey capital of America, but here he's seen chopping wood—not getting ready for Thanksgiving.

The Kieslings (left) in their open kitchen. The maple used throughout references the maple trees that surround the house.

Dwell readers may remember Gregory La Vardera as a recipient of the magazine's Nice Modernist award in 2003 for his contributions to our online community. On the Dwell discussion boards up to six hours a day, La Vardera grew increasingly intrigued by postings from people looking for modern stock plans. After an in-depth Internet search, he discovered, much to his surprise, that very few entities were selling stock plans and the plans he was seeing were not to his liking. He recognized a great opportunity. "This constituted my start into selling modern house plans," he explains. He began working on a set of designs and was soon ready for business.

"Many architects are wary of stock plans," La Vardera says. "Too many turn out to be insipid. That said, though, stock plans are just a fraction of what an architect would charge, so it's a great value for the consumer."

After purchasing home plans from La Vardera through his website www.lamidesign.com for $1,000, the Kieslings' next step was to hire a builder for their 1,420-square-foot modern home. That wasn't easy in Berryville, Arkansas. "All the people who work for Wal-Mart and the people who supply Wal-Mart are building $1 million and $2 million houses all over the place," Eileen says "It's easy for a builder to find work." But the Kieslings were lucky. Their builder, who was tiring of log cabins, decided that building a modern vacation home was just the change he needed. "Basically," Eileen says, "I stayed around during the construction phase and acted as the general contractor—which means I learned more than I ever ▸



Kiesling Residence Floor Plan

A Master Bedroom
B Master Bathroom
C Kitchen/Dining Room
D Living Room
E Bathroom
F Bedroom
G Laundry/Utility Room
H Deck

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wanted to know about building! It was interesting but hectic to say the least."

While Eileen dealt with the day-to-day drama inherent in ground-up construction, La Vardera watched the building's progress on the Internet from his office in Philadelphia. Jelle posted photographs of the home as it was built in Berryville, and even teamed up with La Vardera to write a construction blog. This entry, filed by Jelle, was posted in early spring of 2005: "Builder tried to clear land and dig a hole for the foundation. Machinery got stuck and had to be towed out, but [the driver] finally got a hole dug!"

The Kieslings' willingness to take on general contracting duties themselves helped keep costs under control, and their Berryville bungalow was completed by mid-2005 at a final cost of $150,000. "We love the look and feel of it," Eileen says of their new retreat. "It's as if we were living in a tree house. And there's no wasted space; we utilize every single inch."

Their architect would like to see more people building modern houses. The country's housing stock, he generalizes, is "1 percent modern and 99 percent conventional. But that said, there are lots of people out there who like modern houses and can't find them."

La Vardera remains hopeful. "The tide is starting to turn. Lots of people are unserved at the moment, and there are others who have never been exposed to modern at all. Many people are looking for something new. They're eyeing the possibilities." ▸

A view to the dining area (above), which offers stunning views of the King's River that flows past the house. Jelle bird-watching on the deck (right).

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How to Make My House Your House

A Home and Hearth
Dominating the living room is a wood-burning stove manufactured by RAIS in Denmark. Made of soapstone and heat-retentive, the energy-efficient stove has already reduced the Kieslings' heating bills. "It's great," says Jelle. "It throws out enough heat to fill the entire house." www.raiswittus.com

B Flat-Pack Furniture
The Kieslings are IKEA freaks, and it pains them that the nearest store is seven hours away in Dallas, Texas. "The house is full of IKEA stuff," says Eileen. The bed in the master bedroom came from IKEA, as did the bunk beds, which are set up in the smaller bedrooms. The couple are bracing themselves for a stream of overnight guests. www.ikea.com

C Fan-tastic
The ceiling fans, which are placed throughout the structure, are also energy-saving. As well as keeping the vacation home pleasantly cool, they also cut down on utility bills. "The fans are fantastic," Jelle says. "So far, we have only had to use the air-conditioning once." The fans are manufactured by Hampton Bay and can be purchased at Home Depot. www.homedepot.com

D For the Birds
Eileen, something of an amateur ornithologist, hung bird feeders from her balcony, and birds now descend on the house for hours each morning. The major species they've seen are hummingbirds, cardinals, and finches. According to Eileen, the bird feeders "are made by an old lady somewhere in Arkansas" and were purchased at the Farmers Cooperative in Fort Smith, Arkansas. www.farmercoop.com ■


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B


C


D

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

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Attach or enclose a photo of the person or firm's work*

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- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55+

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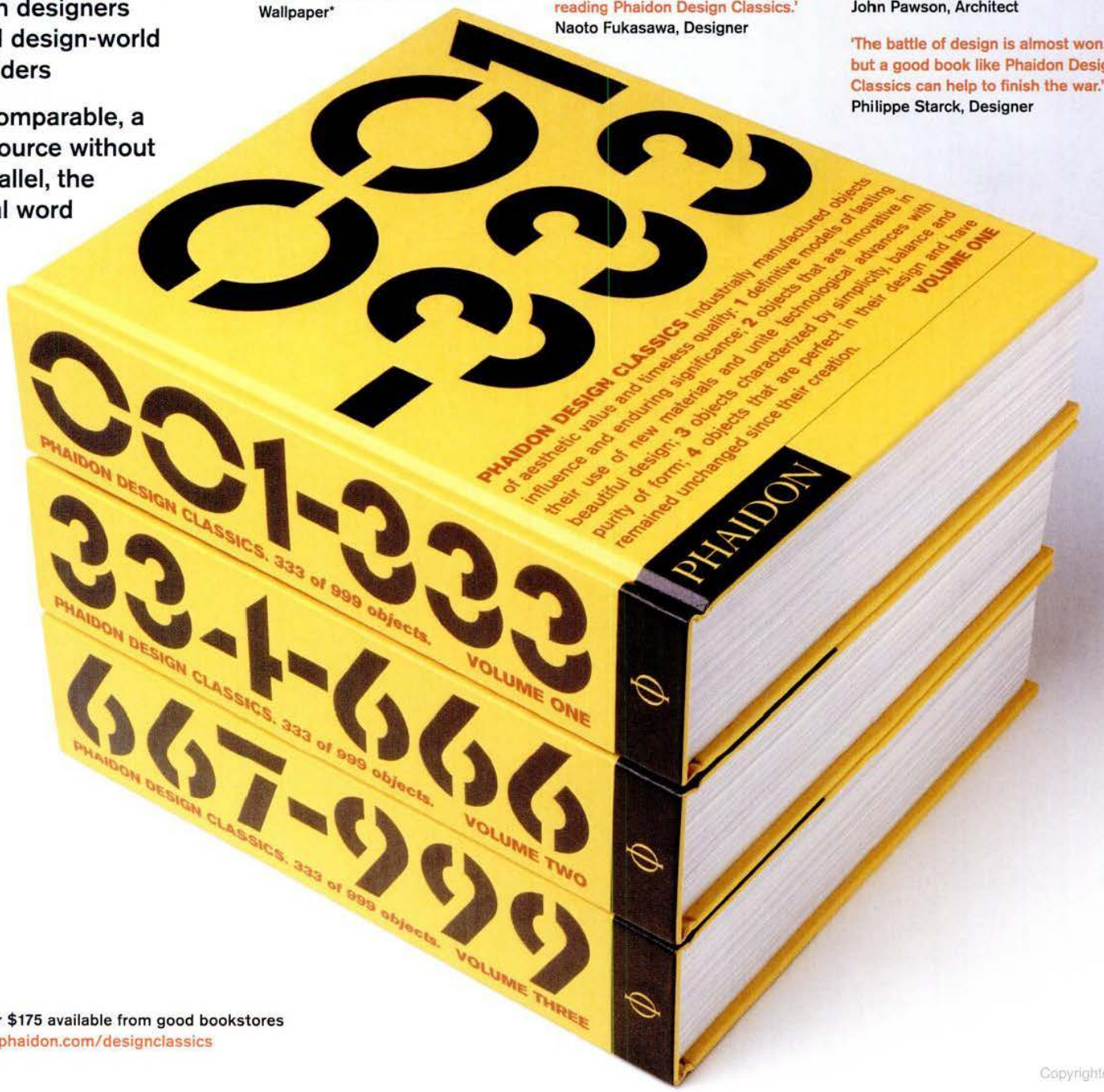

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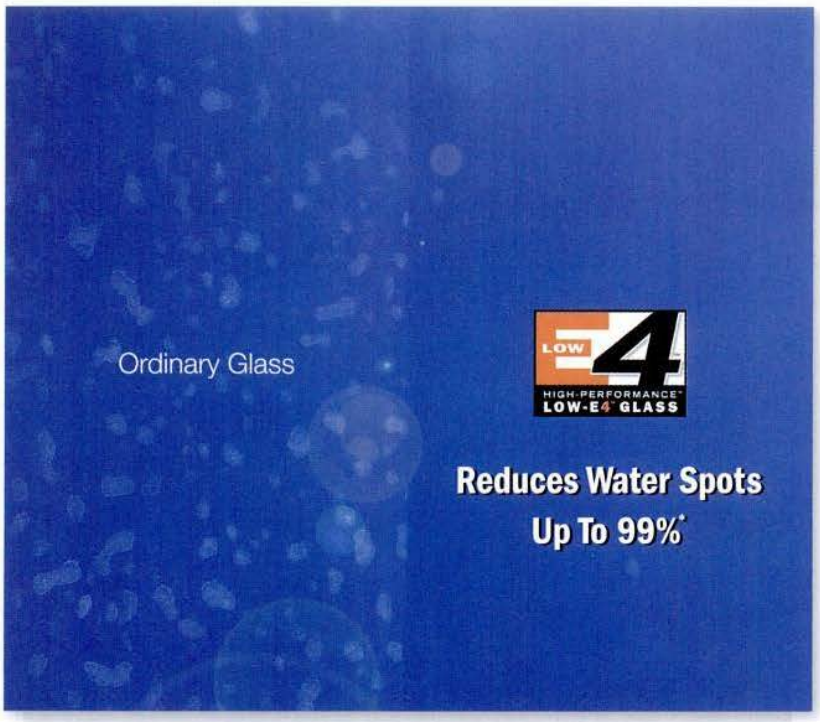

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Going Coastal

It's impossible to ignore nature in Big Sur. "Many tiny jeweled violet flowers along the path of a living brook that looked like Blake's illustration for a canal in grassy Eden... titanic cliffs that Wordsworth mentioned in his own *Sublime*, great yellow sun veiled with mist hanging over the planet's oceanic horizon," wrote poet Allen Ginsberg of the locale, on the central coast of California.

But that which makes the area so attractive—its redwood forests, rock cliffs, and oceanfront access—also makes it a challenge for construction, a fact to which most homeowners remain oblivious in their happy haste to create a place to watch the waves. "Most people in Big Sur didn't grow up here. All they want to do is to look at the ocean," explains Mary Ann Schicketanz of Carmel architecture firm Carver & Schicketanz, with more than a hint of exasperation. "They're not familiar with the problems you have with building directly on the ocean, ▸

Even the most ardent environmentalist would be hard-pressed to argue with the fluid way in which Langka and Zach Treadwell's vacation home blends seamlessly into its Big Sur surroundings.

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Expansive views, plenty of places for the family of six to play outdoors, and generous use of windows throughout the house belie this coastal home's modest square footage.

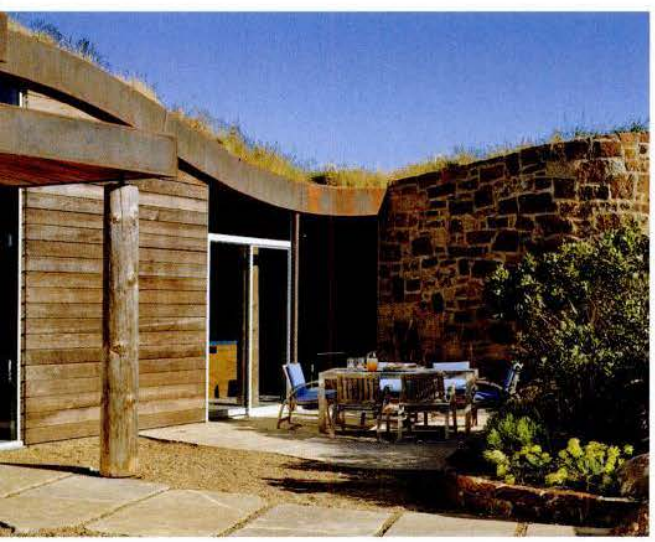
like glare and high winds. There are a lot of site constraints we educate clients on."

Such was the case for Venice, California, resident and writer Langka Treadwell and her husband, Zach, also a writer and film producer, who bought a piece of property in Big Sur and hired Carver & Schicketanz to build them a vacation home. Though the Treadwells are "committed to the environment," as Langka says, their first thought wasn't to build a green house. Instead, through discussions with the architects—whose practice is built on the desire to "be as least disruptive to the landscape as possible"—and a growing understanding of the site constraints, sustainable decisions easily evolved.

In addition to basic environmental considerations, other building restrictions from the notoriously difficult California Coastal Commission and local no-growth policies limited construction to a tiny parcel of land on the Treadwells' 70-acre plot.

To work within these parameters, Carter & Schicketanz cut a wedge into the hillside, then backed the home's retaining wall against the open swath of earth. The result is that, unlike in much of the area—where, as Schicketanz states, "you see water tanks littering the landscape"—all of the home's utilities are hidden underground, including the propane tanks, septic system, and water tank.

From the road, the house appears as an undulating verdigris swoosh in the landscape, a visual enhanced by the green roof that blends into the surrounding two acres of native grasses that the architects planted on the site to replace the more invasive coyote brush that was there ▸



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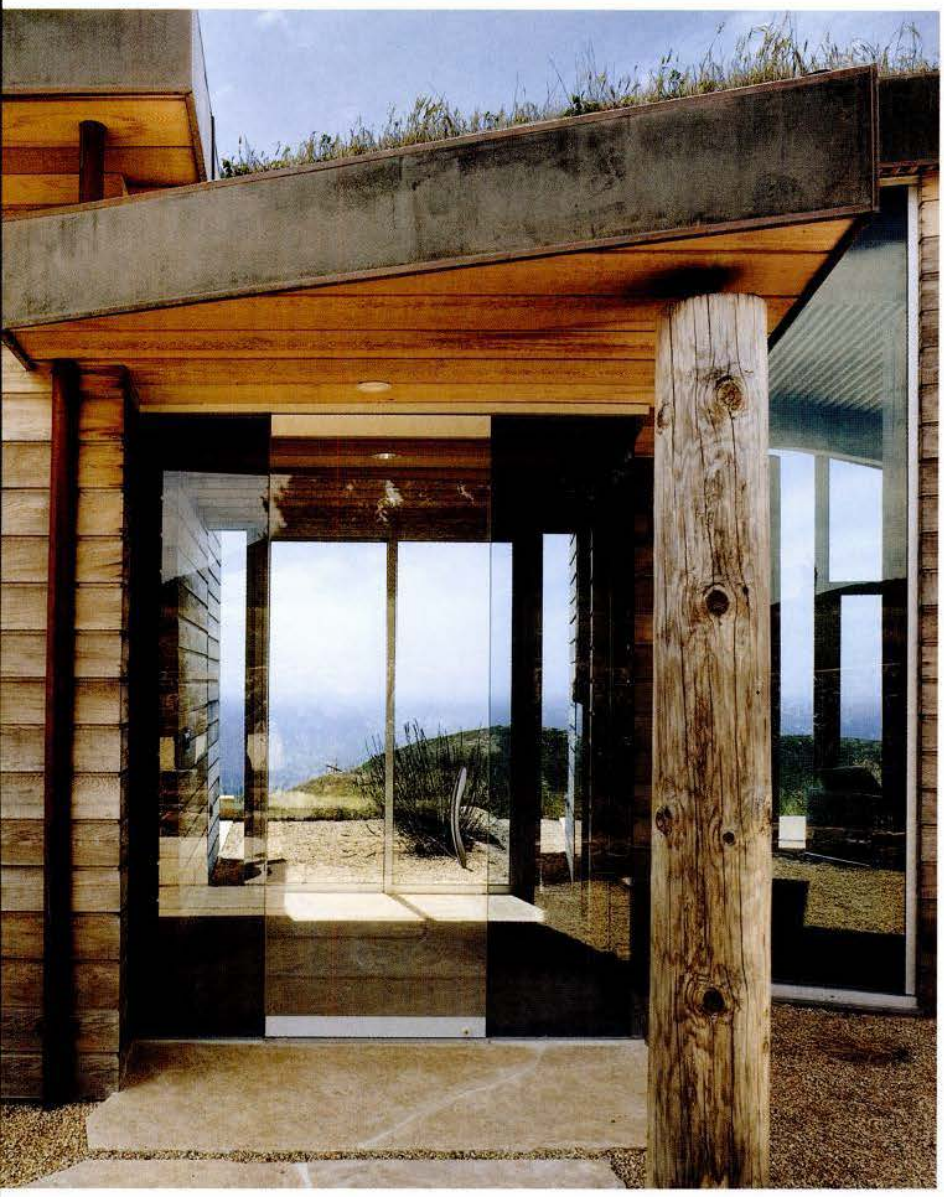


Native grasses, large wood timbers, and plentiful amounts of stone help maintain the sense of "living close to nature" that the Treadwells desired.

before. "We always try to keep control of the landscaping, and hope that our clients have enough appreciation for it that they don't put up geranium pots around the house," Schicketanz explains. "Often the minute people get here, they want to plant a mulberry bush or palm tree instead of a redwood or oak, which actually grow here. We kept the landscape around this house 100 percent native and only added a planter with some citrus and succulents—their flower pot, so to speak."

Inside the 1,900-square-foot house, a wall of windows opens the home to the ocean. Much of the design is centered around keeping the family comfortable and the house temperate. Solar gain through the glass keeps the Treadwells warm, and additional heat gain is garnered through limestone flooring. When the house becomes stuffy, windows oriented to the east and west take advantage of the area's strong winds and open to allow air to circulate. Concrete countertops also maintain an even temperature, and the reclaimed-wood fireplace provides an additional source of heat.

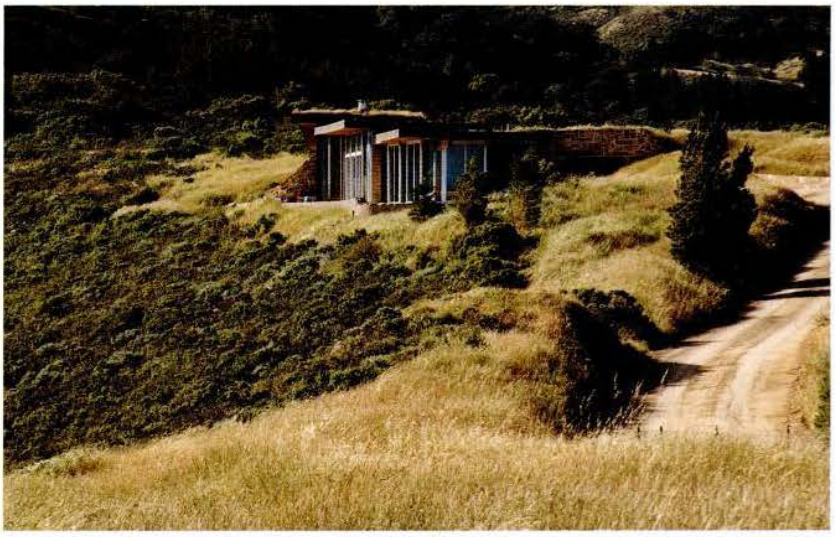
Despite its location far from malls and movie theaters, the area provides vast opportunities for ready entertainment for the family's four adopted children, who range in age from nine months to six years old. "You can't get bored here," Langka says. "The children love to swim in the hot tub, we go to the beach and fill baggies with shells and rocks, and the tide pools are spectacular."

She pauses, then thoughtfully concludes: "I've been all around the world, and whenever I come back here, I realize that the Pacific Ocean seen from those cliffs is the most beautiful view on earth." ■

Svelte Veldt

Given Langka's directive that "the people who live around us have to see our roof and I don't want them to see anything but grass," Carver & Schicketanz topped the house with a green roof with the help of local horticulturalist Fred Ballerini. The architects are well versed in the benefits of green roofs; the first house that Carver designed in 1978 had a sod roof. In the last 30 years, the hippie overtones often associated with grass have been replaced with yuppie connotations. "There's way more receptivity to them now," says Schicketanz.

Gone are the days when you had to mow your overhead lawn daily or climb up to pull weeds. Instead, advances in technology have created an ease in building with sod. Unlike older models, which required 12 to 18 inches of soil and stronger structural support, making the endeavor less affordable and more unwieldy, the Treadwells have a Hydrotech roofing system, which uses only four inches of soil and needs no special buttressing. Native grasses such as California oat and red fescue were planted, and the result is a roof that needs only annual pruning while providing insulation for the home and an attractive vista for the neighbors. —A.H.



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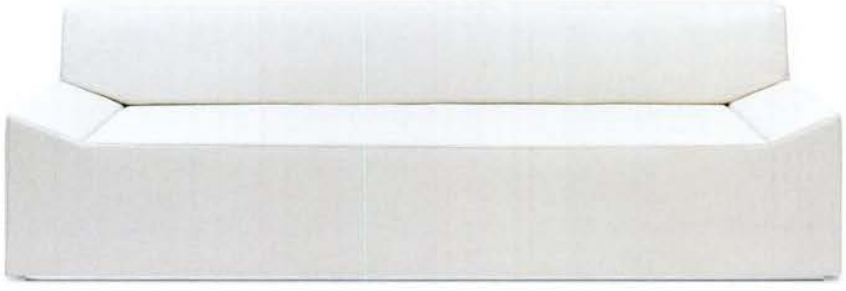

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Please Be Seated

The Simpsons' C. Montgomery Burns once said, "Sitting—the great leveler. From the mightiest pharaoh to the lowliest peasant, who doesn't enjoy a good sit?" As we discovered with television critic Tim Goodman, when it comes to sitting, the lounge chair is king.

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Womb chair / By Eero Saarinen for Knoll / $2,380 (ottoman $1,124) / www.knoll.com
This chair was initially released in 1948 with the catchy title No. 70 and later became known as the Womb chair thanks to its inviting embrace. A padded and upholstered fiberglass shell sits on a polished chrome steel frame. Covering options vary.

Expert Opinion: This is perfect. Everything works. Every angle in your body is supported. It's comfortable; it's attractive. The arms are ideal for me—you could put your notebook on one and, if you're careful, a drink on the other. You could go for hours in this—like a whole season of *The Sopranos*.

What We Think: Much of what we enjoy in chairs owes a great deal to Saarinen and his early collaborator Charles Eames and their explorations with molded plywood, fiberglass, and plastics. It's hard to argue with the Womb chair. It's a classic for a reason. ▶

A Note on Our Expert:
Tim Goodman is the third television critic in the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s 141-year history. His columns appear two or three times a week and he also maintains a blog, The Bastard Machine, on the *Chronicle*'s website. To review chairs, Goodman not only contemplated how long he could sit (in episodic lengths), but also another very important consideration: "I'm not going to be doing any viewing unless I have something to drink—whether it's a Diet Coke or red wine—depending on how bad the shows are."

The lounge chair is the furniture equivalent to the sports car. If you're having a midlife crisis (and happen to be in the market for furniture and not, say, a convertible roadster), do you go out and buy yourself a dresser? No, but you might buy a sexy lounge chair. The reasons for this, however, have more to do with the history of furniture than with male-pattern baldness or marital anxiety. Up until the Renaissance, the chair, much like a Lamborghini Countach, was not the seat of the people—commoners were stuck with chests, benches, and stools. Today the lounge chair is the modern living room's throne—a status symbol and upholstered isolation chamber rolled into one.

In the 20th century the lineage of the chair became inextricably linked with that of design itself. From Thonet to Pillet, to chart the course of the chair's evolution is also to follow technological developments (like bent plywood and injection molding) and the ever-changing notion of what makes design modern, even when it's postmodern. Chairs hold such weight that individual pieces have been elevated to cultural icons—hundreds of magazine covers, movies, and television shows later, Aarnio's Ball chair is as '60s as *Sgt. Pepper*.

When it came time for Dwell to evaluate lounge chairs, it seemed natural that we should somehow tie in another innovation that's grown up right alongside (or in front of) the chair—the television. Although we certainly enjoy a good book and love to sift through the Sunday paper, the reality for most Americans (and sometimes, sadly, ourselves) is that time spent at home equals time watching TV. For Tim Goodman, the television critic for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, that's not such a bad thing. "I watch about 30 hours a week," he told us enthusiastically. "I have three televisions and three TiVos." We recently spent an afternoon with Goodman talking about the ups and downs of a life centered on the small screen, and testing five lounge chairs to see how they would hold up to the new fall season.

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J.J. / By Antonio Citterio for B&B Italia / approx. $4,500 / www.bebitalia.it / The undersized J.J. was created to complement Citterio's oversized Arne sofas. Steel rods support a stained oak frame, between which a series of crisscrossed seatbeltlike bands make up the seat, which is covered in a leather cushion.

Expert Opinion: If I had just seen this I wouldn't normally be attracted to it, but sitting in it is a different story. I like this a lot—there's surprisingly good back support. It's a lot more comfortable than you think just looking at it. I could do a movie in this, maybe even four hours of shows.

What We Think: We too were surprised with just how comfortable J.J. is. The arms angle out slightly, which helps us feel like we can simply relax. We also learned that the chair is upholstered only in leather to accommodate for the hidden lumbar support, which would bulge too much with fabric. Our only concern is that it's very low to the ground.

Facett / By Erwan and Ronan Bouroullec for Ligne Roset / $2,685 (ottoman $840) / www.ligne-roset-usa.com / The brothers Bouroullec conceived the angular Facett range much like a piece of origami—its unique stitched cover unfolding into a single sheet. It's available in a range of fabrics, and the stitching can also be specified.

Expert Opinion: It's weird; this is both comfortable and uptight. While the support is good, there's a problem with the arms—they're too sharp. With the ottoman helping out, you could ease yourself through a two-hour movie or some mini-marathon on HBO with no problem.

What We Think: While we agree that the arms are a bit too high to be comfortable for a sustained period, we've always been drawn to Facett's unique stitching (the love seat cover features almost 700 feet of stitching and uses about 2,300 feet of thread). ►

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Take a Line for a Walk / By Alfredo Häberli for Moroso / approximately $3,500 / www.moroso.it / The unusual name for Häberli's chair comes from artist Paul Klee's description of drawing. The chair's steel frame is covered with injected polyurethane foam. Upholstering options vary. Base options include fixed, swivel (not shown), or with a footrest.

Expert Opinion: I like the shape of this but I'm not sure I would be able to make it through six hours of a marathon, because you want some more comfort. I'm sort of split 50/50 on form and function. The sound is odd because you're kind of in a little dome here—it's going to block off my new surround-sound system. If I look at it in terms of episodic length, you could get through a couple shows max.

What We Think: Häberli's chair has shades of the classic Danish Egg and Ox chairs, but the unusual base options are a point of innovation. We agree with Goodman that if you're going to be sitting down for a while, you could use a bit more padding. With its oversized headrest blocking out the rest of the world, this might be a better chair for reading.

Ola / By Patricia Urquiola for DePadova / approximately $3,000 (ottoman $1,500) / www.depadova.it / With its gentle curves, Ola (or "wave") earns its name ably. The chair is made from rigid polyurethane upholstered with foam and a fixed cover of either stretched Lycra or leather.

Expert Opinion: This is very similar to a chair I have by OFFI. This one is probably better for my wife because she can curl up like a cat and put her legs under her, which I am incapable of doing because I'm inflexible. If there's more than one person over, you can plop down in this one and let them have the couch. I think this is a one-episode chair.

What We Think: With our feet on Ola's ottoman we would be happy watching David Brent blunder his way through a few hours of *The Office* (but then again, we could probably sit in a sandbox and enjoy David Brent). Ola could work if you're strapped for space, but for pure comfort, look elsewhere. ■

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The Power of Paint

With a little paint and a lot of passion, the nonprofit group Publicolor is redesigning community institutions from homeless shelters to hospitals, police precincts to Head Start classrooms. Below, founder Ruth Lande Shuman oversees the latest metamorphosis.

Want to volunteer? Log on to www.dwell.com for more information.

Past security guards and down a dingy stair, visitors to Manhattan's Intermediate School 117 arrive suddenly at a bank of doors the color of the sky after a spring rain. Through the next door (bright green), 13 middle-school students are perched on ladders, armed with brushes, rollers, and a loud radio, coating the walls with high-gloss latex paint in Shimmering Lime, Blue Wave, Sun-Kissed Yellow, and Apple Green.

IS 117 used to be just another gunmetal-gray institution barely discernible from nearby low-income housing projects. Today, its students are redesigning their environment under the guidance of Publicolor, a nonprofit organization founded in 1996 by industrial designer Ruth Lande Shuman. Over the past decade, Publicolor has recruited thousands of at-risk New York City teens to paint 75 school buildings and 87 community sites. Each year, more than 600 kids—90 percent from distressed public-assistance households and streets rife with drugs, gangland graffiti, and gunfire—volunteer for Publicolor's after-school Paint Club program. Dozens of them continue to meet on weekdays and weekends for tutoring, college prep, career guidance, and, always, painting.

With paint donated by Benjamin Moore and blue masking tape from 3M, Shuman begins each trimester by explaining that color is a communication tool and then teaches the kids to use it. To design the color scheme for each school, she asks students to create their own colors and put the most popular combinations to a school-wide vote in the cafeteria. When the scheme is finalized, Paint Club kids gather after school to share a snack, change into old clothes, and paint for a couple of hours.

Delia Rodriguez, who grew up in Hunt's Point, where less than 50 percent of teens graduate from high school, joined Paint Club when she was 14. "It kept me busy," she says. "I wasn't spending time with people in my neighborhood who were selling drugs or hanging out on the corner all day or having babies." Today, Rodriguez is 22, an accounting student at a local college and the assistant to Publicolor's CFO. "We tell her," Shuman says, smiling, "that it's a lifelong commitment now." And one that seems to be contagious: Once Publicolor paints in a neighborhood, Shuman has noticed, residents begin to take pride in their place. "People get the message," she says. "It means: They're worth this." ■

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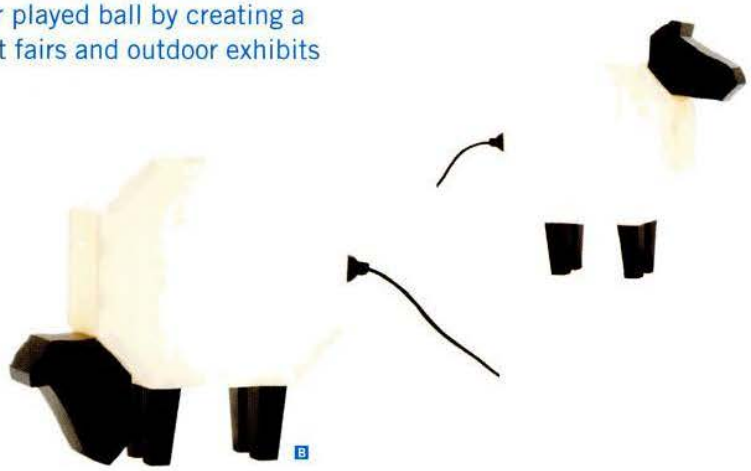
BIENNALE

From its humble beginnings two years ago, the London Architecture Biennale has exploded into a huge festival. The theme for the June affair was "Architecture Takes to the Streets," with hundreds of events centered on a three-mile-long walk through the city. Fortunately, the unpredictable English weather played ball by creating a heat wave to ensure that street fairs and outdoor exhibits were full to bursting.



A Sheep Drive by Lord Richard Rogers and Renzo Piano
They may have worked together on the Pompidou Center in Paris, but driving a herd of sheep from London's South Bank to the historic Smithfield Market was possibly a more stressful collaboration for these A-list architects.
www.londonbiennale.org.uk

B Sheeplight by back4
With sheep being the official icon of the event, these translucent polycarbonate lamps became the must-have souvenir of the week.
www.back4.co.uk ►

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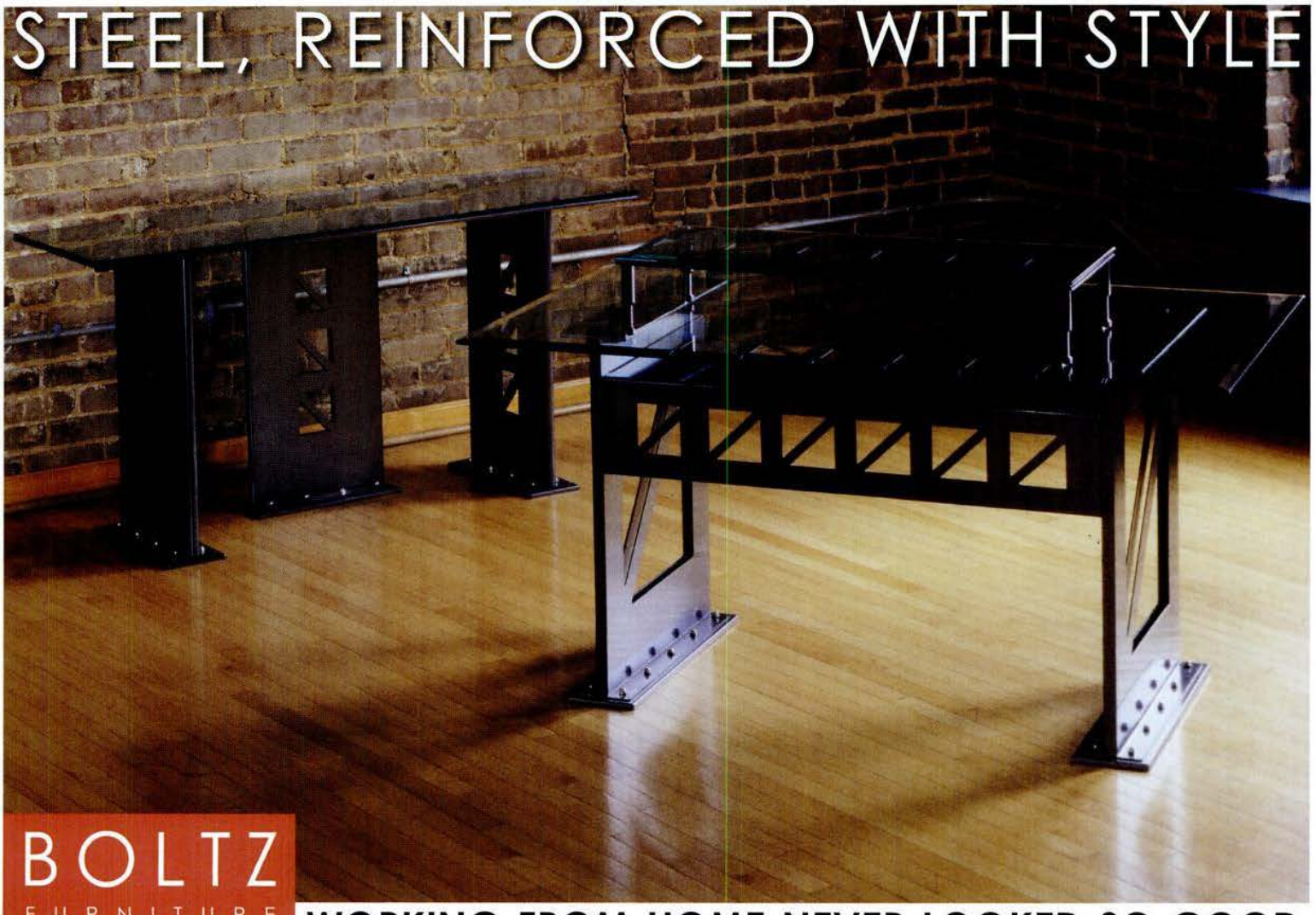

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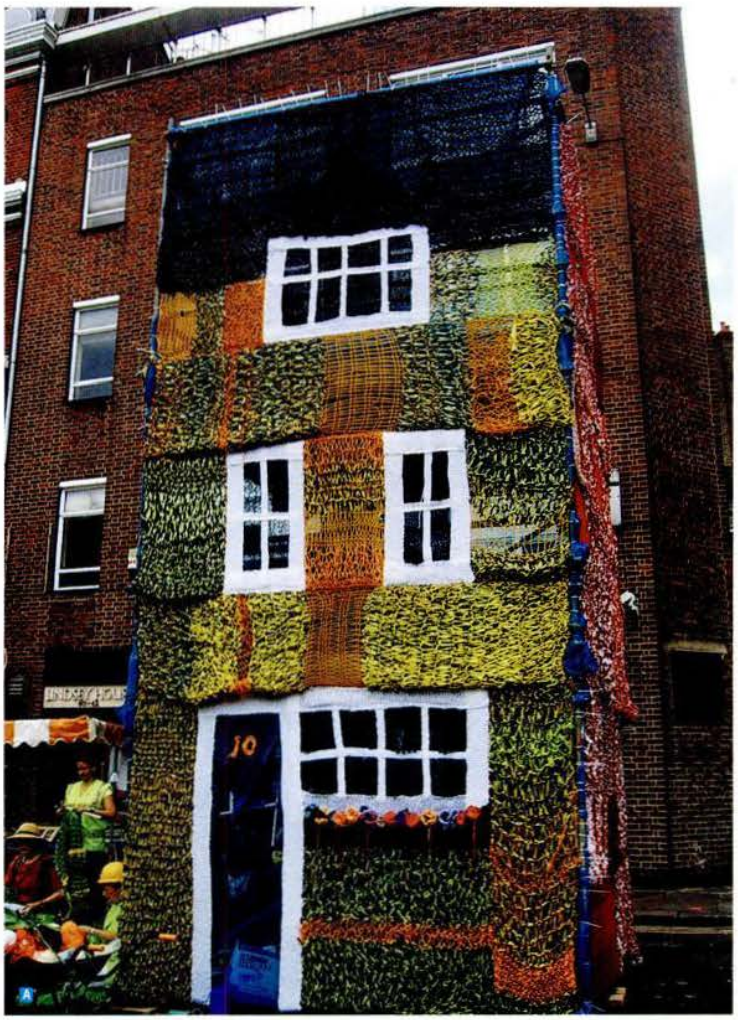

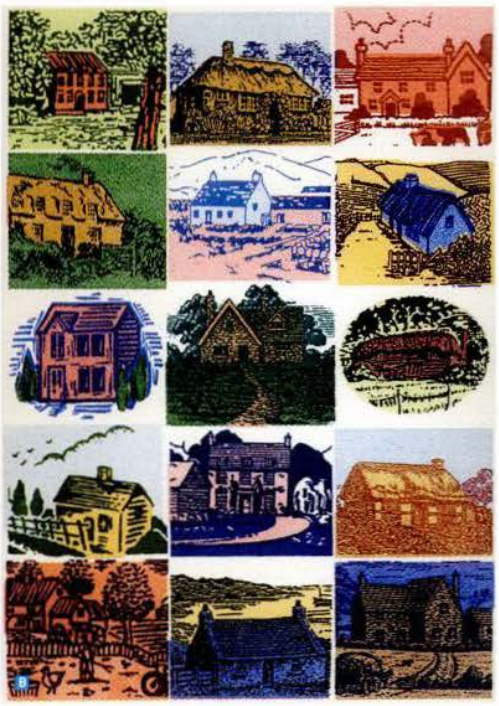

A Knitted House by Knitting Site
High on ventilation, but not so good on security, this house was knitted during the Biennale from wool and plastics by an enthusiastic onsite team. www.knittingsite.org

B 15 English Homes by John Dilnot
Part of a design show in inflatable pavilions at the British Library, this screen print shows a traditional view of the English home. www.johndilnot.com

C Wayfinding Balloons by Jason Bruges Studio
Having a lengthy walk that takes you through winding backstreets could have been confusing, but these giant magenta weather balloons were there to lead the way and highlight shows. www.jasonbruges.com ▶

PHOTOS BY IAIN AITCH (TOP LEFT) AND JASON BRUGES STUDIO (BOTTOM) / PRINT BY JOHN DILNOT (TOP RIGHT)

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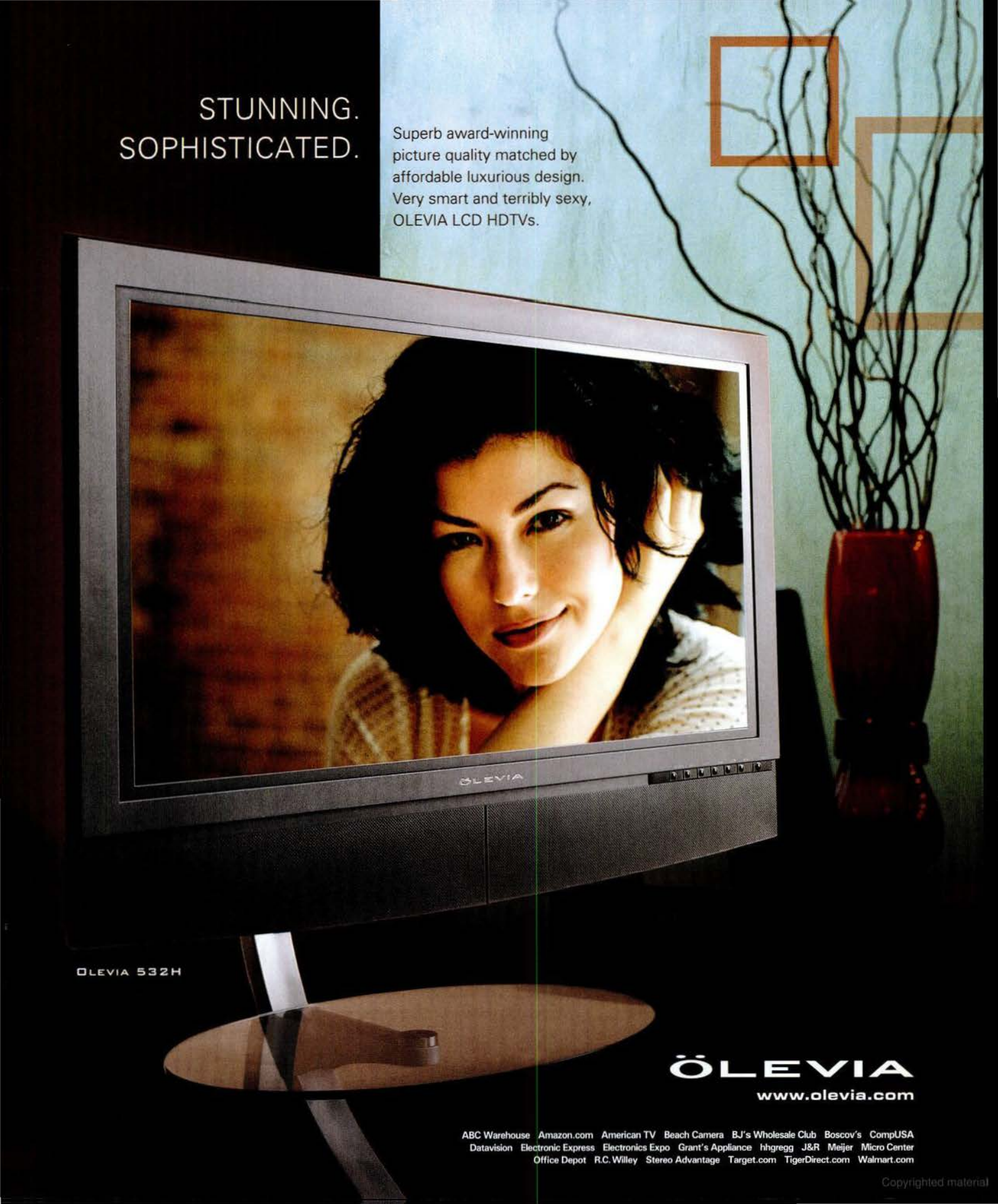

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A King's Cross as Camera Obscura by Minnie Weisz
Using the rooms of a derelict hotel as a huge pinhole camera, artist Minnie Weisz captured ghostly images of one of London's sleaziest districts as it undergoes redevelopment. minnie_weisz@hotmail.com

B Stand Here for Clean Air by Elegant Embellishments
Tiles coated with titanium dioxide were the basis for this environmentally friendly sculpture, which absorbs pollutants and neutralizes them via chemical reaction. www.elegantembellishments.net ■

PHOTOS BY MINNIE WEISZ (TOP) AND IAIN AITCH (BOTTOM)

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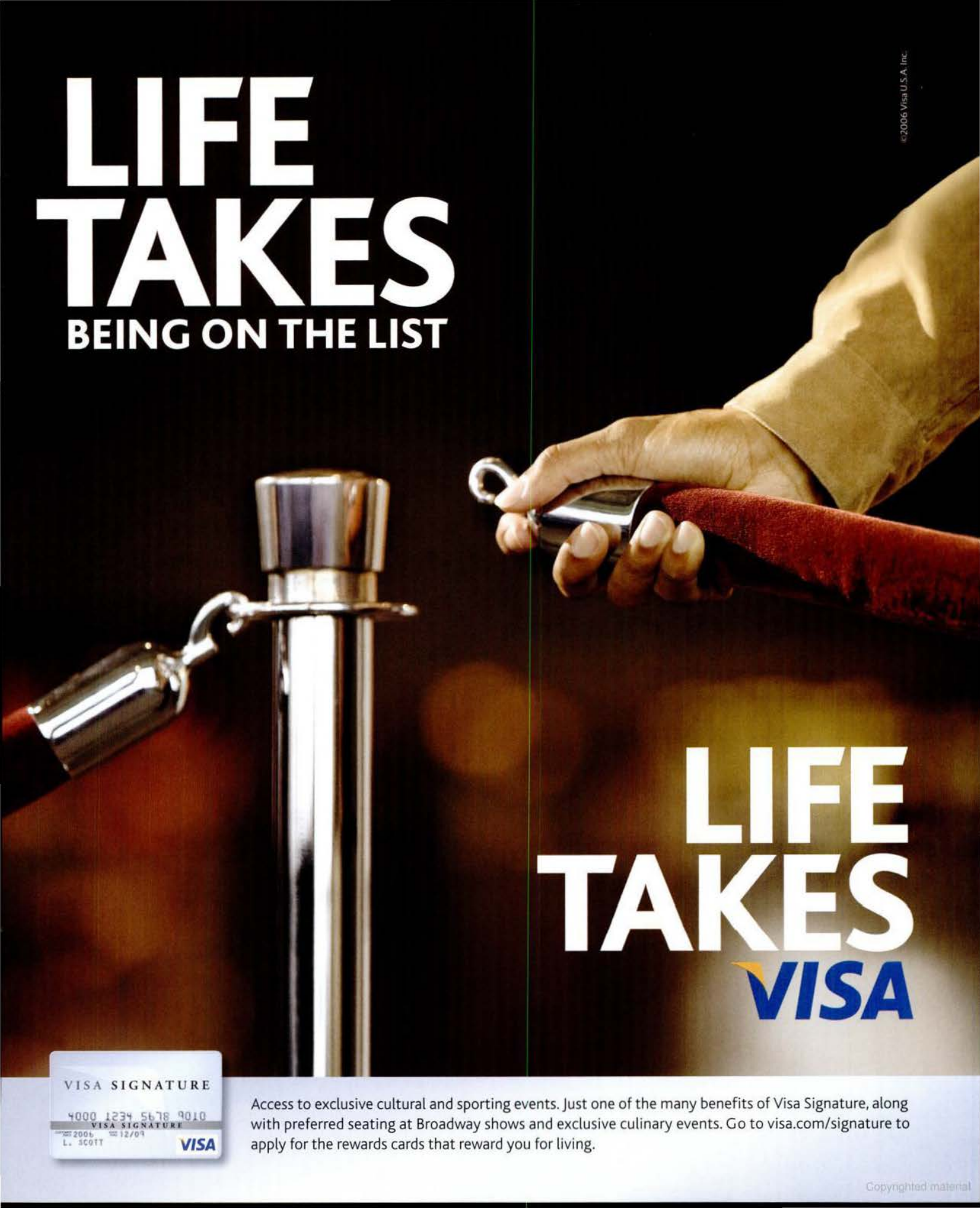

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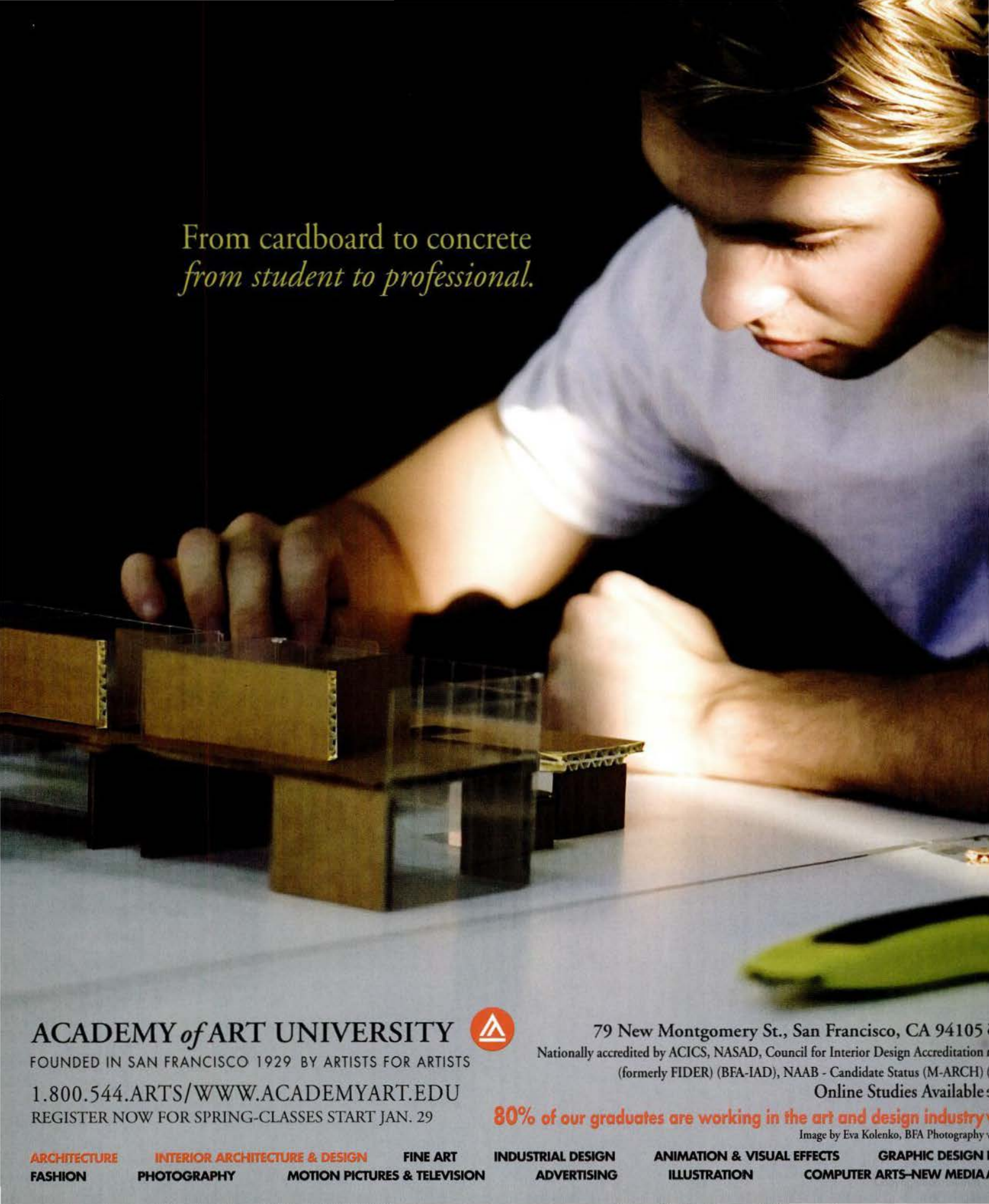

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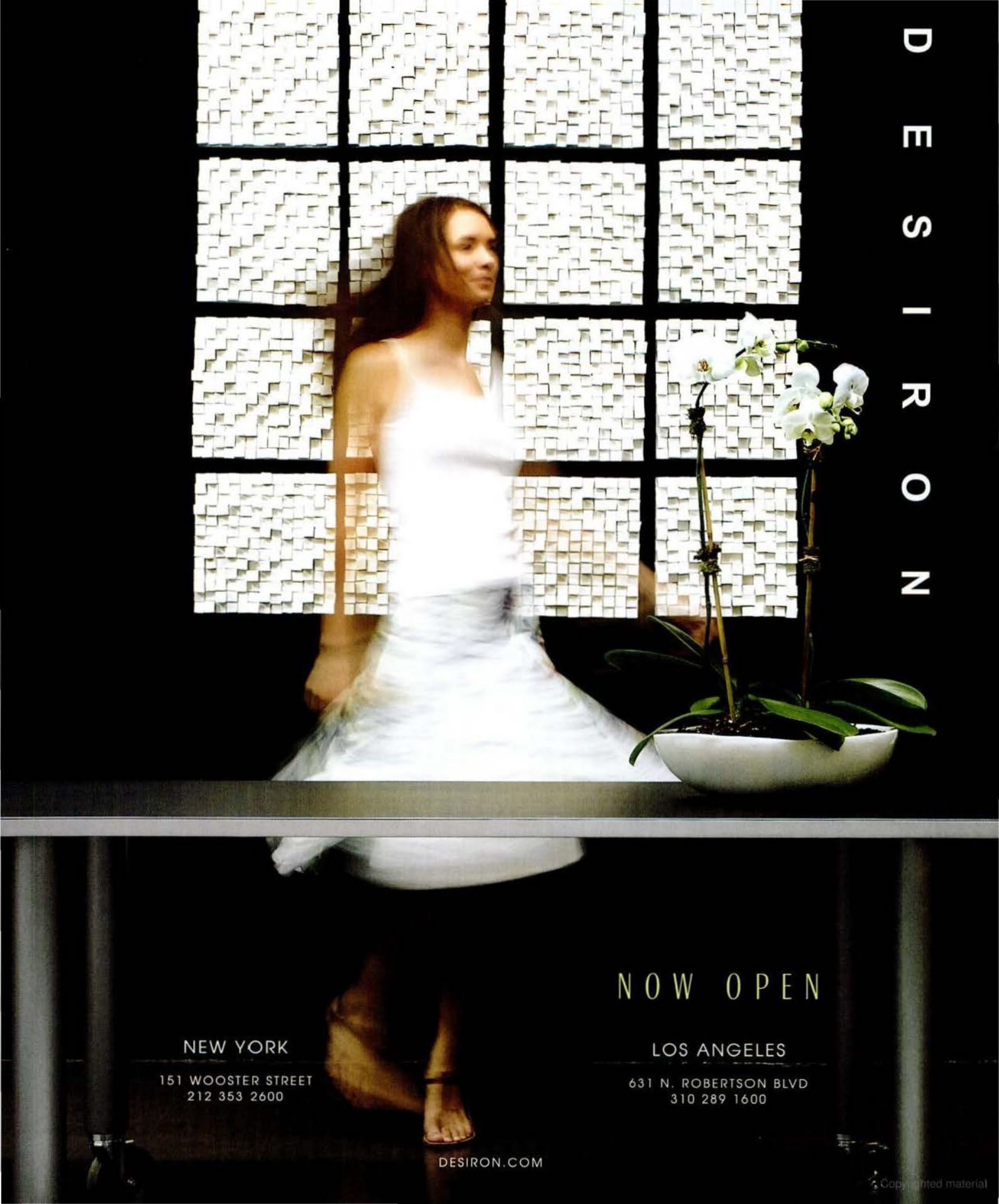

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Story by Jane Szita

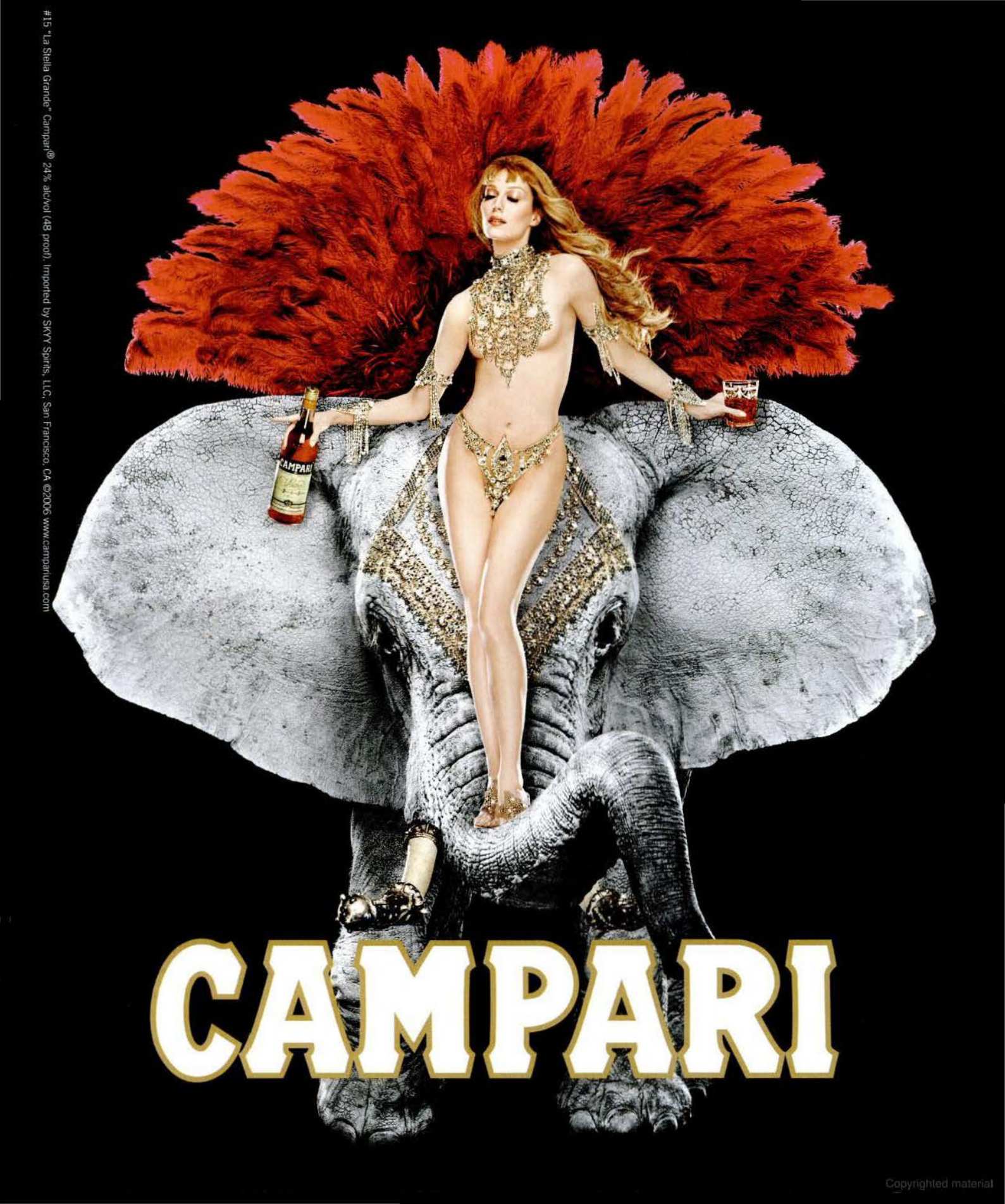
Photos by Peter Belanger

Cover Story

Irma Boom is generally acknowledged to be one of the most important book designers working today. Dutch-born Boom started out studying fine art before switching to graphic design, and it shows: Her books have an extraordinarily expressive quality.

Boom opened her own studio in Amsterdam in 1991, and quickly won international acclaim for designs such as the astonishingly beautiful (and jaw-droppingly weighty) tome she made to commemorate 100 years of Dutch corporate giant SHV. Corporate commemorative literature isn't known for its creativity, but Boom skillfully transformed the dull archival material to produce a masterpiece. She has designed over 250 books, including *Workspirit Six* for Vitra, a monograph devoted to artist Otto Treumann, and two catalogs on artist Aernout Mik, and she helped create *Gutenberg-Galaxie II*, which documents her own work.

Boom currently works for a variety of international clients and teaches at Yale; the University of Amsterdam already houses an archive of her work. Her books boldly break with convention and reject commercial considerations, often pushing the creative limits of both print and paper. Using color and texture to create order, rather than the usual formula of page references and tables of contents, her work manages to be both cerebral and visceral at the same time. ▸



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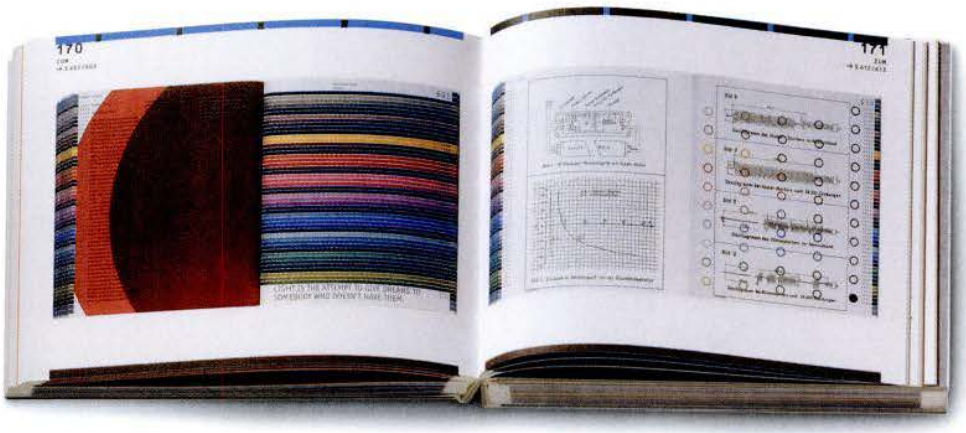

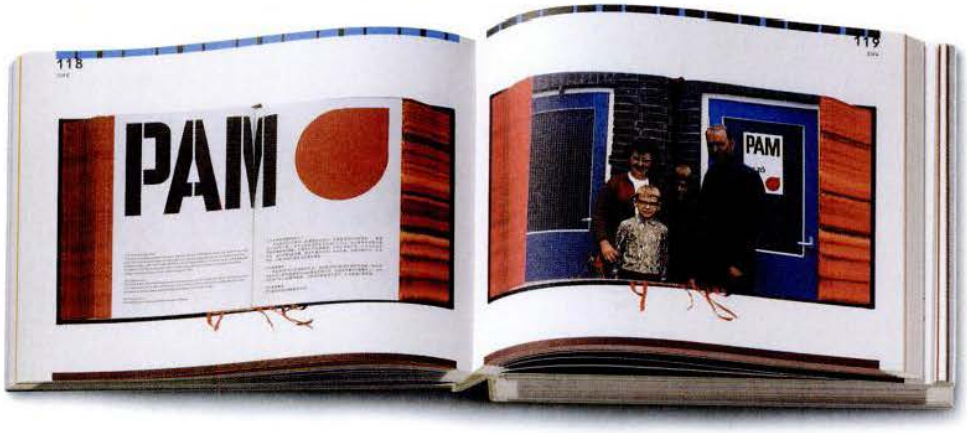

This page and previous page: In *Gutenberg-Galaxie II: Irma Boom*, the designer showcases her own work in typically enigmatic fashion. Hinged in the middle, the book can be read from both sides, and as one volume or two.

Do you ever design digital media?
I'm very tempted to, but I don't; perhaps I will in the future. Nevertheless, I do think that a lot of my work is based on digital media, and would even be unthinkable without it.

In what way?
If you look at the SHV book, for example, you'll see that it's completely nonlinear—you navigate it more like a website than a traditional book. Although there are 2,136 pages, there are no page numbers and no index. It's nonchronological, because I wanted it to work as the memory does—the more recent stuff is at the front, and it's more complex, more detailed; then, as you get further away in time, it's more filtered, with a simple, quiet design. Ironically, we had considered making a CD-ROM first, but had we done so, the technology would already be obsolete. A book has this great physical advantage of being timeless.

Has the digital age changed how we see books?
Printed matter now has another value, another layer of meaning, yes. The book has developed enormously because of digital media—in design, but also in production and status. I always say, when I'm asked whether the Internet means the end of the book, that it really means the beginning of the new book. More books are produced now than ever before, but people use them in a different way. After all, you can read plenty of information on the Internet now. Print, however, still looks like the truth.

How long did you spend on the SHV book?
Five years—and at times I was working on it virtually 24 hours a day. This book is five years of my life... It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing. ►

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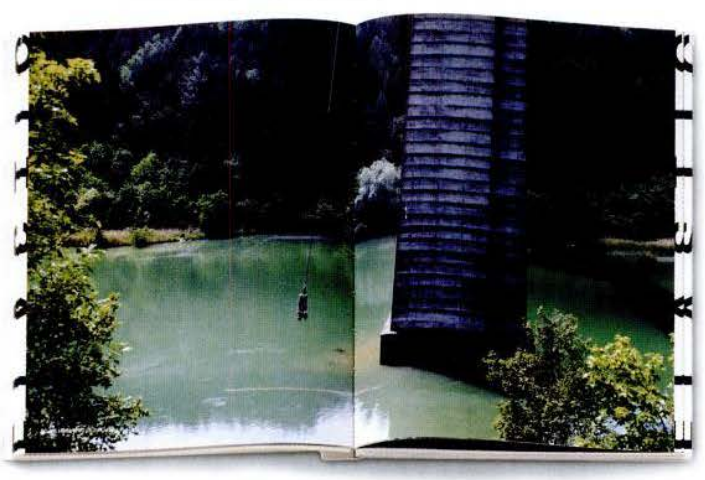

For the cover of her stunning monograph on the Dutch video artist Aernout Mik, Boom opted to use dynamically treated text rather than a static still image.

You famously said you don't read briefs.
I prefer to have conversations with clients, and actually I don't even like to call them clients, I prefer the word "commissioner" [*opdrachtgever* in Dutch]. We have to discuss whatever I'm doing for them.

You recently designed *False Flat: Why Dutch Design Is So Good*. Why do you think the Netherlands excels in graphic design?
It's a cultural and historic thing. The Netherlands has always had a visual, rather than literary, culture. In the 17th century, the VOC (the Dutch East India Company trade organization) had what some consider the first logo in the world. And the art in the Rijksmuseum today was commissioned by people (not, say, the church). So we have this culture of commissioning art.

In the Netherlands, the graphic designer is a well-respected professional; we are used to being given a lot of freedom. Whereas I once did a Christmas card for Ferrari [in Italy]—and they changed my design! That would be unthinkable here. And of course, culture gets state subsidies in the Netherlands—and a lot of the people who commission me are in the cultural sector. So it's possible to do books that have a print run of just 750.

Is it different working outside the Netherlands? Do you ever think of setting up your studio elsewhere?
I have clients in Istanbul and Italy, where graphic design doesn't really seem to exist—only advertising. So they rely completely on my knowledge about photography, publishing, everything. I'm almost like a consultant.

It used to be my dream to work in New York, and I was all set to move there. But I was told, "Your work is too Dutch—look at your covers, they'll never sell!" If you want to sell a book in the U.S., the wisdom goes ▸

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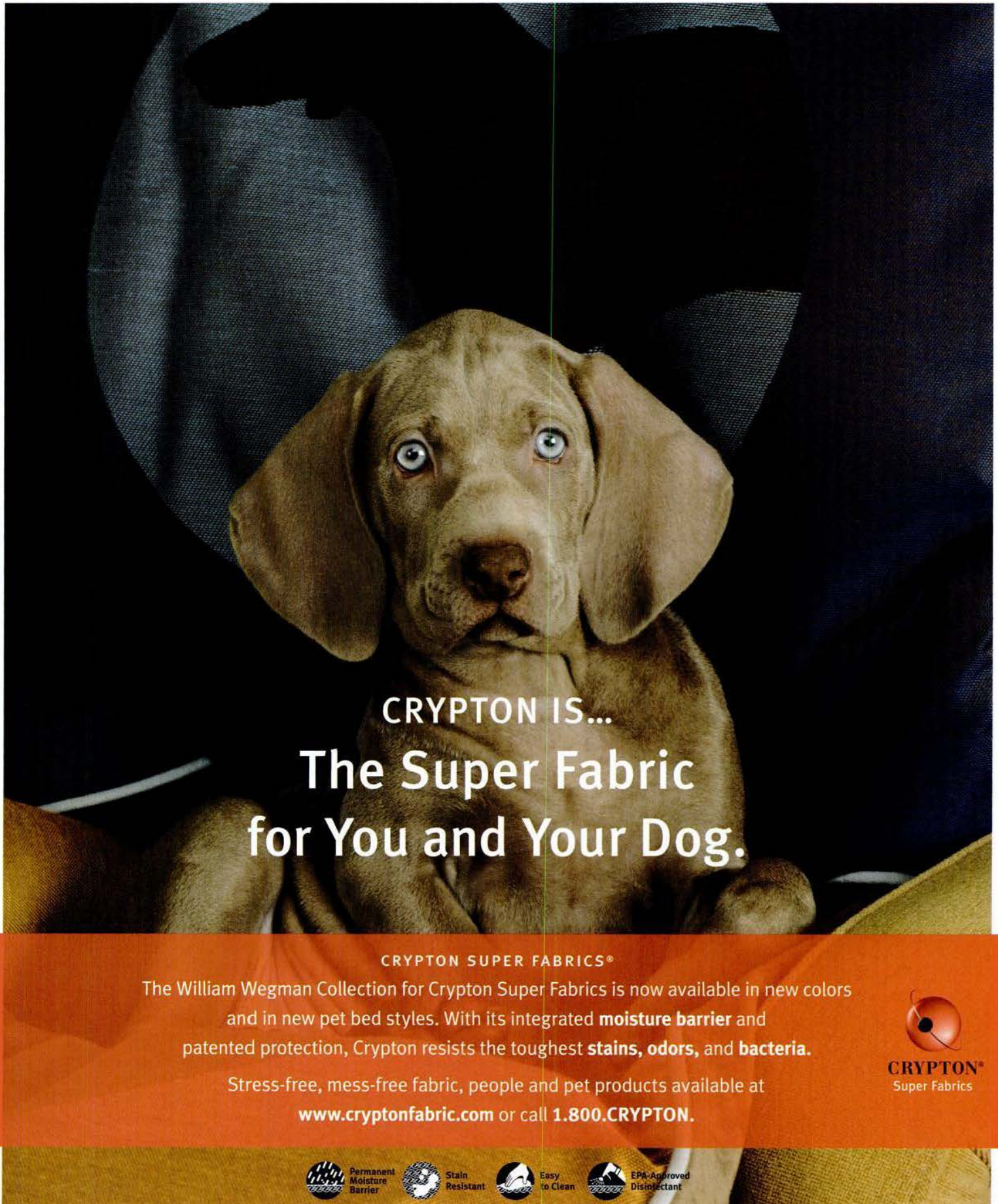

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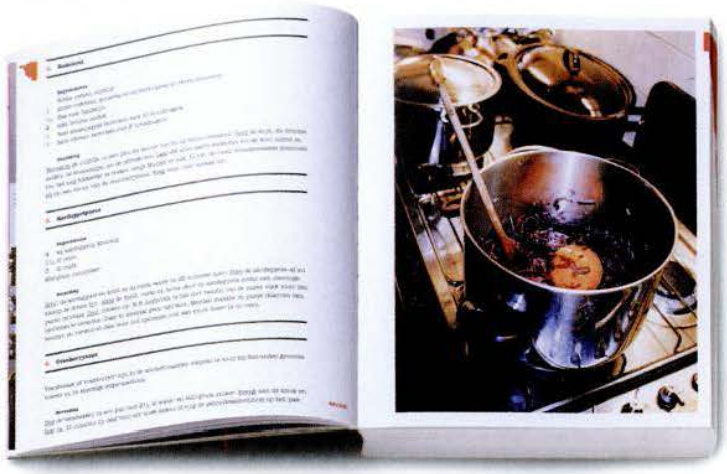

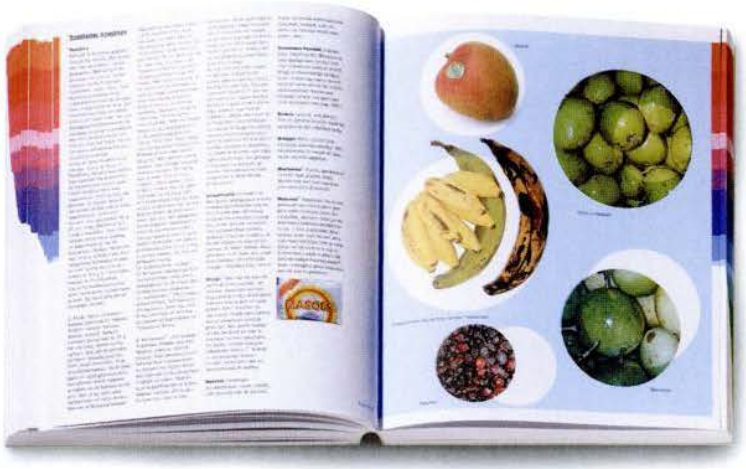

The publishers of the multicultural *Rotterdams Kookboek* didn't want an "uncommercial" text-only cover. But Boom refused to compromise, and sales of the book exceeded all expectations.

you have to have a glossy cover with an image on it. That's the last thing I want to put on a cover. So then I thought, Why work in the U.S., when in the Netherlands I can design whatever I like?

Are you under pressure to be more commercial in your designs?

Sometimes. For example, my cover for the *Rotterdams Kookboek* featured only typography—the names of all the types of cuisine you find in this multicultural city. The publisher said I had to change it, because the book would never get reviewed, let alone sell, if all it had on the cover was words. I threatened to quit, so I got my way and we did the typography cover. And it was bullshit what the publisher had said—the book sold out in three weeks, as did a reprint, and it was reviewed (with a photo of the cover, even) in just about every newspaper.

So I'm assuming an Irma Boom coffee-table book would be impossible?

I hate coffee-table books! Their size alone is completely impractical. A book isn't a decorative object. It can be beautiful, but it must always be functional—its function is to spread information, and it's ultimately a very democratic medium, at least since printing was invented. Coffee-table books are invariably bland and glossy. I like to have a certain roughness in book design—books should look used.

How big is your studio?

There are just the two of us. We're about to move to a space that's big enough for four, but I have to think carefully about that—I don't want to be a manager, and I don't want to be in the position of having to accept commissions I don't really want, just to keep the business going. I have to keep my creative independence, or what's the point? ■

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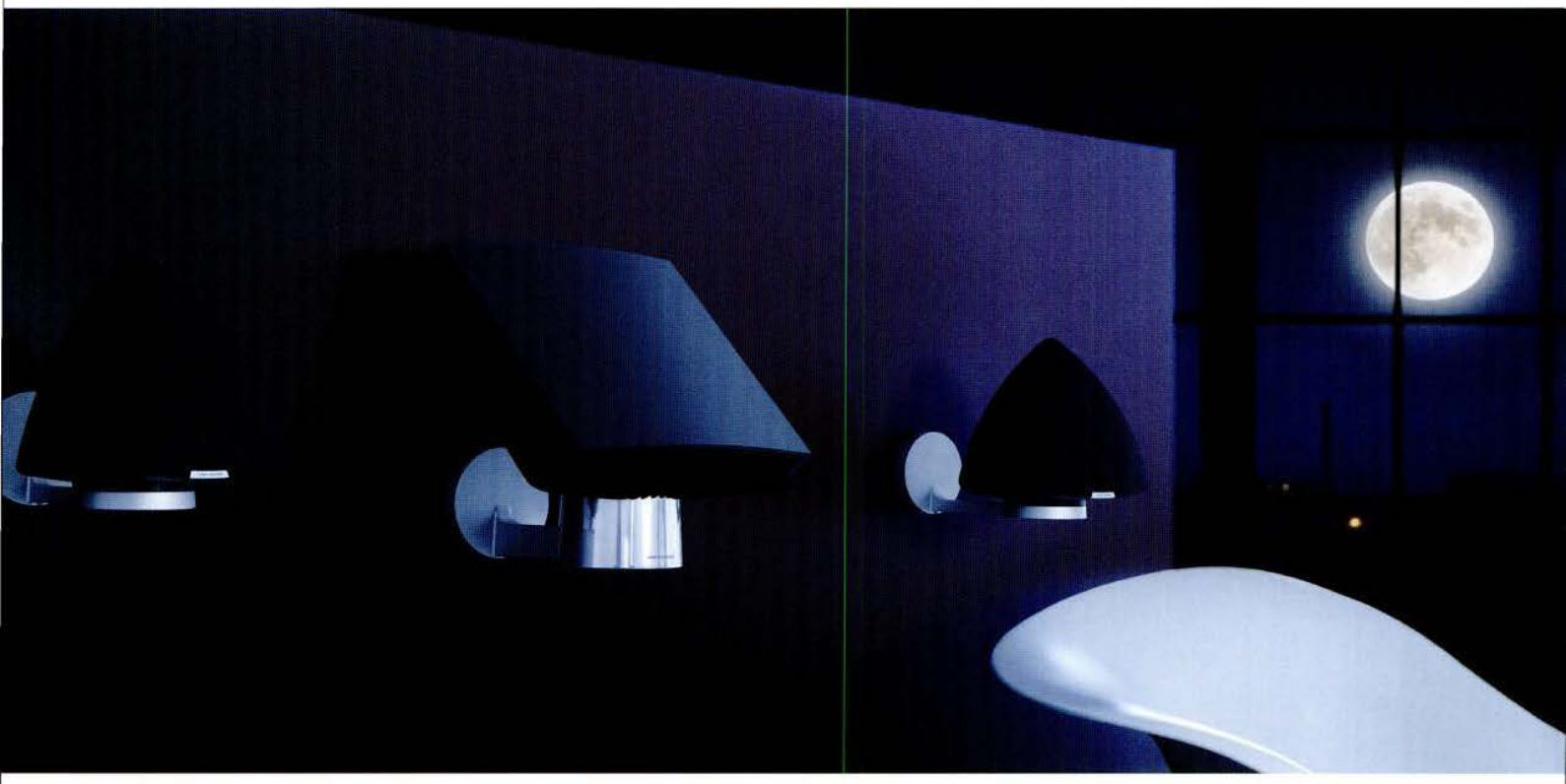

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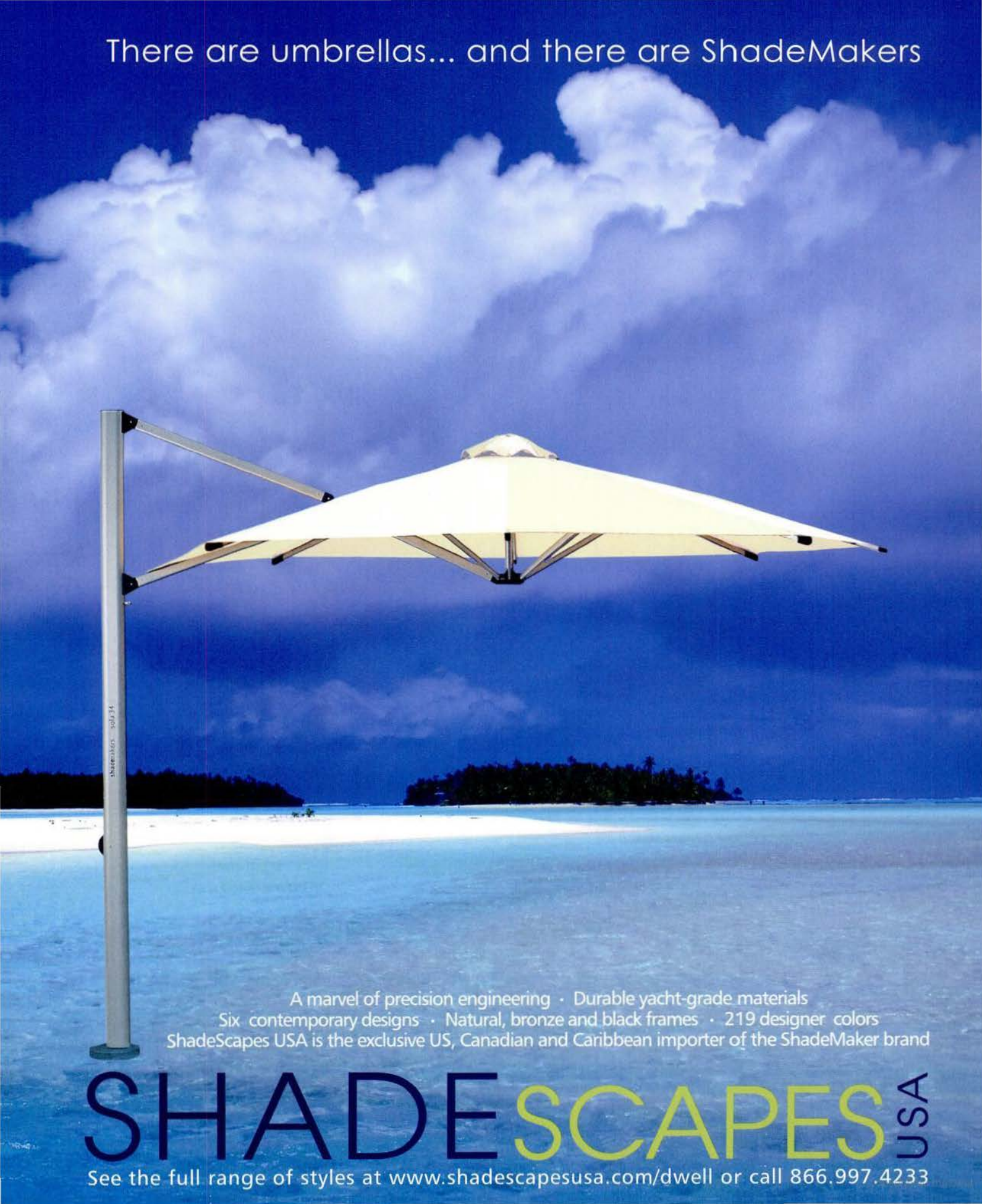

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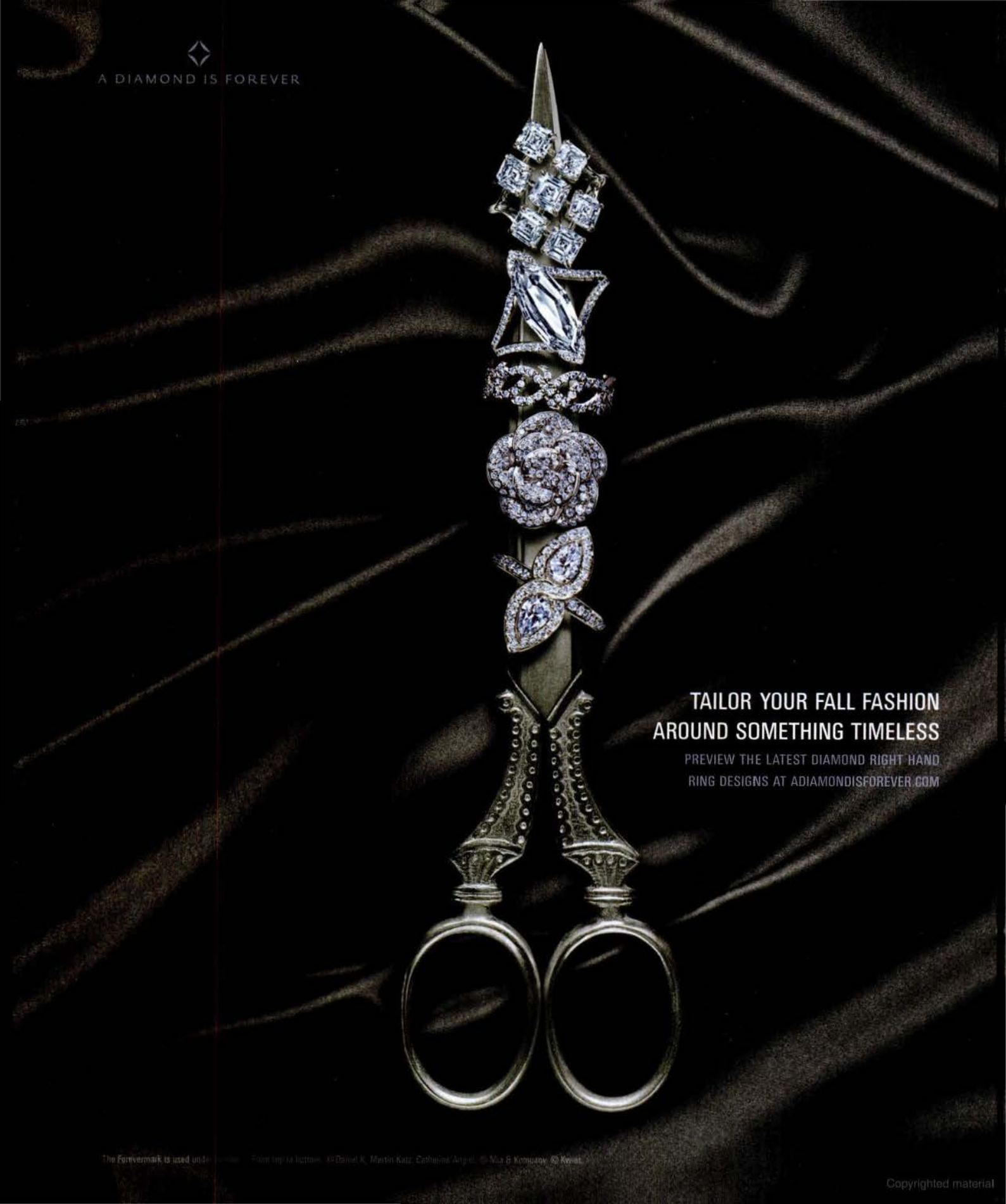

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The Garden State

For maverick landscape architect James Rose, the suburban development was a dehumanizing waste of space that severed people from nature. Fifteen years after his death, his home—for which he designed the living spaces, garden, and furnishings—is a model for a different kind of dwelling.

Rose thought of his home as a "space sculpture with shelter," and described it as "neither landscape nor architecture, but both; neither indoors, nor outdoors, but both." p. 284

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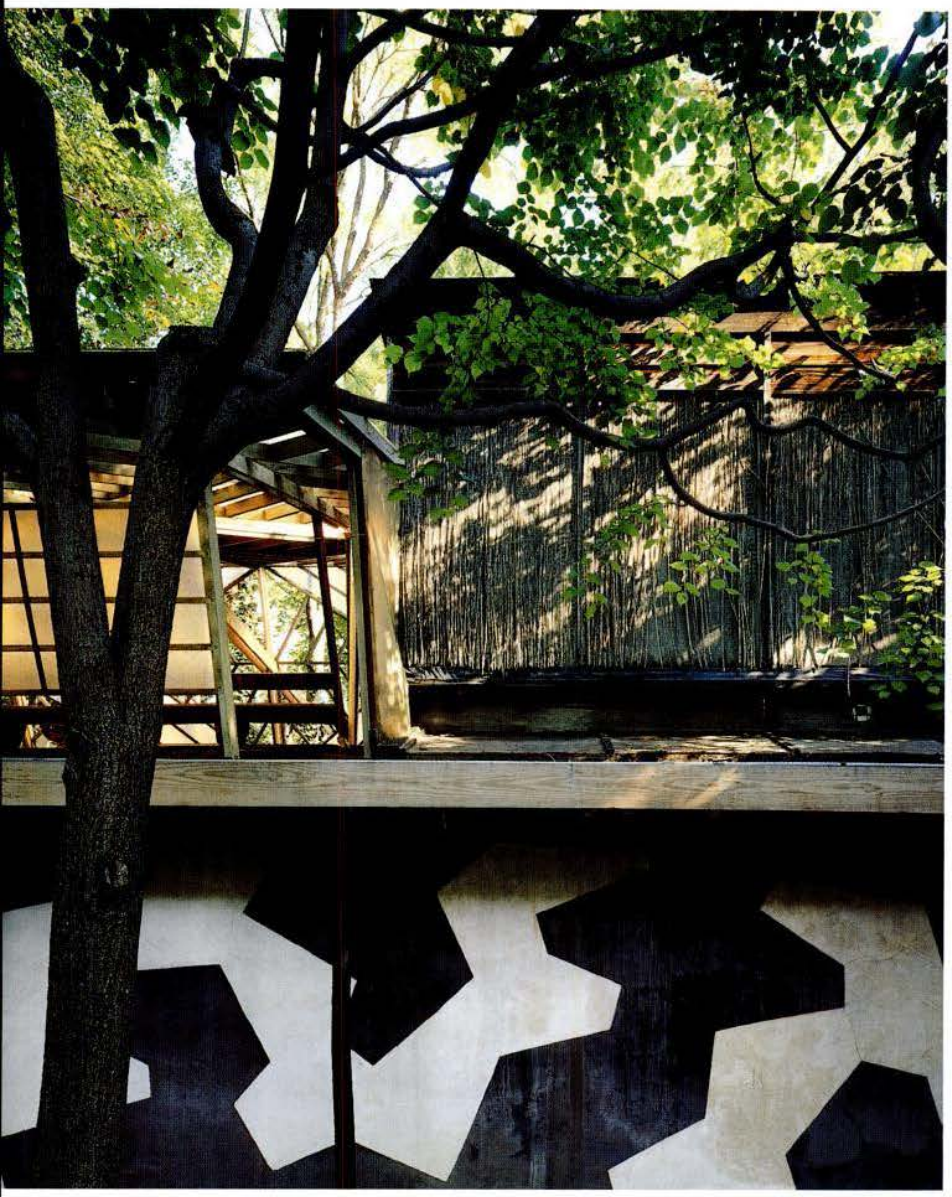

Rose's mural, the "River of Hospitality," begins indoors and continues on an exterior wall (left). Visible above is the roof deck, whose fiberglass–and–ribbed wood construction resembles the filigreed architecture of a leaf (bottom left).

Approaching the door of the James Rose house on a corner lot in Ridgewood, New Jersey, you are not greeted by the typical velvety emerald lawn or picture windows politely set back from the street. After locating the entrance of the cinder block, wood, thatch, and fiberglass structure embedded in foliage, you ascend a few steps to enter a room dappled with light, hear the splashing of a fountain, and wonder, Why can't I live here?

Once dubbed the James Dean of landscape architecture, Rose (1913–1991) was a rebel with a cause, expelled from Harvard's Graduate School of Design in 1937 for producing modernistic landscape designs rather than pastoral watercolor renderings in the formal Beaux Arts style. In 1938 and '39, Rose and former classmates Garrett Eckbo and Dan Kiley put forth their design philosophies in a series of influential articles in *Pencil Points* magazine (now *Progressive Architecture*), and helped propel landscape architecture into the modern world.

"It's hard to remember, but Rose was once the East Coast landscape architect of choice," says Dean Cardasis, director of the James Rose Center, and the person most responsible for rehabilitating Rose's home and, to some degree, his reputation. "Before Kiley did the Miller Garden and became the darling of modern architects, Rose had a thriving international practice." He was also a prolific writer and guest lecturer. But Rose quickly tired of corporate life, preferring to leave Manhattan and work from home, where he could focus on the kinds of residential projects that allowed him to improvise with the real medium of landscape—rocks, dirt, and plants.

Rose was far more concerned about the experience of being inside the garden—he compared it to a sculpture that one moves through—than creating a pretty backdrop for the house. And he preferred working with existing materials, explaining, "I don't bring in rocks to look at them or talk to them, but rocks that are on the site I try to use, instead of digging a hole to bury them as if they were something obscene." Although he created hundreds of gardens in New England and elsewhere, his undisputed masterwork is the project for which he was both architect and client, and which he completed in 1953.

Rose first started ruminating on his ideal dwelling when stationed in Okinawa during World War II. Upon his return, he was repelled by the proliferation of housing developments that thoughtlessly plunked a house in the middle of the lot—creating a useless front lawn and treating the garden as an afterthought. For him, the ideal house was inseparable from the site, rather than "imposed upon" it. ▸

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1. taps. Square.
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3. bathtub. Exline.
4. washbasin. Flat 80.
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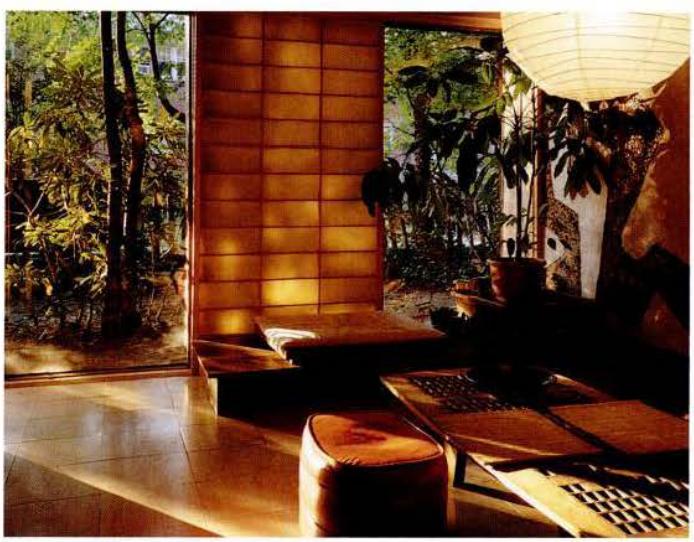
A catwalk (left) leads to the meditation zendo in the roof garden. The hand-hewn spiral staircase joining garden and deck (below left) provides structural support. Below right is Rose's mother's sitting area.

Working on a modest lot (described by Rose as "half a tennis court"), he placed three pavilions—a main house with a kitchen for his mother, a guesthouse for his sister, and a live/work studio for himself—joined by a tightly choreographed connective tissue of courtyards, pools, and gardens. Affording three adults both privacy and communion with nature, the property at Ridgewood embodies the mid-century ideal, so rarely realized, of blurring the borders between indoors and out. Wrote Rose: "The walls become garden walls instead of barriers. The landscape is of the house instead of attached to it, and the space is one."

"It's hard to tell if it's a landscape connected by shelter, or shelters connected by a common landscape," says Cardasis. "Rose essentially took the architecture and pulled it apart, with the solid parts and the voids exploded. I think of it as architectural origami."

For all its obvious delights, the "small village," as Rose called it, was no more enthusiastically received by the neighbors than his theories had been at Harvard. "The idea sat on the local New Jersey cerebellum like hair that comes with the hat," wrote Rose. "Everyone in Ridgewood knows what a house is. The building inspector drew one for me, gratuitously, the day I applied for a building permit, and showed me just how to place it on the lot." Rose, however, found creative ways to skirt annoying codes that impeded his privacy. In one area screened with posts, he responded to complaints by saying, "It's not a fence, it's a pole arrangement." "Actually," he wrote, "I took great pains not to violate any codes. ▸



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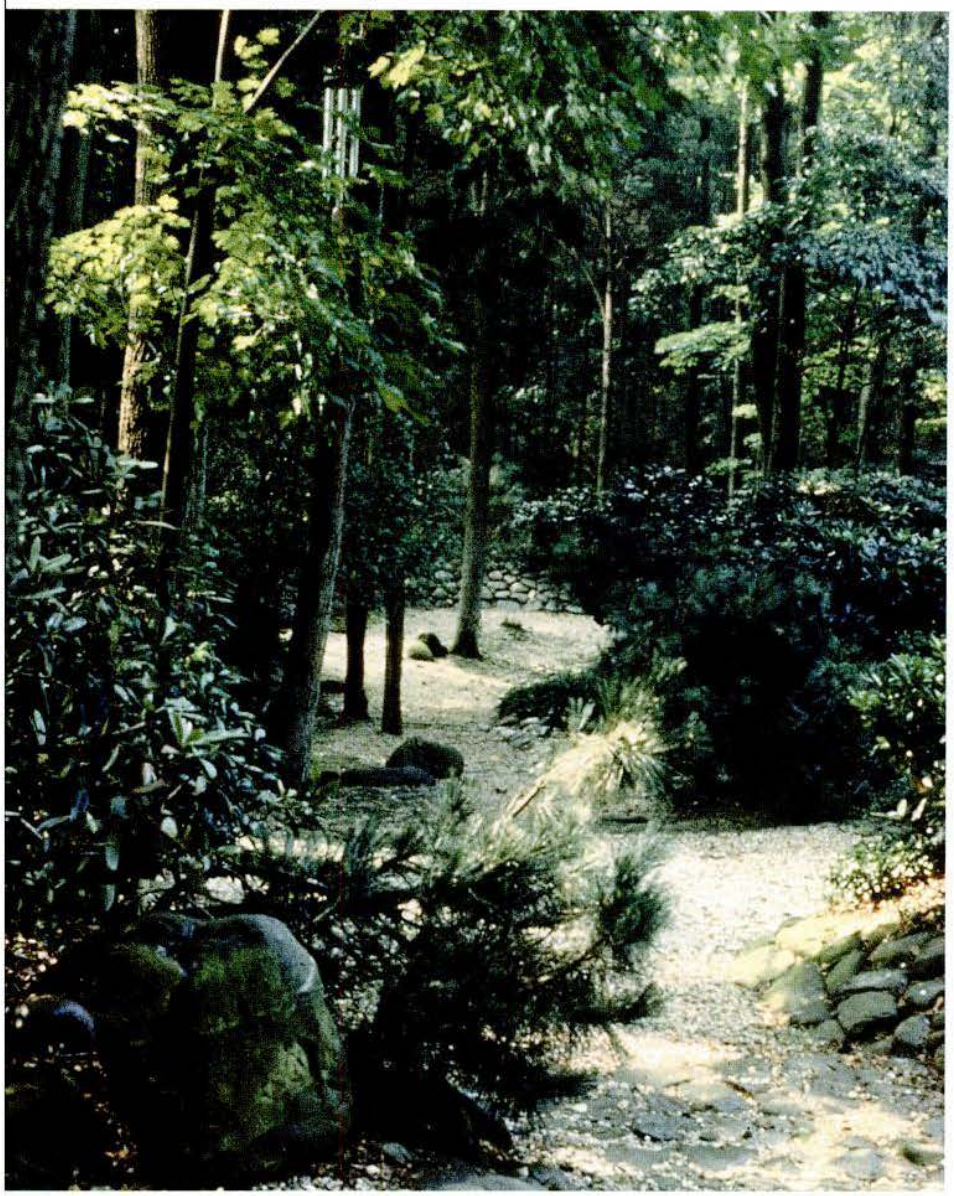


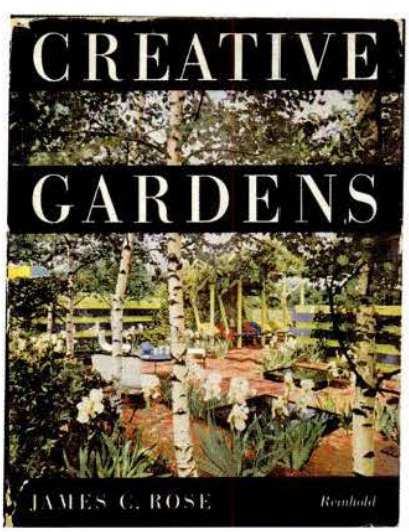
Photo and plan of the Rose-designed Anisfield Garden in northern New Jersey. Dean Cardasis likens his composition of existing trees and topography with minimal materials to a modern interpretation of a Japanese strolling garden.

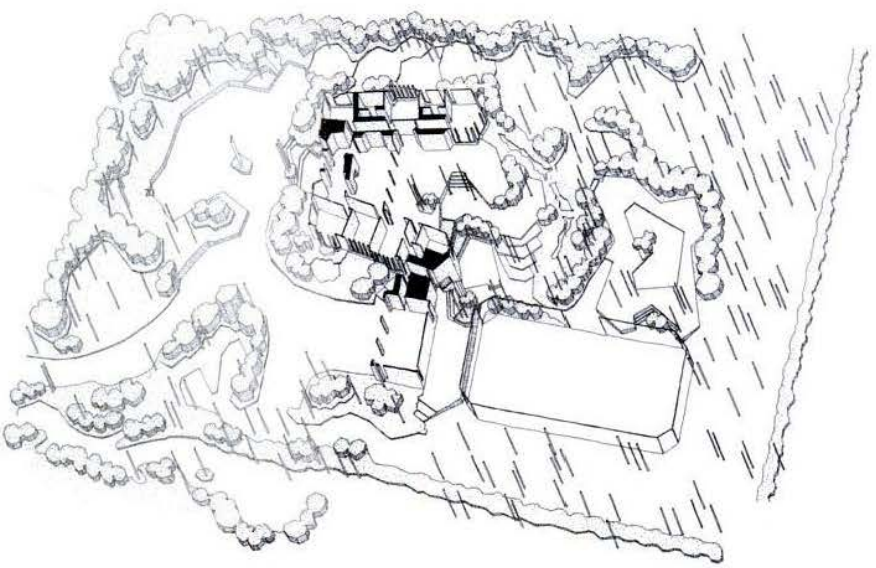
I followed them to the letter, and made them work for me—much to the inspector's dismay."

In the '70s, Rose added a partially sheltered second-story roof deck/tree house that connects to the garden via a spiral staircase. When his mother became infirm, he joined her house to his sister's, creating new alfresco areas, such as the Buddha garden. For the man who wrote "'finish' is another word for death," change was part of the master plan: "I set up the basic armature of walls, and roofs, and open spaces to establish their relationships, but left it free in detail to allow for improvisation. In that way it would never be 'finished,' but constantly evolving... a metamorphosis such as we find, commonly, in nature."

About Rose's perfect fusion of Western and Eastern approaches, landscape architect Richard Haag wrote, "To over-simplify, Western residential forms are walls fending off nature, a man's home is his castle. Traditional Japanese homes are structures of openings, a man's home is his temple." Rose's Ridgewood is both—a place of comfort and serenity, but no monastic retreat.

In terms of capturing the experience of living there, perhaps Rose said it best: "From my point of view it was a happy house. From the moment it was enclosed, something happened acoustically that made voices sound beautiful. It had an earthy quality that made people look and act like characters in a Chekhov play; artificial poses were impossible. But especially, it had its own moods—the moods of nature. Sunlight falls in the right places, and it is capable of dramatic change with the occasion, with the season, and with the time of day." ▸





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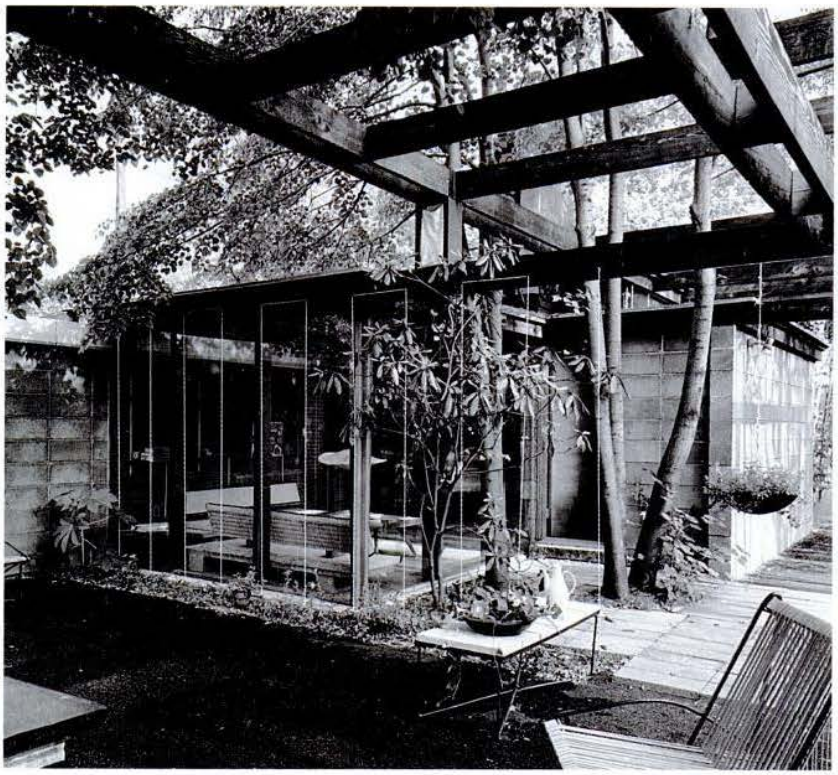

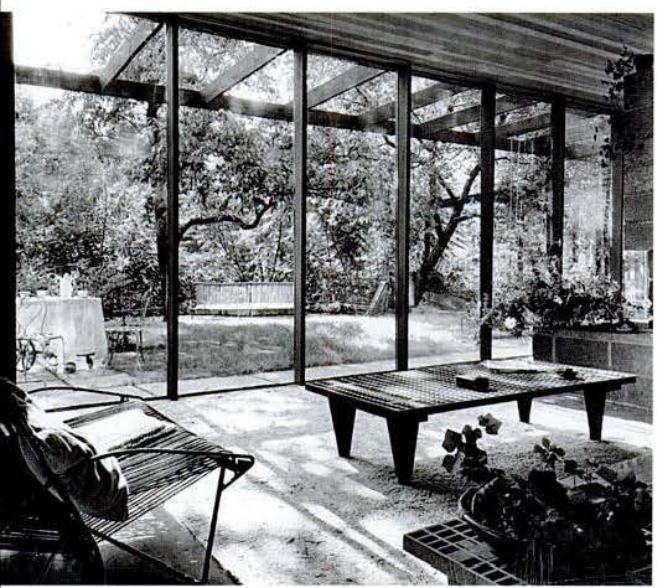

Rose conceived of the design for his house in 1943, when stationed in Okinawa. Endlessly resourceful, he built the first model (top left) from construction scraps he found in battalion headquarters.

Rose designed all the furniture for the house and garden, including the distinctive chairs with loomed seats and backs (which may have been inspired by his mother, a weaver).

Ten Things You Should Know About James Rose

1 / Although Rose never graduated from high school—he refused to take music and mechanical drafting—Cornell accepted him as an architecture student.

2 / Among Rose's four influential books is *Modern American Gardens—Designed by James Rose*, penned under the pseudonym Marc Snow (and reputedly submitted to his publisher as "a snow job").

3 / In 1960, Rose was invited to attend the World Design Conference in Japan. Frequent return trips sparked his interest in Zen Buddhism, and he meditated daily.

4 / Rose hated meddling in his designs. "A client planted some impatiens in front of this sculpted evergreen modulation of light and space," recalls Dean Cardasis, "and he got a disgusted look and said, 'It's like painting a moustache on the *Mona Lisa*!'"

5 / Rose defines "elegance" in his book *Gardens Make Me Laugh*: "It's a nightmare. Something like that Bavarian village that William Randolph Hearst brought back to California—but not quite alive because he forgot to bring the Bavarians and that's something like Salome forgetting to bring the body when she presented John the Baptist to the king."

6 / Having been homeless during the Depression, Rose abhorred waste, and regularly repurposed discarded objects: An old door became a poolside bench, a barbecue was reborn as a fountain, and lanterns were made from roofing material.

7 / Rose once got into a fistfight with James Thurber, and another time sicced his German shepherd, Mr. Hyde, on MoMA officials during discussions about a sculpture garden.

8 / He once said he lost more clients than he got, and that suited him just fine.

9 / Although inspired by Japanese culture, Rose was aghast at its wholesale transplanting to American soil. When a client asked for a Japanese garden, he famously replied, "Of course, madam, where in Japan do you live?"

10 / Informed of Rose's death, Dan Kiley reminisced to Cardasis: "Space, and spatial mystery, that's what got us turned on, me and Jim, and Garrett. Modern is not a zigzag, or a this or a that. Modern is our present understanding of space." ■

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The U.S. is a bit behind our European counterparts in this area, but a number of well-designed recycling bins are just hitting the market. We found a large selection of cans that can be used for trash, recycling, and organics, and will solve the needs of any household.

Pedal bin with bio bucket by Brabantia / $77–88 / available in white, matte stainless, or stainless / one 5.2-gallon bin / www.trashcancentral.com
This simple, streamlined bin is less conspicuous, without being less functional. The corrosion-resistant construction and well-sealed lid are not to be overlooked. The recycling bin is a smaller insert that hangs from the lip, and is better suited for stashing those pesky plastic grocery bags.

Twin bucket recycler by Leifheit / $69.95 / stainless steel / two 2.4-gallon bins / www.cooking.com
Though shorter and stouter than the others, the Leifheit has a mouth that's wider and easier to toss stuff into. The interior bins are made of antibacterial plastic and have handles, both of which are valuable attributes. This functional but diminutive bin is best suited for singles—not a great choice if you're hosting a Super Bowl party.

Butterfly Recycler by Simplehuman / $179 / brushed stainless steel / two 5-gallon bins / www.williams-sonoma.com
Intended for squeezing into narrower spaces, the Butterfly takes a different approach than the rest of the pack. The cleverly designed lid opens in halves when you press on the foot pedal, and can be locked in the open position. It also closes automatically with a satisfyingly slow return (provide your own *Star Trek* sound effects). ▸

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Steel trash can by Oxo / $109.99–119.99 / available in brushed stainless, polished stainless, white, black, red, or yellow / one 10-gallon bin / www.oxo.com
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Twin Touch bin by Brabantia / $195–200 / available in brilliant stainless/black or matte stainless/black / one 6-gallon, one 2.6-gallon bin / www.trashcancentral.com
The Twin Touch is quite rugged, belying its pristine appearance. The steel body and lid defy rusting and chipping, which is a practical concern if you spend the majority of your time around refuse. The larger capacity and unique pop-up lid are pleasant back-saving additions.

Trento Oko 19 + 11 by Hailo / $74–88 / available in white or stainless / one 5-gallon, one 2.8-gallon bin / www.hailo.us
The Oko is basic and no-frills. The sheet-steel construction, wide foot pedal, and large mouth are all useful features. Handles adorn the conveniently color-coded bins and look nice against the stark palette of the white exterior. One bin is meant for biodegradable waste, but you be the judge; cans and bottles will fit in there just as well.

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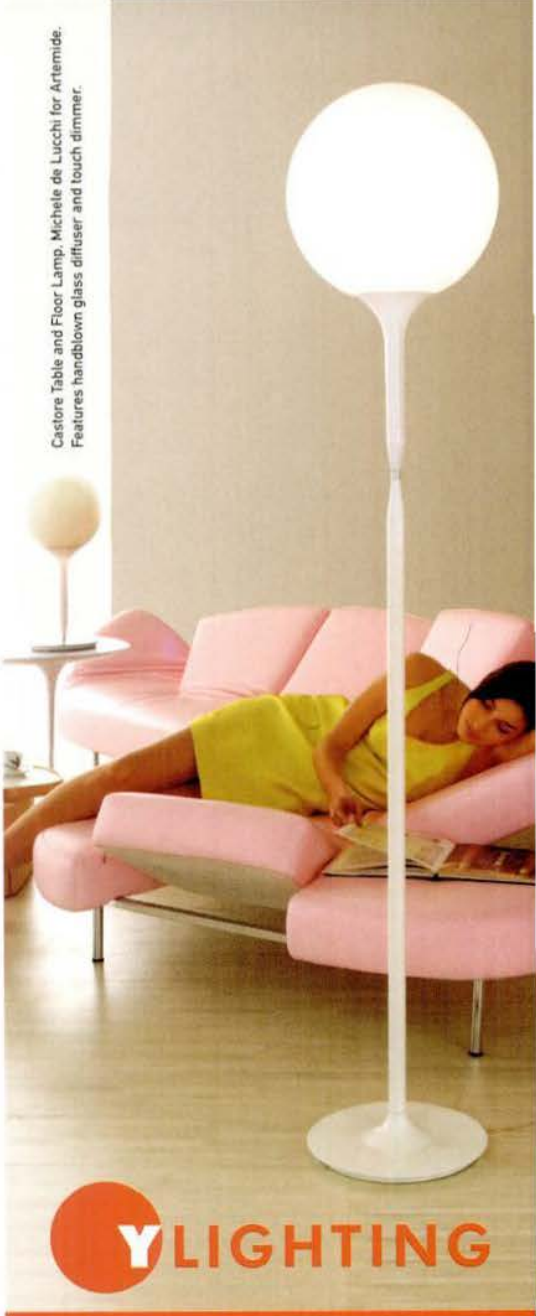

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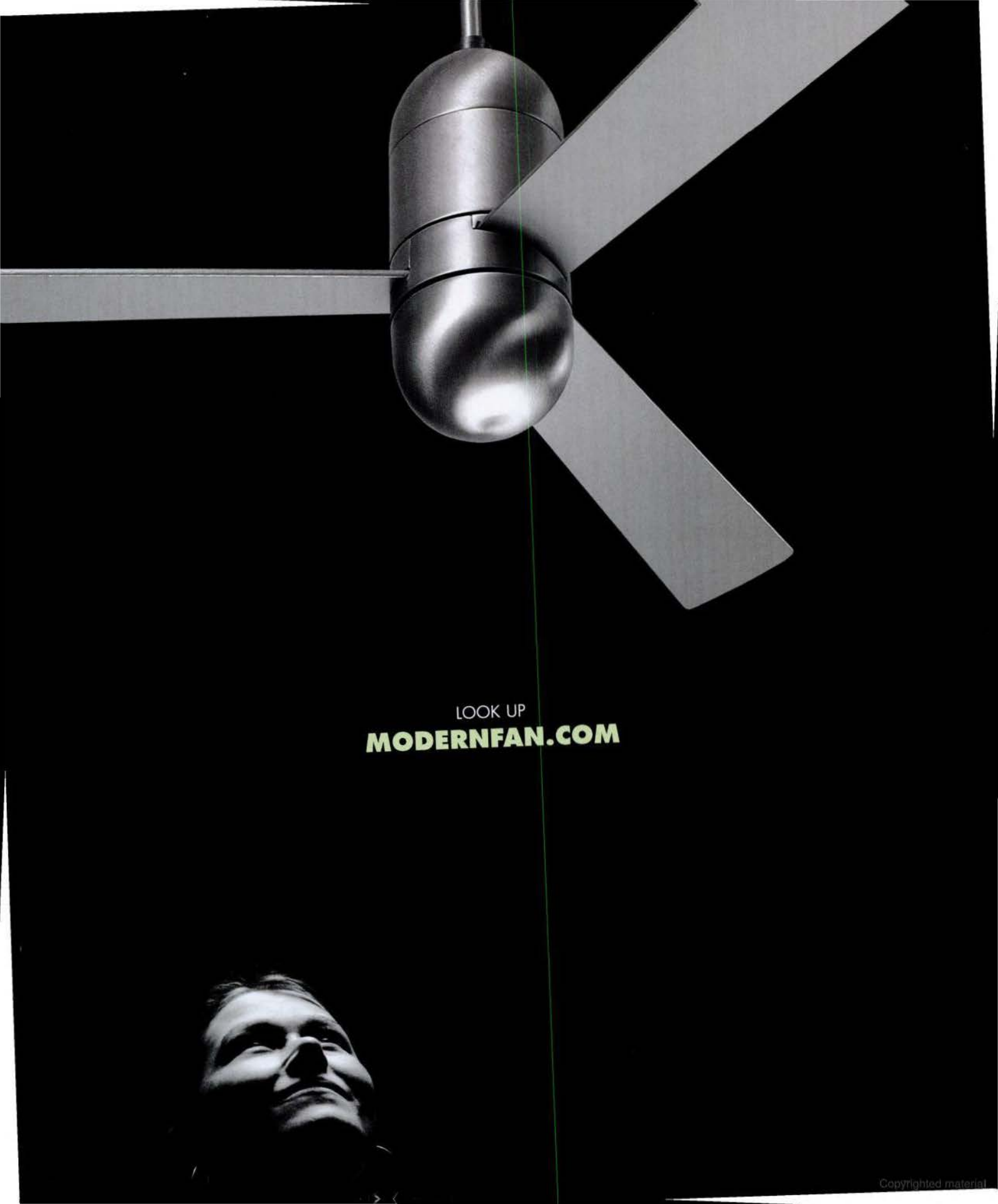

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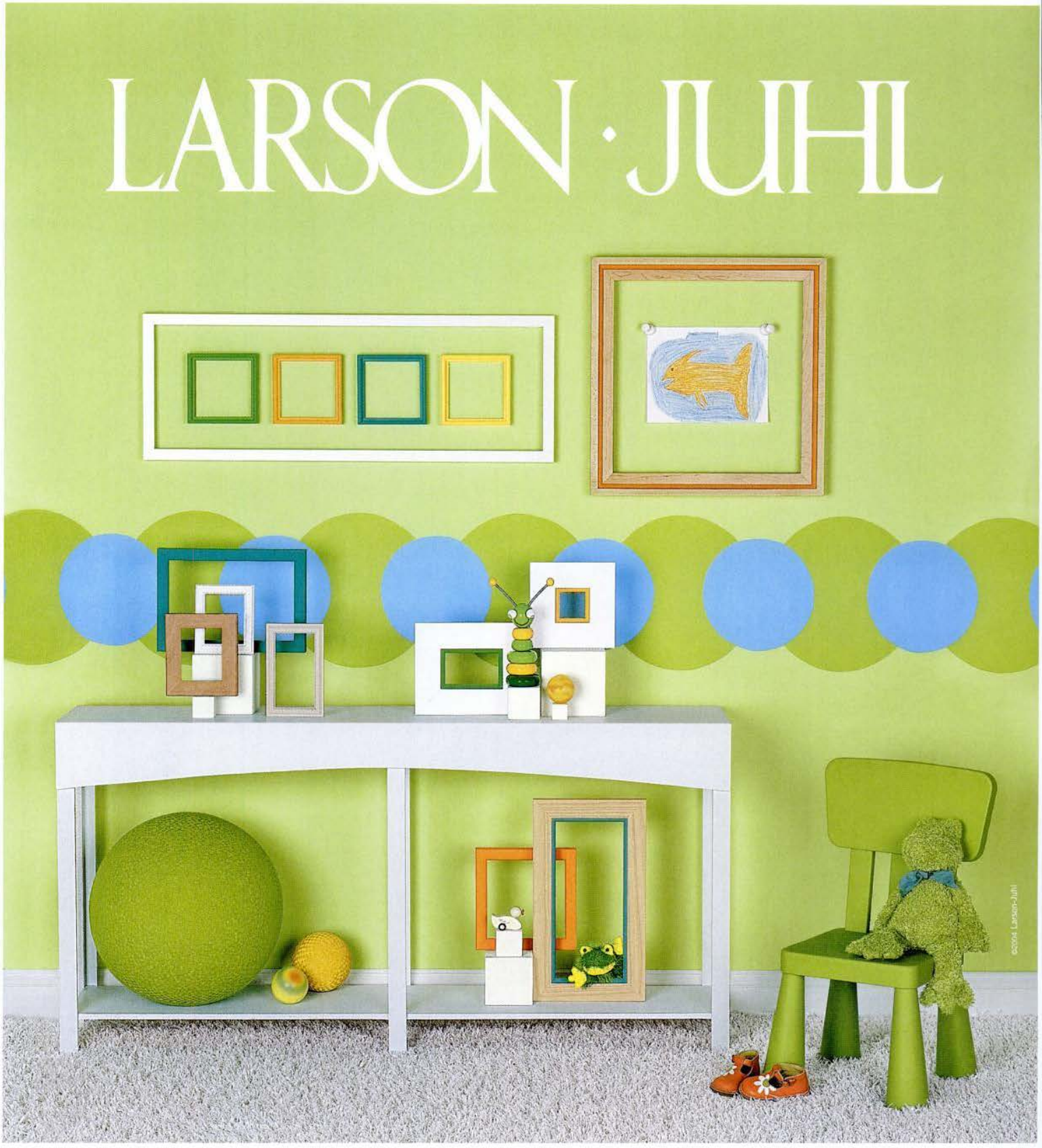

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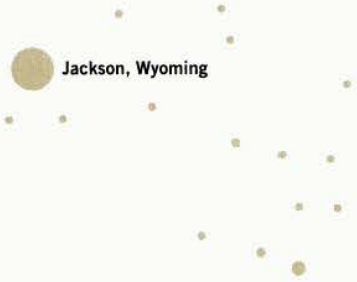

Creating Context

In 1941, *New Yorker* architecture critic Lewis Mumford published his seminal book *The South in Architecture*, pushing for architects to chart a new course for building in response to their time and place. His words, scalding and irreverent, remain as vital today as they were 65 years ago.

"Let us be clear about this, the forms that people used in other civilizations or in other periods of our own country's history were intimately part of the whole structure of their life. There is no method of mechanically reproducing these forms or bringing them back to life; it is a piece of rank materialism to attempt to duplicate some earlier form, because of its delight for the eye, without realizing how empty a form is without the life that once supported it. There is no such thing as a modern colonial house any more than there is such a thing as a modern Tudor house.

"If one seeks to reproduce such a building in our own day, every mark on it will betray the fact that it is a fake, and the harder the architect works to conceal that fact, the more patent the fact will be.... The great lesson of history—and this applies to all the arts—is that the past cannot be recaptured except in spirit. We cannot live another person's life; we cannot, except in the spirit of a costume ball.... Our task is not to imitate the past, but to understand it, so that we may face the opportunity of our own day and deal with them in an equally creative spirit." ■

Princeton, Missouri

Kansas City, Missouri

Project: 5 Delaware
Architect: El Dorado Inc.

St. Louis, Missouri

Jefferson City, Missouri

Kansas City is a sprawling 318 square miles. With the help of creative developers and architects, the three square miles that make up downtown are finally growing up.

Robert Altman's 1996 film *Kansas City* may have left a sour note at the box office, but on a recent visit to its namesake town, it kept popping up in conversation. Widely panned by critics and all but forgotten in the director's distinguished oeuvre, the film turns out to have had a positive effect on the city itself. Setting the movie in 1934, Altman returns to the Kansas City of his youth—a burgeoning Art Deco metropolis full of shady dealings and smoldering jazz. In restoring decrepit period locations, like the Beaux Arts Union Station, the Spanish-revival Granada Theater, and the 18th and Vine jazz district, the movie's production unwittingly spurred on a downtown revival that continues today.

Over the course of the 20th century, Kansas City suffered a fate common among American cities: Minced by imposing highways and strangled by suburban flight, its downtown was left for dead. On a sunny summer day in 2006, however, there are signs of life. Civic development comes in the form of a huge new IRS headquarters (its location selected amid low-rise structures largely for homeland-security reasons) and the soon-to-be-completed 18,500-seat Sprint Center. These large-scale projects are just the tip of the development iceberg. Kansas City's downtown population has increased—from 13,000 in 2000 to 16,700 in 2005—with the real estate market swiftly following suit. Once-dilapidated high-rises are being snapped up and turned into housing. A quick search of KClofts.com reveals 49 buildings with available units for sale. At the top of the list is 5 Delaware.

Unlike the competition, 5 Delaware is unabashedly contemporary. "When the downtown market started happening, we wanted to do something where we didn't have the restraints of working in a historic structure," says Chris Sally, a partner in Marketview Properties, the 13-unit building's developer. For four years, Sally served as downtown development director for the city's ▸

From across Delaware Street, the 5 Delaware lofts blend into their downtown surroundings. Just a block away, the stalls of the River Market, which gives the neighborhood its name, are visible in the background.

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5 Delaware's concrete frame (below) stands out as its defining design gesture—even from across Interstate 70. The new El Dorado Inc. offices (opposite) are located in a renovated industrial building in the Crossroads neighborhood. Not afraid of barbecue or throwing a good party, the Eldos (the five principals are Jamie Darnell, David Dowell, Dan Maginn, Josh Shelton, and Doug Stockman) have a good time at work and at play.

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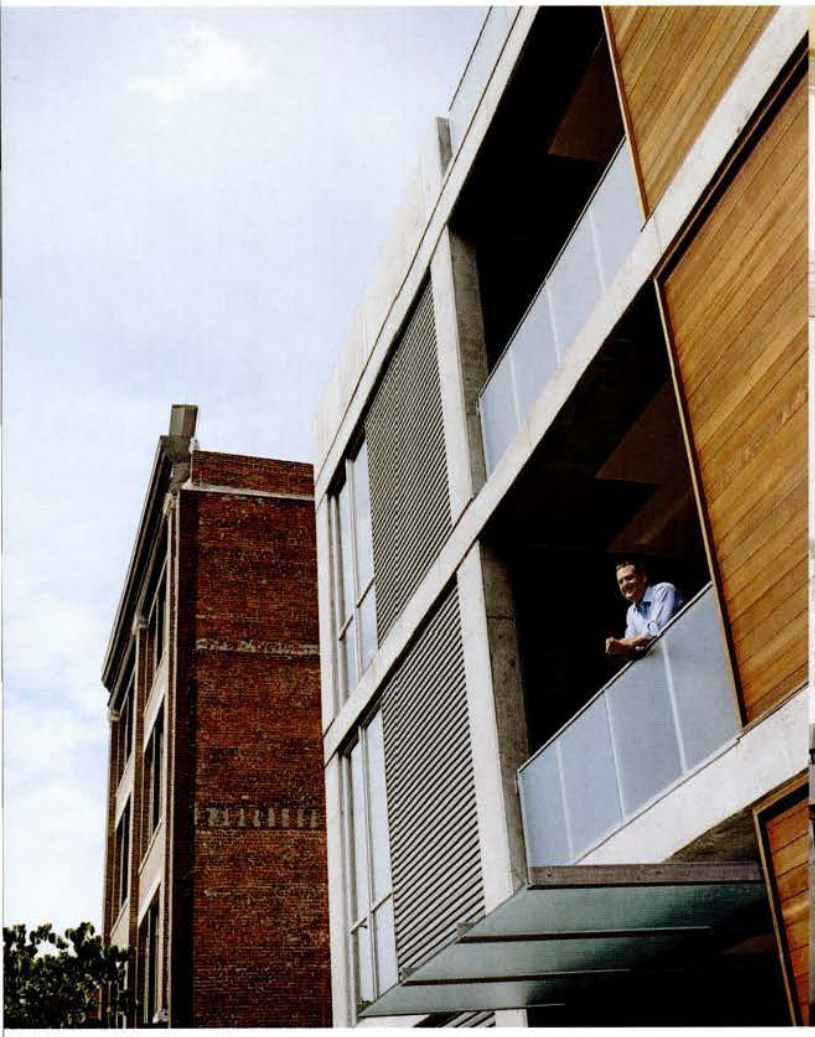
Developer Chris Sally (below) has been known to have conversations with passersby from his "cigar-smoking balcony." The interior of his unit (below right) was also designed by El Dorado. The table is a hand-me-down from Sally's parents, but the Marre Moerel light fixture is not. Sally's fiancée, Julie Gibson, had doubts about the trademark Eldo Green they decided to paint the unit's ceiling, but it doesn't carry into the bedroom (opposite). She adds that the addition of the couple's art collection "has really given [the color] purpose." p. 284

Economic Development Corporation and was schooled in local real estate dealings. With 5 Delaware, he had a vision for something unique. "We didn't want to do anything too controversial, but we also didn't want to do anything safe. We knew we would piss off about 30 percent of the people, but that there would also be 20 percent who'd say, This is what I've been waiting for."

Sally and his partner Jim Potter found the perfect architects in El Dorado Inc. "We knew there was this tension between the nostalgic architecture people and the new breed of young professional types who wanted a modern building," says Dan Maginn, one of El Dorado's founding partners. "We thought we could do something that really paid more homage to historic buildings by way of scale and typology than trying to replicate them."

For the past decade, El Dorado, or "the Eldos" as the firm's members are known to friends, has been at the heart of Kansas City's metamorphosis. From an office in the Crossroads Arts District, a once-overlooked neighborhood just south of downtown (at the cusp of gentrification but still largely dominated by Mexican eateries and graduates of Kansas City's Art Institute), El Dorado has overseen a prolific number of projects both large and small. It is as adept at turning out AIA Award–ready single-family homes and commercial spaces as idiosyncratic installation art (such as the BaDDaSS—an elaborate overscaled bacon-distributing device built for a neighborhood Mardi Gras parade). Part of El Dorado's unique approach comes from the fact that its members are not only architects but also fabricators—each endeavor informs the other. With 5 Delaware, the Eldo team was able to put all of their talents to work.

The building's design arose out of the constraints and opportunities offered by the sloping 9,800-square-foot site at the corner of Fifth and Delaware streets in the River Market—a pedestrian-friendly neighborhood cordoned off from the rest of the city by a mind-boggling array of roads (Interstates 70, 35, and 29; Highways 169,



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"We knew there was this tension between the nostalgic architecture people and the new breed of young professional types who wanted a modern building."

71, and 24) and the Missouri River. "It was a unique lot," says Doug Stockman, an El Dorado partner who was the building's lead designer on a team that included Maginn and Sean Slattery. "Even though it was infill, it wasn't cramped in between two buildings. We had a lot of exposure on all the right sides—east, west, and south. So we wanted to make the most of that."

The lot's downward slope also meant that a slight excavation could create underground parking, which lent itself to a stacked multifloor building as opposed to the cluster of townhouses the developers initially envisioned. Utilizing the maximum footprint allowed by code meant that the team was limited with what they could do on the building's north side, which abuts another property. But out of this constraint, the building's plan readily fell into place. The light- and window-deprived north became the obvious place to locate the building's corridors. "There was a little fear that that would create long narrow spaces in the middle," concedes Stockman, "but you need some of the units to be more affordable, so it seemed like a natural solution."

The building's first two floors feature units that range from 1,780 to 2,200 square feet. Marketview Properties maintains an office on the first floor—in keeping with the neighborhood's blend of commercial and residential space. The designers packed five two-story penthouses onto the third floor, all of which feature gracious rooftop decks with panoramic views of downtown.

One of the first buyers was longtime city architect Tom Bean and his wife, Dyanne. "I've always liked the character of this street," says Bean. "Dyanne had been wanting to move downtown for a while and said, 'Let's go take the urban homes tour.' They had a tent set up here [at 5 Delaware] with a sign, and I just had a good feeling for it." Bean's enthusiasm lent a great deal of credence to the ▸

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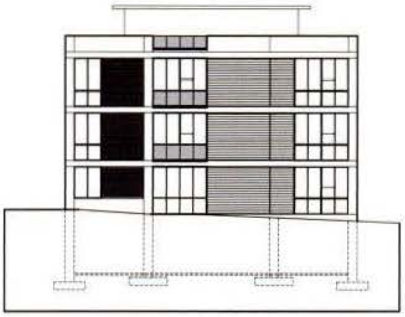
To minimize costs and give buyers maximum flexibility, the units were left as "warm shells," which the resident can finish in any number of ways. "So far, nobody's come in and done a country kitchen," notes El Dorado partner Doug Stockman. Sally challenges Gibson to a game of backgammon in their second-floor living area (opposite).

5 Delaware
East Elevation



Loft Floor Plan

A Office
B Guest Bathroom
C Deck
D Laundry
E Dining Room
F Kitchen
G Guest Bedroom
H Living Room
I Master Bathroom
J Master Bedroom

project for both the architects and the developers.

River Market's stalwart traditionalists weren't as easily convinced, and the building went through a series of design revisions. For El Dorado, working with an exposed concrete frame not only made sense structurally, but also paid homage to the surrounding turn-of-the-century masonry buildings. Because "brick just seemed odd," the team decided to wrap the exterior in Mangaris wood and painted steel. "We picked three basic nonsynthetic materials that made sense," says Stockman. In the meantime, just down the street architecture firm HOK's ultra-modern sports-division headquarters went up. "They got a lot of heat and took some pressure off us," notes Sally.

To keep costs down—5 Delaware was built for a mere $76 per square foot—and to offer potential buyers the most flexibility, the units were sold as "warm shells," which buyers had to finish out themselves with their own architect and contractors. "Given that," explains Stockman, "the intent of the building was to try and set the tone for what would be done inside. So far, nobody's come in and done a country kitchen."

Sally and his fiancée, Julie Gibson, moved into their El Dorado–designed second-story unit in the spring of 2006. "The lifestyle of living down here is unbelievable," Sally says. "There's no yard to clean up. Saturdays and Sundays are free to walk a block to the gym or to the market." But the best part: "It's 35 steps down to my office—you can't beat that."

All but three of the Delaware's units have sold, and Sally is working on two more River Market developments. Meanwhile, El Dorado has fully moved into its new Crossroads office and has a slew of projects on the boards. The trains that rumble through downtown Kansas City may no longer be full of livestock, but the city's stock is on the rise. ■

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Jackson, Wyoming

Casper, Wyoming

Cheyenne, Wyoming

Homes on the range are getting bigger and more expensive by the minute, but a group of progressive architects in Jackson set out to prove that all is not lost.

In the late 1800s, many disenchanted Wyoming homesteaders seized upon the opportunity to earn money by opening their homes to wealthy Easterners, turning their failing ranches into tourist attractions and saving themselves from a largely unfarmable landscape. More than 100 years later, Jackson, Wyoming, still hosts a number of wealthy tenderfeet, many of whom are trading in their tourist badges for part-time residency as profit-hungry developers clamor to accommodate them. For architects living, working, and building in Jackson, this often translates into a battle of design versus provincial style, cost of living versus living wage—not to mention the difficulty of pioneering change in a place where the pioneering spirit has, to some extent, become a parody of itself.

Spring has just arrived in Jackson, and judging by the number of sunburns, everyone is relieved. The energy in the office of Carney Architects stands in stark contrast to the rest of the town, where the soporific off-season is currently holding court; Snow King ski resort looks like a much-loved teddy bear as the last patches of snow pop out against the dull hills like distended cotton stuffing. At the firm a flurry of bright faces move about the floor, large tables crowd with bodies, plans, models, and material samples—clearly the off-season doesn't exist here.

I meet first with the founding partner of Carney Architects, John Carney, who takes me to 199 East Pearl Avenue, the firm's ambitious redevelopment loft project, whose intial phase was recently completed. The mixed-use building clad in cedar and corrugated copper sits near the town center. Carney tells me that the structure consists of 7,500 square feet of office space, two deed-restricted housing units, and six market-rate units. The first tenant is August Spier, a local restaurateur, who, by walking to and from work, uses the residence as Carney had intended it—like an urban dwelling. Carney is ▸

The simple agrarian structures that dot the empty fields and ranches throughout Jackson stand as inspiration to many architects who are fighting to maintain the simplicity and beauty of vernacular buildings.

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Located in a 280-lot subdivision composed of market-rate and deed-restricted lots, Andy Ankney's 1,400-square-foot house blends in well despite its large aluminum clad wood windows, cedar siding, Cor-Ten corrugated roofing, and oxidized steel siding panels.

proud of the fit. "We immediately thought of August for the place," he explains as we walk over to another of the building's occupied units. The place is larger than August's and is empty save for two bottles of champagne in the fridge, some beleaguered furniture, and a few errant books on the shelves. Who lives here? I wonder. But given Jackson's proliferation of seasonal housing, the better question is undoubtedly not who, but when?

As we make our way back to the office, we are circumvented by a man on a bike who goads Carney (in an affable, neighborly way) for blocking his view of the sunset. Up the road, construction is under way on the Jackson Hole Center for the Arts' performing arts wing, a collaborative project between Stephen Dynia Architects and Carney Architects. It is the tallest building in Jackson, and its concrete vertical axis perfectly obscures the dip in the mountains where the sun goes down—at least from this vantage point.

After serving as county planning commissioner for five years, Carney seems unfazed by this sort of dialogue—as much accustomed to exchanging pleasantries about the weather (which he does with seemingly everyone we pass) as he is volleying on market values and development strategies. The community's engagement in these discussions is imperative, as a certain degree of vigilance is required to stay afloat in a housing market where the median price of a home is $1.53 million and the projected median income of a two-person household is only $59,625. This competitive, high-stakes market breeds a certain degree of antagonism toward new or divergent development for fear of losing the town's Western mystique and bringing down neighboring property value. This traditional-at-all-costs approach has proven to be lucrative but, over time, has become parroted and campy, with elk antlers piled in archways and sticking off the side of, well, everything.

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Light pours into the Ankneys' living/dining area (left) with its clear pine plywood ceiling, clear-finish MDF paneling on the walls, and reclaimed-fir flooring. A raised oxidized-steel-grate walkway (below) provides a low-impact, richly textured alternative to the traditional stone walkway.

"We call them all hat, no cattle," explains Andy Ankeny, referring to the influx of wealthy faux cowboys who "keep it real" in their big-brimmed hats and H2s. Ankeny, an architect at Carney, grew up in Jackson and moved back after getting his degree in Bozeman, Montana. Most of Ankeny's family still lives in town, and he points out Jackson's last ranches as we drive around to look at various projects. Keying in a code to open the gate to a private community that houses one of his projects, he recalls, "Before this was gated up, we'd come here in the winter. I had a big old Dodge truck and we'd tie about six ropes to the back and attach them to the sleds and pull each other going about 30." Ankeny drives a Subaru and dresses in khaki shorts and a polo shirt. By my standards, he seems to be keeping it pretty real.

Like many of the architects at Carney, Ankeny and his wife, Shawn (also an architect), applied with the Teton County Housing Authority for a deed-restricted home (the equivalent of Section 8 housing in most areas, but obviously working from a different income scale) back in 2000. The program was designed to protect the county from "Aspenizing," an anthimeria coined for the Colorado town whose unchecked marginalization of its middle class is notorious. In Jackson, many workers make the drive over the pass from Idaho, due to the high cost of living in the town proper. "If everybody who worked here had to drive an hour to their home in another state, we'd have problems with the schools and the infrastructure," Ankeny relates.

While the Housing Authority does its best to protect the local area by only accepting applications from people with a proven commitment to the community, it doesn't oversee CC&Rs (covenance conditions and restrictions) or homeowners' associations, which are committees within a subdivision that rule on the aesthetic merits ▸

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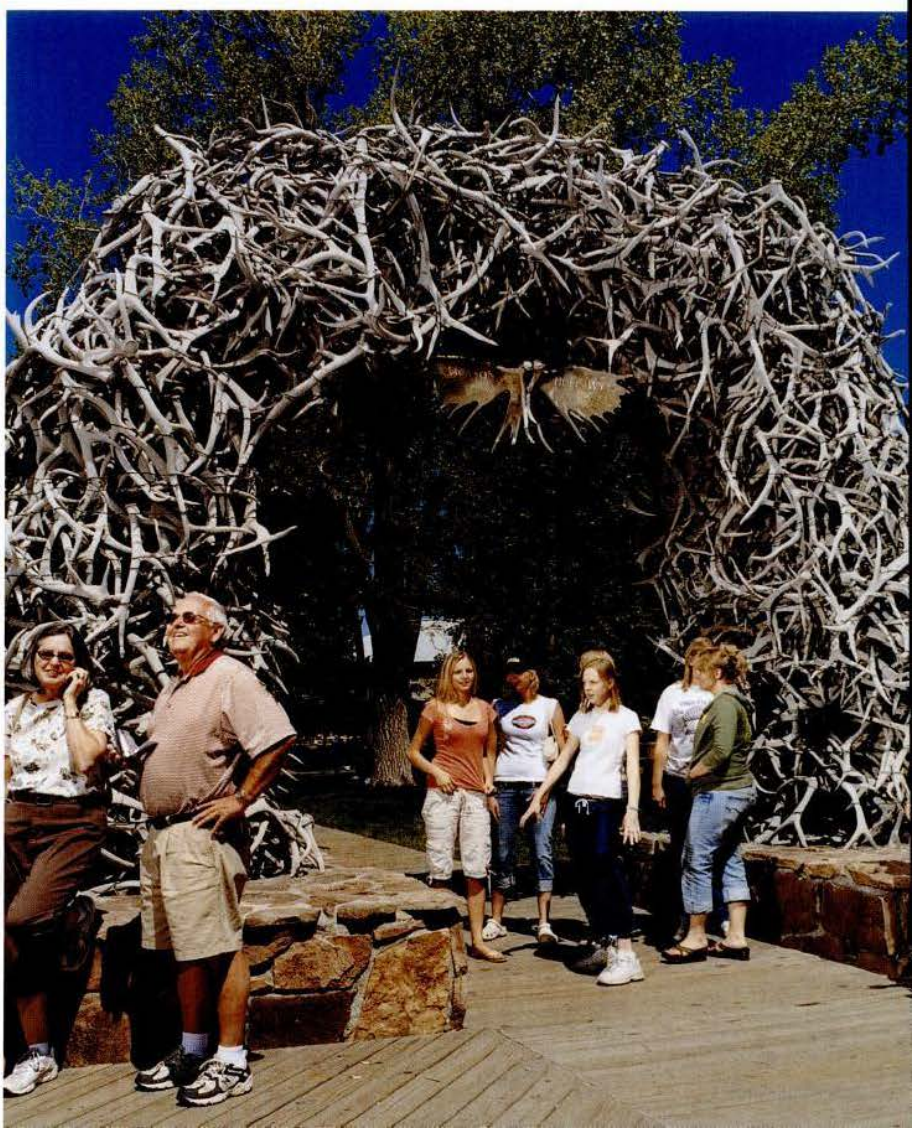
Eric Logan (right) sits in the guest house (opposite) adjacent to his family's home. The interiors are made up of oiled masonite wall paneling, raw MDF cabinetry, and an oiled concrete floor. Below, locals crowd around Jackson's iconic town common.

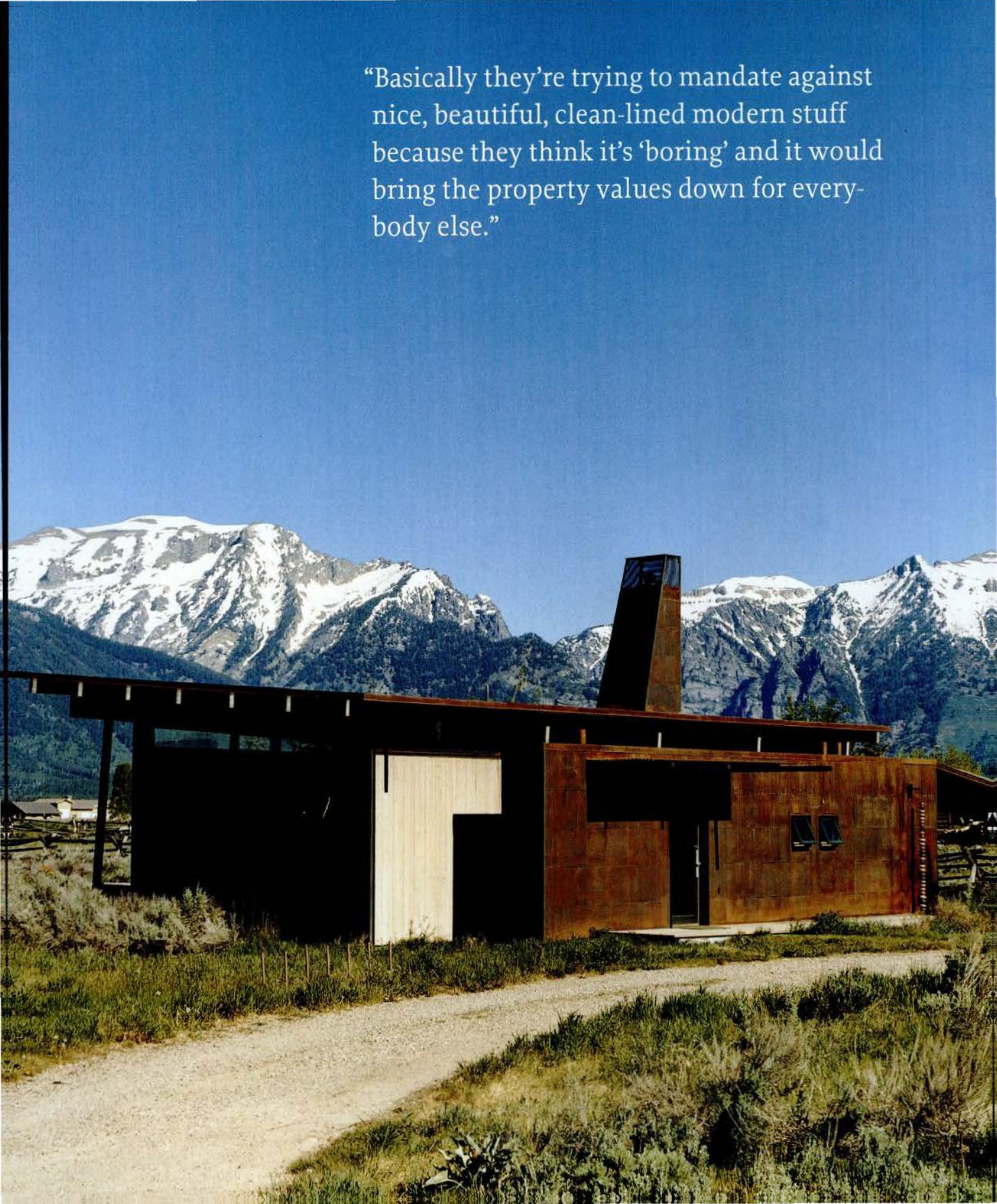
of every project built within its jurisdiction. And with 97 percent of the land in Teton County under natural protection (and off-limits to development), it's pretty much guaranteed that any land purchased will reside within a subdivision.

Ankeny describes the process of working through his CC&Rs—meetings at which he and his wife were the only architects present. If incorporated, the arbitrary edits to their plans would have driven up building costs, which, for a house whose value has been capped by the Housing Authority (and which will appreciate essentially at the rate of inflation), was detrimental both fiscally and aesthetically. "Basically they're trying to mandate against nice, beautiful, clean-lined modern stuff because they think it's 'boring' and it would bring the property values down for everybody else," says Ankeny. "But the funny thing is, they still get very bland projects. They think that they're regulating against that, but they're not; you can't regulate design."

Battles inevitably ensue when it comes to progressive building in Jackson, and in Eric Logan's experience, sometimes the fights are expensive. Logan, a partner at Carney, credits architects like Will Bruder (who has designed a handful of projects in Jackson) for paving the way for modern design in the area, all the while remaining completely modest about his own contribution to the change that's taking place, a lot of which has cost him more than just his time and energy. Logan's CC&R committee was so enraged by his home's simple box structure and corrugated steel that he received threatening phone messages on a regular basis. When he turned his back on an initial plan to use wood elements in his garage in favor of an all-metal structure, he was sued. "I had one guy call me and ask, 'Boy, why in the world would you want so many windows?'" relates Logan ►



"Basically they're trying to mandate against nice, beautiful, clean-lined modern stuff because they think it's 'boring' and it would bring the property values down for everybody else."



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The simple frame of the Stanwood residence (opposite) is clad with oxidized steel finished with linseed oil and outfitted with Sierra Pacific windows and doors. For the interior (this page), Logan returned to his minimalist palette of color and materials. The Stanwoods took particular zeal in furnishing the living area with a number of pieces from Limn in San Francisco, including a pair of B&B Italia chairs and a custom rug from Ligne Roset (below). p. 284

with a rueful smile. One look at his home, which rests at the basin of the Grand Teton National Park, and the answer is self-evident.

Perhaps it was a reward for all his trials that Logan landed the job for Katherine and Carson Stanwood's residence. The couple, who purchased the lot with a preexisting structure, wanted something smaller than the original house (which was moved and has a new home in town). In an area where 9,000-square-foot composite log homes are a norm and there's economic incentive to build big, this is no small feat. To further confound, Logan managed to keep the Stanwoods on budget with the 2,200-square-foot house pricing in at about $160 per square foot—about half the going rate in Jackson.

Being around Logan and Carson, I start to feel like I'm in a meeting for a mutual admiration club; both architect and resident seem to think the other is the best. The truth is, they're both pretty cool. The Stanwoods have carved out a niche for themselves (Katherine runs a high-end boutique in town and Carson does PR for a variety of sports-related merchandise), building responsibly and thoughtfully in a place that they, like so many others before, have discovered and made their own. Of course, none of this would be possible without people like Logan, whose gumption and architectural vision will, in the end, be the only things that keep Jackson from being swallowed up by its conception of itself. Both agree it was a copacetic union, as Carson tells it: "When I first talked to Eric, I think his wife was pregnant with their second child and he didn't want to take on the project; he said, 'Ah, I can't do this project, I'd like to, but, but ahh ...' Then my wife said, 'You know, we don't have a homeowners' association; you could put a pagoda up here if you wanted to.' Needless to say, Logan found the time." ■

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Monroe, Louisiana

As New Orleans struggles to get back on its feet, one architect learns from the past while building for the future.

Project: Lowerline House
Architect: Bild Design

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Lafayette, Louisiana

New Orleans, Louisiana

Can one house tell the story of an entire town?

Not likely. But when a major American city like New Orleans is the victim of a natural disaster on the scale of Hurricane Katrina, sometimes the best way to comprehend the enormity of the event is to break it down into small, digestible moments. Therefore, the compact, two-unit structure on Lowerline Street in New Orleans's scruffy Black Pearl neighborhood seems as appropriate a place as any to try to understand some of the architectural feats that will need to be performed in this fractured metropolis in the coming decade.

Architect Byron Mouton and his wife and marketing consultant, Julie Charvat, first glimpsed the vacant lot that now plays host to this steel-clad, periscope-like structure in 2004. After a little wrangling, they were able to secure the purchase and begin planning a building that addressed the city's immediate needs, namely affordable housing. "But that's the thing," Mouton explains, "the city's immediate needs have always revolved around the place's relationship to water. So while you might want to focus your attention on making a house affordable—or luxurious for that matter—you've always got to be thinking about water." "But for a long time," Charvat chimes in, "the city just forgot about that."

Having memories more suited to elephants, perhaps, than New Orleans's builders, the firm set out to construct a multiunit building along the banks of the mighty Mississippi—some of the highest and most solid ground in the city. This house, they hoped, would be built to withstand flooding and high winds while remaining affordable enough to be inhabited by college students.

Bild Design, in its eight years in existence, has always set out to develop multifamily projects responsive to their immediate habitat. To get a full grasp of what this means in New Orleans, a little urban history is a helpful guiding light—something Mouton, a New Orleans ▸

Lowerline Street in New Orleans's Black Pearl neighborhood is populated mostly by traditional shotgun shacks—save for the periscope-like structure gazing out toward the Mississippi. Bild Design introduced the new structure seamlessly with the help of builders A.J. Christiana Construction. Ms. Doris (opposite), whose tarp-clad house to the left lost much of its roof when Hurricane Katrina struck, checks out her new neighbor.

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native and also a professor at Tulane's architecture school, is only too happy to dish out. In 2004, a year before Katrina struck, the Louisiana State University architecture journal *Batture* published Mouton's succinct description of what the architects and builders in the city would be facing in the years to come:

"Woven into [the people of New Orleans's] lives is the knowledge of their proximity to and hence familiarity with the constant threat of water. Situated between the mouth of the vast Mississippi River and Lake Pontchartrain, the second largest salt-water lake in the United States, most of the area in and around New Orleans exists below sea level. Tales of flooding, constant soggy ground, and sinking foundations have made inhabitants acutely aware of their existence due to man's hand in building the protective levee systems along the shores of the river and lake."

Continuing on, Mouton writes, "Confident in the levees, residents also learned to dismiss any further threat to the ability of the city's numerous pumping stations that in the past have been able to accommodate additional flooding. With assumed resilience of these defensive systems, the shared attitude of residents became lethargic when dealing with the potential threat of water and downfall of the existing conditions. Furthermore, a level of tolerance for patina and imperfection was embraced as a familiar and loved attribute of an increasingly deteriorating surrounds, the wear being justified as an authentic condition of an 'aged' place and often rightly considered as an expression of the 'local charm.'"

Acutely aware of these troublesome conditions, Bild set out to stretch people's imagination of what housing in New Orleans could be, moving the aesthetics ▸

Julie Charvat of Bild Design exits the Lowerline House (opposite). Raised three feet off the ground—rather than slab on grade—the house is well equipped to battle any incoming flood waters. Both the upper two-bedroom unit (below left) and the ground-floor studio (below) are fully equipped with IKEA everything.

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of the Lowerline house far to the left of the norm while at the same time adhering to building principles that could only be considered completely traditional in their response to the landscape.

The Lowerline house's form is derived directly from its industrial neighborhood, so much so that Bild nicknamed the project the Domestic Shed. Bordered on the south by the Mississippi and on the north by some of the city's oldest districts, neighborhoods like Black Pearl, in the immediate vicinity of the river, have been largely neglected due to the amounts of industry that have gathered on its banks for centuries.

But to Bild, this neglect was a window of opportunity. In culling together the surrounding aesthetic of industry—the corrugated Galvalume siding on wood framing, the chain-link fences, the hurricane strapping, the height—the firm designed a home that wouldn't be out of place alongside the cargo ships filled to capacity with shipping containers that traverse the watery terrain some 100 yards away. Though the structure's appearance might seem foreign compared to the quaint cottages surrounding the home, its raised foundation, "shotgun camel-back" form ("One of the oldest building forms in New Orleans," Mouton states), and its embrace of the time-honored tradition of the stoop place it firmly amid the city's most historic structures.

This fact, not surprisingly, seemed to be lost on almost everyone except the neighbors. As Mouton explains, "At first [the neighbors] would say, 'What's that?' They'd ask me in this really great accent, 'Hey man, what's that you making?' And I'd say, 'It's a house,' and they'd say, 'Naw, nobody's gonna live in that." They were really shocked. And then, as it came up they started to take ownership of it to the point that we had no problems with theft, ▸

Jeremy Claud ascends to his bed (opposite and below left), which is perched above the staircase leading from the second-story living area to the third-story sleeping area. Julie Charvat (below, with Byron Mouton) says, "Byron wanted us to move here ourselves for the views, but I said, 'We just moved a few years ago so forget it.'"

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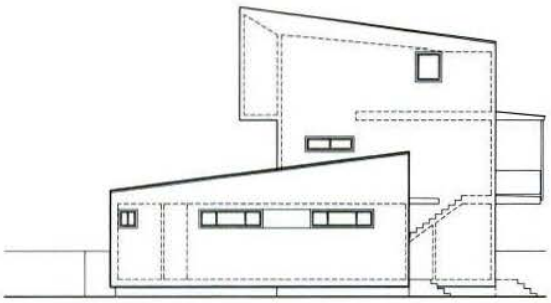
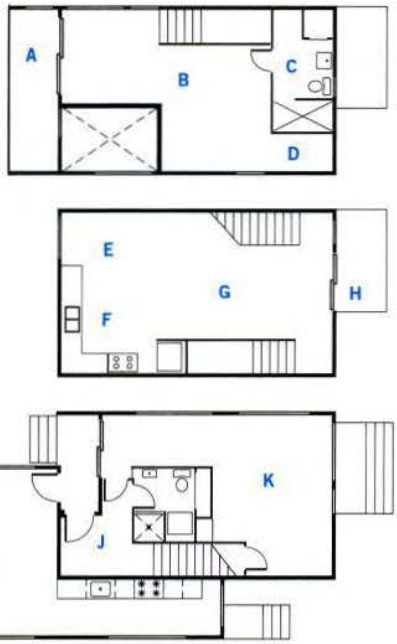
Though the Lowerline House may appear radically different, it deliberately mimics the neighboring shotgun camelbacks. The form is derived from a time when city taxes were based on the height of a building at the street front. To get more space but not get taxed, houses were built up on the rear of the property, problem solved. Ms. Doris offers Jeremy Claud some neighborly advice (opposite).

Copyright Information

Resident Tony Vanky gets the second-story deck prepared for guests. The grittiness of the Black Pearl neighborhood is plainly visible.

Lowerline House
East Elevation





Third-Floor Plan
A Porch
B Master Loft
C Master Bathroom
D Closet

Second-Floor Plan
E Dining Room
F Kitchen
G Living Room
H Balcony

First-Floor Plan
I Studio Apartment
J Entry
K Bedroom

which is often an issue in this town. They would call me to let me know if there was something shady going on, if there was some activity that I should be worried about. I think that if I had come in here and proposed doing a faux historic cottage, the response would not have been the same. But as it was, I think the design was really accepted as an original from the neighborhood."

Working furiously through the spring and summer of 2005, Bild completed the 1,850-square-foot house (with a 750-square-foot studio apartment on the ground floor and an 1,100-square-foot multilevel two-bedroom unit on top) in late August, for about $90 a square foot. "We finished everything up the week before Katrina hit," Mouton says. As the storm approached that last week in August, Mouton and Charvat were, like many New Orleans residents, determined to ride the storm out. "I came home that Friday after working seven days straight," Charvat says, "and Byron told me the news was saying a storm was coming in and I just said, 'Too bad, I want my weekend.'"

As Saturday, August 27, came around, however, it became clear that there would be no relaxing weekend spent enjoying the warmth of late summer. The couple anxiously watched the evening news that night. Mouton was up by six on Sunday morning and by that time, it was obvious they'd need to evacuate. "All our neighbors were out," Charvat says. "I asked them what they were doing and they all said, 'We're getting out of here,' so I figured we'd better do the same." "We packed up our house," Mouton says, "and then we went over to Lowerline, where I basically just locked everything up and left it as is."

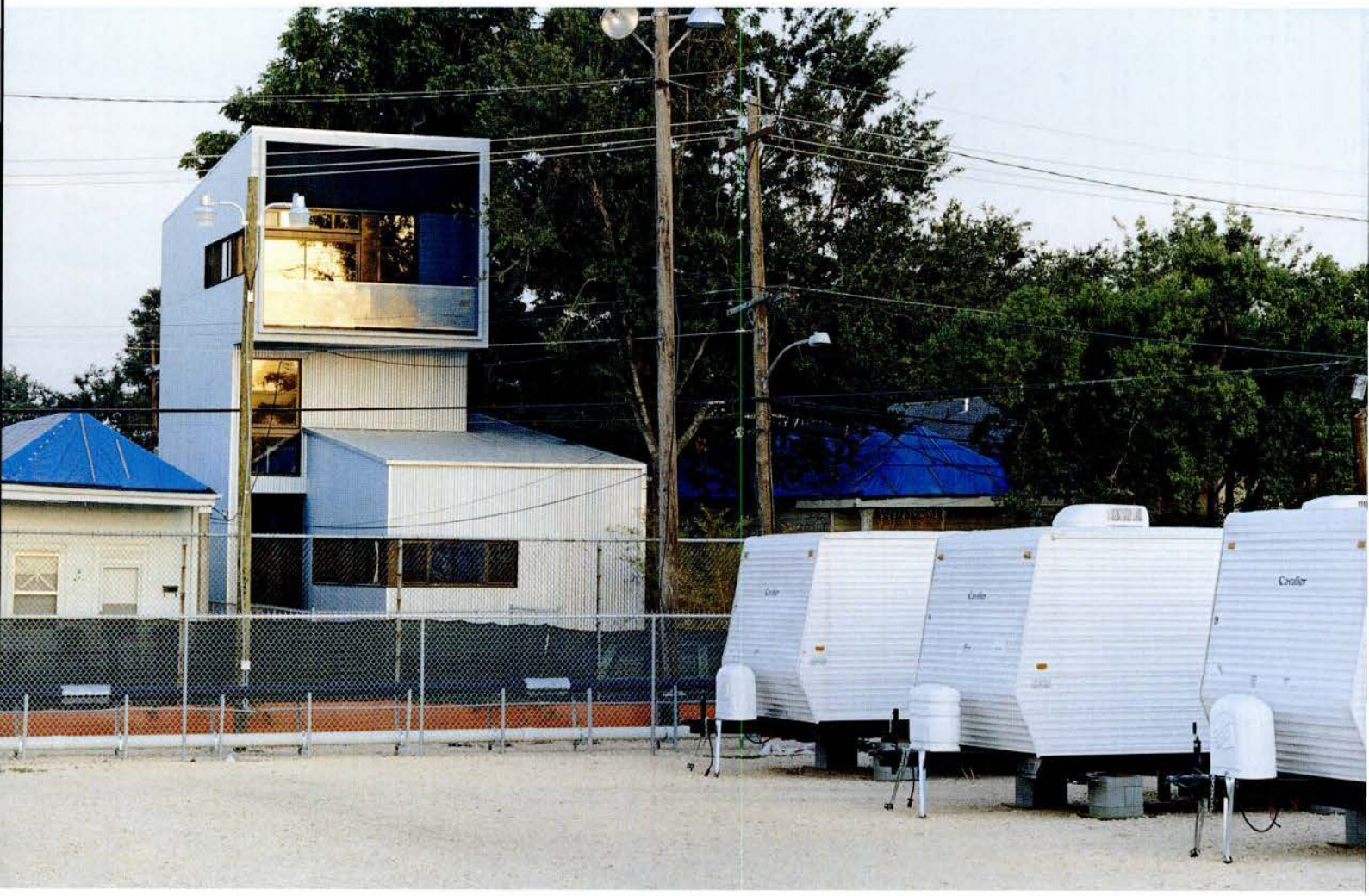
With Katrina descending on the city, the couple tried to navigate through the clogged roadways as best they could. "It took us six hours to get to Baton Rouge [about

80 miles away]," Mouton says. Charvat continues, "While we were heading out, we were stalled in traffic and I just had thoughts of getting stuck in the car, which was really frightening. And a lot of people did get stuck in their cars. Sitting there, I looked back at the clouds building over the city and it was just pitch black."

While Mouton and Charvat waited the storm out in Baton Rouge, the Lowerline house and all their other projects in the city stood strong. "It was pretty amazing," Mouton says. "Our house [featured in the October/November 2004 issue of Dwell] was fine except the fence had blown over. Lowerline was totally fine except that Ms. Doris, our neighbor there, her roof had flown off and it had dented the side of the building."

While Lowerline survived the first real test dealt by Mother Nature, one has to wonder how it has withstood its first few months with tenants. For that, a simple query to the occupants provides the answers : "It's been amazing," says fifth-year Tulane University architecture student Kimberly Patrie, a proud resident of the second-floor unit. "The house has been great. My friends are really jealous." One of her housemates, Jeremy Claud, a student at nearby Loyola University, says, "Not only that, but the neighbors and the neighborhood have been terrific. The neighbors have really taken us under their wing."

As for this one project being representative of a city in recovery, that would be tough to say. The city is still, over nine months later, in shambles with relatively little rebuilding going on. But while this glimmer of hope and progress on Lowerline Street might not reflect the disheveled state of the great city of New Orleans, it does offer a crystalline road map to what the city could still become—a human habitat completely attuned to its surroundings. ■



When Bild began work on the Lowerline House, a beautiful green baseball field sat across the street. Within two weeks after Katrina struck, the baseball field was transformed into a FEMA trailer neighborhood housing many displaced Tulane workers. "I think it is really prophetic," Mouton says. "As soon as we put up this steel-clad thing, all these other steel-clad things migrated here too."

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Photos by Doug Adesko

Rodgersville, Alabama

Family Meal

Recruiting friends and acquaintances, and soliciting strangers from door to door, Doug Adesko captures both the bond and isolation inherent in the family meal. The photographs in this essay are the result of his three-year documentation of a diverse group of families from across the country.

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Lexington, Kentucky

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"At first people are self-conscious and aware of me being there—and the meal often only takes 15 minutes—but in that space of time they often forget that I'm around and then just let go a little bit."

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Cooterville, Missouri

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"I like the idea of promoting the notion that families are diverse, but I'm not trying to make this political. There's a value in it, but it's not something I go out of the way to find—and I don't have to; there's a lot of diversity in the world."

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Avon, Colorado

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Walnut, Mississippi

"The big challenge of documentary work is to capture something without making it stylized to the point where it feels unreal, where you destroy the feeling of really being in these people's presence."

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Saturn is committed to the pleasures of life on the move, and is a proud supporter of author Robert Sullivan's adventure exploring the past, present, and future of transportation. Beth Lowery explains GM's focus on manufacturing sustainable transportation with minimal impact on the environment and the important role that Saturn plays.

"There are many technologies that have been, and continue to be, developed to lessen transportation's impact on the planet. While there is no one single environmental solution, an immediate approach is GM's Live Green Go Yellow campaign that promotes E85 ethanol and GM's 2 million E85 FlexFuel vehicles on the road today. E85 ethanol is a renewable energy source produced from corn that burns cleaner than fossil fuels. In addition to alternative fuels and hybrids, we believe the ultimate answer to removing the automobile from the environmental debate is vehicles powered by hydrogen fuel cells.

Saturn is at the forefront of environmentally-focused technologies, and the launch of the new VUE Green Line hybrid SUV is a big step forward. It's the first affordable electric/gas hybrid SUV on the market—a more sustainable vehicle is now more accessible than ever before. At Saturn, we want to be part of the solution in reducing dependence on petroleum and a cleaner environment. We want to make vehicles that people are proud to own and drive."

~Beth Lowery, General Motors Vice President of Environment and Energy

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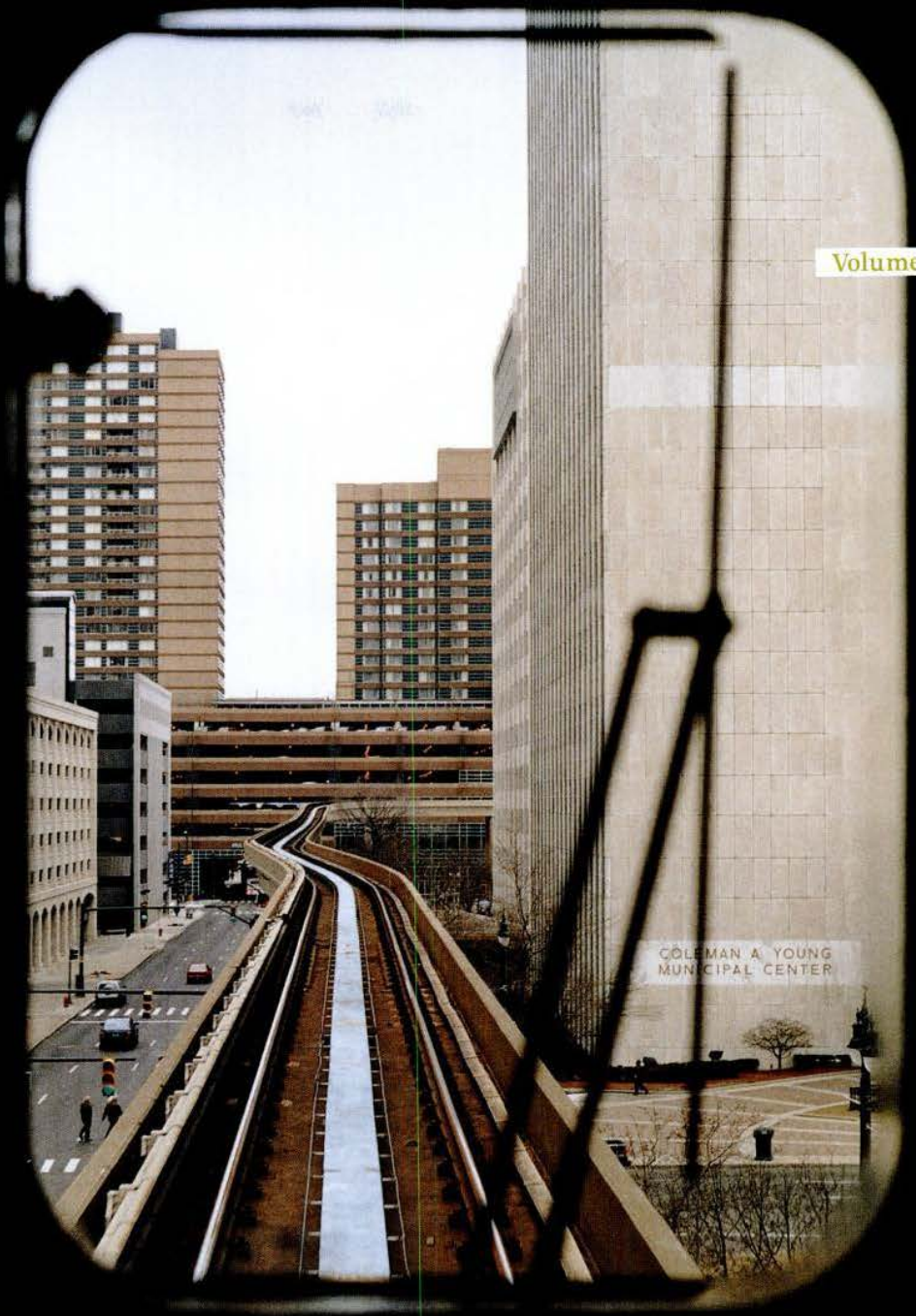
Volume Two



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Perpetual Motion

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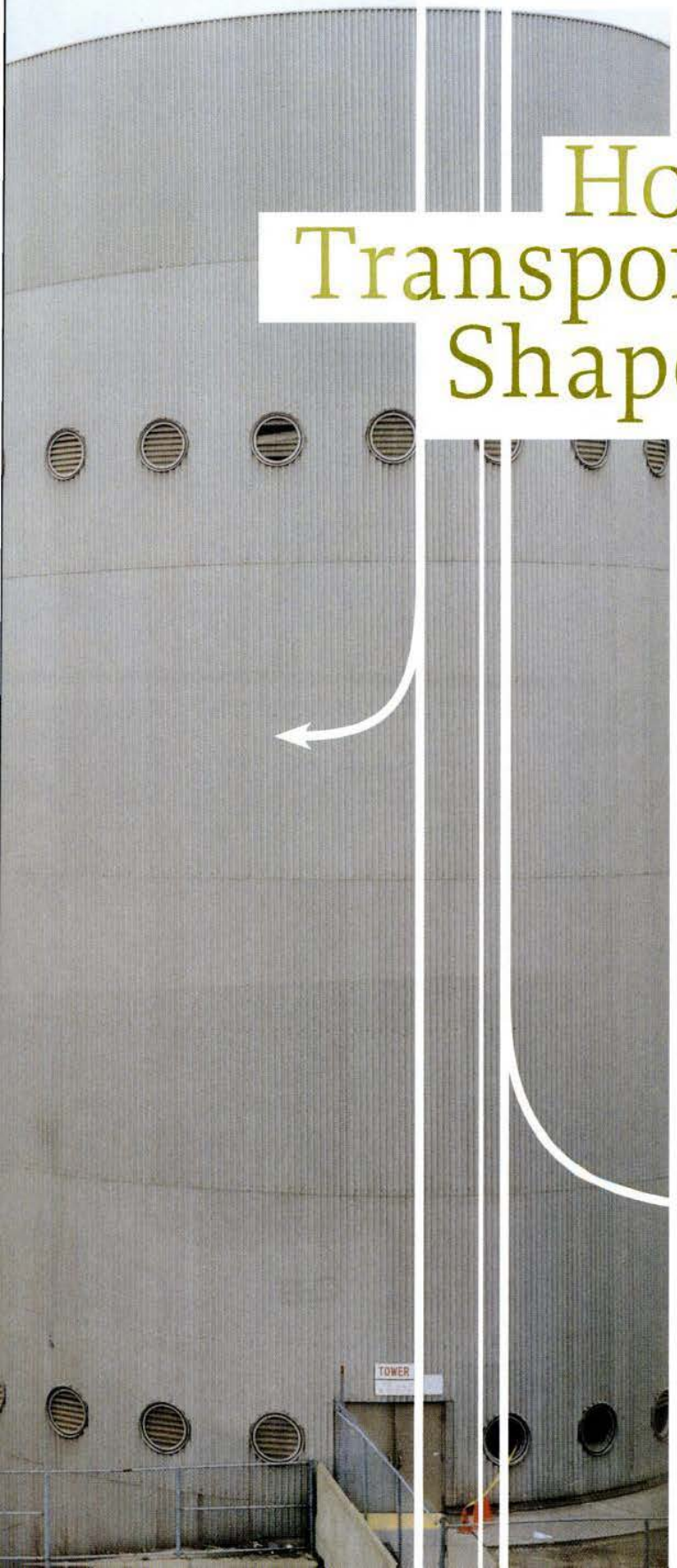

Cobo Center as viewed from the People Mover, Detroit, Michigan

How Transportation Shapes America

Stepping out just before dawn in Detroit as the first traffic is assembling on the Edsel Ford Freeway, I am a lonely pedestrian in the city of cars, walking down Woodward Avenue to the center of downtown.

It's lonely even as the sun begins to rise, partly because of the time of day, partly because everyone knows what Detroit has been through: riots, fires, razings, attempt after attempt to reassemble the city, all mostly failed. You can feel its great automotive success and its civic failures just looking down the struggling avenue, seeing the still-standing core a mile or two down, like Oz. Woodward Avenue—wide and car-loving, an eight-lane tribute to the convenience of the automobile, the device that made Detroit famous around the world, that once made it strong—is lined with monuments to the greatness of the city, along with boarded-up memories of the past, empty lots, scars. Transportation invented the place and, as the power of the car industry faded, as interstates shut off cities and drained their populations, transportation, or the lack thereof, critically injured them too.

A stranger in Detroit might be a little nervous, setting out on foot in the almost dark, given all that's written and said about the city, given what you see on TV and hear in Eminem songs, but a stranger might also happen to meet a resident who is all revved up, happy to give directions to the downtown square, just ahead a few miles down Woodward. "Oh, you can ice skate there and in the summer they have movies—oh, it's really neat down there," she says. "Wait till you see!"

It's almost a surprise to see new construction in Detroit, but there is the Max M. Fisher Music Center by Diamond + Schmitt Architects, a sparkling modern outpost of the Detroit Symphony, and, just adjacent, there are modern apartment houses going up, glass-and-brick construction that could be in Boulder or San Francisco or Atlanta but are in Detroit. Still, even Detroit residents seem to wonder why I am on foot and not waiting for ▸

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Campus Martius, Detroit, Michigan

a bus or a ride of some kind, surrounded as I am by four freeways within about a mile of each other: the Lodge, the Ford, the Chrysler, the Fisher. I pass the site of the old Motown office, at 2457 Woodward, and then crossing the Fisher—a.k.a. I-75—I enter downtown at last, and it's as if I am entering a heart that has undergone bypass surgery. Some of the most beautiful old skyscrapers in America stand next to nothing at all.

Comerica Park, the relatively new Tigers baseball field, and Ford Field, home of the Detroit Lions, seem bigger than most ballparks, given their paucity of neighbors. And the car ads seem bigger too: huge building-sized advertisements that fill up office tower–free space, without irony. General Motors, a few blocks away, moved back downtown a few years ago, and it seems both courageous and courteous, I am thinking, when finally I come to Campus Martius, the new centerpiece of downtown Detroit, the center square.

Campus Martius, built in 2004, is everything Detroit wants to be, a magnet, a crossroads, a reenvisioned and reinvigorated public place. It is a brand-new civic space or maybe even an American piazza, though with an Au Bon Pain and a lot of poured concrete, it's more plaza than piazza. Previously, two dozen or so lanes of traffic flowed freely through here. Now, there is a two-acre oval park that is the centerpiece of the redeveloping downtown—a place for movies in the summer, skating in the winter, for gatherings, for schmoozing—the schmooze being the act upon which all great public spaces are built. Around it stands a tentative collection

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Eero Saarinen–designed cafeteria, GM Technical Center, Warren, Michigan

of old and new and planned but not yet built office buildings. Among them is the new 15-story tower housing Compuware, the software developer that moved to downtown Detroit from the suburbs, as well as those businesses that recognize a good thing when someone else sees it: a Borders, a Hard Rock Cafe, a Ben & Jerry's.

And right behind it is the People Mover, a two-car monorail-like futuristic train, decorated, when I saw it, with advertising for automobiles, like a joke out of *The Simpsons*. And the People Mover carries pretty much nobody around the Detroit downtown—more a tourist attraction than anything to do with actual mass transit. Since it opened in 1987, the People Mover has pretty much been the sum total of Detroit's public-transit system and a metaphor for a city ruined by urban blight, a train that circles over a city no one wants to be in, a train for which people would never, ever trade their car.

The Inn on Ferry Street is a complex of six buildings in the Queen Anne and Romanesque-revival style that sit silently in a neighborhood that was once filled with such homes, and it is here, a few hours later, that I meet Keith Schneider, deputy director and founder of the Michigan Land Use Institute. The Land Use Institute is a nonprofit, grassroots organization that is fighting sprawl in Michigan and attempting to shape development by supporting and quasi-evangelizing everything from watershed protection to farmers' markets to wind power. It wants to do for Detroit and the state, and even to interested states and counties around the country, what the Marshall Plan did for Europe after World War II—rebuild it. ▸

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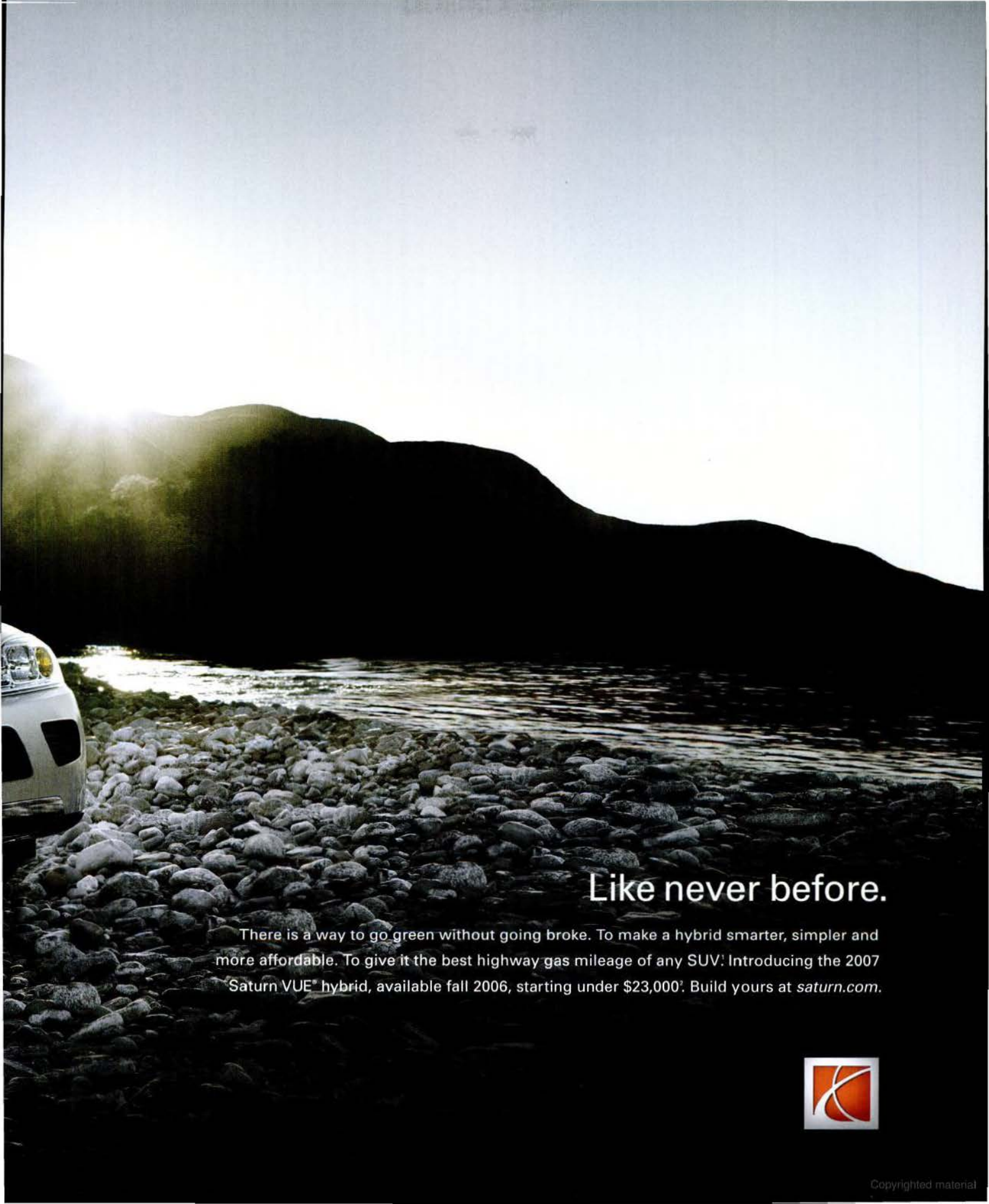

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Biker, Detroit, Michigan

Schneider has just driven a long way, some four hours, for a morning meeting at the Detroit chamber of commerce at One Woodward Avenue.

Though the prosperous and even not-so-prosperous counties of Michigan might not want to hear it, Detroit is, in some ways, the state writ large. It's a former industrial powerhouse that saw a lot of industrial jobs leave in the '70s and continuing off and on until now. It's a state where, as far as regional planning went, highway development was emphasized over nearly everything else—which in turn spawned the growth of tract housing, of development gone amok, of cheaply built though not always affordable development far away from the downtowns that, because of the loss of jobs and the rise of suburbs and exurbs, were emptying out anyway. For that matter, Michigan is like the United States, criss-crossed with roads, its productivity, its environmental health and the health of its populace, its quality of life threatened by past land-use policies based not on sustainable limits but on the idea that a bigger and faster road will make the world a better place.

"You wouldn't believe how different this place was three years ago," Schneider says, referring to downtown Detroit. He's running a little late for the meeting, as he pulls onto Woodward. We pass Campus Martius—the place is filled with people, strolling, coffee-ing, talking. We park, walk two blocks to One Woodward, a 28-story tower built in 1963 by Minoru Yamasaki, the architect of New York's World Trade Center. The design of One Woodward is so similar to the Trade Center, in fact, that

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Detroit, Michigan

in the big lobby, with the tall glass windows, you can feel the Trade Center lobby in your bones. At a table on the 19th floor, there is a group of Detroiters enjoying coffee and bagels—a couple of Schneider's colleagues from the institute, a legislative specialist, a professor, a fundraiser, a member of the regional chamber of commerce, a developer with an eye for affordable housing; the former mayor of Grand Rapids is on the phone. They're talking statewide strategy for smart growth—the creation of the Michigan Transportation Alliance.

It's a discussion concerning development between Ann Arbor and Detroit. It's a discussion about the proposed widening of I-75 and I-94, proposals they oppose. It's a discussion about defining the in-city projects they approve of. "Environmental integrity, social equity, economic development—you have to have a balance," explains Colin Hubbell, a local developer. The ideas for the city, for the state, for the region all have to do not with getting rid of the car but modulating it, reimagining it as one type of transportation among several.

"The big changes in quality of life come when transportation is ahead of land use," Schneider adds.

After the meeting, Schneider drives me around to see the lofts converted by Hubbell—a note of modernism in the middle of not much. We drive back through an old, beat-up neighborhood close to downtown where Hubbell has built some less chic but affordable housing: two-family condos rising like spring wildflowers through the snow.

Schneider's vision for a new Midwest, which he ►

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Gainder

Schneider's vision for a new Midwest is based not on fast food and freeways, but on emphasizing itself as a regionally distinct place.

continues to elaborate on as we whip through the city, is based not on fast food and freeways, but on emphasizing itself as a regionally distinct place—a place where, for example, as the institute states, "sales of local farm products [are] a normal part of everyday business ... a means to invigorate the local economy, preserve farmland, and highlight the region's bounty." Because, as Schneider's fond of saying, "If roads and highways were the keys to success, Detroit would be Paris."

In Schneider's mind, the fate of Michigan has a lot to do with the fate of Detroit. But can changing Detroit into a more transportationally diverse metropolis really make a difference in a state so car focused? For an answer, Schneider and his colleagues point me to Grand Rapids, which is where I am headed that evening. On my way out of the Motor City, though, I get lost on an interstate, miss an exit, find the beautifully reengineered Ford River Rouge plant, discover I am too late for a tour, drive out past more auto plants—some of them still alive, some of them dying—then through more suburbs. I stop late at night for coffee, first at Burger King, then McDonald's, the only places I can find.

"I'll go days without ever driving," Andy Guy, the Michigan Land Use Institute's point man in Grand Rapids, says excitedly as he sets out with me to walk through downtown. "Grand Rapids is really kind of the model in Michigan right now, of urban revitalization, of transit-oriented planning," he notes. In 2001, Grand Rapids—once home to trappers and missionaries and the Ottawa Indians and which distinguished itself from the rest of Michigan, and the rest of the United States, as home to the finest furniture makers in the world—was called one of the most sprawling major metropolitan areas in the country by *USA Today*. Now, Guy points out the walkability, the new pedestrian signs, and, additionally, what he describes proudly as "the affordable beer."

Though Michigan has the fourth highest jobless rate ▸

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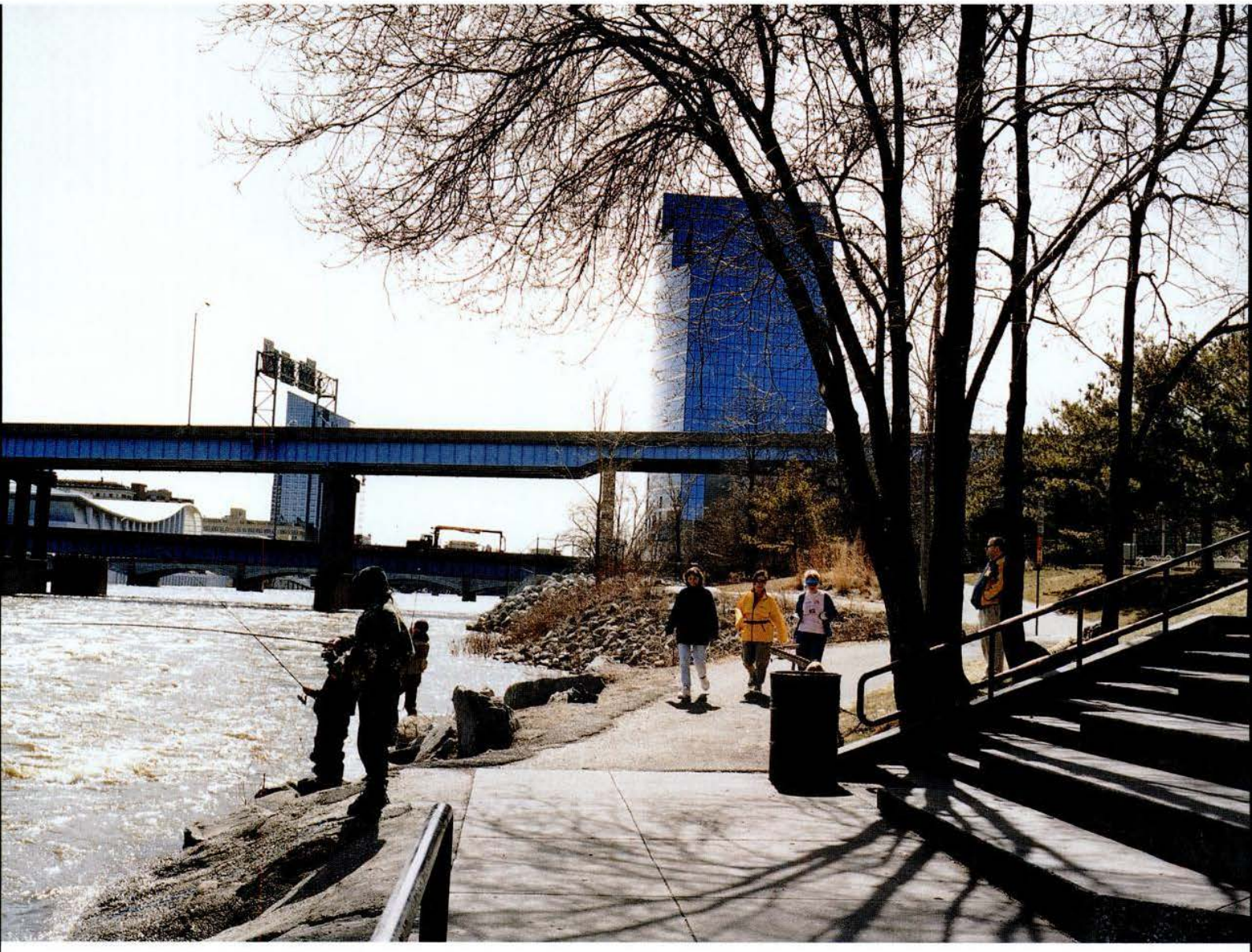

Fishing on the Grand River, Grand Rapids, Michigan

in the U.S., the Michigan Land Use Institute sees opportunity in the economic downturn: Attract new jobs near population centers, and build a public transit–oriented infrastructure on which a recovery and a 21st-century economy can grow.

We walk through downtown, with Monroe Avenue full of people, a warehouse district full of remodeled factories and lofts, and up on the hill a huge new medical complex under construction signaling Grand Rapids' intent to attract health-industry jobs. "The way that we develop is essential to how we compete in the global marketplace," Guy says. "If we just look like anyplace else, who's going to want to live here?"

We cross a street, and walk toward the Grand River, which is filled with fishermen today. In a matter of minutes we arrive at the brand-new transit center, Rapid Central Station, with its well-lit, white-tented top. Guy points out the bus routes, noting the system's strengths and weaknesses—it does not go to the Frederik Meijer Gardens and Sculpture Park, for instance, an incredible greenspace. "There are still some pretty significant cultural amenities that we can't get to on a bus," he says. He points to the map. "This is a pretty serious highway, and you'd have to be crazy to cross it."

We walk some more, crossing the river where once there were rapids, passing the fishermen, seeing the new YMCA, a circle of glass; Guy waves to a friend. We walk to the library, where he is greeted by a librarian and chats a while. We walk to the local bookstore. We look at the construction site for the new medical complex. "I can sit

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Overlooking Grand Traverse Bay, Traverse City, Michigan

here with a can of beer and just watch," he says, clearly relishing the fact that in Grand Rapids you can feel the future—or at the very least *a* future. It may be wishful thinking, but as you walk through town, following the new signs, seeing the new buses, noticing the people on the street who are out of their cars—and even those still in them—you feel an actual change in the air, a place becoming a place again.

On to Chicago, the capital of the Midwest! Drive and drive and drive through Michigan and across Indiana, on a toll road that the governor has just leased to a private company since the state, he says, can't manage the costs. I drive through Gary, Indiana, its neoclassical public buildings on one side, its old black factories on the other. I drive through the swamps and marshes and deserted industrial outposts that are the borderland between Chicago and the rest of the world. I drive for a while on the old four-lane road from Gary to Chicago, now desolate, except for a few strip malls, and think: Slow isn't so bad.

I wake up early the next morning, in Chicago's Lakeview neighborhood, to run the three blocks to the lakeside trails, watch the dawn burn the fog, buy a coffee and the papers, and, two L stops to the north, have breakfast with Mandy Burrell, a writer who works with the Metropolitan Planning Council, who lives in this L-based neighborhood.

"There's a ton of interest in living downtown now," she says, walking in off Addison and Southport, a two-minute walk from the L line. And so much of the interest is ▸

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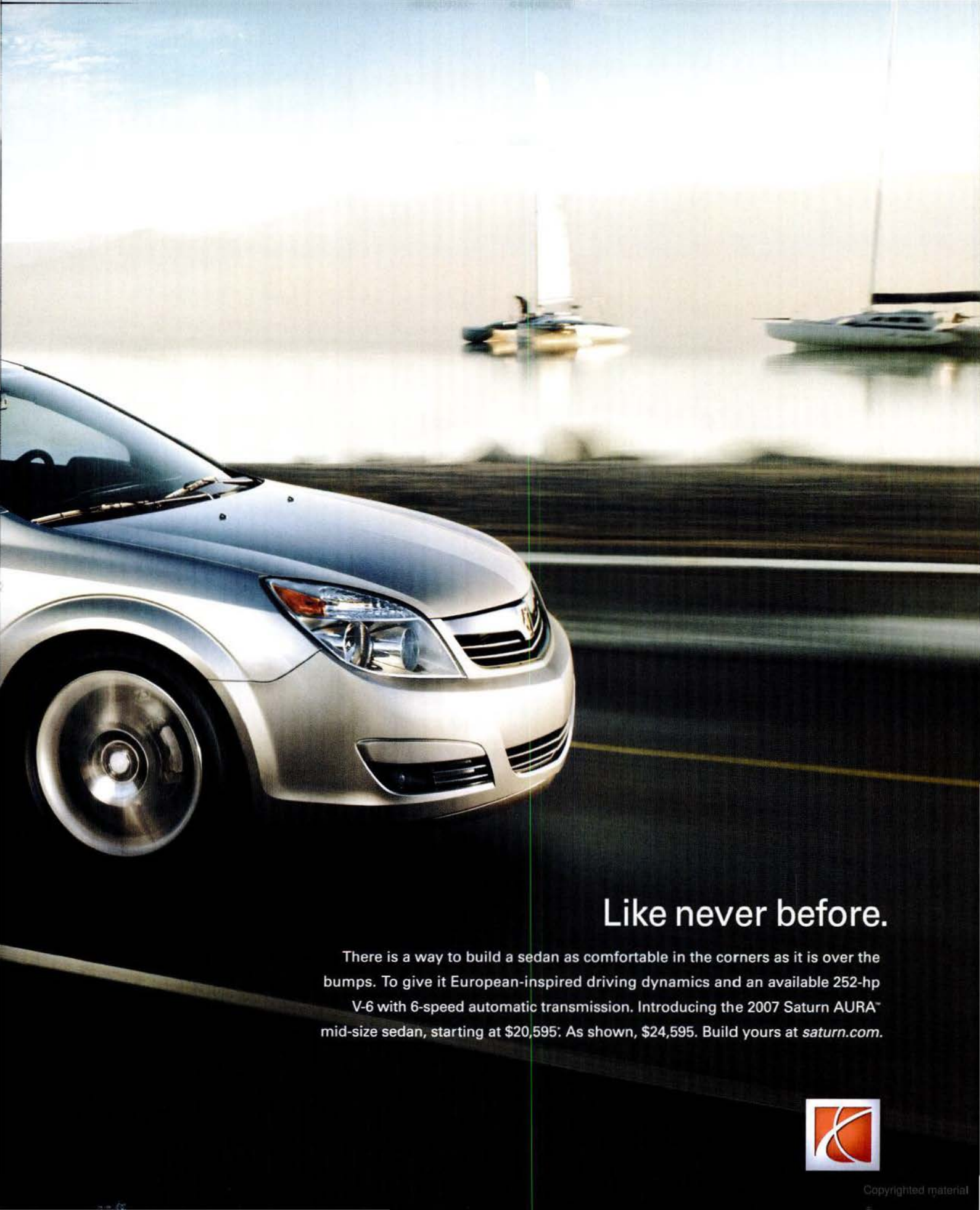

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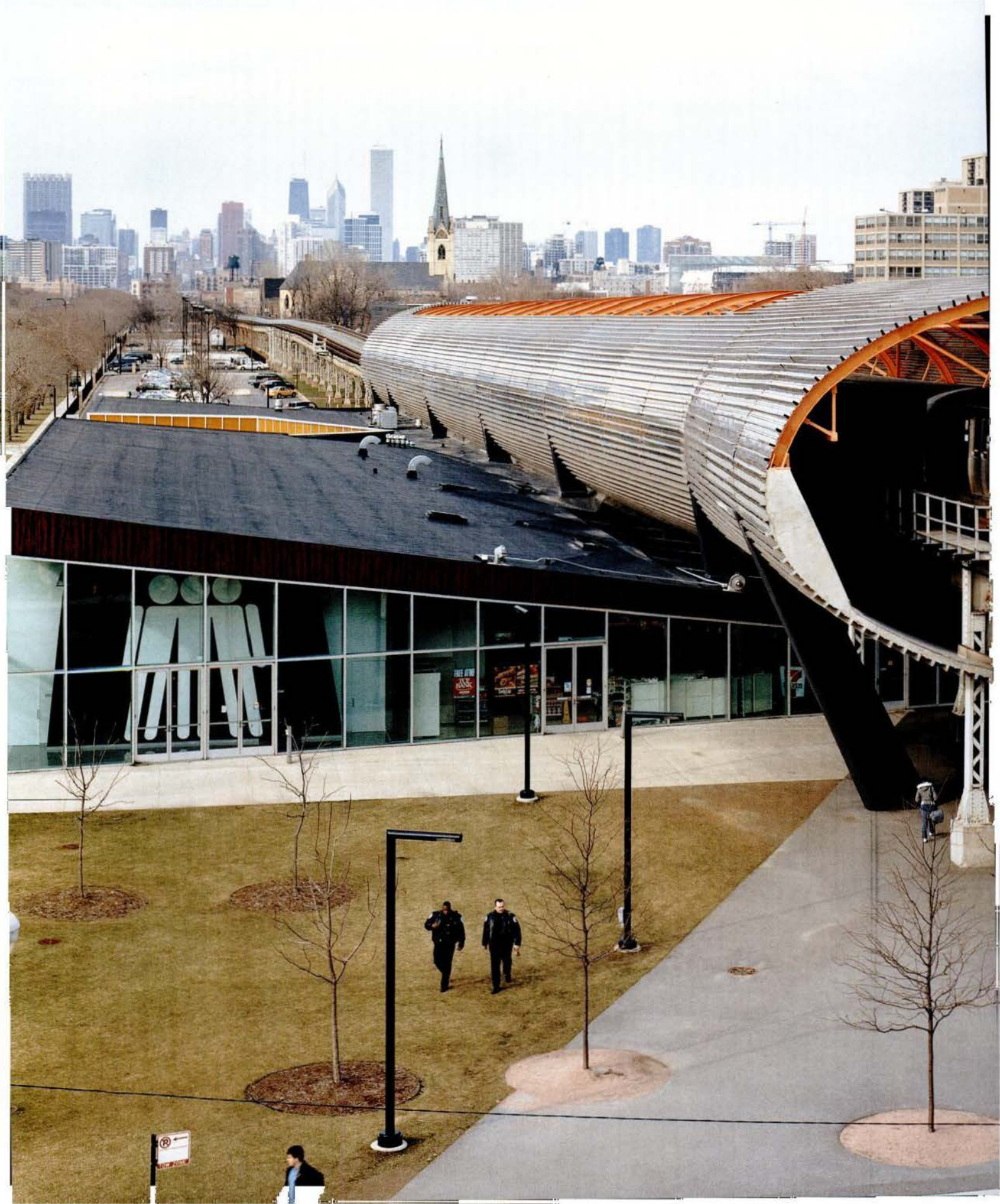

IIT student center designed by Rem Koolhaas, Chicago, Illinois

based on what Chicago has—and has had since 1888 and the rest of the country now appears to want, or something like it, anyway: the L, short for elevated, as in elevated trains. Today, the lines are being rebuilt by a city government constantly pushed by a population that is craving alternative forms of transit, and the neighborhoods in the city near the stations are desirable because of those stations. "We're starting to see a lot of hot neighborhoods," Burrell says.

After coffee, we walk down Southport, joined by one of Burrell's colleagues, Heather Gleason, who studied housing for the council and is currently a zoning expert employed by the city.

Chicago is a city that gets it, as far as urban planners see it. Or is getting it, anyway. For instance, what Carl Sandburg once called the "stormy, husky, brawling, City of the Big Shoulders" is now seeming very green, right down to the top of City Hall, which is covered with grass, since the mayor planted a field of green on top in 2001, the year Boeing moved its headquarters from Seattle, after Boeing officials described Chicago as a place they wanted to live. Walking through a neighborhood like Lakeview, you can see why an executive would like it and why a nonexecutive would too. There are new shops and nice old bars, fancy coffee places and an old restaurant, boutiques and a bar/Laundromat, surrounded by new and old buildings and still-affordable apartments; the housing is two and three stories high, the residential street an antidote to the tall skyscrapers downtown. The new townhouses are adjacent to the 100-year-old ones and neither appears to mind.

"They've managed to blend new buildings in," Campbell says. "You don't notice it right away. You don't say, 'This is new brick.' Now, there's three new buildings in a row." These structures built right next to the L are not the most beautiful buildings ▸

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South State Street and West Roosevelt, Chicago, Illinois

Walking through a neighborhood like Lakeview, you can see why an executive would like it and why a nonexecutive would too.

Lakeview neighborhood, Chicago, Illinois

ever constructed, but then again, you don't have to be Frank Lloyd Wright to build in such a vibrant place. The city throws you into the mix; your work is improved by association, a point made as well by the desolate new buildings in Detroit.

The L isn't just something that gets you through the city; it is a way you experience it. "I've sort of charted my understanding of the city by how many lines I've been on," Burrell says.

We climb to the line, the train, the rickety wooden platform that feels like Chicago, where we part ways. To stand on the platform, to look over the neighbohood, to see the Midwest sky: The L seems like such a relic, a thing from an old painting or documentary photograph from the '20s. It's easy to imagine that people would want to sit in an air-conditioned car rather than rumble along in work-destined groups. But people flock together semi-willingly that morning and every morning for that matter: Chicagoans seem to love their old L. But Chicagoans also love their new L, like the Rem Koolhaas–transformed L stop at the Illinois Institute of Technology, now a futuristic passageway, a glass-and-steel halo over the everyday experience, over the trip to work and school and, nearby, the White Sox. That's the thing about transportation: The new can seem very old very quickly, but if you go back to it, if you tweak it and spruce it up just a little, if you concentrate on what really worked and go back to it once more, then the old isn't old anymore. It's new all over again. ■

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Beulah, Michigan

I drive on the old four-lane road from Gary to Chicago and think: Slow isn't so bad.

To be continued...

Making his way westward, Robert Sullivan next heads to Austin, Texas, to ponder air travel and the growth of regional airports. From there, it's on to Albuquerque, New Mexico, to explore the bicycle's role in regional transit, and finally backtracking to Indianapolis, Indiana, where hopes for an all-out urban revival are being pinned on an inspired pedestrian path through the city's core.

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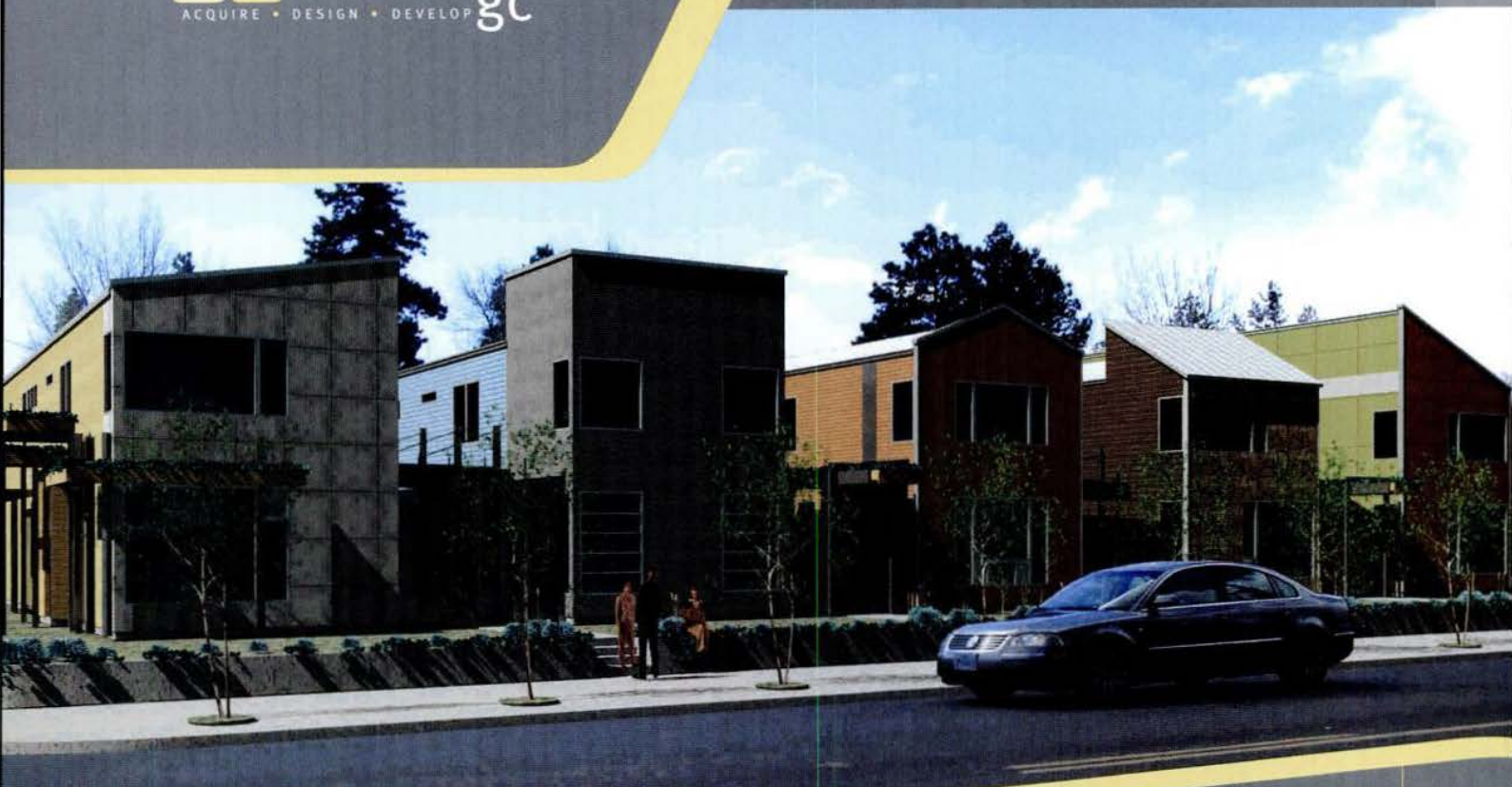

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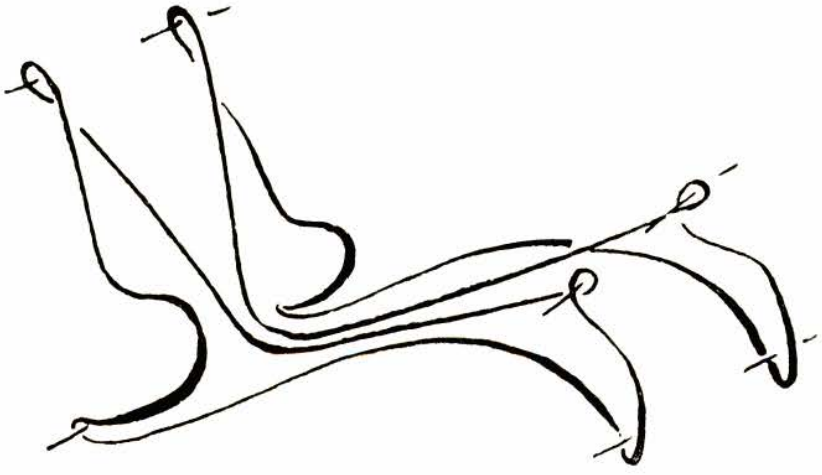
Story by Iain Aitch

A dashing Italian with a surfeit of talent, the enigmatic Carlo Mollino lived a life that is a screenplay waiting to be written.



Sex, Lies, and Furniture

You could easily be forgiven for never having heard of Italian designer Carlo Mollino. Yes, almost everything that he designed, be it a chair or an office building, was a masterpiece, but Mollino never became a household name because his work was never likely to make it into your home.

Designing exclusively for himself and a select group of clients, Mollino worked in a wide range of disciplines and excelled in them all, often abandoning one area of design when he was convinced he had achieved perfection. This gained Mollino a reputation as an eccentric, which was exacerbated by the discovery upon his death of his collection of 2,000 erotic Polaroids of women he had photographed in his home, but he was a man driven by his unusual psyche. He had the skills of an engineer, the eye of an artist, and a mind akin to a computer. Mollino could draw with both hands at the same time, as well as hold an image in three dimensions in his head, turning the design in his mind as he drew.

Mollino's name briefly came to the forefront in June 2005, when a table he had designed sold at auction in New York for the incomprehensible sum of $3.8 million. Two recent books about Mollino's work—*The Furniture of Carlo Mollino* and *Carlo Mollino: Architecture as Autobiography*—should ensure that he remains known for more than a few spectacular sales and outrageous headlines.

Dwell recently spoke with Fulvio Ferrari, the coauthor of *The Furniture of Carlo Mollino* and the founder of Museo Casa Mollino, a private museum that preserves the enigmatic Turin apartment that Mollino designed for himself over a period of eight years yet never lived in.

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For eight years, Mollino designed and decorated this tiny apartment in Turin, Italy, known as Casa Mollino. Though it is full of precious objects and no small amount of obsessiveness, Mollino never lived here.

Tell us a little about Museo Casa Mollino.
The interior is a work by Mollino in itself. There is furniture designed especially by him for the apartment, as well as Italian design pieces that he bought, like lamps, coffee tables, and a chair by Saarinen. The interior of the apartment is quite eclectic and is a very important, precise project that Mollino undertook. He rented it in 1960 and kept it until his death in 1973. The apartment's interior was finished in 1968. We know this from the invoices of those who worked on it. Mollino never used this apartment, though, because he had another apartment for a long time and he remained in that.

Eventually we came to understand that this place is similar to what the Egyptian pharaohs would do during their life: setting up a house that was the pharaohs' pyramid, for their afterlife. There are many ways that we can see this was his intent. For example, there is a Perspex cube in the apartment and you cannot see anything in it. But if you turn it to one side you can see a pyramid.

How did Mollino fit so much incredible work into his life?
He was very rich, as his father made a lot of money building and selling houses, so he never had to work for the money. He spent all his life making masterpieces. He did not waste his time on projects that were not important. All the work of Mollino is important. Other architects and designers do work for clients, some of which has to be done just for the money. If the client was not interesting for Mollino, then he would not accept the job. His work was really very avant-garde for this period, when many people in Italy were having trouble finding enough to eat every day.

Is this why his work is so rare and valuable?
There are not many pieces of Mollino's work, as each was unique and designed for his clients. Today the Mollino furniture is either ▸

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Mollino's low table (left) is composed of curved and polished natural maple, c. 1950. His Vertebrae table (below) consists of a single continuous piece of polished natural maple plywood, c. 1951.

gone or in museums or art collections. The most he made of one model was 200 metal and plastic chairs for the Lutrario ballroom in Turin; they were sold during the 1990s. He designed for you, and it could not be used for someone else.

Did you ever meet Mollino?
No. I was an antique dealer in the 1970s, and a client discovered some of his work on the pages of *Domus* magazine from the 1940s. He asked me to find some pieces for him, and this was the beginning of my life with Mollino. He has been a teacher for my life. From Mollino I have understood that you must spend your life doing what you want. You have to be what you are.

What do you think he was like as a person?
His projects may seem strange but they are completely engineered, completely calculated. Mollino had his fantasies so he was able to add to his projects something much more than an engineer usually would. He seemed exotic, but in reality he never dressed in green or violet, as some people have said. He was very serious in his working life, exploring his different interests and trying to do something that was a masterpiece in that field. For example, he was interested in cars, and in 1955 he designed a car for the 24-hour Le Mans race. He designed the mechanical parts of the car, not just the body. If the people and the project interested him, then people say that he was very friendly; if not, he was quite unfriendly. As a professor he never taught his pupils how to draw a piece of furniture; he was only interested in giving them the opportunity to express themselves. But he was only interested in the clever students. If the pupil was not brilliant, then Mollino was not interested.

What was his architectural work like?
He designed just 12 buildings in his life. ►

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Chairs designed by Mollino reveal his skills as a consummate draftsman (many are conceived from a single drawn line) but also his love of the female form.

He could have designed hundreds, as Italy was completely reconstructed after the world wars. But Mollino was not interested. Each one was special. The most important is the horse-racing society building in Turin, which was built at the end of the 1930s. It has a very modern interior but Baroque ceiling lamps and unusual use of space.

What inspired him to create such modern yet organic pieces of furniture?
He knew the Japanese, the Greek, the Roman, and the Egyptian cultures well, and he understood that these cultures of the past reached the highest points in life. He was expressing himself in life through these classical elements. His work is very modern but also very classic.

He was always photographing women. For him the woman's body was a kind of perfection and he was intrigued with it for his whole life. The portraits were never of the women themselves but of an idea that he had in his mind. Mollino would give his model the direction to act how he was thinking. Mollino himself bought the dresses, jewelry, and shoes, so he was really using a feminine body like a mannequin.

It seems that the erotic Polaroids were made for the afterlife. The pharaohs prepared statues as servants for the afterlife and Mollino's Polaroids are statues in photographic form.

Do you have a favorite piece of his work?
There is a coat hanger designed for Casa Minola that is a carved piece of wood that if you touch it is just so sexy. The wood is so well carved and it is because Mollino designed and followed a piece to the end. If you have this piece in your hand, it is like touching a woman's body. He designed it like he was designing a piece of the human body. It is surreal like a Magritte painting, black and lacquered with no one straight line. It is impossible to draw. ■

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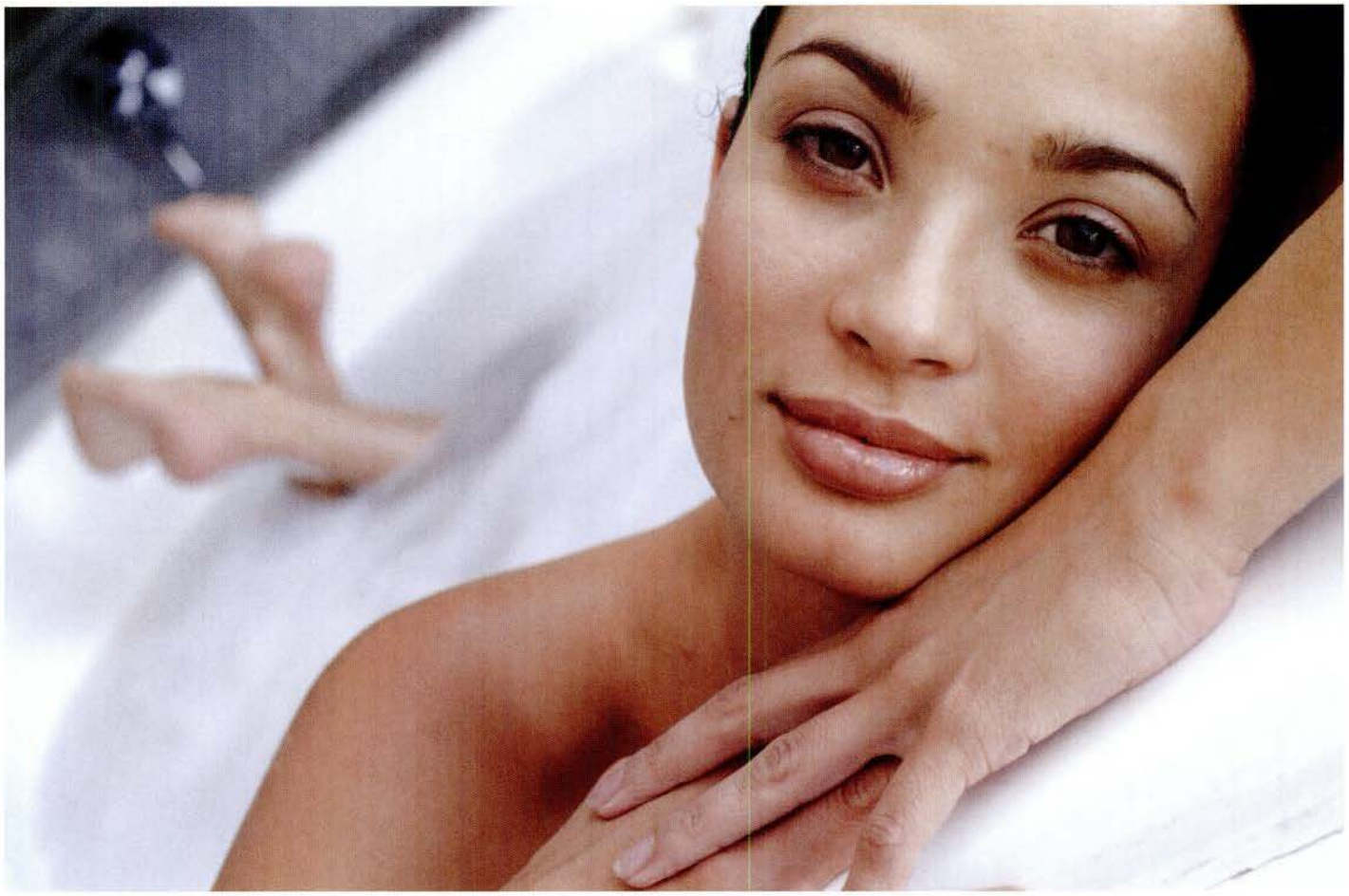

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Story by Lee Bey

Photos by Chad Holder

The Real Chicago

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Chicago has been counted out more times than an old deck of cards. But it still keeps a comeback up its sleeve. Right now the city—particularly its downtown—is aglow with new buildings, bountiful median planters, and the striking Millennium Park with its Frank Gehry–designed bandshell that puts on a show even when there's no concert. Donald Trump is putting up one of the tallest buildings in North America here, and the city has erased nearly all of its bleak and notorious public housing high-rises and is replacing them with livable mixed-income neighborhoods.

So the bright new city beckons. But though his work has played a significant role in this revival, architect Brad Lynch, of the Chicago-based firm Brininstool + Lynch, doesn't want to focus exclusively on that. "There is all kinds of good [architecture] going on," Lynch says. "If you want to learn about the cool buildings, you can go to the Chicago Architecture Foundation and take a tour."

That sounds dismissive, but it's not. Lynch—who knows the terrain and navigates it with a "Yeah, the sign says 'One Way' but you can still go through" familiarity—recommends the foundation's tours as a way to get a view of the city's history and architecture. But for this architect, who's not quite a local but has been here long enough to act like one, the true Chicago experience has to be rounded out by visiting places at the corners of downtown and off the beaten path, in neighborhoods and overlooked storefronts.

Our journey through the real Chicago begins—and ends—at the nondescript (from the outside, anyway) Club Lago, a bar at 331 West Superior in the fashionable River North neighborhood that Lynch has been coming to for 20 years. Club Lago is a remnant (though updated) from the area's industrial era, when it was frequented by printers and packers. The 30-foot bar has a weathered linoleum top and when the original black rotary Western Electric Model 500 desk phone rings, it doesn't beep, twitter, or play an anemic rendition of a top-40 hit—it rings. ▸

At Bari Foods on West Grand (opposite) you can still get an Italian sub directly from the butcher. The Lake Shore Drive bike path (above left) provides ample opportunity for outdoor recreation. Brad Lynch (above right) enjoys some indoor recreation at his favorite watering hole, Club Lago.

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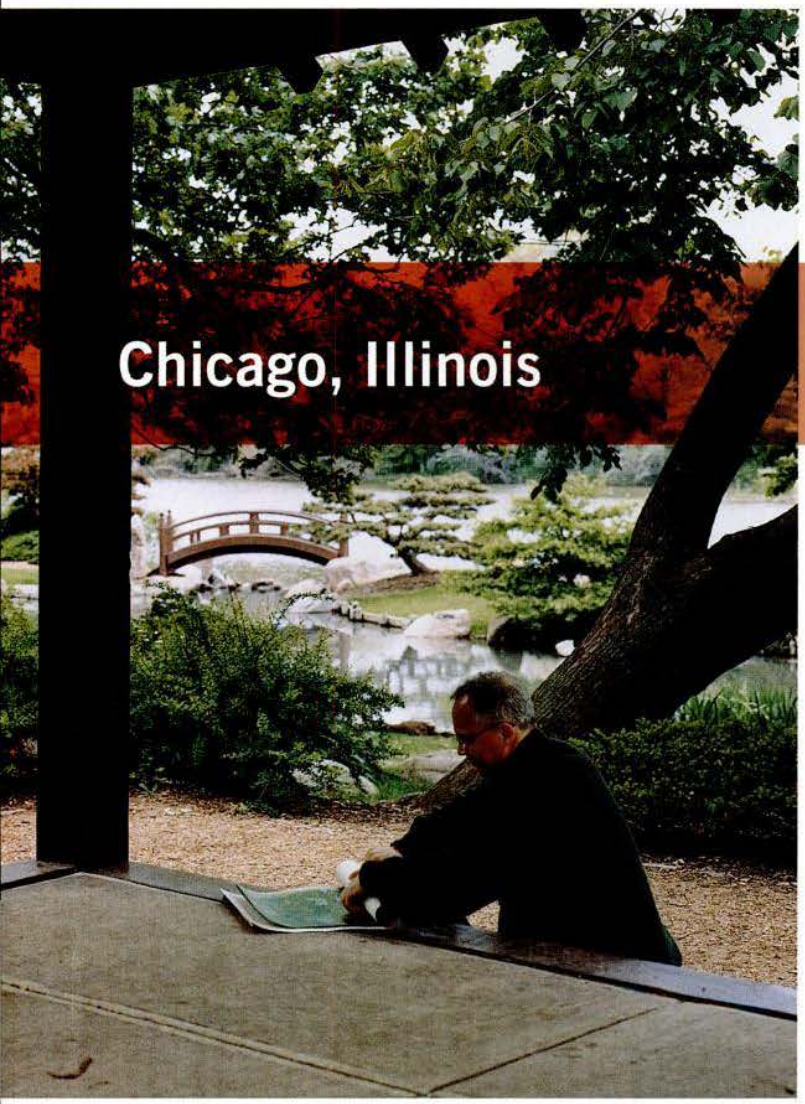

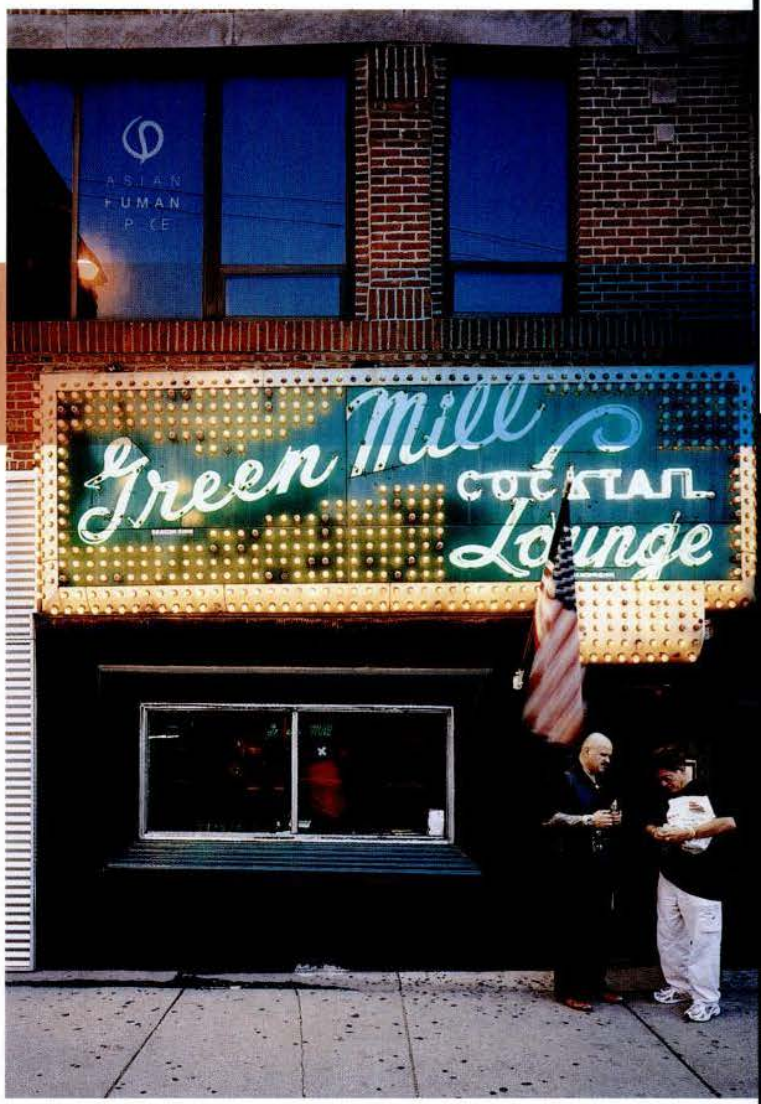

Why are we here?
This is a Chicago bar. Although [the owner] doesn't let me call it a bar because they want to be a restaurant about the Italian food—which is good fare. But there's nothing fancy about it. They still have the old cash register; they're not forcing the classic oak bar on you or hitting you over the head with how cute and fancy it is.

You say the Picasso sculpture in Daley Plaza is a must-see. Why?
It was 1967 and my parents put me in a car and drove down to see the sculpture. I was nine years old and they wanted me to see what the controversy was about. It was my first urban experience. Being in this plaza, surrounded by these buildings, was just a big moment in my life. It was like I knew someday I wanted to be in Chicago.

People often list Chicago's tallest buildings as their favorite. But you've selected a relatively shorter building: the Inland Steel Building by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill.
Inland Steel—I think this is one of the greatest. Think of the time when it was built in the 1950s and what was happening in the city. A really big building hadn't been built for 20 years and this was the first to go up in a long time. And it's so thin and so pure. When I tell people when it was built, they go "Oh, my." Because they thought it was built last year. I like it better than [Gordon Bunshaft–designed] Lever House. It's on a much smaller lot than Lever House but it is just as big of a presence.

The South Side of Chicago has struggled for years with the stigma of being the wrong part of town. For a long time, tourist maps ▸

The Osaka Garden (above, left) in Jackson Park provides a respite from the city while the Green Mill Cocktail Lounge (above right) in the Uptown neighborhood plants you firmly in the middle of all the musical culture Chicago has to offer.

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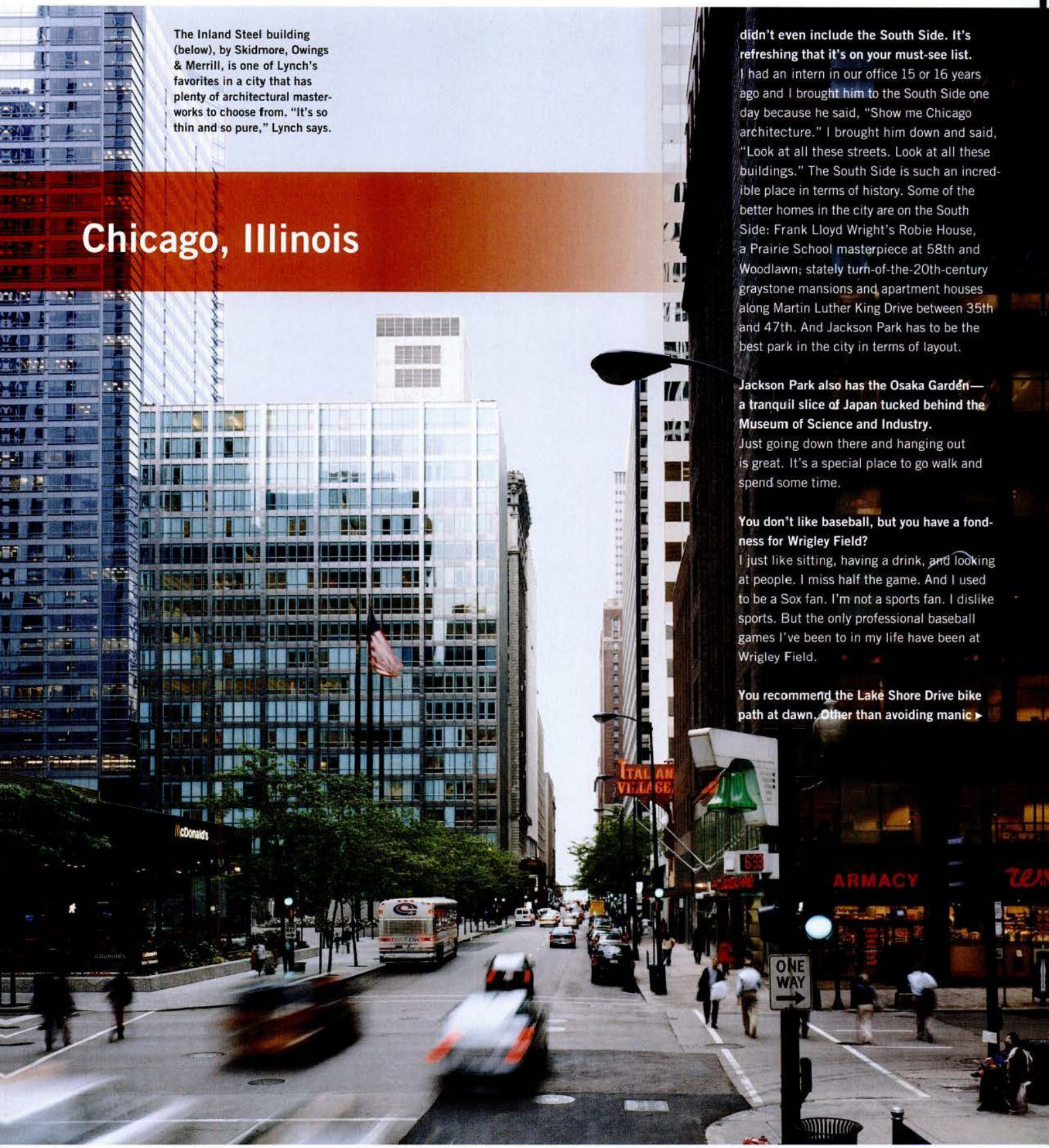

The Inland Steel building (below), by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, is one of Lynch's favorites in a city that has plenty of architectural masterworks to choose from. "It's so thin and so pure," Lynch says.

Chicago, Illinois

didn't even include the South Side. It's refreshing that it's on your must-see list.
I had an intern in our office 15 or 16 years ago and I brought him to the South Side one day because he said, "Show me Chicago architecture." I brought him down and said, "Look at all these streets. Look at all these buildings." The South Side is such an incredible place in terms of history. Some of the better homes in the city are on the South Side: Frank Lloyd Wright's Robie House, a Prairie School masterpiece at 58th and Woodlawn; stately turn-of-the-20th-century graystone mansions and apartment houses along Martin Luther King Drive between 35th and 47th. And Jackson Park has to be the best park in the city in terms of layout.

Jackson Park also has the Osaka Garden—a tranquil slice of Japan tucked behind the Museum of Science and Industry.
Just going down there and hanging out is great. It's a special place to go walk and spend some time.

You don't like baseball, but you have a fondness for Wrigley Field?
I just like sitting, having a drink, and looking at people. I miss half the game. And I used to be a Sox fan. I'm not a sports fan. I dislike sports. But the only professional baseball games I've been to in my life have been at Wrigley Field.

You recommend the Lake Shore Drive bike path at dawn. Other than avoiding manic ▸

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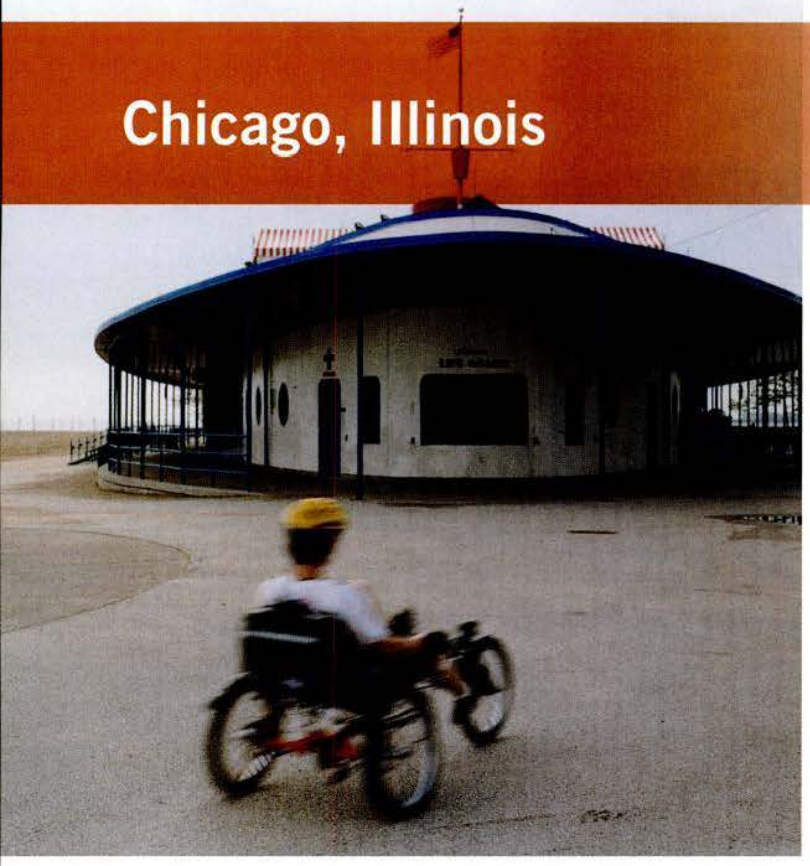

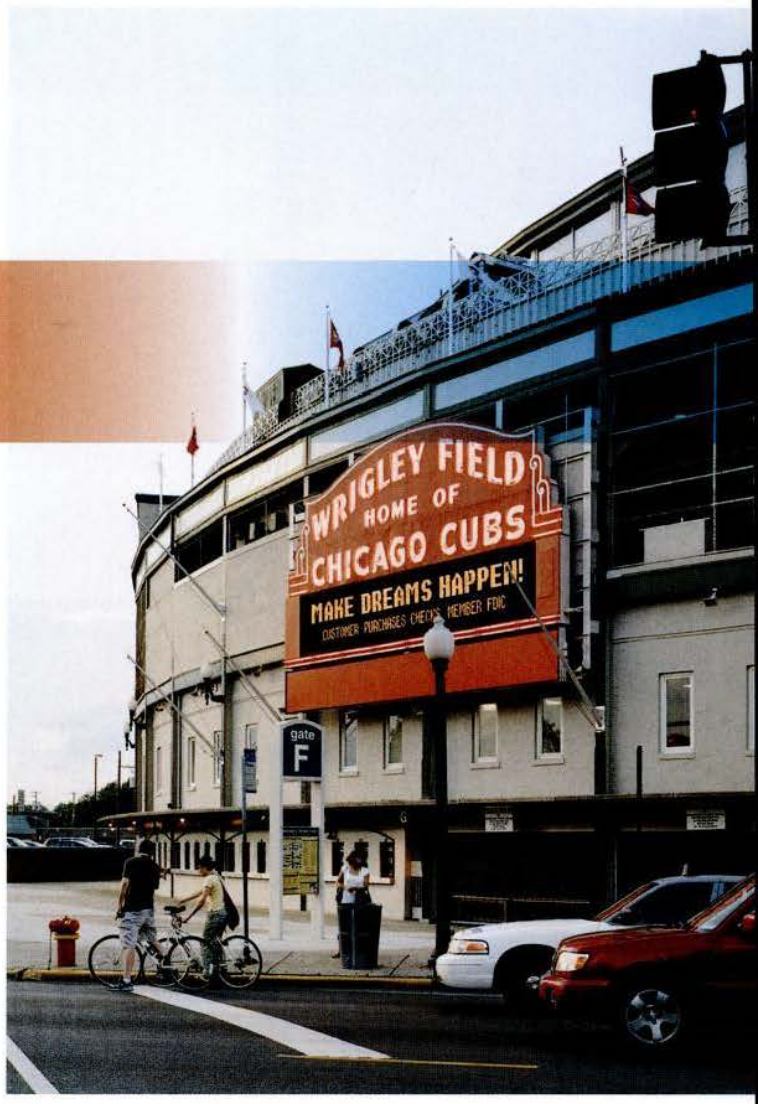

The Lake Shore Drive bike path (above left) is also filled with architectural curiosities. The home of the Chicago Cubs, Wrigley Field (above right), is one of the city's best-known landmarks.

bicyclists, what other benefits can be found in getting up that early? What will the riders see and hear?

I'm not sure there are any benefits to getting up that early, other than avoiding traffic and manic bicyclists—but that might be enough. There is something special about hearing the lake (and not the traffic) and watching the skyline emerge as you bike closer—without having to be as attentive to whether you are going to hit another biker or dog walker. If you start from the north at Foster Avenue, you are already in Lincoln Park and go by the expanse of soccer fields, the Sydney R. Marovitz golf course, a number of nicely designed park buildings, Montrose and Belmont harbors, and the Lincoln Park Zoo—which I usually cut through to get into River North—where you see the single scullers out early in the pond.

The city is filled with good places to eat. Where do you go?

Don Juan's. It's a traditional chips-and-salsa-and-guacamole restaurant. Then they have a fancy dining room called Patricio. The son [of the owner] went to work for Charlie Trotter, then came back. So he has this little room. But what you can do is sit in the front and mix and match orders [between the two restaurants].

You called the Music Box Theatre the last of the independents. What kind of movies do they show?

The Music Box is located in one of the last historic movie houses in Chicago, where it actually has been used as a movie theater since its original opening in 1929. It was designed by a local architect named Louis A. Simon and originally was an apartment ▸

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house too. What makes it even more special is that there hasn't been a Hollywood release shown there since 1977. And for approximately the last 15 years, it has consistently shown new releases of independent, foreign, and art films, as well as special film presentations. Over the summer, for instance, they showed *Sketches of Frank Gehry*, *I Am a Sex Addict*, and *Russian Dolls*.

Speaking of unique tastes, you suggest bypassing the grocery chains in favor of smaller, locally owned places. Such as?
Bari Foods is a small Italian grocery store at 1120 West Grand. They have a really good selection of Italian dry goods and staples, and a wonderful meat counter in the back with Italian sausages; hams, including Prosciutto di Parma; special cuts of meats; and where you can order the city's best Italian sub directly from the butcher on duty. There is no PA system in this small, cramped store—someone shouts to the back room if they have a question. The current owners are the third generation of proprietors, and their grandfather started the business from a pushcart in Fulton Market. He, like most of the Italians that lived and had businesses in that neighborhood in the mid-20th century, is from the town of Bari in Italy.

You left Wisconsin for Chicago. Can you imagine leaving Chicago—giving up your seat here at Club Lago—for another city?
I get exasperated with a really bad month or really bad week and I say, "I'm going to move to Nova Scotia and open a Mexican restaurant." Then I say, "Oh well—you can't. Because you are embedded here now." And I love that. ■

Lynch calls the Music Box movie theater on Southport Avenue, designed by local architect Louis A. Simon in 1929, "the last great independent" in Chicago. If you go, watch out for the theater's tireless protector, a ghost named Whitey who is said to still pace aisle four.

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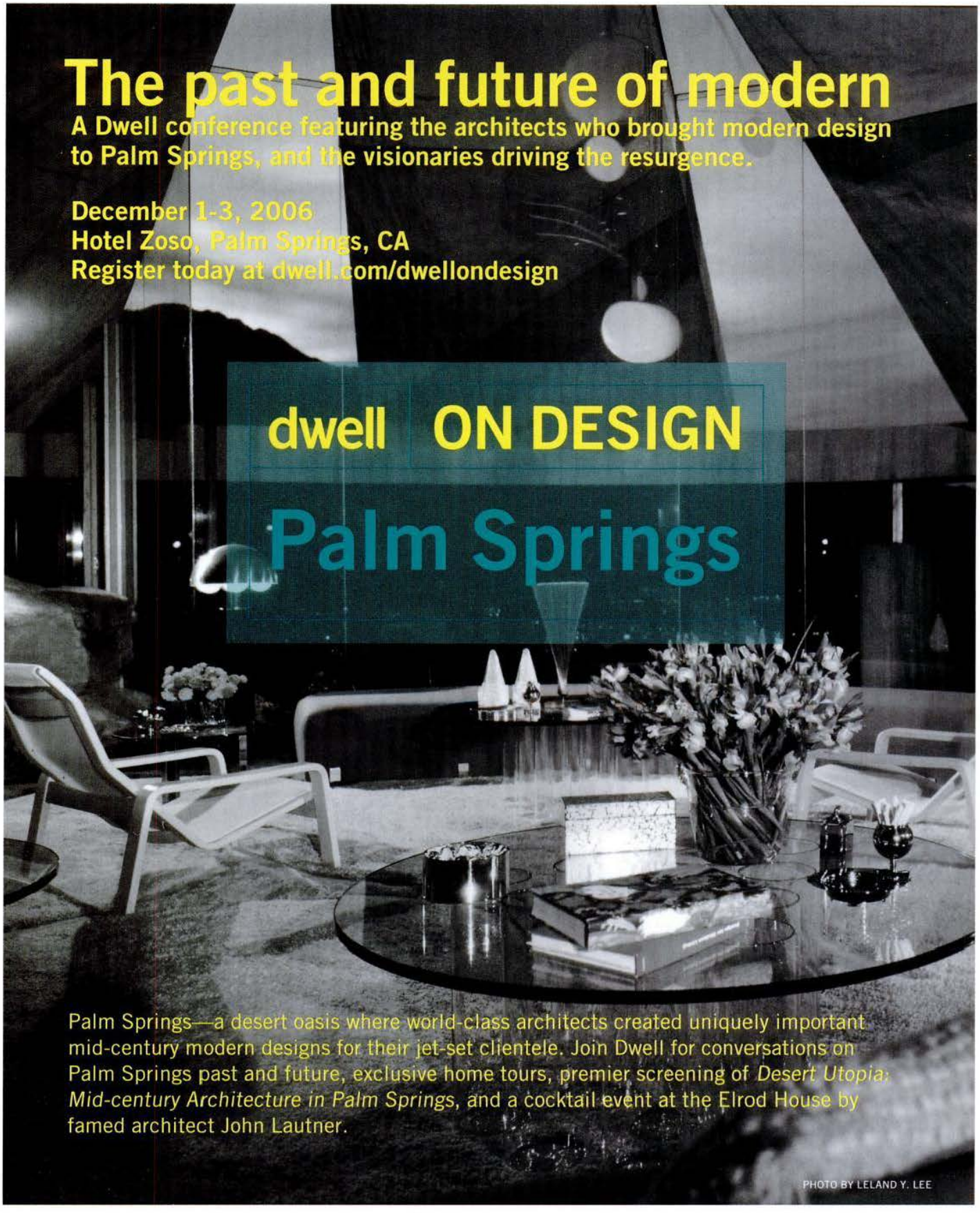

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Story by Amara Holstein

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Living in a Material World

Americans have always held a soft spot in their hearts for futuristic materials, from the amazing lightweight properties of titanium to the chance to conquer Superman with kryptonite. So it's no surprise that marketing mavens have pounced on the nation's love of revolutionary products, promoting a vast array of textiles, plastics, and metals all wielding lofty claims.

Yet for the average consumer, it's hard to muddle through the mire of what's actually advanced and what's simply hype. To lead us through this clutter of high-tech innovation and help us understand the necessity—or uselessness—of all this invention, we spoke with Andrew Dent, a materials scientist who has worked with NASA, Rolls-Royce, and the U.S. Navy, among other illustrious organizations. He's now vice president of Material ConneXion, a New York–based resource center with over 3,500 samples of various polymers, glass, ceramics, metals, and other materials available for reference and architectural elucidation.

"High-tech" is a term that's often bandied about. What does it mean to you as a materials scientist?

"High-tech" means [better] performance over other materials. When performance is the first criteria, you're inevitably going to end up with a high-tech material. Any material can be high-tech. For example, look at the development of plastic packaging for two-liter Coke bottles. There's only 50 grams of plastic used in those bottles. They're able to contain that much heavy liquid in that little plastic; it's less weight, less waste, less packaging overall. That to me is high-tech.

Which industries are at the forefront of new material development?

Aerospace is a great industry to look to; they do a lot of development work. But it's rare that we will find an aerospace material that's directly applicable and affordable for an architect or designer. We're aware of the new high-strength aluminum alloys and the superhydrophilic coatings, but because they're developed through aerospace, there's less of a concern about cost and more of a concern about performance. ►

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Andrew Dent, vice president of Material ConneXion and materials scientist, sits in a conference room at his office. The backdrop is a military material for snow conditions designed by Ogus Camouflage.

It's a common conception that high-tech materials cost more. It sounds like that's true?
Yes, because you're paying for the price of research and development. Also, high-tech materials tend to be produced in smaller volumes. A good example is construction panels. There have been a lot of attempts to make MDF panels out of something other than wood fibers, such as sunflower seeds and waste fiber. The problem is not the properties of the material, or even the price, it's the ability to get high volume. Companies can bring down the cost of MDF and particle-board because they sell a million tons of it. The non-wood-based, perhaps more sustainable alternatives can't reach that cost, because they can't guarantee enough volume.

That's a pretty dismal outlook. Isn't there a way these products can turn mass market?
I think the way we'll see these high-tech materials become mainstream is when you convince the builders that they could sell more houses if a home buyer will spend 10 percent more initially but get that back tenfold in a more efficient, lower-energy house in the long run. That's where sustainability will come in. Perhaps the construction materials themselves aren't as sustainable, but if they can reduce energy costs, that's where you'll see high-tech trumping other materials.

High-tech has to make the consumer's life easier. So things that require less cleaning, smell nicer longer, reduce the overall heating in your house—those things will sell. High-tech that's high-tech for its own sake is not going to work.

You mention sustainability. How do you relate eco-friendly with high-tech?
The two are often mutually exclusive. Performance rarely has to do with making a less toxic product or one that's better for the environment. You will seldom see material researchers be concerned with sustainability.

At the same time, the increase in the cost of oil has been very good in a way because it has kick-started the biopolymers area and forced people to think about alternative materials to plastic. So we're offering substitutes that are more sustainable.

Is high-tech applicable to residential projects?
If you have a new high-tech material, you need to have a special construction staff to install it. If it doesn't look like steel, they won't know if they can put holes in it or paint it or whatever. The inability to install it can be a real limitation to high-tech. It's the same idea with residential homeowners: If they don't know how to put it up or install it or they don't understand the instructions, they're not going to bother. ►

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Alone I have found a glitch in time. A moment where new meets old and the hour hand crawls to a stop. The unnecessary has been stripped away, leaving a heart of intrinsic beauty. Within this simplicity lies an essence that screams without speaking a word. Quietly. Quietly. This is my soul revealed through a minimal coat of wrapped steel.

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A few of Material ConneXion's more than 3,500 material samples are pictured above in their library.

Where are you seeing the most interesting use of high-tech materials?
I would say it's more dependent on the architect, whether they're building in Sweden or Beijing or Seattle. It's a very talented and rare architect who uses new materials. You need to be able to prototype the material and develop it and have faith that it's going to last and be viable. So the architects who are making those attempts at using new materials—they are brave, but they also have good resources and can have these things tested.

Do any particular architects come to mind?
I think that Herzog & de Meuron put a lot of thought into their buildings' outer surfaces and actually use the materials to inform their designs. What I like is their understanding of what a material will do over time. For me, an understanding of how materials age is everything. I'm waiting to see when we'll be mature enough to enjoy the degradation of plastics. The rust on metal, the patina on copper, the wearing of wood, we love—we think it adds authenticity to a project or object. With plastics, we don't have that appreciation yet. When plastic looks old, we think it's in need of replacement, and I wonder when we'll get over that.

Well, some plastics off-gas as they age, which is less than appealing.
True. So perhaps people are reluctant to use new materials because there's not a belief or understanding that they'll age well.

Do you see durability or longevity as being part of what it means to be high-tech?
No. I think they can be ephemeral. The point of some high-tech materials is that they're only supposed to last as long as they need to, and then they're no longer of any use.

What do you predict for the future of high-tech material development?
I haven't seen any really new materials in a number of years, and I don't think I will. We're not going to see any new metals, because we've alloyed almost every single material we can think of. We've reached a point with plastics that we've mixed together as many different types of polymers as we can. We are at an end point for existing materials.

The areas in which we'll see development are nanotech and biomaterials. The ability of nature to grow me, to grow you, to grow a tree out of the most basic stuff is way beyond our current abilities. ►

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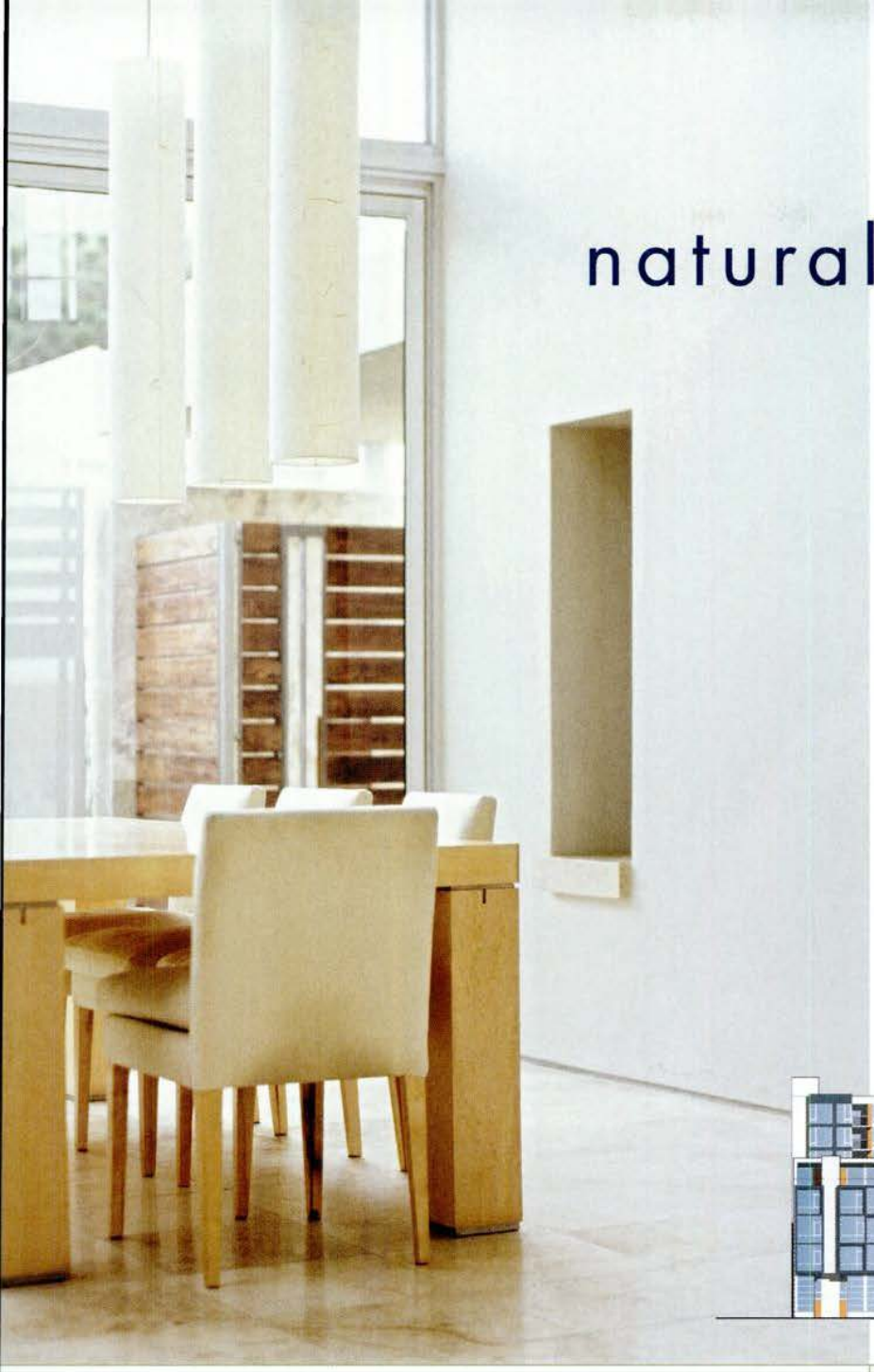

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Photos by Hunter Freeman | Story by Amara Holstein and Christopher Bright

If you're looking for high-performance paint or inventive textiles but you're bored to tears with current offerings, look no further: Here are six of the most revolutionary new products to hit the materials market.

Power Plastic

Konarka
www.konarka.com

Every hour, enough sunlight hits the earth to power the entire planet for a year. But since they're pricey—and, let's face it, generally unattractive—solar cells are still woefully underutilized and most sunlight lays fallow.

Not content to let tanning bodies take the heat, Konarka uses photovoltaic nanotechnology to transform light into energy more efficiently. The actual material is a sandwich of multiple layers of electrodes and polymer made by a Nobel laureate, too complex for most of us to comprehend. But the result is an easy-to-understand flexible plastic strip that's paper thin, comes in a wide range of colors, and can generate power using any kind of light, be it direct solar, filtered sunlight, or indoor fluorescent.

Unlike its traditional photovoltaic counterparts, the material can be incorporated invisibly into an almost limitless variety of products. From cell phones to window panes, these flexible strips have the potential to power the world. Better yet, the possible cost savings for Power Plastic's energy could be 5 to 10 times cheaper than current solar panels. The only downside is that the innovative cells aren't yet available to consumers. ▶

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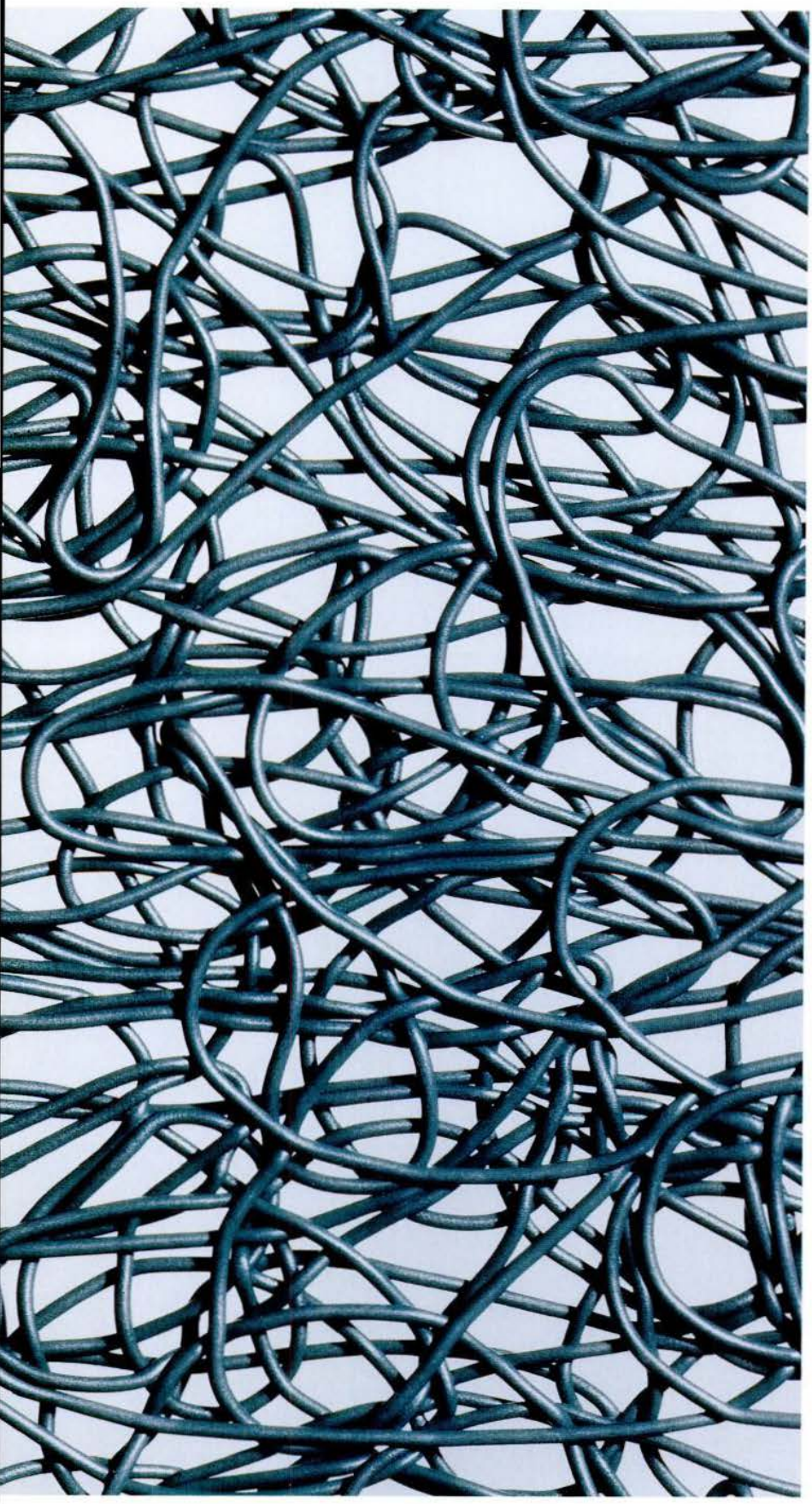

PEC-MAT

Greenstreak
www.greenstreak.com

As more and more Americans are quickly discovering, the land beneath our feet is not quite as solid as we thought. Houses slip down hillsides, trees float down rivers, and whole cities disappear under swirling water.

PEC-MAT provides one way to help stem the oncoming tide. The unique green PVC monofilaments roll onto any earthen surface and help tamp down seedlings and sprouts while also protecting more established growth. Designed to withstand water at a force of 20 feet per second and with a shear stress of six pounds per square foot, this flexible material won't biodegrade nor will it harm your plants; its intent is simply to protect. Just roll it out and spread it over your lawn, parkland, or local floodplain, and it quietly does its job without fuss.

Though it makes no claims to stop your house from sliding down the street, it will help keep your garden in place should a flash flood come through your neighborhood, or shield your prized tomatoes from the ravages of a sudden summer thunderstorm. If only it could deter deer and gophers, it'd be the perfect outdoor material. ►

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Silver has been used for centuries as an antimicrobial agent. The Greeks and Romans used it to fight infection and hinder food spoilage before the days of Band-Aids and Sub-Zero refrigerators. Sommers, in collaboration with AgION Technologies, has employed the epic element in its new bacteria-resistant upholstery and wall covering.

Here's how it works: Silver ions are infused with a ceramic material called zeolite, which acts as a delivery system, and is then applied to the fabric. Translation: The zeolite delivers a continuous release of the silver that battles those pesky bugs, which means less bacteria, mold, and fungus.

The intended and primary application will be in the healthcare industry, but you won't just see it at the doctor's office or when visiting grandma at the nursing home. The coating could also be used in the future for things like shoes and other consumer goods. Currently, design heavyweight Herman Miller is interested in AgUARDIAN's antimicrobial textile as a seating solution, and as an enhancement to their furniture offerings. The material is currently undergoing testing and may be available by late 2006. ▸

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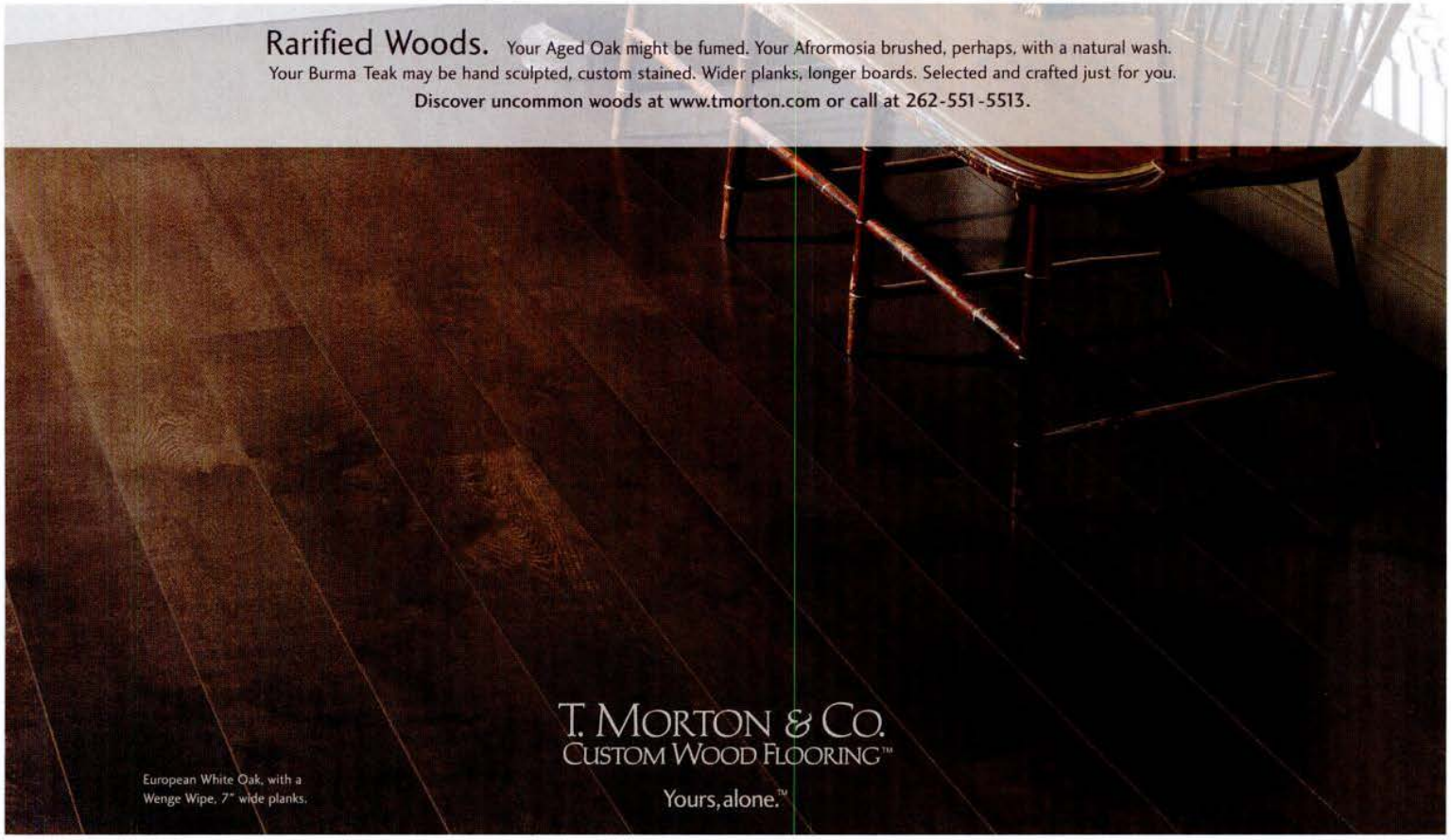

European White Oak, with a Wenge Wipe, 7" wide planks.

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Want to give your office a promotion? Enter to win a 5-piece Architect Series Office from Boltz. Made in the U.S. from steel and glass, Boltz furniture is modular, expandable, and modern. Boltz is steel, reinforced with style. Boltz creates office suites, tables, shelving, and bedroom furniture. To enter to win, visit www.dwell.com/boltz and tell us which piece of Boltz furniture you would select for your home or office.

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Sweepstakes set includes: Architect Executive Desk, Architect Series Bookcase, Architect Office Credenza, Pedestal File Cabinet (not pictured), and Lateral File Cabinet (not pictured), valued at $4,445.

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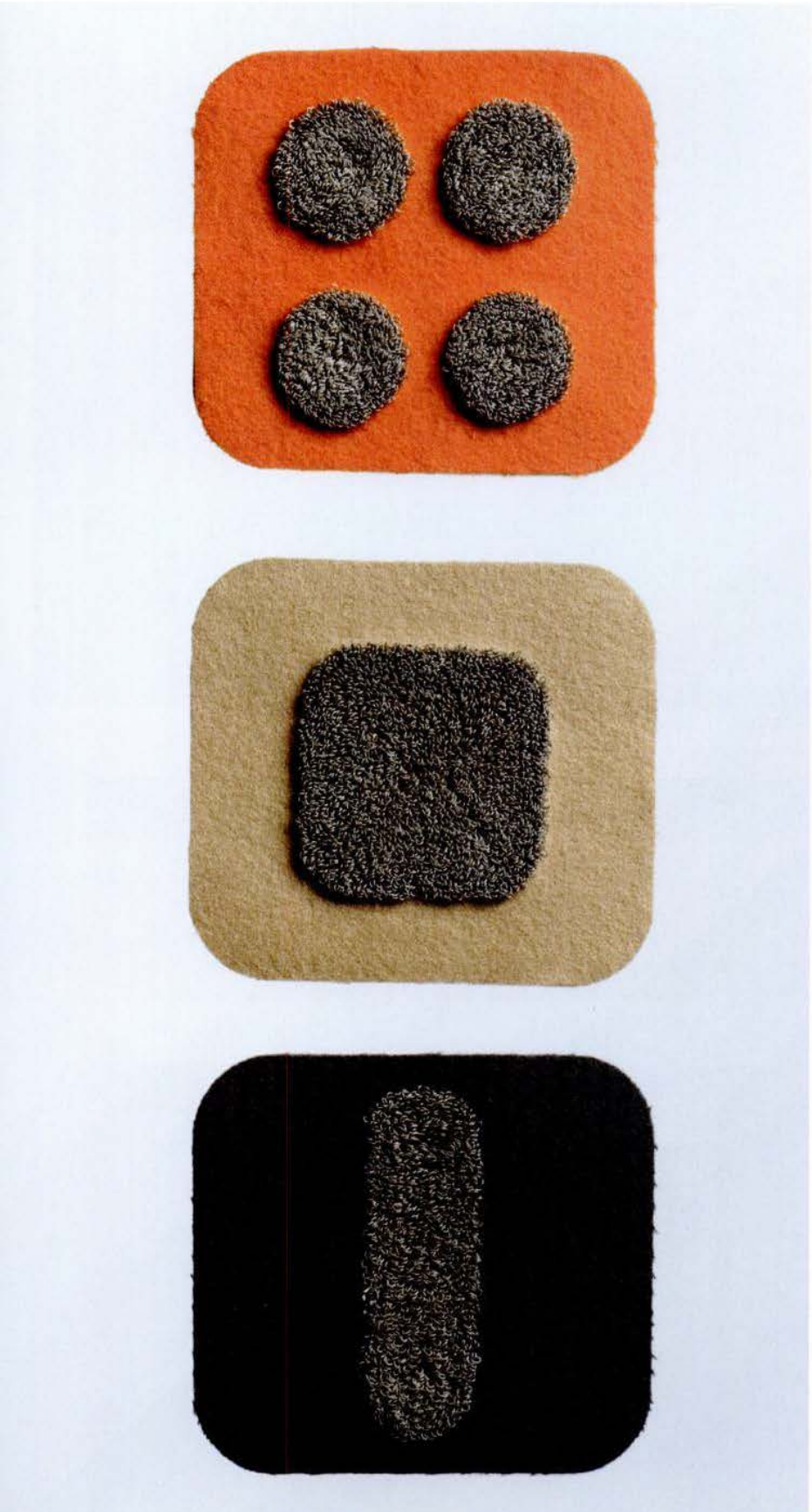

Architect Series Dimmers

International Fashion Machines
www.ifmachines.com

The right lighting can bring warmth and atmosphere to any room. The Architect series dimmers from International Fashion Machines (IFM) do the same, but for your light switch. IFM owner and electronic textile pioneer Maggie Orth used her experiences at the Rhode Island School of Design and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology to create the patented soft and fuzzy interactive textile sensors, which allow users to feel the right ambiance rather than find it.

Orth's products replace the cold, impersonal plastics of traditional switches with the warmth and style of fabric. The inviting dimmers not only change the user experience from mechanical to sensual/tactile, they transform the aesthetic and atmosphere of the room they're used in. The Architect collection features geometric shapes and patterns in a variety of vivid colors, and are equal parts art and object.

Like trading in an old beige desktop for a sleek silver PowerBook, these switches replace the banal with chic functionality. ▸

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Product design that takes cues from nature, known as biomimicry, has produced a number of ingenious and popular products we use every day. The now ubiquitous hook-and-loop system used in Velcro was modeled on the tiny barbs found on burrs, when Swiss engineer Georges de Mestral noticed their uncanny ability to stick to his clothes and his dog's fur during a hike.

Next up, Lotusan paint—inspired by the slick leaves of the lotus plant, and their natural capacity to wash away dirt particles after each rainfall. Conventional paints accumulate dirt and mold over the course of time, which can dull bright colors and leave residual stains. Lotusan's exterior coating repels these unsightly elements, keeping the treated surface clean and unblemished. The smooth matte surface is UV stable, and ideal for a variety of material applications (concrete, stucco, EIFS, and fiber cement-board substrates).

Not everyone can have an easy-to-care-for candy shell to protect their house, however: It can't be used on wood or metal surfaces. ►

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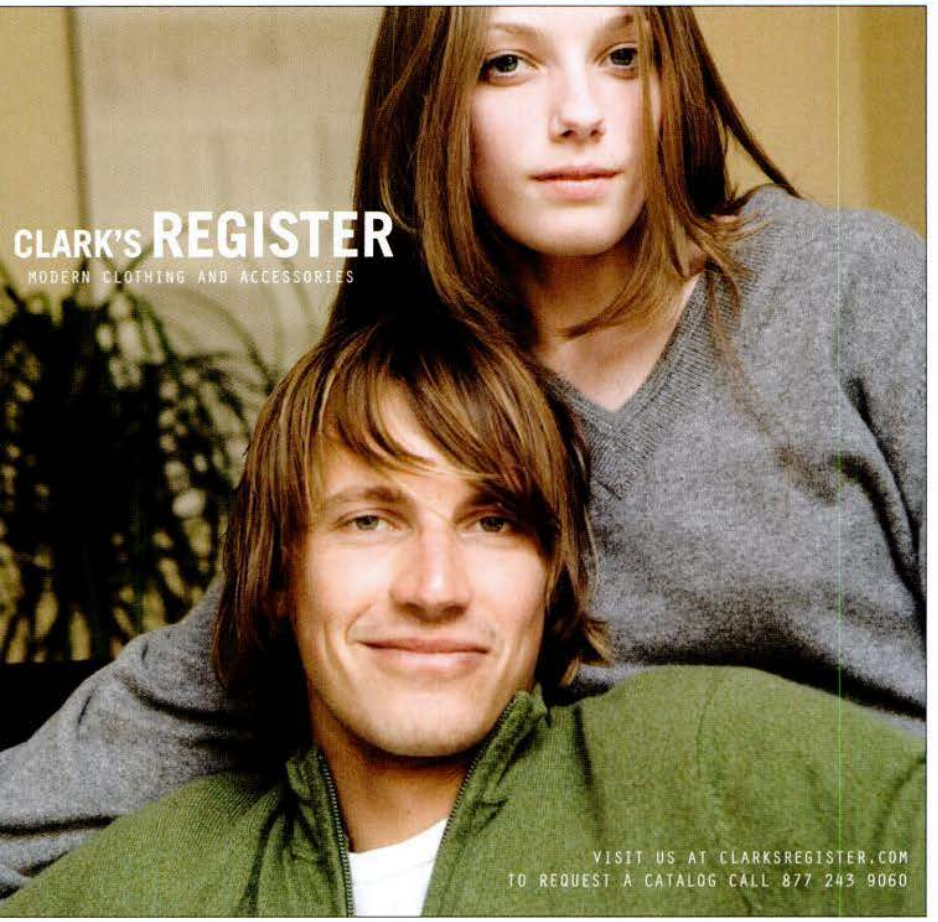

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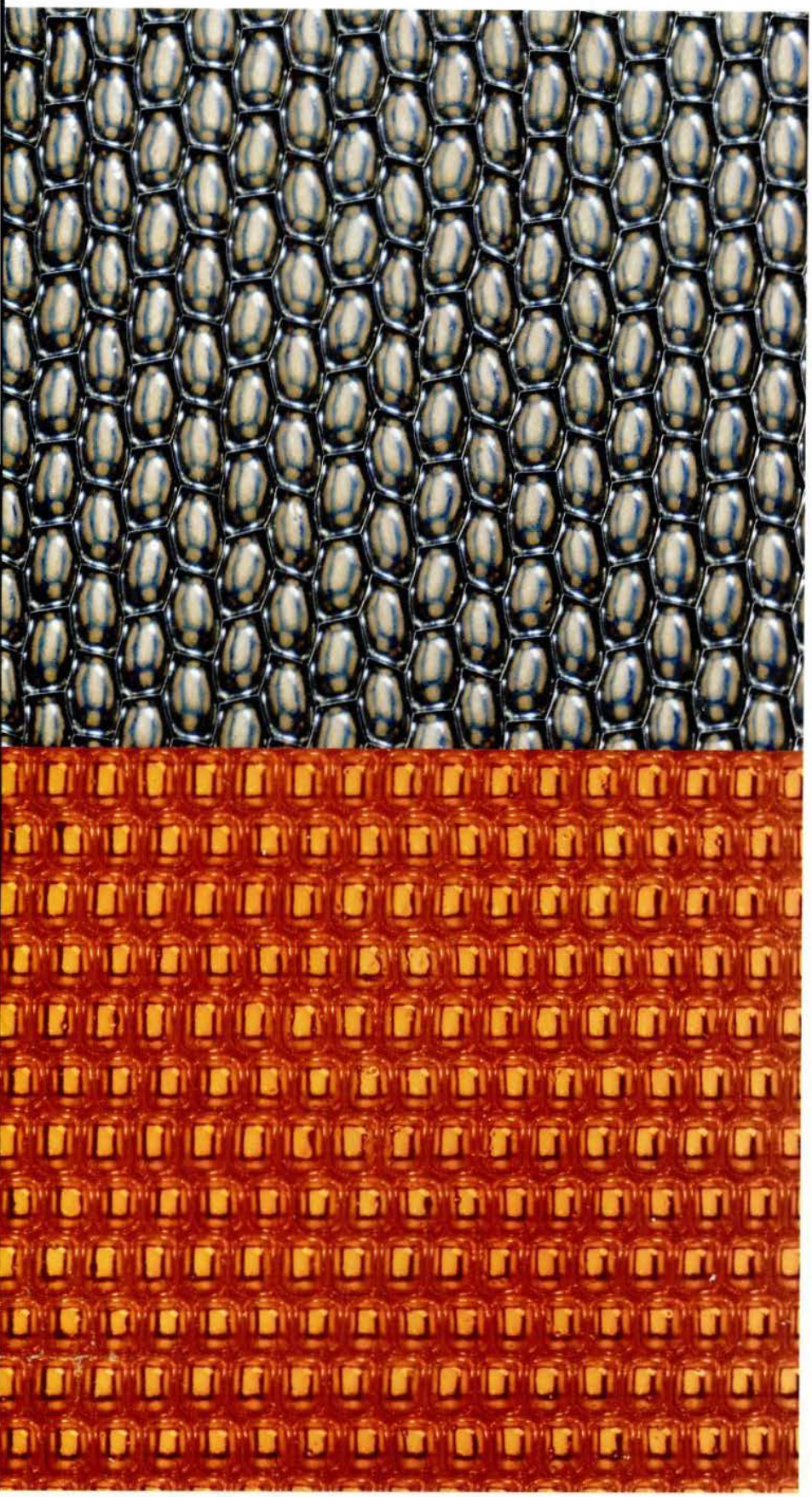

Structural Panels

Panelite
www.panelite.us

Bees have always been admired for their industrious nature and intricate honeycomb architecture; Charles Darwin called the honeycomb "absolutely perfect" as a feat of engineering, symmetry, and careful use of space. The structural material created by Panelite duplicates this shape, using a polymer or aluminum core within fiberglass-reinforced casings.

The panels are lightweight enough (a tenth of the weight of plate glass) for any application, including exterior or interior walls, furnishings, and surfaces, yet their high tensile strength makes them heavyweights in holding their own for construction. All this would be for naught if the material was opaque, so the panels are transparent and glow softly or with vigor, depending on surrounding light sources. And unlike the habitats of honeybees, which are always a luminous yellow, Panelite offers a variety of standard colors ranging from subtle light blue to flaming red, and can custom-match a hue to any Pantone chip of your choosing. ■

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MAK Architecture Tour - Sunday, October 1, 2006 from 10:00a.m. – 4:00p.m.
Join the MAK Center for a rare opportunity to view both the interior and exterior of some of Los Angeles' architectural masterworks, including: *Case Study House #22 (Pierre Koenig, 1959)*, *Fitzpatrick House (R.M. Schindler, 1936)*, *Morgan House (Irving Gill, 1917)*, *Kallis House and Studio (R.M. Schindler, 1946)* and others!

For MAK Architecture Tour ticket sales and information, please contact office@makcenter.org or call 323-651-1510
For more information please visit www.makcenter.org

The Gen(h)ome Project - October 28, 2006 – February 25, 2007
Panel discussion and presentation, Saturday, October 28

Organized by the MAK Center and Open Source Architecture, this exhibition responds to the Schindler House and addresses the new ways that artists, architects and designers reflect upon the natural sciences in general, and genetics in particular. Participants include Karl Chu, Sean Lally, Greg Lynn, Marcos Novak, OCEAN UK, Open Source Architecture, Phillippe Rahm, Servo, Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau. The exhibition will be accompanied by a publication and podcast.

Final Projects - September 7-10, 2006
Works by MAK Center Artists and Architects in Residence Alfredo Barsuglia, Wulf Walter Boettger, Andreas Fogarasi and Sonja Vordermaier.

The MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles is located at modernist architect Rudolph M. Schindler's landmark House and Studio built in 1922 in West Hollywood, California. Activating the historic Schindler House through exhibitions, lectures, symposia, and concerts, the MAK Center presents projects and ideas that break the disciplinary boundaries between the fields of art and architecture.

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Admission: Admission plus *Schindler by MAK* guide $17/ $16 for students & seniors, Admission only $7/ $6 for students & seniors, Free for children under 12 and Friends of the Schindler House, Admission is free on Friday afternoons from 4:00 to 6:00 pm and on Schindler's Birthday, September 10. **Become a friend of the Schindler House!** Ask about levels and benefits.

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MiYO's kitchen uses vibrant "Orange Ya Glad" solid tiles up against a showcase of "Orange Yipes" tiles as the strong border surrounding a central strip of floral tiles known as "Orange Funky Flowers." The result—larger than life color that makes this small space come alive.

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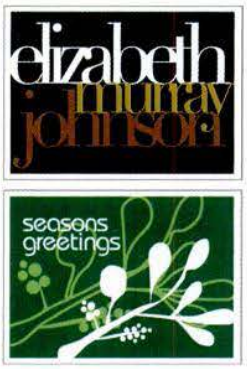

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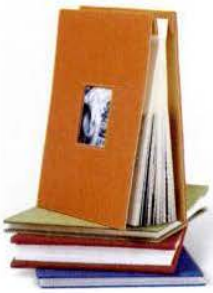

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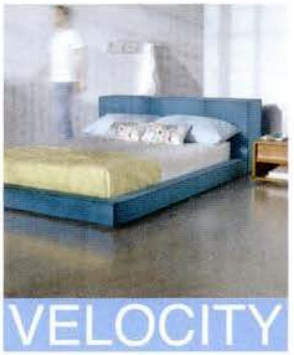

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Shown: C. Morey de Morand's, "Rebel"

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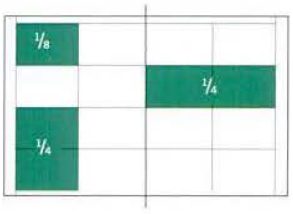

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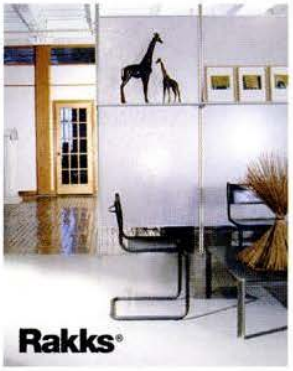

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www.100percentblast.org

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Shown: Small Tote business brief

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www.studiofe.com

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Shown: Park Rug Tricolor

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Shown: Sideboard, walnut

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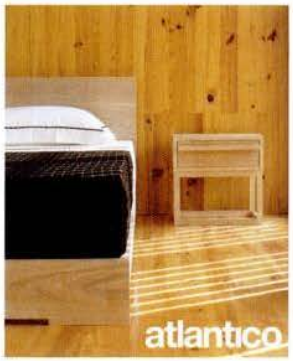
Shown: 011 king size bed $1495 and 012 side table $495

www.atlantico-usa.com



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Shown: Portfolio Kit™ in Hardboard

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New original design from Modernseed. The no-conflict Bro-Sis Chair... brothers or sisters and friends alike have their own seat. A beautiful form executed in a molded plywood chair. Plus a handy storage shelf when brother is not around! Available only at Modernseed, All Things Modern for the Mini™.

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Swarm Gallery

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Shown: Donju dresser in espresso (other colors available)

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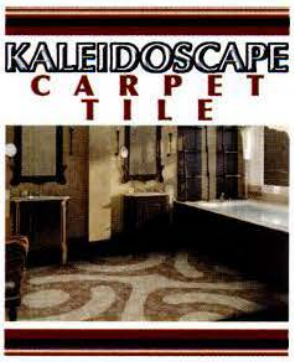

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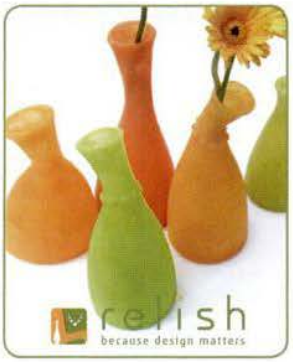
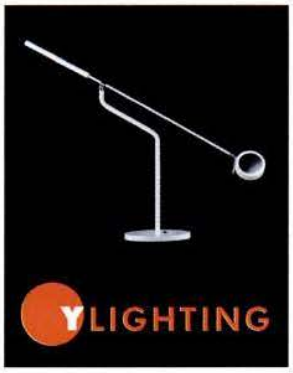


Circa Wallcoverings

Bold and beautiful wallcoverings designed exclusively by Jamie Adler are part of a new collection of furniture, lighting, and objects from Circa created for the elegant living environment.

Shown: Diva

Circa Furniture
Tel. (310) 289-6872
www.circafurniture.com



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Now shipping the long-anticipated Three Sixty table lamp by FontanaArte. Available in several finishes, Three Sixty offers the utmost in flexibility with unique joints on the arm and shaft that allow each to rotate up to 300 degrees.

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Shown: Mother of Pearl III, 48" x 54", unframed acrylic on canvas

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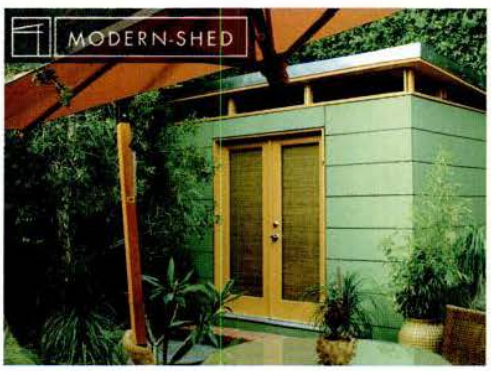

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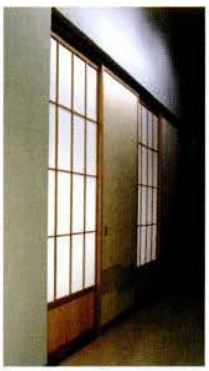

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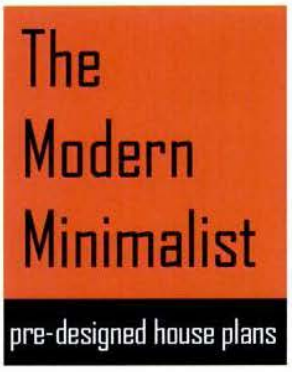

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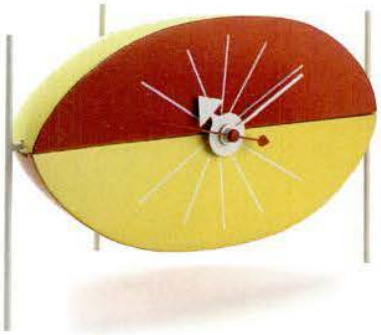

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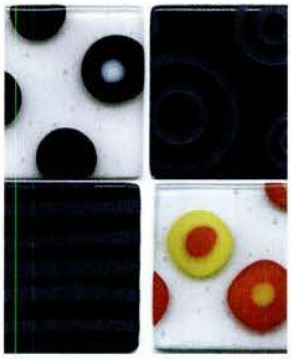
Leaf light by Yves Behar for Herman Miller (2006)



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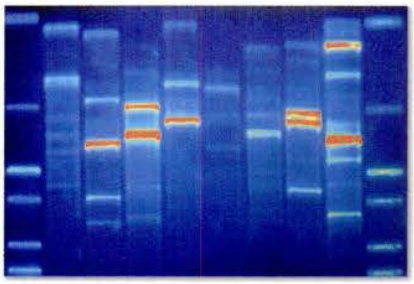

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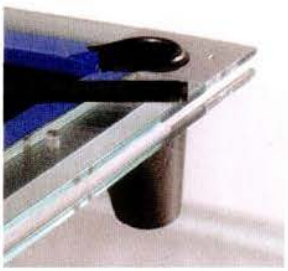
A Slice of Design



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Shown: Organic cotton Jax slingback chair

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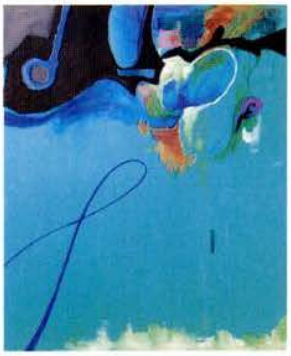

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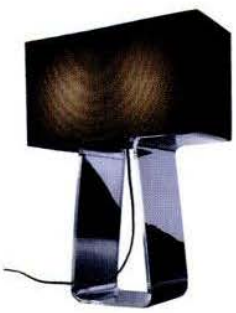

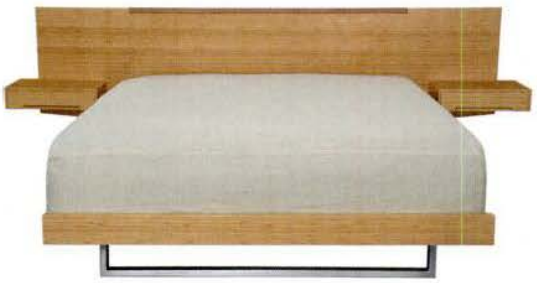

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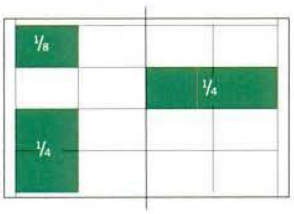

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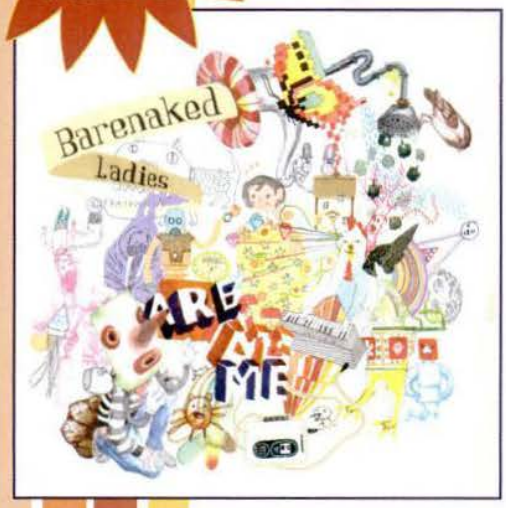

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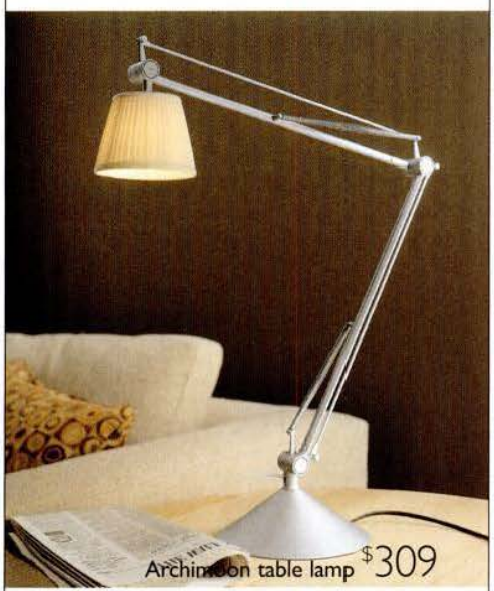

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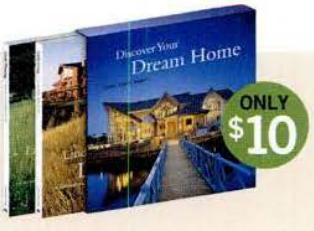

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Story by Christopher Bright

Photo by Cameron Wittig

Modern? You Betcha!

"That place at the end of the street" is how locals usually identify the red corrugated-metal house in this Fargo, North Dakota, neighborhood. The industrial aesthetic of the house, home to Mitchel Hoffart and Karen Olson, stands out in stark relief to its more conventional neighbors. Modernism may have arrived in the land of "gee" and "you betcha," but it's still dwarfed by the string of the World's Largest Animal Sculptures found along I-94.

After acquiring a taste for exposed beams and visible conduits while renting an apartment in a converted warehouse, Hoffart and Olson paired with local architect Phil Stahl to build this industro-agrarian ideal. Ghosts from the construction process, like fingerprints and chalk lines, were left untouched and sealed to preserve their raw character. Among the quality-of-life-enhancing touches are the raised stainless steel countertops in the kitchen that improve ergonomics. No longer forced to hunch over the sink, Olson says, beaming, "Now washing dishes is one of my favorite things to do."

Local contractors weren't familiar with, or especially eager to take on, an enterprise that diverged so far from the usual Victorians and Tudors. Additional help was needed to get the job done, as Stahl recalls: "We had to recruit students and associates from my practice to start swinging hammers."

Of course, everything about the house eschews the mismatched conservative architecture found in Fargo, but that's just what the couple set out to do. Breaking with the local tradition and embracing modernism was a way of making their first home indisputably their own. ■

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