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Above the rhythms of the Big Apple, B. Smith, restaurateur and lifestyle designer and her husband and business partner, Dan Gasby, create a pas de deux. In their sophisticated GE Monogram kitchen, a pair of dishwashers are completely in tune with this harmonious relationship.

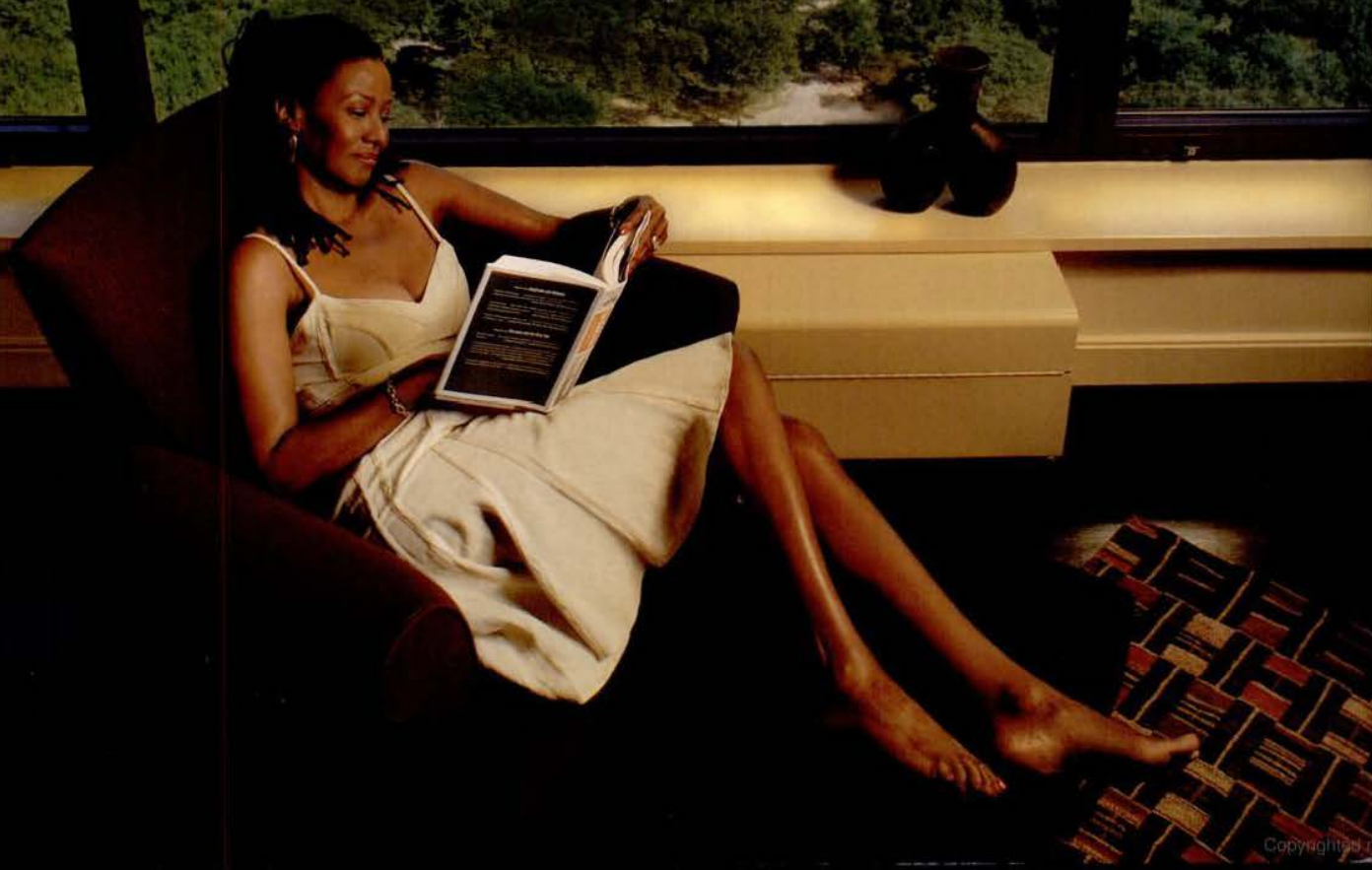
imagination at work



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**Penthouse.  
Central Park.  
Sunrise.**

So what's cooking in the kitchen?





At water's edge, B and Dan harvest herbs and tomatoes that enliven the flavors in the *cioppino*. Their spacious GE Monogram kitchen, with both a speed oven and a multi-function oven, gives further credence to the adage: two are better than one.

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**Beach house.  
Sag Harbor.  
Sunset.**

So what's cooking in the kitchen?



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This One



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A young child with dark hair is smiling broadly, looking upwards and to the left. The child is wearing a light-colored, button-down shirt under a tan or khaki blazer. The blazer has two large, prominent flap pockets on the front. The child is also wearing matching khaki pants that are cut off at the ankles. The background is a plain, light color.

nature's gifts

**hudson, 21 months**  
khaki blazer  
cut off khakis



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*Things to do while you're alive:*

- Go to the Super Bowl
- See a Broadway show, front-row center
- Go to the Olympic Games
- Ski the first tracks at Deer Valley
- Try to hit a major-league fastball
- Stay at a five-star hotel and upgrade your room
- See the Northern Lights
- Take a train ride on the Orient Express
- Go to the Galapagos Islands
- Ride a motorcycle across the U.S.
- Help dig for dinosaur bones
- Float along the Nile
- Own a set of Frette linens
- Volunteer to help save the environment
- Climb Mount Olympus
- Watch the Sumo Wrestling Championship in Japan
- Ride a mule through the Grand Canyon
- Train like an astronaut at space camp
- Fly across the Atlantic in a private jet
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- Drink a mint julep at the Kentucky Derby

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# dwell

"It was just a bunch of cats, random fabric everywhere, crazy lights. It was totally makeshift, with seven different renovation styles. It was crazy." —Greg Martin

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**Editor's Note**

Editor-in-Chief Sam Grawe on design's sultry charms—from miniature chairs to renovated homes.

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**Renovate!  
Reuse!  
Recycle!**

Leif Parsons illustrates the importance of imagination in renovation and reuse.

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**Sun Mun Way Cool**

The Berniers' living room once served as a stage for Blondie and The Ramones. Now the family's two boys bring down the house in Los Angeles's Chinatown. **Story by David Greene / Photos by Bryce Duffy**

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**Keep Your Eye on the Balto**

"Good juju" and java-fueled moxie helped Greg Martin turn a disjointed commercial building in Minneapolis, Minnesota, into his home. **Story by Georgina Gustin / Photos by Cameron Wittig**

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**WestEnders**

Portland, Oregon's, Jeff Kovel and Skylab Design Group reincarnated a former bathhouse, creating a mixed-use space as beatific as it is beautiful. **Story by Aaron Britt / Photos by John Clark**

## Adaptive Reuse

### April 2007

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Photo by Bryce Duffy

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Sze Tsung Leong's photographs document the growing pains of China's rapid development.

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**Make New Rooms**

Business in the front, party in the back: these three homes find new life in their own backyards. **Story by Fred A. Bernstein**



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Forget cracking the book, now you can click the mouse for new content: A preview of what's to come from our editors, exclusively on [dwell.com](#).

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## My House

Adding a third floor allowed these San Franciscans to build up equity without building out.

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Prefab and sustainable for \$170,000? We'd like to see houses such as Youmeheshe's 7.83 Hz occur with more frequency.

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## Nice Modernist

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Shared histories but divergent nationalities are breeding a new cool in the Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

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Three is prime in Tokyo: Designer's Week, 100% Design and Design Tide; plus Las Vegas's Consumer Electronics Show.

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For the London firm FAT (Fashion Architecture Taste), architecture is a buffet—and they're sampling every dish.

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The lasting impression of architect Eliot Noyes: From MoMA to Mobil stations to Martha's Vineyard, he made an imprint on the visual world.

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Strap on your respirators: Architect David Baker outlines the ten steps of eco-friendly renovations.

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Edible Estates ruminates on the American attachment to grass and shares the bounty of their front lawn garden victories.

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## Profile

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Architecture on the radio sounds like an oxymoron, but Los Angeles editor Frances Anderton hits the airwaves on KCRW and *de stijls* the show.

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## Detour

Brian Keaney of Tonfisk Design may be Irish, but his Finnish is flawless; he guides us through ice-cold Helsinki's hot spots.

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## Sourcing

Don't call us, we'll call it out for you: The page where all the links to goods and services awaits!

# 224

## Houses We Love

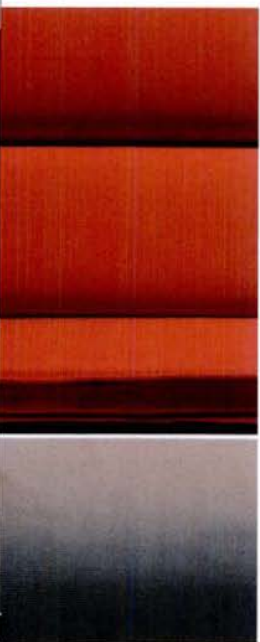
Apartments inside concrete-mixing silos sounds like a Cold War legend, but it's the reality of reuse in Conway, Arkansas.

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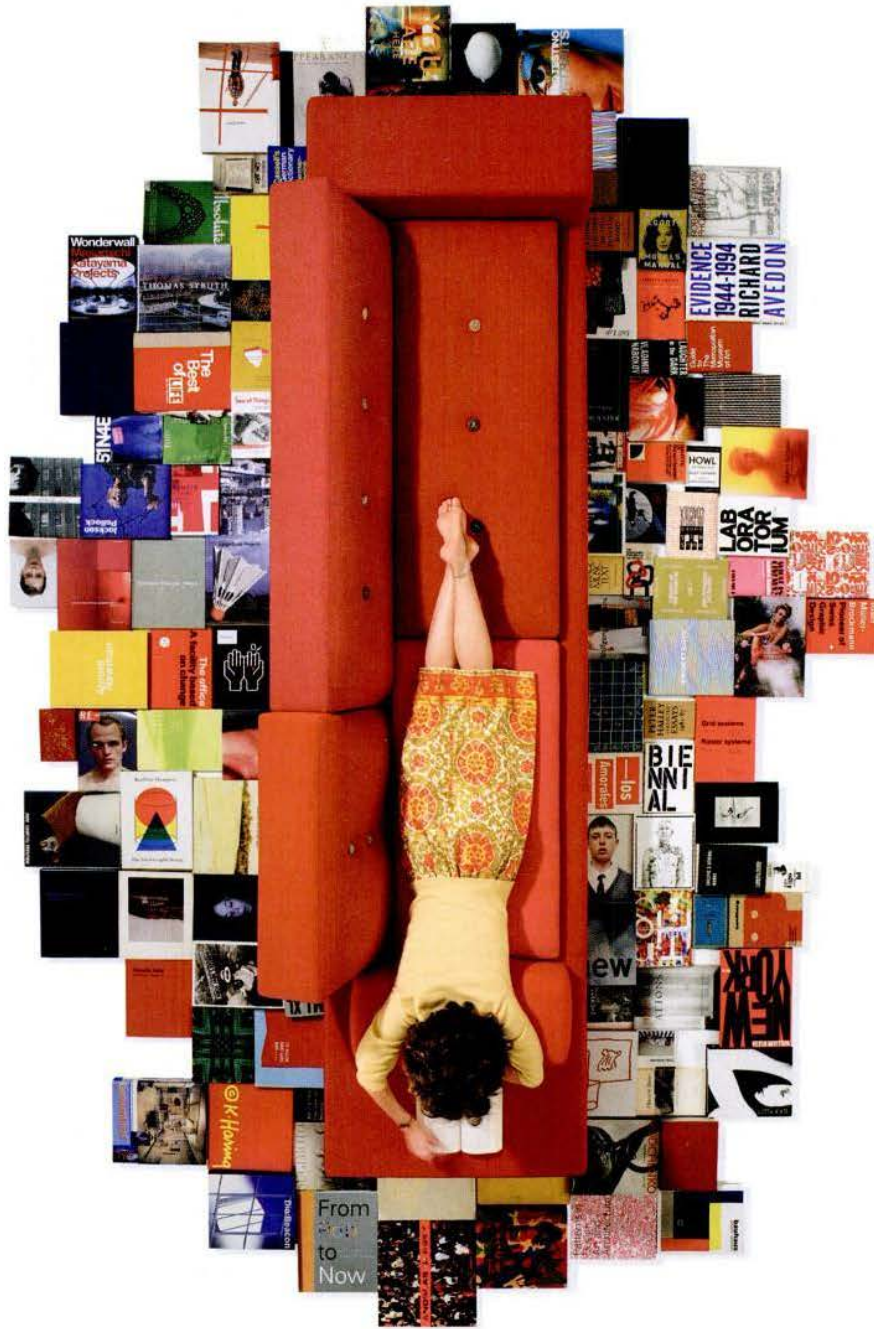
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A vignette in editor-in-chief Sam Grawe's new office includes (clockwise from the hanging IKEA planter): miniature Eames chair; Kaj Frank milk pitcher; Wyoming elk antler and G building block (both gifts from editor Amber Bravo); picture of Milton Grawe during WWII; eight crayons; books from Chronicle Books; Japanese classical 45 rpm records; jade plant from Oakland (unplanted for four years); Syd Mead matchbox limo; National Magazine Award (available from ASME); Dwell editorial map; phone; Algue from the Bouroullec Brothers.



**Thank you for highlighting the art of craft in your February 2007 issue.** I especially enjoyed your articles on photographer Abelardo Morrell (whose work I love); felted Claudy Jongstra; and etsy.com creator, Rob Kalin. I am a photographer and a knitter of felted handbags, and I just opened my own Etsy shop this month (GoKatKnit.etsy.com). It was wonderful to see these three areas of interest featured in your magazine.

In addition, I loved the wonderful colors and design of the cover. I simply had to photograph it and post it on my flickr.com photostream. I have been a subscriber to your magazine for more than two years. I always enjoy reading it, even though I'm not a homeowner and may never be one. I love design, photography, and architecture, and your magazine does a fine job covering all areas. Thanks for the inspiration.

**Kat Miner**

San Diego, California

**I found Dan Maginn's article, "Your House, Your Sandwich" (February 2007),** very entertaining and to the point. Each step of the process of working with a client seemed to be hilariously right on. However, I take exception to the comment that "our ham sandwich is going to be a tidily crafted sandwich and not some Cajun pork wrap." I have lived most of my 63 years in Acadiana and have never heard of a "Cajun pork wrap." But I can guarantee Mr. Magin that if it was done authentically Cajun, it would be very good, and not some "tidily crafted sandwich."

**Eddie Cazayoux**

Breaux Bridge, Louisiana

**As a resident of Vancouver and a subscriber to Dwell,** I was excited to see "Vancouver Manuevers" in the February issue. I have to ask, however, does the author actually live in the city? I was surprised to find such little and misleading information in the article. For example: Holstein remarks that "for some reason or another we Vancouverites appreciate good design, but spend our life savings on a mediocrre condo." To explain more clearly: Partly to blame for this circumstance is that we are in an inflated real estate market, living in the most expensive city to buy a home in Canada—the 15th most expensive in the world (*Vancouver Sun*). The author also fails to mention the abundance of older architecture, omitting entire districts of heritage buildings (Mount Pleasant), the abundance of modernist architecture (Vancouver Public Library, Simon Fraser University, Canada Customs Building, BC Electric Building, Queen Elizabeth Theatre). Where are examples of recent architecture?

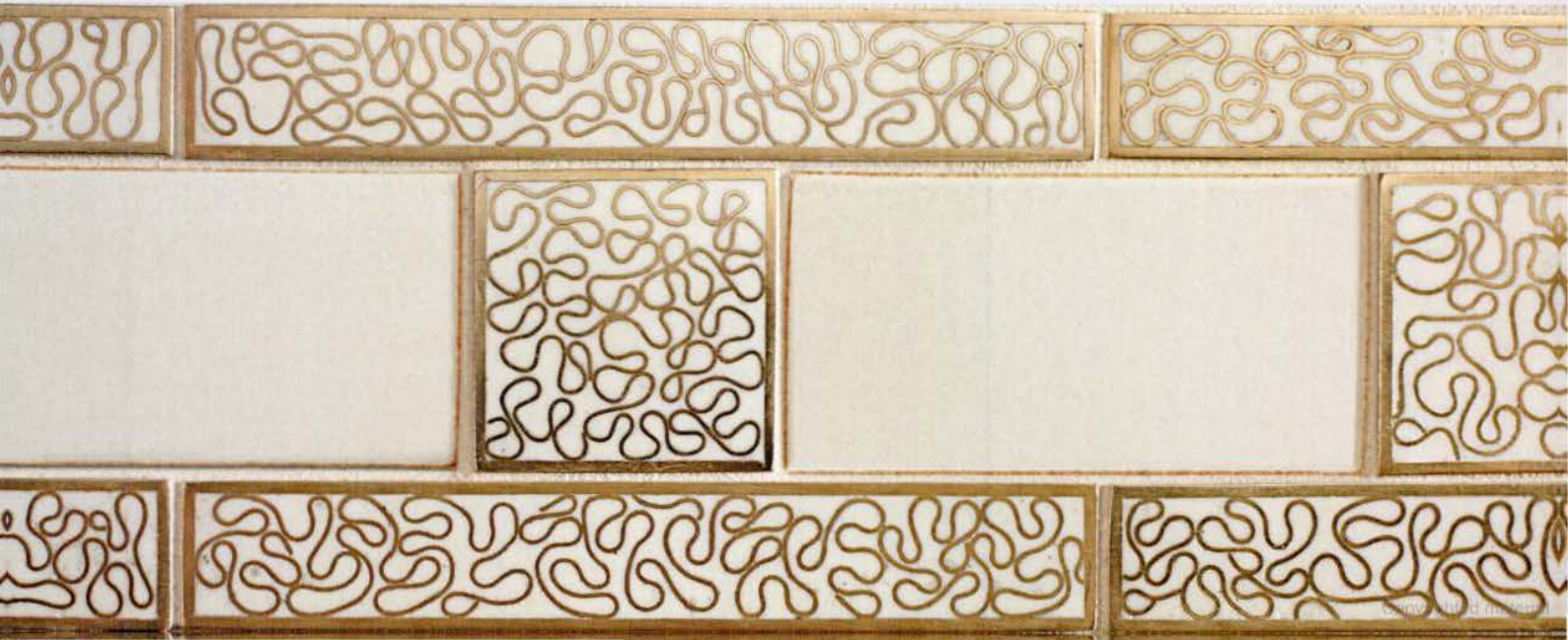
In mentioning Gastown, Holstein notes that ►



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it is the entry point of heroin into North America, and praises the developers who “bought all the scary crack houses to turn them into cool places.” Gastown, as well as other parts of Vancouver, does have problems with poverty and drug use, but I am slightly offended at the lack of humanity the author displays in recognizing this. Gastown is the oldest part of Vancouver, and tourists congregate here to see the architecture and cobbled streets. The “insane juxtaposition” that she mentions of eating cured meats and drinking wine at Salt while watching a drug addict inject heroin is not “how a city grows.” The conditions on the downtown eastside (where Salt is located) have been and still are a complex and highly debated issue in Vancouver. Holstein does include some great parts of Vancouver in her article—we love Arthur Ericksson, Inform has a fabulous new store, and Vij's is very good. But we've got more than that.

**Eva Ravenstein**

Vancouver, British Columbia

**Editors' Note:** *It should be noted that these were not Amara Holstein's opinions, but rather Vancouver native Omer Abel's, whom she interviewed for this article.*

**Thank you for a consistently superior magazine.**

I must, however, confess a puzzlement: I find it difficult to fully comprehend the photographs when they drown beneath the liberal swathes of magenta, cyan, and other colors blazing across various pages. It would seem that the layout staff trumps the work of photographers in the field, and I'm not sure what it is that I gain from that. Would you kindly explain the reasoning behind your approach so that I might understand and appreciate Vancouver (February 2007) when the images are slashed by a continuous bolt of lime? If, perchance, your staff finds difficulty putting their design philosophy into words that this middle-aged man might understand, then I may offer this time-tested adage to fall back on: “Less is more.”

**John A. Bertsch**

San Diego, California

**Editors' Note:** *While design appreciation can be a matter of complete subjectivity, we try to use color as a visual cue to unite sections of the magazine while bringing more life to our pages. In the case of “Detour,” the colored band contains the city name and location on each page so the section can be easily identified. Also, rather than completely obstruct the photography, the color band uses transparency to create an overlaid effect, allowing the image to show through.*

**Are there progressive designers or urban planners who are integrating housing to include people with disabilities?** My sister, a young 52, is paralyzed from MS and uses an electric wheelchair. Aides visit a few times a day for meals. While most would be quick to say she belongs in a nursing home or assisted living facility, she lives independently in her own apartment.

I'm curious if you could point me to any mixed-use residential housing outfitted for accessibility. More and more boomers may face disabilities, and it seems they would be leading a movement to keep themselves independent rather than succumbing to nursing homes and other forms of assisted living.

**Patti Parisi**

Irvine, California

**I'm in the market for a walker for my elderly mother and am curious if you know of any companies or stores that sell or distribute design-conscious mobility aids?** While I think the design of these items has improved over the years (there are different paint finishes and more colors available now), the general design of these devices still seems to be rather clinical and ordinary.

**Naomi London**

Montréal, Canada

**Editors' Note:** *We share your concerns and agree that design is essential to integrating a fully diverse social fabric, which is why we try, whenever possible, to feature residences with universally designed programs. In our March 2005 article, “The Siple Life,” we featured Murray Siple's ranch house renovation, which optimizes space and allows Siple to live independently despite being in a wheelchair. Our November 2006 In The Modern World section featured products from GE's universal design line, as well. In our April 2006 issue Amara Holstein investigated senior housing and innovative alternatives to the traditional retirement community. Also, keep an eye out for our May 2007 issue, which will highlight a New York City apartment renovation that boasts a universally designed program despite limited square footage.*

**I'm a Dwell subscriber and want to comment**

about the use of the United States system in your magazine. Dwell should try the International System as an option; when you write a measurement, write it in both systems. The modern world standard is metric, so come on, let's try.

**Diego Hernandez**

Monterrey, Mexico

**Editors' Note:** *Diego, you are right. There is no excuse for our insensitive, arguably jingoistic,*

*adherence to isolationist nomenclature, but nevertheless allow us to craft a defense, murky as it may be: We are editors, which means two things: that we adhere to a strict style guide, and that we are, for the most part, feeble when it comes to basic arithmetic (you should see us try to split the bill when we go out to lunch—tears have been shed). While this is no excuse, we merely ask that you take pity, and see that we are bound to economy and uniformity when it comes to our treatment of measurements, and since we are a United States-based magazine, and feature predominately United States-based projects, we use the United States system.*

**I have always considered myself more a fan**

of classic buildings and old Victorian homes as opposed to modern design, but after seeing Randy Rappaport's buildings (“Community Building” December/January 2007) up close, I have to say my eyes have been opened.

The approach that he and his architect take to building is what I would call stream-of-consciousness development, which applies to every aspect of the project. His new building has variances throughout, going so far as to having incongruously sized windows. I am a huge fan and cannot wait to see the effect Rappaport has on both the local scene in Portland and the national movement in general. The article was one of the most interesting and personally inspiring I have seen on your pages.

**Brian Auker**

Portland, Oregon

**I appreciate Dwell very much, but how can you**

“Rest Easy” (December/January 2007) knowing you paid thousands of dollars for your mattress? We went to a foam-rubber store where you can have them cut any size, thickness, or density. We had a queen-size, firm, five-inch thick [mattress] cut for \$260, which sits perfectly on our platform bed (no box spring). We use mattress covers on both sides and flip or turn it once a month. It's very lightweight. We've slept on it for ten years, and it will be good for another ten years. Good design and comfort do not have to be expensive.

**Richard Herr**

Elkhorn, Wisconsin

**In October it was \$3,500 chairs, in December**

it was \$75 table settings, and in January it was \$3,000 mattresses. Did somebody replace my Dwell subscription with *Met Home*? Does your “home in the modern world” have room for a family of five on a budget? Please bring things back to reality for the rest of us.

**Adam Pratt**

Wheaton, Illinois ►

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Because it's the rocking that should put you to sleep. Not the chair.



## Letters

**Editors' Note:** Adam and Richard, we understand your concerns—the design world can be expensive. Be that as it may, it is possible to live stylishly on a budget, which is why we dedicated our March 2007 issue to affordable, modern design. While we will continue to show a range of products and projects, we hope to never get irrevocably top-of-the-line heavy.

**Would you ever consider a column on great items** that your readers have bought/found at garage and estate sales? There are many wonderful modern pieces that come up all the time. It would be interesting and educational for your readers. Also, the prices can't be beat!

**Lawrence S. Wach**  
Capistrano Beach, California

**Editors' Note:** While we are not planning a section devoted to garage/estate sale finds in the magazine, there is a place for our readers to post their modern designs on our website. Visit [www.dwell.com/connect/modernmyway](http://www.dwell.com/connect/modernmyway) to find out more.

**It was with surprise and a sense of appreciation** that I saw Aaron Britt's article "Lustig for Life" (December/January 2007). I attended Art Center and the California School of Art under the GI Bill in the 1950s and was very fortunate to have Mr. Lustig as one of my instructors. I received great inspiration and confidence from his teachings and owe him everlasting gratitude.

My own career as an architectural illustrator and designer has always reflected his design philosophy over these many years (I am 84 years old now). Please express my thanks to Elaine Lustig Cohen for sharing a part of Mr. Lustig's life and career with me.

**Robert E. Fansler**  
Whidbey Island, Washington

**Your piece on lack of community** ("Oh, Won't You Be My Neighbor," December/January 2007) in places that are designed to promote it hit me hard. Lack of connection is one of the elephants in the room that we don't talk about, especially in the cheery, buy-more-stuff magazine world. Sometimes I feel like it's just me.

Thank you for making me feel like I'm not alone. Not that you fixed anything, but at least you mentioned it. Now how about an article on cohousing developments, which are created with community creation as a design goal?

**Marylou Avanzino**  
San Jose, California

**I enjoy reading your magazine, so much so that** I have taken to rationing it every month so the

time between is as short as possible. Coincidentally, the article I want to congratulate you on had very few words. I enjoyed your article "Building Blocks" (December/January 2007) that featured Yasuo Moriyama's lovely minimalist complex by Ryue Nishizawa. I appreciate your decision to keep the text to a minimum and let the beautiful photography do the talking. Only featuring captions and photos was a creative solution. Don't give up writing altogether though! Keep up the good work.

**Nathan O'Daniel**  
Goleta, California

**I just read with great interest the story by Fred A. Bernstein** "Wright Now" (November 2006). I noted with some sadness his reference to the Frank Lloyd Wright Building Conservancy's estimate that there are but two dozen original clients still living in the residences he designed for them.

You may not know, but one of those clients lives here in the Bay Area. Mr. and Mrs. Maynard Buehler hired Wright in 1949 to design their Orinda, California, home. It was 70 percent destroyed by fire in the mid-'90s. I rebuilt it under the direction of the original "clerk of the works," Mr. Walter Olds, who was selected by Wright to oversee its original construction. The new house is said to be better than the original and has been featured in a variety of publications. We lost Mr. Buehler last year, but his widowed wife continues to lovingly occupy the house. Mr. Olds is in his late 80s and lives in Berkeley. He has just completed the working drawings for a superb house under construction in Kenwood.

**Keith R. Alward**  
Berkeley, California

**Correction:** On page 84 of "What We Saw" (February 2007) we stated that the moose head was by Big-Game, when in fact it was designed by Augustin Scott de Martinville for Vlaemsch ([www.vlaemsch.be](http://www.vlaemsch.be)). We regret the error.

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Doug Adesko ("Top Notch," p. 77) fashions a lift to shoot the Koshkarian-DiFrancesco house on Potrero Hill in San Francisco, California.

## Contributors

Our London editor, **Iain Aitch** ("Hz So Good," p. 87), has enjoyed eating his home-delivered organic greens for the past five years, so he was delighted to discover that he may soon be able to order a prefab organic house as well. He predicts that two more years of organic spinach will see him strong enough to help with any assembly that might be required.

**Arnie Cooper** ("The Lawn Good-bye," p. 136) is a freelance writer based in Santa Barbara, California. Working on the "Edible Estates" story brought back childhood memories of attempting to grow orange and avocado plants from seed in his parents' New York City apartment. Now that he lives in southern California he can enjoy the real thing in his own garden.

**Michael Dumiak** ("Baltic Breakout," p. 104) has been writing about technology, science, and design for several years and is currently based in Berlin; his recent swing through the Baltics is the second he has made. "The last trip, I was there to look at a tuberculosis ward. This time, to check out one of the more vibrant design scenes in Europe," he says. "It's a region full of contradictions. It's full of talented, forward-looking young people, but is not that far removed from a troubled past. Vilnius is less than a half-hour's drive from Byelorussia, a dark place indeed. The Baltics are rarely boring." This is his first piece for Dwell.

**David A. Greene** ("Sun Mun Way Cool," p. 144) is a screenwriter living in Los Angeles. While researching Dan and Amy Bernier's renovated punk-rock club in Los Angeles's Chinatown, he was thrilled to learn that club headliners included his high school idols, The Reducers, bringing back fond memories of sneaking into the El'n'Gee club in New London, Connecticut, slam-dancing, and drinking cheap beer. He also hopes his parents' subscription to Dwell has lapsed.

**Georgina Gustin** ("Keep Your Eye on the Balto," p. 152) is a reporter for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. A recent transplant from the East Coast, she's enjoyed exploring design and architecture in the middle swath of

the country, including travels northward, to Minneapolis, for this month's feature. She remains unconvinced that residents of that city are not called Minneapolites.

**Brad Hines** ("Cool It," p. 94) is a Los Angeles-based freelance photographer. Accustomed to the demands of shooting celebrities for work, Hines found photographing the low-maintenance Susumu Ueda a welcomed reprieve. A professed mid-century-modern addict, Hines purchased a 1965 flat-roof house and put into it as much glass as was structurally feasible. Currently, his two puppies, Peanut and Ginger, are doing their best to gnaw through what's left of the house's other surfaces.

**Hertha Hurnaus** ("Helsinki Rising," p. 194) is a Vienna-based freelance photographer. She was excited to travel to her favorite European metropolis for Dwell, but being accustomed to visiting midsummer, when the days are mythically long, she had to adjust to Helsinki in mid-December—and to shooting against the midmorning dawn.

**Rod Miller** ("A Concrete Plan," p. 224) teaches art history at Hendrix College and lives in Conway, Arkansas. The concrete factory project has been a high point in a town molested by sprawl. Miller became so enamored with the conversion that he forced his wife and three daughters to suffer through frequent drivebys to check out the progress. When he isn't arguing with students over grades, he occasionally works on writing a history of collegiate chapels.

**Jennifer Roberts** ("Dwell Labs," p. 132) lives in San Francisco and is the author of three books on green homes, including *Redux: Designs That Reuse, Recycle, and Reveal*. She has become obsessed with stockpiling salvaged materials for an ever-growing list of home-improvement projects that she swears she will get to this year, including a sliding window screen made of street signs from a never-built Nevada subdivision and a chicken coop made from old cabinets still taking up space in her garage after last year's kitchen remodel. ■



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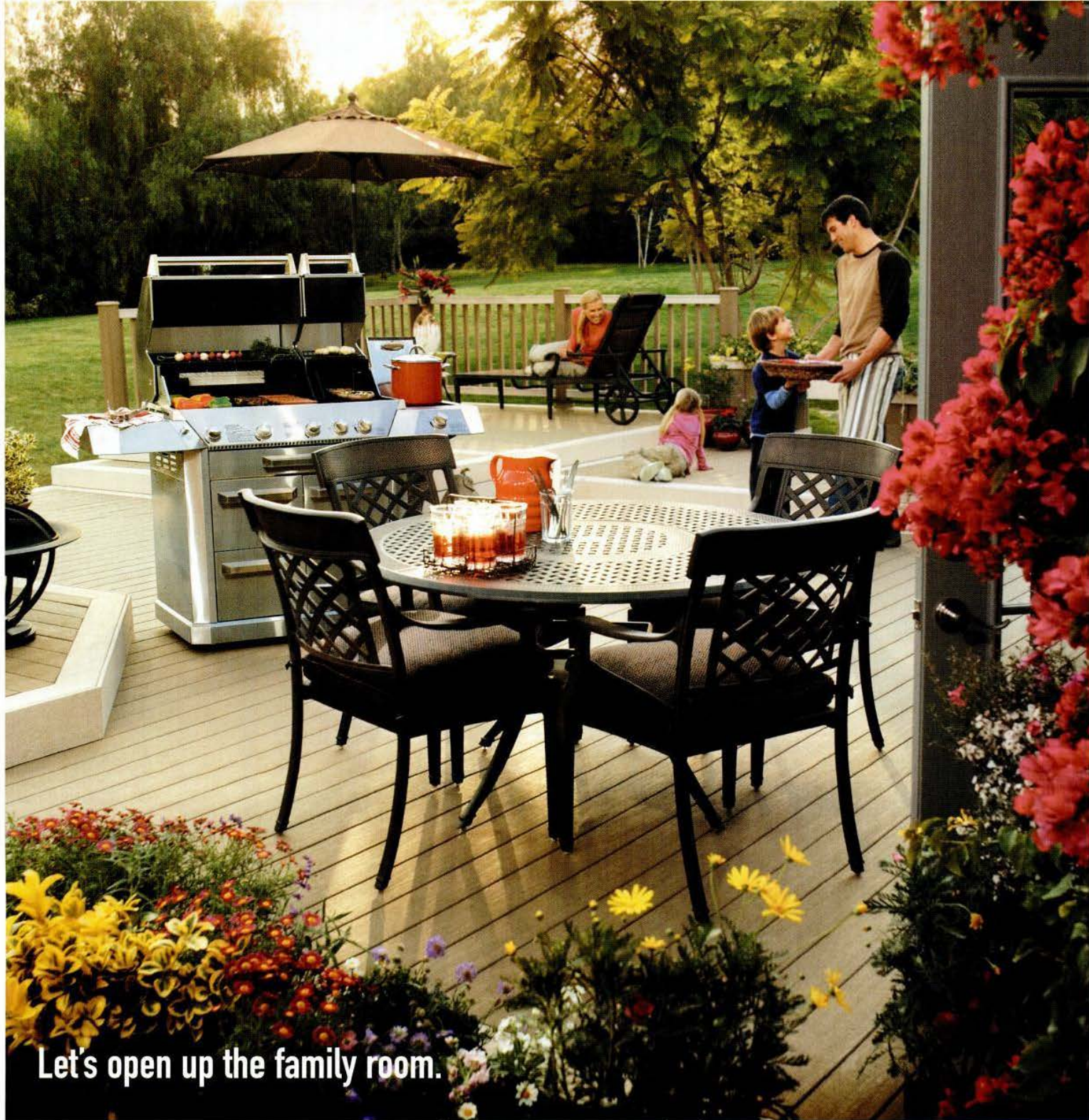
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## We(e) All Love Design

Despite their purposelessness, I enjoyed identifying each of the Vitra Miniatures in the picture below. Whoever is the first to respond with all 23 chairs correctly identified will win a special prize from the Dwell editorial office. Good luck!

While putting together this issue of *Dwell*, I was struck by the photograph below of 23 classic chairs piled up like a dumpster diver's dream. While they make for compelling imagery, these Vitra Miniatures arguably represent the most negative aspects of high design: fetishistic, expensive, and (unless somebody can explain it to me) useless. \$575 seems like a hefty enough price tag for a life-sized chair. Still, I'll admit that I'm guilty of succumbing to the miniature—a *Stuart Little*-scaled Eames chair is sitting behind me as I type this letter (see page 28—and also please note that it was a gift).

Good design is seductive, even when its tiny. For many of us, wanting an impeccably crafted object, or a well-designed home, is an all-consuming force that likely dates back to cave-choosing. Yet few can afford to act on the impulse to own beautiful, expensive things (I usually opt for groceries), leaving us to wonder what it would be like to live with Corian counters, have glass-tiled bathrooms with showers that have multiple nozzles, and recline on five-figure sofas while watching television.

Luckily, this issue of *Dwell* isn't about pining for what

you don't have—it's about seeing the potential in what's already there. The homes we've chosen to feature are the equivalent of the nerdy girl who by the end of the movie has removed her glasses, gotten a new hairdo, won the boy, and been voted homecoming queen. These projects are also all examples of adaptive reuse—a topic that relates directly to sustainability and urban revitalization.

These homes were formerly restaurants, nightclubs, warehouses, insurance company headquarters, shelters, bathhouses, concrete plants—even a men's underwear store. Not exactly what comes to mind when you think of a place to hang your hat. By scratching through the surface (and revealing boarded-up windows), and taking chances that would have deterred even hardened builders (such as prying apart a building's façade to accommodate a huge window-cum-skylight), these residents have created dynamic and wholly unique living spaces—with results even a neanderthal would lust after.

SAM GRAWE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
[sam@dwell.com](mailto:sam@dwell.com)



integra

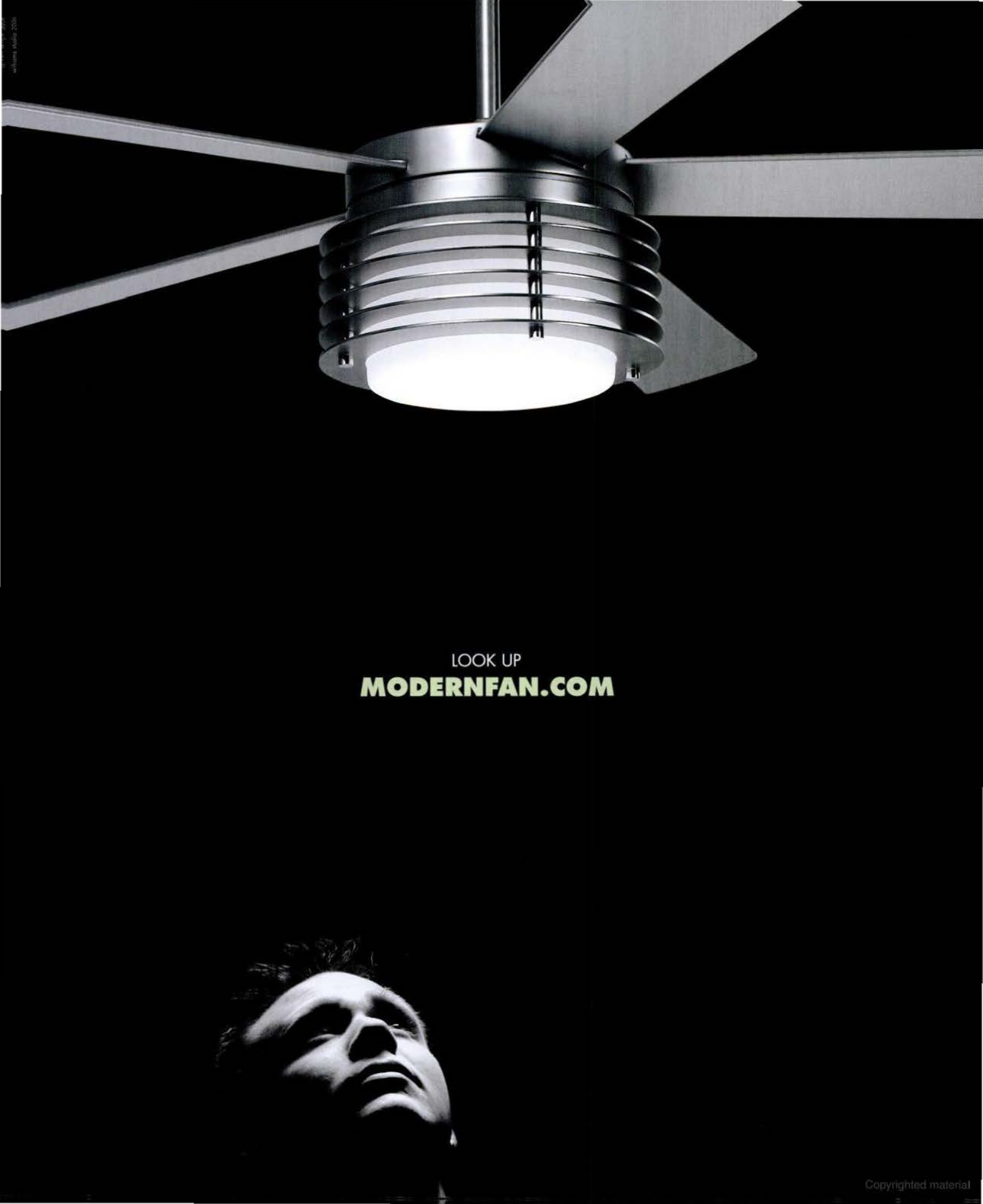
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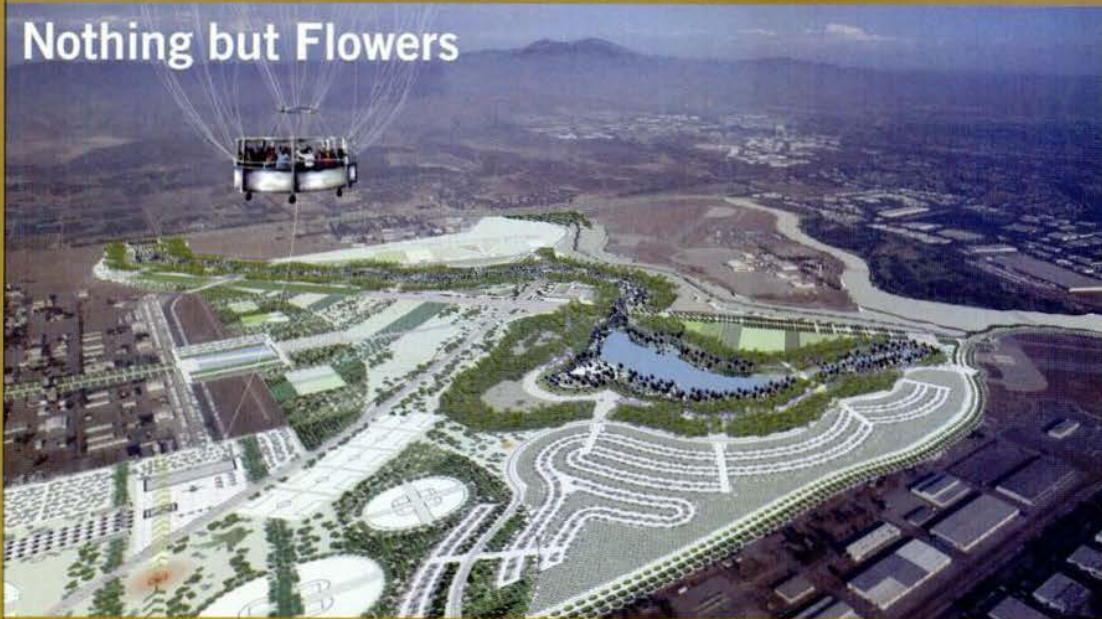


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## Nothing but Flowers



Residents of Irvine, California, have voted to create Orange County Great Park, a major metropolitan park on 1,350 acres at the former Marine Corps Air Station at El Toro.

### Only Online

The Talking Heads' song "(Nothing but) Flowers" imagines developed landscapes returning to their natural state. Its lyrics came to mind recently as I watched the flowering of not one, but three ambitious schemes for turning chunks of industrialized land in Southern California into open green space. —Frances Anderton, Los Angeles editor

## Now

### The Best Time

The American Institute of Architects presents: National Architecture Week, April 8–14, 2007. [dwell.com/Now](http://dwell.com/Now)

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### Duly Noted

Join Dwell editor Amber Bravo at the opera. Explore the proposal for Orange County Great Park with Los Angeles editor Frances Anderton. Each week, one of our intrepid editors, whether in the office or on the way to Helsinki, posts an Editor's Note on architecture, design, or modern living. [dwell.com/Source](http://dwell.com/Source)





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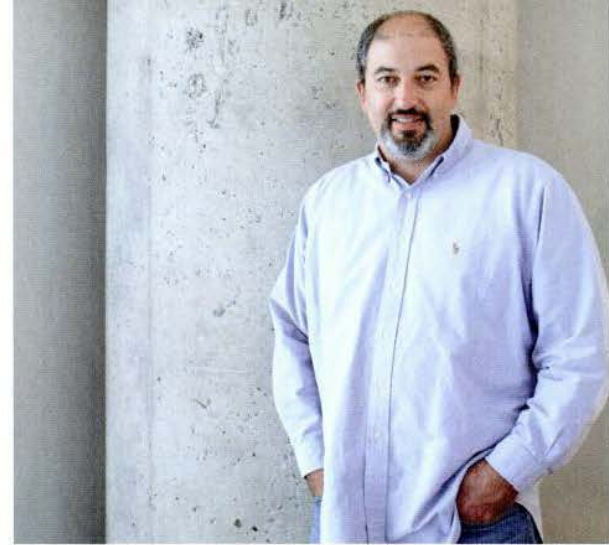


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## Downtown Los Angeles Redesigned—One Building at a Time.

Yuval Bar-Zemer, partner in Linear City LLC, is one of a handful of influential developers working to turn downtown Los Angeles into a vibrant, creative community and a true neighborhood. Their Toy Factory Lofts project is now a leading light in the area, and another upcoming project, the Biscuit Company Lofts in the former National Biscuit Company bakery, will surely be another example of great, livable urban design.

Bar-Zemer told us why it is important that their projects are authentic to the original architecture of the area, and why they use CaesarStone Quartz Surfaces to complete the interior statements.

**Q. Describe the transition you've witnessed—and been a part of—in downtown LA.**

**A.** Until five or six years ago, in Los Angeles, living in an urban context was a foreign concept. Adaptive reuse regulations

changed that and allowed for a flow of exciting projects that are helping to create a distinct arts district downtown, and loft expansion is leading the way. We think the most exciting projects are those that restore the old glory of the original architecture.

**Q. What is the creative mission that drives Linear City LLC's projects?**

**A.** Some developers want to erase whatever is on the ground. To me, that seems out of context. It simply doesn't fit an environment that is an industrial district. We feel it should read what it is, and we proudly maximize the original appearance and architecture and bring it to light. We want our buildings to have that same authentic sense from the outside to the inside.

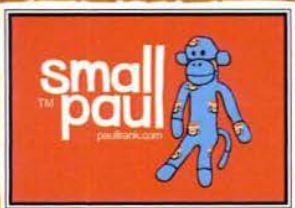
**Q. How do CaesarStone Quartz Surfaces fit in to your vision?**

**A.** We looked to CaesarStone Quartz

Surfaces for our first project at Toy Factory three to four years ago. It's a concrete building, and CaesarStone's palette matched the palette of materials we were using. Their product has a subtle message of quality—it doesn't scream "fancy"—and it doesn't take over the statement in the units. It really appeals to the creative people that are our market in that it is not over designed. It has a perfect functionality and it's the only material we've found that is indestructible. Using CaesarStone has been a home run for us.

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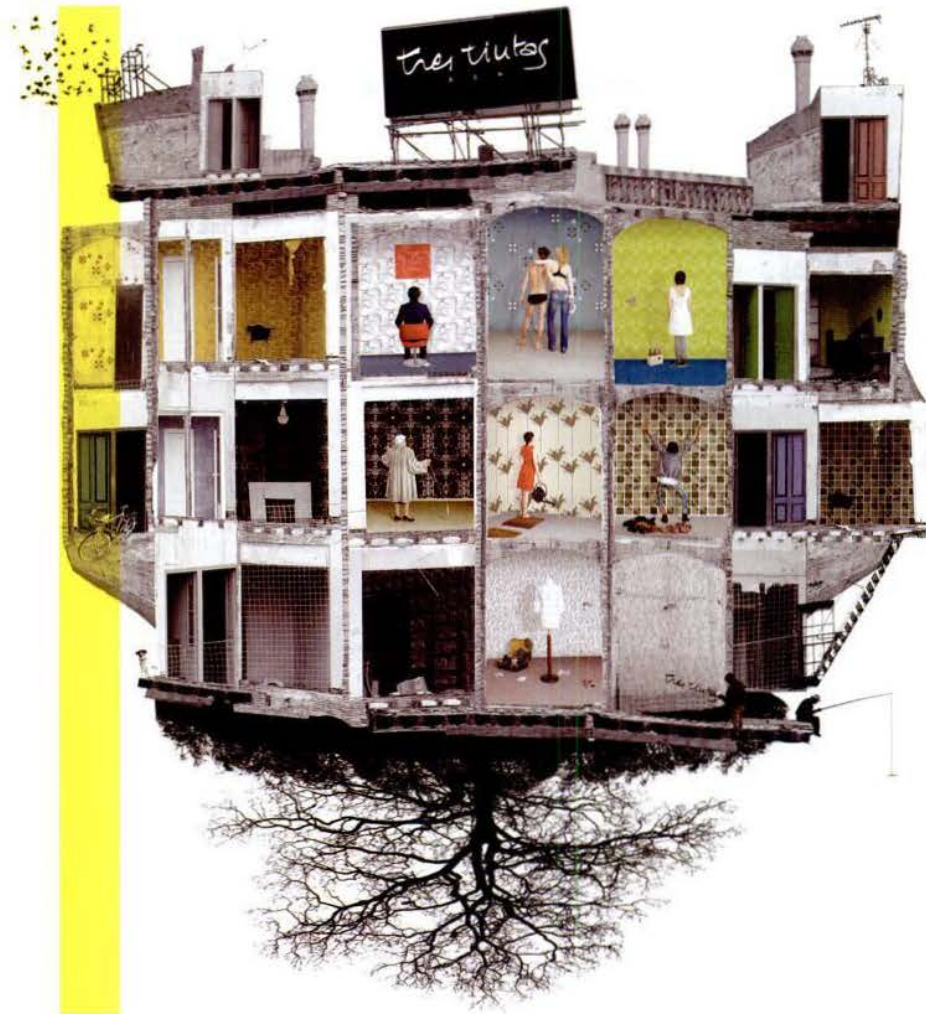
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**Déjà Vu Wallpaper Collection / By Tres Tintas / [www.trestintas.com](http://www.trestintas.com) /** If only we could lift off façades for a day and see the beauty that lies behind constructed walls. No, we haven't gone nouveau hippie on you, but wouldn't it be nice if all dingy apartment blocks looked like this inside?



Although these are newly designed prints, there is a delightful déjà-vu (not the creepy Denzel Washington kind) to this collection, especially in Sophie Leblanc's designs. Pájaros (left), inspired by climbing vegetation, Galaxias (middle), based on childhood spirograph drawings, and Lámparas (right), recreated from notebook doodles, remind us of a bygone era when walls told stories. The crossbreeding of patterns that Tres Tintas promotes is refreshing when so much wallpaper looks like something you swear you've seen before.



**Kone Deco & Marimekko** / [www.marimekko.fi](http://www.marimekko.fi) / Don't lie, when you're in the elevator you do the same thing we do: clasp your hands politely and pretend to be entranced by the imaginary entertainment unfolding on the ceiling. Thankfully Marimekko and elevator company Kone have partnered to assuage those awkward silences by featuring bold prints in their lifts.



**Beads & Pieces** / By Hella Jongerius for Artecnic / [www.artecnicainc.com](http://www.artecnicainc.com) / Beauty is not only in the eye of the beholder, as Artecnic's new Design with Conscience line proves, it's also in the process of production. Seamlessly tying social responsibility to elegant design, the line includes glassware made from recycled wine and beer bottles, chandeliers created by a Brazilian women's cooperative, and the Beads & Pieces ceramics line (above), conceived by Hella Jongerius and produced in Peru by the Shipibo tribe. It's design with a heart.



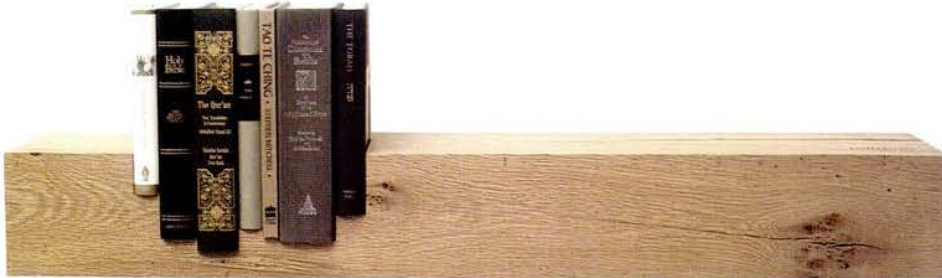
**Mico** / By El Ultimo Grito for Magis / [www.magis.com](http://www.magis.com) / This innovative twist on children's furniture from Magis's Me Too Collection is sure to stimulate even the most demanding rugrats. Functioning as anything from a winsome desk to an unexpected rocking chair, the organic form suggests gnarled roots or a mutant yam, and the durable molded polyethylene makes it a perfect addition to the playroom or tree house—even the living room.

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**Drawing From the Modern / Essays By Hauptman, Garrels & Kantor / MoMA / [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org) / \$100 /** Representing the last 125 years of drawing, the movers and shakers of the affirmed art world appear in MoMA's three-book boxed collection. Just as your fourth grade art teacher made you draw before you could paint, the humble practice has served as the gateway for art movements and star-tists alike.



**Juxtaposed: Religion / By Mike and Maaike for BlankBlank / Curated by John Simonian / [www.blankblank.net](http://www.blankblank.net) /** Religion, the first in the Juxtaposed series, presents seven holy tomes nestled perfectly in a custom, reclaimed hardwood shelf. With plenty of room left for incense and myrrh, each holy writ sits at the same ecumenical height. Though the *Bible*, *Tao Te Ching*, *Qur'an*, and *Torah* all come standard, *Dianetics* didn't make the cut.

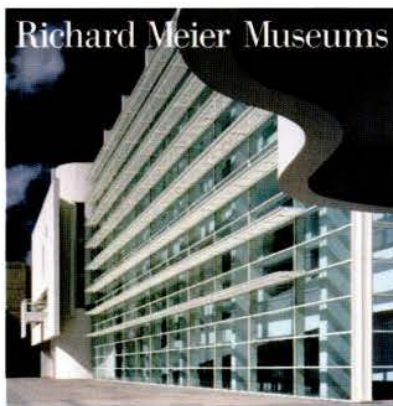


**Skystream Residential Power Appliance / [www.skystreamenergy.com](http://www.skystreamenergy.com) /** Create a "Wind of Change" with this 1.8 kilowatt residential wind turbine. All you need to have your own backyard power (ballad) is an agreement with your local utility, at least 10 mph average wind speed, a property with a half acre or more space, and zoning laws that allow structures like this.

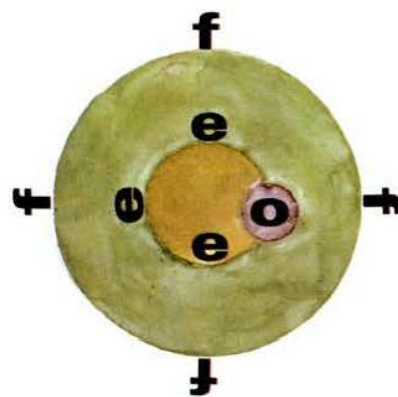




**Bowie Lamp** / By Rerun Productions / [www.rerunproductions.com/](http://www.rerunproductions.com/)  
 If you're thinking red suspenders, beret, and signature dance—this is a different Rerun. The handmade lamps and furnishings from this family-run studio are made almost entirely from recycled parts such as copper piping, guitar strings, brake rotors, and hard disks, but you wouldn't know it by looking at the refined designs. The rich color palette adds to the eclectic character of the lighting collection, transforming the salvaged parts into contemporary heirlooms.



**Richard Meier Museums** / By Richard Meier / Rizzoli / \$85 / [www.rizzoliusa.com/](http://www.rizzoliusa.com/)  
 In the words of Meier, "Architecture is a tradition, a long continuum. Whether we break with tradition or enhance it, we are still connected to that past." Rizzoli provides a look into Meier's own history with the release of the first compilation of his museum designs. Pages of vivid photography, diagrams, and detailed narratives document the architectural footprints Meier has left behind—from Barcelona's MACBA (pictured) to Los Angeles's Getty Center.



**Tragicos Finales**  
 Ocarte, 1960s

**Feo**  
 Jose A. Caceres, 1960s

**Ubu Web** / [www.ubu.com/](http://www.ubu.com/)  
 Remember the glory days of mix-tapes (and the labor of producing them)? Ubu.com is like the raddest multimedia mix-tape ever made, with no need to rewind. Want to hear Jack Kerouac's voice? He's here. Didn't catch Pipilotti Rist's exhibit at the Venice Biennale? Bone-up on her early videos. Even the entirety of the avant-garde magazine-in-a-box, Aspen, is cached on Ubu—along with more obscure creations, such as these two '60s concrete poems (above).

PHOTO BY JESSICA J. MILLER (LAMP)

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"EVERY ROOM SHOULD MAKE A  
**COLORFUL** STATEMENT."

- Jonathan Adler, Potter/Designer

*Jonathan Adler has been molding clay since the age of twelve. He learned to throw pottery at summer camp. Since then, he's taken his love of pottery and molded it into a sprawling empire of "happy chic" home furnishings. Jonathan has never been afraid to infuse a room with vivid color and bold style, so it's only natural that he would be drawn to the vibrant, Full HD 1080p picture of the new 46" Sharp AQUOS. His over-the-top style is the perfect match for the larger-than-life performance of the world's leading innovator in LCD-TVs.*

**Q: How do you work with color?**

"I believe that color is a natural mood enhancer and that your home should make you feel happy. I'm always looking for new ways to liven up a living space, be it a kitchen, a bedroom or a family room. With its colorful, high definition picture, AQUOS is the perfect prescription for a "happy chic" lifestyle. Its Four-Wavelength Backlight System reproduces purer, more accurate reds by adding crimson to blue, green and red. AQUOS not only pumps up the color red, it makes the whole color spectrum richer and more vibrant."

**Q: What's your take on living comfortably with technology in the home?**

"I love mixing and matching with panache. I believe that great designs have a way of complementing each other, regardless of era. The same applies to incorporating technology in the home. The sleek, space-saving lines of AQUOS complement any abode. And if your eye for detail is anything like mine, you'll definitely appreciate the fact that it delivers the highest form of high definition for an incredibly lifelike picture."

**Q: How do you design for intimate settings?**

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about a bedroom with an AQUOS mounted on a wall or perched atop one of my white lacquered end tables. Lounging in bed while watching Law & Order™ on an AQUOS—now that's my idea of heaven."



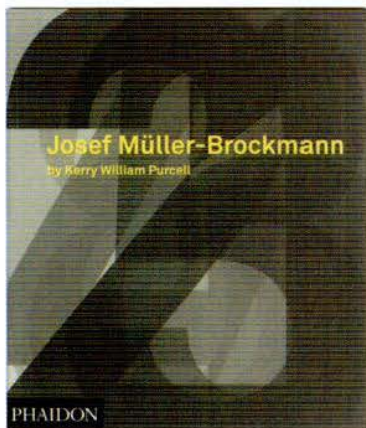
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**Josef Müller-Brockmann** / By Kerry William Purcell / Phaidon / \$75 / [www.phaidon.com](http://www.phaidon.com) / Swiss cheese is known for its holes, just as native son, Josef Müller-Brockmann is known for his use of blank space—so much so that his posters have become iconic “Swiss style.” Müller-Brockmann’s pioneering use of grids, industrial typefaces, and photographs created some of the most celebrated posters of the 20th century.

**Pear lavabo washbasin** / By Patricia Urquiola for Agape / [www.agapedesign.it](http://www.agapedesign.it) / Images of meandering leaves bring the beauty of the backyard to this oft-sterile fixture. Made from white-fire clay, the sink’s soft continuous lines and balanced proportions create a vessel so inviting you’ll wish you could curl up and fall asleep in it. Please experiment only within the comfort of your own bathroom.



**Radical Lace and Subversive Knitting** / 25 Jan–17 June / Museum of Arts & Design (MAD) / New York, NY / [www.madmuseum.org](http://www.madmuseum.org) / Lace and crocheting will be cast off the needles (or cranes) of 27 contemporary artists, making an exhibit radical enough to make even Madame Defarge’s work look tame.



**Althea Merback**  
Ancient Greek Gloves, 2005

**Dave Cole**  
The Knitting Machine, 2005

PHOTO BY ALTHEA MERBACK (GLOVES), COURTESY JUDI ROTENBERG GALLERY, BOSTON (KNITTING MACHINE)

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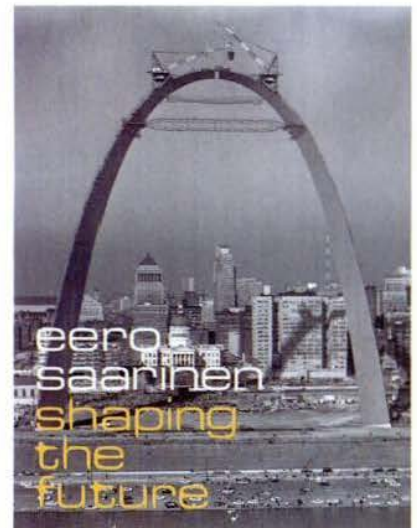
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**Matriochka Dishcloth** / By Atelier Lzc / [www.roseandradish.com](http://www.roseandradish.com) / These daffy dishtowels are the latest from the *plutôt chic* French design firm Atelier Lzc. Ditch your June Cleaver lace and opt for these Technicolor dishcloths inspired by Matriochki, those charmingly ubiquitous Russian nesting dolls. Bound to enliven any kitchen *n'importe quoi*, these tart little towels should suffice in drying your dishes, sopping up slopped Sauternes, and comforting even the most sunken soufflé.



**Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future** / Edited by Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen and Donald Albrecht / Yale University Press / \$65 / [www.yale.edu/yup](http://www.yale.edu/yup) / After World War II, Finnish architect Eero Saarinen played a huge role in establishing America's heartland as a center of progressive design. Seminal works like the GM Technical Center, Gateway Arch, and TWA Flight Center are investigated through sumptuous photos, sketches, and a batch of new essays.



**Bench Toilet** / By Troy Adams Design / [www.troyadamsdesign.com](http://www.troyadamsdesign.com) / The Bench Toilet is a questionable name (who wants to imply that others will be joining you?), but this really is the ultimate commode: both toilet and low-lying cabinet. In the quest for all things clean and sleek, Troy Adams has made a sliding cover to disguise the toilet's flushing function and befuddle your house-guests. Be sure to leave a magazine out so they'll get the picture.

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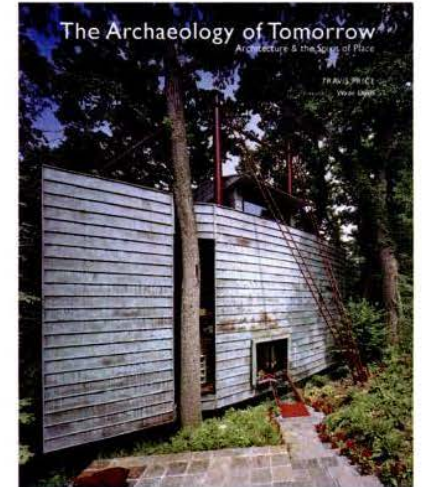
Vik Muniz  
Akte Weimer #157, 2006

Vik Muniz  
Akte Weimer #341, 2006

**Vik Muniz: Reflex** / 11 Feb–7 May / P.S. 1 / Long Island City, NY / [www.ps1.org](http://www.ps1.org) / Sometimes the eyes do deceive, but reflex is true. See why Vik Muniz has called his process “the worst possible illusion.” It’s the first chance to view his “Weimar” series in the United States.



**Oma Citybike** / By Jorg & Olif / [www.jorgandolif.com](http://www.jorgandolif.com) / Ever wince while passing spandex-clad riders on their titanium race bikes, knowing they’re going a total of three blocks for a no-foam-vanilla-soy-extra-hot-chai-latté? If you want to be carbon neutral, but not look like a poser doing so, Jorg & Olif bikes are the perfect solution. The Vancouver-based company is bringing traditional Dutch city bikes to the United States, and dignity and style to American pedalers in the process. These upright riding machines are more comfortable to ride, and feature a bevy of cosmopolitan options.



**The Archeology of Tomorrow: Architecture and the Spirit of Place** / By Travis Price / Earth Aware Editions / \$45 / [www.earthawareeditions.com](http://www.earthawareeditions.com) / Washington D.C. architect Travis Price is a green building pioneer, an avowed modernist, and per this new book, a man with a vision. Unafraid to delve into the spiritual, the sacred and even the eternal, this midcareer retrospective is filled with lavish photographs of his work, philosophy, and grand plan to infuse architecture with more soul.

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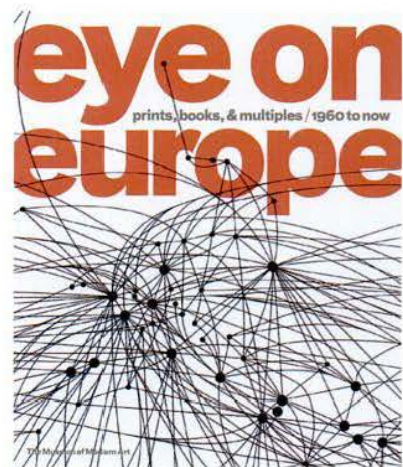
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THERE'S MORE TO SEE



**Electrolux Design Lab / [www.electrolux.com/designlab/](http://www.electrolux.com/designlab/)**

With healthy eating habits in mind, Electrolux held their fourth-annual Design Lab competition in Barcelona, Spain. Nine student finalists presented innovative appliance designs that promote healthy eating habits for the near future through food preservation and preparation. The first-prize winner, Turkish student Metin Kaplan, designed Nevale (left), a personal food carrier and cooker that allows you to store up to four different meals for transport. It keeps food fresh by regulating the temperature and can be programmed to automatically reheat your food at mealtime. Organic Cook (right) designed by Brian Law Chuan Chai, took second place with its capability to fry, grill, and boil food using infrared and vacuum technology. We'd happily trade up from our Tupperware and grandma's crockpot.



**Eye on Europe: Prints, Books, & Multiples: 1960 to Now / By Deborah Wye and Wendy Weitman / D.A.P. / \$65 / [www.artbook.com/](http://www.artbook.com/)** Granted, books, prints, and multiples from Europe in the past 45 years is a pretty heady topic to tackle—a moveable feast if you will. Thanks to MoMA's network, connoisseurs break down the feast into many digestible and delectable courses. Best enjoyed with a 1982 Richter.



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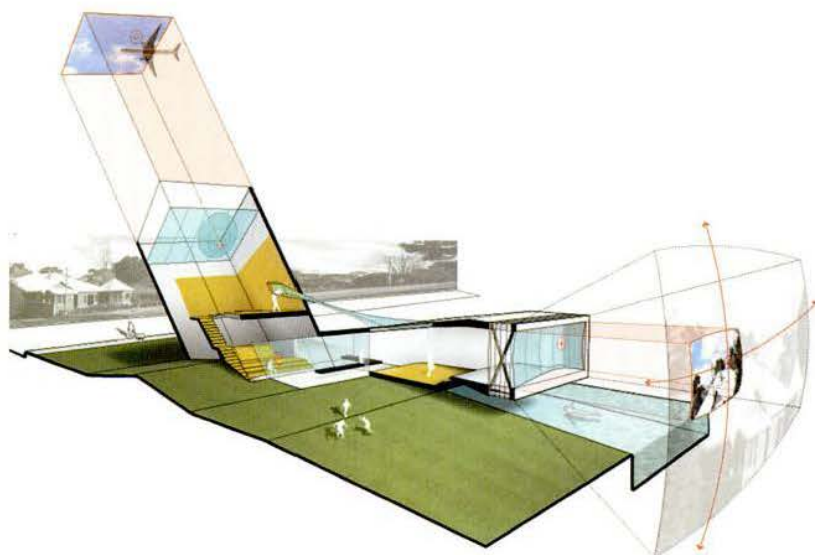
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IwamotoScott  
Jellyfish House, 2006

Joel Sanders, Ben Rubin,  
Karen van Lengen  
Mix House, 2006

**Open House: Architecture and Technology for Intelligent Living** / 14 Apr–1 July / Art Center College of Design / Pasadena, CA / [www.artcenter.edu](http://www.artcenter.edu) / This exhibition organized with the Vitra Design Museum features ten “intelligent house” projects by up-and-coming international architects. The show will explore how homes in the future might integrate technology, architecture, and design in the next 20 years.



This internationally touring exhibition makes its first auspicious appearance at the Art Center College of Design. Open House seeks to create a discussion about how to best utilize recent technologies and to investigate innovative ways that they might be implemented and employed to enhance our domestic lives. Through the work of burgeoning international architecture firms like Atelier Hitoshi Abe from Japan, Sean Godsell Architects of Australia, and EscherGuneWardena Architects from the United States, the exhibition will provide a glimpse into future strategies and solutions for the home. The event dovetails with the conference Dwell on Design: The Intelligent House on April 27–29. This collaboration between Dwell and Art Center will showcase a diverse lineup of architects, designers, and academics, several of whom are currently featured in the exhibition.



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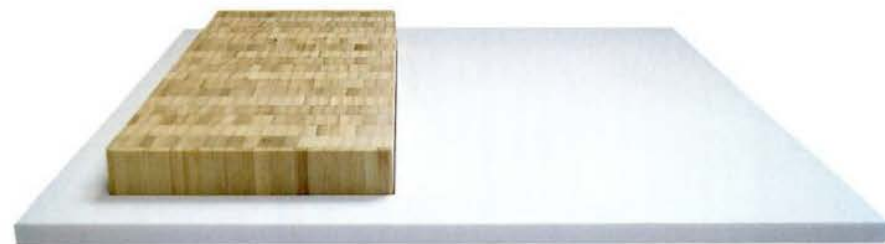
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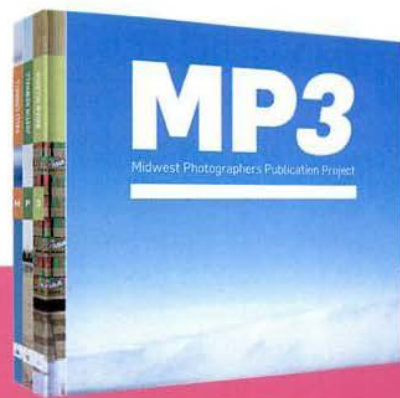
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**Salvor Kiosk** / [www.kioskhello.com](http://www.kioskhello.com) / Before opening her store in New York's SoHo neighborhood (above), Alisa Grifo had previous lives as a set designer, apprentice at a Belgian theater company, and assistant curator at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum. Her eclectic past was the perfect preparation for her latest venture. These days Grifo's gig is combing the globe to gather traditional wares that demonstrate the aesthetic of their origins—like these sublimely packaged crayons, notebooks, and bobby pins from Mexico.



**Pod 1 Tray with Butcher Block** / By FTF Design Studio / [www.ftfdesignstudio.com](http://www.ftfdesignstudio.com) / Mention Corian, and most people conjure images of kitchen countertops. The folks at FTF Design Studio have deftly repurposed this durable and minimal material into a simple sculptural serving tray. The natural grain of the bamboo butcher block is the perfect addition, creating a pleasant contrast against the stark white canvas of the tray.



**MP3** / Aperture Foundation / \$30 / [www.aperture.org](http://www.aperture.org) / Kelli Connell, Justin Newhall, and Brian Ulrich are three rising Heartland photographers who comprise this compelling three-book boxed set from the Midwest Photographers Publication Project. Connell traces the path of a lesbian relationship (sleuths will spot the same model posing as both halves of the couple); Newhall documents banality on the Lewis and Clark Trail; and standout Ulrich snaps vibrantly comic takes on American consumerism.



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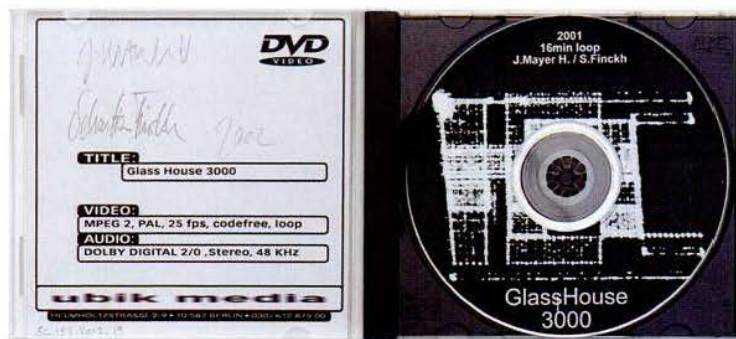
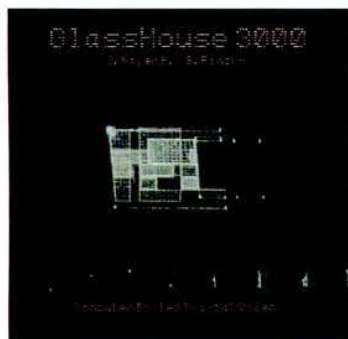




**Tools of the Imagination** / By Susan C. Piedmont-Palladino, editor / Princeton Architectural Press / \$29.95 / [www.papress.com](http://www.papress.com) / Long before architects were rogues with CAD they were cads with mahogany T-squares. *Tools of the Imagination* chronicles the various and sundry precomputer accoutrements of the architectural trade. This slim volume reproduces extraordinary photos of ellipsographs, volutors, and perspective glasses, describing what they did, who might have used them, and why precisely, despite their appearance, they're not torture devices.



**China Cabinet** / By Platform / [www.platformfaf.com](http://www.platformfaf.com) / While most furniture designs today try to conceal every seam and smooth every corner, this contrarian studio flaunts each flaw and imperfection. A signature of Platform's furniture, the cracks, splits, and nail holes of the salvaged material are filled with resin, leaving behind beautiful abstract scars. This china cabinet furthers its roughly hewn appearance with a design that suggests it was simply left on a pallette.



Jürgen Mayer H.  
Glasshouse 3000, 1998–2002

**Digitally Mastered** / Through Nov 2007 / Museum of Modern Art / New York, NY / [www.moma.org](http://www.moma.org) / MoMA delves into the digital realm with this exhibition of recent acquisitions to the museum's collection of architecture and design. Focusing on how architects and designers implement the latest in technology, this show features everything from *au courant* furniture made with computer-guided robot machinery to Jaguar's 1961 E-Type Roadster.

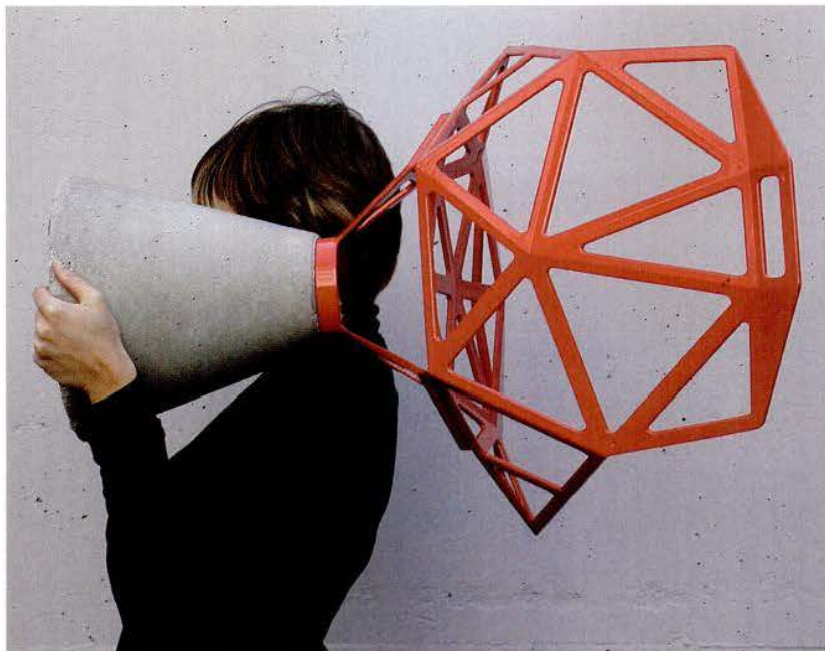


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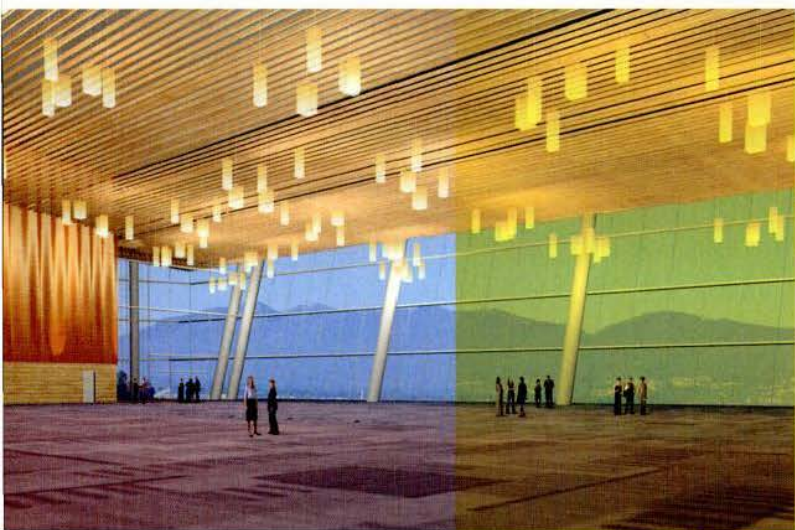
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KGID  
Chair One, 2004

KGID  
Dummy, 2004

**This Side Up: Konstantin Grcic Industrial Design** / 24 Jan–22 Apr / Museum of Design Zürich / Zürich, Switzerland / [www.museum-gestaltung.com](http://www.museum-gestaltung.com) / Grcic collaborated with Nitzan Cohen to conceive this tour through the studio's past 10 years of productivity. The Munich-born designer focuses on the utilitarian process leading up to the creation of products by presenting them in a series of boxes accompanied by models, videos, and prototypes.



**Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre Expansion** / LMN Architects / [www.vcec.ca](http://www.vcec.ca) / LMN Architects needed only \$615 million to renovate the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre, set to open in 2008. Chump change, considering the project is targeted for Canadian LEED Gold certification, and the new center—complete with a 400+ room hotel (left) and the largest living roof in Canada—will triple in size.

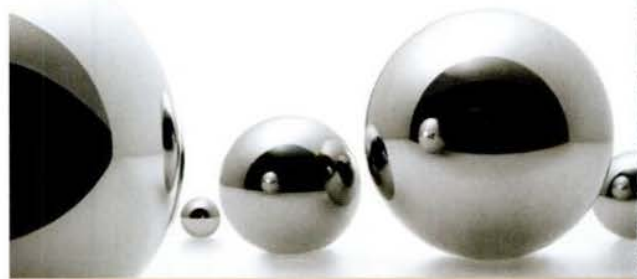


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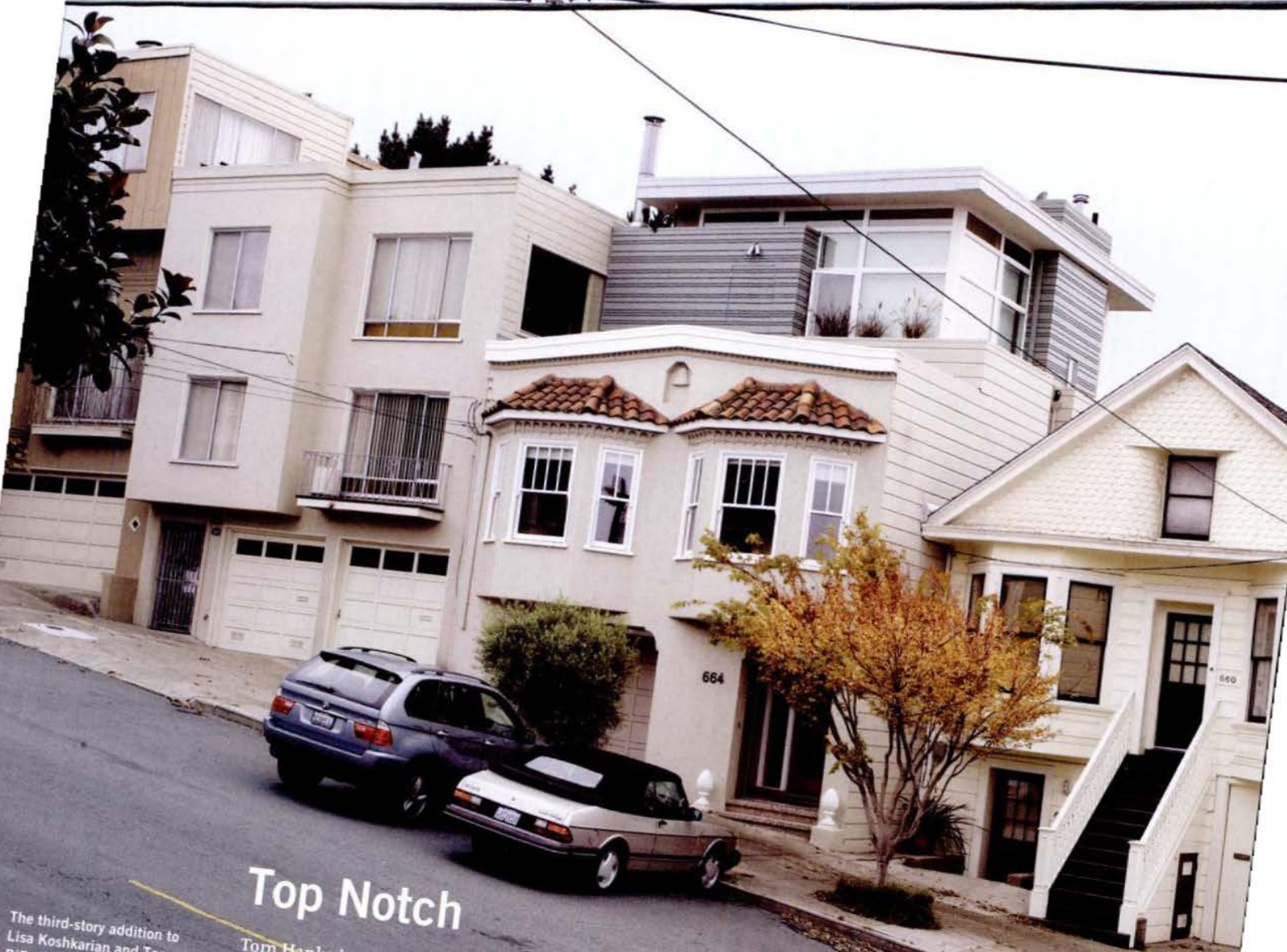
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—Adam and Gita, (instant family) Kai, Luca, and Asha,  
Resolution: 4 Architecture Dwell Home, Beverly Hills, CA



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## Top Notch

The third-story addition to Lisa Koshkarian and Tom DiFrancesco's San Francisco home blends seamlessly in both height and scale, giving the couple 500 square feet of extra space without disturbing the surrounding context.

Tom Hanks is not known for horror films, but his 1986 flop, *The Money Pit*, has a terrifying premise: A seemingly small renovation consumes a couple's life, devouring their reserves of time, money, and sanity with nightmare contractors, intractable plumbing problems, and general calamity—like Boston's Big Dig project in a living room. But as San Francisco residents Lisa Koshkarian and Tom DiFrancesco found in their third-floor addition, it doesn't have to be that way. With a thoughtful architect and good communication they opened up a whole new vista by building upward.

Nestled on a well-kept block in the Potrero Hill neighborhood, the Koshkarian-DiFrancesco house looks like many of the 1930s houses on their street, complete with white trim and a traditional façade. "Remodeling wasn't on our mind when we bought the house," says Koshkarian, standing in her colorful living room with her eight-month-old, Zia, "but after a while, we realized the bedrooms were just too small and the closets were in different rooms. We were thinking of having a family, and if we had a child, we'd definitely need more space." Koshkarian, a psychologist, and DiFrancesco, the CFO ▶



Koshkarian and DiFrancesco lounge on their Poliform bed with their daughter, Zia. The large windows annex an outdoor patio, which extends the already light-filled space into the outdoors. **➊ p. 222**

of a real estate company, wed in 2001, and bought the place the following year. "We really liked the location, the neighborhood, everything, except for the space issue," says DiFrancesco. "We wanted to build up. We just didn't know how hard it could be."

After deciding they wanted an addition, Koshkarian solicited referrals from friends at California College of the Arts, her former employer. Though the couple had never renovated before, they both had a strong design sense, if not actually possessing technical skill. They needed to find someone who understood their vision and who could help realize it under budget. "It's like choosing a new roommate," jokes Koshkarian. Although the couple conducted the interviews alphabetically, Neal Schwartz, from the award-winning firm Schwartz and Architecture, surmounted his surname with a stellar resume and a genuine enthusiasm for the project.

Schwartz's first order of business was to find out how much the homeowners wanted to match the style of

the new master bedroom to that of the existing structure. Not much, it turned out. "I would drive around the neighborhood to see remodels," says DiFrancesco, "They would carry the same '30s style. I wasn't interested in that."

The architect couldn't have been more pleased. "It was great to have clients be so supportive of a modern addition. They wanted to tie in the addition to the existing style but not replicate it," adds Schwartz.

As construction began, so too came the inevitable, largely unexpected side effects of adding the third story. Decisions were made: where to put the staircase, how much work needed to be done to firm up the foundation, what kind of railing should snake up the entry into the master bedroom. The size and shape of the addition was determined partially by building-code requirements (anything more than 500 square feet would have required yet another staircase) and by neighborly concerns (including one incredibly close-by window). ▶





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## My House

The vertical full-length window (below left) offers a slice of the outdoors in the custom-outfitted master bathroom (save for a tub and sink by Kohler; faucet and showerhead by Vola). The office cubby (below right), outfitted with a diminutive window (as per Koshkarian's request), is furnished with Atlas shelving. **p. 222**

"We shifted the light to come over the [front of the] stairs," says Schwartz. "In any organic system, [light] has a ripple effect that changes how you move through space."

Ascending the new staircase, whose bamboo flooring was painstakingly matched to the hardwood of the original house, it's clear you've hit new ground. The new master bedroom is showered with natural light by a series of eight-foot-high windows that open the addition to the outdoors, affording spectacular views of San Francisco's skyline. The muted green and gray shades of the interior walls and siding create a sense of play between the public and private nature of the addition. "You feel like you're both part of the city and apart from it," notes Schwartz. The bed sits in the center of the room, framed from behind by a walnut-paneled wall that opens, in part, to a walk in closet.

The new addition shows the idiosyncratic touches that come from being able to design to one's own specifications. "I insisted on this," Koshkarian says, touching

the small window above her desk, next to a computer. Schwartz, too, has his glory moments throughout the space, like the translucent medicine cabinet that doubles as the bathroom door. All parties agree that prioritizing the details in the master bedroom at the expense of, perhaps, redoing the foyer or straightening the downstairs hallway made for a more fully realized end product. "I would much rather reduce the scope of the project than the quality," says Schwartz.

In the end, the hassles, the compromises, and the unforeseen expenses of building another floor were worth it. The addition stands out from atop their very ordinary home without compromising the integrity of its context. "It's a piece of my life that I've managed to do something creative and unique with," says DiFrancesco. "It's a reflection of us, our creativity," echoes Koshkarian, reclining next to him. There is a pause before DiFrancesco says, chuckling, "I mean, I might not do it again. But I'm very glad we did it." ▶





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## How to Make My House Your House

### **A B** Pullout Pantry Door to Bathroom

Remodeling gives an architect the opportunity to creatively problem-solve space issues. For the master bedroom, Schwartz worked hard to make unobtrusive storage space, which is why the depth of the closet inside the walnut wall is such a surprise. Ditto the sliding door of the bathroom. "Instead of a door or a medicine cabinet, you get both," he says. "It's about being clever about design to intensify the use of things."

### **C** Be Untraditional

One of the first decisions made in this remodel had to do with the placement of the stairs. If the master bedroom stairs came up from the secondary staircase off the kitchen,

it would have had a naturally private feel appropriate for a bedroom. But the homeowners and architect decided to build above the entryway. "If you're going to have to build a staircase, why not get the maximum secondary benefits?" asks Schwartz. "By doing it like this, we are bringing light to the second floor, opening the foyer, and indicating the presence of modern space."

### **D** Railings

Cutting corners doesn't have to significantly cheapen the design. "We wanted the railing to be an elegant continuous line; it's the first thing you see when you enter the door, and it sets the tone for the entire project," says Schwartz. But having the thinner,

parallel bars follow the complex curve of the handrail proved costly, so the architect chose to end the bars at each landing, saving thousands while maintaining a strong visual link between the old and new spaces.

### **E** Bamboo'zled

"When we got the first batch of bamboo, it was more like mahogany," says Koshkarian of the addition's flooring. But the couple persevered in their quest to match the bamboo to the oak hardwood floors on the second-floor landing. Bamboo made sense for many reasons (ecological, financial), and careful color selection softened one of the clearest visual breaks between the addition and the original house. ■



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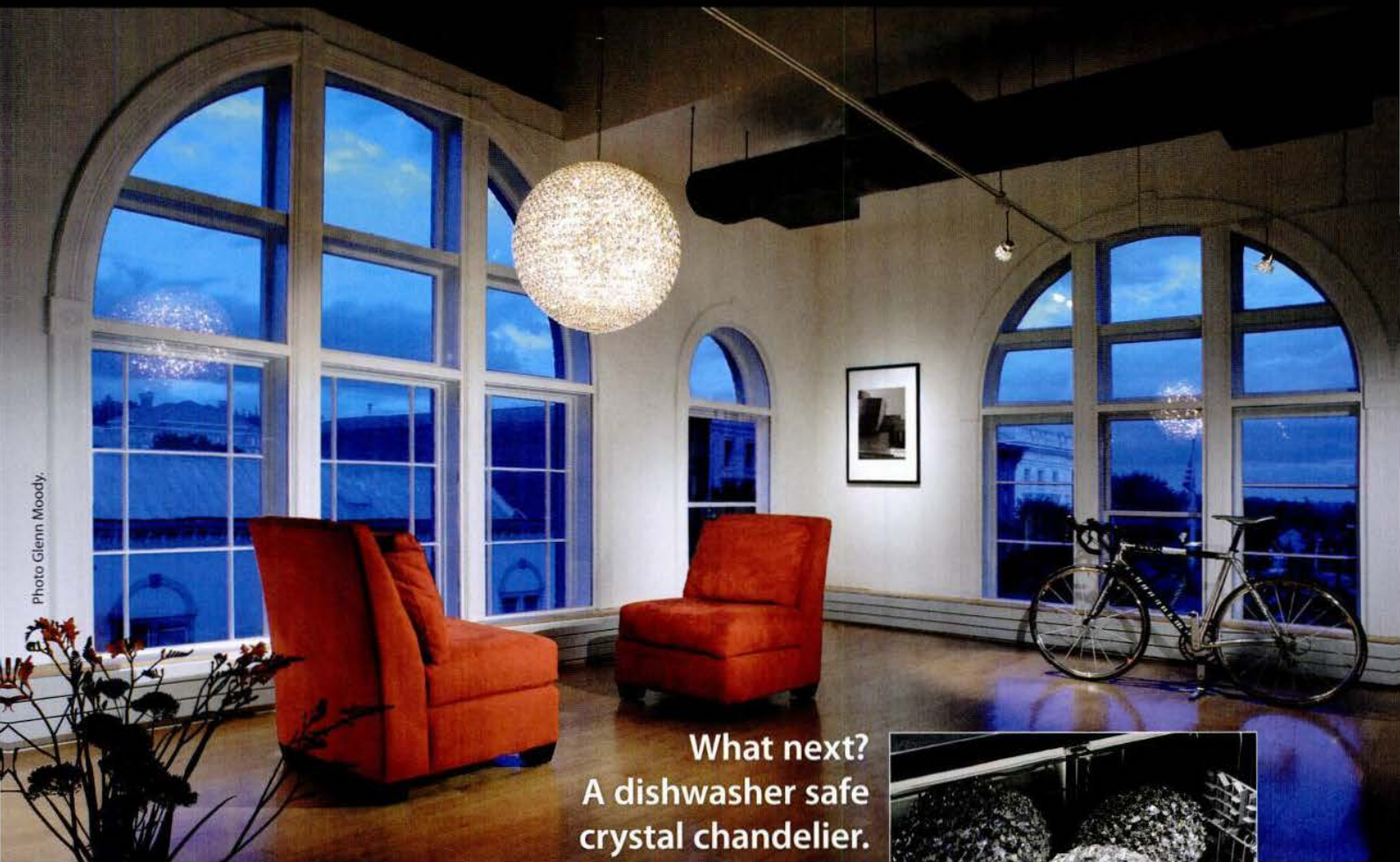


Photo Glenn Moody.

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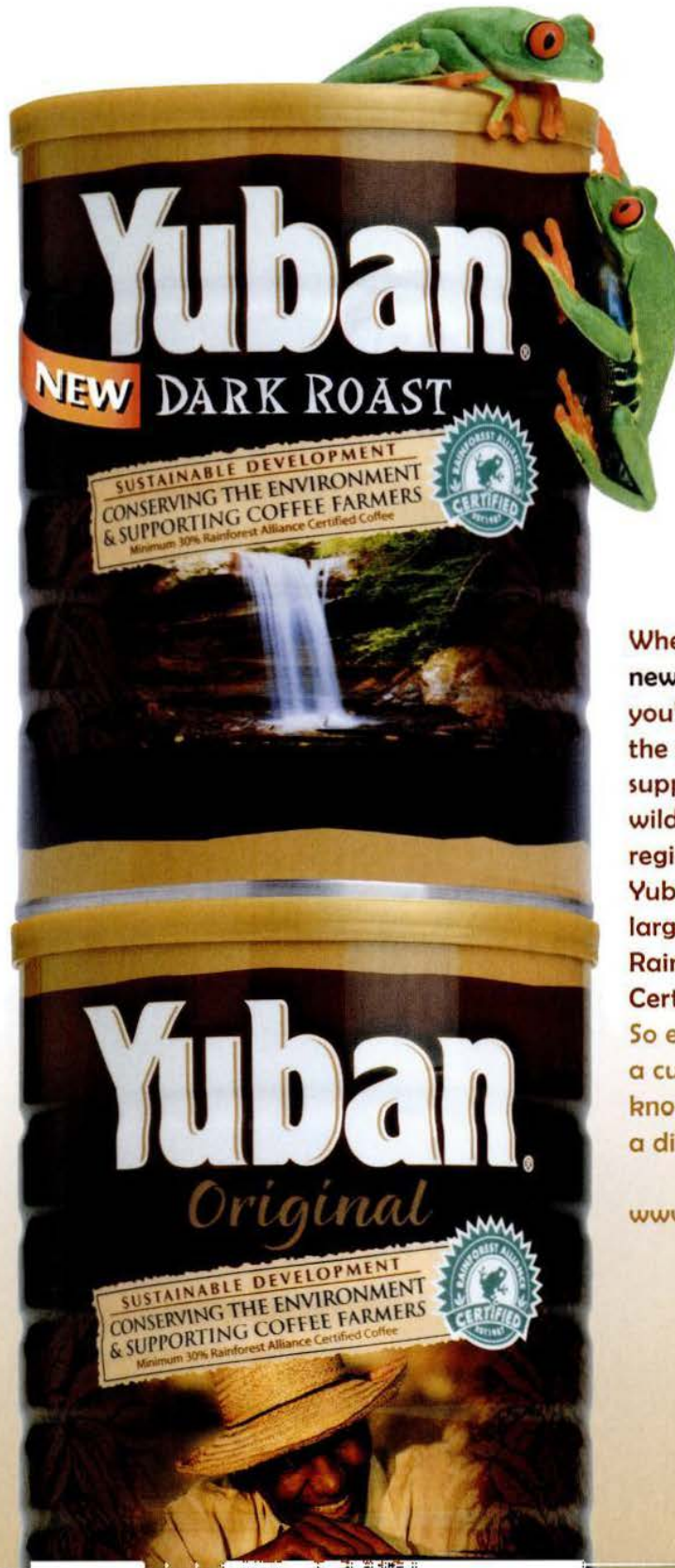
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## Hz so Good

Architects **Simon Beames** and **Simon Dickens** are worried. They are worried about the impact that construction makes on the environment, though they are equally concerned about being thought of as patchouli-scented Deadheads. "It does sound a bit hippie-ish, doesn't it?" says Beames, as he runs through how their design came to be dubbed "7.83 Hz" after the pair's idea to create a home that matches the natural frequency of our planet. He clasps his hand over his distinctly unhippie-like shaven head in an "I knew it" motion.

Beames and Dawkins's fledgling London-based practice, Youmeheshe, was set up to develop an innovative and potentially revolutionary design, which would make a carbon-neutral, eco-friendly prefab house available to the mass market. Yet the two Simons are still unsure how exactly to pitch the idea to a nation that has accepted organic vegetables but has yet to fully embrace the Prius. In ten years' time the idea will doubtless sell itself, but today the two innovators are way ahead of the curve.

Designed to be delivered on just two trucks, ►

These organic prefabs are designed to be built on small streets or in clusters, thus creating communities and allowing for economical and ecological power generation. Traditional materials and techniques are used, but the design is both stunning and contemporary.



## Off the Grid

Designing around a central core means that the layout of the organic house can be adapted to meet the changing needs of the occupants. Ceilings or walls can easily be added or taken away for a simple makeover.

Youmeheshe's prefab is assembled from precut, biodynamically grown wooden panels, which are doweled together onsite rather than glued. This decreases the impact on the environment as well as on the inhabitants, while the delivery schedule is aimed at minimizing transport-related pollutants and noise.

"You don't have glues giving off gasses you would otherwise get," says Beames. "They usually give off formaldehyde, which is what you preserve dead people in. People are unaware of the shortcuts and necessities of traditional fast-track building, or at least overlook them. You have this generation of people being careful about the environment, but they forget about themselves. They eat organic food, but then what are they sitting in?"

Coming in at a budget of about \$170,000 before the cost of land, the 7.83 Hz house is constructed around a central core, through which service areas run and heat rises. The layout and orientation of the three-story home (there are also two-story variations available) is thus adaptable to

circumstance, both internally and externally. The idea is for the houses to be arranged terrace-style, to mimic the most community-minded United Kingdom street layout, yet they can also be offset in small groups. The interior can be altered as families grow or shrink, with floors added to create new bedrooms and removed to create double-height living rooms or even a roof garden.

This grouping and adaptability should allow for a mixed readymade community, as well as allowing for power and heat to be supplied to each unit via small community-owned biomass fuel burners. Beames and Dawkins believe that some larger schemes could see waste dealt with in an environmentally friendly way too, with the use of a reed bed and willow sewage system.

Youmeheshe is just two years old, but it already has two schemes for the 7.83 Hz house in the planning stage, with three set for South London and 26 for the city of Stavanger, in Norway, where the idea of a wooden house is not so alien as it is in Britain. ▶



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Mentlo Park sectional designed by Rick Lee. Shown in Etmo. Rustical Field Green. Pillows shown in Ultracude. Willow and Fern ©2006 AMERICAN LEATHER

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Prefabs are traditionally linked to the use of steel and high-impact building programs. Youmeheshe's design considers everything from how their materials are grown to how they get to the site, ensuring an overall zero carbon impact.

"Some UK developers have not got their heads around it at the moment," says Dickens. "They ask what color the wood is going to be and you say, 'Wood colored,' and they ask if it will stay that color, but of course it changes and weathers." Planning officials are also having to grapple with the ideas behind the house, as the design's carbon-neutral status means that Youmeheshe can talk its way around some restrictions designed to cut down on carbon emissions via heat leakage through windows. For example, where the more standard competition has to stick to 25 percent window-to-floor space ratios to meet emission targets, they can make natural light-filled rooms with much more glazing.

Such advantages are an obvious bonus for Youmeheshe as it tries to win public acceptance of the 7.83 Hz house. The outstanding design and the environmentally conscious standpoint will always win over the buyer who already has an interest in those areas, but in order to have

an effective impact the house must have wide appeal, which is why the company is focusing on low-cost pre-fabs and not one-off designs. "We want it available for the mass market," says Dickens. "Though not in simply the cheapest way possible, otherwise you would not have the materials we are happy to use."

If Youmeheshe can deliver on this aim, then the Simons can cease to worry about being seen as hippies and instead start thinking about finding larger premises to grow into. "I wonder if we can get away with a Simon-only recruitment policy," says Beames, musing upon expansion. "There's us two and we already have another Simon as well, Simon Catton."

The policy seems to be working fantastically well for now, though there is the chance that female Simons may be hard to come by, which could prove a legal stumbling block. But all Simons or not, the future of Youmeheshe is worth watching. ■

### A Whole New Dynamic

The wood for the 7.83 Hz house is grown and cut using biodynamic farming practices. Based on the writings of philosopher and educator Rudolf Steiner, biodynamic farming is a holistic form of agriculture that shuns the use of chemicals and embraces astrology, as well as some rather esoteric fertilizer recipes. Biodynamic farming predates organic farming, though it subscribes to some of the same tenets, and treats the farm as an organism, one that ought to be complete and self-sustaining.

It would be easy to dismiss biodynamics as organic farming-meets-crystal healing while waving an astrological chart, but it is a growing discipline and has distinct advantages for construction projects using wood.

"The wood is harvested during the waning moon, when the sap is falling," says Beames. "That means that there is more air in the wood and that the wood therefore has an incredible insulative property. So instead of having the traditional setup of cavity-wall insulation, two skins, and external cladding, we could seal this single piece of wood and it would perform better than a traditional wall." —I.A.





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# Cool it!

The refrigerator in your kitchen may be humming a pricey song—to the tune of hundreds of dollars and thousands of kilowatts a year. Even a ten-year-old model uses twice the energy of a new Energy Star unit, so it may be time to trade up.

**In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, refrigerators** lined the empty streets of New Orleans like sentries. At night, the standard bright-whites glowed like eerie canvases; it didn't take long for graffiti to hit. In a situation so dire they had to laugh or they'd cry, residents replaced levees with levity, writing out frustration on the fridges: "Only a fool would open this—I was that fool." "Louise, this ice cream tastes funny!" or "Free gumbo inside!"

Despite the obvious problems of their recycling and disposal, refrigerators, unlike automobiles, have become dramatically more efficient in the past two decades—and truth be told, it would behoove every home to have a new model. Americans are reportedly already saving an estimated \$17 billion in energy costs each year thanks to improvements in refrigerator design and technology. However, keeping our ketchup cold and our ice cream frozen still strains resources. Theoretically, if every household in the United States were to replace its refrigerator

with an Energy Star model or the equivalent, we'd be an energy-exporting nation. But energy efficiency doesn't mean leaving looks in the lurch—these fridges could all call the Bauhaus home.

Beyond their stainless steel exteriors, refrigerators today have advanced cooling systems, quality materials, and energy-conserving features (beware of extraneous gadgets like Internet hookups and TVs which consume more power). In short—the places we house our food are designed better than most of our homes. We don't need another Katrina to remind us that refrigeration is a luxury. The least we can do is be responsible by buying energy-efficient models (plus they'll pay for themselves faster than you'll pay off your mortgage).

To assess our selection of refrigerators, we chose sushi chef Susumu Ueda, who appreciates efficient design and, in his quest to serve fish of the utmost freshness, opens and closes a fridge over 100 times a day. ▶

**A Note on Our Expert:** Executive chef Susumu Ueda was born in the United States and raised in Japan and has lived everywhere from Belgrade to Athens. He began his career in 1998 at legendary sushi house Nobu New York, transferred to Nobu Malibu, and eventually landed at The Hump. The restaurant sits on the tarmac of Santa Monica Airport and retains the swank feeling of privacy and panache from flying's heyday. Named for the slang term World War II pilots gave to the Himalayas, The Hump has a 180-degree view of the landing strip, the Pacific Ocean, the Santa Monica Mountains, and Hollywood.



**Evolution 500 Series** / By Bosch / \$2,199 / [www.boschappliances.com](http://www.boschappliances.com) / Model B20CS50SNS, 20.2 cubic feet, four color options, 550 kWh/y

**Expert Opinion:** I think Supercool and Superfreeze [trademarked technology that improves temperature flux and allows rapid adjustment of interior temperatures from the exterior panel] are useful features. At a restaurant you want to have a refrigerator that stays the same temperature all the time and not have to worry about it—but I wouldn't buy a first-generation product, even from a well-known company like Bosch.

**What We Think:** Having all the controls on the outside allows you to open the door less often, which saves energy and just makes sense—what appliance besides a refrigerator has controls on the inside? The panel also has a child-lock setting. Supercool and Superfreeze, which aim to keep food fresh and prevent freezer burn by eliminating temperature flux, may be useful or may be media hype. While 550 kWh/y is competitive (this Energy Star model is 40 percent more efficient than a standard 2001 fridge) and costs about \$50/y, we're siding with the chef on this one: Wait until the Joneses buy a Bosch and see how well it serves them.



**PRO 48** / By Sub-Zero / \$12,000 / [www.subzeropro48.com](http://www.subzeropro48.com) / Model 648PROG, 29.8 cubic feet, stainless steel with optional glass door, 689 kWh/y

**Expert Opinion:** I like this one a lot. I would love to have it, space permitting. Seeing the food through the glass door and having four drawers on the bottom is good for a chef. I can fit everything inside those drawers, but they're still easy to pick up—that's important, because when I'm cooking, I pull the whole drawer out. In the future, if I open my own restaurant, I would like to have a Sub-Zero—it's definitely my favorite.

**What We Think:** While its styling is enticing, you may find yourself curating food for the display case—and forget Styrofoam-clad leftovers. That aside, it's impressive that despite its hulking size, the hand-built PRO 48 is more energy efficient than a 100-watt lightbulb over the course of a year. The two-gallon stainless steel bins are oven-safe: marinate a masterpiece overnight, pull out the drawer, and pop it in. The Ferrari of refrigerators, the PRO 48's price tag has five digits, but people swear by the investment in impeccable design. It's cool enough to give you delusions of grandeur—just leave the blowfish to chefs like Ueda.



**QuatroCooling Convertible Refrigerator** / By Samsung / \$2,599 / [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com) / Model RM255BARB, 24.6 cubic feet, three color options, 690 kWh/y

**Expert Opinion:** I think Samsung has a pretty good idea [with the convertible drawers, that can change from refrigeration to freezing], but I don't know if I personally change so much—and what about the electricity bills? If I decided on one temperature setting, or spot for the freezer, I might never change it. I pretty much just keep Häagen-Dazs in there, but having four drawers is better than two or three.

**What We Think:** There's a reason why the QuatroCooling Refrigerator won the International Consumer Electronics Show's 2006 Best of Innovations Award. Although it seems simple, it took a leap in technology to make four separately controlled climates in one fridge while staying energy-smart and affordable. The Samsung may be a good bet for neatniks (it's easy to clean) and foodies, especially if you're particular about how you house veggies, dairy, and meat. However, unless you're a serious home chef with many mouths to feed, and truly need 25 cubic feet of these options, there are more energy-efficient models in similar styles. ►



Model Mood design S. Barsacchi

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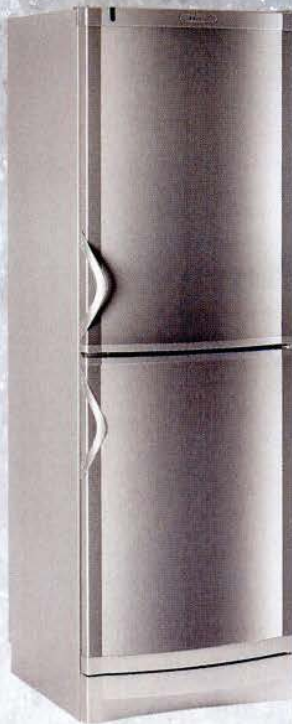
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**Panorama French Door Refrigerator With Linear Compressor** / By LG / \$2,799 / [www.lgusa.com](http://www.lgusa.com) / Model LFX21960, 21 cubic feet, stainless steel, 559 kWh/y

**Expert Opinion:** I like stainless steel best, so it's okay not to have color options. I think this refrigerator is good for a younger generation, maybe even a family. I like the French door, but it's not very good for older people to bend over so much. A TV isn't necessary for the kitchen! My wife and I have an LG. It's fine.

**What We Think:** Maybe we're old-fashioned in some respects, but like Ueda, we want to focus on food in the kitchen, not the nightly news, so it's fine by us that this model doesn't feature the gimmick that made LG fridges famous. In addition, the import of Linear Compressor technology from Asia is more important than increased color options. More than just hoopla, the Linear Compressor is an entirely new mechanism—one that reduces energy loss and improves motor efficiency, but is so quiet you'll be compelled to check that it's running. Although this model is so new (released this April) that no one can speak from day-to-day experience, it's great that companies are exploring alternative cooling technology.



**ConServ by Vestfrost** / Distributed by Summit Appliances / \$1,399 / [www.summitappliances.com](http://www.summitappliances.com) / Model CP-171SS, 11 cubic feet, three color options, 255 kWh/y

**Expert Opinion:** Personally I really like the brushed stainless steel and its style. The small size seems good for singles, or the person who always travels. And I don't think it has a Napoleon complex—it's just like a normal refrigerator, made smaller—maybe made better. It's probably too small for my wife and me (or other chefs), but I like it.

**What We Think:** We agree with Ueda that this unit may be the perfect fit for certain demographics; whether apartment dwellers or people who prefer takeout to kitchen labor. The ConServ has the same level of options, technology, and styling (wine rack, reversible doors, design by David Lewis of Bang & Olufsen) in a smaller footprint than standard. Chris Daum, who sells these units through [conservrefrigerators.com](http://conservrefrigerators.com) and runs her own unit off of solar and wind power says that what really sets the ConServ apart is the European ethos behind its manufacture: It's made of 100 percent recyclable parts. Coupled with Danish design, that tidbit tipped the scales and made the ConServ our favorite. Take note: It's not "frost free."



**Chillerator Garage Refrigerator** / By Gladiator GarageWorks / \$999 / [www.gladiatorgw.com](http://www.gladiatorgw.com) / Model GARF19XXPK, 19 cubic feet, graphite, 418 kWh/y

**Expert Opinion:** I like the way it looks—its projection is very strong and I want my refrigerators to be compact. The shelf design is good for large or heavy items, and it's nice that you can move it easily on the wheels, but for my purposes I like refrigerators with more compartments. I can see cool hotels using this in their rooms.

**What We Think:** If you've ever taken the time to see what lies (or lives) beneath your refrigerator, then the fact that this fridge is mounted on heavy-duty casters is appealing. The rugged toolbox-style exterior is edgy with an advantage: it doesn't show fingerprints. A division of Whirlpool, Gladiator GarageWorks markets items to trick out your garage/basement/shed. The Chillerator was designed as a second fridge for Costco-shopping families, but there's no reason why it can't be your mainstay. Its bodybuilder arms can carry full loads of condiments and beverages, it's compact but not cramped, and frankly, it's nice to see industrial chic taken literally—even when it looks like a Dodge Ram. ■



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## From Commune to Commonplace

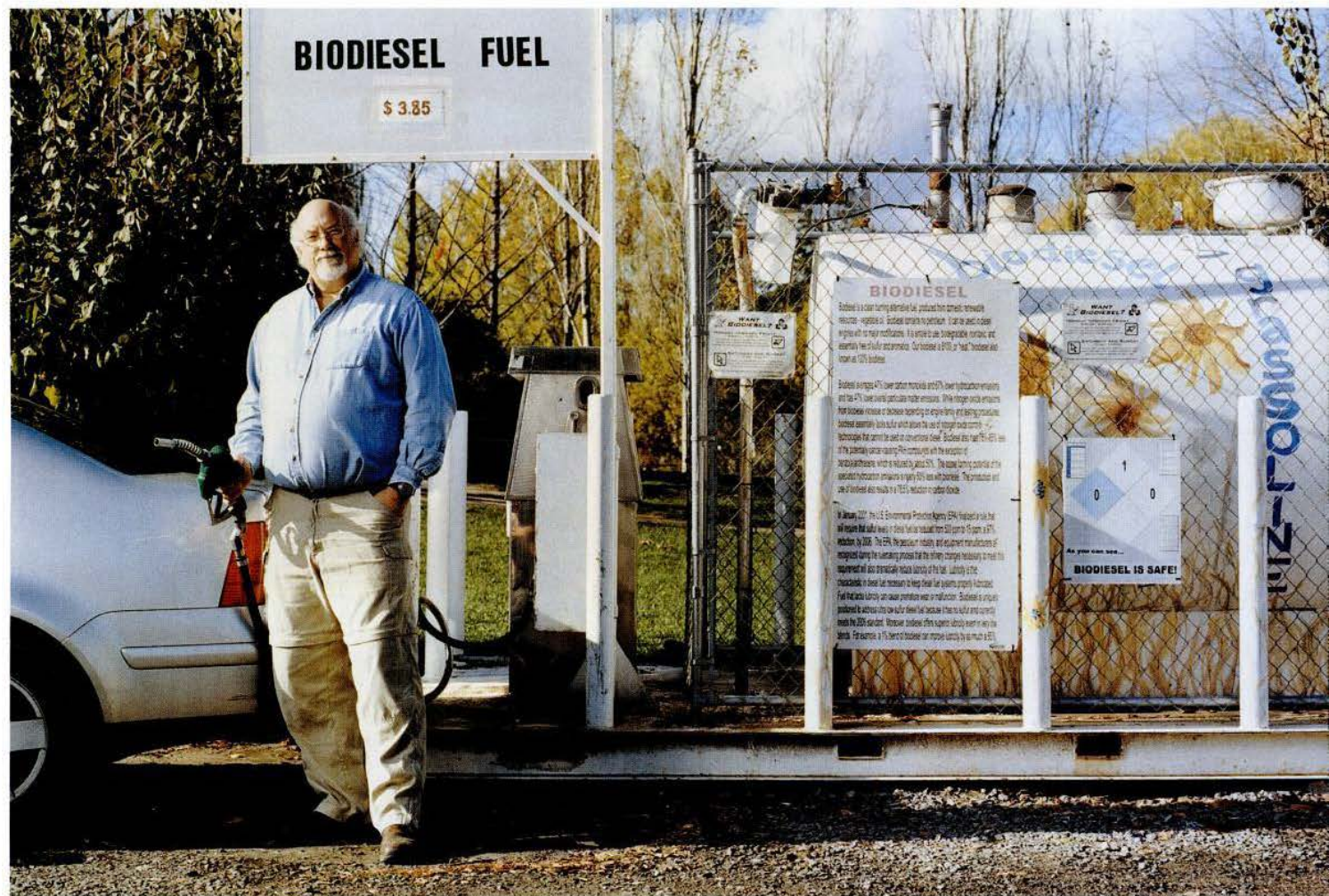
Once a humble collective for Deadheads and Domeheads, Real Goods has since grown into an emblem of conscientious living. Founder John Schaeffer (below) stands proudly next to the eco-friendly company's biodiesel fueling station.

Tired of carting supplies back and forth from Ukiah to the commune where he lived in Northern California, John Schaeffer decided to start selling environmentally friendly wares himself. And so Real Goods, the largest and oldest supplier of healthy-living, renewable-energy, and sustainable-living products in the nation was founded in 1978 in the sleepy town of Willits. A year later Schaeffer acquired several used solar panels from ARCO Solar and became the first retailer in the world to sell a photovoltaic system.

At the time, the 29-year-old burgeoning conservationist had no designs on creating the consumer mecca for all things green. But by 1998 Real Goods had become *the* player in the market, and the amount of carbon dioxide saved through the use of its products was said to be over a billion pounds; the number continues to grow today. Real Goods' stats were so impressive that in 2001 the Colorado-based company Gaiam decided to merge with them, and they are now known as Gaiam Real Goods.

The nonprofit spinoff of Real Goods, called the Solar Living Institute, is located at the center's headquarters and is an example of the outfit's philosophy. Located in Hopland, California, the institute welcomes some 200,000 visitors to its 12 acres of permaculture gardens every year. The structures on the campus are all completely solar powered and were built using straw bale construction and other natural methods and materials. Programs such as the ecological design workshops are doubling in size each year.

Schaeffer's perennial efforts are finally coming to fruition, as sustainability has gained traction in recent years. Incentives have played a large role in this trend, and according to Schaeffer, Germany's example is the one to follow. "They're doing more than double the solar sales than the U.S. with a sixth of the population and much less sun, all because the German government's dedication to combating global climate change provides lucrative solar incentives." ■





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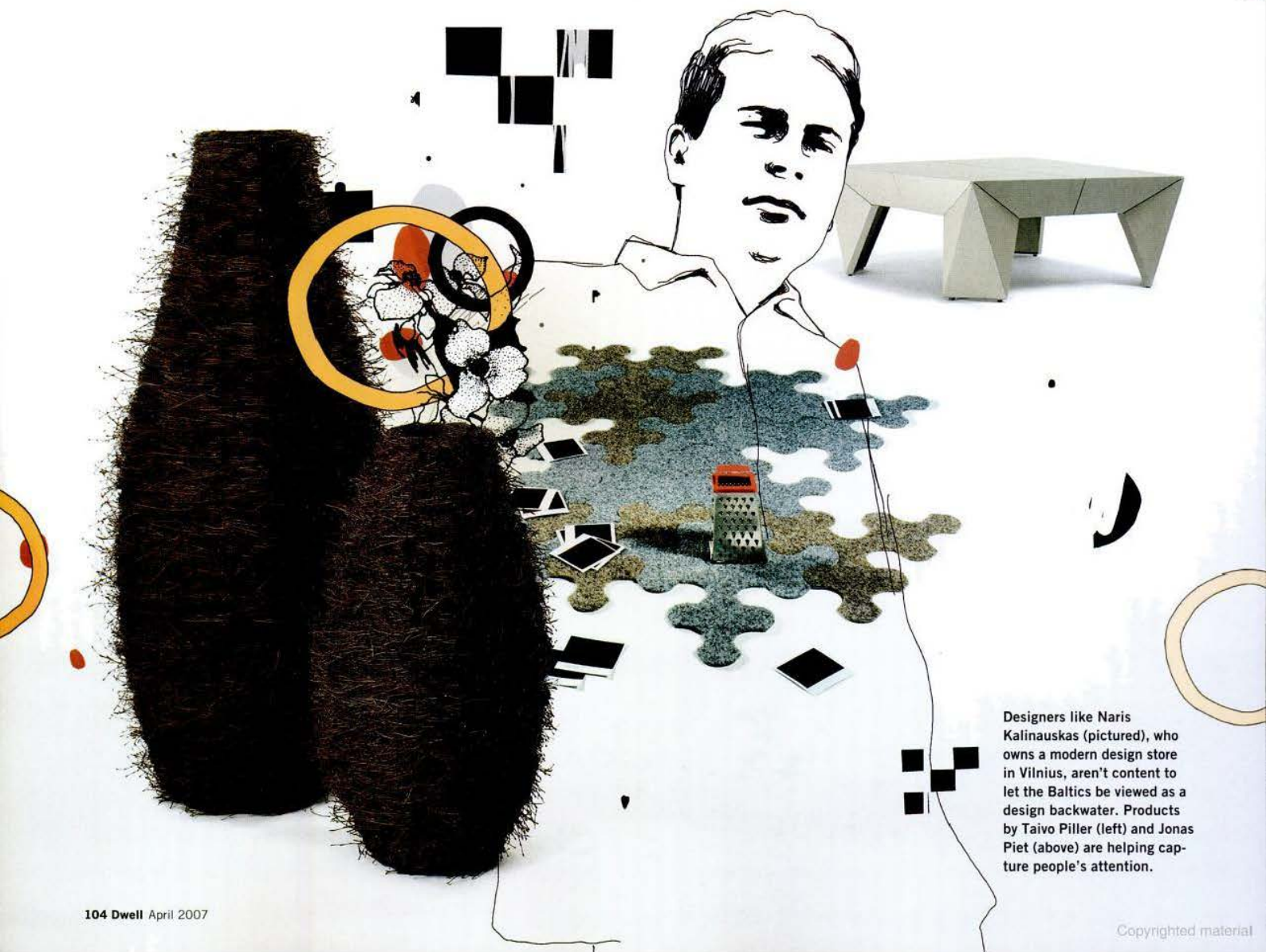
In wintertime, the Baltic Sea slows to a thin and brackish broth, the sky is dark by afternoon, and the lights are low in the old towers of Tallinn, Vilnius, and Riga. Collars are turned against cold and growing winds from the bitter east.

Inside it's warm. There's a hothouse of ideas across the Baltic region, lit with stylish new lamps, bold textiles, beautiful glass, and brash architecture. It's driven by a set of energetic young designers and architects coming into their own in the Baltic states of Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. Legacies of the Bolshevik empire crashing to the ground, sparking chaos and cowboy capitalism, are receding, revealing new dialectics. Spend any time talking to the youth brigade here and they'll be the first to describe tough obstacles, social and aesthetic alike. But it's also easy to see that the Baltics are close to real-

izing trendsetting potential for design in Eastern Europe. There's poverty here, but among designers in all three countries the thinking and vision feel free and fun. Even as the cold northern winter wraps a freezing cloak over the region into the new year, it's worth watching closely.

Not long ago a bright harvest moon rose over the Estonian capital of Tallinn, kicking off a yearlong design festival and celebration full of late nights, television specials, parties, store openings, and discussions. "That's one of the guys who is going to change the world," Martin Pärn says with a wink, pointing to thin, lanky Pent Talvet, who happens to be walking down the same bustling street in downtown Tallinn. Pärn is the 35-year-old head of Tallinn's Estonian Academy of Arts product design department and is himself a well-known furniture designer. "You're bringing the revolution, right?" he says ▶

## Baltic Breakout



Designers like Naris Kalinauskas (pictured), who owns a modern design store in Vilnius, aren't content to let the Baltics be viewed as a design backwater. Products by Taivo Piller (left) and Jonas Piet (above) are helping capture people's attention.

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to Talvet, one of his students. "I hope so," Talvet says with a looping grin. "Hope so?! You can't hope for the revolution," replies Pärn. "You have to say yes!"

Pärn's joking. Sort of. But this kind of skepticism and modesty are typical around town, as are a close dedication to craft, careful attention to style, and palpable excitement about new possibilities. After economic chaos in the wake of Soviet collapse, factories are getting more numerous and dependable, and starting to engage designers—a necessity if raw talent is going to develop into something more. "For 50 years it was a Potemkin village here," says Matti Öunapuu, a friendly rock of a man whose many design achievements include sleek black Packline car-top ski cases and the hurriedly erected 1980 Olympics regatta site, its torch still sitting proud near Tallinn's beach. "We take this very seriously now."

Although there are repeated threads and distinct local media and materials, there is no signature local style boxed and ready for export. It's more complex than that. The "Baltics" are something of a Soviet construction; they're forged together because of recent history, not because of shared consciousness. With spotty trains and narrow roads, it takes a long time to get around the area. But, of course, the Baltics are real—psychically and physically—and a natural market for ideas. It makes more sense to think of the region as a crossroads linked by similar and simultaneous experience—one that spent the past decade defining what it is not. The region, which started from zero, is now more or less broadband wired, looks to the future, and is beginning to see real results.

It has also a design atmosphere marked by youth; sure, some veterans are going strong like Öunapuu and ▶



"We like simple and minimalist things," says Estonian graphic designer Ilona Gurjanova, pictured here with designs by Baltic colleagues Tarmo Luisk (at left) and Nauris Kalinauskas (at right).



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Ceramic Tiles of Italy

furniture maker Maile Grünberg—who's got a great mod take on bent plywood veneer. Even Bruno Tomberg, perhaps the region's premier design thinker and founder of the first contemporary design school in the Soviet Union in the late '60s, wryly calls himself a relic. "I'm retired," he says with a laugh. Most designers here are in their 30s and running their own show. Triin Ojari, editor-in-chief of Estonia's main architectural journal, *Maja*, is 32; Kai Lobjakas, curator of the local design museum, is 31, as is Karin Paulus, design critic of the influential weekly *Eesti Ekspress*. Everyone goes to the local art academy and there are opportunities waiting for graduates. All of this has an impact on style, what gets made, and what it will look like.

"We like simple and minimalistic things," says Ilona Gurjanova, a graphic artist whose work was once scruti-

nized by Communist Party art bosses for illegal national colors. "We are harmonic there." True enough, agrees Tarmo Luisk, a mischievous 36-year-old designer best known for his chic, industrial lamp making. "But we're not Finns. For Finns, Estonians are too crazy," he says. As someone who once hijacked a show opening with an impromptu karaoke session, he's got a point.

It takes two days to drive the 400 miles south from Tallinn to raw, dusty Vilnius, stopping at the more staid Latvian capital, Riga. Both places have a very different feel but share this sense of experimentation. It's a little harder to hear about the scene in Riga (at least for this writer, perhaps because everyone seemed to be on holiday at the same time), but the architecture in both the small urban center and further afield is gaining regional notice, especially from the likes of the Sarma & Norde, ▶



"The community here is growing faster and faster," says Lithuanian furniture designer Darius Cekanaukas of the local design scene. A table of his is shown at left; a light by Neringa Dervinyte is above.

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Arhitektonika, and Arhis architecture and design studios. And not everything Latvian is practical and calm: Interior designer Agris Dzilna, for instance, is known for his dramatic fire-sculpture performance pieces with Akciju Sabiedriba, of the Action Society.

In Lithuania, the new design base gathers in galleries and at a studio/store in Vilnius called Contraforma. "A lot of new companies here are looking for an identity. They're trying to use design now for that purpose," says furniture designer Darius Cekanauskas. When 34-year-old furniture designer Nauris Kalinauskas started Contraforma with his partner, Egle Opeikiene, it was to recognize and encourage new materials and thinking, and to focus this growing energy. Kalinauskas explains, "Basically, we want to help young designers to communicate with manufacturers, to find the best way to present

progressive design projects in the world."

What's happening across this chilly region, marked with pine, birch, sea, and snow is that many young voices are gaining sure footing at once and are able to get products and buildings made.

But more important than forging rules for a regional look is that there's more work than dogma. "Maybe it's better that there are no father figures, no models here," Karin Paulus says. "It's more free." That could have something to do with the reception given to Tallinn's new landmark, the Kumu Art Museum, designed by Finnish architect Pekka Vapaavuori. On the one hand, it's a striking affair, a sleek, impressive, and important building; on the other, the local take is that it's merely okay. "It uses limestone and copper, local materials, classical shapes," Triin Ojari says. "It doesn't say anything new." ■



"We're trying to consolidate the design force of all the country," says Kalinauskas of Contraforma. Egle Opeikiene (left), Martin Pärn (center), and designs by Kalinauskas and Paulius Vitkauskas above.



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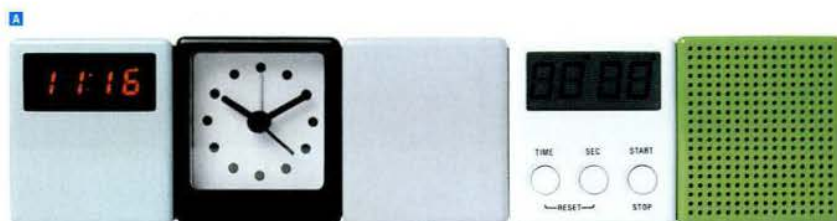
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Without a single banner to gather under, Tokyo's design week may leave first-timers unsure of what exactly there is to see. But Tokyo Designer's Week, 100% Design Tokyo, and Design Tide—which comprise the trio of events—each offer a distinct focus and plenty to take in. This year's program was scaled back compared to the more sybaritic fare of years past, but the frugality of 2006's events notwithstanding, the overall quality remained high, and the design-savvy Japanese public came in droves to get their fix.

**A** 2.5 series / Designed by Naoto Fukasawa for ±0 / [www.plusminuszero.jp](http://www.plusminuszero.jp)  
 The corners on each piece of this series have a 2.5 mm radius, which Fukasawa claims is the ideal measurement for products that feel good in the hand. Here the formula is applied to analog and digital clocks, a timer, a radio, and even a small, empty box. ▶





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## What We Saw Tokyo

**A Aki** / Designed by Jean-Marie Massaud for Time & Style / [www.timeandstyle.com](http://www.timeandstyle.com)

The French designer created two new series—Aki and Mèn—for the Tokyo furniture shop Time & Style as part of a greater exhibition of his life's work. Both demonstrate Massaud's refined, organically derived style; however, despite the pieces's striking elegance, at a press event, Massaud dismissed them as "just something I designed."

**B Phantom** / Designed by Midori Araki for Maxray / [www.arakimidori.com](http://www.arakimidori.com)

Midori Araki, one of Tokyo's heralded young designer/artists, creates furniture pieces with sculptural, almost installation-like qualities. This pendant lamp appears to be a harmless birdcage, but when the light is turned on, a well-placed metal cutout creates a spooky shadow of the cage's former occupant.

**C FlowLounge** / Designed by Shin Azumi for Itoki / [www.itoki.jp](http://www.itoki.jp)

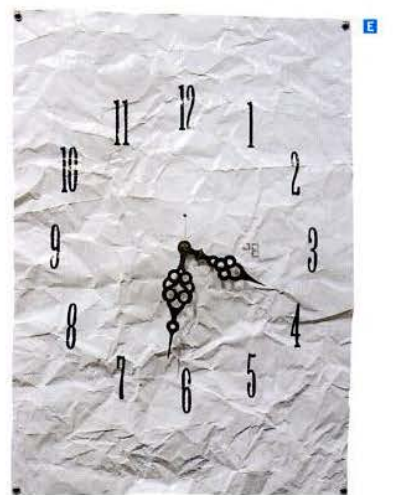
For better or worse, WiFi has enabled people to work from just about anywhere, often oblivious to their surroundings. Recognizing this, Shin Azumi's FlowLounge series creates spaces where people can meet and exchange information, in both a formal and relaxed atmosphere.

**D Cypress** / Designed by Nao Tamura for the AU Design Project / [www.au.kddi.com](http://www.au.kddi.com)

In previous years, Japanese cell phone provider AU produced hugely successful handsets by famed designers Marc Newson and Naoto Fukasawa. This year it unveiled this simple but striking design by up-and-coming designer Nao Tamura. What's not to like about a little asymmetry and exposed circuitry?

**E Time Paper** / Designed by D-Bros / [www.d-bros.jp](http://www.d-bros.jp)

Japanese design team D-Bros, who excel at bringing effective graphic elements to product design, rethink the clock with a series of timepieces that pin to the wall like posters. The clocks vary from the very simplistic to the nostalgically patterned and are sure to enliven any cubicle in its darkest hour. ▶





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CES



Dwell traveled to Las Vegas to battle throngs of pasty gamers, wait hours for taxis, and try our hand at the dizzying circus known as the Consumer Electronics Show (meanwhile, back at home, Apple was introducing the iPhone). We were less concerned with the difference between 1080i and 1080p, or what that means exactly, and more interested in innovative products that could actually make their way into your home.



**A Slim Furniture Concepts /**  
By Teaxs Instruments /  
[www.dlp.com](http://www.dlp.com)

This audio shelf concept, intended for slim DLP TVs, was one of our favorite finds of the entire show. Texas Instruments collaborated with English industrial design firm Native Design and respected speaker designer Bowers & Wilkins to create this clever integration of wall-mounted shelf, digital amplifier, and high-performance speaker system.

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**B Leaf Light** / By Yves Behar for Herman Miller / [www.hermanmiller.com](http://www.hermanmiller.com)

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**C WF337 SilverCare Washing Machine** / By Samsung / [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com)

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**D VX9400** / By LG and Verizon Wireless / [www.lgusa.com](http://www.lgusa.com)

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## Flirting with Pilaster

FAT principals Sean Griffiths, Charles Holland, and Sam Jacob (below) have a laugh outside the studio. The firm aims to add more color and depth to the architectural lexicon.

For some, contemporary architecture means stale geometric boxes and frigid minimalist interiors filled with snooty elitists sporting black turtle-necks. Principals Sam Jacob, Sean Griffiths, and Charles Holland, of the London-based firm FAT Ltd., are doing their best to upend this tired conception by creating rich, playful designs, weaving disparate concepts together to form a wholly new architectural vernacular. The English trio, whose name is an acronym for Fashion Architecture Taste, uses myriad narrative themes in their work, often contrasting fun and quirky ideas with more academic concepts. Think of them as paper architects who actually build things.

At FAT, the goal is to engender a more varied architectural landscape, one that reflects the interests of a building's inhabitants as well as its streetscape. Says Jacob, "I wouldn't necessarily say it's postmodernism, but that kind of eclectic approach—one that isn't based on an architect having a specific style, but having a process which can embrace very diverse interests." While the forward-thinking firm doesn't have a signature aesthetic, there is a concurrent feeling in each of their buildings. Staid traditional archetypes are often mixed

with colorful, cartoonlike forms, creating something between life-size Playmobil sets and Memphis-does-Disney; walking into one of their buildings is a little like Alice going down the rabbit hole.

Since the firm's inception in 1995, FAT has generated an impressive list of accomplishments in a relatively short period. Among them are numerous awards (including the Architecture Foundation's Next Generation Award in 2006), inclusion in an exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a feature on the face of a Dutch stamp. Add their recent lectures at such hallowed institutions as the Tate Modern, Royal College of Art, Yale University, and SCI-Arc to the tally, and the offbeat outfit's prowess starts to come into focus.

The principals at FAT aren't shy about revealing their affinity for all things funky and contrarian, as evidenced not just by their variegated design sensibility, but also by their appreciation of Phil Collins's drum fills. But it's not all about an architectural laugh track for these innovative designers. We sat down with Jacob to see what's behind their playful façade, and discovered some pretty serious stuff: philosophy, the purpose of architecture, and the perils of fast-food consumption.



### How did you three come to work together?

We were all studying in different schools in London at about the same time, and got to know one another through a tutor we shared. When we came out of college, it was a really terrible time in the building industry—right in the middle of a recession. Absolutely the most stupid time to decide to set up an office—there was zero work. To start with, it was really about exploring some of the ideas we'd been interested in at college, which didn't have much to do with building things. It was much more about exploring the margins of what architecture might be through a series of art projects.

### And so you had a very interdisciplinary focus from the beginning?

Yeah, to try and take work and put it in a very public place. That meant putting it into bus shelters, onto "For Sale" signs that estate agents put up outside of houses, business cards, all kinds of things that already existed out in the world, and had a dialogue about the way in which they were used. The projects we were exploring were about how to make architecture without any walls, that didn't have any physical fabric—what that might mean, how that might change ►



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relationships between the artist and the spectator, and how it might alter the way in which we use the city.

**Were you influenced by the likes of Archigram and other paper architects?**

Yeah. We knew and were taught by some of the people at Archigram. When we were starting out, that [ideology] was definitely something we were thinking about. But it was a world of difference here; it was a time when young practices didn't really exist in the UK.

**So do you think the landscape at the time had an influence on the focus and breadth of your work?**

Yeah, it was a very exciting time in London, when the YBA [Young British Artists] sensation was just starting. So there was lots of opportunity for interesting, creative things to occur. And that was a great context to be working within. Gradually, we thought, Well, hold on a minute, we don't want to be like Archigram at all! We want to build! The real challenge is to take these ideas and pursue them through real, built bits of architecture.

**Could you talk a little bit about your process?**

The way that we work with a client is to try and look for the point within the project, and the points within the participants of the project, which are slightly undercover. We try and tease those moments out so that they become the focus. That means trying to identify the elements of personality, and then looking at them in relation to the influences and sources that we might begin to refer to in the design. A lot of projects at the moment are very narrative in a sense. They're quite pictorial, and make a lot of references to things which are familiar, things that exist every day, or something that's more historical, and then kind of recombine and retask them in new, progressive ways.

**You were speaking about the combination of the old and the new. Along those lines, there is a dichotomy present in your work, a lighthearted, childlike humor as well as a really cerebral, manifesto-driven seriousness. What's the motivation behind those apparent contradictions?**

It's partly to do with an idea that architecture's quite a complex thing to experience. ▶



A social housing project in New Islington, Manchester (above), was a collaborative effort that drew heavily from the residents' input. Completed in the spring of 2006, the 23-unit development was designed to be an example of sustainable practices. The Blue House

(left) is a live/work project that contains an office, apartment, and maisonette for a family of three. The blithe façade reflects the mixed-use functionality by combining traditional home and office archetypes. Light filters into the interior of this seminal design (right).

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It's about layering different kinds of meanings and readings, and allowing them to overlay one another. From one angle it can be a fun project, but at the same time it can have more depth to it. It can be explored with a particular set of ideas or theory if you like—a philosophy. The intention is that the work operates on different levels. The motivation for that is how a building works within the city; how it's occupied; or how it's seen as an object, a destination, or a background. Playing up a variety of aspects, which as you say are sometimes at odds with each other, adds to the richness of the project. It's also about trying to get away from the idea of a perfect iteration of a single object or idea.

**Is the goal of your designs to upend the current trajectory of architecture, or rather to steer it in a specific direction?**

We're trying to do a couple of things. On one hand we're trying to explore an alternative to that singular idea or aesthetic; we're trying to upend that. At the same time we're trying to reconnect with certain traditions, which have been randomly plucked from the last 100 years or so, beginning with Arts and

Crafts up to Archigram. It's that kind of idea that you can combine very different things. It's not about pastiche, not about re-creation; it's about using a language. It's about using techniques, technologies, and materials in ways that encourage a more diverse use or understanding of architecture.

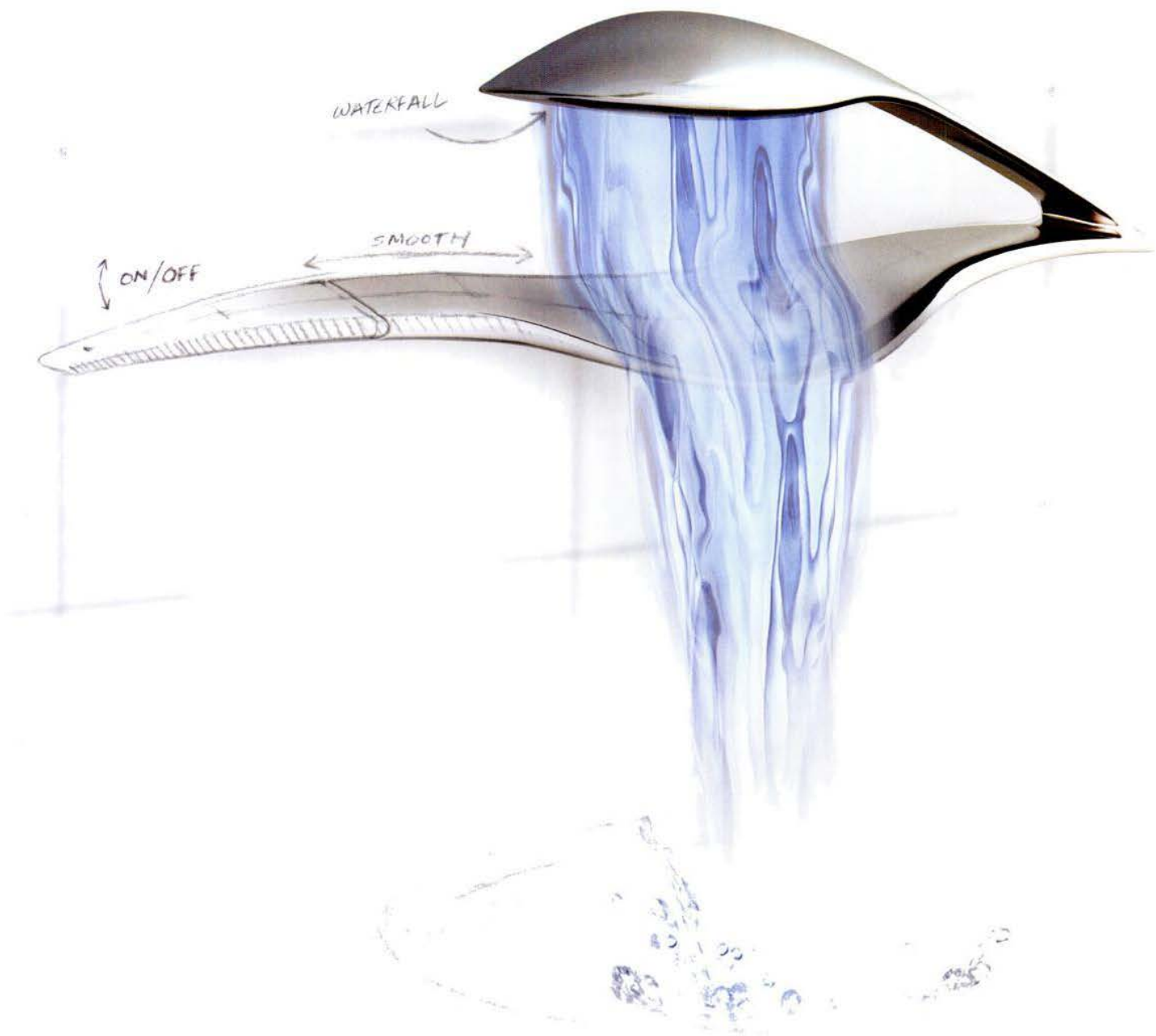
**Is that where the significance of your name—sake comes from, the interplay between fashion, architecture, and taste?**

Yeah. It's also a celebration of things that architects are usually fairly shy of. Architects usually aspire to things like timelessness, and we say, "Hold on a minute, that's a ridiculous thing to aspire to in the 21st century. That's a very obsolete notion. To embrace things like fashion and taste, things that change and shift colorfully, and alter—it's an absolutely valid and important thing for architects to do." The other side of the name is about being fat, consuming stuff, about consuming too much, and the architectural condition that arises when you graze on too much fast food. I suppose in both senses it's about posing a question: What are the aspirations of architecture in the 21st century? ■



An employee at KesselsKramer advertising agency (above) in Amsterdam works at a picnic table in the converted church. A wooden fort and lifeguard station establish scale, as well as provide structures for practical necessities like workstations. The Sint Lucas

Art Academy (left) in Boxtel, the Netherlands, was a bland throwback from the '60s before FAT created a new design for the façade. The exterior forms are echoed in the school's interior (right) where students now work in a more collaborative environment.



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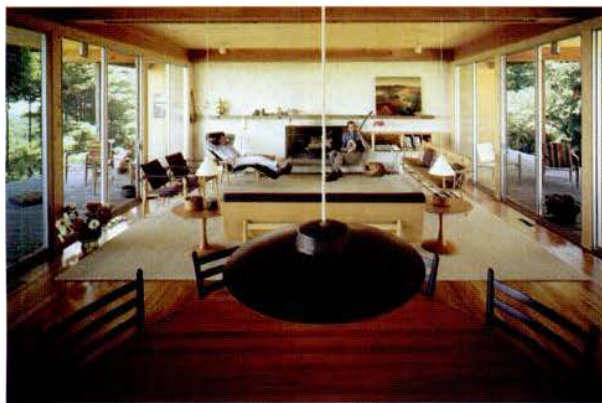


## Ambient Noyes

Neal Rantoul listens as brother-in-law Mark Harrison strums the banjo in the living room (top left) of their summer house. The deck (bottom left) provides a sunbathing spot for a family friend. The 15-foot concrete pillars that support the house (bottom right) mirror the spruces that hem it in.

Frankly, the whippoorwills around the Rantoul house on Martha's Vineyard can get annoying, singing through the night into dawn. They've nested beside a modest trio of wooden boxes rising out of a canopy of trees overlooking the sea. The largest box in the center contains living, dining, and kitchen areas. Bookending it, two smaller boxes contain bedrooms and baths. The long flanks of each rectangle are lined with floor-to-ceiling sliding glass doors; uninsulated wood and cinderblocks form the ends. Threaded to the eaves on slim cables, a wooden deck wraps the house without obstructing views. Two-by-fours framing the walls serve, on the interior, as shelves, bearing old Kodak snapshots and Milton Avery-like canvasses beside kids' crayon drawings. The gossamer skin of this summerhouse allows views, sound, light, and air to suffuse the interior. "My favorite aspect of the house is that it invites the outside in—in all weather and conditions. It places you in the environment, not cut off from it," says Neal Rantoul, whose parents commissioned the house from architect Eliot Noyes in 1963. "I also love the openness, the way it forces you to live together in the common room." Diana Harrison, one of the two sisters with whom Rantoul now shares it, agrees: "We've gotten closer to each other because of the house."

All of Noyes's summerhouses were unpretentious (exposed wood, screen doors, no insulation, shed roofs), though formally sophisticated, affairs. "There was a gaiety to it," says industrial designer Gordon Bruce, who first joined Noyes's studio as an intern in 1968 and has now written the architect's first monograph published last year by Phaidon Press, "but there was a lot of restraint. He respected the site and the needs of the people so he didn't build the Taj Mahal on Martha's Vineyard." Like the Rantoul house, other Noyes houses used the parallel walls and embrace of the outdoors. Noyes's own New Canaan, Connecticut, house consisted of public and private rectangles separated by an open court. The public side had no walls but contained zones carefully defined by materials. Noyes required guests to cross through the open air to reach the bathrooms on the private side, placing nature at the heart of the dwelling. (Friend and graphic designer Paul Rand once gave him the money to install a toilet in the living room; Noyes bought a dogwood tree instead.) For the Graham house in Greenwich, Connecticut, Noyes moved the parallel stone walls close together. Instead of framing the interior space, they formed a "street" bisecting the house through which occupants could access rooms that cantilevered ▶



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The interior courtyard of Noyes's 1954 home in New Canaan, Connecticut (below left). Summer shows a different side (below right).

off them. "My father believed firmly that buildings are practical, enhancing the lives of the people who use them, not objects of reverence," says Noyes's youngest son, Fred, who also became an architect.

In 1940, Noyes was hired as the first industrial design director of the New York Museum of Modern Art. At MoMA, Noyes established the yearly "Useful Objects" show (recently revived by curator Paola Antonelli). To "curate" it and spur Christmas consumerism, he and wife, Molly, mined the local five-and-dime for ordinary items under ten dollars. He initiated educational programs for children and competitions for everything from fabric to furniture design. Noyes used the museum as a platform to educate the American public about design, in general, and about the Bauhaus philosophy, in particular.

In 1956, drawing on his panoply of skills, IBM hired Noyes as their Consultant Director of Design, making him the ultimate arbiter in the company's commission of interiors and industrial design, architecture, exhibits, graphics, packaging, and art acquisition around the world. It was Noyes who hired architects Eero Saarinen, Mies van der Rohe, Marcel Breuer, and Paul Rudolph, and who decorated their buildings with artworks by the likes of Ivan Chermayeff, Alexander Calder, and Isamu Noguchi. Noyes also designed a number of IBM projects, including the colorful Selectric typewriter, and established design reviews of the latest products in a bare

white room to cultivate consistency—not uniformity—throughout the company. Finally, he generated brand manuals to maintain this consistency. Noyes would eventually consult for Westinghouse, Mobil Oil, and Cummins Engine Co., as well, and the same formula worked for each. For Mobil, in 1964, he designed its distinctive service stations, equipment, and corporate design program. With 50,000 stations around the world, the identity had to translate from Indiana to Kuala Lumpur to Dubai. "He educated corporate America about why design is important," says Bruce, "and why it makes good business sense." Anticipating the magnitude of brand power in the mid-1990s, Noyes became a "curator of corporate character."

The eternal teacher—of corporations, students, and the public—Noyes mastered the art of making his message meaningful to diverse audiences. "The thing I'd take away from him," says Bruce, "is the big-picture thinking, seeing the interconnectedness through all the complexity and the consistency between the smallest and biggest things he did." Fred Noyes agrees that his father's architecture was based not on fancy details or complex geometries but on clear ideas—and that this way of seeing the world suffused his life. "He was, first and foremost, an architect," says Fred, "but he brought that discipline to many fields and, in that sense, spread the power of design to places where it hadn't been recognized yet." ▶



*image  
not  
available*

## Ten Things You Should Know About Eliot Noyes

**1 /** Just for kicks, Noyes read the classics in Greek. Despite his highbrow education, he wasn't a pretentious speaker. Frustrated with IBM employee jargon, Noyes composed his "Dear Mother" pamphlet, suggesting memos be written like a simple note to Mum.

**2 /** Noyes imposed limits to define tasks. He once began a meeting by saying, "The objective of this meeting is to be done by lunchtime." No one got to the deli late.

**3 /** As an undergrad, Noyes wanted to be a painter and served as the illustrations editor at the *Harvard Lampoon*. Having switched to architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, he would have attended the Bauhaus had Hitler not closed it in 1933.

**4 /** One Thursday during graduate school, Noyes was invited to join an archaeologi-

cal expedition to the Persian Persepolis as a watercolorist. By the following Monday, he had packed his accordion and skis and deferred his degree for two years to embark on the seven-week steam passage to Beirut.

**5 /** When Noyes returned to Harvard, he found Bauhaus professors Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer teaching. After graduating, he joined their firm briefly. His brand of functional modernism followed Bauhaus tenets and was influenced by Le Corbusier.

**6 /** After Noyes established his own studio in New Canaan in 1947, he drew four of his colleagues—John Johansen, Marcel Breuer, Philip Johnson, and Landis Gores—to the city where, in their persistent efforts to introduce modernism to the bucolic "train station next to heaven," they became known as the Harvard Five.

**7 /** Noyes may have been the first to design a pass-through between kitchen and dining rooms. As wives began to do their own cooking and serving, he responded to the need to pass easily between rooms while entertaining.

**8 /** Noyes insisted that design and commerce work together—and that styling had nothing to do with either. One of his most popular *The Shape of Things* columns for *Consumer Reports* magazine criticized the rampant overdesign in Detroit where he felt execs were "playing rocket ship."

**9 /** Solar control fascinated Noyes and his textural (and economical) experiments perforating and screening building façades originated with partitions he saw in India.

**10 /** In 1977, Noyes died of a heart attack at the age of 66. ■

PHOTOS COURTESY ELIOT NOYES / PHAIDON PRESS (PORTRAIT, SIGN, MAGAZINE, TYPEWRITER); BY ELIOT NOYES (EXTERIOR)



Clockwise from top left: Noyes in his New Canaan office, 1966; the Mobil Oil logo he commissioned in 1965; the Vermont House, 1962, which shows sun control elements; the catalogue from the 1941 MoMA show, "Organic Design in Home Furnishings" curated by Noyes; and the 1961 Eliot Noyes & Associates IBM Selectric typewriter.



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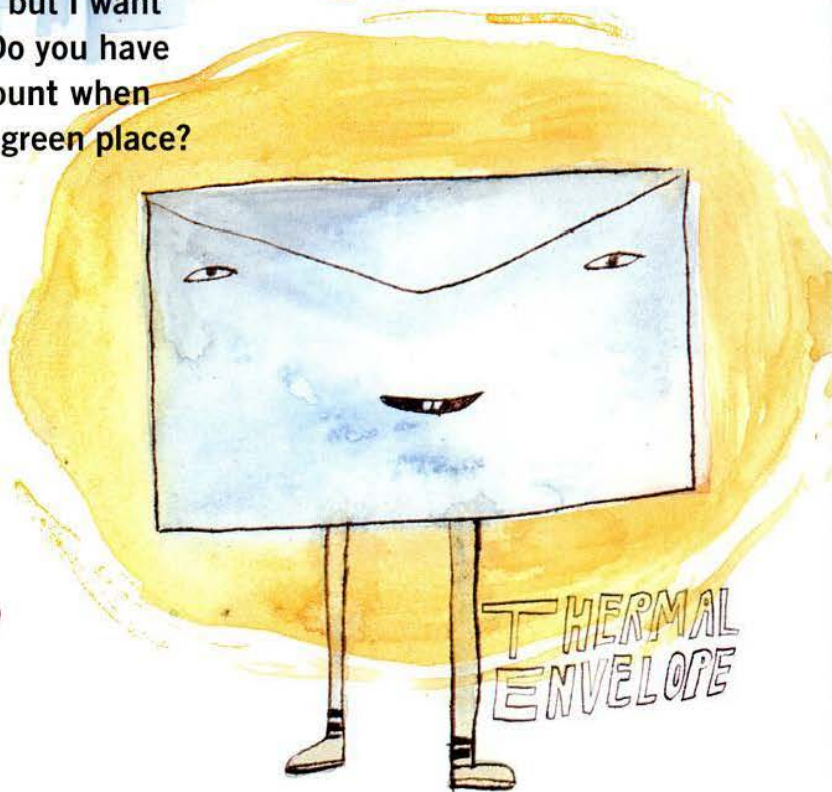
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Dear Dwell,  
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**1** If you renovate an existing commercial building in an urban area, close to transit, you're already there," says San Francisco architect David Baker. "Everything else you do is icing on the cake."

Since its founding in 1982, David Baker + Partners, Architects, has designed more than 6,000 housing units, from homeless shelters to custom houses to live/work lofts to SRO hotels. The firm's staff of 19 work in the Clocktower, a Baker-designed live/work development that gave new life to a former lithograph warehouse in San Francisco's once-scruffy South of Market district.

"We make sustainability one element in design, alongside our goals of community, urban social justice, and affordability," Baker says. The firm's website further explains: "Our work acts as an advocate for improved urban planning, where looking good only counts if it does good, too."

Baker emphasizes that "green requires a comprehensive, not a piecemeal, approach." Whether tackling renovations or new construction, he recommends using a green building checklist like those provided by

the California nonprofit Build It Green ([www.builditgreen.org](http://www.builditgreen.org)). "They're excellent for getting you to cover all the bases," he says.

With renovation as well as new construction, the strategies for environmentally responsible design are the same: cut waste, cut fossil-fuel consumption, weigh the environmental pros and cons of each product, and steer clear of materials that compromise human health. But when offering advice about greening adaptive-reuse projects, Baker keeps hitting upon two words: "It depends"—on scale, location, the building's condition, and a dozen other variables. With those caveats in mind, here are his top-ten strategies for green adaptive reuse.

**1** Save as much as possible of the existing building. "It's easier to save more if you're comfortable with a collage of old and new," Baker says. Exposed ducts and trusses, concrete floors, and steel staircases "are common now but were radical when we first started." He recalls Realtors balking at the raw feel of some of his early projects. ("When's the ceiling going in?" one asked.)

**2** Work with the existing structural system. "It's usually more efficient and it saves money to work with what's there instead of imposing a new structural system on the existing building," Baker notes. But, he also cautions, "It's much more complex to renovate than to build new, and in some cases a structure is not worth saving."

**3** Improve the thermal envelope. Look for opportunities to insulate the roof and perimeter walls and upgrade to energy-efficient windows. But "sometimes you don't want to take the old windows out because you like them. In some of our projects we've added new windows inside the old ones."

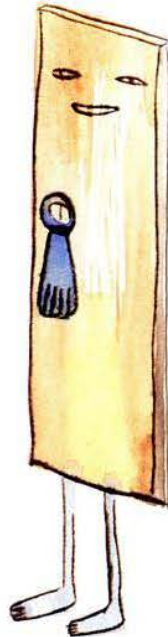
**4** Introduce natural lighting and ventilation. Older buildings that were designed to house things rather than people may lack features we expect from conventional homes, like daylight and fresh air. "Sometimes the windows don't open. You need operable windows for ventilation. In large buildings, we'll often put in a courtyard for natural light and ventilation."



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**5** Deconstruct rather than demolish. "You can do deconstruction yourself, but it's a major operation," Baker cautions. "Many demolition companies are very into deconstruction and for a relatively low cost will take apart and recycle a building. It takes longer than demolition, but it's really amazing how much can be recycled."

**6** Use salvaged and recycled-content materials. Using salvaged materials such as lumber, flooring, and doors needn't always entail reusing what was in your own building. "There may be more appropriate salvaged materials available at local salvage yards." Also consider recycled-content materials, like high-volume fly-ash concrete and recycled glass tiles.

**7** Choose new materials with sustainable attributes. With adaptive reuse, the considerations are "the same as in new construction or conventional residential renovation," Baker says. Choose durable materials, wood certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), and products like bamboo

and linoleum that are made from rapidly renewable or abundant resources.

**8** Look before you leap. Beware of toxic legacies such as asbestos in floor tiles and lead-based paint. Such hazards can be expensive to deal with, especially if they're dispersed throughout a large building, so evaluate potential problems before buying the building.

**9** Don't introduce new pollutants. Help protect indoor air quality by specifying interior finishes with zero or very low levels of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and urea formaldehyde.

**10** Use the roof. Many commercial buildings have unshaded, low-slope roofs ideal for photovoltaic systems, solar hot water collectors, and green, or vegetated, roofs. "Typically we can do some solar," he says. "There's tremendous interest in green roofs, and the visibility aspect is great" for raising awareness about environmental problems and solutions. ■

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## The Lawn Good-bye

Artist Fritz Haeg is trying to change the way we look at our lawns and illustrate how we might make better use of them. Michael and Jennifer Foti's once unproductive front yard (below) gets a makeover.

We sunbathe, picnic, and play sports on them. Our bare feet seem inexorably drawn to them. And for many of us, they're the first thing we see when we step out the front door: lawns. It's no surprise they cover 40 million acres in the U.S., or that we spend more caring for them than the entire GDP of Costa Rica.

Yet despite their attendant pleasures, these patches of viridian splendor leave much to be desired. Sucking up close to 240 gallons of water per person each day of the growing season, our beloved lawns are gradually depleting our natural water sources. Layer on the toxic soup of chemicals used to sustain them, and you can't help wondering if we should use the earth for something more productive.

Fritz Haeg thinks so. The 37-year-old Los Angeles artist is the mastermind of Edible Estates, an ongoing art/gardening project that transforms a typical suburban front lawn into an organic garden. Haeg launched the

project on July 4, 2005, in Salina, Kansas.

The location wasn't a random choice. Responding to the divisions he saw within the country following the 2004 election, Haeg wanted to help patch things up by working in the geographic center of the United States. After discussions with Stacy Switzer, curator of Grand Arts, a nonprofit art space and studio in Kansas City, Haeg got the idea for a lawn-to-garden project. "I really wanted to help people realize that they have a choice to make about how they use their land. Lawns are so pervasive and ubiquitous that we don't really see them anymore," he says. Americans spend more than 30 billion dollars on lawn care each year just to keep up with the Joneses.

Haeg sees our lawn lust as a symbolic demonstration of wealth and prosperity; for many the quest for the perfect postage stamp of curbside green has become as natural as cranking up the thermostat in the winter. ▶



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**Project:** Edible Estates  
**Regional Prototype Garden #2**  
**Location:** Lakewood, California

The Fotis made friends with neighbors by giving away some of the surplus the new garden (below left) produced. Lucky locals walked away with natural delicacies such as white beauty eggplants, Brandywine tomatoes, lemon cucumbers, kum-

quats, apricots, pears, purple sage, rosemary, and thyme. The various stages of development unfold (bottom) in the Southern California suburb, illustrating the stark transformation from everyday turf to extraordinary vegetation.



That's not the case for Jennifer and Michael Foti of Lakewood, California, a quintessential suburb on the southern edge of Los Angeles. After reading about Edible Estates on treehugger.com, Michael, a 37-year-old computer programmer, emailed Haeg. "Our lawn is flat, gets plenty of sunlight, and is totally pesticide-free. It's also one of the brownest on the street, as my wife refuses to waste water on it," he wrote.

The Fotis were among nearly 40 candidates Haeg considered during his seven-month search for the second installment of his project. They were a perfect fit. Not only was Michael an experienced and eager gardener, his thoughtful and articulate demeanor made him a good spokesperson for the project.

And so during Memorial Day weekend last year, the Edible Estates team of 12 volunteers planted the 20-by-38-foot space with a dizzying amalgam of more than a hundred vegetables, fruits, and herbs. (Haeg covered the cost of all the planning and materials.)

Despite a few initial eyebrow raisings, Michael says, the garden was a hit. As a result Haeg has even gone so far as to trademark the name, now officially referred to as Edible Estates, a Gardenlab project by Fritz Haeg. Of course, it didn't hurt that each person who passed by walked away with produce. "I knew that I was going to have a lot more food than I could realistically eat, so it was very important to me that I give away as much as possible." Even so, the Fotis were still left with a hefty surplus. So besides canning and preserving, Jennifer started cooking Greek food to make use of all the tomatoes and eggplants.

"Flip through any Greek cookbook with a decent number of pictures and you're instantly aware that tomatoes and eggplants are 50 percent of the ingredients," she says. And when they tired of moussaka, Jennifer whipped up Indian recipes like masala green beans ▶



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# CAMPARI®

**Project:** Edible Estates  
Regional Prototype Garden #1  
**Location:** Salina, Kansas

The first iteration of the Edible Estates project was initiated on July 4, 2005, at the home of Stan and Priti Cox in Salina, Kansas (below left). A free informational booklet with resources and recommendations was produced to aid local

residents interested in converting their own lawns. The Salina Art Center sponsored and commissioned the project, and an exhibition with design drawings and photos documenting the progress (bottom) were put on display.



with fenugreek and bhagan bharta, an eggplant dish. It was, however, her grandmother's "Chicago Hots," a relish made with cherry tomatoes, celery, bell pepper, and onion that turned out to be the most popular.

But for all the culinary rewards the little garden has provided, Michael is equally passionate about its potential to build community. "I oftentimes feel like we live in a society disconnected from one another and from our food," he says. "I'm really interested in using the garden as a bridge rather than a moat."

The Fotis' mini-farm has garnered more attention than they ever anticipated. But unlike the legions of radical de-lawners ready to overtake suburbia with their sod cutters, neither the Fotis nor Haeg have any desire to cram this agenda down people's throats. Says Michael, "I didn't want the message to my neighbors to be that lawns are bad and if you have one you're a bad person."

Haeg, who spent every weekend of his childhood mowing the front lawn, says Edible Estates "isn't really so much about the actual plant material but the bigger global issues of food production and human interaction." In a country where produce travels an average of 1,000-plus miles from field to plate, shifting to grow-your-own will not only help reduce energy consumption and combat environmental degradation, it'll also give neighbors a reason to get to know one another.

It's this message that Haeg hopes to spread to a broader audience; there's already interest for another project on the periphery of New York City. Through gallery exhibits, how-to pamphlets, a video, and a coffee-table book tentatively titled *Edible Estates: Attack on the American Front Lawn* to be published in spring 2008, Haeg wants to convince Americans to do more mulching than manicuring. Over the next four to five years, he plans to convert seven more lawns, and hopefully many more people. ■

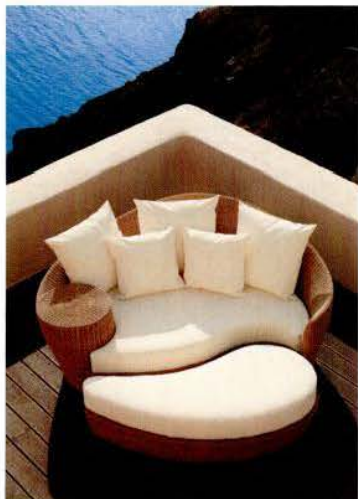


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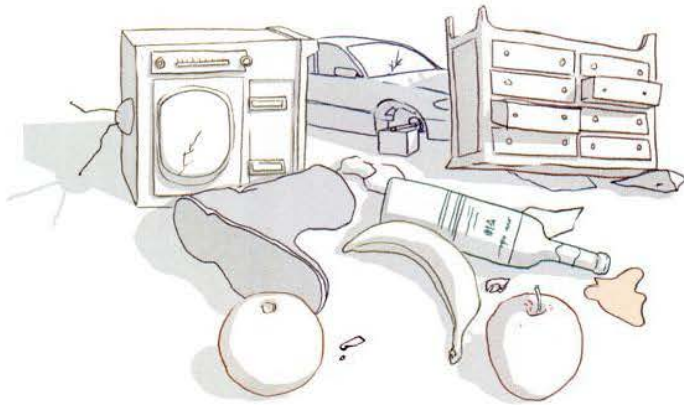


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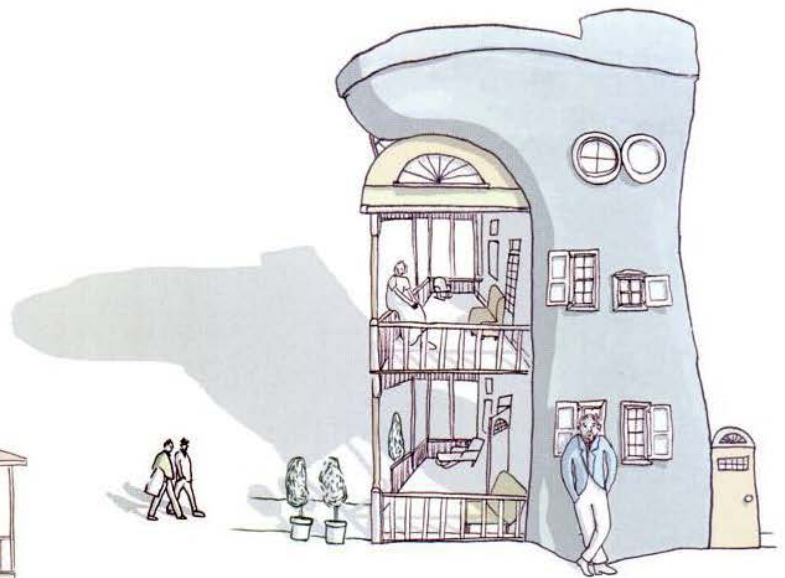
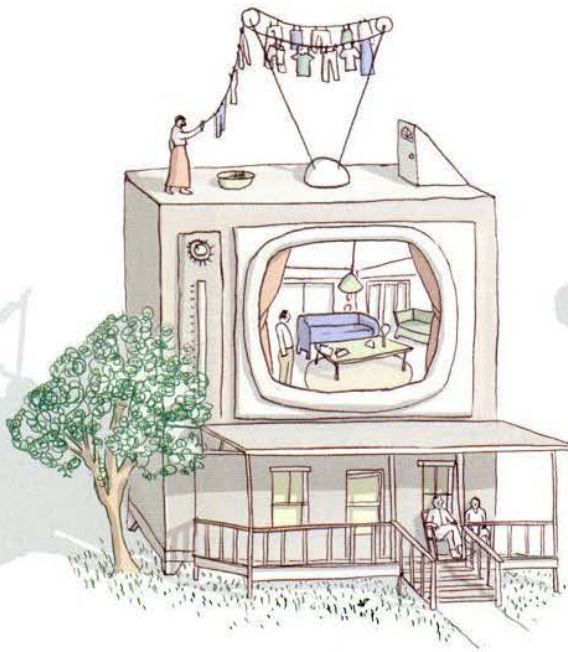
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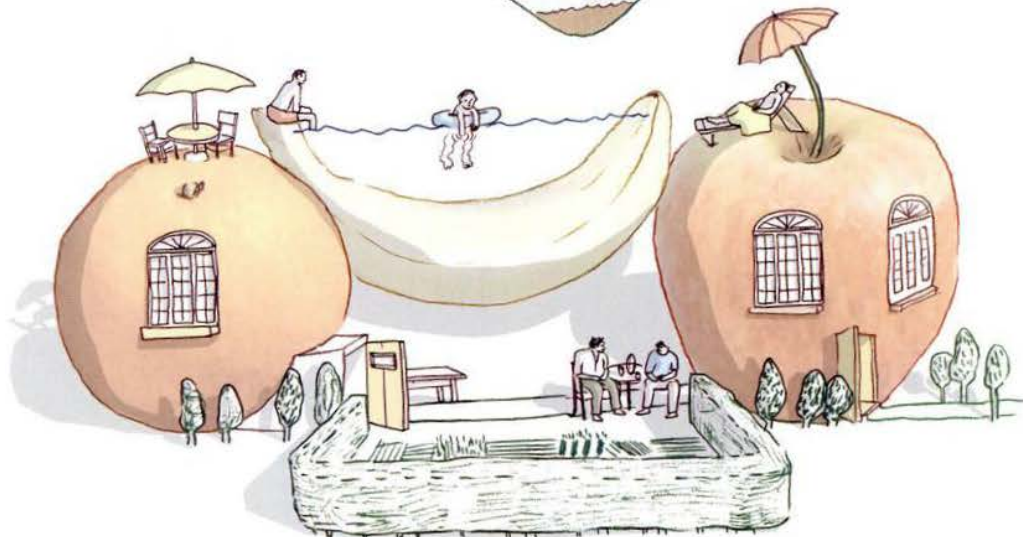
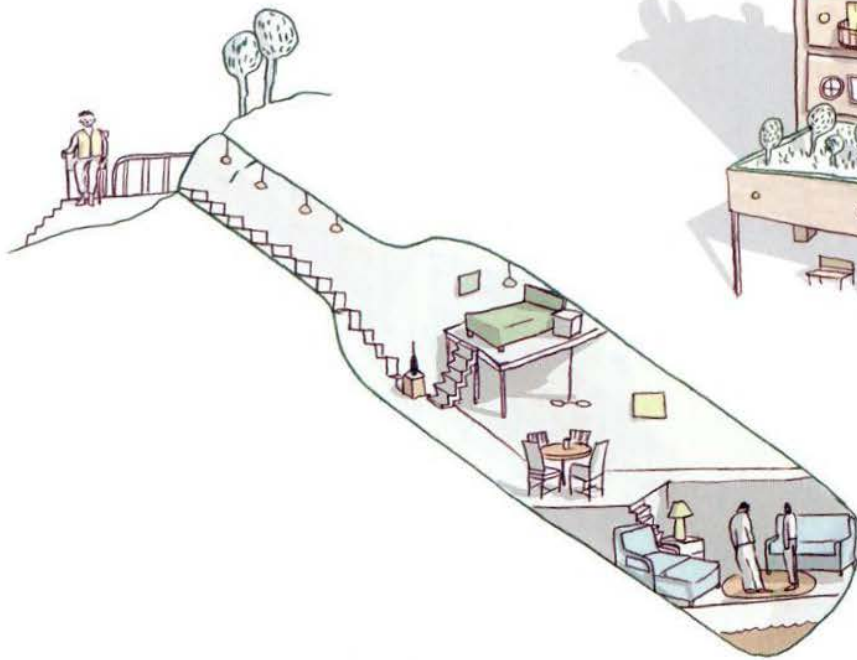
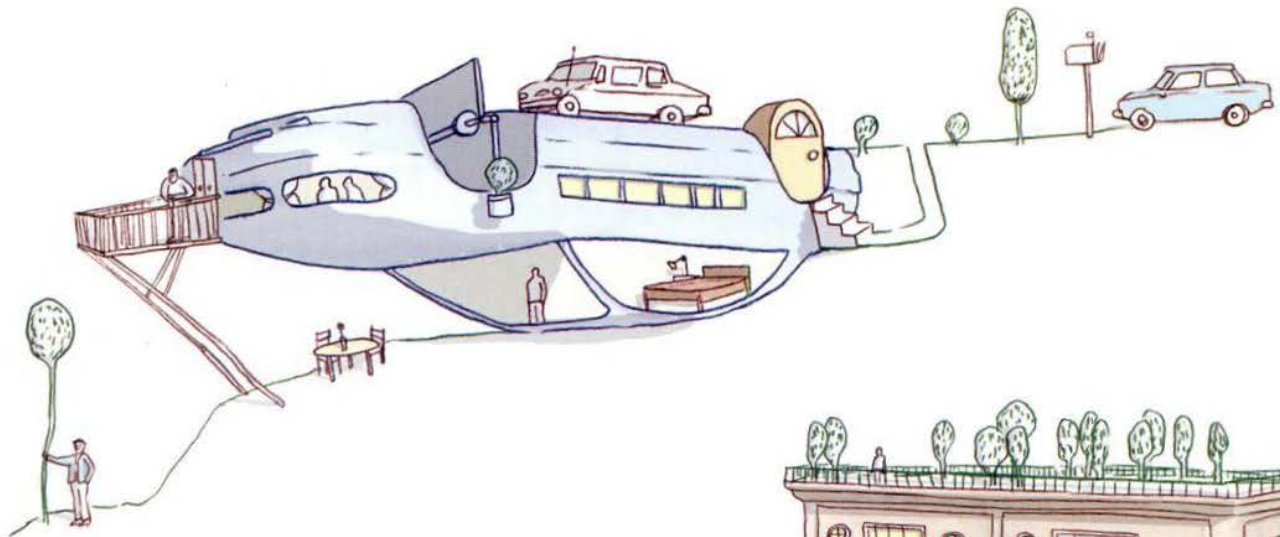




# Renovate! Reuse! Recycle!

Recycling soda cans is one thing, but adaptively reusing derelict buildings takes more than just a trip to the curb. Adventurous clients and designers are having a go at architectural dumpster diving, turning sows' ears into silk purses by transforming just about anything into a place called home.







In Los Angeles, California, a family of four inhabits a polychrome fantasia in the heart of Chinatown. Formerly a restaurant, punk rock night club, and furniture warehouse, the Berniers' loft is anything but boring.

**Adaptive reuse of historic buildings in Los Angeles,** both officially sanctioned and ad hoc, often results in odd juxtapositions, with none odder than the nutty provenance of Dan Bernier and Amy Finn Bernier's loft in Chinatown. In 1939, their building was born as the Rice Bowl restaurant, a politically incorrect "palace in the sky" that served a stiff Mai Tai and was home to the only Asian cabaret in town. Later, it became Madame Wong's—which, to any cool kid raised in the post-punk 1980s, occupies a place as seminal as CBGB but as obscure as Machu Picchu: Once, the Berniers' 1,200-square-foot living/dining room held a stage graced by

**Project:** Bernier Residence

**Architect:** Amy Finn Bernier

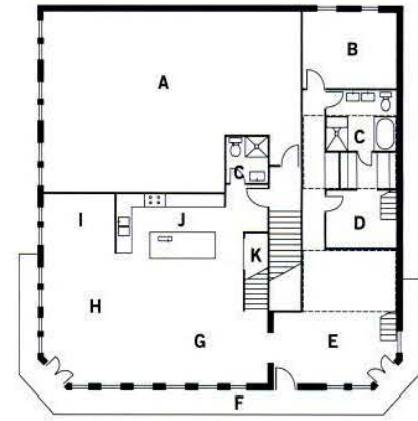
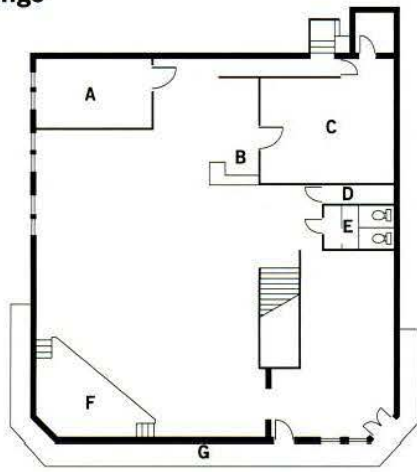
**Location:** Los Angeles, California

then-junior-varsity bands like Blondie, the Go-Go's, Oingo Boingo, and the Police. Dan Bernier tells his favorite story about "Madame" Esther Wong (1917–2005), who was nothing if not adaptable: A failing restaurateur who got into music for the beer sales, she roamed the club's audience to sniff out marijuana smokers. In her most infamous Chinese-grandma moment, "Madame Wong stopped the Ramones in the middle of their set, because someone had written graffiti in the girls' bathroom, and she made them go clean it up," Dan says with a laugh, sprawling on a sun-drenched couch in the former West Coast temple of New Wave. ▶

Lewis descends a metal-tube set of stairs fabricated by a maker of ship's ladders. A bannister from the original restaurant stairway serves as a railing for the sleeping loft.



# Dwellings



## Bernier Residence Floor Plans

### Before / First Floor

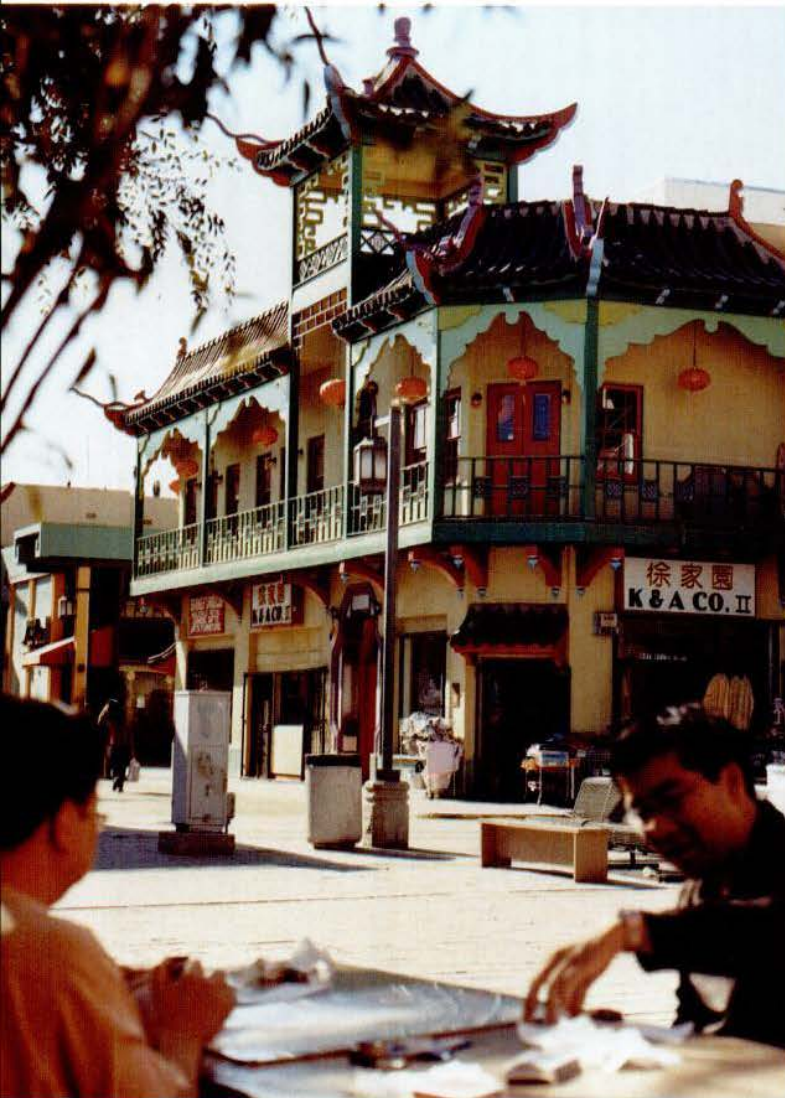
- A Office
- B Hostess Station
- C Commercial Kitchen
- D Janitor Closet

- E Bathroom
- F Elevated Stage
- G Balcony

- ### After / First Floor
- A In-law Apartment
  - B Bedroom
  - C Bathroom
  - D Office

- E Play Room
- F Balcony
- G Dining
- H Living
- I Office

- J Kitchen
- K Laundry



From the mid-1980s until the Berniers bought it in 2003, the building on Sun Mun Way was a 4,000-square-foot furniture warehouse upstairs and a series of low-rent merchants downstairs, all moldering in concert with the declining fortunes of the master-planned, tourist-friendly shopping village north of downtown once known as New Chinatown. (Old Chinatown had been bulldozed and redeveloped several times over by the 1930s.) Today, just-plain-Chinatown is experiencing a renaissance, with bars and art galleries occupying formerly empty storefronts, new housing and light-rail nearby, and a multicultural 24-hour street scene that exists nowhere else in urban Los Angeles. Some call it gentrification, but there may

The exterior paint scheme (opposite left) is a riff on a vintage sign hanging downstairs, which may reflect the

building's original colors. "Hundreds of people a week photograph our building," says Dan. Moe (opposite right)

not be a word for the repopulation of a fake place with real residents. For the Berniers, it's like raising a family in the middle of Colonial Williamsburg. Weird, but fun.

By the time the Berniers got the property, the only remnants of its fascinating past were a disused kitchen in the back—now a bedroom for their sons Maurice (Moe), five, and Lewis, eight—and a distinctive circular opening between the show lounge and dining room, now an open living/kitchen area and lofted sleeping/bath quarters. The "big circle" still serves to separate the front of the house from the back: "We wanted this big public area where people could be eating, cooking, talking—a shared space," says Dan, "and on the other side of the circle is ▶

stands in front of the circular opening between the living area and the sleeping/bath quarters. Thrift-store lamps (below) and

an illuminated snowman lend the loft a warm glow at night.



really 'our' space. It exists as another realm." A couple of swings for the boys are bolted into a beam just beyond the circle, and while homework, playtime, and bedtime occur in the back rooms, the whole house is a free-fire scooter zone.

Kid-friendly touches pop up throughout the space. In the bathroom, a sink for shorties is placed next to one for adults; the bathtub is ensconced below the overhang of the sleeping loft to keep it warm and cozy, while the tooth-brushing area opens up all the way to the skylights. Moe and Lewis's bedroom looks out on the not-so-scenic rear of the Hop Louie restaurant next door, but it also has a great view of Dodger Stadium; in the summer, the boys

**Moe and Lewis (below left) play in their shared bedroom, the former Madame Wong's kitchen. "It's just so fun for**

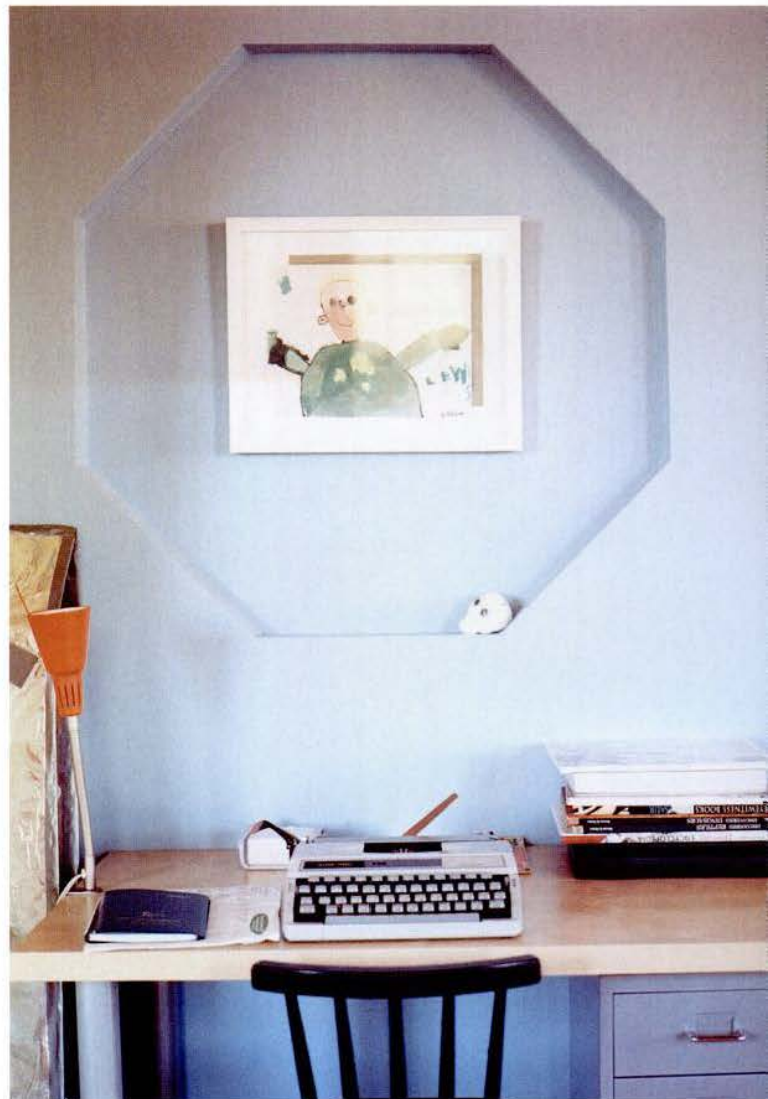
**them to live in a funny place like this," says Amy. "Their friends love to come over and play." Unlike the ornate**

can watch July 4 fireworks from their beds.

In addition to the big circle, the most prominent design elements are the 14-foot-tall ceilings painted bold green, red, orange, and blue, and the golden southern light that flows through the double-hung windows, some of them new, some of them originals buried under decades of stucco and drywall. "It was a club, so they didn't want any natural light, and when it was a furniture warehouse, they were afraid of people breaking in," says Dan. French doors open up onto an original balcony that runs the length of the eastern edge of the building, allowing parents to keep an eye on kids scooting around the concrete plaza below. An IKEA kitchen features red

**exterior, there wasn't much interior detail left to reuse—but the Berniers did their best. Dan says, "There was a wall that had**

**octagonal shapes in it that we took out, and when we rebuilt it, we kept the shapes," (below right).**



plastic panels that riff on the faux-Chinese lacquer seen in Chinatowns everywhere, and a bargain-priced green granite countertop that Dan considers retail Waterloo (but in a good way).

The entire place is lit by a cacophony of floor lamps, including a plastic snowman. There's also a reupholstered Saarinen Womb chair, given to Amy by a formerly homeless client when she worked for a nonprofit that builds housing for people with AIDS. And all the other furniture? "Everything else is from the St. Vincent de Paul thrift store," Amy says with a laugh. Fine art is everywhere, much of it by 1990s L.A. art stars like Martin Kersels and Steve Hurd. This is not just a quirk of taste:

Sunlight streams through formerly boarded-up windows in the living area that was once Madame Wong's stage. "When

we took off the drywall, we realized there were windows in there. So we had more made to match these four," says Dan.

After running a cutting-edge art gallery in Los Angeles during the '90s, Dan retired from the economically mercurial art world at age 40 to go back to school and earn a degree in real estate. Before working in housing and finance, Amy was an architect. She designed the entire renovation of the Chinatown building, with Dan acting as project manager. Sort of.

"I think we were very naive," says Dan of the undertaking. They'd bought and sold a few houses before, living in some, rehabbing others for a profit. But all had been small-scale projects; the Chinatown building was a wholly different animal. A job that was supposed to take a few months stretched into a year and a half. ▶

The new windows open up the east side of the building to views of the courtyard below and the San Gabriel mountains

in the distance. The apartment is furnished with an eclectic mix of furniture, including an Eero Saarinen womb chair. [p.222](#)





“I would often buy the wrong toilets,” Dan admits.) But in the interim, they had time to think. The decision to actually live in the upstairs space, rather than convert it into multiple rental units as they had first planned, was a slow dawning.

First came the intergenerational, and financial, appeal: At the same time the Berniers were considering buying the loft, Amy’s parents were looking for a condo in Los Angeles to be near their grandchildren. Stymied by high prices, they helped make the Chinatown purchase, and in return, Amy designed them a two-bedroom, two-bath apartment on the western side of the building.

And the more time they spent in Chinatown, the more

**In the tiled master bathroom (below), the boys get their own sink. Vintage kettles and a wide-ranging assortment of**

**pots and pans (below, right) sit above kitchen cabinets from IKEA. Amy was the sole architect on the project, when**

Dan and Amy realized it was a great place to raise their boys. “We can walk to a restaurant without having to cross a street, and they can ride their bikes without the fear of cars,” Dan says, pointing to the courtyard of Central Plaza below, where Chow Yun-Fat’s shoeprints and a statue of Dr. Sun Yat-sen mark the traditional gateway to Chinatown. (Not to mention 25-cent kiddie rides and firecrackers available at every corner store.) Amy notes other comforting elements, like a 24-hour bicycle security patrol, and the late-night foot traffic, perhaps the greatest urban crime-stopper of all. “We actually let the kids out of our sight,” she adds happily, words few suburban Los Angeles moms would ever dare to utter. ■

**she wasn’t working a full-time job. (Her cardboard model of the living/dining area included a red Lego as the dining table.)**

**“It’s surprising how great it is,” she says of the redesign (opposite). “It just works really well—if I do say so myself.”**







# Keep Your Eye on the Balto

Coffee shop and bakery owner Greg Martin kept baker's hours to whip this chimerical Minneapolis building into a modern confection.

**Project:** Balto Building

**Architect:** redlurered

**Location:** Minneapolis, Minnesota

**A mustard-yellow brick building in Minneapolis'** Whittier neighborhood once housed an insurance company called the Minnesota Commercial Men's Association. Years later, it sheltered battered women. After that, it was home to an elderly artist who rented out a few apartments haphazardly carved out of each floor. Then, finally, Greg Martin, a coffeehouse owner and part-time rehabber, came along and reincarnated the building yet again—not that anyone standing on the street could really tell.

"It looked almost abandoned," Martin says, appreciatively. And with its crumbling front walk and chipped façade, it still sort of does. But after two years of radical renovation—filling and emptying 40 giant dumpsters of construction debris, taking countless early-morning

trips to The Home Depot, and experiencing episodes of sheer panic—the interior tells a different story. Or, for Martin, who did much of the work himself, it tells many.

The Balto building, as it's known, has been a curiosity to Minneapolitans for years. Built in the early 1900s, just down the road from turn-of-the-last-century mansions, it's a warehouselike commercial building, incongruously plopped down in the middle of a predominately residential neighborhood. "This is definitely one of those buildings," Martin says. "People always wonder what goes on in here."

Developers were curious, too. But the previous owner, a septuagenarian artist named Melisande Charles, steered them away. "She wanted someone who loved the building," Martin remembers. "And we were the only ►

The open volume of Greg Martin's Minneapolis home is broken up to accommodate lofted sleeping quarters and more intimate ground-floor lounging spaces.



people who walked in here and said, 'We want to do this.' Everyone else just saw dollar signs. 'You have good juju'—is what she said."

The good juju went a long way. Martin bought the building for \$575,000—less than the listing price—and began gutting and renovating the basement and first floor, creating two residential units and one commercial unit to rent out for extra income. After that, he took on the giant task of gutting the second floor, which had been chopped into a warren of scattered rooms. "It was just a bunch of cats, random fabric everywhere, crazy lights," Martin remembers.

Martin, a Minnesota native, had renovated several properties in the city over the previous ten years, usually renting out an apartment or two, then living in the building himself and selling the place after a couple of years.

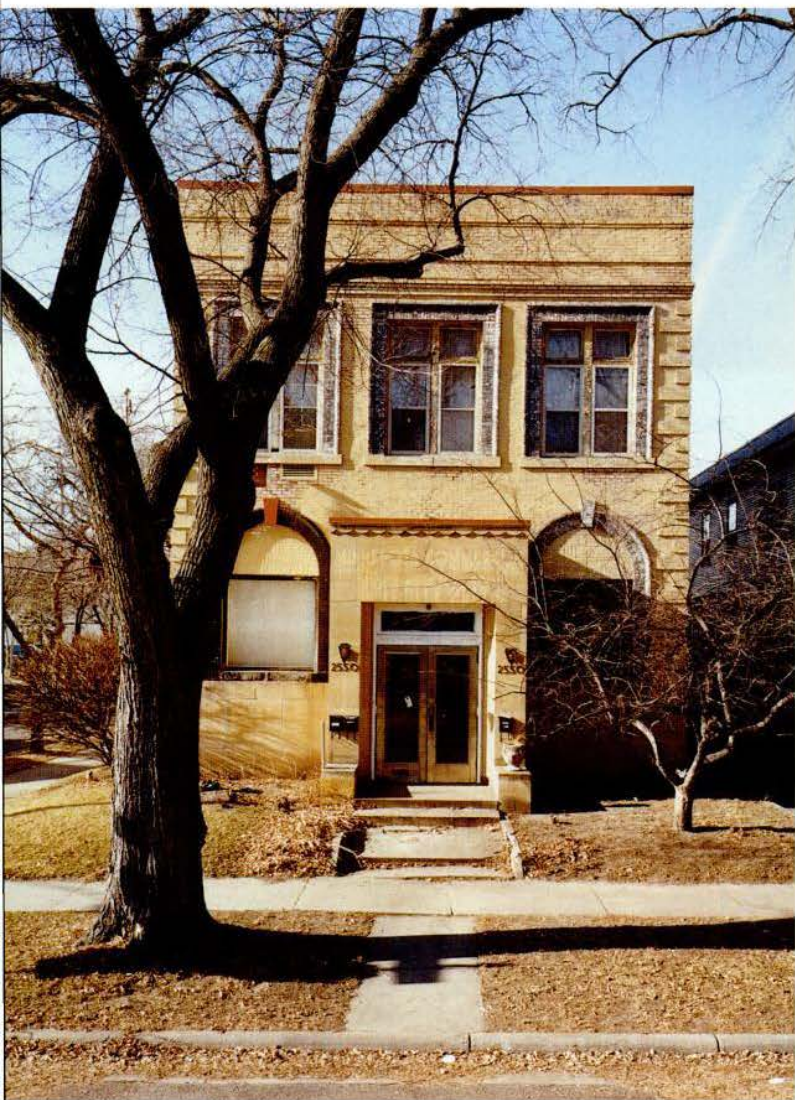
Despite the drastic changes within, the exterior of Martin's home (below left) has remained intact throughout the years.

The kitchen and dining area (below right) is furnished with a salvaged timber table designed by Matt Eastvold, white Panton chairs, and a Glo Ball pendant lamp. Martin and daughter, Eve, whip up a chocolate cake (opposite). [p. 222](#)

But at the Balto building, he wanted a modern, minimal renovation and a home where he could settle with his nine-year-old daughter, Eve, who had been carted around from property to property. "She's had to put up with a lot," Martin admits.

The budget was limited, so Martin did as much of the work as he could. The floor, for one, was covered in asbestos tile, and estimates to remove it and finish the concrete underneath ranged from \$20,000 to \$30,000, so he finally decided to rent equipment and tackle the job himself. "I spent a full-on weekend doing the floors, wearing goggles and a respirator," he says.

Martin came to appreciate his amateur effort. He couldn't get the paint and glue spots off the concrete, so the floor remains splotted with orange and black. "At night, when the lights are on, it just glows. It's ▶





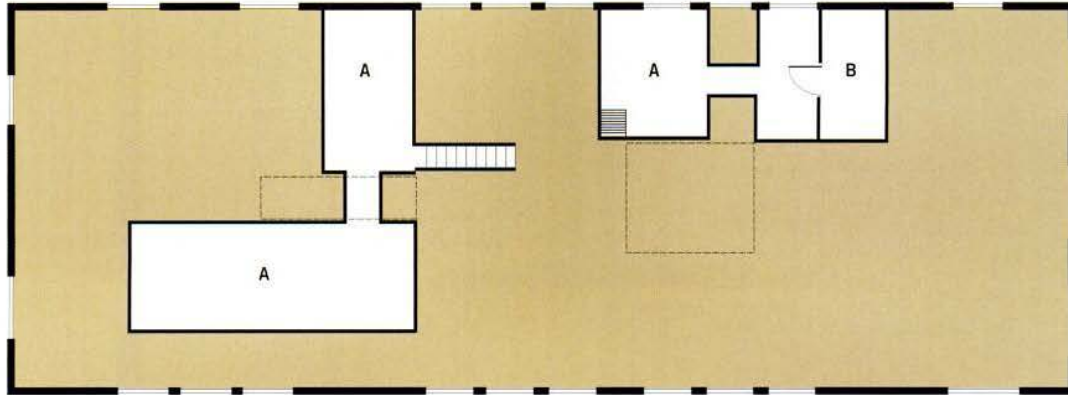
**Balto Building Floor Plan  
First Floor**

A Master Bedroom  
B Master Bathroom  
C Media  
D Bedroom

E Bathroom  
F Sitting  
G Living  
H Kitchen

I Office  
J Laundry





Balto Building Floor Plan  
Second Floor

A Loft  
B Mechanical



amazing," he says. "There are these little hieroglyphs everywhere."

When the job of clearing the 2,600-square-foot space was done and the floors and ceiling tiles were all carted away, Martin was confronted with the overwhelming task of designing the space and realized he needed professional help. "I own a coffeehouse. I'm an amateur renovator," he says. "I love design, but when it came down to it, I didn't know what to do. I freaked out."

Martin admired the work of local design collective redlurered, and enlisted their help. When designer Scott Muellner came over and saw the soaring rectangular space, he instantly envisioned a plan. A week later, the redlurered team delivered a model.

The idea was to maintain the openness and height of the space, maximizing the wall of windows to the south,

**A few carefully chosen furnishings punctuate the light-filled living area that sits adjacent to the kitchen (opposite), like**

**Buttercup Chairs by Blu Dot, a lightbox and screen print by artist John Vogt, and a kelly green vintage couch. Eve works**

while also creating private spaces and second-story lofts that would accommodate Martin's six-foot-five-inch frame. The shared area now includes an open kitchen and dining space with three separate seating areas, two of which are tucked away from the larger space. Two staircases lead into the unit from the ground level, while another leads to one loft space, consisting of two more rooms attached by a bridge. The master bedroom, like the common areas, has 14-foot ceilings—"Maybe it's because I'm tall, but I like a lot of space," Martin says—while Eve's bedroom is two levels, with a desk area below, and a ladder leading to a bedroom and play area above. Another area, on the first level, includes adjacent lounging and computer nooks.

Martin served as general contractor for the entire project, in addition to managing the coffeehouse ▶

**at the desk in her double-height bedroom (below). Vogt's mythically aquatic-themed mural reflects both the taste**

**of a young girl and the pared-back aesthetic of any modern enthusiast. 📍 p.222**





and a baking business he launched the same week he bought the building. In the morning, he'd deliver muffins, éclairs, and scones, check in at the coffeehouse, and then go to the building to work. A couple of times during the yearlong process, he would leave town in the middle of the night to make the six-and-a-half-hour trip to IKEA in Chicago, then turn around and come home with kitchen cabinets, lighting, or pillows. "It was definitely ruining my life," he says. "The relationship I was in at the time? Done."

Martha McQuade, a designer with redlurured, says it's unusual for a client to be as hands-on as Martin was. "We have people who pitch in and do a little painting," McQuade explains. "But Greg is unique. He was fun to work with. He's a cowboy."

**White Algae (opposite) breaks up the space without taking away from the open feel, while idiosyncrasies like exposed**

**pipng and polished cement floors add texture. The master bathroom (below left) departs from the cool tones used**

And it wasn't all bad for Martin's social life. Every afternoon at 4:30—for a full year—Martin invited anyone interested to come over for beers to check out the progress. "There were some days I wanted it to start at noon," Martin laughs.

The hard work also changed his relationship with the space, and with the building, for the better. "This place was just nothing," Martin remembers, "but every day I woke up and worked really hard and made it happen. I love being here. It's really rewarding."

Not that he's a misanthrope, but Martin says he's happy to enjoy the space with Eve for a while without contractors or curious onlookers around. "I like that it looks abandoned," he says, only half joking. "And that the doorbell doesn't work." ■

**throughout the house in favor of warmer, neutral-toned marble tiling, which wraps around a large soaking tub.**

**The bedroom (below right) is decorated minimally by another Vogt screenprint, and a strand of green Algae.** [p. 222](#)







# West Enders

One of Portland, Oregon's, up-and-coming neighborhoods can thank a modern reinterpretation of a previously decrepit building for inspiring a wave of rather chic downtown development.

**Project:** 12 + Alder

**Architect:** Skylab Design Group

**Location:** Portland, Oregon

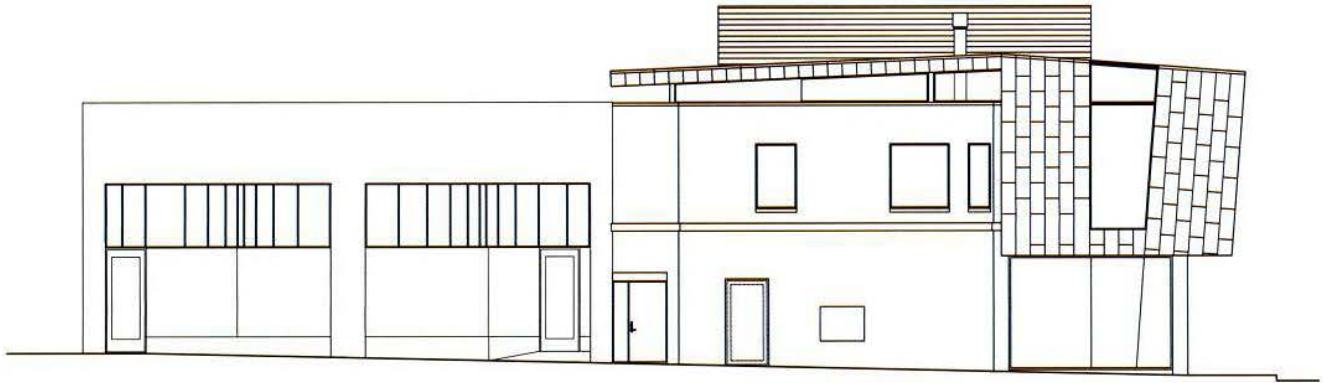
**It is a truth universally acknowledged that an up-and-coming neighborhood in possession of increasingly hip retail and rising rents must be in want of a name.** Several have been trotted out for the bustling blocks of Portland, Oregon's southwest quadrant just west of downtown and south of the hip and hopping Pearl District. Given its spate of design and fabric shops, the Fiber Arts District is an option, as is the hackneyed SoBu (south of Burnside). A far less ostentatious moniker, favored by one of the primary drivers of the neighborhood's development, is also in the fray. "I like the West End," says architect Jeff Kovel, founder of Skylab Design Group. "That's what it's been called historically, and I think it's kind of classy."

If anyone deserves credit for kick-starting the West End's revitalization, it would have to be Kovel. The neighborhood has been a home to vagrants and many of Portland's social services; a methadone clinic and a run-down hotel were centers of activity. But in 2001, Kovel, then 29, decided to move Skylab Design—now with a staff of eight—into downtown Portland and lit upon a crumbling building at SW 12th Avenue and SW Alder Street as his new digs. "We intended to stay for a year and then sell it and get out," he says. "But obviously we're still here."

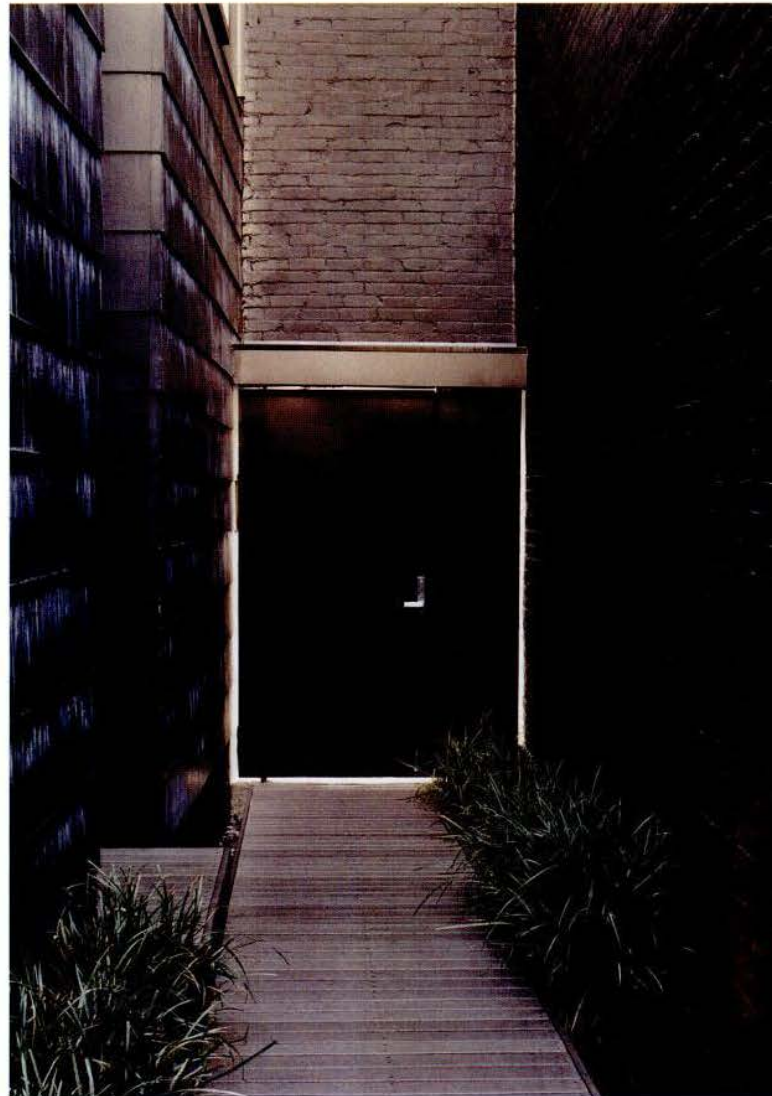
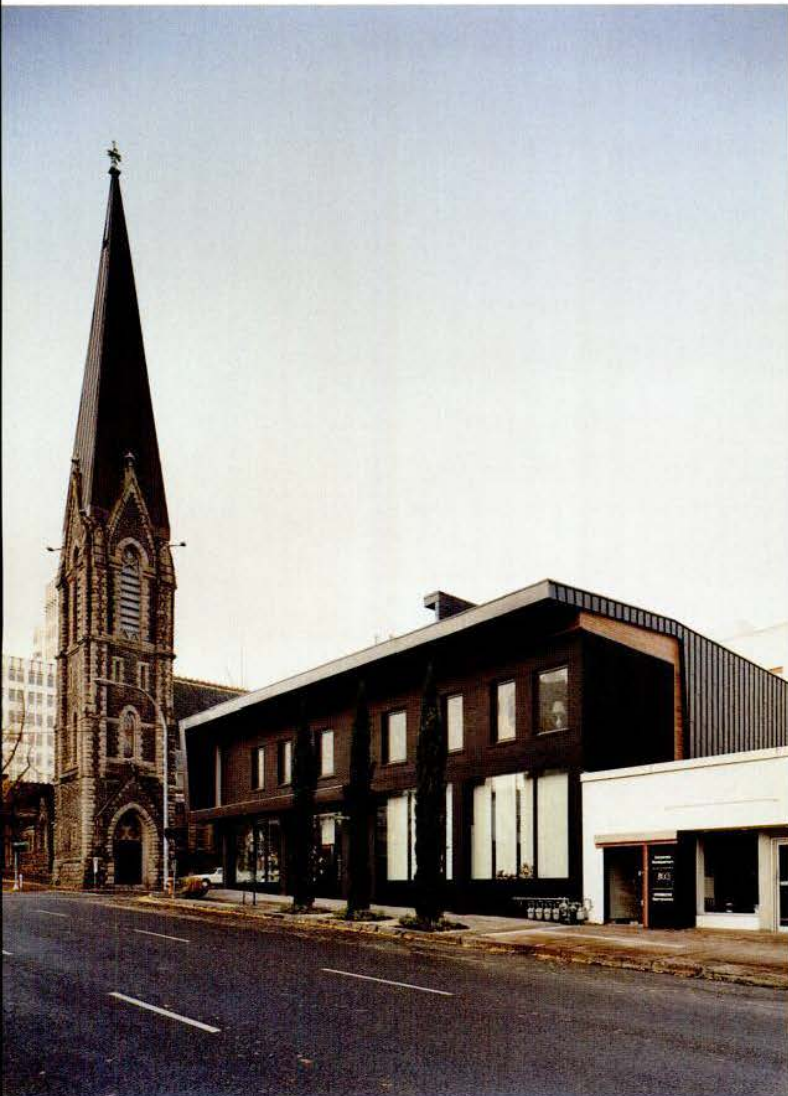
The ramshackle building that has become 12 + Alder serves as the office for Skylab Design, the storefront for ►

Architect Jeff Kovel and his daughter, Lola, bask in the swath of light afforded by 12 + Alder's signature window and skylight.





12 + Alder Elevation



the furniture shop Intelligent Design, space for the salon D Studio, and home to the Kovel family. Erected in 1907, the building has housed a messenger service, a boardinghouse, a storage space, a gay bathhouse, and more recently, a store selling fine, handmade men's lingerie.

Manly underthings aside, for years the West End's only architectural draw was the First Presbyterian Church, a stately Victorian Gothic just across the street from 12 + Alder. "The church is amazing," Kovel says with clear admiration for the sanctuary designed by William E. McCaw, Richard Martin, Jr., and Manson White in 1890. "It was a real no-man's-land down here, and one of the things we wanted to do when building 12 + Alder was to feed off the church and to extend the context of [the] architectural experience."

Referencing the First Presbyterian Church's slate roof (opposite left), 12 + Alder makes nice to its divine

neighbor. The door to the street (opposite right) boasts a graffiti-resistant paint, rendering even the most tempermental

While the modernist glass-and-steel façade is an aesthetic departure from the First Presbyterian's design, the clearest and grandest example of Kovel's dialogue with the church comes in his open, uncluttered 2,000-square-foot residence on the second floor. "When it was a bathhouse in the '70s, there was this pitched skylight that looked up to the steeple." Kovel kept that detail in the bathroom, but wanted an even more sweeping statement for the living room. The corner of the house just opposite the church's steeple seemed promising, but viewing the entirety of the 180-foot bell tower from so close up required a dramatic gesture.

"I imagined prying apart the façade of the building, the way you'd pry open the doors of an elevator," Kovel explains. The result is a great vertical swath cut out of the

tags temporary. In lieu of a checkerboard effect, Kovel kept his carpet squares all vibrantly verdant (below). With the bam-

boo cabinets and countertops the whole space has a pastoral feel. "I wanted it to be like the Bradys' backyard," he says.



shell of the building running the length of the second floor and back several feet into the roof. It's as though a skylight has bled into a window, creating a broad transparent glass stripe that gives way to a numinous view. Realizing this bold gesture required a more down-to-earth feat of engineering and a leap of faith.

"When we decided to keep the shell of this building," Kovel says, "we essentially had to design another one inside it because the place was crumbling. So when we cut out the big window there was a good chance the whole thing could have fallen [down]. We cantilevered the floor out a couple feet over the sidewalk and supported everything from the inside, but once that cut was made the two walls on either side of the window were no longer connected." To the delight of the Skylab team—

While the open kitchen and living room space (below) provide ample opportunity for entertaining, perhaps as compelling

is the Kovels' surprisingly private roofdeck. "We love to have parties over here," says Kovel, "and sometimes we go

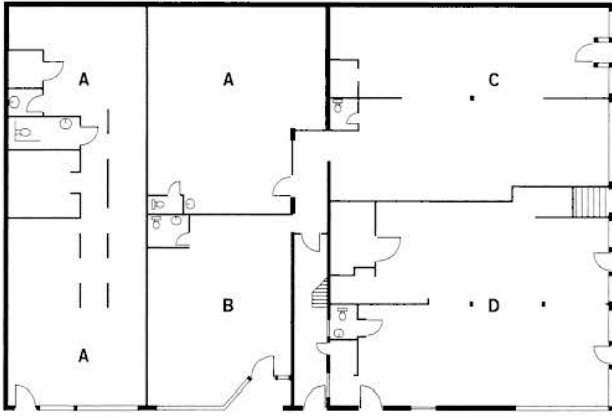
and passing pedestrians—neither wall fell. And in keeping with his connection to the church (secularly architectural), Kovel canted the frame of the window to mirror the spire across the street, just as the bronze painted steel panels that make up the second floor's exterior allude to the First Presbyterian's slate shingles.

Kovel's makeover of 12 + Alder was purposeful, if occasionally perilous. "The people we purchased the building from were going to tear it down," he says, "and we had a couple reasons for wanting to buy it. One was to try to create a conversation about how a defunct building and neighborhood could be revitalized, and another was to adaptively reuse the structure." What's more, the old wooden framework of the structure was shipped over to the Doug Fir Lounge—a Portland restaurant and club ▶

up to the roof." With a privacy screen vexing voyeurs to the west, and no other tall building, save the church spire, nearby,

the Kovels and guests have free rein. "We have a hot tub up there," Kovel wryly discloses.

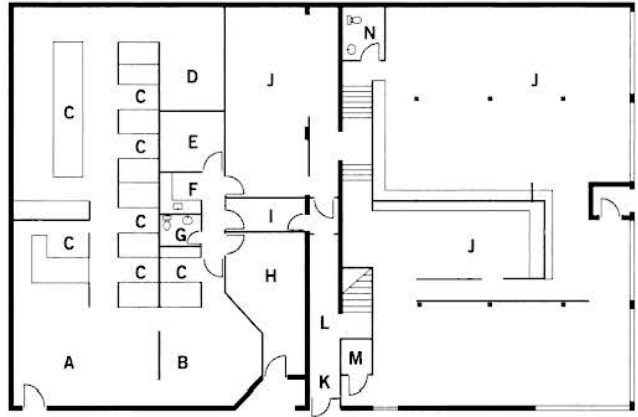




**12 + Alder Floor Plans**

**Before / First Floor**

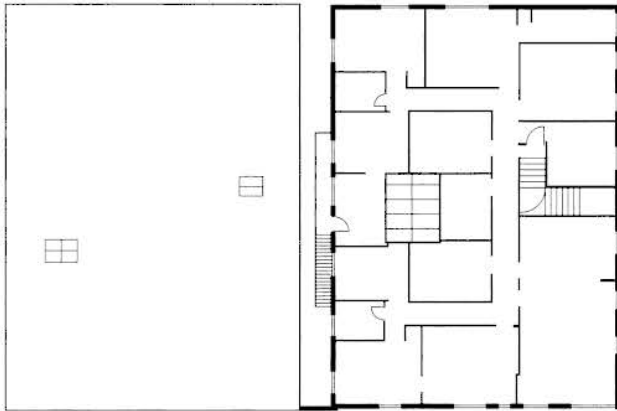
- A Skylab
- B Retail Space
- C Retail Space
- D Retail Space



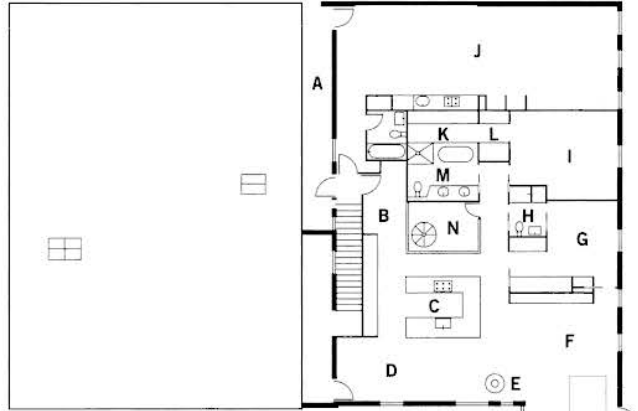
**After / First Floor**

- A Reception / Lounge
- B Conference
- C Workstation
- D Materials Storage
- E Storage
- F Kitchenette
- G Bathroom

- H Retail Space
- I Trash / Recycling
- J Retail Space
- K Residential Entry
- L Exterior Court
- M Electrical Closet
- N Bathroom



**Before / Second Floor**  
Storage from neighboring building



**After / Second Floor**

- A Balcony
- B Entry
- C Kitchen
- D Dining
- E Fireplace
- F Living
- G Guest Bedroom

- H Bathroom
- I Master Bedroom
- J Studio Apartment
- K Master Closet
- L Laundry
- M Master Bath
- N Atrium





Kovel designed and partially owns—and fashioned into the bar. Ordering a Rusty Nail never seemed so apt.

Kovel's tenants Bill Fritts and David Kennedy are as satisfied with their new HQs as their laid-back landlord is. Kennedy's D Studio once occupied a sliver of retail space on the ground floor of 12 + Alder, but has since moved upstairs into a roomier, more private space cut to resemble an apartment. Fritts's Intelligent Design sells the latest in modern furniture; he and his team of designers also do custom and consulting work. Musing on his highly creative tenants, Kovel says: "It's kind of like a collective here—though a really professional one where everybody is working and doing well."

The most dramatic view in the apartment (opposite), the First Presbyterian Church looms large in the Kovel living room.

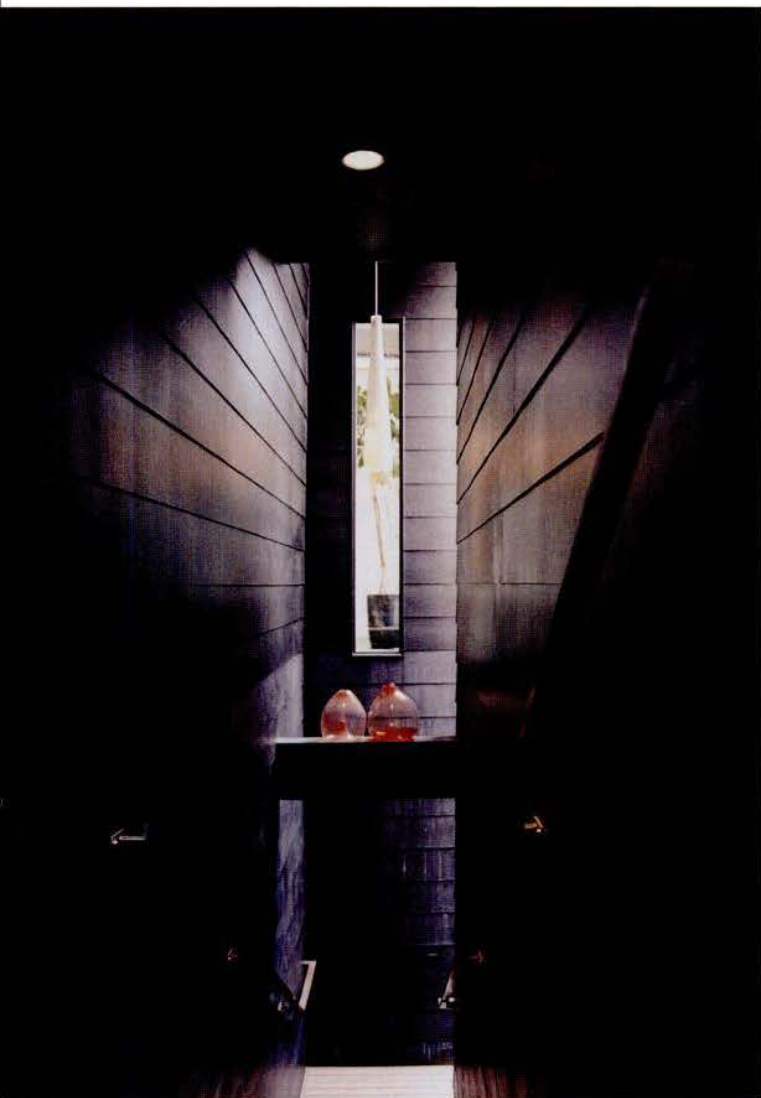
A bit of private space (below left) between the apartment and the street. Below Kovel's apartment is Fritts' furniture

Downstairs, beyond the bespoke walls of 12 + Alder, one finds a neighborhood in flux. West End mainstays like luggage shops and laundries now vie for space alongside chic shops and new restaurants. The derelict hotel nearby has been replaced with a park, and when asked about 12 + Alder's place in the rise of the West End, Craig Olson, who recently opened the modernist gift shop Canoe just across the street, says, "That building is hard to overlook and clearly signaled that change was afoot."

"There's a transformation happening," Kovel says, "and I think that we planted the seed. This building made sense for us because it was all about transition: in business, in the neighborhood, in our lives." ■

shop, Intelligent Design (below right), and around the corner West Enders can expect a new branch of Seattle's Ace Hotel

and the new Portland headquarters for the architecture firm Zimmer Gunsul Frasca.



# Record Time



**Xinjiekou, Xuanwu District**  
Nanjing, 2004

**The instant skylines of China's new cities, captured** over the last five years in the photographs of Sze Tsung Leong, seem to say you could be anyplace in the world today—until you look more closely and see that Leong has crystalized multiple histories in an unprecedented moment of cohabitation. With almost surgical calm and precision, his place portraits document the speed and scale of China's 21st-century urban odyssey as a

vivisection of time. Dynastic compounds are crowded by Communist blocks that are newly dwarfed by mammoth cut-and-paste complexes; the crush of towers looms over broad fields of rubble. Leong's images of Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai, Chongqing, and other next-age hubs convey nostalgia but not sentimentality for the old, while the new, as is its custom, appears indestructible. Above all, he reveals the frailty of the moment.



**Beijingxi Lu, Jingan District**  
Shanghai, 2004



**Xiaobaisi Long, Nan Shi, Huangpu District**  
Shanghai, 2004



**Chaotianmen, Yuzhong District**  
Chongqing, 2002



Wangjing Xiyuan Third District, Chaoyang District  
Beijing, 2003



**Donglishiyong Hutong, Chongwen District**  
Beijing, 2003



# Make New Rooms, But Keep the Old

Sometimes the most forward-thinking, residential designs happen in the least obvious of places; these three additions prove that the party is most definitely in the back.



**The backyard, in American culture, is a place for growing grass and growing children. But in recent years, it has also become a place for growing architecture.** Homeowners who can't—or won't—change the fronts of their houses have found backyards the perfect place to give modernism a spin.

Backyard additions are a chance to breathe new life into old, and sometimes overly familiar, buildings. For architects, they're places to try out new ideas. Markus Dochantschi, who designed a striking backyard addition for Elizabeth and Mordechai Kubany in Maplewood, New Jersey, says he was inspired by a lecture in which Frank Gehry advised young architects to accept commissions no matter how small. "There's always an idea you can test," Dochantschi remembers Gehry saying. "And it may end up, someday, in a much bigger project."

Gehry practiced what he preached, designing backyard additions until he was nearly 60. And he is not alone: Backyard additions punctuated the portfolios of many a noteworthy architect from Michael Graves to Frank Israel. The owners of the following additions chose to integrate modern architecture, but not at the expense of their preexisting homes. In some cases, preservation laws (especially in cities) make housefronts inviolate. Others simply prefer the juxtaposition of traditional and modern styles. As Sarah Ingle, the owner of a renovated row house in Dublin, Ireland, explains, "The excitement is in the contrast of old and new."

**Architect:** StudioMDA

**Location:** Maplewood, New Jersey

When Elizabeth and Mordechai Kubany bought their 1930s house in a leafy New Jersey suburb, one of the things they liked most about it was its handcrafted masonry—including one-of-a-kind clinker bricks. When it came time to enlarge their kitchen, they knew they would never be able to match the unique exterior. To Elizabeth, a public relations consultant for architects and designers, that was a cue, she says, "to try something radical." The architect, she and Mordechai, an owner of an insurance and wealth-transfer planning firm, hired was of the same mind. "Unless you're planning to replicate the original architecture," says Markus Dochantschi of StudioMDA, "an addition shouldn't be some in-between thing. It needs to have its own identity."

In this case, it also needed light and views. "Americans move to suburbs for grass and trees," says Dochantschi, who was born in Germany and educated in Germany and Japan. So he was shocked to find that the Kubanys' house "had no connection to outside—zero." His 400-square-foot kitchen

addition changed that. The new link to the outdoors is both visual (thanks to a custom-made wall of steel-framed doors and windows) and physical (thanks to a flight of stairs as wide as the new room). In the expanded kitchen, Dochantschi (who worked for Zaha Hadid for seven years) kept things simple. Color is scarce—the lacquered table is nearly the same white as the composite stone countertops—but that's fine in a room that is now dominated by views of the backyard. And details are carefully thought out—the mullions of the windows line up with the bookshelves behind the dining table. Dochantschi's goal, he says, is to focus on a few big gestures that support each other, rather than creating small details that compete for attention. Now family life is at the forefront. "As much as we enjoyed the house before, we enjoy it in a totally new way now," Elizabeth says, adding, "I do what I do because I believe that the built environment has the power to affect people's lives. To me, this project proves it." ▶



The Kubany's kitchen and dining areas blend seamlessly thanks to a low-profile kitchen island and the expanse of custom steel-and-glass doors and windows. The cool white tones used throughout and the complementary Bertoia side chairs give a breezy, unclut-

tered appearance. The built-in shelving system echoes the symmetry of the steel mullions used to separate the light of the windows and doors. The deck and staircase leading out to the backyard span the length of the glass wall so as to invite the outdoors in and vice versa.



**Architects:** Peggy Deamer and Scott Phillips

**Location:** Waccabuc, New York

"You come in expecting one thing, and then, as you move through the dining room toward the kitchen, you think, Oh, my gosh," says Stephanie Tobin, describing the reaction of visitors to her house in a New York suburb. "I like the fact that people don't know what they're getting." What they're getting isn't a run-of-the-mill colonial, but a hybrid in which the wall-to-window ratio, high in the front of the house, drops to practically zero in the back, thanks to a kitchen addition with nearly as much glass as a greenhouse.

When Stephanie's husband, John, a trader on Wall Street, was transferred from Chicago to New York, the couple and their two children (they now have four children) bought a center-hall colonial on four hilly acres. "It was a fit for us in many ways, despite our contemporary leanings," Stephanie says. True, she disliked the look of the kitchen, with its dark oak cabinets and salmon-colored countertops, but she decided she could live with it for a few years. When the few years were up, the Tobins began looking for an architect, eschewing local firms whose

work they feared would merely enlarge the house without expanding its architectural sweep. Instead, they turned to Peggy Deamer and Scott Phillips (then partners in Deamer + Phillips, now practicing separately), who replaced the kitchen with a much larger glass box. Though the exterior materials are familiar—clapboard and bluestone—it's the glass walls (coupled with the oblique thrust of the roofline) that makes the room feel as if it's reaching deep into the woods. Says John, "No ordinary colonial could ever let you feel this close to nature." ▶



Stephanie and John Tobin's staid colonial makes a break for the woods with a clever kitchen addition in the back. The large windows reach out toward the house's sylvan surroundings, in a gesture that's more HoJo than PoMo. The addition not only affords generous amounts

of natural light, it also enlivens the home's otherwise nondescript design—satisfying the couple's desire to not merely add bulky square footage to their floor plan. The kitchen bar is outfitted with built-in shelving and accessorized with Bertoia barstools. **E** p. 222

PHOTOS BY JON WALLER



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**Architect:** Bates Maher Architects  
**Location:** Dublin, Ireland

Professor Sarah Ingle and her statistician husband, Willo Roe, wouldn't have changed the front of their house, about a mile and a half from the center of Dublin, even if they could have. The façade—red brick flanking a classic bay window—was protected, but they liked it anyway. They didn't want to change the front rooms, either, thanks to details like a 100-year-old polished-slate fireplace and original cornice moldings.

Instead, Ingle and Roe got adventurous out back: The couple and their four children (who range from 3 to 13 years old) are now benefiting from a bold addition by Dublin architects Bates Maher. The addition includes a rubber-floored kitchen (yes, they do exist outside of Bud Light commercials) with windows far larger than any in the original 1908 house. Those windows overlook a pair of surprising outdoor spaces carved within the home's compact property lines—a small courtyard alongside the preexisting dining room, and a carport that opens onto a back alley. In the former, an almost-Japanese-style garden features wooden slats

that rise up from the ground and enclose an angled storage area. They then spill out onto the carport roof, culminating in an open-ended gable overlooking the back alley—enlivening what is usually the duller part of any row house.

Bates Maher managed to deliver both efficiency and drama in just 540 square feet. "I've never had a proper fitted kitchen before," says Ingle, who especially enjoys drawers low enough so that even her youngest can help set the table before dinner and unload the dishwasher after. From the dining room, with its giant window, "the outside seems to come in," Ingle adds. The addition has become a catalyst for neighborhood-wide change: Their new carport prompted a spate of back-of-the-house additions on the block, Ingle reports—though none, she admits, as dramatic as her own. ■



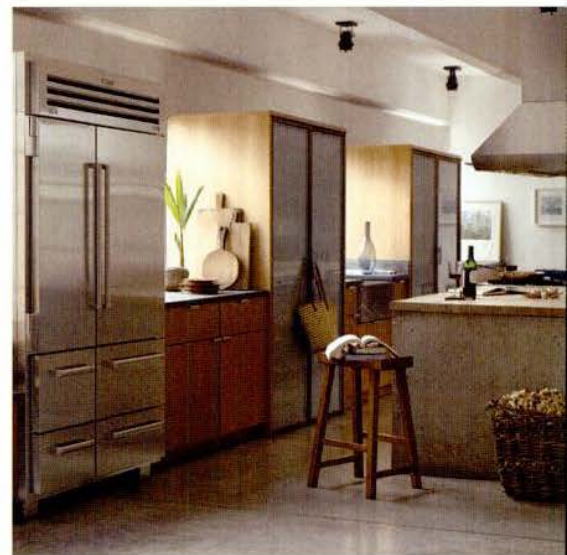
It took architects Bates Maher a mere 540 square feet to make the most dramatic moves on the block. The backyard renovation, as seen from the air (top left), features a slated patio surface that moves from the ground up along the wall

carport (bottom left). The new, subtle kitchen features rubber floors and a large window that looks out onto a small alley linking up to the family's carport. The kitchen ceiling mirrors the exterior deck and roof, and allows slices of light to spill in at the sides.

PHOTOS BY ALICE CLANCY



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## Razing Arizona

When Goethe said that sowing is not as difficult as reaping, he was getting at a truth more universal than agrarian, though any farmer will tell you that in either case, he's right. For centuries agriculture was the hub of civilization, and farmers the shepherds of society. But industrialization, globalization, and technology have changed this. Urban centers are expanding outward, and food supplies have become consolidated and disembodied through outsourcing. Our seeds are now 3,000-square-foot single family homes, neatly planted to accommodate the influx of new hires at an information technology company 60 miles down the road; the soil comes in the form of a big box store, where we can purchase everything and anything (all at once, regardless of season); and we can only hope that the climate for home buyers, information-based economies, and commuters remains clement. ▶

An aerial view, looking northward, of Rotations: Moore Estates, a mock-up of just one of the many residential developments that are supplanting the area's farmland. In the distance, the real thing looms large.



But despite his diminished role, it is perhaps still the farmer who understands this best. Matthew Moore has found himself in the curious position of being both an artist and a fourth-generation farmer, working and living in the greater Phoenix area, one of the nation's fastest-growing metropolises. After finishing his MFA at San Francisco State University, Moore returned to farm his family's 2.5 square-mile farm in Surprise, Arizona, northwest of Phoenix, and was, indeed, surprised to find the landscape drastically altered. "[The developers] had taken out this line of citrus trees on the horizon, which had prevented us from seeing Phoenix for so long," explains Moore, aptly adding, "It just came out of nowhere and leveled me." It wasn't long before eager developers began calling, and subdivisions of 500 to 600 houses started popping up. Moore continues, "I thought, Oh my God, look how fast it's going."

For Moore, it is going—the land he and his family have owned, rented, and worked for 75 years is being parceled off, plot by plot. But for many of the 100,000 people projected to relocate to Phoenix in the coming year, it's the prospect of what's coming—large-scale employment opportunities in the tech, building, and real estate

sectors—that's the draw. "At the time, I was pretty angry about it," admits Moore, "especially [looking] back at that transition and about my individual landscape changing and it changing the cultural landscape as well. It was mindless, the same thing over and over—like a maze."

Moore began working on art pieces that would become sketches for *Rotations: Moore Estates*, his current, larger-scale work. At that time, Moore's family was still optimistic about the longevity of the farm, but they were hemmed in by a number of landowners who were selling to big developers. "We knew that if we didn't do anything, we'd end up being [zoned an] all-water reclamation area, and the land value would be horrible." With the inevitability of sale impending, Moore set about his first large-scale land art piece, renting a 30-acre parcel of land from a neighboring farmer and planting drought-tolerant barley out of which he cut a generic floor plan, entitled *Rotations: Single Family Residence*.

Working on *Rotations: Single Family Residence*, it was impossible for Moore to ignore the correlation between the conventional agriculture and large-scale housing that developers. "I started thinking about the foundation that we lay—across the street there is desert—and [farmers] ▶



Moore (left) walks along the wheat roads of *Rotations: Moore Estates* in July, 2006, when the crop was near full maturity. GPS and CAD renderings (above) helped Moore

better visualize his work, making the plotting process easier by allowing Moore to decide scale and orientation early on in the process.



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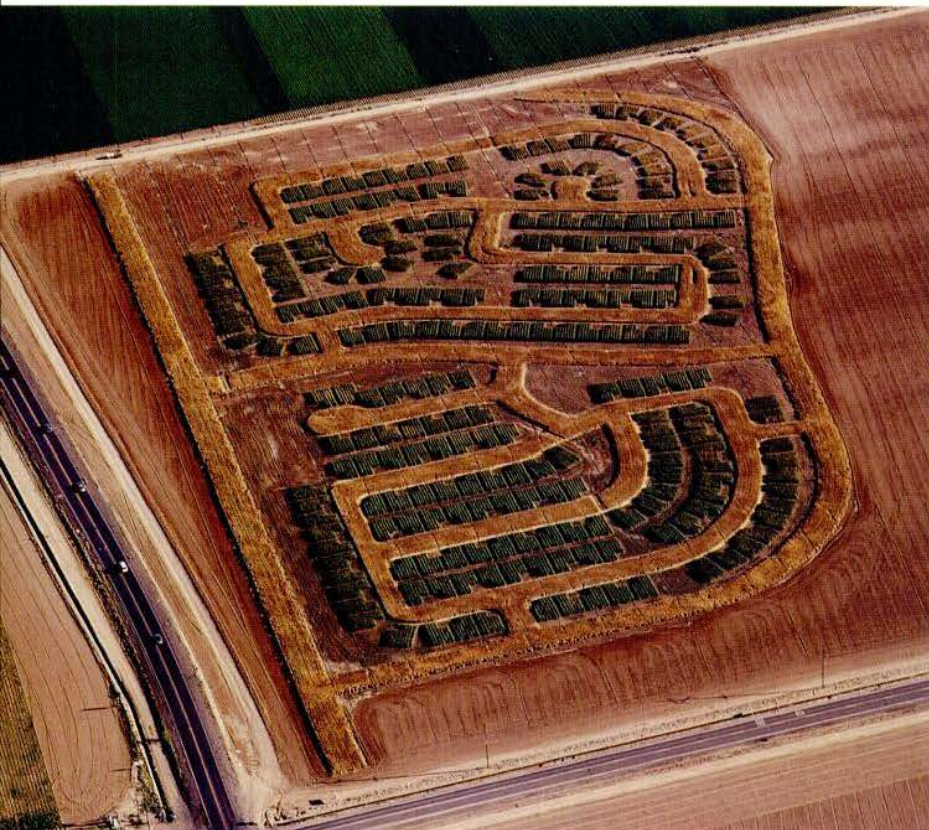
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came in the '20s and just leveled it," explains Moore "[I thought] about the way we run our business: In conventional agriculture, the only way to make money is to increase your yield. I could see the direct relation with these developers—it's just a battle of trying to get the greatest yield." For Moore, whose sympathies lie with the farm, this realization was equivocal; indeed, the sowing was easier than the reaping. "It became really complicated and made me think harder about what I was doing and what I was saying."

In 2004 Moore's grandfather officially sold the first big section of the farm—120 acres, of which 70 or 80 acres are to accommodate 250 homes. Moore got hold of the plans for the subdivision and set about re-creating it, at a third scale. To map out the project, the artist took the plans to an archaeological company, which translated his sketches with GPS and CAD systems. In July 2005, Moore set about planting 250 sorghum "houses" (which grow to six or seven feet), and in November, he and his wife Carrie Marill, also an artist, planted the "roads" with black bearded wheat, an ornamental wheat (which grows to three or four feet) with jet black awns, to mimic asphalt. Moore chose sorghum for its rich maroon

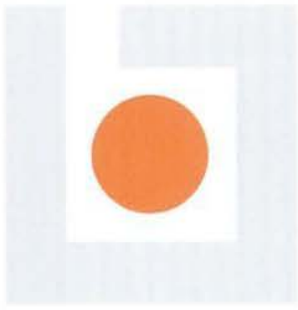
color, which would ape the red-tile roofs of most typical Phoenix developments. "It had the same feel as all those developments, but in the end it was so organic; there was this whole ecosystem living there. There were coyotes living in a couple of the houses, and birds feeding off the wheat—but [there's also] a freeway right behind it."

The process made Moore think a lot about his own imprint on the land. "You can't really point fingers at the subdivision, unless you look at yourself," says Moore. "Farmers brought water here with canals, and it's beautiful growing ground—but in terms of sustainability its questionable, especially when you start plopping down 3,000-square-foot homes, within 12 feet of each other." He has a point: While agriculture has long been the scapegoat for Arizona's water woes (the state uses 2.4 trillion gallons per year: an amount that could support a residential population of nearly 30 million people, as opposed to Arizona's 5.7 million), it's agriculture's technological efficiency that has largely saved the region from becoming like Southern California or Nevada. In truth, the Salt River Project now delivers just 13 percent of its water to agriculture, compared with delivering about 50 percent of its water to agriculture in 1984. ▶



An aerial view, looking southward, of *Rotations: Moore Estates* (left). The aerial view above illustrates where the actual development will rest on Moore's family's farmland. The low-density development will occupy 81.9 acres. At the

northwest corner *Rotations: Moore Estates* sits at a third scale. Moore originally wanted to recreate the development to scale but settled on the more modest one-third scale approach.



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Yet water consumption has not gone down, suggesting that residential developments are using just as much water as conventional agriculture, which has cut its share of water consumption by 20 percent in the past thirty years. The bottom line being that, in terms of sustainability, something has to change.

In *Sprawltown: Looking for the City on Its Edges*, Richard Ingersoll argues that sprawl is inevitable, and our only recourse is to shape it for the better. "To accept one's responsibility toward others, to take care of the environment, to participate in dialogues that define and resolve collective problems is to negotiate ways of finding freedom, even within the confines of consumerism. The polis was a city based on dialogue. Sprawl is conducive to escapist monologues." The polis, of which Ingersoll speaks, was created through the process of *synoikismos*, which, as Ingersoll defines it, is "the ancient process of agreeing to live together in dialogue."

Initiating dialogue is second nature to a farmer, who, by trade, has learned to work with many elements for a mutually beneficial result. Moore, being both an artist and a farmer, seems especially equipped to initiate *synoikismos*. "[*Rotations: Moore Estates*] exists as a link between

the past and the future," says Moore. "It comes down to stewardship, which is really important in agriculture, but which we don't really have a sense of anymore. There's no sense of history in Phoenix that there was desert or agriculture before, unless it's in the name of a subdivision, like 'Cotton Field Acres' or something like that." In many ways, Moore's work is a manifestation of this call for stewardship both environmental and social—the suggestion that the past is not something to simply do away with, but rather something to consider, regenerate, and reshape.

"There's a lot of pain in this history, but there's a lot that's wonderful about it, too; instead of being angry, the best thing to do is to learn. If [this work] inspires somebody to do something differently, then hopefully it will make a difference in a smaller community and grow out from there," explains Moore, who along with Carrie has decided to stick it out for the next few years in Arizona, working both in conventional agriculture and starting a new, organic venture. As Ingersoll posits, "When the day arrives that sprawl begins to make sense, can we anticipate an unleashing of aesthetic and civic resonance?" It seems, for some, these seeds are being sown. ■



Countless housing developments crowd the periphery of the area's remaining farmland. The developments are broken up into self-contained units. Typical to sprawl, the work and service sectors are accessible only via highway.

PHOTO BY TIM LANTERMAN

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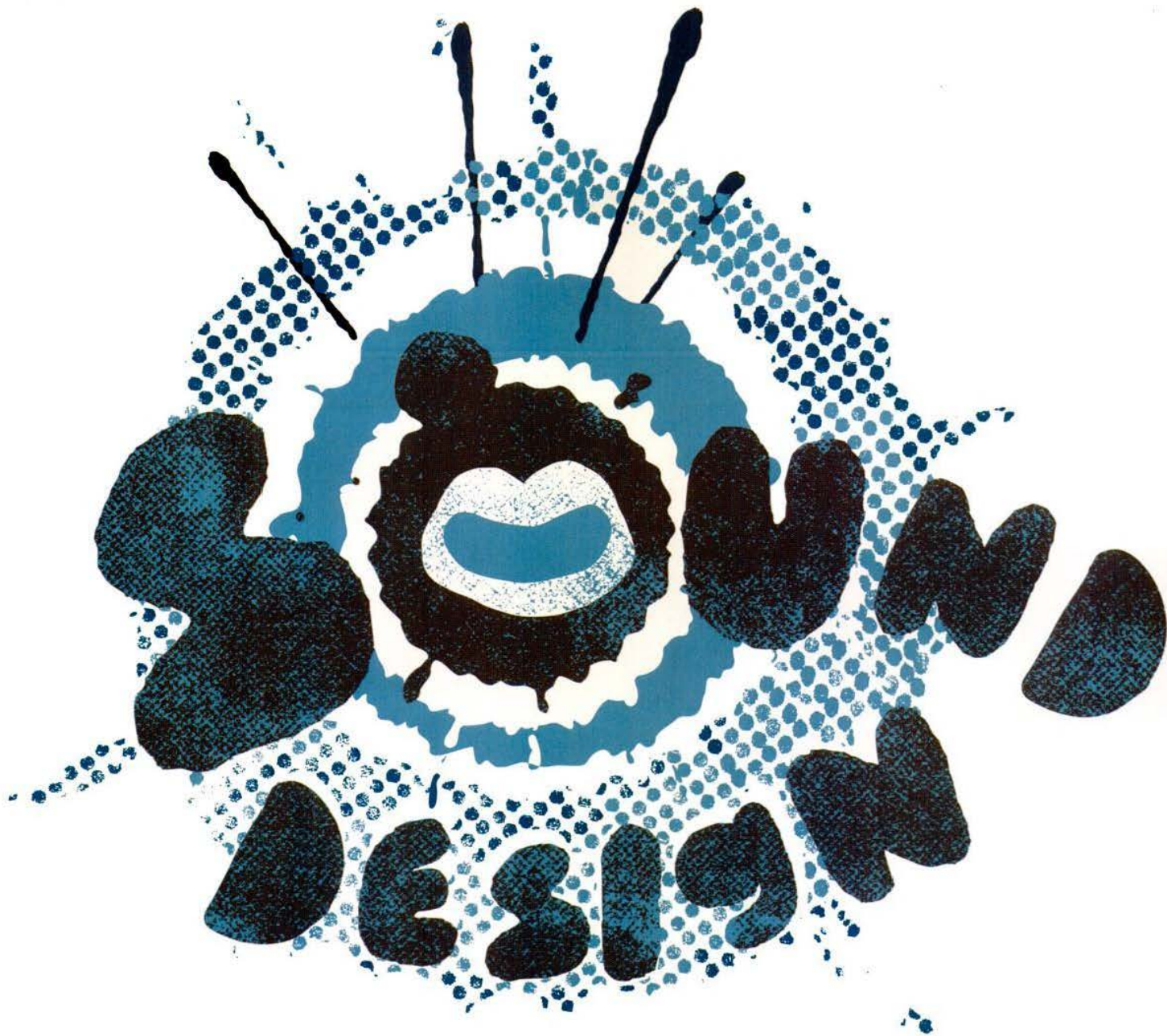
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Six years ago, the Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas won a design competition for an addition to the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) by suggesting the entire museum be torn down and replaced. There was such an outcry over the idea of demolishing this collection of unremarkable but well-loved buildings that Ruth Seymour, the general manager of KCRW, the leading NPR station in Los Angeles, California, suggested we debate the pros and cons on a half-hour show called *Politics of Culture*. She asked me—a producer at KCRW and a freelance design writer—to moderate.

I had studied architecture in England and moved to Los Angeles in 1991 to edit a local architecture publication. A year later the city was blown apart by the Rodney King riots, and KCRW created *Which Way, L.A.?*, a talk

show about the challenges ahead. This program engaged directly with the life of the region—and, as time went on, the nation—and I was so taken by it that I quit editing to volunteer for the show, eventually becoming a producer. All the while, I continued to report on the design and architecture world. To me, architecture and design and politics and society were all connected.

When I was asked to moderate the *Politics of Culture*, I was no star of the airwaves. Rather, my on-air experience at that point was limited to having read a promo in my best cut-glass Queen's English for a program about Lady Diana, and a bit of pitching during our twice-yearly pledge drives. While excited at this new opportunity, I was also utterly terrified.

The half-hour show about LACMA went by in such ▶

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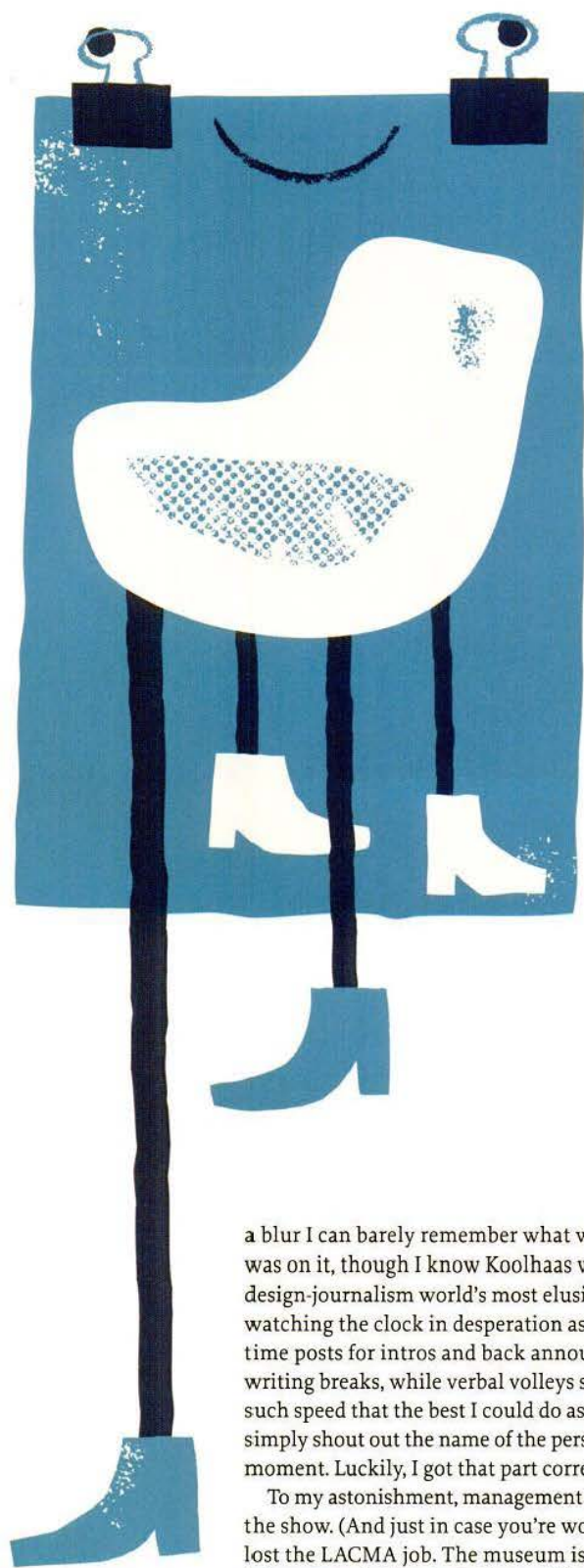
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a blur I can barely remember what was said or who was on it, though I know Koolhaas was not (he is the design-journalism world's most elusive quarry). I recall watching the clock in desperation as I struggled to hit time posts for intros and back announces and underwriting breaks, while verbal volleys sailed past me with such speed that the best I could do as moderator was to simply shout out the name of the person speaking at that moment. Luckily, I got that part correct.

To my astonishment, management seemed happy with the show. (And just in case you're wondering, Koolhaas lost the LACMA job. The museum is still there and is being expanded by the Italian architect Renzo Piano.) In fact, Ruth decided that the time was ripe for a monthly show about design and architecture, with me as host.

She called it *DnA* (meaning "Design and Architecture" as well as "DNA," implying the notion of design embodying a natural order), and the idea was that it would treat design as a hot debate and that every show could be full of fireworks like the LACMA show.

In April 2002 my first show was broadcast. It featured Peter Cook, one of the founders of the 1960s radical architecture group Archigram, who happened to be visiting Los Angeles that week; Herbert Muschamp, then-*New York Times* architecture critic; and Nicolai Ouroussoff, then-*Los Angeles Times* architecture critic. We prattled on in what I thought was a very interesting way about Los Angeles architecture and why it mattered; it seemed like an appropriate launch topic for a show about design based in Los Angeles. I even managed to suppress my still-gnawing stage fright to make what seemed to be a few lucid comments. The engineer and I picked theme music—a quirky tune that I thought perfectly captured the smart, original character I wanted *DnA* to have.

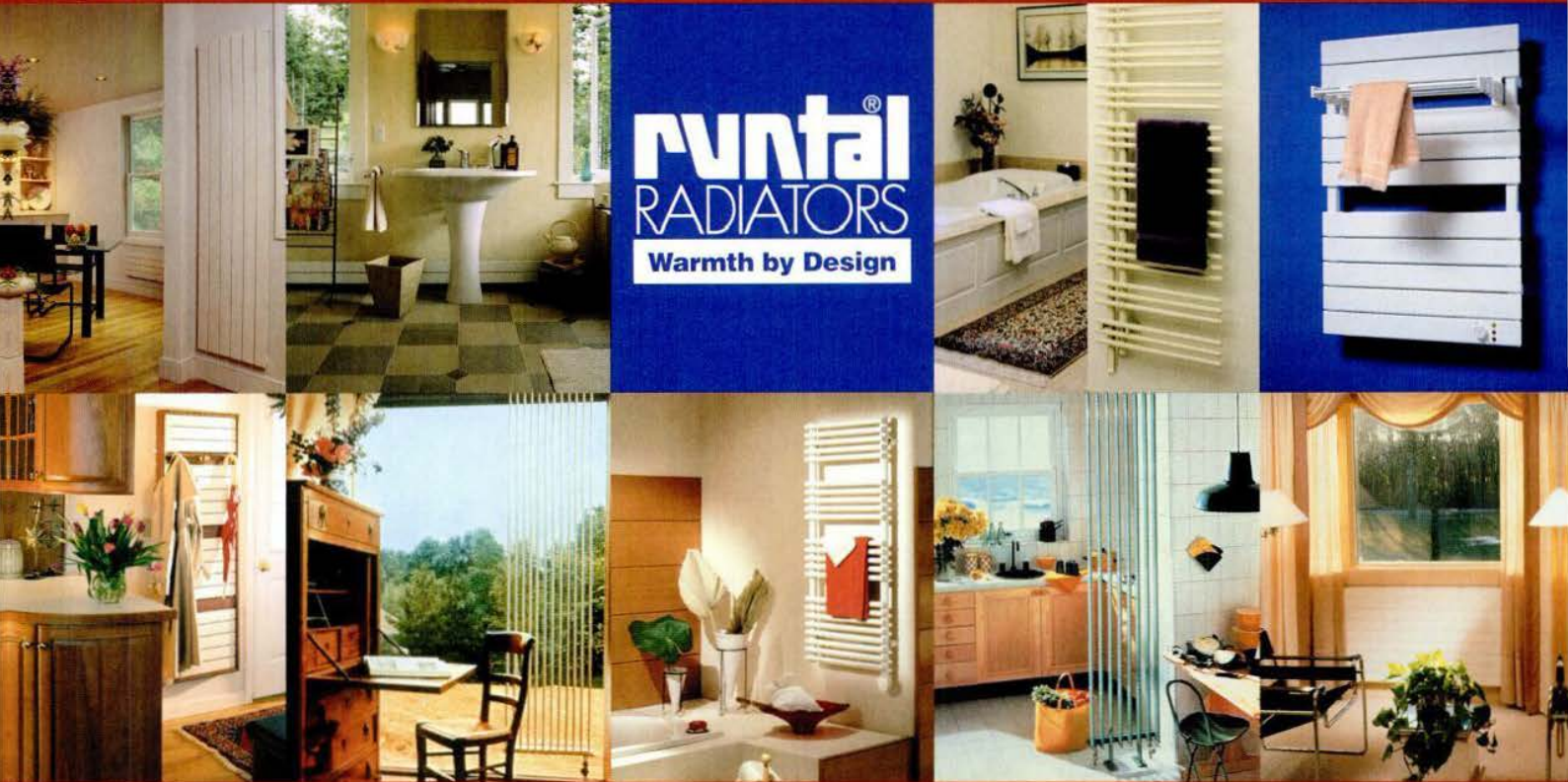
The show went on air, and I waited, nervously, for the response. Incredibly, my email in-box was bursting! The phone was ringing off the hook! I was deluged with emails and calls of congratulations. I was the bomb.

Or was I? A couple days later, Ruth—who had trustingly allowed me to go on air without giving prior approval of the show—delivered a blistering critique of the first *DnA*. It was elitist. It was arcane. It was comprehensible only to the cognoscenti. Simply put, in the parlance of the times, it was not hot.

But, but, but...I protested, brandishing my sheaf of laudatory letters. Every single one of them, she pointed out, was from an architect. Not entirely true—there were also responses from a firefighter and a graphic designer. But there was no denying reality: Architects had responded in droves, either because they knew me personally, or because at last somebody out there in Public Radioland cared enough to make a show about them. It didn't matter what architects alone thought, Ruth said. *DnA* had to make design accessible to lots of people who were not already interested in it. The silly music could go too.

She was right, of course, and since that point I've worked—with the help of colleagues with excellent BS detectors—to present design in a way that is accessible while informed, serious but not earnest, and, ideally, pleasing to a cross section of listeners. Now a magazine show in format, *DnA* tends to focus on modern design—including architecture, product and auto design, fashion, city planning, and more. It has addressed big-picture concerns like sustainability, but most important, it is intended to enthuse, and make people feel that design, like movies or music, is for them, not just for the experts. Lacking visuals, it is also intended to bring design alive with words, which I try to do in the way radio does best, by appealing to the imagination and the heart. ►

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By this I mean Philippe Starck talking in his zany Peter Sellers—as-Inspector Clouseau French accent about the emotional and sexual well-being of a new mother in relation to his design for a baby bottle (this was for the now-dropped line for Target, which we talked about on an early show on democratic design). Or a reflective Frank Gehry, in an interview I did with him prior to the opening of the Walt Disney Concert Hall. I'd tried without success to pin him down at the hall, but we ended up talking as we drove home; the sound of Los Angeles freeways accompanied what became a personal conversation about the impact of fame and maturity on his life and work. There were the kids at Diamond Ranch High School, refreshingly unencumbered by preconceptions about design, giving their gut reactions to their highly unconventional public school by Thom Mayne; the researcher from the nation's largest home-building company, bracingly unapologetic as she explained why they don't push green design; and, one holiday show, a vox pop (collection of brief comments) of very heartfelt opinions from a bunch of California designers, including animator Brad Bird and interior designer Kelly Wearstler, about their ideal children's toys.

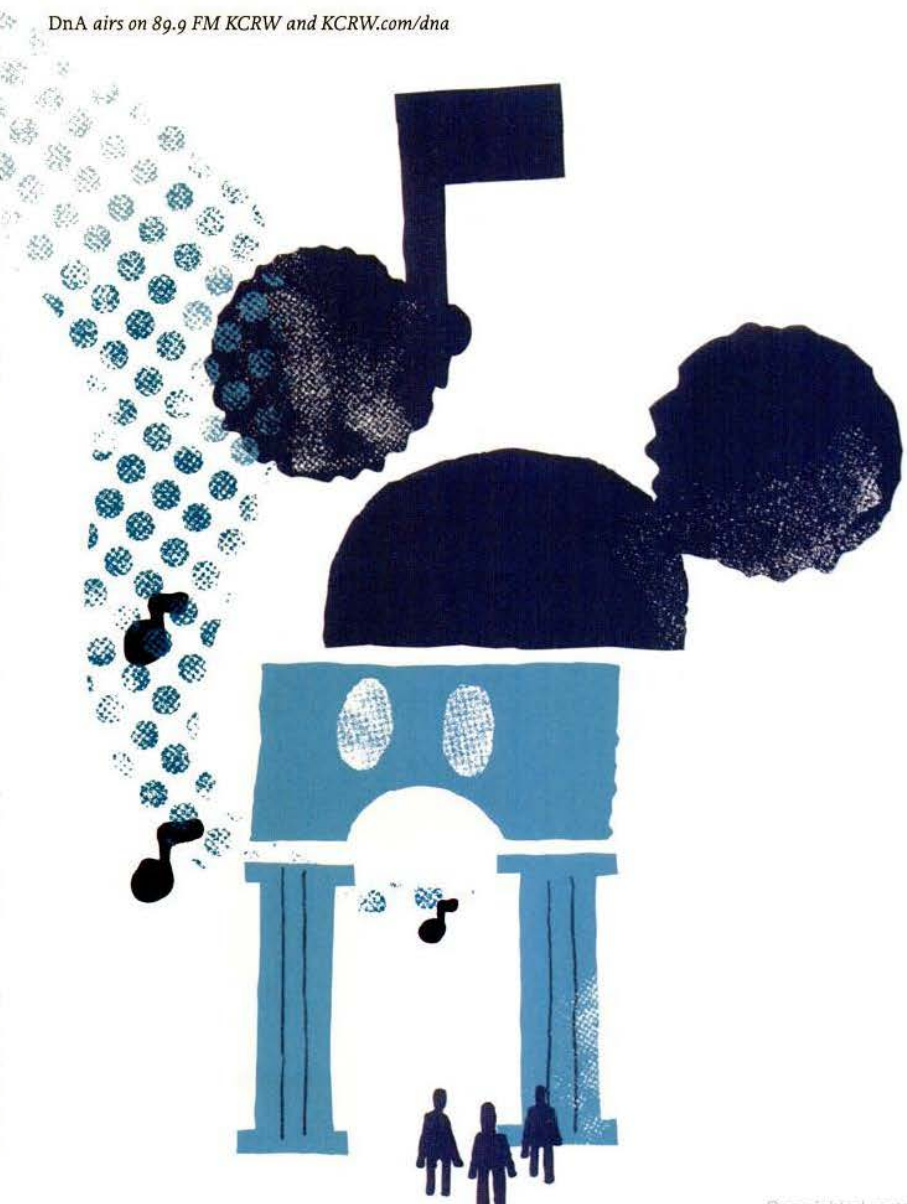
At the end of the day, it all comes down to the instrument of radio: the voice, used seductively by guests like Eric Lloyd Wright when he talked to me in mellifluous, beautiful English about learning the tenets of organic architecture from his grandfather, Frank. Or actor Jodie Foster, who joined me in a segment where architecture-lovers pick their favorite building in Los Angeles. She described, with amazing soulfulness, her choice—the Loyola Chapel by Frank Gehry. I should add that this was a pretty scary interview. It's unnerving enough talking to a Very Famous Person; imagine doing so when they seem to know more than you about *your* subject. Foster studied art and architectural history at Yale with the great maestro Vincent Scully; she clearly knows her stuff.

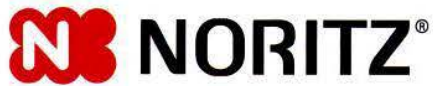
I've learned that the best radio guests are those who speak with passion, wit, and clarity, and without mouthfuls of jargon. Believe me, I'm still practicing. I've tried not to repeat duds like the live roundtable I once did with straight-from-the-lecture-hall curators and architects about a new museum; even my extremely supportive partner called that one "a soul-murdering snoozefest." I've been very thankful for the editing machine after hearing myself drone on with meandering questions, or make daft mistakes, like an interview with the curator of a show about architecture and fashion in which I blithely referred to Rei Kawakubo as "him." I've been struck dumb in interviews, like the time I went to talk to the Bouroullec brothers four days after I gave birth and found that in my postpartum stupor I simply could not remember which brother was which (I had to discreetly tuck a diagram under my recorder with arrows designating Ronan and Erwan). And I've had comedic moments

like the time I interviewed Cesar Pelli at his Segerstrom Concert Hall, while it was still under construction, and the only quiet place I could find to talk was the dusty, unfinished men's bathroom.

Despite these squirm-inducing pratfalls, I have been lucky enough to sustain an audience. When I started listening to KCRW and *Which Way, L.A.?*, I realized that radio was an appealing medium in its directness, technical simplicity, and intimacy. It was not then an obvious forum for my other passion, design and architecture. *DnA* has offered the opportunity to harness both, in a program that—despite taking place in the disembodied realm of the airwaves—makes what I hope is a concrete contribution to the conversation about how design shapes and, at best, improves our world. ■

*DnA* airs on 89.9 FM KCRW and [KCRW.com/dna](http://KCRW.com/dna)





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For the past 20 years Finland's most famous star has been native son and world-class ski jumper Matti Nykänen, known not just for his numerous medals and world records, but also for his frequent appearances in the tabloids. Nykänen has graced the pages of the rags for his five marriages to four different women, multiple arrests, jail time, and stints as waiter, singer, and stripper. But times have changed, and these days Nykänen's not garnering the most attention in the flourishing Nordic capital of Helsinki; a new breed of young designers and a burgeoning creative scene are creating a more compelling stir.

Brian Keaney should know. His firm, Tonfisk Design, which specializes in innovative ceramic tableware and accessories, is one of the fresh forces ushering in the next era of Finnish design. Says Keaney, "I think it's going to be interesting in 10 or 20 years to look back at this

period and consider the results. There's so much interesting stuff going on—new companies and designers are breaking through, and new processes of production are offering a lot of opportunities." Keaney, an amiable expat from Ireland, started the now-hot design studio with friend and fellow University of Art and Design Helsinki graduate Tony Alfström. Don't let his roots mislead you: His Finnish is spot on, and one need look no further than the Tonfisk website to know how committed he and the company are to important cultural cues like herring and mobile phones.

New names like Heikkinen-Komonen Architects, fashion house Ivana Helsinki, and Tonfisk Design are making new headlines in Helsinki. We sat down with Keaney to learn more about Finland's metropolitan epicenter, where the winters are cold, Aalto is worshiped, and the sauna is king.



## Helsinki Rising

**The Finns have always been influenced by and connected to an intimate love of nature. Is this still the case, or are things changing as a result of new technology?**

It's a new era, but at the same time I think if you look at the strengths of Finnish design in the earlier years, Aalto and a lot of these guys were using the latest technologies of the time, most of which were culled from the forest industry. The designs were very pared down, and those characteristics are still indicative of Finnish design today. The old guard was influenced by designers from other countries, but ideas spread so much faster these days. The landscape is a lot more eclectic now that there are so many more designers working in the field.

**There's a lot of buzz about Finnish design these days; seems like it's a pretty crucial time for designers?**

Seems to be. The '50s and '60s were a very big time for Finnish design, until the momentum died down a bit in the '70s; and then it was virtually forgotten about in the '80s. But there was a major resurgence during the '90s, and since then there's been a new breakthrough. A lot of new and younger designers have been given the possibility to produce and export [their products] themselves, and this trend has had a substantial impact in the community. You see a lot of vibrant stuff going on just walking around the small boutiques of the Design District. ▶

**The Helsinki Central railway station (opposite) was designed by Eiel Saarinen in 1909, and still serves as the city's center of public transportation. Alvar Aalto's Finlandia Hall (below left) sits on Töölönlahti Bay, an area popular with the public for its scenic walking trails. Classics, like this Suomi White ceramic set by Timo Sarpaneva for Rosenthal, can be found at the Design Forum.**



**Does the Design Forum play a prominent role in the creative community?**

For Tonfisk it's been very important. It was one of the first shops to sell our products and has become one of our most important customers. We've been in a lot of exhibitions of theirs, which are also touring exhibitions, so it gives you a lot of credibility within Finland, as well as abroad. It's an important place for young designers and smaller groups because it's kind of a first step to getting your stuff out there. Designs don't even have to be in production, you can just have an idea and ten pieces, and they'll start selling them. In recent years it's been a catalyst for newcomers, as well as a good source of publicity for the more established studios.

**Where are the best places to shop?**

If you want to find stuff that you wouldn't normally find elsewhere, you probably have to go to the Design District area. Marimekko, Artek, and iittala are the big names everyone is familiar with, but they're international brands that you can find almost anywhere. The smaller and more unique producers are tucked away on the streets of this area.

**Helsinki is known for its neoclassical architecture; are there any modern buildings people should see when they're here?**

There's the Kiasma building, which is the contemporary art museum designed by Steven Holl, and of course Finlandia Hall, one of Aalto's major accomplishments. ▶

Brian Keaney (below left), who was recently presented with an award from The University of Art and Design Helsinki for his contributions in the design community, stands next to some of Tonfisk's creations. A passerby window shops at Artek (below right), the furniture company founded by Aino and Alvar Aalto in 1935.



Helsinki, Finland



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The 1969 Temppeliaukion Kirkko, or Rock Church as it is known, is one of the most popular places to visit in Helsinki. The dramatic interior space was created from a solid granite outcropping, and is often used as a concert hall because of its superior acoustics.

Helsinki, Finland



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There are a lot of great Art Deco buildings down by the sea. The train station was designed by Eliel Saarinen, and is a fantastic example of this style. The Temppeliaukion Kirkko, or Rock Church, is something everyone should see while they're here. It was designed in the late '60s, and is an underground structure blasted out of a solid granite outcropping. The Olympic Stadium is another impressive site. It was built in the '30s for the Olympics, but wasn't used until the 1952 games because of the war. It's still used today, most recently for the Track and Field World Championships in 2005. It's amazing to think it was built about 70 years ago, and it is still as modern as any other building we have here.

**I had a fantastic meal at Restaurant Nokka last night. Where are some of your favorite places to eat?**

I like the more traditional Finnish places. There are three I'd recommend; one of them is the Sea Horse. It's got good service, white tablecloths, and an interesting mixture of people. There's another place called Kosmos; it's a step up, a little bit finer but the same kind of basic traditional food. The last of my favorites is called the Three Crowns. It has a very '50s style with rich wood paneling in the interior. If you're looking for the traditional café experience, I'd recommend Café Engel. It's situated on an idyllic square with a view of the cathedral, has wireless access for Internet junkies, ▶

**The Kiasma (below left), which opened in 1998, is Helsinki's contemporary art museum. Designed by Steven Holl, the building's scale is based on the dimensions of the human body. The interior (below right) focuses on the use of natural light.**



Helsinki, Finland

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and serves enormous, tasty breakfasts. The Kauppahalli is also a great source for easy meals and quick snacks. It's a traditional market hall near the Esplanade Park with a wide variety of cuisine and wares.

**And if we insatiable Americans can find time in between meals, what would you recommend for entertainment?**

Finns do love the outdoors, so you've got to take in the fresh air while you're here. The Töölönlahti is a nice outdoor spot to check out the bay. There are walking trails that circle the area, and there is a wooded central park that comes all the way into the city. The Seurasaari is another fun outing for a day trip. It is a beautiful island just 15 min-

utes via bus from the center of town that has great examples of traditional wooden houses; very peaceful to walk around. You can stroll on the beach, have lunch at the restaurant, and visit an old wooden church that's very popular during the summer for weddings.


Most importantly, you can't leave without taking a sauna. One of the best places to take a traditional sauna and dip in the sea is the Finnish Sauna Society. The organization is closed to the public during the day, but reservations are available to everyone in the evening. Most of the important decisions in Finland are made in places like this. ■

**A trio of relaxed patrons cool off outside the Finnish Sauna Society (below left), a traditional pastime every visitor must experience. The Kauppahalli marketplace (below right) offers an eclectic selection of local foods and personalities.**



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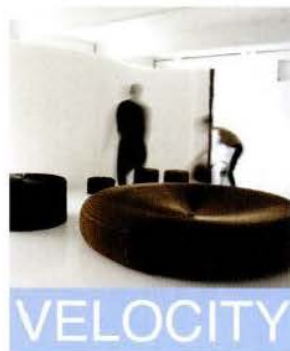
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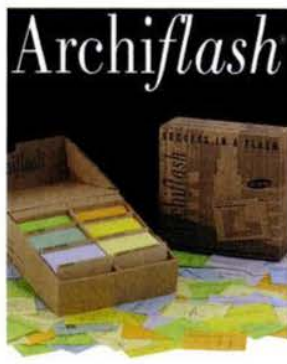
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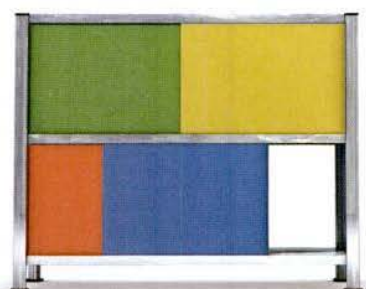
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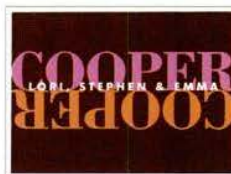
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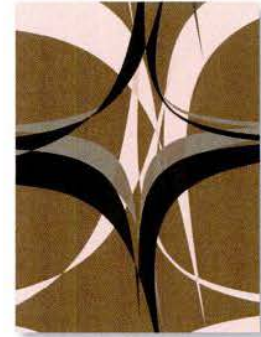
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Shown: *B52 Stainless Steel Bar, ca. 1952*

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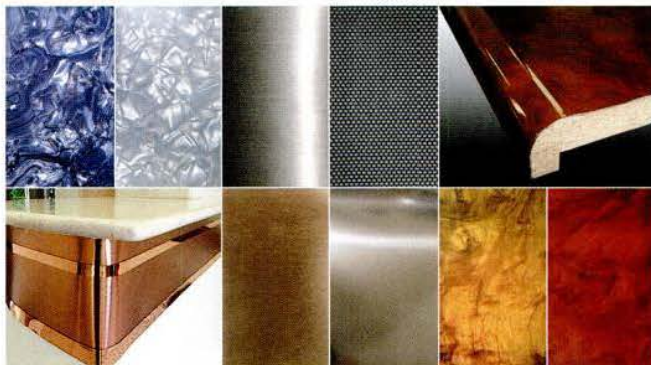
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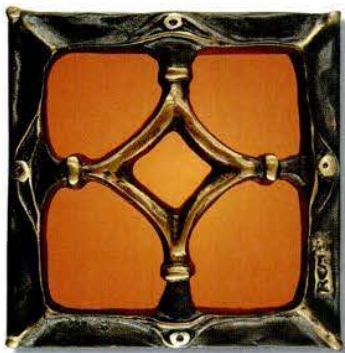
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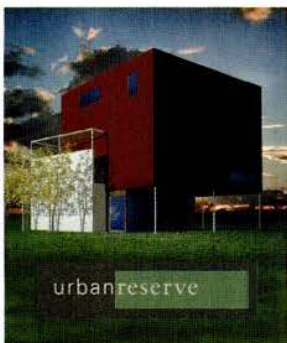
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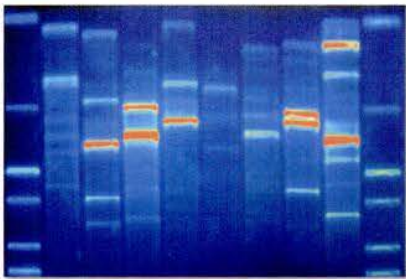
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Shown: *Nouveau* in Walnut/Ebony

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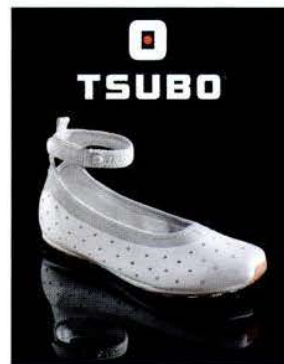
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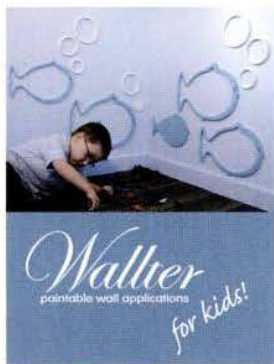
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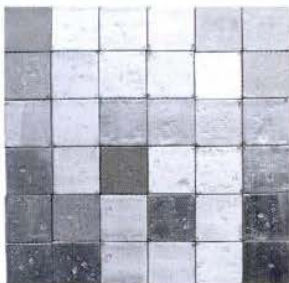


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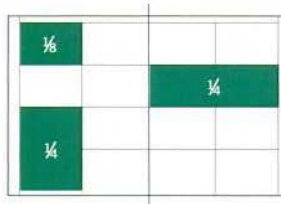
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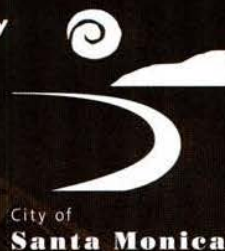


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Dwell Community Events and Promotions

## Celebrate Modern Homes at Portland's "Street of Eames" Tour

Portland will be celebrating modern design this spring with its second annual modern home tour called "Street of Eames." A mix of six distinctive mid-century and contemporary modern homes will be open for one day to raise money to continue an effective after-school enrichment program for public elementary school students living in the city's homeless shelters.

April 14, 2007  
Portland, Oregon  
www.streetofeames.org

 **street of eames**  
portland's modern home tour

  
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www.realgoods.com  
**Real Goods Solar Living Sourcebook**, 12th edition by John Schaeffer (New Society Publishers, 2005)

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**Matthew Moore**  
www.urbanplough.com  
**Sprawltown: Looking for the City on Its Edges** by Richard Ingersoll (Princeton Architectural Press, 2006)  
www.papress.com

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**194 Detour**

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## Preserving Desert Modernism in Palm Springs

By Peter Moruzzi, founder of the Palm Springs Modern Committee

Renewed appreciation of the modern movement in recent years has led to a burgeoning historic-preservation movement focusing on modern buildings in cities across the United States. On the West Coast, the pioneering efforts of the Los Angeles Conservancy's Modern Committee led to the formation of the Palm Springs Modern Committee (PS ModCom) in the nearby Coachella Valley in 1999. The need for such preservation groups stems from the continued threat to modern structures that remains unabated despite the increasing recognition of the value and importance of modernism in the built history of our communities.

In the Palm Springs area, following well-publicized successes (Frey & Chambers' Fire Station #1 and Tramway Gas Station) and bitter losses (Neutra's Maslon House, Frey & Chambers' Palm Springs Shopping Center, and the Biltmore Hotel) PS ModCom's advocacy efforts now concentrate on working behind the scenes with property owners and city officials in crafting preservation alternatives and adaptive reuse options that seek to avoid protracted battles. Simultaneously, as a part of a broader strategy, PS ModCom has initiated annual modern home tours, library exhibitions, and lectures to educate the public and build a constituency for the preservation of our modernist heritage. Our annual Preservation Awards and Lifetime Achievement Award luncheon publicly honors the stewards and pioneers of desert modern design—a prestigious event resulting in tremendous local

goodwill. Additionally, in recent years a partnership of business, arts, and preservation organizations has established an annual Palm Springs Modernism Week that attracts visitors from around the world.

Yet despite these efforts, the preservation battles continue. Currently, PS ModCom is part of a coalition fighting to save the Town & Country Center, an important example from 1950 of the work of Case Study architect A. Quincy Jones and famed African-American architect Paul R. Williams, which a local developer has plans to demolish (visit [FriendsOfTCC.com](http://FriendsOfTCC.com) for more information). This same developer seeks to engulf the former Santa Fe Federal Savings building of 1958, a sublime expression of international style design by architect E. Stewart Williams, with multistory condos. And demolition by neglect continues to threaten several other important modern commercial buildings in the city.

Nonetheless, we take solace in the legacy of the preservation movement, which shows that perseverance and the willingness to take strong action when necessary are key elements to achieving success. Such efforts, combined with effective education and community outreach, will hopefully lead to a day when widespread preservation of our historic modern heritage is the norm and not the exception.

**For more information:**

**Palm Springs Modern Committee (PS ModCom)**

[www.PSModCom.org](http://www.PSModCom.org)

P.O. Box 4738

Palm Springs, CA 92263



Maslon House, designed by architect Richard Neutra in 1962. Photograph by David Glomb.



Maslon House, demolished by new owner in 2002. Photograph by David Glomb.

## Concrete Plan

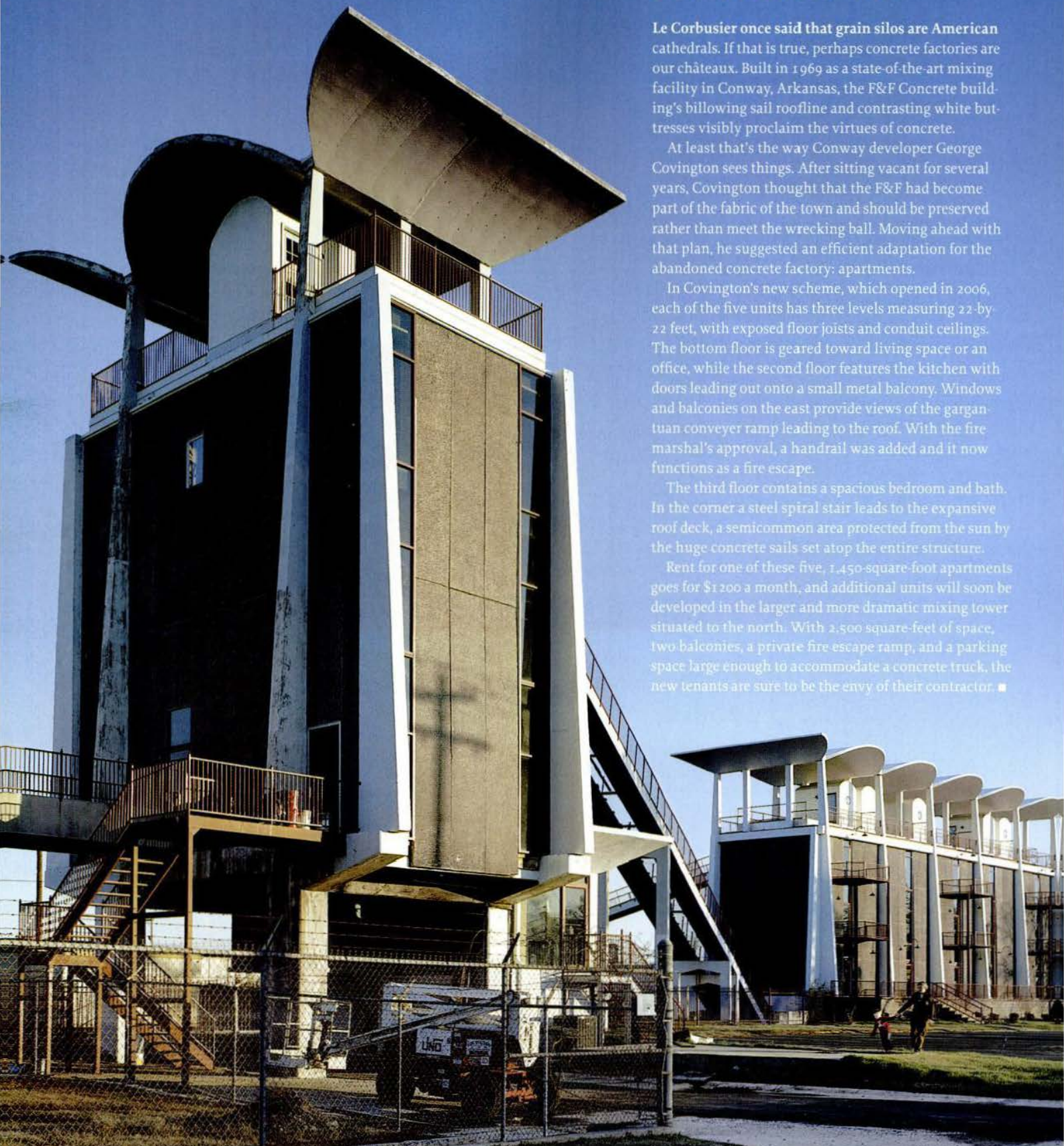
Le Corbusier once said that grain silos are American cathedrals. If that is true, perhaps concrete factories are our châteaux. Built in 1969 as a state-of-the-art mixing facility in Conway, Arkansas, the F&F Concrete building's billowing sail roofline and contrasting white butresses visibly proclaim the virtues of concrete.

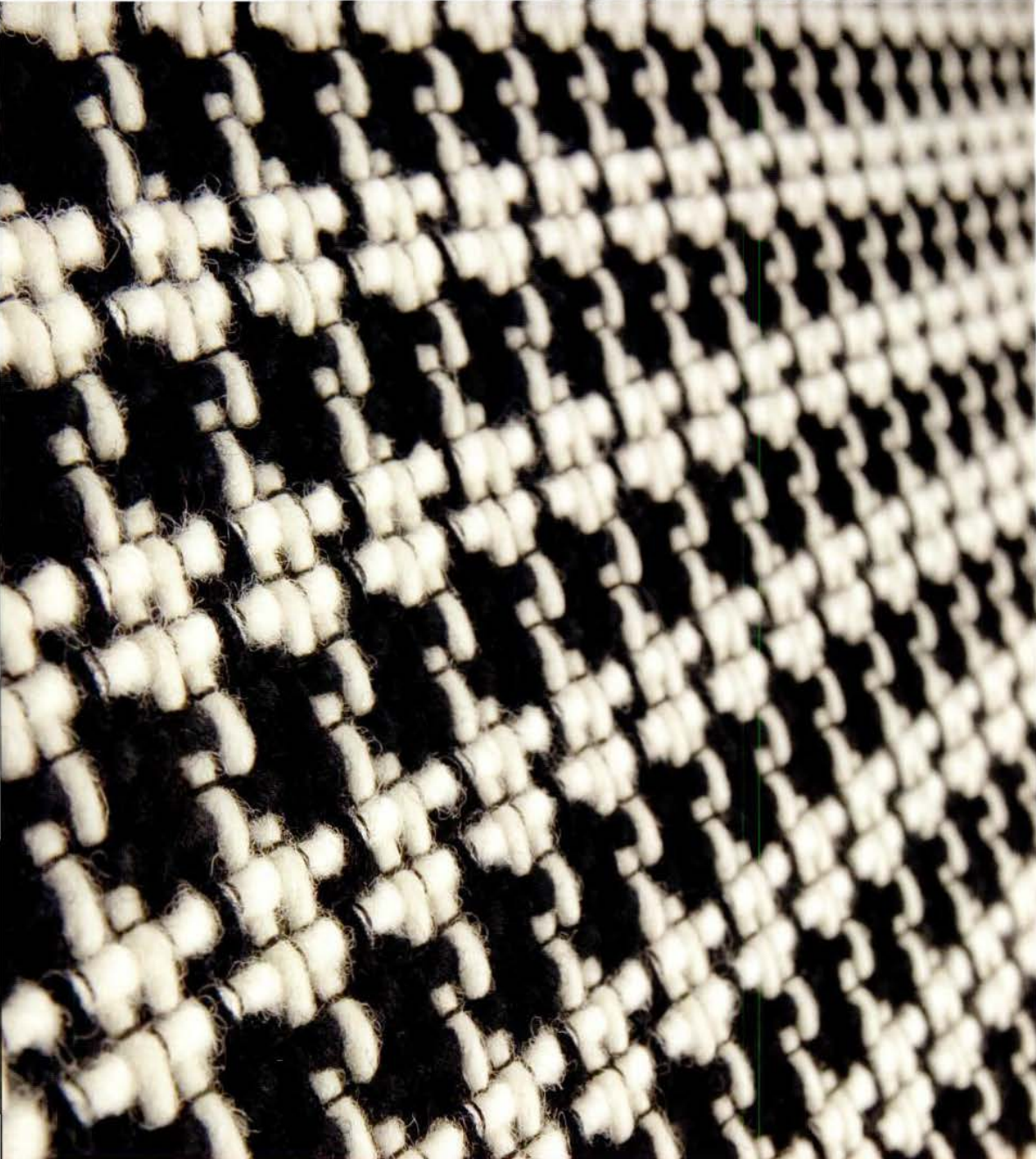
At least that's the way Conway developer George Covington sees things. After sitting vacant for several years, Covington thought that the F&F had become part of the fabric of the town and should be preserved rather than meet the wrecking ball. Moving ahead with that plan, he suggested an efficient adaptation for the abandoned concrete factory: apartments.

In Covington's new scheme, which opened in 2006, each of the five units has three levels measuring 22-by-22 feet, with exposed floor joists and conduit ceilings. The bottom floor is geared toward living space or an office, while the second floor features the kitchen with doors leading out onto a small metal balcony. Windows and balconies on the east provide views of the gargantuan conveyor ramp leading to the roof. With the fire marshal's approval, a handrail was added and it now functions as a fire escape.

The third floor contains a spacious bedroom and bath. In the corner a steel spiral stair leads to the expansive roof deck, a semicommon area protected from the sun by the huge concrete sails set atop the entire structure.

Rent for one of these five, 1,450-square-foot apartments goes for \$1,200 a month, and additional units will soon be developed in the larger and more dramatic mixing tower situated to the north. With 2,500 square feet of space, two balconies, a private fire escape ramp, and a parking space large enough to accommodate a concrete truck, the new tenants are sure to be the envy of their contractor. ■





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