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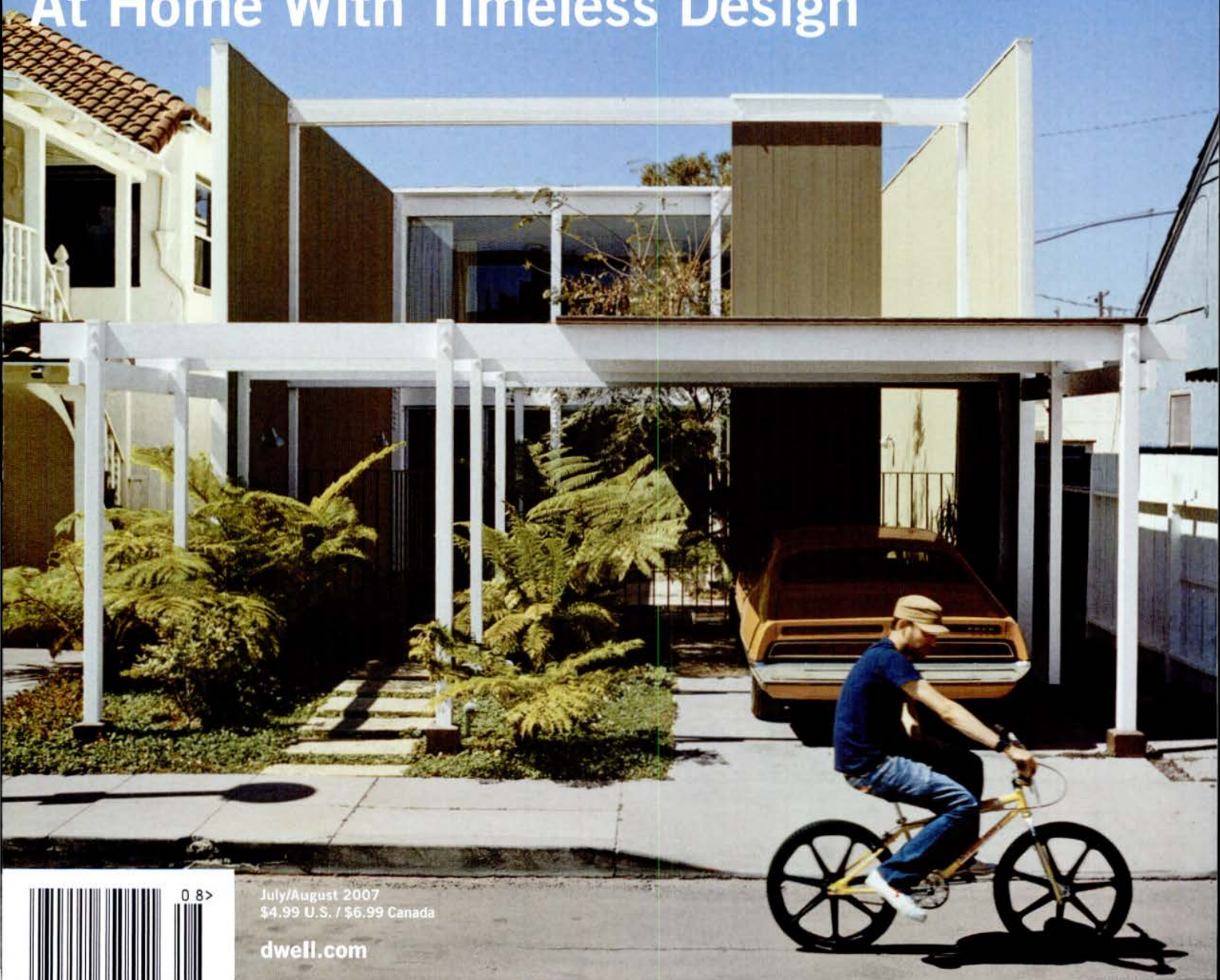

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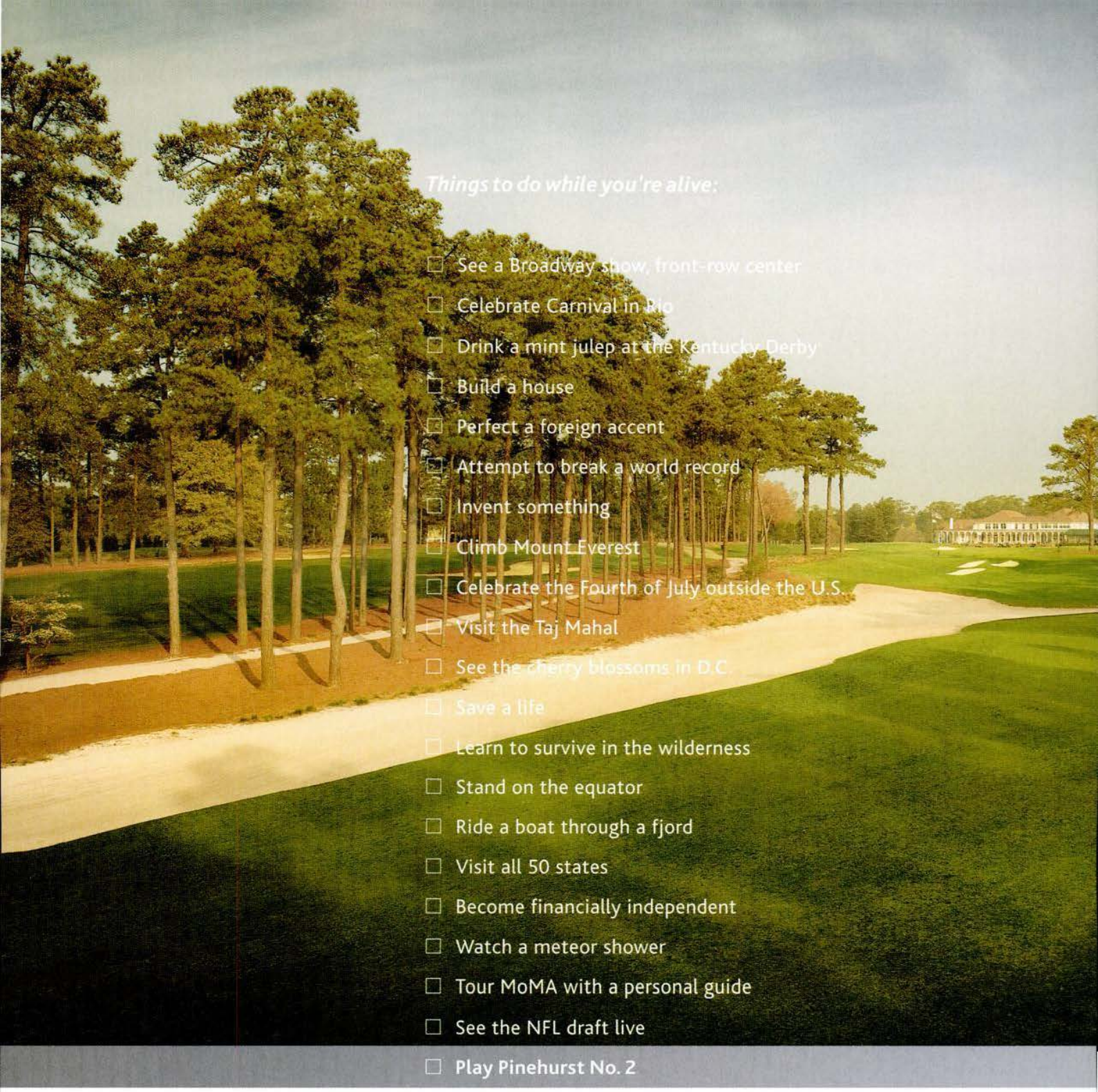

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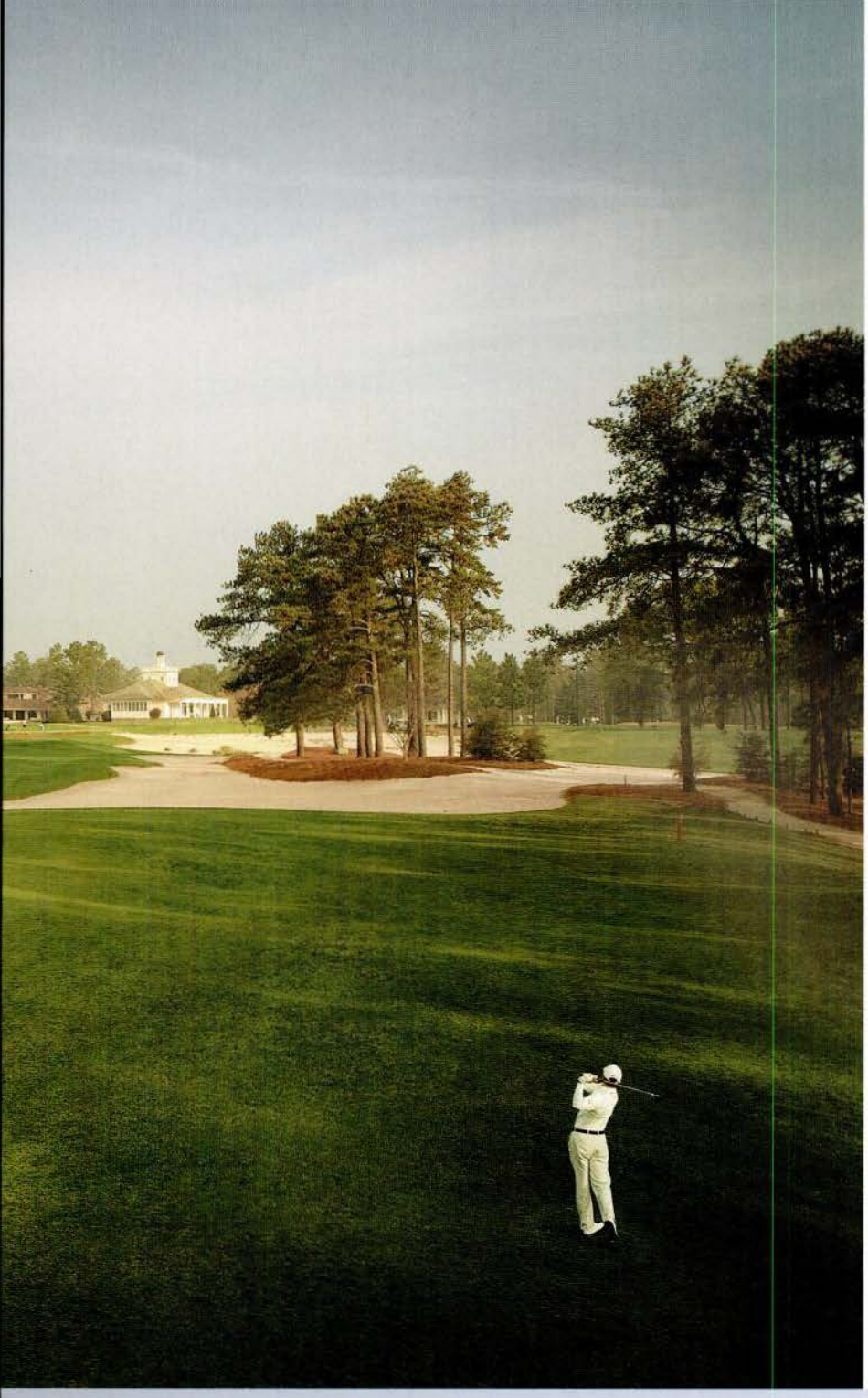

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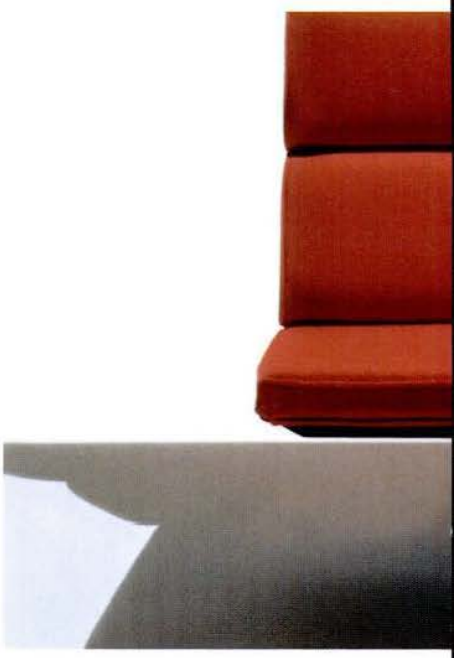

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Archive Issue
July/August 2007

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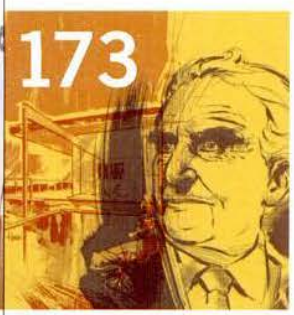
—Barbara Neski



Cover: Opdahl House, Long Beach, California, page 136
Photo by Catherine Ledner

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CELLS IN THE STIMULATED BODY PART SEND
COMMUNICATES SIGNALS FROM THE SENSORY
OF THE BODY. THE HAND TURNS THE WHEEL.

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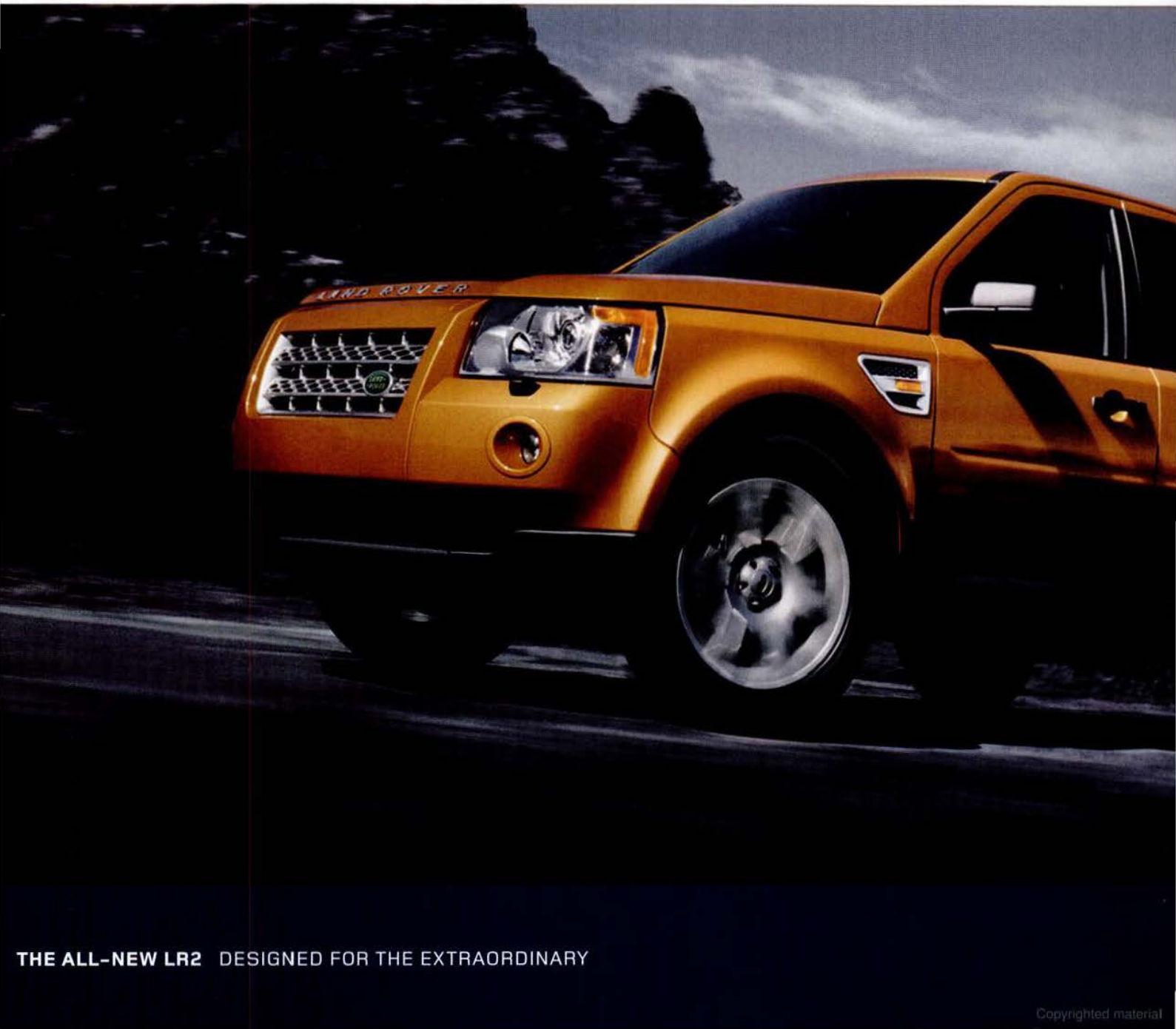

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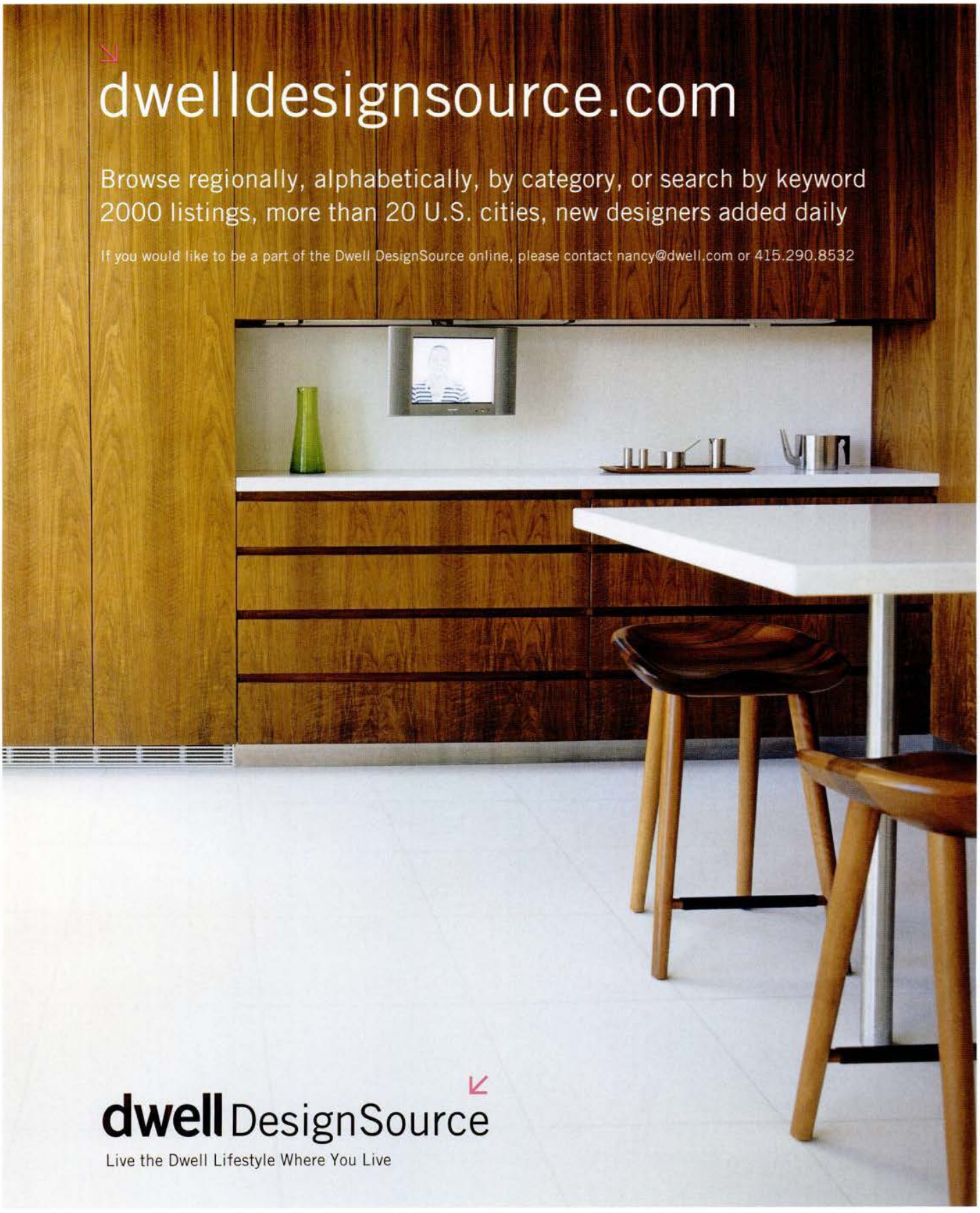

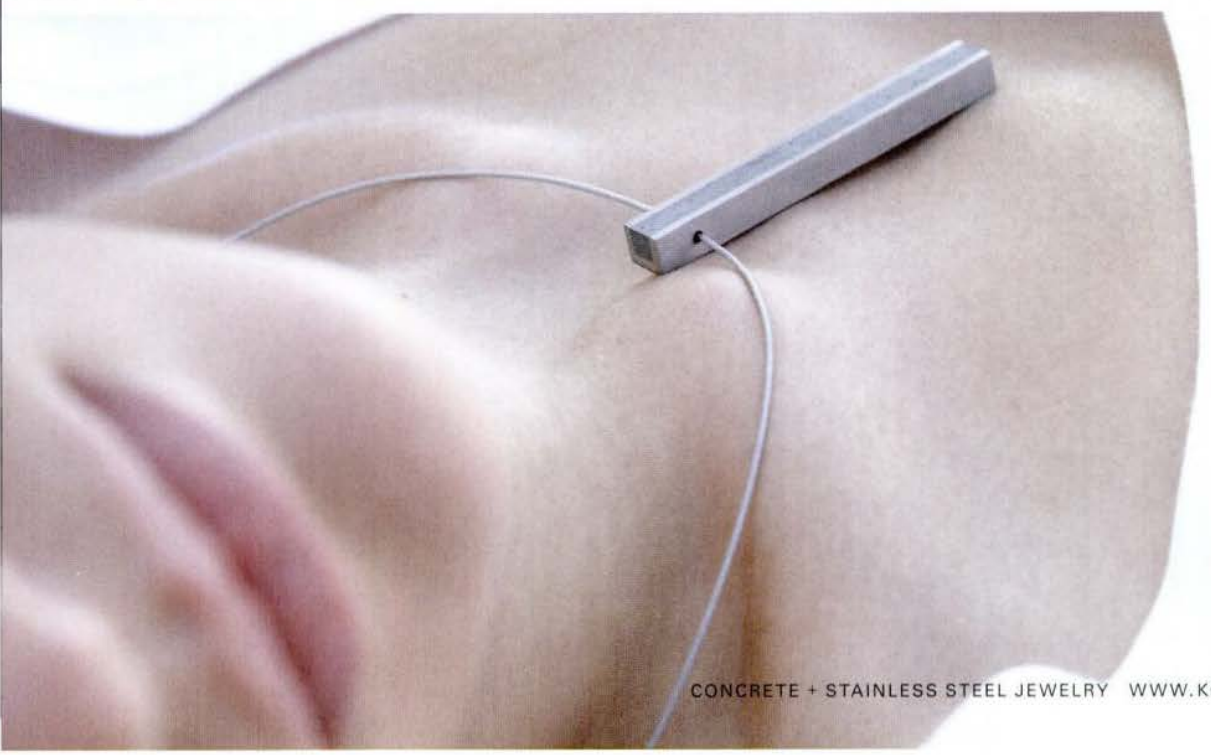

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In the spirit of this issue's theme, Dwell: The Wonder Years: Michela O'Connor Abrams, Chelsea Holden Baker, Christina Amini, Sam Grawe, Ann Spradlin, Fida Sleiman, Brian Karo, Kate Stone, Sonja Hall, Julia Ra, Rya Hornstein, Jennifer McKinley, Joy Pascual, Laura Simkins, Aaron Britt, Kathryn Schulz, Brendan Callahan, Lara Hedberg Deam, Andrea Lawson, Carleigh Bell, Michael Cannell, Alexis Mansinne, Alexis Tjian, Christopher Bright, Suzanne LaGasa, Michele Gerus, Elizabeth Heinrich, Kathryn Hansen

What a treat it was to see your article on Ken Isaacs and his work in your May 2007 issue.

I bought his 1974 book, *How to Build Your Own Living Structures*, somewhere around '74 or '75 and I still refer to it regularly. I've done a few Google searches to find out whatever happened to Isaacs and it seemed that he had just disappeared. It's great to know that he's still around and still innovating.

I've used his two-by-two concept to build all kinds of useful items such as bookshelves, desks, and workbenches. The flexibility of universal parts bolted together in a multitude of configurations has been a design resource I've used again and again.

I remember building an inexpensive library shelf system when my former partner and I were just starting our ad agency. I had him cut and drill dozens of these universal members based on Isaacs design and he kept asking, "Are you sure this is going to work? Shouldn't we try it first?" He was then amazed when every part bolted together and we almost instantly had a complete roomful of shelves.

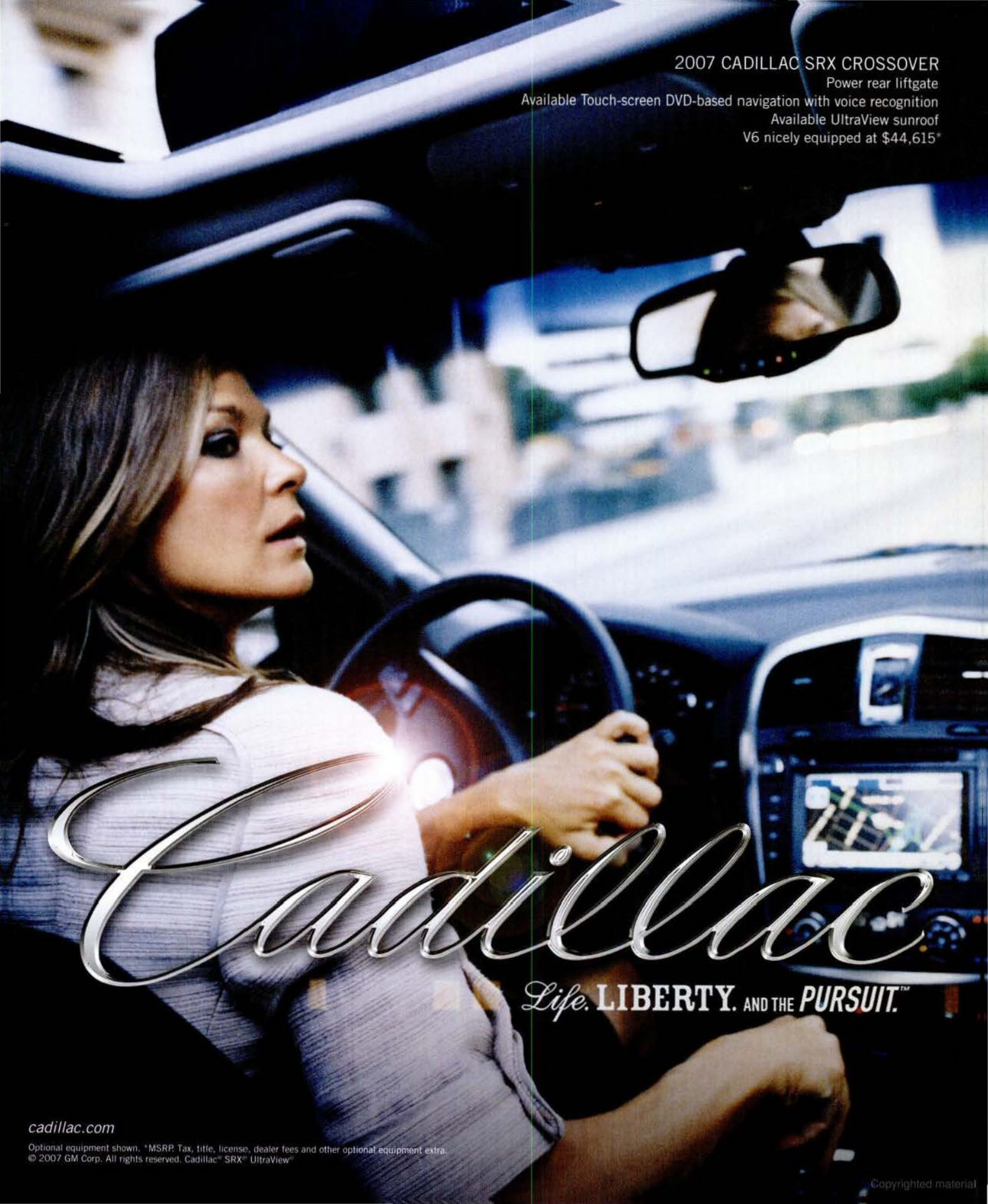
More recently, I've transferred the concept to metal for workbenches and small sheds. I've even scaled up his room-size concepts and have built a two-car garage with a framework of two-by-two, 14-gauge metal tubing. My goal was to build an all-metal, bolt-together garage with no wood and no welding. And, other than a little wood framing around the overhead doors, I succeeded. I created universal members and with the help of my two sons, we erected the frame, bolted it together, screwed corrugated metal barn siding over rigid foam insulation, and even lined one whole wall with a shelf system, once again based on Isaacs's basic design.

Thanks again for the article. If you have the means to communicate with Isaacs, please pass on my thanks for all the enjoyment I've had reading and rereading his book for the past 30 years and for all the practical value his design ideas have given to all of us.

Wayne Powell
Stockton, Missouri

Have you ever felt that you live in a great country, just in the wrong corner of it? Would Dwell consider moving their office headquarters to Southwest Florida? Perhaps the mere presence of such an environmentally conscientious publication would prompt those still driven to build a megamansion to think twice about their decision.

Naples, Florida, is a subtropical paradise. Unfortunately, those who choose to make this their home often have the means to build any size home they want—complete with all the ▸



bells and whistles. It is infuriating, and at the same time heartbreaking, to see my fellow Neapolitans cover every square inch of their tiny parcels of land with a mammoth structure. Here, it would not be wrong to conclude that bigger brings attention, notoriety, and adulation—especially in our local magazines. As one local architect recently said to me: "They are building monuments to lives they believe they want to live." Reality suggests otherwise: the home is occupied by a small family (who rarely set foot into their 4,000-square-foot dining room) and/or is vacant (yet constantly air-conditioned!) for a good portion of the year.

As a local freelance interior design writer, I am constantly in search of unique home design—especially those that respect the environment and are proportionately correct for the land and the family that inhabits it. I also seek well-built examples of such homes. Sadly, I have not found many.

After reading the May 2007 issue of Dwell, I cannot in good conscience continue to write about and applaud homes that destroy, rather than inspire, the environment; I guess I am out of a job.

Gaylene Salomons
Naples, Florida

Please forgive the slightly bemused arrogance that lurks beneath this writing, despite the best efforts of its writer to get over himself. It derives largely from the frustration of witnessing what I suspect will become one more failed foray into the potential of offsite production, the semantically challenged "prefabricated home."

Working as an architect and industrial designer, I gathered ten years' experience as vice president of Engineering and Operations at Chelsea Modular Homes, located in the Hudson Valley of New York State. During my tenure at Chelsea, I came to understand the potential of this production method to provide well-designed building modules with significant savings in cost and fabrication time. Further, I believe the cost difference between offsite production and onsite construction will only widen as economic forces play out.

Simply stated, with offsite production, the means by which those savings are realized is the implementation of proprietary systems—financial, legal, logistical, and manufacturing—engaged in a high-volume production environment, otherwise prohibited by onsite construction. (Constructing offsite, under a roof, one module at a time doesn't particularly realize any savings and incurs many extra costs.) As with any system, the potential for eloquence is extraordinary, and the potential for disaster is omnipresent. Consequently, the manufacturer must be partnered into the mix, and rightly so. He will not risk the investment capital without the power of checks and balances. From that point onward it only becomes more complex. From building permits to crane sizes, the number of tasks that need to be completed to make the method truly function can be daunting.

Recent prefabricated homes by architects, including those published in your magazine, display a thinness to the work. A closer examination brings to question the rhetoric of the idea's promise with products becoming an exercise more for its architect's exploration of fashionable trends, with too little substance, at far too high a cost. In a medium ripe with both need and potential for true innovation and partnership, we find only reiteration of ideas having nothing to do with the core inspiration, offsite production methodology. Once again we architects traffic in the glorification of Ego and Architecture at the expense of meaningful progress. One is left with a sense of failed potential at best and marketing hype at worst.

This is not so much an indictment of our profession as a wake-up call. We are the single major force capable of turning this "revival" into a major movement. Ironically, we also stand to reverse our decline into irrelevance and revive our role as social force at the same time. As of this moment, we have the opportunity to be responsible and irreplaceable contributors for social change and to lead the way in realizing the full potential of offsite production. As of this moment, I fear neither will happen.

In the end, should this latest revival of interest in prefabricated homes succeed, Dwell magazine shall deserve much of the credit. ("Succeed" shall be defined as that moment whereupon offsite production takes its rightful place among the methodologies by which our culture delivers to its members quality homes within their means.) I can remember two, perhaps three such revivals, the last being approximately 1995, but never one where the magnitude of interest had reached a point where a major publication buoyed the momentum. Your support renders an important public service.

Chase Martin
Millbrook, New York

After reading Dwell for a few years there is one theme that always sticks out to me when reading the letters section. Readers often comment, "Show us a house for people on a budget," or "I am a teacher; I could never dream of building a modern home." Well, my family and I are living proof that you can build a modern home and be an average joe.

I worked as a teacher while my husband went to school. (He now is a school psychologist and I am a part-time, at-home mom.) In 2002, we started clipping all of our favorite images from Dwell. We made a portfolio with the design elements we liked and then began the search for an architect who was interested in taking on the challenge. After many disappointing calls and people saying, "You want to build a modern home for how much?" we stumbled upon a perfect match: an architect willing to take on our project for its potential and creative vision.

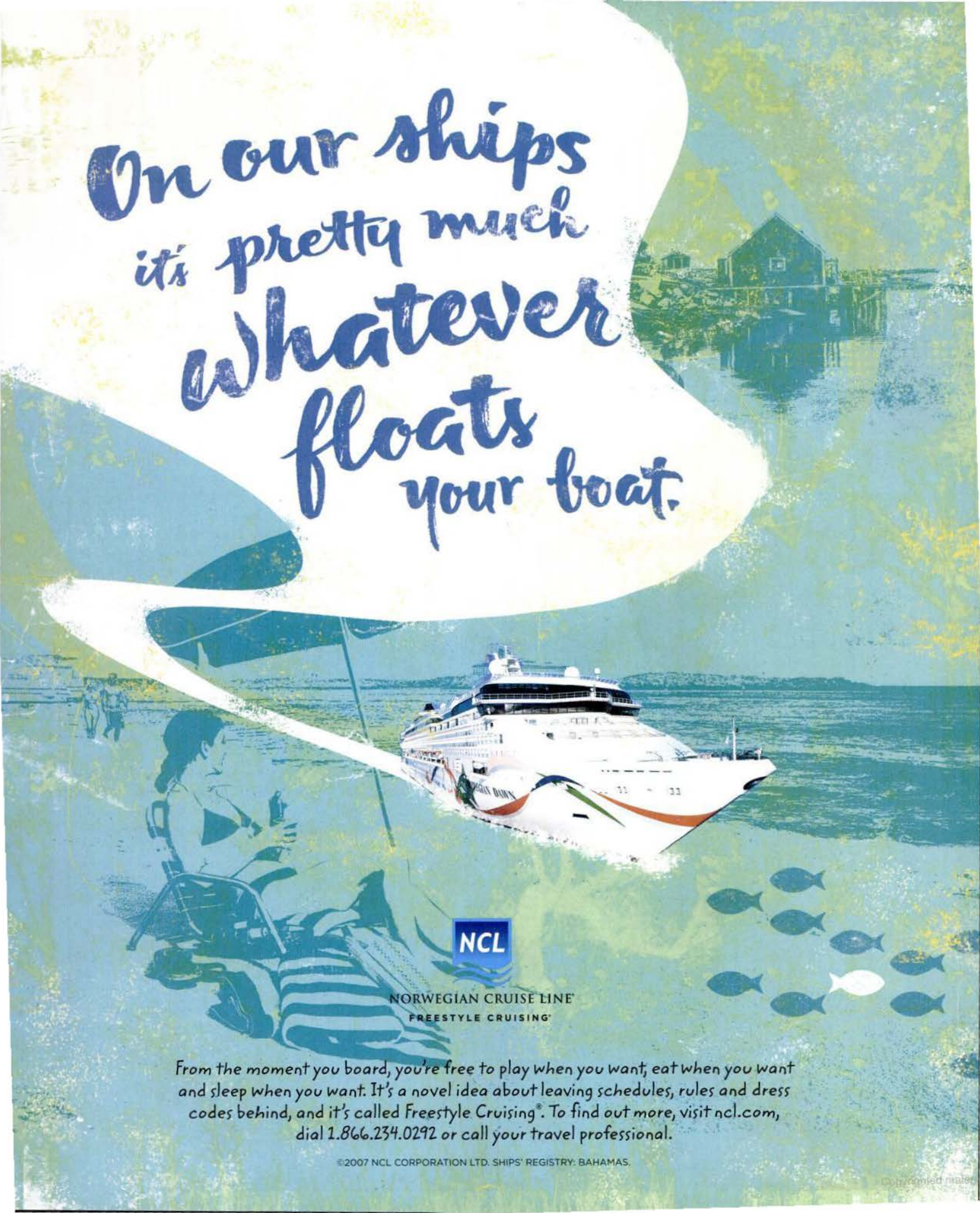
To make a long story short, we now have a modern home that is affordable. Our house cost considerably less ($145 / square foot for everything but land and architect fees) than many of the prefab homes that have been presented in recent Dwell issues. Obviously, to make our modern home a reality, many sacrifices had to be made; we had to think creatively, and we had to find a builder who would be flexible and understand our vision. Dwell has covered affordable homes in the past, and we hope that it continues to do so, as readers like us can be discouraged by images of homes decorated with high-end designer furniture and lighting. To make this even more realistic for readers, it would be helpful to hear from more homeowners like us who are willing to talk about the financial aspects of building a home.

So many readers talk about Dwell becoming more of a high-end magazine. Well, we are here to say you can be a teacher (or in any other field) and have a modern home. We aren't saying it's easy, we just want other readers to keep the dream alive. We never gave up, and every day we look around at our house and are happy to live in a home that is modern *and* affordable. Dwell inspired us, and we want it to continue to inspire people like us. Our house can be viewed at www.strataprojects.com. It's listed as the Shelley Shack project.

Christy Shackelford
Charlottesville, Virginia

Editors' note: *We're happy to hear it! We encourage you and anyone else who is house-proud to submit your project to dwell.com and post it to http://www.dwell.com/homes/show.*

Let me start simply and honestly (please pardon any overuse of adverbs): I love your magazine and have been a subscriber for a few years. As Al Franken said about his love of America, "Grown-up love means...taking the good with the bad, and helping your loved one grow." So in that ▸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Letters

vein, I say to the kids at Dwell: Where was the mention of Ted Smith's name as architect in this otherwise good article about living in a small space ("Living Room" May 2007)? Would the couple profiled have been able to accomplish their "neat-freakishness" organization if it weren't for the design of Smith?

Amanda Waal
San Diego, California

I have to disagree with David Baker's statement, "If you renovate an existing commercial building in an urban area, close to transit, you're already there" ("Dwell Labs" April 2007). Some studies show that the construction, maintenance, and use of buildings are responsible for 48 percent of the energy use in America. Yes, renovating an existing commercial building does take a chunk out of the energy used for the building, and the ten points that David Baker outlines in the article are crucial bits of information. Everything else you do, however, is not "icing on the cake."

If 48 percent of the energy use in America does truly come from the built environment, then the onus for a sustainable future falls on the shoulders of those who design, build, and renovate buildings, as well as the publications that inspire them. David Baker's ten points are far too important to be introduced as unessential bits of information.

Jaimal Proctor
Albuquerque, New Mexico

I had a good laugh reading the letter to the editor in your May issue about the architect versus designer moniker fallout because I've had the opposite problem: not being called an architect when I am one. I've been licensed for six years and have my own practice. I also consult for local firms. At one office, I contributed to numerous designs but kept being introduced to clients as a draftsman.

I summoned all my tact to correct my colleagues ("Do your clients worry about the budget if more than one architect's designing their project? I ask because I've noticed you keep referring to me as a draftsman.") For the next two weeks they addressed me only as "the architect." As in "We're going out for coffee, does 'the architect' want anything?" Was it a generational or gender issue with the principals? Doesn't matter; I know what I am and charge accordingly. But the next time we met with a client, God love 'em, they tried: "This is Whitney, the drafts----marchitect." The ARE tests us in all kinds of ways.

Whitney Morrill
Charlottesville, VA

In the outback of Vermont, where winter still lingers, it is a real pleasure to receive my spring issues. We are an affordable housing developer in a large rural county. We all get excited when the magazine arrives and it is my one perquisite as director: I get to read Dwell first. The scope of the magazine, from design and construction to hardware and lighting, is always fulfilling. Your emphasis on green building, eco-technology, and prefabrication has been instructive. But it is the spirit and brio of the magazine that makes it so much fun.

Terry McKnight
Middlebury, Vermont

I take great exception to the letter written by Ernest Jacks in the April 2007 edition of Dwell with regard to Jerrold Lomax and the Craig Ellwood office. Being the structural engineer responsible for most of the projects that were built during the last ten years of the Ellwood office, including Art Center College of Design, and with my office next door to Ellwood's for all those years, I have very close knowledge of how that office operated. During that period Craig was rarely involved in the design process, with the exception of a residence in Palm Springs, and was rarely present. What does Ernest Jacks mean by "guidance"? James Tyler was the architect we and the Ellwood office worked with during that time.

My relationship with Jerrold Lomax has been on a professional and personal level for over forty years and to have him referred to as a "dissident draftsman" with "spurious claims" is demeaning and belies all the respect I and many others have for him as an individual and as an architect.

Finally, I find it hard to understand how someone who worked for Ellwood for a period of nine months in 1953, according to the Neil Jackson book on Ellwood, could know so much about the office and the many fine architects who produced its exceptional architecture.

Norman J. Epstein
Los Angeles, California

Correction: *On page 72 of "In the Modern World" (May 2007) we got all* New Yorker-y *on Studio Dror, placing an umlaut (in this case, not a diaeresis) over the "O" where there needn't be one. We regret the impulse.*

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Andreas Stevens's ("Opdahl Remastered," p. 136) La Gardo Tackett–designed planter from Architectural Pottery (circa 1959) serves as an ideal place to plant his myriad Vans.

Contributors

Joao Canziani ("Phoenix Envy," p. 188) was born and raised in Lima, Peru; spent his adolescence in Vancouver, Canada; and then moved to the States to pursue photography, studying at Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. Although Phoenix seemed to be under constant construction, with many streets gutted out and new buildings going up, Canziani found himelf stumbling upon little gems of modernism in places he least expected: a library shaped like a big glass cube in a working-class district; and his favorite, a little diner serving the best burgers in a humble-yet-up-and-coming neighborhood.

Hunter Freeman ("Dwell Reports," p. 96 and "Dwell Labs," p. 120), is a photographer based in San Francisco. He has always wondered why, among life's other mysteries, there are no good-looking, well-designed mailboxes. He was very happy to have a mystery revealed in this issue. And he loves light, so photographing the outdoor lights made his heart glow. Really. He means that.

House Industries ("Neutra Territory," p. 173) is a type foundry, illustration and design studio that has been working to change our visual landscape since 1993. Stubbornly sticking to traditional graphic art techniques, House has developed a new typographic idiom that covers everything from hot rodding to modernism.

Dan Maginn ("Ode to the IKEA Cabinet," p. 212) is a principal with the Kansas City–based architecture firm El Dorado Inc. When not working on architectural designs, he works as a consultant to himself, developing strategies for the general public to better understand the flaky, croissant-like layers of meaning in his poetry. Surprised and pleased with the vast piles of cash to be had in the field, he is currently searching for a word that rhymes with "billable."

Joanna Moorhouse ("Eero Dynamics," p. 146) is a Finnish-English photographer based in Helsinki, Finland. She found it inspiring to photograph Aarnio's home and to meet the man himself, whom she found to be very young at heart. At home, Moorhouse's Bubble chair is best-loved by the cats.

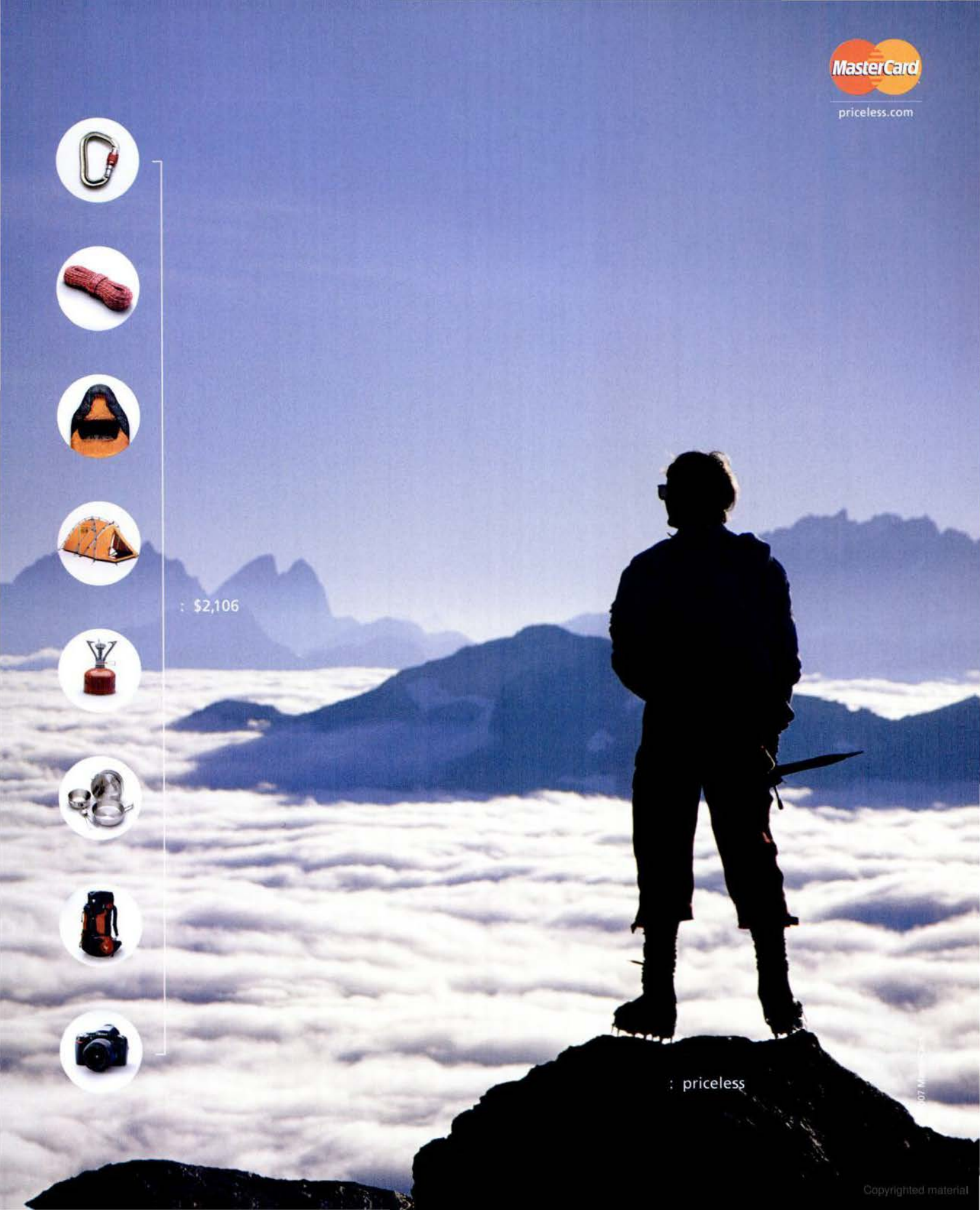
Raymond Richard Neutra ("Neutra Territory," p. 173) is a physician epidemiologist who currently heads the division of the California Department of Public Health that investigates emerging environmental and occupational health threats. His 40-year career in public health was stimulated by the library and visitors of his architect father, Richard Neutra, who was interested in how the built environment affects the health and well-being of its inhabitants. Thus Richard's library was full of books on physiology and biology and his contacts included people such as Hans Selye, the scientist who started stress research. A few years ago, Raymond started writing snippets of memoir-essays about his adventures in public health and about his family. This piece about a half-century-old psychological study on creative architects was part rumination on his father and part speculation on how societal contexts let remarkable people discover and nurture their unique combination of skills.

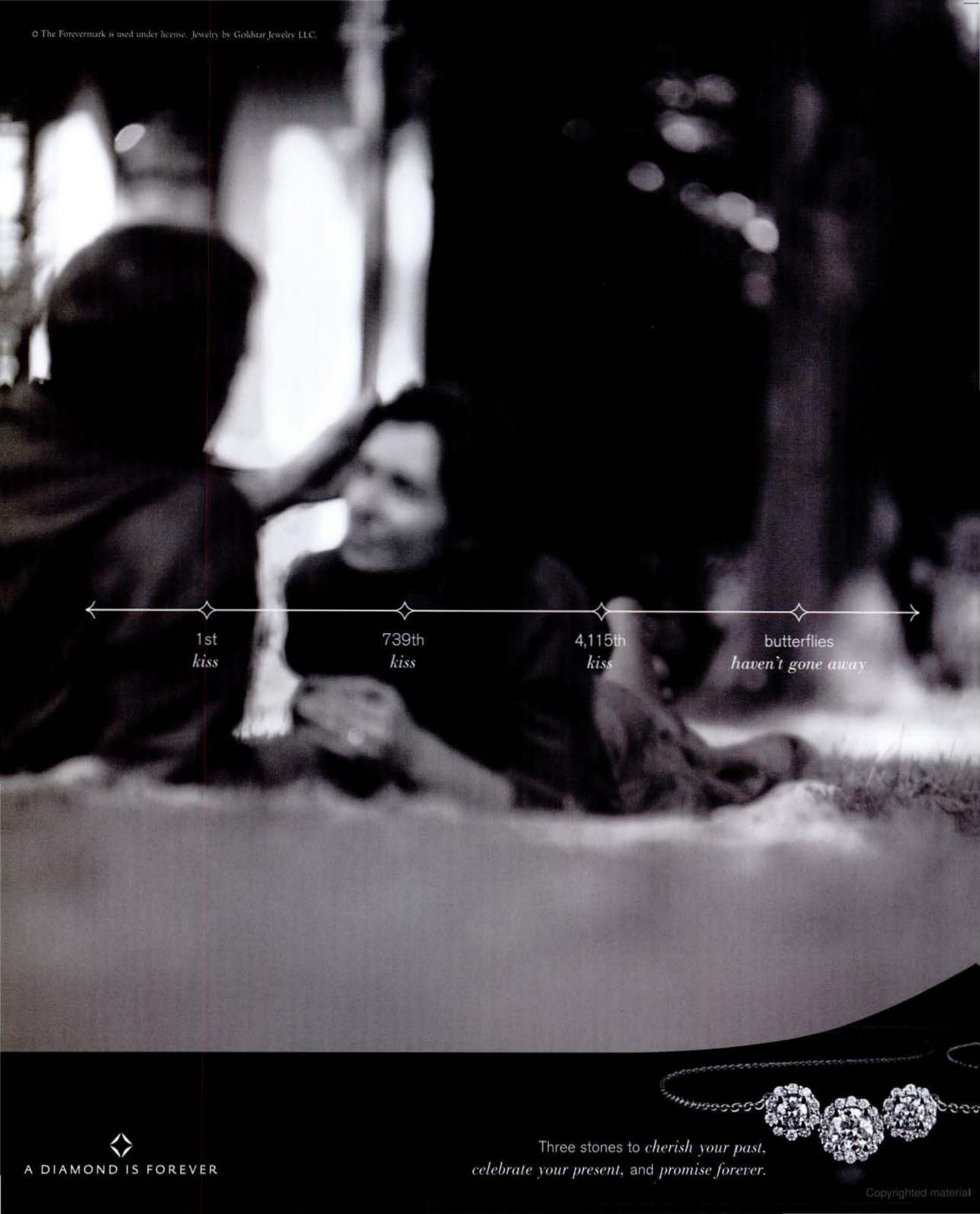
Karen Pakula ("Boom Box," p. 73) is a journalist with the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Leaving her two daughters, partner, cat, and renovator's detritus at home, she headed north to balmy Queensland and a tidy bespoke bachelor pad that fits its owner like a well-cut safari suit. It was tranquil; it was grown-up. And, back at the family pile a few hours later, it was a fading memory.

Richard Powers ("Boom Box," p. 73) is a Sydney-based photographer who traveled to Brisbane to shoot this month's "My House." Powers spent a most enjoyable two days with the owner, Dave, discussing the finer points of Dave's sound system (he was the tour manager for the Sex Pistols). And, in turn, Dave learned about specs on cameras and lenses—boys and their toys!

Heather Wagner ("Kitchens 101," p. 206) is a writer living in New York. Her first experience with iconic kitchen items was the Snoopy Sno-Cone Machine. After a near-fatal overdose of cherry syrup and subsequent years of intensive therapy, she is now strong enough to contribute a survey of internationally renowned kitchen appliances, from a groundbreaking Japanese rice cooker to an ubiquitous French pepper mill. ■

PHOTO BY CATHERINE LEDNER





A DIAMOND IS FOREVER

Three stones to *cherish your past*, *celebrate your present*, and *promise forever*.

Arch Rock

I grew up in an era when classic rock loomed large on the radio dial. It was the late 1980s in Washington DC and between DC 101, 105.9 WCXR, or 106.7 WJFK, you could easily get the Led out whenever you needed to. New Year's Day meant staying up late to hear the conclusion of the top-100-songs-of-all-time countdown (No. 1 was invariably "Stairway...," but "Won't Get Fooled Again" and "You Can't Always Get What You Want" were usually contenders). From the moment those songs hit the airwaves, they just never went away (*Dark Side of the Moon* spent a seemingly impossible 741 weeks on the *Billboard* pop charts).

Sadly, the architectural equivalent of classic rock radio didn't—and doesn't—exist. Despite the cognoscenti's taste for Eames and Eichler, modernist preservation (and education) is still an uphill battle. Unlike with music, not everyone has a favorite building or remembers the first time they stepped into a Frank Lloyd Wright house. Postwar modernism promised to bring "better living" to everyone, but faced with the *blandscape* of today, it's a promise that got sidetracked on an errand to the strip mall. I'm not suggesting we would be better off pretending it's 1952, but sometimes the path forward is lit by looking backward.

In every issue of Dwell we publish a piece under the heading of "Archive." This section of the magazine gives us the chance to turn up the volume, so to speak, on those lesser-known (and sometimes better-known) heroes of design and architecture who pushed boundaries in their time. Rather than just a single archive this time around, we've dedicated all three of our features, starting on page 136, to the subject.

You'll read a transgenerational tale about bringing Edward Killingsworth's classic Opdahl House back to life ("Opdahl Remastered," p. 136). There's a profile of Eero Aarnio, designer of the iconic Ball Chair, who at age 75 is more popular—and busier with new commissions—than ever ("Eero Dynamic," p. 146). Then there's the story of Barbara Neski, one of few women to study under Gropius at Harvard, and a former employee of Marcel Breuer ("Woman in the Dunes," p. 156).

Next, Leslie Williamson's quiet photographs of architects' sanctuaries create unexpected portraits of the noteworthy former inhabitants. An essay from Richard Neutra's third son, Raymond, compares the results of a psychological test conducted on his father at the University of California at Berkeley in 1958 to his own familial impressions ("Neutra Territory," p. 173). Finally, we couldn't leave you without a little nod to the radio classics, so we also included Charles Harker's Earth House ("Absolutely Free," p. 244), which Frank Zappa visited while wearing a white tuxedo and red sneakers.

We think that the best design should be timeless ("to be a rock and not to roll," perhaps), and I hope that we've captured that spirit in this issue. ■

SAM GRAWE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
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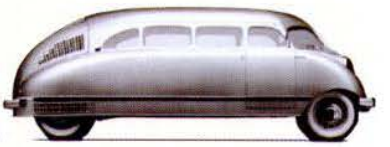

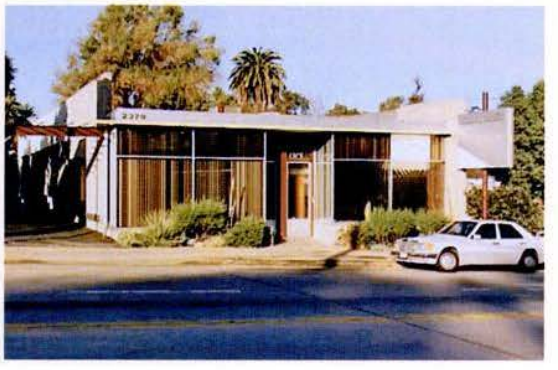

Dwell Blog

Ten issues a year not enough? Stay ahead of the modern world with the Dwell blog, updated frequently with our favorite products, design news, and up-to-the-minute reports from recent design shows. Follow the story of two former child weavers as they tour with RugMark, a nonprofit group dedicated to getting children out of the mills and into schools. Consider Le Corbusier's paint palette (now available in the United States), make an offer on a Neutra, and enjoy the ongoing conversation about sustainable design. The Dwell blog will keep you in the loop.

Send your latest discoveries to tips@dwell.com.
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Dwell Daily

Green Homes

After looking through our archive of sustainable homes, you needn't be green with envy—just green.
dwell.com/homes

Products

Kitchen Accoutrements

As a wise infomercial once said, "But, wait! There's more!" In the case of this issue's "Kitchens 101" (p. 206), it's really true. Go online to find our favorite kitchen products.
dwell.com/product

Connect

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This is your formal invitation to join the Dwell online community, where we gather ideas, share information, and post portfolios.
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PHOTO COURTESY PHOENIX ART MUSEUM. *CURVES OF STEEL: STREAMLINED AUTOMOBILE DESIGN*, 1935 STOUT SCARAB (TOP CAR); PHOTO BY MICHAEL FURMAN, [illegible]

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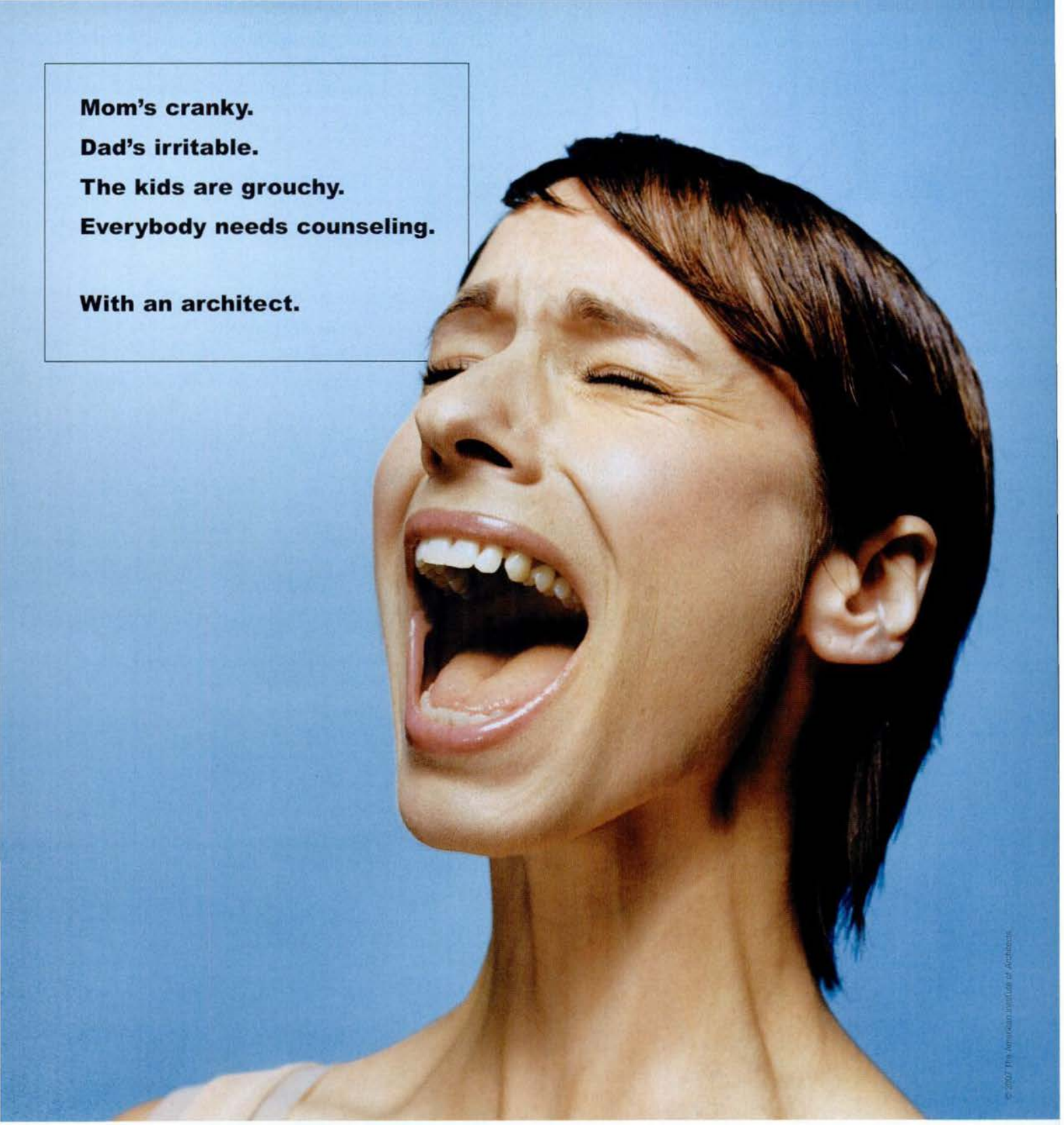

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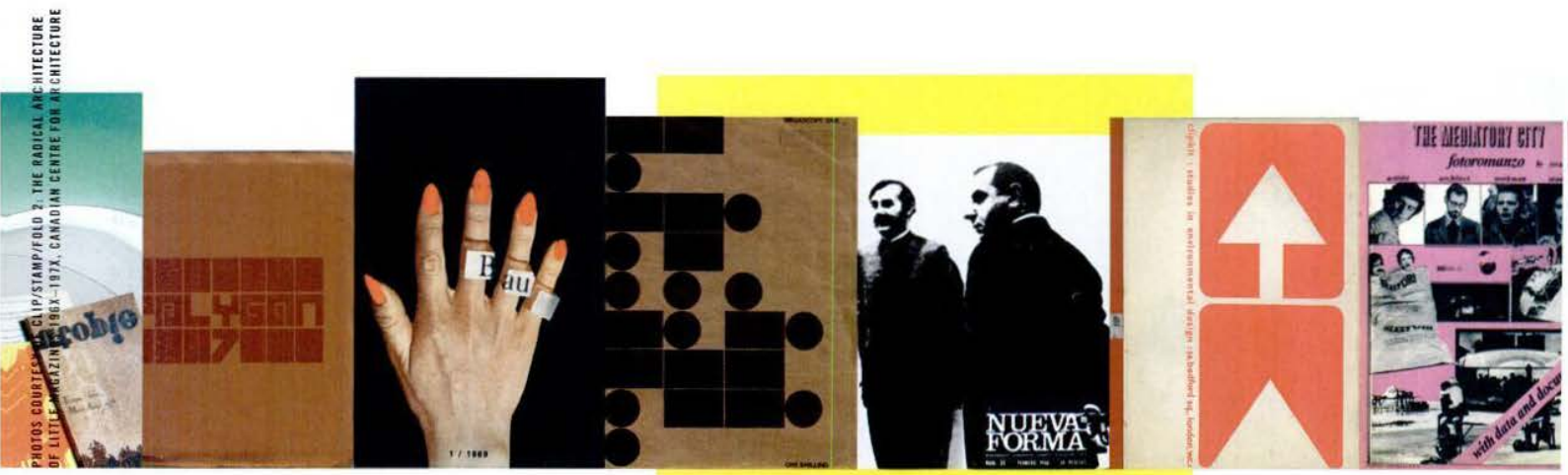
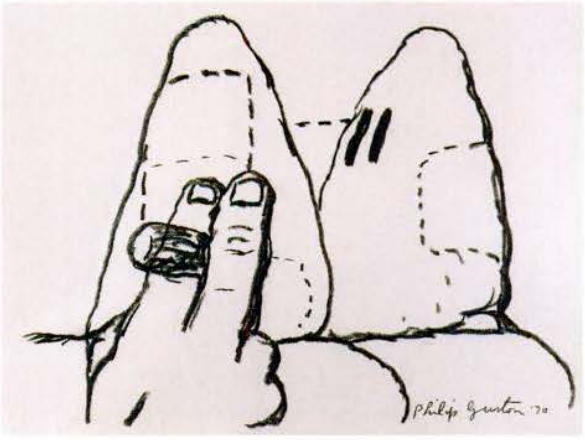
It seems almost unthinkable now, but 40 years ago the newsstands of university bookstores were stuffed with crudely assembled design journals like *Opposition*, *Archigram*, and *Melp!* These so-called small magazines, published on a shoestring, proliferated at a time when tuning in, turning on, and dropping out expanded architectural horizons, and T squares were for squares. The result was a gritty golden age of critical debate and radical graphics that has yet to be eclipsed. The magazines were the subject of an exhibition in New York earlier this year, and the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal follows up with a sequel containing material from 70 magazines published in over a dozen cities.

Clip/Stamp/Fold 2: The Radical Architecture of Little Magazines 196X–197X / Through 9 Sept / Canadian Centre for Architecture / Montreal, Canada / www.cca.qc.ca / This exhibition looks back at the outpouring of low-budget, high-concept magazines that stirred the design world with the spirit of protest and possibility.

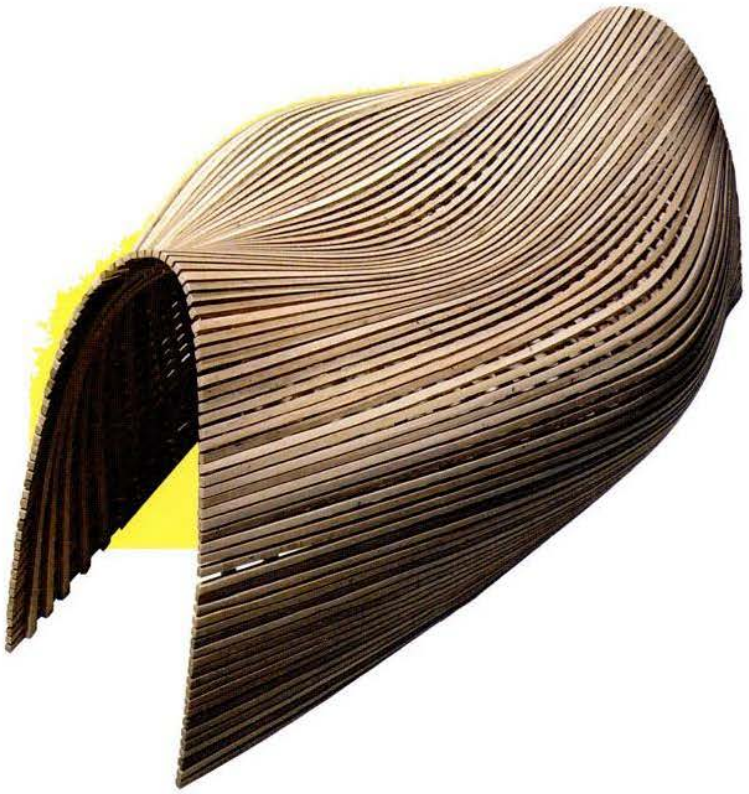


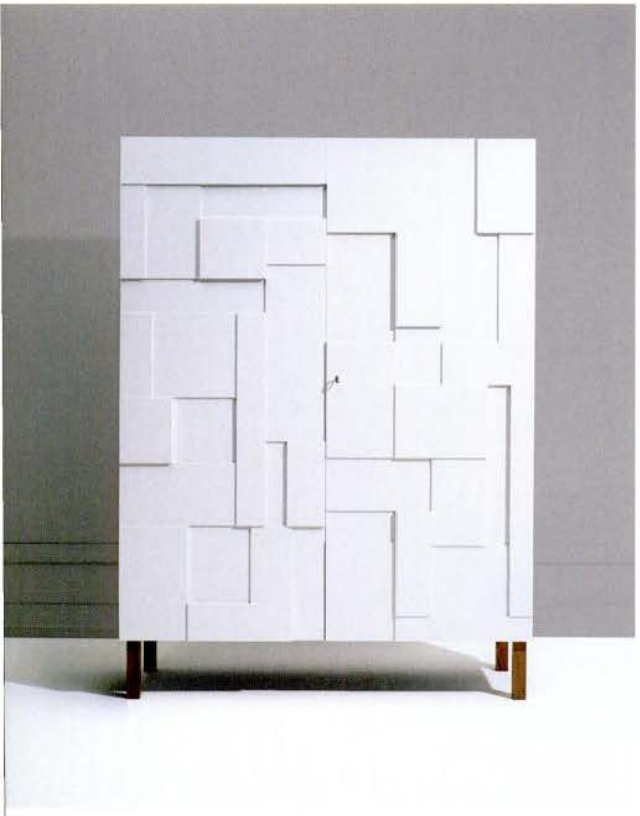
PHOTOS COURTESY CLIP/STAMP/FOLD 2: THE RADICAL ARCHITECTURE OF LITTLE MAGAZINES 196X–197X, CANADIAN CENTRE FOR ARCHITECTURE



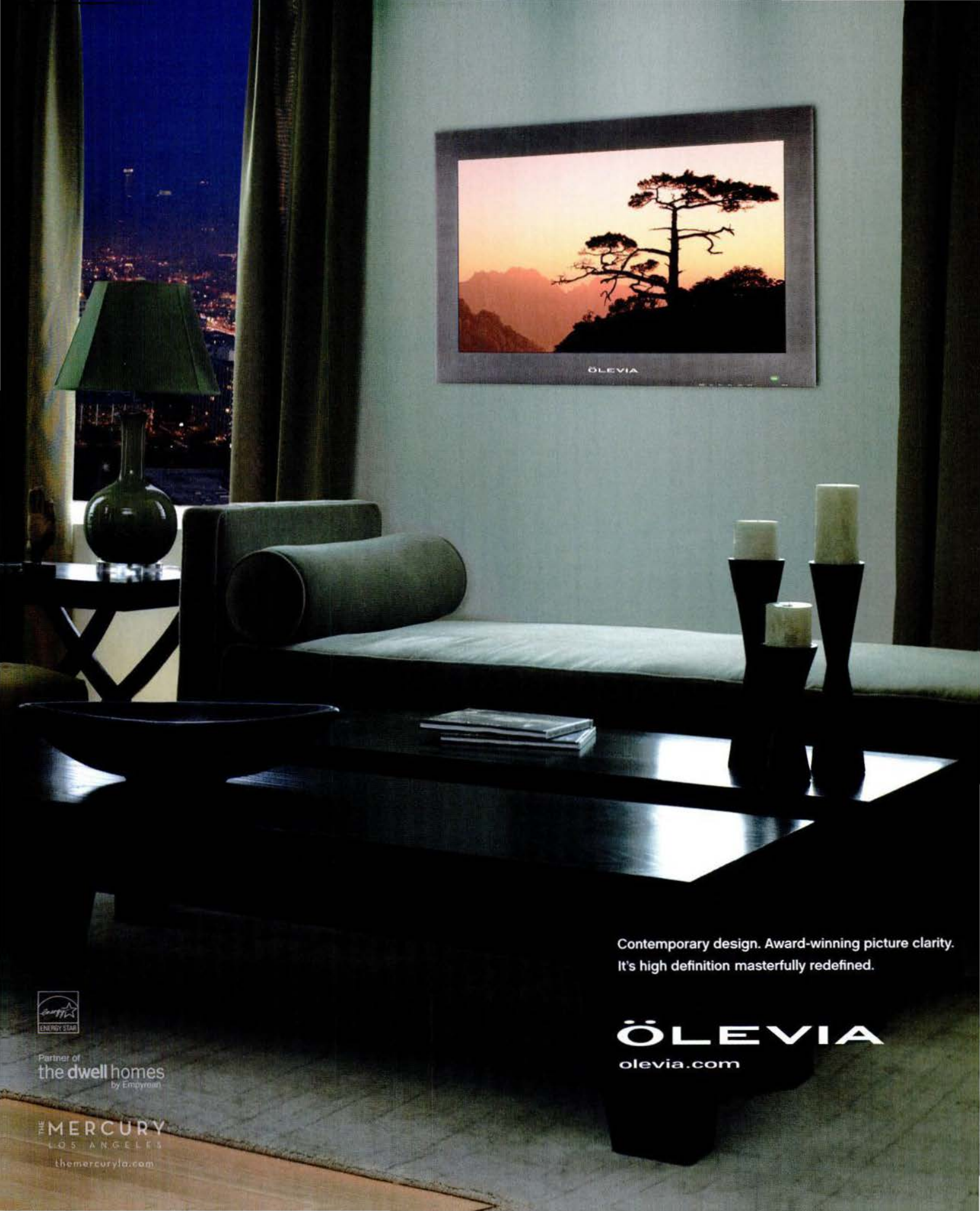
Philip Guston / 30 May–26 Aug / Louisiana Museum for Moderne Kunst / Humlebaek, Denmark / www.louisiana.dk / "It is the nakedness of drawings that attracts me. Drawing points out, suggests, and digs out. At times it seems enough to draw, without the interference of color and form," said Guston—a surprising remark for a man whose career was built upon bright swaths of abstract expressionist canvases. In the twilight of his life he championed the figurative tradition of American art with the comic-strip-style drawings celebrated here.

Bends / By Matthias Pliessnig / www.matthias-studio.com / Ultimately destined for less success than Radiohead's similarly titled album, but certainly more pleasant than decompression sickness, Bends is a beautifully bowed bench from RISD-trained furniture designer Matthias Pliessnig. Inspired by a summer of boat making and sailing, Pliessnig fabricated a softened grid of wood that gives way to support the sitter.





Alba armoire / By Pinch / www.pinchdesign.com / For many of us, the word "armoire" conjures images of *Antiques Roadshow* and Grandma's living room, or possibly a combination of the two. Husband-and-wife design team Russell Pinch and Oona Bannon's latest collection upends this tired notion by combining the quality of traditional craftsmanship with the aesthetic of mid-century plaster reliefs. Their line consists of three editions called the Alba (left), Marlow, and Frey, recalling venerated designers of the past.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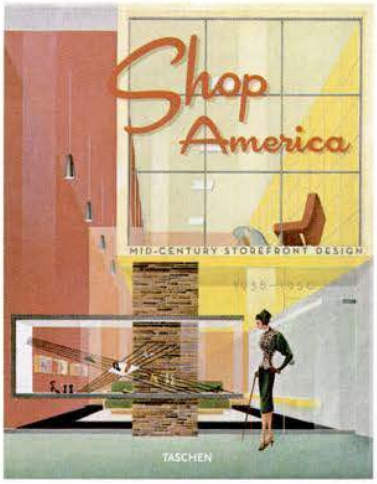
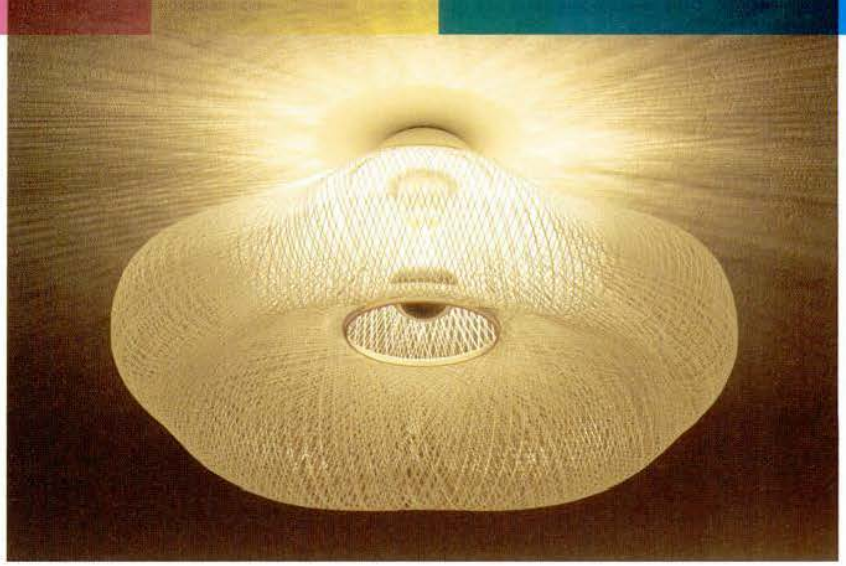


Shop America: Mid-Century Storefront Design / By Jim Heimann / Taschen / $49.99 / www.taschen.com / This is the ultimate expression of a time when spotless expanses of glass shone with a palpable optimism. Think Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks* transformed with glorious sunlight and passersby in hats and gloves. A combination of brightly illustrated storefront designs from 1938 to 1952, peppered with vintage photography, makes you wonder why these dairy bars and hosiery shops were razed for bland banks and Rite Aids.



Mayu Hana / By Toyo Ito / www.yamagiwa.co.jp / Japanese architect Toyo Ito is known for his lightweight buildings, often made with fabrics and perforated-metal panels. The same sense of weightlessness can work on a small scale, as he demonstrated at the Milan Furniture Fair in April with the introduction of Mayu Hana, a glowing biomorphic lamp made of fiberglass strands woven around a resin mold. The design is Ito's first for Yamagiwa, a high-end Japanese lighting distributor.

Coasting / By Shimano / www.coasting.com / Japanese bike-parts manufacturer Shimano—best known for their focus on performance enhancements—took a different tack on the Coasting project, turning their attention to those who favor trips to the local coffee shop over Alpine ascents. Think-it-all think tank Ideo was tapped to help create a new kind of riding experience—one that would motivate car potatoes to get back to pedaling. The result is an automatic three-speed shifting system which will be featured on bicycle designs by Trek, Giant, and Raleigh.

Airstream / By Chris Deam / www.dwr.com/airstream / Can a catalog have wanderlust? After eight years of trying to fill your house with modernist classics, Design Within Reach hits the highway with its own Airstream trailer. The result: a miniature loft on wheels.

In 2001, the Airstream trailer was a fading brand with simulated-wood-grain cabinetry and an aging clientele. Architect and furniture maker (and husband of Dwell founder Lara Hedberg Deam) Christopher Deam breathed new life into the Bambi by giving it an airy, minimalist interior that spoke to the sinuous aluminum skin without resorting to kitsch. In June Airstream launched a new version designed by Deam in partnership with Design Within Reach. One rarely sees such fashionable touches on the open road; every trailer contains tableware designed by Massimo Vignelli, coat hooks by Tom Dixon, the familiar 1947 George Nelson Ball clock, and upholstery by Maharam.

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ADVANCE.

Surreal Things: Surrealism and Design / Through 22 July / V&A Museum / London, England / www.vam.ac.uk / Though their piquant paintings are far better known, the surrealists also turned their cocked eyes to everyday products. Dali's *Lobster Telephone* is a classic of crustacean communication and Oppenheim's *Table with Bird's Legs* looks like it could simply walk away.

Le Bambole '07 / By Mario Bellini for B&B Italia / www.bebitalia.com / Bippity, boppity, Bambole! Thirty-five years after the introduction of the famous Bambole chair, B&B Italia and designer Mario Bellini are back with an updated collection for the 21st century—frames, armrest, and feet still absent. Le Bambole '07 includes an armchair (Bambola, left), a two-seat sofa (Bibambola), a three-seat sofa (Tribambola), and an ottoman (Bambouf, below). The names may be tongue-twisters, but the design spells out comfort in one cushion.

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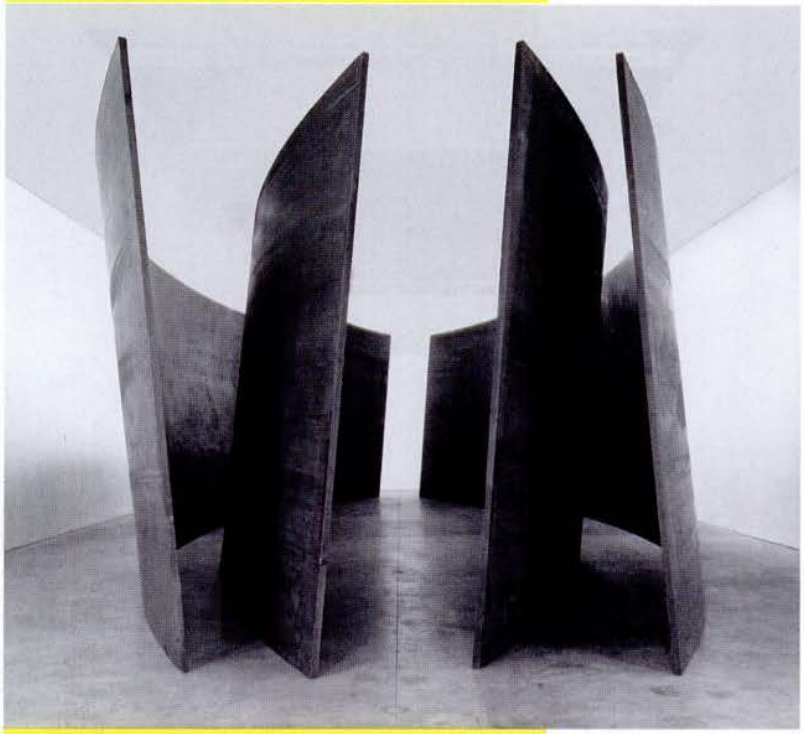

Richard Serra Sculpture: Forty Years / 3 June–24 Sept / Museum of Modern Art / New York, NY / www.moma.org /

Although Serra's most famous and controversial work (*Tilted Arc*, 1981) was torn down and spit out as scrap metal, 27 more appreciated sculptures are installed at MoMA in this retrospective.

Richard Serra
Sequence, 2006
Photo by Lorenz Kienzle

Richard Serra
Intersection II, 1992–93
Photo by Tom Powel

Muji store opening / www.mujionline.co.uk / For years the United States–based Muji cult has been fed by its own obscurity. The Japanese retailer known for its ubiquitous packaging and unfussy furnishings, stationery, and clothing has only been available abroad and in a scattering of museum shops. No longer: Muji will open a flagship store in the United States in time for the holidays. And there will be nothing understated about its location: 5,000 square feet overlooking a courtyard at the base of Renzo Piano's 52-story New York Times Building.

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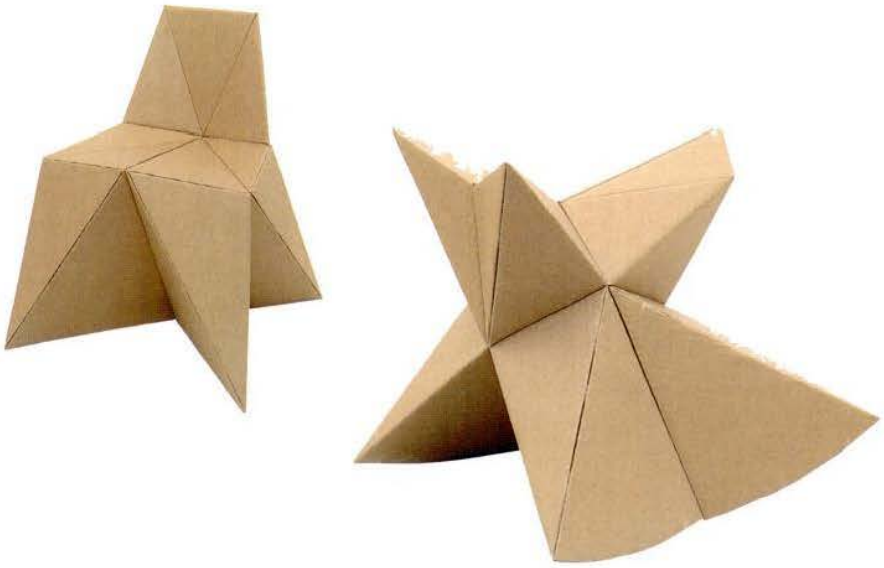
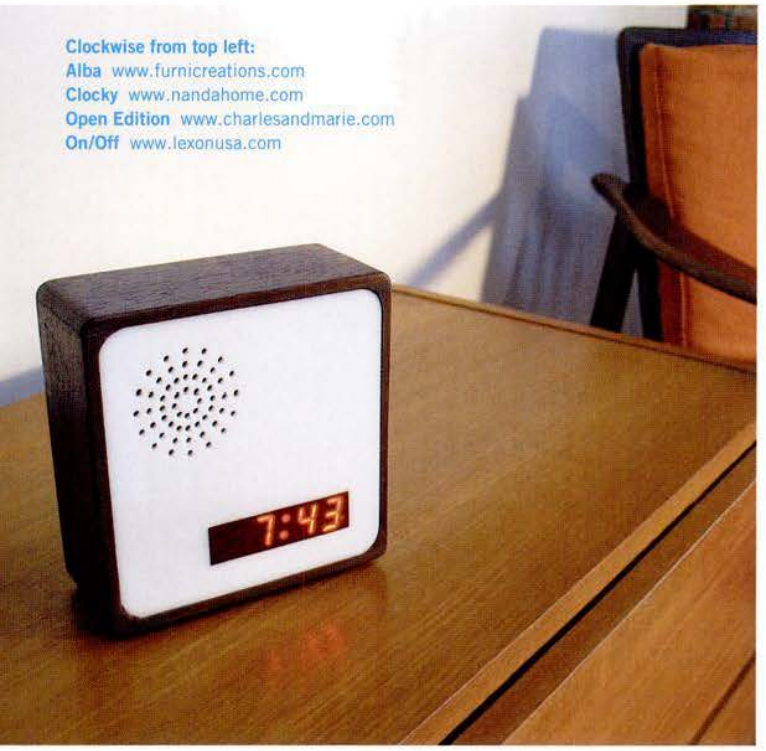
Noming vase / By Frank Kerdil / www.yousaytomayto.com / Made of a unique chalk-and-paper-based material, the Noming vase is a waterproof, highly inexpensive ($15 for four of them), nearly invulnerable alternative to anything Ming. It's reusable, collapsible, and easily personalized with drawings, notes, or doodles; you'll be thrilled to send flowers knowing that they'll end up in a winsome little envelope like this.

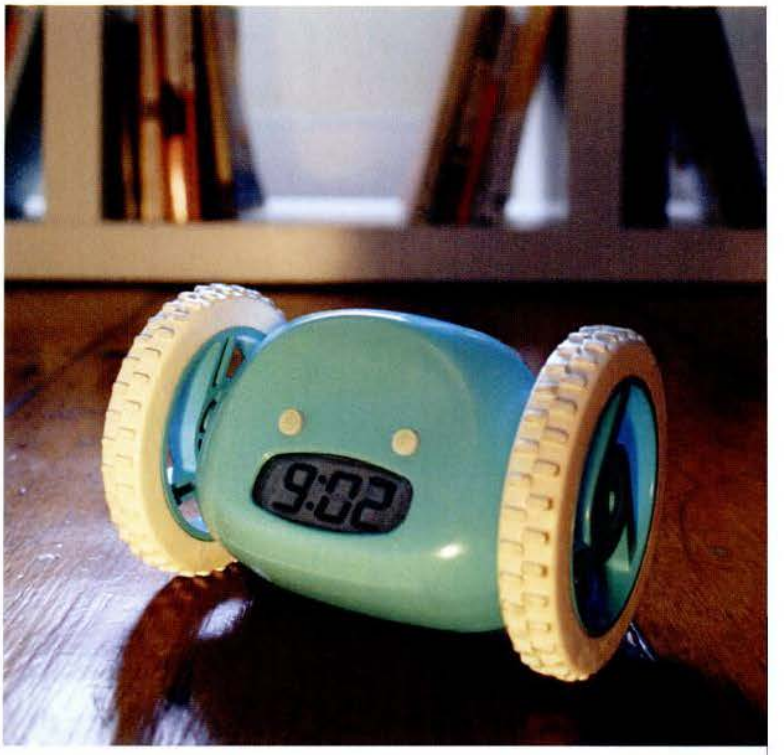
Cardboard furniture / By Nichola Enrico Stäubli for nicolafrombern / www.foldschool.com / All those hours in the mail room are about to pay off. Patterns for these folding cardboard designs can be downloaded for free and easily assembled at home. While it's billed as furniture for kids, jockey-sized adults could certainly enjoy it too, and chances are most felines would find it a fashionable scratching post. Unlike your couch, it's easy to recycle.



"Come in" / "Go away" doormat / By SuckUK / www.suck.uk.com / For those who still delight in *The Da Vinci Code*'s graphic wordplay, flip the magazine upside down and take another look at this welcoming rug. Trippy. Technically, it's an ambigram, but basically it's a "Do Not Disturb" sign for your front porch.

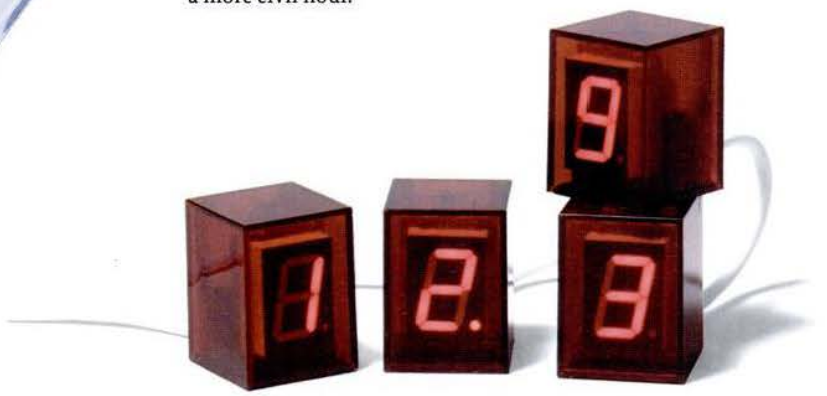
Clockwise from top left:
Alba www.furnicreations.com
Clocky www.nandahome.com
Open Edition www.charlesandmarie.com
On/Off www.lexonusa.com

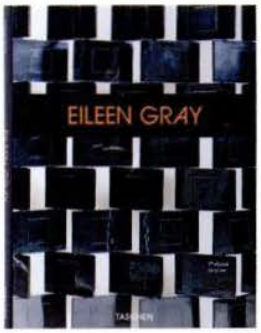




While ending a relationship isn't easy, ask anybody at 6:45 a.m. on a Monday and they'll tell you that it's not so much breaking up as waking up that's hard to do. These four clocks do more than tell the ungodly hour—they suggest, some more imperatively than others, that you get the hell out of bed.

The On/Off alarm clock dispenses with buttons and needs only to be tipped onto its side to silence the crescendo beep. Clocky offers a far more infuriating experience. This agile alarm wheels around the room when the buzzer goes off, forcing the soporific owner to chase it down. The Alba clock (named for skater Steve, not actress Jessica) conjures the Dream Machines of yore with a sunburst speaker pattern and rounded corners; for procrastinators, the Open Edition clock can be rearranged to a more civil hour.

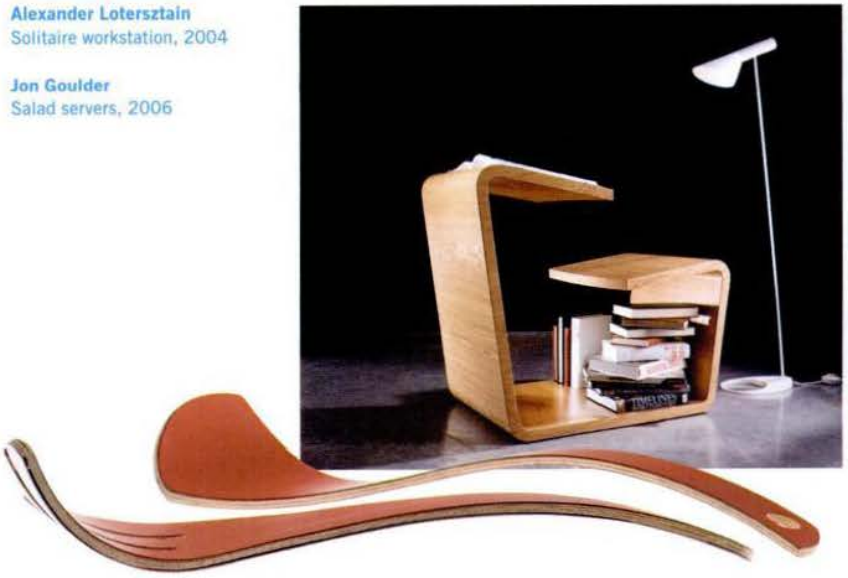




Eileen Gray / By Philippe Garner / Taschen / $24.99 / www.taschen.com / Gray is often associated with the symbolist and decorative lacquer screens she produced early in her career, but she also became involved in furniture and architectural design years later. This book, by Christie's director Philippe Garner, chronicles the vast catalog of Gray's work. Analysis takes a backseat, but you won't hear us complain about the sumptuous images and colorful floor plans.

Alexander Lotersztain
Solitaire workstation, 2004

Jon Goulder
Salad servers, 2006



Freestyle: New Australian Design for Living / 1 June–22 July / QUT Art Museum / Brisbane, Australia / www.artmuseum.qut.com / Although Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps cleaned up in Sydney, this exhibition focuses on life outside the natatorium. Freestyle and its accompanying publication feature the stylistically unbounded design by 40 of the most compelling designers Down Under.

Foundation of a Meal

In any creative endeavor, it helps to start with a good foundation. You can design a room around a sofa, a house around a location, and a meal around the main ingredient. Successful menus are built with beef.

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ASIAN BARBECUE STEAK

Total preparation and cooking time: 25 to 30 minutes. Marinating time: 6 hours or overnight.

2 beef sirloin tip side steaks, cut 1–inch thick (about 8 ounces *each*)
Salt and pepper
Chopped green onions (optional)

Marinade:

½ cup ketchup
¼ cup chopped green onions
¼ cup hoisin sauce
1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger

1. Combine marinade ingredients in small bowl. Cover and refrigerate ½ cup marinade. Place beef steaks and remaining marinade in food-safe plastic bag; turn steaks to coat. Close bag securely and marinate in refrigerator 6 hours or overnight.
2. Remove steaks from marinade; discard marinade. Place steaks on grid over medium, ash-covered coals. Grill, covered, 12 to 14 minutes for medium rare doneness, turning once. (*Do not overcook.*)
3. Carve steaks into thin slices. Season with salt and pepper, as desired. Garnish with green onions, if desired. Serve with reserved marinade.

Makes 4 servings.

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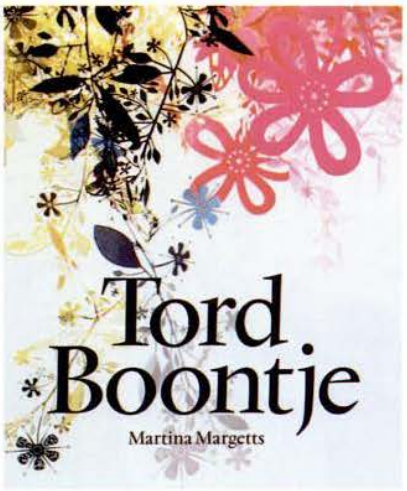
Recipe and photo source: www.BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com

Akron Art Museum / By Coop Himmelb(l)au / www.akronartmuseum.org / The Austrian firm Coop Himmelb(l)au is known in European circles for its brazenly forward-looking architecture and polemical writings, which have been leaving a paper trail since 1968. They may well earn the same reputation in the American heartland after their first public building in the United States, an addition to the Akron Art Museum, opens this summer. The firm added a 7,300-square-foot box containing flexible exhibit space, linking it to the original Italian Renaissance gallery by means of a three-story glass lobby and a 300-foot-long cantilevered steel armature.



Tord Boontje / By Martina Margetts / Rizzoli / $75 / www.rizzoliusa.com / The first comprehensive monograph devoted to Dutch darling Tord Boontje is as precious and playful as his body of work. Luscious close-up imagery of Boontje's creations illustrates his detailed and ornate style, which is also expressed in the book itself. Stencils, perforated and die-cut pages, fabric overlays, and a variety of different papers deftly convey the craftsmanship that characterizes Boontje's work. Now if we could just pronounce his name.

PHOTO BY ANDREW MCALLISTER (AKRON ART MUSEUM)

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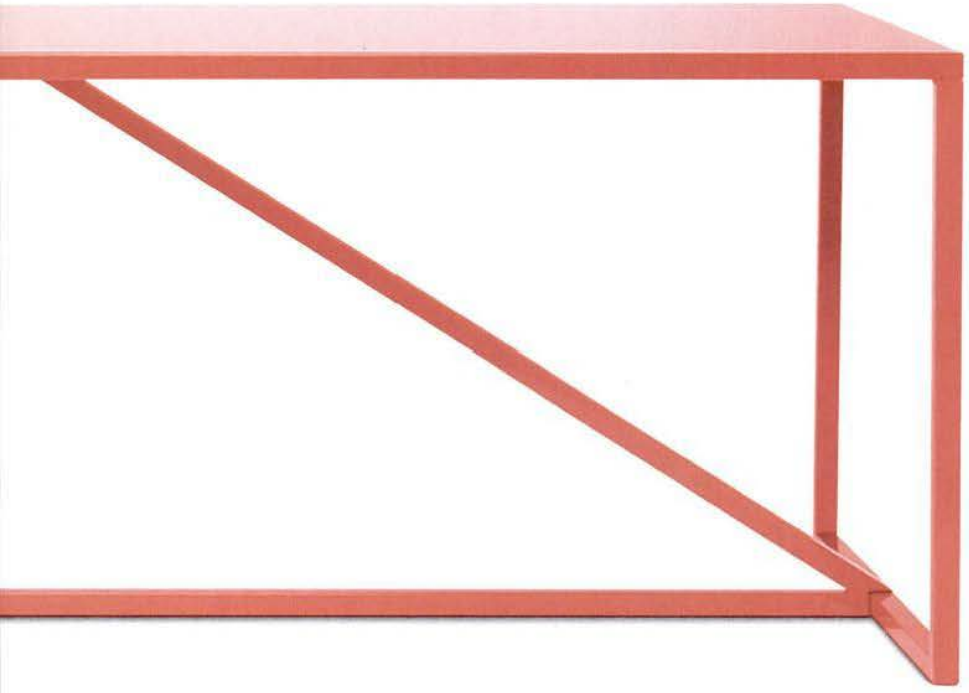

Dining for eight. Or one, if people aren't your thing.

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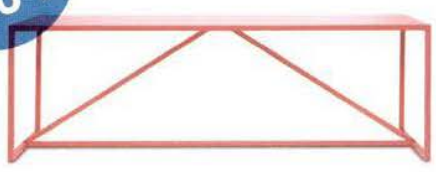

Boom Box

Pricey digs in Sydney and Melbourne are pushing Aussies north to booming Brisbane. Dave Clayden's striking bachelor pad shakes things up in this traditional town.

Londoner Dave Clayden has gradually adjusted to life in the subtropics, where, as he puts it, "toweling yourself down after a shower is enough to make you start sweating again." He no longer mistakes steam rising from a road's surface after a heavy rain for smoke, and he knows that when designing a house "you want to keep the light out and get the air in."

Yet certain local customs still confound him. "Is sex a no-go area in Queensland?" he asks, a reasonable question, given the oblique inquiries about his glass-walled bedroom and transparent bathroom from neighbors, the builder, the plumber, and the man who sold him a wide, low-backed sofa with the promise it would be the perfect place to enjoy some "sleep." ▸

My House

A two-story modernist bachelor pad in a big city with a conservative past is always going to test conventions. Brisbane, population 1.6 million, is booming, thanks to an influx of real-estate refugees from expensive Sydney to the south, and the boom has "introduced the idea of living a lot closer to the city—and each other—than people are used to," Clayden says. Unsurprisingly, the rise of generic residential developments in shades of mushroom and teal has brought about tough heritage regulations.

None of this unnerves the English property developer; after all, the Sunshine State (Queensland to Aussies) has shined on him before. Two weeks into his first visit to Australia eight years ago, he found a parcel of rain forest in the hinterland north of Brisbane and commissioned a three-pavilion kit home by early prefab exponent Gabriel Poole, the only Australian architect Clayden had heard of. When it came time to move to the city in 2004, he penciled in a day to look around. By lunchtime, his work was done—he'd signed a contract and hired an architect. "My life has always been a case of making the most of opportunities when they come up," says Clayden.

Now he has a plot of subdivided land a scant five minutes' drive from the center of Brisbane, in a hidden lane befitting a quiet country town: a few new homes interspersed with dilapidated lodgings, unkempt lawns, lean-to sheds, and empty clotheslines. "I did my normal thing," he recalls, "which is to look at a block of land and think about how it's going to work...and then I want an architect to give me what I don't know I want." ▸

Clayden made the most of his modest lot by building as close to the perimeter as local zoning codes allow (bottom left). The low-slung Strata sofa by King Furniture (below) is perfect for "sleeping." p. 242

How to Make My House Your House

Clerestory Windows (above)
The high windows in the living area not only offer a bit of privacy and better circulation of air, but also provide plenty of indirect light while allowing space for storage underneath.

Natural Ventilation (above and right)
The banks of metal louvers on the upstairs balcony and the wall of windows in Clayden's bedroom allow for the all-important cross-breeze—a simple solution to Brisbane's often stultifying heat. A 13-foot-deep overhanging roof provides plenty of shade.

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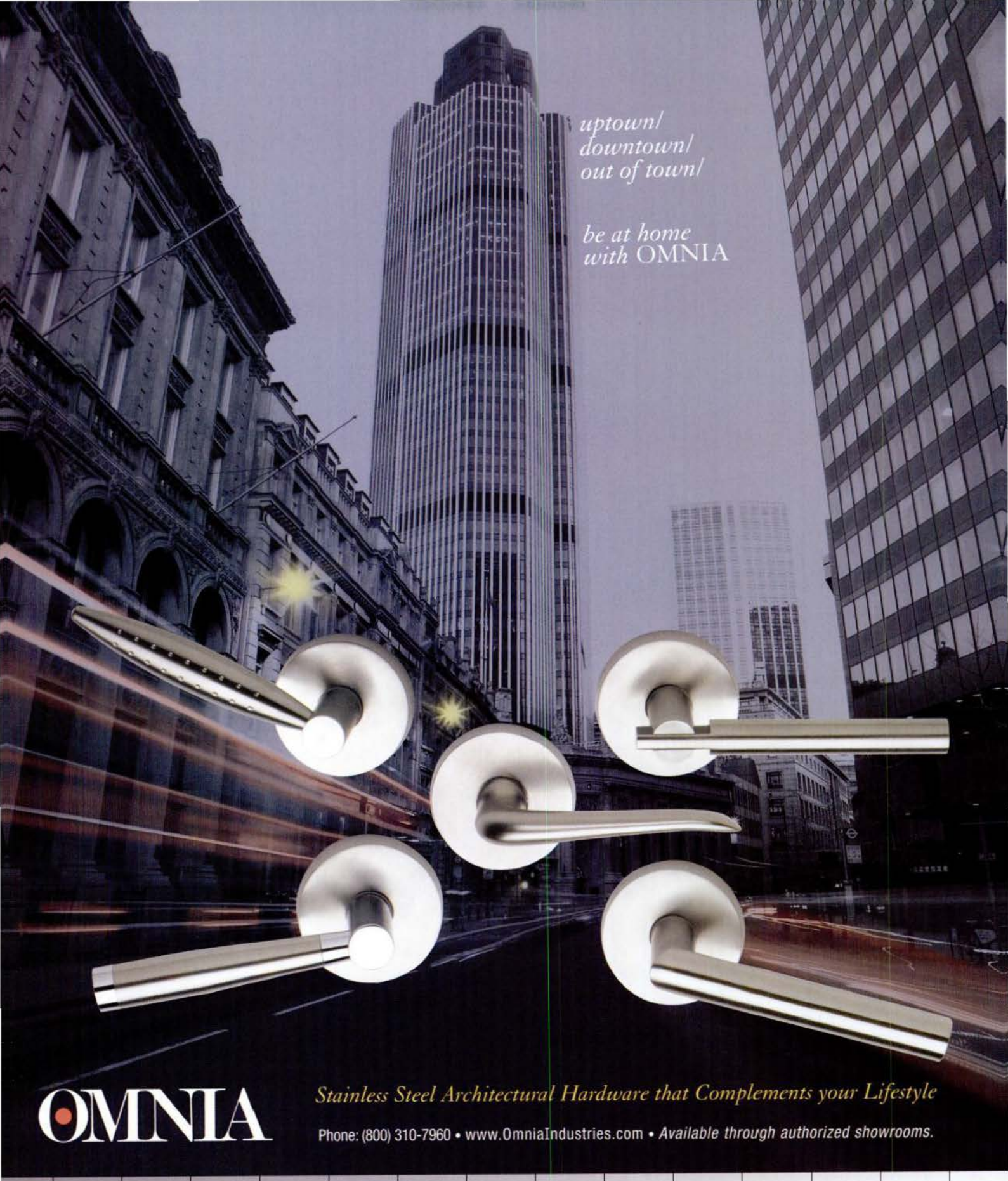
Clayden (left) and Sam Cutler (right), both former tour managers for rock bands, talk music in the spacious, uncluttered living room that opens onto the balcony.



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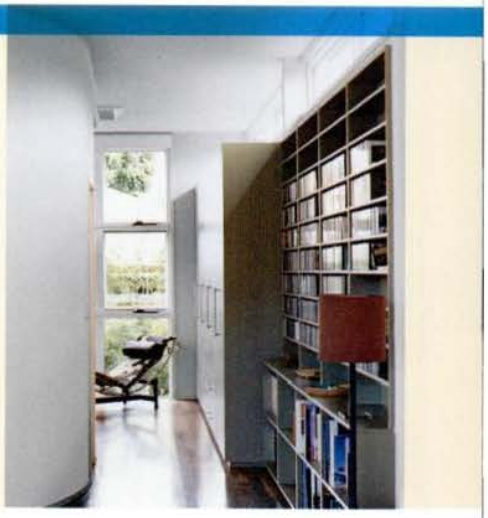
Cue Gerard Lynch, a director of Brisbane firm Kevin Hayes Architects, who arrived at the recommendation of the property's selling agent. Lynch, also a Londoner, has lived in Brisbane for 17 years, and his job often has him acting as a translator between homeowners and town planners. Clayden was thinking "minimalist Austin Powers"; the council, however, wanted a traditional worker's cottage that duplicated the houses on the other side of the subdivision. "We argued that because of the mixed bag of housing in the lane, we should be allowed to create new urban forms to suit the way we live here today rather than 100 years ago," Lynch says.

To seal the deal, they reinterpreted historical building elements. The wall cladding made of Australian Colorbond relates to typical corrugated-iron roofing, while the concept of a modernist box was softened by balancing a large second story on top of a smaller ground floor to create an overhang, echoing traditional styles designed to withstand the extreme climate.

Inside, the pair unleashed their fantasies. In Britain, Clayden did tour publicity and management for a promoter working with punk musicians such as Iggy Pop and the Sex Pistols, and his interest in music borders on mania. "Where everyone else would put a TV, Dave has a box that produces music, [along with] plugs and heavy-duty wiring so essentially he can sit in the lounge room and get blasted," Lynch says.

Upstairs is a large, open, 970-square-foot room with a deck at one end, a bedroom at the other, and a circular, ▸

Storage
Custom-made shelving extends along one wall, transforming from shelves for a library of CDs in the living room to a built-in wardrobe and linen closet in the bedroom, thus avoiding the storeroom look.



Clayden claims that Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* was the inspiration for his bathroom (left). The black column in his living room (below) is not a mysterious monolith, but one of his speakers.

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For a private shower, Clayden closes the blinds on the bedroom windows, though how he manages to elude the prying eyes of nosy houseguests is still a mystery.

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2001: A Space Odyssey–style bathroom in the middle, which serves to break the space "rather than having it read as a series of boxlike rooms," as Lynch says. The bathroom's other, by no means secondary, purpose is to enhance the room's acoustics—"reducing any tendency for echoing," notes Clayden. Standing guard are two slim speakers as tall as bridge pylons.

Behind the curve, the orange-on-orange bathroom shares a glass wall with the bedroom. With a bank of windows on the external wall, only two rows of fabric stand between Clayden and, well, the whole neighborhood. "I guess if you lie on the bed, you can see the toes of someone on the toilet. People thought, You can't shower here," says Clayden. "We just close the blinds!"

The glass also serves to make the bedroom feel larger than it is. A housing code requires homes of 4500 square feet or fewer to be set back from neighboring boundaries by five feet at the sides and about 20 feet at the back, so Lynch used the full permitted width of the house to avoid compromising space.

Downstairs are signposts of the single man: a garage for one, a pond where there is easily space for a small pool, a gingham-free kitchen that's roomy but more like a transit lounge in which to grab a drink before heading upstairs. "There is just no way this is a family house," says Clayden. "I'm single, I have no children, I have no wife. I'm coming up on 55 and I'm looking at what I want to do for the rest of my life. This house is meant to be relaxed." ■

Clayden is perfectly happy enjoying the subtropical sun on the balcony (lower left), though his much-beloved cat Ginger (below) appears far more enthusiastic about lolling on the patio.

Bamboo Screens

Hemmed in by neighbors on three sides, and anticipating a fourth at any time, Clayden needed fast-growing privacy screens. After 18 months, some of the bamboo is already 16-feet tall. By next summer, he hopes, they will also shield much of the house from direct sun, providing "an easy, passive form of temperature control."

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PHOTO BY HOWARD PASAMANICK

Story by Amara Holstein

Photos by Raimund Koch

Leave it to Beavers

The rural Connecticut setting is a chance for two urbanites to get back to nature through all the seasons: "We've taken fly fishing lessons, the river is five minutes from the house, and you can snowshoe and garden," says Lynn Gaffney.

It's not unusual for New Yorkers to have problems with their neighbors; after all, many a co-op brawl has started over a little late-night noise. But it is rare for the downtown crowd to have a beef with a pack of rowdy beavers—which is exactly the situation in which architect Lynn Gaffney and her husband, financial portfolio manager Bill Backus, found themselves recently at their weekend home in the tiny town of Sharon, Connecticut (population: 2,968). The beavers, who reside in the swamp behind Backus and Gaffney's house, generally keep a low profile, but every so often let loose with a torrent of logs and sticks that block all the nearby drainage pipes, making a watery mess of local roads and forcing residents to haul away the detritus.

It's rather comical to imagine a pair of self-described intrepid Manhattanites battling beavers, but such was ►

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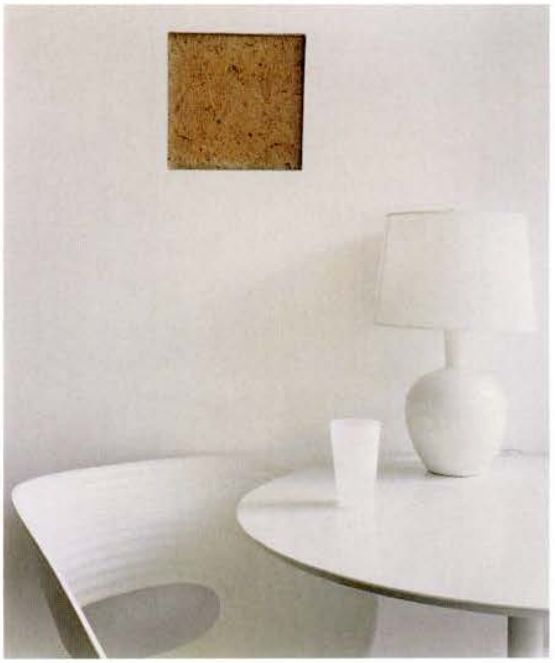
the couple's intent when they decided to build in Sharon. Disgusted with the high price of property and the politics of the co-op market, Gaffney and Backus opted to remain urban renters and spend their money building a 2,000-square-foot house outside the city, in an area so rural "it didn't even have the remotest feel of suburbia," Gaffney says. They settled on an eight-and-a-half-acre plot that backs up against wetlands, a two-hour drive from their apartment.

Gaffney, principal of New York–based firm Lynn Gaffney Architect (lga), prefers to design in an agricultural vernacular merged with sustainable elements, when given a chance. "I like the simplicity of shed-like buildings, the way they're stripped down to bare necessities," explains Gaffney. "I'm also intrigued by barns and their sense of functionality combined with the layers of vertical storage spaces." The combination of a rural location with compliant clients (Backus's only design ►

Instead of buying new furniture, Backus went in favor of re-use and outfitted the house almost entirely with eBay finds, with the exception of the Flos Arco floor lamp by Castiglioni and the Random light by Moooi (below). "I spent months online looking for the right pieces," he says. "It was fun sourcing the furniture myself." $ p. 242

The multitude of windows along with the glass partitions in the house bring in enough natural light that there's rarely any need for electrical lighting before nightfall. The Tom Vac chair (below) is by Ron Arad for Vitra.



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request of his wife was that the house have a washer and dryer) seemed like the perfect such opportunity.

In order to stay within her desired aesthetic and also be green, Gaffney chose to build with structural insulated panels, or SIPs, as they're commonly known. The panels are essentially pieces of dense foam insulation sandwiched between two thin layers of engineered wood, and they're used in place of traditional stud and frame construction. The handy thing about SIPs, and the reason they're so popular with sustainable proponents, is that they're prefabricated off-site, manufactured with a minimum of waste since they're cut to order, and then quickly assembled on-site.

The only downside of the panels is that many contractors are still unfamiliar with them, but Gaffney was lucky enough to happen upon David Jones, a contractor she describes as "green to his inner core" and a knowledgeable advocate of SIPs. His expertise allowed the design to extend its SIPs reach onto the roof, meaning there are no beams where the windows meet the roof, helping keep the house airtight.

Gaffney's dedication to sustainable design extends to her use of other earth-friendly materials. Nods to eco-design include paint-free plaster interior walls, radiant heating, bamboo and concrete floors, a large percentage of fluorescent lighting, and unfinished plywood cladding treated with linseed oil. In addition, careful siting of the home maximizes solar gain in the winter, and protruding SIP fins on the exterior collude with an overhang to minimize the sun's rays in the summer, an important consideration when thinking about heating and cooling the tall, open living areas that were inspired by Gaffney's agricultural bent.

The landscaping, which is still in the early growth stages, pays tribute to the surroundings. The Phantom Gardener, a landscape design company, put in only ▸

The living area (below) features unfinished plywood cladding. In the guest bathroom (below top right), penny tiles were chosen "because they're incredibly economical, utilitarian, and we liked their kitschy feel," explains Gaffney. Fir stair treads (below bottom right) are cantilevered off the wall with a custom steel support to create an industrial look.

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native plants that need no irrigation, such as magnolia trees and fiddlehead ferns. In lieu of traditional sod, there's buffalo grass, which grows no higher than six inches and thus never needs to be mowed. And in reference to where the beavers reside, the couple named their home the Bog House.

As the moniker may imply, the house bears no similarity whatsoever to their 650-square-foot dimly lit pre-war walkup in Chelsea, and that's the way Gaffney and Backus like it. "In New York, we don't live far from the Lincoln Tunnel, with its sounds of traffic," explains Backus. "Here, there's a complete absence of noise. You can stand in our backyard and not hear a thing."

He thinks for a moment, and then says thoughtfully, "You know, my biggest fear used to be that we would become the quintessential Manhattanites whose digestive systems would shut down if there wasn't a bagel in sight. This house has prevented us from that."

To avoid constant maintenance issues—after all, "durability is part of sustainability," Gaffney states—the roof is clad in standing seam metal and the siding is composite plastic decking, rather than easily weathered wood.

Ducts in a Row

Forget drafty old houses where cardigans are *de rigueur*; new homes built with SIPs are so airtight there's no leakage of indoor air, nice for energy bills but perhaps not so great in the winter when the house becomes a bastion of stale air and everyday odors.

To solve this problem, Gaffney opted for something called an energy recovery ventilator, a feature that's becoming more and more common in sustainable homes. The unit is installed inside the house and then connected by two ducts to the outside. One of the ducts sucks out bad air; the other is attached to the vents in the house and brings in fresh air. In other words, it's like an exhaust fan that blows both ways.

The result is a home that retains its energy-efficient qualities without preserving the smell of yesterday's salmon dinner. Best of all, the cost of running the system generally nets out, so you truly can breathe free. ■

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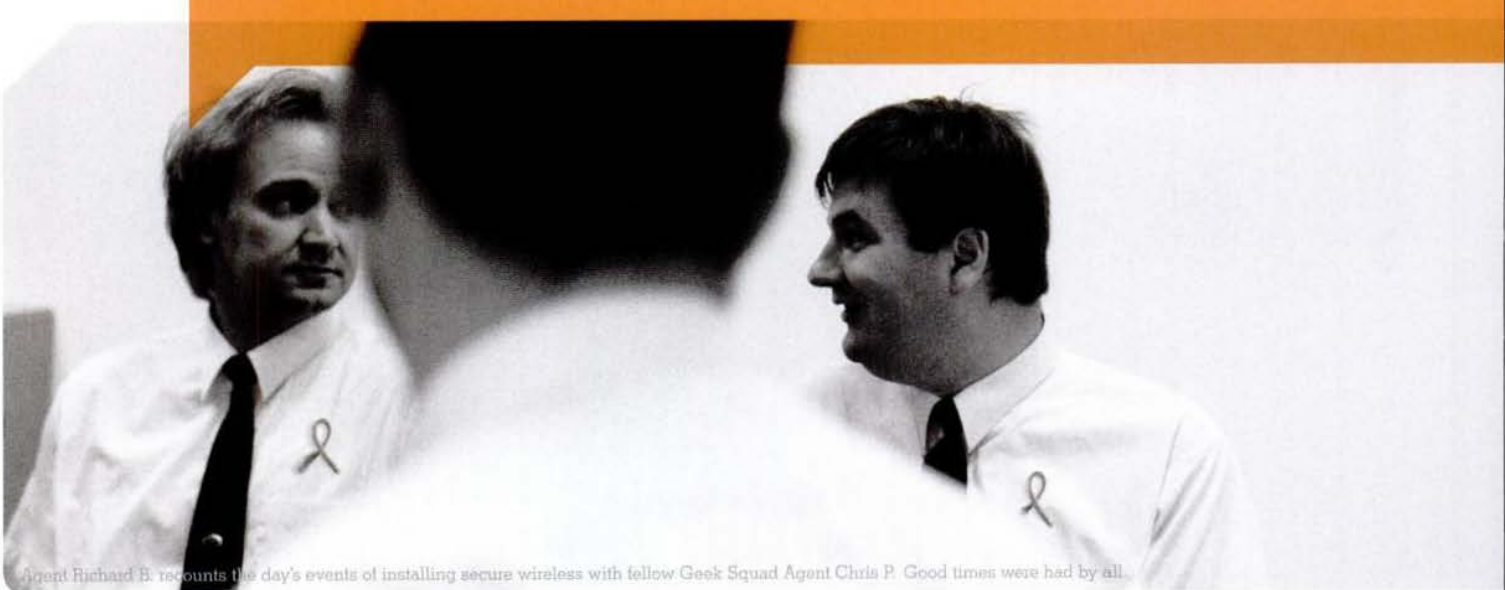
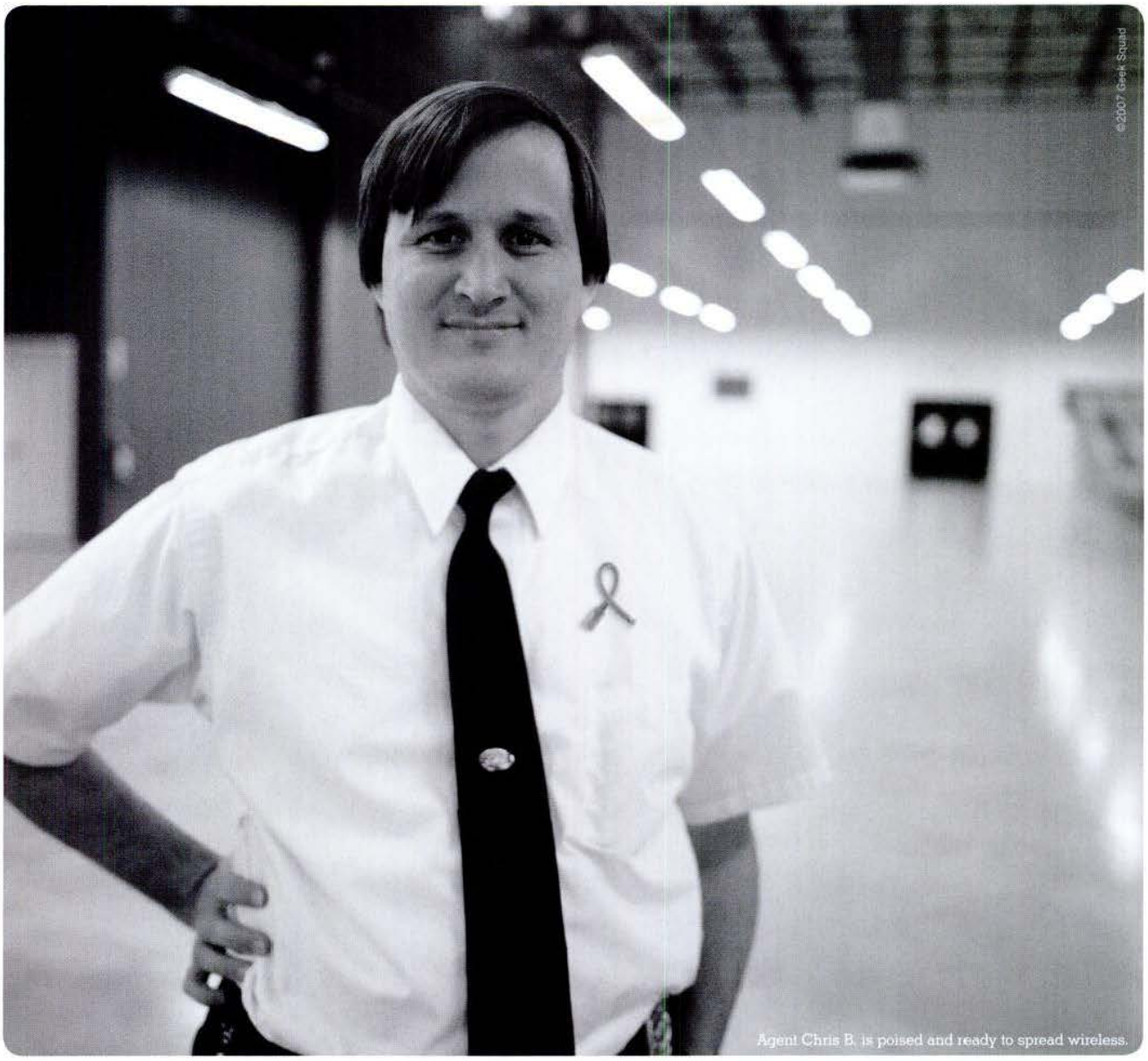


Agent Richard B. recounts the day's events of installing secure wireless with fellow Geek Squad Agent Chris P. Good times were had by all.



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Let it Glow

Be they medieval torches blazing on battlements or bug zappers crackling to life with each new victim, the need for outdoor lighting is clear. From the front porch to the shadowy corners of the backyard, we tour the halogen halls of outdoor lighting to discover how to best light the night.

Though villagers with torches and pitchforks emitted their own brand of outdoor lighting (and justice), the first real advances in the field came in the 1790s, when Scottish engineer William Murdoch figured out how to control ignited coal gas, thereby inventing the gaslight. Typically housed in a glass lantern, the gaslight brightened the thoroughfares of the 19th century. Beforehand, cities had relied on candles to offer nocturnal visibility, often enacting laws requiring those who lived in street-front houses to keep a flame burning through the evening. And electricity quickly rendered coal gas obsolete when Pavel Yablochkov introduced his Yablochkov Candle to the Parisian elite in 1878. Electric street lamps were born and promptly became *de rigueur*.

Stateside, arguably the greatest moment in the history of outdoor illumination came on May 24, 1935, at Crosley Field, then the home of the Cincinnati Reds. President Roosevelt flipped the switch from the Oval Office 600 miles away and 1,090,000 watts crackled to life, illuminating the 632 lamps that kicked off the era of night baseball. By the mid-1960s the majority of Major League games were played at night. The Chicago Cubs were the lone holdout, playing only day games at Wrigley Field until August 9, 1988, when, like Dylan at Newport, they too went electric.

While illuminating a ballgame is a feat few of us will ever undertake, America's backyard culture demands serious lumens. We enlisted a giant in the realm of outdoor furniture, Richard Schultz, and his son Peter, president of Richard Schultz Design, to weigh in on six sleek additions to the ever-brightening firmament of outdoor lighting. They shed some light on these designs' aesthetics, luminosity, and materials, as well as just what precisely should be replacing that tiki torch.

A Note on Our Experts: After 20 years working for Knoll and collaborating with modern furniture titans like Harry Bertoia, Richard Schultz went into business for himself. He leapt to the forefront of outdoor furniture design with the clean, white lines of his 1966 Collection, a modern classic that Schultz continues to update and refine today. Not one to rest on his laurels, Schultz recently designed the dappled and sculptural Topiary series, an outdoor collection modeled on the local foliage in Pennsylvania. Peter Schultz, Richard's son and a Yale-trained architect, now heads his father's company.

Pod Lens / By Ross Lovegrove for Luceplan / $300 / 11" x 4" / 20 watts / Fluorescent / Available as a suspended, wall-mounted, or floor lamp / Sage green, sand, terracotta, or gray / www.ylighting.com

Expert Opinion / Richard: My first impression was that these look like sneakers or blobs, but now I think they look more like tropical fruits. They'd look great hanging in a group in a tree or some kind of shrub. You can get a post to mount them on too, which is wonderful because I'd love to use this as an outdoor reading lamp.

What We Think: We thought of a shoe tree when we first saw Lovegrove's design, but these versatile lights would look lovely aloft. One reservation: They don't feel terribly sturdy, and the bashing they'll take in the breezy arbors might be more than they're up for. Keep these pleasing pods on a more terrestrial plane and they'll last much longer.

Dioscuri wall/ceiling series / By Michele de Lucchi for Artemide / $190–$380 / 9.75" sphere (100 watts), 13.75" sphere (150 watts), 16.5" sphere (150 watts) / Incandescent / www.artemide.us

Expert Opinion / Richard: This one is my favorite. The balls appeal to me because I could see using a lot of them on the wall, or maybe on the ground scattered randomly. It's such a neutral shape, and to see many of them would be like seeing the stars in the sky. Its form is based on geometry, a sphere, and with good design you don't want to have to ask why a thing is the way it is. It should be immediately apparent.

What We Think: Artemide has been producing first-rate lighting for decades. We like the variety of sizes for both the indoor and outdoor versions, but when mounted on the wall the largest size, Dioscuri 42, conjures visions of a glowing, disembodied head. ►

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Uto / By Lagranja Design for Foscarini / $500 / 8" x 126" / 60 watts / Incandescent or fluorescent / Orange, white, or yellow / www.ylighting.com

Expert Opinion / Peter: I'd say this is my favorite because it looks like it will really stand up to being outdoors all the time. The materials feel good to touch and it's got a switch right here on the head of the light. Mostly I like that it's not a blob. It has a clear shape and that gives it a chance of becoming a classic design.

What We Think: This is our favorite too. Though a bit pricey, this sturdy fixture can be suspended or laid out on the ground. Peter likened it to a garden hose with a light on the end, and it seems to have some of the same fortitude. The silicone rubber body has a bit of give to it without being fragile, and the soft colors and translucent materials allow the whole thing to glow.

All Light closed wall sconce / By Rodolfo Dordoni for Flos / $530 / 2.2" x 24" x 3.2" / 24-watt mini bi-pin fluorescent bulb / Stainless steel cover / www.flos.com

Expert Opinion / Richard: This isn't a form that asserts itself and, in a way, the fixture disappears. I rather like that. It's almost like no form at all. What I really appreciate is that you can have it two ways: with the cover off or on. It produces a lot of light but doesn't blind you. But you'd have to be sure that bugs don't get inside it; if they did, it would look terrible.

What We Think: We're pleased at how unassuming this simple bar is. You can turn up the lumens by removing the stainless steel cover, or achieve a softer, diffused effect by keeping it on. Made of opal polycarbonate, it's sturdier than it appears, though determined moths and midges are likely to get in just about anywhere. ▶

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Ibiza / By Francesco Rota for Oluce / $722–$914 / 47" high / 20 watts / Fluorescent / Available with or without speakers, and as a 27" standing light or a wall sconce / www.oluce.com

Expert Opinion / Peter: This is a really nice idea that could work well both residentially and commercially. It was smart to combine the speaker and the lamp without trying to hide the speaker. I also like the rough texture of the polyethylene; it feels sturdy. It does look like it might be tough to put together with the wires for the speaker and the light. Changing the bulb could be a hassle, and for such a high sticker price, nothing on this light should be a hassle.

What We Think: At a scant 20 watts the Ibiza is a dim bulb. We love the speaker, but the soft glow makes it a better fit for some Gordon Lightfoot in the hammock than an all-night Balearic foam party.

Superdelta Ovale series / By Roberto Fiorato for LBL Lighting / $130–$148 / 10.8" x 6.1" / 40 or 60 watts / Fluorescent or incandescent / White, gray, or black / www.ylighting.com

Expert Opinion / Peter: These are very nice and have a more industrial look. I like the old-fashioned quality of a simple light, but the light here isn't symmetrical. The bulb ought to be mounted further off from the side so that it shines from the center of the sconce. It also gets rather hot to the touch, so be careful.

What We Think: The Superdelta Ovale series consists of variations on a theme—the many faces of the clean, unassuming wall sconce. We like the variety afforded by the different faceplates, but are somewhat underwhelmed by the limited color palette and off-center bulb. We do, however, like the sticker price of these nice bright lights. ■

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Story by Chelsea Holden Baker

Sample's Example

> "I've had my share of so-called glamorous architecture and I found it more boring than this. You can only do so much to an office building. Here, no matter how tedious the job is from a design perspective, there's the great feeling of satisfaction that comes from helping someone get a building that's better to live in."
>
> —George Sample

Sample (on the right) at SOM in the '60s before he carefully considered his values and quit. Raised a Quaker, he was a conscientous objector during World War II and was used to standing apart for what he believed in.

In the late 1960s and early '70s, modern architecture leviathan Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (SOM) defined the shape of Chicago's skyline with buildings such as the Sears Tower and the Hancock Tower. But inside the megafirm, architect George Sample had his mind set on projects of a different scale: "After a new tall building was discussed, George would announce that he thought SOM should do low-income housing," explains longtime family friend and former coworker, John Clark. "Though he shared SOM's modernist aesthetic and was good friends with its main partner [Bruce Graham], he was a misfit in that architectural corporation." After 19 years, Sample left the glass tower of SOM for gritty inner-city streets.

In 1974, parts of Chicago were plagued by blight, neglect, and riots. Following what he saw as the social mandate of modernism, Sample set up the Chicago Architectural Assistance Center (CAAC), based on the pro bono practices of doctors and lawyers. In a 1974 *Chicago Tribune* interview, Sample explained that "the Center is not the solution to the problems of the ghetto, but it can provide answers, acting as catalyst to involve the whole architectural profession with the needs of the inner city." Those answers included free blueprints and interpreting building codes for rehabilitation projects for low-income tenants, expert witness services in court, and help fighting to defend whole blocks from demolition. Eventually, the CAAC won support from the city, the AIA, and the University of Chicago, but like many of the design assistance centers that popped up in the late '60s and '70s, it doesn't exist today.

"George is a modernist in a sense that has largely disappeared from the contemporary architectural scene," says Clark, who started his career with Sample at the CAAC. "He believes that people's lives can be improved by improving their physical environment. This was once a dominant current of modernism. And while in many ways the modernist aesthetic has gained new currency—is thriving—this social concern is not." Sample, now 84, is no longer practicing, but his motto remains: "Every man's fortune is, or should be, the business of architects." ■

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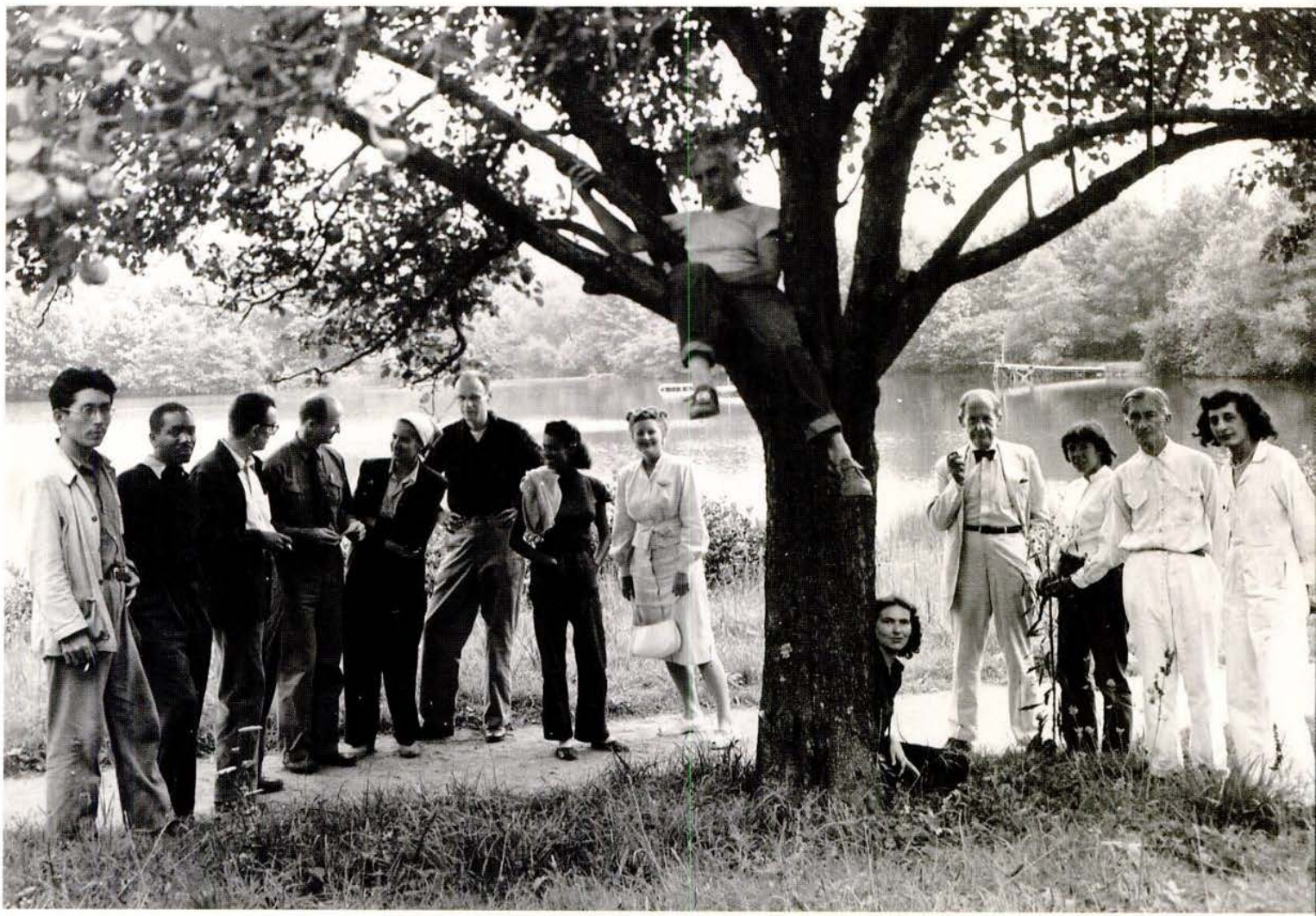
Higher Education

The idea of R. Buckminster Fuller playing the lead role in a surrealist play alongside Elaine de Kooning and Merce Cunningham (with set designs by Willem de Kooning and music performed by John Cage) may seem more like a fell-asleep-while-watching-late-night-PBS dream than reality, but this performance actually happened, and not, as one might expect, in an avant-garde, off-off-Broadway playhouse, but rather, on a hand-built stage in the mountains of North Carolina, at Black Mountain College.

This infamous performance, or "happening" as they were often called, of Erik Satie's "The Ruse of Medusa" took place during the college's 1948 Summer Institute and represents a sort of zenith in the arc of the Black Mountain College story, a time when the school had reached an apogee in creativity and credence. However, one could argue that tracing a hierarchical trajectory defeats the spirit of the place itself: The college may be better described as a series of remarkable happenings strung together in one of Fuller's tensegrity models—each year building upon and bolstered by the last to create what was arguably the most remarkable, profligate, and insular educational institution in the history of the United States.

Founded in 1933 by a group of professors and 15 students from Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, Black Mountain College (BMC) was—quite literally—an idea before it was a place. When John Andrew Rice and his rebel group of knowledge seekers set out to revolutionize American education, they had no funds and no place to go. After securing the Blue Ridge assembly buildings (rented from the Southern YMCA) and cobbling together limited funds, supplies, and a few extra students, BMC opened its first semester with an odd 9:19 student-to-teacher ratio. ▸



The faculty of the 1946 Summer Institute gathers below a tree at the Lake Eden campus: (from left to right) Leo Amino, Jacob Lawrence, Leo Lionni, Theodore Dreier, Nora Lionni, Beaumont Newhall, Gertrude Lawrence, Isa Gropius, Jean Varda (in tree), Nancy Newhall (behind tree), Walter Gropius, Mary Gregory, Josef Albers, and Anni Albers.

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While Josef Albers was certainly the dominant aesthetic force at Black Mountain College, his wife, Anni, was equally dedicated to shaping the visual arts. Josef's core courses were attended by the entire student body (top). Anni developed a sophisticated textiles program at the school, and like her husband, brought the Bauhaus aesthetic to the looms of Black Mountain College (middle). (Below, from left to right) Robert Wunsch, Josef Albers, Heinrich Jalowetz, Theodore Dreier, Erwin Straus, Sam Brown (student moderator), and Lawrence Kocher at a Board of Fellows meeting.

In the spirit of John Dewey, Rice set about structuring a nonstructured, experience-based learning environment where the institutions of higher education were deinstitutionalized: There were no deans, presidents, treasurers, or trustees to interfere with the method or manner in which the faculty taught (there was, however, one typist). The faculty, with the total involvement of the student body, did all governing, administrative, and manual work. Rid of rote, the students were encouraged, first and foremost, to foster their inner artist; in fact, music, theater, and fine art encompassed the "required" core curriculum at BMC. As Rice said in an interview with Louis Adamic in the April 1936 issue of *Harper's Monthly*, "Nearly every man is a bit of an artist, at least potentially a person of imagination, which can be developed; and, so far as I know at this moment, there is but one way to train and develop him—the way discovered, not by me but by Black Mountain College as a whole."

But the truth is Black Mountain College was John Rice, and when Josef and Anni Albers emigrated from Nazi Germany in 1933 to head up the visual arts department (ironically, at the recommendation of Philip Johnson, American architecture's repentant Nazi sympathizer), BMC became the brainchild of Rice and Josef Albers: their classes—Plato and drawing—their respective pedagogical analogues. Albers's teaching career at the Bauhaus informed much of his BMC curriculum, namely the emphasis on experimentation and the combining of high and low arts, which rejected the hierarchy between fine art and craft. As Albers wrote, "To experiment is at first more valuable than to produce; free play in the beginning develops courage."

In many ways, Rice and Albers were ideological bedfellows, and perhaps it was their similarities that caused conflict. Despite their strong progressive and experimental temperaments, both were given to pedantry: Rice could be unyielding and incendiary in the face of politics and implacable in his stewardship of the college; Albers was critical and dogmatic, often reducing students to tears and correcting technical weaknesses through practice and pedagogy. As Robert Rauschenberg once said of Albers, "[He] was a beautiful teacher and impossible person." Rice was asked to resign by the faculty in 1940; it was his third dismissal from an academic post. Albers carried on the torch for the next nine years, before he, too, would decamp due to dissention amongst the ranks.

Teaching and living at Black Mountain College wasn't always easy, and this led to conflict. As Adamic reported in *Harper's Monthly*, "The college nearly collapsed twice [between 1933 and 1936] for lack of money, and was saved by the joint resourcefulness and self-denial of both the faculty and the students." The founding faculty worked for free, drawing out of the treasury only what they needed, which averaged $7.27 per month, per person. Adamic adds that the college's impecunious underpinnings were, for some, preferable to the alternative: "Some are fearful of what money might do to the place, and are almost rabid about not wanting a dollar from anyone who may wish to dictate to them how to 'run' ▸

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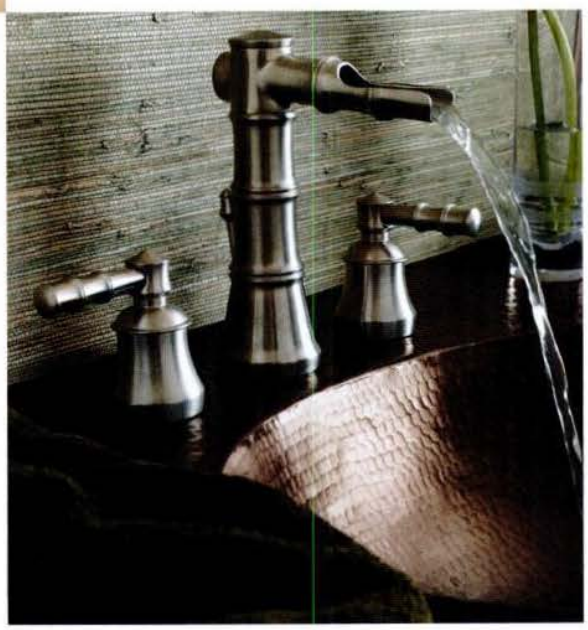

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A. Lawrence Kocher's model for the Lake Eden Studies Building (top) was chosen over an earlier design by Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer due to limited funds. Kocher's entire program wasn't fully realized despite much of the labor being done by students and faculty (bottom). The faculty was keen to develop a hands-on approach for everyday college life by having students participate in maintenance and services for the school, as well as running a farm (middle).

the college, or make any demands upon them other than of politeness and of detailed accounts of expenditures. So BMC barely manages to exist from term to term. And they are in constant danger that the YMCA will sell the place to someone who will not want them to be there."

This fear was obviated when, in 1941, Black Mountain College moved to its Lake Eden campus. The original design for the campus was commissioned to Walter Gropius and Marcel Breuer but was scrapped due to funding issues and impending war. The college opted for a thriftier program designed by A. Lawrence Kocher, and despite much of the labor being done by students and faculty, even it wasn't fully realized: The lone Studies Building stood out like an awkward teen who has overshot his peers. Indeed, the war years were a sort of adolescent age for the college: It was too small to qualify for funding from the wartime programs that other institutions enjoyed, and its resources and autonomy were stretched thin. The college population was winnowed down to older Americans, European émigrés, and women. Work camps were established in the summer, and the college farm expanded to maximize yields and donate food; they also mined mica, which was then a valuable wartime material.

This hands on, by-the-skin-of-our-teeth spirit added a degree of romanticism and nobility to Black Mountain College, and never did it shine more than during the Summer Institutes, established in 1944. What the college lacked in monetary resources it made up for in cultural capital. The school had long enjoyed a fertile relationship with the MoMA and prestigious New York galleries such as Charles Egan. The Summer Institutes became a sort of revolving door for the great artists and thinkers of the day. Albers, too, called upon his connections for resources and was integral to the invitation process. In a 1943 letter to alumni and friends, Albers implores: "Our new course, 'Seeing Art,' has an unusual enrollment: two thirds of the student body participates. It is for this course in particular that we need books and reproductions and slides. We have no color reproductions and no slides at all....It may interest you to know that most of the members of the faculty receive no cash salary, only room and board. Therefore we dare to ask our friends to look over the books in their libraries for books which might be particularly useful here."

Sculptor Richard Lippold was a visiting artist the summer of 1948. In a letter to Albers that summer, Lippold embodies the bohemian, familial spirit of the place: "I have bought an old hearse which I hope will get us to Black Mountain whenever you wish us to come....I have arranged our old car for sleeping, and in discussing the summer with John [Cage] and Merce [Cunningham] last night, including plans for the collaboration on an opera for the coming year, we agreed that they might lend us their plumbing at Black Mountain while we [his wife and kids] sleep in the car." Clement Greenberg, a guest lecturer at the Summer Institutes, taught a visual criticism course without visual aids, as the artists he was lecturing about—including American abstract expressionists ▸


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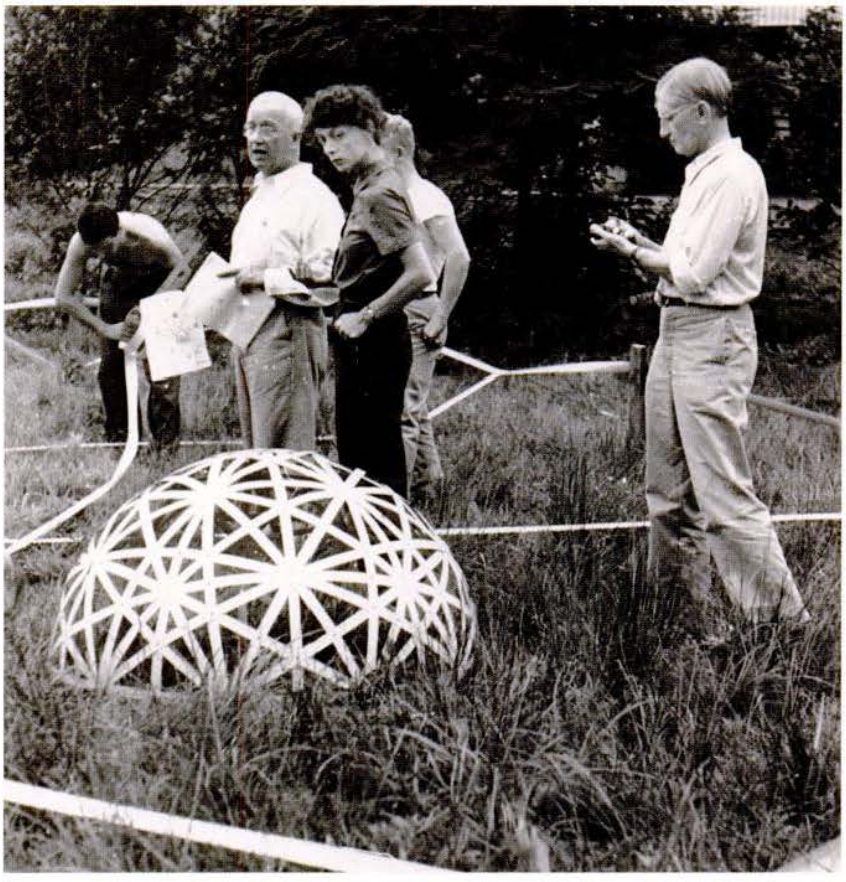

R. Buckminster Fuller and Elaine de Kooning stand behind a model of the geodesic dome the class will attempt to raise while Josef Albers documents the process (top). The larger dome will collapse due to the inadequate building material.

Franz Kline and Jackson Pollock—had few reproductions of their work, and the press had yet to catch on. For visiting artists, many of whom were just starting to gain recognition, Black Mountain was a sort of utopian summer camp where they could live for free and spend their time dedicated solely to the creative process.

It's hard to imagine such ease, frugality, and spontaneity today, perhaps because our concept of an avant-garde art collaboration requires the commandeering of a Japanese whaling ship and multimillion-dollar budgets. Black Mountain managed to accomplish a great deal throughout the '40s and into the '50s on very little, and ushered through its doors some of the most accomplished artists and thinkers of the century, including Max Dehn, Lou Harrison, Jacob Lawrence, M. C. Richards, Ben Shahn, Jack Tworkov, and Robert Motherwell. And importantly, it was done for the betterment of a holistic creative community. It isn't any wonder that many of the school's alumni went on to enjoy successful careers of their own. Notable alumni include Ruth Asawa, Fielding Dawson, Robert De Niro, Robert Rauschenberg, Susan Weil, Cy Twombly, John Chamberlain, Oli Sihvonen, Joel Oppenheimer, and Kenneth Snelson.

With the resignation of Josef Albers and Ted Dreier (another founding member of the college) in 1949, the school experienced a gradual decline both financially and structurally. However, with poet Charles Olson at the helm, it also saw a shift in focus from visual arts to literature. Although Olson carried on the intellectual-bender and renegade-style methods of his predecessors, he didn't have the same reverence for its delicate nonstructure. When the poet Robert Creeley was hired in 1954, there were no science courses being taught at the school, and Olson asked him to teach biology. Creeley recalls saying: "That's the one thing I never took. I never had it in high school. I never took anything remotely involved with biology in college." To which Olson replied, "Terrific, you can learn something."

This dissolution seems distant to the scene six years prior when the inventor (thinker, architect, poet) R. Buckminster Fuller was attempting to raise a 48-foot-diameter hemispheric geodesic dome constructed of Venetian blind strips with his students. Though there is something in the spirit and the method that is constant: As the story goes, the team had determined that in order to raise the dome, they'd have to double the strips throughout, but the school could only afford single strips. Fuller decided to raise the structure regardless, as he'd "intentionally designed this structure so that its delicate system gently collapsed as it neared completion." By building something to a precise structural integrity, Fuller was able to build more expansively with less material. And while the structure did collapse, Fuller proved his point, and his students learned the lesson. It seems that Black Mountain College was much the same: An institution built with integrity of purpose that allowed its teachers and students to think expansively and build outwardly so that when it collapsed, they'd all seen and experienced the possibility, and were better for it. ■

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I've searched all over for an interesting mailbox—something other than a large-mouthed bass with a fin for a flag. Are there any modern mailboxes out there?

—Meghan Busby, Portland, Maine

The dearth of modern mailboxes perplexed us until we read *39 CFR Part III: Standards Governing the Design of Curbside Mailboxes*, which states that a postal worker may return mail sent to incompliant receptacles. Here are a few modern options that will likely please you and keep your post person from "going postal."

Urban letterbox by Heartlands Outdoor Living / $145 / www.letterboxes.co.nz /
"Have a shuftie" at New Zealand's take on a standard box. Although it has the ever-urban lock option, we can just as easily see this in a cul-de-sac of Usonian-style homes. It has an industrial shape, but the nine color options allow for a more personalized look.

Cadrona letterbox by Heartlands Outdoor Living / $110 / www.letterboxes.co.nz /
As the Kiwis say, we were "dead chuffed" to showcase such a *beaut*. New Zealand's Heartlands Outdoor Living is, as far as we can tell, the only company to have created a whole line of modern styles. This flip-top design thinks outside the mailbox and provides a half dome to house your newspaper.

SLV Galvanized Rural mailbox by Solar Group / $6.69 / www.amazon.com /
You might ask why we included a design that hasn't changed since it was standardized in 1915. A) It looks not unlike a Quonset hut. B) It's included in *Phaidon Design Classics*. C) The price. Take your pick. ►

TK 01 by Barbanc / $835 / www.barbanc.com / Our lament at the lack of beautiful wood mailboxes was heard all the way in Seattle, where fledgling design firm Barbanc answered our call, nearly overnight. The handcrafted TK 01 is available in teak (shown here), cedar, and ipe, creating a variety of tones, weights, and of course, prices. The key lock is optional.

No. 10 letterbox / $180 / www.houseart.net / Form following function need not be formulaic. When HouseArt recently acquired Mark Naden's No. 10 from Pure Design, we rejoiced not only in its reissue, but also in the new color options like chartreuse (shown here), bougainvillea pink, and Miami mango. The die-cut shapes mimic the bar code of processed No. 10 envelopes, allowing you to see if mail is waiting. ■

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Story by Amber Bravo | Illustration by Brendan Callahan

"I don't want to be pigeonholed as the guy who makes messed-up stuff."

Jason Miller

Miller's Superordinate Antler Lamps (right) are the refined alternative to the velvet covered, parasite infested, natural ones (though we like those too); we also think they're the reason why antlers are *so* hot right now.

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When people talk about Jason Miller, they invariably mention three things, in varying order: his wit, his youth, and his meteoric rise in the burgeoning United States design scene. Though all of these qualities do belong to him—Miller is funny, young, successful, and (as if it were anomalous) a Brooklyn resident—he is also pragmatic and serious. And if there's a lot of noise surrounding him and his studio, he doesn't hear it.

A designer of "not art" objects, Miller dismisses perfection as a Sisyphean goal, opting instead to make quirky, concept-oriented design. His sagacity and self-possession make him a formidable conversationalist, particularly when it comes to his work; he is reluctant to accept others' opinions of his designs and seemingly references them only to make a point. Yet for all his confidence and particularity, he possesses the same disarming, scrappy charm apparent in his work.

So, let's cut to the chase: Do you feel responsible for the antler thing?

[Laughs.] You know, I've been asked that more than once, and everyone phrases it in the exactly that way—as if it's my fault. What's the problem with the antlers?

Nothing. I actually have a set of real antlers at home, but they were inspired by your fake ones. But aside from spurring a major trend, you've also enjoyed decent exposure at shows in galleries and museums across the country. Do you have a sense of your increasing notoriety?

Being in the [Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum] triennial was great. And I've done some shows at galleries around the county. I just did one in Houston and one in Denver, but I show up for the opening and then I leave, so I don't know how people take it afterwards. I get some sense from sales, because they trickle down to me at some point, but I don't really get a real sense of how it's received. Let's just say the PR in my office is very manageable.

Do you feel that design is getting greater exposure and respect in the United States?

Yes, but we're still way behind. It's hard to judge by Brooklyn because I think it's disproportionate to the rest of the country. And Brooklyn is a pretty small scene compared to Amsterdam or Stockholm. To me, what's interesting about Stockholm is that I actually think the design is quite boring, but it's integrated into the society in a way that whatever we do here in the States is not. There aren't fancy design stores in Stockholm, which is interesting because there is fancy design—it's just sold in regular stores. It's still separate here in the States. There still has to be that special place where you can get "design stuff." And that's indicative of our having not really integrated it yet. We're probably better off than we were ten years ago, but design is still not a part of everyday American life.

Are you happy to have not gone to school for design?

There isn't much I feel I missed. And I think I'm a better designer based on the route I took [which was to study painting in graduate school and then go to work for Jeff Koons and Karim Rashid]. What's good about art school, and what's interesting about people making art, is that they have to think about why they're making everything. They don't need to just solve a problem; they need to figure out why they're making it and what that object means in the world. Design schools don't teach you that. They teach you how to design things, how to solve problems—but they don't teach you why. I'm really glad that my education was the former and not the latter. I don't like to call my work art, and I don't think because there's an idea behind it, that makes it art. You're going to be living with this thing no matter what, whether it solves a problem or not, so it might as well have a good presence; it might as well add something, not just be able to keep your magazines off the floor. We have things that can do ▸

For his Seconds series, Miller played off of the idea of irregular products being sold as "seconds" for a lesser value; the Full Tea Service highlights irregular patterns and misplaced motifs (left). For the exhibition "Repair Shop," ten designers were asked to repair a salvaged chair; Miller contributed this piece, entitled "Kids Have No Respect" (right).

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that, there's no reason to make another one—it has to offer more. So that's all I'm trying to do, to give it something else.

Well, if it's not art it's certainly more conceptual than a lot of objects being produced in the United States. Do you feel marooned?
I think there is more space for it. But I'm still on the fringe. My stuff doesn't sell particularly well, with a few exceptions. The U.S. public hasn't quite accepted design, or rather, a certain type of design. But I don't necessarily think there's anything wrong with being on the fringe—in a way, I sort of have to be here. While I'd like my pieces to be mass-produced and marketed, I'm not operating in that world. I'm creating objects that are expensive because they aren't produced in large numbers and they aren't simple to make—they are not consumable on the same level as [pieces from] IKEA. I think that an independent designer has to operate in this place, because if you're making the same thing as IKEA, you will lose every time—it's just not viable.

What is your opinion of IKEA and its design collaboration, like the PS series?
Well, the alternative is that they just rip it off. So, of course, I support it. I mean, anyone can make a Hella Jongerius vase. Don't get me wrong, I love her—but it would be easy to knock off.

IKEA has historically tried to bring better-looking objects to the masses—it's nothing new. The only American equivalent would be, maybe, Target.
Is it? I mean, everyone says that, but what are they doing? Target feels to me that they're using [good design] as a marketing idea more so than IKEA—and maybe that's because I don't see Hella Jongerius on their TV ads. It's easy to say that Target is the company in the United States that's promoting designers in a way that no other major company is; I'm a little dubious about that.

And one could also argue that the designers they choose aren't wanting for exposure.
Exactly. Philippe Starck does not need any more work—but that's the trade-off. They're not just doing this to be noble, they're doing it because they can use these people in their ads: Karim Rashid, Isaac Mizrahi, Todd Oldham, Philippe Starck—whoever it is at the moment.

[At this point, Miller excuses himself from the conversation to speak with an assistant; he describes the "jewel-like" effect he's after, and then comes back to the phone.]

So, you were saying "jewel-like"?
[Laughs.] I had a high school teacher, Mr. Levine, who said, "If you can't make it good, just make it big and paint it gold." I think that was actually pretty good advice.

Of your work, do you have a favorite thing, say, other than the antlers?
First of all, it wouldn't be the antlers. It's hard to say. If I were to pick two, I would say the Daydreams mirrors and the Duct Tape chair.

Why?
Well, the Duct Tape chair is the best example of an idea that I worked with for two or three years—the idea of imperfection—and that project summed it up for me. I should say, also, that it's imperfection as a virtue, not as a problem. I like the Daydreams mirrors because they're outside of that concept, and I like promoting them because I don't want to be pigeonholed as the guy who makes messed-up stuff. That aside, I really do like them as a project, because it created a new type of object. It's not just a mirror decorated with something, it's actually a new type of mirror. ►

Miller's Duct Tape Lounge Chair (left) is an homage to imperfection, loosely based on that sad lounger from college days, when furniture was found, bought, and repaired for little. Miller's chair, however, is structurally sound; the duct tape is upholstered leather. The Daydreams mirror (right) is a reverent departure from the designer's interest in imperfection.

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I remember my older brother's mirror that said "Styx" in a sparkly, hologram-like font. Yours is subtler.
The technology for those things comes from bar mirrors, so a mirror that says "Styx" is likely produced with the same technology, just pushed a little further. In that way, I was able to create something more ethereal and more like a design object than a cheesy novelty good.

Are you concertedly trying to get away from this "guy who makes messed-up stuff" idea?
Yeah, that was the thinking for Milan [furniture fair]. I mean, it's not a total departure. I don't like things that are perfect. I think it's a silly goal—an unachievable goal—but there are ways to achieve [the idea]. There can be other types of anomalies, not just problems.

What's in store for Milan?
I'm doing a series of terra-cotta flowerpots that are modeled from things that you would use as a flowerpot if you didn't actually have a flowerpot: a two-liter soda can, a coffee can, or maybe a bucket. But they'll be [fired] in terra-cotta. The two-liter bottle one, for instance, is composed of 11 two-liter bottles stuck together in a big blob. It's random—like, if you turn it over, it looks kind of like a Frank Gehry building.

Do you have any cult followings or a concentrated fan base in, say, Japan?
In terms of countries? Oh yeah, Japan seems to really like my stuff.

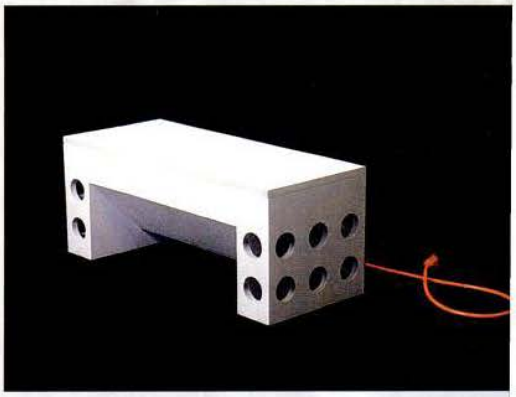
That would make a great pull quote.
Europe doesn't seem to like it at all—you can pull that.

Really? Well, maybe you can wow them at Milan this year.
I can guarantee that I won't wow them at Milan this year. I know it's popular to say that design is international and that borders don't matter anymore, but that's only true to some extent. The simple fact is that Italian furniture looks different from Dutch furniture and Dutch furniture looks different from French furniture, and all of that looks different from American. We're not that global yet. The Milan furniture fair is essentially a fair for the Italian manufacturers, and typically they're not interested in the type of work that I do. And they're likely not interested in the work the Dutch do either. The Dutch get a lot of press, but aside from people like Marcel Wanders and Hella Jongerius, young, new Dutch design is not the thing that people are picking up. So when I say I'm not going to wow them, I mean that even if my show is well received, the Italian manufacturers are not going to be calling me to sign up a product.

And how would you characterize U.S. design?
I think what's interesting about American culture, in general, is that it tends to be pragmatic and it tends to be all-inclusive. It's really hodgepodge. There isn't that direct cultural lineage that a lot of other countries have. Sweden would have a really hard time getting past their design history. It's hard for a Swedish designer not to make something out of blond wood. They might say that they want to, but it's really hard for them not to. We are much more free to do weird stuff. The flip side of that is that I think American design tends to be crass; we're not very good at making pretty things. Again, there are exceptions—everyone's favorite example: the iPod—but I would say, in general, crassness is a quality of American stuff.

Would you like your work to be prettier? Is that something that interests you?
It doesn't interest me at all. What I would like to do is to be able to be okay with making crass stuff.

Are you okay with it?
Yeah, I think so. I have made some ugly stuff before. ■



More anomalous than imperfect, Miller's terra-cotta "Whatever Pots" are cast from objects one would use if one didn't have a planter, like his "Lots of 2 Litres" planter (left). The "CPU Table" (right) is from his "Wire Tables" series.

The Spirit of Finland

There's a lot that's unique about Finland. It's the most sparsely populated country in the European Union and its people are the sixth happiest in the world. (Not that we can assume any correlation between these two facts.) Then there are all those lakes and glaciers and the aurora borealis. In a country so full of natural aesthetics, it's no wonder that Finland churns out so many renowned designers.

And it's no surprise that much of Finnish design is inspired by nature, organic and fluid, because the people are—simply put—surrounded by it. In Finland, one can't escape nature, so one is left to embrace it. Embrace it they do.

Like the designers from Finland, the national vodka, Finlandia, is also inspired by nature, combining six-row barley—unique for the simple fact it ripens in a place where the sun doesn't set for 73 days—and pristine spring water from a protected glacial moraine created 10,000 years ago. All of that untouched land results in untainted, exceptionally pure ingredients, which in turn results in a vodka that is a veritable gift from the earth. The bottle itself seems to have been carved from a glacier that has been left on the counter long enough for the ice to begin to melt.

Finlandia was the first vodka to be imported to the United States. Naturally, it was also the first vodka to be infused with flavors: cranberry and lime, mango and wild berries. It's the finest of what Finland, and possibly the world has to offer: innovative design that expresses the purity of nature distilled into the finest vodka.

In the early thirties there was a great deal of controversy whether modern architecture was here to stay or not. Back home, there was considerable doubt about it. Architects were still covering their buildings with pilasters and columns and arches and all that, which, I must say, look better today than they did when we were in rebellion against them. But in Rome the extraordinary thing I learned was that everything is modern. You would be walking down a street past a 15th-century palazzo and sticking out of the wall of the palazzo would be the ruin of an arch; the palazzo was built around the ruin centuries older than the palazzo. Then, because business wasn't good in Rome either, a corner of this palace had been remodeled and somebody had put in an ultramodern candy shop. So there were these three epochs coexisting in one building. And suddenly you realized the obvious, that everything that is worth anything is always modern because it can't be anything else, and therefore there are no flags to wave, no manifestoes, you just do the only thing you can honestly do now. —George Nelson

Always Modern

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Story by Sam Grawe

Opdahl Remastered

Case Study architect Edward Killingsworth's masterpiece, the 1957 Opdahl House, fell into ruin, but thanks to a musician with a passion for modernism, it is celebrating its 50th anniversary in mint condition.

One afternoon Joyce Opdahl's phone rang out of the blue. "It was so wonderful," she recalls. "Here's this thing that's been out of your hands for all these years and all of a sudden somebody is interested in taking it back to exactly what it was like when you were first married." The "thing" in question is the house Joyce and her husband, Richard, commissioned from a promising young architect in 1956. It was finished just in time to host their wedding reception. The somebody on the other end of the line was Andreas Stevens, the home's present owner, and a mid-century-modernist acolyte. Clearly moved, Joyce adds, "I mean, how many times does that happen?"

Like any story that's almost too good to be true, the 50-year-long arc traced by the Opdahl House is dotted with fateful coincidences, triumphs large and small, a maddening period of decline, and an eventual rebirth.

According to Richard Opdahl, it all started after work one day. "I was driving down Long Beach Boulevard and I saw Ed's office." Edward Killingsworth, Jules Brady, and Waugh Smith had recently set up shop in a glass-walled, post-and-beam affair that gave prospective clients ▸

Project: The Opdahl House / Stevens Residence
Architect: Edward Killingsworth
Location: Long Beach, California

The Opdahl House, designed by Edward Killingsworth for Richard and Joyce Opdahl, was photographed by Marvin Rand in 1957 (left). The unique home is located on the island of Naples, in Long Beach, California, and the design responds to the constraints imposed by the compact site.

Unlike the neighbors, whose homes unflinchingly abut their property lines, Killingsworth set the Opdahl House 42 feet back from the street, dedicating half of the lot to a dramatic entryway that includes a carport, garden, and reflecting pool (opposite). The effect is one of entering a private sanctuary.

PHOTO BY MARVIN RAND

Photos by Catherine Ledner

a clear indication of what they would be getting from the architects. "There was this large oak tree out in front," Richard remembers, "so I went in to talk to him about a small lot I had recently purchased. The only thing I said was that I wanted the front and back to be all glass." Although minimal, Richard's request would provide the catalyst for a stunning design.

The Opdahls' 30-by-80-foot lot was situated in Naples, an island just southeast of downtown Long Beach, California, and a claustrophobic building environment if there ever was one. Even in the 1950s the island was crowded with homes that ate up every available inch of space. Killingsworth's response was to erect 18-foot-high walls that extend the entire length of the lot on either side, carving out an intimate, visually quieting space within which to situate the glass-walled home. By setting the living area 42 feet back from the street, a greater sense of remove was instilled by the intermediary spaces, all framed by post-and-beam connections. "When you walked through the gates, you left the entire world behind," recalls Joyce. "It was like being on your own private island."

Completed in 1957 and photographed with furnishings provided by Frank Brothers, an influential Long Beach–based retailer of modern designs and art, the modest home for a pair of teachers would win an unprecedented string of awards, including the 1957 Southern California AIA first honor and the prestigious 1960 national AIA first honor, and help launch Killingsworth's highly distinguished career.

After a six-year occupancy, the Opdahls and their growing family needed more space and moved out. The house changed hands several times, and, as is the case with so many once-celebrated structures of that particular era, it fell into greater and greater levels of disrepair. A subsequent owner with little regard for the home's pedigree made physical alterations that only hastened the deterioration. By the 1990s Killingsworth, who once proudly toured the home with busloads of architecture students (on one occasion neglecting to inform the Opdahls, much to their surprise), couldn't bring himself to drive by the house.

Meanwhile in La Jolla, California (not too far away from Killingsworth's Case Study "Triad" houses), Andreas ▸

Amidst the vintage furnishings—including pieces by Hans Olsen, Paul McCobb, and Hans Wegner—Stevens works an array of musical gear. The Wegner CH22 (in both photos below) was donated to the home by Joyce and Richard Opdahl. A huge axonometrical rendering by Philo Jacobson hangs in the background.

The double-height living space looks out to the reflecting pool and entry (opposite). A George Nelson Bubble Lamp, Edward Wormley Long John Bench, and Van Keppel Green settee and table were among the home's original furnishings. p. 242

Stevens—better known as DJ Greyboy—was living in a 1960s post-and-beam modern house and was getting his first taste of mid-century design. "I went to my first vintage store, and it was all over," recounts Stevens. While music had been an early all-consuming passion, Stevens's fondness for rare furnishings from Van Keppel Green, Alexander Girard, and George Nelson, to name a few, would soon manifest itself into a full-time occupation. In addition to furnishing his own home, Stevens started a lucrative side career flipping pieces found buried at far-flung Salvation Army stores.

His undeniable passion would eventually lead to the Opdahl House. Stevens first saw the home in a small book called *Art: An Approach* by Robert C. Niece, and began a search to track down the address and see if the house was still there. In 2002, he found it in a sorry state. "It was thrashed," he adds in a SoCal drawl, "but I started obsessing." Although it wasn't for sale, Stevens contacted the owner and made an offer on the house. Without any response, he visited weekend after weekend. He even got in touch with Killingsworth to assess how open the architect would be to sharing original plans and providing a guiding hand for a restoration. Killingsworth replied, lamenting the home's present state, but offering his assistance. Finally, the owner acquiesced, and Stevens "got every last penny and bit of energy [he] had together" to buy the house.

In January of 2003, he moved in, but that was only the beginning. "It was half-eaten by termites and dry rot. I had to deal with every inch of the house." Stevens hired a crafty friend to help with the labor and set to work, despite having only a little experience with construction. "This isn't rocket science," Stevens reasons. "You just have to know what you're doing."

Stevens replaced all the redwood siding, the huge beams that had rotted out, all the posts, every single piece of glass, every plaster surface ("because there were mirrors glued to everything"), and the floors, which had been covered in ceramic tile. Along the way, Killingsworth, who had closed his office in 2001, would check in and provide helpful details on the construction.

Stevens tracked down former associates of the architect, previous tenants, and the original clients as part of his quest. Old family photos provided unpublished ▸

Unsightly service elements of the kitchen (below) are tucked into the central core of the home, while a furniture-like L is situated in the rear corner and visible from the living area. Stevens had the 42 George Nelson cabinet pulls made with a CNC-router system based on an original.

Below a twisting steel staircase (opposite) sits a stool from the impossibly rare 1967 Girard Group for Herman Miller (it was only produced for one year). Stevens rennovated the home from top to bottom, including the Japanese-style fence in the garden.

views of the home and gave Stevens the clues he needed to bring the house back to its exact original state.

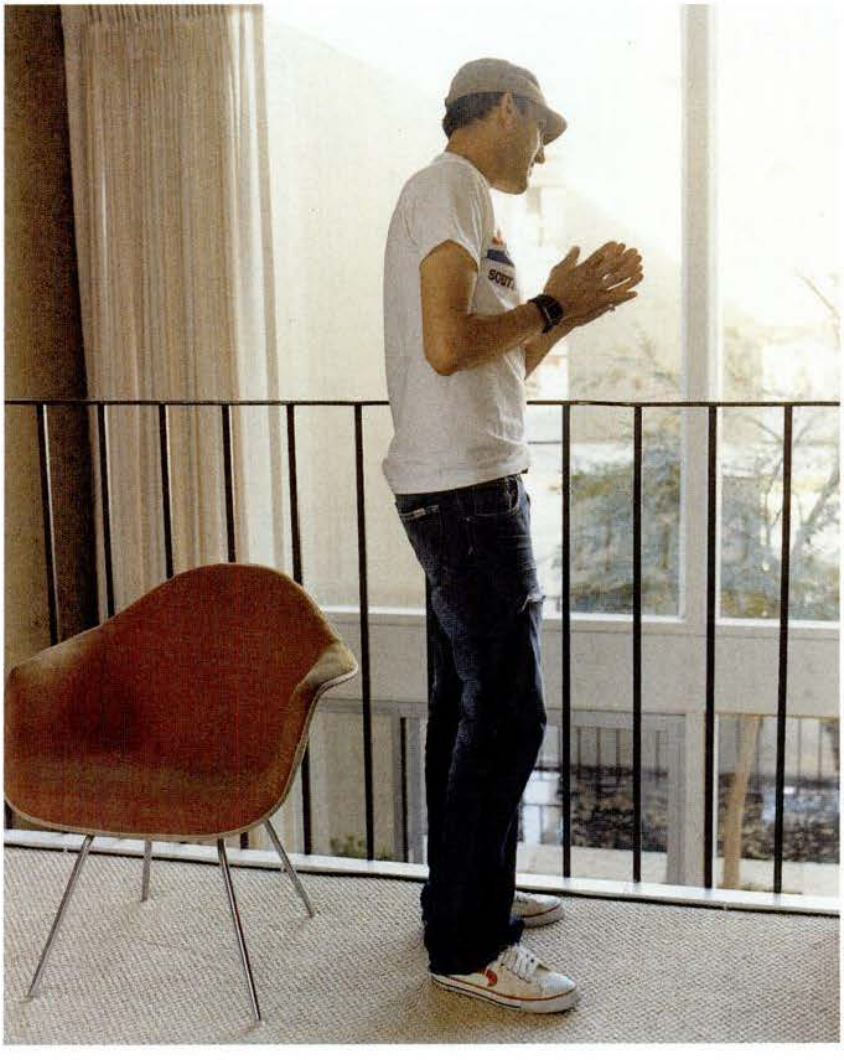
"I gave up my regular life for a couple of years," Stevens admits. The project bordered on obsession. In addition to refurbishing the structure, he went to untold lengths to find original fixtures and match finished surfaces. He found the original outdoor lights on a nearby motel that was being torn down. After a year and a half of searching, he found the original electric stove, an in-wall push-button model, in a house that was being razed in Walla Walla, Washington. What he couldn't find, such as 42 matching white Nelson pulls for the kitchen cabinets, he had made. A fragment of the original bathroom tile turned up in the backyard, and Stevens was then able to match the original color.

When it came time to furnish the house, Stevens directed a similar energy at finding the pieces with which the home was originally photographed. But the house is no museum. With the construction behind him, Stevens loves every moment he spends at home and has infused the place with his own spirit. Recently, among a tangle of cords and gear, he's been working on a new album in the living room, pointing out that the two-story space with balconied bedrooms is similar to that in which Rudy Van Gelder recorded Blue Note's classic albums.

Killingsworth died at age 86 in 2004, but not before he was reunited with the Opdahls, and John Nicholson, the original decorator, in the renovated space. "He was so stoked," says Stevens, emphasizing a long, drawn-out "so." "You can't believe how stoked." Stevens sometimes still refers to "Mr. K" in the present tense, clearly awe-struck by his skill as an architect and delighting in being the home's de facto client.

Collected among the Opdahl memorabilia Stevens has amassed in a bulging three-ring binder is a prescient quote from Killingsworth: "The most flattering thing an owner can say about one of my buildings is, 'It's my building, I did all this myself; the architects only translated my thoughts.' There can be no greater tribute to an architect than this. It means the owner has completely identified himself with the building, and it is his building, not the architect's monument to himself." Despite the gap in generations, the Opdahl House truly has become Stevens's building, and a monument to living. ▸

The two upstairs bedrooms are equal in size and open to the living room below (the metal railing is repeated from the entryway). In a 1958 interview Richard Opdahl commented that, "The only criticism is that there is little aural privacy in a house of this size."



Stevens pared down his collection of vintage furniture and art considerably when he bought the Opdahl house, but he saved critical pieces such as the Gene Cooper painting (above) and Alexander Girard poster for the Herman Miller Textile & Objects Shop (opposite).


RMAN MILLER INC.
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OF
Itles & Objects
AT
EAST 53RD. STREET
NEW YORK CITY
wholesale and retail shop
HERMAN MILLER COLLECTION
OF
'S & TEXTILE ITEMS
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USUAL & SYMPATHETIC
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d by Alexander Girard
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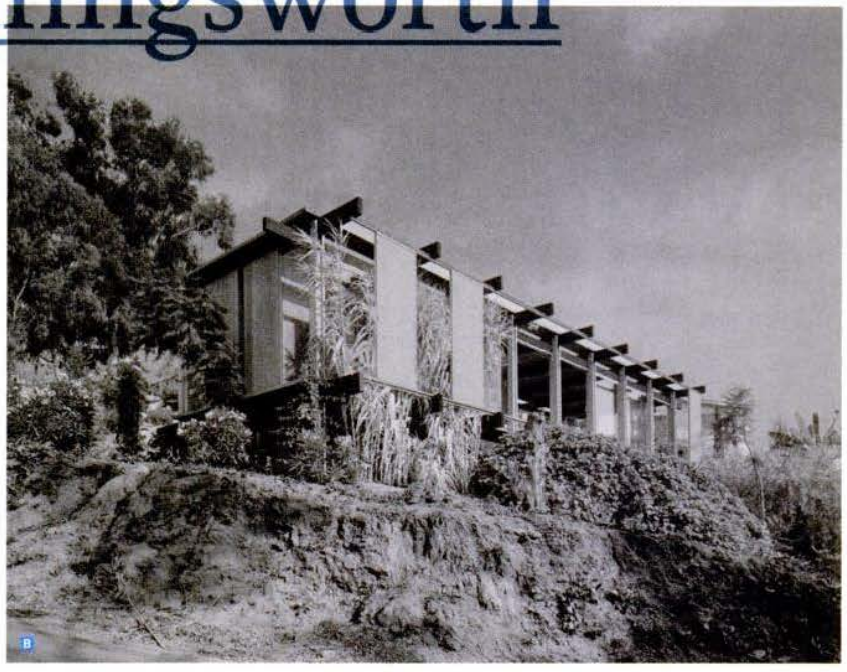
Ten Things You Should Know About Edward Killingsworth



1 / Killingsworth received a bachelor of architecture degree from the University of Southern California in 1940 with cum laude honors and was awarded an AIA medal for the highest academic record in architecture. He then served in the army for five years.

2 / In 1950 John Entenza, the editor of *Arts & Architecture*, drove past Killingsworth's first solo project, a post-and-beam office and residence for his in-laws, and soon after invited the architect to participate in the Case Study program. "I owe my life to John Entenza," Killingsworth would later say.

3 / Killingsworth, Brady, and Smith designed four Case Study Houses for Entenza, including #23, in La Jolla, known as the "Triad," which consisted of three detached but related residences; #25, which was built on a canal in Long Beach for Ed Frank, owner of the Frank Brothers furniture store; and #26, which was to feature prefabricated concrete–and–styrene foam construction but was never built. Case Study Apartment #2, a design for ten units in Newport Beach, California, also was never constructed.

4 / Rigorously attentive to construction detail, Killingsworth only designed one home outside of Southern California. It is located in Piedmont, California, and still extant.

5 / While on vacation in Oslo, Norway, Joyce and Richard Opdahl walked into a room at the United States embassy, only to come face-to-face with four oversized photos of their home. "It was a traveling exhibition from the AIA," recalls Joyce. "I was stunned, but you couldn't just walk up to someone random and say, 'Hey! That's our house!'"

6 / In 1962 Killingsworth was selected as the master planning architect for California State University Long Beach. With campus landscape designer Ed Lovell, he planted over 2,000 Helen Borcher peach trees.

7 / In 1964 Killingsworth designed the ten-story, 300-room Kahala Hilton in a secluded oceanfront location east of Waikiki, Hawaii. Business started off slow, but the hotel's reputation would soon skyrocket after the cast of *Hawaii Five-O* moved in during filming. The hotel was often featured on the show, and guest stars were always guests.

8 / Killingsworth and his partners went on to design more big-name resorts, including the Kapalua Bay Hotel (now demolished) on Maui in 1978, the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel on the Big Island, in 1983, and Waikiki's Halekulani Hotel in 1984.

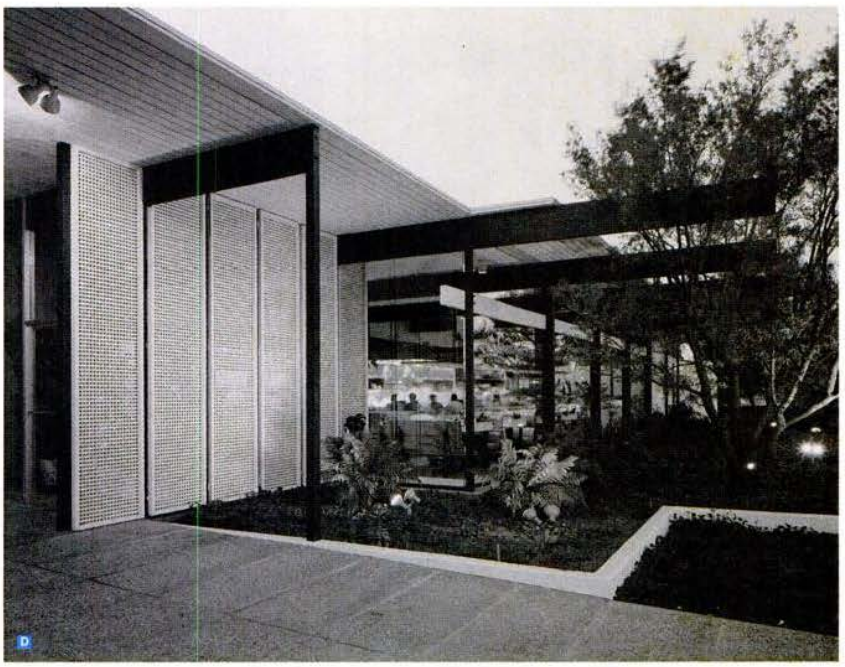
9 / In 1990 *Condé Nast Traveler* magazine ranked all four of Killingsworth's Hawaii projects as the top four tropical-resort hotels in the world.

10 / In September of 2005 CSULB posthumously dedicated Killingsworth Plaza to the architect, who guided the campus's growth for over four decades and never once charged for his services. ■

PHOTOS BY MARVIN RAND (ARCHITECTURE), JEFF BENDER (PORTRAIT)

Edward Killingsworth, Richard Opdahl, John Nicholson, and Andreas Stevens gather at the renovated Opdahl House (opposite left). Traces of the Opdahl House's architectural vocabulary can be seen in almost every Killingsworth design, from commercial buildings like the Cambridge Buidling (above) and Hof's Hut (below right), to later projects like the Kahala Hilton (not pictured).

A Opdahl House
B Robertson House
C Cambridge Building
D Hof's Hut



Story by Asko Ahokas

Eero Dynamic

Eero Aarnio's persistent quest for functional forms and manufacturing processes has been at the center of his iconic and prolific career.

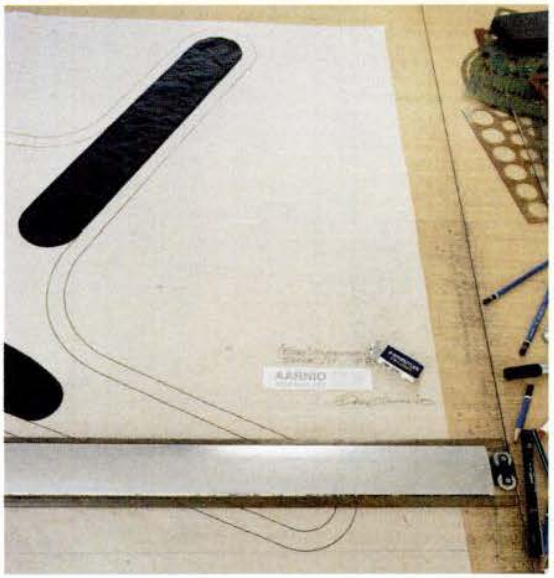
Sitting in a Ball Chair, it's hard to imagine the design is nearing its 45th anniversary. Regardless of the fact that Eero Aarnio never intended the chair to be futuristic, the Ball Chair heralds utopian visions of tomorrow as strongly today as when it debuted in the 1960s. The iconic design—which has appeared on countless magazine covers, in numerous films and television shows (most notoriously in the opening credits of *The Prisoner*), and in almost every survey of modern furniture design—catapulted Aarnio to international fame; however, the designer's consistent pursuit of simplicity and functionality has made him a timeless, and tireless, innovator.

Aarnio's career began in the early '60s, coinciding with an era of political progressivism, economic expansion, and rapid urbanization and industrialization in Finland. As Finns were getting their first taste of Western pop culture, the West proved equally interested in Finnish design. After working for two of the country's top furniture designers, Ilmari Tapiovaara and Antti Nurmesniemi, Aarnio began his career with a simple rattan stool called Juttujakkara (translating loosely as "chatty stool" or "story stool"). ▸

PHOTO COURTESY AARNIO ARCHIVE (PORTRAIT)

Photos by Joanna Moorhouse

A proliferation of Puppies, Aarnio's 2005 design for Italian manufacturer Magis, gather in the living room of his Veikkola, Finland, home. Aarnio's playful spirit, evident in the iconic Ball Chair (opposite), is alive and well in his new work.



The design successfully fused the formal language of modernism with natural materials and craft techniques. Reminiscing, Aarnio describes the characteristics that drew him to those materials: "Rattan has great qualities—from simplicity, to enormous flexibility, to environmental sustainability. You can basically create anything out of it." He adds, "I might actually return to the material in the near future."

A visit to a friend's boathouse would provide the catalyst for Aarnio's career-defining breakthrough. It was here that he was introduced to laminates. "I immediately saw that a ball would be the best shape for using laminates. It would provide the greatest technical strength with the least amount of material." The chance encounter would have a profound effect on the designer: "Ever since then I've been inspired by new materials, and how to find new vocabularies for their design, and new methods of production."

To prove his point, Aarnio created the first Ball Chair painstakingly by hand. He first applied layers of wet paper on a plywood mold in order to create the shell, and then laminated the surface with fiberglass. Apparently the initial results were less than satisfactory—"It looked like a deformed potato," Aarnio admits with a grin.

After smoothing the shell out with an electric sander and applying a stabilizing metal ring to the mouth of the ball, the design worked. Aarnio recalls the chair's journey from conception to prototype: "I built the prototype in an old elementary school in the town of Salo, which is northwest of Helsinki. The school had an art room that was free in the evenings and offered us plenty of space to work. I made more than ten trips, literally traveling a thousand miles before it was finished. There were many times when I wanted to give up, but my wife, Pirkko, insisted I continue. She said, 'If you don't make it, someone else will.'"

The Ball Chair was debuted by the Finnish furniture manufacturer Asko at the International Furniture Fair in Cologne, Germany, in 1966 and was an overnight sensation—even appearing on the evening news. In one week it sold to more than 30 countries and launched Aarnio's reputation as an icon of pop design. Aarnio himself finds this amusing. "I had no intention to create either 'pop' or 'space-age' design—as many people label my work. My intention was purely functional, to create the most practical form for this new material." The tag, however, doesn't seem all that far-fetched; Aarnio's colorful and playful designs have indeed become icons, ▸

Opposite (clockwise from top left): A trio of miniature Pastil Chairs; Aarnio's tools of the trade; the Rocket stool, Aarnio's latest design for venerable Finnish producer Artek; and a miniature Ball Chair. Aarnio (above left) will turn 75 this summer, but the comissions continue to flood in. Aarnio works out his designs digitally (as in with his digits) at a drafting table (above right).

veritable Marilyn Monroes and Cambell's soup cans of the design world.

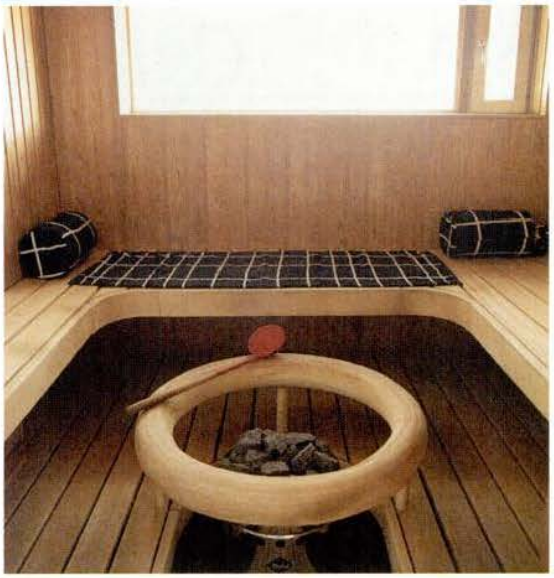
In 1968, the Ball Chair was followed by another success, the Bubble Chair. Aarnio considers the transparent Bubble his most clever product, since no molds are required in the manufacturing process. He explains: "The process starts by heating the acrylic sheet in the oven. Once the sheet is softened, it's laid out on a table. A metal ring is laid on top of the acrylic sheet and hot air is blown from underneath to create the bubble shape. An electronic sensor determines when the correct size has been achieved and the chair is finished once the excess material is cut from around the ring. The production is extremely fast, simple, and functional." Manufacturing is an essential part of the process in all of Aarnio's designs. He considers this final stage a test that challenges his passion to achieve the shapes and forms he originally envisioned.

Further exploration yielded further success with the Pastil, Polaris, Tomato, and Pony chairs; however, Aarnio's triumph with plastics ended as quickly as it had started with the energy crisis of 1973, and it would be nearly three decades until the designer would reemerge on the world scene, after a host of challenges.

During the early 1990s Finland was hit hard with recession, and Aarnio felt the effects—in one year his income plummeted to a fraction of his previous earnings. The recession impacted the entire country's furniture manufacturing industry. Aarnio's long-time collaborator, Finnish furniture manufacturer Martela, chose not to produce any new designs in reaction to tough times. That decision brought Aarnio's character into full force, and he was determined to create an office chair that used the most cost-effective manufacturing process possible. Consulting with the workers who were to bring his new design of bent plywood and metal tubes to life, Aarnio fine-tuned the design and manufacturing process to focus on maximizing efficiency. The result was the creation of the Savoy Chair, which sold an amazing 38,000 copies in one year—nearly double what Martela typically achieved for a successful product.

In a landscape littered with blobjects and with collectors snapping up mid-century furniture at record-high prices, it seems fitting that Aarnio is now at the height of his popularity. Over the past several years, the tireless designer has churned out an eclectic array of ▸

Roll of tracing paper in hand, Aarnio contemplates his next move in his recent home office addition (opposite). The Bubble Chair (below left) is made from a single sheet of heated acrylic. The Formula, Pastil, and Tomato Chairs (below right) all follow a similiar typology.



new products—including the Parabel tables; the Formula, Tipi, and Focus chairs; and the Double Bubble Lamp light sculpture—and shows no signs of slowing down.

As of 2005, Artek, the venerable Finnish furniture company started by Alvar Aalto in 1935, finally added Aarnio to its stable of designers, a puzzling oversight given the intimate scale of the Finnish design world. As Tom Dixon explains, "When I arrived as artistic director, it was clear that Artek had missed out on a huge burst of Nordic creativity in the '60s and '70s. I set about seeing if I could retrofit some of that history." Aarnio seemed the obvious place to start. "Eero was one of the first people I contacted upon arrival in Finland," Dixon confirms, "and I was immediately invited to discuss business in a wood-fired sauna, which was followed by ice-hole bathing, and we began our collaboration."

Aarnio's home and studio (and sauna, of course) are located in the small Finnish town of Veikkola, about 20 miles west of Helsinki. Combining home and office, as Aarnio has done since the early '60s, has yielded designs that, while outwardly sculptural and playful, also have an ingrained sensibility for everyday use. In fact, from the Ball Chair (the original prototype is still in the foyer) to the Rocket stool (which the Aarnios put to use in their kitchen), his latest design for Artek, most of Aarnio's designs have originated from the need for certain items around the home.

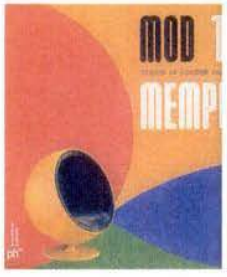
Recently Aarnio designed an addition that seamlessly extends the studio from the living room—furthering the notion that home life and design are fully integrated into a sort of laboratory for living. The office is dominated by oversized worktables scattered with sketches, archival flat files, models, colored pencils, markers, and drafting instruments. Wall-to-wall windows flood the white space with light and offer an idyllic view of the wooded Finnish countryside.

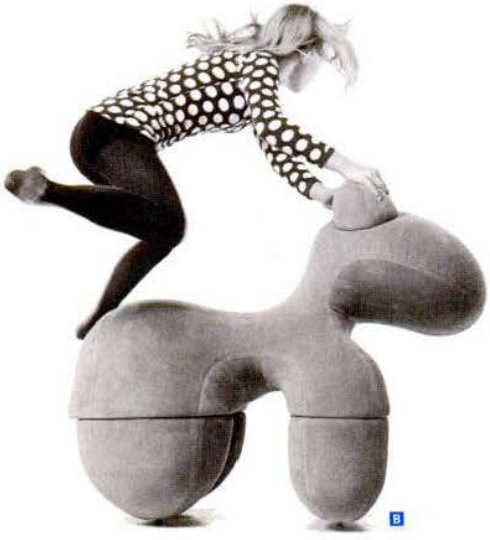
With the expansion of the studio complete, Aarnio has again turned his focus to new undertakings, such as a collection of colorful plastic office furniture for Martela. "I am living in a very exciting stage at the moment," Aarnio enthuses. "There are several projects in preparation, ranging from a man's wristwatch for Sarpaneva to new designs in glass and porcelain." As he approaches his 75th birthday, rather than slowing down, Aarnio seems to be gaining forward momentum.

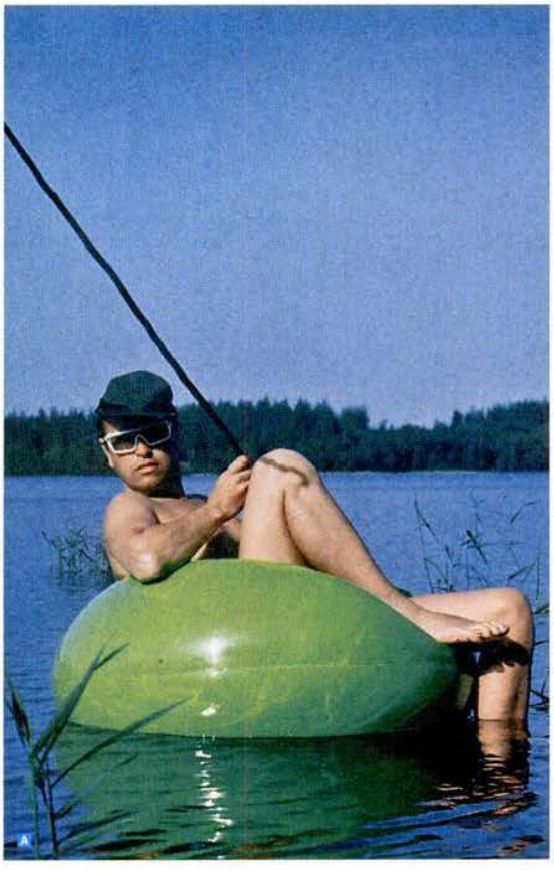
"He's managed to retain an enthusiasm and an energy which is that of a 20-year-old," Dixon raves. "He still looks at the world with fresh eyes." ▸

The Aarnios' living room (opposite) includes a wall of magazine covers featuring the designer's work and a pair of white Pony chairs, Aarnio's 1973 design. Eero and Pirkko Aarnio (above left), in their home's kitchen, have been married for over 50 years. The home also features an elegant sauna (above right)—this is Finland after all.

Ten Things You Should Know About Eero Aarnio







1 / Aarnio was born in 1932, the year Finland ended its prohibition against alcohol. The designer considers that a lucky coincidence.

2 / When he applied to study at the Atheneum Institute of the Industrial Arts in 1954, Aarnio received a perfect entrance exam score by drawing as accurately as possible the tails side of a coin at an enlarged scale.

3 / Aarnio has also had a long and distinguished photography career. Quite early on, he made his living taking portraits—lucky elementary school students had their class photos taken by Aarnio.

4 / Aarnio's smallest apartment was located at Bulevardi 3, in the center of Helsinki. It boasted a living space of approximately 120 square feet, which included the bed, Aarnio's oversized desk, and his wife's loom.

5 / In the early 1960s, Aarnio created an ad proposal for Coca-Cola using the Ball Chair—he painted the shell red and applied the Coca-Cola logo across the back. In a five-second film, Pirkko spun around in the chair, sipping from a bottle of Coke. The film received an enthusiastic response, but Aarnio later received a letter saying, "Thanks for your interest in our product, but we are pursuing a different line of marketing."

PHOTOS COURTESY AARNIO ARCHIVE

A Aarnio demonstrates the Pastil's ability to float
B Promotional photograph for Pony (1973)
C Pastil Chair advertisement (1968)
D Aarnio in his studio in the early 1960s
E Aarnio in the original Ball Chair prototype

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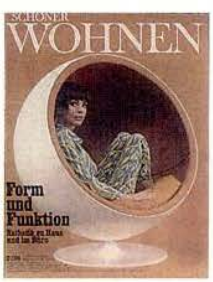


6 / Ball Chairs inside the lobby of Helsinki's Hotel Ellivuori were outfitted with telephones. A local salon added hair dryers, and in Kajaani, an enterprising record shop owner used the Ball as a listening booth by having speakers installed under the upholstery.

7 / The idea of the Bubble Chair was derived from the Ball Chair. Aarnio wanted to have a reading light inside the Ball. He then got the idea of a transparent shell, where the light shines through the material.

8 / When his Rocking Chair was exhibited at Artek's stand at the Milan furniture fair, Aarnio felt that the greatest compliment to the design came from the night guard who slept in the chair without knowing he was being watched on video.

9 / Aarnio draws all his designs in 1:1 or life-size scale by hand, using pencil.

10 / Aarnio loves electric pencil sharpeners—especially the Staples brand. He just wishes that Staples would manufacture them in different colors. ■

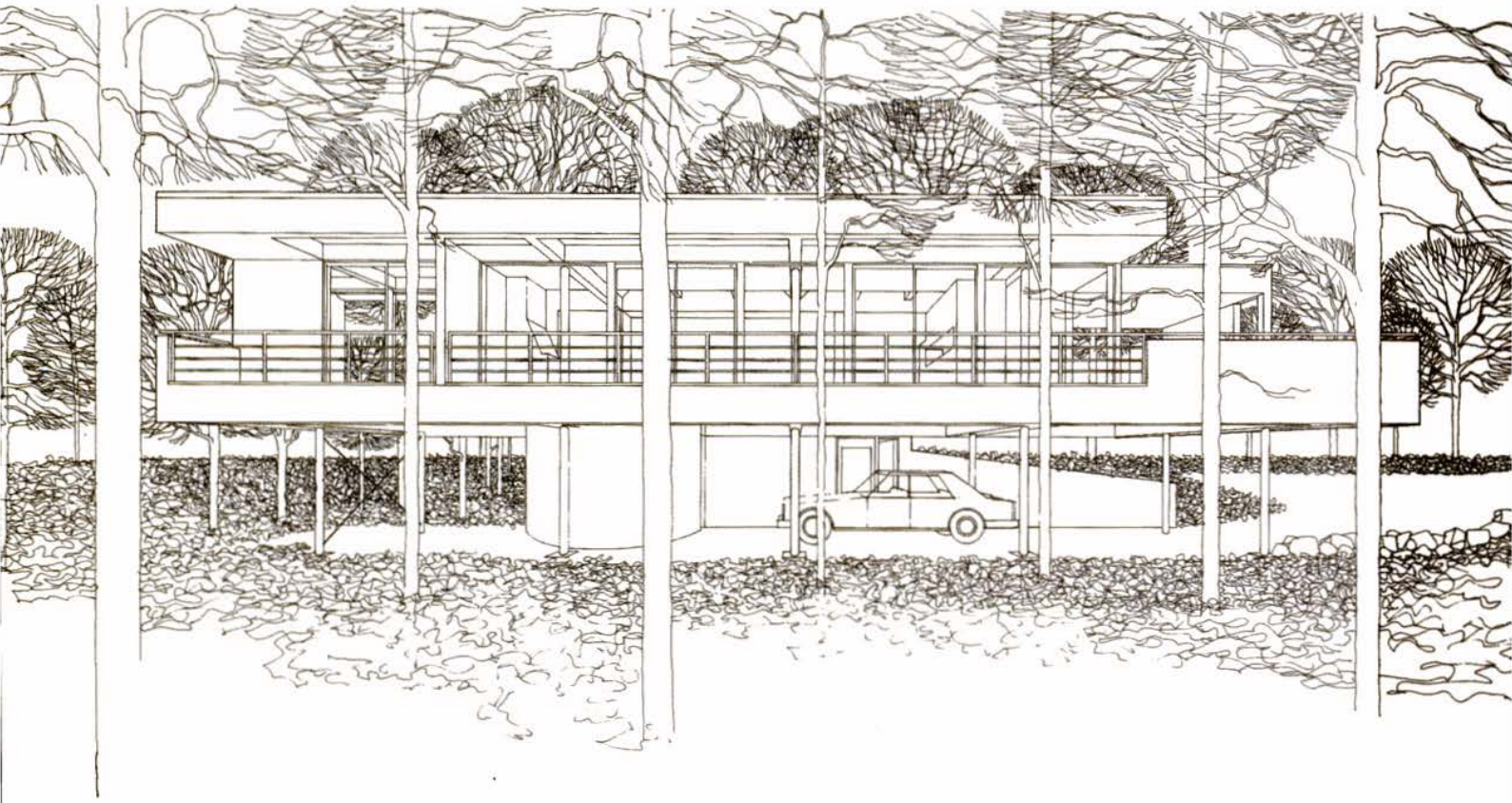
Story by Alastair Gordon

Woman in the Dunes

Barbara Neski is often discussed in concert with her late husband and design partner, Julian. But the recent rehabilitation of the couple's Formby House highlights her skills as a draftsperson and distinguishes her as one of the the few female mid-century modern architects.

"We were so involved in the architecture that we never had time for networking," says 79-year-old Barbara Neski, recalling the 40-year collaboration she enjoyed with her late husband, Julian. "That way we could have a career and children too. We were always a close-knit family." Together they designed more than 35 houses in a style that was at once urgently urban while still being approachable and sensitive to their rural sites. While grounded in the geometry of European modernism, their best designs reflected both the landscape and the social milieu that were unique to the Hamptons, where 25 of their much-lauded vacation homes were built.

The sharp-edged, boxy forms with roof decks, sun courts, shifting planes, and multiple levels were very much an expression of the times. Exterior walls of white or gray-stained cedar siding served as foils for the play of light and shadow. Ramps replaced conventional stairways, evoking a sense of perpetual motion and perpetual expectation: Le Corbusier's idea of *la vie sportif* reimagined for the television age. Unlike some of their better-known contemporaries, the Neskis rarely, if ever, repeated themselves. ▸



Photos by Nigel Shafran

Project: Formby House
Architects: Julian and Barbara Neski
Location: Amagansett, New York

DRAWING COURTESY BARBARA NESKI

The Formby House floats atop its wooded site in Amagansett, New York (above). An early rendering (opposite) shows how its horizontal forms were meant to play against the vertical lines of the surrounding trees. Barbara Neski and husband/design partner, Julian, designed the house in the early 1980s for a corporate headhunter, but got a second chance when it was bought a few years ago by two fashion designers, Scott and Kathy Formby. The original version has been pared down—painted white, an outdoor shower removed—and refined to bare essentials.

Barbara Neski (above) has been designing elegantly restrained modern houses for more than fifty years. She worked in the offices of both José Luis Sert and Marcel Breuer before establishing a firm with her husband in the early 1960s.

Barbara, known as "Bobbie" by close friends, was born Barbara Goldberg in 1928 and grew up in Highland Park, New Jersey. In 1948, during her third semester at Bennington College, she discovered the joys of good design—she was taken by the elegance of the butterfly roof of the nearby Robinson House by Marcel Breuer in Williamstown, Massachusetts—and knew she wanted to be an architect. "I didn't know that a house could be a work of art," she confesses. "Breuer was an eye-opener."

Barbara finished Bennington in 1949 and went on to Harvard's Graduate School of Design (GSD), then under the directorship of Walter Gropius. Women architects were still an oddity then, and Barbara's father warned her to take up shorthand just in case. While she never studied directly under Gropius, Barbara remembers him being a very gentle man, which wasn't always the case with GSD faculty. One of her teachers, Hugh Stubbins, refused to take her seriously. "He would come around during crits and completely ignore me," recalls Barbara. "He didn't even look at my drawings." She was, however, accepted by the other students. "All the guys wanted to help me. I had a lot of boyfriends."

She finished Harvard's three-year program in two, and in 1952 started in the New York office of José Luis Sert, where she worked on urban plans for Bogotá and Havana. "There were only a few of us in the office and everything was charrette. We'd always work through the night." It was also at this time that she met her future husband and design partner, Julian Neski, who was also working for Sert. They married in December of 1953 while they were both working in Marcel Breuer's office. "Breuer always liked women as 'things' hanging around the office," she says. There, Barbara developed plans for a factory in Canada, a house in Connecticut, and the new library at Hunter College. She stopped working for Breuer in ▸

Kathy Formby sits reading in a Bertoia chair for Knoll at an almond-shaped Danish dining table beneath two vintage PH Snowball lamps by Poul Henningsen for Louis Poulsen. Scott talks on the corded phone in the kitchen. p. 242

1957, pregnant with her first child, Steve. "I changed his diaper on our drafting table," she recalls.

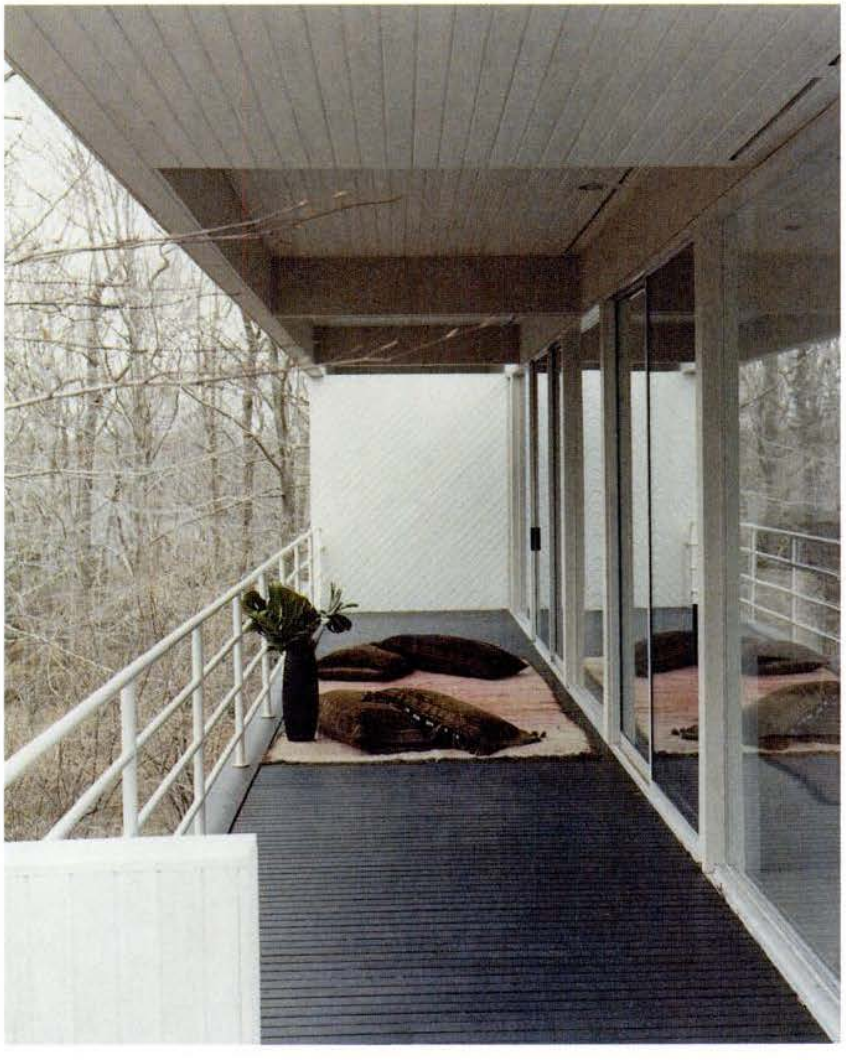
By the early '60s, the Neskis had established their own firm. "We shared everything and presented ourselves to clients as a team," says Barbara, but clients often had a more conventional view. "Invariably the wife would direct her questions about interiors to me and the husband would bring up money matters with Julian."

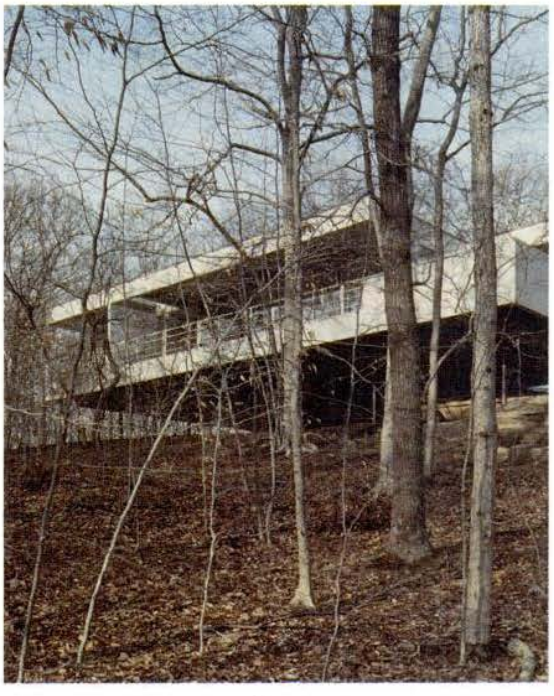
The Neskis' clients weren't merely escaping their weekday pressures; they were out to make a statement, transplanting their edgy energy from the city to the beach. The Simon House (Remsenburg, 1972) was just such a reflection of its owners' careers. Peter Simon starred on a soap opera and his then-wife, Merle, was a singer/dancer on Broadway. The house's 11 rooms were stacked in spiraling order, each on its own level. As one progressed up the central staircase, the ceilings got higher and the views expanded, culminating in a panoramic view of the ocean. "It opened up nicely as a stage set," says Barbara. "We liked to imagine Merle dancing down those stairs while her husband played the piano on a different level."

Barbara and Julian were equals in the studio. "We never had an argument about design," says Barbara. "We usually knew exactly what the other had in mind." Julian always tried to get the right proportion. He would do a tiny sketch and then Barbara would blow it up and make it work as a building. "I'm a puzzle freak—I love crosswords and jigsaw puzzles—so I worked more on the plans and how everything fit together." With the Simon House Julian had the idea of squares within squares, but it didn't work until Barbara turned it all at a 45-degree angle and stacked the levels into an ascending sequence.

The Formby House (1980) has all the moves of a classic Neski beach house minus the million-dollar views—it's actually a ten-minute walk to the nearest beach. Originally built for a corporate headhunter, the house hovers on narrow pilotis above a thickly wooded lot in Amagansett. Barbara envisioned this as the house's compositional thrust and an early rendering shows how supporting columns, railings, and window mullions echoed the forms of surrounding trees. Discrete volumes were wrapped in cedar siding punctured with large openings. An open deck cantilevered out to one side. ▸

The house reaches out to surrounding views through sliding glass doors and cantilevered sundecks. "In spring we have the dogwood trees hanging over the deck and it feels as if they were blossoming right in the middle of the living room," says Kathy Formby.





Scott and Kathy relax on a pair of vintage leather sofas by Florence Knoll (opposite). The round table was bought at a flea market. p. 242

By 1995, however, when Scott and Kathy Formby, two young fashion designers, came across the house, it was badly in need of repair. "When we first saw the house, we knew whoever designed it was on the same wavelength," says Scott. "We shared the same values, the same aesthetics." They went with their instincts and decided to buy it on the spot. Instead of hiring another architect, they sought out the Neskis, asking them to help update the house. "These were the coolest people we ever met," recalls Kathy. "Barbara was wearing a big old sweater. At first we were nervous, like Mom and Dad were coming over, but we bonded with them right away."

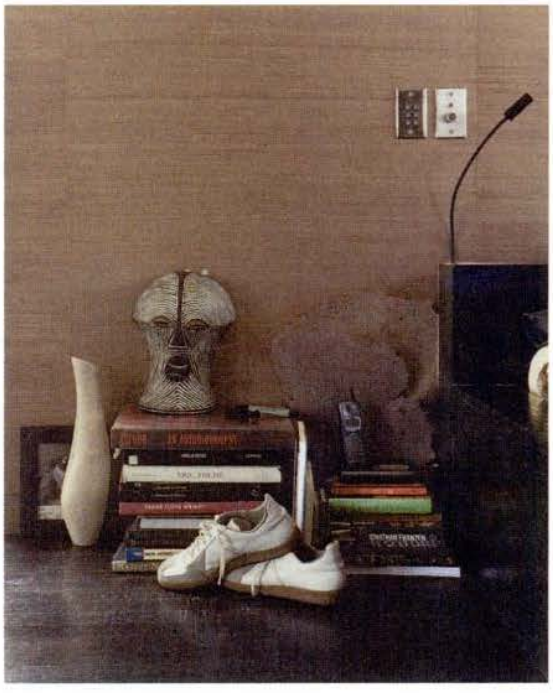
The outside, which had been silvery gray, was stained white and the outdoor shower was removed from the front. Interior spaces were also painted white to create a neutral setting for the Formbys' collection of mid-century furniture. The hollow-core doors were replaced with solid ebony-stained ones. Woven-seagrass wallpaper hangs in the bedrooms and a bed of smooth black stones lies on the bathroom floor.

"The house is so beautifully placed," says Kathy. "There is the light shimmering through the trees. It's like you're cloaked in trees. In spring we have the dogwoods hanging over the deck, and it feels as if they were blossoming right in the middle of the living room." Neski houses were never just plunked onto the site like abstract objects, but were intimately connected to the natural landscape. Openings and decks were determined by view lines and prevailing breezes.

Looking back, Barbara is delighted with the work the Formbys have done. "They really captured the original spirit of the house. Their enthusiasm is wonderful."

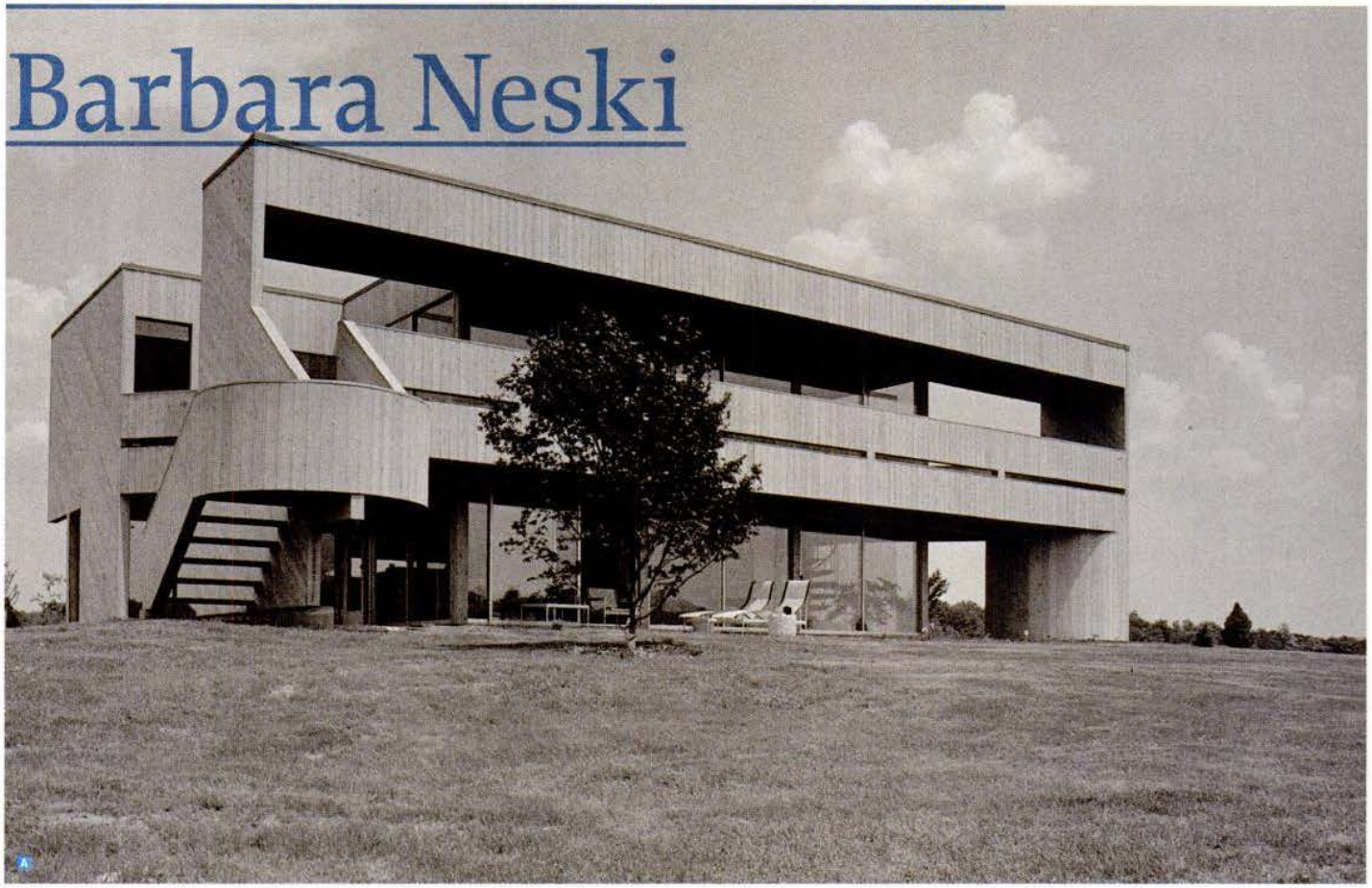
Throughout their four decades of practice, Barbara and Julian kept their office small, partially by choice, retaining a one-to-one relationship with each and every project, drawing all the details themselves. After Julian died in 2004, the architectural practice slowed somewhat, but Barbara continues to work on apartment and office interiors in Manhattan. Though things have gotten easier for women working in architecture, Barbara is always cognizant of the trail she helped blaze. "It wasn't easy being a woman architect in those days," says Barbara. "I wasn't supposed to know anything unless it was about the kitchen or the furniture." ▸

The house has become a setting for the Formbys' extensive collection of mid-century furniture and contemporary art, like the Bramble Suspension by Kevin Inkawhich (below), mixed together with new and found objects that they've brought back from frequent travels.



Books, sneakers, and a cordless phone mingle on the floor of the Formby's master bedroom (above); the soft light that suffuses the guest room (right) gets the occasional helping hand from an Isamu Noguchi Akari series table lamp. p. 242

Ten Things You Should Know About Barbara Neski



1 / Barbara Neski was one of the few women to attend Harvard's Graduate School of Design program in architecture under Walter Gropius.

2 / Barbara worked in Marcel Breuer's New York office from 1953 to 1957 but was paid considerably less than her male colleagues, even though she was equally qualified.

3 / Barbara wasn't the only female architect working for Marcel Breuer in the mid-'50s; BJ Barnes was also on his staff.

4 / The Neskis' Chalif House introduced a modern version of the New England vernacular to the Hamptons and was included in an exhibition at the 1970 World's Fair in Osaka, Japan. It was also featured in several magazines—*Look* described it as a "saltbox for all seasons."

5 / Barbara worked on several non-residential projects in and around New York City, including the Tivoli Towers housing complex in Brooklyn (1973) and the elegantly refined interiors of the Foundation Center (1985).

6 / The Cates House (1968–1970) was inhabited by three psychoanalysts: a woman, her husband, and her ex-husband, along with their various children. When the Neskis dropped by to see the finished house, they found all three shrinks together on their hands and knees. "They were finger painting on the living-room floor," recalls Barbara. "We didn't ask any questions. They were good clients."

7 / Barbara taught architectural studio at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn from 1978 to 1992.

8 / In the 1980s she converted an old firehouse in New York's Chelsea neighborhood into a center for a non-profit organization that taught building trades to unemployed women.

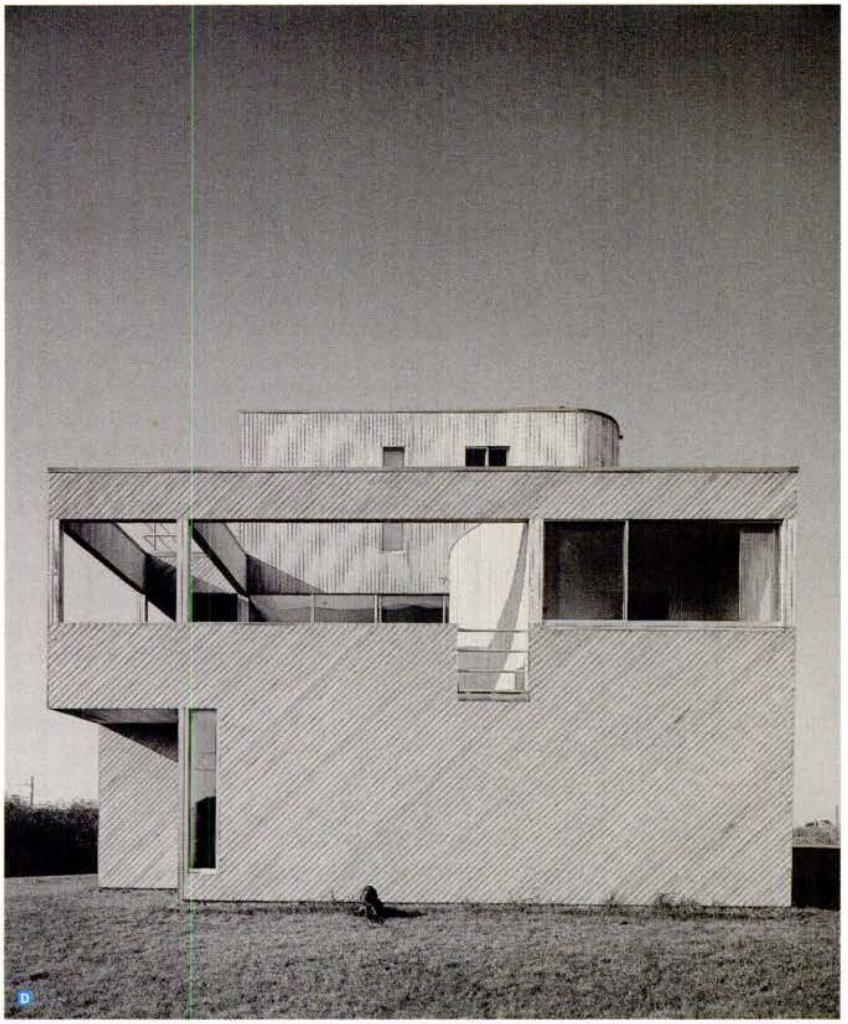
9 / Barbara was made a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects in 1989.

10 / Barbara is currently the director of the Viridian Artists Gallery in New York. ■

PHOTO BY NORMAN McGRATH

A Frisch House
B Chiaraviglio House
C Formby House
D Kaplan House

Most of the thirty-six (or more) free-standing houses by Barbara and Julian Neski were designed as vacation or weekend getaways. As many as twenty-five of these houses were built in the Hamptons.

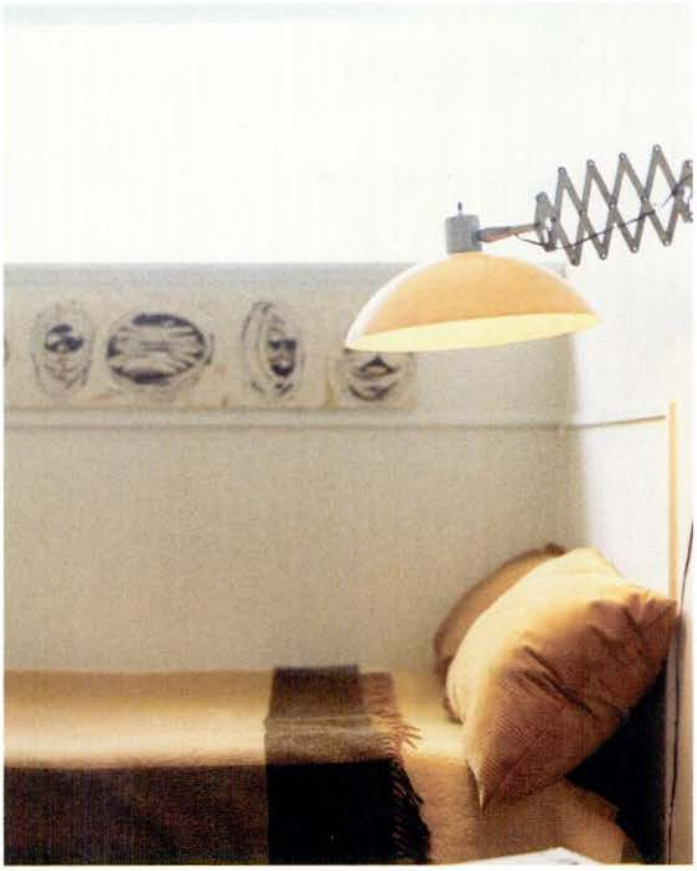


PHOTOS BY NORMAN McGRATH (A,B), WAYNE FUJI (C,D)

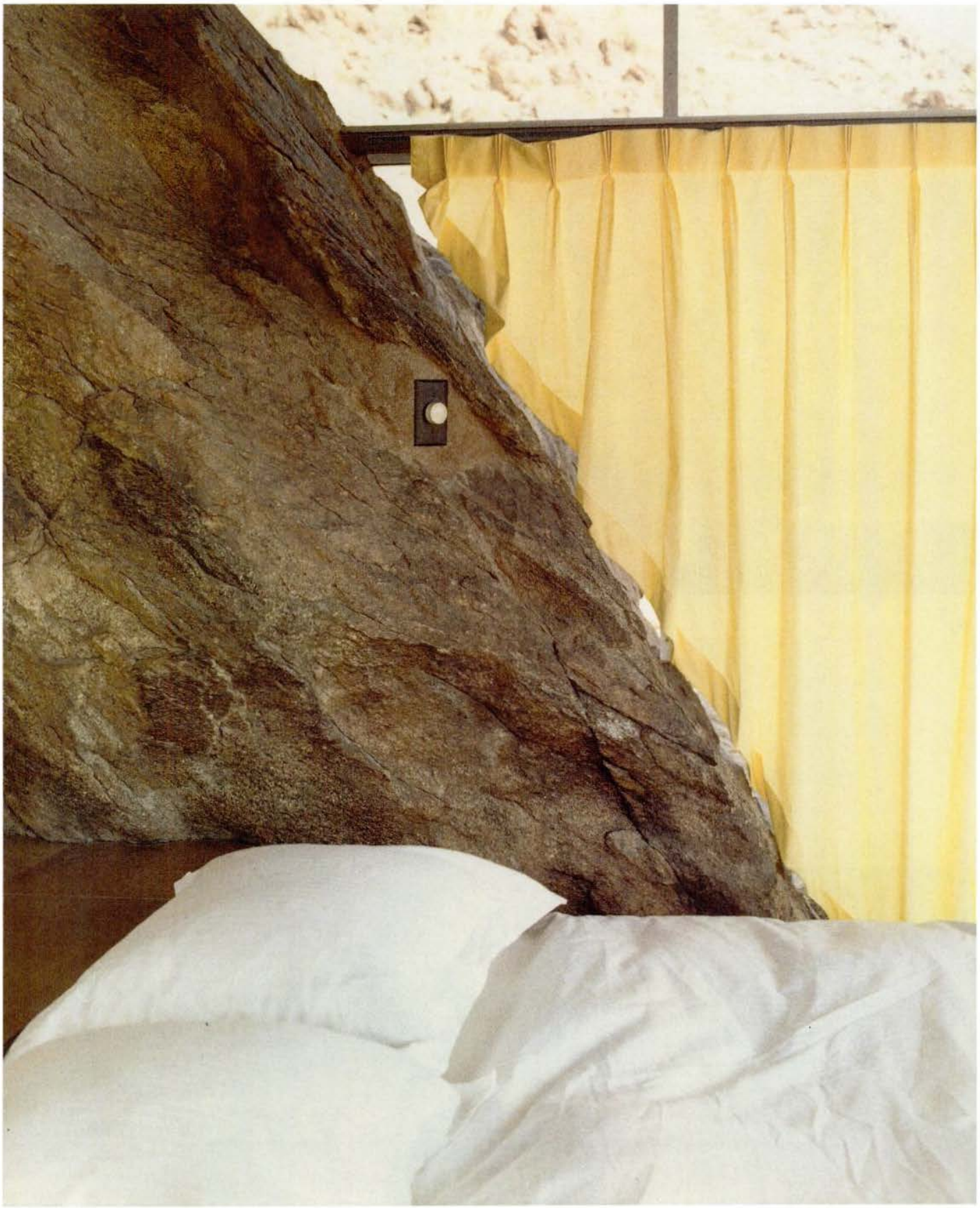
Photos by Leslie Williamson

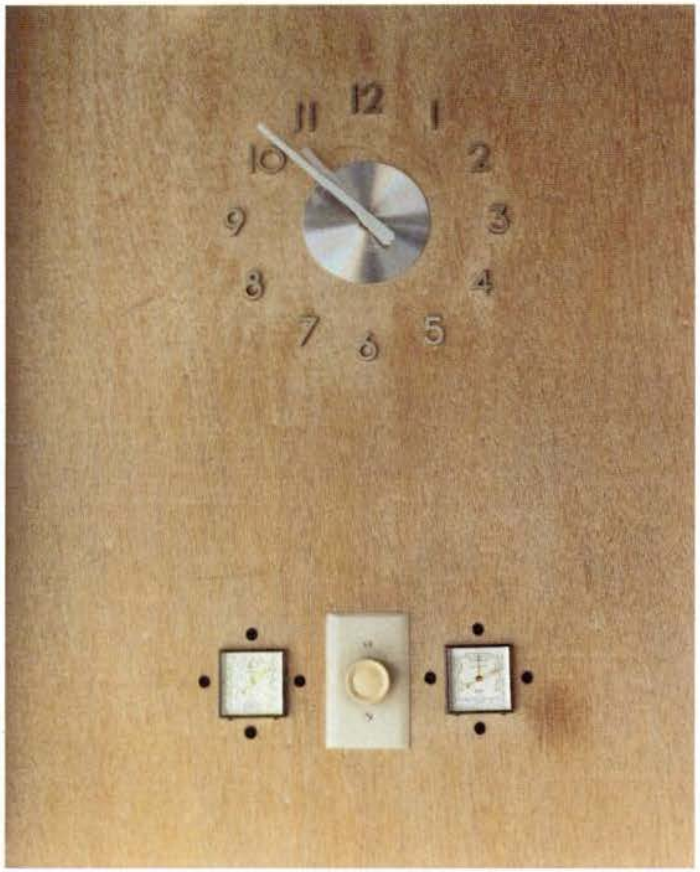
Inner Space

Leslie Williamson's photographic series of architects' and designers' personal spaces captures the way the designers inhabit their homes and humanize their iconic aesthetics. "Sometimes people's personal effects and possessions give you a clearer sense of the person than an actual portrait," explains Williamson, "I found the more I photographed, the tighter and closer my images became." By focusing on quiet, interior vignettes, Williamson reveals an intimacy in each space, and, in turn, makes each person's life's work all the more tenable.

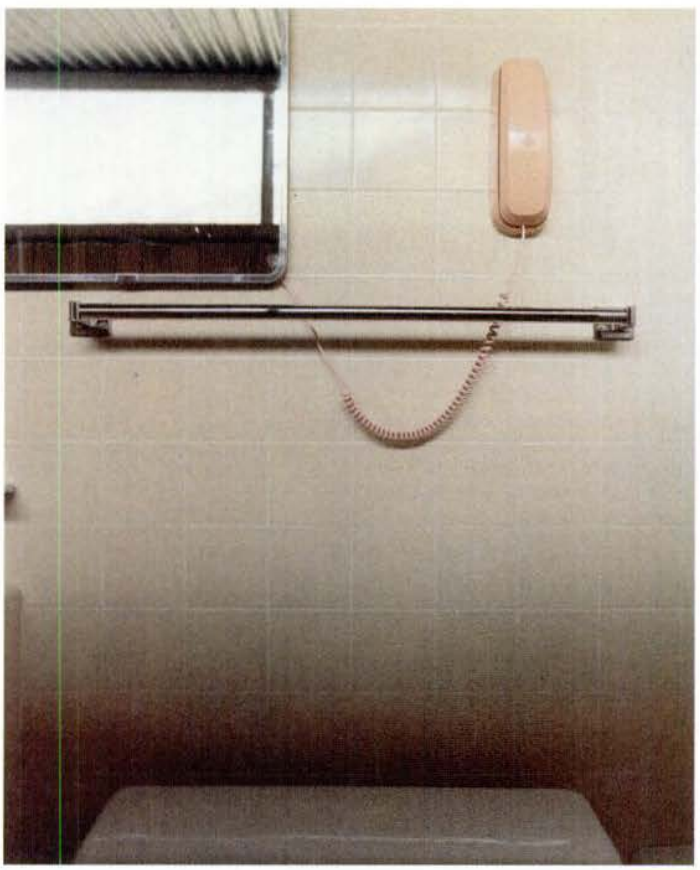


Walter Gropius

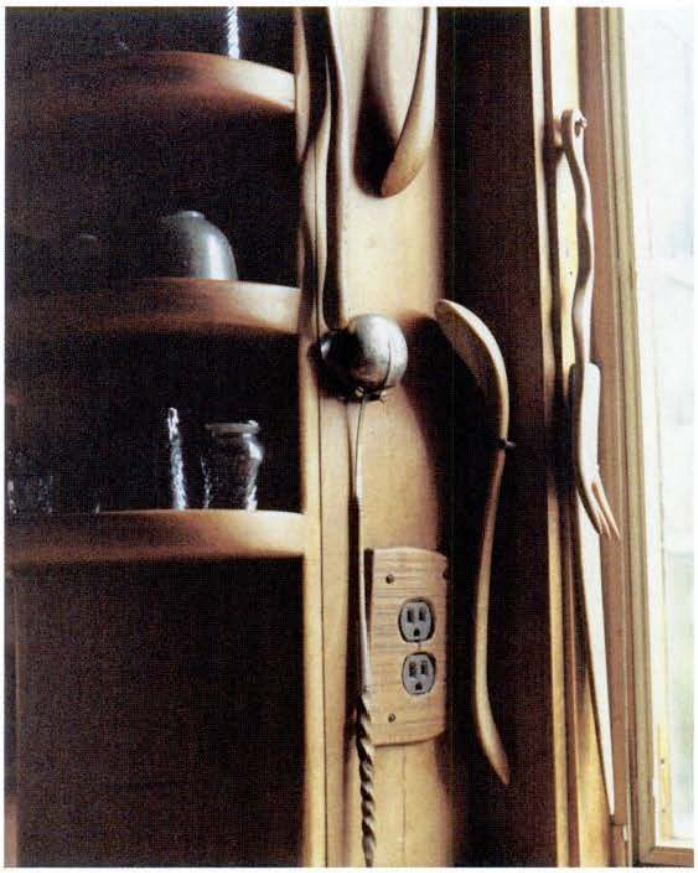




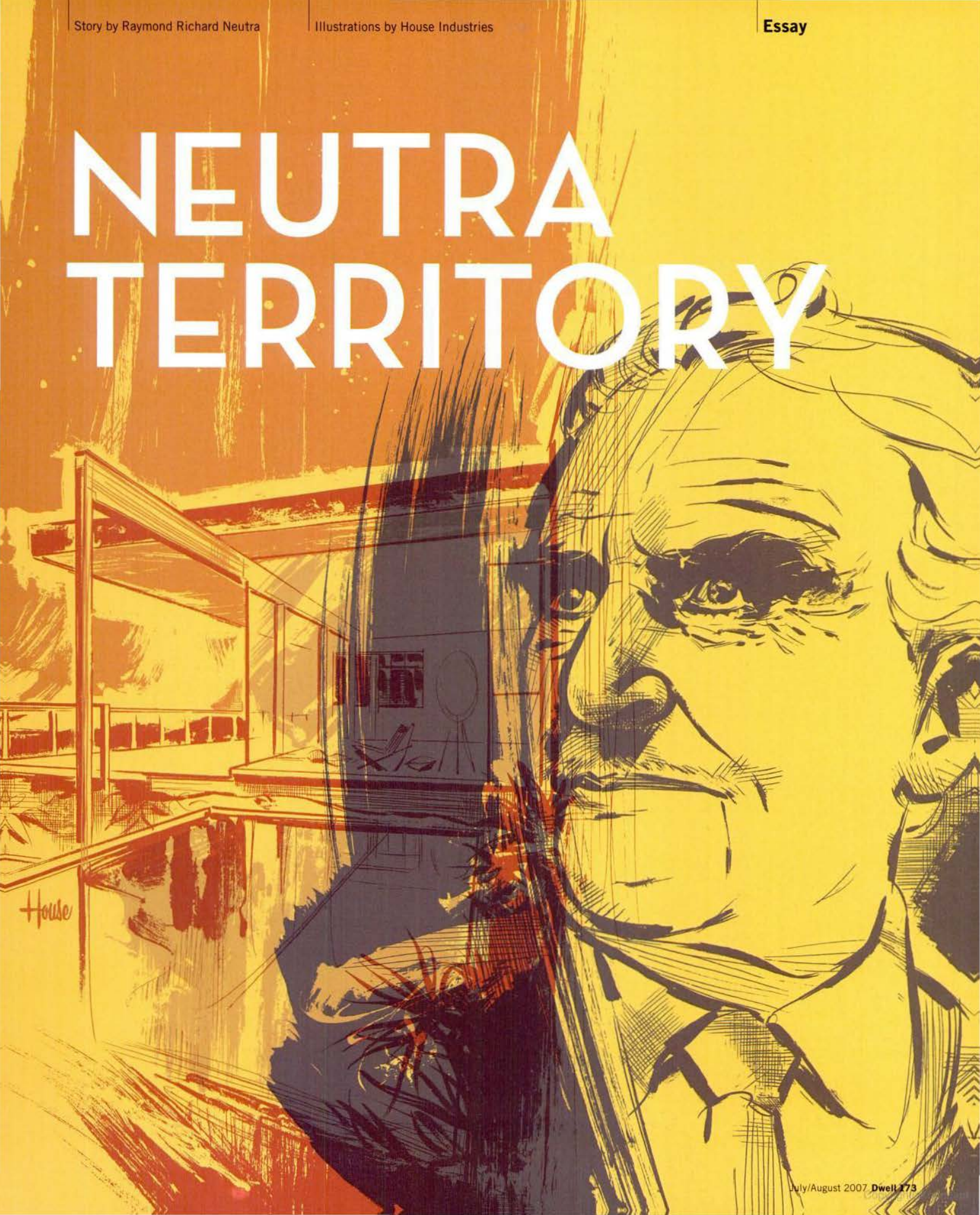
Albert Frey



Joseph Esherick



NEUTRA TERRITORY



In the late afternoon of Friday, December 12, 1958, a caravan of automobiles pulled away from the Oakland and San Francisco airports and headed for the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. They stopped in front of a brown-shingled building on a hill at the upper end of the campus, and out stepped a remarkable cargo. Ten of America's most famous architects emerged onto the sidewalk and climbed a set of wooden stairs to the living room of the house above. There, they greeted colleagues who, like them, had agreed to participate in a weekend of psychological testing aimed at understanding, once and for all, the personality traits that combine to produce extraordinary creativity.

My father, Richard Neutra, was, at 66, the oldest of the bunch, with a productive and influential career that had begun in the mid-1920s. Pietro Belluschi, who had immigrated to the United States around the same time as my father but had gotten a somewhat slower start, was now Dean of Architecture at MIT. Louis Kahn, another late bloomer, had likely been chosen by the architecture editors and professors who comprised the selection committee on the strength of his 1953 Yale University Art Gallery and the Richards Medical Center, which was then under construction at the University of Pennsylvania. I.M. Pei, at 41 one of the youngest in the group, had formed his own firm a couple of years earlier. Gropius-trained Eliot Noyes was at that point designing the Selectric typewriter for IBM. Marcel Breuer–trained John Johansen was already well established and a member of the Connecticut clique (along with Noyes, Breuer, Philip Johnson, and Landis Gores) known as the Harvard Five. Ernest J. Kump, A. Quincy Jones, Warren Callister, and Raphael Soriano had variously distinguished themselves as leading lights of what would become known as California's mid-century modernist movement.

Talking about that evening 40 years later, research psychologist Wallace B. Hall told me it was a convivial meeting over sherry. For the subjects of this unusual UC Berkeley Institute of Personality Assessment and Research study, the prospect of spending the weekend in each other's company was part of the attraction. For me, that weekend is connected in memory to a day not long afterward when I came home from college for Christmas vacation. My father had just received his test results, and I have always remembered his gleeful reaction to them. They had conclusively demonstrated, he said, that he should never have been an architect at all. He should have been a missionary instead!

Of course, in a sense that's exactly what he was—a missionary for a particular kind of architecture. He and the generation of European architects who had watched the slaughter of their best and brightest during World War I had vowed to do away with the vanity of European royalty and the havoc it had wrought—indeed, to strip from architecture all the trappings of historical reference and imperialist fantasy. Theirs was to be an architecture for Everyman. Conversion was called for in California, away from the styles born of clammy climates, away from the contrivances of outmoded social elites. For my father, this meant using the latest technologies to serve a client's sociological, psychological, and physiological needs and bring that client back to a nurturing and unpretentious nature. The gospel of the flat roof and the sliding glass door had arrived.

It was years before I gave any serious thought to what had gone into this valiant and endearing attempt by some of the country's smartest psychologists to explain what made people like my father tick. In 1980, when I moved to Berkeley to begin my work with the state health department as a physician epidemiologist, ▸

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I knew that the records from that weekend were probably stored somewhere on the UC Berkeley campus, and I thought I would try to locate them some day. I wondered if they would show me my father as I knew him, and I also wondered if they would confirm my father's belief and my own observation that he went about doing architecture in a way that was somewhat different from other successful architects.

He used to muse about his slightly older Viennese compatriot, Rudolf M. Schindler, who had died five years before the Berkeley gathering. Despite the fact that they had both apprenticed to Adolf Loos, who had declared ornament to be a crime; despite the fact that they had both admired Otto Wagner, who late in his career had broken away into a new, "modern" way of doing architecture; despite the fact that they had both worked for Frank Lloyd Wright—in short, despite telling similarities, my father and Schindler approached architecture and their clients in radically different ways. My father, who had one short-sighted and one far-sighted eye, tended to think in terms of easily separated horizontal and vertical planes. He held Schindler in awe for his ability to imagine, design, and build innovative three-dimensional spaces. Schindler, who early on had given up sculpture to become an architect, looked at the shaping of internal spatial volumes as the legitimate objective of architecture. He created one innovation after another by improvising as he went, often without drawings since he frequently served as the general contractor on his jobs. My father aspired to achieve a steady evolution toward ever more serviceable products by using standardized details and elaborate working drawings. Affable Schindler accommodated his clients' wishes in an informal way and often maintained a personal friendship with them. My father aspired to be like a kindly family physician—he recorded his clients' needs in a formalized diary and after making the diagnosis he "prescribed" the necessary environment. While he stayed in touch with some of his clients, he always maintained a degree of distance.

Most of all, while he shared with Schindler—and many others—an interest in the engineering of new materials and structural types, my father was unique in his belief that the ideal architecture was informed by physiology. The psychological and sociological program was important, but physiology held the key to successful design. He hoped that scientific knowledge would enable him to create environments where the probability of certain definable results would be increased and that some of these results would pertain to experiences that formerly had been couched solely in aesthetic terms.

Was it possible that the Berkeley researchers could have picked up on these traits and differences? And would my memories of my father bear any similarity to their findings?

In October 2002, I sent an inquiring email to the chairman of the psychology department at UC Berkeley. A few evenings later, I received a phone call from Dr. Hall, who had been a member of the research team. In the quavering voice of an elderly gentleman, he informed me that the materials related to my father were in fact stored at the university. Although he had retired 20 years earlier, Dr. Hall still went in every day, and he invited me for a visit. He ushered me into a large, windowless room lined with tall, olive-colored, metal filing cabinets—the fruits of a generation of creativity research directed by a man named Donald MacKinnon, who, among other things, had developed tests to assess the suitability of World War II soldiers for assignments as OSS spies. Dr. Hall pulled out my father's file and a number of articles ▸

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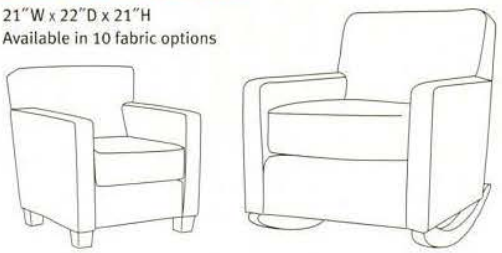


that outlined the conclusions derived from the tests.

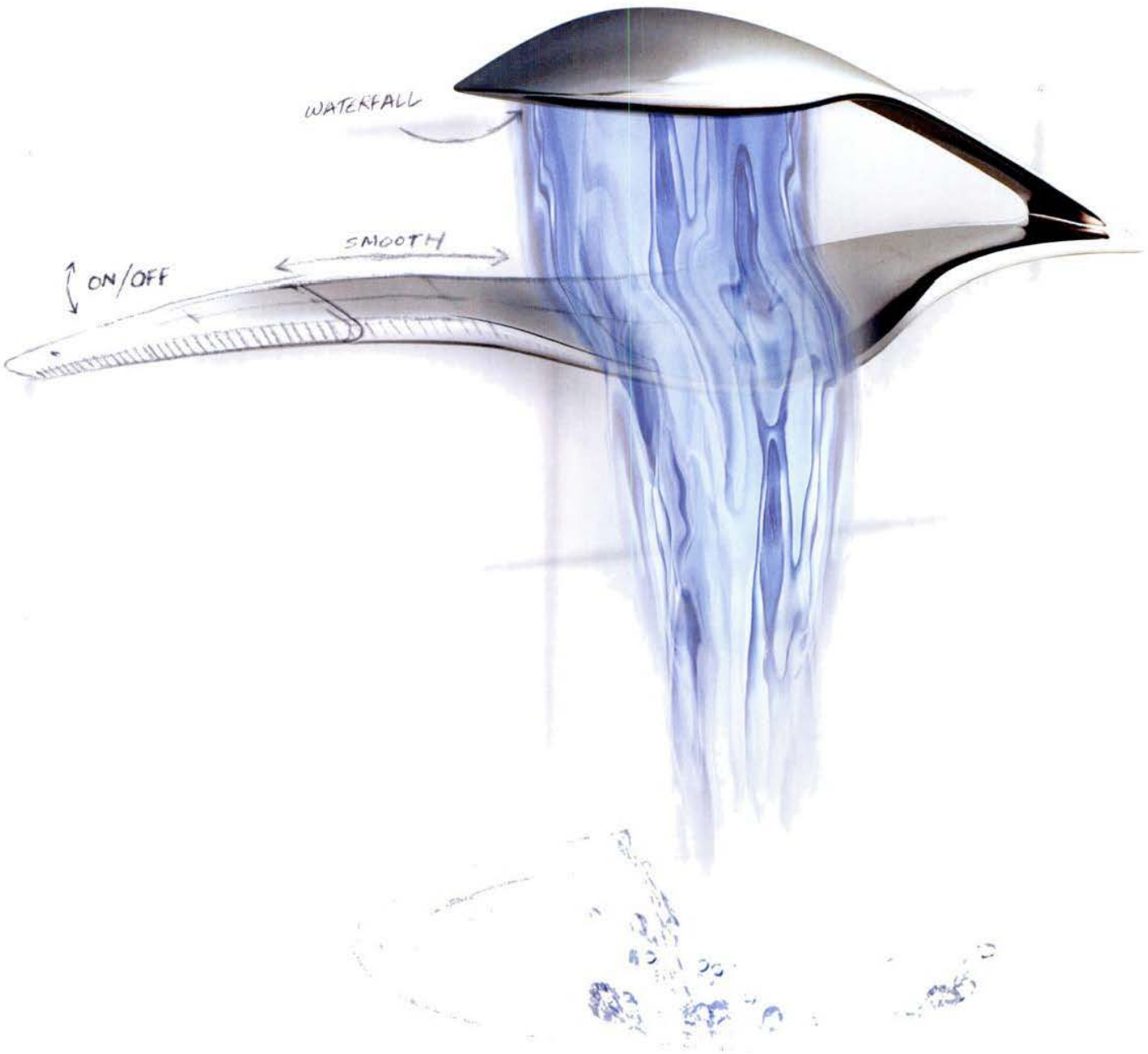
It's worth going into some detail as to the design of the study, because it shows the lengths to which the principal investigators went to unravel the riddle of the creative personality. The general intent, as described in the quarterly publication of the Carnegie Corporation of New York (which funded the study), was to find out what highly creative people were like, how they thought, and what kinds of situations would foster or smother creativity. Professor MacKinnon chose to focus on architects because they had to combine artistic, interpersonal, business, and technical skills in order to be successful. From there, he and his team zeroed in on the question of what distinguished the renowned creative architects from the rest. Ultimately, in a 1962 article in *American Psychologist*, MacKinnon would conclude that the renowned creative architects had a greater degree of self-assertive energy, a more complex ego structure, and greater flexibility, and were reasonably independent of social constraints, uninterested in making a good impression, capable of being aggressive and assertive, and free to follow their own aesthetic values and ethical standards. He noted, too, that they were able to embrace and resolve the tension between their strong theoretical and aesthetic commitments. They demonstrated unusually wide interests and were more open to emotion than the other architects were.

Using lists generated by professors of architecture and editors of architectural magazines, MacKinnon had selected 40 of the most creative architects in America for the study. (Frank Lloyd Wright had declined the invitation.) My father was placed in one of four subgroups of ten. Another group of 40 architects who were younger associates of these luminaries served as one comparison group. A third group of 40 architects, chosen at random, served as another. The second and third groups were sent tests to complete at home. The first group completed those same tests and were interviewed during the course of the weekend by clinical psychologists, who then composed reports.

The report on my father's session opened with this impression from the young clinical psychologist who interviewed him: "R. Neutra gives an extremely impressive appearance. A shock of white hair, very black, bushy, angular eyebrows, tall of stature...he could easily look foreboding; but his slightly weak mouth eases the severity of his appearance and perhaps gives a suggestion of cruelty."

The researchers also employed two well-known personality assessment tools, the Gough Adjective Check List and a Q-sort by Block. On a 1 (low) to 9 (high) scale as to ten traits, my father scored a 9 for inquiringness, aesthetic sensitivity, sense of destiny, and maturity and responsibility. He scored an 8 for ability to evaluate, personal stability, and adjustment. He scored a 7 for intellectual competence and independence. He scored a 6 for originality.

On the basis of what I know about my father, I would have awarded him a 4 for stability and a 9 for originality. My father had tremendous ups and downs, and while he ultimately did cope with the setbacks, he perseverated on the problem at hand and invariably pulled in everyone around him to share in the grief. With regard to originality, it must be acknowledged that the breadth in form of his creations did not come close to that of a Frank Lloyd Wright or an Eero Saarinen or even a Rudolph Schindler. As I've mentioned, he developed a philosophical rationale for the stability and evolutionary nature of his productions. Indeed, when asked to name his best work, he demurred: "The whole thing is one whole river. ▸



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I see the whole development—like in a tune, which is the best part?" But when pushed, he chose the Palm Springs winter vacation house that he designed for Edgar Kaufmann, who spent his spring and summer in Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater. He characterized it thus: "The problem in its purest form. Just a question of human response to mystery of the site. Can I make it fit in terms of human response?"

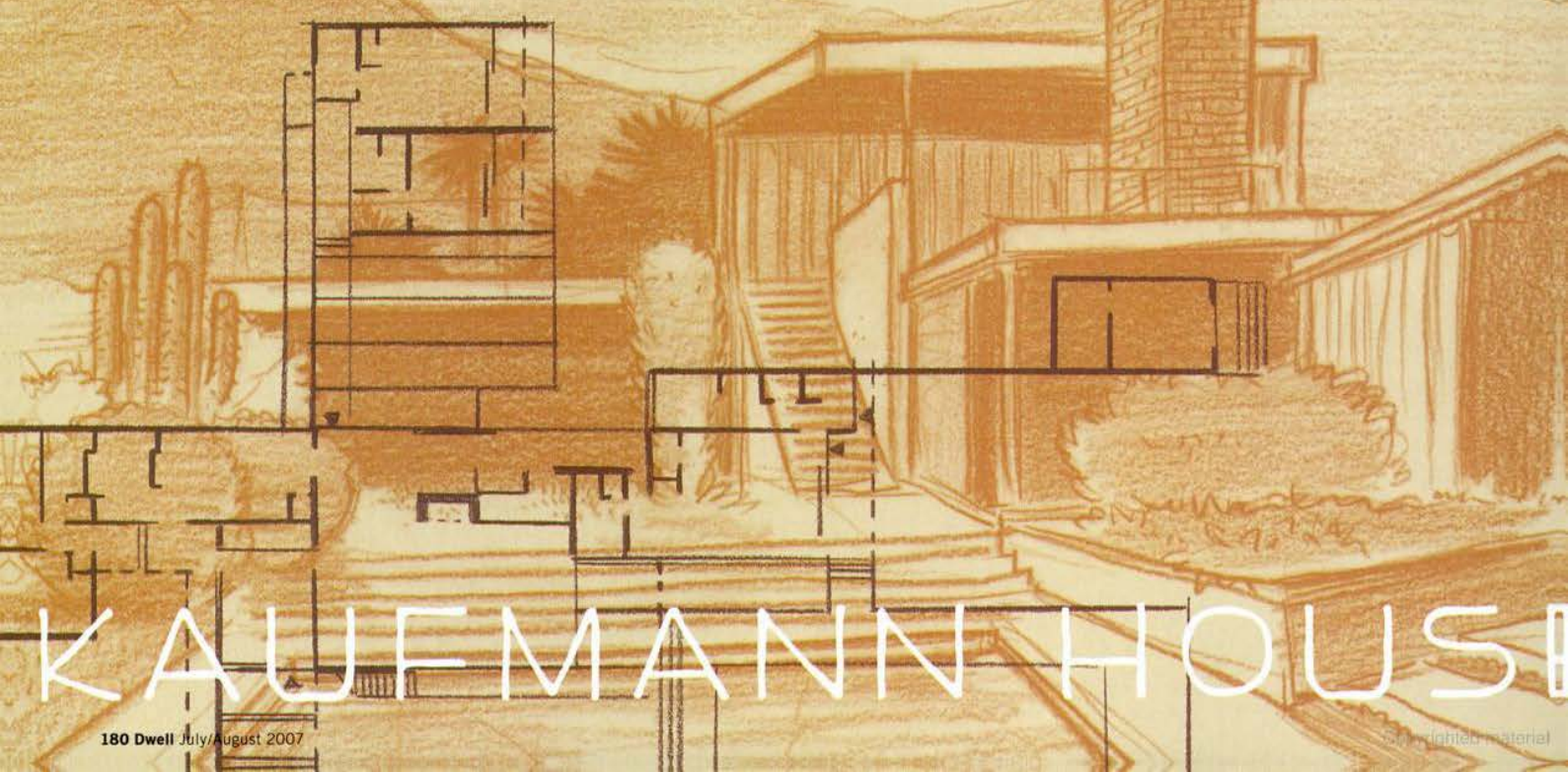
I think it would be inaccurate to assume that my father tried to be a volcano of new forms and in failing developed an elaborate excuse for his lack of originality. I would guess that he felt a genuine satisfaction in the act of subtle refinement, akin to the obvious satisfaction that he spoke about and revealed in body language when he spent hours, with a soft pencil, shading in dark shadows in an architectural rendering to make the shape of a new design sing out to the viewer. (It may be that he bequeathed similar synaptic connections to my older brother Frank, who was autistic. Frank could spend hours smiling and toiling over his geometric coloring book, making sure that each shape was smoothly and perfectly shaded, with no overlap to the adjacent shape.)

However, with regard to intellectual matters, my father was really one of a kind. I've had the opportunity, in the course of my own career, to meet some remarkable people, yet I have come across few who were as willing to think through things from first principles or in ways that showed as much independence and originality as my father. He was a thorough-going contrarian in conversation, always playing the devil's advocate and often remarking with satisfaction after some particularly interesting riff, "I don't think anyone has looked at this issue in quite this way before." My ability to follow where his thoughts were taking him—to challenge him with relevant questions and to truly enjoy and admire the fireworks of his monologues—was the most positive and affectionate aspect of our relationship. It was this kind of mental fencing that made up his attempts to engage with other people, and those who either enjoyed playing the straight man to his verbal antics or were capable of engaging in full-fledged, if playful, battle made up the very small number with whom he really clicked.

The psychologist's report touched on these intellectual tendencies: "To simply say that he has a high need for achievement would tend to be misleading. That statement is too mild. There is no room for question regarding his ability to solve any problem that might interest him. Not only must he be able to solve them all, but he must solve them better than anyone else."

A battery of pencil and paper tests had come forth. Dr. Hall had the architects build a mosaic from one-inch colored squares, and the results were rated by art professors. My father did not particularly distinguish himself here. There was a Concept Mastery test by Terman, a Gottschaldt Figures test, an Allport-Vernon-Lindzey Study of Values test. My father resembled the others in his group by scoring low on economic values and high on aesthetics. He scored unusually high on theoretic matters. The Barron-Welsh Art Scale showed that he and his ilk were significantly more likely to prefer complex line drawings. His group as a whole also had a high femininity score on the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and again on the Strong Vocational Interest Blank, reflecting wider interests and openness to emotion. It was in this last test that my father's vocational interests were observed to be more theological than architectural.

One of the most dramatic differences between my father's group and the comparison groups was their relative scores on the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. ▸



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My father scored moderately as Introverted, Intuitive, Feeling, and Perceiving (INFP). According to the Team Technology website [www.teamtechnology.co.uk], INFP types function in a team by contributing innovative ideas, generating team spirit through sensitive listening, and finding win-win solutions, while they also irritate by being idealistic, seeming to be out of touch, spending too much time thinking, avoiding conflict, and focusing too much on interpersonal issues. I think I recognize some of my father's traits in this description.

By the time I got to the "intuition" versus "sensing" test, though, I had begun to formulate the opinion that there was something unsatisfactory about at least some of these psychometric tests. In this particular one, those who "sense" are people who prefer to act on facts that can be observed through their senses rather than rely on possibilities and relationships that can be intuited. One hundred percent of my father's group preferred intuition to sensing, compared with 59 percent of the randomly chosen group. Seemingly an enormous disparity, but was it a valuable one? I decided to test the test. In 1960, there were about 34,000 architects in the United States, only 40 of whom—or 0.12 percent of the total—were apparently considered by architecture professors and editors to be the top tier creatively. What would have happened if every architect in America had taken the Myers Briggs Type Indicator test? We can presume that 59 percent of them, or about 20,000, would also have preferred intuition to sensing. Among them would be found the famous 40, lumped in with a few extraordinary but unrecognized talents as well as thousands of undistinguished architects. It makes me wonder how successful those psychometric tests were in predicting promising spies in World War II.

This kind of problem piques my interest because, as an epidemiologist, I look for tests that are "specific"—whether they're trying to pick out patients with a rare disease or architects with a rare talent. To be "specific," a test like Myers Briggs must almost never predict creativity in someone whose true nature is plodding and dull. But I doubt whether any of the tests the architects took could meet that specificity criterion.

And if all these psychometric differences are interesting but don't add up to, say, the precise personages of my father, Kahn, Pei, and the others—then do they serve any purpose? Reading through the test results, I found them meaningful but probably not in the way the researchers had hoped. Assuming (as I do) that most of these differences would have been present even when the subjects were young and not yet famous, they remind us that much of artistic talent is inborn, and that this talent involves many traits that can provide a virtual infinity of ways to become a great architect or artist. This tells me that we need to support creative possibility. As a public health professional used to the idea of broad-based campaigns, I would assert that there are nutritional, child-rearing, and educational interventions that are cheap enough to provide to everyone and that, once applied, can help increase the rate of successfully creative people.

This brings us back to my father. He had been very lucky in this regard. He grew up in *fin de siècle* Vienna, with an excellent classical high school education; inexpensive access to theater, opera, symphonies, and museums; and family connections through which he came to know the likes of Freud, Schoenberg, Loos, and Klimt. The Hapsburg investment in these public goods produced my father and Schindler in one generation—two extremely creative architects per 2 million population. The Viennese education didn't make all students into geniuses, but you could argue that it increased the rate ▸

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of fully realized geniuses enough to make a societal difference. It doesn't take too many Leonardos or Botticellis to get things hopping and remembered later as exemplifying a golden age.

My interest was recaptured when I read in the psychologist's report that my father needed to have people not just love him but be devoted to him, and that he feared loved ones would leave him. This finding was apparently based on his having mentioned that he had a recurring nightmare in which his parents abandoned him. Indeed, he said he had had it the night before.

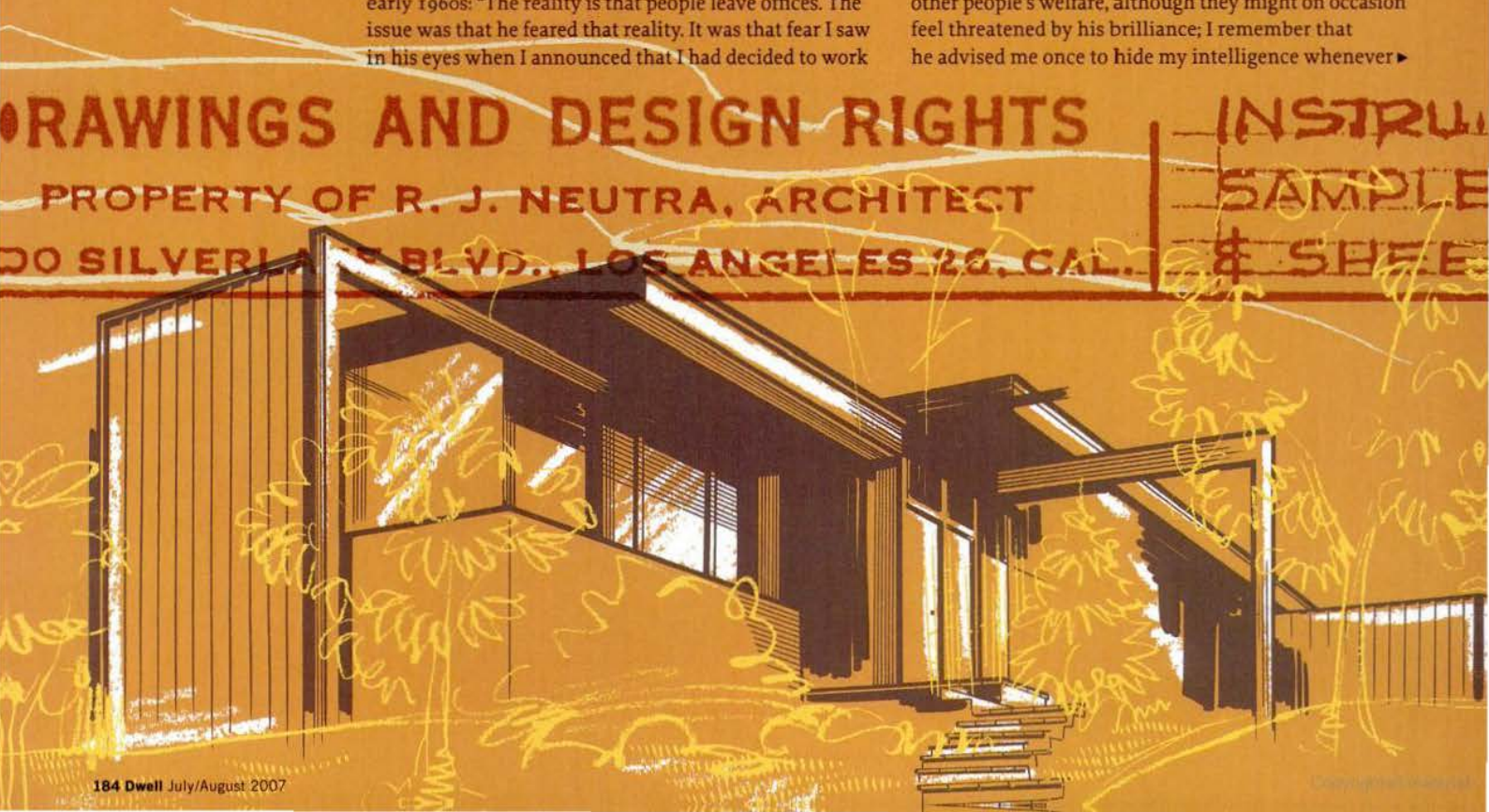
Nothing in what my father ever revealed about his family would have suggested a real risk of abandonment, nor was there any evidence of harsh family pressure to excel. What I know is that he was born to my grandmother when she was 41, 12 years after the birth of her third child; judging by his mother's age and the close spacing of the other children, I think it likely that his conception was not intended. Still, he was the much-admired pet of his parents and older siblings, according to his autobiography. Yet his youth was not without trauma. His mother died when he was 16. The Vienna that nourished him as a boy and young man collapsed after World War I. The emotionally rich community in which he had been reared was in shambles. If he was to have community, it would be of his own devising.

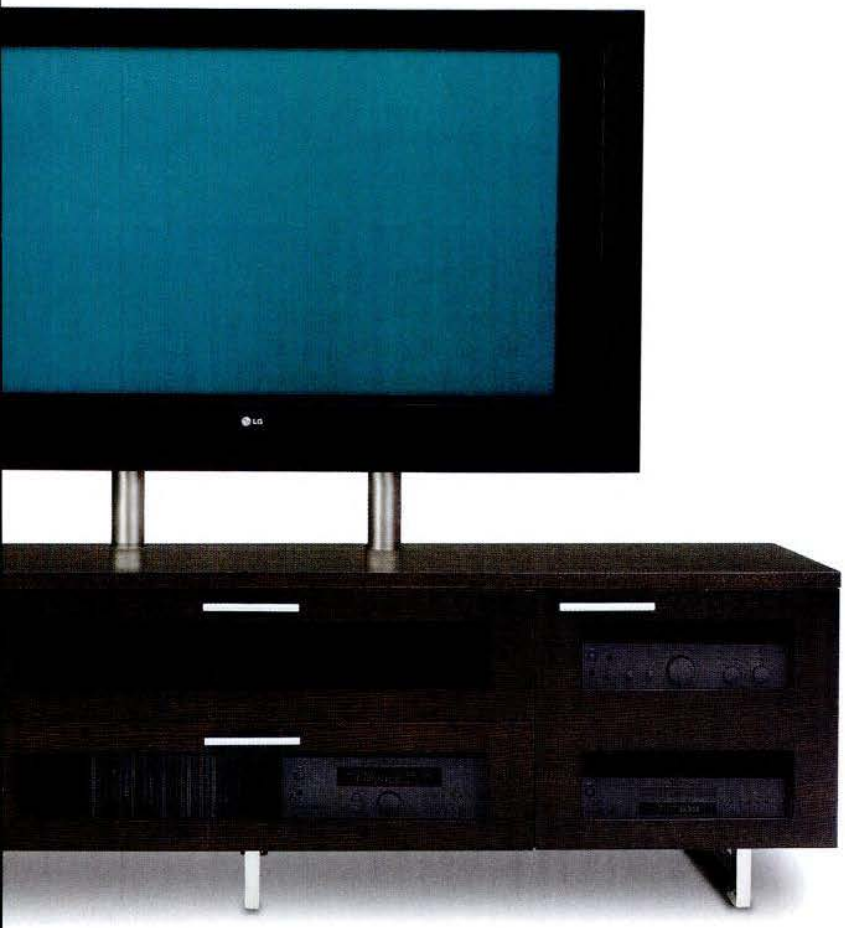
I knew that my father prized, even clung to, sympathetic and skilled collaborators, and I came to learn that he experienced as abandonment the inevitable departure of the many young people who came through his office to get experience. One of these young architects, Joe Hansen, wrote to me about his decision to leave in the early 1960s: "The reality is that people leave offices. The issue was that he feared that reality. It was that fear I saw in his eyes when I announced that I had decided to work in Europe. It made me feel bad because I saw the pain it caused him. I was not leaving him; I was furthering my education. If only he could have empathized with my feelings, he could have shared my happiness and saved us both pain. I still feel the loneliness of that moment, and I wish I could have done something to alleviate it."

Ironically, my father thought that one of his key traits was empathy. When asked if he had any unusual talents, he named empathy and the ability to draw and to communicate orally. (Interestingly, he didn't attribute his success to hard work—his typical day, seven days a week, went from four in the morning to 11 at night, and he proudly claimed never to have taken a vacation.)

What my father called empathy, I would call "social intelligence." He delighted in imagining the interests, needs, and values of unknown users of the schools and public buildings and city plans that he developed, and these imaginings were vivid and accurate enough to result in successful designs. He was selectively observant and intensely interested in clients' and coworkers' motivations, interests, and values, and he used his insights to motivate them to pursue a particular course of action. He knew how to satisfy enough programmatic needs that clients would forget they weren't getting the Cape Cod house whose magazine image they had brought to their first conference with him. When asked how he would define creative achievement in architecture, he answered: "By solving the problem with the full conviction of the client, putting emphasis on something entirely different than what they started with."

In my experience of him, he wanted very much to believe that everybody loved him and that he worked for other people's welfare, although they might on occasion feel threatened by his brilliance; I remember that he advised me once to hide my intelligence whenever ▸





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possible, because I would not be loved for it. (I'm enough of a show-off that I didn't take the advice, and I don't think I have suffered greatly as a result.) He had a manic enthusiasm that he selectively deployed and that was hard to resist. But there was something purely analytic about his assessment of other people. Temple Grandin, the prominent high-functioning autistic who is a professor at Colorado State University, describes herself as "an anthropologist on Mars." She studies people to figure out what motivates them but doesn't imagine that she feels what they feel. This resonates with my perception of my father. Faced with the fledgling architect's flight from the nest, my father could not empathize with the very same kind of exhilaration he himself must have felt in leaving his family, his roots, and his employer (the pioneering architect Erich Mendelsohn) for a new life in America. He just couldn't feel it. Instead, he was flooded with the sense of abandonment.

So there it all was, laid out in a neat record of "objective" testing, the interviewer's notes and inferences, and the interviewee's self-assessments. All there, but incomplete, inconclusive. I saw my father in the test results, and yet—how could it be otherwise?—my own memories and reflections enlarge and alter somewhat the personality that was captured in that process. Despite the high score of 9 on the aesthetic sensitivity test, the picture painted of him did not, for me, properly emphasize his true sensitivity. I think of his deep craving to call upon a muse that would deliver unexpected order and beauty—even as he chose to present himself as the can-do, practical engineer, the prescriber and guarantor of efficacious environments. He didn't reveal that other part of himself, but it was there and it was central.

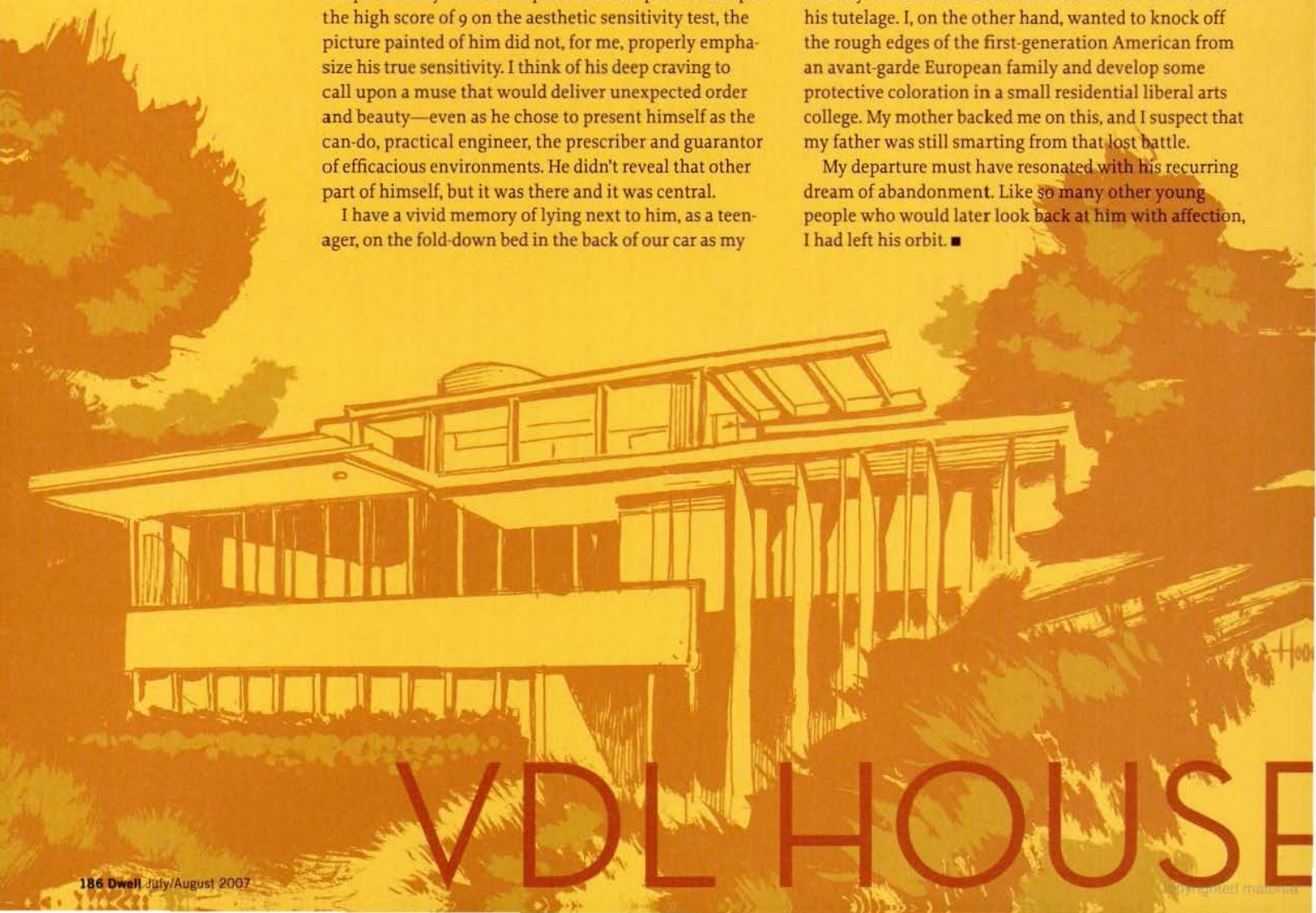
I have a vivid memory of lying next to him, as a teenager, on the fold-down bed in the back of our car as my mother drove us slowly down the winding road of the Kruse Rhododendron State Reserve in a canyon of the Northern California coastal range. Sweeping past above our heads through the back window were the overhanging boughs of white rhododendrons. We lay there transfixed and in silence as the clouds of blossoms swept by us. There were many moments like that with him. The serenity of the near-nature buildings he designed was for him an antidote to the pervasive anxiety of the production process, and a path to the realm of that sensitivity.

One parting note: Buried among the many answers my father gave the psychologist was one concerning me. When asked about his children, he said, "Third son fared badly. He can't become an architect. He wants to become a psychiatrist. He is in conflict."

At the time my father said this, I was doing quite well in my second year at Pomona College, completing my premed courses with good enough grades to eventually get me into medical school. At the same time I was enjoying, without any conflict that I was aware of, a smattering of philosophy, art, drama, and history. I was completely oblivious to my father's concerns; to his credit he never shared them with me.

He had wanted me to live at home and attend UCLA as a day student so that I could continue to benefit from his tutelage. I, on the other hand, wanted to knock off the rough edges of the first-generation American from an avant-garde European family and develop some protective coloration in a small residential liberal arts college. My mother backed me on this, and I suspect that my father was still smarting from that lost battle.

My departure must have resonated with his recurring dream of abandonment. Like so many other young people who would later look back at him with affection, I had left his orbit. ■



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Story by Christopher Bright

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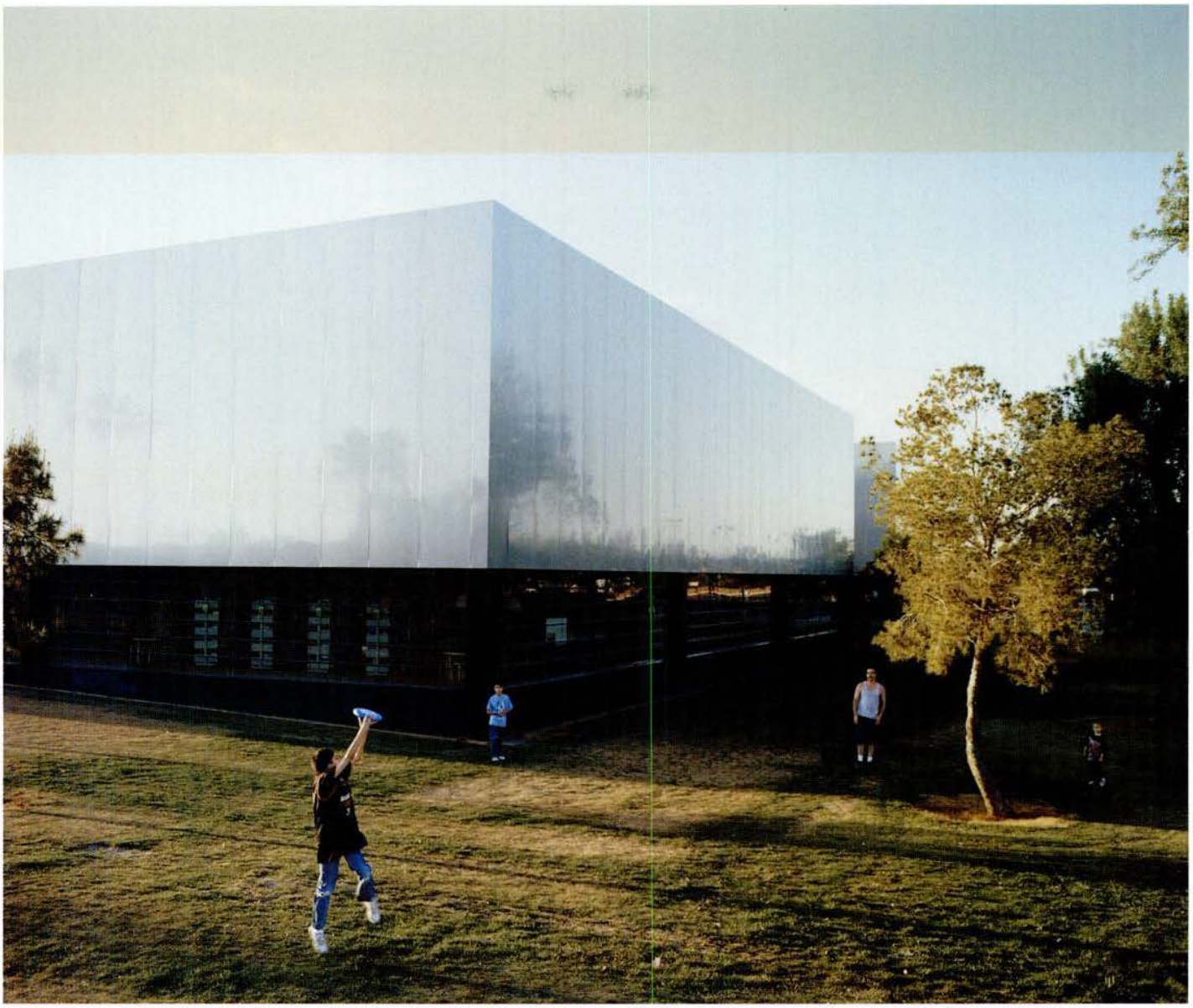
Phoenix Envy

I'm sitting at a conference table in an old Fred Astaire dance studio in Phoenix, Arizona. Outside the sculptural entrance sit rusty gabions filled with black cinder clinkers from a volcano in nearby Flagstaff. Across from me is Will Bruder, dressed in a casual iteration of the quintessential architect's uniform: long-sleeved black shirt complemented by geometric eyeglasses. Bruder is reserved as we shake hands, but as soon as our conversation turns to Phoenix, his manner quickly changes to impassioned extrovert. His name is attached to nearly every important building in the area from the past 30 years, including the Phoenix Central Library and the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art. Frank Lloyd Wright is the one with the storied past in Arizona, but if he's been cast as the Godfather, Bruder is playing Michael Corleone. ▸



Phoenix locals take advantage of the sun near the Palo Verde Library, designed by Gould Evans Associates LC and Wendell Burnette Architects. The building utilizes visual concepts usually applied to retail environments and is connected to an identically scaled structure that serves as the Maryvale Community Center.

It was Phoenix's optimism that attracted Bruder to the city in 1974 when he first opened his studio. "The uniqueness of the horizon and the desert light encouraged everybody to try something different," the architect reminisces. This sanguine attitude, coupled with the arid climate and a low cost of living has brought hordes of carpetbaggers to the Valley of the Sun. Unprecedented growth, some positive, some not, has been the recurring headline in recent years.

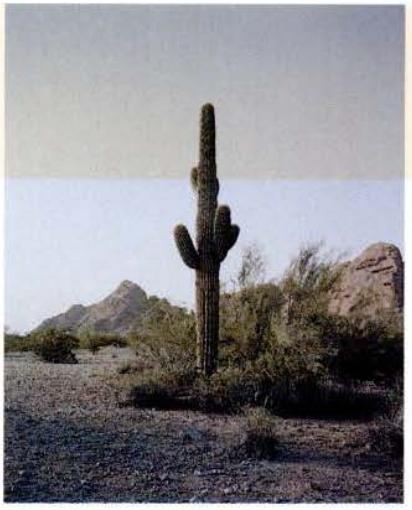
The Phoenix metropolitan area is among the fastest-growing areas in the United States, and urban planning has usually taken a back seat to unfettered development as a result. The car is king here—driving is just about the only way to get around the more than 9,200 square miles of the region. As Bruder says, "In this community it's been hard to define the foot and the bicycle as much as the car.

And he's right. Navigating Phoenix is a lesson in freeway nomenclature. The endless pavement and strip malls remind me of a distant Los Angeles suburb with its own international airport. But hope looms on the beautiful iridescent horizon. A new light-rail system will soon be up and running, the slow food movement is taking hold, and promise still burns eternal in this ever-evolving Southwestern town.

Phoenix seems to be living up to its name. While the tabloids are fond of Maricopa County for its colorful sheriff and the pink jumpsuits he makes inmates wear, I found quality cuisine, a thriving art scene, and unique modern architecture with a keen sense of material and siting. Bruder took some time to talk about desert design, where to find the best burger in town, and how to celebrate the summer solstice in Arizona's biggest city. ►

Phoenix, Arizona

The Cosanti Foundation, a nonprofit educational organization established by Paolo Solari in 1965 to research urban development, is open to the public. The ceramic studio seen here is adjacent to Solari's original drafting room.



What was Phoenix like before it became such a large metropolitan city?
There was a really neat sense of optimism, Western character, and lore. There was this rootedness of epic stories: The Biltmore, the Wright houses and Taliesin, and Cosanti—it was pervasive. It was a cool place to be. It was a time (in 1968) when I was making 50 cents an hour working for Paolo Soleri at Cosanti. After taxes we had an income of about $32 a week. We had board and a place to live on the Cosanti site, but with that money we were able to buy groceries for the week, go to a few movies, travel a little bit, and buy an Indian artifact occasionally; it was pretty cool. All through the '70s and '80s there was a sort of constant optimism.

The millennium has since marked gridlock and sprawl across the entire West from large city to small. The car has taken over. And what we've fortunately seen in the late '90s is awareness and people finally starting to do something. We have our first light-rail route coming online at the end of next year and high hopes about the new densification and where things are going.

What's the artistic community like here, and the creative landscape in general?
The creative landscape has, at its heart, three museum institutions of distinct focus. We have the Phoenix Art Museum, which we call the grand dame. They have a wonderful new second addition, completed by Tod Williams Billie Tsien Architects, which is just finished. It's a contemporary forum that's tied to thinking and lectures and cultural events, so it's abuzz. There's something good happening there that's at the core of the city.

The other museum being SMoCA, which was a transformation I did of a five-plex ▸

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Phoenix, Arizona

The Lisa Sette Gallery (top), located in Scottsdale, has earned a reputation for compelling fine art exhibitions. Architect Will Bruder (below) contemplates at his office, which resides in a former Fred Astaire dance studio.

AMC theater that was completed in 1999, now 20,000 square feet of gallery space. It is a Kunsthalle, if you wish, a museum basically without a major collection. I collaborated on a sculpture court at the site with James Carpenter, the great glass artist. It is well curated, well conceived, and is a shot in the arm for Phoenix.

And then you have the Nelson Fine Arts Center, of course, the award-winning building by Antoine Predock that combines the Hispanic character of this place with the rich collections of Arizona State University.

Which is your favorite to visit?

SMoCA, hands down. Marilu Knode is the senior curator there and they put together really interesting exhibitions. It's definitely worth a look. The two north galleries feature Rotraut Klein-Moquay's collection, who was the widow of Yves Klein. And so we have some Christos and other really killer pieces. That's the nice thing about that museum, you're always surprised. The little gift shop there is a must for architectural books, design objects, and such.

Then there's the gallery scene in Scottsdale, which is interesting but more of a commercial scene, other than the Lisa Sette Gallery. What's become the legacy here are the First Fridays. They have evolved from hundreds to literally thousands of people coming out. There are probably 50 to 60 venues every month without exception. It becomes a street carnival, and at the core of that is a gallery called Modified Arts, which is a music and entertainment venue along with a gallery.

Grand Avenue and Roosevelt are these edgy commercial hearts of the old city from back in the '20s. You have Eye Lounge and Made Art Boutique all within walking distance. They're at the heart of this thing, and it rocks. Eye Lounge is a co-op for young artists, really good stuff that never disappoints. We have Tammie Coe, who is an artist in her own right who does these unbelievable pastries and breads. Right down the street you have Welcome Diner, it's a fantastic little hamburger joint half the size of this conference room. There is ▸

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Phoenix, Arizona

The Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, known as SMoCA, is just one of Bruder's contributions to the Phoenix area's design catalog.


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Phoenix, Arizona

Southwest-style hipsters bask in the kitschy glory of the diminutive Welcome Diner, where the burgers are sublime and seats are limited.

a good music scene going on too. There's the Rhythm Room, which is a whole subculture in of itself.

Sounds like a pretty eclectic mix.
Yeah, a totally eclectic mix. There's Tempe's musical heritage with the Gin Blossoms and such—vestiges that start forming to make a city. The arts are there along with the retail venues. There's a place called Red Modern Furniture, which is over on Camelback Road, and Lola, which is a little tapas place nearby. We've also got Passage, an unbelievable boutique on Central Avenue that is just blowing everybody away. It is the hottest little fashion venue with the most wonderful environment. It's the most unexpected thing, and it's affordable, accessible, and cool.

My Florist Café and Zoës Kitchen are in the 7th Avenue and McDowell Road area, which is just six blocks from the art museum, and there are some really interesting used furniture shops there. Another place that's gotten a lot of buzz is LGO, La Grande Orange Grocery and Pizzeria, which is located in an old post office. Something good happened there. It's the sort of thing you see often in really great cities, and we're finally getting it.

Phoenix has been too much about big-dollar development, always going to the next site and screwing up the land values of the communities. So nothing has filled in consistently. And that's problematic. There's a hunger of that developer mindset here that sometimes hasn't been the best for the city. I find that the singular freeway systems across this vast state were much more gratifying as a younger man when traffic and tourism weren't what they are. Trips to ▸

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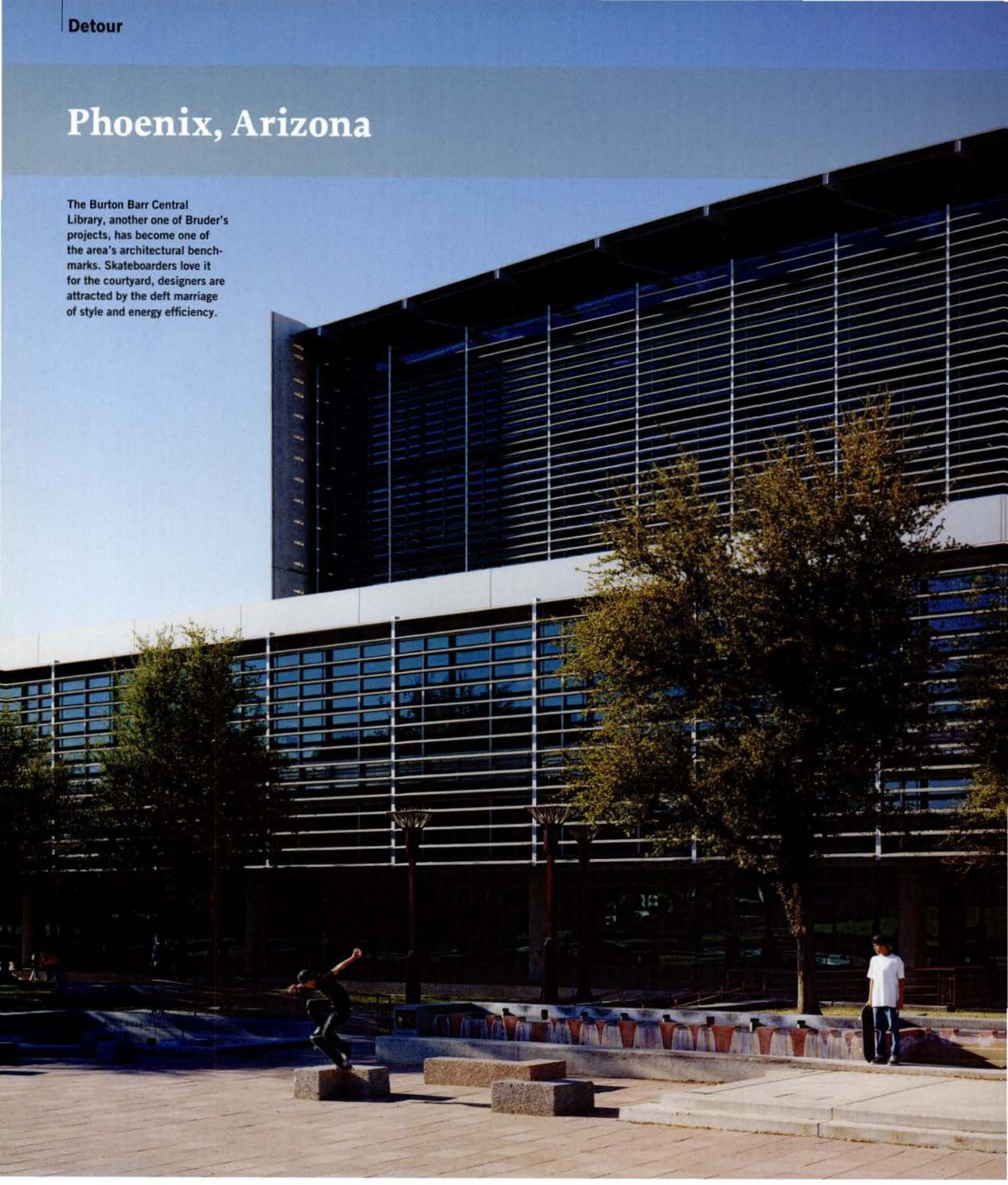
Phoenix, Arizona

The Burton Barr Central Library, another one of Bruder's projects, has become one of the area's architectural benchmarks. Skateboarders love it for the courtyard, designers are attracted by the deft marriage of style and energy efficiency.



Phoenix, Arizona

Designer Benjamin Noriega-Ortiz's Garden of Eden theme for the Mondrian Scottsdale Hotel takes the form of a giant rooster at Asia de Cuba (top), the hotel's savvy and sumptuous restaurant. A mural provides the perfect backdrop for this van parked at the Icehouse (below), a historic space now home to art installations and community events.

Sedona or the Grand Canyon are not as satisfying as the fabric of the city. Canals, streets, neighborhoods. When you keep your eyes open, there's really a lot to see.

What are some of your favorite buildings in the area?

The Arizona Biltmore by Albert Chase McArthur has basically weathered a legacy now of almost 80 years, and it is a benchmark of excellence; its siting, its use of materials, its quite luxurious lobby space. It is a great place to have a glass of wine and smoke a cigar; and if you do, go sit on the back patio looking at the sun set over Piestewa Peak (formerly Squaw Peak); it's a seminal building. The Central Library and SMoCA go without saying—there's the Deer Valley Rock Art Center that I also designed. It's at a petroglyph site with more than 1,500 petroglyphs, completed in 1994.

The Palo Verde Library by Wendell Burnette and Gould Evans is getting a lot of play; it was on some covers and won a national AIA award. The Loloma Transit station was done by Vito Acconci with a local architect named Doug Sydnor, so that's a cool thing. Everybody always hears of Arcosanti, but Cosanti is really the one to go and see. It's this magical little thing, the original studio with the old buildings.

Richard Meier's new contemporary courthouse has an interesting environmental agenda, but has gotten such bad press. It's a very difficult thing in a post–Okalahoma City, post–9/11 world because courthouses are no longer public places. There's a suspicion in Arizona of outsiders, that they aren't looking close enough, so the big-time New York architect didn't win big reviews for a building that looks silly to the locals. The press killed it before it had a chance to live.

What about activities that people could only do in the Phoenix/Scottsdale area?

A trip to the great reading room at the Burton Barr Central Library is a must, ideally arriving at solar noon, which is normally around 12:30. You can see the roof flow and light, which is a cool thing. If you happen to be here on the summer solstice we have a ▸

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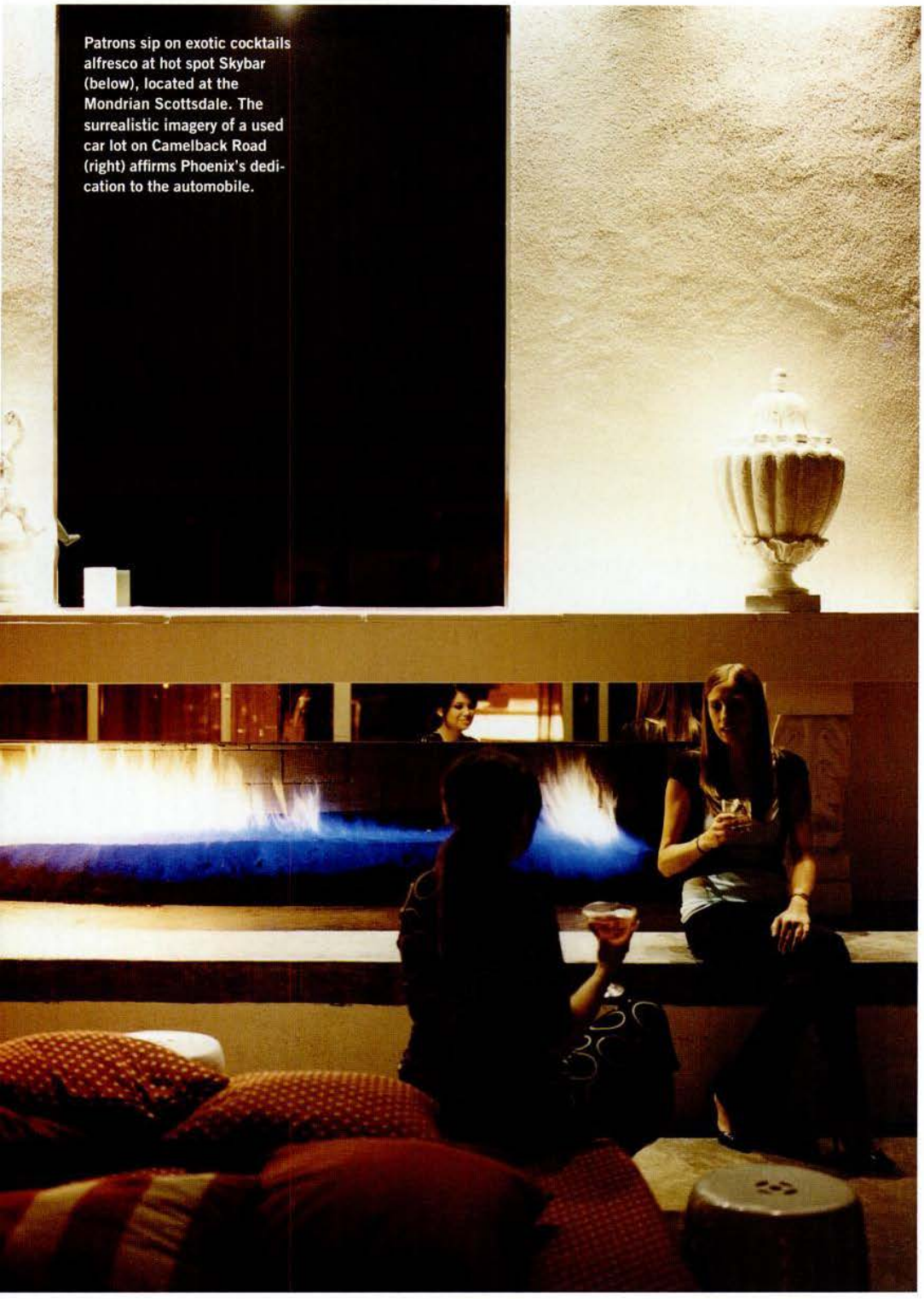
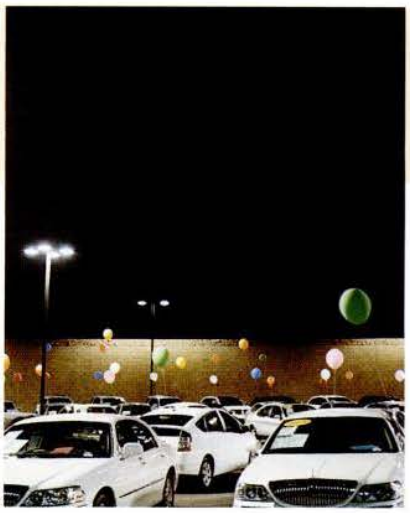
Phoenix, Arizona



Patrons sip on exotic cocktails alfresco at hot spot Skybar (below), located at the Mondrian Scottsdale. The surrealistic imagery of a used car lot on Camelback Road (right) affirms Phoenix's dedication to the automobile.



celebration of the event where each candle is lit by a dagger of light through the skylights.

Hiking the loop trail around Piestewa Peak or the rim trail up Camelback Mountain is a great way to see the perspective of the city. Biking on the canal system is another great way to see the different neighborhoods and history of the city. If you follow the canal route, it's a pretty comfortable thing for just about anyone. Read your *New York Times* on Sunday morning, get on your bike for a few hours, and you've seen everything from a different point of view.

Where's a good place to grab a nice dinner?
Sea Saw is a wonderful interesting little sushi place over near the canal in Scottsdale. Rancho Pinot is probably the best authentic gourmet Western cuisine you can find here. The chef and host are a couple—impeccable, really really good stuff with an eclectic cowboy environment. Barrio Café is one of the nicest Mexican food experiences offering an interesting vegetarian and Southwestern thing that has more to do with Mexico than it does New Mexico. City Bakery is another cool place. It is tied to the Bentley Projects, which is this sort of MASS MoCA gallery slash party place. City Bakery and the Poisoned Pen bookstore are dynamite.

And finally, where would you recommend having a nightcap?
AZ88 Bar & Restaurant has been a mainstay since the '80s. One of the owners is a conceptual artist, so it's an interesting place with stimulating architecture. And, again, the bar at the Biltmore. Whether you're going to eat there or just have a cocktail, it's a fantastic experience. ■

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Design the Dwell Lounge Chair or vote for your favorite at dwell.com/thelounge

Sam Grawe, editor-in-chief of Dwell, and John Christakos, president of Blu Dot, announced plans for an open competition to design the ultimate lounge chair—the Dwell Lounge. Calling for entries that must be comfortable, sustainable, efficient, honest, and affordable, Grawe and Christakos launched the competition at the Blu Dot booth at ICFF in May.

ABOUT THE COMPETITION: Deadline for entries is July 2, 2007. Three finalists will be chosen by a Dwell/Blu Dot jury and their designs will be previewed in August at dwell.com. In August, you can cast your vote for your favorite finalist entry on dwell.com.

Finalists' prototypes will debut at Dwell on Design San Francisco on September 15, 2007. The winning design will then be announced based on a three-part vote split equally among Dwell, Blu Dot, and online votes cast at dwell.com/thelounge.

The winner will receive a $5,000 cash reward. Finalists will receive a $1,000 cash reward in addition to $1,000 credit at bludot.com. The Dwell Lounge will then go into production and will be introduced by Blu Dot and Dwell at ICFF in 2008. For further information, please visit **dwell.com/thelounge.**

dwell BLU DOT

Open Sesame

Architect Justin Korhammer kept the hallway of this Manhattan bachelor pad free and clear with a kitchen that folds away with the precision of a Swiss Army Knife.

A A flipper door folds up and out of the way to reveal a microwave for late-night leftovers.

B A three-foot drawer with a Corian surface for chopping slides away into the kitchen and ductwork beyond.

Photos by Adam Friedberg

Number of dishwashers Americans will buy this year: 8.2 million

Iconic Kitchen Item: Peugeot pepper mill by Jean and Jean-Pierre Peugeot It's Thursday night at the Olive Garden, and the gang from sales is all here to unwind. Chardonnay is poured, office scandals exchanged, and bowls of minestrone distributed. Suddenly, a waiter appears, brandishing a pepper mill like an assault rifle, cranking pepper onto plates until diners hold their hands up in surrender. This invigorating ritual all started with the Provence model pepper mill from Peugeot, a staple at all-you-can-eat establishments and Michelin four-stars alike. The brainchild of the eponymous Parisian automaker, the Peugeot pepper mill has a mechanistic internal logic, utilizing steel rows of spiral teeth that lead each peppercorn through a cracking and grinding stage onto your shrimp sensation of choice.

C Bifold doors expose the center-stage workings of the kitchen—the sink, shelves, and prep area. The doors are installed so that they fold in, not out, thereby leaving the hallway unobstructed.

D To keep the kitchen shallow, the cooktop is limited to two burners and the shelves are a trim eight inches deep.

E A down-market dishwasher and a refrigerator hauled from McGrath's previous apartment are disguised behind custom panels of stainless steel.

F By leaving a 14-inch gap to the ceiling, the kitchen stands as a piece of furniture, a stainless steel armoire with movable parts.

Story by Katrina Heron

Percentage of Americans who entertain guests in their kitchen instead of their living room: 77

Iconic Kitchen Item: Sarpaneva cast-iron pot by Timo Sarpaneva
The Sarpaneva cast-iron pot has a robust medieval shape that derives from Finnish folklore. The pot's detachable wooden handle has an organic, woodsy feel and allows the chef to both lift the pot off the stove and carry it, one-handed, to the table. Modern in a way that doesn't lean too heavily on novelty, the Sarpaneva cast-iron pot rethinks a traditional piece, puts history and humanity back into industrial design, and makes a damn good reindeer stew in the process.

From Meals to Ideals

Julia Child's iconic kitchen, with its pegboard walls and welter of cooking gear and food prominently displayed, is decidedly at odds with the clean lines and the obsession with order of strict modernism. Its functionality (another hobbyhorse of tutting modernists) however, is beyond reproach.

The American kitchen is a complicated affair. Although the last 75 years or so have witnessed an unparalleled outpouring of ideas for simplifying, improving, and beautifying it, this torrent of creative thinking has not eliminated the mystery of what the kitchen wants to be. Not coincidentally, what we want it to be pretty much defies coherent explication. An informal poll of what a number of friends want from their kitchens found an identity crisis of a room:

"I want my kitchen to reflect my design aesthetic." "I want it to stay clean." "I want it to inspire me to make incredible meals." "I want to feel at home and safe there." "I want it to be the centerpiece, the place where everything happens." "I want it to keep my secrets." "I want it to be bigger." "I want it to feel like my grandmother's kitchen." "I don't want it to remind me of my mother's kitchen." "I basically don't have one." "I want it to express my love of food." "I want it to make me feel good."

Back when kitchens were mainly workhorses for producing meals, the situation (if not the work) was a lot more straightforward. It was the early modernists who, recognizing the kitchen's untapped potential for unifying utilitarian, psychological, and aesthetic goals, raised the programmatic ante—and struck a blow to freewheeling cooks the world over.

In the 1920s a young Austrian named Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky was tapped to create a small, mass-producible kitchen suitable for Stuttgart's Weissenhof Estate—an apartment complex and modernist showcase designed in part by the likes of Le Corbusier, Gropius, and Mies van der Rohe. Like the architects, Schütte-Lihotzky saw herself as equal parts designer and social ▸

"Where the kitchen is the home, it is the home which revolves around the kitchen."

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Iconic Kitchen Item: Automatic rice cooker by Yoshiharu Iwata
When it debuted in 1955 for Toshiba, Yoshiharu Iwata's automatic rice cooker represented a revolutionary symbiosis of Japanese industrial design and Western convenience. The pure round shape, pearly-white finish, aluminum lid, and staunchly functional black handles soon became the gold standard for all rice cookers to come. The design offered an automated system with a timer that steamed rice to perfection, allowing '50s housewives to kick back with a well-deserved martini while dinner cooked itself.

engineer, and her particular concern was the domestic emancipation of women. Her kitchen, modeled on the galley of a railway car, put every necessary item and implement within arm's reach. Storage was analyzed, optimized, and labeled; countertops and shelving were smooth-lined, no-nonsense, wipe-and-go affairs; everything was neat and tidy and could be put away. Efficiency was prized and therefore drudgery would be banished; Schütte-Lihotzky took to running time-and-motion studies with a stopwatch. In short, her design was so rational it was quickly hailed as revolutionary and is widely referred to today as the blueprint for the first modern kitchen.

In the early 1950s the University of Illinois Small Homes Council scored a major coup by unveiling the kitchen work triangle—stove, refrigerator, sink—proclaiming that the distance between the three points should be no less than four feet and no more than nine feet, while the sum of the three sides of the triangle should not exceed 26 feet. "Traffic flow" crept into kitchen discourse, as in "traffic flow should not enter the work triangle." Along came zone theory, which grouped functions into areas called workstations. And a couple of years from now we can celebrate a century of fervent research into counting kitchen footsteps so as to devise new ways to limit superfluous movements.

Though some of these experts-with-stopwatches breakthroughs were dramatic, others call to mind Fran Liebowitz's observation that "food is an important part of a balanced diet." People eventually started to grumble and rebel; chefs railed against designers who knew nothing about the art of cooking. Julia Child's kitchen featured pots, pans, and whisks hung on exposed pegboard—a messier but no less valid take on functionality. In fact, Child advised keeping every implement in view—weren't you less likely to use your wonderful tools if you stashed them away? Child's larger message was simply, Enjoy yourself. She and her husband, Paul, ate virtually every meal at their kitchen table because they felt like it, whether it was *à deux* or with the Queen of Sheba.

It's true that a certain kind of modern kitchen can seem maniacally antiseptic and hard-edged—the anti-kitchen, you might even say, a place where you could eat off the floor, if you could find anything to eat. But at the same time there are modern kitchens whose spare, streamlined beauty brings the processes of cooking and the pleasures of the table to an entirely new level, as the design pioneers intended.

It seems likely that we'll crack the code of the ideal kitchen around the time we figure out what the ideal relationship looks like. In the meantime, thanks in part to a resurgence of interest in fresh foods and sustainable living, kitchens have started to reflect an organic sensibility, from the choice of materials to small touches like the herb garden that lives on the countertop. The hard edges are getting a little softer; the ruby beets with dirt still clumped at the roots belong. *Ars* and *techne* are aligning. And we seem willing to take a few more footsteps than are completely necessary.

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Iconic Kitchen Item: Pedal Bin by Brabantia Design Team
Thanks to the Brabantia Pedal Bin, the next time someone accuses you of trash-talking, you can take it as a compliment. First introduced in 1947 in Aalst, Netherlands, the swift pedal function transformed the malodorous trash bin, giving people a sleek new way to keep their paws off last night's herring. Inspired by the basic shape of the original wastepaper basket, Brabantia brought in corrosion-resistant metal and a plastic inner bucket. Once the province of master craftsman, it's now mass produced and as ubiquitous in modern kitchens as organic eggs.

An Ode to The IKEA Cabinet[1]

Joining the Grecian urn, the much-rhapsodized IKEA cabinet finally gets its poetic due as a heroic ode. Anyone who owns a set may verily be inclined to put quill to paper and dash off a few stanzas of their own.

O IKEA, thou art filled with brimming distractions!
Already we have consum'd so much in thy nest.
Our bags are nigh full of Secondary Things[2]
We came not for. Let us locate our Primary Desire:
'Tis Kitchen Cabinets we seek. Companion!
Release the gnome-shaped candle from thine grip.
('Tis odd-looking, that.) Drop also the penguin-shaped
Dog toy and focus thine attention! See ye not
What I see? Past the digital clocks, there. Behold
My lingonberry-stained finger: It points to Cabinets.

O COMPANION! Let us enter the show-kitchen together
And pretend that it is ours.[3] (Though 'tis a fiction, 'twill
Help us imagine our own sweet reality.) Look! Here I am
Roasting an imaginary beef! See? Let's take it out of the
Oven, and let it cool down. Companion! Put thyself to
Good use and prep these invisible organic carrots next
To me. Have ye enough room to peel them? Where art
Thy carrot pan? Is she in a cabinet there? Yes, 'tis there!
This layout, subtly modified has many merits. 'Twill
Function quite well with our real beefs and carrots.

O CABINETS, thou art affordable[4] and shall fit like
Careless laughter on our walls! Yet ye remain incomplete.
'Tis time to cloak you properly. What color are thy doors
And drawers? Be ye wood'n made, or be ye glossed in shiny
Resin? Do steely knobs populate thine countenance?[5]
Companion! Like siblings at play with Mr. Potato Head, let
Us now select a proper face for our Kitchen-Tuber. Duvbo?
We smileth not at thee. Ärlig? No—thou art too white. Lo!
Who's this? Companion! What think thee of Linjär? Aye!
Blue of face, sleek of handle, (shines she not brighter[6]
'Pon our approach?) LINJÄR![7] Thou art ours!

(1) In an attempt to poetically explore the cultish phenomenon of IKEA kitchens, my girlfriend and I recently traveled from Kansas City to the IKEA in Minneapolis. Our Primary Goal was to research their Äkurum modular cabinet system—the Secret Weapon of design-savvy urban dwellers across the globe.

(2) Inside the store, as we made our way up to locate our Primary Desire, we grabbed a cart and began hoarding Secondary Things. It is easy to get distracted at IKEA: How can you pass up these wee stainless steel bowls, for instance? Six for two dollars? Or these fun corks? They don't have corks like these, these exact corks, in Kansas City.

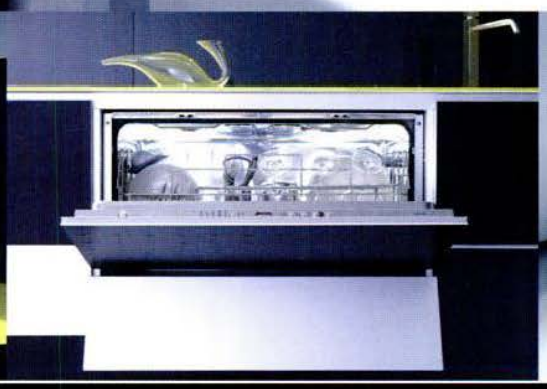
(3) What? You're too good to play house? Listen, friend, you're not buying a lamp here, so take it up a notch and get gritty. If you're serious about an IKEA kitchen, you need to drop your catalog and go test your culinary/social theories in physical space/time. Chop some fake onions and sip some good fake Shiraz in a real kitchen as you fake talk to your fake friends. Ask yourself: Is this fun? Am I making a good risotto here, or am I just stirring rice?

(4) For comparison, IKEA bases the prices of their kitchen models on a ten-by-ten-foot, L-shaped design. For a well-built, modular kitchen without appliances, you'll spend somewhere between $1,000 and $3,000. Although these prices are hilariously low, they don't factor in the hours required to properly assemble and install your kitchen. Find a kitchen-savvy Ikean and ask them to ask you if you need help in all this. Think about what they're asking. If you say "yes" to their question, then ask for their help. They're very helpful.

(5) Once you have decided on the best functional arrangement for your kitchen, the next step is to finalize the package. Obviously, the same layout can look completely different based on your material and hardware choices. Talk to an Ikean about the pros and cons of different styles. Some models look kind of desperate in the store but would look great in the right house. Others look glossy and sweet in the showroom but would require constant cleaning. (Nothing de-cools an otherwise cool kitchen like greasy fingerprints on all the doors and drawers. Do you want to communicate, "We eat a lot of chicken nuggets," when your boss comes over for dinner?)

(6) While you're at it, ask about lighting. Yogi Berra once said: "A great kitchen without great lighting is a sucky kitchen."

(7) Duvbo and Ärlig are two of the roughly 20 models offered at IKEA. Our favorite model is Linjär, designed by the Swede Mikael Warnhammar. It utilizes the same Äkurum modular cabinets as all IKEA kitchens, but it is tricked out with integral anodized-aluminum pulls and glossy blue lacquered doors and drawers. It looks like a big cell phone. It's great.



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Story by Amber Bravo

Percentage of Americans who say they eat healthier food now than when they were children: 36

Iconic Kitchen Item: Juicy Salif by Philippe Starck Behold the juice squeezer that started wars. Well, wars of words. Conceived by force-of-nature Frenchman Philippe Starck for Alessi in the early 1980s, this cast-aluminum lemon juicer was sniffed at by some critics, who deemed it impractical, unwieldy, and mildly frightening to small children. But for those who love design for design's sake, the angular, arachnid lines represent a shining beacon in a world of drab, utilitarian kitchen utensils. Juice this, it seems to say, imperious to detractors and still relevant 20-odd years later.

The Farm Project

For the Farm Project, Mike Meiré abandoned the idea of the hyper-designed kitchen in favor of one where life—of all manners—happens.

PHOTO BY HARTMUT NAGELE

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Percentage of architects who say kitchens will continue to get larger: 67

Iconic Kitchen Item: Kitchen scale by Marco Zanuso The kitchen scale has historically had two uses: weighing ingredients for recipes and measuring drugs. We know absolutely nothing about the latter, so let's concentrate on the former, and the brilliantly self-contained design of the Terraillon kitchen scale by noted architect Marco Zanuso. The attention to use of space is paramount to the scale's design. The result is a modular product with multiple functions: The lid can be used as a dish for food items to be measured, or inverted to contain liquids, spices, or other perfectly legal substances.

For Meiré, the juxtaposition of materials was key to the Farm Project's visual concept, like the pairing of a traditional china bowl with an acid-yellow Dornbracht faucet (right). Meiré felt it was important to show the tools that go into making a meal, so pots, pans, and foodstuffs are all visible on open shelving (left).

Approaching Mike Meiré's Farm Project from the street, one follows signs into a rundown parking garage with a partially blasted-out ceiling; the blustery, bitter Cologne weather is kept out by a protective tarp to form an ad hoc alcove outfitted with bales of hay for seating and heat lamps for warmth. The inviting glow of the installation contrasts appealingly with its cold gray environs; inside, animals both live and stuffed crowd the walls, plants grow straight out of the tables, goats and fish coexist happily, birds chirp in their cages, china bowls serve as sink basins, and food is piled high on all manner of shelf. It is, in a word, enchanting.

Meiré began thinking about the Farm Project installation back in 2005, when Dornbracht, a company for whom he has directed brand strategy and marketing for nearly 15 years, asked him to help position them creatively in the kitchen. (Dornbracht and Meiré have long held aesthetic reign in the bathroom.) "What makes [Dornbracht] interesting is not only the design, it's about how [the company] has become involved in contemporary cultural movements," explains Meiré. "People are refusing to be so disassociated from their food, and people are more concerned about where their food is coming from and what they're eating; the kitchen is where this all comes together."

Upon first glance, Meiré looks the part of the German creative type—the glasses, the black clothes, the skull cap—but his ebullience belies that stereotypical Deutsch austerity, and his enthusiasm is reflected in every corner of his installation. "I realized that minimal is taking over," Meiré explains. "And I like minimal design; it's not really that I'm questioning it, it's just that [it can be] too much. This strategy is wrong for the kitchen because this is the room where life really happens."

Meiré, as it happens, has a very full life—his wife and three kids, whom he endearingly never fails to mention, ▸

PHOTOS BY HARTMUT NAEGELE (SHELVES); MIKE MEIRÉ (SINK)

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Amount Americans are expected to spend on their kitchens in 2007: $79 billion

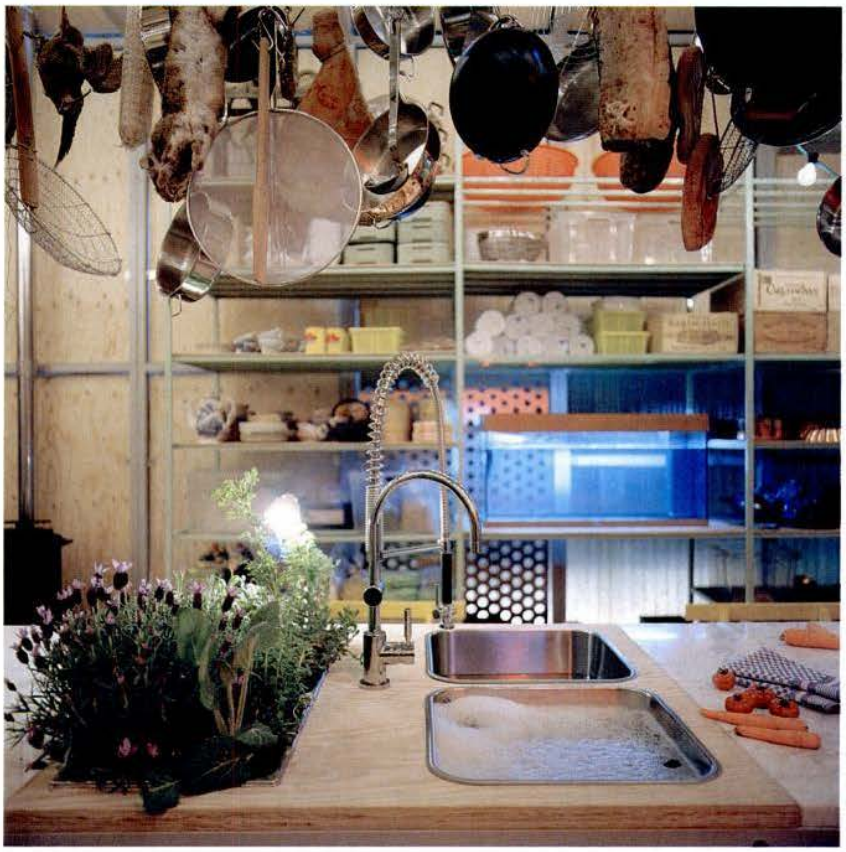
Iconic Kitchen Item: Minitimer by Richard Sapper
The Minitimer circular kitchen timer is a near-perfect object. The design is both meticulous and user-friendly, revolving from the inside so you can view the remaining time from above or the side. Barely three inches in diameter, this timer can be set up to 60 minutes in a single turn, and has been a kitchen staple since its inception in the early 1970s. (Milan-based Ritz-Italora is the original manufacturer; the Minitimer has been produced under license by Terraillon since 1971.) With a loyal following of industrial-design enthusiasts, the Minitimer is now in the permanent collections at the Museum of Modern Art and the Pompidou Center. Ding!

For the Farm Project's opening at the Cologne Furniture Fair, hundreds streamed through the installation and were treated to food and drink that had been prepared on site.

PHOTO BY HARTMUT NAGELE

Average number of gallons of water consumed by each dishwasher in the United States this year: 1,935

Iconic Kitchen Item: Bialetti Moka Express by Alfonso Bialetti Get thee behind me, Starbucks. This natty stove-top coffeemaker is simple, durable, and, according to the manufacturers, the only industrial object that has remained unchanged since its debut in 1933. The pot is made of three metal parts: a base boiler, a filter, and an upper compartment with a steam-release spout. As basic as it is refined, this compact coffee purveyor was designed by Alfonso Bialetti—grandfather of Alberto Alessi—who trained as a metalworker in Paris. Italians know their coffee, Parisians know their style, you do the math.



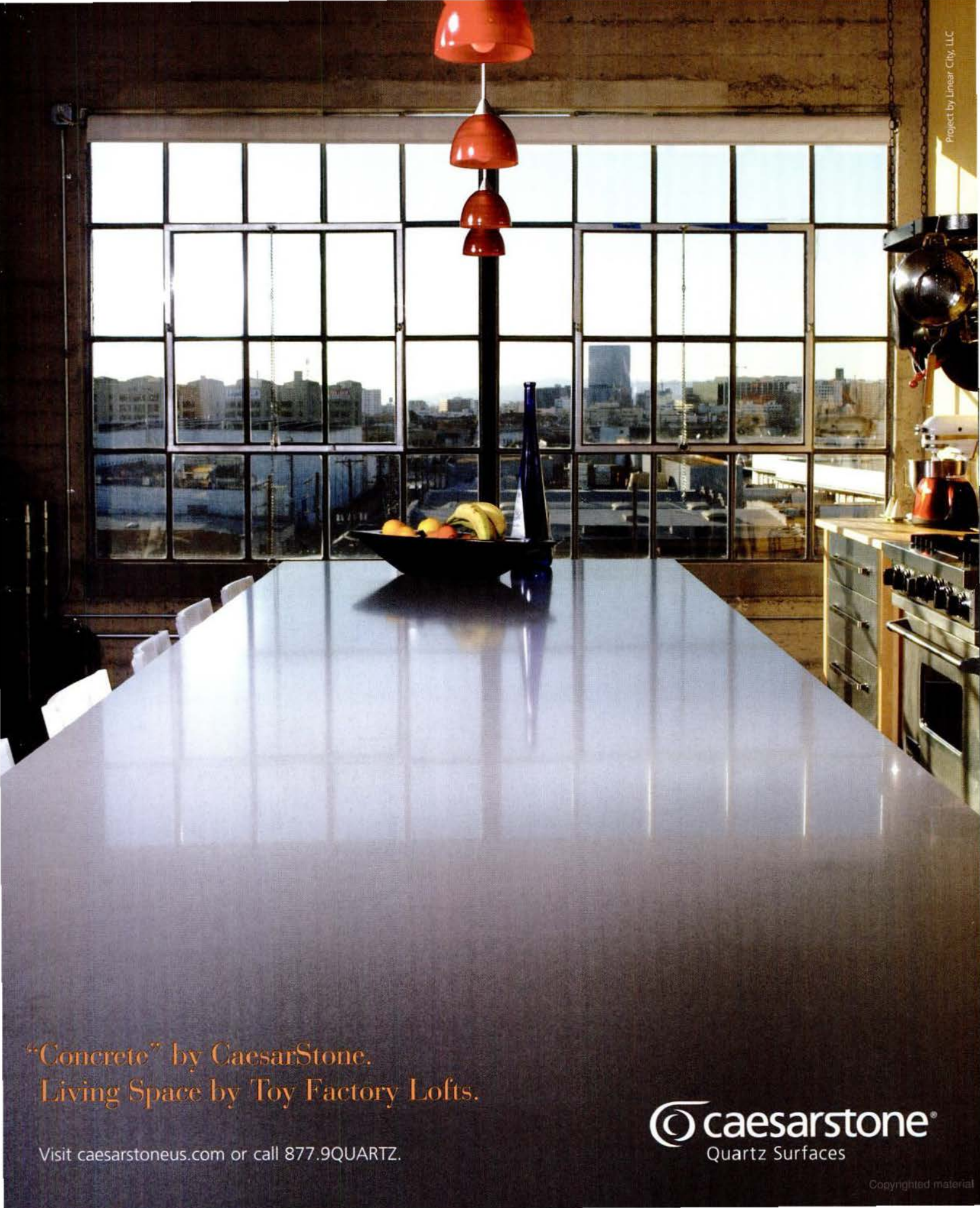
Meiré wanted to foster a sense of knowing where one's food comes from and of being connected to that process. The modular structure houses a small pen in the back and inside the space, which the animals can travel through at their leisure; plants grow from containers in the kitchen's central countertop.

were a great inspiration to him with this project. "I have kids, I am married, and my kitchen is a socially dynamic place," explains Meiré. "This is the place where you let life really happen, you create all these crazy juxtapositions. When you travel through the world, you bring food from other places, you find nice objects, and so on. [You] don't want to hide all these things in the cabinets."

While Meiré was imagining this environment, various tragedies were playing out in the global one: Hurricane Katrina and the tsunami in southeast Asia loomed large. "There were so many disasters and catastrophes taking place...and they stuck out in my mind. Normally people try to put everything in order [and] try to keep [chaos] from the surface, but what happens with disaster—a flood, an earthquake—is it takes this structure away. It brings everything to the surface and then suddenly every material becomes equal: You have plastic next to chrome next to high-tech material; you have cheap next to rich materials. I thought, If these images are published everywhere in the world, it is somehow affecting the way we look at things. And I thought, If I am to create a kitchen which reflects, in some sense, what's really happening now, then I have to have respect for these kinds of structures, disaster structures—when you see disasters, you see afterwards that people want to and do survive."

While his initial concept was to "curate chaos," what Meiré ended up creating was a "heim"—a home, an asylum, a hearth—through the marriage of diverse and surprising materials: vegetation, foodstuffs, animals, warmth and sound. "[At the opening in Cologne] the thing that really stuck with me were people's smiling faces; I have never seen so many smiling people. I think this is important for architecture and design: to make people smile. Sometimes, I think, everything has to be so sophisticated, so intellectual, so serious. We are taking ourselves so seriously that we forget to smile somehow."

PHOTOS BY HARTMUT NAGELE



Designer's Block

While some of Joe Columbo's designs have proven the test of time (Alitalia still uses his plastic flatware), others were simply ahead of their time.

A The adorable Minikitchen, one of Colombo's first designs to experiement with multiple funtions contained within a single unit, debuted at the Milan Triennale in 1964 and was produced by Boffi in limited numbers before fading into obscurity.

B Originally constructed out of wood, the Minikitchen now features sleek Corian surfaces and a solid teak chopping board.

PHOTO COURTESY BOFFI

Percentage of American families that eat dinner as a family five times or more per week: 52

Iconic Kitchen Item: Dish Doctor by Marc Newson
Those of you without a dishwasher, raise your chapped, calloused hands. Now imagine a product that turns this drudging chore into futuristic fun! Behold Marc Newson's Dish Doctor for Magis, a vibrant plastic creation that renders the term "dish rack" as antiquated as the telefacsimile. Partially created by computer-aided design (Newson was one of the first industrial designers to experiment with CAD software), the Dish Doctor sports flexible pegs that snugly hold your wedding china, while two cutlery drainers keep the forks and knives in their own comfort zone. And, best of all, there's a removable reservoir to collect wayward water drips.

C A total of nine separate storage spaces (drawers, cupboards, compartments) are contained within the Minikitchen.

D The unit contains a refigerator with 1.7 cubic feet of storage (you'll have to provide the miniature bottles of booze). While this may prove impractical for the Costco shopper, it might encourage greater use of fresh ingredients.

E A ceramic glass induction hotplate with touch controls beats the lame electric coils of the original issue. The unit also contains two electrical outlets (for a panini press and espresso maker, obviously).

F The Minikitchen is perhaps the world's only kitchen that can come to you—it's set on four rotating casters (two of which have brakes, just in case your shanty is slanty).

PHOTO COURTESY BOFFI

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Shown: Special Sax with Tri-Bell

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Shown: White flora cocktail, zebrawood end, red flora end

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Shown: Park rug malbec

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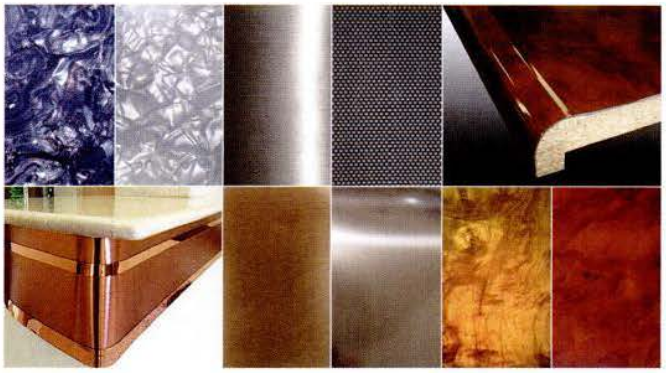

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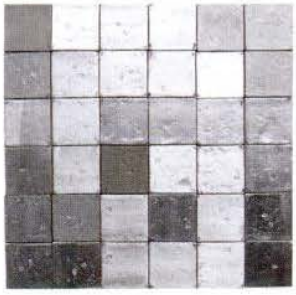

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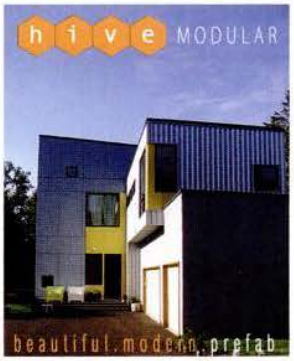

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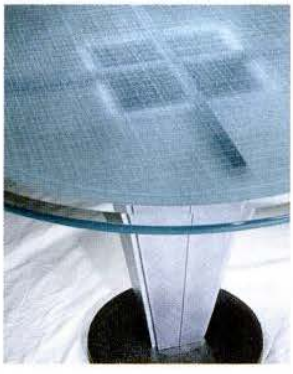

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Shown: Small Tote business brief

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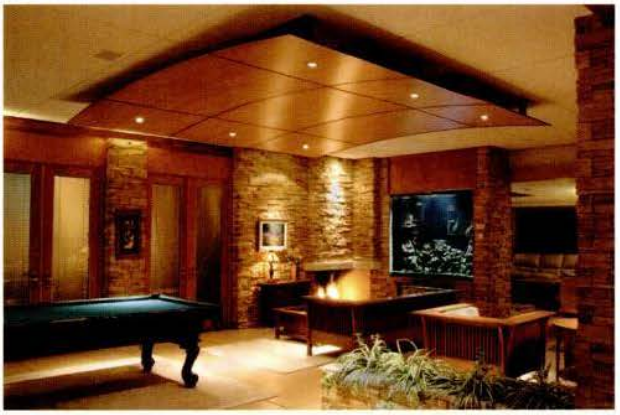

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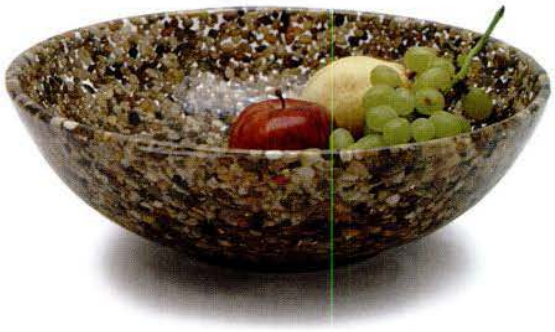

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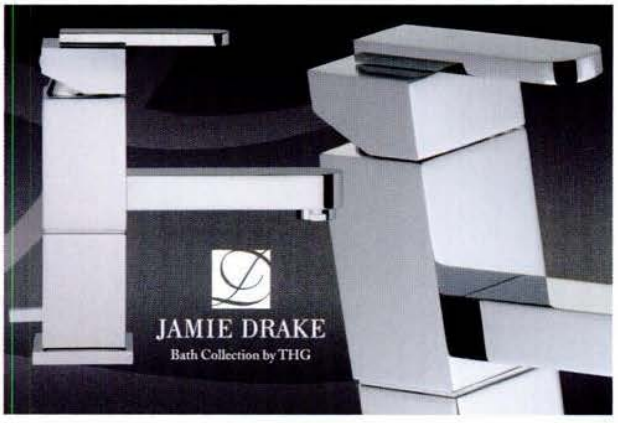

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Pioneer of indigenous-style furniture, a collection of contemporary designs inspired by the ancient handcrafting of the world's native peoples. Responding to a need to bring natural, tactile materials into the home, this furniture evokes distant cultures and exotic locations. Exhibiting at Las Vegas Market in July.

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Shown: Profil single-hole faucet

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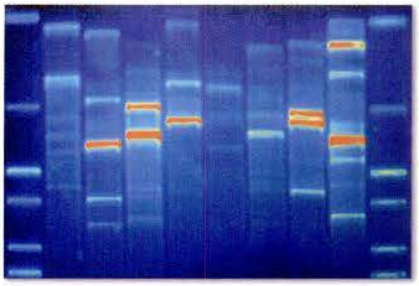

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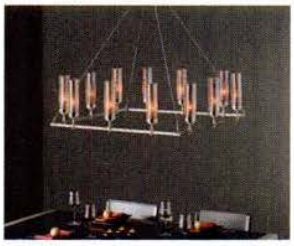

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Shown: Ball by Modern Fan, Artemis by Minka Aire, Enigma by Fanimation

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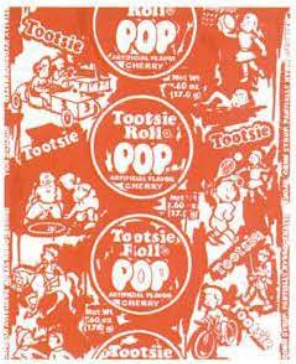

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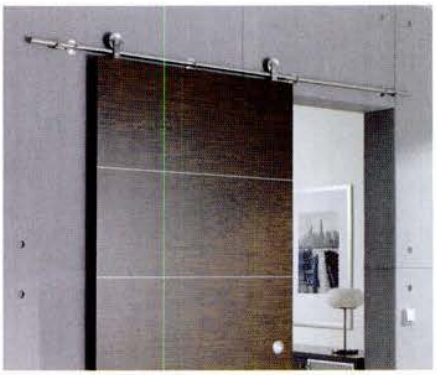

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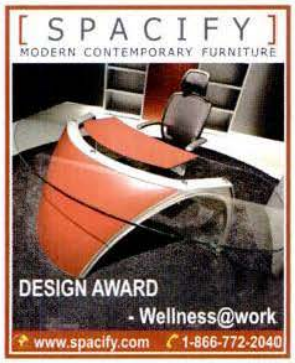

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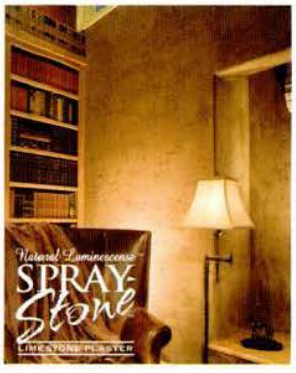

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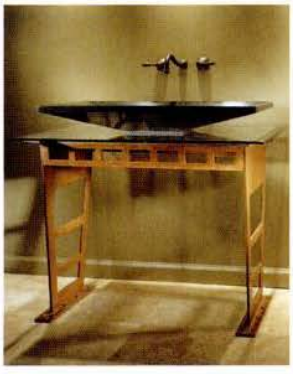

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ENERGY STAR

Story by Alastair Gordon

Photos by Charles Harker

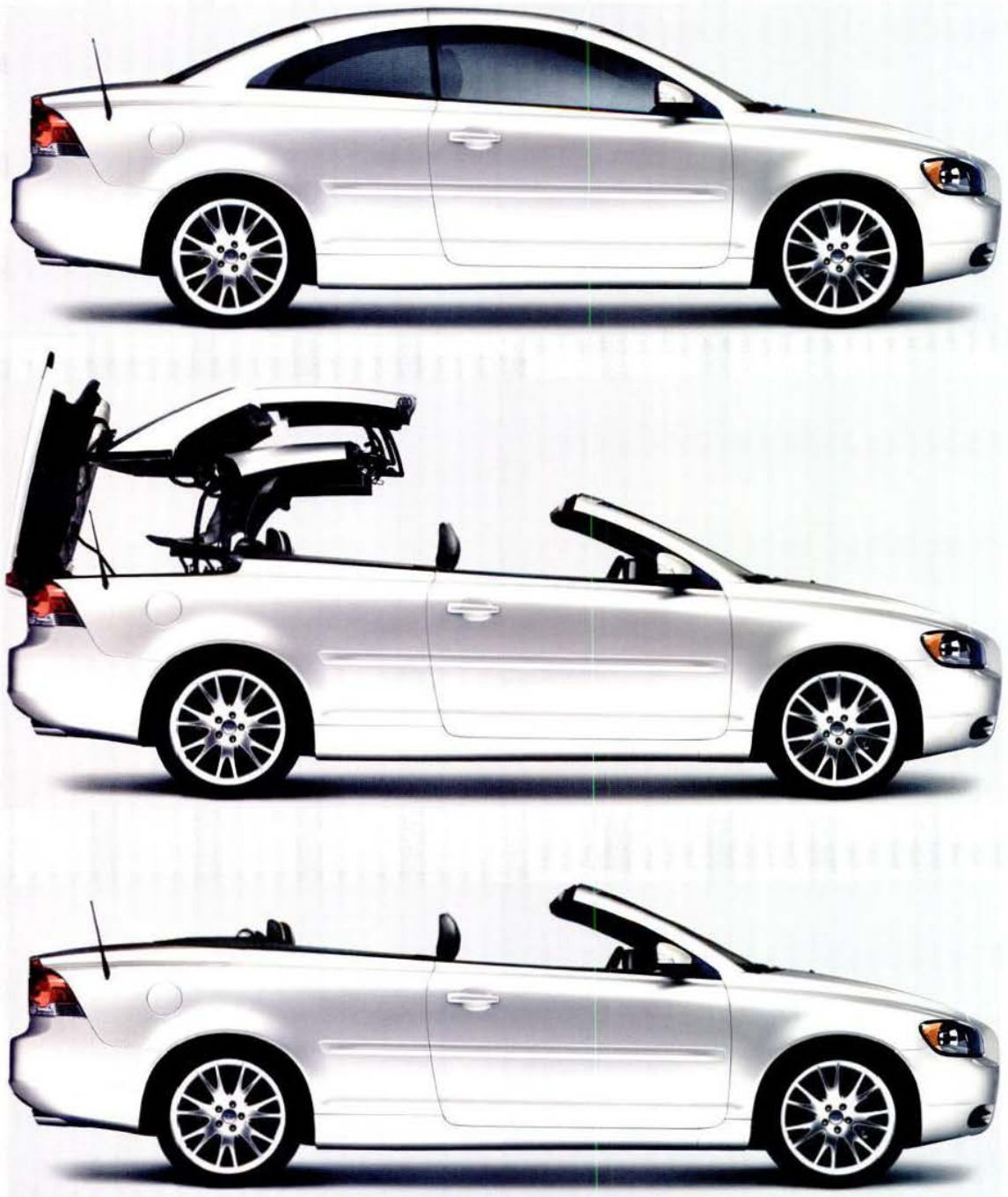
Absolutely Free

The late 1960s and early '70s saw an explosion of free-form, organic building—some called it "biotecture"—as hundreds of outlaw architects pursued the dream of nonsquare shelters with curving walls, undulating roofs, and womblike interiors. "Corners constrict the mind," explained one hippie homesteader. "Build circular musical structures and help destroy rational box-reality," said another. But an unregistered young architect named Charles Harker, founder and president of the Tao Design collaborative, took the free-form concept to a new level when, in 1969–1971, he and his friends built the Earth House on six acres in the Hill Country west of Austin, Texas.

The house appeared to sprout directly from the ground, as if volcanic magma had bubbled up and frozen in place, rising skyward in bulging masses or dipping downward with undulating fins that buttressed the main forms of the structure. In a process that Harker called "supramorphics," welded steel reinforcing long strands of flexible PVC piping generated a structural skeleton. This was sprayed with polyurethane foam and then carved into the desired effect. A final coating of Portland cement plaster was then sprayed over the sculpted form, for fire protection. The Tao builders didn't bother with plans; instead, they set out with a basic idea and improvised, adding new shapes, walls, and rooms. "All design is spontaneous," says Harker, who compared it to the metamorphosis of a butterfly. "The visualization is in a constant state of flux." The foam was forgiving. Mistakes could be corrected in minutes. Most decisions happened in an intuitive rush, "riding high on a frail bubble of mutual assent and understanding," according to Harker, who today teaches architecture at Kent State University, in Ohio.

The Earth House interior was a continuous biomorphic flow of walls, floors, and ceiling merging into cave-like chambers, concave nooks, and even furniture. A fireplace, benches, shelves, and storage spaces were carved directly out of flowing wall surfaces, in some places finely detailed like the filigree of bird bones.

Though razed in 1990 to make way for an Episcopalian church retreat, between 1970 and 1979, thousands came to visit—including Frank Zappa, who showed up one day wearing a white tuxedo and red sneakers. "Zappa picked up so quickly on what was going on," Harker recalls. "He wasn't even stoned." ■



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