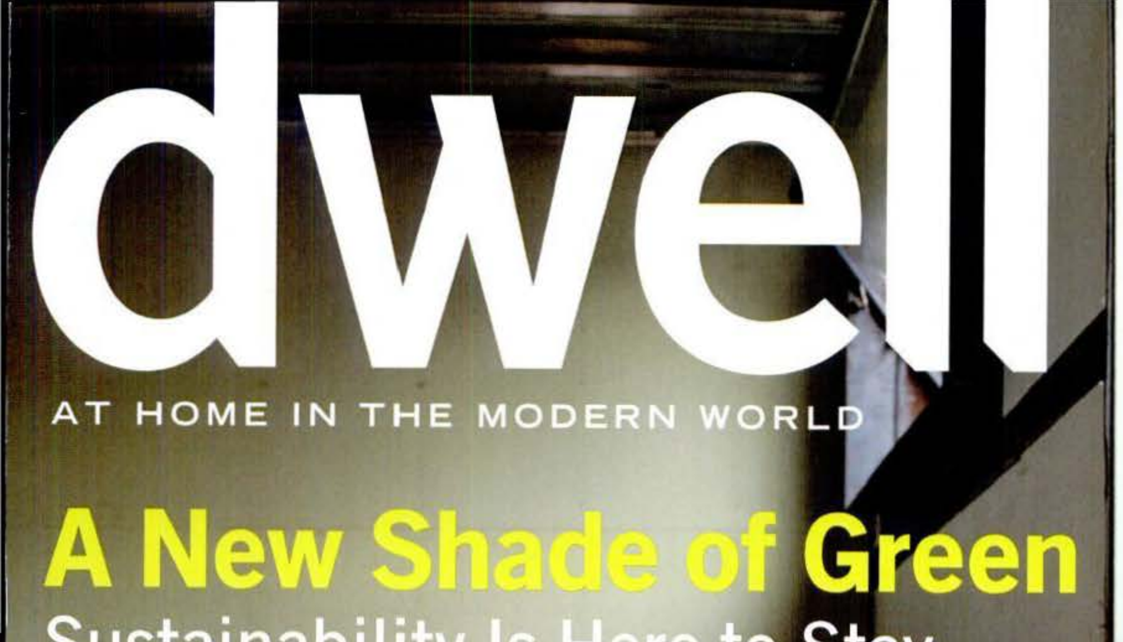

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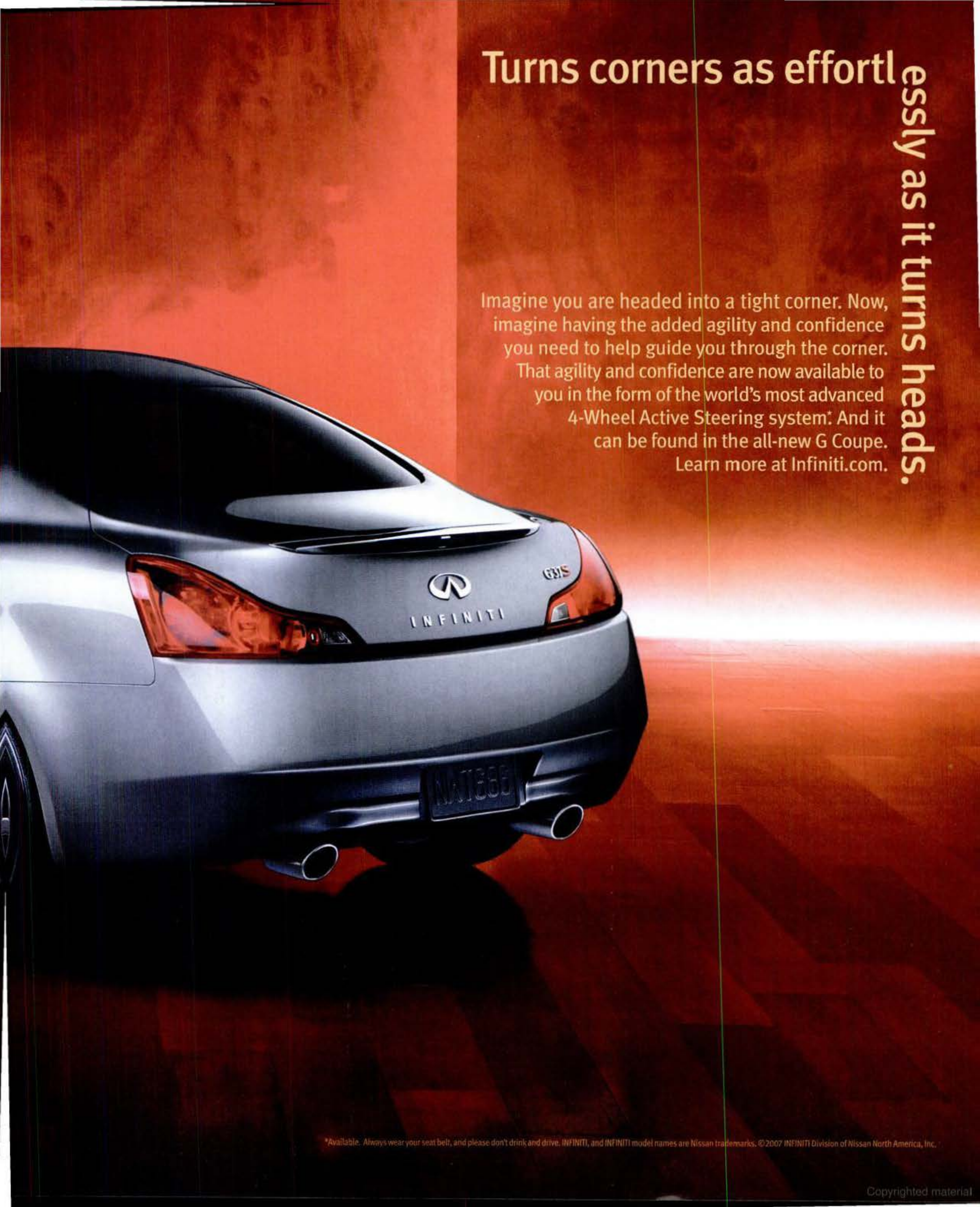

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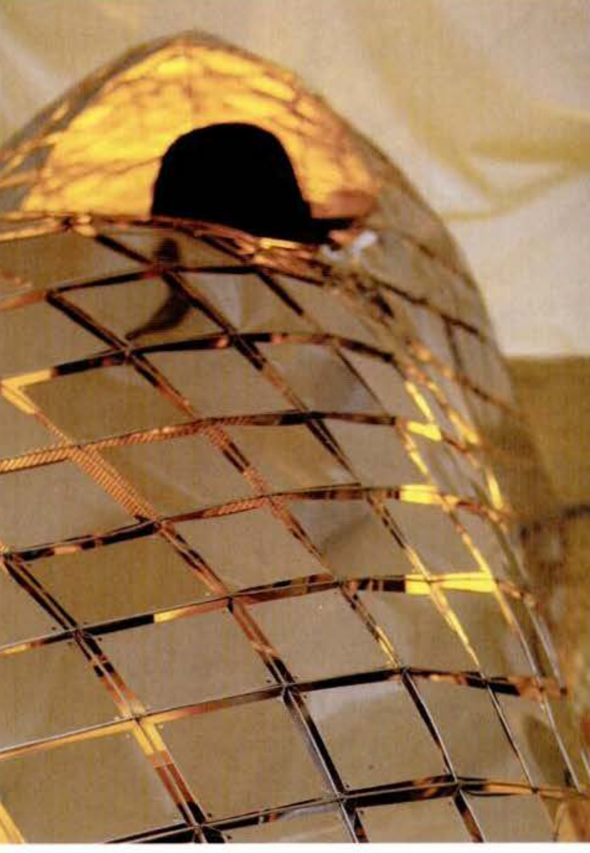

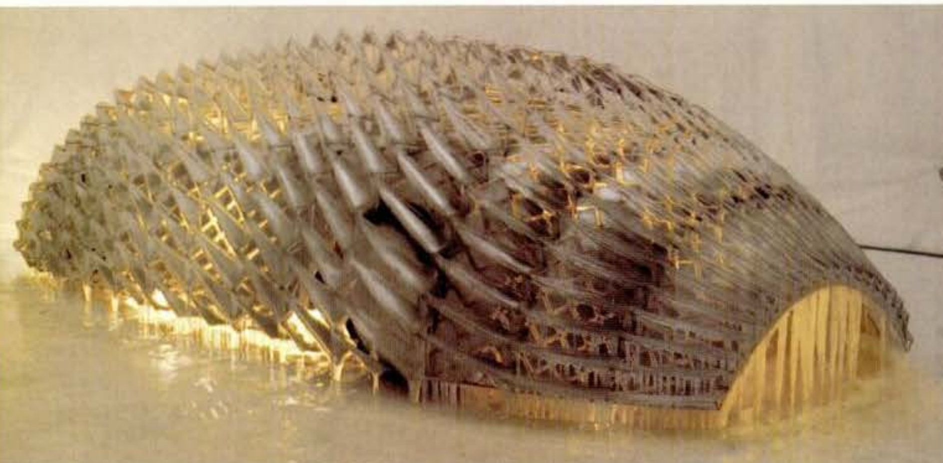

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Your tempo: Olafur Eliasson is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and generously supported by BMW. Renewable geothermal energy is provided by Constellation NewEnergy. Media support is provided by *Dwell* magazine.

All images: Olafur Eliasson, *Your mobile expectations: BMW H_2R project*, 2007; Courtesy the artist; © Olafur Eliasson. Clockwise from top left: *Your mobile expectations: BMW H_2R project* (detail); Eliasson's studio team working on a study for *Your mobile expectations: BMW H_2R project*; *Your mobile expectations: BMW H_2R project* (detail); *Your mobile expectations: BMW H_2R project* (installation view).

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November 2007

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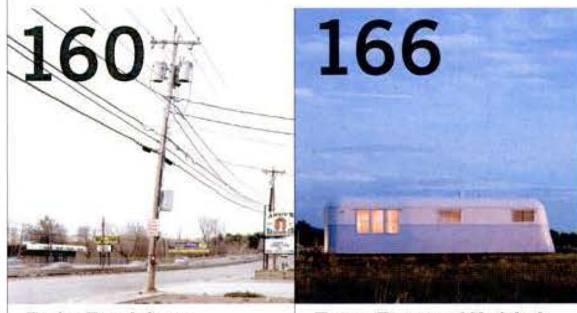
"The whole point was to contribute to the discussion of green energy—to show it is possible to do these sorts of things." —**Mary Henning**



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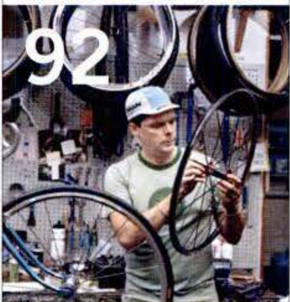

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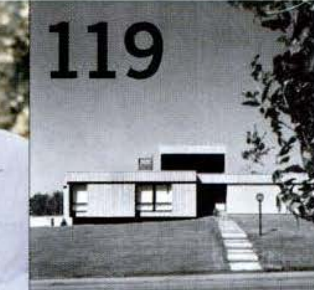

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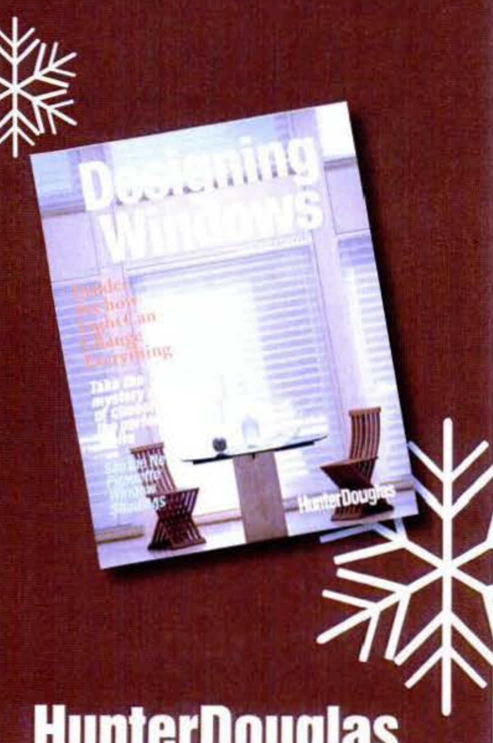

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Hamber, senior editor Amber Bravo's alter ego, put her love for refuse and reuse into constructing this whimsical porcine refuge. During especially busy times the drawbridge raises, transforming the commonplace cubicle into a pundit-worthy pen. Plans for a moat have yet to be approved.

PHOTO BY SAM GRAWE

In your recent Milan report ("Special Design Report: Milan," September 2007), the Worker sofa that we developed with Hella Jongerius appears in the "ugly" category. While I disagree, I am aware that one can have different opinions in aesthetic matters. On this level I would be interested to know whether you—or your reporter—have seen the actual product or just a photo and, in case you saw the real thing, why you find it to be ugly.

What I find inappropriate and offensive is the comment "Shame on you, Hella." Shame implies betrayal, not just error. As you use the familiar "Hella," I assume that you know her personally and that you know her work. In this case you would also know that she is uncompromising and sincere. She would never do anything she does not believe in. So, what should she be ashamed of? To have designed something you happen not to like?

The comment "We'll give the designers some props for actually convincing the suits to produce that stuff" just proves that you—or the person who wrote this comment—have no idea of the design process at Vitra. It is a long process in which designer and producer are intensely involved. The result is a common one. There are no suits involved that have to be convinced by the designer.

Rolf Fehlbaum
Chairman, Vitra
Basel, Switzerland

Several months ago, I was saddened by the fact that I was seriously considering canceling my Dwell subscription. I have been an avid reader since nearly the beginning but was starting to feel that every issue was a repeat of a former issue or just too similar in most every respect. It also came across as more of a periodical for architects to show off their work rather than a cross section of the marketplace. I am happy to say that during the past few months I feel that a new vitality has been breathed into the issues. A more varied array of homes is being shown as well as a larger breadth of topics. One great example is the Ghanaian home shown in the September issue ("An Inno-Native Approach").

Pamela H.
Mill Valley, California

My design-junkie friends and I love Dwell and look forward to receiving it each month, so much so that we actually meet up for brunch just to chat about the gorgeous homes, cutting-edge design, and well-composed articles. We argue and laugh and admire and covet—it's a great time. However, we've recently come up with a new game: Which picture, story, or item is so

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overly precious or pretentious or just so wrong as to constitute a joke perpetrated on Dwell's reading public? For the September 2007 issue, here's where we called you out: After heated argument (and second Bloody Marys all around), the collection of calipers on page 60 (Connecticut Country makes a modernist comeback?) was narrowly edged out by the full-sized picture on page 161 of...a tree. Great design, trees.

Hope you don't mind a set of devout modernists having a little fun at your expense—we're huge fans of Dwell.

William Bryan
New York, New York

I have been subscribing to Dwell since the beginning and have every issue. Periodically, I try to [get rid of] the old issues, but I just can't. The past two years or so have been very disappointing and discouraging for me. I felt your magazine had lost its voice and the original target audience that I felt I was a part of. I love modern design in all aspects but have no patience with the pretension most of it had taken on in your advertising base. To make matters worse, I thought Dwell had sold out to become the *Architectural Digest* for the Modern World. Guilt by association. To my delight it looks like the direction you are taking has brought Dwell back to the core values I subscribed for in the first place. Please keep up the good work!

Steve Knapheide
Springfield, Massachusetts

Since the first issue of Dwell, there has been much to rave about and little to fuss over (SUV ads aside). However, as I was midway through the September 2007 issue I turned to the full-page image of a hanging skinned animal carcass.

This is a magazine about architecture, green design, and respect for the environment. It's not about food, and I am sorely disappointed and disgusted over this shock-value photo. Even meat-eating readers must have been surprised (at least it doesn't hide where meat comes from, is that your point?). As a vegetarian for ethical and humane reasons, not to mention the absurd amount of ecological damage that must happen to produce one hamburger, I am appalled and saddened by your choice to be antagonistic. Show me a knife that cuts a ripe tomato.

With a heavy heart at the loss of a love, I ask you to cancel my subscription. I certainly will not be giving any for Christmas presents.

Elizabeth Rittmeyer and Family
Ojai, California

As a reader and fan of your magazine, I was dismayed by the lack of criticism in your coverage of Tokujin Yoshioka's straw wall installation at Moroso's Via Pontaccio showroom during Milan's Design Week ("Special Design Report: Milan," September 2007). The installation by Yoshioka is a blatant rip-off of *Haze* (2003) by New York–based artist Tara Donovan.

Donovan is widely known for her sculpture and large-scale installations constructed of intricate matrices of common materials such as Styrofoam cups, Scotch tape, pins, toothpicks, fishing line, rubber bands, and straws. *Haze* is a wall construction of clear plastic straws of varying lengths, stacked to create an undulating, honeycomb surface.

Donovan's work was constructed and exhibited in Los Angeles at ACE Gallery in 2003, and once again in 2005 at the Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, obviously predating both Yoshioka's recent Moroso installation and his 2006 Remembrance installation.

The idea of artists working simultaneously in similar ways and sharing common materials is no great surprise. But this instance stands out to me as a particularly egregious example of one artist co-opting another's practice for commercial gain. I feel confident that anyone familiar with Tara Donovan's work would agree.

Benjamin Provo
Los Angeles, California

I'm not sure why a magazine like Dwell has to be based in San Francisco with its QVC dollhouse architecture. But it's a bit much when its San Francisco–based editorial staff resorts to infantile Los Angeles bashing. In his article on Andy Lipkis ("Tree's Company," September 2007), Aaron Britt sits smugly on his 21st-century perch and calls William Mulholland the ultimate eco-villain because his engineering marvel has brought water to millions of Angelenos for a century. We shall overlook San Francisco's desecration of John Muir's favorite Sierra valley for the same purpose. However, since we are hopelessly parochial in our epistemological outlook, Dwell would do well to explore early 20th-century fascination with technology in giving us a perspective on our own. There was an era when irrigation and dams were icons of man's achievements. They provided hope for our future in the same way that Andy Lipkis's TreePeople does today.

Hakha Mortezaie
Los Angeles, California

Your piece on the use of large photos to bring the "outdoors" in ("Walls Gone Wild," Sept 2007) had a rather catty air to it but, compared to the typical movie review in the *New Yorker*, was still rather nice and well mannered; no one will want to kill themselves. Of course, we ▸

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wouldn't expect Dwell to find such things attractive, but the worst aspect I could see about most of the efforts was that the furniture often lacked imagination. Of course, my other thought was, where can I get one of those? You see, unable to have a Dwell environment myself (I did once live in a Craig Ellwood Case Study in Hollywood), I have gone the other direction and built a freestanding tiki hut in my bedroom—I even have a blue sky. I have given a lot of consideration to having the Tonga Room [www.tongaroom.com] thunder and rain effect, but so far haven't been able to figure out how to avoid the mildew effect. But a nice scene of a beach, or a tropical waterfall on the wall that is supposed to be the porch—now that just might do it. People tend to react the same way on seeing it for the first time: "I know you said you'd built a tiki hut, but I wasn't expecting an actual hut."

Paul Tominac
San Francisco, California

Editors' Note: *While the photos in that article were indeed rather tongue-in-cheek, please note they were not the work of Dwell stylists, but rather photographs by the artist Thomas Wrede.*

Thank you for the great Frances Anderton interview with the ever-fascinating Richard Koshalek (June 2007) and the insightful and illuminating Raymond Neutra essay about his complicated father ("Neutra Territory," July/August 2007). I had a serious crush on Raymond when he was 18; this essay confirms my good taste.

Ann Videriksen
Los Angeles, California

I was pleased to read the article on Edward Killingsworth ("Opdahl Remastered," July/August 2007) and the remastered Opdahl house. Two years ago, I was one of a lucky number of designers who stayed at the Kapalua Bay Hotel, and we all commented on the simple and elegant architectural composition and structural forms. If only the newer resort projects around the world possessed the same rigor and design finesse displayed at Kapalua Bay. The hotel has since been demolished, but I hope the lessons learned by designers from that architectural gem will reappear in future creations.

Douglas Wittnebel
Walnut Creek, California

I have never written to a magazine before, but after reading your July/August cover story ("Opdahl Remastered"), I couldn't resist. Back in 1958 I saved a magazine article on this house, and still have it. I could not throw away the article; it still is my favorite house after all these years. I was only a teenager then, but I still find that house exciting. The magazine article back in 1958 is about 12 pages with many photos. I would like to send them to the new owner. It was wonderful to see a young guy excited about a piece of mid-century architecture, and giving it new life.

Al Moffat
Baldwinsville, New York

I worked for Killingsworth, Brady & Smith in 1962, the year that the Kahala Hilton was designed. It was my first real professional job, and I still have vivid memories of their spectacular office, where an oak tree grew in through a wall of the drafting studio and out the roof, dropping occasional debris on my drafting table. As the most junior member of the staff, in addition to cleaning the reflecting pool I was the one who kept track of the entire set of working drawings for the Kahala (every line and letter of which was hand done in those pre-CAD days). Your ten facts about Ed Killingsworth should have stated that Waugh Smith was very much involved in the design of the Kahala. Ed would sequester himself in a back room to do houses for individual clients, but the hotel design included much of Waugh's input as well.

At the end of 1962, one week after the catered Christmas dinner for staff, held in the drafting room, which was decorated and specially illuminated by the partners, Ed and Jules Brady assembled us to say that Waugh was leaving—and a third of us were being fired. There's surely a story there about why they split, but I don't know it. I do know that Ed was a prima donna. My job also included making prints on the cheap office copier, which leaked ammonia fumes and left me half blinded with tears after every use. If I brought in a copy I had run too fast and hence made too dark, he cursed, crumpled it up, and threw it at me. Not something Waugh would have ever done.

Christopher Adams
Berkeley, California

I wanted to thank you for printing a well-written and insightful article on Black Mountain College ("Higher Education," July/August 2007). I was quite taken aback when I initially saw the piece. Just last weekend I had a conversation with my board co-chair and we discussed what a good match an article about Black Mountain College would be for Dwell.

Despite its short life, Black Mountain College deserves a place in the pantheon of progressive education. What happened at Black Mountain College impacted education, architecture, and almost every arts-related field. It is also notable that the college was one of the first in the south to desegregate. When Alma Stone Williams was admitted in the summer of 1944, a full ten years before the 1954 *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision, full racial integration was practiced in the classroom, dormitory, and dining hall.

In addition to the website for the Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center (www.blackmountaincollege.org), I would suggest that anyone interested in the school check out the Black Mountain College Project (www.bmcproject.org), which was compiled by independent scholar Mary Emma Harris, and *Fully Awake*, a new documentary film on Black Mountain College by Cathryn Davis Zommer and Neeley House (www.ibiblio.org/bmc/bmchomepage.html).

Bobby Gold
Co-chair
Board of Directors
Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center
Asheville, North Carolina

The July/August 2007 issue of Dwell is one of your best ever, partially because I am such a fan of mid-century modernism (I've just completed a review of *NorCalMod* by my friend Pierluigi Serraino) and also because I know both Raymond Neutra and Barbara Neski. Long ago, before I switched careers to architecture, I was a cabinetmaker and a furniture maker in New York. During the 1970s I built work for several of Barbara and Julian's projects. A couple of years ago, Raymond showed me the piece of his you have included in this issue. It's great to see it made available to a wide audience.

The article on Black Mountain College was also fascinating, and the picture with Varda sitting up in the tree priceless. One point I'd like to clarify: The author describes the 1948 performance of *The Ruse of Medusa* as a "happening." However, that term was not coined until a decade later (some say it was invented by Allan Kaprow in 1957). The word really came into its own in the early 1960s, something I can attest to since I am old enough (sigh) to have participated in a few at the time.

Miltiades Mandros
Oakland, California

I hesitated to write a response to your "Phoenix Envy" (July/August 2007) travel story because, as a Phoenician and editor of a local modern design magazine, I figured I was simply too close

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to the subject to form an objective opinion. Then I began thinking about how your article completely missed the mark on this city. Yes, it's car dependent, and yes, the best burger comes from the Welcome Diner—but there is a new breed of modern architecture brewing here and a staggeringly high level of commitment by the creative class to make this a model 21st-century city. The Mondrian's restaurant was designed by a Los Angeles designer for a New York company. How is that a representation of how we do it in Phoenix? (Plus one photo was incorrectly captioned.) Bruder mentioned the beauty of the Arizona Biltmore resort—why not show that grand lobby? Or the Hotel Valley Ho? It's a mid-century-modern resort recently redesigned by an Arizona architecture firm that's located down the block from the resort itself. Now there's a Phoenix story worth telling travelers!

I have always enjoyed your travel features and appreciate the insider's perspective. But "Phoenix Envy" read like a laundry list of plugs, and is being viewed as a missed opportunity by many members of the local architecture and design community. Readers would have gained more from less of a list and more from meaningful, insightful descriptions.

David Tyda
Phoenix, Arizona

In regard to your Kitchens 101 (July/August 2007): Most of the basic concepts of kitchen design originate with Frank Gilbreth, a builder and efficiency engineer who developed Motion Study (which is very different from Taylor's Time Study). Gilbreth developed the basic concept of the work center, including many key ideas—such as variable counter heights and work flow, and, more generally, the careful observation of how people actually do work. After his death, his wife, Lillian, applied these concepts to the home and the kitchen. It would be interesting to explore the relationship between their work and that of Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky, but the concepts originate with Gilbreth. This work is also the foundation for accessible design and ergonomics, fields in which Lillian was also a pioneer. Studies at Cornell in the early '50s, known as the Cornell Kitchen, expanded on this work. My work in this field leans directly on these two sources.

The work triangle of the Small Homes Council should not be viewed as a positive breakthrough. It's really a dumbing-down of much more interesting and powerful ideas. It was used as a quick check for evaluating the design of FHA-funded homes after the war, to make sure their kitchens were not completely nonfunctional. Many genuinely bad kitchens conform nicely to its strictures, including modernist ones. It's much better to go to the source, and more fun.

Sam Clark
Plainfield, Vermont

It appears that neither Mr. Korhammer nor his client really do much cooking ("Open Sesame," July/August 2007). Otherwise, the highlighted three-foot-wide Corian surface might not have been designed to slide under the built-in oven. One can only imagine the disaster of having to hurriedly clear the chopping surface before opening the oven to remove an overly browned game hen from the take-out shop.

Modern design is always a pleasure to look at. It's even more pleasurable when it functions well.

John Young
Novato, California

Thanks to your photos on pages 88 and 90 ("Leave It to Beavers," July/August), I finally know what I have sitting in my garden (that is, besides just an extremely heavy piece of marble): It's the base to a Flos Arco floor lamp by Castiglioni.

I bought it for $10 at an east Dallas garage sale about a year ago. The woman who sold it to me told me that it was the base of a lamp, and it still had attached the vertical metal piece that leads into the curvy part of the lamp. I was amazed to see it in your magazine. I love to read every issue; I always learn something new.

Michael W. Hubbard
Dallas, Texas

Correction: In our October 2007 issue, we listed incorrect contact information on our Sourcing page for Christian Dean ("Minneapolis, MN," p. 172). His phone number is (612) 872-2398, and his email is cdean@citydeskstudio.com. We regret the error.

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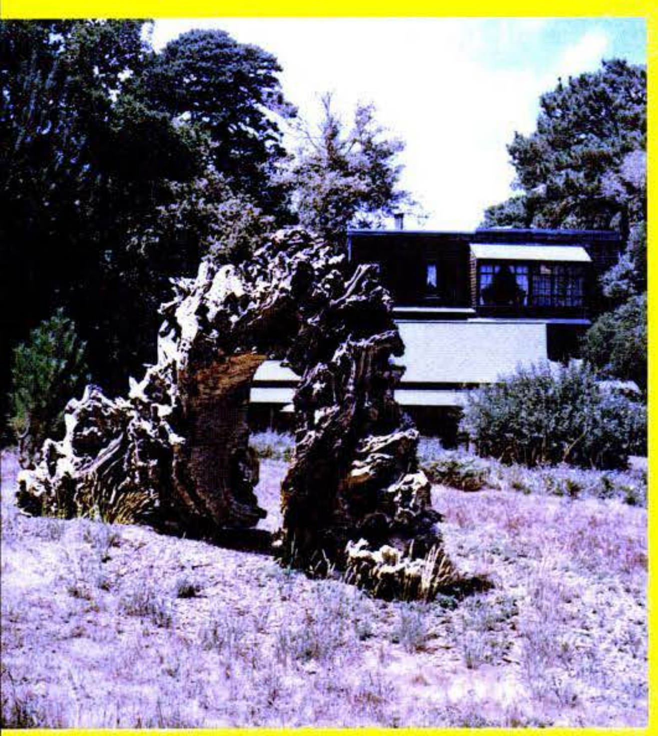

This twisted root used to belong to, and took shape at the hands of, Isamu Noguchi, but now resides in the backyard of eco-thinker Sim Van der Ryn ("The Sim," p. 112). It's far more than a simple sculpture—Van der Ryn actually got married under its arch. We can't think of a hipper chuppah.

Contributors

Aya Brackett ("The Sim," p. 112) is a San Francisco–based photographer who enjoyed her excursion to photograph Sim Van der Ryn at his self-proclaimed "hippie palace." Having grown up off the grid (with many hippies) in the mountains of Northern California, she appreciated Van der Ryn's simple way of living, his free-flowing design, and especially his apple trees. Among other magazines, Brackett has shot for the *London Telegraph Magazine, Martha Stewart Living,* and *Travel and Leisure.*

Dan Maginn ("Roll Out the Barrel," p. 132) is a principal architect at El Dorado Inc., an architecture firm in Kansas City, Missouri. He doesn't think there is anything funny about rain barrels, storm water management, or global warming. He does, however, think it's pretty funny when dogs sit in the front seat of cars, calmly looking forward, with their heads at approximately the same height as their driver's—except when the driver slams on the brakes and the passenger dog pitches forward and bops his nose on the dashboard. That's not funny.

Clayton Maxwell ("Free-Range Kickin'," p. 166) is an Austin-based writer who was forced to labor on the El Cosmico site before she could write about it. She now fantasizes about trading in her laptop for a tool belt and becoming a plumber in Marfa, Texas, where she knows she'll be wanted.

Cy Merkezas ("Home Sweat Home," p. 174) is an architect who divides his life between the restoration of monuments and mansions in Washington, DC, and his own handmade constructions amidst the mountains and forests of Floyd, Virginia. He does not view one locale as an escape from the other—just two intertwined worlds that allow common design ideas to be explored in divergent contexts. And despite appearances, he is not a masochist, but is still perplexed as to why building one's own house without electricity or vehicular access has to be so physically tiring. Writing his account of these activities for Dwell only served to dredge up memories of the pain and humiliation (and transcendent joys) of a do-it-yourself life.

James Nestor ("No Grid in Sight," p. 144) is a writer living in San Francisco. In preparation for his stay in the desolate high desert of southern Utah, Nestor walked around for hours wearing Dolphin shorts, a desert flap hat, a fanny pack, and an unbuttoned linen shirt. This training, it turns out, did not help him at all in Utah, but did earn him a new name in San Francisco: Creep.

Andy Reynolds ("Ride On!," p. 92) is a Seattle-based photographer. He doesn't bike much—photo gear is too big and heavy—but he's had a bike in the shed and rides it now that his five-year-old daughter is learning to ride hers. His fondest memory of biking is when he broke his left fibula on his Nishiki 10-speed right before a Scorpions concert and had other concert goers sign his cast.

Jennifer Roberts ("The Sim," p. 112) is a San Francisco writer and the author of three books on green homes: *Redux, Good Green Kitchens,* and *Good Green Homes.* She's not sure what she enjoyed most while working on this story—Sim Van der Ryn's heady conversation about "eco-logical" design and the shift to local resource use, watching him collect eggs from his large flock of hens, or his gift of a vintage egg carton. She would like him to know that her four young chickens have started laying, and are now regularly keeping the carton filled with organic San Francisco eggs.

Bruce Sterling ("Another Green World," p. 134) is a design critic, science-fiction novelist, and weblogging laptop gypsy from Texas who was last seen exiting Belgrade, Serbia, and bound for an extensive stay in Turin, Italy, the "Design Capital of the World," for 2008 AD. ■

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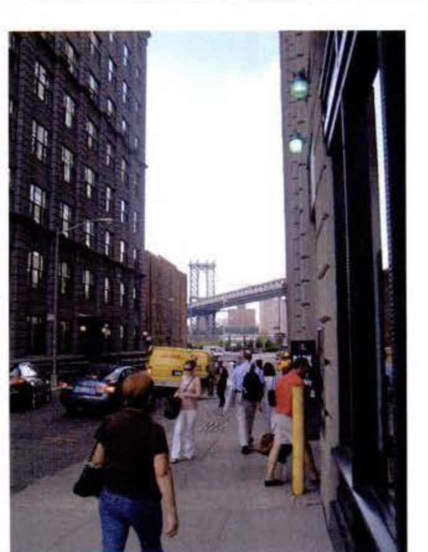

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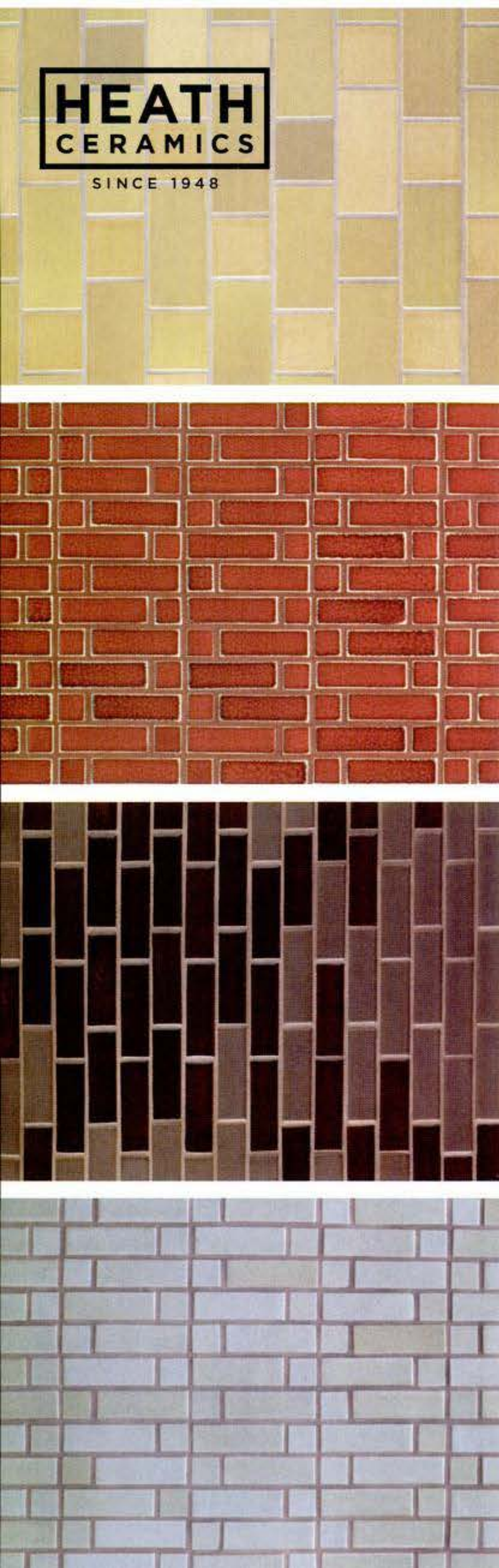

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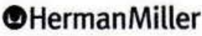

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Light Box

For Tad Beck, making a home out of a stolid, windowless warehouse meant opening it up from the inside out.

Tad Beck greets his lab mix, Little Bear, at the bottom of an alternating tread stairway that makes getting to and from the roof deck easy on two or four feet.

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Tad Beck, an artist with a keen concern for the environment, is happy to talk about the features that make his new house green, including the solar panels on the roof and the bamboo on the kitchen floor. But he also has a way of focusing on what's really important. "The biggest green move we made was that we reused an old building," he says.

Indeed, his new house in Los Angeles—which includes a pair of studios (one for Beck, the other for his partner, fashion photographer Shawn Smith)—is an old warehouse building, largely unchanged on the exterior, except for a layer of charcoal gray paint and new front door. The outside is virtually windowless: The building abuts commercial structures on three sides and faces a busy street on the fourth. But inside, Beck, with the help of designer Riley Pratt, created a home around a luminous interior courtyard. The 10-by-12-foot opening, which is framed by four sliding glass doors, provides a semblance of California living—the suburban ideal of rooms extending onto terraces—within an urban shell.

The courtyard wasn't Pratt's only intervention. Fitting an apartment and two workable studios into a 2,800-square-foot building required him to make full use of the building's 12-plus-foot ceiling height. Pratt lifted the apartment up on a four-and-a-half-foot-high platform, from which it overlooks the two workspaces. That way, the 900-square-foot apartment feels expansive, borrowing space, visually, from the two studios. (As a bonus, a vast crawl space under the apartment is used for storing eveything from tools to snowboards.) ▸

The kitchen, with Richlite counters and upper cabinets that reach to the ceiling, leads to a small dining area illuminated by a Plexiglas "Agave" lamp (above). ❶ p. 238

How to Make My House Your House

Curtain Call

To make the bedroom seem ethereal—and far larger than its 12-by-12 dimensions suggest—Pratt designed a curtain that hangs on three sides, hiding closets to the left and right of the bed and providing privacy when extended in front of the sliding glass doors. The bedspread, in charcoal with undulating turquoise stitching (www.foldbedding.com), recalls the folds of the curtain; the overall effect is of a place for floating off to sleep.

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General Cluster
Even in a wide-open loft space, it's possible to create cozy furniture groupings. In the living room, where Beck reclines reading a Sharon Lockhart monograph, a grouping is formed by a couple of Eames chairs and a coffee table (made of tiles by Roger Capron) on what Beck calls a "quasi-psychedelic rug." The furniture clustering provides moments of intimacy in the otherwise open space, which moves throughout the kitchen, dining, sleeping, and living areas, creating axial vignettes around the courtyard.

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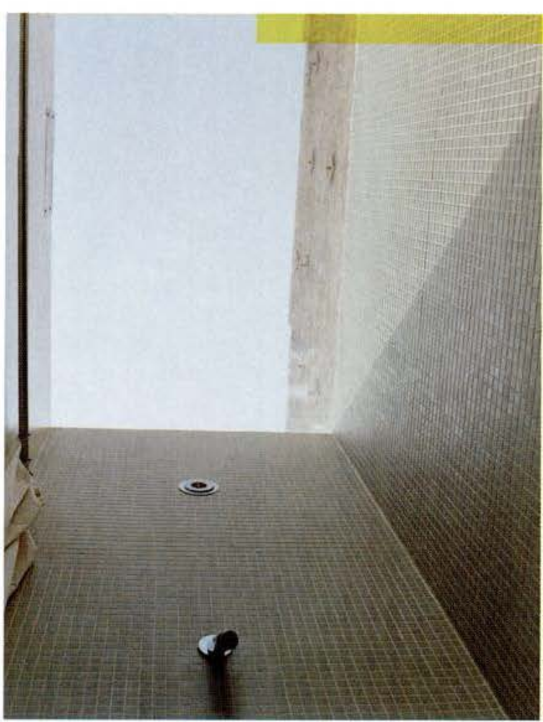
The couple's living room (which includes a flat-screen TV) overlooks Tad Beck's studio (below); art supplies are stored in niches that are invisible from the living space above. A hallway along the edge of the building provides an alternate route to the front door.



Bathed in Light

A skylight over the middle of a room is a nice thing. But, as Riley Pratt demonstrates, using a skylight along the edge of a room can help dematerialize walls and make an indoor space feel especially luminous. Here, Beck's shower stall seems to continue right up to the clouds (the skylight was installed so that its frame isn't visible from below). "It's like showering outside," says Beck, an outdoorsy type who spends his summers in a house on a harbor in Vinalhaven, Maine.

When Beck moved to Los Angeles to attend the Art Center College of Design, he traded in a sprawling loft on lower Broadway in Manhattan for a Hollywood bungalow and a separate studio, to which he biked miles each day. After three years studying, he was offered a teaching post at University of Southern California and was ready to buy a place. But Beck, who has moved from painting to working in still and video photography, and Smith, whose fashion photography needed room to maneuver, required two studios in addition to their living space, something a conventional house wouldn't likely provide.

Encouraged by a USC housing program that gives grants to faculty who buy property in the communities bordering the campus, Beck started looking in areas he hadn't previously considered. He found his building, which was being used as an adult magazine warehouse, in the ethnically diverse North University Park neighborhood, next door to the site of one of the earliest documented gay churches in Los Angeles. (It was destroyed in an arson fire in 1973, which Beck sympathized with.)

Pratt added significant structural support to bring the building up to code, but the biggest technical challenge was the courtyard. Los Angeles is not exempt from heavy rainfall, so to keep the glass-walled space from becoming a fish tank, Pratt designed a hardwood deck above what is essentially a giant shower pan, tilted down toward a corner drain. A small succulent garden (the couple asked each friend to bring a cactus to their housewarming party) on the deck also helps with drainage. ▸

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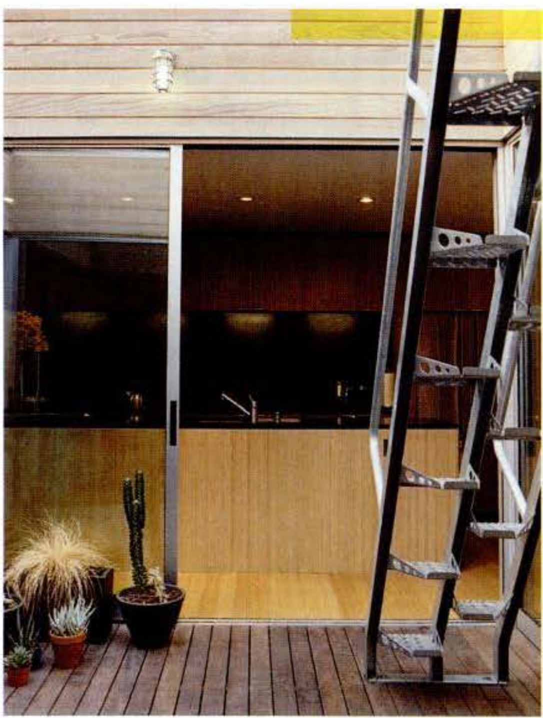
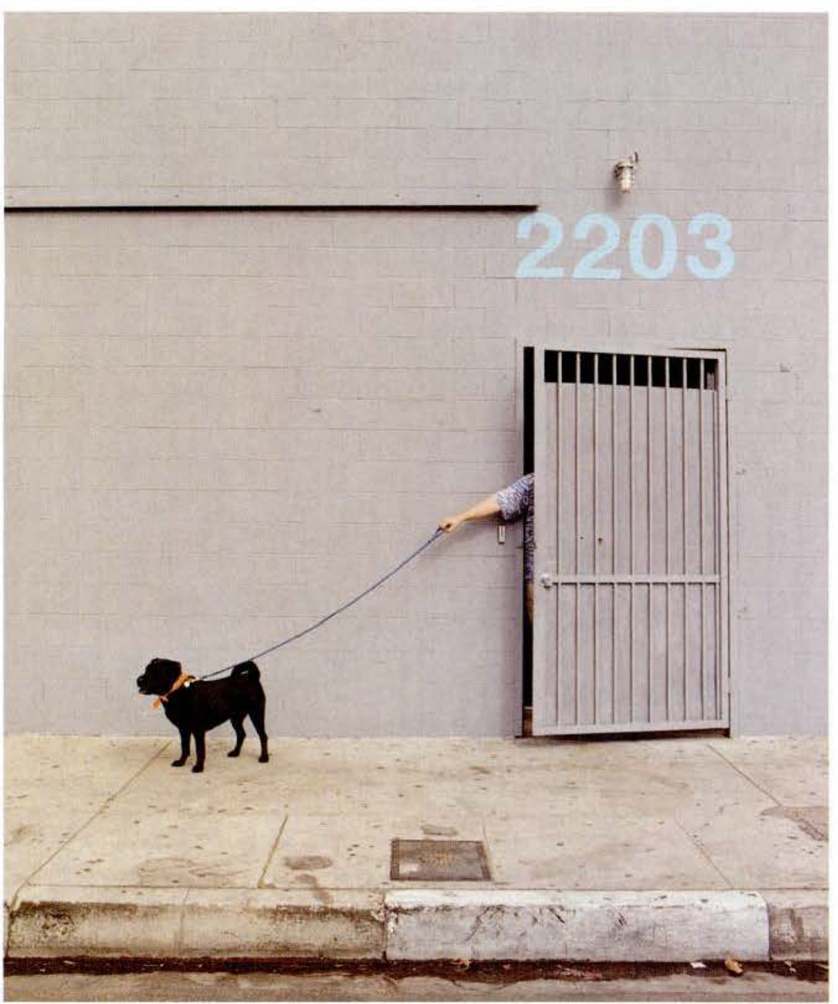
Except for adding a coat of grayish paint and stenciled numbers (below), Beck changed little about the building's façade. But four new exteriors face an inner courtyard (right), with a cactus garden and a galvanized metal stairway to the roof. The teak slats contrast with the kitchen's bamboo flooring.



Stair Master

There wasn't enough room for a conventional stairway to the roof deck, so Pratt chose an industrial model from Lapeyre Stair (www.lapeyrestair.com), a New Orleans–based manufacturer. Its alternating tread design makes walking up a cinch—even for Beck's Lab mix, Little Bear. Beck recalls that when he told the company he wanted a stairway for his home, they weren't interested in selling to him. But he persevered and called back the next day and said he needed it for his warehouse, and the order went right through. Beck became accustomed to the difficulty of categorizing the building as either residential or commercial: Inspectors treated it as a home for some parts of the building code and as a workplace for others.



A simple bedroom, lined with closets and anchored by a platform bed, sits on one side of the courtyard; a ceiling track allows the same curtain that conceals the closets to continue all the way around the room, creating an ethereal enclosure. On the other side of the courtyard is the kitchen, which Pratt designed minimally, using bamboo for the cabinets and floor, and Richlite (which is made of paper and resin) for the counters. Linking the kitchen and bedroom is the living room, where a huge built-in sofa (with storage for linens and DVDs underneath the cushions) provides ample seating in what is otherwise a compact room. Beck carefully selected a few pieces of mid-century furniture, including an Eames lounge chair—his favorite perch—and a complementary rocker. A ledge supports a large-screen television on which Beck can view and show his artwork.

From the apartment, stairways lead down to the two studios: Smith's in the front of the building (giving models and stylists easy access from the street), and Beck's in the back. Adding to this one-story warehouse's multilevel feel is a galvanized steel staircase, which leads from the courtyard to the roof and creates a perfect place to sunbathe—except on the portion set aside for solar panels, which provide much of the building's electricity and hot water. (In summer, Beck says, "We get to watch the meter go backwards.")

Pratt has given Beck and Smith a house where everything fits perfectly. "I look at the house and don't see a thing I want to change," says Beck. "And I can ride my bicycle to work." ■

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Story by Amara Holstein | Photos by Jack Thompson

Designed by Matt and Tina Ford, the Shade House condos, starkly clad in concrete and weathered wood, might seem rather incongruous in a neighborhood of charmingly decrepit bungalows. But Matt says with pride that in fact locals find his project very appealing. "The old style and the very new work together," he states.

A bird flying over Houston, Texas, sees only a sprawling canopy of trees. It seems the perfect nesting place for creatures both avian and human alike; unfortunately, the green ends at the tree line. All of those leafy branches shade a city that appears to care little for sustainable design, with cars that chug gas by the low-mileage gallon and oversized houses that dominate the persistently expanding cityscape.

Houston does have the occasional odd bird—including some more interested in bucking trends than broncos. Matt and Tina Ford, for example, have been building for years with their firm Esplanade Homes. Recently they decided to create a series of affordable townhomes aimed at buyers who couldn't afford ground-up construction, yet still craved earth-friendly elements. Under the auspices of their new company, Shade House Development, the Fords bought, designed, and built on a lot in an historic neighborhood called the Heights. "It has an eclectic side to it," explains Matt. "In other neighborhoods, all you ▸

Houston, We've Solved a Problem

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Weathered wood tempers the gray stucco siding and provides a pleasant refuge in the community garden space (right). Inside the condos (below left), the Fords' penchant for rescuing and renewing is in evidence. From the many refugee animals that contentedly lounge about the house, to the salvaged gym floors in the kitchen, to the recycled metal railing and the stair treads in the hall (below right), everything has been saved from destruction and reused.

see are McMansions. Here, people are restoring old bungalows." Only five minutes from downtown, it's an area where Matt's brand of modernist design is welcome. "People would give you a hard time if you built a stucco Mediterranean here, but the old style and the very new work together," he says.

To integrate the Shade House into its surroundings, the exterior features a combination of raw concrete and exposed wood (reclaimed lumber) that complements the existing concrete structures of the neighborhood. Beneath the exterior cladding and the roof is a clever energy-saving solution: radiant barrier house wrap. The wrap, which looks just like tin foil, repels radiant heat and bounces it right back into the atmosphere—a breath of fresh air in Houston's torrid summers.

Since so much of life in this city revolves around beating the heat, the Fords have made keeping cool while keeping green their top priority. "As much as 37 percent of heat gain can happen in the attic air ducts," Matt explains. He moved the air-conditioning ducts from the attic into the house's interior and attached them to an energy-efficient furnace, keeping costs lower and making the necessary evil of air-conditioning less of a polluter. In addition to a clever roof temperature control system, the houses are capped off with Cool Tone shingles, which reflect more light (and heat) than their traditional counterparts. The five units measure between 1,600 and 2,200 square feet—diminutive by Lone Star State standards—but as Matt puts it, "The greenest thing you can do is a tight design."

Though Shade House does some serious environmental heavy lifting, the interiors were envisioned to be clean, calming spaces. Some of the units have river rock walls at their entrances; others have ladders in a loft ▸

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Naturally subtle tones predominate in the bathroom (right), with Walker Zanger stone floors complemented by sanded concrete walls and dark mahogany cabinets topped by a slab of white marble. In the living area (below), the family's dogs Kirby and Forest commandeer beds that Matt custom designed for them, enjoying the view of the trees floating outside the floor-to-ceiling windows reflected in the recycled steel-frame mirror.
ⓘ p. 238

space that lead to wraparound roof terraces, where residents lounge on deck chairs and tend to stalks of potted bamboo. Tina chose gray and brownish-green hues that soften the otherwise stark walls, and Matt created a smoothly curving wall in the living area that holds the bathroom at the widest part of the arc to counteract all the straight lines.

If the wood floors look vaguely like the basketball court at your high school, with different colors interspersed within the grains of maple, it's because they're all recycled gym floors from nearby schools. The countertops and stairs are also wood, these purchased from a man who runs a tree-trading program: Matt gives him old trees that are cut down when he clears lots, then buys them back as lumber for construction.

But perhaps the most enchanting lumber on view is just outside: Floor to ceiling windows provide panorama views of the actual trees. Walking around the complex, one of the residents of the other units will invariably ▸

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Off the Grid

Unlike most Houston yards, there's no grass to cut around these houses. Instead, the garden is gravel interspersed with low-maintenance plants like black bamboo, agave cacti, and foxtail ferns. Set inside concrete and steel planters that the Fords made themselves, the landscaping also hides protruding air conditioners.

greet you with a cold bottle of beer, and "suddenly all the other tenants will be outside," Matt says with a laugh. He's pleased with the sense of community that's developed, one he carefully cultivated through his design. Because the units are densely packed on a small lot, he turned each of them inward to face an interior courtyard. A lack of fences makes the outdoor area feel larger than it is, and proves an excellent spot for late-night parties, which are lit and powered by a large solar panel that collects sunlight during the day.

The project has been so successful that the Fords are already starting to build a second set of Shade Houses. But perhaps most telling is the pride the Fords and their daughter Daisy feel in the project. Already a green proponent, "we hear Daisy explaining how solar works to other kids," Tina says. And recently, the three moved from their rambling Victorian home into one of the two vacant units, "in order to downsize and live even more environmentally consciously." ■

The Mighty Ducts

Houston's summers are almost unbearable, as anyone who's ever experienced its humidity and relentless sun can attest. Few would even consider a place without air-conditioning, so Matt devised a plan to help reduce the need for artificial cooling.

The centerpiece of his solution is a technology he calls Sun-Flow. Based on the idea that "the majority of cooling that houses do is to fight heat coming in through the attic," he explains, he increased the size of the cavities in the roof rafters to move more air through them. Each cavity has access to a large vent, and as temperatures rise, the hot air vents out through a series of airshafts and channels. As a final step when it really gets hot, rooftop solar panels power up fans that attach to the sides of the houses, and blow air out of the attic whenever the sun makes an appearance.

The result is that hot air never makes its unwelcome way into the house, so there's significantly less need to crank up the air conditioner. —A.H.

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Ride On!

As the bike industry begins to meet the growing demand for practical, sensible bicycles tailored to commuting and urban outings, the time has never been better to get back that freewheelin' feelin'.

In 1960s-era Amsterdam, white bikes could be found scattered about street corners, free for the riding. Unfortunately, the urban idealism that led to the city share program rusted faster than the bike frames; people responded to "free for the taking" but not to "returning."

Spurred by concerns about pollution and congestion, several U.S. and European cities are now reviving the idea, with help from new technology that holds riders accountable for a bike's return. In July, Paris and New York both introduced bike-share programs, but with different degrees of commitment. Paris rolled out 20,000 bikes to be used in perpetuity; New York made 20 available for a five-day experiment. The Paris program was sponsored by the city government; the New York program was sponsored by a group of architects, planners, and designers and a nonprofit gallery.

In the United States, pay-as-you-go city car shares, like Zipcar, work on the same principal as bike shares, but have gained more traction. Zipcar reports that people who sell (or simply don't buy) a personal automobile to join the use-only-as-needed Zipcar collective reduce their driving by up to 50 percent and utilize the "most efficient" means of transportation—including bikes—to close the gap. Heralded as a solution to parking problems, congestion, and pollution, car shares make up one wedge in the plan to reduce the number of vehicles on the road (itself a small slice of the global warming puzzle), but they are hardly a solution to all our problems.

But don't hang your head just yet. Even Byron, our bicycle expert, still owns a car. The biggest impediment to a robust bike culture in the United States is the lack of infrastructure to support enjoyable bike commutes. That will require a critical mass—and not necessarily a heated mob swarming city streets for a renegade Friday commute—to decide that biking is a way to take control of, and enjoy, your life. While the car is at the core of American culture, so too is the pursuit of happiness. As Byron says, "When you don't have to sit in traffic, or circle a parking lot just to get a cup of joe, you begin to realize how liberating bikes are." ▸

For inspiration, pick up the documentary *Contested Streets* or the book *How to Live Well Without Owning a Car* and visit dwell.com/blog for Bike Hugger's extended commentary.

A Note on Our Expert:
D.L. Byron is the principal of Textura Design, Inc., a Seattle firm that specializes in business blogging, and the publisher of Bike Hugger, a blog about bike culture. Byron's ongoing design study in urban transportation (documented on Bike Hugger) gave birth to Bettie, a husky, but attractive "SUB," or "sport utility bike." Technically, Bettie is a Surly Karate Monkey 29-inch-wheeled frame, with a Stokemonkey electric motor assist and an Xtracycle hitchless trailer, but she's also an investigation into how finding the right bike for your life can make a car seem impractical, even unnecessary.

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Puma

8-speed Urban Mobility (semi-folding) by Puma with Biomega and Vexed Generation / www.puma.com / $1,600 / Unisex: one size; steel gray and ribbon red

Expert Opinion: Folding bikes are incredibly popular abroad. Europeans use them on trains, and they're easy to store in small apartments. The Puma has an interesting feature: The cable suspension also serves as a cable lock (meaning that if anyone messes with your lock, the bike essentially auto-destructs; but as long as you're the rightful owner, Puma will come to the rescue). It's the full package of form and function, and it's cool.

What We Think: You won't have to pop a wheelie to take your bike on the elevator, and you might make a few friends on the train; folding bikes, especially ones the same size as a "regular" bike, are still a novelty on Main St., U.S.A. With a Biomega frame, gears by Shimano, and chunky tires, you can take on potholes as well as San Francisco–style hills. And when pesky Vespas swerve into the bike lane, disc brakes give you excellent stopping power.

Alta

Single-speed city racer by Alta / www.altabikes.no / $911 (665 euros) / Unisex: medium and large sizes; white and yellow

Expert Opinion: Single speeds reduce maintenance and focus on the ride. Alta is marketing what bike messengers have been building for years. It's modern, design-y, and well done, like the BMX bike you had as a kid: nothing to break, just ride it to get a Slurpee. The single speed is not to be confused with a fixie (fixed gear), which doesn't have a freewheel and is mostly braked by your legs. In biking culture, riding one says, "I'm so freakin' good, I don't need brakes."

What We Think: This bike says, "I'm at least as good as a messenger." Because it's stripped down, it's light enough to haul up a few stories. The handlebars are its signature feature, meant to put you in a power stance to charge uphill and dodge traffic. The work of a Norwegian collective of graphic, furniture, and product designers with an ad agency, it's fit for the streets, and your wall. Anyone who says they're not buying it for looks is lying.

Surly

Long Haul Trucker by Surly / www.surlybikes.com / $929 / Unisex: one size; utility blue

Expert Opinion: This is a great commuter bike, but my favorite is Surly's Big Dummy frame, which is a production version of a sport utility bike frame that I'm building Bettie 2.0 with. A cyclist can order the Big Dummy from their local shop and customize it with components of their choice—great for date nights, taking the kids to school, or getting dinner. When a bike accommodates your lifestyle better you rely on a car less.

What We Think: If you have the gumption to go for it, we support the DIY ethos behind building a bike off of a frame; that's how Surly started after all. While you can buy simple framesets for all of their styles, they also make complete bikes for instant gratification. One of the few companies that didn't succumb to the the aluminum or carbon-fiber-frame fad, the all-steel construction of Surly's Long Haul Trucker won't rattle your bones and is sure to stand the test of time; or as Surly would say, the test of 20 beer runs or 200 hundred miles, any given Sunday. ►

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Biomega

Biomega AMS 8-Speed bicycle by Jens Martin Skibsted for Design Within Reach / www.dwr.com / $1,200 / Men's medium and large, in silver; women's small and medium, in Indian beige

Expert Opinion: The AMS [as in Amsterdam] is built for getting around town. It features a shaft drive, internal gears, and fenders. Basically it's the perfect hipster's grocery-getter. The simplicity of the shaft drive is attractive, and the fact DWR sells it appeals to the creative professionals, and hopefully inspires them to ride.

What We Think: The bike's designer, Jens Martin Skibsted, gives an apt analogy for the Biomega: It's like a Mac compared to a PC. Sure, there are more technical bikes out there, but this is an intuitive, smooth ride that never freezes or requires a nerd to fix. And because it has internal gears, all those creative professionals don't need to worry about getting grease on their skinny jeans. Although the bike is pricey, Design Within Reach delivers on reliable quality. Considering that we love Macs and clean pants, we're big fans of this bike.

Brompton

Brompton folding S-type / www.bromptonbicycle.co.uk / $1,149–$1,995 / Unisex: one size; 16 colors

Expert Opinion: The best thing about the Brompton is that you can gatecheck it like a stroller when flying. It's super easy to fold and has been refined and dialed in over the past 30 years. Many Brompton users don't carry locks. They just fold it and either carry it or store it. While the Puma is urban, the Brompton is a commuter and travel bike. The biggest differences are the size and the Puma's built-in cable lock.

What We Think: While the Brompton brand may be the butt of biker's jokes (it's rather like its British mate, the Mini, in that sense), the S-type—for "sporty"—has a slightly more aggressive stance than other Brompton models. It's also the lightest. While it may not be the best bike for basketball players, it's a completely viable option for train/bus-plus-bike trips, and still cooler than a Segway. The 16 colors are enhanced by 13 color options for the fork, rear frame, handlebar, and stem, so even with all stock parts you can claim it's customized.

Novara

Novara Transfer by REI / www.rei.com / $599 / Unisex: 15 in. and 13 in.; red

Expert Opinion: You can tell that commuters designed and built this bike. It's full of well-considered features and specs like reflective tire sidewalls, a hub-generated front light, and a loud bell. If you're ready to bike commute, the Transfer is ready for you. It's also got internal gears for low maintenance, plus bomb-proof rims, and platform pedals that let you just hop on, even with a big briefcase and grocceries.

What We Think: While the price tag is lighter than the other bikes, the Novara is heftier; however, seven gears give it plenty of flexibility for a 33-pounder. The fact that it comes completely kitted-out means that it's not an accessories trap; all you have to do to get going is put on a helmet (not spandex). *Bicycling* magazine named the Novara the best commuter bike in 2006. It's definitely the most bike for your buck, but being stuck with maroon and white feels a bit like being trapped in our old varsity letter jacket. ■

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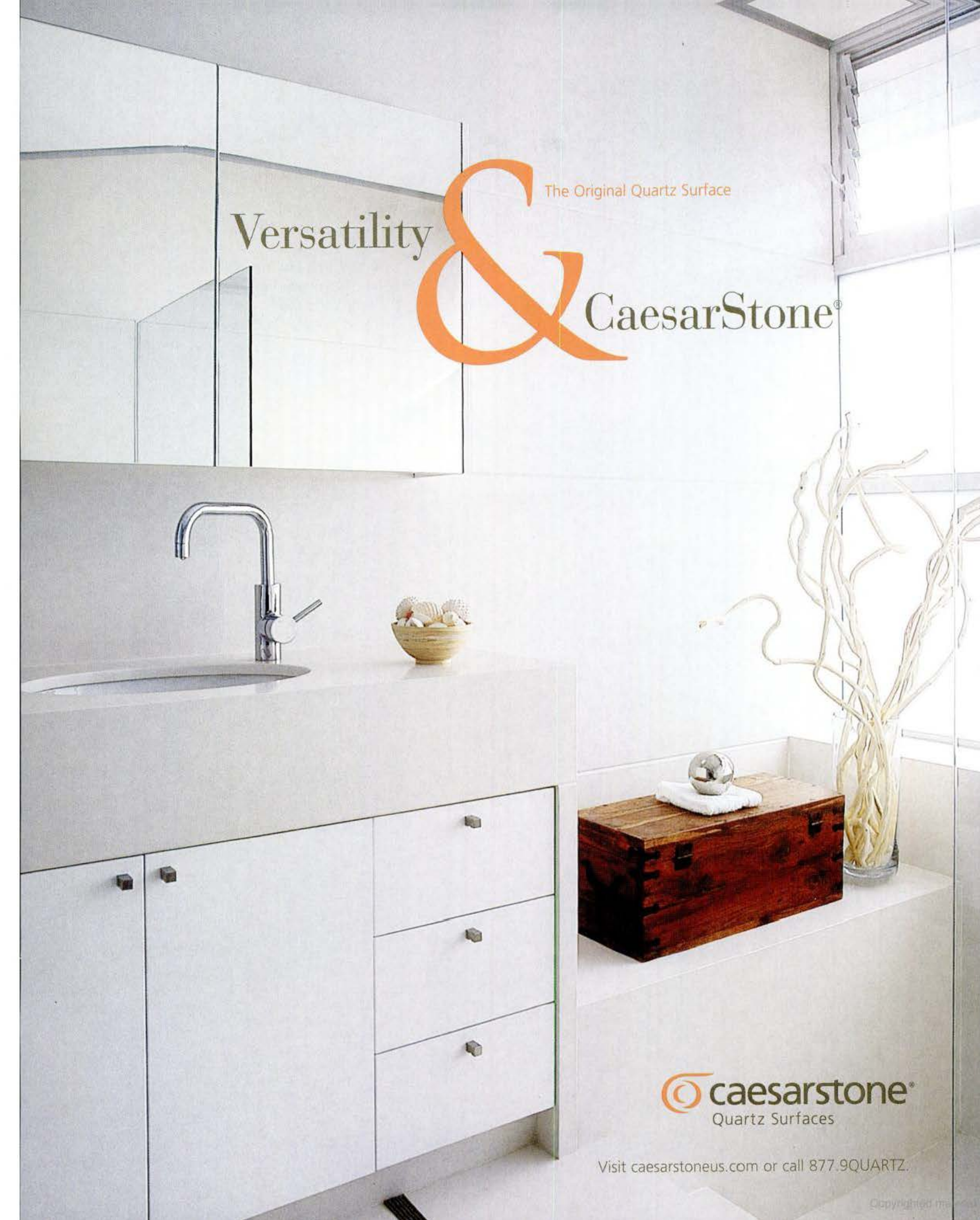
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Story by Michael Cannell

Brooklyn Renaissance

Thanks to a group of young Brooklyn architects, an immigrant neighborhood untouched by gentrification gets low-income housing with high ideals.

If you travel east through Brooklyn—beyond Bedford-Stuyvesant, Bushwick, and Brownsville—you eventually come to East New York. While the rest of Brooklyn is swept up in a giddy renaissance of bistros and brownstone renovations, East New York is home to some of the city's poorest residents. This is the end of the line in more ways than one, a district of abandoned cars and Chinese take-outs with bulletproof glass.

Imagine the locals' surprise at Glenmore Gardens, two complexes comprising five modern buildings with cedar-and-corrugated aluminum siding completed this spring on Glenmore Avenue and around the corner on Van Siclen Avenue.

"Everybody stops and stares," says Gary Gilchrist, an immigrant from St. Vincent who won a city lottery that allowed him to buy one of the homes for $329,000. ▸

In the scrappy neighborhood of East New York, the design firm Della Valle Bernheimer built five buildings for low-income homebuyers, including one belonging to Shahan and Junnatul Rastgir (above).

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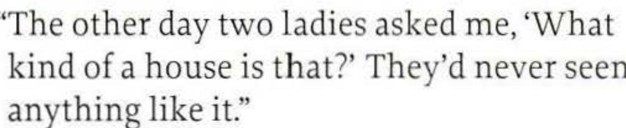

"The other day two ladies asked me, 'What kind of a house is that?' They'd never seen anything like it."

Della Valle Bernheimer designed two of the five structures themselves and hired three other young firms—Architecture Research Office, BriggsKnowles, and Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis—to do the rest. The homes were built for $108 per square foot using cedar paneling and corrugated aluminum arranged horizontally to correspond with the vinyl siding of neighboring homes (above). Residents including Fen Qi-Huang and Guo-Feng Jiang shown with family members (top right), and Amelia and Lynette Deroy, (bottom left) have found a strong sense of community, in addition to first rate design, at Glenmore Gardens.

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"The other day two ladies asked me, 'What kind of a house is that?' They'd never seen anything like it."

Five years ago, New York asked for proposals to start replacing the dwindling stock of low-income homes. The winning bid came from Della Valle Bernheimer, a young Brooklyn design firm that co-developed the project in collaboration with ET Partners. "We wanted to find work for ourselves, but we also wanted to do something socially beneficial," says Andy Bernheimer.

Rather than design all five structures themselves, Bernheimer and his partner, Jared Della Valle, took the helm on two and assigned the other three to other young firms—Architecture Research Office, BriggsKnowles, and Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis. Della Valle likes to call it a "do-gooder Sagaponac," referring to the subdivision of high-end homes by well-known architects in the Hamptons.

They agreed on a common mix of materials primarily comprised of fiber cement panels, renewable cedar siding, and recycled corrugated aluminum. The aluminum refers to the borough's industrial past, and its horizontal pattern echoes the vinyl siding of neighboring homes. Each semidetached 2,200-square-foot home includes a small downstairs unit that can be rented out to help pay the mortgage.

Gilchrist and the other buyers were selected from more than 2,000 applicants. In the evenings they sit out on a modern version of the traditional Brooklyn stoop or gather in the generous family spaces configured around open kitchens. Like the best of the old Brooklyn neighborhoods, Glenmore Gardens is becoming a community. "We're all drawing closer together," Gilchrist says. "We're neighbors now, no matter where we came from." ■

Working in one of the city's most crime-ridden areas, the architects tried to balance the neighborly bearing of traditional brownstones with the need for security. Olateju and Bosede Ogunremi (right), for example, can look out on the street from the safe remove of a third-floor balcony.

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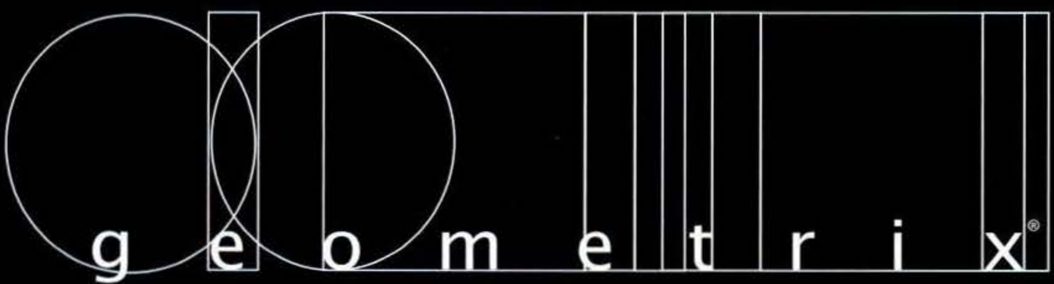
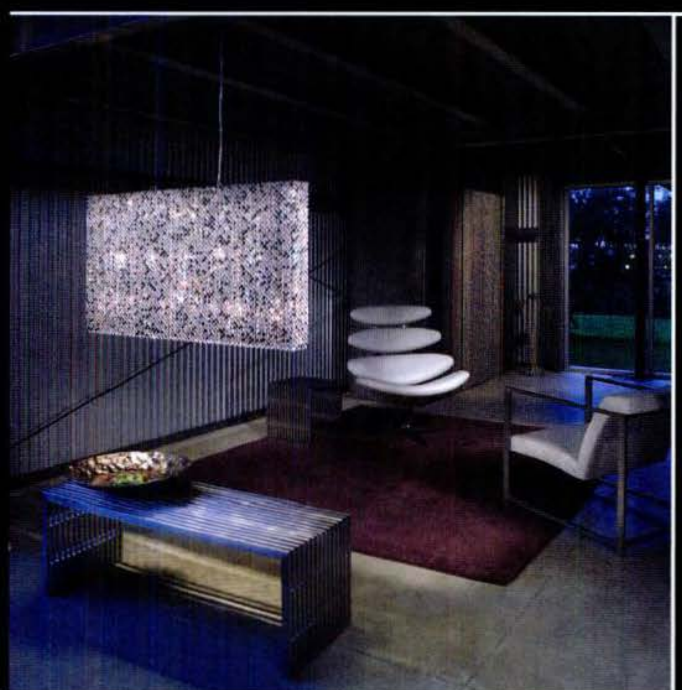
Photos Glenn Moody




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Dad's irritable.

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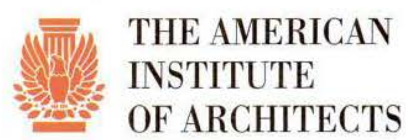

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Story by Amber Bravo

Farm Team

A century ago, owning a brick henhouse was a real coup of a coop, something only well-to-do farmers could afford. At least this is what I'm told, as I pass the tidy, low-lying brick shelter that houses Tryon Farm's clutch. I'm inclined to believe it: The roosters here possess a regal air (they're massive) and the hens seem happy to haunt such a handsome roost. And well they should. Tryon Farm is an exemplary model for conservation-minded real estate development—a place where the chickens come before the eggs (they provide ambiance as well as the makings of a mean omelet), and land preservation is tantamount to growth.

The ecology in Michigan City, Indiana, where Tryon is located, and the nearby Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore is one of the most diverse in the country, and the ponds, dunes, and forest that thrive within the borders of Tryon are maintained and preserved by the Tryon Farm Institute, a nonprofit conservancy. Homeowners pay taxes solely on their home but contribute a flat rate to the maintenance of communal land, occasionally chipping in with a bit of the labor as well. (On this particular visit, a number of residents woke up early to help clear out overgrowth in the prairie.) But what truly distinguishes Tryon from other conservation communities and the bulk of new development in Michigan City is that its progressive development strategy is coupled with progressive architecture.

At Tryon, the best omelets are whipped up by resident and proprietess Claudia Geise in an 1890s brick farmhouse that has been converted to a bed-and-breakfast. Ironically enough, those who consider buying the modern homes here—small Cor-Ten steel boxes and berm houses scattered in the woods and dunes—find themselves at home among the B&B's antique lace and florals.

A member of Tryon's old guard, Geise chats with guests about the farm and construction. She was among the first to purchase a home in the community's Farm Settlement, which is centered around the original ▸

Context

The communal garden in the Farm Settlement (inset, left) acts as a meeting place for Tryon residents; a farmstead loft—with its traditional barn-like form and modern, idiosyncratic details—can be gleaned beyond this communal space. The houses in the Garden Village settlement (inset, right) illustrate how Tryon's housing typologies correlate to their surroundings; in this case, the structure lies low to the ground and its colors corresponds to those of the surrounding meadow. A long view of the Tryon barn (below) from the working alfalfa fields preserves the historically agrarian character of the farm.

PHOTOS BY JOHN HINES

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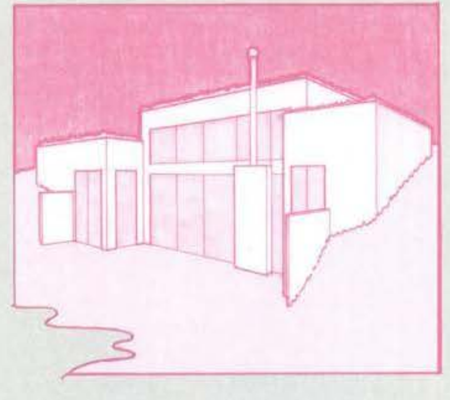
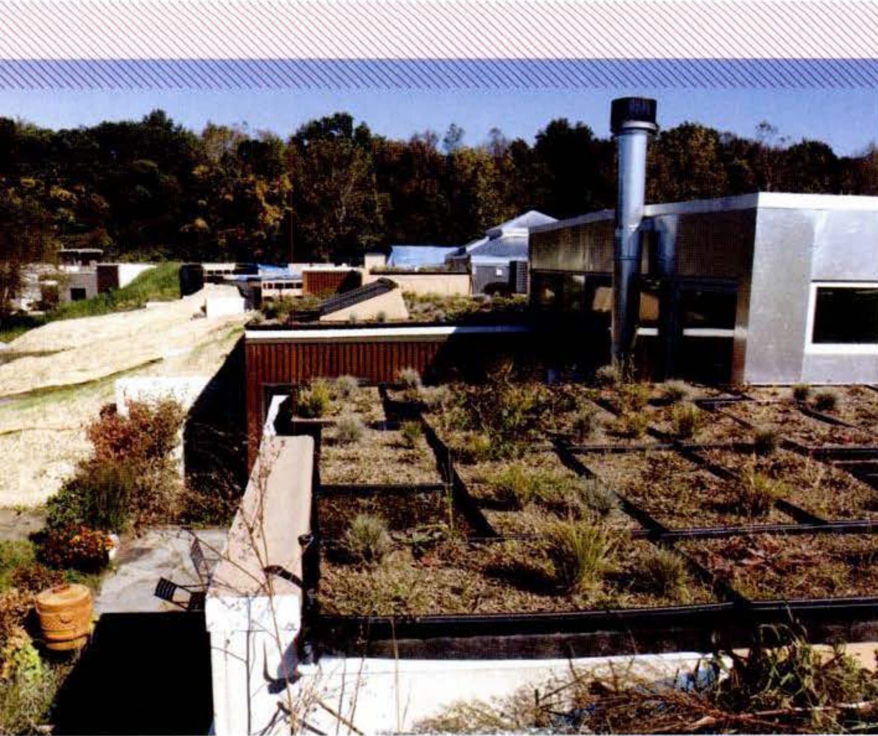
Garden House / Dune Settlement
Eight 1,400-square-foot homes are sited in a natural clearing south of the dune ridge. Clad in half Cor-Ten steel, half cedar, the structures carry on a dialogue with the houses in the Woods Settlement, where Cor-Ten is a prevalent material. The Garden House has a flat roof and a deck with living space below. The decks allow residents to enjoy the old-growth trees that grow along the dunes to the north.

Pond House
The 1,800-square-foot Pond Settlement houses are bermed on two sides, allowing plenty of light to penetrate the living space. The berms, which act as buffers between neighbors, are planted with rye and alfalfa and are seeded with wildflowers. Planted container roofs continue the natural line of the berm and can be arranged to form pathways. The container-based green roof (below) allows for a normal load-bearing roof construction.





farmhouse, outbuildings, and communal garden. Of the three completed housing clusters, known as "settlements," the Farm was the first, and the buildings here most closely resemble traditional agrarian structures.

"It was nothing romantic," says Geise, of her introduction to Tryon eight years ago. "I just stopped for gas."

Geise's cool, matter-of-fact demeanor melts at the mention of Ed Noonan, Tryon's primary developer, who helped Geise realize her dream of owning a B&B. Geise, like nearly everyone who has fallen in love with the spirit of the community and the land at Tryon, first fell for Ed and Eve Noonan.

Since the Noonans bought the land in 1990, they have poured heart and soul (and about half a million dollars) into turning the farm's 170 acres into a working sustainable development, complete with a natural wetlands sewage system, which operates independently of a municipal system, and biophilic berm houses that are embraced on all sides by wildflowers and native grasses. One hundred and fifty homes will dot the landscape when Tryon is fully built, but the Noonans' plan calls for three-quarters of the land to remain undeveloped.

"We're a little elderly to be doing this," Eve says, without a hint of irony. While it's true that many people in their 70s wouldn't dare take on a 30-year mortgage, the Noonans are anything but elderly: Ed's sly, youthful air is touched with a knowing, sage-like quality. And he seems to wear his heart on his sleeve. (Literally. For much of the visit he's been wearing a sweatshirt with a red heart stitched to one sleeve.) He's a softie with a strong vision—though, he says, he couldn't pull it off without Eve, who he insists truly softens (and sweetens) what is, at the end of the day, a real estate deal.

Almost half complete as of summer 2007, Tryon's 74 homes are an exercise in site planning and context. The houses range from approximately $150,000 to $500,000 and from 625 to about 2,400 square feet, and come in a variety of models with structural names like Flat-Top, Round-Top, and Broken Long House, each with integrity enough to give subdivision housing design a good name—no small feat. Through two firms, Edward Noonan Associates and the 10-person Chicago-based Chicago Associates Planners and Architects, or CAPA, Ed acts as both architect and developer for the project.

Tryon's specific mission tends to attract a self-selecting group of residents who share similar beliefs; more often than not, it's the small differences that divide them. For instance, some residents may be concerned with invasive plants, while others are more interested in the architecture and care less about maintaining a specific ecology. Thus, differences arise as to where and how communally pooled money is invested back into the property.

I get a sense of Ed's perspective of the place as we drive around Tryon on a particularly soggy June day—the windshield wipers lazily sloshing in time to a languid tale about Tryon's communal garden, which turns out to be more of a parable: When Tryon started out, the communal garden was modest and everyone worked on it together. It was so successful, they decided to ▸

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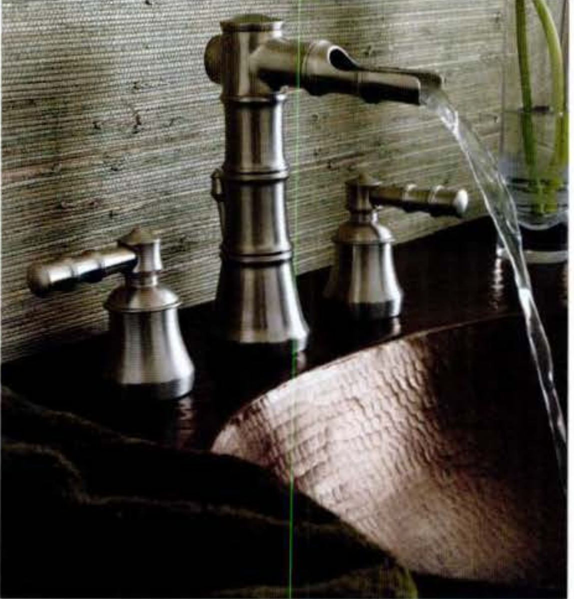
The drawer pulls –
Antique copper.

The flowers –
Fresh-cut
orchids.

The soaps –
Essence of honey.



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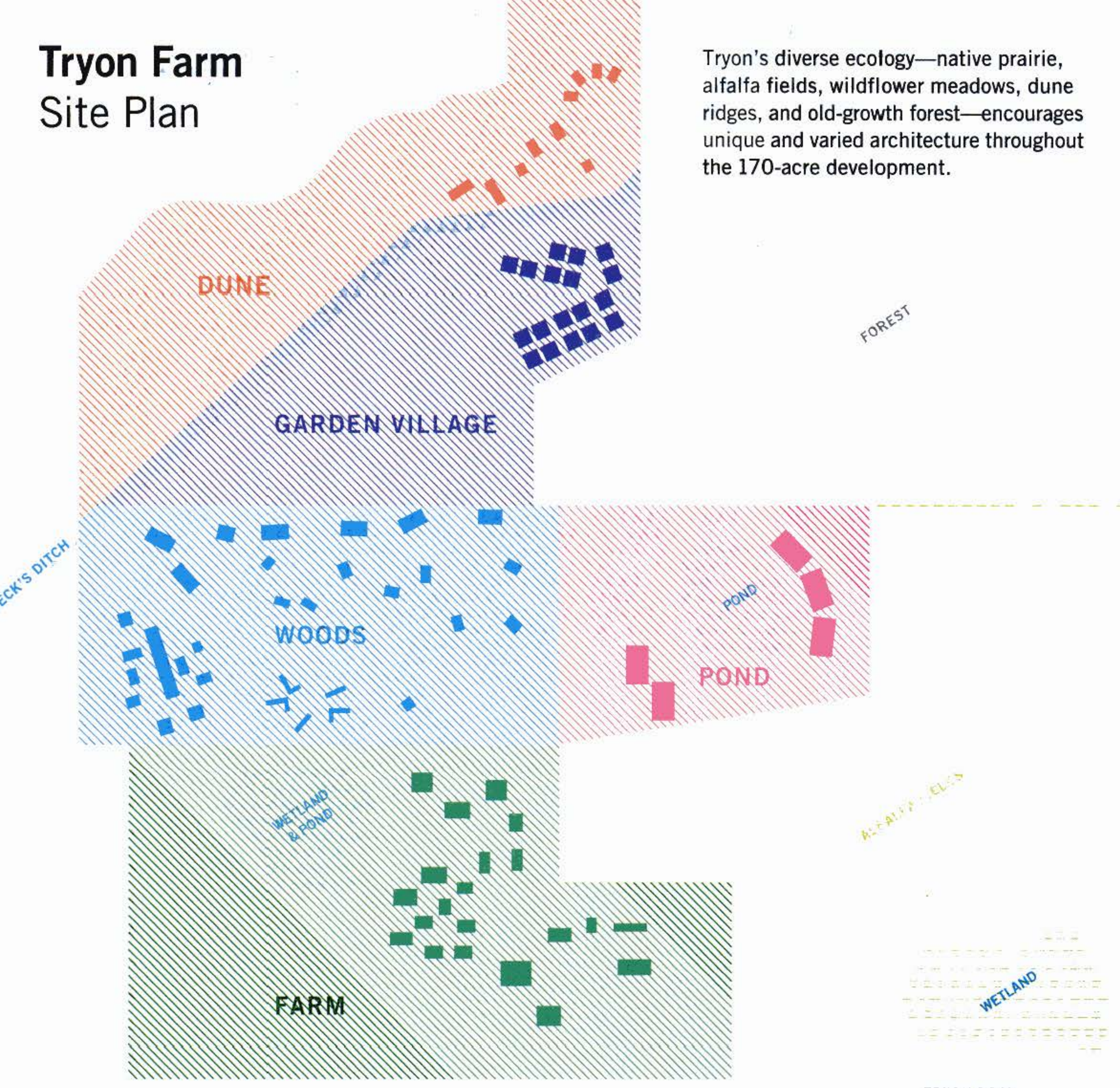
Tryon Farm
Site Plan

Tryon's diverse ecology—native prairie, alfalfa fields, wildflower meadows, dune ridges, and old-growth forest—encourages unique and varied architecture throughout the 170-acre development.



Dune Settlement
The Dune Settlement is sited along the edge of a small meadow that comes off the south side of a natural dune ridge; the ridge runs parallel to Beck's Ditch and is the tallest point at Tryon. Decks give residents full access to the old-growth forest along the ridge to the north; the meadow is favored by local deer.

Garden Village Settlement
This settlement acts as the central meeting point for the entire development; the structures here are designed to lie low among the meadow flora. Blond concrete gives the houses weight against the tall grasses; the palette corresponds to the surrounding flora. The houses are grouped into pairs and quads.

Woods Settlement
The 31 units that pepper the Woods Settlement are placed randomly throughout the landscape on a case-by-case basis in order to preserve the trees. This settlement has the most diverse housing typologies (six total), which blend into the oak, maple, and pine forest. Originally, this area was used as pasture land.

Pond Settlement
The Pond Settlement follows a low-lying dune ridge that runs through the alfalfa field, undulates and spills over the houses to the edge of the pond. A control device monitors water levels so there is no threat of flooding; the soil at Tryon is very sandy, so flooding spreads evenly throughout the development and doesn't accumulate.

Farm Settlement
The Farm Settlement was the first attempt at siting houses to simultaneously achieve privacy, density, and views. The houses relate to the prairie and to the pre-existing barn structures; the pitched roofs speak to the latter. The prairie is mowed and burned every year to release seeds for the native plants.

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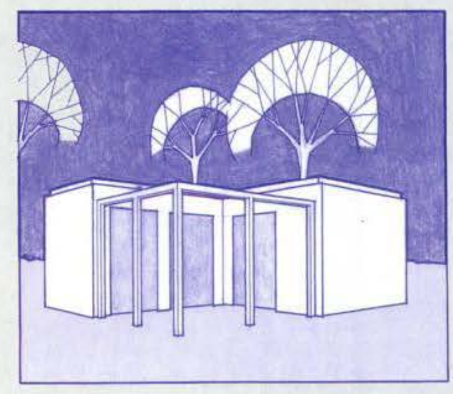
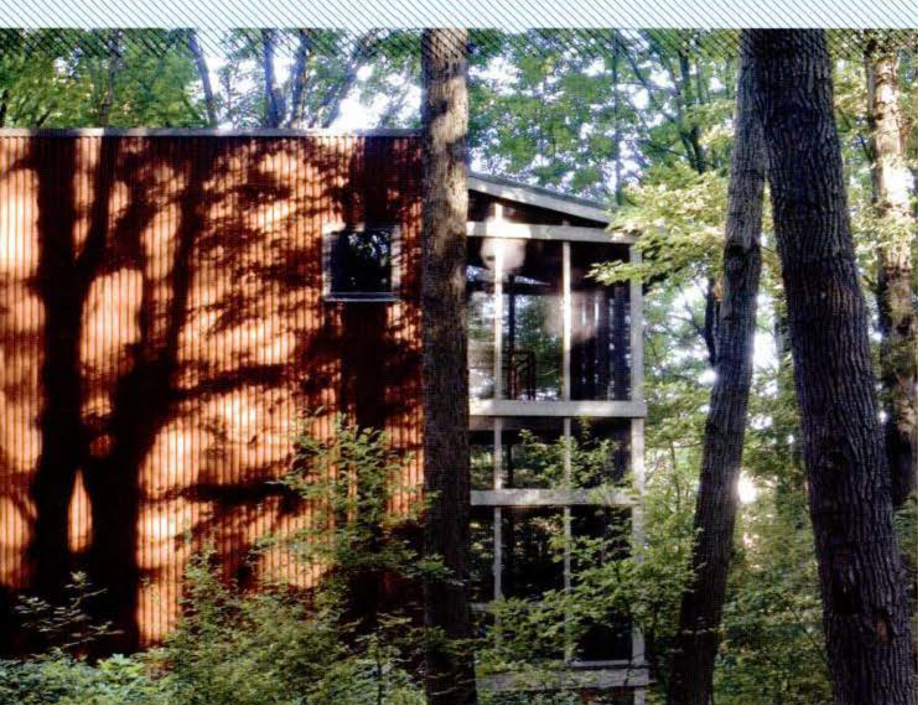
Garden Village House
The Garden Village Settlement houses are small (825-square-foot interior space) and feature semi-enclosed gardens that make up 35 percent of the total living space. The settlement was designed to be community oriented. The gardens act as a filter between the meadow on one side and the neighbor's house on the other and, in lieu of a yard, allow residents to personalize (and privatize) their outdoor space.



Flat-Top House / Woods Settlement
The 1,200-square-foot houses have two-story screened porches, which capitalize on the beauty of the surrounding trees. The Cor-Ten steel siding develops a patina over time and beautifully complements the natural environment. The houses blend well during the growing season and contrast sharply against the snow in winter. In autumn, residents immerse themselves in the turning foliage.



make it bigger, but the bigger it got, the more burdensome it became, and eventually it went to seed. So the community switched to personally allocated raised beds, which have been more successful: "Now people weed their own, and then they go weed their neighbors', but they wouldn't weed a common garden. I think that's one of the biggest problems with community life," Ed explains, "Whatever is yours I accept, whatever is mine I accept, but whatever is split is hard."

Ed and Eve are the first to admit to the difficulties of operating a community where land and labor are a shared expense. "It's more interdependent than a regular subdivision—but it is still a subdivision," says Ed. "We have to break that territorial imperative of the lot." Ever since it started, the community has been self-governing, with homeowners having equal votes, regardless of the size of their home, and so far it appears to be working. Since opening in 2001, Tryon Farm has retained nearly every resident that has bought into the development. Most re-sales are generated by people upgrading within the community.

Whatever its trials, Tryon Farm's community spirit remains. On Saturday evenings residents gather in the garden for cocktails, and during the summer they screen movies on the side of the barn. CAPA also hopes that the newest settlement, called the Garden Village, will improve community relations by acting as a social hub. "It's supposed to be the central part of the farm where you come in and you've got a lot of diversity and it's more communal [in its layout], whereas some of the Woods houses are sort of secluded," says CAPA's onsite manager Scott Kuchta. "We hope that that's going to attract possibly younger people, but at least younger in mind-set."

Right now Tryon grows and harvests only livestock feed, but Ed and Tom Forman, CAPA's head planner and designer, set aside land for a community-supported agricultural farm in Tryon's early planning stages, should there ever be an interest in setting one up. "If somebody were to come along and say, 'I'd like ten acres,' we'd say, 'Hey, use it, we won't charge you for it, if you take care of it, and make good on it, and support community-supported agriculture,'" Ed explains.

He likes to barter. According to Ed, a handshake and his word are as good as any written contract. This live-and-let-live attitude has served Tryon well and has helped soften the edge of the rough-and-tumble world of real estate development. As architects Dawn Heid and Gary Beyerl can attest, Tryon is all for fostering an independent creative spirit: Ed has encouraged the architects to build three homes of their own design (respectful of the Tryon aesthetic). Ed's attitude is that positive, community-minded endeavors—be it with farming, social events, or architecture—bring the same benefits to the community that conscientious site-planning and ecologically sensitive building bring to the natural environment. They allow it to thrive. ■

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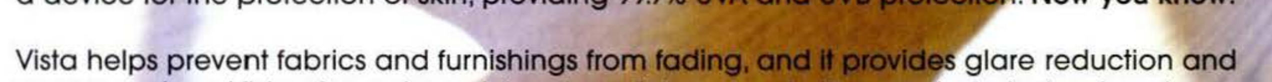
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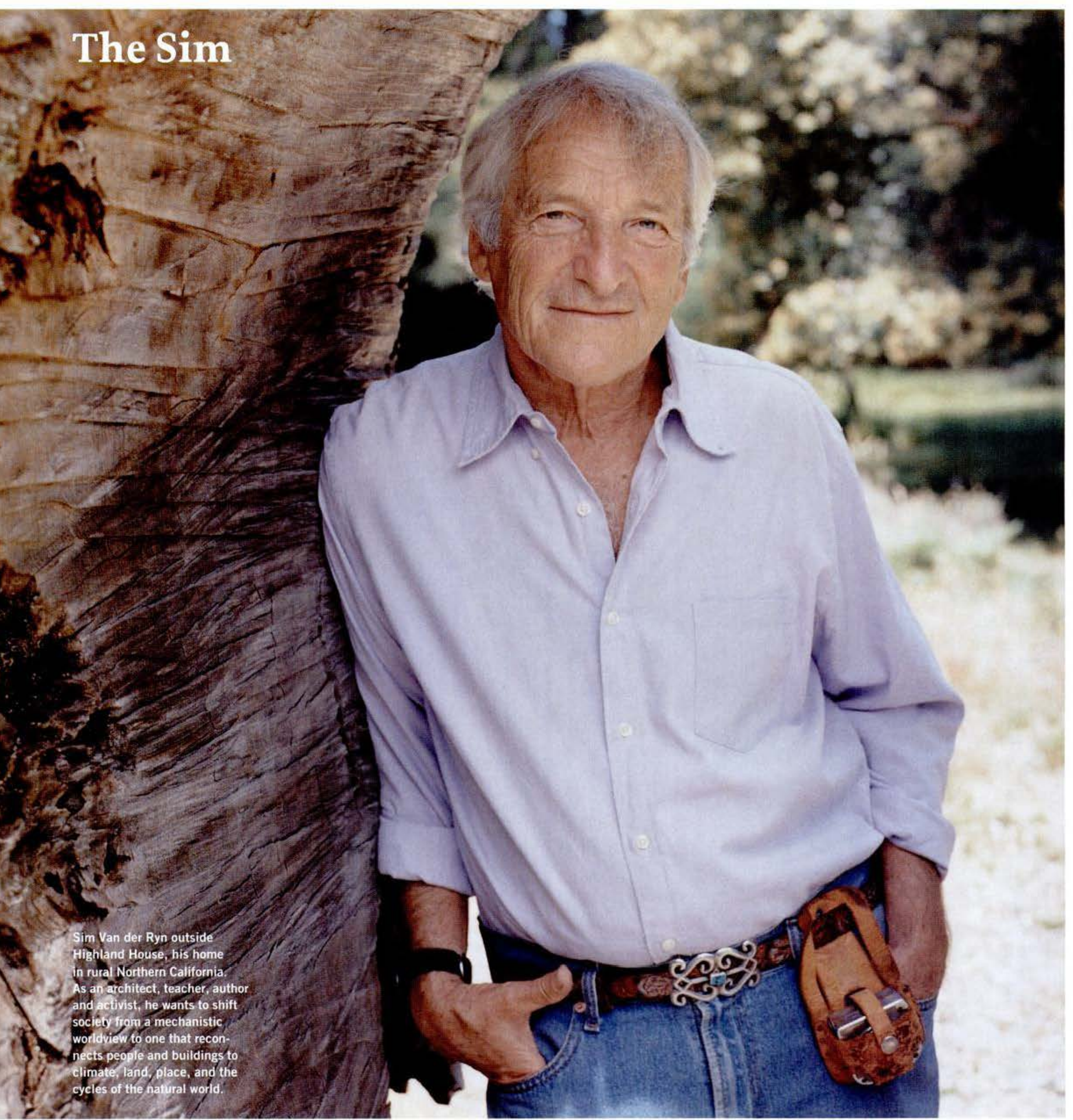
The Sim



Sim Van der Ryn outside Highland House, his home in rural Northern California. As an architect, teacher, author and activist, he wants to shift society from a mechanistic worldview to one that reconnects people and buildings to climate, land, place, and the cycles of the natural world.

"In this fear-based society, people are afraid to ask, What are your aspirations? What is your vision? But not to ask those questions is foolish and irresponsible. I get hired to be the provocateur, to ask the questions that others are afraid to ask."

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For decades Sim Van der Ryn's name has been synonymous with design that's in tune with nature. His career has included stints within the establishment, including professor of architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, and California State Architect under Governor Jerry Brown in the late 1970s.

But Van der Ryn is also known for his collaborative countercultural experiments in sustainability, including the Farallones Institute in rural Sonoma County, California, as well as Berkeley's Integral Urban House—named by *Fine Homebuilding* as one of the 25 most important houses built in the U.S. since Jamestown. More recently, the Solar Living Center in Hopland, California, stands out among his many design projects that seek to connect buildings to the cycle and flow of nature.

In 1939, when Van der Ryn was four, his family fled Holland to escape the advancing Nazis. Few members of the large Jewish family who remained in Holland survived. As a boy, Van der Ryn sought solace from his family's grief by spending countless hours immersed in the natural world that thrived in the weedy vacant lots near his home on the outskirts of Queens. Looking back, he believes that's where the seeds of his life's work began to germinate. "When you escape one holocaust, you don't want to be part of creating another," he writes in *Design for Life: The Architecture of Sim Van der Ryn* (Gibbs Smith, 2005).

We talked at Highland House, Van der Ryn's "old hippie palace" (as he describes it), which sits on a ridge butting up against the wild lands of Point Reyes National Seashore, 40 miles north of San Francisco.

You were trained as a modernist at the University of Michigan in the 1950s. How did you get from modernism to practicing what you call eco-logic design?

In school, I did a design project for a museum. This was in Michigan with rain and snow, so my design had a sloping roof with eaves. I'm practical, and I'd already had construction experience by that point. But the professor said the sloping roof and eaves weren't acceptable. My design did have lots of glass—I learned that much. But I had to learn much later about where to put glass on a building.

They didn't teach you about solar orientation in architecture school?

[Laughs.] No. Some schools still don't. A lot of schools put ideology ahead of common sense. I don't have an axe to grind about modernism. A lot of people don't understand what modernism was about, although it's now close to 100 years later. It represented an overthrow of the old order—of patriarchy, hierarchy, the Hapsburg Empire. It had a strong socialist component. There was a lot of hope that technology and socialism would solve our problems.

It didn't quite work out that way.

Modernism had a huge effect on the shape of our cities: All these glass towers and curtain walls—[they] are giant heat collectors. I do find some quite beautiful, like the Lever House. But most don't make much sense from an environmental point of view. I'd like to see what Philip Johnson's energy bills were for his Glass House.

Where do you start, from an environmental point of view?

My first criterion is place. Putting ideology first is just wrong. I'm arguing for commonsense solutions that fit place and need.

When you look at buildings today that are being labeled green or sustainable, what makes you feel hopeful?

The hour is late. [Pause.] It is good that people are waking up to the toxicity of materials, conserving resources, health, indoor air quality, and other commonsense things like daylight. But what about spirit? A building's got to make you feel good. If you don't feel comfortable in a building, what does that say? We're wired—at least I'm wired—to see living things. Biophilia is a very strong influence in my architecture.

Biophilia isn't something that comes up much within the mainstream green context. There's no box to check for a LEED [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design] credit for biophilia.

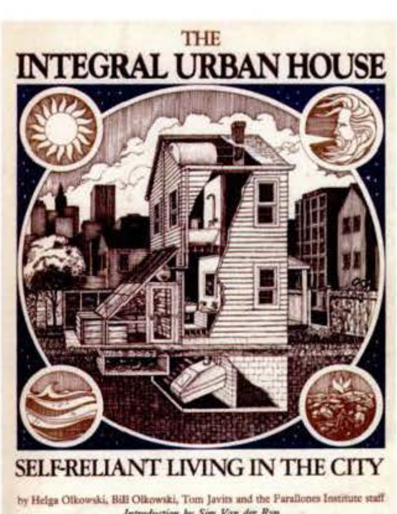
There are plenty of smart people behind the U.S. Green Building Council, but we have to get beyond LEED.

Is there a danger that green building may get stuck there, that we'll consider LEED-certified buildings good enough?

We can't stop there. Rating systems like LEED are just the mechanics. Metrics are important, but there has to be vision and leadership. In a way, this preoccupation with rating systems becomes an excuse for the status quo.

What's holding us back?

In this fear-based society, people are afraid to ask, What are your aspirations? What is your vision? But not to ask those questions is foolish and irresponsible. I get hired to be the provocateur, to ask the questions that others are afraid to ask. ▸



In the Van der Ryn–designed Life Expression Wellness Center in Sugarloaf, Pennsylvania, the reception and waiting areas are housed in a daylit wing with a curved green roof planted with sedum (near right). The Integral Urban House reported on a demonstration project showing how a city household's inputs and outputs of energy, food, and other resources could be localized. Though out of print and nearly three decades old, the book (far right) still stands as one of the best guides to urban sustainability.

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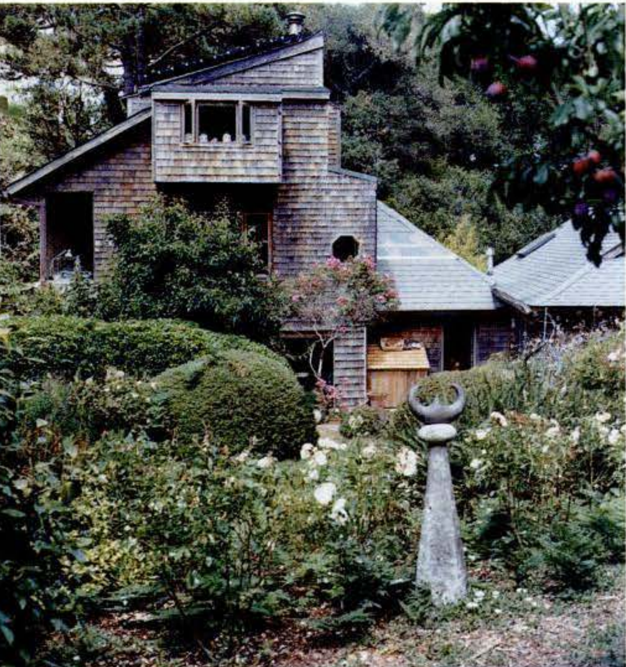

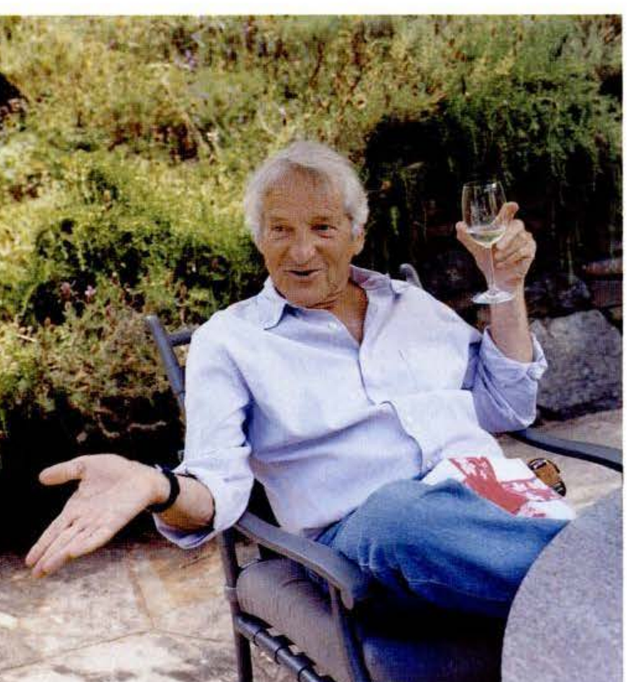

Van der Ryn started work on Highland House (top) in 1972 by building a pole-barn structure adjacent to an existing 1950s cabin. He connected the two buildings with a pyramidal roof supported by a long 12-by-12 salvaged redwood beam. The cabin was replaced in 1990 with a Japanese-style pavilion that holds kitchen, dining, and living spaces. Van der Ryn muses that "maybe a dream is to make our houses more like living landscapes, with minds of their own."

If you were an architect living seven generations from now, what would you have to say to architects working today?
Seven generations from now, architects will be asking: What the hell were they thinking? Why were they building these buildings? What was their worldview?

So what are people to do today if they're designing a house and trying to think about global warming impacts? We don't know what climate change has in store for us. How do we factor that in to how we design today?
The most important thing is to not assume that conventional infrastructure like electricity, water, sewer, and so on are going to be operating all the time.

The Katrina lesson?
Yeah. I have grid-intertied solar here, so I'm screwed. What I probably ought to do is put in enough battery-operated solar so I could at least operate our well.

Most of us don't live on five rural acres like you have here. What's possible at the urban or suburban scale?
[When I was a professor at UC Berkeley,] I asked questions that no one was asking of the students. The first thing I'd have students in the freshman class do is go find out where your water comes from, your gas comes from, your electricity, your food, where the sewage goes. We would take field trips and literally do those things. And then we said, let's [design] a house and see if we can disconnect it from Safeway [grocery store], disconnect it from East Bay MUD [the local water utility], disconnect it from PG&E [the local gas and electric utility].

That's what became the Integral Urban House—the Berkeley Victorian that you and others transformed into a model of sustainable urban living?
It was an experiment, not saying we want to be survivalists, but [wanting] to see what resources we use, where they come from, and to what extent we can localize them.

Thirty years later this question of relocalizing our resource consumption finally seems to be getting some traction.
We need to find smaller appropriate local scales for basic resources. In areas that have significant sunshine, that would be an argument for having local solar grids where—yes, maybe it's tied into the big system—but if the big system goes down, there's a substation and you can redistribute it locally. There are various options, solar isn't the only one. In some areas it could be district heat, particularly in urban areas. And local catchment for water. At least deal in the local watershed if there is a watershed rather than importing it from so far away. It's common sense.

The movement is really growing in Northern California and many other regions for local food production.
All these systems need to be broken down into smaller scales—water, energy, food. And waste too. All my household's organic waste goes to my chickens. We have Recycle Circus here once a year in West Marin [County], where everybody brings their old junk and other people can pick through it and take what they want for free. Now we're talking about getting a permanent local free flea market rather than having Waste Management haul it off to a landfill in a remote location.

So it comes back to place, to learning to live well in place?
In terms of global warming, that's going to be crucial because some of these large central systems are not going to be functioning reliably due to fuel shortages, unpredictable weather, and so on. Some of them are not functioning now. In this area, it's heartening. Marin County schools are serving more food that is organic and local. In West Marin, we have a commons group. One problem here is that the [National] Park Service [which manages Point Reyes National Seashore] is operating with an obsolete notion about what their mission is. [Even before Europeans arrived], none of this was wilderness. There was a large Miwok population.

They were cultivating the land?
And burning the brush. The Park Service wants to restore all this marshland near Point Reyes. I think that's good, but what I'm pushing for is to take this farm that they're buying right on the edge of town and work with the community to make it a demonstration of how we can have food production and at the same time have the marsh restoration. They're not mutually exclusive. The Park Service is operating under this model that nature is good, people are bad.

Yet we are nature.
That's the fundamental issue. When particularly the West really groks that and acts on it, that would be the nature of a big shift. ■

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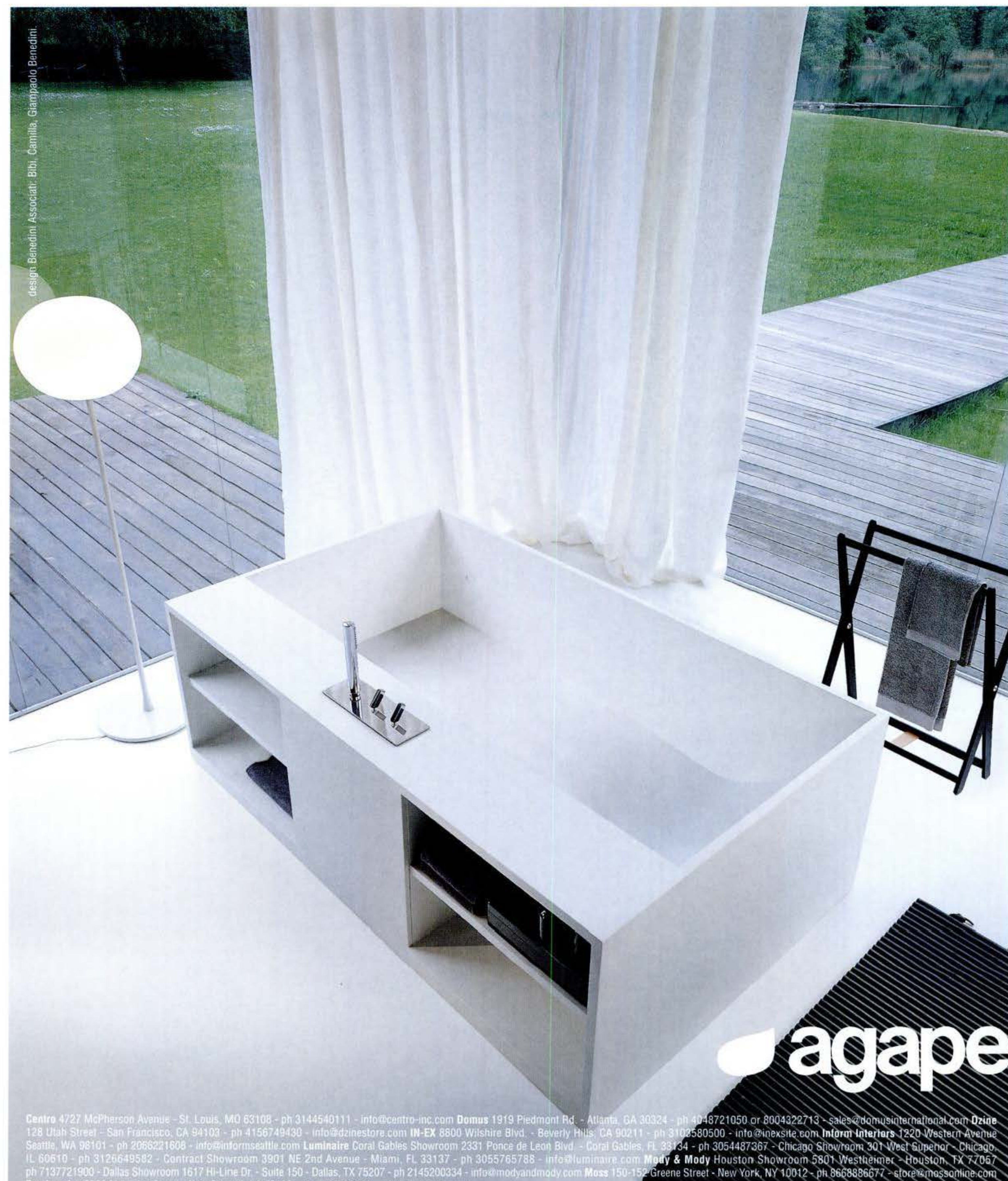

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Simple lines. Because lounging is all about exerting as little effort as possible.

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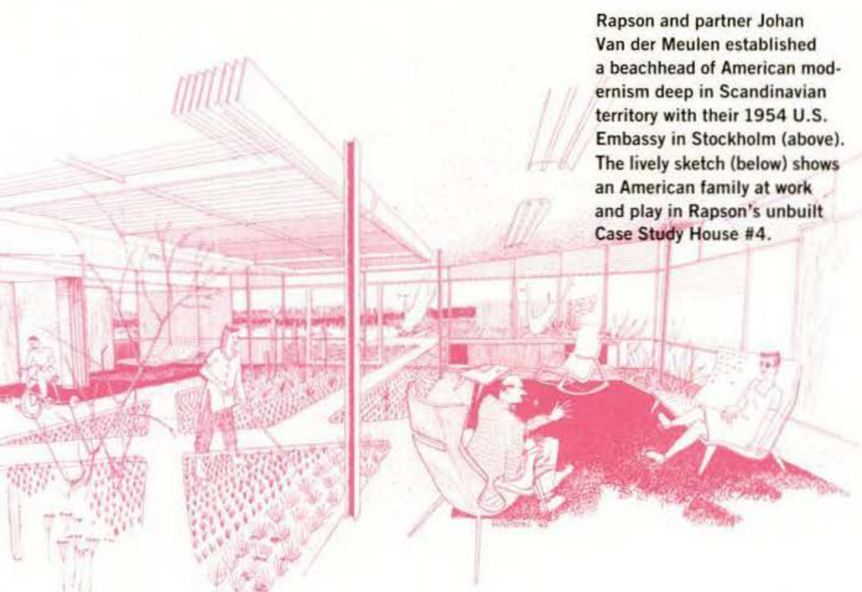
Bohemian Rapson

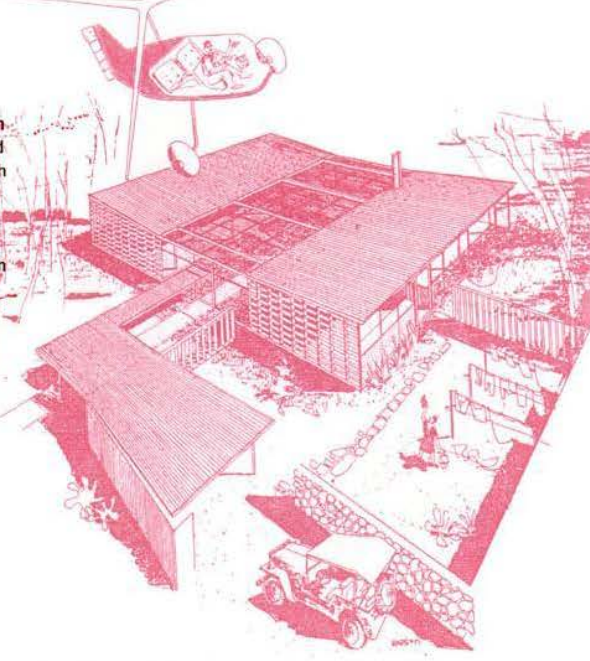
Though an architect's reputation rests upon what gets built—and occasionally on what doesn't—it's rare that one is remembered for the more quotidian aspects of making buildings: entering competitions, instructing young architects, building models, drawing. Though Ralph Rapson's eight-decade career as one of the U.S.'s most visible proponents of the International Style—he designed the original Tyrone Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Case Study House #4, and the U.S. embassies in Stockholm and Copenhagen—is enough to place him on the map of 20th-century American architecture, any account of his legacy would be incomplete without considering him as a draftsman.

Rapson makes precise architectural drawings with sharp lines and a savvy sense of perspective, and though the technical merits of his draftsmanship are clear, the characters that people his renderings conjure an unexpected dose of soul. Like a da Vinci drawing tarted up by James Thurber, one half-expects a punch line beneath ▸

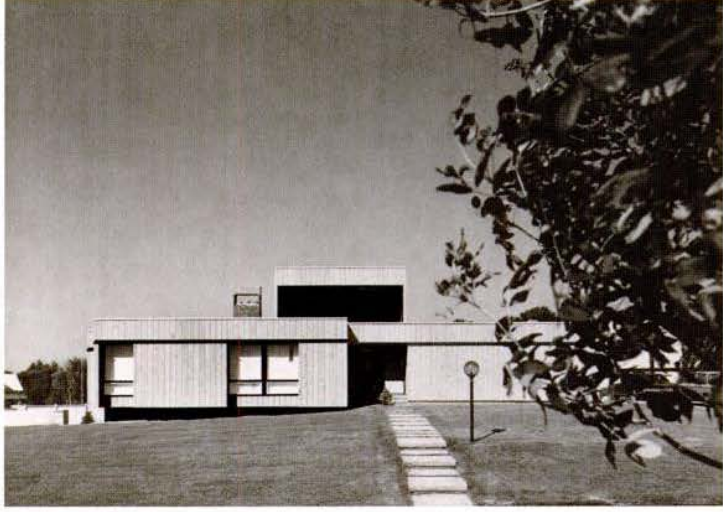
PHOTOS AND DRAWINGS COURTESY RALPH RAPSON ARCHIVE (ENTIRE STORY)



Rapson and partner Johan Van der Meulen established a beachhead of American modernism deep in Scandinavian territory with their 1954 U.S. Embassy in Stockholm (above). The lively sketch (below) shows an American family at work and play in Rapson's unbuilt Case Study House #4.



Taking every advantage of its bucolic environs, Rapson's 1974 summer house (above) in Amery, Wisconsin, was dubbed the Glass Cube. Another sketch for the Case Study House #4 (right) imagined the residents looking not only out to greet the neighbors, but up. Far from the Los Angeles Case Study Houses, Rapson built a bevy of homes in the Twin Cities area, like the Butwin House (below) in Mendota Heights in 1967.



each sketch in lieu of the standard architects' mark. Collegiate types in checked pants, blousy broads with vampish cigarette holders, and the occasional helicopter whirling above populate his drawings and lend the wholesome brand of modernism a human touch. More than simply rendering a lobby or a chair or a house, Rapson's drawings express the promises mid-century modernism was making to postwar America: leisure, affluence, and the sophistication and utility offered by an expansive new kind of design.

"I see people as animated parts of the building," the 93-year-old Rapson says. "Whenever I'm designing a building or a piece of furniture, people become a strong part of my general approach. The design process isn't just about bricks and stones; for me it's also about the people in a building and how I expect them to live."

Rapson was born in Alma, Michigan, in 1914; when he was an infant, a deformity caused his right arm to be amputated at the elbow. Drawing soon became his main form of expression—a way of talking through imagery. After an early brush with Frank Lloyd Wright at Taliesin, Rapson found his formative home, and a two-year scholarship, working at Cranbrook Academy of Art beneath Eliel Saarinen and alongside his son Eero. Together they worked for Saarinen the elder and on projects of their own, eventually winning a 1939 design competition for a new fine arts center at the College of William and Mary. "Cranbrook was a very exciting, dynamic place where I met and worked with guys like Charlie Eames, Harry Bertoia, and Harry Weese," Rapson recounts. "But the William and Mary competition put me on the map as one of the new design personalities, if you will."

As more commissions came his way, Rapson was invited to take part in one of modern architecture's most influential programs: the Case Study Houses. In 1945 John Entenza, editor of *Arts & Architecture*, asked Rapson to design a practical, attractive, modern house in Los Angeles in hopes of sparking a revolution in postwar residential design.

Though 25 Case Study Houses were presented, Rapson's Case Study House #4—or the "Greenbelt House" as he called it—was never built. Imagining it as a boxy single-story house with an open floor plan, Rapson chopped the structure into two glassed-in halves with a wide swath of green space between them. His drawings show women at work in their greenbelt gardens and men at play in lounge chairs *en pleine air*—a sanitized glimpse (gender roles intact) of the nuclear family for the atomic age. Filled with modern furniture, including his popular Rapid Rocker for Knoll, the house is the International Style writ small for the American middle class.

"Practically all the work I've done is not too far off from Bauhaus principles," explains Rapson. And though he butted heads with Entenza, who thought the design commercially unviable, Rapson attributes the demise of Case Study House #4 to finances: "I didn't want to do one in the suburbs. I decided to do a house in the city, in Watts or someplace like that. In 1945 you couldn't get anyone to invest in the city." ▸

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

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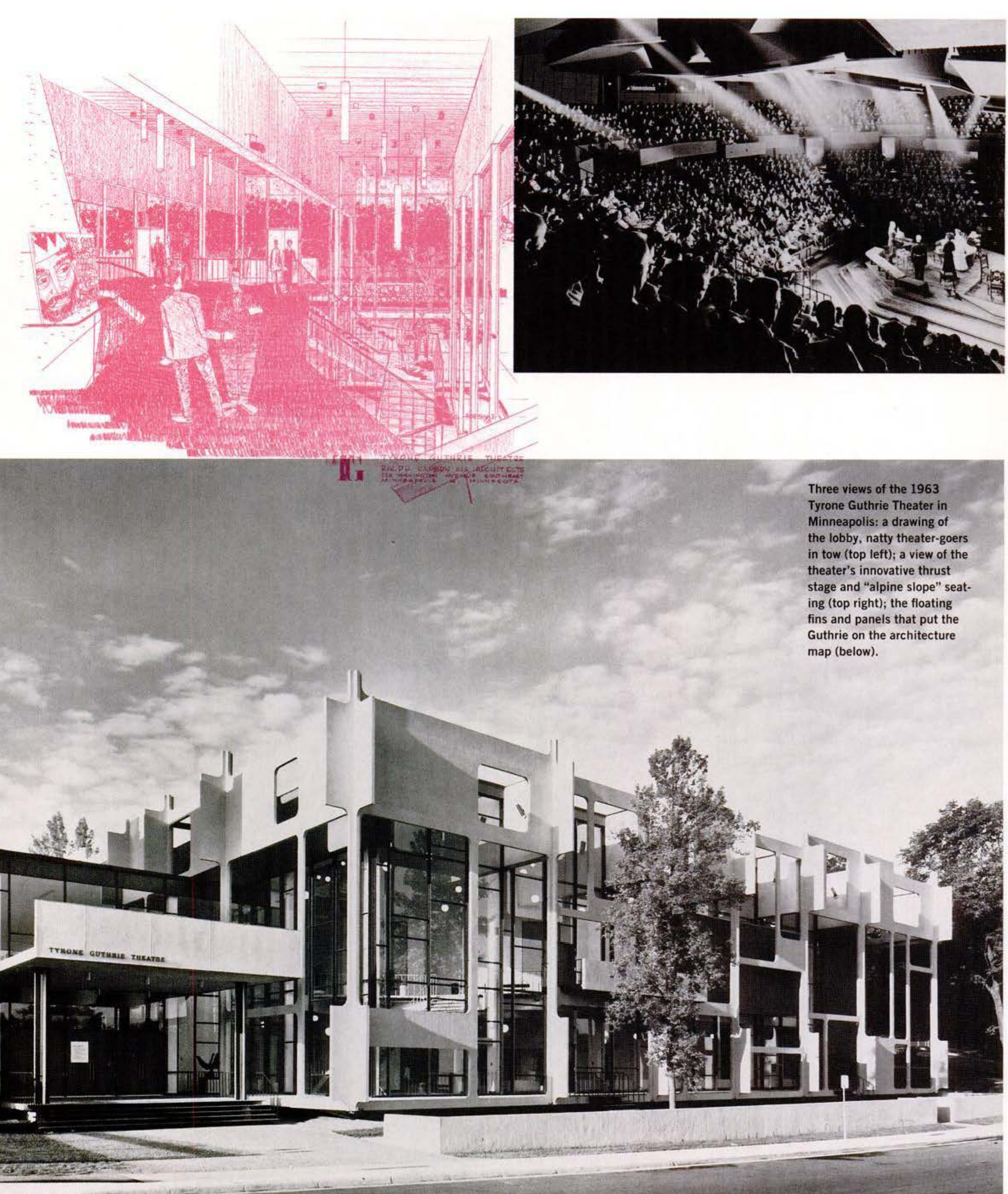

Three views of the 1963 Tyrone Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis: a drawing of the lobby, natty theater-goers in tow (top left); a view of the theater's innovative thrust stage and "alpine slope" seating (top right); the floating fins and panels that put the Guthrie on the architecture map (below).

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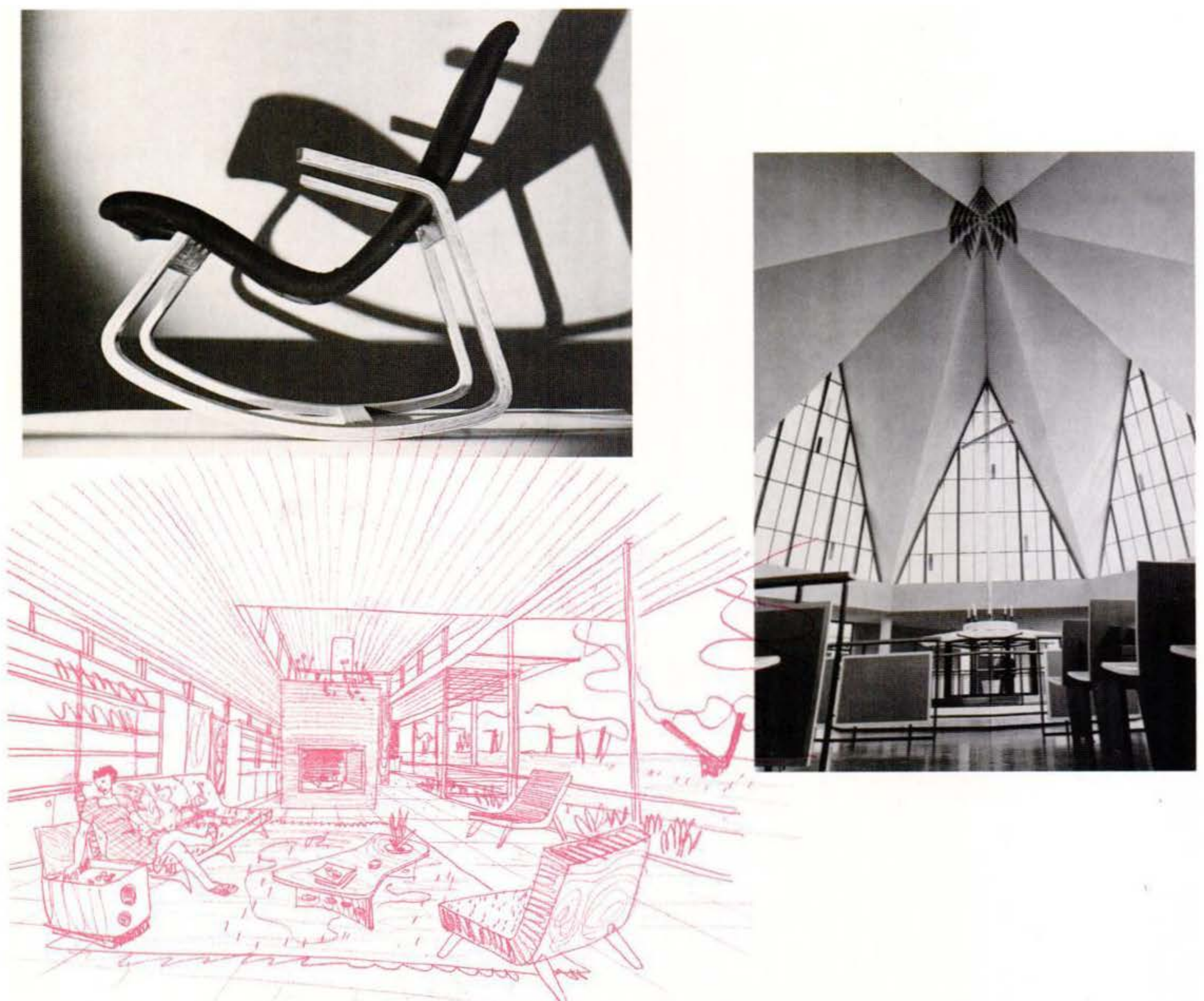

After a stint teaching at the New Bauhaus in the early 1940s, where he worked and studied closely with Laszlo Moholy-Nagy and Mies van der Rohe, Rapson moved on to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He then accepted what would become a longstanding post at the University of Minnesota as the head of the School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, one he held from 1954 to 1984. "As a professor of architecture I always demanded that I be allowed to do outside work," says Rapson. "And as I look back on my career I wonder why I didn't spend more time building buildings. I think I turned down more than I built. In that way teaching was a real luxury because I didn't have to depend on my practice for all of my livelihood."

Despite his teaching regimen, Rapson still managed to design scores of residences, including the many-pavilioned brick-and-glass Pillsbury House on Minnesota's Lake Minnetonka, embassies, churches, museums, and perhaps his crowning work: the Tyrone Guthrie Theater.

Completed in 1963, the Guthrie was among the first American theaters to use a thrust stage—one that juts well out into the crowd, allowing the audience to surround 220 degrees of the stage—instead of the traditional proscenium. In a highly democratic stroke, Rapson sought to blur the boundary between the balcony and orchestra levels by mounting the seats to stage left on a continuous alpine slope. The façade was a matrix of Mondrian-meets-Millennium Falcon panels and fins hovering just off the building.

Today, Rapson is still at work with his son Toby at his Minneapolis practice, Ralph Rapson Architects. He's working on some low-income prefab housing based on the Greenbelt House (he also contributed one of the 16 entries to the Dwell Home Design Invitational a few years back). His pace, however, has slowed. "I have a lame back from bending over a drafting board my whole life," he confesses with a touch of pleasure. "But I still go in three or four days a week." ▸

Beyond buildings, Rapson had a fruitful collaboration with Hans Knoll in furniture design. The Rapson Rapid Rocker (top left) in its 1951 bentwood version is still in production today. Rapsons's sketches for more furniture (bottom left) trade in sophisticated Americans at play. From play to pray, residents of Edina, Minnesota, were free to worship at Rapson's 1957 St. Peter's Lutheran Church (top right).

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10 Things You Should Know About Ralph Rapson

1 / Rapson's collaboration with Eero Saarinen didn't end with architecture. He introduced him to touch football, a game Saarinen didn't fully grasp but took to with great vigor.

2 / Visitors to Rapson's apartment often had the soles of their feet painted and pressed on the ceiling in what he called "a Who's Who of architectural footprints."

3 / Rapson booby-trapped Saarinen's bed on his wedding night by sawing most of the way through its wooden legs. It collapsed when the newlyweds lay down, eliciting whoops and applause from those gathered outside.

4 / After taking significant flak for Rapson and partner John Van der Meulen's design for the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm, his State Department colleague Ides van der Gracht complained, "The Swedes aren't nearly as modern as they're cracked up to be."

5 / Tyrone Guthrie proved such a difficult man to work with on the Guthrie Theater that Rapson dubbed him "Tyrant Guthrie" and took to drawing him with devil horns.

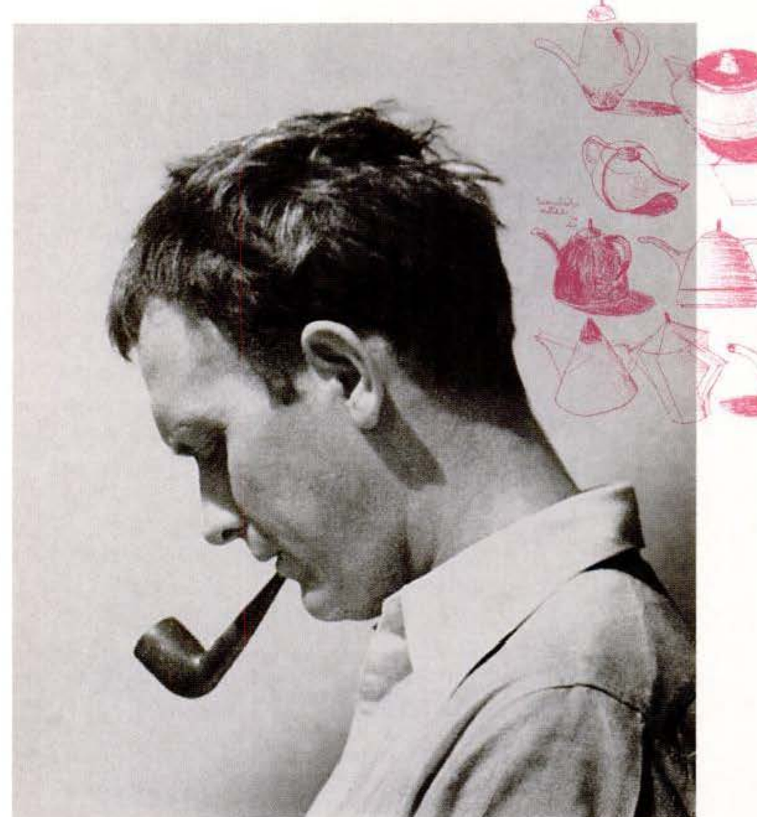
6 / Rapson's 1973, Corbusier-inspired Cedar Square West tower was meant to house a great diversity of Minneapolis's population. It's now home to one of the city's largest concentrations of Somalians.

7 / In 1989 a full-scale model of the Greenbelt House was finally built inside the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles.

8 / Jean Nouvel designed the new Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis to mimic Rapson's version four decades before. Rapson says: "He stressed that the new thrust house be as close to the original as possible. There's not quite the same intimacy but basically it follows the pattern of the original."

9 / In the face of Minneapolis's starchitect building boom (which includes Nouvel, Cesar Pelli, and Herzog & de Meuron) Rapson is unimpressed: "There's a lot of half-assed modernism here. The public circulation of those buildings is really bad. You have to think about people when you design."

10 / At 93, Rapson can still be found designing with a pen, noting, "I'm not a computer guy at the moment." ■



Ralph Rapson as a young man (far left) worked quite hard to become what he later called "one of the new design personalites." But he rarely passed up the chance for a prank, like painting the feet of friends and pressing them to the ceiling of his apartment (below). The precise, playful qualities of his draftsmanship are on display with his sketches for teapots, vases and the like (near left). No Rapson sketch was complete without his signature signature (below).

Ralph Rapson

"I see people as animated parts of the building. The design process isn't just about bricks and stones; for me it's also about the people in a building and how I expect them to live."

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Dear Dwell: I'm sick of living like a slob. Now that I've finally got a nice place to hang my hat, I need something to hang it on. Can you recommend some off-the-hook coatracks that don't look like glorified telephone poles?

—**Dean Bein**, San Francisco, California

There's no reason to get all hung up on the clutter in your entryway, especially with the glut of clever coatracks and hanging systems on the market. Here are a few options to prevent your foyer from going to rack and ruin.

A Symbol coatrack by DESU Design / Anodized aluminum, steel, or powder-coated steel, painted MDF / $445 for monochrome, $395 for color / 36.25 x 6 x 1.5 in. / www.desudesign.com

In the summer, when coats are buried deep in closets and hooks are merely an unpleasant reminder of cold times ahead, the Symbol coatrack functions as a decorative piece. Simply flip the hooks down again when the mercury dips—impressive rack, indeed!

B Coat Range by Brave Space Design / Walnut and maple wood / $175 / 9 x 30 x 1.5 in. / www.bravespacedesign.com

Coat Range can stand alone or in groups, expanding into tiny Tetons across your wall. Made from the Brave Space's scrap wood, you can bring a natural landscape into your home while helping preserve one at the same time.

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C Ivy coat hook system by Michael Meredith for mos Office / ABS plastic in light grey, dark grey, white, and green / $65 for 16-piece set / 6 x 5 x .5 in. / www.ivy.mos-office.net

Call it a digitized creeper, or a functional version of Algue, Ivy appears to crawl across your wall guided by some obscure design-world algorithm. Whether it functions as a coatrack for those who hate coatracks, or a serviceable sculpture for those who hate coats, it's a handsome addition to a bare wall.

D Wire coatrack by Tom Dixon / Welded stainless steel / $300 / 27 x 26 x 6 in. / www.dwr.com

As an infinitely extendable chain of hooks, Tom Dixon's paperclip-inspired Wire coatrack provides stalwart stainless steel utility and is flexible enough to wrap around corners. ►

A Ghost Tree by Erich Ginder / Rubber-coated cast resin in white, black, or custom color / $1,700 / 18 x 68 in. / www.erichginder.com

A leafless birch perched on a Saarinen base may be the spiritual symbol for austere Finnish winters, but in the flesh it feels a little flimsy. Heavy coats will likely break branches, and at this price, the bank as well.

B Tree Hooked coatrack by Alissia Melka-Teichroew and Jan Habraken for BY:AMT / Powder-coated steel in black, white, or matte silver / $74 / 22 x 10.5 in. / www.alissiamt.com

Structurally streamlined, Tree Hooked is inspired by flowering branches, though we think it could also pass as a subway map. Display it in any orientation, or supplement it with additional modules for seemingly boundless customization.

C 2D3D by Blu Dot / Powder-coated steel in grey, red, or white / $89 / 6.5 x 38.5 x 1.25 in. / www.bludot.com

Suitable for the savviest alumni of the Transformers generation, 2D3D is a coatrack in disguise: a flat perforated sheet that you fold into a five-hooked wall-mount rack in five easy steps. ■

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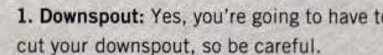
Story by Dan Maginn

Illustration by Alex Robbins

Roll Out the Barrel

Like toasters, rain barrels should be functional and cool looking. The basic concept is simple: An elevated container captures water from your roof's downspout during a rain, which can then be used to water your petunias. Easy as toast. So how cool can it look? It's up to you, your ingenuity, and your bank account. If appearance is not a concern, buy a readily available $30 kit and use an old plastic olive barrel. Or, if you want it to fit in with your post-and-beam, glass-walled house and show your neighbors that you know who Karim Rashid is, consider hiring an architect or designer to assist you. Even better: Utilize a kit for the first year as a prototype and then hire a designer to help you construct one that is specific to your needs.



1. Downspout: Yes, you're going to have to cut your downspout, so be careful.

2. Screening element: Located in the upper aperture, this will help keep leaves and bugs from clogging the system.

3. Barrel: Needs to be corrosion resistant (plastic, stainless, or galvanized steel, for example) and sized to hold enough water to allow you to water your petunias a few times in between rains. It also needs to look cool.

4. Overflow: The overflow is critical; and the barrel ought to be large enough to allow for excess water to exit the system in a controlled manner. Some designers divert the overflow into a rain garden.

5. Spigot: Allows you to control how and when you use the stored water.

6. Hose (or soaker hose): Carries the water to the petunias. The type of hose depends on the pressure of the system and what exactly you want the water to do.

7. Stand: The higher the barrel, the more pressure in the system. Many people chuck their rain barrels up on a couple of concrete blocks. You can do better than that.

8. Rain garden (in lieu of petunias): Typically composed of native wildflowers and grasses that are especially good at absorbing water, rain gardens look great and contribute significantly to the reduction of storm water runoff. If you go this route, consider hiring a landscape architect to help you properly size the garden and select species that are appropriate for your yard's microclimate. ■

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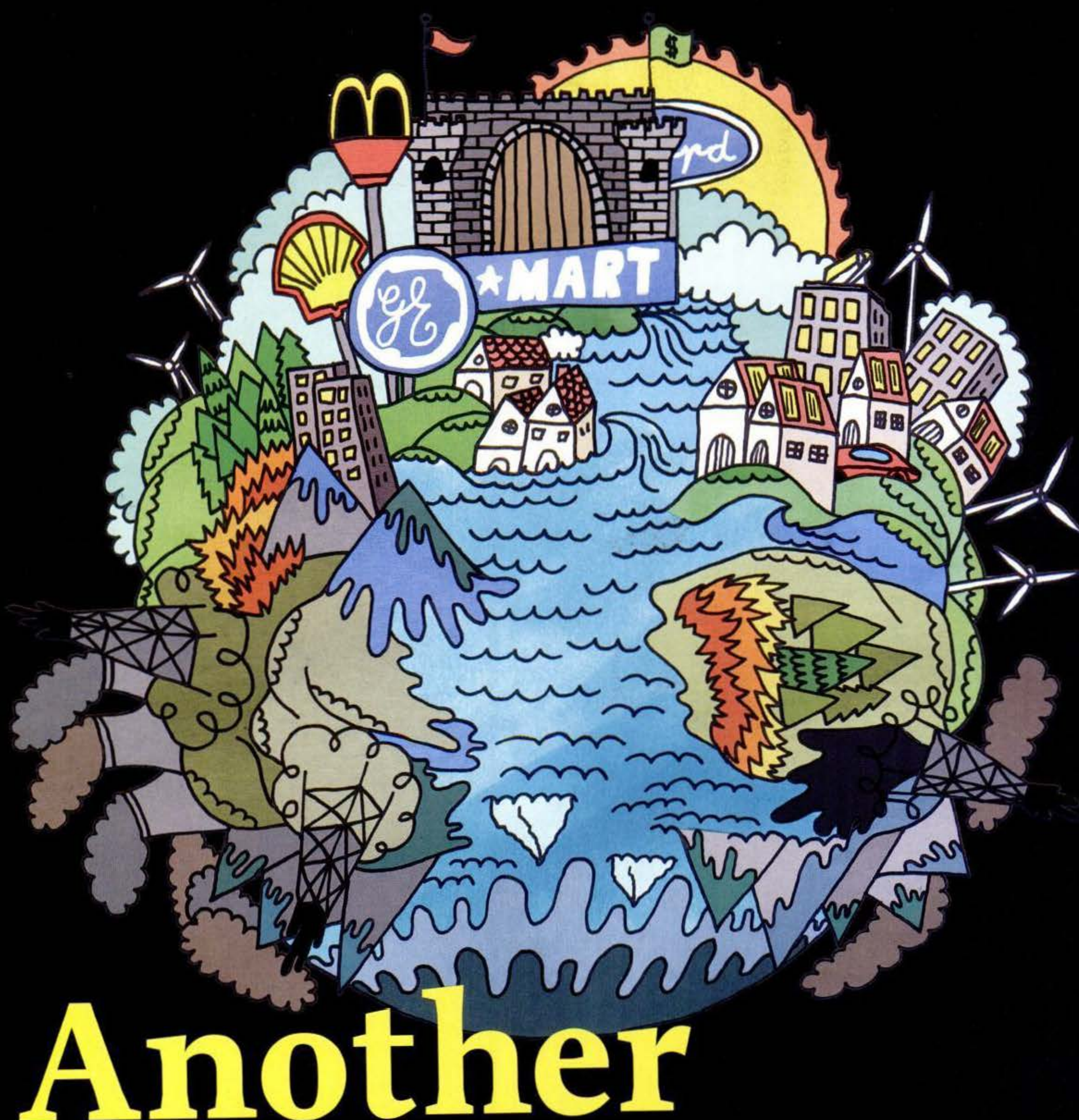

Another Green World

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The third influx of global greening is at hand...

The first failed in the 1970s: a mélange of social justice and human potential movements, Malthusians, New Age mystics, and communards.

In the 1990s diplomats, scientists, and jet-setters passed the Kyoto agreement. Some nations refused to ratify it; those who did wouldn't enforce its limits. Then the New World Order collapsed and the sky began misbehaving.

This is the third great effort. The situation is extremely alien by 20th-century standards. Here are the new players.

Corporate Greens

Common wisdom has it that corporations ruthlessly exploit the environment while people, parties, and oversight bureaucracies have to rein them in. This is no longer so: General Electric, Wal-Mart, McDonald's, Ford Motor, even Shell and BP are way ahead of the general population in effective environmental action and awareness. The key enabler here is the *Stern Review*, which points out that a living planet is a much more profitable place to do business than a dying planet. London, New York, and Tokyo all under water? That'll hurt the bottom line!

The stars within Corporate Green are today's ultra-rich moguls, billionaires so wildly empowered by soaring income disparities that they can take princely environmental actions on a personally planetary scale. They include Michael Bloomberg, Richard Branson, Vinod Khosla, Ted Turner, John Doerr, Bill Gates, Paul Allen, various private-equity myrmidons from Goldman Sachs, and anyone else who reads the scary briefing papers at the Davos World Economic Forum.

Two percent of the planet's population owns 50 percent of the planet. The wealthy cannot hide from the sky: Rising seas will take Martha's Vineyard, snow thaws will rob them of Vail. The current huge boom in green-energy stocks is the work of these people.

Bright Greens

These are the neo-green intelligentsia, high-technicians from the digital-culture industries. They have replaced the ink-on-paper hippie contingent of the *Whole Earth Review* with a planetary tangle of websites, how-tos, wikis, shopping sites, and seminars. When Google suddenly went carbon-neutral in a slew of solar panels, this was a Bright Green coup. Bright Greens aren't druggy leftie mystics; they are sobersided techie geeks—they don't hug trees, they measure their carbon uptake.

The failure of Brown and Black

Brown is traditional heavy, polluting industry; it's been offshored, its insurance costs are skyrocketing, and it ran out of cheap energy. Black is oil: now worth so much that it produces either bloody chaos, as in Nigeria and Iraq, or a swaggering, menacing petrocracy, as in Iran, Russia, and Venezuela. Neither of these former champions can even pretend to be about prosperity or business-as-usual; they've run out of friends.

Khaki Green

All revolutions tend to drift into terror, and Khaki Green—militarized, emergency green—is the beckoning world of Green Terror. Khaki Green is the handy catchall term for tomorrow's possible martial law, emergency rescue, refugee management, starvation relief, food riots, blackouts, peak-oil hoarding, survivalist cults, mass evacuation, raging newfangled epidemics, massive forest fires, water rationing in stricken cities, operations other than war, and the rest of the dark side scenario.

All of this is already happening in the world's ill-organized places, from Darfur to New Orleans. Some people imagine sustainability to be a passing fad. This is like Scarlett O'Hara imagining that Atlanta will stop burning because she's bored with Yankee troops.

We're on a slider bar between the Unthinkable and the Unimaginable. Sustainability is a mighty effort to haul that slider bar toward general survival as the smoldering planet groans at the seams. The Unthinkable is a global Somalia, Baghdad as the world's model city.

The Unimaginable is a set of awesome interventions we scarcely have words for yet: new design, new manufacturing, new culture, new cities, new infrastructure, new factories. It is biomimetics, algae fuel, cellulosic ethanol, building information management, product life-cycle management, quantum-dot solar, nanotube weirdness—and it's coming. No change on this scale has ever happened so quickly. The smart money is on it and the dumb money is losing wars, losing office, and losing lives. There's no safe place to stop without this change. We'll see "sustainability" eliminate everything else—we'll see the firm core of a sustainable civilization and the calamitous brownfields that used to be everything else.

The key to success is to make global greening not just a grim necessity, but a designer luxury (bling green). It's got to work so well that people flee headlong for it and leap into its embrace with a sigh of relief.

Well How? Read On...

Story by David A. Greene

Photos by Dave Lauridsen

Method Lab

Designer Jennifer Siegal's own house is a modest 1920s Spanish bungalow on the leeward side of busy Lincoln Boulevard in Venice, California, that looks nothing like what she makes at her day job. A little bit homely, a little bit avant-garde, it's a place to try out ideas, test products, and show off to potential clients and give them a feel for how she might make their own new house work. If they don't grok Siegal's crunchy-granola-meets-industrial vibe, then maybe they should just move on.

Project: Siegal Residence
Architect: Office of Mobile Design
Location: Venice, California

"It's this perfect little thing that attaches to the garden," Siegal says of the 200-square-foot trailer (right) that serves as an addition to her house (opposite). "There's something fascinating about repurposing materials. It doesn't always work; you have to have a creative eye to see what the next life will be."

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A few years ago, Siegal was the It girl of prefabricated residential architecture, after newspapers and magazines (including Dwell) touted her use of recycled transoceanic shipping containers as the Next Big Thing. But windowless, uninsulated metal crates aren't for everyone; they were more like the Honda Insight of the prefab world, conversation pieces that spurred ideas about how to make kit housing less expensive and more pragmatic. For Siegal, the answer, these days, is factory built: After years of hard work and heartbreak, she's got her own prefab factory up and running in Chino, California, churning out custom houses and, lately, a school.

The nonprefab place where Siegal lays her head is a perpetual work in progress. About a mile from the beach, it's been retrofitted with the sustainable materials and ideas she explores in her practice, from the single woodstove that heats the whole house to a new wide-open floor plan that welcomes sea breezes. It's also an R&D zone: "I'm constantly doing stuff, like this door," Siegal says, showing off a welded-steel-and-glass entry made by her longtime steel fabricator, whom she met during her premortgage days at SCI-Arc, the Southern California Institute of Architecture.

"But mostly, the things in here are either found objects or they were cheap," Siegal notes. She points out a bookshelf she made from scrap lumber, and the huge glass doors that lead from the kitchen to the back garden; they originally came from a grocery store in East Los Angeles. A well-traveled Sub-Zero refrigerator rattles and hums in the kitchen, another dumpster-diving coup from a demolition site. The house's bamboo flooring, from Smith & Fong in San Francisco, was free. "One of the things I do is I contact a company I want to work with, and say 'Hey, I'll promote you if you supply me with this thing for free, or give me a discount,'" she explains. It's not as crass as it sounds; mooching is a time-honored tradition in the underfunded halls of academe, where Siegal spent most of her adult working life. "In my teaching, I would do the same thing," she says with a laugh. "I'm really good at asking for things—and most people don't ask."

Jennifer's father, Sidney Siegal, was a New York abstract painter who moved his family to rural Peterborough, New Hampshire, in the late 1960s. "Did you ever see that movie *Pollock*? That's what my life was like," she says, recalling expatriate urbanites cavorting at dinner ▸

The first phase of rehabbing the backyard trailer was fabricating custom steel-and-glass doors (opposite). "A lot of the things in here are found objects," Siegal says of her home's contents. The vintage stove, with its funky yellow Bakelite knobs (below left), was inherited from the previous owner. Siegal built bookshelves from scrap wood, bartered for her Danish modern furniture, and haggled for a living-room rug in Morocco (below right).

parties in the woods. "I think that's why I'm a risk taker. Growing up in a small town, you're not fearful." Portable retail runs in the family, too: After pushing a pirate hot dog cart in Boston after college, Siegal discovered that her grandfather once hawked dogs at Coney Island.

Siegal likes to call herself a "mobile entrepreneur," and the theme pops up throughout her career—and in her backyard. Squatting amid the carefully clipped grass is a 200-square-foot wheeled truck trailer, deposited there by crane. Siegal bought it years ago for $1,500. She wanted to have a plan for it before moving it to her new house—but her mother thought otherwise. "She said, 'Just get it into your backyard,'" Siegal laughs. "'It doesn't matter—if it's there, you'll figure it out.'"

The trailer is attached to Siegal's renovated master bedroom, which includes a sunny new bath and laundry room. It's technically a "bonus room," a Los Angeles real-estate euphemism for the kind of unpermitted, ad-hoc addition that usually resembles something out of *The Silence of the Lambs*. But Siegal's spin on it is a shiny, white aluminum-clad trailer with its original mahogany floors and tare-weight numbering intact, that she "just sort of glued to the house."

"The reason I chose it is because it had openings on the back and on the side—it used to be a moving truck," says Siegal of the almost dainty metal box. The first phase of customization entailed cutting holes for a window with a Sawzall, and swapping out the doors from steel to glass. "I still don't really have a program for it," she says of the funky, shedlike space. "Sometimes it's yoga, sometimes it's partying—but I just like it."

Siegal notes that for the amount of money she's sunk into the renovations, she could've demolished the house and started new. "When I bought it, you couldn't even walk in—it was like a rat maze," she recalls of the house she bought at a probate sale in 2002. But after all the changes, she says, "I feel like it's me, like it's my house." Besides, recycling is the original shade of green. "It's about sustainability," Siegal explains. "You can start from scratch—or you can work with what you have."

Siegal sits at her kitchen table and ponders her long-time love affair with architecture that "lives lightly upon the land." "One of the reasons I was always fascinated with trailer parks is because they're great communities—like the way the kibbutzim were started in Israel," she says. "Everyone watches out for everyone else, they live

At the same time she annexed the trailer, Siegal opened up the master bedroom to include a new bath and laundry room. "The house hadn't been touched since the 1920s—it had lots of tiny little rooms," says Siegal of the home she bought in 2002. "But I loved that yard, and I thought, I could make this place really great." Her latest addition is a two-story workspace where the garage once stood (see plan opposite).

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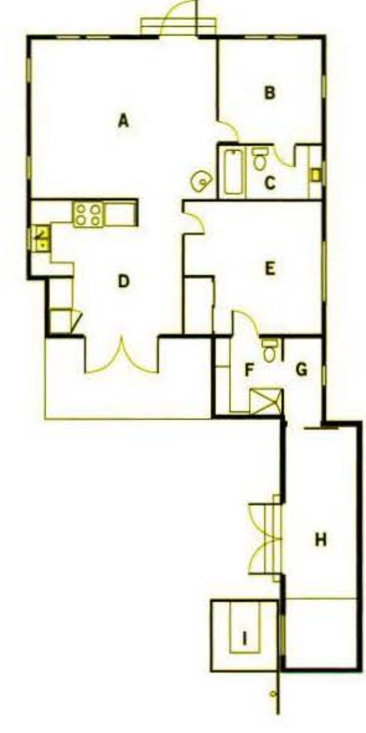
in very small lots, it's very efficient, and everyone tends to have a garden space." Just outside her backyard trailer is a tiled hot tub, set amongst an amazing variety of succulents that Siegal has grown from clippings brought up from vacation trips to Baja California. "This is really what I actually love to do. More than anything," Siegal says of her time spent in the garden.

She's totally serious, too, especially in light of the path she's taken from recycling queen to prefab factory boss, and lately, budding green-lifestyle maven. When she speaks about her mini-empire, Siegal sounds like a cross between Martha Stewart and the sun-creased hippie lady who sells sand candles down on the Venice Boardwalk. She just wants to make the world a better place—and to make a living. Her latest venture is a series of "urban green centers," where city dwellers can buy everything from organic food to Jennifer Siegal–branded clothing, door handles, even entire houses. "My whole career has been completely intuitive," says Siegal, staring at her sunny backyard. "It's been an evolution. I can see now what the links are, but when I'm in the middle of it..." Her voice trails off as she realizes that what she's doing now will someday be the middle of something else. ▸

Most of the plants in the garden (right) are grown from cuttings imported from Mexico. "I have a trailer down in Baja," Siegal reports. "It's a total ad-hoc situation: no electricity, an outdoor shower, an outhouse. It's a level above camping." Chunky steel bed frames in the bedrooms (below) were Siegal's first attempt at furnishings.

Siegal Residence
Floor Plan

- **A** Living Room
- **B** Guest Bedroom
- **C** Guest Bathroom
- **D** Kitchen
- **E** Master Bedroom
- **F** Master Bathroom
- **G** Laundry
- **H** Trailer
- **I** Hot Tub / Shower
- **J** Studio



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Fo' Show

Jennifer Siegal's other house is the portable ShowHouse, a 720-square-foot example of her factory-built prefab housing, wedged in among the boutiques and coffee bars on trendy Abbott Kinney Boulevard in Venice. "I set it up so people would have a place to come and kick the tires," Siegal jokes. "What does modern prefab feel like?"

Siegel is a total nerd for new and earth-friendly building materials; among those on display in the ShowHouse are an iPort music system, with embedded speakers and a wall-mounted votive niche for an iPod; radiant heating panels—nicknamed "people heaters"—that efficiently warm you and your stuff, not the air around you; and Kirei board, a sustainable sorghum by-product that causes visitors to pet the walls and coo softly.

The 12-by-60-foot, steel-framed, slope-roofed ShowHouse is the fruit of Siegel's collaboration with a formerly moribund industrial prefab factory, which for 30 years cranked out "nasty" construction trailers and depressing temporary classrooms. "Now they're stoked," Siegal says of their new focus on earth-friendly houses and schools. Siegel's prefab sales pitch is concise: "I can do this in half the time and for a third of the cost of a conventional structure. Plus, it comes in on the back of a truck." ■

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OMD continually updates the ShowHouse with the latest eco-friendly materials, including nontoxic birch veneer Koskipanels and Durapalm flooring (left), which is a secondary product of coconut palms; bamboo flooring (below right); and Kirei board (below right), which is made from the discarded stalks of sorghum plants. Furnishings from Vitra, including Jean Prouvé and Verner Panton chairs and a Jasper Morrison side table (right), and a kitchen from Boffi (below left) help make the ShowHouse as stylish as it is sustainable. p. 238

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No Grid in Sight

Most deserts are dry and dusty expanses of blue skies, bleached soil, and ruler-flat horizons. The Colorado Plateau is not one of them. This is a land of stunning contradictions, where thousand-foot rock monoliths jut like raised fists from flat riverbeds, and traffic-light-green foliage glows on stoplight-red soil. The sky here appears not blue but bright white, a flashbulb burst through squinted eyes.

At the heart of the Colorado Plateau is the Navajo Nation—a 27,000-square-mile sovereign state lying in the Four Corners region, in Utah, New Mexico, and Arizona. It's here, along a dirt road, miles from anything and anybody that Rosie Joe's house shimmers like a modernist mirage on an alien landscape.

Project: Rosie Joe Residence
Architect: DesignBuildBLUFF
Location: Bluff, Utah

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Entirely off the grid, the house is powered by four photovoltaic panels that supply electricity to lights, small appliances, and water pumps. Rosie Joe weaves a traditional Navajo rug (opposite, top). DesignBuildBLUFF's 2007 team put the finishing touches on their latest project (opposite, bottom).

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"That's it on the left, see it?" asks Hank Louis, the 56-year-old lead architect, as we navigate a bumpy sand path and park in the shadow of the house's sprawling V-shaped butterfly roof. "We were trying to do something special, to make some real architecture here," explains Louis, stepping from our air-conditioned car into 105-degree summer heat. As he approaches the front door, the façade of exposed wood, red rammed earth, and glass is reflected in his circular Lennon-style glasses, which, like his Panama hat, never leave his head. "It's traditional for doors to face east on Navajo homes," he says matter-of-factly. "You know, when we build here it is not just about erecting a structure." He pauses, then knocks on the door. "It's also about reflecting and celebrating the Navajo culture."

Rosie Joe's house was the first project built in the Navajo Nation by DesignBuildBLUFF, a nonprofit organization affiliated with the University of Utah's College of Architecture + Planning, that Louis directs with a group of first-year graduate students. Each year eight to ten students design a house for a Navajo family then spend a semester on the reservation constructing the house by hand. The houses must operate off the grid. The goal is for budgets not to exceed $30,000.

Louis based DesignBuildBLUFF on the Rural Studio, which he had read about in a trade magazine a decade earlier. "I just thought those were the coolest things I'd ever seen," he states. Led by Samuel "Sambo" Mockbee until his untimely death in 2001, Rural Studio enlists students from Auburn University to construct environmentally conscious, cost-effective, and innovative housing for low-income families throughout Alabama and surrounding states. In 1998 Louis invited Mockbee to give a lecture at an annual architecture symposium in Salt Lake City. "He really incited the students," explains Louis, "and he really incited me. He told us to do something, to make something real happen—and to do it now!"

Four years later, Louis and students had completed two outdoor recreation spaces and a 2,000-square-foot straw-bale house for a Tibetan refugee family of nine living in suburban Salt Lake City. "After the [Tibetan family's] house, I knew we could do this, push this beyond our comfort level and make something bigger happen," says Louis. He planned to build the next house off the grid in the high desert of Navajo Nation. Eight students enrolled. By fall 2003, they had received 30 applications from families on the reservation in need of a home, but it was Rosie Joe, a single mother of two who worked three jobs and lived with her mother in a 150-square-foot shed without running water or electricity, who caught their attention. Louis worked with Navajo elders to secure a 66-year lease on a half-acre in the middle of a deserted bluff off Highway 191. In January 2004 the newly formed DesignBuildBLUFF team packed their bags and moved 350 miles southeast to the high desert. "We kind of just went on a leap of faith."

Bluff is a dusty outpost located a few miles outside the Navajo Nation in the southeastern corner of Utah. ▸

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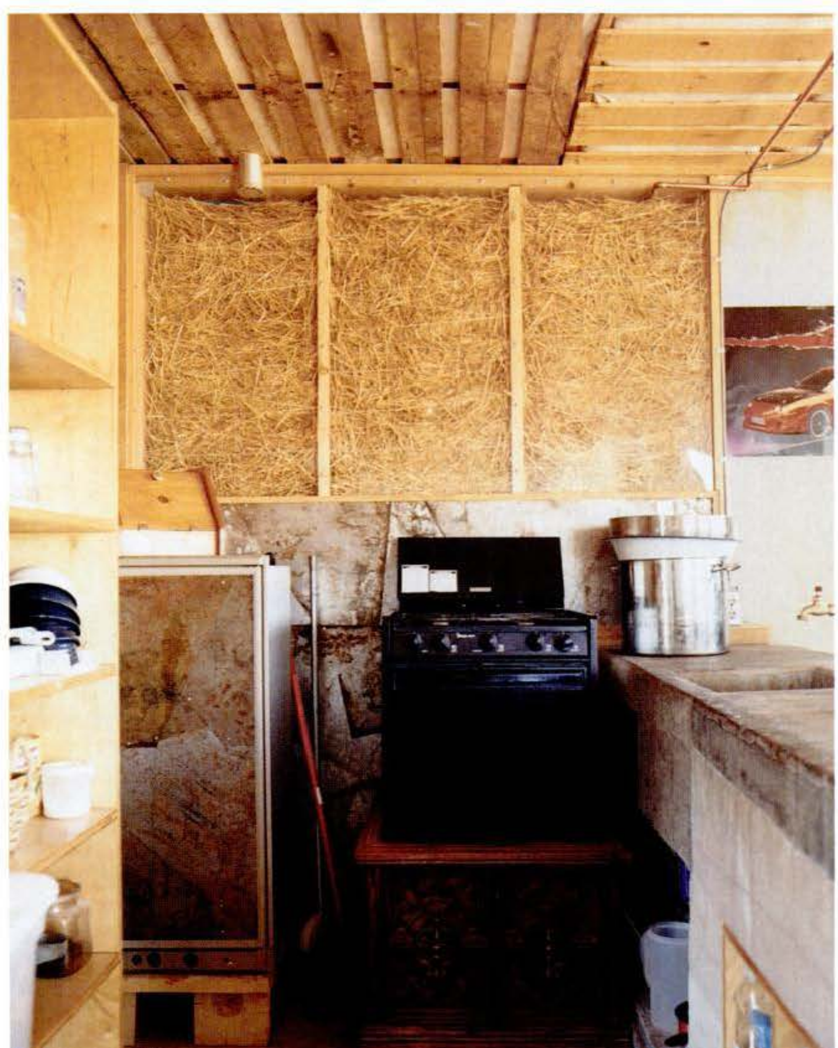
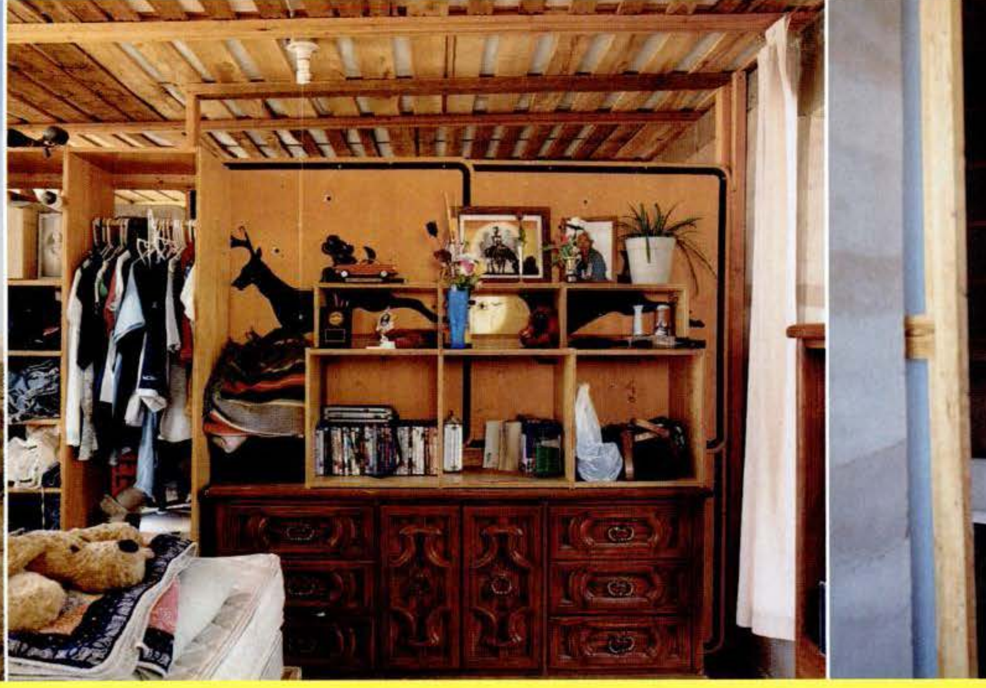


Kitchen and living room walls were constructed of clear and white acrylic panels stuffed with straw to allow for natural ventilation and light to filter softly into the house. The walls leaked after the first winter and the straw sank down in the frames. Students returned to the site, sealed and filled the walls with Styrofoam (leaving the straw-fill in the kitchen as is). Nicholas sits in the shade of the roof (opposite page); students cut and hand-welded thousands of reclaimed rebar pieces into a complex grid that would support four bi-level corrugated-steel roof panels.



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It contains exactly one coffee shop and one taco stand, which provides most of the sustenance for its 320 flip-flop-wearing, mostly new-age and cowboy residents. At the dusty center of Bluff is a five-bedroom sandstone Victorian house once owned by a turn-of-the-century rancher. This is DesignBuildBLUFF headquarters, where students spend six months living and working together to build their house.

When I pull into the weedy parking lot across from the house, the four remaining 2006/2007 DesignBuildBLUFF students are there to greet me. They have just finished a nine-hour day of work and are playing horseshoes, strumming Beatles songs on guitars, and drinking Utah-regulated 3.2-percent beer on hand-me-down couches on a sprawling porch. This small group has volunteered to stay through the summer to put the finishing touches on the 2007 project—a crescent-shaped two-bedroom house for an elderly Navajo couple living three miles out of town.

"Ah, those new students, they have it easy!" says Clio Miller, a graduate of DesignBuildBLUFF who worked on Rosie Joe's house. "When we showed up, there were no beds or couches. It was January, and it was freezing. We didn't know what we were doing, didn't know the building process, and we didn't have any mechanical tools."

What Miller and other Rosie Joe students did have was a three-dimensional paper prototype of the house they were about to construct, a 1,200-square-foot rectangular structure outfitted with a double roof that would heat and cool itself naturally via a complex passive solar program. "This was our opportunity to get out of the classroom and put something into reality," states Scott Woodruff, another Rosie Joe graduate. "And we were very excited about it."

Along the 22-mile drive from Bluff to Rosie Joe's house in Navajo Nation, windswept shacks, collapsed sheds, and wheel-less Winnebagos stand on the desert landscape like tiny ships lost on a sandy sea. "Most Navajos choose to live alone out here, away from groups of people, away from utilities," explains Louis. Of the more than 175,000 Navajos that populate this area, 44 percent are unemployed, and over 56 percent live below the poverty level, the highest poverty rate in the U.S.

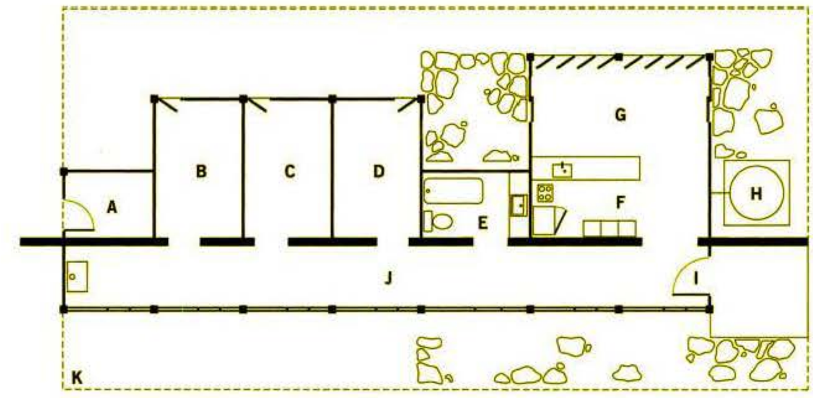
"Some of the elders didn't want us out here at all. They've said, 'The most helpful thing you can do is to leave us alone, to quit giving people handouts,'" explains Louis. "But I don't believe that. What we want to do is work together, to get everyone involved in this process. That's what I learned from Mockbee, and that's what we're doing out here—trying to pass this on."

The first step in building Rosie Joe's house was constructing a rammed earth wall. Students gathered sand and clay from around the house, handpacking it into a 75-foot-by-18-inch mold. Because it is made from the surrounding earth, the wall disappears into the landscape, the natural red-and-tan striations mirroring the rolling desert plains.

The concrete foundation came next. "We found that living off the grid was one thing; constructing a house ▸

Rosie Joe Residence Floor Plan

A Storage
B Master Bedroom
C Bedroom
D Bedroom
E Bathroom
F Kitchen
G Living Room
H Cistern
I Entry
J Hall
K Butterfly Roof



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off the grid was another," explains Miller. One night when the group was working until 9 p.m. to complete an integral last part of the foundation, they ran out of water. "We ended up emptying the water from our CamelBaks and pouring it into the concrete," she says. "It actually worked. We finished the job. But we got pretty thirsty."

The house is framed with exposed rough-sawn pine bought at a 50-percent discount from a mill in nearby Dolores, Colorado. Mismatched wooden pallets make up the ceiling, each gathered from the back of supermarkets and delivery depots around neighboring Cortez. The group pieced together the odd-sized pallets, Tetris-like, and lined them with canvas stuffed with insulation to allow air to circulate easily within and outside the house.

The final—and most challenging—component of the house was installing the semi-detached 2,500-square-foot butterfly roof. This open structure allows for wind—which is frequent in the area—to pass through the roof without lifting the panels. The roof also collects water for the house. As rain falls, the wide panels funnel water into a 1,500-gallon above-ground cistern located on the east wall. "Just a couple inches of rain fill the cistern—they've never needed [to supplement their water from a municipal system]," explains Louis.

I return to Rosie Joe's the next day. It is her day off from waiting tables and folding laundry in Bluff, but she's busy, weaving a traditional Navajo rug. "This one is for Hank Louis," she says, flashing a smile. Her left hand feeds yarn to the hand-built loom as the right presses a wooden comb-shaped beater against the weft. Behind her, flat blue-white sky abuts red earth. Through the white-framed windows, the flat squares of contrasting land and air resemble a Rothko painting.

"You know, when the house was being built, I saw the big [rammed earth] wall and thought, It is so weird!" Rosie Joe laughs. Phelicia, her 14-year-old daughter, sits at her feet leafing through old magazines while 9-year-old Nicholas enthusiastically asks if anyone would like to join him in the 101-degree heat for a round of desert basketball. "Some people pass and they think it is a drive-through, or a gas station," she says. "But then they see that we live here, and they like it. And we like it very much too. It is our home."

Stepping outside to leave, I look back at the house. Atom-bomb storm clouds spit lightning across the crooked horizon. The sky, all gray and white and exploding in every direction, resembles the ocean at its most furious. In the tumult of the elements, the rectangular frame and rhombus roof appear almost fake, a magazine cut-out accidentally dropped on a Gateway screensaver. But there is a virtuosity, a realness, about the house. Void of superfluity, it is clean and modern and green not by choice but by necessity—an efficient machine made for simple living. In a world obsessed with varnish, stucco, and matching Pantone colors, this trueness of design and purpose is not only refreshing—it's revelatory. ■

Ram On

Take some dirt, sand, and clay, stomp on it for a while, and what do you get? One of the most resilient construction materials in history. It's called "rammed earth," and for thousands of years it's been used by billions—yes, billions—of people to build everything from latrines to parts of the Great Wall of China.

Rammed earth is not just energy-efficient and cool looking, it's also easy to make. A dirt mixture is dumped into a 12- to 24-inch mold, and a stabilizer of concrete—or, historically, lime and animal blood (not PETA-approved)—is added. The soil is tamped to about half its original height and then cured. What remains is a rock-like wall boasting a compression of up to 625 pounds per square inch—pliable enough to support a nail yet sturdy enough to last centuries. The considerable density gives the structure an exceptional thermal mass, allowing it to soak up heat during the day and evenly distribute it throughout the night.

Unlike traditional wood-framed houses, rammed earth structures are fireproof and termite-proof, and produce very little post-construction waste. An estimated 2 billion people in the world still use earth to construct their houses today.

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In wintertime, the rammed earth hallway wall serves as the central heating device, soaking up sunlight through south-facing windows and distributing warmth throughout the house. A wood-burning stove at the end of the front hallway provides additional heat for cold winter nights.

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The First Wave

In Sydney's cramped beachside suburbia, architect Steve Kennedy defied a small footprint and a terrible drought with a generous double-height extension and a cutting-edge custom-made water-filtration system.

Australia is in the throes of a blistering drought, and water consumption is strictly regulated. In the garden (below right), Mary Henning gives her potted plants a much-needed drink of graywater diverted from the kitchen and bathrooms and filtered by a massive green wall. Household water is heated by a rooftop solar system (below left). Clovelly's sunny climes, and a secluded back patio (opposite), permit ample opportunity for outdoor entertaining and relaxation.

Project: Henning/Wansbrough Residence
Architect: Kennedy Associates Architects
Location: Clovelly, Australia

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The façade of the original semidetached bungalow (below) is untouched, suggesting a run-of-the-mill suburban abode. In the backyard (opposite, above), the hard-working green wall is a striking feature even though its primary purpose is to treat recycled water. A wall of books travels the height of the stairs leading to Ann Wansbrough's office (opposite, below), which rests comfortably on the top floor despite her limited mobility.

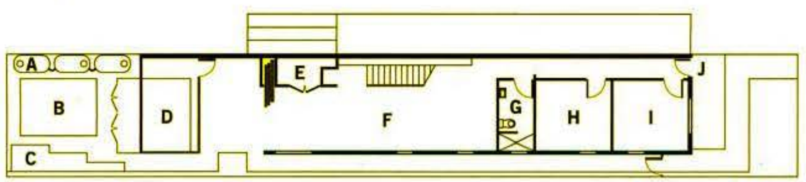
Way back in the heady days of civilization's energy bacchanalia—about five years ago—two Australian women and their architect set about creating an environmentally friendly home on Sydney's suburban scorched earth. They trucked in slim, sexy rainwater tanks from Queensland and a thermal chimney from Victoria and acquainted themselves with low-VOC house paints and floor oils. Then they tricked out their design to capture maximum amounts of sunshine, sea breeze, and precious rain, which they recycle not once but twice. Met with a cavalcade of Aussie media adulation upon its completion, a local green-housing legend was born.

Just a few beaches south of world-famous Bondi Beach, Mary Henning and Ann Wansbrough's renovation of a semidetached cottage in Clovelly outperforms even today's rigorous sustainable building codes—it uses 75 percent less town water than the average two-person home when the government's maximum target is 40 percent. "Nobody was talking about water when we started—and it's such an important issue on a dry continent," says Henning.

In the backyard, behind the pool's stacked-stone wall, one finds the home's sustainable showpiece—a pocket-sized water-treatment plant. To one side are three steel tanks, each with the capacity to store nearly 800 gallons of rainwater collected on the roof. Facing them is the green wall, a vertical garden and graywater filter in one. Combined, the measures mean that all water collected on the site is recycled and reused until its final stop in the toilet or the washing machine. Nothing is wasted, a boon to the parched parcel, as excess storm water is sent to an underground sump and allowed to seep back into the ground. The only demand on town water supplies is what's needed for cooking and drinking.

The water system cost about $12,000, an expense that created a trade-off with other energy-saving strategies. Space on the roof has been reserved for photovoltaic cells, but in the meantime the women have joined a green power company to supply them with energy from accredited renewable sources. "We had to decide—do we try to make the house as energy efficient as possible or do we do the water thing?" Henning recalls.

Clovelly Residence Floor Plan



Ground Floor
- **A** Rainwater Tanks
- **B** Storm Water Absorption
- **C** Storm Water Absorption
- **D** Therapy Pool
- **E** Laundry
- **F** Living Room / Kitchen
- **G** Bathroom
- **H** Bedroom
- **I** Bedroom
- **J** Entry

K L M N O P

First Floor
- **K** Library
- **L** Open to Below
- **M** Study
- **N** Master Bathroom
- **O** Master Bedroom
- **P** Deck

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After several years of drought, the answer was clear.

The women arrived at their position on environmental responsibility by way of considered inquiry and faith, not fashion. In her late 50s, Henning is a management consultant for universities in Australia and the Pacific and is energized by blue-sky ideas. And, like Wansbrough, who works in social policy and is a minister for the Uniting Church in Australia, she is a great believer in community and "the power of the collective." "The whole point was to contribute to the discussion of green energy—to show it is possible to do these sorts of things," Henning says. "It was either do this, or make a very large contribution to the Australian Conservation Foundation."

But where would such a generous charitable donation leave her friends and fellow gourmands? The president of the foodie collective Beefsteak and Burgundy Club (Botany Bay chapter)—and keeper of its gavel and cellar—Henning routinely hosts serious feasts. Her record for dinner is 28. Though it required the procurement of new wineglasses for predinner drinks and each of the banquet's four courses, and some clever seating ▸

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arrangements in the house's roughly 1,600 square feet, all had elbow room to spare. "I've got friends with much bigger houses, but they can't do that sort of thing," she says.

Both food and sustainability were on Henning's mind when discussing the design with architect Steve Kennedy: "I like to see the clouds when I'm cooking. I stand in the corner and look up at the sky or the trees and I could be anywhere in the country." A two-story wall of glass in the living room affords her these diverting views; Wansbrough, on the other hand, most often takes in the view from her home office on the floor above. Here Kennedy upended conventional wisdom, designing so that Wansbrough, who lost a leg in a motorcycle accident and has limited mobility, isn't grounded on the first floor. As Henning says, "Why should a disabled person have to live downstairs and be prohibited from enjoying the view?" Kennedy echoes the importance of considering Wansbrough's individual needs: "Ann's disability was important in our concerns—but Mary and Ann embraced all the ideas and went, 'Righto, where shall we go with this? What shall we do to make this happen?' There ought to be awards for good clients."

To accommodate Wansbrough comfortably, Kennedy designed a straight staircase with deep treads and a small upper-level kitchenette. The kitchen island is on wheels so it can be moved out of the way to allow her wheelchair passage, and the spacious bathroom is fitted with wide-opening doors and reinforced grab rails, concessions so subtle and well detailed they go virtually unnoticed. Out back, near the green wall, a small therapy pool is as pretty as a pond when not being used by Wansbrough for her marathon exercise sessions in the warmer weather.

Intellectual fitness is equally high on life's agenda for these two. Henning's other passion is art, and she is assiduous about its placement and effect on the eye. "Almost every day I stop for a few minutes and just look at the paintings and see something new," she says, referring to the 20 small abstract works by Lezlie Tilley that run the height of the living-room walls, rising from earth to tree-canopy colors and "linking the two levels." "It struck me as stupid to hang one painting downstairs ▸

Wansbrough relaxes in the living room (opposite), a serene area with a bank of windows and an arrangement of Lezlie Tilley's paintings inspired by the Australian bush. The bathroom's width and reinforced handrails accommodate Wansbrough's needs (below right), while a small balcony off the master bedroom (below left) is both a sheltered area for reading and a crucial device for creating cross breezes.

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The lush backyard garden (opposite), with therapy pool in the foreground, hosts the green wall, which reduces the house's drain on city water by 75 percent. Hidden behind the stone feature wall are three 800-gallon rainwater tanks that store whatever water falls from the skies.

and another above it for upstairs," she says. "We needed something to connect the space."

Books—thousands of them—sit in shelves that span the staircase opposite, another visual link as they rise toward the heavens, from detective novels to the theology section.

In all this, Kennedy had to adapt the women's green-hued mission. With a sizable sum of money invested in the vertical garden, energy efficiency had to be achieved through ingenuity and deft design. Kennedy installed a new product called the Sun Lizard thermal chimney to suck warm air out of the house in summer and recirculate it during winter. Solar technology on the roof provides power for the hot water system and heating for the pool while passive solar design succeeds in catching light all day long and avoiding the need for air-conditioning. A spate of crafty, drafty louvers and window adjustments create cross breezes, and Kennedy installed a cunning detail he calls the "windoor"—a false solid wall that opens all the way—to keep cool on hot days.

Mercifully, Sydney rarely gets bitterly cold, but Kennedy still wonders about the tenability of one of modernism's hallmarks—all those lovely windows—in the face of increasing demand for thermal performance. "Louvers are about keeping the sun out and dealing with privacy, but they don't keep the heat in. If you want a house to perform, you have to limit glazing," he says. "The aim is to find ways of moving from the fundamental model of houses for 50 years, which has been the glass box. It's what we've all been designing, but the simple fact is no matter what you do, glass is a really poor insulator."

His thoughtful design has spared the women from large electricity bills, but financial gain is not their primary concern. "The important thing is the house itself is such a delight to live in," Henning says. "There's the sense of space, the fact that you can have all the things you'd like in a house twice the size." And, of course, there is the very individual comfort factor. "The fact that Ann has a need to do with accessibility is no different to the other needs that influence the way we want to live. Her needs are no different to my need to have space for art on the wall." ■

When in Drought

It might look like a planter box for high-density agriculture, but the green wall created by Steve Kennedy's team and environmental engineer Toby Gray harvests and treats water on a small suburban block.

Twenty feet long and six and a half feet high, it operates on a similar principle to reed ponds, in which graywater is cleaned and filtered by nutrient-absorbing plants and soil.

The cycle starts with rainwater, which is diverted to the pool, showers, bath, or basins and then redirected—as graywater—to an underground holding tank. Twice a day, the graywater is pumped from the tank to the top of the wall. The water makes its way through a row of strelitzias, canna lilies, and liriopes, down to the white-flowered arum lilies and eventually to the ferns. On its way down, the water is filtered and "polished" (or denuded of tiny particles) by sand and gravel in the garden beds, ready for reuse in the washing machine and toilet.

Homeowners Mary Henning and Ann Wansbrough did a crash course in vertical gardening. "The crucial thing was that the plants would live long and prosper," says Henning. "They have to like having wet feet, but they were chosen to deal with their positions, because each level operates as a different microclimate. The top level is more exposed than the other two, for example, and the plants have to be hardy. And you've got to have plants that don't mind a certain amount of soaps and detergents."

Concerned about the device, local authorities demanded the installation of a UV filter, which had the unexpected effect of improving water quality beyond everyone's expectations. "The water has been tested and it's fine. We could drink it," Kennedy says.—K.P.

Water Cycle Diagram

- **A Rainwater Collected from Roof**
- **B Rainwater from Tank to Plumbing**
- **C Graywater to Holding Tank**
- **D Holding Tank to Green Wall**
- **E Treated Water to Laundry / Toilet**
- **F Blackwater to Sewer**

A
B
C
D
E
F

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Photos by Frank Breuer

Pole Position

With their stately images of water towers, grain elevators, and cooling towers, Hilla and Bernd Becher captured beauty in the mundane, and documented the near infinite variety of these prosaic subjects. Frank Breuer's survey of telephone poles continues in this tradition—it comes as little surprise to learn he studied with the Bechers. In a larger context the poles are little more than useful eyesores—an unquestioned, haphazard addition to the landscape. However, centered in the frame like the subject of a portrait, the commonplace pole takes on an abstract, sculptural quality, and serves as a starck reminder of life on the grid.

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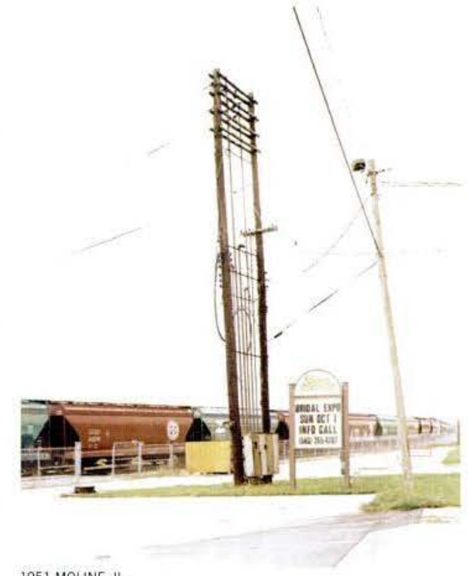
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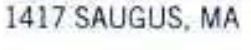

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Story by Clayton Maxwell

Photos by Allison V. Smith

The El Cosmico crew—artists, friends, canine volunteers—unwind with an end-of-the-day fire circle. The Food Shark trailer, source of the Marfalafel falafel sandwich, is on site, keeping workers fed and happy.

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Free-Range Kickin'

It takes grit to transform a sun-baked field in Marfa, Texas, into a small village of vintage trailers and yurts. The heat, the dagger-sharp yucca, and the scarcity of hardware stores and skilled trade workers (Marfa has only one plumber, and he's the most popular guy in town) are enough to derail the building dreams of many. Then there is the seductive inertia of Marfa time, the slowing down that happens in the local culture of midday naps and porch sitting. Renowned as the late Donald Judd's modern art refuge, this tiny desert town may be an international outpost for artists and cool seekers, but it can also be a very hard place to get things done.

But that hasn't deterred Liz Lambert. Born and raised in West Texas, Lambert solidified her reputation as Austin's premier hotelier after turning the San José—a once squalid, crumbling motor hotel—into an icon of Austin style and a veritable cultural hub. It's not difficult to see the potential Lambert brings to Marfa, where she is pressing ahead with her newest venture, El Cosmico, a haven for Spartan and Vagabond trailers.

El Cosmico is not necessarily for solitary, indoor types; trailer buyers thus far have been people with some communal spunk who want a few small comforts with their big desert skies. "There's going to be wind, dust, the errant spider," quips Lambert. "This is not a four-star hotel, but the trade-off is a blanket of stars at night. Anyone can get a second home, but one of the attractions of a place like this is you know that when you go to stay in your trailer, and it's 20 feet away from your neighbor's, you're kinda looking forward to seeing [them] and being thrown into the mix." El Cosmico is a classy hybrid between a standard hotel, where one feels removed from the land, and a communal campsite: Here you get the desert stars, community, and luxury linens, too.

As with the San José, Lambert has culled an all-star mix of collaborators, turning to Bob Harris of Lake/Flato Architects to conceive of the overall design, Jack Sanders of Austin's JWLKR Design Build Adventure to manage the project, and Christy Ten Eyck to head up landscape design. When it's completed, El Cosmico will be an oasis amid the cacti, with an 85-foot-diameter orb-shaped pool surrounded by low-lying walls that radiate out in Cosmo-like circles whose orbiting amenities include stored trailers, wood-heated Dutchtubs, Nomad yurts ▸

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Clockwise from top left: Until the outdoor showers are installed, dog Darryl bathes beneath the El Cosmico water-tank; Jack Sanders brands the water tank with the El Cosmico logo, designed by Austin artist Noel Waggener; an early site plan by Lake Flato; architect and land artist Ann Tucker paints the concentric rings of the El Cosmico design onto the land with Sanders.

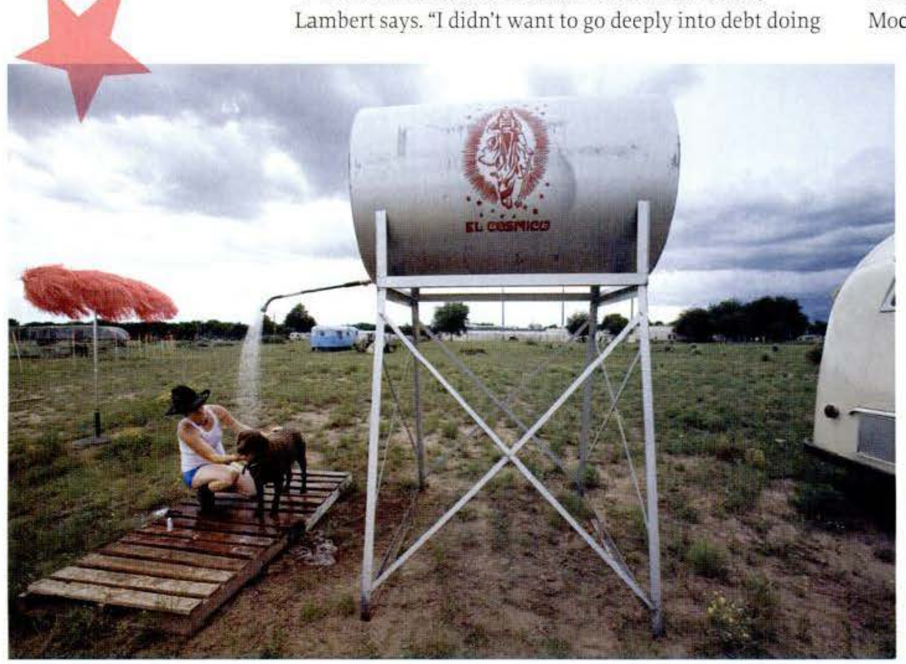
by Ecoshack, a bar, a stage and dance area for parties, gardens, and art studios. Lambert calls it "a trans-Pecos kibbutz for the 21st century."

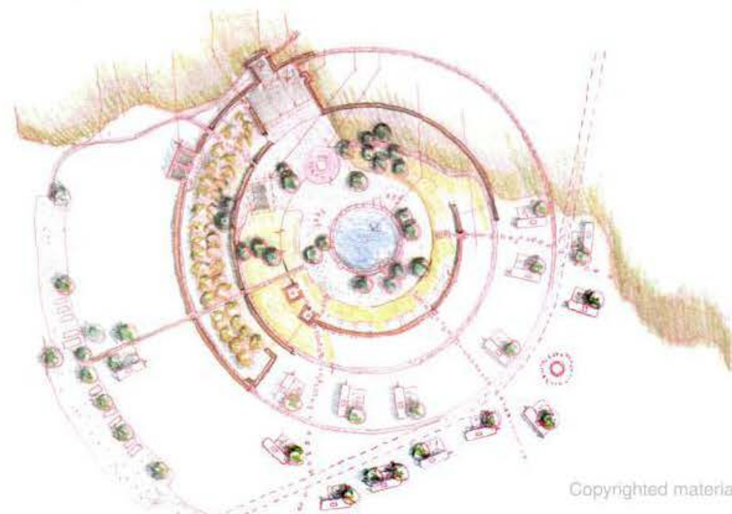
While the endorsement may smack of a bygone era of utopianism, El Cosmico's efforts to live lightly and conscientiously are many. Lambert is installing a wind turbine, and many trailers will have a photovoltaic panel; eventually the site will be fully powered by sun and wind. And because the El Cosmico team recognizes the dilemma of filling a swimming pool in an arid climate, they have scaled back the size of the pool and are opening it up to the public so that a little water can go a long way. Ten Eyck, an expert in sustainable desert landscaping, is designing an extensive water-harvesting system with large cisterns to recycle water. "The rain water may be enough to fill a pool, but it's hard to say yet," she comments. "You'd be surprised; we do get some real gullywashers out there."

But sustainability is more than green technology and careful design. Incremental growth and simple human elements play a key role in making a good project last. "I want El Cosmico to be sustainable on all levels," Lambert says. "I didn't want to go deeply into debt doing it; I wanted it to find its own way over the years. That's why I love the idea of people investing in the village of El Cosmico, so immediately you have people who give it life and become part of it." Because the trailer owners are financially committed, El Cosmico has a built-in long-term community: a simple, but essential, part of the plan.

El Cosmico is an atypical project for Lake/Flato, the much-in-demand, much-lauded San Antonio-based firm, but Harris is dedicated to the cause: "It is a rare opportunity to do something different," he explains. "El Cosmico is rooted in Texas vernacular and a model for touching the ground lightly. I've worked with Liz before and I have a great affinity for her and for the fun we have together. Because Marfa is so isolated, you are inevitably connected to not only the landscape but to the people as well. It's pure...to me, there's an honesty about it."

Project manager Jack Sanders is equally invested, so much so that he's set up camp in a Spartan on the Cosmico grounds. He is the project's on-location solutions man as well as its resident philosopher. A former instructor at the Auburn University Rural Studio in Alabama and protégé of the late Samuel "Sambo" Mockbee, he stresses the importance of process, ▸





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Lambert's interiors—part desert vernacular, part Jack Kerouac—are framed by the smooth birch walls of the Spartans and Vagabonds (top left). Liz Lambert (top right), devoted to restoring 1950s Spartan and Vagabond trailers, shows off one of her best specimens. Jack Sanders soaks in a Dutchtub (bottom right).

of engaging with the land and the people involved. "The way that I was mentored, [the building process] is about joy," he explains one night by an El Cosmico fire pit, his face smudged, a cold beer in hand. "At the Rural Studio, building something is about lifting the spirit, and that's evident in the process as much as the final product."

Sanders and Lambert have recruited a coterie of talents to fire the spirit of El Cosmico. Land artist Jarrod Beck worked with Sanders in the beginning stages to scratch out the design to scale, making a sketch upon the site's hard earth. Using a Bobcat loader as his paintbrush, Sanders drew concentric circles onto the land, framing them with painted poles to define the space. Wedding art with construction, Sanders and Beck used cattle panels and rebar to fashion mock-up trailers, positioning them according to the Lake/Flato site plan. The mock-ups let the technicians know where to put utilities and gave everyone a sense of the scale and relationship between the trailers. Other artists who have worked on the project include Stephen Ross, a University of Texas architecture lecturer who brought a class out to build on site; Noel Waggener, the printmaker behind the El Cosmico graphics; and Butch Anthony, an Alabama artist. "I don't mean this in a light manner," Lambert comments, "but it is a playground for all of us, a laboratory where we can work problems out and experiment with things."

For Lambert, no Marfa quirks will keep El Cosmico from happening, especially when there are beautiful Spartan trailers to renovate. Lambert has a long-held love affair with the 1950s Spartan and Vagabond trailers and their yachtlike birch interiors. Lambert and her design team locate the best specimens, treat them to her unique modern renovation in Austin, and then haul them westward, where each will be styled with a porch, an outdoor shower, and a view of the low, craggy desert mountains just north of Mexico.

El Cosmico will grow at its own pace. After the first phase of trailers and pool are in place, the yurts will be set up and available for nightly stays, with a Spartan "hotel office" by the entrance. Art studios, which will come later, will be available to rent to anyone. "This project is always going to be about the process," Lambert says. "I'm not going to wake up one day and [have it] be done. It will always be a work in progress. So we might as well enjoy it." ▸

"There's going to be wind, dust, the errant spider. This is not a four-star hotel, but the trade-off is a blanket of stars at night."

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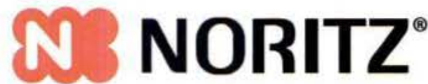

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Many a traveller adores dozing between the hotel's crisp, white linens, the gentle strains of late-night SportsCenter, a tender goodnight kiss. And while a final glimpse of Fenway before bed is enough to set anyone a-dreaming, hotels are an environmental nightmare. Endless, superfluous loads of laundry and guests who leave all the lights on are just the tip of the iceberg for this notoriously wasteful industry. Thankfully for all of us, the following flops are taking pains to show you, and the Earth, a bit of hospitality. ■

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Home Sweat Home

The land we purchased—a little less than 40 acres in the Floyd County foothills of southwestern Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains—is the hilly, unfarmable center of several large agricultural tracts accessed by a gravel trail that follows a deeded right-of-way through several gates, across a creek, and up a steep hill. We bought the land on impulse—it was simply beautiful—but afterwards Belinda and I looked at each other and wondered if we were crazy. We didn't even own a house yet, and there we were buying a lumpy landscape, hundreds of miles from our home in Washington, DC, and commencing a 30-year-and-counting construction odyssey.

Like most obsessions, it began innocently enough. We had no plans for the property, and for the first three years did little more than make periodic visits. Eventually we purchased a tent and spent the occasional night. We came to love our land, the mountain views, meandering creeks, and beautiful canopy of trees, but we hated camping. Keeping the humiliating rain-soaked details of our shortcomings as campers to ourselves, we began a curious construction project in a distant place, without the benefit of electricity or motorized equipment. These circumstances, and our meager budget, forced us to make no big plans.

Because the site was still inaccessible by vehicles, all the materials—at least in the beginning—had to be carried in by hand. We quickly learned to evaluate every architectural impulse in terms of its true cost: the purchase price plus the human energy it would require to convey. We calculated the material needed for each idea, and then converted it into our standard unit of measurement—wheelbarrow trips. The inevitable outcome was to question every architectural assumption; it also tended to shrink everything we built. Each expedition to the bottom of the hill and back presented more than a quarter hour of sweat-drenched effort, sometimes ►

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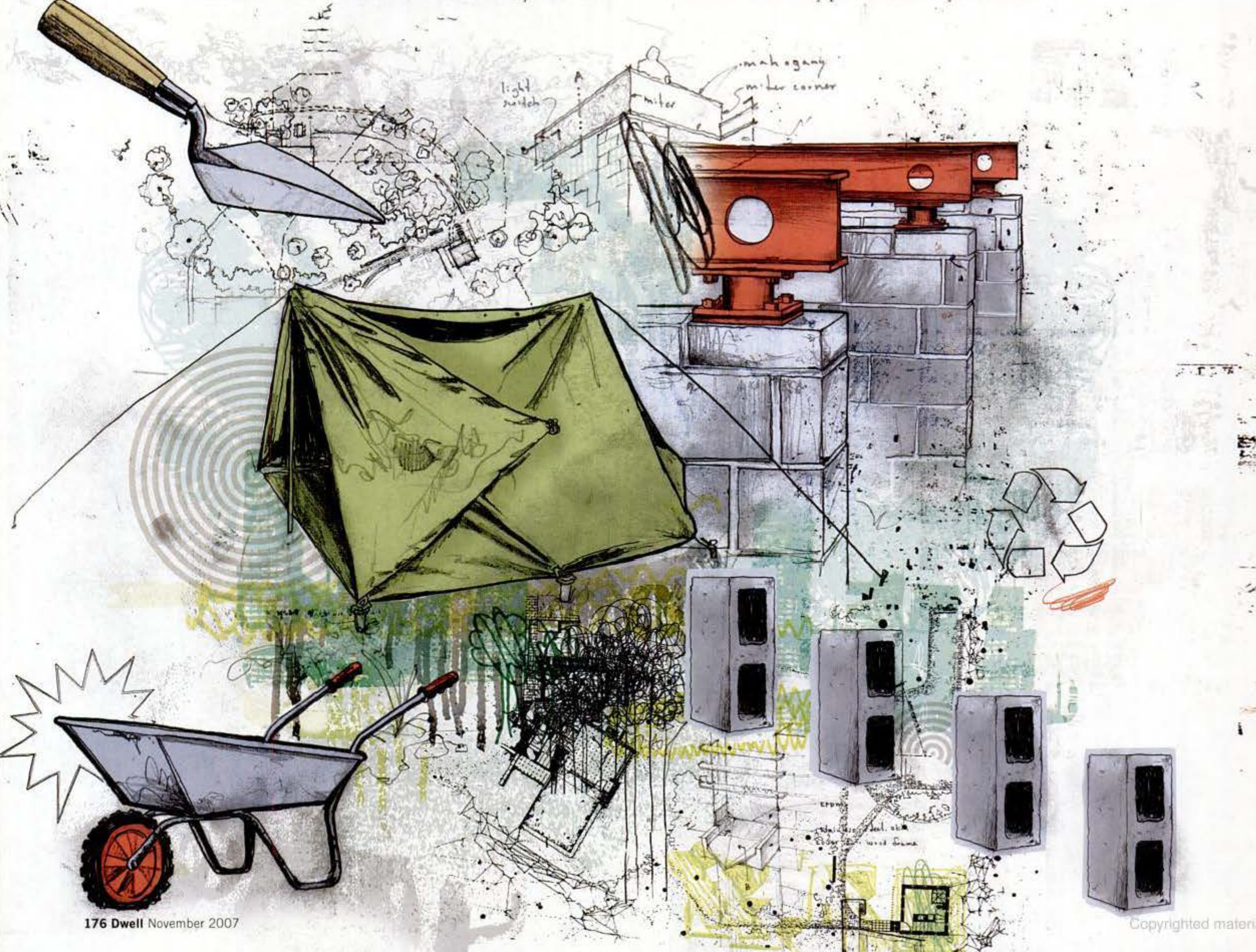
with Belinda pulling a rope tied to our one-wheeled beast of burden as I pushed from behind, wondering if my marriage (and my back) would survive. At night, in our unloved fabric cocoon, Belinda remarkably confessed that what had been mostly my obsession up to this point—to build a home in these hills, with our own hands—had become mutual.

We had no image of what we were making, and certainly no architectural plans, we simply set about solving each problem as it presented itself. We worked weekends and vacations with only occasional assistance from friends and family. The process was slow—15 years to finish the cabin—but it gave us time to acquire necessary skills and learn the land. Intimacies of the place—like the arc of the sun in the sky, the direction of prevailing winds, and a growing appreciation of the surrounding cultural landscape—began to inform every decision.

We taught ourselves to lay block, frame roofs, sheathe walls, and build furniture. Belinda became an excellent mason's helper and jackie-of-all-trades; I learned to sweat pipe and make quasi-acceptable miter joints. In the end we built the little cabin we called Villa Floyd almost entirely alone. This drive to self-sufficiency was not entirely voluntary; we knew only a few people in the area when we arrived, and initially couldn't afford to seek their help. After that, it just became habit. Learning to do everything ourselves was similar to how early settlers went about ensuring their survival in the wilderness. We were merely continuing the tradition.

When we began, there were no building codes in Floyd County, so Belinda and I acted not only as clients and designers but as builders and regulatory authorities. We made sketches, passed them back and forth until there was consensus, and then began building what we could fit into a weekend. Disagreements about what to build were rare; our quest for shelter kept the decision-making process simple. We organized the tasks according to need. The most pressing things—a flat spot for a tent, a place to wash, simple shelter—came first, even if the process was unconventional.

It wasn't obvious at the time, but we were discovering sustainable design—actually inventing it as we went along. For their availability and low cost, we used concrete blocks from a nearby plant and locally harvested ►



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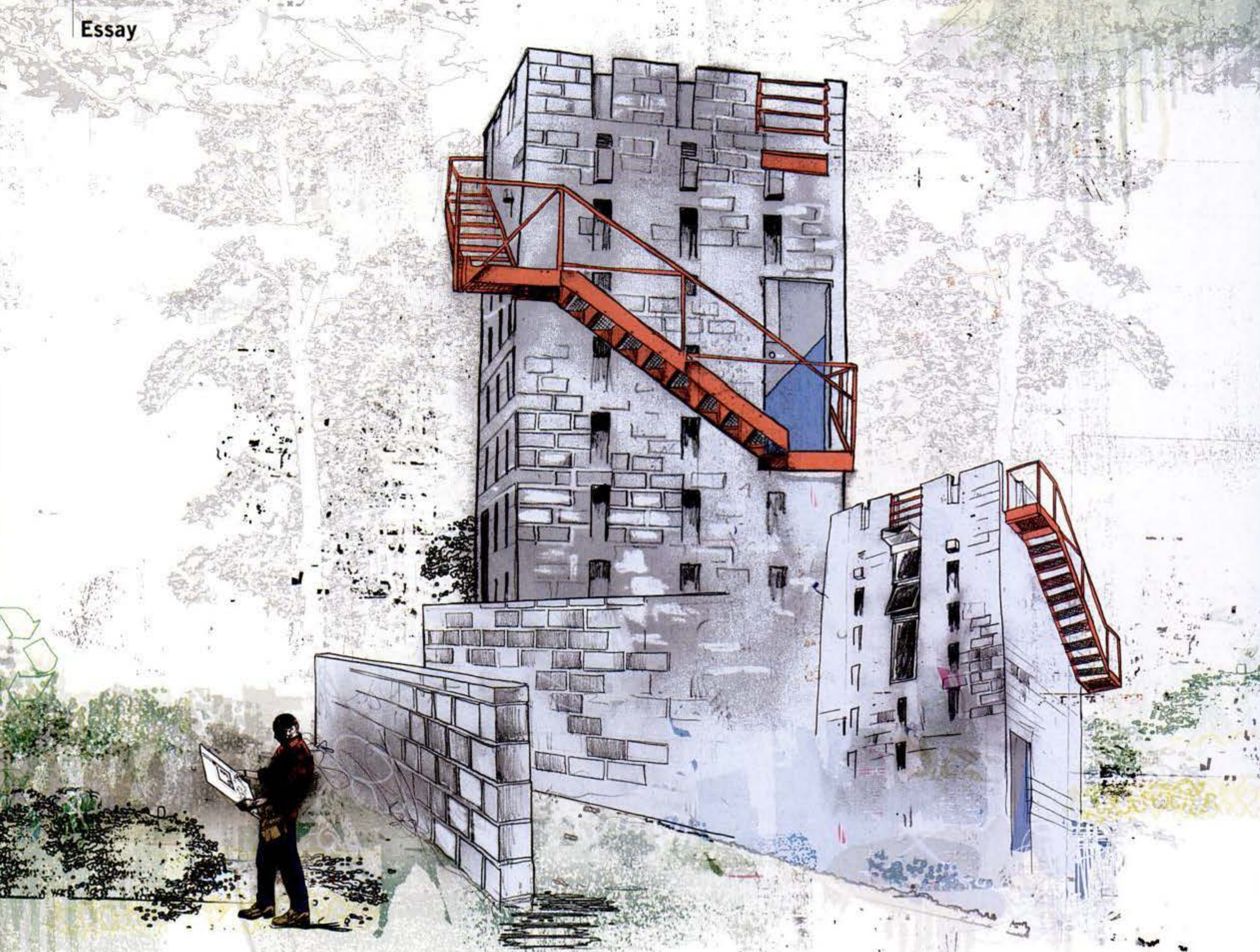

lumber. When our professional lives began to focus on restoring historic buildings, it wasn't long before materials salvaged from urban palaces found their way to our rural cabin. (We didn't appreciate until later that the short transport distances with local materials and the use of recycled components also reduced the embodied energy of our project.) In time, our two worlds—the office in the city and the obsession on the hilltop—began to overlap and intertwine. It was to be expected, I suppose, that Belinda's early work with the American Institute of Architects Research Corporation, one of the first organizations to begin looking at energy use in buildings, and my lifelong interest in climate-responsive indigenous architecture would influence the details of our villa.

The techniques we were developing, and our evolving appreciation of environmental issues, also began to weave themselves into our work in DC. Regardless of what our clients would say they needed, we always tried to make them build only what was necessary, and our knowledge of how much energy goes into erecting a building found expression in the details we designed.

As our pavilion grew into a proper house, we positioned the heaviest masonry and concrete elements where they would be exposed to winter sun—a feature that transformed our construction into a passive solar abode. We had little choice. Without electricity we needed a less time-consuming way of staying warm than constantly burning wood. When the cabin was finally enclosed, a decade and a half after we started, it stayed warm in winter and cool in summer by virtue of its materials and orientation. Now, our visits extend deep into winter. It still feels satisfying simply to pass the night, even with snow blowing sideways.

By most people's standards our cabin is too small—nearly all of it would fit inside a typical two-car garage—but the interplay of levels and shifting orientations give the interior a spacious feel, and we are hard-pressed to think of anything that might be lacking. Its compactness born out of minimizing materials also makes it easy to heat. We have added creature comforts, such as commissioning a well and buying a portable generator to pump water into a tank in the attic (which we used to fill by hand). But the process has altered our habits and the ▸

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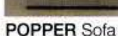

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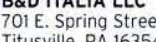

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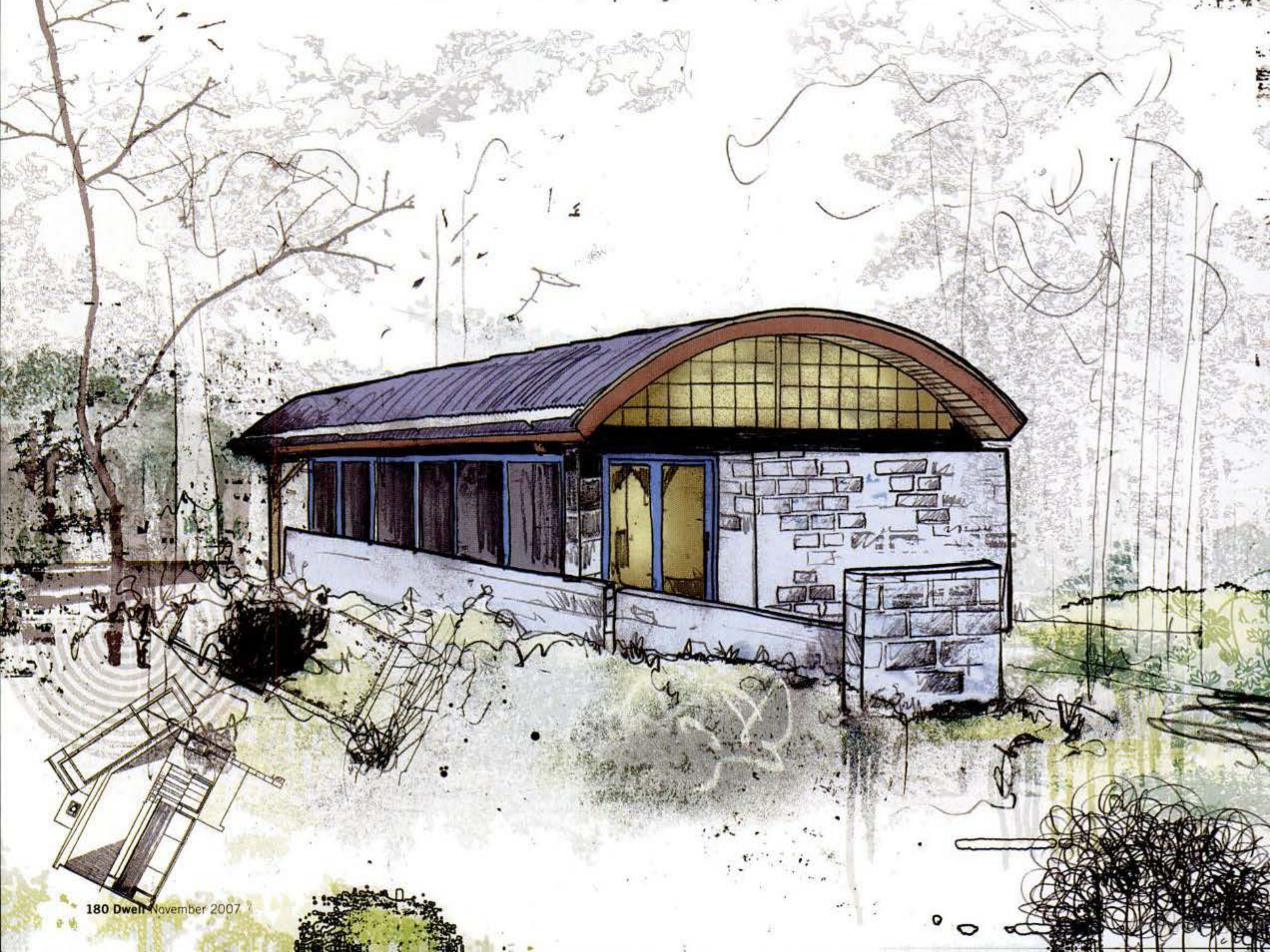
memory of carrying every drop we consumed makes us frugal. Even after the arrival of full-time electricity provided instant access to both cold and (gasp) hot water at the villa, we continue to wash dishes and take showers like we always did, treating water as a precious (and quite heavy) commodity.

Having come this far, we couldn't stop. We jumped into the construction of a summer guesthouse for fair-weather friends—a tower wrapped in an exterior staircase that leads to a roof deck—and a studio. Older and presumably wiser, we could afford to watch a professional mason lay more blocks in three days than Belinda and I had managed in 15 years—it was humbling, but we had no regrets. The quirky journey of discovery that became Villa Floyd could never have been accomplished with hired help.

We further involved the local community when building our small studio. The region is home to several timber frame companies, and the wood used for it was reportedly salvaged from a dilapidated barn somewhere in the county, and the skilled craftsmen who assembled the frame were practically neighbors. The entire production, from the acquisition of materials to their fabrication and assembly, was concentrated within a 20-mile radius of the site. In the end the studio exceeded our expectations, requiring little additional effort to stay warm in winter, and experiencing only minor temperature fluctuations when unattended—a crucial factor given the electronic devices the studio houses.

The impulse to do what we did isn't unique, but the twisted course we followed led us to produce a cluster of buildings that are. We came to understand that we had imposed ourselves on a place whose history and traditions we didn't share. In some ways our very presence amounted to trespassing, and throughout, our goals and resources were in flux. And it must be said that "sustainability," as it is currently defined, was not always our first priority. Instead, we fell in love with a piece of land—a place. We tried to learn what we could from our surroundings and blend that with what we were learning about architecture and construction. That what we produced qualifies as sustainable design is simply the result of a commitment to respect the environment in general, and this place in particular. ■



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Everyone Deserves a Richard Hutten

Richard Hutten isn't worried if you graffiti his designs, roll around naked on them, or allow your dog to chew them up. In fact, his first major retrospective at the Kunsthal, Rotterdam, features photos of people (and animals) doing all of the above. "I make things to be used," he says. "When people send me photos like these, of my furniture in their homes, that's the biggest compliment they can pay me." He looks around at his Bronto chairs and Elephant hassocks standing pristine and captive in the exhibit. "The museum isn't a natural environment for my work," he reflects. "I'm not about perfect images, but real objects for real people."

With an impressive body of work behind him, from his intelligent reworking of the Arts and Crafts Berlage Chair, to the casual but calculated Zzzidt stool (also known as Skippy, and named as the ultimate Dutch design object by Aaron Betsky in *False Flat: Why Dutch Design Is So Good)*, Hutten is one of the Netherlands's most internationally successful designers. Still only 40, he belongs to the select but diverse group including Marcel Wanders, Hella Jongerius, and Jurgen Bey, who surfed the wave created by Droog Design in the early 1990s. At this year's Milan furniture fair, he showed 15 new objects, ranging from sleek silverware for Christofle to the enigmatic white Elephant developed for a real estate project in Amsterdam.

In a sense, Hutten enjoys the broadest appeal among his Droog contemporaries—having achieved a level of popularity in Asia to rival that of another Dutch icon, ▸

Hutten exercises his Point It glove (perhaps inspired by the aye-aye lemur) while sipping from a Dombo mug. A firm believer in the democracy of design, he calls Dombo (of which around 100,000 have been sold for about ten euros a pop) "the most expensive plastic cup in the world."

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Miffy (Dick Bruna's cute white rabbit)—but he remains the most Dutch in his resolute functionality: De Stijl furniture maker and architect Gerrit Rietveld is his idol, for the sober radicalism of his work. "I've been called the new Rietveld, and that's immensely flattering," he says. "Rietveld was a revolutionary. He showed what you can do with just a few sticks of wood."

A similar austerity is evident in all Hutten's objects, but the key to their success lies in the conceptual twist that gives them a frank and friendly presence. For example, Table-chair, his 1991 graduation project from the Design Academy Eindhoven, uses the simplest of forms to redefine both table and chair, by collapsing the boundaries between them. By the time he designed this piece, Hutten had already evolved his "No sign of design" philosophy. What would become his signature phrase found early expression in a room he created in which everything was composed of the same basic element: A flat-topped, four-legged form was used in varying sizes to serve as floor, ceiling, bed, chair, and table. "Scale gives meaning and defines function," Hutten adds.

The same disciplined approach is evident in the Atomes d'Argent series of silverware that he recently designed for Christofle. Each of the seven pieces in the luxury collection is functional, he is keen to point out. Moreover, all repeat the same simple design motif: clusters of spheres. He chose spheres, he says, because he considers their reflections more beautiful than those of flat forms. In fact, it's the reflections that give the objects their decorative appearance, allowing the designer to achieve an ornamental effect while using a restrained geometric shape. "For me, design is a thinking process," says Hutten. "It's not about form, it's not about shaping."

Dutch writer Ed van Hinte succinctly summarizes his method: "Richard Hutten is an industrial designer who works from a clearly defined set of limitations rather than towards an image of what the object is going to have to look like." This Chair, a lean and lovely stackable design for Lensvelt (2004), demonstrates the strictness of Hutten's working method, which is based on what he calls "defining the rules."

"The plywood seat and metal frame chair has been done so many times before, but for me, [Arne] Jacobsen's Series 7 was always the best," Hutten explains. "So I thought, how can I add anything to that?" He decided instead to reduce the raw materials to create a lighter, more sustainable chair. Whereas Jacobsen used 12-millimeter-thick plywood, Hutten settled on 5 millimeters, a decision that pushed current technology to the limit. Following a long search for a manufacturer for the seat and back, there was a two-and-a-half-year struggle to perfect the molds. "It looks simple, but it was a nightmare because there isn't a straight line in it." says Hutten. "Traditionally, design aims at solving problems. But I don't solve problems, I create possibilities."

"The charm of Richard's objects is that they look so straightforward, yet they are complex and difficult to achieve," comments Aaron Betsky, director of the ▸

Hutten's polyethylene Elephant was based on a low-res scan of one of his children's toys (and is also available as a light). Candlesticks for Christofle use the sphere as a defining form. This Chair demonstrates the strictness of Hutten's working method; it looks simple but was two-and-a-half years in development.

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Behind Closed Doors

AVION home theater furniture is more than just a pretty face. Yes, it's a sleek design. But it's what you don't see that makes AVION a true original. With hidden integrated features like speaker and media storage compartments, an easy-access back panel, hidden wheels, flow-through ventilation and an optional flat panel TV mount, AVION is ready to meet the demands of the most challenging entertainment systems.

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"When people send me photos like these, of my furniture in their homes, that's the biggest compliment they can pay me."—**Richard Hutten**

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Cincinnati Art Museum. "There's a childlike innocence to his basic forms that he treats with a smile and manipulates into something adult."

"Richard's designs have great clarity," adds Wim Pijbes, director of Rotterdam's Kunsthal, who has been familiar with Hutten since Droog's first exhibition in Milan in 1993. "He's a true designer. When you ask Richard for a chair, a chair is what you get, not an art object that you can also sit on. His work always shows a good use of materials and is sold at a good price. I think in the future he will emerge as a great designer of mass-produced objects, unlike Wanders and Jongerius, who are basically limited-edition designers."

Dombo, Hutten's famously jolly child's drinking cup with big ears for handles, suggests that Pijbes is right: 100,000 have been sold so far. Dombo retails at about ten euros, making it a highly democratic design object. "But it's still the most expensive plastic cup in the world!" counters Hutten. "I want to make beautiful objects that as many people as possible can enjoy." He continues unabashedly, and without irony, "I think everyone deserves a Richard Hutten."

Meanwhile, fresh fields beckon: In Korea he was asked to design the building (an enormous 2,152,782-square-foot complex complete with design shopping mall) and curriculum for a new design school, which will also bear his name. "Attitude is what I'm going to teach," he says. "The Asian way is to follow a leader; they say, tell me what to do. I say, you have to think for yourself."

The building will be a collaboration with MVRDV, with whom he also collaborated on a new housing development in Amsterdam. The Parkrand apartment block features three huge "outdoor rooms" which Hutten outfitted with giant plant pots on enormous saucers, 13-foot-tall chandeliers, and sofas. For the playroom, he created the Elephant hassock and light, using a toy (belonging to his young sons, Abel and Boris) as a model: The ribbon pattern on it is the result of the low-resolution scan he used. "The context is the reason this object exists," he says. "Form follows context."

Given the strongly architectonic element in his work, more adventures in building seem inevitable. "There will absolutely be a Richard Hutten building one day," he agrees. He is also working on a series of photographs of people in their own homes, which will form the basis of an exhibition and book. "The theme is voyeurism," he says. "The subject is people who are just waking up and going about their morning routines, all over the world. It's based on sequences. I've been a fan of Eadweard Muybridge and his time-lapse images since I was a kid."

One plan Hutten does not have is to enlarge his studio. "I have five people working for me, and I want to keep it small," he says. "We're like a rock band and I'm the singer/songwriter—I'm very selective about the commissions I take on, and I do all the design. I don't want to run a design factory. If someone calls up and asks for a Richard Hutten, then a Richard Hutten is exactly what they're going to get." ■

2004's 2 Love Seat was produced in a limited edition of three, one of which is currently in the Stedelijk Museum. Hutten designed the Cross for Droog in 1994. The Sexy Relaxy chair resembles a person chilling out. The Table Lamp, from 1998, is as simple as the name implies.

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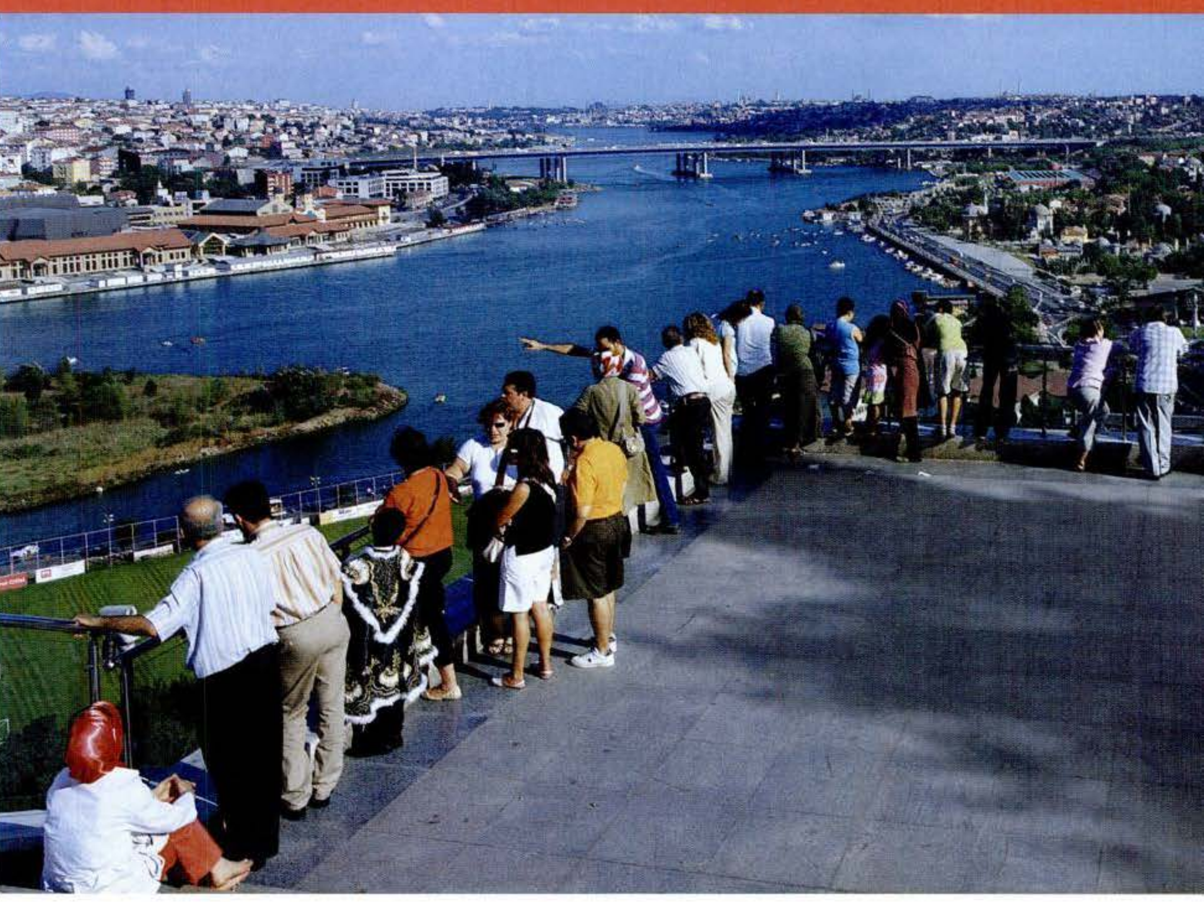

Inside Istanbul

Istanbul views: The scene on the balcony of the famed Pierre Loti Cafe near the sacred Eyup Mosque (above) and the city seen from the Galata Tower (opposite), looking down on the Galata bridge and some of the prettiest rooftops in town, on the edge of the fashionable Beyoglu district.

The old saw that Istanbul is the bridge between Europe and Asia is technically true—the Bosporus Strait parts Istanbul into a European side and an Asian side—but doesn't go far into explaining its uniquely Turkish nature. Ever since people began building in the area around 5,500 BC, it has been a place of constant tumult. With each new empire—it was the capital for the Romans, the Byzantines, and the Ottomans—palaces and churches were razed and rebuilt to honor the latest despot. Civilizations came and went. It was named and renamed.

So it makes sense that what exactly constitutes the Turkish nature is very much up for grabs. The Republic of Turkey was founded in 1923, by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who saw that in order for Turkey to avoid being divided up by and parceled out to various European forces after the Ottoman Empire's defeat in World War I, it had to become a modern nation. He abolished the caliphate, changed the script from Arabic to Latin, gave women greater rights, and helped write a democratic constitution. He moved the capital from old Stamboul, formerly Constantinople, to the central city of Ankara.

But modernization—or to put it slightly more pejoratively, Westernization—couldn't be done by government mandate alone. The price for abandoning tradition was a loss of certain freedoms; to distance the new state from Islamic rule, Atatürk made it illegal for men to wear the fez and women to don head scarves. Those laws have since been relaxed, but the current political situation is an uneasy mix of military rule and democratic process.

Culturally, though, Istanbul benefits from the tension between tradition and modernity; it's a lovely mess. As has been widely noted, the person with the most lasting impact on Istanbul may not be any sultan or ruler, but the 16th-century architect Sinan, who designed the approximately 100 mosques that define the skyline. ▸

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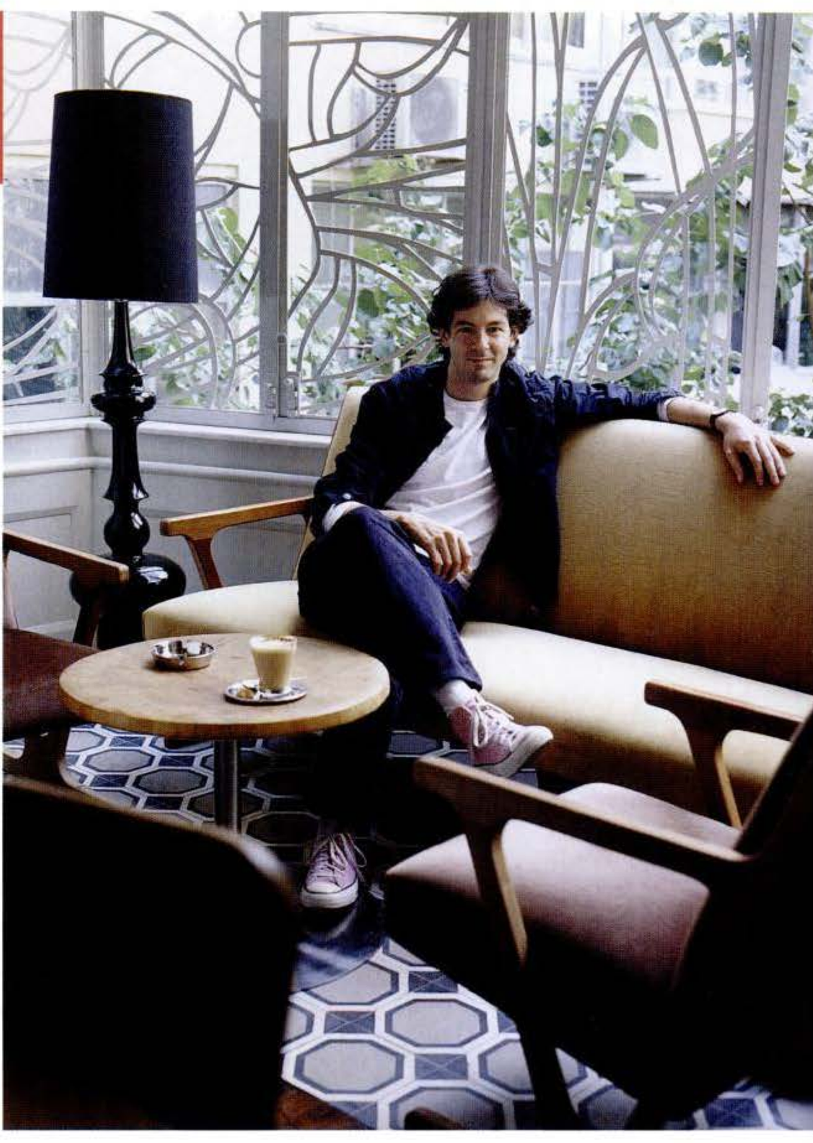
Istanbul, Turkey



Looking down from Galata Tower onto Galata Square (left), festooned with flags and home to a number of cafés and street vendors. Designer Efe Buluc (right) lounges in House Café, close to his home in the fashionable Nisantasi district. It lies slightly out of most tourists' radars, although Nobel Prize–winning novelist Orhan Pamuk has written extensively about his experiences growing up in the neighborhood.
p. 238

Sinan is a hard act to follow—his designs are beautiful in their simplicity and elegant geometry—but not all modern architecture makes one long for the Ottomans. In the Levent district, malls have been constructed on a grand scale. Kanyon, the flashiest, does indeed seem like a canyon; its semicircular design makes the promenade around the shopping center, movie house, and apartment complex seem like a geological expedition. The Nisantasi district, famously described by longtime resident and Nobel Prize–winning author Orhan Pamuk, is filled with chic boutiques and Art Nouveau architecture. The Istanbul of Agatha Christie's Orient Express-era writing, a European trade center of the city formerly called Pera and now named Beyoglu, has the highest concentrations of hipsters. They beeline for the cafés, bars, and music venues; at night, the streets jump with outdoor cafés and a mix of traditional *fasil* and pounding club music around every cobble-stoned corner.

To get perspective on today's Istanbul, I spoke to Efe Buluc, 32, who is one-third of the To22 design team. He, along with the New York–based Mark Goetz and the London-based Todd Bracher, takes a philosophical approach. They have won notice with their clever designs—a martini glass, for instance, that uses the olive as a stopper. Born in Ankara, Buluc moved to the United States when he was 15 and was educated at Pratt Institute in New York; as a result, Buluc says that even after four years in the city, he can still feel "like a tourist in my own country." He chose to move back to Turkey because he wanted to work from somewhere besides an established (and, in his view, complacent) design spot such as Milan, and he wants to help raise the profile of his home country. We spent a few hours at the very pleasant House Café in his neighborhood of Nisantasi, drinking lemonade and discussing the limits and possibilities within the city of Istanbul. ▸

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Istanbul, Turkey

Something old, something new: The rather prepossessing entrance to the Istanbul Modern (right) stands in sharp contrast to a lovely, Sinan-designed mosque in Ortaköy (below), on the Asian side. The Istanbul Modern, along with a number of small galleries, has welcomed a new generation of contemporary Turkish artists.

What were some of your first impressions of Istanbul?
Initial impression? I thought it was old and chaotic. New York is chaotic too, but New York seems more like a place of work. Istanbul is more like a biblical city.

What made you decide to move here?
The quality of living is a lot higher here... but I'm also a Turk. I wanted to claim my own town a little bit. There's a lot of power in that, doing work in your own country. One should be proud of that. I do work around the world, but you have to [do work at home, too]. People have suggested that one of the reasons Istanbul has such an active creative scene now is because more people have begun working with ideas of tradition and what it means to be Turkish.

What do you think of the design scene?
Turkey is very influenced by the design in other countries, and I think that it hasn't fully found its character....But I don't think groundbreaking design has a country. I wouldn't worry about making a design Turkish, or American or English or what have you. To me, it's like math. Once you get it right, there's only one way of doing it.

But do you ever get inspiration from the history in Istanbul?
The city is crawling with historical sites. I don't look at the older stuff; I don't like to live in the past.

But if you had to go...
Oh, of course, there are the things that one has to see. I have friends who visit and I take them around. There's a train station in Haydarpasa that's absolutely gorgeous. The ►

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Istanbul, Turkey

Kanyon is the oft-photographed face of New Istanbul. It's a mall with upscale restaurants, luxe stores (England's trendy Harvey Nichols, Turkey's pricey Vakko), a movie theater, a grocery store, office space and apartments—but even those without money to spend can enjoy strolling its many levels.

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Istanbul, Turkey

The arches of the Valens Aqueduct (right), completed in 368, span a busy avenue, fusing the ancient with the modern—a common juxtaposition in Istanbul. Devout Muslims and Western-style tourists congregate outside the Blue Mosque (below) in the Sultanahmet district.

mosques by Sinan have to be seen, as well as the Hagia Sophia. There's a lot of power in that building, I mean maybe the pyramids in Egypt get close to it, but nothing else.

Where are the modern places you like?
Have you been to Kanyon, the shopping mall? It was designed by an American architect [John Simones], with a Turkish partner. That building shows the potential of modern architecture in Istanbul that doesn't ruin the city. Some people seem to think Istanbul is precious, that you can't make new things, but that's not true. Something doesn't have to have Turkish decoration to be Turkish. The city is changing its face; there's no need to make things that look Turkish. The thing is, people don't have a clear idea of what "looking Turkish" would look like. They can't. Turkey combines cultures and religions—Istanbul is a huge melting pot, so much more so than New York. People outside Turkey don't really know about it, and Turkey doesn't advertise itself so well.

Who are your favorite Turkish designers?
Ayse Birsel, she's an industrial designer. I like my dad, too. Seriously, he's a great architect. Ragip Buluc.

Any based in Istanbul?
Hmmm...no... [Buluc smiles apologetically]. You know, Istanbul is very old, full of beauty and magic, but it creates problems. You can't pull rabbits out of hats. It's like, you couldn't make a movie like *Jaws* here because that's not about being Turkish, and things have to be about being Turkish, not just about a big shark. In L.A. or Australia, you can make whatever and become ►

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Istanbul, Turkey

Although the exterior of the Blue Mosque (technically the Sultan Ahmed Mosque) is gorgeous, many say that it's not Sinan's masterwork: the sightlines inside are obscured by a number of columns. This is not a problem for the magnificent Hagia Sofia (in background), which sits directly across from the Blue Mosque in Sultanahmet Square.

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Istanbul, Turkey

The Ataturk Cultural Center (right), located in the busy Taksim Square, is home to the opera and many state-sponsored music and performance events. For a different view of Istanbul, climb in the balloon in Kadikoy (below) and see the city by air. Or just eat in the restaurant next to the balloon.

successful on those terms, but it's different here. But that's changing too. It's interesting to have Kanyon in Istanbul. You can't compare Sinan to Kanyon—Sinan worked on a fantastic human scale—but Kanyon is very important because young Westernized Turks such as myself need a place to go and feel that there's a modern environment.

So where else do you like to go in Istanbul?
I like being at the seaside. There's a nice area called Bebek that has a lot of green. You take a boat to go to the Princes' Islands. It's a rough ride, but it's nice to get away from the hectic city. I like to go to the Asian side—that's where the train station is. A lot of people put it down, and say that nothing really happens there—but it's fun to take the boat; you can see Istanbul's magical side.

Do you spend a lot of time in the Nisantasi neighborhood, where you work? Drive around? Take walks?
I don't walk around so much. In New York, walking around gives [one] confidence and energy. In Istanbul, it's exhausting.

Because of the cars? [The traffic is terrifying.]
No....Oh no, I sound so negative! Let me say this: The people in Istanbul are more real and mature than other people. In New York, people my age act like they don't know what life is about. In Istanbul, there is a weight on people, a lived-in and experienced look. Also, we're a warm-blooded, Mediterranean people who are extremely friendly and my friendships in Turkey are incredibly strong. And I like Istanbul. I think that it's a blank page that needs to be filled by a new generation of Turks. We're capable of great things. It's an extremely rich culture. ■

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can furniture be **Fashion?**

Menlo Park sectional designed by Rick Lee. Shown in Elmo Rustical Field Green.
Pillows shown in Ultrasuede Willow and Fern. ©2006 AMERICAN LEATHER

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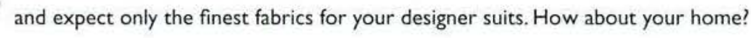
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Story by Sarah Rich

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Knowledge Is Power

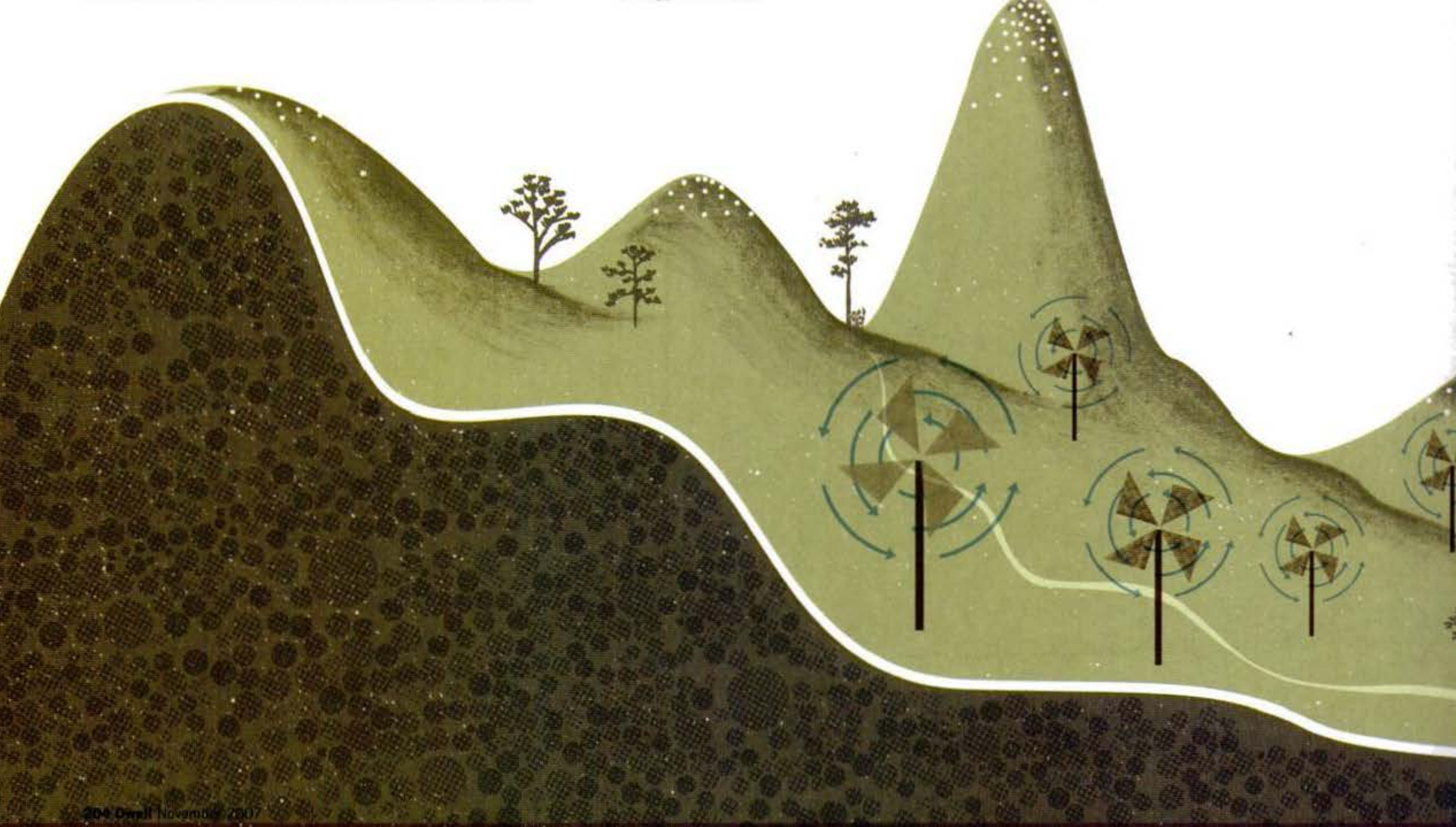
If necessity is the mother of invention, then the coupled concerns of population growth and resource depletion might be considered the parents of energy innovation. In the face of scarcity, we find great creativity, as seen through the recent proliferation of efficient, renewable, and independent power solutions. The development of green technologies may soon outpace the rise of gas prices, which will save us money and curb emissions that contribute to global warming. How fast this happens is up to us; and contrary to most people's assumptions, it's not on the road where we'll speed up progress but in our homes and offices. Buildings account for nearly half of the greenhouse gases sent into the atmosphere, so finding ways to improve efficiency at home can go a long way toward improving the environment, saving cash, and supporting the research and development of ever better technologies.

Home energy-saving devices still haven't completely overcome the stereotype of ungainly eyesores on otherwise lovely houses, but they're getting closer. Now that solar energy can be collected through photovoltaic roof tiles instead of enormous elevated panels, efficiency can be subtle—even elegant—which means that environmentally conscious design addicts can have their cake and eat it too. Indoors, advancements in insulation, appliance mechanics, and lighting have enabled a fresh compatibility between energy conservation and style.

Ease of use with energy-saving devices is another consideration that's long been regarded as a barrier to adoption among many homeowners. We assume alternative technologies are hard to install and even harder to maintain—that you have to be a DIY enthusiast to take advantage of them. But it's now easy to find preassembled, ready-to-use products, and many companies offer installation and service.

It's also possible to tap into green energy without making any modifications to your home or site. Many energy companies offer their customers green options. In Washington, Oregon, and California, for example, you can opt for your power to come directly from wind farms or, where that's not possible, to have a portion of your payments go toward the development of green energy technologies in the form of "credits." When purchased from a general energy provider, choosing green doesn't usually cost more. This kind of plan gives consumers the power to drive the distribution of renewable energy and decrease consumption of fossil fuels.

Throughout the following pages we'll explore the available technology, and take a look at ways to save energy at home.



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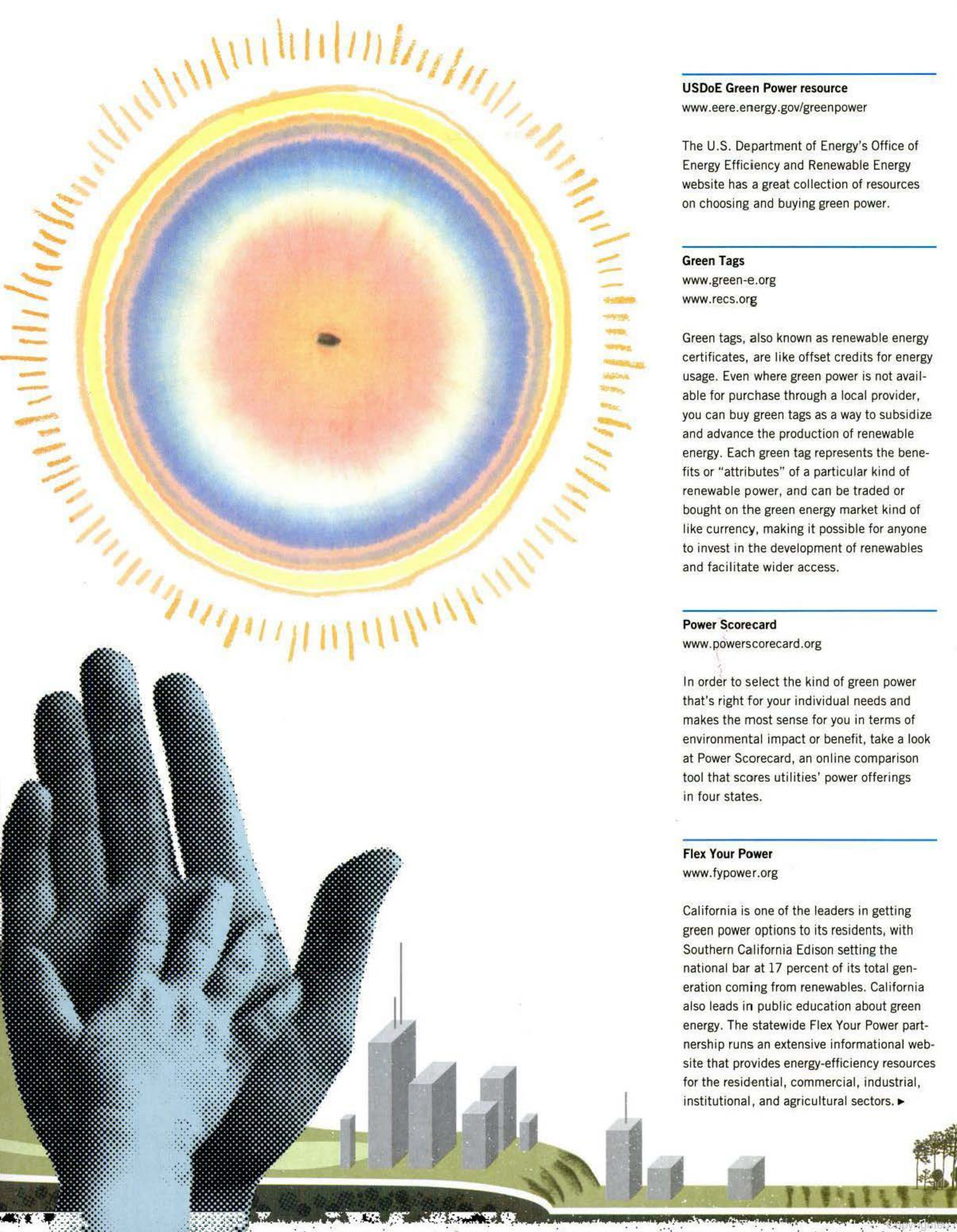

USDoE Green Power resource
www.eere.energy.gov/greenpower

The U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy website has a great collection of resources on choosing and buying green power.

Green Tags
www.green-e.org
www.recs.org

Green tags, also known as renewable energy certificates, are like offset credits for energy usage. Even where green power is not available for purchase through a local provider, you can buy green tags as a way to subsidize and advance the production of renewable energy. Each green tag represents the benefits or "attributes" of a particular kind of renewable power, and can be traded or bought on the green energy market kind of like currency, making it possible for anyone to invest in the development of renewables and facilitate wider access.

Power Scorecard
www.powerscorecard.org

In order to select the kind of green power that's right for your individual needs and makes the most sense for you in terms of environmental impact or benefit, take a look at Power Scorecard, an online comparison tool that scores utilities' power offerings in four states.

Flex Your Power
www.fypower.org

California is one of the leaders in getting green power options to its residents, with Southern California Edison setting the national bar at 17 percent of its total generation coming from renewables. California also leads in public education about green energy. The statewide Flex Your Power partnership runs an extensive informational website that provides energy-efficiency resources for the residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and agricultural sectors. ▸

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Home Energy Monitors

There's no shortage of evidence for the theory that when we know we're being watched, we become more conscious of our behavior—we even change our behavior in turn. It doesn't have to be a person watching; it could be a computerized device, or even a mirror that provides us with an immediate reflection of our own habits. On this basis, real-time monitors that display the amount of energy we're consuming serve as non-invasive behavior modifiers to encourage us to cut back on wastefulness.

Wattson by DIY Kyoto
www.diykyoto.com

As the name suggests, DIY Kyoto is a company that's taken global warming prevention into its own hands. Their Wattson home-energy monitor is well designed and well mannered, quietly presenting a pink-lit display of kilowatt-hours used on a box that looks not unlike a digital clock.

PowerCost Monitor from Blue Line Innovations
www.bluelineinnovations.com/powercost monitor.php

It's one thing to see real-time energy usage as a measurement of kilowatt-hours, but quite another to see it displayed in dollars and cents. The PowerCost shows both kinds of data through a wireless device receiving information from a transmitter on the household utility meter. Nothing like a little financial incentive to change habits fast.

Energy Star Labeling

Labeling systems help standardize the qualifications and quality of green products, as well as helping consumers know what's what. The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Star label has become one of the most ubiquitous and trusted symbols for guiding people toward environmentally responsible appliances and electronics. Energy Star now has an interactive website where you can explore ways to become more energy efficient in each room of your home.

Energy Star @ Home
www.energystar.gov

An interactive room-by-room tour teaches you about different ways to improve efficiency at home and consider the options that are best suited to your budget and taste.

Vampire Power

Probably the most evocative term among the otherwise technocratic energy vocabulary, vampire power is the continuous current that appliances and electronics draw from an outlet even when turned off. As long as the plug is in the wall, trace amounts of energy seep in to maintain standby mode, taking with it trace amounts of your bank account and slowly increasing your energy bill. In order to prevent electrical goods from sucking unnecessary juice, they must either be unplugged or plugged into power strips that have an on/off switch. Eliminating this energy drain can reduce bills by up to 10 percent. ►

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Climate Control

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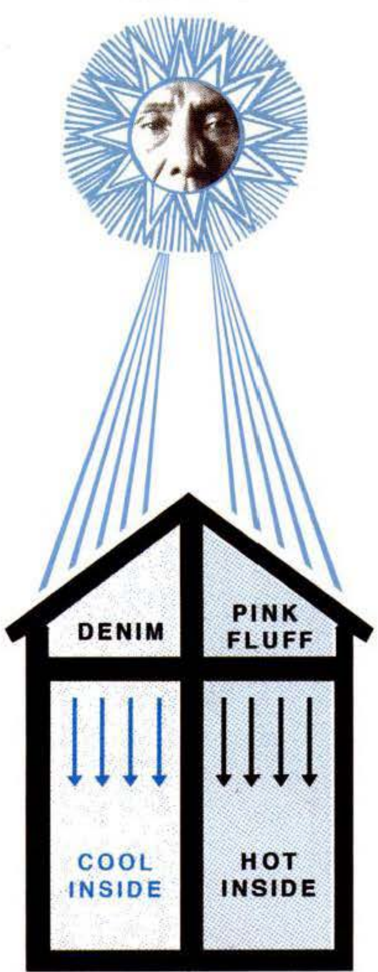

INSULATION MODEL

Window Glaze

Natural light and good insulation are two of the most important elements of a green-built house, though without attention to detail, they can stand at odds with one another, since glass is a far less effective insulator than any solid wall material. When moving into or renovating an old house, replacing single-pane windows is often the first priority. The dual-pane upgrade improves the R-value (the measurement of heat loss through glass) considerably by enclosing a thin layer of air between two panes of glass. Even better is a triple-glaze window, which seals two spaces between three panes of glass coated with a low-emissivity (low-E) glaze that reflects radiant indoor heat, dramatically decreasing heat loss.

Insulation

Despite its fabulous color, the pink fluff of typical insulation doesn't do much to regulate indoor climate compared to the gels, foams, structural insulated panels (SIPs), and other high-tech materials that are now available for residential use. The standard pink batting also contains substances that present serious health hazards in the home. You can now find new insulation options made from natural, nontoxic, and recycled postconsumer material.

Spray foam insulation
www.icynene.com

When insulating with spray foam, certified installers show up looking ready for space travel or battle against a deadly virus. Hoses in hand, they spray into wall and ceiling cavities, and the foam immediately begins to swell and expand, filling in every bit of empty air space. While the process looks hazardous, most spray foam is actually environmentally friendly and nontoxic. Once installed, it's some of the most efficient, lightweight, and stable insulation around.

SIPs
www.sips.org

In the vein of the prefab craze, structural insulated panels are a popular choice for modern architects. The prefabricated units create a highly efficient insulated skeleton for a new building. They are lightweight and modular, making them easy to use and to move. SIPs save construction time and site waste, require smaller HVAC equipment, and contain wiring channels that simplify the installation of electrical systems.

Denim insulation
www.bondedlogic.com

We love jeans that appear worn and tattered—so much so that we pay big money for a strategically placed tear—but old denim does more than make a fashion statement. Bonded Logic developed a home insulation material made with recycled denim that eliminates the toxicity inherent in fiberglass insulation and makes use of old dungarees that are torn in unfashionable ways.

Mushroom insulation
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
www.rpi.edu

Greensulate almost qualifies as "grow-your-own" insulation, made from the spores of oyster mushrooms blended with flour and minerals to create an organic, fire-retardant insulation board. It's not much more efficient than standard fiberglass, so perhaps not the top choice for energy savings, but it does eliminate toxins and petrochemicals from the walls of your home (and serves as a good party topic when entertaining). This material doesn't exist commercially yet, but the students who developed it during scientific research have sparked significant interest from the green design industry. ▶

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Jimmy crack corn, and I don't care.

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Light On

The standard pear-shaped incandescent bulb that most of us have been using for ages has a bad reputation among environmentalists as an energy hog. Incandescent bulbs last a very short time, and waste almost all of the energy passing through them in the form of heat, rendering them highly inefficient as a light source. These days, almost every list of "simple steps for saving the environment" includes switching from incandescents to compact fluorescents, which last up to ten times as long and shrink energy bills.

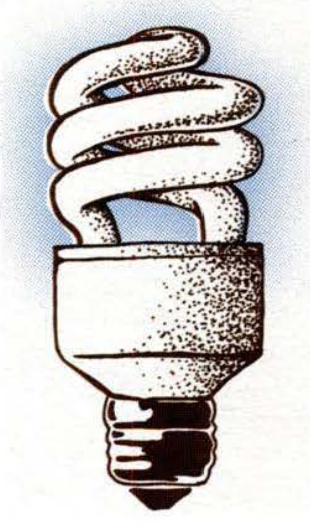
CFLs

The coil of a compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) is a known symbol for energy efficiency. Simply replacing incandescents with CFLs throughout a home or building can cut lighting energy use by more than 50 percent. Because it's as easy as swapping out one bulb for another, everyone from Oprah to Home Depot to the Department of Energy has launched campaigns encouraging people to make the switch. It's a small change that makes a big difference, saving 2,000 times its own weight in greenhouse gases. Nevertheless, many people resist the move to CFLs because the quality of light generally pales in comparison to a glowing white incandescent. It's a common complaint that the light is too yellow, too dim, or simply disruptive to a considered home atmosphere. Knowing this, lighting companies have been striving for a more ambient, appealing quality of illumination so that there's no excuse not to choose a CFL.

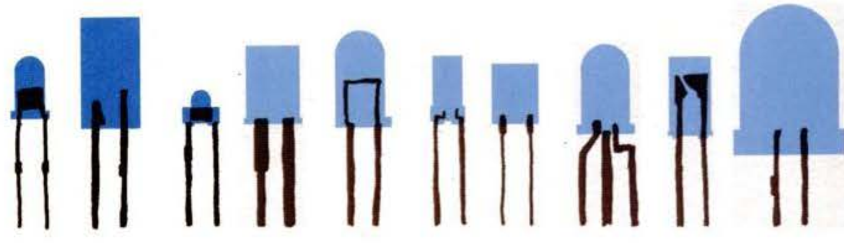
LEDs

Light emitting diodes (LEDs) have been used for a long time in products that require long-lasting illumination with little energy, such as traffic lights, illuminated signage, and small indicator lights in electronic devices. They come in a range of colors and take about 85 percent less power than standard lighting. Only recently have LEDs been considered for residential and commercial lighting applications, undergoing design modifications to increase compatibility with standard fixtures. They currently cost more than CFLs and have fewer uses, but as interest in everyday LED use grows, so does research and development toward creating viable consumer products, such as Herman Miller's Leaf light.

The tables below (based on the U.S. Department of Energy website) compare CFLs and incandescents. They assume the light is on for six hours per day and that the electric rate is ten cents per kilowatt-hour. ►

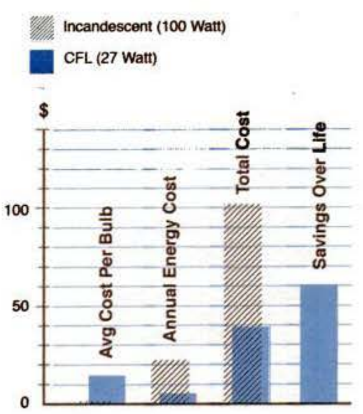


COMPACT FLUORESCENT LAMP BULB (CFLs)



LIGHT EMITTING DIODES (LEDs)

INCANDESCENT VS. CFL



BULB REPLACEMENT

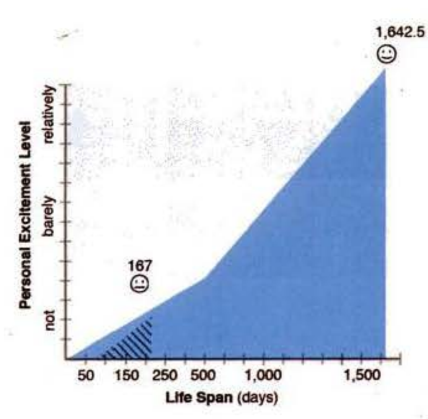
Replacements over 4.5 years

100%

0%

(Chart based on quantity of 10)

LIFE SPAN



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www.storaenso.com/sustainability

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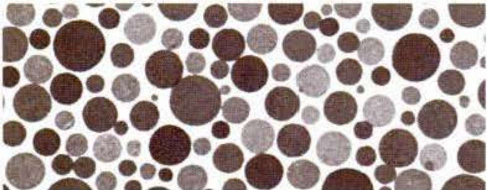

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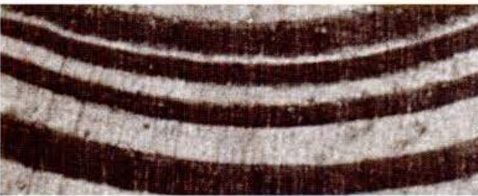

OUTER CORE

INNER CORE

Sunlight Transport Lighting

Sunlight transportation systems are the pinnacle of innovation in energy-efficient design. Using photovoltaic panels and fiber optic threads or cables, these systems literally transport daylight into windowless spaces, far outshining the full-spectrum lightbulbs that have long been used to get natural-feeling light into dark places.

Parans
www.parans.com

Swedish lighting company Parans has one of the most advanced and diverse product lines for natural indoor lighting. The three-part system pulls in sunlight through externally mounted solar panels, transmits it through fiber optic cables, and projects it into interior rooms through a ceiling fixture designed to suit a variety of tastes and functional needs.

Zeno sunlight lamps
www.luceplan.it

Zeno was designed for Luceplan as an integrated ceiling lighting system that can use solar collection in conjunction with several different kinds of bulbs. With multiple options, the light can change its quality, direction, and diffusion for a customized and adjustable ambience.

Sunlight Direct
www.sunlight-direct.com

The Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory developed hybrid solar lighting as part of an investigation into improved home energy efficiency. The system uses rooftop mirrors mounted alongside solar collectors to concentrate and direct sunlight into diffusion rods that illuminate an array of ceiling fixtures to light even large rooms consistently. In large spaces, this can save thousands of dollars in electricity and climate-control costs over several years.

Re:Form Energy Curtain
www.tti.se

Researchers at Sweden's Interactive Institute found a way to weave solar-collecting technology into textiles, forming a window shade that can store solar light during the day and emit it at night. The interactive energy curtain allows the user to determine how much energy to store and use according to how far the shade is pulled down during the day, helping illuminate the relationship between power saved and power spent. ►

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Gusty Thoughts and Tankless Tasks

RESIDENTIAL WIND

Residential Wind

When we think of alternative energy at home, our minds leap straight to solar panels, the most obvious symbol of a site-generated grid-free power source. It's less common to think of wind turbines for small-scale residential use, because most of us have only seen them by the hundreds along highways or on agricultural land. The power generated on those sprawling farms can be purchased for residential use through many energy providers, but it's also possible to put a small turbine right on your property and get the same results with the added bonus of self-sufficiency. Residential wind turbines have been slower to hit the market than solar, largely because refining the design for home use has required a great deal of engineering (especially maximizing efficiency where wind currents don't reach high intensities). However, a host of start-ups are rising to the challenge and the first residential turbines to hit the market are said to provide for up to 70 percent of a home's energy needs.

Southwest Wind Power's Skystream
www.skystreamenergy.com

Mag-Wind
www.mag-wind.com

Bergey Windpower
www.bergey.com

Kestrel Wind Turbines
www.dcpower-systems.com

On-Demand Hot Water

We don't keep a kettle boiling on the stove all day for the one moment when we want tea, so why do we keep water heated around the clock when all we need it for is a shower or a load of laundry? On-demand heating technology, also known as tankless heating, makes hot water available only when it's needed, saving the energy required to heat it when it's not being used. A tankless heater is much smaller than a typical hot water tank, containing just a set of coils through which water passes for quick warming. Though the on-demand system costs more than a standard hot water system, it saves money over its lifetime as it eliminates most of the energy (and costs) that heating your water normally demands.

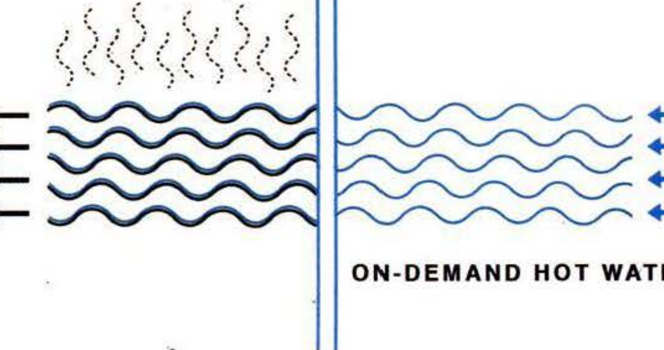
There are many different manufacturers of tankless hot water systems and a range of options depending on whether you want gas or electric, what your demand is, how large a space you have for the heater, and how many points of use the heater is intended to serve. Tankless water heaters generally last longer than standard storage tanks.

Bosch AquaStar
www.boschhotwater.com

Chronomite Instant-Flow SR
www.chronomite.com

Rinnai
www.rinnai.com

Noritz
www.noritz.com ►



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Zeroing In

It's become increasingly common to hear the term "zero energy" or "zero carbon" used to describe buildings that achieve complete energy sustainability by generating as much energy as they consume. Zero-energy homes require no input from nonrenewable off-site power sources, emit no net greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and sometimes feed surplus energy back into the grid. Many combinations of passive and active generation can be used for designing a zero-energy structure, depending on what's appropriate for local climate, budget, site regulations, codes, and individual preferences.

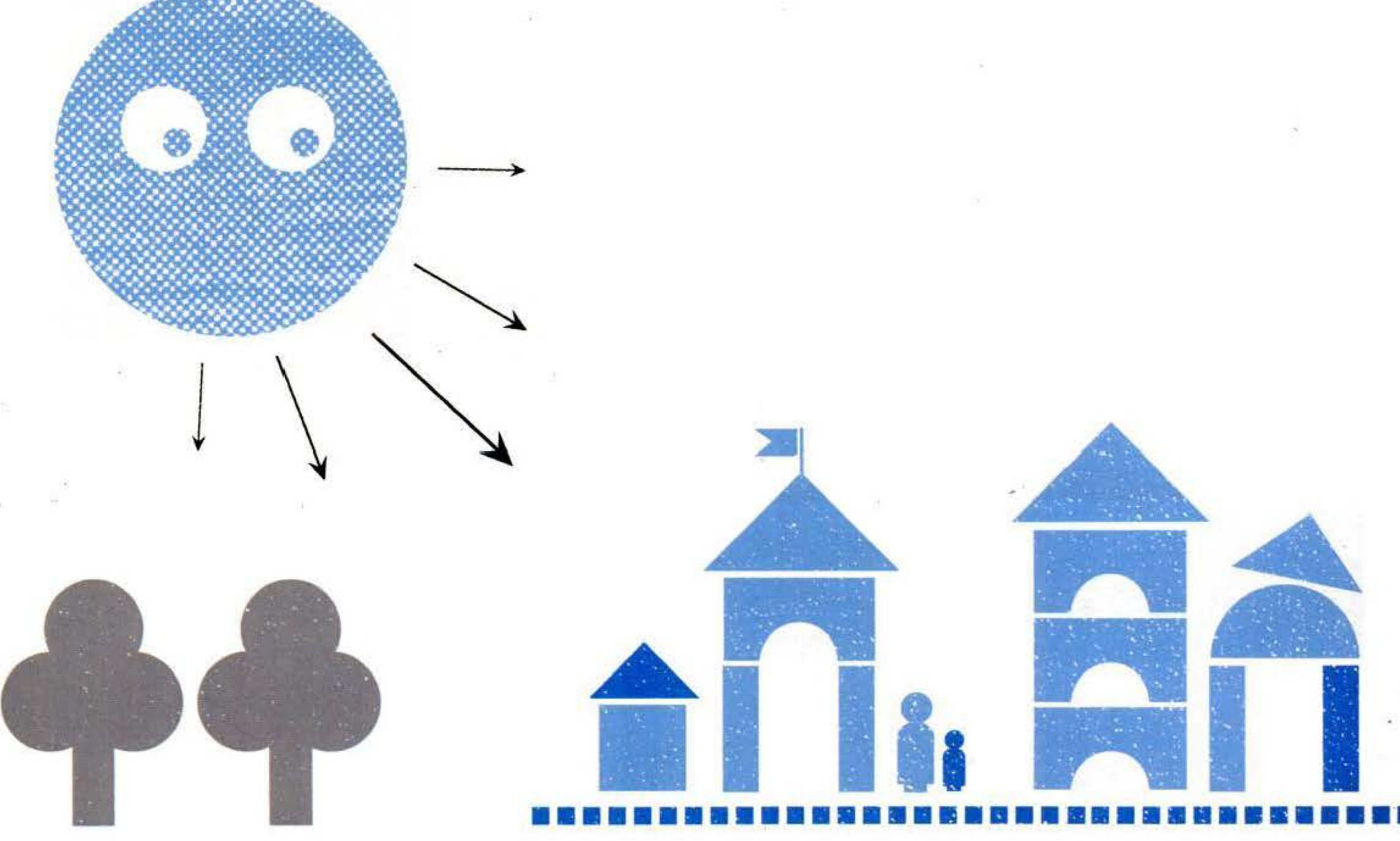
Passive efficiency strategies are best implemented during the construction phase. These include things like orientation on the site for maximum southern sun exposure during winter months, natural ventilation systems, strategically placed windows and shade trees, and thermal mass that can absorb and retain heat. More active strategies include geothermal heat pumps that recover energy from ground sources, and wind turbines placed on site.

Zero Energy from the Ground Up: Glass & Bedolla House

One of the earliest and most memorable examples of designing and building for zero energy comes from architect Zoka Zola, whose zero-energy Glass & Bedolla House exemplifies a modern-organic-fusion style and low-impact luxury living. Some critics point out that the house is not small (a deal-breaker for those who consider compactness an inextricable part of sustainable building), but Zola zeroes out every square foot through solar, wind, and geothermal systems. One of the crowning characteristics of the house is its external coat of greenery, which creates an elegant insulating shroud. As a prototype, the house's Chicago location offers an optimal laboratory for testing extremes. Frigid winters and sweltering summers don't make the task easy, but through extensive preliminary observation of the site and surrounding environment, Zola managed to equip the house properly to handle the weather.

Energy Retrofit: The Now House Project

It may be simpler to build a zero-energy home from scratch than to retrofit an existing structure, but buildings constructed in the 20th century are generally the most in need of upgrades for energy efficiency. There are some simple modifications that can be made on existing homes to dramatically reduce waste, emissions, resource exploitation, and energy bills. The Canada-based Now House project has developed a replicable model for retrofitting World War II homes to near-zero net energy. Deterioration that comes with old age and the inferior quality of mid-century materials is the largest issue these homes face. As a rebuttal, the Now House focuses primarily on sealing the building envelope, replacing worn insulation, and installing solar panels. It's a homeowner-friendly strategy that keeps costs and disruption down. ■



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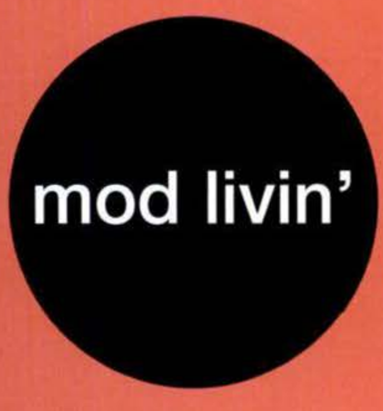

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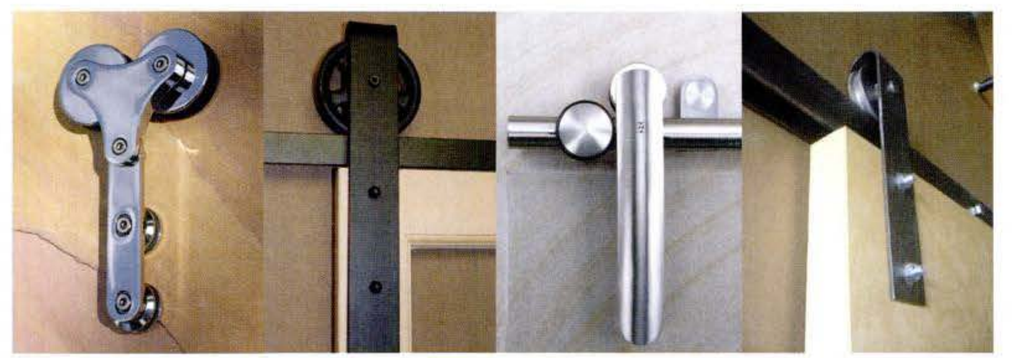

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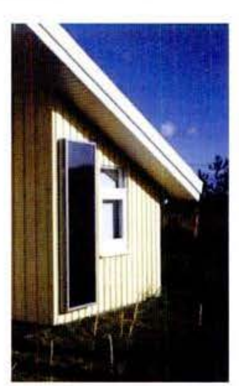

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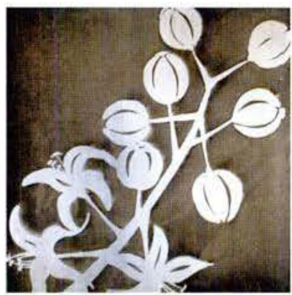

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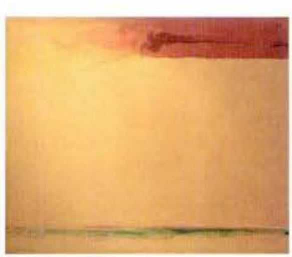

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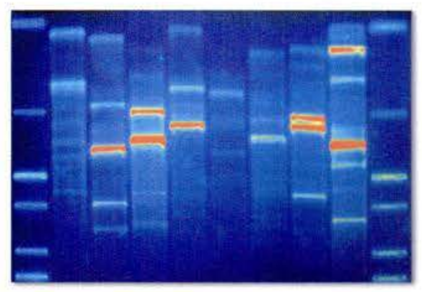

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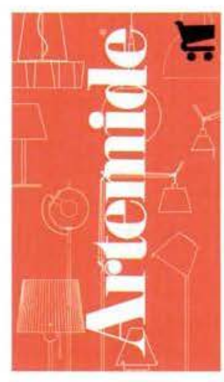

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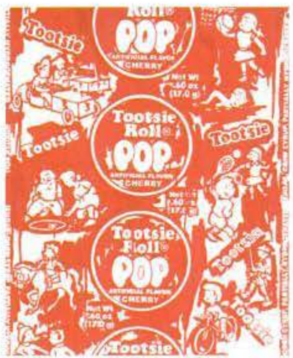

ToddLimArt.com

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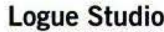

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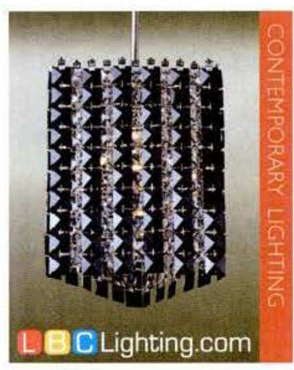

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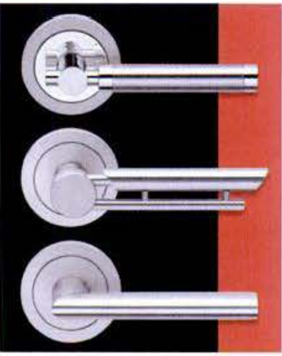
www.CharleyHarper.com



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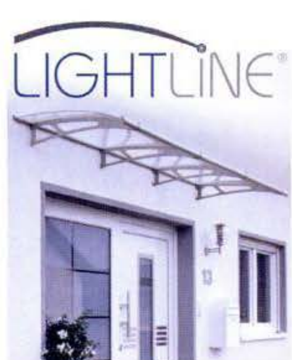

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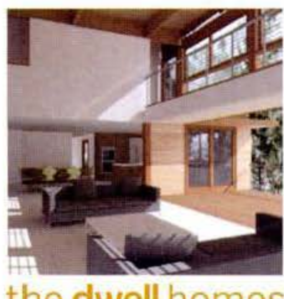

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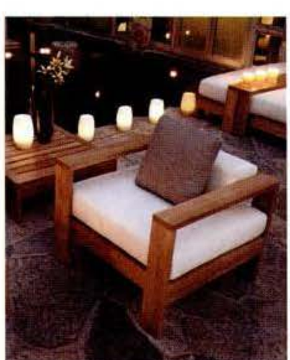

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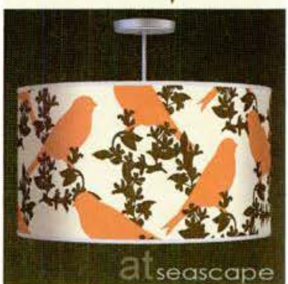

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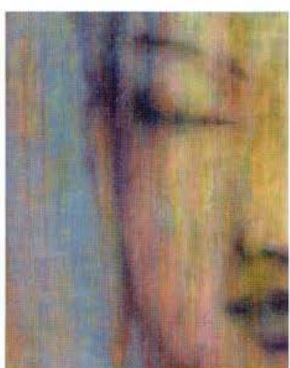

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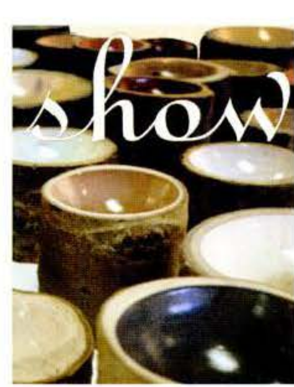

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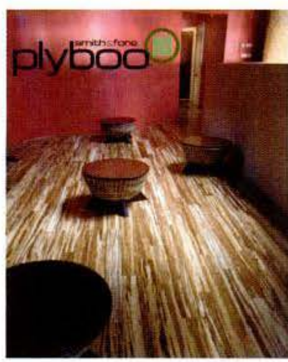

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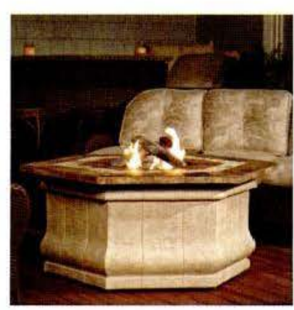

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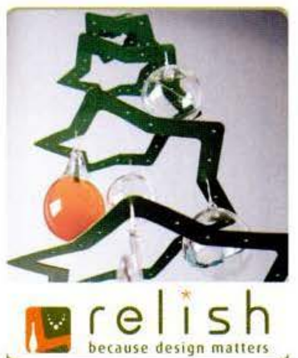

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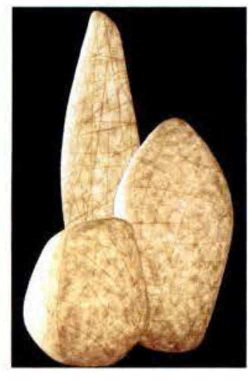

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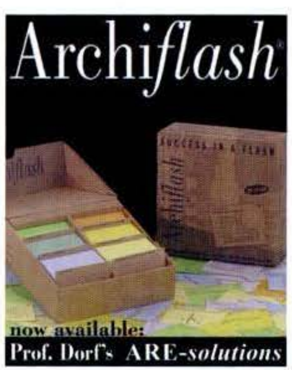

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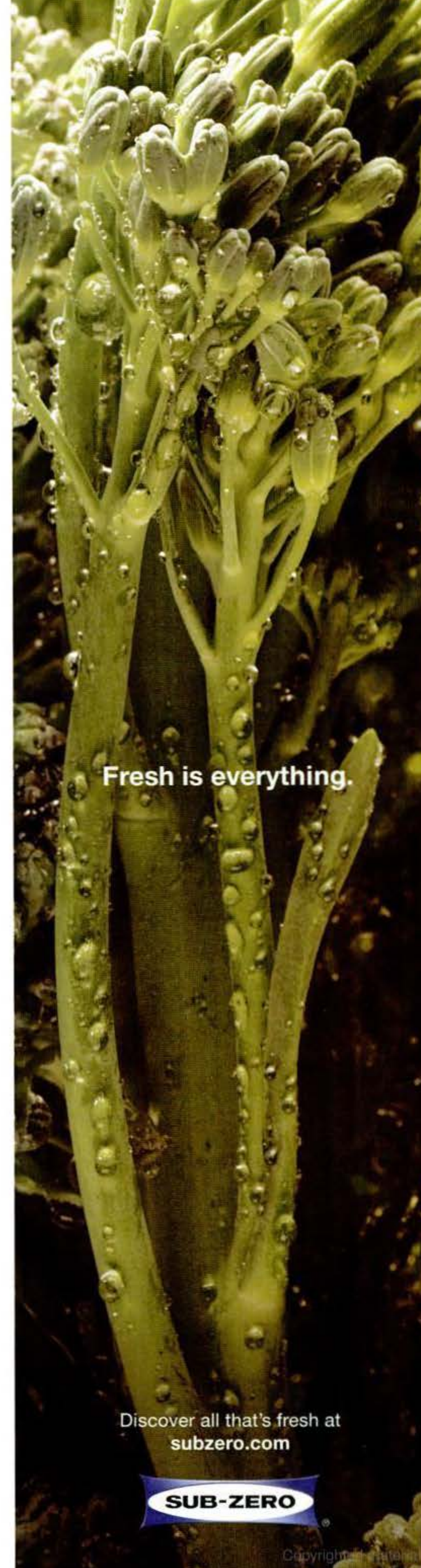

Story by Aaron Britt

Six-Pack Apts.

When the architecture firm Calori Azimi Botineau discuss their newly completed project in the idyllic Mediterranean town of Eze, France, they pay homage to the usual suspects of international style: Ludwig Mies van der Rohe and Le Corbusier. Also among their influences are two painters who seem to have little to do with turn-of-the-21st-century design: Henri Matisse and Pierre Bonnard. The architects reference Matisse's and Bonnard's captivation with the region's light, evident in paintings which exploit its qualities as it filters into indoor space.

Love of Bonnard (of which we're also guilty) aside, the window screens that the architects devised for their Strip of Six Apartments are far more sculptural than painterly. The galvanized steel, louvered shades were designed to open like eyelids—we love the idea of an apartment squinting—allowing residents to control the amount of light coming in. The façade is always in flux, imbuing the building's skin with an active, ever-changing quality.

Though the screens make a bold statement, the siting of the apartments is just as audacious, giving the whole place an air of sophisticated derring-do. Perched perilously on a cliff that looks out onto the sea, extreme plots of land such as this are often the only places left to build on France's very popular southern coast. With outdoor space at a premium, Calori Azimi Botineau turned to the roof. Accessed by private staircase, each unit is furnished with a solarium *avec une vue incroyable.* And in true French Riviera fashion, the rooftop has become a prime social spot to dine, sip pastis, and of course, sunbathe. ■

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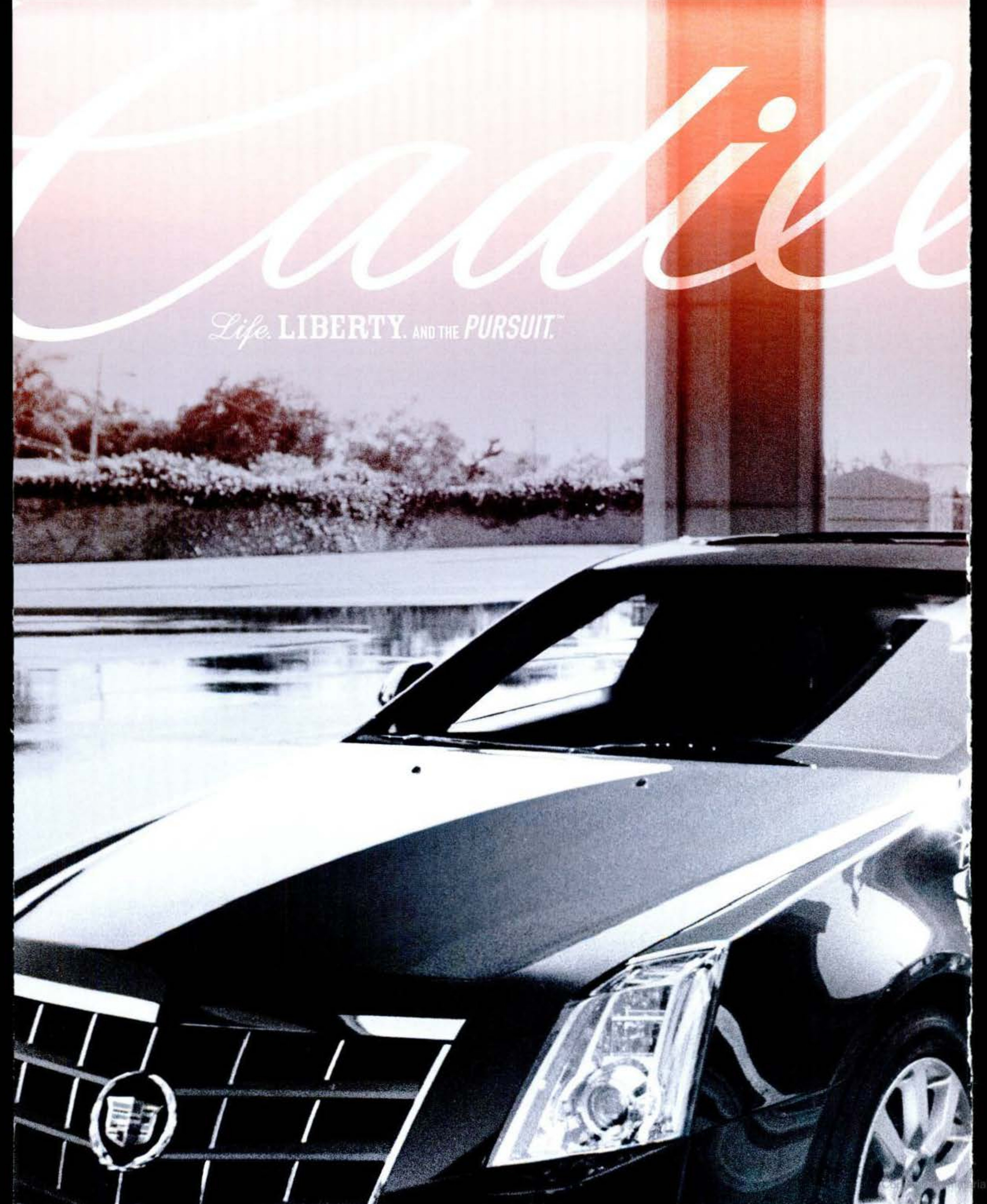
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*In today's luxury game, the real question isn't about whether your car has French-stitched interior accents or an available 40-gig hard-drive that lets you store thousands of songs. The question isn't about a 6-speed transmission, variable valve timing, or a host of available features including all-wheel drive, a 304 hp Direct Injection V6, ambient interior lighting, articulating headlights, performance brakes or any of that. No, in today's luxury game, the real question is, when you turn your car on, does it return the favor? Nicely equipped at $41,775.**

Life. LIBERTY. AND THE PURSUIT.

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