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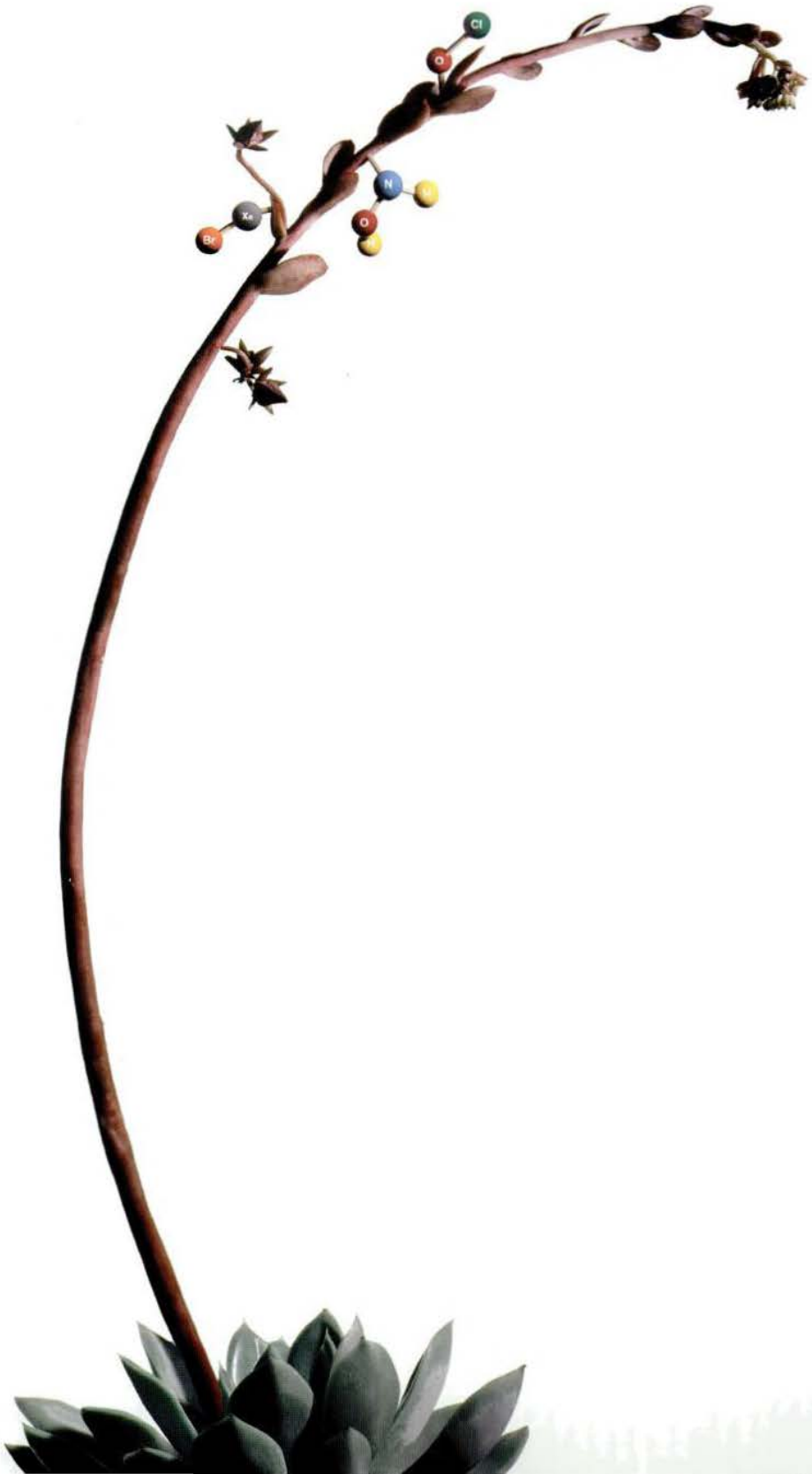

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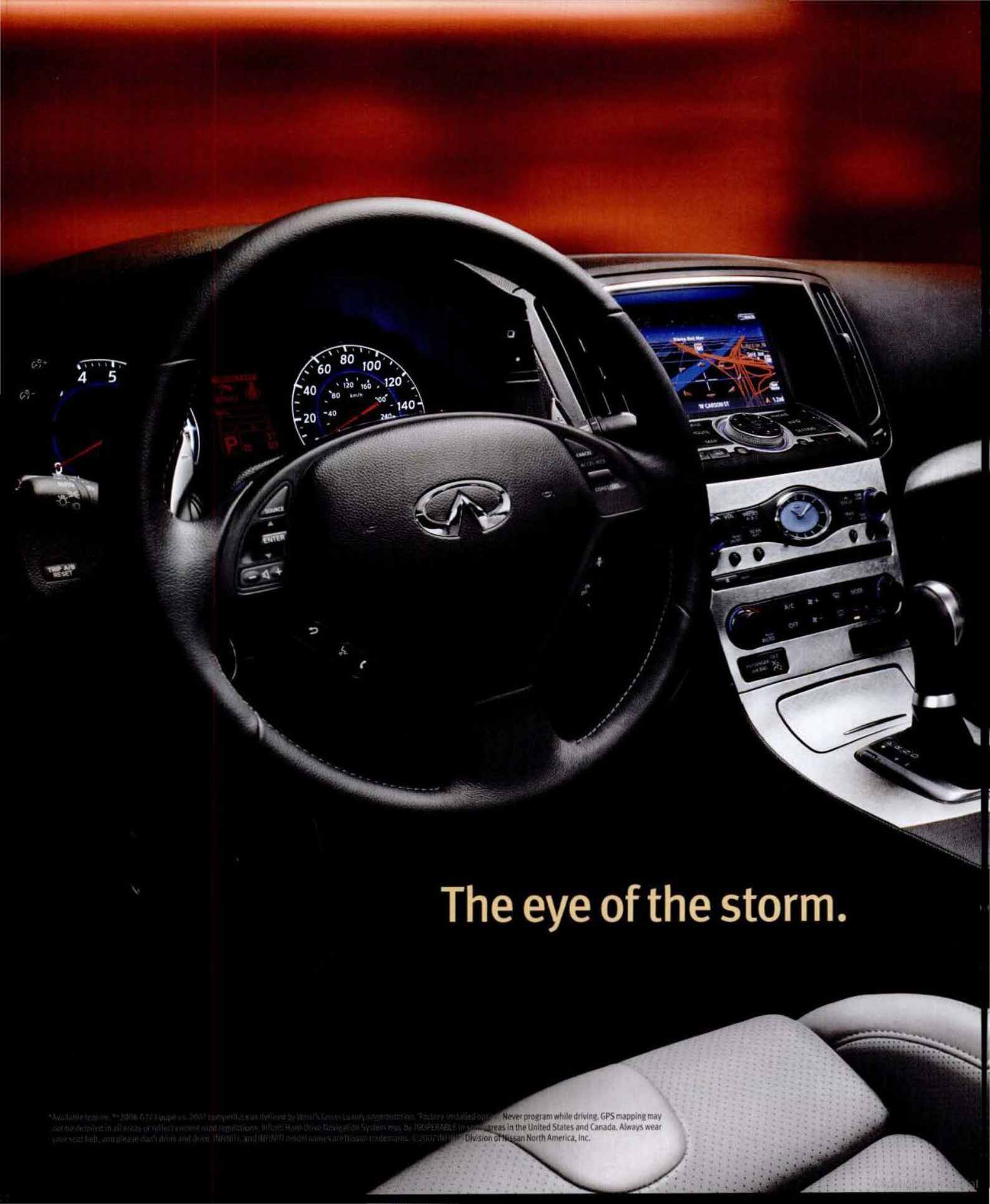


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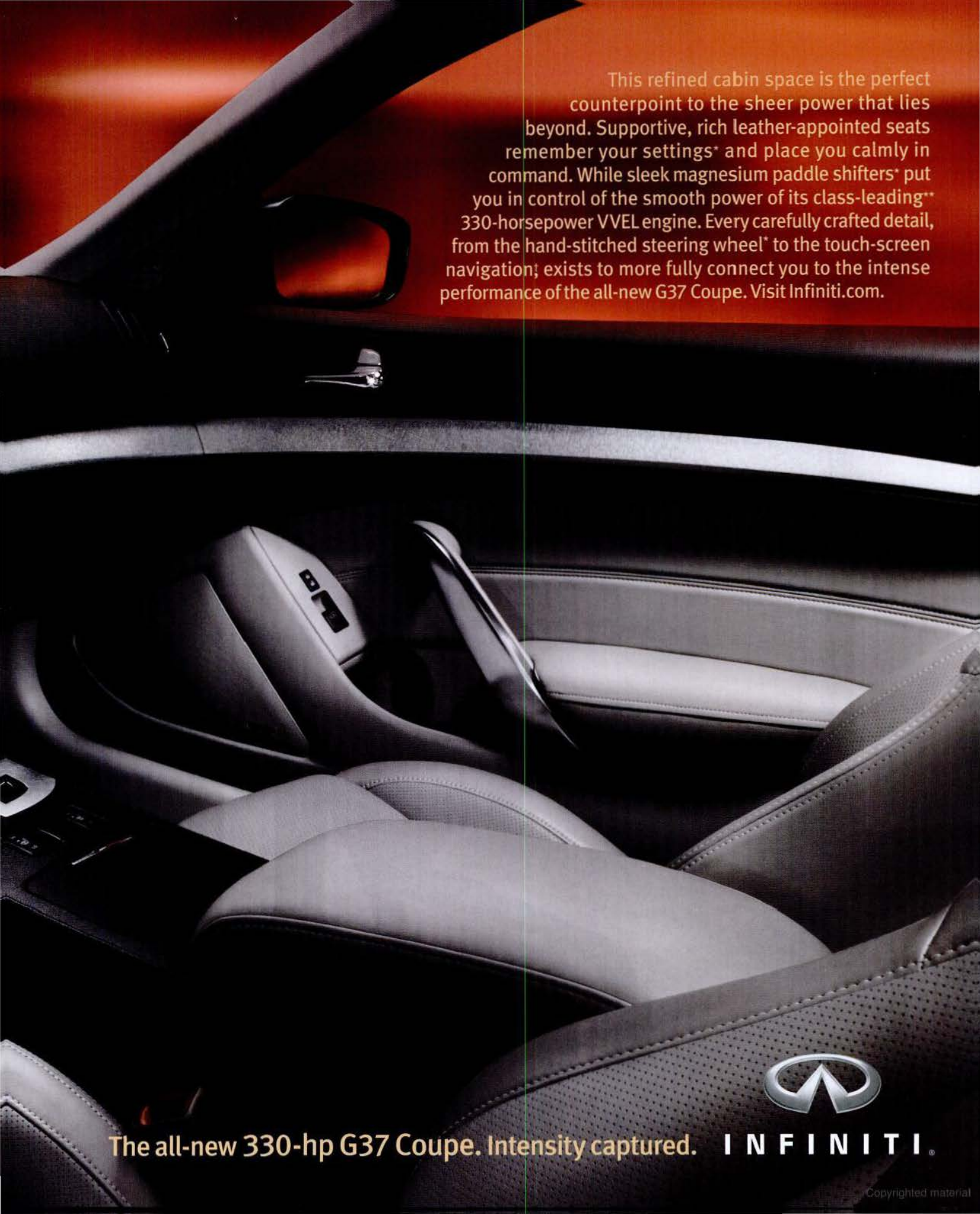

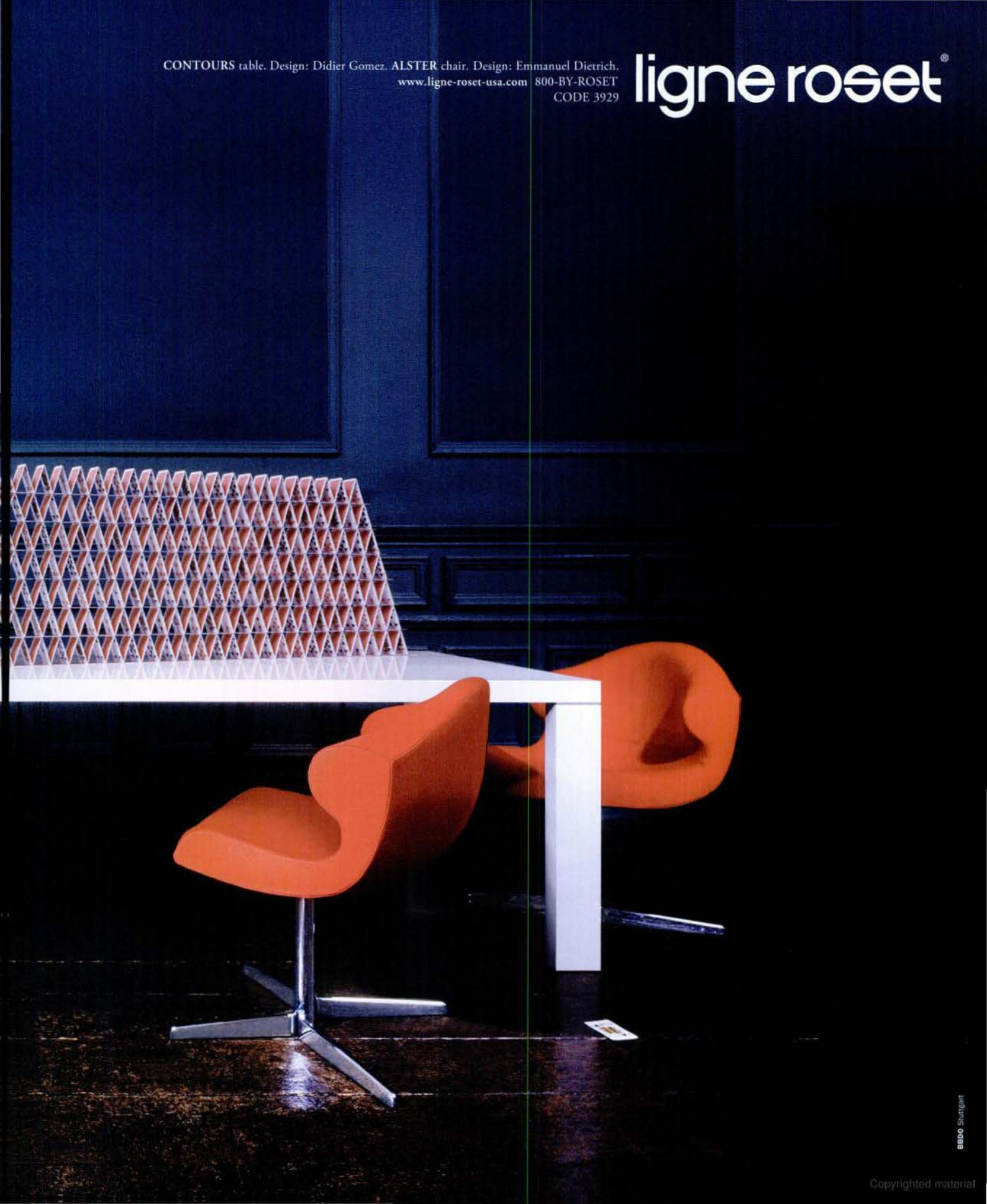

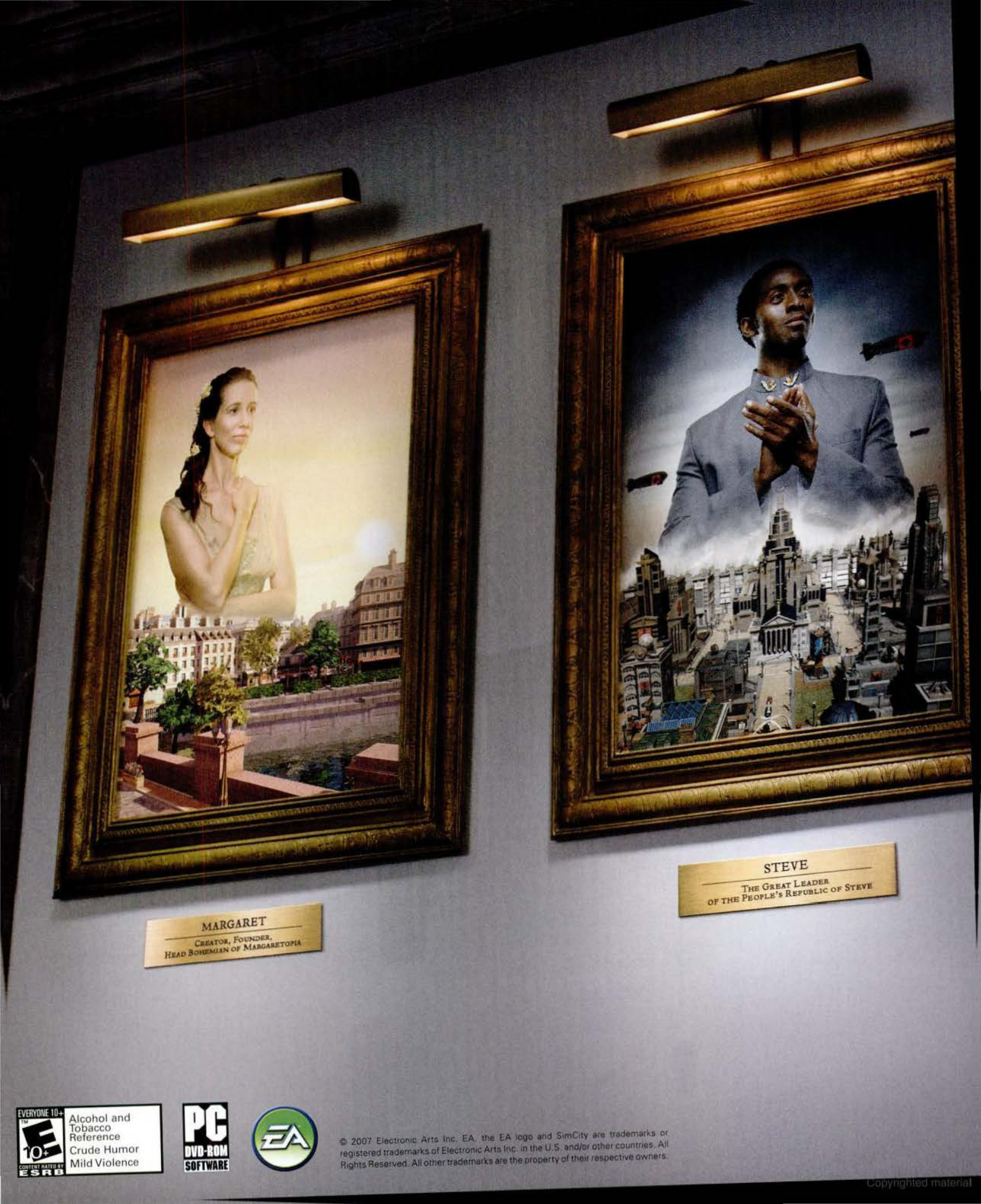


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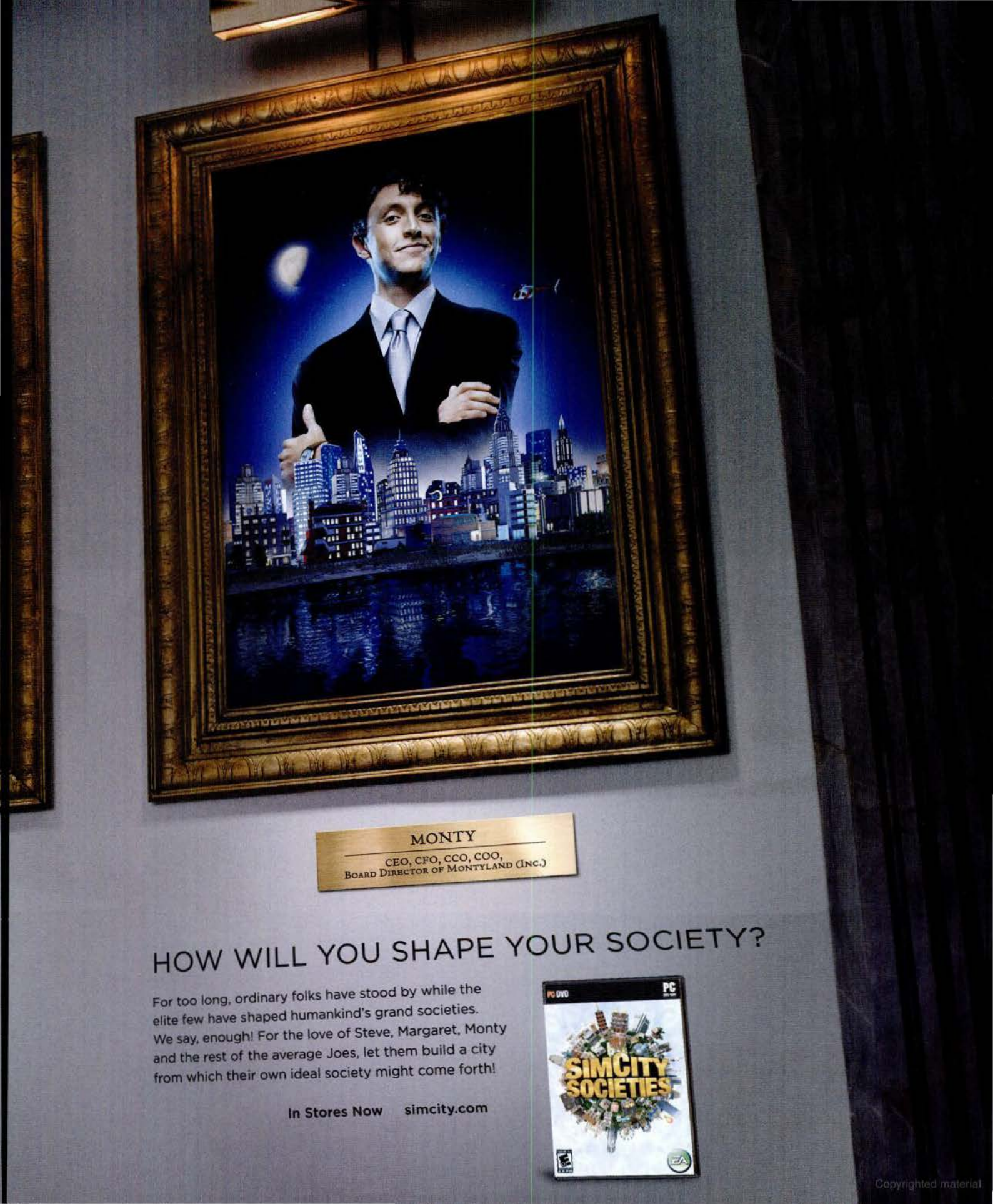
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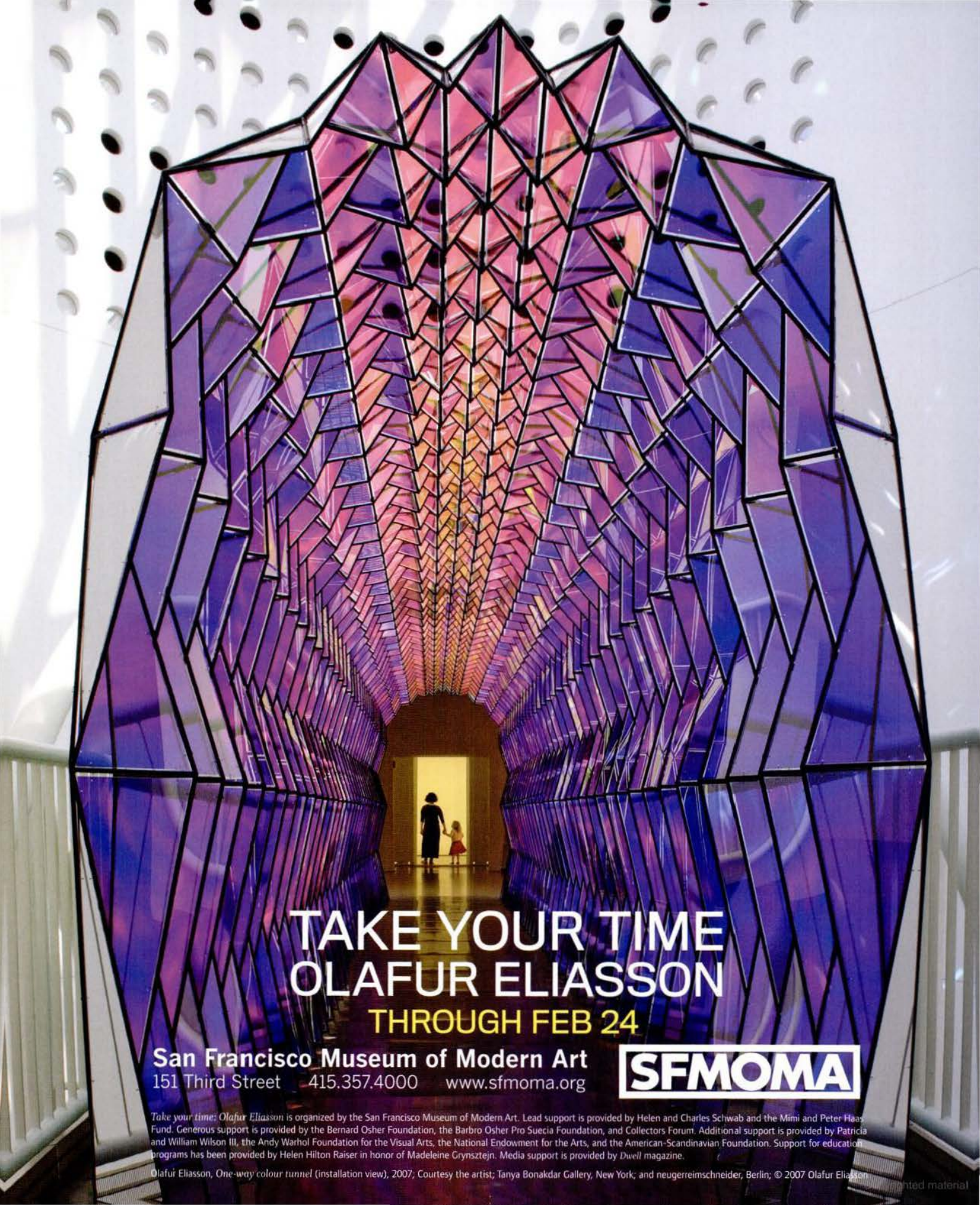


*Take your time: Olafur Eliasson* is organized by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Lead support is provided by Helen and Charles Schwab and the Mimi and Peter Haas Fund. Generous support is provided by the Bernard Osher Foundation, the Barbro Osher Pro Suecia Foundation, and Collectors Forum. Additional support is provided by Patricia and William Wilson III, the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts, and the American-Scandinavian Foundation. Support for education programs has been provided by Helen Hilton Raiser in honor of Madeleine Grynsztejn. Media support is provided by *Dwell* magazine.

Olafur Eliasson, *One-way colour tunnel* (installation view), 2007; Courtesy the artist; Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York; and neugerreimschneider, Berlin; © 2007 Olafur Eliasson

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## Suburbs with Attitude

Dec/Jan 2008

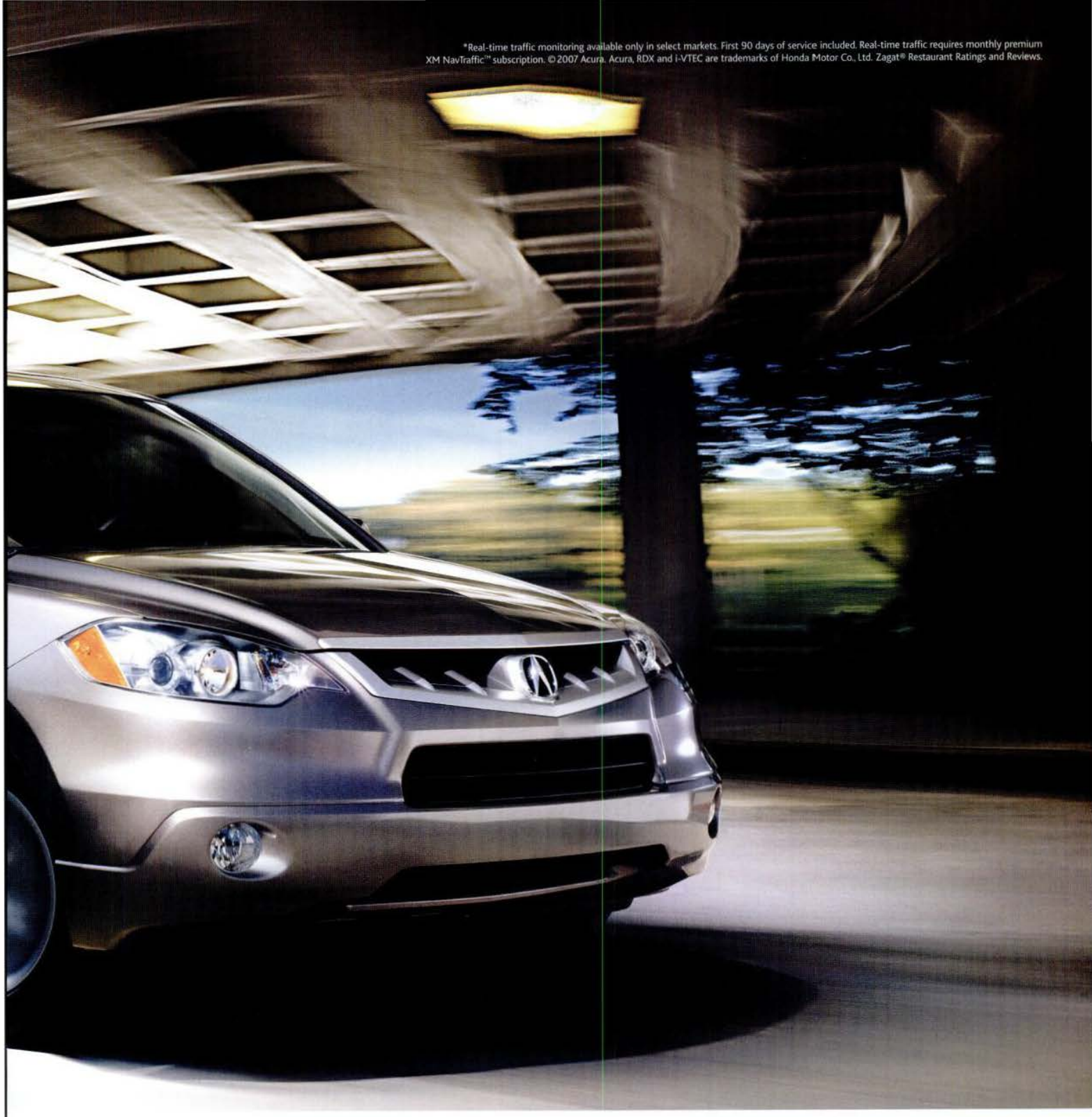
"We want to try to understand and identify qualities in suburbia that have value in their own right."—**Tracy Myers**

**Cover**

Cardew Residence, Vancouver, British Columbia, page 136

**Photo by João Canziani**

VARIABLE FLOW TURBO. INSTANT RESPONSE FOR
THE INSTANT-MESSAGING CROWD.



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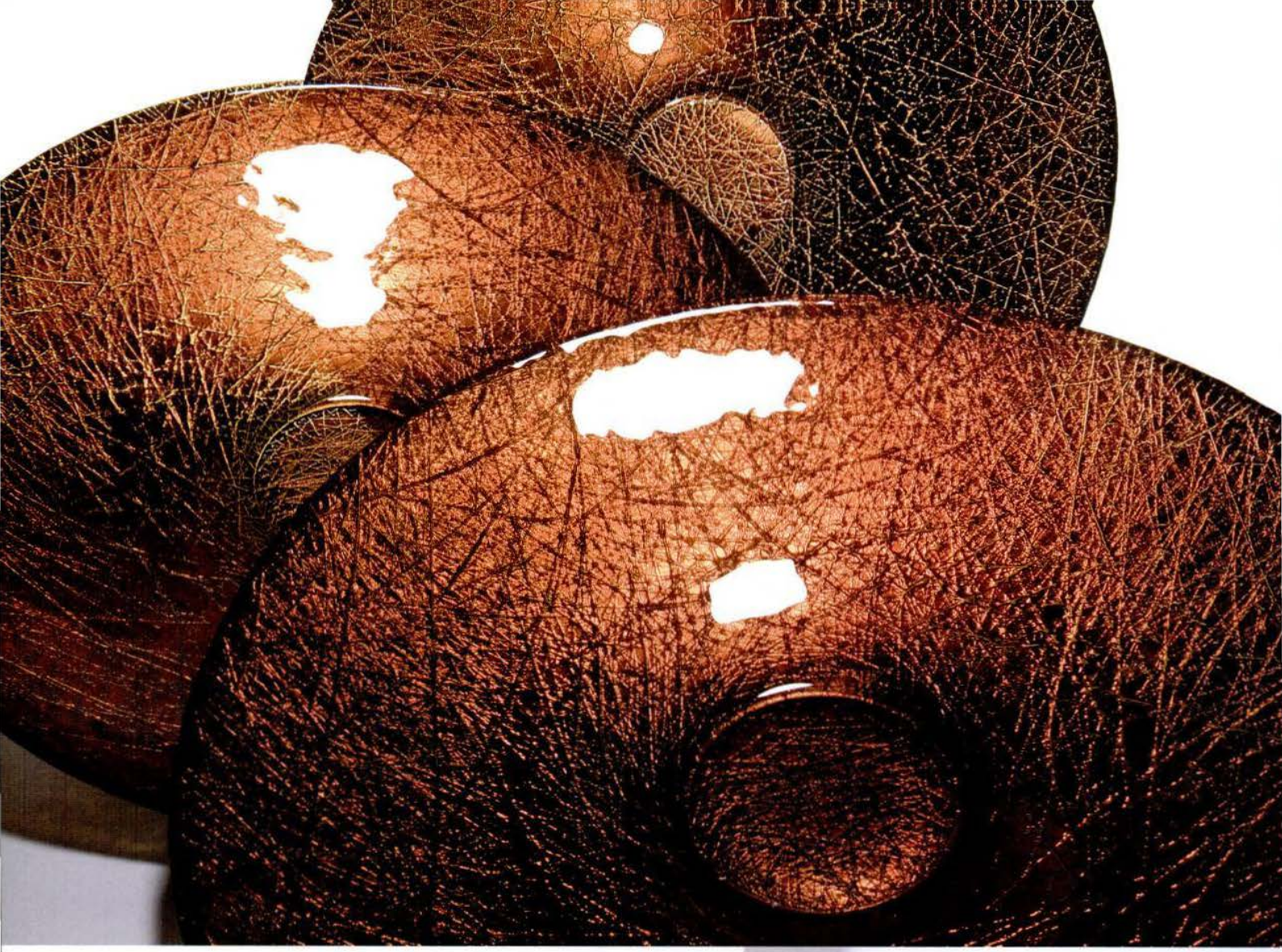

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ISBN has never meant much to the Dwell library. Not surprisingly, when it came time to organize our bookshelf, we opted for Roy G. Biv over John Dewey. While proving not to be the most functional cataloging system, it's provided us due inspiration for February's forthcoming Color issue.

**Seven years? Really? I was only 20 years old?!** I guess it's about time that I drop you a line, then: I was lucky enough to happen upon your very first issue, and have read every single issue cover-to-cover since then. Dwell has utterly changed—and continues to inform—my perspective on the world around me. Thank you.

**Melissa Chubbuck**
Seattle, Washington

**In "Home Buying 101" (October 2007), you quote** real estate agent John Barnette as saying "these homes...will smell like an 80-year-old woman." I get the point (probate sales are like this), but this quote just doesn't seem worthy of your magazine, and I wouldn't dream of renewing my subscription. What were you thinking?

**Barbara Nay**
Antrim, New Hampshire

**It's always a treat to receive my latest issue of** Dwell, but as I pored over the October 2007 issue I was struck by a couple of references to the designs of Charles and Ray Eames that were less than complimentary (horrors!). First, your mention of Blu Dot's Real Good chair in "What We Saw" includes the statement that it's a "welcome alternative to the ubiquitous Eames fiberglass shell chair." Ouch!

Then I saw Angelika Taschen's take on coffee tables, which included her opinion of the Eames Elliptical (a.k.a. surfboard) table (she loved it). But you guys preferred the Platner table simply because it wasn't Eames, "perhaps... because all things Eames are starting to have the 'Impressionist syndrome,' where they seem less special due to ubiquity." There you go with ubiquity again—you folks must really hate Barcelona chairs!

I don't get it. Shouldn't good design be widely accepted and embraced? Does design have to be novel, or does a designer's work have to be seldom seen to be considered good?

Dwell is a great champion of sustainable practices—in building, furnishing, and living. To me sustainability means holding on to things that work. My partner and I have been collecting Eames design for years—our first arm shell chair was $15 in a thrift store window. Sure, we love most of the new stuff that Dwell highlights every month, but we're not going to chuck our Eames furniture just to be on the cutting edge.

**Tim Elitharp**
Portland, Maine

**I'm writing in response to the introduction for the** "Greetings from..." section (page 171, October 2007). When I received the magazine, I was excited that it would include something about ▶

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# There is no such thing as a romantic table for 8.

my country, but I was also disappointed because, in U.S. magazines, Puerto Rico is usually misrepresented.

To say that "most Puerto Ricans speak Spanish" only shows the lack of knowledge that most Americans have about us. In spite of being a U.S. territory for more than a hundred years, it's amazing how easy it is to talk about Puerto Rico as if it was an undiscovered, mysterious place. I find it important to let you and your staff know that all Puerto Ricans speak Spanish because it is our official and primary language. English is our second official language, but is not our main language. This is very important to clarify because your publication is sending a wrong message to thousands of people that may not know about Puerto Rico.

Also, the Casita Blanca restaurant doesn't serve Creole food. Our locals don't eat Creole food since we have never been a French territory (that's Haiti, by the way). La Casita Blanca serves authentic Puerto Rican food that we call *"comida criolla."*

For a magazine with such high standards as Dwell, it would be wise to have really good fact-checkers on staff to avoid offending your readers with the details.

**Yanira Cirino**
San Juan, Puerto Rico

**I've been a subscriber for years, and I have to** say absolutely—without exaggeration—that it is the first time in seven years that I've been truly disappointed with a project in Dwell. Considering your editor-in-chief's plea for "context and consideration," I was perplexed to find neither in Jeff Waltz's project ("Pittsburgh Steeler," October 2007). I've seen the homes in the background of this steel structure, and they're beautiful. I really consider myself open-minded when it comes to architecture and experimentation, but I will never go along with the idea that just because someone dared to do something different we have to accept and applaud it.

It's clear that Waltz has good taste—the inside is really cool—but, to me, the exterior is simply wrong.

**Arda Talu**
Chicago, Illinois

**I was very much impressed with your article** about Bangkok ("The Bangkok Beat," September 2007). That said, I think what Mason Florence refers to as "Sino-Portuguese"-style architecture is actually "Chino-Portuguese," the unique style used in southern Thailand, especially in Pung-Nga and Phuket. Historically, many wealthy Chinese immigrants mixed European style (mostly Portuguese due to the colony in Macau) with traditional Chinese building techniques. In Bangkok there are many buildings that mix traditional Chinese style with European style, but not Chino-Portuguese style like most of the buildings found on Charoen Krung Road ("New Road") and Song Wat Road.

**Sethapong Pawwattana**
Bangkok, Thailand

**I take issue with two letters printed in the** September 2007 issue. Regarding Len Charlap's statement, "I am my stuff and my stuff is me," he may be his stuff, but I am certainly not. I am my ideas, my thoughts, and my experiences, not a bunch of dusty, meaningless consumer goods and tchotchkes.

Which is probably why I (unlike Jeff Coons of San Diego) do more than just "exist" in my 700-square-foot apartment, which does not, in any way, resemble a prison. I "live" there (as do my husband and baby daughter), and it is real living because I am not spending my time cleaning, dusting, and maintaining a large, mostly unused space. How much space can one person occupy at a time anyway?

So, please, keep the articles about small spaces coming.

**Catherine Ellard**
Woodside, New York

**In the September 2007 issue, I noticed that** you captioned a picture appearing on page 155 ("Highway Hideaway") as "a painting by Wayne Gonzales depicting Lee Harvey Oswald." The only picture I could see depicted the now-famous "three tramps" who were in the area of the Kennedy assassination on that fateful day. Pardon me for being a fault-finding nit-picker, but Oswald was a bum, not a tramp.

**Ralph K. Echols**
Scottsdale, Arizona

**Thank you so much for your article on the Opdahl** house ("Opdahl Remastered," July/August 2007). The article did a wonderful job of tracing the house's rise and demise from an innovative architectural piece to its "re-worked condition" when Andreas Stevens bought it and moved in. Ed Killingsworth was very proud of it and stated that it launched his career as an architect.

We have many memories of living in that house, and what a great experience it was. We had our wedding reception there soon after it was completed. Our first son was born when we lived there, and we sold it only because the architect preferred not to add another bedroom and bath over the carport when our second son was born.

Andreas deserves credit for his devoted restoration, as you pointed out in your article. He energetically checked the Internet to find original pieces used in the house and was successful in most cases, even replacing some of the furniture.

We would also like to thank Catherine Ledner for her beautiful photography. She really did justice to the house.

**Joyce and Dick Opdahl**
Huntington Beach, California

**O, Dan Maginn,**
Thou made'st our Swedish faces blush with pride at thy sweet serenade ("An Ode to the IKEA Cabinet," July/August 2007).

O, plucky poet! How vast is thy reach? Within a fortnight didst countless surefooted patrons appear at our gate (including ten from thine own hamlet, Kansas City): clutching your magazine to their breasts, praising your missive and clamoring for kitchen cabinetry contentment. Such happy hubbub! We didst comply.

O, home! 'Tis surely the most important place in the world. Is such kitchen magnificence attainable for all? Aye, verily! If a journey to IKEA is not in the stars, one need merely seek IKEA.com on the web of the wide world. All will be revealed.

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**Mary Sorenson**
IKEA Twin Cities
Bloomington, Minnesota

**I was very pleased with the extended archive** section of your July/August 2007 issue. Specifically, it was great to see the old photos of Black Mountain College, with its legendary staff and students, and to read about its idealistic and revolutionary agenda. The article prompted me to think of the current state of design and architecture education in the U.S. I wonder whether you would consider reporting on the greenest, most forward-thinking, creative, and artistically based design programs around. Surely there must be some lesser-known programs worthy of note, and who better to expose them than Dwell?

**Daniel Luis Martinez**
Tampa, Florida

**I am a college student who has been reading** your pages for the last couple of years. I look forward to seeing great design here in our modern world. I appreciate the effort that your staff takes to locate and disseminate the knowledge of such items to the everyday person. However, as of late

your magazine has seemed to wander away from the promise of that.

The Dwell/Blu Dot lounge chair design competition has been a clear indication of this. I was excited about the ideas behind the competition: a lounge chair that is comfortable, sustainable, environmentally friendly, and affordable. It gave me hope that I would finally be able to obtain a great chair for my place.

Upon seeing the three finalists' designs posted on Dwell's website, I was deeply disappointed. With all of your focus on sustainable and environmental design I would expect to see some of that knowledge present in the choice of these designs. However, I cannot really see how these chairs are environmentally friendly.

Most depressing to me is that from reading about the materials and looking at the construction I have come to the conclusion that I will not be able to afford any of these designs. My brain tells me that it is going to cost more than $250. This places the chair out of the reach of the majority of your "everyday" readers. It seems that Blu Dot is keeping with making furniture that many people cannot afford. It also helps reinforce the negative stereotype that good design is only for the privileged.

I hope that in the future you will aim to correct some of these issues. I hope that Dwell will stop teasing the children with candy and never letting any of us have a taste.

**Mychal Stewart**
Atlanta, Georgia

**I just wanted to say how much I appreciate your** magazine for its high-level quality content as much as its graphic presentation. I personally love the swaths of color that run through pictures and text. Please keep that modern visual approach which corresponds so well to your excellent editorial work.

**Bernard Lagacé**
Paris, France

**I just finished reviewing a *Wallpaper* fashion** spread in which an extremely pretentious fashion shoot took place at Mike Miere's Farm Project ("Kitchens 101," July/August 2007). *Wallpaper*'s work is to be esteemed, and I do respect their publication. Yet, as I absorbed their work, I really enjoyed knowing that you guys published such a perceptive article about Miere's work before *Wallpaper* had the opportunity to ostracize the location with fashionista atrocities.

I write this comment only with the intention of saying Dwell kicks some *Wallpaper* ass. I also hope you stay the forever grounded and down-to-earth architecture magazine you have so far proven yourself to be.

**Karina Napier Anderson**
New York, New York

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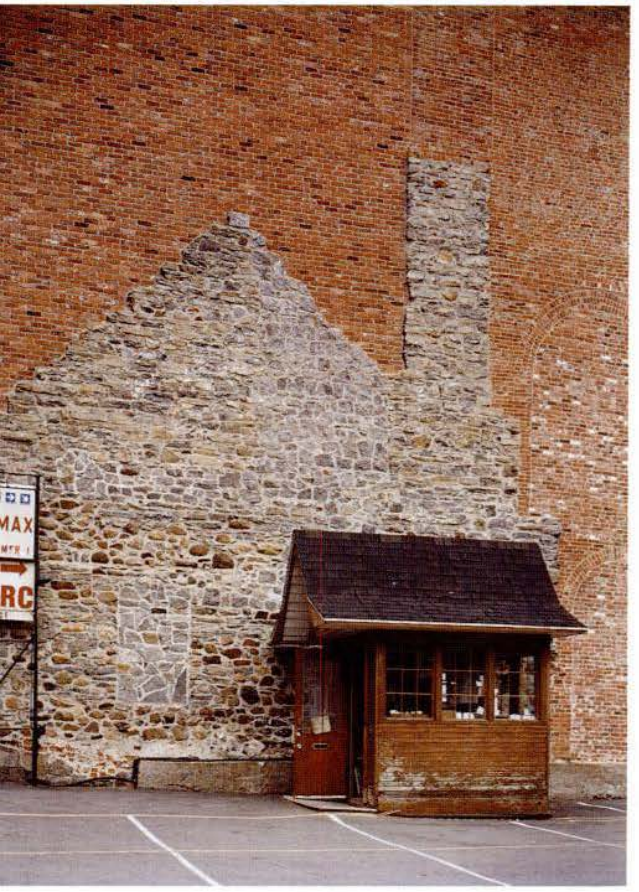

Matthew Monteith captured a small parking kiosk—a mere shadow of the former structure—on the Rue St.-François-Xavierut in Montreal.

# Contributors

**Jaimie Epstein** ("Pastoral Manner," p. 154) lives and writes in New York but will jump at any chance to trade city for country. Although she prefers her country wild, the lush greenery of well-tended Greenwich, Connecticut, did wonders for her concrete-addled soul.

**David A. Greene** ("Courtyard of Appeal," p. 88) is a screenwriter living in Los Angeles. While exploring the sunny, hacienda-inspired expanses of Thomas Robertson's Courtyard House, he was reminded fondly of that time he defended a small Mexican border town against bloodthirsty bandits, alongside Steve McQueen and Yul Brenner.

**Chad Holder** ("Home Schooled," p. 146) had this to say of documenting the Boling family in Wyoming, Ohio: "Haley, Mason, and Muriel were some of the best kids I have ever met. Upon my arrival, 13-year-old Haley asked if we would mind if she cooked a meal for us that evening, stating, 'Don't worry, it will be edible.' She prepared one of the best meals I've ever had, right down to the *pot de crème* (which she pronounces with an impeccable French accent). I hope my little ones turn out to be as polite and fun as the Boling kids; I suppose the switch to the suburbs was the right move."

**John King** ("Surrogate Cities," p. 182) is the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s urban design writer. He grew up in Walnut Creek back when there was only one place to buy Peet's Coffee east of Berkeley, when enclosed shopping malls were the height of sophistication, and when searching out fresh music required a trip to college-town record shops rather than the Internet.

**William Lamb** ("Industrial Revolution," p. 77) lives in Jersey City, New Jersey. He had a "one gorge" quota for his trip to Ithaca, New York, to report this issue's "My House" feature, and credits its subjects, Maria Cook and Lance Compa, with directing him to a particularly stunning one at Robert H. Treman State Park.

**RJ Muna** ("Chair Up," p. 100) is a photographer living in San Francisco. By drawing on his work in both fine art and commercial photography, Muna is able to combine the two aesthetics to make smart, visually captivating images. For this shoot, he drew inspiration from his work photographing dance companies throughout the Bay Area, bringing the chairs to life with lighting and composition.

**James Nestor** ("Soul Surfer," p. 125) is a writer living in San Francisco. Traveling to interview architect Harry Gesner, Nestor found a renewed appreciation for his Southern Californian motherland. This did not happen, as you might expect, in a rented teal-green PT Cruiser while waiting in traffic for hours on the 405, but rather atop a surfboard 50 feet out from a private white-sand beach in Malibu sharing glassy waves on a balmy midsummer evening with a famed 83-year-old architect. Ah, maybe SoCal ain't that bad after all.

Vancouverite **Carolann Rule** ("On the Level," p. 136) is a former magazine editor who writes for a variety of publications, including *Metropolitan Home*, *Azure*, *Western Living*, and the *Globe and Mail*. "I must admit that when architect Peter Cardew first told me about this project I wasn't jumping up and down with excitement," explains Rule. "I have always associated split-level architecture (if you can call it architecture) with suburban development that begins with bulldozing every element of topographical variety in an area, spaghetti street layouts, same-same building forms, and cheap construction. Was I in for a surprise! This house is a knockout! Not just because of the way it looks, but because of the way it makes you feel so relaxed and comfortable when you are inside. I could live here in a heartbeat!"

**Deborah Snoonian** ("The Adding Machine," p. 163) is a senior editor at *This Old House*. She can't decide what she liked more: the house she wrote about for this issue or the huge spread of Armenian food that homeowners Gregg and Arpie graciously provided for her. "We're all of Armenian heritage—enjoying huge meals and talking about food are as natural to us as breathing," she says. A native of Lawrence, Massachusetts, Deborah lives in Brooklyn with her fiancé Bradley and cat Oskar. ■


ALCHEMIA chair - PLANET table

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# Announcing the Next Classic

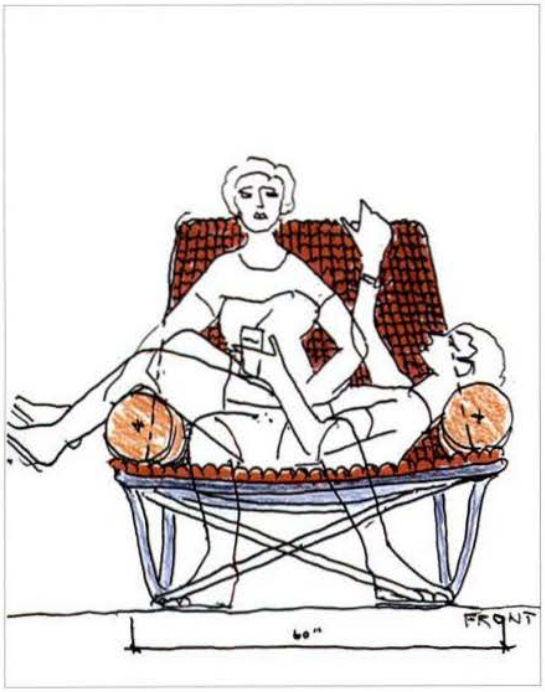
This summer, Dwell and Blu Dot, the Minneapolis-based company known for well-designed, modern furniture offered at reasonable prices, hosted a competition to design the ultimate lounge chair—something comfortable, sustainable, efficient, honest, and affordable.

In July, an invited jury selected three finalists from the open competition: furniture designer Mike Devereaux, architect Ralph Rapson, and swimwear designer Susan Marie Reyes. Blu Dot produced working prototypes of the three finalists' chairs, which were debuted to the public at Dwell On Design San Francisco.

The winner was decided by a three-way vote cast by Dwell, Blu Dot, and an open poll on dwell.com. On September 15th the design by Case Study architect Ralph Rapson was named the winner. Sam Grawe, editor-in-chief of Dwell, explained why the Large Lounge was so compelling: "We felt like this chair, with its generous proportions, really embodied the spirit of lounging. It lives up to the Dwell name and is harmonious with Blu Dot's line. Of the designs, we felt it had the most potential to become a future classic."

The Large Lounge is scheduled go into production next year and will inaugurate Blu Dot's Dwell Collection at the ICFF in May of 2008.

**We thank the Dwell Community for the inspiring submissions and for your votes.**




**Winner**
Large Lounge Chair by Ralph Rapson

This Large Lounge Chair is for sitting upright or lying down. The design features a metal cross frame with light perforated metal infill or fabric mesh, plus fabric cover mat.

**Finalists**
Sun Lounge Chair
by Susan Marie Reyes (left)

Circuit Lounge Chair
by Mike Devereaux (right)

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After-school special: Editor-in-chief Sam Grawe, circa 1980, poses in front of the family split-level in McLean, Virginia.

# Sprawl in the Family

**In certain circles, "suburbia" truly is a dirty word.** Before the sounding of the second "b" the mind fills with ghastly images of cookie-cutter developer homes squeezed onto crammed lots tessellating infinitely through a clear-cut landscape. Who would ever choose to live there? Wouldn't it be preferable to drive another 30 minutes to be in the countryside, or give up the extra two bedrooms, bathroom, powder room, walk-in closet, unfinished basement, and garage and stay in the city?

I've done my time. The suburb I was raised in was hardly the monsterburbia of today, but "*cul-de-sac*" and "split-level" is really all I need to tell you. My parents moved to McLean, Virginia, in 1975—a nice enough place to raise kids, afford a decent house, have a yard, and commute to a job in Washington, DC. But after that job took the family to India for four years, the McLean we returned to in 1985 was a whole new world. Gone were the odd farmhouse and the funky little health-food store, and in came the tracts of palatial faux colonials and shiny Mercedes Benzes. McLean was booming with Reaganomics, and suddenly our little split-level enclave looked downright down-market.

That really never bothered me too much (I was no Alex P. Keaton), although in some respects the community became less appealing. On the other hand, the Metro had connected northern Virginia with DC, so it was easy enough to soak in true urban grit—or conversely, you could get in a car and head out to Appalachia. Just as often we would bargain hunt around the Beltway at vintage instrument and music shops, and eat dim sum in strip malls or late-night slices of pie at a Greek diner. The suburbs had plenty to offer; you just needed to dig a little deeper, and be willing to make a few concessions.

I think the same is true today, but the Internet has also had an impact. With anything in the world just a click away, where you choose to live matters significantly less than how you choose to live. Living in suburbia used to imply being landlocked by banality, but with the surfeit of information and media flowing through every home, this is no longer the case.

The suburbs were, and are, a product of the American dream, and today that dream manifests itself in manifold ways—extending from prepackaged vulgarity (see "Signs of the Times," page 134) to unique, tangible expression. In this issue, we visit suburbs of Vancouver, Cincinnati, and New York City (and even make a stopover in Sweden) to explore homes that turn the average suburban paradigm on its head—from unlikely renovations to prefabricated additions. Serendipitously, the exhibition "Worlds Away: New Suburban Landscapes" (co-produced by the Walker Art Center and Carnegie Museum of Art) opens in February 2008, so we had the opportunity to compare notes with cocurators Andrew Blauvelt and Tracy Myers.

In a conversation with senior editor Amber Bravo (page 173), Blauvelt strikes a chord when he says, "We live in the present so much that we forget that yesterday's suburb is the city fabric [of tomorrow]." To his point, in contrast to the newly built developments at the fringe, today McLean does feel like a real place—and our old split-level is now a classic example of postwar housing. The part of the equation we most often forget, both when creating and evaluating the suburbs, is time.

SAM GRAWE, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
*sam@dwell.com*

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"Dwell on Design San Francisco was a great show and the perfect platform for launching our new pieceHomes. We are extremely pleased with the response we got and it was a great pleasure for us to be involved in such an impressive event—we are looking forward to Dwell on Design Los Angeles!"

Jonathan Davis,
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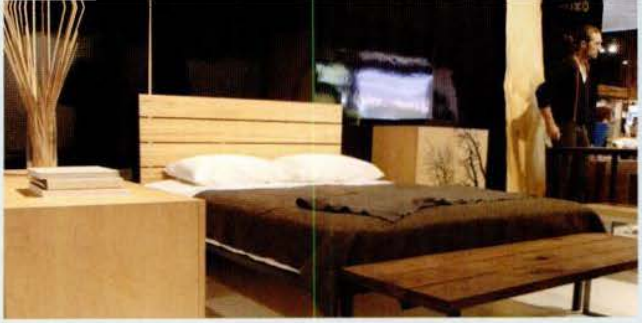

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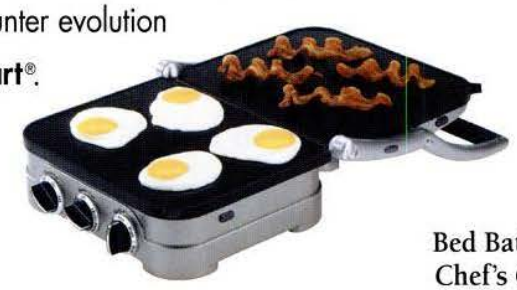

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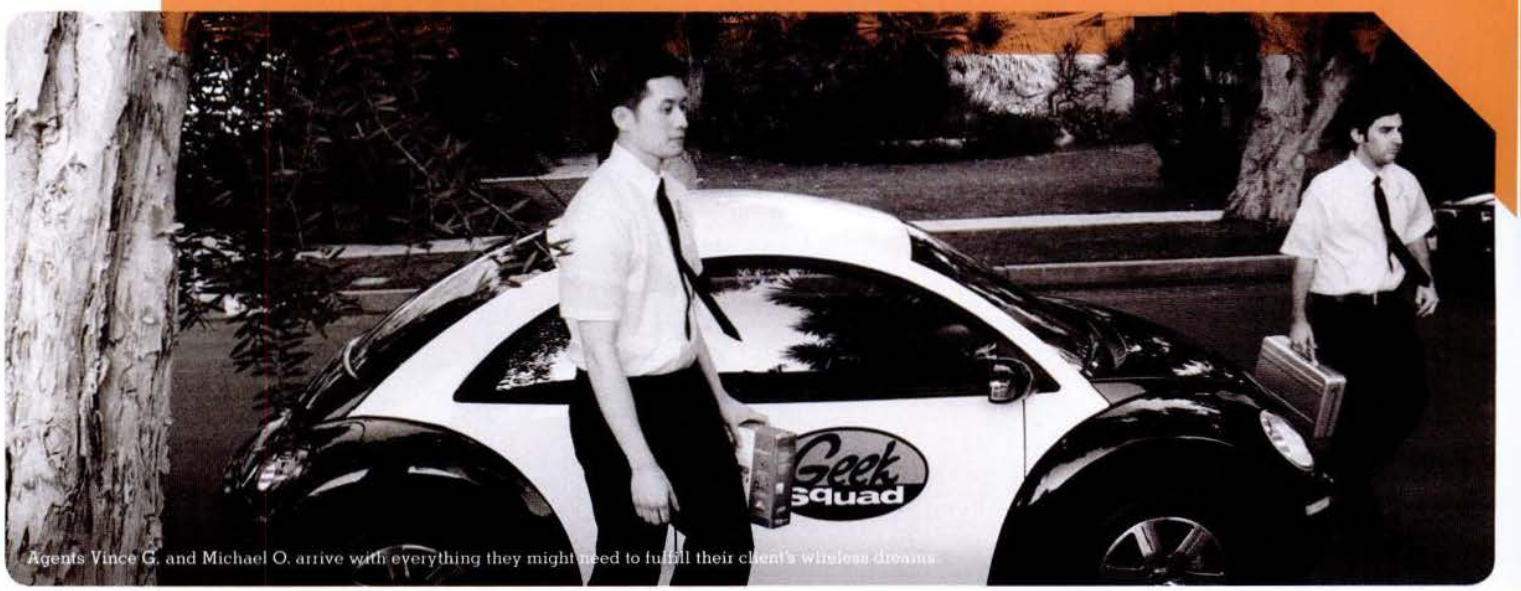


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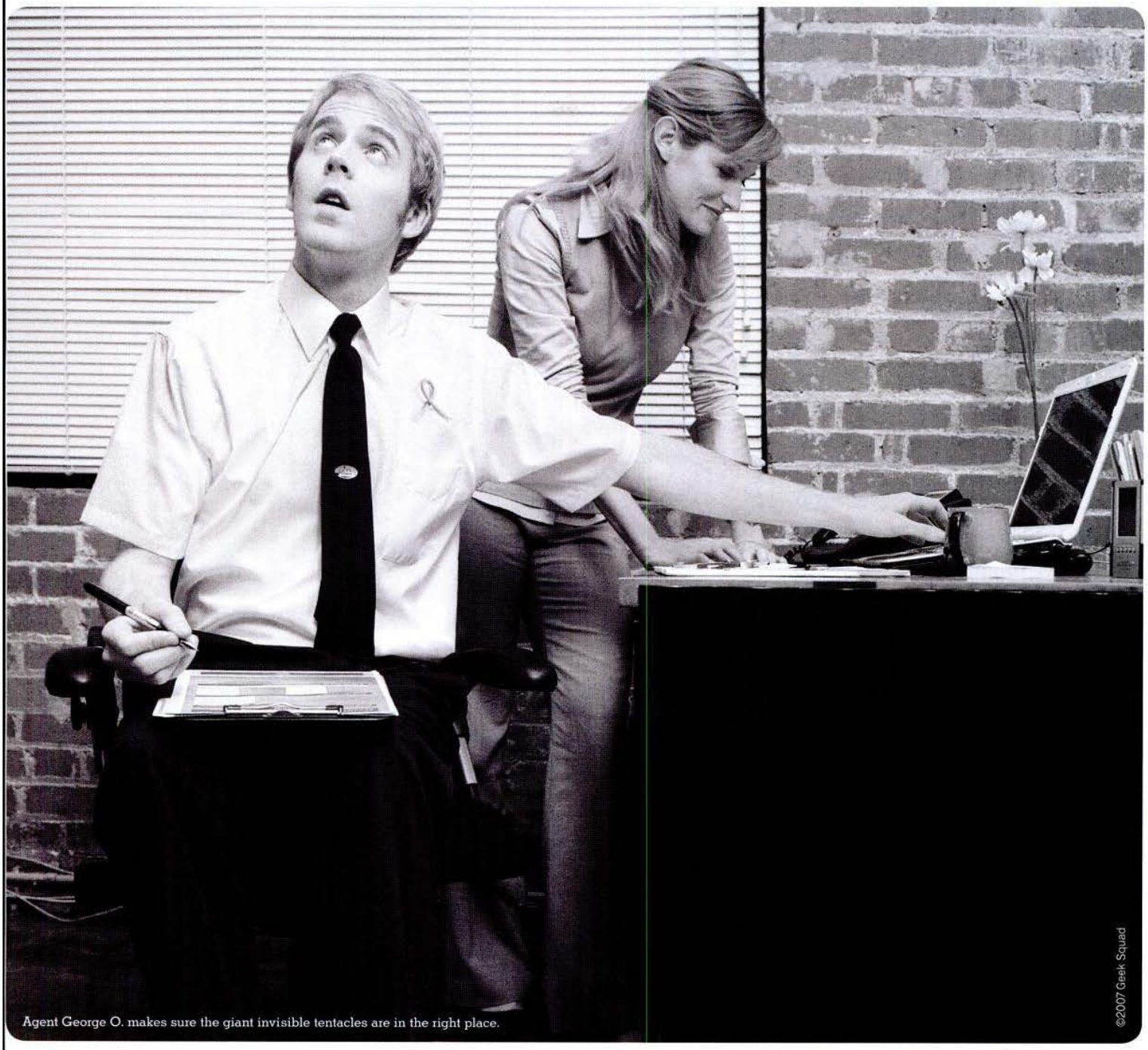

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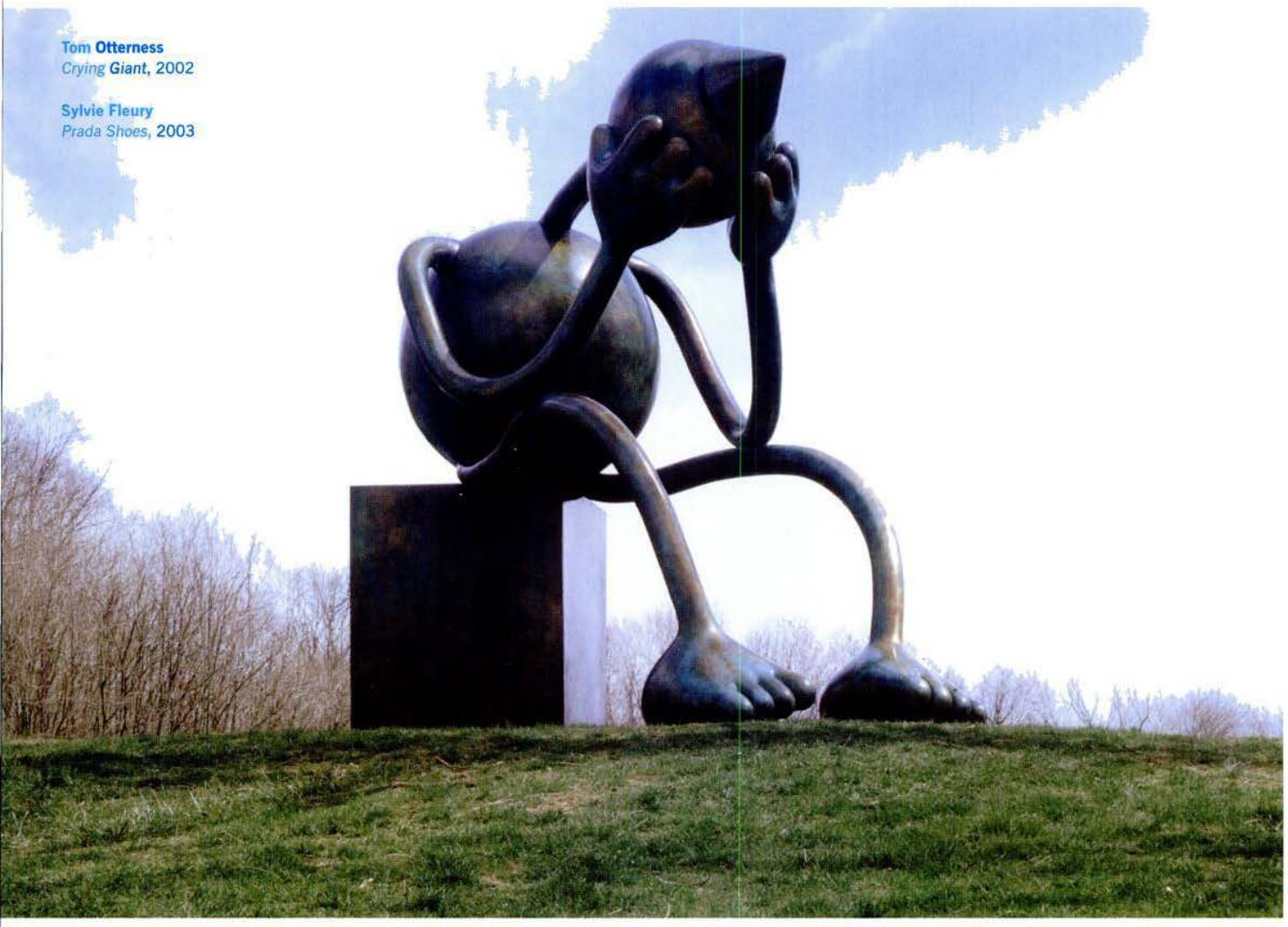


**Tom Otterness**
*Crying Giant*, 2002

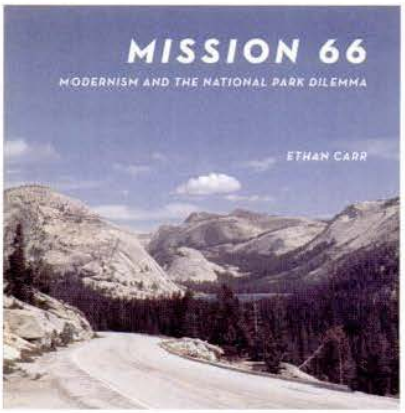
**Sylvie Fleury**
*Prada Shoes*, 2003

***Sculpture Today*** / By Judith Collins / Phaidon Press / $69.95 / www.phaidon.com / Whether filling galleries with pollen, dead sharks, or busts made out of their own frozen blood, today's sculptors are nothing if not adventurous.


Billing itself as "the first comprehensive survey of contemporary sculpture," Phaidon's hefty new *Sculpture Today* delivers 464 pages packed with the works of more than 300 artists. The usual suspects are present and accounted for: Dan Flavin, Jeff Koons, and Richard Serra share page space with the new vanguard of Olafur Eliasson, Damien Hirst, and Rachel Whiteread. The book is efficiently organized into 18 themed chapters with titles like "Gravity," "Light," "The Body," "Strange Creatures," and so on—a welcome specificity that guides even the most uninformed reader through the complex ideas and material practices that animate sculpture today.

PHOTOS COURTESY TOM OTTERNESS / MARLBOROUGH GALLERY (CRYING GIANT); SYLVIE FLEURY / ART & PUBLIC / GENEVA (PRADA SHOES)

**Playground Fence** / By Tejo Remy and Rene Veenhuizen / www.remyveenhuizen.nl / This ingenious reworking of the playground fence bends, bulges, and warps in just the right ways, giving hyperactive children a novel place to play, and work-weary parents a welcome place to relax and rest their feet. Part park bench, part urban barrier, Remy and Veenhuizen's boundary-blurring design adds a fluid new wrinkle to how we define public space.




**Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma** / By Ethan Carr / University of Massachusetts Press / $39.95 / www.umpress.umass.edu / In 1956, the U.S. National Park Service was 40 years old and going through a major midlife crisis (minus the paunch, Porsche, and twenty-something girlfriend). Then along came Mission 66, an ambitious ten-year plan to inject nearly $1 billion into the aging system. Upon its completion in 1966, the initiative had fixed roads, expanded campgrounds, and shaped our parks into the ones we know today. Although the Mission's legacy is open to some debate, the appeal of its story is not.

**Tak lamp** / By Khodi Feiz / www.feizdesign.com / Khodi Feiz's Light Green line of environmentally conscious furniture provides a clean counterpoint to more common eco-not-so-chic designs. The two-headed Tak lamp is a standout: A pair of slender, swinging branches bear 3.4-watt LED bulbs that produce the equivalent of 40 watts of light for up to 35 years, making both its aesthetic appeal and moral math easier to grasp than in-flight Sudoku.

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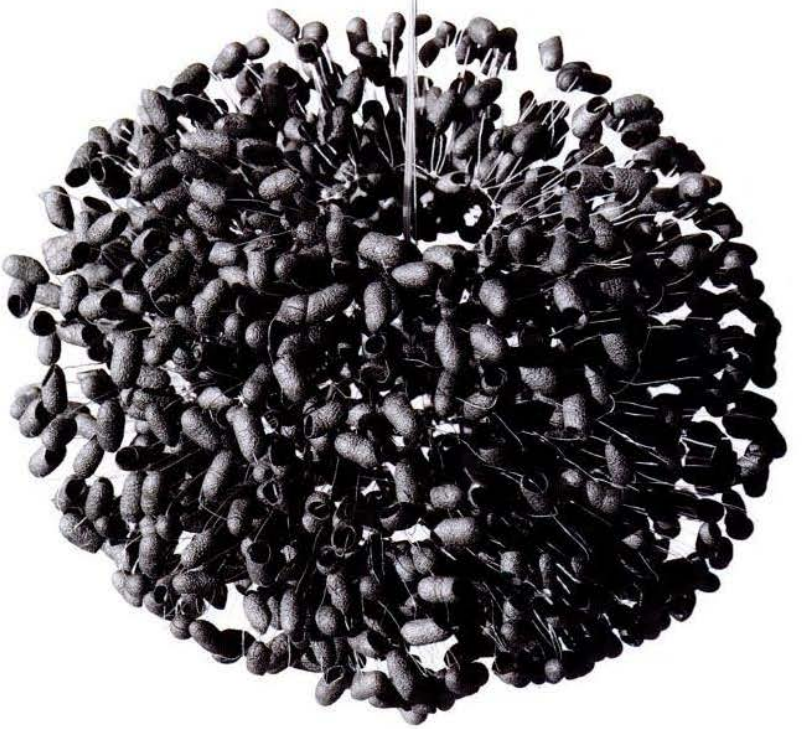
**Rachel Whiteread** / Through 20 Jan / Carnegie Museum of Art / Pittsburgh, PA / www.cmoa.org / Rachel Whiteread's monumental plaster casts of architectural spaces have won her a long list of well-deserved awards, including the prestigious Turner Prize in 1993. Now on display at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh is an especially impressive, and physically daunting, work: Two intersecting stairwells cast from the London home of Lord Horatio Nelson create a pale, abstract knot that looms over museum visitors. Its titantic form creates a wonderful juxtaposition with the surrounding gallery.

**Midnight Moon pendant light** / By Angus Hutcheson for FordBrady / www.fordbrady.com / Designer Angus Hutcheson gives a nod to the assiduously assembled art installations of Cornelia Parker with his varied line of lighting for FordBrady. Handcrafted from silkworm cocoons dyed soot black (or left cotton white), they remind us of exploding asteroids, collapsing matter, glowing snowballs, or—from just the right angle—perfectly picked-out 'fros.



**Beard cap** / By Vik Prjónsdóttir with Vikurprjón / www.scandinaviangrace.com / Inspired by the woolen hoods of Icelandic farmers, the Beard cap by Icelandic design collective Vik Prjónsdóttir is a godsend to gents whose own facial hair leaves something to be desired. Warm, constricting, difficult to talk in, and itchy as hell, this winsome cap handily beats your beanie.

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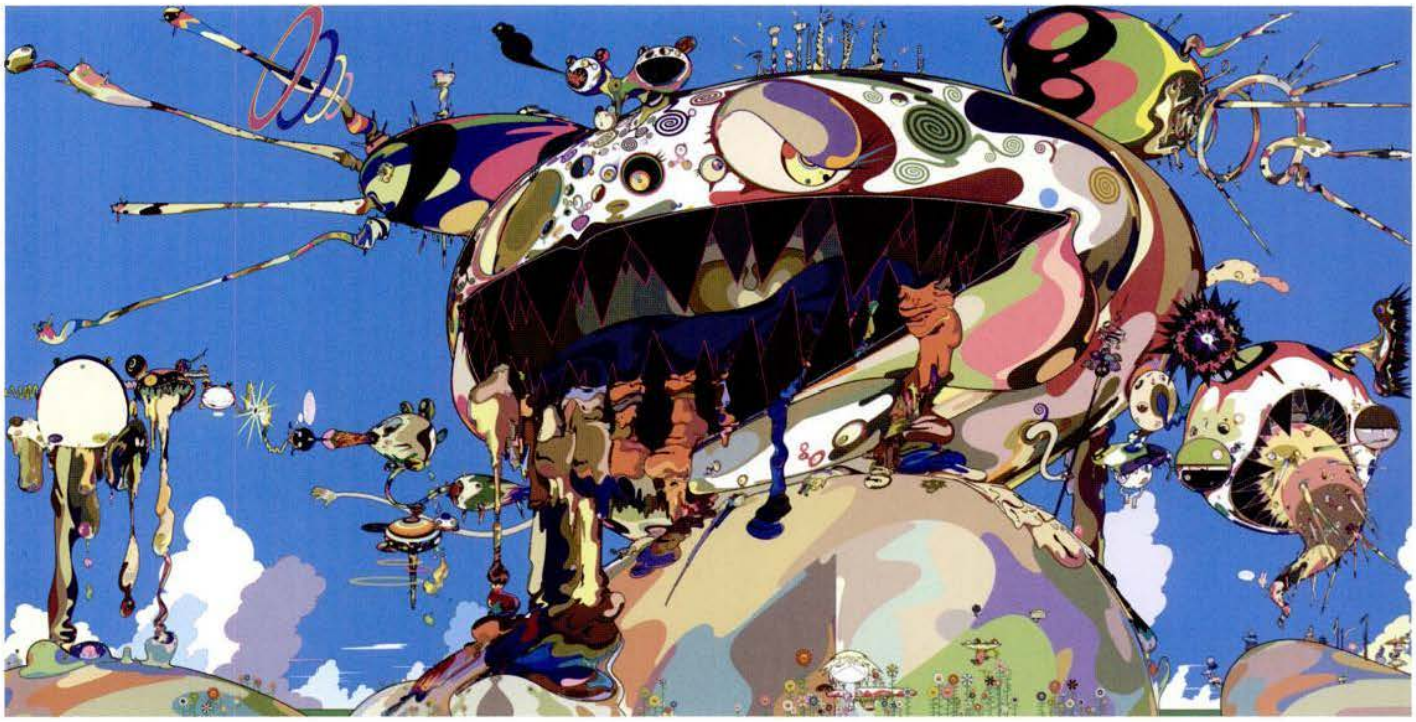

**© Murakami** / 29 Oct–11 Feb / The Geffen Contemporary at the Museum of Contemporary Art / Los Angeles, CA / www.moca.org / Takashi Murakami's brain-sizzling sci-fi pop art crosses media, themes, and now continents, with this explosive exhibition of more than 90 of his works, including a new animated film. Murakami's exuberance, colors, and sheer artistic energy will be burning Angeleno retinas all winter long.

**Yabaco chair** / By Ryann Aoukar and Damien Robache for Nienkämper / www.nienkamper.com / Pharaohs, kings, and emperors named Ming have all parked their royal assets on seating sporting the classic cross-base motif. Now—thanks to the transatlantic team of Aoukar and Robache—monarchs of modernity have a 21st-century chair apparent of their own. With a gently sloping seat crowning a symmetrical steel frame of Kjærholm-like curves, the positive and negative spaces of the Yabaco chair rule equally supreme.

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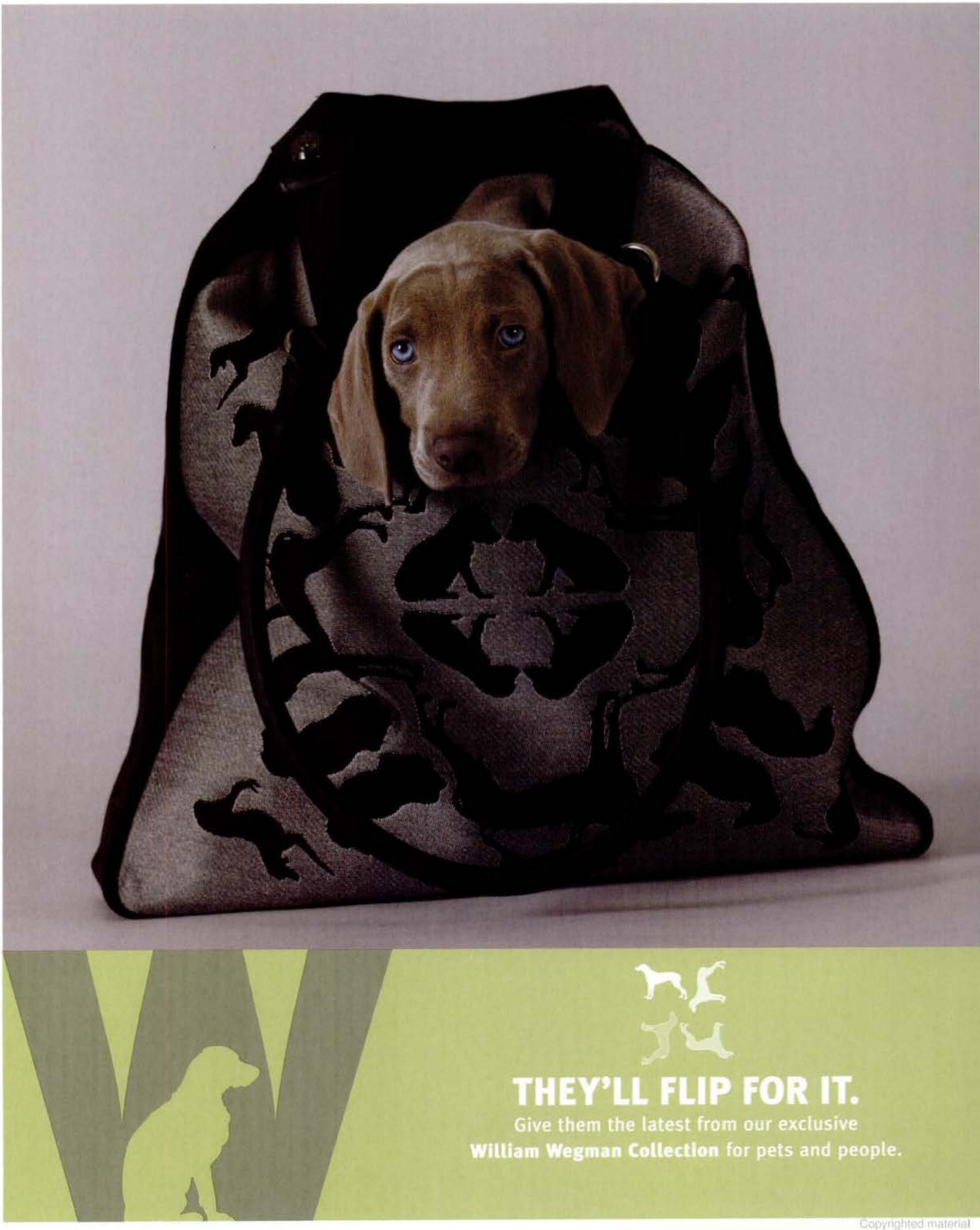

At left: Midnight Black/Platinum Petalonia Tote 16" x 17.5" x 4." Above, clockwise from top left: Hot Chocolate/Mocha Petalonia Totes 16" x 17.5" x 4," Midnight Black Bolster Pet Bed, available in 18" x 24," 27" x 36" and 36" x 44," Hot Chocolate Rotator Tote 24" x 15.5" x 6.5," and Hot Chocolate Rotator Duffle 22" x 9" x 10."

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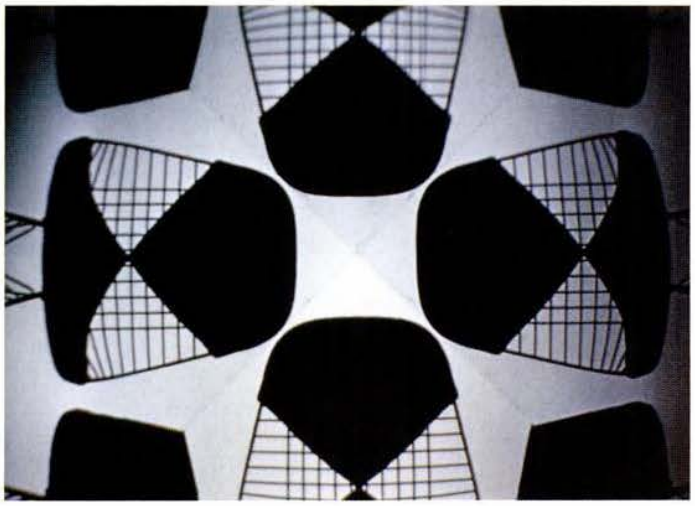
Charles Eames—who, with wife Ray, is remembered as a much-loved luminary of mid-century-modern design—was born on June 17, 1907. And in light of the seldom-seen assemblage of ephemera, photos, and prototypes slated for display, the Eames Office has rightly decided that a little centennial celebration is in order. Beginning January 17, 2008, it will host the second part of a comprehensive career retrospective tracing his rise from obscurity to iconic ubiquity. The fact that it's being curated by Carla Hartman—Eames's eldest grandchild—is just icing on the cake.

**Charles Eames: Part II—California to the World** / 17 Jan–17 June / Eames Office / Santa Monica, CA / www.eamesoffice.com /

The Eames Office is throwing a five-month-long shindig celebrating Charles's 100th, and you're invited!



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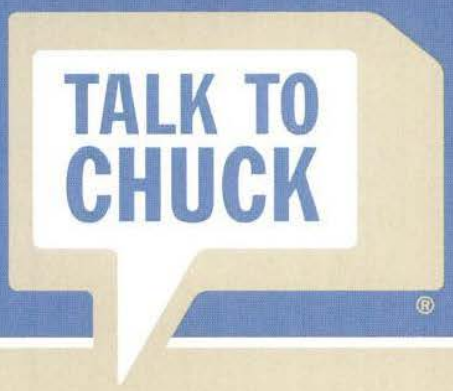


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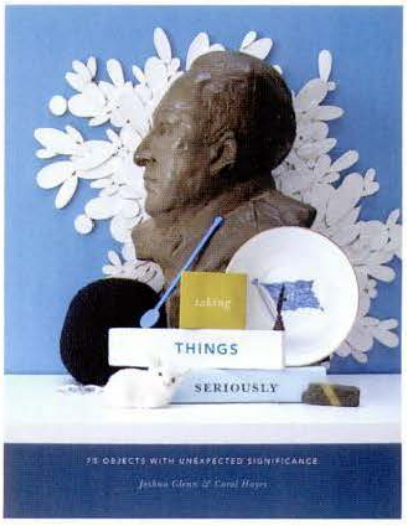
**Plastic Polo** / By Michael Young for Lacoste / www.lacoste-usa.com / The iconic alligator and do-I-really-want-to-drop-that-much-coin-for-a-polo-shirt price tag are sure indicators that you've got a Lacoste on your hands. British designer Michael Young also got hold of a Lacoste polo, and has—at the clothier's behest—bedizened it with plastic scales mirroring the gnarled, leathery hide of the trademark animal. Dubbed the Plastic Polo, Young's limited addition to the piqué polo pantheon can be found on an Andy Roddick near you.




**Taking Things Seriously: 75 Objects with Unexpected Significance** / Edited by Joshua Glenn and Carol Hayes / Princeton Architectural Press / $17.50 / www.papress.com / In the right place at the right time, even the most useless object can attain life-changing significance. This delightful, often hilarious new book gives us 75 examples of such things taken seriously: an antique phone terminal, a box of clipped fingernails, a gigantic bowling trophy, even someone's "rock wrapped in a pie tin." These "are not merely objects," it says, but quotidian totems imbued with highly personal emotional power.

**Strass stool** / By Michelle Ivankovic for Umbra / www.umbra.com / Upon first encountering the silicone-dipped Strass stool, we assumed that someone had forgotten to post a "Wet Paint" sign, and almost walked on by. When passing it a second time, however, a more seasonally evocative image came to mind: that of a frozen, lonely little park bench. Thankfully—for its sake and ours—spring is just around the corner.

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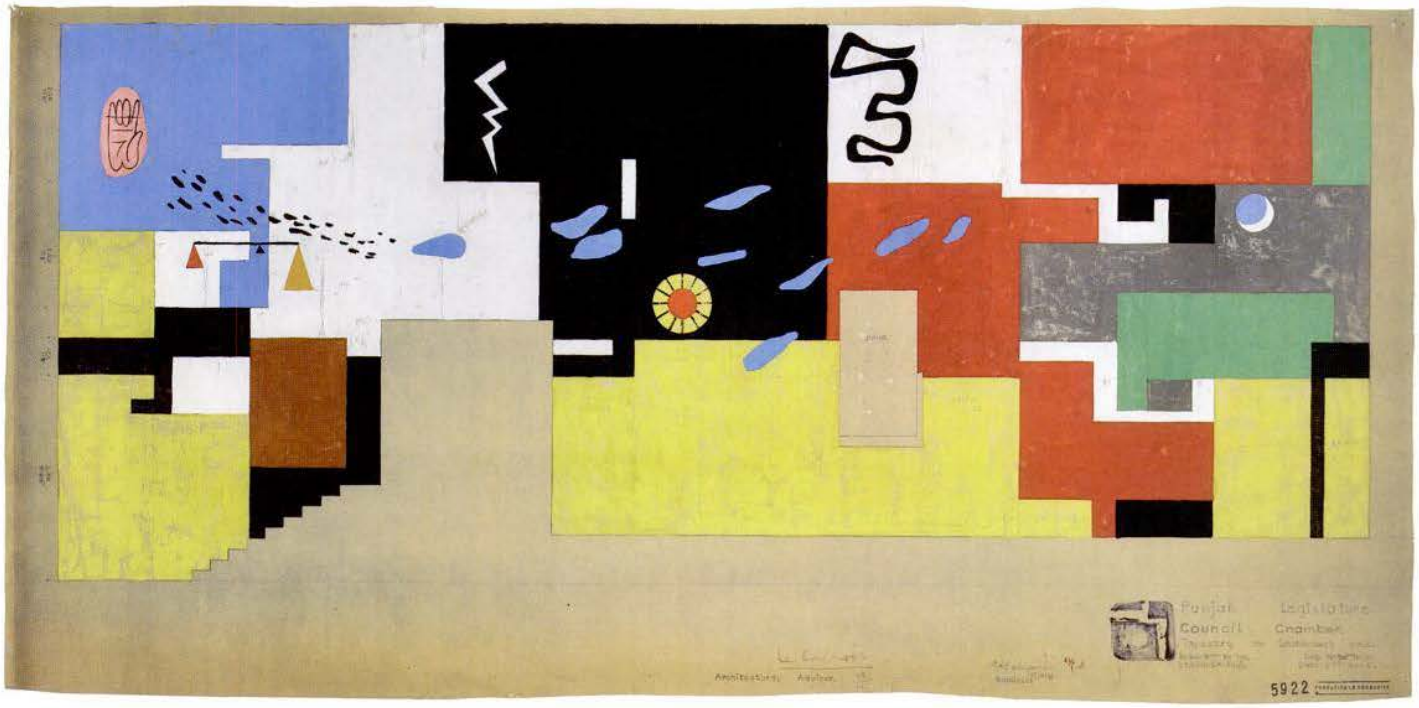
**Dakar chair** / By Dune / www.duneliving.com / Too many chairs designed today appear to be more set piece than sit piece, but this is a low-profile exception. With its simple wood frame and discreetly upholstered seat, the Dakar chair is a nice option for those who prefer that their furniture be functional as well as fashionable.

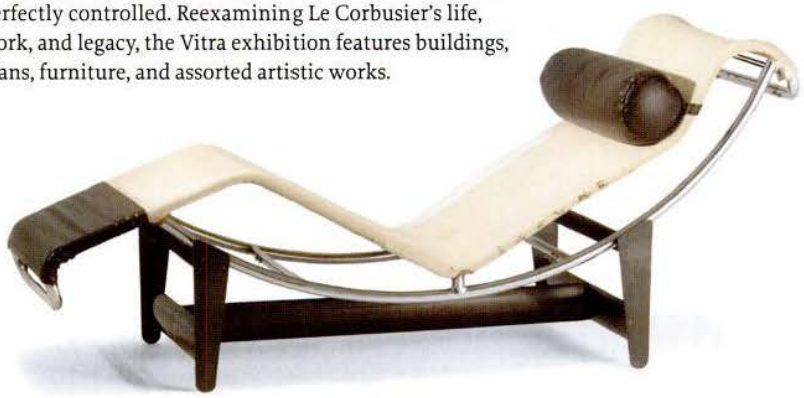

**New Museum opening** / 1 Dec / New York, NY / www.newmuseum.org / The new New Museum hopes to revitalize New York's contemporary art scene—or at least the Bowery District. Designed by Tokyo-based SANAA—architects Kazuyo Sejima and Ryue Nishizawa—the sleek and comfortably proportioned new facility includes galleries, classrooms, a theater, roof terraces, and a flexible event space. Constructed in a former parking lot and clad in anodized aluminum, only time will tell how well its dull gray façade weathers the extremes of New York.

**City Plates collection** / By notNeutral / www.notneutral.com / Grab your passport, and please pass the gravy. notNeutral has recently added four new cities to its international itinerary of tabletop travel destinations: Dubai, Las Vegas, New Orleans, and Washington, DC. Cartography has never looked more appetizing.




**Le Corbusier—The Art of Architecture** / 29 Sept–10 Feb / Vitra Design Museum / Weil am Rhein, Germany / www.design-museum.de / This major new retrospective at the Vitra Design Museum rightly declares Le Corbusier "an important point of reference for contemporary architecture and urbanism." But before we celebrate Corbu's work, we should take a look at his politically complex legacy.

Friend of bulldozers—and car-loving architect of identikit towers—Le Corbusier was no fan of history. He was, rather, a pioneer of modern aesthetics and structures who helped push architecture into a bold new age of ideas and experimentation. Yet the whitewashed urban voids that he envisioned replacing Europe's cities were "machines for living in," organized like factories: vast, efficient, and perfectly controlled. Reexamining Le Corbusier's life, work, and legacy, the Vitra exhibition features buildings, plans, furniture, and assorted artistic works.



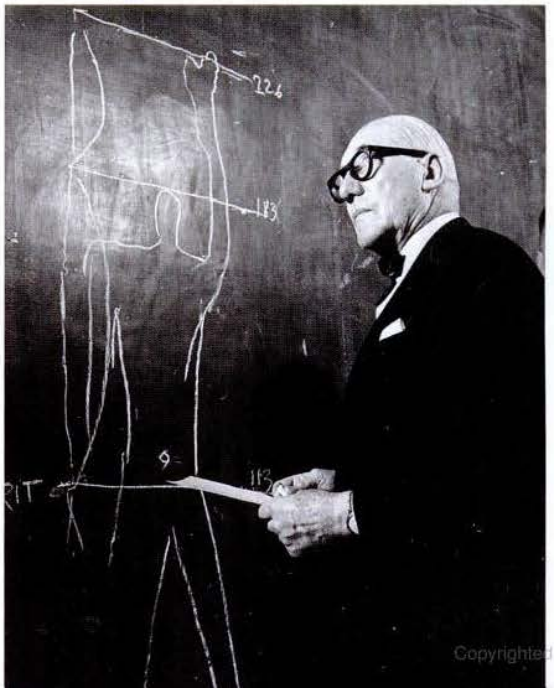



PHOTO COURTESY FLC/VG BILD-KUNST / BONN / 2007 (PORTRAIT)

**Vitra Edition collection** / By various designers for Vitra / www.vitra.com / The first Vitra Edition collection debuted in 1987, and boasted a roster of talent that read like a who's who (and who-will-be) of architecture and design. In 2007, a new crop of Vitra all stars—Arad, Grcic, Hadid, and more—served up a fresh batch of experimental (and now available) eye candy. Covet prototypes—like Naoto Fukasawa's Chair, pictured above—from both *very* limited editions at the London Design Museum, now through January 27, 2008.


**Seventy-nine Short Essays on Design** / By Michael Bierut / Princeton Architectural Press / $24.95 / www.papress.com / In this lively collection of previously published essays, Michael Bierut provides a compulsively readable guide to all things design. While fonts and logos receive their expected due, so too do Eero Saarinen's TWA terminal, treadmill tripping, and enormous wild geese.

**Barrel, Campfire, and Chiminea votives** / By David Weeks for Kikkerland Design / www.mxyplyzyk.com / Whether you're a former hobo, Boy Scout, or rec-room refugee of the '70s, this charming little trio of porcelain votives is sure to bring back warm memories.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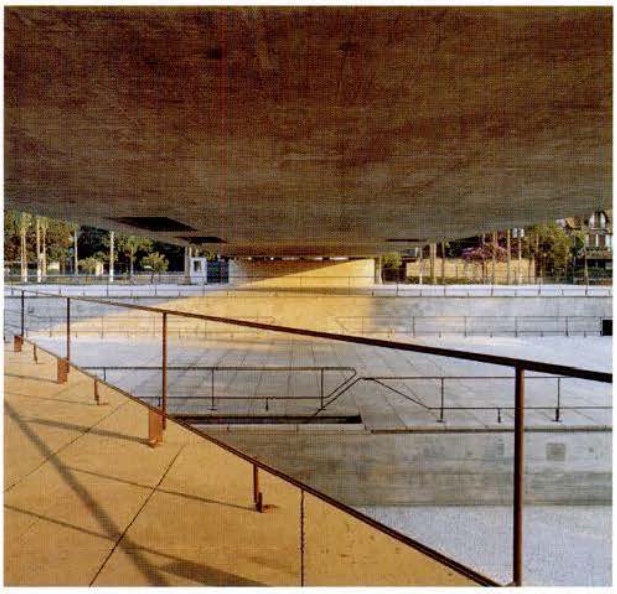
**2D-furniture** / By Wouter Nieuwendijk and Suzanne van Oirschot / www.checkhuh.nl / Flat Stanley would undoubtedly agree: The 2D-furniture collection by dynamic Dutch duo Wouter Nieuwendijk and Suzanne van Oirschot delivers an unexpected visual wallop with a dimensionally deficient design. A whimsical eye for both subject and scale turn what could've been an IKEA-by-way-of-*Craft* magazine weekend projects into flat-out scene stealers.


**Extensions** / By Adam Mornement / Laurence King Publishing / $40 / www.laurenceking.co.uk / The book's back cover says it all: "Additions and alterations to private homes have become one of the most fertile breeding grounds for architectural innovation." Author Adam Mornement sets out to prove that statement with this illustrated look at basement add-ons, roof terraces, expanding cabins, and the odd "suspended bedroom." Our coffee table just got a new addition.




**Paulo Mendes da Rocha: Fifty Years** / By Paulo Mendes da Rocha with Rosa Artigas / Rizzoli / $85 / www.rizzoliusa.com / Before he won a Pritzker Prize in 2006, Brazilian architect Paulo Mendes da Rocha was nearly unheard of in North America. But his muscular use of steel and concrete to frame well-massed, geometric spaces just got some glossy-paged love: This detailed survey of Mendes da Rocha's lifework lays out just what the northern hemisphere has been missing.

**Springbuck rocker** / By Justin Plunkett for Joom / www.joom.co.za / Bounding straight off the South African savanna, Justin Plunkett's wild update on the domesticated rocking horse had more than one Dwell editor wishing that it came in an adult size. Unlike its rusty relatives listing gracelessly at the playground, the sproinging Springbuck is as svelte as its veld-grazing namesake. Can a giraffe hat rack be far behind?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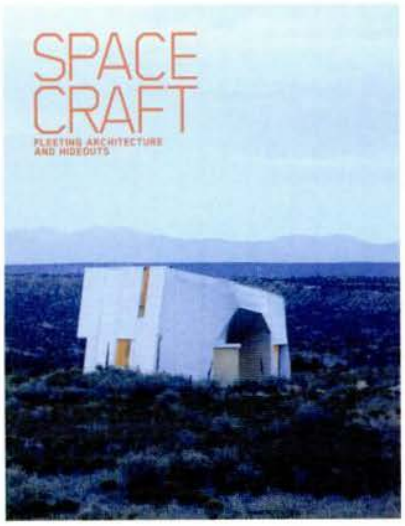


**Spacecraft: Fleeting Architecture and Hideouts** / Edited by R. Klanten and L. Feireiss / Die Gestalten / $70 / www.diegestalten.de / Temporary spaces rarely receive the architectural attention they deserve. *Spacecraft* makes an effort to correct this oversight by focusing on "flexible, fleeting structures that only exist for a limited time." And that's only half the book: The other half focuses on permanent spaces "that are used temporarily," including vacation homes and downtown offices. These can be quiet retreats or exciting experiments—and sometimes both at the same time.

**Isis chair** / By Jake Phipps for Thonet / www.thonet-vienna.com / Folding under pressure rarely looks good, but the kirigami-like Isis chair by Jake Phipps manages to make it look downright classy. While more for the floor than the wall, it puts a slick spin on Studio Dror's recent Pick chair, and represents manufacturer Thonet's first wood folder since 1930.


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Story by William Lamb | Photos by Adam Friedberg

# Industrial Revolution

This steel-and-glass house, set amid dense forest south of Ithaca, New York, captivated Maria Cook and Lance Compa when they first toured it in 2004. They bought it not long afterward and turned it into a weekend retreat.

**Maria Cook and Lance Compa were only looking to** kill a sleepy Sunday afternoon when they drove 20 minutes south of their home in Ithaca, New York, to see a house that a real estate circular had teased as an "architect-designed modern."

They certainly weren't hunting for a new house. At the time, they were contemplating a move to Southern California, where Cook grew up and still has family. In any case, they were already living happily in a 19th-century Greek revival in downtown Ithaca, where both are on the faculty at Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations.

Still, what they saw that afternoon in September 2004 struck them. Set in a clearing on 14 acres of dense forest, the house is a stark, steel-sided box that at first blush clashes intensely with its surroundings. But Cook and Compa were transfixed by the floor-to-ceiling windows offering an expansive view of a gently sloping hill to the south. When they got up the next morning, they confessed to each other that they had spent the better part of the night thinking about it.

"It was a completely unexpected thing, and I think it was love at first sight for both of us," Cook says. "And then, shortly after that, the California thing fell through, and at that point, nobody had made a bid on the house."

"We decided to bring California here," Compa says. ►

The couple bought the house in November 2004. They kept their house downtown as a primary residence and use the new one as a weekend retreat—though its proximity to Ithaca means they can, and often do, visit whenever the urge strikes.

"The house captured us," says Compa. "It was the contrast of the design in this setting. This is really modernist tending toward minimal. It's all straight lines, right angles, steel and glass, and it's in the middle of this Appalachian forest. At first it's shocking, but then there's a reconciliation that takes place."

For Cook, the appeal was "the light and the quiet, the sense of calm that you get as soon as you walk in the door, and the way the wildlife interacts with the house." It is not uncommon, she says, for deer or a gaggle of wild turkeys to trot by, peering quizzically at the strange creatures inhabiting this curious glass-and-steel box.

The house was designed in 1999 and 2000 by architects Eric A. Kahn, Ron Golan, and Russell N. Thomsen of Central Office of Architecture in Los Angeles. The idea, Kahn says, was to create "a sanctuary, a place for quiet repose and reflection within nature." Construction was completed in 2002.

The architects chose materials that set the project apart from both its surroundings and the neighboring houses, most of which were built with liberal amounts of stone and aluminum siding. "We chose metal siding to make ▸

### How to Make My House Your House

**Galvaluminous**

For the exterior, the architects chose corrugated Galvalume, an alloy-coated sheet steel. It's a low-maintenance material with a 40-year projected life span. Just as important, architect Eric Kahn says, is the way it responds to the seasons, gently reflecting the green of the surrounding forest in the summer and taking on a sleek, machine-like look when snow falls in the winter.

Compa and Cook relax on a patio at the western end of the house that overlooks a neighboring farm (top). Floor-to-ceiling windows (above) capture natural light and warmth while offering expansive views of the woods to the south. "In the winter, I like to use the house as therapy because there's so much light," Cook says.

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a statement about this thing being an artificial, rational construct and to distinguish it from the material of the site and nature," Kahn elaborates.

Polished concrete floors with radiant heat help keep the house warm in the brutal upstate winters. The trees shed their leaves in the fall, opening up a view of sloping hills to the south and exposing the house to ample light and warmth from the low-hanging winter sun. In the spring, the leaves return to create what Compa calls a "cool summer cocoon."

The house was designed to accommodate limited mobility, including a floor surface with no thresholds. A pair of wheelchair-accessible bathrooms are hidden behind "wrappers" of Formica-laminate cabinets, closets, and drawers, dividing the 1,620-square-foot open floor plan. The accessible elements are subtle, however, never threatening to overshadow or detract from the overall design.

For Cook and Compa, there was some adjustment involved in moving into a house that had been designed to a stranger's exacting specifications. They wondered, for example, why there were only three sets of windows that open, and questioned the decision to squeeze the kitchen into a narrow passage between the living and dining areas.

Storage—the overabundance of it—also has been an issue. "We were a little puzzled as to why there's so much," Cook says, yanking open one of 30 drawers ▸

**Counter Offer**

In place of tile or granite, the architects installed black epoxy-resin countertops—the kind that should be familiar to anyone who has spent time in a high-school chemistry lab. The material is durable and easy to clean, and it complements the aesthetics of the interior. Durcon Inc. is a leading manufacturer of this stain- and flame-proof material.

Some aspects of the design continue to puzzle Cook and Compa, who compare the narrow kitchen (top) to an airplane galley. The house has become a showcase for Cook and Compa's collection of modern furniture, including several Eames chairs and a Jens Risom chair for Knoll (above). p. 230

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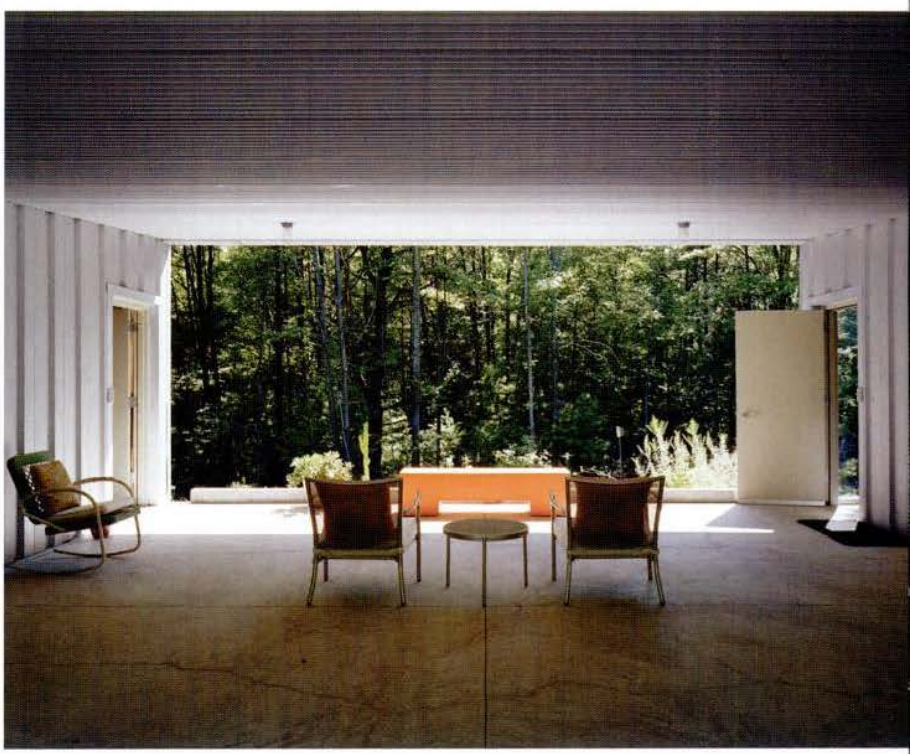
tucked beneath a counter that runs the length of the northern side of the house. "We certainly don't use every drawer, and it's a problem because we put things in a drawer and we can't tell what drawer. We end up opening every damn drawer in the house looking for stuff. So we have that kind of relationship with the house too."

Cook and Compa have added a few tweaks to make the house their own. They converted a carport into a breezeway, complete with outdoor furniture. Together with a patio at the western end of the house, it adds nearly 1,300 square feet of usable space in the spring, summer, and fall. Inside, they found a way to show off their collection of ceramic and wood pieces by putting them in the cabinets that ring the western core and leaving the sliding doors open.

Over the past three years, the couple have learned to adapt and innovate, and to appreciate the quirks that make the structure unique. For example, they resisted their initial impulse to tinker with the black, white, and gray interior color scheme.

"We didn't like the gray at the beginning, but now we do," Cook comments. "Our first idea was, Oh, we need color in here. But I think one of the points of the house is that the color and the movement and the excitement is happening out there in nature, so the inside has to be more stable." The professor adds, laughing, "The house teaches us a lot of stuff too." ■

**Pipe Down**
The water heater and the heating and air-conditioning equipment were installed in the garage and are connected to the house by wires and pipes that run over the carport (shown at right). Keeping these necessary but noisy items away from the house helps to minimize the ambient noise inside.



A counter runs the length of the northern side of the house, offering a convenient workspace and plenty of storage (top). Cook and Compa turned a carport into a breezeway, adding patio furniture and an orange bench to give the space a dash of color (above). Along with the patio, it adds 1,300 square feet of usable space during the warmer months.

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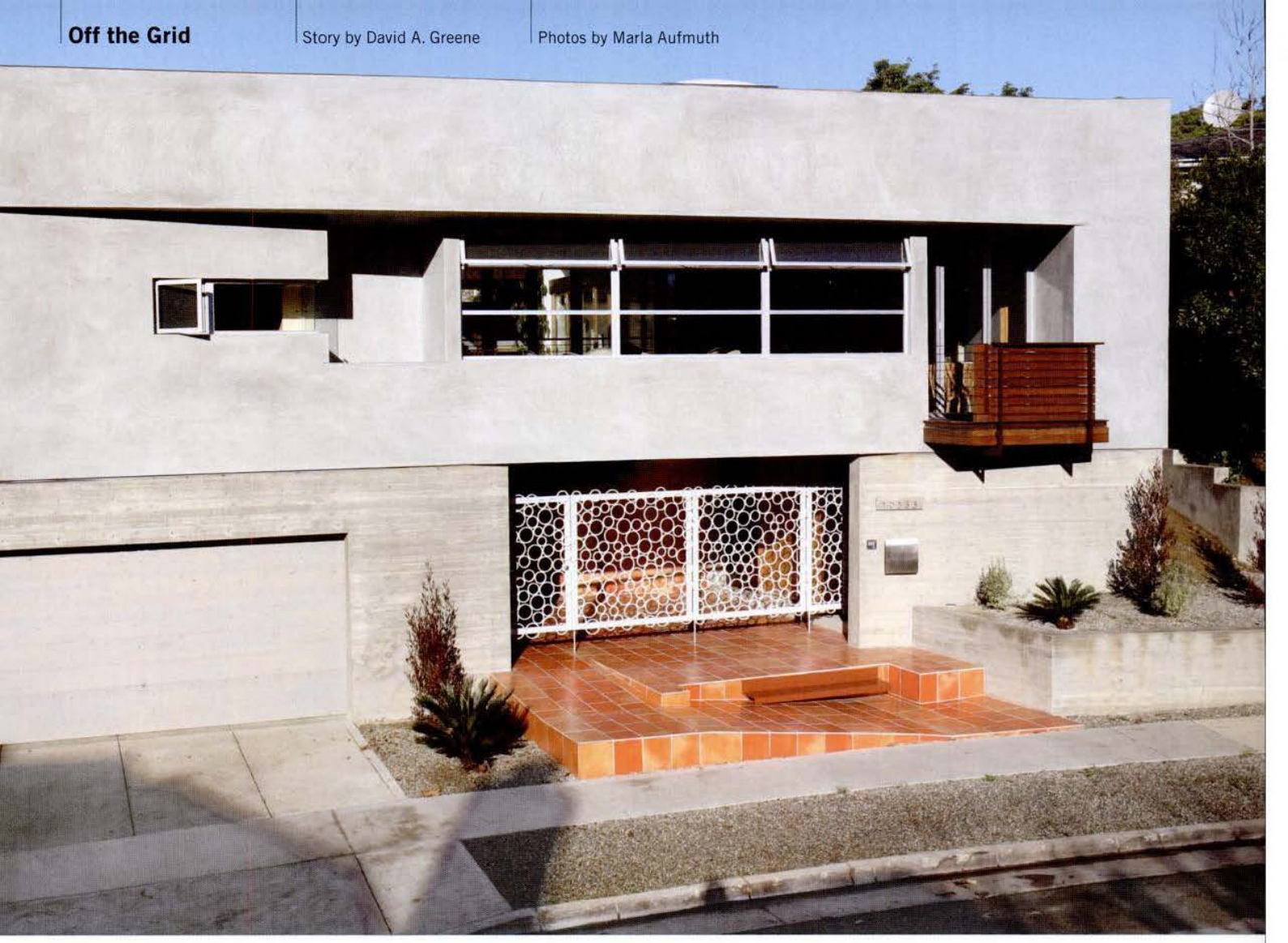

# Courtyard of Appeal

Thomas Robertson's Courtyard House is an homage to Mexican haciendas and their descendants: sturdy, Spanish-style L.A. houses built in the 1920s and 1930s, which to this day still don't need air-conditioning. The thick stucco walls and tiled roofs repel heat, and the cleverly positioned casement windows (even in closets) suck Pacific sea breezes far inland.

**Like so many L.A. stories, the tale of the Courtyard** House begins with a lucky break. One day in 2001, Thomas Robertson got a call from a friend he hadn't seen in ages. The friend told him that his elderly aunt needed companionship in her twilight years, and that she owned an empty lot in a posh West Los Angeles neighborhood. Would Tom like to design a home they could live in together? "I thought he was joking," Robertson recalls. And just like that, he had his first house commission.

Inspired by L.A.'s "phenomenal weather," the English-born, Pittsburgh-bred designer was determined to build his friend a courtyard house, one of the original forms of sustainable architecture. After a scouting trip to Oaxaca, Mexico, Robertson came back with visions of haciendas dancing in his head, convinced that the age-old style was the perfect solution for modern L.A. living.

From the street, the 2,800-square-foot Courtyard House looks, at first, like any other modern house: concrete, desert plants, a Blomus mailbox. But then one notices the thick, gray stucco of the exterior has a soft, steel-troweled sheen, and the iron railings on the ipe-wood balconies look suspiciously hand-wrought, hinting at more old-school ideas within. The street-level entry court is paved with orange-red porcelain tiles, recalling the bricks of Old Mexico.

Stepping up into the home, visitors are met by the wide-open courtyard, paved with the same porcelain tiles and protected from neighbors' prying eyes by the U-shaped embrace of the house. ("It's almost like an arm hugging itself," says Robertson.) One wing soars up to a second story, with a rakish roof oddly reminiscent of classic L.A. diners—then again, not so odd, since Robertson's client sent him to look at Google-style coffee shops for inspiration. "He was pretty eccentric," notes Robertson.

The client had specific, seemingly contradictory requests: "He wanted an open, loftlike place—but ▸


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The two sides of the house look across the courtyard at each other, and are bridged by the dining room, which looks out onto the street below like the wheelhouse of a ship. "Everyone ends up in the kitchen anyway, so why not put the kitchen in the courtyard?" says Robertson. The only two enclosed rooms in the house are the bedrooms.

also nooks and crannies, little places to tuck away in," Robertson remembers. He wanted a place where his aged aunt would feel secure, yet where he could work on his art—alone. By committing to the courtyard, Robertson was freed from figuring out how to negotiate the incongruous spaces in the same big box.

The two-story wing was built for the nephew, with a living room at ground level that's bathed in sun from a skylight, and a bedroom and bath with a private balcony upstairs. Tucked away in back are an office and tiny art studio with a separate entrance. The stairs are part of a spectacular storage unit Robertson designed from knotty-pine plywood; it looks like something the IKEA elves dreamed up after a week at Burning Man.

The aunt's wing is a single story that slopes down gently into the lot, containing a kitchen, a den, and, at the farthest end from the street, a bedroom and a bath that includes both outdoor and indoor showers. Access is via either the kitchen and den or a narrow secret hallway that ramps down behind the kitchen, avoiding the bustle of the social areas. This hallway includes cubbies and hide-away storage, all Robertson's design; he was given carte blanche to design everything in the house, and he ran with it. In the kitchen, he designed the powder-coated metal cabinets and silverware drawers, and a cartoon-angled breakfast nook in the same jaunty pine (think Keith Haring meets Amtrak).

The Courtyard House has the standard Prius-generation green kit: radiant heating in the slab-on-grade concrete floors, boosted by a solar water heater; photovoltaic cells hidden on the reflective Galvalume roof. But the real ecological engine is the windows, amazing Transformers of fenestration that take the term "curtain wall" literally: Once lifted up and slid in their tracks, the kitchen windows stack neatly out of the way, like 200-pound vertical blinds. The result is total deconstruction. The kitchen doesn't just flow into the courtyard, it becomes a part of it. The same functional, but pricey, ▸


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A curtain made of cut sheet steel by Chicago sculptor Mary Brogger hangs in the living room. The bookshelves were designed by Robertson and Ripple Design. The stacked plywood boxes and powder-coated steel spacers allow light to pass through the shelves. On the left is a fireplace faced in the same hand-troweled concrete as the façade; owner Jan Horn likens it to a miniature house. "I love that little building," he says.

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Robertson designed everything from the orange powder-coated-steel shelves and storage units to a knotty-pine breakfast nook. Similar eating nooks are a signature feature of 1920s and '30s Spanish-style houses—though the originals were decorated in a Moorish theme.

window system (by NanaWall) is used, if slightly less theatrically, in the dining and living rooms.

Robertson's wonderment at L.A.'s temperate clime, and his choice to build in harmony with it, is in tune with some of the greatest architects ever to work in Los Angeles, from Greene & Greene's Craftsman sleeping porches and Frank Lloyd Wright's outdoor living rooms to Rudolf Schindler's breezy masterpiece on Kings Road. All of those architects were cold-state émigrés similarly inspired by L.A.'s permanent forecast of 90 percent awesome, 10 percent apocalypse—and their houses were built before the siren song of the four-ton air-conditioning compressor made uninsulated boxes so cost-effective to mass produce.

But like so many L.A. stories, the tale of the Courtyard House ends with a shocking twist. As the project reached completion, the elderly aunt died, and the house was put up for sale. With no A/C, no master suite, and no pool, Robertson's brand-new, fully realized Courtyard House was suddenly a handyman's special on L.A.'s multimillion-dollar Westside.

All houses change as they age, and the Courtyard House has had to grow up faster than most. Its new owners, Jan and Maureen Horn, have a professional appreciation for architecture: Maureen's a broker, and Jan's a real estate agent who specializes in what he calls "architecture as art," mostly modern and architect-designed homes. "Tom's kitchen/den is one of the greatest spaces I've ever been in," Jan exclaims. And of the courtyard, he says, "Maureen and I call it our piazza—to us, it's very European feeling." The Horns love the Courtyard House, though they do plan a few changes.

Piazza or cortile, plaza or patio, the courtyard is the heart of the house, with L.A.'s light and space as its lifeblood. Which may be why the Courtyard House feels like it's been around for decades. It's all so retro, it's practically medieval. Robertson prefers to call it "modest," which sounds about right. ▸

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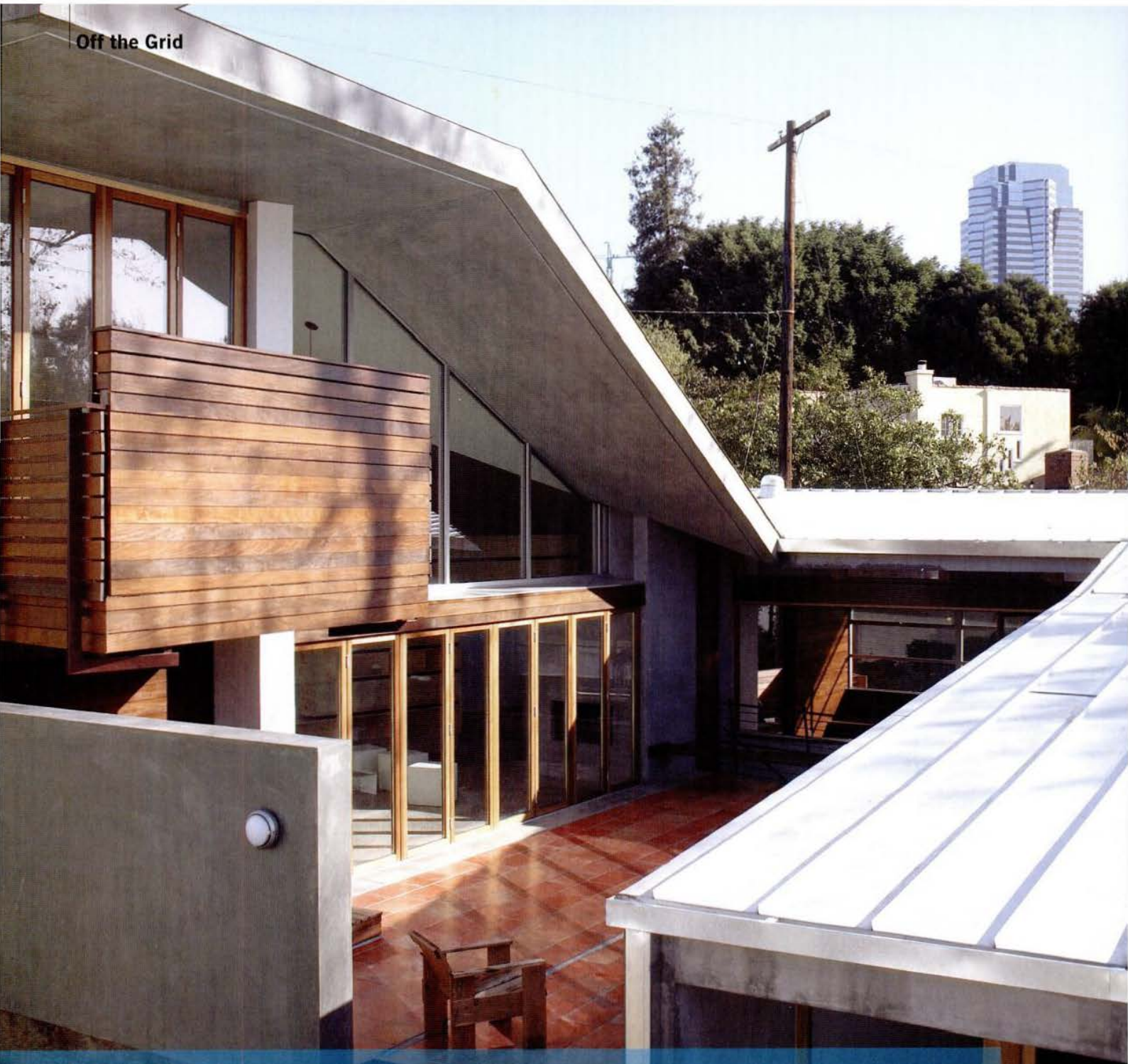

## Sit and Be Fit

If you ask Thomas Robertson, the difference between actively green houses and his passively sustainable Courtyard House is the difference between "a solar-powered yacht and a sailboat." It could be argued that the most sustainable aspect of the Courtyard House is in fact the house itself: Built of metal studs and steel tube frame on a site that's been graded and compacted, it should endure a century of drought, El Niño rain, and the odd earthquake. The stucco walls and galvanized-metal roof moderate heat, while the cool concrete floors suck it into the bowels of the earth. Roof overhangs control sunshine, shunning it in summer and allowing it to creep through the house in winter. The disappearing window-walls and thermal-chimney skylights allow sea breezes from the west to swirl and flow through the rooms—nature's air-conditioning. "It's like a big wind scoop," says Robertson.

Like all new technologies, whiz-bang green is having its look-at-me moment; but like indoor plumbing and the iPhone, it'll become ubiquitous soon enough. The Courtyard House jumps ahead of the curve by looking back at time-honored concepts of site-specific regional buildings (in this case the hacienda). You heard it here first: Passive is the new active. —D.G. ■

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# Urban Retreat and City Escape Named Winners of The Infinity Design Challenge

Dwell and The Infinity are pleased to announce the two winning designs from The Infinity Design Challenge, a national contest offering readers and the design community the chance to design the interior of a model home in one of San Francisco's newest luxury high-rise buildings, The Infinity. The winners, who will see their creations brought to life in early 2008, include Robert Edmonds and Vivian Lee of Edmonds + Lee Architects in San Francisco, and a group of designers from Cupertino, California, Tammy Tran, Jessica Liu, and Kelly Lin. The winning designs and other selected entries are currently on display at The Infinity Design Center located at 160 Folsom Street in San Francisco.

Contestants, who worked within a budget of $75,000, were asked to submit a design proposal for one of three varied floor plans, with the challenge of expressing the vision of The Infinity's architecture, which communicates understated elegance, serenity, and contemporary luxury.

Designed by renowned architect Bernardo Fort-Brescia of Arquitectonica in collaboration with Clark Manus, FAIA of San Francisco architectural firm Heller Manus, The Infinity is a modern urban community, featuring two towers rising 37 and 42 stories, and two mid-rise buildings of eight and nine stories. The Infinity is distinguished by a sleek exterior design with expansive, undulating curved glass walls that rise into the sky, affording each homeowner with their very own panoramic San Francisco "bay window."

The panel of judges included Dwell owner and founder, Lara Hedberg Deam; Clark Manus of Heller Manus, FAIA, leader in the transformation of Rincon Hill; and noted architect Mark Jensen, AIA, who spent four years as the chair of the interior architecture department at California College of the Arts. More than 50 entries were received from throughout the country.

**For more information about The Infinity, visit www.the-infinity.com or call (415) 512–7700.**

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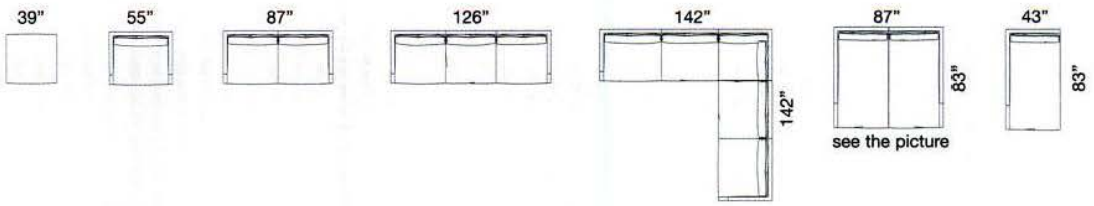


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# Chair Up

This dinner guest is always invited, but doesn't eat or drink, and never joins the conversation. But long after the party's over, it will still be at the table. Our favorite dining companion: the dining chair.

**On the one hand, a dining chair should never come** between you and your meal. It should serve you nobly whether you're chewing or chatting idly. It should be a silent partner who assuredly sees you through the night, securely grounding you as drink takes to your head, gently coddling you as your weight gradually disperses, and propping you up gingerly when the time comes to retire. On the other hand, every chair, dining or otherwise, makes a bold statement. The chair is no mere machine for sitting. It tells people things that are historical, stylistic, and highly personal. The chair holds a unique place in our history: an ancient tool evolved and updated in tight symbiosis. Chairs evoke the limitless variation with which the brain can address a simple task.

"I am pretty far on the spectrum of style over comfort," Richard Wright tells us from his Chicago-based auction house. "It sort of goes hand-in-hand with what I do." Imagine the final scene of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, but with the endless stacks of wooden crates replaced by every imaginable 20th-century design collectible, and you get a sense for the world over which Wright presides. This is a man who knows his chairs, and knows they are a loaded subject. "When you deal with a design history, so much of it is about the chair, so you become very critical of chairs and chair forms. I have a harsher criteria for chairs—especially dining chairs." This criterion, which deems that a dining chair should remain comfortable over the course of a dinner party while still living up to its stylistic responsibilities, has proved difficult to fulfill. Even with the pick of the litter, Wright is still searching for his ideal set. "Right now I have these Mies van der Rohe chairs which are incredibly heavy. My three-year-old can barely move them. I've been searching for a contemporary dining chair that fits what I want, and honestly, I haven't found it yet." Would any of our seven dining chair picks have the Wright stuff?

**Organic chair / By Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen for Vitra /** This vaunted design was created for the 1940 MoMA exhibition "Organic Design in Home Furnishings." The chair, which was the first to mold wood into complex curvatures and use the cycle-welding technique of bonding rubber to wood, won first prize at the show and would have been produced by Heywood-Wakefield had the war not intervened. The chair was finally mass-produced by Vitra in 2006. www.vitra.com

**Expert Opinion:** I don't want to sound like a whiny antiques dealer, but my heart kind of sank when I saw that this chair was available commercially. In my mind I always think of it as being this wonderful, historical object within which you can trace the directions that design would take over the following decades. To change my mindset from that to "Is it comfortable?" or "Can I use that in my dining room?" took some readjustment. Just the thought of sitting in it is crazy—you'd never be allowed to with an original, they're so fragile.

**What We Think:** Wright informed us that an Organic chair once fetched $125,000 at auction, but in 2004 one failed to sell for $40,000 (signaling a downward shift in the Eames market—buy low, folks). At those prices even Mitt Romney would balk at furnishing his dining room with originals, so we're thankful Vitra has worked its magic here, despite the ramifications for whiny antiques dealers. The dream team of Eero Saarinen and Charles Eames doesn't disappoint: This is one of the most comfortable chairs we've ever sat in. ►

Portrait by Thomas Chadwick

**A Note on Our Expert:** Richard Wright (not to be confused with the Richard Wright who authored *Native Son* or the Richard Wright who plays keyboards for Pink Floyd) is the proprietor of the world's most renowned auction house for modern design. Wright gravitated toward postwar design in the mid-1980s, "when that stuff was really considered junk," and began auctioning modern pieces at the Treadway Gallery in the mid-'90s. In 2000 he started Wright, and over the past seven years his name has become synonymous with the finest design collectibles of the 20th century (culminating in the 2006 sale of Pierre Koenig's Case Study House #21, along with all of its contents).

**PK9 / By Poul Kjærholm for Fritz Hansen /** Designed in 1960, the PK9 features a distinctive three-legged stainless steel base topped by a leather-covered seat of pressure-molded polyester. www.fritzhansen.com

**Expert Opinion:** Aesthetically I love these chairs. They really illustrate what makes Kjærholm so special as a designer: He took International Style and brought some heart to it. But I have a real problem with three-legged chairs in terms of dining chairs. If you are going to sit for a fairly short amount of time (and not drink), it's OK, but if you are going to have a dinner party and relax, then three legs don't work.

**What We Think:** On a recent visit to New York, we took the opportunity to eat at the Museum of Modern Art, where these chairs are used in one of the restaurants. Kjærholm! we thought as we waited to be seated. After an hour in the chair, however, we had a different take: We felt like a jack-in-the-box. The PK9 proves to be too much of a balancing act for a proper dining experience.

**Swag Leg chair / By George Nelson for Herman Miller /** While the 1958 fiberglass originals fetch steep prices on the collector's market, today's Swag Leg chair is easy to acquire and 100 percent recyclable. The shell is available in white, black, or gray, and the swagged legs can be chrome, white, or black. www.hermanmiller.com

**Expert Opinion:** I've always loved this chair. But I only want one—or maybe two—of them, and I want it behind a little delicate desk. The thought of eight of these around a table starts to terrify me. There is the famous quote of Eero Saarinen saying he designed his pedestal chair to "clean up the slum of legs" around the table. This would be beyond a slum; it's the ultimate ghetto of legs.

**What We Think:** The thought of too many Swag Leg chairs in the same room is enough to make us lose our appetites. That said, at a table for four, we could see it working. We also commend Herman Miller's efforts to update the piece for the 21st century with sustainable materials.

**HP/1 / By Jasper Morrison for Cappellini /** The HP/1 (whose name stands for "hi pad") is executed in Morrison's typical understated manner. The molded seat is available in a wide range of fabrics and leathers and sits atop a satin stainless steel base. www.cappellini.it

**Expert Opinion:** I don't know why I am so against a sled base. I always think of it with the Bertoia chair and being in a museum cafeteria setting. I like the graphic nature of the seat here, which is what makes the chair distinctive. The range of colors also plays into that graphic quality. But with the raised glides on the feet and the base, [the HP/1] wouldn't transition well into a formal dining room. Maybe in a kitchen, with a mix of colors.

**What We Think:** This chair clearly owes its lineage to the Eames and Bertoia classics, but the molded seat, with its perfectly executed curves, makes it a modern-day classic. Whether it's too informal for your dining room is up to you, but the only thing keeping it out of ours is its lack of arms. ▶

**Metropolitan side chair / By Jeffrey Bernett for B&B Italia /** Bernett's 2003 side chair rounds out a collection that also includes a lounge chair and bed. This chair is available in a wide range of coverings atop a choice of frames: an aluminum base with four feet or a steel sled-style base. www.bebitalia.it

**Expert Opinion:** I thought this chair, with the little reveal in the back, was safely mod. It wouldn't upstage the room, and because of the upholstery it would be comfortable. On the downside, the bases are lifted right from historical chairs. The pedestal is more officey, and the sled is a less elegant base than I like to see in a dining room statement.

**What We Think:** If Bernett's side chair were to win an Oscar, it would be for Best Supporting Actor (or actress, depending on your upholstery). With its quiet take on modernism, it's not going to be a star, but for that very reason it works in a variety of environments—not to mention that the seat is balanced and comfortable, and holds up for a whole meal.

**De La Warr Pavilion chair / By BarberOsgerby for Established & Sons /** The aluminum De La Warr Pavilion chair was designed for the 2005 reopening of England's modernist seaside landmark. While it can be used outdoors, an upholstered version is available, with the option of a perforated or solid back. www.establishedandsons.com

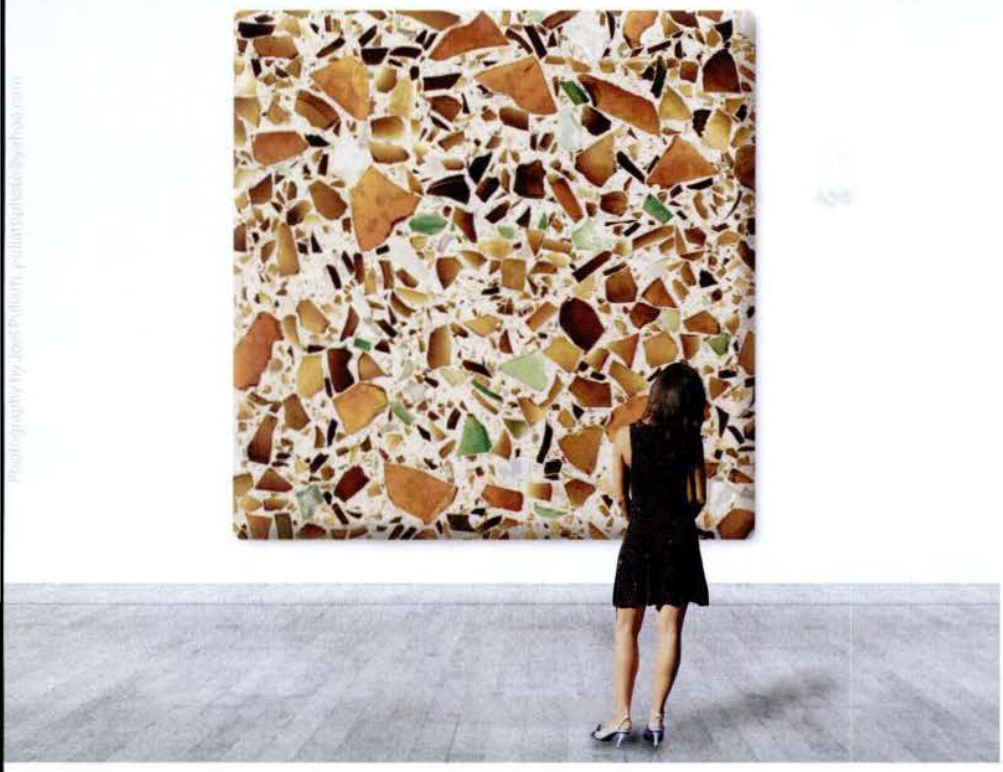
**Expert Opinion:** I like the perforation, but it is almost directly lifted from Hans Coray's iconic Landi chair. However, I wouldn't particularly like the perforation on an interior usage—the visual punch of it just makes sense outside because of the nod toward function. The upholstered version with the perforated back is sort of an odd disconnect, and with the solid upholstered version you start to lose something.

**What We Think:** What we appreciate here is the fact that the designers have recognized that dining chairs are so often seen from behind, tucked underneath a table, and have therefore created two very distinct façades.

**Carbon chair / By Bertjan Pot and Marcel Wanders for Moooi /** The genesis for the Carbon chair was the Carbon Copy, a prototype carbon-fiber replica of Charles and Ray Eames's iconic Wire chair. This chair is completely hand coiled and is 100 percent carbon fiber and epoxy. www.moooi.nl

**Expert Opinion:** I love this design. It is clearly a pastiche of chairs designed by Eames and Bertoia, but so wonderfully updated in this new material. I also particularly enjoy the feel of the hand that made it, or the play of randomness in the construction. It's taking that very rational "good design for the masses" and tweaking it to express humanism a little bit more. Intellectually I really like it, but would I want to sit in it at a dinner party for two hours?

**What We Think:** If you're looking for something quirky and clever, look no further than Holland with its cache of Eindhoven-educated designers. The Carbon chair may be a 21st-century classic. However, if you wear short shorts or skirts, it might be best to opt for another seat. ■



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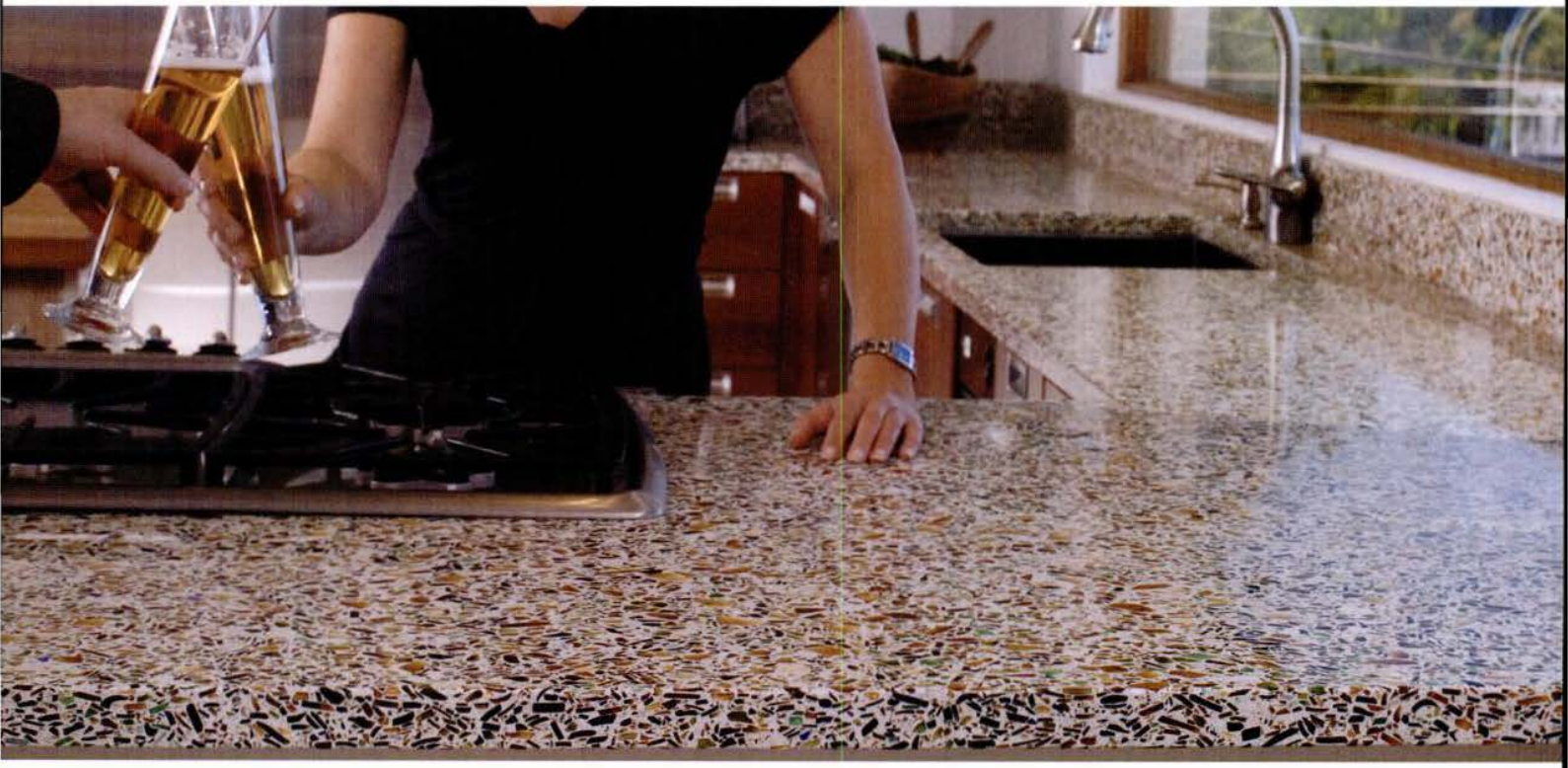

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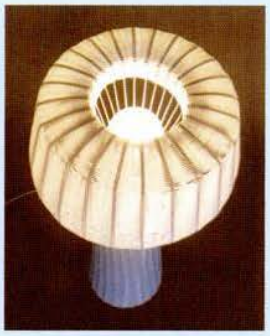


# On a Smartpath

Zoë Melo works with designers and artisans to produce socially responsible design objects like Domingos Tótora's Objects + Stools Collection, which is constructed from Kraft paper and banana fiber made by Gente da Fibra in Minas Gerais; Federico Churba and Patricio Lix Klett's La Feliz series of objects, lighting, tables, and stools made from plastic and hand-woven in Argentina; and Mana Bernardes's collection of jewelry and objects made from toothpicks, Bic pens, PET bottles, and hair clips.

**The title "model-turned-" on anyone's resume can be** a bit dubious; it tends to overshadow whatever's on the other side of the hyphen. Especially when it's someone like Brazilian-born Zoë Melo, who has dedicated herself to design work that transcends trendy or facile definitions of sustainable or socially responsible practices. Certainly, bling and glitz are not topping her list of priorities. But without her modeling experience, she would never have become the head of her own eponymous socially sustainable product development firm.

"I saw a world of money and glamour," she says, speaking from her studio in Los Angeles. "I certainly can't complain about my time in Paris." Working in fashion helped develop her love of design. "But at some point, I had this awakening to the things around me—to spend less. We don't need so many things. Living in America, I learned how we become big spenders," she explains.

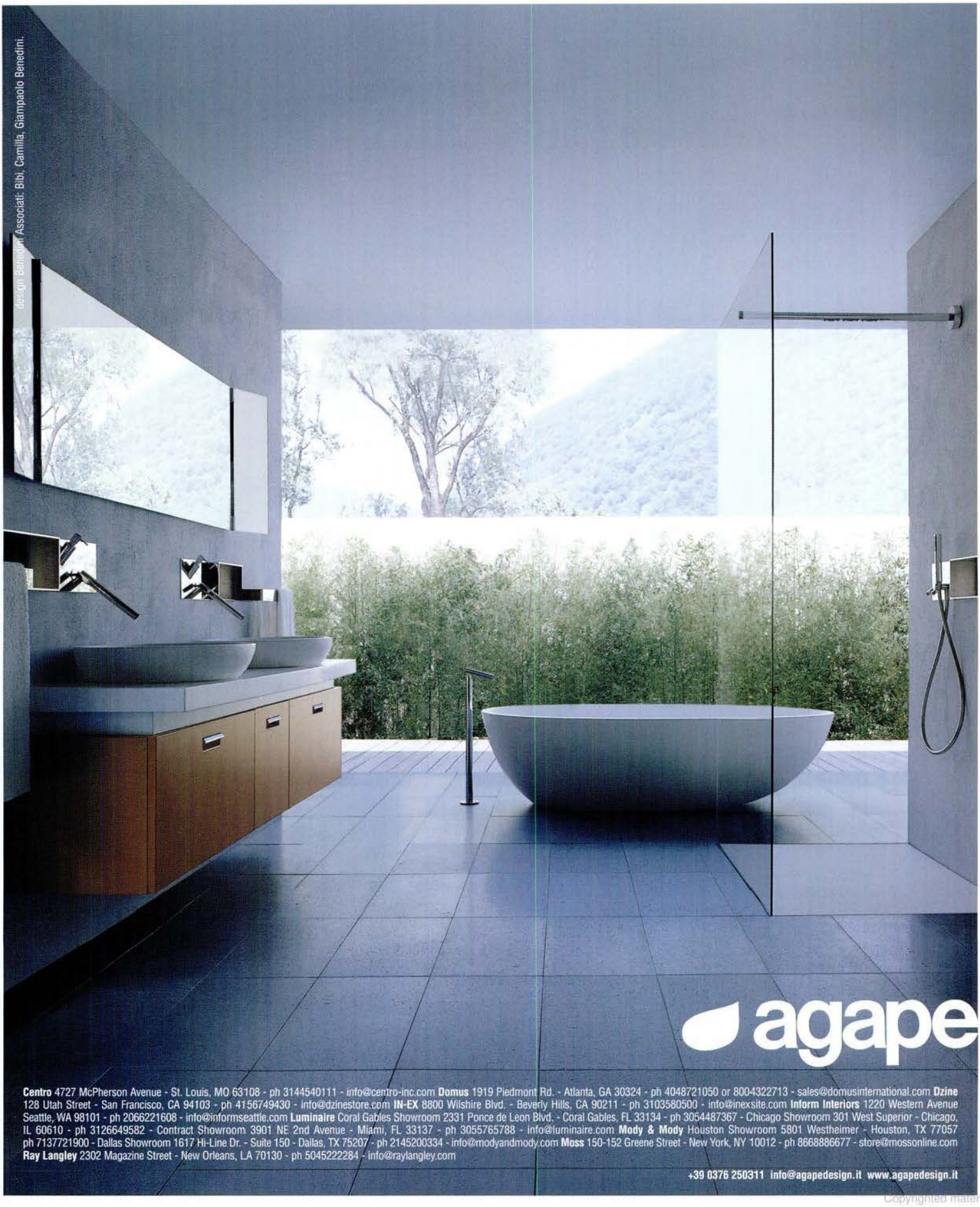
Despite having no formal training, Melo has worked on a variety of projects with clients all over the world: In 2003, she started cz-works with architect Charles Swanson; she also worked with Estudio Manus. In addition, she has helped design everything from the São Paulo nightclub Lov.e Club to a T-shirt for Purp7e to an art installation for David Byrne in Lisbon. After introducing an Artecnica product to Brazil in 2004, she joined the company in 2005, as the director of design development. It was at Artecnica that she developed her passion for bringing together artisan communities and professional designers, helping to guide some of their Design with Conscience projects through development.

It wasn't enough, Melo knew, to work with people in a poor community for a few months and then abandon them. "You really need to have an understanding of how the [production] process works," she says. "It's one thing to do one product, another to do a thousand of them. To do social work is different; it's a huge commitment, and I believe in social work." She believes that the numerous areas in South America that are littered with empty factories, husks of industries, could be put back into use with creative and thoughtful organization.

Currently, she's working with a philosophy called "smartpath"—sizing up a company's projects and seeing how they can be made creatively and sustainably. "I don't want to work with any materials that are harmful to the environment." Among her current projects are a jewelry line, which uses recycled materials, with Mana Bernardes in Brazil, and woven plastic lamps and furniture from La Feliz, by Federico Chuba and Patricio Lix Klett of Argentina.

Although her firm is trying to work with a zero-footprint policy, she insists that there are no formulas or catchphrases to sum up her philosophy. "I don't want to be a superhero. I just try to pay attention and do better at what I'm doing," she says. "I'm not there yet. I'm nobody by myself. It requires a lot of people with a positive attitude to share these ideas." ■

PHOTOS COURTESY ZOË MELO

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Story by Aaron Britt

# The MPreis Is Right

**Nutritionists often tout the merits of shopping along** the perimeter of the supermarket. They reason that spending time and money on that outermost *Ringstrasse* of produce, dairy, bakery, and meats cuts down on all those dietary beasties like processed foods and sodas. Of course, one must occasionally dash into the middle rows for staples like baking powder and toilet paper, dodging trans fats and high-fructose corn syrup all the while. But suppose you were drawn to the edges of the grocery store for something other than your triglycerides. Suppose your Ralphs or Whole Foods had a bank of windows or even, radically, a view.

That's the theory behind MPreis, a chain of design-conscious Austrian supermarkets. Although design and supermarkets are antithetical in the United States, the Innsbruck-based MPreis Markets has wholly embraced ▸


Austrian architect Peter Lorenz designed the MPreis market in Niederndorf, a small town in the Tyrolian Alps. Each MPreis responds to its mountainous environs; this one takes up the sheer verticality of the wooded peaks with an abstracted forest of its own.

PHOTO BY THOMAS JANTSCHER


If every tip of every hair on my head could speak, I still couldn't say my gratitude. ~ Rumi

So I paint it. ~ me

www.bethtom.com

the forward-looking talents of young local architects. They're betting this emphasis on architecture will not only beautify the already magnificent Tyrol but also push profits to alpine heights.

"For us the communication between the building and the landscape is essential," says MPreis co-CEO Hansjörg Mölk. "Every market is designed for the space it stands in." That MPreis markets have little to do with stucco boxes is evident: Rough-hewn logs support the roof at the Niederndorf store like a bare forest; the pitched roofline in Matei in Osttirol mimics the nearby mountains; and the floor-to-ceiling windows in St. Anton let in copious natural light and incredible views. "Our stores are part of the landscape, part of the everyday environment," says Mölk. "To us this results in an obligation, a responsibility to co-design the living space of our customers and to improve the quality of life in the region."

Because supermarkets aren't necessarily the sexiest commissions, Mölk sought to employ the homegrown talent. "In the beginning architects generally refused to plan supermarkets," says Mölk. "It seemed minor for them. So we started to work with only the best young, local firms. Now it's the other way around—architects come to offer their ideas, hoping to realize a project with us."

Of the dozens of modern markets built, only one has been designed by a foreigner—French hot shot Dominique Perrault, who designed the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. And he got the job only by dint of meeting Mölk while working in Austria.

Peter Zelger, of the Innsbruck firm Holz Box, completed an MPreis market in Salzburg in 2003. Nestled against a wooded hillside, the glass-and-blond wood structure ▸

The Achenkirch store (top) by Giner and Wucherer is a long, approachable building that allows plenty of natural light and enviable views of the crags a few miles away. A pastoral mosaic of deer and trees adorns the façade of the Elbigenalp store (bottom right); the sleek steel of the Zirl store (bottom left) refers directly to its modernist parentage.

PHOTOS BY LUKAS SCHALLER (ACHENKIRCH/ELBIGENALP), THOMAS JANTSCHER (ZIRL)

The dramatic and graceful swoop of Machné and Durig Architects' MPreis in Matei in Osttirol creates a parking lot that feels more like a small harbor than an uninviting field of endless blacktop.

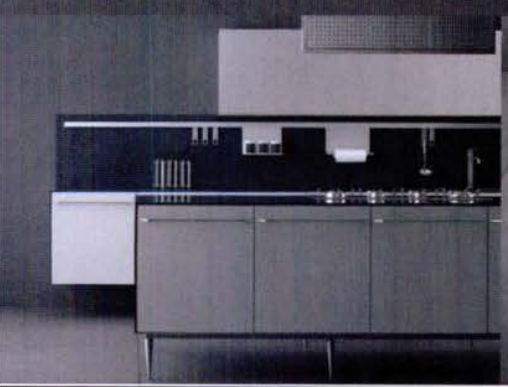
PHOTO BY PAUL OTT

looks more like a speed-skating complex than a place to pick up spaetzle. Zelger says that MPreis allowed Holz Box "a mostly free creative hand" in the design process, adding that the great upshot of having designed such a visible store is that "now we know where things are when we go shopping."

MPreis was founded in the early 1920s by Mölk's grandmother Therese. After Hansjörg and his cousin Anton Mölk took over in the mid-1970s, it began moving toward a more design-conscious identity. The first MPreis designed by an architect was built in 1982 and was born of a friendship with Austrian architect Heinz Planatscher. "He planned a few stores with us and inspired us to invest more in the quality of the space," says Mölk. "There was no planned strategy we followed, but in the end it turned out to be something that made us very different from others in the business."

North American supermarkets have also tried to distinguish themselves through design, most notably the shiplike Publix by the Bay in Miami Beach, by Wood and Zapata, or the skylit glass palace of the Queens Quay Loblaws in Toronto, by Rebanks Architects. Greg Fontana designed the lighting for an energy-saving Stop & Shop prototype in Foxboro, Massachusetts, that makes extensive use of natural light, a strategy that's been shown to increase sales. In the 1960s, supermarkets like Safeway and Penn Fruit Co. tried to present a unified modernist front. Safeway's "Marina" model, with its archlike, glassed-in façade, was based on a store in San Francisco's Marina neighborhood and replicated hundreds of times around the country.

Unlike the Safeway plan, though, each MPreis market is architecturally unique and linked to the others not through the same front entrance or predictable location of the deli, but by an effort to make MPreis and modern design synonymous. "People in the Tyrol think of MPreis when they pass by a construction site with modern architecture and lots of wood and glass," says Molk. "The ►



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stores all look different, but they have one sign in common: the red cube, our company logo."

Red cube, wood, and glass aside, it's more than just the exterior that sets MPreis apart. Each store has an attached café called Baguette, and the high ceilings and natural light keep shoppers lingering, which is good for both business and sun-starved patrons.

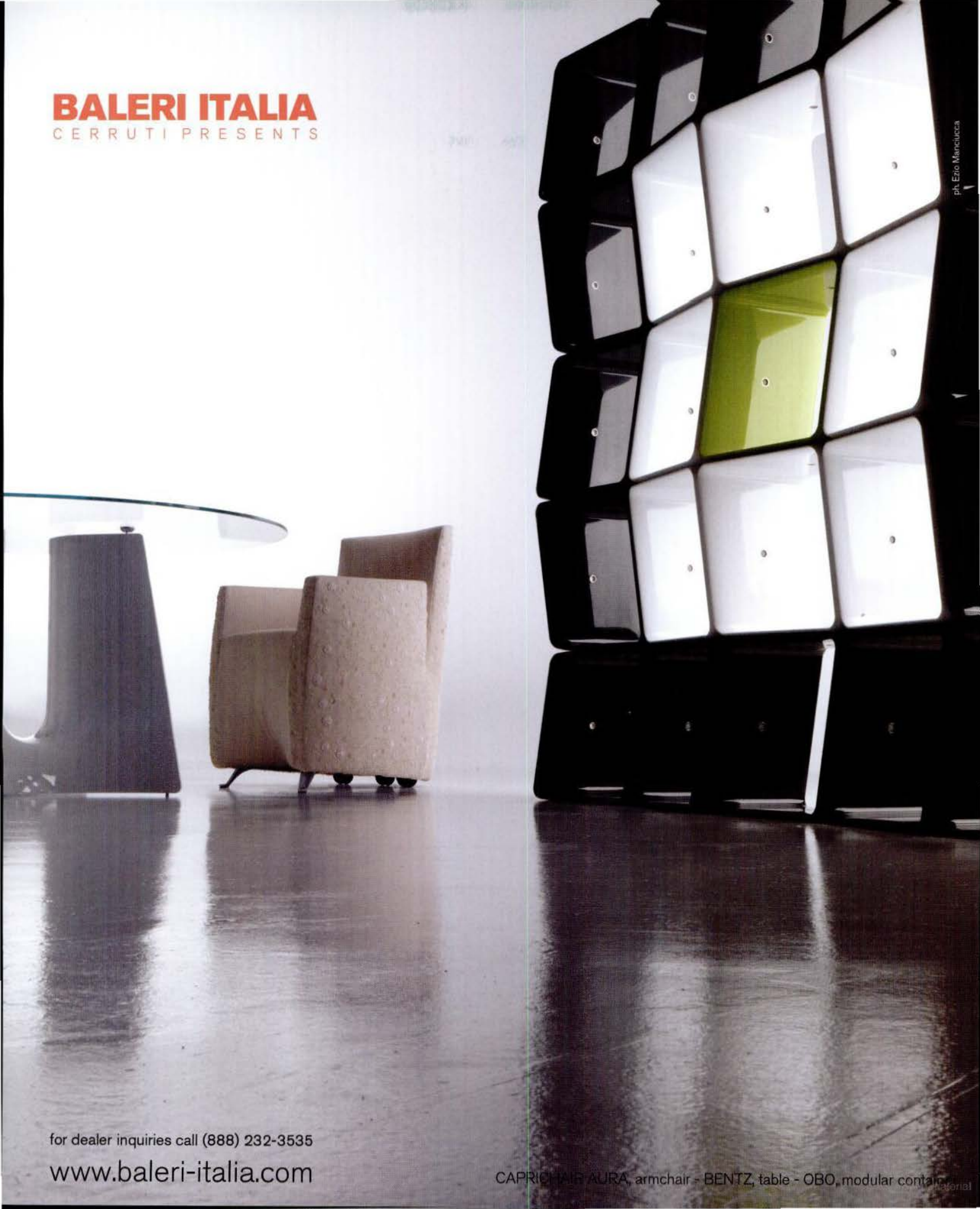
What seems to be at work with MPreis (and far less apparent in American supermarkets) is an emphasis on design. Though not naïve enough to credit their success to architecture alone—co-CEO Anton Mölk reports that "business increased not only due to architectural design, but due to the combination of a good price-performance ratio, friendly employees, and customer proximity"—MPreis confirms a notion that still hasn't taken root in the States: that good design is something that can, and perhaps should, happen everywhere, not just at contemporary art museums.

MPreis's commitment to modern design is so strong that it earned the company a spot representing Austria at the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale. Musing on his company's place in Austrian design, Hansjörg Mölk says, "With conformity no discussion would arise. At an MPreis market people start to be more aware of the quality of the spaces they're entering. For us, investing in architectural space means creating value for our colleagues and our customers."

By virtue of progressive architecture, excellent siting, and stunning environs, MPreis elevates an often-mundane fact of daily life. And if the vista from the produce section doesn't provide sufficient awe, the view from the parking lot isn't half bad either. ■

MPreis's outpost in Wenns (top), tucked deftly among the Alps, was designed by Astrid Tschapeller and Rainer Köberl; the elevated concrete market is reminiscent of Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye. The store in Wattens (bottom left) opts for live trees over stripped trunks, and the glassy store in Fügen (below right) by Helmut Seelos positively glows at night.

PHOTOS BY LUKAS SCHALLER (WENNS), GÜNTER KRESSER (FÜGEN), GÜNTER R. WETT (WATTENS)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Story by Frances Anderton

# Let's Be Frank

"I am not interested in vernacular to be sentimental. I am interested in what it can teach us. All vernacular architecture is sustainable. It is always inherently related to the region. But let me emphasize that regionalism should not be confused with parochialism any more than you would call Faulkner a local Southern writer."

Frank Harmon (left) is a gentlemanly Southerner who favors regionalism: architecture that befits its locale and climate. The Prairie Ridge Eco Station, an open-air classroom in Raleigh, North Carolina (above), operates without air-conditioning and is made of locally grown wood.

PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY HURSLEY (PRAIRIE RIDGE); F8 PHOTOGRAPHY (PORTRAIT)

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**Though many people have recently woken up to** the need to go green, for a few, living in harmony with nature has been a long-held ethos. One such person is Frank Harmon, a North Carolina architect who has been designing sustainably for almost three decades. His projects—mostly in his home state—include churches, arts and educational buildings, and houses that embody the ideals of new regionalism. Harmon hews to the notion that a structure should be specific to its place in terms of materials and its relationships to geography and climate. Raised in North Carolina but educated at London's influential Architectural Association, Harmon worked for Richard Meier, the New York–based architect known for his impeccably detailed—if somewhat cold—white, glassy buildings. So what made Harmon turn toward his warmer brand of regionalism? He had a couple of very strong influences.

**You're an avid proponent of regionalism. How did you get there?**

In my late 30s, I met Harwell Hamilton Harris, who became a very important mentor to me. He was the first modern architect to fuse modern principles with traditional materials like wood and stone and to illustrate a respect for climate and region. His thought was that every building is a portrait. It's a portrait of the owner, or it's the story of the site or the particular climate or materials of a region. In other words, he felt that all great architecture started with the particulars of climate or site or materials. The more I thought about that, the more I thought that was entirely true.

Also, as a child growing up, I used to love North Carolina barns and farmhouses; but, going off to school in England, then working in New York, I felt they were rather provincial. Then I moved back to North Carolina and realized the inherent intelligence in those buildings.

I was also influenced by my childhood home. I grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina, in a suburban development at the edge of the city where some very forward-thinking planner had created greenways and parks, preserving the streambeds. I grew up playing on the banks of those streams, and I can say now that most of what I know about architecture I credit to playing by those streams. To this day I thank the anonymous architect who planned those pathways.

**That doesn't sound like the stereotypical 1950s alienating suburb.**

No, it was built before World War II—sometime around 1920—and consisted of small houses, on small lots, and there were sidewalks. There was a huge change in suburban design in the 1950s. One reason for that was air-conditioning; the other was the bulldozer, which really came into its own after the war.

I never use a bulldozer. Now don't get me wrong, it's a wonderful tool, but unfortunately ►

The Strickland-Ferris House was built for an artist on a steep hillside in Raleigh, North Carolina. Conceived as a "fallen leaf," the structure is raised to allow groundwater to flow underneath. The copper rain chain, fiber cement rain screen on the walls, and standing-seam metal roof combine to give the house a modern vernacular character.

PHOTOS BY TIMOTHY HURSLEY

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**How have you woven these kinds of regional traditions, like porches, into your work?**

I have just completed a church in historic Charleston, South Carolina. It builds on an existing vernacular of Charleston architecture, a wonderful building type known as a "single house," because they were only one room deep and always had [a] large porch across the south or southwest side of the house. So for this church, I said, "You need hallways, but why don't we put them out on porches to reduce the heated area by a third?" So now it is one room deep and cross ventilated. It also has the first green roof in Charleston.

**So the church is a kind of modern vernacular?**

Yes, but I am not interested in vernacular to be sentimental. I am interested in what it can teach us. All vernacular architecture is sustainable. It is always inherently related to the region. But let me emphasize that regionalism should not be confused with parochialism any more than you would call Faulkner a local Southern writer.

**You've been building sustainably for decades. Does the current green awareness represent a real shift?**

Yes, I think it does. I've been doing green stuff for 25 years, and over that time I've had to educate my clients, and that has been very difficult. Today they all come to me and want something sustainable. The single biggest impact we have energy-wise is our buildings, not cars, and our clients get that. I think there is general unease about how we treat the world, and people want [to] build in a sustainable way. The pastor at the church in Charleston said that building sustainably is a moral issue. Architecture is arguably the most important issue of our day.

**What about suburban development, which carpets so much of the country and seems to be the antithesis of regionalism? Is the message getting though there?**

It is, I think. Almost all major builders are talking about how their buildings can be more sustainable. The greatest difference I can hope for is that houses and buildings can respond to places where they are. In our country we have the greatest geographical difference, so why is it that houses in Washington State look the same as buildings in Florida? The most sustainable—and liberating—thing we can do is to acknowledge the places we are in. ■

PHOTOS BY JWEST PRODUCTIONS

The Taylor vacation house looks out on the Sea of Abaco in the Bahamas. It's sheltered from the intense summer sun by an inverted umbrella roof that also collects rainwater for all domestic needs. An open-air stair leads up from the middle-floor bedroom terrace. The living room is perched on the third floor to catch the breeze and the best views.


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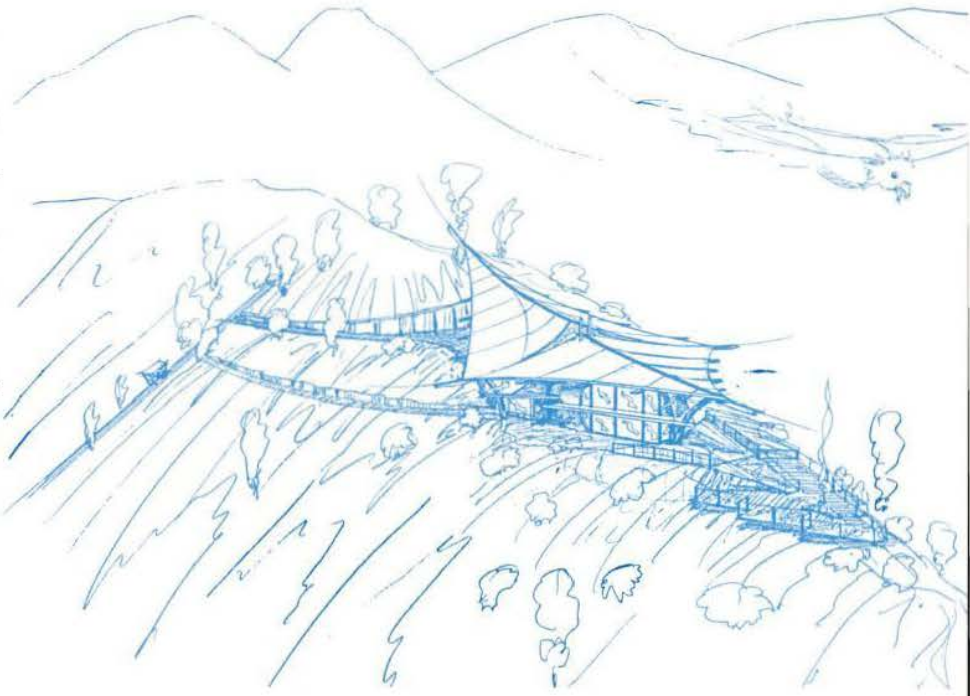


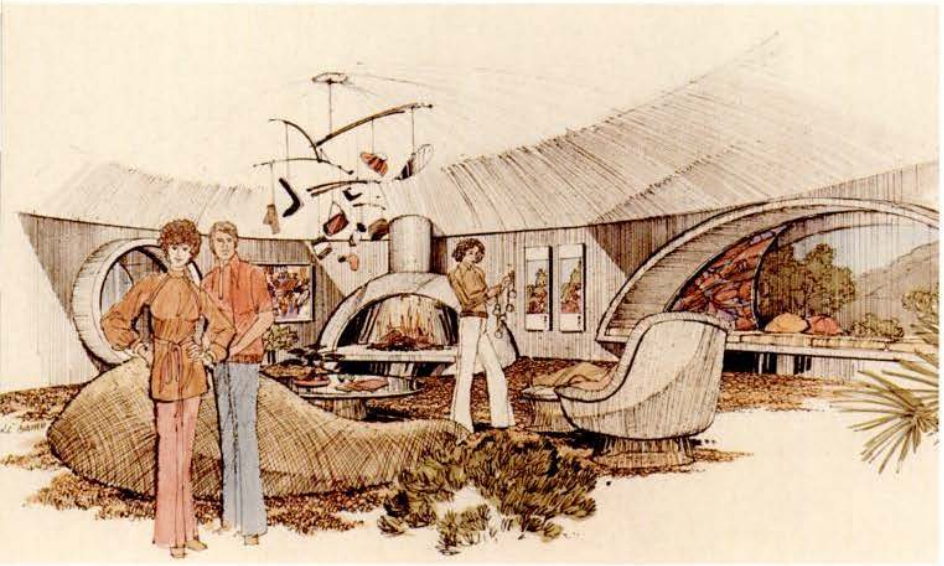
**"What I've learned for the six decades I've been doing** this is to go to the soul of the site, to learn its secrets before I begin," says Harry Gesner. Behind him the late-afternoon sun hangs over the flat, blue Pacific Ocean like an overripe orange about to drop. "Too many architects spend time at their drafting boards and not on the site—that's when they get things wrong." Gesner turns to face the beach. "Sorry, this"—he interrupts himself—"is going to have to wait." Moments later he is cutting his 12-foot longboard down the face of a head-high wave. He passes by his High Tech House built in 1995, then the Arts and Crafts–inspired Lighthouse House built in 1970, and finally his most famous creation, the wild and jazzy Cooper Wave House built in 1957 and used by Jørn Utzon as inspiration for the Sydney Opera House.

This is Harry's Beach, the tiny private cove on the coast of northern Malibu where Gesner has lived and surfed for the past 40 years. It's where he defined the cool, laid-back grooviness of Malibu architecture—a quintessentially West Coast design of sunken living rooms, indoor fire pits, cathedral ceilings, and sun-soaked solariums built for lavish cocktail parties by the pool, partygoers sipping cognac in cable-knit turtlenecks, shorts, and ▸

# Soul Surfer

**Harry Gesner's Eagle's Watch House cranes over Malibu. The original 1955 house was destroyed in the Malibu fires of 1993. "I found the owner crying in the street," he says. "I promised to rebuild it." Gesner completed the revamped home in 1997.**

PHOTO BY STEVEN LIPPMAN, DRAWING COURTESY HARRY GESNER



**The 1965 Scantlin House (top) once housed architect Richard Meier and is now owned by the Getty Museum. Gesner got real groovy with an illustration of the proposed Autonomous Mushroom House (center) in 1972. His first house, designed in 1948, had a most unusual fireplace (bottom).**

flip-flops. His clients included Marlon Brando, Anne Cole, June Lockhart, and other Hollywood swingers of the 1960s and '70s.

Gesner made his imprint on California modern architecture not just in the inventive ways he articulated the soul of the landscape, but also in playing to the larger-than-life egos of his clients. His 1965 house for famed inventor J.R. Scantlin—an airplane enthusiast and irrepressible playboy—demonstrates both points aptly.

The living room of Scantlin's Brentwood estate—which now belongs to the Getty Museum—looks out over a 180-degree view of Los Angeles. Beneath it, a bright green lap pool extends 100 feet from the outside beneath a submerged wall directly into the master bathroom. Here, Scantlin and company could enter and exit the pool without ever leaving the house, or, alternately, enter and exit the bathroom without ever leaving the pool area. Bent lacquered-wood beams arch upwards and outwards over the pool, mimicking the craning neck of a bird—an homage to Scantlin's obsession with flying.

The master bathroom resides in a terrarium of ferns and snake plants that cover the south-facing corner. "I hid the toilet in the plants to give the feeling that you were going outside, but, you know, with the comfort of a toilet," Gesner says, laughing. Architect Richard Meier lived in the Scantlin House while designing and overseeing construction of the Getty Museum. "It took him so long because he didn't want to leave this house!"

In Malibu canyon, Gesner is standing in the parking lot of the famed Duke's Restaurant. He points right to Arch House, which he built for *Auntie Mame* playwright Jerome Lawrence ten years ago. Opposite the canyon is his Eagle's Watch House—a copper-roofed cathedral of concrete and glass he built in 1997 after the Malibu fires destroyed the original 1955 structure. Each house pulls from Gesner's eclectic patchwork of design hooks—the buttressed beam framing of Notre Dame; Neutra's blurring of indoor and outdoor space; the fluid and refined lines of Frank Lloyd Wright; the space-age, B-movie psychedelia of *Barbarella.* Gesner credits his improvisational style to a lack of formal training. "I don't recommend my way of self-education," he says. "But I guess it speaks well for originality and individuality."

Back at Harry's Beach, it's twilight as we return from our evening surf. Gesner towels off and heads to the patio with a 40-ounce Miller and a box of Saltines. "People think some of these ideas of green building are new, that using sustainable energy systems are recent inventions. What they don't realize is every other culture in the world has been doing this for centuries, for millennia," he says. "That's what I've been trying to do since I started, before there was such a word as 'green building'!"

In the dusk, Gesner's stinging blue eyes appear bright and lucid. He turned 82 last April but carries the physical and mental acumen of a person half his age. "You know, I've always been a believer in 'the more you do, the more you can do,'" he says, turning to pet his 22-year-old Labrador. He soon heads back into his house to begin another project. "And I'm not done yet." ▶

PHOTO BY STEVEN LIPPMAN (EXTERIOR). COURTESY HARRY GESNER (DRAWING/INTERIOR)

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# 10 Things You Should Know About Harry Gesner

**1 /** Gesner was one of the first soldiers to storm Omaha Beach, in Normandy, on D-Day.

**2 /** After a tank blasted him through a wall and into the snow during World War II, doctors wanted to amputate Gesner's frozen legs. He refused and managed to save them by massaging them with olive oil. He recovered fully.

**3 /** Gesner left his architecture studies at Yale and Columbia to seek out—and find—hidden treasures in the jungles of Ecuador.

**4 /** He met Errol Flynn in a Mexico City bar after Flynn's boat crew had mutinied. Needing money, Gesner agreed to join the new crew in Acapulco, but when Flynn never showed, he used the boat to shuttle tourists.

**5 /** Gesner's uncle was J.K. "Jack" Northrop, who created the X-4 research plane famously flown by Chuck Yeager, and whose design for the B-49 Flying Wing jet eventually led to the Stealth Bomber.

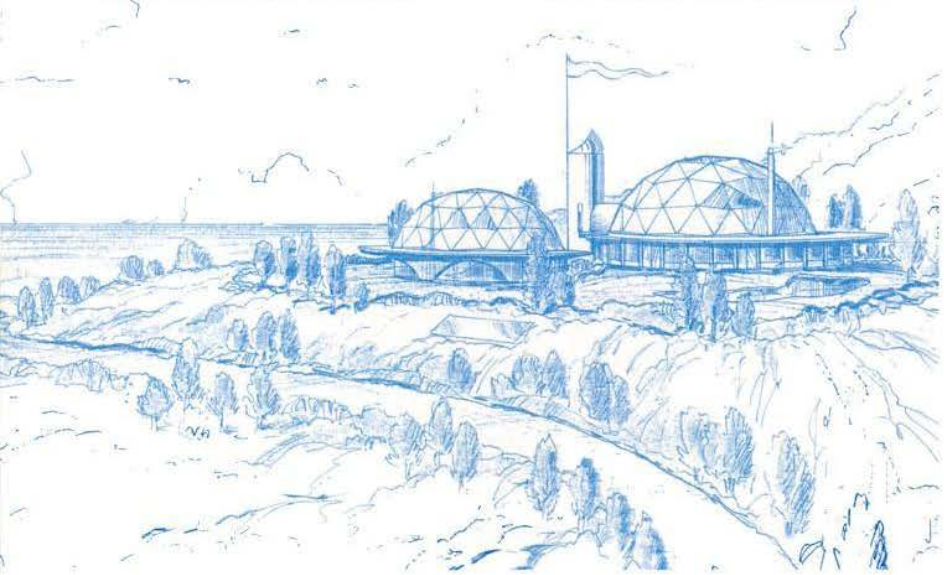
**6 /** His wife, actress Nan Martin, has starred in more than 120 Hollywood films and TV shows, including *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit*. Their son, Zen, played Sinbad in the syndicated TV series *The Adventures of Sinbad*.

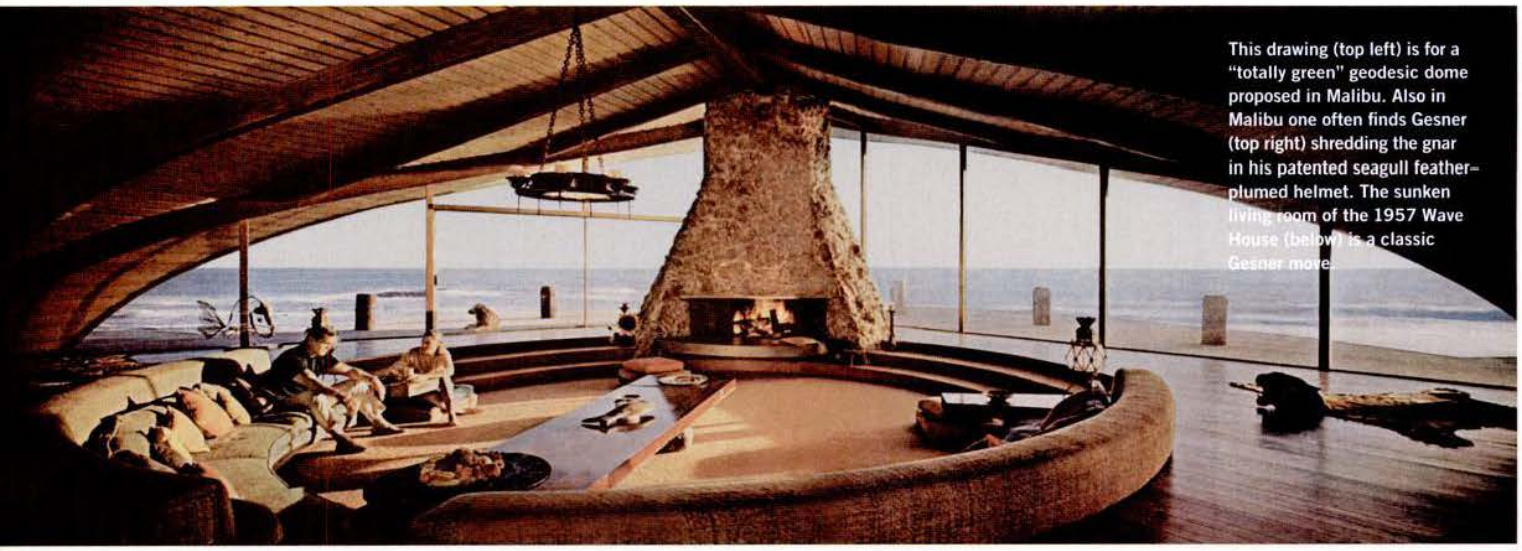
**7 /** He sketched the design for his famous 1957 Wave House with a grease pencil on the top of his surfboard while trying to get to the "soul of the site" (a.k.a. surfing late when he should have been working).

**8 /** For Marlon Brando's Tahitian estate, Gesner created a natural air conditioner out of a 25-foot-long aquarium that pumped cool water in from a reef outside the house.

**9 /** Architect Richard Meier had the submerged wall of the indoor-outdoor pool of Gesner's 1965 Scantlin House sealed up after a transient swam into the house one night, donned Meier's coat, and was found smoking a cigar in the living room.

**10 /** Gesner uses a dowsing stick to locate water on the land on which he is building. "It's not a mystical trick," he says. "I find water every time." ■





This drawing (top left) is for a "totally green" geodesic dome proposed in Malibu. Also in Malibu one often finds Gesner (top right) shredding the gnar in his patented seagull feather–plumed helmet. The sunken living room of the 1957 Wave House (below) is a classic Gesner move.

PHOTO BY STEVEN LIPPMAN (PORTRAIT), COURTESY HARRY GESNER (DRAWING/INTERIOR)

**Dear Dwell: I've been looking for modern salt-and-pepper shakers, but all I've found are tchotchkes and diner-style pillars. What do you recommend?**

—**Cheryl LeGasse**, San Francisco, California

If your table is falling flat, a salt-and-pepper set can enliven the landscape. Black and white are standard issue, but unexpected shapes or a hint of color can spice up any setting.

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**B Dry Bones by Chris Stiles** / $24 / www.aplusrstore.com

**C Classic Century by Eva Zeisel** / $36.95 / www.crateandbarrel.com

**D Wobble by WGI Group** / $32 / www.moma.org

**E Sal& by Caterina Fadda Studio** / $42.95 / www.hiddenartshop.com

**F** Salt and Pepper No4 by Ron Gilad for Designfenzider /
$54 / www.designfenzider.com

**G** Nook by Luciano Lorenzatti /
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**H** Bird Salt/Pepper by Jonathan Adler /
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**I** Shake by Tonfisk Design /
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**J** Stelton Cylinda-Line by Arne Jacobsen /
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**K** Mono Gemiini Stacking by Mikaela Dorfel /
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**L** Good Chemistry by Fred /
$15 / www.day-lab.com

**M** Black and White Egg /
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**N** Shake a Leg by Perch! /
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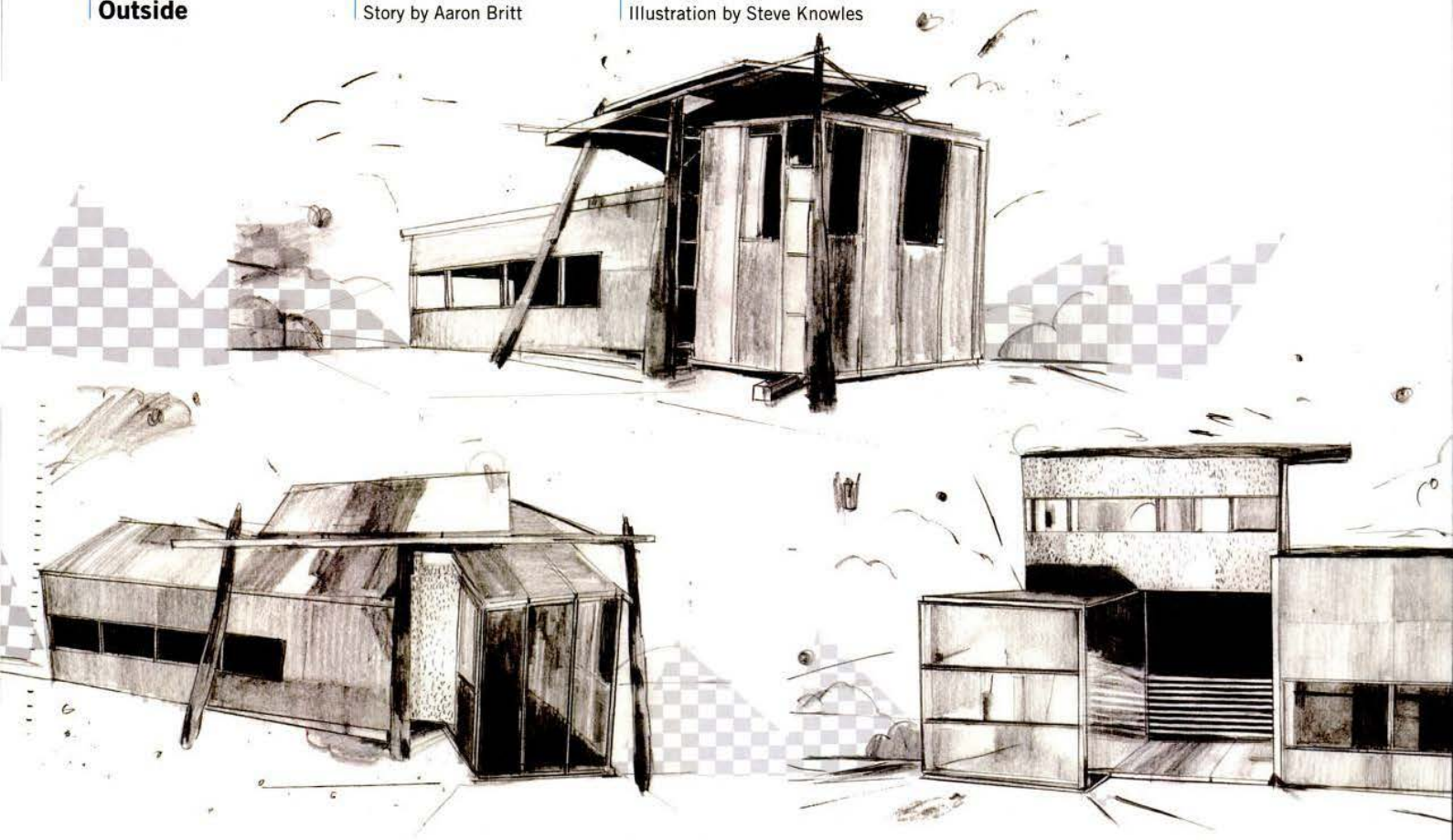
**O** Salt and Pepper Orbs by Andi Kovel for Esque / $159 / www.branchhome.com


Story by Aaron Britt

Illustration by Steve Knowles



# Thibault's Follies

Quebec City architect Pierre Thibault has designed three Habitats Légers, or Light Habitats—small structures installed in the landscape and meant as creative retreats. The first was built for noted choreographer, and Thibault's close friend, Jean-Pierre Perreault, and was based on a set design Thibault made for one of Perreault's dance performances.

For an expanded view of the Habitats Légers, visit dwell.com/slideshows.

**Occasionally artists will leave their medium, setting** down the paintbrush to pick up a movie camera, or trading the proscenium for prosody. Though cross-genre vanity projects abound (Billy Corgan's and Jewel's wince-inducing volumes of poetry come to mind), exploring a new creative avenue does occasionally bear fruit (Leonard Cohen swapping his pen for a guitar, for instance). But the most compelling results often come when artists return to their original discipline, invigorated and endowed with fresh perspective.

One such collaboration between decorated Quebec City architect Pierre Thibault and one of Canada's internationally renowned choreographers, the late Jean-Pierre Perreault, resulted in some of Thibault's most winsome and personally beloved work.

It began when Perreault asked Thibault to design a stage set—a series of steel frames and cloth panels to be manipulated by the dancers—for one of his productions. It was a natural fit for Thibault, who had designed theaters for the Grand Théâtre de Québec in Quebec City and Laval University in Montreal, but this was his first foray into actual stage work. When the show closed, Perreault made another request: He asked Thibault to create a small, inexpensive structure based on the set to be used as a creative getaway near his rustic summer home in Rawdon, about an hour from Montreal.

"The idea was to have a very cheap shelter to install in the landscape without electricity," Thibault says of the small cabin. As portability and cost were crucial constraints he used prefabricated panels of glass, wood, and steel for the exterior. The rough-hewn logs that support the canted roof only add to the homespun quality of the place, as do the candles and gas stove needed for an overnight stay. "It's different than a tent, though, in that it has three distinct spaces: one in which to eat, [one to] sleep, and [one to] work," he says of the no-frills interior.

As Thibault went to work on the Habitat Léger (Light Habitat) his experience designing for the stage—both in terms of budget and scale—came to the fore. "Working with dancers really gave me a sense of the human scale," he says—a critical aspect of the design, since the total area was just 350 square feet.

Easy to assemble and take down in harsh winters, the small structures have proven popular with Thibault's pals; he's built two more for friends. Of the Habitat Léger owners, perhaps Perreault loved his best, leaving it up for the winter and simply covering it with a tarp when not in use. Sadly, the choreographer died in 2002 at the age of 55, further endearing the small structures to Thibault.

He has no plans to mass-produce the Habitats Légers, but he does imagine additional creative cross-pollination. "I enjoy working with people who are not architects," Thibauld says. "I would love to collaborate with a filmmaker." ■

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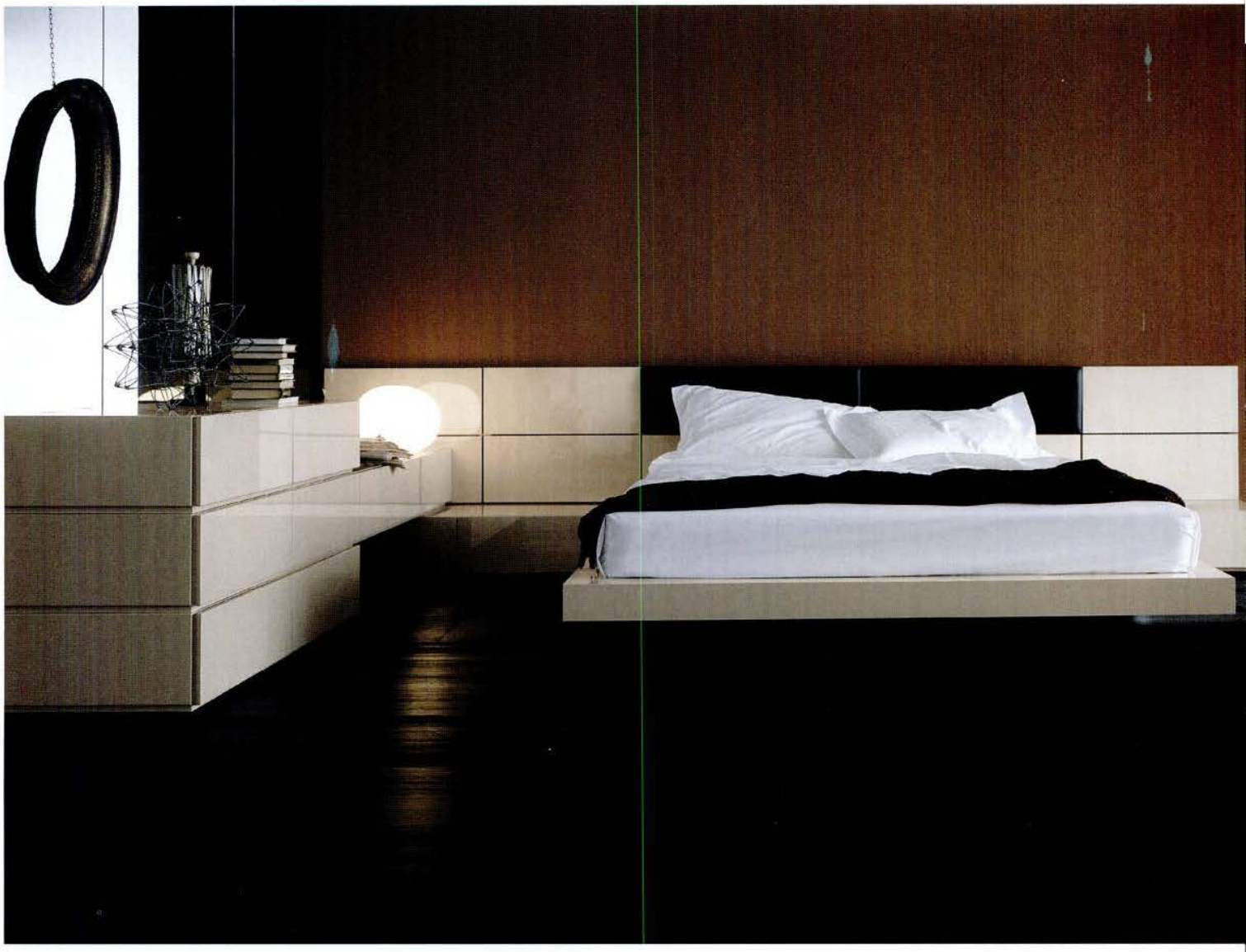

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Story by Amber Bravo

Photos by Mark Luthringer


# Signs of the Times

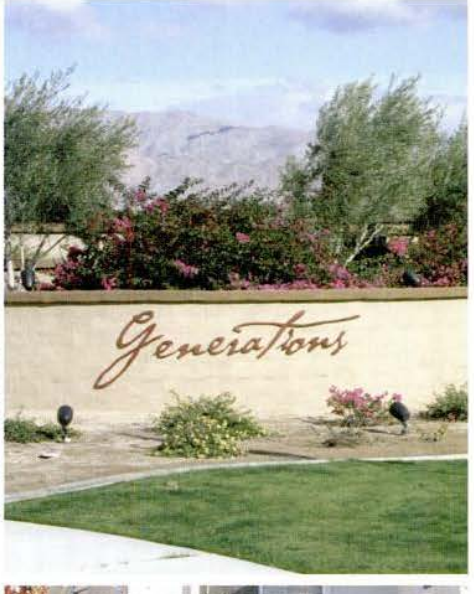
To many, the gates of Quailwood, Villagio, and Crystyl Ranch are anything but edenic. They suggest, instead, a kind of purgatorial haze (and etymological nightmare): the slow dissolve of a rich social fabric, supplanted by anonymous landscapes and the promise of an unencumbered life.

Mark Luthringer's *Ridgemont Typologies* forces us to confront the hypnotic banality of the 'burbs: "These places are important because they are the front lines of the advancement of our built environment and, like it or not, our culture," says Luthringer. "*Ridgemont* is about our desire for a mythic lifestyle, one industry's attempt to fulfill that desire, and what the results look like to a passerby."

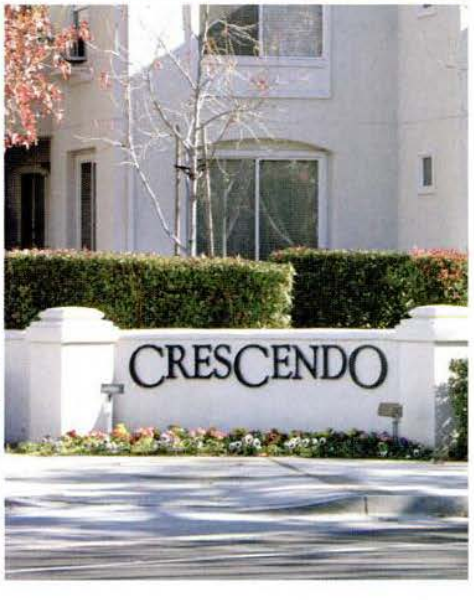
But the suburbs—and their inhabitants—are not only ripe for resistance to conformity, they also have rich social and cultural potential. Demographic studies reveal that suburbia is diversifying; no longer the land of white flight and middle-class nuclear families, its shape and character is changing. New demands on our landscape (sprawl) and advanced communication (constant, remote connectivity) require that we adjust our focus and reinsert our individual character into these landscapes. There is "life" in suburbia, we need only define it.





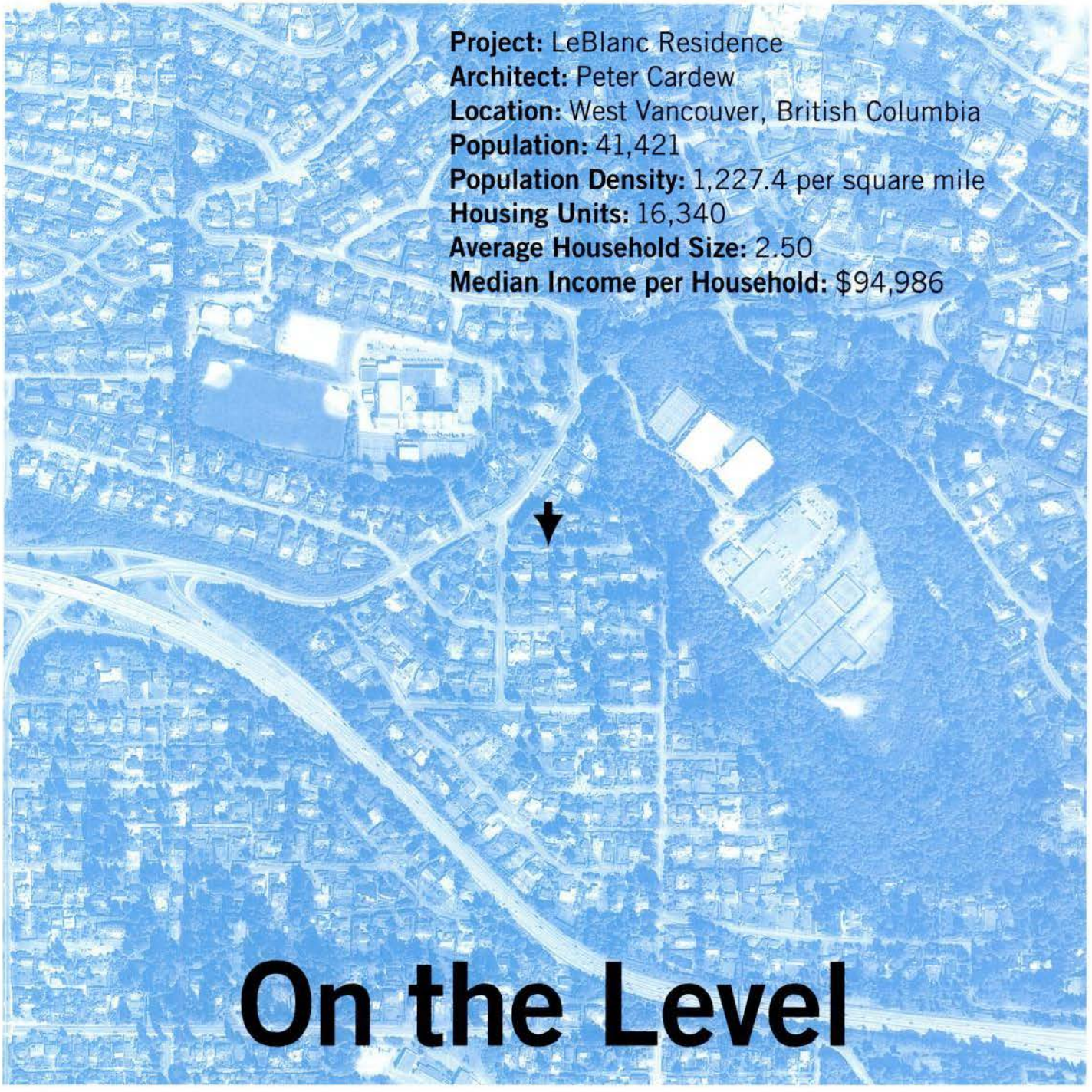





Story by Carolann Rule

Photos by João Canziani




# On the Level

**Judged by contemporary design standards, the** typical postwar suburban split-level house has little to recommend it. Usually spotted in a tract with dozens of similarly shaped units, the classic split would be anonymous in its subdivided surroundings were it not offered a unique coat of paint and a particular mix of gewgaws stuck on like appliqué. These elements can be anything from fake dormers and inoperable shutters to extraneous stonework—whatever the developer who designed and built the house happened to have in his bag of decorative tricks. Inside, the textbook split-level presents a tangle of stairways and a confusion of half stories with awkward ceiling heights. It's no wonder that when it comes time to renovate these buildings—as is happening with greater frequency as they surpass their 50th anniversaries—homeowners are instead choosing to tear them down and start again from scratch.

This is both a shame and a waste, according to Peter Cardew, the England-born, British Columbia–based architect responsible for the recent makeover of a ▸

JeanClaude LeBlanc and Megan Griffith stand outside the entry court of their newly revamped 1960s split-level house (opposite) in West Vancouver's British Properties, a neighborhood originally laid out in the early 1930s by the Olmstead brothers.

SATELLITE PHOTO COURTESY DIGITALGLOBE

A 14-foot-wide opening at the rear of the house contributes, along with the concrete flooring, to an almost seamless transition from indoors to the patio (right). A spate of mid-century furnishings includes chairs by Hans Wegner and Poul Kjærholm and an Achille Castiglioni Arco lamp. Oversize doors in the front entry (below) create the sense of a continuous wall when closed. Griffith lounges on a Zanotta sofa in the sparely furnished living room (opposite). p. 230

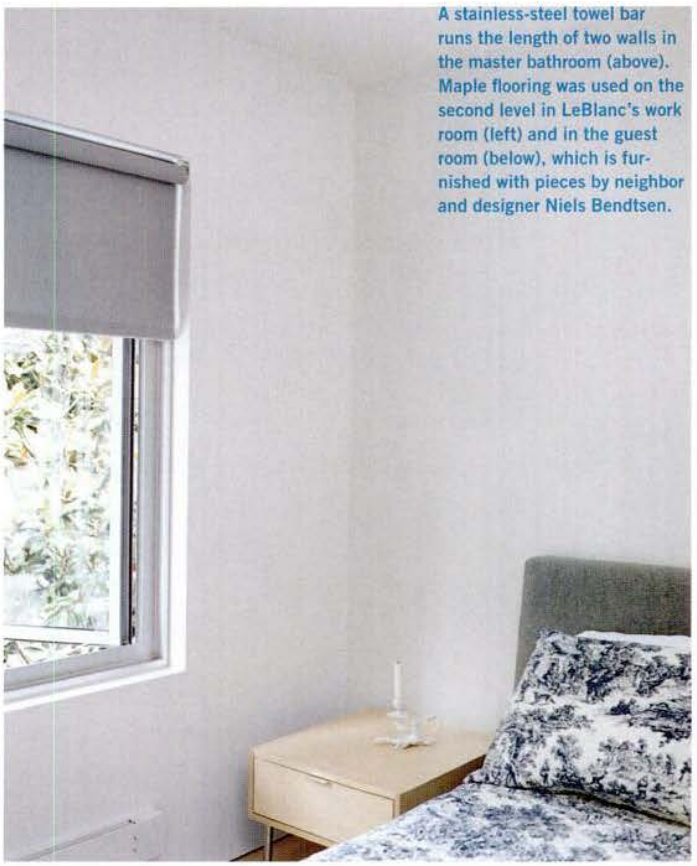
split-level in a bedroom community northwest of downtown Vancouver. "It's a pity," he says, "because the split-level is an original type that represents a significant time in the history of North American housing, the postwar building boom." Like Victorian housing before it, much of which was demolished in the 1950s, "the split-level has a cultural value worth preserving," he says, acknowledging that this is unlikely to occur until the split-level acquires widespread cachet, which it currently lacks, or the stock becomes endangered. Right now there is a surplus of cookie-cutter split-levels strewn across the continent. These buildings will continue to come down—which is wasteful, because many of them are structurally sound. "When people talk about sustainability, they are usually referring to new architecture," says Cardew. "But when you figure that most of the energy that goes into a building comes from the one-time act of construction, you are already ahead when you can keep a building rather than demolish it."

Demolition was the furthest thing from the owners' minds when they hired Cardew—but then, so was sustainability. "This was just a decent house, and we needed someone to help us with a new kitchen and to open things up a bit," says JeanClaude LeBlanc. The 33-year-old real estate developer had been renting the 3,000-square-foot house with his 31-year-old girlfriend, Megan Griffith, when the owner planted a "For Sale" sign on the sprawling lawn out front. LeBlanc responded by purchasing the property and calling in Cardew. ▸

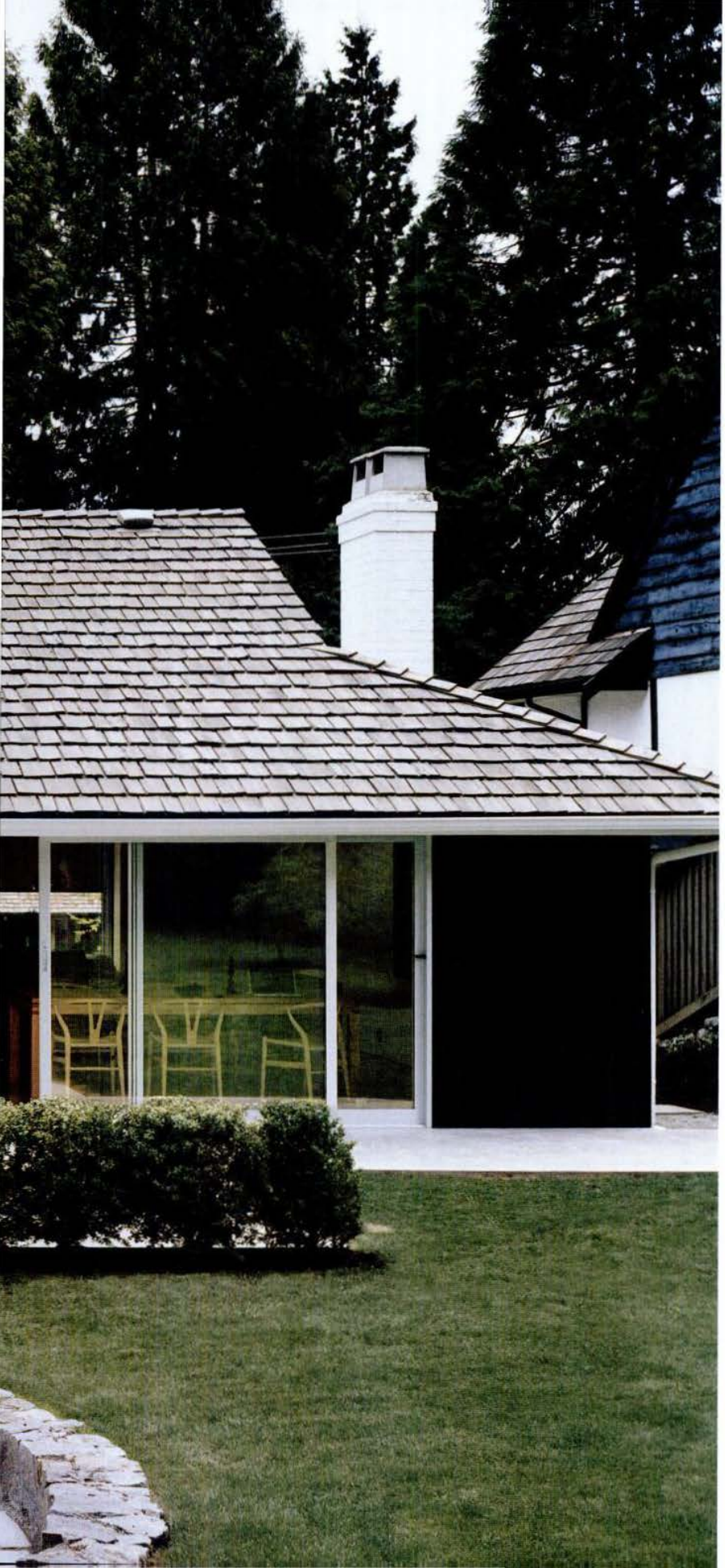
Daylight, admitted by way of clerestory windows, brightens the dark zones between the kitchen and the den (above left) and the front entry (above right). A maple bookcase defines the point between the living room and foyer (below left). LeBlanc sits at the western maple dining-room table, designed by the architect (below right).

LeBlanc reports that the scope of the project expanded "once we cracked things open and found all kinds of problems—wiring, plumbing, you name it." An acknowledged perfectionist, he realized that whatever alterations he made would be diminished by things left unchanged. "New next to old can work, but it doesn't always," he says. "I have plenty of friends who can live with design discrepancies and would never have gone as far as I have because of the detail involved; it just doesn't matter to them. But we wound up gutting the place. I work at home and walk through these rooms 30, maybe 40, times a day. And I didn't want to have to look at anything left unresolved and think, I could have done something about that."

The decision to gut the home paved the way for a truly minimal aesthetic to emerge. "We didn't do much, but we did a lot, if you know what I mean," Cardew quips, skirting the details. When you compare before and after photographs, you can see that this is true. Where the old façade was standard-issue split-level, busy and cutesy, the new one is handsome and plain. By subtracting a cosmetic dormer and a few other superfluous openings, exchanging complex elements for simpler ones (for example, a mullioned picture window for a single sheet of glass), and adding a light-colored concrete driveway (the perfect foil for a house painted black), Cardew reworked the façade so that it looks better proportioned and draws attention to—celebrates even—the split-level's iconic form. ▸



A stainless-steel towel bar runs the length of two walls in the master bathroom (above). Maple flooring was used on the second level in LeBlanc's work room (left) and in the guest room (below), which is furnished with pieces by neighbor and designer Niels Bendtsen.



After trying dozens of colors, LeBlanc says, they settled on basic black for the exterior as a way to best marry the building with its forest surroundings, which include 30-foot-high western red cedar trees. The pool is original; but the deck, once made of concrete, has been reclad in granite to match the old retaining wall.

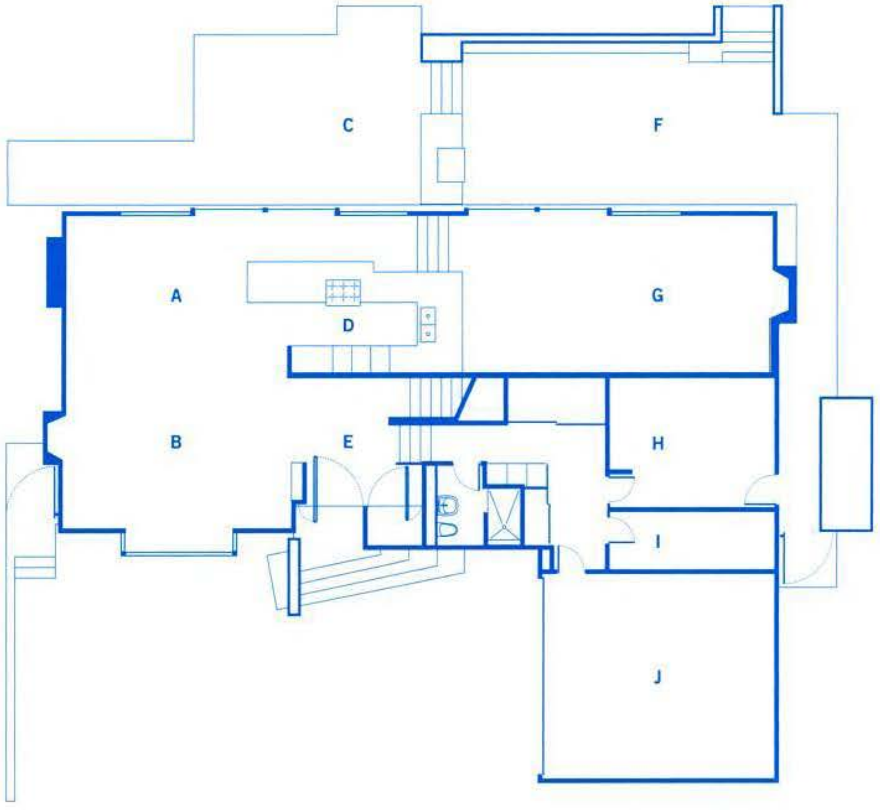
Inside the home Cardew addressed LeBlanc's shopping list of concerns: the need for a more gracious entry, natural light, and an open feeling throughout the public spaces. By reangling the outside stairs and widening the front door to a welcoming five feet, the architect created an entry that feels both distinctive and generous. By lowering the ceiling height to seven feet in the foyer, he made the adjoining living-area ceiling feel much taller than its conventional eight feet (an old trick from Frank Lloyd Wright's playbook). By knocking out the walls and doors that separated the living, dining, and kitchen areas, he turned a '60s layout into an '00s open plan that reflects the casual way LeBlanc and Griffith like to live.

To take advantage of natural light, Cardew did a few things you might expect, like painting all the walls a light-bouncing white ("We've found a tintless white base works best in this gray environment," says project architect David Scott, referring to Vancouver's notorious overcast), and covering the floors on the main level in hand-troweled reflective concrete ("It's lighter than machine-troweled," Scott notes). However, most of the home's light comes from seven seven-foot-wide floor-to-ceiling windows Cardew had installed—four on the main level and three in the den/recreation room, located a half story down from the kitchen.

One of the architect's biggest challenges was to deal with the most awkward moment in standard split-level architecture: the juncture between the single-story and two-story structures. In this house, the hookup is visible ▸

LeBlanc Residence Floor Plan
Main Floor

A Dining Area
B Living Area
C Terrace
D Kitchen
E Entry
F Rear Courtyard
G Den
H Office
I Mechanical
J Garage




twice: from the foyer and from the no-man's land between the kitchen and den. In each instance, a section of wall from the second floor drops out of the ceiling on the main level to form a bulkhead. Compounding the problem is the half flight of stairs leading down to the home's lower level. "Even though you know you are not going to hit your head when you go down the stairs, I am six-foot-three, so I think about it," says LeBlanc. "I could see Peter thinking about what to do about this the first time he came over."

Cardew's response was to create a gap between the building's two halves and extend the offending bulkhead wall up to the second-story ceiling, where it now butts against a corner window that has been tucked under the existing soffit. The introduction of the skylight transformed a negative into a positive. Where once there was an obstacle, there is now a grand expanse of wall alive with the play of daylight.

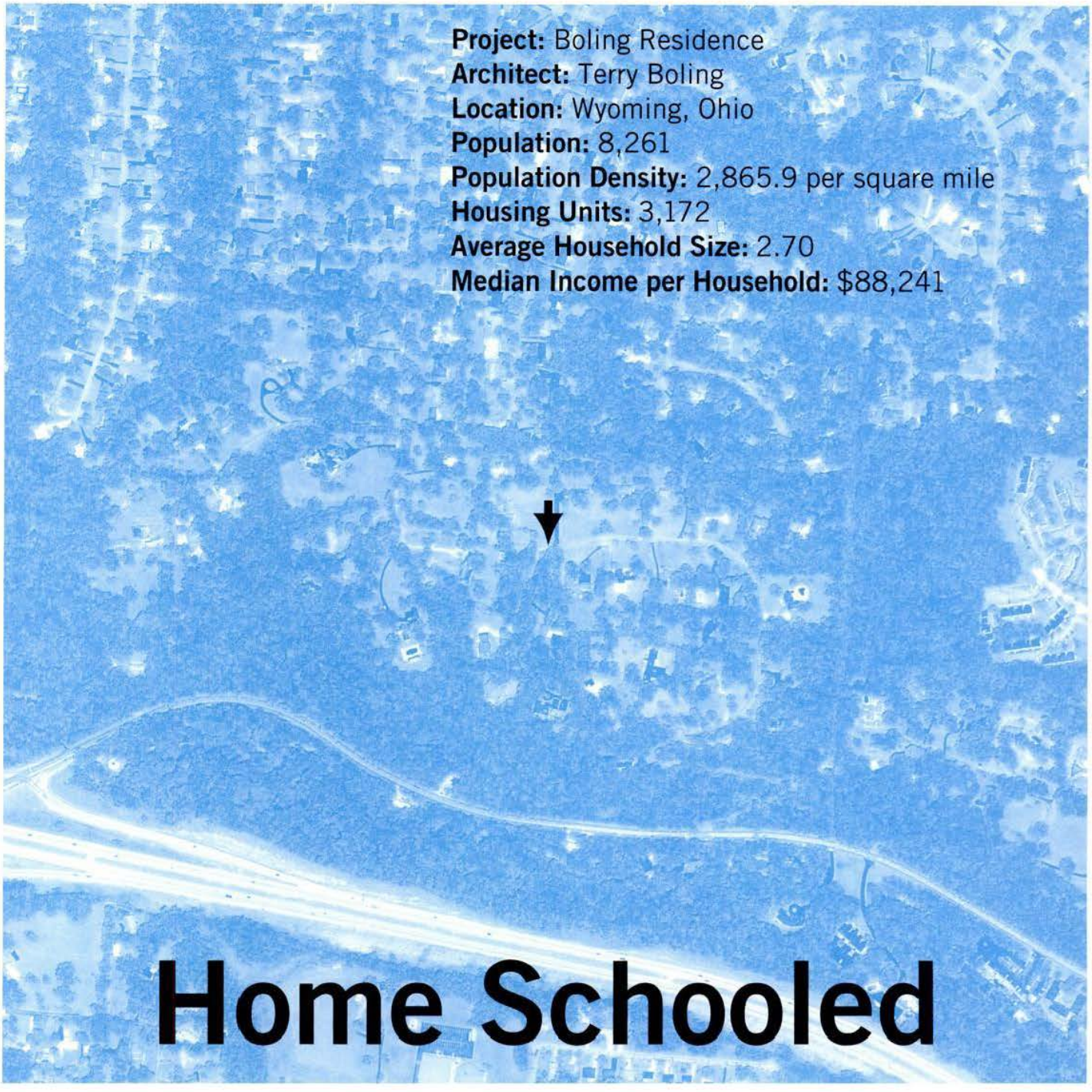
Natural light contributes to the home's overall calming effect, as does the limited palette of materials—mainly drywall, concrete, and maple—and Cardew's treatment of rooms not as separate entities but as part of a continuous whole that blends harmoniously with the building's original character.

"We retained the past to sustain the future," says Cardew. On the other hand, LeBlanc admits that while he is behind the "big idea" of preservation, his motivation for saving this one, and in such a meticulous manner, was personal. "There's just so much junk being built out there; I didn't want my renovation to be part of that." ■

Griffith and LeBlanc cozy up on the Flexform sectional in the den (below), where one of the home's two original wood-burning fireplaces has received a new concrete hearth and mantel. The room, which is located a half flight of stairs down from the main living area (opposite), feels unusually light and airy because of new, wider sliding doors and and a fresh coat of bright white paint. p.230

Story by Georgina Gustin

Photos by Chad Holder




# Home Schooled

**The house at 157 Congress Run in the Cincinnati sub**urb of Wyoming was a fine little place, a sturdy 1940s brick Cape with trim, boxy rooms and an undulating yard punctuated with old trees. In perfect condition and in one of the state's best school districts, it was one of those iconic suburban homes that young couples with growing families fantasize about.

But to Terry Boling the house was all wrong. When he and his then wife, Debbie, bought it in 2003, he immediately ripped off the top floor and started tearing things up, leaving neighbors and passersby mystified and confused. Even Terry—a seasoned architect and professor of architecture at the University of Cincinnati—sometimes wondered. "I thought about it myself," he now admits. "Are we doing the right thing?"

But four years, five and a half tons of concrete fiberboard, and one (amicable) divorce later, the iconic suburban house has been transformed, along with the Boling family, and everything is the better for it. At least the Bolings think so. ▸

The radical addition to the Bolings' brick Cape extends into their sprawling, grassy yard (opposite), granting easy access to the outdoors from the kitchen and living spaces. On top of the original house, the renovated master bedroom suite opens up views to the property.

SATELLITE PHOTO COURTESY DIGITALGLOBE

The kids gather around the Heywood-Wakefield dining set, which Terry purchased from Mainly Art in Cincinnati (left). The flooring in the kitchen and living area is honed travertine from The Great Indoors. Terry and Haley stand in the shelter of the living area overhang (below). The boxes jutting out from the wall house the fireplace and television.

Opposite page (clockwise from upper right): What was once a closed-in staircase has been opened up, allowing light to pour in. An area that once led from the original house to the garage is now enclosed and serves as a transitional space between the private and public areas of the house. The master bathroom, outfitted with Bisazza tiling, has a view of the backyard from the tub. Stacked Baltic birch plywood strips encase the master bathroom, with gaps providing ventilation. The strips also serve as a screen for the closet doors. p. 230

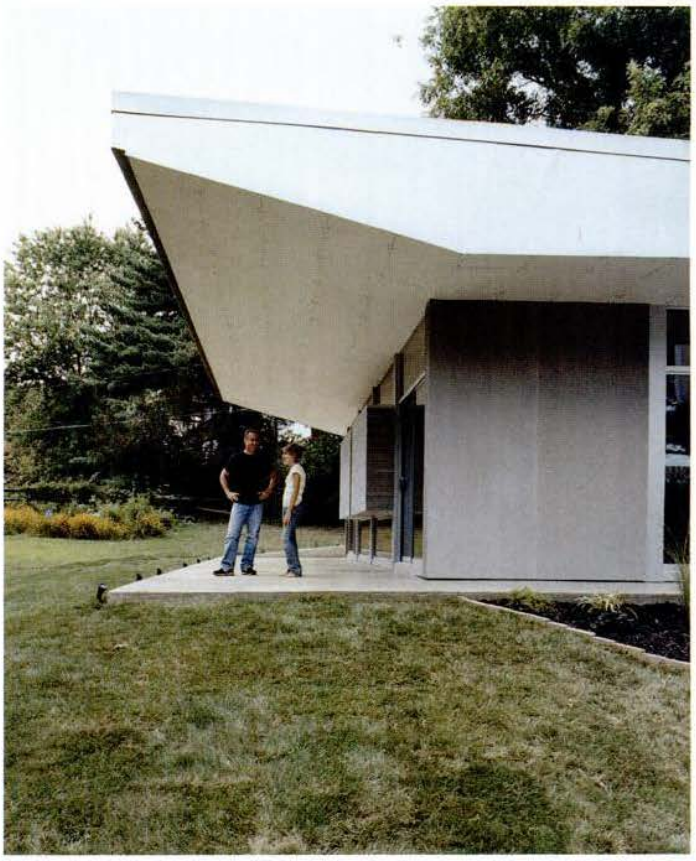
"I was out here one day during the renovation," Terry recalls, standing on the sweep of lawn in front of the house, "and a pickup truck with a bunch of questionable characters drove by, and one of them yelled, 'That's the ugliest house I've ever seen!' But I'm fine with that. This was more about how it works and less about looks."

The Bolings had been living in Belgium and Austria for four years, when they decided to resettle in Cincinnati, where both had gone to school. They found a Victorian in a northern Kentucky suburb of the city, just across the Ohio River, and spent almost a decade there, renovating and reworking the place. "We moved from Vienna, Austria, to Ludlow, Kentucky; we had three kids, one after the other," Debbie remembers. "It was all a blur."

As the kids got older and the prospect of their education loomed, the Bolings started searching for a house in a strong school district; Wyoming, with its top-ranked public schools, was an obvious choice. Finding the house, though, wasn't as easy.

"We wanted to live within the school district, and this place came on the market. It had almost two acres, which were unbelievable. But we weren't enamored with the house—at all," Terry explains. "The rooms were okay, but we wanted something more open. The second floor had no windows, except one small bathroom looking out onto this amazing yard. We wanted to exploit this beautiful view."

With help from some of his graduate architecture students at the University of Cincinnati, where he ▸



Mason and friends scramble around his soon-to-be tree house as Muriel swings. What remains of the original brick house can be seen on the right side of the structure, with the new master bedroom on top and living area on the left. A hot tub and seating area are accessible through the basement and living area.

specializes in teaching design-build studios, Terry ripped off the entire second floor, with its two small, dark bedrooms and gabled roof, and replaced it with an aluminum-trimmed box containing a new master suite that sits, slightly askew, on top of the original first floor. They covered the exterior of the box in cement fiberboard—one of Terry's preferred materials, which also serves as a wall and ceiling surface throughout much of the house. "I hate drywall," he says. "I don't think I used any in the house. I like the tectonic quality of the fiberboard and the exposed screws. We must have used thousands of screws on the ceilings and the walls."

Another theme also began upstairs. Terry and his students encased the master bathroom with Baltic birch plywood cut into strips, stacked on top of each other and glued—a hand-hewn, rough-textured detail that's repeated throughout the house. "I'm really interested in this idea of the mark of the maker, of seeing the labor that goes into the product," Terry explains.

Downstairs, the original boxy rooms seemed perfectly scaled for children's bedrooms and were essentially left alone. The master bedroom became 9-year-old Muriel's, the den became 11-year-old Mason's, and the kitchen, with a little work, morphed into 13-year-old Haley's, forcing all culinary efforts into a cramped, improvised space in the basement where Debbie cooked with a hot plate and an electric pan. "My friends told me I should write a book about Crock-Pot cooking," she jokes.

About a year after they bought the house, the first ▸

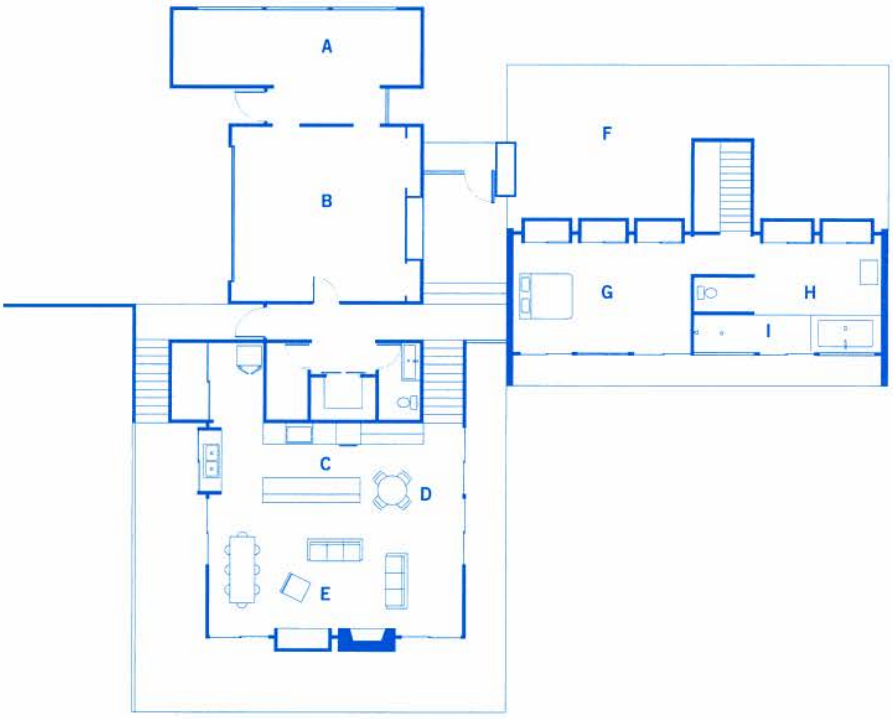
**Boling Residence**
**Floor Plan**

**Ground Floor**

A Workshop
B Garage
C Kitchen
D Dining Area
E Living Area
F Bedrooms

**Second Floor**

G Master Bedroom
H Master Bathroom
I Shower




Muriel samples some of Haley's culinary offerings in the new kitchen (opposite). The deep window doubles as an eating area and a place to serve guests.

phase was pretty much completed—and then the couple decided to separate. At first they tried living in the house, each of them staying there with the kids on alternate weeks. But that arrangement was too stressful, so Terry moved out permanently, even as the work continued. "We decided to move forward," he explains. "We were too far in to turn back."

Over the next two years, Terry and his students, with a little assistance from subcontractors, added a second wing to the house, which juts dramatically into the backyard—another light-filled aluminum-trimmed box containing the living, dining, and kitchen space. The idea, Terry says, was to create a continuous open room that connects to the parklike backyard.

During construction, Debbie and the children lived in the renovated old wing, which was separated from the new addition by plastic sheeting. Finally, the new wing was ready, and on Easter weekend 2006, with guests on the way, Debbie tore through the plastic that covered a doorway and walked to the other side. It was worth the wait, and the two years of cooking in the basement, she now says. "It's all here, so it's really functional," says Debbie, a self-described farm girl from southern Illinois. "I really like being connected to the earth and soil. I can go out and get my herbs, and I can walk out to the grill without walking all over people."

Admittedly, the process of transforming the house was slow. "All of this was done by my students and me," Terry explains. "That's why it took a long time." But the pace also allowed ideas that might have gotten lost in a typical building rush to percolate and develop. Terry and his students framed the fireplace in the old living room with stacked strips of leftover cement fiberboard, for example. "How can you pre-imagine everything, every detail and every surface?" he wonders. "You can't. I needed to be in the space and feel the space. I think of it as a kind of slow architecture."

Terry hopes the experience of being immersed in the building process will change the way his students think about architecture and design. "The connection between construction and architecture is much closer for me," he says. "So many architects don't even know how to build. This is what I try to get students to see—that they don't have to have one or the other. By doing the design and construction they see they're one and the same. When your body's engaged with the work, it's not abstract anymore."

Terry now lives in a "much more modest" house less than a mile away from the suburban dream home that he and his students upended. (The kids join him at his place every other week.) But he still comes over all the time to work on one thing or another. Some doorframes still need trimming— "the thresholds between things are always the hardest," he says—and a new decking area outside the addition needs work.

And outside, not far from the trampoline and the faded wooden swing, another project is waiting to happen. "Next we're going to build Mason a tree house." ■

Story by Jaimie Epstein

Photos by Juliana Sohn


# Pastoral Manner

**Santiago Suarez is a man who craves challenge,** a knight errant, if you will, whose exploits are in the realm of the intellectual and artistic. His wife, Bonnie, has been his game companion and adventurer in kind since they met in college in the late '60s. Three years ago they set out on a quest to downsize from their converted raised ranch in Greenwich, Connecticut, which, with their three sons grown and gone, had become too empty feeling. Having commuted to his film studio in Manhattan for more than 20 years (Santiago directs visually kinetic commercials for the likes of Gillette, Life Savers, and Kellogg's), Santiago had become attracted to the idea of clean, modern loft living, something "cool, maybe a little Spartan," but he didn't want to leave Greenwich. Less than an hour from the city by train or car, Greenwich might as well be another country entirely: It roams and rambles where the city contracts and tapers; it sprawls horizontally where the city funnels vertically; homes in Greenwich seem to be moated by enough greenery to landscape a neighborhood park in ►

The Gaudí-inspired steeple top and sushi bar–inspired front door suggest that the Suarez home (opposite), a former Baptist church, is not your average two-bedroom, two-bath suburban residence.

SATELLITE PHOTO COURTESY DIGITALGLOBE

The house is as much a work of art as a showcase for it. The Suarezes are catholic in their tastes: They buy for love not investment, their collection a mix of high and low. In the foyer, prints and drawings acquired over the course of their world travels hang along the attenuated S-curve of the wall opposite the front door (right). On the mantel above the fireplace (below), a Warhol collage is surrounded by a papier-mâché sculpture of no special provenance, a Vigliaturo glass piece, and a Picasso plate.

With the free-floating birch pod defining the space, and the massive Venetian chandelier accentuating the volume, the great room (opposite) is, indeed, great. The Suarezes wanted the living area to be a place where the family could be occupied individually while still together. Bonnie works in the kitchen (opposite) while Santiago (seated on an IKEA couch borrowed from one of their sons until they find something else) works on the computer.

the city. In short, it is anything but Spartan.

After a year of searching for the impossible, Santiago tripped over an ad in the local newspaper —"Church for Sale!"—went to the open house "out of curiosity," and bought the 19th-century structure, once home to a Baptist congregation, the next day. Only then did he start thinking about what to do with it. He spent a year perusing architect portfolios, even interviewing Zaha Hadid (alas, the job was too small), and trolling the Internet. There he found the husband-and-wife team of Alan Organschi and Lisa Gray. The firm's office in an industrial building in New Haven demonstrated the sort of adaptive reuse the Suarezes had in mind, and when they saw Gray Organschi's transformation of a firehouse into a café and bar cum music studio cum apartment, they were sold.

They were lucky to have an "open-minded client like Santi," says Gray, whose approach is not to rebuild slavishly but to save what is original and great and stabilize the structure, "to bring it back to life." The church had been decommissioned almost 30 years ago and renovated in haphazard, do-it-yourself hippie style, the celestial voices of the choir having long been drowned out by the earthly harmonies of Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, the pews supplanted by shag carpet, and the sacrament replaced with the smell of, um, burning rope. Finding a way for the structure's iconic form to communicate with its contemporary function was a challenge, to say the least.

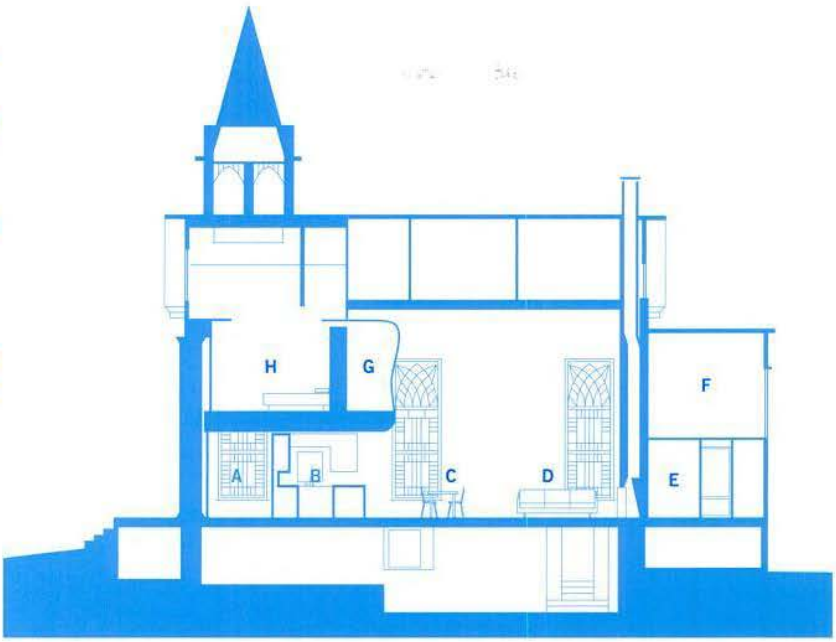
By the time Gray Organschi saw the space, it had already been gutted. The Suarezes had wanted to take it down to its ribs to prevent future surprises, so the architects could see exactly what they would be working with. The interior design was "meant to work as a counterpoint to the very simple, dignified, historic building" that serves as its envelope, Gray says, to be distinctly

and absolutely "other." The question was, in carving out space within the space, "how much to let what we were doing show on the outside." In keeping with the architects' aesthetic principles, the answer was, as little as possible: to let the exterior walls of the church read as they had been written more than 150 years ago.

With a word changed here and there, of course: Because no one knew what the church's original front door had been, there was room for interpretation. Santiago commissioned a replica of a sushi bar's white-cedar door that he had seen in Japan. Its undulating waves tease and invite, telegraphing the idea that a different story is being told within.

As soon as you step into what might be called the foyer and round the corner of its curvaceous wall, this new tale is undeniable. What the Suarezes refer to as "the birch pod," and the architects describe as "an other life-form that landed there," asserts that the 21st century has, indeed, touched down in the 19th, invading like a friendly alien. The pod floats above the great room, ▸

The Jan Larsen Gallery in Brooklyn's DUMBO neighborhood is a favorite haunt for Bonnie and Santiago. That's where they found the Montauk photograph ("It's exciting," Santiago says, "a frozen moment in time") and coffee table composed of traffic signs (below). The painting on the landing of the stairs leading to the guest room (opposite) is a junk-store find. Santiago was especially struck by the incongruity of a New England artist employing such tropical, Gauguin-like colors.




Suarez Residence
Section

A Entry
B Kitchen
C Dining Area
D Living Area
E Mudroom
F Guest Bedroom
G Closet
H Master Bedroom

hovering where the choir loft stood silent as parishioners entered the church. Respecting the old while translating it into the new dovetails with the Suarezes' aesthetic, which is all about marrying the two, using one genre to soften another: a choir loft becomes a master bedroom and bath; the importance of "journey," whether spiritual or physical, plays out in the ribboning of the stairs; the old basement kitchen morphs into storage and laundry facilities (because, Bonnie says, "I didn't want to go down to a bogeyman basement"). The house is, in the end, "all bits and pieces," Santiago says, spliced together like one of his eye-popping television commercials.

But what bits and pieces! A Venetian chandelier as big and bright as a planet provides the great room's center of gravity (or, rather, center of whimsy). Deco screens from a movie theater flank the kitchen; some of their glass circles were duplicated by a glass blower for door panels in the passageways opposite. Paintings, sculptures, and photographs are scattered around the house deliberately, but as casually as a child's toys, although some prized pieces remained in hiberation for awhile, waiting to be woken from their slumber when the Suarezes found the right place for them. You would think that with 20 feet of vertical wall space, hanging art would be a cinch, but it's just the opposite, so Bonnie and Santiago took their time, perching a Matthew Rolston photograph here, staging a cluster of cobalt-glass "bamboo" canes there. The fireplace wall, where the church's altar once presided, is a snapshot of the arching eclectic vision that has directed the process: Neapolitan bamboo is the backdrop for a Warhol collage of Marilyn Monroe, an inexpensive papier-mâché sculpture, a Vigliaturo glass piece from the gallery in Venice where the chandelier and bamboo canes came from, and a Picasso plate. ▸

The window beside the tub in the master bathroom (right) peers over the living space below and echoes the shiplike quality of the pod, which also contains the master bedroom. Lights reminiscent of portholes and mahogany walls deepen the feeling of being on an ocean cruise.

The Suarezes opted for a cozy bedroom with beautiful details, old and new—lustrous mahogany behind the bed, Baker tables beside it. The long beam overhead replaced the original, but smaller beams above it are authentic (below). The family gathers on what is, for now, a postage-stamp-size back porch (opposite). The outdoor space will be revisited later, but this house "is not about gardening," Santiago says. Little by little, he and Bonnie plan to replace the grass with low-maintenance pachysandra, perhaps terracing it with a nod to Versailles—art, art everywhere.

The Suarezes are also taking their time with the kitchen, perhaps because it is a sacred space for Bonnie, a professional chef whose culinary energy these days is expended largely on the Sunday-night family dinners she "caters" in the DUMBO section of Brooklyn, where all three sons live. For now, the island is a slab of marble atop a found base; the counters are constructed with Speed-Rail, a system of pipes and fittings that can be used to build a lighting grid or attach a movie camera to, say, the side of a car to shoot the action within. Speed-Rail also frames the gesso-topped dining-room table. (Yes, gesso, the stuff Renaissance painters slathered on wood panels.) "I've been eating on that thing for ten years," Santiago says.

What started as a personal quest by the Suarezes to reinterpret, "to be excited," as Santiago says, "to have someone teach me a lesson"—in short, to have their minds blown—has had a similar effect on those touched by the project. Ted Whitten, an early project architect, consecrated the Suarezes' new home by having his wedding there before the job was done, wires dangling like industrial party decorations. Meanwhile, the contractors learned a thing or two: They had never built a wall that wasn't straight, had never even worked on anything non-colonial—what, no molding to hide mistakes?—hardly surprising given the traditional nature of architecture in conservative, centuries-old Greenwich. And with its steeple bell sitting on the front lawn à la Marcel Duchamp, the church has become a happy town curiosity—the Suarezes, only just moved in, have already been approached by would-be buyers.

It has definitely been a long, strange trip—for a Baptist church, for the town of Greenwich, and for Bonnie and Santiago Suarez—but the journey is hardly over yet. ■

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Story by Deborah Snoonian | Photos by Roy Zipstein



Using pioneering digital design and manufacturing methods, architect and builder John Nastasi fashioned a steel-and-glass bedroom wing for the Najarian home while renovating the rest of the existing modestly sized suburban house.

# The Adding Machine

**At first glance, the elegant steel-and-glass addition** to the Najarian home some 20 miles northwest of Manhattan in the suburb of Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey, seems straightforward enough. But the longer you look at it quirks slowly reveal themselves: the curve of the roofline, a fold in the north-side wall that gently bends outward, the ever-so-slight torque of the entire structure. There's a certain delight in noticing these oddities as they percolate into your consciousness—like mastering a Mind's Eye poster in your friend's dorm room.

Weird angles are the calling card of architect John Nastasi. They're also the reason his Hoboken-based firm, Nastasi Architects, has built most of its own residential designs. "We couldn't get contractors to build complex forms on the budgets we had, so we began doing it ourselves and have been ever since," he says. ▸

The Najarian addition didn't rely on the tedious manual calculations and construction methods that Nastasi's complex forms once entailed. Instead, the architect developed a parametric model—essentially a database that contains geometric information as well as structural properties, materials, and site-specific data like the sun's angle and prevailing winds. He programmed rules and performance criteria right into the model (such as limiting the addition's size or height, or setting a baseline standard for energy efficiency), and the form automatically adjusted itself to the specified conditions, like a tree trunk growing naturally around a rock. After evaluating the different options generated by the parametric model, Nastasi refined the design until he and his client were satisfied. He then sent the model to fabricators, who used the data to manufacture the major structural components of the addition—namely the steel frame and window systems—using precise digital methods similar to those used to make cars and yachts. And all this for a price comparable to traditional suburban construction.

It's a far cry from the string and nails that Nastasi and his staff once used to re-create paper ideas in the real world. Nastasi also insists that parametric modeling is more flexible and adaptable than other prefab methods that rely on mass-produced components and materials that are put together the same way over and over again. He calls the Najarian project a suburban prototype—and he hopes his methods will help redefine how suburban additions, and eventually entire homes, are built.

"The construction of houses hasn't evolved much in the past 50 years, and that's partly why we see the same tired styles over and over again: fake colonials, fake Gothic architecture," he comments. "That's why I came up with this idea of a smart wing that can adapt easily to conditions at any site, at a cost that's no greater than the old way of doing things. I'd like to put one of these wings onto 500 houses across the country." It's an intriguing goal, but the question remains: Can one small experiment in New Jersey (insert your own toxic-waste joke here) transform suburban design for the masses?

A native of Jersey City, Nastasi hasn't strayed far from his roots. He studied at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, returning to New Jersey afterward and launching his firm in Hoboken in 1991. It was a few years later, when ▸

"There's a myth that digitally driven fabrication isn't widely available, but it is—you just have to be willing to go outside of the architectural and building communities to find it."

The bedroom's aesthetic epitomizes the interior of the whole Najarian home: spare, neutral furnishings and ample outdoor views (left). A Noguchi Akari pendant lamp provides a distinctive handmade touch, while wall-mounted Artemide Tolomeo fixtures light up the Najarians' bedside reading.

The subtly curved roof (above) shields the south-facing windows from too much sun. The stones that surround the deck off the master bedroom, including the stone-cum-stair on which architect John Nastasi stands, were excavated from the yard during construction.
p. 230

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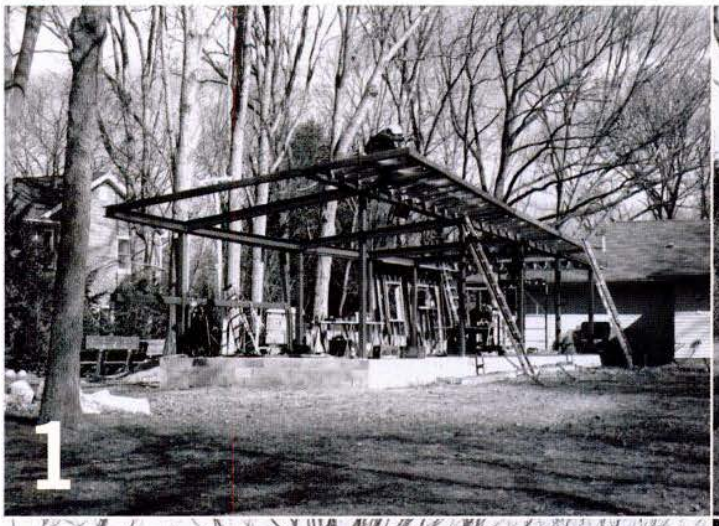
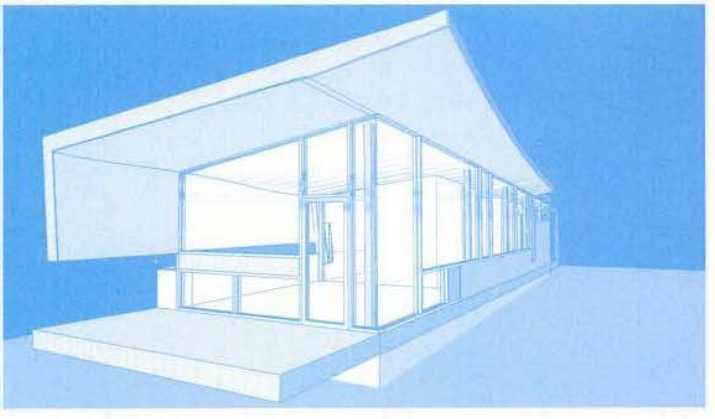






"This work challenges the notion that prefabrication must be bound by a very tight set of rules about materials and construction methods."

The parametric model of the addition (renderings below) contains information about the structure's geometry as well as nongeometric information like the strength of the steel and local environmental conditions like the sun's path and prevailing wind patterns. Construction photos (above) show the assembly of the steel frame and cut-to-fit joists, and later, the addition of the glass curtain wall system, all of which required close coordination among tradesmen and contractors. Arpie Gennetian Najarian says they often met after work to talk about the project informally. "Everyone was willing to learn from each other," she remembers.



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At night, lights illuminate the underside of the addition's roof, enhancing the lanternlike qualities of the structure.

designing a $60,000 addition for the Shin family in Closter, New Jersey (that of the strings-and-nails experiment, which won a citation of merit from the local AIA chapter in 1996), that Nastasi began thinking seriously about how to achieve the odd-angled forms he wanted, with fewer headaches. "I was frustrated by my own inefficiencies," he says.

Nastasi found himself increasingly drawn to computers and 3-D CAD and modeling software, which were, of course, becoming more and more powerful. When he entered Harvard's Graduate School of Design in 2002 for what he calls "a retooling," he told them he wanted to learn how to craft digital models used for prefabrication that would allow flexibility in the final materials and construction methods.

Nastasi found a perfect test case—or rather, the perfect test case found him—around the time he began his studies. Commercial real estate broker Gregg Najarian was at work flipping through a copy of *Momentum*, a magazine published by Mercedes, when he came across pictures of a home Nastasi had designed. "It stopped me in my tracks," says Najarian.

He brought the magazine home to his wife, Arpie Gennetian Najarian, a fine artist and graphic designer who once worked for the design firm Gensler. They'd been searching for an architect to renovate their one-story 1960s home. "This is our guy," he told her. She agreed instantly. The couple hired Nastasi for the project, which was to include a bed-and-bath wing for themselves and their three young children.

The Najarians were game to let Nastasi experiment with high-flying design methods as long as the budget didn't break the bank. So experiment he did. Working with one of his students who had a background in mathematics, he first designed the addition from milled Styrofoam covered by a glass composite skin. No dice, he decided—too much of a one-off.

Next he tried a folded-metal structural skin, a solution similar to his thesis at Harvard, which won him the school's Peter Rice Prize for innovation in architecture and engineering. But again he scrapped the idea. "It was beautiful, but it wasn't prototype-like. I wanted something that could be made into a more affordable addition for any home," he recalls. ▸


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As they say, the third time's a charm. Nastasi reduced the structure to a torqued steel frame supplemented by lightweight metal joists available at any home-improvement store, which were the key to making it affordable and feasible. The addition and renovation were completed last spring. The low-slung structure—all white walls and spare furnishings brightened by colorful artwork, including many of Arpie's mixed-media pieces—stands quietly in contrast to the McMansions that have been built on surrounding lots that once featured more modestly sized homes. "Those just get demolished these days," says Gregg. "We didn't want to be wasteful like that. Why not work with what we have?"

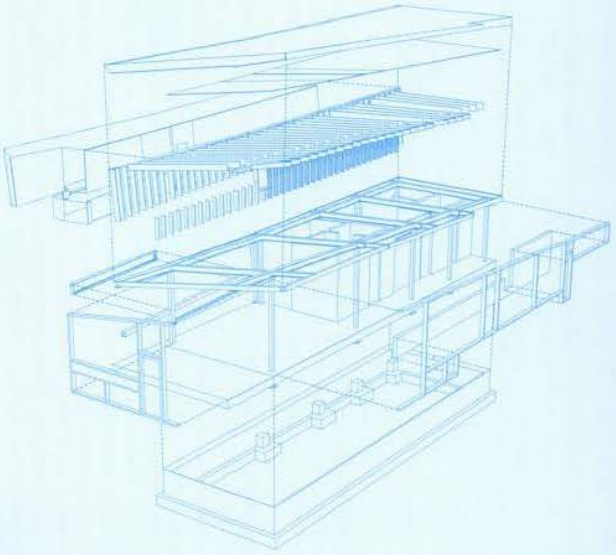
Meanwhile, Nastasi was so compelled by what he was learning that he crafted a curriculum to teach young and midcareer designers his new methods. In 2004 he established the Product-Architecture Lab at the Stevens Institute of Technology, an engineering school in Hoboken, where he created a two-year multidisciplinary master's program. Each class consists of a dozen students—architects, mechanical engineers, computer scientists, mathematicians—who together refine the design methods Nastasi pioneered at Harvard, lending the process a sense of momentum.

That momentum has thus far translated into a smart house he designed for a sculptor in Plano, Texas, and projects as diverse as a kindergarten, a ten-story mixed-use building, and research work for buildings in India and the Middle East (with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill and Buro Happold). In 2006 Nastasi was short-listed to design a family of pedestrian bridges in four New York City boroughs. Still, it's suburban homes that seem to have the most hold on the designer. "Architects are missing opportunities to do something important there if they just focus on urban areas," he laments.

Carlos Cárdenas, who met Nastasi at Harvard, is using the Najarian addition as a case study for his doctoral thesis. "This work challenges the notion that prefabrication must be bound by a very tight set of rules about materials and construction methods," he points out.

Nastasi adds, "There's a myth that digitally driven fabrication isn't widely available, but it is—you just have to be willing to go outside of the architectural and building communities to find it." ■

"The construction of houses hasn't evolved much in the past 50 years, and that's partly why we see the same tired styles over and over again: fake colonials, fake Gothic architecture."



Digitally cut strips of zinc, arranged both horizontally and vertically (left), help provide a visual connection between the addition's exterior and the cement board used to reclad the original house. An exploded image from the parametric model (above) demonstrates the home's kit of parts.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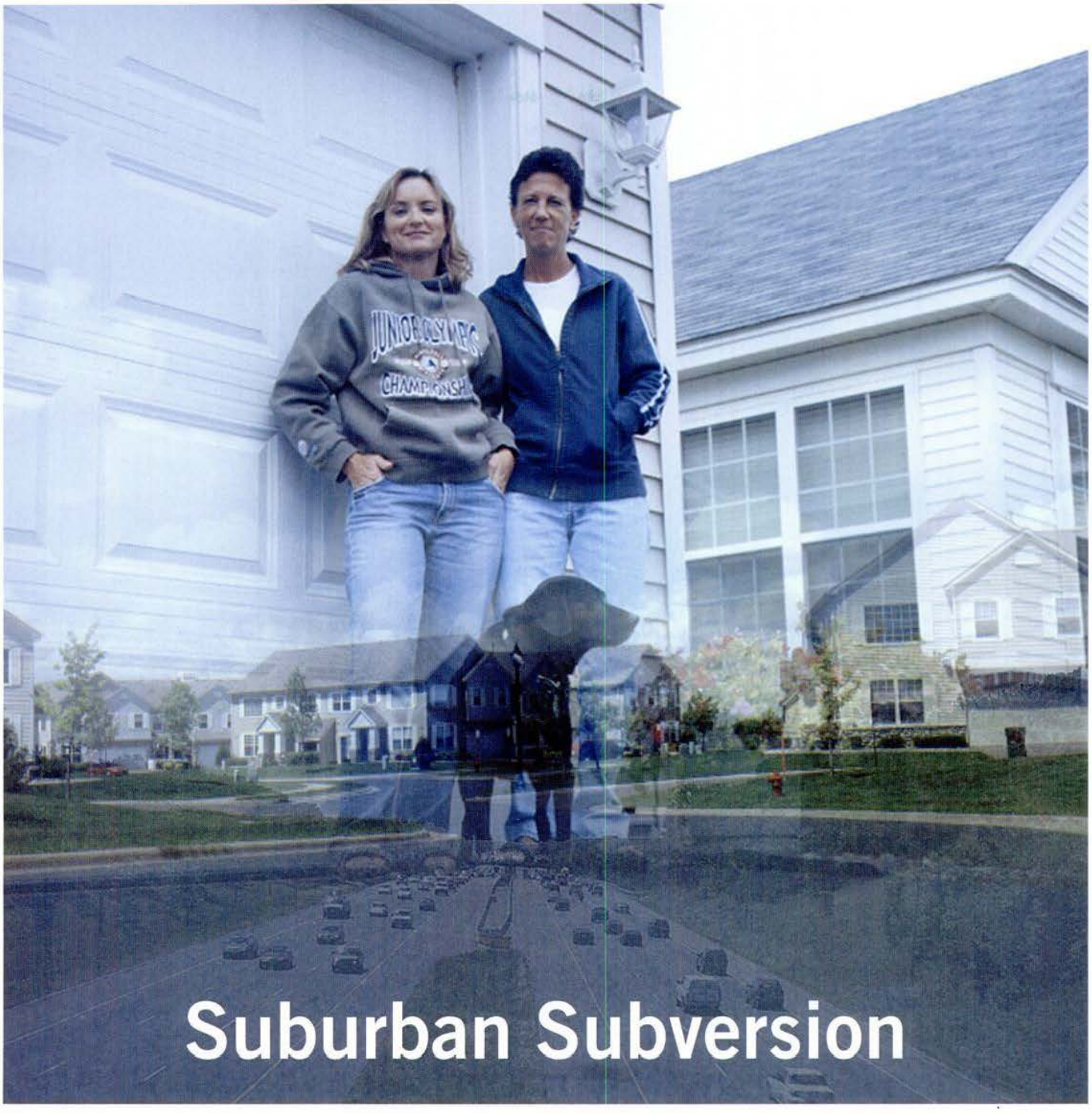

# Suburban Subversion

**For "Worlds Away: New Suburban Landscapes"** cocurators Andrew Blauvelt, design director and curator at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, and Tracy Myers, curator of the Heinz Architectural Center at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh, explore the art and architecture of the contemporary American suburb. Opening at the Walker Art Center in February 2008 and at the Carnegie in October 2008, the exhibit encompasses approximately 5,000 square feet of gallery space and will feature a diverse range of media—paintings, photographs, prints, architectural models, sculptures, and video—that explores a variety of suburban conditions. Dwell sat down with Blauvelt and Myers to discuss the much-maligned 'burbs and the challenge of curating a show dedicated exclusively to their rapidly expanding and infinitely complex fabric. ►

**Laura Migliorino**
*Oakbrook Way #2*
22" x 22", inkjet on canvas, 2007

**You've characterized "Worlds Away" as having a somewhat revisionist or contrary perspective. Could you elaborate on this?**

**Andrew Blauvelt (AB):** A lot of people's ideas of the suburbs—particularly city dwellers'—are from the 1950s, the idea that they are [made up of] white, middle-class families with single detached homes. There's a lot of new demographic data that busts holes in these ideas about suburbia, and we want to begin to impart this information to viewers, so that they leave realizing something they hadn't recognized before.

**Tracy Myers (TM):** Those of us who continue to think of suburbia as this monolith are not only being kind of elitist but also being very naïve. The texture of the exhibition will suggest something about the condition of America today. More than half the population in the United States lives in suburbs; there's a reason for that, and rather than continuing the pattern of maligning that trend, which many urbanites think of as unsavory or unsatisfactory or just plain evil, we want to try to understand and identify qualities in suburbia that have value in their own right and that might dissolve myths about it.

**Angela Strassheim**
*Untitled (McDonald's)*
40" x 50", C-print, 2004

**Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis**
*New Suburbanism*
sectioned perspective, 2000

**Interboro**
*In the Meantime, Life with Landbanking* (Dutchess County Mall, Fishkill, New York)
2003

**An exhibition like this is bound to draw a lot of parallels between the visual arts and architecture. Can you speak to some of these pairings?**

**AB:** There will be moments where you're connecting a painting or photograph with an architectural project. The hope is that these things will start to resonate with each other. Interboro architects, for example, is a firm that's more interested in process and developing solutions that are much more based in reality. When they look at a "dead mall," they don't think, Oh let's make it a civic center. Instead, they analyze: Why do dead malls exist? With *In the Meantime*, they analyzed a real dead mall. They talked to the property owners to try to figure out why they sit on them—which is called "land banking." Their interventions are more tactical than strategic. They're looking at traditional types of activities that could be slotted in to give life to the mall while it's in this hibernation mode. ►

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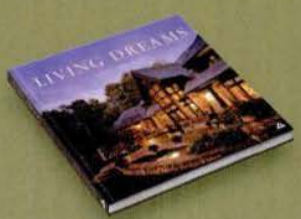


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**Then you have artists like Julia Christensen, who documents how abandoned big-box stores are being reused by different communities across the country.**

**AB:** Another photographer in that vein is Paho Mann, who has been documenting the redevelopment of Circle Ks. In the '90s Circle K sold off a ton of their properties. Mann looks them up in old Yellow Pages and then [goes to the site] to document them. So some of them are tattoo parlors and others are real estate offices. But they still have the same underlying typology, so you can tell it's the same store, just done 27 different ways. It's a contrast between how people are really using the spaces and how an architect would approach it. Of course, Interboro is not your typical architect.

**TM:** The fact that Interboro is willing to look at their interventions as provisional is a very humble approach, and I think most of the architects we're looking at have an essential humility. It's not about creating big statements; it's about using what's there and improving it, not from the point of view of the architects, but from the point of view of the ultimate user. In a general sense, one trend that's discernible in architecture projects is a kind of incrementalism. Suburbia is not like a greenfield site or a clear site in a city where you can imagine the whole thing. Rather than programming the space to dictate what happens there, it's inverting that process to capitalize on what happens there and make architecture out of it. There's a distinct ecology in that strategy of reusing big boxes. It's an opportunistic approach, and it's a matter of economics, I'm sure. It's easy to renovate a big box—you don't have to do much. The character of the building is such that you're not going to convey to your parishioner some sense of lavishness through a big-box renovation into a church. It is what it is. ▶



**Paho Mann**
*Re-Inhabited Circle K: Carniceria Cuerrero, Phoenix, Arizona*
20" x 24", inkjet print, 2006

*Re-Inhabited Circle K: Days Dollar Store, Phoenix, Arizona*
20" x 24", inkjet print, 2006

**Julia Christensen**
*Snowy Range Academy, Renovated Wal-Mart Building, Laramie, Wyoming*
27" x 18", digital photograph, 2005

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**Andrew, you suggest that artistic representation of the suburbs has changed considerably since the '60s. Could you elaborate?**

**AB:** Suburban representation in the arts has shifted since the late 1960s, which often documented suburbia's homogeneity, [and lack] of culture—that classic urban-dweller-looking-at-an-alien-land sort of critique—like in the work of Dan Graham. I think you can track [a shift] in architecture as well.

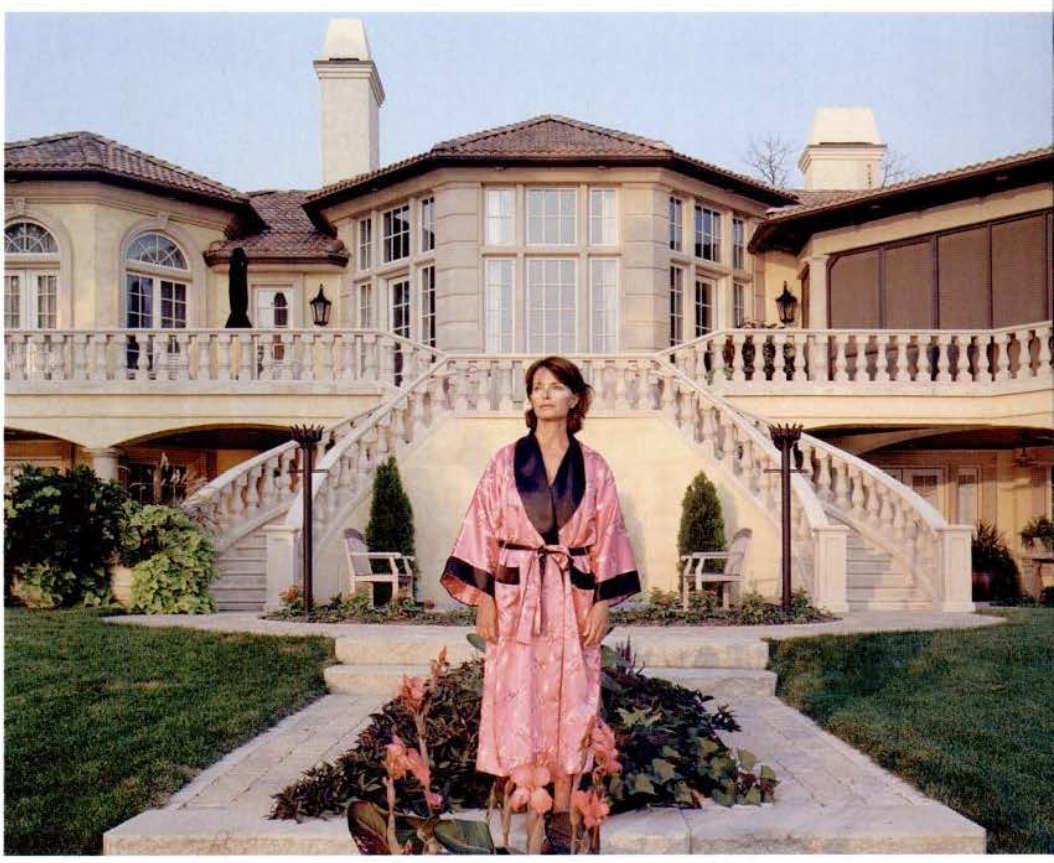
Tracy and I both grew up in the suburbs, and I think a lot of the artists [in the show] also grew up in the suburbs, so they have a slightly different relationship to this landscape—it's not completely foreign. It may be a source of inspiration for them. Of course, there are definitely pro and anti—or ambivalent—camps, but the stance isn't "Oh I hate suburbia; therefore, I'm not going to deal with it." It's more about how to intervene and interpret it knowing that it's a multibillion-dollar industrial complex. It's that kind of shift that we're trying to hint at. It's much more provisional and tactical.

**Dan Graham**
*Homes for America*
34.5" x 25", chromogenic prints mounted to board, 1966–1967

**Angela Strassheim**
*Untitled (Elsa)*
30" x 40", C-print, 2003

**So would you say that you're endorsing the suburban aesthetic when you talk about the "poetics of the megaspace"?**

**AB:** My other interest, aside from writing about graphic design, is to write spatial critiques. For [the "Worlds Away" catalog], I would focus on this idea of the megaspace and what would constitute a poetics of that space because most spatial poetics are based on intimacy and minimization, not on gigantism and scale-shift. I'm trying to bring in some topical themes, like many of the suburbs around certain cities in the country are trying to restrict the size of McMansions. And there's this whole cottage industry started by Sarah Susanka—[of] the "not-so-big house"—about appropriate lifestyle scaling, and I want to take a sort of contrarian's look at what constitutes place and intimacy and the idea of the megastore, the megamall, the megachurch in the culture of bigness. ►

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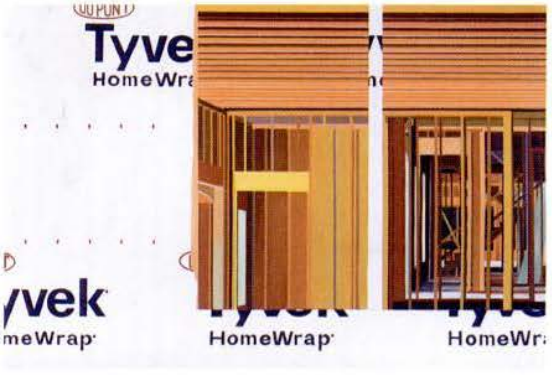
**In general, it seems the visual arts take on a more critical tone, whereas the architectural projects are more positive in their approach or intervention. Are there any artists who you feel present a more positive perspective?**

**AB:** The painter Sarah McKenzie lives in a suburban area, and she basically paints what she sees outside the window. The photographer Laura Migliorino initially set out to document edge development and the spoiling of nature in the southern suburbs of Minneapolis, but it became something else when she got there. The people who live there were younger and it was more ethnically diverse than she'd thought and she started taking portraits. You also have the more pro or neutral people like Greg Stimac. His series of people mowing their lawn is more an exercise in documentation and parallels the work of John Divola from the '70s. Brian Ulrich also documents contemporary shoppers. Angela Strassheim documents her own family, which is born-again Christian, and I don't think she's trying to put any particular spin on it—it's more neutral than it is critical.

**TM:** The project that first stimulated my interest in this subject was *New Suburbanism* by Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis Architects. It basically looks to big boxes for sectional opportunities in an essentially horizontal design strategy. They look at these big boxes and think: Okay, the big boxes are sort of maligned and derided. Is there something else that we can do with them? Is there some other sort of opportunity available to them that isn't being exploited? To oversimplify, they propose building housing on top of them.

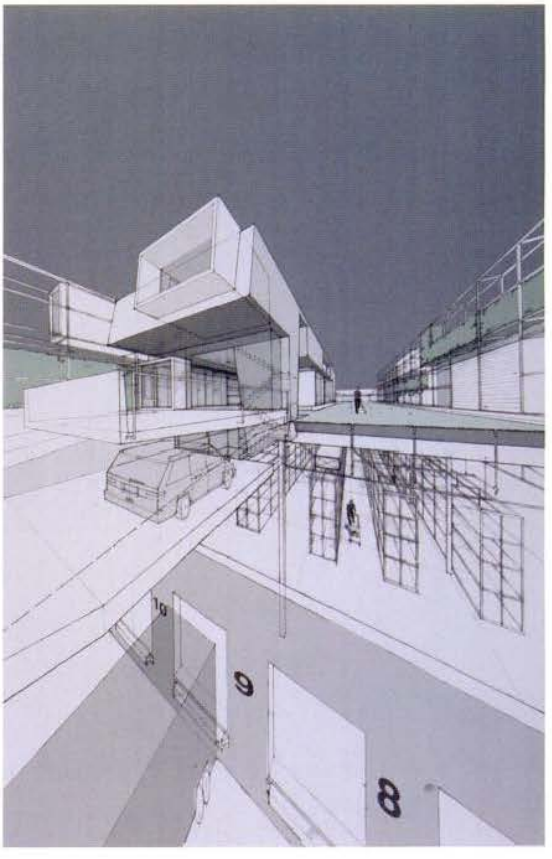
All the architecture projects in the show are not judgmental. They're really about maximizing opportunities—implicitly acknowledging that massive suburbanization has negative ramifications for almost all of us. Whether you live in the city or whether you live in the suburbs, you're affected by suburbanization. I think that the architectural projects are critical in the fundamental sense of that word. They are looking critically at the suburban condition and figuring out how to make something of it instead of sort of demonizing it.




**Do you think the exhibition will be comprehensive enough to change people's perspective on suburbia? Is it your goal to change our minds?**

**AB:** We only have so much square footage to come up with a cohesive argument. A lot of people forget that the Eichler homes and the mid-century style that is so popular today—these were all suburban development typologies. We live in the present so much that we forget that yesterday's suburb is the city fabric.

**TM:** One thing that one could hope for in an exhibition like this is that it doesn't seem to be overly ambitious or polemical, and that, as you're going through your world, you'll begin to see it differently or just see it in the first place. Because the kind of suburbanization that happened after World War II is now really an historical phenomenon. And Andrew's observation about the Eichler homes is that what a suburb is is hard to define. It's a moving target, and the criticism hasn't kept up with the movement of the target. For example, [with regard to] suburban families, about one-third are nontraditional nuclear families. And people don't realize that because they don't look around, and they have no reason to think about it. To the extent that it can provoke that kind of thinking, it will at least influence one's perspective on the world that they inhabit. ■



**Sarah McKenzie**
*Wrap*
48" x 72", oil on canvas, 2006

**Greg Stimac**
*Mowing the Lawn (Chandler, Arizona)*
30" x 41", archival inkjet prints, 2005–2006

**Lewis.Tsurumaki.Lewis**
*New Suburbanism*
sectioned perspective, 2000

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Story by John King

Illustrations by Claire Louise Mallison


**So this is what city life boils down to: flat roofs, right** angles, and steel-mesh awnings for industrial spice.

The complex is called CentreVille, and it's the last thing I expect to find on State Farm Drive in Rohnert Park, a suburb 40 miles north of San Francisco. The three-story buildings hug the empty sidewalk with a methodical progression of boxy shapes that are as crisp as anything clad in four shades of stucco can be. There's even a sharp-edged space at the corner intended for a café—all part of what CentreVille's marketing brochure calls "exciting and modern architectural design...city style and luxury in the heart of downtown."

Only two things are missing: hordes of faded-rock-tee-clad hipsters, and any semblance of an urban scene. Instead I see handsome redwood trees, reedy Hinebaugh Creek, and a small office building that wears its dark wood shingles with '70s pride. On the far side of Rohnert Park Expressway there's a shopping center that rises from the asphalt with a look best described as washed-out Spanish Mission. SoHo, it ain't.

No matter. If CentreVille is a textbook case of real estate marketing hubris, it's also a fresh example of how America's physical and cultural landscapes are shifting. In the United States of 2007, downtown is a state of mind. Urbanity is a branding exercise. And if your definition of "city life" is nothing more than a cool backdrop to high living, the suburbs are happy to try and fill the bill.

The notion that sleek looks and brushed steel translate into urban authenticity might seem absurd to oldsters like me, who expect our scenes to be rooted in an actual place. But that's old-school thinking—pre-iPod and wifi, pre-Netflix and Amazon, pre-Urban Outfitters (99 stores at last count) and Starbucks (who's counting?). I'm nearly 50, a relic of a time when tracking down the mysteries of art or the avant-garde still involved exploring, on foot, unfamiliar terrain. Today, cutting-edge culture is a mouse-click away; if you know exactly what to Google, or you've got a wired friend to send you links, you can be Kerouac 2.0.

This easy access to the edge didn't happen overnight, of course; MTV introduced suburban teens to the gangsta lifestyle back in the late 1980s, and way back in 1994 the headline of a *Time* magazine cover story asked "If Everyone Is Hip...Is Anyone Hip?" The difference now ▸

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is that entire projects and neighborhoods are being built on the premise that suburbs can design and offer their own calibrated slices of urbanity.

In my neck of the woods, the two best examples are downtown Walnut Creek and San Jose's Santana Row.

The former is a real place, a once-rural crossroads that evolved into a suburban destination and now serves as the biggest Bay Area shopping hub east of San Francisco. Even five years ago, any condominiums built near the center of town adopted a rustic-resort air; by contrast, the new 181-unit Mercer looks like it was outfitted by Banana Republic. It's lean, it's taut, there are polished-concrete columns along the sidewalk, and the advertising stresses the easy walk to downtown shops as well as a performing arts center and a Peet's (the Bay Area alternative to Starbucks).

Santana Row is something else: an ebulliently garish world of urban make-believe, 42 acres of former shopping center laid out in a street grid that tries to pretend it's not next door to the Winchester Mystery House, a quirky, 160-room Victorian mansion moonlighting as the biggest tourist trap on I-280. The four- to eight-story buildings are a Disneyfied cross between New York's SoHo and New Orleans's French Quarter; the ground floors are stuffed with restaurants and bars and shops and spas.

As different as they feel, each project has the same aim: to make suburbanites feel like they're part of a scene. Santana Row property manager Fred Walters describes the market for the 511 residential units on the upper floors as "modern urban...people who want an urban experience, like in San Francisco, but they also want to be close to work." At the Mercer, residential real estate broker Alan Mark explains, "A lot of people have absolutely no desire to live in San Francisco. But they'd love to walk to restaurants and some kind of cultural entertainment.... Just because people live in the suburbs doesn't mean they're looking for a suburban aesthetic."

And so we have Mies lite. All the complexities and ragged edges of older big cities are buffed to a glossy sheen. Forget the connotation of "downtown" that existed into the 1980s—blight and crime and corrosive decay, the New York of *Fort Apache, The Bronx*. Think instead of the New York of *Friends*. All that's needed for ▸



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an urban vibe is a café or two that serves fair trade coffee, a wine bar where you can get tapas, and a multi-screen cinema approachable on foot. Find room for a Design Within Reach and a Whole Foods Market, and the package is complete.

A place like Rohnert Park lacks even these basic items on the urban checklist. But it probably has politicians with dreams of a downtown to call their own—and a few big companies nearby that covet the sort of young high-tech workers who don't cotton to the suburban ideal of a backyard and a rumpus room, at least not yet. That's the target demographic, and it wants a little bit of city, even if it's manufactured on the spot.

What's more, CentreVille isn't all that unusual. A few miles south in Cotati—the kind of place where genuine hippies still amble into the skimpy center of town—The Lofts at Cotati Station advertises "the best elements of contemporary design," which translates to 19-foot ceilings, Grohe fixtures, track lighting, and bamboo floors.

South of San Francisco there's a large apartment project named Solaire that sits on a barren stretch of El Camino Real (six lanes of not much) across the street from the retaining wall of a subdivision. But it's stacked three or four stories high, there's a Trader Joe's grocery store included, and it's next to a BART commuter-rail station. That's enough for the marketing firm to tout Solaire as a perfect spot to "enjoy the downtown lifestyle without the hassles of downtown living."

Ah yes, the hassles. The weird people you encounter on the street. The trash and litter and gridlock. The lack of parking spaces and the abundance of drivers who don't know what they're doing. The element of surprise.

That's the difference that remains—the thing that separates authentic urban culture from what's being whipped up in the 'burbs.

As lifestyles go, I fully understand the allure of downtown as stage set—a place that encourages you to walk, that doesn't feel like some hermetically sealed shopping mall. There's a veneer of sophistication and who knows, you might catch someone's eye.

What's missing is the unexpected. Big cities are defined by change; people move to them to make things happen, to carve out a life, to experience the jolt that comes from seeing something new. ■

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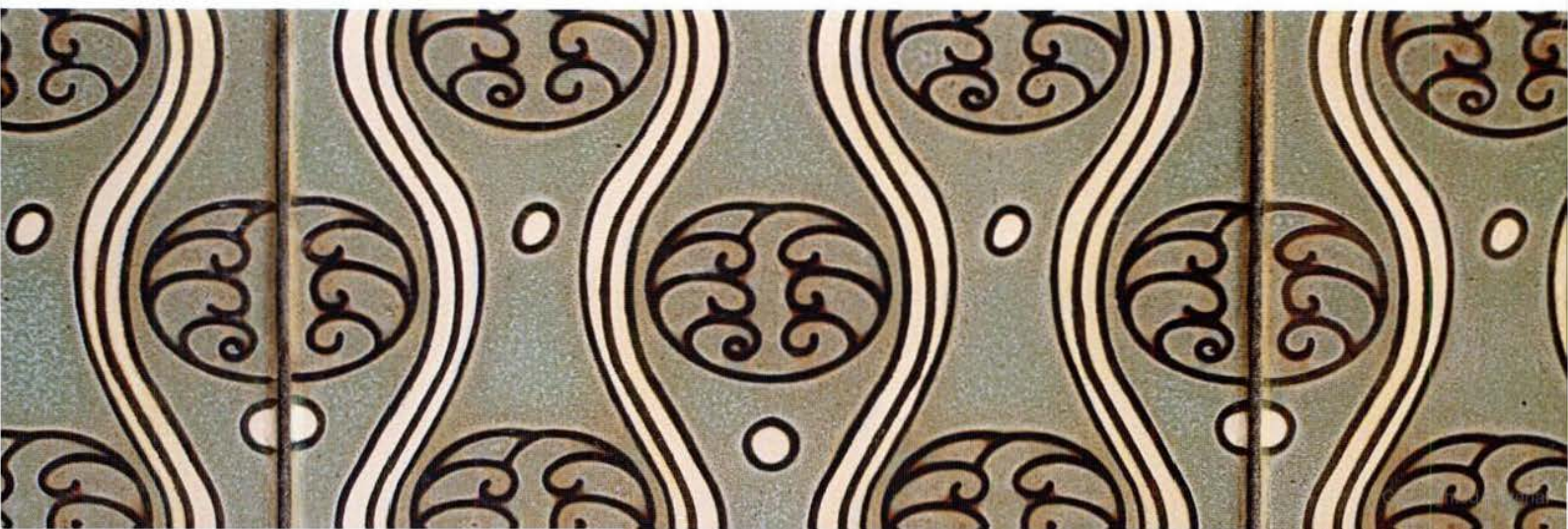

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Story by Jane Szita

# The Suburbs Strike Back

Swedish prefab specialists Smedshammar + Holmberg are on a mission to rescue their compatriots from boring suburbs—and their deep-seated suspicion of architects.

Silverdal Terrace I gets its name from the raised rooftop terraces created by pulling back the upper module of the houses from the street. The terraces were very popular with buyers. "The houses change character depending on the angle you see them from," says architect Anders Holmberg.

PHOTO BY RASMUS NORLANDER

**Anders Holmberg is tired of apologizing for being** an architect. "It sounds ridiculous, but Swedish people still blame the architecture profession for the massive program of building we had here between 1965 and 1975," he says. "The problem is, it resulted in lots of monotonous high-rises surrounded by greenery—very influential in Europe at the time, but a social disaster. People felt disoriented and disconnected in their new high-rise homes."

Holmberg, who founded the Stockholm-based architectural office Smedshammar + Holmberg with Carl-Johan Smedshammar in 2001, believes that the subsequent backlash is why Swedes, despite their fabled design literacy, are simply uninterested when it comes to contemporary architecture. So, when Smedshammar + Holmberg was approached by property developer Skanska to create a new development in the Stockholm suburb of Silverdal, Holmberg jumped at the chance to "create a 'good' version of suburbia." A major inspiration was a certain construction system that the Swedes have nothing against: that Scandinavian classic, Lego.

"We began by designing the houses as four Lego blocks," says Holmberg. "Even before we started work on the design, we met with the construction company to decide the dimensions of the prefabricated sections, as determined by the manufacturing and transportation requirements. Since the factory making the units is located far away, in northern Sweden, the building sections had to fit easily onto trucks."

Faced with a clear size limitation of 13 by 42.5 by 11.5 feet (the maximum size of the prefabricated units), and the demands of the area's master plan, which specified that one side of each house must border the street, the architects devised a set of Lego-style blocklike units, which they could "manipulate to create the best possible layout." Yet the resulting 18-house complex is anything but boxy.

Rather than creating a flat frontage on the street, the architects pulled back the upper module of each house to form a more sculptural profile, adding a raised terrace topped by an asymmetrical white frame for attaching plants or fabric screens. This feature, which lends the development a greater feeling of privacy as well as more visual interest, would become a major selling point, and give the development its name: Silverdal Terrace I.

The layout that Smedshammar + Holmberg achieved through the considered use of simple, repeated elements is complemented by the bold use of contrasting colors—white for a home's public areas (the entrance walls), black for the rest—which provides a modern take on the traditional Swedish wooden façade. "The houses change character depending on the angle you see them from," says Holmberg. "This creates variation—which is important to have in a suburban area."

The Terrace could become the basis for Smedshammar + Holmberg's first international foray: a possible new development in the UK, also in partnership with Skanska, and a major step for the firm. With their backgrounds in engineering, Holmberg and Smedshammar share ▸

Anders Holmberg (above right) and Carl-Johan Smedshammar (above left) take a moment to reflect on their work. Silverdal Terrace I (left), their version of prefabricated suburbia, uses black and white to demarcate public and private spaces.

PHOTO BY RASMUS NORLANDER (PORTRAIT)


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Silverdal Terrace II (left), created as an example of "good" suburbia, uses various shades of gray to add distinction and definition to the individual houses. Villa Oscar (below) is a typical example of a Smedshammar + Holmberg private commission, where a wooden frame is used to "frame" the house in the landscape.

a highly pragmatic and technical approach to their vision, which made the realization of their design a seemingly effortless process: The Terrace houses required only one day for basic construction, with all finishing completed within five weeks.

"Generally speaking, we build houses today like we built cars around 1910," says Holmberg, who admits that he almost became a car designer. "It's an old technique—the construction industry hasn't caught up with other manufacturing industries. You wouldn't build a car piece by piece today, out in the open and exposed to all the elements, so why build a house that way? If architects are smart, they'll focus on getting construction companies to invest in new techniques."

Nevertheless, Holmberg stresses that the firm's priorities remain strictly architectural: "While technical limitations are always our starting point, we never let structural factors inhibit our designs," he says. "Our structural knowledge is the key to our work, because it means we can be sure of realizing our ideas."

For Holmberg, such pragmatism is a defining feature of Swedish architecture: "The climate is extreme—cold winters, warm summers—so here building has always been focused on materials and structure. We have to be practical, given the weather—but that doesn't have to mean boring."

Practical often means using Sweden's traditional building material, wood, which is both affordable and sustainable. Sweden remains a densely forested country, and by European standards it is sparsely populated, so the natural landscape is very present. "We think the best projects connect with the surrounding landscape," says Holmberg. Their work, in particular a series of houses for private clients, demonstrates a close relationship with the natural environment: A villa in Essingen is rooted in the ground like a tree, while the Kiw mountain lodge balances on a peak like a pebble. Others, like the Villa Oscar, have wooden frames on terraces or roofs that seem to exist solely to fuse house and landscape together. ▸

PHOTOS BY RASMUS NORLANDER

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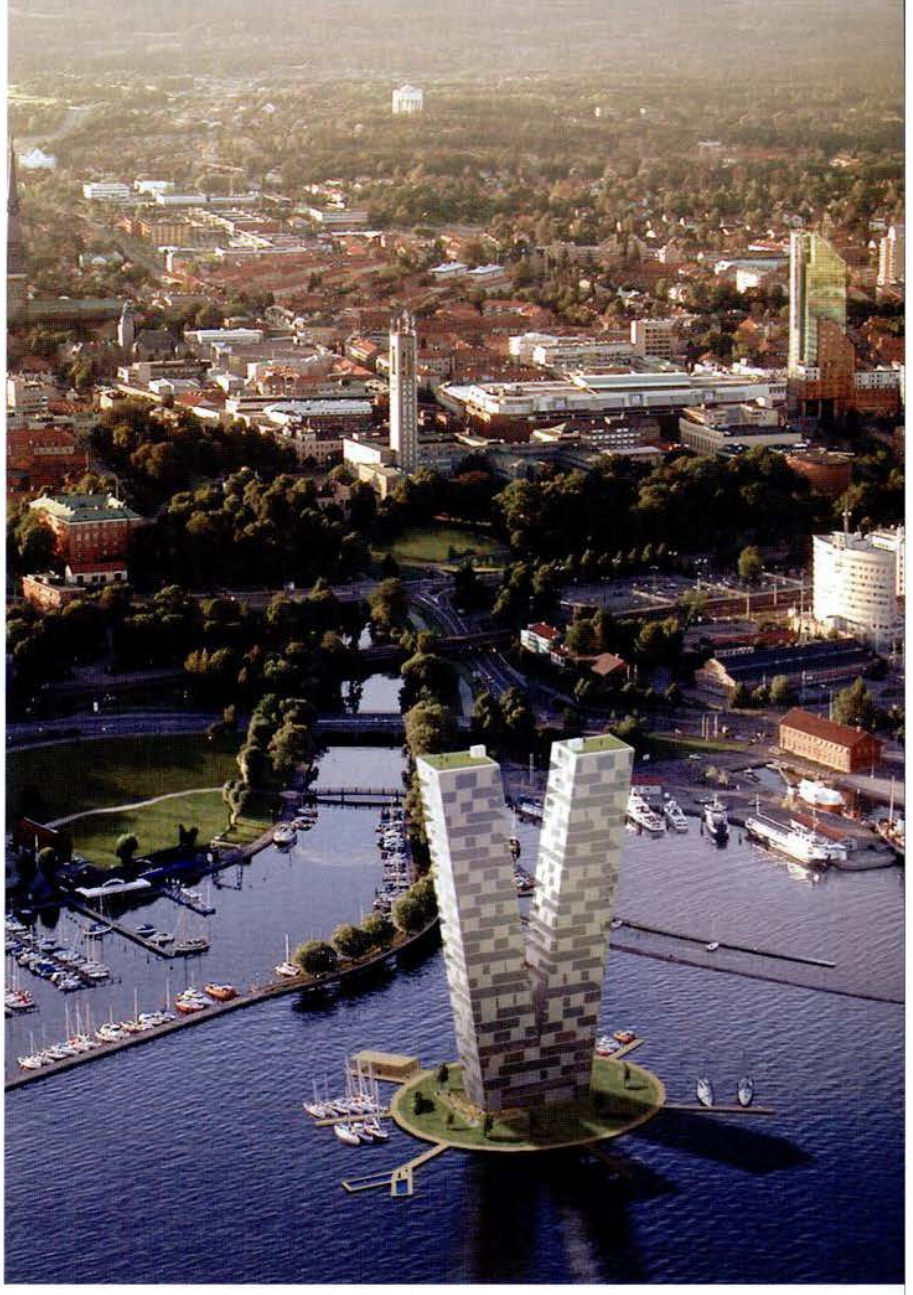
While Holmberg bemoans the lingering suspicion of architects in Sweden, he admits that his firm has benefited from the recent boom in home building (triggered by low interest rates and a long national tradition of home ownership). He also corrects the assumption that his villa clients are wealthy: "The simple fact is, it's often cheaper to buy land and build a house on it than it is to buy an existing house. Our private clients often have strict budgetary constraints, so building these homes means making very smart choices in terms of materials and so forth. While they don't have huge amounts of money to spend, they do tend to have a big interest in architecture, and they want something unique. This is encouraging, because an awful lot of boring architecture is still being built in Sweden."

Holmberg adds that a major factor in this is the overregulated nature of municipal master plans, resulting in cookie-cutter developments on the outskirts of every Swedish city. As an antidote to such suburban dullness, Smedshammar + Holmberg has recently begun to take a more polemical direction. Their visionary V-House, a 300-foot-high, V-shaped structure in the town of Västerås, was a conceptual design intended to provoke debate—which it certainly has.

"Media coverage was huge," says Holmberg. "We've now been asked to submit proposals on developing the town. We will do more of this sort of conceptual work in the future, because architecture in Sweden desperately needs to improve its reputation—and that's exactly what we are trying to achieve." ■



The visionary V-House (above) is a 300-foot-high structure designed for the Swedish town of Västerås, and is intended to counteract typical suburban designs. "An awful lot of boring architecture is still being built in Sweden," explains Holmberg. Marinstaden, or "Navy City" (far left), is a proposed design for a prefabricated floating community. Each of the homes (left) feature exploded planes tied together by water, light, and reflection.

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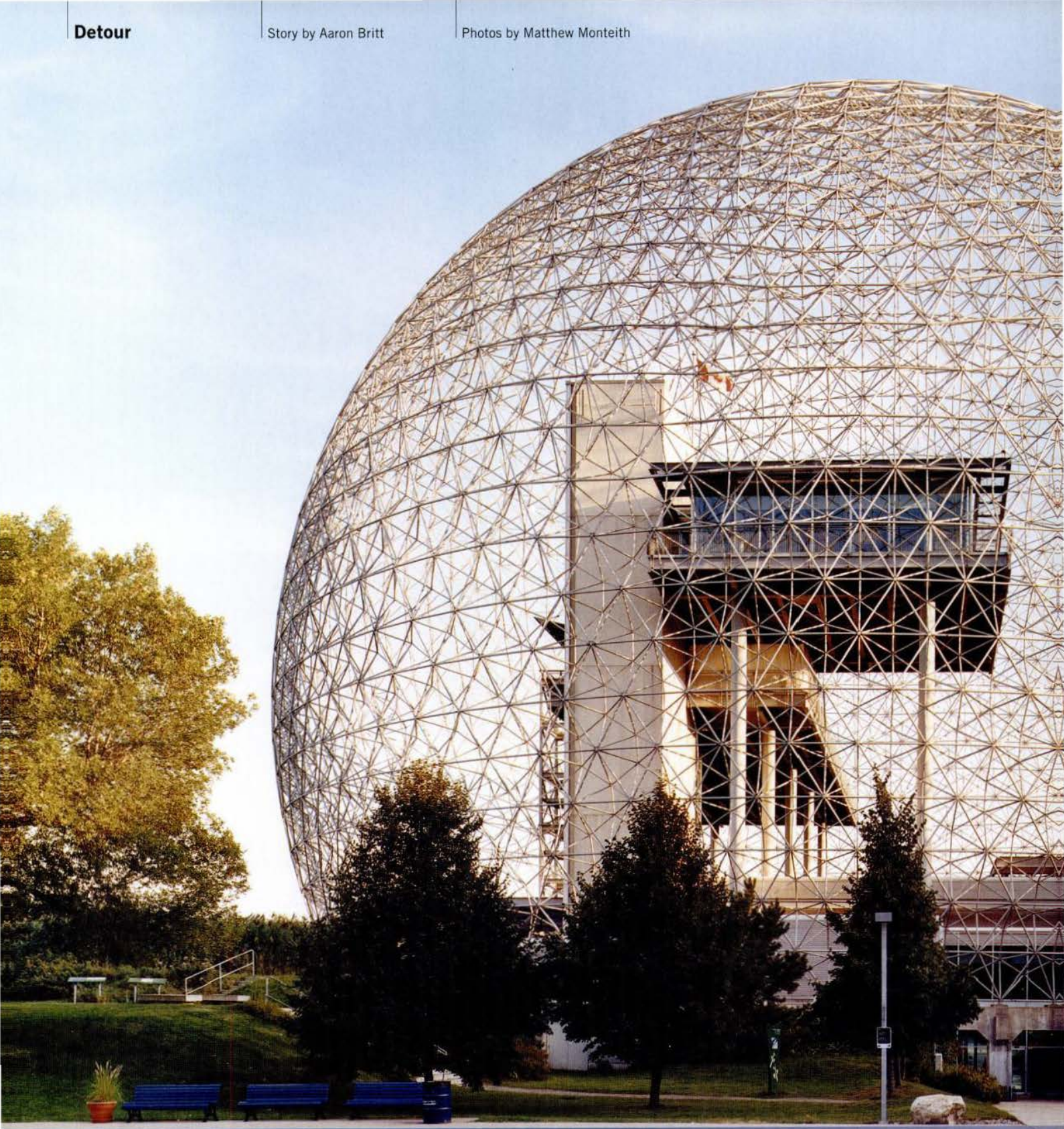
Story by Aaron Britt

Photos by Matthew Monteith

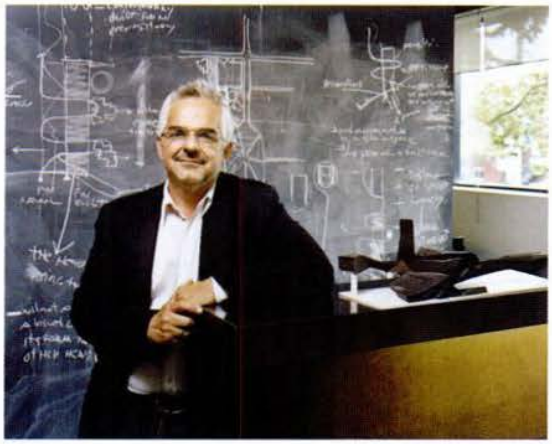


# Montreal Exposed

**Forty years ago last summer, the world turned its** attention to Montreal for Expo 67, which proved to be the most successful World's Fair in history. Setting all manner of attendance records—569,000 visited on the third day—and including 62 nations, Expo 67 marked the centenary of Canada's confederation and established Montreal as a design spot to watch. A geodesic dome by R. Buckminster Fuller was the highlight of the American pavilion, but the fair's *coup de grâce*—and one of Montreal's enduring architectural symbols—was Moshe Safdie's Habitat 67, a geometric apartment complex that looks like Mies van der Rohe's take on an Anasazi cliff dwelling.

Though Montreal isn't booming quite like Toronto or Calgary, the *très* European stone streets of the Old City are still a favorite of tourists—and of the American under-21 set looking for a beer. Downtown development and its bustling arts scene prompted UNESCO to honor Quebec's cultural center by dubbing it a "City of Design" in 2006. But at least one architect in Montreal is skeptical about the honor bestowed by UNESCO. Gilles Saucier, of Saucier + Perrotte Architectes, has designed university buildings and museums all over Canada, and his work in his hometown of Montreal includes the Faculty of Music Building at McGill University and several boutiques. He worries, though, that the "City of Design" appellation suggests that his city is something that it's not. Or at least not yet. ▸

Bucky Fuller's Biosphere (left), built for Expo 67, is both an exemplar of that left-field visionary's work and an obvious landmark for a city still very engaged with its architectural history. Though Montreal boasts a number of modern marvels, much of the city is quite traditional. The two styles collide when buildings like the Institute de Tourisme et d'Hôtellerie du Québec (above) rest next to Victorians.



**You take some exception to this City of Design idea being applied to Montreal.**
I've got nothing against Montreal being a City of Design, and there is a lot of wonderful design here, but to just establish it as a fact is kind of strange to me. We need to do more than just say that we're a City of Design. It must be a goal of ours so we can orient the city toward that objective. I'm sure the *chambre de commerce* is really happy that Montreal is this City of Design, but they've been promoting the same things for a long time. We're still living on that old image of Habitat 67 and the Olympic Stadium [built for the 1976 games]. In 1967 we were at the center of the world's attention. And for the past 40 years we've been losing that centrality. We need something to put us back on the map—not the Bilbao effect, but something organic and lasting.

**How should we get to know the city then, if not by its most recognizable landmarks?**
The truth is, Montreal is a place to discover. You don't easily find what is so divine about it, but the people here are very welcoming and if you talk to them they will help you see. There isn't some organized system to discovering the city as the *chambre de commerce* presents. I prefer going to smaller, lesser-known places, and that's where you find wonderful food or nightlife. It's all very organic here, but there's no system to discovering it, or one place or neighborhood to go. One of the best, most established places here is Café L'Express and they don't even have a sign.

**What is the most exciting thing architecture-wise going on in Montreal today?**
The most exciting design in the city for me ▸

# Montreal, Quebec

Gilles Saucier (above) in the offices of his firm, Saucier + Perrotte Architectes. One of his favorite restaurants, Le Club Chasse et Pêche (below), offers an excellent array of traditional meat and seafood dishes with some unexpected design details on the side.

The view from the kaleidoscopic façade of the Palais des Congrès de Montréal on to Place Jean-Pierre Riopelle provides both a desirable vantage on a bustling public square and an unexpected sense of whimsy.

# Montreal, Quebec

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# Montreal, Quebec

right now is the Cité Internationale. It's creating a new center for the city. There you have the Palais des Congrès, lots of new buildings, and the incredible fountain [*La Joute*] by Jean-Paul Riopelle that shoots flames and smoke and all. It's absolutely fantastic. I don't love the Cité Internationale so much for the architecture, but for the impressive gesture. It occupies the top of the highway [the Ville-Marie Expressway has been moved underground] and connects the north and south, the Old City and the New. They used to be divided by that highway, and now we're starting to heal that scar. We need more buildings that allow us to connect.

**That's a business and civic district that tends to die down at night, though. What's happening in the Old City?**

There is an initiative now to make a new center in Old Montreal. It's lovely down there and the stone buildings are amazing, but it's very touristy by the St. Lawrence. The western part of Old Montreal is developing in a really natural way, though. McGill Street is coming up. Men's clothier Michel Brisson will have a new shop there, and my friend Hubert, who runs the excellent restaurant Le Club Chasse et Pêche, is opening an arts space. That's the future of the Old City. The west part of Old Montreal also reconnects to downtown and will be a place of passage unlike the touristy center of Old Montreal. They were initially thinking of a new Cirque du Soleil and a casino there, but that would act as a barrier and limit the expansion. The way the west part of Old Montreal is going, it will help re-create the natural fabric of the city. I'd love to build something really provocative down there. ►

Like most folks who live in wintry climes, Montrealers relish their outdoor sports. Bicycles (above) hold sway at this pedestrian brick house. Moshe Safdie's Habitat 67 (left) debuted at Expo 67.

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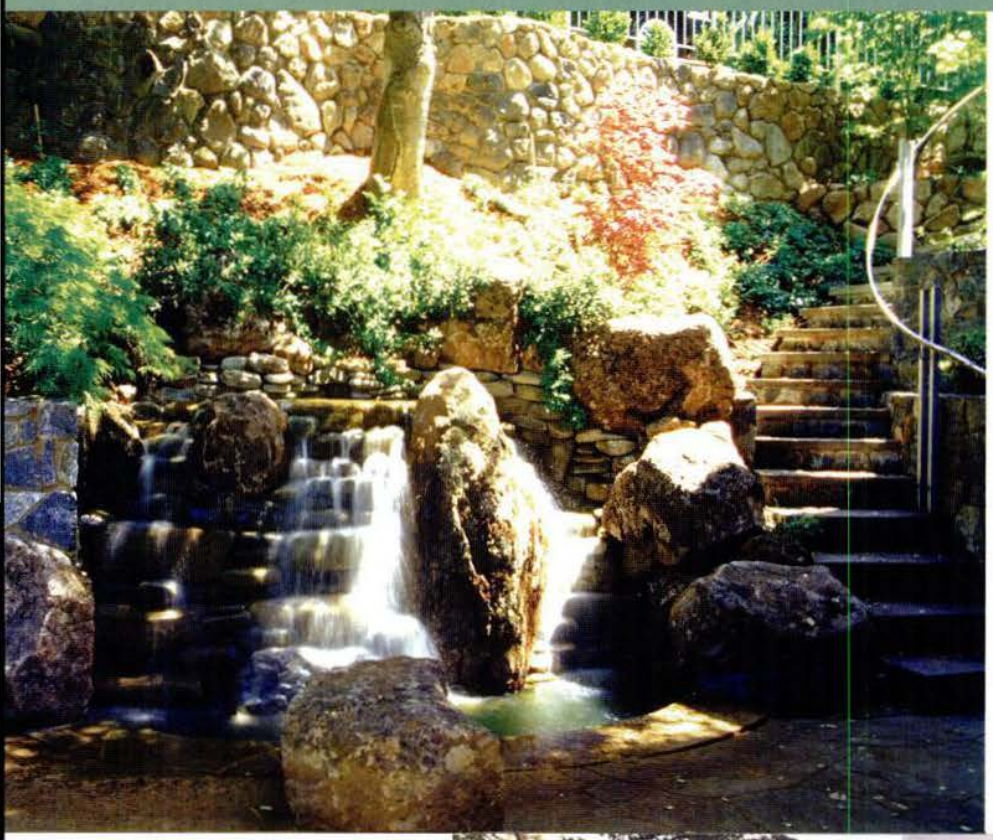

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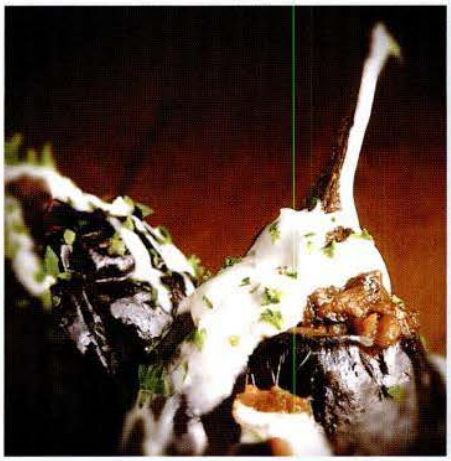
# Montreal, Quebec

**You love downtown, yet your office and home are in northern Montreal. Why stay out of the action, or is there action uptown, too?**
Little Italy, where I live and work, is slowly changing. Now there's a garage nearby and a fish market. But, like any city, it's where the artists come to buy cheap houses and studios. It's not booming, but it's slowly becoming a very interesting place to be. There are lots of artists here, and really it's more like a village. This is Montreal to me, anchored in the way people live and want their city to be.

**Another lasting effect of Expo 67 was Charles de Gaulle's incendiary comment: *"Vive le Québec. Vive le Québec libre."* The last referendum for an independent Quebec failed in 1995. What's the tenor of the times these days?**
In the past, the east side of Montreal was Francophone and the west was Anglophone. It's still that way to some extent, but we're enjoying a moment of harmony right now. The new leadership has said that the referendum is on ice for some years in order to establish a healthier, more connected city. This is a wonderful city and it's the only place I know where everyone really does speak two languages.

**One of the most beautiful views of the city is from the St. Lawrence River looking north. But when I was there, I saw a lot of people with surfboards. What were they doing?**
People surf in the St. Lawrence here. There's a standing wave right in front of Habitat. You see, Montreal is all about surprise. You come here expecting one thing and then you see a guy surfing in the river. It's on YouTube. ▸


The colorful lilypads hoisted aloft (above) are part of Montreal Garden Festival and overlook Silo #5. Gourmands relish shopping trips to the open-air Marché Jean-Talon (below) in Little Italy.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Nomade Architecture's addition to the Centre des Femmes de Montréal helped rehabilitate the 1857 house to the right and helped propel the important organization, architecturally at least, into the 21st century.

# Montreal, Quebec

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Art lovers visit the gallery Parisian Laundry (above) to admire the photos of Massimo Vitali. The slopes of Mont Royal—a massive park and mountain in the middle of the city—offer wonderful views of downtown (below).

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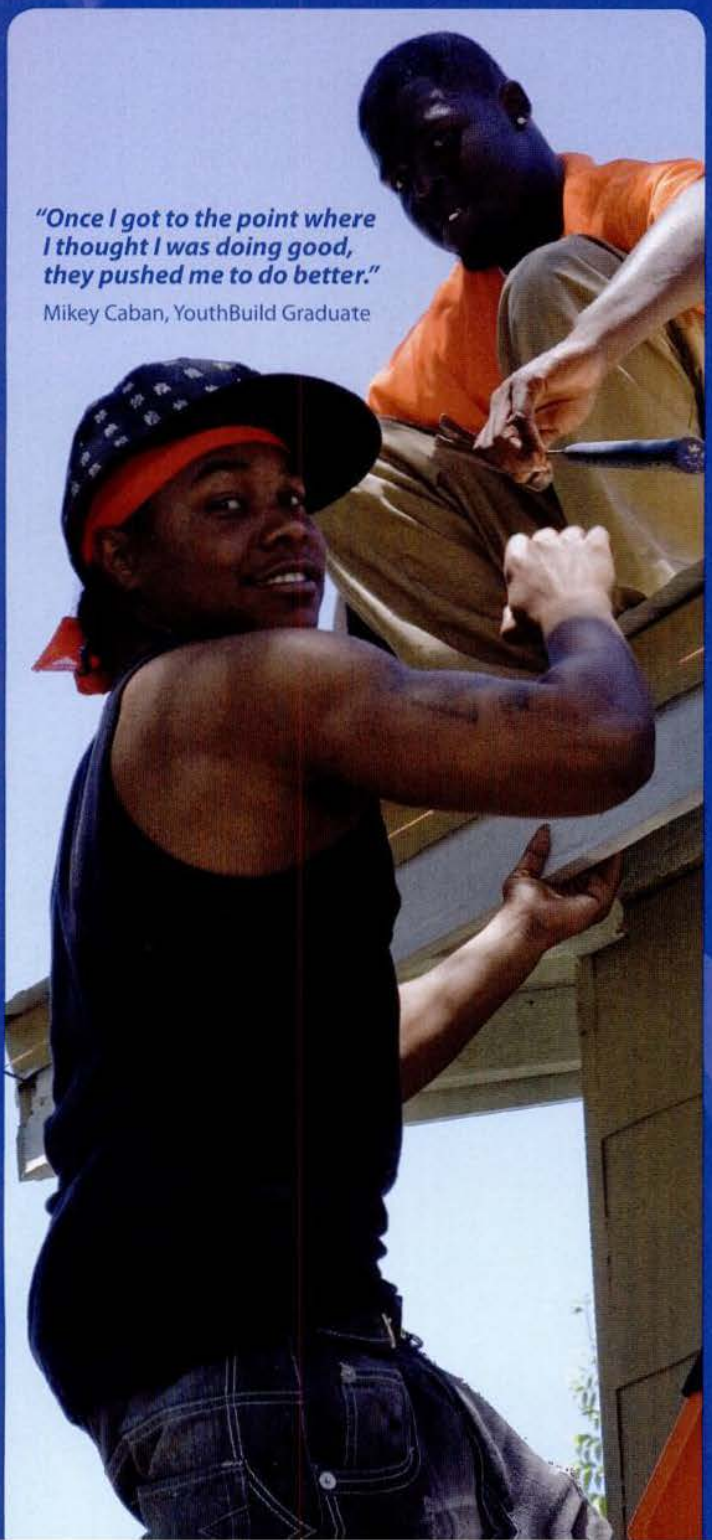

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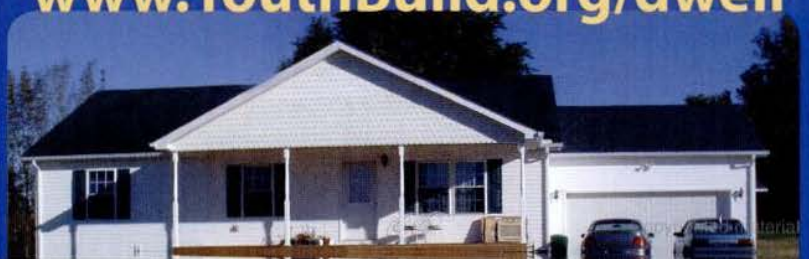

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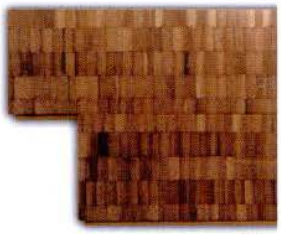

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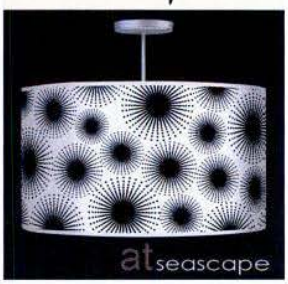


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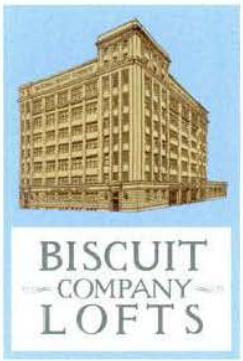

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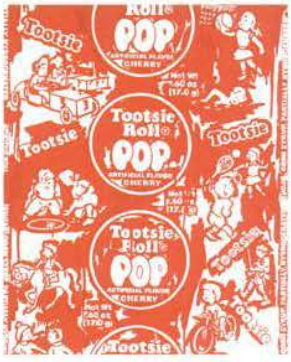


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**www.g2art.com**

## Linton Ltd.

Architecturally inspired and individually crafted wearable art. Sterling, 18k and 14k gold and precious stone.

*Shown: Gold Bar Rings sterling and 18k yellow gold*

**Linton Ltd.**
**Tel. (501) 321-8226**
**www.lintonltd.com**

## www.palazzetti.com

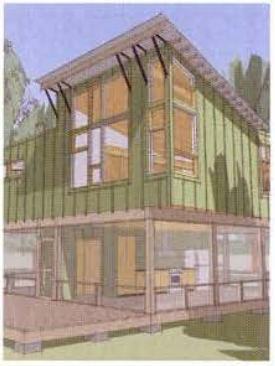
PALAZZETTI Group Ltd.

## Modern House Plans

*Creating a Modern World Begins With You*

In 2002, we set out to create affordable house plans to make modern design available to more people. The houses are unique, original designs, yet easy enough for any home builder. Today they are being built across the country.

**Gregory La Vardera Architect**
**Tel. (856) 662-4909**
**www.lamidesign.com/plans**
**plans@lamidesign.com**



## John Beck Paper & Steel

Custom home furnishings

residential—contract—wholesale

*Shown: Birkett Table, 72" x 40" steel, glass, and casters*

**www.johnbecksteel.com**

## RAIS Pina

The RAIS Pina gives a whole new meaning to high living. An award-winning innovation of design creativity, the RAIS Pina's unique elegance and distinctive design makes the stove functional as a practical room divider and an exclusive piece of furniture that warms your house and entices the eye. The RAIS Pina was honored with the Vesta design award and the stove's every detail has been honed by perfection to produce what we believe is a masterpiece of stove-making.

You can explore RAIS's full product line of wood-burning stoves, fireplace inserts, and other accessories by visiting us online.

**www.rais.com**

## World's Only Comfortable Sofa Sleeper

Patented system eliminates metal bars associated with an uncomfortable sofa or poor night's sleep. Sleepers are 80" long and available in king, queen, full, twin, or cot sizes.

Unlike the competition, your feet won't hang off the end of our beds.

**www.aufurniture.com/dwell**

## The Monarch Condominiums

Living transformed. Be the first to experience condominium living at The Monarch. Located at West 5th Street and West Avenue in downtown Austin. Steps from Lady Bird Lake and the vibrant West 6th street entertainment district.

**Toll-free (866) 347-4083**
**www.MonarchCondominiums.com**

## Acme Made

*Modern Things for a Modern Lifestyle*

Acme Made designs a complete line of stylish, yet protective, bags, cases, and accessories for the creative professional. Available online and through select retailers worldwide.

*Shown: The Metro Tote with removable laptop sleeve in rubberized canvas.*

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**www.acmemade.com**
**info@acmemade.com**


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Official Dwell Event Producer

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Exhibition banners that once hung on city streetpoles are now available for your home. Own one of these dramatic artworks from MoMA, LACMA, SFMOMA, Art Institute of Chicago, and others.

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*Media Platform n02*

Green design meets technical versatility in a series of modern media platforms handcrafted in New Hampshire. The natural beauty of renewable bamboo and refined elegance of satin aluminum fittings combine in simplicity and quality construction to meet today's complex media requirements.

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**www.loguestudio.com**

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*Lighting and Accessories*

Norwell Lighting and Accessories is proud to introduce design-and-finish-matched solid brass lighting and accessories from traditional to modern.

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**82 Stevens Street**
**East Taunton, MA 02718**
**Toll-free (800) 822-2831**
**www.norwellinc.com**

## Conde House

Tosai Dining Table
Designer: Peter Maly

White oak or walnut solid wood top with stainless steel legs.

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**Tel. (415) 864-8666**
**www.condehouse.com**

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*A Mod Livin' Exclusive*

From November 2007 to April 2008, Mod Livin' and some of our finest manufacturers i.e. Adelta, Alessi, Blu Dot, Kartell, Modernica, and more will donate a portion of purchases made at Mod Livin' to (Red) a project organized to end AIDS in Africa.

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**www.modlivin.com**

## plain mary

Recently featured at the Golden Globes Style Lounge and the Emmy's Gifting Suite! Dwell readers enjoy 10% off. Use discount code "dwell10" during the checkout process.

**www.plainmary.com**


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The backyard office, playroom, work-out studio, get-away-from-the-kids escape you've always wanted. K3 ships flat and assembles in two days. Plus, its compact 117 square feet make it permit exempt in most areas.

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**www.kithaus.com**
**info@kithaus.com**

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Furniture made with Palmwood has had a strong response from environmentally-conscious customers. After exciting international growth, Pacific Green, the pioneer of Palmwood design, is actively seeking retailers in the Americas that are interested in securing exclusive distribution rights to the furniture.

**www.pacificgreeninternational.com**
**info@pacificgreeninternational.com**

## the as4 modular furniture system

**Atlas Industries**
**Tel. (718) 596-5045**
**www.atlaseast.com**

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Our energy-saving, wall-mounted and vanity-top mirrors offer crisp, clear illumination with a fraction of the usual heat and energy consumption. 50,000+ hour LEDs mean no bulbs to change! Featuring solid brass construction and optical quality glass with 5x magnification. Available in chrome, bronze, or satin nickel.

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BY REMCRAFT

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Europa Stairways: a new generation of stairs and railing systems of custom-made glass, stainless steel, wood, powder-coated steel, cables railings, acrylic, LED light systems in glass treads, and more! For commercial and residential use. Model 73 MF starting from $8,000. Visit our homepage. We design and build your dream stair.

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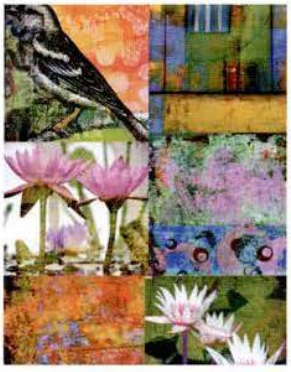
Ricki Mountain has an eclectic style, and has gained a reputation as a prolific creative resource for designers and retailers worldwide. She is pleased to now offer her artwork direct.

**Tel. (925) 286-8798**
**www.RickiMountain.com**
**rickimountainstudios@gmail.com**



## Light Up the Night

The best outdoor gatherings are a sure thing with Patio Embers portable outdoor gas firepits. Trendsetters can entertain well into the evening with Tania and its generously sized honey beige marble top. For information on Tania or any of our beautiful firepits, visit us online.

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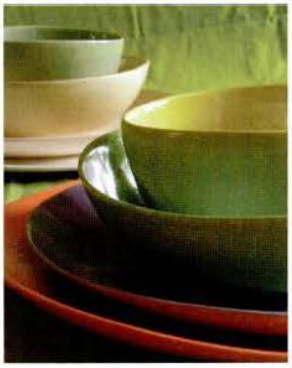

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LBCLighting.com

## LBCLighting.com

*Contemporary Lighting Store*

Largest contemporary lighting collection.
Free shipping.
Trade discount.
Price-match guarantee.

*Shown: Orten'zia Very Very Gold, 1-Lt Design by Bruno Rainaldi*

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Our toys feature soft, rounded edges and modern, fun shapes. We make them in Vermont from local, sustainably-harvested maple and non-toxic finishes. Your modern kids will love to explore their world with our fresh take on the classic wooden toy.

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*Shown: #29 by James Irvine 16" H x 14" D. $345 includes shipping in continental U.S.*

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ARTICOLO

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Enhance your home with bold, beautiful accessories and classic modern furniture from Weego Home's signature collection.

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**Fax (310) 392-8465**
**www.weegohome.com**

## Kozai

*Modern Organic Furniture and Lighting from Japan*

Celebrating solid hardwood and superb Japanese design and craftsmanship

*Shown: Yuzen Hall Cabinet (detail) with solid walnut slab-top and contrasting tambour doors in hard maple, by Noriyuki Ebina*

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**www.kozaidesigns.com**

## Wallter

New easy-to-install mobiles by Wallter. Made locally in the USA. Check out all the available designs and colors on our website.

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**www.wallter.com**

## ArtByLT

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**Ithaca, New York, studio**
**Toll-free (877) 278-2581**
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## RETRO@HOME

Comfort, posture, style. Paying homage to Florence Knoll and Jens Risom, the Dexter furniture collection conveys elegance and sophistication. The Dexter furniture collection is available exclusively through RETRO@HOME. We specialize in vintage and new mid-century-modern home furnishings. Courtesy to the trade.

**3811 San Pablo Avenue**
**Emeryville, CA 94608**
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**www.retroathome.com**

## ISS Designs Shelving

*Modern Design. Infinite Possibilities.*

Transform your wall space with a custom-designed wall unit or shelving system. ISS Designs combines a clean modern look with strength and ease of installation. Wall-mounted and pole-mounted options. Anodized aluminum hardware with custom shelves and cabinets for design-oriented clients.

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**www.issdesigns.com**
**info@issdesigns.com**

## Fusion Furniture LLC

Reborn: RE series by Tim George. Carts originally manufactured in the 1950s for the medical profession but never used until their recent modification and transition into the B52. Limited-edition offer.

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

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**www.fusionfurnituregallery.com**

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Introducing Builtby™ from Inhabit. Even a lamp should offer opportunity for self-expression. Your lamp does not have to be like hers, and his is nothing like yours. So while you may think you are just getting a lamp, we see it as an opportunity to get a little more of yourself.

**www.inhabitliving.com**

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*The Utmost in Function and Design*

Sold in easy-to-install kits with brushed stainless steel support brackets, UV-resistant acrylic visor panels, integrated aluminum rain gutters, and all the necessary assembly hardware. Select from a variety of styles, sizes, and finishes.

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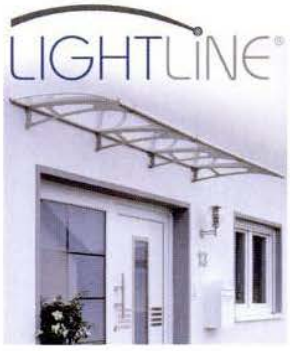


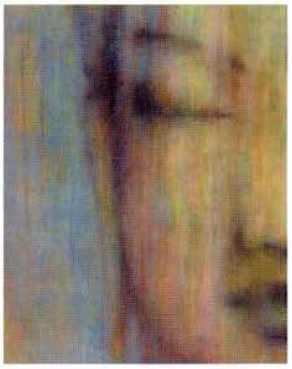

## Shenspace

*Conscious Modern Art and Design*

Eastern influence and urban energy. Original abstract and modern paintings that specialize in Asian and Buddhist-inspired images.

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**The ART Bar**
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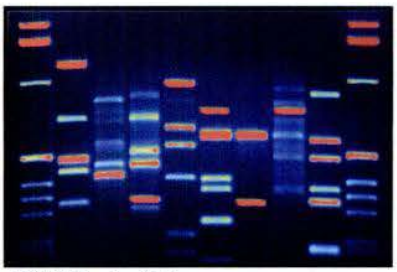
**www.shenspace.com**



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dna 11

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*Modern Carrying Accessories*

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**www.hideostore.com**

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Unique European wooden toys, stuffed animals and children's furniture.

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Large selection of toys made in Europe.

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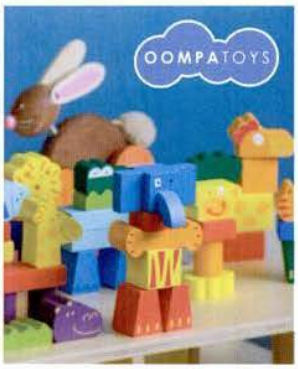


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Berkeley Mills
east-west furniture design

## Origami

Bamboo's never looked like this before. These solid bamboo pieces—Origami Sofa, Origami Chair, and Kyoto Table—are just the beginning of an expanding collection. The "green line" is growing.

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In 1997, New York-based designer Sandy Chilewich introduced the first Chilewich product—RayBowls™—at the MoMA Design Store, where it met with instant success. Chilewich celebrates the company's 10th anniversary with limited-edition reissues of the original RayBowls, available exclusively at MoMA.

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**www.momastore.org**

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Spray-Stone is an authentic lime-based coating for interior and exterior walls.

It brings a wonderful soft glow to any project, as it cures to real limestone. Apply over existing textured walls to get a new texture, color, and ambiance in one step.

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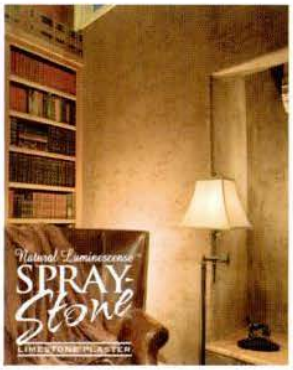


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Imagine every step having its very own Tibetan rug. Our Alto stair treads are available in four color sets, each with solids and patterns. Arrange them in any sequence. Perfect for open stairs. Rugmark certified.

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We invite you to get between our sheets. Sin in Linen brings spirited designs to quality bedding. Our soft cotton sateen will delight babes and beaus alike. For sultry sleep and devilish dreams, make your boudoir blush and visit us online.

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## Unicahome.com

*Style. Selection. Service.*

The Kuno Prey Christmas tree will delight young and old alike. Standing five feet tall, this tree is made of bottle brushes and painted wood. A new twist on an old tradition. Available exclusively through Unicahome.

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Modern lighting, fans, and home accessories. Find the best-known names like Artemide, FLOS, Foscarini, LBL, Tech, and Modern Fan, as well as the latest design-studio inspirations. Friendly, expert service. Guaranteed pricing. Free shipping. Easy returns.

*Shown: The Spun Light T1 designed by Sebastian Wrong for FLOS*

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blend CREATIONS

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Brushed stainless steel pendants inlaid with a variety of contrasting materials.

*Shown: Round 'washi' pendant (Japanese Chiyogami paper inlay)*

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ChicModern.eu
BarBazar.com

**Toll-free (888) 7-GET-TFC**
**Toll-free (888) 743-8832**
**www.TheFurnitureCollection.com**
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## Flying Zeppelin

*Furniture. Sculpture. Design.*

Employing techno-primitive techniques to create unique furniture, sculpture, and intriguing modern design. To see these and a wide array of possibilities visit us online.

*Shown: Innie and Outie rubber stools 12" x 12" x 17"*

**Tel. (503) 729-2747**
**www.flyingzeppelin.com**
**info@flyingzeppelin.com**

## MIRROR-LUX RST5

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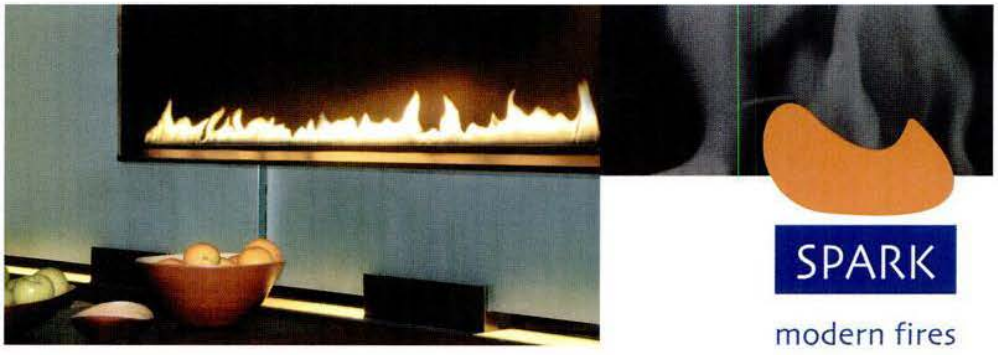


## Modern Fire

The first to eliminate "fake logs" and offer gas fireplaces with a clean and simple design for the modern home. Spark's signature Fire Ribbon now available in 3 ft., see-through, and 6 ft. models.

**Spark Modern Fires**
**Toll-free (866) 938-3846**
**www.sparkfires.com**

## Seductive Shadows

The idea was simply to bring sensuality into the home with nothing more than a whisper.

They are a digital feast to the eyes and a mystery to the mind. They arrive ready to hang and are sized 2–4 feet high.

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Plushpod seeks out only the finest high-design modern furniture and décor from new, notable, and visionary designers around the world. Like the original Bubble chair from Finland by Eero Aarnio.

*Visit us online or in our store!*

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**Toll-free (866) 758-7430**
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**www.plushpod.com**

## Jaxx Sphere for '60s Purists

Popular as mod furniture during the 1960s, Jaxx Sphere is capturing a piece of nostalgia with the comfort of a premium memory foam mix. Comes with a free matching ottoman! ($70 Value)

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**www.studiooneup.com**

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*A Lifetime Investigation into Architectural Ornamentation*

Simple, intelligent, lasting impressions for existing doors, or any surface. Allow our experience to assist you with your architectural detailing.

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*Local Modern Resources*

Find the modern design resources you need at moderndwelling.com. Real estate, designers and retailers organized by city to make finding local products and services easy.

We're adding new resources daily. Visit us online today!

**www.moderndwelling.com**

## Chef's Mats by Gel Pro

Finally, you can spend time in the kitchen creating your favorite meals without the pain and discomfort caused by hard kitchen floors! As seen on HGTV, Gel Pro Mats are filled with a soft gel that makes standing on even the hardest kitchen floor a pleasure. These innovative mats are scientifically engineered to absorb shock and reduce pain-causing pressure. Enjoy time spent in the kitchen even if you suffer from back pain, foot pain, or arthritis.

Designer colors in traditional and exotic textures. Available in many sizes and all mats are stain resistant. Don't worry about red wine or pasta sauce spills—clean-up's a breeze! Proudly made in USA. Makes a great gift! Order today!

**Toll-free (866) GEL-MATS**
**Toll-free (866) 435-6287**
**www.gelmats.com**

## House of European Design

Our unique collections combine superb seating comfort and carefully thought-out functions with timeless design. Choose from hundreds of fabrics and leathers to tailor the perfect piece to you.

*Shown: Egg Chair*

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**www.design-eu.com**

## Campbell Laird Studio

*Printed and Signed by Artist*

ABC's *Extreme Makeover* chose award-winning artist Campbell Laird, for their modern home episode. Dwell magazine chose Campbell for its first Dwell Home. Join collectors from Trump Tower in NYC to modernist homes of the Hollywood Hills. Archival, limited-edition artworks.
*Shown: Volta #1*

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**www.campbelllairdstudio.com**
**info@campbelllairdstudio.com**

genius jones

## Genius Jones

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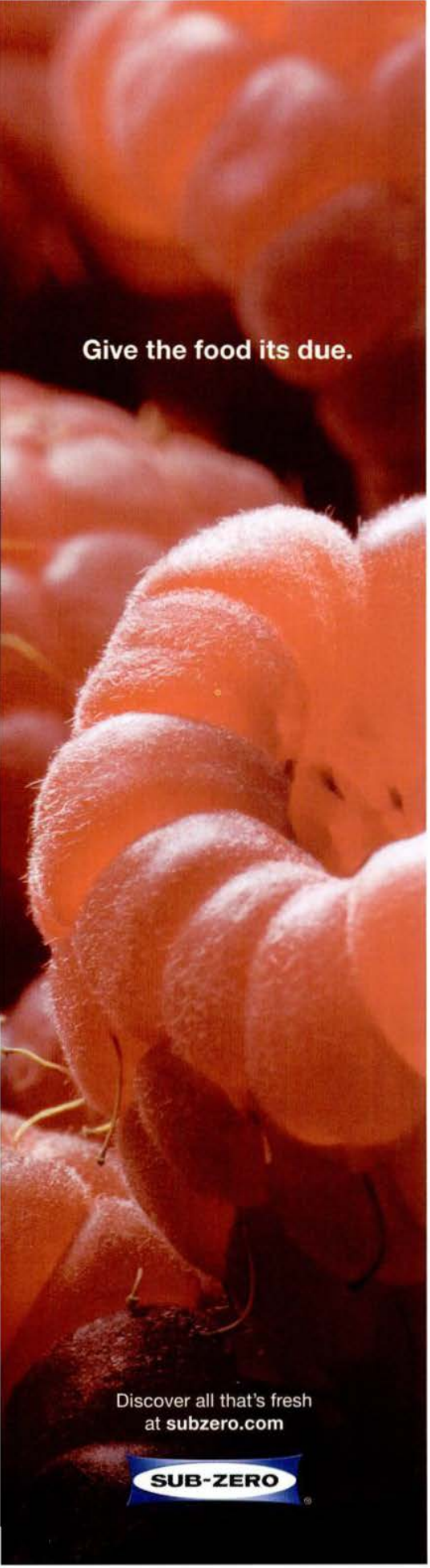


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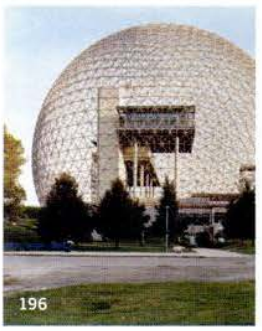


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# Five's Easy Pieces


Hilltop homestead by day, sustainable spaceship by night, the Moström family's No.5 House lands off the grid in a forest near Stockholm, Sweden.

**For most people contemplating a move, thoughts** of packing the portable pieces of their lives in boxes rarely engender much enthusiasm. For Markus and Kajsa Moström and their three children, however, such thoughts were greeted happily as they and their architects devised a way to box things up in a much more inviting way.

Having made the decision to leave their apartment in Stockholm, Sweden, for a then-naked knoll in the forests of Nacka (a 15-minute car ride away), they placed the process of designing their new home in the trusted hands of their longtime friends at the architecture firm Claesson Koivisto Rune.

In an admirable effort to put vision to paper, Markus (a graphic designer) produced a multidisciplinary mash note of a brief brimming with images, illustrations, and text. Upon learning of Markus's mental image of the project ("It is night and you are approaching the house. It lights up like a spaceship stranded on top of the hill") lead architect Deta Gemzell and her team had a perfect picture of the direction they would take.

Employing a layout technique any graphic designer would recognize, the architects drew up plans for an elongated box-shaped house using a flexible grid system based on the standardized dimensions of available building materials. The system resulted in two important benefits during construction: maximum use of available space, and minimum use of available budget. A grid of a different kind was kept in mind as well: Using only locally sourced materials, and constructed under the strict energy-conservation standards set by the Swedish government, the No. 5 House has all of its energy needs met from renewable sources.

Its bedrooms are arranged like the compartments of a Japanese puzzle box, each featuring a wall of floor-to-ceiling windows. A partially enclosed terrace creates an outdoor extension of the living room, and further blurs the boundaries between box, birch, and beyond. ■


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