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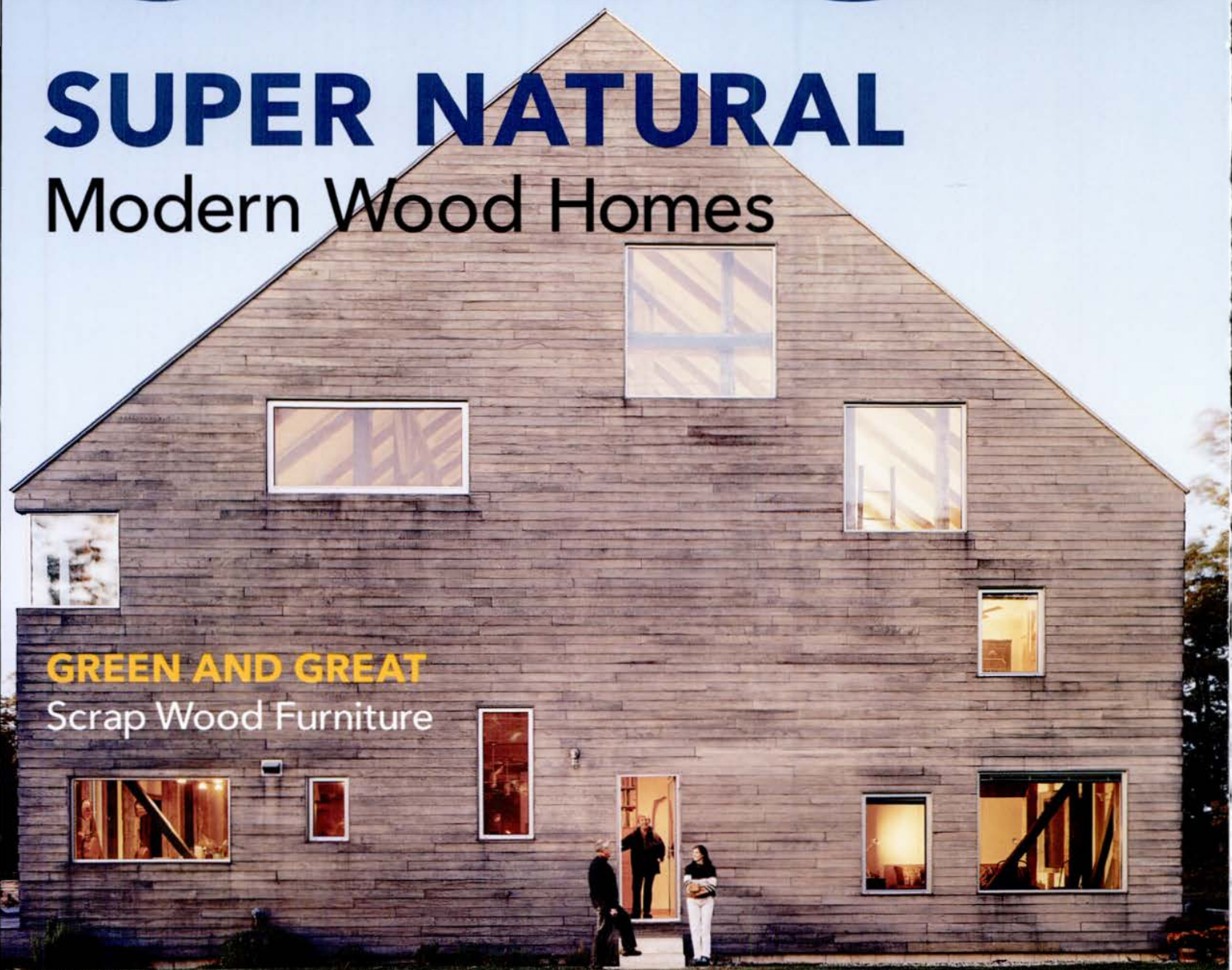

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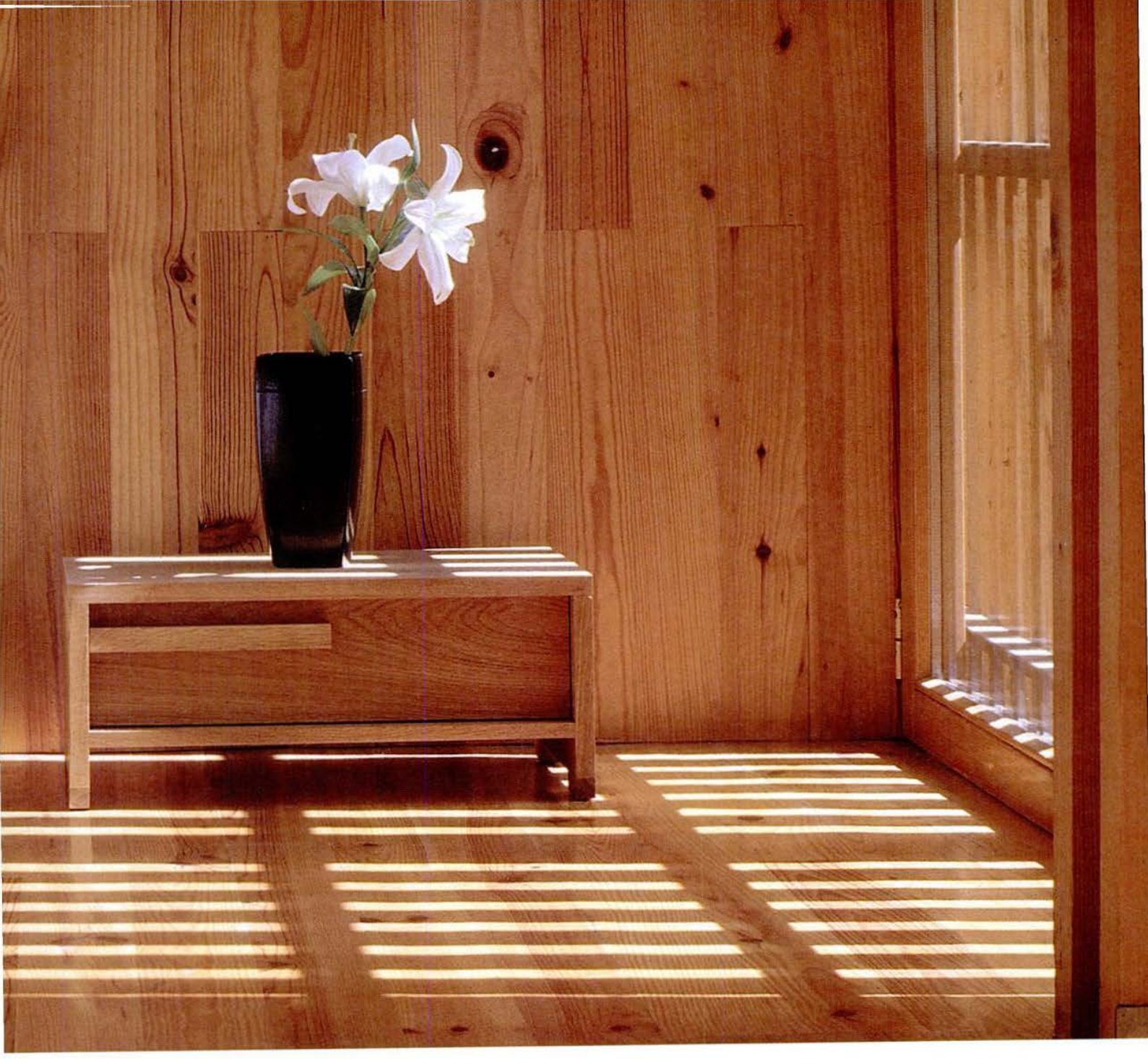

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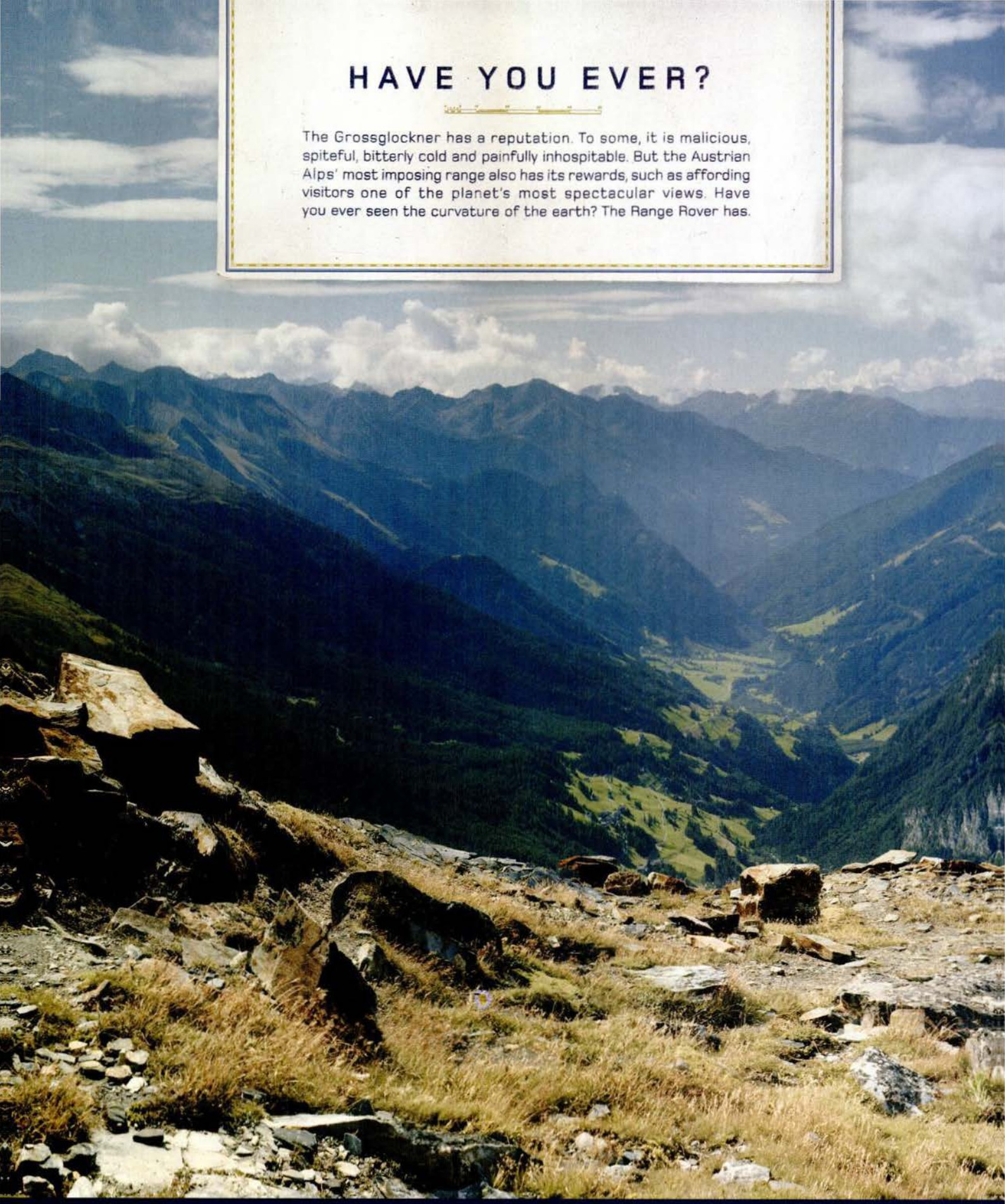

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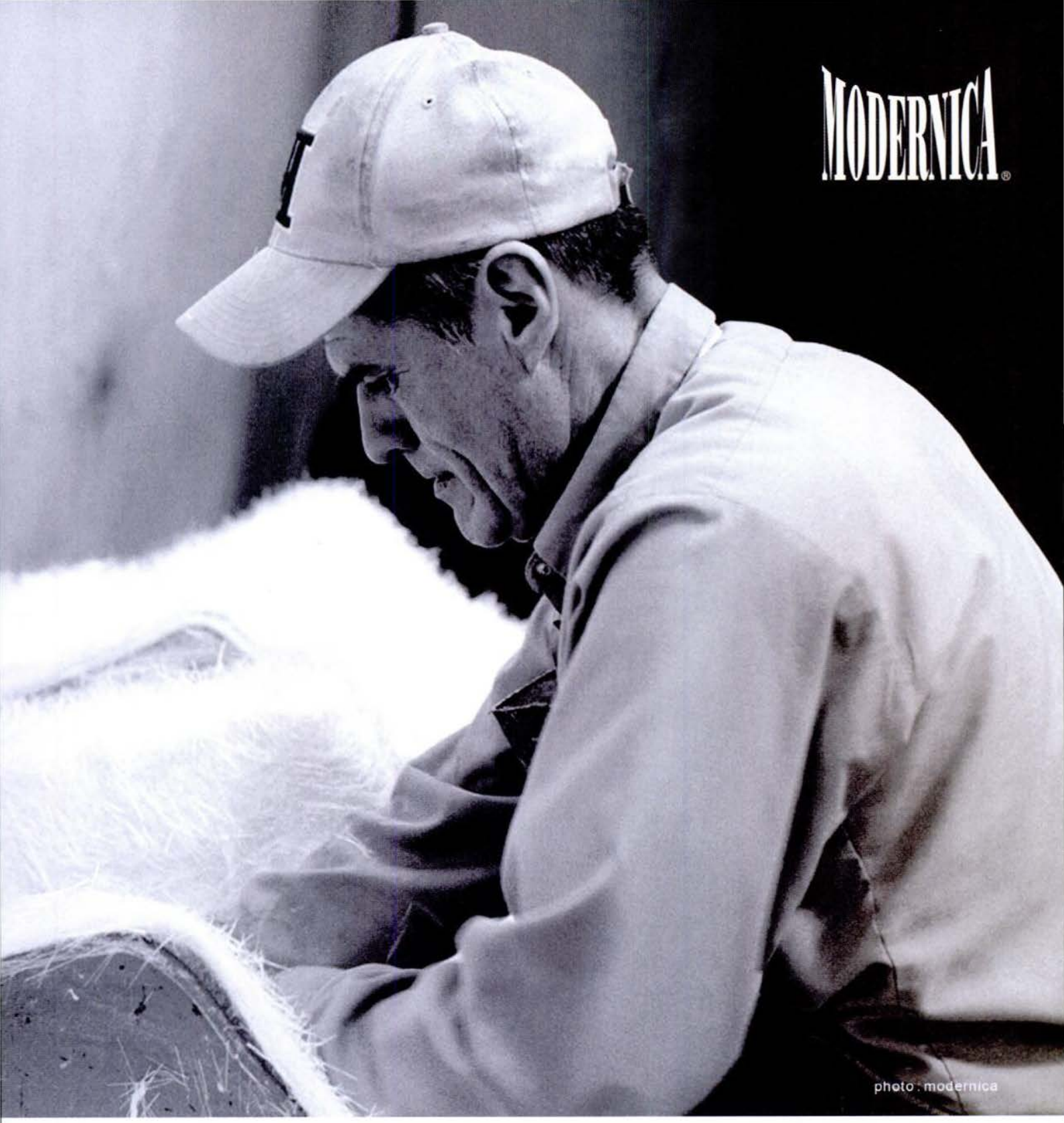

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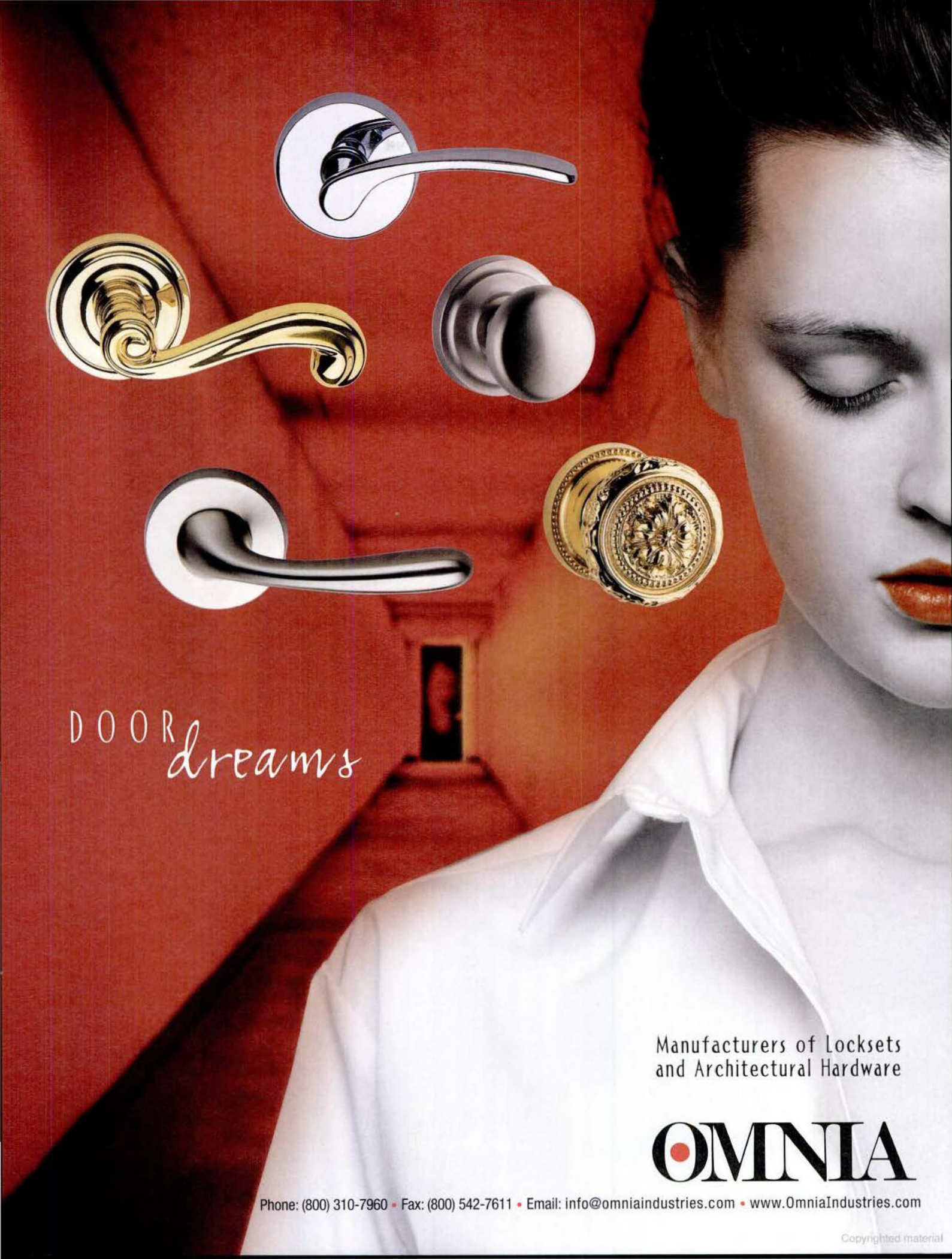


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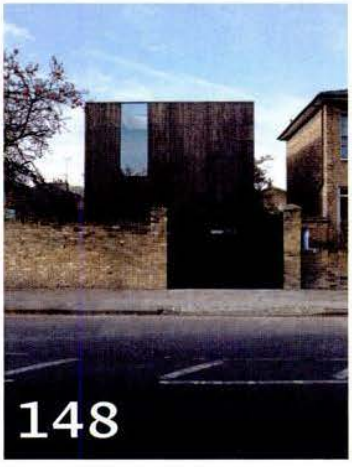

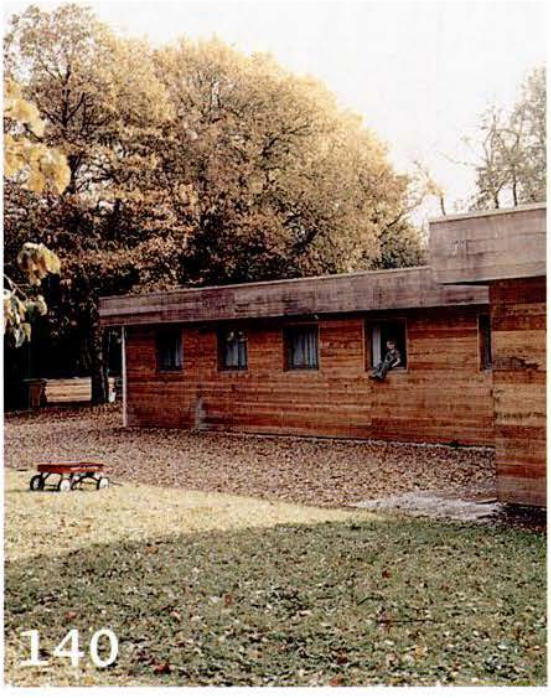

Cover: Goodman Residence, Pine Plains, New York, page 132
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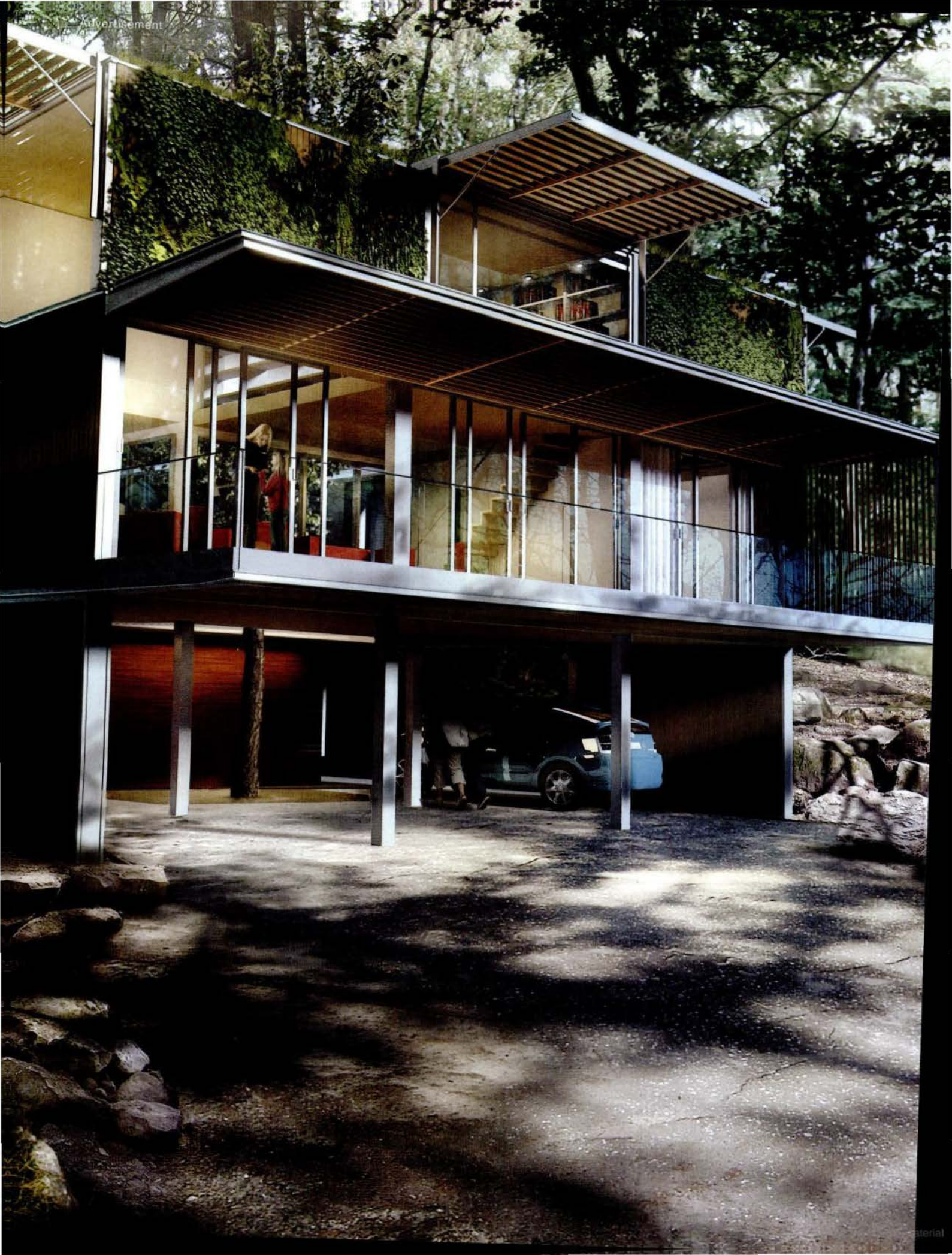

The Énóvo House. Intelligent living, now

In the rolling farmland just north of Montreal, south of the ski resorts, a small miracle is taking shape. A new house. A house that engenders a different, kindlier way of living – some would say, a more intelligent way of living.It is a house built of glass, wood and dreams. It is the Énóvo house.

The name is derived from the Cheyenne word meaning "Your Home".

The Cheyenne, like all North American Indian tribes, had a deep, abiding respect for the land, and did not abuse it. They lived in complete harmony with nature. They were the original ecologists.

Today, throughout North America—indeed, the whole world—an increasing number of prescient architects and developers are looking back to the nature-respectful lifestyle of Native Americans, and finding inspiration.

Karl Mongrain, president of IME Habitat, Montreal, is one such visionary. Together with a like-minded team of Montreal architects, he has created a house that belongs both to the past, and to the future. From the past, he has taken the idea of free-spirited living in close contact with the outside world. From the future, he looks to the audacious developments in prefabrication, recycling and insulation. In doing so, he has brought to life a living space that is compassionate both to those who live within it, those who live around it, and to the land upon which it stands.

The Énóvo house is designed to evolve. The modular configuration adjusts fluently in sync with the changes and phases in the lives of its owners. Similarly, the house adapts effortlessly to any terrain, urban or outback, to earthquakes, downpours, winter blizzards, scorching heat.

The house is striking. Clean cubist forms, a preponderance of glass, a purity of line. But perhaps the most innovative feature is the Green Roof: a covering of self-sustaining vegetation stretching right across the entire house. This, as the Cheyenne knew, is the optimal, and most natural insulation against the elements. Underneath the roof, rainwater is collected, filtered and recycled, as is water from the laundry, showers, and kitchen. Heating, the radiant floors, air conditioning and security systems are all controlled by intuitive movement sensors. Everything is designed for the minimum abuse of energy and natural resources. Even at the construction stage, the house can be assembled in a matter of days, with next to no damage to the site or to the surroundings.

For Énóvo owners, life will be filled with space, light and the freedom to refashion their home to fit evolving lifestyles. Ceiling to floor high-performance windows will give them a breathtaking sensation of openness, space to stretch the imagination, and a oneness with the outside world. This is the magic, yet the blinding logic, of Énóvo modular construction.

And then, in the middle of it all this logic and versatility, the unexpected. A courtyard. It is a secret space for meditation, relaxation, dreaming, for a Jacuzzi under the stars, a pensive Japanese garden, a micro winter wonderland, a joyous play area for the children. It is the sanctuary around which the entire house revolves.

Though born in the countryside near Montreal, the Énóvo concept effortlessly crosses national, cultural, and climatic boundaries. It is a living space designed to be at ease with the stucco of Tuscany or the concrete of Los Angeles, the tangerine groves of Marrakech, or the gum trees of the Australian outback, the snows of Aspen, or the deserts of Arizona. Prefabricated modules are shipped from a deep-water port with on-site rail facilities. Local and world markets are easily and rapidly accessible in an energy efficient fashion. And anywhere the Énóvo house goes, it will be constructed from materials that have the smallest feasible carbon footprint.

Just as some building materials acquire unwieldy carbon footprints, so do human beings. Even a future owner of an Énóvo House could unwittingly be growing one, despite being aware of the need to conserve energy and protect the planet. No amount of rainwater conservation, green roofs, or intelligent thermostats can help those who insist on expanding their carbon footprint. The house, of course, goes a long way to reducing waste and pollution, but those who reside there will have to play their part. Living in an Énóvo House is an exhilarating experience, but it is also a team effort.

THE ÉNÓVO HOUSE

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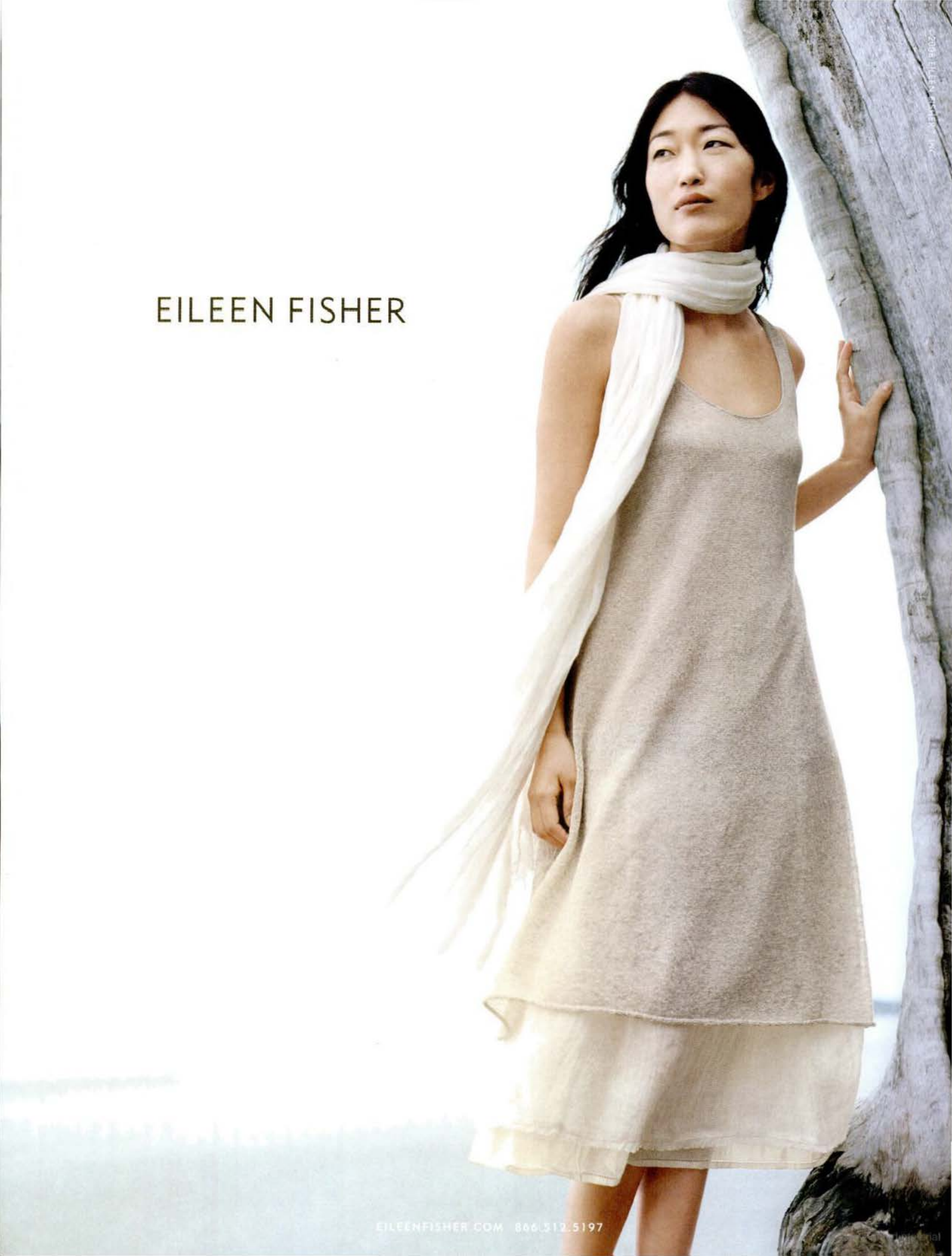

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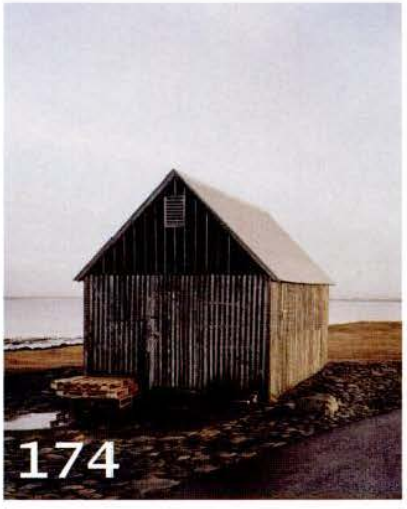

"The house is not about a lot of little things. It's one big thing at all times."

Preston Scott Cohen

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The Good Wood

If two materials defined the modern architecture of the 20th century, they would be glass and steel. These materials—not new, but newly employed—provided the structural backbone for our growing cities, and architects found original expressive avenues in the pared-down, machine-age aesthetic they provided.

Why, then, is Dwell devoting an issue to wood?

Though a sweeping movement on the scale of modernism has yet to coalesce in this century, chances are that when one does, it will address the issues of climate change, the depletion of renewable resources, and the emergence and integration of new technologies. No material is better suited to serve this as-yet-formed movement than good old-fashioned wood.

After all, wood is the ultimate sustainable material. Properly harvested, trees grow, get cut down, and are replaced with more trees. Across its life cycle, no building product has lower energy consumption rates. Wood essentially acts as storage for carbon dioxide (even after it is made into construction material), and when recycled as fuel it creates more energy than was used in its production. Plus, people tend to like it. Where glass and steel are cold and intimidating, wood is warm and fuzzy. It's also incredibly versatile. Wood can be as prosaic as particleboard or as poetic as burl.

With this issue we attempt to demonstrate the promise of this time-tested material by showing the breadth and beauty of its uses. This is perhaps best exemplified by two of our featured Dwellings. With architect Preston Scott Cohen, Elise and Arnold Goodman resurrected an 18th-century barn by inserting a steel frame into the structure ("Raising the Barn," p. 132). The 48 windows built into the cedar siding and the open-plan interior fuse with the historic barn in a unique stylistic hybrid. In London, architect David Adjaye's home for photographer Ed Reeve employs an engineered-timber system of precut, interlocking, self-supporting, cross-laminated spruce panels ("All Clad," p. 148). Contractor Eurban constructed the kit-of-parts structure from Swiss supplier Balteschwiler in two days—without a single scrap heading to the dumpster.

Rounding out our Dwellings is Hût Architecture's renovation of Anna and John Carver's 1950s country bungalow in Peasmarsh, England ("Heart of the Country," p. 140). New siding of roughly hewn larch covered up the old stucco and improved the building's thermal envelope while neatly bridging the gap between modernism and the log cabin.

Of course, wood's range isn't limited to architectural and building applications. In Process (p. 124), we visit the Brooklyn studio of Scrapile, where two industrious designers have literally turned trash into treasure. As the company's name implies, all of their products are made from the trademark striated lumber they create from discarded scraps of wood.

For Conversation (p. 117), senior editor Amber Bravo chats with Tom Dixon, who in his short tenure as creative director of Artek, the Finnish furniture company famous for Alvar Aalto's bent birch designs, has updated the manufacturer's approach. Having introduced a line of bamboo furniture in 2007, Dixon outlines his plans to use the material extensively in the future. More surprising, however, is the 2nd Cycle series. Artek has been buying back old pieces—warts and all—and giving them new life by reframing how they are presented to the public. This wabi-sabi approach to sustainability, where a manufacturer isn't actually making anything, is itself a minor revolution, and Dixon at his best.

If any 20th-century designer could claim a holistic approach to woodworking, it was George Nakashima, who from 1940 to 1990 crafted furniture that gave wood a lyrical voice. For this issue ("A Custom Concern," p. 156) author Marc Kristal and photographer Leslie Williamson travel to Nakashima's shop and home in New Hope, Pennsylvania, to document how his daughter Mira has carried the master woodworker's legacy into a new century by following the fastidious tenets that make a Nakashima piece quite unlike any other.

Nakashima didn't live in an era of so-called sustainability, but he seems to have understood it. As he wrote in 1981's *The Soul of a Tree*, "It is a stirring moment when out of an inert mass drawn from nature we set out to produce an object never before seen, an object to enhance man's world. Above all, a tree will live again."

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For James Newton Howard, a musical note isn't just something you hear. "It's hard to explain, but I've always thought notes have tactile qualities. Some are chewy. Some have a rust-like quality. Others have a kind of knife-edge, prickly feel about them. In my mind, every note has a distinctive character, much like the characters in a movie. When it comes to scoring films, that's a useful starting point." **James Newton Howard,** *Composer and Fellow of the Society of Sound*

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MY LIFE

Poliform

Thank you for occasionally featuring the design and architecture of Australia. People tend to forget about us because we are "at the bottom of the globe," yet we have some excellent design going on here—everything from innovative paper lampshades to fine examples of prefab and kit houses. Which brings me to my next point: I would love to see more articles on prefab homes in Dwell. It's a great housing method for the future—tire of the location, move your house!
Jan Hurley-Anderson
Melbourne, Australia

December/January 2008's "Industrial Revolution" story was a lovely photographic invitation to enjoy a well-designed and beautiful house. Intentionally and artfully, universal design was clearly the foundation upon which this house was literally built. Why then the baffling decision by your writer to use words like "threatening" and "hidden" to describe thoughtful elements that allow this home to be used and enjoyed by all? Perhaps an introduction to the principles of universal design at the Center for Universal Design at N.C. State University might encourage Dwell to celebrate rather than apologize for accessibility.
Margaret C. Herman
Cary, North Carolina

As an architect, I've often wondered what it is that so many other architects, designers, and magazine writers find so objectionable about suburban neighborhoods. Thanks to the "Signs of the Times" article (December/January 2008) on suburbia, I now know: It is the appalling presence of white, middle-class, nuclear families. How stupid of me to have been so blind for all of these years.
Louis B. Carballo, AIA
Sugar Land, Texas

I have enjoyed your magazine and television show (on the Fine Living channel) for quite some time. I had written last year to see if there was going to be another season of Dwell on television. I got a response that, while Dwell was not in production for more shows, you were working on another series that would be starting soon. Is this still happening? If so, when and on what channel?
Chris Helms
Muncie, Indiana

Editors' Note: We have plans to return to television sometime in the future, but in the meantime, you can check out the videos on dwell.com for a quick fix.

It is an infuriating dilemma: appreciate that my issue of Dwell sans plastic wrap is more eco-friendly, or suffer dismay that my issue arrives ripped, folded, bent, and mangled far too often. Is there some other option to satisfy both goals?
Mark J. Reeves
Boston, Massachusetts

I have become an avid reader of your publication and anticipate every new issue. I appreciate your dedication to exploring the burgeoning "green" movement, as evidenced by your recent cover story "A New Shade of Green" (November 2007). I am, however, puzzled by the fact that each month your magazine comes wrapped in plastic. Isn't there some "greener" solution? Whatever happened to the old brown paper wrapper?
Gregory Foley
Oakland, California

Editors' Note: Sustainability isn't always pretty. For those subscribers who do

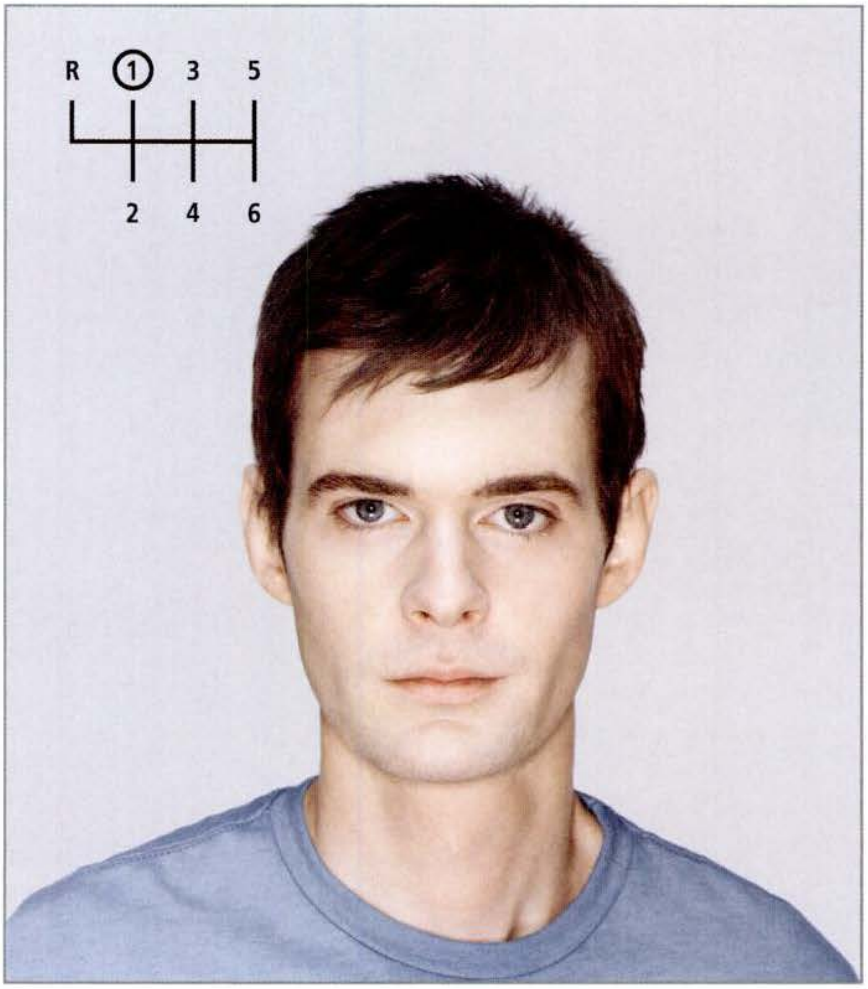

Photo by Mark Luthringer

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Green. As in the color one's face turns right before one's going to hurl. That's how I'm starting to feel if I continue to see "green" products. Don't get me wrong: I love the idea of the green movement. It's one thing if we all agree to switch to compact fluorescents, heat or cool our homes with more moderation, or whatever other little acts we can do together to make a bigger impact on the state of environmental affairs. But I am beyond sick and disgusted with producers of consumer goods that are "green." And only for one reason: Because I genuinely feel that the only green these producers care about is the green of consumers' money. We all see many products presented to us on nearly every page of hip magazines like Dwell that tout themselves as being green for one reason or another. But with some semblance of being environmentally conscious comes a price tag that smothers other similar products in its big green shadow. Why?

With everyone's minds on doing what is better for the environment, producers need to focus on the big picture of helping people achieve that goal by underselling the less environmentally conscious competitor. The technology is out there. The willingness is out there. Make it affordable, and they will come.

Biju Varughese
via email

I would like to suggest an article on the Make It Right Foundation in New Orleans, perhaps focusing on several different house designs that are slated to be built in the near future. They are designed to be sustainable, hurricane-proof, and energy efficient. Thank you!

Helene E. Negler
New Orleans, Louisiana

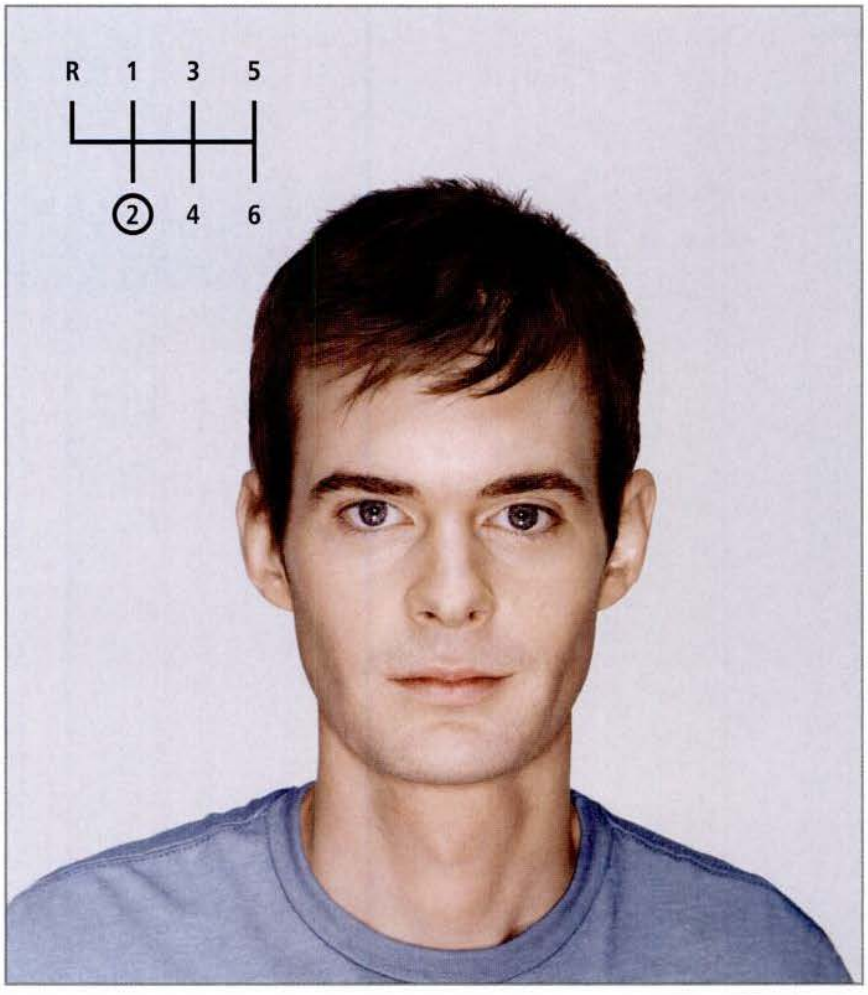
Editors' Note: Duly noted. We are also excited by the prospects of the project, which you can read about at makeitrightnola.org.

I saw a set of children's sheets in the November 2007 issue and also, I think, a fire extinguisher ("In the Modern World"). I can't find the magazine and can't remember the source for either product. Can you help?

Emily Rosenfeld
Florence, Massachusetts

Editors' Note: The Circus and City bedding are by Boodalee (boodalee.com), and the 2007 IDEA award-winning fire extinguisher is called the Home Hero and is available at Home Depot (homedepot.com).

As an avid reader and fan of Dwell, I was disappointed in John King's essay "Surrogate Cities" (December/January 2008). The question of suburban appropriateness and what constitutes an authentic experience in the suburbs is an interesting one. However, it seems that Mr. King is more concerned with the semantics of the marketing materials, and the words used by salespeople, than with the more germane architectural dilemma confronted by these projects. As the designers of three of the projects mentioned in his essay, we think he misses the broader point. The role of fringe communities in American life is evolving. Our task as designers working in the suburbs has been to confront these changes head-on. The architectural pastiche and style of the architecture is secondary to questions of density, lifestyle, and land use. While the projects mentioned have been met with varying levels of success, they all break from a "normal" way of thinking about suburban design.



We believe the view held by Mr. King is antiquated, a holdover from a time when cities and suburbs were polar opposites. Times have changed. The diversity that has been a hallmark in cities for decades has become a part of the suburbs as well. Adult roommates, same-sex couples, married couples without children, and career-driven singles now comprise most of the home-buying public. Design must respond to this changing demographic. While we do still design projects that accommodate the traditional nuclear family, some buyers are not looking for the same things that buyers looked for in the past. There is no "one size fits all" solution. We think the "rustic-resort" of downtown Walnut Creek can coexist with what Mr. King calls "lean and taut." After all, isn't this what makes cities great: the juxtaposition of different architectural styles, different lifestyles, and different points of view coexisting, creating unexpected and dynamic contrasts?

While he may not agree with the design aesthetic, Mr. King's essay smacks of a citycentric view that suggests that authentic experiences are impossible in the suburbs. We know that this is not Dwell's point of view. Many of the projects shown in your pages confront suburban living as a design challenge. The goal is not to replicate the city. Rather, these projects act as catalysts for future development around them. As designers we hope to spark a synergy that can lead to a new way of viewing these places. Each is a unique solution, answering a specific problem. CentreVille, for example, is the first piece of Rohnert Park's specific plan that tries to provide a place where people can live and work without the need to clog the highways on their one-hour trek to San Francisco to experience authenticity. That community is trying to create a place where people can know their neighbors, chance meetings can happen, and people can be comfortable with a different lifestyle choice.

The line between city and suburb is blurring. As we try to use our resources more carefully, densities are increasing, and more and more, there are segments of our population that live in these threshold places between the dense urban center and single-family sprawl. As designers, we try to speak to the lifestyles, tastes, and attitudes of today. These suburban dwellers read Dwell too. They also want to be "at home in the modern world."

David Senden, Principal
KTGY Group, Inc.
Irvine, California

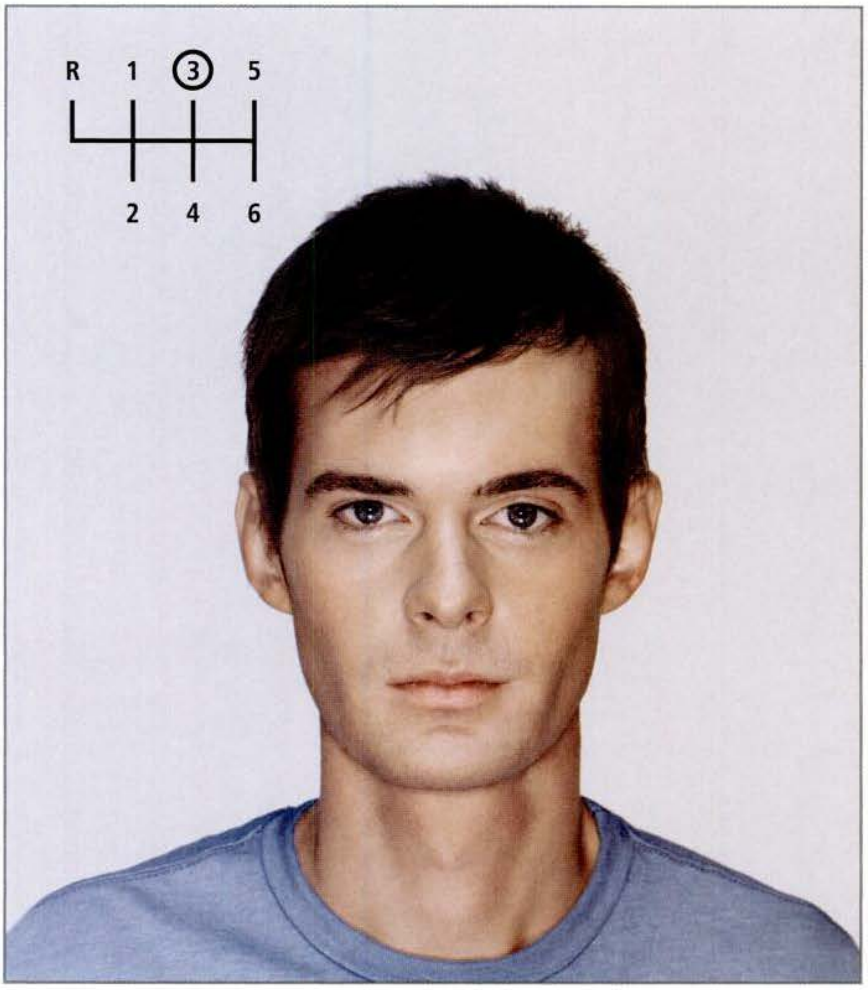
Were you writing tongue in cheek concerning the Mostrom family's No. 5 House ("Five's Easy Pieces," December/January 2008): "naked knoll," "put vision to paper," "brimming with images, illustrations, and text"? The result of the above thoughts and comments is, perhaps, the ugliest house I have seen in many a year. The only saving grace is the beautiful "naked knoll." I just hope the neighbors cannot see across the knoll to that shipping container masquerading as a home.

Bill Healy
San Juan Islands, Washington

Your alternative-energy article "Knowledge Is Power" (November 2007) was informative and I enjoyed it very much. I work at an interactive design agency in Austin where my coworkers and I have a large interest in alternative resources and environmental topics. I decided to make a copy of this article to share with my coworkers, but making copies of something already printed, especially on the topic of conservation, seemed inappropriate.

So, here is my (not so new) request: It would be great if Dwell subscribers could choose between a printed and a digital version. I am aware that the chance of sharing this document increases, but I don't see much of a difference between handing the magazine physically to someone versus forwarding a digital document. Please take this into consideration to save some of the energy that it takes to print the magazine.

Janis Gonser
Austin, Texas



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Sorry to say, but I have only explored two issues of Dwell. Until last September, I did not even know the magazine existed. I would not say that you are an "Anthony Robbins dance and sing and seduce me show"—you are far better. Thank you for creating such an inspiring magazine. (Not flattery, just plain facts.)
Per V.E. Klemming
Stockholm, Sweden

I've just finished reading the article on Harry Gesner ("Soul Surfer," December/January 2008), and wanted to let you know how inspiring I found both the man and his visions. Are there any books available that feature a range of his work?
Helen O'Sullivan
Melbourne, Australia

Editors' Note: We're not aware of any books that specifically feature Mr. Gesner's work, but recent stories in *Vanity Fair* and *Malibu* magazine might offer some additional inspiration.

You have a great magazine. Is there any way you could compile all your past issues on a DVD? *Fine Homebuilding* and other magazines archive past issues and put all the ads, page numbers, front cover, back cover, table of contents, articles, and photos on DVD. Another income stream. Sell each year. Or maybe every two years. On DVD.
Susan Zettler
via email

Editors' Note: While we have yet to look into DVD archiving, our past and future issues will soon be archived digitally with Zinio (zinio.com).

I am a long-time subscriber and fan of Dwell, finding a lot of inspiration and resources for good design. This past year I have been able to use some of that inspiration and those resources in the course of a kitchen and bath remodel. The project started out simply: We needed to replace a couple of aging appliances. But, as these projects often do, it quickly mushroomed into a complete makeover with the blowing out of walls and the rearranging of fixtures in an effort to wrest this postwar tract home from its last remodel in the 1980s. Unsatisfied with the proposals offered by design professionals, my wife and I ended up doing most of the design work. Acting as our own general contractors, we worked with local tradesman like our next-door neighbor, the cabinetmaker. Much of the finish work, such as casting the concrete countertops, we took on ourselves.

This project has inspired me to start thinking about our next house: a downsized, empty-nest bungalow. Like our recent project, I plan on doing as much of the design and construction myself as possible. And that got me to thinking: Could Dwell do a special issue or an occasional feature article on do-it-yourself modern? It would be great to see what other nonprofessional modernists have created using their own talents and labor.
Ian Dodd
Culver City, California

Editors' Note: Our monthly "My House" feature provides great first-person insight into how other homeowners have approached similar projects.

I recently renewed my subscription for another 20 issues of Dwell and now, thanks to an observation by my pesky landscape-designer brother, I'm wondering if I haven't renewed for another 20 issues of redundant Eames chair glorification...
Marc Willhite
Denver, Colorado

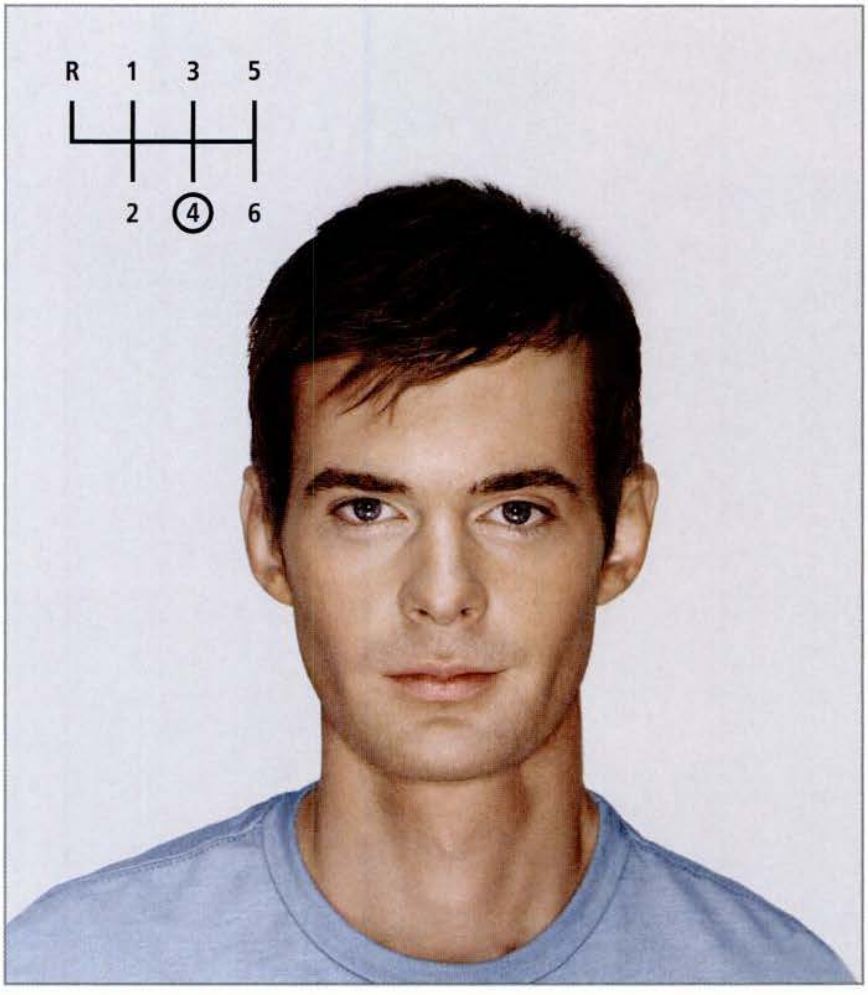


Photo by Steven Lippman

After viewing your December/January 2008 issue, I think you're back on track. The photos in Dwell are my main reason for being a subscriber, such as those on pages 116, 126, 128, 147, 150, 163, etc. (I'm in love with large panels of glass and the lakefront.) Keep the photos coming...cheers!
Roger Marshall
Syracuse, New York

I was surprised to see a photograph of a house design on the cover of your September 2007 issue ("Highway Hideaway") that closely resembles my own. I purchased my two-story home in Cincinnati, Ohio, in March 2001, and began renovating approximately nine months later under the direction of an assistant professor at the University of Cincinnati College of Design, Architecture, Art and Planning. My home sits on the edge of one of the hills of Cincinnati with a wonderful panoramic view of the city in the river valley below.

I, too, have small windows on the street front for privacy and glass doors on the back of the house—both on the first floor and in the second-floor master bedroom—to maximize the view. The Aidlin Darling design captures the same lines and details that are shown on my house. The only exception is that we used copper rather than Cor-Ten steel on the surface of the structure.
Stephen J. Keller
Cincinnati, Ohio

I have a newfound admiration for your magazine. Every month, I look forward to thumbing through the pages of Dwell and reading about the amazing houses featured throughout. I have two requests: (1) Please show "before" photos of the renovated houses. I hope to redo a house one day and it's hard to imagine what you can do until you see the "before" and the outstanding "after" images. (2) I despise weeding through all of the cookie-cutter-style houses (offered by developers) and want something unique! Are there any resources out there for modern-home lovers looking to purchase a modern home?

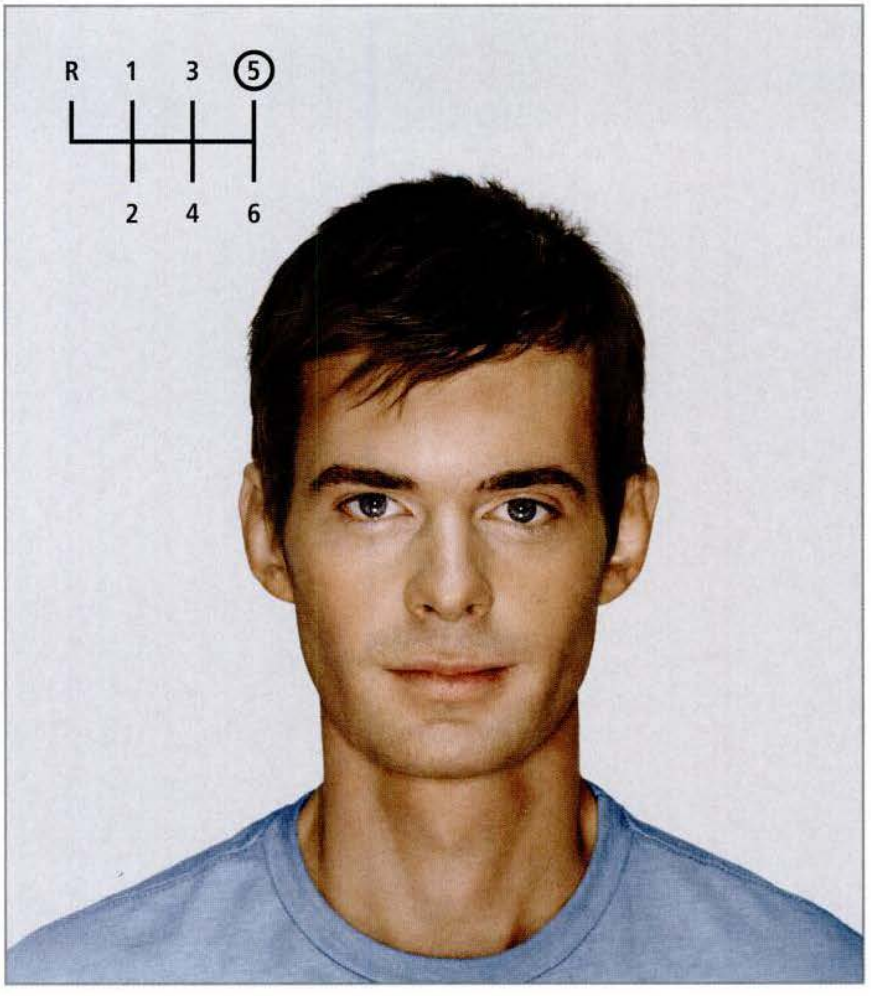
I love the magazine and am shocked when I read that readers cancel their subscriptions over one small thing. I just want to encourage everyone at your magazine to keep doing what you're doing—it's amazing.
Diane Zerr
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Editor's Note: Our September 2005 issue included the article "Realtors Who Choose Modernism over McMansions" as part of a section dedicated to real estate.

As much as I enjoy your magazine, I'm troubled by the little subscription solicitation cards inserted into each issue. In your recent "green" issue (November 2007), there were five, and in the new "suburbs" issue (December/January 2008), which arrived today, another five. This is unacceptable from a publication that supports sustainability, recycling, and eco-friendly practices. Please: One card, bound in so it doesn't become litter on the street or in the home, would be sufficient. Save some trees.
Lucinda Thomson
Bowling Green, Kentucky

I'm writing in regards to the December/January 2008 issue of Dwell. I've enjoyed your magazine for a while (and enjoyed this issue as well), and in general I'm encouraged by your attention to green and sustainable practices. However, it seems to me that this philosophy is tested when an issue of Dwell contains no less than seven subscription solicitation cards—five loose, plus two firmly attached that I had to rip out. I understand your desire to solicit subscriptions, but what an opportunity to renew/reduce/recycle!
Kevin Atkinson
Ottawa, Ontario

Would you consider an issue dedicated to studio apartments and dorm rooms? I am going insane trying to fit everything into one small studio



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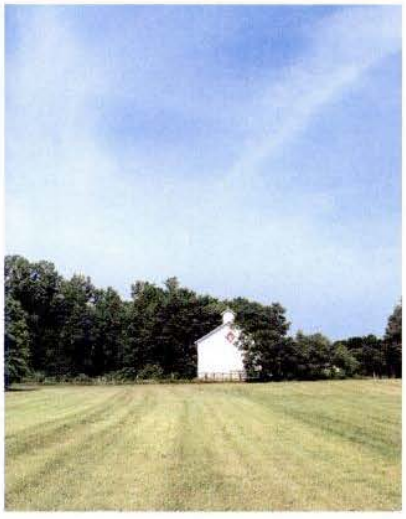
apartment. It's difficult when you have to fit a bed, desk, television, storage, etc. into one tiny room. I am a very visual person, and am always searching for pictures that would help me. Thank you.

Noah Kameyer
Woodland, California

Editors' Note: We've dedicated four issues of Dwell (most recently, March 2008) to small spaces such as yours.



I have been a reader for several years and am amazed at some of the precious gems you find. The November 2007 issue is a great case in point. Your article about Tryon Farm in Michigan City, Indiana ("Farm Team"), fascinated me because it did such a great job discussing the hopes and theories of building modern in the natural landscape. It was so interesting that I went to the Tryon Farm website to read more about their plans.

I was shocked (pleasantly, mind you) to see that this was not just theory but a good-sized residential community well on its way. I recently followed that tour of the website with a real tour of the farm. I was shocked again (even more pleasantly) to see and touch the fantastic work being done by Ed and Eve Noonan and their Tryon Farm team. From concept to completion, this project epitomizes Dwell's tagline "At Home in the Modern World," and it does so on many levels, from dwelling to community to global sustainable integration.

Now I have to be critical: By just reading your article, there is no way for a reader to comprehend the level to which the Tryon Farm team has taken a great idea and made it a real place. Pictures! Where were the pictures? There is so much real work completed there it should have been easy. For all us readers, who clamor for proof that it can be done, please do a nice photographic spread on this project in a future issue. It is inspiring.

James B. Guthrie, AIA
Edmonton, Alberta

Just weighing-in from the nation's capitol to say: Great story on Copenhagen ("Detour," February 2008). I've flown through there several times on trips to other parts of Europe, and my few hours between flights have been spent exploring its wonders. I was a bit sad though, that you didn't pick up on the wind farm in the distance in your opening photo. Perhaps in future looks at other cities, you can make it a habit to highlight the good design of alternative energy use.

Philip L. Hoffman
Mount Rainier, Maryland

Corrections: On page 116 of our December/January 2008 issue ("Let's Be Frank"), we incorrectly attributed the portrait of architect Frank Harmon to F8 Photography. It is actually the work of Cara Galati and Jonathan Kaz of F8 Photo Studios.

On page 60 of our February 2008 issue ("Houses We Love"), we listed the Little Comton House architect Caleb Messier's email address instead of his website. Additional examples of his work can be found by visiting hughes-messier.com.

We regret the errors.

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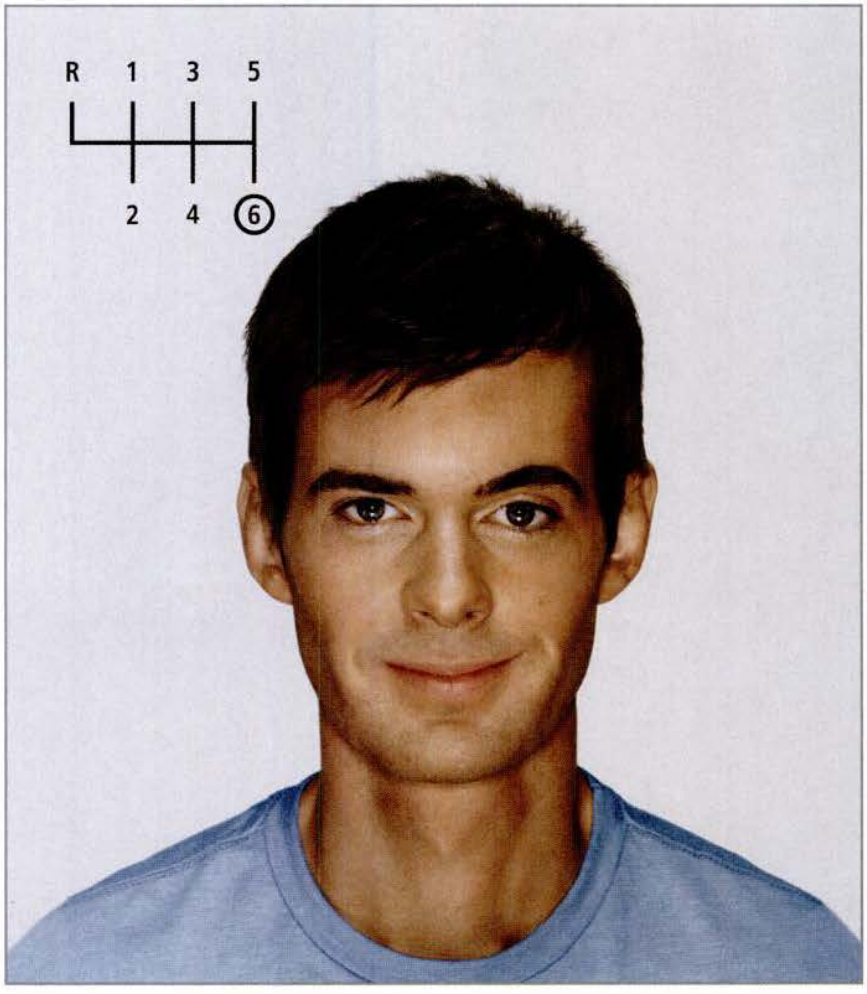

Photo by John Hines

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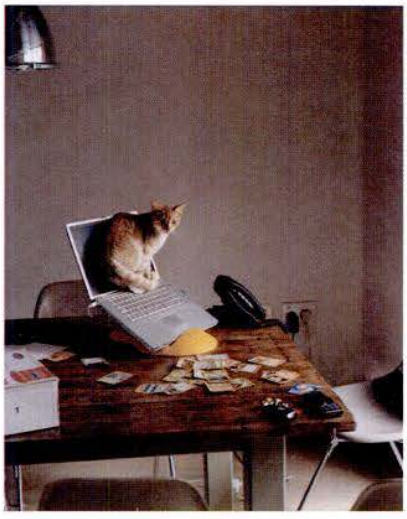

Photo by Nigel Shafran

Dominic Bradbury
Now living in a Norfolk, England, village after a decade spent in London, writer Dominic Bradbury took a train to familiar stomping grounds to hear architect Marcus Lee describe his self-designed timber-frame Hackney house ("Slanted and Enchanted," p. 83). He found much that he could relate to: "Having young children myself, I find myself more and more interested in how you create a good-looking, well-designed house that works and functions well for the whole family. That seems to me like a really good lesson in designing for real people rather than just setting out to impress."

Max Fraser
Max Fraser is a London-based design author, curator, and consultant. His work as a freelance journalist gives him access to some progressive projects, such as the house by architect David Adjaye which he visited for this issue ("All Clad," p. 148). As he explains: "So much new building is mediocre in its design, so I always admire individuals who manage to sensitively push the envelope in design terms while complying with the regulatory bureaucrats. Furthermore, these persevering visionaries all maintain a glint in their eye!"

Marc Kristal
Big Apple-based contributing editor Marc Kristal found a bumper crop of fresh inspiration while working on his story about Arnold and Elsie Goodman's home in Dutchess County, New York ("Raising the Barn," p. 132). His interest was piqued after seeing renderings of the project five years earlier. Nothing prepared him, however, for its "beauty, client suitability, and surroundings that rival those of a *Masterpiece Theatre* epic."

Kristal also paid a visit to the Pennsylvania-based Nakashima woodworking studio ("A Custom Concern," p. 156). "The power of the work was greatly increased by seeing so much of it in one place, in the context of its creation, in an environment so infused with Nakashima's strong presence and spiritual nature."

Eirik Johnson
Boston-based artist Eirik Johnson felt right at home upon entering Scrapile's sawdust-caked Brooklyn workshop ("The Pi Table," p. 124). "My father was a woodworker and I would spend hours helping him with projects in his basement workshop. Visiting the guys at Scrapile brought those memories back. They turned on their planer, and cranked the new Band of Horses album loud enough to hear through the protective headphones." True to his woodsy roots, Johnson is currently finishing a long-term book project focusing on logging territory and communities in the Northwest.

Leslie Williamson
After staying at a local Best Western, photographer Leslie Williamson found her extended stay at the Nakashima compound so inspiring that it was almost necessary to have her forcibly removed from the property ("A Custom Concern," p. 156). "I lived on apples fresh picked from the tree, and spent every minute of the day tracking the light from one stunning room to another. It was a total bliss ride." She's currently wrapping up work on a book of photography showcasing the inner sanctums of iconic designers and architects, and making herself right at home in the process.

Photographer Nigel Shafran ("Heart of the Country," p. 140) catches Ronnie—named with brother Reggie after the notorious Kray twins—fencing stolen *MTG* cards on eBay.

Now online...

Newsletter

There's always something happening in New York, Miami, Chicago, Los Angeles, and San Francisco, but not all of it is worth leaving home for. "Around the Clock" is a weekly events listing for all five cities every day of the week. If you live in one of these places, subscribe. If you're visiting, check our website. Events include home tours, flea markets, lectures, film festivals, and art openings.
dwell.com/aroundtheclock

Trade Shows

April is the month of the mélange: From the High Point Furniture Market in North Carolina to the Milan Furniture Fair and the Kitchen and Bath International Show in Chicago, Dwell takes you behind the scenes—and into the plumbing—to report on the most noteworthy products from these shows. (Whether that means the best, the trendiest, or the greenest remains to be seen.)
dwell.com/blog

Outdoor Fencing

Whether you want to keep the deer out or the dog in, a fence communicates the character of your yard. So it's important to pick one that enhances the landscape. Page through our selections to find an outdoor fencing option that best suits your style.
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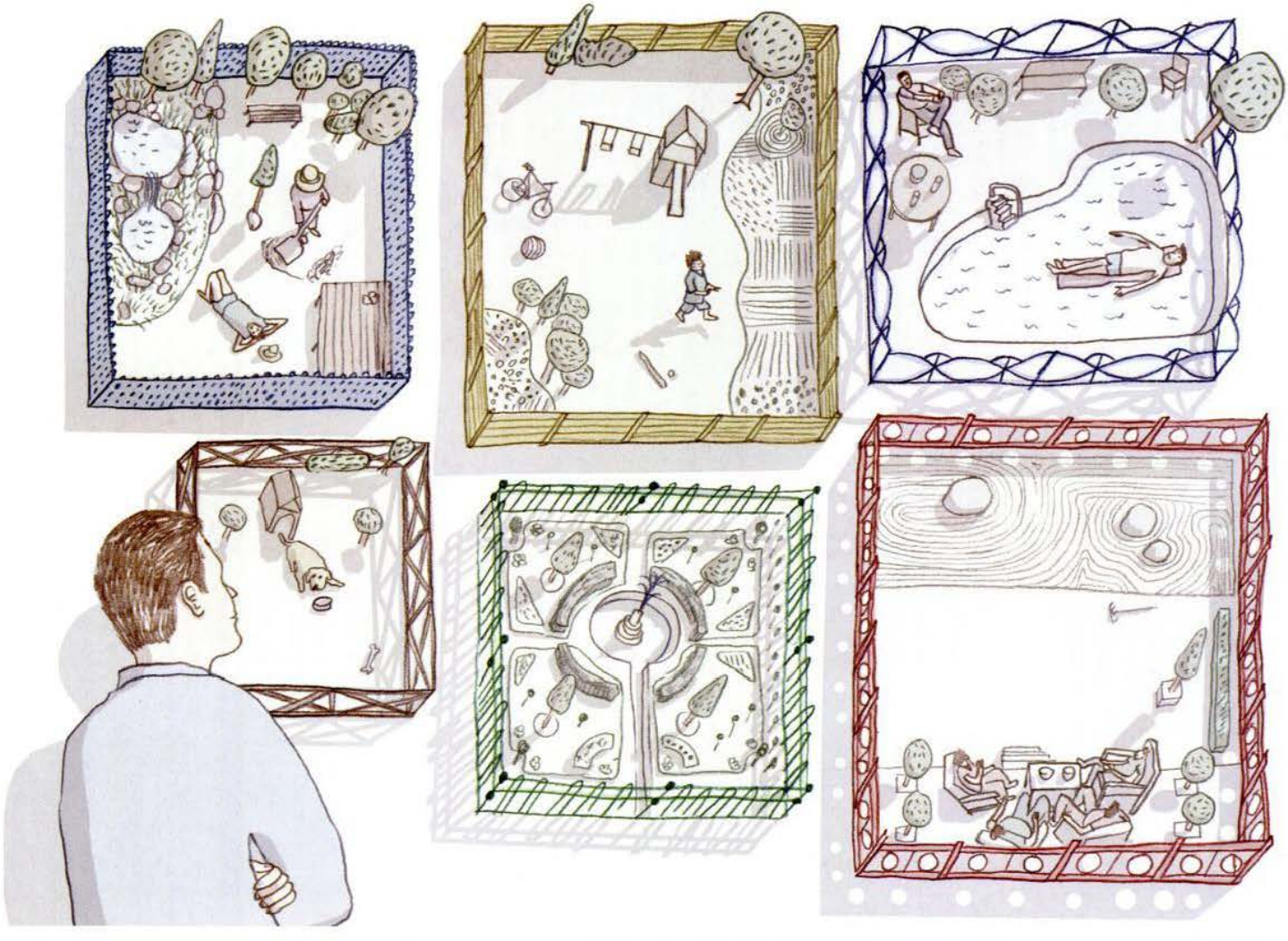
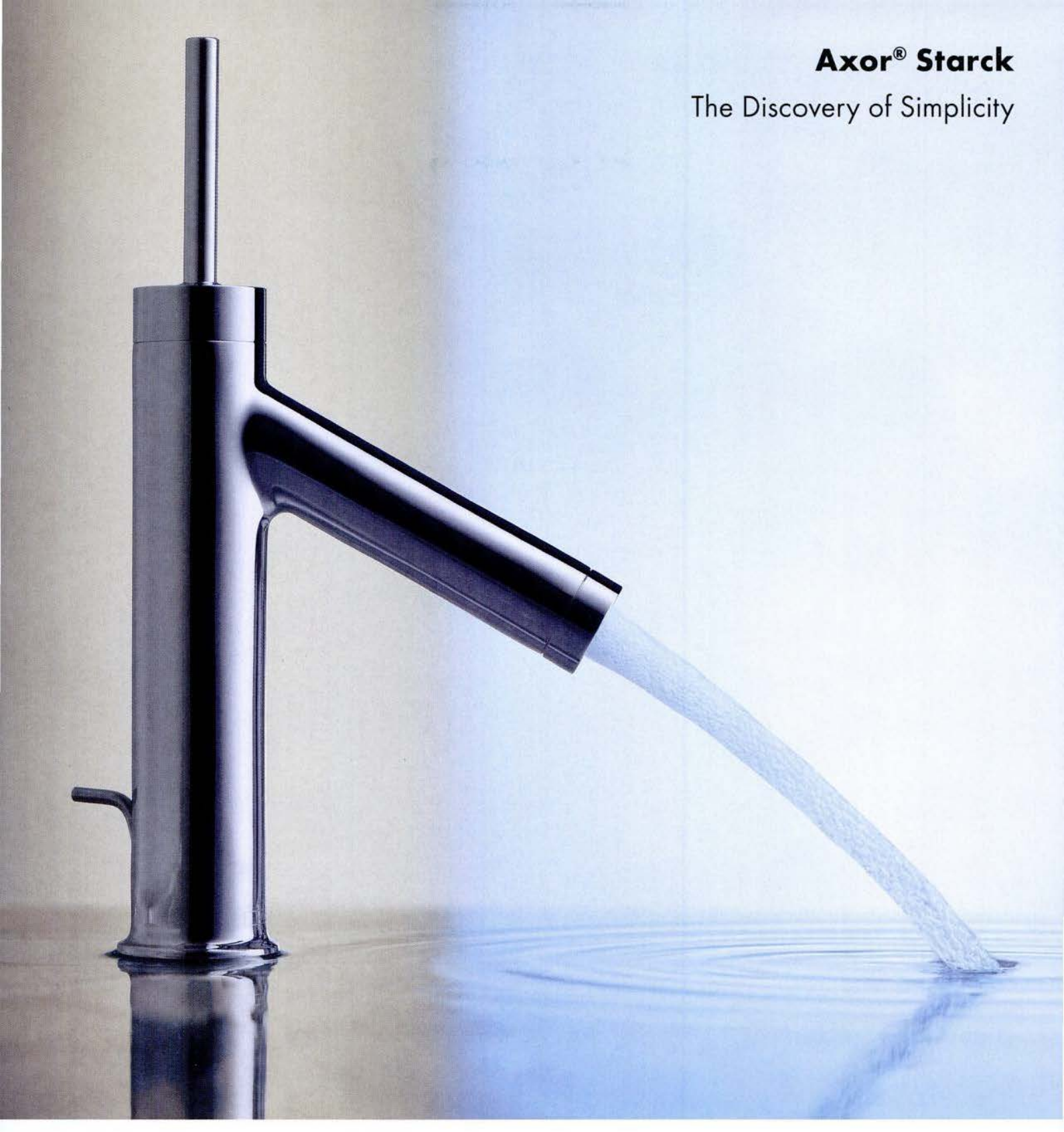


Illustration by Leif Parsons



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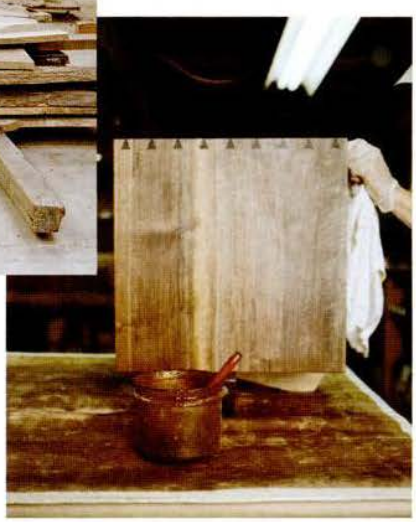
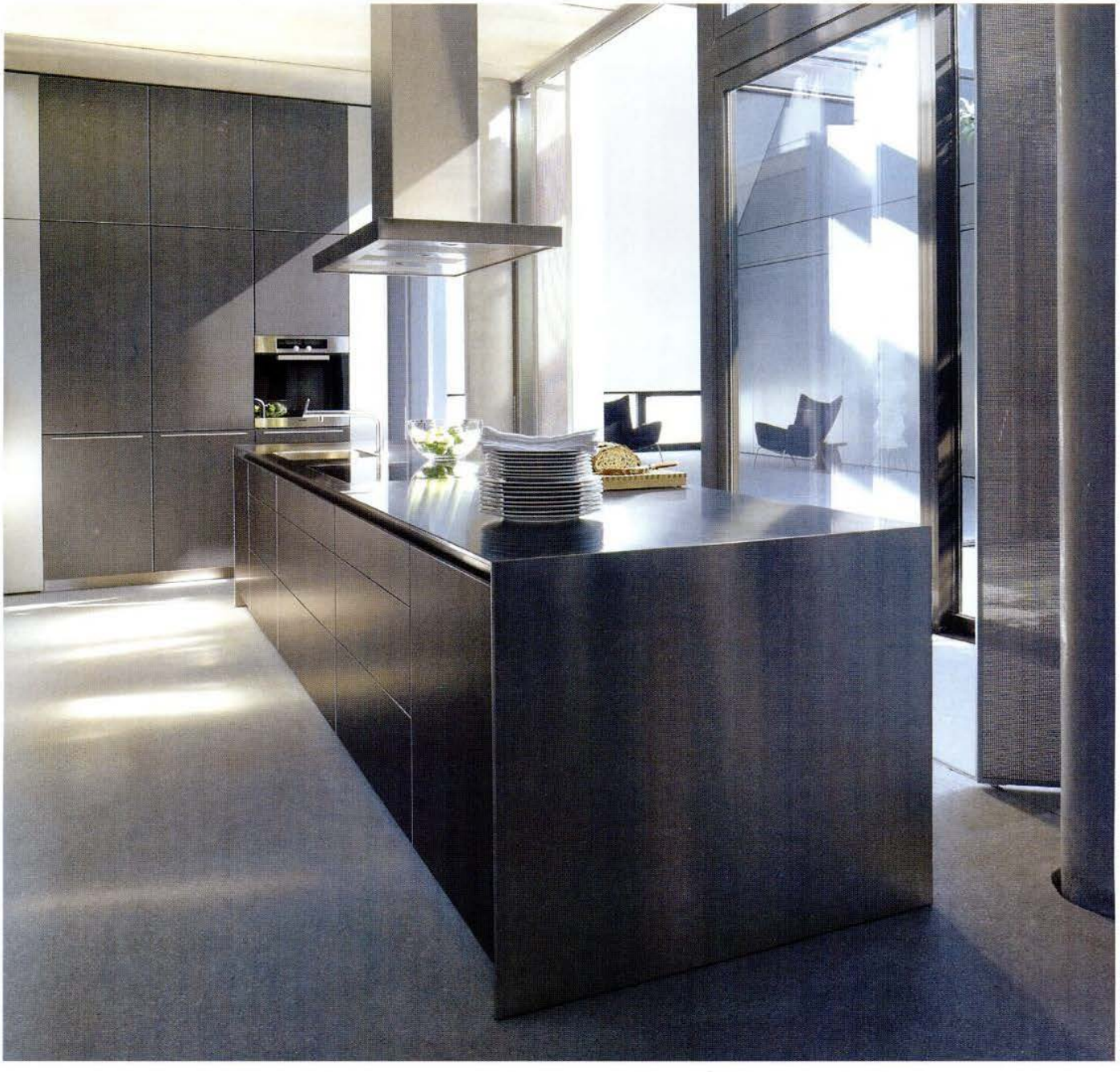
Family Affair

George Nakashima's relationship with design began with a bachelor's degree in architecture from MIT in 1930, and took him on an odyssey through France, India, and Japan, and finally back to a bucolic workshop in Pennsylvania, where he produced some of the 20th century's most revered furnishings. After his death in 1990, his daughter Mira assumed the journey, continuing the familial craft in her father's studio. Check out images of their work, their woodworking process, and the Nakashima compound. dwell.com/slideshows



Photos by Leslie Williamson

bulthaup



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In the Modern World

This wild whirl of wood is a "soft conference" nest by Stickwork and Intelligent Design for Wieden+Kennedy. The office altering project, with its willow walls and wisps of alder, was inspired by "the sheltering tent of a sultan's caravan"—perfect for hatching new ideas at your next team meeting.

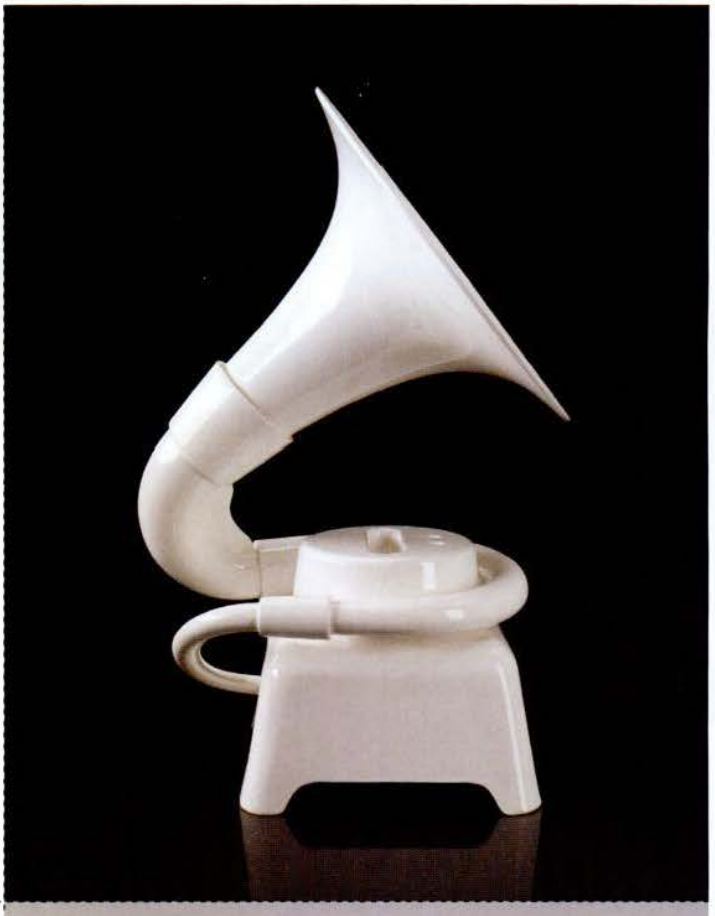
Photo by Jeremy Bittermann

April Calendar
Important dates in art and design, with architecture thrown in for good measure: Dwell's timeline for the month.

April 6-11 (2008)
Luminale, the Festival of Lighting Culture, lights up Frankfurt am Main, Germany.
luminale.de

Woody Wood rug
By Yvette Laduk
0900-design.nl
We tried counting the rings on this rootsy Dutch rug—printed with a cross section of a tree and burned on its barklike edges—but we kept getting stumped.

Phonofone II iPod speaker
By Tristan Zimmermann
scienceandsons.com
Nearly two feet tall, ceramic, and capable of amplifying an iPod using nothing but the magic of acoustics, the retro Phonofone II is our gramophone for the future. *(right)*



Factory planter
By Chiaki Murata for Metaphys
aplusrstore.com
Help the fresh fruit on your counter feel less homesick by surrounding it with this 16-inch ring of tabletop turf. Prairie-grass seeds and hydroponic nutrient capsules are included; a mini mower, however, is not.

Ant cushions
By Bev Hisey
propellermodern.com
The embroidered insect army caught marching across these wool cushions by designer Bev Hisey makes accessorizing a total picnic. *(right)*

April 8 (1892)
Richard Neutra, one of the founding architects of California modernism, is born. He also died this month, on April 16, 1970.

April 9 (1959)
America's first starchitect, Frank Lloyd Wright, dies in Arizona.

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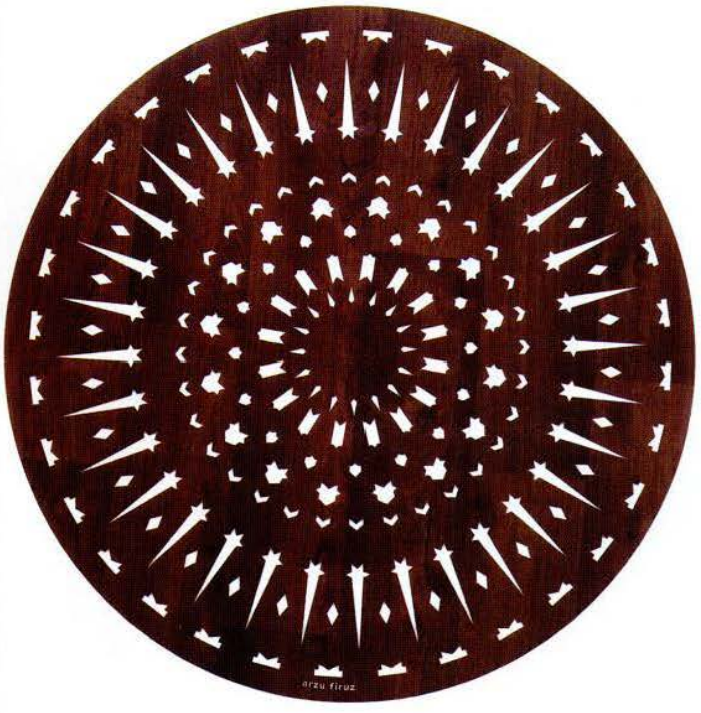
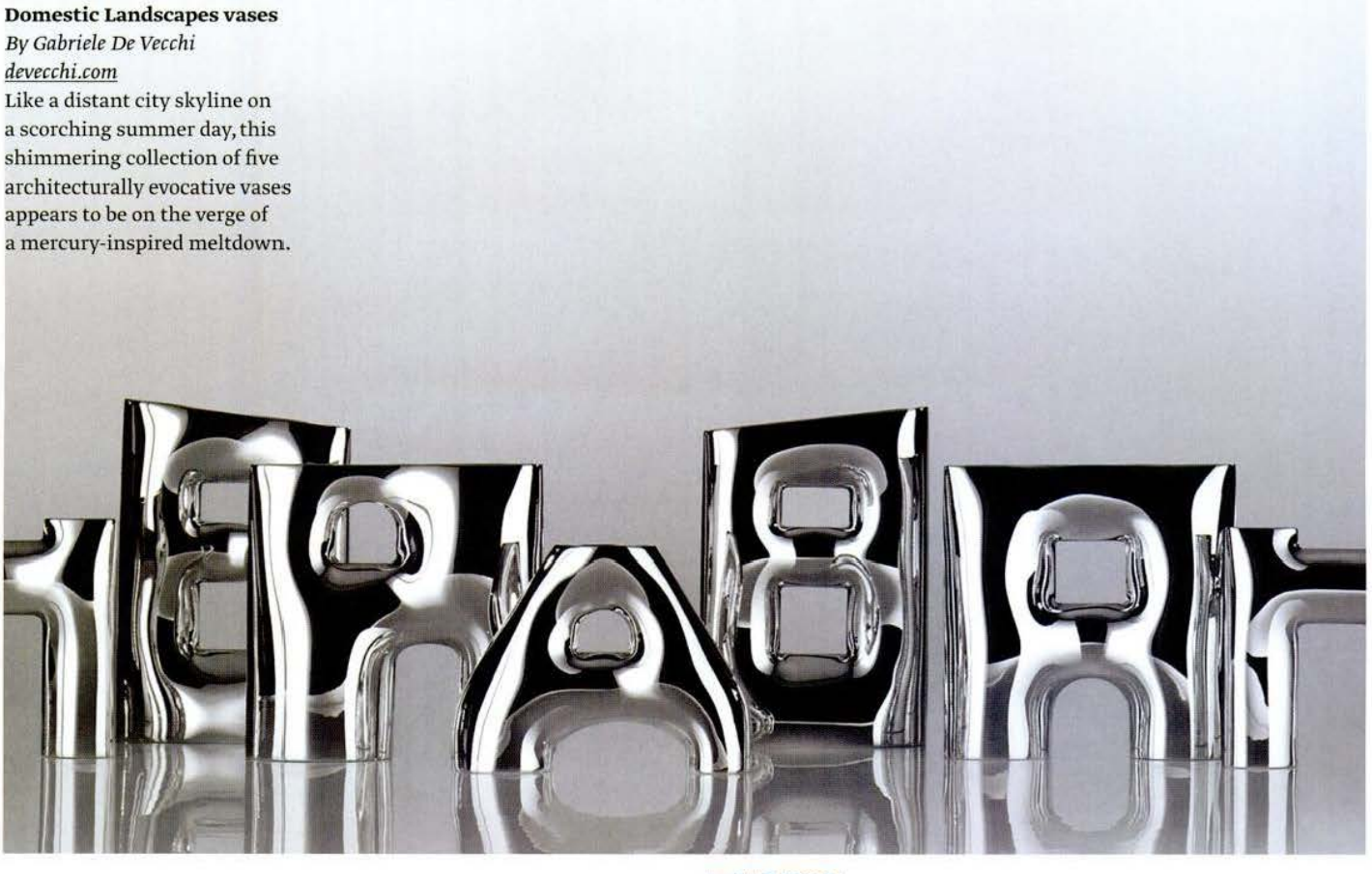
Felt Pebbles
By Ronel Jordaan for Be Sweet
branchhome.com
These rock softies are hand dyed and carded from 100-percent merino wool by women in a job creation program in Johannesburg, South Africa. The next time you feel like unleashing your inner Bamm-Bamm, grab a fruity-colored pebble instead.

Tapis vinyl floor covering
By Arzu Firuz
arzu-firuz.com
Make your floors look a little mo' rockin' with one of these intricately incised, woodgrain-patterned vinyl floor coverings. They're available in a variety of shapes, sizes, and patterns (Rosace is pictured), and were designed by Istanbul-born, Paris-based Arzu Firuz. *(right)*



Domestic Landscapes vases
By Gabriele De Vecchi
devecchi.com
Like a distant city skyline on a scorching summer day, this shimmering collection of five architecturally evocative vases appears to be on the verge of a mercury-inspired meltdown.



April 12 (2008)
North opens at the Slought Foundation, Philadelphia.
slought.org

Hamilton, seating system
design: Rodolfo Dordoni

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A Short History of Lincoln Logs

With nearly one million sets sold each year, Lincoln Logs have remarkable staying power. For a toy that has hardly changed in almost a century, its lasting appeal is all the more extraordinary.

Invented by John Lloyd Wright, Lincoln Logs rolled onto the scene in 1916. Allegedly inspired by the innovative earthquake resistant design used in the foundation of the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo—which was designed by John's father, Frank Lloyd Wright, and featured a seismically strategic mesh of interlocking beams—the all-wood Lincoln Logs link together with the help of small notches.

The rectilinear sets compel kids to build broadly horizontal, cabinlike structures, more akin to rustic forest redoubts than to modern high-rise housing, which was their inventor's intent: Taking cues from his father's own architectural attitude, John Lloyd Wright infused his toys with a sense of simplicity in both material and construction. Lincoln Logs elevate detail and quality of joinery over flashy facades and abstract theories.

Since day one, they have been marketed with an air of nostalgia, as a way to look back on the national narrative of spreading into frontier territory, building forts, and expanding settlements. A politically incorrect—and unintentionally hilarious—ad for Lincoln Logs published in 1934 states the following: "You all know the stories people tell about the pioneers who settled our country. How they cleared land, built log cabins, and fought the Indians... Today we don't have to do the things the pioneers did, but you boys and girls can build the same sort of little houses, barns, forts, and villages that the pioneers did if you use Lincoln Logs." The sets even came with "little figures of Indians, cowboys, soldiers, and trappers, and a set of animals for a farmyard."

Though the sets still come with frontier-themed figures (the "Indians" are now referred to as "Native Americans" and they cost 75 cents each), and "nostalgia" is actually the first button you see on the Lincoln Logs website, these toys do lend themselves to modern design. Intricate cantilevers and Peter Eisenman–inspired grids are only a large-enough toy set away.

Lincoln Logs also lead one to wonder what kids might create with a set designed by, say, Zaha Hadid. Might kids raised playing with toys designed by architects one day be more likely to become architects themselves? Lincoln Logs show that the tactile allure of structural design starts early—and that appeal never quite fades.

Dwell's editors resisted quaintly nostalgic advertisements (above), and chose instead to construct vertically oriented, modernist Lincoln Log structures (below). lincolnlogs.knex.com

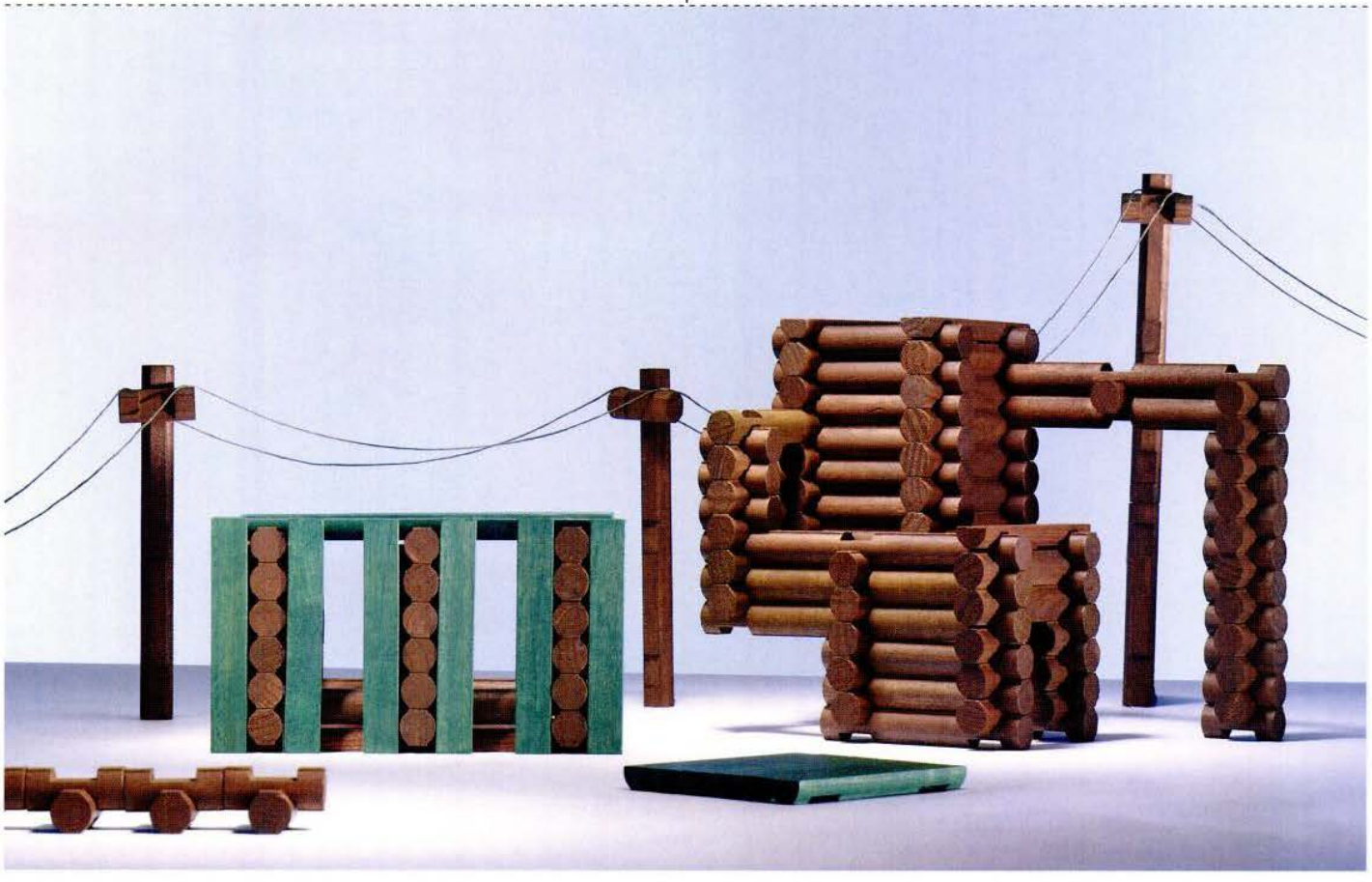
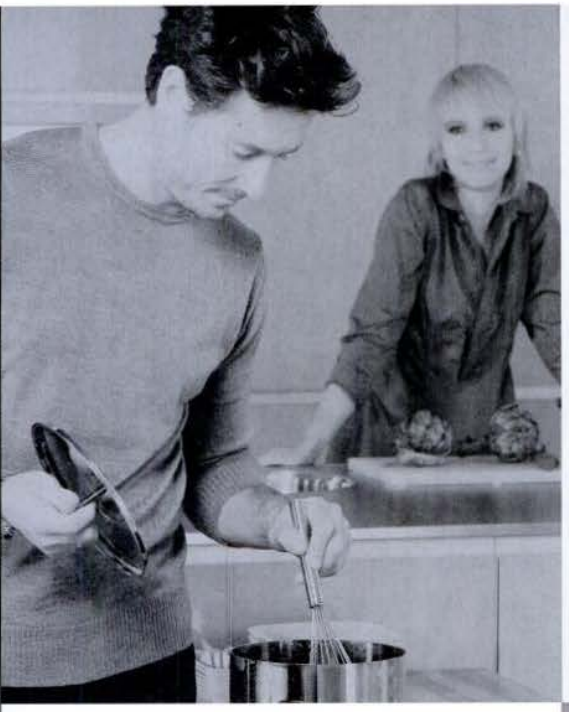


Photo by Peter Belanger, Poster courtesy K'NEX

Super Structure



Geoff's Non-Negotiables...

- "Performance on par with my BMW M5"
- "Responsible green manufacturing"
- "Installed on my schedule"
- "A sexy look for late dinners with Julia"

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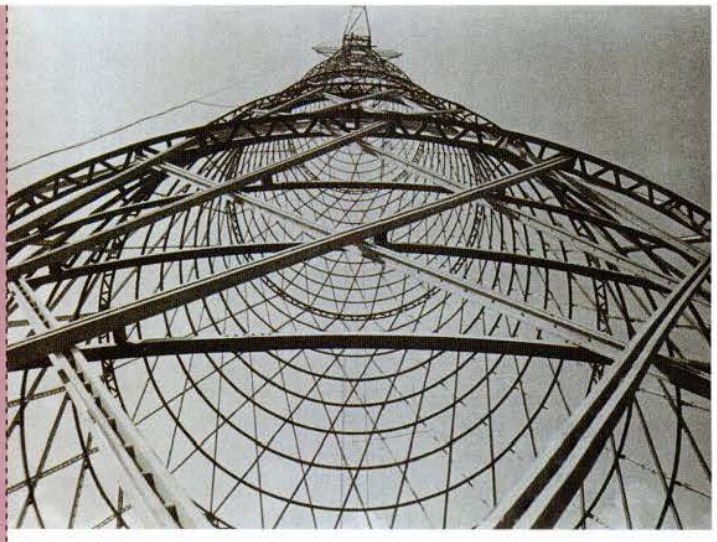

Alexander Rodchenko: Revolution in Photography
Hayward Gallery, London
February 7–April 27, 2008
southbankcentre.co.uk
Canted angles, extreme close-ups, and a palpable sense of propulsion animate the photography of Alexander Rodchenko, one of the Soviet Union's most visible and important avant-garde artists. (If you doubt that, check out the cover of Franz Ferdinand's second album.) The Hayward Gallery mounts a new show to take stock of his work from the 1920s and '30s, paying special attention to the formal innovation and photographic abstraction he achieved using bizarre camera angles, fish-eye lenses, and canny tricks of perspective.

Out of This World: Shaker Design Past, Present, and Future
Bard Graduate Center for Studies in the Decorative Arts, Design, and Culture, New York City
March 13–June 15, 2008
bard.edu/bgc
The Shakers' utopian vision can be seen in the minimal chairs, tables, dressers, and more at this wide-ranging exhibition.

Phantom Sightings: Art After the Chicano Movement
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
April 6–September 1, 2008
lacma.org
Focusing on concepts and techniques instead of ethnic identity, Phantom Sightings brings the "phantom culture" of Chicanos into the bright lights of the Los Angeles museum world. (*right*)

April 13 (2008)
Promises of Paradise closes at the Bass Museum of Art, Miami.
bassmuseum.org

April 14 (1924)
Louis Sullivan, inventor of the skyscraper—and mentor to Frank Lloyd Wright—dies.

ASIA chair - MODERN table - HORIZON buffet

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BSB Design

BSB Design was established in 1966 in Des Moines, Iowa, as a small architectural firm with a grand mission statement: Every family deserves to live in an architect-designed home. Forty-plus years later, BSB employs over 200 people and has amassed an award-winning portfolio of homes. So what would make a U.S. firm verging on mega status suddenly decide to focus its pro bono attention on solving a housing problem thousands of miles away? According to architect and chairman of the board Doug Sharp, all someone had to do was ask.

While Sharp was visiting South Africa in 2006, a local minister challenged him to assist in remedying the local shelter shortages. Upon returning home to Des Moines, Sharp immediately got started. "Worldwide, over 600 million people are living in overcrowded, inadequate, and poor-quality housing. Our firm has been so blessed, and we really wanted to give something back." A special team of BSB architects and designers began working on the Abōd series—low-cost, low-maintenance, easily assembled dwellings designed to replace the world's dilapidated shacks and shanties. After eight months of client interviews, user testing, and design, the first three Abōd prototypes were en route via FedEx (in 2-by-4-by-12-foot boxes) to their new home in Soshanguve, north of Pretoria.

The Abōd is most notable for the fact that it can be assembled—or disassembled—in one day by two people, using only the screwdriver and awl that comes with each kit. Also important is the fact that the homes qualify their owners for access to much-needed subsidized loans. Sharp has now enlisted a strong ally closer to home: Volunteers with Blessman Medical Ministries in Polk City, Iowa, are devoting their time, resources, and services in an effort to effect positive change in a country that no longer seems so far away.

New Abōd homes in South Africa.
myabod.com
bsbdesign.com

Michelle Lord

Michelle Lord is a visual artist based in Birmingham, England. For the UK's Architecture Week 2007, she produced an ambitious architectural model based on Jorge Luis Borges's story "The Immortal," a labyrinthine world of classical domes and steps leading nowhere.

What novels, music, or films keep you thinking about art and design?
My work is based on literary environments. The short stories and novels of writers like Italo Calvino and J. G. Ballard regularly make me rethink the possibilities of fictional space.

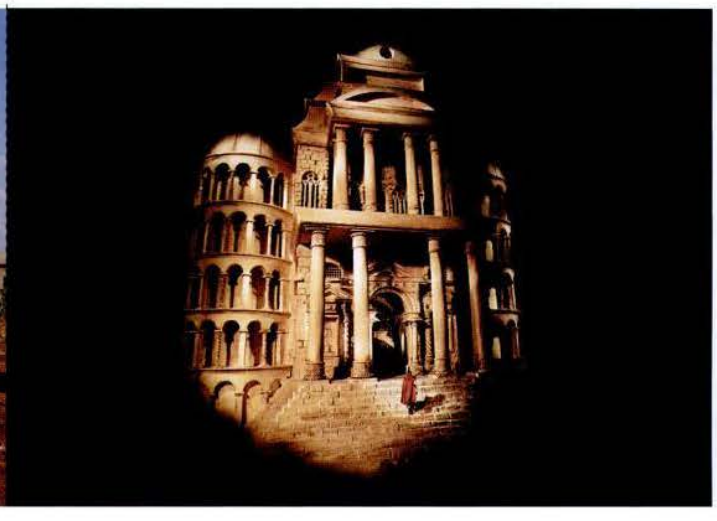
What's your dream project?
I have plans to build Calvino's *Invisible Cities* and Olaf Stapledon's *Star Maker*. Environments and architecture making a strong link to science fiction will feature quite strongly in future works.

Is there a specific object that changed how you think about art and design?
What amazes me is gadgetry designed to be dual functional. For example, a Motorola phone that's also a pair of glasses; a Japanese bra that doubles as a shopping bag; a talking toothbrush; and my personal favorite, an LCD screen belt buckle.

What three buzzwords do you never want to hear applied to your own work?
Terms that gloss over or diminish the work—like "decorative," "ornate," or (worse still) "fantasy."

Where do you see your profession in 20 years?
A key element of my work is how low-tech materials can appear to be digital. With the increase in computer-generated imagery, this notion of the artist as alchemist—spinning straw into gold—may be lost or forgotten.

Michelle Lord's model of "The Immortal," a story filled with "dead-end corridors, high unattainable windows, portentous doors which led to a cell or pit, incredible inverted stairways whose steps and balustrades hung downwards." michellelord.co.uk



Illustrations by Elisabeth Moch, Photo courtesy BSB Design (exterior)

Nice Modernist Q & A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Cards of Tomorrow

If, in the 1930s, you had bought a pack of cigarettes produced by Stephen Mitchell & Son in Glasgow, you would have found yourself holding a small collector's card illustrated with scenes from "the world of tomorrow." Printed on both sides of wallet-sized pieces of cardboard were glimpses of a world teeming with eye-popping futuristic things like "solar motors," wind turbines, and glass houses—even thought-detecting machines and a dam across the Strait of Gibraltar.

While you stood there cupping your cigarette against the rain, in your other hand you'd have held a concise and well-illustrated glimpse of future technologies. As the nicotine kicked in, you'd have read that tides will be harvested for their electrical energy, Europe will reclaim vast tracts of land from the floor of the North Sea, houses will rotate on hidden motors, and automated cranes will assemble giant high-rises using "huge sheets of synthetic material...supported on a steel framework." Other cards would have presented you with space guns, "gyrotilled" fields full of modified crops, airports built atop mid-ocean gantries, and sparkling black towers dedicated to the control of global weather.

These exuberant reimaginings of the world ahead were often eerily prescient. While wrong in many details—instead of rockets accelerating mail delivery we use email, and airports haven't (yet) become "concrete landing-fields" on the roofs of skyscrapers—their interest in tomorrow is both inspired and commendable. These cards' keenly imagined world of the future only underscores the inanity of our present nostalgia for Marlboro men and a mythological past.

MITCHELL'S CIGARETTES

SOLAR MOTOR

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

A SERIES OF 50

1

SOLAR MOTOR

Coal-mines and oil-wells will not last for ever. We shall have to gain the energy we need, not from fuel, but from the inexhaustible forces of nature. Among these is the heat of the sunshine. It could be focussed on to a central boiler by a huge circle of mirrors, mounted on a revolving turntable so that they would always face the sun. Vast volumes of steam could thus be produced with no expenditure on fuel and next to none on upkeep, the water-supply being replenished by an automatic pump as it began to run low. A similar sun-furnace, in the blazing heat of California or the Sahara, could be used to smelt metals.

STEPHEN MITCHELL & SON

ISSUED BY THE IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO. (OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND), LTD.

MITCHELL'S CIGARETTES

WIND TURBINE STATION

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

A SERIES OF 50

5

WIND TURBINE STATION

Winds high above the earth are both stronger and more constant than those nearer the ground, and in them we have a possible source of energy as yet completely untapped. The German engineer Hermann Honnef suggests the erection of a wind power station 1,500 feet high, built of a steel framework and carrying a number of gigantic wind vanes. These would be connected direct to dynamos, carrying current to the transformer stations at the foot of the tower, from which it would be transmitted over the land.

STEPHEN MITCHELL & SON

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MITCHELL'S CIGARETTES

WEATHER CONTROL

THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

A SERIES OF 50

50

WEATHER CONTROL

Though at present we cannot even foretell the weather, let alone control it, there is no need to suppose that we shall always be so helpless. The picture shows a possible method of producing rain artificially. Electrified globes at the top of great towers would attract the clouds; failing natural clouds, streams of water pumped to their top would be evaporated on electrically-heated plates to form water vapour. Discharges of powerful electric sparks, like an artificial thunderstorm, would cool the air, condense the clouds, and bring their contents to earth as rain. In the meantime, a series of automatically-controlled motor-sowers might turn up the soil and scatter the seeds.

STEPHEN MITCHELL & SON

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A multi-limbed tower harvesting wind power (above) joins forces with a rotating solar motor (top right). Resembling Eiffel Towers, gantries devoted to weather control produce an "artificial thunderstorm" (bottom right).

All 50 cards have been reproduced in Prophets of Zoom, by Alfredo Marcantonio (Merrell, $14.95). The book states its purpose as "demonstrat[ing] just how accurate, or inaccurate, the various forecasts have proved to be."

Speculation

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Minka: My Farmhouse in Japan
John Roderick
Princeton Architectural Press, $24.95
Fifty years ago, journalist John Roderick bought a small farmhouse in Japan for $14, then had the whole thing dismantled and put into storage. *Minka* tells the story of that house's reassembly, its visit by a U.S. president, and Roderick's often-amusing struggles to bridge the cultural divide.

Lionel H. Pries: Artist, Architect, Educator
Jeffrey Karl Ochsner
University of Washington Press, $60
Architect Lionel Henry Pries is remembered as much for his role as an educator as for his contributions to architectural design. His own work was a mix of West Coast modernism, American Arts and Crafts, and the International Style—with Native American painting and ornament thrown in for good measure.

Space Fighter: The Evolutionary City (Game:)
MVRDV/Delft School of Design
Actar, $35
Space Fighter suggests that tomorrow's cities will be run like video games, an organizational challenge best addressed through simulations, not the book-based planning of today's town halls. So will mayors one day fire their planners and pick up a Wii? Only time will tell.

Japan Style
Gian Carlo Calza
Phaidon, $49.95
Gian Carlo Calza explores history, religion, philosophy, and art to find the "recognizable yet elusive quality that is Japanese style." Posters, books, photos, masks, and tea cups mix with meditations on music and dance to fill the book's 300-plus pages.

Photos by Peter Belanger

April 15 (2008)
Renzo Piano speaks with critic Jonathan Glancey at the Tate Modern, London.
architecturefoundation.org.uk

April 18 (2008)
Norwegian Wood closes at the AIA San Francisco.
aiasf.org

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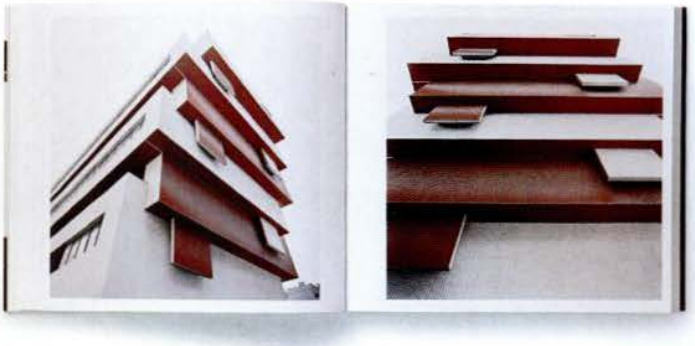
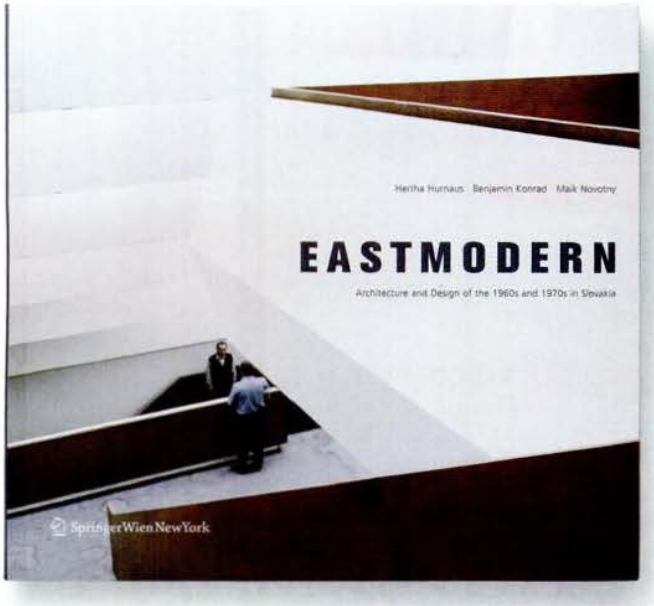
STAND | Stand up, out, and for sustainability. Look for the announcement of the winners of STAND in May 2008.

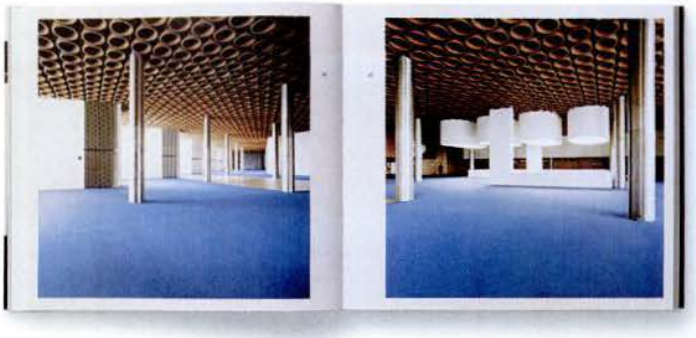
Eastmodern: Architecture and Design of the 1960s and 1970s in Slovakia
Hertha Hurnaus, Benjamin Konrad, Maik Novotny
SpringerWienNewYork, $39.95

Photographer Hertha Hurnaus accompanied architects Benjamin Konrad and Maik Novotny on a series of exploratory day trips outside their home city of Vienna to rediscover an all-but-forgotten landscape of modernist architectural classics in the neighboring nation of Slovakia. The trio began to catalog these unusual structures on a website, eastmodern.com, which they've now turned into a 238-page book. "Today the fact has been mostly forgotten," the architects write in one of the book's accompanying essays, "that during the 1920s and 1930s the young Czechoslovakian nation was one of the most innovative and progressive European countries in terms of architecture and technology." This innovative approach to space and design extended well into the 1970s. State-run planning departments produced formally adventurous, even spectacular, buildings that managed to incorporate folk-art motifs—albeit heavily abstracted and geometrized—into their designs. Slovakian architects of the day "sought to break away from functional restraints and to create spatially and artistically more complex compositions and sculptural forms that were redolent of works authored by Le Corbusier and the British brutalists." The book is more than just the last gasp of a lost age: It includes interviews with four of Eastmodernism's most enduring architects, three short essays, and more than 120 full-color photographs by Hurnaus.

eastmodern.com
hurnaus.com

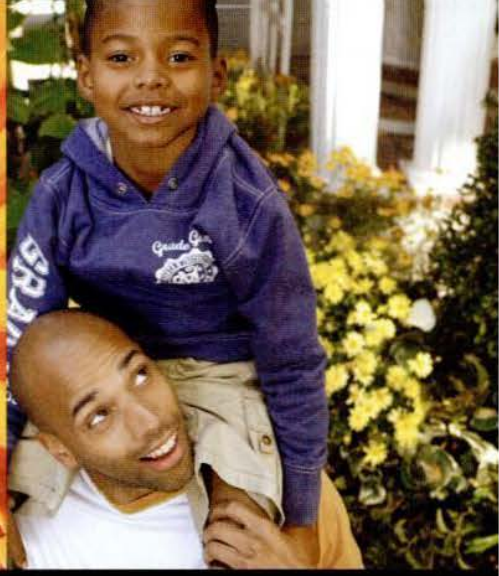






Photos by Peter Belanger

April 20 (2008)
Design proposals are due for the *White House Redux* competition.
whitehouseredux.org



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pareumbrella.com

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kikkerland.com

4. Perch, $56
by Tray 6
tray6.com

5. Stand umbrella, $60
by Hironau Tsuboi for 100%
100per.com

6. Picnic, $65
*by pare*umbrella*
pareumbrella.com

7. Petrooli, $40
by Marimekko
marimekko.com

8. Original, $55
by SENZ
senzumbrellas.com

9. Grass, $56
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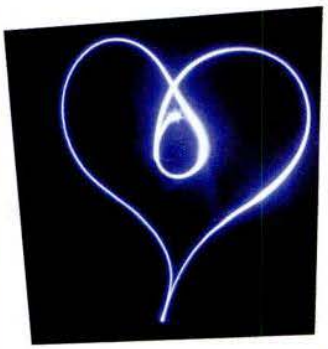

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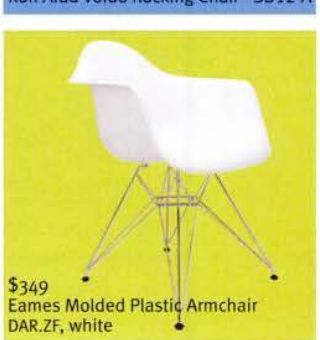

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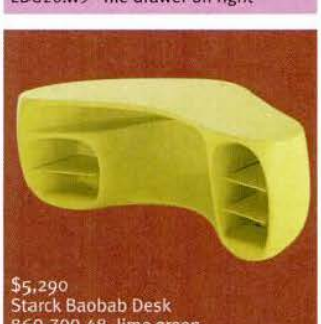

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Rio chaise longue
By Oscar Niemeyer
r20thcentury.com
While Oscar Niemeyer's architectural accomplishments are widely regarded as the touchstone of mid-century Brazilian modernism, his impeccable furniture designs are equally iconic. In conjunction with Niemeyer's recently celebrated 100th birthday, R 20th Century is offering an expertly crafted 13-piece collection of interior architecture that includes the looping wood and cane Rio chaise.

Tone chair
By Leif.designpark
leif-designpark.com
The designers and craftspeople at Japan-based Leif.designpark honor their country's rich history of traditional parquetry with their new Tone line of chairs, tables, and case goods. The natural color and grain variations of different types of wood combine to beautiful effect.

April 20 (2008)
1973: Sorry, Out of Gas closes at the Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montreal.
cca.qc.ca

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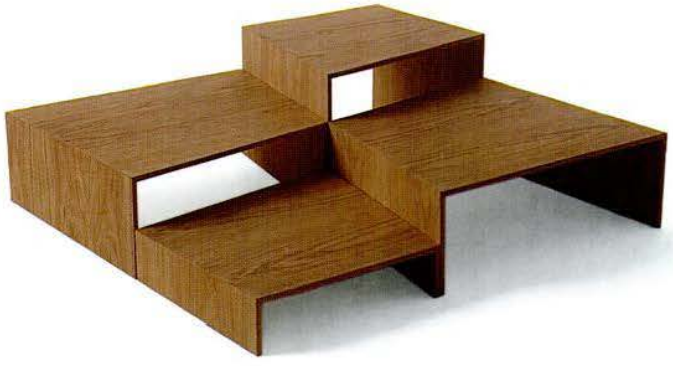
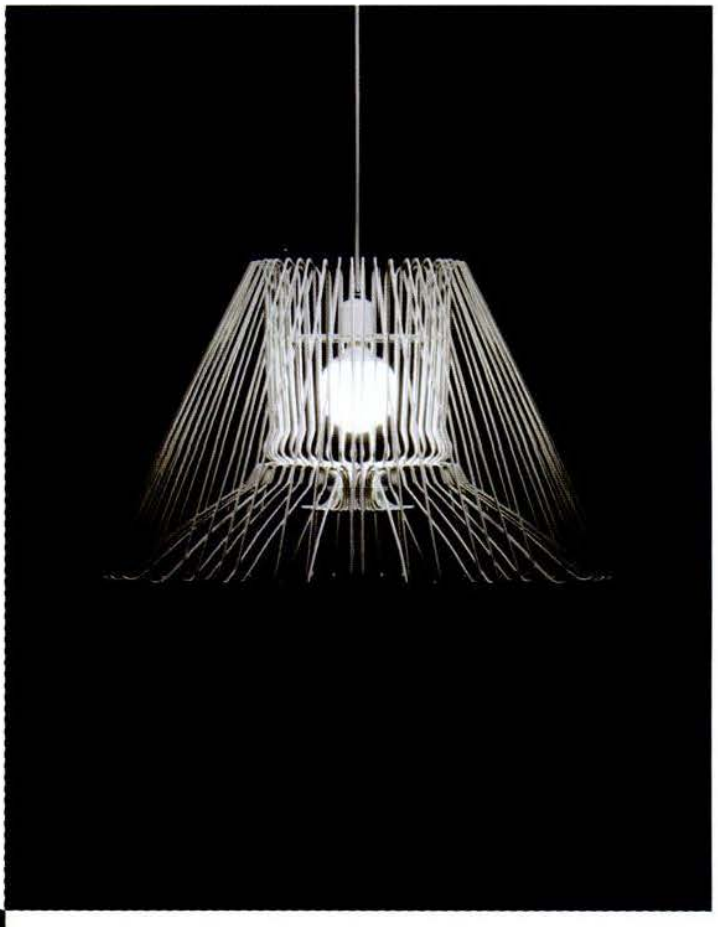
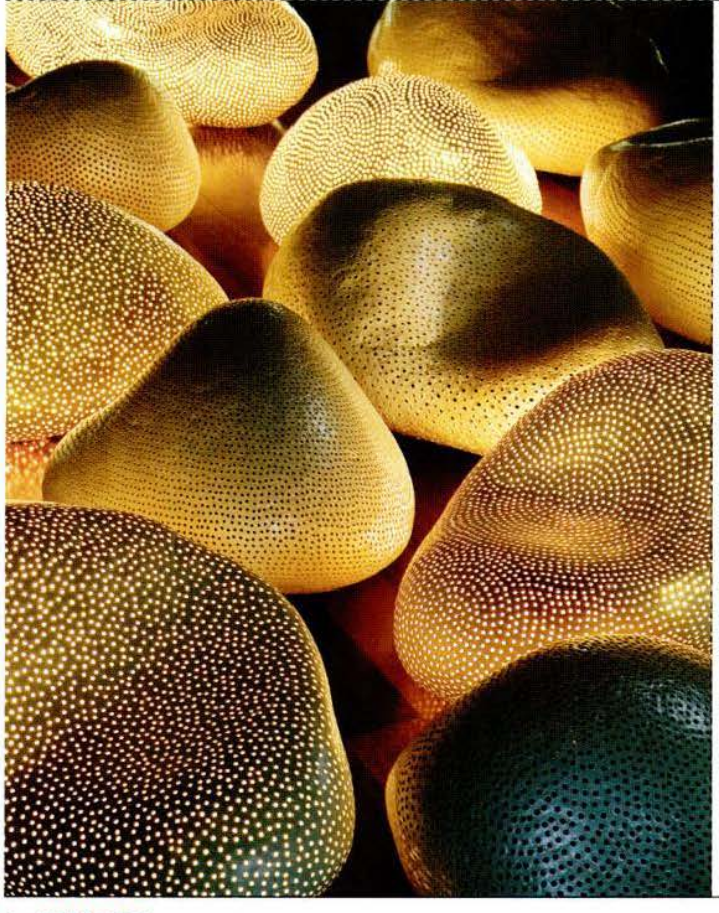


Jetty table
By Piero Lissoni for Living Divani
livingdivani.it
The mix-and-match Jetty tables (and accompanying seating) by prolific Italian designer Piero Lissoni remind us of summers spent barefoot by the shore.



48 Hanger light
By 101
welcometo101.com
The resourceful 48 Hanger light by 101 repurposes Joan Crawford's #1 enemy into a delicate wire-framed pendant that casts rhythmic patterns of shadow and light. *(right)*

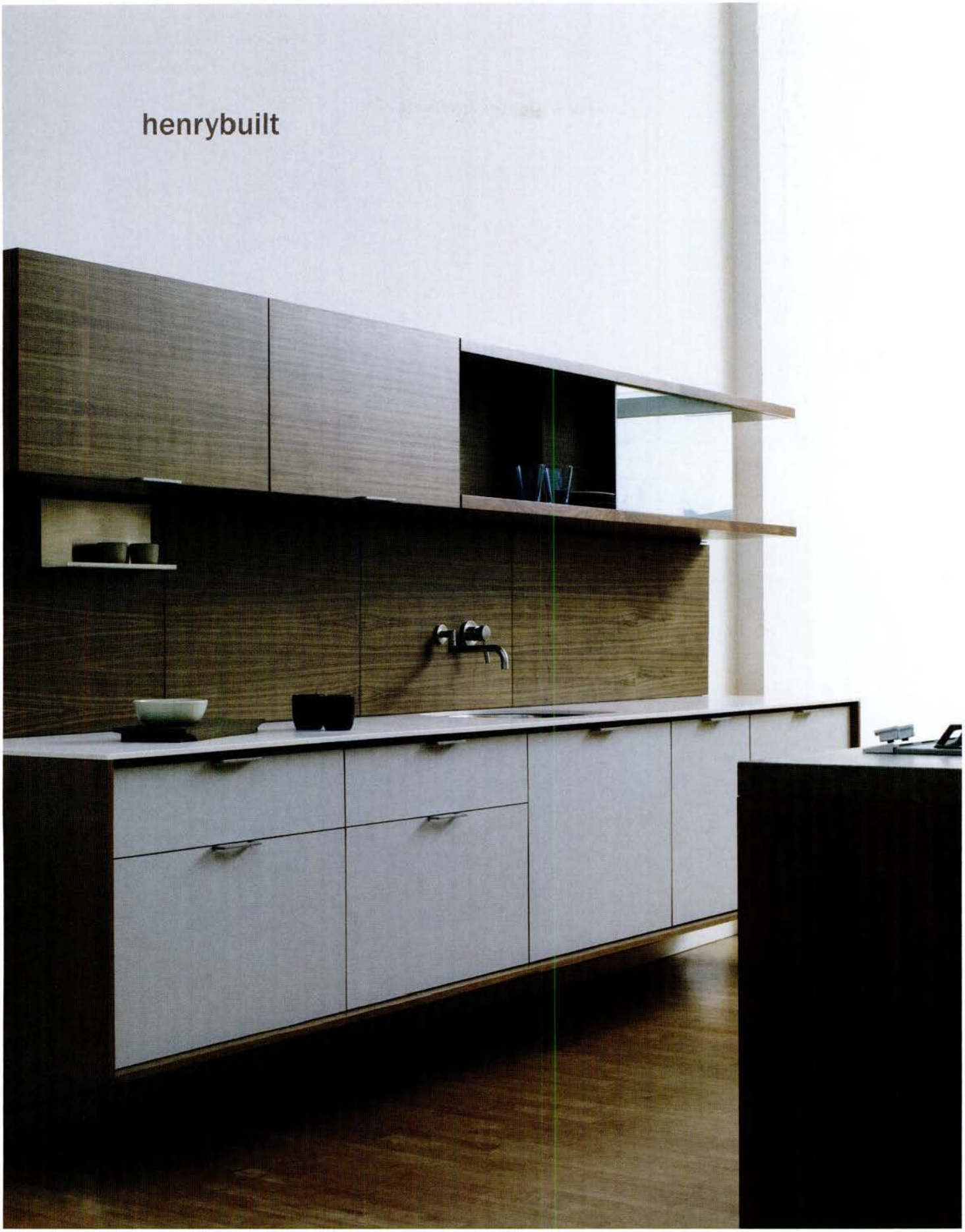


Sassi Luminosi
By Neno for Bosa
stevelawler.com/bosa
Bosa's handmade, sea urchin–like Sassi Luminosi lights glow softly with a mood-improving presence that transcends their punctured, beautifully translucent ceramic shells. *(left)*

MW cabinet
By Nauris Kalinauskas for Contraforma
contraforma.com
The MW line's top-loading-VCR aesthetic and muted choice of materials—powder-coated laser-cut steel and unfinished solid wood—result in a design that is more remix than rewind.

April 27 (2008)
Michael Riley: Sights Unseen closes at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia.
artgallery.nsw.gov.au

April 30 (1869)
Hans Poelzig, Weimar architect and later advocate of the International Style, is born.



Casa Tóló
Villa Real District, Portugal
Alvaro Leite Siza Vieira
casatolo.com

Cedar House
North Elmham, England
Hudson Architects
hudsonarchitects.co.uk

Photos by Fernando Guerra (Casa Tóló), Steve Townsend (Cedar)

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 [1]See miele.com for details.

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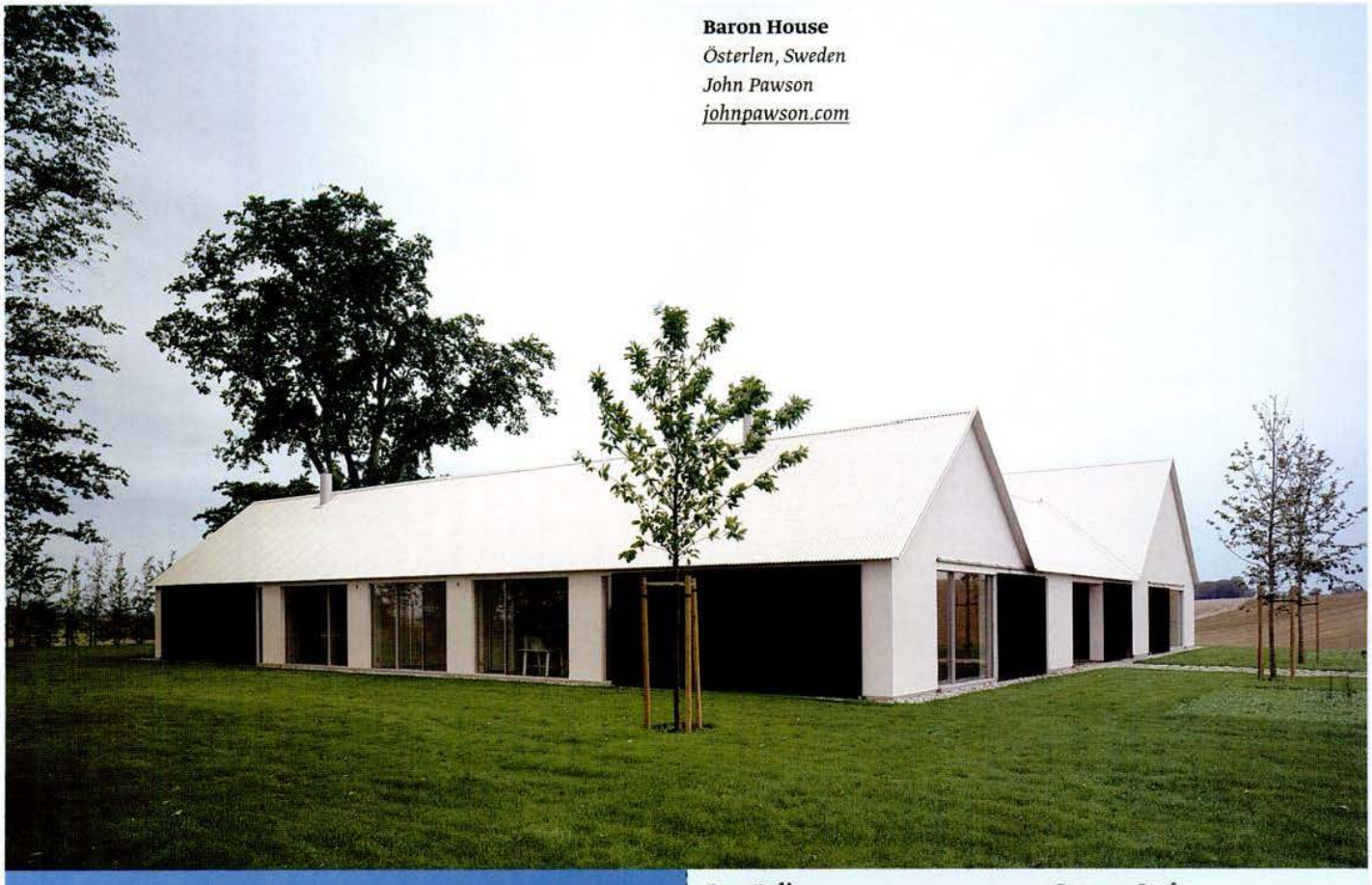
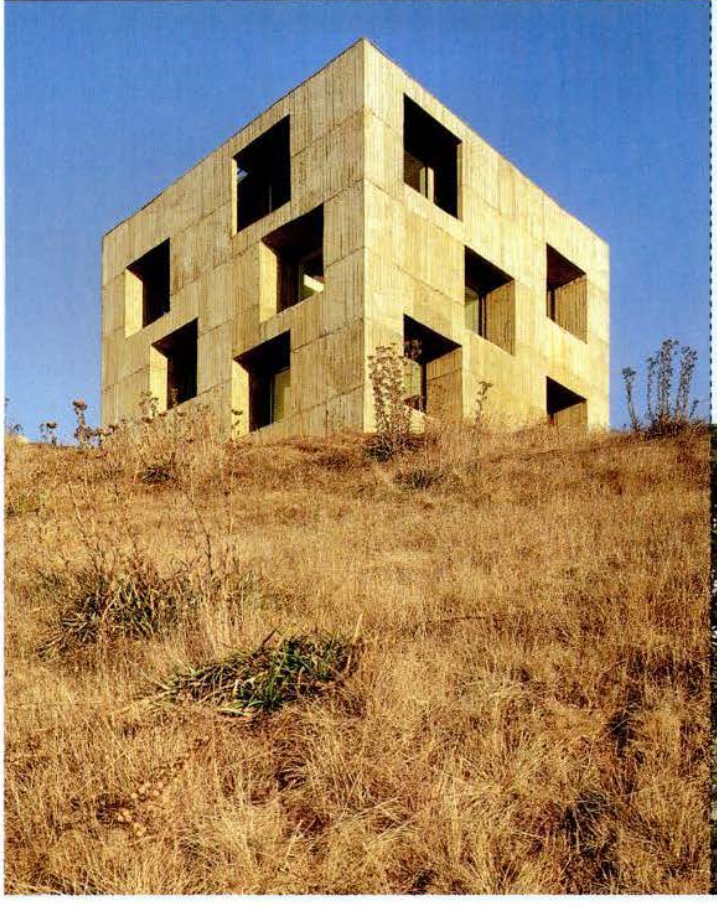


Baron House
Österlen, Sweden
John Pawson
johnpawson.com



Casa Poli
Coliuma Peninsula, Chile
Pezo von Ellrichshausen
pezo.cl

Casa no Gerês
Vieira do Minho, Portugal
Graça Correia, Roberto Ragazzi
correiaragazzi.com

Photos by Hisao Suzuki (Baron), Cristobal Palma (Casa Poli), courtesy Graça Correia Lda (Casa no Gerês)

Houses We Love

How About A Little Single-Tasking. Phones that play music. Music players that play movies. When did we start doing everything at once? And when did we multitask the joy out of driving? Like the joy of gripping the wheel and hugging turns with a tight, stiff chassis on a lowered, sport-tuned suspension[1] and 17" aluminum alloy wheels.[1] The joy of stepping on the pedal of a high-output ECOTEC™ engine with an EPA-estimated 32 mpg highway[2] and leaving whatever else we were doing in the dust. Like the joy of driving. Of doing nothing more than driving. Just something to rethink about.

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G House
Yokohama, Japan
Nagisa Kidosada, Seiji Kamayachi
ki-ka.jp

Photo by Masao Nishikawa

Houses We Love

Paramount sectional, Cube cabinet with fireplace, Cube shelf

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Taking inspiration from barns, warehouses, Case Study Houses, and Japanese residential architecture, architect Marcus Lee and his wife, Rachel Hart—an architectural model maker—created a unique timber-framed home in Hackney, London. The three-story house packs within its double-height ceiling five bedrooms, a study, a music room, and a mezzanine gallery while still leaving enough space for an open-plan ground floor and garden. Lee tells us how he created such a hardworking, flexible, and desirable family home.

Slanted and Enchanted

Story by Dominic Bradbury
Photos by Jeremy Murch
Illustrations by Keith Shore

Marcus Lee and Rachel Hart's wonderful wooden home sits at the end of a quiet London lane and politely turns its back on the workshops next door.

We built the house on a garden site that we bought at auction. It was a huge risk when we bought the piece of land back in 2000 with no planning permission and no services. Rather romantically, perhaps, the garden was next to a pickle works that is now, sadly, a paint spray shop. It was a long back garden to a handsome Georgian building, so we had to get all kinds of planning approvals.

My wife, Rachel, and I jointly bought this site, and she had an interest all along in doing a house. I have to give her enormous credit. It can be hugely stressful building a house, and it is probably easier for me because I'm in the business. It's a slow process, and you do it on a shoestring.

The whole idea of a timber frame means that you can build quickly and move into a flexible space, rather like a barn or loft, at minimum cost and then fit it out or change it as you live in it. Though the work does slow down when you move in. It's a bit of an admission for an architect, but there's no doubt that once you are in a place—no matter how good your planning—you are not fully aware of how that tree next door, for instance, might relate to the space or affect the light. When you move in you can refine things, but you risk driving your family mad in the process.

As a family we tend to gravitate to the living room and kitchen—that's the focus of family life. The children tend to do their homework and drawing on the kitchen island or the dining table and watch television downstairs.

The Corian kitchen island unit acts as a real hub. A lot of people are surprised to find a television tucked away under the worktop, which we can watch from the sofa. It doesn't dominate the room, though. The kids sit at the island for breakfast and other meals, and when people come they end up sitting there and talking while we are cooking. It works well. Then we have a more formal dining table looking out over the garden.

On the ground floor, we have a shift in floor level between the entrance area and the rest of the living area, which was completely to do with the difference in level between the street and garden. We wanted high ceilings and a double-height space in the kitchen area, which is to the side of the main living zone, with a mezzanine and an internal balcony above. The change ▸

Lee, Hart, and their children Ruby, Jodie, and Mae gravitate to the kitchen, where the Corian-coated kitchen island doubles as a desk for homework.


ph. ruy teixeira - ad. graph.x
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design Franco Poli
Tent
design Rodolfo Dordoni
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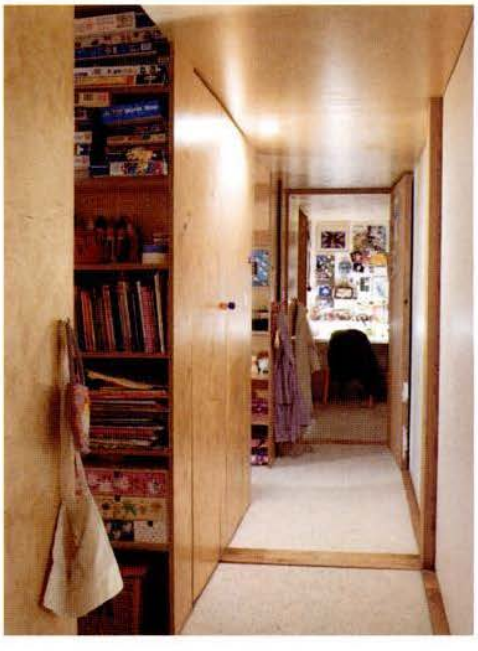

"On the whole the house has some of the feel of a barn or warehouse, but also of the Californian Case Study Houses, like the Eames House."

Marcus Lee

The second-floor family bathroom (top left) has an interior window overlooking the kitchen below. On the top floor (top right and middle right) the children have a sequence of bedrooms built into the eaves with space enough for desks and a choice of standard bed or bunk bed. Out in the garden (bottom right), Lee designed a large cupboard with a sliding door and bank of shelves. The dining area (bottom left) benefits from the abundant natural light that pours in from the garden.

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in level allowed us to get the ten-foot-high ceilings, and be able to walk down into the main living space.

Downstairs is a flexible, open plan, while upstairs is more cellular. On the second floor, we can use sliding doors to section off the guest room and a small en suite bathroom. It's a luxury in London having a spare bedroom, but when my older daughters—Katie and Lois—come to stay, it's good for them to have that sense of privacy.

We maximized every bit of space by creating a third floor up in the eaves. When we first moved in, the girls—Mae, 6, Jodie, 8, and Ruby, 10—had a big, open, attic dormitory up there with rows of beds. More recently we divided that floor up into a study and then three separate bedrooms, each with a normal bed and a bunk bed tucked in up by the ceiling, which are great for sleepovers. There's definitely a kids' zone up in the attic and an adult zone on the second floor.

On the whole the house has some of the feel of a barn or a warehouse, but also of the Californian Case Study houses, like the Eames House. Japanese domestic architecture is also something we really admire. The wood factor fits in with that, but this is not a highly detailed house—it's very simple. You do get that kind of modular sense here which you get in some Japanese houses, plus the minimalism—being able to put all the clutter into the banks of storage that we have.

In the summer you can extend the main living space by opening out into the garden. The buttress zone idea, with storage running across the side wall of the house, carries out into the garden where there is a big storage cupboard with a huge sliding door and a built-in sofa bench. It screens out the factory beyond.

Rachel takes most of the credit for the water pond. It was her idea to create this bridgelike feeling as you pass into the yard. There's that Japanese flavor again and a few fish. In the summer the garden really adds a whole new dimension to the house, becoming an outside room.

Before this house I built another timber-framed house in Highbury for the family. My father, who is a retired architect, built our house in Hertfordshire, where I was born and grew up. It's in my blood. I think I've got three houses in me, and—having finished this one—I've done two. One to go.

The main living area on the ground floor has plenty of storage, bookcases, and a Danish wood-burning stove, which pivots to throw heat and light in different directions.

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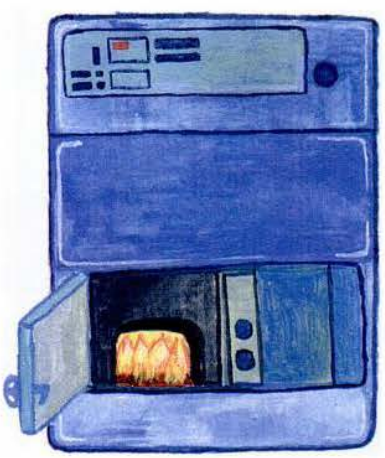
Timber Toys
The frame of the house is made of Siberian larch that was laminated in Denmark and shipped to Gordon Cowley, who runs a company called Timber Engineering Connections in Lincolnshire. Cowley then turned the timber sections into a kit with a minimum number of drawings. After creating the shape and dimensions they wanted, Cowley and the engineers—Arup, in Lee and Hart's case—took care of the sizing, bracing, and fitting it all together.

Corian Spice
The Corian worktop on the kitchen island is the room's pièce de résistance. With the black slate floor and the timber walls, the couple opted for a bright orange countertop to keep the wooden abode from feeling too much like a cabin.

Culinary Reflections
A mirrored backsplash in the kitchen intensifies the feeling of openness, a clever cheat for all of the space-deprived. "It gives the kitchen a rather barlike feel," quips Lee. The stainless steel-fronted cabinets are, like in many budget-conscious houses, from that kitchen stalwart Ikea.

Trojan House
The house's roof and walls are clad in red cedar—an unusual choice for London. Though it won't likely keep the rain out like slate or tile would, a protective membrane below will. The worst that could happen is that the timber might deteriorate and need replacing. Even still, Lee and Hart love the idea of their timber frame home wrapped in a warm wooden blanket with a hardworking membrane underneath.

Our Pellets
Doing their part for the environment, Lee and Hart chose a pellet boiler for their heating needs. "To connect us up to main gas would have cost us more than £20,000, so that forced our hand a bit," Lee explains. Using compressed pellets of sawdust or other timber waste, pellet boilers not only make good use of refuse, but stand to save homeowners some serious cash.



Make It Yours


A Director.
A Sommelier.
2 Equestrians.
So what's cooking in the kitchen?

And action! Cast: David Cornell, director/husband; Mea Argentieri, sommelier/wife; Clancey and Ella Cornell, equestrians/daughters.

Wide shot reveals cast preparing a meal in their California kitchen. Feature: double convection ovens, professional cooktop with dual-stacked burners and 42" ENERGY STAR qualified refrigerator with Express Thaw and Chill compartment.

Fade out as the doorbell announces arrival of guests. *Perfect take!*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Straw Tech

When Anders Stokholm asked his old friend Felix Jerusalem to design his family's new home in Eschenz, a northern Swiss village on the Rhine River and Untersee Lake, the client and architect agreed that they didn't want to disturb the ancient Roman artifacts buried in the property's wet soil. But they did want something both modern and green. Jerusalem's solution, the Strohhaus, beautifully merges the old with the new: The structure floats above the saturated ground on pilings—referencing building methods used in the area thousands of years ago, according to Zurich-based Jerusalem. And except for its concrete core, the entire house is made from slabs of prefabricated, formaldehyde-free compressed straw.

The Strohhaus is no earthy adobe or old-school straw bale dwelling, though. Its walls are made from panelized strawboard sandwiches. Highly dense outer layers perform the load-bearing function, with lighter-weight layers in between creating thermal insulation; midweight slabs were used for interior features.

Compressed straw is a better insulator than timber, Jerusalem notes, and no more flammable when compressed to this degree. It's also a much more renewable resource: Compared to the years it can take for a tree to mature, straw replenishes in about three or four months—the time it takes to grow a field of grain. Not much less than the time it took to construct the Strohhaus, which was completed in 2005, just in time for the Stokholms to be settled in for Christmas.

The entire structure is sheathed in inexpensive translucent-green corrugated plastic—the stuff you'd normally use to roof a small shed—making the construction and materials visible as well as contributing to the home's insulation. The unusual outer skin adds an aesthetic bonus when sunlight shines through it, casting shadows in varied patterns across the inner walls.

This transparency pleases Jerusalem, who feels that the raw, exposed design of the Strohhaus contradicts popular associations of plastic and straw with cheapness, disposability, and kitsch. "Andy Warhol took trash and made art out of it; I think this is very similar," assserts Jerusalem.

The €325,000 budget (about $475,000) was tight by Swiss standards, Jerusalem notes, and had to include the intensive research and development involved in prototyping a new design. To stay within budget, the home's interior is intentionally spare, a "noble carcass," with heating and electrical lines running through exposed pipes.

Story by Emily Gertz

Pilings float the Strohhaus above its wet site in northern Switzerland. When weather permits, the huge west-facing windows slide open, merging living room and garden.

Photo by Georg Aerni

This simplicity also fits the philosophies of both architect and client. "I think people should think about how they want to live," says the architect. "Must there always be so much luxury? Could it be simpler and more direct?"

Jerusalem saved more money by concentrating the plumbing—kitchen, bath, and toilet—in the concrete core, which extends underground just enough to create a small wine cellar accessable through trap doors.

Despite the home's modest footprint, the living room feels spacious and light, thanks to the long, bare walls, free of shelving or detailing. Cheerful white and yellow paint on alternating walls emphasizes the room's width and dramatic height, and a bulbous black fireplace punctuates the space, suspended from the high ceiling on a long stem. On the west side of the living room, three huge sliding glass doors open onto metalwork steps that lead down to the family's private garden. The color and light weight of the exterior material help soften the division between indoors and out.

The Strohhaus is set on a roughly north-south axis that maximizes the landscape. At the north end, the open living space flows into a gallery situated above the master bedroom; picture windows frame the view of Lake Untersee and the Rhine. The children's bedrooms are at the south end, on the other side of the concrete core, creating privacy at both poles of the home. The passage between the children's rooms and the bathroom also contains the family's library and kitchen storage.

While the Strohhaus has earned a lot of regional acclaim for its innovation, local reaction was mixed. "Americans think Switzerland is cows and cheese and chocolate," says Jerusalem, and some Swiss are the same, preferring traditional representational design (think Alpine ski chalet) to a deceptively simple-looking house set on pilings. But the Stockholm family is happy with the home, which has seen them snugly through three winters.

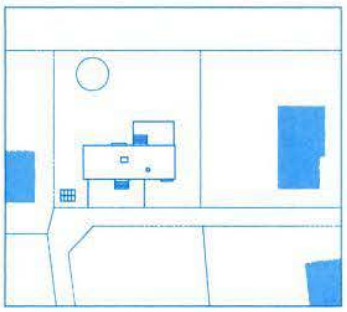
Although the German firm that made the compressed straw slabs has since gone out of business, Jerusalem hopes his prototype will advance architecture's capacity to solve energy and climate problems. "Architecture learns so slowly from technical [advancements]. We must create new concepts and new materials," he says. "It must be more than only aesthetic; it must have more substance."

The extra-long suspended fireplace emphasizes the living room's height. Minimal interior detailing resulted in a bold yet calm space—and kept costs down.

Upstairs, gallery windows frame the Rhine River. A concrete core (visible on the left) houses the kitchen, the bathroom, and a mini wine cellar below.

Photos by Georg Aerni

Everything that goes into food
goes into you.



Strohhaus site plan

Floor plan

A Bedroom
B Kitchen
C Bathroom
D Entrance
E Living Room
F Master Bedroom

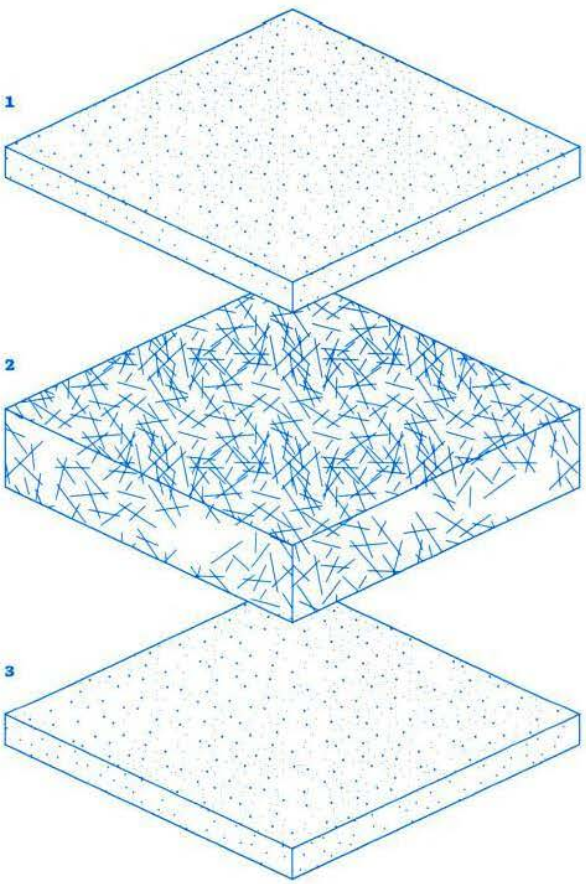
Straw Houses: Facts and Figures

Environment: About 200 million tons of straw go to waste in the U.S. every year. If all the wasted straw were burned, it would add up to nearly 6 percent of the total CO_2 emitted annually by passenger cars. Building with straw contributes to smog reduction.

Fire: A plastered straw bale wall is about three times as fire resistant as a typical timber-frame-and-drywall construction, because the straw is packed so tightly that there is not enough air for combustion. A study from the National Research Council of Canada demonstrated that plastered straw bales withstood temperatures of about 1,850 degrees F for two hours before any cracks developed.

History: Nebraska is considered the birthplace of straw bale construction in the U.S. The arrival of horse-powered balers in Nebraska in the 1880s made straw a popular building material. The earliest straw bale structure in North America was likely built in Bayard, Nebraska, in 1896.

Pests: Straw has no nutritional value, being low in organic matter and high in silica content, and because the straw is so densely packed, it's not too appealing to pests and insects.



1 & 3 Sandwich Layers
Highly compressed straw, 40 mm thick, performs much of the load-bearing function. Interior walls use two slabs of this material with no middle insulating layer.

2 The Hearty Filling
The inner core is a lighter-weight insulating layer of compressed straw (300 kg/m³ in density, compared to 600 kg/m³ for the outer layers), from 170 to 200 mm in width. All the layers are glued with a formaldehyde-free material called Isocyanat.

Straw Houses Through the Ages

Traditional Fijian hut
Straw, mud, and grass compose this island abode.

1903 Burke House, Nebraska
The oldest-known extant straw bale home in the U.S.

2006 Modern Straw House
An update on traditional straw bale construction.

Photos by Graham Boulding (Fiji), David Eisenberg (Burke), Laura Lee Intscher (Modern)

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As likely to host the sending of emails as the serving of entrees, today's dining table needs to be set for anything.

In the refectory of the Convent of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, there exists a dining table of singular historical significance. Nearly 25 feet in length, with wood trestle legs half obscured by a crisp white tablecloth, its utilitarian design would not look out of place in a family-style Italian restaurant. However, due largely to the fact that the table's occupants happen to be Jesus and 12 highly animated disciples, its finer points are easily overlooked.

In Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, the expansive table is intended as a framing device for the drama being acted out around it. Yet, more than 500 years after Leonardo tagged that somber dining-hall wall with his masterpiece, its 15th-century furnishings remain familiar: Most of us can recall meals shared around a similar table, in a staid room reserved solely for important repasts and repartee.

But, much like the coffee table before it, the dining table appellation is sounding increasingly dated. Open-plan live/work spaces, on-the-go lifestyles, and even the re-emergence of poker night from its banishment to the basement have altered this formerly formal piece of furniture's use. With this in mind, we asked multidisciplinary designer Rich Hansen to dish on which of these five tables he deems suitable for more than just supper.

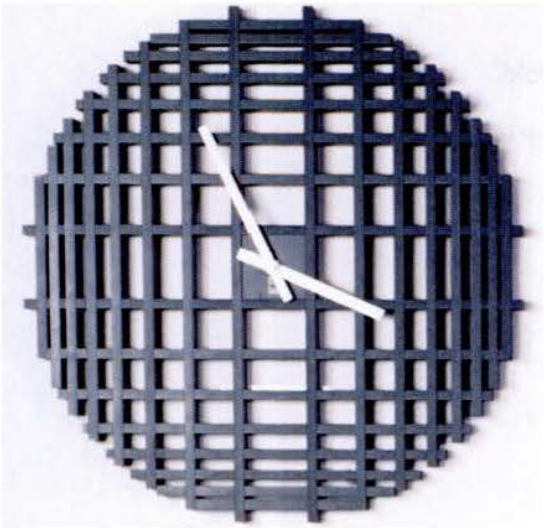
Xpand table
By Franz Riener for Xpand Möbelhandels / $2,350–$3,880 / Seven wood options or bamboo / 55–73"x37"x30"; 63–81"x37"x30"; 71–89"x38"x40" / xpand-furniture.com

Expert Opinion: I really like the simple form of this table—it would go well with almost any interior approach. What's fantastic is that you have this thing that's a perfect little size for a desk area or something, and then you can go, "Honey, let's invite some people over," and it easily expands to seat ten. Huge improvement over "Get the 14 leaves out—we have three more people coming!" The way it expands is really well done, but the grate-like openings mean that you'll have to be pretty diligent about cleaning it. Messier kids are gonna need to sit at the ends, no question.

What We Think: The accordion-like conceit of this table is more than just structurally inventive, it's engaging on a tactile level as well. The straightforward lines and wide range of natural material options make Xpand a versatile choice, both functionally and aesthetically.

Special thanks to Propeller for providing a location to shoot the portrait.

Story by Michael Grozik
Portrait by Todd Hido



A Note on Our Expert

Rich Hansen honed his diverse design chops over the course of 25 years spent feeding an insatiable appetite for all things aesthetic. He began as a graphic designer for clients such as *XLR8R* magazine, Nice Collective, and Pablo Designs. Hansen also boasts furniture, interior, exterior, and exhibition design work in his portfolio, with a number of San Francisco-area restaurant projects under his belt, and a bar on tap. He recently collaborated with Apple accessories maker Incase on their office and identity redesign, and is currently focused on a condo conversion in Scottsdale, Arizona, notable for its reuse of materials and off-the-grid approach to climate control.

Bigwire table
By Arik Levy for Zanotta / $3,000–$3,400 / Plate-glass top, steel tube base / Top in brown, red, or white; base in graphite, red, or white; / 51" or 57" diameter x 29"; 49"x69" oval x 29" / zanotta.it

Expert Opinion: This one hits a bunch of retro design buttons, and creates a very specific look that's quite contemporary and versatile. It references [Warren] Platner—who I actually think made a more elegant table—and the internal shape of the base suggests [Eero] Saarinen's Tulip table. But it doesn't look like the smaller size would have much legroom. For me, tables need to have a lot of space to stretch out—I'm likely to kick it every time I sit down.

What We Think: If you're looking for a mid-century-friendly table with a fresh yet familiar personality, this would be a good fit. Bigwire's egg-beater-like base might be better suited for the dinette than the dining room, and we agree that post-omelet slouching could be somewhat problematic for longer-limbed sitters.

Strut table
By Blu Dot / $1,099–$1,299 / Polyurethane painted MDF top, powder-coated steel frame base / Assorted colors / 75"x35"x29"; 90"x35"x29" / bludot.com

Expert Opinion: The graphic designer in me really likes the logic of its clean lines and proportions. But that cross piece and base...I understand why they needed to do it that way—for stability—but I'm not sure how you can avoid hitting your shin or scuffing the paint, especially on the ends. I don't want to be reminded of the design once I've sat down—I want to engage with my work or the other people at the table, and not continually worry about where I put my arms and legs. It's like the uneasy feeling I get when sitting with my back to the door.

What We Think: The strict geometry of this table favorably evokes both farm tables and scaffolding, but may not be the most functional choice for those who enjoy hosting large dinner parties. If used primarily as a worktable, however, its admittedly restrictive base could provide a welcome sense of order.

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Hollow dining table
By Brave Space Design / $2,400 / Bamboo / 77" x 36" x 30"; 36" x 36" x 30" / bravespacedesign.com

HOLLOW & TAKE

Expert Opinion: I like this table's general shape, especially the side view. I also like the functionality of the hollow construction, though it would be interesting to see that opening carried all the way around. I don't find the aesthetic created by the mixing of bamboo colors as appealing as the use of bamboo itself, which is something of a problem. For many people, unfortunately, style and design will trump sustainability every time.

What We Think: Why do so few furniture designers seem to understand that style and sustainability needn't be mutually exclusive? We only found a handful of appealing sustainably made tables, and the Hollow was one of the best. To us, the open ends appear custom made for clutter cleanup—napkins, placemats, mail, books, laptops—which makes it a great choice for storage-strapped residents of small spaces.

Take a table
By Alfredo Häberli for Moroso / Price TBD / Honeycomb aluminum top with natural-stained oak veneer, powder-coated steel tube base / 79" x 57" x 30"; 98" x 37" x 29.5" / moroso.it

Expert Opinion: I think it's really interesting, though in the end, I'm just not sold. The top is truly beautiful: Its classic diamond shape facilitates conversation, and the tapered edge is a nice touch. But I have issues with the base. The tubular metal legs and rubber footpads initially reminded me of some mid-century designs. Ultimately, though, they seem to have more of a highway-rest-stop, National Park Service kind of aesthetic—and not in a good way. I wish it was resolved a little more elegantly in relation to the top, and didn't look like such a shin-banger.

What We Think: The edgy attitude exhibited by the angular top is refreshing in a field dominated by circles and rectangles. We like the resolutely retro quality of the base, though it could hinder seating-arrangement flexibility. It would likely integrate well with a mid-century-modern aesthetic, especially if tasked with live/work double duty.

A Good Days' Work

In 1942, auto factories had tanks on the assembly lines and nylon was solving the silk scarcity. Designers faced the challenge of balancing wartime demands with the potential of industrial innovation. One young couple rose to the test, on their way to becoming the most celebrated pair in British modern design.

Photos courtesy Hille (chair), Whitworth Art Gallery (textile)

Story by Sarah Rich

In the early 1950s Lucienne Day shook the textile industry, inciting a host of copycats and transforming popular taste. Spectators (above) typifies her lively, original style.

Robin Day's 1963 polypropylene chair (below) is one of his best-selling designs. Still in production today, the low-cost, multifunctional seat is truly timeless.

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Some precocious designers make a big splash early on and spend the rest of their careers hovering inside the far-reaching ripples. Robin and Lucienne Day, on the other hand, have spent 70 years designing according to the shifting tides of taste and circumstance, never content to coast on their achievements. Outlasting mid-century-modernist credentials, they continue to pioneer new concepts for furniture, textiles, and interiors into their 90s.

The Days are living legends in the UK, often referred to as the British Eameses for their celebrity, influence, and extraordinary contributions to modern design. In contrast to the Eameses, however, the Days' partnership has formed the foundation of two independent careers, both of which yielded designs that transformed industries and remain as recognizable today as they did 60 years ago.

Robin Day and Lucienne Conradi met at the Royal College of Art in 1940, and their styles jelled immediately—Robin's furniture providing a well-suited frame for Lucienne's textiles. "We have had remarkably similar—identical—tastes in all things right from the moment we met," Robin remarks. Collaboration soon led to courtship, and in 1942 they were married.

Their first years together were spent enduring World War II and the devastation of London during the Blitz. In the war's aftermath, people needed a sign that the UK could rise from the ashes, and accordingly, in 1951, the Festival of Britain was held to initiate a cultural rebirth. England's most talented young designers—the Days among them—were called upon to construct the festival facilities. Robin created furniture for the venue, from stacking orchestra chairs to fold-down box seats to outdoor furniture for the terrace, and both he and Lucienne exhibited domestic designs in the Homes and Gardens Pavilion that generated great excitement among festival visitors.

Robin's spare, compact home furnishing systems and Lucienne's bright, large-scale textiles illuminated new possibilities for home interiors even within the financial and spatial constraints imposed by the postwar economy. The Days' work revitalized Britain's relationship to design and kicked both of their careers into high gear.

For Robin, the festival activated the potential he'd revealed in 1948 when he and his collaborator, Clive Latimer, won the storage section of the New York Museum of Modern Art's International Competition for Low-Cost Furniture. His space-efficient home storage units exhibited a progressive approach to devising design solutions. ▶

Q Rod chair (1953)
The molded Q Rod chair for Hille consisted of just seven parts—far simpler and less material-heavy than the popular Hillestak.

For the Royal Festival Hall, Robin designed the seating for both audience and orchestra (above left). These orchestra chairs became a best-seller for Hille.

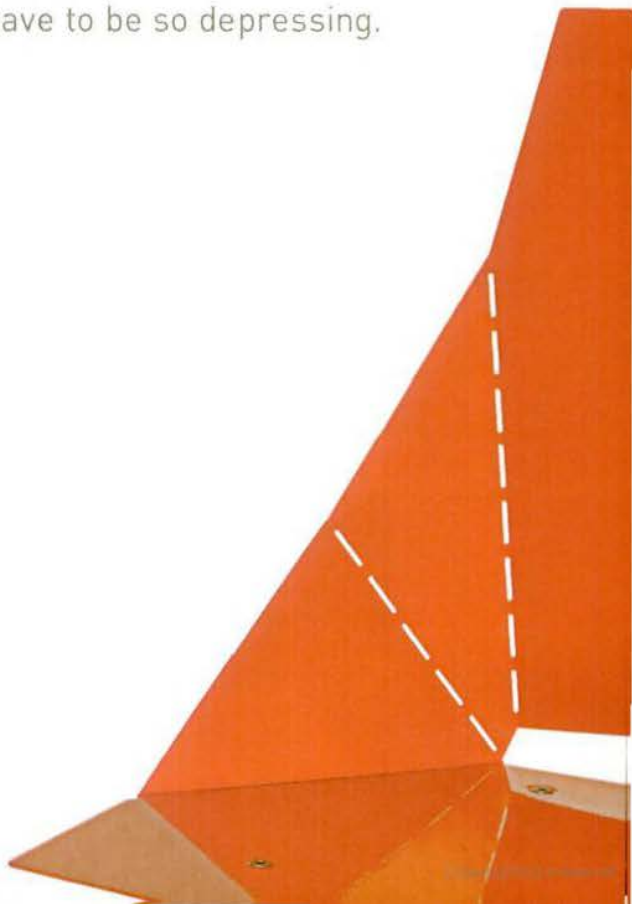
A version of Robin's storage unit (top right), which won the MOMA's Low-Cost Furniture Competition award. Robin's Royal Festival Hall lounge chair (bottom right). ⓘ p. 206

Photos courtesy Robin and Lucienne Day Archive (interior, desk), Octopus Publishing Group (chair), V & A Images/Victoria and Albert Museum (Q Rod chair)

bludot.com

BLU DOT

Group therapy doesn't have to be so depressing.



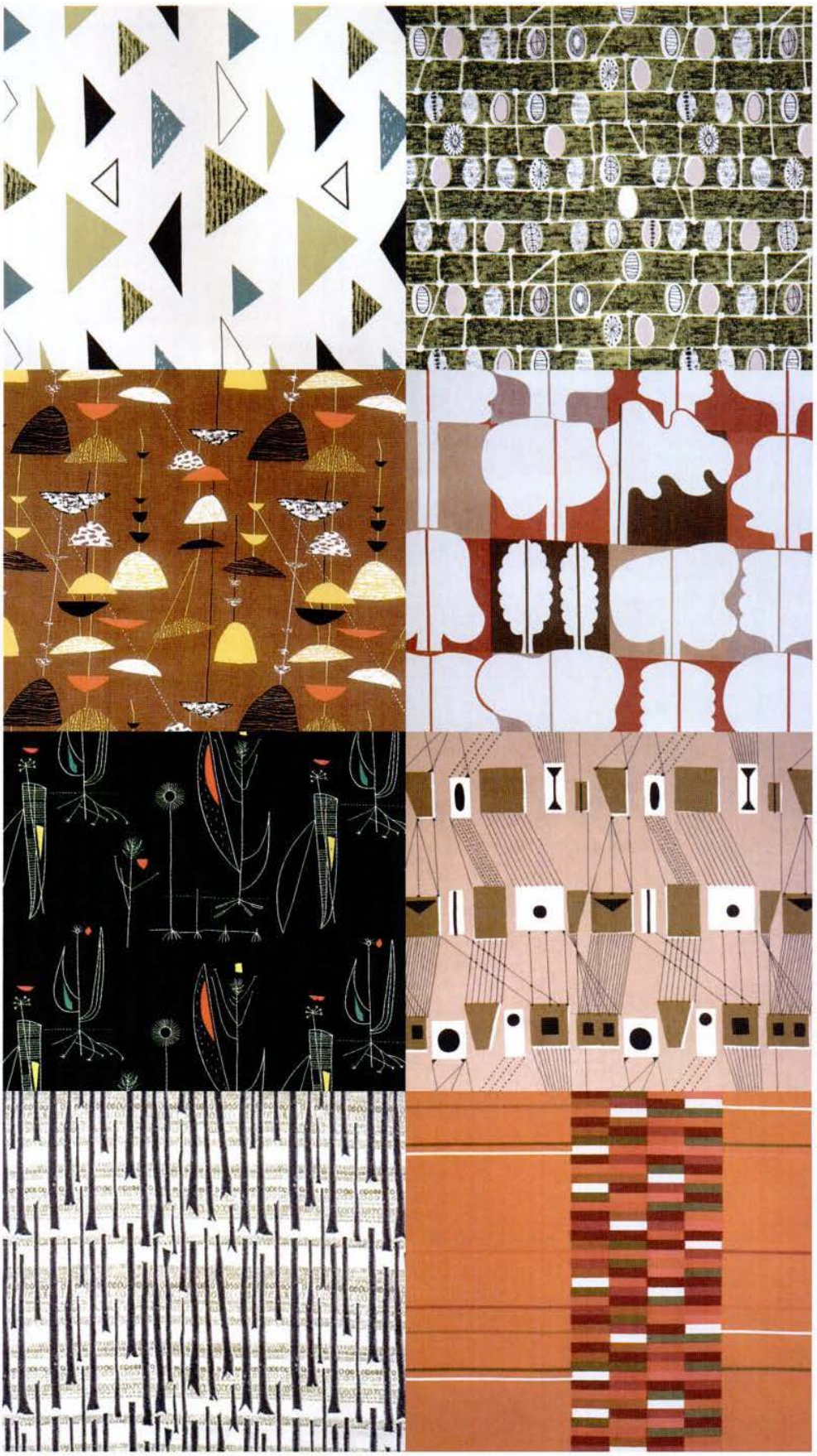
Fabricated from a single sheet of plywood set in a tubular aluminum frame, the molded-plywood cabinets were exceptionally lightweight and strong, and required little material or assembly. Functionally, they accommodated confined living quarters and scarce resources, but aesthetically, they owed nothing to the restrictive circumstances of the 1940s.

Similarly, Lucienne's approach to textile design was driven as much by context as by visual impact. While Robin factored in noise, traffic, comfort, and durability, Lucienne envisioned rooms in a simple, colorless state, then metered the size and use of space in order to devise an appropriate pattern. When custom design moved toward mass production, however, the patterns just as often stood on their own.

At the Festival of Britain, Lucienne debuted what would become her most widely recognized and emulated pattern. The geometric and abstractly floral cup-shaped design known as Calyx sent waves throughout the textile industry, immediately shifting pattern composition towards nonrepresentational, large-scale, and freeform shapes, fine lines, and daring use of color.

The Days' success at the festival attracted the attention of several mainstays of British manufacturing, as well as an inevitable succession of imitators. In 1952, Calyx was presented with the American Institute of Decorators' highest honor, and before Lucienne had returned from accepting the award, her pattern was already being copied. "Initially when I saw other designers following my lead, I was annoyed," Lucienne explains. "But I quickly came to realize that I was forming and leading a legitimate style."

Her originality became the driving force behind Heals Fabrics, which produced Calyx for the festival. The wildly positive public reception led Heals to establish a relationship with Lucienne that endured for decades and yielded a parade of distinctive and popular patterns. An association with Rosenthal, the German ceramics manufacturer for whom she produced tableware in a distinct, delicate style translated from her textile work, led to further success.



Photos courtesy V & A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum (Isosceles, Strata, Rig, Forest, Calyx), Whitworth Art Gallery (Parkland, Causeway, Herb Antony), Hille (chair)

Polypropylene armchair (1967)
Injection-molded polypropylene was cost-effective and low-waste, making it ideal for commercial applications.

Over the course of her career, Lucienne's evolving style consistently influenced pattern trends across North America and Europe. The selection above illustrates the breadth of her work. Clockwise from top left: Isosceles, 1955; Strata, 1952; Parkland, 1974; Rig, 1952; Causeway, 1967; Forest, 1959; Herb Antony, 1956; Calyx, 1951.

Robin maintained an equally strong and long-lived partnership with Hille Seating, which manufactured many of his most iconic designs. The stacking plywood Hillestak, one of Robin's first mass-manufactured designs, with its simple lines and lightweight construction, became nearly as recognizable as the Eames molded-plywood chair. In the '70s, Hille produced Robin's polypropylene Series E—the unmistakable brightly colored plastic chair now ubiquitous in grade-school classrooms on both sides of the pond.

Robin's work became progressively more utilitarian through the end of the century. His belief in design as a service led him toward public projects, from transit stations to medical waiting rooms. Meanwhile, Lucienne gravitated toward fine art with hanging silk mosaics displayed in commercial spaces and museums.

The Days' continuous evolution is a testament to their uncompromising professional independence. Even as fledgling designers they exhibited a hard-headed business sense and never hesitated to assert its terms. Both refused to become employees of any manufacturer, working only as consultants to ensure they'd be respected and treated as colleagues.

Their insistence on creative autonomy presaged the attitude common among today's young designers that freedom is fundamental to success. The Days were ahead of their time not only in business but also in their philosophies of production and the role of design in the world. Today's environmentally conscious designers mimic mid-century restraint—albeit motivated by different circumstances—in their efforts to be simultaneously innovative and moderate; and while Robin wouldn't likely characterize his work as "sustainable design," he has always held a fundamental conviction that good design wastes nothing and lasts for generations.

"Products should be designed to endure and be cherished," Robin affirms. "I am against haute couture design and much contemporary work which is capricious, frivolous, flippant, superficial, and egotistical. Facile novelty of appearance leads to early obsolescence."

Even as they approach their centennials, Robin and Lucienne are hardly out of date. They continue to turn out new work, produced in partnership with emerging studios like London-based twentytwentyone, and each piece is a testament to the longevity of their vision and the creative buoyancy that's kept them afloat through decades of cultural and technological change.

Childsply chair (1999)
Made from a single sheet of birch plywood, this chair was auctioned off for charity by London gallery twentytwentyone.

In the late '50s, Robin designed a series of televisions (left) which set the stage for home electronics that could integrate gracefully with a modern interior aesthetic.

The Hillestak (right), a low-cost molded-plywood stacking chair (with echoes of the Eameses' DCW), was one of Robin's early successes with manufacturer Hille. p. 206

Photos courtesy V & A Images / Victoria and Albert Museum (TV), Robin and Lucienne Day Archive (stacked chairs), twentytwentyone (chair)

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10 things you should know about Robin and Lucienne Day

1. Robin is an accomplished mountaineer and rock climber—he made the first traverse on skis from Arctic Lapland to the south of Norway, and is said to be the oldest person to climb Mount Kenya to the summit, when he was 76.

2. When Robin first began working with Hille, he asked to be paid on a royalty-only basis, correlating his compensation directly with the quality and success of his work.

3. Ceramics were Lucienne's least favorite medium to work with. "I was never very happy with my results."

4. Converse sells its classic Jack Purcell sneaker in a number of Lucienne's patterns, including Calyx and Trio.

5. In their own home, Lucienne liked to have a mental break from her work. The pattern maven used almost entirely solid colors for their interiors.

6. If you've ever been in the London Underground, chances are you've sat on a steel bench—the Toro—designed by Robin.

7. Lucienne and Robin could be called the "Posh and Becks" of the 20th century. The press considered the Days to be important taste makers, and scrutinized their lifestyle in detail.

8. Lucienne has a deep knowledge of botany, which is reflected in many of her abstracted plantlike patterns.

9. Lucienne's linen tea towels won a gold medal at the 1960 California State Fair.

10. One of Robin and Lucienne's collaborations involved designing aircraft interiors for British Overseas Airways Corp., which even included the dining trays and utensils.

Photo by Trevor Fry (portrait), Courtesy Hille (bench, plastic chair), Royal Air Force Museum (poster)

Robin and Lucienne in 1979 (top). Robin's Toro seating, an all-steel bench found throughout the London Underground (middle). After World War II, Robin used his innate talent for drawing and graphics to create recruitment posters for the Royal Air Force (below left). The hard-wearing Series E chair, first released in 1971 (below right).

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"You can take the principles of what something stands for and use them in a completely new way. Otherwise you're just a retrospective company."

Tom Dixon

Photos by Hainsley Brown (portrait), Matti Pyykkö (Bambu chair), Marco Melander (2nd cycle)

Story by Amber Bravo

A Children's chair N65 (top left) and Stool 60s (bottom) from Artek's 2nd Cycle series, which is embedded with coded RFID tags. The tags contain a link to records of the furniture's history and origin. The stackable Bambu chair (above), designed by Henrik Tjaerby (2006), is part of Artek's new Bambu series. **p. 206**

In 1935, Alvar and Aino Aalto, Maire Gullichsen, and Nils-Gustav Hahl founded the Finnish furniture manufacturer Artek (Art and Technology) to produce furniture, textiles, and lamps that upheld the main tenets of the International Style. Initially established to produce furnishings for Alvar's architectural endeavors, Artek's innovation in bent plywood became increasingly popular with the public both in Finland and abroad. For more than 70 years, the company has continued producing the same stock of quality products.

Tom Dixon—the designer who claims to have fallen in love with welding because "it had none of the seriousness of craft and none of the pomposity of design; it was industry"—seems at once the least likely and most apt choice to lead Artek into the 21st century. Dixon became Artek's creative director through a partnership he and David Begg (who founded the Tom Dixon company) entered into with the private investment firm Proventus in 2004 to form Design Research, which owns and manages both the Tom Dixon and Artek brands. As he explained to Dwell in a recent interview, Dixon has set out to renew Artek's commitment to innovation while exercising a healthy dose of reverence for its tradition, in terms of both sustainability and design.

What was your initial approach in inheriting a company with as rich a heritage as Artek?

When I first started working at Artek, I was consciously thinking about the positioning of the company. What I saw in Artek in the 1930s was the story of someone really innovating in wood and natural materials and adapting them to a kind of modernist theory, which had previously only been done in man-made materials. Alvar Aalto was looking to humanize this. The story is one of application of design and industrial process to a natural material and to an industry which, in the main, was very old-fashioned and craft-based. There are lots of layers of cultural heritage and parallels with architecture as well, given that Alvar Aalto was an architect and his secondary career was a furniture designer; I think that's a unique proposition.

With a company like Artek, for which birch plywood is so much a part of its aesthetic identity, something as simple as a material change is fairly radical. What was the impetus for this change?

[I knew] it was going to be difficult to do anything more in plywood because in the intervening 50 years not much new had really been developed at Artek. The Americans, the Danes, and the Italians had all been making huge steps forward in bent ply; this innovation was no longer cutting-edge. If Alvar Aalto had really invented new ways of making furniture in bent ply, it had been very much superseded by the Eameses in the '40s and '50s. And even currently, there are companies like Gubi, for instance, that are using three-dimensional plywood to great effect as well. I felt like we'd lost the leading position, and we were somewhere like 50, 60 years out of date, and I had to find something new to bend rather than just a bit more plywood. Bamboo kept on cropping up as the outstanding contender.

As a design material, how do you find bamboo to work with?

It has a series of really interesting engineering properties in terms of strength and flexibility, and in the way that it grows so fast. So all we've done really is to spend three or four years understanding the material to try to make it into an industrial material rather than a craft material, which is pretty much what Alvar Aalto did with birch in Finland in 1925.

Do you feel that this material shift in any way maligns Artek's deep-seated tradition?

There is no other [furniture] company that has survived from that era in its original form. The furniture [Aalto designed for] Paimio Sanatorium is still made by the same factory, with wood from the same forest, and sometimes actually on the same machine [that] ▸

From left to right: A dining chair from Tom Dixon's Wire series, which includes a coat rack and stand; a portrait of Alvar Aalto in the 1930s; a stack of painted and worn Stool 60s, perhaps one of the most popular pieces from Artek's archive, given new life in the 2nd Cycle series. ⓘ p. 206

Photos by Marco Melander (2nd cycle), Lehtikuva Oy (portrait)

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"I'm no eco-campaigner, but I think we've all got a responsibility to start investigating alternatives. What's clear is that, in terms of what's available for natural resources, we are running out."

produced it in 1929]. So we're very careful not to undermine or destroy this tradition. But the new products don't have to be made in Finland and don't have to be made out of birch and don't have to be modernist classics. I think it's very important for a company that was as forward-thinking as Artek to regain some of that degree of innovation and newness. It was very important to me not to undermine the history, but also not to try to do new versions of what we're already doing. You can take the principles of what something stands for and use them in a completely new way. Otherwise you're just a retrospective company.

You are self-taught and began your design career as a welder. How do you find working with wood?

Well, I always found wood a tough material because you have to plan with it properly, unlike metal, which I can cut up and reweld in a different way. If I make a cut in a piece of wood, then that's it. It doesn't necessarily suit my impatient nature. But I've typically gone down a completely different route with natural materials, which is to look at the raw material first, like bamboo, and also other materials that we're investigating, like recycled paper pulp, which I initially looked at as a furniture material, and which we eventually used for the Shigeru Ban–designed pavilion [at the Milan Furniture Fair 2007].

Many of your more recent projects seem to stress the importance of sustainability. Is this a primary concern of yours?

You know, I'm no eco-campaigner, but I think we've all got a responsibility to start investigating alternatives. It doesn't matter if you believe in global warming or not. What's clear is that, in terms of what's available for natural resources, we are running out. I think designers, particularly, should be in the avant-garde in considering their position on those issues. So anything that allows us to reduce the use of raw materials, anything that allows longevity in objects, is really legitimate in my view. Previous to being involved in Artek, I didn't have a natural place to talk about these subjects, but now I can actually take an active role in trying to promote some of the things that I think are better practice. The 2nd Cycle series, for example, promotes the idea of not producing anything new at all.

And people seem to be responding to this concept?

I've been encouraged by the overwhelming interest in something as normal and as everyday as representing things that have got a bit of a past, a bit of age and heritage—that they are more worthwhile and more valuable.

Multiple platforms are run under the umbrella of Design Research. Do you identify most closely with the Tom Dixon label?

[*Laughs.*] Well, obviously I have trouble separating myself from myself. It's taken quite a while for me to make that distinction, and I feel I'm in a position which is interesting from a creative point of view because it presents interesting possibilities for manipulating myself into a sort of fanciful character. You can pretend to be something completely different. And also, there's the other side, which is to have the opportunity to do things which aren't in your own personal voice, which is what you do if you are a film director or a novelist.

Do you like that role?

Yeah, very much. It's not the same as doing your own designs, but it's just as rewarding, if not more so, because you have more infrastructure and you're dealing with the whole lot: the packaging, the information, the marketing, the object, and the sourcing and the rest of it. I'm much more comfortable in that role than [as] just a pure designer of objects for other people. You know, if you're a designer, you end up as a servant to others where you have very little control over your output. It's a bit like journalists, eh? You know, where an editor or an advertiser might trouble you to change something that you've written, you might be reduced, you might have to wait months to see what's going to come out or not. I like being able to control all elements of the process. Obviously it all has its own set of challenges—it's never that rosy.

Photos by Rauno Träskelin (pavilion), Helene Bangsbo Anderson (copper shade)

For the 2007 Milan Furniture Fair, Artek teamed up with the forestry company UPM to build a Shigeru Ban–designed pavilion (above left). Constructed out of wood-plastic composite building material, which can be incinerated or recycled. Tom Dixon's Copper Shade pendant lamps (above) reflect his background in metalwork. p. 206


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Ich Bin Ein Mulcher

When, at cocktail parties, the conversation turns from the fleeting news of the day to the subject of sublime beauty, I often find myself smiling, for soon, I will speak of mulch. Although I like all kinds of mulch—pine needles, straw, leaves, shredded tires—I think most highly of double-ground hardwood mulch. Hardwood mulch is humble, which is ironic because it comes from trees, and trees are quite proud. Trees, in fact, make fun of mulch as they flail about dramatically in the breeze. Trees can be jackasses.

But trees fall down, and then who's laughing? A fallen tree is no longer quite a tree: It's a disappointed, tree-shaped collection of wood that's suddenly out of options. Not quite ready to be dirt just yet, it makes a last-minute, desperate deal with the earth: Grant me a couple more years before you take me back completely. I'll sacrifice myself to the cause and perform many beneficial tasks in return. I'll keep you tidy and free of weeds. I'll control erosion and keep you moist. I'll stop being a jackass.

Like the lone survivor of an airplane crash, hardwood mulch finds priority-shifting energy in its new life. Pride eroded, it learns to suck it up and get to work. Like Ernest Borgnine, it sets up the drama so that others can shine. We can learn much from mulch, just as we can learn much from Ernest Borgnine. We should honor and respect mulch, for we too shall one day fall down. We should buy large quantities of it, fall to our hands and knees, and spread it around with great care and heartfelt words of thanks. Later, when the subject of sublime beauty comes up at cocktail parties, we should smile knowingly. Embracing our inner Borgnine, we should stand up straight, limbs outstretched, and start taking the conversation down a notch.

Story by Dan Maginn
Illustration by Mike Perry

Trees, cocktails, Borgnine—we're all in this together, cycling in and out of our earthly existence. Living, dying, intermingling our little atoms. That's neat.

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DECKING RAILING FENCING DRYSPACE ACCESSORIES

Scrapile—Pull up a chair to one of Scrapile's impossibly elegant dining tables and you'd never guess that the materials used to create it had once been destined for a landfill. Founded in 2003 by Carlos Salgado and Bart Bettencourt, Brooklyn-based Scrapile repurposes cast-off scrap wood to create crisp modern furnishings. Salgado and Bettencourt met in the mid 1990s, doing installation work at the now-defunct SoHo branch of the Guggenheim Museum. "We were both appalled by the waste at the Guggenheim," says Salgado. "Between exhibitions everything got demoed, and it was still good material. It just sat on our consciences." Years later, they found themselves at a studio staring at a pile of wood, wondering what could be made from it. The query yielded two benches—the seeds of Scrapile. The collection has been growing ever since.

The Pi Table

Story by Mark Lamster
Photos by Eirik Johnson

Carlos Salgado and Bart Bettencourt stand in their Brooklyn studio, where they invented Scrapile's signature striated wood surface out of salvaged scrap wood.

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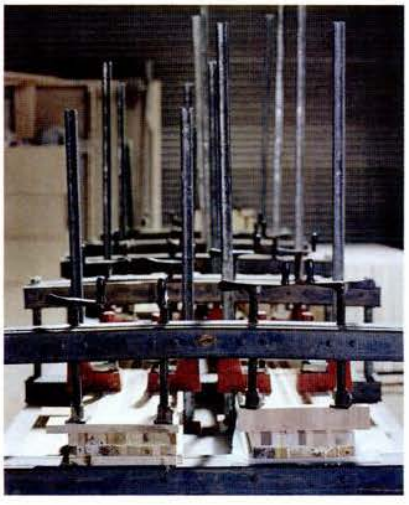
Dumpster Diving
The first step in the Scrapile process is to acquire raw materials. Salgado and Bettencourt are beggars, not choosers: Any wood—from cherry to walnut—will do. With help from a local nonprofit, NY Wa$teMatch, they've found a number of mills, lumberyards, and other businesses happy to offload their detritus. It helps that Scrapile's studio—a 5,000-square-foot space they share with Bart's other business, Bettencourt Green Building Supplies—is in Brooklyn's Greenpoint neighborhood, home to considerable light industry. "We're literally surrounded by hundreds of woodworking shops," says Salgado. "It's a cost-benefit for them: They don't have to fill up their dumpsters as much." Over the course of a year, that can add up to a substantial savings for the donor, and a windfall in free material for Scrapile, to say nothing of the environmental benefit. Everyone wins.



Building a Block
With raw material in hand, they painstakingly assemble their scraps into a solid, ten-foot-long block that is eight inches square. To achieve the striated pattern of cascading bands that is Scrapile's visual trademark—which Salgado calls the "waterfall effect"—pieces are cut to size and arranged by wood type before they're bonded together with nontoxic, water-soluble glue. "There's a lot of math involved," says Salgado, but the result is "a very clean piece of wood."

Above: Scrapile doesn't discriminate against any wood, but they are meticulous in arranging the pieces into single sheets; Salgado at the power saw.

Below: The new planks are covered with nontoxic adhesive. Once bonded, the pieces are sliced and weighted until they're ready to be used in a design.

LA Forum is pleased to announce the release of *Polar Inertia: Migrating Urban Systems*. Reyner Banham once observed that in Los Angeles "mobility outweighs monumentality." What was true for the automobile is fast becoming true for the home. It is possible today to live on wheels, to be completely transient and yet remain completely connected. Architect Ted Kane takes a critical look at how city life predicated on total mobility and utterly dependent upon the corporate-controlled wireless world is expanding the meaning of urbanity.

Please join us at R.A.M. Publications at Bergamot Station, 2525 Michigan Ave., Bldg. #A2, Santa Monica on March 20th at 7:30 pm for a book signing and drinks. *Polar Inertia: Migrating Urban Systems* can be purchased from www.rampub.com.

Visit www.laforum.org for more information on future events and publications.

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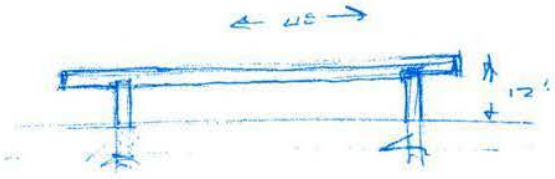
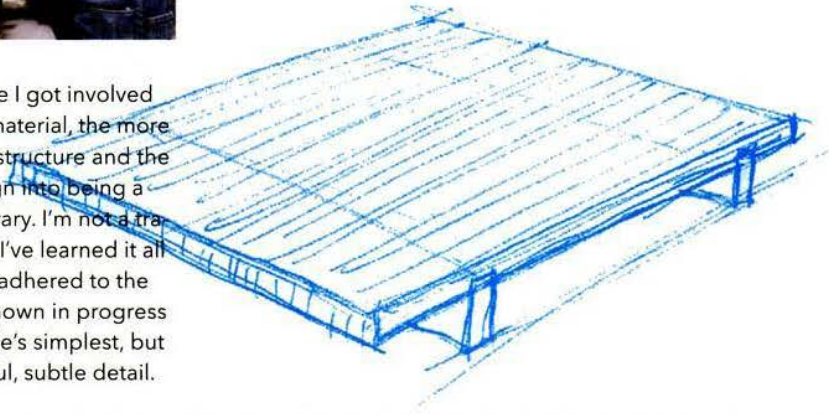
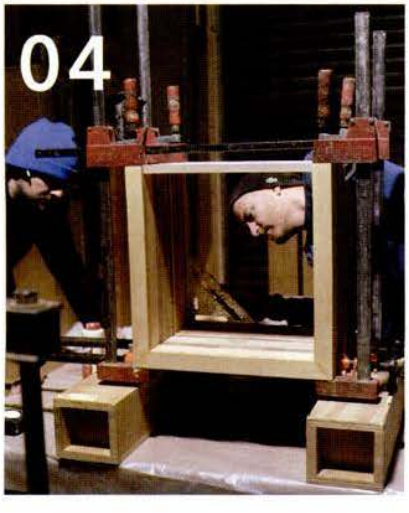




A Design Emerges
All of Scrapile's sharp modern forms come from the solid block of wood. The pieces have evolved from basic, boxy shapes to more complex lines as Salgado, who does most of the design, has become more comfortable as a woodworker. "Initially the idea was to keep the designs as simple as possible," says Salgado, a sculptor by training. "But the more I got involved in the making of the material, the more I wanted to push the structure and the language of the design into being a little more contemporary. I'm not a traditional woodworker. I've learned it all on the job. I've never adhered to the rules." The Pi table, shown in progress here, is one of Scrapile's simplest, but still displays thoughtful, subtle detail.



Putting It Together
With a design in place, the block is trimmed down to size, planed, sanded, and edge-cleaned. Planks are cut with precision, to ensure the waterfall pattern aligns exactly, and pieces are glued and clamped down to dry. Then they're patched if needed (no more than two places per piece), re-sanded, oiled, branded, and carefully crated for shipment. "Sometimes you forget that we have hundreds of little pieces glued together, and they're alive," says Salgado. "Wood breathes depending on the weather, the temperature. It does what it wants to do." Scrapile are also doing what they want to do, and the results are nothing you'd ever consider throwing away.

Above: Once they have crafted the materials, it's time to cut, measure, and assemble the pieces of the Pi table—and the variations in color and texture become more dramatic.

Below: Because they are constantly sourcing new scraps, each completed piece has a one-of-a-kind pattern, and each layer tells its own story.

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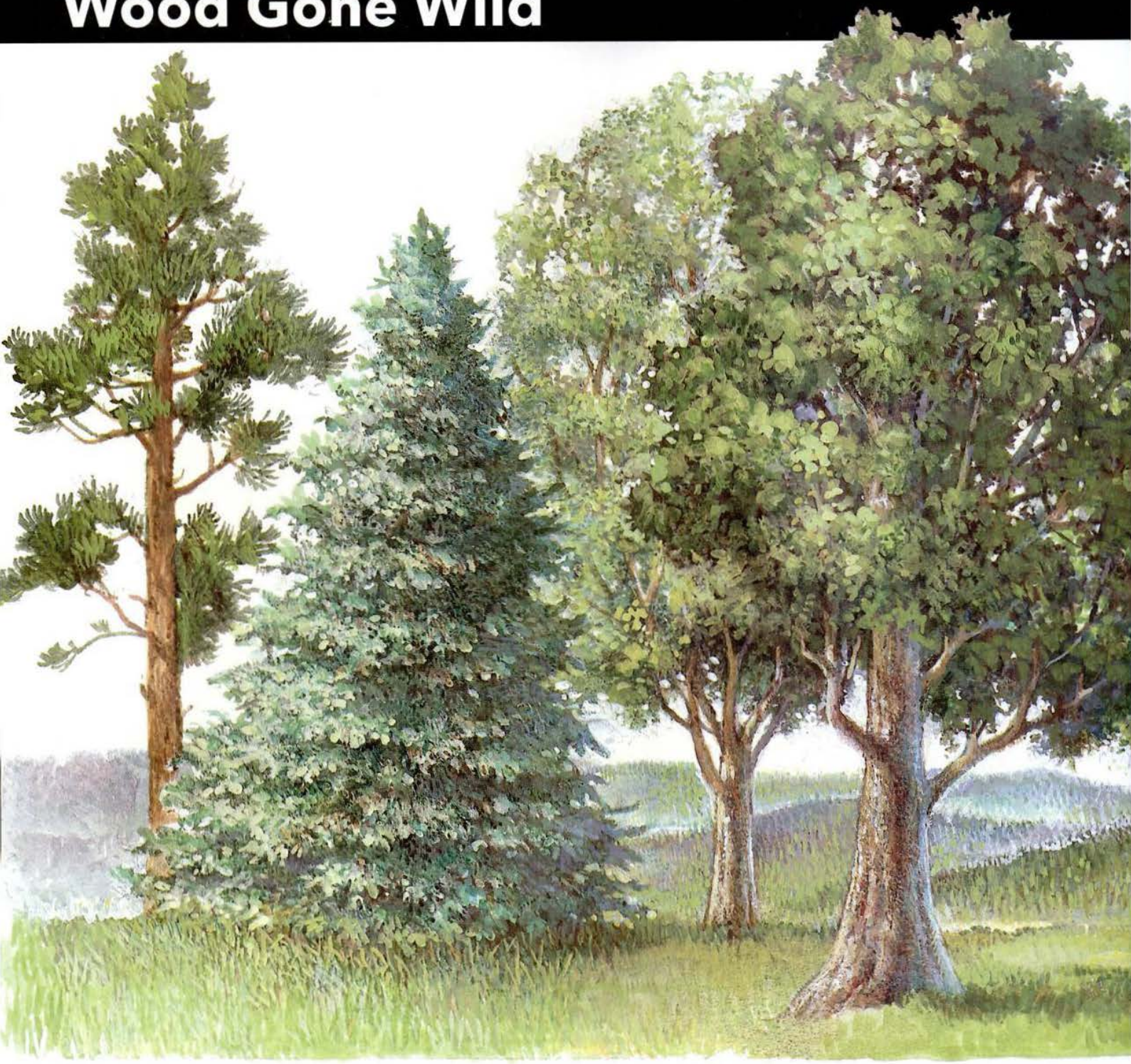
Wood Gone Wild



Pine
This softwood evergreen has a humble history as a less durable (and cheaper) alternative to hardwoods like oak. Light in weight and color, pine takes paint well, making it a top choice for crafts and cabinetry. Pine also knows its math: The tree's branches, needles, and cones all grow in a Fibonacci sequence.

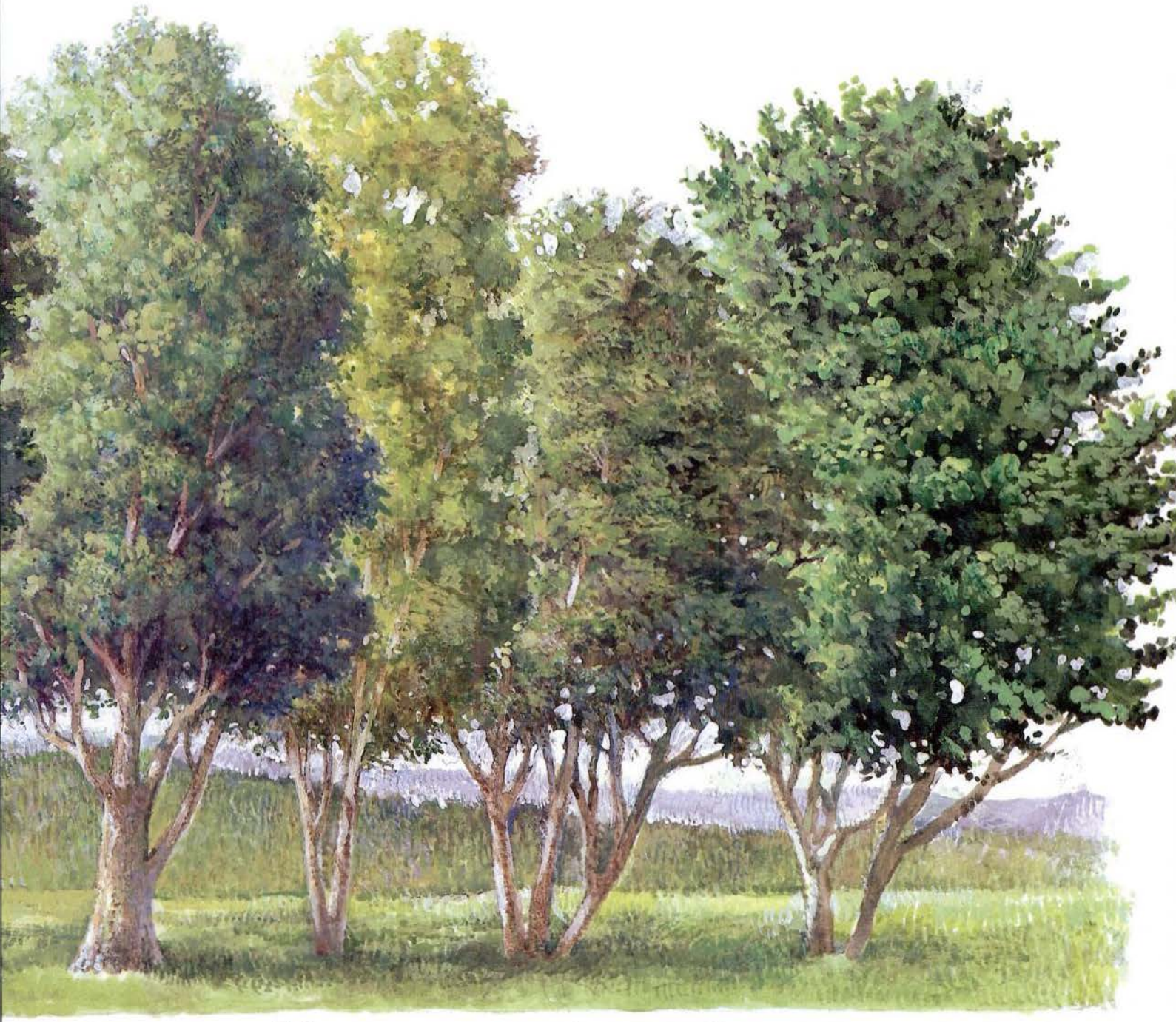
Spruce
Spruce is resilient, tall, and conical, and usually grows in northern regions. This soft, white wood is used in everything from papermaking and musical instruments to aircraft manufacturing—remember the so-called Spruce Goose? Spruce is also a source of vitamin C and a popular breeding ground for moths.

Maple
The sugar maple, also known as hard or rock maple, is the most common species used for flooring and furniture, and even lines the lanes of bowling alleys. As the name indicates, it also provides us with maple syrup. Maple is a sign of autumn's arrival, when its leaves turn to brilliant reds and oranges.

Oak
The oak is the national tree of the U.S., England, Estonia, and Germany, and its vast native habitat has increased its importance to the craft and building industries. This hard, dense wood resists pests and decay, and has been used for more than 4,000 years to make timber-framed buildings, floors, and furniture.

When it comes to building houses, walls, tables, or chairs, no material is more basic than wood. Wood is responsive, practical, easy to use, and beautiful—and it can be replenished with careful stewardship. This month we get in touch with our inner druid and take a look at eight good woods and their roles in building and design.

Illustration by Robert Hynes



Mahogany

This fine-grained tropical hardwood first gained popularity in 1597, the year Sir Walter Raleigh presented Elizabeth I with a table made from mahogany planks off the deck of his ship. Though the commonly used big-leaf mahogany is not yet endangered, conservationists are paying close attention to its rise and fall.

Teak

Teak is a durable, termite-resistant, semi-hard wood native to India and Malaysia. It is coveted for flooring, shipbuilding, and furniture. The essential oils found in wild teak are superior to the farmed stuff (grown in almost any tropical climate), which, unfortunately, has led to the devastation of many natural groves.

Rosewood

Brazilian rosewood is endangered and expensive, but its strong, sweet scent and rich grain patterns have long made it a favorite for cabinets, flooring, furniture, and musical instruments. Rosewood contains an acrid oil that must be removed—often by steaming—before it's shaped into a piano leg, credenza, or tabletop.

Ebony

Ebony belongs to the *Diospyros* genus (along with persimmon trees) and grows throughout Africa and Asia. The commercially coveted Macassar ebony is often found in oboes, clarinets, and pianos. This evergreen's black or chocolate brown wood is extremely durable, and so dense that it won't even float.

Raising the Barn

Architect Preston Scott Cohen resurrected an early 1800s barn as a vacation home for a literary couple and their family, calling to mind both the agrarian spaciousness of the structure's former life and the vernacular of its new function as a house. Transcending both, Cohen created a piece of architecture that is at once porous and opaque, familiar yet otherworldy.

The Pine Plains, New York, home of Elise and Arnold Goodman (below) boasts 48 windows, the largest of which measures 8'6" by 7'6". As architect Preston Scott Cohen explains, the "free facade makes it impossible to identify how many levels there are, or even to tell the difference between a door and a window." From without, the windows reveal dramatic glimpses of the 18th-century barn frame and new steel structure that support the house. From within, says Elise, "Each season, each time of day, offers a different view of the world. It's spectacular."

The skunks may be miserable on Skunks Misery Road, but from the look of things, the people are doing just fine. Land values have risen so high along this roadkill-dotted lane, which winds through Pine Plains, a hamlet two hours north of New York City, that the dairy farms that once flourished on the forested, hilly landscape have been converted into estates. The cows have mostly decamped, but the farmhouses and barns remain—suggesting that the affluent fauna now grazing among the mâche pits shares its predecessors' architectural predilections.

That is, until one turns at the Simon's Farm mailbox, bumps a mile along a dirt road, and beholds the home of Arnold P. and Elise Simon Goodman. The design, by architect Preston Scott Cohen, takes the peaked-roof gable house—an object so familiar as to seem invisible—and, with a provocative mix of modernity and tradition, a sprinkling of the surreal, and a massive explosion of scale, utterly upends our notions of home.

"The house is not about a lot of little things," declares Cohen, with an enunciative clarity that

Project: Goodman Residence
Architect: Preston Scott Cohen
Location: Pine Plains, New York

Story by Marc Kristal
Photos by Raimund Koch

"The house is not about a lot of little things—it's one big thing at all times."

Region and Biology
Cedar trees are members of the *Pinaceae* family. While cedars are now cultivated in parts of Australia, New Zealand, Europe, and throughout North America, they are native to the region that spans from the western Himalayas to the Mediterranean Sea. The Lebanon cedar, for instance, is so indicative of the country's landscape that it actually appears on the national flag.

"We didn't want to diminish the openness and height and feeling of a great expanse of space," says Arnold—though, he adds, "I was slightly concerned that we were going to end up feeling like we were reading in Grand Central Station." Fortunately, the barn frame's horizontal beams perform a domestic function by creating the illusion of a lower ceiling. The three major anchor beams were hewn from a single tall yellow pine.
p.206

converts simple words like "moves"—"mewves"—into events. "It's one big thing at all times."

The seed for Cohen's architectural sequoia was his clients' desire for a country retreat. "We wanted three things," says Arnold, who is partnered with his wife in a Manhattan literary agency. "Privacy; a Catskill Mountains view; and a place to swim. But we could never find a house that suited us, so we decided to build." The couple purchased a 164-acre property, one of the last still-undivided parcels created from a 1706 British land grant. There was a spring-fed spot for a pond, and, after clearing 15 wooded acres west of their building site at the land's high point, they got the biggest defoliation-related surprise since Mikhail Gorbachev lost his hair: a view, not only of nearly the entire Catskill range, but an Arcadian tableau of valleys, forests, and fields in front of it.

As for the dwelling itself, "we'd rented a barn once that had been converted into a house," Elise says, "and we discovered how lovely it was to have high ceilings and wood beams." The idea, Cohen recalls, was to "have a barn disassembled and restored, and reconstructed with a new envelope built around the frame." The Goodmans were drawn to the traditional Dutch version, with its broad, nave-like central axis with aisles on either side, and massive H-shaped supports. In New York's Mohawk Valley, the couple found a unique example: a barn dating from the early 1800s that, via the addition of a fifth bay (one more than usual), had a colossal 50-by-60 footprint and soared to a height of 37 feet. "Though the old siding was in typically passable condition," says Cohen, "the frame was the best they'd seen."

The greatest challenge, however, was not finding the ideal property or the perfect barn. It was engaging an architect who could provide that unquantifiable something Elise calls "a work of art." And so, in a manner of speaking, she went to the source: the Museum of Modern Art's library, where she discovered Cohen's "breathtaking" Torus House, which had been featured in MoMA's 1999 exhibition The Un-Private House. "[The Torus] scheme has an airy interior, largely a single open space, connected to the landscape," Cohen explains. "It was quite similar to the Goodmans' program."

For Cohen, the project was a chance to experiment with "transforming historical typologies to produce a new language." Vernacular structures like barns, he observes, "establish conventions that are rooted in social practices we can understand. Contemporary architecture can elaborate on that, so that the new is brought into a dialogue that has collective values embedded in it."

In keeping with the Goodmans' desire to retain the barn frame in "pristine form," Cohen left the

In keeping with the Goodmans' desire for just enough subdivision for rooms to sleep and work in, Cohen inserted a two-story volume into one of the barn frame's side aisles. An additional small mezzanine over the kitchen (below right) serves as a play area for grandchildren. In the bedroom, a "scarecrow" crafted by the Goodmans' grandson Eli hangs on the wall (below left).

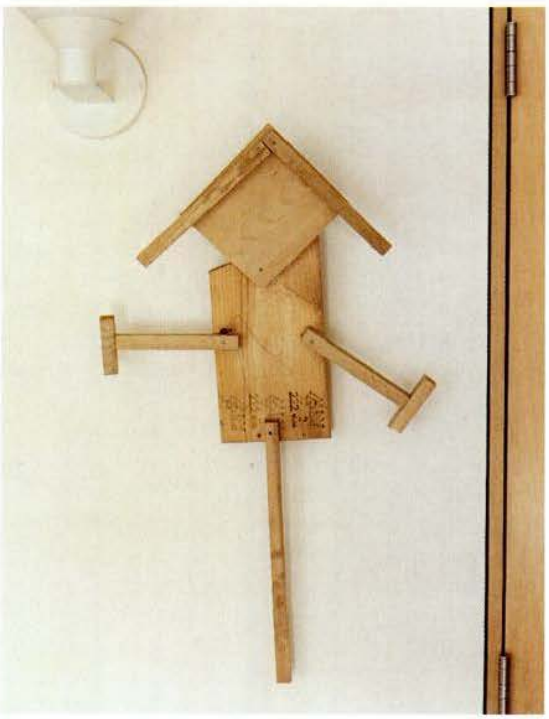
space largely open, locating the master suite, guest accommodations, offices, and baths in a two-story volume tucked into a side aisle. Then he focused on the dialogue between past and present, producing several large gestures that, by reinterpreting elements of the barn, revivify the "collective values" common to domestic architecture.

The first, says Cohen, involves "the irreducible image of a house—the gable form," which has, through simplification and inflation, been converted into a nearly hyperreal expression of home. "To make the exterior more monolithic and provide a more astonishing contrast with the timbers behind it—a dialectic of the refined and rustic—the exterior is clad in tightly tailored, four-inch-wide cedar planks that look at moments like cast-in-place concrete," he observes. "It adds to that peculiar overscaled character."

Inside, the contrast is indeed astonishing. Apart from the timbers' monumental beauty, Cohen says, "their fascination derives from the return to the pure tectonic experience of architecture. The barn frame confronts one with it in the most profound way—and in a domestic setting, where it normally isn't offered."

Excluding the partitions that traditionally stabilize a barn facilitated Cohen's liveliest inspiration: an exposed, load-bearing steel frame that sits between the wooden beams and walls. The support establishes a pas de deux between pre-and post-industrial structure, in which the partners endlessly contrast and harmonize—sometimes separating, at other moments colliding with startling, kinetic beauty. Considering the sculptural starburst of wood and steel in the guest room, Elise wonders, "Why put any art on the wall?"

By releasing the building's skin from its structural support function, the steel frame also enabled Cohen's anarchic, Dalíesque scramble of 48 windows, which reinforces the drollery of the house's scale. "It's a free facade," he explains. "And we've displayed it by having the windows wander off out of sync with the barn's bays." In fact, there's a method to the madness: "They're determined by views and



Use
Cedar is famously aromatic. Its distinct scent masks the smell of clothes and linens—where moths seek to lay their eggs—making it a popular choice for closets.

Rather than concealing the barn frame in the private rooms, Cohen created an interplay between modern and historic elements (as in the master bath).
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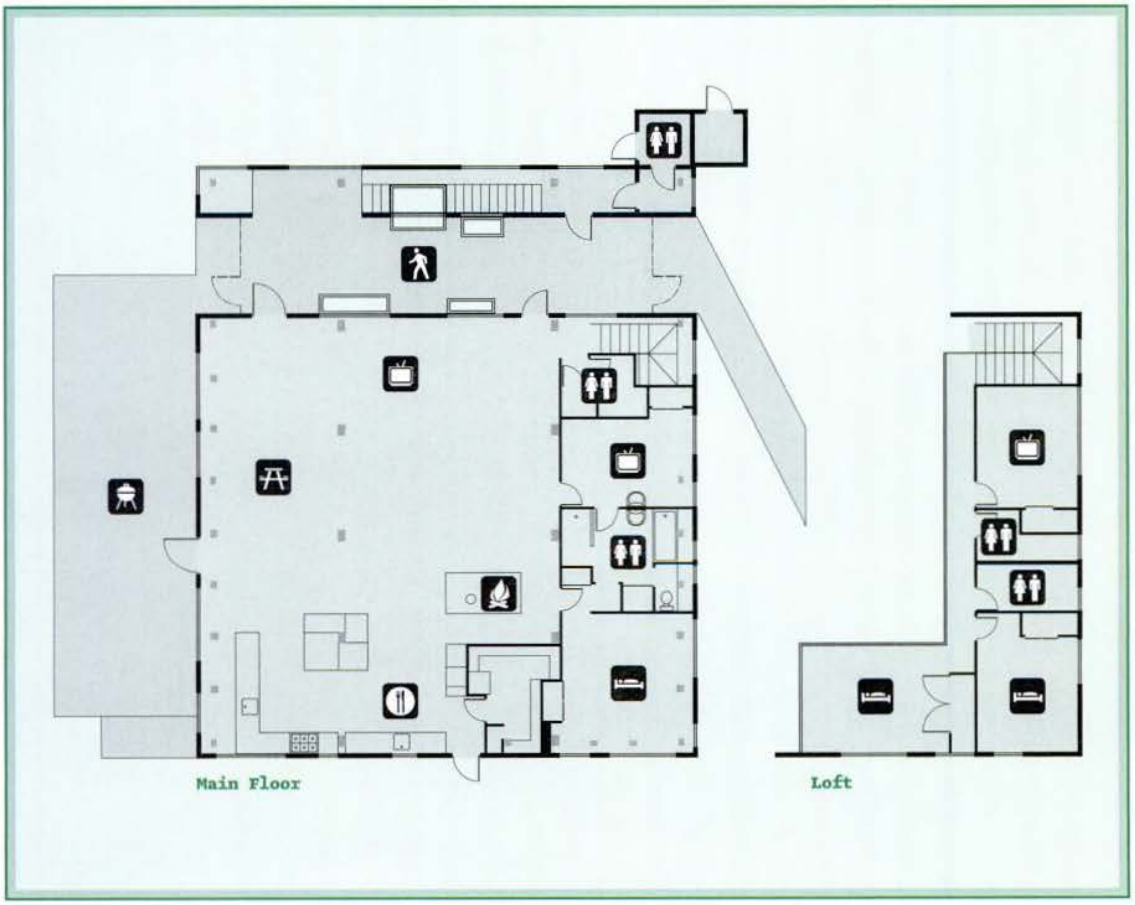


Goodman Residence Floor Plan

- Bedroom
- Deck
- Kitchen
- Bathroom
- Dining Area
- Living Area
- Fireplace
- Breezeway

Did You Know?
Cedars produce purple pinecones, which lend the already magisterial tree an even greater air of regality. Due to their resinous oils, the trees resist rot and borers, and have been valued for durability for centuries over; the Egyptians used its resin for mummification and its sawdust was found in the pharaoh's tombs. For this reason, the trees have long symbolized immortality.

relationships to furnishings, and have geometric connections with one another," Cohen says. But in a wry inversion of the pleasures of looking out, he adds, "they also frame views of what's inside—they capture certain intersections of timber and steel."

Perhaps the architect's richest gesture is the ten-foot-square breezeway—running the structure's full width and open at both ends—that forms the main entrance. This was, the Goodmans joke, the only piece of "architecture" they would permit. Indeed, its mention sends Cohen into an enthusiastic fit that borders on the zany. "That was the thing that mattered most to me!" he yells. "That moment when you're poised in the interval of the threshold—this extends that interval through the whole house. The breezeway invites you not just to enter, but to explore the experience of entering." Because the space's windows fold from floor to wall and wall to ceiling, opening 360-degree views of the interior, one is surrounded by the house's pleasures before going through the front door. The experience is further enriched by the breezeway's function as an interior porch, directly on axis with Round Top Mountain, one of the Catskills' tallest peaks. Best of all, it can be enjoyed year-round: Cohen designed outsize roll-up glass and screen doors, which drop like theatrical flats and keep out the cold in winter and bugs during the summer.

The outcome is an architecture that unites Cohen's theoretical rigor, instinct for the sensuous, and sheer creative exuberance. It's also remarkably in sync with its occupants, who seem like typologically correct Upper West Siders of a certain age until, of course, you come to recognize their unexpected iconoclasm, appetite for risk, and good humor. "The house is a great source of pleasure," Elise affirms. "Can you imagine having this in your life?"

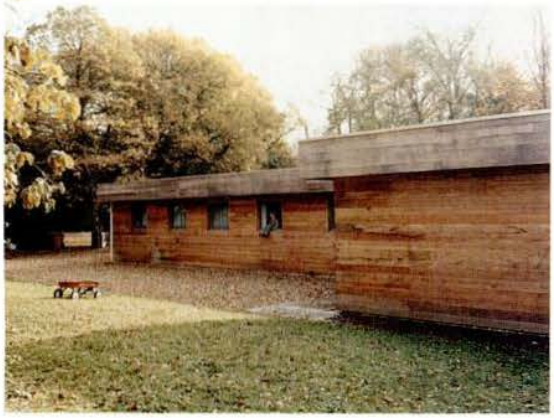
Cohen, pointing to the design's use of space, replies, "Why not? The persistence of those gigantic things creates great effects at many scales. It challenges conventions, draws you into a new experience, but relieves you of the expenditure of having to resolve everything," he says. "That's part of what makes it a modern house. And I like that."

A sharply angled walkway (above right) leads up to the house's breezeway (opposite). In a narrow residual area between the breezeway and the house's northern elevation, Cohen created a so-called "skinny space," with a changing area accessible to the outdoor shower.

Heart of the Country

Driving through the leafy country lanes on the outer edges of London's commuter belt, it's hard to imagine the city is just an hour away by train. But the Sussex fields around the village of Peasmarsh set the scene for John Carver and Anna Carloss's modern renovation of a mid-century bungalow, bringing the city—or at least its design sensibility—that much closer.

Hût Architecture used rough-sawn larch and galvanized steel to enliven what was a dull-looking mid-20th-century bungalow in the English countryside. The wood will age and change color rapidly, allowing the building to merge into its natural surroundings yet still have enough unique details not to disappear into the landscape. The architect tested various finishes by leaving them outside to see how well and how fast they aged.



It would be easy to assume that the delightfully named Starvecrow Cottage would have roses around the door, a thatched roof, and look like something from a storybook. But John Carver and Anna Carloss's bungalow—tucked away in the village of Peasmarsh, on the outer edges of London's commuter belt—is far more modernist chalet than country cottage. Clad in rough-sawn Siberian larch and finished with anodized aluminum, the low structure is a pleasant surprise in England's wealds and wolds, where a home without Tudor beams constitutes blasphemy.

Fortunately for Carver and Carloss, planning consent was not such a large issue as it might have been: Their seemingly brand-new modernist home is really just a reworking of a tired mid-century building, which the couple purchased in 2005 as a weekend retreat and transitioned into their primary residence. "A friend emailed me one day to say he had been out to see this place that had just come on the market and we should see it too," says Carver. "We came down on the Saturday morning. Just as we got here someone was leaving, and just as we left someone was arriving. Later on I realized that I dropped my glasses, and so I phoned the agent and he said he had found them on the driveway. So I went back to get the glasses. When we saw the place again, we said, 'Let's agree on a price here and now and shake hands on a deal.'"

This sudden decision was something of a surprise for architect Andrew Whiting of Hût Architecture. Whiting had just obtained building permits for a roof extension on the couple's London home, but was quickly enlisted to work on the forlorn Starvecrow Cottage. Needless to say, the roof extension never got built. "Initially, [the Starvecrow project] was just going to be a change of color and maybe a nice wooden floor, but it grew from there," says Carver. "Our involvement was always incremental," says

Project: Starvecrow Cottage
Architect: Hût Architecture
Location: Peasmarsh, England

Story by Iain Aitch
Photos by Nigel Shafran

"We sometimes joke that it would have been easier and cheaper to have knocked it down."

The living room's floor-to-ceiling windows allow plenty of natural light in and offer a clear view of the woods to the rear of the property. Carver is a fan of taxidermy and his stuffed vixen has attracted a number of real-life suitors. The fox (behind the Eames Lounge chair) was previously the mascot of Carver and Carloss's creative agency, Cunning.
p.206

Region and Biology
The ten species of larch occur broadly across the cooler parts of the northern hemisphere. They grow in forests across Canada, the Pacific Northwest, and parts of the northeastern United States, where they are often known as tamaracks. Larches are among the most common plants in the immense boreal forests of Russia and northern China, as well as in the lower Himalayas and Japan.

Whiting. "It was always 'just a bit more,' so we ended up doing a vast amount of work on the property in the end. John and Anna were particularly involved clients, but in a good way. That is not always a positive thing, but it was with them."

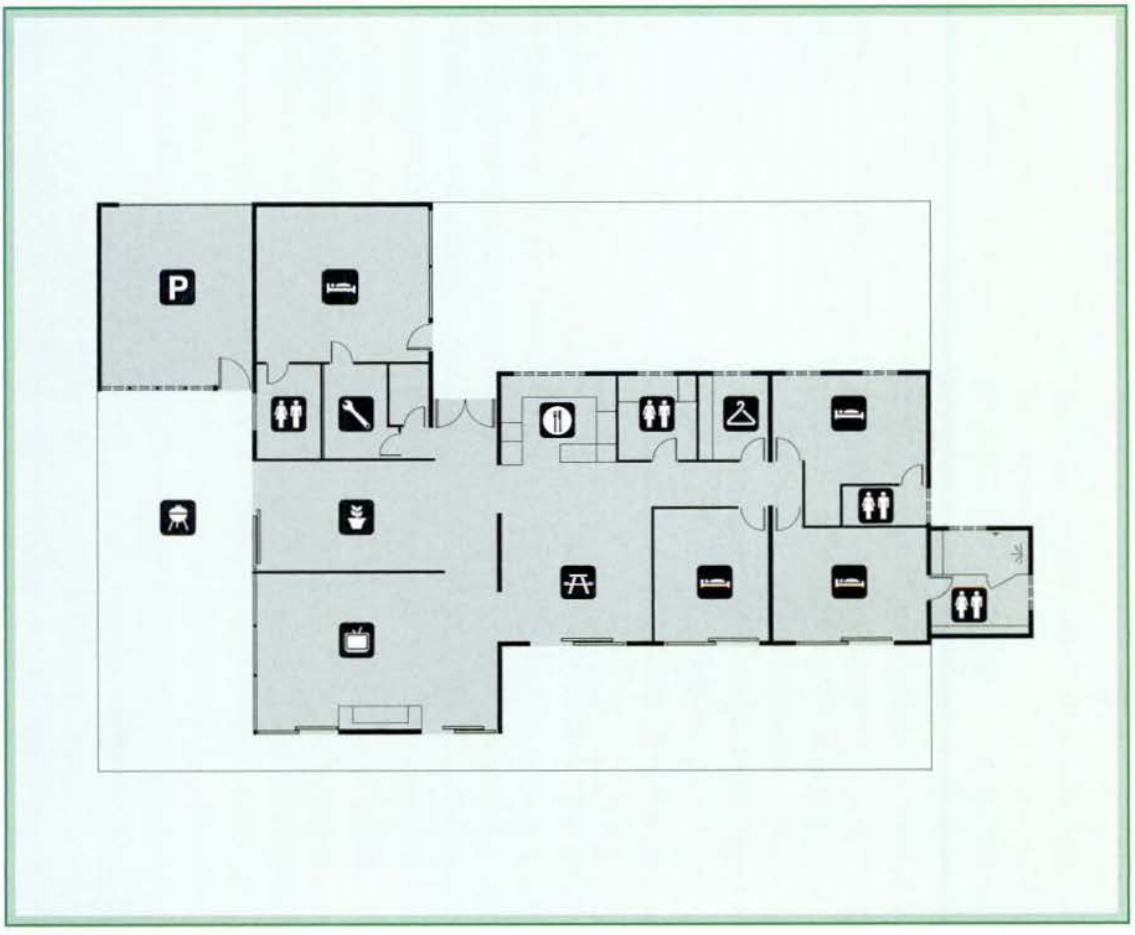
This approach suited both parties. In fact, they all got on so well that Hût eventually moved in to share an office with Carver and Carloss's creative agency, Cunning. "They were so easy to get along with and very flexible," says Carloss. "We had worked with a couple of architects in the past and they always seem to have had an agenda, and that is what they stick to. That can be very difficult when you have your own opinions."

As it turns out, Carver and Carloss's opinions dictated many of the changes made to Starvecrow Cottage. The 4,500-square-foot building retains much the same footprint of its mid-century counterpart, but the addition of floor-to-ceiling windows to the rear and various skylights brings the outstanding landscape closer and fills the home with light. "My dream property has always been one level and with massive picture windows," says Carloss. "This allowed us to do that, but the amount of renovations and the budget were far greater than what we first thought of. We sometimes joke that it would have been easier and cheaper to have knocked it down and started again. But the shape is beautiful and we wanted to retain that." Surprisingly, previous residents had not thought to have a proper view of the valley, much of which is owned by the family's famous neighbor, Sir Paul McCartney.

To decide on the exterior materials, the team left more than a dozen types of timber and treatments out in the elements for a month before deciding on untreated Siberian larch, which sheaths the house's nearly four-inch layer of insulation. This replaces the previous stucco frontage and ensures that the

All of the outdoor play (left, with Carloss and six-year-old son Finlay) means that the interior flooring must be durable. Carver and Carloss chose polished concrete, which can be easily swept and swabbed. The bedroom and adjacent bath (above) are minimally furnished with a Skipper bed from Habitat, and, occasionally, a pile of unironed laundry. Opposite page: The architects kept the original low-beamed ceiling, retaining the house's English countryside charm. The kitchen and dining area open out to the expansive grounds, and are furnished with Eames fiberglass shell chairs and custom cabinetry designed by artist Neil Jolliffe. The couple purchased their Banksy prints (opposite left) from the artist's London gallery, Tom Tom. p.206

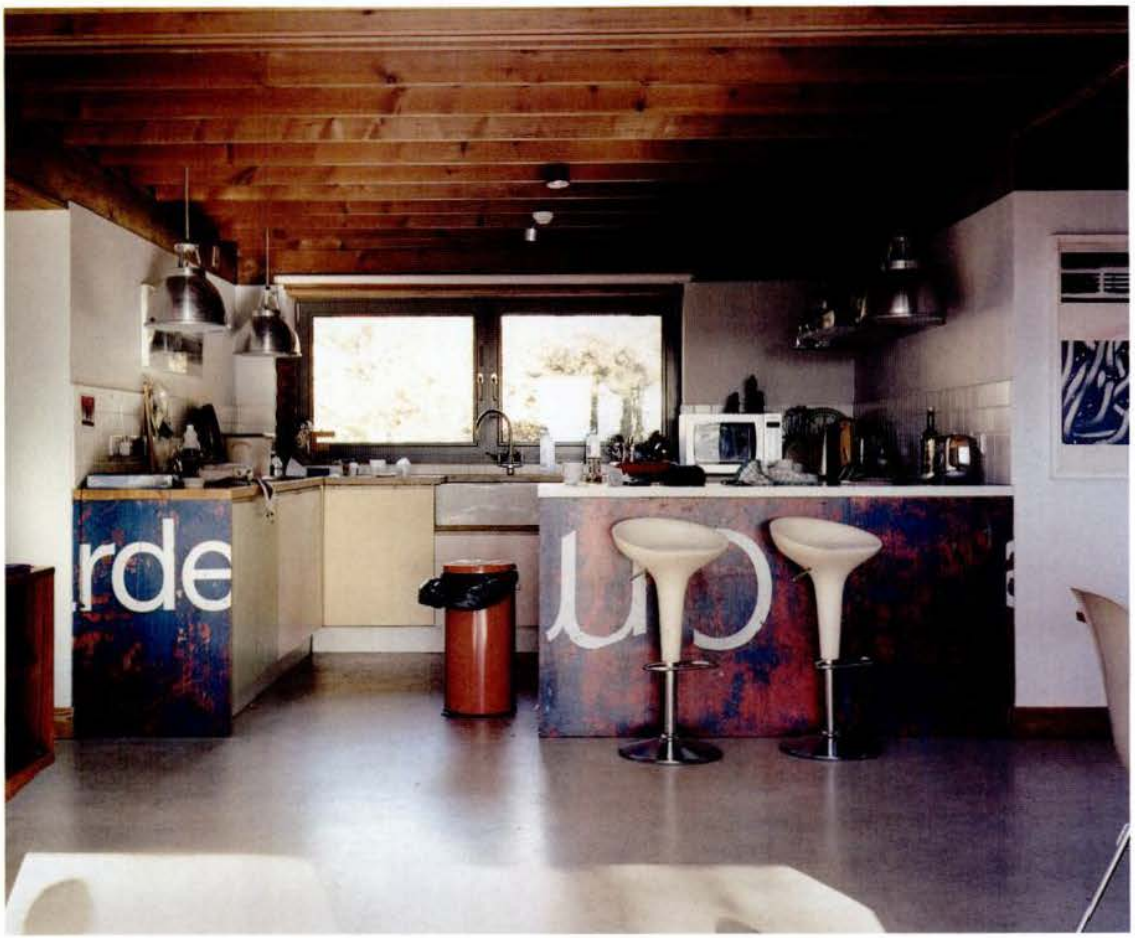
Use
Larch is revered for its beauty and as a harbinger of spring. The sturdy tree, which can reach over 150 feet in height, is an excellent windbreak. Some herbalists believe that tinctures made of its flowers can boost confidence. The European, Japanese, and tamarack larches are popular in bonsai culture. Larch was widely used in pagan cremation ceremonies.



Starvecrow Cottage Floor Plan

- Garage
- Bedroom
- Bathroom
- Utility Room
- Kitchen
- Dressing Room
- Patio
- Conservatory
- Dining Room
- Living Room

Did you know?
Belonging to the pine family, the deciduous larch is an anomaly among the typically evergreen conifers. It sheds its small, soft needles—which sprout a bright, iridescent green in the spring that darkens by the fall—each year. New needles grow singly, but those on older twigs are found in dense clusters.



Carver and Carloss's choice of kitchen design by artist friend Neil Jolliffe reflects the couple's eclecticism and playfulness. The kitchen cabinetry draws from the soft pastel shades often seen in English coastal towns. The lighting fixtures found throughout the kitchen are Giant Pendants from Original BTC. An expansive skylight (opposite) gives a feeling of spaciousness in the kitchen/dining area.
p.206

home remains warm and dry, while the wood will age naturally. The bungalow is just a short drive from the sea, so the weather can become extreme, another reason for the decision to use polished concrete for the floors—the family need not worry about wandering in from forest walks with muddy shoes.

The internal layout is also far more open than the original, creating what Carver calls "a country loft apartment feel." The couple had an artist friend, Neil Jolliff, come in to add flourishes such as the sherbet-colored kitchen cabinets and a comic-book shelving unit for the couple's six-year-old son Finlay's bedroom, which also benefits from some neat capsule-like beds from design store Habitat.

Perhaps the most stunning result of the collaborative work between Hût and Carver and Carloss is the glass-roofed conservatory, which brings the wood from outdoors inside. It houses many of the couple's eclectic purchases, such as a foosball table and tabletop Space Invaders. Adding to the quirk factor is a varied collection of taxidermy throughout the home, including the eye-catching stuffed fox who looks out over the valley.

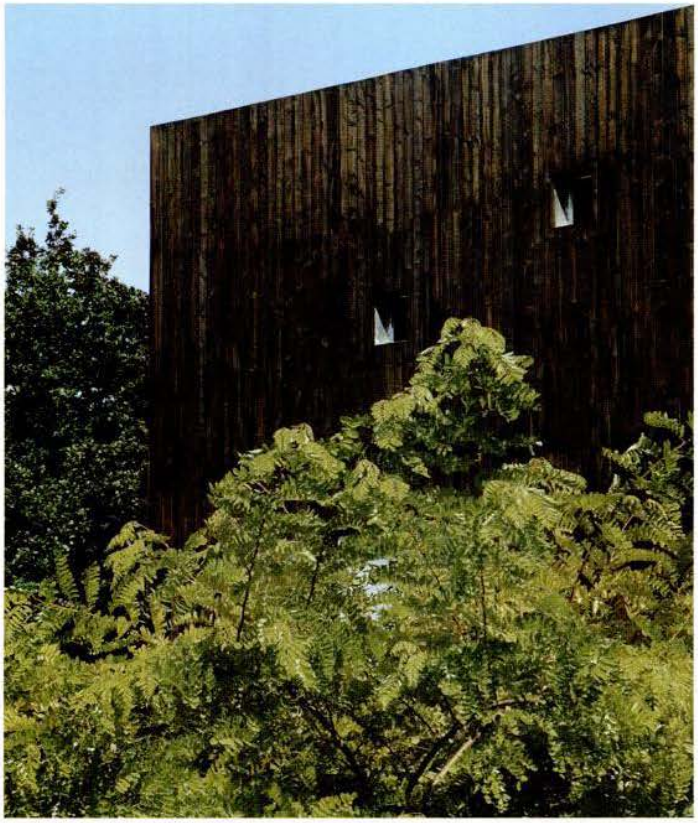
The newly realized Starvecrow Cottage is finished, at least for now, and the family is settling into full-time occupancy with Finlay attending a local grade school and the pair alternating days in their London office. "It is nice to see a place being lived in," says Whiting. "As an architect there is that awful [experience] where you finish a project and it looks great, but then you never see it again." To some, Carver and Carloss might have been the clients from hell. But to Whiting they were inspiring; they have become both friends and office buddies as well as inspiring patrons. He adds, "I suspect our work here may not be entirely over, but that's the exciting aspect of working with such creative people."

All Clad

For photographer Ed Reeve, building his own house had been a lifelong dream. When he met architect David Adjaye, and found the perfect plot of land in London's De Beauvoir Town, Reeve knew his time had come. The Sunken House, so-named for its excavated site, is a dark, cedar-clad cube in a stuffy part of town, where weathered brick and clay chimney pots are more common than modernist angles.

The house's stained-cedar cladding (below left) makes a stark but pleasing contrast to the natural foliage of the site. Earthy yet geometric, the house combines opposing tendencies remarkably well: Dark exterior walls hide a well-lit, white interior; clean lines and angles frame informal circulation.

The facade (opposite) achieves a notable sense of verticality for such a stout structure, with its stained timber cladding aimed straight up toward the sky. The heavy, horizontal brickwork of the neighboring Georgian houses seems to imply aesthetic controversy, but in fact, during its short planning review, Reeve's house received letters of support from no fewer than five neighbors. The front gate opens onto a driveway, which in turn leads to a private patio around back.



A rather mysterious cube rises up between the trees and neighboring Georgian houses of London's peaceful De Beauvoir Town. The cube is clad in a cedar rainscreen, which is stained dark brown. A single slot window at the front is all that indicates that this is, in fact, a house. To those close to the commissioner and inhabitant, Ed Reeve, it has affectionately become known as Ed's Shed.

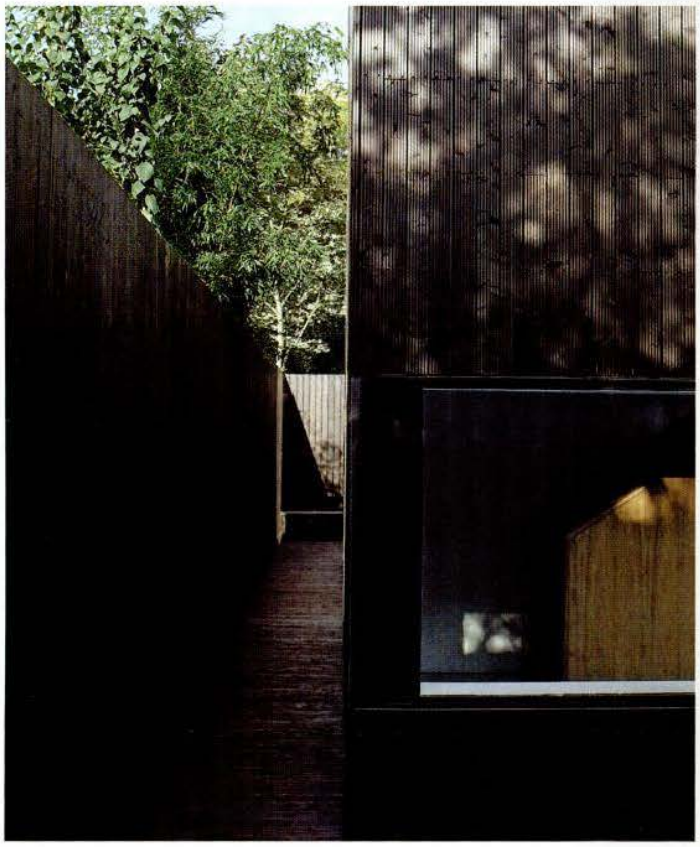
"Since I was nine, it has been a lifelong passion to one day build my own house," muses Reeve, a photographer. It is with justifiable pride that he can make such a statement, as he contentedly sips a cup of tea in his recently completed home.

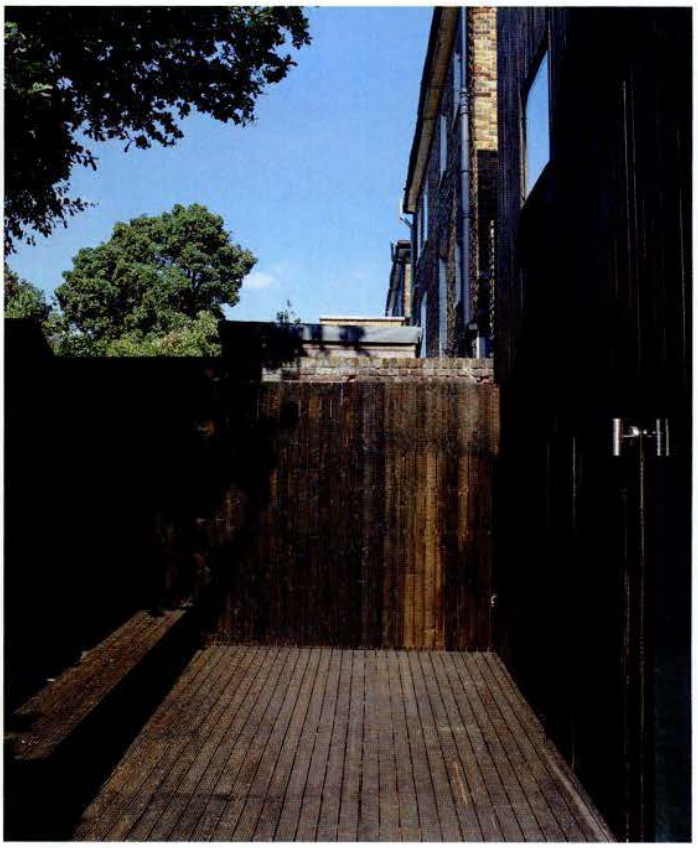
The thought of building your own home is, by most people's standards, a draining proposition. Finding a plot in London is already a struggle, as the shortage of availability coupled with the turmoil of regulations and high land costs are three challenges too many. For Reeve, the opportunity couldn't come soon enough.

Serious conversations to realize his childhood dream go back more than a decade, to when Reeve met the then-fledgling architect David Adjaye. While Reeve shot Adjaye's portrait and early architectural projects, the two struck up a friendship. When, in 2003, a mutual friend pointed out a potential site in De Beauvoir Town, Reeve immediately fell in love

Project: Sunken House
Architect: Adjaye Associates
Location: London, England

Story by Max Fraser
Photos by Ed Reeve





The outer walkway (above left) leads all the way around the structure, spilling into a small patio in back. Even the rear facade (above right) is seamless—its door all but disappearing into the cedar cladding. A garden of small herbs and vines creates a fan of green (right) as the plants creep up the outside walls. What at first seems to be a stark use of artificially dark wood reveals itself to be unironically natural: a soothing and woodsy backdrop for this home in the bustling city.

with it. He always knew he wanted a house with plenty of natural light, instinctively in tune with the trained sensitivities of his photographic eye, so he was understandably eager to exploit the location's evening sunset as well as optimize the view of the surrounding trees. Reeve was adamant that the new house should make a panoramic composition of the natural environment outside—a visual luxury in sharp contrast to the urban density on view for most city dwellers.

After Reeve purchased the plot, formerly a builder's yard located at the end of a block of houses, Adjaye commenced with some early concepts for Reeve's consideration. One of his first ideas was to include windows only at the back of the house, to focus and accentuate the view—but the idea never really gained traction with Reeve, who grew uneasy with this rather extreme proposal. The final design was approved in 2004 (albeit with more windows). Adjaye obtained planning permission within eight weeks, accompanied by the written support of five neighbors.

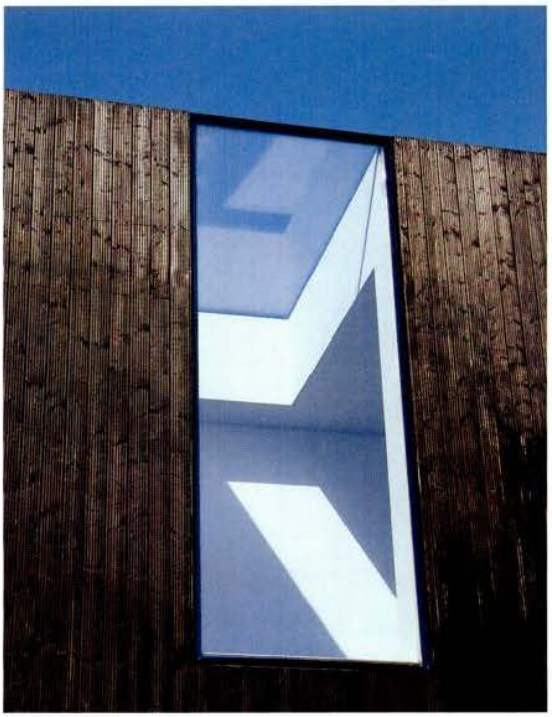
The entire site was excavated to basement level in order to create the sunken concrete foundation on which the house now sits. With this in place, the prefabricated solid timber load-bearing structure simply arrived one day on two trucks from

Biology and Use

The spruce is a conically shaped coniferous evergreen that traditionally grows in cooler, higher elevations. At maturity, spruce reach heights of more than 75 feet and diameters greater than 25 feet. The tree's needles, which vary in color and length depending on species and age, grow singly out of the branches on pegs in a spiral pattern. The spruce has many common applications, one of the most important being paper manufacture. It is also widely used as a building material, for musical instruments, and for Christmas trees.

"Since I was nine, it has been a lifelong passion to one day build my own house."

Despite its dark and boxy exterior, the house's interior is bright, naturally lit, and spacious. Adjaye, a master of the well-placed window, is in top form here. The staircase (above left) ascends toward sunlight: a gap cut straight through the roof and facade (right). Other windows range from the smallest of square portholes to wall-sized, cinematic expanses of glass (opposite).
p. 206



Germany. The large section-engineered spruce panels were expertly assembled in two days and, to everyone's satisfaction, gave immediate shape to the house. Hemp insulation improves the acoustic performance of the structure while the solid timber frame boasts a significantly reduced carbon footprint. (Each cubic meter of timber saves almost one ton of carbon dioxide emissions, compared to the use of brick or concrete blocks.)

There was a lull of a year before suitable builders were found to complete the fit-out, made more difficult by the fact that Reeve's budget had already been maxed out. Perseverance and continued momentum were essential, both of which could be attributed, in some part, to Reeve's new partner, Michela Meazza. Indeed, certain key moments in the house were accompanied by key moments in their relationship. For example, Reeve celebrated the purchase of the site at their first dinner date; the rough structure was then inaugurated with a bottle of champagne as the couple perched tentatively on the roof. Now, they have been happily living in the house since May 2007, having overseen the process together.

Through a set of gates at street level, one reaches the house beyond a small space that provides off-street car parking—a rarity in London. The dark-brown-stained timber that clads the facade also

Engineered Timber
The Sunken House was constructed by contractor Eurban of Leno solid timber panels from the Swiss manufacturer Balteschwiler. After receiving the plans from the architect, each custom panel is constructed by cross-laminating side cuts of spruce until the desired shape is reached. The panels are easily shipped flat, and are self-supporting when installed—no nailguns required.

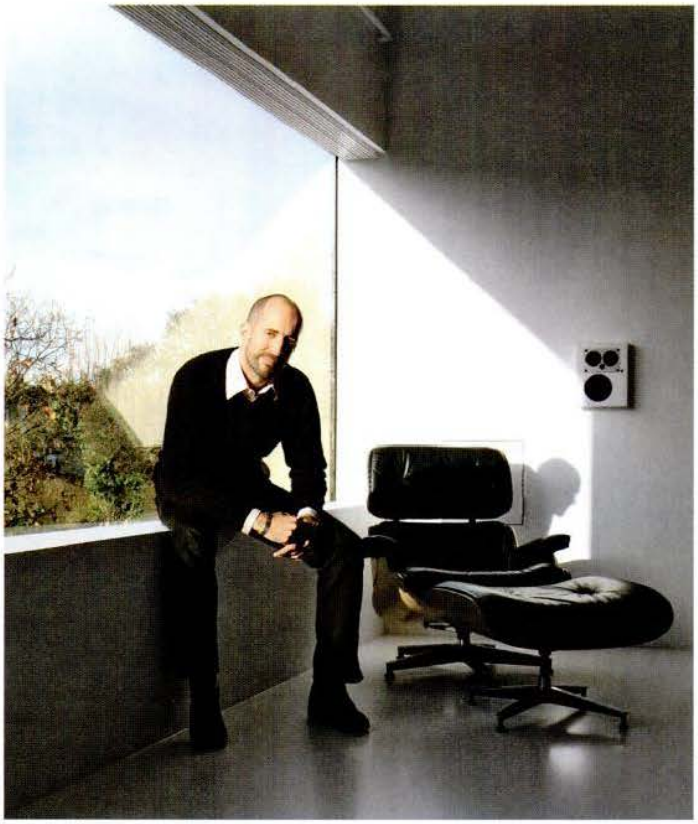
flows into the vertical and horizontal surfaces of the concrete patio. This abundant use of what is essentially wood decking gives the impression that the house has sunk into its own skin, which explains why Adjaye named it the Sunken House.

Past the front door, a triple-height space—a key transitional area—houses a walnut staircase flooded with natural light from the overhead slot window. Small, randomly positioned panels dot some of the walls. These somewhat abstract interjections open to the outside, allowing natural cross ventilation to counteract any overheating in the summer. All rooms have under-floor heating, banishing the need for unsightly radiators. The master bedroom, bathroom, and office occupy this main floor, so guests are either steered down toward the kitchen or up to the main living room.

Head upstairs and the tranquility of the site comes alive: The patina of foliage from the rubina, oak, maple, and birch trees and surrounding gardens are framed beautifully by the large single-pane picture window. Dominating the vast white room with its poured white rubber floor is a corner sofa by British furniture designer Rock Galpin, big enough for entertaining or catching a movie on the slick TV. The back wall features immense built-in closets, which Meazza uses for her office. For the brave,

Did you know?
The word "spruce" originated from alterations to the word "Pruce," which was a previous name for Prussia, as a generic term for goods brought to England by Hanseatic traders from that region. This included not only the timber but also such things as beer and leather. In the 16th century "spruce" became a verb meaning to trim or make neat.

Reeve's partner, Michela Meazza, uses built-in closets for her home office (right). The imposing gunmetal gray doors can simply be swung shut at the end of a long day's work. Reeve himself (below) pauses in a ray of afternoon sunshine, surrounded by the house he had so long dreamed of building. Seen in the architectural context of its London neighborhood (opposite), the house is all the more extraordinary: compact, materially innovative, and easy on the eyes. p.206



a drop-down hatch in the ceiling reveals a sliding ladder with access to the barrier-free flat roof, which boasts stunning 360-degree views of London's distant high-rises. Solar panels reap the rewards of such exposure and generate energy for the home's hot-water supply.

Down in the kitchen, a spacious layout for both the cook and guests fulfills the couple's love for entertaining. A large glass window allows light in and gives view to the small jasmine-lined outdoor area, great for summer parties. The garden links around to a small courtyard at the front of the house, and stairs loop back up to the entrance.

One leaves Ed's Shed certain that it is anything but a shed. Adjaye has managed to create an urban sanctuary—a home that invites you to retreat from the demands of city life. The couple, hindered by constant travel commitments, are conscious that they need to add more homely touches to counteract a feeling of emptiness in certain spaces—a sparseness that is nevertheless balanced by soft artificial illumination and continual shifts in natural light.

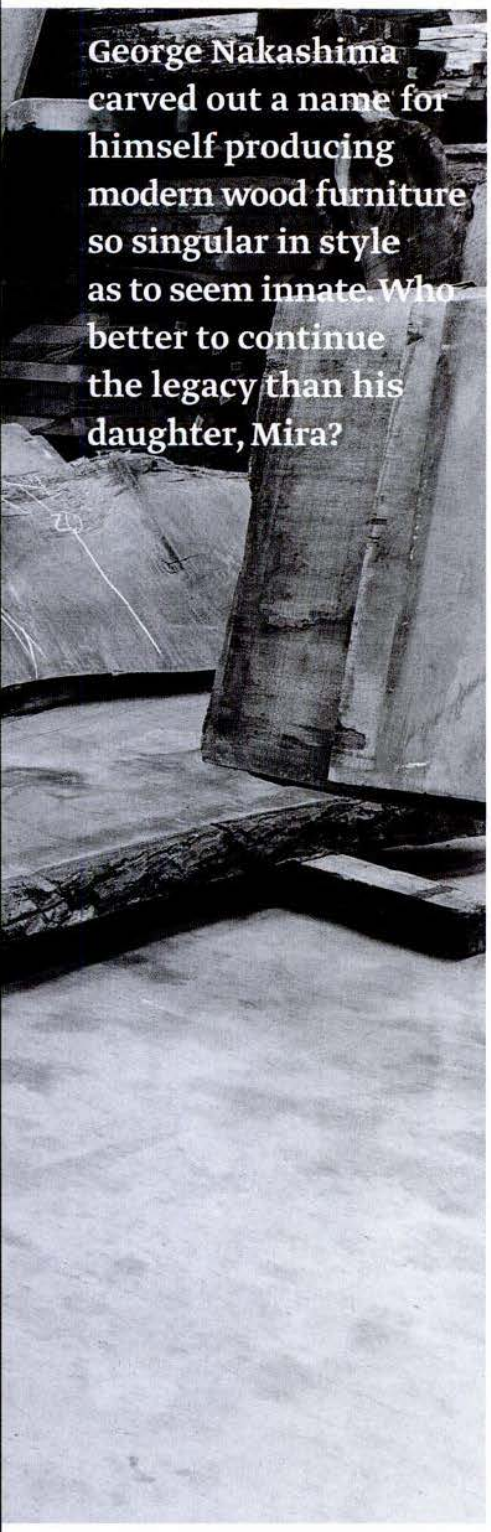
Asked if there is anything he would have done differently, Reeve responds with a fairly resolute "no." He is living the euphoria that is inevitable after such an ambitious endeavor—an endeavor that has literally been a lifetime in the planning.


75
75A

A Custom Concern

Story by Marc Kristal
Photos by Leslie Williamson

"When you have two branches that go off the trunk, you cut through them to get the widest expanse," says Mira Nakashima, who learned woodworking from her father,



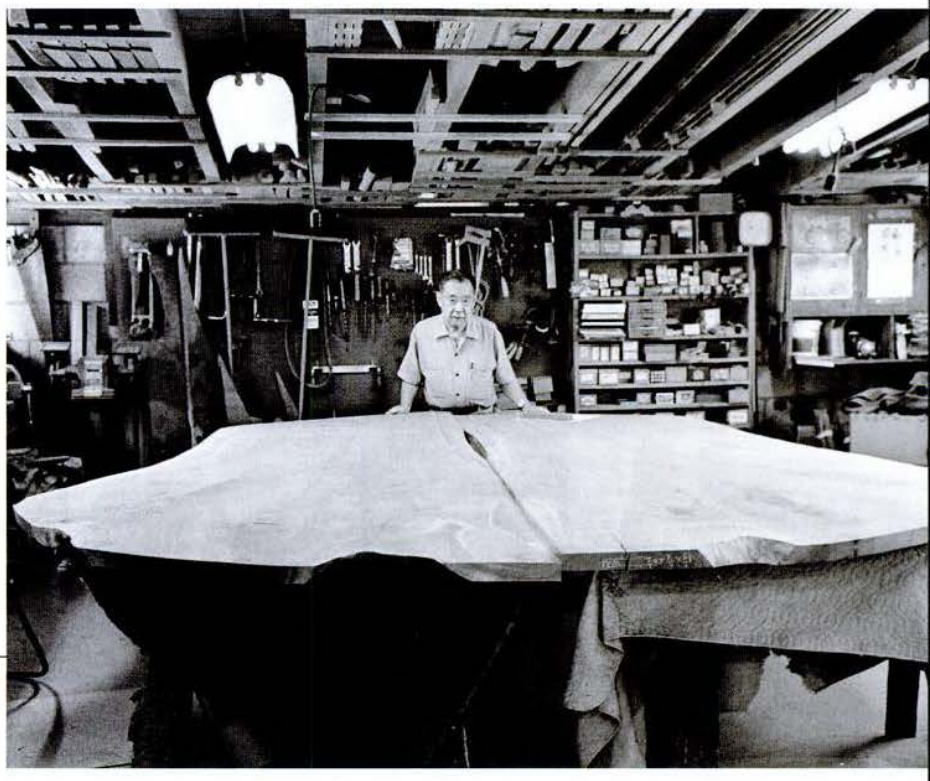
George Nakashima carved out a name for himself producing modern wood furniture so singular in style as to seem innate. Who better to continue the legacy than his daughter, Mira?

Photo by Jack Rosen (right)

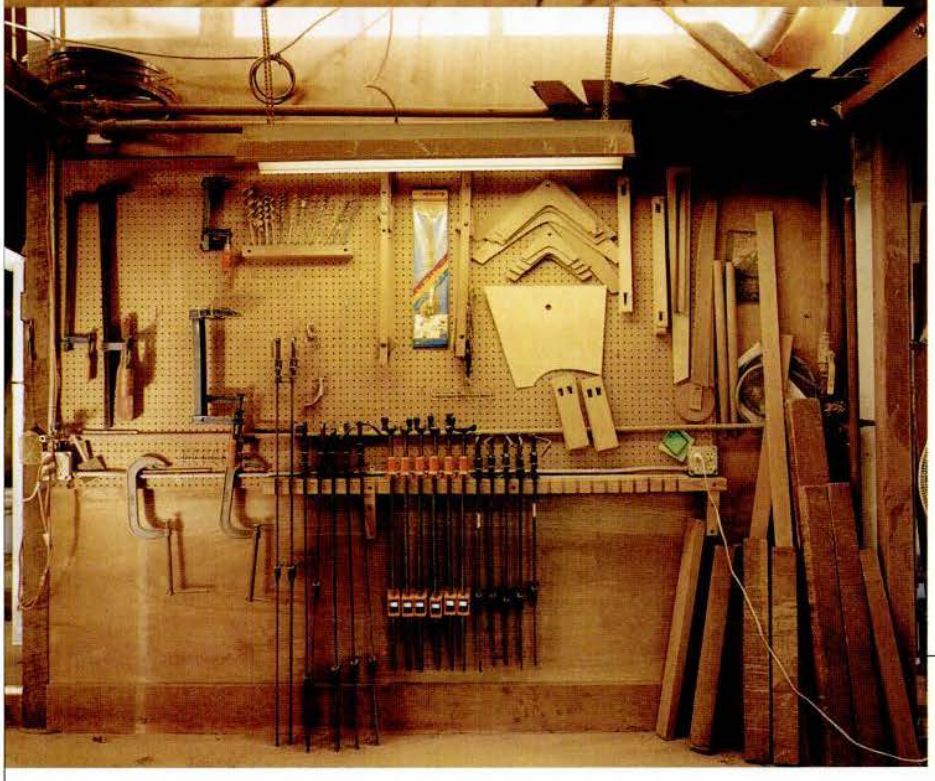
George Nakashima Woodworker, the concern that since 1944 has produced furniture by "the one American blue-chip designer of the 20th century"—according to Sotheby's James Zemaitis—occupies 8.87 lush acres at 1847 Aquetong Road in New Hope, Pennsylvania. The compound, as most people call it, consists of 15 structures, all but one designed by Nakashima himself. These range from utilitarian workshops and warehouses to the Reception House, arts building, and Conoid Studio, which combine modernist design and construction principles, Japanese architectural traditions, and wood craftsmanship with originality and elegance.

Though legend has it that Nakashima made every piece, in actuality he employed a group of artisans to help execute his designs. Today the operation remains much as it was, with Mira Nakashima running things since her father's death in 1990. Three full-time chair makers, three finishers, and five multipurpose woodworkers produce classic Nakashima works, Mira's Keisho line, and custom adaptations—everything from $750 stools (in a day or so) to 18-foot-long, $75,000 dining tables (in about a month)—at the rate of roughly 400 pieces per year.

Also unchanged is the consuming emphasis on wood. Just as the foundation of great cooking is quality ingredients, Nakashima furniture depends upon superlative material, whether it's local black walnut or cherry, California redwood root, Carpathian elm burl, or French olive ash. No less critical is the cutting, which involves balancing a good yield with a sense of how to realize the timber's aesthetic and structural potential. "Dad said that, when you cut a log into lumber, you're like a sculptor," says Mira, a disarmingly friendly, unpretentious woman, over tea and truffles in the studio. "You have to have an idea of what you're going to make out of it." After they've been flitch-sawn (to preserve the natural edge), the boards are dried for several years, then kiln-dried and stored in one of three warehouses, where they await selection by a client, often for decades. Though choosing can take a few hours, says Mira, "Sometimes we go back and forth for months before they make up their minds." Once a decision is finalized, she produces a detailed drawing. Then the ▶



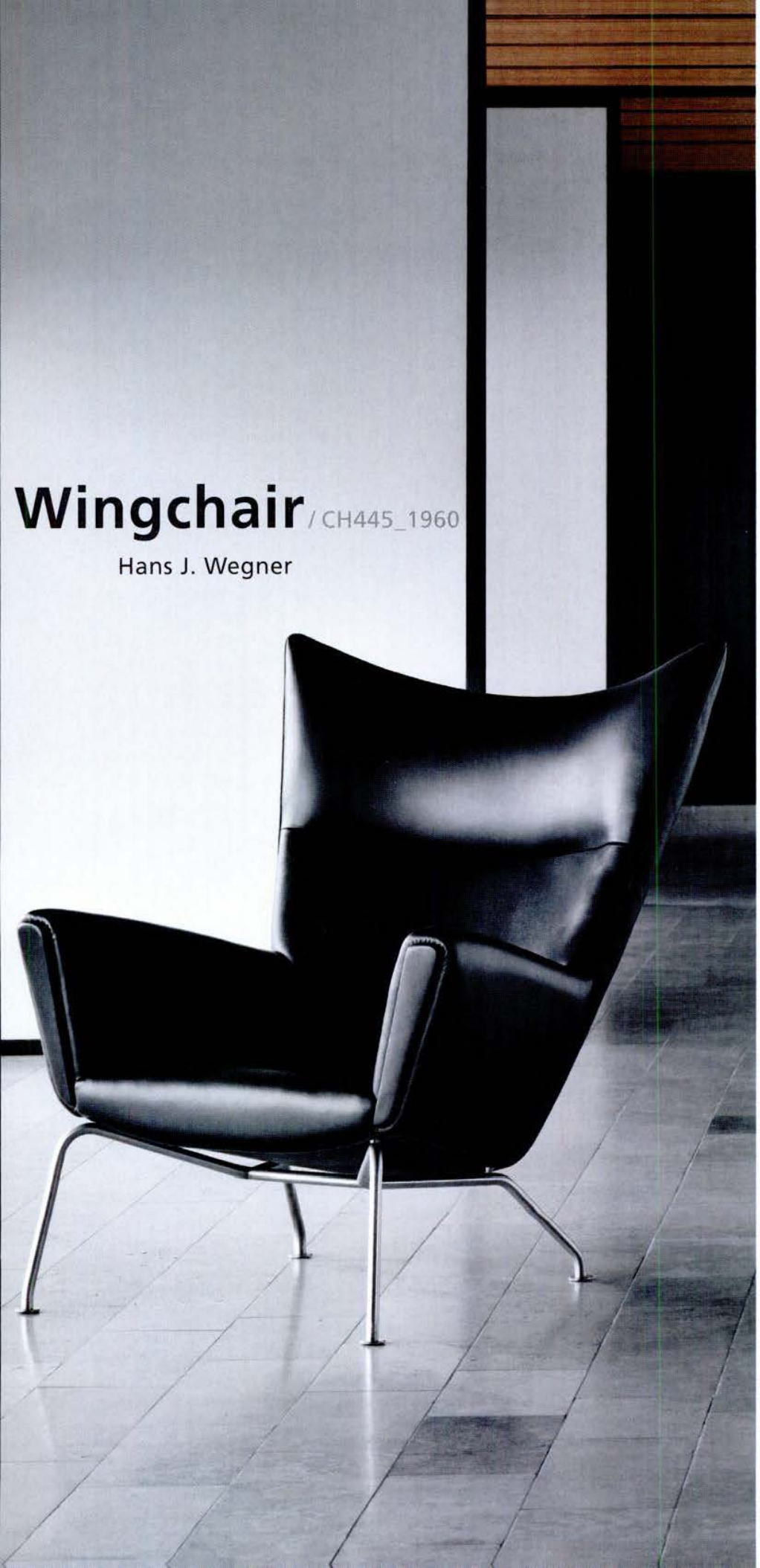
George (right, in 1986). After cutting, the boards are air-dried for several years, then kiln-dried and stacked according to their original formation.



wood-workers have at it, converting their Grade A ingredient into one of the most recognizable furniture design styles of the past 100 years.

That style—characterized by free-form edges and vividly grained surfaces, butterfly-shaped splints that stabilize imperfections, and architectural support structures that express the tension between the natural and designed—seems inevitable, but it grew out of a decades-long dialogue between the designer's creative spirit and a range of artistic and cultural influences. Nakashima's voyage of self-actualization—he called himself "the world's first hippie"—took him through many lives: from an Arcadian boyhood hiking in the Pacific Northwest (he was born in Spokane in 1905); to architectural training in France, the University of Washington, and MIT; to a job in the Tokyo office of architect Antonin Raymond. Faith played a part as well: In 1936, Nakashima journeyed to Pondicherry, India, to oversee a building project at the ashram of Sri Aurobindo, and was so taken with the influential Indian teacher that he became a disciple. So, too, did trauma: Nakashima ultimately resettled in ▸

Mira (above left) with a chalk-annotated board in one of the three workshops George built. A woodworker (above) removes the bark from a natural edge.



Wingchair / CH445_1960

Hans J. Wegner

CARL HANSEN & SØN
1908 - 2008

Hans J. Wegner / Wishbone Chair, CH24_1950

Hans J. Wegner / Shell Chair, CH07_1963

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Seattle, but in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor, his family (including two-week-old Mira) was relocated to an internment camp in Idaho. There he learned traditional Japanese carpentry from a fellow internee. Luckily, Raymond—who owned a farm in New Hope—was able to sponsor the Nakashimas' release, and they joined him there in 1943. A year later, Nakashima began making furniture in his garage; two years after that, he acquired the first three acres of land, and Nakashima Woodworker found its home.

These peregrinations influenced Nakashima variously. Exposure to Japanese culture strengthened his innate "kinship with the heart of a tree," as he put it, and led him to fashion furniture from split, perforated boards; this amounted, he believed, to "an act of resurrection," and offered the tree "a second life of dignity and strength." But Nakashima was also motivated, Mira believes, by privation. "When we were put in camp, he learned to work with found materials—packing crates, or gnarly bits of bitterbrush he picked up in the desert," she says. The butterfly splints, widely regarded as a Nakshima invention, are actually a centuries-old structural device used in European and Shaker furniture, though typically concealed. Nakashima's innovation, inspired by his Eastern experience, was to expose them: "The whole idea of transparency is inherent in Japanese architecture. Dad just carried it over to furniture." Nakashima's formal training enabled him to craft elegantly minimal supports for his great gnarled tabletops. "He understood the forces and joinery so well that he was able to use as little understructure as possible," Mira says.

The designer's most profound influence, however, was spiritual: Sri Aurobindo taught him, Mira recalls, "that unless you get your ego out of the way, you can't go to your highest potential." And, as beauty is an expression of the divine, the artisan "is only a medium for transferring this energy from the universe to everyday life." Yet despite his devotion to the Mingei ideal of the unknown craftsman, and what Mira calls "his anti-ego spiels," Nakashima possessed an outsize personality and tolerated no interference—from anyone. "I can't count the times I was fired," says Mira, who studied architecture at Harvard and Tokyo's Waseda University, and practiced interior and landscape design, before joining her father in 1970. "One time, I'd just finished an assertiveness course, and decided to apply what I'd learned. I was out the door." So closely was Nakashima associated with his furniture that it nearly killed the business. "After he died, people who'd ordered things figured they couldn't be any good without him," Mira says. "We had 50 percent cancellations."

What saved things, poignantly, was a disaster. In 1989, a fire destroyed the Princeton, New Jersey, home of Arthur and Evelyn Krosnick, taking with it the 112 Nakashima works they'd accumulated over three decades. Devastated, they asked the designer to reconstruct their collection; after his death, the project fell to Mira. "That was all the business we had," she remembers. "It took three and a half years. And it was a good learning experience for me."

The story expresses a recurring theme of the family's life and work—

Photos by Ezra Stoller/Esto (middle, right), Courtesy The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley (top), Nakashima Archives (bottom)

George referred to the process of distressing furniture as "Kevinizing," says Mira, "because my brother Kevin (bottom left, with George and Mira, circa 1975) was always hopping around on the tabletops in his cowboy boots." When George began the compound, his daughter recalls, "The shop was the first building. We lived in a tent."

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Although Nakashima created mass-produced furniture for Knoll (1946–1954) and Widdicomb-Mueller (1958–1961), says Mira, "he wasn't happy with the results. They'd do variations and changes without telling him." Nakashima preferred to craft pieces like the 1947 Grass-Seated chair (above) at the compound with his own workers.

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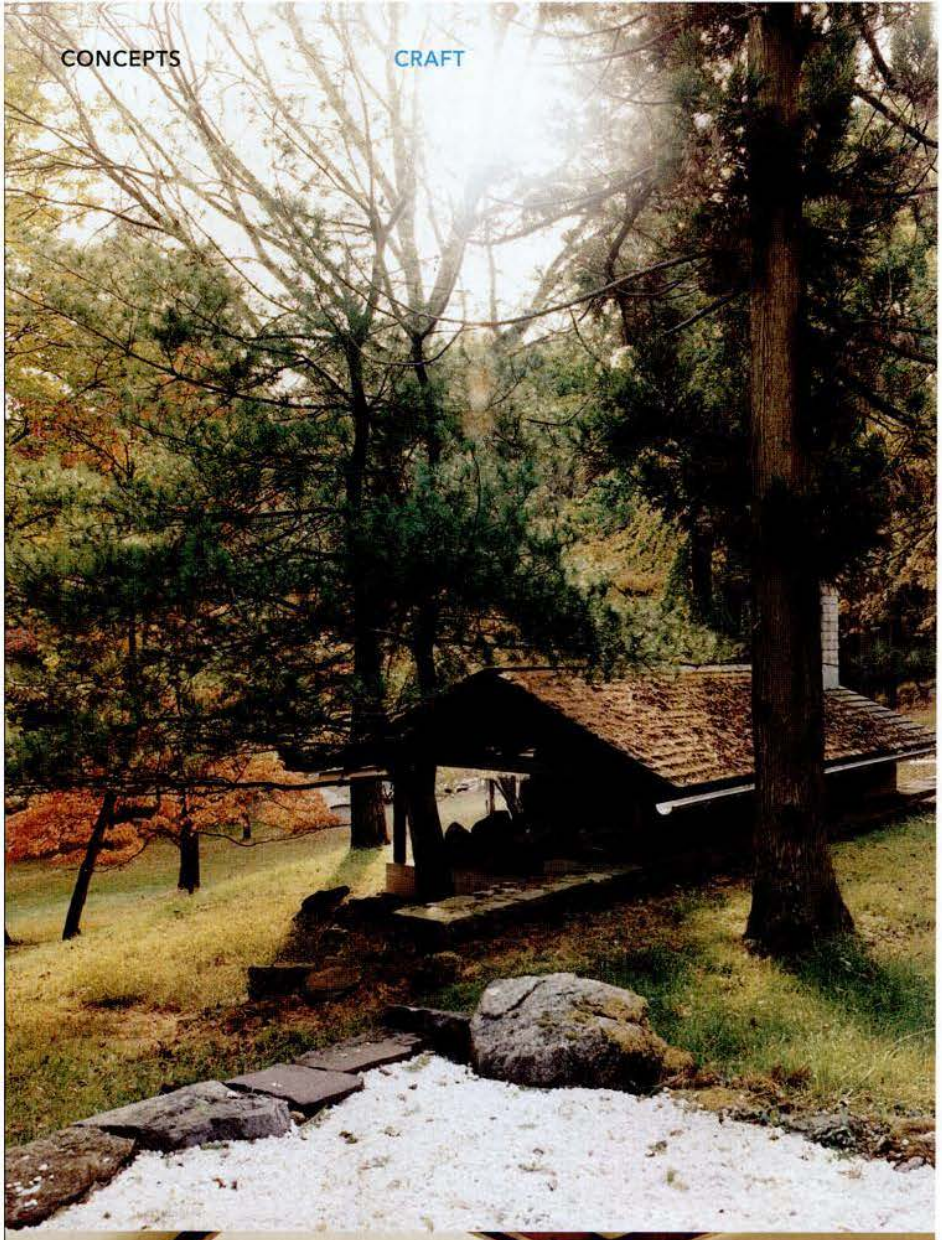
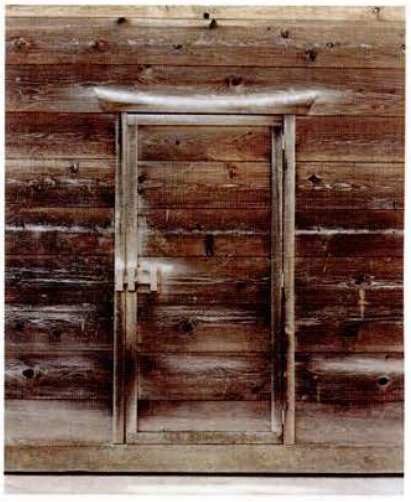


one echoed, fittingly, in the cycles of nature: death and resurrection. Just as he viewed his craft as giving a "second life" to a tree, it was the Krosnicks' catastrophe that enabled Mira not only to sustain the business but to gain the skills and confidence to make it her own. She doesn't foresee Nakashima Woodworker surviving into a third generation. But Mira's desire to preserve both the compound and her father's legacy has led her to explore converting it into "a museum or teaching institution"—she laughs—"to teach all those people making knock-offs the right way to make 'em."

Nakashima's message, his daughter once wrote, was that "we must consistently remember the eternal in all that we do," which is a way of saying that, while its form may change, the spirit endures. So it will be, one hopes, at 1847 Aquetong—and for the most eternal of reasons. "It's a shame to waste it all," Mira says. "That's why I kept going after Dad died. It's a shame to waste it all."



The compound's structures range from simple sheds (top) to the exquisite Reception House (bottom left), Nakashima's self-proclaimed "swan song" at the compound.

DWELL AROUND THE CLOCK NEWSLETTERS

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Dwell Community
Events & Promotions

A Mama's Touch

Walking along a narrow cobbled road in a lively part of London's Bethnal Green with garages and lock-ups arranged in a row along one side, it isn't difficult to spot Nina Tolstrup's home. While the other houses on the street all have brick facades, only one is finished in a crisp, clean render with unpainted, matte-varnished timber doors. It has to belong to a designer. Nevertheless, I decide to make sure I'm in the right place before I ring the doorbell. As I'm rummaging around in my bag, trying to find my diary, a voice with more than a hint of a Danish accent floats down from a balcony a couple floors above me: "Grant, hello! Is it not easy to find?"

Very quietly Tolstrup, the Danish furniture and product designer, who works under the name Studiomama, has been carving herself an enviable reputation in the UK. At the 2007 100% Design Festival in London, for instance, she picked up the Best Contribution award for the Made in Denmark stand she curated. She also walked away with first prize at Design Nation's Eureka exhibition for a collection of elegant pewter bowls she developed with Wentworth. Surprisingly, though, Tolstrup came to the profession a touch later in life, hitting her stride at 38 once her two children had reached school age.

And this, I discover, is reflected in the family's home, where her work area takes up a minimal amount of space. As she escorts me to the second floor, which contains the kitchen and lounge area and also her titanium PowerBook, it only takes a glance to

Behind Nina Tolstrup's dining table/office desk is a sideboard she designed herself, which is littered with things she has both collected and made.

Story by Grant Gibson
Photos by Ben Anders

notice that we're surrounded not only by Tolstrup's own work, but also by pieces from designers she admires. The kettle is from the collection Jasper Morrison designed for Rowenta; tucked under her office desk-cum-dining table is an old Hans Wegner Wishbone chair; I spot an Arne Jacobsen tea pot; and we sit on some Rodney Kinsman-designed Omkstak chairs reclaimed from a rubbish bin at the Royal College of Art.

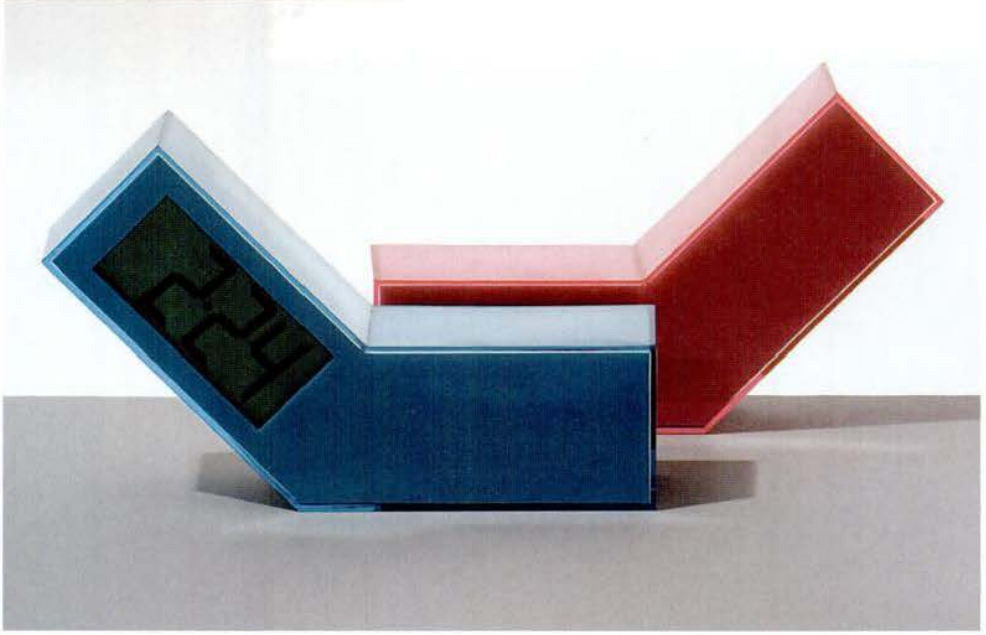
The fact that there's an outdoor shower on the balcony—not something you tend to see in this part of town—adds to the interior's contemporary Scandinavian feel. "As a kid there would not have been a day where I wouldn't have been exposed in one way or another to these kinds of design icons," she shrugs. And sitting snugly next to all these classics are pieces from her own portfolio. In fact, the house acts as a rather sweet retrospective of her fledgling career, including her commercial work represented by the brightly colored, button-free OnOff clock—so called because to turn the alarm off you tilt the clock sideways until it rests on its outstretched arm.

This quirky but functional design language pops up elsewhere: Her dressing-room mirror can be flipped 90 degrees and locked into place to become an ironing board. And then there's the huge, freestanding medium-density fiberboard (MDF) cube punctured with circular windows that acts as her children's playroom. "I probably can't deny that there's a very strong Danish influence in my work," she explains when quizzed about her

Nina Tolstrup's living space (above) is furnished with a combination of pieces that she's designed herself, like the Pallet chair (right) she created for the Ten, 10, X project at 100% Design, and the classics she's collected from the likes of Kjærholm (in red leather) and Eames. It isn't difficult to spot the designer's house (left) along the narrow cobbled street in the East End of London. The clean facade is a clear break with the predominantly brick houses and a row of lock-ups. p. 206

aesthetic. "It's the form follows function idea that's ingrained in me. I like quite simple shapes with a certain kind of functionality and truth to them. I'm not trying to do something overcomplicated." Fair enough, but she's probably too modest to mention that her products are also laced with a wit that, in a world full of slick, overbranded products, is something of a relief.

Initially trained in marketing, Tolstrup never quite felt at home being a client. "I was wanting to be much more involved in creating things," she says. Salvation came when she visited Les Ateliers school of industrial design in Paris with an artist friend. "It was a fantastic old factory building," she recalls, "that had all-new equipment and workshops. But it was totally disorganized. You arrived in the morning and there'd be no one there. Come



Photos by Richard Davies

The aptly named Mirror/Ironing Board (top) acts as a full-length mirror and also locks into place as an ironing board. The winsome Ice Star (left) comes flat-packed and can even be sent as a postcard. The magazine rack/toilet paper holder (right) was made for Habitat. The OnOff clock (bottom) comes in alarming colors. p.206

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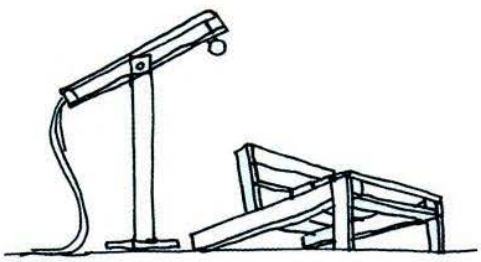
2000—One Line
The product that first brought Tolstrup to prominence, Habitat's One Line is a collection of bathroom accessories—from towel rails to toilet-roll holders—made from half-inch stainless steel tubing. Rather than getting the drill out, simply lean the pieces against the wall, providing bathroom furniture that can be moved at any time. (p. 168)

2003—Pilot hanger
Designed for Danish company Trip Trap, this hanger is made from pressed oak or teak with a stainless steel hook. Very Scandinavian, very beautiful, and far better for blouses and blazers than what the dry cleaner provides.

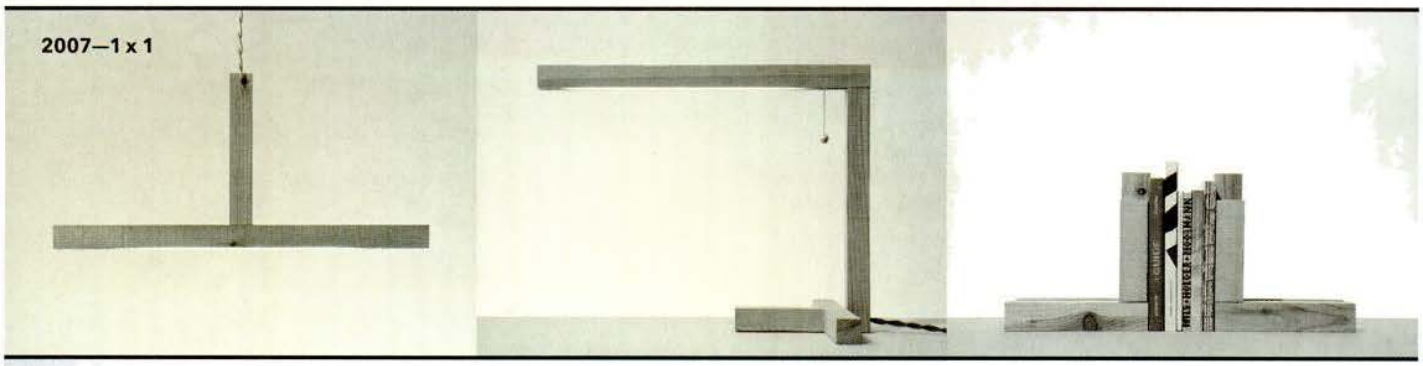
2005—Beach Chalet, Whitstable
The cedar shingles that clad Tolstrup's diminutive seaside chalet are most assuredly great shakes.

2006—Pallet Concept
Created for the 2006 Ten, 10, X exhibition at 100% Design, this collection of chairs, lamps, and stools appears to have developed a life of its own. The idea is simple: Take pallets found in the street, download assembly instructions from Tolstrup's website, and refashion them into a simple, elegant range of furniture.



2006—Random Shelving
Ninety-six pieces of oak were hand-cut to form this literary puzzler. (p. 172)

2006—OnOff alarm clock
This battery-powered bedside clock comes sans irritatingly small buttons and a convoluted set of instructions. The alarm is activated when the LCD screen lays flat and stops as it's tilted onto its sidearm. The OnOff alarm clock, made by Lexon, is as quirky as it is effective. And at $40, something of a steal. (p. 168)



2007—Fruity bowls
Manufactured by Wentworth Pewter

2007—Happy Family chairs
Manufactured by E&Y

2007—Made in Denmark
Curated by Tolstrup, the stand, which showcased some of the best young talent in Denmark, was one of the highlights of London's 100% Design. Taking inspiration from Wegner's Wishbone chair, Tolstrup found a clutch of Danish designers who manufacture their products locally.

Photos by Makoto Fujii (Child chair high + low and pallet chair), Richard Davies (Pilot hanger, 1 x 1, Fruity bowls)

PAINT COLOR: MS329 *Blue Strawberry Pot.*
ADDITIONAL PRODUCTS: *Peyton Tuxedo Sofa, Larkspur Bar Cabinet.*

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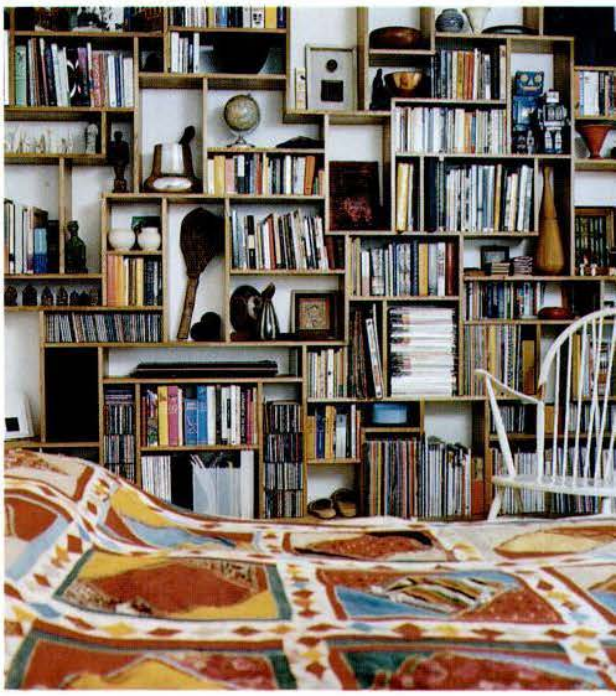
midnight everyone was working and there was loud music."

After a stint in the fashion industry, a foray into retail, a spell as a photojournalist, as well as a period as a corporate design manager, it was only when she met her partner, Jack Mama (after whom the practice is named), and moved to the United Kingdom that she began designing properly. "I had no contacts or networks here," she recalls. "I just picked up the phone and called Habitat and asked to speak to Tom Dixon." Dixon took her call, then commissioned her to design One Line, a range of bathroom accessories made from half-inch stainless steel tubes.

Despite this initial success, Tolstrup's career was almost instantly put on hold when she had a family. "I effectively took four years off, which I was really paranoid about at the time," she says.

In 2006, though, she came back with a bang, starring at the Ten, 10, X booth at 100% Design, where a group of ten designers were asked to create a range of products that cost £10 made with materials that came from a 10 km radius of their respective studios. Taking the timber pallets dumped around the market near her home, Tolstrup created a dining and lounge chair, a lamp, and a stool. Assembly instructions can be downloaded from her website for £10. According to Tolstrup, it's about "taking that sustainable exercise as a designer and really just selling my ideas rather than a product." Though the £10 pieces made out of street flotsam may not be wildly comfortable, they certainly don't look out of place in her living room next to the beautifully battered Poul Kjærholm sofa.



The self-supporting and extremely flexible bookshelf (top) is made from 12 mm oak planks and uses 96 individual handmade pieces. Tolstrup made a home within a home (left) for her playful children from painted MDF. Sticking with the Scandinavian feel, Legos are plentiful. The balcony (right) is notable for its outdoor shower. p. 206

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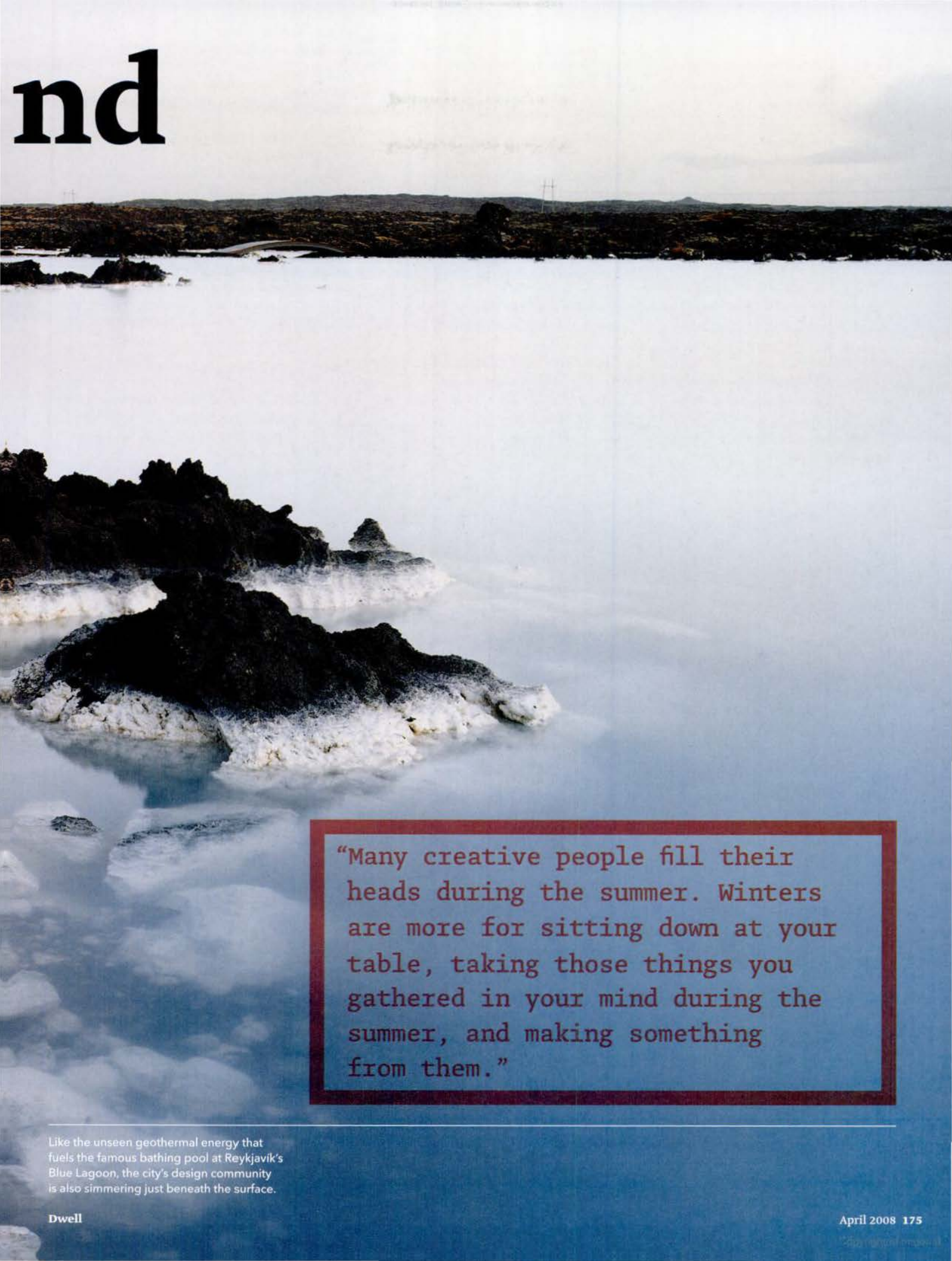


"Many creative people fill their heads during the summer. Winters are more for sitting down at your table, taking those things you gathered in your mind during the summer, and making something from them."

Like the unseen geothermal energy that fuels the famous bathing pool at Reykjavík's Blue Lagoon, the city's design community is also simmering just beneath the surface.

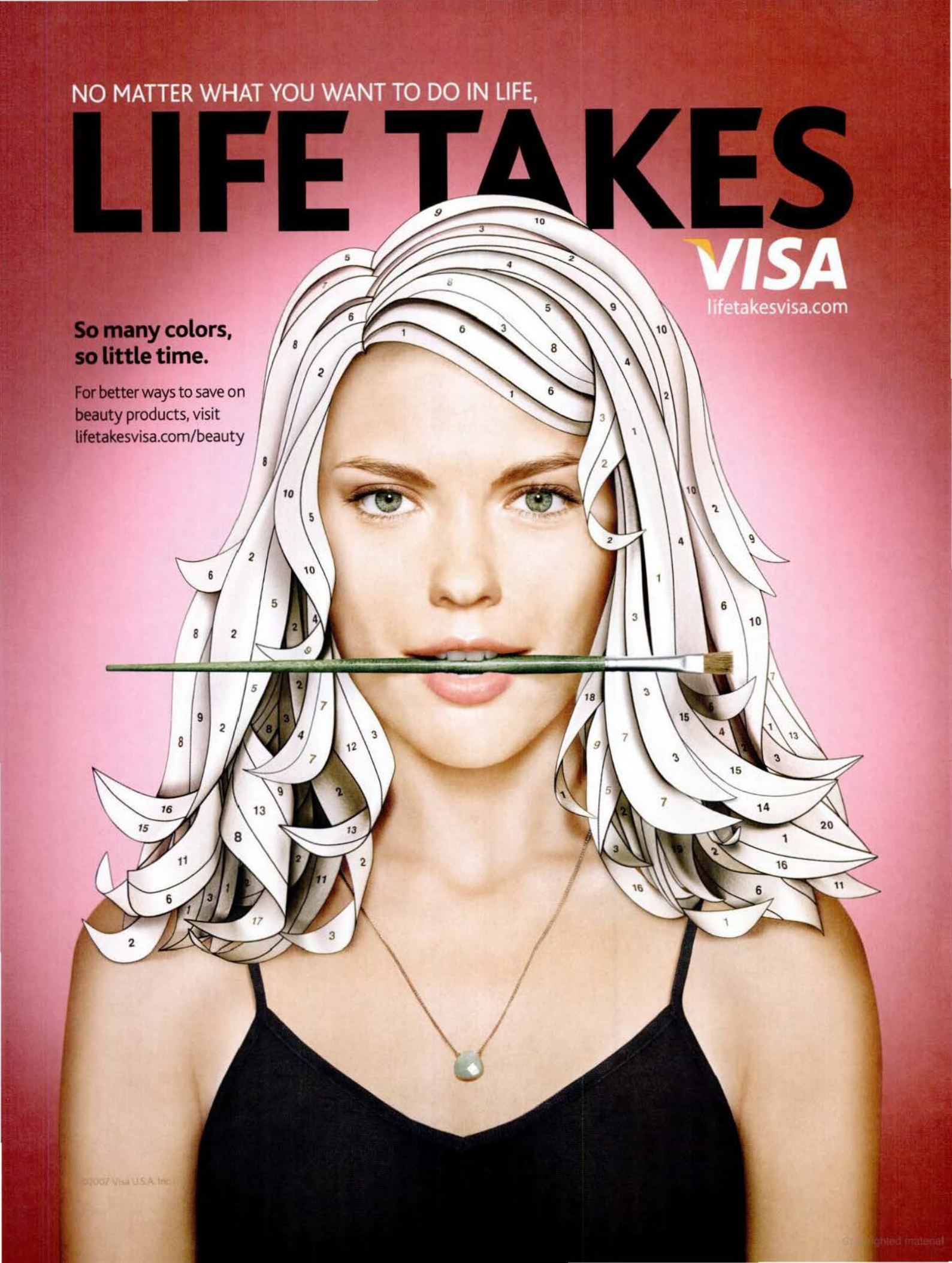
The view from Studio Bility designer Gudrún Lilja Gunnlaugsdóttir's home just outside Reykjavík would be bucolic were it not for the threat of severe weather. In the former auto repair garage that she and graphic designer husband Jon Ásgeir Hreinsson are renovating, expansive windows look out on a lighthouse at the end of a long jetty. At midnight on the night after Midsummer's Eve, the sun hasn't set. We have a clear view of the sky as it grows moody, stooping low and gray, reminding us that summer could disappear precipitously under showers of rain and the bruising winds off the North Atlantic.

Iceland is a land of extremes, suspended between Europe and North America, with ties to Scandinavia (Vikings, sagas, an affinity for nature) but few of its high-profile design icons. The countryside features dramatic textures (moss, magma, roiling hot springs, and glacial crevasses), while much of its tiny, cosmopolitan population lives in the highly rational architecture of the capital, Reykjavík. The national language, like much of Iceland's architecture, is literal and lacks extraneous embellishment or preciousness. Additions to the lexicon are often made up of precise, elaborate compound words (Icelandic is not unlike German in this respect), augmenting the Icelandic vocabulary to keep pace with developments in technology and the sciences. (The word for "deodorant," *svitalyktareydir*, entered the dictionary some decades back and literally means "smell-sweat-destroyer.") But this highly efficient brand of economy is tempered by a widespread faith in fairies and *huldufólk*, the hidden people who inhabit stones.

It wasn't until 2000 that the Iceland Academy of Arts began to grant degrees in design, and today, as the first graduates establish studios and show new work, Reykjavík's burgeoning design community is reaching new heights. Last year Gunnlaugsdóttir curated the exhibit Magma/Kvika: Icelandic Contemporary Design 2007 at the Reykjavík Art Museum, which featured the multidisciplinary work of more than 80 local designers, a striking number relative to the country's population of 300,000.

Over skewers of fresh fish brought home from a hole-in-the-wall shop in the nearby harbor, Gunnlaugsdóttir talked about what's afoot and why it's time for all of us to keep an eye on Iceland.

Nearly two-thirds of Iceland's population of 300,000 lives in the greater Reykjavík area. The city's name means "smoky bay." The view of the waterfront shows the rational architectural pragmatism that holds sway in much of the country.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What do most people in the rest of the world not really understand about Iceland?

That the population is as small as it is, only 300,000 in the whole country, and that it is always cold.

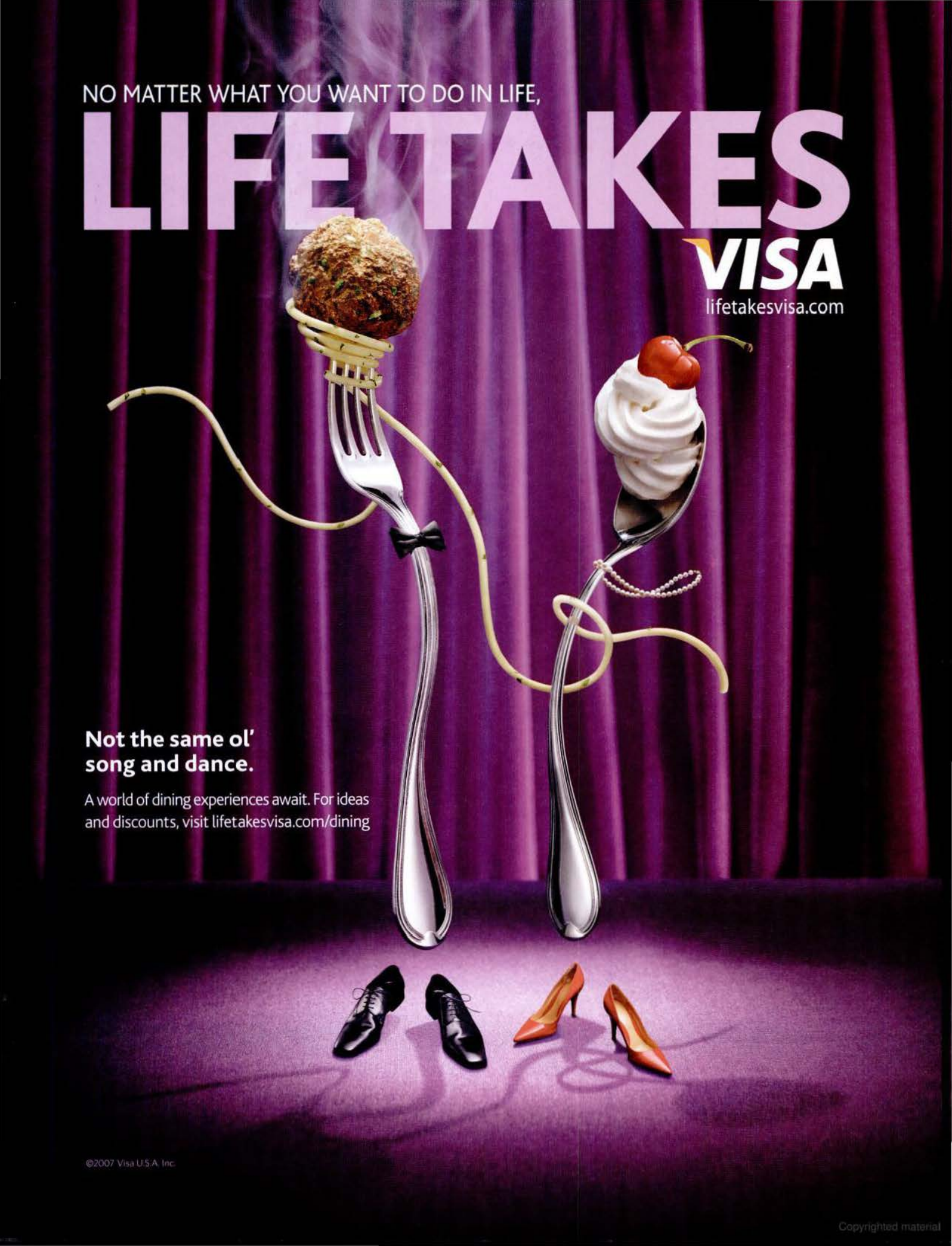
Does the physical climate have any effect on Reykjavík's creative climate?

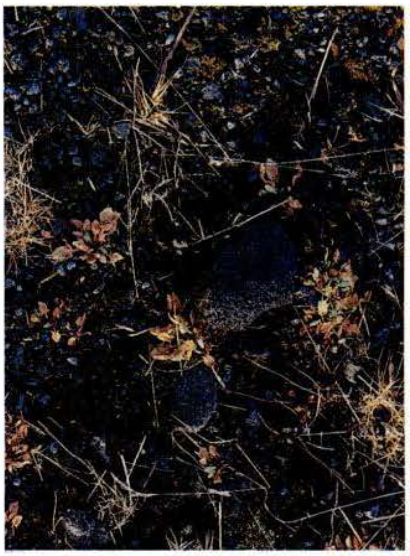
The progress of making things is much faster here because somehow you tend to hurry before the storm hits. Summers are more playful, and we do not take work too seriously. You may see a sign on an office door reading "Due to very nice weather, we are taking the rest of the day off." Very nice weather, meaning more than 68 degrees. I think many creative people fill their heads during summer. Winters are more for sitting down at your table, taking those things you gathered in your mind during the summer, and making something from them. Last year, Haraldur Jónsson used black paper to create the exhibit Crumpled Darkness, which really represents what it is like to live in the darkest days of winter. Architects have played with our climate; the moss wall on the city hall designed by Studio Granda is a good example. Its colors and forms transform with each season. Icelandic wool keeps us warm and is an inspiration. "Love gloves" are woolen mittens that are joined together so you can still hold hands on cold winter days.

When you returned from studying design at Eindhoven in the Netherlands, what were your impressions of Reykjavík?

I really wanted to figure out what ▸

Grasses and moss (top) grow in plush mats over volcanic rock on the edges of the city. Her back to the lighthouse that she and her family are renovating, Gunnlaugsdóttir (left) teaches, curates, and runs her own design studio on the outskirts of Reykjavík. The houses (right) show the traditional style alongside the contemporary. ⓘ p. 206





The dramatic Icelandic landscape is on stark display just outside the capital. The North American and Eurasian tectonic plates meet near Keflavic (top left), and rocks (top right) may house the *huldufólk*. Geothermal activity (bottom right) is nothing new, nor is the slightly saltier activity that takes place in this shark-skinning shack (bottom left).

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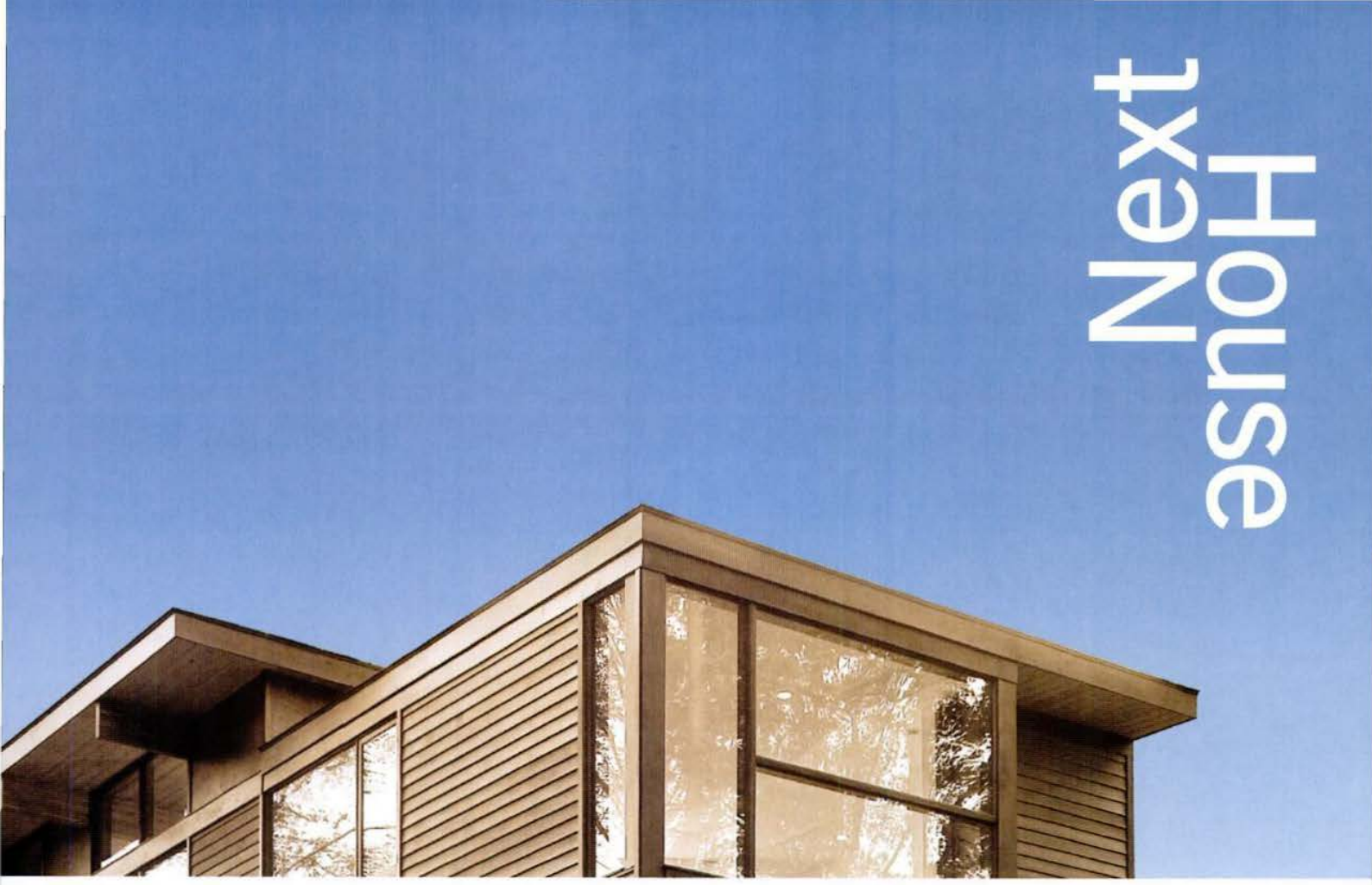
makes design here distinct, but I discovered that we are very international and mixed. You can find projects that are linked to our stories and myths, like the work by Vik Prjónsdóttir, which is full of wit but still practical, substantial, and even ecofriendly in its production and creation.

We also have a lot of designers whose work is very craft-based, with materials like ceramics, wool, and fish skin. Good examples of this are shops like Kirsuberjatréd and Kraum and the work of ceramicist Kogga.

You can see the city shining in the creations of young designers. In fashion it is names like Naked Ape, which makes street clothing with screenprinted artwork by various Icelandic artists. Mundi Designs is an exciting new fashion label headed up by a young graphic designer.

The original Naked Ape shop (top) sells inventive street clothes that are screenprinted by the store's owner and many local artists and designers. Vik Prjónsdóttir Studio (right) is on the vanguard of Icelandic design. The Asmundur Sveinsson Collection (bottom left) is worth visiting for the architecture as much as the sculpture. p. 206



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Does the widespread belief in folktales manifest itself in the design being made?

In a way, I think many designers think it is too close to them and maybe a bit naive. Fairies and *huldufólk* are a part of our history and have been in our stories for ages. It might now be a good time to introduce those creatures in designs. I've used them in a few of my own designs. It's important for us to remember that we are not living alone in this world.

When we talk about Reykjavík, are we only talking about one half of the Icelandic culture?

Reykjavík is a big part of our culture, but the countryside is even bigger. Many people have summer houses or second homes in the country—or come from a family of farmers way back. You are always close to your roots and know where you come from. We all take inspiration from nature and our sagas. Not that we dwell in the past, but we know where to look to create something new from our past.

Considering the Art Academy just began granting design degrees, have local designers found their voices yet? Are there any issues that they are struggling with, like the lack of a manufacturing base in the country?

The design community is young, and still has to find its way. Iceland is a great country for making prototypes and limited editions due to the closeness of the factories, but it is too expensive for export in mass production. The government could be a lot stronger in setting a goal for the future of Icelandic design.

In architecture we have some really great Icelandic buildings, and local architects have fought to preserve our building style. It is so important that old and new come together and enrich each other.

What can visitors experience only in Reykjavík or Iceland?

Go to a local pool, and after a good swim go into the hot pot. That is where very important conversations take place—about politics, culture, gossip, whatever is an issue worth talking about. You should not miss the feeling of soft moss on rough lava. You can find it close to the city and in the countryside; just step out of your car and feel it. And during the winter, a blizzard—go outside and feel the weather in all its strength.

Kron Kron, a local shop, features the knitted seal-shaped robes, humorous mustache-guarding winter hats, and blankets by design collective Vik Prjónsóttir. p. 206

The cozy Saegreifinn (Sea Baron) Fish Shop is owned by a former fisherman, a legendary salty character who lives above the shop.

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Founded in 1946, Cappellini is a launch pad for great international designers. It offers a wide range of products in four collections. Collezione and Sistemi focus on the production of custom-made furniture; Progetto Oggetto features home furnishing accessories; Mondo is a series of pieces which reinterpret the handmade style with a cosmopolitan approach. Some Cappellini products are exhibited in the world's premiere museums. In 2004, Cappellini became part of Poltrona Frau, piloting the project for a "new quality centre" backed by the private investment company Charme. **cappellini.it.**

Poliform

Italian manufacturer of high-end wardrobe systems, wall units, beds, and kitchens since 1942. Collaborating with leading European industrial architects such as Paolo Piva, Carlo Colombo, and Christian Liaigre, to mention only a few, Poliform has brought quality, fashion, function, and technology together to create unique and timeless designs reflecting the personality of the contemporary homeowner. Call 888-POLIFORM for the showroom nearest you, or go to **poliformusa.com** to download catalogs in realtime.

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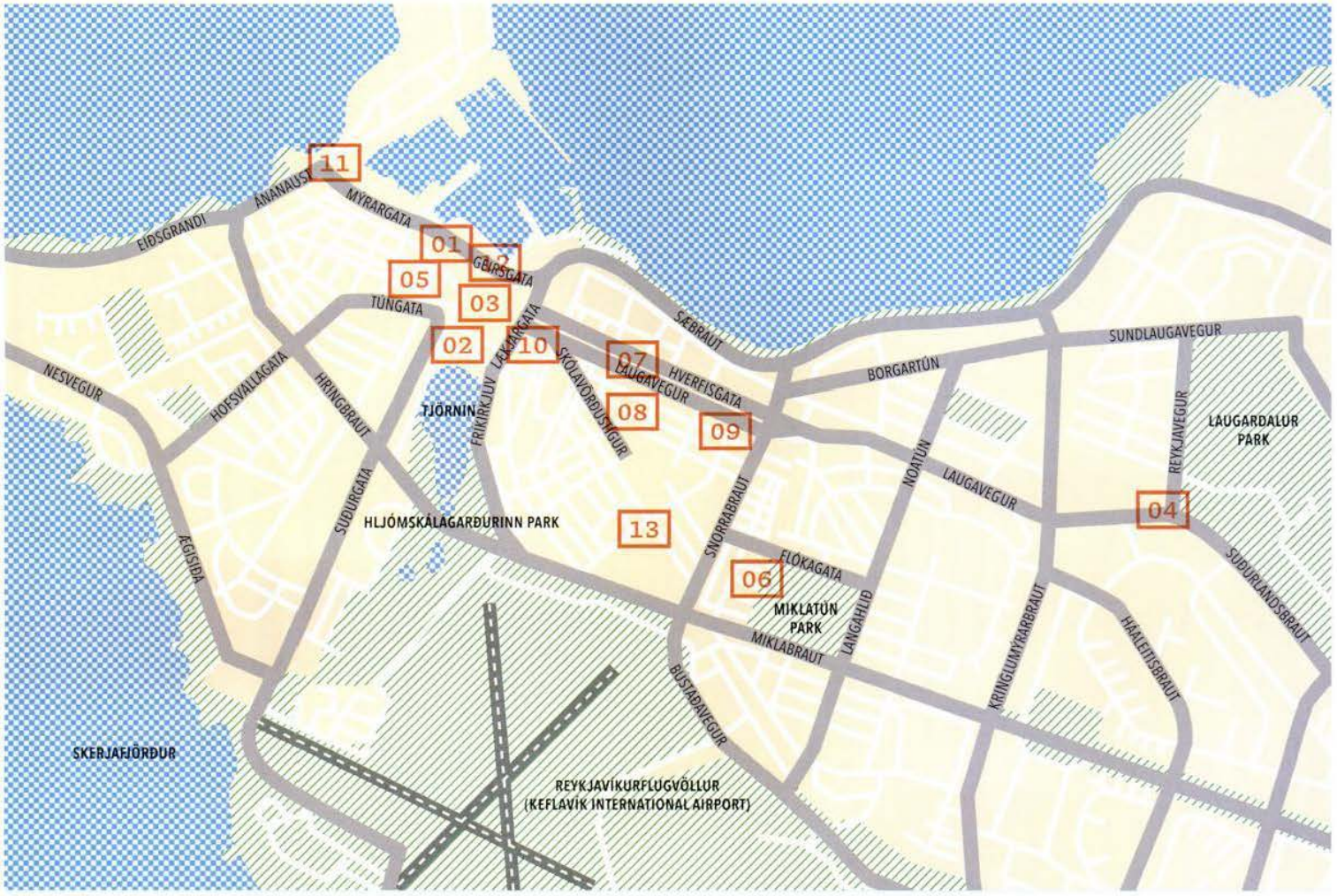
Events & Promotions



Restaurants

Saegreifinn [01]
saegreifinn.is
Geirsgata 8
354-553-1500

Sjávarkjallarinn [02]
sjavarkjallarinn.is
Adalstraeti 2
354-511-1212

Icelandic Fish & Chips [03]
fishandchips.is
Tryggvagata 8
354 511 1118

Museums

Reykjavík Art Museum (Each of the three branches)
artmuseum.is

Asmundur Sveinsson Sculpture Museum [04]
Sigtún
354-553-2155

Hafnarhús [05]
Tryggvagata 17
354-590-1200

Kjarvalsstadir [06]
Flókagata
354-517-1290

Fashion Shops

Naked Ape [07]
dontbenaked.com
Bankastraeti 14
354-551-1415

Spaksmannsspjarir [08]
steinunn.com
Laugavegur 40
354-588-6649

Kron Kron [09]
kronkron.com
Laugavegur 63b
354-562-8388

Design and Craft Shops

Kraum [10]
kraum.is
Adalstraeti 10
354-517-7797

Saltfélagid [11]
saltfelagid.is
Grandagardur 2
354-578-7810

Kogga [12]
kogga.is
Vesturgata 5
354 552 6036

Architecture

Hallgrímskirkja (church) [13]
hallgrimskirkja.is
Crowns the top of shopping street Skólavördustígur in the city center.

Grjótathorp (Stone Village)
One of the oldest neighborhoods in Reykjavík at the heart of the city center.

Music

Iceland Airwaves
icelandairwaves.com
Huge annual autumn music festival bringing together scores of local and international DJs and musicians, from Sigur Rós to Thievery Corporation, since 1999.

Nature

The lighthouse on Grotta Eyland

Money: Iceland uses the krona or crown (ISK).

Transportation: From Keflavík International Airport take the Flybus. A direct trip takes 40 to 50 minutes and costs ISK 1200 one way.

Tips: Tipping is never expected.

Gadget adaptability: European plug: ⊙

Shopping hours: Most businesses operate between 9 AM and 5 PM but summer working hours may change to between 8 AM and 4 PM.

Reykjavik Tourist Card: Available in 24-, 48-, or 72-hour increments, this card grants free admission to most museums, galleries, thermal pools, and unlimited bus travel within the city.

Foreign keyboard frustration level (1-10): 10. Start pecking.

Help! For police, ambulance, or fire, dial 112.

Time zone: GMT all year round.

Reykjavík, Iceland

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emma gardner design, LLC is a boutique design and development company that produces fine contemporary interior products for use in residential, office, and hospitality spaces. Chief designer Emma C. Gardner was the winner of a 2006 Best of Year award from *Interior Design* for her Joy rug. Based in Litchfield, Connecticut, the company offers its products through select showrooms and is a proud member of the RUGMARK Foundation, a global non-profit organization working to end child labor. For more information please visit **emmagardner-design.com.**

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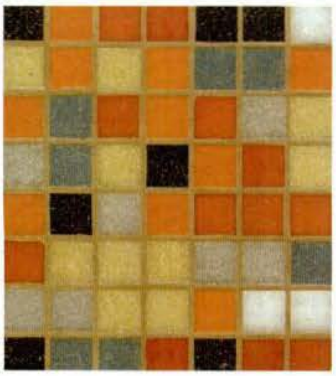

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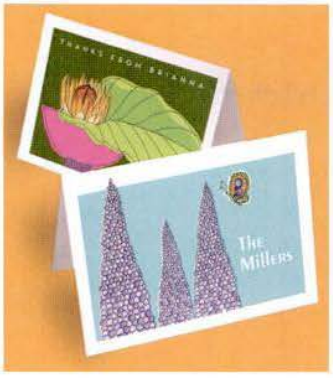

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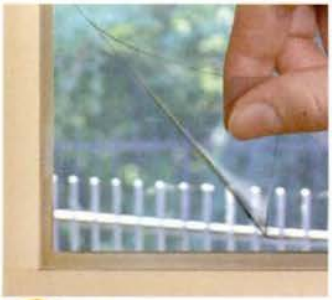

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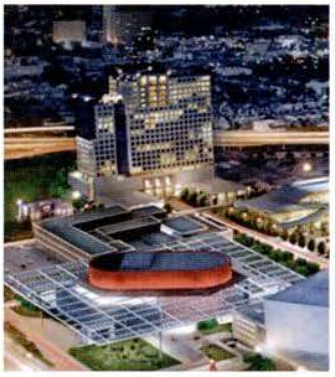

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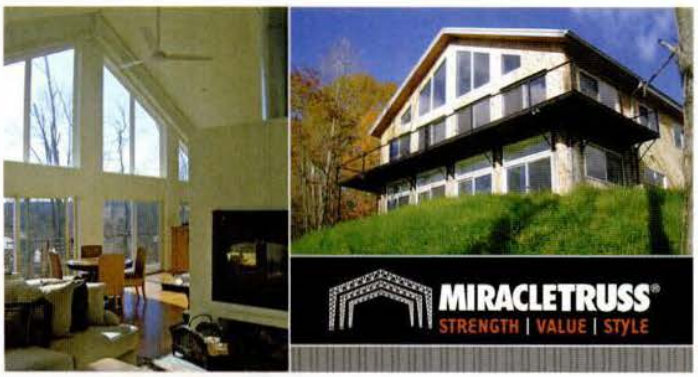

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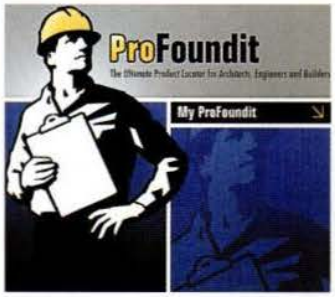

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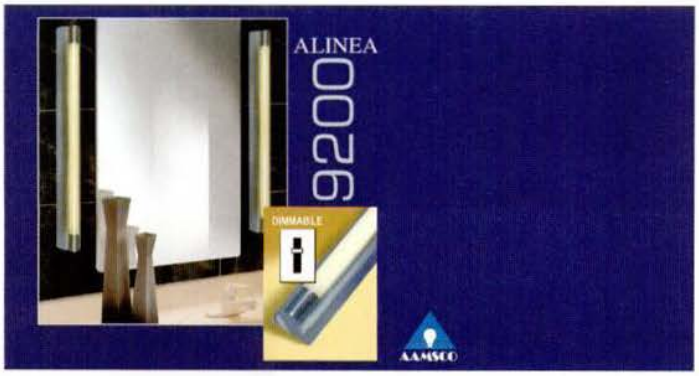

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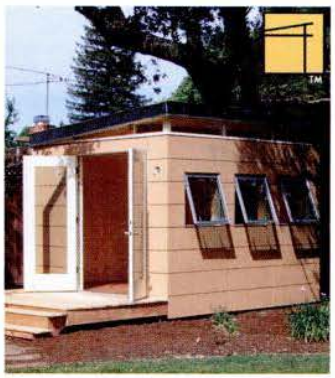

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Toll-free 888-7-GET-TFC
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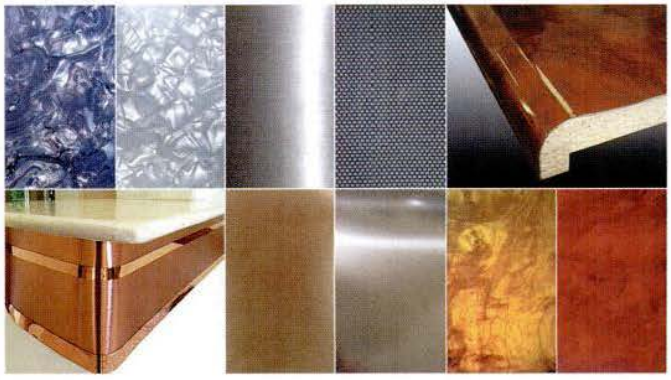
Modern and green designer accessory structures. Whether it's 100 or 1,000+ square feet, the cabana's prefabricated design leaves room for imagination and budget to accessorize your unit to fit the way you live.

moderncabana.com



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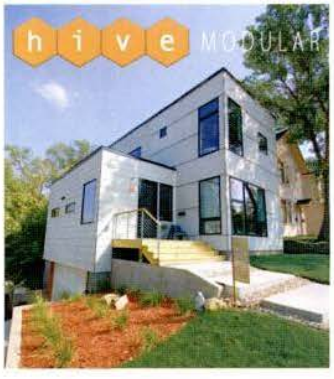

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Shown: The Metro Tote with removable laptop sleeve in rubberized canvas.

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Modern Market

City Collection

The City Collection from Sonia represents clean, simple yet sophisticated designs of contemporary bath furniture. Featuring a portable storage caddy and a freestanding furniture console with storage shelves and pull-out drawers, the City Collection is available in several finishes including white, wenge, and walnut (shown). Sonia is a premiere manufacturer of exquisite bath vanities, storage solutions and accessories. As a Green manufacturer, Sonia operates under an in-depth environmental protection policy that assures products are made in a way that decreases the use of natural resources and hazardous chemical products.

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Shown: "DIVA" Sofa

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botanist™
indoor-outdoor furniture

Botanist

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Photo: Ethan Rohloff Photography

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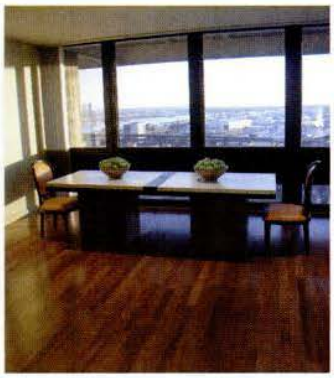

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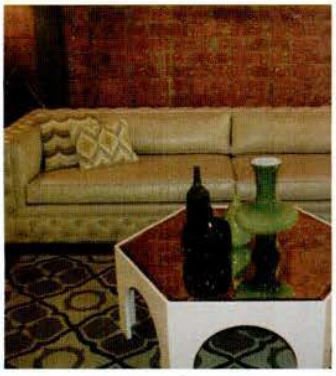

roomservicestore.com

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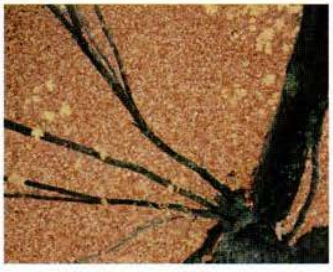

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Brian Crowley

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Diamond lounge chair and Barstools by Harry Bertoia for Knoll
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140 Heart of the Country

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Skipper bed by Habitat
habitat.co.uk
Eames Lounge chair and ottoman by Charles and Ray Eames for Herman Miller
hermanmiller.com
Giant pendant lights by Original BTC
originalbtc.com

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adjaye.com
Tel: 011-44-20-7739-4969
Ed Reeve
reeve.co.uk
Ed's Shed
edsshed.co.uk
Eurban Construction
eurban.co.uk
Cocoa sofa by Rock Galpin
rockgalpin.com
Windows by Culmax
culmax.co.uk
Floor heating system by Vysal
floor-heating.co.uk
White poured-resin/rubber floor by Stratum
stratum.uk.com
Cupboards, media unit, and bedroom wardrobes by Jona Warbey
jonawarbey.com
Walnut dining table by Philip Wood for Citizen Citizen
citizen-citizen.com

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George Nakashima Woodworker
nakashimawoodworker.com
New Hope, PA
newhopepa.com
Waseda University, Tokyo
waseda.jp

166 Profile

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studiomama.com
Made in Denmark
madeindenmark.um.dk
100% Design
100percentdesign.co.uk
Design-Nation
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wentworth-pewter.com
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Studio Bility
bility.is
Reykjavík, Iceland
rvk.is
Iceland Academy of the Arts
lhi.is
Reykjavík Art Museum
artmuseum.is
Haraldur Jónsson
this.is/comet
Studio Granda
studiogranda.is
Eindhoven, Netherlands
eindhoven.nl
Vik Prjónsdóttir
vikprjonsdottir.com
Kirsuberjatréd Icelandic Design
kirs.is
Kogga
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208 Theme Attic

Loyal Loot
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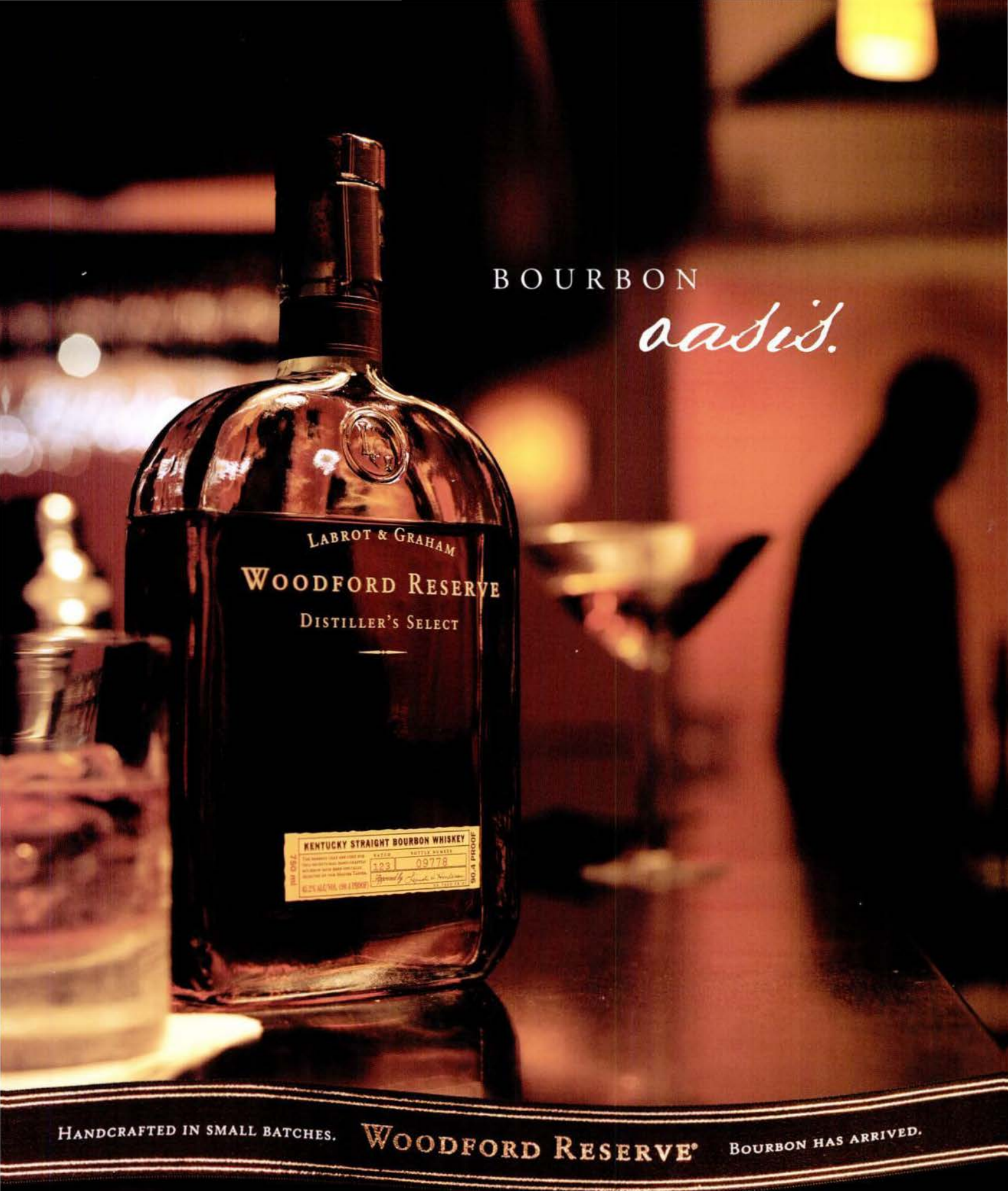

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