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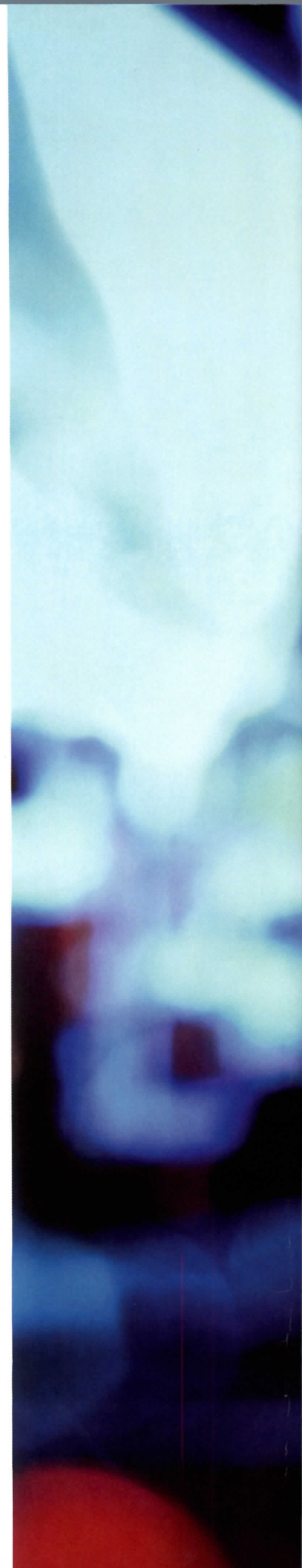
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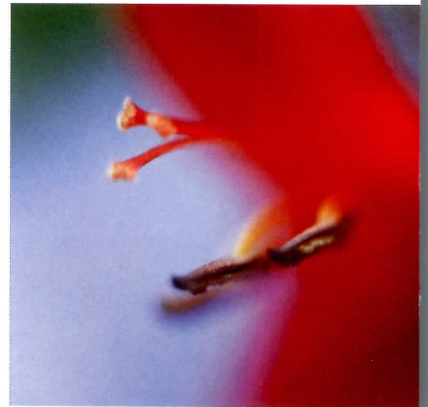


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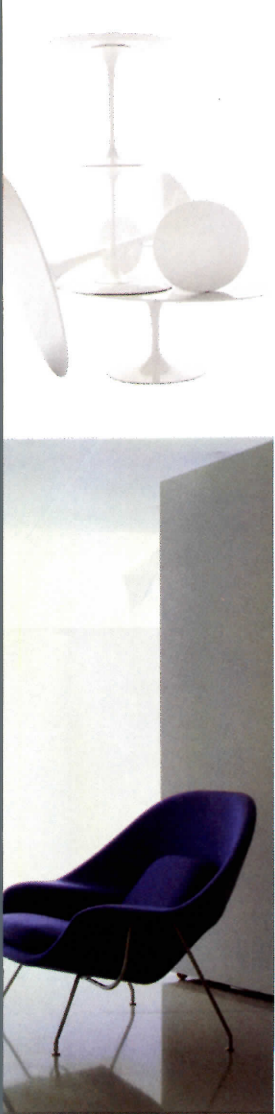
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Cheap and Chic

April 2011

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Dollar, Dollar Build, Y'all

How do you steer clear of the money pit and head straight to home sweet home? We do a fiscal fact check on each of this issue's featured Dwellings.

Dwellings

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A New Slant

Half the budget for Prentis Hale and Tracy Edmonds's Seattle home went toward making the remote, sloping lot buildable (as well as street and utility accessible). The prep paid off to create their multilevel tree house.

Story by Miyoko Ohtake
Photos by Philip Newton

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See What Develops

Making the 100K house a 1,296-square-foot, LEED-Platinum reality took an on-budget collaboration—in an offbeat Philadelphia neighborhood—between residents Chad and Courtney Ludeman and architects Interface Studio.

Story by Aaron Britt
Photos by Mark Mahaney

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Appetite for Construction

The extended Becerril family—plus dog, parrot, tortoise, and pygmy pig—enlisted architect Jorge Gracia to construct a modern home to suit their unique combination of kin. The project's quick turnaround helped keep it all within the financial plan.

Story by Frances Anderton
Photos by Paco Perez Arriaga

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Fine Finnish

Interior designer Susanna Vento used her eye for clever upcycling and creative reuse to personalize her Helsinki apartment. Here she shares how she made it happen.

Story by Jaime Gross
Photos by Petra Bindel



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Cover: Vento Residence
Helsinki, Finland, page 106
Photo by Petra Bindel

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When it was time to expand architect Paul Bernier's Montreal bachelor pad into a space suitable for his growing family, he opted for two boxy additions: an office for the adults and a garden playroom for the kids.

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Few houses can boast an energy bill in the black. Using reclaimed materials and smart-home technology, Mike Moore of Tres Birds Workshop designed the Quivas Residence in Denver, Colorado, to make more power than it uses.



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“In this recession, I think we’ve learned that housing values have very little to do with housing.”

Chad Ludeman

114 Essay

For insider insights on how to build a better home for less, architect Dan Maginn bcc's you on his email correspondence with notorious client Johnson M. Grapejus.

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Feel free to kick back at the Mohawk General Store, designed to mirror the owners' living room.

124 Home Gardening 101

Green thumb Sara Carnochan separates the wheat from the chaff and gives us a bountiful history of domestic cultivation.

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Indulge in the sweet buy-and-buy with our completely comprehensive sourcing page.

144 Finishing Touch

A fresh coat of (chalkboard) paint transformed Margaret Oomen's Home Depot peg board into a rotating exhibition space.



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Spatula City!

You're standing in the aisles of your local kitchen-supply emporium deciding on an important spatula purchase. Spatula A is your standard-issue stainless-steel flipper and plastic-handled affair—straight out of Wile E. Coyote's *ACME Catalog*. Spatula B, on the other hand, is constructed from a lightweight and non-corrosive titanium alloy initially developed for use in Japanese telecommunication satellites. Narrow, tapering slits, offset at the optimum angle, ensure that absolutely nothing will ever stick to it mid-flip. A seamlessly grafted silicon edge allows the right side to double as a scraper. A counter-balanced, ergonomically crafted handle, made from some kind of neoprene-like recycled material, is available in a range of stylish colors. The one in honeysuckle, a bright melony pink, is particularly fetching. Spatula A costs \$4. Spatula B costs \$34. You gasp audibly but quickly see that a small percentage of the B sale goes to a nonprofit supporting nutritional cooking programs for working single parents. You're leaning toward Spatula B, but you still can't make up your mind.

You know that Spatula A will likely get your pancakes flipped and sunny-side-up eggs safely to your toast, but now that you've seen what Spatula B has to offer, maybe flipping pancakes and depositing eggs could be a more enriching, dynamic experience. With that handle, Spatula B will keep your carpal tunnel from flaring up, and the honeysuckle hue will bring a smile to your face every time you use it. Thirty dollars is a big difference in price, but the Austrian company that manufactures it guarantees that its been rated for 200,000 double flips (that's at least 40 years of pancakes)—and what about helping those single parents? Congratulations, you've convinced yourself Spatula B is a worthwhile investment; your pocket is \$34 lighter.

Apologies for the spatula saga. Although ludicrous, it is illustrative of the kinds of decisions we fortunate first-worlders are faced with on a regular basis. It also illustrates both the advantages and absurdities of the state of design in contemporary consumer culture.

How badly do we really need high-tech, designer spatulas? There's a valid argument that says we do—new designs evolve with new technology, offer greater durability and environmental responsibility, and improve our quality of life. On the other hand, many new designs exist for the sake of being new—of making sturdy old Spatula A seem antiquated and lame—and to keep the wheels of commerce turning. Most of the time, however, the distinctions aren't so black and white.

In this issue, we've gone in search of Spatula C in order to show that vital, modern design doesn't have to cost \$34—although it may not be \$4, either. During my time at Dwell, I've always been disappointed, from both an aesthetic and economic standpoint, by the vast gulf between high-end and mass-market design. The spatulas that take some, but not all, of the features of B, and marry them to a price that's closer to A, are few and far between, if not next to nonexistent. Curious as to why this is, I spoke to John Christakos, president and CEO of Blu Dot, one of the few manufacturers of modern furnishings that produce goods at a reasonable cost. "Most designers design for high-end manufacturers as opposed to producing and distributing their own designs," he told me. "By default, they are also designing for the affluent. To be successful in delivering on affordability, you need to own the process and not give up on the promise."

When it comes to building an affordable and well-designed modern home, we open up a whole other can of worms (crate of spatulas?), but essentially Christakos's premise remains intact—one must own the process from beginning to end. With each of the homes we feature—all of which came in under \$190 per square foot—the owners and architects dug deep to find creative ways to circumvent the usual expenses. From limiting construction to a second floor, to building on an unbuildable lot, to streamlining the building process, the methods varied but the promise remained the same. The premise of good design may be subjective, but the best design is design you can afford. ■■■

Sam Grawe, Editor-in-Chief

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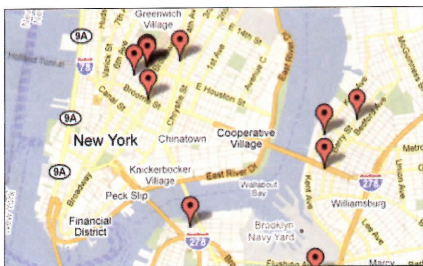


VIDEO//

Beneath the Surface

In our latest video series, *Beneath the Surface*, we explore the myriad uses of Corian. Most people know that Corian makes for excellent countertops, but few realize that it also lends itself quite nicely for all kinds of interior and exterior applications. Check out our inaugural video, featuring a group of intrepid industrial design students at the University of Philadelphia who challenged their imaginations using only Corian as a starting point. Stay tuned for the next video in the series—we're heading into the realm of healthcare design, highlighting the intersection between good design in institutional practice and the benefits of Corian.

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Made in the Shade

Calling all textile designers and all around creative thinkers! We've unveiled our latest design competition, *Made in the Shade*. The design brief? Create a dynamic pattern for the Kirbé vertical drapery system from Lutron using the raucous prints of great mid-century modern designers—think Larsen, Day, Eames—as your launching pad.

dwell.com/made-in-the-shade



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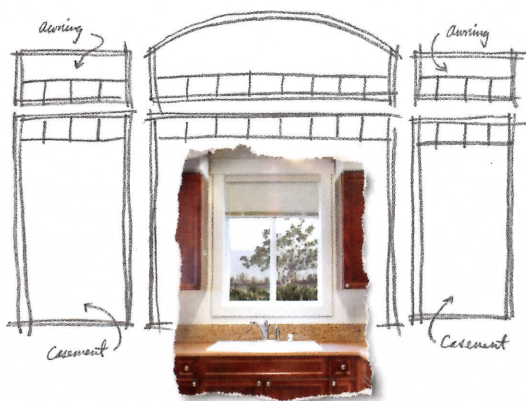
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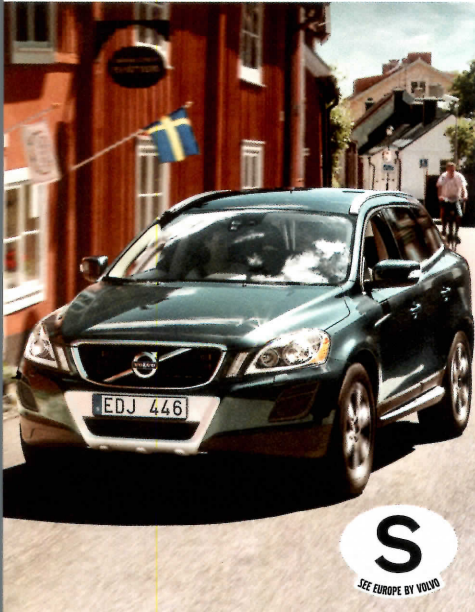


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LETTERS

The February 2011 issue was a real disappointment. There's good design using recycled or old material and there's just junk furniture. I'm sure you could cover better, more useful topics other than college-student-dorm, salvage design. Every time I see design like what was in this issue, like milk crates as furniture, it reminds me of what my friends and I used when we were in college.

Joe Chao
Sent via email

I couldn't help but notice the absence of a fictional architect icon in the February 2011 "Listomania." Though Mike Brady may be more remembered for his fatherly advice than his architectural designs, he was a cool dad with a cool profession. Mike was the first architect I knew about and I'm certain he inspired countless fans to rethink what they wanted to be when they grew up. Mike also claimed to design and build the Brady home, which is one of the most recognizable fictional homes on TV. There are even house plans created by fans available online.

Your Own Private Case Study



That said, here's my submission: "Mike Brady: First played by Robert Reed in *The Brady Bunch* TV series (1969-1974) and in various reunion specials in the 1980s, Mike made a resurgence into the public eye in *The Brady Bunch Movie* (1995) and *A Very Brady Sequel* (1996), both times played by Gary Cole."

Scott Sayers
Bellingham, Washington

Who are the designer and manufacturer of the movable closets featured on page 44 of the February 2011 issue ("My House")?

Eric Aragon
Salt Lake City, Utah

Editors' Note: The closets were custom designed by resident and designer Barbara Hill (barbarahilldesign.com) and designer and fabricator George Sacaris (sacaris.com).

The "Off the Grid" house (December/January 2011) is amazing. It's wonderful to see how easily and beautifully people are making these small spaces

The 1949 Eames House in Pacific Palisades, California—where the iconic designers Charles and Ray Eames lived out their days—has been officially open to the public for exterior tours (and rare members-only interior ones) for seven years. In many ways, the prefab steel-and-glass house and detached studio (with guest quarters) are time-stopped, with tribal blankets piled up on the couch and tabletop arrangements left as they were in 1988, when Ray died.

In an effort to keep the house, studio, and grounds vital; continue preservation work; and boost the endowment for future care, the Eames Foundation, helmed by Lucia Eames and her children, earlier this year decided to open the house to the public in new, unprecedented ways.

"We've identified some things to make it a richer experience here and raise money to make the house more secure for the future," says Eames

work and taking that huge step to lessen their carbon footprint. A lot of people are under the impression they need something so much larger than they actually do.

Posted by Amy Purehome
on dwell.com

Who is the designer of the bed frame featured on page 93 of the December/January 2011 issue ("Academy Rewards") and where can I purchase it?

Bruce Finkelman
Chicago, Illinois

Editors' Note: It is the Matera bed by Sean Yoo, designed exclusively for Design Within Reach (dwr.com).

Perhaps most notable among the young designers turning lemons into lemonade during the recession ("Young Guns," December/January 2011) are Gina Reichert and Mitch Cope of Design 99 and Powerhouse Project. The couple bought a foreclosed home in a tough East Detroit neighborhood for \$1,900 and transformed it into a pilot project and

Demetrios, chairman of the Eames Foundation Board and grandson of Charles and Ray. Among the new offerings: more in-depth interior tours offered to the public (\$500 for two people); tours capped off with picnics in the meadow (\$1,000 for four); renting the meadow for weddings and parties (\$15,000 for up to 50); and—most unusual—an overnight stay in the studio loft.

For \$10,000, two visitors can have an Eames-themed sleepover, snoozing in the guest quarters that were usually reserved for family, screening rarely-seen films and videos, thumbing through historic photos, and observing the changing light in the studio through the day and night. It's the closest you can come to being an Eames descendant. Recalls Demetrios: "For us, this wasn't an icon of modernism—it was just our grandparents' house and a great place to stay." eamesfoundation.org

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LETTERS

demonstration center for sustainable design, job-training programs, and biking as a healthy option for driving in Motor City. What an incredible model for local neighborhood empowerment, both economic and emotional, and so much more effective than the urban renewal projects of 30 years ago, like Renaissance Center, which turned its back on the street. It is Internet-era cottage industry at its best that can rekindle cities house by house and block by block well off the beaten paths of hip and expensive “creative class cities” like New York, Miami, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

Robert Heller
San Francisco, California

“Art Collecting 101” (December/January 2011) was a great introduction and step toward demystifying the world of art, but I was disappointed that it didn’t mention the extraordinary availability of affordable, original artwork through Etsy. I started collecting art when I was 18—I didn’t have a car then so all my spare money went into cash installments for works of fine art. Nearly 20 years later, with a mortgage, a family, and two cars, I don’t have much spare change these days, but I continue to buy original art from Etsy. It’s a fraction of the cost of gallery pieces, and I buy directly from the artists, supporting them and building relationships with them in the process. Given that you profiled 20x200 as an affordable alternative, I think Etsy deserved some space too.

Danielle Wensauer
Mount Vernon, Washington

In your November 2010 issue, Adele Weder wrote about a project in British Columbia (“Off the Grid”) and noted that she was impressed by the feat of BattersbyHowat Architects and their clients, who managed to erect an architectural showstopper atop a rocky waterfront cliff.

First and foremost, I can assure you that those parties did not erect anything. As a new subscriber to what promises to be a breath of fresh air amid architecture journals, I’m hoping you can set yourselves apart from the

rest and recognize the efforts of fellow contractors. All too often, the architecture community and its subculture overlook the hands and efforts of those of us in the business of making them look good—namely, contractors. Please give credit where credit is due and set yourself apart.

Doric Creager
Doric Inc., General Contractors
Spokane, Washington

Editors’ Note: Without the work of contractors, none of what the architects we feature would be possible, and we try to attribute the builders whenever we can. For this “Off the Grid,” you can find Hart Tipton Construction (harttipton.com) listed both in the story and in the Sourcing section.

Who makes the pendants hanging in the kitchen on page 64 of the July/August 2010 issue (“Off the Grid”)?

John Lewis
Calgary, Alberta

Editors’ Note: The lights are the Drop pendants by Fiedeler and Raasch for Anta (anta.de). Check out this kitchen—along with 99 more—and full sourcing information in our special kitchens issue, on newsstands April 5.

Correction: If you thought the price of David Mellor’s City flatware in our February 2011 issue (“Dwell Reports”) was too good to be true, you were right. The correct cost is \$151 for a six-piece place setting.

Also, in our “Detour” to Athens, Greece, in our November 2010 issue, we wrote that Bernard Tschumi and Michael Photiadis “codesigned” the New Acropolis Museum. Tschumi was the design architect and Photiadis was his local counterpart during the competition and early phases of the project. We regret the unclear description of the relationship.

Please write to us:

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Letters may be edited for length and clarity. ▮

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CONTRIBUTORS

Petra Bindel

Petra Bindel traveled from her home in southern Sweden to Helsinki, Finland, to photograph the 660-square-foot apartment of Susanna Vento and her family ("Fine Finnish," p. 106). "We had a few very intense hours shooting the space and Susanna made a lovely lunch," Bindel says. Before she left, Susanna's husband, Jussi, gave her a copy of his band's CD to share with her music-loving husband.

Sara Carnochan

Sara Carnochan is a cofounder of Heart Beet Gardening in Los Angeles where she plants, prunes, and writes. While penning "Home Gardening 101" (p. 124), Carnochan squished at least 127 cabbage worms; transplanted more than 648 seedlings; and harvested tomatoes, kale, carrots, and a wide variety of lettuces from gardens across Los Angeles. If she were a vegetable, she would be an eggplant.

Jessica Haye and Clark Hsiao

Jessica Haye and Clark Hsiao are photographers based in Los Angeles. For this issue they hit Silver Lake for the mid-century design buff's paradise that is Mohawk General Store ("Design Finder," p. 120). While hanging out with co-owners Kevin and Bo Carney and Ellen LeComte, Haye and Hsiao learned about the oldest candle-makers in France, what it really takes to rewire a chandelier, and why classic Americana never goes out of style.

Alexi Hobbs

Alexi Hobbs is a Montreal native who spent a day photographing the Plateau Mont-Royal residence ("My House," p. 54). "The oddest part was when the neighbor across the street let me into his apartment to use his balcony as a shooting platform," Hobbs says. "Five minutes later, we realized this neighbor was nowhere to be found. For a moment, we thought we might be locked in and would have to crawl out through a window!"

Katja Lindroos

Katja Lindroos is a Helsinki-based journalist and producer. This month, she

visited the inventive apartment of Susanna and Jussi Vento, their daughter Varpu, and their Siamese cat ("Fine Finnish," p. 106). "I shall never again underestimate the power of a Nigella Lawson chocolate cake," Lindroos says of Susanna's baking.

Tim McKeough

Tim McKeough, a journalist based in New York, returned to his native Canada, the land of poutine and chewy bagels, to visit the Montreal home of Paul Bernier and Joëlle Thibault ("My House," p. 54). He was amazed by the couple's lush oasis of a garden and couldn't help comparing it to his small Manhattan apartment, where the closest he gets to the outdoors is an open window.

Philip Newton

Photographer Philip Newton is a Canadian but has lived in the United States for so long that he considers himself a "Camerican." Though primarily a fashion photographer, Newton always finds shooting for Dwell a treat ("A New Slant," p. 78). "I'm continually inspired to photograph structures where design and economy win the day, ideas over dollars," he says.

Sarah Rich

Sarah Rich is a writer living in Brooklyn and a former senior editor at Dwell. While she was touring the Quivas House in her hometown of Denver ("Off the Grid," p. 68), the first snowflakes of the year fell, and the designer and homeowners showed their true Colorado colors. Instead of lamenting the arrival of winter, they jumped for joy at the thought of breaking their snowboards out of storage.

Malin Rosenqvist

Illustrator Malin Rosenqvist's first attempt at growing a garden on the balcony of his home near Stockholm was too successful ("Home Gardening 101," p. 124). "It turned into a jungle," he says. "Nothing was less than a yard tall, leaving no space to enjoy the deck. This year I'm planting far less and only herbs. The rest I will draw and put on my walls instead." ■■■



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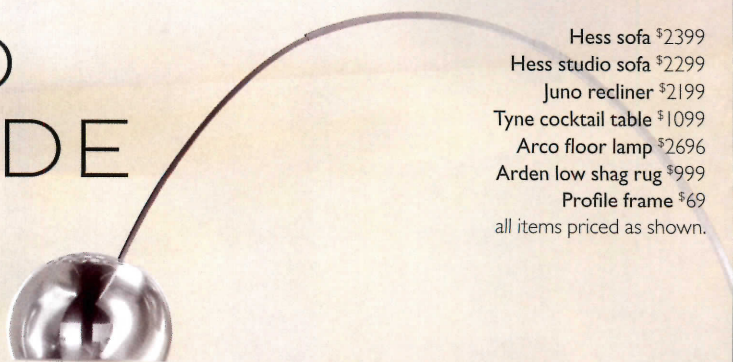
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In the Modern World



Nature's bounty can do far more than provide a balanced diet. Netherlands-based Studio Formafantasma rooted *Autarky*, a traveling exhibition, in Sicilian craft traditions, creating wares composed of little more than wheat. Flour, agricultural waste, and a touch of limestone were transformed into a wealth of useful—and beautiful—goods. formafantasma.com

April Calendar

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

April 3

Modern in the Making: Design 1900–2000 closes at the Speed Art Museum in Louisville, Kentucky. speedmuseum.org

Spout Milk and Sugar Set

by Paige Russell, \$85

paigerussell.com

There's only one question to ask yourself after pouring a splash of milk from Paige Russell's stoneware creamer: One lump or two?

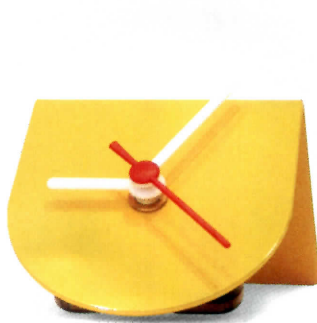


Half-Time Clock

by David Weatherhead for GOODD, \$26

good-d.com

This battery-powered timepiece has one of the hottest centerfolds we've seen in a while.



Chalk It to Me Piggy Bank

by Ladies & Gentlemen, \$85

ladiesandgentlemenstudio.com

This piggy's chalk exterior is perfect for fickle savers who frequently amend their wish lists.



Bubble Smoke Digout Vase

by Chive, \$12

chive.ca

Slim stems and blooming buds appear to hover in this faintly tinted glass double bubble.



Polar Bear Animal Box

by Karl Zahn for Areaware, \$49

areaware.com

Don't get any big ideas. Only the smallest bit or bob will fit inside this miniature beechwood box.



Kånken

by Fjällräven, \$65

fjallraven.us

It's a rugged Swedish import with a boxy take on the classic backpack. When you're ready to hit the trails, release the Kånken!



Heath House Numbers

by House Industries in collaboration with

Heath Ceramics, \$45 per tile

heathceramics.com

If a shell rocker is too spendy, give your home a hint of Charles and Ray with Eames-inspired address plates.



Whisk

by LucidiPevere

for Normann Copenhagen, \$24 each

normann-copenhagen.com

Basic beating is an acquired skill. This zippy whisk will help you master the art of French omelets, soufflés, and sauces.



Ruuturouva Canvas Basket

by Maija Louekari

for Marimekko, \$29

marimekko.com

Keep your keys handy in this eye-catching catchall from textile legend Marimekko.



April 9-17

Brave the heat and head to Modern

Phoenix Week.

modernphoenix.net/hometour



All have clear bins.

Clear bins let you see dirt and dust collect as you clean your home. But how much is captured is not always so clear.



But Dyson cyclone technology captures more dirt than any other.

When James Dyson developed the world's first cyclonic vacuum cleaner, everyone advised against having a clear bin. But inside you could watch cyclonic forces separate the dirt and dust from the airflow.

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Boost Boxes

These days, it seems like everyone is busy saving the world. Using recycled, sustainably sourced materials is *de rigeur* for designers and manufacturers as consumers are becoming savvy about the importance of product pedigree. There's a disconnect, however, between the standards we hold our purchases to and the ones to which we keep ourselves accountable (hands up if you've switched out every incandescent in your house for an LED). Common sense seems to be superseded by, at best, confusion over where to begin and what to buy and, at worst, apathy.

Boost Home, a new company out of Berkeley, California, hopes to take the what-where-and-why out of making your space more efficient and all-around Earth-friendly. Each of their nine Boost Boxes targets

a different area of your home, offering easy-to-understand DIY installation guides along with a comprehensive selection of tools and tricks that you might never expect, like fresh toilet flappers for the bathroom, eco-dimmers for your mood lighting, and water wick meters for your garden. You can track your progress not just in the resources spared but also the amount of money saved. The Whole Bathroom kit, for example, can keep an extra \$500 and 25,000 gallons of water from going down the drain every year. An entire set can be installed in an afternoon, so there's just no excuse not to take control of your consumption.

 Clockwise from top: selections from Whole Bathroom Boost Box, Whole Home Energy Boost Box, Garden Water Boost Box.
boosthomeproducts.com



April 10
 Alessi: Ethical and Radical closes at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
philamuseum.org

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MakerFaire.com

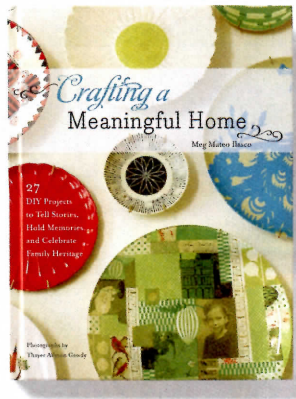
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IN THE MODERN WORLD

Crafting a Meaningful Home
by Meg Mateo Ilasco
STC Craft, \$25

Anonymous mass production is losing its mass-market appeal, and there's a growing movement toward owning things that have origins beyond an assembly line. Handmade crafts have an inherent history, so it's telling that the 27 projects outlined in *Crafting a Meaningful Home* are linked by two very strong, very personal themes: family and place.

After author Meg Mateo Ilasco's brief introduction, the book is structured by project, each of which is anchored by a poignant bit of background about the designers who share their work: Jean Lee's almost impossibly thick Doily rug was born from youthful summers spent in Taiwan learning crafts with her mother; Anna Corpron and Sean Auyeung began experimenting with the material for their Rock-ite Bottle vases through endless



model building in architecture school together. It's almost enough to simply read their tales and admire their efforts—almost. We predict you'll want to take part and start a new yarn or two yourself.

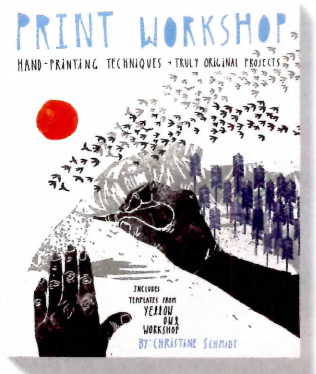
mateoilasco.com

Print Workshop: Hand-Printing Techniques and Truly Original Projects

by Christine Schmidt
Potter Craft, \$20

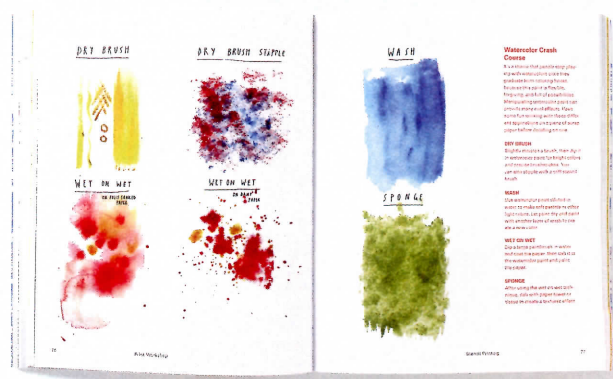
A blank canvas can really get the blood pumping. For some, the sight is a beacon. For others, it can be intimidating. Christine Schmidt, founder and creative force behind San Francisco-based studio Yellow Owl Workshop, falls firmly in the former category, but *Print Workshop*, her first book, is designed to appeal to anyone who's interested in giving printing a try.

The book starts by laying out the tools of the trade, helpful terms, and various techniques, then segues into 32 projects, all of which are accompanied by a healthy dose of editorial commentary from Schmidt. Her temperament runs far wide of twee, instead offering conversational insights—a forest scene makes an ideal mural because “just like



in nature, any imperfections provide interest to our eyes”—without romanticizing the process (“gigantic fabric stores can seem like their own special version of hell”). From making mobiles to embroidery to photographs, it's a thoroughly engaging entry into the world of personalization through print.

yellowowlworkshop.com



Books



borders by hella jongerius

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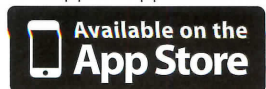


With fresh, intelligent coverage of modern architecture and design, tailored for mobile devices, the Dwell App features:

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-Wall Street Journal Coolhunter



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Photo credits, clockwise: shopHORNE.com, Ace Hotel, John Merkl.

Tea sofa

by José Manuel Ferrero for Sancal
sancal.com

The subtle contrast of the smooth base and complementary-colored honeycomb-quilted cover is what attracts us to this sturdy sofa.

Unfold

by Form Us with Love for Muuto
muuto.com

The flexibility of this pendant is made in the shade, a soft silicone that can be flat-packed—and unpacked—without diminishing its dome. (right)



Binic

by Ionna Vautrin for Foscarini
foscarini.com

Hollywood's a-calling, are you ready for your close-up? This desktop spotlight will illuminate day-to-day activities as if you're on set and ready for action.



TA18 Zehn

by Philip Mainzer for e15
e15.com

Philip Mainzer gives legs the boot in favor of solid European oak slats to keep Zehn's smooth surface aloft. (below)



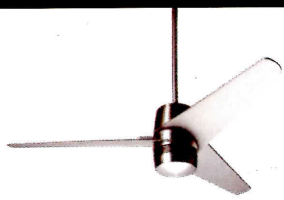
Superleggera

by Giò Ponti for Cassina
cassinausa.com

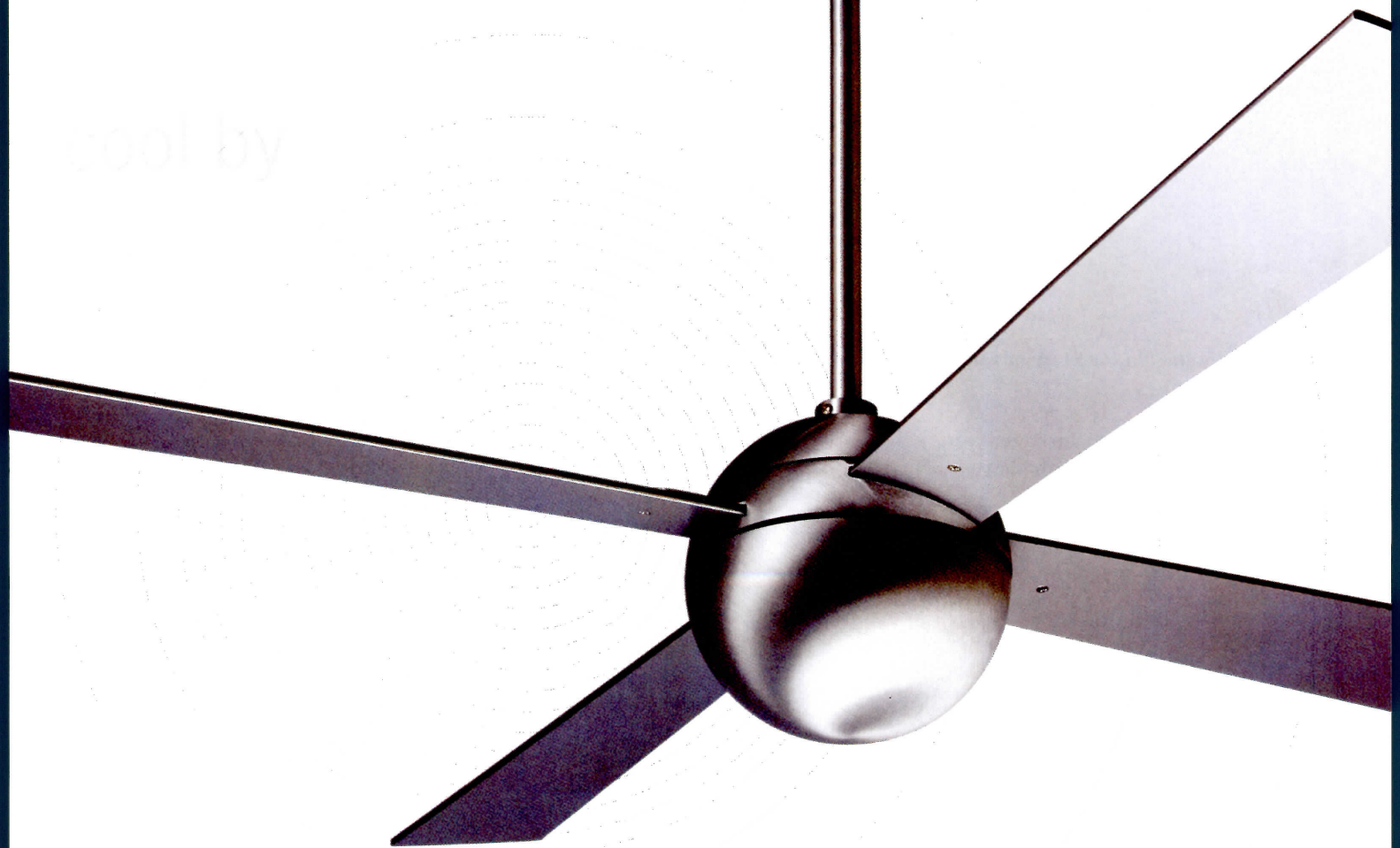
This reissue of Italian design maestro Giò Ponti's lithe classic reintroduces the mid-century accessory of padding for your posterior. (above)

April 17

How Wine Became Modern closes at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art.
sfmoma.org



cool by



design



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Plus

by *studio taschide* for FORMvorrAT
formvorrat.net

Screw screws. All you need to attach Plus's tabletop to its legs is a light bit of elbow grease, as the pieces were designed to click directly into place.



Smoke Grey Standing Cumberland Lamp

by *Studio Dunn*
studiodunn.com

Set this handblown beaut directly on your side table for a low glow to light the pages of your nighttime reading.



Stretch

by *Debra Folz*
debrafolz.com

If Aunt May had her way, Peter Parker might sling cotton around the house instead of webs across the city, resulting in these softly sweated oak shelves.



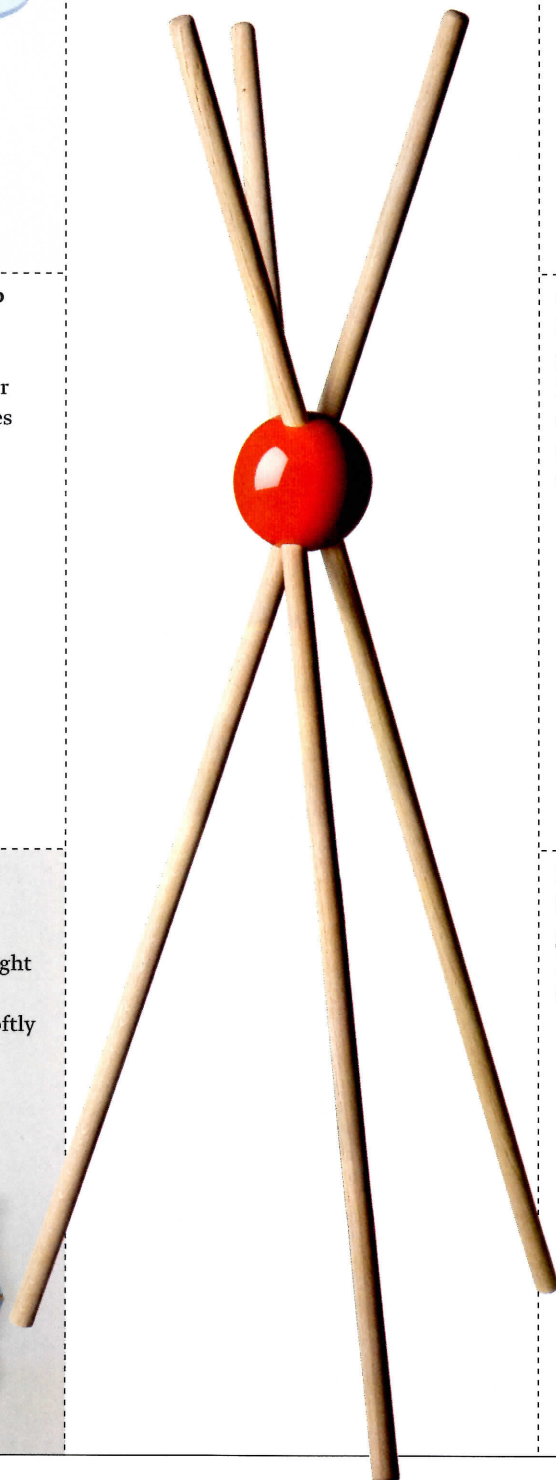
April 17

Peter Fischli David Weiss closes at the Art Institute of Chicago. artic.edu/aic

Lock Coatrack

by *Sylvain Willenz* for Tamawa
tamawa.be

Bakelite is back—it's the ball that binds the three ash wood poles into a tripod stand for your hat and coat.



Second Skin Chair

by *Quinze & Milan*
quinzeandmilan.tv

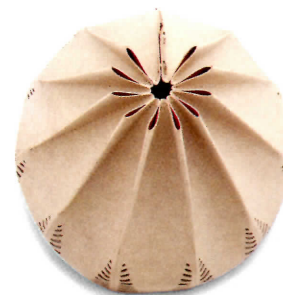
The colored, custom leather cutouts are a much cooler look for this elemental oak frame than the usual side-chair covering of yesterday's trousers and last night's jacket.



o-Re-gami lampshade

by *Matali Crasset* for *Regenesi*
regenesi.com

Leather scraps too small to reuse are regenerated—with a touch of natural latex—into the composite material that makes up this upcycled pendant.



Iko Round

by *N. Garnham* for *Jardan*
jardan.com.au

Iko's mix of marble and American oak is a match made in materials heaven.



April 24

On Becoming an Artist closes at the Noguchi Museum in Long Island City, New York. noguchi.org

HATCHBACK
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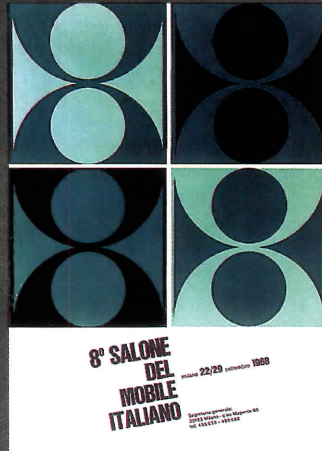
IN THE MODERN WORLD



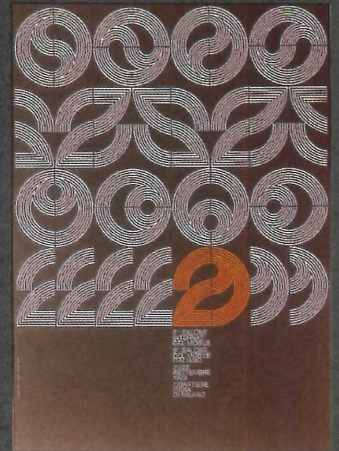
1961, CAMILLO PIZZIGONI



1963, STUDIO BECHERONI-MAROTTA



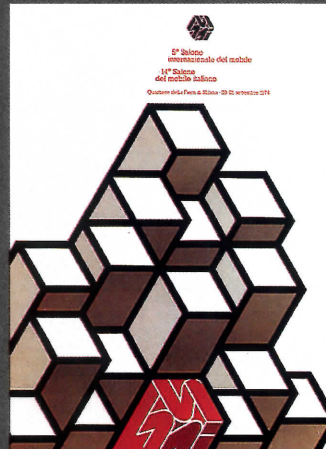
1968, ALBERTO LONGHI



1969, ALBERTO LONGHI



1973, ALBERTO LONGHI



1974, ALBERTO LONGHI



1976, ALBERTO LONGHI



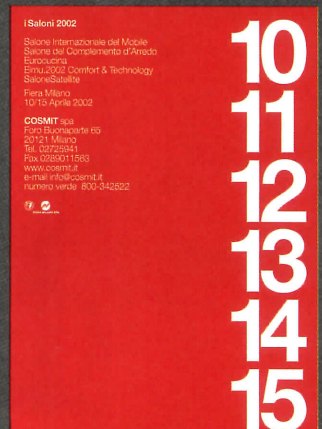
1984, ALBERTO LONGHI



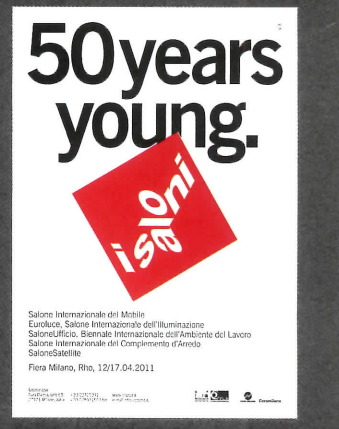
1986, PIERLUIGI CERRI



1991, PIERLUIGI CERRI



2002, MASSIMO VIGNELLI/VIGNELLI ASSOCIATES



2011, STUDIO CERRI & ASSOCIATI/PIERLUIGI CERRI AND ALESSANDRO COLOMBO

In the beginning, there was Italy. When a handful of furniture manufacturers formed Cosmit in 1961, Salone Internazionale del Mobile was conceived to promote homegrown talent. In the subsequent half-century, the Milano

fair went über-international and has since become the biggest design spectacle of the year. Here, we take a look back at how the graphic identity of the event has evolved. *Buon compleanno, Salone!* cosmit.it

Focus

@ Extended slideshow at dwell.com/magazine

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Blogging It All Back Home

We are nothing if not domestic voyeurs. More homeowners are turning to the Web to record the juicy ups and downs of tackling a remodel. We take a grand tour.



1. **Chezerbey** chezerbey.com

When they're on the job, architects Lauren and Kyle Zerbey get designs approved by their clients, then pass off the construction process to professionals. Not so for their own Seattle home, which was built in 1910 and which they began fixing up in 2006. Before, during, and after shots humanize the process. "By struggling to do the work ourselves and then documenting it, we've become better architects," says Lauren.

2. **The Brick House** the-brick-house.com

Morgan Satterfield began chronicling hands-on renovations on

her Hemet, California, mid-century pad in 2008. "Blogs have made living stylishly less intimidating and encouraged design-minded people at every income level to consider their space worthy of great design," she says. She's since turned the site into a hub of easy DIY tutorials—from salvaging a fence to refinishing a set of Eames chairs—and isn't afraid to share the inevitable bloopers along the way (be sure to check out the post about the slat screen structural snafu).

3. **My Scandinavian Retreat** scandinavianretreat.blogspot.com

Vilde reports on the evolution of her Norwegian beach cabin

from 1970s kitsch to modern-day classic. She shares eye candy from Scandinavian magazines, websites, and photographers that provide a wealth of ideas for her own space—and may very well give you the itch to make some changes of your own.

4. **Door Sixteen** doorsixteen.com

Anna Dorfman and her husband Evan are (still) fixing up their 1885 Victorian row house in the Hudson Valley of New York. For close to four years they've documented some heavy-duty transformations—including a complete bathroom gutting, which included a full price breakdown—giving a sense of

what real-world home projects cost while encouraging readers against overspending.

5. **Hollywood Renovation** dwell.com/articles/backstory

Renovations aren't just for homeowners. There are plenty of light alterations renters can do to customize a borrowed space. Linda Taalman, of Taalman Koch Architecture, tracks the improvements of her Southern California live-work rental on our very own dwell.com. The entries "illustrate the amount of time it takes to get things done," she says, "including redos and blunders."

—Sonia Zjawinski

Illustration by Leif Parsons

Listomania

So quiet, it screams German engineering.



Operating at just 40 dBA, the 800 Plus is
the quietest dishwasher in the U.S.*



Engineered to speak for itself. The 800 Plus cleans with the power of 1,300 gallons using only two, and provides 24/7 peace of mind with exclusive AquaStop® leak protection technology. Protecting your home while silently delivering great cleaning results—it's why we say we're invented for life. www.bosch-home.com/us



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IN THE MODERN WORLD

Alpine Hut

Stara Fuzina, Bohinj, Slovenia

OFIS Architects

ofis.si



Cemetery Road

Sheffield, England

Project Orange

projectorange.com



House R.

Karlsruhe, Baden-Württemberg,

Germany

CHRIST.CHRIST associated
architects

www.christ-christ.cc



Photos by Tomaz Gregoric (Alpine Hut), Gareth Gardiner (Cemetery Road), Thomas Herrmann (House R.)

Houses We Love

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Table SPICE
Chair GEL-SL
Sideboard LIFE-2

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San Diego _ www.holdithome.com
Interior Illusions · West Hollywood
www.interiorillusionshome.com

florida

Adam's Interiors · Fort Lauderdale
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BOVA Furniture · Atlanta
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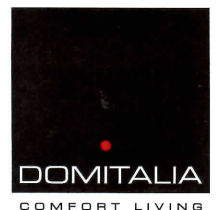
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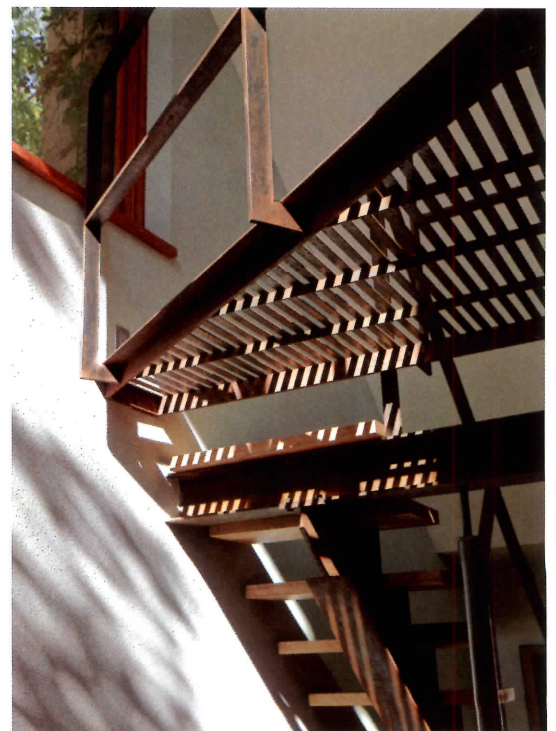
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Separate Boîte Equal



From the leafy sidewalk outside Paul Bernier and Joëlle Thibault's home in the Plateau Mont-Royal neighborhood of Montreal, there's no clue that their brick home is all that different from its neighbors. But step inside, and perceptions quickly shift. Rather than the tight, dark entry hall typical of century-old row houses, Bernier and Thibault's three-story-high stairwell is flooded with sunlight that illuminates surprising architectural details and an open-plan interior. Bernier, an architect, and Thibault, a lawyer specializing in alternative dispute resolution, managed to renovate and expand their home for about \$100 per square foot by using affordable materials, forgoing extravagant hardware and finishes, and taking on much of the work themselves. Bernier tells us how it came together. ▶▶

Two boxy additions to a renovated home in Montreal ensure that this family makes the most of both work and play.



Story by Tim McKeough
Photos by Alexi Hobbs



Greenery bursts out to the street from the side yard of Paul Bernier and Joëlle Thibault's home (opposite left). In the second-floor hallway (opposite right), Bernier skipped

typical hardwood flooring in favor of thin strips of birch boards spaced a distance apart to allow light to filter between the two levels. Bernier (above) helps seven-year-old

Edouard with his homework while four-year-old Victor flaunts his rebellious side.



I bought this house in 1993. It's a hundred years old but had been cheaply renovated with vinyl windows, mirrored closet doors, and carpet. Still, I saw lots of potential. I was alone and I had a small budget, so I slowly did a little work by myself. Then, in 1998, Joëlle moved in.

In Montreal, the yards are usually behind the houses, and everybody can see into each other's property. In our case, our yard is on the side, wrapped by other buildings, and it's very private—that was the main thing that drew me to the house. There was a building there, but it collapsed in the '70s, when the Plateau was a really poor neighborhood and the buildings weren't well looked after. Our garden is very lush, and the walls of our house and the neighboring place are covered with greenery, which really absorbs the sounds of the city. You notice the difference in the fall when the leaves drop, and all the hard surfaces become exposed—suddenly, you hear the noise.

When our older son Edouard was two and Victor was on the way, we decided to expand. We were tripping over the kids' toys. So we designed two additions: a playroom and an office. They are two boxes, each about 264 square feet, one in the garden and one on the roof. Our objective was not only to gain some more space but also to make the house lighter and brighter. We moved to an apartment across the street for about six months during construction, and I served as the general contractor.

We decided to site the playroom at the end of the garden, and keep it at one story, to allow sunlight to come into the yard—around three p.m., when there's sun, there's a big ray of light that streams in. We put a green roof on top to absorb heat and sound and to extend the lush feeling of the yard. We had to work around the silver maple tree—the wall comes in to make way for it, and I installed windows so you can see the trunk. ▶



Sheltered behind the fence that runs along the sidewalk (top), the plantings give the courtyard the feeling of an urban oasis (bottom). Because they also dampen the

sounds of the city, the garden is a peaceful retreat, even though it's located next to the road.

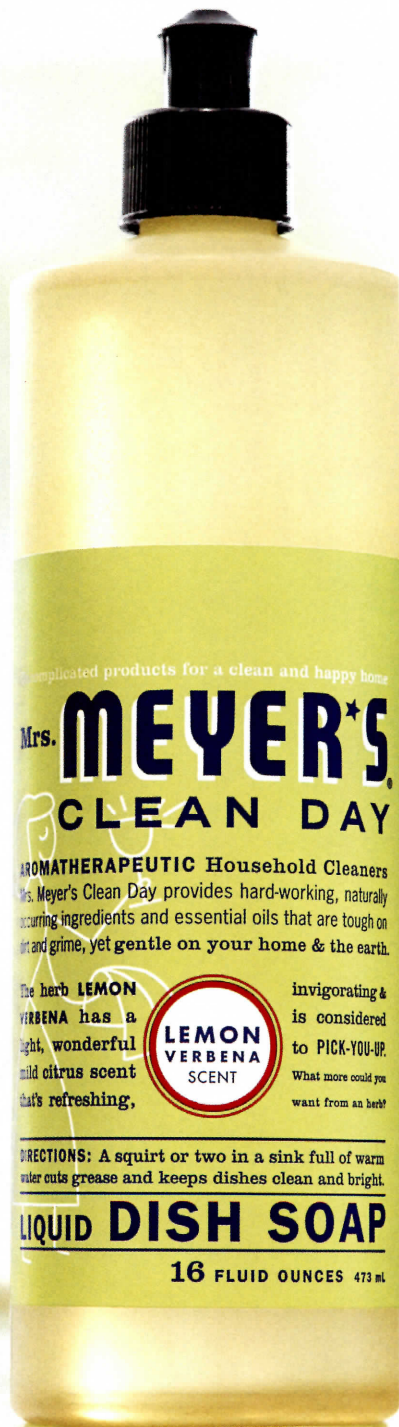
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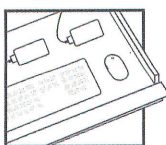
A small, single-story addition to the row house adds a playroom without eating up too much outdoor space. A green roof also helps make up for lost garden beds, while

creating attractive, leafy views from the second and third floors. In summer, when the sliding doors are left wide open, indoor and outdoor spaces blend together.



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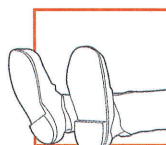
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MY HOUSE



One wall section in the playroom juts in to sidestep a mature tree outside, while slender windows allow the kids to monitor its progress through the seasons (top). On the

top floor (bottom), a new addition provides office space for Bernier and Thibault, where a V-shaped ceiling maximizes headroom within local building-height restrictions.

I really like that the house now runs around the garden and embraces it. In the summer, it's cooler there than on the street, and we move from the living room to the outdoors to the playroom, as if it's all just part of the house. We love having family dinners out there.

We also put an outdoor shower in the corner of the garden, hanging from a tree with no enclosure. On hot days, the kids like to run under it in their bathing suits, and sometimes we use it for a quick shower before bed because it's more fun.

For the office, which is on the roof, our addition had to be invisible from the sidewalk, because the city has designated our block as a two-story street. I set it back and lowered it partially into the existing building, so you can't see it. That's why the city accepted my proposition. It has large windows and suddenly gave us something that we didn't have before: an expansive view over all of the housetops in the neighborhood! It's a bright and peaceful space. Joëlle and I really enjoy it; it's the place we go to when the kids aren't at home or after they've gone to bed. They have their playroom; the office is our room.

This house is not big but ends up feeling bigger than it is. One reason is that we kept the stairs and circulation areas as transparent as possible, fostering more interaction and bringing in more light without sacrificing space. Instead of using the standard hardwood in the second-floor hallway, we laid square one-and-three-quarter-inch birch boards with gaps between them to allow sunlight from the windows to pass right through. Eventually, I'm going to remove a few more boards to let the light come through better, once the kids are older and I don't have to worry about their feet getting caught. But it's already a house where you can't hide too much, which is perfect for our family. Joëlle and I always know what the kids are up to, even when we're in different rooms, and they always know that we're close by. We can talk through the floors, and I can look down at the kids having breakfast in the morning, which helps keep us all together, even when we're busy. ▶

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Open-Door Policy

"These big sliding doors allow us to open the bedrooms right up or close them down," says Bernier, noting that he built the doors on-site from birch boards to keep costs down and then used tracks and hardware from K. N. Crowder. "For now, the kids don't like it when I close them too much," but as they approach their teenage years, it will be easy to create more privacy. kncrowder.com

A Vine Romance

One of Bernier's earliest and ongoing projects is covering the exterior with vines, including *Virginia creeper*, which grows thickly and can survive cold winters. It not only helps keep the home cool in summer, he says, but also muffles the sounds of the city outside. For urban-friendly gardens, Bernier recommends the landscape company *Jardinurbains*. jardinurbains.com



Hole in Some

Bernier forewent hardware pulls on most of the cabinetry. Instead, he cut holes in the plain fronts to serve as handles—circles in some, rectangles in others. The only exceptions are the messiest areas, like below the kitchen sink, where he installed stainless-steel pull bars by Richelieu that can stand up to wet and soiled hands. richelieu.com



Reel Simple

For a simple, low-cost bedside reading light with a dash of industrial style, Bernier ran a standard-issue cord set through a vintage clothesline pulley, which he picked up at a flea market, on Thibault's side of the bed. "If she ever wants it to be higher, she can easily adjust it," he says.



Keep Right

To eliminate flex in the cantilevered stairs, Bernier placed the structural stringer off-center. "When you climb the stairs and hold the rail, you actually step closer to the inside edge," he says. He also located the handrail against the wall to keep it from visually interrupting the living room. The custom metalwork is by Félix Lepage. felixlepage.com



Make It Yours

Bernier's do-it-yourself approach to building much of his family's home helped keep costs down, even as he added many personal touches and one-of-a-kind elements.

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The Cheap Seats

Story by Jaime Gross
Photos by Peter Belanger

@ Extended slideshow at
dwell.com/magazine



There are lots of handsome chairs out there, but sitting beauties that cost \$250 or less are a rarer breed. Our picks run the gamut from traditional (the wooden, Shaker-inspired Salt or the Thonet-designed Era, the quintessential cafe chair) to

the downright futuristic (we're looking at you, oddly anthropomorphic Dr. Yes). We sat, swayed, shook, stacked; we hefted them into the air; we typed, ate, and made grand conversational hand gestures. Here's how they stood up in our sitting showdown. ▮▮

PROS

CONS



Salt
by Design Within Reach
\$98
dwr.com

The slim bentwood seat lends an impression of solidity without adding actual heft: The chair weighs fewer than eight pounds.

The curved back piece comes to a sharp point at the bottom edges; wild gesticulations may result in dented triceps.

The narrow profile and small footprint makes it ideal for tight living quarters, and the timeless design ensures it won't date.

Despite the seat's carved-out, anatomically correct imprint, those on either (rear) end of the spectrum may be bummed out.



Arco
by Mario and Claudio Bellini
for Heller
\$250
helleronline.com

The erect back encourages good posture without compromising comfort, and the 25-inch-wide seat has a generous feel.

The high-gloss, static-prone finish is a magnet for dust and dog hair and will easily scratch: Beware deadly jeans rivets.

In addition to red, white, and black, it comes in a transparent version—a smart way to add seating without visually cluttering a room.

Due to their shiny, sharply curved profiles, our elbows kept slipping cartoonishly off the armrests.



Real Good
by Blu Dot
\$129
bludot.com

It packs flat, which means it's cheaper and more environmentally friendly to ship. Plus you can fit a whole dining set in your Le Car.

Though 16 pounds doesn't sound like much on paper, its angular shape makes it awkward and unwieldy to carry.

Assembly is a DIY-ers dream: Fold the powder-coated steel along perforated laser cuts to create the strikingly faceted chair.

The downside to hands-on assembly: When the paint chips along the folds, as it did on ours, there's no one to blame but yourself.



Era Chair
by Michael Thonet
for the TON Factory
\$150-\$175
dwr.com

This is the iconic bentwood chair, evoking romantic visions of Paris sidewalk cafes.

From a distance, Era looks great, but upon closer inspection, some of the details feel a bit crude, namely a flimsy-feeling seat with a ridge along the edge and exposed screw heads. Did value-engineering price out wood plugs?

It comes in classic brown, white, and black, as well as a gutsier fire-engine red. It's easy to tote and super-lightweight—it's fewer than eight pounds!



Dr. Yes
by Philippe Starck
for Kartell
\$187
kartell.com

The Dr. Yes is no shrinking violet; the bold, sweeping profile makes a big statement in any room.

It's wiggly! The spindly, tapering legs give the chair a fair amount of torque and swivel—more than any other chair in our roundup.

We love the contrast between the glossy exterior and matte interior, and the texture of the seat keeps your glutes glued.

It's also oddly tall: Despite the dip in the seat rim, shorter people's legs will dangle.



Air Chair
by Jasper Morrison
for Magis
\$154 (four for \$616)
magisdesign.com

These lightweight polypropylene-and-glass-fiber chairs are ideal for outdoor use; they're stackable and each has a cutout that ensures the seat won't gather puddles.

One size doesn't fit all: The relatively low back hits short folks right below the shoulder blades, discouraging reclined relaxation.

They come in ten colors, from fuchsia to beige, so there's a shade to suit every space.

They come only in sets of four—a bummer if you seek a singleton.



America
by the Conran Shop
\$29
conranusa.com

In case you missed it, we'll say it again: It costs \$29.

It's engineered for durability and foldability, not long-term-sitting comfort. Plus, it might trigger unpleasant flashbacks of DMV waiting rooms and SAT testing halls.

When folded, it's just two inches wide: Stash a few in your closet to accommodate extra guests.

We like the matte finish, but the spray-painted surface is a bit mottled in spots.



DSS Stacking Side Chair
by Charles and Ray Eames
for Herman Miller
\$229
hermanmiller.com

The supportive back comes up high and tapers toward the top, providing clearance for your elbows—useful if you're at a computer or pulled up close to a worktable.

It's so popular it's become ubiquitous—see practically every issue of Dwell.

It's stackable and "gangable"—you can clip several together to create rows.

The recyclable polypropylene plastic may be "eco-friendly," but it lacks the tactile appeal of the original fiberglass seat, which patinas beautifully. Scour your vintage shops...



Spark Chair
by Don Chadwick
for Knoll
\$235 with seat pad, \$159 without
knoll.com

With six base colors and more than 80 different Knoll fabrics for the cushion, this baby is almost endlessly customizable.

The seat pad isn't removable or retrofittable, so pick your pattern wisely: There's no changing it out when you get bored—or tipsy with your red wine. ■■■■

Super-comfortable, thanks to the padded seat and gently curved back. It's also available without the seat pad.



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The Bright Stuff

John and Paige Damiano are snow worshippers. As the Colorado and New Mexico territory manager for Burton Snowboards, John depends on winter precipitation for his business, not to mention for family entertainment. While the pair waits all summer for the flakes to fall, they'll be the first to tell you that their domestic comfort actually revolves around the sun.

The Damianos' house, located in Denver's Highland neighborhood, runs completely on solar energy. When the couple approached Mike

Moore, general contractor and design principal of the Boulder-based firm Tres Birds Workshop, sustainability topped their list of requirements. "The premise was to build a house that would last 400 years," says John.

Though none of us can say for sure whether the house will be standing for the Damianos' great-great-great-grandchildren, we can predict, based on a fastidious design process, time-tested materials, and advanced technologies, that the Damianos' first home will enjoy a very long life. ▶



Story by Sarah Rich
Photos by Bryan Schutmaat



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Solar Power

An array of solar thermal tubes crowns the garage, and photovoltaic panels extend like wings over the third-floor deck. "If we were going to make a big architectural move, we had to have reasons," Moore explains, referring to the conspicuous placement of the panels. "We needed array space with year-round direct sunlight as well as summer shade and rain protection, so it made sense to let them fly out."

Underground, a superinsulated cistern stores 1,000 gallons of 180-degree solar-heated water, which can meet the house's energy needs for a week even if the sun doesn't shine. But lack of sunlight is not a problem here. Talk to any Denverite and you're likely to hear one of the city's top selling points: There are more sunny days per year here than in San Diego. ▶

Your Turn...

Thinking of going solar? Read on to see if photovoltaics (PVs) are right for you.

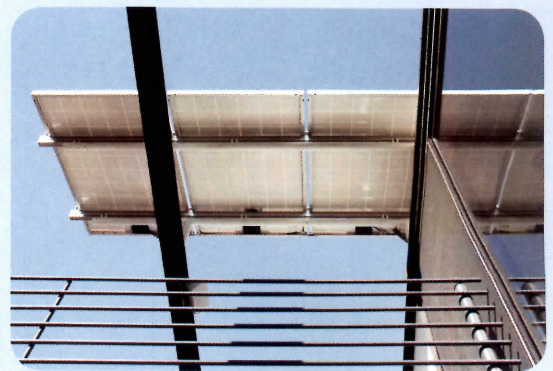
Before plopping panels on your roof, consider other ways to conserve electricity, like switching to CFL or LED lightbulbs and replacing inefficient electrical appliances like old refrigerators. "Conservation is the leanest means to reducing electrical use and fossil-fuel consumption," Moore says. "PV panels require a lot of energy to produce, ship, install, and dispose of."

Give your lot a once-over. To tap into affordable PV technology, you want a shadow-free environment and a south-facing roof with a 25-degree slope.

Examine your household's energy usage by reading the kilowatt-hours-used line on your electricity bill. You'll need a system that can meet this load—but does not exceed it, as there are often no financial incentives to making more energy than you can use.

Look into buy-back agreements from your regional

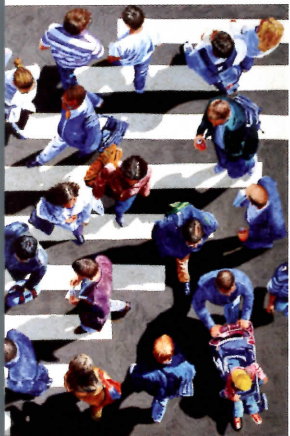
utility companies to eliminate the need of on-site batteries for energy storage. "Remember, PV panels make electricity during the day when most people are not home to use it and then are off at night when you do want it," Moore says.



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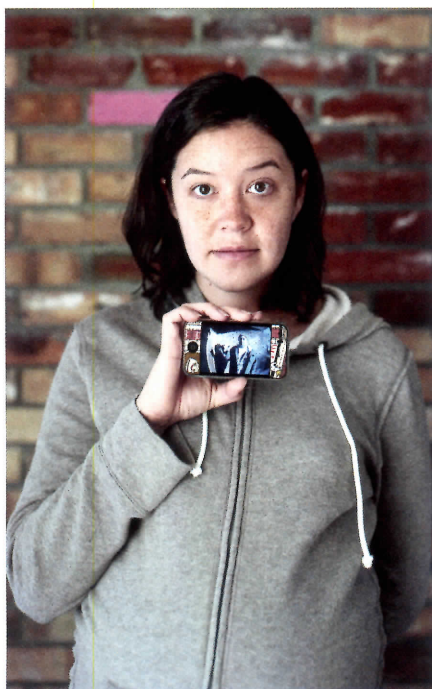




Reclaimed Materials

The house that came with the lot had suffered years of neglect, but its old bricks were readily salvageable. Moore combined these with others taken from local demolition yards, piecing together beautiful, two-tone walls flecked with brightly painted pink, orange, lime green, and white bricks salvaged from a Denver elementary school.

A close look at the wide plank floors on the first level reveals numbers printed at random. In their previous life, the boards were bleachers for a school sports stadium. "We didn't have to do much to them," Moore remarks appreciatively. "All those years under people's rear ends gave them a nice smooth finish."



Your Turn...

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ecobee.com

HomeLogic

homelogic.com

Eragy

eragy.com

GainSpan

gainspan.com

Indigo

perceptiveautomation.com/indigo

Remote Control

While the design of their house automatically promotes energy efficiency, John and Paige can streamline their consumption even more by controlling their lighting and appliances remotely from their smartphones. The entertainment and security systems are housed in a central console in the basement, which works wirelessly. When the Damianos go skiing for the weekend, they can conserve electricity and keep the house secure from hundreds of miles away.

Creative Reuse

In the last decade, Colorado forests have been devastated by the relentless presence of the pine beetle. Vast stands of dead trees create a serious wildfire threat and must be cleared, so some resourceful craftspeople around the state are making use of the dried-up timber.

Moore has been using the so-called beetle-kill pine in his projects for years. In the Damianos' house, he lined the floors, ceiling, cabinetry, and walls of the second-story living area, white-washing the planks "to let a little more sunlight bounce around the room." Under the thin coating, the natural blue shade of the wood can be seen, adding subtle color and texture to the room. ▶



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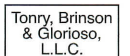
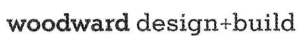
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Green Roof

On all three aboveground levels of the house, outdoor spaces feature as prominently as indoor ones. The backyard is lined with tiered concrete boxes for planting vegetables; the modest top floor—which houses the master bedroom—has a deck wrapping three sides; and in the middle, a 770-square-foot green roof extends off the living area.

Sedums, perennials, and herbs thrive in four to eight inches of soil, enjoying direct southern exposure tempered by shade provided by the overhanging master bedroom. Two bedrooms on the second floor are for Rocco, the couple's newborn son, and they hope another child within a few years. "We wanted the children to be able to come out of their rooms and see nature," says John. ■

Your Turn...

There are many ways to create a green roof, and deciding on an approach depends on where you live and how supportive your house's roof structure is. Homes in snowy areas generally have roofing that is made to support a lot of water weight, but on the West Coast and in the South, most aren't designed for the weight of a garden.

Direct Planting:

Directly applying four to eight inches of soil in a blanket across the roof means that if your roof can support it, you can grow not just

sedum—the small plants typical of green roofs—but also plants with deeper roots like herbs and edibles.


Planter Boxes or Raised Beds:

Choose this option if your roofing material contains questionable toxins or if you can't put soil directly on the roof. You still need to be able to support a fair bit of weight for this method.

Hydroponics:

Planting a hydroponic garden means you avoid the weight of soil, though water is still quite heavy. Numerous edibles can be grown hydroponically.

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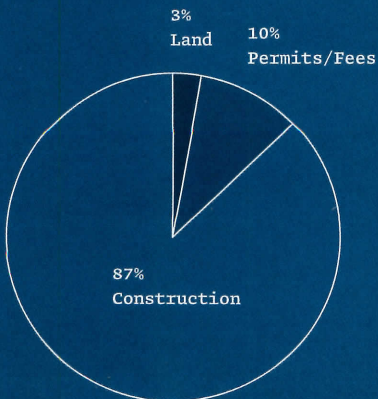
Dollar, Dollar Build Y'all

Woody by the idea of affordable modern homes, these three design teams got creative in order to cut costs for their clients and their respective clans. Here, they open their books to reveal how they lowered their bottom lines to less than \$190 per square foot—construction costs, fees, and land included.

Seattle

Project: Treehouse
 Designer: Prentis Hale, SHED Architecture and Design, shedbuilt.com
 Location: Seattle, Washington

Total Cost:
\$516,540



2,760
 Square feet

\$187.15
 Total cost per square foot (based on costs including construction costs, soft costs, and land)

\$162.82
 Total cost per square foot (based on construction costs only)

\$150.72
 Original projected cost per square foot (based on construction costs only)

\$449,387
 Amount spent on construction (total)

\$229,130
 Amount spent on construction materials (subset of total construction costs)

\$52,155
 Amount spent on permits, architect fees, and other soft costs

\$15,000
 Amount spent on land

\$0
 Amount spent on furnishing (in addition to total cost)

Bathroom tile
 Biggest splurge

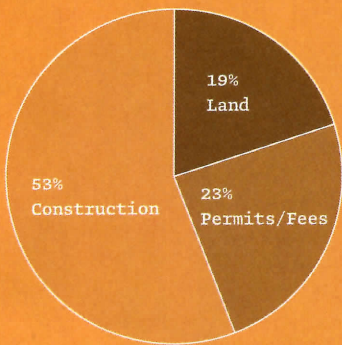
Buying an entire Ikea kitchen
 Best deal

Philadelphia

Project: 100K House
Architect: Interface Studio Architects,
is-architects.com
Developer: Postgreen Homes,
postgreen.com
Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Total Cost:

\$200,000



1,296

Square feet

\$154.32

Total cost per square foot
(based on costs including construction costs,
soft costs, and land)

\$81.02

Total cost per square foot
(based on construction costs only)

\$100.00

Original projected cost per square foot
(based on construction costs only)

\$105,000

Amount spent on construction (total)

\$45,000

Amount spent on construction materials
(subset of total construction costs)

\$45,000

Amount spent on permits, architect fees,
and other soft costs

\$37,500

Amount spent on land

\$7,500

Amount spent on furnishing
(in addition to total cost)

Wooden panels on the staircase

Biggest splurge

Building an on-grade slab foundation in- stead of a basement

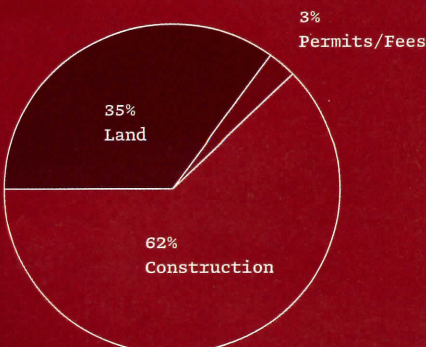
Best deal

Tijuana

Project: Casa Becerril
Architect: Jorge Gracia, Gracia Studio,
graciastudio.com
Location: Tijuana, Mexico

Total Cost:

\$495,740



4,357

Square feet

\$113.78

Total cost per square foot
(based on costs including construction costs,
soft costs, and land)

\$70.00

Total cost per square foot
(based on construction costs only)

\$70.00

Original projected cost per square foot
(based on construction costs only)

\$304,990

Amount spent on construction (total)

\$190,000

Amount spent on construction materials
(subset of total construction costs)

\$15,750

Amount spent on permits, architect fees,
and other soft costs

\$175,000

Amount spent on land

\$12,000

Amount spent on furnishing
(in addition to total cost)

Dining table and chairs

Biggest splurge

Building quickly with galvanized steel frame

Best deal

A New Slant

Story by Miyoko Ohtake
 Photos by Philip Newton

Project: Treehouse
 Designer: SHED Architecture and Design
 Location: Seattle, Washington

Maisie and Pippa Hale possess the reckless abandon innate in most four year olds, but there are two things in particular that they aren't afraid of: knives and power tools. Since I arrived this afternoon, the charismatic twins have been sitting on the yellow kitchen island countertop helping their mom chop vegetables, each taking turns playing assistant knife wielder.

Prentis Hale and Tracy Edmonds's daughters grew up around moving blades. Hale served as both designer and general contractor for the family's house in Seattle's Mount Baker neighborhood, and the toddler twins often visited the construction site with lunch and Edmonds in hand. Back in the kitchen, Maisie turns from dicing onions: "We ran through the hole!" she squeals recalling scurrying through the opening in the timber framing separating their soon-to-be bedroom from their parents'.

But for Hale and Edmonds, planning the project came long before preparing for twins. In the 1990s, premarriage and prekids, the couple shared a one-bedroom apartment in Capitol Hill, just northeast of downtown. "We stayed there so long that we ended up being the old people in the building," Edmonds shares with a laugh. The area became increasingly "too hipster and too loud" for their liking, and with friends starting families and buying houses, they started looking, too. After discovering that the lower-price homes on the market all required substantial work, Hale and Edmonds decided to build from the



@ Extended slideshow at
dwell.com/magazine

In Seattle, where others saw only a severe slope and lack of municipal hookups, one couple spotted their ticket to their dream home.

A supposedly impossible site was the perfect plot for Hale (pictured) and Edmonds, who were searching for some sort of break that would afford them the chance to build their own home. Stilted the house over the steep hill gives them direct access to nature while still being located just a ten-minute drive from downtown Seattle.





ground up. Hale was immediately thrilled with the idea: As a cofounding principal of SHED Architecture and Design, this was his chance to experiment with a personalized structure and a small budget.

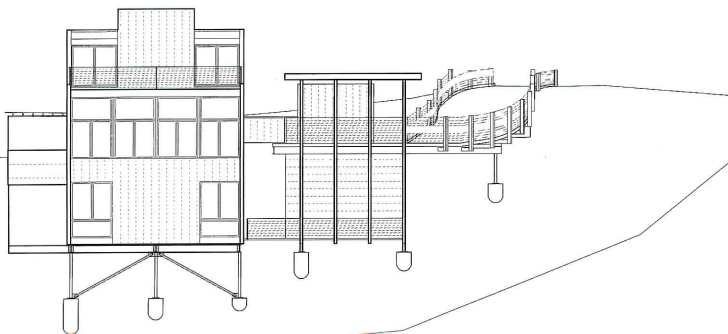
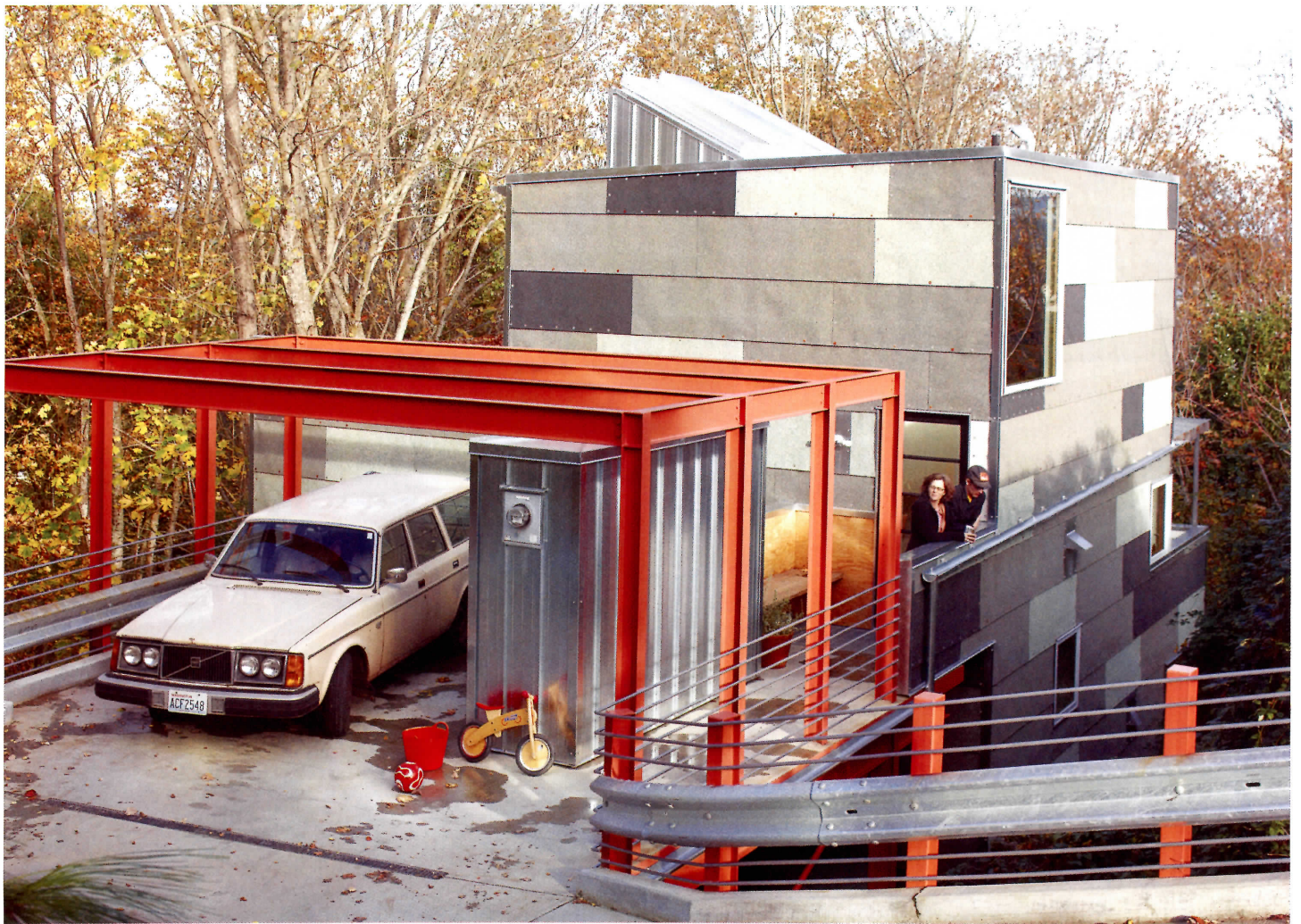
Edmonds embraced the challenge of finding an affordable lot, scouring the Internet for properties priced less than \$25,000. When a search unearthed one adjacent to a park on Lake Washington, she called the realtor immediately. The agent was initially brash, scoffing at the idea that anyone would be interested in the lot—but he wasn't entirely without reason: The parcel was practically inaccessible. It was situated 20 feet beyond where the road dead-ended at a curb and lay another 20 feet below street grade. The plot lacked municipal hookups and plummeted down the hill at a 50-percent slope. But the neighboring property had caught Edmonds's eye: Just beyond the steep pitch was the P-Patch community garden in which she and Hale had been growing salad greens for years. "We'd carry a trowel and bike over from our old apartment," Edmonds remembers fondly. "It was our escape."

Today, their home floats at the edge of the wooded park, nestled among the boughs and branches. Anchored upon 11 piers, it's clad in colored strips

of asphalt roll roofing, an affordable siding alternative that Hale chose to resemble bark. On the east and west sides, decks outfitted with hammocks and swings jut out Swiss Family Robinson-style. Last spring, Edmonds hauled beets from the P-Patch through a living-room window with a bucket and string, and she jokes about installing a zip line from the room directly to their section of the garden.

The Treehouse—despite conjuring romantic notions of a summerlong project—was anything but a single season's effort. Hale and Edmonds purchased the property in 1999 for \$15,000, but it took a decade to move in. First they had to test the soil to make sure the land could hold foundation piers (their only building option, since excavation was beyond their budget). Then, "we just sat on it," Edmonds says. She moved to Italy in 2002 for a year of Montessori training; Hale joined her for a few months of photography. In 2006, Maisie and Pippa were born. Finally, after years of permitting and pricing—then repricing contractors and materials after the economic meltdown—construction began.

Hale (and Edmonds) quickly realized the downside of designing one's own home: There's no one to tell you when to stop. Hale's flights of fancy



Inside, Hale's passion for homemade and vintage furniture helped keep costs low. His material preferences also lightened the load: Inexpensive plywood lines the ceiling and cork covers the floors. Outside, an affordable mix of asphalt roll roofing and HardiePanel siding creates a barklike appearance.

took the design from a double-height art space to one including a wood and metal shop. For months, he came home with model after model of the house, each time hoping for an architecture school-like crit from Edmonds who just wanted Hale to pick a design and stick with it. "The hardest part was imposing discipline and coming to grips with reality," Hale concedes. "I needed to figure out where the rubber met the road and start from there."

The resulting home is tucked quietly away at the end of the street, leaving just the top floor and skylight hutch visible from the road. Though the 1,644 square feet (built for just \$162.82 each) are spread over three floors and stilted above the steep hillside, it feels more like a ranch house. "It's like Frank Lloyd Wright's Usonian homes: everyone in one main space," Hale says. In many ways the house does resemble the iconic architect's small, affordable homes, designed with simple materials, strong connections to the land, and the hope of building a better solution for living.

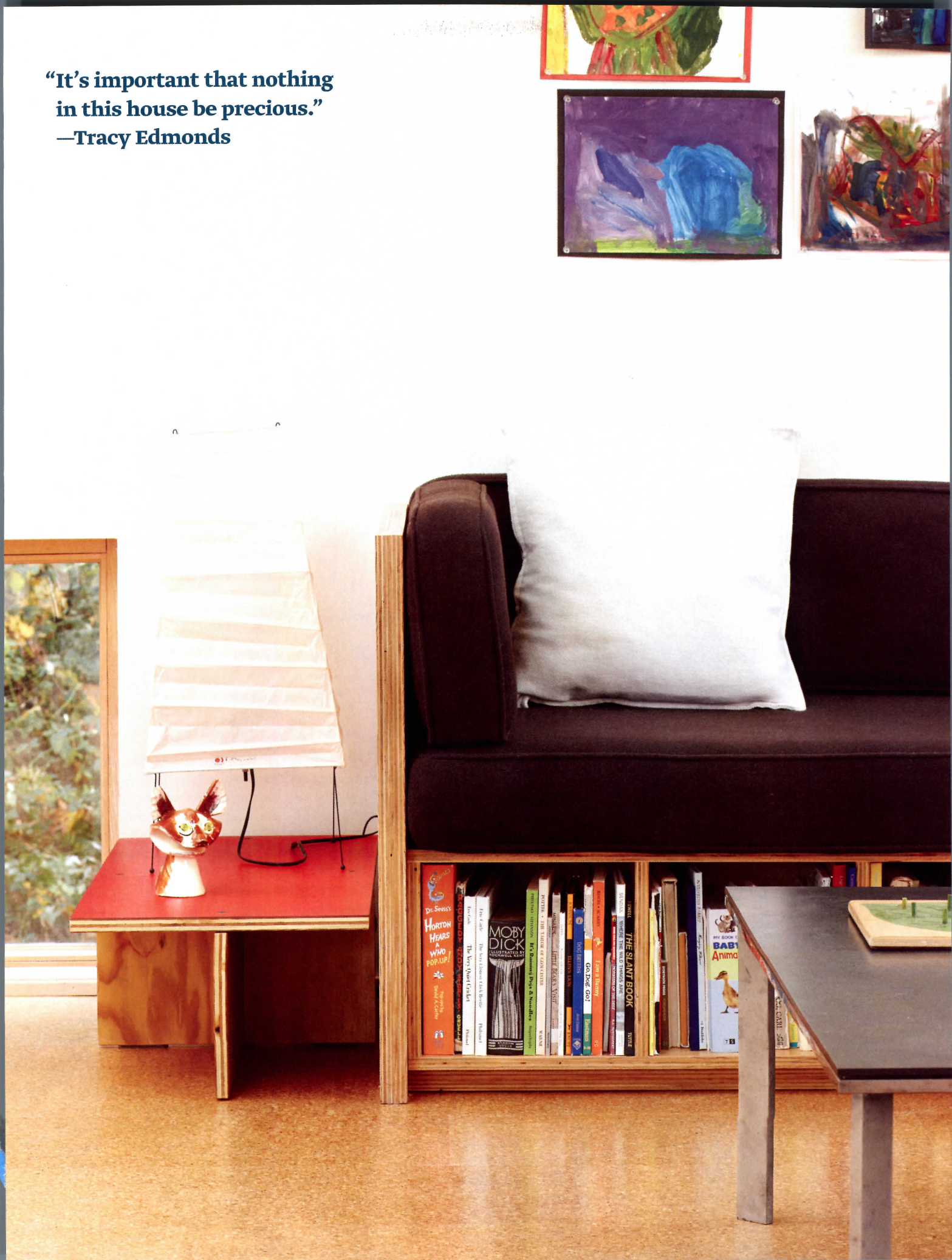
There's rarely a moment when a family member is out of sight. The kitchen opens to a deck and the dining room, which anchors the living room on other side. It's in this great room (great floor, really) ▶▶

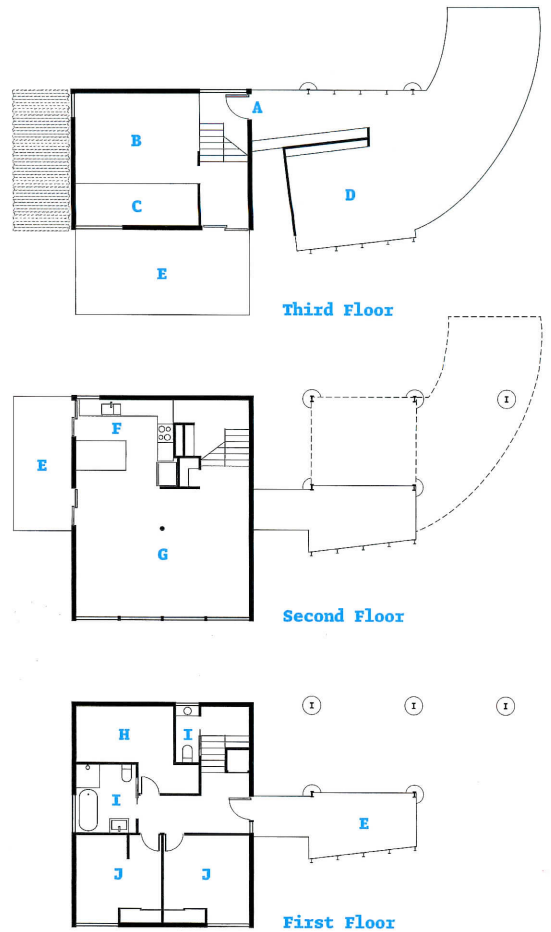
DWELLINGS

Evidence of the family's DIY nature is omnipresent. In the office-cum-craft room (top), Hale built a planter box and art-supply cubbies with leftover plywood. In the living room (below and right), an Akari lamp by Isamu Noguchi sits atop a coffee table Hale made and next to a collage of Maisie and Pippa's paintings.



**“It’s important that nothing
in this house be precious.”
—Tracy Edmonds**





Treehouse Floor Plans

- A Entry
- B Studio
- C Open to Below
- D Carport
- E Deck
- F Kitchen
- G Living Area
- H Mechanical
- I Bathroom
- J Bedroom


that Maisie and Pippa read *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* together on Hale's handmade couch, which is outfitted with built-in bookshelves. Hale often works at the dining table—a former banquet table repurposed by a friend—instead of in the loft, which houses his and Edmonds's desk but has been commandeered by the girls and turned into their arts-and-crafts room.

The bathroom, a storage closet, and two equally sized bedrooms are located on the lowest level—for now. "The house is exactly the size we want it to be," Hale says, "though I don't know if Maisie and Pippa will think that in a few years." If—or more likely when—the twins outgrow their shared room, the loft is shower- and toilet-ready, built with flexibility in mind to allow the space to be remodeled into an additional bedroom and bath.

"This house is Prentis's ongoing project," says Edmonds, adding, "that's why I say designers shouldn't live in their own designs." Hale had hoped to build a bridge from the loft to the living-room roof, but that idea was placed on the backburner due to limited funds. He plans to clad the bedroom walls with plywood, one of his favorite materials for its texture and price tag, but he hasn't gotten around

to it yet. In the kitchen, Hale and Edmonds forewent installing Bosch appliances (though they hope to upgrade later), cashing in on a sale at Ikea that cut the price of the entire kitchen system and appliances to a mere \$4,700. Outside, they bid adieu to building a slender driveway guardrail, as it would have required extensive, and thus expensive, testing to meet code. Parts of the house are still scrappy and unfinished—the bedroom doors stand unframed, the powder room pocket door doesn't close completely—but the family makes do. "It was important that nothing in this house be precious," Edmonds says. Tick marks running up a wall in the kitchen track Maisie's and Pippa's growth; their paintings and artwork are pushpinned directly into the wall.

When the sun begins to set, we gather around the dining table for the meal Edmonds prepared with her two tiny sous-chefs. When Maisie and Pippa start squirming in Edmonds's arms, it's time to call it a night. We make our way to the front door, where boots and sneakers spill out of the shoe-storage area. "This entryway is too small," Hale critiques, "but on the upside, there are no long goodbyes." Ours isn't—but it's clear that Hale, always the designer, is already reworking the space in his mind. ■■■



Pippa, one half of the ever-entertaining twins, goofs around on the stairs leading to the entrance and loft above and the bedrooms and bathrooms below (left). Hale and Maisie peer out of one of the living-room windows (right), from where Edmonds dreams about installing a zip-line directly to their garden patch. 📍



By keeping the budget strict, the insulation tight, and its values clear, Philadelphia's Postgreen Homes shows a little brotherly love for green, urban housing.

See What Develops

Story by Aaron Britt
Photos by Mark Mahaney

Project: 100K House
Architect: Interface Studio Architects
Location: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Chad Ludeman is looking somewhat ruefully through the rain-flecked front windows of the 100K House. A pair of residences are going up across East Susquehanna Street in Philadelphia's still-scrappy East Kensington neighborhood, where Chad, his wife, Courtney, and their development company, Postgreen Homes, are diligently developing a quartet of sustainable-housing projects—100K, Skinny, Passive, and 2 Point 5 Beta—all to be sold for less than \$300,000.

Chad's wariness is twofold: It's that of an entrepreneur anxious to keep hold of his end of the market in a neighborhood Postgreen has laid claim to, and that of a Philadelphian who values small, green homes within reach of the young professionals (like him) otherwise priced out of owning in Center City. Thanks in part to the Ludemans, East Kensington might be the next frontier in the sprucing up of Philadelphia—but as the early construction across the street suggests, not everyone thinks as they do.

"In this recession, I think we've learned that housing values have very little to do with housing," Chad observes. And though new development across the street and speckled across the surrounding blocks may bode well for Postgreen's fortunes, Chad sets higher store by a house's Home Energy Rating System (HERS) rating than its resale value.

Though affordability and sustainability are Postgreen's clear aims, the developers' understanding of value extends beyond the property line. But to achieve what they imagine people like themselves want—small, sustainable houses for reasonable prices—Chad and Courtney first had to prove they could make one for themselves. By setting a tight budget, building only as much as they could afford, and making the house's shape conform to the budget's limitations ("The box comes first!" was both a rallying cry during the design phase and a fact of life during construction), Postgreen and Interface Studio Architects successfully built the first installment in what Interface principal Brian Phillips calls "a little design ghetto over here."

The Ludemans moved into their debut creation, the 100K House, in 2009, using it as both a domicile and a test case. The project comprises a pair of adjacent, two-story homes clad in durable HardiePanel vertical siding that announces them as defiantly modern. What's not visible from the street, though, is the 100K House's LEED Platinum certification—or its 2010 LEED for Homes Project of the Year award from the U.S. Green Building Council.

"Nobody's doing much modern, small, and green development around here," says Chad. "There have been some row-house renovations and rehabs, but I think ours must be the first ground-up house built in East Kensington in the last 20 or so years."

The novelty, and the success, of the Ludemans' two-unit building (the 100K House is just one of the houses; the adjacent 120K cost a bit more to build) is due to its small size and devotion to green building practices, but the real selling point is that their 1,296-square-foot residence came in at just 100

The HardiePanel siding on the adjacent 100K and 120K houses is a dramatic break from East Kensington's mostly brick facades (opposite, with the local elevated train). The simple, well insulated box and the absence of a third floor keep each house affordable, sustainable, and within the reach of young families.



Concrete floors and an Ikea kitchen and spice rack make for an affordable, cleanly geometric aesthetic at the back of the bottom floor. The appliances are by Frigidaire, and the black countertops are sealed with Eco Tuff by Eco Procote.



“The 100K House is not over the top in terms of energy efficiency. It’s better than code, sure, but ultimately it’s just what makes sense.” —Chad Ludeman

\$81 per square foot in construction costs. The “100K” moniker comes from the house’s hard materials and construction costs (they actually ran closer to \$105,000: \$45,000 in materials and \$60,000 more in labor), though the remaining soft costs like permits and architect’s fees brought the small residence in for around \$200,000. The lot cost a mere \$37,500 per unit, with \$3,000 more in closing fees. East Kensington’s cache of cheap, vacant lots, proximity to the hip Fishtown neighborhood, and nearby public transit make it an ideal laboratory for inexpensive urbanity.

Keeping costs down meant building in a rougher neighborhood as well as sticking to a limited palette of materials: The space is defined by exposed concrete and birch plywood, an Ikea kitchen, and the Har-diePanel vertical exterior. But the real savings came not so much in materials as in the marriage of form and function. The 100K House’s boxy, unfussy form kept material and labor costs to a minimum and worked entirely in the service of constructing of a tight thermal envelope and a valuable LEED rating.

“We had to hit the budget to prove that the concept could work,” says Phillips, noting that he treated his design process “more like industrial design than architecture.”

“As an architect you often collect information from your client and then imagine what kind of a house might meet those aspirations,” Phillips continues. “In this case we knew exactly what the aspirations were: \$100 per square foot, LEED Silver [they hit Platinum as a “happy accident”], and a provocative design. Then we asked ourselves, Can a house really do that?”

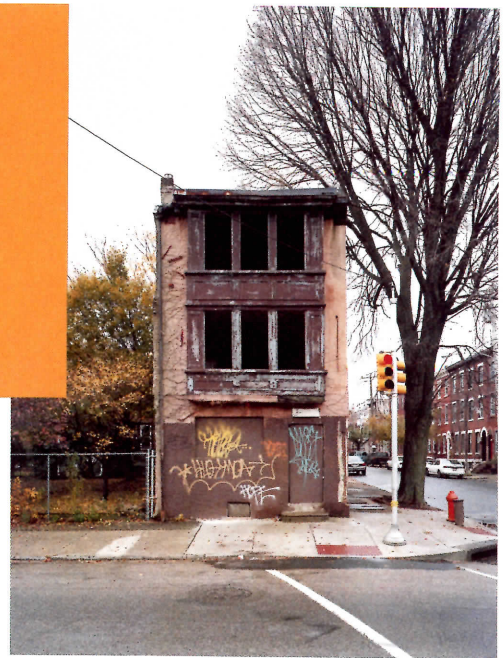
It can, though getting there has as much to do with what Phillips calls “accepting less” as it does with budget-conscious construction. The perpetual question in the numerous iterations of the design was “If we do a little less, can that actually be cooler than [doing what people have come to expect, but] cheaping out on it?”

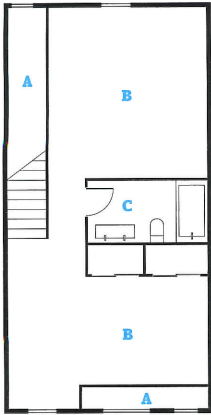
Doing less also meant consuming less. The 100K House is close to 70 percent more energy efficient than the older properties next door, thanks to heavy-duty insulation, tight-fitting windows, and serious attention paid to the home’s R rating. It’s a common theme in Postgreen’s projects: The Skinny Project down the block has a HERS rating of 23—Chad claims it’s the lowest in the city for a residence—and the Passive Project a few streets down is built to Germany’s highly efficient Passive House standards.

“When I tell people that we’ve hit LEED Platinum,” says Chad, “they’ll say, ‘So you’ve got bamboo floors and geothermal heating.’ We don’t have any of that. To be honest, the 100K House is not over the top in terms of energy efficiency,” he continues. “It’s better than code, sure, but ultimately it’s just what makes sense.”

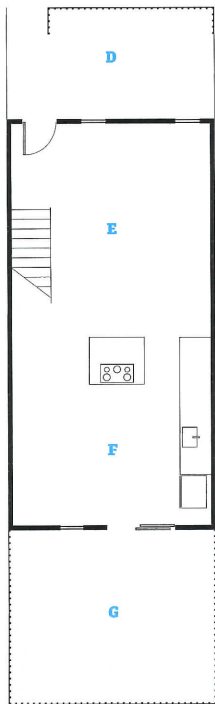
Courtney adds that last winter, thanks in part to their solar thermal panels for heating hot water, their heating and hot water bill combined, in chilly Philadelphia, was never more than \$70 per month. “We have no fights about the heat anymore.” ▶▶

Vacant lots and derelict houses aren’t terribly hard to find in East Kensington, a neighborhood (top) where more developers are starting to pay attention. Courtney and Teague (bottom) play in the living room opposite a Perch lounge designed by Eric Pfeiffer for Offi. The paintings behind the TV are by artist Chris Clark.





Second Floor



First Floor

100K House
Floor Plans



- A Open to Below
- B Bedroom
- C Bathroom
- D Front Yard
- E Living Area
- F Kitchen/Dining Area
- G Backyard



The long, rectangular bottom floor is one uninterrupted space. Bikes live beneath the stairs, and the kitchen island is a center of activity. The dining table was made by Bench Dog Design and the Real Good chairs are by Blu Dot. An inexpensive fan by Emerson and exposed CFLs are smart, low-cost options for the ceiling.





Teague (this page) plays in his Hiya crib from Spot on Square. More adult playthings, like this pair of bikes (opposite) live under the stairs, whose cutouts break up the plane of plywood and double as peepholes for kids at play.





Neither the master bedroom (where Courtney reposes on the bed) nor Teague's bedroom (below) has a door, making the small space upstairs feel more open and continuous. The backyard (opposite) yields veggies and flowers, and another Postgreen project is under construction just beyond the fence. 📍

Another reason for that low energy bill is because Postgreen cast off a hoary developer orthodoxy: They nixed the third floor. "Some developers call the third floor 'the money floor,'" Chad says. The jump in profit developers see in selling a three-story house, as opposed to a two-story house, is significantly relative to the cost of building that large master bedroom and en suite bath. "A lot of developers don't want to sell at \$250,000. They'd rather come in when they can get \$450,000 or \$500,000," Chad explains. "We want to be able to deliver highly efficient homes to average working people. Efficiency and design should not only be for the wealthy, in our opinion."

But for average working people to embrace Postgreen's ethos, they must take Phillips's ideas about accepting less to heart. The Ludemans' home consists of two floors, the first little more than a concrete-floored rectangle housing a living space and the kitchen. Upstairs is Chad and Courtney's modest bedroom, a small room for their son, Teague, and a bathroom that boasts the only door in the house. Bikes hang in plain view beneath the stairs; a small island with an induction cooktop separates the kitchen from the living space.

The home's furnishings and fixtures are equally humble. A row of bare CFLs hangs from the ceiling of the living area, and the appliances in the kitchen are sturdy, efficient fare from Frigidaire.

The Ludemans, who brought little furniture with them to the 100K House, outfitted their new space for \$7,500. The result is a tasteful curation of Ikea and CB2 goods peppered with an Eames rocker in Teague's room, a Mag table and Perch lounge chair by Eric Pfeiffer for Offi ("That chair was a small splurge," says Courtney, "but I lusted after it"), a dining table fabricated out of old reclaimed pine beams by Philadelphia's Bench Dog Design, and a pair of custom barstools made by Kala Studios. The olive oil might well be the only object professing to be "Made in Italy."

The biggest divergence from the home's no-frills mission, and easily the biggest design move on the interior, is the staircase railing, a custom-built bit of low-tech high design. Made of laminated birch plywood, the barrier does double duty as a handrail and a useful divider between the public downstairs and the private second floor. Cutouts in the panels frame the view from the stairs and add a bit of visual flair while still keeping to code.

Ultimately, Postgreen's notions of affordability extend beyond the line-item budget. They're about finding a point of equilibrium between design and value, energy efficiency and attainable, middle-class housing and accessibility to downtown. "Until pretty recently, people imagined that the value of a home was tied to large square footage," says Courtney, but Postgreen's thinking—perpetually that of the citizen-developer—extends beyond what it takes to make a sustainable home to what it takes to make a sustainable East Kensington. Making a vibrant, green community means never losing sight of who does, and who could, live right next door. ||||



Appetite for Construction

Story by Frances Anderton
Photos by Paco Perez Arriaga

Project: Casa Becerril
Architect: Gracia Studio
Location: Tijuana, Mexico



Six years ago, architect Jorge Gracia came to Dwell's attention with a house he built for his family that was radically different from any other in his hometown of Tijuana, Mexico, where the hillsides are peppered with unplanned, makeshift houses for the poor and pastel-colored, ersatz Spanish manses for the rich. Despite Mexico's strong modernist tradition—think of the work of Luis Barragán and Enrique Norten—Tijuana hasn't been its beneficiary. "I'm an architect in a city with no architecture," Gracia told Dwell in 2005. "In a place like this, you have to ask a client to have faith, and faith to me has always been the belief in something you can't see."

Despite Tijuana's shortcomings, Gracia has since managed to find local clients prepared to take that leap. He now has about 50 houses to his name, including the recently completed Casa Becerril, built for Marco and Angelica Becerril and their extended family. They commissioned Gracia after seeing the home he built for their oldest daughter, also named Angelica, which, like several of Gracia's designs, was completed quickly and cost-effectively using a light-weight steel framing system manufactured and sold by Marco.

Casa Becerril is located in one of Tijuana's many gated communities, protected by a high perimeter fence, barbed wire, and a guard who collects visitors' ID cards and keeps them until their departure. Land is at a premium here, so unlike the nearby border town of Mexicali, where sprawling, low houses sit on large lots, the majority of homes here are multi-story and jammed together, almost like row houses. Such is the case for the Becerrils' new house, which sits calmly and quietly on a tight site between cookie-cutter houses—a stark, narrow, and tall box clad in creamy HardiePanel fiber-cement siding and rich brown acrylic panels.

Not only does the house look different, it is less packed in on its site than the other houses, which squeeze up to their property lines. Instead, Casa Becerril is reached in stages, first through a quiet gravel yard shaded with bamboo and then by a second-level private courtyard leading into the main cooking, dining, and living room.

Mexicans often seek seclusion and like to focus on the family, explains Gracia, and this house conforms to that tradition by centering the life of the house inward, away from the street, onto the inner courtyard and the family space, which is typically brimming with people and pets. On the day of our visit, Angelica (the elder) is busy at the kitchen island making tacos for the guests, and a little Pomernian, Paco, bounces around enthusiastically. Soon, Marco appears, followed shortly by his daughter Erica; expected later is the younger Angelica, now living with her parents and her two daughters. The family also includes a cocky parrot named Panchito, who is perched in the kitchen; Oscar, a 40-year-old tortoise who lives in his own custom stone kennel in the bamboo of the entry; and, snuffling at the glass doors from his home in the courtyard, a perky little black boar named José. ▀



The Becerril family embraces stark modernism with a mute facade clad in Hardie board and acrylic panels (left); access to the heart of the house is through the bamboo garden. Marco Becerril, at the left end of the table, presides over his extended family in the double-height dining area (above).

“In a place like this, you have to ask a client to have faith, and faith to me has always been the belief in something you can’t see.”
—Jorge Gracia



Angelica Becerril prepares food at the kitchen island; the Carrara marble countertop is one of the few luxury materials used in the house (above). An exterior stairway meeting the main entrance leads to the guesthouse (right). Marco Becerril embraces indoor-outdoor living (opposite).





DWELLINGS

Pivotal to the overall plan, the courtyard is sited on the eastern half of the house to maximize space and morning light on its narrow, enclosed site. The main part of the house sits on the western half, with a guesthouse, currently occupied by Erica, on an upper level at the south end. Along the western edge of the lot, the building butts up close to its neighbor and therefore gets scant natural light. Here, Gracia created an efficient spine of closets, bathrooms, and other utility spaces, all neatly concealed behind flush walnut-paneled walls and cabinets.

The house thereby is both a streamlined machine for living in—Angelica repeatedly raves about the efficiency of the house—and a restful, contemplative space. Marco, it turns out, not only had faith in his architect's ideals—“we invested in the building because we believe in him,” he says—but also sustains a profound faith of the kind Gracia had described as “the belief in something you can't see.” He prays daily and keeps his walls free of decoration except for an image of Jesus (and, on a wall upstairs, a typewritten memo of moral and domestic rules for his family). The house has an almost monastic

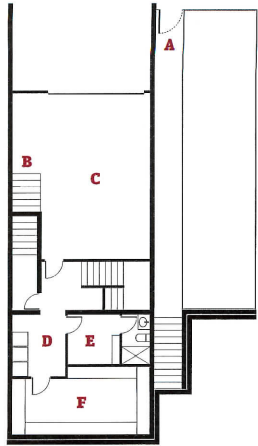


The dining table doubles as a homework spot (above). The bedroom in the guesthouse features cheery colors (left). Unlike its neighbors, Casa Becerril is set back from the street and fits a yard onto its tight site (opposite).

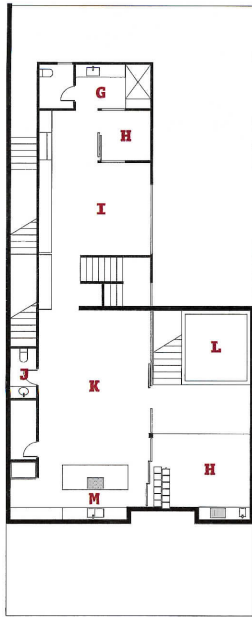
Casa Becerril
Floor Plans



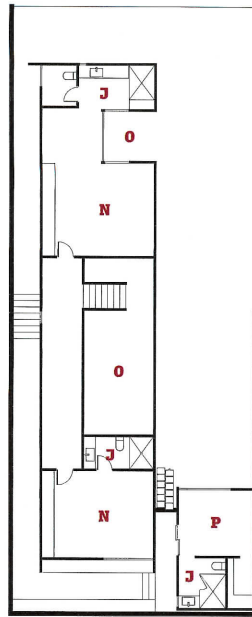
- A Entry
- B Stair to Loft
- C Garage
- D Laundry
- E Maid's Quarters
- F Storage
- G Master Bathroom
- H Terrace
- I Master Bedroom
- J Bathroom
- K Living/Dining Area
- L Pool
- M Kitchen
- N Bedroom
- O Open to Below
- P Loft
- Q Roof



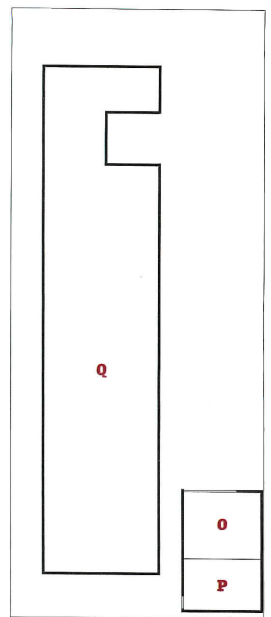
Ground Floor



First Floor




Second Floor




Roof/Loft

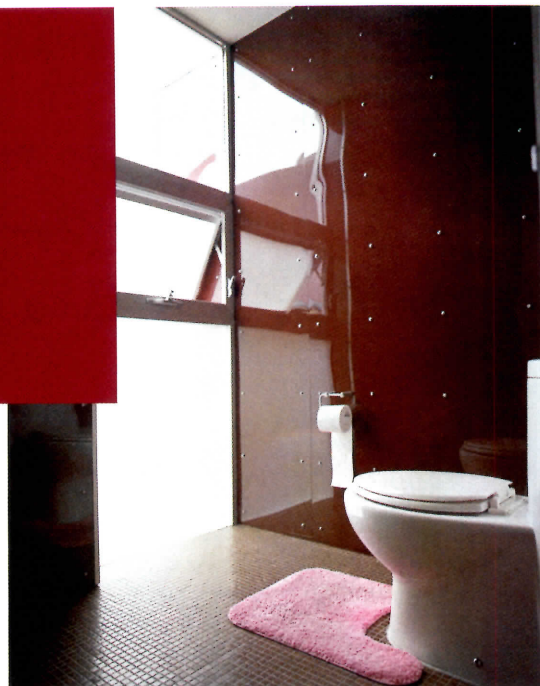






The bamboo garden, home to Oscar the tortoise, abuts the walkway leading to the central courtyard (opposite). The small pool at the top of the landing provides the family with a place to cool off.

Despite a tight site, light floods into every room, including the restroom in the guesthouse (top). The architect Jorge Gracia sits on his handiwork, an unusual custom-made Cor-Ten stair leading from the courtyard to the guesthouse (bottom). The inner courtyard (opposite) is the core of the home. 



asceticism that is even more pronounced than most modernist minimalist interiors. Downstairs, built into a niche off the corridor, sits a small shrine, with a kneeler in front of a triumphant Jesus and photos of grandchildren on the acrylic paneled wall.

Later, over a glass of tequila and spicy nuts, Marco explains that the house is unusual for Mexico, where houses often feature “many expensive paintings and flowers.” He laughingly says that their neighbor refers to Casa Becerril as “the warehouse.” But the warmth in this house, he says, comes from “the people, not the accessories, all the family together, cooking and eating.” His wife concurs, saying she loves it because it is so much easier to maintain. In the house they previously occupied, she recalls spending all her time on upkeep, “making sure flowers and portraits were properly cleaned” and tidying unused spaces, such as the “living room that was like a museum.” She is especially impressed by details like the concealed toaster, which tucks neatly in a drawer.

The aesthetic of efficient use of space and unadorned, basic materials befits an architect who cites Mies van der Rohe as one of his greatest influences: “With Mies, you see nothing that is not needed,” says Gracia. But the aesthetic also emerges from an approach that emphasizes careful cost control. The 4,357-square-foot Casa Becerril was built for around \$320,000, plus the land at \$175,000, with building costs of about \$70 per square foot (compared to the average \$200 in San Diego). The client and architect made savings by using the lightweight galvanized-steel framing system that could be put up fast and worked without a contractor. Gracia, on principle, builds his own projects. “To be able to build something interesting, you have to build it yourself.”

But building fast is the real key to reducing costs, explains Gracia: “Most of the materials come from the U.S., so the only place you have room to play with is in the cost of labor. Labor costs are about \$1,000 per week and a house is built in nine months to a year. So if you can build in four or five months, that’s where you can start to save money.” Built in five months, Casa Becerril was not even his most cost-efficient project. “We spent more time, but we have built two houses in three and a half months.”

When Dwell last met Gracia, he, like many Tijuanaans, was making the daily commute across the border—a lengthy process that involves sitting in traffic, sometimes for hours, and navigating a gauntlet of security cameras and inspections—to work in San Diego. Now with the recession in southernmost California, he has set up a permanent office in Tijuana. “I think developers are investing here because the costs are lower.” Right now, Gracia is working on shopping malls in Tijuana and a retail store in La Paz, and he has embarked on speculative development, building two houses for sale in Playas de Tijuana. Of course, they will express his modern sensibility. “I see Tijuana as a white canvas,” he says, “that’s the reason I decided to move back here. The city is growing, and I see a need for architects to propose something of value for the city.” ■■■





Fine Finnish

A pair of crafty designers on a serious budget show that though their apartment may be short on square footage, it's long on charm.

Story by Katja Lindroos
Photos by Petra Bindel

Last summer, Susanna and Jussi Vento purchased a two-bedroom, 660-square-foot apartment in Helsinki's Punavuori district, where they live with their one-year-old daughter, Varpu. The building was "an unremarkable '50s high-rise," says Susanna, "but we liked the light in the apartment, the practical layout, and the original double doors between the rooms."

The tiny abode was in desperate need of a makeover, but knowing that an expensive pipe replacement loomed, the couple had to be frugal in their interventions. Fortunately, both work in creative fields—Susanna is an interior designer, stylist, and editor, and Jussi is a graphic artist—and renovating with a tight budget was exactly their kind of challenge. "We come from families that love doing things with their hands, so it's natural for us," Susanna says. With less than \$4,000 but plenty of DIY spirit, the couple turned a boring flat into a visually exciting home. Susanna shows us how.



@ Extended slideshow at
dwell.com/magazine



MIRROR

"I had to create optical illusions to make the space feel bigger," says Susanna, who installed a six-by-seven-foot mirror in the front hall to bounce light around. "The mirror could not have been an inch bigger, otherwise it wouldn't have fit through the door!"

WALL ORGANIZER

The plastic Uten.Silo organizer by Vitra handily shelters small items such as pens, bills, and eyeglasses—turning potential clutter into handsome wall art. vitra.com

COAT ROD

Susanna designed the coat rod herself and had it fabricated by a local welder out of bent water pipes for only \$70. "The inspiration came from my mother's radiator," says Susanna. "I looked at the pipes and thought, Hey, hung from the ceiling they could carry our coats!" She painted the pipes white and clamped an old desk light onto the rod: "I like solutions that look a bit industrial and not too stiff." An electrician wired the light so it goes on when they flip a switch by the door.

STORAGE

To keep the entrance-way clean and uncluttered, the family stores their shoes in Habitat boxes (which can also double as stools). habitat.co.uk

FLOORS

Susanna originally used a water-based paint to coat the sanded oak parquet floors but "after four layers, I started to wonder why the floor was still yellow." A call to the manufacturer's help line revealed the trouble: Some woods (including oak) react after sanding by extracting color. The proper oil-based formula solved the problem. ▶▶

Entrance

When Susanna entered her future home for the first time, it appeared cramped and uninviting. Her first step in adding a sense of spaciousness and clarity was to paint all the surfaces—walls, doors, cabinets, ceilings, and parquet floors—white.

Kitchen

In the kitchen, Susanna and Jussi tore down the ceiling and wall cabinets with the help of Jussi's father, a skilled craftsman. "Behind the cabinets we found lovely little nooks that work perfectly as shelves for things like salt and pepper mills. When you strip everything to its original state, you are able to see what the house is truly about."

STORAGE

"I like to look at the patterns and colors of dishes," Susanna says, explaining why she opted for open shelving from the Swedish brand String. "We have minimized the stuff we own, so all of our pans and plates fit on the shelves. Since we use them every day, they don't have time to gather dust." string.se

COLOR

The minimalist black-and-white palette is both practical and good-looking: "It makes it easy to add accent colors, like petrol blue, and also makes the apartment's architectural details—such as the original doors and deep window ledges—more prominent."

CABINETS

Because the remaining cabinets will soon be ripped out for a plumbing upgrade, Susanna devised an inexpensive way to jazz up the MDF units in the meantime: "We painted them white and covered them with

triangles cut from black contact paper. It's an easy way to change the look of kitchen cabinets if you're renting—when you move out, you can just peel up the tape without leaving a trace."



BERTOIA CHAIRS

Susanna is willing to work for the things she covets, such as the Bertoia chairs by the window. "I Googled 'wire chairs' (*rautalankatuoli* in Finnish) because I figured if somebody sells them with that description, he doesn't know their true value," she says with a mischievous grin. The first chair came from northern Finland, and the second was found in Germany through eBay. She then had an automotive body shop paint them with glossy black car paint. "They didn't charge anything for the job. I just made the guys a big chocolate cake, and they were happy." ebay.com

RUG

The \$299 Stockholm Rand rug from Ikea provides a visual anchor for the room: "It is made of wool so the quality is good. I also like the fact that it is big enough for the dining area and still affordable." ikea.com

LIGHTS

A string of outdoor lights fosters a cozy atmosphere. "I tried them out once for a party and they looked so nice that I decided to keep them. The light is warm and inviting."

CHAIRS

Susanna prefers a mismatched set of chairs, one that includes Eames reproductions and Aalto originals from flea markets. "I can afford ones I like when I don't need six of them! Besides, it's nice to let guests choose their favorite." ▶▶



Living/Dining Room

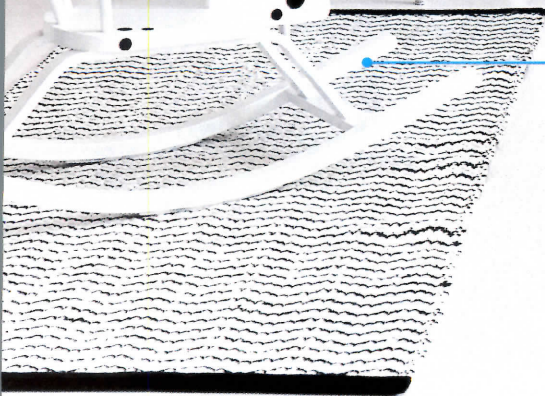
The focal point of the living/dining room is an oak table from Ikea. "We like to draw, read newspapers, sew, and invite friends over, so a generous table suits our lifestyle." No couch? "We simply don't need one—plus it would take up a lot of space."

Master Bedroom

Despite its serene appearance, the master bedroom is an active, multifunctional space. The family sits together on the bed to read and watch cartoons: Tove Jansson's *Moomin*, about trolls who live in the forests of Finland, is a favorite.

DESK

The simple trestle desk where Susanna works on her blog *Pikkuvarpunen* ("little sparrow") is made of Ikea table legs and a piece of wooden veneer. "It looks elegant and is easy to move around," Susanna observes. pikkuvarpunen.blogspot.com



HORSE AND RUG

Susanna found the rocking horse on huuto.net, a Finnish equivalent to eBay. Underfoot is a black-and-white rug—"a housewarming gift from a relative who wove it from recycled sheets and VHS cassette tapes. We truly have a family of DIY buffs." ▶



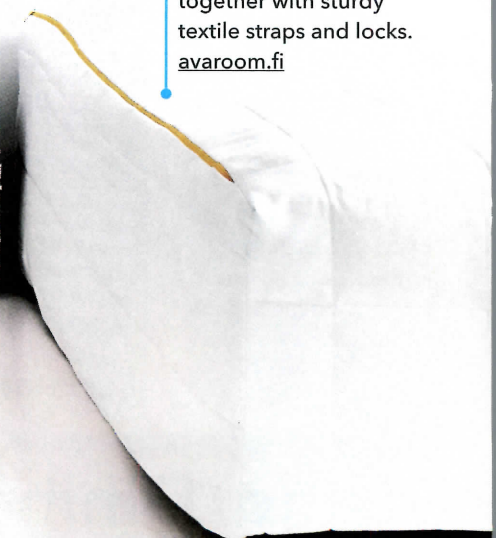
LIGHT

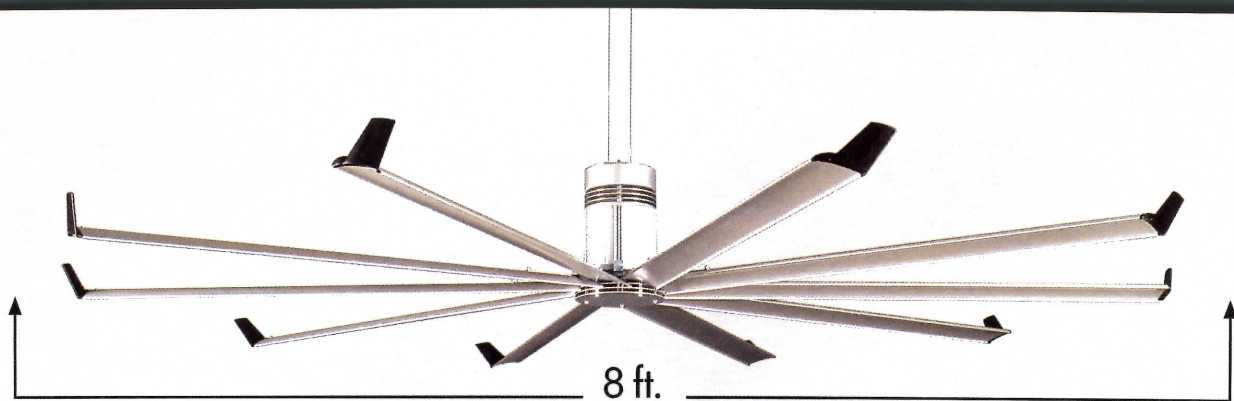
With its cluster of bare bulbs, the light above the bed channels a pricey Droog design. "I bought individual cords and knotted them together. Then I took it to an electrical shop and had them join the cords into one plug."



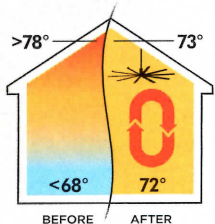
BED

Since the bed doubles as a couch, Susanna bought a smart-looking quilted bedspread that zips snugly around the mattress from the Finnish company Ava Room. Stacks of interior design magazines stand in for bedside tables, held together with sturdy textile straps and locks. avaroom.fi





BIG CIRCULATION



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CONCEPTS

COAT RACK AND TABLE

Susanna believes that even small children appreciate good design. That's why she relocated one of her favorite objects, an Illumesa light table by Verner Panton, to Varpu's room. "I used to have it as a coffee table, but being round, low, and easy to clean, it is perfect for Varpu. I also bought her a Hang-It-All by Charles and Ray Eames. One day, when she has a place of her own, she might hang her coat on it. Now it is a nice way to display her favorite toys." verpan.dk
eamesgallery.com

FRIDGE

The vintage American-style refrigerator is the first piece of furniture Susanna ever bought. "I found it at an auction in a small town in eastern Finland. It used to belong to a hotel manager. Now it functions as a locker for my husband's clothes."

TOYS

The toys in Varpu's room are mostly wooden, colorful, and hardwearing. "I find old toys at flea markets. Besides being affordable, they are usually better made than new ones."

Varpu's Room

Many pieces in Varpu's room are especially meaningful to Susanna, who made them while on maternity leave, including the colorful cotton flags. "It is Varpu's own space, so it has to be the most joyful and colorful of the apartment!" Susanna declares.

BED AND PILLOWS

To source Varpu's Jolla bed—a classic piece by Muurame—Susanna did some social networking: "I sent a message on Facebook that I'm looking for a Jolla, and in no time I found an inexpensive secondhand bed." muurame.com ■■■ 





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Re: Re: Back in the Box

Affordable design is all about compromise, as this (fictional) email exchange between architect Dan Maginn and his grandiose client Johnson M. Grapejus proves.

From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **Re: Re: Kinderscheisse Cost Estimate**
 Date: March 3, 2011, at 5:37 P.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Johnson—I added the “[meat-smoking room](#)” and the “[mother-in-law suite](#)” per your last email and got the drawings to Kinderscheisse Construction late last week. Attached is their revised cost estimate. Not good—as you can see, we’re now about \$150K over budget. So, we either need to rein in the size of your house or raise the budget. Let me know what you want to do.

—DM

From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **Re: Kinderscheisse Cost Estimate**
 Date: March 1, 2011, at 11:22 A.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Just got your text. Wow. I know you’re disappointed in the cost estimate, but I don’t appreciate being called a “[Skinny-jean-wearing jackass](#).” So before you “[hire an attorney to take \[me\] down](#),” take a quick peek at the revised floor plan I’ve attached. You still have a very cool 3-BR house.

—DM

From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **Re: New Design = Sucks**
 Date: February 28, 2011, at 7:41 P.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Johnson—The design I emailed you doesn’t “[suck](#),” it’s just smaller.

Remember our first meeting, way back on August 16th at my office? At this meeting, after you described the features you wanted your house to include (“[duomo](#), [walk-in terrarium](#),” etc.) and how much money you had to achieve them, I expressed concern that there was likely a disconnect between the two. Remember? I told you that custom houses cost about \$200 per square foot, minimum. I told you that for your budget of \$300K I could indeed design a simple, well-detailed 1,500-SF, 3-bedroom home that would function perfectly for your family. Not a 4,200-SF house with “[wide-plank sequoia floors and a dedicated space for mayonnaise making](#).” I have been pretty clear about the relationship between size and cost, not “[criminally and artistically negligent](#),” as you stated in your email. If we’re going to hit your number, we need to reduce square footage or the quality of the materials. Or both. (And we need to hold the mayo, hahaha.)

—DM »

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From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **Re: Re: Out of Box Idea**
 Date: February 9, 2011, at 4:15 P.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Got your voicemail, and wanted to clear something up.

When I said in a previous meeting that some of the houses in the mags come in under \$200 a foot because they use student labor, I was referring to college-age architecture students, not grade-schoolers. Although I think your son LeBron and his Boy Scout friends are a talented group of kids, it's a real stretch to think that they "could build parts of the house themselves, which could then be Super Glued together by Kinderscheisse."

I still believe the way to get to your \$300K number is to reexamine your program, lose what's not essential, and compress the plan into a more efficient shape.

—DM

From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **Re: Out of Box Idea**
 Date: January 26, 2011, at 8:40 P.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Johnson,

When you say "as I talk to my very smart, very professional friends—one of whom went to architecture school for more than a year—they confirm that if you are willing to think outside of the box, it's possible to build a house for \$100 a foot." I doubt we're talking about the same type of house. While it's true that you can build a basic house for \$100 a foot in many parts of the country, these houses don't look like the sleek, site-specific, trimless, zinc-clad joints in your design mags. Which brings me to "the box." You have stated time and again that I need to join you in thinking "outside of the box" when it comes to construction delivery methods.

I have real concerns about most of your "OOTB" ideas, Johnson.

For instance, I don't think that "using discounted, Vegas-quality materials that Uncle Kenny has access to, *hint hint*" will save money in the long run. And I doubt that "taking the house off-grid with a bank of refurbished C-bacon delivery-truck batteries and a very large wire" is a realistic option. And I remain dubious that "creating an affordable mobile house made of shipping containers and railway cars, linked together with tubes and steered from within like a submarine or video game" is a real possibility. Etc., etc.

Johnson, perhaps this OOTB thinking is effective in your Canadian bacon business, but I'm struggling to find its value in the custom home-building environment that Kinderscheisse operates within.

There is little, if any, correlation between the creation of well-crafted, affordable modern housing and bulk Canadian bacon processing. In your email, when you say that "C-bacon used to be a luxury, something only rich Canadians could afford" and then go on to accuse me of "thinking like a Canadian," it gives me pause. Providing affordable Canadian bacon to the masses isn't that hard to do, really—no offense. Cheap C-bacon can exist because everyone agrees on what it is. The variables that contribute to its existence are locked down: it's salty and it's hamlike and it comes in little circles. Everyone has a different idea about what an affordable house is.

—DM ▯



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From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **Re: Re: Canadian Bacon House?**
 Date: January 24, 2011, at 1:08 P.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Johnson,
 No, it wasn't my intention to suggest you or LeBron or any other member of the Grapejus family should literally live in a house made of Canadian bacon.

—DM

From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **Re: Canadian Bacon House?**
 Date: January 22, 2011, at 2:33 P.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Johnson,

I hope you're kidding when you say "[it's time to play smashface](#)." I was just trying to point out that there is not yet a system in place in the U.S. that effectively streamlines the housing design and construction process. At least not one that results in dramatically reduced costs—and I doubt there will ever be, as long as consumers have specific lists of nonstandard deal killers—duomos, dedicated mayo centers, etc.

If everyone seeking a cool modern house was willing to live in a mass-produced living unit with a minimum of options, then we'd be all set and the industrial world could get down to the business of producing this commodity cheaply. But of course this isn't the case—there are just too many variables involved to effectively systematize the process. For instance—one of your "[deal killers](#)" is that LeBron's bedroom "[MUST BE fully powder-coated and circular, for easy hose-down](#)." I seriously doubt any of the prefab companies we've looked at offer this feature.

—DM

From: Dan Maginn, AIA
 Subject: **RE: Wango Tango**
 Date: January 20, 2011, at 9:18 A.M.
 To: Johnson M. Grapejus <jgrape@canadianbacon.biz>

Johnson,

I'm trying to help you here. I'm not "[blindly shooting down your OOTB ideas with \[my\] crossbow, like some kind of architectural Ted Nugent](#)." I'm just trying to key you into the reality of the marketplace for custom construction, based on my 20 years of experience. Unless you're willing to reduce the quality of the materials in your house or the craftsmanship required to connect the materials together, it will cost you \$200 a square foot, or more. If you can't give on quality, you'll have to give on size. If you can't give on size, you'll have to give on budget—i.e., come up with more \$\$\$. But something has to give.

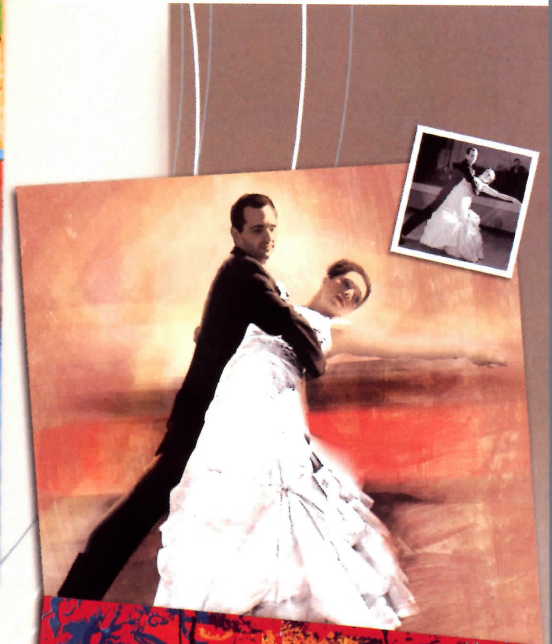
In 20 years I've yet to see an "[OOTB](#)" idea that wasn't adorned with a big fat asterisk or two. So unless you can find a band of volunteer craftsmen or spirited university students to build it for free, or unless you're willing to embrace a (noncircular, non-powder-coated) prefab house that someone has already designed and built a few times, you're going to be over budget. My "[OOTB](#)" advice to you is to get BITB (back in the box), where I am. It's nice in here, actually. It's simple and compact and well made, and the light is great. And, perhaps most importantly, you can afford it. So, join me in here, and let's simultaneously embrace both the potentials and constraints of construction together.

Onward!

—DM ■■■

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Los Angeles's Mohawk General Store, founded in 2008 by husband and wife Kevin and Bo Carney, is less like a shop and more like a friend's apartment. Blown-glass and powder-coated steel pendant lamps hang above glass-and-steel tables topped with jewelry and small ceramics; records and design books line the wooden wall shelves; shirts, dresses, and bags designed and made in the United States and abroad drape from hangers; and comfy chairs and sofas give everyone a place to lounge.

Though originally on Mohawk Street—hence the name—the store has since relocated to the heart of hipsterrific Sunset Junction. In addition to joining a new retail neighborhood (being able to “park and walk to a few places is a rarity in Los Angeles,” Kevin says), the store also has a new collaborator: Ellen LeComte, who imports furniture from the Netherlands for her wholesale warehouse Amsterdam Modern and to sell in the store. “It’s not the normal mid-century stuff,” Kevin says. “It’s things most people here haven’t seen before.” And though some of the goods may be foreign, all the designs feel right at home. ▶

To Live and Buy in L.A.

Looking for mid-century furniture?
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Sunset Junction's Mohawk General Store
lives up to its name.



Story by Miyoko Ohtake
Photos by Jessica Haye and Clark Hsiao

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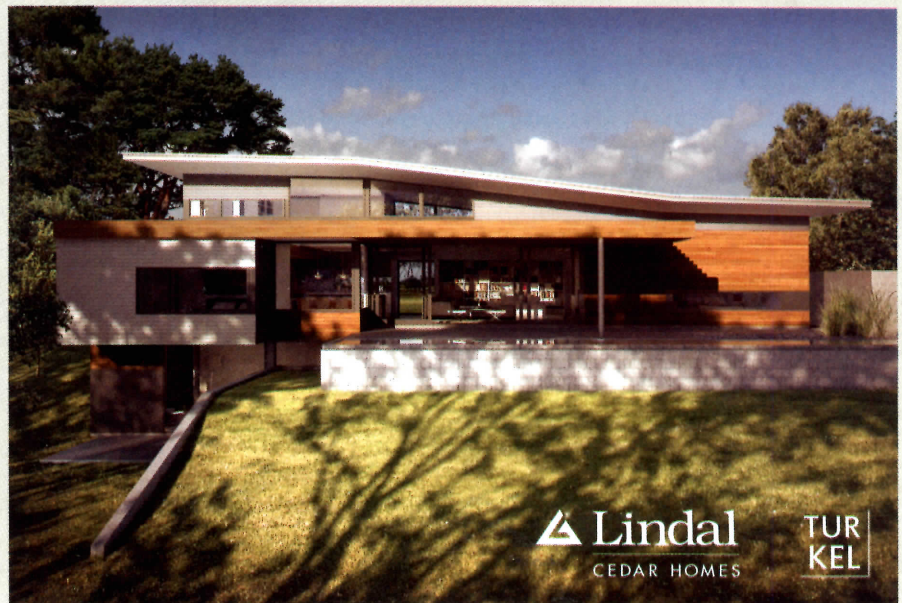
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The warmth and livability of a modern Turkel Design Lindal home comes from clean, uncluttered lines and the inspired use of natural materials.





What prompted you to launch Mohawk General Store?

Kevin Carney: I wanted a place to sell my shoes [Carney is the founder of the Generic Man shoe company]. Now the goal is as much about being continually inspired as it is about being a business. It's finding an amazing piece and instead of it being a private discovery, letting it be a public experience.

What's the new shop like?

We've created a big living room for people. You can come in and pick up a book or sit on a couch. The guys go straight for the stereos.

What made Amsterdam Modern a good fit as a furniture partner?

We did a pop-up shop for Urban Outfitters together. Ellen's husband

is Dutch, and she brings in really different, unique pieces. We appreciate people who come in wanting to be challenged.

Who is your ideal client?

We get three different customers: There's the person who only sees furniture, and the person who only sees clothing, shoes, and jewelry. Then there's the shopper who takes it all in and says, "Wow, I've never seen all of this in one place."

You also mix local and international designers.

There's an immediacy and intimacy to working with locals and friends. When something sells, you can just call and ask them to drop off another piece. But we mix American brands, such as

Kevin describes the shop—and its ever-evolving and rotating inventory—as "a public gallery of where we're at in architecture, fashion, and music."

Engineered Garments, based in New York, with those from abroad that catch our eye, too: A.P.C. from France, Comme des Garçons from Japan, Ellen's furniture from the Netherlands.

How do you select an item to sell?

I look for a good story. Customers like that. They like to know the designer, the materials, the details.

Who are your new neighbors?

This is the center of L.A.'s artist communities. Intelligentsia Coffee is right here. There's Cafe Stella, a great French restaurant that really reinvigorated the area; Bebop Interiors, a furniture store; Zachary's Smile, a women's vintage and new clothing shop; Forage restaurant; ReForm School, a craft and design shop; and even a farmers' market that happens every Saturday.

What's next?

We're planning on hosting exhibitions and creating window installations with local artists. We've also started making shoes exclusively for the shop. I'd like to do more specialty pieces with designers and cocreate things you can't get elsewhere. It'd be a creative outlet for us and another reason for everyone else to check out our store. ■■■

Go Find It!

Mohawk General Store and Amsterdam Modern

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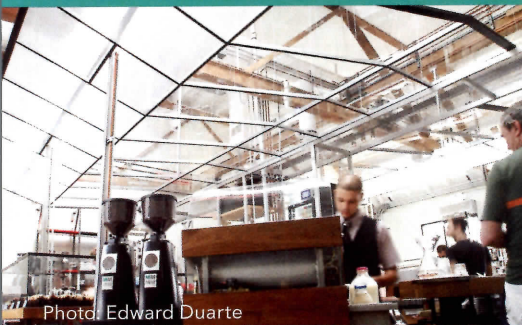


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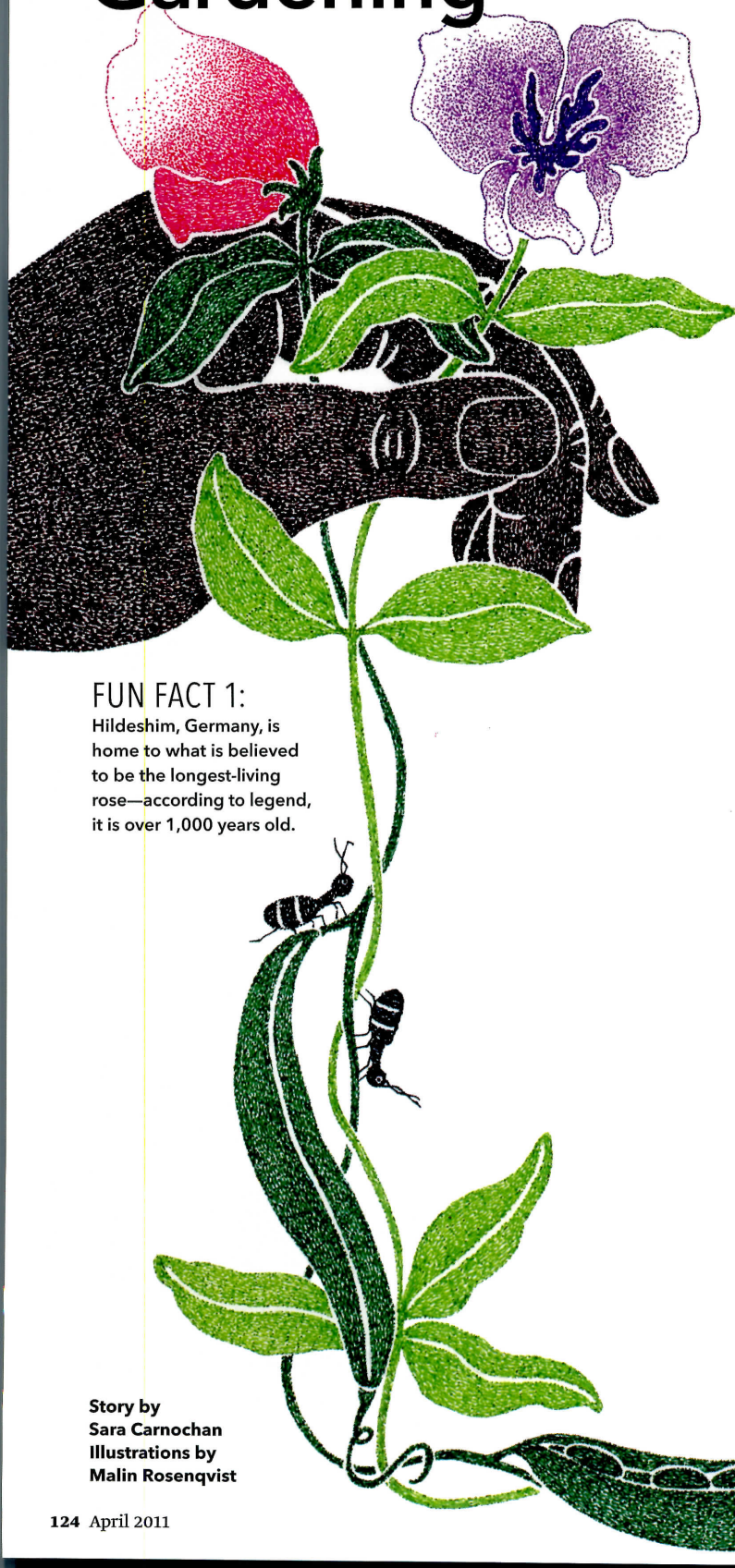
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ON DESIGN

An Introduction to Home Gardening



FUN FACT 1:

Hildesheim, Germany, is home to what is believed to be the longest-living rose—according to legend, it is over 1,000 years old.

Story by
Sara Carnochan
Illustrations by
Malin Rosenqvist

Ever since Adam and Eve's unfortunate eviction, their descendants have been plunging hands and seeds into the earth in hopes of bringing forth food, beauty, and the satisfaction of taming nature. Though few of us find that our home gardens offer the peace, beauty, bounty, and ease of Eden, each planting—from Babylon's Hanging Gardens to Gregor Mendel's famous peas—adds to our knowledge of and delight in the natural world.

A high point in the story of ornamental gardens came in 16th-century Holland, where Dutch gardeners imagined them as jewel boxes. They strategically placed mirrors in their gardens to accentuate their beauty and give them a feeling of infinity (land was tight in Amsterdam even then). By 1635, Holland was at the height of Tulip Mania, a frenzy during which prices fetched for the prized flowers and their bulbs soared to astronomic heights.

Around the same time the rigid geometry and topiary feats of the French garden held aesthetic sway across Europe, only to be replaced a century later by the more natural, if atavistic, English garden with its false ruins and sylvan lakes.

Colonial Americans, however, desired more utilitarian gardens. Food and medicine—especially in New England, where settlers struggled with harsh winters and stony soil—trumped good looks.

As cities grew denser, and the largest swaths of urban green space were dedicated to public parks over private gardens, city planners like Ebenezer Howard sought a new balance of culture and nature. At the turn of the 20th century, Howard published *Garden Cities of To-Morrow*, a book proposing suburban living that promoted greater harmony with the natural world and greater proximity between agricultural and city centers.

Not 20 years later Britons and Americans alike got a taste of gardening as part of the war effort. During both world wars, politics, patriotism, and national identity staged a horticultural coup: Victory gardens, grown in the yards and converted flowerbeds of private homes and in larger public plots, were touted as a means to support the troops by decreasing demand on commercial produce.

The postwar boom and a rash of urbanites rushing to the suburbs gave rise to a surge in the sprawling ornamental lawn that before were only found on estates. Tellingly, Miracle-Gro first appeared in 1951, making lawns grow greener and faster. Other synthetic fertilizers and pesticides followed suit, making

a few bottles of chemicals and the gas-powered lawnmower the 1950s' biggest addition to the home gardener's tool shed.

In the last ten years, however, many gardeners have renewed their interest in sustainability and utility in startling ways. In desert and temperate areas alike, there is increased awareness and interest in drought-tolerant and native plants. Even Miracle-Gro has hopped on the green wagon with moisture-control soils that help conserve water. Home food production is back on the scene as well, brought to new publicity heights by First Lady Michelle Obama, who planted a garden at the White House in 2009, the first time vegetables have been harvested at 1600 Pennsylvania since Eleanor Roosevelt's day.

Though the urban, suburban, and rural landscapes are continually shifting, a constant rethinking of what with pruning shears in hand, the gardener will have a say in what practices are scattered to the wind and which branches will blossom and bear fruit.

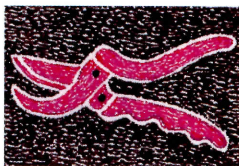
FUN FACT 2:

The garden snail slurping up greenery in California is the same snail slurped in French restaurants across the globe.

Words You Should Know



Bolt: The often sudden flowering of a vegetable plant. Usually considered a bad thing, bolting refers to plants grown for their leaves, like lettuce and spinach, and results in a tough texture or bitter taste.



Deadheading: The cutting off of "dead" flower heads once plants are done blooming to encourage new blooms.



Hardiness zones: A "zip" code for gardeners. Using either the USDA 11-zone system for the whole United States or the Sunset zone system that takes into account rainfall and temperatures, gardeners have help determining if a plant is a good fit for their zone.



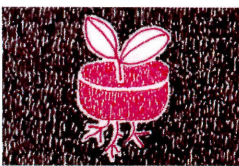
Nitrogen fixation: A concept most important to veggie gardeners: Nitrogen can be replenished by legumes (such as peas and beans) that convert nitrogen in the air into nitrogen stored in their roots, which is then available as a rich nutrient in the soil.



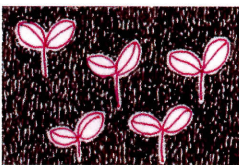
N:P:K: The elements nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Together they are responsible for most of the healthy growth of your plants. Fertilizers are labeled with different ratios of N:P:K, which influence what parts of the plant will flourish.



Pony pack: Like a six-pack of beer, flats of plants bought at nurseries to be transplanted in your garden. They can come in anywhere from four to 80 plants a flat.



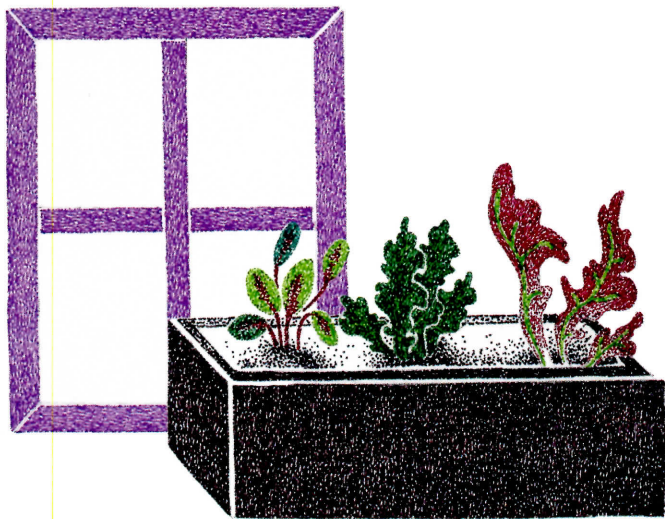
Striking: Putting a cutting from an existing plant into a planting medium to start a new growth.



Volunteer: A plant that planted itself. The seed for the volunteer may have flown in on the wind or been deposited by fruit (such as a tomato) that has fallen. If conditions are right, the seed will sprout and a new plant will grow. ▶



Going to Pot



Container gardening is often the only option for apartment dwellers longing for some greenery in their lives and soil under their fingernails. If you have limited space, grow something that you can really get a kick out of—like mint for mojitos—but bear in mind that when growing in containers, sunlight, drainage, and soil nutrients are your primary concerns.

Naturally, a bit of research on which plants fare well in the house is critical for the indoor gardener. But a few simple rules of thumb always apply. **Start by choosing a pot that is at least twice the size of the plant. Picking the right soil at the start will not only permit the plant to thrive in the proper potted environment but also sort out any drainage problems.** Sculptural succulents will fare better in drought-tolerant cactus mix than that sprig of mint, which is much better off in soil with the moisture of a wrung-out sponge.

Also keep in mind that even the most shade-tolerant vegetables need at least five hours of sunlight to thrive, with most veggies and herbs needing a minimum of eight.

If an edible indoor garden is your aim, start with **herbs and salad greens like arugula, oak leaf lettuce, and mesclun lettuce mixes.** They do well sown by seed into containers: Generously sprinkle some seeds on the top of your potting soil, then cover them with a thin layer of compost. Keep the soil consistently moist and in full sun, and you should start eating fresh baby greens in about a month.

Pest Practices

FUN FACT 3:

In mild conditions aphids can reproduce asexually and give live birth—sometimes to pregnant nymphs (baby aphids). That's right, born hungry and pregnant.



For decades home gardeners have turned to an arsenal of chemical pesticides, herbicides, and synthetic fertilizers to keep their lawns, ornamentals, and veggies looking perfect. Unfortunately, this type of garden control has a dangerous impact on the ecosystem.

A pesticide used on a specific plant won't necessarily stay there. It can easily wash off the intended victim and the runoff can wind up in sensitive watersheds where fish, algae, and, through a nasty ripple effect, whole ecosystems can suffer. Even if the pesticide stays inside the garden gates it can have a detrimental effect on the garden itself by discouraging (and possibly killing) natural enemies of the very pests you are trying to ward off.

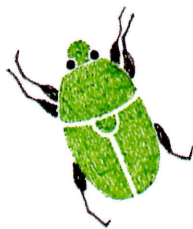
Instead, encourage ladybugs—who are predators of leaf-destroying aphids—into your garden. Attract them by planting small, sweet-smelling plants like carrots, fennel, and dill and letting them flower. Equally powerful “good bugs,” like the lacewing, will show up and pitch in as well.

To kill aphids outright you can also mix up an organic, lower-impact pesticide of your own. Mix two teaspoons of liquid castile soap (Dr. Bronner's, for example) into a liter of water, then spray the mixture onto the affected leaves and stem of the plant. This soap mixture will kill the aphids, but it can also kill the good bugs, so use it sparingly to maintain a diversity of insects in your garden.

When battling pests in the garden, it's helpful to take a step back and think about managing rather than controlling them. Your garden does not exist in a vacuum. Choose plants that are generally problem-free and that invite beneficial insects into the garden. Finally, practice patience and remember that your garden is a vibrant member of a much larger ecosystem. ▶

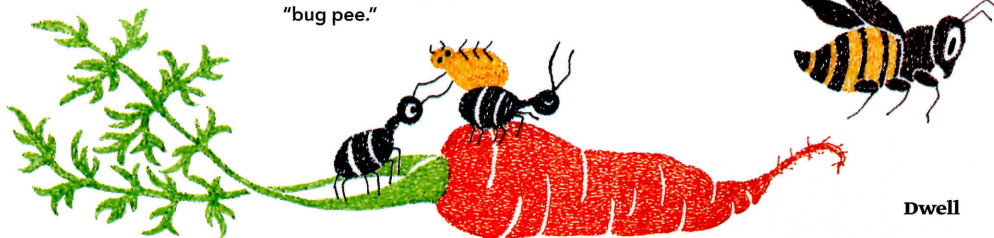
FUN FACT 4:

Vanilla is an orchid vine native to Mexico. It only produces the prized bean when pollinated by hand or by the specially evolved melipona bee.



FUN FACT 5:

Ants are the cowboys of the garden world. They herd aphids, protect them from ladybug attacks, and milk them for their honeydew—a nice way of saying “bug pee.”





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FUN FACT 6:

In 2005, the United States was home to 40 million acres of lawn.

FUN FACT 7:

Oak trees can transpire (think plant perspiration) 40,000 gallons of water a year.



Modern Sharecropping

For every well-tended backyard garden there's another gone to seed, and for every happy horticulturalist noodling with the begonias out front there's a cooped-up apartment dweller anxious to work outdoors. A movement is afoot, however, to unite landless gardeners with available plots of land, and it promises to both make better use of urban space and bring people together over a basket of shared vegetables or flowers.

By now, land-share programs are common in Britain and they're gaining ground in the United States as well. Like a green thumb's eHarmony, garden-share programs match up those with land they don't care to tend with those who would love to do a bit of gardening.

Some garden shares were formed to alleviate the wait-list purgatory of community garden spaces. Still others were created to grow food in response to

a lack of fresh, affordable produce in urban areas.

By dividing the responsibilities and risks associated with farming, and often focusing on organic gardening techniques, this progressive, equitable brand of modern sharecropping is taking root and making more efficient use of the urban landscape.

Typically, the gardener supplies the labor of tilling soil, planting seeds, and squishing unwelcome bugs in the service of growing an edible garden. She then shares her bounty with the landowner according to an arrangement made at the start of the season. As with much grassroots social innovation, the Internet is at the heart of the movement. A handful of websites, like Shared Earth, GrowFriend, Yardsharing, or Hyperlocavore have led the charge. Log on if you crave a bit of yardwork or if you'd like someone to productively tend that fretted-over patch of weeds just beyond the kitchen window. ▸



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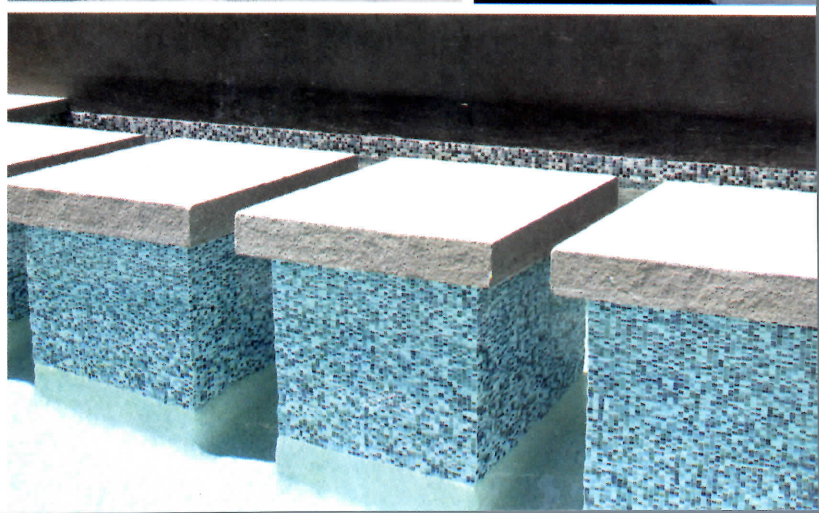
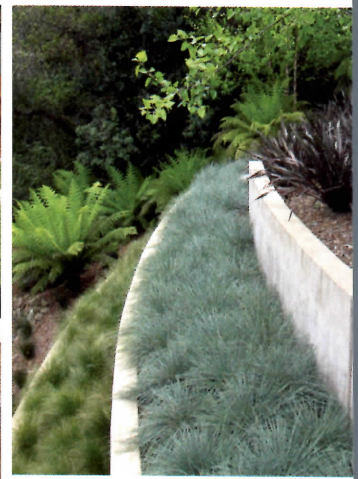
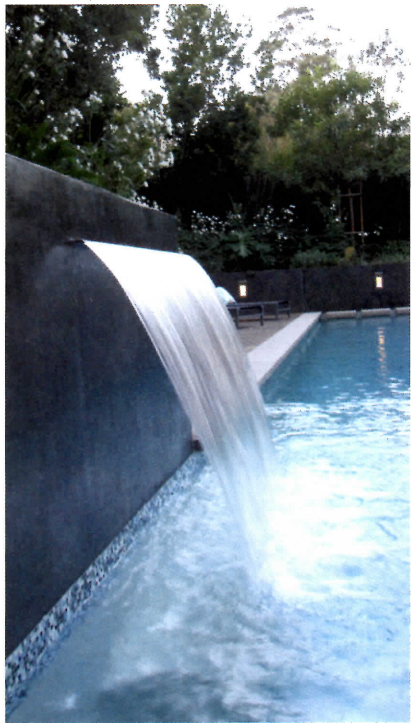
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Seedlings

Before gathering those rosebuds, before planting the roses themselves, learn about what's in store for your garden.

Libby Anglin, manager of Armstrong Garden Center, Westchester, Los Angeles, branch

"Nurseries and garden centers are many people's last connection to nature—whether or not they're aware of it. I think nurseries will need to offer more fast-food gardens, as in prepared planters. For customers who still want to get their hands dirty, some garden centers are already offering recipe cards for plantings. The gardener doesn't need to know which plants go together botanically, because the garden center has done that research already."

Jeff Garascia, senior vice president of global research and development for Scotts Miracle-Gro

"We're looking to make gardening simpler. There's not an ancestral connection to the farm anymore. [So we're] making it easier for the consumer to achieve good results."

David King, garden master, the Learning Garden at Venice High School, California

"In the future, I see city blocks coordinating their growing together. I see one person becoming the beekeeper, one who's better at growing starts, and one go-to bug person. We need to encourage more gardeners and more study of gardening."

Nancy Somerville, executive vice president and CEO of the American Society of Landscape Architects

"We're at a tipping point of knowledge about how the conventional garden is ignoring the environment and what a landscape can do for us. It comes back to people's own homes, especially in regards to water conservation through rain barrels, rain gardens, and vegetative swales."

Nysa Dahlgren, landscape designer, Ardenwoods Landscape Design

"There's so much connectedness through electronics. People will get tired of that solo ride. People will want to go back outside and connect with other humans, real humans. Land is, and will be, at such a premium in most places. We'll need more public gathering spaces."

Megan Bomba, cofounder of Heart Beet Gardening and project coordinator at the Urban and Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College

"While land will be more scarce in 30 years, people are creative and will find ways to do what they need to do—like gardening in little containers and hydroponics. If anything, gardening will be more creative."

Nicholas Bauch, PhD, and humanities fellow in geography and integrated studies at Stanford University

"The future of gardening in the United States is dependent on how we manage the growing disparity of wealth. The shape of private gardens will be unchanged, but the challenge will be to increase the number of public gardens. City governments have to make public spaces a priority and support them financially." ■■■





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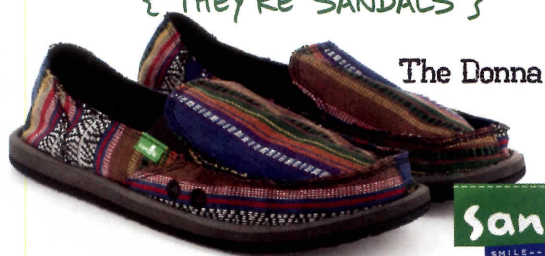
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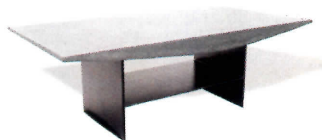
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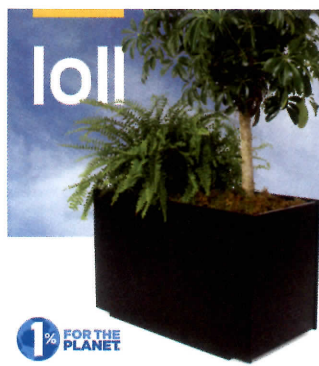
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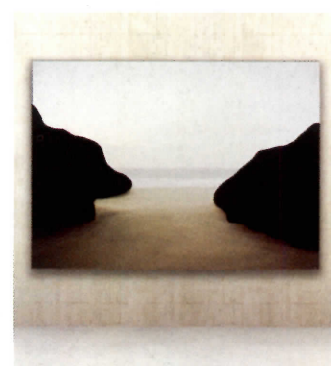
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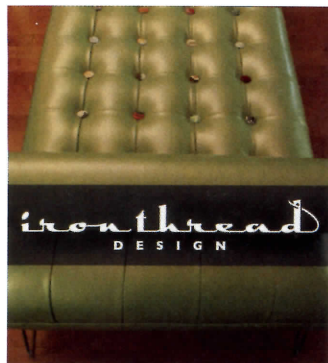
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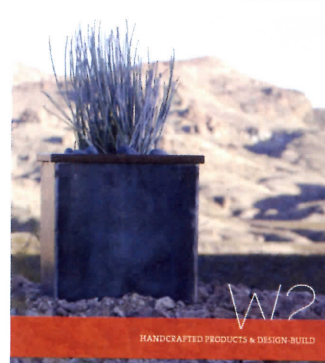
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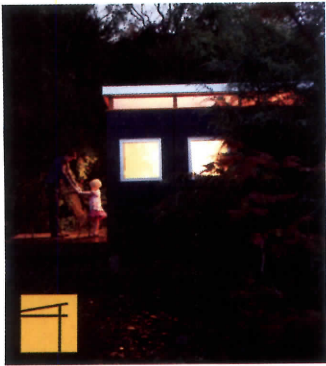
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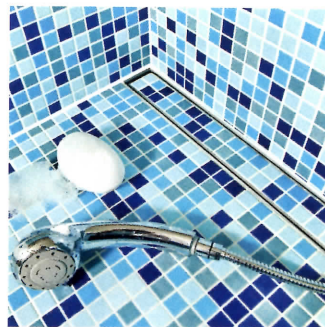
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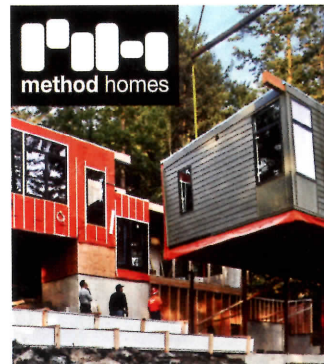
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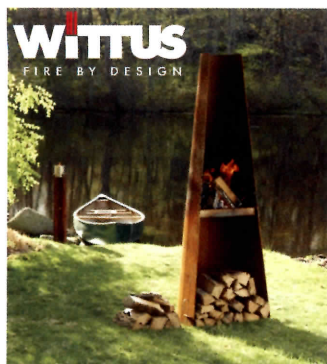
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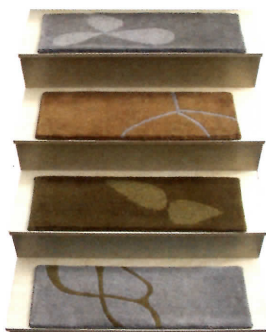
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