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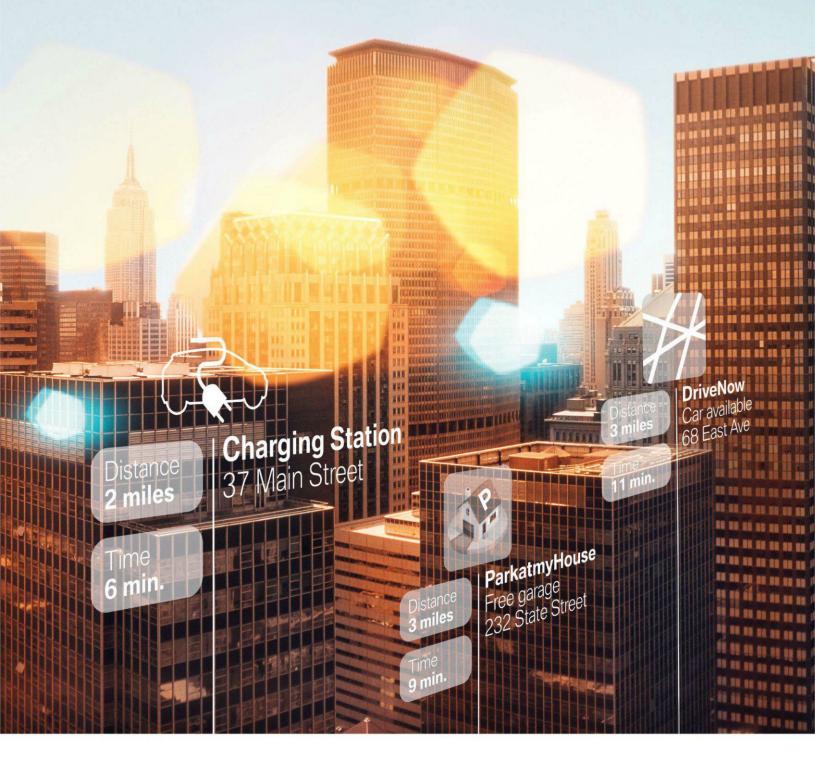
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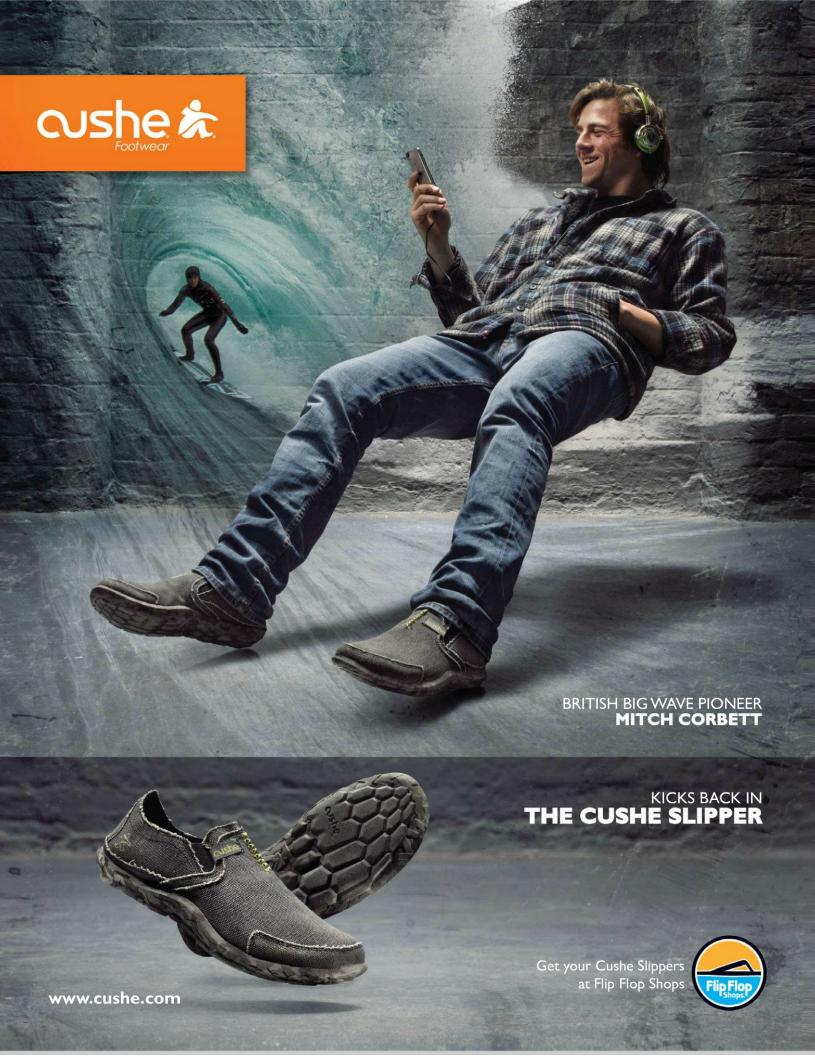
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**Cover:** Golden light glows from the Gamby House on the island of Kauai, Hawaii, p. 46. Photo by Linny Morris



This page: Peter Østergaard and Åsa Olofsson, with daughter Maja, add color to their *hygge* Denmark cottage, p. 70. Photo by Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen

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> Join us on a jaunt through welllit history as we revisit Edison's most famous invention, peek at a Gilded Age library, see a stunning photovoltaic array, and flash to tomorrow's most promising lighting designers.



We spotlight the best bikes, racks, and accessories for the design-savvy cyclist.

#### 62 Off the Grid

This South Korean model home is also a model citizen, with more green bells and whistles than you can shake a wind turbine at. A collaboration between an architecture firm and a construction firm, this modern manse even hosts overnight guests interested in what the future of sustainability looks like.



#### 46 My House

An extended family decamps from Los Angeles to the Hawaiian isle of Kauai, staking out territory for a sustainable household in an open-air domestic shed.



#### 94 **Fire 101**

The original source of both light and energy, fire has been making a house (or cave) a home for hundreds of thousands of years. Our guide to fire takes a look at heating, lighting, cooking, and other domestic applications for the open flame.



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# 110 Sourcing

If your space is looking hopelessly spare, flip to Sourcing to find the who, what, and where of the designs featured in this issue.

# 112 Finishing Touch

A tree-filled domicile on the southern Japanese island of Honshu brings indoor-outdoor living to a new level.



Photos by Todd Tankersley, Linny Morris, Sergio Pirrone, Hiroshi Ueda

# The Bright Idea

# "It is the thunderbolt that steers all things."

-HERACLITUS

In our modern age, the ability to control light almost seems given until the power to do so is taken away. Flipping a switch has become for many almost a mindless act, thanks to the Edisons and Teslas of the world, and that ease of use nearly lulls us into believing there's no consequence for convenience. Throughout the process of building this issue, I was reminded of Ray Bradbury's "All Summer in a Day," a short story that plays on the theme of light and darkness. The plot involves a group of schoolchildren that have never seen the sun in the entirety of their young lives, because they inhabit a world in which daylight appears for only one hour every seven years. On the celebrated day, the children lock one of their mates in a closet, causing her to miss the precious hour. The horror of that punishment has stayed with me since I read the story years ago. It's a terrible thing to imagine a world without illumination.

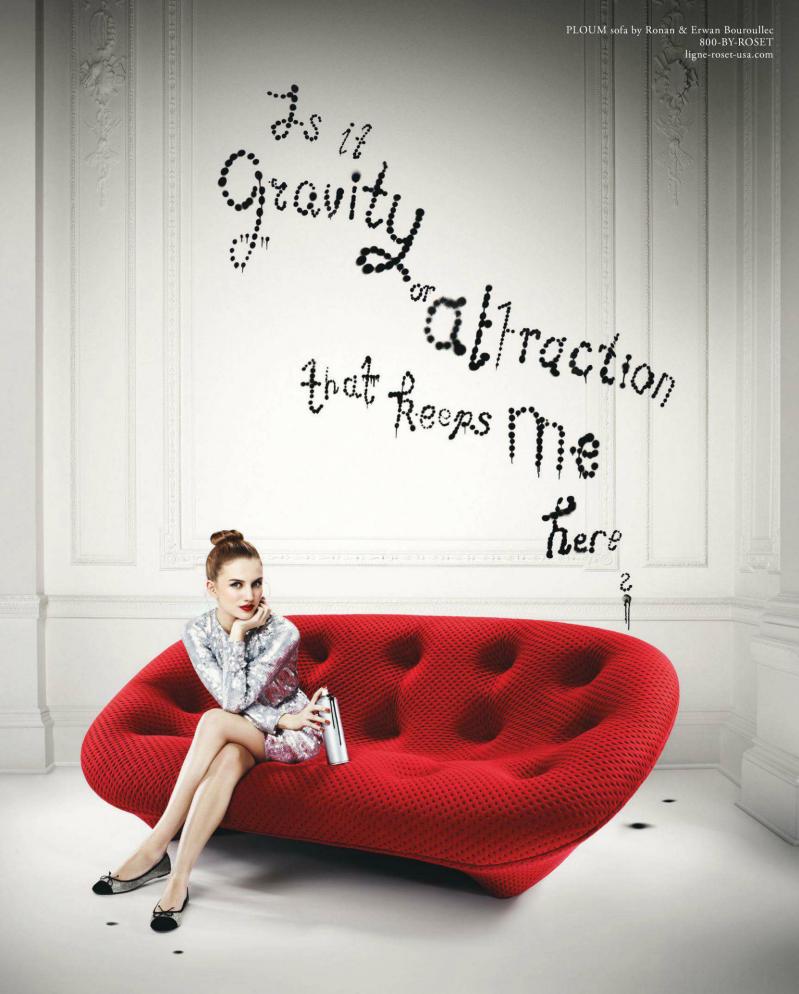
This issue examines our domestic relationship to light and energy, and how these essential ingredients set the stage of the modern world. Selecting such a broad theme gives us leeway to skip around history and bounce about the globe, considering ideas expressed in many countries, so that we might understand the power of illumination and how it can change our lives.

We visit dwellings in South Korea and Hawaii, Denmark and Italy, to share stories of people using light for all manner of reasons: to underscore volume, to harness energy for reuse, or to simply make a cozy home for family and friends. Elsewhere in the issue we revisit a most basic component—fire—to emphasize where the story of energy begins. Later we talk to a sustainability expert to understand what we can glean from other societies' relationship to sunlight. We also delve into the lightbulb itself—how its look has evolved over time, and how designers are using LEDs to create luminous spaces and sculptural lighting pieces.

Whatever the context, the simple truth is that light is power. To understand it, to bend it to our will, to use it wisely, all of these goals compel us to reach for it again and again—even when it burns our fingers. Whether or not we ever acknowledge the impermanence of that proposition—that to hold light is even possible—the point is to continue reaching for it.

Amanda Dameron, Editor-in-Chief amanda@dwell.com Follow me on Twitter: @AmandaDameron

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# While I applaud the starkness of the

Tatami House (My House, December/ January 2012) and the "it looks like what it is" ethic, I'm taken aback by the exterior's fortress-like sensibility it exudes the antithesis of community. While acknowledging that a person's home is his or her castle, what are the chances that the residents are seen only when the garage door opens and a car either arrives or departs?

## Kevin Atkinson Posted on dwell.com

I just finished poring over—no, devouring—the "Best Homes in America" special issue of Dwell. The article on the Dollahite house ("Salvage Love") hit me between the eyes and grabbed my heart. As a real estate broker for way too many years, I specialized in "architecturally significant" properties. What struck me about Blake Dollahite's home is that it is a home. Not a statement; rather, an architectural poem. The article was warm, moving, and inspiring.

There are creators we all know—George Nakashima, Sam Maloof, Samuel Mockbee, and others—who invest their work with an ineffable and indefinable spirit. It's called "legacy" and it's there, on your pages, in spades. Thanks for treating us to such tenderness—that's the only word I can find to describe those pages.

Michael Nicola Santa Fe, New Mexico Two things, both pertaining to November's issue ("Smaller and Smarter," 2011): First, I enjoy the wildly exciting architecture you display. Looking at these homes and reading their lovely backstories are my wife's and my guilty pleasures. Secondly, the article "All We Need" shows a bedroom with a loft. Floor plans were provided, but I still cannot understand how Katherine and Matt get into the loft. Can you help me find the puzzle's missing piece?

## Sarah Jane Sindler Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Editors' Note: We wrote to Katherine Bovee, and here's what she says: "Since construction, we've planned to install a library ladder to our loft, which, unfortunately, wasn't in place in time for the photo shoot. Though we had been using an ordinary utility ladder, we're now the proud owners of a Putnam Rolling Ladder." putnamrollingladder.com

Wow! What a thoughtful, happy house ("Level Headed," November 2011). Mid-century modern can be redundant, but this is just so winsome and inspiring. I love the layout, white walls, and bright accessories. I also sense that this is a very friendly place to live.

#### Charlene Posted on dwell.com

Midland, Michigan, is a wonderful small city to visit (Archive, October 2011). There are many examples of outstanding residential architecture by Alden B. Dow and others, especially in the established neighborhoods largely unspoiled by hideous McMansions. There is an entire enclave near the medical center filled with Dow's work and that of his associates and another near the country club with many examples. If you find yourself in this part of the state, a little exploration is well worth your effort.

Rick S. Posted on dwell.com How heartwarming to see Richard Meier's Douglas House ("On the Waterfront," October 2011) restored. When Batter Kay Associates was designing my new home in 2000, I drew inspiration from homes featured in Richard Meier Houses (Rizzoli, 1996), particularly the Douglas House. Post-its I affixed to its pages still stick out from its edges, reminding me that I asked the architects to incorporate details like the Douglas's external metal-clad stacks and other Meierian features, like large-scale tiling, the juxtaposition of gray and white areas on exterior walls, glass blocks, and outward-looking glass above a fireplace, all of which fit right into Batter Kay's style.

# Ron Wakefield San Diego, California

I love Dwell. It's refreshing to sit and thumb through the magazine rather than sit at a computer screen to get ideas. I am very motivated to simplify the space around my house after looking through your magazine; I have even pondered turning my garage into an art studio. Thanks for the inspiration!

Jane Sent via email

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Letters may be edited for length and clarity. №

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#### Helenio Barbetta

Based in Milan, Italy, photographer Helenio Barbetta is a regular contributor to a number of international architecture and design publications such as Casa da Abitare, Casa Vogue Italia, Elle Decor Japan, and others. Barbetta shot the Chiavelli residence ("Going Big, Going Home," p. 78) located in the Veneto region of Northern Italy. "At every turn inside the home, I would get lost in the views of the surrounding hills, even when they were shrouded in fog," he says.

## Winifred Bird

Freelance journalist Winifred Bird fears her name is now on the "most frequent callers" list at architect Keisuke Maeda's office, which she phoned at least a dozen times to get the full story on Nest House (Finishing Touch, p. 112). She is thankful for his gracious staff, who maintained an amazing degree of courtesy in the face of her daily calls.

# William Bostwick

Brewer, beekeeper, and writer William Bostwick recently moved from Brooklyn's dim glow of Edison bulbs to San Francisco, lit by ecofriendlier fires: CFLs, iPhone screens, and the California sun. Researching "Getting Lit" (In the Modern World, p. 27) made him appreciate his bright new home—but not enough to turn over his incandescent stockpile. Bostwick writes for Bon Appetit, GQ, and the Wall Street Journal.

## Patrick DiJusto

After barely escaping from his burning house in 2006, New York-based writer Patrick DiJusto wanted nothing more to do with fire. Writing "Fire in the Home" (Fire 101, p. 94) gave back to him a sense of wonder at the beauty and usefulness of the open flame. He's now shopping for a freestanding fireplace for his Brooklyn apartment.

#### Erika Heet

Contributing editor Erika Heet relayed Tanya and Chris Gamby's adventures in building the ultimate DIY residence on Kauai (My House, p. 46), composed of three small pavilions, some without solid walls. "They built every square inch of that house themselves using recycled materials, common sense, tips from their architect, and a little bit of luck," she says.

## Marc Kristal

New York contributing editor Marc Kristal fell in love with the Hillsdale house (In the Modern World, p. 27) the moment he saw it. He also immediately realized how tricky it would be to capture on film (or in print, for that matter) the way in which the structure uses light and sightlines to play with one's spatial perceptions. Kristal, who is also a screenwriter, is presently working on a film adaptation of Silvano Arieti's *The Parnas*.

# Alexis Madrigal

Alexis Madrigal is a senior editor for the Atlantic and author of Powering the Dream: The History and Promise of Green Technology (Da Capo Press, 2011). While interviewing William McDonough ("Sixteen Ways of Looking at a Bedouin Tent," p. 88), he discovered that every significant correspondence in McDonough's life is being archived by Stanford University in a new digital storehouse of biographical information.

# **Linny Morris**

Though she prefers to shoot interiors and architecture, Honolulu native Linny Morris will aim her camera at just about any subject as long as it's not colored beige. Photographing the Gamby home (My House, p. 46) deep in the interior hills above Kapaa, Kauai, was even better than anticipated. "The family was an enthusiastic collaborator, which quadrupled the fun." Her most recent book is *The Hawaiian House Now* (Abrams, 2007).





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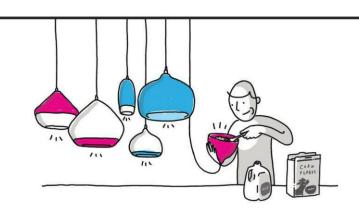
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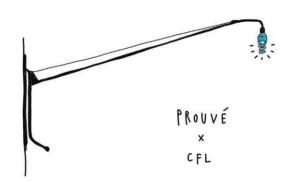
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**Illustrations by Craighton Berman** 

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# by Daniel Smith (Hooker's Green); Yves Klein, ADAGP, Paris (International Klein Blue); Randall (Schiaparelli); J. Paul Getty Trust 2003 (Meier); Katie T. (FLW Red)

# **Personal Coloring**



For some artists, architects, and designers, a careerlong love affair with a certain shade leads to a lasting association. Here are the backstories of our favorite signature colors.





In 1845, Tiffany & Co. printed an annual Blue Book catalog showing off its diamonds and gems. In 1878, the book's cover appeared in the particular shade of forget-me-not blue that has become synonymous with the brand; generations on, the blue Tiffany box might be the single most recognizable instance of American packaging design.



#### Hooker's Green

**Botanical painter William** Hooker (1779-1832) created this shade of green by mixing Prussian blue and gamboge to get a hue that he used largely in painting leaves and foliage. The color is in production today by paint makers like Golden Artist Colors, Da Vinci Paint Company, and Daniel Smith Acrylics.



Working with a chemist, French abstract artist Yves Klein arrived at his eponymous blue by developing a binding medium that could absorb pure ultramarine pigment without dulling it. Klein's series of late-1950s monochrome paintings and the coffee table (above) in the piercing color cemented it as his and his alone.



Schiaparelli Pink

The neon shade of pink surrealist Italian fashion designer Elsa Schiaparelli used throughout her career first hit the market in 1937 in the packaging for her perfume Shocking. The box came in the eye-popping pink, also known as "shocking pink" in England.



Richard Meier White

Officially called "Getty White," this mixture of five different colors is a proprietary shade of pale that debuted early in 1997 as the architect put the finishing touches on the Getty Center in Los Angeles.



# Frank Lloyd Wright Red

Wright introduced the vibrant red in his personal logotype in 1898. He described the hue as the "lily that you see in Wisconsin... the red top in the fields of grass. It had a peculiar and wonderful color spot, and I never failed to rush in that direction and collect it."



Leatrice Eiseman is the executive director of the Pantone Color Institute and the coauthor of Pantone: The 20th Century in Color, out last fall from Chronicle Books. In it she gives us a decade-by-decade deconstruction of the hues and shades that constituted the groovier aesthetics of the last century.

# How does an artist or designer come to be known for a signature color?

It could be that the person is predisposed to a color that they love, and they want to adapt it to their work and essentially make the color their signature. Or they might adapt or change a color to make it uniquely theirs.

What about for just an average person? How can I get a signature color-start wearing red all the time? Often in clothing we're attracted to what are literally more personal colors. If you were praised a lot as a child for your blue eyes you might lean toward blue, or you may see a redhead wear a lot of terra-cotta. Do you wear a lot of red and other bright colors?

Yeah, I guess I do.

I suppose I'm not really attracted to drab colors. So I'd say that red speaks to you psychologically and all the things red inspires is how you want to be perceived. Often people have no idea that they're even expressing themselves this way. -Aaron Britt



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# **Back to** the Future



The legacy of mid-century designer Joe Colombo is underscored with a reissue of his plywood 4801 chair, now appearing for the first time in plastic from Italian furniture company Kartell.



Though Italian designer Joe Colombo is well represented in the molded-polymer annals of the Kartell archive, his 4801 chair, released in 1965 and produced until 1979, was the only object ever manufactured by the company in something other than plastic. The 4801's characteristic curves—sinuous, fluid, and belying a hidden complexity were composed from three pieces of bent plywood, lacquered to a sleek finish, and fitted together without any metal parts or glue. In the 47 years since, advances in industrial molding technology have allowed Kartell engineers to fabricate the seat in three hues of the company's signature material, PMMA plastic.





Ignazia Favata, an architect at Studio Joe Colombo in Milan, says, "His designs have not aged in 30 years—they seem to have slipped the bonds of time." Proof resides in the permanent collections of MoMA, the V&A, and the Centre Pompidou, all of which own a plywood edition of the 4801.

The design has been reproduced in black, white, and crystal-clear plastic in the same proportions as Colombo's original, a process that Kartell treated with reverence, according to CEO Claudio Luti: "We have been reluctant to approach re-editions because they may not be respectful of the original. This new chair is just the right balance between celebrating the past and making it topical in today's world."

Photos courtesy of Kartell



hybrid of floor and wall lamps. daphnalaurens.nl





# **Bulb Report**

Each of the following four lightbulbs burns about as bright as a standard 60watt incandescent, with the same 2,700 Kelvin "soft white" color temperature. Efficacy, the term used by lighting manufacturers for a bulb's overall efficiency, measures the lumens produced per watt of power used.

# A. CFL

Compact fluorescent lamps glow when electricity passes through mercury vapor. Hazardous when broken, they're cheap, bright, and efficient when intact.

## **EcoSmart 14-Watt** Household CFL

Price: \$8 Energy consumption: 14 watts Light output: 850 lumens Life span: 10,000 hours Efficacy: 61

# **B. HALOGEN**

Technically incandescents souped up with halogen vapor, these bulbs burn hotter and brighter without wearing out.

# Sylvania SuperSaver Soft White

Price: \$3 Energy consumption: 43 watts Light output: 745 lumens Life span: 1,000 hours Efficacy: 18

# C. INCANDESCENT

These bulbs burn with a pleasingly full spectrum thanks to a resistive tungsten filament that flares when electricity courses through it.

# **GE Reveal 60-Watt**

Price: \$2 Energy consumption: 60 watts Light output: 630 lumens Life span: 1,000 hours Efficacy: 11

# D. LED

As solid-state lights-no gas here-LEDs have just a piece of semiconductor crystal in which electrons bounce and glow.

# Philips AmbientLED 12-Watt

Price: \$25 Energy consumption: 12 watts Light output: 800 lumens Life span: 25,000 hours Efficacy: 67





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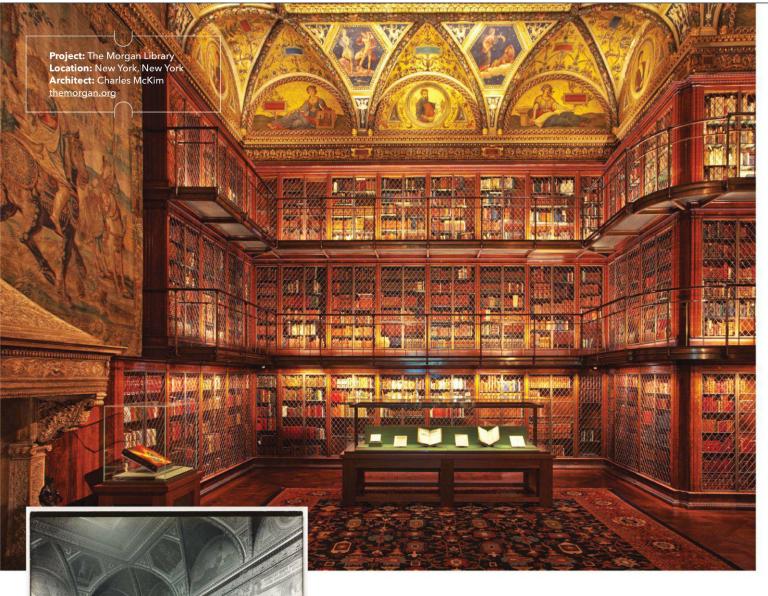
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# **Illuminated Texts**



Personally wired by Thomas Edison, J. Pierpont Morgan's home was the first electrified residence in New York. A recent LED retrofit delivers the library into a new age.



In the 1880s, electricity was a terrifying but exhilarating concept. The idea that one could escape the smell and drudgery associated with gas lamps, particularly in one's own home, was tantalizing but the risks involved—fiery destruction to person and property, namely—deterred even those with cash and courage to spare. Enter J. Pierpont Morgan, one of the country's wealthiest citizens and no stranger to calcuated risk. He was in the process of building a monument to his riches in the form of a

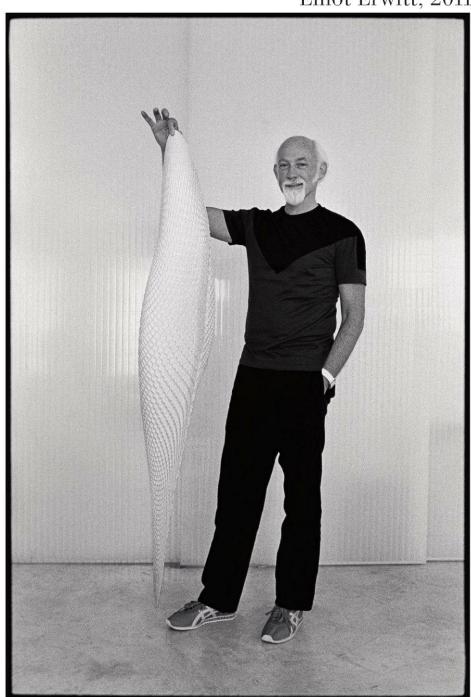
Richard Renfro, of Renfro Design Group, and Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners updated the library's lighting program in 2010 to embrace LED technology. brownstone on Madison Avenue, and he decided that Thomas Edison, the pioneer of a new incandescent technology, should outfit the home. A trench was dug, a steam-powered generator installed, and two small house fires later, the structure became the first successfully electrified residence in New York—and the country's most modern home. Over a century later, original library fixtures were replaced with discreet tracks of LED bulbs, ensuring that its future will continue to burn bright.

@

Extended slideshow at dwell.com/magazine

## A tribute to light

Elliot Erwitt, 2011



Ross Lovegrove: Cosmic Leaf





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Revealed from the Cang Mountain in Dali Prefecture, Yunnan Province, by Master Selector Wang Su Xi in 2009 Dali Dreamstone | I.D.D.A. Awarded "Platinum" Ranking Medium: Marble | Framed Size:  $28^{1}$ /4" H x 45  $^{1}$ /4" W

# ONE AND A HALF BILLION YEARS IN THE MAKING

The word "Dreamstone" is a coined term that seems apt for a stone that offers exquisite twodimensional views of our three-dimensional world. This virtually lost and then rediscovered art form primarily utilizes marble quarried from the Cang Shan Mountains of Yunnan Province, in Southwest China. Intensely desirable from ancient times on, even the Emperors of the Song Dynasty (906-1279 CE) demanded Dali Dreamstones as tribute in lieu of gold and precious gems. These stones present a vivid variety of color and patterns that magically portray the life of man and the beauty of nature, as nothing else can. Xu Xiake, one of China's most famous Ming Dynasty scholars, once wrote that after seeing Dali Dreamstones, he felt that China's other art galleries should all be closed. Now with only a few "Master Selectors" alive to reveal the extraordinary, the value of Dali Dreamstones is increasing exponentially. The opportunity to select from the palette of nature's masterpieces is extremely limited. After many years of discriminating collecting, TK Asian Antiquities is proud to offer the largest and finest selection of Dali Dreamstones ranked by the International Dali Dreamstone Association (www.idda-us.com).

## **Coming into Views**



This courtyard house on the edge of the Berkshires offers both grand vistas and plenty of privacy, thanks to its custom rain screen.



What drew Seth Grosshandler and Kim

Wainwright to their 20-acre property in rural Hillsdale, New York, were the extraordinary unobstructed views of the Berkshires to the east and the Catskills to the west. The challenge on the completely exposed hilltop site was protecting their planned 2,800-square-foot, two-bedroom courtyard house from the occasionally brutal weather. In response, architect Lea Cloud, of New York City's CR Studio, created a "superinsulated building envelope" intended "to feel light and airy," Cloud says. So instead

of the clapboard siding or shingles common in the region, the architects devised a rain screen of Atlantic white cedar that floats four-and-a-half inches off the structure. The clever cover allows the house to breathe, drains away moisture, and conceals the "cheap and hideous foam" covering the house's multilayered insulation sandwich with light-handed elegance.

Since Grosshandler and Wainwright wanted as many windows as possible, the architects next extended the slatted screen over the glazing in certain places to form a textured pattern that makes the outward vistas more complex and enables a rich play of sunlight within the house. And to create an enclosed pool and vegetable garden, Cloud morphed the screen into an intermittently porous fence that permits views of the Berkshires from selected points in the pool while keeping out garden-munching deer. The architects' simple, surprisingly variable idea transforms what might have been a quotidian country home into a visually rhythmic exercise in immateriality. —Marc Kristal

Photos by John Muggenbo



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#### **About Face**



Solar panels have a reputation as being unsightly, but this U.S. Department of Energy Solar Decathlon show home sheds the stereotype that photovoltaic arrays are eyesores.

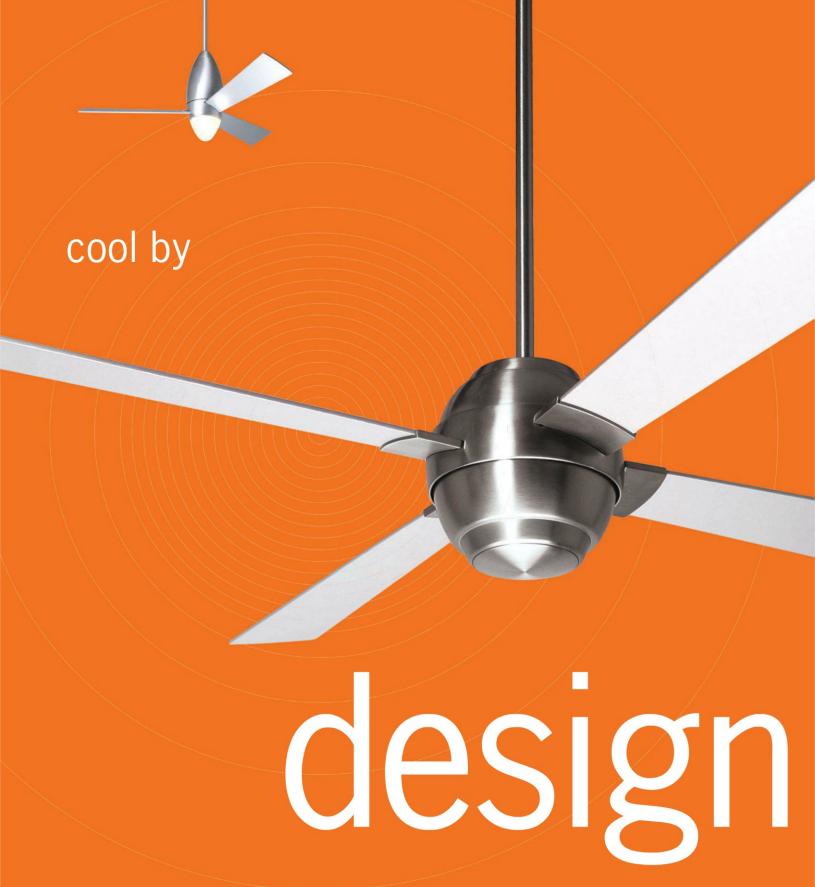
**Project:** Solar Homestead Location: Boone, North Carolina Architect: Appalachian State University Department of Technology and Environmental Design tec.appstate.edu above and reflected light below, maxi-Porches are a beloved element of the simply paying homage to its traditional role, the Appalachian State students Southern vernacular and lifestyle, tradimize the amount of energy generated tionally serving as an extension of the recast the porch as a power generator, per square foot by the 8.2 kW array. indoors—a shady place to gather, socialintegrating architecture and engineering "The porch wouldn't be nearly as enjoy ize, or share a meal. So when the students in a surprising and elegant way. able if we used regular solar panels,"

of Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, entered the Solar Decathlon, a biennial energy-efficient residential design competition, the iconic space figured prominently in their concept. "We wanted to share the context of the region," says Chad Everhart, an architect and the faculty advisor to the 30 students who worked on the project. But beyond

"We didn't want to just tack solar panels onto the house; we wanted to integrate them with the design," says Chelsea Royall, a graduate student and the project's design director. To that end, the team installed a canopy of 42 bifacial solar panels by Sanyo atop a white pine trellis. The flat panels, which collect energy from direct light

says Royall. "Light filters through these, and opens up the whole space. It's a different way to use solar panels that shows how beautiful they can be," Today, the house, which won the Decathlon's coveted People's Choice Award, stands on the university's campus, a thoughtful marriage of technology and aesthetics.

—Diana Budds







# Grateful Shed As told to Erika Heet Photos by Linny Morr

A family discovers the joys of DIY design-and muddy feet-in their home made up of distinct pods that blends

harmoniously with its surroundings in the rainy mountains of Kauai.



Tanya and Chris Gamby-a psychologist and web developer/portable outdoor movie theater owner, respectively-have called Hawaii home for most of their lives. After a detour to Los Angeles, where their children, Jackson, now nine, and Zeke, seven, were born, they came back. They were perfectly content with their old plantation house in the town of Lihue, on Kauai, when they accompanied Chris's sister on her own property search in the island's lush mountains. When they came across a 20-acre parcel that backed up to verdant, rainy valleys and stunning views, Tanya was immediately smitten. "When I saw the land, I thought, 'I'd sell my soul to live here," says Tanya, who luckily only had to sell her existing house to do so. They bought the property as an extended family, and then the Gambys, with \$80,000, limited construction experience, and guidance from local architects Ben Sullivan and Tony Hatto (who are also designing them a larger house on the site), built a temporary hangout made from three 10-by-12-foot modules and dubbed it Ag Shed Villa.

Tanya, Chris, Jackson, and Zeke spend much of their day outside (above). When she's not at the treehouse (left), Jackson hangs out in the kids' room (right).

# LOCAL TRAFFIC ONLY





"The layout is a little funky, but it flows.

It's pretty small—only 600-plus square feet—
but it's nice because we're all together."

—Tanya Gamby



The kitchen (top) occupies one corner of the L-shaped structure. As throughout, the floors are made up of reclaimed eucalyptus that Chris planed himself.



Just off the kitchen is the lanai (above left), which serves as the family's main gathering spot. The polycarbonate roof lets light through but keeps the rain at bay.

Tanya: Our old house sold before we knew how the property would be divided up, and we needed to build something for ourselves quickly. We knew we could do as many 10-by-12 sheds as we wanted, so we thought we'd do three and just take them apart and put them back together as needed. We figured we'd just make this really sweet, simple studio we could use temporarily and eventually turn into a guest room and a home office. So Chris just started building it, and our architects decided they wanted to help us, so they got involved, and it was this total spontaneous collaborative effort that morphed into this building.

Originally we were going to put in a green roof and living walls—we had wanted to do that on our bigger house, too. So we started with a design and quickly discovered that there were some issues with living walls and mold in Hawaii, and then we found out that even though there's all this research on Hawaii being a great place for green roofs, we couldn't get home insurance here if we put them in. We have everything in place, so as soon as that changes we will put them in, but unfortunately we can't do it yet.

As it became a real building, our architects engineered it for us so that it would actually meet the codes. It was sort of a back and forth with the architects-we had the shape of the building and the design laid out, and they picked some of the materials, like the cement boards for the walls and the polycarbonate roofing, which was something they always wanted to try. The bathroom walls and the shower are made out of polycarbonate, which is beautiful in certain areas and in some it's actually really hot, so the downside is we've created almost a greenhouse effect in places. But in the rainy season it's incredibly beautiful. The other thing is, it's loud. There have been times when it really starts to rain up here, and we can't hear each other at all.

**Chris:** The layout is pretty simple: We started off by building three small pods, and it was just going to be these 10-by-12 rooms with interconnected IIII

When a nearby road washed out in a flood, Chris and Tanya hauled the broken bits of asphalt to their property and made a walkway (above center) leading to the entrance.

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"We had to make it up as we went, so some things don't work perfectly, but overall I think it turned out pretty well."

-Chris Gamby







decks in an L shape, but it turned out to be too much of a hassle to make connecting decks so we just enclosed the whole thing. We have the kitchen at one end of the L, and then the middle is a connecting glass hallway containing the dining room. The corner is our all-purpose closet/laundry room, and up above that is our master loft, and then there's another connecting glass area that's our living room, and that connects to the kids' pod down at the end. The layout is a little funky, but it all flows together. It's pretty small-only 600-plus square feet-but if you're in the kitchen, with canvas walls and screens everywhere, you ▶

Connecting the kitchen and laundry area is the dining area (above), enclosed with floor-to-ceiling glass panels. "Chris built the whole thing," says Tanya.

The view from the dining area extends across the lanai to the lawn (top right), which never needs watering—it stays green from the island's frequent rains.

Jackson and Zeke escape their bedroom (above) through a slide repurposed from an old play structure. The 20-acre property backs up to nearby mountains.





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#### **MY HOUSE**







can't see the kids in their room but you can hear them. For the most part it's nice because we're all together.

Tanya: The house is very nontraditional for Kauai. It's funky but fun.

Chris: We had to make it up as we went, so some things don't work perfectly, but overall I think it turned out pretty well. There was a lot of experimental stuff that we tried because we knew we'd eventually build a bigger house and we thought this was a good testing ground.

Tanya: Doing both the Ag Shed Villa and the "real" house, we found that it's scary to experiment on a real house. It's very expensive. It's fun to experiment on something small, because your investment is not as big. If you mess it up or the siding's wrong on 100 square feet, it's a lot easier to fix. It was the first time we could say, "Yeah, try that, let's see what happens." We definitely changed some of our bigger house stuff based on the Ag Shed, like incorporating the boulders that are all over the land-we'll repeat that. We actually unearthed one the size of a minivan that we're going to use in the bigger house.

We had some good unexpected surprises. Initially, we were going to put glass doors everywhere but we had to get out of our previous house before the new one was finished, so we just put canvas up on one wall-it's so temperate here that it worked fine until we decided we needed a real wall. Chris put up a half-canvas, halfpolycarbonate wall temporarily, and I ended up loving it. It looks really cool, it keeps the rain out, it's solid, it can flip up if we want it to, and I don't see us ever changing it. A glass door would have been predictable and followed the pattern of the house, but this worked so much better.

Chris: Having a good plan is really important, too. It's nice to want to do things on the fly and make it up as you go, but planning out certain things is hugely important. When I originally started building, my footings were a little small and we could see the building sinking on one side—it actually dropped down an inch or two. So we went back in and beefed up the footings, and they aren't going anywhere now. It would have been nice to know ahead of time how big the footings needed to be. That was pretty key.

Tanya: The whole idea for the structure was that this would be a really fun place for the kids for a few years. Chris made a pallet treehouse just outside their bedroom, and we added a slide right out of their bedroom window that leads to it. They're out there all the time; they use all of that stuff constantly. But timeouts aren't very effective; you go into their room and they're gone.

Chris: The kids also like to run into the house and lock the door to the slide behind them—they take turns locking each other out for fun. So it does get a fair amount of use.

Tanya: The photographers were saying we reminded them of the Swiss Family Robinson. The day they were here, the kids took three showers, and they were still running around all muddy. And that's exactly how I wanted them to grow up. ▶

The compact living area is just off the kids' room (top left). A glass slider and a stackable LG washer and dryer maximize space in the laundry area (top right), which

includes a small utility closet. Nearby, the bathroom (above) includes a composting toilet and a Home Depot sink on a pedestal Chris made from chunks of found wood.





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#### **Board Meeting**

The unique wall panels are made of HardieBacker cement board from James Hardie. "That's the material I'm happiest with," says Tanya. "I like the way it looks, it's cool, and it works." Typically used for waterproofing beneath floors and countertops, the board is perfect for combating the extreme rains that sometimes pound the house. jameshardie.com



**Boulder Holder** 

site serve as natural anchors for the building's exterior beams. "You can't dig five feet on this property without hitting a boulder," says Chris. As suggested by the couple's architects, the boulders act as a support system, unique architectural ornamentation, and extra seating.



#### **Swede Motion**

With no Ikea in Hawaii, the Gambys took advantage of a trip to Los Angeles during construction to pick up their kitchen cabinets-simple models made of glass, plywood, and particleboard. They shipped the cabinets to the island and, à la all things Ikea, put them together onsite, situating them high above the counter. ikea.com



#### A Bright Idea

After build-out, the family realized they needed a light for their dining room. Tanya and Jackson took to their storage container, where they found fake flower branches they had bought at Ace Hardware, and paired them with a crumpled string of old Christmas lights. "We plugged it in and that was that," says Tanya.

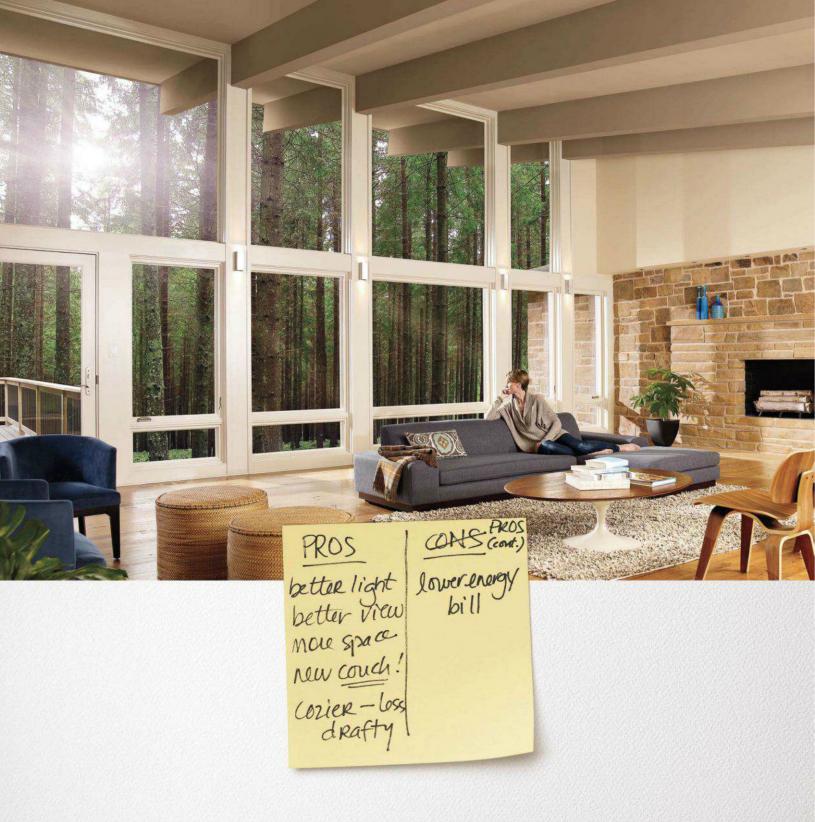


#### **Waxing Poetic**

During construction, Tanya's brother, a boat builder on Oahu, found tons of eucalyptus pieces that his neighbor was about to throw away. Chris broke many a saw blade planing the incredibly dense wood for the floors, which he stained with Jacobean by Minwax. The Waterdrop jug is from Esque. minwax.com esque-studio.com

For more information and resources, see Sourcing on page 110.

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# BIKE BRIGA

We've long known about the environmental and health benefits of biking, but the demands of savvy urban cyclists aren't the same as those of weekend warriors. Designers are wising up and creating bikes and accessories that suit the modern lifestyle. We take a spin through high-design racks, accessories, performance apparel, and everything in between.

By Diana Budds **Photos by Peter Belanger** 

#### **OCNC Floor Drive Pump** by Lezyne

#### \$100

Your kitted-out custom ride deserves equally attractive accessories. This lightweight aluminum pump from Lezyne is available in silver, blue, gold, or red and has a 43-inch-long hose compatible with both Presta and Schrader valves. lezyne.com

#### Perch Rack

#### by Clankworks

Requiring just two screws, Perch is simple to mount. The bent-ply piece holds up to 50 pounds, but our 30-pound bike put the shelf under duress. It didn't come crashing down, but we'd be nervous using it in a house with youngsters who love to climb things. clankworks.com

#### **@** Watts Helmet

#### by Bern Unlimited

Inspired by the style of skating helmets, the Watts won't make you look like an extra in Alien. There are vents on top of the helmet but not in front, so bring along a sweatband or a handkerchief on hot days. bernunlimited.com

#### Storm King Parka

#### by Outlier \$475

Save the spandex for the weekends, friends. Outlier's water-resistant and breathable parka is the ultimate in fashion-forward performance apparel, boasting taped seams, arm vents, and enough length in the tail that your behind won't be left in the wind. This style is cut large, so order down a size. shop.outlier.cc

#### **©** Eclipse P9 Bike

#### by Tern Bicycles \$1,100

This baby folds in ten seconds flat to dimensions of 16.5 by 35 by 30 inches and weighs just 29 poundsessential attributes for commuters who travel on trains with bicycle restrictions. Eclipse has 24-inch wheels and a nine-speed drivetrain, boons for riders seeking the comfort and flexibility of a full-size bike in a folding version. ternbicycles.com |

Styling by Janis Bakken/Artist United





#### **O**Pedal Pod

#### by Tamasine Osher \$887

British designer Tamasine
Osher released this walnut
shelf at last year's London
Design Festival. For those
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to be multifunctional,
Pedal Pod boasts ample
cubby space to stash
odds and ends along with
the rubber-lined roost
that suspends your bike.
tamasineosher.com

#### **@**Gen2 Helmet

#### by Nutcase \$65

Helmets may not be the most alluring bike accessories out there, but they are the most essential. This low-profile silhouette is more subdued than the standard style. And if you need more convincing, keep this in mind: It can save your life in a spill. nutcasehelmets.com

#### S Leather Town Gloves by Rapha

#### by Rapha \$150

Rapha's leather gloves have a reinforced palm to protect your mitts from the numbing cold while letting you maintain a tight grip on your handlebars. The moisture-wicking fabric lining feels oh so soft and helps keep hands from feeling clammy. rapha.cc

#### O Roadster Sport

#### by Linus Bikes \$639

The Roadster Sport comes tricked out with a rear rack, bell, and fenders that ensure splashing through a puddle won't leave your suit soggy. Linus improved the bike's stylish Europeaninfluenced design by strengthening its wheels and using stainless steel for its crank hardware. Beauty and brawnwe couldn't ask for more. linusbike.com.

#### **©** Farmers Market Twin Pannier

#### by Public Bikes \$80

Cast off that too-heavy messenger bag digging into your collarbone.
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Custom bike maker Renovo out of Portland, Oregon, rethought the materials used in frames and opted to craft theirs from sustainably sourced bamboo and hickory. It's not just for looks: Natural wood withstands impact better than carbon frames. Now, if only we could take the major dent to our wallet... renovobikes.com

#### **O** Hood Bike Rack

#### by Quarterre \$200

This leather-trimmed. powder-coated-steel rack cradles the top bar of your bike. Its abstract sculptural form will look great on your living room wall, but be sure to have a carpenter's level and extra set (or two) of hands on deck while you mount this surprisingly heavy piece. quarterre.com

#### **©S-Works Prevail Helmet** by Specialized \$230

Specialized outfits its

#### sponsored Tour de France cyclists with these to careen through the French countryside and alpine hills-and the price reflects that. The Prevail is lightweight and well ventilated so your forehead won't sport a telltale red mark after wearing it-good to note if early meetings are on your agenda.

#### **O** Monty Roll Top **Messenger Bag** by Mission Workshop \$149

San Francisco-based Mission Workshop sells this weatherproof bag in custom combinations of five fabric colors and five buckle colors. Easy-access pockets ensure you'll stay organized, and the roll top accommodates oddly sized loads. We love that it's made in the USA and has a lifetime warranty. missionworkshop.com

#### **©** Transit Jacket

#### by Aether Apparel \$395

Transit's reflective detailing remains incognito during the day but helps passing motorists see you at night. Four-way stretch fabric allows a wide range of motion, but we wish the arms were longer to accommodate reaching down to drop handlebars. Bonus points awarded for the mid-back pocket. aetherapparel.com IIII

60 April 2012 **Dwell** 

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## E+ FOR EFFORT

The E+ Green Home, a concept house located an hour outside Seoul, not only points the way to a greener South Korea, it may well be the most sustainable house in the country.

By Aaron Britt Photos by Sergio Pirrone



Visit Seoul, South Korea, and you'll be stunned by the average apartment building—tens of stories high, and numbering in what must be the hundreds, these landscape-defining structures look less like the housing stock of a high-tech megacity than massive concrete milk cartons.

Riding a wave of dissatisfaction with high-rise dwelling, growing numbers of South Koreans are looking for a different, more sustainable way to live. And a new housing prototype in Kyeong-Gi-the E+ Green Home-showcases the sustainable building

prowess of the firm Kolon Engineering and Construction and also the design acumen of Seoul's Unsangdong Architects Cooperation.

Erected on the site of Kolon's headquarters, the show home is one of what the firm hopes will be many they'll build across South Korea. With a tripartite approach to energy efficiency, the E+ Home is at once a laboratory and a showcase for the 95 green technologies used, many developed by Kolon. By saving (the house uses 27 percent of the average Korean home), generating (it produces 38 percent of what's used by the average Korean home), and recycling energy, the E+ Home even meets German Passive House standards.

A tool for marketing and education, the E+ Home is that rare spec house that actually functions as a working residence: Curious house-hunters can actually book a night or two in the place to get a feel for what serious green living feels like. Rare is the chance to spend a night in so techy an abode, but if you can't swing a stay in Kyeong-Gi anytime soon, take our tour of South Korea's bright green future.







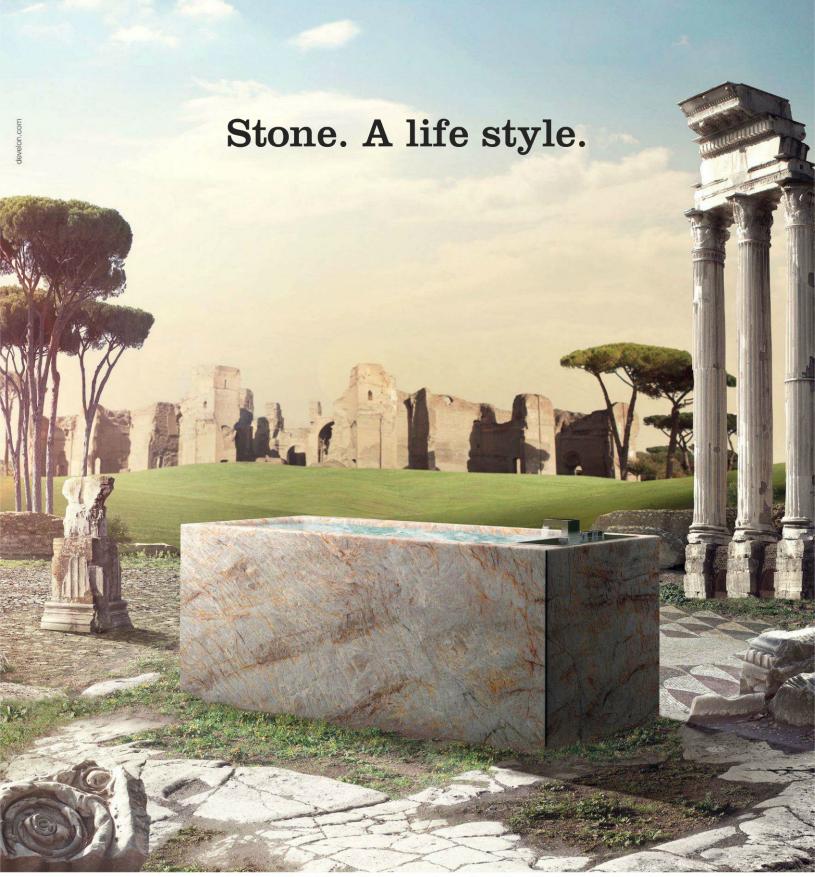


This second-floor gallery (above) displays the green materials and technologies Unsangdong and Kolon built into the house. The two firms teamed up on the furniture design as well.

#### **JUST VENTING**

Though a tight thermal envelope is critical to the E+ Home's sustainability, Kolon's heat recovery ventilation and air filtration systems (above the desk at right) help ease the load.





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#### WINDOWS UPDATE

By angling the second-story window (above left) away from the hall, Unsangdong created an expansive space without adding to the house's footprint. A building-integrated photovoltaic window by Kolon does double duty bringing both light and energy into the house.

#### **TUBE STATION**

Never enthralled with high-tech for its own sake, the architects make use of age-old passive cooling techniques like the stone "cool tube" that runs through the kitchen (above right) and second floor (above left).

#### **SERENITY NOW**

Designed to suit all the needs of a Korean family of four, the interior takes what Unsangdong calls "emotional design" as seriously as energy efficiency. This tranquil ground-floor bedroom and bath (bottom) were created with the help of Japanese interior designer Kondo Noriko.



#### **Dwell in the Digital World**

**NEW CONTEST//** 

## Live/Work Design Contest

When we devoted our November 2010 issue to the theme of Live/Work, we weren't looking for the typical home office—a hideaway of messy files, dusty desks, and bulky computers. Instead we sought live/work solutions and products that expertly mixed business with pleasure. In that spirit, we've teamed up with the go-to source for modern classics, Design Within Reach, on this special Live/Work Design Contest. Do you have a product or furniture idea that's destined to be a future live/work staple? The winning design will be considered for production and sale through DWR. Submit now!

dwell.com/live-work

# LIVE/WORK THINK/DESIGN SUBMIT/WIN

**Enter the Live/Work Design Contest now.** 

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EXTENDED SLIDESHOW//

#### **Illuminated Texts**

Hand-wired by Thomas Edison himself, the J. Pierpoint Morgan Library and Residence was the first electrified home in New York. Last year, the Renfro Design Group and Beyer Blinder Belle Architects & Planners spearheaded a major retrofit to usher the next generation of lighting technology into the library: LEDs. In our extended slideshow, we share archival photos.

dwell.com/morgan-library



TAKE ME HOME//

#### **Bike Accessories**

This month's Dwell Reports covers designs tailored to urban commuters. We're giving a few of the featured products away. One lucky person will take home a Farmer's Market Pannier by Public Bikes, a Federico bell, a set of LED lights by Bookman, and a Pica toolset by Crankbrothers. Enter to win!

dwell.com/take-me-home



**EXTENDED SLIDESHOW//** 

#### **Hygge House**

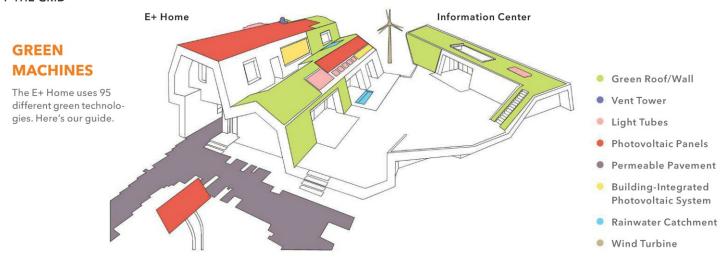
In this issue we feature a former fishermen's cottage outside Copenhagen that was renovated by Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen of Norm.Architects. By enclosing an attached greenhouse and opening up the historic building's floor plan, Bjerre-Poulsen created a light and airy 1,260-square-foot home for a family of four. Bjerre-Poulsen offers more of his images in our extended slideshow.

dwell.com/hugge-house





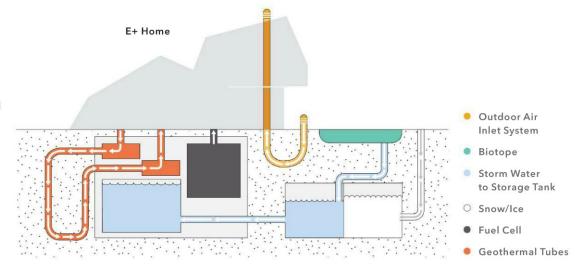






## UNDERNEATH IT ALL

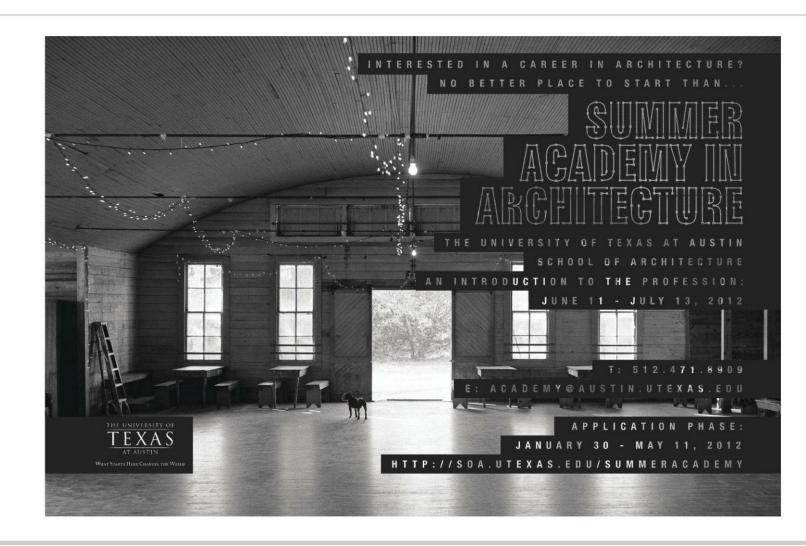
By capturing and storing storm water and heat underground, the house saves even more energy.





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# Hygge House

IN A FORMER FISHERMEN'S COTTAGE OUTSIDE COPENHAGEN, A YOUNG FAMILY HAS CARVED OUT A COZY, LIGHT-FILLED HOME.

By Jaime Gillin Photos by Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen

Project: Vedbæk House Architect: Norm.Architects Location: Vedbæk, Denmark



A few hours into a visit with Peter Østergaard and Åsa Olofsson at their house in Vedbæk, a coastal town 12 miles north of Copenhagen, the couple is parsing the meaning of hygge. A Danish word that has no direct equivalent in English, hygge (roughly pronounced hoog-eh) describes the warm, cozy feeling that develops when friends gather in a room with some open flames (candlelight, fireplace), alcohol, and plenty of time to enjoy the experience. There's an aesthetic component, too-worn wood and strewn sheepskins help. So do "small things, and blankets," offers Olofsson. "On the beach you wouldn't hygge," says Østergaard, "and it's not really partying." Though it's somewhat difficult to define, they know it when they see it. In fact, "we're hygge-ing right now," Østergaard points out, nodding at the surrounding tableau: a weathered wooden dining table topped with homemade apple pie, half-drunk glasses of red wine, and lit votives. "This house helps."

Indeed, the house, a cottage built by fishermen in 1860, is exceedingly cozy, with sloping ceilings, a sculptural spiral staircase, and "lots of irregular little steps and corners and twisted angles," as Olofsson puts it. The couple bought the place in 2005 and immediately enlisted Østergaard's best friend, Jonas Bjerre-Poulsen, the head of Norm. Architects, to help renovate it. The house was originally a warren of small rooms, with an attached greenhouse and a low-ceilinged storeroom. Bjerre-Poulsen fixed it up in stages over the next four years, transforming the storeroom into a guest room and the greenhouse into a long, narrow sitting and dining area. He tore down the interior walls in the main building's 430-square-foot ground floor,



Olofsson and Østergaard (above) have personalized their home with quirky finds from flea markets and mementos from their travels. Their dining room and sitting area (below) used to be an uninsulated greenhouse; now it's a light-filled space where the family gathers for meals at a weathered table and Åsa curls up on two custom daybeds, designed by Bjerre-Poulsen, to read and look at the garden.







"EVEN WITH A
SMALL HOUSE,
SOME PEOPLE
HAVE A FAVORITE
CORNER, BUT WE
USE THE WHOLE
HOUSE EVERY
DAY." -PETER
ØSTERGAARD



When Bjerre-Poulsen first saw the house, "I instantly saw all the interesting possibilities," he says. "As an architect you see not what it is but what it could be." Among those possibilities: transforming an adjacent storehouse into a guest room (below), connected to the original house via the renovated dining room and sitting area.



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The snug attic contains the couple's platform bed, custom designed by Bjerre-Poulsen to maximize storage and fit the unusual space (opposite); a crib for Carl; and a small bed for Maja (above), tucked under the eaves on the other side of the photo wall.



creating an open-plan kitchen and living room, and built custom furniture to fit the tight spaces—a platform bed with integrated storage in the attic bedroom and a pair of streamlined sofas in the narrow sitting room that overlooks the garden.

The renovated house feels much more spacious than its 1,260 square feet would suggest, thanks to the floor-to-ceiling white interiors (including a low-profile kitchen with appliances tucked behind false drawer fronts) and some architectural tricks. The low ceiling in the sitting and dining room is pierced with skylights to give a sense of verticality, a move inspired by traditional Japanese temples, as well as to create a rhythm of light and dark and "spaces within a space," as Bjerre-Poulsen puts it. Similarly, an underground wine cellar adds



a sense of depth in the living room thanks to the one-and-a-quarter-inch-thick glass door inset into the wooden floor. At night, the lit-up cellar acts like a built-in lamp, flooding the room with an atmospheric glow.

Though it's a tight fit for the family of four—baby Carl sleeps in a crib in his parents' attic bedroom and six-year-old Maja sleeps in a closet-size nook in another corner—it's not yet cramped, and for a while longer should fulfill Olofsson's original fantasy: "a house where we could live close together but not on top of each other." And if things ever feel too squeezed, they can imagine the home's 19th-century residents, a troop of Nordic fishermen who crammed into the home's formerly tiny rooms—a situation few would call cozy, no matter how much candlelight, furs, and booze you had on hand.



To maintain a uniform look in the kitchen, Bjerre-Poulsen secreted most of the appliances, including the fridge, behind white Kvik cabinets. The home's previous owner's father was one of the first wine importers to Denmark, and the cellar still contains some of his bottles, first placed there 40 years ago and now dusty, with obscured labels and decaying corks. The couple opens one once in a while-"they're usually very bad, but sometimes very good," says Østergaard.



Ground Floor

#### Vedbæk House Floor Plans

- A Bathroom
- B Kitchen
- C Family Room
- D Entry
- E Dining/Living Area
- F Guest Room
- G Garden/Deck
- H Bedroom
- I Master Bedroom

Dashed red lines denote skylights

#### A Well-Lit Home

A central challenge of the renovation was to integrate lighting into the architecture in such a way that "even if the space had no furniture, you could turn on the lights and instantly get a cozy atmosphere," says Bjerre-Poulsen. After Europe banned incandescents in 2009 Bjerre-Poulsen turned to halogen fixtures, which are more energy-efficient and give off a similar quality of light. (He won't use LEDs until their ability to render color is further developed, he says.) In Østergaard and Olofsson's kitchen, he embedded a halogen strip in the underside of the wooden shelf over the countertop to direct light onto the work surface (below). He also installed can lights with brass-colored interiors on the ceiling (right); the halogen bulbs reflect the golden interior, giving off a warm glow. Every light in the house is an overbright fixture on a dimmer, for maximum flexibilityif you can adjust different levels for every situation, from working to entertaining, then you don't need to rely on secondary floor or table lights, Bjerre-Poulsen points out.

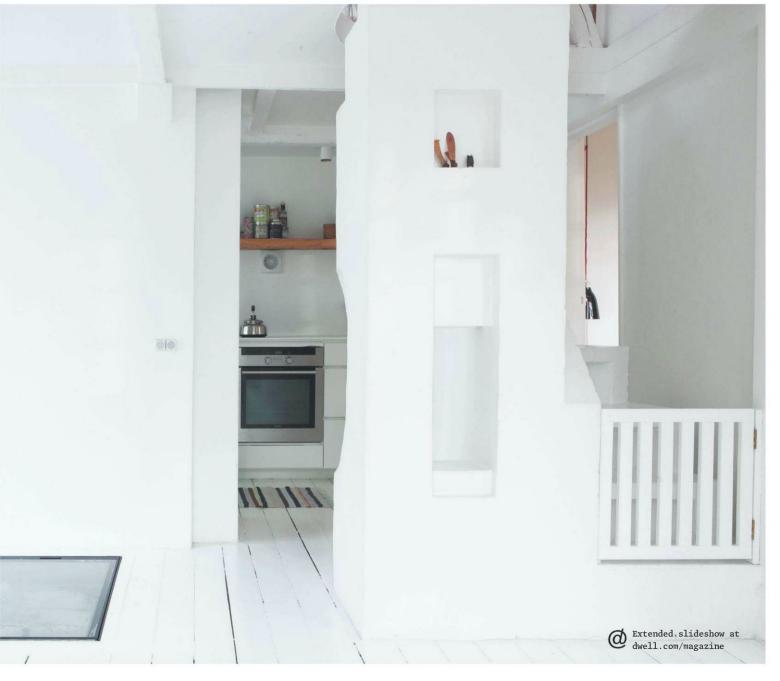






The skylight over the home's entrance (left) "helps simulate a feeling of grandeur and creates an airy and welcoming atmosphere," says Bjerre-Poulsen. The stepping stone (right), like the skylight, was inspired by zen architecture. "In most traditional wooden houses and temples in Japan, the house is lifted above the garden, and the transition is always marked by a sculptural stepping stone," says Bjerre-Poulsen. "We used the same principle between the old house and the addition."





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After nearly eight years of renting a tiny apartment in the center of Asolo, in northern Italy, Guido Chiavelli and his wife, Sabrina, were ready to find a house outside of town and start a family. "Our dream was to go back to the countryside where we both grew up," says Chiavelli, who runs his family's clothing company, Il Gufo. "We want our children to experience close contact with nature. If you live in an urban area, you have a different kind of childhood."

The Chiavellis knew exactly where they wanted to live—a short drive from Asolo in an area called Monfumo, or "silent hills." And so on nearly every free day they had for two years, the couple drove around, looking for just the right sort of site: one that would be accessible but not overly visible from the main road. Three different real estate agents later, Guido and Sabrina found a crumbling and abandoned farmhouse with an overgrown vineyard, tucked









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Previous spread: Photo by Paolo Belvedere



The sitting area and office are on the second floor, reached via the catwalk. "We watch TV here, use the computer, and sit by the fire," says Chiavelli. "The way you access the space is part of the architecture, and that's part of the beauty of it." Near the sofa by Piero Lissoni for Cassina is a Bourgie lamp from Kartell;

on the large table, made from old roof beams, is a Taccia lamp from Flos. The top floor holds the Chiavellis' bedroom suite (opposite below), with a dressing room and built-in spa. "The farmers dried their crops up here," says Chiavelli. "We knew right away this was the spot that we wanted to have our own room."



and that is long, patient work. Only the older stonemasons know the technique, and it's an art we are going to lose if we don't keep the tradition alive."

Caprioglio turned to Luigi Bordin, a seasoned local contractor who employs stonemasons trained in this precise technique. "I had a splendid professional relationship with him," says the architect. "He is a man of wide experience, and I learned so much from him in terms of operating in such a complex site's orography and soil conditions. He led a team of five stonemasons, supervising and also physically working at the site for the entirety of the project."

Because the Chiavellis wanted to preserve the shell of the existing structure, the process of shoring it up was of paramount importance, particularly since the house is situated in an earth-quake-prone area. "Building is different than renovating, and just holding up the building was the most delicate part," explains Chiavelli. "The perimeter, the shell, was so tenuous that people thought we were fools—I mean, there were times when if you just touched the wall, it would have come down."

Caprioglio braced the building with a steel pilaster to support the main structure of the roof. "This was an important component in particular, but in general I tend to expose structural elements in my work," says the architect. "I prefer to highlight elements that give strength without appearing heavy in dimension." Once that was accomplished, it was time to focus on the interior and start planning a modern addition. "This was a farmer's house, and they stored crops here," says Chiavelli. "The rooms were so tiny, and there were so many of them. We wanted a luminous space to capture the beauty of the surrounding environment, and we knew we wanted our living areas to be at the very top to make the most of the light. Once we shared our desires with Filippo, and told him how we wanted to live in this house, he made it happen by addressing every one of our needs."

By the time construction was well underway, so too was the Chiavellis' plan to start a family. Their son, Rocco, was born toward the end of the project and therefore fundamentals of baby-proofing were built into the design. At first glance, however, the house does not necessarily look very child-friendly, particularly when considering the most defining element of the first floor—a massive central staircase and catwalk system composed of glass and steel. "It's beautiful, but it's dangerous," admits Chiavelli. "Protecting him was, of course, our main priority."

Notions of protection and accessibility figured into every decision the Chiavellis made. Due to the high volume of the structure, the team decided that the home would be comprised of four floors connected via an elevator accessed from an underground garage and wine cellar. "Having four different levels, well, at first we

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Caprioglio paired the indigenous sandstone of the existing structure with teak mounted on two-foot-wide panels. The structure at right holds the glass-topped kitchen (below and opposite). The floor plan shows three of the house's four levels; the basement level contains a wine cellar and laundry room.

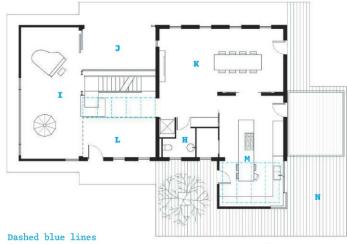


- A Master Suite
- B Elevator
- C Dressing Area
- D Sitting Area
- E Office
- F Bedroom
- G Open to Below
- H Bathroom
- I Living Area
- J Patio
- K Dining Area
- L Entry
- M Kitchen N Deck





Second Floor



denote skylights

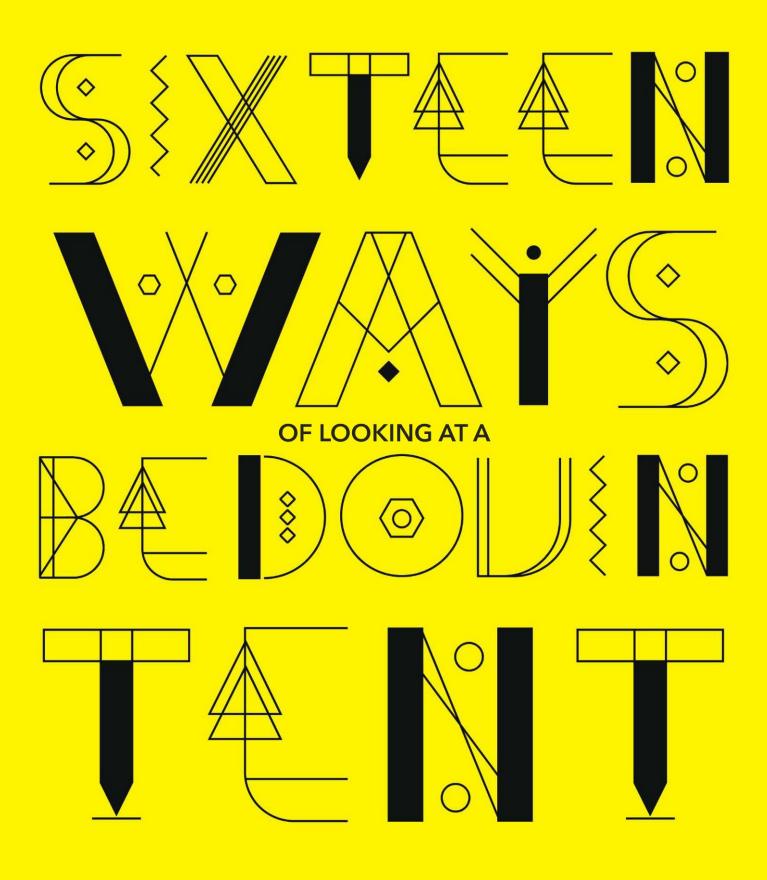
Ground Floor

thought we might not need that much space. But then we started thinking long term. We look at this house as the home of our lifetime," explains Guido. "That means we envisioned that someday we may not be able to climb steps without difficulty, and we wanted our friends and family who may not have the easiest time getting around to be able to visit us comfortably."

When the new home was complete, the couple hosted a party to thank the 100 or more people who worked on the project. "It was a very emotional moment; we were all crying and congratulating each other, drinking prosecco and hugging," Chiavelli recalls. "All the effort and hard work of these people, every day for two years, to give us such an extraordinary and special home-we are so proud, my God, that whatever it cost, that moment paid for it."







Architect, systems designer,
Cradle to Cradle founder, and
sustainability guru William
McDonough talks entropy,
Walker Evans, paper houses,
and "buildings like trees" with
science writer Alexis Madrigal.

By Alexis Madrigal Illustrations and typography by Oh Yeah Studio

This was not how Americans in the late 1950s tended to manage the seasons. At the time, we were participating in the greatest run-up in energy usage in the history of the world, much of it driven by the increase in the climate control of buildings. With energy in all forms cheap and abundant, builders and buyers replaced "good design" with more fossil

fuels. Life wasn't necessarily easier, but they made it feel that way.

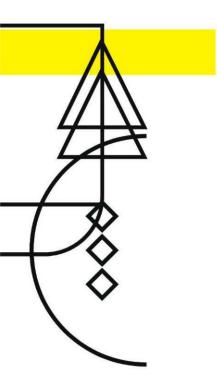
Perhaps McDonough's early years help explain why his work over nearly three decades has catapulted him to the forefront of the discussion around green architecture. Reducing the amount of energy a building uses requires its architect to understand its energy flows, the way the manmade interacts with the natural, how the sun's heat and light produce an environment. McDonough's thorough grasp of thermodynamics isn't just school learning.

Young Billy McDonough, long before he cowrote Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things with Michael Braungart or won a National Design Award, or generally presided as one of the big thinkers around sustainable design, learned how energy worked with his body. As a boy growing up in Japan, he lived in an uninsulated paper house and during the cold winters, his family ate in padded kimonos with their feet dangling through a cutout in the floor. The same brazier that kept their food warm radiated its heat under the table to their feet. Finally, right before bedtime, each member of the family would get into a cauldron-like bathtub heated directly by a fire. "You would get as red as a lobster, pop yourself out, and run to your futon in your pajamas and dive in," he recalls. "Now you're superheated surrounded by insulation. You lie on your back and your mom tells you a story and you fall asleep and you're warm all night."

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#### Can you describe your earliest interactions with light and energy?

Having been born in Japan, I lived in a paper house as a baby. The house was whatever the ambient temperature was. There was no way to heat or cool a paper house. But you can have the light. We always had light.

#### So energy and light were in tension.

Even today when you see "energy-efficient" houses, you'll see very little glass. If you're looking at energy conservation, you can't have a modern glass house unless you have very heavy glass that has metal coatings that selectively engage with the light. My firm is looking at low-cost and low-operating-cost housing, and if you do, you adjust it to the minimal need for natural light.

## You studied photography at Yale with Walker Evans. He must have taught you much about light, but what about architecture?

I learned many great things from him. At one time, he was in the hospital. I printed one of my photographs and brought it to him. He looked at it for half an hour and said, "Most people think photography is about the capturing of reflected light. The real key, both physical and metaphysical, is you take a picture of the light in the air. You're dealing with the atmosphere."

#### Have you found a place in your work for that kind of holism?

In the early '70s, I went to Jordan to work with King Hussein to help build permanent homes for Bedouins. The Bedouins could no longer be nomads, really, because they couldn't access Saudi Arabia and Iraq. So they had to get housed because they couldn't move around with their camels and goats. And it was there, living in a Bedouin tent, that I had this astonishing revelation. We're walking around in khakis and sleeping in white tents. And the Bedouins are walking around in black with lots of layers on and living in black tents. What're they doing in black? Isn't white supposed to be cooler? I couldn't understand it until I lived in it.

#### What did you learn?

The western tent heats up like an oven. It's 120 degrees, there is no air movement; you're in an oven. Then, go to a Bedouin tent. You're in this deep shade and the sense of temperature is different. I went around with a thermometer. It goes from 120 degrees outside to 95 degrees in the tent. That's quite tolerable in a dry place.

When you lift the flaps in the Bedouin tent, it causes massive conductive currents, because the surface is black. The weave is coarse and heavy because that's much easier to roll up. The tiny openings in the fabric are ventilation and light fixtures. The sun sparkles through

these tiny apertures. It's like having a million MR-16s [halogen lightbulbs] up there. Beautiful, sparkly, bright sunlight.

I cataloged how many things a Bedouin tent did at once: 16. The factory that makes the tent (the goats) follows you around and makes little kids that are so cute. If you have more than one goat, we call that capital. A herd is capital. It's currency with potential.

The other reason the tents are black is that the goats' wool is black. They give you flesh, cooking oil, tents, playmates. They are entertaining and use solar energy in forms we can't: eating weeds. The symbiosis and all these natural flows were just amazing. And all I was doing was sitting in a tent.

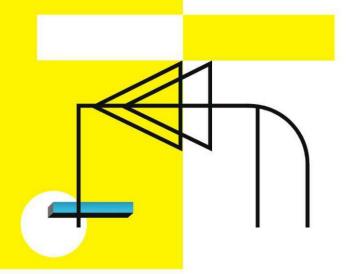
### Goats are an excellent piece of living technology. But how did you end up relating that to the practice of making buildings?

When I was still at Dartmouth, I decided to take a physics class because I wanted to understand Hiroshima and the atomic bomb. The professor told me that I needed to know the special theory of relativity and he handed me this fat book. I'm staring at this paper with millions of formulas. I thought, I can't do this. But I kept staring at the formula, E = mc², and I also kept staring at the fire that I had going. I don't know that I ever figured out anything, but I came to understand entropy.



#### "We don't have an energy problem. We have a material problem. We have carbon in the wrong place."

—William McDonough



#### I'm not sure I've grasped entropy, but I've had it described to me as the thermodynamic concept that the universe tends toward disorder.

It's the log! There is a dispersed form of energy, solar energy, which is entropic on the part of the sun. Then we have this dispersed collector, the tree, the leaves and the disaggregated minerals, the soil, and we have this flux of the water in the hydro cycle. And guess what happens next? We get life itself. Life accrues in negative entropy.

And I thought, if I ever become an architect, I'm going to design buildings like trees and they are going to be negatively entropic. I'm not going to make buildings that spew carbon back into the atmosphere.

#### How then do you make a building that operates as living system?

In 1989, I won a design competition for a daycare center in Frankfurt, Germany. My proposal was for a building operated by children. I imagined them waking up the building in the morning, tending vegetable gardens on the roof, and opening and closing windows and shutters as temperatures and prevailing winds suggested. I envisioned a geothermal system acting like roots. The fundamental proposition was a building like a tree. This was the first time I began using that term—"a building like a tree."



I wanted this daycare center to be operable by children; I felt that they would understand where it was: They would become native to its place. They would instinctively understand that the building belonged right there in that latitude and culture. Unfortunately, nation-wide economic defunding of daycare facilities meant that the building was never realized.

I mention this because thinking about energy and light really brings me back to my early work and the fundamental elements that inspired it. It all comes back to the sun.

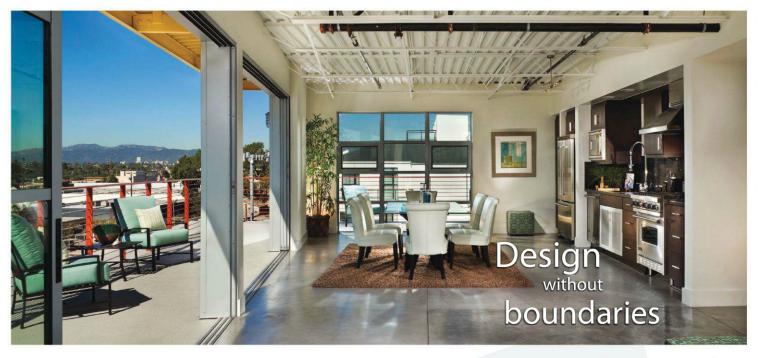
The practice of green architecture has exploded since you first started designing buildings. Is this ever-expanding field taking all the right turns?

Everyone is saying, "I'm going to be zero carbon." That's silly. You've just told me what you're not. If I get a jar of peanut butter and it says chlorine-free, it's like, what?! We're telling people what we're not. We need to define what we want to be.

The design of life is accruing carbon from the atmosphere and putting it into biota. It's the greening of the earth, literally. Carbon is our friend and carbon is a material. We don't have an energy problem. We have a material problem. We have carbon in the wrong place. We have a carbon location crisis.

#### What's next for you?

I learned something else from Walker Evans, who was 69 when I met him. At that time, he was using a 670, a Polaroid, a new camera at the time. I said, "Mr. Evans, I can't understand. You're the most respected large-format photographer and you're walking around with a 670." He goes, "Here's why." And he took a picture and handed it to me. "Bill," he told me, "you're 20, you need to learn that every ten years, you put down your tools and pick up new ones; otherwise, you only have one life." I am at the point where I'm putting down my tools. I'm designing products, designing huge systems, and consulting with countries. Why would I wander around at the age of 70 carrying a big 8-by-10? ■





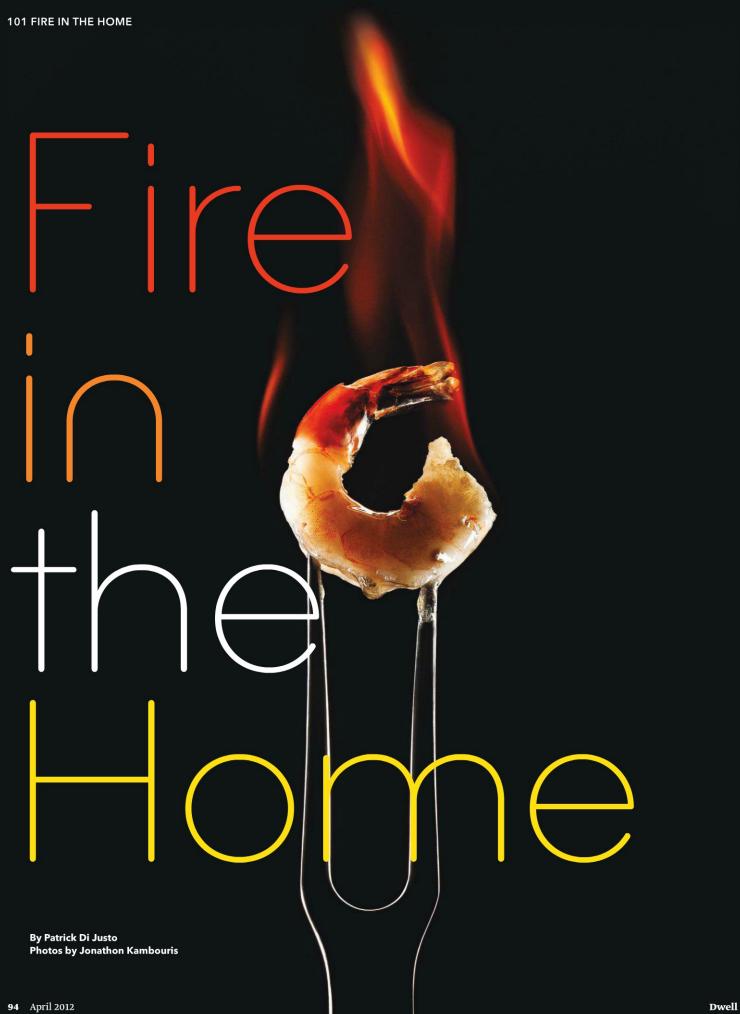
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sliding glass door

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Styling by Ed Gabriels for Halley Resources

Taming fire was humankind's first and most critical step toward its mastery of the material world. About 400,000 years ago, our ancestors learned to harness the flame, setting us on the course that would lead from the stone hearths those early humans built to the modern high-efficiency catalytic woodstoves we use today. More important, though, was the capacity to selectively apply heat, a transformative power that allows us to turn dirt into metal, cold into warmth, dark into light.

Skip ahead some 399,000 years to the 12th century for the invention that truly domesticated the light and heat that has sustained us: the chimney. Up to this point, dwellings in cold-weather lands like Europe were one-room manor houses with communal fires and smoke holes in their roofs. The chimney suddenly made multiroom buildings not just possible but comfortable, because different rooms—each with an independently controlled fire—could now be dedicated to single uses like cooking, eating, and sleeping.

But across the millennia what Shakespeare called "the smoky light that's fed with stinking tallow" changed not at all. Fire was dirty, smelly, and dangerous; usually born out of some type of friction, it always burned some form of organic matter, usually wood or animal fat. The Cro-Magnon who carved the little lamps of limestone and charred animal fat that illuminated the cave drawings at Lascaux 17,000 years ago would have had little trouble understanding the essential nature of a whale-oil lamp lighting the 1700s home of a Nantucket Quaker.

But in the 1880s, a worthy challenge to fire's reign finally arrived: the orange glow of the incandescent electric lightbulb. It was sold as being cheaper and safer than gas or oil lighting, and the quick embrace of Edison's bulb was staggering: Between 1893 and 1901, New York City went from having 1,500 electric street lamps to over 17,000.

The 1905 development of nichrome—an alloy of nickel and chromium that produces a great deal of heat when electrified—made practical the development of electric cooking and heating units. The kitchen fire now had a rival too. Within a few months, the stovetop bread toaster would be replaced by the electric toaster; a few years later, everything from waffle irons to coffee percolators to ovens and ranges were being run on electricity. In the space of 60 years, using fire to cook, heat, or create light became symbolic of backwardness and poverty, and for a while in the mid-20th century, the phrase "all-electric kitchen" was actually a selling point.

Yet even though we have no pressing need for fire in the home anymore, we're loath to part with it. Whether the candle mania of the 1970s or the hearth-heavy McMansions of the 1990s, we refuse to wave goodbye to fire's crackle and luminosity. Perhaps it's because fire is one of the few surviving links to our ancient selves that is neither socially unacceptable nor legally off-limits. And as radically inefficient as fire is for lighting in the 21st century, we still spend \$2 billion on candles each year. Forget the ear-busting stereo system—a wood-fired pizza oven just might be a home's coup de grâce. More prosaically, some 16.9 million backyard grills were shipped in 2009. And, most basic of all, the presence of the letter salad "Wrkng fireplce" in a real estate ad still turns up the heat. ▶

Dwell April 2012 95

## Warmth

Kiel Moe, assistant professor of architectural technology at Harvard University, specializes in architecture and energy issues. "As fuel prices fluctuate," he says, "you're going to see more people return to heating directly with fire."

An open flame, like the one in your fireplace, Moe explains, is at most only about 20 percent efficientalmost perfectly useless. "It produces hot smoke and ash, which is nothing more than potential fuel that is wasted. Masonry heating, on the other hand, approaches 80 percent efficiency."

A masonry heater is a chambered stone or brick structure, very popular in the wood-sparse tundras of Scandinavia and Russia, that burns a small amount of wood-usually a house needs just one burn per day-in a short amount of time. It takes in cool combustion air from outside, which causes the fire to burn at terrific heat (2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, compared to an open fireplace's 1,000 to 1,200 degrees), creating very little smoke or ash. The hot combustion gases flow through a labyrinthine flue that heats the thermal mass of stone or brick, which then radiates that heat back into the house for hours. Some masonry heaters incorporate a baking oven into the design.

"By extending the masonry mass upstairs you can heat two floors at once," Moe explains. "And there are many masonry designs that have small windows to give the user a visual relationship to the fire."

#### Masonic Ritual

HOW 13,000 POUNDS OF BRICK AND TWO **SMALL FIRES KEEP** THINGS TOASTY

Radiating Heat from a Masonry **Heater System** Second First Leve

The T42 House in Minneapolis, renovated by the architecture firm VJAA, is putting the thermal mass heating concept to the test in the dead of the Minnesota winter. "Our brick contraflow heater weighs 13,000 pounds," says Jennifer Yoos, a principal at VJAA, "and the core was built by heating expert Albie Barden [of Maine Wood Heat Co. Inc. in Skowhegan, Maine], who spent years researching the 400-year history of thermal mass heaters." To aid the thermal mass heater, the house has high R-value windows, a brick floor that helps radiate heat on the first level, and an uninsulated secondlevel floor into which heat

**Hot Hot Heat** 

**Masonry Heater** 

THE TEMPERATURES THAT MAKETH A CIVILIZATION

mainewoodheat.com

from downstairs rises, "On

all but the coldest winter

days," Yoos says, "the house can be heated with

just two burns."

viaa.com



White phosphorus (the head of a nonsafety match) ignites



Adult human skin suffers thirddegree burns after two seconds



#### 155° F E. coli

bacteria are killed



621° F

425-475° F



Lead melts





750-850° F Soft coal ignites



**500°** F Gasoline ignites



500-1100° F Firewood burns

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## Lighting

Lisa Heschong, a California architect with the Heschong Mahone Group, which specializes in research on building performance, doesn't think much of firelight: "The use of fire for lighting, while romantic, is extraordinarily inefficient, energy intensive, and potentially polluting. Indoor combustion is one of the main sources of indoor air pollution, especially in the third world." Cities like Sacramento, California, even limit wood-burning fireplaces to keep skies clearer. "In our climate," Heschong explains, "the presence of smoke in the winter increases the prevalence of soot, thereby reducing daylight."

But what about the romance loophole? Photographer Bill Wadman loves the flame's amber hue for exactly that reason: "Firelight is extremely warm in color, shifted very much toward orange, so it gives some of the same advantages that the 'magic hour' does just after sunset. I think it's ingrained in us to equate this warm color and the warmth of the fire itself with the concept of home and security. And because of the way skin reflects light, warmer light tends to be more flattering and diminish flaws in portraits. Pleasing, yes, but accurate? Not a chance." Which works just fine for romance.



**Afterglow** 

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by Big Dipper Wax Works bigdipperwaxworks.com What better way to celebrate the obsolete technology of the wax candle than with a wax candle in the shape of an obsolete technology? These 100 percent beeswax candles are molded to look like Polaroid or Super 8 film cameras, and transistor radios and provide an ironic comment on the concept of obsolescence-until the electricity really goes out. At which point, you'll wish your

Why relegate the pleasures of a crackling firelight to just one room of the house? This framed flame from Spark Modern Fires—which burns natural gas or propane at 95 percent efficiency, negating the need for a vent–slots into the wall, letting it cast a warm hue in at least two directions.

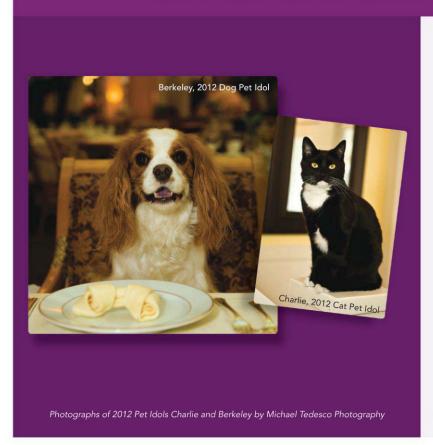
#### Lighthouse oil lamp

by Christian Bjørn for Menu menu.as

Scandinavians are all about fighting the gloom of the subarctic winter with fire. These oil lamps, with porcelain canisters shaped like the lonely lighthouses that dot the fjords, burn like tabletop bonfires, even in high wind.



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## Cooking

lan Tattersall, curator emeritus at the American Museum of Natural History, says that some anthropologists believe that we tamed fire before we were even human. "When the first prehumans came out of the trees and moved to the African savannas," an event Tattersall says took place about one and a half million years ago, "they were primarily fruit eaters. In order for them to make a living on the plains, they would have had to eat meat." But with vegetarian intestines, these hominids would have had a very hard time absorbing animal protein—unless it were broken down through cooking.

The first prehistoric gourmands used fires blocked with stone and probably fueled with dung. However, when it comes to the contemporary cook's fuel of choice, celebrity chef and author Mario Batali loves wood: "It provides without a doubt the most delicious and unique flavor and is the most versatile heat source." When asked to describe his ideal flame-based cooking arrangement, he enthuses, "I would have a wood-burning oven, a wood-fired grill, and a six-burner range with a stainless steel plancha (all with natural gas)."

Open-fire cooking, also called hearth cooking, is a modern throwback to those prehistoric times. With nothing more than a standard household fireplace (or fire pit) and a few cast-iron or earthenware pots, its practitioners produce multicourse meals—from soup to dessert—the way people did before the kitchen as we know it was developed. William Rubel, in his book *The Magic of Fire* (2002), claims that hearth cooking offers a greater range of fire temperatures and that a more "three-dimensional" placement of the cooking vessels can produce dishes with flavors that are stronger, richer, deeper and more striking. Stovetop or fireplace, each is a step up from the raw diet.

Ember-Roasted Cipollini Soup CHEF MICHAEL TUSK OF SAN FRANCISCO'S COTOGNA RESTAU-RANT COOKS THIS SOUP IN THE GLOWING EMBERS



#### **Ingredients**

1 tablespoon duck fat or olive oil
12 cipollini onions, unpeeled, root attached
2 cups whole black trumpet mushrooms
2 pints chicken or vegetable stock
2 heads garlic, separated
4 sprigs fresh thyme
2 bay leaves

1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for seasoning

Maldon sea salt and freshly cracked pepper, to taste

4 farm-egg yolks Pecorino di fossa or similar hard cheese



Start a wood fire in a grill or hearth an hour ahead of cooking time and let it settle into red embers.

Make a cartoccio—a paper packet—in which to cook the onions: Place a 16-by-24-inch piece of parchment paper on top of a similarly sized piece of aluminum foil. Fold the two in half for a 12-by-16-inch rectangle, with the parchment on the interior.

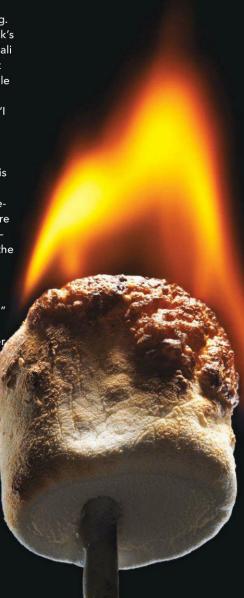
In a small saucepan, melt duck fat or olive oil and toss in the onions.

Fill the cartoccio with the onions. Bury the packet directly in the coals and bake about 20 minutes.

When the outer skins of the onions are nicely roasted, remove the cartoccio from the embers and let cool. Peel off the charred skins and reserve the onions. Place the onion skins in a 2-quart saucepot with stock and bring to a simmer. Remove from heat, cover pot with plastic wrap when cool, and let steep for 30 minutes.

While the skins are steeping, toss together the garlic bulbs, mushrooms, thyme, bay leaves, vinegar, and olive oil. Season mixture with salt and pepper, and place in the center of the cartoccio. Immerse the cartoccio in the embers and bake for 30 minutes. Remove the cartoccio from the embers and discard the bay leaves and thyme. Strain out the onion skins from the broth. Peel and slice garlic, and add, along with the mushrooms and onions, to the broth. Simmer the broth for just a minute or two and season to taste.

Warm four soup bowls in the oven. Place an egg yolk in each bowl and season with the Maldon sea salt and a bit of black pepper. Ladle hot soup into each bowl, making sure to equally distribute the onions, mushrooms, and garlic. Drizzle olive oil into the soup and finish each bowl with shaved pecorino di fossa. Serve immediately with warm grilled bread.



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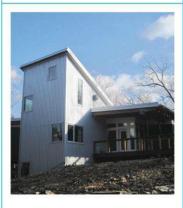
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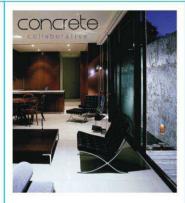
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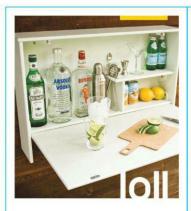


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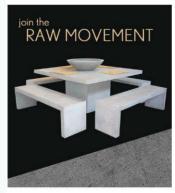


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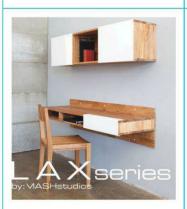
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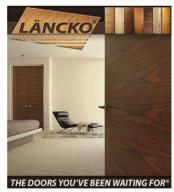
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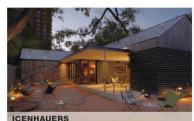
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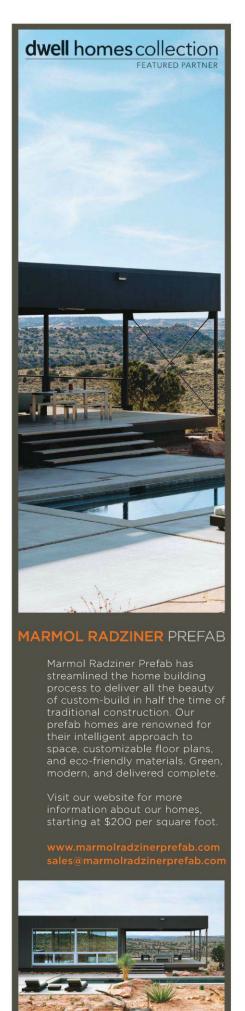
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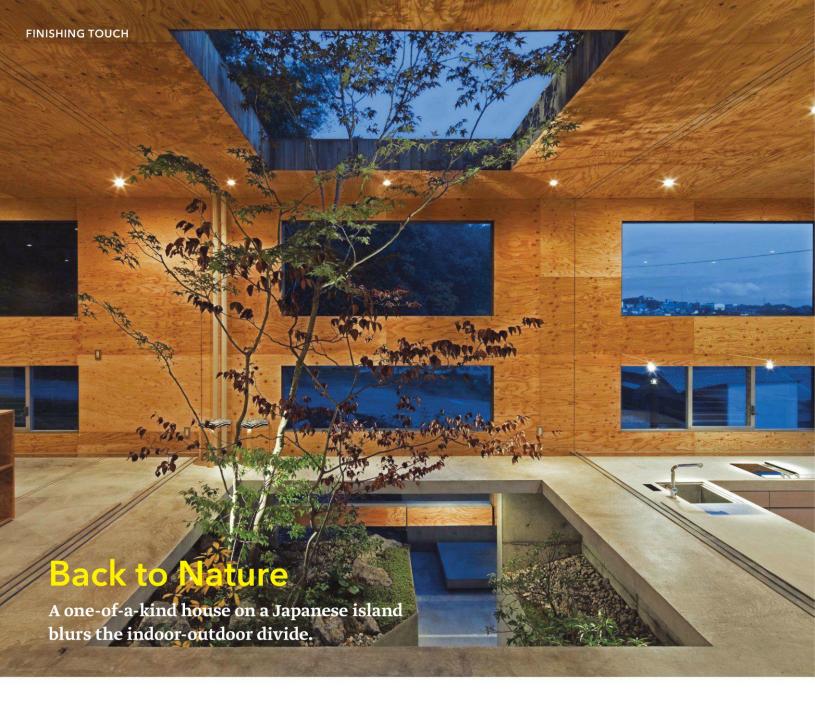
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#### What differentiates a house designed

by architects from a woodland nest built by a robin or a rabbit? That basic, elemental question—and a desire to narrow the gap between the two inspired the 1,300-square-foot home Hiroshima-based architect Keisuke Maeda designed for a teacher, her two teenage daughters, and their cat in the hills of Onomichi, on the southern Japanese island of Honshu. "It's a nest that's dug into the ground and covered with fallen leaves, where inside and outside flow into each other. That seemed right for a house near the woods," says Maeda.

The building is composed of a partially buried concrete box covered with a well-insulated cedar-and-larch shell (what Maeda calls "the nest" and "the fallen leaves"). The open-plan living, dining, and kitchen area sits at one end of the long rectangle, with the bedrooms at the other. In between lies an enclosed courtyard through whose glassless windows rain, wind, and an occasional bird drift in. Sunlight, too, falls in dappled patches through the

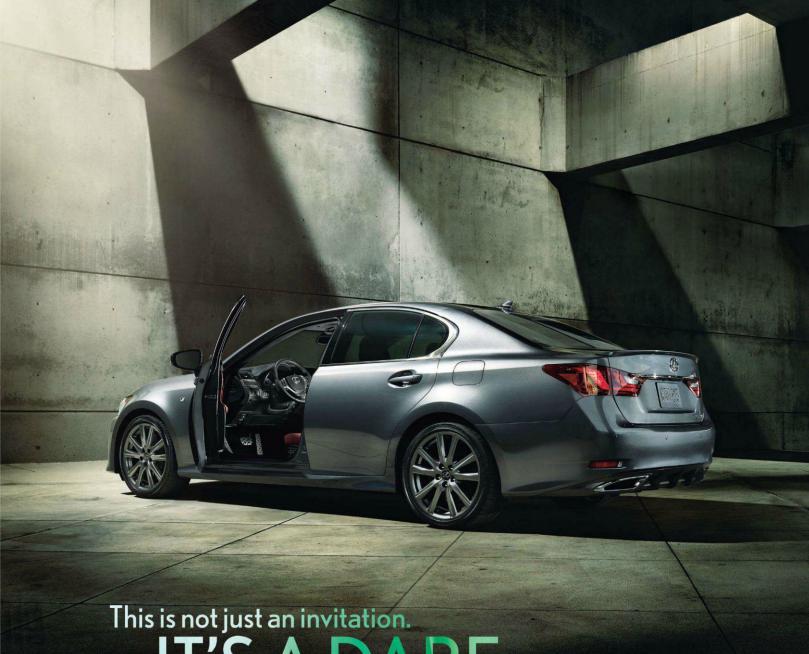
abundant windows and skylights, warming the concrete base in winter.

The courtyard gives the three residents a sense of being close to one another—but not too close, says Maeda. "Sitting in the living room, you can look across and see the light in the bedroom and know someone is there," he says. For now, a paper divider screens the girls' bedroom; when they move out, their mother will take down the screen to create a cozy one-room nest that's likely to feel anything but empty. IIII

By Winifred Bird







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