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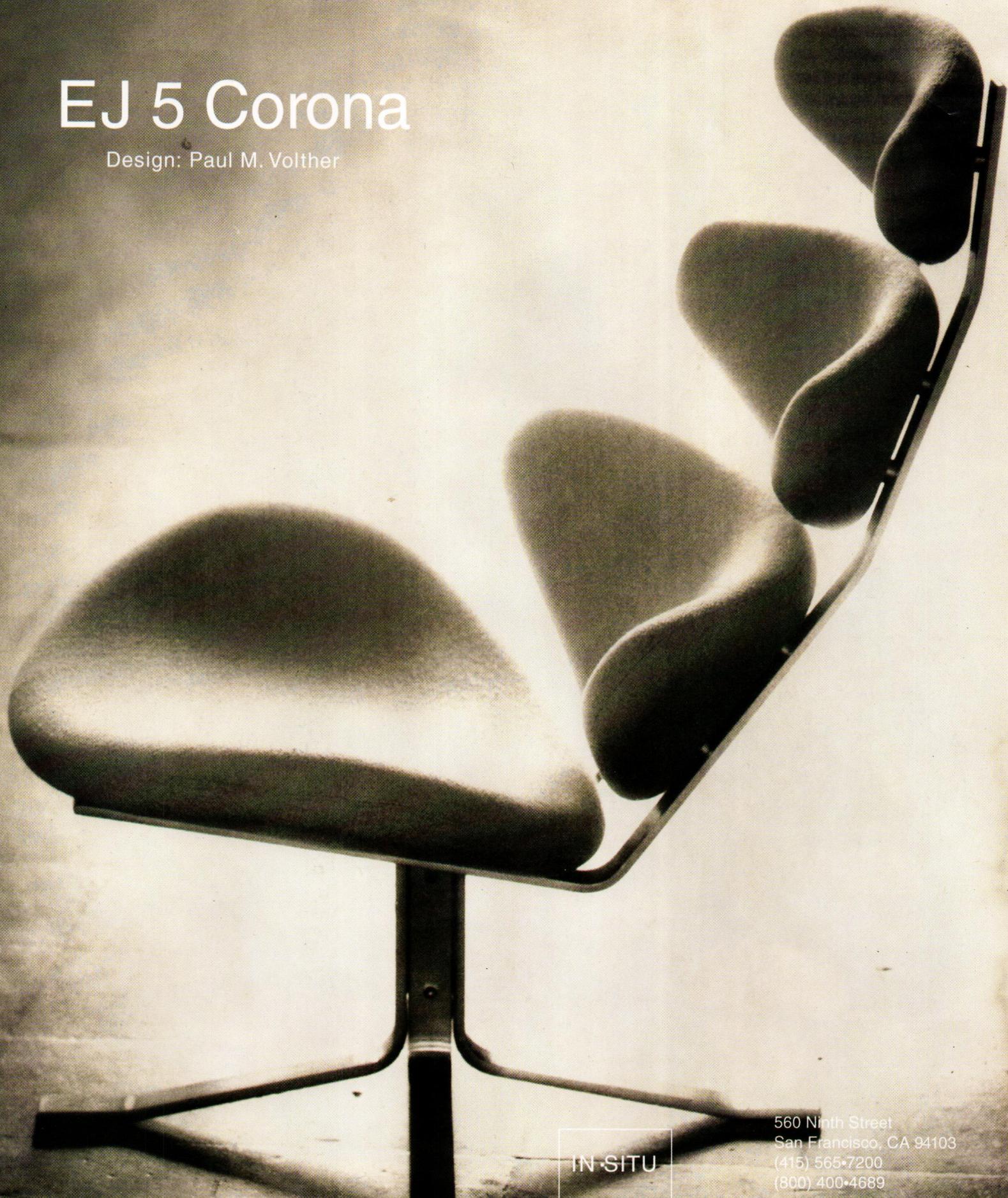
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September 2001 Issue 37



## cover

Visitors to Huell Howser's high desert retreat 45 miles outside of Palm Springs celebrate the beauty of the desert from a front-row seat that offers a breathtaking view of the mountains. A collection of cactus, indigenous plantings, boulders, and found objects as sculpture surround the pool. See "Modern Spaces: Twentynine Palms" below. Photograph by David Glomb



## features

### 50 the modern garden

This article is a treasure hunt for that lost child of the international modern movement in art, architecture, and design: the modern garden. Though elusive, it was more than merely a dream: it served to focus some of the 20th century's great ideas. By Jane Brown

### 56 robin and lucienne day: pioneers of contemporary design

Robin and Lucienne Day were Britain's most versatile and distinguished designers of the post-war period. Working independently and in a wide range of mediums that included furnishings, graphics, textiles, and industrial design, the couple was instrumental in the introduction to Britain of stylish and contemporary design during the 1950s and 1960s. By Simon Andrews

### 62 wright the weaver's textile block houses: restore or destroy?

Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel, completed in 1922, was destroyed in 1968 for the land it sat upon. His four "textile block" houses in Los Angeles, built between 1922-24, have deteriorated due to pollution and human neglect. Will they suffer a similar fate, or can they be saved? By Ginger Moro

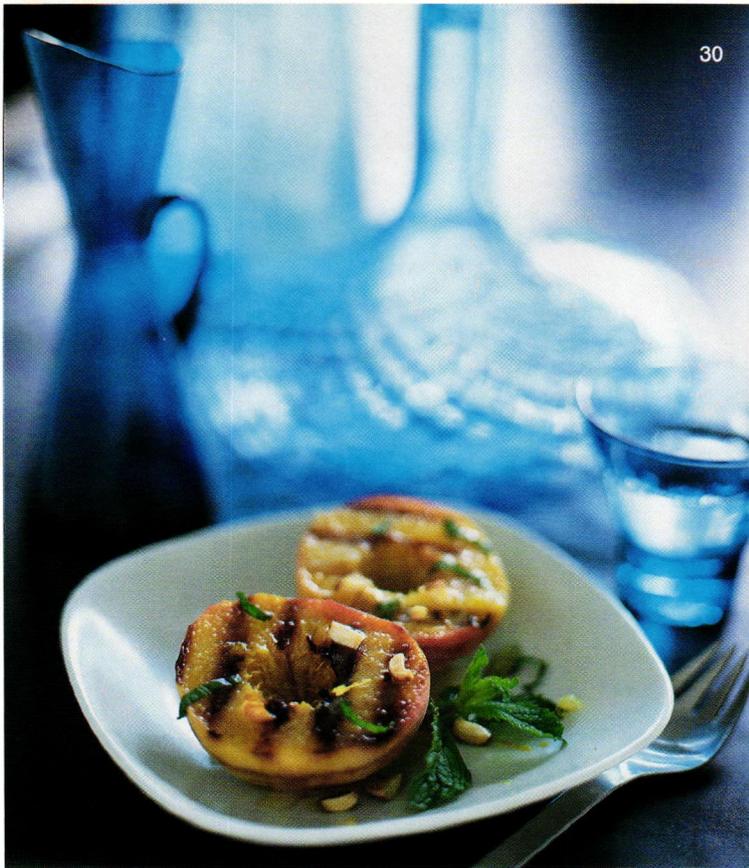
### 68 modern spaces: upgrading an icon

It is quite a coup to get the chance to upgrade a house designed by a famous architect for a famous client. The John Entenza House by Harwell Hamilton Harris has been restored and renovated beyond its original mediocre construction by architect Michael Folonis, whose firm has garnered three awards for the project. By Barbara Lamprecht

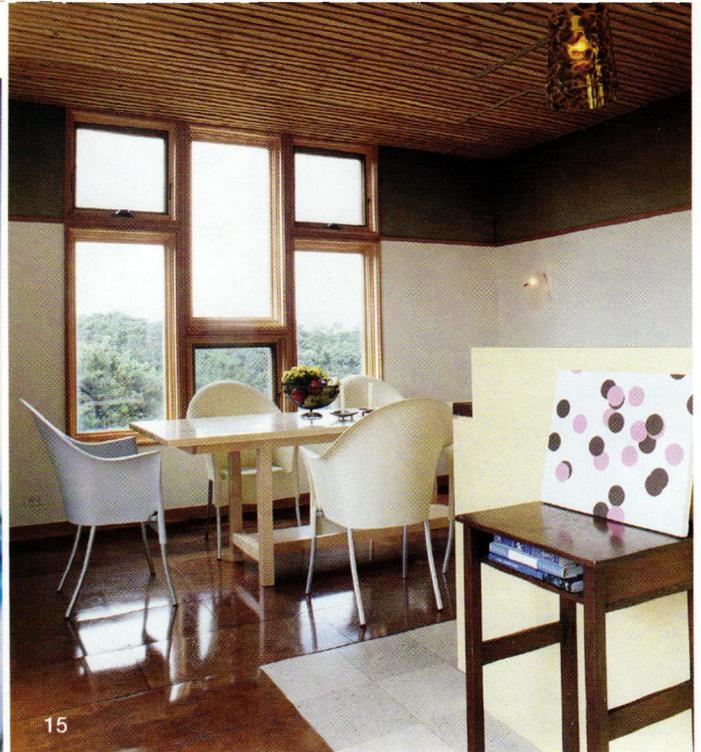
### 74 modern spaces: twentynine palms

Huell Howser, producer and host of KCET's *California Gold*, says that Twentynine Palms is 45 miles above but "a world away from Palm Springs," where he owns another mid-century home. This home and its environs serve as a gallery for Howser's found objects, all rescued from unappreciating eyes and as lovingly and thoughtfully displayed as any Rodin or Henry Moore. By Jean Penn





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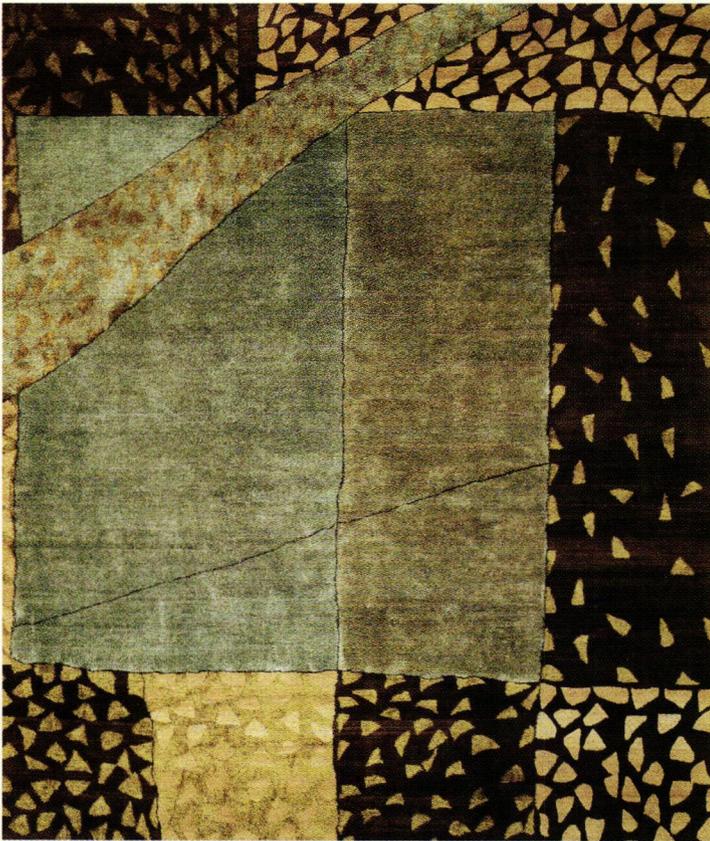
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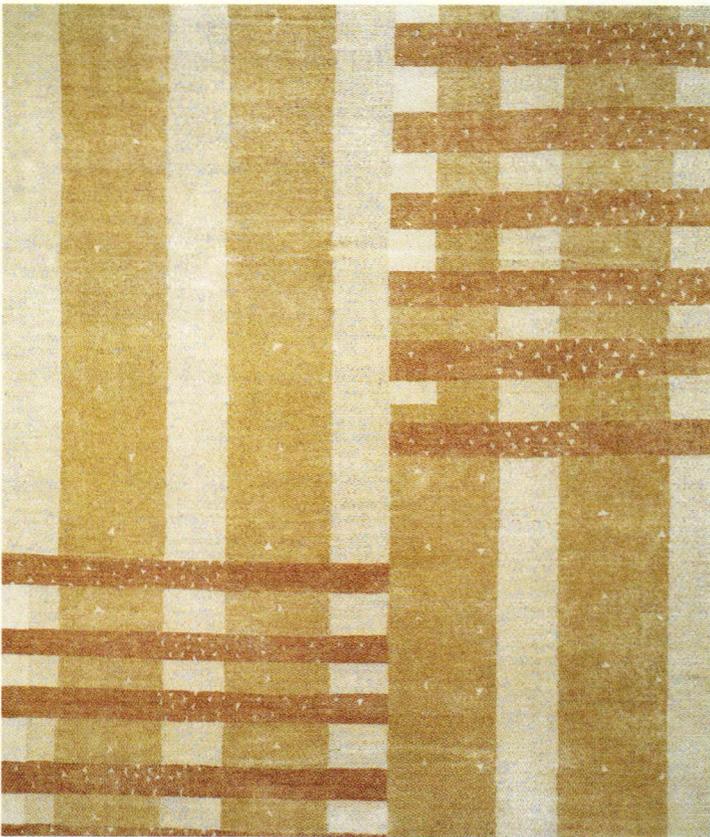
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# contributors



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## Lisa Hubbard

Lisa Hubbard is a still life and garden photographer who lives in NYC. She is a regular contributor to several magazines, including *Gourmet*, *Food & Wine*, and *MSL Baby*. Her work was included in the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum's Triennial "Design Culture Now" exhibition. She is very happy to have the opportunity to shoot for *Echoes* and to collaborate with Susan Ottaviano. Working on the food column with Susan is a rare opportunity for a photographer to be part of a story from concept to finish. "Susan and I make up parties in our heads and design the pictures around them."



## Kateri Lanthier

Kateri Lanthier is a freelance writer based in Toronto. With an "Edith Wharton-esque" fixation on interior design and the decorative arts, she is an editorial contributor to *Canadian House & Home* magazine. Her poetry has been published in numerous international journals, and she is currently finishing the first draft of a novel.



## Carol Berens

Carol Berens, the author of *Hotel Bars and Lobbies*, was trained as an architect and is based in New York. She writes about design, architecture, and travel, most recently for *TWA Ambassador and Ulysse*.



## Ginger Moro

Ginger Moro is an author, lecturer, collector, and dealer specializing in

20th century jewelry and the decorative arts. She spent 16 years in Paris where she was actress by day and *chanteuse* by night. She was co-publisher of an Art Deco antiques boutique, *Aux Trois Graces*, in Montparnasse for six years. In Los Angeles she exhibits at the Modern Times and Santa Monica Antiques shows, and conducts guided tours of architectural icons.

Ginger is the author of *European Designer Jewelry*, and has contributed to *Jewelers' Circular-Keystone*, *Heritage Magazine*, and *Silver Magazine*. A regular contributor to *Echoes* since 1997, she serves as *Echoes'* foreign correspondent.



## Michael Weber

"Finding the balance, genuineness, and joy in classic and contemporary modern architecture through composition, quality of light, situation, and simplicity in such a way that the viewer is allowed a way in to new thoughts and feelings is what I hope to accomplish when photographing. When combining modern fashion with complimentary architecture, I feel as though a transcendence into new levels of thought occurs for me, allowing me to smile with new hope." You can view additional work by Michael Weber at [www.michaelweberphoto.com](http://www.michaelweberphoto.com).



## Jean Penn

Jean Penn, currently the executive editor of *Palm Springs Life*, has been writing about design for all of her career, first for *Women's Wear Daily* and *W* and later as the lifestyle editor of *Los Angeles Magazine* for many years. She has written regularly for a variety of publications, from *Playboy* and *Cosmopolitan* to the *Los Angeles Times*.



©JAYNE MEHLER

## Susan Ottaviano

As an avid collector of vintage cookbooks and 20th century modern design, creating recipes and styling

food for *Echoes* is a dream job! For this issue, Susan focuses on "Cuisine Mediterraneo," including Grilled Sardines and Campari. Susan styles food for a variety of publications. She is also the lead singer of the band *Book of Love* which had a new album released in January 2001.



## Tucker Shaw

Tucker Shaw, who daringly attempted to read *The Joy of Cooking* straight through from the beginning (he failed, caving midway through the dry rubs chapter), lives in New York City for the food. His first book, *DREAMS*, was published by Penguin in 2000.



## Barbara Lamprecht

Barbara Lamprecht, M.Arch., is the author of *The Complete Works of Richard Neutra*. Lamprecht has also written for *The Architectural Record*, *Architecture*, *Metropolis*, and *Elle Decor*, and has served on the boards of the Oxford University Architectural Society, the Los Angeles Forum for Architecture and Urban Design, and the Southern California Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. Lamprecht has recently left her job as an architect to become a full-time writer and teacher (of architectural history — she teaches a class called "Modernist Houses and Housing" this fall).



©GAIL MERRIFIELD

## Jim Huff

Jim Huff is best described as a freelance, maverick design curator. Inside Design is a multi-faceted company dedicated to promoting forward-thinking design through product development, special events, design talent management, lecture series, a TV show, and [insidedesign.com](http://insidedesign.com). Jim's friendly, trustworthy, and passionate persona has endeared him to the international design scene. His endeavors have been published nationally and internationally in publications such as *Interior Design*, *The New York Times*,

*Intramuros*, and *Wallpaper*.

## Marvin Rand

Architectural photographer Marvin Rand's career began in 1943, when he was pulled out of college and drafted by the U.S. Air Force to serve as a photographer until the completion of his duty in 1945. After Rand's tour ended, he re-enrolled at Los Angeles City College, and was accepted at the Art Center College of Design in 1948. He completed a photography major in 1950.

Rand has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a lifetime achievement award from the City of Los Angeles, and counts among his clients Charles Eames, Cesar Pelli, Louis Kahn, Frank Gehry, John Lautner, Craig Ellwood, Gregory Ain, MoMA, and Gwathmey/Siegel. His work has been featured in *Progressive Architecture*, *Domus*, *Architectural Record*, *Arts & Architecture*, and *Metropolitan Home*, among other publications.



## Mel Byars

Currently the editorial director of [www.designzine.com](http://www.designzine.com), Mel Byars received a Bachelor's degree in journalism before studying anthropology in the Graduate Faculty of The New School University. He began specializing in design history in the late 1980s shortly before his *Design Encyclopedia* was published, the second edition of which is expected in 2002. His eight books include volumes on the making of contemporary products such as *50 Chairs* and *50 Lights*, as well as introductory essays in a number of books. Prof. Byars, who teaches at Pratt Institute and lectures widely, is a contributor to *I.D.*, *Graphis*, *Metropolitan Home*, and other design magazines.



## J3 productions

J3 productions is a visual communications agency specializing in brand imaging, design, and photography. Founder Jonathan Lo and his crew, including in-house photographer Mark April, work together to create imagery through a wide variety of mediums, ranging from graphic design and marketing collateral, to styling and photography. A sort of "one stop shop."

Based in Southern California, J3 productions' recent clients include

KBond in Los Angeles, and designer labels such as Roxy, Alex Goes, Modern Amusement, Buz Jones Jeans, Sugar clothing/shoes/cosmetics, and Urban Decay. Their photography has been featured in *Echoes*, *Mac Directory*, and *Glue*. [www.j3productions.com](http://www.j3productions.com)



## Simon Andrews

Simon joined Christie's South Kensington in 1994 on an internship with the furniture department, and after a year began cataloguing the weekly furniture sales and sales of 20th century furniture. In 1995 he began to introduce Modern Design auctions which became part of the 20th Century Decorative Arts Department in 1996. Simon is presently the Head of Modern Design at Christie's South Kensington.



©MARCCELLO VILLANO

## David Glomb

With his roots as a sound engineer for the touring companies of *Grease* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, David's photographic career began while assisting fashion photographer Albert Watson, but his first published work resulted from the photography of Anglo Donghia's new showroom on the West Coast in 1976.

David relocated from Los Angeles to the desert outside of Palm Springs in 1991. A collaboration with Adele Cygelman in the production of *Palm Springs Modern* was published by Rizzoli in 1999.



## Steven Cabella

Steven Cabella is the owner of one of the oldest vintage design shops in America, The Modern i 1950s Shop. A writer/design historian who has been collecting the work of Charles and Ray Eames for over 20 years, Mr. Cabella has been a contributor to *Echoes* since 1995, writing the off-beat "Modern Eye" column. He is happy to converse with collectors through his website, [www.modern-i.com](http://www.modern-i.com).

# CHRISTIE'S

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**Marc Newson - "Pod" cabinet**

*circa 1986*  
one of two prototypes

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£40,000 - 60,000 (\$58,000 - 87,000)  
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on October 10, 2001



**Carlo Mollino**

Oil painting by Otto Maraini, 1930

**ESTIMATE**

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To be sold at Christie's King Street  
on October 23, 2001

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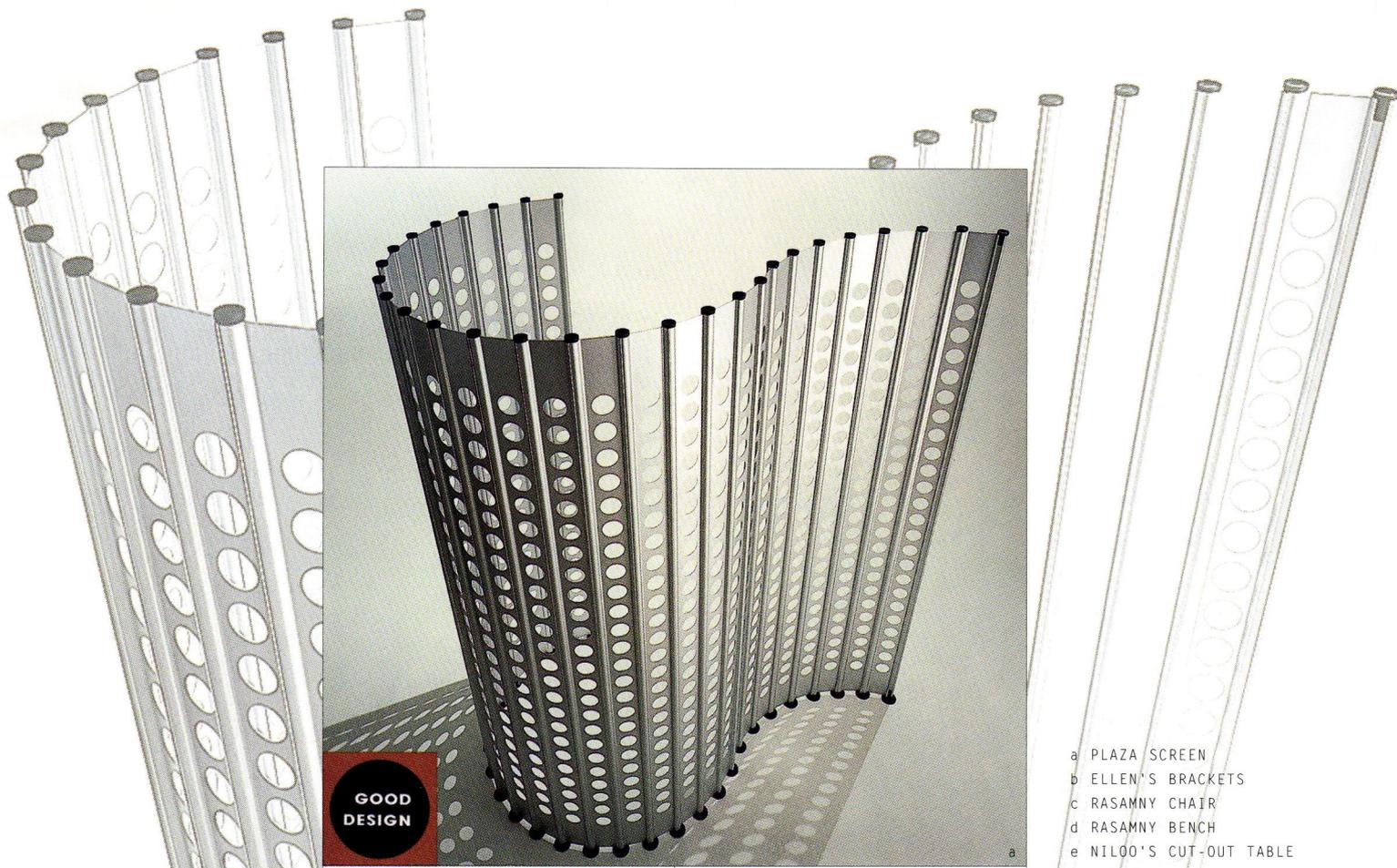
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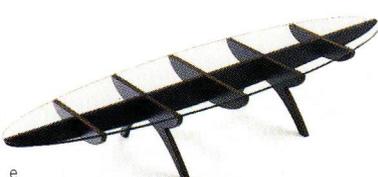
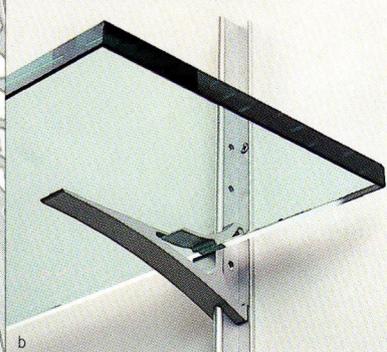
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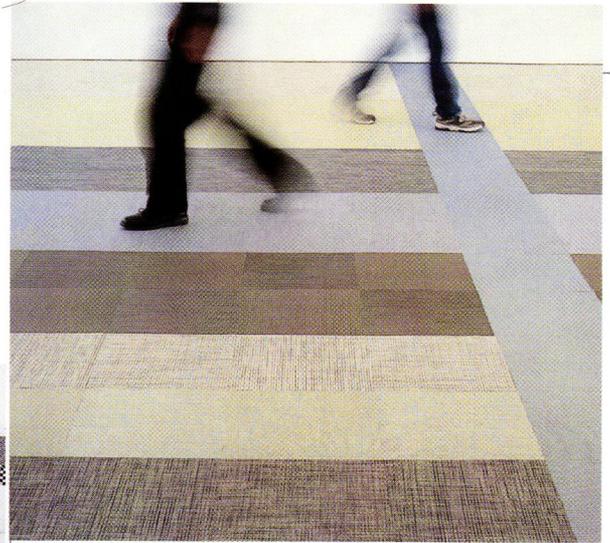
### Tidy Up with a Design Icon

Designed by Munich designer Ingo Maurer's wife, Dorothee Becker, originally as a wooden toy to help her children use geometric shapes in play, **Uten.Silo** is one of the best-known plastic designs of the late 1960s. Though her children weren't interested in the toy, the shapes and dimension of the game were later repeated in the final Uten.Silo. A prototype was presented at the Frankfurt Fair of 1969, and soon after Ingo Maurer put the product into production, investing in an injection-molding machine to form the front out of one piece of ABS plastic. The first Uten.Silos to hit the market in December 1969 were an overwhelming success, selling under the name "Wall-All." However, the oil crisis soon dampened the public's enthusiasm for plastic, and production halted in 1974. Today, a true-to-the-original version of the Uten.Silo has been reissued by the Vitra Design Museum. Available in white, black, or red molded plastic. 37.25H x 26.5W x 3.25D. \$260 through Deco Echoes Inc. 508 362-3822.

## what's hot

### arvid: expanding from architecture

Solveig Fernlund and Neil Logan, the principals of Fernlund + Logan Architects, have recently launched *Arvid*—a grouping of modern furniture and accessories for the home. As in their architecture, the pieces in the collection are an expression of clearly defined parts. Shown: Arvid stools, with a stainless steel base and wool felt or Maharam's *Textiles of the 20th Century* upholstery, \$650. Arvid, 212 614-2988. [www.arvidinc.com](http://www.arvidinc.com).



### plynyl?

Sandy Chilewich—co-founder of the revolutionary HUE Legwear company—opened her own design studio in 1996 and met instant success with her first product, *Raybowls*. Her newest introduction is *Plynyl*, a textural, colorful, versatile woven vinyl floor surface created through bonding an extremely durable synthetic fabric to a high performance, flexible, commercial grade backing. Available in tiles, mats, and wall-to-wall, Plynyl is offered in a multitude of weaves, ranging from a sisal look to the high tech feel of aluminum. Chilewich, 212 679-9204.



### new from herman miller

Herman Miller for the Home is drawing from the past and the future for their newest releases—the 1951 Eames *Wire Chairs* and

the *Capelli* stool. The *Wire Chairs*, which haven't been sold in North America for 34 years, are being reintroduced through a collaboration with Vitra. They are true to the originals in terms of design, materials, and detailing. Available in black powdercoat or chrome wire as the *DKR* wire chair (\$543/\$550), the *DKR5* with leather dot seat pad (\$742/\$750), the *DKR2* with leather "bikini" pad *shown above* (\$1027/ \$1050), and the *Wire Base Plastic Chair* which features the same base topped with a molded plastic seat available in five colors (\$285/\$300). The new *Capelli* stool, designed by Carol Catalano, consists of two identical pieces of molded multi-ply veneers cut with "fingers" which interlock to form a remarkably strong seat. Hardwood plies, light ash face veneer. 15.5w x 13.25d x 17.25h. \$412. All available through Deco Echoes, 508 362-3822.

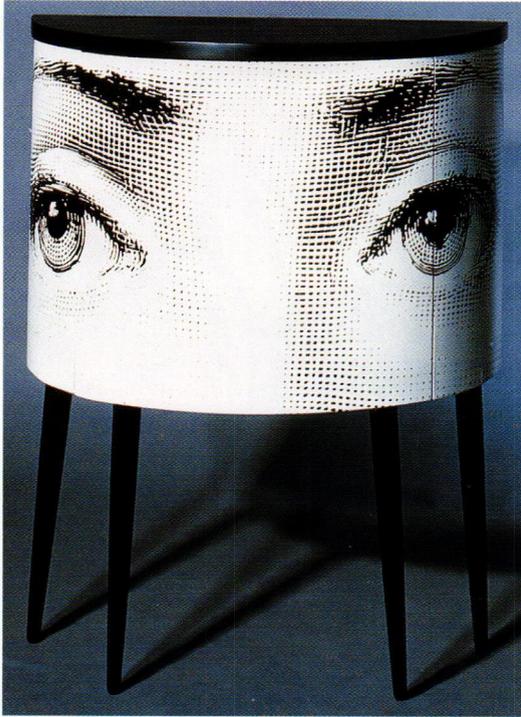
### outdoor minimalism

Clean, unadorned, and thoroughly modern, Emmerson Troop's new outdoor furnishings are constructed of powder-coated aluminum (available in white or any custom color). The side table features a glass top; the chair cushions are weather-resistant Sunbrella, available in a variety of colors and patterns. Chair 29.5"w x 33.5"d x 27"h, Side Table 22"w x 30"d x 14"h. Chair: \$1250, Side Table: \$570. Emmerson Troop Inc. 323 653-9763.



### variations on a theme

Most of Piero Fornasetti's work is based on infinite variations of a number of themes, the most famous being the face of a woman. The most recent variation is the placement of the image on a new collection of furnishings created by Barnaba Fornasetti. Through Barneys in New York. 212 450-8331.



### spear's lines work

*Linework*, a collection of five fresh, mid- to large-scale designs in a bold array of colors, is inspired by architectural graphics that have been transformed by architect Laurinda Spear—of the renowned firm Arquitectonica—into stunning, 54" wide contract wallcoverings. Shown: *Wave* in Vence blue. Available through Wolf-Gordon Inc. 800 347-0550, [www.wolf-gordon.com](http://www.wolf-gordon.com).

### pure joy

Pure Design was founded in 1994 with one goal in mind: to create objects that translate the individual spirit of the young designers of our generation. Their CSL table, designed by Andreas Engesvik in 2001, does just that. Available with white caster wheels, the CSL is durable, portable, functional, and stylish—what more could you ask of a table? \$397 from Pure Design, 780 483-5643, [www.puredesignonline.com](http://www.puredesignonline.com)



### tied in knots

Marcel Wanders' new *Fish Net* chair for Cappellini expands on the macrame technique he used for Vitra's *Knotted Chair*—this time using rope made of graphitic carbon and aramid fiber finished with epoxy resin. Limited release, available through Cappellini Modern Age in New York. 212 966-0669.



# THE MAGAZINE



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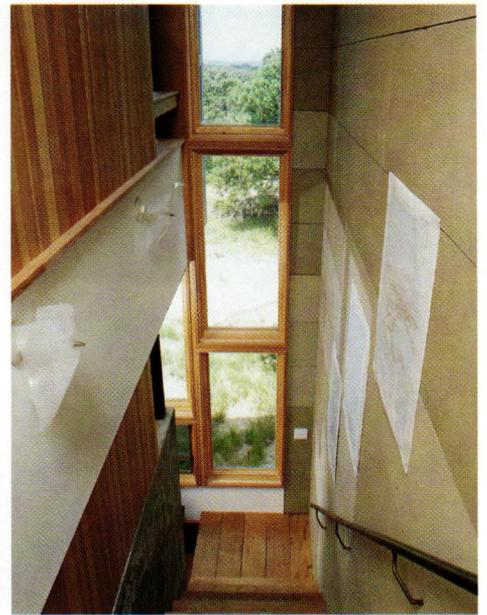
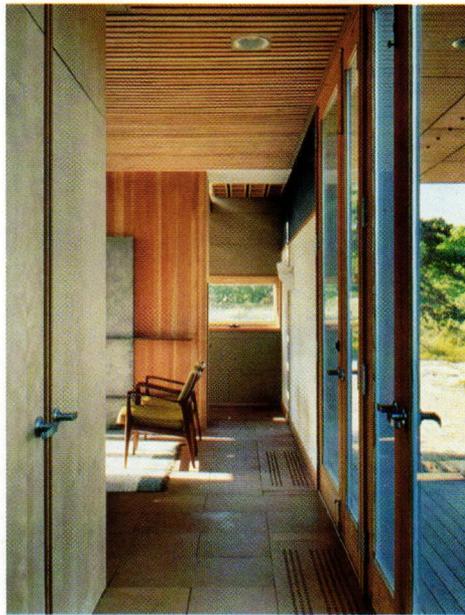


### HM/FM House: Revisiting the Roots of Modernism

In a place known more for tradition than innovation, David Piscuskas, a principal of 1100 Architect, used conventional construction materials in an inventive way to build a casual and comfortable beach house overlooking Cape Cod Bay that is anything but conventional. **Text by Carol Berens. Photography by Michael Weber and 1100 Architect**



**Previous page:** Deceptively simple, the house is composed of two intersecting rectangular volumes, one set atop the other at a 90 degree angle. **This page, clockwise from top right:** A two-story soaring glass wall floods the stairwell with light; The dining room floor is particle board soaked in aniline dye and finished with many coats of polyurethane. The ceilings are composed of stripped Douglas fir over homosote, recalling Alvar Aalto designs while absorbing sound; Windows are stock sizes, combined in syncopated patterns to create large expanses of glass; The stair treads, actually wooden boxes cantilevered from one side wall of the stairwell, float sculpture-like, skimming the other wall by only a few inches; The main entrance; Visual interest stems from the nature, color, and pattern of the materials themselves

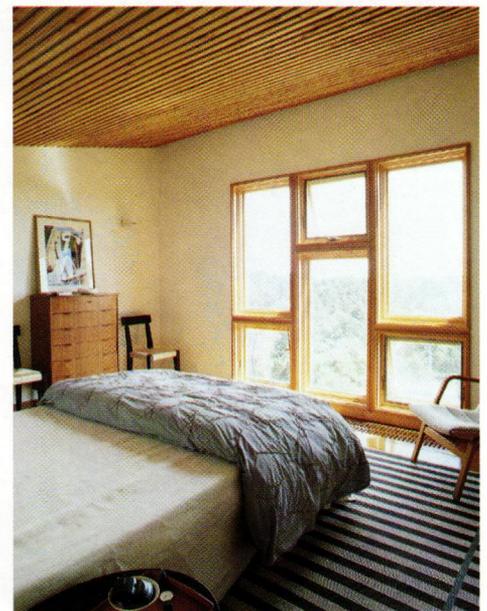
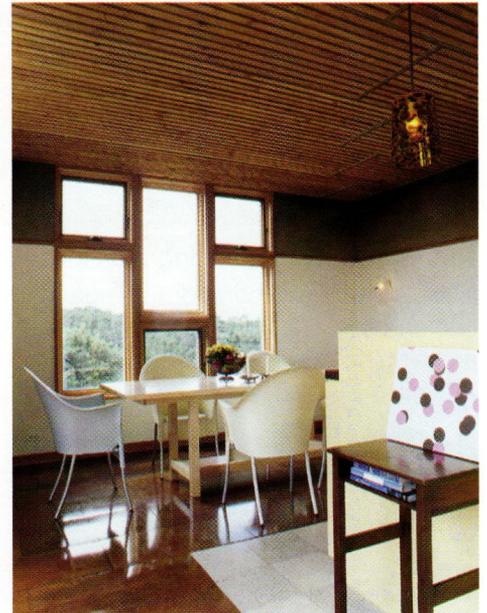
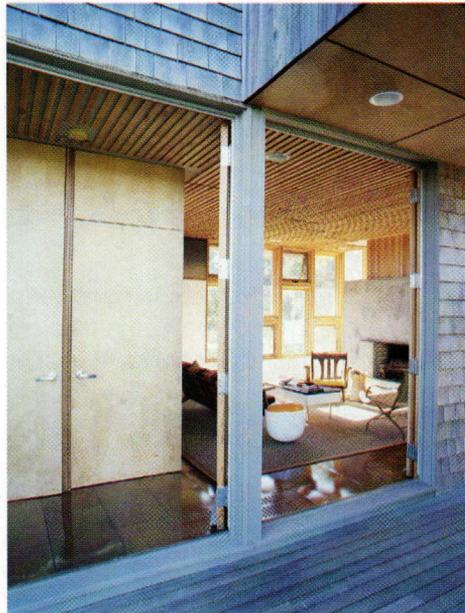


"I wanted to bring modernism back to its roots, to achieve design within a budget," David Piscuskas, a principal of 1100 Architect, explained. He was talking about his own house on a hill overlooking Cape Cod Bay, a place known more for tradition than innovation. His goal: Use conventional construction materials in an inventive way to build a casual and comfortable beach house that would stand up—in looks and function—to the wear and tear of family living. The result: A sculptural wood-framed house that is anything but conventional.

Weathered cedar shingles and siding clad this New England seaside house, but no shutters or gables or widow's walks are in sight. Deceptively simple, the house is composed of two intersecting rectangular volumes, one set atop the other at a 90 degree angle. (Piscuskas dubbed the house the "HM/FM House" to identify which part of the house the contractor was in when speaking with him over the phone from New York. HM is the grounded box; FM, the cantilevered one.) The roof of HM tilts up asymmetrically at two ends, making the house look like a ship afloat on the water, its peaked prow cutting through the waves. FM perches atop metal pipe columns like a lifeguard station looking out over the landscape. Roof edges are sharp and minimal with no overhangs or eaves, creating a crisp man-made object in the middle of scrubby, seaside nature.

As in modernist homes of earlier times, light suffuses the inside of the HM/FM House through large expanses of windows which open onto seascape vistas. The front wooden deck leads into both the kitchen/dining area and living room through a wall composed of wood-framed glass doors. The stairwell, tucked behind the fireplace wall at the end of the living room, leads

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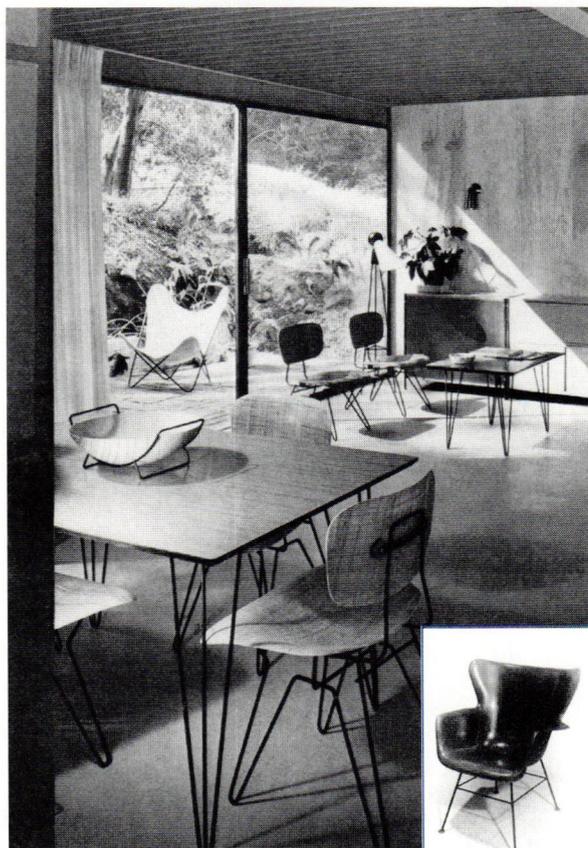
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## modern eye facts, details, connections



### X-Rated, X-Base Eames Chair

In retrospect, a very humorous incident. But at the time, it was censorship of the arts—and the victims were Charles Eames and Saul Steinberg. It was at the Long Beach Museum in Los Angeles County, California in 1951 at the traveling design exhibition entitled "Designs for Living." One of the most important exhibitions of post-war modern design—featuring the work of Eames, Nelson, Knoll, and dozens of America's best designers—this show had already traveled across the U.S.A. without incident. However, upon reaching L.A. the show was installed at the Long Beach Museum just as the museum was changing directors. One of the design objects in the just-installed show was a steel and fiberglass chair designed by Charles Eames and produced by the Herman Miller Company. The Zenith-made shell of this chair also carried a cartoon-like image of a nude female figure, drawn on the shell's surface by artist Saul Steinberg. The museum's new incoming director found the piece "vulgar" and instructed her staff to turn the offending Eames chair towards a wall so the Steinberg sketch would be hidden from the museum visitors' view. Staff loyal to the former director, who defended the work, returned the chair to its original position. The two sides continued to scuffle over what the press dubbed "the nude chair" and took turns repositioning it throughout the show's L.A. run.



### Conover Confusion

Luther Conover, post-war California designer and founding member of the Pacifica design style, has always been a victim of copies and mis-attributions. Luther was known for his innovative yet simple solutions to the problem of designing and manufacturing within a limited resource. Often using wrought iron and plywood, Mr. Conover would employ local high school students to do the welding on the wrought iron bases for his award winning wooden chairs and tables.

Most famous for its successful 3-legged stacking stool set, the Conover Company was also an early victim of copyright infringement—an increasing problem in the growing field of product design. With a simple design like the stacking stools, smaller companies could easily copy a successful product and sell it to a less than sophisticated audience, sometimes filling the need for a lesser-priced version for people who could not afford the already reasonably priced original. When checking the authenticity of your Conover designed 3-legged stools, the originals have three large black rubber donuts (these parts are really '40s toilet seat bumpers) used as caps on the underside of the stool to protect the tops during stacking. Another hint is to look at the feet, a feature left entirely off in some copies. These "feet" are really just steel washers, welded on the ends of the wrought iron legs to stabilize the stool and prevent it from tipping over.

Another Conover problem is the constant claim that certain fiberglass and wrought iron chairs are of his design. The only problem there is that Mr. Conover never worked with fiberglass as a material for his designs. The chairs pictured here are often credited as his designs, but in reality they were made by others. (These are not rare prototype Eames chairs either.) The high-backed easy chair on a wrought base was made by the Prolon Company in the early 1950s, and the other chair, made with sheer burlap laminated to fiberglass, was the *Fibrimold* line of chairs manufactured by Lensol-Wells which were featured in the many photo layouts of Pierre Koenig's modern-styled Glendale home, built by Mr. Koenig when he was a 26-year-old student at UCLA.

### Eames Things

In the early 1950s, the wire components of the Eames' wire chairs and storage units were once manufactured by the L.A. based Coleman-Peterson Corporation. They were makers of display stands, wire refrigerator shelving, wire baskets, shopping carts, and, of course, Eames parts.

Did ya know? The Evans Plywood Company, home of the Eames Office and birthplace of the Eames plywood chair, started life as a maker of wooden shipping pallets used in the transportation of the manufactured goods.



By Steven Cabella **Questions?** Write to: [eye@modern-i.com](mailto:eye@modern-i.com)



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### **Fantastic Plastic**

Elevated above the lowly description of “seating,” these chairs are pure sculpture due to the creative freedom allowed by their base component—plastic, that often maligned yet fantastic material

**Photographs by Pierre Crom**



*Ear Chair* designed by Georges Laporte, 1964.  
\$2000 from M.A.D. design  
*see resources*



This page

**Orgone Lounge** by Marc Newson, 1989,  
\$2000 from M.A.D. design

Opposite page

**Garden Egg Chair** by Peter Ghyczy, 1968,  
\$1800 from M.A.D. design

see resources



## object focus



### **Bellini Chair**

**Designers:** Mario Bellini and staff, Milan, Italy

**Year of Design:** 1997, in production from 1998

**Manufacturer:** Heller Inc., New York

**Materials:** Fiberglass-reinforced polymer, matte-finished, non-fading, indoor/outdoor use

**Size:** 16.5 x 17 x 34 inches

**Colors:** Dark gray, light gray, cream, and sage green

**Awards:** Good Design, The Chicago Athenaeum, 1998; Design Distinction, *I.D.* magazine Annual Design, 1999; bronze medal, IDEA Industrial Design Excellence Award, 1999; Editor's Award for Seating, International Contemporary Furniture Fair, New York, 1999

**Price:** \$80

### **It's More About Absence Than Presence:**

#### ***Bellini Chair* by Mario Bellini**

The secret behind the popular *Bellini Chair* is about elements that do not even exist. And the missing elements are solid legs. But is the absence good or bad?

**Text by Mel Byars**

The *Bellini Chair*, like all chairs, is a piece of architecture in its most condensed, miniaturized form. And, just like a building, a good chair is a feat of good engineering. That's why architects have been so fond of, even obsessed with, the chair, pursuing its betterment, like the better mousetrap. They and the rest of us are so enamored of the chair that it has been metaphorized into representing the human body—with a seat, a back, arms, and legs.

From the beginning of the 20th century, designers have been thinking about a one-piece chair, with the presumption that it probably had to be made in a plastic material.

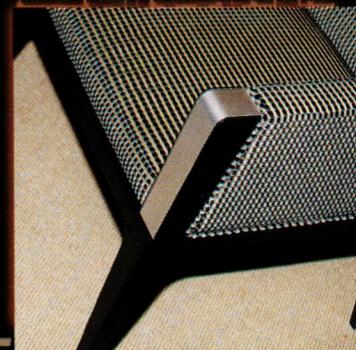
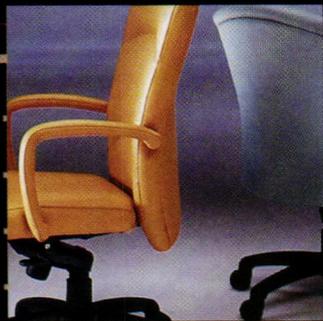
In the late 1950s, the Dane, Verner Panton, took up the gauntlet, and, in 1960, developed a single-piece polyurethane-foam version. But inexpensive serial production was not possible with this design, and, besides, plastics had fallen from public favor. Not until 1964 was his chair able to be made, but in a different material from the original. Even so, Panton's S seat, today available in two > 103



The ingenuity of the *Bellini* gas-formed leg lies in the realization that a hollow leg is stronger than a solid one

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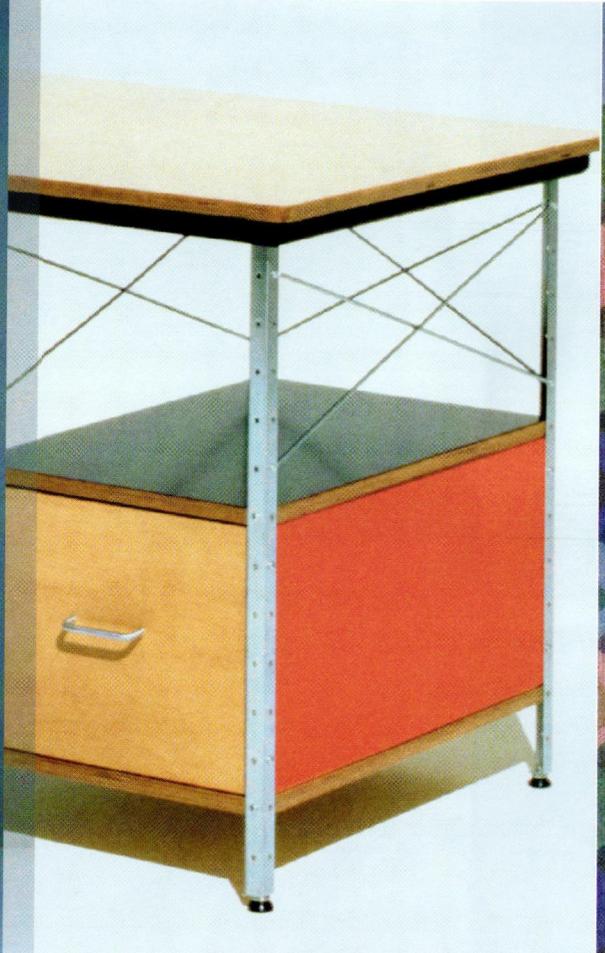
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Nick Dine's *Ravioli* seating is based on uncut ravioli. Manufactured by the American company Dune, the *Ravioli*—perfect for lounging or playing with small children—is available in 75 colors

### From Art to Industry: Nick Dine

Nick Dine's work is equally direct, uncomplicated, and to the point, much like the man who designed it. But he is, in many ways, a pioneer. **Jim Huff** of *Inside Design* speaks with Nick to uncover the roots of his passion for design

It is a good time to be a designer in America. Design consciousness is on the rise. This is evident in the innovative products that are available to the retail consumer, and it is apparent by the proliferation of design magazines. These magazines are promoting a core group who are feathered with press clippings, bodies of one-offs, and little else. This new wave of design in America is in its infancy, and it is anyone's guess which designers will struggle through the business to actually become successful. Nick Dine is one designer who has the stamina, determination, and business acumen to actually survive the march of time.

Nick Dine has designed everything from textiles and furniture to fixtures and interiors. Dine is an exceptionally brawny man, brash and broad shouldered; he speaks his mind. His work is equally direct, uncomplicated, and to the point, much like the man who designed it. But he is in many ways, a pioneer; while many of his peers devoted their early careers to the offices of the aging Italian design elite, Dine stuck it out in New York with the belief that if he could make it there he could make it anywhere. He is at once a designer and a design director, tackling both sides of the business coin. And he was the first "New Modern" to use color boldly. While other designers were obsessing on white, orange, and green, it was Nick who dared to use fuchsia, purple, and lilac. In April of this year, these colors were a popular trend at the Milan Furniture Fair.

His work has a definite industrial feeling. His inspiration comes from function, not form. Sheet metal, exposed pins, and ball bearings: these are the grammar of his vocabulary. But in the end all of the pieces are powdercoated or upholstered to a fine finish.

**JH** *How did your design interest start?*

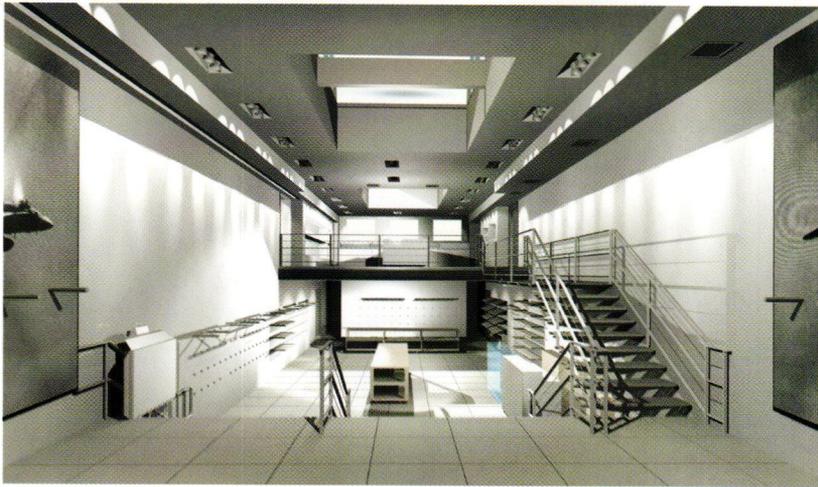
**ND** *I was in art school for sculpture, and I was making pretty bad sculpture, but I was enjoying it. My work seemed to have a strong technical aesthetic. The art thing was not doing it for me. My dad is an artist, and I grew up in a culture that appreciates art, design, and architecture. All of those things interested me. It seemed like a logical way to go. When I finished at RISD, I went to school at night for auto mechanics because of my interest in how cars work and look. The goal was to get involved with cars, not as a career, but more as an interest. That led to my passion for mid-century items, and I started collecting. That is when I decided to pursue furniture design. I never studied architecture or industrial design, even though I do them now.*

*My design journey is about education and growth. If I can make money while I am doing it, that's terrific. This is not an industry that people enter to become millionaires. It is a creative pursuit, and it is about passion. Not just for your own work, but for the whole collective. There are so many designers whose work I totally admire and appreciate because I love design. Design fills the void for everything.*

**JH** *So, the mid-century masters directly influenced you?*

**ND** *I was influenced by the powerful artistic expression of amazing industrial products. It was the first time I had really seen art and science combined, which is a way to define industrial design. It was then that the idea of furniture for production*

**Clockwise from right:** *Work Station 2* is part of a modular office and work environment designed for the Japanese company Ideé; *Shelves* are made of folded steel components that interlock to form a myriad of configurations. The system is entirely friction-fitted; *Work Station 1*'s components are coated steel, the work tops are epoxy MDF, and the bases are cast and machined aluminum; Design for Stussy and Head Porter shop in Soho, NYC



really hit me. Before, I was making one-offs and art furniture. On a whim I had applied to the Royal College of Art in London. That is where I latched on to the idea of objects made for production.

**JH** **What are you currently working on?**

**ND** I am developing more products than ever while pursuing commercial interiors, consulting for a developer, and art directing a design driven-magazine that will be launched in the near future. I have really pursued the idea of plurality in my business: designing vs. design direction. I am also the art director for the American company, Dune, where we have teamed up with some great design talent to create product.

I love aesthetic durability, things that get better with age. I try to work to the standard of the mid-century masters—Eames, Nelson, etc. I really want to make things that will look good in 20 years. That is hard to control, but I can try my best. I hope my designs have aesthetic durability along with quiet poetry and an overall enjoyment. The goal is to design product that will be available to the public, with or without my name on it.

**JH** **What interests you right now?**

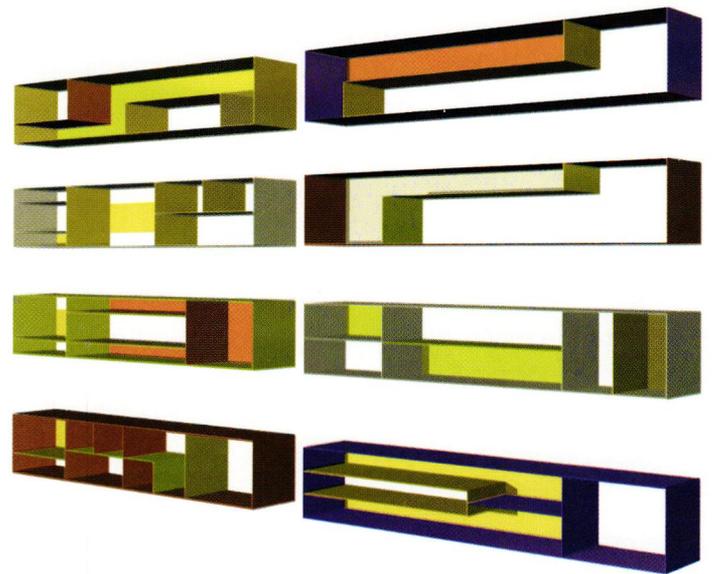
**ND** I am a big fan of design, I like the newest cool thing. I am not a big gadget guy, even though I usually buy them—like the Palm Pilot I bought and do not use. I love technology, but I want someone else to use it. I think Starck and Newson are doing great things; their career models interest me. The cult of personality was really well developed on their end along with their design talents. This business is tough and competitive. You have to do a bit of dancing and strutting.

**JH** **I hear that Marc Newson recently purchased some of your products?**

**ND** He bought some of my metal cabinets for his office. I was pretty flattered, so I went out and bought one of his watches. Cool, huh?? (laughter)

**JH** **What does your crystal ball tell you?**

**ND** You know what's funny? With the new post-dot com economy, non-virtual reality seems to be back in vogue. Design objects will continue to remain very relevant. Food, > 103



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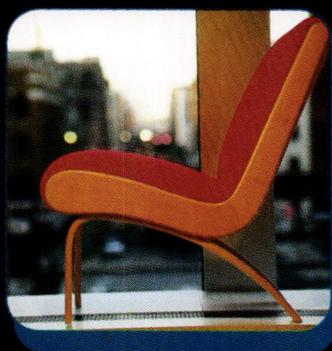


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## classic bites



Photographs by Lisa Hubbard  
Recipes and Food Styled by Susan Ottaviano  
Text by Tucker Shaw  
Assistant Food Stylist: Annichelle Saludo  
Photographed at Bongo Lounge, NYC

### Cuisine Mediterraneo

Booked your vacation before the Onassis cousins called to invite you to languish on the deck of the Athena? No worries. A quick Maria Callas-inspired cruise through the kitchen can keep you in the chic (and on the cheap), without cutting into your overstuffed social schedule. First port of call? Capri, sun-drenched island playground for the Roman elite, and the perfect setting for a snack of Grilled Sardines and Roasted Red Peppers. Next stop, Corfu, where a savory Mediterranean Salad with Fava Bean Toasts will tickle your tastebuds and satisfy your stomach—without compromising the lines of your barely-there bikini. And the final anchor: Cap Ferrat, the gem of the French Cote-D'Azur, where Moroccan merchants peddle their spices to four-star francophone chefs, who in turn delight visitors with tangy-sweet Grilled Peaches, accented with almonds, mint, and exotic cardamom. Now, really, what do those Agnellis and Casiraghis have that you don't?

Opposite page

**Campari and Soda**

**Glass** from Bongo Lounge

This page

**Grilled Sardines served with**

**Campari and Soda**

**Plate** from a selection at Ad Hoc

**Salsa bowl** (part of a set of three

bowls) from MXYPLYZYK

Vintage Old-fashioned **Glass**

(1950s) from Bongo Lounge

*see resources*





This page  
**Mediterranean Salad with Fava  
Bean Toasts**  
Plate from a selection at Ad Hoc  
Model: Basil Lucas  
Opposite page  
**Grilled Peaches**  
Plate from MXYPLYZYK  
*see resources*



### Grilled Sardines with Roasted Red Peppers

- 2 red peppers
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
- Sea salt and pepper
- 16 fresh sardines, scaled but not gutted
- 2 tablespoons fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- Tomato Salsa (Optional)

Put whole peppers under broiler or hot grill and cook until charred all over. Transfer peppers to a brown paper bag and leave to cool. Peel and discard skin and seeds. Cut flesh into thin strips and place in a small bowl. Add 1 tablespoon olive oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper. Stir to combine. Set aside.

Wash and dry sardines, place them on a large platter and sprinkle liberally with sea salt. Cover and set aside for 1 hour. Wash and dry again, brush with remaining olive oil and grill sardines over medium heat for 2-3 minutes per side, until cooked through. Serve sardines hot with roasted peppers and garnish with cilantro and tomato salsa.

**A NOTE ABOUT SARDINES:** The most important thing to look for when buying sardines is freshness. The sardines must be bright, shiny, and firm. Ask your fishmonger to scale, but not gut the sardines because this can tear the skin.

### Campari and Soda

- 2/3 cup Campari
- 1/3 cup club soda
- fresh lemon, sliced

Fill an old-fashioned glass with ice cubes. Add Campari. Top with soda. Garnish with lemon slice (Makes one cocktail)

### Mediterranean Salad with Fava Bean Toasts

- SALAD
- 1 shallot minced

- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon ground pepper
- Salt to taste
- 1/3 cup almond oil
- 8 ounces cleaned lettuces such as romaine, green leaf, bib, or radicchio
- 1 red onion, sliced in strips
- 32 picholine olives, pitted
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled

In a small bowl, whisk together shallot, lemon juice, salt and pepper. Slowly mix in almond oil. Place lettuce, red onions, and olives in large salad bowl. Add dressing and toss to combine.

Divide lettuce among four salad plates. Garnish with crumbled feta. Serve with Fava Bean Toasts. (Serves 4)

### FAVA BEAN TOASTS

- 20 fresh fava beans, shucked
- Juice of one medium lemon
- 1 clove garlic, coarsely chopped
- 1 basil leaf, chopped plus additional leaves chopped for garnish
- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil plus 2 tablespoons for bread
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese
- 1 large loaf of crusty country bread

Bring a large pot of water to a boil over high heat. Add beans and boil 2 minutes. Drain and plunge into cold water bath. Drain again when cool. In a food processor or blender combine: beans, lemon juice, garlic, basil, and oil. Process for 30 seconds until well combined. Add Parmesan cheese. Continue to process until smooth. Meanwhile, cut the bread in 1/2" slices. In a small bowl add 2 tablespoons olive oil and with a pastry brush coat each piece of bread with oil. Under the broiler, toast bread until brown; alternatively, grill bread on the barbecue. Spread a heaping tablespoon of puree on each bread slice. Garnish with additional basil.

**A NOTE ABOUT FAVA BEANS:**

Fava beans, also called broad beans, resemble giant

lima beans and are popular in many Mediterranean dishes. Now available in many farmers markets in the US. **WHAT TO LOOK FOR:**

Fava beans should be bright green, fat, somewhat shiny, and the skin should feel velvety to the touch. Avoid any pods with wrinkly damaged skin or blackened ends.

**PREPARATION:**

To shuck the beans: Snap off the stem and pull away the tough string on the side of each pod. Break open pod. The inner lining of the pod should feel moist, and the beans should be tightly encased in their skin. Remove beans and set aside.

### Grilled Peaches with Roasted Almonds, Mint, and Cardamom

- 3 tablespoons sliced almonds
- 4 peaches, ripe but firm
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon zest
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons fresh mint, leaves removed and thinly sliced
- Whole Cardamom pods for garnish

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place almonds in a pie plate and toast for 8-9 minutes, or until golden brown. Set aside. Slice peaches in half and remove pits. Rub peaches gently with lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Prepare grill: Allow coals to burn down until they are no longer fiery. If using a gas grill turn heat to low. Place fruit cut-side down on grill and cook for 5 minutes. Remove peaches from grill and set aside.

Melt butter in a large saucepan and add cloves, ground cardamom, and lemon zest. Cook over low heat for about 10 minutes stirring occasionally. Add the peaches to the spicy butter, toss gently and cook for another 2-3 minutes. Arrange the peaches on four plates and drizzle with honey, almonds, mint and cardamom pods. (Serves 4)

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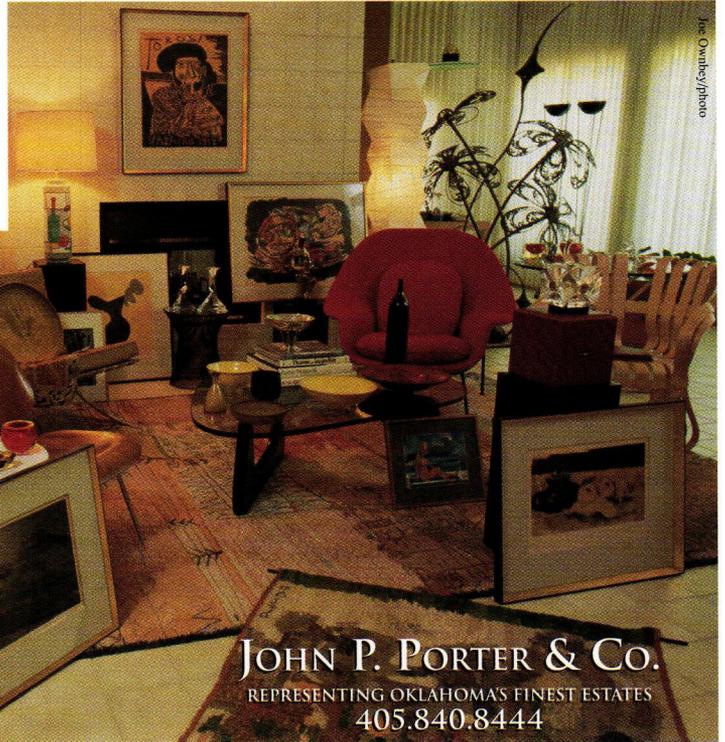
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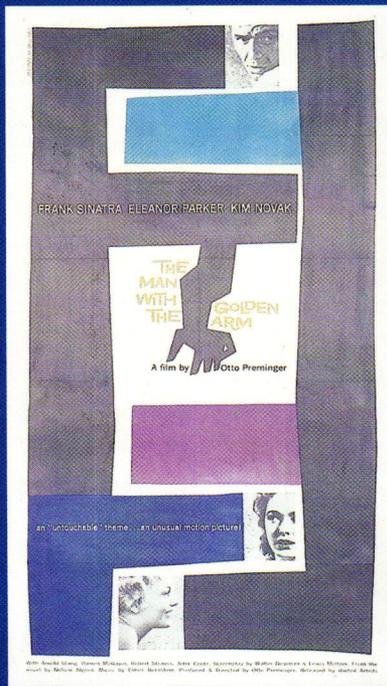
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Bill Brethour of Yours Mine and Ours is all smiles at the Design Exchange Show & Sale

### Keeping an Open Mind

Fornasetti, Taxco silver, Italian glass, Staffordshire ceramics—an open-minded interest in design was the only prerequisite for attendees of a symposium held at the Royal Ontario Museum, part of the fourth annual Collecting the 20th Century event

**Text by Kateri Lanthier**

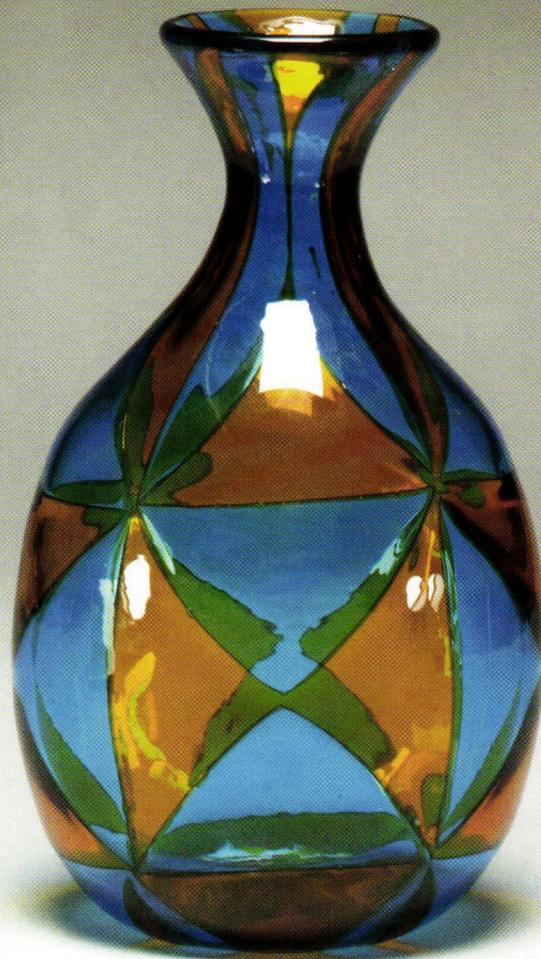
Decorative arts devotees descended on Toronto from March 31 to April 5 for Collecting the 20th Century, a multi-faceted annual event. Now in its fourth year, the event encompassed a symposium at the Royal Ontario Museum, a show and sale by numerous dealers at the Design Exchange, a major auction at Waddington's, and a rough-and-ready auction at Latvian House. A tour of Waterford Wedgwood Canada, to view new designs by Rocha, Munro, Fornasetti, and Versace, was organized, as well as a tour of the post-war moulded plywood furniture display at the Design Exchange by curator Rachel Gotlieb.

The ROM lectures covered such diverse topics that it would be rather difficult to imagine a private collection that encompassed all four areas. An open-minded interest in design seemed the only prerequisite. In his introductory remarks, host Conrad Biernacki declared that one eager attendee was delighted—he collected in three of the areas. Picture, if you will, Fornasetti chairs drawn up to

a dinner table, guests adorned in Spratling silver brooches, a sideboard sideshow of '50s Italian glass, and place settings of borderline-kitsch Midwinter ceramics of post-war Britain—alternating with plates bearing the enigmatic visage of Fornasetti's muse. The mind reels.

The experts were, of course, undaunted, and delivered charming potted histories of each speciality. Rosalind Peppall, senior curator of Decorative Arts at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gave a generously illustrated lecture on the career of Piero Fornasetti (1913-1988), whom Ettore Sottsass called "the magic child." The talk, delivered on a stage lit by Fornasetti-designed lamps, delved into the Milan-based designer's talent for draughtsmanship and long-time partnership with architect Gio Ponti, founder of *Domus* magazine. The lecture was especially informative on some likely stylistic influences, including the 15th century intarsia work in the studiolo of the ducal palace at Gubbio, and a German secretary-cabinet of the 18th

**Clockwise from right:** A stunning selection of glassware was included in Waddington's Decorative Arts from 1850 auction, including an orange and turquoise 1950s Barovier & Toso vase (\$4370), and a red and orange 1950s Venini vase (\$2875); Bill Hogan displayed an impressive wall of iconic chair designs at the Design Exchange Show & Sale



century. (The aforementioned lamps were provided by Eurolite, the exclusive Canadian distributor for the new Fornasetti lamp collection by Antonangeli, Milan.)

Penny Morrill's talk on Taxco silver was enthusiastic and appreciative, if a little scattered. While the lecture did convey the poignancy of New Orleans architect William Spratling's idealism in founding workshops in Mexico for the production of hand-wrought silver, the sense of chronology—and of the importance of place—were sketchy. At one point, Morrill made an off-hand reference to her grandparents' connection to Taxco, an intriguing personal note that might have served well as an introduction to her interest in the topic.

A survey of '20s to '60s Italian glass, in all its peacock glory, was presented by Esther Oldknow, the recently appointed curator of Modern Glass at The Corning Museum of Glass. She noted that brightly colored glass has brought light into the dark interiors of Venetian palazzos for centuries. The difficulties of dating Murano glass, and the complexity of techniques, were covered as the parade of names went by: Venini, Seguso, Martinuzzi, Barovier and Toso. Because the masters regarded their individual expertise as a form of copyright, certain techniques practiced as recently as 40 years ago have died along with them. Oldknow suggested that '60s glass is now a hot—and still affordable—collecting area.

Author Steven Jenkins gave a dryly amusing talk on the production of Staffordshire ceramics in Britain after World War II. The austerity of post-war conditions meant that each piece of ceramic tableware was limited to two colors. This utilitarian mindset was relieved in part by the Festival of Britain, although "Festival style" became a pejorative to some. Terence Conran's mod designs stood out, but in general this was a time of transition, with stylized botanical designs awkwardly placed on TV-screen-shaped plates. After the

show, Esther Oldknow confessed to being rather unfamiliar with the tableware discussed. Here in the good old Commonwealth, the designs are familiar to Canadians of a certain vintage, and tend to live on—and on—in summer cottage kitchens. The wares are highly sought after by young British collectors, however, who must have a keener sense of nostalgia—or of irony.

#### design exchange show & sale

On the floor of the old Toronto Stock Exchange, heated trading was again in effect—but this time, in goods of the past. Attendance at the Design Exchange show was not quite up to the numbers sought by the organizers. One difficulty may be that the Design Exchange, located in the business district, is still rather obscure to many Torontonians and tourists. The throngs in the standing-room-only crowd at the Latvian House auction, a few days later, seemed to point to the problem. Latvian House is on College Street west of Bathurst, a relentlessly hip stretch of cafes, restaurants, and clubs. By night, the corner of Bay and King swirls with not much more than wind-tunnel breezes from the bank towers.

Some high-end pieces sold quickly at the Design Exchange, often to other dealers—a typical occurrence. John Silverstein of Hot Property sold a Josef Hoffmann *Fledermaus* chair “immediately” for \$4600. Bill Hogan displayed an impressive wall of chairs, all iconic designs. Among them was an Estelle Laverne *Tulip* chair, for which he was asking \$12,000. Andrew Zeger’s all-Memphis, all-the-time booth was a highlight, featuring a *Carlton* room divider by Ettore Sottsass, in plastic laminate, from 1981 (\$18,500).

At Anthony Matthew’s Period Gallery display, the sons of Netherland-born designer Jan Kuypers lounged on his Canadian-made sofas and chairs from the 1950s, exchanging amusing quips of their own: “I’ve never seen that chair except in our kitchen.” “I keep thinking we should be taking it home—and why is the upholstery so clean?”

#### decorative arts from 1850

Waddington’s had received so many pieces of furniture, ceramics, and glass that their auctions had to be spread over two days. Highlights included a lavish Danish silver tea service by Johan Rohde for Georg Jensen, c. 1925-30, with a post-1945 tray, which sold for \$43,700 (est. \$15,000 to 20,000). A stunning selection of glassware included a Kosta glass vase by Vicke Lindstrand, which fetched \$977.50; a densely decorated Aureliano Toso vase from the 1950s, for \$747.50; a ‘50s Venini vase for \$2875; and a Fratelli Toso murrine *Handkerchief* vase from the ‘40s, which sold for \$1265. (All prices include a buyer’s premium of 15%.) \*



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Photography and Styling: J3 Productions  
Make-up: Dehx  
Hair: Julio @ the Projekts  
Models: Nate Svari @ M Models  
Kirsten Oliver @ LA Models

Striped long sleeve **shirt**, Modern Amusement, \$64; Gray-green **coats**, Modern Amusement, \$72; Pea green **sweatshirt**, Modern Amusement, \$42; Green slip-on **shoes**, Yogi by Duffer, \$99, from KBond; **Socks**, stylist's own; Tan messenger **bag** with leather strap, Modern Amusement, \$86; Glossy white metal **desk**, Vintage Office, \$1090, from Room Service; Wood and metal **chair**, Verini, \$385, from Room Service; Chrome desk **lamp**, Cocktail Molotov, \$330, from Room Service; White wall **calendar**, Danese, \$150, from KBond; Green desk **organizer**, Color Crush, from colorcrush.com  
*see resources*



**First step—do your research**

Sage green **shirt** with vintage fabric inserts, Kostas Mukadis, \$189, from KBond; Green **slacks**, Seiji Kuroki, \$294, from KBond; White metal **TV tray** with magazine rack, R&D Design, \$340, from Shelter; Metal **cart**, Boom Design, \$125, from Room Service; Three-tiered wood **cubbie**, Blank and Cables, \$145, from Room Service  
*see resources*





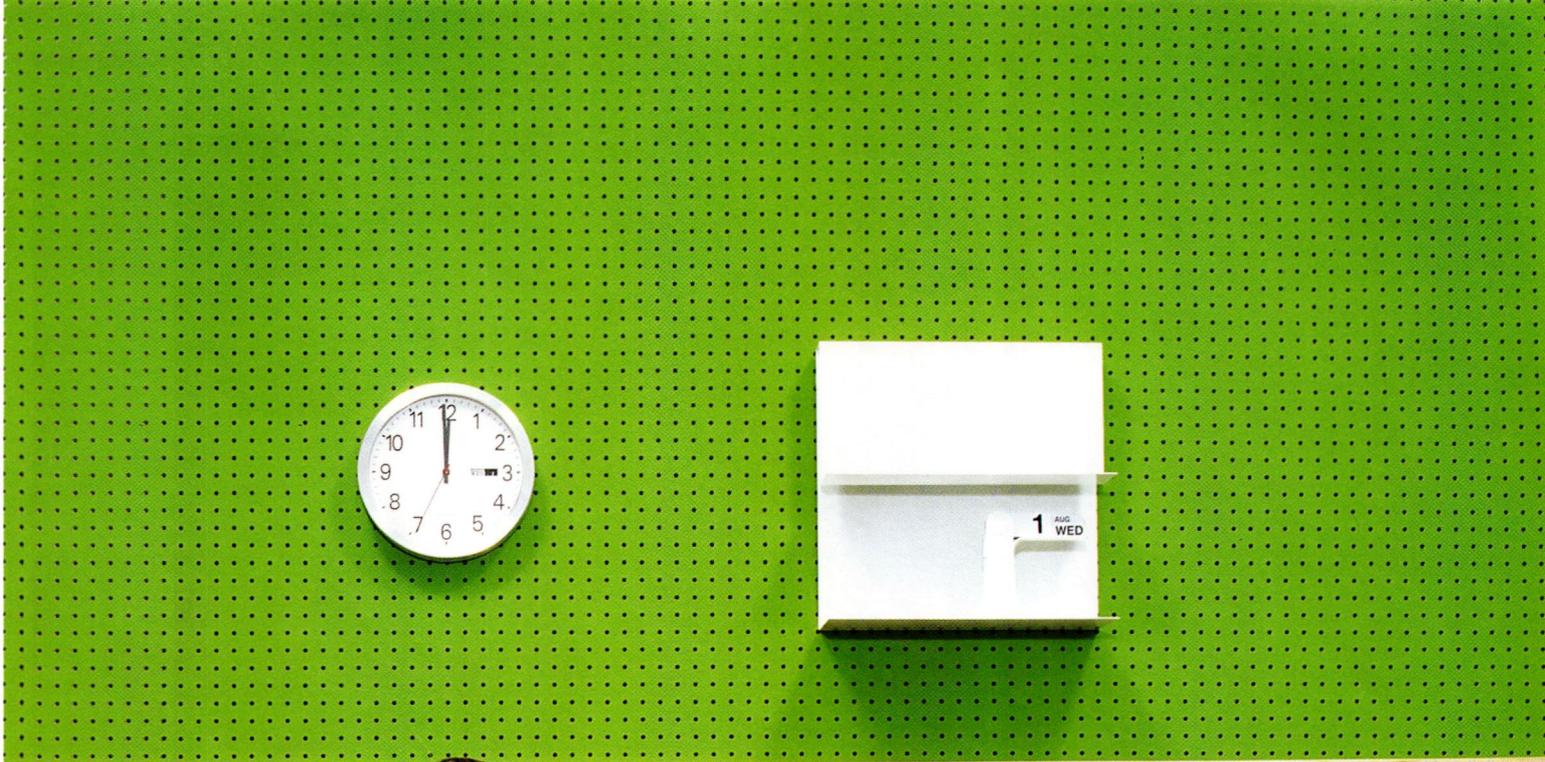
**Next, the brainstorming session**

(on her) Ivory **blazer**, Pure Joy, \$205, from Nordstroms; Lime green **capris**, Pure Joy, \$120, from Nordstroms; Lime green **halter top**, Pure Joy, \$82, from Nordstroms; **Shoes**, stylist's own; (on him) White short sleeved **shirt**, Modern Amusement, \$64; Drab green **pants** with orange "belt" detail, Urban Action, \$220, from KBond; White metal **ladder** with wood shelves, Blank and Cables, \$1090, from Room Service  
*see resources*



**Take a break, get to know your coworkers a little better**

(on her) Bright lime green terry cloth polo **shirt**, BDg, \$38, from Urban Outfitters; White **pants**, Katayone Adeli, \$130, from Saks Fifth Avenue; **Shoes**, stylist's own; (on him) Tan **shirt** with dark green stitched stripes, Modern Amusement, \$76; Green **trousers**, Kostas Murkadis, \$289, from KBond; White metal rolling **locker cabinets**, Vintage Office, \$600, from Room Service  
*see resources*



**It's 12am, time to catch your second wind**

Sage green vintage shirt with hand painted skull motif, Alife, \$219, from KBond; Green plaid pants, Klurk, \$165, from KBond; Green slip-on shoes, Yogi by Duffer, \$99, from KBond; Green folding chair, Ikea, \$9.99; Two-tiered white metal hanging wall shelf, Pure Design, \$55, from Room Service; Silver clock, Target, \$19.99; White metal standing calendar, Danese, \$110, from KBond  
*see resources*



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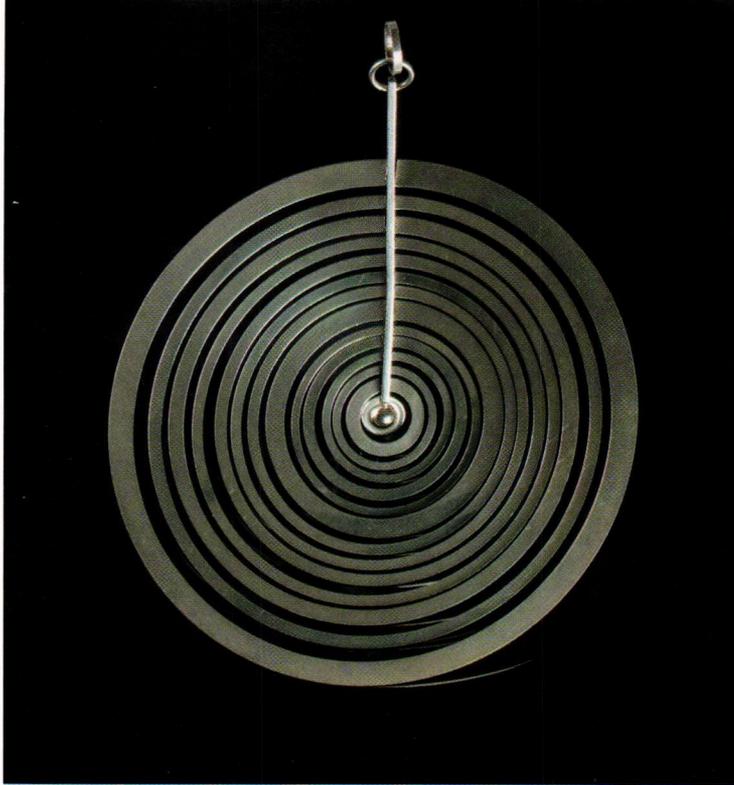
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### Swelling Interest in Modern Finnish Design

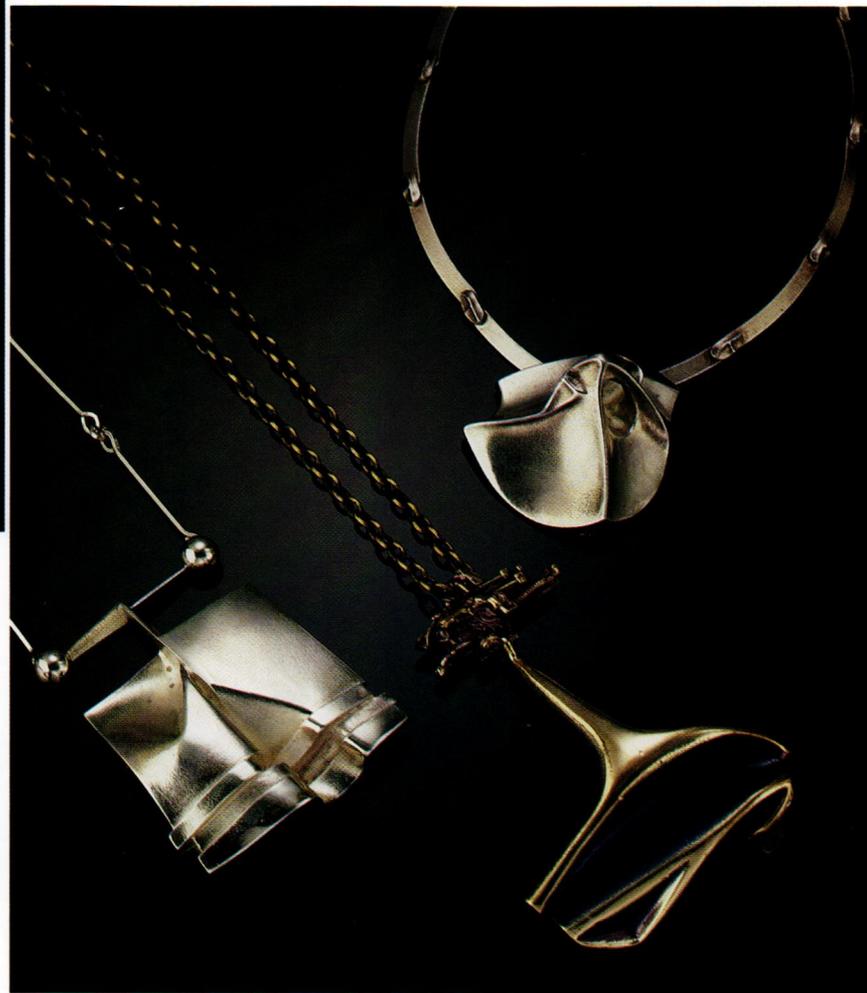
Many collectors have now begun to turn their interest to the one country with a flourishing and unique decorative arts tradition that has remained relatively unexplored—Finland

**Text by Simon Andrews**

Two specialist auction sales held in the London spring season have borne witness to an enhanced awakening of interest in Finnish post-war design. As the auction and collectors market has matured over the last few years, and the traditional hunting grounds of Italian and French decorative arts and design have become more barren, many collectors have now begun to turn their interest to the one country with a flourishing and unique decorative arts tradition that has remained relatively unexplored—Finland.

In 1998 modern Finnish design was the subject of a major review hosted by the Bard Graduate Center, New York. Late 2000 saw the Helsinki Museum of Decorative Arts stage an extensive retrospective on Tapio Wirkkala, exhibiting for the first time numerous seminal designs in plywood and glass, and illustrating the designer's lesser known talents as an industrial and graphic designer. Retrospectives are also planned for Timo Sarpaneva and for Nanny Still, while currently a New York gallery is staging an exhibition on the influential though hitherto under-recognized furniture and industrial designer, Ilmari Tapiovaari. The undercurrents of interest in modern Finnish design have swelled for a number of years; however, it is through such exhibitions, increasingly accurate reference material, and specialist dealers and auctions, that the subject has now been brought to the fore.

On March 7 Christie's London hosted a 99 lot sale of a private collection of Finnish design. The collector, a Finn, had over 20 years accumulated an extensive collection of domestic glass, ceramics, and metalware, including numerous rarities and two prototypes. The timing of the sale proved to be appropriate, and as with any private collection that is completely fresh to the market, considerable interest was generated. The most intensive bidding during the sale was for glass pieces by Tapio Wirkkala and Timo Sarpaneva. Sarpaneva designs which attracted fierce competition both in the room and on the telephones included a 1954 prototype *Airs* vase, similar to an *Orchid* vase however with two apertures, which realized £8500 (estimate £5000-6000); a 1955 *Kayak* art piece at £6000 (estimate

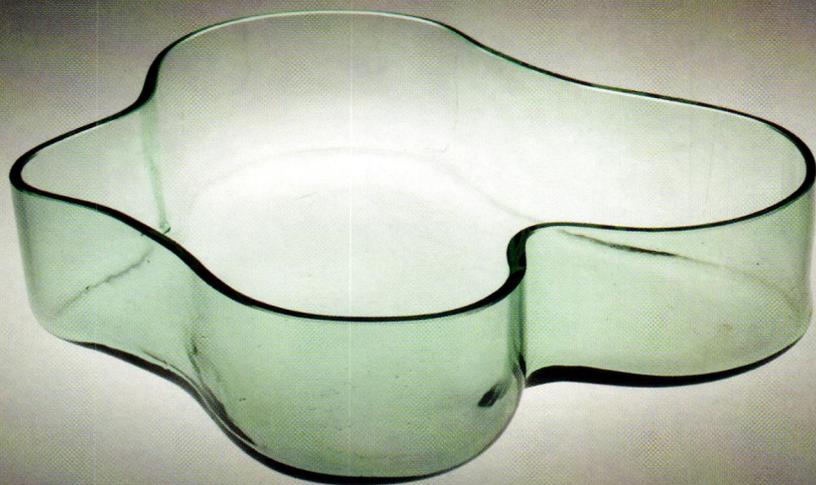


**Left:** Silver pendant, designed by Tapio Wirkkala in 1970, handmade by Nilo Westerback, estimate £800-1000, sold for £1800 at Christie's South Kensington's Private Collection of Finnish Design March 2001 sale. **Right:** A selection of jewelry by Bjorn Weckstrom, c.1970, included in the Design sale held at Phillips Bayswater in March 2001, selling for (left-right) £250, £350, and £420

£2500-3500); a 1955 *Lancet II* art piece £6700 (estimate £4000-5000); and a prototype triple-well art piece, unique and dated 1954, which sold for £5500 (estimate £4000-6000). Sarpaneva's glass from the early 1950s, produced while the designer was enjoying successes at the Milan Triennales achieved the highest overall glass prices; however, it was also positive to witness results for his 1983 *Claritas* series, with two early exhibition pieces making £4000 each (estimates £1500-2000 / £2000-3000).

The collection had a greater emphasis on the glass of Sarpaneva than it did on the glass of Wirkkala; however, strong bidding was again evident, to include a rare 1956 facet-cut dish at £4000 (estimate £2000-2500), three 1950s *Lichen* vases of varying size at £2200 (estimate £1000-1200), and an undated 1950s *Chanterelle* vase doubling estimate to hammer out at £1100. A work by Wirkkala was, however, to achieve the highest price of the sale; a 31-inch high silver candelabrum, designed in 1968 and modelled as a stylized tree, prompted very strong bidding between a telephone bidder and a room bidder, finally tripling its estimate to sell to the tele-

**Clockwise from right:** Silver candelabrum, designed by Tapio Wirkkala in 1968, handmade to order by Hopeakesus Oy, estimate £5000-6000, sold £16,000; Plywood *Leaf* dish, designed by Tapio Wirkkala in 1954, made by Soinne et Kni, estimate £1200-1400, sold £2600; Dish model # 9745, designed by Alvar Aalto in 1936, pre-1949 production by Karhula, estimate £1500-2000, sold £2600. All of these items are from Christie's South Kensington's Private Collection of Finnish Design sale held in March 2001



phone bidder for £16,000.

Glass by other important designers sold well. For example, a 1940s dish by Alvar Aalto realized £3300 (estimate £1500-2000), and it was reassuring to see positive interest in the Pop-inspired work of Oivva Toikka, who was represented in the sale by a 1967 dish, with abstract pattern and possibly unique, which sold well above estimate at £900. The biggest surprise of the sale, however, was reserved for a set of seven 1950s bottle vases, designed by Nanny Still, which generated tremendous interest to finally sell for £3500, ten times their pre-sale estimate.

Overall the Finnish private collection was 93% sold. Of the 90 lots sold, the vast majority went to overseas collectors, three lots went to US institutions, and only eight lots were sold to the trade. The second sale to include examples of Finnish design, and the only other sale this season to date, was the Phillips London sale of Design. Held two weeks after the Christie's sale, this sale presented a mixed collection of European and American furniture, glass, and industrial design, and a sizeable selection of Finnish glass and jewellery. Strong prices for good examples of glass were again evident, and of particular interest were the prices bid for examples of Wirkkala's comb-cut crystal *Leaf* series, which included a double estimate hammer price of £1050 for a large 1955 *Leaf* bowl, and £780 for a rare and interesting standing *Feather* vase. This sale also included a large selection of Finnish jewellery from the late 1960s/early 1970s. This is an area that has seen a tremendous surge of interest in the last 12 months, and was duly reflected by strong bidding. \*



### Up Close: HM/FM House

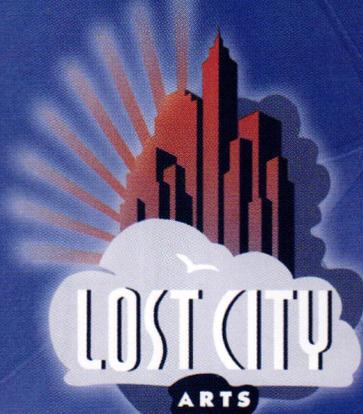
(continued from page 16) upstairs to the three rooms comprising the private part of the house, with two of the rooms occupying the FM part of the second story. A two-story soaring glass wall floods the stairwell with light. The stair treads, actually wooden boxes cantilevered from one side wall of the stairwell, float sculpture-like, skimming the other wall by only a few inches. "I've always been intrigued about floating things," said Piscuskas.

Piscuskas achieved his goal of economy by designing the proportions of the house around material dimensions—there are no half-cut shingles or custom-made windows. He embraced American modernism's post-war use of off-the-shelf, everyday materials deployed in a slightly off-beat way. Things are never quite what they appear to be nor handled in a standard way. Exterior doors and windows are stock sizes, combined in syncopated patterns or installed together to create large expanses of glass. The stairwell wall is homosote, cut in an ashlar pattern, like stone panels, and soaked in aniline dye to lend subtle changes in tone to each piece. The living/dining room floor is particle board also soaked in aniline dye and finished with many coats of polyurethane. The ceilings are composed of stripped Douglas fir over homosote, recalling Alvar Aalto designs while absorbing sound, a necessary job in an open plan.

True to modernism's doctrine of avoidance of applied ornament, visual interest stems from the nature and color of the materials themselves. Natural, of course, does not mean artless. On the exterior, two five-course bands of Western red cedar shingles wrap around the house and contrast with Eastern white cedar shingles. These color bands connect the second story windows and give scale to the house, preventing the HM portion from looking like just a big box. FM, clad in a weathered vertical-grain Western redwood, is set against HM both in volume and surface treatment. Contraposition is also evident in the interior. A hard, smooth-surfaced concrete-stuccoed square fireplace wall is asymmetrically framed by a warm, vertical-grain Douglas fir wall. Two steel shelves act as a mantel and create a horizontal (and again floating) connection. Color is not applied, but dyed so the color comes from within, embodying the material.

1100 Architect (its name taken from the address of its original studio) has been refining its interpretation of modernism for almost 20 years. Based in New York, the two partners, David Piscuskas and Juergen Riehm, have worked on a broad range of projects from the highly visible newly-designed Museum of Modern Art Design Store to private apartments and artists' lofts. Their architecture, as is evident in the HM/FM > 103

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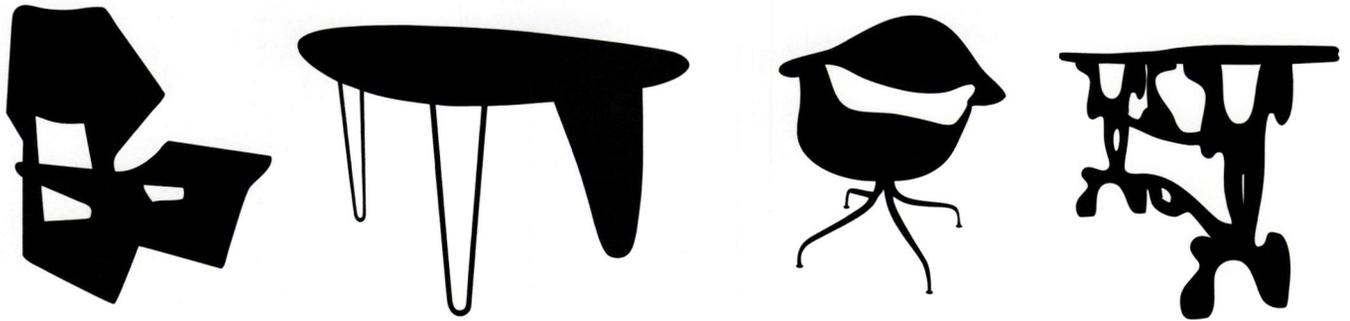
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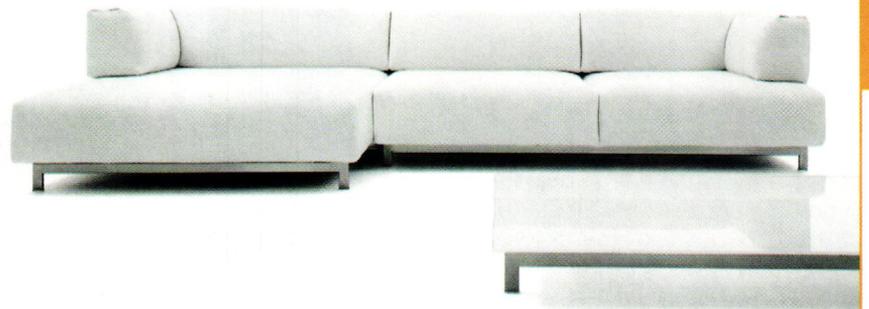


20th Century that is, modern to be exact. From post-war icons to new areas of collecting, Wright brings the best of the 20th Century to auction. Four modern and two art auctions annually. Call the gallery to be a part of future events. Coming up: Modern Art and Design, October 2001.



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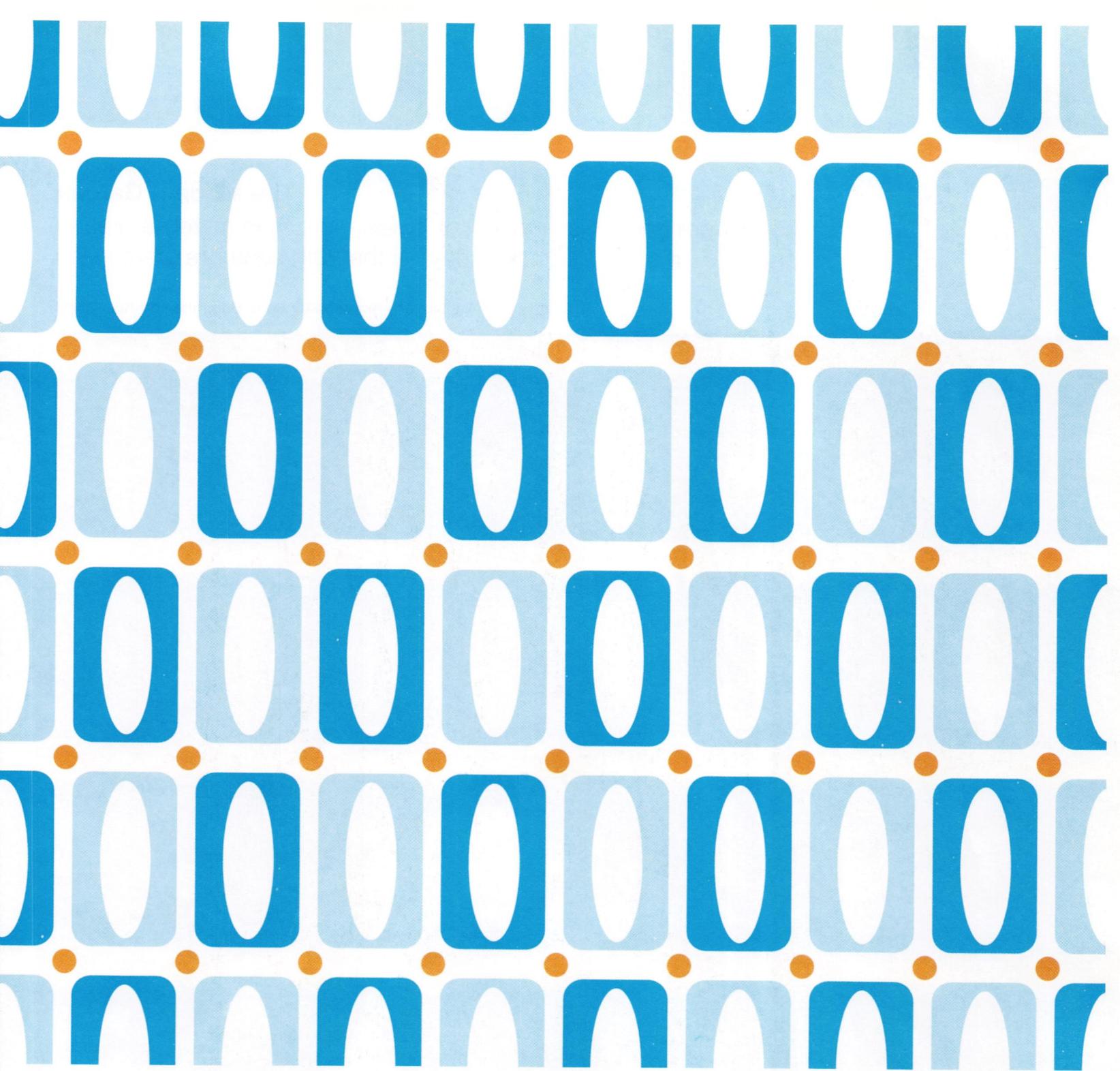
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**september 2001, issue 37**

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modern gardens

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robin and lucienne day

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frank lloyd wright's textile block houses

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entenza house—renewed, restored

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great modern books

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## The Modern Garden

The modern garden is elusive, but it was more than merely a dream:  
it served to focus some of the 20th century's great ideas

Text by Jane Brown Photographs by Sofia Brignone and Alan Ward



*Excerpted with permission from The Modern Garden by Jane Brown, Princeton Architectural Press, NY*

This is a treasure hunt for that lost child of the international modern movement in art, architecture, and design: the modern garden. The search begins with the oracles of the Bauhaus pioneers, their exodus from Europe to temporary haven in Britain during the 1930s, and

then their more permanent landfall in America. The modern garden achieved stature in America, so much so that it tended to become an interpretation of the modern landscape, and it was re-exported to a rather mystified Europe in the 1950s. Within a decade it was dead, mainly through misunderstanding and a smothering in historic revivals and rampantly eclectic Postmodernism.

Of all the garden images that came from Europe between the wars, Gabriel Guevrekian's triangular conceit of squares and zig-zags for the garden at Villa Noailles in Hyères, France, is by far the most potent, and the most persistently illustrated. Inspired by his triangular garden of "water and light" displayed at the 1925 decorative arts exhibition, this fantastic garden for the seaside villa at Hyères was designed by Guevrekian and Mallet-Stevens in 1927 and the constructed the following year. The garden is in reality one large triangular flower box, with the internal proportions divided using the smallest square as a module





Paley Park, East 53rd Street, New York, Zion and Breen Associates for William S. Paley, 1965. A miraculously intimate modern space among the canyons of Manhattan

The pity is that the modern garden encompassed in theory and practice ecological empathy, flexibility in maintenance, lack of expensive pretence, and avoidance of finite materials and harmful substances—all of which gardeners, architects, and designers have been clamorously demanding, largely in vain, for the last 40 years. The theory of the modern garden was never carefully codified by any latter-day Humphry Repton, nor have the gardens that were made survived well. The modern garden is elusive, but it was more than merely a dream; it served to focus some of the 20th century's great ideas.

#### The Oracles

It would be overly imaginative to suggest that the pioneers of modern design gave a great deal of their time to gardens; gardens do not

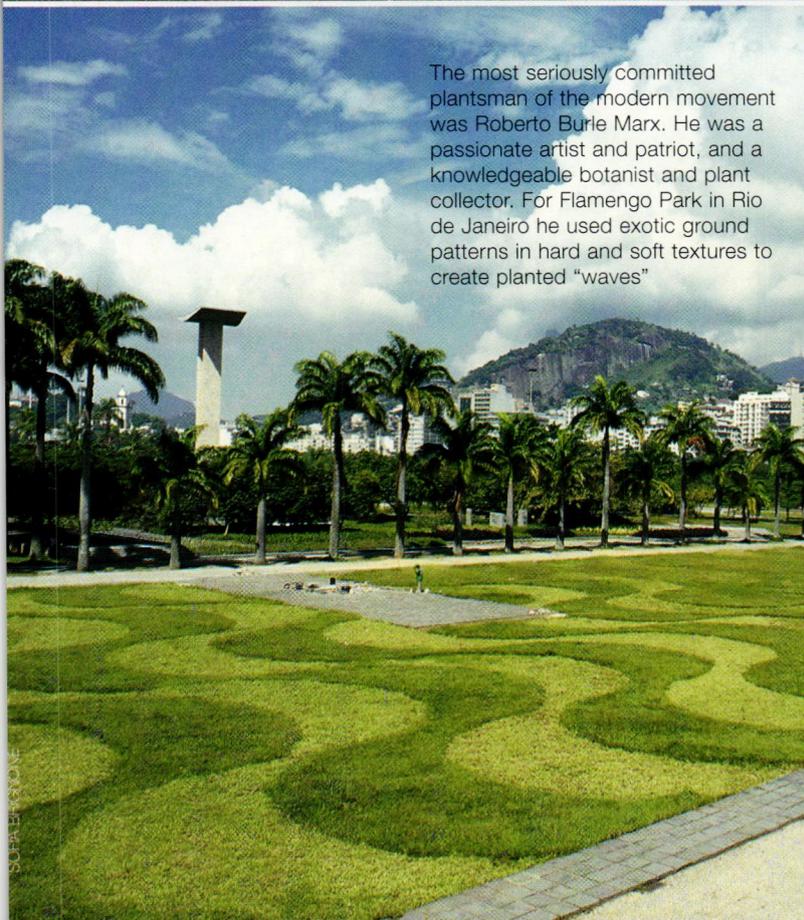
bring in high fees nor great reputations, the chief factors that have relegated them to a subsidiary consideration. However, seeing them as they saw themselves, as universal designers, abstract artists exploring uses of form and color and the first settlers of modern design for living, the great oracles (Mondrian, Van Doesburg, Klee, Le Corbusier, Oud, Rietveld, Mendelsohn) can be discovered murmuring on gardens and even designing some of significance.

#### De Stijl

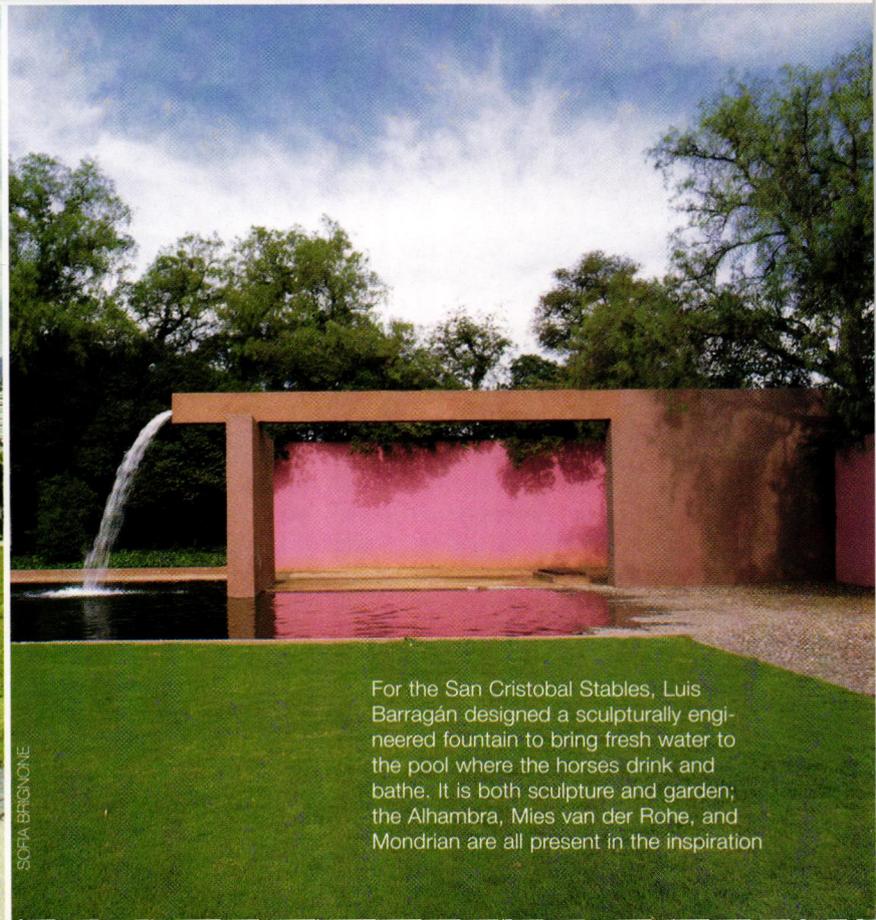
The De Stijl movement was driven by a loose association of nine artists and architects (including Piet Mondrian, Theo Van Doesburg, J.J.P. Oud, and Gerrit Rietveld). Their radical philosophical ideas about art and nature extended into the realm of garden design. Van Doesburg, the Dutch painter, designer, and propagandist and main-



Fletcher Steele was the first American to take an interest in French gardens, particularly those of the pioneer modernists, and he kept himself informed on European developments, thoughtfully analyzing them for gardens and landscapes. Steele concerned himself with any means "to create beauty in space composition," and his advocacy of a thoughtful, modern philosophy is evident at the *Naumkeag* garden in Stockbridge, Massachusetts where he incorporated the contours of Bear Mountain in the background into the curving paths in the foreground



The most seriously committed plantsman of the modern movement was Roberto Burle Marx. He was a passionate artist and patriot, and a knowledgeable botanist and plant collector. For Flamengo Park in Rio de Janeiro he used exotic ground patterns in hard and soft textures to create planted "waves"



For the San Cristobal Stables, Luis Barragán designed a sculpturally engineered fountain to bring fresh water to the pool where the horses drink and bathe. It is both sculpture and garden; the Alhambra, Mies van der Rohe, and Mondrian are all present in the inspiration

**Below:** From the outset for his home in Lincoln, Massachusetts, Walter Gropius planned and planted the garden to complement the house. After 10 years Ise Gropius felt that the effect was achieved as she described: "The appearance of our house has changed because the landscaping and gardens have had time to grow up to our original plan. The house is opened up to take in a part of the surrounding area and extends beyond its enclosing walls; it reaches out with 'tentacles' of trellis, low walls, and planting designed to delineate the outdoor living spaces and make them a part of the overall composition."



spring of *De Stijl* magazine, certainly embraced gardens, seeing them as the logical extension of his designs for interiors. In his scheme for a terrace of housing designed by Cornelius Rienks de Boer at Drachten in Friesland (1921), he proposed blocks of primary colors for the interiors, and for external windows and doors—a blue window frame, red door, and bright yellow surround all applied to one small house. The colors were to be repeated in geometric planting plans for the gardens.

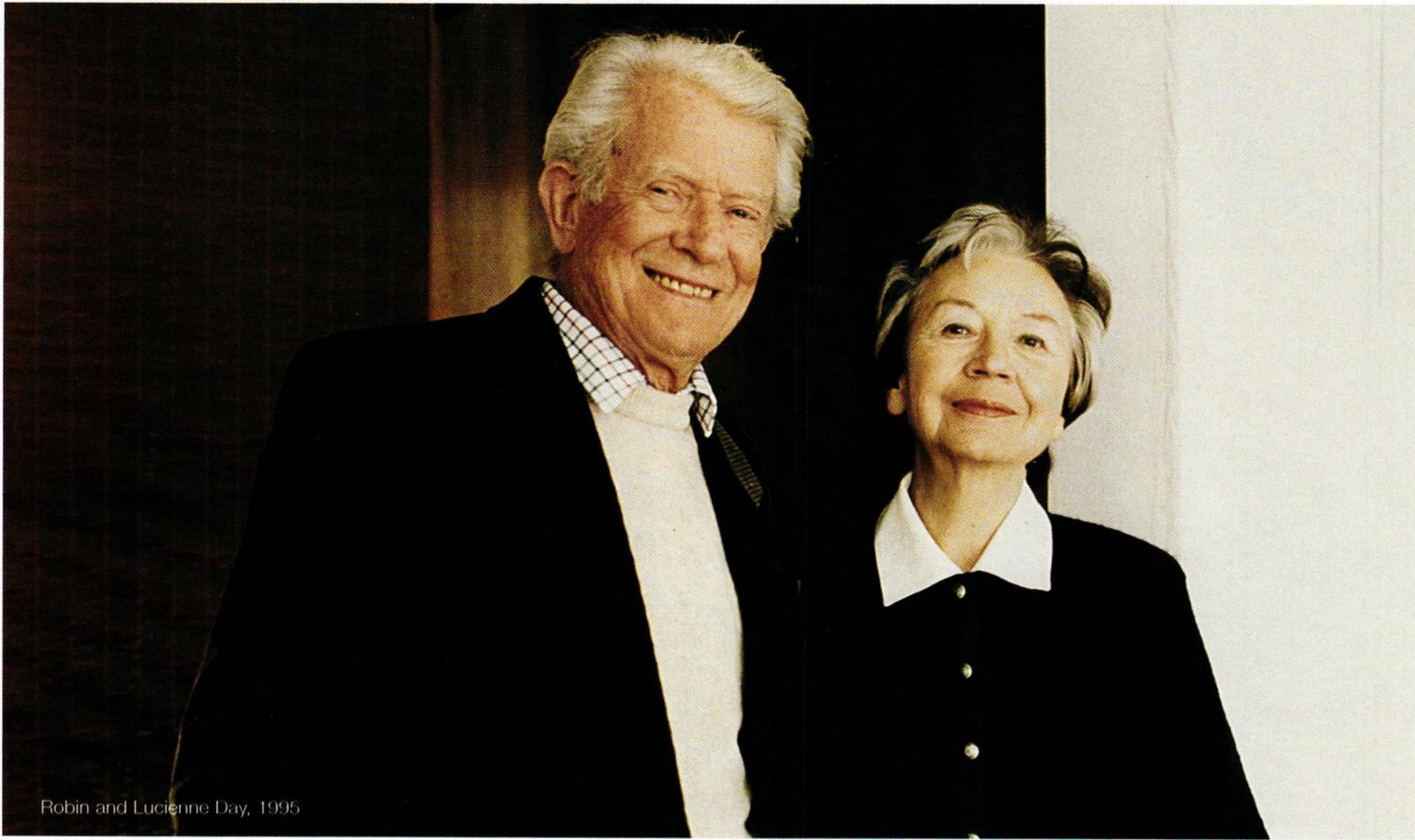
The architect J.J.P. Oud was equally positive about gardens for his pioneering city housing, notably the four-story blocks at Tussendijken, Rotterdam, built in the early 1920s. Oud believed that in order to live in the city, there must be a way of distracting inhabitants from the "industriousness" that forged the pace of city life: in contrast to the street, with its severe frontages, the inner court of his blocks had

balconies, flower boxes, and individual gardens. His white terrace of family housing, for the Weissenhofsiedlung exhibition at Stuttgart in 1927, reveals their row of individual gardens, for children's play and the washing line, which inspired a worldwide ideal of "starter" homes with gardens into the 20th century.

Gerrit Rietveld's small house for Truus Schroeder of 1924-25 remains a De Stijl icon. We may wish that Mrs. Schroeder had been more of a gardener, and that she had left images of plantings and pathlines in her small, flat, rectangular garden. However, in the search for modern theory, the Schroeder house demonstrates two important objectives—first, that the modern house is the prime but insubstantial, translucent form in its own garden (witness Rietveld's Pavilion, 1955, a transparent garden house for the Kroller-Muller Museum at Otterlo); and secondly, the modern garden is not > 80

An aerial photograph of a formal garden, likely Villa Il Roseto in Florence, Italy. The garden features a complex layout of circular and semi-circular paths made of light-colored stone or concrete, interspersed with lush green lawns and meticulously maintained hedges. A prominent circular flower box filled with pink flowers sits on a path in the middle ground. In the background, a yellow building is visible, and a small circular fountain or pool is situated on a higher level of the garden. The overall design is symmetrical and geometric, characteristic of modern garden architecture.

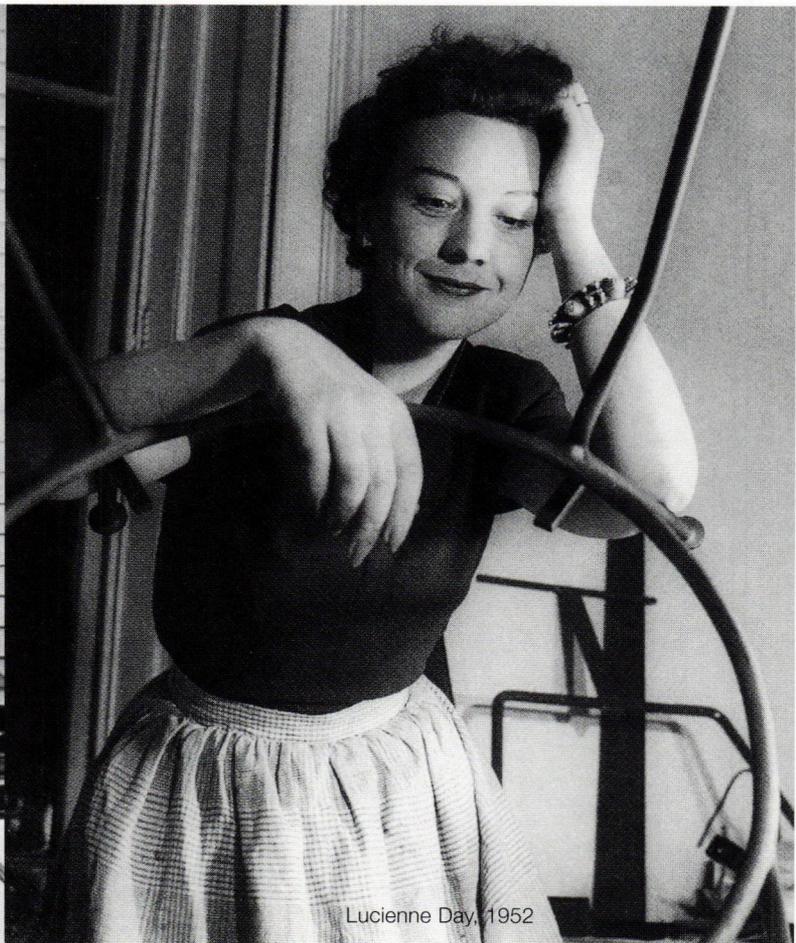
Pietro Porcinai is Italy's most distinguished designer of the 20th century. His early period, the 1930s, reveals the infectious magic of the modern garden. His sketches assume the characteristics of Mendelsohn, or Burle Marx: he adopts squares and rectangles, an oblong pool placed asymmetrically in a small garden, or a pattern of interlocking paths and right angles based upon the ancient symbol of the swastika (used frequently in modern gardens until the mid-1930s). Under the influence of his heroes, Fritz Encke and Karl Foerster, Porcini saw his method as the creation of garden spaces and features with plants, rather than architecture. The formal terrace at Villa Il Roseto in Florence, Italy—one of the finest survivors of Porcini's commissions—is a witty composition of circular patterns and textures, with highlights of color in the flower boxes



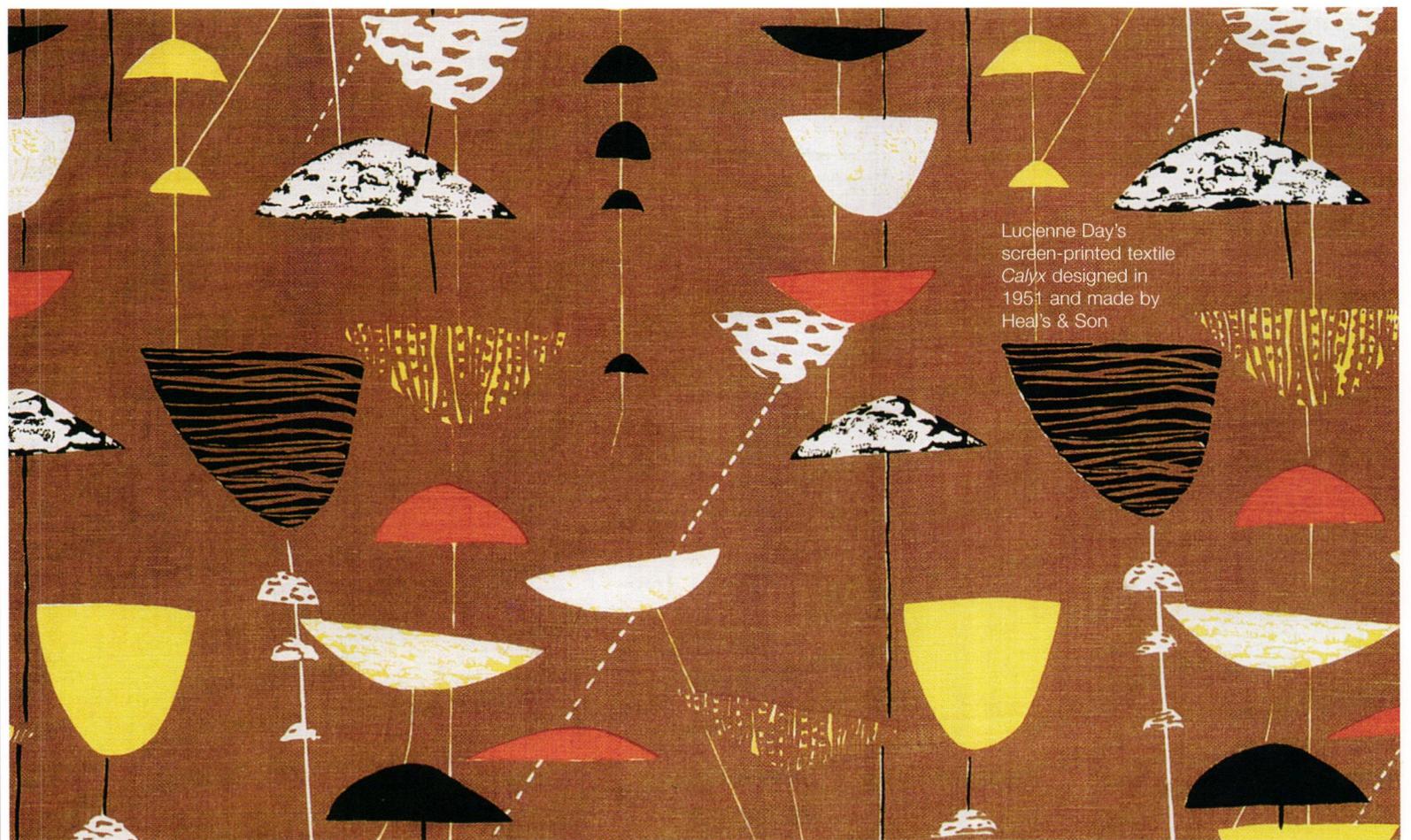
Robin and Lucienne Day, 1995



Robin Day, 1949



Lucienne Day, 1952



Lucienne Day's  
screen-printed textile  
*Calyx* designed in  
1951 and made by  
Heal's & Son

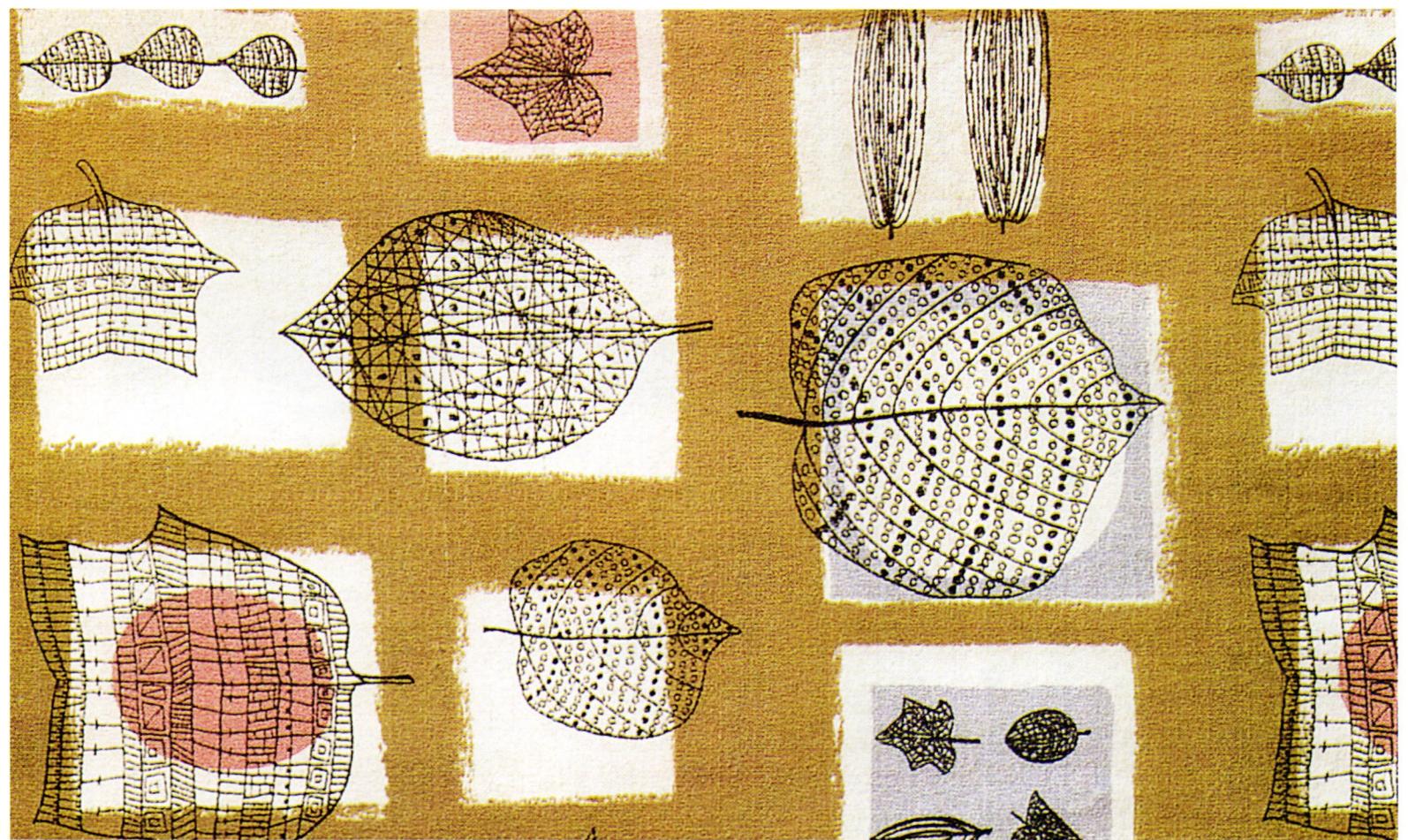
## Robin and Lucienne Day: Pioneers of Contemporary Design

Working independently in a wide range of mediums, the Days were instrumental in the introduction to Britain of contemporary design during the 1950s and 1960s

Text by Simon Andrews

Photographs courtesy the Barbican Gallery, London and  
*Robin + Lucienne Day: Pioneers of Modern Design*, Mitchell Beazley publishing





Robin and Lucienne Day were Britain's most versatile and distinguished designers of the post-war period. Working independently and in a wide range of mediums that included furnishings, graphics, textiles, and industrial design, the couple was instrumental in the introduction to Britain of stylish and contemporary design during the 1950s and 1960s. Robin's international career was launched in 1948 when he was awarded first prize for his storage unit at MoMA's "Low Cost Furniture Competition," and the couple proceeded to achieve celebrity through their furnishings for the 1951 Festival of Britain. The Days' extensive achievements have been recently celebrated in a major retrospective at London's Barbican Gallery, and as prices for good original examples of their early work continue to soar, it is appropriate to consider their varied and extensive contributions to the Modern Movement.

The son of a former railways worker and police constable, Robin Day was born in 1915 in the furniture-making town of High Wycombe. Awarded an arts scholarship to study at the local secondary college, Robin's syllabus was geared towards future employment in the local furniture factories. Although providing a solid base for the understanding of furniture production, Robin had set his expectations higher, and in 1934 was awarded a scholarship to study at London's prestigious Royal College of Art. It was through the RCA that Robin met his future wife and partner in design, Lucienne Conradi, also a student and a talented designer specializing in printed textiles. They were married in 1942. The Days remained in London during the war, and the austerity of those years was reflected in the furnishings that Robin designed for their own home. This included a dining table made from plumbing pipes and an old door, covered in linoleum, and a set of dining chairs, whose plywood backs Robin had hand-formed using the steam from a domestic kettle. The chairs were upholstered in textiles designed by Lucienne. The experience of wartime austerity was to have an enduring effect

**Opposite page, clockwise from top left:** Robin Day dining chair, designed and made for use in the Regatta Restaurant, Royal Festival Hall, Festival of London, 1951. One of a handful of examples to survive. Sold at auction in October 1999 for £2200, now in a Private Collection; Reclining chair, 1952. Among his early work, Robin considers this to be one of his most successful designs; Robin day sofa-bed, designed in 1957 and made by Hille. The design was recognized at the 1957 Milan Triennale. **This page:** Lucienne Day's *Fall* textile designed in 1952 and made by the forward-looking firm Edinburgh Weavers

on Robin, and economic considerations and affordability were to remain a characteristic of his furnishings produced during the 1950s and 1960s.

During the late 1940s Robin was primarily occupied with exhibition stand designs, including the "Jet" avionics exhibition of 1946, hosted in a London Underground station, and the touring Atomic Energy exhibition of 1947. Although untrained as a graphic designer, Robin had a natural gift for creating powerful visual images that conveyed a message simply and directly, and in 1948 he was invited to produce a series of recruitment posters for the Royal Air Force. By this time Robin was now firmly established as a leading exhibition designer, which apart from his teaching, occupied most of his time; however, his longer term ambition remained to design furniture.

In 1947 New York's Museum of Modern Art announced a follow-up to the 1940 "Organic Design" competition. Precipitated by war-time restrictions on furniture production, the "Low Cost Furniture Competition" invited worldwide contributions. The competition had been brought to Robin's attention by a colleague, Clive Latimer, who also had experience in experimental furniture production. The competition was to offer Robin his first opportunity to design furniture since the homemade examples of the war years, and with materials still severely rationed in the aftermath of war, opportunities for aspirant furniture designers were otherwise still scarce. Divided into two



categories, Seating and Storage, the competition attracted over 750 entrants from 32 countries submitting a total of almost 3000 designs. Robin and Clive together designed a multi-purpose wall-mounted domestic storage system, made with plywood cases on aluminium frames, which astounded the novice designers by being awarded First Prize in its category. For both designers the award brought high-profile recognition, and for Robin it was to be instrumental in securing a commission for the Festival of Britain, and led to a 30-year relationship with furniture manufacturer Hille.

Established at the turn of the century, Hille produced popular and high quality reproduction furniture, although during the 1930s it had also produced a range of fashionable Art Deco furniture. The directors of Hille were aware of the new trends in post-war American furniture design, and were keen to commence the manufacture of contemporary furnishings that could be exported to the USA. After hearing of the success of Day and Latimer in the MoMA exhibition, both designers were invited to produce furnishings intended specifically for the US export market. Robin produced a dining suite, constructed of high quality timbers and with leather upholstery, that was enthusiastically received by the American market. After the success of this suite, Robin immediately began to design a series of low-cost furnishings that came to be marketed as the *Hillestak* range. Inspired by the plywood furnishings of Charles Eames and Alvar Aalto, the *Hillestak* chair was first produced in 1950 and immediately became a tremendous international commercial success. This was expanded to include a related series of desks, dining tables, and storage units, and for the first time the British furniture-buying public, jaded by nearly a decade of "austerity" furniture, had access to modern and stylish furnishings.

By 1954 Hille had ceased all production of reproduction antique furniture and was producing solely the designs of Robin Day. Robin's collaboration with Hille also extended to include the design of all of the manufacturer's advertising material, including the redesign of the

**Above, from left to right:** Lucienne Day's *Herb Antony* textile, 1956, for Heal's; *Helix* by Lucienne Day for Heal's, 1970. Multiple layers of pattern are a leitmotif running through Lucienne's abstract designs. **Opposite page:** Robin Day's *Polyprop* series of chairs. The polypropylene side chair was introduced in 1963, and the armchair followed four years later. Shown here in two of their original colors: charcoal and flame red. Dark blue was introduced in 1968 and white in 1970. Since 1963 over 14 million chairs from the *Polyprop* series have been produced, making it the world's most successful and widely distributed low-cost seat

company logo. It is through this remarkable and fortunate collaboration that the "Contemporary" style was first eased into Britain.

The Festival of Britain, held in 1951 on a south London bomb-site, was a state-organized exhibition in the tradition of the Great Exhibition of 1851, intended to present a synthesis of science, technology and the arts to a war-weary British public. An optimistic vision of a modern future, the Festival offered unparalleled opportunities for ambitious architects and designers, and was instrumental in establishing Robin and Lucienne Day as a celebrity "designer" couple. Robin was commissioned to design a wide range of seating that was used throughout the pavilions of the exhibition, and of note are a series of organic plywood lounge and dining chairs that made use of the new laminating techniques developed first by the aircraft industry and then pioneered in the US for furniture production by Charles Eames. Robin's seating for the auditorium theater, installed in 1951, remains in use to this day, an illustration of its practicality and durability. The couple collaborated on the "Homes and Gardens" pavilion of the exhibition, and it was here that Lucienne's designs for wallpaper, and her new furnishings fabric *Calyx*, first attracted the attentions of the domestic furnishings retailer, Heal's & Son. Incorporating influences from the art of Alexander Calder and Joan Miro, and fused with an organic linear interpretation of plants and flowers, *Calyx* proved to be a revolutionary textile design. Throughout the late 1940s > 85



**Opposite:** Seen from below, the blocks of the Ennis House retaining walls are scattered over the hill, victims of time and earthquakes. Half of these walls have been restored by Eric Wright. This is a restoration in progress

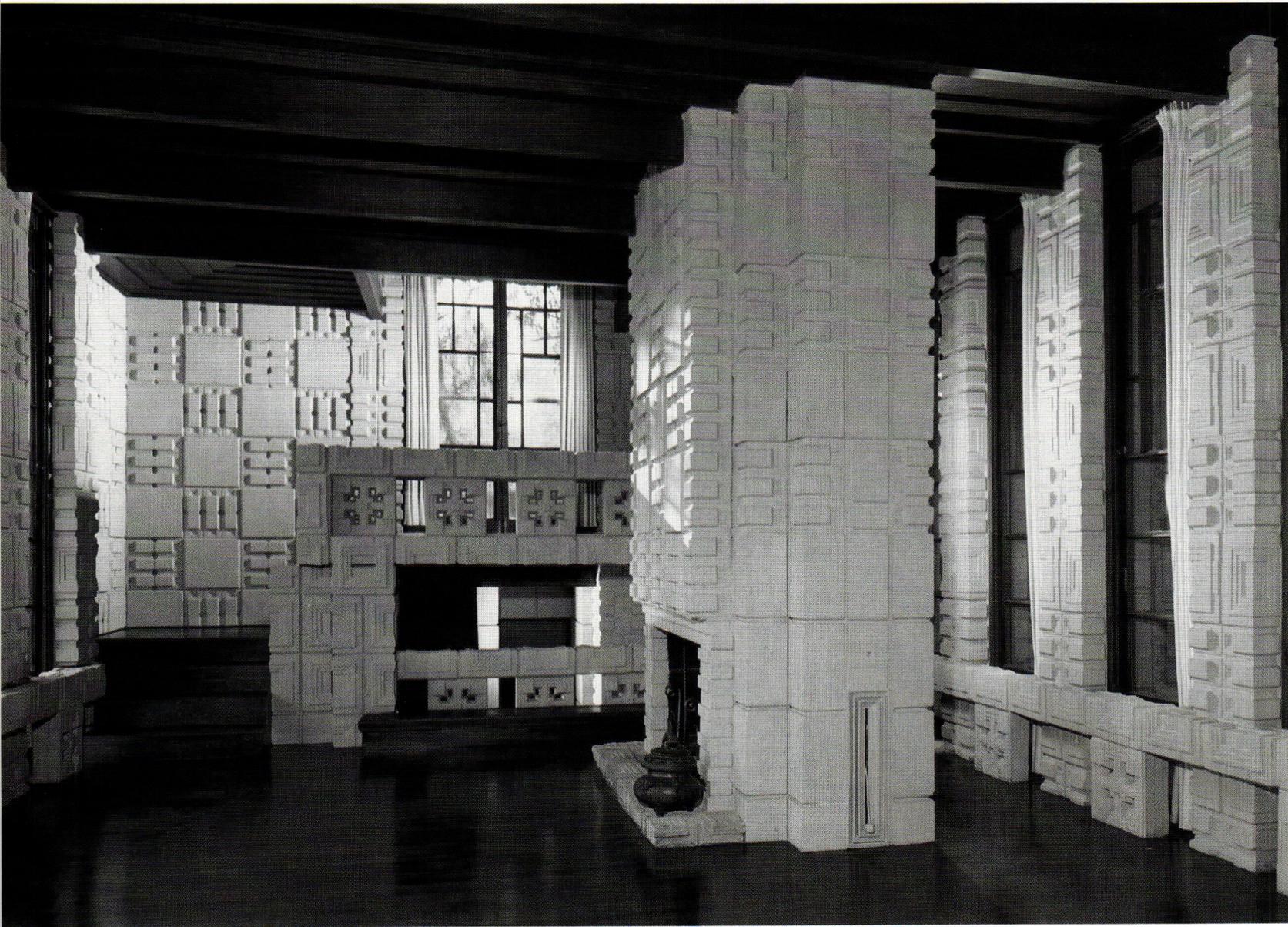
### **Wright the Weaver's Textile Block Houses: Restore or Destroy?**

Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel, completed in 1922, was destroyed in 1968 for the land it sat upon. His four "textile block" houses in Los Angeles, built between 1922-24, have deteriorated due to pollution and human neglect. Will they suffer a similar fate, or can they be saved?

Text by Ginger Moro

Photographs by Julius Shulman, David Sadofski, George Budd, and  
Courtesy the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University

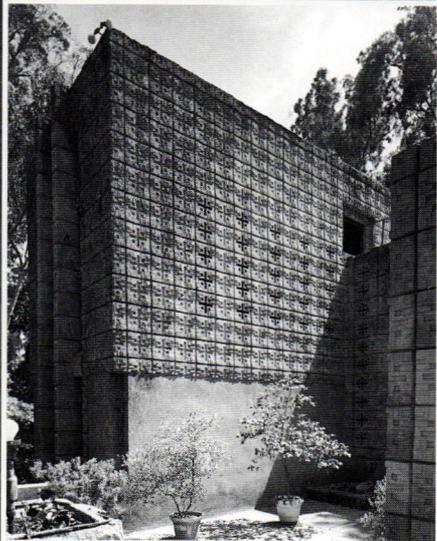
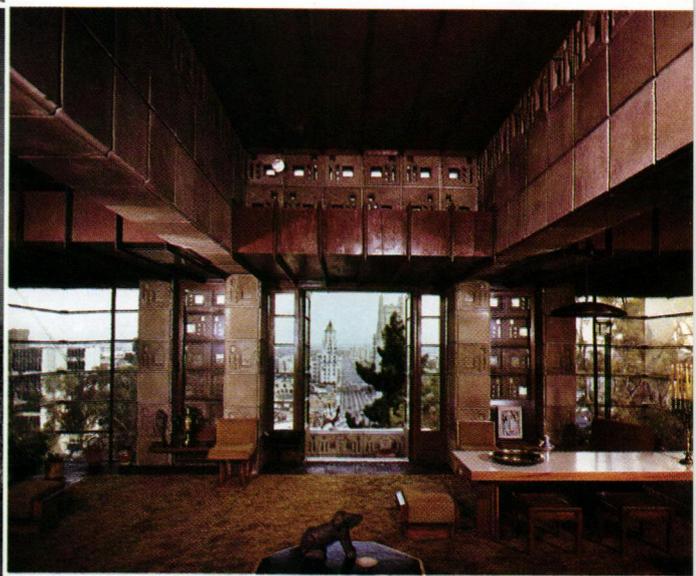


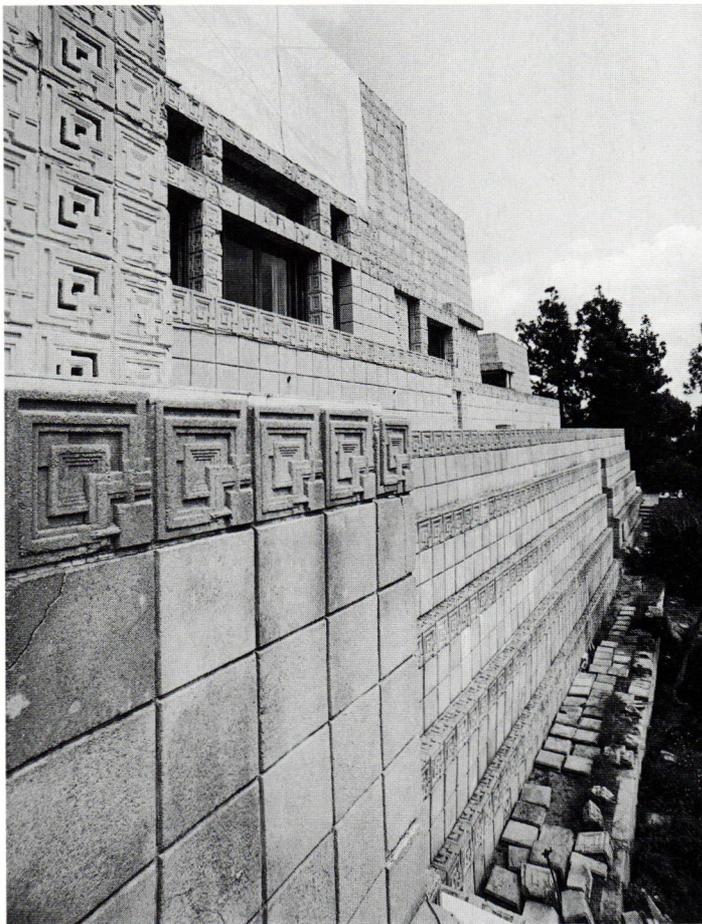


**Above:** The interior upper floor living room of the Storer House with three different textile block designs painted white. The piers are two-stories high, and the fireplace is oriented asymmetrically. **Opposite page, clockwise from top left:** The exterior of the Freeman House, 2000, showing structural and earthquake damage to concrete blocks which are shored up by planks. Before restoration; The exterior south elevation of the Freeman House, 1950s. Architectural historian Esther McCoy is enjoying the view from the terrace; The Freeman's living room with abstract eucalyptus blocks acting like a perforated screen, and a fine view down Highland Avenue. The Hollywood scene could be admired from the mitered two-story corner windows. The low upholstered chairs are by R.M. Schindler. The octagonal coffee table (cut down by Schindler in 1938) and pole light fixture are by FLW. Painting by Jawlenski; The closed street facade of the Millard House, 1979. All the exterior blocks of the load-bearing perimeter shell were patterned, appearing as surface decoration over the stuccoed concrete base. The perforation of the cruciform blocks was the only change in composition; Wright's Taliesin Fellowship Square logo appears to be an abstraction of the fellowship image (implying master and apprentice), and the Maya volute and *Mixteca Greca* motifs of Uxmal and Mitla; Exterior east terrace of the Storer House with cantilevered trellis designed to support awnings. Frank Lloyd Wright pole lamp is visible in the living room on the left

In September, 1923, a devastating earthquake destroyed much of Tokyo, Japan, leaving buildings in rubble and 140,000 dead. One of the buildings which survived with minimal damage was Frank Lloyd Wright's Imperial Hotel, completed in 1922. His innovative seismic design of structural separation joints was credited with saving this masterpiece from destruction. In 1922-1924, Wright, who had settled in earthquake-prone Los Angeles, built the four residences he called "textile-block" houses. They were resilient constructions of cast concrete blocks interwoven with steel rods. These modern Mayan temples built on Southern California hill sites have survived 80 years of natural disasters. It was human neglect and pollution which almost did them in. Wright's Storer House has been restored, but the Millard House, Freeman House, and Ennis-Brown House are all in various stages of disrepair awaiting restoration to their original state. The Imperial Hotel didn't fare as well. It stood on valuable real estate, so it was demolished in 1968. Low rise gave way to commercial high rise. One out of five of Wright's buildings has been destroyed. Can the rest be saved?

Frank Lloyd Wright was born in rural Wisconsin in 1869. By the time he died in 1959, Wright had left an architectural legacy of great invention and experimentation. He was predestined to be an archi-







tect by his determined mother who decorated Frank's nursery walls with prints of great cathedrals. Here the child made constructions out of the building blocks of an educational game invented by Friedrich Froebel. Wright credits these wood cubes, spheres, and cylinders which he laid out on a table marked with a grid, with an early understanding of geometry, later forming the basis for his square grid construction system.

***"Only when art is indigenous, the work of a particular time, according to the nature and character of the people of that time, is it for all time."***  
**Frank Lloyd Wright**

In his fifth decade, Wright was still playing with blocks, but on a magnanimous scale, in the City of the Angels. Although he rarely admitted to any outside design influence, it is known that as a young architect working for Louis Sullivan in Chicago, he spent long hours at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. There he studied the full-size plaster casts of Mayan ruins—the Pre-Columbian monuments of Uxmal, Mitla, and Chichén Itzá. The Maya were considered "the Greeks of the New World." The elemental architecture of this indigenous culture of Mesoamerica was the opposite of the prevailing Classicist Ecole des Beaux Arts style which Wright passionately opposed.

***"There resides a certain 'spell power' in any geometric form which seems more or less a mystery, and is, as they say, the spell of the thing."***

Wright hoped to combine 10th century Maya/Mixtec wisdom with 20th century technology to stem the tide of American materialism. His Utopian idea was to make decorated cast-concrete blocks an economical new building material, revitalizing society in the process. The integral decoration of his buildings had a mystical meaning > 89

**Opposite page, clockwise from top left:** The Mixtec Palace of the Columns (1200-1500 AD) in Mitla, Oaxaca, Mexico. The walls were composed of alternating plain and textured mosaic patterns of serpents, clouds, and waves; The long loggia leading to the master bedroom of the Ennis-Brown House recalls the sculptured columns of the Temple of Warriors at Chichén Itzá, Yucatan. The fireplace, Giannini fresco, and 16-foot teak door are on the left, the double-height living room opens on the right. The clerestory windows were Wright's last use of stained art glass; Carved stone temple lintel of a reclining figure holding a double-headed serpent with the head of a long-nosed god in each mouth, Yaxchilan, Chiapas, Mexico, AD 780; Julius Dietzmann copied the figure from the previously-mentioned lintel for the Ennis-Brown House fireplace panel, 1925, but eliminated the ornate open-jawed serpent heads on the right and left, substituting instead the flaming breath, the maize plant, and benevolent rattlesnake rain god. Among the ancient jaguar head and plant hieroglyphs is the modern image of two clasped hands (upper left) representing fellowship; The horizontal alternating banding of the Ennis House is reminiscent of the ancient Mitla palace walls (complete with rubble at the base). **This page:** The Ennis-Brown House soars like a Mayan temple over the Hollywood Hills, a monumental cubic massing of textile blocks. The chauffeur's quarters and garage are to the left of the courtyard and iron entrance gate. The dining and living rooms are in the center of the building, and the master bedroom is on the far right

## Upgrading an Icon

The John Entenza House by Harwell Hamilton Harris has been restored and renovated by architect Michael Folonis beyond its original mediocre construction

Text by Barbara Lamprecht  
Photographs by Marvin Rand





Generic filigreed wrought-iron gate and fencing, standard suburban issue, was added as in-fill to the staircase and to the wall. Now removed, the identity of the steel pipe balustrade reads clearly as intended, a spare silhouette against the white stucco wall. The railing begins where Harris believed a hand would naturally reach out; hence the bottom two treads are not connected to the rail. This underscores the curve as an element separate from the stair treads. It runs up along the wall and then curves back, beckoning to the promise of a roof garden



It is quite a coup to get the chance to upgrade a house designed by a famous architect for a famous client. The John Entenza House by Harwell Hamilton Harris has been restored and renovated beyond its original mediocre construction by architect Michael Folonis, whose firm has garnered three awards for the project.<sup>1</sup>

It must also have been an extraordinary moment in 1937 when the young, little-known Harris was hired by no less than the great Entenza. The gentle architect seems an odd choice for the editor, known for his imperious manner, impeccable dark suits cladding his big, loose frame, and for his passion-charged political editorials. Above all he is renowned for his huge Swengali-like ambitions for local architecture.

One year after Harris designed the house, the editor took control of *California Arts and Architecture* and wrestled its identity as a polite, well-mannered regional architectural magazine to his own will.<sup>2</sup> As *arts + architecture* it celebrated what Southern California Modernists brought to the table—an irreverent, ad-hoc approach to materials and methods that embraced the outdoors—and stamped it with international credibility.

Entenza's own design persona is usually incarnated not by Harris but by architects such as Craig Ellwood, Pierre Koenig, and Raphael Soriano. Their designs of glass in skin-tight steel frames represent the 'high classicism' of Case Study House fame, a fame propelled by Entenza's establishment of the famous experimental

program.<sup>3</sup> The Entenza House is equally an anomaly in Harris's oeuvre. His typically understated work evokes the humble tranquility of Japanese architecture. Harris admired Craftsman nobility Greene and Greene, but it was the 1909 C.C. Curtis Ranch in Pasadena by their contemporary Louis B. Easton, with its homelier spaces and rougher wood textures, that resonated deeply with him. His own ethereal glass-and-wood 1935 Fellowship Park House still exists, hidden deep in a little wooded ravine above downtown Los Angeles.

So why choose Harris, protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright and Rudolf Schindler's work and student/employee of Richard Neutra?<sup>4</sup> Entenza knew Harris in two ways, the first through a scandal. A design virtually identical to a Harris project, the 1934 Lowe House, received a prize in the General Electric small house competition. The architects admitted they had seen Harris's design in *California Arts and Architecture*, but denied the charges of plagiarism and kept the \$2,500.<sup>5</sup> When the magazine published the two plans side-by-side, Harris was deluged with favorable publicity, to his great surprise, catapulting him into the public eye across the country. Secondly, Entenza knew the Fellowship house, and emphasized that "this was the kind of house that he *didn't* want, but 'because you could design this house, I know you can design the kind of house I *do* want.'"<sup>6</sup> What Entenza wanted was a "masculine-looking" house. He also suspected that Harris was the man to give it to him.

While small at less than 800 square feet, the design proves that

**Opposite page:** The rear of the house opens out southwest to the canyon. Its crisp nautical façade is a restrained rectangular composition of steel pipe, stucco walls, and a pair of sliding glass walls each nine feet wide located below a single length of clerestory. Beyond, another clerestory provides cross-ventilation. Oriented to the east, it invites morning light

**This page:** In contrast, the street façade is a study in opposing curves articulated in the roof line, the steel railing and the concrete and grass strips defining the driveway

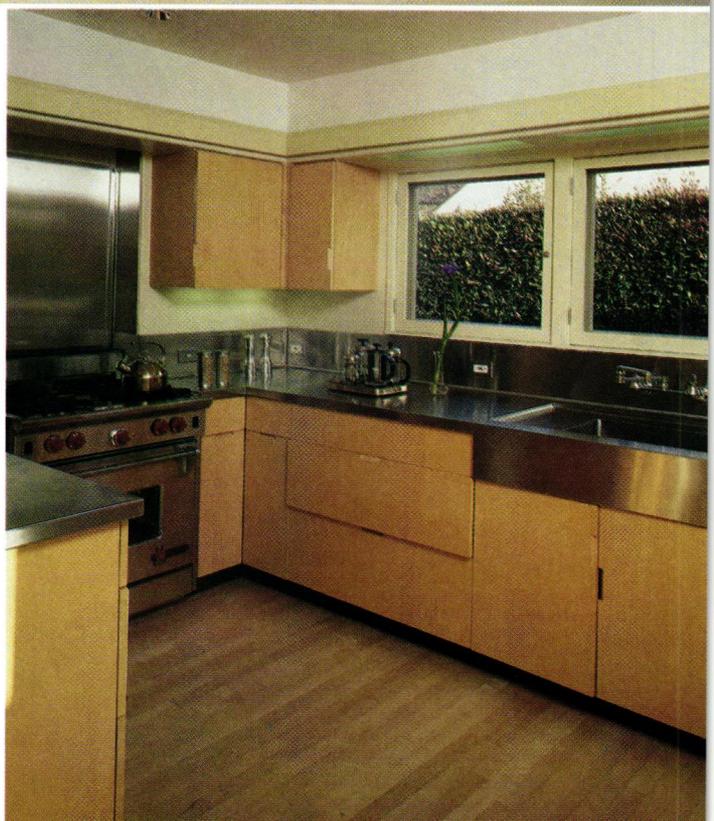


The newly reinstated pale tones of white paint above the sand-colored walls along with maple built-in cabinetry and floors unify, brighten, and enlarge the house. One version of the Eames Storage Unit (ESU) is seen to the right of the fireplace, just in front of the entry where an Eames *Hang-it-All* is mounted. Two mohair-covered Alvar Aalto chairs face the fireplace, the grey color matching the new six-by-nine concrete hearth "rug" repoured after the original was discovered beneath linoleum



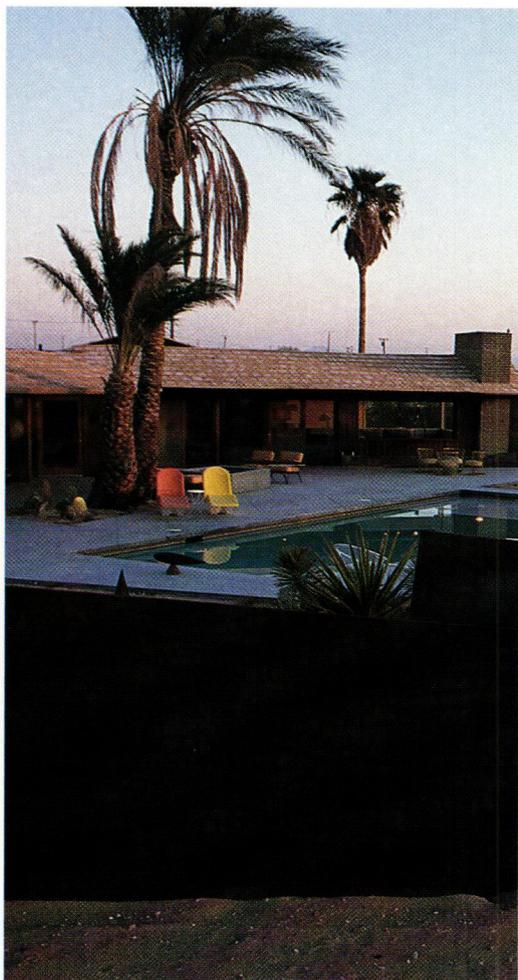
size doesn't matter when it comes to trophies. With its sweeping curves exuberantly reaching out to engage the street, its white stucco walls and corrugated metal and steel rail detailing, at first glance it appears as a crisply turned out period piece of Streamline Moderne married to International Style. Indeed, when the house was written up in his own magazine Entenza's reviewer didn't fail him. "It is a man's house every inch of it," the piece gushed, the writer obviously having no problem assigning gender traits to buildings.<sup>7</sup> In any case, Entenza had chosen his first architect wisely. He remained there until 1949, when he moved into Case Study House Number 9 designed by friends Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen.

In addition to a good-looking house delivered on a lean budget of \$2700, Harris produced a highly functional environment. (The recent work cost \$160,000, also a sound price in today's dollars.) For example, the overlapping arcs in front of the building are not simply stylistic gestures. At the ground plane, the driveway curves in from and back to the street. This not only welcomed and ensured the safety of the constant stream of visitors such as Charles and Ray Eames alighting from their cars, it also created an opportunity to dramatize the moment of arrival, vital to a socially astute journalist. Overhead, one dynamic half-circle with a highly varnished wood ceiling, like an uplifted deck of a precisely detailed yacht, shelters the visitor walking into the house. A second, smaller half-circle in the plans describes the stucco volume containing, according to the original plans, a "shower and lockers," perhaps for ocean bathers seeking a place to freshen up. Harris's solution is also a sophisticated salute to neighbors, since the car is > 97





**Opposite page, bottom:** The original windows were replicated. They retain Harris's 3-foot module. Replacing painted plywood, the kitchen was remodeled with stainless steel countertops and sink. The new maple cabinetry uses the same angled cutouts for hand pulls that Harris designed, a detail that Richard Neutra and Rudolf Schindler also employed frequently. **This page, top:** In the plywood wall behind the bed's headboard Harris subtly highlighted his three-foot module with a narrow open joint. Folonis redesigned the bed with drawers below for linens and blankets while the chest next to the bed is a replica of the original. The curve of the glass walls echoes the sweeping curve defining the carport. **Left:** There was no tub in a bathroom originally "awkwardly laid out, to say the least," according to Folonis. To solve both problems, he first relocated the toilet from where the sunken tub is now to a more discreet location next to the door. Instead of trying to fit a tub into the newly made custom space, he simply "dug a hole and ran the tile straight down" to create a combined tub/shower. Continuing a smooth plane with the tile also dovetailed neatly with Harris's thinking on both maintenance and on simple, frank gestures



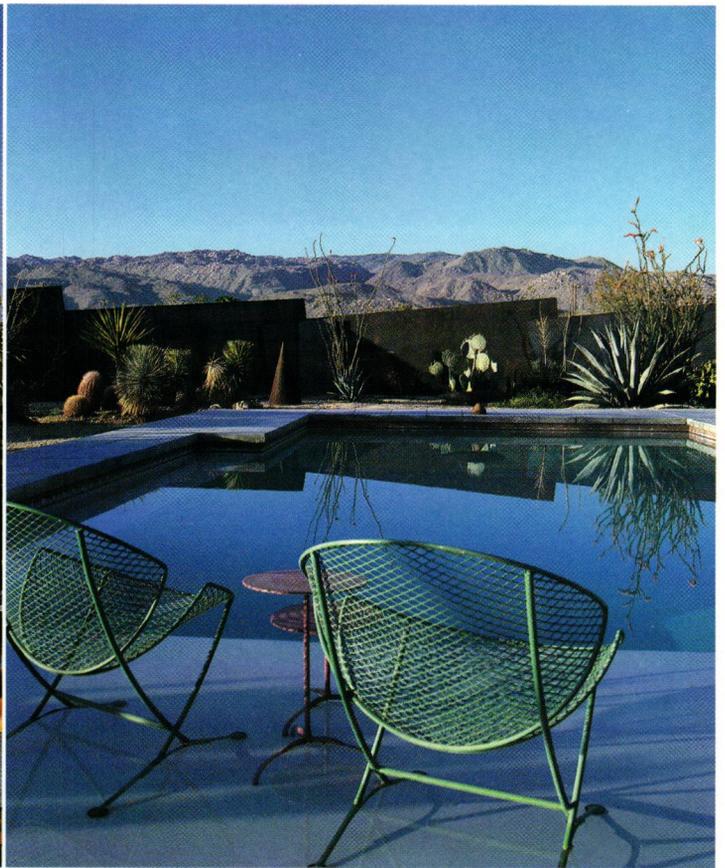
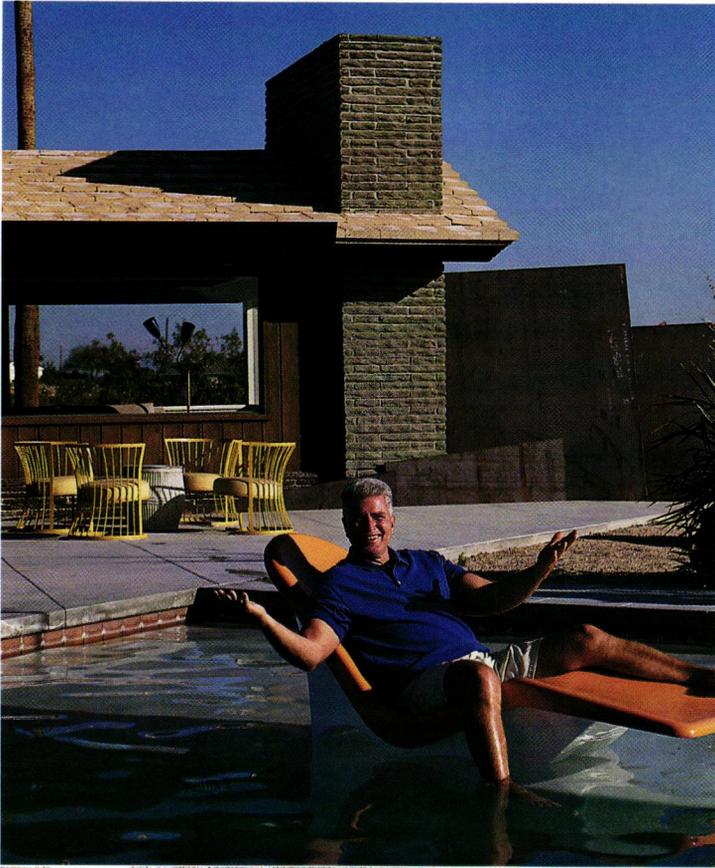
## Twentynine Palms

For Huell Howser, producer and host of KCET's *California Gold*, life is about the joy of discovery. *Echoes* discovers his modern oasis in the high desert

Text by Jean Penn  
Photographs by David Glomb



For privacy, Huell surrounded his home with a dramatic fence composed of sheets of rusted iron set at ten-degree angles. They match perfectly the steel color of the surrounding mountains, once mined for iron and ore

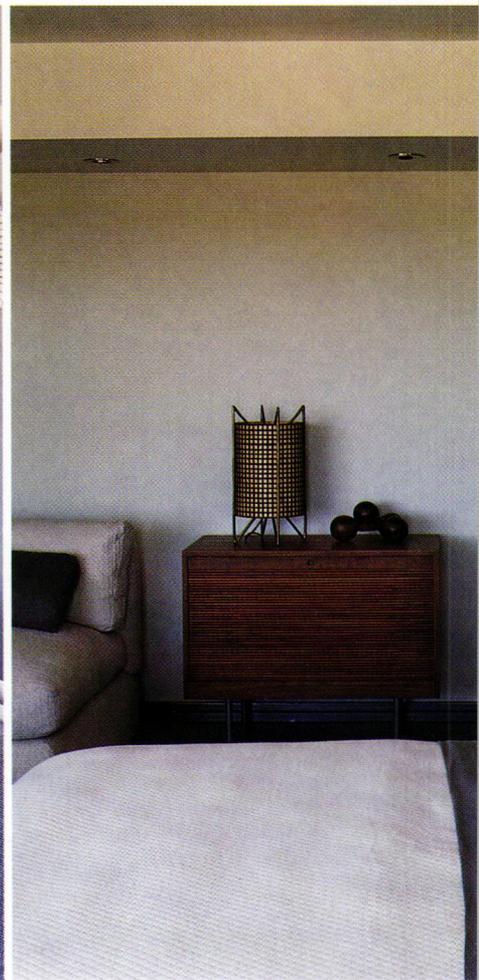


This page, clockwise from top left: Huell Howser enjoying his new pool design which features a shallow ledge for sitting in a chair, taking your shoes off and cooling the feet; Visitors here celebrate the beauty of the desert from a front-row seat. Collection of cactus, indigenous plantings, boulders and found objects as sculpture surround the pool; Huell ripped out the grass and petunias and roses surrounding the original simple rectangular pool, which he then lengthened. He added the fire pit for cold nights and star gazing. Ground lights include an old street light that looks like a dinosaur egg

Behind the house a shaded veranda beckons. It's filled with comfortable, colorful, furniture, all bought at consignment stores and originally made with indoors in mind. The veranda had been boarded up and used as a storage area by the original owners. Howser removed the walls and left the beamed ceiling from which hang bent pieces of copper that serve as light coverings. A discriminating dove has been nesting in one of these unusual lampshades every summer for the past three years



**From left:** "I don't like a house that looks like you're walking in from a movie set, from a particular era. That's silly. No house stands still in time." Furnishings in the living room include a custom made couch and finds from Palm Springs consignment stores. To his knowledge, none of it is by a name designer. Nor is it all pure '50s. The coffee table is an old map reading machine with glass over it that he found it in a marine surplus store. The lighting strung on industrial wiring is state of the art; The hanging over the bed is a silkscreen from a Mexican towel company, rescued from an alley. The metal frame around the bed is a consignment store find and accommodates reading lamps. The closet door was made of metal and wood by a local craftsman; On a wall near the dining area, a group of found objects are displayed as sculptures on the wall



Huell Howser, producer and host of KCET's *California Gold*, says that Twentynine Palms is 45 miles above but "a world away from Palm Springs," where he owns another mid-century home. And the drive between his two houses, along Highway 62, is exciting in both directions. "When I drive down to Palm Springs, I'm thinking of sushi and maybe dancing at the clubs all night. When I drive up here, I think of hiking at Joshua Tree and feeling close to the stars."

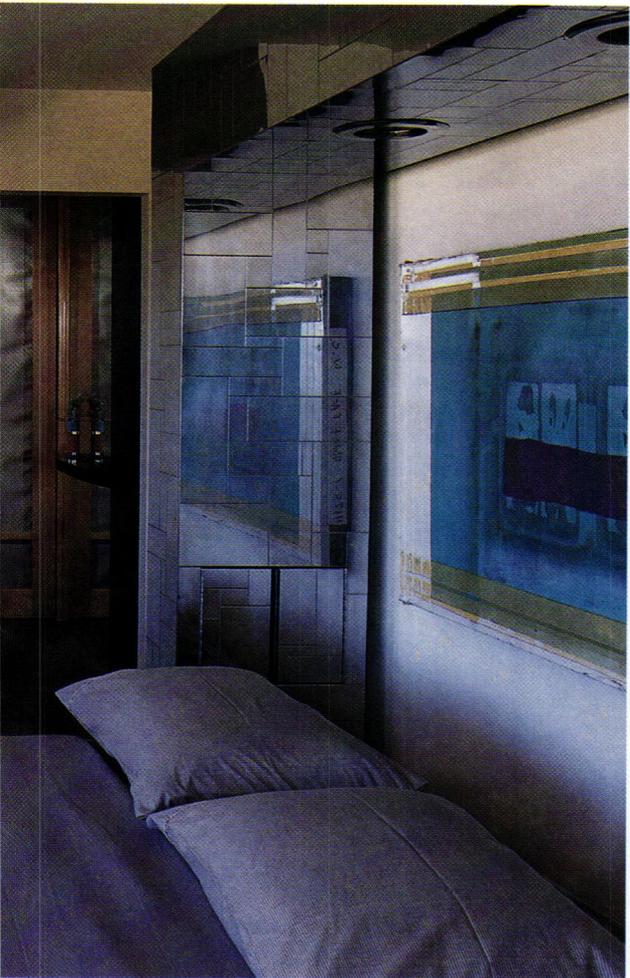
Indeed, his high desert home is removed from most worlds, surrounded by Joshua Tree National Park and the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base. The road off the highway leading to his retreat features a sparse line of simple, contemporary homes, spaced wide apart on 2.5 acre lots. He has bought the two neighboring lots to insure further solitude. For more privacy, he surrounded his home with a dramatic fence composed of sheets of rusted iron set at ten-degree angles. They match perfectly the steel color of the surrounding mountains, once mined for iron and ore.

The world behind that fence is inviting, thoughtfully and dramatically composed, and clean in lines: a relaxed, no-fuss kind of place. Metal baseboard is used throughout the house. Windows are uncov-

ered. Floors are covered with concrete or industrial carpeting. Chairs are all comfortable. A ledge was added to the pool, just for sitting in a chair and getting your feet wet.

But don't be fooled. This home and its environs really serve as a gallery for Howser's found objects, all rescued from unappreciating eyes and as lovingly and thoughtfully displayed as any Rodin or Henry Moore. An old street light is turned upside down and used as a sink. Solar heating panels serve as wall hangings by the front door entrance. A wire mesh cone and huge clay objects serve as lit sculpture around the pool. He likes the mystery of not knowing what function most of his found objects originally served. What counts is the beauty of the design, shape, and color.

Likewise, Huell doesn't know what architect might have designed his home. It's probably not by any famous ones, but he is impressed by the Palm Springs homes by Albert Frey and Neutra and feels this has some of the same elements. Further, it has "good karma." The family it was designed for lived there for more than 50 years. Howser bought it from the sons three years ago. "At the time when this was built, there were maybe two or three of this Palm



Springs-style house anywhere in the high desert. The shell of the house is exactly as I found it." *Exactly as I found it.*

We're going to hear that phrase again and again, in Howser's engaging Tennessee drawl. KCET's answer to Charles Kerault, his life mantra is about the joy of discovering found objects. His mission is to find beauty in people and places that people pass by and don't see. Collecting found objects, he says, is something he suddenly got swept up into about 10 years ago, as an outgrowth of his show. *California Gold* is, after all, about found people and places that people drive by a thousand times and never think to investigate. He grew up in a two-story colonial in a tiny town in Tennessee, and his small-town "wow look at this" attitude is part of the fun. After 12 seasons, on all 13 affiliates in California, he has taken public television viewers everywhere from a food replica factory to Frank Sinatra's house in Rancho Mirage. Anyone who watches knows he's especially crazy about the desert and the '50s.

For the past 10 years, Howser has found himself at salvage yards, old warehouses, factories, and alleyways, carting away objects of beauty—usually loading the treasure right then and there

into the back of his Explorer. "People would walk by these objects, and because they are not displayed as art, in an expensive gallery with price tag of \$10,0000, they dismiss them. But to me, they are just as great as anything I see in a gallery."

He brought the house back to its original structure, rather than make major changes. "When any family lives anywhere for 50 years, they futz it up. Add a bit here—put in storage there. Over time, they lose the original vision they had when they sat down with the architect. What I did was strip it back to bare bones original integrity and added a bit, like the addition to the pool and removing a wall."

Huell was his own contractor, juggling projects between here and his show. He had no mattress, sleeping on the floor and roughing it for a long time. "Every bit of the original concrete around the pool had to be blasted out down to the dirt before the new concrete could be poured over it. I remember sitting out here, looking at nothing but a hole where the pool used to be. Luckily, I had this absolute picture in my mind of what this house was going to look like, to hang onto. I stayed true to that, and went at it a little at a time. But I wouldn't bring many people up here for those first two years. It was > 80

## Twentynine Palms

(continued from page 79) too big a leap of faith for them to see what was in my mind."

In brown, sand, metal, and earth tones, his high desert home is "rawer, more in touch with nature" than his colorful and glitzy Palm Springs digs. His Los Angeles apartment in the El Royale, a 1929 historic landmark, is all parquet floors and molded ceilings.

Despite the many differences between his three homes, the one thing they all have in common is a storeroom packed with found objects, waiting for gallery time. \*

## Modern Gardens

(continued from page 54) ashamed to be seen—in fact its openness, smallness, and sense of display were an expression of community living.

The concept of space as organized by color and geometric form, epitomized by the work of Piet Mondrian, rose from the fertile ground of De Stijl. Mondrian's artistic, and to some extent spiritual, journeying is relevant to the developing theory of the modern garden. Mondrian came from a Dutch Calvinist background, and his early paintings were representational landscapes and studies of trees and flowers directly inspired by nature and his native landscape. In his late 20s he discovered theosophy, an esoteric cult devoted to spirituality, with a lack of interest in, if not an actual disdain of, the physical processes of nature. He worked through his paintings to transform his seascapes, compositions of trees, and studies of plants into abstract forms in response to the theosophic goals. "For me, the plastic relation is more alive precisely when it is not enveloped in the natural, but shows itself in the flat and rectilinear. In my opinion . . . the natural appearance veils the expression of relations. When one wants to express definite relations plastically, one must show them with greater precision than they have in nature."

## Le Corbusier and the French Modernists

For all Le Corbusier's severe and bony visage and his radically extreme outbursts, perhaps it is surprising that his sketches and drawings of his buildings should be so full of plants and greenery. Like Mendelsohn, he saw trees, shrubs, and well-planted containers as the necessary dressing for his buildings; however, immediate celebrity—the persisting images of buildings photographed while the whitewash was still wet—have not allowed his garden ideas to be appreciated. Reassessment has revealed that gardens, roof gardens, and terraces were intended for many of his most famous villas, but that they have been obscured by circumstance or ignored by historians.

Ironically, Le Corbusier's contributions to the modern garden are most aptly summed up by a work that paradoxically has no "garden" at all: his most famous villa, the Villa Savoye (1929) at Poissy. This *machine à habiter* stands in a field, on an idyllic site open to spectacular views, and yet sheltered from the road by trees, unthreatened by neighbors or even by a picturesque landscaped park. Here he could bring his notions of the modern garden into play, without interruptions. "Standing in a field, you cannot see very far," wrote Le Corbusier, "What's more the soil is unhealthy, damp, etc. . . . consequently, the real garden of the house will not be at ground level, but above it, 3.5 meters up: this will be the hanging garden whose surface is dry and healthy, and from it you will get a good view." Le Corbusier was nothing if not manipulative: perhaps it was not so much that the "unhealthy" damp offended him, rather that a garden on the ground would clutter the pure relationship of his building to the earth. The modern architects liked the appearance of gravity defied; this was at the very core of their new technological expressionism, and they were not likely to let a mere garden shackle the otherwise deftly "floating" buildings. Villa Savoye, therefore, embraces its garden terraces into its sculptural interplay of spaces, and the terraces are screened from the approach.

## Erich Mendelsohn

In contrast to Le Corbusier's rather bloodless wizardry, Erich Mendelsohn is characterized by his love of plants as fellows on this living earth, as God's contribution to his architecture, and his consequent affection for his own garden. If Le Corbusier is the flat earth designer par excellence, then Mendelsohn embraces the curving, undulating site, in all its "vegetative oneness," as the partner of his buildings.

"I see the site, the surface, the space; my surface, my space, of which I eagerly take possession. The architectural idea usually occurs to me spontaneously, at this very moment. I record it as a sketch. In other words, knowledge, the exact understanding of the actual preconditions, enters my subconscious mind—the plane comes to life as a ground-plan, the empty space as a spatial entity—an experience that is at once two- and three-dimensional."

Mendelsohn is one of the soundest and most sympathetic sources for modern garden theory, and his reference to the "architectural idea" includes both the building and its garden surroundings.

## Paul Klee

"Klee was an artist who delighted in the imaginative stimulus of everything he saw"—his architectural fantasies hold a special place in the affections of architects, and so his painterly contemplation for *Plan for a Garden* of 1922 is surely an inspirational blessing on the modern garden. The painting comes from his period on the faculty of the Bauhaus. Klee's works have perennial powers for the inspiration of designers, perhaps because he felt that he lived close to the heart of creation. In his work, "as though a sufficient variety of human beings, animals, plants, and landscapes did not already exist, he invents new human beings, animals, plants, and landscapes, such as have never been seen before." He presents their mutual relationships, their ever-changing surroundings and fates, their "loveliness and abomination," and we realize that we have been granted an insight into "the finest subtlest mechanism of all living things."

Klee's vision anoints him as the chief spokesman for the garden at the portals of transforming art, and *Plan for a Garden* epitomizes his bewitching legacy.

## Britain in the 1930s

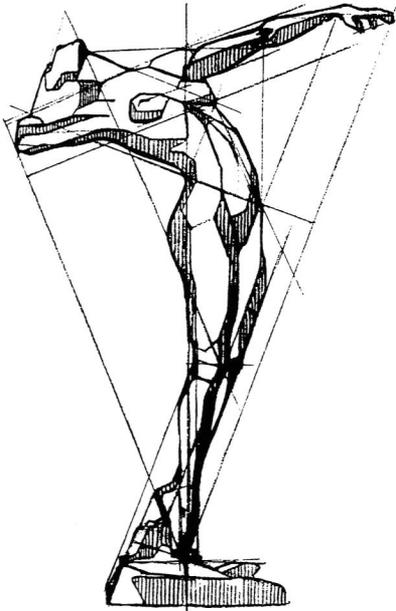
The auguries for the modern garden in Britain were not good. The general air of economic gloom and depression meant that gardens of any kind had a very low priority, except as the setting for escapism and spurious gaiety, when tables and colored umbrellas were set out on the lawn to cheer the cocktail parties. The general shortage of work meant that all émigrés were regarded with suspicion, and this included the émigré "oracles"; Walter Gropius and Erich Mendelsohn were welcomed and supported in their short stays only through the generosity of Jack and Molly Pritchard and their Hampstead friends, who worked hard on introductions and commissions. The need was for large design projects, blocks of flats and public buildings; gardens could only be incidental, and though Gropius and Maxwell Fry and Mendelsohn in partnership with Serge Chermayeff were to leave a valuable British legacy—as much by a kind of osmosis as by actual design—gardens were not a priority. Mendelsohn never really had time to discover an empathy with the English countryside and gardens. If he had, the story of the modern garden in Britain would surely have been a longer and more triumphant tale.

## America: The East Coast Landfall

The wisdom of hindsight now makes it clear that America was to be the spiritual home of the modern movement, but the actual transfer of ideas, ideas exploded out of old Europe by the First World War, was to be largely propelled by the Second. America had sampled the works of Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Oud, and Le Corbusier in the Modern Architecture International Exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in 1932, staged by the Museum's

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**Modern Gardens**

(continued from page 80) director Alfred H. Barr Jr., Henry Russell Hitchcock, and the young Philip Johnson, all of whom had travelled in Europe and brought back the exciting discoveries.

In 1936 Dean Joseph Hudnut of Harvard's Graduate School of Design travelled in Britain and Europe looking for the talents who could bring the modern movement to America; he famously rejected Mies and wooed Walter Gropius, who duly arrived at Harvard in March 1937. Dean Hudnut had also met Christopher Tunnard, and the opinions expressed in his *Gardens in the Modern Landscape* were thus immediately transferred to Harvard. Tunnard himself soon followed. The New York World's Fair of that year was enthusiastically modern: Niemeyer and Costa's Brazilian pavilion had a planting scheme by Roberto Burle Marx, and the General Motors exhibit was laid out by a young landscape architect of Californian upbringing with a Harvard MLA named Garret Eckbo. Eckbo and his Graduate School of Design contemporaries, James Rose and Dan Kiley, had been straining at the leash of the European traditions. "Pictures, pictures, pictures. What about environment? How about three-dimensional space experience?" These are some of the frustrated comments Eckbo had scrawled in the margins of his Harvard textbook. Exposure as a designer at the World's Fair had given Eckbo's views an airing. All three of them—Eckbo, Rose, and Kiley—expounded their views in the architectural press in 1938 and 1939, in what amounted to a new social and design agenda for landscape architects, and their "revolution" transformed the modern profession.

The most forceful exposition of Eckbo's ideas was in an article published in *The Studio* in 1939; here Eckbo recognized the basic and primary problem of the garden as the integration of the carefully ordered geometry of architecture with the apparent disorder, or at least fluid and organic form, of the natural site. The answer was not the imposition of one extreme upon the other, but an intimate blending of the two; the mere act of planting an ivy softens the geometry, and the careful placing of designed elements in elevation in the garden suggests order. His most characteristic stroke was on the subject of space—"man needs things around him and over him, as well as underfoot, to feel that sense of security and seclusion so essential to a good garden."

Eckbo's appreciation of "space," the three-dimensional experience, allied him to artists and sculptors, especially Constructivists, with whom he felt such sympathy; he extends this into belief in the "ultimate aesthetic possibilities" of materials. For the garden, he names the four fundamentals, earth, plants, rocks, and water—"The technique of earthwork is engineering but its concept of form should be completely sculptural, a three-dimensional modeling . . . to produce the most expressive form without catering to naturalistic or historic precedent. Planting is an arrangement of individual units of infinite variety in form, color, and texture: groupings organize space and make three-dimensional compositions akin to those produced by paintings and sculpture. Rocks are three-dimensional forms, the fundamental objects, and water is their complementary plastic and expressive element. All other materials must be subordinated to these four primary materials or the organic integration of man with nature is lost."

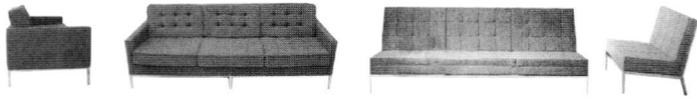
**Thomas Church**

What we now term the California School of modern gardens was inspired by two designers, the feisty Eckbo and his alter ego, Thomas Church. Church began his garden design practice in San Francisco in 1927, and for 10 years he designed and made "formistic" layouts of neat symmetry and compartments of clipped hedges, rather witty and slightly French in manner. But in 1937, after reading about Cubism and the Bauhaus, he went to Europe, searching out modernists, even meeting Alvar Aalto in Finland. On this trip Church found his own brand of modern theory, a personal philosophy based firstly on the admired functionalism, secondly on

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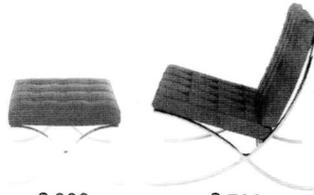
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## Modern Gardens

(continued from page 82) the use of modern materials, and thirdly on more abstract notions of spatial expression. This last point was to mark him out, take his work "beyond the mere satisfaction of requirements and into the realms of fine art." "Church developed a theory based on Cubism, that a garden should have no beginning and no end and that it should be pleasing when seen from any angle, not only from the house."

## The Modern Garden in Prairie and Desert

There were pressures upon the California dream which were to have a profound effect upon the garden. The first, in a word, was water; the discovery of an environmental consciousness in the 1960s meant that California was soon riven by arguments over the rising demands for water, and gardens were named as greedily anti-social devices. The dreaded shortage of water gave impetus to the environmentalists, a burgeoning wing of the design professions, there had long been a "natural habitat" wing to the modern garden movement, and this had now reached California.

The founding member of the Prairie School of design, Jens Jensen, arrived in America from Denmark at the age of 26 and took a job as a gardener for the Chicago City Parks department which lasted 14 years. His familiarity with the entire Midwestern range of plants, his sensitivity to their individual personalities, to their growth habits, and their comparison to the wild, all date to this long apprenticeship. He was only interested in enhancing the glorious landscape that nature had given America—he planted native trees, sugar maples and elms, "skirted" with flowering dogwood, shadblow, plum, redbud, ninebark and many others; his ground coverings were of blue *Phlox divaricata*, yellow lady's slipper, and purple violets. Jensen represented the ecologically conscious designers, before such a term had truly been invented.

Jensen's client list was impressive, and he was Frank Lloyd Wright's chosen collaborator. He had been most involved with Wright's early houses; he worked on the Coonley House and on the garden for the Sherman M. Booth house 1910-11, when his office was in the same building as Wright's. He was a frequent visitor to Taliesin and was inspired by it to found his own school, The Clearing, in Door County, Wisconsin, which still survives.

## Post-War Europe: A Second Flowering

The modern garden returned to post-war Europe in the hand-baggage of landscape architecture, as a kind of culture-supplement in the parcels of American aid to recovery. It was to be a device of reunification and of the reconstruction of bomb-shattered cities. Landscape architects were to provide the garden settings for new housing, hospitals and schools, and the workplace, whether factory or office complex.

Many aspects of the modern story, so drastically abbreviated by the war, were replayed: Corbusian tiers of flats would rise from natural gardens of asymmetrical planting. For families and retired couples there were to be houses with gardens, and design was to bless even the smallest plot.

Sylvia Crowe's *Garden Design*, published in 1958, was a complete textbook of history and design. The garden history section ended with "The Contemporary Garden" to which the author assigned the following definition: "The most recent of the long historic line of garden traditions which is now evolving in America began to emerge in Northern Europe during the first half of the century. It shows distant descent from the English landscape garden, overlaid with the Robinson-Jekyll tradition of planting, and a strong strain of Japanese influence, while the impulse of the Bauhaus school of architecture gave it a twist towards a new use of free form.

From this sprang a recognizable type of garden associated particularly with Scandinavia, remarkable for its domestic quality and its deceptive air of casualness. These are comfortable, unassuming

gardens, relying . . . on simplicity and sensitivity to organic growth. Ostentation or a heavy hand destroys them. Historically they are important because they set a standard of attainable excellence for the small and modest garden.”

### The Modern Garden: To Be Continued?

As we slip the bonds of the old millennium and of a century that has been obsessed with nostalgia for the past, is it possible that we can rediscover a belief in the present? Have we the courage to live with gardens and groves that honor our relationship with planet earth, in mathematical and scientific analogy, in ecological richness and minimalist serenity? If so, then we will have found a common bond with most of the early modern gardeners. Gardens are notoriously lag-gard, trailing in the wake of architecture and fashions in clothes and interiors; perhaps the exciting beginnings of 70 years ago were premature; perhaps the day of the modern garden is yet to come. ✱

*The Modern Garden* by Jane Brown (Princeton Architectural Press) is the first fully illustrated overview of the great gardens of the 20th century. It is available through the *Echoes* bookstore on page 92.

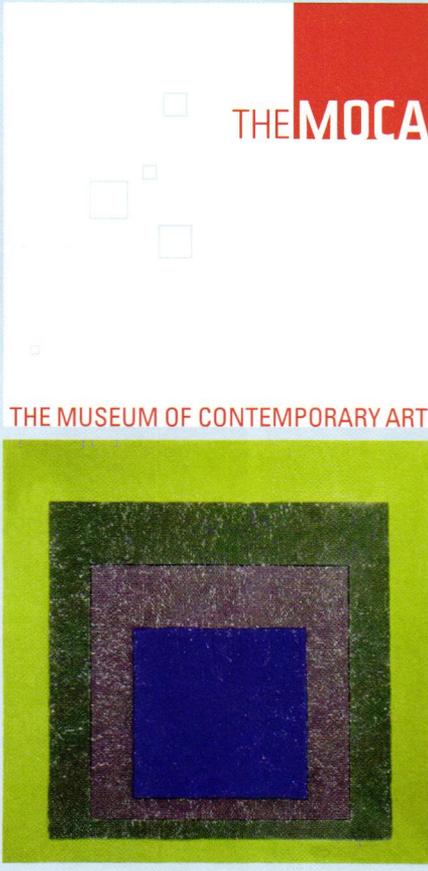
### Robin and Lucienne Day

(continued from page 60) Lucienne had collaborated with a number of progressive textile manufacturers; however, her partnership with Heal's, subsequent to the Festival, was to result in a highly original series of textile designs for the manufacturer over the ensuing two decades.

1951 was proving to be a very active year for the couple, who only two years previously had been relatively unknown outside of their immediate design circles. In the absence of any official British presence at the 1951 Milan Triennale, Robin received a personal invitation from the organizers to mount a display. With costs borne by Hille, Robin created a variation of his upmarket dining/living room interior that he had originally created for the Festival. Lucienne's *Calyx* textile formed the backdrop of the setting, and was rewarded with the prestigious Gold Medal. The successes of 1951 cemented the couple's reputation as the embodiment of *Contemporary* style, and afforded the designers *carte-blanche* in their respective interests in both the furniture and textiles industries. Their celebrity was used to the advantage of their manufacturers, and the couple was featured in various advertisements, to include a famous campaign for an alcoholic drinks manufacturer, where they are presented as the epitome of modern style and taste. Following the lead established by the American manufacturer Herman Miller, who applied the names of their designers—Charles Eames or George Nelson—to the labels found on furnishings, the British manufacturers began to follow suit, aware of the cult mythology attached to these designers' names.

The 1950s continued to be profitable for both designers, each exploring and extending the dialogue of their earlier designs. For Hille, Robin produced furnishings for both the domestic and contract markets, and throughout the decade produced a number of designs for televisions and radios for the manufacturer Pye. Lucienne enjoyed contracts with several other textiles manufacturers, and her style continued to mature, frequently inspired by plant formations, and with a spidery style reminiscent at times of the American designer Saul Steinberg, whose work, and sense of humour, she greatly admired. Lucienne produced wallpaper designs for both British and German manufacturers, and also designed linear patterns for porcelain manufacturer Rosenthal that were used on Raymond Loewy's 1958 *Service 2000* dinnerware. Although Robin and Lucienne practiced separately throughout the decade, on a creative and instinctive level they were in tandem. The spindly steel legs of Robin's Festival furniture were echoed by the fine spidery lines of Lucienne's early textiles, while near the end of the decade both moved independently towards broader, flat surfaces of color and texture.

The plastics revolution of the early 1960s was to present > 86



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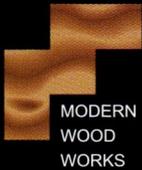
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## Robin and Lucienne Day

(continued from page 85) Robin with his most successful and versatile chair design to date. Inspired by the Eames's fiberglass shell chairs, Robin was to design an even more economically-produced alternative through the use of polypropylene to mass-produce seat shells. The single-form shell could be fitted to a variety of bases, thus reducing manufacturing costs. A single injection moulding tool was capable of producing 4000 seat shells a week, and since 1963 over 14 million chairs from the *Polyprop* series have been produced, making it the world's most successful and widely distributed low-cost seat. Robin and Lucienne's polymath design skills attracted numerous commercial commissions throughout the 1960s, to include the furnishings for Churchill College, Cambridge in 1964, and the interiors for airline BOAC's new Super VC10 passenger aircraft in 1967. From the 1970s onwards, Robin continued to design contract furnishings, to include stadium and auditorium seating, and in 1990/91, a range of industrial seating used widely throughout the London Underground. In 1975 Lucienne retired from commercial design, although she has remained creatively active, and of note are her series of silk mosaics handmade during the 1980s and 1990s.

Robin and Lucienne's early work is today highly sought after by collectors. Lucienne's textiles from the early 1950s will sell well, when available. *Calyx* is one of the scarcest textiles and was produced in several color-ways. The variant shown at the Festival and at the 1951 Triennale was printed on a beige field. A short length printed on the less desirable dark green field sold two years ago at auction for 450GBP. *Calyx* was retailed in the USA by Greef Fabrics; however, there also existed briefly in the US an unlicensed copy of the design which was printed on cotton sateen, rather than on linen. Examples of Robin's furniture that were used in the Festival buildings of 1951 are also extremely scarce, as all the furnishings were discarded and destroyed during refurbishments in the early 1960s. Only a handful of chairs appear to have escaped destruction, and a rare 1951 dining chair, bearing Festival Hall labels, was sold 12 months ago at auction for 2200GBP, a record for the designer.

In the 50 years since Robin and Lucienne first achieved international prominence at the Festival of Britain, they have consistently appeared at the forefront of modern domestic and industrial design. In tune with movements in international design, and with an ability to translate their ideas into an affordable, accessible and stylishly modern product, the couple was largely responsible for the introduction and acceptance of the "Contemporary" style in post-war Britain. Their early work has enjoyed a resurgence of interest, and several furnishings and textiles, including a version of the original 1948 MoMA prototype cabinet, have re-entered production and appear as timeless in today's market as they appeared innovative and stylish half a century ago. \*

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*Robin + Lucienne Day: Pioneers of Modern Design* by Lesley Jackson (Published by Mitchell Beazley, 2001) is available through the *Echoes* bookstore on page 92. The Barbican Gallery in London held a major retrospective on the works of Robin and Lucienne Day from February 8-April 16 of 2001.

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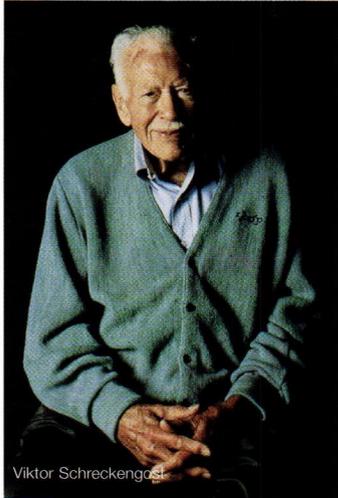
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# calendar september, october, november, december

## Shows/Events

### september



22 "Bowls, Bicycles and Beyond: A Conversation with Viktor Schreckengost" at 11am in the Museum Theater at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, CT. T: 860 278-2670  
 23 Butterfields 20th Century Decorative Arts auction in San Francisco and Los Angeles, CA. T: 415 861-7500  
 27-30 100% Design show, Earls Court in London, England [www.100percentdesign.co.uk](http://www.100percentdesign.co.uk)  
 29-October 2 International Art + Design Fair, 1900-2001 at the Seventh Regiment Armory, NYC, NY. T: 212 877-0202

### october

3 William Doyle Galleries' Belle Epoque: 19th and 20th Century Decorative Arts auction in New York, NY. T: 212 427-2730  
 4-7 Chicago Design Show at the Merchandise Mart in Chicago, IL. T: 800 677-6278. Web: [www.merchandisemart.com](http://www.merchandisemart.com)  
 5-7 Gramercy Park Modern show in New York, NY. T: 212 255-0020  
 10 Christie's South Kensington 20th Century Decorative Arts: Important Design auction in London, England. T: 44(0)2073213445. Web: [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)  
 19-21 International Vintage Poster Fair at the Herbst Pavillion in San Francisco, CA. Web: [www.posterfair.com](http://www.posterfair.com)  
 20-21 David Rago Modern Auctions' 20th Century Modern Auction Weekend in Lambertville,

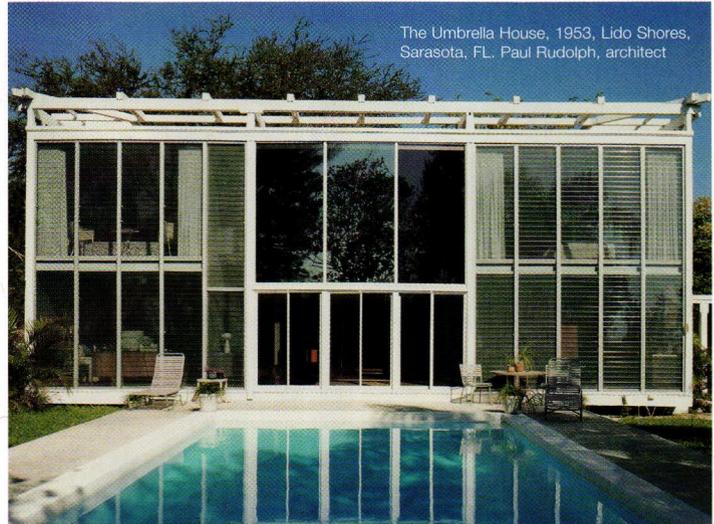
NJ. T: 609 397-9374. Web: [www.ragoarts.com](http://www.ragoarts.com)  
 20-21 Modern Times 20th Century Design Show & Sale at the Glendale Civic Auditorium in Glendale, CA. T: 310 455-2894. Web: [www.moderntimesla.com](http://www.moderntimesla.com)  
 21 Wright's Modern Art & Design auction in Chicago, IL. T: 312 563-0020  
 23 Christie's King Street Carlo Mollino auction in London, England. T: 800 395-6300. Web: [www.christies.com](http://www.christies.com)  
 26-28 International Vintage Poster Fair at the Metropolitan Pavillion in New York City, NY. Web: [www.posterfair.com](http://www.posterfair.com)  
 27 John P. Porter & Co. Mid-Century Estate Sale in Edmond, OK. T: 405 840-8444

### november

1-5 The Sarasota School of Architecture: An American Legacy Tour & Symposium in Sarasota, FL. T: 941 388-1400  
 3-4 The Modernism Show: An Exposition & Sale of 20th Century Design, 1890-1970 in Winnetka, IL. T: 847 446-0537  
 8-11 Modernism: A Century of Art and Design show at the Park Avenue Armory in NYC, NY. T: 212 777-5218. Web: [www.sanfordsmith.com](http://www.sanfordsmith.com)  
 10-11 Triple Pier Expo at the Passenger Ship Terminal Piers in New York, NY. T: 212 255-0020. Web: [www.stellashows.com](http://www.stellashows.com)  
 13 William Doyle Galleries' 20th Century Art and Design auction in New York, NY. T: 212 427-2730  
 16-19 Art of the 20th Century show at the Park Avenue Armory in New York, NY. T: 212 777-5218. Web: [www.sanfordsmith.com](http://www.sanfordsmith.com)  
 17-18 Triple Pier Expo at the Passenger Ship Terminal Piers in New York, NY. T: 212 255-0020. Web: [www.stellashows.com](http://www.stellashows.com)  
 24-28 The International 20th Century Arts Fair at the Seventh Regent Armory in NY, NY. T: 212 642-8572  
 29-30 Neocon West at the Los Angeles Convention Center in Los Angeles, CA. T: 888 791-5654. Web: [www.merchandisemart.com](http://www.merchandisemart.com)

### december

1-2 Art Deco-60s Holiday Sale at the Concourse Exhibition Center in San Francisco, CA. T: 650 599-3326. Web: [www.artdecosale.com](http://www.artdecosale.com)  
 2 Treadway Gallery's Objects 2001 auction in Chicago, IL.



The Umbrella House, 1953, Lido Shores, Sarasota, FL. Paul Rudolph, architect

MICHAEL ZIMNY

### Sarasota School of Architecture Tour and Symposium

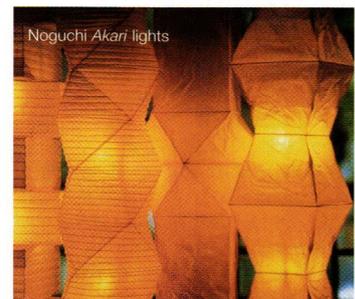
A five-day conference and tour on land and water of 48 structures designed by Paul Rudolph, Ralph Twitchell, and colleagues of the Sarasota School of Architecture will be held November 1-5. For information or registration visit [www.sarasota-architecture.org](http://www.sarasota-architecture.org).

T: 513 321-6742  
 2 Treadway Gallery's 20th Century auction in Chicago, IL. T: 513 321-6742  
 11 William Doyle Galleries' Barbie and Bakelite auction in New York, NY. T: 212 427-2730  
 12 Phillips' 20th Century Design auction in New York, NY. T: 212 570-4830  
 12-13 William Doyle Galleries' Couture, Textiles, and Accessories auction in New York, NY. T: 212 427-2730

### Museum Exhibitions

Through October 14 "Rooms with a View: Landscape and Wallpaper" at Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution in NY, NY. T: 212 849-8400. Web: [www.si.edu/ndm](http://www.si.edu/ndm)  
 Through October 14 "The Architecture of RM Schindler" at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. T: 202 272-2448  
 Through October 14 "California Pottery: From Missions to Modernism" at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in San Francisco, CA. T: 415 357-4000. Web: [www.sfmoma.org](http://www.sfmoma.org)  
 Through October 28 "The American Tradition & Walker Evans: Photographs from the Getty Collection" at the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, CA. T: 310 440-7300. Web: [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu)

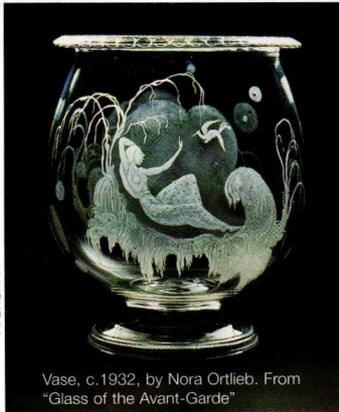
Through October 28 "Fred Schmidt: An Outdoor Sculpture Installation" at the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, PA. T: 215 340-9800. Web: [www.mchenerartmuseum.org](http://www.mchenerartmuseum.org)  
 Through October 28 "Stanton Macdonald-Wright and Synchronism" at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in Los Angeles, CA. T: 323 857-6000  
 Through November 11 "Defining Modern European Design, 1890-1935" at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in Houston, TX. T: 713-639-7300



Noguchi Akari lights

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Through November 20 "Isamu Noguchi" at the Designmuseum in London, England. T: 44 (0) 20 7940 8790  
 Through January 6, 2002 "A Century of Design, Part IV: 1975-2000" at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, in New York, NY. T: 212 535-7710. Web: [www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)  
 Through February 24, 2002 "Glass of



Vase, c.1932, by Nora Ortlieb. From "Glass of the Avant-Garde"

the Avant-Garde: From the Vienna Secession to the Bauhaus" at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Smithsonian Institution in NY. T: 212-849-8400

**Through March 24, 2002** "From Arts and Crafts to Modern Design: The Architecture of William Price at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. T: 202 272-2448

**September 8-November 25** "Brooklyn!" exhibition at the Palm Beach Institute of Contemporary Art in Lake Worth, FL. T: 561 582-0006 Web: www.palmbeachica.org

**September 12-April 28, 2002** "Cesar Pelli: Connections" at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. T: 202 272-2448

**September 14-November 3** "Theodore Brauner *Solarfixes*: Photographic Paintings, 1946-1952" at the Ubu Gallery and Janos Gat Gallery in New York, NY. T: 212 794-4444

**September 15-November 11** "Rudi Gernreich: Fashion Will Go Out of Fashion" at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Philadelphia, PA. T: 215 898-5911

**September 16-January 20, 2002** "What's Shakin': New Architecture in LA" at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, CA. T: 213 621-2766

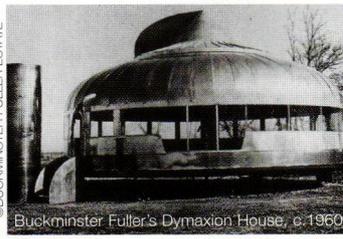
Web: www.MOCA-LA.org  
**September 20-December 15** "Modern Architecture on the Upper East Side" at the New York School of Design in New York, NY. T: 212 472-1500. Web: nysid.edu

**September 22-September 30** "Danes on the Move" exhibition at the International Design Center in Richfield, MN. T: 612 341-3441 Web: www.danesonthemove.com

**September 30-January 6, 2002** "Aaron Siskind and Franz Kline: Expression Through Abstraction" at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, CA. T: 213 621-2766. Web: www.moca-la.org

**September 30-January 6, 2002**

"Matta in America: Paintings and Drawings of the 1940s" at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, CA. T: 213 621-2766 Web: www.moca-la.org

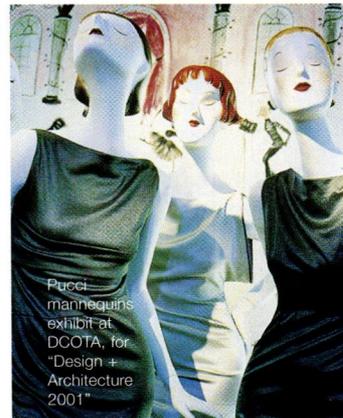


Buckminster Fuller's Dymaxion House, c.1960



Dymaxion House Interior

**October** "The Dymaxion House: A New Way of Living" at the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn, MI. T: 313 271-1620



Pucci mannequins exhibit at DCOTA, for "Design + Architecture 2001"

**October 1-31** "Design + Architecture 2001" in Miami, FL. Web: www.DesignAndArchitectureDay.com

**October 6-October 14** "Danes on the Move" exhibition at Copenhagen Contemporary Furniture in Columbus, OH. T: 614 459-7773

**October 6-February 17, 2002** "Architects of American Fashion: Norman Norell and Pauline Trigere" at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT. T: 860 278-2670



V-Chair by Paul Tuttle

**October 9-January 13, 2002** "Paul Tuttle Designs" retrospective exhibition at the University Art Museum, University of California, in Santa Barbara, CA. T: 805 893-2951. Web: www.uam.ucsb.edu

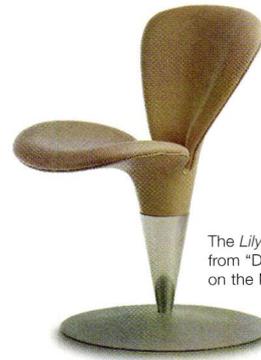
**October 11-January 8, 2002** "Alberto Giacometti" at MoMA in NYC. T: 212-708-9400

**October 12-October 21** "Wild Walls: Berlin/Los Angeles Film Festival of Architecture and Urbanism" hosted by the MAK Center for Art and Architecture and USC, held at the Schindler House and USC campus. Free public event. T: 323 651-1510 Web: www.MAKcenter.com

**October 12-January 6, 2002** "Vital Forms: American Art in the Atomic Age, 1940-1960" at the Brooklyn Museum of Art in Brooklyn, NY. T: 718 638-5000

**October 12-January 6, 2002** "Victor Brauner: Surrealist Eccentric" at The Menil Collection in Houston, TX. T: 713-525-9404 Web: www.menil.org

**October 16-January 12, 2002** "London Fashion" at The Museum at FIT in New York, NY. T: 212 217-7642



The Lily chair from "Danes on the Move"

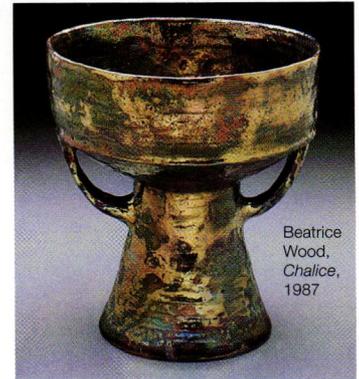
**October 20-October 28** "Danes on the Move" exhibition at House of Denmark in St. Louis, MO. T: 314 878-4800

**November 1-January 5, 2002** "Frantisek Vizner: 35-year Retrospective Exhibition of Sculpture and Drawings" at Barry Friedman Ltd. in New York, NY. T: 212 794-8950 Web: www.barryfriedmanltd.com

**November 3-November 11** "Danes on the Move" exhibition at Scandinavian Design in Chicago, IL. T: 312 337-4200 Web: danesonthemove.com

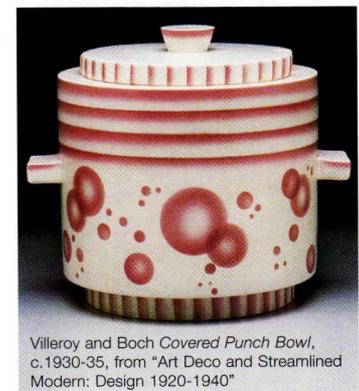
**November 3-25** "Living Modern: Architecture, Design and Art" at the Art Center Sarasota in Sarasota, FL. T: 941 388-1530

**November 6-December 1** "Beatrice Wood: Gilded Vessels" at the Garth Clark Gallery in New York, NY. T: 212 246-2205 Web: www.garthclark.com



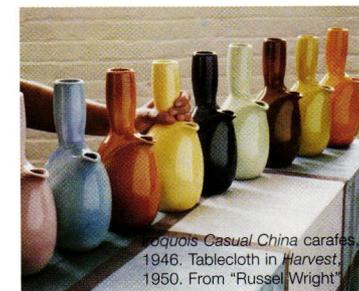
Beatrice Wood, Chalice, 1987

**November 17-November 25** "Danes on the Move" exhibition at Design Quest in Grand Rapids, MI. T: 616 940-0131



Villeroy and Boch Covered Punch Bowl, c.1930-35, from "Art Deco and Streamlined Modern: Design 1920-1940"

**November 18-Spring 2002** "Art Deco and Streamlined Modern: Design 1920-1940" at the Dallas Museum of Art in TX. T: 214 922-1200



Jeppia Casual China carafes, 1946. Tablecloth in Harvest, 1950. From "Russel Wright"

Mary and Russel Wright, 1940s



**November 20-March 10, 2002** "Russel Wright: Creating American Lifestyle" at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in NY. T: 212 849-8400

**December 15-April 7, 2002** "Aluminum by Design: Jewelry to Jets" at the Wolfsonian-FIU in Miami Beach, FL. T: 305 531-1001

## Wright the Weaver

(continued from page 67) for him, binding the house to nature in perfect harmony. In her book, *Pre-Columbian Art and the Post-Columbian World*, Barbara Braun notes that Wright may have called these "textile blocks" to distinguish them from ordinary prefab building blocks, and to allude to their origin in ancient textile art. Architect John Ulloth, of Eric Lloyd Wright's office, maintains that "Wright was not a stylist. He may have created buildings in a similar vein to the Maya but they were not an imitation." When asked why Wright never visited the Pre-Columbian ruins with which he shared an undeniable kinship, Oscar Muñoz of Taliesin West explained: "He perused his vast collection of photographs and books, but Wright never set out to see monuments. He only visited Chartres Cathedral in the Fifties," when he was 81.

Wright's Hollyhock House, 1917-1922, for Aline Barnsdall, took the form of a Pre-Columbian temple with abstract hollyhock friezes—part of a compound including a theater and a children's school. Wright met future client, Harriet Freeman, through Rudolph Schindler, who supervised the Barnsdall construction while he was building the Tokyo Imperial Hotel. Wright's clients were artists who embraced his idea of organic architecture dramatically sited on hills. According to author Vincent Scully, Wright's consistent refusal to acknowledge his ancient sources (which he called a "splendid confirmation" of his own work) was based on "his tragic need to keep the romantic myth of the artist as isolated creator and superman alive in himself." Historian Robert Sweeney now believes that "Wright was looking over his shoulder the whole time."

*"Concrete is a plastic material—susceptible to the impression of the imagination. I saw a kind of weaving coming out of it. Why not weave a new kind of building? The steel strands resist tension, and the concrete resists compression. Together, the two can resist stresses from any source"*

The first textile block house was conceived in 1922-23 for rare book dealers, George and Aline Millard. The site, framed by eucalyptus trees, hovered over a ravine in Pasadena. Wright hired "Monyana" men off the street to set the wood molds "with decayed granite, sand, and gravel on the site. The blocks might well have been of better quality. Some unnecessary trouble was experienced in making the buildings waterproof. All the difficulties met were due to poor workmanship, not to the nature of the scheme," Wright wrote in 1927. Architect Gary McCowen, who worked on restoring the house in the '80s, calls it "a romantic building, because it's entirely one-of-a-kind, created experimentally from wood > 90

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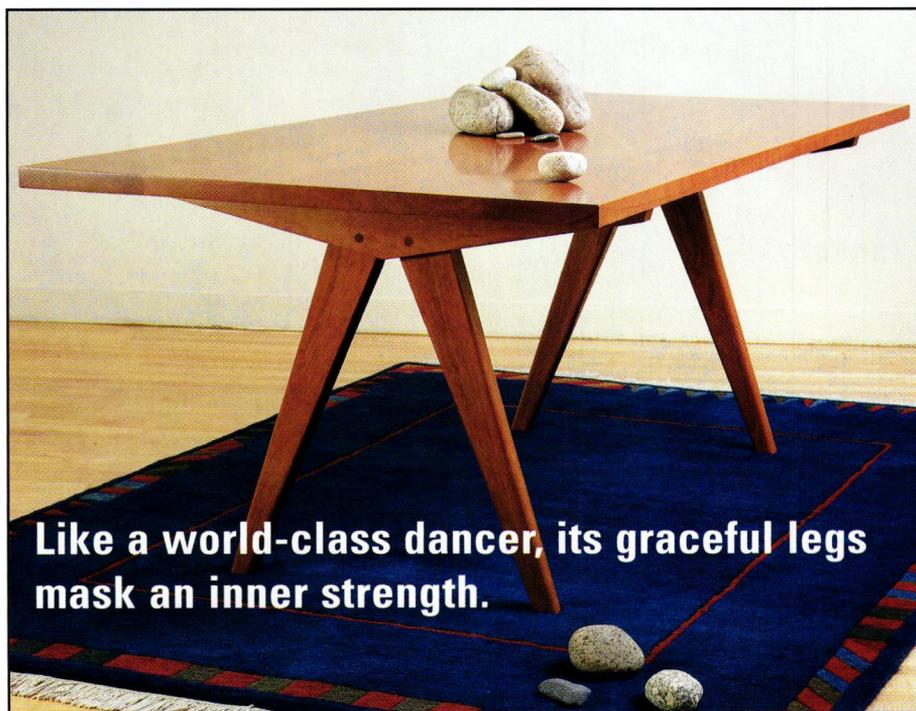
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## Wright the Weaver

(continued from page 89) molds with the blocks interlocked, not coffered or reinforced with rods as in the three later houses." Eric Wright explains: "When Wright saw the Henry Bowman House designed by my father, Lloyd, in 1922, with steel rods around concrete block pillars, he decided to incorporate that idea into his future textile block houses."

Wright's revolutionary structural system used cast-concrete blocks—16" square, 3 1/2" thick—which were coffered in back to reduce weight. When the walls were assembled in two layers, with a cavity in between, the blocks were reinforced (woven) with quarter inch square steel rebars, horizontally and vertically, representing the warp and woof of fabric. Grout was poured into the grooves between the blocks. Thus the blocks were both the skin and structure of the house, serving as exterior and interior walls of the same material. The patterned faces were created by applying wood or aluminum molds (for the last three block houses) to the dry packed concrete which was cured for 10 days before assembly. The high relief of these perforated blocks formed changing chiaroscuro shadows.

Wright used a variety of different patterns, symmetrical and asymmetrical, for his four block houses, keeping one or two patterns unique to each house. For the Millard House, he used a simple geometric pattern with the negative cruciform center surrounded by small squares. (The Maya kan cross, identified by historian Dimitri Tselos, symbolizing the four corners of the world, was seen in the mosaic friezes of Mitla palaces in Oaxaca.) Patterned blocks were interspersed with plain ones for walls, floors, and partitions which were woven into the building fabric, forming planes or corners in the round. The wide range of textures of the blocks created unique spaces in each house. The perforated blocks cooled the interiors when left open, or allowed light to penetrate the rooms when glazed.

**"I would rather have built this little house than St Peter's in Rome."**

The Millard House, dubbed "La Miniatura" by its owners, costing \$10,000, was originally intended to house their book collection. But after the roof terraces were added to the original design, the house rose three stories over the sunken ravine, doubling the budget. (Barbara Braun sees a connection between the upper balcony with French doors separated by patterned piers, and the Temple of the Jaguars over the ball court of Chichén Itzá.) Soon after it was completed, a rainstorm filled the house with mud, settling the foundations. Undaunted, Wright emptied out the debris and demanded that the City fill in the ravine with concrete as a future conduit for flashfloods. In 1926 Lloyd Wright designed

the studio "Doll's House" addition. When a new heater was installed, cutting out a four-by-four supporting corner post, Gary McCowen notes that this "caused the parapet to settle, and water to infiltrate the wood studs causing dryrot. But I'm glad the house was built. It stands for all the difficulties it went through." The present owner's renovation by Marmol and Radziner will be supervised by Eric Lloyd Wright, whose motto is to "use modern materials and methods to make things right."

Part of the allure of the textile block buildings was Wright's conception of organic architecture which integrated seamlessly with its surrounding environment. He mixed his concrete with decomposed granite on the site, to incorporate the same color and texture. This was a romantic idea which proved to be disastrously unpragmatic with time. The cast concrete blocks were composed of inherently unstable minerals which weathered when wet. The leaching feldspar formed soluble salts, which in combination with the sulphur in the mortar crystalized in the pores, producing efflorescence. Moisture was retained inside the blocks, and the steel rebars rusted. Today, the vintage concrete blocks crumble at the touch.

**"No house should ever be on a hill or on anything. It should be of the hill. Belonging to it. Hill and house should live together, each the happier for the other."**

The Charles Ennis House, (1923-1926,) was the most monumental (8000 sq. feet) of Wright's textile-block houses. Ennis, who owned a clothing store, was a Maya enthusiast, so Wright pulled out all the stops. Heroically perched on a hilltop, the temple-fortress is visible for miles. Great chunks of the huge retaining walls are strewn over the slope below, victims of time and earthquakes. The horizontal cubic massing and alternating bands of plain and decorated blocks on the canted walls are reminiscent of the ancient Mitla palaces of Oaxaca. The Maya grouping of structures around an open space is recalled in the central court terrace between the main house and the chauffeur's quarters over the two car garage.

The integral ornaments of the Ennis House concrete blocks are simple overlapping squares with a large negative square center and a single positive corner square. These motifs were rotated or cut in half. The cave-like entry hall is low and dark (6' 6" high) opening dramatically upstairs into a 22-foot high living room. The dining room is a more imposing space with a stunning panoramic view of the city, and a ceremonial bronze fireplace hood. "Surely no space in 20th century architecture is so suggestive of pagan ritual," Sweeney states in *Wright in Hollywood*. A 100-foot long loggia running the length of the house is lined with > 93



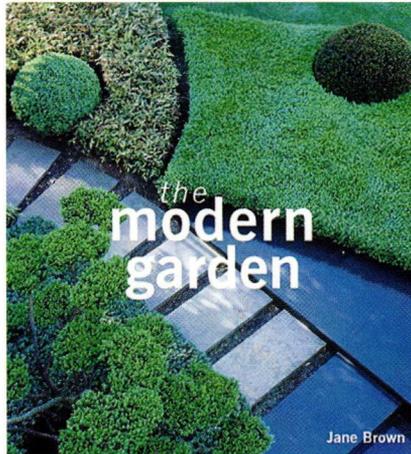
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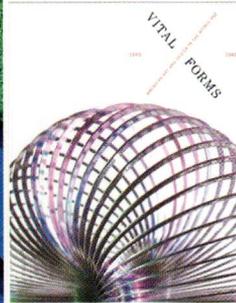
# great modern books

**The Modern Garden** (Princeton Architectural Press, \$45) *The Modern Garden* is the first fully illustrated overview of the great gardens of the 20th century. It examines hundreds of gardens created throughout the century and around the world, from the works of Geoffrey Jellicoe to Roberto Burle Marx, Russell Page to Dan Kiley. Author Jane Brown provides an authoritative and lucid study of this often ignored subject, revealing long-lost masterpieces as well as classic gardens. Eleven gardens are explored in special detail; photographed in spectacular color and supplemented by never-before-seen historical images.

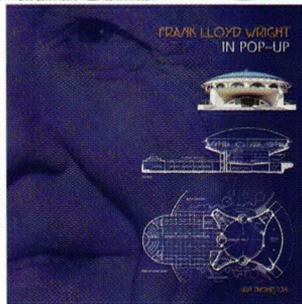
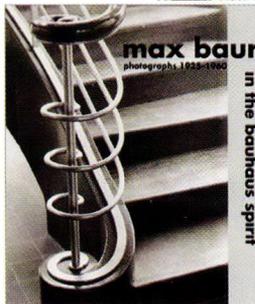


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**Vital Forms: American Art and Design in the Atomic Age, 1940-1960** (Harry N. Abrams, \$49.50) 1940 to 1960 was a compelling era for the arts in America. Artists and designers responded to the atomic-age anxieties of the post-war period with "vital" forms—organic imagery and biomorphic shapes based on nature. Examining visual arts from an interdisciplinary perspective, *Vital Forms* focuses on the development and ascendancy of this organic imagery. Essays place the works in historical context, and illustration is provided by hundreds of photographs.

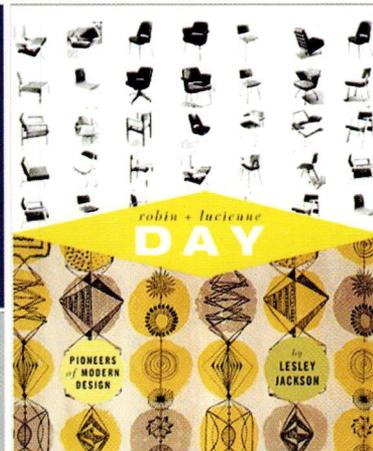
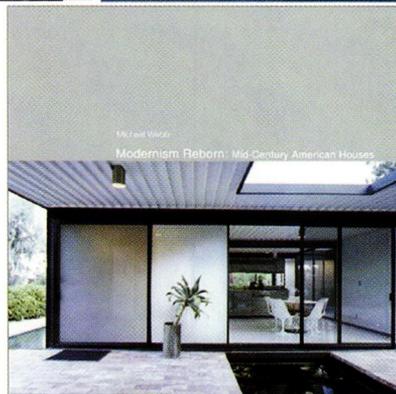


**Max Baur: In The Bauhaus Spirit, Photographs 1925-1960** (Stemmle Publishers, \$65) Max Baur is one of the great masters of modern photography, whose work is closely related to the famous photography of the Bauhaus school. This book presents the first survey of his oeuvre ever published.



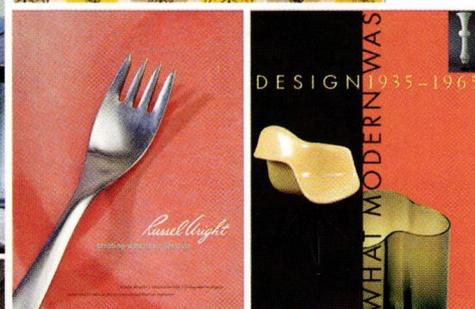
**Frank Lloyd Wright Pop-Up** (Thunder Bay Press, \$19.98) Using the latest in paper engineering, this book brings to life six of Wright's most famous buildings: The Robie House, the Charles Ennis House, Fallingwater, the Johnson Wax building and research tower, the Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church, and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum of Art.

**Modernism Reborn: Mid-Century American Houses** (Universe Publishing, \$39.95) In the first book of its kind, renowned architectural critic Michael Webb and ESTO photographer Roger Straus III examine 35 extraordinary modern houses that have been restored, enhanced, or extended by new owners who see them as timeless classics.

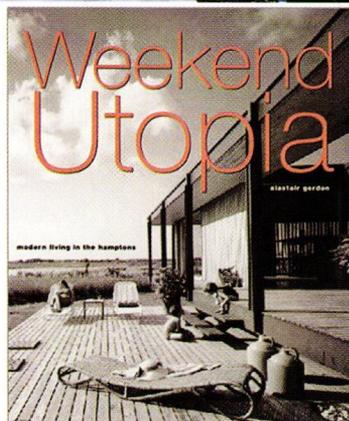


**Robin and Lucienne Day: Pioneers of Modern Design** (Mitchell Beazley/Princeton Architectural Press, \$50) Hailed as the British counterparts to Charles and Ray Eames, Robin and Lucienne Day electrified the British design scene in the 1950s with their startling furniture and textile designs. *Robin and Lucienne Day*, the first-ever full-length monograph on their designs, features never-before-seen archival material along with over 250 color images of the full range of their work, including furniture, ceramics, textiles, wallpaper, interiors, appliances, exhibit designs, and graphics.

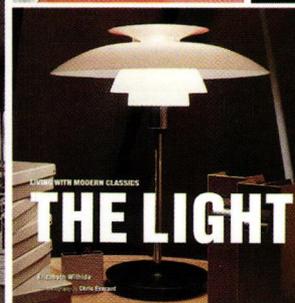
**Russel Wright: Creating American Lifestyle** (Harry N. Abrams, \$35) This volume—which accompanies an exhibition at the Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum—showcases more than 125 of Wright's best designs for mass-produced dinnerware, textiles, and furniture. Despite Wright's enormous influence, there has been no major survey of his work, until now.



**Weekend Utopia** (Princeton Architectural Press, \$45) Once quiet agricultural land, Eastern Long Island first became popular among artists, architects, writers, and society patrons in the 1920s, when it served as a breeding ground for modernism. In *Weekend Utopia* Alastair Gordon traces the area's history, both in architectural terms—looking at modest beach houses and modern mansions alike—and in the life stories of the world-famous artists and designers, whose influence is felt on "The Island" even today. Over 175 photographs and illustrations detail the architecture, interiors, and nuances of these beautiful weekend homes, and provide an intimate portrait of the people who inhabit them.



**Design 1935-1965: What Modern Was** (Harry N. Abrams, \$60) First released in 1991, this popular book has been re-released with 37 new color plates of previously black-and-white images. The book's encyclopedic coverage focuses on 200 of the finest decorative modern objects, complete with authoritative essays and detailed biographies of the designers.



**Living With the Modern Classics: The Light** (Watson-Guption Publications, \$19.95) Forty lights that have become enduring classics are showcased in this tribute that offers an introduction to the designers and their other notable work. Some of the 20th century's best known designs are shown, including Eileen Gray's tube light, Poul Henningson's *PH5* table light, Jasper Morrison's *Glo-Ball*, and Isamu Noguchi's *Akari* paper lanterns. Every light in the book is still in current production; an excellent resource list of retailers is provided.

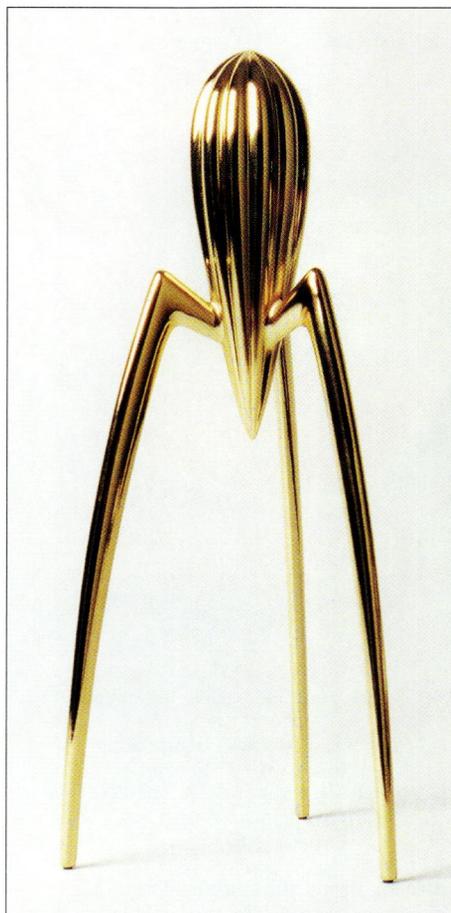
## Wright the Weaver

(continued from page 91) patterned concrete columns like those of the Temple of the Warriors of Chichén Itzá, Yucatan. By the fireplace in the loggia is a charming wisteria mosaic of colored glass tiles, by Orlando Giannini. Beside this mosaic is a 16-foot tall, narrow closet door made of one piece of solid teak. Half-expecting to discover the flowing robes of a Mayan priest, the visitor opens the door to find two 15-foot ladders. Closets are at a premium in Wright's houses. There is one in the hall, but none in the master bedroom. The Ennis' clothes were stored in the servants' quarters, from which they were carried by the maid, freshly ironed, to the bedroom.

This is the last house where Wright used art glass windows to punctuate his living spaces. The rectilinear glass segments are contained in zinc comes for 29 windows and three doors. Sweeney points out that these windows are not Wright's original rectilinear designs which were more graphically related to the building. Wright's theory of organic architecture claimed that ornament cannot be divorced from its setting and still be meaningful. This hasn't stopped owners of early Wright houses from removing the windows to sell at auction, or replacing them with air conditioners. Happily, the Ennis House windows are preserved intact.

The extraordinary metalwork details of the Ennis House were crafted by German ironsmith, Julius Dietzmann. The ornate iron front gates are embellished with linear meander patterns and Maya hieroglyphs, both authentic and invented. The bathroom fixtures include marble basins supported by iron legs. The hand-wrought light switch plates and door pulls are Maya-inspired. A dramatic bronze panel over the dining room fireplace depicts the "God of Fire, Xiuhtecutli," complete with magnificent quetzal plumage headdress and flaming breath. The figure was taken directly from a carved stone lintel from Yaxchilán, Chiapas, Mexico, 780 A.D. Eric Wright explains that: "Grandfather didn't approve of the ironwork because he saw it as an imitation of Mayan art. He was an astute observer of the basic concepts of Mayan and Native American art which he analyzed and synthesized for a different use of design. He adapted the Maya articulation of repeated patterns and slanted walls for his block houses."

The Ennises and Wright disagreed on interior decorating. Ennis installed black and white marble floors in the halls; Wright wanted gray shale for a more harmonious whole. Ennis chose orange ceramic towel racks and an orange tile *Mixteca greca* around royal blue tiled walls over Wright's suggestion of plain blocks and gold mosaics for the masterbath. Braun notes that in the Fifties, Wright merged his signature red square >94



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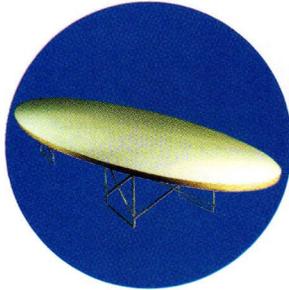
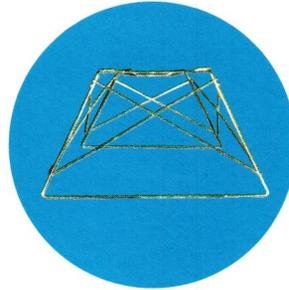
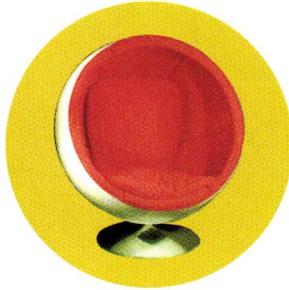
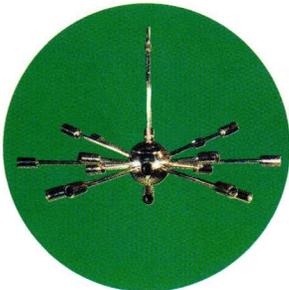
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## Wright the Weaver

(continued from page 93) with the Maya/Mixtec volute for his Taliesin Fellowship Square trademark. Muñoz maintains that Wright's only acknowledged direct influence was Froebel's geometric children's blocks.

Following the stock market crash, Mrs. Ennis was forced to sell the house in 1936. The Ennis House was bought by Augustus Brown in 1968 for \$119,000. He was the last of seven prior owners, most of whom let the house deteriorate (except for John Nesbitt, film producer, who installed a swimming pool in the north terrace in the '40s). A successful businessman who had grown up in the slums of San Francisco, Brown had always dreamed of living in a big house. "I saw Wright's magnificent but very dilapidated creation and wanted to restore it from its sorry condition in the spirit of Mr. Wright."

The non-profit Trust for the Preservation of Cultural Heritage took over the enormous project when Brown moved out in 1980. Nick Maraton, office manager for the Trust, estimates that the restoration of the concrete blocks and retaining walls which were severely damaged in the 1994 earthquake will cost six million dollars. "An earlier restoration effort painted the surfaces of the blocks with latex paint which was supposed to keep the moisture out, but water settled in behind it and the blocks were like sponges and disintegrated. The unpainted surfaces fared better than the painted ones. Lloyd Wright suggested that the steels bars in the blocks be coated with rust inhibitors, but unfortunately that wasn't done." Atmospheric pollution has sandblasted further damage to the concrete blocks.

*"We would take that despised outcast of the building industry—the concrete block—out from the gutter and make it live as a thing of beauty—textured like the trees, standing at home among other trees in its own native land."*

For 14 years, Wright's Freeman House has been visibly self-destructing on the brow of a hill. The house has stood empty since 1997. Harriet Freeman bequeathed the house to the University of Southern California in 1983, three years before she died there. When it was built on a dirt road in 1924, there was only one other house on the hill. Since then, the weight of the buildings on the unstable hill had pushed the house four inches down the slope. Wooden planks shored up the crumbling concrete blocks, and a blue tented roof guarded against the rain. Harriet's \$200,000 maintenance bequest had been spent on engineering restoration. The 1994 earthquake was very nearly the *coup de grâce*. USC has finally acquired the \$760,000 earthquake emergency repair funds, which combined with a \$500,000 donation and a Getty grant, financed the sinking of 23 caissons into the hill to make

the house structurally sound.

The Freeman House block depicts an abstract building with a eucalyptus tree. The walls are modular segments, not continuous surfaces as in the other block houses. Dave Chernow, the mason who will rebuild the house, explains: "The house would never pass today's structural codes. The walls have no tensile strength: they bent with the earthquake and never returned to their original shape because square rebars were used. We're going to cast new imprints of moldable plastic from the original molds for the tiles which will be mortared onto stable cement structural walls on both sides. The walls will be networked with round rebars which are more flexible. We'll save as many of the original blocks as possible; each block taken out is numbered." Dean Robert Timme of USC Architectural School says a "stronger concrete block is being developed to match the original in texture and color." (The block recipe is different for each house.) Wright's textile blocks are collected by museums and galleries as works of art.

There are historical and cultural reasons for saving the Freeman House. At 2500 square feet, it is the smallest and most audacious of the textile block houses. Owners Samuel and Harriet Freeman were bohemians, Communists, and passionate defenders of the arts. Sam owned a jewelry store downtown, and Harriet, a former hooper, taught Warner Brothers starlets how to high-kick. Through her sister, Leah Lovell (who taught at the Barnsdall children's school with Pauline Schindler), Harriet met Rudolph Schindler, who became her architect and lover. Schindler added a study with kitchenette between the two bedrooms as well as a garage apartment which the Freemans rented out to starving artists or blacklisted screen writers. Rhumba King, Xavier Cugat, before he hit the big time, could be seen on the terrace juggling his maracas and chihuahuas.

Having spent \$23,000 (twice the original estimate), the Freemans endured Wright's austere fireside pew benches until 1928 when Schindler replaced them with a more comfortable sofabed unit. Over 25 years, he designed 35 pieces for the Freemans. Recently his freestanding and built-in pine panelled furniture was pulled out and stored (possibly to be sold to museums) by Dean Robert Timme of USC architectural school, who found it "inconsistent with Wright's design." Julius Shulman, who photographed the house with Schindler's furniture in the '50s, was dismayed: "Harriet Freeman told me that without Schindler she wouldn't have had a house, because Wright deserted her in Tokyo building the Imperial Hotel. She commissioned the furniture, so it belongs in the house not in museums." The controversial question of restoring a house absolutely > 96



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Sadofski, and Dave Chernow for their contributions to this article. The Ennis-Brown House is open for scheduled tours. Phone: 323 668-0234. Frank Lloyd Wright's quotes are from his autobiography. For more on Harriet Freeman's relationship with Schindler and Wright see: "Neutra and Schindler: Consonance and Dissonance" by the author, *Echoes*, November, 2000.

**Photography credits:**

**PG.63:** David Sadofski. **PG.64:** Julius Shulman. **PG.65, clockwise from top left:** George Budd; Julius Shulman (2); Registered trademark courtesy the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, Scottsdale, AZ. Used with permission; Julius Shulman. **PG.66, clockwise from top left:** David Sadofski; Julius Shulman; Courtesy the Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, from *The Rise and Fall of Maya Civilization* by J. Eric Thompson; David Sadofski (2). **PG.67:** Julius Shulman

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**Upgrading an Icon**

(continued from page 72) parallel to and partially hidden from the street. To the right, a sensuously curved steel handrail leading to the rooftop terrace (a ubiquitous addition to any Modernist house ala Schindler and Le Corbusier) stops just at the point a hand would need a little help.

Though Harris responded to his client's needs, he did not sacrifice his own practices. On the interior, he applied his own nine-point list of dos and don'ts for dealing with small houses, such as using indirect lighting. As in many other Harris houses, here a continuous wooden cornice line at door height both unifies the entire interior composition and provides a subtle distinction between the lower portion of the room and the upper, often seen in Japanese residential architecture as well as in Schindler's work. The same neutral paint colors, simple materials, and floor coverings are used throughout. Here the original sand >98

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### Upgrading an Icon

(continued from page 97) color is used up to door height and white for the upper walls and ceiling. Harris reserved bright colors such as crimson and chartreuse for tile and fabrics.

The advice worked for Folonis as well when he replaced the carpet with maple flooring, maintaining the feeling of lightness and expansiveness flowing throughout the house. Concrete was used for the hearth; Harris first saw it used in Schindler's King Road House in Los Angeles in 1928.<sup>8</sup> Small gestures accomplished big tasks, a requisite in Modernist house planning. Just inside the entrance Harris used a small second curve tangent to the driveway that incidentally creates a curtained coat closet. More importantly, it gently but firmly orients a person *toward* the bright living room with its pair of 12-foot-wide sliding glass doors leading to the shallow balcony and *away* from the private spine of the house on the south.

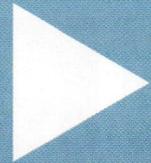
The architect also created big spaces on a very tight footprint for his tall, stoop-shouldered client, such as angling the six floor-to-ceiling glass windows of the bedroom to enlarge the view and bring the trees in. Harris found ways to make daily activities easy and graceful, such as curving all transitions between vertical and horizontal planes to eliminate places where dust would gather, or adroitly grouping cabinetry beyond eye-shot next to the fireplace (and just as discreetly renovated by Folonis to house 21st century entertainment needs). He also employed his trademark three-foot module both for building elements (3'x3' windows in the kitchen and bath) and room sizes (a living room of 15'x24', the bedroom 12'x15', the kitchen 9'x9'), arguing that it was a more domestic scale than a four-foot reference.

Folonis's Santa Monica-based firm overhauled the house structurally; to preserve the interior plaster, the exterior walls were removed to upgrade the mechanical systems and add insulation. Instead of leaving the drive as one glaring 10-foot-wide swath of concrete, the design team went back to Harris's drawings, where they discovered that he alternated bands of green grass and concrete (again, reminiscent of Neutra's treatment around the curved 1935 Von Sternberg House and its surrounding moat), a move which animates the sense of acceleration on the small hillside site.

The firm also renovated the kitchen and bath. Now a sunken bathtub is located where the toilet sat, originally awkwardly located so it was the fixture first visible from the bathroom doorway. The new kitchen maintains the same simple cabinetry detail that many Modernist architects used, substituting a hand-size angled in-cut for fussy hardware on doors and drawers, though now the tile countertop has been replaced with >103

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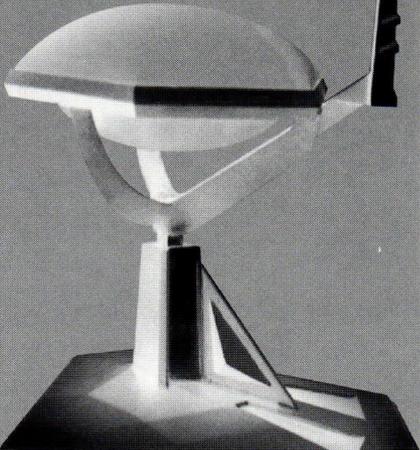
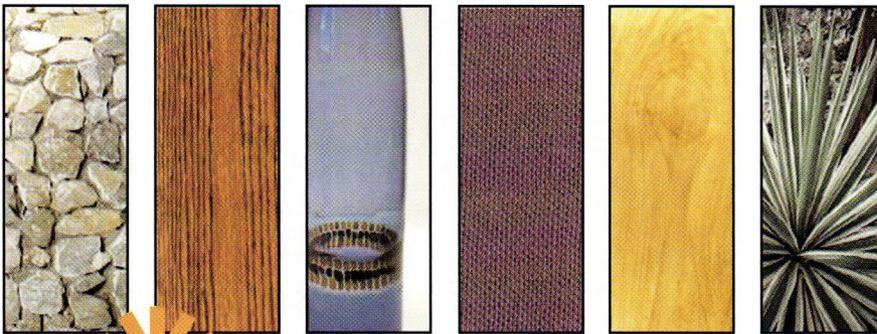
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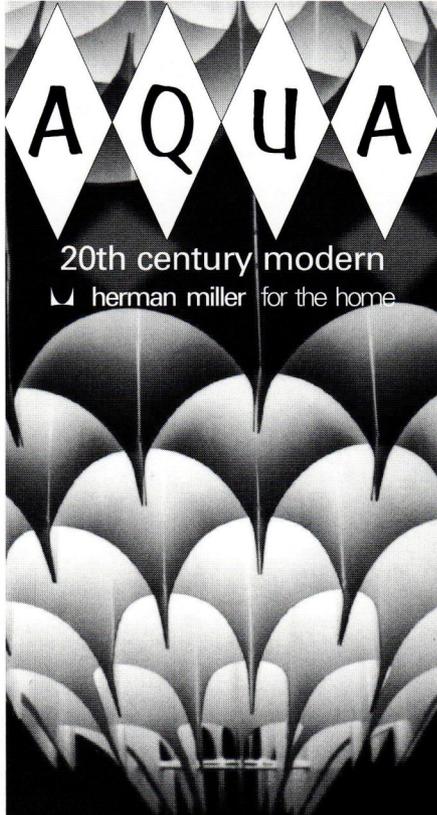
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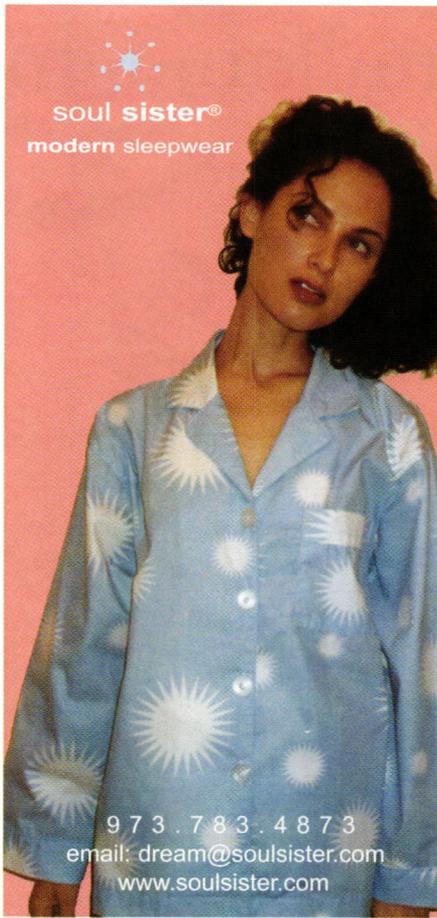
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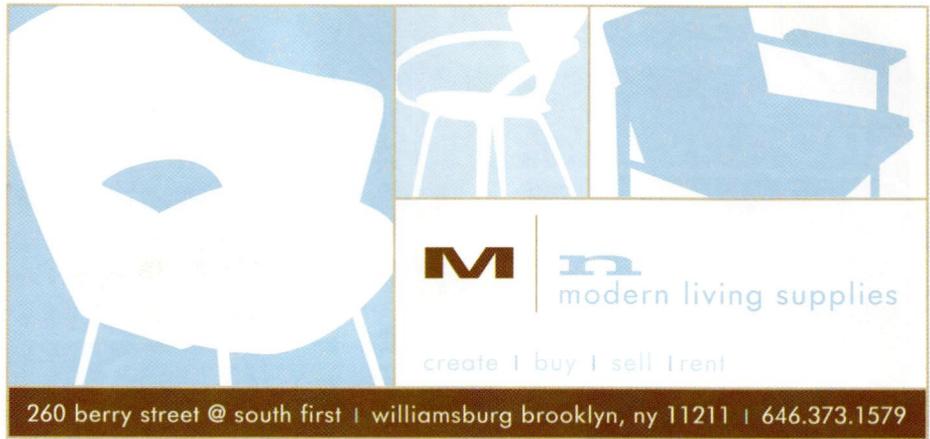


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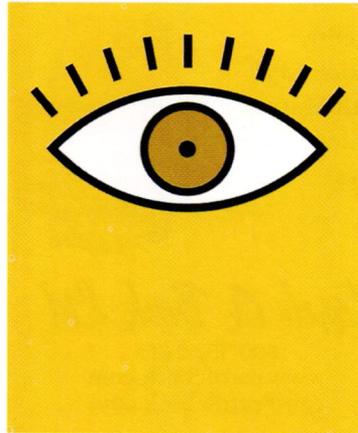
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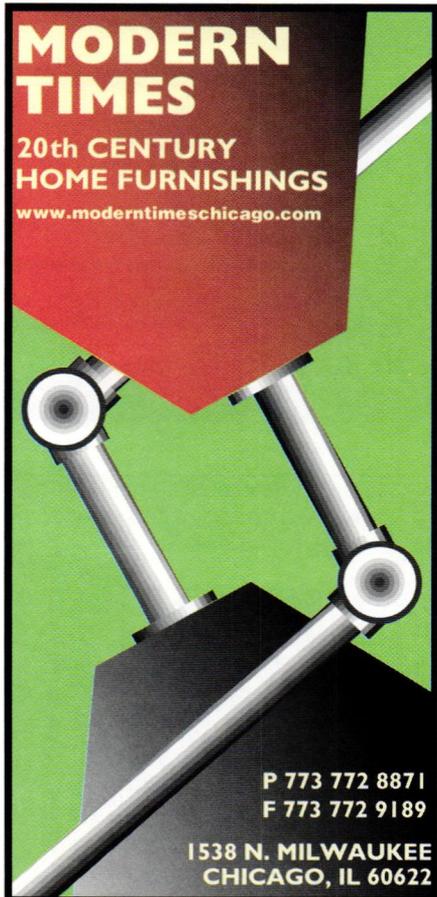
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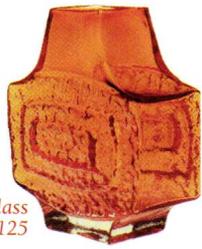
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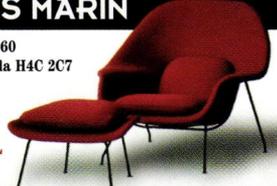


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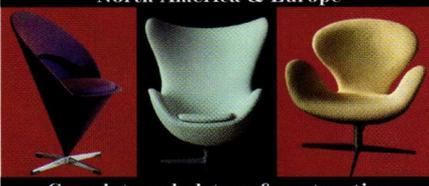
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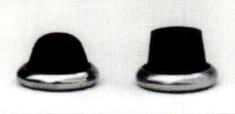
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## Upgrading an Icon

(continued from page 98) stainless steel and the poorly built white-painted pine cabinets with maple to harmonize with the floor.

In far better condition than the original, one might think Entenza would have applauded the work. \*

### Footnotes:

<sup>1</sup> Michael Folonis and Associates. Folonis is associate professor of architecture at the College of Environmental Design, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the old magazine used a gracefully seraphed arts-and-crafts typeface based on a woodcut to convey such article titles as *The Palm Springs Residence of Mr. and Mrs. John B. Smith, Gerard R. Colcord, Architect*. In the new magazine, the title is terse and direct: *Three House by The Architects Collaborative . . .*. The transition to *arts + architecture* began in 1938. It ceased publication in 1967.

<sup>3</sup> The first project was designed in 1945, the last in 1964. In their shapes and materials each project challenged suburban America to a richer, more stimulating way of living.

<sup>4</sup> Neutra's 1937 Malcolmson House, a few doors down the street, had just been built. Though it doesn't address the car and parking as Harris so successfully does, with its steel cantilevers from a central pier it is structurally much more ambitious. Formally it strikes a remarkably similar pose to the Entenza House in its white stucco cladding; the sensual, minimalist handrail detail leading to the roof; and the curved glass volume in back. Harris worked on several Neutra projects which shared such strategies in the 1920s and early '30s.

<sup>5</sup> Lisa Germany, *Harwell Hamilton Harris*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), pp 50

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66-8.

<sup>7</sup> *California Arts and Architecture* 52 (July 1937):33. See also Germany.

## Up Close: HM/FM House

(continued from page 47) House, updates modernism's aesthetic simplicity by imbuing warmth and livability into their projects while not losing sight of an inventive, intellectual rigor. *see resources for details*

## Object Focus

(continued from page 24) entirely different materials, is not a bona fide chair—one with four traditional legs.

Of course, since the Pantone chair, there have been cheap, if unattractive, one-piece plastic garden chairs that were forced to include "L"-profile legs to offer strength.

With the search continuing into the '90s for a chair with solid, or solid-looking, legs and a price tag of less than \$100, along came Alan Heller. With a history steeped in plastics since the early '70s, he had pioneered the use of Melamine for dinnerware and the upscale application for storage units of today's ubiquitous transparent polypropylene.

In 1997, Heller sought to solve the solid-leg problem, courageously so since he is not a big manufacturer. Partnering his dream with the staff of Mario Bellini, the designer with a 40-year-old Milanese practice, they ultimately chose a fiberglass-reinforced polymer for their new-concept chair.

chair. The 1998 result of the marriage was the first gas-injection molded chair—sturdy, thin-legged, stackable, inexpensive, and pretty. Its realization demanded the use of special molds and equipment that could shoot a gas into and then be evacuated from the plastic material while all four legs were being simultaneously formed, leaving a more or less uniform wall.

As with many technological innovations, the *Bellini Chair* called on an idea that was mimicked shortly after its introduction by Jasper Morrison's funky but highly successful 1999 *Air-chair* for Magis—its title thus derived from the air or space in the legs. (However, Magis's 1998 one-piece polypropylene *Wait* chair by Mathew Hilton that incorporated the chubby, homely "L"-profile leg of former garden chairs was a dud, no matter its cheap price.)

The ingenuity of the Bellini gas-formed leg lies in the realization that a hollow leg is stronger than a solid one. So why didn't someone think of this long before now? \*

## New Moderns

(continued from page 28) *shelter, and clothing, that basic necessity thing. I think our products are important, somewhere between shelter and clothing. I am trying to mix it up.*

### JH *Are there any American companies that really interest you and why?*

ND *I think that there are numerous opportunities for improvement in a lot of companies in the U.S.: from Airstream to Kohler and more. We'll see. How much does it really cost a big company to do some design experimentation? It's frustrating; not a lot happens. It's important that U.S. companies start taking stock of the design talent in America.*

### JH *So, do you still collect mid-century?*

ND *I have not bought a piece in five years but still own quite a few. It is not as interesting to collect something that a lot of people now own. It will go out of fashion again, but I will still appreciate it and understand it. I was there before it was in Pringles commercials.*

### JH *What is your process?*

ND *I do lots of hand drawings, and then I give them to someone else to tweak on the computer. Then I edit their work. When I used to do everything on the computer I found it limiting because I would get too involved with the tool.*

### JH *Mmmm, what else?*

ND *I gotta go see my wife and kids. They are more important than design. Later. \**

OOOps: In last issue's article Marcel Wanders' company name was misspelled. The correct spelling is Moooi. We apologize for the error.

## resources

**HM/FM House** / pages 15-16

**1100 Architect:** 435 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014. T: 212 645-1011. **Repettoire** (props and styling): 114 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02114. T: 617 426-3865, also: 75 Grand Street, New York, NY 10013. T: 212 219-8159.

**Fantastic Plastic** / pages 20-23

**M.A.D. Design (Modern Art & Decoration) design:** Specializing in modern art, furniture (1950-2000), and design. Located in the center of The Hague, The Netherlands. <http://www.mad-design.nl>.

**Cuisine Mediterraneo** / pages 30-33

(Shown in Contents, pg.4): Lindt **Stymeist plate** from MXYPLYZYK; **Glass** from Mr. Pink; Georg Jensen **fork** from reGeneration; Glass **bottles** from Bongo Lounge. **MXYPLYZYK:** 125 Greenwich, New York, NY 10014. T: 212 989-4300. **Bongo Lounge:** 299 10th Avenue, NYC. T: 212 947-3654. **Ad Hoc:** 136 Wooster Street, New York, NY 10012. T: 212 982-7703. **Mr. Pink:** 223 West 16th Street, New York, NY 10011. T: 646 486-4147. **reGeneration:** 38 Renwick Street, NYC, 10013. T: 212 741-2102.

**The Deadline** / pages 38-43

(shown in Contents, pg.4): Tan suit **jacket** and **slacks** by Theory, \$310/\$210, Bloomingdales; Lime green linen **shirt**, \$38, Gap; Green **top** with dots, \$24, Gap; **Shoes**, stylist's own; Metal **table/chair** by Blank and Cables, \$240, Room Service; Light Green **phone** by Vtech, \$29.99, Target. **Modern Amusement (C.M.):** 770 W. 17th Street, Unit A, Costa Mesa, CA 92627. T: 949 642-7053. **Modern Amusement (L.A.):** 8038 W. 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048. T: 323 653-6153. **KBond:** 7257 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036. T: 323 939-8866. **Room Service (L.A.):** 8115 3rd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90048. T: 323 653-4242. **Shelter:** 7920 Beverly Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90036. T: 323 937-3222. **Bloomingdales:** nationwide. **Nordstrom:** nationwide. **Gap:** nationwide. **Target:** nationwide. **Ikea:** nationwide. **Urban Outfitters:** nationwide. **Color Crush:** [www.colorcrush.com](http://www.colorcrush.com).

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## final thoughts

For young people today, it must be difficult to imagine the restricted atmosphere—social and every other way—that hemmed in those of us who grew up in the early 1900s. In architecture, the ‘modern movement’ came like a liberation, a clearing of the mind. No more copying of styles; ‘think things through from scratch;’ functionalism. We ‘girls’ at the Cambridge School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture agreed that the approach to architecture that we were learning applied to all aspects of life. We still think so.

Sarah P. Harkness, founding partner  
The Architects' Collaborative, 1994