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EDITED BY SHAX RIEGLER

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A language

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The all-new A8 L.
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PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK

On the Oregon Trail 106
Rob and Maria Sinskey pack up family and friends and hit the road to visit the small farms that are restoring quality to American food.

PRODUCED BY LORA ZARUBIN

on the cover
From children’s rooms to country estates, summer is the time to keep things simply chic. Pink peonies fill the Samoa teapot of Limoges porcelain, $570, by Jean Louis Coquet from Lalique. 800-993-2580. Follement demitasses, $60 each or $335 for a set of six, by Christian Lacroix, and lacquered silver teaspoon, $420 for a set of six, all from Christofle. 877-728-4556. In background, Jasper Conran’s Daisy fabric in Black Ink by Designers Guild, through Osborne & Little. Photographed by Suzy Kim.
As I See It, #1 in a photographic series by Hugh Kretschmer.

The Kathryn™ lavastone console in Citron. A refreshing lemon that’s anything but vanilla.

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kohler.com/citron
T IS A RAINY SUMMER SUNDAY, another day in a week of relentless, torrential downpours. At first the rain is a welcome respite from the sun that scorches and withers plants and skin; soon, though, the rain becomes cause for alarm. The gutters are clogged and rain is washing down the windows, seeping in over the sills. Mysterious jets are springing out of the retaining wall at the back of the garden; rain is sluicing its way across the driveway onto what was once my terrace, and is transforming it into a swimming pool. The sump pump in the basement has come clanking to life, but it is an ancient machine and moves arthritically, creaking and grinding, complaining, dangerously overloaded.

I cannot weed; I cannot plant; I cannot prune; I cannot mow. I am housebound but feel like beating my wings against the bars of my cage; I look outside and there is so much to do. The weeds luxuriate; they seem almost to snicker. I can go to work on the gutters. I put on a raincoat and sneakers and march purposefully out to the garage to get the extension ladder, and that is when I learn that I am the proud owner of yet another useless gadget in my arsenal against the inexorable decay of the house. The ladder is so heavy that I cannot budge it. How did I ever hang it on those pegs? I remember that my father and brother were with me when I brought it home from the hardware store. Alone, I don't have the strength to handle it. And what was I thinking, exactly, when I bought a ladder that could reach higher than two stories? I was thinking that I could shore myself up against trouble. Here is trouble, and I am helpless against the waters lapping at the foundations of my house.

I am once again at the mercy of the plumber, or the roofer, or any genius who can calculate and divert the runoff pouring into my basement from the neighbor's uphill grounds. I will take help from anyone who will take my call. The gutters can wait. Indoors again, I get to work sorting through piles of catalogs. I can never get rid of them; they are the mailbox perennials, and I am addicted to them. The catalogs are full of the season's amazing gadgets: motorized floats that will spin you and your cocktail across the surface of your pool, for those too languid to paddle; outdoor heaters—40,000 Btu!—that will warm the air around your chaise, for those too weary to get a sweater. It is impossible not to start reading them, not to wonder at who would spend money on such things —and wonder, too, where I will store everything I am ordering. How do you get a life where flirting with the edge of infinity in your pool is your biggest problem? And why? Why do we need help with problems we do not even know we have, when we cannot get help for the problems lurking under the eaves?

One catalog catches my eye, probably because there is a picture on the cover of a man with a wrench, bending over a puddle of water, and a woman behind him, her face a mask of shock and despair. I can relate to this. All my appliances leak. Even the toaster. The catalog, Duluth Trading, turns out to specialize in tools and gadgets for the serious tradesman. It is filled with lethal-looking things like a machete (with leather scabbard), a flame tool, patella knee pads, contractor's consoles, lineman's utility buckets, antivibration gloves, a calculator that "instantly finds lengths for common rafters and solves concrete square-ups and slopes," and enough holsters and buckets and holders and pouches to organize an elementary school. What a mysterious world of gadgets; they are seductive. You get tricked into thinking that your problems could be fixed if only you had the right tool. But the tools are meaningless in the wrong hands. Incredibly enough, the cover of the catalog turns out to be advertising the solution to an age-old problem known in the trade as plumber's crack: a T-shirt with an extra-long tail to cover the backside of the guy kneeling on the floor, his head in the cabinets under your sink, his jeans—well, you get the picture. More problems we didn't know we had. I would not mind if the plumber arrived wearing a bikini. Around here it would take a crack in the fabric of reality for the plumber to show up at all.

The rain lets up a bit. The sparrows nesting in the ivy that covers the neighbor's garage part their curtain wall and swoop and dive through the drizzle. I watch from my window as they land in my gutters, pluck out pine needles and catkins from the oak and bits of straw and even the shredded plastic wrappers of cigarette packs left behind by the roofer, and return with the debris tucked into their beaks to shore up their nests. Soon my gutters are running again. What a clever gadget a sparrow turns out to be.
Bombay Sapphire Martini
by David Rockwell

SAPPHIRE INSPIRED
Soft, luxurious and more colorful than ever. The Royal Velvet collection for bed and bath.
In the world of haute couture, there is one thing every model wants: a cover. And the entirely new RX 330 is no exception. Of course, with features like a Rearview Camera, Dynamic Laser Cruise Control, Adaptive Front Lighting System, Power Rear Door, Air Suspension, DVD Rear-Seat Entertainment, 7-speaker Mark Levinson® Premium Audio System and Class-Leading Fuel Economy, it’s obvious that looks alone aren’t everything. The ingeniously luxurious RX: suitable for fashion ramps everywhere, including those on the highway.
domestic bliss

A wizard’s tent makes any room seem magical, while an adult-sized seat is a perfect throne for the wee and a comfortable perch for the weary (their parents). See next page for details.

Create spaces for kids where their fantasies can come true, from a fairy-tale castle to a room that feels like a great summer camp. Here’s our portfolio of ideas.

PRODUCED BY JAMES SHEARRON AND VIRGINIA TUPKER
PHOTOGRAPHED BY SUZY KIM • WRITTEN BY INGRID ABRAMOVITCH
Not all kids' furniture has to be pint-sized. In a child's playroom castle, an adult-scale chair becomes a sturdy throne.

- Every sorcerer needs a private place for casting spells—and playing hide-and-seek. Create a magical corner with the Wizard tent from Fleur, $295, in purple canvas. 866-397-3300.
- Hickory Chair's Tuscan armchair makes a majestic perch for a tiny royal. 800-349-4579. It is covered in Hogwarts-worthy Giza fabric from Clarence House.
- Turn Brunschwig & Fils's Stonework wallpaper into a castle wall by cutting crenellations into the top edge.
- When children are at play, floors take a beating. InterfaceFor's square fiber tiles are easy to install and clean, and won't damage floors underneath. $10 each. interfaceflor.com.
- For the final Midas touch, hang a six-light gold-leaved crown chandelier. Available for a princely $5,575 from Lampworks. 888-526-7967.

Make a bedroom feel like summer camp all year long. All you need is bunk beds (and a moose)

- Lake in the Woods, a wall mural from Environmental Graphics, gives kids a room with a view. The line of murals—used in many movie and TV backdrops—includes a moonscape and the Manhattan skyline; they can be trimmed to fit any wall. About $100, by special order, Home Depot. 800-553-3199 for stores.
- For stylish kids' furniture, try Pottery Barn's new PBteen catalog, which carries the Locker dresser, $449, Camo pillowcase, $24, and ripstop blanket, $39. 866-472-3X11.
- IKEA's Tordal bunk bed, $69, is a classic. 800-434-4532.
- This summer, Mars will be closer to Earth than at any other time in recorded history. View the planet's polar caps with a Celestron telescope, $100, from Astrotec. 877-278-7683.
Turn a patio umbrella into the focal point of an indoor rumpus room filled with graphic shapes, candy hues, and groovy knockabout furniture.

- Make an indoor shelter out of an outdoor umbrella. (Just trim the pole to kid height.) Here, the Siam umbrella in natural, $1,107, Janus et Cie. 800-245-2687. Or check out Pottery Barn's Market umbrella, from $79. 888-779-5176.
- Don't confine outdoor fabrics to the patio—water-resistant and scrubbable, they are perfect for a child's room. Giati Designs offers great colors like Lime and Daffodil.

Who says sophisticated furniture doesn't belong in a child's room? A classic daybed and slipper chair will grow with your daughter.

- Invest in children's furniture with grown-up style. A daybed could one day be moved to a hallway, while a child's slipper chair has the right scale for a bathroom. Gustavian bed and Emma chair, Country Swedish; white acrylic cube, Albrizzi Design.
- Black-and-white with pink is so very Eloise. On the chair and walls, Jasper Conran's mod Daisy fabric.
- Start a teacup collection. Christian Lacroix's cups and saucers, $60 each, are too fragile for play, but can come out for special occasions. Christofle. 877-728-4556.
- What's a tea party without a guest? Piglet, $18, and other stuffed creatures, FAO Schwarz. 800-426-8697.
A grand hotel offers ideas for summer decorating

by Ingrid Abramovitch

Congress Hall, a colonnaded Victorian hotel in Cape May, NJ, reopened last summer as a seaside stunner. Colleen Bashaw, a Ridgewood, NJ, interior designer who has worked for Parish-Hadley (and is a granddaughter of the preacher who once ran Congress Hall as a religious retreat), shows us how she mixed beachy charm with sophisticated elegance.

The seashore inspired the designer's colorful palette of yellows and blues. Bashaw asked Sherwin-Williams to custom-mix the perfect azure for the guest rooms, left, and a turquoise inspired by the ocean for the ballroom, far left. The pillows are in Rose Cumming's Shell stripe.

"I wanted a floor good for dancing barefoot after coming in from cocktails on the beach," Bashaw says. In the turquoise ballroom, stained black and white diamonds spiff up the original wood planks.

Even the urbane lounge gets a touch of the beach: vintage white shell lamps stand out in the chocolate brown room. Shades from Oriental Lampshade Co., NYC. 212-832-8190.

A coat of paint freshens up old wicker furniture. In the lobby, Bashaw painted vintage wicker black and added upholstered seats in white chenille with black horsehair trim. Cabana stripe lampshades made from Scalamandre's cotton-and-silk Carnival stripe are the crowning touches.
IT'S A BIT OF A CONTROL FREAK.

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When Claire Murray hooked her first rug, 
she had no idea what she was starting

by Catherine Newton

Claire Murray clearly remembers 
the day she first saw someone 
hand-hooking a rug. A girl in 
hers fourth-grade classroom in 
Washington state was working 
on a big yellow star. Murray was intrigued. 
Several decades later, across the continent, 
a 30-something Murray found herself on 
a ferry from Nantucket to the mainland, 
standing at a woman hooking a rug, and she 
knew it was time. She wanted—needed—to 
learn the craft that had long ago captured 
her imagination. The woman on the ferry 
sent Murray to Maggie Meredith, an artist 
who had been teaching a group of islanders 
how to create one-of-a-kind traditional rugs. 
Murray was hooked.

What she didn't know at the time was that 
she was planting the seed for a cottage industry that would grow 
into an international home accessories business. What she did 
know was that she loved making rugs and that she needed them.

Passion and necessity have been the twin cornerstones for 
the life decisions of Murray, who trained in printmaking and 
sculpting at the National Academy School of Fine Arts in New 
York City. She moved from Manhattan to Nantucket in the late 
1970s and became an innkeeper, because she wanted a safe 
place to raise her daughter. A newly divorced, single mother, she 

knew nothing about the hospitality industry. Nevertheless, she 
fell in love with a house on Fair Street and turned it into an inn, 
putting gardens in the backyard and decorating each of the 
eight guest rooms with her own handmade quilts and the rugs 
that she designed and hooked during long winters on the island.

Not long after, the rugs became a business. The owners of 
Nantucket Needleworks, who sold six-ply virgin merino wool 
yarn from New Zealand, were going to retire and give up their 
shop. Murray needed a yarn source, and bought the shop in 
1986. Even though, she says, "I knew nothing about retail." She 
began selling her patterns and finished rugs. Soon she renamed 
the shop Claire Murray, and the brand became a must-have 
among the crowds that descend on the island every summer.

Today, there are a dozen Claire 
Murray stores in New England and 
South Carolina that exclusively carry 
her handmade rugs and other 
high-end accessories. Murray is now 
working to bring her designs to differ-
ent markets. With her staff, she has 
developed 25 product lines—table-
ware, kitchen textiles, bedding, bath 
accessories, loungewear, sweaters— 
carried by more than 8,000 retailers. 
This summer she started offering 
handbags, and this fall she will launch 
a line of shoes. Motifs range from 
gardens and animals to scenes of 
Provence and, of course, Nantucket. 
"What I do," she says, "is translate 
the things I love—the cornflower blue 
of Nantucket skies, the grays of the 
island's shingle houses, the wonder-
ful colors from the gardens."

And while the translations take many forms 
these days, Murray notes that her products 
are always inspired by one initial work of art. 
She starts at the floor, then works her way up 
and throughout the room, interpreting the 
original design for other objects. As Murray 
says, in an apt metaphor for her corporate 
success, "It always starts with a rug."
Laura Innes, *ER*

Playing a character so lacking in vanity for the past seven years has given Innes a new perspective: “Women are about so much more than just appearances.” She finds that cosmetic procedures can sometimes strip women of their individuality. “Everyone starts looking alike at a certain point. A woman’s true vitality comes through when she’s just being herself.”

Breathe new life into your skin. Daily Regenerating Serum contains the highest concentration of Amino-Peptide Complex from Olay, which means it delivers maximum hydration and regenerates skin’s appearance. Gentle enough for use day and night, it minimizes the look of fine lines, evens skin tone and leaves skin feeling velvety smooth.

SECOND SKIN

Olay Regenerist gets deep with three actresses who love the skin they’re in

They say no to drastic measures. Cosmetic surgery, laser treatments and chemical peels aren’t even in their vocabulary. But that doesn’t mean they want the lines viewers remember to be on their faces. These women are taking skincare into their own hands. Here, they divulge another layer with Olay Regenerist.

Regenerist has that effect on women. It’s not just skincare; it’s cell care. Olay Regenerist employs a unique Amino-Peptide Complex to regenerate skin’s outer layer and reveal newer skin. One cell at a time. Proving that dramatically improved skin need not require drastic measures.
see change

Constance Marie,
The George Lopez Show

As Angie Lopez, Marie is proof-positive that motherhood and sex appeal can still go hand in hand. "What kind of statement would I be making if my look was totally manufactured?" She believes that plastic surgery might send the wrong message to future generations. "I'm sometimes surprised at the lengths people will go to for social acceptance."

If you're not ready for surgery, give your look a lift from a bottle. Olay Regenerist Enhancing Lotion with UV Protection moisturizes and regenerates skin's appearance as it safeguards skin from the sun's damaging rays. Its light, non-greasy formula includes light-bending powders to soften the look of fine lines.
SHE’S a NATURAL
Kellita Smith, The Bernie Mac Show

“I believe in embracing my evolution and celebrating my looks at every phase. Truthfully, I think I just keep getting better.” Smith refuses to succumb to the pressures of Hollywood, asserting there are countless ways to get results without taking drastic actions. “With so many advances in skincare, I feel completely empowered over the fate of my face.”

Take control of your skin’s destiny. Deliver intense moisture to dehydrated skin with Olay Regenerist Perfecting Cream. The rich, luxurious formula renews skin’s outer layer and strengthens its moisture barrier so skin looks and feels like newer skin.
join the skincare revolution

Olay Regenerist comes in three versions that can be used individually or in combination to help regenerate your skin's appearance* without such drastic measures as chemical peels, cosmetic surgery or laser. To learn more about Regenerist or for a free sample, visit olay.com.

TELL US ABOUT YOUR SECOND SKIN—AND GET A THIRD

We want to know what you think about new Olay Regenerist. Tell us how the products have helped you to beautifully regenerate your skin's appearance and we'll send you this trendy ultrasuede handbag (pictured). Simply mail your testimonial along with your name, address, phone number and proof-of-purchase including UPC and receipt (must reflect purchase between July 2 and August 1, 2003) to:

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Your materials must be received by August 8, 2003. One bag per customer. While supplies last. Allow 8–12 weeks for delivery.

*renews skin's outer layer to reveal newer skin
"A juice extractor is indispensable," says chef Mario Batali, who uses his KitchenAid to add "the purest fruit flavors to all our dishes." We give six juicers the squeeze by Ingrid Abramovitch

**L'Equip Mini**
$129. lequip.com.
**THIRST** Taking up less counter space than competitors, the Mini turns pineapple chunks—and other produce—into frothy juice. Pulp is ejected into a detachable basket for easy cleanup.
**WORST** It doesn't seem to yield as much juice as some other extractors.

**Juicelady**
$130. Gracious Home. 800-338-7809.
**THIRST** The best-selling Juiceman now has a feminine counterpart dressed in sleek stainless steel. No fruit or veggie stands a chance against the pulverizing power of her titanium-coated blades.
**WORST** We found the Juicelady tricky to assemble.

**Waring Pro**
$99. 800-492-7464.
**THIRST** If you like your juice a touch pulpy, this extractor does the job for less money than the other machines we tested. Easy to clean, it comes with a stainless-steel pitcher.
**WORST** The model we tried leaked and emitted the smell of burning rubber.

**KitchenAid**
$250 to $270. kitchenaid.com.
**THIRST** This beautifully designed model squeezes every last drop from fruits and vegetables. The citrus press is easy to use and comes in two sizes. Limeade or grapefruit juice, anyone?
**WORST** The design of the pulp basket makes it challenging to clean.

**Acme Supreme Juicerator**
$259. williamsonoma.com.
**THIRST** This machine pumps carrot juice as effectively as any juice bar, and has a citrus press, too. The disposable filters cut cleanup time by more than half.
**WORST** The Juicerator takes up a lot of counter space. It continues to spin for up to three minutes after it is turned off.

**Omega 4000 Juicer**
$250. Sur La Table. 800-243-0852.
**THIRST** A favorite of juicing fanatics, the Omega is a professional-caliber machine that efficiently juices everything from beets to cantaloupes.
**WORST** Carrots stain the white plastic. (The manual recommends soaking overnight in a solution of water and Cascade.)
Vinegar is one of the most versatile ingredients in my kitchen, so it's no surprise that my larder is filled with a wide variety of bottles. No two wines are alike, and that holds true for vinegars as well; each has a specific culinary purpose. My use of vinegar goes way beyond salad dressings. I use it when I sauté poultry, meat, and mushrooms, and when I stir-fry vegetables and make marinades. Vinegar should not be limited to savory dishes, either. I often drizzle a 50-to-75-year-old balsamic vinegar on fresh strawberries or vanilla ice cream. Here are some of my favorite vinegars and how I like to use them.

**WHAT A CROCK!**

There has been a vinegar pot in my kitchen ever since I realized that I could use leftover wine to make vinegar instead of pouring it down the drain. Vinegar is easy to make, though you do need a starter. I got mine in the South of France, but you can easily get one from Beer and Wine Hobby, 800-523-5424, which also sells vinegar crocks and barrels. After the vinegar has aged for a year, I put it in a wooden barrel for more aging and flavor.

- **Chalk Hill Clematis Balsamic Vinegar** is one of the finest American varieties. Made by Paul Bertolli, it has great acidity and a wonderful aroma. $40 for two 375 ml bottles. In CA, 707-433-8416.
- **0 Citrus Champagne Vinegar** is great splashed over a fennel and Parmesan salad with a drizzle of extra-virgin olive oil. It has a delicate, spritzy punch from California champagne and lemon zest. Perfect for a light vinaigrette. $12 for 6.8 oz. 888-847-7148.
- **Castello di Volpaia Red Wine Vinegar,** made from Sangiovese, is my favorite red wine vinegar. It's aged in chestnut and oak for a smooth, elegant flavor. Sublime for delicate salads and mignonette sauce. $8 for 500 ml. From Dean & DeLuca. 800-999-0306.
- **Gran Capirete Sherry Vinegar** counters bitter greens like arugula and radicchio, and plays nicely off of sautéed escarole or chard. $13 for 250 ml. chefshop.com. 877-337-2491.
- **Rich Balsamic Vinegar,** aged for ten years in oak, chestnut, mulberry, juniper, and cherry woods, is my everyday balsamic for sauces, marinades, vegetables, and grilled chicken. $12 for 6.8 oz.
- **Perfectly balanced Apple Balsamic Vinegar** is made from organic apples. I use it in salads with Roquefort or chèvre, and for sautéing chicken. $14 for 250 ml. The Apple Farm, in CA, 707-895-2333.
- **I use the light and slightly sweet Marukan Organic Rice Vinegar** in sushi rice, stir-fried vegetables, and any Asian recipe that requires rice vinegar. $13 for 17.5 oz. chefshop.com.
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With a little planning, you can create a paradise for your children—especially if you accept the fact that they prefer getting dirty to weeding by Deborah Needlman

Start them young; most children love flowers almost as much as they love being dirty and wet. With some baby-sized plastic tools, Nathaniel, 2, digs in.
Her own tiny plot—a 4-by-4-foot square within my vegetable garden—is a crazy quilt of flowers, vegetables, herbs, and climbers. Whenever we come home, she races straight from the car to see what has grown, and exclaims on its astounding beauty. I don’t know anyone else like that—except me.

Like her mother, she also loves cutting flowers for the house. Only, she wants to pick every one she lays eyes on—and just the flower, with barely enough stem to keep the prized blossom intact. For her wonderfully clashing (and stumpy) bouquets, she fusses over her selection of a vase and the most “splendid” place to set it. She begs flowers for bouquets from other people’s gardens and presents everyone who visits us with a cluster of their own.

Once you start seeing through your child’s eyes, the choice of plants for her becomes obvious. A child’s garden is all id—decadent excess and floral hedonism. There is no merit in restraint or value in structure, no sense that foliage matters, or even that it exists. Color—and no color is too brash—and sensory stimuli are everything. You must think large, bright, fragrant, weird, and tasty. And fast-growing. You’ll want plants that tower over them, like sunflowers, and things that grow large before their eyes, like pumpkins. You’ll want amusing vegetables, like purple beans, and freakish things, like misshapen gourds and edible flowers. You’ll want vegetables they can eat.

GARDENING TEACHES CHILDREN about the cycle of the seasons and opens their eyes to the wonders of nature, giving them a taste for patience and disappointment, and I think that’s just wonderful. But all I had in mind by giving my children seeds and a spade was the chance to garden again.

Before having children, I was someone who skipped meals, canceled plans, and toiled past dark by the light of my car’s high beams in order to garden. Once I had my first child, I realized that my vision of a quiet baby nestled in a pram by my side as I planted would never materialize. I have a neighbor who built stairs and stone walls with a baby strapped to her chest. I could barely water a plant.

Whether it’s because they are small and still believe that whatever Mommy finds interesting must be so, or simply because children really love nothing more than covering themselves in dirt, my experiment in horticultural indoctrination has taken off. Perhaps too well.

My daughter, nearly 4, is a flower-worshiping mini-me. The stroller grinds to a halt and she disembarks before every bud and blossom: “Mommy, I want to grow that in my garden, and that and that and that.” She peruses magazines and catalogs: “I want seed for this flower, and this and this and this.” She has yet to see a flower she doesn’t admire.

l little sprouts

How to keep children (and yourself) interested

- EMBRACE THE TACKY Previously scorned annuals, gnomes, and metallic globes are all adorable.
- A PLOT OF THEIR OWN If the kids decide it is better to uproot than to sow, you will not mind.
- START SMALL Children are not avid weeders, and a 4-by-6-foot plot can hold plenty.
- RULER OF THE PLOT Let them choose their own plants and layouts as much as possible.
- EQUIP THEM Small, well-made tools will minimize danger to them and to your garden.
- LET THEM WATER They excel at it, and with a lightweight coiling hose attachment (smithandhawken.com), they may even stay dry.
- GARDEN PROJECTS For tips on those that will appeal to both mother and child—making rose water, lavender bath sachets, and mint tea—see kidsgardening.com.
- DANGER LURKS Be aware of tools left on the ground and open bags of fertilizer or manure—organic does not mean nontoxic.
A CHILD'S GARDEN

straight from the garden and bright annuals for cutting that produce all season.

If you have the space, it’s nice to give a child a (small) plot of his own, but containers can also be stuffed with flowers and edibles. Even a sunny windowsill can harbor many herbs, houseplants, cacti and other succulents, and forced bulbs like hyacinth. Indoors or out, a handmade sign (laminated for outdoor use) is good for staking out ownership. My daughter dictated hers: LILY'S GARDEN. ONLY LILY IS ALLOWED TO PICK THE FLOWERS. EVERYBODY ELSE IS ALLOWED ONLY TO LOOK AROUND.

Over the winter, as my daughter affixed Post-It notes to every image of a flower she saw, I thought more about designing her garden plot than my own. But, consulting those who had done this before, I scaled back my plans, from a secret garden with table and chairs to a simple square plot that she can master and that doesn’t create another garden area for me to manage. The plot you make may be the children’s garden, but yours is the principal labor.

Gardening with small children has taught me about patience and disappointment and the wonders of nature. Good enough is now good enough. I figure that for every plant my 2-year-old son unearths, I can plant ten more in the same time. When he excitedly offers me the freshly plucked heads from all the first snowdrops, I can (most of the time) delight in his joy.

Sometimes, after a companionable session of gardening, I fail to realize that the children have had enough until they are naked and knee-deep in the mud puddle they have been watering for the previous half hour. But when I see my daughter tromp through the garden, dripping wet, with the sun on her back, snapping peas from the vine and popping them into her mouth, I realize that what she must be feeling is what I’ve been after all along. I took up gardening as an adult to try to capture some of that childlike joy for myself. She’s got the real thing.
A CHILD'S GARDEN

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Long-handled tools (only shorter) for kids over 5. $45 for six pieces. kidsgardening.com. Schylling makes tools for the 3-to-5 set. 800-767-8697.

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For those under 2, tools and toys are the same thing, but these really work. Canvas tote with plastic tools, $17. geniusbabies.com.

Lightweight watering cans with gently sprinkling removable nozzles that you'll want to use yourself. $16 each, from landscapeusa.com.

These delightfully colorful hand tools with painted hardwood handles won't get lost in the dirt. $8 for a set. nygshopinthegarden.org.

For the chic young gardener, a mini Provençal market bag from R. K. Alliston, one of London's best garden shops. $9 at rcalliston.com.

Gloves so cute and snug-fitting that children will actually wear them. $3 a pair, in a variety of sizes, from alextoys.com.

Organic Italian vegetable seeds, selected for children, in irresistible packaging. $3.25 per packet, from growitalian.com.

So that maybe the mud can be left at the door instead of trekked through the house—plastic clogs. $15, from backyardgreenhouses.com.
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Landscape designer Diana Balmori creates a seaside garden of plants not often seen so perilously close to the surf's edge by Stephen Orr

Like any good seafaring story, gardening next to the ocean is an elemental saga of wind, waves, salt, and rocks. Storm-tossed coastal gardeners must develop the flinty resolve of a New England whaling captain, and the most successful learn to adapt quickly to challenging conditions. After all, even the best-laid plans can be suddenly washed out to sea. A Connecticut coast garden by landscape designer Diana Balmori is sited on a rocky peninsula that determines its simple layout. In her first attempts at making a garden on the property, Balmori tried working with the stony land. But soon she decided to take matters into her own hands. She trucked in fresh earth and devised a series of raised beds that give her the ability to place plants in a sheltered area, while controlling both soil quality and irrigation. Her choice of plants is unconventional. Rather than scrappy shore grasses and native shrubs, Balmori successfully grows the kinds of perennials and annuals, from peonies to nicotiana, usually found in a backyard. To be sure, the fact that the house and garden face Long Island Sound, rather than the rougher open ocean, makes her work easier. But even this coastline has its summer gales and winter northeasters. Still, they haven't defeated a seasoned plantswoman whose ingenuity holds lessons for all seaside gardeners.

Between a rock and a hard place

- ADDING SOIL During her first summers making the seaside garden, Balmori excavated crevices between large granite boulders and then shoehorned plants into the pockets. Since plants tend to dry out more quickly in sandy, rocky coastal earth, Balmori added fresh soil. Humus, decayed leaves, compost, topsoil, or small-chipped mulch will further conserve soil moisture. Seaside areas can also be lean in nutrients. Add organic fertilizer such as fish meal. Soil that is naturally salty can stunt plant growth and inhibit seed germination, so replace it with fresh soil where needed.

Seaside visitors

Plants such as these peonies, foxglove, and dianthus rarely survive the rough conditions and poor soil usually found on the coast. Diana Balmori's plantings, ensconced in protective raised planters, are grouped tightly to prevent wind evaporation and dissuade weeds.
Cottagey, pink mix of peonies, foxglove, dianthus, and heuchera resembles an English flower border. A quieter grouping consists of silver-leaved artemisia and yarrow, white campanula, and iris. Several planters are filled with red and orange plants: nicotiana, burgundy-leaved heuchera, astilbe, and lantana.

**Raised beds** Though Balmori was successful growing plants among boulders near the shoreline, within a few years, there was little planting space left. To gain more, Balmori hit upon the idea of building raised flower beds. "I preferred to make individual units that could be reached from all sides and where one could control the soil conditions," she says. Today, ten beds are lined up on a gravel terrace below the house like small metal boats in a marina. They are made of Cor-Ten steel, which forms a protective layer of rust and does not corrode completely, even after years of exposure to the elements. The planters are arranged in a comparatively sheltered position on the leeward side of the house. But they are still close to the seawall, and do experience some wind and salt damage. A small number of plants are lost each winter, depending on the harshness of the weather. Seven years ago, a strong hurricane swept one planter several hundred feet up the cove. Even so, the garden survives season after season. Recovery efforts such as flushing the soil with tap water remove salt and help sustain the remaining majority of the plantings. "This isn't a fixed garden," Balmori says of the plant laboratory. "Every year it's a different experiment."

**A sea of challenges**

- **WIND** As on any exposed site, desiccation, or windburn, is a major problem for seaside plants. Place beds in areas with natural shelters such as dunes or rocks, or position your garden on the least windy side of the house. If you need to install a barrier like a hedge or fence, make sure it blends in with its setting and doesn't block your sea view.

- **SALT SPRAY** Burns leaves, and makes them less efficient at drawing up water from the roots. Many seaside plants have adapted beautifully to salty conditions. Yarrow (Achillea) and sea lavender (Limonium latifolium), for example, have silvery or finely cut leaves that protect them from salt. Plants such as Montauk daisies and sea holly (Eryngium) have leaves with a waxy texture that repels salty water. Shrubs like Russian olive (Elaegnus angustifolia), willow, and sea buckthorn (Hippophae rhamnoides) have narrow leaves that also resist salt spray. It is helpful to rinse plants with a hose after storms have blown salty air or water into the garden.
great ideas
BY THE SEA

The color of distance A bed carved between the stones behind the house is planted with hardy geraniums, such as 'Johnson's Blue,' and delphinium. The marine color tones are intended to blend in with the far-off horizon of the sea.
As garden pests go, contractors are often the cause of more damage and heartbreak than a plague of locusts

by Tom Christopher

women entering the building trades, I should have given equal billing to "dames in steel-toed shoes."

Professor and extension landscape horticulturist at Texas A&M University, Welch may be the most accomplished horticulturist I have ever met. He wrote the book (books, actually) on gardening in the Deep South; in particular, his Perennial Garden Color for Texas and the South is widely regarded as scripture by the gardeners of that region. He's a compulsive collector of heirloom roses, regionally adapted perennials, warm-climate bulbs, native shrubs and trees, new vegetable cultivars, you name it. Unable to stop planting, he has accommodated his habit by renovating a series of rural cottages. After returning some dilapidated structure to a solid elegance it never knew under its original owner, he adorns it with a garden appropriate to the period and site. Then, typically, he sells, so that he can begin the process anew.

Consider Welch's story, which is classic. Welch's current project is a circa 1870s farmhouse near the University of Texas's Winedale Historic Center, in Round Top, Texas. Welch had substantially finished the structural renovations by the winter of 2002; the house needed only a coat of stain before he could surround it with plantings. He didn't think twice about volunteering the garden-to-be as a tour destination for Winedale's fall garden symposium. In this way, he put himself at the painters' mercy.

The first contractor he hired painted the barn, stopped work, and then stopped returning calls as well. A second contractor delivered only excuses right through the spring planting season. Welch had wanted the painters off the premises before he planted, but he could wait no longer. He installed a collection of antique roses and a parterre of sweet myrtles he started from cuttings of historic specimens. He fleshed out the young shrubbery with an array of annuals. A plague of grasshoppers attacked the plants, but they were recovering nicely when the dilatory painter arrived. While applying a petroleum-based stain to the fence and house, the painter also sprayed it all over the young plants, turning green leaves to brown crisps. Welch threw what he calls "a little fit." He tried to

ILL WELCH IS NOT given to profanity. A gentleman in the Southern tradition, he has never resorted to strong language in my presence during the 15 years of our friendship. Yet I could hear the damnation almost surfacing in his voice as he described to me what the painters had done to his garden. And I experienced a feeling of relief.

I certainly didn't take pleasure in his misfortune. But it was liberating to know that even he is not immune to contractors. Personally, I regard them as the most catastrophic of garden pests. Indeed, when I was once given the task of compiling a ten-worst list, I put "guys in steel-toed shoes" at the very top. That was unfair, of course. With the increasing number of
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September 6 - October 12, 2003

by Jim Wann, Cass Morgan, Debra Monk, John Foley, John Hardwick and John Schimmel

On Highway 57, somewhere between Frog Level and Smyrna sits the Double Cupp diner alongside an old gas station. The Cupp sisters run the diner and four guys work the gas pumps. This electrifying group serves up a musical revue that is part rock-n-roll, part country and part blues - a show that is sure to leave you tapping your toes and cheering for more.

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impress upon the painter the need for respect. The painter waited until Welch was away to apply the second coat. This time, before turning on the compressor, the painter swathed all the plants with clear plastic drop cloths. He left the plants that way, wrapped like microwave entrees, for several days in the burning central Texas sun. In that sense, he did “finish” the job, and Welch had to hire yet another contractor to complete the painting of the house.

This story might seem extreme if it were not familiar to every gardener who has survived home repairs. If there are two places to put that pallet load of lumber, my experience has been that garden-variety contractors will always set it down on top of the rhododendrons. They back trucks over the lawn when it is wet and soft, whack divots of bark off tree trunks with their backhoes, and mulch the flower beds with Styrofoam coffee cups and cigarette butts. Then, when you think you are finally rid of them and are repairing the damage, they return to make some adjustment and it starts all over again.

Communication is the key to avoiding problems, he explains, adding that it should begin before any deal is struck. When he inspects a house to bid on a job, he also inspects the yard, to plot how he can gain access and move materials in and out. He has refused jobs, he says, when it was clear that he could not accomplish these tasks without causing substantial harm to the landscaping. Before stripping off old shingles, he hangs a tarp from the roof’s edge and drapes it over the plants below so that debris slips over and beyond them. He’ll upend a trash barrel over a small shrub he deems to be at risk; larger ones he’ll encase in scrap cardboard or shelter under lean-tos made from two sheets of plywood fastened together with screws at the peak. The perennials can be protected by scheduling the work for a season when they are dormant.

These are services that Turner believes other contractors would duplicate if they were requested to do so before a bid was submitted. I intend to do this, and insist that the contractor discuss all such measures with me. I want to mark out the avenues of access with stakes and plastic tape. I’m going to lay down sheets of half-inch plywood where he (or she) needs to stack materials. I’ll be ready next time.

That’s good. Bill Welch agrees. But he reminds me that we cannot always hire Turner & Son. Sometimes work must get done and time or money is short, and gardeners take whatever contractor they can get. That’s why persistence is an essential quality for the gardener. In Texas, gardeners persist in the face of grasshoppers, armadillos, drought, and tornadoes. The least I can do, Welch intimated, is to persist in the face of contractors.

His gardener’s almanac
practice today, perhaps in history.” This will come as news to such undisputed architectural doyennes as Denise Scott Brown and Gae Aulenti, to say nothing of several of Hadid’s exceptionally talented female contemporaries (Billie Tsien, Kazuyo Sejima, among others), some of whom have created works far more convincing than anything yet executed by this diva of deconstructivism.

So how did Hadid do it? She had the good fortune to study under, and then work for, Rem Koolhaas, a genius of self-promotion right up there with Wright and Le Corbusier. What she learned from him had much to do with the ways in which persona and polemics can infuse the building art with an air of the heroic, especially in these less than heroic times. Koolhaas, a consummate media strategist, found fame through his provocative series of cult-classic books, whose subliminal topic is the latent eroticism underlying everything from urban planning to shopping. Hadid, far less of an intellectual than her erstwhile mentor, made her mark with the most spectacular architectural renderings since the early modernists turned the classical conventions of Beaux Arts drawing upside down.

Hadid’s dazzlingly abstract invocations of radically fragmented volumes and interpenetrating spaces can be hard even for architectural specialists to decipher, but they are exhilarating. Difficult though they are, these projects exude wall power galore. And as technology has changed, Hadid has morphed her representational method from manual drawing to computer-generated graphics with Matrix-like seamlessness. But, however compelling paper architecture might be, there comes a time when you must put up or shut up, and that day of reckoning has at last arrived for her.

The opening in June of Hadid’s Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, the new home of Cincinnati’s Contemporary Arts Center, has been the most eagerly awaited architectural event of the year, save for the inauguration of Frank Gehry’s Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles in October. The CAC, one of the liveliest institutions of its kind, hasn’t attracted this much national attention since 1990, when it was attacked by local authorities for displaying the sexually
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GRAB LIFE BY THE HORNS

SOME SUPERHEROES USE A PHONE BOOTH.
MOMS HAVE THIS.
transgressive photographs of Robert Mapplethorpe, resulting in a sensational censorship trial that the CAC won, happily. The combination of its colorful past and Hadid's white-hot aura seemed certain to make hers an epochal commission.

As it has turned out, this is a good but surprisingly underwhelming building, hardly the defining event to cement Hadid's place among the modern masters. It feels conservative, in contrast to the dynamism of the architect's renderings, which relate to the finished structure in much the same way that the catwalk presentations of the Paris couture collections do to the toned-down, more salable clothes that wind up in stores.

There are reasons for this disconnect. Hadid's explosive depictions rarely acknowledge the structural necessities required to support her vertiginous pileups of boldly varied components, thrusting this way and that and often ending up in a point. Gravity and building codes are the enemies of her compositions, and she lacks the instinctive grasp of sculptural form that makes Gehry the preeminent practitioner of this kind of high-stakes architecture. The crucial difference is that he begins not with flat imagery but with hands-on fabrication of three-dimensional models, which are later translated to the computer screen by his high-tech associates.

Sited on a corner of the busiest traffic intersection in downtown Cincinnati, the CAC immediately brings to mind two iconic New York museum buildings. With its cantilevered, concrete-clad upper stories thrusting forward like the opened drawers of a desk, it's a mildly cockeyed riff on Marcel Breuer's 1966 Whitney Museum of American Art. And the two-story-high glass curtain wall set into the broad main elevation recalls the similar treatment of the facade on Philip Goodwin and Edward Durell Stone's original 1939 Museum of Modern Art. Here, however, Hadid has some fun with the panes by spacing the vertical mullions ever closer as they run across the width of the dark, reflective window wall.

The worst part of the exterior is the horizontally projecting portion covered in matte black aluminum panels. Their dark finish is unevenly applied and wrecks the impression of this element as a single compositional unit. Like Gehry and Koolhaas, Hadid is not overly concerned with perfect detailing, which is fine as long as it doesn't subvert our ability to read certain parts of a building as the designer intended. To Hadid's credit, though, she kept construction costs down to a remarkable $20 million (a fifth of the tab for Gehry's Guggenheim Bilbao), and you can't expect quality on the cheap.

The C.A.C. is meant to function as a social engine as much as an art space. In heartland cities, institutions like this one are far more than mere galleries, providing a vital communal link with the world of ideas that contemporary art can open us to. Emphasizing that sense of civic engagement, Hadid gives the ground floor a welcoming street presence, a celebration of humane city life seen far too infrequently amid today's urban sprawl. Recessed strip lights set flush into the paving carry the eye on the diagonal into the building like the oblique sight lines in a Renaissance treatise on architectural perspective. (Cont. on page 112)
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ON THE BLOCK

A pair of these sleek Panton chairs from 1973 recently went for $600 at auction.

A laminated cabinet from the '70s by Raymond Loewy fetched $3,000.

A 1964 Verner Panton plastic Wonderlamp sold for $10,000 last December at Wright, a boutique auction house in Chicago.

A 1970 Joe Colombo Tube chair, made of padded plastic cylinders, carried a $10,000 estimate at a recent sale.

One word: plastics

Once derided as symbols of a throwaway society, plastic designs are becoming prized collectibles by gregory cerio

...the subject of an exhibition that opened in July at the Palm Springs Desert Museum. "Acrylic is an honest material. It has integrity; it lasts forever. Acrylic pieces are like diamonds in an interior."

Plastic also figures prominently in the collection of one of today's most enthusiastic devotees of avant-garde furniture, Jenette Kahn, a New York media executive and author of an acclaimed book on radical design, In Your Space. "Few materials make color so radiant and exciting, and it's a medium that has invited designers to do some of their most innovative work," says Kahn, who owns plastic pieces by Verner Panton, Wendell Castle, Bernard Rancillac, and others. "The material itself is inexpensive, but the results are worth their weight in gold."

Wait a minute, you say. Diamonds?

We're talking about plastics here! Plastic means cheesy—something disposable, overproduced, and certainly déclassé, right? Well, perhaps not. Those who follow the auction market have recently noticed more and more plastic designs showing up in sales catalogs for boutique auction houses and even the major firms. A growing number of collectors are coming to appreciate plastic pieces, not only for their radical forms but also out of a realization of the importance of plastics in the history of twentieth-century industrial design. "There comes a point when people get it, and that's when stuff becomes sought after," says Peter Loughrey, founder of L.A. Modern Auctions and modern design specialist for Butterfield's Auctioneers. "Plastics are on the cusp. That dialogue from The Graduate was never more apt. To someone looking for an area in which to start collecting, I'd say there's one word: plastics."

The image of plastics as cheap is still correct in one context—price. "It's the field with the greatest differential between critical acclaim and market value," says James Zemaitis, head of the modern design department at the New York offices of the auction house Phillips, de Pury & Luxembourg. Last May, Phillips sold an elegant Dondolo rocking chair, a 1965 design by Cesare Leonardi and Franca Stagi, for $20,000. In December, Richard Wright, a Chicago auctioneer specializing in modern art and design, sold a 1964 Verner Panton Wonderlamp—
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Pregnancy: Teratogenic Effects: Pregnancy Category C. Triamcinolone acetonide was teratogenic in rats, rabbits, and monkeys. In rats, triamcinolone acetonide was teratogenic at inhalation doses of 20 mcg/kg and above (approximately 2/10 of the maximum recommended daily intranasal dose in adults on a mg/m² basis). In rabbits, triamcinolone acetonide was teratogenic at inhalation doses of 20 mcg/kg and above (approximately 7/10 of the maximum recommended daily intranasal dose in adults on a mg/m² basis). In monkeys, triamcinolone acetonide was teratogenic at an inhalation dose of 50 mcg/kg (approximately 17 times the maximum recommended daily intranasal dose in adults on a mg/m² basis). Dose-related teratogenic effects in rats and rabbits included fetal palate and/or internal hydrocephalus and axial skeletal defects, whereas the effects observed in the monkey were craniofacial malformations.

There are no adequate and well-controlled studies in pregnant women. Therefore, when consider using nasal spray, it should be used at the lowest possible effective dose in a manner that minimizes the dose received by the fetus. Women should be warned of potential hazards and monitored closely during pregnancy.

Nursing Mothers: It is not known whether triamcinolone acetonide is excreted in human milk. Caution should be exercised when Nasacort AQ Nasal Spray is administered to nursing women.

Pediatric Use: Safety and effectiveness in pediatric patients below the age of 6 years have not been established.

Corticosteroids have been shown to cause growth suppression in children and teenagers, particularly with higher doses over extended periods. If a child or teenager on corticosteroids approaches or reaches adult height, growth suppression may occur. In children and teenagers, particular care should be taken in monitoring growth and development. If growth suppression occurs, Nasacort AQ Nasal Spray should be discontinued and the patient evaluated. If growth suppression is judged to be inadequate, the decision should be made on the basis of the clinical need for the drug versus the patient's need for growth. Once growth is complete, a 1/2 mg/day dose is generally adequate to maintain control of symptoms.

Adverse Reactions: In placebo-controlled, double-blind, and open-label clinical studies, 1483 adults and children 12 years of age and older received treatment with triamcinolone acetonide aqueous nasal spray. These patients were treated for an average duration of 51 days. In the controlled trials (2-5 weeks duration) from which the adverse reaction data are derived, 1394 patients were treated with Nasacort AQ Nasal Spray for an average of 57 days. In a long-term, open-label study, 172 patients received treatment for an average duration of 286 days. Adverse events occurring at an incidence of 2% or greater and more common among Nasacort AQ-treated patients than placebo-treated patients in controlled adult clinical trials were:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adverse Event</th>
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<tr>
<td>Pharyngitis</td>
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<td>Epistaxis</td>
<td>2.7 vs 0.8</td>
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<td>Increase in cough</td>
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A total of 602 children 6 to 12 years of age were studied in 3 double-blind, placebo-controlled clinical trials. Of these, 172 received 110 mcg/day and 207 received 220 mcg/day of Nasacort AQ Nasal Spray for two, six, or twelve weeks. The longest average duration of treatment for patients receiving 110 mcg/day and 220 mcg/day was 76 days and 80 days, respectively. Only 17% of these patients treated with Nasacort AQ were discontinued due to adverse experiences. No patient receiving 110 mcg/day discontinued due to a serious adverse event and one patient receiving 220 mcg/day discontinued due to a serious event that was not considered drug related. Overall, these studies found the adverse experience profile for Nasacort AQ to be similar to placebo. A similar adverse event profile was observed in pediatric patients 6-12 years of age as compared to older children and adults with the exception of epistaxis which occurred less than 5% of the pediatric patients studied.

Adverse events occurring at an incidence of 2% or greater and more common among adult patients treated with placebo than Nasacort AQ were: headache, and rhinitis. In children aged 6 to 12 years these events included: headache, epistaxis, headache, injection, otitis media, sinusitis, and vomiting.

In clinical trials, nasal septal perforation was reported in one patient treated with Nasacort AQ. This patient did not experience symptoms of withdrawal. Nasacort AQ Nasal Spray has not been established.

In the event of accidental overdose, an increased potential for these adverse experiences may be expected, but acute systemic adverse experiences are unlikely. (See OVERDOSAGE.)
striking light fixture composed of hanging red plastic balls—for $10,000. Art pieces and prototypes aside, these items represent the top echelon of the plastics design market. Most pieces go for a few hundred to a few thousand dollars, and many for much less. In November, a wave-shaped 1962 Joe Colombo Acrilica table lamp fetched just under $6,000 at Phillips, while a Panton VP hanging lamp brought $3,100. Raymond Loewy DF 2000 plastic laminate case furniture from the '60s routinely goes for under $2,500. Christie’s sold a set of six Jones acrylic chairs once owned by Tennessee Williams for $6,000. Lamps by the '60s Italian design firm Superstudio can be found for $1,000; an Ettore Sottsass Valentine type-writer by Olivetti goes for $150.

Granted, plastics aren’t for everyone. For each attribute of plastics, there seems to be, unfortunately, a corresponding weakness. While designers love the freedom of form that the material allows them, plastic tends to be cold and have no cozy “give.” Though many plastics theoretically last forever, some older types of polyurethane can degrade when exposed to sunlight, and white plastics are prone to yellowing. Plastics are waterproof and have great strength in proportion to their weight, but they are susceptible to scars and burns. “Minor scratches can often be buffed out, but deeper scratches, chips, and cracks are very problematic,” says Richard Wright. “Wood takes on a patina and looks good with a few nicks, but you want plastics to be pristine. People who are serious collectors are obsessed with condition.”

The irony, then, is that mint-condition objects made of common, ordinary plastics can actually be rarer than those made from materials that are considered precious. Perhaps even more appealing to the nature of a true collector, the field of plastic design is rich in history and detail, a treasure trove for those who take a connoisseur’s delight in arcana. Plastic materials have been around since the mid-1800s, and refinements and discoveries in industrial synthetics continue to this day. The term “plastics” encompasses scores of materials, from familiar products like Bakelite, Lucite acrylic, fiberglass, polyester, and vinyl to those whose names only a chemist can pronounce. Developments in the use of plastics in home furnishings are well documented. So, in the same way that aficionados of midcentury design can look at an Eames chair and tell which year’s production run it came from by the feet or the rubber shock mounts, plastic collectors can date a design by its materials. The seductively curving Panton chair, perhaps the most famous piece of plastic design, is the perfect example. The first chair ever made from a single piece of synthetic material, it was introduced by the Swiss firm Vitra in 1967. The initial version, made of cold-pressed reinforced polyester, proved too costly to manufacture. In 1971, the company put out another model, made of a space-age thermoplastic called Luran S, but this new material wasn’t as tough as had been hoped and was dropped in 1979. After further tinkering in the Vitra labs, subsequent editions of the Panton chair have been made in molded polyurethane and injection-molded polypropylene.

Yawn-inducing scientific gobbledegook? Maybe. But to certain collectors, the fun is in the minutiae. Peter Loughrey says he recently sold a “major” museum a red stacking side chair designed by Joe Colombo and made of ABS—acrylonitrile butadiene styrene, a plastic used early in the development of injection molding. The price was $1,000, and, Loughrey says, “they were happy to get it. Lots of collectors buy only ABS. It’s a rare and important material in the evolution of plastics.”

So sneer at plastics. Roll your eyes at polyvinyl watatsts and thermobabble manufacturing. Somewhere, a design geek is proudly sitting on her 1972 Luran S Panton chair. And, auctioneers say, she’s also sitting on a tidy investment.

**ON THE BLOCK**

**PLASTIC DADDIES**

Leading designers in the use of synthetic materials

- **Verner Panton** (1926–1998) With his colorful, wondrous designs for Vitra and Herman Miller, the Danish architect was arguably modernism’s most exuberant innovator in the use of plastics. “Most people spend their lives living in dreary gray-beige conformity,” he said. “[My goal] is to provoke people into using their imagination.”

- **Joe Colombo** (1930–1971) The Milanese architect studied painting when he first entered college, and an artist’s eye for color and form is clear in his fanciful yet always functional designs.

- **Eero Aarnio** (born 1932) The Finnish designer’s Ball chair, above, is an icon of pop art design of the ‘60s. For all its super-groovy looks, the womblike chair is as cozy as Grandma’s quilt.

- **Vico Magistretti** (born 1920) One of the first Italian designers to experiment with plastics. While lovely and deceptively simple in form, Magistretti’s pieces place a premium on usefulness.

- **Ettore Sottsass** (born 1917) Architect and designer of everything from furniture to appliances, Sottsass works with every conceivable material. Plastics figure in some of his best-known pieces, from the Valentine typewriter to the laminated Carlton roomdivider.  

**THE EERO AARNIO Ball chair is still made in Finland from the original molds.**

**Vico Magistretti’s designs, like the Vicario chair for Italy’s Artemide, are noted for their simplicity, utility, and lush use of color.**
Recently divorced himself from the appellation, removing the Soave name from his labels. "It's water," he says of the average Soave. "No aroma, no taste." Roberto Anselmi is a Porsche-driving, black-Prada-clad native of the region whose genial and gregarious nature keeps rubbing up against his fierce perfectionism. Shortly after he welcomes me into his sleek modernist suite of offices in the village of Monteforte d'Alpone, he throws a small tantrum about the faint ammonia residue of some cleaning products in the tasting room and instructs his daughter to move our tasting to the nearby winery, while making a note to chastise the cleaning staff. In many ways he reminds me of Angelo Gaja, another hypomanic Italian who inherited a wine estate in a backwater appellation and decided to conquer the world.

Anselmi’s father was a successful negotiant who turned out millions of bottles of undisguised plonk from purchased grapes. After returning to the family seat with an oenology degree and high moral purpose, Roberto closed down the negotiant business and set about, in concert with his friend and neighbor Leonildo Pieropan, "to make a revolution." The revolution started, as is so often the case, in the hills. Or maybe it was a counterrevolution: the traditional Soave Classico district encompassed only the hillsides, with their poor volcanic and calcareous soils.

In 1968, when the official Soave appellation was created by the Italian authorities, pressure from the big growers resulted in a huge expansion of the zone to include vast swatches of fertile, overproductive flatland (ignoring the ancient Roman maxim “Bacchus loves the hills”). Anselmi concentrated his efforts on the steep hillsides and adapted new viticultural practices to replace the old, superproductive pergola system. Beginning in the late 70s, he started producing serious, rich Soaves and lobbied fiercely for stricter regulations. Anselmi failed to convince the authorities that his neighbors should be held to a higher standard. “After twenty-five years, I decided to divorce Soave,” he says. So you will just have to take my word for it that Anselmi’s wines are essentially Soaves, the essence of what garganega (accented with a little aromatic Trebbiano di Soave) from this region can produce: a wine with more body and fruit than the average Italian white and mineral highlights that can make it reminiscent of a good Chablis.

Among the millions of bottles of watery Soave that pour forth each year are a few shining examples of this white at its best by Jay McInerney
Anselmi's friend Pieropan remains married to the Soave appellation; he and his forebears are undoubtedly the best thing that ever happened to this tramp of a wine region. Stylistically and temperamentally, Pieropan is the opposite of Anselmi: a shy, bespectacled homebody who favors cardigans and lives with his family in a meticulously restored villa just inside the crenellated medieval walls of the town of Soave.

Despite his reputation as the ultimate traditionalist, Pieropan loves technology, and the medieval outbuildings around the house are crammed with the latest in computer-controlled, stainless-steel fermentation tanks. His vineyards, like Anselmi's, are located in the hills of the Classico region, and his wines have long been cherished by connoisseurs for their purity, delicacy, and balance. His single-vineyard La Rocca is one of Italy's greatest white wines. Unlike most Soaves, Pieropan's wines can age for ten years and beyond, becoming increasingly mineral-y over time. They are the best possible proof that the region is worth saving.

A few other producers are making noteworthy wines, including brothers Graziano and Sergio Prà, whose single-vineyard Monte Grande Soave, made from grapes with a serious case of vertigo, is consistently one of the best wines of the region. The Gini brothers, Sandro and Claudio, make a rich, plump style of Soave, as does Stefano Inama. Inama's regular Soave is very good, but he has made a name for himself in a hurry with two supercharged, wood-aged wines, Vigneti Di Foscarino and Vigneto Du Lot, which are deemed freakish by some traditionalists, tasting somewhat like super-ripe new-world chardonnays. Whether you like this style or not, they are an excellent antidote to the notion that Soave is a dilute and boring stuff.

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vegetables, concentration and production, privacy. South—heat, light, drought, calm, agricultural plains, trees, rotarian crowds, the life of ignoble ease, spiders, fruits and desserts, the waste of time, publicity. West and East are relatively neutral.

In this pattern, I think that I detect two formative factors, Puritanism and Introversion. If, like me, you have been brought up to believe that man cannot, if he is to live rightly, surrender to his nature, but must, on the contrary, struggle with it; if again your temperament, like mine, is of the kind that prefers your own company or the company of one other to the company of several; if, when you go for a walk, you prefer the countryside to be uninhabited, except for yourself and your companion; if you are passionately convinced that a house should be a womb with small rooms, small windows, and thick walls, not a marketplace or a railroad station, then you are probably, like me, a cold weather man.

In hot weather what is bound to happen? Life will only be bearable if you relax, and your Puritan conscience will torment you. The lushness of summer vegetation will seem a dangerous temptation. You will have no peace, no retreat. Inside, windows and doors must be left open and you must lie in bed defenseless under a mere sheet. If you venture outside, the streets and the beaches are crowded with noises and heaps of people, and it will not be long before you find yourself wishing to heaven it were wintertime, when you could be sitting in front of the fire reading or having a really interesting, intimate talk.

Literature has not been fair to cold weather. In the past this was understandable enough; it was harder to keep warm in cold weather than cool in hot, and consequently the poets celebrated the coming of spring and summer, but let me hope that winter will find poets to sing its praises. Mr. T. S. Eliot made a promising beginning when he broke with tradition and called April the crudest month.

I do not really function properly until I can pull the thick lining into my topcoat; faith and charity vanish abruptly in some dreadful explosion of heat around the end of March. When I buy my morning paper, after a brief glance at the obituary page, I turn to a close study of the weather report, the immediate importance of which transcends any domestic or foreign situation.

Should circumstances ever drive me, like Ovid, into exile, I shall retire, if I am allowed, to a little fishing town in Iceland at the bottom of a grim fjord where the sun is not seen for five months in the year. There, not I hope alone, I shall eat fish, play the phonograph, and die in the greatest contentment.
A powerful engine growling behind the grille was one of the many legacies of America’s greatest car designer. All of which live on today at the car company where he hung his hat.

BUICK
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helped the couple create the parterre, opposite page, in which catmint and 'New Dawn' roses cluster around an antique wellhead.
FAMILY AFFAIR

IN SOUTHAMPTON, HOMEOWNER ROBIN PICKETT KEEPS TRADITION ALIVE WHILE GIVING IT A COLORFUL TWIST

PRODUCED BY CYNTHIA FRANK  PHOTOGRAPHED BY SIMON UPTON  WRITTEN BY INGRID ABRAMOVITCH
At Robin Pickett’s summerhouse in Southampton, Long Island, afternoon tea is served daily amid chintz and Chippendale. The manners are gracious, the lampshades are smocked, and mother lives three doors away.

It is a way of life that comes naturally. Pickett is a great-granddaughter of Thomas E. Murray, a colleague of Thomas Edison’s who bought almost a thousand acres of potato fields on the ocean here in the early 1900s. For five generations, Murray’s family—whose ranks came to include Vanderbilts and Fords, and even a Wimbledon champ, Pickett’s stepfather, Sidney B. Wood—spent their summers riding horses, sailing, and sunning at the beach club. Pickett’s mother, Pat Wood, chronicled their activities in the Beachcomber column she wrote for decades in the Southampton Press. “It was tremendous fun growing up,” Pickett says. “All my friends were my cousins, and we would swim at our own swimming hole with our own lifeguard.”

The Murray compound no longer exists. Most of the land was subdivided and sold after Pickett’s grandmother died in the 1960s. When Pickett’s aunt Catherine di Montezemolo decided to sell her home five
“THINGS DO NOT HAVE TO MATCH PRECISELY, BUT EVERYTHING SHOULD BLEND TOGETHER”

—ROBIN PICKETT
years ago, her niece couldn't let it go. Pickett bought the house with her husband, John. While the life they have created here speaks nostalgically of another era, they have updated the home with their love of outdoor living and Robin's eye for fresh color and pattern.

"The good strong bones were there," she says of the Mediterranean-style house and the gardens where her aunt had planted willow trees and daffodils. Di Montezemolo, a former Vogue fashion editor, had used the land as a wildflower meadow, where her horses grazed. In 1994, she hired an architect, Millard Peabody, to build a house. "The architecture was based on my husband's family villa in Tuscany," says di Montezemolo. With its stucco facade, she adds, "it was also a little bit French."

Since the Picketts have five grown children, the couple needed space to accommodate visits from family and friends. Robert Paxton, a Virginia architect whom the couple met when they had a working farm near Charlottesville, designed a new guest cottage and pool house for the Southampton property. He also added a covered porch outside the living room so that the family could dine outdoors. To provide a view from the house, the Picketts

DESIGNER SAVVY
"Dining rooms are difficult," says Pickett. "I told muralist Robert Jackson to go wild."

TRADE SECRETS
FURNITURE George III chairs and Regency table, opposite page, Hyde Park Antiques, NYC.
FABRIC Dining chairs in Manuel Canovas's Sanci damask.
FLATWARE Tiffany & Co., NYC.
RUGS Chinese needlepoint carpets from Stark appear in the dining room, opposite, and living room, above.
Pickett chose a color palette inspired by the garden: fresh greens, pinks, and an energizing celadon.
hired Charles J. Stick, a Virginia landscape architect. He designed a parterre surrounded by hundreds of hydrangeas, roses, and crape myrtles, and placed at its center a circular bed filled with seasonal flowers and climbing roses.

As a young woman, Robin Pickett attended the New York School of Interior Design, but when it came to her own houses, she had always enlisted the help of Georgina Fairholme, an English grande dame who began with Colefax and Fowler in London and decorated Jackie Onassis’s house on Martha’s Vineyard. When, ten years ago, Fairholme announced that she was retiring to Italy (she has since returned to the United States and lives in Sag Harbor, New York), she told Pickett it was time for her to go out on her own.

From Fairholme, Pickett inherited several strong contacts in Manhattan, including Baron Upholsterers (specialists in rolled-edge chairs) and Passementerie, purveyors of custom trimmings. Fairholme also taught Pickett how to embellish a room with special details such as tufting on upholstery and ribbon trim. What’s more, Pickett says, “I learned from Georgina to have a sense of fun and whimsy, that things do not have to match precisely but that everything should blend together.”
For the house in Southampton, Pickett selected a palette of fresh greens inspired by the garden. Anchoring the living room is a sofa in a bold Colefax and Fowler print of plump pink cabbage roses on a background of wide pistachio and ivory stripes. Two more Fairholme contacts helped pull the room together: paint expert Dennis Oliphant mixed an energizing celadon for the walls, and Nat Cohen of Stark Carpets found a floral rug in his collection that was a perfect match.

Pickett commissioned painter Robert Jackson to adorn the dining room walls with trompe l'oeil garden trellises, pagodas, monkeys, and birds. “I've always found dining rooms difficult to decorate, so I told Robert to just go wild,” she says. As with every mural Jackson has painted for Pickett in the past few years, this one includes a portrait of Baron, the family’s 10-year-old West Highland terrier, who has his own chair and plate at the dining table. “He rules all of us,” Pickett says. “He eats Cheerios.”

If that seems a tad silly, it’s really part of the larger plan. Rather than longing for a vanished past, Pickett has created a new home filled with family, beauty, and fun. “What I've always wanted,” she says, “is a happy, lived-in house.”

**DESIGNER SAVVY**
The guest room, above, and porch show a knack for light yet substantial environments.

**TRADE SECRETS**
**FURNITURE** Rattan furniture by Kemble Interiors, Palm Beach. Porch coffee and side tables by Norcross Patio, West Palm Beach.

**FABRICS** Walls, curtains, and bedspread fabrics by Colefax and Fowler.

**RUG** Holbrook by Stark.
THE HOUSE SPEAKS NOSTALGICALLY OF ANOTHER ERA, UPDATED TO REFLECT A LOVE OF OUTDOOR LIVING
Master Class  Robin Pickett makes her own home using lessons from the past

Robin Pickett earned her license to decorate under the eye of Georgina Fairholme, an alumna of Colefax and Fowler, the English firm that John Fowler led with Lady Colefax and then Nancy Lancaster. (The company is now best known for its fabric and wallpaper; the Sibyl Colefax & John Fowler Decorating and Design division fashions interiors and sells antiques.) No wonder Pickett, like so many Americans, was drawn to the English country house tradition that Fowler popularized: he made chintz respectable and rescued us from Victoriana. His artful collages of fabrics and furnishings invite adaptation and personalization. His method allowed Pickett to indulge her passion for peppy color and natural motifs, and to create a house built for comfort. — Sabine Rothman

GROUND COVERS  As an alternative to rush or sisal matting, on top of which he layered Oriental rugs, Fowler often designed carpets with geometric or floral patterns inspired by 18th- and 19th-century models. In a similar spirit, Pickett used Chinese needlepoint and worsted wool Wilton weave carpets with consistent small-scale patterns that extend the botanical theme underfoot and don't compete with her fabrics. Wilton carpets, woven on a Jacquard loom, were originally developed to compete with handmade needlepoints. Their pile can be looped or cut. From front: Kenmare is the wide loom Wilton in Pickett's bedroom; Carnation in lilac, a narrow French Wilton, and Sonesta in white, a wide loom Wilton, are pretty alternates. All are available, in custom colors, from Stark Carpet.

WALLED GARDENS  Pickett hired Robert Jackson, a decorative painter, to create fanciful trompe l'oeil trellises in her dining room. Wallpaper is a more convenient way to bring garden structures inside. From top: Try Brunschwig & Fils's Treillage Sidewall panel in celadon and off-white; coordinating borders allow you to create the architecture of an entire room in two dimensions. Bambu #9820-4, from Clarence House. Nuttlebury from the Wessex Collection, by Osborne & Little. Gallery Gardens in Moss, by Tyler Hall, through Carleton V.
SMALL SCALE
Small patterns act neutral but add texture. Clockwise from bottom left: Colefax and Fowler’s Petersham in green, at Cowtan & Tout; Bassett McNab’s Small Scale Texture, at Carleton V; Colefax and Fowler’s Byron Weave, Cowtan & Tout; Newport Plaid in Sage and Jubilee Collection #13029-04, both Duralee Fabrics, Ltd.; Jane Churchill’s Pembury Check in pink/pale green and Colefax and Fowler’s New Tavistock, both at Cowtan & Tout; Isabelle Embroidered Matelasse Coordinate in Hibiscus, at Schumacher.

Choosing Chintz
Prints that have vertical stripes as a structural background for riotous blossoms will ground your palette

- A dense pattern of buds and blooms floats over green and ivory stripes of varied widths on the softly faded linen-and-cotton Bramdean print in Pistachio, from Lee Jofa.
- Exuberant sprays of roses and the casualness of a linen-cotton blend create the summery look of Escapade in yellow and green, designed by Suzanne Varney, at Carleton V.
- We think Vita Sackville-West would have loved the lush bouquet and subtle moiré stripe on Sissinghurst cotton in green, by Colefax and Fowler, available through Cowtan & Tout.
- Colefax and Fowler’s Ellerby in pink and green, at Cowtan & Tout, anchors Pickett’s living room. This weighty linen blend has a herringbone weave.

Fitting Trims
Fun finishing touches for curtains and upholstered furniture, from left: 3/4-inch Domus Dotted Braid in pink/green; 1/4-inch woven ribbon in pink/green/cream; 10-mm Imported Cord with Tape in pink/green; Domus Pom Pom Fringe in cream/celadon/red. All from Samuel & Sons Passementerie.
HELPING HANDS
Architect Harry Elson and designer Alan Tanksley make a Palm Beach

PHOTOGRAPHED BY FRANÇOIS DISCHINGER
STYLED BY MICHAEL REYNOLDS
WRITTEN BY BETH DUNLOP
DESIGNER SAVVY The loggia, as seen from the pool house, epitomizes the owners' architectural mandate: a house that is epic but minimalist.


house a showcase for a stunning collection of art and crafts owned by Elson's parents.
The ambassador had just arrived at the Palm Beach airport for a quick visit to check on the progress of his home renovations. "Let's go by and see the house," he said to the friend who met him.

The friend began to mumble. "I don't think you want to do that," he said.

"Don't be silly," replied Edward Elson, at the time the U.S. ambassador to Denmark.

"We went by, and there wasn't a house," Elson says. Months earlier, he and his wife, Susie, had bought a fairly nondescript early-1990s house and turned to their New York architect son, Harry, to redo it. After long, fruitful hours of discussion and design—even a bit of debate—the couple returned to Copenhagen.

They thought they knew what Harry was doing, but they didn't. "Of course, at the end of the day, he was absolutely right," Susie says.

The son had studied his parents well. "This was a very pedestrian, neo-Regency builder house," Harry says. "I just stripped it down to its essence, to its bones." What he built in its place is modern yet classically proportioned, simple yet highly sophisticated. It is a house with a certain ease and lofty ambitions, a house for uncomplicated living and formal entertaining."
The architecture allows the art and handcrafted items, such as Judy Kensley McKie's bronze lizard handles on the front door, to take center stage.

TRADE SECRETS

FURNITURE Custom-made sofas surround a Wendell Castle coffee table.

FABRICS Sofas in Rogers & Goffigon's Loofah linen. RUG Custom wool-looped area rug by V'Soske Joyce Ltd., Ireland.

PAINTINGS Cristobal Toral's Yellow Apples (1973) and James Valerio's Studio Figures (1982).
The house is modern yet classically proportioned, with a certain ease and lofty ambitions. It is a house for uncomplicated living and formal entertaining.
Edward Elson, former rector of the University of Virginia, and his wife, a former chairwoman of the American Craft Council who has been collecting for decades, developed a love for artist-made furniture, fine and unusual antiques, and New Realist paintings. During their six-year stint in Europe, they were captivated by the simplicity of style in Denmark and became fascinated by the Palladian villas of northern Italy. Thus the mandate to their son: make a house that is both minimalist and epic. "It is not large," the architect says, "but it is somehow almost endless in scale."

The central space is a capacious, high-ceilinged living room with the proportions of an art gallery, which it essentially is, accommodating outsized paintings by Jack Beal and James Valerio, among others, as well as ceramics, drawings, and a remarkable mosaic wing chair—it sits in one corner as if it were furniture—by Candace Bahouth. A library that features a metal chair by André Dubreuil and a bronze and silver-plate sculpture/table by Lucas Samaras opens off to one side. Oversized French doors lead to a broad, covered loggia. "What's nice is that it all flows together, and yet there are intimate spaces," Susie Elson says. "When just the two of us are here, it's not too big, but we can have ten for dinner or entertain one hundred and fifty."

New York designer Alan Tanksley came to "curate" the collections, a term used well in this case. He commissioned furniture—two curved, pale living room sofas that flank a Wendell Castle coffee
table, for example—that would, he says, "play a supporting role, framing and giving life to the room and allowing the very important, complex, and visually assertive pieces a presence."

For the dining room, Tanksley commissioned from Donald Lipski a chandelier ("Well, it really transcends chandelier," Tanksley says) that is an inverted tree. The dining room is a skylit cube filled with art and handcrafted furniture, but the tree dominates. By day, it is a work of art, but, Tanksley says, "at night it is an apparition, like something from Hawthorne, dazzling and ethereal."

Harry Elson, who worked for Edward Larrabee Barnes and Charles Gwathmey before setting out on his own, is a well-schooled modernist, but does not limit his scope or his sources. "I appreciate metaphor," he says, "but as a starting point, not as replication." He drew ideas from Palladio, Alvar Aalto, Erik Gunnar Asplund, Paul Rudolph, even New Orleans's French Quarter. "I wanted a modern villa," he says. "The building is not just the object but part of the landscape."

The Charlottesville, Virginia, landscape architect Warren Byrd designed a garden that is divided into three distinct rooms: a narrow, junglelike walkway that culminates in Robert Arneson's Big Head of Jackson (Pollock), the open pool area, and a lawn with a single sculpture, by Antony Gormley. The garden is planted entirely in green and white flowering plants, which make it "so serene and cool," Byrd says.

For all that this house contains, it is tranquil. "Of all the houses we've had, the places we've lived," Edward Elson says, "this is the one I enjoy the most. I take extra delight in just waking up in the morning in this peaceful and elegant environment."

Beth Dunlop lives in Miami Beach. Her most recent books are A House for My Mother: Architects Build for Their Families (Princeton Architectural Press) and Beach Beauties (Stewart Tabori & Chang).
DESIGNER SAVVY For all its extraordinary beauty, everything has a practical application, from the lap pool to a table and chairs.

TRADE SECRETS FURNITURE The steel bed frame in the guest room, opposite page, top, is by Tom Markusen, from 1984. Poolside teak benches with galvanized metal seats, left, by Sutherland, through Holly Hunt. In the kitchen, this page, Ron Arad’s Walking Table (1990), and custom chairs by Olivier YeDrine for Neutu-Studio. ARTWORK In the guest room, Alfred Leslie’s David Burres (1976) and Helen Searing (1976).
When Ralph Lauren remade American style, we should have known he would not be satisfied until he remade Mother Earth as well. In an exhibition hall at Chicago’s Flower and Garden Show last spring, Lauren designed a country estate garden worthy of the fantasies of a Henry James heroine. With its manicured lawns and clipped allees, the garden culminates in a romantic scene: a river of grape hyacinths runs along an embankment of grasses and daffodils and leads to a vine-clad pergola set for supper. As always with a Ralph Lauren set, there are touches that bring the fantasy within reach: a rowboat strewn with pillows can grace any lawn for an afternoon’s repose, and a chandelier brings elegant dining into the garden.

—DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN
The Monastery of St. John the Divine, this page, looms over the town of Chora on the Greek island of Patmos, where John Stefanidis and Teddy Millington-Drake built a house and garden, foreground.

The lemon tree terrace, opposite page, is furnished with a table and chairs of Stefanidis's design and has a view of a chapel devoted to the prophet Elijah on a distant hilltop.

**WORKING IN**

DESIGNER JOHN STEFANIDIS AND THE PAINTER TEDDY MILLINGTON-DRAKE CARVED A SPLENDID GARDEN ON THE ROCKY AEGEAN ISLAND OF PÂTMOS
LATE IN THE SUMMER of 1965, two travelers making their way across the Aegean chanced upon the town of Chora, on the small Dodecanese island of Patmos. One of them, the painter Teddy Millington-Drake, wrote that “most of the houses were empty and closed. Old women in the street picked a basil leaf or a carnation to offer with a greeting as we passed. There were only two or three other foreigners on the island.” Millington-Drake’s fellow traveler was the designer John Stefanidis. “There were ruins everywhere—high walls and handsome houses, yellow with age, as they had not been whitewashed for decades,” he says. “Nevertheless, there hovered over the island a great stillness and beauty.”

Chora, whose narrow cobbled lanes do not allow for automobiles, was built in the eleventh century beside the Greek Orthodox monastery of St. John the Divine, who had written the Book of Revelation (otherwise known as the Apocalypse, one of the Bible’s most terrifying and beautiful texts) in a dank cave on the side of a hill. Millington-Drake and Stefanidis bought two sixteenth-century whitewashed village houses

DESIGNER SAVVY Practical and lovely, wall buttresses are used as backrests on one terrace, shaded by an almond tree. The pots are filled with red hibiscus and bougainvillea.

TRADE SECRETS FABRICS The cushions are covered in white sailcloth and Sunbrella’s striped acrylic.
The sunlight on Patmos is ambrosial. It caresses and dazzles. It is more than we can ask for" — John Stefanidis

and turned them into one long, meandering two-story house, and made a third building into a house for guests. Their dry and rocky property falls in shallow terraces to a broad valley. On a still summer night, the sound of the goats’ bells in the low-walled fields floats through the blackness. Across the valley, a stony hill is crowned by a small church devoted to the prophet Elijah, said to be built on the site of a temple to Apollo. And “in a little valley nearby, half-buried in the foundations of a hermitage, small and white, graced by two palm trees, lie the remains of a Roman bath,” says Stefanidis.

At first, the only water available was collected in a cistern each winter. When the town finally had a water system, “it was possible to start some kind of planting,” wrote Millington-Drake. They intended to make a blue-and-white garden with little color, but as it grew more sophisticated, color could not be resisted—hibiscus and pink bougainvillea, shaped in pots as in India, and yellow allamanda. The garden was slow-blossoming, as gardens tend to be. Even now, Stefanidis does not consider the garden finished. It will never be finished.

A terrace in the garden, its wooden pergola heavy with grapevines and moon-colored plumbago, has a daybed and chairs, and a table for summer dining. It is called Freya’s Terrace, after the late writer Freya Stark, a guest who used to work there each morning before her swim. She wrote to the owners: “It is a work of art you have inserted in the unexpected, bright frame of the islands." This art is so subtle that Millington-Drake stopped one
DESIGNER SAVVY The palette of cool blues and white—chosen by Stefaniadis, at rest, opposite page, in yer sorası, by traditional Turkish dining nook—maximizes the sense of serenity in the garden.

TRADE SECRETS FURNITURE Stefanidis designed the stone-topped table, this page. The tin lantern and wood-and-rush chairs were made on the island of Rhodes.

TABLEWARE The glassware, this page and opposite, was custom-made for the house by Venetian artisan Laura De Santillana. The Sévres-pattern plates are from Waddesdon Manor, Buckinghamshire, England. FABRICS The bedroom curtains, opposite page; bottom, are made of local linen.
Depending on the time of day and the season, the paths of the garden spill from fragrance to fragrance. Female guest from sunbathing in the garden in a bikini. “It makes it look untidy,” he said.

Depending on the time of day and the season, the paths of the garden spill from fragrance to fragrance: rose, mandevilla, dianthus, datura, tuberose, lavender, lemon blossom, lily, gardenia, verbena, and the almost unbearably exquisite *Cestrum nocturnum* (night-blooming jasmine).

There is shade in the garden, a most important thing in that dry place, and there is an ancient privacy to it; a feeling of worship and myth, as if a silent dryad hovered at your side. There is even an old serpent that slides from the stones to cool itself in the heat of the day.

On another terrace, thick with roses, a striped dhurrie is laid in the evening for cocktails; Turkish lanterns hung in the lemon trees light the paths. The Tomb Garden, its olive trees underplanted with santolina, oleander, and plumbago, contains the remains, sanctified by the local priests, of Millington-Drake, who died in 1994. There is an herb garden of parsley, mint, rosemary, and coriander in raised beds bordered by agapanthus. There is a lemon grove; a garden of rare cacti; a forest of prickly pear; pomegranate and fig trees; cypress; a Mughal fountain in a copse of westringia; a Sleeping Beauty thicket of aloe; and stone walls tumbling with jasmine.

“It was a secret island, known to few,” Millington-Drake wrote. “We didn’t want other people to come, buy houses, and break the spell. When the occasional tourist, sometimes even friends, passed by, I closed the shutters.” Little remains the same, least of all the garden. Only the light is unchanged. “It is remorseful, ambrosial,” Stefanidis says. “It caresses and dazzles. It is more than we can ask for.”

**Susanna Moore’s new novel, One Last Look, will be published by Knopf in September.**
designer savvy  White cedar shingles, cladding the exterior of the house, opposite page, were chosen because they weather to a silvery gray patina. A linden espaliered on a trellis inscribes the west elevation of the Shaker-like structure.

trade secrets  FURNITURE  Bittersweet vines clipped from local woods create a wall sculpture above a daybed, this page, covered in old French linen, with a pillow in a vintage checked linen.

LAMPS  Bracket wall lamps, made with segments from Grand Brass Lamp Parts, NYC.

taking her boughs
Garden designer Deborah Nevins builds an airy live-in orangery and fills it with bold botanical cuttings.
designer savvy
Nine-foot-high triple-hung windows help achieve the feeling of being outdoors and indoors at the same time.

trade secrets
FURNITURE Nevins designed the dining table and Knole settee.
FABRICS Antique French linen on the tables and couch.
LAMP Tolomeo table lamps by Artemide.

None of the properties that her friends had brought to her attention caught her fancy, so they were relieved when she finally announced that she had bought a wooded two-acre parcel on which she would create the year-round house she couldn't get out of her head.

"I've always wanted to live in an orangery," says Nevins, who was trained as an architectural historian before turning to the vocation that has brought her international acclaim. "The whole idea was to be able to sit inside and feel as though I were physically outside." To realize that vision, she turned to architect Peter de Bretteville to design the house. She knew just what she wanted: a design that would reflect her respect for the classic simplicity of the local Shingle-style vernacular as well as her ardent love of all things French. Not surprisingly, the cross-cultural result of that pairing evokes the Francophile spirit of Thomas Jefferson, especially in the nine-foot-high triple-hung windows straight out of Monticello that give the spacious living room the lofty, sun-flooded feeling of the citrus conservatory that Nevins imagined. Indeed, during the cold months of the year, the 20-by-28-foot space is home to fragrant Meyer lemon trees that spend the summer outdoors in...
Against the off-white backdrops, the cuttings make the house seem like a three-dimensional botanical album.
The generous scale of the rooms makes the small building seem quite luxurious.

FURNITURE Dominating one wall of the living room is an early-20th-century, 32-drawer French apothecary cabinet, from Rooms & Gardens, NYC.

TABLEWARE On the cabinet’s shelves are early-19th-century French Creil creamware plates and cuttings of fig leaves.

huge terra-cotta tubs. At the opposite end of the ground floor is an actual greenhouse in which Nevins overwinters the many other non-hardy potted trees—including fig, bay laurel, and myrtle—that punctuate the areas surrounding the shingle-clad building.

As geometrically severe as a Shaker barn, the compact form of the structure was dictated less by philosophy than economy. To keep costs down, Nevins asked for a footprint so small—a mere 20 by 45 feet—that when the foundation was poured, a neighbor asked why she was building her swimming pool first. And because complex gables can add significantly to a budget, the simple pitched roof makes the structure seem like a full-scale version of a Monopoly house (albeit a very elegant one, since the Parker Brothers game pieces do not come with a perfectly trained linden espalier on one narrow end). But there is not the slightest hint of cost cutting here, thanks to the generous scale of the rooms, which makes the building seem vastly larger and quietly luxurious once you step into it.

Nevins’s approach to the interiors was much influenced by the taste of her good friend Rose Tarlow. Monochromatic off-white walls and linen upholstery throughout, antique wood floors and chimneypiece, and well-burnished antiques chosen more for patina than pedigree all give the high-ceilinged rooms a timeless aura
not unlike that of Tarlow’s much published Bel-Air home, though Nevins’s relaxed version is more appropriate to this rustic setting.

Window treatments are minimal to nonexistent. Nevins wanted to maintain a strong interconnection between interior and exterior, and on the ground floor eschewed curtains altogether, so that the eight great living room windows could be opened to the surrounding gardens unimpeded by fabric. For some privacy at night, she hangs an antique lacquer kimono stand with vintage textiles and places it in front of the window closest to where she is sitting. Yet there are some contemporary surprises, too, such as a concealed neon light installation by her friend the artist Stephen Antonakos that casts a serene blue glow in her second-floor bedroom and welcomes guests as they arrive up the curving driveway for one of her frequent dinner parties.

ON THOSE OCCASIONS, and every other day that Nevins is in residence, for that matter, the rooms are enlivened with the bold cuttings she prefers to conventional flower arrangements. Against the off-white backdrops, these striking specimens make the house seem like a threedimensional botanical album. In winter, it might mean massive flowering branches that she cuts and forces in the greenhouse; in summer, a huge fig leaf or acanthus frond placed like a sculptural fragment to emphasize the incomparable design skills of Mother Nature. Oldest of all is a fern fossil embedded in a huge chunk of anthracite propped on the living room mantel. “That’s the piece I’d run for if the house caught on fire,” Nevins says, “though because it’s coal, it wouldn’t burn right away.”
were physically outside”—Deborah Nevins

designer savvy in Nevins’s bedroom, a delicately outlined 19th-century French iron tester bed encapsulates the elegant restraint of the house. A pair of myrtle trees flank the bed.

trade secrets FURNITURE American 19th-century table and turn-of-the-century chair. FABRICS French 19th-century linens cover the bed. PAINTINGS Portrait of Nevins at 14, by Nancy Ranson.
A century before the East End of Long Island was littered with postmodern McMansions, artist William Merritt Chase devised a stylish way of life for the newly fashionable Hamptons, one that has never been surpassed in sophisticated elegance. The beach communities of the South Fork had become more accessible with the arrival of the railroad in 1870, when affluent New Yorkers began to summer in those villages, and among them was a group of art patrons, who lured Chase, the leading American Impressionist, with the gift of a lot in the (Cont. on page 112)

William Merritt Chase's Hall at Shinnecock (1892), pastel on canvas, 32½ by 41 in., from the Terra Foundation for the Arts' Daniel J. Terra Collection. Photograph courtesy of the Terra Foundation for the Arts, Chicago.
HISTORY LESSONS

Taking cues from Sissinghurst, Giverny, Kew, and other
ARDENERS MUST APPRECIATE restoration drama: they witness it year after year. But the gardener who conceives a grand new production in the old style, and then nurses it to full bloom, is a rare species, Joan Carl and her mother, Mary Beryl Patch Turnbull, are examples of that breed, as Little Orchard, the Carl family's retreat in Southampton, New York, demonstrates.

According to Carl, Little Orchard was more reclamation and reinvention than restoration. She and her husband, Bernard, had been looking for a summer place for themselves, their three children, her mother, extended family and friends, five cats, and four dogs. Washingtonians for most of the year, the Carls loved the sun and sea air of the Hamptons.

The house, a multi-gabled wonder with ten bedrooms, was built in 1916. “Several harsh seasons had taken their toll,” Joan Carl says. “The teahouse and old rose arbors were rotting. There were some peonies in a bed, and a small collection of roses by the drive.”

Transforming the landscape from tangle to tour de force took more than five years, and the combined will of mother and daughter. They wanted the gardens to suit the period and mood of the house, so they reinvoked the quadratic equation of the original landscaping. The front of the house opens to the south quadrant, with a swath of lawn, an allée of sycamores,
and a great copper beech. The east quadrant has a formal lily pond, fountains, a pool and pool house, tennis courts, and another expansive grass carpet. The rear of the house abuts the north quadrant, with yet another greensward and symmetrical rose arbors proceeding to a restored Victorian teahouse. The west quadrant is the setting for the greenhouse, the vegetable and cutting gardens, the orchard, the guest cottage, and Mrs. Turnbull's own garden.

Carl went straight to the source—or sources—for both the grand plan and many details. “We lived in England for two years,” she says. “The gardens at Sissinghurst inspired our white garden. Kew and the Chelsea Flower Show introduced us to countless annuals and perennials. The garden at Le Manoir aux Quat’ Saisons in Oxfordshire influenced the layout of the cutting, rose, and vegetable gardens.”

She was captivated by the sound of water at the Villa d’Este, and discovered vibrant rhododendrons in Scotland and the pure classical geometry of box parterres and formal allées in France. “In Giverny, we learned to appreciate the subtle sounds that tall grasses and leaves make in the breeze,” she says. “Monet’s garden also suggested the forms of our rose arbors, the curved wood bench, and the porch swing.” Beatrix Farrand’s gardens at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington provided insight into structure and seasonal color.

Vita Sackville-West’s axiom about garden design—“Profusion, even extravagance and exuberance, within...
We lost only one, which I consider a great victory.” — Joan Carl
the confines of the utmost linear severity"—certainly applies here. Massive privet hedges and mature hydrangeas frame the lawns and garden rooms. Annuals and perennials in border gardens explode with Technicolor intensity from April through October. The water lovers hover around the edge of the pond: astilbe, iris, and hibiscus grow alongside Carl's phragmites (perennial grasses).

"The specimen trees on the property are among its greatest riches," Carl says, "but when we bought the place, a good eighty percent were close to dying. We lost only one tree, which I consider a huge victory." Legend has it that the property's three large beech trees were literally beached a hundred years ago when a ship that was headed to Philadelphia from England broke up in a storm off the Long Island coast. "There's a tree in the far quadrant that is a cedar of Lebanon," Carl says. "It reminds me of my mother, who grew up in Beirut, where her Boston-born father was head of the American University's chemistry department for twenty years. Every summer, the family would head into the hills and live in tents they pitched under the cedars."

Nostalgia provided a powerful impulse for restoring this property to its current glory. So did the desire to create the kind of place that Carl's children would always hold dear. As for the gardens, Carl says, "Our goal was to create informality within classically planned spaces." That they have, and so much more.

Judith Nasatir is a writer in New York.
ground rules

If you establish the proper framework for a garden, harmony will follow

by Deborah Needleman

Renaissance concept of a villa in which the house flows into the garden. Carl restored this layout and used another Italian practice, enclosing a property's perimeter with hedges.

The Trees

- **Topiary** Large shapes clipped from boxwood were popular in Italy during the Renaissance and, according to Carl, in Southampton in the 1920s. In the 16th century, as now, box topiary were fashioned from *Buxus sempervirens*. These are hand-pruned twice a year.

- **Allées** Arboreal avenues, like the Carls' sycamores, were a feature of Renaissance gardens adapted in France by Le Nôtre. The *Platanus acerifolia* were planted in the 1940s in rows 24 feet apart.

- **Specimens** In the English landscape style of the 18th century, shade trees flourished unclipped and unregimented. Carl nursed 20 such grand trees, like the copper beech, by clearing away understory plants and fertilizing.

The Flowers

- **The White Garden** Like Vita Sackville-West, whose white garden at Sissinghurst inspired the one here, Carl appreciates formal hedges softened by billowing flowers. The beds are edged with Korean box, a hardier and more disease-resistant variety than English box (*B. sempervirens* 'Suffruticosa'), which was used in Europe (and America) for hundreds of years.

- **Hydrangeas** Carl uses casual clumps of these profusely flowering shrubs in a formal way to flank paths. Each cluster contains three hydrangeas planted 3 feet on center.

- **Cutting Garden** Annuals and tender exotics are grown under glass for a rotating summer display, much as they would have been in Victorian England. The practice then, as now, requires the help of a gardener.

  'Nikko Blue' hydrangeas and symmetrically placed urns, opposite page, mark the descent to an original circular fountain with statuary. The Carls excavated the lily pool beyond, which had been filled in during the 1960s, adding water lilies and koi. A cloudlike hedge of globe arborvitae encloses the pool and leads to a Lutyens bench. This page, from top: roses and dahlias from the cutting garden.

Estate Gardens

Combining the great gardens of Europe for elements to adapt, Joan Carl did what any owner of a grand estate would have done in the 1920s, the period from which her property dates. Eclecticism and historicism were the reigning principles of garden design from 1890 to 1940 (an era author Mac Griswold calls "the golden age of American gardens" in her book of the same name), so Carl harmoniously incorporated ideas from disparate sources within a framework of privet hedges, masses of hydrangea, and sweeping lawns—elements that define the horticultural vernacular of the Hamptons.

The Layout

The original design of the property—with a garden emanating from each side of the house—is an elaboration on the
Classically planned spaces will feel informal with masses of loose, blowsy plantings of hydrangea and lavender
On the Oregon Trail

Rob and Maria Sinskey pack up family and friends and hit the road to visit the small farms that are restoring quality to American food
Among the pleasures of the trip are the spectacular views, like the one, opposite page, from Mount Hood Organic Farms. Gus Gamble, this page, with a plate of little pies made from local berries.
snails in the shade of a generous willow on a wilting July afternoon in the twenty-first century? That’s the past for you: it always looks great when you edit it right. It’s the present that often appears as ungainly as a double-wide Winnebago swaying down a narrow stretch of road. Wine maker Rob Sinskey and his wife, Maria, know something about the luxury of adapting the past. They bought these Spartans, restored one, updated the other with air-conditioning and a new kitchen, and set out with their daughters, Lexi and Ella, and friends Launce and Amanda Gamble and the Gambles’ children, Gus and Jane. But first they put a vintage frame around their vacation: the idea was to travel in these beautifully designed objects back to the kinds of farms that existed before locally grown produce was replaced by agribusiness and chemical crops. Rob Sinskey locates the swing date, not entirely coincidentally, somewhere around 1946.

Family travel in a very small space may not be everyone’s idea of summer fun, but the Sinskeys and the Gambles figured that the Spartans would be a lot nicer than any motel they’d find between their homes in California’s Napa Valley and their destination in Oregon. Since the trip is about food, their traveling kitchen makes it possible to gather local organic produce and prepare it themselves, instead of chancing it at restaurants that are neither organic nor especially family-friendly. For Maria, who was executive chef at San Francisco’s Plumpjack Cafe and now oversees the kitchen at the Robert Sinskey Vineyards, this journey is not so much a busman’s holiday as an opportunity to get back to the basics of family life: setting up camp, making a meal, cleaning up, and going to bed without “the static of computers, television, and so forth.” Of course, it’s a lot of work. “I had no idea just how much,” Launce Gamble admits a few days into the trip. The caravan’s
first mishap occurs just after the families leave Napa, when the brakes lock on one of the trailers. Finding a place to pull off for a few hours of repair work, like finding a level place to camp, is not so easy when you have to maneuver the trailers as well as the two Ford diesel trucks that pull them. Even getting gas or stopping at a campsite for a septic dump or changing a tire requires more planning and patience than anyone could have counted on. So much for nostalgia.

When the caravan finally arrives at Kristin and Rich Ford's farm on Sauvie Island, 10 miles from Portland, it's tremendously hot, the children are tired, and the grown-ups are not at their best when one of the diesels sinks into the Fords' septic tank, flooding their laundry room. But there are compensations. Maria makes delicious little pies with the berries they have picked nearby, and Kristin serves Ford Farms' sparkling hard cider, an elegant, French-style drink that is memorably refreshing. And so the journey back to artisanal farming begins with the Fords and their 40 varieties of heritage apple trees, which they planted six years ago and which are now producing enough of this superb cider to sell at venues such as Whole Foods. The Ford operation looks bucolic, with
The small scale of the trailers is something children like Ella appreciate. Maria finds that trailer travel keeps the family together on a vacation.

A sour cherry clafoutis that Maria made from the cherries on the Jacobsons' tree, opposite page. Gus and Jane enjoy a midafternoon snack.

Highland cattle grazing just beyond the house, rows of apple trees, three Labrador retrievers, and tidy gardens of flowers and vegetables, but the operation isn't self-sustaining yet, or anything less than labor intensive, even though it all looks so effortless.

A dinner of greens from the Fords' gardens, fried fingerling potatoes with onions, excellent steaks from the Highland cattle and from the Gamble Ranch in Napa, and the superb Sinskey Pinot Blanc and Pinot Noir washes away the difficulties of the day.

REALITY BEGINS TO BITE HARDER

The next afternoon as the caravan leaves Sauvie Island and travels north to Hood River and the agricultural area known as the Fruit Loop. Orchards line the roads, but so do signs like “When the American Farmer Is Gone, Who Will Feed You?” and “Buy U.S.-Grown Fruit, the Safest in the World.” The embattled tone is something Brady and John Jacobson of Mount Hood Organic Farms know well. They came here 22 years ago, attracted by a spectacular setting facing Mount Hood. They hoped to make a go of 150 acres of pear trees, but competition from foreign growers and the large producers that have now jumped into the organic market reduced their profits drastically. They still maintain 60 acres of orchards and, in conjunction with a (Cont. on page 112)
blueprint  
(Cont. from page 48)  
The recessed, glass-walled entry further blurs the boundary between indoors and outdoors, carrying the concrete of the sidewalk right into the soaring lobby and straight to the back, where the rough gray material swoops upward to create the rear wall. This "urban carpet," as the architect calls it, plays off against the strong black diagonal of the stairway that connects to the second story, where another similar flight switches back to the floor above that, and reflexively onward and upward.

This element continues the venerable tradition of museum staircases that function as public concourses—think the old MoMA and the Whitney again, to say nothing of the Met and the new American Folk Art Museum. However, this version feels a few inches too narrow to allow files of people to ascend and descend without brushing against one another, unless they're on the Atkins diet.

Because the CAC has no permanent holdings, it's free from many requirements of collecting museums. This adventurous client wanted a scheme more assertive than the neutral containers favored by institutions that put art, rather than architecture, in the forefront. "We never intended a background kind of building," says CAC director Charles Desmarais, "and never had the slightest doubt that Hadid's design was appropriate for us."

How well its varied sequence of spaces will serve special exhibition needs—from large-scale installation pieces to video works to performances in a flexible black box—remains to be seen, as new permutations in experimental media evolve. One guaranteed success is sure to be the top floor UnMuseum, easily the most imaginative art gallery for children in many years. At the very least, the CAC is far more accommodating than the region's other deconstructivist Kunstballe, Peter Eisenman's Wexner Center for the Arts, of 1983–1989, at Ohio State University in Columbus, a building notoriously inhospitable to the objects on view in it.

An enviable number of current jobs will give Zaha Hadid ample opportunity to further test her mettle in the years just ahead. Only then will we know whether this unquestionably interesting figure lives up to the formidable reputation that has for so long preceded her. 

eye on art  
(Cont. from page 97)  
Shinnecock Hills and an offer to head a summer art school.

By the summer of 1892, Chase was living in a new Shingle-style house designed by his friend Stanford White. It sat on a bluff with views of Shinnecock Bay, and the environs soon became the principal subject matter of the painter.

Here we have what at first glance seems to be simply a charming portrait of the artist's family at their country place. The double-height hall with balcony epitomizes the decorating principles of the Aesthetic movement—that exotic mix of Asian and European influences exalting art as the highest goal of life. Chase incorporates such hallmark Aesthetic florishes as huge blue-and-white oriental vases (filled with local bayberry boughs), a red lacquer Chinese chair, and prints in thin black frames à la Whistler.

M OR E T H A N A  G E N R E S C E N E, however, this exceptionally ambitious work pays subtle homage to what some consider the greatest picture of all time. Our gaze is first captured by the Chases' eldest daughter, Alice (nicknamed Cosy), who peeks out at us while her sister Dorothy peruses a foldout book of ukiyo-e, Japanese woodblock prints, which had a profound influence on innovative nineteenth-century artists. The bold diagonal of those accordion pleats directs our eye to the languorous figure of Alice Gerson Chase, the artist's wife, who reclines in a slipcovered easy chair. Only later do we realize that reflected in the right mirrored panel of the armoire is the figure of the artist himself at his easel, recording this idyllic scene of domestic contentment.

The composition comes straight out of Velázquez's masterpiece Las Meninas, which Chase revered and studied intensively at the Prado. Like the Spanish infanta in the prototype, Cosy Chase engages the viewer while the painter makes a ghostly appearance through the looking glass, putting us in the place of the artist as well. Though Chase's dashingly executed pastel makes no pretension to court portraiture, both works exude a transcendent calm that elevates a mundane moment into a parable on the goodness of everyday life. 

on the oregon trail  
(Cont. from page 110)  
number of stores, including two chains, use the fruit to raise money for Portland's public schools in return for the growing costs. In the meantime, Brady has turned the old pickers' cabins on the farm into charming rentals and created a cash crop out of one of the most beautiful sites on either coast.

The economics of organic farming in the modern world are lost on the children. They are quite happy with Maria's raspberry and marionberry muffins and a clafoutis of sour cherries from the Jacobsons' tree. And Rob, at least, is still optimistic that an organic future can be something more than a luxury. He points to his success in turning his vineyards around. In 1990 the soil in the Sinskey chardonnay block was so hard you couldn't get a shovel in the ground. Rob got a pick, turned the soil over, saw that there was nothing living there, and decided to get nutrients to the vines naturally. When the chardonnay block was successfully reclaimed, he decided to turn the rest of his operation over to organic methods.

The Sinskeys have extended their mission from their vineyards to the winery, where Maria sees to it that artisanal food is prepared for the tasting rooms. To drive the point home, her book, The Vineyard Kitchen (HarperCollins), pairs simple seasonal menus with appropriate wines. She has no trouble acknowledging that organic food is out of reach for most people, but that doesn't deter her. If everyone who can afford organic food buys it, she reasons, the market will produce more and the price will drop. That's the economies-of-scale argument, and it's solid even if there is a paradox at the end of its rainbow: organic methods are so labor intensive that when demand increases substantially, small farms may well be driven out by the large operations that are already dumbing down the definition of organic. The Jacobsons know this, yet their business cards still read "Farming for Future Generations." That's their hope, and the Fords' too. As for the Sinskeys, they plan to keep up their yearly trips to family farms, traveling in their Spartan trailers across the country and against the American grain.
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Please don't get me wrong. I'm all for creative transgression and experimentation. At the risk of sounding like Dr. Phil, that odious oracle of New Age jingoism, I truly believe in the power of self-actualization. All people should have the freedom to realize their potential, to chase their dreams, blah blah blah. Nevertheless, self-actualization is not the same thing as wishful thinking—it can't be accomplished by fiat or press release. If reinventing one's identity were that easy, I'd be Madonna.

Bitterness and resentment may be my bread and butter, but I still like to give credit where credit is due. I am therefore happy to add my voice to the chorus of critical praise that has greeted the opening of Dia:Beacon, the daring new museum dedicated to conceptualist and minimalist art from the 1960s to the present. Housed in a former Nabisco printing plant overlooking the Hudson River 60 miles north of Manhattan, Dia:Beacon tantalizes culture vultures with a series of monumental artworks too large and ambitious for most urban exhibition spaces. The factory's vast, regimented halls and spare, industrial character (vintage 1929) are uncommonly sympathetic to the physical and ideological demands of Dia's collection. Art and architecture, happy at last.

Predictably, I do have one or two wee bones to pick. In the downpour of well-deserved kudos, I'm afraid, proper credit has not been given to the young architects of OpenOffice, the firm that collaborated intensely with "master planner" Robert Irwin. Dia officials, in their quest to champion Irwin as the visionary force that drove the mammoth renovation, have tended to downplay the tremendous efforts of OpenOffice's four principals: Alan Koch, Lyn Rice, Galia Solomonoff, and Linda Taalman. Yes, I'm sure that Irwin was a guiding force on the project, but architecture doesn't happen by itself, and Irwin is not an architect. Of course, he alone must receive full credit—"responsibility" might be a better word—for certain aspects of the project: the underwhelming parkingscape of fruit trees; Irwin's own open-air side gallery/garden, which looks like an employee amenity at a Stamford, Connecticut, office park; and his dorky, contrast-clad entry pavilion.

But let's turn my frown upside down. Dia:Beacon is an extraordinary accomplishment. My recommendation: pack up the kids and stay for lunch.

AD THINGS HAPPEN when good architects decide to present themselves as artists. This lesson was made painfully clear at the Whitney Museum's recent exhibition "SCANNING: the aberrant architectures of diller + scofidio." The cumbersome term "architectures" was a clear portent of pretension, especially when used in conjunction with novelty capitalization. I presume that the highfalutin title of this show was meant to suggest the overly conceptual, theoretical flavor of the work of Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio. Along with traditional building models and drawings, the architects presented Deep Thought installations of suitcases suspended from the ceiling and toy robots on a conveyor belt. Village Voice art critic Jerry Saltz summed up the problem neatly: "Diller and Scofidio aren't even artists; they're architects pretending to be artists, and their so-called art is atrocious."

To be fair, artists who masquerade as architects usually fare no better than their cross-disciplinary colleagues. Consider the appalling new Balenciaga boutique that opened a few months ago in Chelsea, the epicenter of Manhattan's contemporary art scene. Forsaking established commercial arenas such as SoHo and Madison Avenue, Balenciaga apparently wanted to send a message of higher aspirations. To that end, the fashion house entrusted the design of its store to French conceptual artist Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster. I can hardly imagine what "concept" the artist was trying to express in her installation of synthetic boulders and dirty bits of fabric that looked like plush toilet seat covers. On the day I visited, an exterminator wandered through the poorly renovated industrial space with a can of rat poison. All my senses vied for the title of Most Aggrieved; olfactory ultimately won the dubious distinction.

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