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MODERN IN DENVER

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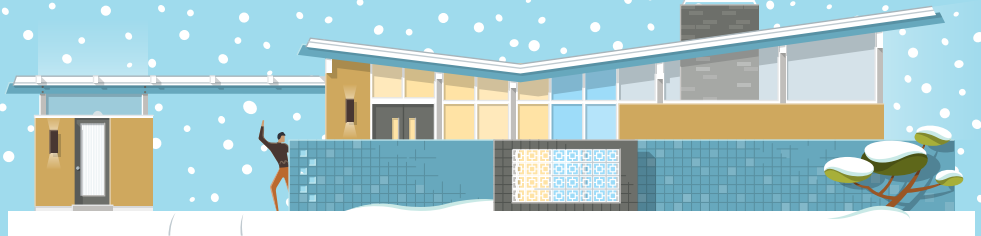
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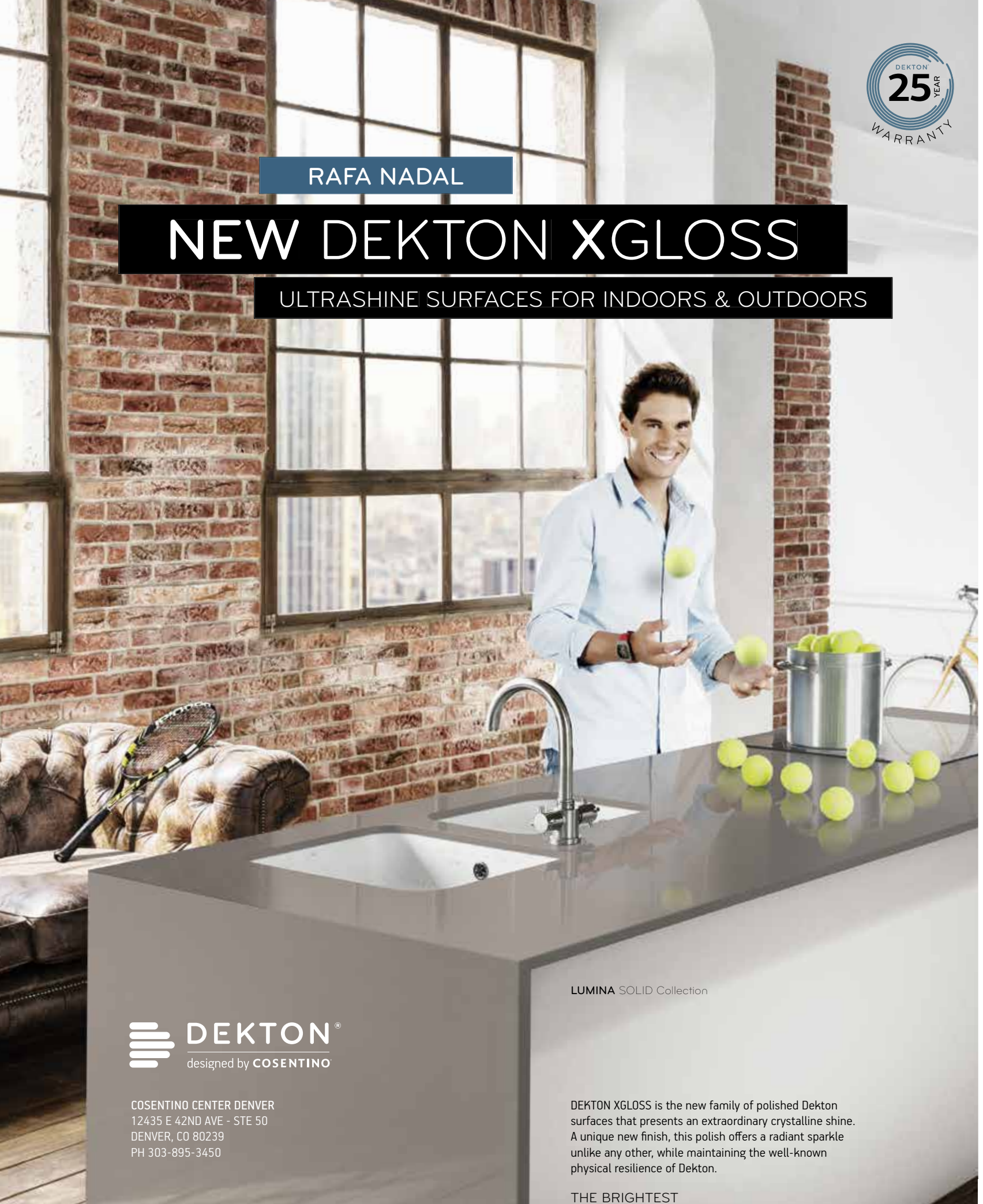
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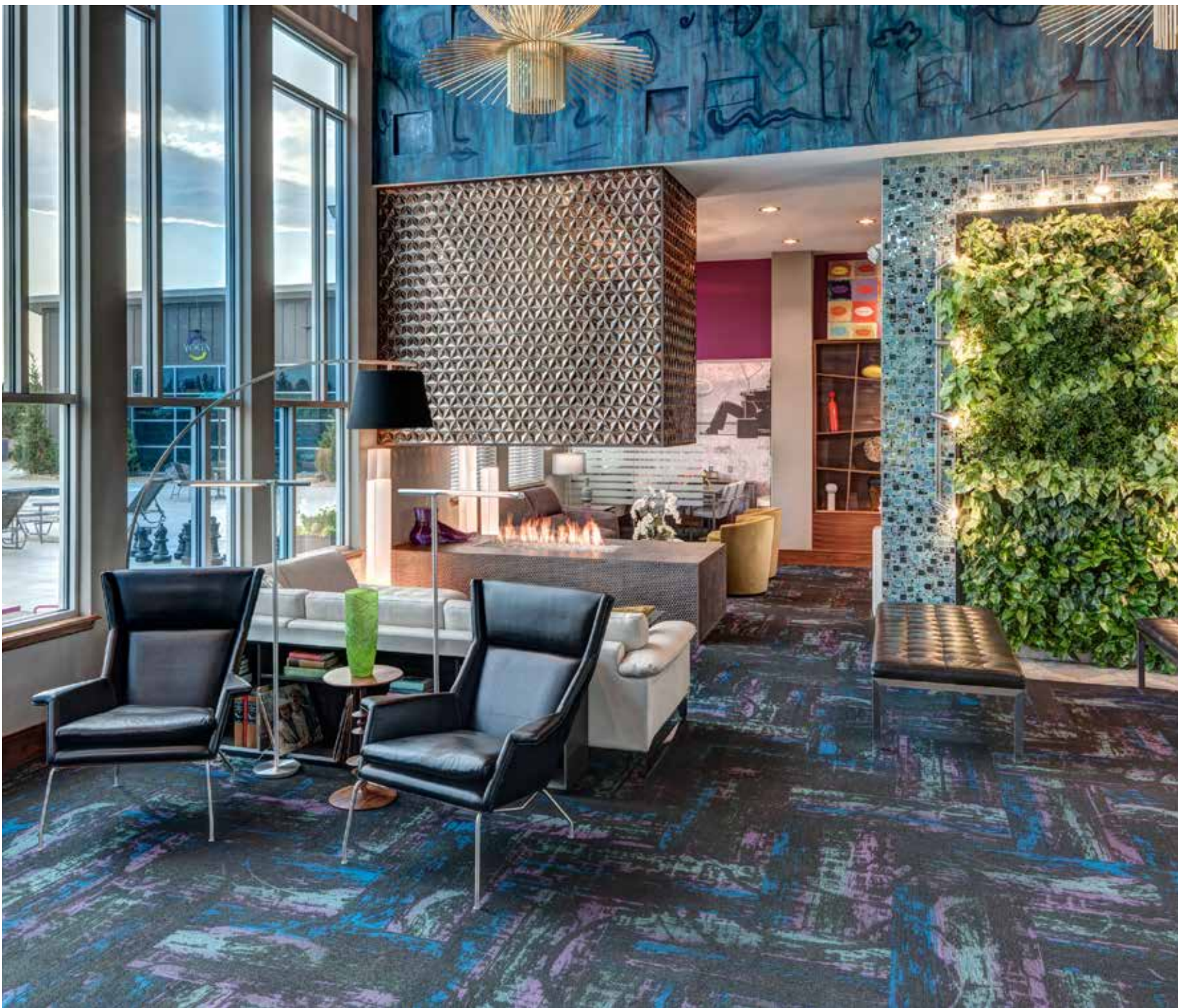
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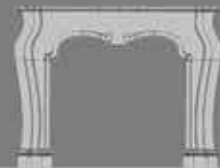
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"What good is the warmth of summer, without the cold of winter to give it sweetness." -John Steinbeck



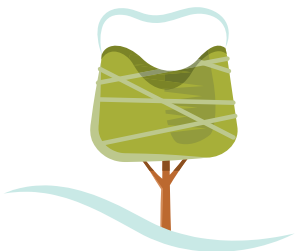
Winter!

2015 // 2016

ISSUE #THIRTY-ONE



"The alternative to good design is always bad design. There is no such thing as no design." -Adam Judge



36 // Field Study

OUR WINTER WONDERLAND OF NEW GADGETS, MODERN ACCESSORIES, AND FURNITURE.

58 // Modern Roots

WITH ITS PATCHWORK QUILT OF ARCHITECTURAL STYLES, BONNIE BRAE IS A NEIGHBORHOOD STEEPED IN DENVER HISTORY. BY TAPPING INTO THAT RICH ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE, ONE NEW HOME BRINGS MODERNIST IDEALS AND CONTEMPORARY VISION TO THE AREA WHILE REMAINING TRUE TO ITS PAST.

74 // You Are Here

HAVING A SENSE OF PLACE MEANS MORE THAN KNOWING YOUR GEOGRAPHY. IN OUR LATEST DESIGN CONVERSATIONS OP-ED, THE TEAM FROM TOMECEK STUDIO ARCHITECTURE EXAMINES HOW WE'VE LOST OUR SENSE OF PLACE, HOW TO GET IT BACK, AND WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT.

78 // Designing Wellness

TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES HAVE MADE US BETTER ENTERTAINED AND MORE FULLY EQUIPPED THAN EVER BEFORE. BUT AMERICANS' OVERALL HEALTH CONTINUES TO DECLINE. COULD THE POWER OF DESIGN ACTUALLY BE OUR SALVATION?

106 // Courting the Past

THE DENNIS MAES PUEBLO JUDICIAL CENTER ISN'T YOUR AVERAGE COURTHOUSE. DIGGING DEEP INTO THE COMMUNITY'S PAST LED TO A CREATIVE REIMAGINING OF WHAT IT MEANS TO DESIGN RELEVANT CIVIC ARCHITECTURE. CALL IT A COMMUNAL CONVERGENCE.

114 // Drawing Inspiration

WITH A BACKGROUND IN THE TOY INDUSTRY, ILLUSTRATOR CHRISTIAN MUSSELMAN HAD PLENTY OF EXPERIENCE WORKING ON BARBIE BOOKS AND HOT WHEELS PACKAGING. BUT LATELY HE'S FOUND THAT A FULL-TIME GIG ILLUSTRATING CUSTOM HOME PORTRAITS IS SERIOUS FUN—AND SERIOUS BUSINESS.

122 // All in the Family

DENVER'S HARVEY PARK IS A HOTBED OF MID-CENTURY MODERN HOME RENOVATIONS. FOR ONE COUPLE, REVIVING THEIR DREAM HOME REQUIRED MORE THAN JUST OUTSIDE EXPERTS. IT ALSO CALLED FOR A LITTLE HELP FROM FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, AND EVEN THE FORMER OWNER.

132 // Absolutely Pre-Fabulous

YOU KNOW ALL ABOUT FLAT-PACKED FURNITURE. BUT WHAT ABOUT FLAT-PACKED HOUSES? IN THE 1950S, ARCHITECT CLIFF MAY PIONEERED THE IDEA OF QUALITY PREFABRICATED HOMES THAT COULD BE ASSEMBLED IN AS LITTLE AS ONE DAY. MANY OF THOSE HOMES ARE STILL GOING STRONG.

140 // System Upgrade

BUCKING THE TREND OF QUIRKY FEATURES AND FLASHY ACCENTS SO POPULAR AMONG TECH FIRMS, ONE BOULDER COMPANY FOCUSED INSTEAD ON BUILDING A SPACE THAT MEETS THEIR EXACT NEEDS—NO BEER TAPS OR PING PONG TABLES REQUIRED. SIMPLICITY SURE CAN BE BEAUTIFUL.

144 // Cooking in a Material World

WILLIAM OHS HAS GROWN FROM A GARAGE-BASED STARTUP TO A CUSTOM KITCHEN POWERHOUSE, WITH 17 SHOWROOMS THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA. BUT A VISIT TO THEIR 50,000-SQUARE-FOOT DENVER FACTORY UNCOVERS A RECIPE FOR SUCCESS LITTERED WITH DELIGHTFULLY UNEXPECTED INGREDIENTS.

152 // Living Art

A WELL-DESIGNED PLANT CAN HAVE A BIG IMPACT IN JUST ABOUT ANY SPACE. OUR LUSH AND VERDANT PHOTO ESSAY ON MODERN INDOOR GREENERY PROVES THAT IT'S EASIER THAN EVER TO SPRUCE UP YOUR HOME OR OFFICE WITH A FEW SIMPLE ADDITIONS.



CONTENT



MY LIFE
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STORIES

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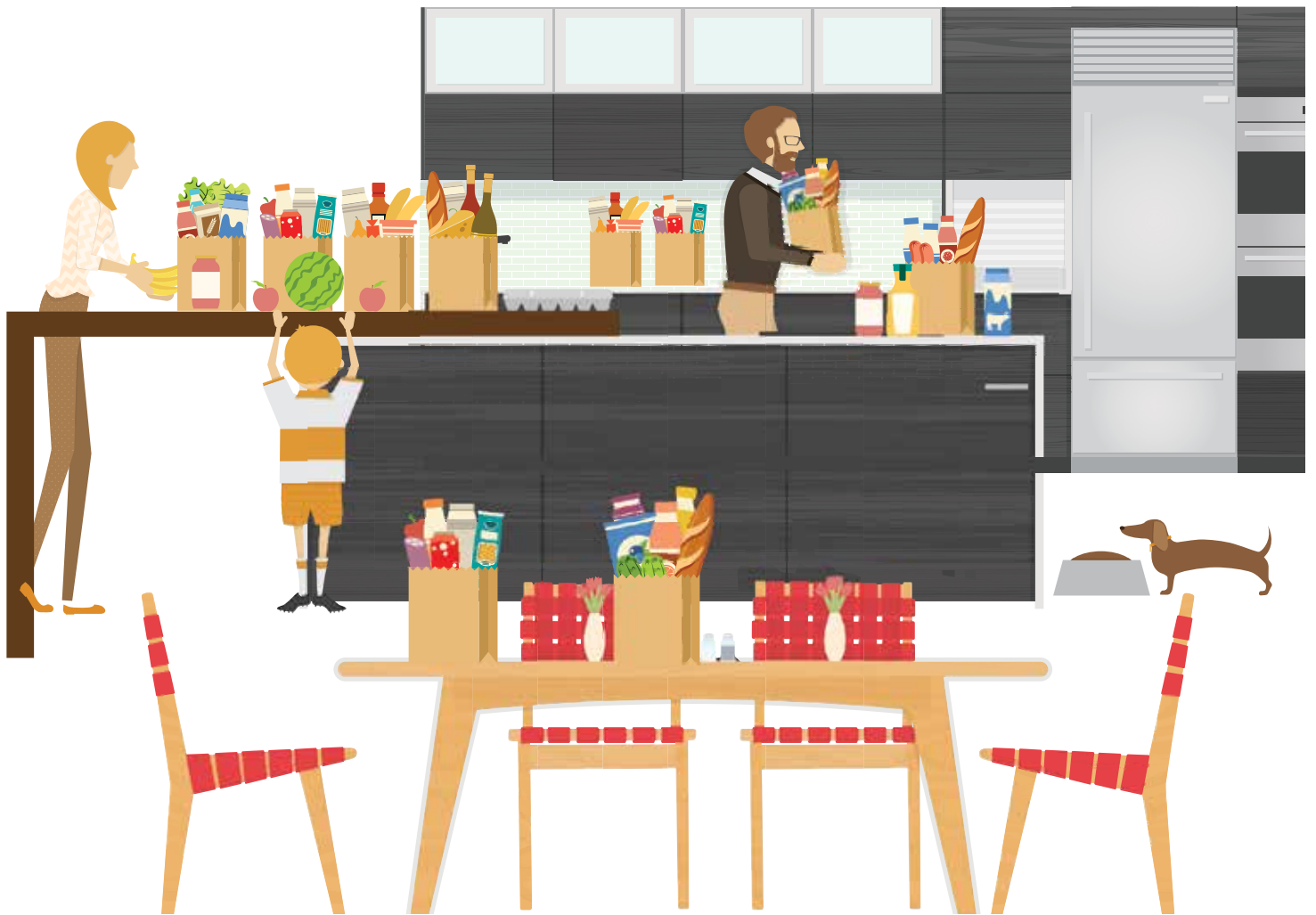
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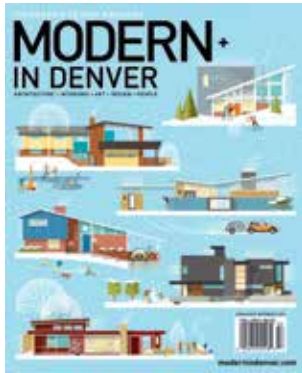


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A SPECIAL EDITION

COVER VERSION OF A COVETED COVER

ONE of the biggest rewards of publishing *Modern In Denver* is the opportunity it provides me to work and collaborate with so many talented and interesting people. Writers, photographers, editors, and designers—they all work extremely hard to help us creatively promote and celebrate great design on every page of the publication. This issue has been particularly thrilling. When we contacted Christian Musselman to profile his incredible architectural illustrations, our conversation led to a unique and inspiring collaboration and our first illustrated cover in 30 issues. The *Modern In Denver* library has an extensive collection of vintage design and shelter magazines dating back to the 1950s, and Christian’s work reminded me of some of our favorite illustrated issues of *Better Homes and Gardens* from the 1950s. I thought it would be fun to do our own “cover version” of one of these vintage classics. The goal was to capture the essence and look of the old cover, but make it current

for today. Christian was enthusiastic, and we settled on the September 1959 issue of *Better Homes and Gardens* that featured several mid-century homes with a fall scene. We changed the scene to winter, added a couple of new modern homes—one being our featured home this issue, the beautiful Semple Brown-designed Duncan house (p. 58) – and updated the cars and other small details. The process was terrific, Christian did an amazing job, and we have a special cover that is already one of my all-time favorites. I hope you’ll take a minute to look it over and appreciate all the rich detail. Inside this special cover is a full issue with highlights that include a 16-page feature on design and wellness, a story focused on the inspiration behind the new Pueblo Judicial Center, and two pieces on the mid-century modern neighborhood Harvey Park. One focuses on a young couple who restored their first Cliff May home themselves, and the other looks back at the prefab innovation Cliff May developed

in the mid ‘50s to streamline the building of a handful of neighborhoods across the country, including Denver’s own Harvey Park. Writer Atom Stevens traveled to the Cliff May archives in California to research this story and shed light on the impact May has had on current prefab building techniques. It is a fascinating and unique historical piece that illustrates just how much current design thinking was already gestating more than 65 years ago.

Thanks to you, our readers, we have had a wonderful 2015, full of amazing growth. 2016 is shaping up to be our biggest year yet, with an expanded staff, new events on the way, and more original content for the magazine. Onward!

William Logan
william@modernindenver.com

Christian Musselman makes a living illustrating detailed home portraits for clients near and far. This particular portrait has special significance because the home belonged to Musselman’s grandparents, and therefore holds strong childhood memories. The house no longer boasts breezeway jalousie or big square picture windows, but Christian was able to reference old photos to resurrect the past. What’s old is new again.



TWO COVERS

The Winter Issue once again comes jam-packed with so much in-depth original content that one cover couldn’t contain it all. In addition to Christian Musselman’s reimagined 1959 *Better Homes and Gardens* scene, the Dennis Maes Pueblo Judicial Center spins a fully-realized sense of history, place, and regionally-specific architecture into a wholly unique civic facility perfectly suited to the residents of southern Colorado. Enjoy.



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sometimes agile minds using an iMac 27", Adobe InDesign CC,
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printer, apple music, an iPhone 6 Plus, a Paper Mate flexi grip pen,
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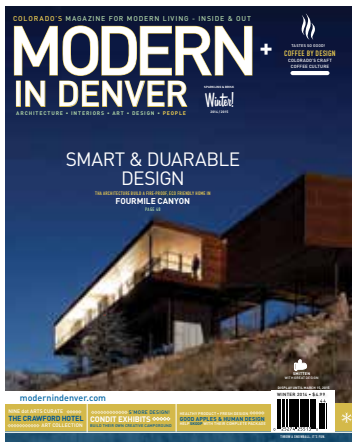
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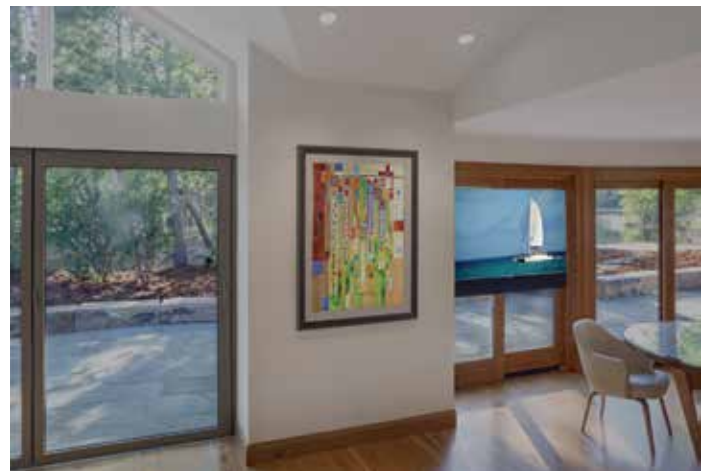
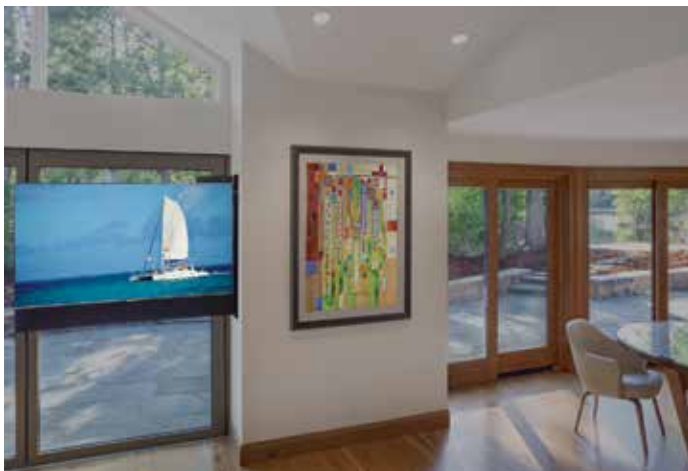
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Young builders (and even mature ones) can configure a new skyline daily with Blockitecture or Garden City, a series of blocks to inspire budding architects. But these aren't your typical rectangular shapes. They have multiple cuts and more than eight corners. The blocks require a thoughtful mind to attempt homemade skyscrapers that stand tall, with buildings jutting out into cliff hangers. Garden City, which is designer James Paulius' expansion of Blockitecture, not only adds greenery, but also new planes and triangles.

+areaware.com





SOFT SPEAKER

Disguised as a piece of furniture, the BeoPlay A6 speaker from Bang & Olufsen provides something unusual in wireless speakers: five channels to provide the high and low sounds expected of a B&O product. As with most wireless speakers, the A6 relies on Bluetooth to connect to music players, like a smartphone or iPad. There's also WiFi and Ethernet to beam the music to other rooms—and other speakers—in the house. But you don't need to be holding the music player to control A6. Touch the top to change tracks or swipe to adjust volume.

+beoplay.com

SEAT PSYCHE

Algere Design approached the Ego chair thinking about technology and how people live today. Usability followed. The Spanish design team shaped the seat with a creative asymmetrical frame with just one arm rest—perfect for getting work done while holding a tablet.

+byvtapizados.com





FLOORED

Hand over simple shapes like circles and diamonds to Margo Selby and the woven textile designer weaves the ordinary into a more complex, colorful version of the living-room rug. She treats each piece like a sculpture, which in the flooring industry is known as hand-carved Wilton. And because the British artist hand crafts her pieces (did you expect anything less?) with high-quality fibers, each is unique.

+margoselby.com



A DAY IN YOUR LIFE

Ever wonder where the day went? Leave it to Graava to remind you. This pocket camera, which prefers not to be in your pocket, will capture your day. The camera, when attached to a bicycle helmet or purse strap, records it all. Smart software figures out what scenes might be most memorable, and at the end of the day, it stitches together your life for an instant replay that won't take all day to watch.

+getgraava.com





SMASH LIGHT

Take a modern lamp and smash it flat and you'll get Bulbing, a two-dimensional lamp that has caught the fancy of netizens and design enthusiasts everywhere. A bit of a novelty but such an eye catcher, this LED lamp is a mere 5 mm thick. Its "wire-frame" lampshade appears 3D from different perspectives, just as one would draw a 3D cube on paper. Cleverly, designer Nir Chehanowski of Studio Cheha built a wood base for the lamps so a variety of 2D shades just slide in and light up. The latest collection introduces the desk lamp, dubbed DESKi, and features a classic steel and Birchwood stand.

[+bulbing-light.com](http://bulbing-light.com)

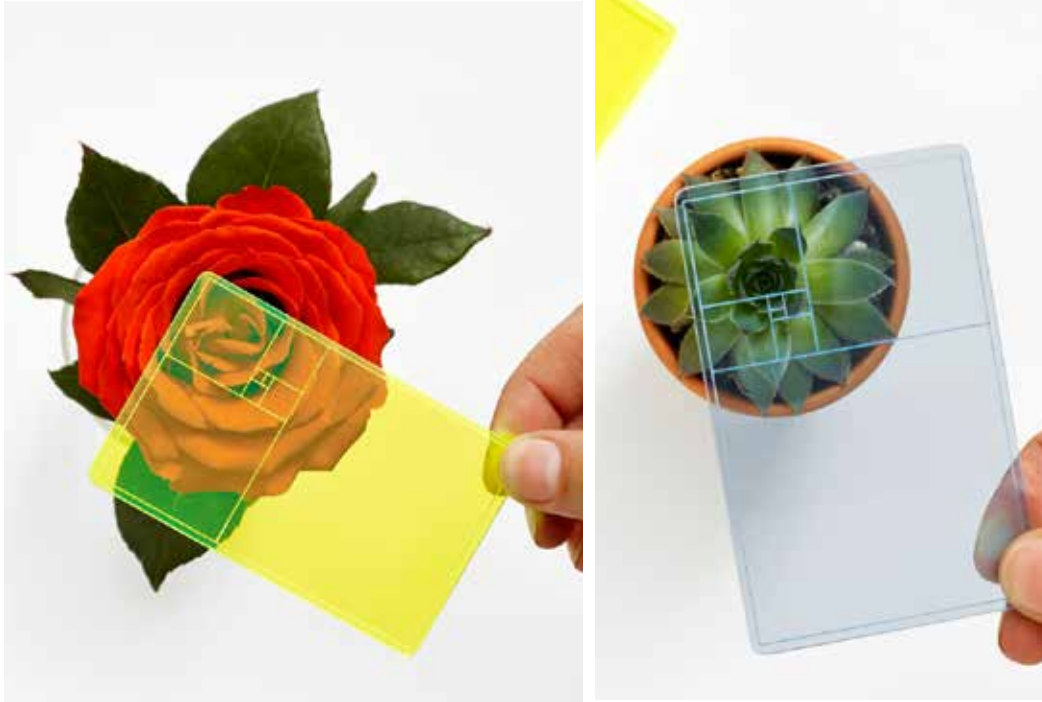


CUP OF SLOW

Drink coffee. But savor the cup if it was made by the Theo coffee maker, a non-electric, extremely slow-brewed device from designer Francis Cayouette. The filter has just three holes at the bottom so coffee hangs with the beans a bit longer. The award-winning Theo also comes in a smart matte-black stoneware carafe with a bamboo lid to keep warm.

+stelton.com





RELATIVE PERFECTION

Want to make sure your end tables are set at the same proportion as the Greek Parthenon? You no longer need to master the Golden Ratio, which some artists and architects theorize is the most aesthetically pleasing proportion. Just pick up one of these Golden Section Finders from Parsons & Charlesworth, a Chicago design studio founded by Tim Parsons and Jessica Charlesworth. Take a peek and let beauty come naturally.

[+parsonschalesworth.com](http://parsonschalesworth.com)



SMART WASTE

The Internet of Things tackled the trashcan and out came the Bruno Smartcan. It has all the features germaphobes will swear by: a vortex vacuum at the base to suck up what a broom dare not sweep, a touch-free lid that opens with the wave of the hand, and built-in storage for 13-gallon trash bags. The smart part? With the accompanying mobile app, Bruno will remind you trash day has arrived or that you're low on bags. Now if it would only take the trash to the curb.

[+brunosmartcan.com](http://brunosmartcan.com)



PATTERN RECOGNITION

On the lookout for dishware with style? Start by looking in the mirror. Utilizing a visual concept known as anamorphosis, Japanese company D-BROS developed a mirrored cup that perfectly reflects whatever pattern resides on the accompanying saucer. Getting a different perspective is as easy as changing the position or angle of the cup. Because of the delicate mirror finish, each piece is hand-made with a thin finish atop white porcelain. What you see is what you get.

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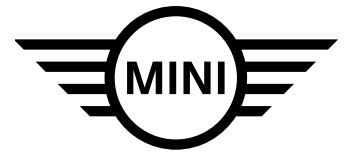
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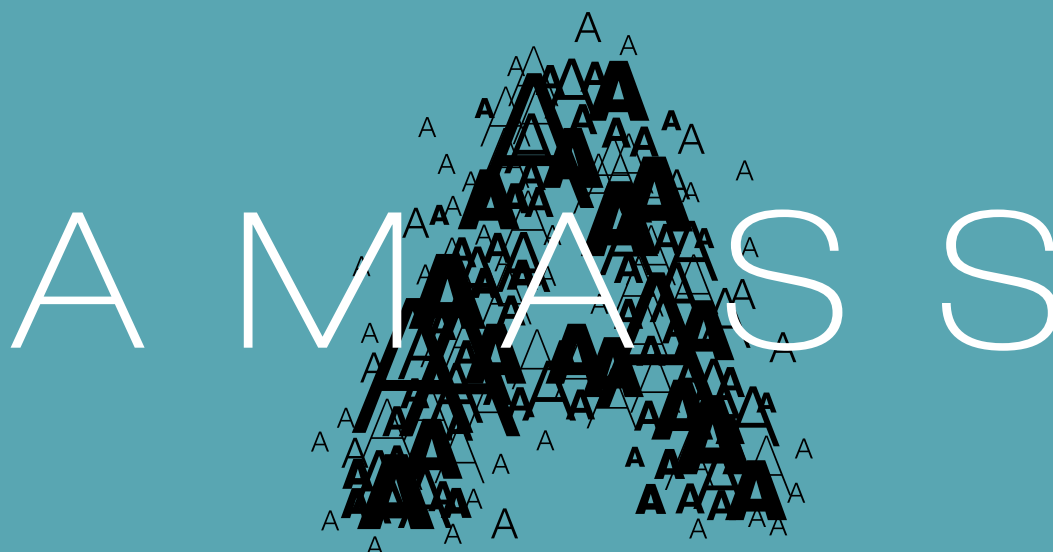
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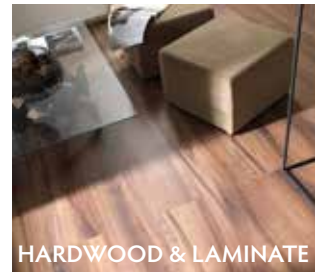
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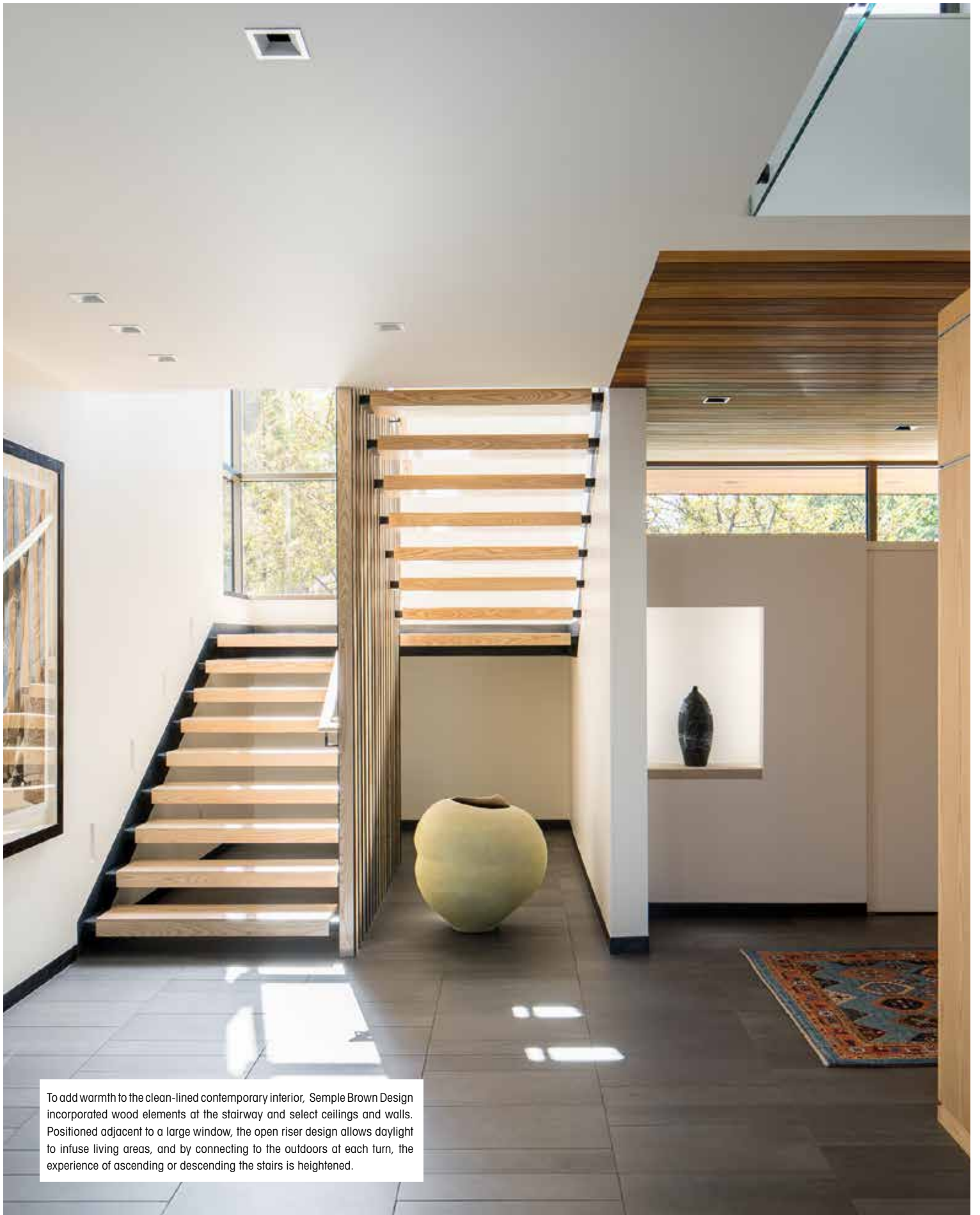
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To add warmth to the clean-lined contemporary interior, Semple Brown Design incorporated wood elements at the stairway and select ceilings and walls. Positioned adjacent to a large window, the open riser design allows daylight to infuse living areas, and by connecting to the outdoors at each turn, the experience of ascending or descending the stairs is heightened.

MODERN ROOTS

Semple Brown Design inventively interprets Bonnie Brae's architectural past to craft a harmonious new home with both Modernist ideals and contemporary vision.

WORDS: Sarah Goldblatt, AIA • IMAGES: DAVID LAUER

LIKE many of Denver's urban neighborhoods, Bonnie Brae has become a patchwork quilt of architectural styles. New home designs here have rarely looked to the domestic typologies set forth between the late 1920s and 30s after noted landscape architect Saco Reink DeBoer designed the winding subdivision in 1923 to emulate a peaceful Scottish Village focusing on the land's topography and natural beauty. Already a departure from the city's linear street grid, Bonnie Brae—which translates to "pleasant hill" in Gaelic—became a proving ground of sorts for Denver architects daring to break from 19th century romantic revivals and appropriate emerging European design principles, including the clean-lines, flat-roofs, and ribbon-windows of the International Style and Moderne movements. This genre's "less is more" assertion left its imprint on the picturesque residential enclave—and also inspired a 21st-century vision for outdoor enthusiasts Leanne and Kevin Duncan, who were looking to build a home both timeless and connected to the neighborhood along with the ability to bring the outside in.

With grown children out of the nest, the Duncans were ready to dispatch their suburban lifestyle and move closer to the city core. "We wanted to downsize not only in land, but in space," said Leanne, a landscape architect. "We wanted to forgo formalities and use

every inch of the house." While cycling through Bonnie Brae, the couple found the ideal site located along one of its distinctive curving streets to build a home that would establish their urban roots.

"We appreciated Kevin and Leanne's desire for a home that would fit comfortably among its neighbors," said Semple Brown Design Principal Tom Gallagher, who worked closely with founding Principal Sarah Brown on the project. Among Colorado's leading practitioners of a contemporary approach to architecture, the firm studies context, materials, and landscape to lend specificity to each project as was the case with the Duncans' home design. "Their site is a linchpin between the one-story neighbors facing the street and those that sit taller along Bonnie Brae Boulevard," he said. Both the scale transition and established rhythm of front porches informed Gallagher's geometric, two-story composition of solids and voids that recalls Rietveld's De Stijl-influenced 1924 Schröder House (sans primary colors). "By adding a low canopy and choreographed movement to the front door, we enhanced the entry porch presence and still met all zoning requirements," said Gallagher, whose plan follows the site's five-foot downward slope from the street to the alley, allowing the two-story home to convey a modest street presence with expanded volume at the back.

MODERN ROOTS

The brick cladding choice—over modern materials du jour, like COR-TEN, stainless steel, or zinc—was also a nod to the neighborhood’s masonry tradition found among its early Modernist, Tudor, and post-war ranch homes. But instead of the typical tan, red, or white standard sized brick, Gallagher chose an oversized “Norman” brick in a luminescent charcoal hue called Ironspot from Endicott Brick. “The manganese in the brick pops on the face when it’s fired, creating iridescent bubbles,” he said while describing how it reacts to light and changes character when viewed from different angles. The longer brick module, along with deep roof overhangs, serves to visually compress the home’s verticality.

“BY ADDING A LOW CANOPY AND CHOREOGRAPHED MOVEMENT TO THE FRONT DOOR, WE ENHANCED THE ENTRY PORCH PRESENCE AND STILL MET ALL ZONING REQUIREMENTS.”

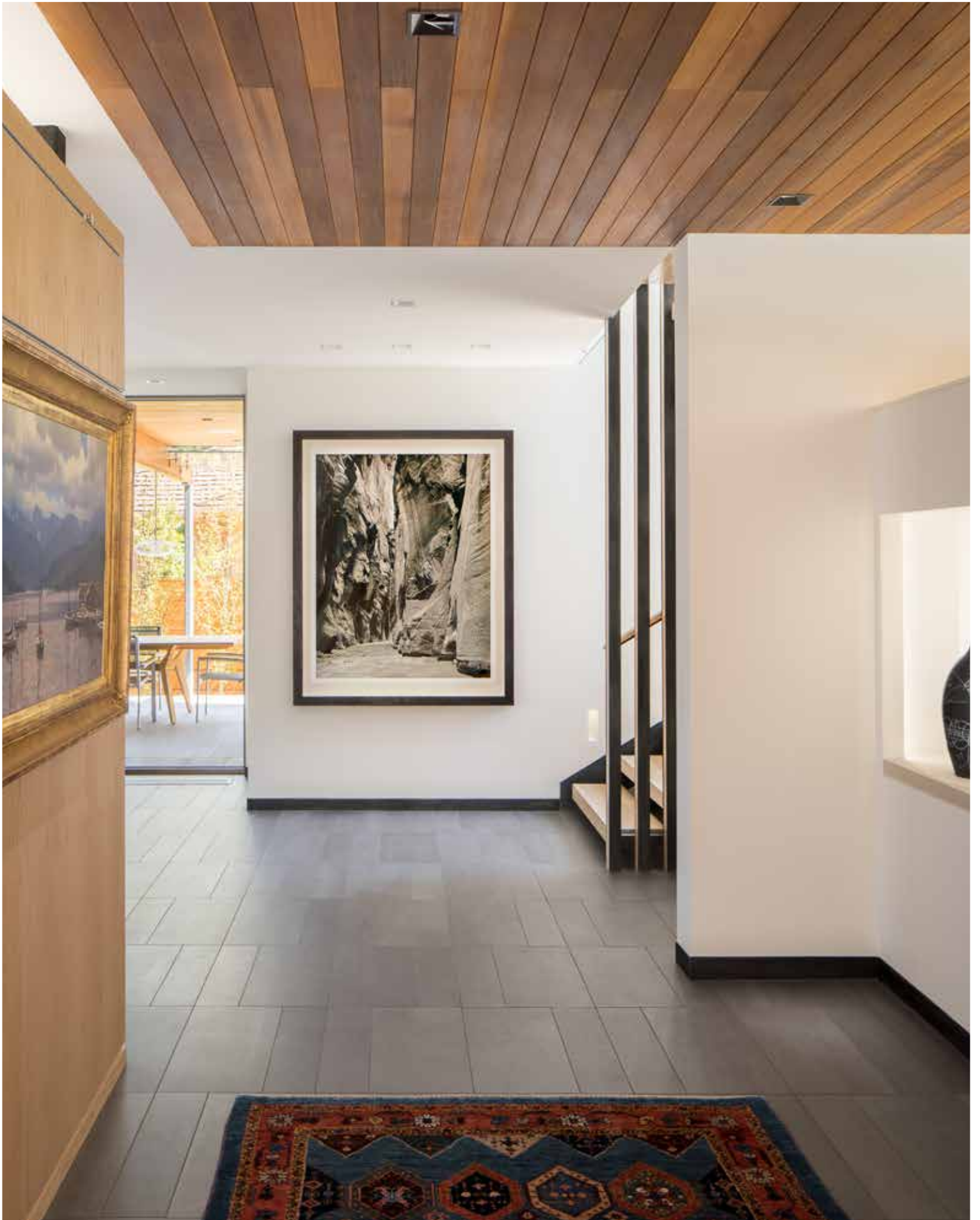
-TOM GALLAGHER, SEMPLE BROWN DESIGN

To further embrace the site context and topography, Leanne designed all landscape elements, including a low-scaled, layered entry sequence of alternating steel fences and board-form concrete walls (think Clyfford Still Museum) and a koi pond with lilies to establish the hierarchy of shared and private spaces that continues through the house. “The level

A series of concrete site walls, bluestone paths, koi ponds, and grasses establish the sequence of arrival and procession to the front door, while the sculptural form of the house, comprised of solids and voids, pays homage to the Modern movement’s synthesis of art and craft. The dark brick choice nods to the neighborhood’s masonry tradition and intentionally inverts the International Style’s signature white exteriors. A glimpse of Colorado artist Gail Folwell’s sculpture *Meso Ecto Endo* peeks out from the front porch.









OPPOSITE PAGE: The entry foyer is delineated with cedar decking at the ceiling and an ash-paneled wall with built-in art-hanging hardware. Just beyond, a floor-to-ceiling window hints at the home's seamless indoor-outdoor connection. Gray-blue ceramic floor tile from Mosa establishes a consistent ground plane throughout the main floor.

ABOVE TOP: Like a Mondrian painting, the interior spaces are composed of horizontal and vertical planes comprised of windows and walls overlaid on a neutral background. The living room features a limestone-clad, indoor-outdoor fireplace, which extends through to the roof-top patio. **ABOVE:** A custom-made glass and steel "cube" elegantly displays the fruits of the family's wine business. "We really wanted an active, temperature-controlled cellar where you could reveal the wine and not just store or display it," said Kevin Duncan of the home's focal point. Color-changing LEDs within the cube create a warm glow that emanates throughout the interior spaces.



of transparency at the front yard reinforces the neighborhood's welcoming feel while creating a visual edge," said Leanne. Indoors, the light-infused main level spaces—living, dining, and kitchen—spatially link to one another. In between are tightly framed vistas to the landscape that become the artwork. Even the finely executed minimalist kitchen (by Veselbrand) and the soaring exoskeleton-like stair (crafted by local artisan Rob Brindley), which expands skyward to the rooftop patio, feel like functional art. The distribution of the remaining program—master bedroom, two guest suites, an aerie-like office on the second level, and music and media rooms below grade—further defines the home's inner sanctum.

Hidden within the folds of the house, courtyards create indoor-outdoor flow. Gallagher equates this interweaving of space to the plasticity of sculpture; they carved voids from the solid mass of the house to create strategically placed outdoor rooms. Extended eaves create shaded spaces for year-round enjoyment while floor-to-ceiling Reynaers Aluminum lift-and-slide doors fuse interior and exterior living space into one.

Adding to the sense of refinement are the precise reveals that distinguish elements: drywall to aluminum door and window frames, flooring to walls, and stone to wood soffits. Aligning joints between materials—and the lack of such typical concealing ornament as base or ceiling moulding—further imbue the home with a sense of elegance through an astounding attention to detail. While the forms of the house are far from eccentric, the high level of craft involved made it demanding to build for the project's general contractor, Old Greenwich Builders, including Owner Cress Carter and Project Manager Gardner Middleton.

In distilling the neighborhood's historical context to its essentials, Semple Brown designed a residence clearly grounded in its Bonnie Brae setting. Yet it also speaks clearly in its own voice to the Duncans' desire for an enduring urban home and to the architects' contemporary vision. Said Leanne: "On a typical day we use every space; that was our goal."

The homeowners agree the stairway to the rooftop patio seemed like "one unsolvable problem that became one of the best features of the house." The project's general contractor, Old Greenwich Builders, credits Modern Craftsman Founder Rob Brindley for "the spectacular calculation and precise fabrication of the stair components" that allowed for its exact placement.

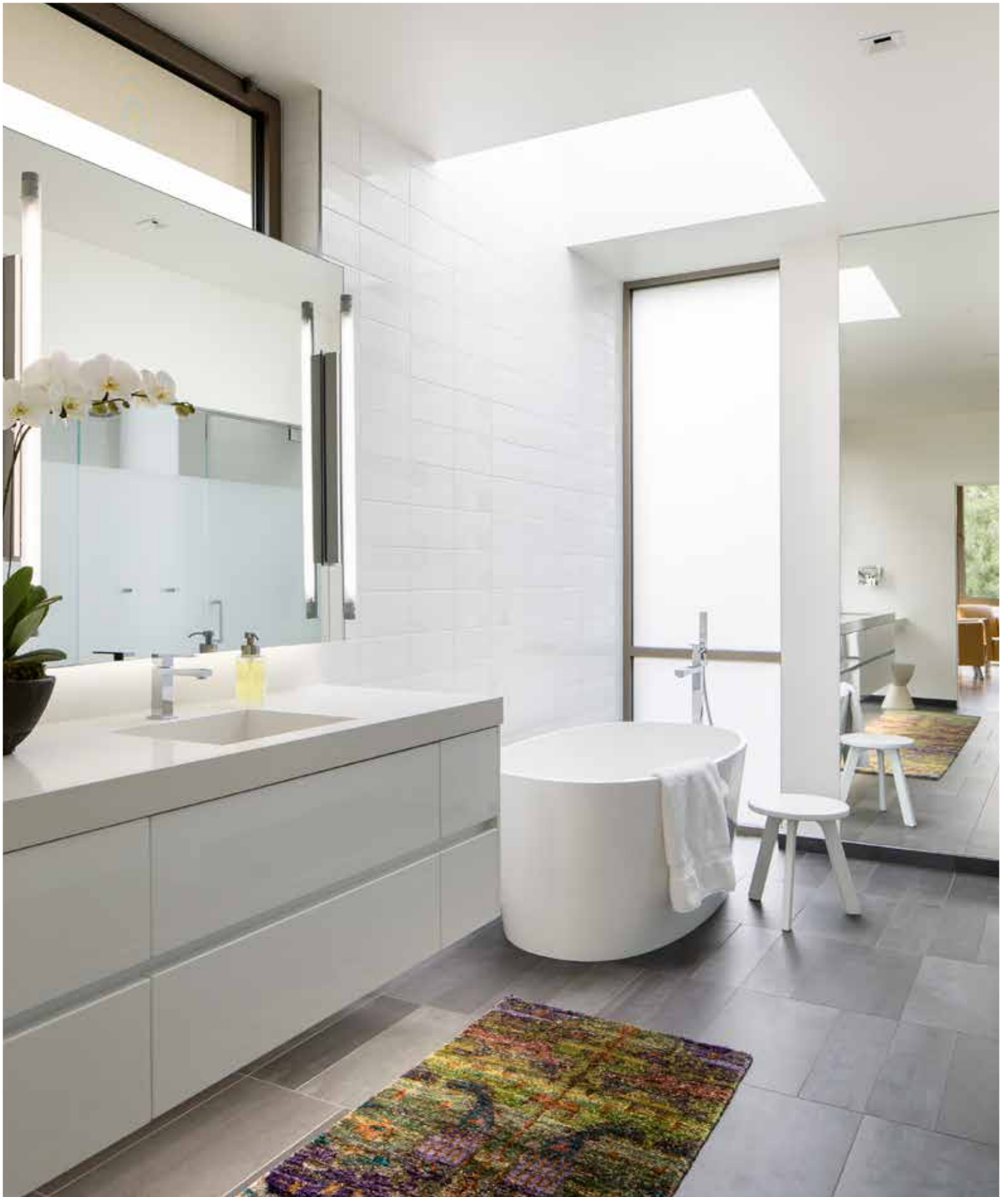


ABOVE: Artisan Ian Hutchinson built the custom table and chairs that welcome guests into the home's hub. In the kitchen, designer Kevin Vesel of Vesel Contemporary Kitchens, Inc. used Krión for the countertops and sinks for a seamless, contemporary look that complements the Miele appliances. He hand-built a Veselbrand "jewel box range hood" with back-painted glass and LED lighting to add sparkle and contrast to the matte-glass backsplash. The wood cabinetry fronts are produced from an engineered walnut veneer that is hand wire-brushed, stained, cerused, and clear coated with a unique European product that "enhances the natural, textural feel," said Vesel. "I have always been cross-pollinating different technologies and their end-uses, making use of whatever I can."



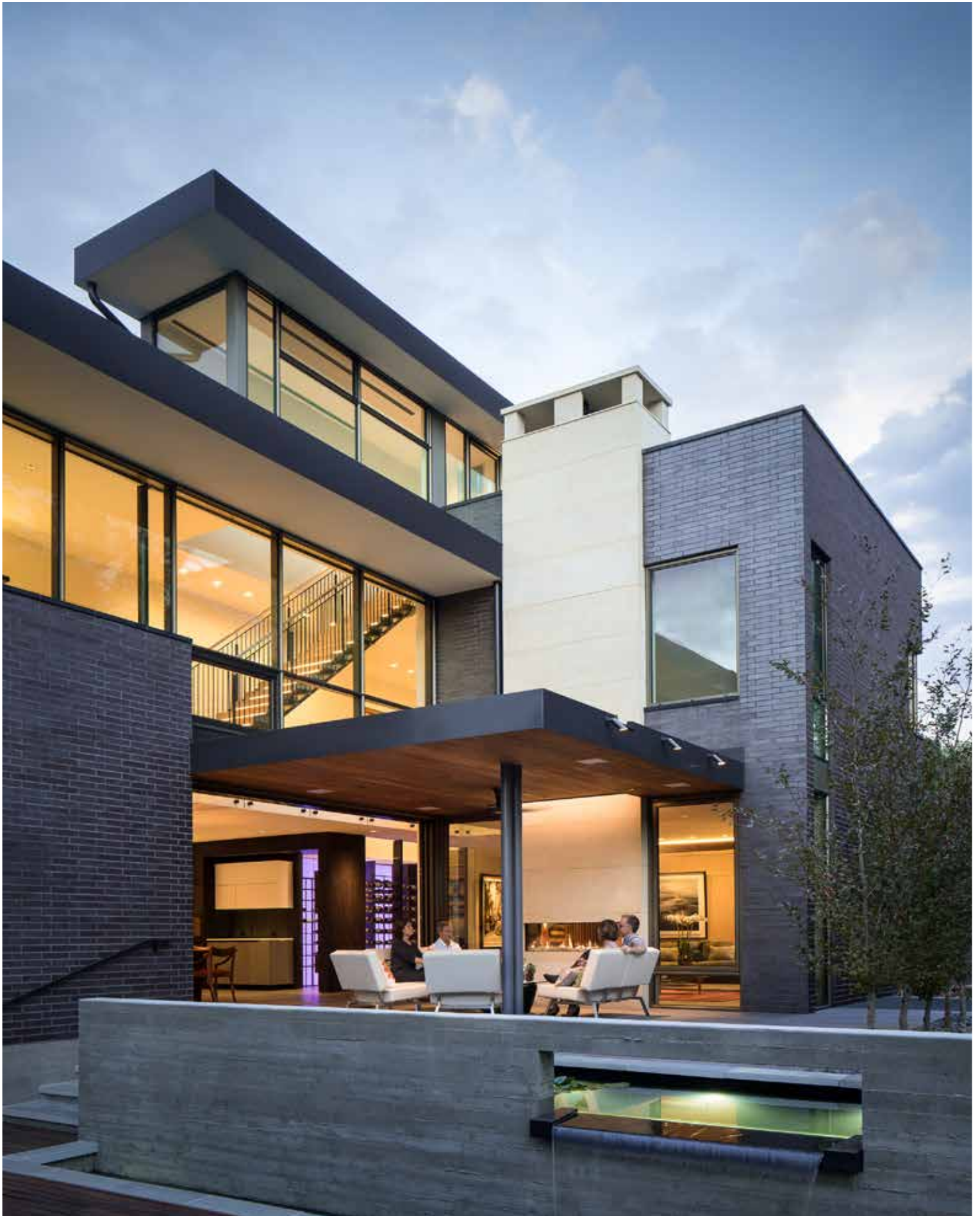
LEFT: Instead of standard, old-school duplex power receptacles in the backsplash, Kevin Vesel developed the Veselbrand Power Port. The flush, clean detail involves using a magnetic tool to remove the receptacle cover when needed and can be concealed after use.

FAR LEFT: "Varying elevations, colors, and textures help create movement and energy within the space," said Vesel. "It's all the attention to detail that makes things look simple and clean."





ABOVE: Surrounded by windows, the master bedroom with light-colored ash floors feels like a treetop hideaway. European tilt-and-turn windows from Reynaers are used throughout the home for their energy efficiency and ease of function. The built-in bookshelves and media center were built by Aspen Leaf. **OPPOSITE:** In the master bath, a Victoria + Albert freestanding IOS soaking tub and Gessi sink faucet and tub filler from DKSB Plumbing and Tile set the tone for the elegant, minimalist retreat. The flooring is Mosa ceramic tile from the Greys Collection.





PROJECT CREDITS

Architect, Interiors

Semple Brown Design

General Contractor

Old Greenwich Builders

Landscape Architect

Leanne Duncan

Lighting Design

186 Lighting Design Group

Home Automation

Xssentials

Kitchen Area Design, Fabrication, Install

Veselbrand

Custom Furniture

Ethan Hutchinson Woodworker

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Ornamental Metals, Glass, Stairs

Modern Craftsman

OPPOSITE: "There is always one space that is in shade or sun," said homeowner Leanne Duncan of the strategically located outdoor rooms. On the southwest patio, guests gather around the outdoor fireplace, seated on Thos. Baker furniture from the Madison Collection. **ABOVE:** The deep overhang, along with a koi pond with lilies and the sound of water, create a calming atmosphere. Leanne, who is also a landscape architect, selected Beech trees that will be "pleached" or woven together over time to create a natural green edge to the patio space.



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WORDS: B. MARTIN, K. SIETMANN, B. TOMECEK, B. WHEELER

"... Space in the image of man is place." -Aldo van Eyck

Place, in the most intimate sense of the word, refers to something that is part landscape, part culture, part climate, part time. There is a distinctly physical component to place-making, just as there is an equally important emotional component—true place exists in memory as much as on a map. Is it not, after all, some combination of landscape and culture that draws so many of us to Denver in the first place?

But even in such a definable, desirable cultural context, where has our sense of place gone? Our state capital is neatly situated between epic mountains and nearly limitless prairies, within minutes of nearly every climate known to man. But the geographic diversity which makes Denver unique is also part of the problem. How do we build in a region that exists in the middle of so many places? Simply replicating another city's style or form isn't the answer. Trying to define a uniform process for all to follow won't work, either. Instead, it is the recognition of one's place—our actual presence in body and mind—that reminds us what we've forgotten.

It is, of course, crucially important to understand where we've come from. Just as prospectors brought with them tools to uncover newfound wealth, so, too, did wealth bring along an architecture rooted outside this spirit. Long since importers of architectural style, Denver has struggled to find a representation of its own distinct sociological and topographic context. Adobe structures of southwestern Colorado suggest a rugged earthbound culture strongly tied to the landscape. The weathered, agrarian buildings that dot our prairies seamlessly blend into the periphery. Even the derelict water wheels and abandoned mining structures lining the path to the mountains cultivate a sense of nostalgia. And yet Denver itself lacks iconic structures that embody its people.

Author Yi-Fu Tuan said, "[T]here may be greater awareness of built forms and space in a traditional than in a modern community. One cause of such greater awareness is active participation." It is this participation that creates attachment, as Tuan adds, "Attachment to the homeland is a common human emotion. Its strength varies among different cultures and historical periods. The more ties there are, the stronger is the emotional bond." It is this bond, this tangible memory, that transforms mere space into place.

As has often been the case in nostalgic works we revere, builders used what they had locally, in knowledgeable ways, with the utmost attention to craft and detail. What they designed, often for their own use, was meant to last a lifetime. Inherent in this methodology is the lasting creation of memory and emotion critical for understanding our own place and time. It is, as Tuan writes, this loss of attention that teeters us on the edge of losing our sense of place. Hyperdevelopment, impatience, and detachment have forced us to move too quickly, eliminating our desire for craft and causing us to forget where we came from.

Where we came from is an acknowledgement of the unique social and cultural climate that exists in Denver. Walk any city street these days and there is an almost palpable sense of adventure, of a respect for nature, and of the passion and pride that drives people to live and work here. Just as strong is the creative craft culture emerging from local farmers, brewers, and designers. We find it in our food, beverages, and fashion, so why do our cities and homes make no distinction to this great place in which we live?

It's easy to lose ourselves, architecturally or otherwise, in the modernization of the world around us. Today's impatient, globalized culture positions us somewhere between reliance on universally understood processes and a desire to maintain our uniqueness. An excess of information, ever at our fingertips, leads us to idolize imagery from a foreign place and expect its clone to create an identical experience elsewhere. This globalization also leads us to no longer marvel at creations that can use any material, applied to any form, punched with any aperture, and placed at any exposure within any climate. With all the technological advancements in the building industry, we've conceded the possibility for thoughtless architecture. We've created a place that arguably has forgotten the importance of a sense of place. The same house now can exist in Denver, Denali, or Denmark.

Whether in architecture, art, food, or farming, attentive processes that acknowledge our rich past, that benefit from the technological advancements of today, and that are inimitably informed by the landscape and influenced by the hand of the maker, yield something that appeals not only to our human needs but to Denver's desire to foster creativity. What inevitably follows is the reflection, in each and every detail, of the architect, the builder, and the client. And it is these details that allow us to touch a specific time and place. This is what creates that lasting memory and, in turn, as Aldo van Eyck suggests, turns mere space into place.

At its core, our original pioneering spirit has never left. To this day, we carry a true sense of pride and adventure in the city we inhabit, and with ongoing developments socially and culturally in the Denver area, there is no time like the present to reestablish our own sense of place. Architecturally, this freedom, this adventure, this strong tie to the landscape can yield a distinct and important architecture, and we are reminded of the questions we often ask ourselves: Why here? Why now? Why this?

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Tomecek Studio Architecture is a design studio that creates buildings, objects, and environments that heighten the senses and celebrate the unique qualities of place. They seek imaginative clients and innovative projects that allow the firm to contribute to local and global communities through design excellence. Their handcrafted projects span residential, multi-family, and creative commercial, including parks and recreation work. Tomecek Studio recently received the 2015 AIA Colorado Innovative Practice honor award.



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WORDS: Charlie Keaton

FORGET POLITICAL GRIDLOCK AND NEVER-ENDING DEBATES ABOUT POLICY REFORM. IN THE FACE OF A NATIONAL HEALTH CRISIS, A WAVE OF INTEGRATED DESIGN INNOVATIONS, FROM FACILITIES TO TECHNOLOGIES TO CONSUMER PRODUCTS, IS DISRUPTING THE SYSTEM AND GIVING CONSUMERS BETTER CONTROL OF THEIR OWN WELL-BEING.

Cars drive themselves. Drones deliver groceries. We talk to our phones and our phones talk back. If you blinked, you might have missed it: The future arrived while we were busy doing other things.

Modern life is dependent upon, if not flatly ruled by, technologies that barely existed a decade ago. We have precious little understanding of the invisible wizardry that sends our emails or navigates our GPS, but we'd be lost without it. Even our entertainment options, limited mostly to compact discs and cable networks at the turn of the 21st century, are boundless. Americans now spend more than four hours per day watching TV, and nearly three hours on mobile devices like phones and tablets.

And yet despite these great advancements—or perhaps in large part because of them—we face an unprecedented health crisis. Preventable, lifestyle-related conditions proliferate. Even here in Colorado, which routinely ranks as one of the healthiest states in the nation, more than half of all adults are overweight or obese. Depression and other mental health-related illness is at an all-time high. We are more equipped and better entertained than ever, but we aren't exactly well. Call it the paradox of progress.

But wait, hang on, don't give up just yet. There is hope on the horizon, and that hope lies in the power of the very technology that engulfs us. More precisely, it is the power of design that just might be our salvation.

Design, after all, is the force that allows for greater efficiencies among doctors and nurses in today's hyper-connected healthcare facilities. It drives the development of everyday consumer products, which address issues of hygiene, hydration, sleep, fitness, and nutrition. It informs the evolution of modern workspaces, which support and encourage employee wellness. And in an age where 86 percent of mobile device use is devoted to web applications, it powers the cutting-edge programs that allow us to track, analyze, integrate, and improve our behavioral patterns in ways never before imagined.

We are a species at a crossroads. The stakes are immense and the road ahead is littered with obstacles and opportunity. For the sake of our health, and our loved ones, and our future: Let the burning embers of innovative design light the way.



THE WEIGHTING IS THE HARDEST PART

The rapid evolution of health technology has tipped the scales—literally. Qardiobase is a fully integrated "smart scale" that measures not just your weight, but also muscle mass, body fat, and body mass index (BMI). It automatically recognizes multiple users, has a pregnancy mode for moms-to-be, and, of course, syncs with your smartphone to provide real-time data in the form of charts, statistics, and overall trends.

The solid base design is sleek and minimalist, with a glass top, LED display, and secure wireless capabilities. Perhaps best of all, hitting your fitness goals is rewarded with the most universal praise of all: a smiley face. +getqardio.com

A NEW YEAR INEVITABLY BRINGS WITH IT THE RESOLUTION TO TAKE BETTER CARE OF OURSELVES. NOW MORE THAN EVER, TECHNOLOGY PLAYS A ROLE IN THAT STRUGGLE. WANT TO GET IN BETTER SHAPE? THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT.

The average American now accesses more than 26 different apps per month, spending well over 37 hours Tweeting, Snapchatting, or crushing candy. But while gaming continues to dominate in terms of market share, health and fitness apps are increasingly well represented.

Some of these are relatively lightweight in nature. Streaks, for instance, is a simple push-button tool for developing new habits. If your goals include trimming down, Streaks integrates with your iOS Health app to automatically track and log, say, how many steps you take each day. Rise is an app that lets you upload photos of your meals and share them with a nutrition "coach" who provides targeted feedback on ways to improve your diet. With some patience and a little discipline, apps like these can move the needle in your battle of the bulge.

But others take a more ambitious approach. Colorado-based DispatchHealth is on a mission to do nothing less than reshape the way patients seek out and receive acute care. Research varies, but it's generally accepted that more than 30 percent of all emergency room visits are not medical emergencies. One recent study found that Colorado residents spend as much as \$800 million per year on unnecessary ER visits. Mark Prather, who founded DispatchHealth along with Kevin Riddleberger, is a veteran ER doctor who saw an opportunity to change that—and in the process, to shift the paradigm in a way that makes health care more consumer-centric.

DispatchHealth developed a website, phone service, and smartphone app to complement their existing relationship with 911 dispatch, which dates back to 2013. Users in need of medical care can tap into DispatchHealth's growing roster of doctors and nurse



ZEN AND THE ART OF HEART RATE VARIABILITY

How well do you know your body? Probably not as well as you think, which is why Asian startup Zensorium developed the Tinke. Designed to dock easily with your iPhone or Android, Tinke utilizes a simple touch system to monitor heart rate, oxygen saturation, respiratory rate, and heart rate variability. Every bit of that data syncs to the mobile app, allowing you to track progress over time and compare your numbers to established baselines. There's also the Vita Index, a fitness score that blends the data into one easy-to-follow measurement, and the Zen Index, a proprietary algorithm that calculates stress levels. [+zensorium.com](http://zensorium.com)

practitioners in real time, getting mobile (or virtual) health care in their own home while potentially avoiding thousands of dollars in hospital bills.

"Tech is a big part of what's enabled this whole idea of taking a portion of the ER and bringing it to you," said Prather. "That would've been pretty difficult 20 years ago, but our lab essentially fits in a small suitcase now, and we're working on imaging and as much other technology as we can cram into that little vehicle."

Josh Wills agrees. As Partner and Design Director at Consume + Create, Wills and his team were instrumental in helping DispatchHealth develop not only their collateral materials,

website, and app, but also their naming, logo, identity design, and the car wrap that adorns each mobile lab. Wills sees the integration of services like DispatchHealth with other emerging markets like fitness wearables—itsself a billion dollar global business—as a golden opportunity.

"With the advancement of wearable technology," said Wills, "with smartphones getting better, with all our devices being more connected, the potential that technology has to really improve the healthcare and well-being of humans is huge, and in a way that's kind of automated. And I think that's where Dispatch is going, and to me I see that as being the bigger potential and promise of this platform and technology." ■

"With the advancement of wearable technology, with smartphones getting better, with all our devices being more connected, the potential that technology has to really improve the healthcare and well-being of humans is huge, and in a way that's kind of automated. And I think that's where Dispatch is going, and to me I see that as being the bigger potential and promise of this platform and technology." - Josh Wills, Consume + Create



image: Carl Bower

DispatchHealth is a Colorado-based company looking to provide a low-cost intervention for unnecessary emergency room visits—which represent roughly a third of all trips to the ER. The majority of acute health problems still require a formal hospital visit, but for an average cost of \$200, DispatchHealth sends doctors or nurse practitioners straight to your door, fully equipped to treat many common ailments. "It's not one size fits all, it's about getting the patient into the right model at the right time," said Co-Founder Kevin Riddleberger. "And that's where leveraging technology allows us to extend our services outside the walls of the system, so that we can now deliver more efficient care to populations."



If Instagram has taught us anything, it's that we're a nation that loves to document our food. Rise (above) is a smartphone app that channels this love into a healthy outlet: weight loss. Rise connects you with a registered dietitian who helps develop a personalized strategy. Take pictures of your food, share them with your "coach" for specific feedback, and watch the pounds melt away. [+rise.us](#)

UNDER PRESSURE

The CDC estimates 70 million American adults have high blood pressure—and only about half of those people have their condition under control. The first step is consistent tracking, which is where the Wireless Blood Pressure Monitor comes in. Produced by Withings, makers of health technology products ranging from watches to scales to baby monitors, the Wireless Blood Pressure Monitor gives instant color-coded feedback, syncs directly with the Health Mate phone app, and makes sharing information with your doctor a snap. [+withings.com](#)





A growing body of research suggests that much of our day-to-day behavior is the result of simple habit. Streaks is an iPhone app that bills itself as “the to-do list that helps you form good habits.” Identify up to six tasks you’d like to make part of your daily routine, and Streaks provides the positive reinforcement needed to cement those habits.



WATCH WHAT HAPPENS

The fitness wearables market is booming, with brands like Fitbit and Jawbone clawing their way to prominence. But in the summer of 2015, Apple announced its own arrival amid a crowded field of competitors with the first-generation Apple Watch. This isn't merely a timepiece or a fitness tracker. It could be a game-changer.

It isn't just that the Apple Watch tracks your workouts, or that it integrates with other fitness apps, or that during yoga it can show you a picture of that reverse warrior pose you haven't quite mastered. What makes it so compelling is that it does all these things while also looping in your email, text messages, and other staples typically associated with smartphones—and that it aspires to do so much more.

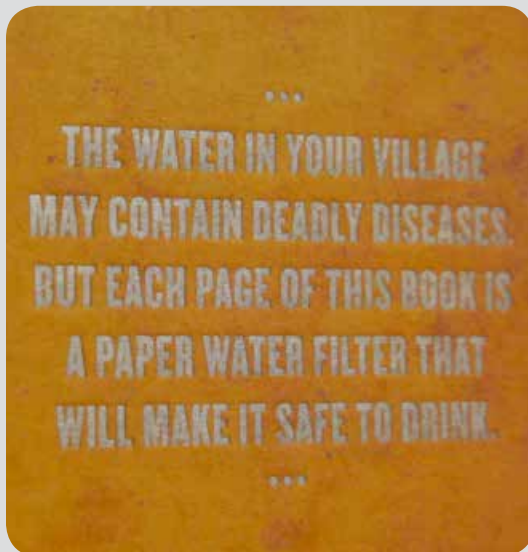
Commerce? Sure, make a purchase with a few clicks and a swipe. Navigation? No problem with built-in GPS and maps features. Convenience? Wave it in front of your hotel room door to gain access. And of course: lean heavily on the omnipresence of Siri. The interesting thing about the Apple Watch—which, to be fair, has drawn its share of detractors—is that fitness is one small, native element among many. They've already put a supercomputer in your pocket. Now they want to put one on your wrist.



BREATHE EASIER

We take more than 20,000 breaths per day. But what are we inhaling along the way? Atmotube (above) is a small, portable device that measures air pollution and harmful pollutants and sends real-time measurements to your phone. It's designed for use by virtually anyone, but is especially helpful for asthmatics, children, and the elderly. +atmotube.com





A DRINKABLE BOOK?

According to the World Health Organization, more than 3 million people die each year—almost entirely in developing nations—from water, sanitation, and hygiene-related causes. The Drinkable Book serves as both water filter and instruction manual for how and why to sanitize dirty drinking water. Founder Theresa Dankovich came up with the idea while working on her doctorate at McGill University, and while the finished product hasn't come to market yet, it isn't far off.

The concept is brilliantly simple. Sheets of extra-thick paper are embedded with silver nanoparticles, which kill dangerous bacteria and leave behind a healthy, refreshing dose of H₂O. Each filter lasts several weeks, meaning a full book could provide the tools for about a year's worth of clean water. Dankovich and her team are in the process of scaling up paper production and planning public health trials in Central America and Africa, with a goal of distributing 1,000 Drinkable Books (equalling 25,000 filters) around the world.

Learn more and contribute at DrinkableBook.tilt.com.

THE AVERAGE AMERICAN WORKS 47 HOURS PER WEEK, HIGHEST IN THE INDUSTRIALIZED WORLD, WHILE ALSO TAKING FEWER VACATION DAYS AND RETIRING LATER IN LIFE. WHICH MEANS THAT WHEN IT COMES TO MAINTAINING PROPER PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING, GETTING TO THE GYM A FEW DAYS PER WEEK ISN'T NEARLY ENOUGH. MORE AND MORE, EMPLOYERS RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR WORKSPACES THAT PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS AMONG THEIR WORKERS. BUT WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE, EXACTLY?

Not long ago, the answer was often as reductive as buying ergonomic keyboards in bulk, but we've come a long way in recent years. Policy is one easy way to affect change. Denver-based tech firm Full Contact has a policy called Paid, Paid Vacation, which provides each employee \$7,500 per year to spend on a vacation, during which time they are strictly forbidden from working or even checking email. Programs are another effective tactic: fitness challenges, recipe exchanges, yoga classes, and smoking cessation programs are among the more popular offerings.

But programs and policies are only part of the equation. In order to maximize employee wellness, the workplace itself has to be reimagined. As Design Director for Gensler, Michelle Liebling has seen a dramatic shift in how her clients approach the issue of employee wellness. "A lot of our clients are looking to the notion of the workplace being a tool to make happy, healthy, engaged workers by understanding who they are and creating a space that authentically speaks to that." Liebling points to subtle nudges, rather than heavy-handed mandates, as a big factor in driving change. One client added standing tables without chairs to reduce the amount of sitting (and with the added benefit of shorter meetings). Another focused on biomimicry, bringing naturally occurring textures and shapes, like Fibonacci spirals, into the office environment. Others have implemented hydration stations every few feet.

THE NUMBERS

\$2,650

The average annual cost to companies (per salaried employee) from absenteeism.

4.9

The average number of sick days taken each year by all U.S. workers.

2.69

The average number of sick days taken by U.S. workers who feel engaged at work.

6.19

The average number of sick days taken by U.S. workers who feel disengaged at work.

71

The percentage of companies that believe an employee wellness program is an effective way to cut costs.

\$521

Estimated annual amount that mid-sized to large employers spend per employee on wellness programs.

TERMS DEFINED

Fibonacci spirals refer to a mathematical sequence that appears with improbably high frequency in nature, from flower petals to snail shells to hurricanes to our own Milky Way galaxy. Also called the Golden Ratio, its properties can even be traced to the building of Egyptian pyramids and the Parthenon.

Biomimicry is the imitation of models, systems, and elements of nature for the purpose of solving complex human problems. One famous example is Velcro, which mimics naturally-occurring hooked structures such as burs. Architects employ biomimicry, too. The Eastgate Centre in Zimbabwe is a mid-rise, mixed-use facility designed using structural techniques gleaned from studying termite mounds. In an African climate where temperatures spike, The Eastgate Centre uses only 10 percent of the energy of comparable buildings, but stays cool without air conditioning. Who knew termites were engineering prodigies?

THE LEVEL

It's an increasingly common refrain: Sitting is the new smoking. Even for physically active people, prolonged sitting increases your risk for cancer, cardiovascular disease, and type 2 diabetes. Enter The Level, a sleek, naturally sourced platform that keeps you moving while at a standing desk or in a classroom. And it looks just enough like Marty McFly's stolen hoverboard to add a dash of the cool factor. [+fluidstance.com](http://fluidstance.com)



SOWING THE SEEDS OF LUNG

There are a growing number of ways to bring the outside into your office. Gensler's Michelle Liebling points to emerging practices like biomimicry, geometric patterning, and the strategic use of natural, tactile materials for any surface that might get touched, pushed, or sat upon. But there's another, more old-fashioned way to incorporate nature into the workplace: plants.

Studies show that even a few basic house plants can help alleviate all sorts of health problems, including headaches, dizziness, nausea, and mental fatigue. Introducing plants to your office may also increase productivity by as much as 15 percent while lowering stress. The process is fairly straightforward, as plants absorb air particulates during their natural process of photosynthesis. Even the potting soil contains microbes, which can help produce cleaner air for breathing.

But which plants offer the best bang for your buck? Here are four easy-to-find species that will help clean up your office—or anywhere you may find a stagnant air supply.

Bamboo Palm – Give your workspace some vertical definition with a beautiful plant that grows as high as 12 feet under optimal conditions.

Garden Mum - NASA found that this little beauty removes benzene, formaldehyde, and ammonia from indoor air supplies.

Ficus - Hardy and low-maintenance, the Ficus thrives in bright, indirect sunlight.

Aloe Vera - It not only removes pollutants, but the leaves produce a clear liquid packed with vitamins, enzymes, and amino acids.

There's an aesthetic benefit to bringing the outside indoors, too. Get a richer sense of how beautiful the common plant can be by checking out our photo essay on p. 152.



SITTING: ARE YOU DOING IT WRONG?

Even if you exercise every day, too much sitting is hazardous. Not only that, but unless your boss sprung for an ergonomically advanced suite of office furniture, you're probably in a near-constant state of bad posture and poor body habits. French designer Benoit Malta can't help improve your workout routine, but he just might have a solution for that slouch. Inactivite is a two-legged chair that engages your core and promotes better posture by putting you in a state of "bearable discomfort." Not recommended for long periods of uninterrupted sitting or for use at family holiday gatherings, where "bearable discomfort" already comes standard.

+benoitmalta.com

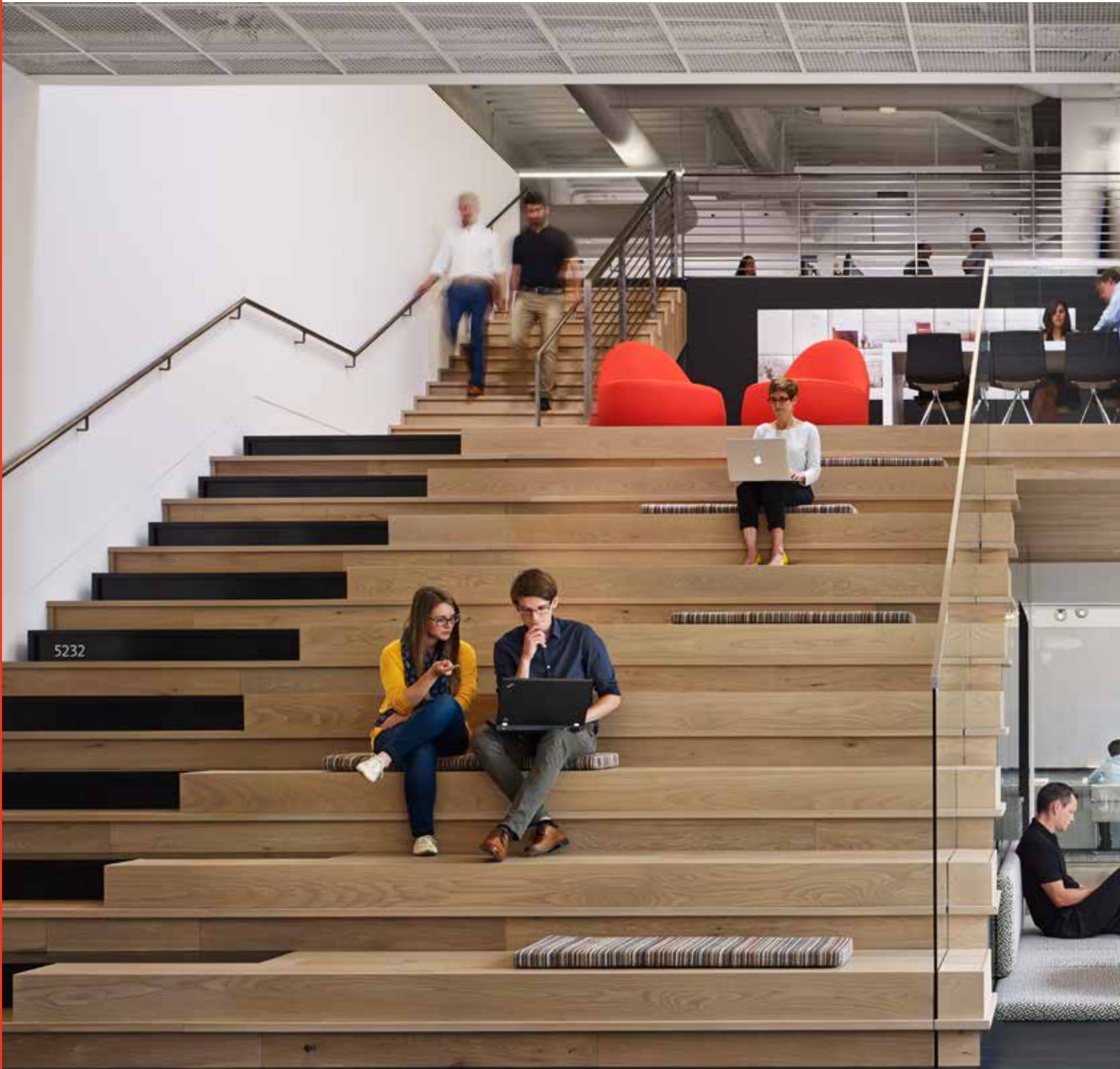


image: Genster / Ryan Gobuty




When Liebling and her Gensler colleagues began work on their new downtown headquarters, they made nudges of their own. They created a wide variety of breakout spaces throughout, putting their employees on laptops and encouraging them to move around and find new perspectives. They added sensors to their lighting system, casting a warm and comfortable glow at 3,500 Kelvin, which automatically dims on

"A lot of our clients are looking to the notion of the workplace being a tool to make happy, healthy, engaged workers by understanding who they are and creating a space that authentically speaks to that." -Michelle Liebling, Gensler

a bright day. They focused on acoustics as a way of minimizing noisy distractions, lining the walls with fabric-wrapped, tackable fabric. And they put the elevator around the corner and out of sight while making the stairs the building's undisputed focal point.

For their trouble, Gensler garnered awards from both AIA and IIDA for their new office, but the real reward has been the anecdotal response from employees, who report better overall health and engagement since the move. Liebling attributes this to an employee-centric approach, and she believes the biggest shifts in workplace design in the coming years will stem from wider acceptance of similar practices. "It's old news to talk about generations in the workplace, but it's not old news to talk about work styles in the workplace. An introvert is different than an extrovert, and what does that mean for them in an office environment? That will continue to be more on the forefront and companies will be more interested in designing a space that fits their people, as opposed to their people fitting into a space." ■

When the time came to design new headquarters for their Denver office, international architecture firm Gensler tucked the elevators around a back corner and brought the staircase front and center. Made from oak with custom steel treads, there are 20 lower steps, 15 upper steps, and 10 rows of bleachers. The staircase measures 17 feet across, with cushions strategically placed to encourage breakout work. The seating also faces a retractable projection screen, which measures 164 inches diagonally (roughly 11'x7').



Ask anyone who designs healthcare facilities what the future holds, and they'll likely answer with some variation on a common refrain: flexibility. H+L Interior Designer Kate Chapman said, "We simply won't need as much hospital space. We won't have these monuments to illness, we'll have ambulatory centers and small outreach centers of wellness. The hospital of the future is one that can flex—it's an ER now, and in five years it's an urgent care, and in 10 years maybe it's an orthopedic clinic. Something more modular, designed so that it can change." With that future in mind, Herman Miller's Compass line emphasizes "adaptable and functional spaces that can easily navigate change."

MEDICAL SCIENCE HAS EVOLVED SO RAPIDLY IN THE PAST DECADE THAT IT'S NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO TALK ABOUT NEWLY CONSTRUCTED FACILITIES WITHOUT USING WORDS LIKE "FUTURISTIC" OR "SCIENCE FICTION." OPERATING ROOMS, IN PARTICULAR, HAVE BEEN GROUND ZERO FOR ADVANCEMENTS THAT INCORPORATE EVERYTHING FROM INDUSTRIAL ROBOTIC TECHNOLOGY TO DIGITAL IMAGING THAT ALLOWS FOR THE KIND OF NON-INVASIVE SURGERIES THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN PURE FANTASY A GENERATION AGO.

But in order to see where the most significant changes in healthcare are developing, you have to look beyond the headlines touting space-age OR technology and focus instead on less obvious, more practical design choices.

Take, for example, nurses stations. Colorado is home to 61,000 licensed nurses, and nearly 60 percent of them work in hospitals. For any given hospital visit, patients spend more time with a nurse than any other hospital staff—and that same nurse is likely responsible for as many as five other patients concurrently, all day long. Tectonic shifts in the healthcare industry brought on

by the Affordable Care Act are expected to result in an even greater demand for registered nurses, meaning an even higher nurse-to-doctor ratio.

All of which means that when it comes to efficiency, safety, and better patient care overall, a well-designed nurses station is the best place to start. "Hospitals are pretty utilitarian spaces," said Kate Chapman of H+L Architecture. "To do healthcare design, you need to have more than just a marginal idea of how nurses or doctors are working. Those spaces are set up to be functional and streamlined so that the interventions on the patient are as low as possible, but also so that each

facility has its own flavor that reflects the patient population they're serving."

Chapman just completed interior design work for a free-standing emergency department with UC Health in Fort Collins. Recent trends have called for decentralized nurses stations, which, in theory, allow nurses to be closer to their own patients, their own supply closets, and their own medication rooms. But H+L looked closely at the evidence-based learning and found that rather than simplifying things, this setup generally caused just as many problems as it solved: Collaboration dried up, supplies and medications weren't always where

ADAPT AND EVOLVE

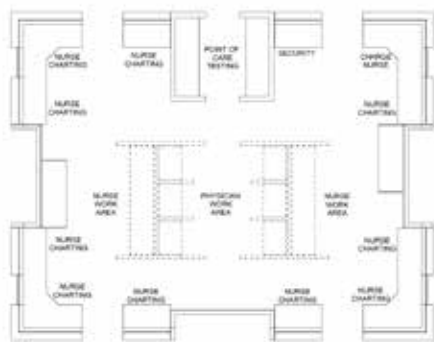
The merging of healthcare and hospitality has never been more pronounced. Today's hospitals have to provide more than just great care, they must also give patients and their families a top-notch customer service experience. Along those lines, Steelcase is putting extra emphasis on designing for comfort. This family waiting area (right, top), with crisp lighting, comfortable furniture, and a distinctly modern aesthetic, is a far cry from the cramped seating and dimly lit days past.

Meanwhile, the Empath patient recliner (right, bottom) was designed using more than 2,000 hours of observations between patient and provider, along with direct feedback from more than 300 nurses. What they learned was that patients are often injured while being transferred from chair to bed, and that one in three nurses has sustained an injury during a patient transfer. The Empath was intended to be comfortable, durable, and easy to clean—but also sturdy, adjustable, and with multiple access points. And because sustainability is always a good idea, it's also up to 90 percent recyclable.



they should be, and nurses were doing a lot of impromptu hunting and gathering when they could otherwise be with a patient ... which is exactly the kind of thing decentralized stations were supposed to prevent.

Instead, Chapman and her colleagues came up with a large, centralized nurses station in the shape of a horse track. With just one nurse on each side, it's possible to see every single patient room. On the interior is a large open area for dictation and charting, with adjustable-height tables for doctors and standing-height tables for nurses (who rarely sit). Around the perimeter are 12 additional stations for longer-term charting and better visualization of patients, plus a point-of-care testing station with room for three more people. The end result is an easy-to-access space that comfortably holds upwards of 25 care providers, all of whom can quickly and easily communicate, collaborate, and lend support. It isn't the most glamorous aspect of the facility, but given that every tiny efficiency adds up to significantly better patient care, shorter wait times, and lower costs for both providers and consumers, it may be the most impactful. Great design, rendered almost invisible. ■



The Emergency Department nurses station at UC Health in Fort Collins is a centralized hub of activity, designed to facilitate greater communication and collaboration among dozens of doctors and nurses. The designers at H+L Architecture left plenty of room inside the racetrack-shaped layout for adjustable height desks, standing tables, dedicated dictation spaces for doctors, and modular charting areas for nurses. It may not have the flash of a boutique healthcare facility (see p. 91), but it all contributes to a smoother flow in what can be a chaotic environment. Said H+L's Kate Chapman, "Good design is invisible, and any brush strokes you leave should be invisible. I'd rather you walk into a hospital and feel like, 'Wow, this hospital is really incredible and I feel safe, and comforted being here, but I can't tell you why.'"



EMBRACE CHAIR

Few things are more stressful than the premature delivery of a child. Making matters worse is the environment meant to care for these fragile newborns—lots of high-tech equipment, minimal space, and almost no privacy whatsoever. Dutch designer Ricky Kloosterman took all that into account when she came up with EMBRACE, a partially enclosed chair made specifically for mothers to care for their premature babies. The seating area is large enough to fit at least two people comfortably, with dedicated space to hang necessary medical equipment. The rounded form has a tall back to promote skin-to-skin contact between mother and child, and the curved sides are lined with hygienic imitation leather cushions. EMBRACE began as a graduation project for Kloosterman, then a student at Design Academy Eindhoven, and has since shown at Dutch Design Week and garnered multiple award and grant nominations. + rickykloosterman.nl





images: John Selby

ONCE A PATIENT, NOW A GUEST

Boutique hotels are all the rage, with their custom room designs and intimate sense of hospitality. But how about a boutique healthcare facility? The New Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Birmingham, England, is exactly that. Its Teenage Cancer Trust Young Persons Unit boasts a study room, movie theater, breakfast bar, daycare facility, and lounge. It's also designed with an eye toward providing a more comforting palette than the traditional beige-on-beige setting, with bright colors and vibrant imagery. And if that weren't enough, every bedroom is equipped with laptops, WiFi, gaming facilities, and comfortable furniture.

Closer to home, California's Cedars-Sinai Medical Center caters to the rich and famous like no other hospital in the world. Thirty-two Super Deluxe Suites on the building's eighth floor offer meals from a gourmet chef, a personal assistant to satisfy whims and tackle errands, and walls decorated with original works by Picasso. All that luxury comes at a price, however: Private suites start at \$1,000 per day. With the shift in healthcare leading to a greater emphasis on customer service, the future will surely bring more comfortable amenities as a basic standard of care. In the meantime, don't expect to see *Girl Before a Mirror* adorning the walls of your local hospital any time soon.

SLEEP: NECESSARY, GLORIOUS, AND OFTEN ELUSIVE. ACCORDING TO EVEN THE MOST CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATES, 40 PERCENT OF ADULTS DON'T GET THE RECOMMENDED SEVEN HOURS PER NIGHT—AND EVEN AMONG THOSE WHO DO REACH THAT MAGICAL THRESHOLD, QUANTITY DOESN'T ALWAYS EQUAL QUALITY. AS A RESULT, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS WANDER THROUGH LIFE, ZOMBIE-LIKE, IN A FOG OF DROWSY IRRITABILITY.

Sleep monitors can be helpful, but for the average person they're generally too expensive, too unwieldy, or both. SevenHugs is a French startup aiming to make sleep monitor technology more accessible. Their hugOne system includes tiny sensors that slide under a mattress cover and track not only your sleeping habits (and the sleeping habits of your entire family), but also provide information on room temperature, humidity control, and air quality. It integrates with your thermostat, controls your lights, and wakes you up at the optimum moment during your sleep cycle.

Whether or not SevenHugs is a panacea for better sleep isn't really the point. In a larger sense, their efforts are representative of a groundswell in industrial design geared toward developing affordable consumer health products for the masses. And if sleep isn't an issue in your home, what about dental care? The Kolibree smart sonic toothbrush entices kids to brush their teeth by turning it into a game that syncs with a smartphone. It also tracks specific brushing technique and provides real-time qualitative feedback.

On top of dental care already? How about Vessyl, the high-tech cup (designed by the legendary Yves

Behar) that recognizes, tracks, and analyzes virtually any beverage you put inside, with the ultimate goal of improving hydration, regulating caffeine, and reducing sugar intake. Display indicators along the side provide information about your daily consumption, a wireless charger gives the battery five days of life in about an hour, and, as with seemingly every new consumer gadget on the market, the whole thing integrates with your smartphone.

Sleeping, drinking, brushing your teeth—there's scarcely a sliver of your daily routine, no matter how mundane, that isn't on the fast track to better living through design technology. The Consumer Electronics Association estimates that by 2018, the "connected health and wellness market" will increase by 142 percent on its way to \$8 billion annually. For decades, even as life expectancies have pushed higher and higher, Americans' overall wellness has trended downward. If there's a light at the end of that tunnel, it might just be the integrated revolution of everyday things. Bring on the future. ■



French startup SevenHugs has developed technology they believe will help the entire family sleep better. Their integrated system connects to smart bulbs and thermostats, creating the ideal lighting and temperatures by which to fall asleep and wake up. Environmental sensors monitor temperature, humidity, and air quality. And miniHug sensors slip easily under bed sheets to track the sleeping patterns of parents and children alike. All that's required is wireless internet and an Android or iOS device.



When an exciting new product boasts features like 3D motion sensors, sonic vibration, induction chargers, bluetooth connectivity, accelerometer, gyroscope, and the ability to produce 15,000 vibrations per minute, you'd be forgiven for not guessing we're talking about a toothbrush. Kolibree is the next evolution in sonic dental care, combining cutting-edge technology with clever consumer features, such as the *Go Pirate 2* game for smartphones, which gives kids a fun and interactive way to brush their teeth—even those hard-to-reach molars in the back.



You may have fond memories of your *Dukes of Hazard* lunchbox, but times have changed and your kids deserve a food transport device that won't require a tetanus shot. Enter OmieBox, the smart solution for 21st century students. Boasting a vacuum-insulated bowl, leak-proof gaskets, kid-friendly handle, and removable divider for modular food compartments, OmieBox is the lunch kit you never knew you needed. +OmieLife.com



Coffee. Soda. Even sports drinks. Beverages are a shockingly rich source of calories, and many people don't realize the content of the liquids they put in their bodies. The Vessyl is a sleekly-designed cup that recognizes and aggregates everything from a craft beer to a pumpkin spice latte, providing real-time nutrient data directly to your smartphone. Vessyl has a modern feel (thanks in part to world-renowned designer Yves Behar), and the non-stick interior and spill-proof lid make it practical and long-lasting. When you know precisely what you're drinking, every hour is happy hour.



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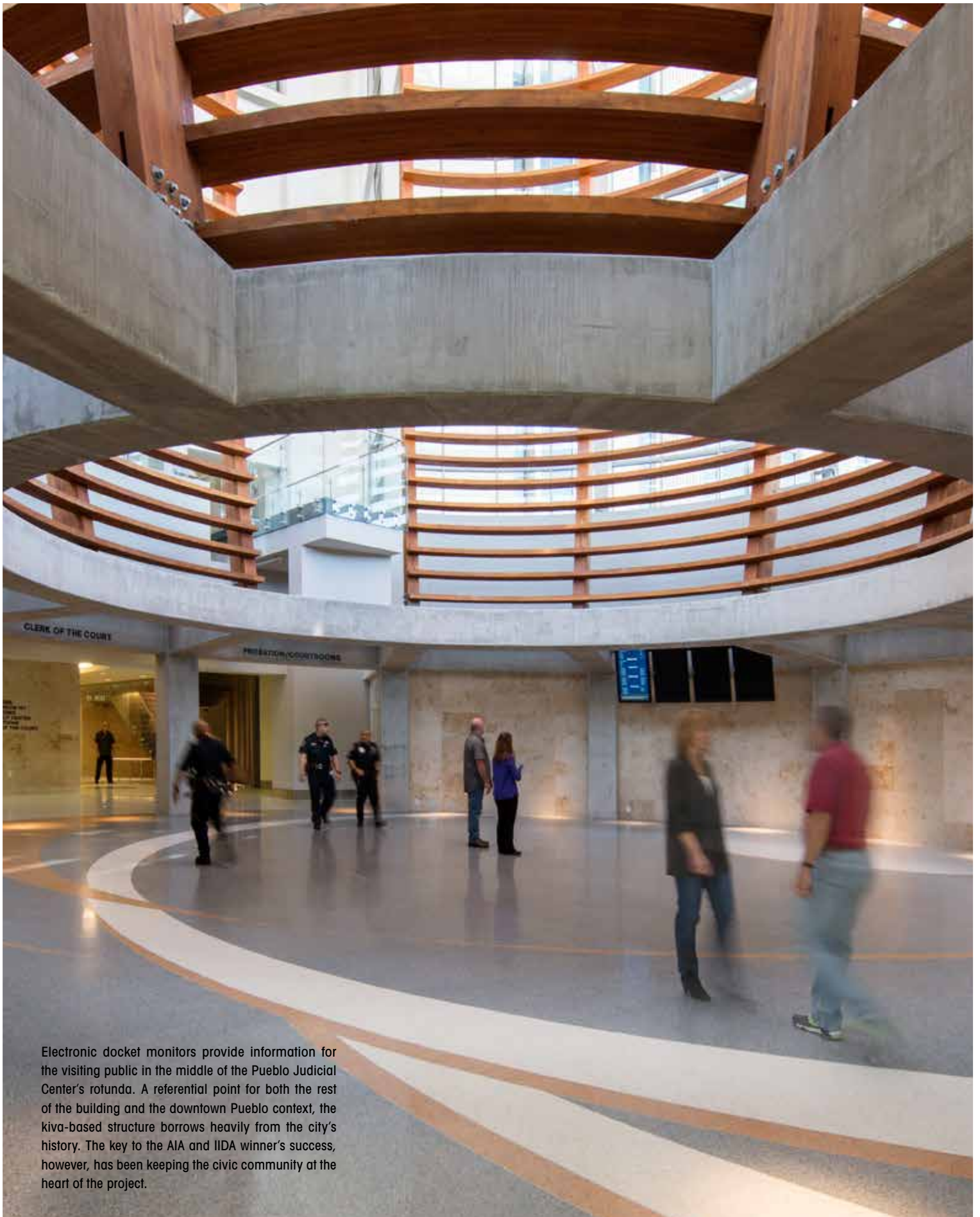
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Electronic docket monitors provide information for the visiting public in the middle of the Pueblo Judicial Center's rotunda. A referential point for both the rest of the building and the downtown Pueblo context, the kiva-based structure borrows heavily from the city's history. The key to the AIA and IIDA winner's success, however, has been keeping the civic community at the heart of the project.



COURTING THE PAST

When considering courthouse architecture, “community” isn’t always the first word that comes to mind. But DLR Group’s approach—which resulted in AIA and IIDA awards—proved that respect for a region and its people is the recipe for success. At the center of the Dennis Maes Pueblo Judicial Center lies a crafted communal convergence: a unique kiva-inspired rotunda serves as part wayfinder, part exclamation. But expressing an authoritative modern municipal marvel first requires translating key elements of Pueblo’s past.

WORDS: Cory Phare • IMAGES: Ed LaCasse

IT BEGAN, AS SO MANY IDEAS DO, WITH A QUESTION: HOW DOES CIVIC VOCABULARY GET LAYERED ONTO THE MODERN COURTHOUSE?

The answer, arrived at by DLR Group, is to develop an inclination for inquiry. For the national firm, that means honoring place by understanding both history and praxis. It means asking its story and what the community wants. And according to DLR Group Court Architect Todd Orr, discovering that sense of place makes all the difference when designing authentically for a specific region. “We want to make personal, local community gestures a part of the context in which the structure resides,” said Orr. “The end result is architecture that isn’t formula-driven, but a result of questions and responses.”

Those responses underscore both the heritage and vivacity of developing today’s Pueblo. Formerly home to an icehouse on the western edge of downtown, the site for the five-story, 180,000-square-foot judicial center was specifically chosen to anchor an end of 5th Street, sitting just outside the Pueblo Creative Corridor. According to Orr, one of the key site challenges was addressing the existing subsurface site conditions to build the LEED Silver-certified structure, but the effort was more than worthwhile. With high-efficiency HVAC, low-flow water fixtures, and recycled or rapidly

renewable materials, the transformation revitalizes a forgotten city block. Designed as a bent linear bar, the diagonal axis insinuates the rail line that once traversed the city. The result is a “bracketing” of downtown with I-25 to the east, and to the west, the courthouse, convex to mountain vistas and serving as a referential exclamation point.

The dot in the exclamation point is the building’s rotunda, integrating the concept of the kiva from Puebloan Indian culture. A staple in communal life, the kiva was a natural fit to address the question of civic vocabulary raised by DLR Group, particularly relevant for the purpose of the judicial center. Circled by perimeter seating and with a compression ring at head-level, the structure owes directly to the layout of its forebearer. As the eye travels upward, the exposed gray concrete gives way to a soaring basket-like wood frame made from Douglas fir, reminiscent of a coke oven in an aesthetic nod to Pueblo’s heritage as one of America’s great steel cities. “The combination of kiva and coke oven inspirations brought in the human element to the space,” said Orr. “The resulting design impact is much stronger and more personal.”

The arching beams culminate in a skylight oculus, which diffuses natural light and creates an aedicule—a room within a room—thanks to the exterior glass curtain wall. Sheathing the rotunda, the wall contains geometric patterns reminiscent of Anasazi pottery,

“WE WANT TO MAKE PERSONAL, LOCAL COMMUNITY GESTURES AS PART OF THE CONTEXT IN WHICH THE STRUCTURE RESIDES. THE END RESULT IS THAT IT ISN’T FORMULA-DRIVEN, BUT A RESULT OF QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES.” -TODD ORR, DLR GROUP



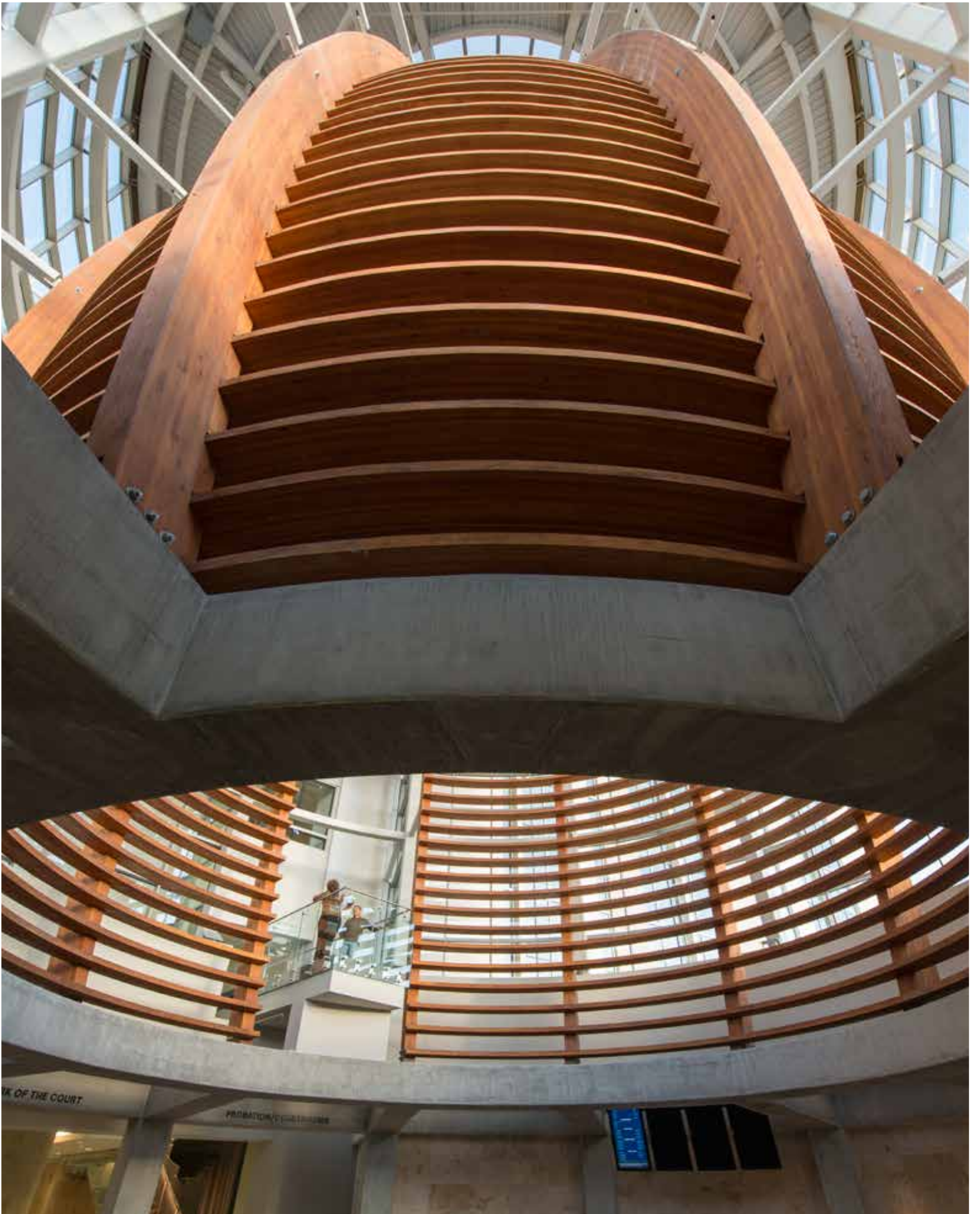


ABOVE TOP: Inspired by the work of renowned minimalist sculptor Richard Serra, the ceremonial stair leads visitors up to the building’s second floor, which houses Probation and Records. The overlook projects back out above the referential central rotunda. **ABOVE BOTTOM:** LEED Silver doesn’t just mean efficient utilities and sustainable construction. It also speaks to the quality of the interior environment and the access to daylight. Designed as a thin, curved bar, the narrow aspect ratio of the floor plan maximizes natural light deep within the building. Borrowed light is brought across the private corridor into the courtrooms via a translucent clerestory window. **OPPOSITE:** Originally designed as a pure curtain wall, community feedback encouraged DLR Group to reimagine the building’s exterior skin. The resulting building envelope is inspired by monochromatic and geometric patterns found in Anasazi pottery. By bringing in the elements of natural wood and concrete throughout, the aesthetic impact is

with vertical elements subtly evocative of the region’s natural topography. Together, with the earthen-based color palette and orientation to the sun’s movement, the impact is one of water flowing from the mountains and cutting natural erosion patterns.

The eye toward natural flow is paramount to design functionality—and given the judicial center’s built-in traffic patterns, public streams and tributaries emerge and converge naturally in a civic swirl. “The nice thing about designing a courthouse is that people have reasons to go there,” said Orr. “It generates more community involvement than other buildings that people might not interact with as much.” By placing security outside of the rotunda, it creates a destination point and sense of arrival when stepping across the kiva threshold, encouraging visitors to stop, observe, and find their paths. Thanks to central electronic docket monitors, it’s easy to determine whether to travel to the adjacent jury assembly space or head to the public elevator core immediately beyond the central room. And in another nod to the region’s industrial past, a steel-plated ceremonial stair connects the pedestrian level to a circumnavigating second floor overlook that references back to the main public space.

It’s the public space, after all, which brings us back to the initial question of marrying civic and judicial in a seamless manner. Simply put, the DLR Group created a successful project by asking the city to tell its story. “It’s a natural evolution of the [design] process,” said Orr. “We want to make sure we’re asking the right questions to know what problems we’re trying to solve.” That process involved community outreach and visioning meetings to address what was important to the ultimate arbiter of usage—Pueblo’s citizenry. By involving local input from day one, DLR Group was able to discover the optimal way to regionally ground function, sustainability, and intriguing aesthetics in the Dennis Maes Pueblo Judicial Center. And as Orr points out, a project’s success is determined by the people it was built to serve. “How it performs is a direct result of the community’s involvement in the process,” he said.



OF THE COURT

PROBATION/CHILDREN

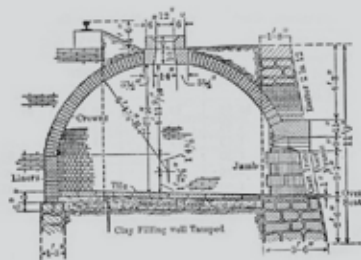




FORGED FROM THE EARTH



In researching the region's roots in 19th century industry, DLR Group discovered an inferno of inspiration. Reaching its zenith during the Industrial Revolution, the beehive coke oven played a key role in developing Pueblo into the Steel City of the West. In the ovens, coal was transformed into coke—a fuel and smelting agent that provided early industrial settlers the building blocks of the industrial west. The resulting influence can be seen in the Judicial Center's latticed wooden beams, vaulting conically to the sky, and the aperture serving as a culminating conflagration.



Side Section:
Beehive oven

OPPOSITE: By placing security outside of the rotunda, Judicial Center visitors are struck with an awesome presence when they step into the central public area. Specifically designed as a point of arrival, the structure evokes an experience of wayfinding by mixing natural and industrial materials—Douglas fir glulam beams, exposed gray architectural-grade concrete, and beyond, the glass curtain wall and precast panel. The second floor overlook, then, functions as a natural point of reflection and reference back down upon the main floor's kiva.

SPACE FOR GATHERING

“Sipapuni.” In the creation mythology for several Southwestern Native American tribes, it is the threshold through which ancestral proto-humans climbed through to emerge in the present day.

This passage into a new world of light is embodied within the kiva, a ceremonial structure housing sacred rites for rain-making, healing, and hunting. Associated with the kachina belief system of Puebloan and Hopi nations, the kiva holds a significant role in community culture as public architecture.

As a foundational inspiration for the central area of the Pueblo Judicial Center, the kiva-based rotunda honors this by serving as a main referential point within both the building and larger downtown area. Envisioned as the “living room” of Pueblo, the space was constructed as a place for the community to gather: for civic celebrations, and at night, as a beacon shining down 5th Street. This symbolic sipapuni—or “hole in the sky”—gives modern Puebloans a window into their future by honoring a key part of their regional history.



PROJECT CREDITS

Architect of Record
DLR Group

Civil Engineering
Short Elliot Hendrickson, Inc.

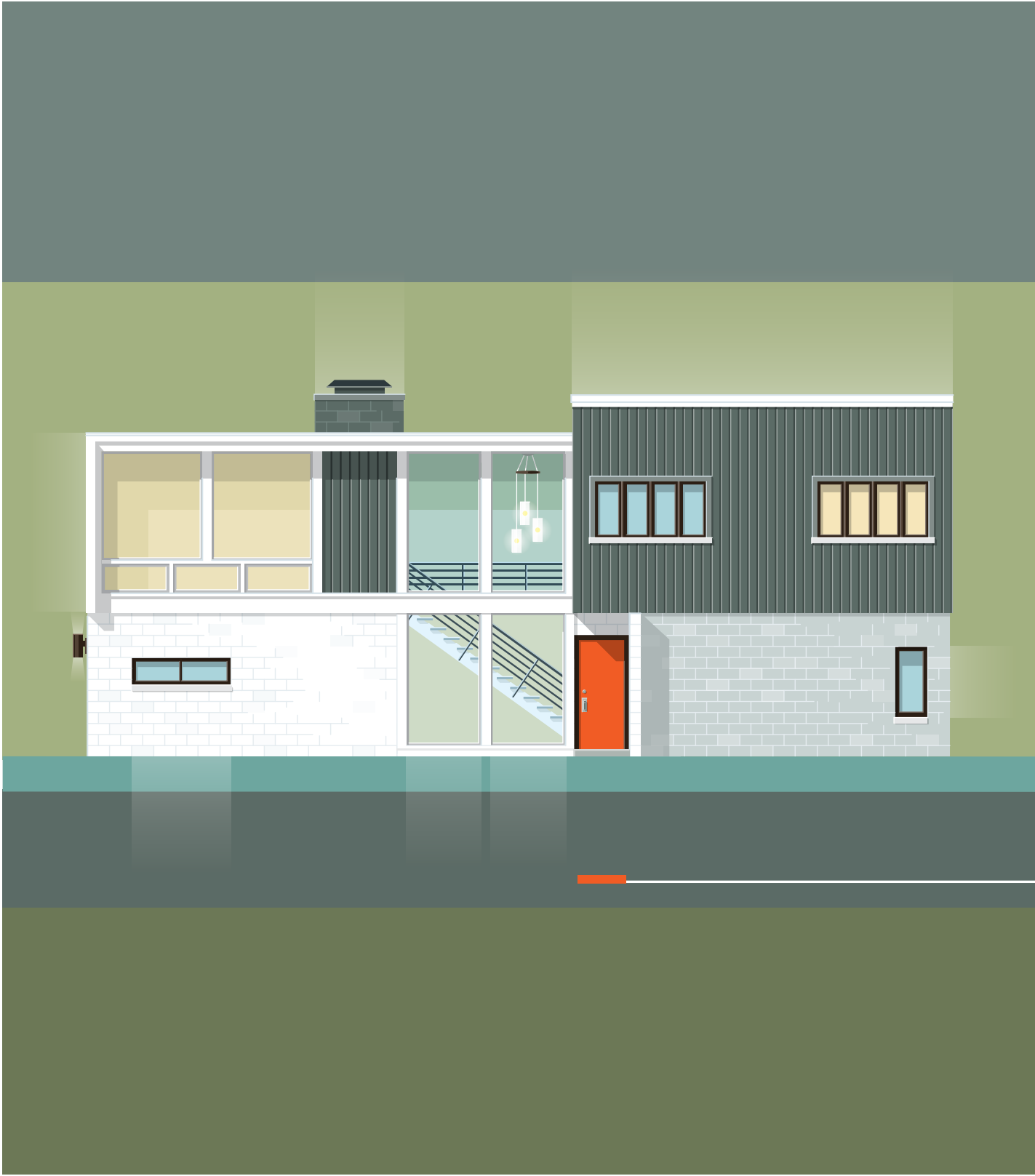
Structural Engineering
MGA Structural Engineers, Inc.

MEP Engineering
RMH Group

***Security, IT,
and Courtroom Technology***
Technology Plus

Landscape Architecture
Design Collaborative, Inc.

Contractor
H.W. Houston Construction



DRAWING INSPIRATION

Christian Musselman has fun. But don't mistake that for lacking professionalism—producing detailed custom home portraits is serious business. From children's toys to mid-century masterpieces, the Denver-based illustrator has crafted a lifelong dream into a successful career of serious play.

WORDS: CORY PHARE

AS A CHILD, Christian Musselman was struck by the design of his grandparents' house: single-level, open floor plan, and with expansive windows—informed by function and celebrating the life inside. It's an image that can be seen in the custom residential illustrations he conjures through Christian Musselman Illustrations, catalyzing the imagination with their detailed simplicity. It makes sense, given that they serve as continuance of Musselman's life's work—as someone who has "...wanted to be an illustrator ever since he was a kid." And fortunately for his clients, he brings a well-honed sense of wonder to each project.

After agency work as a storyboard artist and designer, Musselman evolved his illustration work into a full-time venture. That's what led to serious work from child's play; for the past decade, he has illustrated projects from Barbie books to Hot Wheels packaging. "It's been a great gig; I love the energy and crazy color palette used in the toy business," said Musselman. "It's fun to see the artwork on the shelves."

So how does one get from toys to terrazzo? By taking a walk. An appreciator of the architectural abundance back in his hometown of Chicago, Musselman—after a brief stint in Santa Fe—began finding inspiration within Denver's own creative cache on display. "Walking around Arapahoe Acres, I was inspired to try channeling my thinking and creativity in a new way," he said. "It sparked me, these big pieces of livable artwork on the streets."

Excursions to Palm Springs only added fuel to that creative fire. "You can't go there and not become a house nut!" he said. Drawn to mid-century's inherent optimism, one thing he noted was the

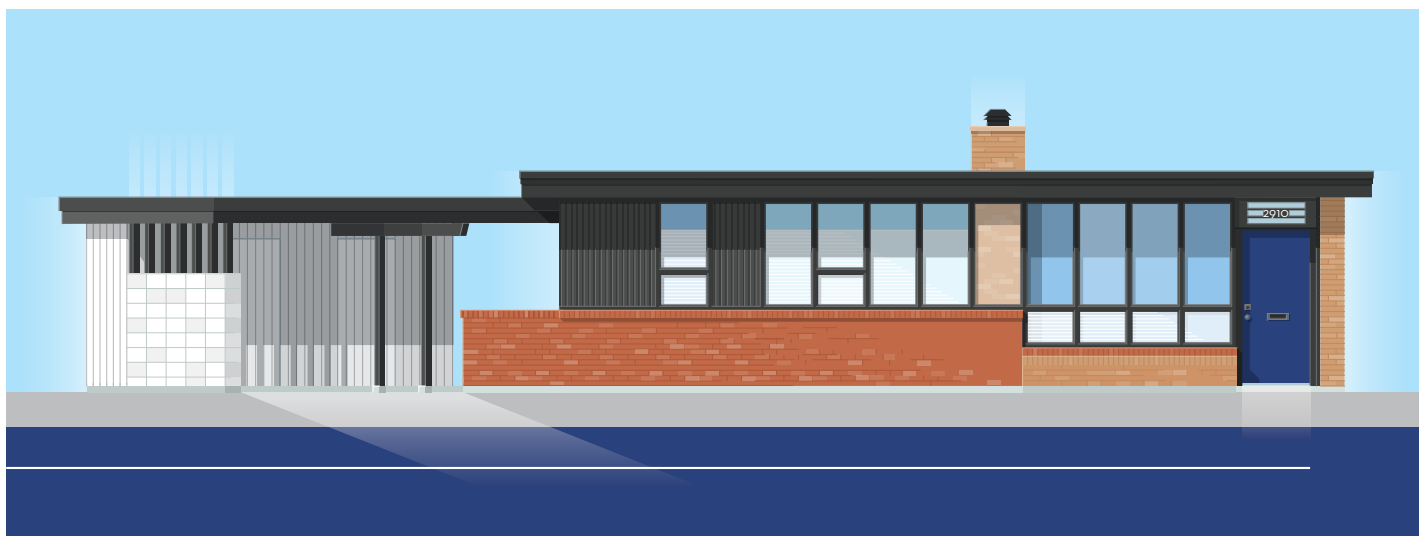
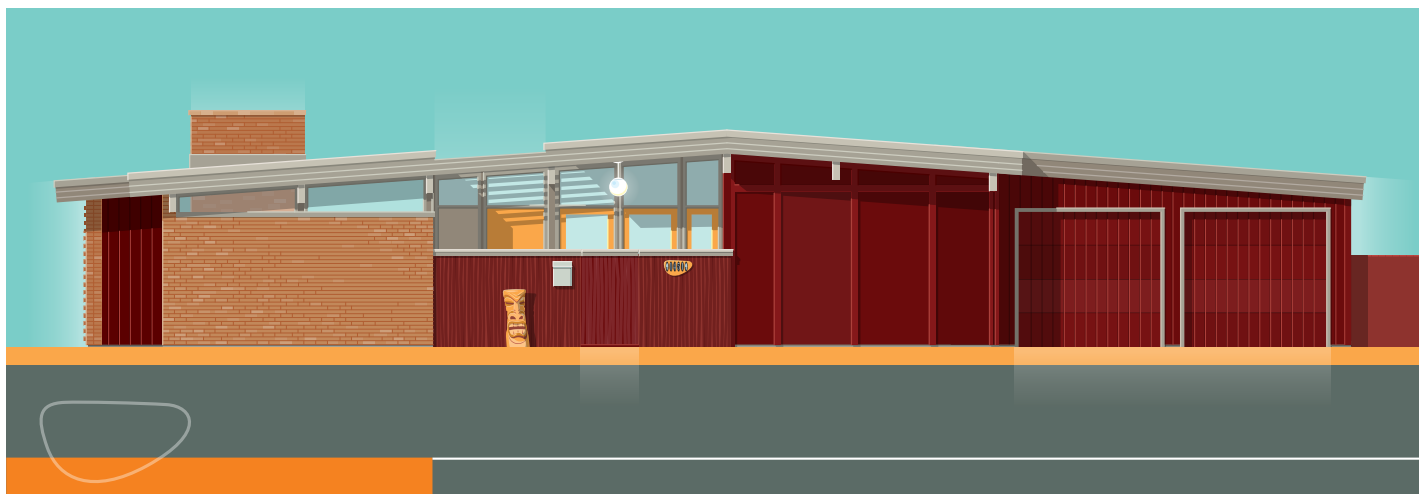
ability of Modernism to imbue minimalism with vitality. "How much can you take away and still have incredible flair?" he said. "Someone had a vision of what it meant to live in this present moment, with an eye to the future."

Translating that vision to an illustration requires not just incredible attention to detail, but a process both creative and conducive to collaboration with far-flung constituents across the country. Musselman begins his projects by having clients take first-round reference photographs, and he uses those to diagram 10 to 15 further detailed shots. Then, in Adobe Illustrator, he blocks in larger elements before adding doors, windows, trim, and down to the finest details, all the while in consort with the homeowners to ensure the vision they're working toward together. And those colors that made illustrating toys so engaging? Musselman finds the same fun from finagling modern accents into muted background elements.

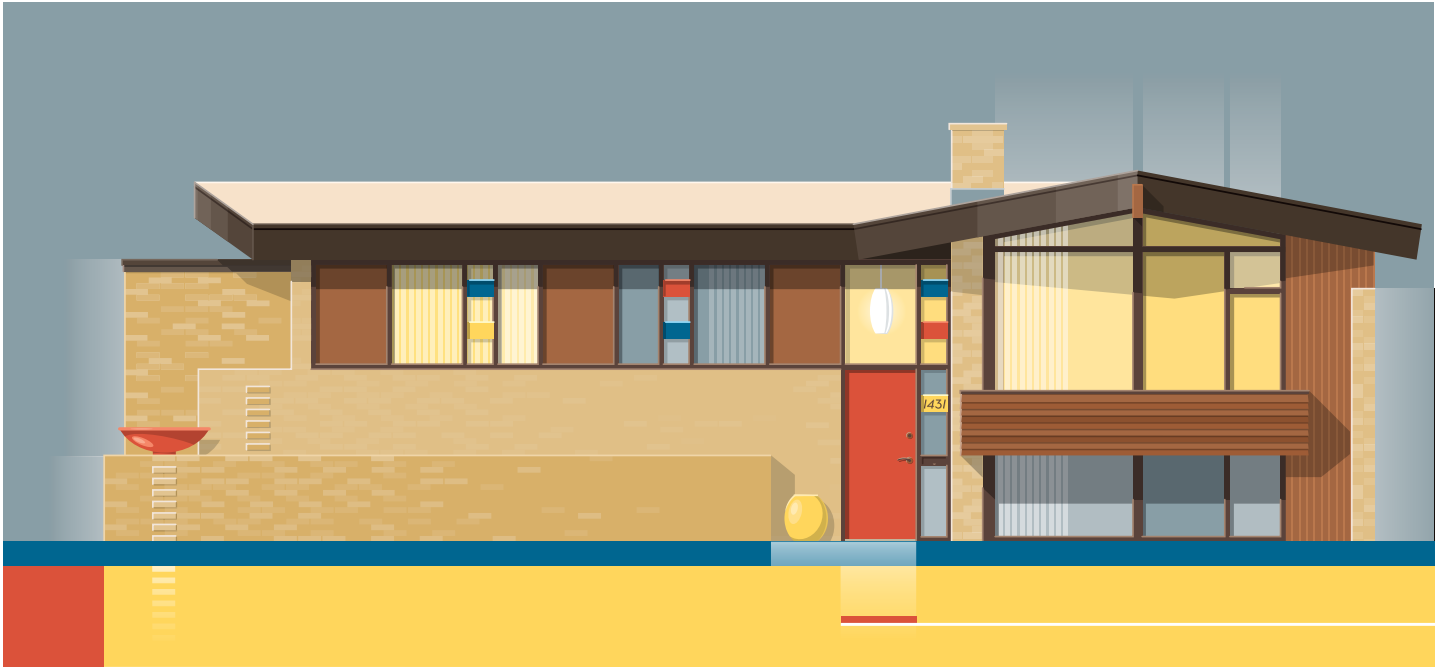
This discovery process is at the core of Musselman's illustrations. When you study them, you begin to notice details that you didn't initially—similar to the homeowners' discovery while traipsing through their hedges to get the best photograph. The result is a refined playfulness, using detail to honor the shared vision of artist, architect, and resident. "It's fun to play with and stylize illustrations, but the niche is giving people accurate graphic representations of their homes," said Musselman. "If that means counting individual bricks between windows, then that's what I'll do to get it right for them."

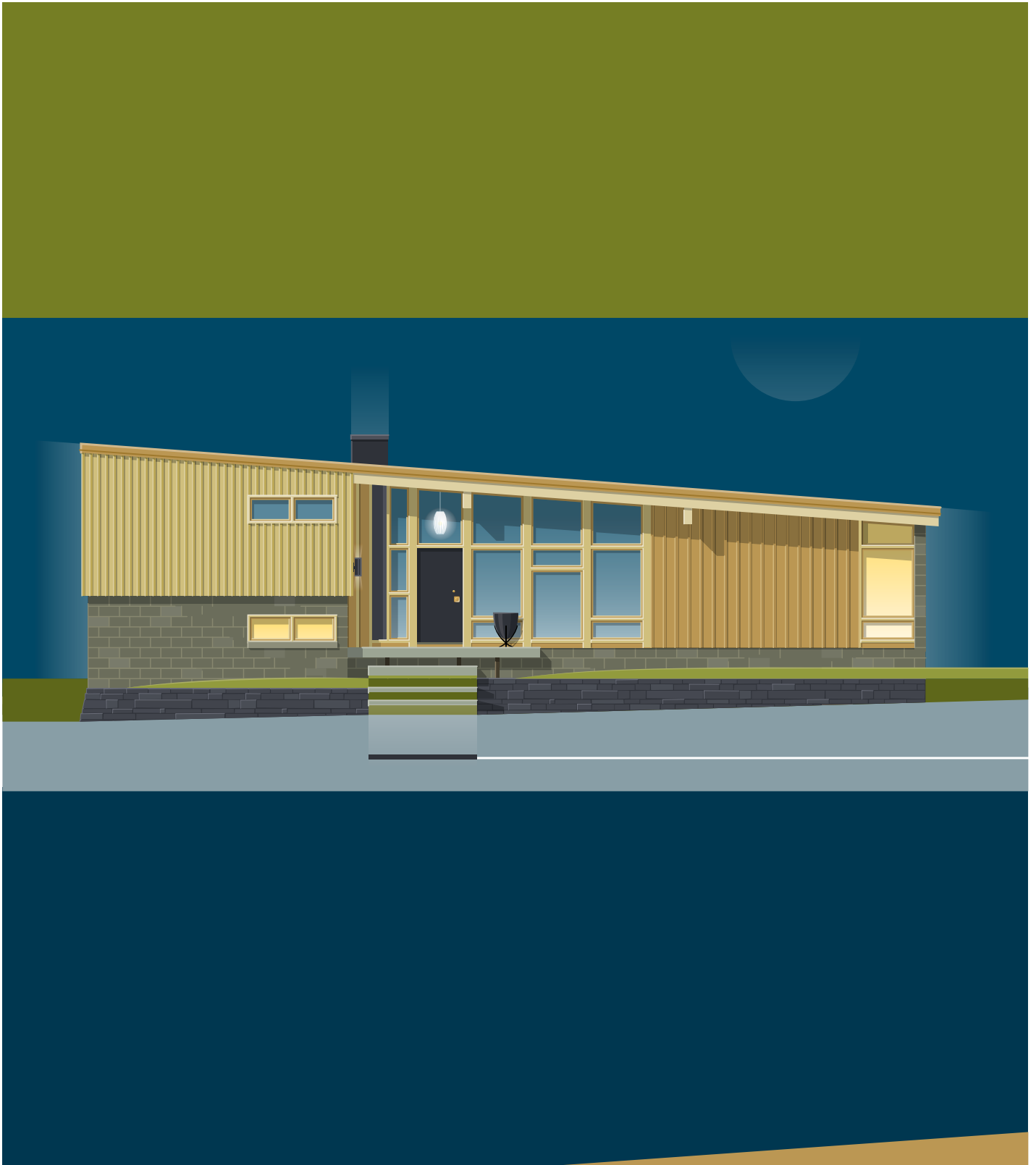
See more of his work at christianmusselman.com.



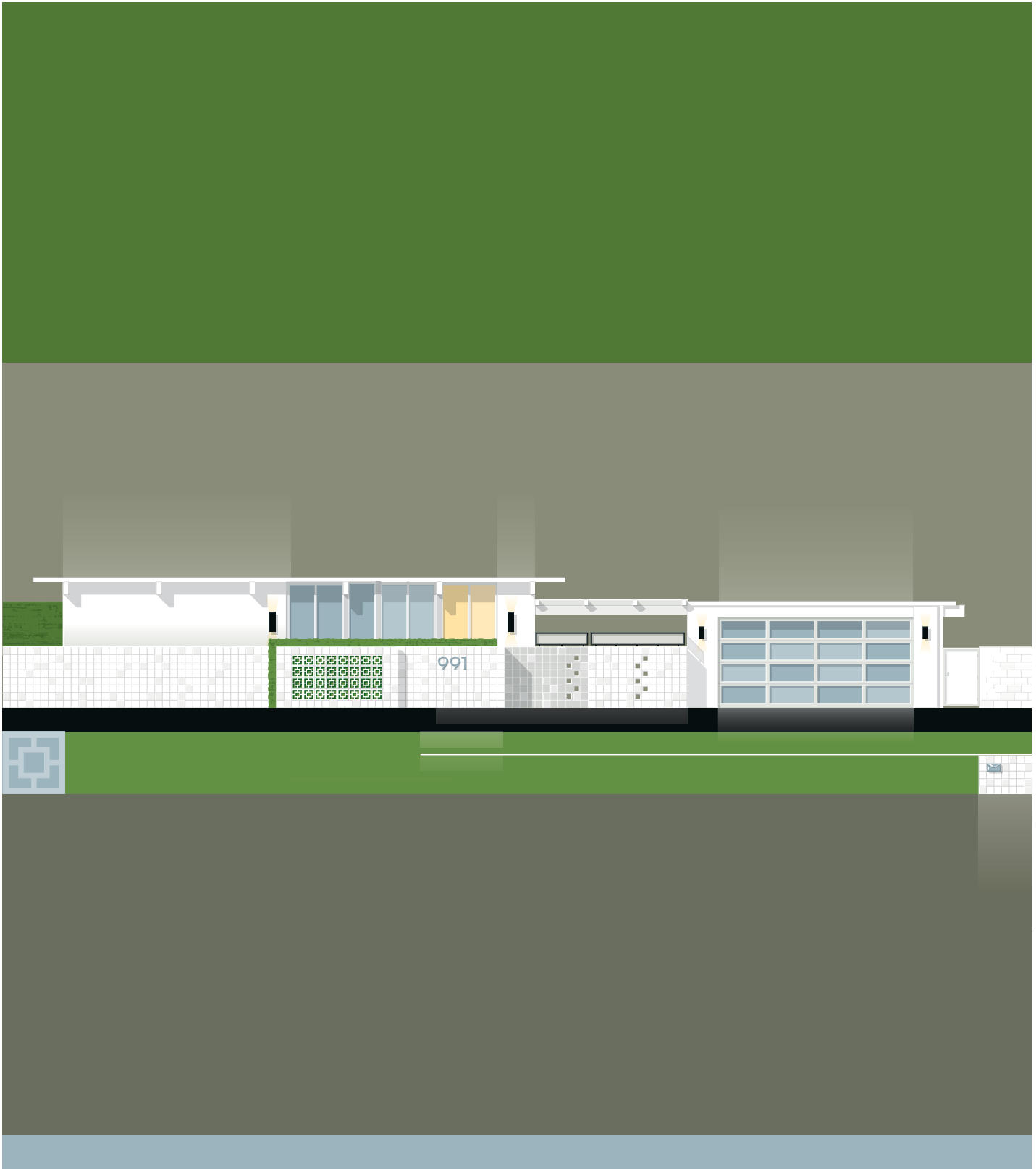


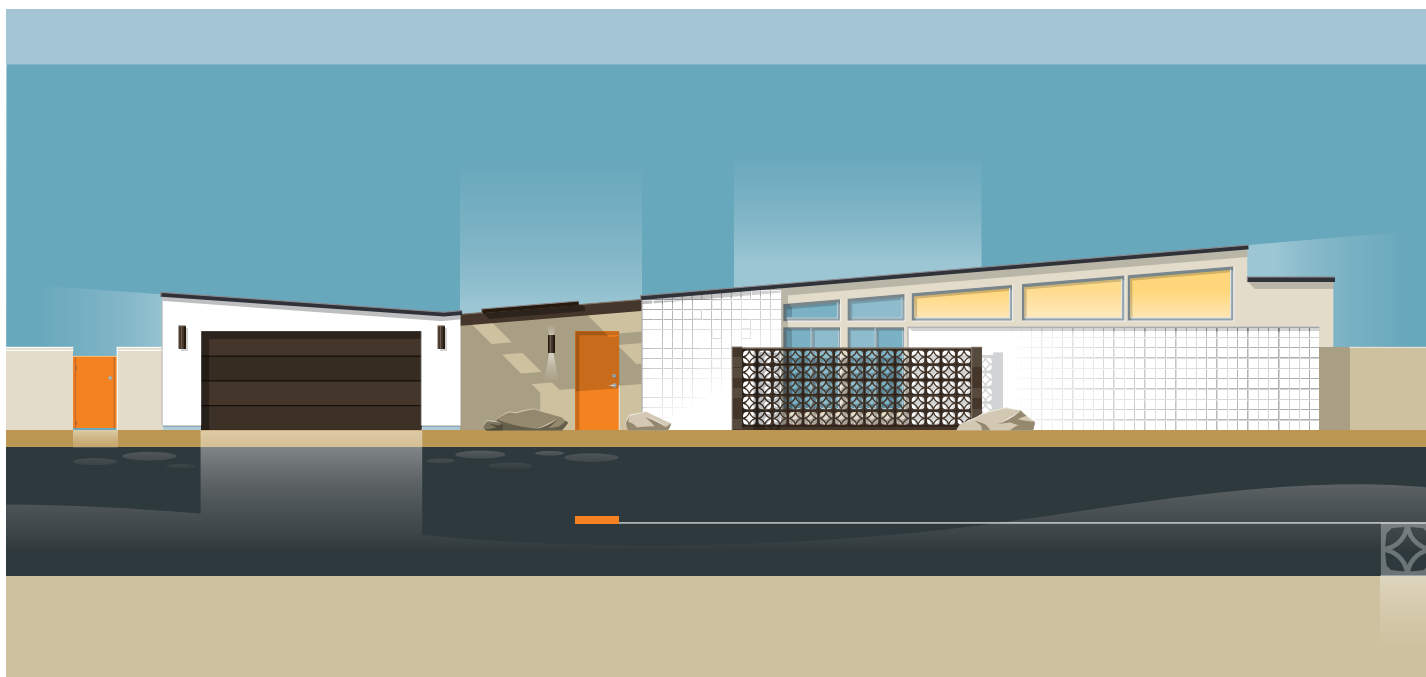
DRAWING INSPIRATION





DRAWING INSPIRATION









ALL IN THE FAMILY

With great architecture comes great responsibility, and with an eye toward revival and respect for history, one Harvey Park couple breathed life into a classic Cliff May home with the help of neighbors, friends, and even the former owner.

WORDS: Atom Stevens • IMAGES: Daniel O'Connor



WHEN HOMEOWNERS OPT TO RENOVATE, THEY TYPICALLY CALL ON EXPERTS TO ACTUALIZE THEIR DREAMS. CONTRACTORS HANDLE THE PAIN POINTS: PERMITS, PLUMBING, AND THE DREADED PAINTING. BUT FOR NEWLYWEDS COLE AND DANIELLE ST. PETER, A DIY APPROACH TO RENOVATING A 1955 CLIFF MAY HOUSE BROUGHT TOGETHER NOT JUST THE COUPLE, BUT ALSO THE COMMUNITY.

MAYDAY

Barely settled into a rental in Harvey Park, the St. Peters quickly fell in love with the neighborhood's distinctive mid-century modern houses, and they set out on a mission to buy. But the market was tough on buyers; houses would sell in a matter of hours to flippers offering cash. The advice given to the newlyweds: beg, borrow, and steal to get a house right now. But for some sellers, preserving the integrity of a home is more appealing than cash. The St. Peters were in luck.

It was a corner lot. Cliff May architecture. A highly desirable L-shape floor plan and one of the largest homes in the neighborhood. But it needed a lot of work—work that would be respectful of its history and architecture. Its seller was adamant about that.

That seller was Judy. She lived in the home for decades and, fortunately for the St. Peters, was conscientious about the home's fate—so much so that she rejected the offer of a flipper who had questionable intentions. Instead, in October 2014, the St. Peters walked away with the home. As it approached its 60th birthday, the house was passed on to a new generation—a young couple jumping into their first year of marriage with a massive project ahead of them.

A LITTLE HELP FROM MY FRIENDS

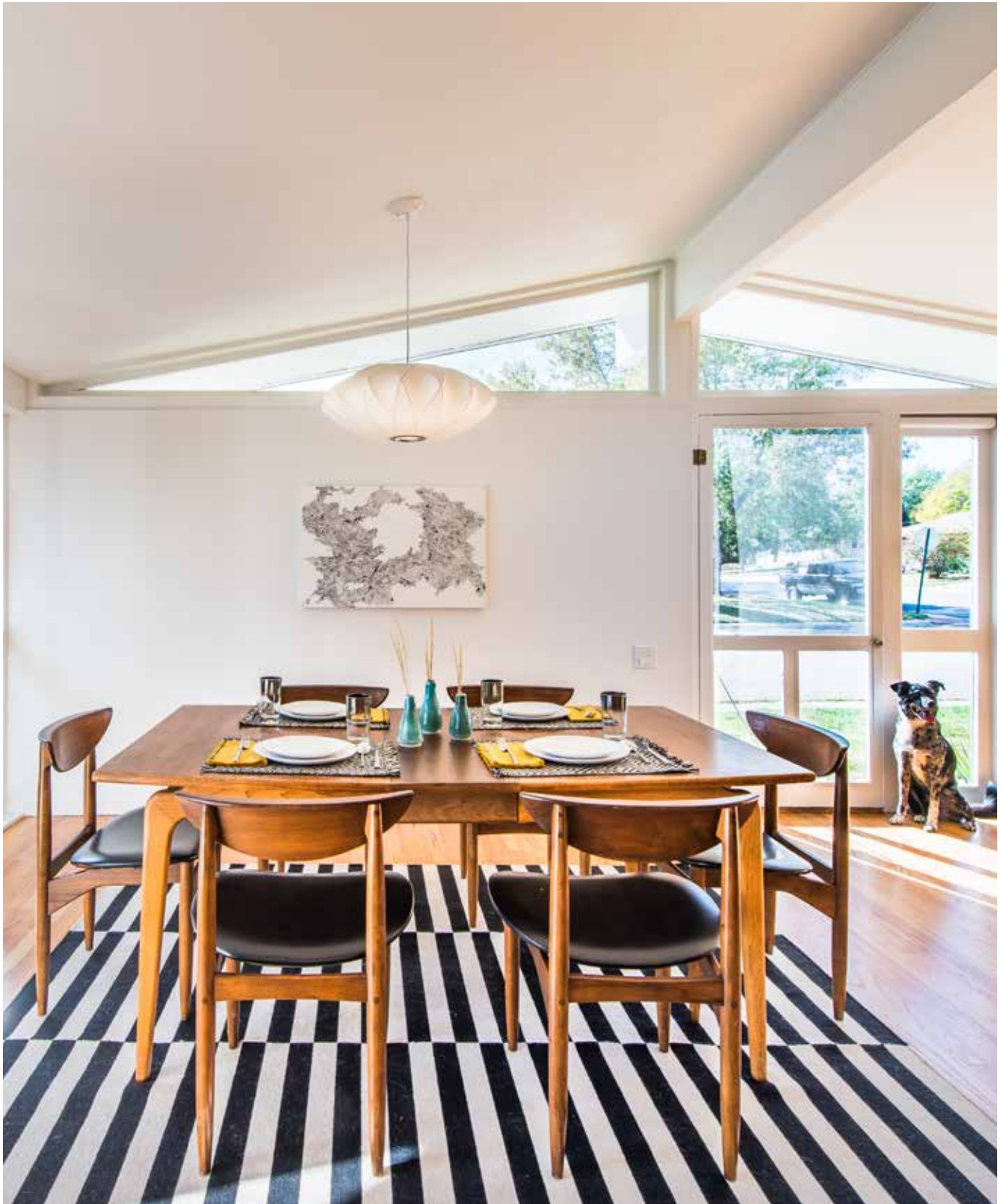
They hadn't even closed, and Judy, who is in her 70s, rolled up her sleeves alongside the St. Peters to help remove carpet, revealing wood floors below. And that was just the beginning. With the help of neighbors, friends, and family, the project came to life as a community effort—and is among the many reasons the St. Peters coveted the neighborhood. One Harvey Parker helped lay oak floors. Another helped with plumbing. The neighbors' skills and their generosity played a large part in the St. Peters' yearlong accomplishment.

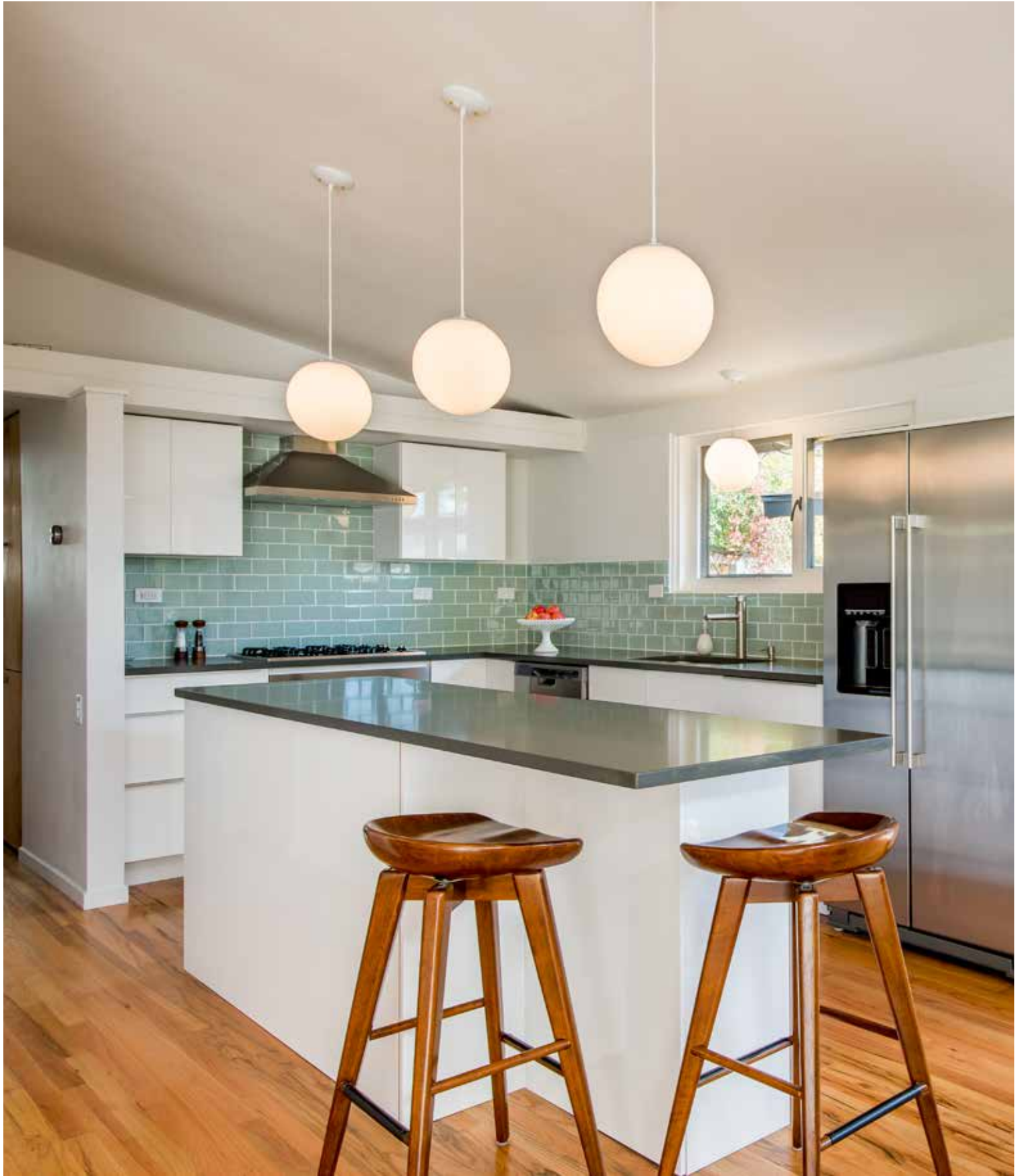
But it was the help of Cole's father that was most valuable to him. "I've always done this stuff with my dad," Cole said. He helped his father on countless projects and was eager to initiate his own this time. Cole's father, a professional electrician, helped on just about every part of the project.

GETTING DOWN TO WORK

The St. Peters were steadfast about preserving the original architecture, and they wanted to be good stewards of their Cliff May home. Although the house was largely stripped down to almost nothing, the original wood floors stayed, as did the original exterior windows. "I love the windows," said Danielle. "I love having all the natural light." The clerestory

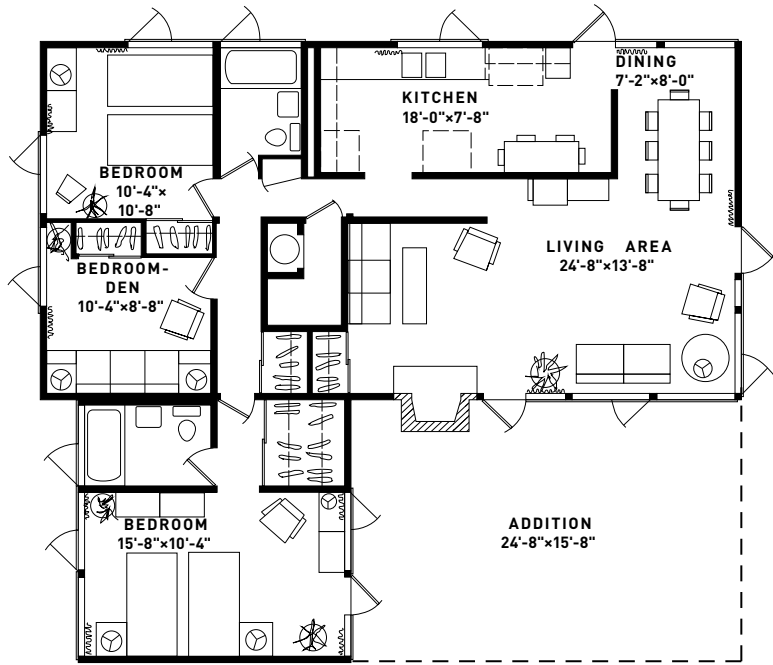
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OPPOSITE: Removing a six-foot wall and replacing it with an island helped create a warm and welcoming kitchen. Oak flooring was extended into the kitchen, and new cabinets, backsplash subway tiles, globe lights, and mid-century barstools round out the full kitchen renovation. **TOP:** Ceramic vases are from Jaime Kelly, who is a local potter and Cliff May neighbor. Coffee and side tables are Lane Acclaim. **BOTTOM:** Made by the Illinois Moulding Company and acquired via some shrewd hunting on Craigslist, the mirrored shadowbox that hangs above a Kent Coffey Townhouse dresser is the living room's showstopper. The brick fireplace was originally painted, but a previous owner stripped them bare. "We love the warmth and texture it adds to the room," said homeowner Cole St. Peter.



Designed by local architect Ollie Nielsen, himself the proud owner of a Harvey Park Cliff May home, this 1960s addition resulted in a large den where there once was a private patio. It's a good example of how space can be added while being sensitive to the home's original modern architecture. The office table and Aeron chair were purchased for \$5 each from the Denver Art Museum during an office relocation. In the den (pictured to the right), the wood entertainment center was once an indoor grill. Owner Cole St. Peter built the hideaway doors himself.







windows add to that element. "It's really cool that you can see trees and sky," said Cole.

In the first days, the couple began demolition after work, removing walls to open the living space of the house. They discovered soffits with recessed fluorescent lighting hiding skylights, which they opened. The former hearth for an indoor grill in the den was removed, and the partial-height wall surrounding the kitchen—an original feature often demolished in Harvey Park's Cliff May homes—was removed (with the help of a neighbor, of course).

The bulk of the work involved removing elements that clashed with the original architecture. Walls were sanded to remove a heavy southwestern-style texture, both bathrooms received complete makeovers, and kitchen cabinets, counters, and appliances were replaced. Everything was repainted except the tongue-and-groove roof deck in the den, which was sanded to reveal its natural wood—the most time-intensive, yet rewarding project. The five-week undertaking required intense persistence, sanding in four passes and only half of three boards at any one time using a heavy belt sander. The work was made a bit easier—but a bit more precarious—by using the pair of stilts that Cole borrowed. "I did fall. Twice. And it was gnarly," he said. Despite going against the advice of his father and just about everyone else, the results were worth it.

THE BULK OF THE WORK WAS TO REMOVE ELEMENTS ADDED BY THE PREVIOUS OWNERS THAT CLASHED WITH THE ORIGINAL ARCHITECTURE.

TOP: The guest bedroom features a Kent Coffey Townhouse dresser, nightstand, and headboard. A matching dresser serves as a console in the living room. **MIDDLE:** Bright and spacious master suites are a popular feature of the L-shaped floorplan. The St. Peters have adorned theirs with a Broyhill Sculpra bedroom set, mid-century chairs from the Denver Art Museum's offices, and a Lux clock that arrived as a birthday present from Cole's mother. The painting, by Montana-based artist Brooke Nelson, is of the family dog. **BOTTOM:** The wood ceiling and shower window are original, but nearly everything else in this guest bathroom, from floor tiles to modern vanity, are new and improved.

The electrical and plumbing systems were upgraded, with additional accent lighting added. The only work not done by the St. Peters and friends was the new roof and the refinishing of the wood floor—and only because they weren't able to acquire the commercial-grade materials and equipment. In the end, their goal was accomplished: to let the home's simple architecture come first, treating everything else as complementary.

FINISHING TOUCHES

The success of the renovation is that it went beyond the sledgehammer and sanding. In addition to the structural work, the St. Peters tastefully outfitted the home with many mid-century modern furniture finds acquired from Craigslist, local picker "Mid-Century Mike," and the Gone for Good store in Denver. "The inside of the house has been so much fun," said Danielle. "I've never had a problem; we've always had a vision."

Beyond the enjoyment with their Cliff May home, the St. Peters have come to enjoy Harvey Park. "There are just great people here—people who like to hang out and be a part of other people's lives," said Cole. And lucky for the neighborhood, they'll be paying their good fortune forward. Said Danielle: "We're getting to the point that we're almost done, and now we can actually help someone else—now that we know how to do stuff!"




Since purchasing this original Cliff May home in 2014, Cole and Danielle St. Peter have lovingly restored (or reimagined) nearly every square inch—including this all-seasons covered patio. Originally designed as a carport, this sheltered space is perfect for entertaining while still providing plenty of privacy. The mid-century Homecrest patio set, rocker, side chair, tables, and planter all were acquired through secondhand outlets.



FLAT-PACKED HOUSING IN HARVEY PARK

ABSOLUTELY PRE-FABULOUS

WORDS: Atom Stevens



LONG BEFORE IKE A INTRODUCED FLAT-PACKED FURNITURE TO THE U.S., CALIFORNIA BUILDER CLIFF MAY HOMES PIONEERED THE IDEA OF FLAT-PACKED HOUSES IN COLORADO. WITH 170 OF THESE PREFABRICATED GEMS STILL STANDING, DENVER'S HARVEY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD IS A LIVING TESTAMENT TO MID-CENTURY BUILDING INNOVATIONS THAT MAY OTHERWISE BE FORGOTTEN.

SIXTY YEARS AGO, SOMETHING BOLD WAS HAPPENING HERE.

AMID THE ONGOING REAL ESTATE BOOM, A HANDFUL OF SCATTERED COMMUNITIES HAVE DISTINGUISHED THEMSELVES AS CONTENDERS FOR THE TITLE OF DENVER'S NEXT HOT NEIGHBORHOOD. ONE SUCH ENCLAVE IS HARVEY PARK, A QUIET MID-CENTURY HOLDOVER SITUATED JUST WEST OF FEDERAL BOULEVARD. BUT AS WITH SO MANY RESURGENT POCKETS AROUND TOWN, THE STREETS OF HARVEY PARK ARE LINED WITH A RICH AND ECCENTRIC HISTORY UNKNOWN EVEN TO MANY OF ITS

The year was 1955, and the newly annexed Harvey Park was the epicenter of an enormous building boom. The city's population was exploding at four times the national average, and builders were scrambling to keep up with demand. At the same time, potential homeowners had more money to spend than ever before, and builders fought to outdo one another in size, quality, innovation, and price. The 1955 Parade of Homes featured a whopping 86 houses, and the Cliff May homes in Harvey Park were among them.

Built by Rocky Mountain Cliff May Homes, a subsidiary of D.C. Burns Construction, these homes represented the cutting edge of design and engineering in the 1950s. Rare was the builder willing to establish a dedicated neighborhood of "contemporary style" houses in Denver. Rarer still was the builder willing to take on a modular housing system that was largely untested outside of California. D.C. Burns, however, had a reputation for looking forward; they were one of the first companies in the region to build housing for soldiers returning from World War II, and they had been ahead of the curve in offering VA loans.

The Cliff May homes in Harvey Park were built using a modular pre-fabricated approach known as the Cliff May-Chris Choate system, designed with a standard kit of pre-made parts and engineered for high quality in a controlled factory environment before being flat-packed and shipped to the build site for rapid assembly.

The houses were comprised of a post-and-beam super-structure, enclosed by pre-made, tilt-up panels. Some of the innovation, however, had more to do with how they were actually built. Instead of piecing together the super-structure first—the typical method for a post-and-beam building—the May-Choate system erected the tilt-up panels first, along with various vertical posts that might occur at glass walls or under the main beam of the house. Beams were then placed atop walls and posts. This made construction so efficient that—assuming a foundation was already in place—a house enclosure could be finished in a single day.


But simply creating an elegant and minimally engineered structure was only part of what May hoped to achieve with his tract homes. Inspired by the architecture of California's classic Mexican ranch houses, May envisioned informal living that carefully balanced openness and privacy and treated indoor and outdoor living spaces equally. This meant outdoor living spaces could be created using privacy fences and connected with the indoors via glass French doors and walls.

It also meant designing with a sensitivity to how houses relate to one another. He argued against the idea of "minimum setbacks," which often resulted in houses being built in perfect rows, with bedrooms looking into neighboring bedrooms. May's thinking was on full display in Harvey Park, resulting in a highly varied and interesting streetscape while playing down the fact that, as a result of their minimalist architectural language, many of the houses looked very similar.

In fact, this architectural language was one of May's major philosophies and innovations. Although the press referred to the May-Choate designs as contemporary, with their vaulted ceilings, glass walls, low-sloped roofs, and clerestory windows known as "glass gables," May believed he was designing houses devoid of a particular style.

By taking style out of the equation, offering a set of coordinating colors (mostly earth tones), and maintaining a consistent massing through the neighborhood, May created a sort of architecturally egalitarian community, in which the largest houses were nearly indistinguishable from the smallest ones, reinforcing his notion of informality on a neighborhood scale.

Moreover, the houses arrived with no pre-conceived standards regarding how they should be decorated or furnished. Although an Eames Lounge fits quite comfortably in a Cliff May home,

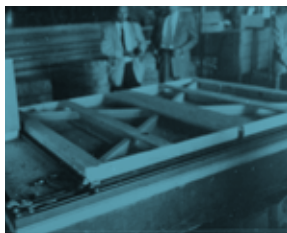


THE CLIFF MAY HOMES IN HARVEY PARK WERE BUILT USING A MODULAR PRE-FABRICATED APPROACH KNOWN AS THE CLIFF MAY-CHRIS CHOATE SYSTEM, DESIGNED WITH A STANDARD KIT OF PRE-MADE PARTS AND ENGINEERED FOR HIGH QUALITY IN A CONTROLLED FACTORY ENVIRONMENT BEFORE BEING FLAT-PACKED AND SHIPPED TO THE BUILD SITE FOR RAPID ASSEMBLY.

Vintage 1950s photos show workers installing a pre-manufactured partial window panel in the field. When fully installed with the wood beam on top, a rough opening creates room for a window unit. Each May-Choate system panel was built on a 64-inch module, and within that module were five different options: solid wall, partial window (for bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens), full-height glass, french doors, or a 3-foot wide entrance door with a sidelight. The 2"x4" posts at the end of each panel come together to create a 4"x4" structural post on the home's exterior, which ultimately support a 4"x6" wood beam.



Workers assemble wall panels at one of the facilities licensed to manufacture the patented May-Choate building system. Treated redwood or cedar boards were pre-installed on the exterior for the board and batten siding. Wood blocking was included on the interior for rapid fastening of drywall and fixtures. Various lumber companies, including Briggs Manufacturing in Tacoma, Washington, and Anderson Lumber in Salt Lake City, manufactured the kits on a regional basis exclusively for Cliff May Homes and their licensed building partners.



May's preferred Spanish colonial style worked just as well. It was left entirely to the tastes of the residents.

Although there were a number of builders outside California committed to Cliff May Homes, Burns Construction was one of the largest, building the 170-house tract in Harvey Park and a 150-house tract in Las Vegas. Despite a strong network of builders willing to sell their products, problems emerged and Cliff May Homes did not last much longer. May left the partnership in 1956, with longtime collaborator Choate taking over. But without May's direct involvement, distributors like Burns, who would have been key to scaling up the brand, lost confidence in the company. In turn, very few Cliff May tract homes were built outside California after May's departure.

As the notion of modular and prefabricated houses has come back into fashion, it's

curious that May's ideas haven't been revived and reimagined. The technology and design of flat-packed construction has come a long way since the hand-built wood panels of the 1950s. And yet the absence of any builder introducing a range of modular, prefabricated houses at scale makes it clear that the challenges May and Choate faced have not entirely abated.

Building codes are one problem. Although the International Building Code has improved consistency nationwide, local amendments still make things complicated for builders trying to deploy a system across a broad geographic area. Other problems, ranging from quality control, varying home values, shipping, and labor challenges, still exist for all home builders. There is also the matter of finding a builder, like Burns, willing to risk deploying a new system that must make sense financially while also generating demand among potential

buyers. The odds, sadly, are not in favor of large-scale modular prefabricated housing making a major comeback.

Even so, the Cliff Mays in Harvey Park stand as more than just another mid-century modern neighborhood in Denver. They represent a bold experiment, an effort to change the whole idea of affordable single-family housing. Even though this experiment may not have led to lasting change in the industry, residents still enjoy the fruits of May's progressive thinking. In recent years, his designs have been rediscovered and better appreciated.

Now 60 years old, Denver's Cliff May homes are more vibrant and full of life than they have been for decades. Who knows? Maybe this is Denver's Next Hot Neighborhood after all.

During the 1950s heyday of Cliff May Homes, their founder used detailed scale models to demonstrate the functionality of his May-Choate system. This model shows full-height walls with cross-bracing to provide lateral stability, wood blocking for the rapid fastening of drywall and fixtures, and the complete lack of traditional wood stud framing. A main 4"x14" beam runs down the central axis, flanked by two 4"x8" beams along the exterior, with 4"x4" posts providing support. Roof rafters span the beams, creating vaulted ceilings in every room, and when combined with the tie-beams at the gable walls, create the rough opening for clerestory windows which create the illusion that the roof is floating over the house.





CLIFF MAY

A SHORT HISTORY OF A LONG LEGACY

California architect Cliff May traded dreams of musical stardom for a life rooted in grand conceptual design. Along the way, he cast a long and lasting shadow on the world of modern architecture.

OFTEN considered the father of the modern ranch house, Cliff May should perhaps be better known as a purveyor of the casual and informal California lifestyle. The fact that May was never formally trained as an architect was little more than a technicality. Even early in his career, he showed an attention to detail befitting a grizzled architectural veteran. From his precise selection of colors to the ways in which a house related to its occupants (or the sun, or an adjacent house), May was careful to consider every last aspect of the houses he designed.

His resulting contributions to the world of design are substantial, but May never set out to make a career in architecture. He really wanted to be a musician, and while in college at San Diego State University, he had a band called the Cliff May Orchestra. At the urging of his father, however, May changed course. Seeking a more reliable income, he left school and began building furniture, which quickly blossomed into building entire houses. After moving to Los Angeles, his new trade evolved further as he began designing custom homes for wealthy clients—sprawling ranch homes spanning 10,000 square feet or more—and even designed entire subdivisions.

Due to his talent, success, and charisma, May's work began attracting attention from

national publications like *Sunset* magazine and *House Beautiful*. He published his first book with *Sunset* in 1949 (it remains in print more than six decades later), and even wound up designing their former headquarters in what is now Silicon Valley.

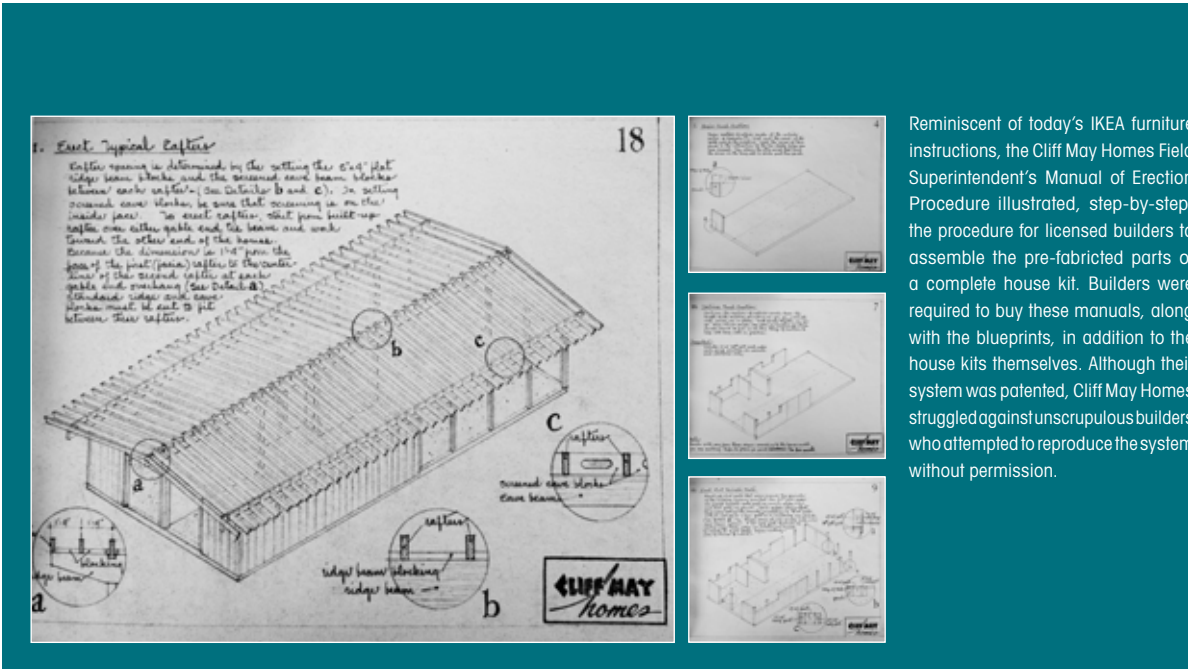
Celebrity aside, May had visionary ideas about how homes should be designed, and he had a unique ability to merge tradition with cutting-edge principles. He felt strongly that good design had the power to make life better for everyone, telling *LIFE* magazine in 1949, "I was very much impressed by the Levitt development [in New York], seeing those thousands of houses ... [we have] agreed that today's houses are superior to those built 10 years ago. Such houses do represent better specifications. But they do not have better design. They do not represent a better way of living."

In response to what he saw as a dearth of good housing design, May teamed with California architect Chris Choate, forming Cliff May Homes in 1953. The company innovated a prefabricated system of homebuilding, selling house kits to builders rather than developing neighborhoods directly. Denver's Harvey Park stands as a shining example of this approach, and other tracts can still be found in Tacoma, Salem, Houston, Dallas,

Tucson, Salt Lake City, Las Vegas, and as far east as Flint, Michigan. The company sold an estimated 18,000 houses in a relatively short span, with May leaving the firm in 1956 ahead of its ultimate closure just two years later.

"A HOUSE DOESN'T HAVE TO LOOK MODERN TO BE MODERN, AND A MODERN-LOOKING HOUSE ISN'T NECESSARILY MODERN." -CLIFF MAY

May spent the balance of his career designing large custom homes worldwide. His clientele grew to include not just the rich, but also the famous; he designed an estate for vintner Robert Mondavi and a home for actor Gregory Peck (now owned by Ben Affleck). May passed away in 1989, but there's little doubt that his legacy lives on.




Reminiscent of today's IKEA furniture instructions, the Cliff May Homes Field Superintendent's Manual of Erection Procedure illustrated, step-by-step, the procedure for licensed builders to assemble the pre-fabricated parts of a complete house kit. Builders were required to buy these manuals, along with the blueprints, in addition to the house kits themselves. Although their system was patented, Cliff May Homes struggled against unscrupulous builders who attempted to reproduce the system without permission.



ABOVE: In 1951 Los Angeles, this early demonstration house from Cliff May and Chris Choate was used to prove to inquisitive builders that a May-Choate house could be erected in a single day—note the large clock prominently displayed in the foreground of the construction site. **OPPOSITE:** Cliff May Homes' simple architectural language was intentionally free of references to a specific style or of any attempt to make the house itself the center of attention. Instead, May focused on informality, indoor-outdoor connections, and diminished massing that allowed nature and sunlight to prevail.





CLIFF MAY ENVISIONED INFORMAL LIVING THAT CAREFULLY BALANCED OPENNESS AND PRIVACY AND EQUALLY TREATED INDOOR AND OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES. THIS MEANT OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES COULD BE CREATED USING PRIVACY FENCES AND CONNECTED WITH THE INDOORS VIA GLASS FRENCH DOORS AND WALLS.

SYSTEM UPGRADE

BOULDER IS NO STRANGER TO TECH FIRMS TAKING UP RESIDENCE IN REIMAGINED INDUSTRIAL SPACES. BUT APPLIED BROADBAND ISN'T LOOKING TO EMULATE THE LATEST SILICON VALLEY FADS. LUCKY FOR THEM, ARCHITECT RICK EPSTEIN AND DESIGNER MARCEL DE LANGE KNOW JUST HOW TO GET WHERE THEY'RE GOING.

THE offices at 2741 Mapleton are home to a firm specializing in Internet technology so advanced it defies easy explanation. In and of itself, such a thing isn't unusual—21st century Boulder, after all, is a well-known hub of high-tech entrepreneurs. But what sets apart Applied Broadband's new headquarters is the relative simplicity. Take a stroll around the building and you'll see plenty of subtle design flourishes—plenty of smartly functional choices—but none of the quirky badges so commonplace among tech firms. There isn't a beer tap or ping pong table in sight.

"We went through a process of interviewing everyone in the company," said Studio Completiva Principal Rick Epstein. "They wanted it to be comfortable and dynamic—a good, serious environment, but still fun, interesting, playful, and collaborative." Epstein, who recently joined Studio Completiva, worked with longtime friend colleague Marcel de Lange of 641West Design to create a space that could accomplish those aims—and do so on a relatively modest budget.

Not that it was easy. The building in question was in desperate need of an overhaul. Built in the late 1970s, it was dated and

WORDS: CHARLIE KEATON • **IMAGES:** DANIEL O'CONNOR





SYSTEM UPGRADE

closed off, its 4,600 square feet originally quartered into four suites. But the bones were good, and if you looked at it from just the right angle, there was potential peeking out from the shadows. All that was needed was a unifying vision, someone to break it down and then thoughtfully and holistically piece it back together—which is precisely where Epstein fits in.

Epstein has a career trajectory to match his curious nature. Born in New York, he came to Boulder as an undergraduate before eventually studying—concurrently—at MIT and Harvard. He won a prestigious Watson Fellowship in his 20s and used the opportunity to travel the world for a year. From the mediterranean to China to Japan, he studied vernacular architecture in humble villages, all the while taking note of the unique cultures, climates, materials, and settings. The experience set him on a path of urban design. In addition to his work with firms like RNL, AR7, and Studio Completiva, he's served on the Boulder Planning Board and Urban

Renewal Authority, as well as the Belmar Design Review Board, all of which gives Epstein a decidedly big-picture approach to projects like this one.

He began the Applied Broadband project by moving the front door and cutting out the lobby ceiling, creating a vertical connection between ground and top floors. The ceiling tile and carpet came off. Then he summoned warmth and texture by adding beetle-kill wood to a building comprised almost entirely of steel and concrete, varying that wood in both width and depth. The resulting juxtaposition lends a sense of action and of cohesion throughout.

Stairs were cut to guardrail height, and industrial grating has created a bridge effect that connects Applied Broadband Founder Jason Schnitzer to his team of computer engineers. A collaboration desk fashioned by de Lange anchors a handful of glass offices, each outfitted with repurposed Haworth elements. To the south, the upstairs patio employs more fiberglass grating, with the

added benefit of yellow tinting, which provides a complementary splash of color when viewed from the street. Also visible from the street is a ground level patio framed by French-inspired Gabions and giant block numbers in the style of Dutch supergraphics. "It was actually a pretty complicated remodel," said Epstein. "How do we tie it all together; how do we unify it? That was a real, continual theme, creating that openness. I think this exceeded our expectations, how much it all hung together, because you make a thousand choices as you move through a project."

Taking in its full expanse from the street after the project's completion, it's clear Epstein was looking not just at the building, but at the way the building tucks into its environment. The urban planner sees things with an inside-out perspective, and what he sees is this: "It's like a small idea, done well."





Collaborating project designer Marcel de Lange contributed to nearly every aspect of Applied Broadband's building renovation. But his fingerprints are particularly apparent on the fabricated ceiling panels hanging in the lobby and above the second-floor collaboration space. The designs are a winking homage to Voronoi patterns, a mathematical formula used to determine the shortest distance between two points in a non-rational grid system. While that might not mean much to the average person, Voronoi patterns are an important part of Applied Broadband's business. Also important: sunset views from the balcony.

PROJECT CREDITS

Architecture/Interiors

Richard Epstein, AIA, LEED AP,
Principal Architect (now with Studio Completiva)

Marcel de Lange, 641West Design
Collaborating Project Designer

Client

Applied Broadband

General Contractor

Center Management

Structural Engineer

Studio NYL

Electrical Engineer

Architectural Engineering Design Group

Landscape Architect

Karla Dakin

Steel Fabrication

jari-design

Custom Ceiling and Furniture Fabrication

Marcel de Lange

Glass Wall Systems

Haworth

COOKING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

THERE'S AN ALCHEMY TO A BUSINESS BORN IN A GARAGE—AN ARTISAN, BENT OVER A BENCH, GIVING VOICE TO A FOMENTED VISION. THE IMAGE OF THE WORKER CONJURES A COMPLETE DEDICATION TO CRAFT, WITH PURITY, EXPRESSION, AND VISION. IT IS THE RECIPE THAT'S CATAPULTED VENTURES OUT OF GARAGES FROM SEATTLE TO SILICON VALLEY. AND AT THE DENVER-BASED WILLIAM OHS SHOWROOM, THE CONVERGENCE OF THESE DISTINCT MATERIALS TAKES CENTER STAGE, WITH THE RESULT EMERGING GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS.

WHEN you examine the individual pieces that make up the contemporary kitchen setup in the Cherry Creek location, you're struck by the deep vibrancy of the materials that comprise its components. Wood. Glass. Metal. Quartz. Leather?

Individually, they could not be more different—yet somehow, they all play their parts together masterfully. That's largely due to the work of Nabeel Faizi, Professional Kitchen Designer with William Ohs and maestro of these mellifluously merging materials.

Founded by its eponymous namesake in 1972 in his garage, William Ohs now boasts 17 showrooms across North America and a 50,000-square-foot factory facility in Denver. Renowned for its high-end traditional custom kitchen design styles, the company has expanded its old world craftsmanship to its more recent transitional and contemporary lines catering to modern audiences. And according to President and Co-Owner Bob Cilli, they continue to integrate European inspiration by attending the International Kitchen Furniture Exhibition (EuroCucina) in Milan every other year.

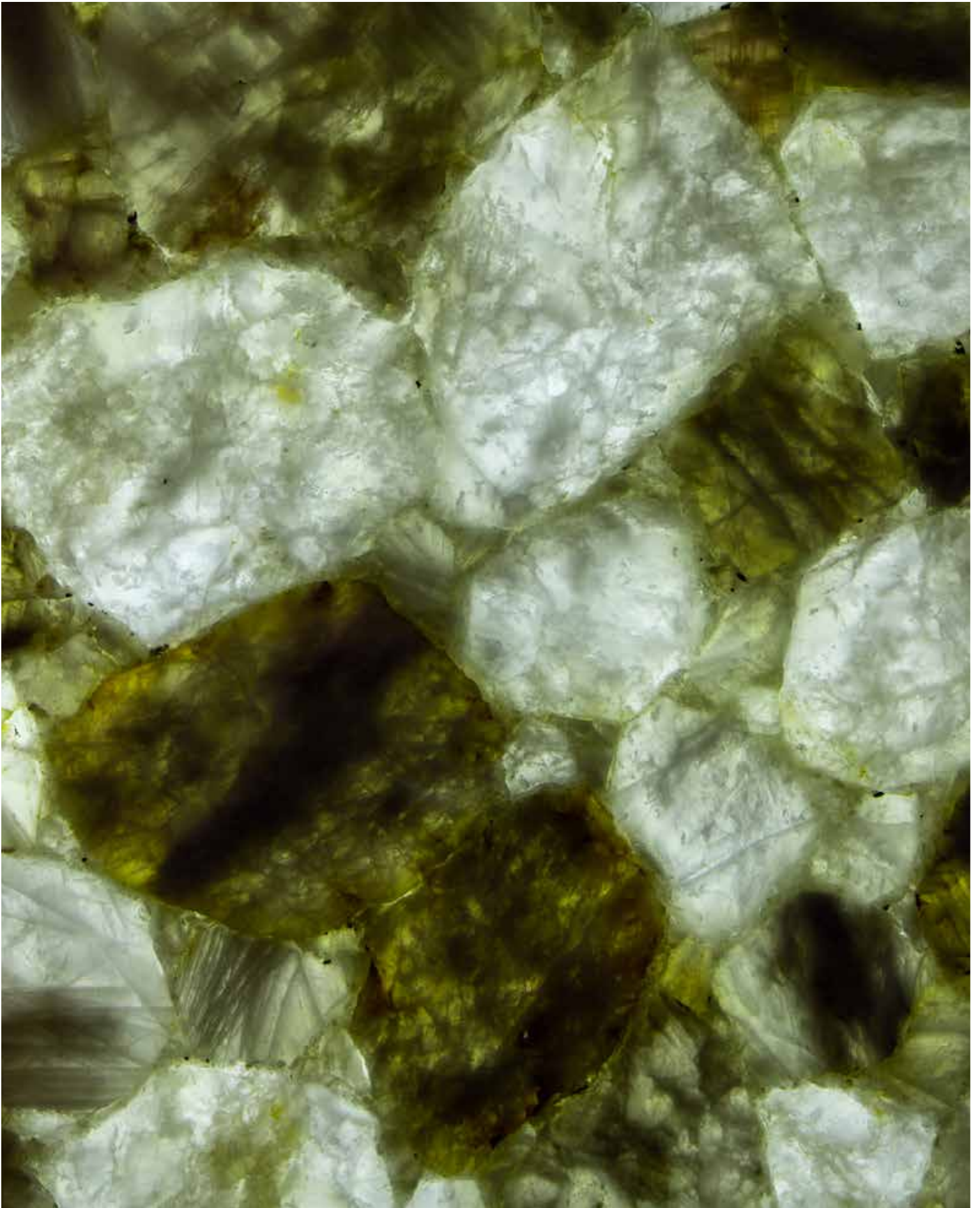
It's not hard to see this globally influenced confluence of luxury and experimentation as you travel through the showroom kitchen. A Miele oven is surrounded by machine-fed raked walnut-sheathing. A Caesarstone slab sits on top of luminescent backlit quartz, provided by Galleria of Stone. Back-painted glass fronts to drawers and cabinets are surprisingly durable and customizable

with 50 different options. A dramatic industrial cooktop hood adopts Hollywood special effect techniques with a liquid metal patina, developed by Liquid Metal Coatings. And subtly tucked in a classic chrome hutch is a leather-wrapped take on the conventional cabinet. Sourced by Edelman Leathers, the bovine veneer is beginning to boom as a contemporary trend among younger customers, according to Cilli.

Whether created in-house or sourced from local vendors, working with such varied compositional elements obviously carries with it an innate sensitivity to aesthetic balance. With the wrong canvas, the effect can easily veer off into the ostentatious—hence the frequent choice to resort to a classically clean purity for a base. "These material combinations are often applied to white kitchens," said Faizi. "The white keeps the mix from looking too wild, yet the contrast gives the minimalist palette extra life."

That life results in a one-of-a-kind symbiotic epicurean ecology. And like a soufflé, the attenuated balance of what goes into a kitchen can help what comes out of it rise to expectations. According to Faizi, the dark, raked-walnut veneer on the island was picked to match the polished grain tone of the onyx top, which, in turn, complements the white glass fronts. "The key to mixing surfaces is to use tones that relate to either cool or warm families and to use strong contrast so the mismatch is clearly intentional and beautiful," he said. "Pick a material that has a grain variation with a solid, and then use one of the grain tones for the surface." The

WORDS: CORY PHARE • IMAGES: JAMES FLORIO & KYLER DEUTMEYER





Contrast and complement—the key is finding balance in materials working together. The dark-raked walnut veneer (sheathing Miele appliances) matches the grain tone of the polished onyx top, creating an interplay with the softening minimalist white glass cabinet fronts. Caesarstone on the counter island complements the gray, waved tile backsplash and liquid metal hood. Behind the island (accented by backlit quartz), stainless and glass display cabinet doors house a leather-wrapped set of rollout drawers.

result is a complementary harmonization of color and texture.

Texture, here, being a synecdoche to the incredibly complex process that goes into the hallmark of the company's handiwork across each line. That means taking 10 steps to achieve their Sandpoint finish, from raw material through rub-through to final product. That also means attention to detail down to the screwcaps, which undergo the same treatment to ensure seamless continuity. And that, for the consumer, means a luxury kitchen that not only looks good, but holds up for decades to come. "The difference is the durability," said Cilli. "We have people who have been with these kitchens for 25 years or more just now coming back to us for kitchen number two."

That repeat patronage spanning decades speaks volumes to the timelessness of William Oh's craft. It's the combination of machine acuity and the personal touch of the artisan in the garage. It's combining seemingly disparate elements as voices that blend together in an exponential manner. Or, as Faizi said, "It's meeting clients' uniquely exclusive design needs in a way that leads to unconventional features finding harmony together." And that's what we call a materially successful kitchen.

PROJECT CREDITS

Quartz: Galleria of Stone

Hood: Liquid Metal Coatings

Rollout Cabinet: Edelman Leather

Sink: ULTRA Design Center

Backsplash: Decorative Materials

Appliances, Glass Cabinets, Raked Walnut: William Ohs

Caesarstone: Stone Collection





Appearances can be deceiving—what first seems to be a substantially heavy hood above the cooktop is actually a liquid metal patina that creates the illusion of heft. Crafted by Liquid Metal Coatings of Lakewood, this process combines metal granules with a hybrid polymer binder and catalyst, creating a real “living” metal that bonds to the substrate. With recessed lighting against the gray, waved backsplash tiling and the Miele cooktop, the effect is an unexpected cascade of hard and soft—at once, both heavy and light.



Tempered glass fronts add an exquisite touch to the base cabinets of the contemporary kitchen. "Demand has been high," said Co-Owner Bob Cilli. "It's not as fragile as you'd think." And though the surface is built to withstand bumps and wear, the inability to be cut and fragility in shipping demands a high level of acuity in its creation. Clients can select from 50 standard colors of the back-painted base, which is covered by the durable glass and glaze finish.

COOKING IN A
MATERIAL WORLD

A Kohler Karbon articulating two-hole deck-mount kitchen sink faucet with 13-inch spout and silver tube perches above a Rohl single bowl prep sink. The unique combination of stainless steel and copper gives a warmth and sheen that radiates from the island, giving a subtle nod to accent tones found throughout the kitchen.



The leather-wrapped rollout drawers behind the glass and stainless display cabinet doors add a subtle organic quality to the parenthetical culmination of the kitchen. The result is a complementary interplay of elements and depth. "The leather interior visible through the glass helped coordinate the finish and color through the exterior of the kitchen," said Nabeel Faizi, Kitchen Designer. "It complemented the mix of polished stainless in the kitchen without being too much."

modern indoor plants

LIVING ART

Just because there's a blanket of snow on the ground doesn't mean there's not something interesting growing on inside. From a splash of colorful contrasts to leafy cantilevers, it's no secret that houseplants can chlorophyll a room. Yet these aren't your everyday arrangements. Sumptuous succulents and provocative palms provide an architecturally intriguing infusion of life into even the coldest of environments. And with a little imaginative design, it's easier than ever to plant your green thumb squarely on the horticultural zeitgeist. With an eye toward planting the seeds of great design possibilities, we've curated a small collection of funky flora to help spruce up your modern spaces.

IMAGES: JAMES FLORIO & KYLER DEUTMEYER



Xanthosoma 'Lime Zinger' - Elephant Ear Tongue

We love the bright chartreuse leaves of this tropical plant, but with a touch of the tropics comes high maintenance to survive in our dry Colorado climate. The Lime Zinger requires high humidity, so a humidifier is a must-have. While there are many varieties of the Elephant Ear, the Lime Zinger can grow up to six-feet tall. Our only complaint: This plant is toxic to pets.

STAYIN' ALIVE

The Lime Zinger does best in strong, filtered light. While it can tolerate direct sun, like people, it can easily sunburn. When it comes to water, this species requires fast-draining, continually moist soil that is rich with organic matter.



Ficus Elastica - *Burgundy Rubber Plant*

The deep color and shiny leaves of the Burgundy Rubber Plant are a decadent touch to dull interiors. But with that shine comes a layer of dust. To remedy, wipe the leaves with a moist cloth. And if the plant becomes too tall or leggy, cut off the tops. Simply pick a good height and slice through the main stem with a sharp knife. The remaining portion of plant will become sturdier as the new central branch grows.

STAYIN' ALIVE

Bright, direct sunlight produces a dark burgundy leaf. No light? No problem. This plant will tolerate low light, but the leaves will fade to light green. Water the Burgundy Rubber Plant only when the soil is dry by pouring water into the top of the plant pot and letting it run out the bottom to soak the roots.



Echeveria - *Echeveria 'Black Prince'*

It's dark. It's dramatic. And it's an easy-to-care for succulent! While the rosettes of most Echeverias are close to the soil, we love the height gained on this one from City Floral. In winter, its color is green but darkens to purple or black in full sun. Be sure to plant in the smallest pot possible, just bigger than the root ball to prevent root rot. In the case of sunburn, simply behead the plant.

STAYIN' ALIVE

This plant prefers bright light, but avoid afternoon sun altogether, as it can cause stress and sunburn. Don't overwater, but make sure the soil is never bone dry. Pour water until it drains out the bottom and repeat. Keep your eye out for wilting, shriveling, and dropping leaves—all signs of poor watering.



Sansevieria - Snakeskin Plant

The Snakeskin Plant, one of about 70 different species of snake plants, is your best bet for the horticulturally challenged. In mid-century modern homes, you'll often see the Mother-in-Law's Tongue variety, easily identified by its yellow edges. Unlike most plants, Sansevieria gives off oxygen at night; put at least a half dozen in your room to improve air quality.

STAYIN' ALIVE

Sansevieria does best in east, west, or north windowsills. This tough plant can survive with any bright light and is great for windowless offices and dark rooms. Water very little in winter or in an air-conditioned room, and wait until the pot is quite dry before watering. Use room-temperature water (distilled if possible).



Chamaedorea Elegans - *Parlor Palm*

We love large palms in modern homes, but many can break the bank. The Parlor Palm is a cost-effective alternative that does well where many other species struggle. Not only is it great at cleaning the air, but it's easy to care for with its adaptivity to low light and humidity. With enough light, a mature plant may produce small yellow flowers. The flowers are followed by seeds that are rarely fertile and not worth saving. Simply cut the flowers off when they begin to turn brown.

STAYIN' ALIVE

The perfect spot for the Parlor Palm is somewhere bright. Low light will be tolerated but is not preferred, and harsh sunshine will scorch the leaves. Underwatering trumps overwatering, so water well, then wait until the surface of the soil has dried out, at which point, water well again.



Aloe Vera - First Aid Plant

What can't this plant do? You can drink its juice, use it to soothe a sunburn, and it's architecturally interesting to boot. If they get enough light, over time, aloe vera plants flower, starting as a spike that gradually gets larger. The plant produces offsets or "babies" that can be removed to produce an entirely new plant, but beware: Aloe vera is toxic when ingested by cats and dogs.

STAYIN' ALIVE

If in doubt about watering, don't! They shouldn't be cold and wet. Water aloe deeply, but then allow the soil to dry at least 1-2 inches deep between waterings in order to discourage rot. Water even less in winter, and keep it in bright, indirect light.



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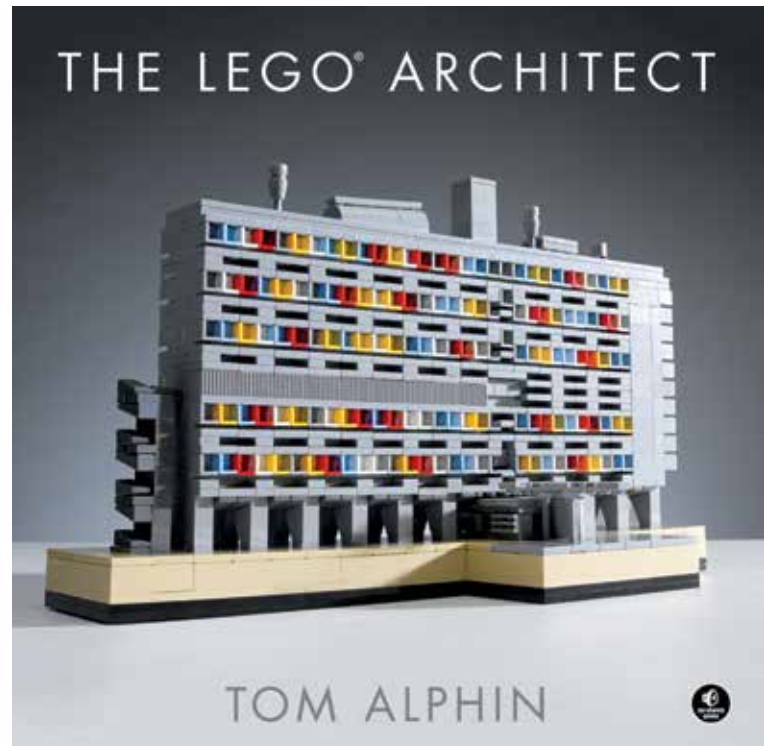
“LEGO always had its roots in architecture—after all, the little plastic pieces are called bricks!”

So begins *The LEGO Architect*—a breezy, interactive, and surprisingly educational book that blends brief introductory lessons on architectural theory with practical how-to instructions for recreating famous buildings. Author Tom Alphin, a Microsoft computer scientist by day, is out to teach readers about real-world architecture while also providing context to better appreciate the buildings we walk or drive past daily.

Each chapter focuses on a dominant architectural style of the modern era, beginning with the Neoclassical period and encompassing Art Deco, Modernism, Postmodernism, and more. There are photos, short history lessons, and page after page of schematic diagrams for those inclined to build a LEGO landmark of their own. Alphin’s examples run the gamut from Frank Lloyd Wright’s Robie House to the Royal Albert Hall to our own Denver Public Library.

Perhaps most notably, *The LEGO Architect* represents another data point in the Danish company’s improbable rise to the top of the toy world. Once considered a niche product line exclusively for young children, LEGO has become a globally-beloved brand boasting more than 14,000 employees and upwards of \$1.7 billion in net revenue annually. According to the LEGO Group Responsibility Report, 85 million children worldwide had a “LEGO play experience” in 2014.

But the thing is, it’s not just for kids anymore. Such stratospheric growth wouldn’t be possible without armies of evangelists well into adulthood—people with no vested interest in promoting the LEGO brand beyond their own love of the product. Alphin is one such evangelist, and his book is well-positioned to recruit plenty more just like him. Let’s get building.



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