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RENOVATION MEETS PRESERVATION WHEN BOSS ARCHITECTURE TAKES ON A SEVEN-YEAR PROJECT. SOMETIMES SUBTRACTION REALLY ADDS UP. P. 80

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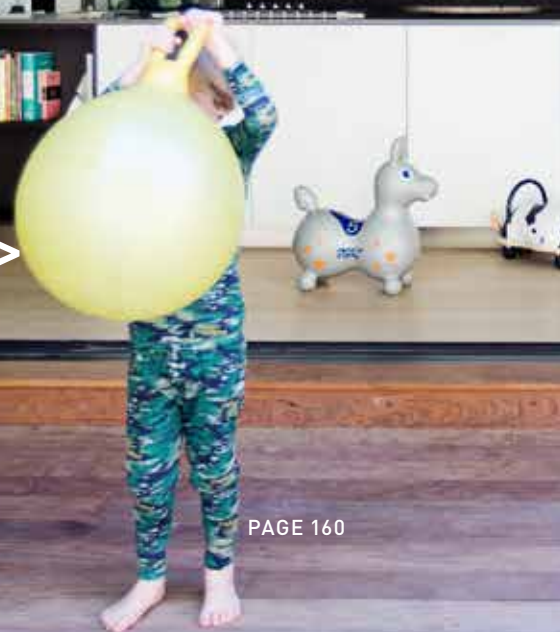


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38 // FIELD STUDY

Our playful roundup of new gadgets, modern accessories, and inviting furniture.

62 // SURROUND ARCHITECTURE

Talking to an architect about achieving balance is like asking a musician about staying on key. But balance is the key ingredient holding all great buildings together. And it may be the secret sauce powering the firms who build them.

72 // HOME FURNITURE

We scoured the design landscape for fresh and exciting furniture that's sure to spruce up your spaces. Here comes spring.

80 // THE ART OF SUBTRACTION

When it comes to homes with a distinguished design pedigree, knowing what to update versus what to preserve is a thorny issue. But preservation is about more than protecting specific features. It's about honoring the architectural intent.

92 // RETHINK THE SINK

From 3D faucets to unexpected finishes, modern design in the bathroom has never looked better. So fresh and so clean.

108 // INSPIRED READING

What inspires today's top designers? Tap into Denver's diverse creative community for book recommendations ranging from landscape gardens to punk-rock poetry.

114 // THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY IS AT STAKE

Many of tomorrow's architects are trained today in a bubble, without regard for modern, real-world considerations. But there is a better way.

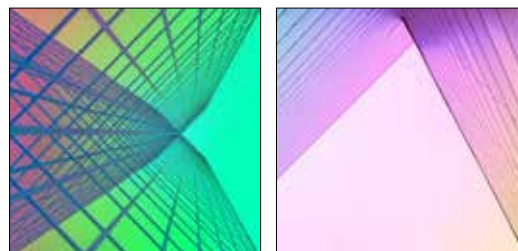
120 // LAUNCH PAD

At KPMG's Ignition Workspace, design innovators Perkins+Will rethink office space with unusual building materials and a workplace experience that promotes choice.

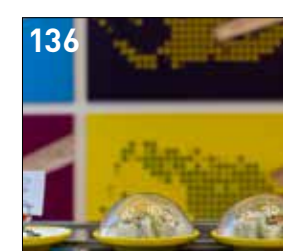
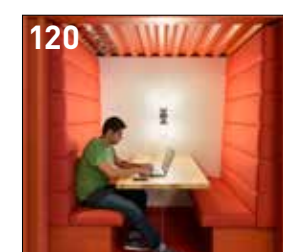
130 // EXPERIENCE ELEVATED

Two years after legalization came to Colorado, the marijuana retail experience is evolving. For its new space in Louisville, Ajoya dispensary partnered with architectural firm Roth Sheppard to meld established principles with innovative ideas.

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SPRING 2016



136 // BACK TO THE FUTURE

For a landlocked state, Colorado has no shortage of hip sushi restaurants. But with its throwback conveyor belt, pop art wall, and retro modern vibe, new addition Sushi Rama wasted no time distinguishing itself.

144 // THE BIGGEST LITTLE CABINS

What does it take to design and build 14 micro cabins in a remote location, each with unique floorplan and specifications, on a budget of less than \$10,000 per unit, in just 19 weeks? Seeing is believing.

152 // A ROUND OF APPLAUSE

Even if the Turntable Studios name doesn't yet ring a bell, the building it occupies can't help but be familiar. After generations of renown as an iconic hotel, a Denver landmark stays intact while getting a vibrant new look.

160 // FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Great design often shows up in unexpected places. In this Utah kitchen, high-end Italian design manifests itself with clean elegance, complementary materials, and effortless functionality.

166 // HOME GROWN

To honor Denver Botanic Gardens' Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory, cacao seeds grown onsite became a treat for the first time with the help of Fortuna Chocolate.

170 // CULINARY COOL

Sous vide is a complex, restaurant-style method that uses precise temperature control to cook foods to perfection. Now the sous-vide method comes straight to your home—and your smartphone.

172 // EYE CANDY

Drenched in retro-futurist hues, the Instagram feed for Denver-based Ashley Engler delivers a pastel promenade of inspiring geospatial geometry.

176 // ONE LAST THING

The forgotten sibling of a modern classic calls on new technology to solve old problems. Knoll welcomes back a Saarinen original, six decades later.

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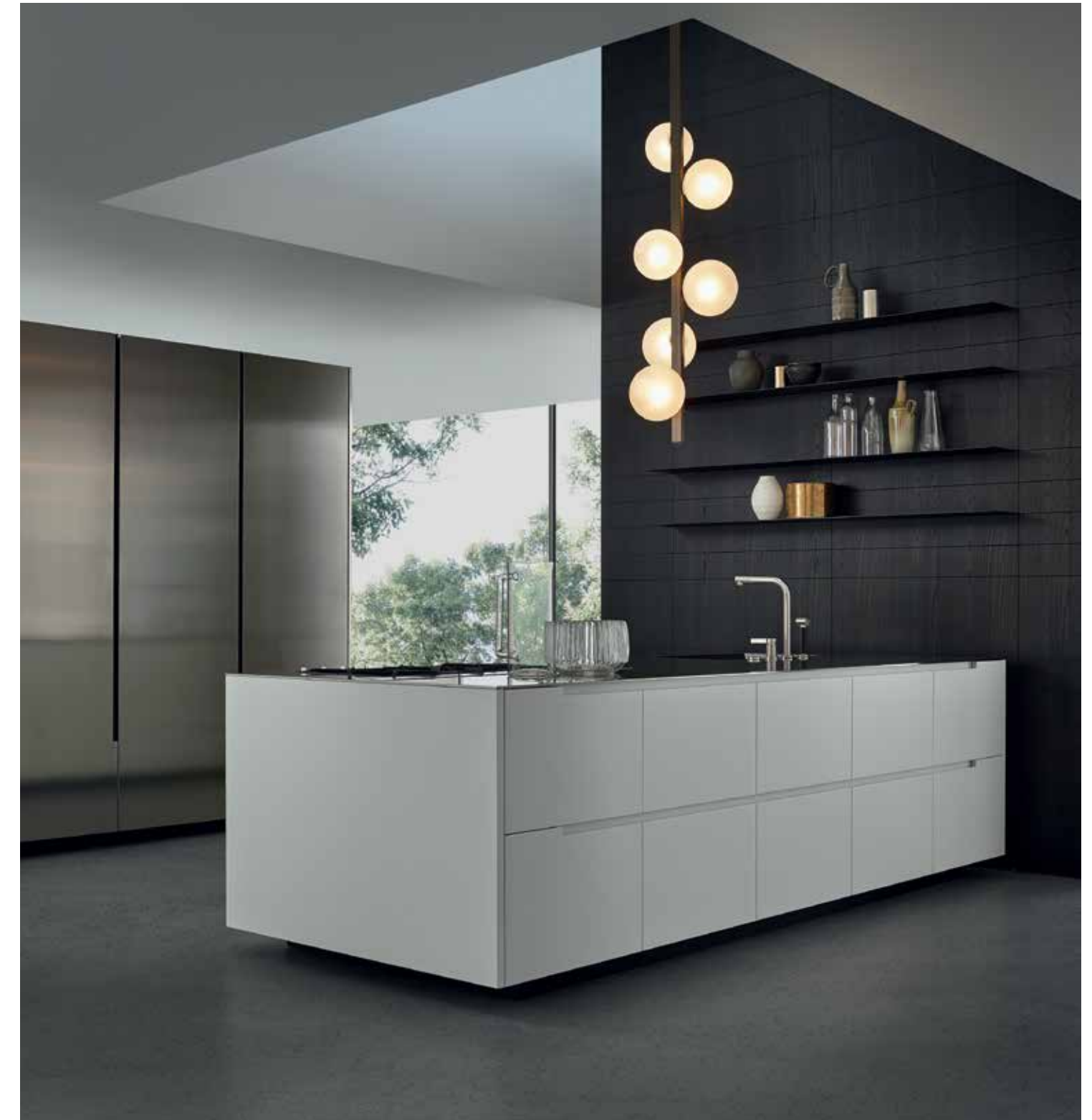
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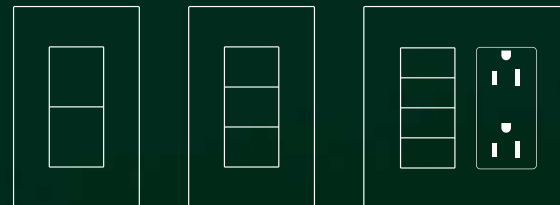
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A DESIGNER KNOWS HE HAS ACHIEVED PERFECTION NOT WHEN THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO ADD, BUT WHEN THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO TAKE AWAY.

-ANTOINE DE SAINT-EXUPERY

GETTING at exactly what elevates a passable design to a good design—or a good design to a great design—is not easy, and consensus is hard to come by. As Paul Rand so famously (and succinctly) said, “Design is so simple, that’s why it is so complicated.” The best design solves problems, enhances our life experience, and delights us, all while being transparent. It feels new, yet simultaneously so natural, so right, that we are startled it hasn’t always existed.

Because of this ineffable component, the creative design process is often equally about excavation—about what you take away as much as what you add. Reducing choices. Organizing. Using subtraction to arrive at meaning. This was the process that BOSS.architecture went through with our featured residential project this issue.

After several years and numerous plan iterations, they discovered the right path to updating their clients’ home was not to add more, but to take an already excellent design and enhance it by subtracting and providing balance. It was about focusing on the details, the essentials of what made the house work. While the result feels so simple and so true, it was a long, complicated process to get there, and we were fortunate to not only showcase the incredible house, but to learn in detail how BOSS.architecture managed to elevate an already terrific home (p. 80).

This issue also features a profile on Boulder-based firm Surround Architecture, who likewise apply a thoughtful and studied approach to work that qualifies as some of the most captivating projects in Colorado over the last 10 years. We talked to Principal Dale Hubbard to learn more about their process, projects, and the talented team

who brings it all together. Their story begins on page 62. Great teams are the focus of our story about Colorado Building Workshop, the design build program at the University of Colorado Denver. Professor Rick Sommerfeld is shaping a new generation of architecture students who are not only passionate about theory and design, but who also gain hands-on building experience as they learn what it takes to make their designs a reality. We tell the incredible story of how, in just 19 weeks, they designed and built 14 unique micro cabins for the Colorado Outward Bound School site in Leadville (p. 144).

For our commercial design section, we visit a next-generation cannabis retail store designed by Roth Sheppard Architects, talk to Perkins+Will about their new KPMG Ignition Center downtown (p. 120), and have a fun (and colorful!) conversation with LIVstudio about what influenced their design of the hip new Sushi Rama restaurant in RiNo (starting on p. 136).

We’re always eager to learn as much as we can about our creative community, so we reached out to a broad cross-section to learn what books have inspired and informed their careers. It was fun to see their diverse and fascinating responses, and I’ve already added several of the books they recommended to my cart on Amazon! Check that feature out on p. 108.

This is our biggest issue ever, and it contains more great projects, products, and stories than could be listed here. So spend some time with it and enjoy!

And finally, don’t forget to come to our annual spring party, Design In Bloom, on April 28 at SPACE Gallery. It’s the perfect way to welcome spring and see how top designers create unique floral arrangements.

You can RSVP at modernindenver.com.

William Logan
william@modernindenver.com

TWO COVERS



Starting last fall, *Modern In Denver* has created two distinct covers for each new issue. We suspected this was a good way to highlight our wide-ranging content and showcase both residential and commercial projects—and judging from your enthusiastic response, we were right. This issue features a stunning BOSS.architecture residential remodel seven years in the making, and the main floor dining area at Sushi Rama in RiNo designed by LIVstudio. Both covers were shot by photographers James Florio and Kyler Deutmeyer.



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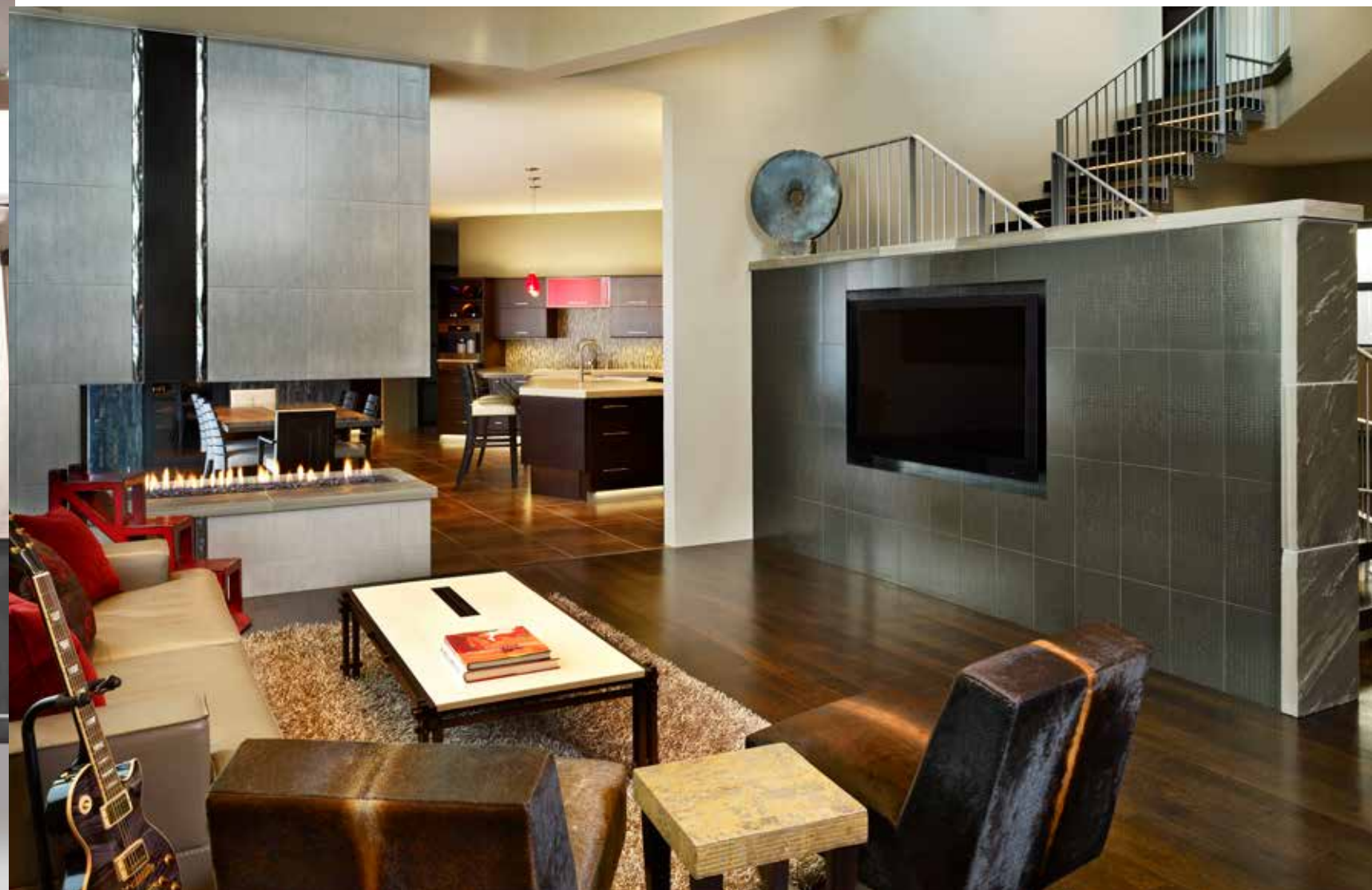
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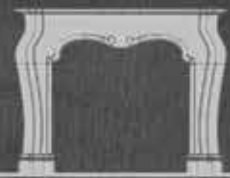
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and a much needed sense of humor.

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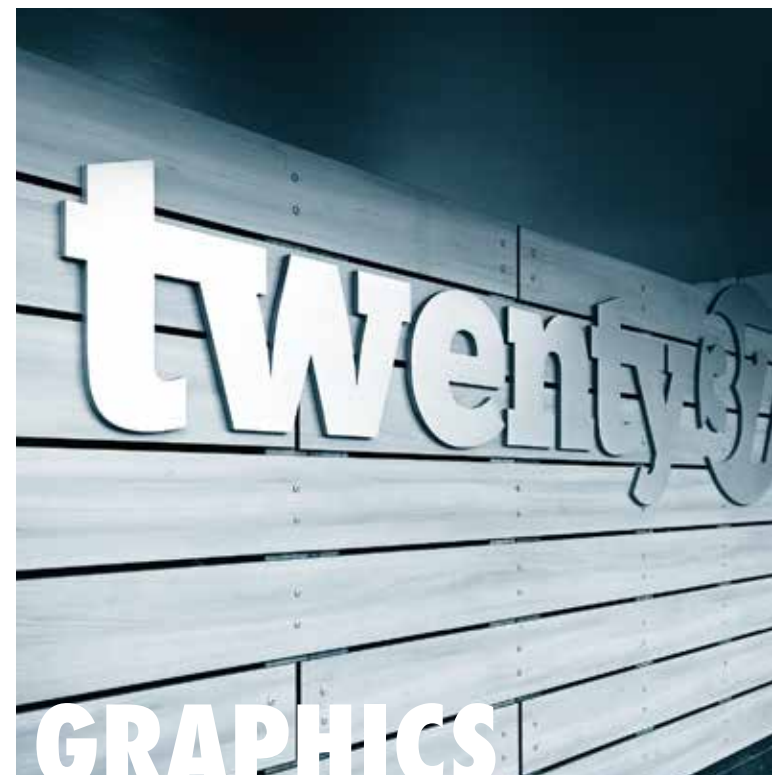
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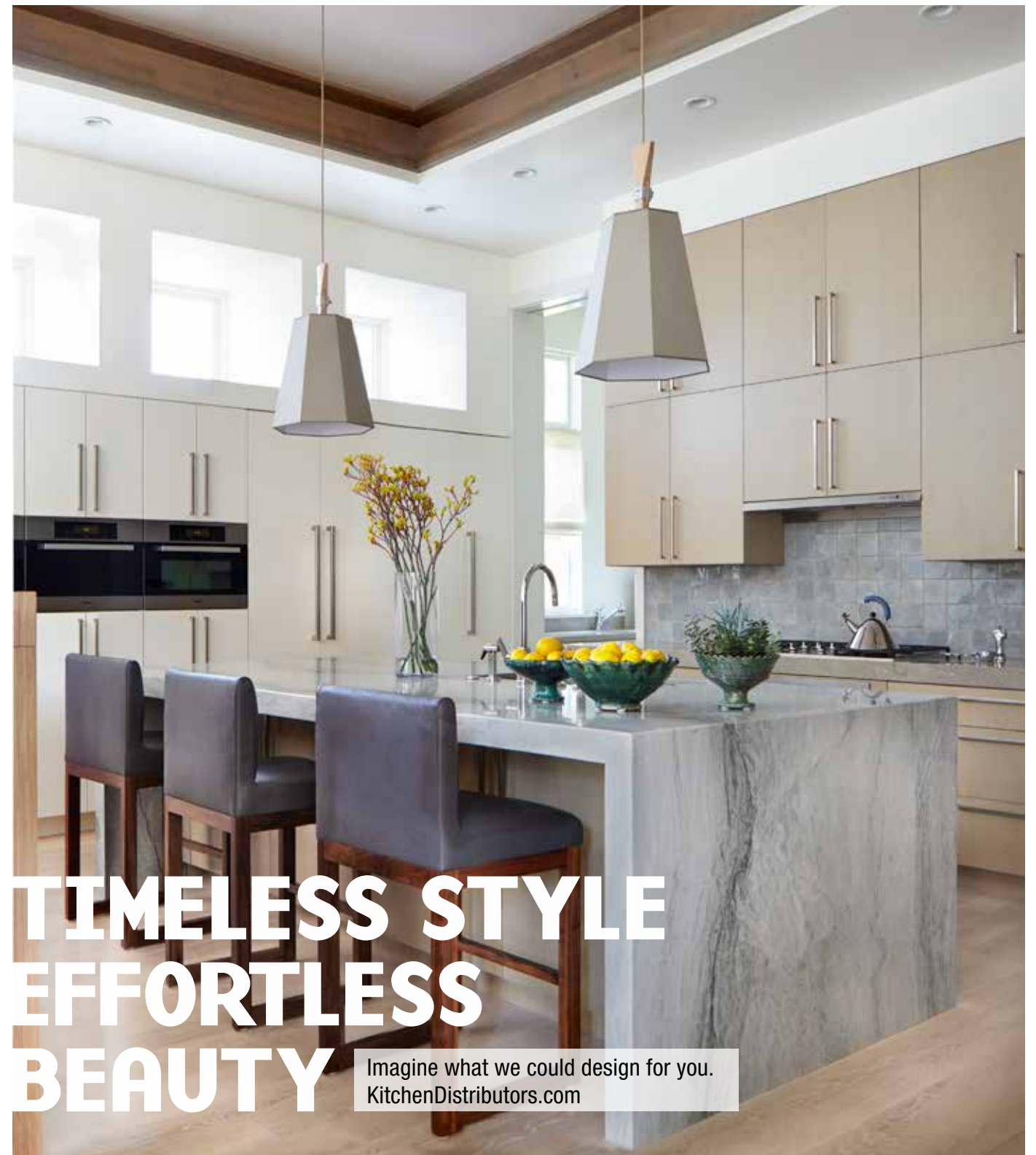


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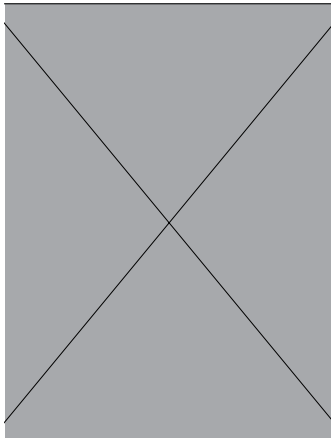
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SWOON SEAT

Color and cushion adds a comfortable touch to Patricia Urquiola's modern Lilo Armchair. The wood frame gives the chair an elongated shape that seems to beckon: come, relax, and stay for a while. It's similar to the long relationship between its designer and the Italian furniture manufacturer. Moroso was the first to take a chance on Urquiola back in the 1990s, and the two have never parted.

+studiocomo.com



SKATER LINES

A coffee table you can skateboard on? Indeed, says Danilo Nedic, a Rotterdam-based designer and co-founder of Focused Skateboard Woodworks with fellow designer Jeroen Dekker. The company salvages broken and worn-out skateboards by slicing off pieces against the grain, which exposes colorful layers of plywood. Glued and smoothed onto a frame, skateboards get a new life as a fine-looking piece of furniture with an even better story. DecksPad, inspired by the stubby manual pads at skate parks, is strong enough for manual tricks, but meant for supporting a cup of espresso.

+focused.nu

DIFFERENT KIND OF POT

Parrot wants to get us to a smarter house-plant, especially those of us who just can't keep plants alive. Parrot, which also builds drones and other electronic gadgets, added all sorts of technology sensors to its Parrot Pot – including one that tracks light, another for air, soil, fertilizer, and soil moisture. The Bluetooth-enabled pot also reaches into a special plant database to determine caring conditions and adjusts its caring as needed. But the pot's smartness only goes so far. Parrot Pot relies on owners to place it in a sunny spot and keep its 2.2-liter water tank filled.

+parrot.com





LOOK AGAIN

Ever look into a mirror and see something unexpected? The Vinkel Mirror, created by German designers Nikolaus Kayser and Nicole Losos, offers a different perspective in one mirror made of two pieces. The two mirror halves are set at different heights and slope upward toward each other. The result is two perspectives on whatever is reflected.

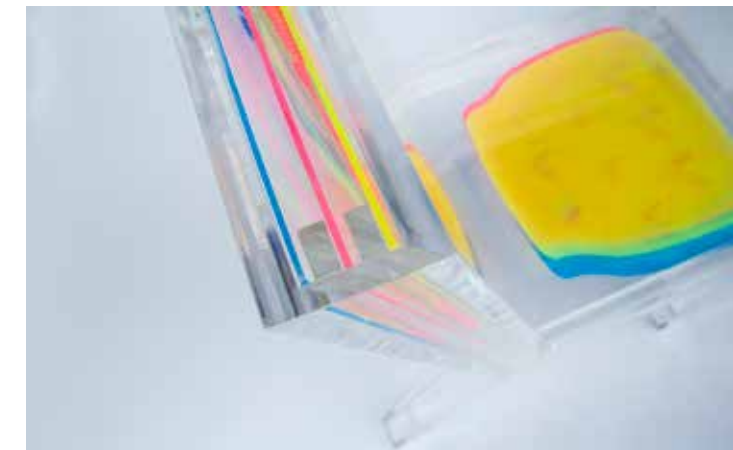
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JUMP SMART

If Double Dutch was the last new thing you remember about jump ropes, get ready for the Smart Rope from South Korean design agency Tangram Factory. It looks like a shiny jump rope but with its built-in Bluetooth, Smart Rope communicates with a smartphone to track one's health progress. There's also a USB port on one of the handles for charging. But what is most appealing for those of us who can't jump and count at the same time, Smart Rope has 23 LED lights embedded into the middle of the rope. As you jump, the rope uses persistence of vision to project the jump number you're on.

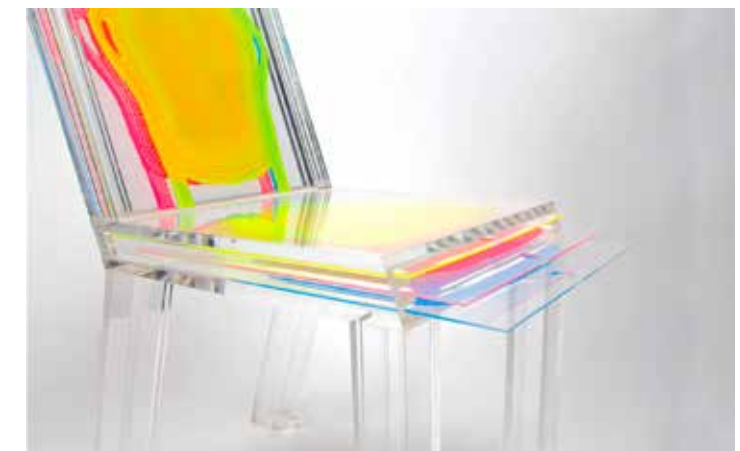
+tangramfactory.com



SUSTAINABLE SEAT

To put the kibosh on flagrant consumerism, South Korean industrial designer Sohyun Yun created a chair with personality. The Layer chair is an acrylic seat that morphs with one's mood. It relies on clear sheets imprinted with custom designs that slide in and out of the bottom and top of the chair. Yun's hope is that if people add their own touch to Layer, they won't easily toss it when the next trend arrives. "Changeable design leads to long-term use," said Yun. Layer is available as a custom order.

+luckandmiracle.wix.com/designersohyunyun



AIR LOCKED

AirBolt's tagline gets to the point: It's not the first smart lock for luggage. It's the first true lock for your luggage. And yes, AirBolt keeps luggage locked. It'll also unlock luggage with a smartphone, find lost luggage or set an alert if luggage moves too far a distance. A crowdfunded project, AirBolt promises delivery by August 2016. Hopefully by then, it will also be TSA accepted.

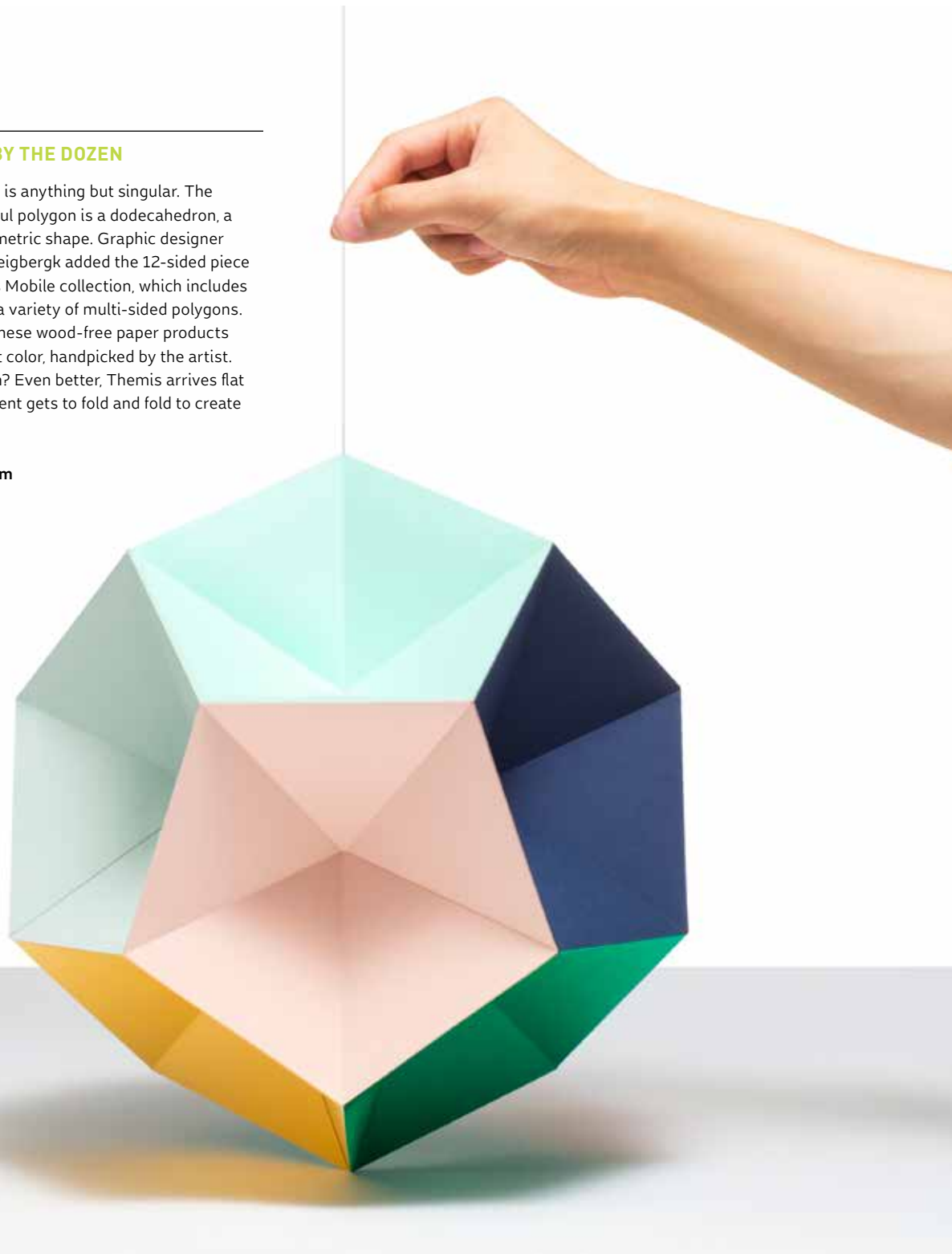
+theairbolt.com



TRICKIER BY THE DOZEN

Themis Mono is anything but singular. The 12-inch colorful polygon is a dodecahedron, a 12-sided geometric shape. Graphic designer Clara Von Zweigbergk added the 12-sided piece to her Themis Mobile collection, which includes mobiles with a variety of multi-sided polygons. Each side of these wood-free paper products has a different color, handpicked by the artist. Sound like fun? Even better, Themis arrives flat and the recipient gets to fold and fold to create 3D shapes.

+artecnica.com



SIDE EFFECTS

Moiré Side Tables from New York City's Bower design studio offer a chic spot to set a cup or potted plant. But they can also spruce up a room in need of something clever. The two half-moon pieces have walnut slats on top of a colorful molded wood base. Moiré tables are at a different height so one tucks under the other for a variety of configurations.

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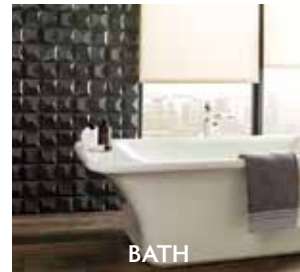
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RESIDENTIAL DESIGN

BALANCE / DETAIL / FEELING SURROUND ARCHITECTURE/

IN ARCHITECTURE, THE CONCEPT OF BALANCE IS SO FUNDAMENTAL AS TO BE TAKEN FOR GRANTED. TALKING TO AN ARCHITECT ABOUT ACHIEVING BALANCE IS LIKE ASKING A MUSICIAN ABOUT STAYING ON KEY. BUT BALANCE, WHILE NOT EXACTLY NOVEL, IS THE KEY INGREDIENT HOLDING ALL GREAT BUILDINGS TOGETHER. AND IT MAY BE THE SECRET SAUCE POWERING THE FIRMS WHO BUILD THEM.

WORDS: Charlie Keaton • IMAGES: Dale Hubbard

THE BLACK BEAR HOUSE sits on a sloping site right at the base of Chautauqua. It's a glorious structure, all clean lines and floating stairs and mountain views, but the house itself is also a retaining wall and a massive cantilever. Getting it to rest precisely this way, in perfect balance with such a challenging environment, required no small feat of creativity—not to mention some heavy-duty civil engineering.

Black Bear is a creation of Surround Architecture, a 12-person firm whose offices sit just blocks from Pearl Street in Boulder. Surround's portfolio is largely residential, but the steady backfill of commercial projects does more than round out the work week. "I think the process for commercial work is so methodical as far as communication that we transport that over to our residential side in order to create a very organized process," said Founder and Principal Dale Hubbard. "You see a lot of residential work that gets done pretty fast and loose, and I just don't think that's fair to anyone involved not to have a very robust documentation and communication process. There's too much on the line."

That granular attention to detail proves beneficial for single-family housing like Black Bear, but also for the occasional venture into multi-family units. Dwell 22 (pictured left) is a striking historic infill project featuring three modern, vertical, three-bedroom units, directly adjacent to a longstanding 1929 Edwardian farmhouse. Known internally as Snow White and the Three Huntsmen, here was a project with such strict zoning constraints that the metrics between garages are measured in inches.

That sense of give-and-take works both ways, with commercial projects taking on elements of Surround's residential sensibility. In fact, it was their residential work that caught the attention of Boulder Brands, the natural foods company best known as the umbrella uniting Smart Balance, Udi's, and Glutino, who hired Surround to design their new corporate headquarters. The challenge was to marry a warm, open environment with the practical, functional needs of a publicly traded company. The result was an inside-out office layout, where most workspaces are near windows and the closed-off offices sit toward the interior—along with



Referred to internally as Snow White and the Three Huntsmen, the multi-family historic infill project Dwell 22 was built around an existing 1929 home. "We came up with the idea to let the little house be the house, and let these three columns of new residences be the protectorate of the white Edwardian house," said Dale Hubbard of Surround Architecture. In that vein, the "huntmen" are three-story columns made with select tight knot cedar vertical channel lap—not unlike shiplap cladding, but with a gap that gives it a nice pinstripe.

a deck that looks out over the Flatirons and a full test kitchen suitable for hosting lectures, classes, or even visiting investors. "I think there's some feeling and some texture and some intent that we pull into our commercial work," said Hubbard. "And I think the people who occupy those structures would agree that maybe they have a bit more heart and soul than just going with a commercial design outfit."

More than the simple interplay between residential and commercial projects, however, true balance comes from a deeper commitment to complementary ideals. As the face of his firm, Hubbard exudes a calm demeanor. He is poised and confident, but also highly attuned to those around him. His staff is a heterogeneous mix of ages, backgrounds, and

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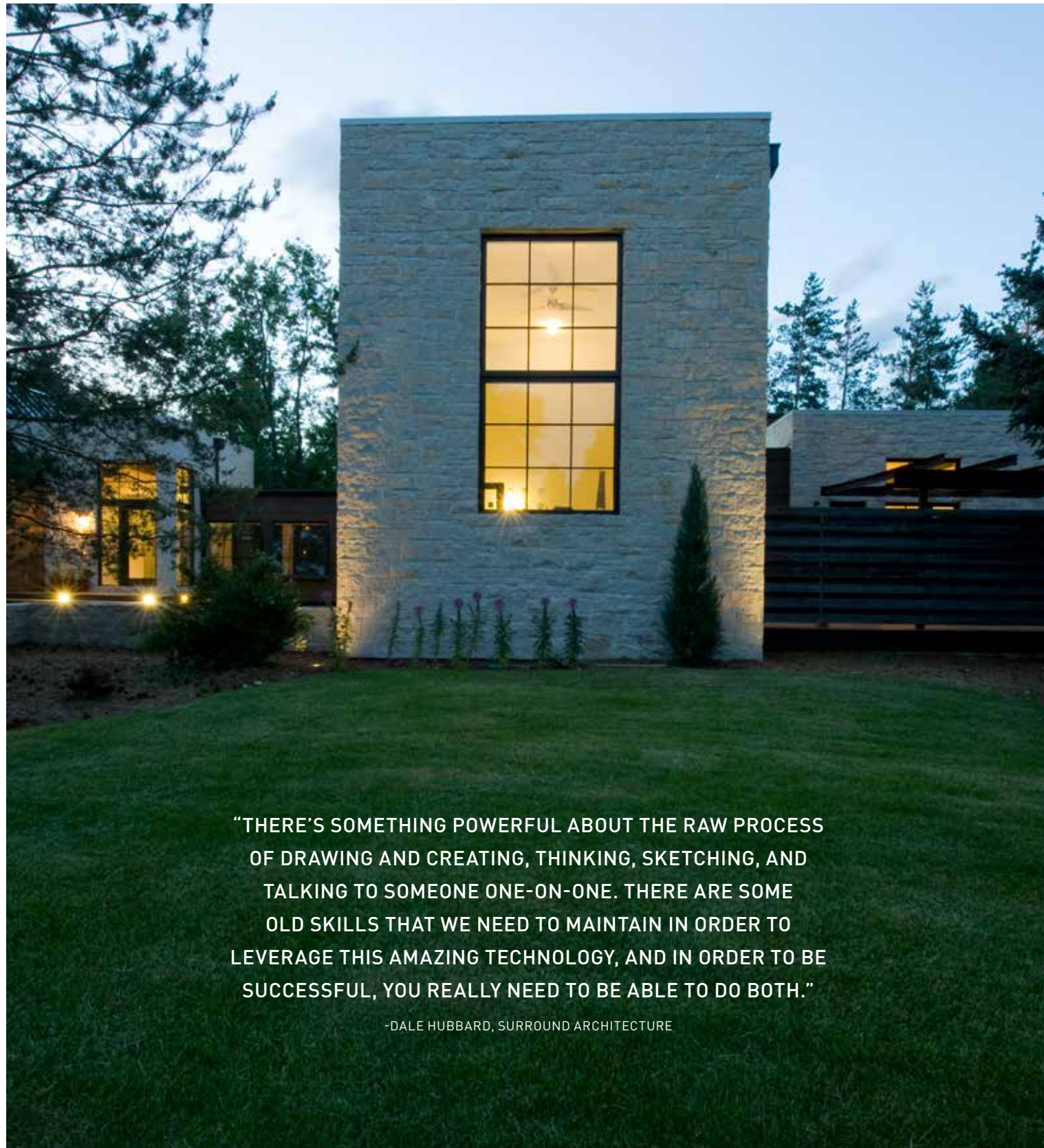
-DALE HUBBARD

expertise. They operate in ever-shifting teams in an open studio space, and, as is increasingly common, there are no set hours. Luna the Office Dog might wander from desk to desk in search of affection.

But don't mistake the casual atmosphere for a lackadaisical approach. By eschewing a more traditional pyramid-shaped hierarchy and implementing what he calls a "guerrilla warfare" structure, Hubbard sets

Built on a difficult sloping site outside of Boulder, the Black Bear house made use of some clever engineering to turn constraints into striking design flourishes. Said Hubbard, "The L-shape of this structure is holding back the soil in the back of the lot. The cantilever on the front was obviously very dynamic, and it puts this living room out where it needed to be in order to get the right views of the city. But what it also allowed us to do was to move our low point up the hill—that way we had more height."





“THERE’S SOMETHING POWERFUL ABOUT THE RAW PROCESS OF DRAWING AND CREATING, THINKING, SKETCHING, AND TALKING TO SOMEONE ONE-ON-ONE. THERE ARE SOME OLD SKILLS THAT WE NEED TO MAINTAIN IN ORDER TO LEVERAGE THIS AMAZING TECHNOLOGY, AND IN ORDER TO BE SUCCESSFUL, YOU REALLY NEED TO BE ABLE TO DO BOTH.”

-DALE HUBBARD, SURROUND ARCHITECTURE



Using a simple materials palette of Kansas limestone, cedar, and a steel standing seam roof, Surround Architecture created dynamic interplay between indoor and outdoor that stands as a prime example of modern transitional architecture. “It’s not a museum,” said Hubbard. “It’s a life laboratory for the family who lives there.” On the interior, they exposed standard scissor trusses that would ordinarily be buried in a roof plenum, doubled them up, and added painted gang nail plates and steel brackets, lending a sense of warmth and presence to the great room.



high standards for even his greenest designers. "I've always felt it's important to drive the ability to make decisions down deep into the firm, allow people to get the answers they need, and implement the things they need by themselves," he said. "I would never hire anyone I wouldn't feel comfortable putting in front of our most aggressive client."

Reliance on such a diverse, empowered staff also requires a thoughtful alchemy when it comes to process. The team at Surround collaborates daily within the bleeding edge Building Information Modeling (BIM) software Revit, a decidedly new school approach to architectural design that allows for real-time, three-dimensional modeling. But the old school method of marker-and-trace drawing is equally present, and Hubbard believes that not only will the tried-and-true methods never go away, but that their incorporation into even the most modern, high-tech project is essential. "There's something powerful about the raw process of drawing and creating, thinking, sketching, and talking to someone one-on-one," he said. "There are some old skills that we need to maintain in order to leverage this amazing technology, and in order to be successful, you really need to be able to do both."

Commercial meets residential, formality melds with informality, and emerging technologies reinforce textbook fundamentals. It is the precise calibration of each distinct element, in flexible and responsive increments, that allows for boldly original work to shine through. Even in an age of unprecedented specialization, balance is crucial. Balance is foundational. Balance, when viewed from the proper perspective, is even beautiful.

Before it became home to Boulder Brands' corporate headquarters, this famous 50,000-square-foot Pearl Street address was long known as the Borders building. Led by project architect Tim Laughlin, Surround completed the project in two phases: adding the third floor offices before turning attention to the lower-level test kitchen.



Any project in Boulder's historic Mapleton district requires thorough vetting and approval before a single shovel breaks ground, so Surround took a thoughtful approach to their design. They kept the front of the house demure, and as referential to simpler structures represented elsewhere in that area as possible. The rear of the home is decomposed, and the interior reflects Hubbard's appreciation of structural rationalism within the architecture. The dining room table was custom built from a black walnut tree that blew down at the owners' previous home.



Surround Architecture has constructed a staff that embodies the balance and versatility of the work they produce. From left to right: Dale Hubbard, Tim Laughlin, Dustin Buck, Kim Cattau, Rory Bilocerkowycz, Laura Marion, Chad Willis, Anna Slowey, Katherine Willis, Shane Inman. (Not pictured: Conor Wood and Amber Danzl).



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This custom Eames Lounge Chair and Ottoman is made with a natural vegetable-tanned leather upholstery that wrinkles around the edges and the tufts, consistent with Charles Eames' desire for the chair to resemble "a well-used first baseman's mitt." The molded plywood shell features hand-oiled Santos Palisander veneers. Only three sets were produced, and they're not for sale. But we can dream.

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The Clap Armchair features seating with hexagonal fabric that is both functional and elegant. It comes in eight color combinations and rests atop a sturdy plastic frame. Designed by Patricia Urquiola, Clap belongs to Kartell's Soft line and is made especially for the commercial sector.

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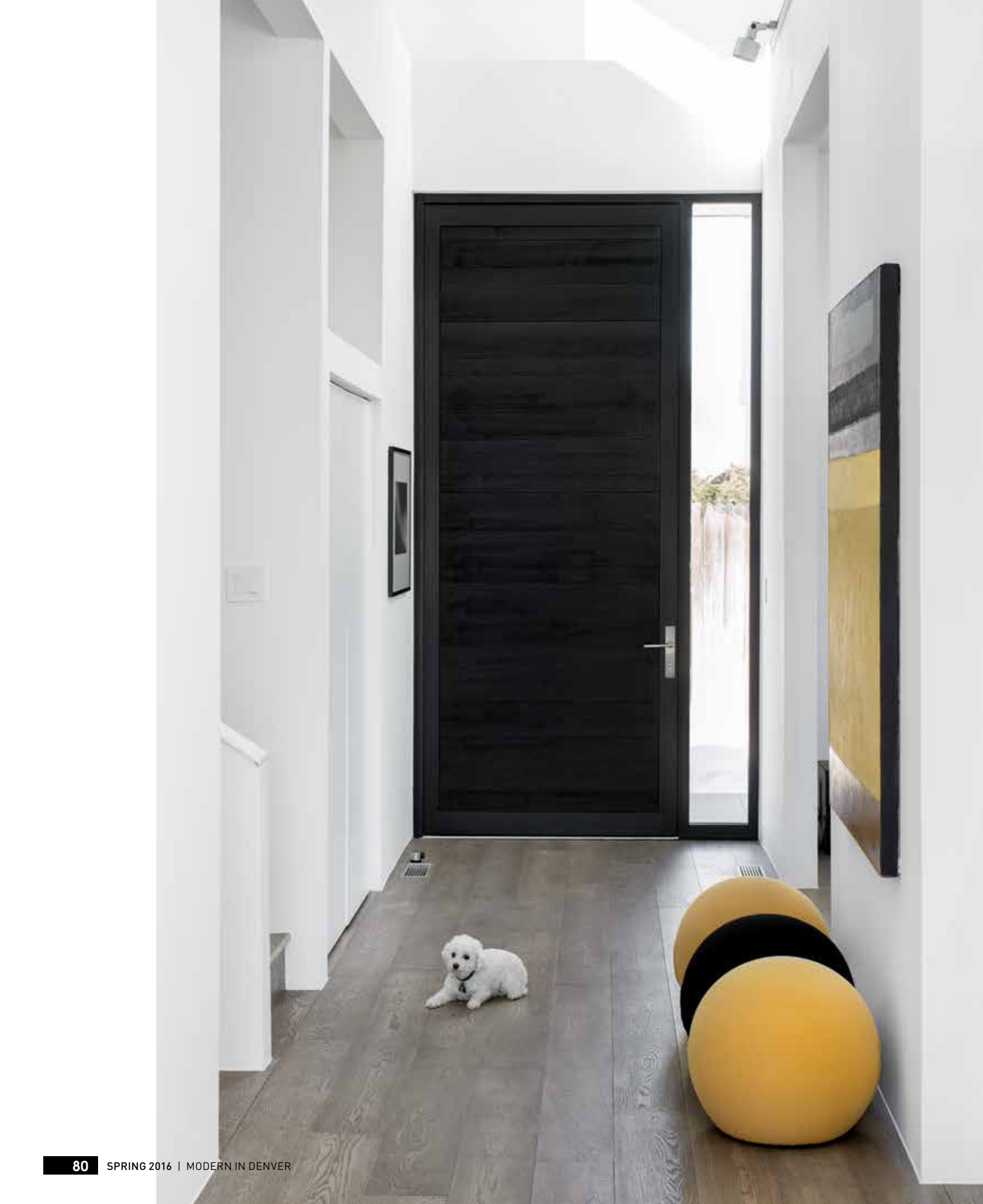
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THE TAKEAWAY.

THE ART OF SUBTRACTION

WHEN TASKED WITH UPDATING A CLASSIC MID-CENTURY MODERN MASTERPIECE, THE TWO-MAN TEAM AT BOSS ARCHITECTURE TOOK THEIR TIME. WITH HELP FROM COLLABORATORS, CRAFTSMEN, THE OWNERS, AND EVEN THE ORIGINAL ARCHITECT, CHRIS DAVIS AND KEVIN STEPHENSON DEMONSTRATED EXACTLY WHAT PRESERVATION IS—AND WHAT IT ISN'T.

WORDS: Charlie Keaton • **IMAGES:** James Florio & Kyler Deutmeyer

HOME renovation: often necessary, frequently problematic. When it comes to houses with a distinguished design pedigree, knowing what to update versus what to preserve is, at the very least, a thorny issue. How much of a home's original structure should be maintained, and in what condition? When is it okay to scrape and start fresh? Are certain homes permanently off-limits? And if so, who decides?

There are no easy answers, but honoring the original architectural intent is a good place to start. That was the approach of Boss Architecture's Chris Davis and Kevin Stephenson, who spent the better part of seven years on a meticulous renovation project in Denver's Country Club neighborhood. Built for his own young family in 1972 by architect David Decker, the home won an Award of Distinction from the American Institute of Architects (AIA) that same year. The Deckers loved it so much they stayed for 18 years, and the owners who followed have been there a quarter century.

But livability is a fluid state best measured in decades. In order to remain true to the ideals of functional

modern living, even great homes must evolve. And so it was that when the owners of the Decker House finally decided to update, they did so with caution. They hired Boss, a firm with a reputation for conscientious work, and even consulted Decker himself, still a working architect who splits time between Colorado and California.

"It was a process of discovery," said Stephenson of the relatively modest tri-level that occupies a corner lot just west of Cherry Creek. In a neighborhood known more for opulence than restraint, here is a home whose dimensions measure just 40 foot square, with thoughtful symmetry and easy, intuitive transit between floors. Every inch feels inhabitable and accounted for, with clean, crisp lines and an expansive flow. Main floor, top floor, lower level, tucked-away basement: the harmony between levels gives the impression of a house much larger than its 2,100 square feet. "This was a great space, we just loved it. So we tested the idea of bigger changes for the first two or three years, a little bit at a time, until ultimately we distilled it all the way back to this preservationist approach."

THE ART OF SUBTRACTION



“THIS WAS A GREAT SPACE, WE JUST LOVED IT. SO WE TESTED THE IDEA OF BIGGER CHANGES FOR THE FIRST TWO OR THREE YEARS, A LITTLE BIT AT A TIME, UNTIL ULTIMATELY WE DISTILLED IT ALL THE WAY BACK TO THIS PRESERVATIONIST APPROACH.” -KEVIN STEPHENSON, BOSS ARCHITECTURE



ABOVE: “For other projects, especially restaurants, we sometimes celebrate intentional misalignments, which creates a tension and an energy that’s desirable in a stimulating environment,” said Kevin Stephenson of Boss Architecture. “But a space like this is more about creating a harmony and quietness to the architecture. It puts your mind at rest, and you probably don’t even notice.” **LEFT:** Appliances are hidden, rather than exposed, at either end of the kitchen behind doors that easily recess and retract.



The aim was for a kitchen that feels hand-crafted rather than machined. To that end, local millworker Mitch Clark custom built the islands and cabinets. Taking down a wall that once separated a much smaller kitchen from a formal dining area created new opportunities for natural light, as did re-proportioning the fenestration on the front and back of the home.



Boss Architecture's Chris Davis and Kevin Stephenson shared a profound respect for the work done by the original architect, David Decker. They spent years trying to subtly refine, rather than reimagine, Decker's vision for a livable modern home. "He spent money where he should have spent it," said Stephenson. "Having these high clerestory windows in the open living spaces while also preserving privacy on a narrow lot. Often everyone wants glass everywhere, and this idea of indoor-outdoor living gets sort of applied to every surface. But on these narrow city lots, it's challenging to create such an intimate house where the views inside and out are captured and screened in."

THE ART OF SUBTRACTION

The most substantial change was a dropped wall that once tucked the kitchen behind a little-used dining room. With so much more open space, the kitchen blossomed into a minimalist culinary jewel. Custom, hand-crafted millwork by Mitch Clark frames matching parallel islands between cleverly hidden appliances at either end of the room. Track lighting draws the eye from here to there without distracting from the surplus of natural light during daylight hours. With no need for formal dining space, a floating bench was added to the far wall—cast, in a subtle touch, from material that appears not only on both kitchen islands, but along the stairs and elsewhere throughout the house.

Door heights were raised at the front and rear of the home, scaling height appropriate to volume and calling attention to the axial crossing. A double-height vaulted entry that was once underwhelming now achieves greater alignment with the architecture around it. In the living room, a single sliding glass door became two, and a fireplace shifted. Outside, bluish-gray T1-11 siding was replaced with the white stucco that Decker wanted all along, but could not afford. (He was, after all, still a young architect with two kids. His initial 1972 budget of \$15 per square foot ballooned all the way to \$17, pushing his total cost—land and all—to around \$45,000.)

During the course of the seven-year renovation, changes became more nuanced. "All the way through, the conversations reflected a level of restraint," said Stephenson. "It was about determining how they really wanted to live instead of focusing, as often happens, on resale considerations. It was, 'Let's only put a light where a light is needed. Let's only make a change where a change is needed, not to just to have it, and not to perform to the next buyer's desire.' And that took effort."



Boss Principals Chris Davis and Kevin Stephenson were college friends at Montana State University, and they've worked together at firms in Chicago and Denver. But until starting their own firm in 2008, they hadn't collaborated much. "Now we collaborate on every project," said Davis. "We're both designers and both builders, and we challenge each other to see things from different perspectives." The complementary nature of their personalities elevates the work—and makes it fun.

PROJECT CREDITS

Architects and Designers
BOSS.architecture

Interiors
Jessica Doran Interiors

General Contractor
Old Greenwich Builders

Millwork
Flying C Woodwork

Landscape Architect
R Design



Details loomed large. Along the walls of the upstairs office, how much shelving is too much? On the stairs that lead you there, how do you take a wall and cap down to the more purist vision without resorting to inauthentic fixtures like glass handrails? In the master bath, should the lines of every tile be perfectly aligned? When replacing the 3/4-inch quarter round baseboard, should the drywall be taken down over the hardwood floors, and if so, how will that affect the movement between materials? More often than not, finding solutions meant finding comfort in the beauty of subtraction, rather than addition. In this regard, having principled owners with the patience to let those discoveries play out over time was a huge asset. So too was their collaborative relationship with general contractor Old Greenwich Builders. "To their credit," said Davis, "they drove every subcontractor to pay attention to every last detail. And if anything was off, made them turn around and do it again."

Davis and Stephenson were grateful to work with clients who weren't driven solely by resale considerations—instead, the mandate was to make each room live as well, and as simply, as possible. Said Davis, "We were always challenging ourselves with materials or composition to say, 'Okay, we like this, but how many things can we pull out of the composition and simplify? How much can we reduce this, and if it's still strong, let's take it back to what it was.'" In the master bedroom, that minimalist approach led to a modest, functional space best described as a sleep chamber.

Updating a home like the Decker House is a delicate balancing act under any circumstance. The act of preservation, properly executed, is about maintaining architecture and design—not to mention more elusive qualities like flow, symmetry, heart, and soul—and not necessarily every specific nook and cranny. It's about creating spaces that live better without undermining the original intent, and without disrupting the surrounding environment.

"There's a spatial dialogue that David Decker nailed, and we didn't want to challenge or change that," said Davis. "It reflects a time that's gone. You really can't build it like this anymore. There are just so many options and expectations

and restrictions and code requirements and pro formas and resale considerations ... you wind up with a product that's not as exciting or stripped down. I love this era when you could just buy a piece of land and build a house. You could do a set of drawings in three sheets instead of 150 sheets."

The days of three-sheet drawings may be lost to history, but the spirit of the homes they spawned need not be. You can't build them like this anymore, but with a little care and a lot of humility, preserving the great houses of bygone eras is more than just a worthwhile goal. It's an essential cause.



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THE BATHROOM >

FRESH & CLEAN FOR 2016

April showers bring May flowers, but well-laid washrooms bring rain showers to the start of your day. And with modern design at the foundation, you're free to do your best thinking as you freshen up. From 3D faucets to unexpected finishes, the bath has never looked better.



> RETHINK THE SINK

Why are vanities always stuck to walls and bathtubs relegated to the corner? Not anymore! Thanks to GRAFF, your bathroom can break from being a wallflower with Dressage. The freestanding vanity adopts a furniture-like feel, and with its warm walnut finish, this airy design transforms your bathroom into a day at the spa.

+graff-faucets.com





>NURTURE WITH NATURE

Bringing the outside in tops the trends for 2016, as natural materials like wood connect us to the outdoors while adding a spa-like sensation to our tub time. The Duo bathtub from luxury Italian line Nella Vetrina puts us in touch with nature with this walnut and moon stone combo creating a modern outdoor getaway without leaving the bathroom.

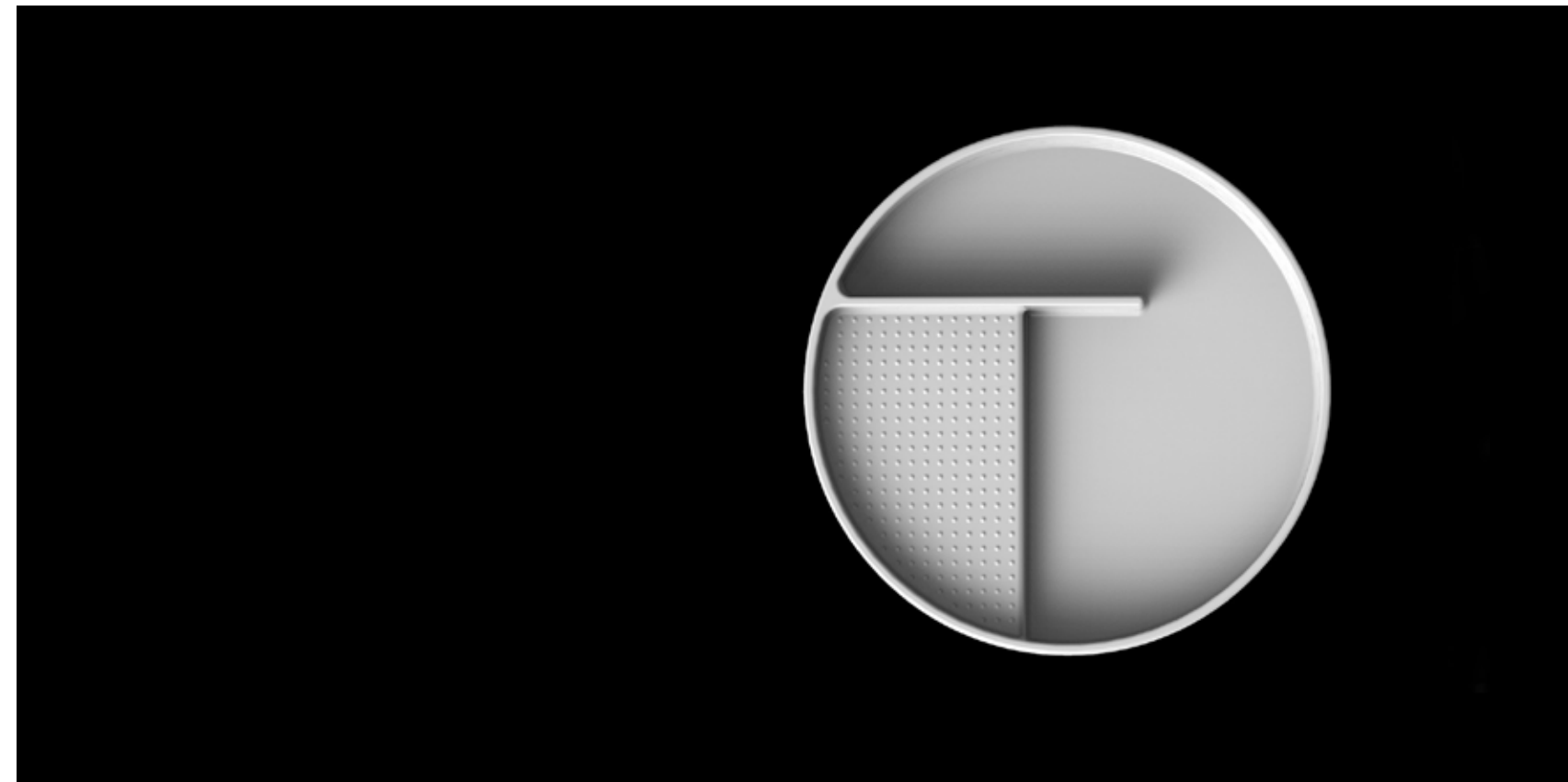
+nellavetrina.com



> MAKING A SPLASH

Wowing the crowds at the 2016 Kitchen and Bath Industry Show, this 3D-printed faucet combines the technology of today with American Standard's 140-year heritage. Part of its DXV line, the Shadowbrook faucet is one of three designs manufactured by a computer-guided laser beam that takes about 24 hours to print. Like what you see? Start saving. A 3D-printed faucet will set you back \$12,000 to \$20,000.

+dxv.com



> A MATERIAL WORLD

Industrial designer Konstantin Grcic—whose work is part of MoMa's permanent collection—is the artist behind LAUFEN's modern collection of washbasins and trays. Its material, SaphirKeramik, is twice-as-strong, more ecological, and thinner than ceramic. Its malleability provides a fresh, clean alternative to traditional ceramic basins, featuring strong architectural lines we love.

+laufen.com



> SINGING IN THE RAIN

Transform your shower to a full sensory experience with sound. Grohe has partnered with Philips to bring you Aquatunes, a wireless, water-resistant speaker that connects to mobile devices via Bluetooth. Specifically designed for use in the shower, you can position Aquatunes at the perfect height and location, making up for our lack of perfect pitch.

+grohe.com



> A BRIGHT IDEA

The rain shower gets a softer makeover with the Aimes showerhead from TOTO. The showerhead, which comes in chrome and brushed or polished nickel, draws its design and inspiration from the shades of the 19th century oil lamps but gets an update with the clean lines of the translucent, white plastic hood. As a bonus, its 65 rubber nozzles do double duty and prevent limescale buildup.

+totousa.com



> OUTWEIGHING EXPECTATIONS

We love concrete, but its hefty weight makes it a dud as the material of choice for large projects. Native Trails solved that conundrum with its Avalon tub, made from a combination of natural jute fiber and cement known as NativeStone, making the tub much lighter than expected. Available in 62-inch and 72-inch sizes and three finishes, each tub is hand-formed, polished, finished, and sealed.

+nativetrails.net



> LOCAL TALENT

The best kitchen and bath trends are recognized annually at the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show, and taking home the silver was this functional vanity by Robern. Tucked inside Balleto's smart design are hidden compartments, with sections for hand towels, waste, reading material, and plumbing. This clever storage solution has received accolades from design media and critics worldwide, yet its designer, Travis Andren, graduated right in our backyard from the University of Denver.

+robern.com



> MIRROR, MIRROR

In a sea of matte surfaces trending for 2016, Michael Young's stainless steel Juogor Faucet stands out. The "MY" kitchen and bathroom line was created to offer contemporary solutions with a fresh, yet classic design approach. As the designer said, "It is design as industrial art that interests me, not just as a limited edition, but on a scale of mass production." Each is built with lead-free, anti-bacterial and oxidation-proof materials.

+michael-young.com

> GETTING STEAMY

Turn your shower into spa in 60 seconds flat with the Steam Generator by Kohler. We love that you can retrofit your existing shower with an easy-to-install kit, complete with a digital control panel and built-in reservoir for aromatherapy, making every day a day at the spa.

+us.kohler.com



> SMOOTH SAILING

A seamless water drain is every modern homeowner's dream, and QuickDrain has turned that dream into reality with its new WallDrain system. By installing the drain into the wall and sloping the shower floor to one subtle channel, there is no disruption in the shower design. A sloped trough ensures the removal of all water and debris after each use, making WallDrain our favorite product design this year.

+quickdrainusa.com



> OLD WORLD MEETS NEW

With marble inlays, golden accents, and chic shelving, the Altamarea Bathroom Boutique marries elegant vintage sophistication with sleek, modern lines. Using precious materials such as Brown Onyx, Paonazetto, Fior di Pesco Carnico, along with stone and wood, the expansive collection of bathroom furniture and accessories creates a timeless space.

+altamareabath.it



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White Open Spaces

Architects and designers have long revered the color white for its ability to harmonize and balance space. Miele employed this respect for pure lines and transparency when creating its new Brilliant White Plus Series. Understatedly elegant, this new collection of built-in appliances offers discriminating homeowners and design professionals a unique solution to kitchen design. Come experience it for yourself at Kitchens at the Denver.

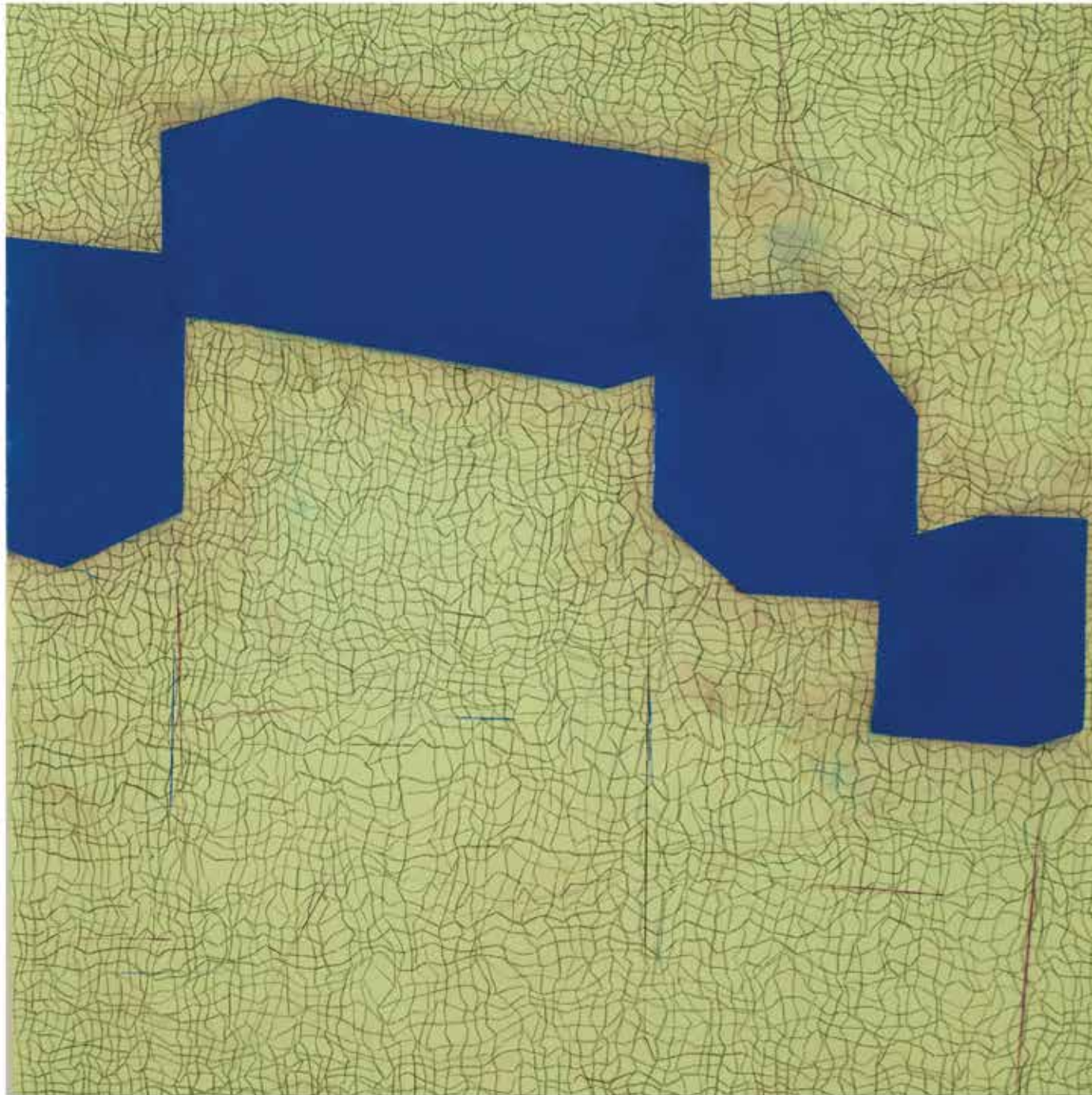
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ON THEIR SHELVES

INSPIRED READING

BOOKS THAT FUEL THE CREATIVE SPIRIT

We may live in an age of iPads, smartphones, and countless varieties of binge-worthy Netflix programming ... but there's still no substitute for a really good book. Tapping into Denver's multi-faceted creative community, we reached out to a broad cross-section of design professionals and asked each of them to handpick three books that have influenced their careers. From landscape gardens to punk rock poetry, the responses we got back were every bit as wide-ranging (and insightful) as you'd expect.

IMAGES: TREVOR BROWN JR.



JENNY WEST
/ ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN MANAGER
KNOLL, INC.



DESIGN DRAWING, BY FRANCIS D.K. CHING: Drawing is an instrument critical to the design process, involving seeing, imagining and representing. This book is notoriously regarded as the authority in how to express not only artistic ideas, but how to organize and represent one's design thinking. Although I was introduced to this material as a textbook while a student in Interior Architecture studio, its education and value has only grown in relevance over time. **WHAT TO DO WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN (AND IT'S ALWAYS YOUR TURN), BY SETH GODIN:** When we all dream of greatness, of transformation or stardom—whatever it is—the human response is fear. We are taught to question ourselves. Seth Godin inspires the reader to embrace tension, nurture your passions and, most importantly, to actually take action on your aspirations to do something that matters. "The cost of being wrong is less than the cost of doing nothing." For me, his words were a call of action for dormant ideas. **VISIONARY WOMEN, BY ANGELLA M. NAZARIAN:** This collection of powerful storytelling discusses the diverse paths of 20 visionaries who took intuitive actions to scribe their own personal excellence, often in many stages throughout their lives. The vitality and depth represented in these remarkable women fuels unconventional thinking, prioritizes self authenticity and embraces the spirit of evolution and change in one's profession. It is worth a read for either a gained sense of perspective on life's journey, or simply motivation for embracing change.

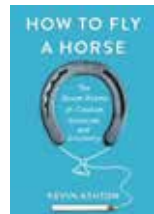


TAMAR CHANG
/ KITCHEN DESIGNER
THURSTON KITCHEN AND



TEL AVIV: THE WHITE CITY, BY JOCHEN VISSCHER: As a child growing up in Israel I remember visiting my great uncle and aunt in the big city: Tel Aviv. The visits were always full of culture; we went together to different museums and shows. My favorite part was strolling the streets of the “White City,” hearing about the architectural style. Tel Aviv has the world’s largest collections of structures built in a unique form of the Bauhaus or International Style. The style was adapted to the Mediterranean climate, and as a child looked very international to me, and the style still influences my design daily. I love the concept of light and airy design where form meets function, and every angle is interesting, understated, and functional. **THE MAGIC MIRROR OF M.C. ESCHER, EDITED BY BRUNO ERNST:** Escher’s work has always captivated my imagination. I remember sitting with the book of his prints for hours, trying to make sense out of the illusions, enjoying all the small details that made the bigger picture, and always finding a new idea, or aspect, I did not see before. His work always symbolized to me the balance between two worlds—natural vs. mathematical, dark vs. white, simple vs. complex. Escher’s lines and shapes flow through the overall design. This is a feeling you cannot put into words, but if you walk into a well-designed space, no matter the style, you can feel it, and to me it feels right. **VERSAILLES: A BIOGRAPHY OF A PALACE, BY TONY SPAWFORTH:** Living in a country that appreciated simplicity, our family trip to Holland, Belgium, and France was overwhelmingly amazing. I was 10 years old, visiting Versailles—a place I could not even imagine existed. We picked up this book about the palaces, a book I later carried with me as a reminder of how large the world is, and how many ideas are there for us to explore, enjoy, and learn from. It also reminds me how peoples’ sense of beauty is often influenced by their past, by their experiences, and by their culture.

HOW TO FLY A HORSE, BY KEVIN ASHTON: This book takes you on a voyage through some of humanity’s greatest innovations to expose the unexpected reality behind who creates, and how they create. It investigates why innovators meet resistance, how organizations suppress creative individuals, and cites examples on business and invention ranging from Mozart to the Muppets. *How to Fly a Horse* has been instrumental in my approach to new ideas, how our company is run on a daily basis, and the ability to create. **GARDENS OF LUCIANO GIUBBILEI, BY ANDREW WILSON AND STEVEN WOOSTER:** Not only is Giubbilei’s process very similar to that of Elevate by Design, his approach to each project and the overall outcome is inspiring from beginning to end. He relies heavily on his contractors during the construction process, and is very involved in the field to ensure the final product is exactly what he envisioned. It’s enlightening to see that designs can be interpreted many different ways, by different people; however, the involvement throughout the installation is crucial. Giubbilei’s style is contemporary and clean, with mass plantings and hard lines. This is a book I keep nearby, to grab whenever I need to get the creative juices flowing. **LANDSCAPE ASSPIRIT, BY MARTIN HAKUBAI MOSCO AND ALXENODEN:** Landscape as a Spirit taught me how to follow a contemplative path when it comes to design. It explains the use of natural materials within the garden to reflect arrangement and to produce a balance of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and space). Using this approach is helpful while creating small urban landscape plans, or even designing large, multi-area estates. All of Martin’s gardens give a sense of tranquility and simplicity, which is inspiring to me, and pushes me to be thoughtful and reflective while working through the design process.

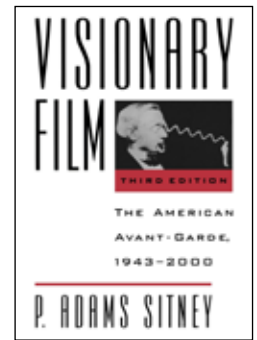
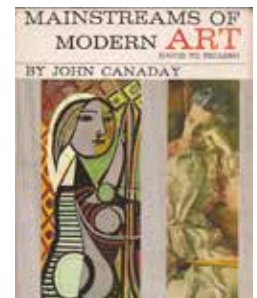
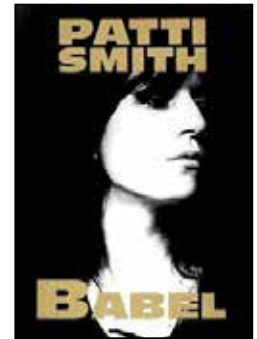


CHRIS TURNER
/ LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
ELEVATE BY DESIGN



DEAN SOBEL / DIRECTOR
CLYFFORD STILL MUSEUM

MAINSTREAMS OF MODERN ART, BY JOHN CANADAY: This was the text to my first art history class, taken when I was majoring in Business Administration. Needless to say, Canaday’s text, clear and informed, made quite an impression on me—I later changed my major to art history and have been working in the field of modern and contemporary art every since. I didn’t know this at the time, but Canaday, a long-standing art critic for *The New York Times*, was an enemy of Abstract Expressionism. **BABEL, BY PATTI SMITH:** I first heard Patti Smith’s debut album, *Horses*, shortly after its release in late 1975 through an underground radio station in my hometown of Milwaukee. (I asked my parents to buy the album for my 16th birthday, and I still have it.) For a kid in the Midwest, these poems about exotic people and faraway places, accompanied by photographs by Smith, Robert Mapplethorpe and others, introduced me to a world that seemed alternately frightening and exhilarating. **VISIONARY FILM: THE AMERICAN AVANT-GARDE, 1943-1978, BY P. ADAMS SITNEY:** This early, important study of the film-based art of such now-major figures as Kenneth Anger, Andy Warhol, Michael Snow, and Stan Brackhage, opened my mind to the possibility that art existed far beyond painting and sculpture. First published in 1974, I read it [this second edition] as a student in the mid-1980s. For someone in my mid-20s, the discovery of Snow’s *Wavelength*—a 30-minute extended close-up of a photograph pinned to a wall—taught me how important process, duration, and ultimately ideas, are to contemporary art.



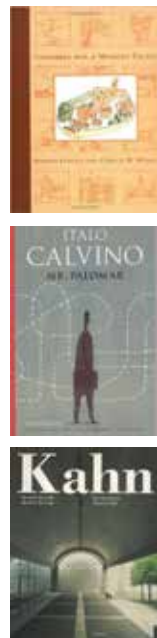


CHRIS SCHULTZ
/ GENERAL MANAGER
MITCHELL GOLD + BOB WILLIAMS



OBJEKT INTERNATIONAL, EDITED BY HANS FONK: This book really shows design without borders. Objekt spotlights every type of design and then some. It's also incredibly useful because every example has so much depth, so much inspiration, and so much heart. This is what designers aspire to do. **BIOPHILIA, BY CHRISTOPHER MARLEY:** Christopher Marley is currently my favorite artist, and his absolute best is the reclamation collection. He has such a strong understanding of the animals he is working with, and because of that he is able to really show the beauty in their life. What he does is such a masterful example of nature refined. **PAULO MENDES DAROCHA: COMPLETE WORKS, BY DANIELE PISANI:** Paulo Mendes da Rocha is such a tremendous architect. What I love about his work is his take on modern design, the mixture of natural elements, and his use of natural light. I feel that we are just now seeing all around us so much of what he was doing 60 years ago.

CHAMBERS FOR A MEMORY PALACE, BY CHARLES W. MOORE AND DONLYN LYNDON: Through their letters, sketches, water colors, and line drawings describing the built environment, friends and colleagues Charles W. Moore and Donlyn Lyndon exemplify selected architectural themes and compositions. As a student, this book served as an introduction that felt like a personal tour of some iconic works of architecture. But more importantly, it exposed me to concepts of design that have become integral to the way I create today. The elements and constructs discussed are simple, but inherent in what I feel are examples of good architecture. **MR. PALOMAR, BY ITALO CALVINO:** This book explores perception through the mind of Mr. Palomar, a fictional character whose musings include cheese, a blackbird's whistle, and his lawn. Following his thoughts is akin to mentally riding an Escher-esque rollercoaster with the end rarely providing a resolute conclusion, and often the potential for another trip around the perplexing tracks. To this day, I am still intrigued by Calvino's critical thinking and his unrelenting consideration and reconsideration of not only the topic of focus, but of the manner in which he observes it. **LOUIS I. KAHN IN THE REALM OF ARCHITECTURE, BY DAVID B. BROWNLEE AND DAVID G. DE LONG:** Of all the architects I studied in school, Kahn had the greatest influence on my early architectural development. I admire the way he made a new type of "modern" architecture that utilized traditional design concepts. His use of scale, proportion, axes, and symmetry are evidence of his early Beaux-Arts education, and for me were a reprieve from the Post-Modern and Deconstructivism movements that were popular in architecture schools during the late 1980s and early 1990s. But in the end, it was Kahn's quest for the perfect "light" that's stuck with me the most.



SCOTT PARKER
/ FOUNDING PRINCIPAL
NEST ARCHITECTURE



ALICEN DUNBAR, IIDA
/ INTERIOR DESIGNER
DLR GROUP

THE ARCHITECTURE OF HAPPINESS, BY ALAIN DE BOTTON: This book creates a unique introduction to the psychology of design, and poses thought provoking questions that underscores the influence of design on our identities. I enjoy the insight it provides on the history of architecture and for the way it leads to musings on the direction of humanistic design. It definitely makes you look at your surroundings with a more critical eye—and an enriched appreciation! **FIFTY MODERN BUILDINGS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD, BY DEYAN SUDJIC:** Deyan Sudjic's classic is a study in curation. When I first picked it up I thought I would know most of the buildings, but I find it most interesting for the ones it includes versus those it left out. I expected to see icons like Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater, or Mies van der Rohe's S.R. Crown Hall. Instead it recognizes more obscure, but singular, buildings such as Zumthor's Kunsthau Bregenz—exemplary of minimalist design. Whenever I look through this book, I instantly get the travel bug and the inspiration to explore cultural and historic design elements. **INTO THIN AIR, BY JON KRAKAUER:** Being in Colorado, of course I'm a bit of an adrenaline junkie. This intense story of climbing Mount Everest emphasizes what the human body can withstand, and it shows the never ending passion one can have to reach their goals despite mounting challenges. While I wouldn't say I'm planning a trip to Nepal as a result of reading this, it does spill over into my design mindset: if I envision and fully understand the end result of a project, I find it easier to navigate obstacles and get my clients to the top.



WHAT DO YOU THINK?

This op-ed column, authored by rotating guest writers, aims to stir conversations on architecture and design among our creative community. Note: Thoughts do not always reflect the views of MID (although they many times will). To start a conversation of your own, pitch ideas to info@moderninddenver.com

OP/
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COME CHAT WITH US

Words on a page are only the start. Every three months, *Modern In Denver* hosts Design Conversations, a lively event where our Op/Ed authors engage the community on topics related to their columns. Admission is free, and we provide food, drinks, and stimulating dialogue. Kind of an unbeatable deal, no? Visit moderninddenver.com/events to RSVP and join the conversation.

THE ONLY THING AT STAKE IS THE FUTURE OF OUR CITY

MANY OF TOMORROW'S ARCHITECTS ARE TRAINED TODAY IN A BUBBLE, WITHOUT REGARD FOR MODERN, REAL-WORLD CONSIDERATIONS. BUT THERE'S A BETTER WAY.

WORDS: RICK SOMMERFELD AND RACHEL KOLESKI

In the traditional model of architectural education—a model that dominates today's colleges and universities—students create highly theoretical projects, built around the illusion of endless funding, with little concern for systems, scheduling, or budgets. They churn out enchanting forms as individual authors, without regard for construction, detailing, or even gravity. They are well-versed in theory but encounter very few moments when that theory is applied to the practical, build-able realities they'll face as practicing architects. Technicality and poetics are needlessly divorced.

The evidence is visible in the built environment we navigate daily. Students enter the profession and are unable to clearly translate classroom theory into tangible buildings. They lack the tools necessary to convince a client their ideas have value. The work teeters between shallow and flashy or dull and formulaic, while the academy and the profession stand around pointing fingers at each other.

We only bring this up because it's incredibly important. The only thing at stake is the future of our city.

So is there an education model that effectively translates theory into reality and serves as a bridge between the academy and the profession? Is there a model that provokes architects into doing work that is a more appropriate reflection of our time, not to mention our lives?

We believe there is, and it's called design build education. It's not exactly a new idea—Yale has offered it since 1967, and it's estimated that more than 70 percent of architecture programs have some form of design build in their curricula. But in the traditional model, design build is often a supplemental accessory rather than a guiding principle. And although a small number of these traditional programs challenge students to be innovative in ways that create value for the client, most merely teach students "how to build." Perhaps that seems like a small distinction, but it's a big difference.

Innovation is born not from a singular architectural author, but from rigorous and thoughtful collaboration. Design build education uses peer-to-peer collaboration to allow students to clarify their solutions and strengthen their designs.

They work with consultants to help focus the creative dialogue and to help form solutions which, through honesty of material, simplicity of assembly, and integrity of craft, create details that imbue the project with breadth.

They work with community organizations to learn how clearly communicating intent creates value for the client. They learn to talk about building performance and user experience and to avoid the trap of engaging in a stylistic spiral.

In all these cases, design build is the bridge between what it is to design in theory and what it is to build in reality. It is the educational conduit linking the practical and theoretical.

The melding of these collaborations with a student's naturally occurring curiosity leads to innovative investigations. Materiality becomes an expression of the concept, and the interplay between materials—the language by which to read the structure's story—becomes apparent. The result saves client money, speeds project delivery, and eases construction. It also advocates for the conscientious use of materials, which gives meaning to surrounding context and user experience.

The time has come for mindful evolution of traditional architecture education models. Our built environment depends on it.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Colorado Building Workshop is a nationally recognized, award-winning design-build program at the University of Colorado Denver. Their work has been widely published, including exhibits in Paris, France and an upcoming exhibit at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. Rick Sommerfeld is an Assistant Professor and Director of the program. Rachel Koleski is an alumni of the Colorado Building Workshop and the current Teaching Assistant.

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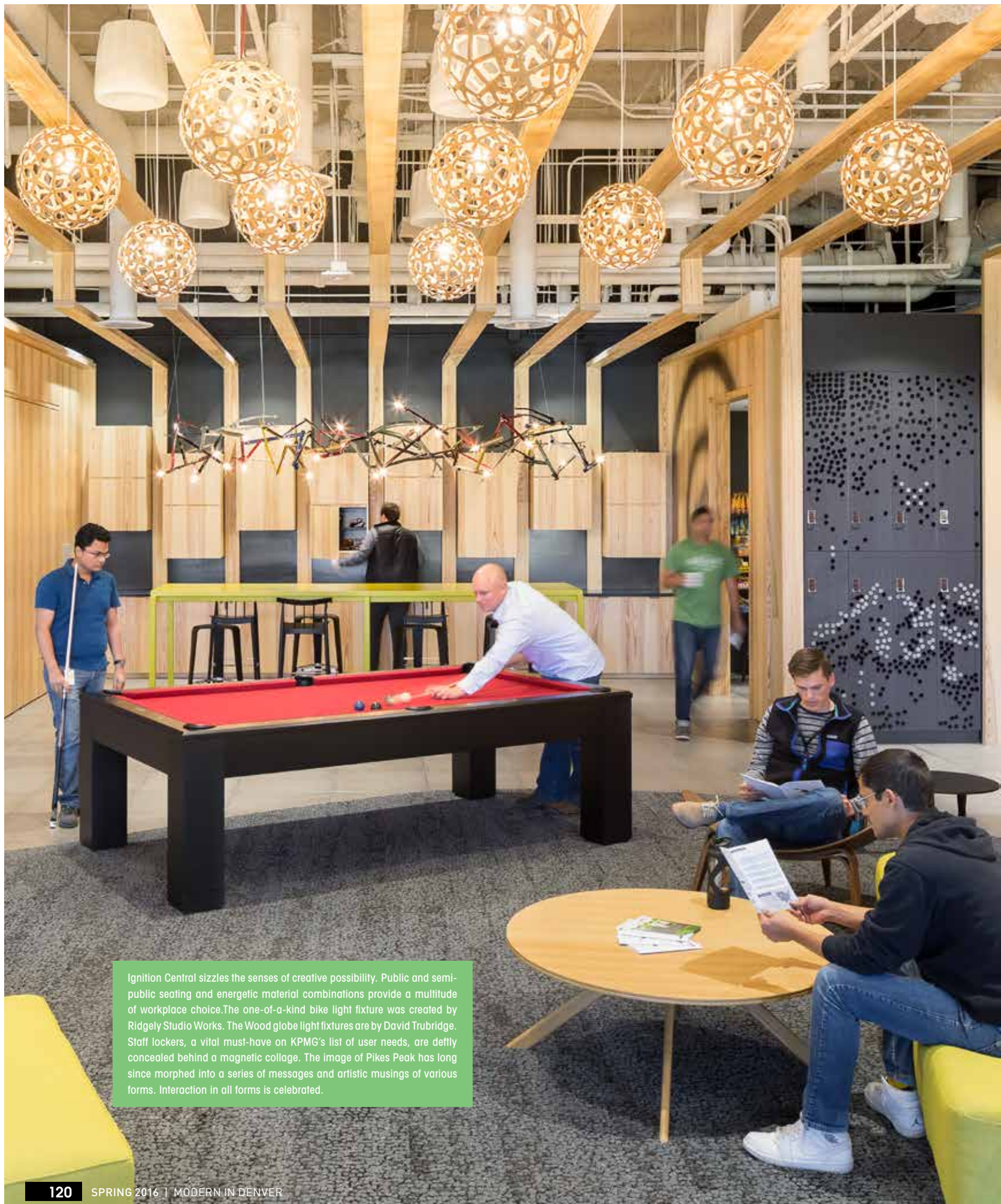
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LAUNCH PAD

WORDS: Sean O'Keefe • IMAGES: David Lauer

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WHEN YOU'RE WALKING INTO A PLACE CALLED IGNITION, YOU'RE EXPECTING TO BLAST OFF.

The single-tenant elevator that carries you to KPMG's new Denver office from the mezzanine at 1001 17th Street feels every bit like an office tower elevator always does—sterile, steady, and silent. The only difference is you're ascending but one floor and you know that going in, making the prospect of actually blasting off seem impossible. Instead, the doors open to reveal a visual tapestry of vibrant design, innovative thinking, unusual building materials, and a workplace experience designed to promote choice.

For starters, that sterile elevator just dumped you out into an anti-room fashioned from a shipping container boldly framing a fishbowl view of Ignition Central—a loungesque workspace featuring billiards, shuffle board, and a wide array of public and semi-private seating opportunities. KPMG Advisory Managing Director Lou Trebino happens to be working from Ignition Central when we arrive. He is on a call at one of a bank of booth-style workstations—also framed by a shipping container on the far side of the room—and he's so integrated into the space we don't even realize he's the guy we're looking for.

"Ignition grew from a need to develop energetic, creative space for several groups of new types of employees KPMG acquired through intellectual capital investments in disruptive technology," said Trebino. "Instead of trying to fit those people into our systems, we developed systems that would create alternative ways to work—both physically and personally—not just for creative people but for everyone."

KPMG is a Big Four accounting firm comprised of a global network of professionals providing audit, tax, and advisory services employing more than 174,000 people in 155 countries. When asked what a typical KPMG office is like, Trebino paints a picture of the buttoned-up accountant in a three-piece suit seated

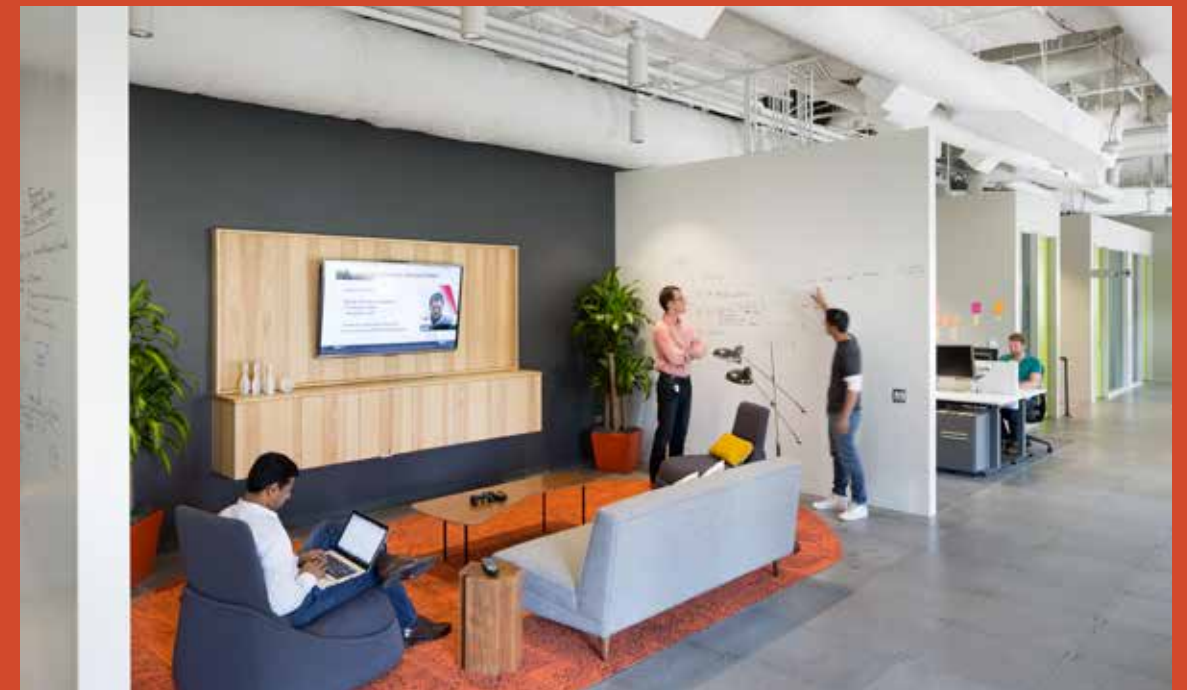
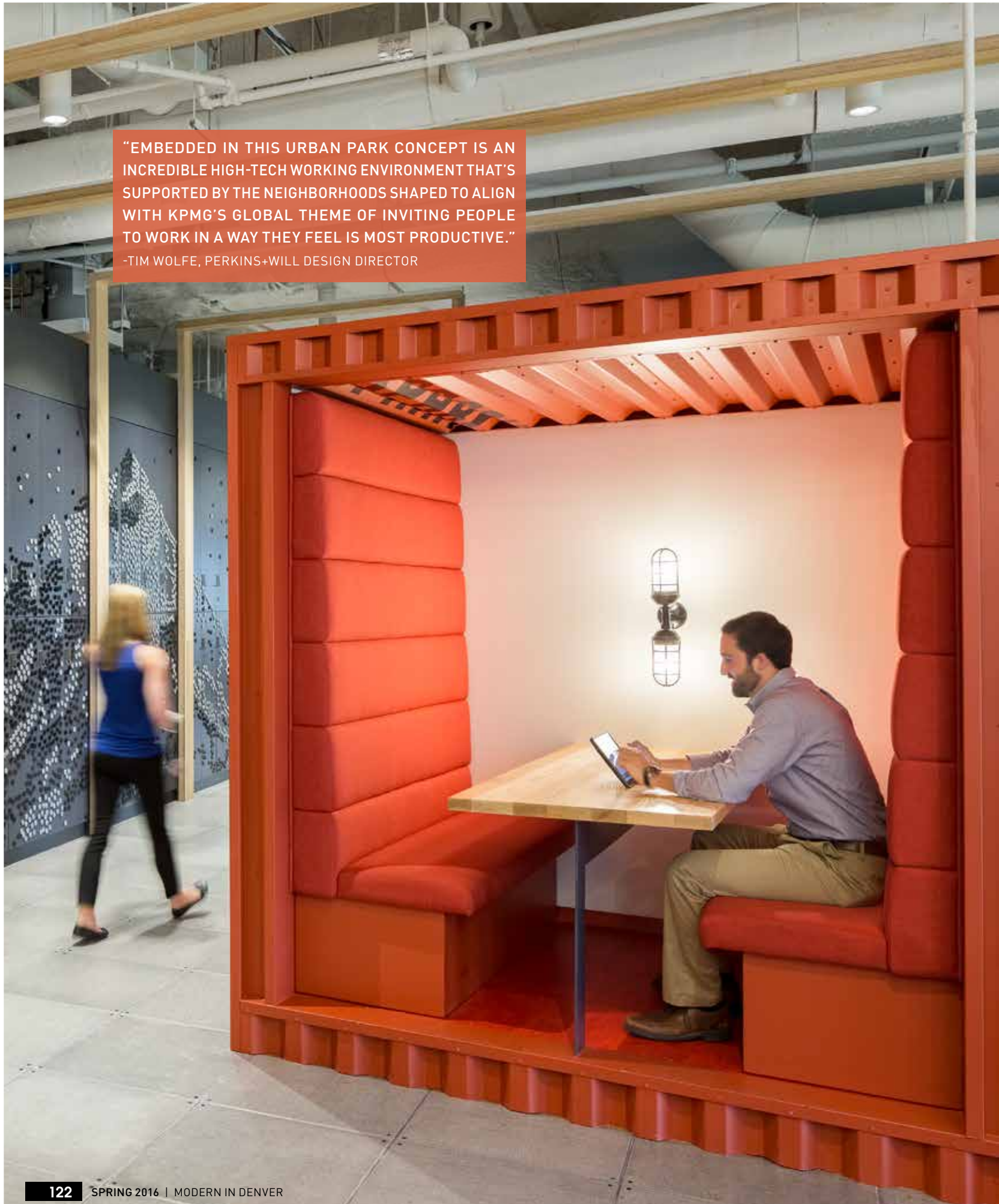
behind a massive cherry wood desk surrounded by walls of books encased in walnut millwork. Designed by acclaimed international architecture practice, Perkins+Will, Ignition builds on KPMG's previous workplace of the future concepts including open workspaces, brighter colors, and glass top reception desks. "We had a fantastic opportunity to go quite a bit further and rethink our environment," said Trebino, casually dressed in jeans and a sweater. "Perkins+Will really listened to our needs and proposed dynamic and innovative workplace concepts including the fact that there are absolutely no private offices here regardless of level."

KPMG Ignition is designed around three primary concepts—vibrancy, choice, and integrated technology—and walking around the space all three are pretty hard to miss. Bold hues cover most every surface while employees are spread out between workstations and a variety of conference rooms, gaming lounges, chess sets, and other relaxed spaces. Each space offers multiple seating postures, and workstations can be raised, lowered, moved, or otherwise reconfigured at the touch of a button. For every person sitting and working, there is at least one doing the same thing standing. While some employees may choose to spend the day seated at a single desk, others may find themselves in a new spot every few hours. Rather than simply thinking of the workspace desires of millennials, Ignition seems to recognize that professionals of every generation can benefit from a combination of traditional work stations, open, socially inspired spaces, library-like reading nooks, and virtually everything in between.

Within the work areas, the office's variety of functions are loosely grouped departmentally, with each team's core work area named after one of Denver's hipper neighborhoods—LoDo, RiNo, and Highlands. Each neighborhood adjoins to the next by way of one of the infused recreational respites. The Wii gaming station,

Ignition Central sizzles the senses of creative possibility. Public and semi-public seating and energetic material combinations provide a multitude of workplace choice. The one-of-a-kind bike light fixture was created by Ridgely Studio Works. The Wood globe light fixtures are by David Trubridge. Staff lockers, a vital must-have on KPMG's list of user needs, are deftly concealed behind a magnetic collage. The image of Pikes Peak has long since morphed into a series of messages and artistic musings of various forms. Interaction in all forms is celebrated.

“EMBEDDED IN THIS URBAN PARK CONCEPT IS AN INCREDIBLE HIGH-TECH WORKING ENVIRONMENT THAT’S SUPPORTED BY THE NEIGHBORHOODS SHAPED TO ALIGN WITH KPMG’S GLOBAL THEME OF INVITING PEOPLE TO WORK IN A WAY THEY FEEL IS MOST PRODUCTIVE.”
-TIM WOLFE, PERKINS+WILL DESIGN DIRECTOR



OPPOSITE: Staff lockers, a vital must-have on KPMG’s list of user needs, are deftly concealed behind a magnetic collage. The image of noble Pikes Peak has long since morphed into a series of messages and artistic musings of various forms. Interaction in all forms is celebrated. **ABOVE TOP:** Ignition is designed to engage users on many levels and seeks to leverage chance meetings and spontaneity. Writable surfaces and advanced technology abound—communicate when, where, how, and with whom you want at an instant’s notice. **ABOVE BOTTOM:** With the primary workplace neighborhoods configured along the exterior walls, the design imparts abundant daylight into every day. Sitting, standing, or roaming around, a key to Perkins + Will’s design is the idea that there certainly can’t only be one great way to work. Systems furniture by Knoll and open office lighting is by Juno and Pinnacle.

LAUNCH
PAD ▶

for example, boasts an elegant low slung couch and a lifesize cardboard cutout of Trebino playing tennis. Material choices and textural combinations are defined by a theme Perkins+Will refers to as "urban park." Inspiration is drawn from Denver's urban fabric, composed of an eclectic combination of old, reused non-precious and industrial materials counterbalanced by fresh modern forms and sophisticated furnishings. A light fixture made from recycled bicycle parts hangs above a counter top bar referencing Denver's bike culture; a living moss wall decorates one passage way in embrace of Colorado's magnificent outdoors; and a backlit wall of green bottles illuminates an alcove featuring air hockey and foosball in a salute to the many local microbreweries. "KPMG wanted Ignition's multitude of recreational activities to be integrated throughout the entire office rather than in a single area," said Perkins+Will Senior Interior Designer, Kim Klingeisen. "Creating adjacencies with high-energy, potentially loud spaces next to conference rooms, and common workstations presented some acoustical challenges." In response, the loudest recreational areas, though open, are slightly recessed into the building's core, while common workstations all abut exterior walls, giving every employee immediate access to views and daylight.

Throughout Ignition the integration of technology is constant. Old-school flip charts on easels have been replaced by mobile, digital pads where impromptu notes can be taken and printed, saved electronically, or emailed around the world at the touch of a button. Virtually every wall in every conference room is a writeable surface allowing white boarding to take place anywhere. In several places mega-large touch screen monitors sit on rolling platforms waiting for a brilliant idea that requires immediate human interaction from the far corners of the globe. KPMG is beta testing them in secrecy for one of the world's largest software producers. When you have the coolest workspace, you get to try out the coolest new toys first.

As with any innovation, owners are eager to measure the value of their investments, and in design, the challenge can often be quantifying effectiveness. In the case of Ignition, measuring success isn't hard at all. For starters, KPMG employees visiting from other offices are immediately awestruck when they walk in the door. Since the Denver office opened in 2015, a new Ignition Center was established in Grand Rapids, Michigan, while three more are scheduled to open in Atlanta, New York, and San Diego. Perhaps more importantly, Trebino shares that within a few months of opening, a group of KPMG employees from different departments happened to be playing

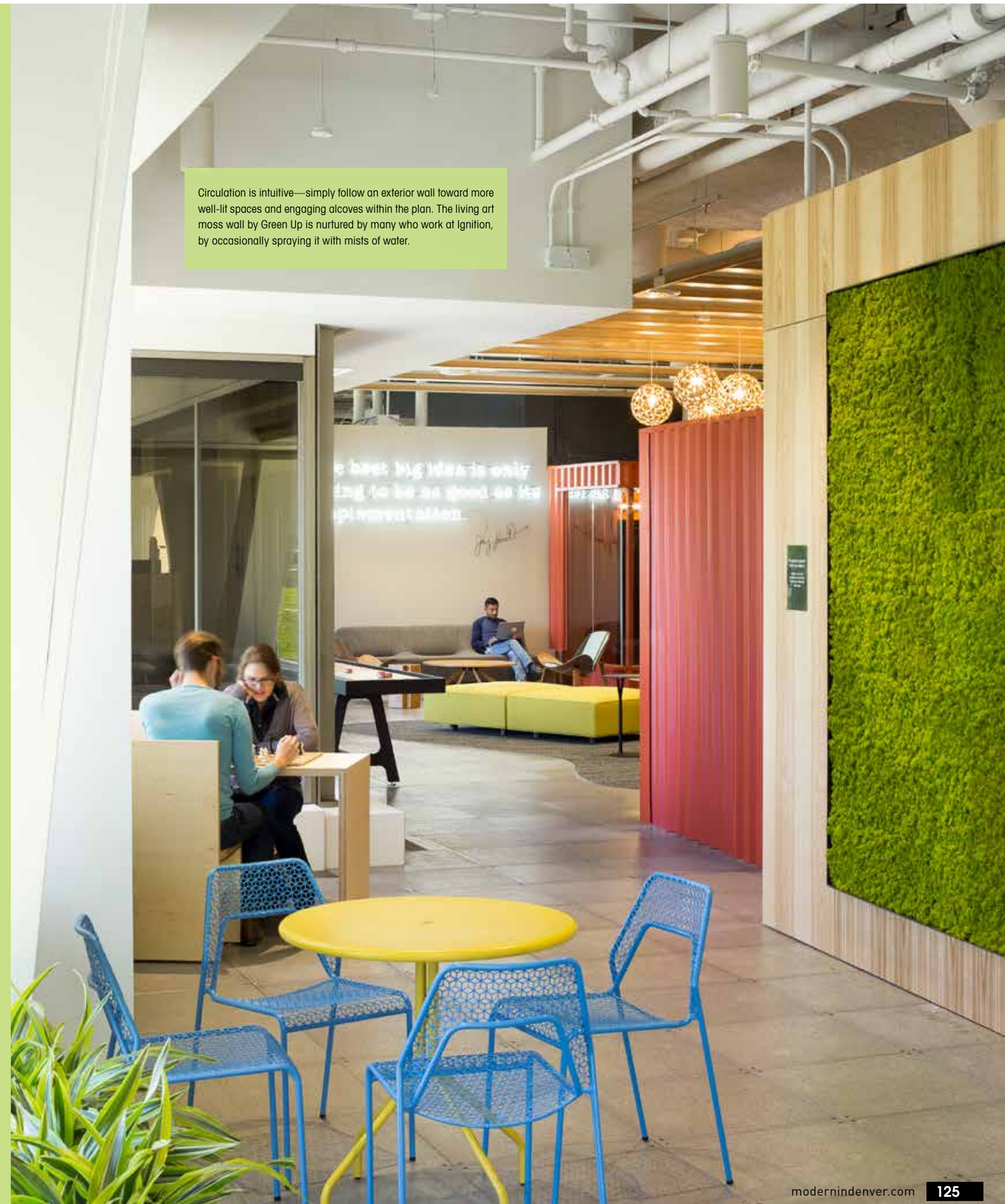


Walking through Ignition for the first time is an experience. Rather than fitting creative and analytical thinkers into a single space, Perkins+Will has developed an innovation-tank environment and a workplace experience about choice.



Communication seems to be a driving by-product of the wonderfully developed and executed design theme. Magnetic pegs are rearranged by hand when an idea occurs while touch screen technology in an array of forms is integrated throughout the office.

Circulation is intuitive—simply follow an exterior wall toward more well-lit spaces and engaging alcoves within the plan. The living art moss wall by Green Up is nurtured by many who work at Ignition, by occasionally spraying it with mists of water.



**LAUNCH
PAD >**

a game of pool when they suddenly realized they were all solving the same set of problems several different ways. Within a matter of minutes, they began rethinking their processes, taking the best of each department's ideas and streamlining them into a single synthesized solution that improved processes for three distinct groups. "Ignition presents all of us with new and exciting ways to work and to improve communications both face-to-face and remotely," said Trebino. "The space compels us to think beyond ourselves and to continually consider how we can be better at what we do, not only for our clients, but for each other. We used to take the majority of our meetings at our clients' offices as a sort of an industry tradition. Now clients not only insist on having meetings here, many of them ask if they can use the space for their own engagements, as well."



PROJECT CREDITS

Architect and Designer

Perkins+Will

Design Director: **Tim Wolfe**
Senior Project Designer: **Kim Klingeisen**
Senior Project Designer: **Rocco Tunzi**
Project Manager: **Jennifer Carzoli**
Project Technical Lead: **Vince Onagan**
Project Designer: **Elaine Schmid**
Project Designer: **Edelyn Putri**
Project Designer: **Sylvia Obiedzinski**

General Contractor

Turner Construction

MEP Designer

Environmental Systems Design

Structural Engineer

Martin/Martin Consulting Engineers

AV

Strategic Products and Services

Lighting Consultant

Anne Kustner Lighting Design

Branding Consultant

Forcade Associates



TOP: Polished industrial materials and elegant, modern forms merge seamlessly throughout Ignition. Vibrancy was key to the desired brand statement while functional interactivity within the space increases opportunities and ways to communicate. The red chairs are from Bernhardt and the grey felt light fixture is by BuzziSpace.

ABOVE: Carrying the urban park theme forward, subtle touches like naming conference rooms after local microbreweries imparts a sense of place that feels like community and with community comes commitment. The decorative lighting in the conference rooms is by Stickbulb.



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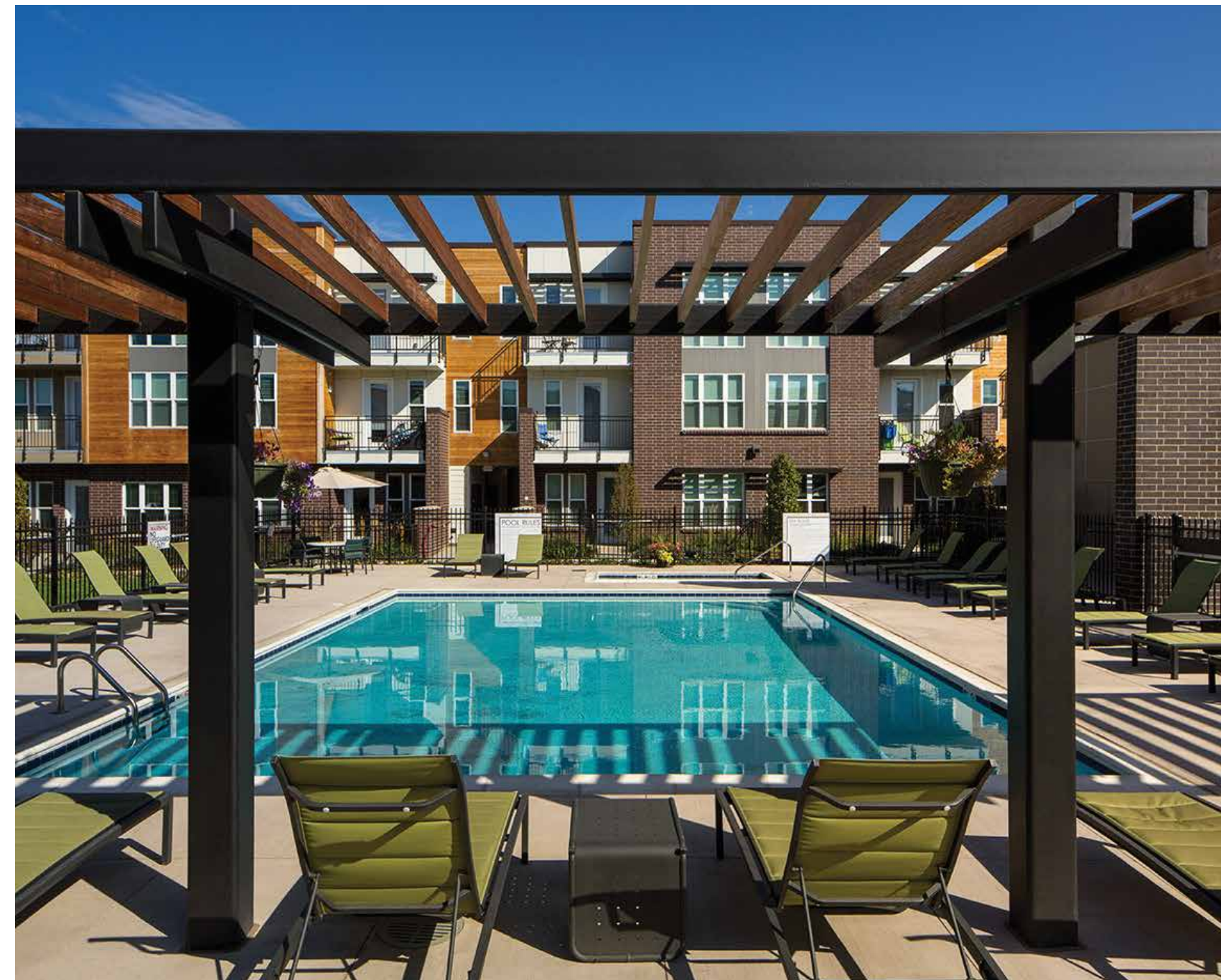
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EXPERIENCE ELEVATED

COMMERCIAL DESIGN

INNOVATIVE THINKING AND ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCT DISPLAY MERGE TO REDEFINE MARIJUANA'S RETAIL EXPERIENCE AT AJOYA.

WORDS: Sean O'Keefe • IMAGES: James Florio & Kyler Deutmeyer

LIKE ANY INDUSTRY, in retail marijuana, maturity takes time. With maturity, of course, comes enhanced decision making benefiting from past experience and the insights of others that compels new thinking, improved processes, and tangible results. Such is the case for Ajoya, a Louisville dispensary determined to elevate the retail marijuana experience through branding and design. The brainchild of brothers Joey and Shaun Gindi, Ajoya celebrates personal freedom and marijuana's diverse user-experiences. More lifestyle brand than dispensary, Ajoya is a forward-thinking champion of cannabis' versatility while contributing to an evolving conversation on retail marijuana practices.

"This product has been consumed for centuries by people from all

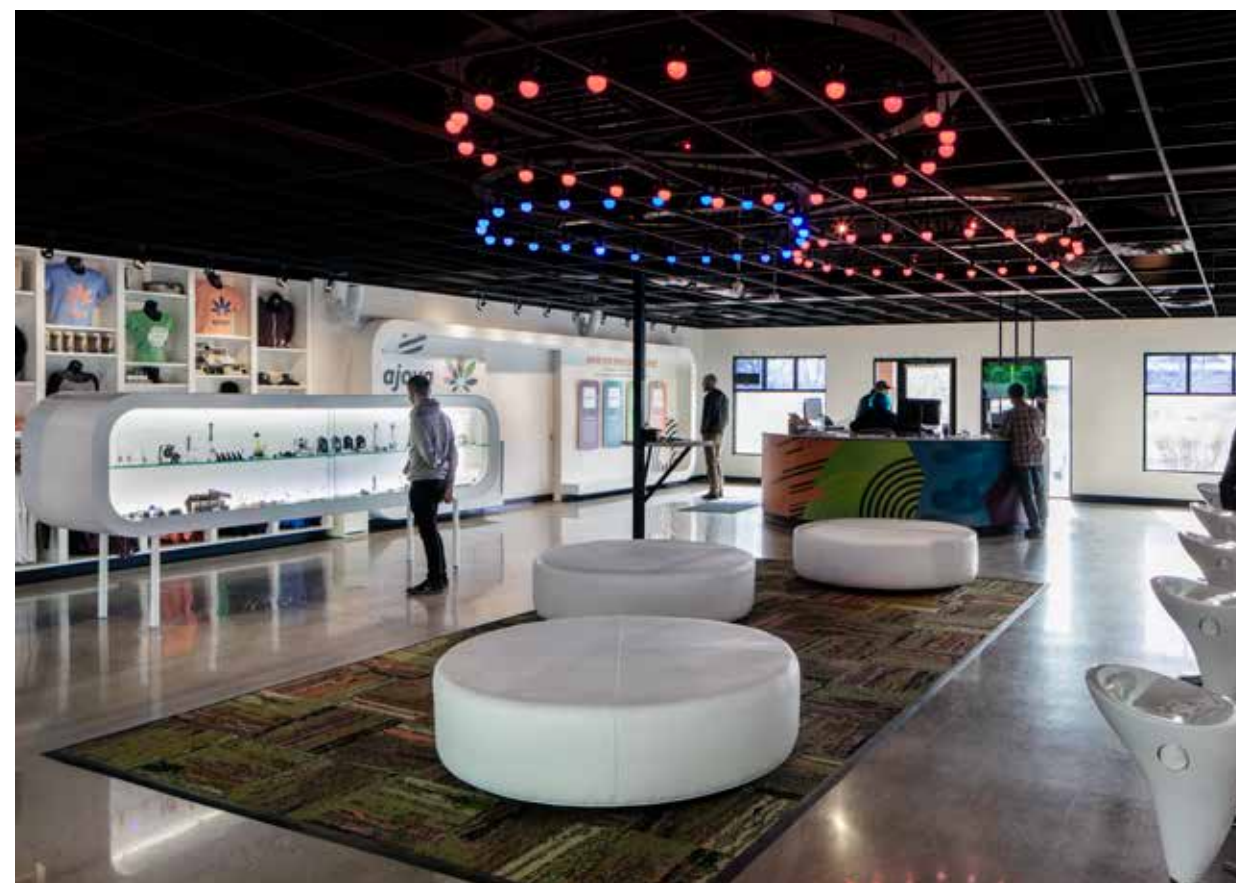
walks of life and all forms of accomplishment," said Joey, Ajoya's Chief Operating Officer, a responsibility he assumes with the same panache expected of his Wall Street counterpart, minus the tie. "Our thinking continually returned to the experience of marijuana and how that word 'experience' means so many different things to the people who use it."

The Gindi brothers have been in the retail marijuana business since 2009 when they opened a medical dispensary in a strip mall owned by their father. Initially, their objectives were to simply build a customer base and make a profit, admittedly never really thinking of brand building. As they outgrew their space, the Gindis envisioned a more consumer-driven operation to distinguish themselves from abundant competition. In strategic



“THE DESIGN TOOK SHAPE AROUND AN EFFICIENT, OPEN, PROFESSIONAL CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE THAT BUILDS ON WELL-ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES OF PRODUCT DISPLAY AND FEELS NOTHING LIKE A STEREOTYPICAL HEADSHOP.”

-TYLER JOSEPH, ROTH SHEPPARD ARCHITECTS



Roth Sheppard Architects focused on creating a space that would seamlessly adapt to the future. Retail marijuana customers already range widely in age, but the approaching retirement of the Baby Boomer generation may shift Ajoya client demographics even more. There could also be an uptick in the number of disabled customers, which makes universal accessibility even more crucial. In response, Roth Sheppard added seamless height changes in the main bar counter, enhanced lighting, and careful arrangement of fixtures to an already wide-open floorplan.

meetings they focused on the notion of the user experience, while paradoxically recognizing that people’s marijuana experience expectations are so varied.

A spark was ignited when Joey turned to HighBridge Creative, a Louisville branding company with an identify design portfolio in similar markets like craft beer. Working across the spectrum of user experiences, HighBridge Creative recommended that Ajoya focus on consumption’s targeted effects, ranging from an infusion of energetic creativity to a desire to subdue either pain or anxiety and calm the senses with many variations in-between. “Breaking the experience into a range of effects, we found the inspiration for what we’ve done,” said Joey. The four experience categories at Ajoya—settle, unwind, focus, and elevate—are indicative of the product’s effects and set the stage for the retail design the Gindis were looking for. Color-coded, well-defined

product experience statements are keys to Ajoya’s differentiation. However, the product evaluation and purchase experience is where Ajoya really distinguishes itself and credit there is shared with Roth Sheppard Architects and builder B&B Remodeling.

Well known for exceptional design in a wide range of building types including high-end retail and public safety, Roth Sheppard has been pushing the edge of design by shaping solutions to the user experience since 1983. Their award-winning experience includes boutique spaces like the Denver Art Museum’s gift shop, several Room & Board stores, and other lifestyle brand retailers. “The notion of a lifestyle brand focused on the user experience was the departure point,” said Tyler Joseph, a project designer with Roth Sheppard. “The design took shape around an efficient, open, professional customer experience that builds on well-established principles of product display and feels nothing like

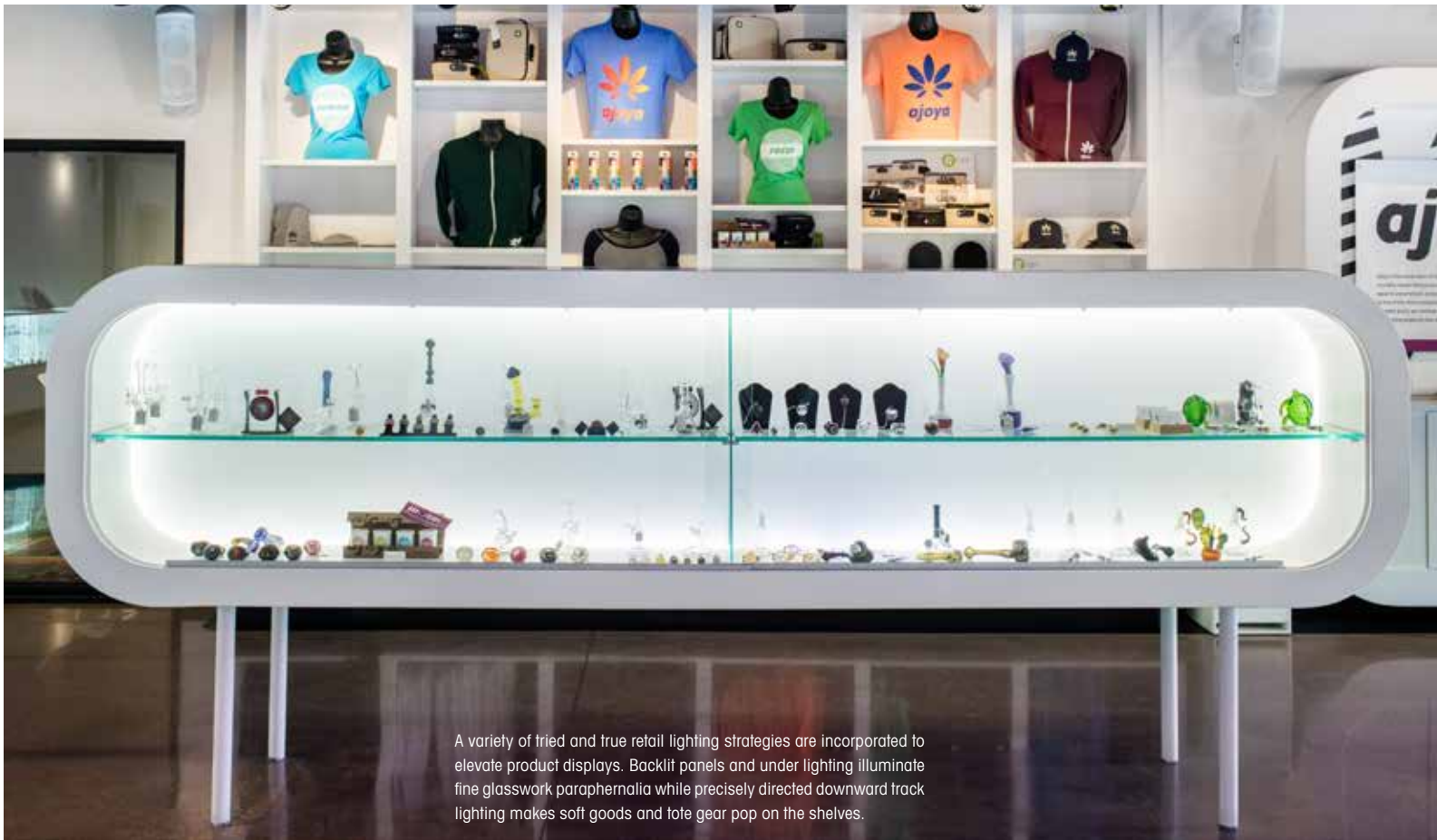
a stereotypical headshop.”

Walking into Ajoya, the design differences are hard to miss. Gone are the Bob Marley posters, candles, and dusty glass skull bongs stacked to the ceiling. Immediately, the store is wide open with no physical distinction between the guest waiting area and product display. A circular reception area allows check in and funnels the unfamiliar toward a lively color-coded display detailing the range of experience choices, a theme that resonates throughout the store. Supplemental products, apparel and merchandise on display including—yes, cool glass skull bongs—allow customers to engage in the potential purchase process while they wait rather than being separated from the merchandise as dispensaries generally do. Customers then engage with budtenders across a sleek white retail bar at individual service points that allow semi-private consultations without the transaction feeling like a backroom deal. Service points are partitioned by triangular glass

display cases showcasing a wide range of edible, concentrated, and infused products that range from chewable candies to hand lotion, hair gel, and much more—some of which is strictly medicinal with no impairing effects.

Roth Sheppard was able to draw parallels between displaying high-end merchandise like jewelry and marijuana’s crystalline structure. This thinking influenced a wide range of lighting choices throughout the space. LED lighting is incorporated to illuminate the sparkling trichome crystals on the marijuana buds, while backlit illumination panels at the retail displays enhance close-up product presentation. Color-changing LEDs hangs above the lounge area and track lighting used to draw attention to soft goods.

“Product display is really important to any retail experience,” said Joseph. “At Ajoya, we designed each detail of the main bar



A variety of tried and true retail lighting strategies are incorporated to elevate product displays. Backlit panels and under lighting illuminate fine glasswork paraphernalia while precisely directed downward track lighting makes soft goods and tote gear pop on the shelves.

and the display cases to enhance the products being offered and instill confidence in their quality to the customers.” Beyond the glass display cases at the countertop bar, Ajoya’s bulk product inventory is pre-packaged and stored in color-coded square boxes behind the budtenders, keeping everything close at hand but without a sense of clutter.

Joey and his team continue to refine the sales process, currently offering a collection of four different experience-specific marijuana strains as a flight for those who may be unsure about exactly which type of experience is ideal for them. Ajoya’s leadership is also planning to increase staff training to ensure budtenders are all speaking a common sales language and have a deep knowledge of their products, effects, anticipated longevity, and other distinguishing characteristics. Further adding to Ajoya’s vision of promoting a lifestyle brand, beyond the typical paraphernalia, the store also carries an array of lifestyle accessories such as Stashlogix tote cases and Apothecanna lotions. While retail marijuana itself maintains a high-level of consumer demand, long-term success in retail sales will continue to be an evolving conversation between retailers, designers, and consumers.

Tried and true sales strategies like customer funneling, effective merchandising and lighting, and a well-informed sales staff will always be positive contributors to success and maturity will always be a backdrop for an elevated retail experience

PROJECT CREDITS

Architect
Roth Sheppard Architects

Electrical Engineering
C3S, Incorporated

Contractor
B&B Remodeling

Identity Design & Branding
HighBridge Creative

Specialty Subcontractors
BAR Electric – Electrician
All West Surface Prep – Floors
Barry Painting – Paint
A Ability Glass – Display Cases
Palmer Woodwork – Custom Millwork



KIVA CHOCOLATE BARS

With its sans serif font and minimalist packaging, it’s clear from the get-go that a KIVA chocolate bar promises a more refined edible experience. But KIVA’s design chops don’t end there. Like most chocolate, KIVA bars are segmented, but in thinking through form and function, each KIVA segment is equal to one recommended dose of THC.



PAX 2 BY PAX VAPOR

When portable vaporizers first hit the market, who would have thought the industry could ever produce something as refined as the Pax 2? Its slim, columned profile provides style and stealth in equal numbers, and the ergonomic mouthpiece, minimalistic LED indicator, and anodized aluminum surface are like something you’d find in an Apple store.



APOTHECANNA

As the first U.S. skincare company licensed to use cannabis flower extracts, Apothecanna faced a challenge common to many innovators: how could they build trust? Part of the answer lay in the packaging. With bold typography, substantial white space, and an informative label, the design is one of clinical simplicity.



LEGAL BY MIRTH PROVISIONS

In a blatant, yet endearing celebration of its own legitimacy, Mirth Provisions chose Legal as the name of its cannabis-infused beverage line, designing the bottles in a speakeasy style. The sparkling sodas are rich in flavor (and cannabis extract) and conjure a pronounced edginess that’s both exciting and stylish.



STASHLOGIX

If every child’s dream is to nick their parent’s weed stash, StashLogix is the ultimate dream crusher. Founded in 2014 and based out of Boulder, the company offers three fortified cannabis cases—the GoStash, EcoStash, and ProStash—built with responsible moms and dads in mind.

AS THE CANNABIS INDUSTRY CONTINUES TO EVOLVE, COMPANIES HAVE THE FREEDOM TO PERFECT OLD PRODUCT DESIGNS AND IMPROVE UPON NEW ONES. VAPE PENS ARE MORE DURABLE THAN EVER, FIRST-RATE PASTRY CHEFS ARE DEVELOPING GOURMET EDIBLES, AND CASES AND CONTAINERS HAVE NEVER BEEN MORE SECURE. BIT BY BIT, HIGH QUALITY, BRAND-FOCUSED DESIGN IS TAKING CENTER STAGE.

HIGH DESIGN

WORDS: JOSH KRAUS

Not long ago, the majority of cannabis products were dealt in the shadows. Packaging was limited to doggie bags and old prescription bottles, branding rarely deviated from the occasional pot-leaf decal, and more advanced devices like vape pens were nearly non-existent. Discretion was the name of the game, and consumers’ options were severely limited. Needless to say, product design was low on the totem pole.

Now that the cannabis industry is in full swing, new pot products are flooding the shelves every day, and consumers are graced with endless choices. Pot is officially big business, and just like any other business, design plays a key role. There is a renewed focus on packaging and iconography. Special attention is being paid to workmanship, engineering, and quality of materials. Gone are the days of cheap tie-dye and red-eyed cartoons. Today, companies are focusing on modern aesthetics and high concept design, qualities which the following cannabis products deliver in spades.



RODAWG

In this (relatively) new world of concentrates and atomizers and drinkables, cannabis containers might seem boring in comparison. But Rodawg takes umbrage with that idea. Its line of cannabis containers, cases, and protectors maintain a distinctive futurist style while employing state-of-the-art childproofing and odor-concealing technology.



DRIP ICE CREAM

It was only a matter of time until ice cream, America’s edible pastime, received the cannabis treatment, and Drip is knocking it out of the park with its one-two punch of delicious product and spot-on branding. The packaging’s creamy red-blue color combo recalls sun-drenched summer afternoons of yesteryear.



COMMERCIAL DESIGN

BACK TO THE FUTURE

ADD SUSHI RAMA TO THE GROWING LIST OF HIP, HIGH-CONCEPT ASIAN RESTAURANTS IN THE MILE HIGH CITY. BUT WITH ITS THROWBACK CONVEYOR BELT, POP ART WALL, AND RETRO MODERN VIBE, SUSHI RAMA HAS ALREADY DISTINGUISHED ITSELF FROM THE PACK.



WORDS: Charlie Keaton • IMAGES: James Florio

DENVER may rest at the epicenter of a landlocked state, but its residents still have a taste for good sushi. The latest addition to an already impressive roster of local purveyors is Sushi Rama, newly opened in the RiNo district. Owned by Jeff Osaka and Ken Wolf, Sushi Rama distinguishes itself in part by the use of *kaiten*, a conveyor belt-style delivery system that allows patrons to pick whatever bite-size portions they want as dishes pass by. Pricing corresponds to the color of the plate, and each plate is outfitted with a microchip that allows the staff to track and remove any item that's been through too many rotations.

Sushi Rama was designed by local firm LIVstudio, who handled not only architecture and interiors, but also some of the massive art that adorns the walls. We sat down with husband-and-wife principals Brandon and Tana Anderson, along with Adam Steinbach, to get a peek into the process behind their bold design.

MODERN IN DENVER: NOT MANY RESTAURANTS FEATURE CONVEYOR BELTS RUNNING THROUGH THE MAIN LEVEL. HOW DID THAT COME ABOUT, AND HOW DOES INCORPORATING SUCH A UNIQUE ELEMENT IMPACT THE OVERALL DESIGN?

ADAM STEINBACH: From the beginning, Jeff Osaka wanted to do something different, something that hadn't been brought to the Denver restaurant scene. The *kaiten* concept came from him, and given the small footprint of the space, it seemed logical to use that conveyor system to optimize seating and minimize staff. We loved the way the movement of the belt activated the space and encouraged social engagements. The diners' close proximity and social-centric seating was very intentional.

BRANDON ANDERSON: We really focused on that idea of movement and made efforts to visually move visitors around the restaurant, as well. We have three bands of color that move throughout the interior. Along the ceiling, they follow the conveyor belt, then fold down walls or bend around corners.

MID: MOST SUSHI RESTAURANTS FAVOR A SUBDUED, JAPANESE GARDEN-STYLE AESTHETIC, BUT YOU WENT THE OTHER DIRECTION. WAS THE INTENT ALWAYS TO CREATE SUCH A BOLD ATMOSPHERE? WHAT'S THE STORY YOU WANT TO TELL?

AS: We tried to create a lively atmosphere where people want to come and interact with others while eating. Ken Wolf described his vision as "modern retro," or sort of a modern take on 1960s atomic and Austin Powers decor.

BA: Conveyor belt sushi was developed in the late 1950s, and it really gained popularity for a while in the '60s. We definitely wanted to tie into that time period.

MID: TELL US ABOUT THE WARHOL-ESQUE SUSHI WALL. IT'S CLEARLY THE FOCAL POINT OF THE ROOM, AND IT BRINGS A VERY SPECIFIC ENERGY TO THE RESTAURANT.

TANA ANDERSON: This was quite a process for the team. Originally, Adam wanted to put a Lichtenstein-esque art installation there, which was very nice. But for all the energy we spent to make it work, it didn't feel right.

AS: Yeah, it really began with the idea of making a statement. When we first examined the space, we loved the height. At 18 feet, it's nearly as tall as it is wide, and we knew we had an opportunity to do something impactful as soon as you walk in the door.

BA: We've integrated our artwork into several projects in an effort to create memorable spaces that capture the essence of the concept. We liked the idea of an ode to Roy Lichtenstein because of his entertaining use of precise compositions in pop art installations. And after many iterations, it became more of a mixture of Lichtenstein and Warhol.

TA: This truly is a testament to our philosophy, which is, "Listen to the space and it will tell you what is right."



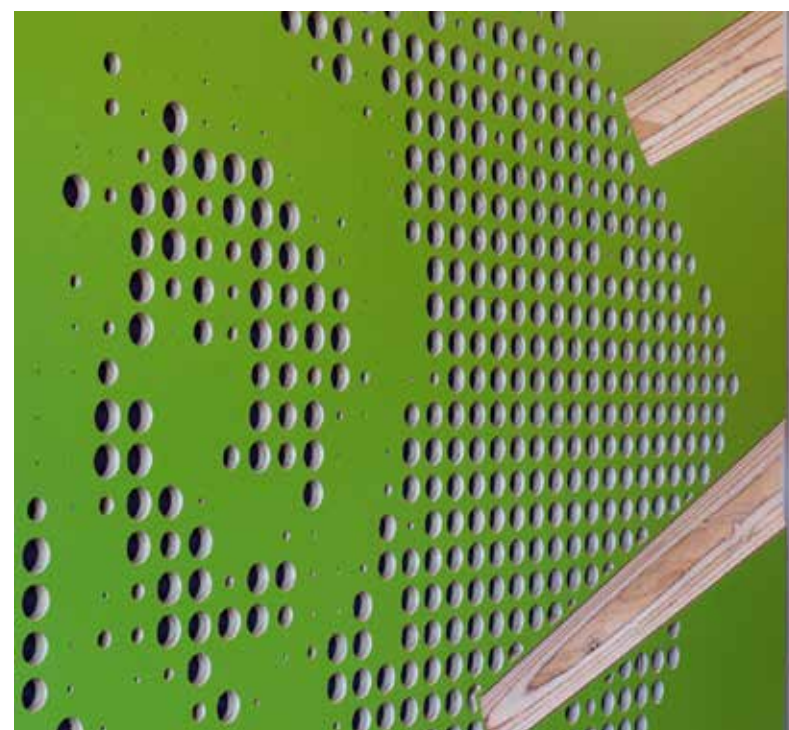
In keeping with the 1960s atomic decor, 20-bulb Sputnik fixtures preside over the main floor dining area. Meanwhile, a conveyor belt transports color-coded, microchip-embedded plates from which diners can snag their next dish at will.



Working within a small footprint in the RiNo neighborhood, LIVstudio focused on creating a sense of movement and energy throughout the space. Bands of color run along the ceiling and walls, color-changing orbs rest atop the kitchen, and social-centric seating creates a vibrancy that naturally encourages interaction among guests.

Using 13-ply, baltic birch plywood and plastic laminate, the LIVstudio team worked with VonMod to fabricate the showstopping art wall at Sushi Rama. The materials called to mind mid-century modern furniture designs, also evident in the banding, bar stools, and table tops. It also complemented the Saarinen chairs and Panton flower pot lighting.

To create such a dramatic effect, a single image of a salmon roll was manipulated through multiple software programs, allowing the LIVstudio team to parametrically distort the halftone image by modifying variables like spacing, gradient, and hole diameter. By adjusting the tooling pattern and depth of the CNC router, they were able to control the concave cut of the "chopstick" and expose layers inherent in the material.



PROJECT CREDITS

Owner and Construction Management
Wolf Properties

Architecture and Interiors
LIVstudio

MEP Consulting Engineers
Boulder Engineering

Fabricator
Vonmod

Bar Stools
Housefish

MID: IS THAT A TUNA ROLL? CALIFORNIA ROLL?

BA: It's actually a Salmon Roll. The fish wrapping the outside of the roll gave us a stronger profile than a typical seaweed wrapped roll.

MID: WE'VE SEEN DIGITAL FABRICATION IN A NUMBER OF LIVSTUDIO'S PROJECTS. WALK US THROUGH THE PROCESS.

AS: The pursuit of new methods of design and fabrication sometimes sparks creativity in new ways we haven't previously considered. It usually starts with a concept, whether it be a form, an image, a material, or something that inspires us. The digital element is really just another tool to help bridge the gap between conception and construction.

BA: We've always been interested in the connection between design and craft, and we love sitting down with craftsmen to work through details. We currently have several relationships with local fabricators, but on our first digital fabrication projects, we built them ourselves. It helped us understand how to produce the digital information we needed.

AS: For the sushi wall, we wanted to create something that paid homage to the graphic work of Warhol and Lichtenstein, but also brings the tangibility of the material to represent the image. Subtle details like the concave carving of the chopstick brought forth different layers of the plywood, adding depth. In much the same way, with the perforations that form the halftone image of the sushi piece, the depth of the material hides certain colors from the viewer until they're standing directly in front of it. It's only from that very specific position that the color of both the back and front panels are revealed. We like the way the artwork can become a passive, interactive installation to the observer.

MID: WE LOVE THE LIGHTING FIXTURES, RED BOOTHS, AND SAARINEN TULIP CHAIRS. WHAT WAS YOUR SPECIFIC APPROACH TO DESIGNING THE INTERIORS?

AS: The booths and banquette are intended to evoke the spirit of mid-century modernist furnishings. The curved white base and bright red fabric are meant to complement the Saarinen chairs. And the light fixtures are representative of that retro aesthetic.

TA: Take me back in time while moving me forward at Jetson speed.

MID: THE ART WALL AND CONVEYOR BELT ARE SHOWSTOPPERS, AND THEREFORE BOUND TO GET ALL THE ATTENTION. WHAT ARE A FEW OTHER DESIGN ELEMENTS THAT YOU'RE PROUD OF, BUT WHICH MIGHT GET OVERLOOKED?

TA: Most people stop at the conveyor belt and the lower level, which are great unto themselves, but the transportation doesn't



The addition of Saarinen's tulip chairs fits the mid-century aesthetic of the restaurant, while also providing comfortable, clutter-free seating. Saarinen famously said that he invented the Tulip set in response to the confusing and unresful underside of most tables and chairs—"to clear up the slum of legs in the U.S. home."

end there. The upper level has its own culture that is uniquely energized. And one of my favorite spots is the space between—I love the energy you get heading up the stairs, looking down at the movement below while being pulled into the upper level vibe, and then unexpectedly in the middle you look to the left and see the "zen garden" sandbox with the modern, playful, color-changing orbs. It's delightful.

AS: I think the use of curved corners and laminate banding helps complete the composition of the space. Details like the rounded openings that peer into the kitchen and the curved masses that make up the back of the house help soften the atmosphere and contrast nicely against the industrial context of the shell.

MID: HOW MUCH SUSHI DID YOU EAT DURING AND AFTER THIS PROJECT? ARE YOU OFFICIALLY EXPERTS?

BA: Even though we loved sushi before, we really committed to doing further research to get everything just right. You know, for the sake of the project! Now that the restaurant is open, and just one block from our office, we're there more than we care to admit. In fact, our daughter, Liv, insisted on having her birthday dinner at Sushi Rama.



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THE BIGGEST LITTLE CABINS

HOW INNOVATIVE, FLAT-PACKED PROBLEM SOLVING LED STUDENTS AT COLORADO BUILDING WORKSHOP TO CREATE A SENSE OF HOME FOR THE NOMADIC INSTRUCTORS OF COLORADO OUTWARD BOUND SCHOOL.

WORDS: Charlie Keaton • IMAGES: Jesse Kuroiwa, Peter O'Neil, Rick Sommerfeld

Designing cabins for instructors at Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS) led students like Rachel Koleski to consider the end user at every step. "The gradation between indoor and outdoor, public and private, was a big deal for us. We wanted to make sure we protected them, but still let their love of nature back in." To that end, each of the 14 cabins has its own unique design, with some emphasizing more communal space (like this cedar deck) while others focus more on introverted features, such as a pop-in window seat for reading.

THE BIGGEST LITTLE CABINS

THEY COME FROM ALL OVER, young adventure seekers drawn to Colorado's rural mountain terrain as if by gravity. Each June they load their vehicles with oversized Rubbermaids holding most of their worldly possessions and set out for a summer of non-stop teaching, learning, and leading. They'll face untold hardships as they guide students and adults through rugged outdoor courses lasting anywhere from eight to 81 days, but the challenge is part of the appeal. For instructors at Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS), the hardships only make it more worthwhile.

"The tricky thing is that we're kind of half and half of everything," said Ella Hartley, a COBS instructor from Maryland. "We're looking for community but we're also transient. We're outside all the time, but mostly we're introverts who need some personal space. Some of us have been responsible for ourselves for a decade or more, but we also don't have a lot of things, and we haven't taken on a lot of the responsibilities that traditionally come along with adulthood."

JD Signom was a COBS instructor for 12 years who later found his way to Colorado Building Workshop, a design build program for graduate students at the University of Colorado Denver. Late in 2014, Signom got word that the COBS site in Leadville was in need of new housing for its instructors, many of whom—Ella Hartley included—spent their summer nights crammed 10-to-a-room in dormitories.

At the time, Signom couldn't know that an innocent conversation among friends would lead to a comically ambitious project: 28 grad students creating 14 micro cabins, each with a unique floorplan and specifications, on a site so inaccessible that no cranes or semi-trucks could reach it, on a budget of less than \$10,000 per unit, in just 19 weeks. At the time, all he saw was an opportunity. And he knew exactly who to talk to.

THEORY MEETS PRACTICE



Among the biggest challenges of designing micro cabins for Colorado Outward Bound School (COBS) staff is that the instructors who live there are, almost by definition, gear junkies. They also tend to keep most of their worldly possessions in giant Rubbermaid containers, so the students at Colorado Building Workshop incorporated that learning into their design. Each cabin contains shelving dimensions tailored exactly to fit Rubbermaids. Nearly everything else was designed on a two-foot or four-foot module, to eliminate unnecessary cuts and achieve straighter dimensions as a result of the incorporation of factory edges.



Given its long list of recent credentials—including more than 20 awards from institutions like the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ASCA)—it's hard to believe the design build program at UCD was nearly shuttered just a few years ago. Back in 2009, Rick Sommerfeld was associate chair of the architecture department, and when the design build faculty left for another university, he took a bold leap. Stepping down from his post, Sommerfeld founded the Colorado Building Workshop, created a director position around his particular suite of skills, and found the funding to pay for it all.

"I think academia for a long time was thought of as a theoretical endeavor, and perhaps the skills required to detail a building or specify a material were left to the firms that hired and trained the students," said Sommerfeld. "On the flip side, the profession has a tendency to be very focused

on getting the building built, and their interest lies less and less in the architecture, sadly. So how do you blend those two things together and teach students how to carry theory forward into an architectural practice, but at the same time give them the tools to transition into the profession?"

The answer, it seems, lies in the myriad real-world challenges hoisted upon their young shoulders. Colorado Building Workshop had already tackled a wide range of projects, from the interior of the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art to an urban farming classroom near the Lamar light rail station to a performing arts stage in Ridgway. Now they were headed into what Sommerfeld admits was totally uncharted territory. "The scope is so big, the project covers so many acres, and there are just so many elements. It's unlike anything we'd ever done before in terms of scale and cost and even the number of students."

EATING AN ELEPHANT



The Leadville site is harsh, remote, and uneven—ideal for someone participating in a COBS course, but challenging for the design-build students tasked with creating these cabins. The solution included varying levels of prefabrication: wall panels were built in the workshop, but had to be small enough to be flat-packed, transported by flatbed truck, and moved around on-site by no more than four people. “We knew the size of the truck we could get back there, and we knew the size of the bed, so therefore we had to deconstruct our project into a series of parts that fit in the most efficient way,” said Rick Sommerfeld.

THE BIGGEST LITTLE CABINS

To replace the dorm living existence of past generations, Sommerfeld and his students set out to build 14 micro cabins for the COBS instructors, each less than 200 square feet. Constraints loomed large from the outset. There was the timeline (19 weeks from start to finish, including all planning, design, fabrication, transportation, and construction); the budget (\$133,000 total, or about \$9,500 per cabin); the environment (remote, sloped, and prone to harsh weather); and a labor force centered around 28 students, many of whom had little to no actual construction experience.

There were, however, reasons for optimism. That work force, so green around the gills, didn't cost much—just a notch above free labor, really. And their team was led by experienced professionals, including UCD instructor Scott Lawrence, student-turned-instructor JD Signom, structural engineer Andy Paddock, and craftsman Jordan Vaughn. What's more, they had Sommerfeld, who brought loads of relevant knowledge and experience along with an inspired, can-do attitude he summed up with a quote from Charles Eames: “I have never been forced to accept compromises, but I have willingly accepted constraints.”

The students began with a weekend visit to the Leadville

Mountain Center, hosted by COBS leadership. Along with team-building exercises and basic site analysis, they interviewed their new clients and held a variety of design charrettes, sussing out priorities and intent. Back in Denver, they began looking at form, conducted modeling charrettes, and prepped their campus workshop for the long work ahead.

After presenting the COBS team with design proposals and soliciting feedback, students were broken into seven teams of four, with each team responsible for two cabins. A one-to-one mock-up began to take shape in the workshop—a task that proved invaluable to those without existing construction skills. Said student Rachel Koleski, “You draw up details all day, but actually having to put them together and realizing, ‘Oh, it doesn't work in that order,’ or, ‘I need the fastener to be that much longer,’ really helped a lot.”

That brand of insight is all part of Sommerfeld's master plan. He isn't shy about sharing his frustration with the slanted views that design-build programs often attract. His program isn't a trade school, nor does he expect students to go into contracting. “But what I do hope they understand is what those contractors and builders and craftsmen have to do to

“I THINK ACADEMIA FOR A LONG TIME WAS THOUGHT OF AS A THEORETICAL ENDEAVOR, AND PERHAPS THE SKILLS REQUIRED TO DETAIL A BUILDING OR SPECIFY A MATERIAL WERE LEFT TO THE FIRMS THAT HIRED AND TRAINED THE STUDENTS,” SAID SOMMERFELD. “ON THE FLIP SIDE, THE PROFESSION HAS A TENDENCY TO BE VERY FOCUSED ON GETTING THE BUILDING BUILT, AND THEIR INTEREST LIES LESS AND LESS IN THE ARCHITECTURE, SADLY. SO HOW DO YOU BLEND THOSE TWO THINGS TOGETHER AND TEACH STUDENTS HOW TO CARRY THEORY FORWARD INTO AN ARCHITECTURAL PRACTICE, BUT AT THE SAME TIME GIVE THEM THE TOOLS TO TRANSITION INTO THE PROFESSION?”

-RICK SOMMERFELD





**THE
BIGGEST
LITTLE
CABINS**

get their project built," he said. "And how the details and the way they draw it and the way they think about it can make their lives easier, or in some ways can push those craftsmen to an interesting place where they want to collaborate because it asks them to be the best of their profession."

IF YOU BUILD IT...

The micro cabin designs were finished by spring break, which left only the month of May for construction. Having fully embraced their time and environmental constraints, the students devised an ingenious plan around the idea of creative prefabrication. They couldn't fully pre-fabricate the cabins because they didn't have the warehouse space—and anyway, the Leadville site was inaccessible to large vehicles, so getting a semi-truck or crane up there was a non-starter. Instead, they broke the project into three smaller parts. For the exteriors, they built wall panels that could be flat-packed and loaded onto a flatbed truck, then unloaded and moved around easily by two to four people on site. In this way, they got wall panels for all 14 cabins up to the site in the beds of three trucks.

For the interiors, they worked with architect and cabinet manufacturer Jordan Vaughn to design interiors that were made entirely from plywood using a Computer Numerically Controlled (CNC) router. Through Lean Product Delivery, they

designed everything on either a two-foot or four-foot module, meaning that in many situations, the studs and plywood didn't need to be cut at all. By using full sheets, the cabins were designed around the proportions of the materials, which led to a shorter timeline, more factory edges, and straighter, truer dimensions. Once they understood where all the holes, latches, joints, screws, and fasteners needed to be, they reverse-engineered a sequential loading process based on the location of each cabin, packed everything into a rented Ryder truck, and set off once again for Leadville.

The final piece of the pre-fabrication puzzle were the columns holding each structure in place. This meant carefully negotiating the terrain both in terms of what was underfoot (to establish a flat building platform) and what was overhead (the roof that holds snow off the cabin). The columns were built in the campus workshop and shipped to the construction site, where the learning curve for assembly was steep, but swift. Erecting the columns, as well as the girders that filled out the metal frame, took a full day at first. Eventually they managed six in the same timespan.

The entire on-site building process took just 29 days.

HOME ON THE RANGE

Rick Sommerfeld doesn't care much for symbolic architecture. He values the beauty and poetry that comes from a well-designed building, and he's quick to lament the erosion of curiosity that's led to so much uninspired sameness in the built environment. But even so, what he values most is creating something that brings tangible value to the client—and in the case of Colorado Building Workshop projects, something that brings value to his students. Still, it's hard not to see a glint of symbolic virtue in the 14 micro cabins he helped manifest for Colorado Outward Bound School. Yes, his students learned practical skills that will advance their careers. And they've learned valuable lessons about collaboration and teamwork, which Rachel Koleski described like this: "We spent such an intense amount of time figuring out how to work with others, and how to listen. I think we all get really excited in design sometimes, and we forget to stop and listen to what the clients want, or what our teammates want."

And yes, the client is indeed thrilled with the outcome. COBS leadership points to the importance of these cabins in building a sense of community, and in their ability to help retain instructors from one season to the next. But beyond all that, there's a less measurable result as well, and the symbolism, while not the intention, is no less important. Just moments after explaining the nomadic personality traits

OPPOSITE: Prior to the creation of these micro cabins, many COBS instructors stayed in dorms with as many as nine other people. Having a private space is good for keeping up morale during the long summer months, and it's also good for retention. Said instructor Ella Hartley, "When you're living in a room with 10 people you feel like a camper yourself. The fact that they're making these spaces for us shows an incredible amount of respect." **ABOVE:** The Colorado Building Workshop team, led by Rick Sommerfeld (bottom right), designed and constructed 14 unique cabins in 19 weeks.

that compel COBS instructors to return year after year, their lives packed into Rubbermaid containers, Ella Hartley made a point to express just what her cabin, number seven, meant to her. "Having these spaces for staff and being able to provide a slightly more permanent, settled space, when we're so busy going in and out of the field again and again, is kind of a nod to our individuality and our adulthood. Sometimes you just want to curl up with a book in your own bed, and this summer, when I got to have my own space and my own bed that was all mine, it made me feel like a more permanent part of the community."

The micro cabins at the COBS site in Leadville may measure fewer than 200 square feet each. But to the people who inhabit them, the sense of home they provide is infinite.



DESIGNING OUTSIDE THE BOX—LITERALLY

A ROUND OF APPLAUSE

AFTER GENERATIONS OF RENOWN AS AN ICONIC HOTEL, A POPULAR DENVER LANDMARK GETS NEW LIFE. WITH TURNTABLE STUDIOS, JOHNSON NATHAN STROHE HAS CREATED FRESH AND VIBRANT MICRO HOUSING THAT BLURS BOUNDARIES BETWEEN YOUNG AND OLD.

WORDS: Charlie Keaton • IMAGES: James Florio

ONE of the newest arrivals on the Denver micro housing scene is also, paradoxically, among the oldest. Even if the Turntable Studios name doesn't yet ring a bell, the building it occupies can't help but be familiar. Built as a prototype hotel in the late 1960s and standing strong in the shadow of two Mile High Stadiums in the decades since, the circular 13-story landmark has for years been a comforting sight along the I-25 corridor. But in contrast to its historical significance, the building actually represents a refreshingly progressive view of modern living. And it easily could have gone another direction entirely.

There was plenty of interest from developers when the property at 1975 Mile High Stadium Circle came available. In the midst of a booming real estate market, any tract of land brushing up against Jefferson Park, the Highlands, and downtown Denver offers loads of potential. But where most saw an obvious scrape job, Nichols Partnership was intrigued by the opportunity to renovate a historic building—and in so doing, provide livable, attainable rental options at a dramatically smaller scale. Using the existing hotel footprint, the vision came into focus quickly: 179 micro units, most at 335 square feet.

"It certainly allowed us to offer these units that look and feel like new construction at a monthly rent that is significantly lower than if we'd built it from scratch," said Dan Schuetz, Project Manager for Nichols. "Just taking it down to the concrete was more cost effective, and the concrete that's there is solid, and it's going to be there for hundreds of years. It's a good structure."

That same structural integrity, however, brought with it a high degree of structural constraint. Johnson Nathan Strohe (JNS), who handled architecture and interiors for the project, chose to embrace those constraints right away. Knowing they were working with an inherently circular building, they looked to other mid-century designs for inspiration. One particularly well-suited contemporary was the iconic Capitol Records building in Los Angeles. This early connection helped establish a music-heavy theme throughout, including a wall in the main floor community area that required the careful sourcing of dozens of vintage speakers.

A ROUND
OF APPLAUSE



“YOU OFTEN SEE KITCHENS THAT ARE OUT OF PROPORTION, AND THERE’S NOTHING LEFT THAT’S A WORKABLE SPACE. COUNTER SPACE IS THE NUMBER ONE THING BECAUSE IT’S GOING TO FULFILL MORE THAN JUST KITCHEN FUNCTIONALITY IN A SMALL UNIT. SO YOU HAVE TO BALANCE THAT AGAINST THE QUESTION OF: HOW MUCH COOKING WILL YOU ACTUALLY BE DOING IF YOU LIVE HERE?” - TOBIAS STROHE

Speaker wall notwithstanding, the community area required the most structural reinvention, as walls were brought down to increase flow and encourage communal interaction. The main level tumbles from one dynamic area to another, with a workout room, TV sitting areas, ping pong table, foosball, shuffleboard, and direct access to the outdoor swimming pool. Lighting and furniture feature an emphasis on red, orange, and yellow, which ties directly to the “kinetic art” created by the randomly sequenced red, orange, and yellow shades adorning each unit. When viewed from the outside, those shades provide an ever-changing tapestry to passersby, fully dependent on which unit’s shades are down and which aren’t.

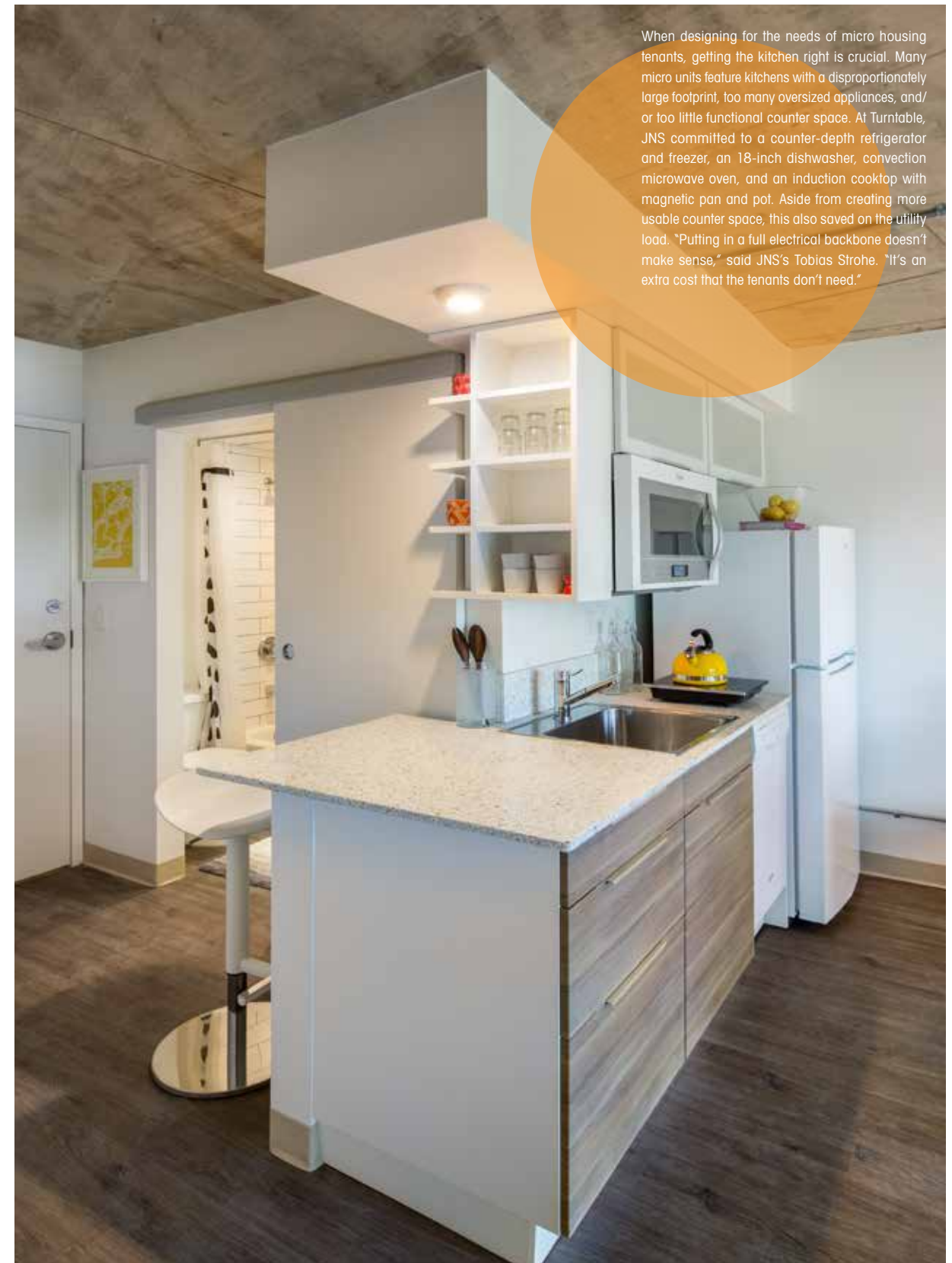
From the inside of a model unit on the ninth floor, those shades—which are neutral on the backside so as not to overwhelm the interiors—complement what is arguably the most important element of the renovation: the floor-to-ceiling windows. “We knew it was going to be great, but it was still a surprise just how much bigger it made the units feel,” said Tobias Strohe, Partner at JNS. The addition of Juliet balconies allowed for sliding glass doors, which means not just natural light but, if the mood strikes, fresh air.

As with most any living space, micro unit kitchens are crucial to obtaining balance and flow. “You often see kitchens that are out of proportion, and there’s nothing left that’s a workable space,” said Strohe.

“Counter space is the number one thing because it’s going to fulfill more than just a kitchen functionality in a small unit. So you have to balance that against the question of: How much cooking will you actually be doing if you live here?”

Mindful of this, JNS passed on a full oven and large appliances, opting instead for counter-depth refrigerator, 18-inch dishwasher, movable cooktop, convection microwave oven—and plenty of real estate for the aesthetically pleasing, recycled glass countertops. Doing so didn’t necessarily save on cost, but it was an important tactic for maintaining proper functionality. “Currently a lot of these appliances are the same cost as the full goods because they’re just less common

After a long life as an iconic Denver hotel, the 13-story concrete cylinder in the shadow of Mile High Stadium is now Turntable Studios, with 179 micro units renting for about \$1,000 per month. “The median home price is higher in Denver than in comparable cities like Austin or Portland,” said Dan Schuetz of Nichols Partnership. “Smaller housing units located in more walkable locations is a potential solution for the high cost of living problem creeping up on us in Denver.” Meanwhile, the red, orange, and yellow roller shades provide a kinetic art experience for passersby as residents raise or lower their shades throughout the day.

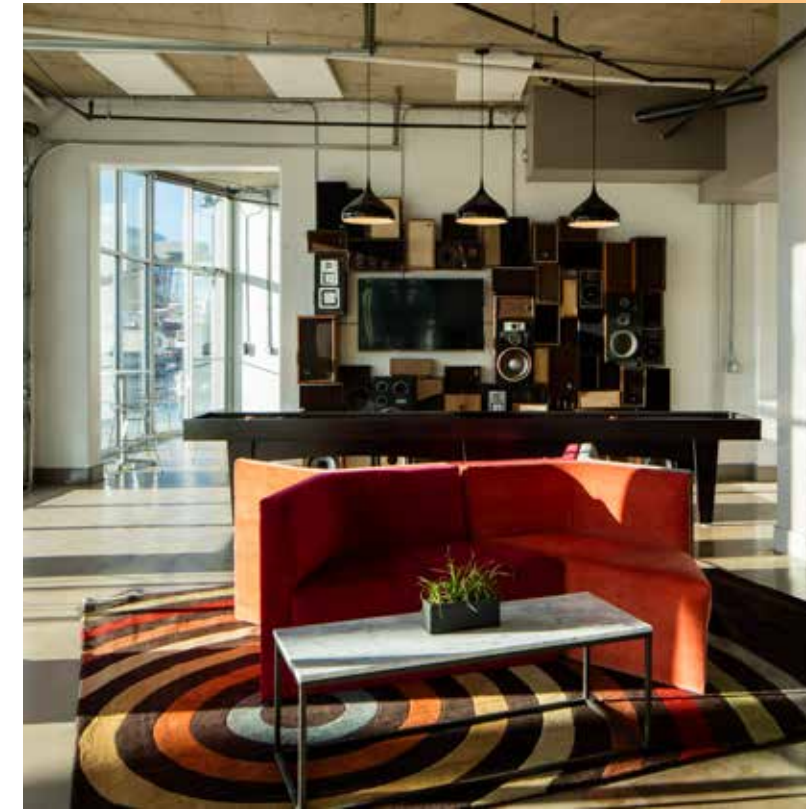


When designing for the needs of micro housing tenants, getting the kitchen right is crucial. Many micro units feature kitchens with a disproportionately large footprint, too many oversized appliances, and/or too little functional counter space. At Turntable, JNS committed to a counter-depth refrigerator and freezer, an 18-inch dishwasher, convection microwave oven, and an induction cooktop with magnetic pan and pot. Aside from creating more usable counter space, this also saved on the utility load. “Putting in a full electrical backbone doesn’t make sense,” said JNS’s Tobias Strohe. “It’s an extra cost that the tenants don’t need.”

**A ROUND
OF APPLAUSE**



TOP: The building may be cylindrical, but the individual units within Turntable Studios are pie-shaped. During their research phase, JNS learned that even in a micro unit, most people prefer to bring their own bed (as opposed to the popular trend toward Murphy beds). By maximizing space in the kitchen and bathroom, there was plenty of room left over for a queen-sized bed and sitting area. **ABOVE:** Retaining the location of the original bathtub and toilet allowed for a more efficient use of space elsewhere. The compact vanity includes a surprising amount of storage, and a sliding barn door helps reduce the sense of claustrophobia a traditional door often brings.



PROJECT CREDITS

- Developer:** The Nichols Partnership
- Architect:** JNS
- Interior Design:** JNS
- General Contractor:** IKOTA
- Structural Engineer:** Monroe & Newell Engineers
- Civil Engineer:** Creative Civil Solutions
- Landscape Architect:** Studio Insite
- MEP Engineering:** MDP Engineering Group
- Project Lender:** First National Bank

The main floor of Turntable Studios required the most structural reinvention. The units themselves allowed for only minor changes, but opening up the common areas on the ground floor was a priority for the designers at JNS. "We tore away walls wherever we could to make it feel as open as possible," said Interior Designer Jessica Schoen. "We got rid of the drop ceilings and connected the indoor and outdoor spaces with windows and overhead garage door access. This is the first thing people see when they walk in, and we wanted it to flow as one space." Since much of the inspiration for the project came from the iconic Capitol Records building, JNS carried a music theme throughout—including this vintage speaker wall in the main common area.

in the United States," said Jessica Schoen, interior designer at JNS. "But everything we picked, we went with a high quality product. And it all just fits."

They also left room for a queen sized bed, rather than the Murphy bed option more typical of a micro unit, after research showed that most people prefer this. In order to engineer some degree of privacy, they buttressed the bedding area against a wardrobe and shelving unit, and added a curtain track along the side. Nearer the front door, the bathroom features a sliding barn door mechanism and compact storage vanity, but makes use of the original (now reglazed) bathtub.

Given the small space and relatively reasonable price point (most units lease for less than \$1,000), you'd be forgiven for assuming that twentysomething professionals dominate the building. Everyone, including Nichols Partnership and JNS, assumed the same thing at first. But a funny thing happened at Turntable Studios, and it happened right away: diversity of tenants. Rather than attracting strictly Millennials, the less-is-more lifestyle of attainable micro housing seemed to appeal to those with a Millennial mindset—that is, those who value life experiences over material possessions, those who spend a lot of time away from home, and those

who are comfortable in less cluttered, impermanent spaces.

"I think we've grown accustomed to living in larger spaces than we really need," said Dan Schuetz. "Even here in Denver, which isn't Manhattan or Tokyo, I think people who try living in a smaller space find that it's kind of liberating, it sort of frees the mind to enjoy the community around you. A good percentage of the building is people in their 50s to their 80s. For some it's a second home or a city crash pad, and that works because it's nice and livable, there's a lot of natural light, and the built environment appeals to people from 18 to 85."



KITCHEN + FOOD DESIGN

FOUND IN TRANSLATION
STUDIO COMO • POLIFORM

HOME GROWN
DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS • FORTUNA CHOCOLATE

CULINARY COOL
SOUS VIDE • COOK MELLOW

KITCHEN + FOOD DESIGN

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

WHEN YOU THINK OF HIGH-END ITALIAN DESIGN, WHAT COMES TO MIND? FOR MANY, IT'S A CLEAN ELEGANCE: BOLD, CONFIDENT LINES THAT MARRY THE WARMTH OF FINISHED WOOD WITH SLEEK MODERN SURFACES. DIFFERENT INGREDIENTS COMMINGLE TO CREATE A COOL, COMPLEMENTARY CONCOCTION. ABOVE ALL ELSE, THOUGH, IS THE VISCERA—WHEN RUNNING YOUR FINGERS ALONG VARIEGATED COMPONENTS, YOU NEED TO FEEL THE FLOWING FUNCTIONALITY OF EACH PIECE LAID OUT EXACTLY AS IT SHOULD BE, WITH NOTHING LEFT OVER. IN OTHER WORDS, IT HAS TO FIT.

WORDS: Cory Phare • IMAGES: Leah Miller





“WE HAD A SIMPLE GOAL: TO CREATE A BEAUTIFUL KITCHEN THAT FILLED THE SPACE AND WAS INTEGRAL TO THE ARCHITECTURE.” -MATT SMITH, STUDIO COMO

“COMO” COULD REFER TO THE CITY IN NORTHERN ITALY AT THE BASE OF THE ALPS AND LUXURY RESORT-LADEN LAKE COMO; IT CAN ALSO BE TRANSLATED TO ENGLISH TO MEAN “BUREAU” OR “DRAWERS.” SIMILARLY, QUALITY KITCHEN DESIGN—FROM DRAWERS TO DOORS AND BEYOND—HAS QUICKLY BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH THE ITALIAN BRAND POLIFORM, FOUND AT DENVER-BASED STUDIO COMO.

Fit is a function of Poliform, headquartered roughly 10 miles outside of Como in Inverigo, Italy. Tracing its roots back to 1942 as a small artisanal shop, the modern global luxury brand added CR&S Varenna kitchens in 1996. Throughout their growth, however, they’ve maintained the character and culture of a family-run business.

Clarity and shared vision proved integral when Denver’s Poliform experts connected with clients in Salt Lake City. According to Matt Smith, Studio Como Technical Systems Designer, they

specifically selected the Kyton line to meet the goal of an ultra-clean performance aesthetic. “The plain door style with handles routed into the front panels gets rid of ornamentation,” said Smith. And on a larger level, it integrated into the footprint and structural flow: “We had a simple goal: to create a beautiful kitchen that filled the space and was integral to the architecture.”

A defining feature of the project is the pocket door units, which are popular in European kitchen design, according to Smith. Two doors along the main run will open and push back into the cabinetry, creating a clear workflow runway. After use, the doors slide back, creating the clean surface plane, resulting in what the homeowner describes as a “functional disappearance.” The result is profound: sleek, unbroken lines that contain every culinary need close at hand, hidden from sight when not in use.

Functionality flows throughout the kitchen, broken into distinct cooking and cleaning sections. From the pullout worktop to the sealed aluminum sink cabinet, each component is designed to

Viewed from the courtyard, the dark Spessart oak cabinets form a contrasting background for the softer, tactile matte white glass lining the island’s backside. Up closer, the subtle variegated surface of the wood becomes apparent, complementing the clean, natural lines that are void of excess ornamentation. Opened, the pocketed doors push back into cabinetry to create a clear walkway, a highlight of contemporary European kitchen design. The Varenna hood was specifically selected to cover both the main cooktop and flat grill and extends over the circular marble cutting board. With distinctive prep/cook and cleaning/storage zones, the homeowners can move between the panel-fronted appliances to the pull-out worktop and auxiliary-lighting adorned shelving (which can be cleared out and opened into additional workspace).

**FOUND IN
TRANSLATION**

make optimal use of space within, below, and around. The island's built-in Sub-Zero refrigerated drawer can be used for beverages and to supplement the full-sized Gaggenau unit on the opposing wall; except for this and the Varenna hood over two cooktops, the kitchen is outfitted with a full Gaggenau appliance package. Ample sized internal drawers outfitted with blum Legrabox systems are functionally arranged, with the top two housing spices and silverware and a deeper bottom one for pots and pans. And pull-out trash bins with built-in lids keep odors out of the main area. Whether part of the frosted warm white matte glass-fronted island or hidden behind Spessart Oak perimeter panels, layout and aesthetics were tailored to—and often directed by—client specifications (as evidenced by the last-minute choice to create space and break lines by offsetting the seating area, a decision their architect confirmed). "The design process was heavy on collaboration," said Smith. "It was about getting exactly what they needed."

With remote component production overseas and remote installation, translating the vision into an executable reality was not without its challenges. As it was difficult to justify regular on-site travel to Utah (much less Europe), process became beholden to communication efficacy: every modification, no matter how minor, was subject to a possible time delay. Fortunately, the experienced team at Studio Como was able to relay client specifications in an efficient manner, resulting in a smooth install. "The challenge was really in discussing design," said Smith. "There's different terminology. The key was figuring out what we needed to talk about before beginning to solve the problem."

The resulting solution is a maximal-function, minimalist-appearance kitchen. And according to the homeowner, it's a perpetual topic of conversation—from the expansive counter to the uniform paneled components, guests marvel at the sleek integration (and have to be shown where the "hidden" refrigerator lies). As the satisfied client reiterated, it brings optimal performance that vanishes after task. What's left behind is visceral, clean, and modern. Or, as Smith said, "It looks more like furniture and less like a kitchen." And that, regardless of translation, is what we call bellissimo.

PROJECT CREDITS

Kitchen
Studio Como

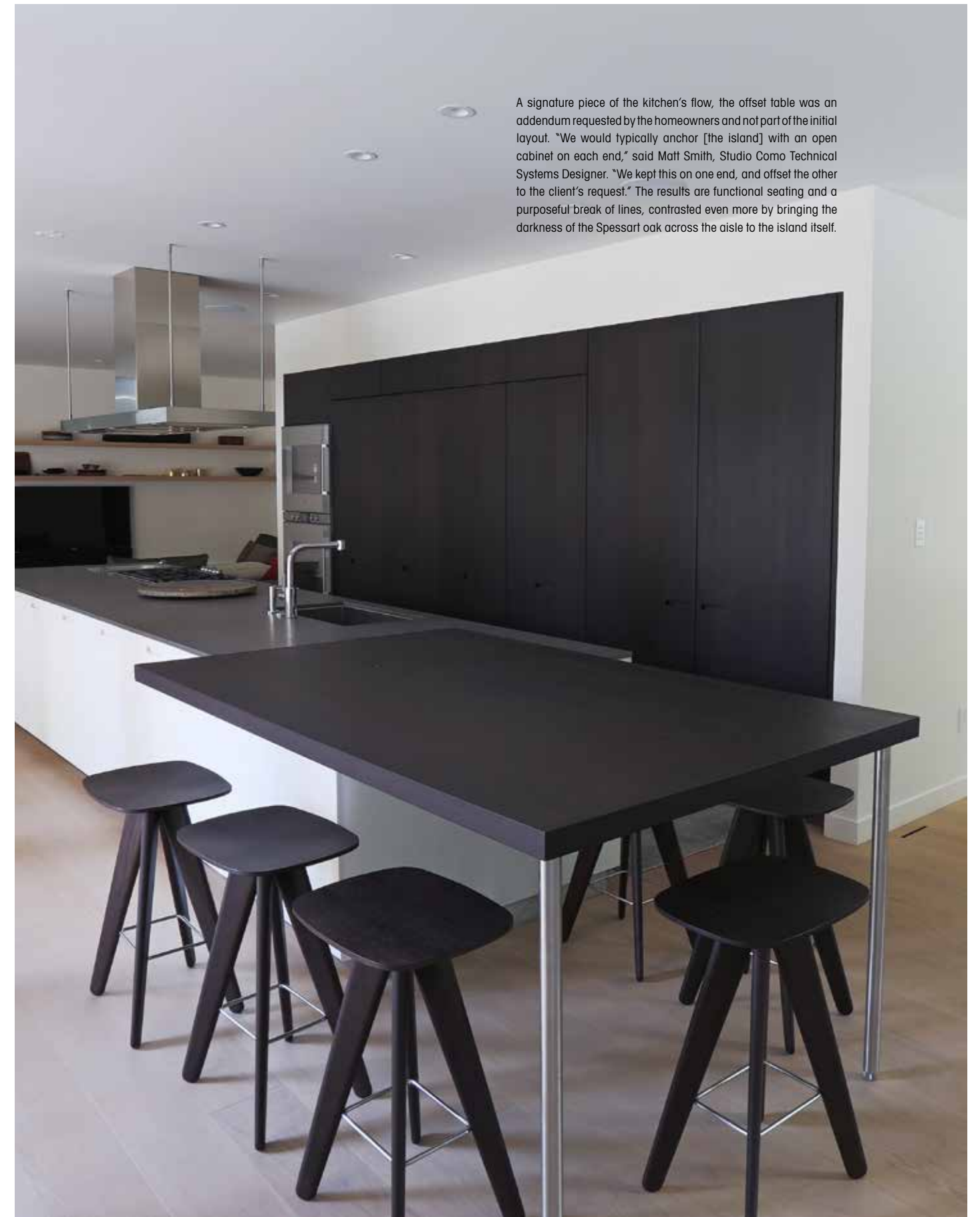
Architect
Lloyd Architects

Builder
Marsala & Company

Interior Design
Ann Tempest



Whether laboring in the adjacent workspace or unplugging for a bit of relaxation, flow is a fundamental factor in the open concept's design for life. And the key to anchoring the kitchen as a central component to this was finding the right fit in Studio Como. From Paola Lenti rugs to De La Espada dining room tables, the Denver design studio carried the right accents to ensure kitchen continuity extends throughout a residence.



A signature piece of the kitchen's flow, the offset table was an addendum requested by the homeowners and not part of the initial layout. "We would typically anchor [the island] with an open cabinet on each end," said Matt Smith, Studio Como Technical Systems Designer. "We kept this on one end, and offset the other to the client's request." The results are functional seating and a purposeful break of lines, contrasted even more by bringing the darkness of the Spessart oak across the aisle to the island itself.





HOME GROWN DESSERT BY DESIGN

TO HONOR DENVER BOTANIC GARDENS' BOETTCHER MEMORIAL TROPICAL CONSERVATORY, CACAO SEEDS GROWN ONSITE BECAME A TREAT FOR THE FIRST TIME WITH THE HELP OF FORTUNA CHOCOLATE.

WORDS: Amy Phare • IMAGES: Trevor Brown Jr.



FERMENTING. ROASTING. CRACKING. WINNOWING. REFINING. CONCHING. TEMPERING.

There's a lot of work that goes into making a perfect bar of chocolate—but even more that goes into growing a cacao tree. You'll typically only find one in the tropics and below altitudes of 1,000 feet, and in addition to needing year-round moisture, poor growing conditions make it a disease magnet.

It's a rare treat then, indeed, that Denver Botanic Gardens have not only successfully grown a cacao tree for 18 years, but that they have produced chocolate from it with the help of Boulder chocolate maker Fortuna Chocolate. "We were really excited about the experience with cacao grown at this elevation," said Fortuna Chocolate Owner Sienna Trapp Bowie. "It's amazing that they grew it. We were excited to work with it and experience its familiarity and differences—and to share it with the community during the 50th anniversary celebration."

The anniversary she refers to is the building of the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory—a mid-century architectural landmark designed by architects Victor Hornbein and Ed White. The Gardens honored the anniversary with a celebration of the

structure in February. "The idea was to have a confection—a party treat—of a plant growing at the conservatory, and it's the first time we harvested the pods on the tree and collaborated with a chocolate maker," said Nick Snakenberg, Curator of Tropical Plant Collections at the Gardens.

The pods, which are football-sized fruits with a thick, peel-like outer shell, house the cacao beans, or seeds. "The idea that it's a tropical fruit that produced something everyone enjoys is a surprise," said Snakenberg. Its Latin name, "Theobroma," translates to "food of the gods"—and for good reason. "Every bean has a different characteristic, much like wine," said Bowie. "You make wine from different grapes, and it will produce different flavors. This cacao [from the Gardens] is different, because of where it's grown. The varietal is very different from what we've been working with."

Aside from this special collaboration, Bowie, along with her husband, Aldo Jorge Ramirez Carrasco, and brother, Spencer Bowie, work exclusively with single-origin estates in Mexico. "The most important thing for us is to have this awareness of this relationship we're building with farmers," said Bowie. "The direct trade component is very important and produces the best flavor. Working directly with farmers allows input based on our



In 1998, cacao tree seedlings were planted in the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory at Denver Botanic Gardens. While seeds from the cacao tree pods have been studied for educational purposes, 2016 marks the first time they have been harvested to make chocolate. "Typically we leave them on the tree, so visitors can see them," said Nick Snakenberg, Curator of Tropical Plant Collections. "A lot of people don't have any idea where chocolate comes from, so we leave them on display." The pods pictured are the size of small footballs and have very thick, peel-like outer shells. "You need to open the pod carefully—you have to use a lot of power to open it without damaging beans inside," said Sienna Trapp Bowie, owner of Fortuna Chocolate, who partnered with the Gardens to produce chocolate from this tree.

HOME GROWN
DESSERT BY DESIGN

conversations over the years, and then we bring chocolate back to them so they can be part of the process and contribute to how they think the flavor is developing. Our goal is to grow the company to be a family legacy and get our family involved just like the farmers' families do."

Fortuna, a new bean-to-bar chocolate maker who operates out of a mobile "tasting lab" in Boulder, chooses single estates for the flavor results, as well. "The reason that it's so important is that most chocolate is made from different estates and made en masse, and you lose some of that unique flavor," said Bowie. "We're excited to be working with some of these estates in Mexico that do fermenting on site and maintain their artistry."

Ramirez was born in Mexico, and the couple has traversed the world—most recently having lived in Tokyo. While you can find a selection of their products at Cured, Blackbelly Market, and several other locations, most of the chocolate they produce is for local chefs at places like Fruition and Spuntino. "One thing we want to contribute is providing a level of thoughtfulness and quality—and making dessert with the same level of care and detail as the meal," said Bowie. "We really were inspired by the level of quality and ingredients while living in Tokyo and are happy to see that Colorado's food scene and chefs have really been flourishing." Fortuna's approach is additionally influenced by the European style of chocolate, where the cacao is ground for far longer to break down the particles, which Bowie describes as a much smoother mouth feel.

Lucky for Colorado, Fortuna's trio traveled the world and brought back with them the best ingredients from the best estates using the very best baking methods. As for the elusive chocolate produced from the Gardens' tree? Since so few pods were harvested, the chocolate was only available at the private celebration honoring the Conservatory's anniversary—but the seeds of inspiration go beyond, infusing the community with the feat of growing at altitude and the collaboration of our creative community.

"One of the main functions of Denver Botanic Gardens is to get people excited about plants," said Snakenberg. "There are not too many stronger connections than chocolate that everyone loves, and that connection is just one more thing we rely on plants for."



Fortuna Chocolate Owner Sienna Trapp Bowie (top center), husband Aldo Jorge Ramirez Carrasco (right), and brother, Spencer Bowie (left) were influenced by their time living overseas. "We really were inspired by the level of quality and ingredients while living in Tokyo," Sienna said. Like coffee, cacao seeds need to be fermented, roasted, separated, and ground before becoming chocolate as we know it. "You've probably tasted some gritty chocolate, which is ground for a short time," said Sienna. "The European style happens for several days, and that's our style," which, she said, results in a smoother mouth feel.



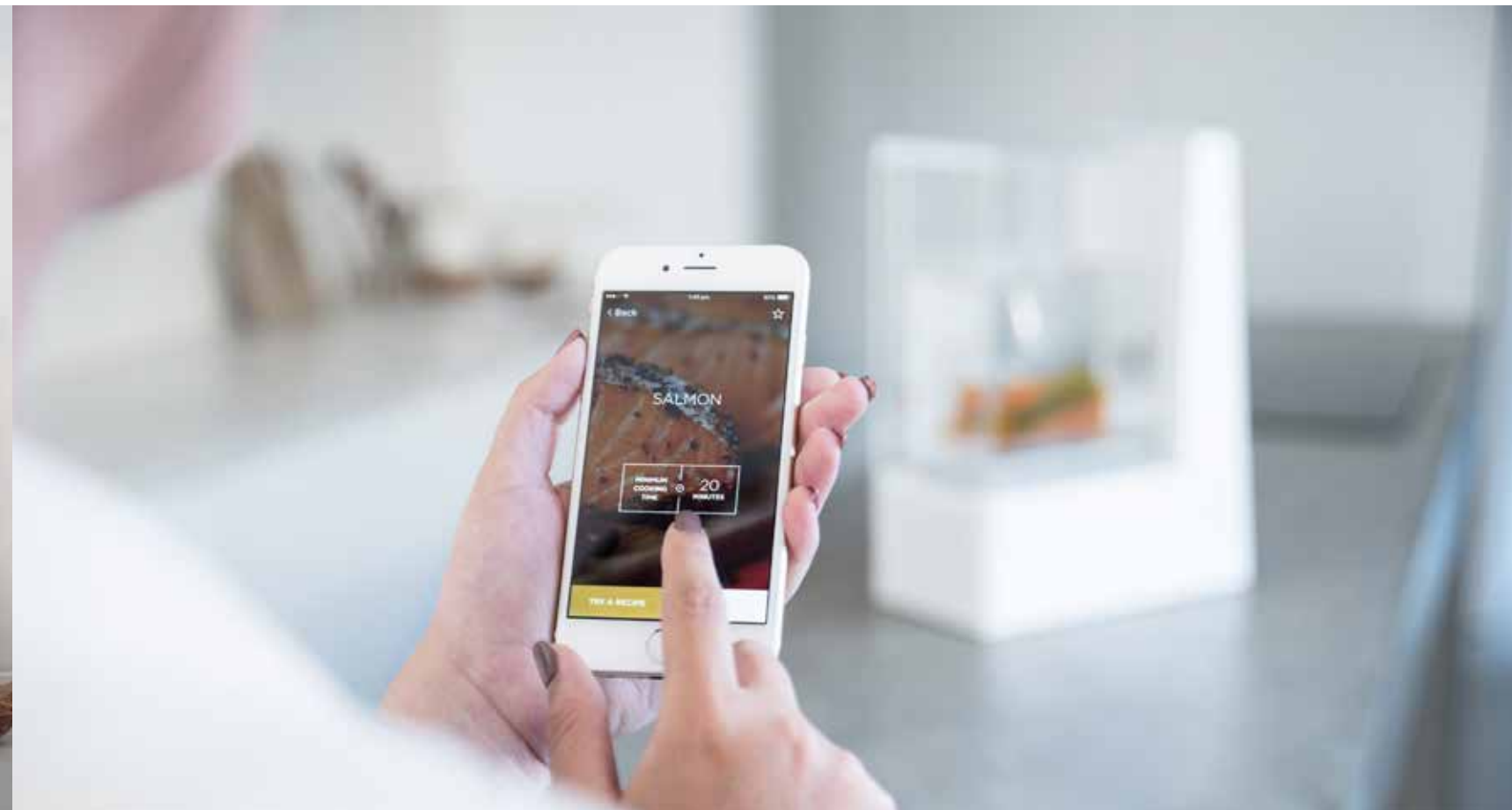
Aldo Jorge Ramirez Carrasco works from Fortuna Chocolate's mobile tasting lab with ground cacao seeds harvested from a tree at Denver Botanic Gardens. Growing the tree at altitude is a feat, and the new bean-to-bar chocolate maker created a small batch of the treat for a private event honoring the Boettcher Memorial Tropical Conservatory's 50th anniversary. Since Colorado's varying temperatures don't allow for traditional fermentation (which occurs in open air in regions near the equator, where cacao is usually grown), Fortuna used an incubator to achieve this step. "It's amazing to smell the differences between fermentation and what we know as the final product," said Fortuna Owner Sienna Trapp Bowie.

CULINARY COOL

MASTER MEALTIME USING YOUR SMARTPHONE AND MELLOW

REDEFINE COOKING WITH MELLOW—THE WORLD'S FIRST SOUS VIDE MACHINE CONTROLLED BY A SMARTPHONE. SOUS VIDE IS A RESTAURANT-STYLE, COMPLEX COOKING METHOD THAT USES PRECISE TEMPERATURE CONTROL TO COOK FOODS TO PERFECTION. MELLOW TAKES THAT TECHNOLOGY AND MAKES IT MAINSTREAM WITH GREAT DESIGN AND FUNCTIONALITY.

WORDS: Heather Shoning



HOW IT WORKS

Place your ingredients in self-sealing, waterproof Mellow food bags and drop them in the water tank. Next, use your phone to tell it what you're cooking, how you'd like it cooked—medium-well for steak or crisp-tender for veggies—and what time you want it ready. Mellow does the rest.

Start your meal before you head out for the day, and Mellow will keep everything cool until it's time to start cooking. You don't have to worry about anything spoiling. And at just the right time, it starts cooking. It uses controlled water temperature to cook the food evenly—never over- or under-cooked.

Because of the super smart technology that uses your WiFi, Mellow has no buttons or screen on the machine, so the design is sleek. And Mellow looks great on your countertop.

A LEARNING CURVE

As you use it, Mellow begins to learn your personal food preferences and will cook your meals just the way you like. It asks for your feedback and incorporates it into its "brain" so if it wasn't just right this time, next time ... perfecto! It's also flexible. If you're running an hour late for dinner, just give Mellow a heads-up, and it will make the necessary adjustments to ensure your food's ready when you are.

NET BENEFITS

"Another kitchen gadget, really?" you're thinking. Feel free to get rid of the rest if that's what it takes to make room for Mellow. This amazing device helps you make healthy meals as sous vide cooking retains more of your food's nutrients than other cooking methods, and the high-tech cooking bags seal in the juices so your food is never dry. You can make up to six adult portions at once, so invite your friends over for dinner—even on a weeknight!

+ cookmellow.com

THE SCIENCE OF SOUS VIDE

While sous vide literally translates to "under vacuum" in French, sous vide cooking has become a household term, thanks to its ease and results.

In a nutshell, it's cooking that happens in a precise, temperature-controlled water bath—a desirable technique for the mastery you can achieve because of precise temperature and humidity control. While best for meat and eggs, you can use it to cook veggies, as well.

With traditional cooking—by oven, range, or grill—temperatures fluctuate. However, when cooking sous vide, food boasts an even doneness all the way through—no undercooked centers or burnt edges. And with our lack of humidity, sous vide cooking should be a staple for every Coloradan, as the closed bag creates a fully humid environment that effectively braises the food. Basically, your food is cooked evenly, is juicy, and is a cinch to create. What's not to love?

EYE CANDY

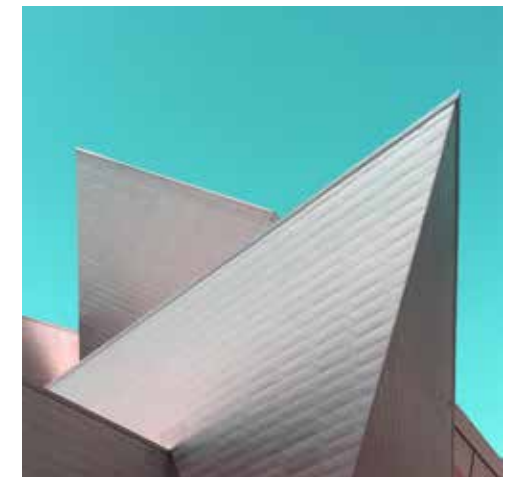
DESIGN IS SWEET, BUT HOW CAN WE LOOK AT EVERYDAY STRUCTURES AS SACCHARINE-SATURATED SUCCOR? DRENCHED IN RETRO-FUTURIST HUES, THE INSTAGRAM FEED FOR DENVER-BASED ASHLEY ENGLER (@COLORADO_SUNSHINE) ANSWERS THAT QUESTION THROUGH A PASTEL PROMENADE OF INSPIRING GEOSPATIAL GEOMETRY. EVEN MORE ASTOUNDING: THIS ARCHITECTURAL EYE CANDY COMES FROM THE PALM OF OUR HANDS.

WORDS: Cory Phare

FACING a difficult point in her personal life, Ashley Engler answered a different challenge in February 2011—taking a daily photo in response to someone literally on the other side of the globe. Australian blogger @FatMumSlim (Chantelle Ellem) created a picture-a-day prompt that got Engler thinking of how to capture a concept—2016’s list includes such instigatory esoteria as “lucky,” “faceless,” and “simplicity.” This artistic constraint resulted in a focus that unleashed Engler’s creative expression, one frame at a time. “Some prompts were really hard,” she said. “For instance, ‘toothbrush.’ How are you going to take an interesting picture of that?”

Thank the Insta-gods for oral hygiene. Her photos of buildings today now hit like a burst of sugar to the brain: heliotropic hexagons ascending to their termini, or the Golden Ratio unfurling down a cyan staircase. Soaring, swirling, and curving, they exist at the apex of structure and perception. And like the inspirational sayings they’re garnished with, they reward you more the longer you spend with them. “It’s a source of creativity, especially with the uplifting captions that come from everyday conversations,” said Engler. “They can be a little epiphany of life.” Pairing the elements of image and text is key, and the referential impact can be exponential. “I look at any Instagram post, and with the photo and caption, can identify exactly what was going on at that precise day and time,” she said. “In that way, it’s somewhat of a diary or journal.”

Constructing that personal monolith is no easy feat—especially when you’re doing it all on your phone. On one of Colorado’s many clear, sunny days, Engler will take up to 20 photos of a specific structure that



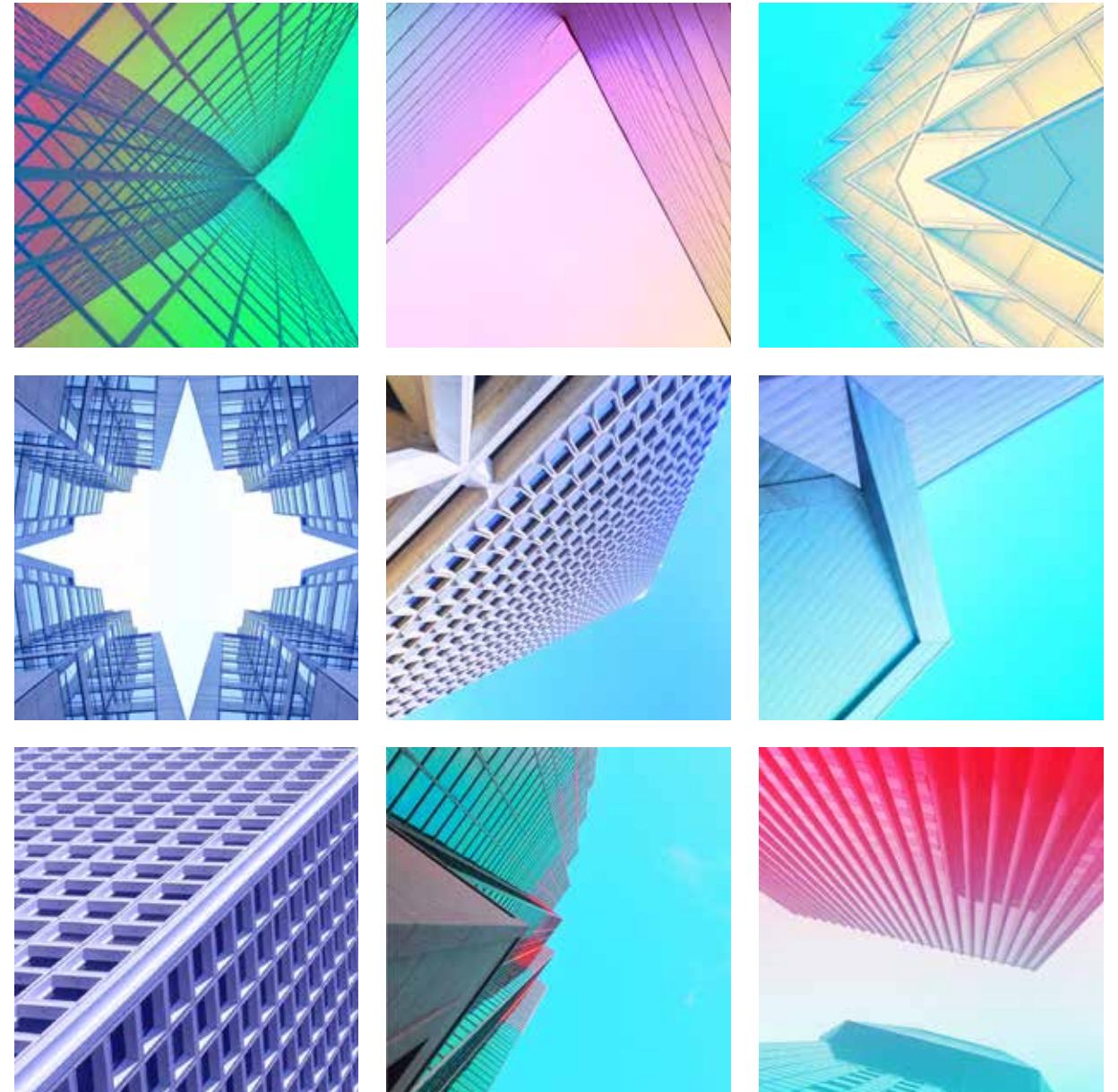
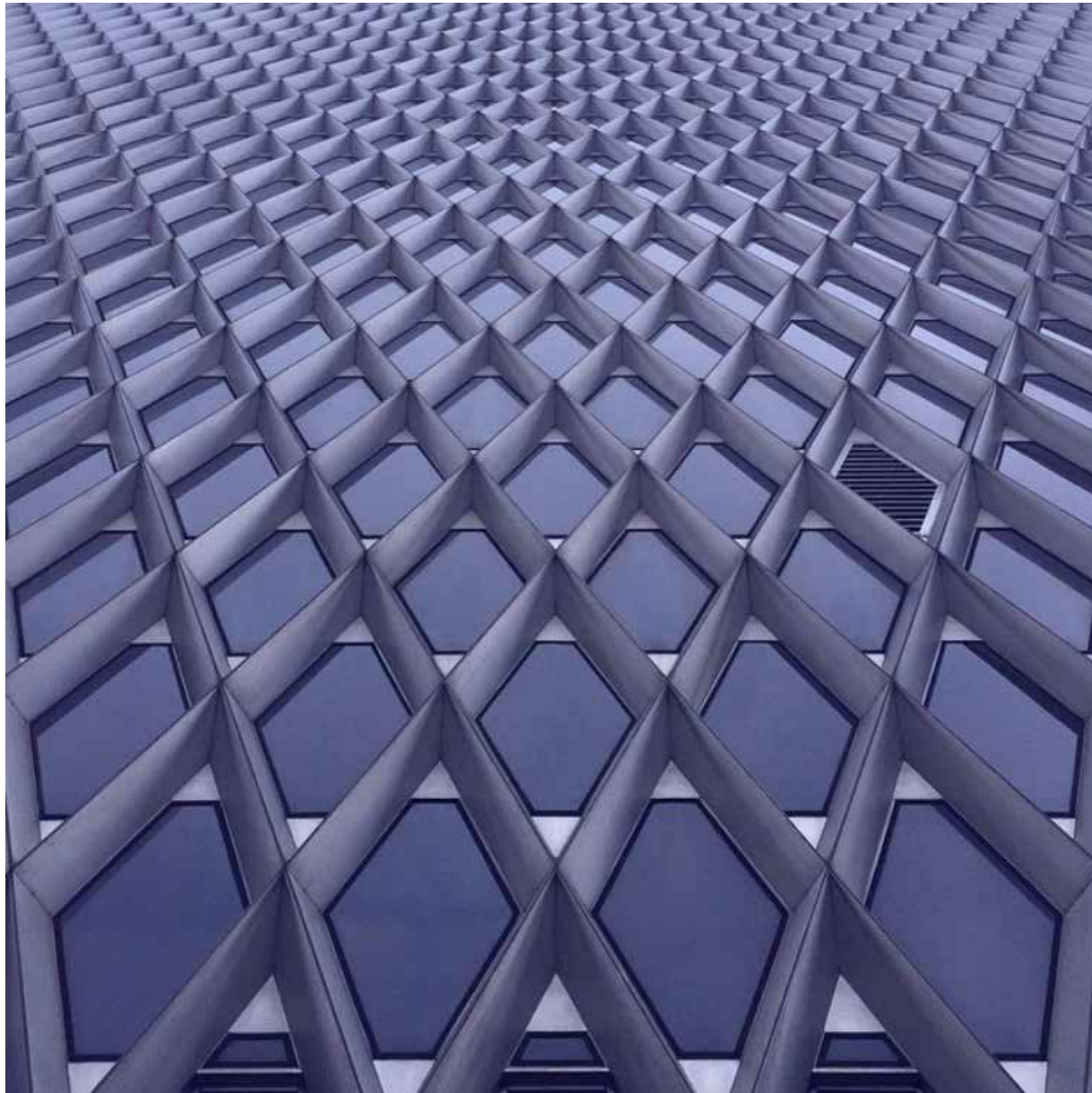
catches her eye before beginning the editorial process. For that, she starts with Snapseed, an application used to crop, brighten, and adjust color saturation before moving on to more specialized tools; Diptic, PicTapGo, and Pixlr are just a few of the six or more apps she’ll use to compose the perfect picture. And how does she know when she gets there? “There’s a gut feeling to knowing when they’re done,” said Engler. “I don’t like to post it unless it speaks to the soul and I’m content with what’s been made.”

In addition to her personal Instagram feed, she also moderates @arkiromantix_denver (the regional branch of a popular tag for abstract architectural imagery) and @FlippinDenver (a nonprofit literary organization). Involvement in these various communities has led to her organizing photo walks and meetups for fellow aesthetes, including Keith Clark (@loverofbuildings), formerly featured in *Modern In Denver*. “We’ll do that quite a bit—just explore the city and shoot buildings together,” said Engler. “It’s neat to put a face and personality to a name you interact with all the time.” This sense of community also feeds a collaborative spirit: Engler will occasionally post others’ work that has inspired her (with attribution and filtered through her own creative lens, of course).

The result is a vibrant and nuanced Instagram feed, a saltwater taffeta of flowing color, structure, and volume. And the ephemeral nature of her medium means she’s never far from seeking inspiration for the next interpretation—and challenge. “In addition to architecture, [the feed] is sometimes abstract, sometimes geometric, and you might even see a cloud shot or pretty sunset,” Engler said. “It’s good to expect the unexpected; I like to be able to look back on it and smile.” We’ll tap twice to that.

@colorado_sunshine







WHEN Eero Saarinen won a bid in 1944 to design the General Motors Technical Center in Michigan, the agreement also required furnishings for 5,000 people across the 25-building complex. Saarinen wisely decided to fill that requirement with pieces he was already designing for Knoll. Among the furniture to arise from that alliance was Model 73, the Womb Settee, a double-wide version of the now-classic Womb Chair.

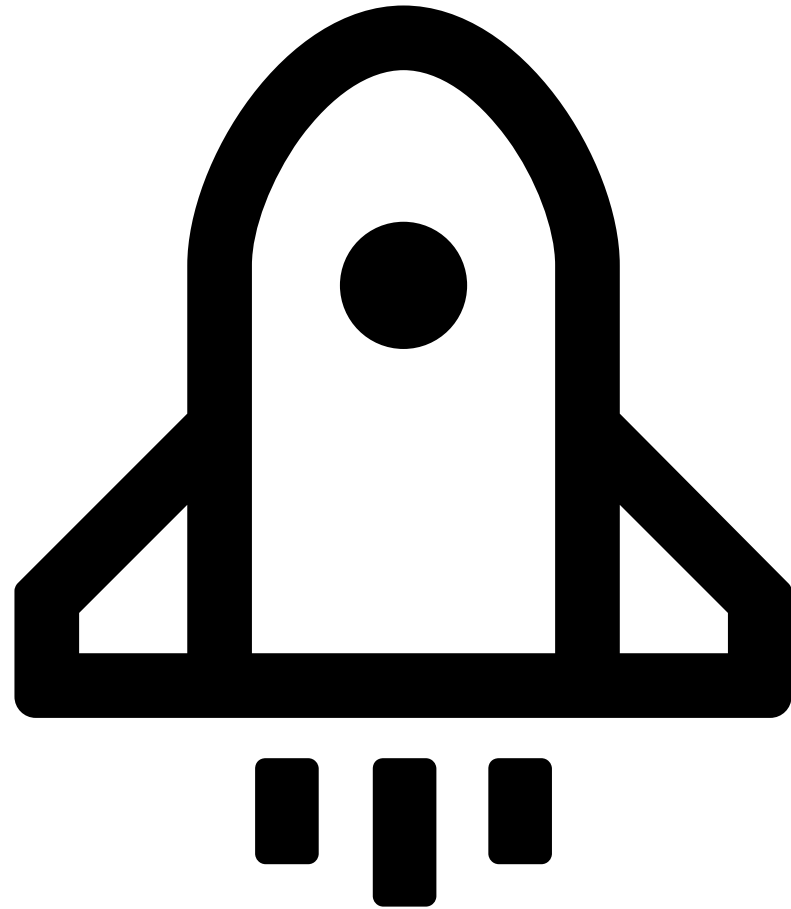
But while the Womb Chair went on to great acclaim, the settee remained in production for just three years. Meant to withstand heavy usage in a busy corporate setting, the flexibility of the plastic shell undermined its durability. Patent documents show that Saarinen's early plans involved two separate halves joined at the center, but even though he ultimately opted for a single molded piece, the settee wouldn't hold. Bending and breaking occurred, and by 1956, production was stopped altogether.

In 2012, Knoll took on the challenge of reviving the lost masterpiece. Progress was slow at first. Saarinen's original upholstery drawings were little help, since he'd made undocumented changes while developing the prototypes. "We encountered the same challenges they had in the late 1940s," said Design Director Benjamin Pardo.

Persistence paid off, however, as the Knoll design team eventually landed on a technology called Reaction Injection Molding (RIM), which strengthened the shell and quelled the pesky structural problems. And by adding a strut not visible to the naked eye, the Womb Settee is now every bit as durable as it is beautiful. Which is saying something.

MAKE WOMB FOR THE SETTEE.

THE FORGOTTEN SIBLING OF A MODERN CLASSIC CALLS ON NEW TECHNOLOGY TO SOLVE OLD PROBLEMS. KNOLL WELCOMES BACK A SAARINEN ORIGINAL, SIX DECADES LATER.



“A ROCKET WILL NEVER BE ABLE TO LEAVE THE EARTH’S ATMOSPHERE.”

THE NEW YORK TIMES, JANUARY 13, 1920



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