

residential architect

A HANLEY-WOOD, INC., PUBLICATION / MARCH 1999

jim nagle
mark nasset
paul volpe

midwest moderns

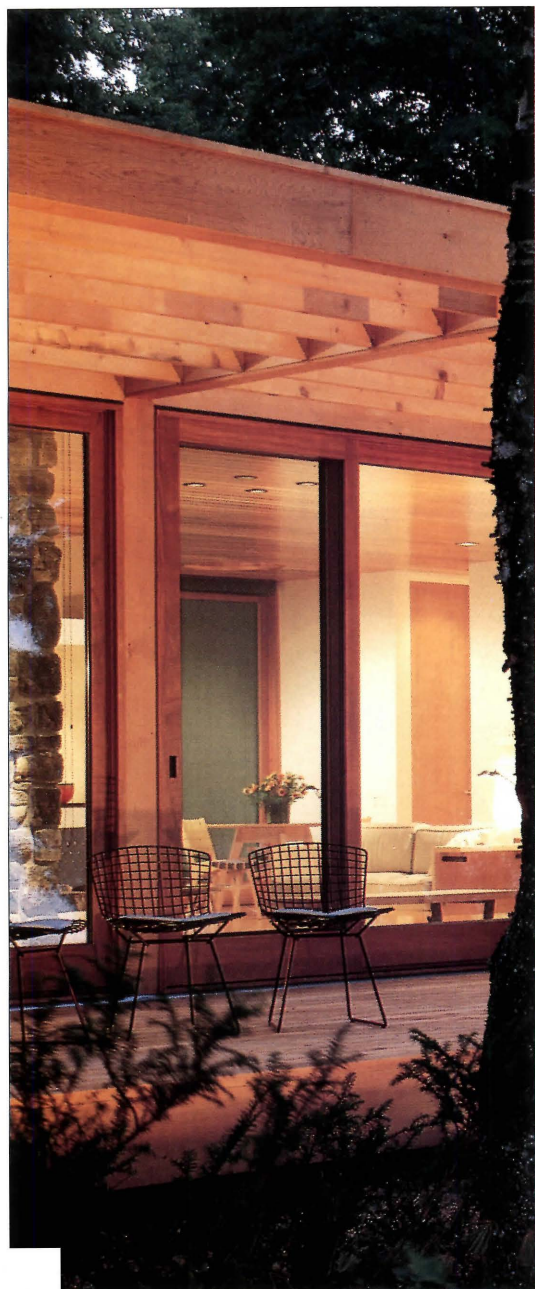


best of 1999: texas, california, florida /
home for life / structural insulated panels /
ownership options / marketing strategies /
bauhaus at 70 / postcard from glasgow

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Three Midwestern architects—Jim Nagle, Paul Volpe, and Mark Nessel—steer clear of regional stereotypes in their refreshingly Modernist work.

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Why Houston architect Bradley C. Hollenbeck, AIA, likes to design very big houses for very rich people.

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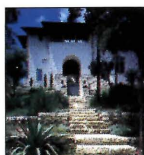
Sole proprietor? Partnership? Corporation? We evaluate a variety of ownership options for residential practices.

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Everything that you do shapes your firm's image in the eyes of the public. Here are eight marketing techniques you can use to make a good impression.

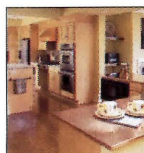
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What makes a good house a good home?

A collection of houses from Texas, California, and Florida sets a standard for excellence in residential design.

home for life... page 86



Devereaux & Associates pushes the edges of manufactured housing in LifeStages '99, a show house for active adults who want to age in place.

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This month's selection of unique products blurs the line between art and utility.

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Day-to-day office tools that keep small residential practices running smoothly.

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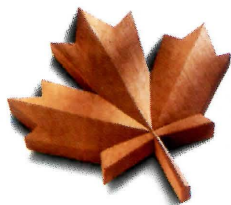
New York architect Colin Cathcart swears by structural insulated panels (SIPs) in residential design.

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A shower enclosure fabricated from suspended glass panels required close consultation with specialty trades.

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Deborah Berke, AIA, takes refuge in Louis Kahn's British Art Center at Yale.



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blueprint. Your vision, your insight adds the details which take a home from ordinary to

extraordinary. So you need products that highlight what can be done, rather than what

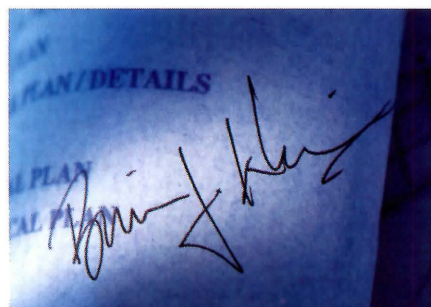
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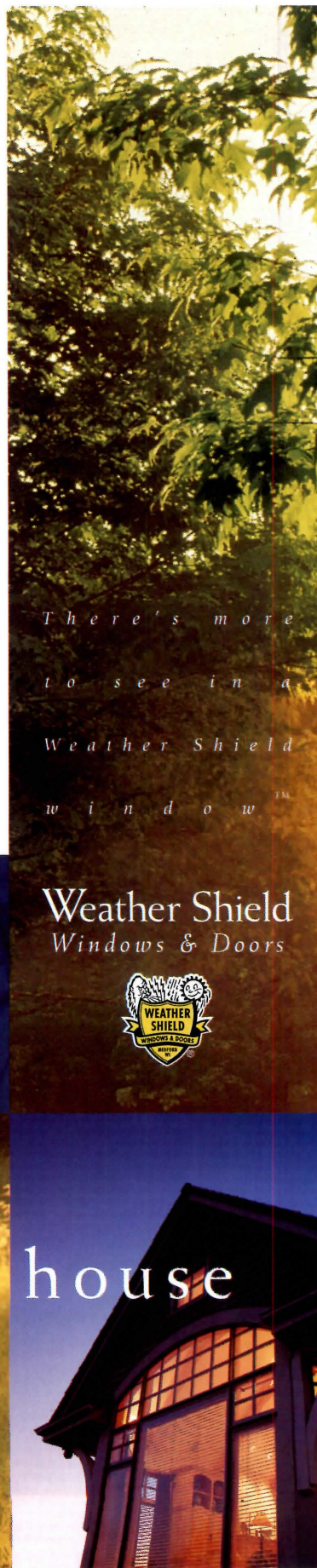
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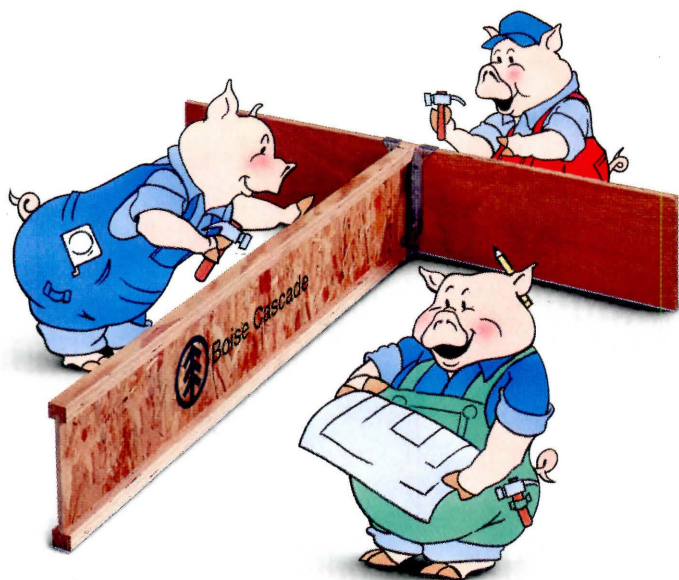
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Judy H. Neighbor / Art Director / 202.736.3331 / jneighbor@hanley-wood.com

Amy Doherty / Managing Editor / 202.736.3442 / adoherty@hanley-wood.com

Meghan Drueding / Associate Editor / 202.736.3344 / mdruedin@hanley-wood.com

Deena Shehata / Assistant Editor / 202.736.3407 / dshehata@hanley-wood.com

Jennifer Johnston / Graphic Designer

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Kristina K. Goings / Graphic Designer

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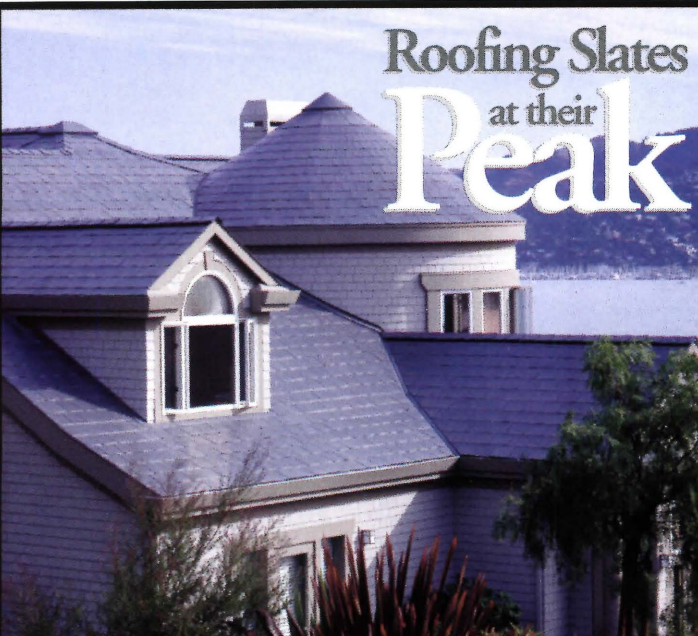
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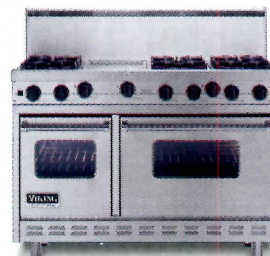
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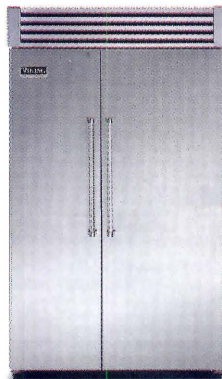
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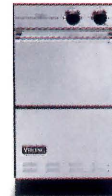
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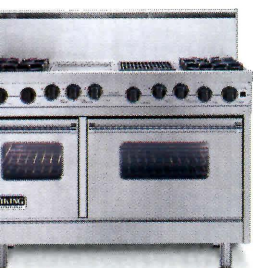


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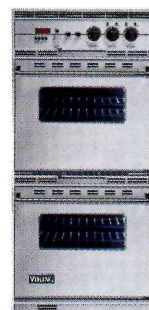
Dual Fuel 48" Wide Ranges



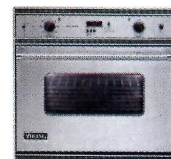
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Gas 36" Wide
Single Ovens



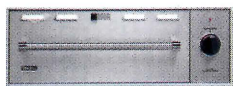
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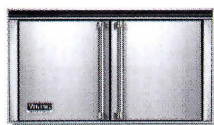
Electric 30" Wide
Single & Double Ovens



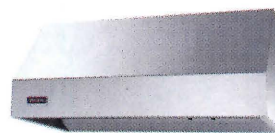
Gas 30" & 36" Wide Cooktops



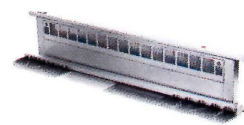
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from the editor

good housemaking

feast your brains on our midwest moderns.

plus—three houses that exemplify excellence in residential design.

by susan bradford barror

In the November/December 1998 issue of *residential architect*, I asked our readers whether architectural regionalism is alive or dead. The question generated a number of provocative responses, which you'll find in this issue, starting on page 16. The prevailing view seems to be that regionalism is indeed dying—if not already dead—thanks to our transient and polycultural society, the homogeneity wrought by corporate America, and a desire to save on

nation's heartland and the work of three architects—Jim Nagle, Paul Volpe, and Mark Nessel—whose playful Modernist housing shatters the stereotype of stolid Midwestern farmhouses and Prairie Style paeans to Frank Lloyd Wright.

Their interpretations of local vernacular idioms are at once free-spirited and idiosyncratic. And while their work is by no means typical of the housing being produced in the Midwestern United States, it shows the subtle reach and sophistication that regional influences can have.

we thought long and hard
about what makes a good house
—and a good home.

construction costs, to name but a few of the reasons our readers gave.

from the heartland

The context for the question was our November/December cover story on the work of David Lake, Ted Flato, and three of their contemporaries in the Texas design community. This month we move to the

good houses, good homes

Also in this issue, you'll find smart marketing ideas for residential design firms, an analysis of ownership options for architectural practices, a New York architect's views on designing and building with structural insulated panels, and another New Yorker's love affair with a museum in Connecticut.



Katherine Lambert

Plus—a three-house portfolio we've called the Best of 1999. We thought long and hard about what makes a good house—and a good home. Then we set out to find superlative examples.

The houses we selected hail from three very different regions of the country: central Texas, Southern California, and Florida's panhandle. Though they share the rigors of correct proportion, intelligent use of materials, and site sensitivity, their architects—Paul Lamb, Taal Safdie, and Alexander Gorlin—embrace varying philosophies on the role regionalism should play

in the design process.

It is that range of philosophies that keeps the best residential design fresh and forward-thinking—the very kind of work we like to show in the pages of *residential architect*.

Think you've got a superb home or community to share with your fellow readers? Send us decent color photos, floor plans, and a project description. We are interested in projects less than two years old, which have not been published nationally.

And—as always—send us your comments, suggestions, and story ideas. We look forward to hearing from you. **ra**

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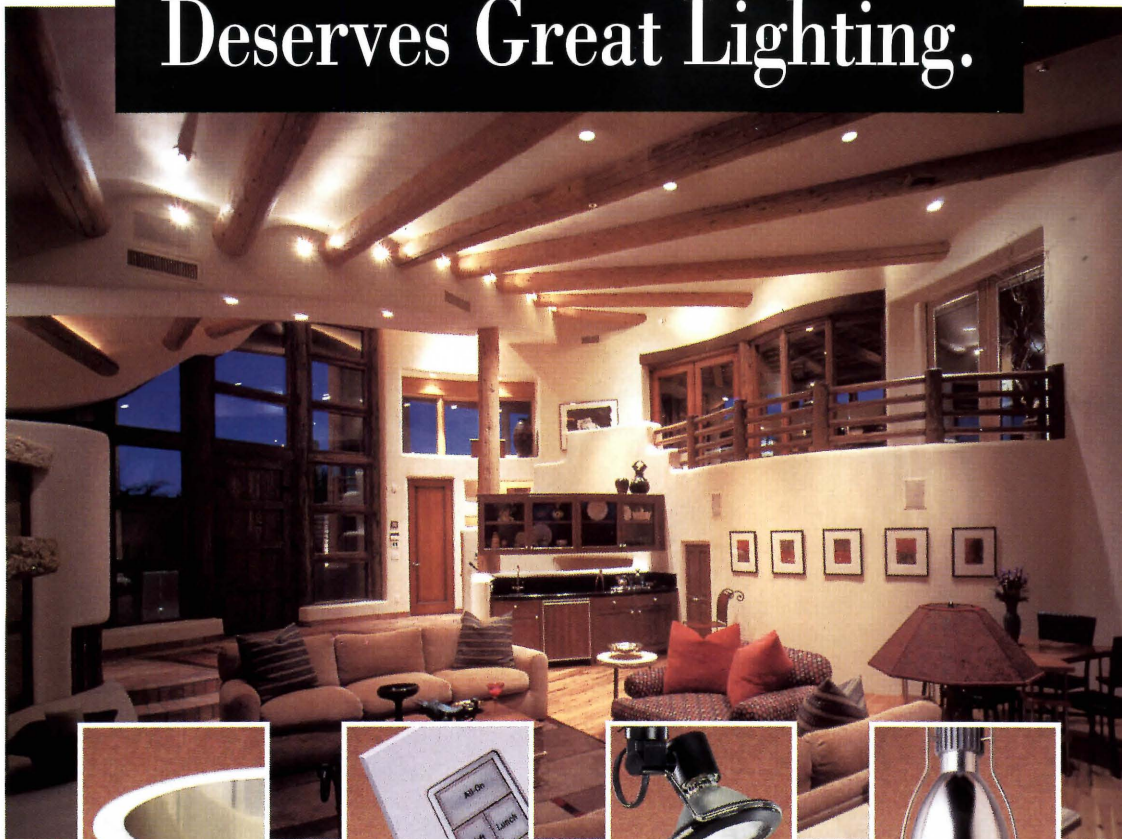


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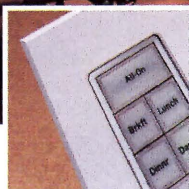
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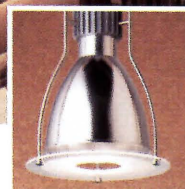
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regionalism: dead or alive?

I enjoyed reading your thoughts on the supposed death of regionalism (From the Editor, November/December 1998, page 11). I believe that there are several factors leading to this phenomenon.

First, corporate image. A host of national and global firms have marketed their services through the use of a corporate image, which is incorporated into their facilities' architecture. Think of McDon-

ald's, Home Depot, Mobil, and Citibank.

Second, the transient nature of our nation's workforce has helped create a demand for styles that reflect not the region in which people are currently living, but the region they moved from. For example, New England clapboard cottages in Orange County, Calif., and Colonial Revival houses in Celebration, Fla. (Note that those styles originated in the Northeast and are now showing up in regions that are growing economically. In contrast, you do

not see many Mediterranean houses showing up in the North.)

Third, I believe that this trend within the housing market is a result of the fact that 98 percent of new homes are being designed by contractors. It is incredible that most home buyers are willing to pay 7-percent Realtor fees yet are unwilling to pay even 3-percent fees to have their new home custom-designed by an architect. That says a lot about what consumers think of architects' services.

Incidentally, I am an

architect working for a large A&E firm in Florida (but I am originally from Buffalo, N.Y.).

*David Schoening
Reynolds, Smith and Hills
Jacksonville, Fla.*

I n answer to your question about whether regionalism is dead or alive:

I don't think it's dead ... yet. But it is dying.

There once was a time when you could identify where you were by the style of architecture you saw around you. With the homogenization of the



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world over the last generation, that's harder to do. There are Taco Bells and Burger Kings in every neighborhood on earth now; giant superstores are gobbling up or out-competing Mom-and-Pop neighborhood stores. When you shop, you don't know any one and no one knows you.

Just last week, my neighborhood hardware store closed forever. Home Depot put them out of business. In 1994, our neighborhood pharmacist, Mr. Albert, closed his long-time corner drug store with its timeless soda fountain. An Eckerd's pharmacy—part of a chain of drug stores—replaced it.

In residential neighborhoods, you can't tell what's Florida architecture anymore. People move here from up North and want their style of home to come with them. We now name our builder models after the towns or cities where the style originated. One builder wants me to design a tenement-style house like the one I grew up in back in Massachusetts. Its name? The New Bedford. I also have the Brockton, Fairhaven, Dartmouth, and Hyannis models. We have styles from California,



the Carolinas, California, Georgia, California, the Midwest, California, Oregon, California, and Texas. Did I mention California? Sorry.

Thankfully, though, the real Florida has not completely disappeared, once you get away from the tinsel and glitter of the tourist areas. Hopefully, these out-of-the-way towns that grew up

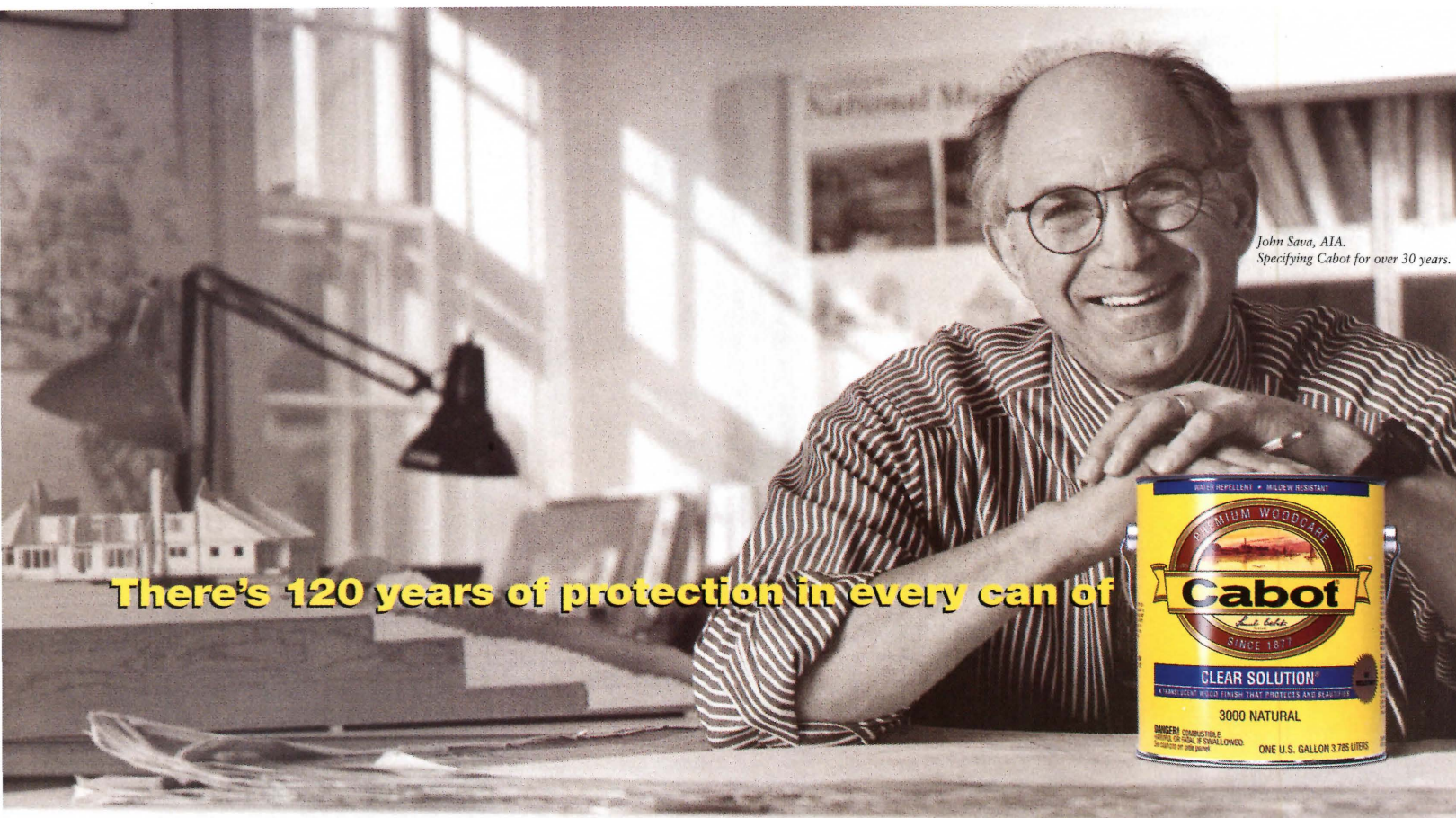
along America's main streets before the advent of the interstate highway system will remain as they always did, sort of like in the movie "Fried Green Tomatoes."

Maybe, just maybe, we'll get back to what made this diverse nation so diverse in the first place, and return to our roots in residential and commercial design. Then everyone's home town won't look like everyone else's home town. And that's the way it should be.

Can we stop the death of regionalism? I hope so.

Steve A. Shard, AIBD
Design Services Unlimited
Orlando, Fla.

continued on page 20



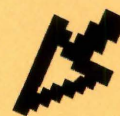
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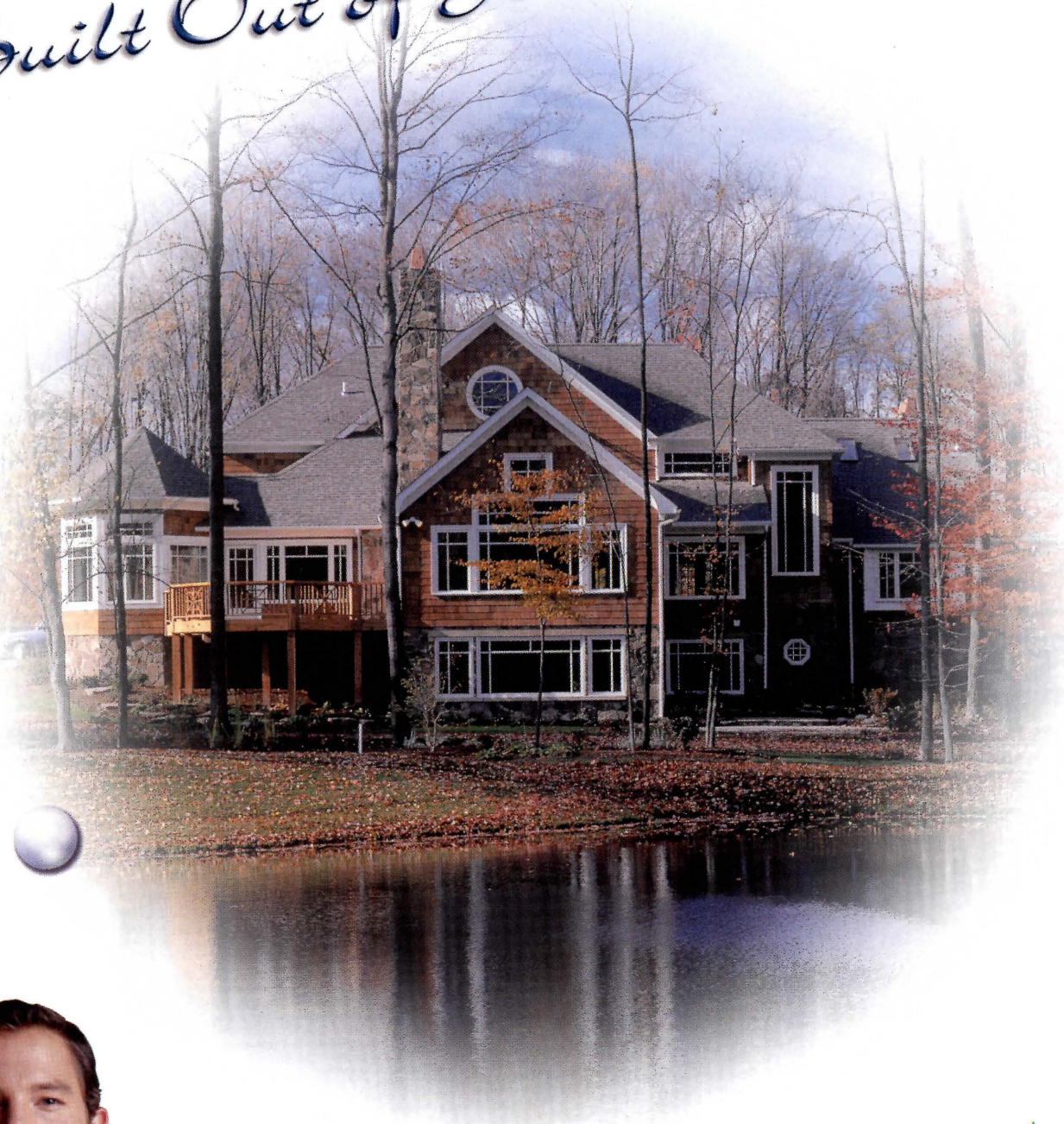
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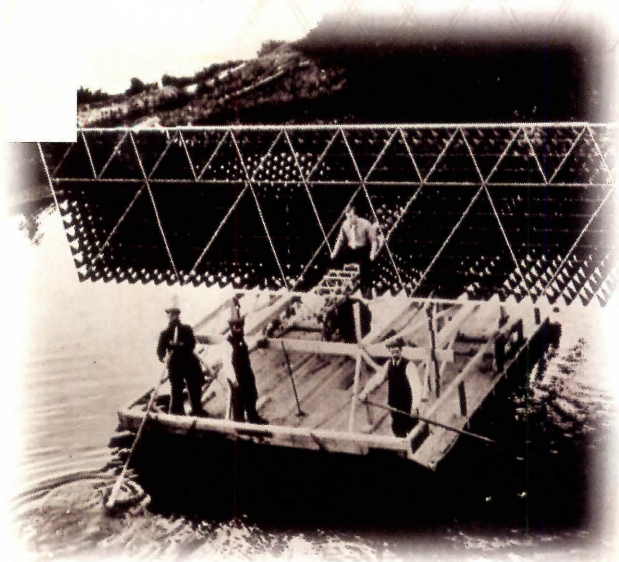


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Not to mention that telephone thing.

Alexander Graham Bell's genius didn't end with the telephone. In 1907, he achieved manned flight with the tetrahedron—essentially a flying iron kite in the shape of four equilateral triangles.

letters

In essence, you answered your own question as to whether regionalism is dead or alive when you mentioned that buyers in Washington, D.C., prefer brick colonials while Philadelphians opt for stone-front houses. Regionalism appears to be quite strong; it is vernacular architecture that is on the ropes and gasping.

What we used to call vernacular architecture—building or designing with materials and methods appropriate to a given region, locale, or climate—has given way to a kind of Wild-West movie-set facade. Stone fronts are fine if you view them from just one perspective—dead on—but we do not live in a two-dimensional world. When one gets to the corner of the house and finds that the stone wall is supported by clapboards, integrity suffers.

Vernacular architecture in its purest form is a structure built of materials found on the site. If a certain type of tree grows naturally in an area, it makes sense to use that type of wood in construction. But Styrofoam as stone? Concrete rocks?

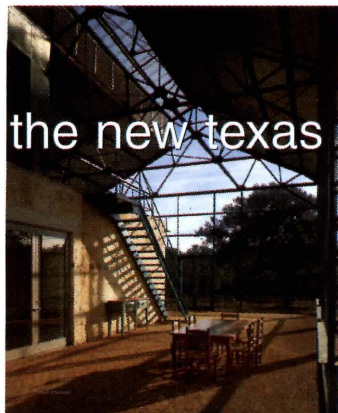
I understand the economics involved, but that is precisely the problem. We live in a time when the dollar takes precedence over honesty, reality, and integrity—values that do not exist in our government and certainly do not exist in our residential designs.

These are, of course, my opinions only and do not represent the thoughts of the firm for which I work.

*Guy A. Ciappini
Lindsay, Pope, Brayfield
& Associates
Lawrenceville, Ga.*

Throughout the U.S. today, the ongoing transformation of the building industry has turned regionalism into a largely nostalgic and symbolic exercise. To the extent that regional archetypes have historically encompassed unique technical responses to particularly geophysical contexts—available materials, local trade practices, climate and seismicity, and indigenous culture—they have been genuine. But, starting perhaps with balloon framing, building techniques have evolved: improvements in flashing and weatherproofing, engineered lumber and steel framing, cavity insulation and air conditioning and ventilation, dual and low radiant transmission glazing, and better seismic and wind resistive engineering. New building techniques and modern building codes have reduced vernacular architecture to stylistic emulation. In California, energy codes have contributed greatly to the demise of regionalism as well.

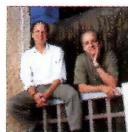
In the past, accidental and arbitrary cultural distinctions also characterized regional architecture, thanks to a combination of isolation and ethnic tunnel vision. Today, however, the emotional identification of an architectural work with a particular environment is both quaint and technically irrelevant because of the growing universality of building technology. Any stylistic archetype can exist essentially as a shell, regardless of the kind of space enclosed, not least because virtually every “natural” finish material has a cheaper and more reliable modern doppelganger. Fire



the new texas regionalism

david lake and ted flato lead the trend toward regionalism in residential design, texas-style.

by susanne lang



The authors of the new Texas Regionalism, David Lake and Ted Flato, are pictured in their studio in Austin, Texas. Lake and Flato are the authors of the new Texas Regionalism, a book published by the University of Texas Press.

Wind and sun, architectural style, historical feel. These are the elements that define the new Texas Regionalism, a book published by the University of Texas Press. The book is a collection of essays by David Lake and Ted Flato, two of the leading architects in the state. The book is a collection of essays by David Lake and Ted Flato, two of the leading architects in the state.

the lake/flato effect
Just when you think you know what a regionalist is, here comes David Lake and Ted Flato. The two architects are the authors of the new Texas Regionalism, a book published by the University of Texas Press.

PHOTOGRAPH BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS

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codes in many communities in Southern California have practically outlawed wood shakes and shingles. Does regional authenticity then allow the substitution of Class A cementitious shakes or composition shingles with thick butts or faux-wood textures? Once the "real" parameter, fire resistance, is met, the choice is virtually meaningless in a regional sense, except for stylistic preferences.

Custom residential architecture may continue to provide opportunities for the use of venerable techniques and materials when cost is not an issue, but regionalism is out of the question for mass housing, except for superficial stylistic variations. Even appropriate massing of stylistic archetypes is difficult in merchant housing; the current term in vogue to describe affordable framing at medium densities is "box on box," with a bit of applique to confuse and bastardize the historic rhetoric. Single-family custom homes typically allow the designer latitude for building orientation and passive or active solar design; tract housing or custom residences on infill sites almost never do.

Vernacular architecture is by definition borne of regional and cultural imperatives. Talented architects such as Lake

and Flato ("The New Texas Regionalism," November/December 1998, page 46) may build careers using native or rustic materials brilliantly—and arbitrarily—on behalf of their affluent clients' lifestyles and philosophic principles, but regional environments no longer demand it. Regionalism, then, has become just another stylistic choice at the whim of current celebrity. True regionalism has died a natural death, another casualty of megacultural evolution.

Gary R. Collins
G.R. Collins + Associates
Costa Mesa, Calif.

student rate

a friend of mine gave me four back issues of *residential architect*. I read each cover to cover and found them to be very valuable and informative. Looking at the subscription qualification questionnaire, though, I decided that there is something missing from the criteria for the distribution of this magazine: students. These kinds of magazines provide the most current information—material that can strengthen student designs and thinking. I propose that *residential architect* be made available to college students who are studying

architecture.

Before the next issue is put into print, consider the students. Without them, architecture simply would not be the rising, dynamic

field that it is now.

*Daniel O'Connor
Texas Tech University
Lubbock, Texas*

editor's note: U.S. student subscriptions are now available for \$19.99 a year. If you'd like to subscribe, please call 888.269.8410.

more on macs

Regarding "PCs Live On" (Letters, November/December 1998, page 14): Anyone who has used a Mac and a PC prefers a Mac. I use a PC at work (only because I have to), and a Mac at home. Architects have gotten the notion that a PC with AutoCAD gives them compatibility with their consultants. An AutoCAD file from a consultant is just as foreign as if it were from another program, unless all parameters are the same. There are programs on the Mac that do everything a residential designer needs to do, and more. With Mini-Cad, PowerCADD, and DenebaCAD, you have more than you need—plus the compatibility to work with files from AutoCAD.

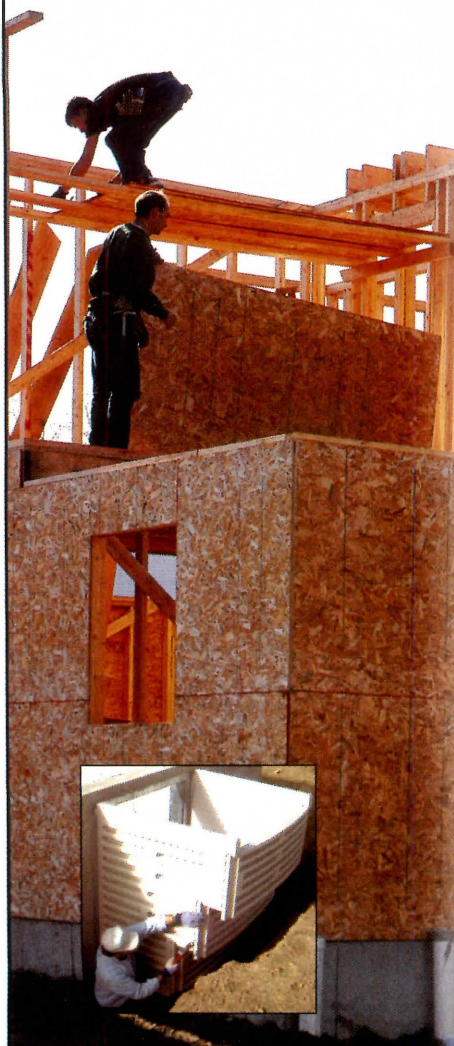
*Gary Polak
The Architectural Group
Grandville, Mich.*

good form

I found the letter Construction Contracts by Paul DeGroot of interest (Letters, January/February, page 17). Recently, I have been contemplating developing standard contracts for residential design and construction. I would like to see the issue addressed with regard to not only the owner/contractor relationship, but the architect/owner relationship as well. Mr. DeGroot is right that the AIA has no good

continued on page 24

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standard form for residential and I have not found any other source.

I look forward to each issue and am pleased to find down-to-earth articles

on everyday projects and issues instead of the elitist articles and projects typical of some other architect magazines.

*Robert Lipka, Architect
Utica, Mich.*

editor's note: Look for an article on residential contracts in an upcoming issue.

kind words

In my opinion *residential architect* is one of the finest publications dealing with residential design available—and its Web site is the best I've found.

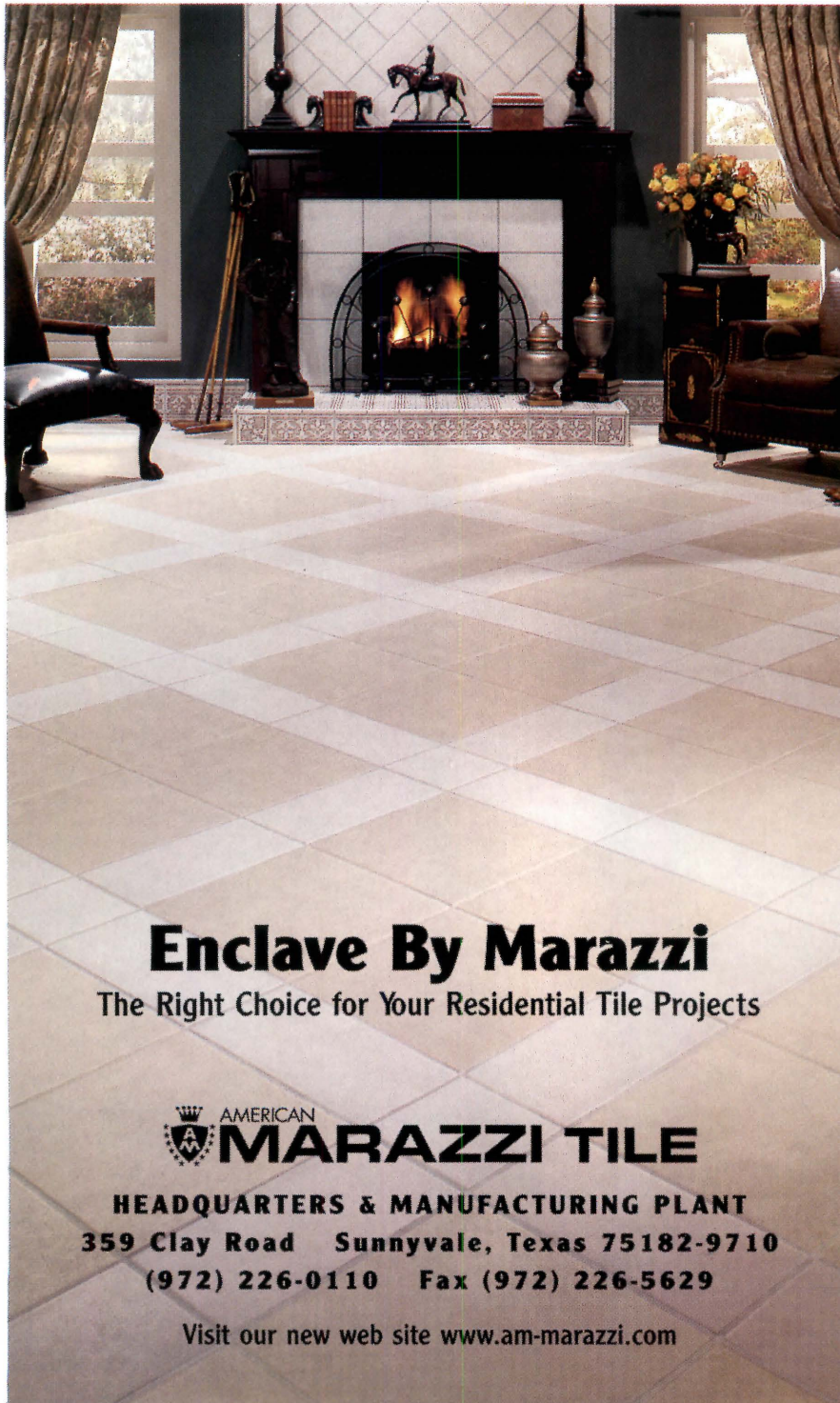
As a designer engaged in residential work, with an emphasis on remodeling, I can assure you that your magazine and Web site are visited frequently. I am particularly encouraged to see that this seems to be one place where architects and designers can exchange viewpoints and enjoy each other's work.

I especially enjoyed the recent issue featuring Texas regionalism and the work of all. Wish there had been more. As I am in Texas, I hope to see some of their projects.


*Joseph E. Offutt
J.E. Offutt & Assoc. Residential
Design + Interior Design
Garland, Texas*

Having received and enjoyed past issues of *residential architect*, I must say that your publication certainly does not fit the bill of a typical residential design magazine. As I pass your magazine around the office, I sense the excitement people get from reading articles that successfully encompass the scope and realities of residential design today.

*Corina Robert
Director of Business
Development
Sullivan Architecture
Valhalla, N.Y.*



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*fig. 2: Nord Door No. 4670
Sidelight No. 4676 (Oak)*



*fig. 5: Nord Door No. 4681
Transom No. 7681 (Hemlock)*



*fig. 4: Nord Door No. 4624
Sidelight No. 4627 (Oak)*

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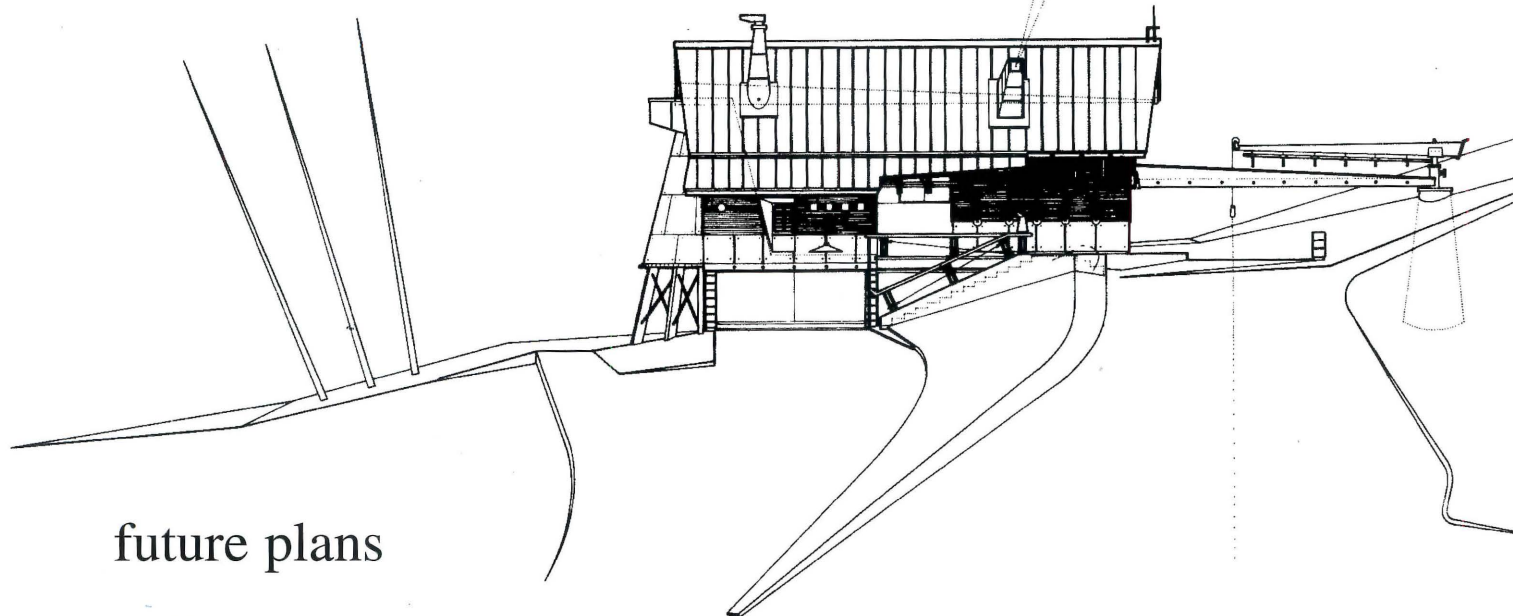


Circle no. 221



home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design



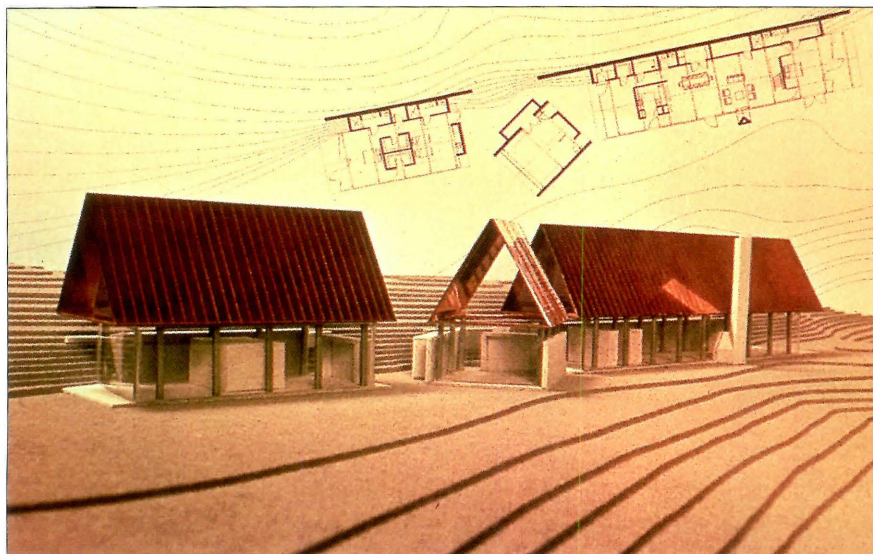
future plans

Concept houses from Mississippi, Louisiana, and Massachusetts were among the winners in the Boston Society of Architects 1998 Unbuilt Architecture Design Awards. The international competition, now in its seventh year, drew 82 entries.

Christopher Monson's Basket House proposes a new building system for the design and construction of small, affordable houses: intersecting woven arches. The concept unites handicraft with technology by exploiting the structural potential of wood, concrete, and flexible insulating sheathing.

Monson, a visiting assistant professor at Mississippi State University, uses flexible wood arches (laminated, oriented strand, or parallel veneer) for cross bracing. The arches are woven with fiber cables around strips of conventional lumber or plywood, and are connected to shallow concrete foundation "rails" that can be poured in place or precast and transported to the site. A flexible insulating sheathing system fastens to the woven cross members, enclosing the entire structure.

Robert J. Fakelmann's design for a home and studio in northern Louisiana expresses a regional vernacular drawn from dogtrot houses, barns, and other outbuildings common in the rural South. Fakelmann, an associate professor of architecture at Louisiana Tech, addresses the



Peter Forbes and Associates' House for the Next Millennium features an open, flexible floor plan that accommodates a range of household types.



Christopher Monson's Basket House (above), with its woven wood arches, is the most experimental of the three residential winners. Robert J. Fakelmann's home and studio (top left) utilizes locally familiar materials and construction methods.

region's warm, humid climate by raising the structure off the ground and aligning openings to encourage natural ventilation. His palette of locally familiar materials includes metal siding and roofing, concrete block, and standardized framing lumber.

Peter Forbes and Associates' winning design uses factory-fabricated components and a tri-part floor plan to satisfy climatic and household demands. Forbes envisions a steel and glass structure that avoids "the problems of inferior wood and uncertain on-site construction," he says in his entry statement. Though the design is supposedly a prototype, its triangulated forms are a signature of Forbes' recent residential work.—*susan bradford barror*

bauhaus at 70

the 20th century's most influential design movement celebrates its 70th birthday with *Bauhaus 1919-1933*. Written by Magdalena Droste of the Bauhaus Archiv in Berlin, this important new book is a meticulously researched and lavishly illustrated tribute to the school that gave rise to Gropius and Mies, Kandinsky and Klee—to name but a few of the architects and artists who taught there.

Droste opens with a history of the Bauhaus, placing the school within the context of other influential European arts and crafts institutes of the day. Founded by Gropius in Weimar, Germany, its first mission was to "build the future" through creative collaboration between artists and artisans. The result: a rich body of design work still celebrated today for its lasting impact on industrial and domestic design.

Subsequent chapters

address the various studios within the Weimar Bauhaus, the demise of the program in 1924 and its re-emergence in Dessau a year later, and the school's 1930 transformation into an architecture school led by Ludwig Mies van der Rohe.

Bauhaus 1919-1933 documents the institute's most important artistic and architectural contributions through more than 300 illustrations and photographs. Here we see not only the chairs and lamps that Bauhaus scholars produced in the early years, but also the posters, theatrical sets—and ultimately, the buildings that are the movement's most enduring legacy.—*s.b.b.*

Bauhaus 1919-1933.
Bauhaus Archiv/Magdalena Droste. 256 pp. Illustrated.
New York: Taschen America. 1998. \$24.99 (hardcover).
1.888.taschen.



photo: Doug Sanford

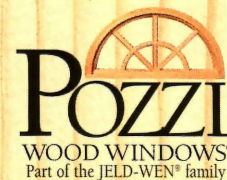
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ups and downs

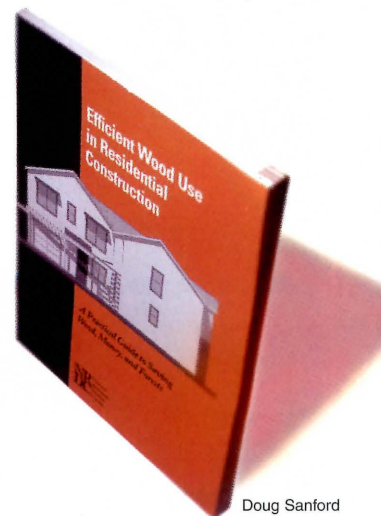
Staggered steps connect a sitting room/guest bedroom to the loft above. Austin, Tex., architect Paul Lamb proposed the space-saving stair as an alternative to a ladder. The risers and treads, which are fabricated of reclaimed longleaf pine, are dimensioned to meet local stair-code requirements—despite their unorthodox configuration. Touch-latch cabinets set into the staircase hide storage cubbies and a small TV.

See page 74 for more on the house.—s.b.b.

save wood, save trees

design and building professionals can save thousands of dollars per house—and save trees, too—using guidelines prepared by the Natural Resources Defense Council. The NRDC's new *Efficient Wood Use in Residential Construction* presents proven approaches to saving wood through design and material selection. The 103-page book uses industry case studies, builders' experiences, and numerous illustrations to provide information on trusses, stressed-skin panels, optimum-value engineering, certified and reclaimed wood, and job-site waste reduction.

For a copy of *Efficient Wood Use in Residential Construction*, send a check for \$8.95 (payable to the NRDC) to: NRDC Publications Department, 40 West 20th St., New York, N.Y. 10011-4211. Call 212.727.2700 for more information, or visit www.nrdc.org.
—deena shehata



Doug Sanford



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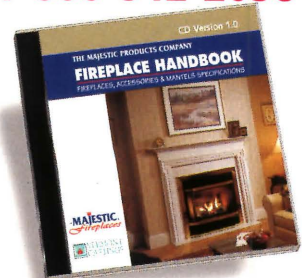


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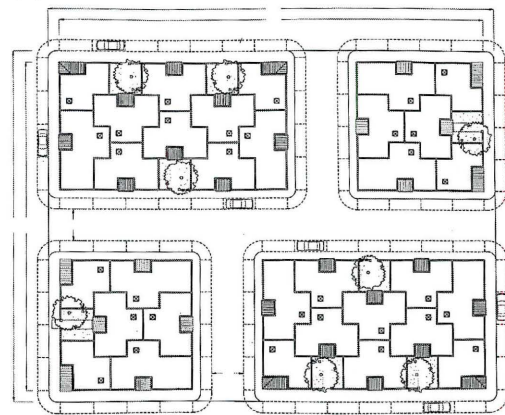
duany Plater-Zyberk & Co. has met the affordable housing challenge head-on with a prototype for attractive, livable, high-density housing units



DPZ's single-story courtyard houses achieve 17 units per acre.

clustered around shared courtyards. The Miami-based architecture and town planning firm informally calls the concept "carpet houses" because, as DPZ's Matt Shannon puts it, "They're one-story units that go down smoothly, like a carpet."

DPZ has achieved a density of 32 units per 1.831-acre block by strictly defining the site plan: eight one-bedroom units, 16 two-bedrooms, and eight three-bedrooms to a block, fitted together like puzzle pieces. The firm has no immediate plans to build the carpet houses; it's currently pitching the plan to developers, Shannon says.—*meghan drueding*



© Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co.

conferences and competitions

renaissance '99 design competition

entry form/payment deadline:

april 1, 1999

entry binder deadline: may 1, 1999

entry fee: \$125 for standard entry;

\$65 for details entry

The Renaissance '99 design competition recognizes excellence in residential and light commercial remodeling and renovation. Winners receive feature coverage in the September 1999 issue of REMODELING and recognition at an awards event during the 1999 Remodelers' Show, November 5 through 7, in Philadelphia. The competition is sponsored by REMODELING and the NAHB Remodelers Council.

For more information, call 202.736.3450, e-mail cpowell@hanley-wood.com, or visit www.remodeling.hw.net.

kitchen and bath industry show

april 15-18, 1999

orlando, fla.

The National Kitchen and Bath Association hosts its 19th annual Kitchen/Bath Industry Show. Some 500 kitchen and bath manufacturers will exhibit the latest faucets, fixtures, cabinets, flooring, lighting, countertop materials, and appliances. Educational programs range from "Designing Freestanding Furniture" to "Feng

Shui." To register, call 1.800.843.6522 (educational programs); 1.877.795.7583 or 1.817.255.8053 (exhibits).

a/e/c systems '99

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*Shown: Caramel Drystack LedgeStone.
In background: Fall Stream Stone*



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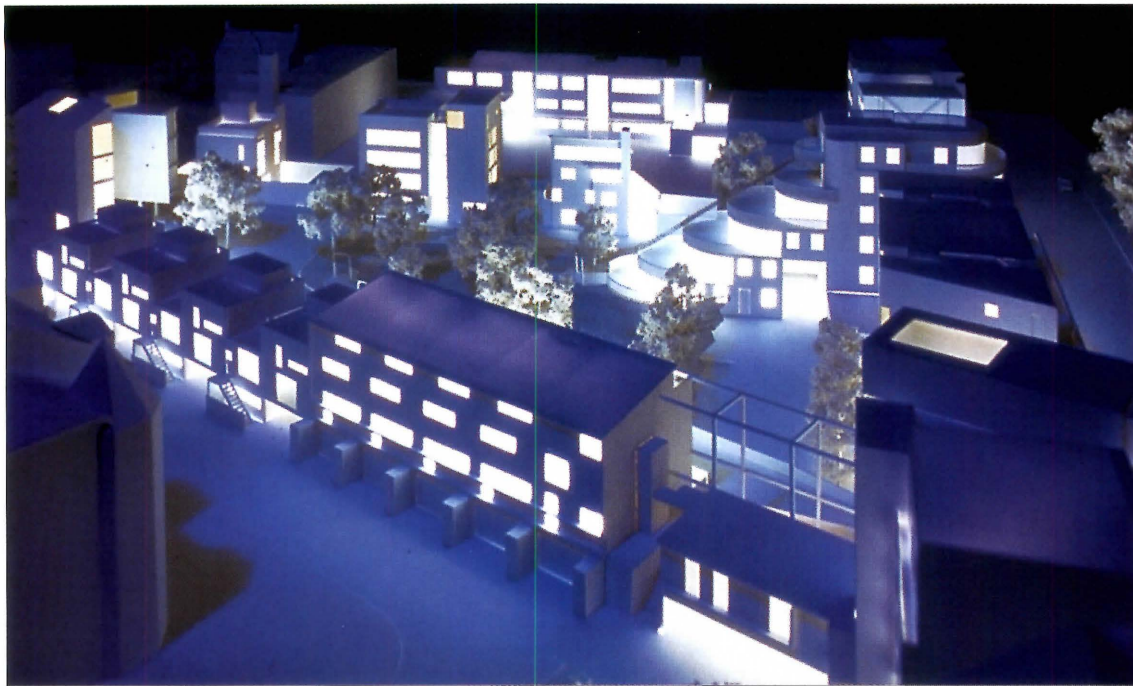
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A model of the Homes for the Future site conveys the size, scale, and diversity of housing to be built in Glasgow during the 1999 UK City of Architecture and Design exposition.

Photos: Glasgow 1999 UK City of Architecture and Design



Glasgow-based architect Wren and Rutherford designed this two-apartment building on a triangular site for the Homes for the Future program.

postcard from glasgow

Scotland's largest city is hosting a year-long celebration of architecture and design from around the world. Called Glasgow 1999 UK City of Architecture and Design, the exposition will include more than 300 events, lectures, and exhibits designed to position Glasgow as a major European center of new building approaches and products. Environmental sustainability will be a major focus throughout the year.

One component of the exposition, the Lasting Legacy Project, will continue beyond 1999. Under this program, the former Herald Building will be transformed into an exhibit and lecture facility called The Lighthouse: Scotland's Centre for Architecture, Design and the City. The Lasting Legacy Project also includes Homes for the Future, a six-month program to build housing near the Glasgow Green and St. Andrew's

Square, two downtown areas that have suffered from isolation and urban decay.

The mission of the Homes for the Future project is to combine good architecture with forward-looking approaches to urban living, says director Deyan Sudjic. The homes will address changing family structures and environmental and energy concerns with a mix of attached and detached units and more outdoor space than is found in many inner city developments. Up to 150 homes will be built for sale and rent; the first phase was scheduled for completion this month.

The Homes for the Future exhibit will be open to the public between July and October, 1999, and is sponsored by a consortium of private and public developers. Once the exposition ends, the homes will be sold and the area will be redeveloped as a new community.

—deena shehata



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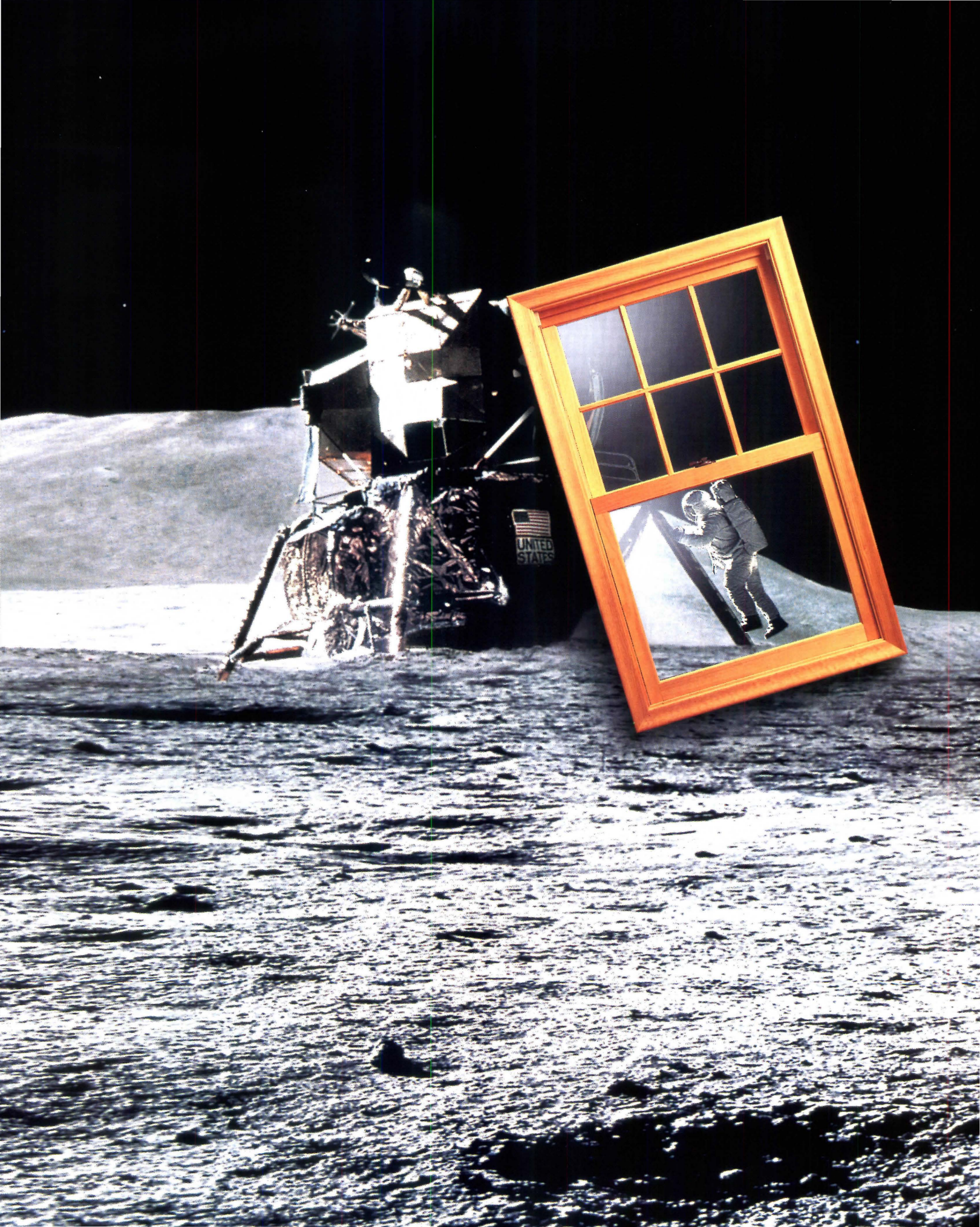


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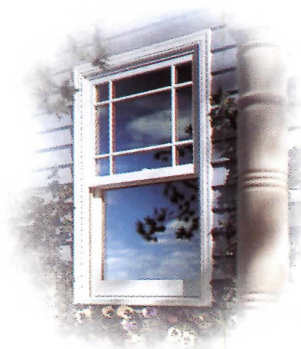
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high society

why we like to design big houses for wealthy clients.

by bradley c.
hollenbeck, aia

In early August 1991, the day before I was to start working at Charles W. Ligon AIA Architects in Houston, I received a phone call at home. It was Charles Ligon, asking me to meet him the next morning at a job site: a 13,000-square-foot custom residence in the city's upscale River Oaks neighborhood. I remember thinking the house was as large as many commercial buildings I had worked on after graduating from architecture school at the University of Kansas in the late 1980s. And so was the \$6 million budget, as I learned at that first meeting.

I was eager to explore the limitless design possibilities these big numbers suggested. My enthusiasm paid off when Charles Ligon and I formed Ligon/Hollenbeck Architects. Today we do two or three multimillion-dollar houses a year, ranging from 10,000 to 42,000 square feet—which means we have six to eight custom high-end homes at various stages in the office at any given time.

I attribute our success in this market to four factors: experience, design innovation, personal service, and teamwork.



Photos: © 1998 Hester & Hardaway

experience

Charles Ligon's practice was rooted in the custom and speculative markets of the 1980s and early 1990s. By the time I joined the firm, we were attracting clients who had seen our larger homes and wanted us to design ultra high-end custom homes for them.

Charles had 21 years of experience in residential design, and I had done some residential work for Arquitectonica in Miami. We both wanted to focus exclusively on king-size custom homes. Once we had designed a few, we were able to take new and prospective clients to see our work. There we could

discuss design ideas and—most important—hard costs with them.

design innovation

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We invest a lot of time in our clients, listening to the clues they give us as we show them other houses we've designed. It's a pretty intuitive process. And we encourage them to bring us lots of pictures of design ideas they like.

Our houses can take a year to design and two or three years to build. We've done houses with his-and-hers libraries, dog rooms, parrot rooms, handicapped-

continued on page 44

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personal service

Charles and I enjoy what we do, and we like to maintain a personal relationship with our clients. That's why we've kept the firm small. We sell our small size and accessibility to prospective clients.

When they call with questions or a problem, we take the calls ourselves and hear them out. We don't always have the answers, but our clients know we are available to them.

teamwork

The final and most important factor contributing to our success has been our policy of teamwork. When



A couple nearing retirement requested a Tuscan exterior (shown on previous page) and a large domed foyer for their 12,500-square-foot house in Houston.

we formed Ligon/Hollenbeck, our clients became partners on our team. We work with a wide range of consultants, such as lighting and theater designers, suppliers of English mantels and Venetian tapestries, and the like. So it is important that clients, builders, architects, and consultants are all on the same team.

With projects that can last three or four years, it's inevitable that we will hit bumpy times. Our policy is to work as a team during the good and the bad, deliberately including everybody in the design and building process. I think that everyone involved appreciates this pol-

icy. Team members tend to be more open to solutions when there is a problem or conflict.

marketing our firm

Like most architects, we stay up-to-date with technology, materials, and cost controls. We attend the national AIA convention every year, and support local events when we can.

But to reach out to wealthy clients, Charles and I have had to become highly effective at navigating the upper circles of society. We attend charity events, book signings, and business-related events. We believe that it's good to be wherever past, present, and future clients might get to know us better. We may not get work immediately, but we get the ball rolling. And we make a lot of cold calls from leads we pick up at these events.

Builders are another good source of leads and referrals. And when we can, we host open houses

at just-finished projects. These events allow us to show our design experience to prospective clients at a personal level, and have led to several successful projects that are currently on the boards and under construction.

why bother?

All of this may seem like a lot of work, and it is. But I wake up almost every morning excited about going to the office. It is rewarding to work with clients to design a house that truly represents them. I've found that bigger houses and budgets tend to afford architects greater participation in the creative design and building process. And, frankly, that's a great position for an architect to be in. **ra**

Bradley C. Hollenbeck, AIA, is a principal with Ligon/Hollenbeck Architects in Houston. The firm is currently designing a 42,000-square-foot house in southeast Texas.



Brad Hollenbeck (right) with partner Charles Ligon

“bigger houses and budgets afford architects greater participation in the creative process.”

—brad hollenbeck, aia



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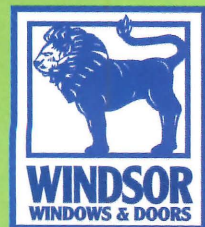
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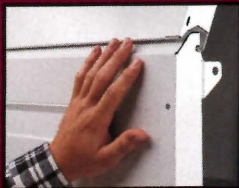


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ownership options

does it pay to partner? incorporate? or go it alone?

by sharon o'malley

Career counseling and testing only confirmed what Duo Dickinson already knew: "I don't play well with others. I really need to be autonomous."

So Dickinson is the sole proprietor of his custom practice in Madison, Conn., though he employs 10 or more architects and interns at a time. Keeping just one name on the door means the firm's work carries his persona, he says. And when he goes to sleep at night, "There's just me, not me and the boss, not me and the partner. It got the corporate structure out of my life."

Solo ownership suited custom architect David Giulietti, AIA, as well, until he realized how much his personal assets—including his home and retirement savings account—were worth. A sole proprietor can lose personal possessions and wealth over a business deal gone bad. If the architect can't pay a vendor, for example, the supplier can try to squeeze the payment out of the family home. If a client trips while at the architect's office, sustaining injuries beyond what the designer's insurance will pay, the client could tap the

joint checking account of both architect and spouse.

So, last year, after 10 years as a sole proprietor, Giulietti incorporated his Portland, Ore., business. Now, his personal assets are legally off limits to those who do business with him. If his firm fails, in other words, Giulietti won't lose his house.

beyond solo

More than half of residential firms have sole proprietors, according to a 1997 *residential architect* reader-ship survey. But more are taking partners or legally incorporating in an effort to

limit their liability, reap greater tax benefits, or ensure that younger co-workers will keep the firm up and running once the founding architect retires.

Bill Fanning, director of research for PSMJ Resources in Boston, says architects of all stripes are starting to gravitate away from sole proprietorships. PSMJ has not yet tallied its 1998 architect survey, but Fanning predicts the results will show that more architects are selling an interest in their firms to partners during these rosy economic times. "Right now, firms are in good financial shape.

And current owners like to sell high," he says. During depressed economies, he notes, sole proprietors tend not to take partners.

Mark Simon, FAIA, says taking partners when the living is easy makes more than just good financial sense. It has helped his 72-member firm retain key designers who were being recruited by others. "The best people do not want to be employees forever," says Simon, a partner at Centerbrook Architects and Planners in Centerbrook, Conn.

But partnerships don't offer owners legal protec-

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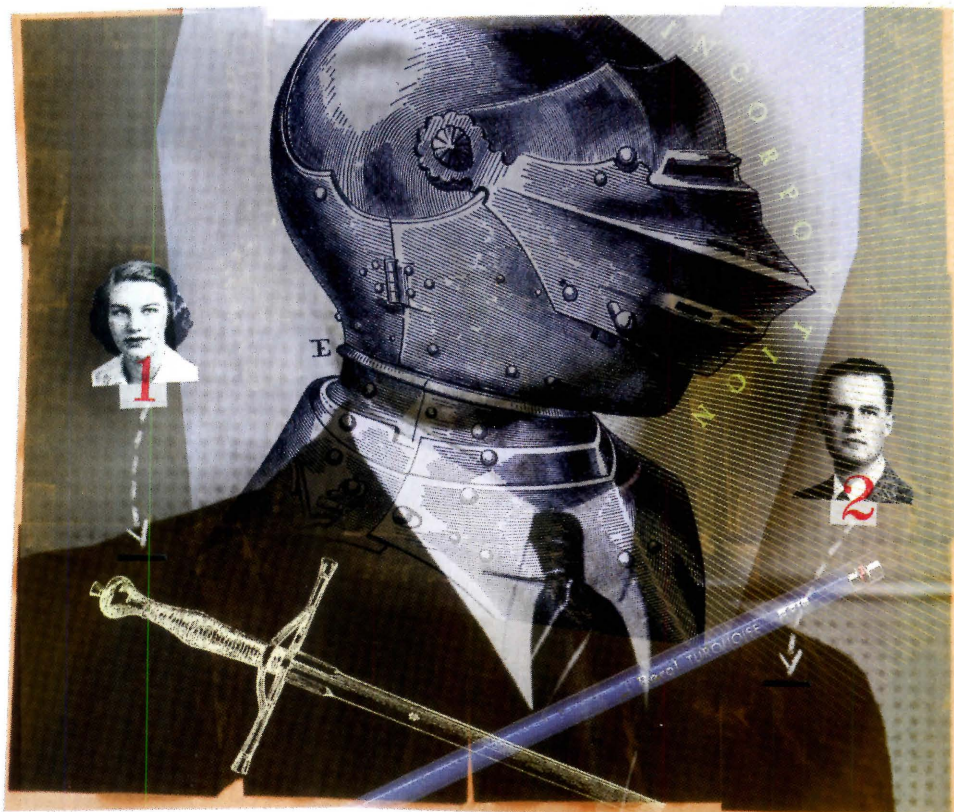


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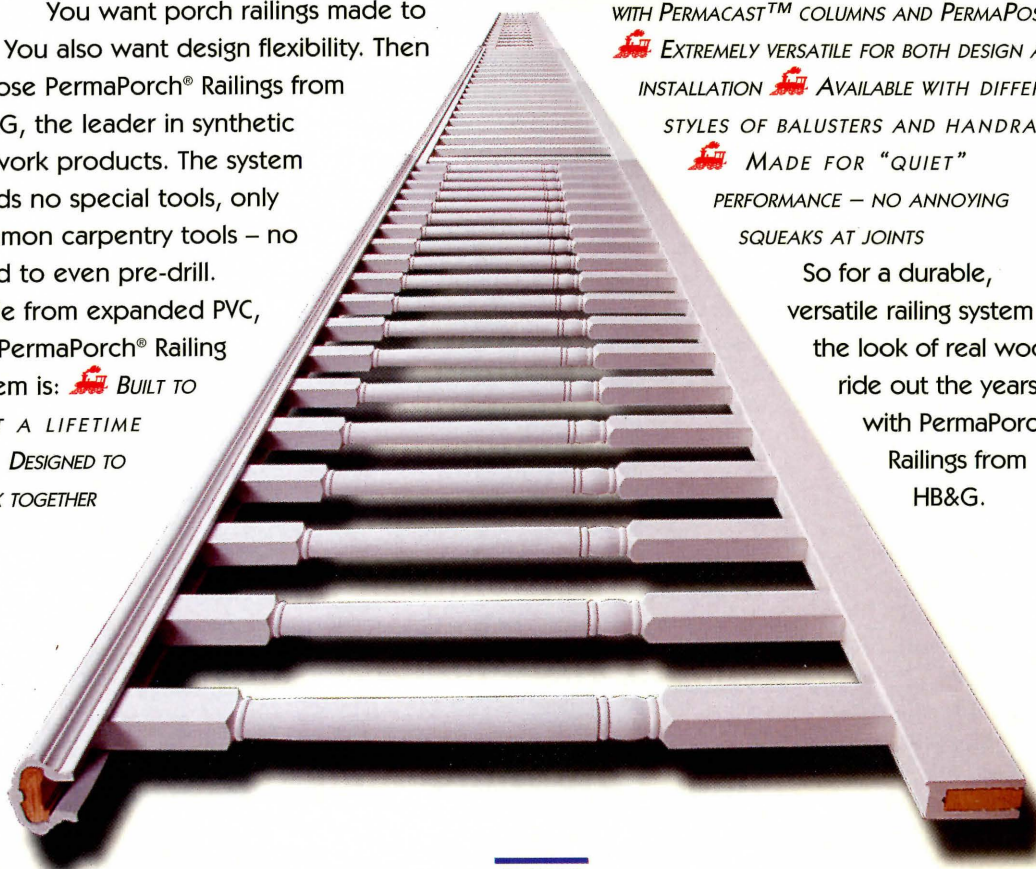
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tions. So the five partners at Simon's firm recently changed their ownership status to become a limited liability corporation (LLC), a structure that limits the partners' liability without the tax penalties associated with big corporations.

risky business

When should a firm change its status from sole proprietor to partnership, or from partnership to corporation? That depends on how much risk the architects are exposed to and how much they feel comfortable carrying, says Jeff Bennett, of the Portland, Ore., law firm Tarlow Jordan & Schrader.

A sole practitioner who works at home with no employees and incurs few debts might not want to spend the \$1,000 or so it costs to have a lawyer do the paperwork for an LLC. But once that architect hires help, rents an outside office, buys computers, and starts a line of credit at the bank, it's time to reassess.

"Architects have different thresholds of pain," says Bennett, a former landscape architect. "If I've got assets, I'm thrifty, I'm working toward retirement, and I don't want to have these assets exposed, it's worth it to spend \$1,000 to incorporate and pay for an annual report. But if I'm confident I'll pay my bills, why should I spend any more money on a lawyer?"

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definitions

Sole proprietorship: One person is in charge, and that person has not formed any kind of legal entity to limit liability. The sole proprietor is responsible for all business decisions and their consequences, and may be sued personally if the business can't pay its bills.

Partnership: Co-proprieters doing business together. This is not a legal entity, and often, partners forego drawing up contracts in favor of a more casual working relationship. Partners typically buy into the business, own a percentage of it, and reap that percentage of the profits. Yet legally, each partner is equally responsible for the firm's obligations and equally able to make commitments on behalf of the firm. Partners have no legal protection from being held personally liable for bad business deals.

Limited liability partnership (LLP): A relatively new structure, the LLP sets limits on each partner's liability within the firm. Each partner is equally liable for paying obligations to vendors, no matter how much of the firm he or she owns. But once a 5-percent partner has paid a vendor in full, for example, the 5-percent partner can force the 95-percent partner to repay him or her 95 percent of that cost. LLPs are not legal in all states.

C-corp or Subchapter C corporation: Firms organized in this manner have legal protection for the personal assets of their owners. If the firm can't pay a debt, its owners will not be required to come up with the money from their personal accounts. Corporations also have tax benefits that sole proprietors and partnerships do not. For example, owners may deduct 100 percent of health insurance and medical expenses for themselves and their employees, while noncorporate firms may deduct just 60 percent of those expenses. The trade-off: C-corps pay taxes on firm income (minus expenses and salaries). If there's a profit at the end of the year, the C-corp pays corporate taxes on that before distributing it to owners as bonuses. Then the owners pay income tax on it—so the money is taxed twice.

S-corp or Subchapter S corporation: This kind of firm is taxed like a partnership so there's no double corporate tax. Each owner is treated as a partner at tax time, paying tax on the firm's income at a rate equal to his or her own personal income-tax bracket. Like the C-corp, S-corps get to deduct more at tax time. More design firms are organized as S-corps than as C-corps. But S-corps may not retain earnings from one year to the next, even if the owners wish to defer distribution of profits. C-corps may.

Limited liability corporation (LLC): Popular with architects, this brand-new form of ownership blends some aspects of a corporation with the tax structure of a partnership, similar to an S-corp. But unlike an S-corp, there are no restraints on retaining earnings. And unlike an S-corp, which is limited to 35 owners, an LLC may have unlimited owners.

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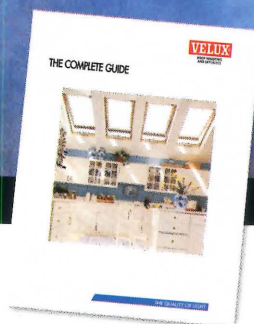
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good advice

Many architects have incorporated mostly because their lawyers or accountants told them to, says Don Jacobs, AIA, whose 30-employee firm is organized as a C-corp—a corporate structure that offers personal protection for the company's owners and some added tax benefits. Jacobs, a principal in JBZ Architecture + Planning in Newport Beach, Calif., says it's smart for architects—who typically have minimal training in business management—to find good consultants and heed their advice.

Donald Evans, AIA, owner of The Evans Group in Orlando, Fla., agrees. He set up his firm as an S-corp, which allows owners to pay income taxes on firm profits at their own tax bracket, while still affording some personal liability protection.

"As an architect, I feel I'm a good businessman from the standpoint of knowing how to do good business—finding clients, working with clients, doing good design," Evans says. "But I look to my business manager and financial planner" for advice. He adds: "With a good business manager, I can design and have fun." *ra*

Sharon O'Malley is a freelance writer in College Park, Md.

liability

Architects are subject to three kinds of liability: professional (design problems); business (accidents at work); and contractual (leases and loans). Incorporating the firm means that your personal assets are safe from claims by clients, employees, vendors, and others who have a business or contractual bone to pick. But no form of ownership protects the architect from professional liability. Thus the designer—and not just the firm—can be held responsible if someone is dissatisfied or injured because of a flaw in a home's design.

An architect's best bet, says Portland, Ore., attorney Jeff Bennett, is to buy insurance that covers professional mistakes and negligence. And buy plenty of it, he says, because claimants can come after the architect's personal holdings if a court awards more than the insurance policy will pay.

Even more important is quality control, says design consultant Hugh Hochberg of The Coxe Group in Seattle. "The first thing is to do good work," he says. "Do good work and buy insurance."

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midwest

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modern

pie, baseball—and contemporary residential design.

by meghan drueding



The Chicago-based owner of this New Buffalo, Mich., house intended it as a week-end retreat—but currently spends five to six days per week there. Nagle Hartray Danker Kagan McKay of Chicago designed the project.

Cleveland architect Paul Volpe, AIA, doesn't want to be pigeonholed as a Modernist. "I don't like to be associated with just one style," he says. Though much of Volpe's other work has a strong historicist flavor, his firm has added a distinctly Modern townhouse community to Cleveland's skyline (below).

The project's fresh design places him among a growing group of Midwestern architects whose bold forms are as at home in the heartland as the Prairie Style or the classic American farmhouse. Others in this free-spirited circle include Jim Nagle, FAIA, of Nagle Hartray Danker Kagan McKay in Chicago, and Mark Nessel, AIA, of Nessel Architecture in Excelsior, Minn.

loose interpretation

"Modernism humanized" is how Jim Nagle describes his firm's approach to residential design. "We're trying to break down the scale of a house, to get some juicy interest into it."

That philosophy comes through in a weekend house the firm recently designed on a 240-acre working farm in New Buffalo, Mich. (previous page). Its 5,750 square feet of living space are spread among three structures: a two-story, three-bedroom main house; a guest house with a sleeping loft; and a garage/office. The main house connects to the guest quarters by means of a screened-in porch, and to the

garage/office via a porte-cochere and trellis.

Nagle, project manager Eric Penney, AIA, and project architects Patrick Jones, AIA, and Doo Ho Lee, AIA, gave the house several decks and roof terraces that add some "juicy interest" and allow the owners to spend more time outdoors. Nagle's enthusiasm for outdoor living is equally apparent in his downtown Chicago townhouse (shown on cover) and his upstate Wisconsin vacation home (right), both of which he designed.

The "juicy interest" in Volpe's Tillman Park townhomes and Nessel's studio/guest house for an Excelsior graphic designer derives from playful forms and vibrant exterior color schemes. "The project is clearly visible from a major road leading into the city," says Volpe of the Cleveland townhouses. "We decided that the pastel colors would help make it a sort of landmark." Nessel's striking blue cube features an elephant-shaped waterspout on the roof—added at the request of the client's young daughter, whose favorite animal happens to be an elephant.

All three projects exhibit a carefree attitude on the part of their designers and a willingness to experiment with the precedents set by the great Modernist architects.

creative contextualism

Another quality that distinguishes the Midwest Modernists: their particular, subtle brand of contextualism. These architects conscientiously refer to their environments through the natural materials they use, the uniquely Midwestern building forms they echo,

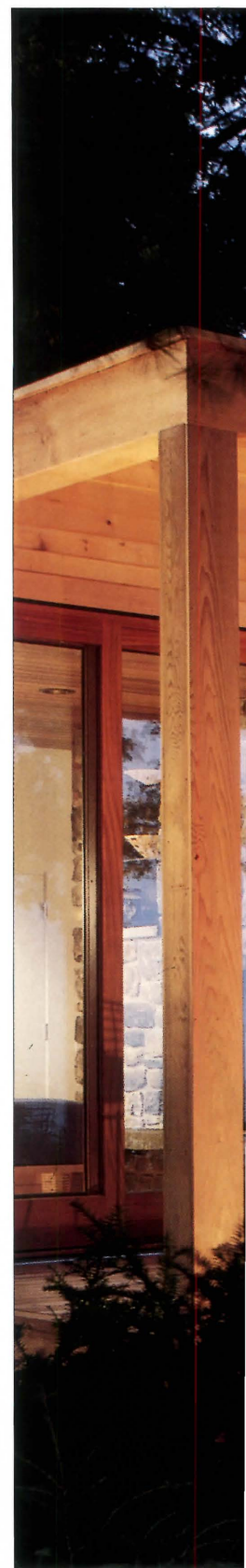
"we did upscale in a not-so-upscale neighborhood. it was risky"

—paul volpe, aia



Photos: © Schuemann Architectural Photography

Paul Volpe's firm, City Architecture, designed the townhomes at Tillman Park in a wedge shape that encloses community open space. A steel-and-acrylic awning defines each front door.





© Hedrich Blessing

Like much of his other work, Nagle's own weekend cottage in Door County, Wis., exemplifies a relaxed, outdoor-oriented Modernism.

midwest modern



A fully equipped kitchen facilitates entertaining in this Minnesota studio/guest house. Nessel designed the central stair using standard metal parts.



© Karen Melvin

and the relationships they establish with their built surroundings. Yet it is vividly original work—never imitative or derivative.

Take the New Buffalo house. “At the beginning, the clients told us they wanted a Prairie Style house,” says Nagle. “This was our interpretation of that request.” The home’s expansive diagonal views, massive fireplaces, and rich mix of woods—cedar, pine, maple, and mahogany—reflect the Prairie influence.

But by eliminating traditional exterior detailing and translating ground-hugging Prairie massing into multilevel Modernist cubes, the architects have created a cleaned-up, aired-out version of a Prairie house. “The clients also asked us to add barn-like elements,” says Penney. The vertical spaces represent the architects’ interpretation of a lofty barn interior. Nagle and his team also added such Modern details as black metal window frames, railings, and struts, and flush-to-outside windows. “We tried to do Frank Lloyd Wright, abstracted,” Nagle says.

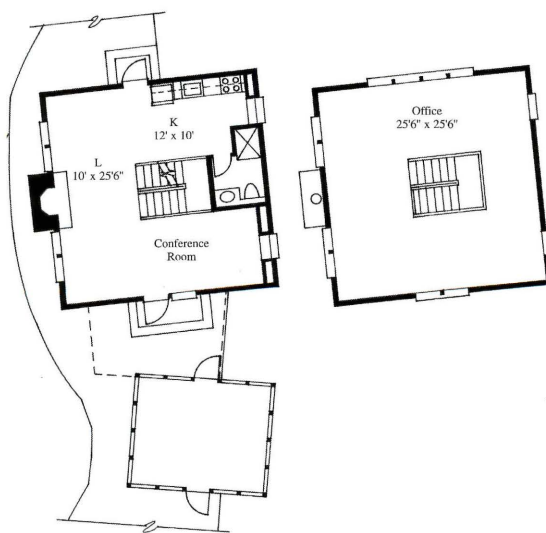
Volpe and project architect Michael Caito chose to tie Tillman Park to its working-class neighborhood of single-family frame houses through color, materials,

and proportion. They clad the 18 townhouse units in fiber-cement siding that resembles the wood clapboard seen throughout Cleveland. They made a concerted effort to honor the scale of existing homes in the area. And they chose a pastel palette to link the units to the colorful Victorian houses nearby. The result: a contemporary development that enriches the surrounding neighborhood rather than detracting from it.

Architectural richness aside, Tillman Park is a departure from the local norm simply because it’s a townhouse development. “Cleveland has traditionally been a single-family town—little houses on little lots,” Volpe says. “Townhomes are hot now, but they’re definitely a new thing.” The site itself was also something of a gamble for Volpe’s firm, City Architecture, and the developer, the Detroit Shoreway Community Development Organization of Cleveland. The .95-acre parcel lies within view of a major freeway. “We did upscale in a not-so-upscale neighborhood. It was a little risky,” admits Volpe. The risk paid off: The townhomes sold out almost as soon as they went on the market at prices starting in the \$200,000s.

“not everyone likes it, but it’s been talked about more than any other project i’ve done”

—mark nesseset, aia



© Saari & Forrai Photography

A garage and glassed-in porch, both topped with corrugated metal, flank the studio. The main house lies just to the right of the porch.

midwest modern



Nagle Hartray Danker Kagan McKay chose Indiana limestone for the hearth wall of the New Buffalo, Mich., home's kitchen.



© Bruce Van Inwegen

Nesset's design for a studio/guest house addressed local context by responding to the region's harsh winter climate. Dyed blond maple floorboards and white walls reflect as much sunlight as possible. Extra insulation, a high-efficiency furnace, and an air exchanger that brings in outside air but not outside cold also maximize comfort during the long winter months.

The studio makes no reference to other, older homes in the neighborhood, nor to the client's Shingle Style house, just a few dozen feet away. That's intentional. "I was excited to do the studio because I knew the client would be open to some nontraditional design," says Nesset, who says that Excelsior, a town 35 miles from Minneapolis, needs more architectural diversity. "Not everyone likes it, but it's been talked about more than any other project I've done."

positive flux

Which brings us to the third and perhaps most important trait of the Midwest Modernists—an intense desire to expand their design and technical capabilities.

Both Volpe and Nesset were accustomed to doing far more traditional work than the projects featured here. Clearly, both wanted to challenge themselves. Nesset went so far as to invite his client to a lecture at

the University of Minnesota on the work of Peter Eisenman, Robert Venturi, Charles Gwathmey, and Frank Gehry. The seminar helped inspire both architect and owner to push their limits in designing the Excelsior project. As for Volpe, he says his firm had only been waiting for the chance to work with a progressive developer who would risk a bold project in conservative Cleveland.

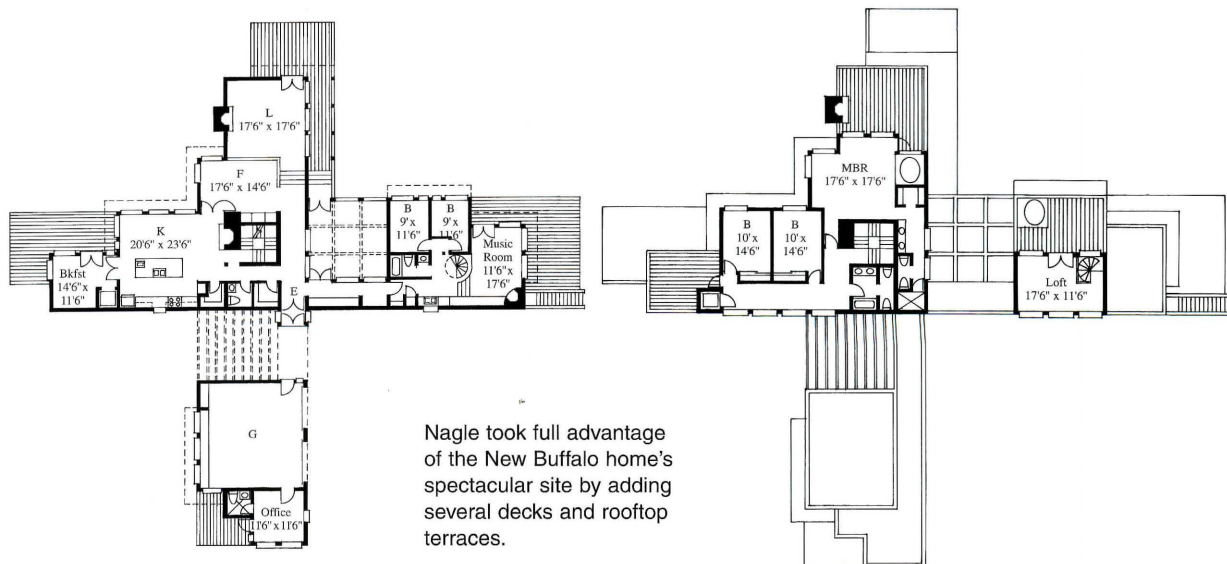
Unlike Nesset and Volpe, Nagle has been a Modernist for most of his professional life. Not all the homes he's designed have been in such a natural vein as the New Buffalo and Wisconsin houses, though; some, like his 1978 Chicago townhouse, embody a stricter, more formal Modernism.

"Our houses have a distinct and consistent Modern theme," Nagle writes in a retrospective of the firm's work, "but it is a Modernism overlaid with adaptations to site, context, and program ... and the desire to create an architecture that is a little harder to categorize."

Such an elusive yet comfortable sort of Modernism typifies the housing Nagle, Nesset, and Volpe are creating now—architecture characterized by its very resistance to characterization. It's a style that takes no cues from outside influences without questioning and rethinking—a Modernism that's uniquely Midwestern. **ra**

“we tried to do frank lloyd
wright, abstracted.”

—jim nagle, faia



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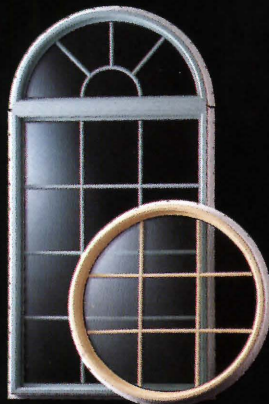
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eight ways to make a good impression.

market

they're watching you. Everything that you as an architect do shapes your firm's image in the eyes of the public. Whether you're chatting with former clients, meeting with contractors, or attending a home show, you're communicating something about yourself to the world at large—including anyone who might want to hire you.

A good marketing program makes

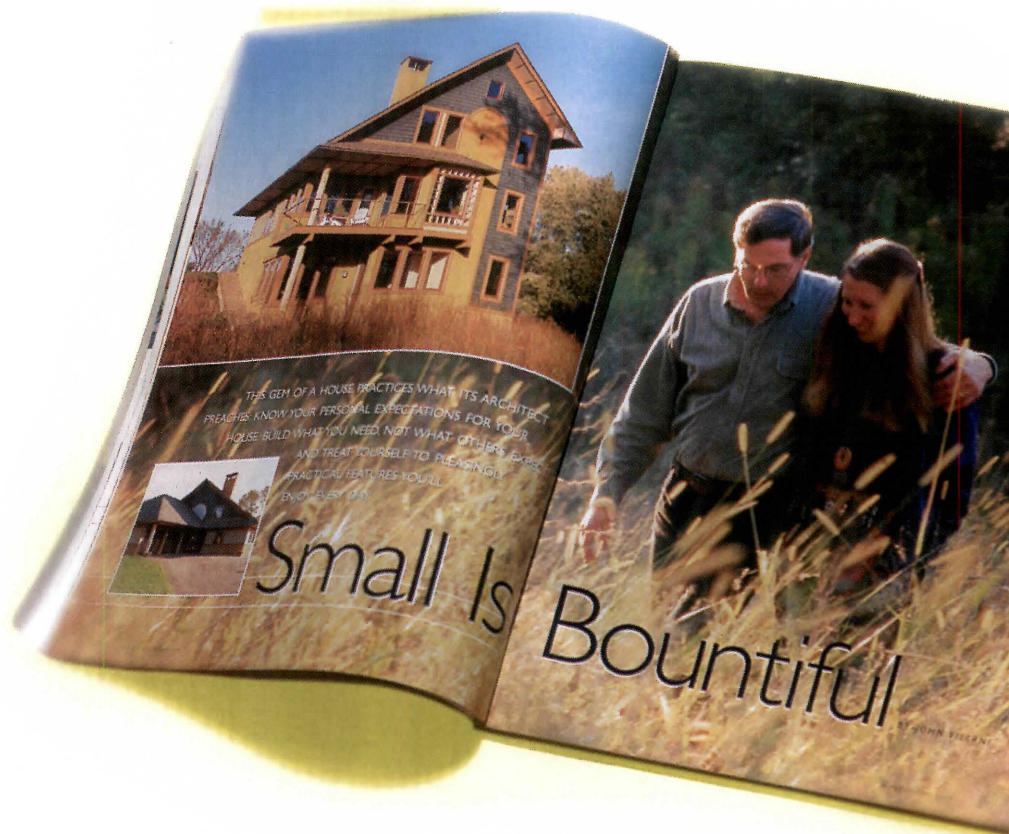
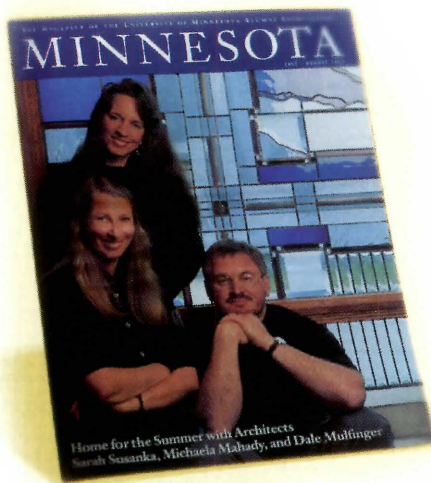
judicious use of that attention, directing it toward the qualities that make your firm unique and effective. The goal is to educate and inform your audience, showing them what you as an architect can do for them.

Most firms rely on a variety of marketing techniques. On the following pages, we cover eight of them. Some are costly, but many are inexpensive or even free. Measure which work best for you by asking potential

clients how they heard about you. Track the answers, see what trends emerge—and spend your marketing dollars accordingly.

be the expert

One of the best ways to attract positive public attention is to present yourself to the public as a problem-solver. Give a talk at the local library or community college on how to work with an architect. If the talk is a



by paul j. donio

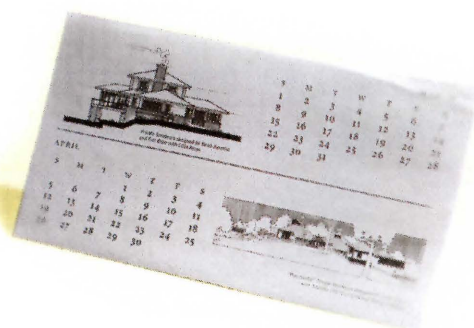
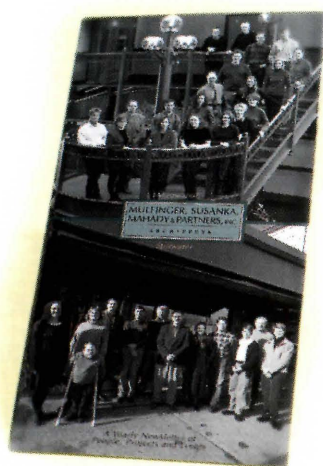
s m a r t s

success, consider developing it into a whole series. Serve on your local historic-preservation board. Or offer to write a weekly column on home design for the local paper. Talk regularly with newspaper editors, reminding them of your availability as a source.

The design staff at Mulfinger Susanka Mahady & Partners in Minneapolis does all this, and more. Project architects in the 40-person

firm are responsible for their own marketing. Sarah Susanka, AIA, for example, does both speaking and writing; she gets a lot of attention with her message (and book) about using design to get the most out of small houses.

Whatever you do, make sure you're comfortable with the venue you choose. "Find the medium that allows you to establish rapport with people—anything that puts you in



Mulfinger Susanka Mahady & Partners sends prospective clients a folder full of information about the firm. The contents—which vary according to each prospect's interests—may contain any of the elements shown here. From left: reprints from regional and national publications; a copy of the firm's newsletter; a calendar illustrated with the firm's work; project-information sheets packed with photos.

Photos: Doug Sanford

“former clients are our best source
of new work.”

—maxine dolle

with a lot of people who may need your services,” advises Susanka.

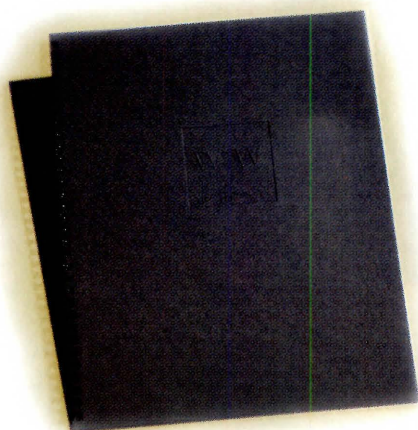
For architects on a shoestring, the beauty of the “expert” strategy is that it costs you virtually nothing but your time. And once you have established yourself as a community resource on the topic of design, you’ll find that

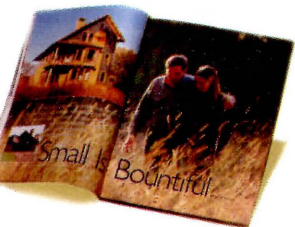
the time you invest pays for itself many times over.

networking

When husband and wife Joseph Cincotta and Julie Lineberger launched their design firm, LineSync, in Wilmington, Vt., a decade ago, they relied on old-fashioned networking to build their business. Lineberger wrote for the local newspaper and got involved with the

Walker/Warner Architects sends prospects customized booklets containing references, design philosophy, and laser-printed project photos. The firm’s distinctive logo appears on all of its marketing materials and stationery.





“choose the medium that works best for you.”

—sarah susanka, aia

chamber of commerce. One day a week—“Marketing Day”—Cincotta drove around to towns within an hour’s radius, walked into real estate sales offices, and introduced himself. “Some would say, ‘What are you doing here?’” Cincotta recalls. “But others were very receptive. Through the Realtors, we reached a whole market of people retiring from urban areas and looking to build their last house. It worked much better than I ever dreamed.”

Another good professional network to tap is contractors. “Clients often go to a builder first,” points out Shannon Taylor Scarlett, AIA, a sole practitioner in Wellesley, Mass. Her “networking” is mostly a matter of working well with contractors, and having them bid on jobs when the clients come to her first. One-quarter of her business comes through builder contacts.

Your clients, of course, provide the best networking group of all. Maxine Dolle, marketing director for Thomas Peter Dolle Associates in Brookline, Mass., says, “I stay in touch with former clients because their referrals are our best source of new work.” She uses thoughtful gestures like little gifts for the kids, holiday greeting cards, and making sure clients get copies of pictures when her firm gets the house photographed.

Scarlett and Dolle are also both part of a residential marketing network formed by the Boston Society of Architects. This AIA chapter publishes a residential project handbook that includes tips for homeowners on working with architects; advice on

budgeting, design, and construction; and a directory of firms who do residential work. Check with your local AIA chapter to see if it offers anything similar; if not, take the lead in launching such a resource.

publishing projects

Getting published is not as hard as many architects think—but neither is it the client-generating bonanza that some expect. Publicity in national magazines looks the most impressive, especially if you get reprints. But local newspapers and regional magazines often generate more business for diverse practices.

How do you get published? “Editors need stories,” explains Susanka, whose firm has appeared in dozens of publications. Yes, the project has to be well-designed; and yes, good photography makes a big difference. But editors are most likely to assign an article about your project if you explain the story behind it. A client’s special needs, an interesting technical challenge, or something unique about the client family are the kinds of issues that appeal to readers.

Getting published takes a little hustling on your part, but the financial investment is low—unless you supply the photographs. (Count on spending at least \$2,000 to photograph a house; more if the project is large and elaborate. Look for more on commissioning photography in a future issue of *residential architect*.)

brochures

Many firms use bound brochures to market themselves. While these can

look handsome, they are inflexible, costly to produce, and difficult to keep current. If you do choose to produce a brochure, don’t send it out to everyone who calls. Spend a few minutes talking to prospective clients first, to make sure there’s a potential match.

Well-designed firm folders serve the same function as brochures, but in a more flexible and economical format. Produce information sheets for each project you’ve done, and customize the folder contents based on what you’ve learned about the prospect. Your package should include background on the firm, a list of recently completed projects, and information about key personnel.

Walker/Warner Architects in San Francisco worked with a graphic designer to create its custom brochures (see facing page). Prospects receive individualized booklets that feature photos of the kinds of projects they’re interested in. Embossed covers and spiral binding lend each package pizzazz. (The firm invested in its own binding equipment to make customized production easier.)

Instead of a brochure, Hiland Hall Turner, AIA, of Bedminster, N.J., sends a “Home Planning Guide” to potential clients (see page 71). The mailing builds on prospects’ interest and motivates them to make an appointment. When they come in, they’re often already committed to the project—without being “locked into any ideas,” says Hiland Turner. “The guide is part of the educational process.”

Turner spent about \$15,000 for the design and printing of 3,000 kits with

envelopes. With photography for the project inserts, the total came to almost \$25,000. But it's a marketing effort the firm expects to use for three to five years.

Whatever type of printed material you use to introduce your firm, make sure your look makes the right first impression. That means working with a graphic design professional to develop a distinctive logo and compelling presentation. It's money well spent.

newsletters

Company newsletters needn't be as slick as brochures, and they're usually more economical to produce. The cost per mailing ranges from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for printing and postage, depending on quantity, size, and paper quality.

"It's a good investment for the amount of coverage and presence you get into the hands of people," says Susanka. Her firm's yearly newsletter combines chatty personal news—like who in the firm had a baby—with substantive articles about such issues as panelization and sustainability.

Downing Thorpe James, in Boulder, Colo., views its quarterly

but not corporate-looking," she says.

The newsletter goes to just about everyone who has had contact with the firm, including "prospects, the media, developers, friends of the company, and clients." Copies are also distributed at trade shows.

"We've picked up some major clients that way," Grassmeyer says. "People will call us years later because they remember our newsletter."

home shows

Home shows put you smack in the middle of crowds of people who are interested in your services. The investment, though, can be significant. There are brochures to hand out and a booth fee to pay; also, someone needs to be at your booth constantly.

Some architects are adamant that the effort and cost are worthwhile; others have experienced disappointment. "It's exhausting," says Frank Harmon, FAIA, of Raleigh, N.C. He took a booth at his local home show for five years in a row. It netted him only one project, so he stopped.

"There are few things better," counters Susanka, whose firm does home shows as well as the Minne-

Don't sell yourself; sell the profession, emphasizing the benefits of working with an architect. If your local AIA chapter participates in home shows, take a turn at the booth for a low-risk way to see if it's worthwhile.

Also, consider giving a lecture at a home show. That can be just as effective as having a booth; more so, perhaps, because it allows you to position yourself as an expert.

the internet

A Web site is a great way to let prospects get a good look at your work before they contact you. "People typically go to our Web site first," says Cincotta. They like to look at the firm's work up close, he says, without the risk of face-to-face awkwardness "if they don't like what they see." Since Cincotta and Lineberger's home-based practice is in a rural area, the fact that they've been computerized since the '80s demonstrates a level of sophistication that prospects might not otherwise see.

(For more on using the Internet, see "Net Benefits," page 66 in the January/February 1998 issue of *residential architect*).

"people go to our web site first."

—joseph cincotta

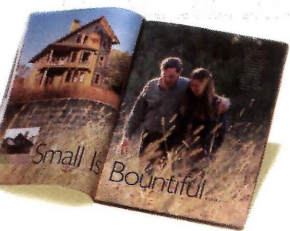
newsletter as "another communication tool," says marketing coordinator Laurie Grassmeyer. "We show a variety of projects, and try to be informational without blowing our own horn too much." Designed and written in-house, the publication is "polished

apolis Parade of Homes, a huge, biannual event where thousands of people tramp through new homes all over the Minneapolis area.

The best way to work a show is to take the same approach as with any other public forum, says Susanka.

job signs

Never underestimate the power of a job sign. The work you do is your best advertising, and a sign on the job lets passers-by know it's yours. Something tasteful, with the firm name and telephone number printed in letters large enough to read while driving by, is enough. "It's one of the simplest and easiest things we do,"



“we try to be informational without blowing our own horn.”

—laurie grassmeyer

says Harmon. Having snagged several projects in the last two years with his signs, Harmon claims that they “give the biggest return for the investment of any marketing.”

just do it

Think you’re too busy to market? Chances are, the opposite is true, unless you prefer a roller-coaster workload. Even when your office is

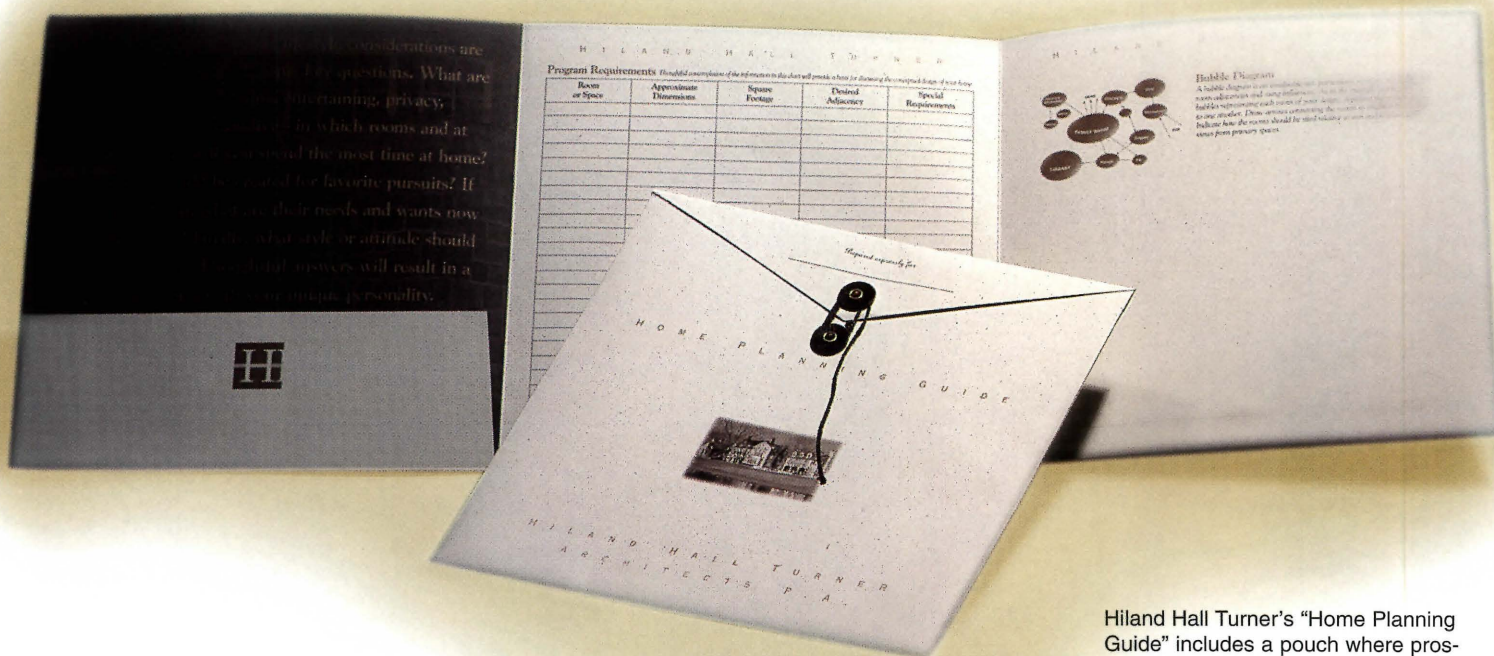
buzzing with activity, you need jobs in the pipeline. Otherwise, you and your staff are headed for a demoralizing letdown.

Every architect interviewed for this story emphasized the importance of a steady marketing effort. In most cases, steady means 5 to 10 percent of your annual revenue, and 10 to 20 percent of your time. Use those benchmarks to figure out how many

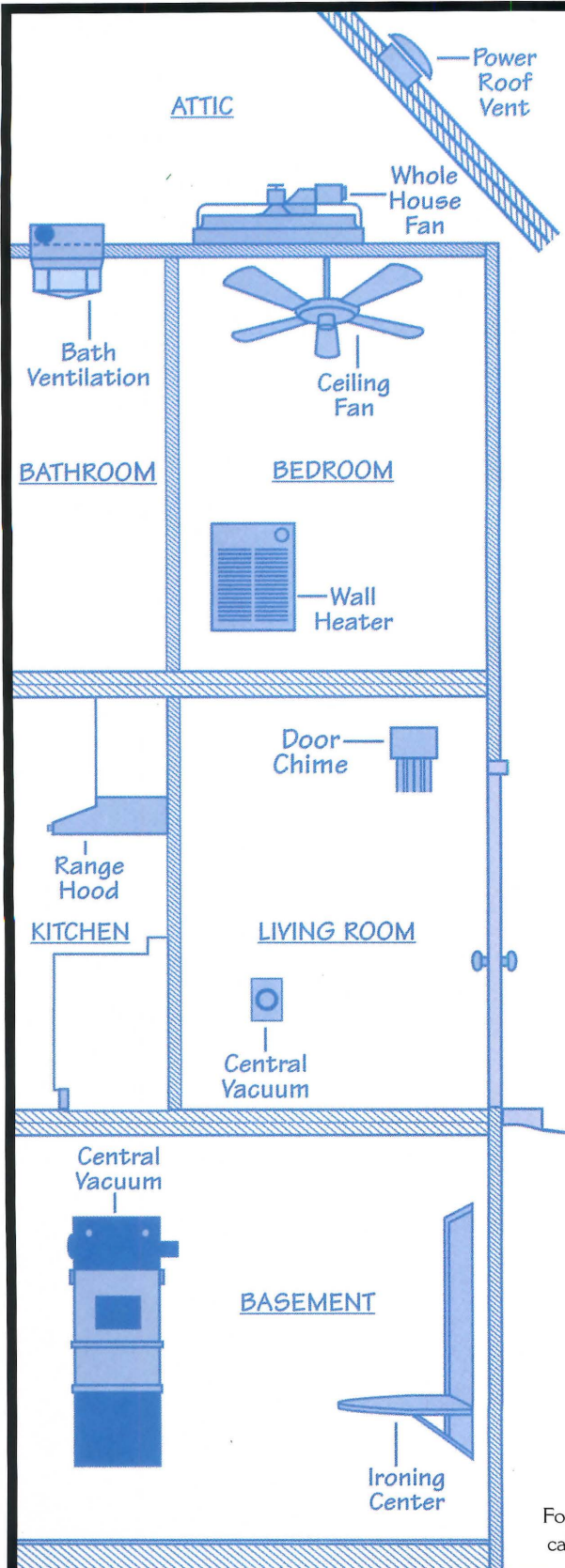
projects you can photograph; how much networking you should do; and how many different techniques you can try.

Figure out what you enjoy doing most, and then just do it. Be persistent, and folks won’t just watch you—they’ll call you. **ra**

Paul J. Donio is a freelance writer in New York City.



Hiland Hall Turner’s “Home Planning Guide” includes a pouch where prospects can store photos of homes they like; a programming chart where they can list all the rooms they need; and a bubble diagram that gets them thinking about room adjacencies and views.



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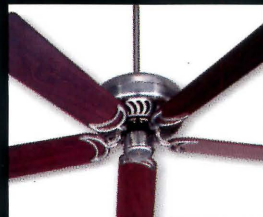
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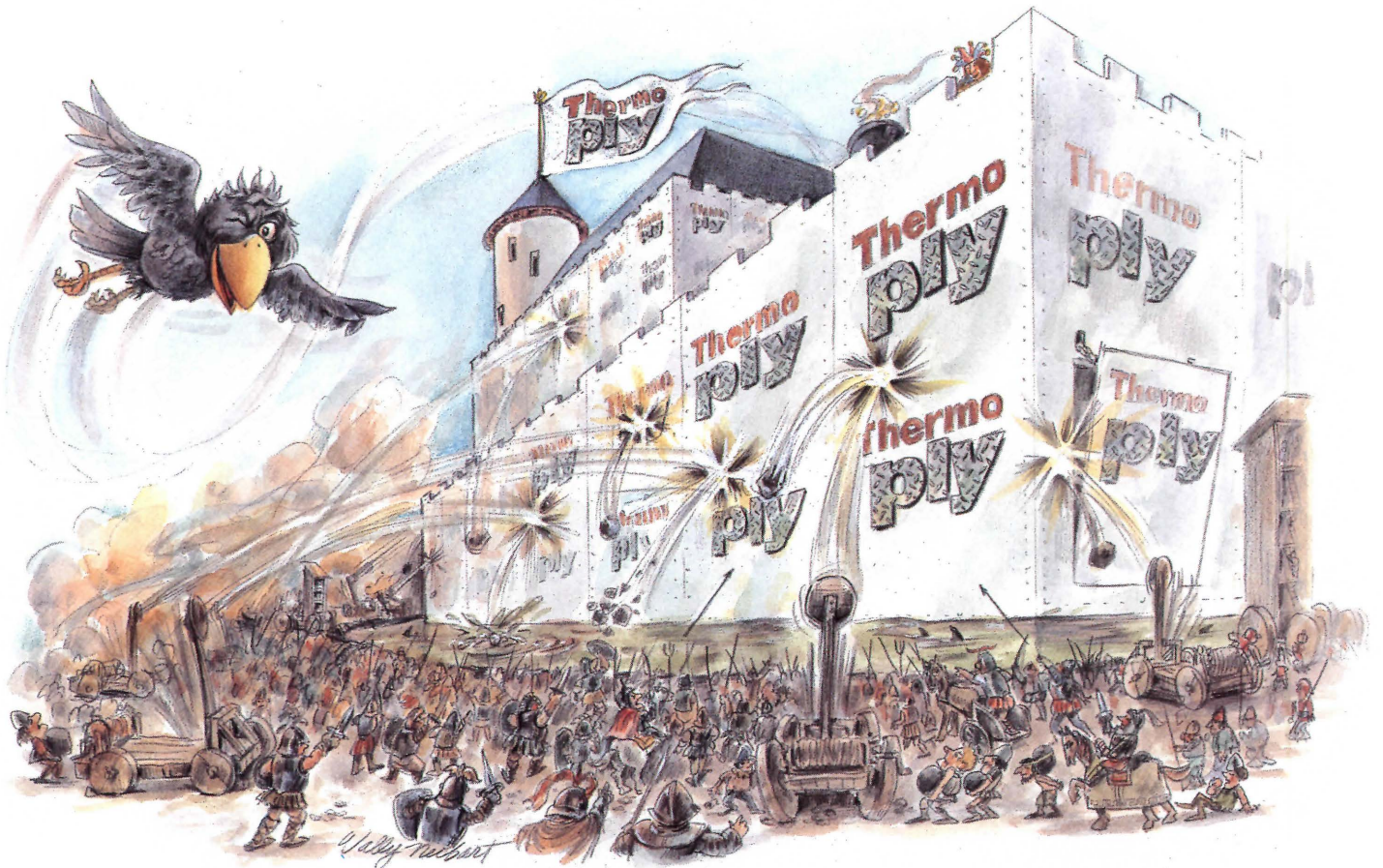


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best of 1999

what makes a good house?

correct **proportions**, of course.

site **sensitivity** and smart use
of **materials**. and equally important,

an intuitive **understanding** of
what makes a house a home.

here are three that set
a standard for **excellence**
in residential design.



Paul Lamb Architects used native vegetation to buffer the Tilton house from its suburban street in Austin, Tex. Visitors approach the house along a gravel path, stepping down into a small sunken garden (right). Entry to the private domain is multilayered; the first is a gate fashioned of aromatic cedar.



austin, tex.

When Bonnie and Lawrence Tilton asked Paul Lamb, AIA, to look at their suburban lot in Austin, Lamb had immediate reservations. He visited the site before meeting the Tiltons and found it spectacular. But he thought the showy, oversized houses popping up all over the new development were a sign of trouble.

"I was nervous about the neighborhood and the Tiltons' expectations," he says. Prior to meeting them in person, he prepared a polite speech to ease himself out of the situation. So when the couple walked into his office and announced they had no intention of building a house anything like the ones around it, Lamb breathed a sigh of relief.

texas roots

From that first meeting, he set out to design a house that would augment the hillside site, which overlooks the city and a string of lakes. "We wanted a Texas house made of local materials," says Bonnie. "To me that meant a porch. We wanted it to fit the landscape."

That sat well with Lamb, who was determined that the 4,400-square-foot house would complement the site, not be an affront to it. "So many of the houses in those neighborhoods are built with only a gesture to the street. We let the trees remain, to provide a buffer," he says.

The site's elevation afforded great vistas of Austin's skyline. But Lamb was equally influenced by an existing cluster of trees and a natural clearing that framed views of the lake below. He generated an L-shaped plan that forms a courtyard on the uphill side and stretches the living spaces and bedrooms along the ridge. Overlooking the



Photos: © Peter Tata
Architectural Photography

best of 1999

courtyard along one wing is Bonnie's Texas porch, which serves as entry, reception area, and informal eating space. Lamb's solution dovetailed nicely with the Tiltons' desire for a house that embraces the outdoors.

local tradition

Lamb rooted the house in Hill Country tradition, with walls of local limestone and a galvanized, standing-seam roof. Smeared mortar joints, a technique

borrowed from German immigrants who settled nearby in the 1800s, give the walls a monolithic quality. "We tried to detail the house to keep the essence of an old building," Lamb says.

Another such detail is the fretting over the windows. The building code requires that windows in masonry walls have steel lintels, which would have tarnished Lamb's desired aesthetic. Instead, he used a stone lintel, em-

bedding the steel one course higher in the wall so it can't be seen.

Inside the house, Lamb made the walls look thicker by edging the window sashes an inch or two toward the outside. A rounded corner bead on the drywall return gives the impression that the walls are plaster. Minor adjustments, says Lamb, "but they give the walls more substance."

open minds

When the Tiltons entertain, guests head for an outdoor room carved from the home's lower wing. The space is Lamb's reinterpretation of the breezeways common to Texas dogtrot houses. Though that arched passage—and indeed, the entire house—may not match the Tiltons' notion of traditional Texas design, the result is a testament to their openness as clients.

"They had a strong image of the house, but they weren't slaves to that image," says Lamb. "To their credit, they weren't scared of the whole design process."

Vernon Mays is editor of Inform, the architecture and design magazine of the Virginia Society AIA.



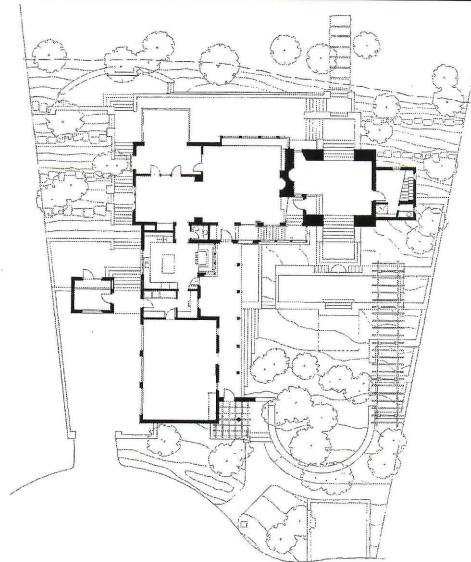
Limestone stairs terrace down the steep hillside behind the house (top left). Arched openings funnel breezes through a 16-by-20-foot outdoor room (right). A small fireplace warms the sheltered space on cool days and evenings. Above it is the owners' suite; secondary bedrooms and a study are on a lower level.

The living room's vaulted cypress ceiling is both rustic and refined (left). Lamb's signature is the Rumford fireplace, flanked here by cabinets of reclaimed long-leaf yellow pine.





Photos: © Peter Tata Architectural Photography



project:

Tilton house, Austin, Tex.

architect:

Paul Lamb Architects, Austin

general contractor:

David Dagleish Construction, Austin

interior designer:

Garrett Yebernetsky, Wyckoff, N.J.



best of 1999

julian, calif.

Views drove the design of this weekend retreat. Located in hill country two hours east of San Diego, the site measures about 11 acres. But only a limited piece was high enough to capture the vistas the clients desired: of mountains and San Diego to the west, and of Cuyamaca Lake to the south.

"They wanted the house to reach up as high as possible so that they could see above the trees," recalls Taal Safdie of Safdie Rabines Architects, a San Diego firm that does primarily custom residential work. The design could not exceed the county's 30-foot height limit, however, so Safdie wedged the 2,000-square-foot structure into the slope. The hilltop elevation appears as a two-story structure. Its roof arcs upward, exposing three levels of living space to downslope scenery.

firm foundation

Because the hillside beneath the house is granite, Safdie wanted to limit the footprint size—and excavation costs. She worked with one of the clients, a structural engineer, to design a concrete box foundation that would anchor the building to its site. The foundation contains a workshop; the structure above is clad in cedar.

Safdie's design for a weekend retreat in Julian, Calif., wedges into a granite hillside. From the rooftop deck, the owners enjoy westward views of mountains and, at night, the lights of San Diego (right).

Photos: John Durant Photographer



best of 1999

The main living level is organized around a massive two-story fireplace. The kitchen, dining room, and guest bedroom flank a sunken living room whose exposed fir ceiling soars 20 feet. All major living spaces have direct access to decks, the most spectacular of which faces southwest off the living room. Safdie specified industrial-style aluminum windows and doors for that floor-to-ceiling view wall, eschewing double-pane

glazing in favor of clear glass. "We didn't want to obstruct the view in any way," she says.

circulation system

The single-pane glass was an indulgence, to be sure. But Safdie compensated with a surprisingly effective passive heating and cooling system.

In chilly weather, the clients use the

fireplace and a wood-burning oven in the kitchen to warm the house. Adoquin stone floors and the stone hearth wall store and release warmed air.

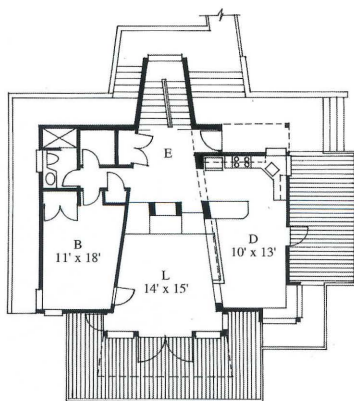
Safdie designed a series of solid fir interior shutters to control the circulation of heated air among the home's various levels; a door-sized pocket shutter closes off the stairwell. When the weather turns warm, those same shutters work in tandem with operable aluminum windows to draw air up and out through the home's upper levels.

The shutters serve another function as well: They give the upper rooms views of the dramatic center space. The second level contains the owners' suite, a sitting area, and the children's bedroom, which has its own play loft tucked into the curve of the roof. Shutters connect these spaces, too, to the home's heated core.

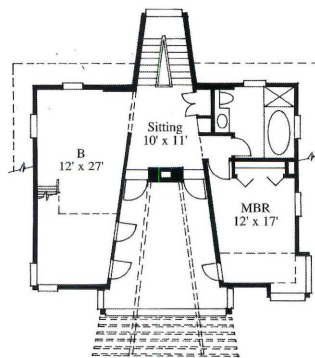
rooms with a view

Though the home's footprint is a simple box, the wedge form that bisects it adds visual interest by flaring the central two-story space toward the views. The wedge extends the living room out into the deck, creating the window wall that is the home's focal point. Atop it all is a private roof deck and spa—the ultimate outdoor room.

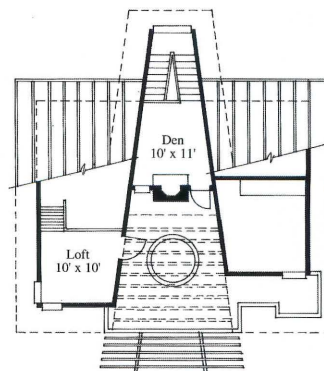
—susan bradford barror



ground floor



second floor



third floor





Photos: John Durant Photographer

Safdie specified Adoquin stone for the hearth wall and floors (above). The stone provides a cool surface in warm weather. On chilly days, it stores and releases heat generated by the fireplace and a wood stove in the kitchen.

One entire wall of the living room is glass (left), with corner windows that extend views out into the deck. Interior shutters foster air circulation as they connect private rooms to the home's two-story core.

The arcing roof form (far left) shelters three levels of living space—plus a basement workshop set into the home's concrete foundation.

project:

Private residence, Julian, Calif.

architect/interior designer:

Safdie Rabines Architects, San Diego

general contractor:

Steve Goddard Construction, Julian

best of 1999

seaside, fla.

Shutters open, it's an old New Orleans-style townhouse casting a friendly eye to the street. Shutters closed, and it's a melancholy dwelling touched by a hint of mystery. Either way, New York architect Alexander Gorlin's 2,700-square-foot "shutter house" is a model of improvisation on a vernacular theme.

open-and-shut

Gorlin wanted the home's architecture to be contextual—but not rigidly so. Thus, he says, he hit upon the idea of taking a local motif (plantation shutters and French doors) and making it virtually the entire skin of the house. "The theme also plays with the notion of order and variety," says Gorlin. "The space between the windows is shutters, and the space between the shutters is all window." Like the familiar visual puzzle depicting facing profiles—or a vase—it's all in how you look at it. And the home's exterior flexibility allows its owners to change its character according to their whims.

Gorlin achieved an aged look by eliminating the final coat of weather-proofed stucco covering the home's exterior. Front balconies enhance the New Orleans reference (large photo, right). Stepped decks on the back of the house (right) culminate in a rooftop bathing pavilion (above, left).

The custom-made mahogany shutters aren't just for aesthetic appeal; they're actually quite energy-efficient. "They work the same way as in old Italian villas," says Gorlin, "blocking light while providing ventilation. They even eliminate the need for air conditioning." (The house does have air conditioning, but according to Gorlin, who's a friend of the owners, it's rarely put to use.)

view finder

Gorlin took advantage of a prime corner location by wrapping floor-to-ceiling windows around all three exposed facades. French doors on the home's rear, east-facing side open onto second-floor and third-floor decks, which are offset to allow the morning sun to reach both at once. A rooftop deck holds a hot tub from which residents can see the town of Seaside and the Gulf of Mexico.

Gorlin's floor plan plays to the views. He located rooms where his clients spend the most time—the owners' suite and the kitchen—at the back of the house, facing the water. The arrangement makes the most of sunrise watching and al fresco meals.

—meghan drueding

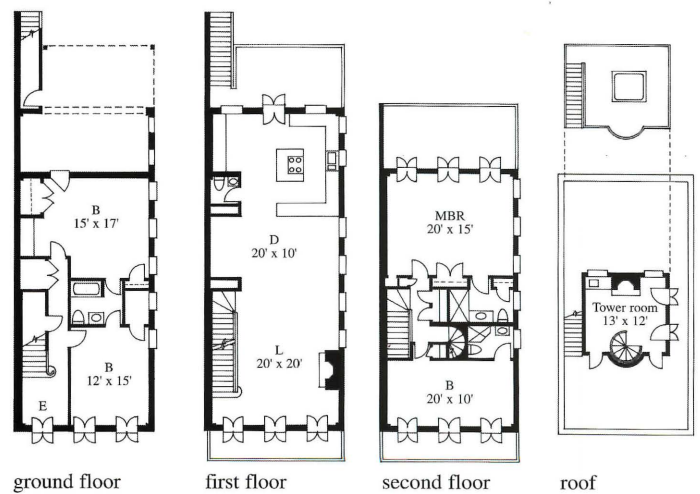


Photos: Michael Moran, Photographer





A second-floor kitchen basks in sunlight and ocean views.



project:

Shutter house, Seaside, Fla.

architect:

Alexander Gorlin, Architect, New York

general contractor:

New Creations, Panama City, Fla.

interior designer:

Carl D'Aquino Interior Design, New York

They're over 45



They have the freedom
They have the money
They have the motivation

At this stage in their lives, they want a home
that meets their needs ... now and in the future.

Life**Stages**Home

In 1997, **Masco** sponsored a consumer research study commissioned by *Builder* magazine. It provided statistics on the housing plans, preferences and priorities of people in or entering the "mature" market — people aged 45 and older.

In the next decade, this market segment will see tremendous growth, as people in the post-World War II "baby boom" generation enter their 50s and 60s.

The LifeStages Home is a direct result of our Mature Markets Study. It provides architects with practical solutions for the unique housing wants and needs of people aged 45 and older.

Designed and equipped for aging in place.



The LifeStages home allows its owners to grow older comfortably, in a house that's easily adaptable to their changing lifestyle: the den/sitting room in the master suite can become a separate his or hers bedroom; the guest bedroom can become a suite for live-in help; and the dining room can become an office.

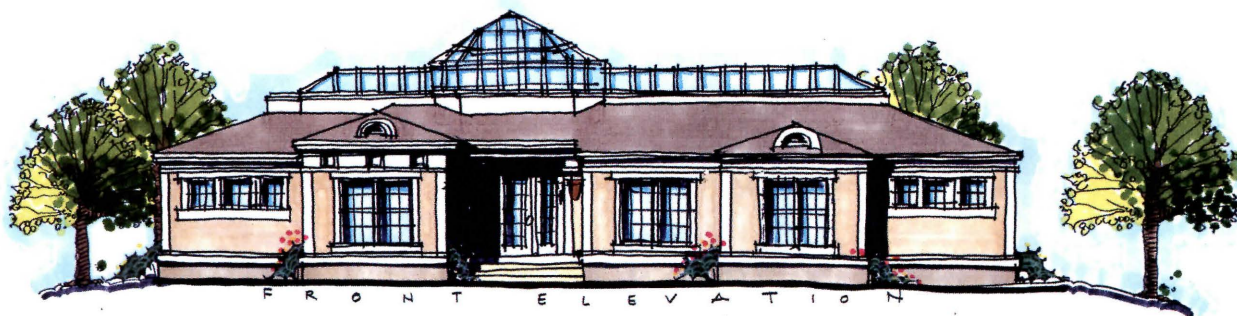
From our research results, the LifeStages Home includes many "must-have" features for buyers in the mature market, including a

large, well-equipped kitchen with easy-maintenance materials and finishes, and good accessibility, particularly for people with restricted mobility and flexibility.



Masco companies provided more than 50 products for the LifeStages Home, and many of them appear on the list of feature priorities from our Mature Markets Study.

The designs of these products make them more easily usable for people with physical disabilities, but that accommodation is invisible; they are completely accessible, pleasing and desirable for anyone.



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Circle no. 214





a hud-code show home
combines luxury and convenience
for active adults who want
to age in place.

home for life

by rich binsacca

photos: kevin berne

Stretching the design and production limits of manufactured housing, LifeStages '99 staggers six HUD-code modules along its front elevation and delivers added dimension and drama with a site-built cupola and gallery skylight.

architect Bill Devereaux thought he was through with LifeStages '99. He had participated in a kickoff meeting for the show home, which would demonstrate aging in place and universal design within the context of manufactured housing. His role had been to design an owners' suite during a half-day charrette.

Two months later, project co-sponsors BUILDER (*residential architect's* sister magazine) and Masco Corp. called Devereaux back to design the entire house. His charge: to design a plan for an active but aging couple looking for luxury and long-term convenience. BUILDER and Masco already had HUD-code giant Fleetwood Homes on board to build the house. "The idea was to push the limits of manufactured housing" in terms of design, says Devereaux—and to leverage the latest products and features for accessibility.



home for life

“it looked quite linear when we tried to design it

code creativity

Devereaux and his team were familiar with the design constraints of designing HUD-code units: widths no more than 16 feet, standard plate heights under 8 feet, and egress within 35 feet of any location inside the house, to name a few.

But instead of letting the parameters of manufactured housing drive the design, Devereaux's team approached the floor plan and elevations from the program side. “It looked quite linear when we tried to design it using standard HUD-code modules,” says chief designer Sandy Fennell. “So we set out to create the best floor plan first.”

design objectives

Devereaux freely admits that his McLean, Va.-based firm has more experience designing retirement housing than manufactured homes. Thus, his team drew heavily on its knowledge of mature buyer preferences in designing the LifeStages house. They focused on four key elements: separation of functions, furnishability, openness, and light. While these characteristics aren't always priorities in HUD-code housing, Devereaux and his team knew how important they are to the show home's target audience.

separation

To achieve separation, the team gave the floor plan distinct zones and designed rooms for privacy and intimacy. The living room, for instance, is small and formal—perfect for reading or quiet conversation. The two secondary bedrooms and

guest bath are on the opposite end of the house from the owners' suite, giving seclusion to each. The kitchen is designed to accommodate two separate but equal cooks.

furnishings

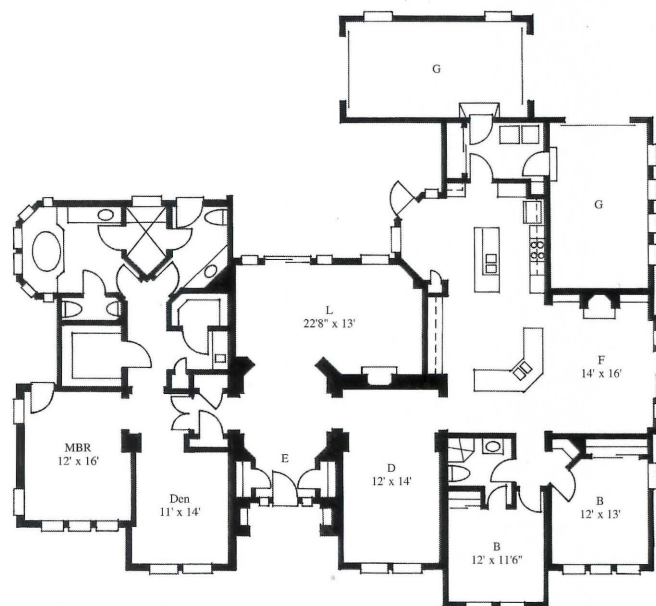
Devereaux knew that move-down couples come with a lifetime of beloved furnishings. So his team designed the living and dining rooms to accommodate family treasures. A den off the owners' suite and a well-scaled family room can hold extra pieces. And the plan features abundant built-ins for knick-knacks from the old homestead.

openness

Achieving openness within the constraints of manufactured housing was Devereaux's biggest challenge. “We wanted the house to feel spacious,” he says. His team worked with Fleetwood's in-house architects to add a foot to the 7-foot, 8-inch plate height found in standard manufactured homes, without intruding on HUD-code transportation limits.

The resulting ceilings are loftier than those in many site-built homes. The extra height allowed Devereaux to create through-views that give smaller areas some spaciousness.

The higher ceilings also broaden long sightlines between the owners' bedroom and bath, and in the gallery between the owners' suite and the kitchen/family room. The higher plates “remove the linear feel of the house,” Fennell says. So, too, do the thick, textured pilasters that intrude slightly on the gallery—a design detail that



Devereaux & Associates overcame the linear constraints of manufactured housing by lining up six 12-foot, 9-inch-wide modules and staggering them to create exterior interest.



A plate height higher than standard HUD-code specs makes smaller formal areas feel bigger and provides room for design details like this pass-through above a two-sided fireplace.

sing standard hud-code modules, so we set out to create the best floor plan first.”

—sandy fennell



Two cooks can easily use this kitchen with its pair of islands. The dining room (below) is separate from, yet convenient to, the kitchen.



A shared tile shower links his-and-hers baths. The shower includes an integral bench and both hand-held and fixed showerheads. Angled walls and low thresholds make the owners' retreat wheelchair-accessible without sacrificing luxury.

plays the practical role of hiding the joints between the HUD-code modules.

light sources

Light was an important objective. “Mature buyers want light everywhere, both natural and artificial,” Devereaux says. To that end, the plan includes a dramatic 18-foot-high cupola over the foyer and a gallery-long skylight. Both were built on site after the house was shipped. Another site-built cupola tops the breakfast nook.

The team gave the house plenty of glass doors and windows throughout, including three skylights in the family room. Recessed cans brighten the house at night. And Devereaux installed task lighting in ample supply, especially over work surfaces, along the gallery, and under the kitchen cabinets.

universal design

Like many features in the house, the abundance of light speaks to the long-term needs of maturing buyers. Eyesight and agility fade with age. Extra light—as well as lever handles on doors and faucets, midwall switches, accessible appliances, and adequate turnaround space—allows occupants to live as comfortably in the house at age 80 as they did in their 60s. Such universal design solutions have been well researched, Devereaux says. “It doesn’t take a lot of effort to build them into a design, and they really work” to extend a home’s lifespan, he says.

meeting hud code

Once the house was designed, the next challenge was to build the 3,175-square-foot floor plan using Fleetwood’s manufactured modules. Problematic? Not at all, says Fennell. In fact, the initial layout changed very little once her team and Fleetwood’s architects put their heads together.

They decided to build the floor plan using six 12-foot, 9-inch-wide by 60-foot-long HUD-code modules, placing them side by side and slightly staggered to create some dimension across the front and rear elevations. Fleetwood was even able to factory-build a single-car garage on the back of the house—an element that’s usually a stick-built addition to manufactured homes. (The LifeStages house gained a second, drive-through garage on site.)

life after lifestages

Fleetwood is not yet prepared to offer the LifeStages plan in its catalog. The engineering to achieve the extra plate height is one of several modifications that are keeping the house off the assembly line. As for Devereaux, he and his team relished the opportunity to serve two masters—the program requirements and the construction constraints. “It was a different kind of challenge for our office,” he says. “Projects like this keep us from getting stale.” *ra*

Rich Binsacca is a freelance writer in Boise, Idaho.

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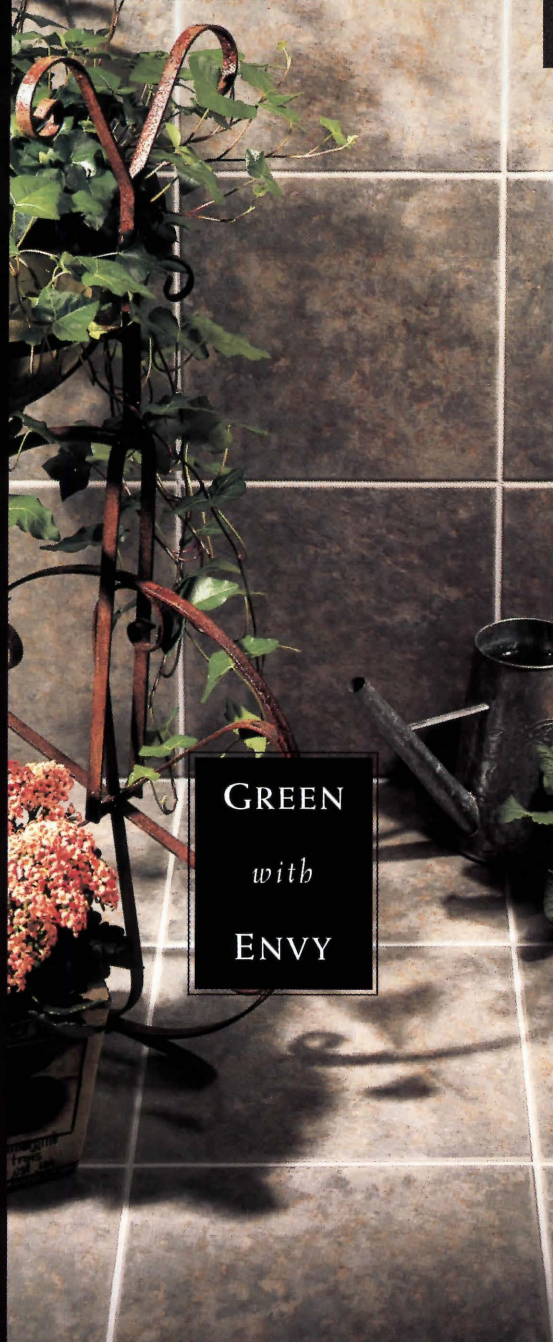
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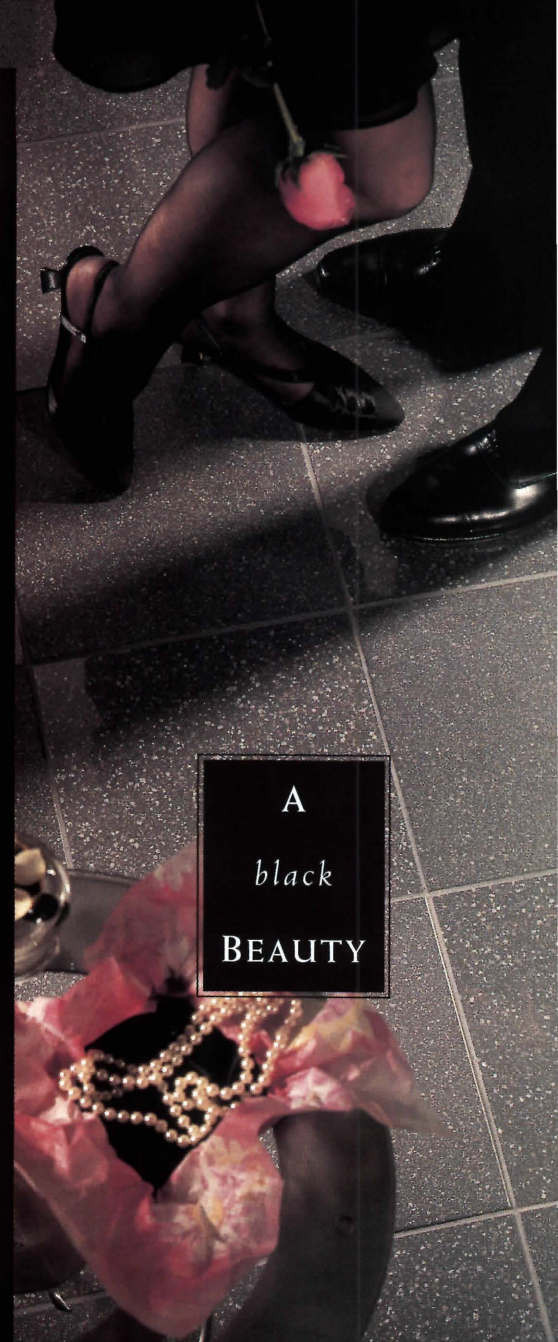
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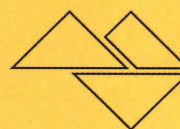


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manhandles

San Francisco designer and sculptor Cari Jaye Sokoloff merges art and function with her unique line of hand-cast bronze pulls and knobs. Originally designed as individual sculptural pieces, Manhandles provide distinctive hardware for interior and exterior furnishings. They come in five standard finishes: dove, black, antique, celadon, and natural bronze. The handles shown here start at \$130; custom hardware is also available. For additional information, call Soko at 1.888.828.7656.



art de vivre

Looking for the ultimate in custom faucetry? French manufacturer Tétard-Haudiquez-Grisoni (THG) has introduced its jewelry-quality fixtures of precious stones and crystal to the U.S. through THG USA. Thousands of designs, genres, and styles are available; each fixture is made to order. Some products include matching towel racks and accessories. The Zephyr Cristal shown here, part of the Elegance Collection, is a sculpted swirl of polished brass and aqua crystal. It retails for \$1,895 (pricing depends on the level of customization required for each fixture). For additional information, contact THG USA at 1.908.281.0191.

metallica

Trout Studios' imaginative new collection of Trouttile cast aluminum tiles swims against the current of traditional ceramic tile lines. "I didn't see aluminum tiles



anywhere," says designer Sallie Trout, "so I decided to design them myself." The tiles are made from solid cast recycled aluminum with a ball-burnished or semi-polished finish, and are installed in the same way as ceramic tiles.

The Trouttile collection features seven designs in bas relief—a dragonfly, daisy, pear, heart, pansy, wild spiral, and a steaming cup of coffee—plus a plain tile. The raised patterns make some of the tiles more appropriate for vertical applications. According to the maker, the low-maintenance finishes age well over time. Tiles cost \$16 each. For additional information, contact Artistic Bath & Tile, 310.202.8868, or www.troutstudios.com.



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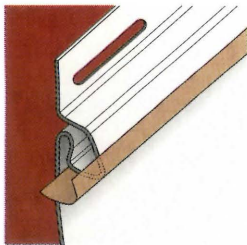
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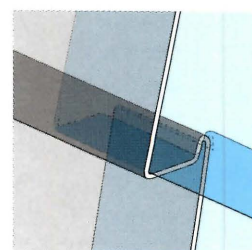
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everyday tools

day-to-day tools for the well-equipped small office.

by sara o'neil-manion, aia

When it comes to office equipment, architects cannot live by computers alone. Everyday items—from presentation tools to staplers and storage systems—help keep the practice running smoothly. Here is an inventory of equipment we use on a day-to-day basis, both for client interface and behind the scenes.

presentation equipment

Architects used to make presentations with slide projectors, overhead projectors, easels, and flip charts. These old reliables still are necessary components in an architect's presentation repertoire. They cost in the hundreds of dollars to buy, or can be rented as needed.

But today's world of presentation technology includes several useful high-tech tools as well.

lcd data and video projector

This is a must for showing CAD three-dimensional virtual-reality walk-throughs to groups. It's a high-price item, costing \$6,000 to \$7,000. Our firm uses it infrequently, so we rent one

on an as-needed basis. Should you decide to buy, base your selection on resolution, ease of use, color saturation, sound quality, highlighter capability, and inclusion of a zoom lens and remote control.

flat large-screen monitor

Again, this is a fairly pricey (approximately \$3,000) item that can be rented. These screens are more elegant-looking and easier to transport than standard monitors. They are great for presentations to groups because they can be mounted on a wall. They come in a variety of sizes, up to 30 inches by 3 feet. As the technology matures, these screens should become more affordable.

visual documentation still camera

Our firm's large manual Nikon with all the requisite lenses sits in a box in our office. We prefer to use the lightest, smallest point-and-shoot 35mm for recording existing conditions. And we have a Polaroid for specific, immediate recording needs. Good point-and-shoot 35mm cameras and compact Polaroids can be purchased in the \$100 to \$250 range.



Illustration: Greg Clarke

What we use most frequently of all is a digital camera that allows us to transport existing-condition photographs immediately into our CAD drawings, or cut in actual entourage for a CAD rendering. The price is high—about \$400 to \$1,000—but the versatility is well worth the cost.

video camera

This is another effective tool for recording existing

conditions and building systems prior to close-in. It can also be used to create a series of images for CAD 3-D walk-throughs. And it's the best tool for recording information long-distance, so base your selection on size, weight, and ease of use and maintenance. Check your local electronic media store for equipment options and prices.

continued on page 98



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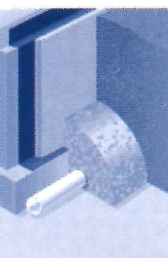
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day-to-day tools calculator

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typewriter

Compulsive neatniks still use these dinosaurs for typing forms. Our typewriters received so little attention we finally gave them away. Now we fill in forms by hand—or on computer, when possible.

binding

We use two- and three-hole punches with three-ring and Acco data binders to store information in our files.

For formal presentation binders, we use an in-office binding system that in-

cludes plastic GBC ring, wire ring, and various thermal plastic binding edges. Anticipate a \$300 to \$800 cost for a binding machine.

miscellaneous tools

Most of these items cost in the hundreds of dollars—

and they are worth every penny, in my estimation.

■ A paper cutter in a standard small size for simple trimming jobs.

■ A cutting board and technical knives for finishing and trimming presentation boards, photographs, graphics, and the like.

■ A heavy-duty stapler for quick binding of large sets of drawings. These staplers cost from \$50 and up. Test different options at a supply store before you buy; look for variable thickness settings and ease of use.

■ A postage meter and electronic scales will save you countless trips to the post office. Pitney Bowes offers a variety of these items for small offices. Don't waste your money on mechanical scales, because postage rates change too frequently.



■ Sonic measuring tools for quick measurements. Don't rely on these tools for accuracy. Insist on tape measurements for final, accurate checks.

■ Measuring tapes and rules. We keep several lengths of tapes and folding

rules. They are routinely broken, left at a project, or disappear, so figure on a five-year life cycle for each.

■ A square and level for punch-list walk-throughs. A 48-inch level is guaranteed to get a drywall subcontractor's attention.

■ A crowbar for opening walls and ceilings to verify hidden conditions during site visits.

storage

Storage of drawings can overwhelm any office. CAD has not reduced paper flow, but actually increased it (not to mention creating a new need for storage of electronic media).

At issue is the amount of valuable rental space that drawings occupy. Architects face professional liability and the need to maintain building records for the legal statute of limits in their jurisdiction, which can be 20 to 25 years.

print storage

Current project prints should be stored in a readily accessible area, preferably a fireproof, flat-file metal cabinet (roll storage bins and hanging racks also work, though they aren't fire-safe).

electronic and photographic storage

You may also want to consider new storage methods. Large format scanners convert print material into electronic media. Other

options include electronic copying to optical disks or storage tapes; microfilming; microfiche; and other photographic techniques that reduce paper or mylar hard copy into film or other smaller media.

Most storage systems used by architects—for printed, electronic, and photographic matter—are available through drafting and engineering supply companies.

disposal

Once a project is completed and dead-filed, documentation should be properly disposed of. Paper files customarily are shredded. Select shredders for heavy-duty performance and speed. Architectural offices are major paper producers, and getting rid of the paper is a major operation. We routinely shred as part of dead-filing and disposal of projects past set limits. Our office has worn through three shredders in the past three years.

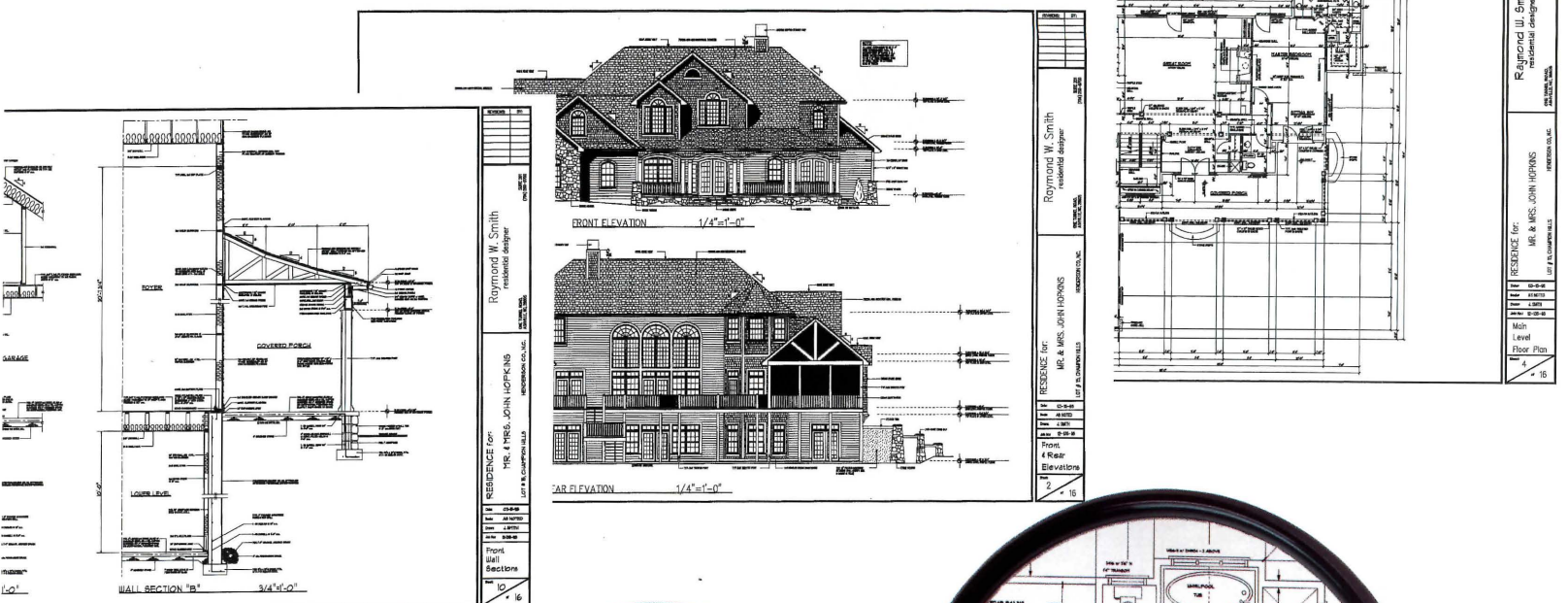
Most paper can be recycled, whether it's shredded or not—assuming your office building or cleaning service offers recycling. The exception is printed matter that uses heavy metals, such as photographs and some magazines and newspapers. **ra**

Sara O'Neil-Manion, AIA, is a founder of O'Neil and Manion Architects in Bethesda, Md.

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keep the practice
running smoothly.”

—sara o'neil-manion, aia

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Circle no. 47

panel discussion

a tale of two houses: one built with structural insulated panels, the other stick built.

by colin m. cathcart

If you're like most architects, you can't contemplate designing a new house without thinking about stud framing.

Well, think again. My firm won't build another stud-framed house if I can help it. Not that light wood framing isn't a great structural system. Its strength and resilience have been proven again and again. But energy conservation has always been an afterthought.

Critics misjudged stud framing in the 1830s when they called it "balloon" framing, thinking it so light the wind might carry houses away. Cold wind blew right through instead. Insulation, vapor barriers, air barriers, and seal strips were subsequent fixes. Yet stud work promotes thermal bridging and uninsulated voids, even today.

the alternative

Structural insulated panels (SIPs) offer a better way to build a tight, well-insulated envelope. SIPs are stressed-skin sandwiches of rigid insulation bonded between two wood-fiber facings. Panels typically are 4 by 8 feet with nominal thicknesses of 3½, 5½, 7½, 9¼, and 11¼ inches, coordinating with conventional lum-

ber dimensions. Using SIPs, a small custom house can be erected, sheathed, insulated, and sealed for airtightness in a single day.

house #1—sips

I wasn't looking for an alternative to stud framing when I started to design a house near Woodstock, N.Y. The clients asked for a home that would deflect north winds, welcome the winter sun, and stay cool in the summer without air conditioning. We developed a barrel roof that curved down near the ground on the north side, exposing and shading three stories of glass on the south. But the owners

wanted more insulation than rafters or studs could hold: R50 in the roof and R30 in the walls. How could we give them that amount of insulation if we used wood framing?

An associate suggested SIPs. At first I was suspicious of the panels' claimed R-values. But the values proved credible, since the joints are far apart and the panels are factory-made. Houses made with SIPs have fewer joints, so they are more airtight than framed houses and usually don't need a vapor barrier, roof vents, or housewrap. And much to my surprise, the local building inspector in Woodstock was all in

favor of using SIPs, having recently approved another panel house nearby.

We wanted to avoid roof trusses in our design, because we planned to use that curving roof shape inside the house, too. This led to another pleasant surprise: the spanning capabilities of SIPs. A stressed-skin panel develops strength the way an I-beam does. The skins act like flanges, taking compressive and tensile loads, while the insulation works like an I-beam web, distributing shear forces and keeping the skins from buckling.

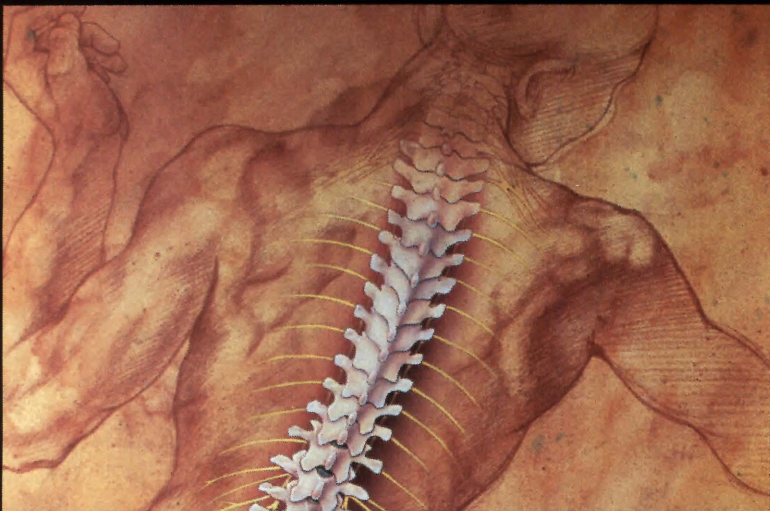
The Woodstock house proved to be warm, draft-

continued on page 104



Eduard Hueber/Arch Photo

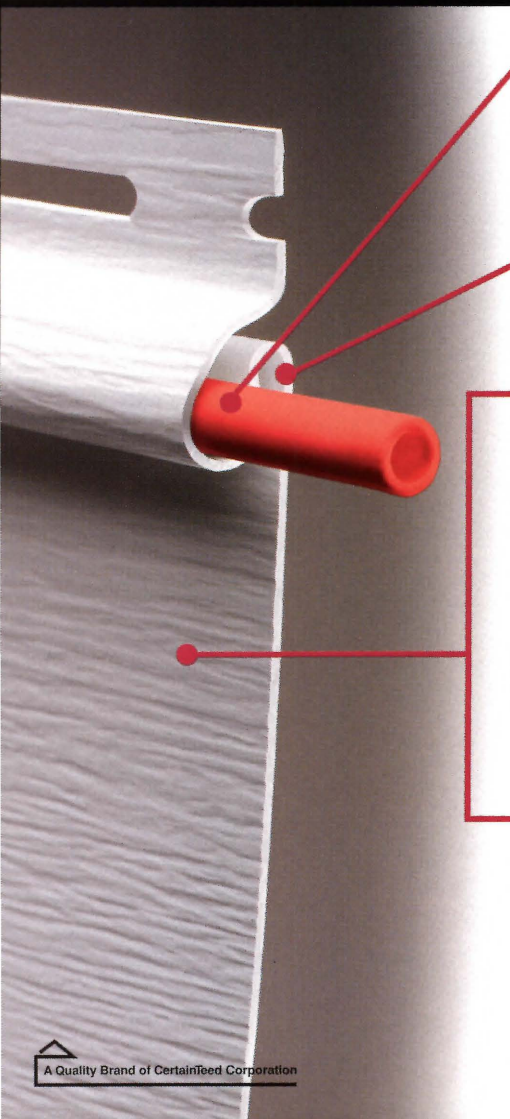
The first SIP house we designed near Woodstock, N.Y., buries into a south-facing slope. SIPs allowed high insulation levels and a curved shape without requiring roof vents.



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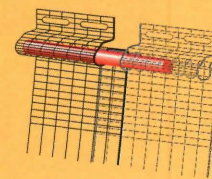
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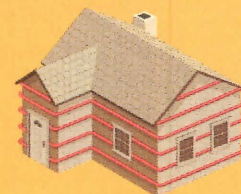


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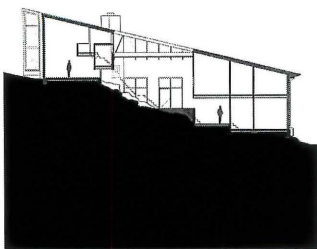


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free, and solid. "Once people have selected panels," says Mike Tobin of AFM Corp., a partnership of SIP manufacturers, "they start to connect the dots, picking better windows and doors, heat-recovery ventilation systems, and combined heating systems."



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Section shows how we would have used SIPs to frame the second house, with its rocky cliff and monopitch roof.

house #2—stud framed

When we got a call to design another energy-efficient house in the Catskill Mountains, we jumped at the chance to use SIPs again. The house was to step down a mountainside, encompassing a rocky cliff. The panels enforced the simple geometric discipline of a monopitch roof. The framing plan was simple, and construction promised to be quick.

Although initially receptive to SIPs, the owner was concerned about the premium he was paying for this efficiency—more so after he discovered he might have to relocate soon after

the house was finished. Since the contractor was a proud old framer with little experience in SIPs, he offered a 2-percent credit to frame the house with 2x6s instead—with half the insulation. Over my objections, we were commissioned to recalculate the structure, this time using stick framing. The house is now being finished—alas, without SIPs. We call it the Marilyn Monroe house, beautiful on the outside, but hurting inside.

learning curve

To those in the SIPs industry, it's a familiar pattern. "We do well with quality-conscious 'step-up' homeowners," says AFM's Tobin. "But if they care more about \$400 faucets than what's inside the walls, they will stick with frame construction."

As for builders, few small contractors are willing to bet their businesses on the time savings promised by houses built with SIPs. Until they're familiar with the system, most will estimate labor costs comparable to stud framing. It usually takes a few SIP jobs before a builder can appreciate the efficiencies of panel construction. Still, "it isn't rocket science," says Structural Insulated Panel Association director Cynthia Gardstein, AIA. "Erection savings are generally clear with the third house."



Kiss + Cathcart Architects

SIPs are made of rigid insulation sandwiched between two wood fiber skins of oriented strand board.

SIPs currently account for only 1/2 percent of housing starts. But production of SIPs is on a 30-percent per-year growth curve, and will likely claim a substantial portion of the market within a generation. The system is part of a trend toward engineered wood products—plywood, roof trusses, wood I-beams—that are straighter and more predictable under load than conventional lumber. Because they are fabricated from "farmed" trees rather than older-growth wood, engineered wood products

continued on page 106

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resources

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Circle no. 265

are more environmentally responsible, too.

Most makers of SIPs provide instructional videos, span tables, test certificates, and detail binders. And, once they receive a contract, they provide signed and sealed panel shop drawings for approval prior to fabrication, shipping, and erection.

sips vs. studs

So a stick-framed house is no longer the best house you can build. "The difference in construction quality is like the difference between site-built and shop-built cabinets," says David Wright of Better Building Systems, a SIP prefabricator and erector in Grass Valley, Calif.

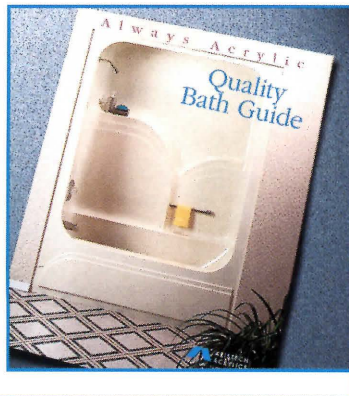
Stud framing will likely remain common for the next decade in affordable and mass-built housing, and in regions with low-cost energy and labor. But for high-end homes in areas with high fuel or labor costs, and wherever owners are interested in real quality and energy efficiency, SIPs are now the construction method of choice. And I believe it's only a matter of time before SIPs replace stud framing in most houses. *ra*

Colin M. Cathcart is a partner at Kiss + Cathcart Architects of New York City and associate professor of architecture at Fordham University.



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by rick vitullo, aia

anthony Abbate, AIA, and Terence O'Connor, AIA, are colleagues in the School of Architecture at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Fla. O'Connor teaches design and design theory, while Abbate teaches both design and methods and materials. They frequently toss around theoretical solutions to actual problems they encounter in their practices.

Case in point: their collaboration on a residence in Miami, which produced an elegantly practical approach to a bathroom shower. The two conceived a theoretical design for a shower as a series of suspended glass planes. The $\frac{3}{8}$ -inch-thick tempered glass panels would eliminate long linear joints made with messy and unsightly sealants, which are so often a maintenance headache. Water would slide down the inner glass plane—held off the outer curb below by a series of brushed cast-aluminum pin connections—and flow into the drain.

By overlapping the panels and exposing their edges instead of joining them together, Abbate and O'Connor emphasized the unique nature of the glass as it relates to the aluminum pins; each material is expressed simply and independently of the other.

continued on page 112

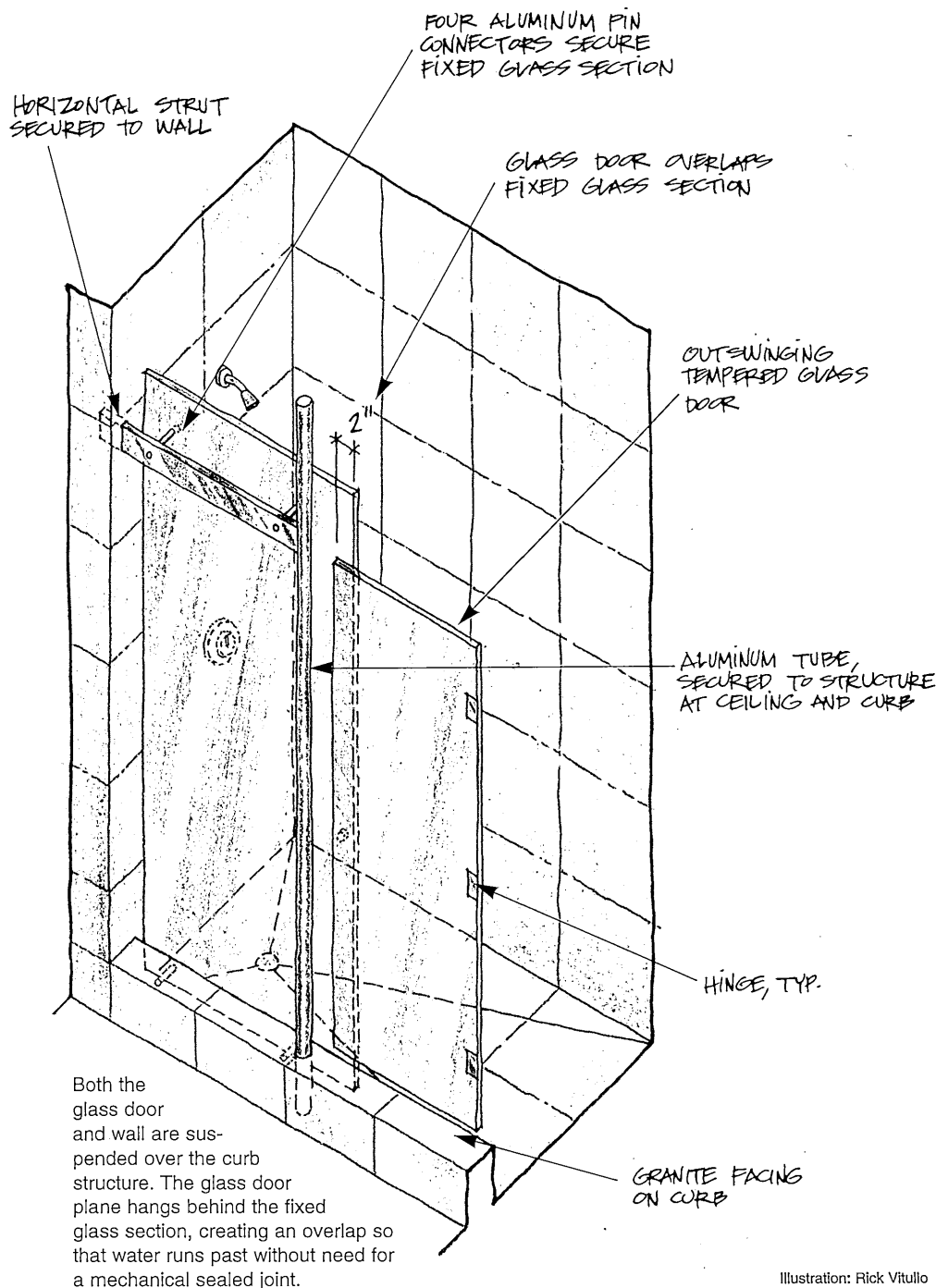
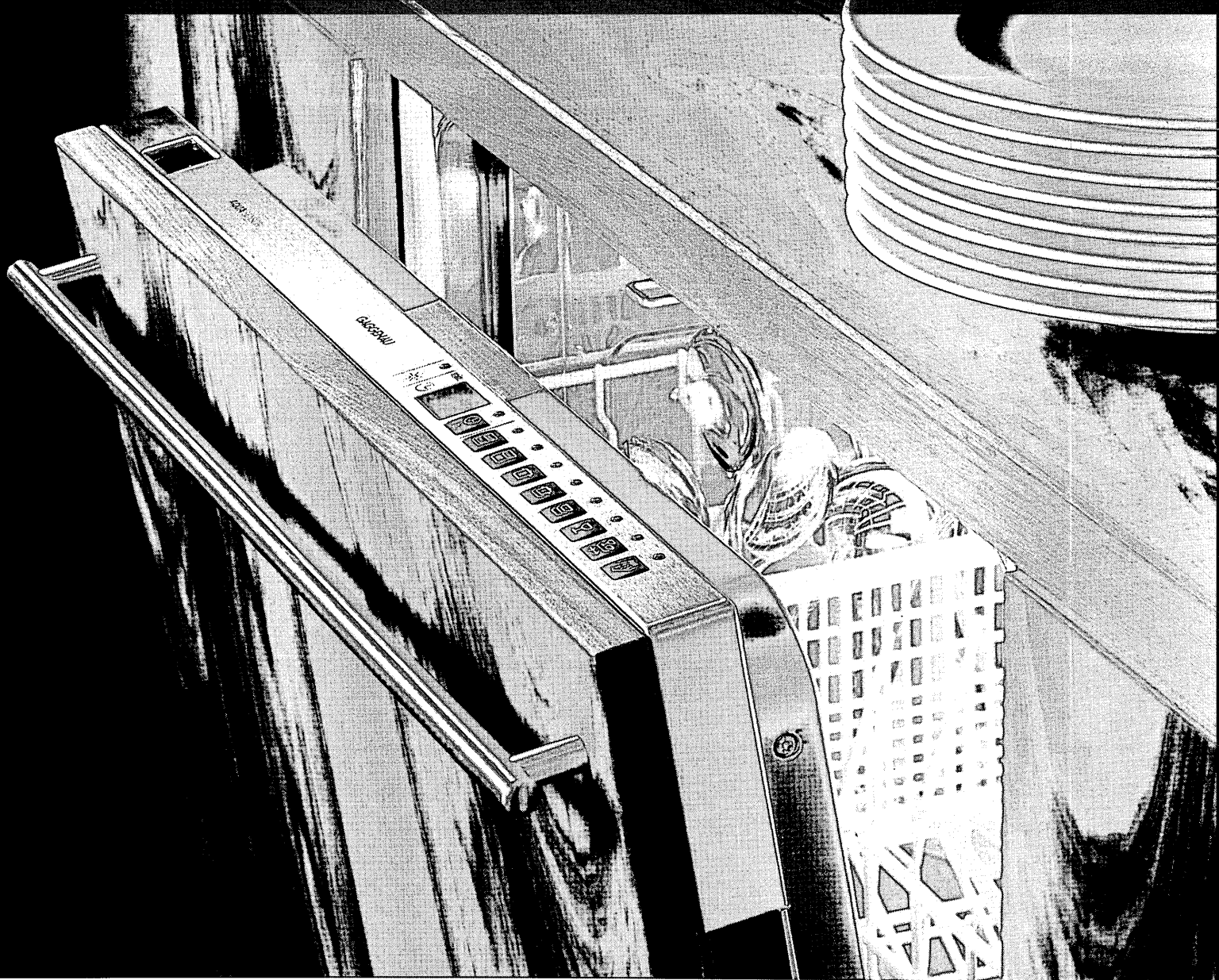


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teaming with trades

Abbate believes in consulting closely with specialty trade contractors and craftspeople when developing architectural details. This shower was no exception. He and O'Connor worked with glazing company Crawford Tracey Corp. to convey their idea of suspending planes of clear glass separate from the wall and curb structures.

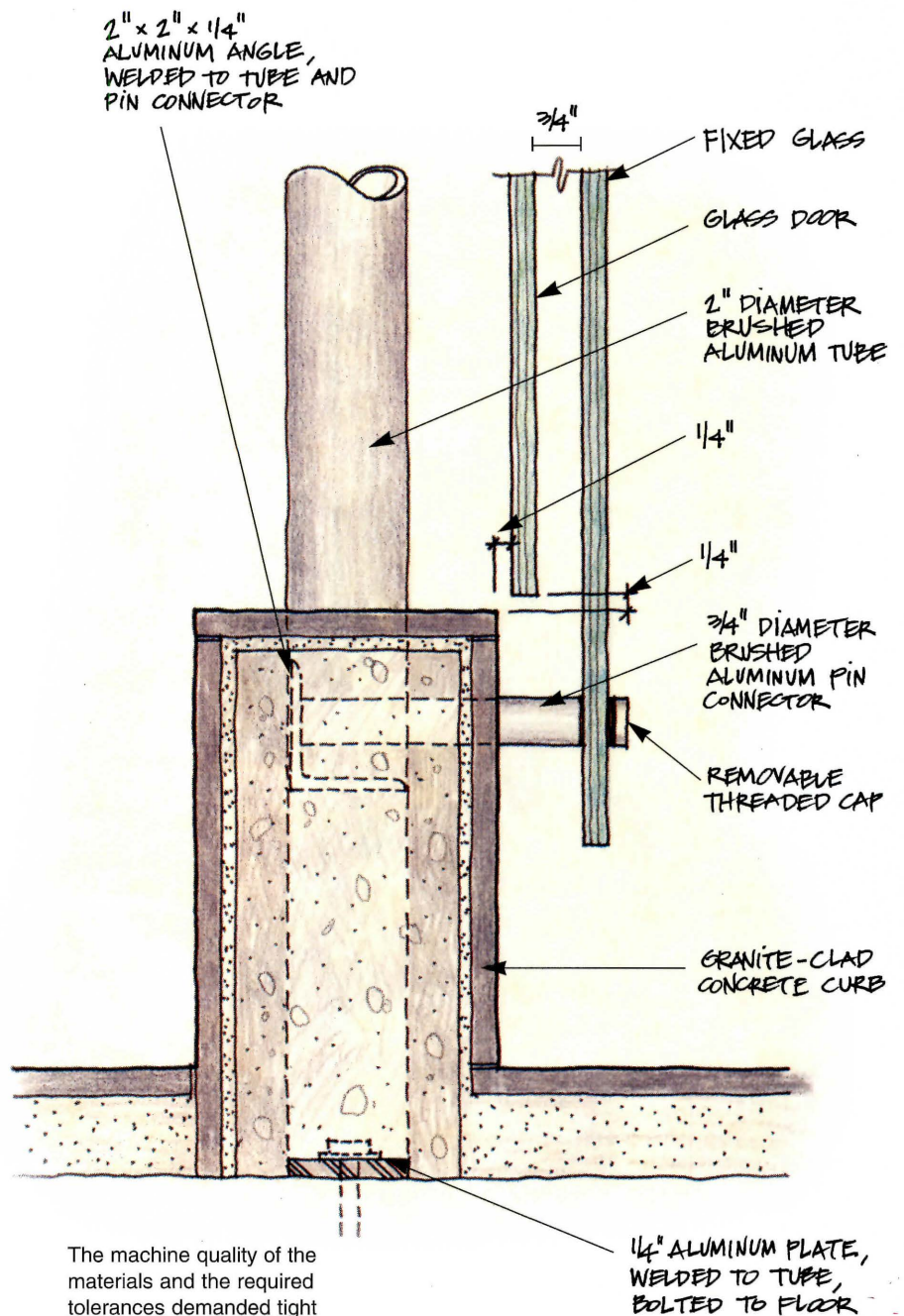
Their design required machine-like tolerances as close as $\frac{1}{16}$ inch. Communication among architects, stone masons (for the granite finishes), glaziers, and the structural engineer had to be just as tight. The team worked together to produce the shop drawings so that nothing was left to chance.

Such collaboration can be a challenge. But when all team members understand the design concept up front, the result can be precise, practical, and beautiful. **ra**

Rick Vitullo, AIA, is founder and principal of Oak Leaf Studio Architects, Crownsville, Md.

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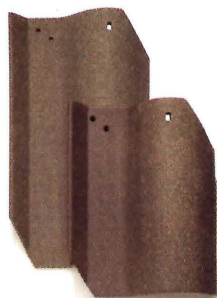
The machine quality of the materials and the required tolerances demanded tight dimensions and superb craftsmanship. Abbate and O'Connor chose aluminum over stainless steel for the shower structure because the expansion coefficients of aluminum and glass are very similar.

Illustration: Rick Vitullo

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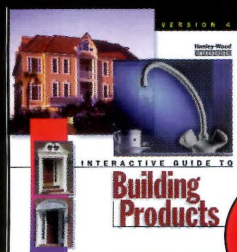
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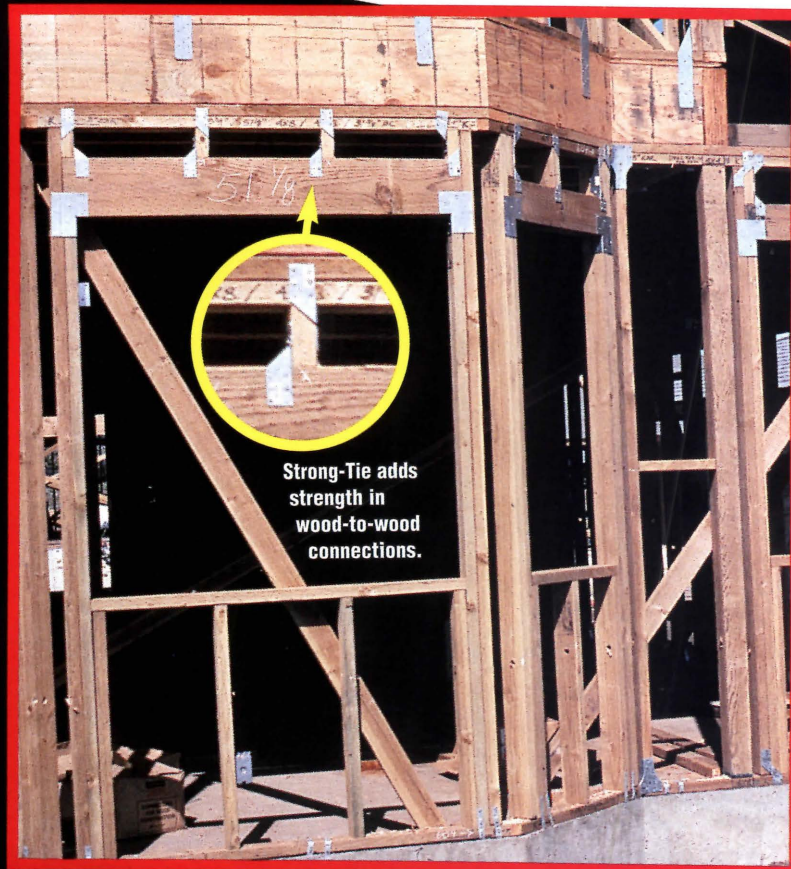
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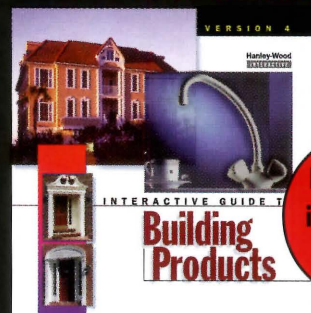
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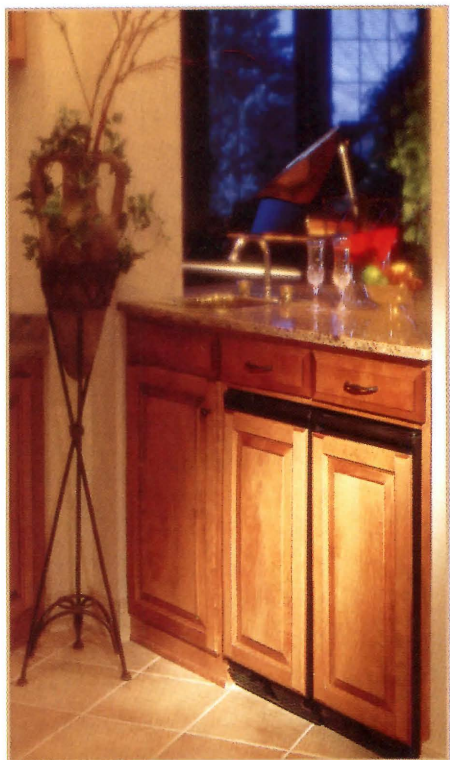


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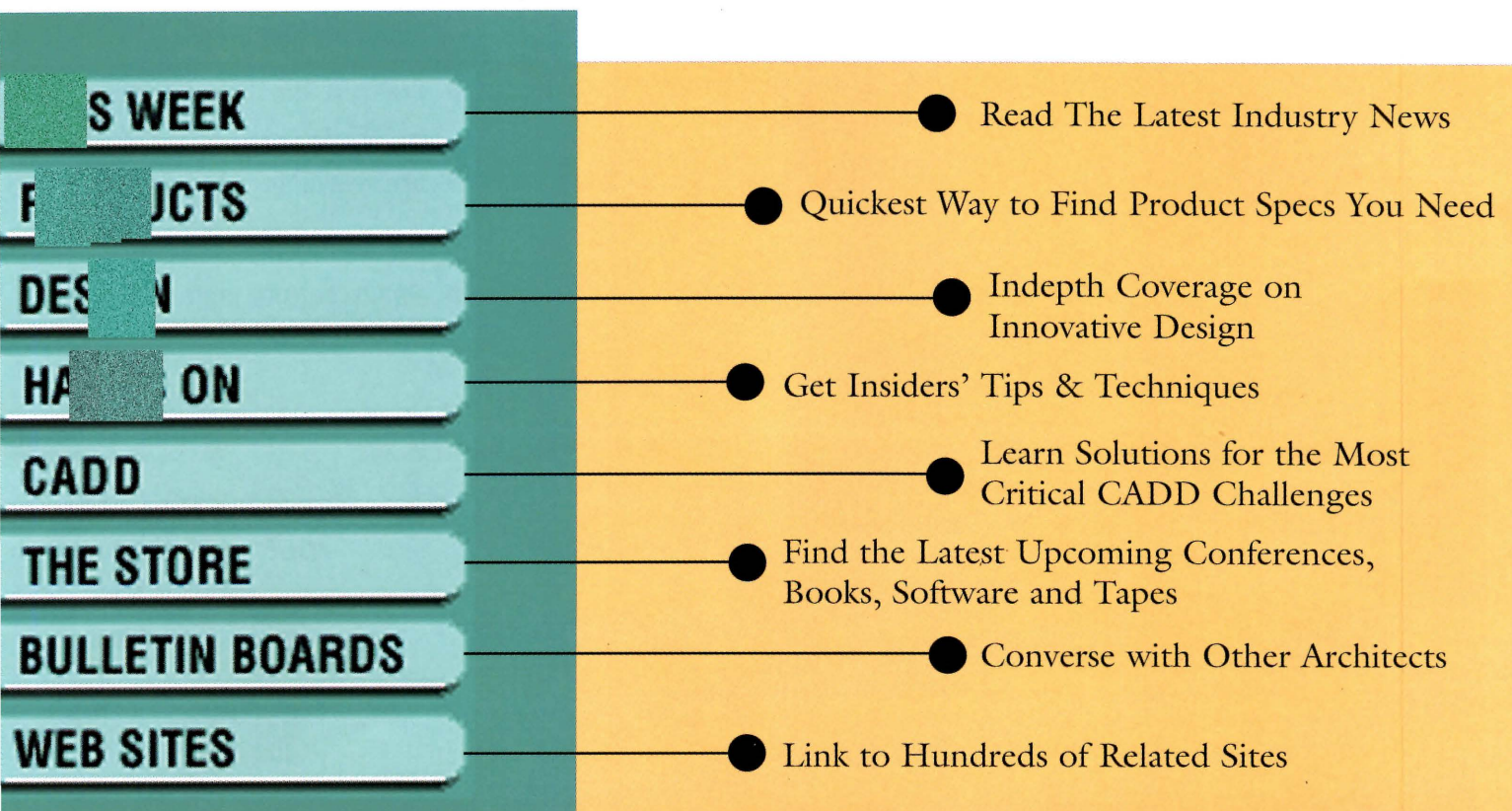


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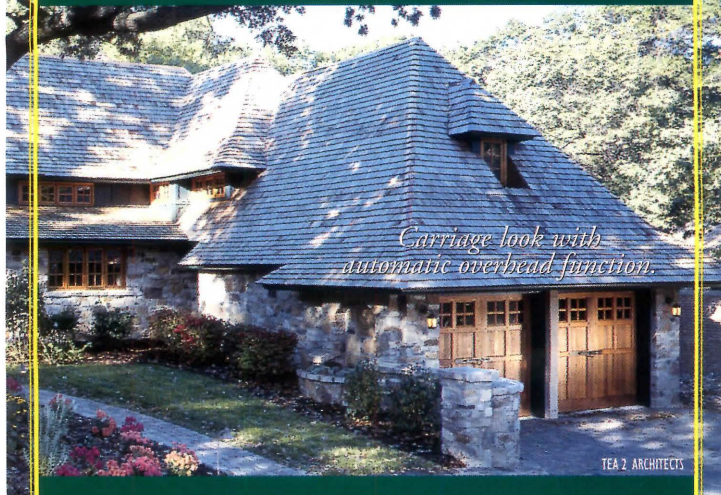


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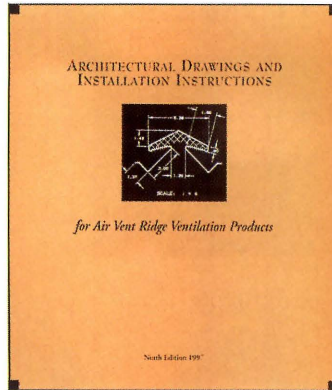
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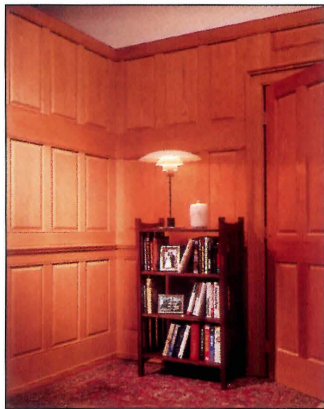
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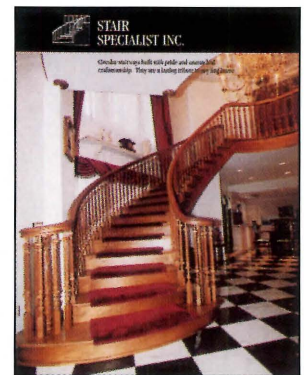
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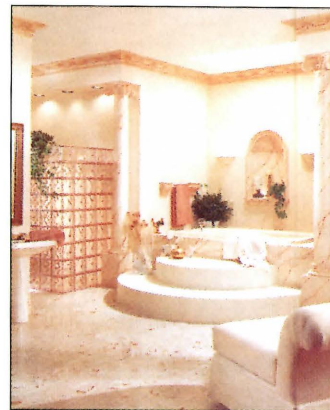
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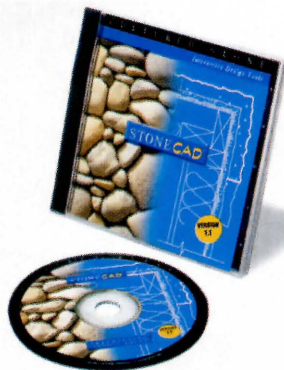


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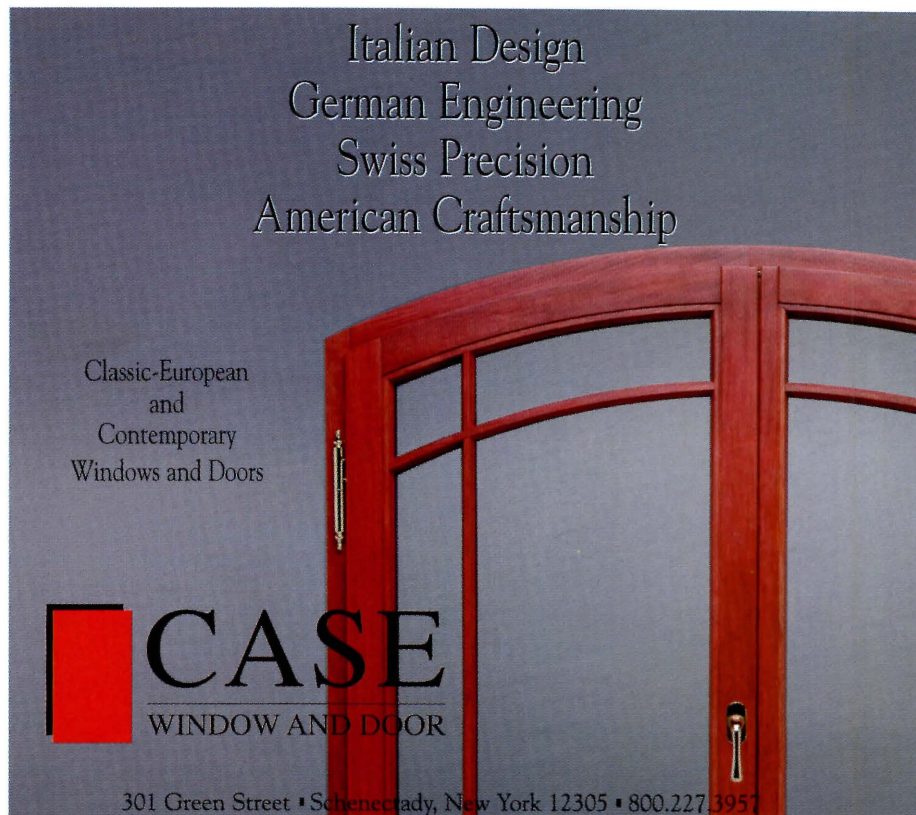


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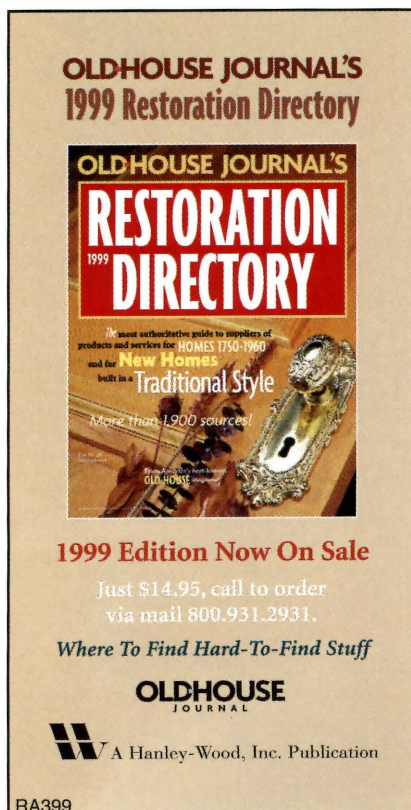
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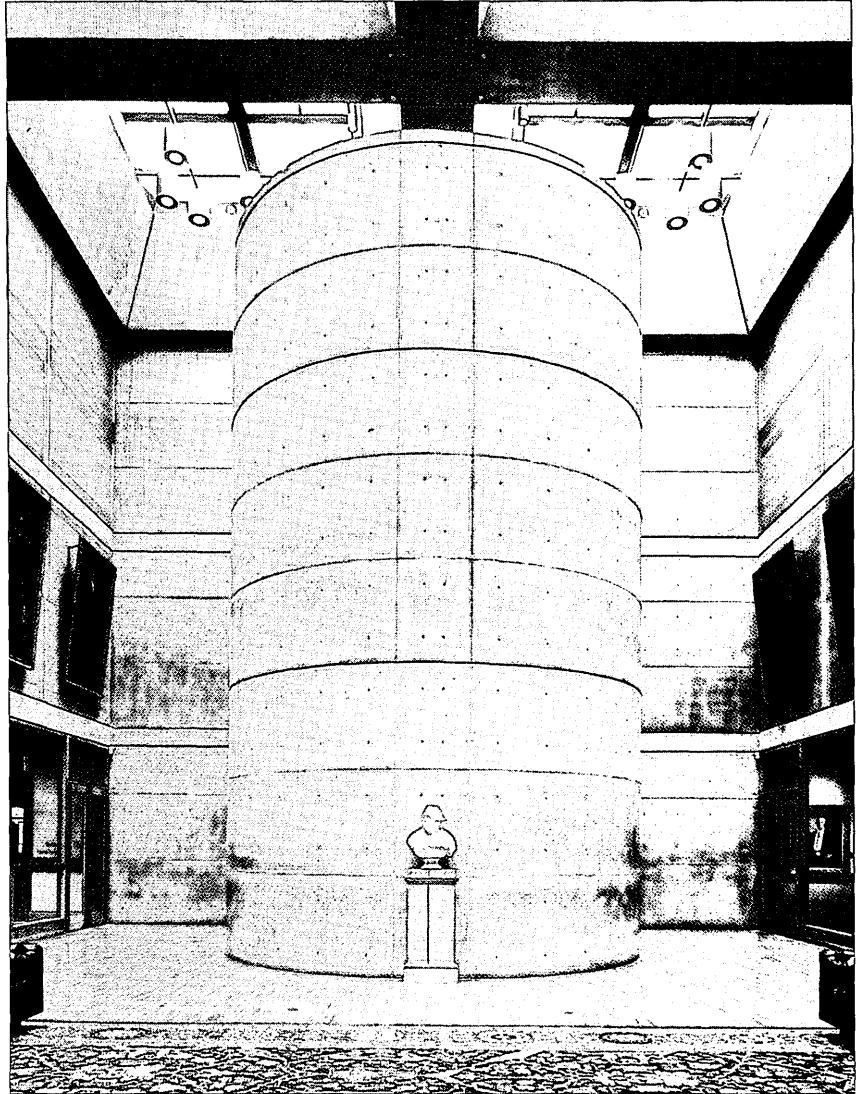
museum quality

new york city architect deborah berke, aia, finds refuge
in a connecticut art museum.

In every city I visit I have found a refuge, a place that offers solitude instead of crowds, and quiet instead of noise. If you travel frequently you may do the same thing. Perhaps your choice isn't a building. It may be the secluded corner of a park, a quiet residential square, or a bridge worth walking across.

For me, it is almost always a small museum. In New York, the Frick is my oasis. In Providence, it is the Museum of Art at the Rhode Island School of Design. And in New Haven, Conn., I retreat into Louis Kahn's British Art Center at Yale University.

The wonderful thing about the BAC is that the serenity begins before you enter. The soft dark grey of metal panels in a concrete frame sets a mood of quiet restraint. Inside, the grid is repeated, but the infill is wood, and its warmth is welcoming. Each room is perfectly proportioned. Other than the art on display, structural detailing and materials provide the only adornment.



Courtesy British Art Center, Yale University

The art alone is reason enough to visit the place. But the ultimate moment in the building is the main stair, enclosed within a cylinder. You enter, it embraces you; you ascend and are released on another floor to experience yet another perfect space. Each time I visit, I feel that I am experiencing the sublime. **ra**