

A man with dark hair, wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a light-colored knit vest, stands in profile in a kitchen. He is looking towards the left. Behind him are wooden kitchen cabinets with glass doors, filled with various dishes and plates. In the foreground, a stainless steel sink and a teal bowl are visible on the countertop. The overall lighting is warm and natural.

residential architect

A HANLEY-WOOD PUBLICATION / SEPTEMBER 2000

a little light music

dan phipps
brings rhythm
and radiance
to kitchens
and baths

kitchen currents / idylls of the bath /
growth control / building community /
fougeron's hazy glazing / DPZ's sprawl brawl

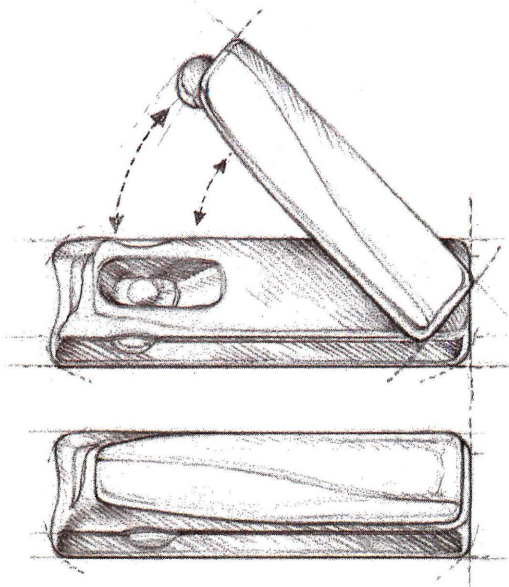
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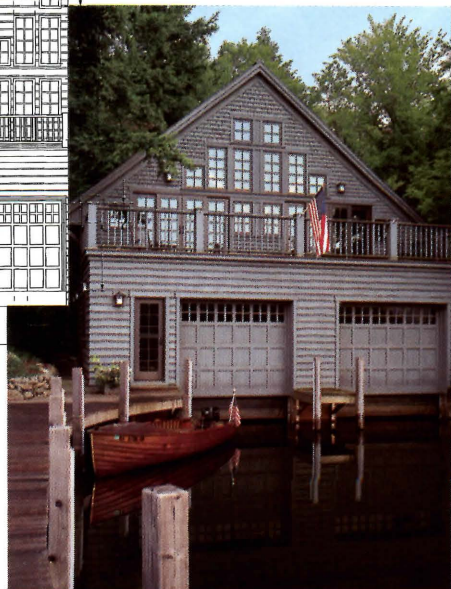
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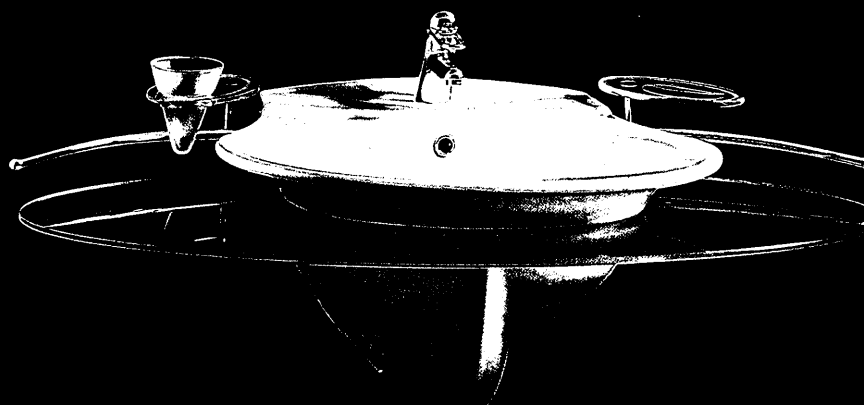
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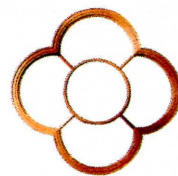
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On the Cover: Dan Phipps, photographed by Robert Cardin

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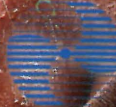
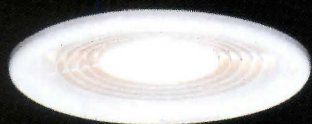
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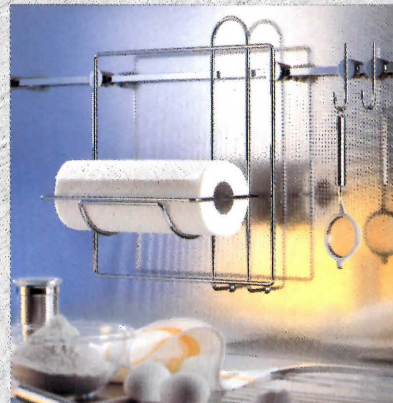
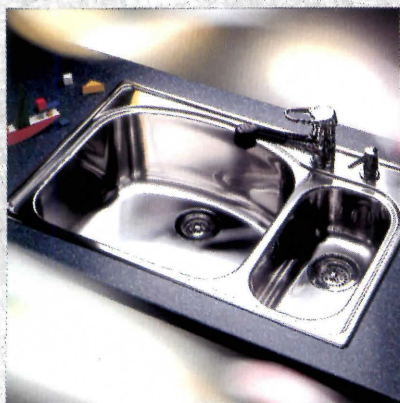


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function and fantasy

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by s. claire conroy

We've come a long way since we were all slaves to a dark galley kitchen and a 5-by-7 bath with a shower-head over a tub. Once little more than functional necessities, these are now the most important, most expensive, most designed spaces in the house. They're a wonderful challenge for residential architects, whether you're just starting out in the profession or you have a vast portfolio to your credit.

Nearly 20 years ago, our cover guy (see story, page 44), San Francisco-based architect Dan Phipps, began his career designing kitchens and baths. Nowadays, he's a very successful residential architect, but he's happily still doing kitchens and baths. That's because these projects have grown up with him, becoming ever more complicated, costly, and creative. Phipps recently completed a kitchen remodel that topped the charts at \$500,000, more than three times the U.S. median price for an entire single-family home. "The irony is, clients will spend a zillion dollars on their kitchen and in the first week, all they'll make is a frozen burrito," he says. His clients want the ultimate in looks and function (they

could run Lutèce out of their homes) even if all they use is the microwave.

the hunger

True, some people really use their kitchens to make a meal, but more often the room is fulfilling some deeper hunger. Our homes don't simply address the way we really live, they also explore the fantasies of how we'd like to live. Clients will often spend big dollars just to obtain the possibility of that fabulous dinner prepared in that gorgeous kitchen. And the same goes for the master bath. How else do you explain all those giant jetted tubs everyone passes by on the way to a three-minute shower? Someday, they believe, their lives will slow down enough for a long, luxurious bath by candlelight.

Unless price is no object—and even among the super wealthy this is rare—architects have a very difficult task in balancing clients' wants, needs, and budget. Nowhere is that battle more bloody than in the kitchen and bath. How many times have you had to tell a client whose heart is set on granite counters that their budget can only swing laminate? Chances are, they'd rather sacrifice the pricey roofing material to get those high-end counters.



Photo: Katherine Lambert

That's something merchant builders have understood for a while now. Even in the least expensive production home, you'll find some swank materials in the kitchens and baths. They know those rooms will sell the house.

In addition to Phipps' beautiful work, we showcase five kitchens (page 58) and five baths (page 70) that demonstrate what great design talent and enlightened clients can achieve when they come together.

what's your dream?

Finally, this issue's Practice column examines how residential architects are dealing with the booming economy and the blessing and burden of too much work. Should you swell your firm to grab

the work that's out there, or overwork the people you have in case there's another Black Tuesday ahead?

Dan Phipps, for one, has made the difficult decision to turn away work. As he attempts to reposition his firm to do more contemporary work, he's starting to say no to the jobs that don't further his goals. "I always feel the bottom is going to drop out. I'll always be looking for the next job," he says. "But we asked ourselves, What's the dream?" **ra**

Questions or comments? Call me: 202.736.3312; write me: S. Claire Conroy, *residential architect*, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005; or e-mail me: cconroy@hanley-wood.com.





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tips and trends from the world of residential design



Margot Hartford



Richard Barnes



amazing glazing

Glass houses have come a long way since Philip Johnson's 1949 rendition in rural Connecticut. A house by San Francisco architect Anne Fougeron, for example, employs a high-tech combination of steel and clear and translucent glass to define not just walls but floors and staircase treads. It garnered a 2000 DuPont Benedictus Residential Award, given by DuPont and the American Institute of Architects for the architectural use of glass.

Located in Palo Alto, Calif., the house's circulation spine is defined by a glass stair tower and a second-story glass walkway that allow light to seep into the downstairs living areas. "We've always been interested in how to create different layers of transparencies," Fougeron says. "The glass was a way to work with those ideas and connect spaces without having them be open." The judges remarked on the house's rich textures and light patterns, noting that rather than just a wall of glass, there's a lovely interplay

of solid and transparent forms.

The jury also gave Special Recognition to Washington, D.C., architect Hugh Newell Jacobsen's Scheer House, in the planned community of Windsor, Fla. The design's glass living-room pavilion sits within a walled garden, invisible from the street. "Glass makes very exciting spaces because of the tension on its skin," says Jacobsen, FAIA. The judges agreed, admiring the plan's clear geometry and the room's "visual access to the environment."—*cheryl weber*



Richard Barnes



Richard Barnes

Architect Anne Fougeron used steel and glass walls, floors, and stair treads to achieve “layers of transparency” in this Benedictus Award-winning house in Palo Alto, Calif. From left: Fougeron; the house’s rear elevation; and two views of the home’s suspended second-story glass bridge.



Robert C. Lautman

This Windsor, Fla., house by Hugh Newell Jacobsen earned praise from the Benedictus judges for its “visual access to the environment.” The home’s glass living-room pavilion overlooks a walled garden.

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David Sharpe

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on the waterfront

San Diego-based Carrier Johnson has designed a mixed-use project that blends big-city sophistication with small-town ease. The Renaissance, a \$75 million project in San Diego’s marina district, will have 218 residential units and 12,000 square feet of combined retail and restaurant space in two high-rise buildings.

“Traditionally, the public has been afraid of cities,” says Frank A. Wolden, design principal at the firm, “but now that city life is getting safer, people want the street experience.” With that in mind, the architects put the retail shops and cafés at the street and terrace levels and incorporated mini parks and plazas throughout their design. A stone garden wall hides 450 parking spaces from pedestrians’ view.

On the residential side, the Renaissance will offer a variety of living spaces: two-story walk-ups, two-story lofts, one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, and, on the 20th and 22nd floors, two-story penthouses.

The project is expected to take two years to complete; construction began this summer.—*n.f.m.*



Ian Espinoza

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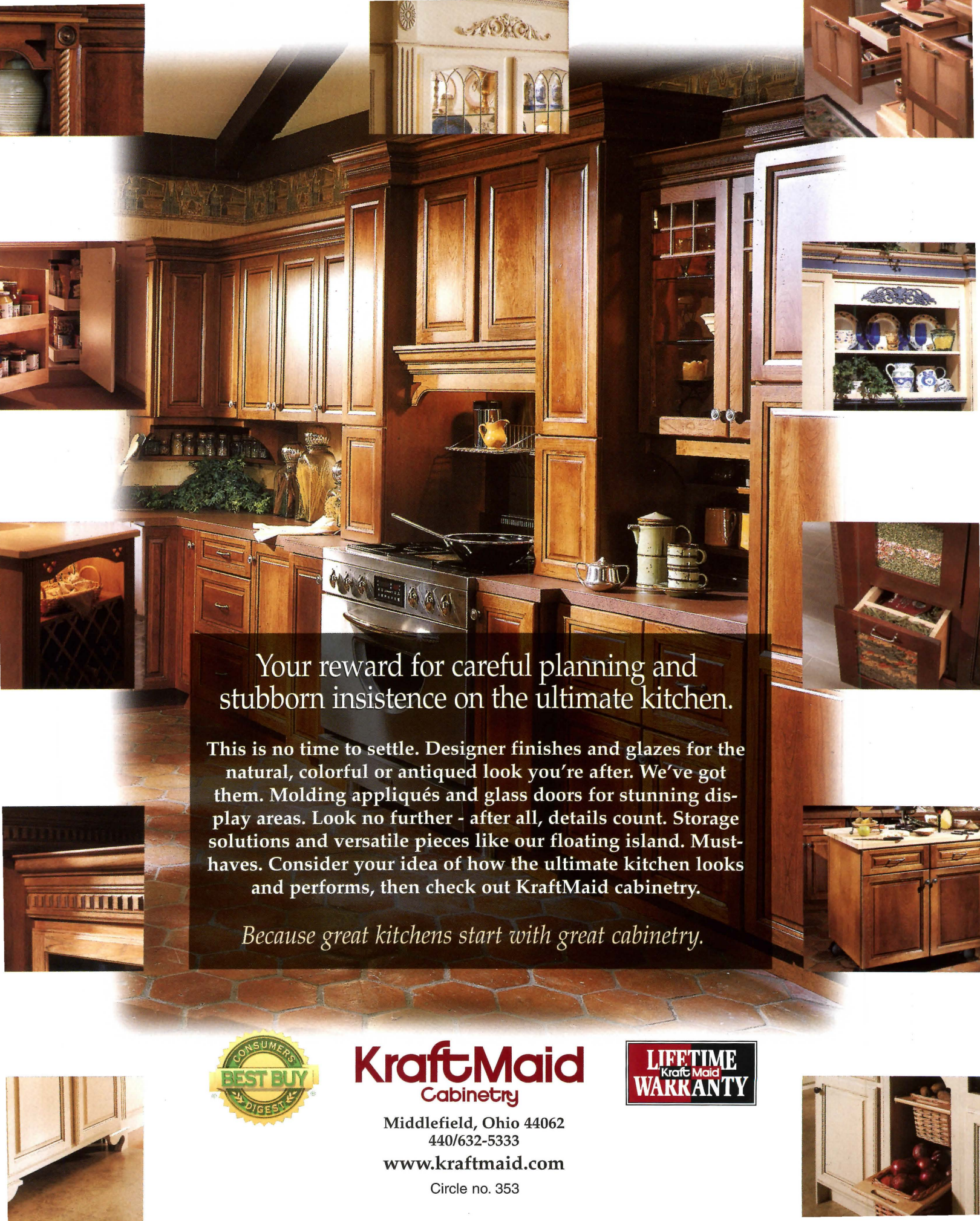
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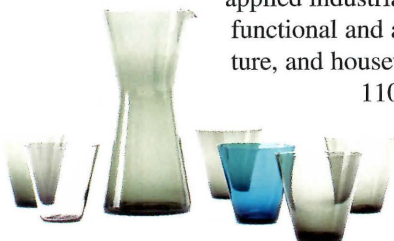


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modern living 2

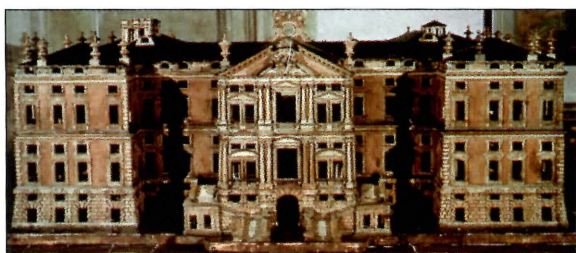
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the triumph of the baroque: architecture in europe 1600–1750

through october 9
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Musei Civici Veneziani, Museo Correr, Venice

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venice architecture biennale

through october 29
u.s. pavilion, giardini di castello, venice



Sponsored by the Guggenheim Museum in New York, this studio program and exhibition features the work of architecture students from Columbia University and UCLA. Shown: computer rendering of an airport compressor. For more information, contact Scott Gutterman at 212.423.3840 or visit www.guggenheim.org.

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suburban renewal

Those familiar with the town planning philosophies of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk will appreciate the metaphor-loaded jacket design of their new book, *Suburban Nation*. The blocky, obnoxious capital letters (filled with images of parked cars) that spell out the title also spell out the Miami-based architects' dislike for the typical auto-dependent American suburb. The book's subtitle, *The Rise of Sprawl and the Decline of the American Dream*, appears in a serious, retro-looking typeface, suggesting the authors' faith in historically rooted plans and structures. And the cover's red, white, and blue color scheme, along with the un-ironic use of the phrase "American Dream," reflects the patriotic optimism present in Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co.'s celebrated 20-year body of work.

But while the book's packaging won't surprise anyone who's read about or seen Seaside, Kentlands, or any other DPZ-planned community, its contents will. Despite its ominous-sounding name, *Suburban Nation* is at different points funny and solemn, hopeful and matter-of-fact. It's neither a dire prediction nor an evangelistic treatise. It's simply a well-researched, clearly written examination of the problem of subur-

ban sprawl in America and its potential solutions.

Indeed, the fact that sprawl has become a significant political issue is due at least in part to the interest Duany and Plater-Zyberk stirred up in the 1980s with their "radical" approach to town planning, which was actually inspired by successful old prewar suburbs and ancient European planning principles. Over the past couple of decades, they (and co-author Jeff Speck, who is director of town planning at DPZ) have continued to deviate from the standard pattern of residential development. Along the way, home builders, architects, and consumers have embraced their New Urbanist vision of pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhoods.

Though *Suburban Nation* incorporates New Urbanist tenets into its proposed fixes for ailing communities, converting new believers to the movement doesn't appear to be its primary goal. Duany, Plater-Zyberk, and Speck seem determined to make us think about why the garage-

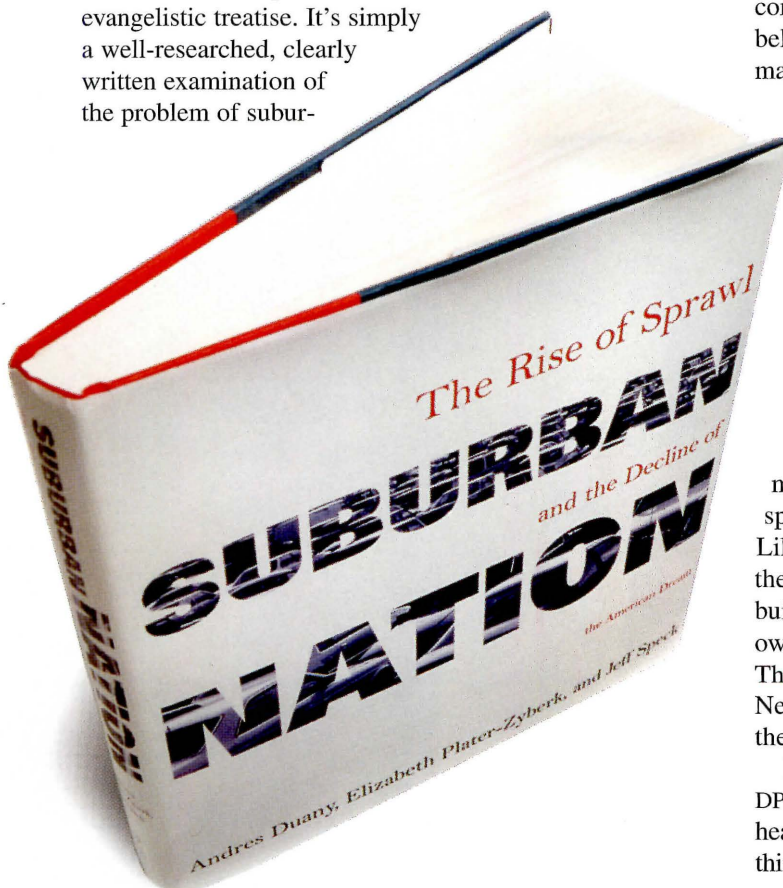
laden, income-segregated suburbs of today exist and what exactly is so bad about them.

They explore the middle-class housing crisis and the unglamorous world of traffic patterns and zoning laws with gusto and intelligence. Their often-amusing examples of illogical planning practices (one planning department labels trees along a highway as "Fixed Hazardous Objects") shock the reader into a heightened awareness of sprawl's negative consequences.

In the can-do spirit of the traditional town movement, the three architects tell readers how to combat sprawl through old-fashioned grass-roots activism. Like true teachers, they acknowledge that theirs is not the only way, leaving room for other observers of the built environment to jump in and come up with their own alternatives to cul-de-sacs and collector roads. They've included two useful appendices, a Traditional Neighborhood Development checklist and a history of the Congress for the New Urbanism.

In the end, *Suburban Nation* turns out to be much like DPZ's best towns: suspiciously perfect-looking, but at its heart a soundly plotted and constructed argument for how things should, and could, be.—meghan drueding

Suburban Nation.
Andres Duany,
Elizabeth Plater-
Zyberk, and Jeff
Speck. 256 pp.
New York: North
Point Press. 2000.
\$30 (hardcover).
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David Sharpe

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SEPTEMBER 28	Overview of the International Residential Code	Lakewood, CO	One-day seminar on plan review or design of a structure or building when considering the provisions of the IRC. For more information contact Connie Burton at 303-433-9500.
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a sense of community

john mutlow devotes his los angeles practice to socially responsible affordable housing.

by john mutlow, faia

While working in London after my 1967 graduation from the Architectural Association there, the first project I was engaged on was the design of council housing, low-income housing owned by the local borough or city authority. The architectural departments of several London boroughs were at the forefront of council housing design at that time, and discussion about the social and design aspects of this type of work

was intense.

One local firm that left a personal imprint on me was Nicholas Grimshaw Architects. In particular, the firm's design for an apartment tower block clad in anodized aluminum and overlooking Regents Park in west London (1968) ingrained in my memory the potential power of new materials and of existing materials used in different ways.

Later, after moving to America and attending graduate school at UCLA, I became involved in improv-

ing the dilapidated housing conditions of Pico Union, an inner-city, predominantly Latino immigrant community adjacent to downtown Los Angeles. My interest in social housing was rekindled; today it is a mainstay of my private practice in affordable housing.

talking tenants

Before taking on an affordable housing project, architects need to decide on a basic premise. Are we providing housing for tenants to live in, or are we providing a sense of community? If we are providing a sense of community (my preference), we need to see the tenants—and the tenants need to see themselves—as participants who are important to the success of their housing project. Then they are more likely to consider the housing as their home and take pride in their place of living. This will not only elevate their sense of well-being—it will also reduce maintenance costs, because it gives them more reason to take care of their home. Good design responds highly to the functional and psychological needs of the user.

Although it may not be



Photos: Courtesy John V. Mutlow, FAIA, Architects

Involving tenants in the design process has been vital to the success of such affordable-housing projects as Yorkshire Terrace (above), says the author (left).

the most critical issue with the client, design is at the forefront of all my affordable housing work. I strive to see yesterday's and today's projects as stepping-stones to future housing projects and to address issues of appropriateness, place, time, and function.

yorkshire planning

An examination of a particular project, Yorkshire Terrace in Los Angeles, may help to clarify several elements of my design approach. Yorkshire Terrace includes many of the processes and procedures that I customarily follow in the design of a project and is, therefore, fairly representational of my work.

This affordable infill family housing project is

located in Pico Union. It was developed by a local community group, Pico Union Neighborhood Council (PUNC), and is situated within one of L.A.'s Neighborhood Development Districts. PUNC received financial assistance from the local Community Redevelopment Agency in the form of a land "re-use appraisal," a euphemism for a lower land cost, with HUD providing construction insurance and rental assistance (subsidy) through the 236 program.

The site was three contiguous standard lots, but the existing traditional and historical community was made up of single lots with two-story, single-family

continued on page 26



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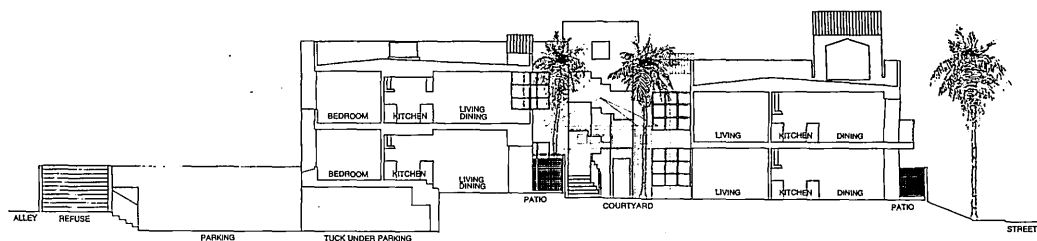
houses. This issue of difference of scale was resolved by designing two slab buildings with a 2-foot, street-side grassy zone. The zone paralleled the setbacks of other housing on the block and established a separation between the program's public and private functions.

The hip roof of the entrance repeats the porches of the adjacent houses. The additive elements of bay windows, stairs, and entrance porches to the courtyard facades reinforces the differentiation between the private facades facing the courtyard and the public (street) facade's responsibility to fit contextually.

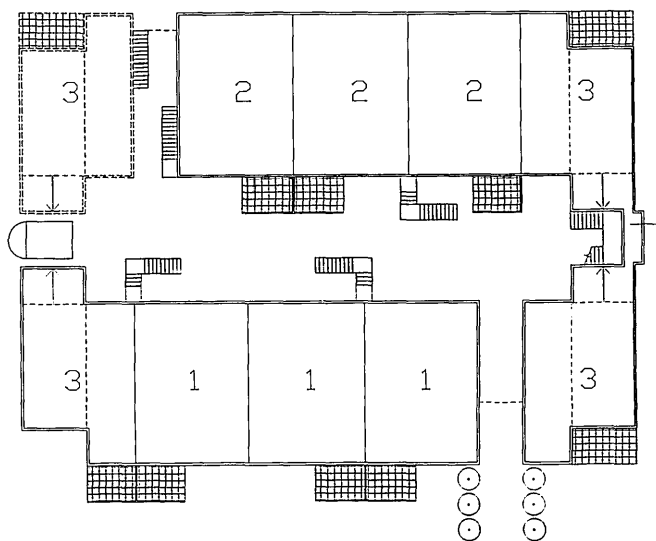
The courtyard, a typical Southern California and Mediterranean housing form, is the social gathering space and generator of the site plan. Residents have access to all the dwelling unit entrances directly from this space, which increases the possibility of informal social interaction.

The tuck-under garage was the result of a balanced cut-and-fill objective. Because the cost of removing excess dirt to lower the garage was greater than the cost of increasing the building volume, we were allowed 10-foot ceiling heights in the rear units' living/dining rooms.

A north-south axis courtyard receives less shade and therefore more sun during the winter. This permitted a narrower courtyard than an east-west axis would have, freeing up more of the site for the living units.



Mutlow capitalized on the uneven topography of Yorkshire Terrace's site by designing a tuck-under parking structure. Balconies, patios, and a community courtyard give every resident access to both private and public outdoor space.



Courtesy John V. Mutlow, FAIA, Architects

Through the active participation of Yorkshire's future residents in the design process, many of their desires and needs were incorporated into the program.

Strategic terminology was critical. A "gazebo" was a nonallowable expense, but in L.A.'s hot, desert-like climate, a "shaded seating structure" was allowable. Instead of calling the project an "apartment building," we used the language of tract housing, such as "one basic unit plan with two variations or model options." Thus, we were able to work with an experienced tract-housing contractor and retain several of the lower tract-housing costs.

Every design and social condition included as a base element the issue of affordability.

A complete list of

design elements and approaches would be much longer. But these examples do begin to provide an idea of the depth, breadth, and time commitment I have found necessary to achieve a minimal level of design excellence in affordable housing. Engaging the client, mortgage lender, user, and community early in the design process has led to earlier, less costly design solutions.

listen more, talk less

This sense of rapport has been especially positive with continuing clients. They begin not only to believe in the feasibility of their projects but also to rely on our office to mesh design with affordability, to successfully resolve design issues or problems, and to generate new solutions when the situation requires

it. Our approach is never static. With new agencies, a change in personnel, or simply with passing time, one must pay attention to the evolving ways, needs, and progress of the affordable housing market.

If I could make a single suggestion to architects involved in housing, it would be to listen more and talk less. Understand the language of the client, the nonprofit sponsor, the governmental agency, and the finance agency. Involve that language—not the language of the architect—in the development and explanation of your designs. Assess and respond to the client's needs, all the while refining and expanding your own ideas and thoughts. **ra**

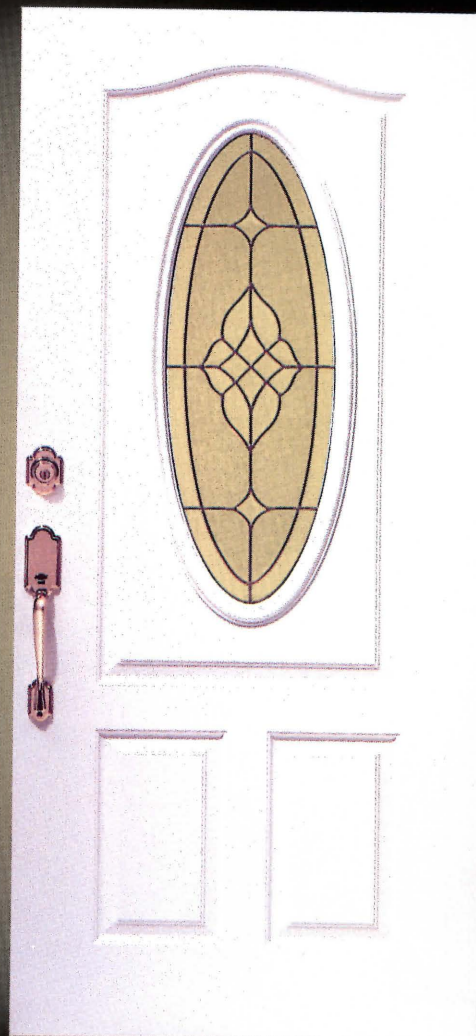
John Mutlow, FAIA, has won numerous awards for his affordable housing work in Los Angeles.



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spin control

are you driving the boom times or are they driving you?

by cheryl weber

The good times keep on rolling. Buoyed by low unemployment rates and record consumer spending, the current economy's possibilities seem limitless. And nowhere is that promise felt more strongly than in the housing profession. Americans are madly in love with their homes. Single-family dwellings are being built at a pace of nearly a million a year. And at 6 million units annually, the rate of existing home sales is still rising.

"The housing industry has been a good deal stronger for the last two or three years than virtually anyone's been projecting," says economist Kermit Baker, of Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies. "For reasons that aren't apparent, numbers have continued to rise well beyond what seems to be the need for new housing given the demographic trends."

That's not news to architects, who've been operating at a faster spin since the mid-1990s. Fresh from the AIA convention in Philadelphia, architect Michael Hauptman, AIA, of Brawer & Hauptman, Philadelphia, put the times into perspective: "Ten years ago, as you got architects together for

discussion, it was inevitably about the awful job market and the low fees. This group of architects almost without exception talked about the difficulty of finding people to work for them."

The booming economy has heaped both blessings and curses on architects, and firms that have withstood the relentless pressures are wiser now than they were five years ago. Large and small offices alike have swiftly devised new ways to manage the workload and their clients' expectations, working not just harder, but smarter. They will emerge in the next economic cycle with better trained staff, more diversified practices, sophisticated computers, and more firmly held principles.

Indeed, there are some signs the economy is cooling. Baker predicts that in the next year or two, the Federal Reserve will be much more aggressive at

keeping consumer spending in check. "I have a hunch we're going to see some decline in residential construction over the second half of this year and into 2001," he says.

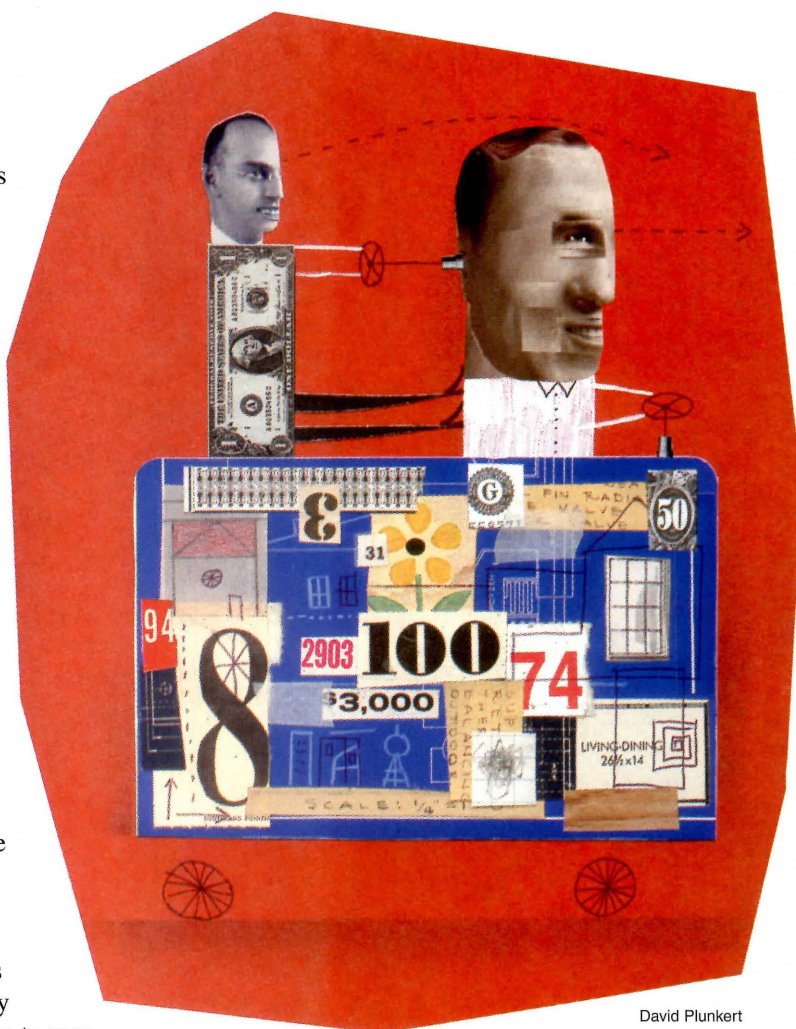
supply and demand

Architect Colleen Mahoney, AIA, would welcome the breathing room. Mahoney Architects' geographic range includes Sonoma County, Calif., which

attracts Silicon Valley residents looking for a less crowded place to live. The seven-person office averages 20 projects a year, yet gets a call a day from prospective clients—a familiar story. It's not only her office that's backed up, but the whole system is log-jammed, she says, with engineers, contractors, and city planning departments tied up months in advance.

Although she plans to

continued on page 32



David Plunkert

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add one or two people to her practice, Mahoney is adamant about staying small so she can offer the personal touch. Rather than risking staff burnout by asking employees to work overtime, she's held the line on workload, becoming more selective of clients and projects. Perhaps best of all for the profession, she's been proactive about educating clients that design is a thoughtful process.

"With cell phones and Palm Pilots, people expect such instant responses," she says. "We're not an action film. Mistakes are made when a design isn't well jelled." Mahoney is working with her attorney to come up with contract language explaining that good architecture takes time. Meanwhile, clients who are willing to wait sign a contract that specifies a starting date, but Mahoney stresses that progress may be slowed by components beyond her control. "Most people are getting that," she says.

Booked contractors are really a blessing in disguise, notes Brian Brand, AIA, president of Baylis Architects, a 41-person firm in Bellevue, Wash. "Projects that go slower tend to be better thought out. Owners also make mistakes in their decisions, then second-guess themselves, resulting in time-consuming revisions to drawings." Even before this tight market, Baylis Architects was pushing for a longer time

out of the frying pan, into the fire

"Architects have had two to three years of unexpected good luck," says Kermit Baker, Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard. "But I'm guessing the economy will start to slow over the next year. It would behoove architects to prepare for somewhat softer times."

Michael Tardif, director of the AIA's Center for Technology and Practice Management, suggests doing three things to bone up your business while the going is good.

1. Invest in key employees. Identify talented people in the firm. Make sure they're properly compensated and as highly trained as possible, and you will increase the likelihood of retaining them when times are tough. Begin making people partners and setting up an employee stock ownership plan.

2. Shop around for professional liability insurance. "As a general rule, the cost of insurance is inversely proportional to the state of the economy," Tardif says. When times are good, prices go down because insurance companies can spread their costs over a larger volume of business. And their costs are lower because clients are less apt to litigate when they're flush with cash.

Tardif recommends buying an insurance policy with a provision to share excess profits with the insurees. "The payouts for errors and omissions won't

occur until five to seven years down the road, so you're likely to see that profit sharing during the downcycle, which can offset the rising insurance costs," he says.

3. Diversify your practice. When discretionary income slips, custom residential work is the first to feel the pinch. Broaden your relationships and expertise, and you'll be in a position to leapfrog into other areas less affected by the cash squeeze. For example, a lot of residential clients own businesses, and you can leverage that relationship into commercial or retail work. "There's nothing more intimate than to design someone's home," Tardif says. "Architects often fail to capitalize on the trust they're developing. It's as easy as saying, 'Hey, would you please consider me next time you're building a facility?'"

Another way to diversify, Tardif says, is to take the next logical step in your practice—say, from designing single-family homes to similar-use projects such as multifamily housing, assisted-living facilities, or nursing homes. Or transfer your skills to another facility that uses the same building type—wood-frame construction—as a custom home. Likely candidates are small commercial structures such as day-care centers, medical clinics, and office buildings. You might then move from a day-care center to an education wing on a church or synagogue, and then to an entire place of worship.—C.W.

frame for design. And in the last six months, Brand says, people have been more willing to oblige.

Architect Jill Neubauer, Falmouth, Mass., has noticed, too, that the boom has helped force clients' expectations into line with reality. "People start out overly optimistic and in our

first meeting we review a more realistic budget and schedule," she says. "Usually they're way off on both of those. Then they start saying, 'I'm not going to have this money in six months. I'll have it in a year and six months.' There's a lot more client education. You can tell it

like it is rather than them demanding things."

tough choices

Like Mahoney, Neubauer has chosen to keep operations small—at least until her children are older, and until she sharpens up her business systems. She's

continued on page 36

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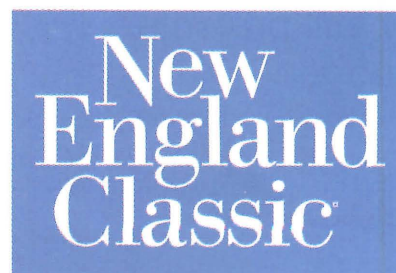
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where will winning projects appear?

Winning projects will be published in the May 2001 issue of *residential architect* magazine.

how will projects be judged?

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entry form

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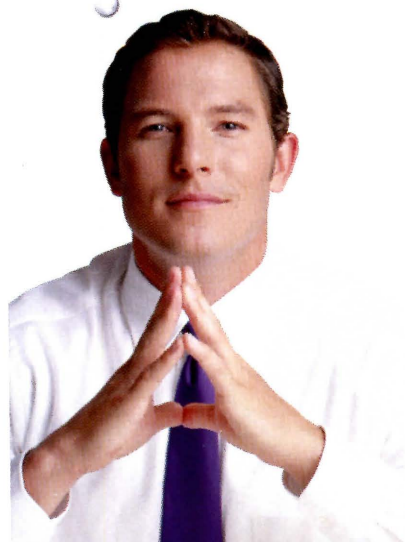
Signature _____

number of entries categories

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | 1. Custom Home, 3,500 square feet or less |
| _____ | 2. Custom Home, more than 3,500 square feet |
| _____ | 3. Renovation (residential remodeling and additions) |
| _____ | 4. Multifamily Housing |
| _____ | 5. Single-Family Production Housing, detached |
| _____ | 6. Single-Family Production Housing, attached |
| _____ | 7. Affordable Housing (At least 20 percent of the units must be affordable to families earning 80 percent to 120 percent of the local Median Family Income. Consult your area HUD office or local government office for the MFI.) |
| _____ | 8. On the Boards (any unbuilt project from the categories above) |

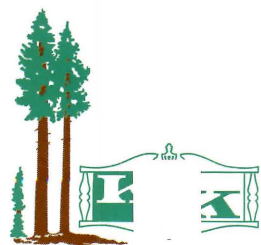
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worked hard not to let the economy overtake her life. It helps that she shares an office building and support staff with her husband, Stephen Stimson, a successful landscape architect with a much larger practice. But she lives with the angst of occasionally turning down plum projects.

"Saying no is a personal discipline," she says. "When someone needs your help, it's a compelling thing. And one always has the feeling that you should never turn down work. You wonder, where would that project have taken me?"

A large firm, of course, has more maneuvering

room. In seven years, Looney Ricks Kiss Architects, Memphis, Tenn., has grown from 33 people in one office to 160 employees in Nashville, Tenn., Princeton, N.J., and Memphis, with a one-person presence in Houston. Residential demand is still outpacing the firm's capacity. But when an A-list client comes along, Looney Ricks Kiss can at least lay the groundwork for a long-term relationship by offering to help with just part of the project.

For example, for developers of multifamily housing, the firm will do land planning, market research, or establish

design guidelines. Production builders often hire LRK for schematic designs, then use local architects to develop the final product.

"The key has been to just be candid about our schedule," says Frank Ricks, AIA. "If we can't provide a final product until six months down the road, we'll work on it in segments. It's a negotiating process. Every day there's some surprise that throws you off schedule. But one advantage of being a larger firm is that we can shift staff from one project to the next if we get behind on something."

talent search

Looney Ricks Kiss has experienced the same desperate search for qualified employees as other architectural offices have. That's why the firm hired a management consulting firm to be on the national lookout for compatible staff, more or less continually since 1996.

Rather than adding employees to support some external growth strategy, however, LRK's philosophy is that architectural talent will attract new business. "We didn't start these other offices to capture market share in terms of a growth strategy," Ricks says. "It's



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"i'm setting goals and tracking reports month to month. i'm getting the infrastructure established to be a well-functioning machine."

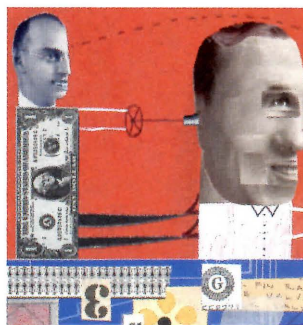
—jill neubauer, jill neubauer architects

not around numbers, but trying to grow talent within our firm and creating the culture to support it."

Another downside of the boom is that architects being lured away from other firms often have unrealistic salary expectations—and many do find better deals elsewhere.

"We've had a higher rate of turnover in the last three years than in the last 28 years," says Brand.

John Merkle, AIA, of TMS Architects, Portsmouth, N.H., refuses to buy high. He has added two people in the last several years and plans to hire two more. "We've had to train



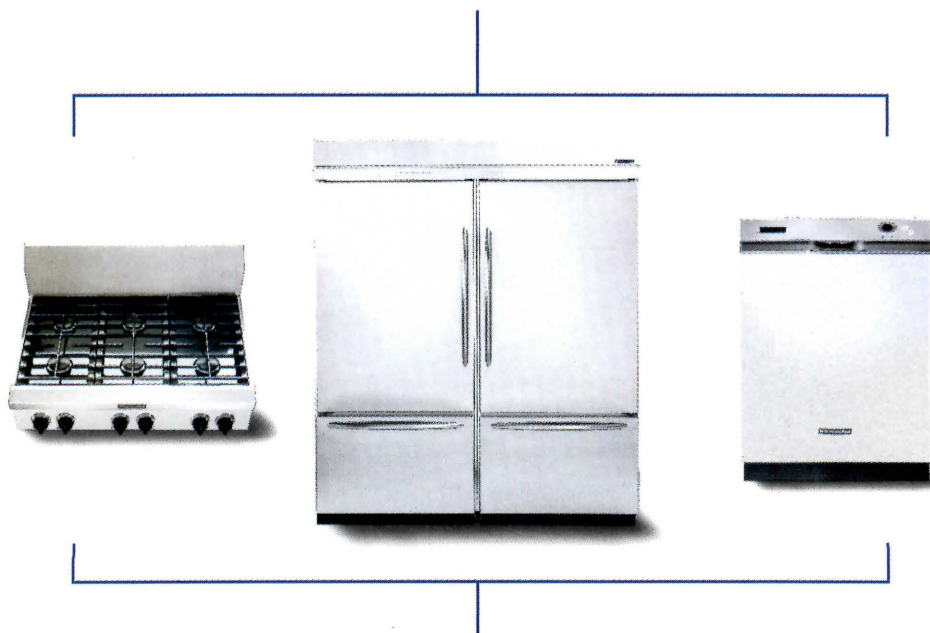
our staff not to respond to the spikes in the economy," Merkle says. "It doesn't take much to upset one firm's salary structure by jumping at an individual you wouldn't normally hire for that wage." He holds the line at a midrange base salary, but attracts talent by offering a robust financial

package that includes bonuses given throughout the year, profit sharing, and pension plans. "My personal philosophy is you want to hire somebody at what they're comfortable making," Merkle says. "If you have to offer them \$10,000 less than what they want, they won't be a good employee."

techno tools

Whether their goal is growth or the status quo, every firm interviewed for this story has used windfalls from the new economy to buy top-drawer technology. Merkle recently

continued on page 38



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linked his company's desktop computers with a UNIX system, which lets designers work on drawings simultaneously. "It's especially effective during a time crunch. And it's an immensely stable system, not subject to all this 'Love Bug' stuff that affects the PC world," he says.

Looney Ricks Kiss uses the Internet all day long to transmit drawings and photos to clients and its other offices—and even floor to floor in the Memphis building. The firm also requires contractors on some jobs to have digital cameras on site. If they have a question, they can take a shot and zap it

via the Internet to the office, where it can be blown up and the problem resolved in a matter of minutes.

A year ago, LRK embraced technology at a whole new level with the purchase of a Polycom video conferencing system. It lets staff conduct virtually face-to-face design reviews between offices. "Being in the design business, it's hard for us to talk without having an image," Ricks says. "The video conferencing has been a real boost. A remote control lets us zoom in on someone's face or a drawing detail in their notebook. We also use it as a management

tool. We'll get together on business matters where we want to see face to face."

onward and upward

Internet-age technology hasn't fixed everything. As they build on the gifts of a kind economy, architects continue to face a less glamorous task—to refine operations so their firms are poised for the next phase: diversification, growth, or simply higher profits.

In the last five years, Neubauer says, she's been able to make a great deal of headway building her business base. Now she's focusing on running it. "For

the first time, I'm taking an AIA course on the finances of a small firm and taking time to implement it," she says. "I'm setting goals for the year and tracking reports month to month. I'm getting the infrastructure established to be a well-functioning machine."

Brand says as his company has gotten larger, it's been forced to revisit its delivery systems. For example, the total conversion to AutoCAD in the office in the last five years has made a lot of its drafting standards obsolete. "We're establishing what drawings we prepare and what information we put

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WITHOUT MAKING A SOUND.**



on the drawings to make them concise and efficient, yet affordable for the client," he says.

With the increase from four to six partners, the firm is also setting up formal guidelines for taking on projects and the like. And, whereas until a couple of years ago the principals "did marketing with their left hands," Baylis Architects recently hired a marketing director to broaden its image. "We built our firm on single-family custom residential work," Brand says. "Beyond that, we have an interest in doing more urban design in emerging communities, such

as mixed-use midrise buildings. We are working now on several projects between six and 20 stories tall."

Marketing consultant Kay Lentz, of The Lentz Group, in Houston, believes that's a wise move. "Our philosophy is you have to market for the future," she says. "Those who have not set their niche in place are going to be the ones who go by the wayside."

Lentz recommends using the Web to research market trends. "Look at government budgets, see what major universities are doing, and identify types of projects related to your market," she says. "Sud-

denly you have a huge additional base of people you can be marketing to."

"Too often we expect people to know who we are," Lentz adds. "That isn't the reality. Most people have to be educated as you shift into a new market."

looking inward

For Looney Ricks Kiss, a firm that's already broadened both its market and its geographical reach, the most compelling task for the future is to focus inward, creating a cohesive company culture. In the past year it has begun to explore teamwork and employee self-awareness. Currently it con-

ducts a series of training exercises in collaboration. New employees also attend a three-day off-site session where they discuss such leadership issues as identifying personal passions and how to balance their professional and personal lives.

"The things that make sense here in the office also tend to be valuable on a personal level," Ricks says. "I'm trying to create an environment that allows everybody to be their best. We think that's perceivable by the client and gives us a market edge." *ra*

Cheryl Weber is a freelance writer in Severna Park, Md.



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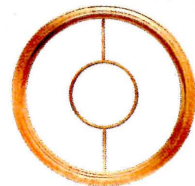
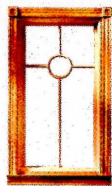
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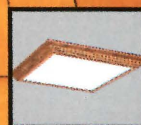
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a little light music

dan phipps brings rhythm and radiance to kitchens and baths.

by s. claire conroy

dan Phipps thinks architecture is like music. And in his case, maybe he's right. Using light and shadow, solid and void, color and texture, he composes rooms as melodious and moving as any serenade. Precise, practical, elemental, his designs hit all the right notes with perfect pitch. Although he's done many beautiful custom homes, he's especially accomplished at kitchens and baths.

"I see some of them as pieces of music: Vivaldi, Copland, Stravinsky," he says. "Music is part of the architecture, breaking it down into rhythms, melodies, counter melodies." He knows what he's talking about: He studied cello on a scholarship to San Francisco State College before switching to architecture at the University of California at Berkeley.

He grew up in San Francisco, the son of a surgeon who liked to make

intricate wooden boxes for relaxation. He shares his father's drive for precision, mingled with an artist's love of beauty. "I've always had an interest in building things—boats, furniture. I enjoy seeing how things fit together," he says. "Kitchens and baths are both intense rooms—so many functional issues, so many demands on them, especially kitchens. Function has to happen there but not feel that way."

Phipps still resides in San Francisco and works in the city and its tony suburbs, where remodels and teardowns are the order of the day. His interventions are highly demanding, involving such challenges as historic mansions, steeply sloped sites, and California's morass of code requirements. His clients are wealthy, sophisticated, and hard to please. And, unlike many kitchen coveters, most of his clients really use their swanky appliances and semiprecious counters. Yes, they actual-



Robert Cardin



Photos: John Sutton Photography (above); Greg Crawford/BeateWorks (below)



a little

ly cook. One would hope so, considering some spend as much as \$500,000 for Phipps' handiwork.

What do his clients get for such an investment? Someone who treats a kitchen as more than just the sum of its functions. "A kitchen is not simply a room with a bunch of appliances and cabinets. It should have a sense of place. It's just as important as a living room," he says. "Architects used to see a house as a beautiful box with some nice rooms, but they paid no attention to the kitchen." That's been changing over the last decade or so, but Phipps was an earlier adopter of the "kitchen as theater" philosophy—a stage for family life. As each family member chases a Filofax full of appointments, it's one of the few places where they can slow down, come together to fix a meal, recount adventures from the outside world.

Phipps has more than a professional interest in kitchens. An avid cook, he met his wife in a cooking class. And they both belong to a "buddy supper club," where members gather at each other's houses and cook big feasts. "I like being in the kitchen; I'm comfortable there," he says. "What we do is problem solving—figuring out the drawer for the 4x5 menu cards, for chopsticks. I wouldn't do well if we turned out widgets. I don't like doing kitchens, I like doing spaces for people."

give piecework a chance

Phipps' design somehow manages to look sleek without seeming slick. It's a talent he honed working for a commercial interiors firm early in his career. He took that job and another with a commercial architecture firm because architecture school compelled him to practice "architecture with a capital A." There was a mystique, he says, "that the work had to be large scale." But he preferred a

light music

smaller, more intimate canvas. And when he launched his residential design firm in 1983, running it from his apartment in San Francisco's North Beach neighborhood, he began humbly with piecework: remodels, additions, kitchens, and baths.

"I showed friends what I was doing almost with embarrassment," he says. "But they said, 'Hey, this is great. You should send it in to the magazines.' So, I sent four or five projects to magazines and they gobbled them up." Today, his firm has in the works a teardown, three new houses, and 15 remodels. His office, a small, converted movie theater in a slowly gentrifying corner of San Francisco's Tenderloin district, is at capacity with a staff of 10, including five architects. Yes, he still does piecework, but the scope of those pieces has grown with the firm and with the real-estate market, economy, and sophistication of residential clients. Who would have imagined a \$500,000 kitchen remodel in 1983?

He's now at the point where he turns down projects that aren't large enough to challenge him or to contribute substantially to the bottom line. "We're at just the right size for me. I can still see, touch, feel the projects," he says. "Any bigger than 10 people and I'd be in a management position."

bathroom window

If bathrooms aren't the window to the soul, they're at least a very intimate glimpse into people's personal lives. Here's where trust between the client

and the architect is essential. "There's a little bit of therapy in what we do. We create a safe place for clients to open up and reveal themselves," says Phipps. "Listening is a key thing. You have to listen to people, spaces, surroundings, to all sorts of signals. Everybody will tell you what they want if you listen closely. You'll learn if they can get by with one vanity, or if they need two with a partition in between."

The bathrooms he designs aren't overblown sybaritic retreats, they're well-appointed spaces, thoughtfully tailored to each user. Phipps specs sleek, high-end materials but keeps them from slipping into slick by softening the quotient of gloss. Marbles are honed, not polished; metals are brushed; woods are subtly grained. "We pick the very tree we'll use for cabinetry," he says. "We'll hunt for just the right screw for a towel bar." That attention to detail is part of what sets his work apart, and how those details come together is crucial. "Surfaces, cabinets, counters, recesses, medicine cabinets—it's the intersections that are the real challenge," he explains. "God in the details comes from the intersection of this material and that one."

Even though Phipps' projects are at San Francisco's high end, space is still an issue. Tight, stratospherically expensive lots mean making the most of available square footage and letting in lots of daylight. So, in bathrooms, he often wraps tubs and showers in large tiles—like those from Buddy Rhodes—which he carries all the way up the

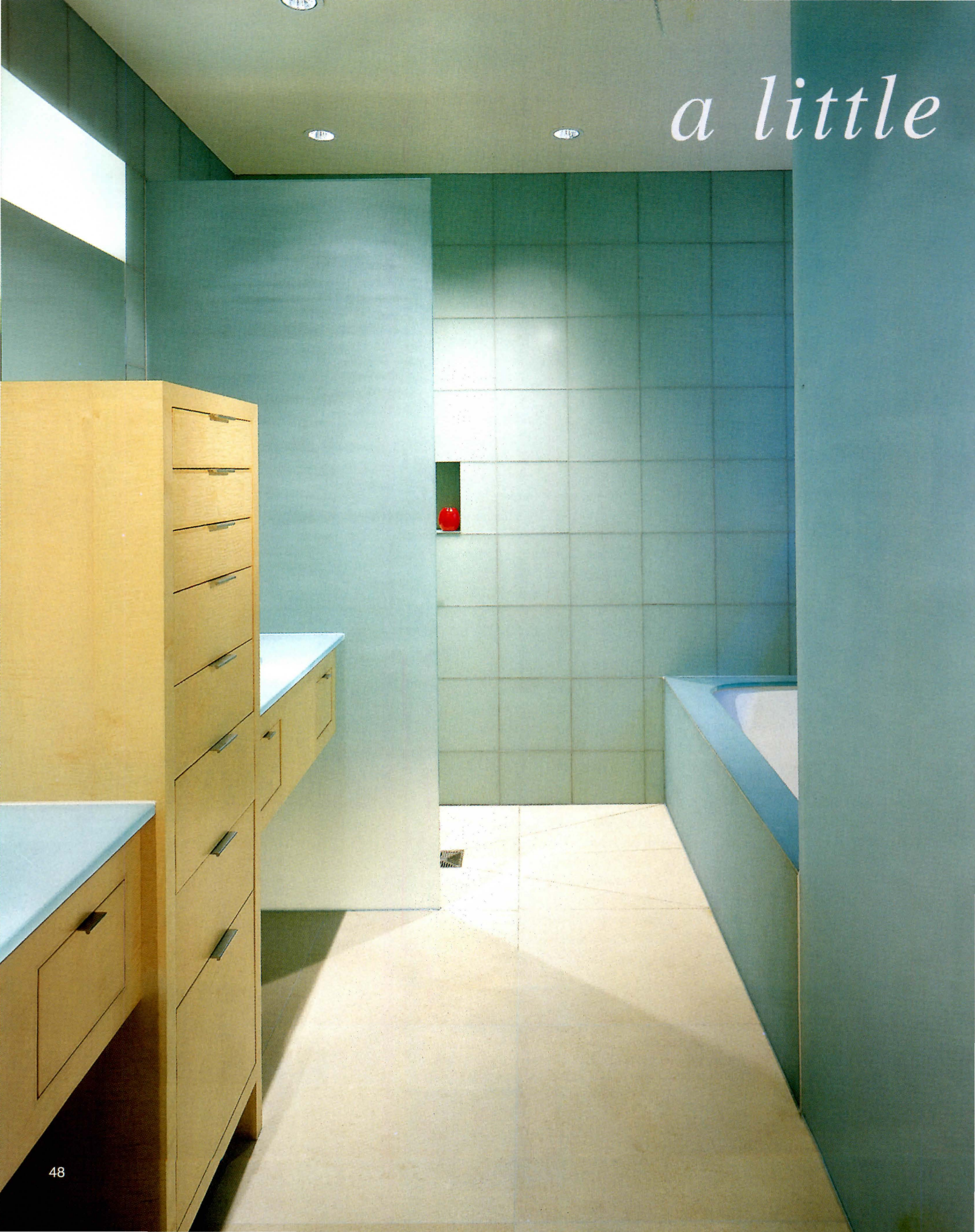


Photos this page: John Sutton Photography.



Clockwise from opposite, top left: 1 and 2. Counters in zinc and soapstone define different zones within the large, multicook kitchen. Zinc, a soft, stain-prone metal, scars and weathers with use. 3 and 4. Mixing translucent and solid fronts lightens the visual load of cabinetry. Phipps often designs freestanding furniture to complement his kitchens. 5. Supported by a steel-wrapped column, a deluxe, remodeled kitchen soars like a big-top tent.

a little



light music

walls. Glass enclosures or showers left open to the room and plenty of windows maintain the illusion of flowing space. In kitchens, wood trim segues from cabinet to window frame, then up the wall and into crown molding—like his father's intricate wooden boxes. Translucent glass cabinet fronts keep claustrophobia at bay.

hurry up and wait

Such demanding work requires extremely talented craftspeople to execute. Phipps relies on long-term relationships with expert builders like Steve Stroub, of Sausalito, Calif.'s Stroub Construction, but it's getting tougher and tougher to book his jobs in the booming real-estate market. "We used to call two or three months before we needed work to begin. Now we have to call as soon as we get the project," he says. "We've got to get the contract, get the permits in line ASAP, just to stay on top of the process. Design can go as smoothly as possible and then have to wait for two years."

The hassles have made the smaller jobs even less feasible for Dan Phipps & Associates Architects. Last year, the firm held a retreat for its employees to survey the road ahead. As a result, they decided to change course a bit. "We looked at each other, what we're doing, what kinds of projects we want to work on," he recalls. "We asked the question: What's the dream? The answer was: bigger projects—and less historical work. We want to do things that reflect

today's time, materials, construction techniques. Once we articulated it, it began to happen. We started by weeding out of our portfolio the projects that represent where we don't want to go. We used to take everything that came through the door. Now if it's too small or not the right fit, we don't."

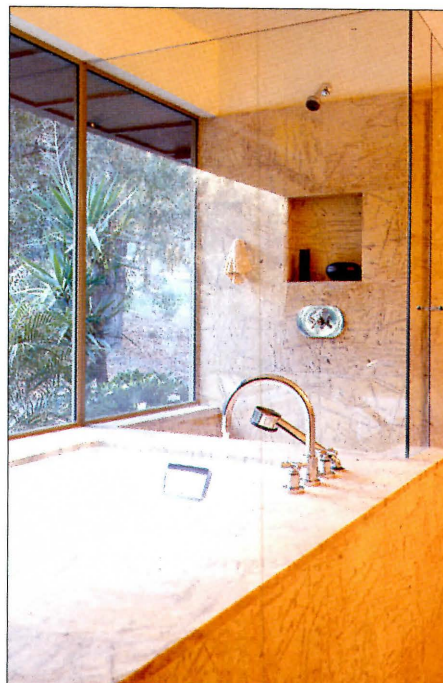
Of course, such choices are the blessing of a good economy coupled with a well-earned reputation for beautiful work. These are the best of times for Phipps, who's managed his firm's evolution wisely. He works long days, 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., but rarely works weekends. His clients, he insists, don't complain. "People love it when you have boundaries. I used to do everything they asked. Now I say, 'I do this but not that.' Before, I would have changed myself, morphed to deal with a difficult client. Then you don't know who you are; clients don't know who you are."

It comes back to the issue of trust. If clients are calling at all hours with concerns, chances are that faith isn't there and the design and building process will prove unpleasant for everyone. "If there isn't trust, it isn't going to work," says Phipps. "We're in a boat, we're pushing off from shore, I don't know where we're going, but I guarantee there's Shangri-La out there. And they're trusting me with their life savings. I have blind faith here, what's it going to be?"

It's not easy being a Pied Piper, but it helps if you have perfect pitch. *ra*



Photos: John Sutton Photography



Clockwise from left: 1 and 2. Wrapping the walls with large glass tiles and dividing task areas with matching glass panels makes a small master bath seem much larger. A storage cabinet separates his-and-her vanities. 3 and 4. A glass shower enclosure keeps the view going in this master bath. Honing marble tiles and counter and clear-coating maple cabinetry softens the gloss quotient of such rich materials.

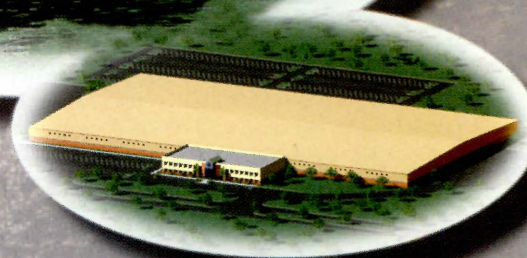
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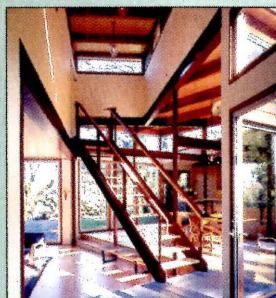
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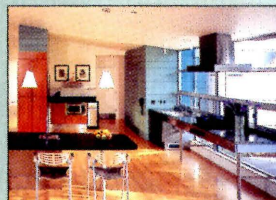
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Pfau Architecture;
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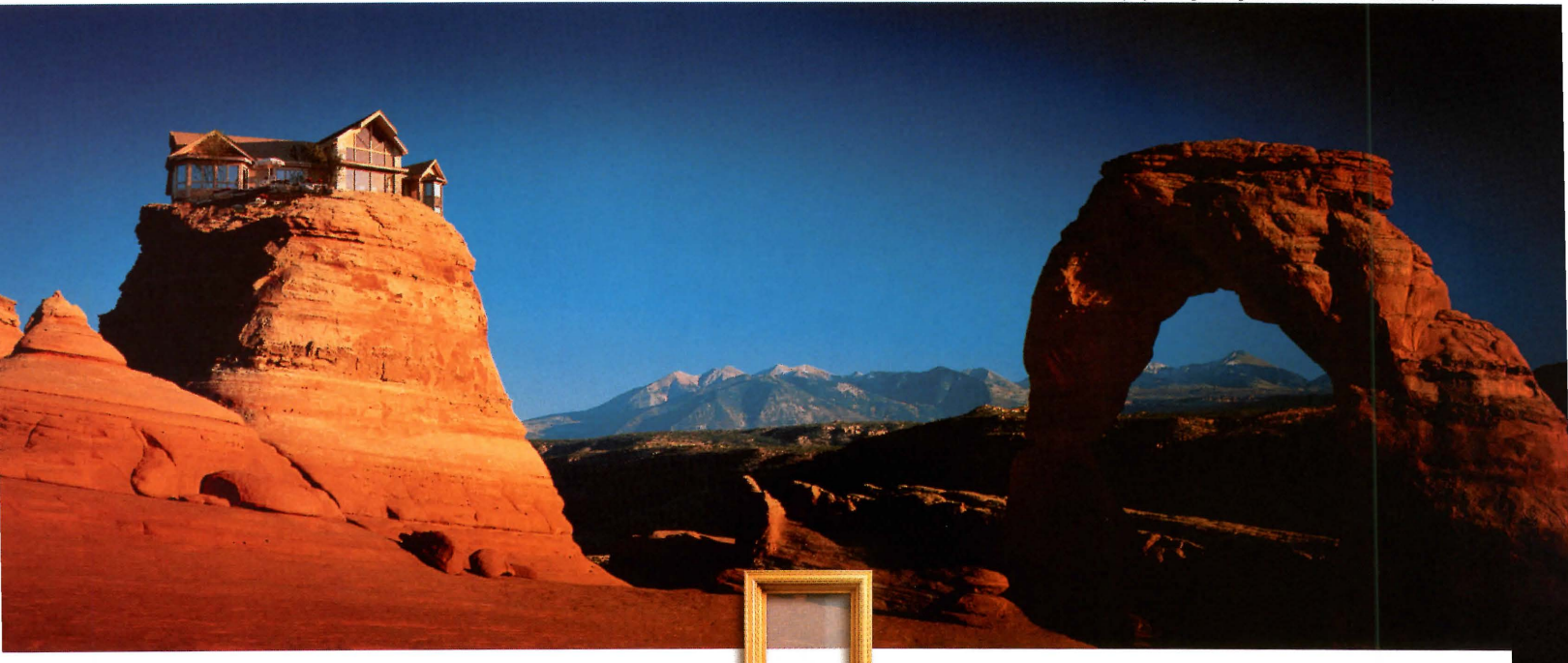
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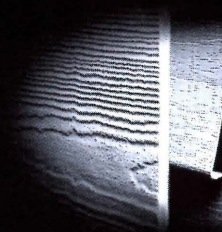
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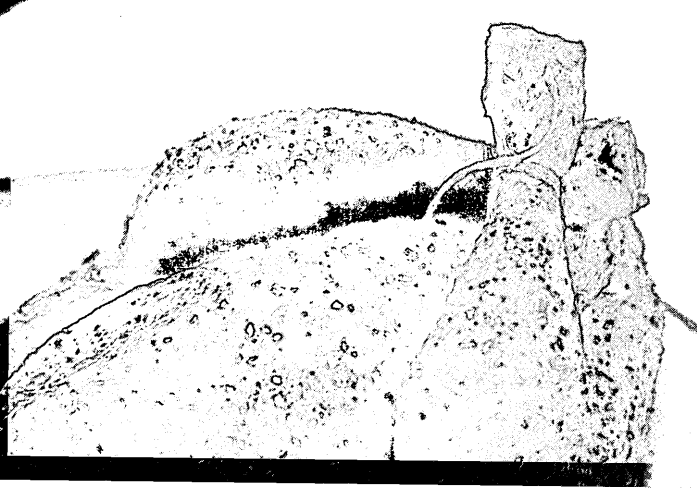
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kitchen currents

A photograph of a modern kitchen interior. In the foreground, a curved wooden island with a metal base holds a bowl of oranges and a blue pitcher. To the left, a stainless steel range hood is mounted above a cooktop with two small fans. The background shows a large window and a dining area with blue chairs. The lighting is warm and ambient.

*"that plywood wall is like a sail full of wind.
it gives the room a nautical feel."*

—henry stolzman, aia



Hardworking surfaces and high-octane appliances support the owner's passion for cooking. The kitchen's three-tiered lighting scheme accentuates its linear nature.

four architects mix **hot** design trends
with **style** and **savvy**.

by meghan drueding

material success

When it comes to seeking out unusual materials for kitchens, designers and architects are getting more adventurous by the minute. That enterprise comes through loud and clear in a Florida kitchen designed by Pasanella + Klein Stolzman + Berg of New York.

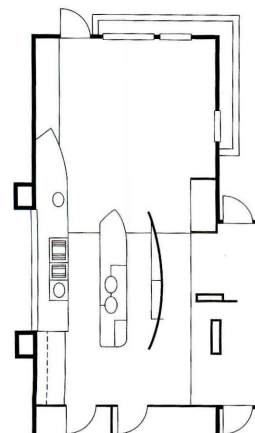
PKSB, which consulted with Cheng Design of Berkeley, Calif., on the project, designated an irregularly shaped island as the room's focal point. Its cast-concrete base is colored with metallic powders and ornamented with pieces of wood, stone, and backlit art glass. A teak countertop holds double sinks and drainage slats for wet dishes or produce. The counter's graceful curve, along with the bent plywood partition separating the kitchen from the hallway and dining room, makes subtle reference to the home's oceanfront location. "That plywood wall is like a sail full of wind," says partner Henry Stolzman. "It gives the room a nautical feel."

Smooth, sleek materials like black granite countertops, birch veneer cabinetry, and maple floorboards form a serene backdrop for the dramatic island. PKSB also enlisted blue-green paint as a design tool, using it to create "niches of color," in Stolzman's words. This artful blend of restraint and resourcefulness results in a materially better kitchen.

architect: Pasanella + Klein Stolzman + Berg, New York; **builder/contractor:** Foley & Associates Construction Co., Daytona Beach, Fla.; **project size:** 250 square feet; **construction cost:** Withheld



Photos: © Paul Warchol



social studies

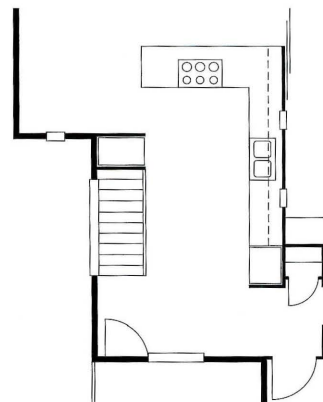
Without a large, open kitchen, many families might not see each other at all these days. The client on this San Diego project hoped for a little more togetherness when he requested a kitchen as social center of his new home. "The house is a very simple teardown-and-rebuild, two bedrooms and two baths," says San Francisco architect David Hecht. "The owner is a single man with a teenage daughter, and he loves to cook and entertain."

An ongoing dialogue between Hecht and his client helped the architect design a room that practically guarantees social interaction and enjoyment. The floor plan is arranged so that a cook standing over the range can easily converse with guests in the dining room. And, since the dining room opens up to the living room via a sliding door, the owner can also take part in larger gatherings without neglecting his kitchen duties. The mixture of open shelving, see-through stainless steel mesh cupboards, and solid maple drawers makes finding cooking tools and ingredients a snap, while still providing places to hide appliances and other bulky items from view.

Hecht's inventive use of color and light imparts a sense of fun and energy to the space. He lined the south-facing, 14-foot-high dining room wall with windows and French doors so that natural light pours in over the peninsula and through its open shelves. To satisfy California's strict energy use limits, he designed a long, plastic-covered light box above the kitchen cabinets. This translucent soffit contains fluorescent lights, which cast their soft white glow down through the cabinets for low-cost, energy-efficient ambient light. Slightly reflective, lightly colored materials like polished maple flooring and a concrete backsplash and countertops further contribute to the room's sunny appeal.

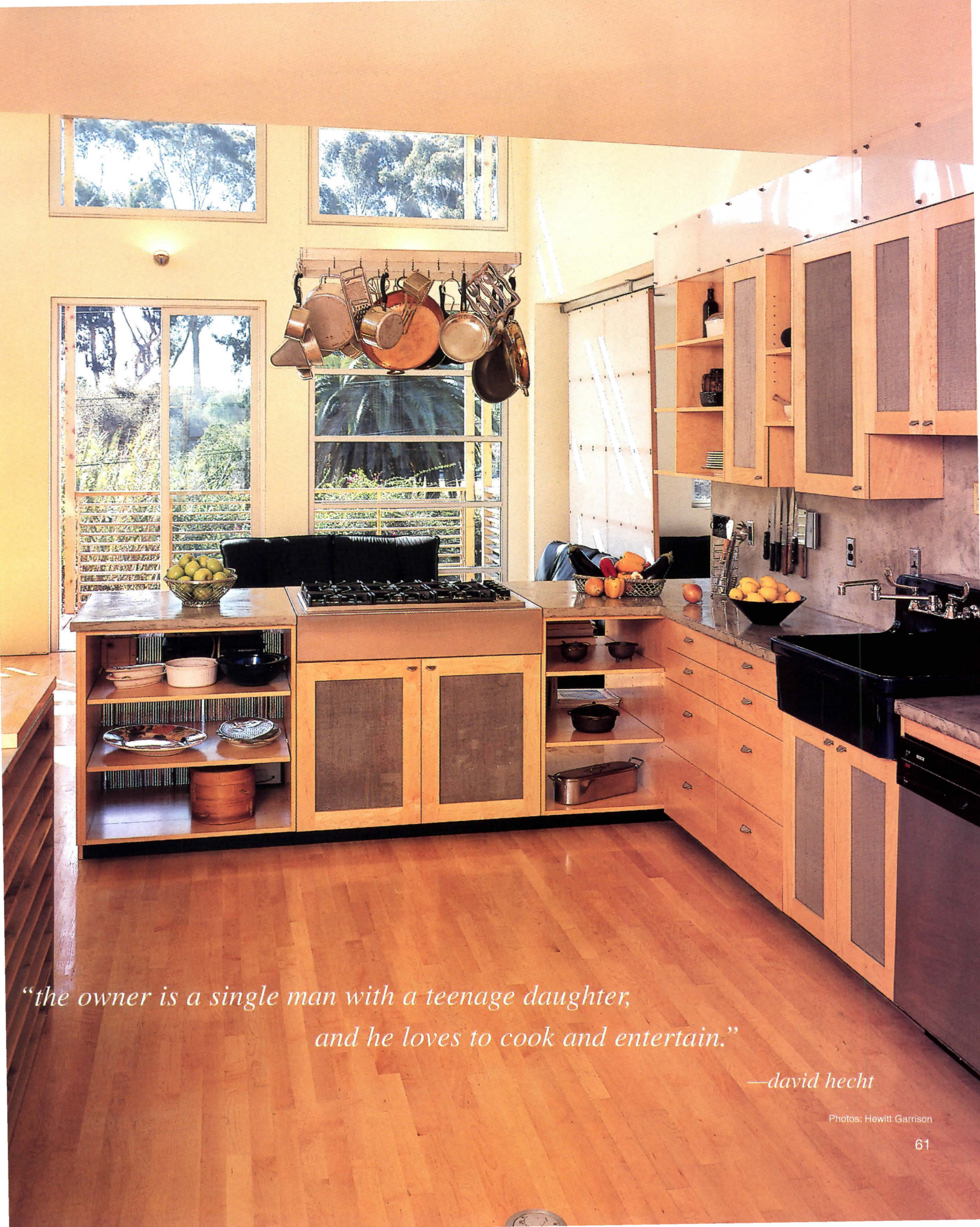
As the kitchen's final plan fell into place, Hecht and his client faced a burning question. "We didn't seem to have room for the convection oven anywhere," the architect says. "We ended up putting it on a counter at the top of the stairs, in its own maple box." The owner eventually plans to build a mobile cart for the oven to make it more accessible. An enthusiastic metal- and woodworker, he also built the dining room table and the kitchen's hanging pot rack. If such innovation and teamwork suggest a larger trend among architects and their clients, count on some exciting new developments in kitchen design over the next few years.

architect: Hechtwerke Architecture, San Francisco; **builder/contractor:** Michael Mihos Construction, San Diego; **project size:** 300 square feet; **construction cost:** \$125 a square foot



Hecht added a splash of the client's favorite color, deep blue, with a farmhouse-style sink and a stained-glass block set into the backsplash.





*"the owner is a single man with a teenage daughter,
and he loves to cook and entertain."*

—david hecht

Photos: Hewitt Garrison

hot
kitchen currents
style
savvy



*"the client requested something unconventional ...
she didn't want an everyday, suburban-looking kitchen."*

—jon halper, aia

educated palette

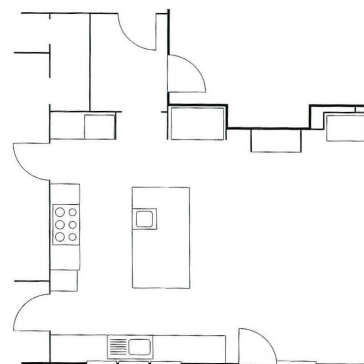
Color, especially organic, soothing blues and greens, is a big story in kitchen design these days. So is a casual, furniture-style look. Jon Halper, AIA, used both elements to design a cliché-free kitchen renovation in Larchmont, N.Y. “The client requested something unconventional,” says Halper. “She came up with the sea-green paint for the woodwork, and she asked that we avoid using any wall-hung cabinets. Basically, she didn’t want an everyday, suburban-looking kitchen.”

Since wall-hung cabinets weren’t an option, Halper created six free-standing armoire-like storage cupboards. The floor-to-ceiling, 2-foot-deep painted wood pieces are sized to accommodate such space-consuming items as a large refrigerator, a television, dry goods, and dishware. A central, maple-topped island, like the base cabinetry throughout the room, sits atop furniture-like “feet.” It provides additional storage, a work surface, and seating, and contains a secondary sink to compensate for the 10-foot distance between the cooktop and the primary sink.

The painted ceiling grid gave Halper another opportunity to infuse color into the space, and it helps unify the kitchen and breakfast room. But it also camouflages an awkwardly placed structural beam left over from the original house. “When we came in, there was a big steel beam dividing the room in the wrong way—lengthwise,” he explains. “We didn’t want to have to drop the ceiling to cover it up, so we designed the grid around it.” In addition to disguising the offending beam, the grid has its practical purposes: One of the smaller beams holds the piping from an upstairs bathroom.

Halper used an eclectic mix of materials to underscore the room’s old and new aspects. The stainless steel appliances, backsplash, range hood, and stoveside counters make contemporary counterparts to the old-fashioned nickel drawer pulls, light fixtures, and pot rack. Sleek marble and maple countertops balance out the highly detailed woodwork. And their light shades complement the green paint perfectly. The Greenwich, Conn., architect’s strategic blend of traditional forms and modern appliances gives this kitchen staying power that’s, well, evergreen.

architect: Halper Owens Associates, Greenwich, Conn.; **builder/contractor:** Brenner Builders, Pound Ridge, N.Y.; **cabinetmaker:** Culin & Colella, Mamaroneck, N.Y.; **project size:** 400 square feet; **construction cost:** \$400 a square foot



The breakfast room’s French doors and oversized windows usher natural light into the kitchen. Chunky period fixtures provide additional task and ambient lighting.

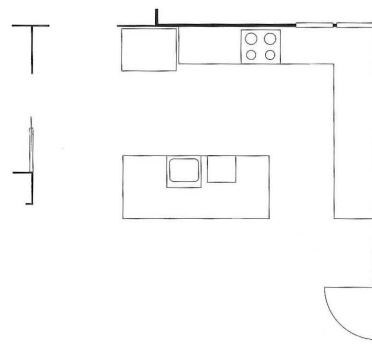
barrier relief

Views, both to the outdoors and to rooms adjacent to the kitchen, are always an important amenity in residential design. But they were vital to the plan of this kitchen in Jeffersonville, Vt., part of a new house designed for a client who uses a wheelchair. Before starting the project, Stowe, Vt., architect Milford Cushman listened carefully to the owner's candid, thoughtful evaluation of her needs. "I've never had a client who was so willing to be specific about what she wanted," he says. "She wasn't afraid of the opportunity to get involved in the home's design; in fact, she embraced it. She was a fabulous teacher."

One of the insights he gained from their conversations was that accessibility isn't always a matter of being able to physically reach things. Even though his client couldn't do the cooking herself, she still wished to participate visually in kitchen activities. So he left the room open to a family/dining/living space, eliminating doors or any partitions that would block sight lines into the kitchen. Instead of traditional cupboards and pull-out drawers, he lined the walls with open shelves. And he placed a wheelchair-accessible counter below a set of expansive corner windows so that the owner can experience a postcard-perfect view of Vermont's Green Mountains.

Cushman realized that overdesigning for his client and her wheelchair would be just as detrimental as ignoring the issue. "We tried to make sure there was a good balance of space, in the kitchen and throughout the house," he says. "The openings between rooms are slightly wider than usual—just enough so that everyone feels comfortable, but not enough to be very noticeable." The addition of a couple of closed-door cabinets, one above the range hood and one in the base of the hutch, contributes to that sense of scale and balance. He also made sure that the wheelchair can fit through the space between the kitchen's island and the opposite wall, even when the refrigerator door is open. Yet the island sink, the refrigerator, and the cooktop are still in close enough proximity to form a highly efficient work triangle. Cushman's skilled juggling of beauty, accessibility, and functionality has yielded a room that's wonderfully welcoming to all its occupants.

architect: Cushman + Beckstrom Architecture and Planning, Stowe, Vt.; **builder/contractor:** Conklin Construction, Morrisville, Vt.; **cabinetmaker:** Don McCormick, Elmore, Vt.; **project size:** 190 square feet; **construction cost:** \$135 a square foot



Stainless steel accents, straight-forward molding and millwork, and Prairie-inspired light fixtures all lend this rustic kitchen a Shaker-like simplicity.



*"i've never had a client who was so willing to be specific
about what she wanted. she wasn't afraid of the opportunity
to get involved in the home's design; in fact, she embraced it."*

—milford cushman



Photos: Carolyn Bates

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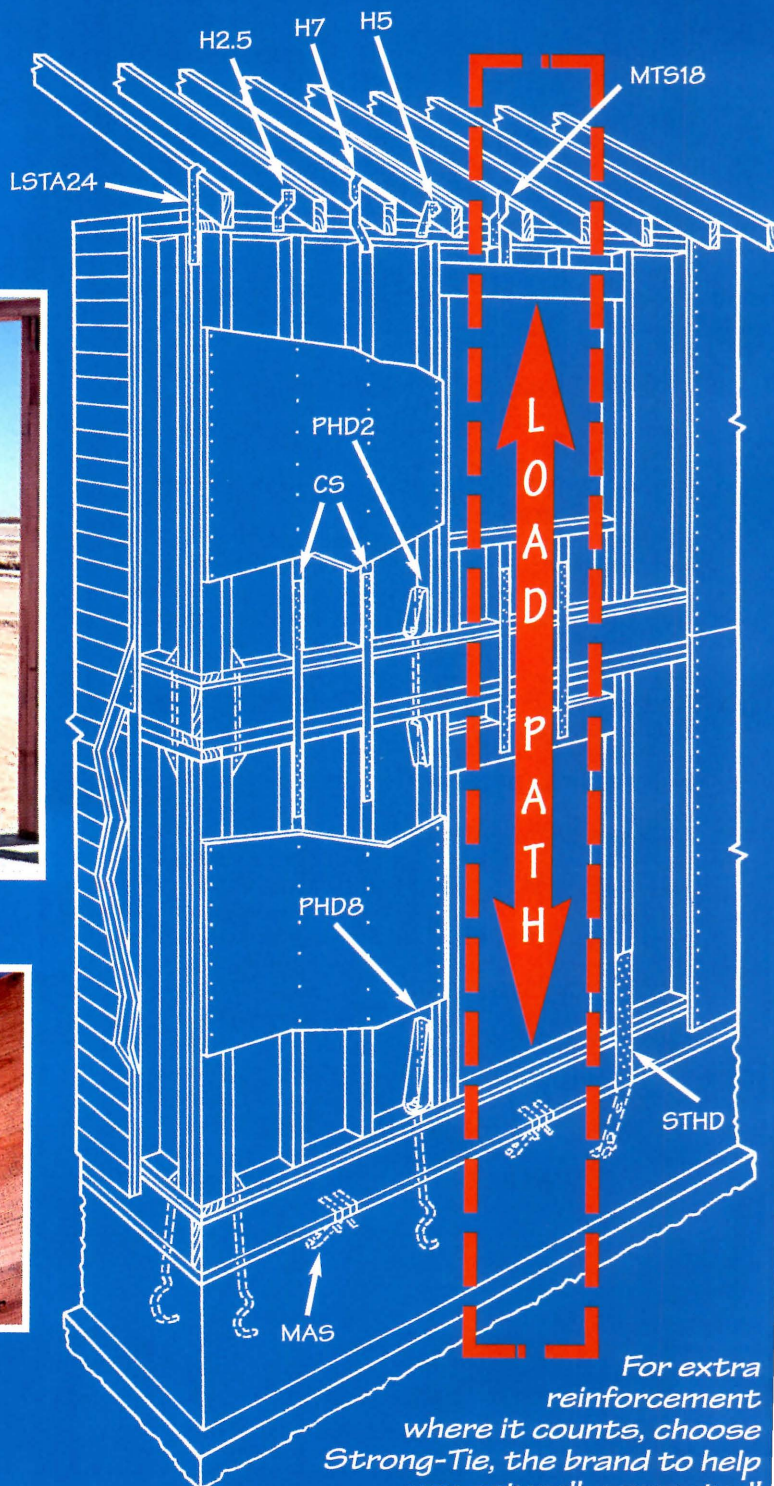
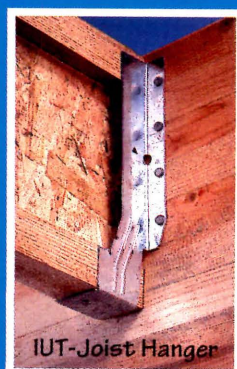
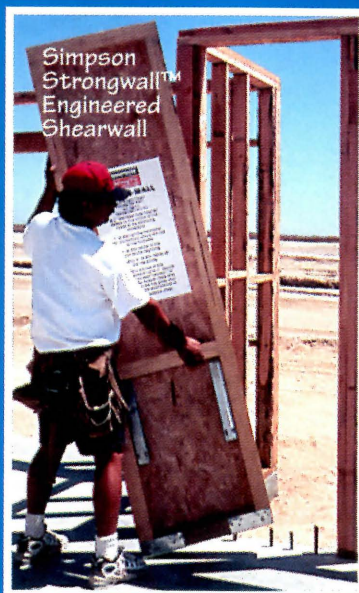
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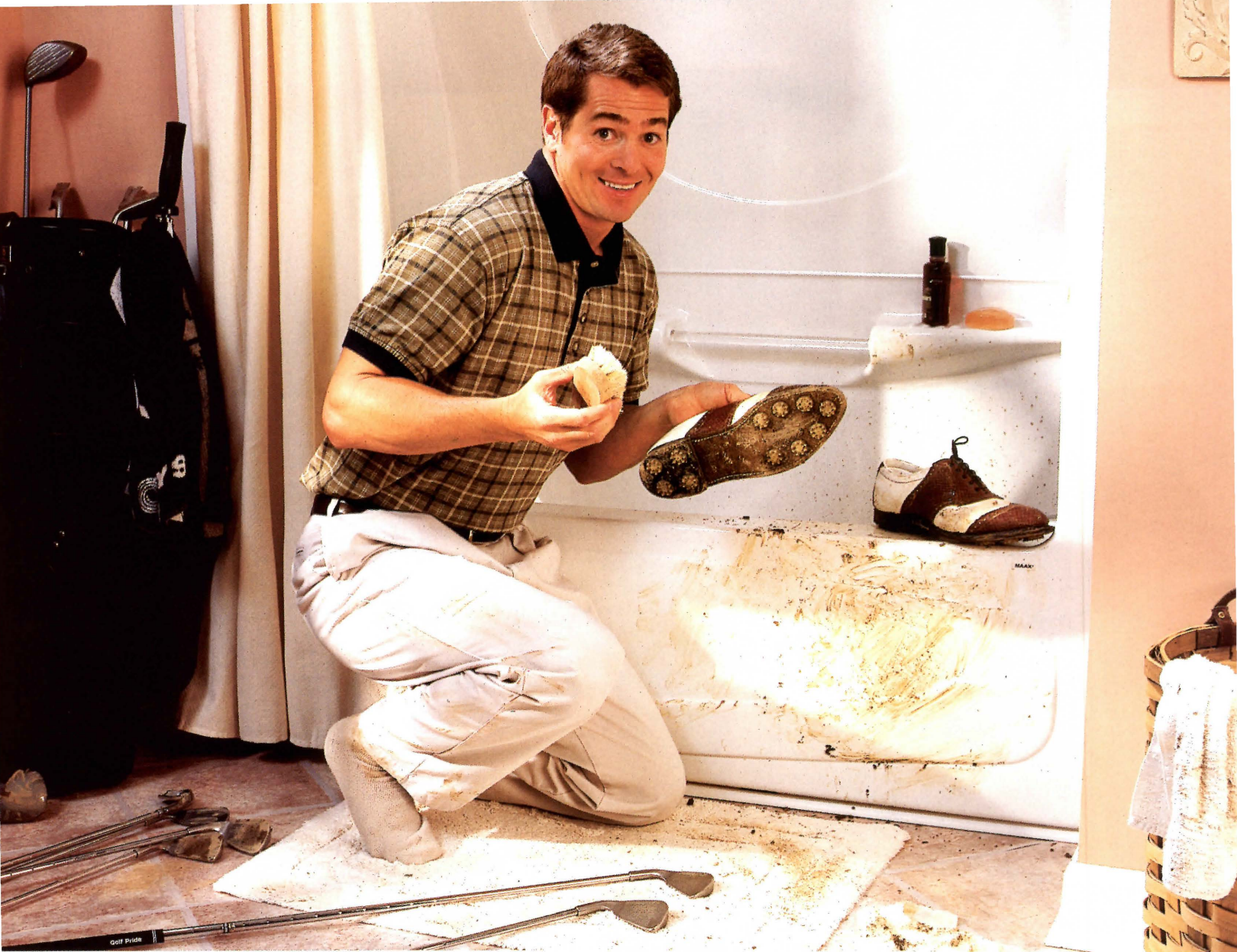
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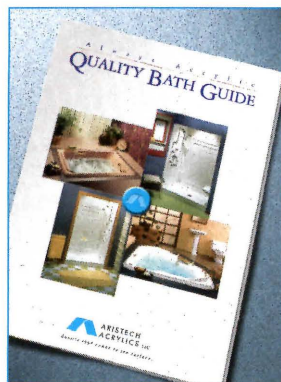




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by cheryl weber

outside the box

A steam shower is high on the list for most clients. If their home is small, though, it can be a trick to fit one in. "Rather than having a little shower, people want more of a relaxing environment," says architect Heather Faulding. "But there's never enough room." She devised an ingenious layout to slip a combination shower and steamer into the master bath of this 15½-foot-wide town home on Manhattan's Upper East Side. The new bath is nestled along a skinny second-story corridor. Its three compartments—a toilet and bidet, a vanity in the middle, and a tub and steam shower—are divided by light-filtering glass block. They stretch along the axis of the house, from the bedroom on one end to the study on the other.

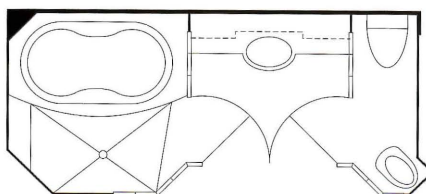
One of the singular features of the design is its options for shutting off or opening up the space. When pulled together, two frosted-glass doors close the entire bath to the hall corridor and open the interior chambers to each other. When the doors are opened inward, a stunning, swirled-aluminum vanity becomes part of the hallway and the rest of the bath disappears. "We didn't want the client to have to go in and out for different functions," Faulding says of the long, narrow space. "But we wanted privacy for the toilet and shower. This way you can have it both ways."

When the doors are left open, the jog to the washbasin makes a pleasant stopping place in the hallway. Faulding and interior designer Margaret Davis used three mirrors—two are medicine-cabinet doors—behind the vanity to reflect the skylit hallway and a sculptural metal-and-wood stair that goes to the roof. A diagonal pattern of blue pearl granite floor tiles sums up the room's playful geometry.



Photos: Stuart O'Sullivan

The vanity area (opposite) borrows sunlight from a skylit stairwell across the hall. Inside the bath, each room opens to another along a single axis.



architect:

Faulding Architecture, New York

builder/contractor:

Scordio Construction, New York

project size:

125 square feet

construction cost:

\$200 a square foot

bathing beauty

This sophisticated master bath in a 1915 Arts and Crafts home in Pasadena, Calif., gives few clues to its origins as a tiny bath and dressing room. Designed as part of a whole-house renovation, the expanded room marries materials and details from the past to the clean style and convenience of the present.

The new space includes a steam shower and a claw-foot tub, a pair of pedestal sinks, and a custom cabinet. "One of the problems of using pedestals in a master bath is that you lose counter space," architect Georgie Kajer says. Since the room was wider than it needed to be, she solved the problem by deepening the wall behind the sinks to create a handy ledge. Its marble top is a sleek period material that matches the marble on the threshold and the chest of drawers.

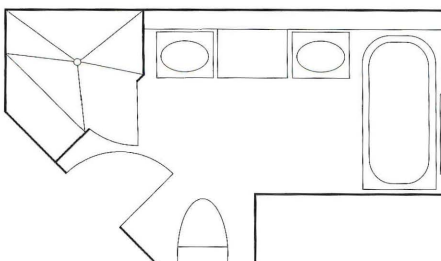
In addition to extending sink-side space, the chest of drawers was designed to make the bath feel like just another room in the house. "It brings some of the character and architecture of the house into the bath," Kajer says. So does the Douglas fir bead board, borrowed from the butler's pantry.

The architect chose other old-fashioned fixtures, such as the claw-foot tub and lights with push-button switches. She notes, however, that the tubs only work in baths with enough square footage for a separate shower. "It's expensive to jerry-rig them into showers," Kajer says, "and a drag to step in and out across the tub."

Underfoot, a bold checkerboard pattern achieves the look of mosaic tile without the tedious installation. The porcelain tiles are shipped on 12-by-12-inch squares of paper, the finished side held fast with water-soluble glue. So the sheets of tiny tiles were simply laid into the grout and the backing removed. Like the rest of the bath, it's a fresh, utilitarian take on a timeless look.



Eric Staudenmaier



architect:
Kajer Architects, Pasadena, Calif.
builder/contractor:
Thomas Lake Builders, Pasadena
project size:
96 square feet
construction cost:
Withheld

A chest of drawers stands in for the traditional vanity and helps make this bath look like any other room in the house.

clean sweep

In an old house with a spectacular water view, simple materials are best. They speak quietly for themselves and let the vista take center stage. So Shaker-style minimalism fits the bill in this bath, part of a remodel to a 1910 cottage on Long Island Sound. Architect Stuart Disston, AIA, brought order and warmth to its tight quarters by wrapping the walls in painted poplar planks. Recessed medicine cabinets offer unobtrusive storage. The table-type vanity, too, lends a sense of openness and lets the materials shine. Disston covered the vanity, tub, and backsplash in sea-green Vermont slate and finished them with brushed nickel faucets.

Along another wall (not shown in the photos), the architect tucked a side-by-side shower and toilet niche. Frosted glass on the shower wall shares light between the two spaces, as does another frosted glass door that encloses the water closet.

Water view or not, Disston is seeing a return to a simpler aesthetic in the bath, one that minimizes decorative trim and molding—elements people may tire of and that aren't easily changed. "I think there's a segment of the population that's going to want things clean and uncomplicated, and nicer materials," he says.

architect:

Austin Patterson Disston Architects, Southport, Conn.

builder/contractor:

Louis E. Lee Co., New Canaan, Conn.

project size:

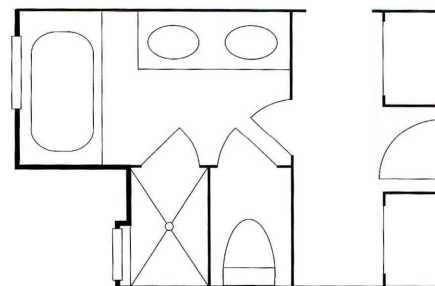
84 square feet

construction cost:

\$347 a square foot



Photos: Jeff McNamara



Smooth Vermont slate, recessed medicine cabinets, and a table-like vanity increase the sense of space in this narrow bath.



In keeping with the bath's large scale, architect Ned Stoll chose patternless materials such as slab granite and stainless steel. "They let the surface elements of the room read," he says, "rather than a dizzying mosaic of materials."

John Herr

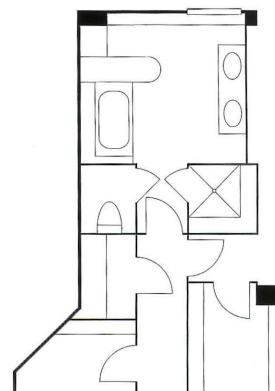
luxury liner

If this sleek master bath makes you think of a luxury ocean liner from the '30s, you've got the right idea. The clients asked architect Ned Stoll to evoke that image throughout the entire house, which overlooks Long Island Sound. Working with the interior design firm Wayne and Doktor Ltd., Stoll wrapped the bath in brushed stainless steel wainscoting, then set a countertop, cabinet, and table afloat along the perimeter. Sandblasted glass doors enclose the shower stall and a separate toilet compartment. And black granite on the floors and other horizontal surfaces keeps the look clean and minimal.

Stoll says the combination of gypsum board, stainless steel, and granite was an attempt to create a feeling of serenity and get away from a tired trend. "So many baths are all stone in one form or another," he says. "We were trying to avoid that gaudiness, to let the surfaces be less distracting."

The fittings and the light fixture over the twin sinks lend their own simple lines. So does the long ledge behind the tub. "Selected objects such as bottles and shells can be placed on the counter, letting those objects be celebrated," the architect says. Another celebrated object—a sculptural, cast-iron coat tree the clients found—is a counterpoint to the subdued design. Stoll notes that clients often like to add a favorite piece of freestanding furniture to a bath, rather than having everything built in.

The use of so much stainless steel and granite could have come across as cold. But Stoll addressed that potential problem by incorporating incandescent lighting that casts a warm glow around the room's perimeter. And on the ceiling, a huge, cone-shaped skylight brings the sky right into the bath. At night, the lights shining on the roof glass reflect the room's quiet, elegant composure.



architect:

Partners Stoll & Stoll Architects,
New Rochelle, N.Y.

builder/contractor:

R.J. Baker Contracting, Scarsdale, N.Y.

project size:

225 square feet

construction cost:

Withheld

neutral territory

Architect David Giulietti is well-acquainted with the weekend getaway. He has his own retreat on the Oregon coast and has designed several others. So he understood his clients' desire for a beach-like bath and easy-to-clean surfaces, such as this sand-toned ceramic tile countertop and floor.

The tastes of the owners, who work for high-tech companies, also run toward high design. And this neutral bath is a calm counterpoint to the playful color in the rest of the Nedonna Beach, Ore., house. But the space is livened up with such glamorous touches as glass block on the steam-shower walls, a heated, hairpin-turn towel rack, broad washbowls, and large round mirrors.

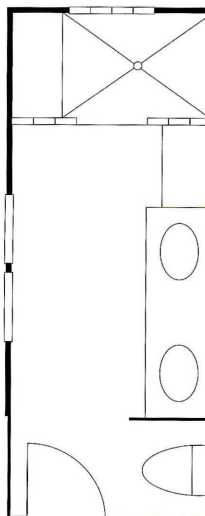
This room marks a number of trends, says Giulietti, among them a movement toward smaller master baths with higher quality materials and accessories. For example, "people might have a generous steam shower and forgo the jetted tub," he says. Roughly two-thirds of his clients also opt for raised washbasins. Besides their novel appeal, they can be more user-friendly than fixed lavs. If necessary, he says, "one bowl can be set higher for a taller husband or wife, rather than raising the whole counter."

And in many of Giulietti's designs, a decorative, wall-mounted mirror is replacing the traditional medicine cabinet, which is then absorbed into closet space. In this case, all the better to reflect the wild coastal view from windows on the opposite wall. **ra**

Cheryl Weber is a freelance writer in Severna Park, Md.



David Papazian



Sand-colored surfaces evoke the nearby beach, while glass block and elegant washbowls satisfy the clients' taste for high design.

architect:

Giulietti Associates, AIA, Architects, Portland, Ore.

builder/contractor:

Kashas Construction, Camas, Wash.

project size:

100 square feet

construction cost:

\$160 a square foot



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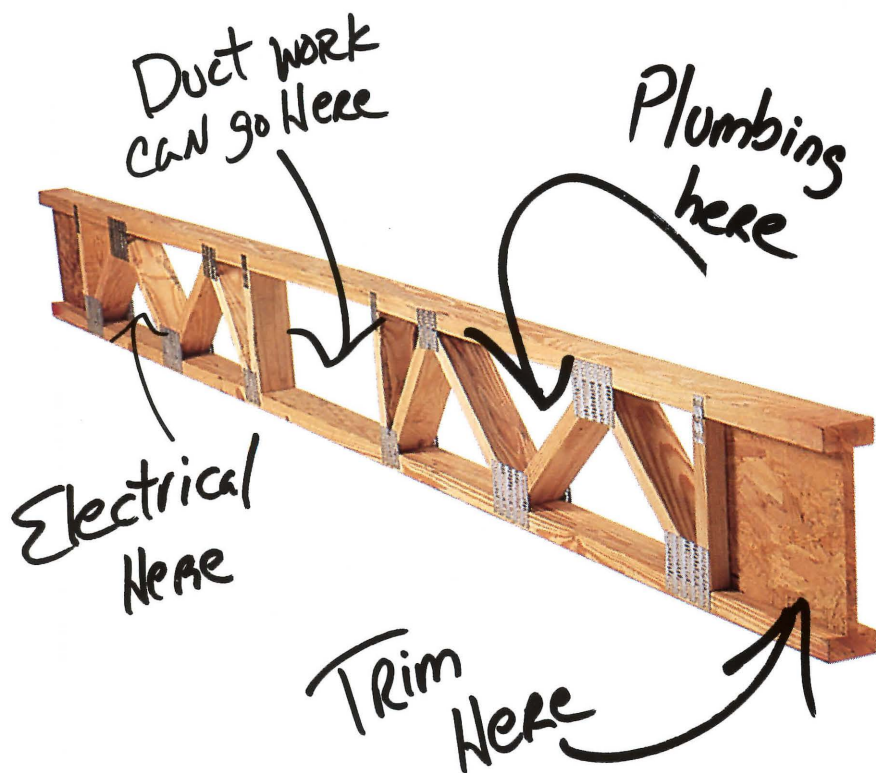
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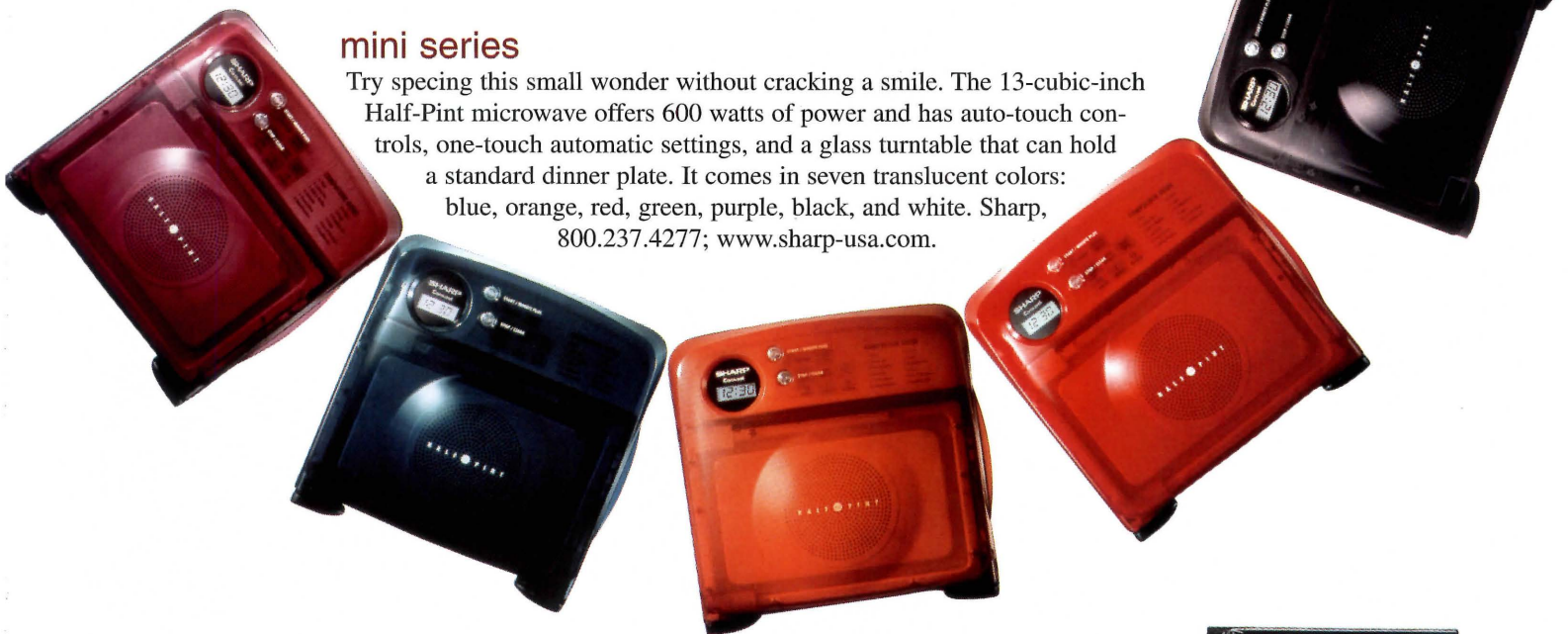
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continued on page 80

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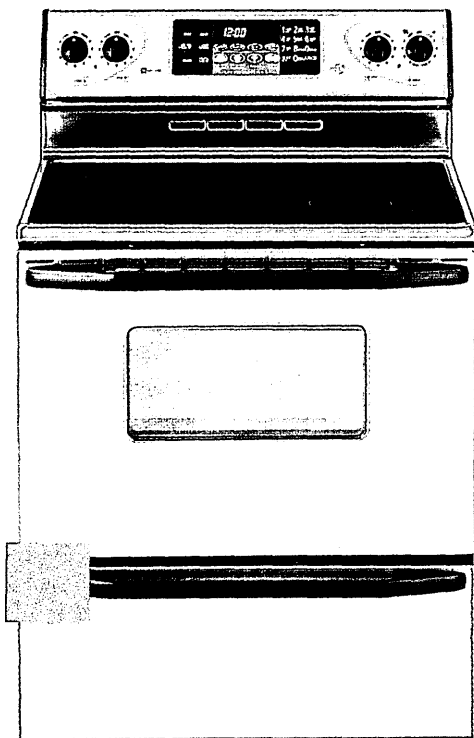
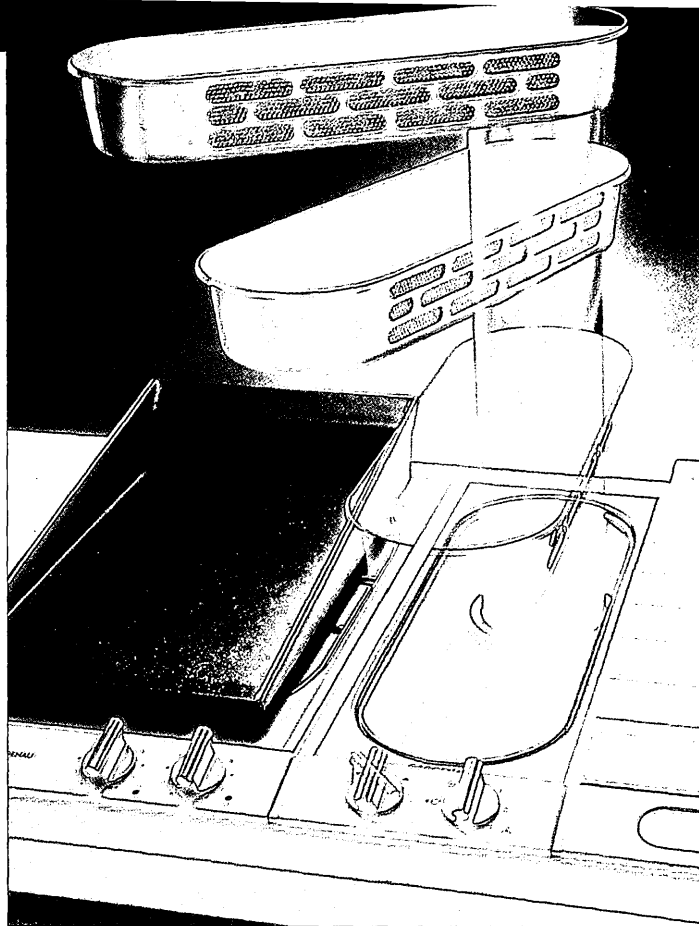
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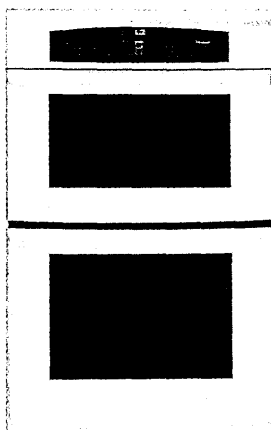
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—katy tomasulo

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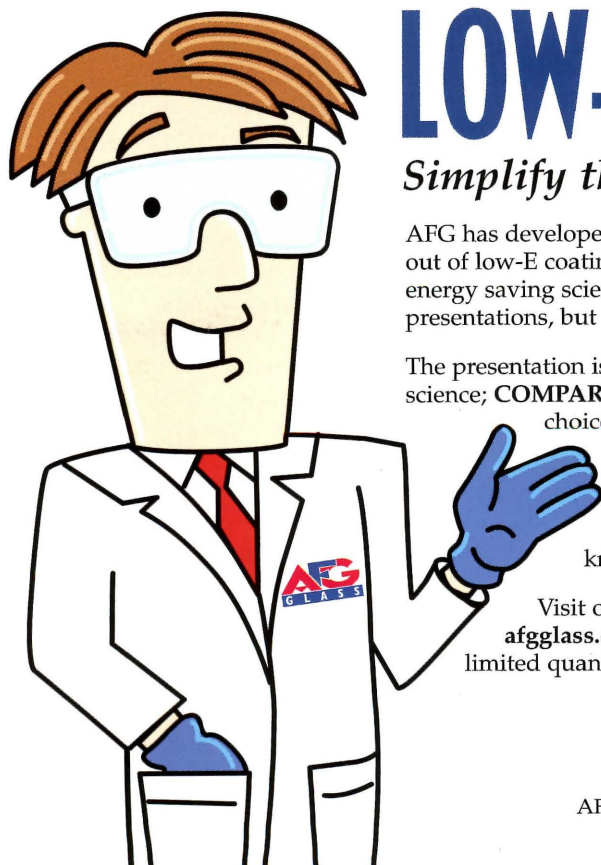
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by nigel f. maynard

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product guide

Carefully vetting the budget is the best way to narrow the field of choices. It's the "single most important thing in specing a countertop," says Michael Hauptman, AIA, of Philadelphia-based Brawer & Hauptman. "It all depends on what the homeowner is willing to spend."

Once the budget is established, the real work of choosing a material begins. Michele Dremmer, associate and director of interiors at Holabird & Root in Chicago, says the average client knows the broad spectrum of materials available but is unaware of their particular characteristics. It's the architect's job to steer the client in the



Richard E.

Concrete countertops, like this one by Berkeley, Calif.-based Cheng Design, are popular because they offer design versatility and vast color options. They must be resealed periodically, though, to resist staining.

right direction. "Most materials are durable, depending on what the need is," she says.

David Hertz, AIA, says durability is a major issue for his clients. The president of Santa Monica, Calif.-based Syndesis, a design firm that manufactures a concrete-based surfacing product called Syndecrete, says that some materials look great but will not perform well in hardworking kitchens. He encourages his clients to take a sample of the material they want and test it under their toughest conditions.

Jack Moses, of Moses

Architecture, Highland Park, Ill., lets his clients choose a product and then gives them feedback about their choice. "I tell them about the drawbacks," he says. "I let them know what they can expect."

tried and true

Plastic laminate is perhaps the most popular of all countertop surfacing materials because of its low cost, ease of installation, and design versatility. It comes in a wide variety of stock colors and textures or can be specified for a custom look. Despite the material's vulnerability to burning, fading, and delam-

ination, many architects believe it's the best value for the price.

Jon Anderson, AIA, of Jon Anderson Architects, Albuquerque, N.M., prefers granite for cost-is-no-object counters, but agrees that laminate is the best choice for frugal gourmets. "Laminate is the most desirable thing for the money," says Anderson, who specializes in moderately priced custom work. "A custom kitchen with granite countertops can cost between \$5,000 and \$7,000 more than plastic laminate."

Tile is another popular

continued on page 86

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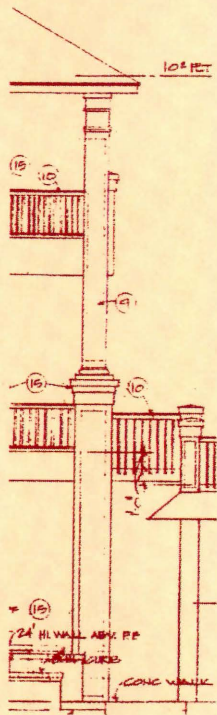
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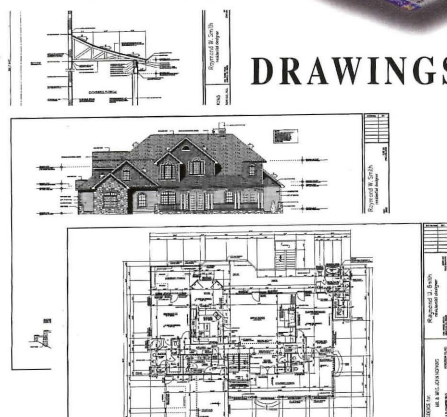
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material list &

Material List & Cost Estimate

Material	Description	Qty	Units	Cost	Waste	Labour	Total
FOUNDATION							
8-20 Wall Foundation		1803	sq ft	0.70	10.00	2.00	704.14
Wedge Form (Wally)		2360	sq ft	0.05	10.00	0.50	23.50
Asp Rebar		2058	sq ft	0.15	10.00	2.00	442.47
EXTERIOR FINISH							
Brick	Brick Red	81	sq ft	2.70	15.00	10.00	329.61
Siding	White Vinyl	2327	sq ft	1.95	15.00	10.00	3277.95
Gable Siding	White Vinyl	1076	sq ft	1.95	15.00	10.00	2401.40
Brick Chimney	Brick Red	1	cft	24.50	10.00	2.00	14.00
Brick Fire	Brick Red	1	cft	12.70	10.00	2.00	14.00
Brick Veneer	Brick Red	1	cft	8.80	11.00	10.00	23.24
Brick Veneer	Brick Red	10	sq ft	0.25	15.00	10.00	7.36
Siding Veneer	Brick Red	207	sq ft	0.16	10.00	1.00	26.76
Siding Veneer	Brick Red	175	sq ft	0.16	10.00	1.00	20.17
Siding Veneer	Brick Red	15	sq ft	0.16	10.00	1.00	21.56
Siding Veneer	Brick Red	25	sq ft	0.16	10.00	1.00	40.40
Outside Siding Corner	Brick Red	1	sq ft	1.00	10.00	2.00	48.20
Inside Siding Corner	Brick Red	1	sq ft	1.00	10.00	2.00	118.80
Door Trim	Brick Red	267	sq ft	1.20	12.00	10.00	360.16
Window Trim	Brick Red	1	sq ft	1.20	12.00	2.00	178.76
Door Sill	Brick Red	328	sq ft	0.42	10.00	2.00	7228.16
TOTAL PROJECT COST							\$38428.57

cost estimate



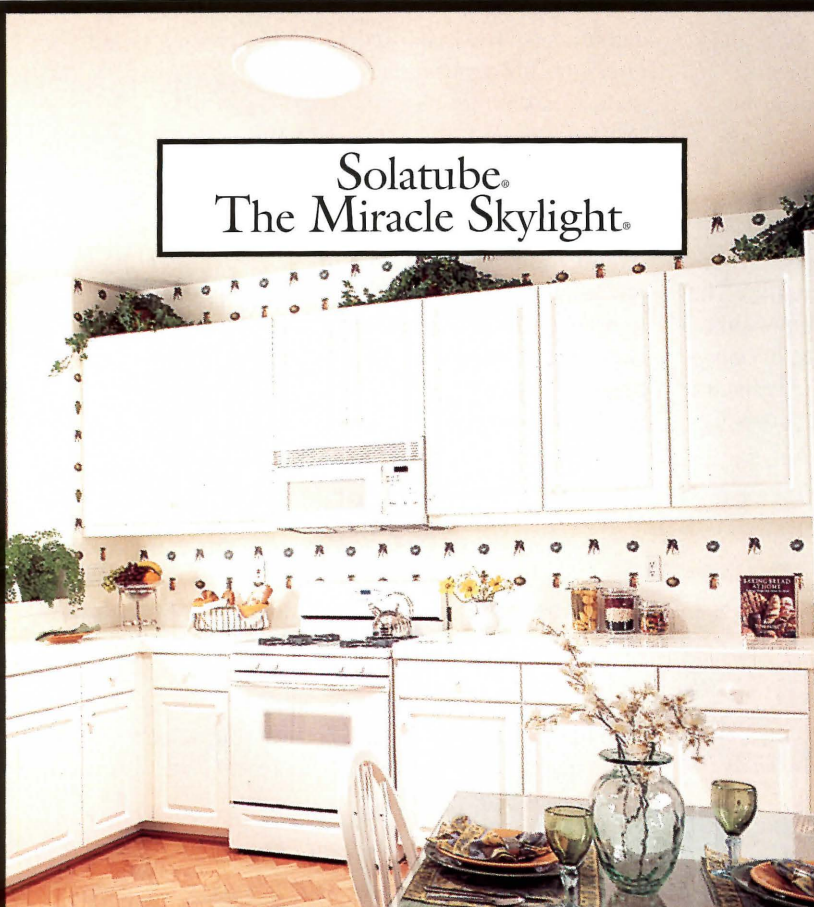
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spec for budget-conscious clients. "In some designs, like a country kitchen, I really like tile," Dremmer says. "Grout lines are a problem for many people, but some clients want the look of the grout lines for the overall effect." Tile has problems, too, of course: It can chip and its grout lines are difficult to keep clean.

counter offers

When the budget increases, so do the choices. Pricier specs include solid surfacing, many varieties of stones and metals, butcher block, concrete, and newer products like Silestone, Pyrolave, Syndecrete, and Fireslate. These products carry considerable costs, but they also bring benefits.

Solid surfacing is a highly versatile stain-resistant product that repairs easily. The chameleon of counters, it mimics a number of materials, including many stones. Unlike stone, though, it feels warm to the touch—a plus for eat-in counters. Still, many architects avoid the material because they believe it looks artificial. They also

claim it can be prone to warping and fading—all for a fairly hefty price tag. "I tell clients that they may as well pay a little more for granite," says Anderson.

Concrete provides some of the most vibrant design possibilities, allowing architects to specify it in funky colors or with glass chips or other objects embedded in the surface. It's susceptible to cracking, however, and must be resealed periodically to resist staining.

Hertz developed Syndecrete as an alternative. The cement-based composite is half the weight of concrete, but is more resistant to chipping and comes in

600 colors. Its price ranges from \$80 to \$300 per square foot.

Another new material is Silestone, an engineered stone manufactured by Eagan, Minn.-based Cosentino USA. It's composed of 95 percent quartz and 5 percent pigments, resins, and binders. The manufacturer says it doesn't require sealers, is stainproof, and resists burns and scratches. It comes in various colors and costs about \$60 per square foot.

Other relatively new products are Fireslate and Pyrolave. Fireslate, a fiber-cement panel that has long been used in laboratories, is now turning up in stylish kitchens. It looks like soapstone but does not scratch or crack, says Tom Worthen, owner of Fireslate-2 in Lewiston, Maine. It costs between \$24 and \$34 per square foot.

Pyrolave is a lava stone that comes from volcanic flows in France. The stone is cut and styled to specifi-

cations, sprayed with enamel, and fired in a kiln. Jean Pauwels, president of the North American division of Pyrolave, in Raleigh, N.C., says the product is heat and chemical resistant, waterproof, and doesn't require sealants. It costs about \$145 per square foot.

proceed with care

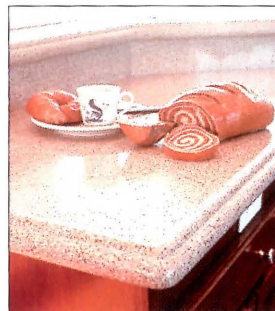
Whichever product you and your client choose, make sure you do it with your eyes wide open. Says Hauptman, "No matter how nice a material looks, sometimes it is inappropriate for the kitchen. You have to make sure the material will stand up to the heavy use."

"The importance of the countertop is underestimated," Hertz agrees. "It takes a lot of abuse. Architects undervalue the need for a high-quality surface, and thus they need to be very careful in selecting some materials." *ra*



Composed primarily of natural minerals and recycled materials, Syndecrete (above) is precast to specs, prefinished, and fitted on site. The less-expensive Silestone (below) is made mostly of quartz.

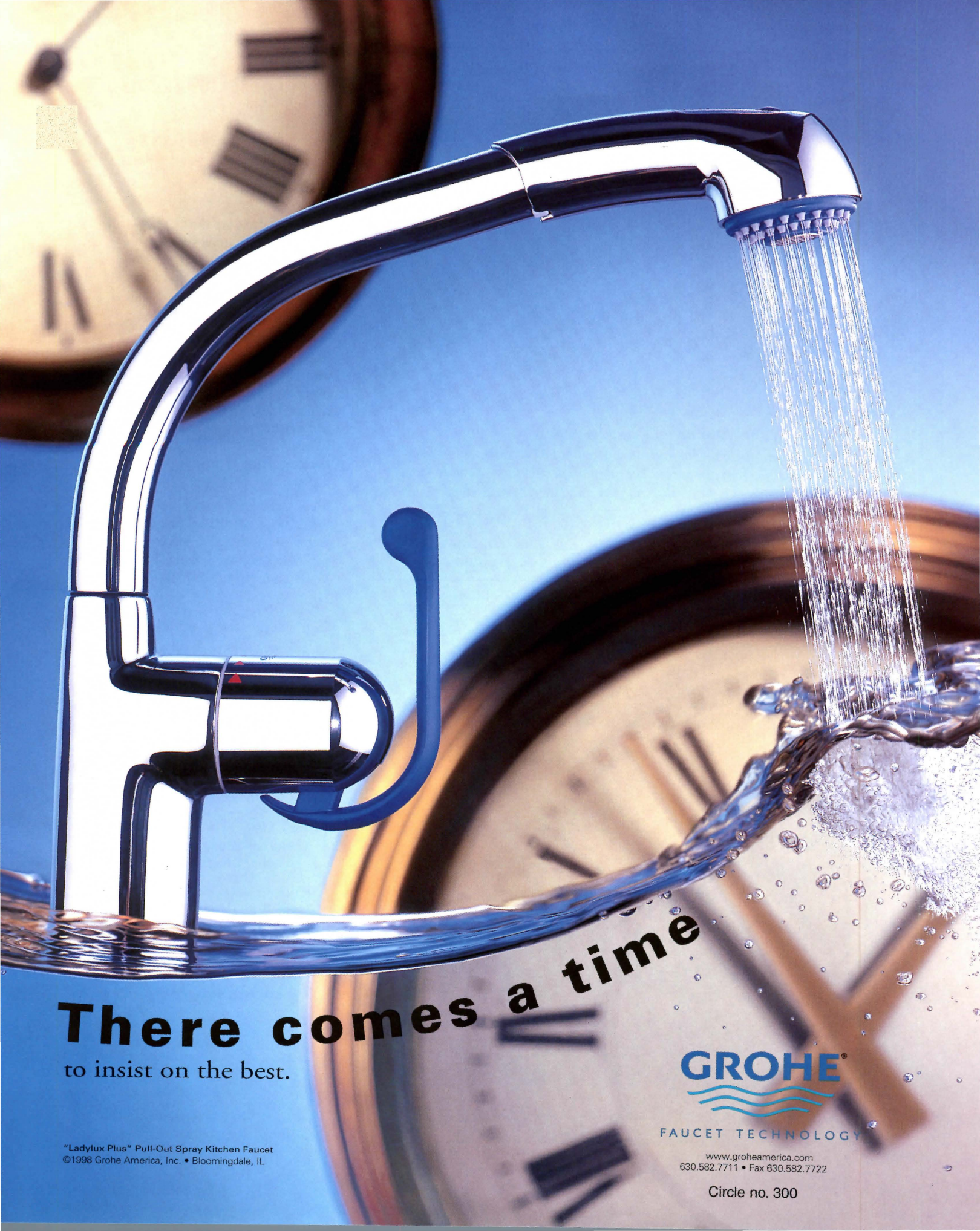
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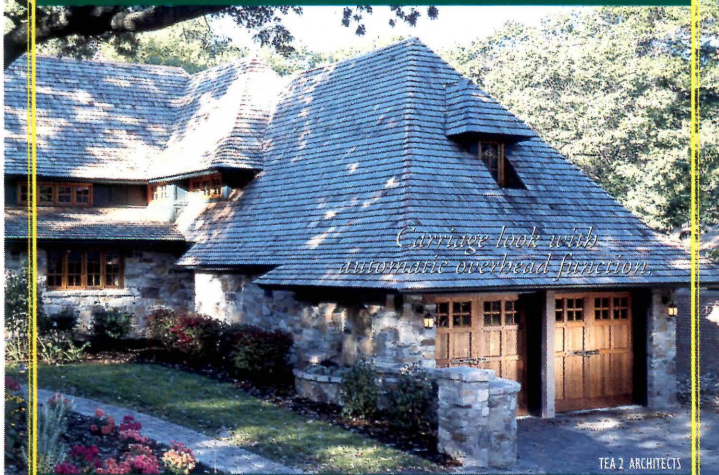
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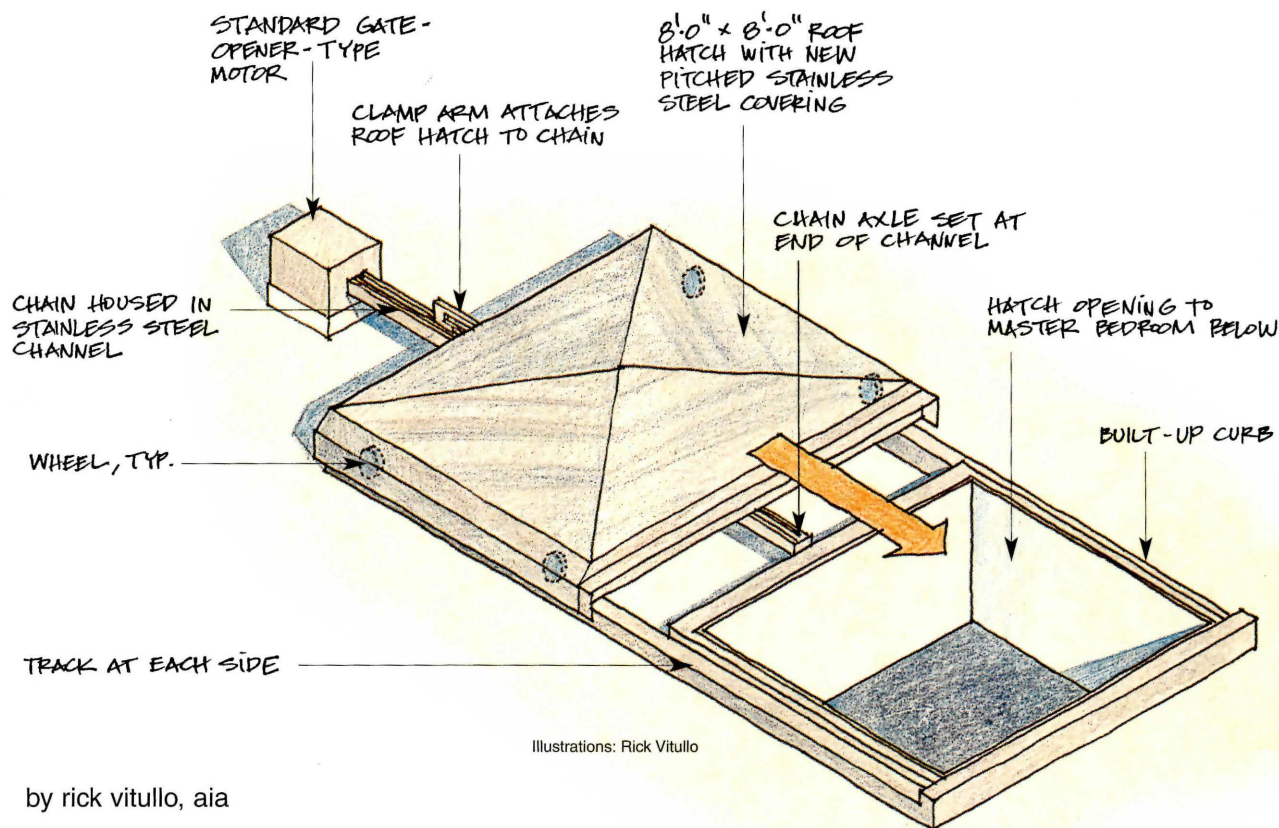
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hands on

hatch work

rebuilding a broken ceiling hatch brings the sky into a beach-house bedroom.



Illustrations: Rick Vitullo

by rick vitullo, aia

during its 11 years in practice, the Santa Monica, Calif., design/build firm Marmol and Radziner Architecture + Construction has enjoyed its share of idiosyncratic client requests and unusual design challenges. One of the firm's most intriguing jobs involved revamping a dilapidated sliding roof hatch above a master bedroom in Manhattan Beach, Calif.

When the homeowners bought the 1980 beach house, they were charmed by the possibility of opening up their bedroom ceiling to the outdoors, so they asked Marmol and Radziner to

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Brian Nesin, an architect on the project team, says that a big part of redesigning and refurbishing the 8-by-8-foot sliding hatch involved "waterproofing and weatherproofing the details a bit and redesigning the flashing." The team built up both the hatch itself and the curb it rests on, making the entire arrangement taller and better able to shed rain. Because of the wet ocean air, they used stainless steel for all exposed metal parts.

The hatch rolls back and forth over the ceiling opening on wheels that follow two metal

continued on page 92

When the rebuilt hatch is open, neither the hatch itself nor any of the mechanisms that make it work are visible from inside the bedroom—quite an improvement over the original.

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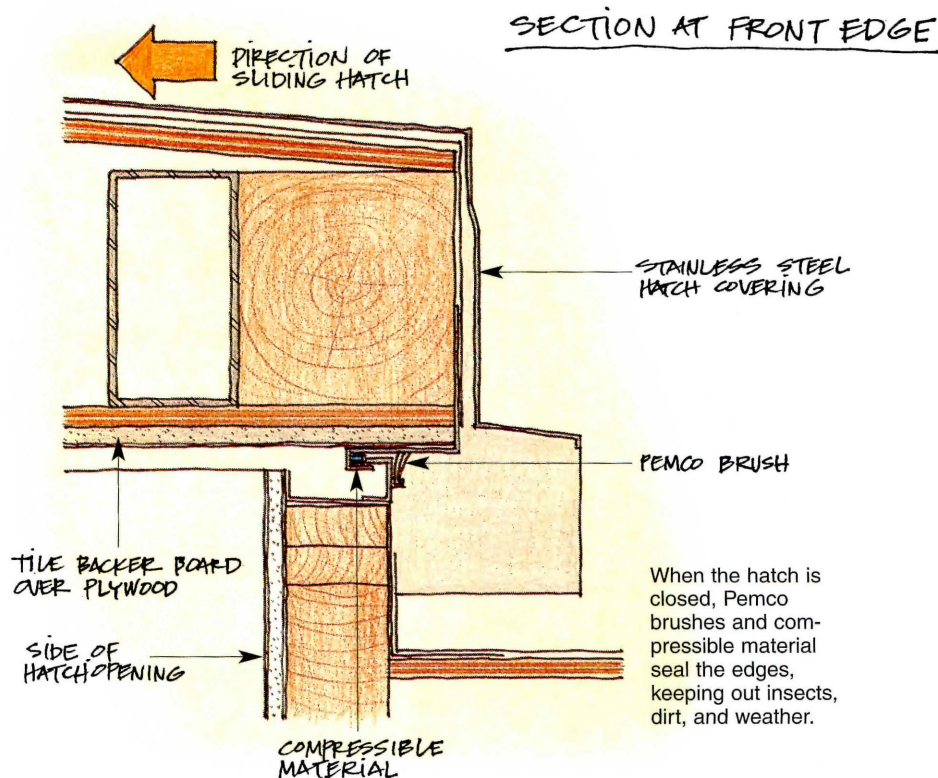
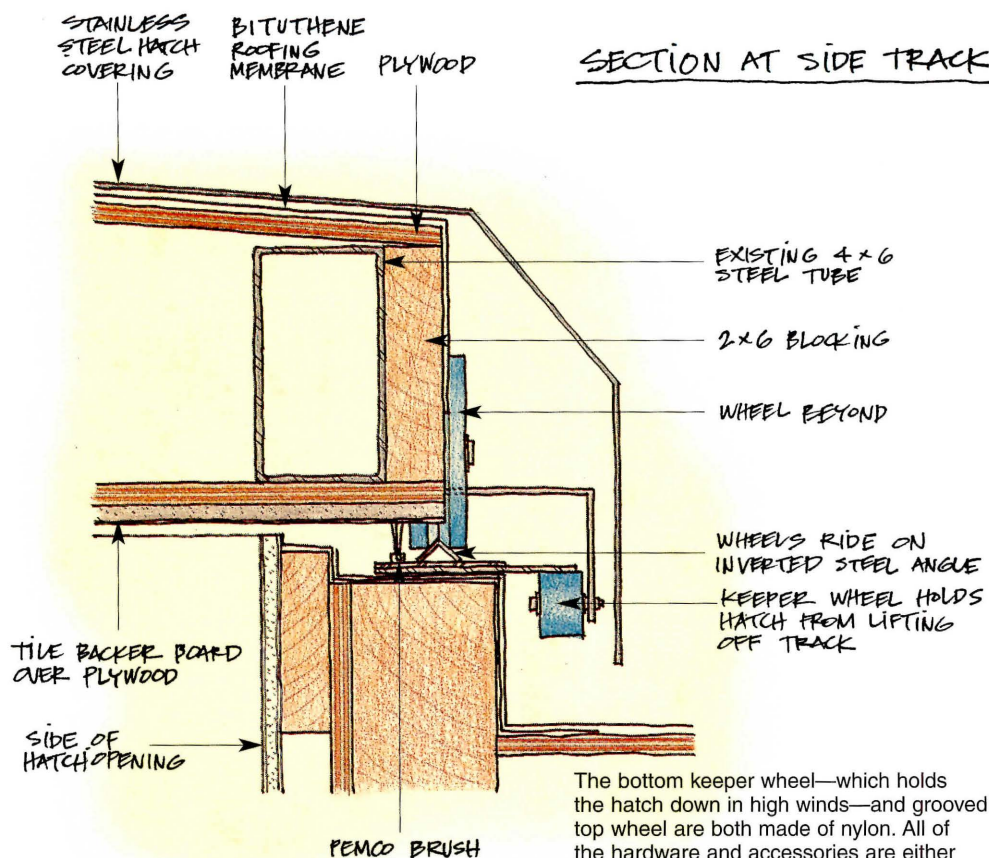
tracks set onto stainless-steel covered curbs on the roof. The tracks were part of the original design but were totally rebuilt by the architects. The firm also replaced the device's motor—a standard automatic gate opener—as well as the chain drive and wheels, and they tied the motor into the computer brain of the house's low-voltage electrical system. A standard operable skylight-type rain sensor automatically shuts the hatch on rainy days. To keep the door airtight when closed, Pemco brushes and compressible material were added to the perimeter of the hatch.

Inside the master bedroom, the architects extended the dry-wall on the hatch opening's side walls up beyond the well's top edge, thereby concealing from below all of the mechanism's various parts. Now, when the hatch is open, nothing is visible except a welcome patch of sky. *ra*

Rick Vitullo, AIA, is founder and principal of Vitullo Architecture Studio, Washington, D.C.

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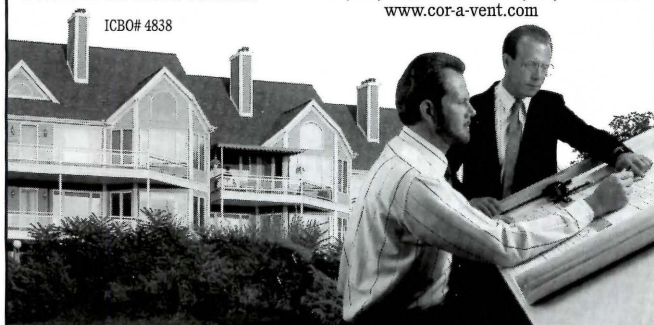


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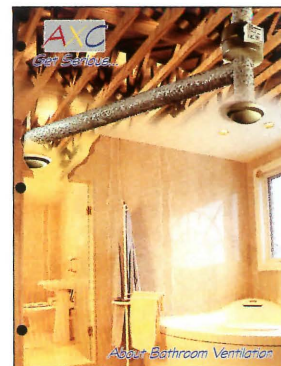
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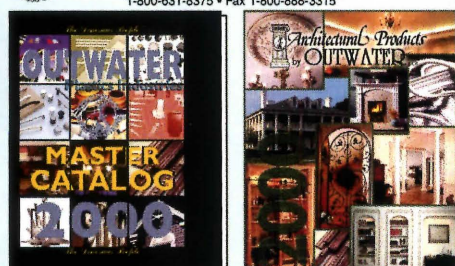
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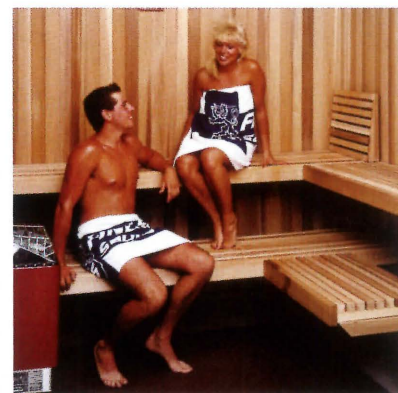
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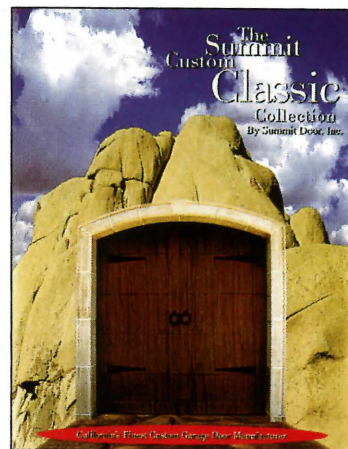
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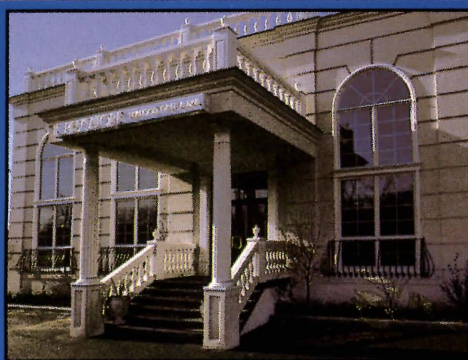


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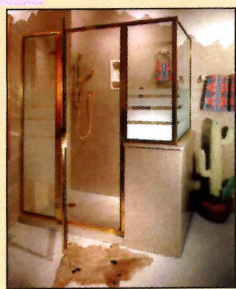
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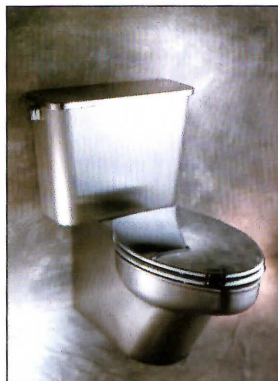
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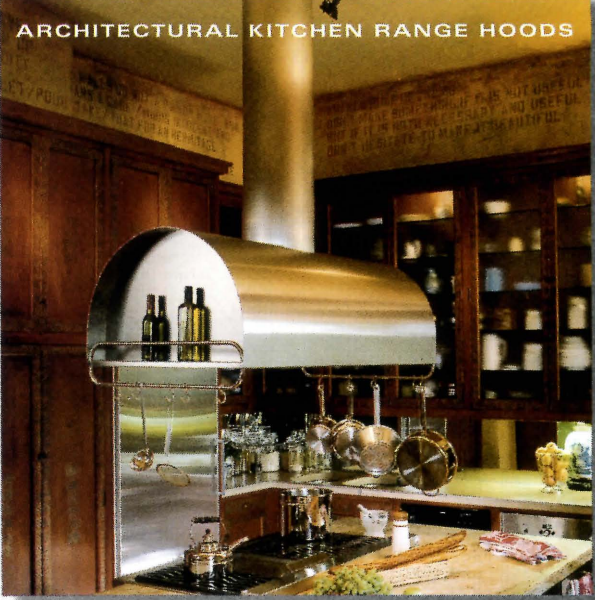
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built to last

stefanos polyzoides touts the modest california bungalow.

Sprawl builders call them “product”—the typical houses of suburbia.

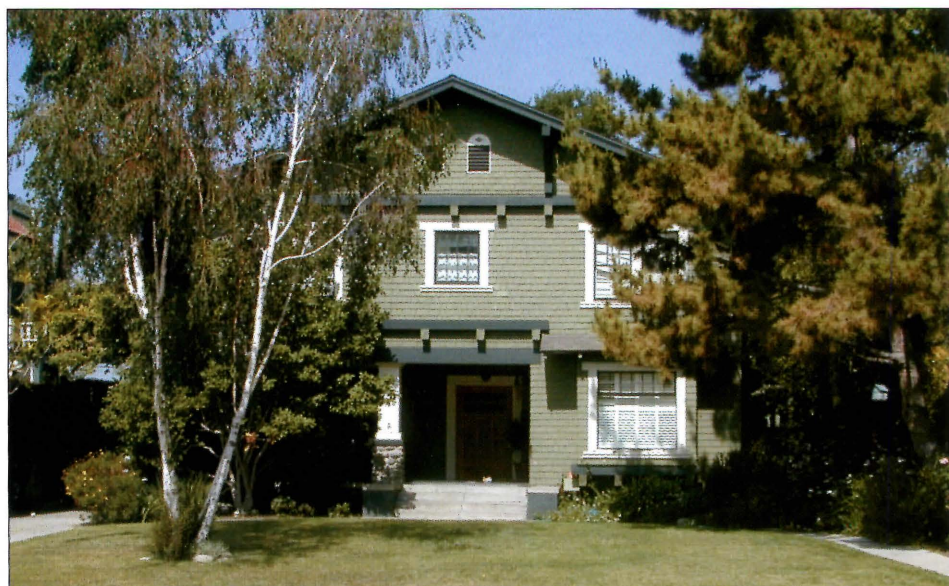
Evidence is mounting that these tract houses (below) do not increase in value over time. They destroy the streetscapes that they define, and dealing with their deteriorating carcasses is becoming an acute problem in many second- and third-generation suburbs.

Yet it wasn't long ago that a production house served the needs of successive generations admirably. It was the California Bungalow (above), designed



Lee Rayburn

in Chicago and St. Louis and used as a key element in the formation of neighborhoods and towns in the United States from 1900 to 1920.



Phaidon Kydoniatis

It was unadorned and thoroughly simple in its design, and almost modern in its construction. A wooden house, the bungalow was often pre-cut and shipped by rail to the West. Its general plan, with large rooms dedicated to public uses and small rooms to private ones, suited millions of diverse families. Tall ceilings and large windows brought ample life to its interiors. Porches often connected the house and its garden into a single architecture. In a time of revolutionized domestic technology and living patterns, the bungalow has proved the ultimate flexible

dwelling. In Pasadena, Calif., where I live and work, there are many bungalows that 100 years ago cost \$200 and are now worth over \$400,000.

Bungalows were an identifiable house form. Refined by traditional architectural elements—doors, windows, chimneys, porches—they served both the families they nurtured and the streets that gathered them into neighborhoods. They symbolized a home setting and a civic culture that were true to the core of this republic. **ra**

Stefanos Polyzoides is a principal of Moule & Polyzoides, Architects and Urbanists, in Pasadena, Calif.