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ethos inspection / the big house clinic
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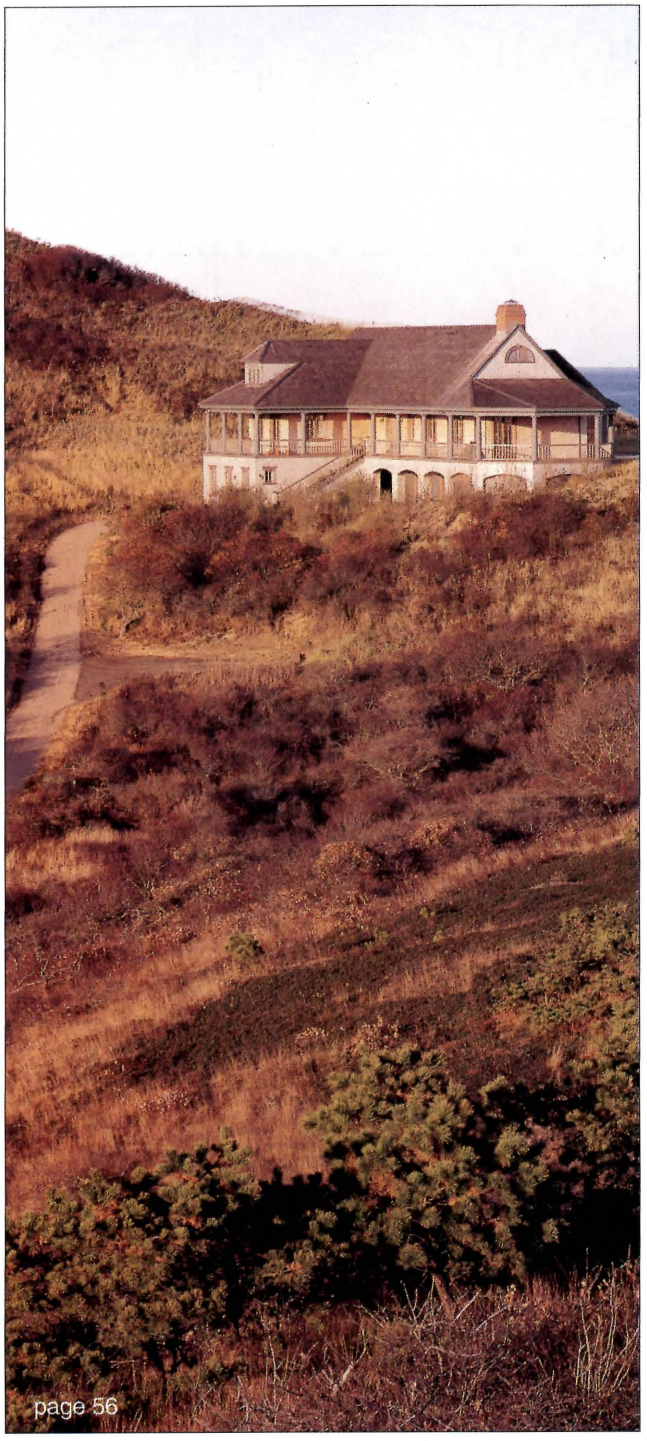

The path taken: Allan Greenberg's house on the Atlantic Coast finds refuge in the familiar. Above photo by Tim Buchman; cover photo by Mark Robert Halper.

residential architect design awards 2003

call for entries

Turn to page 9 for information on how to enter *residential architect*'s fourth annual design awards competition.

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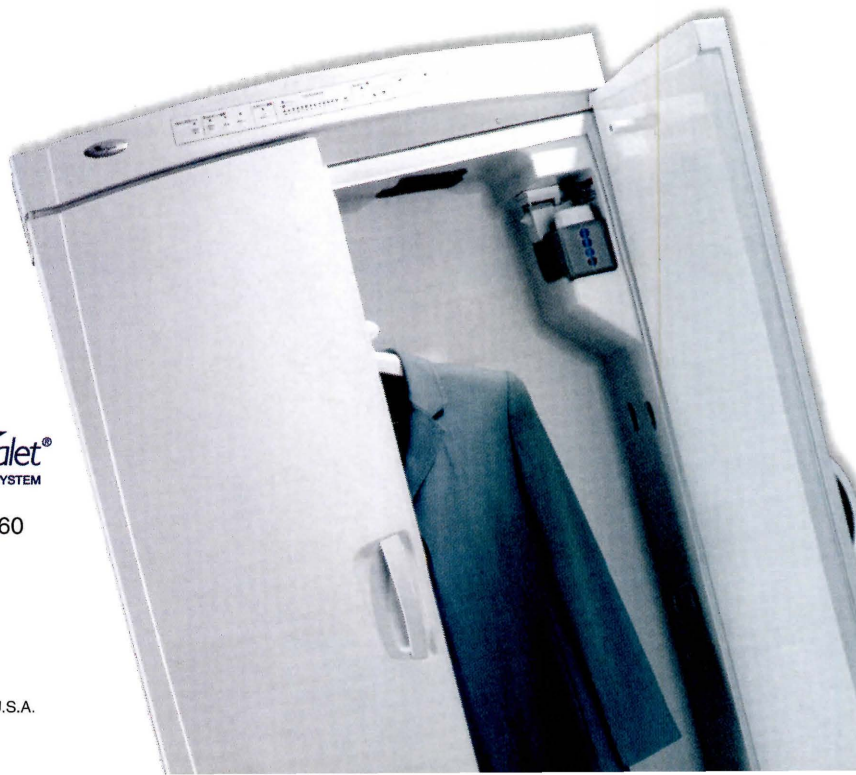

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big house proud

america's castles can't be all bad, can they?

Mark Robert Halper

by s. claire conroy

How dull would this country be if we had no Biltmore mansion, no Newport "cottages," no Lyndhurst Castle? If you love houses, you've got to appreciate a big house done well. It may disturb you to think seriously about what the Robber Barons did to pay for them, or the open fields that were lost to them, or the energy and materials consumed to build and maintain them. But, as with the Egyptian pyramids, when you can step back from those concerns and simply enjoy them for what they are—outsized works of art—you have to admit you'd miss them if they were gone.

Where I went to college in the Mid-Hudson region of New York, there were several notable house museums nearby. Franklin Delano Roosevelt's boyhood home, Springwood, was perhaps the most famous—for reasons that had little to do with its architecture. But just up the road were two more interesting houses, both designed by McKim, Mead, and White. The Vanderbilt Mansion, owned by Frederick Vanderbilt, and the Mills Mansion, owned by Ogden Mills, anchored vast acreage along the Hudson River. They were amazing in their old world opulence and also for their elegant integration with their extraordinary sites.

Nowadays, many Americans still covet their own Robber-Baron mansions but seldom are willing to pay for the site, the materials, the landscaping, and, most important, the talented architect to pull it off. Barons, demi-barons, and wanna-be-barons often settle for "McMansions"—drywall-and-Dryvit versions of America's favorite house styles of the past, crammed onto painfully small and achingly barren sites. A great house needs a great site. Springwood squired 290 acres, the Vanderbilt Mansion occupied at least 200, and the Mills Mansion topped 1,600 in its heyday.

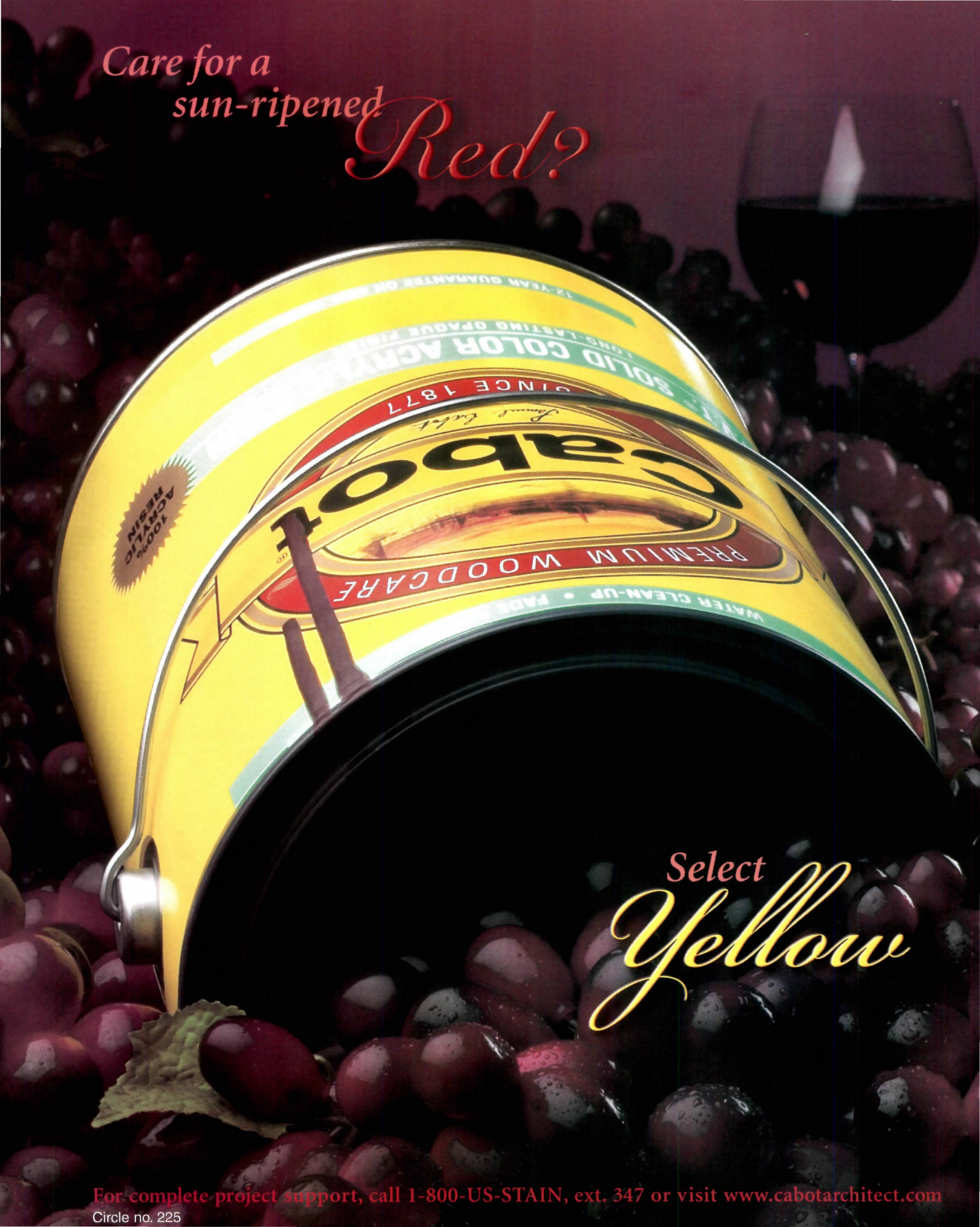
For this issue, we've interviewed some of the best big house design talent in the hopes that we may cleanse our minds of the bad examples and affirm that big, beautiful houses are still possible (see "The Big House Clinic," beginning on page 81). They may even be preferable if the alternative is to subdivide the parcel into smaller, multiple McMansion lots. At any rate, each of our architects has unique insights into what makes a larger house successful, but on this one point they agree: It all begins with the site.

"On a small piece of land, 7,000 square feet can be gross," says architect Allan Greenberg, who's designed many handsomely hefty houses (see page 56 for the story). "It's possible to do good big houses, I'm sure of that. But you have to have the right piece of land to carry it off."

Right now, he's in the middle of a project for design doyenne Martha Stewart. Her compound in Bedford, N.Y., called "Cantitoe Farm," will eventually encompass a number of buildings, including a 4,500-square-foot principal residence. In all, it's a rather modest proposal for the 153-acre site—a 15,000-square-foot house would not look out of place on such an ample piece of land. "For most people, size wins out over quality," Greenberg says. But, in this case, it turns out Stewart is a good steward of her property.

I have to admit, I look forward to the day when I can visit Martha Stewart's house museum—perhaps at my next college reunion many moons from now. 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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letters

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choice words

Your editorial in the April issue of *residential architect* ("Clients' Choice," April 2002, page 13) is so true. I lose so many clients to builder-drafting services because the client does not want to pay for the years of experience and professionalism [of an architect]. Not only do I lose residential projects, but I lose small commercial projects that are allowed to be designed by a draftsman and structural engineer in my state of Florida. I just sent a proposal out to a client on Monday and wished I had been able to make a copy of your editorial and include it with the proposal.

I think most lay people are unaware of the true reasons for hiring an architect, as your article points out. These are the people who need to read your article. Thank you for writing it.

Ken Shapiro, RA
KHS Architects
Deltona, Fla.

I am a builder. I build homes and do renovations and additions to existing homes. Your column ("Clients' Choice") is very disappointing. The attitude that only the architect is the good guy and the center of the building process is past its time. How about the concept of a collaborative effort of owner, architect, and contractor?

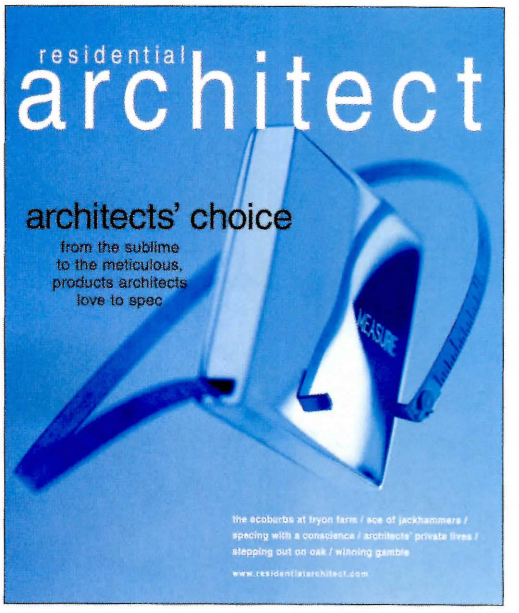
There is no question that the architect brings the creative skills to the project. But how about cost controls? Who understands this better than the builder? How about choice of materials? Just because a rep came to your office does not mean the product is any good. Who says the architect understands site problems as well as a builder? The architect works on a two-dimensional surface. How often have we poor builders found a plan that is not buildable and said, "If only they had asked me about this before they drew it."

The client is best served by a design and build process. The old architect idea that competitive bidding is best is so wrong. Supervision does not get quality. Good contractors with skilled mechanics do. The low price at the bid is not the answer; the right price to achieve the goals of the client is. Architects are so hung up about interference in the design process and afraid someone may have a suggestion that improves the design by changing the plan. What the client needs to pay for is the design, not the huge set of details and specifications that increase the cost of the design service.

The building of a home should not be adversarial. It is a collaborative effort of people to achieve the desired result in a business environment. Why is it that in commercial and institutional construction so much of the work is being done on a design and build basis but only in residential construction are architects hung up about the old way to do business? No wonder so many of your friends complain they do not get enough money for their efforts.

Richard Dickson
by e-mail

continued on page 17



"the attitude that only the architect is the good guy and the center of the building process is past its time. how about ... collaborative effort?"

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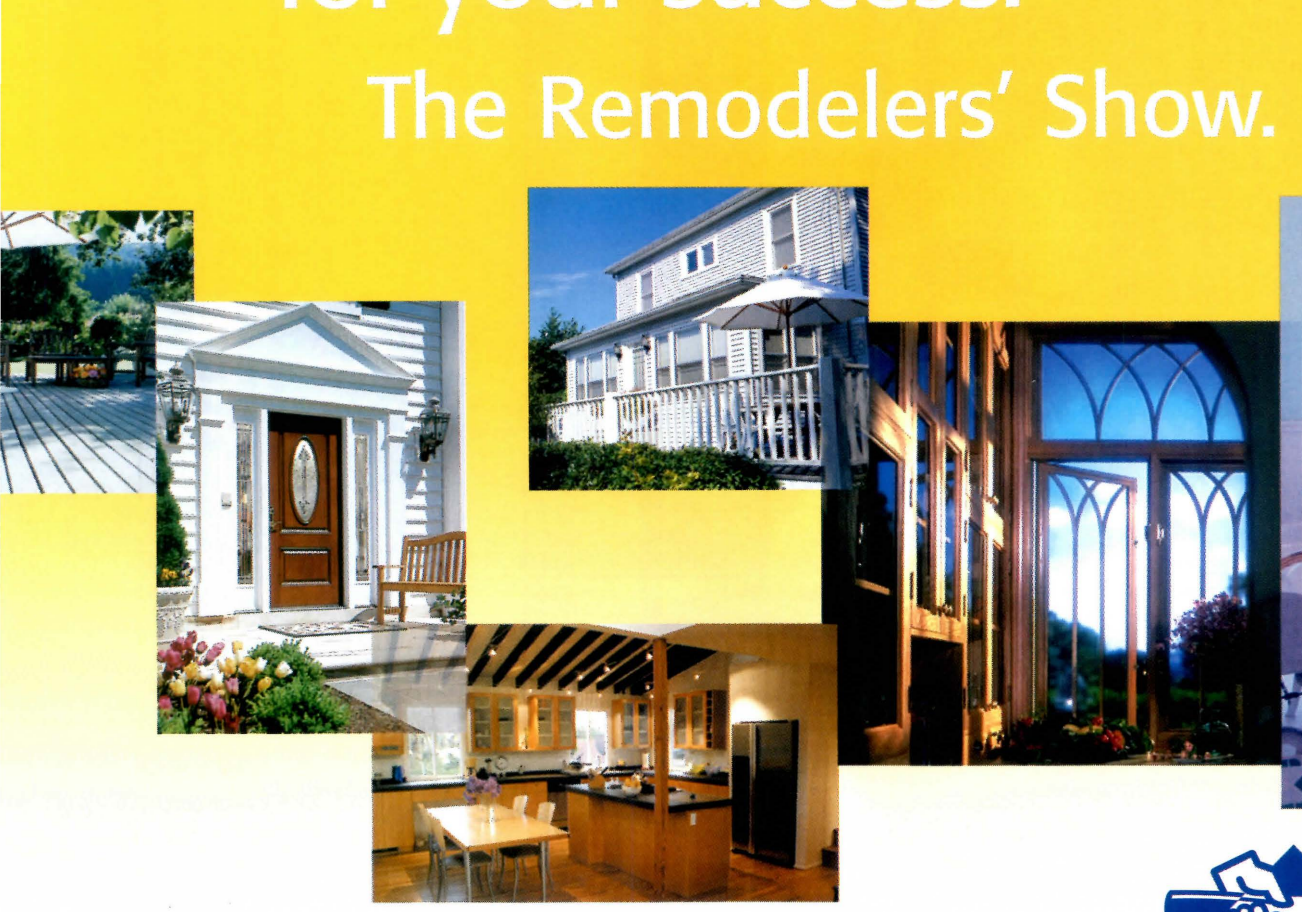

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from the editor

clients' choice

they'll spend on products, but will they pay for your?

by s. claire conroy

In some ways, products are your competition. Home-buyers would rather cut out that superfluous design fee than do without the granite countertops, Viking range, and Bosch dishwasher. After all, they believe they can find a decent home plan through a book, Web site, or "custom" builder. If it's not exactly what they're looking for, the builder can tweak it for them. Or they can go to a design/build firm that swallows the design fee to get the construction job. Ask them to spend $60,000 for full architectural services on a $400,000 house and they're apoplectic. Buyers want the money in the house, they'll say, not someone's pocket.

I feel like I'm arguing with one of those people trapped in Plato's cave—the ones who think the shadows are beautiful enough because they've never seen the outside world. Maybe you can help me bolster my argument and get you that $60,000 fee. Here's what I've told her so far:

Instead of plopping a generic plan down on your property, architects design the house to fit your site, your budget, and your lifestyle. They are problem solvers. They can find efficiencies in design and construction that will make the house less costly to build. They can develop a footprint that gets you the space you want without consuming all of your valuable backyard. They can open up the house to light and breeze, but block the view of the neighbors next door. They will also supervise construction of the house, watch-dogging the builders to make sure they're building it right. Ultimately, they'll work on the house for at least a year and a half. And, frankly, they rarely charge enough for all the work they put into a project. Will that contribution amount to XX dollars at resale? Well, how do you measure nonphysical but vital qualities like pleasing proportions, effortless functionality, and the simple, daily delights of something designed well? You can add that Sub-Zero refrigerator a few years from now, but you can't so easily solve a flawed floor plan after the fact. Good design is a necessity; nice products are the luxury.

I guess it's another battle in a never-ending war: some people will get it; some just won't. If you think of any more ammunition, let me know. I haven't given up the fight. ▫

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: conroy@hanley-wood.com.

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"good residential architecture is about drawing out the essence of someone and translating that into a habitable space."

responding to your editorial ("Clients' Choice"), I also believe the client rarely realizes the effort and thought that goes into the design of a functional yet aesthetically pleasing 'environment.' As an intern getting ready to take the exam in about a year, I have found this out about clients. Most are very knowledgeable and savvy about business and know how to cut a deal.

However, they do not realize that the decision to cut corners in this large investment might cost them the functionality of the space they will likely live in for a good portion of their lives. Put it to your friend like this: If you don't put forth the money upfront, then you will put it forth down the line and the result still will not be as pleasing as if it had been done right in the beginning.

Joe Richmond
Archiplan International, Ltd.
Schaumburg, Ill.

I work for MHI home builders. I like to read *residential architect*, especially your editor's column. I just read "Clients' Choice" and know what you are talking about. Doing several projects of my own for my own clients (outside MHI) I often get involved in those questions: "Why do we need an architect? We can get our builder to do it without an architect." (At MHI, we are very flexible. We do a lot of customizing as a tract home builder, but it's still a tract home.)

One of my most-used arguments is that an architect can save them a lot of square footage. A builder surely can build them a house, but with an architect they usually can get the same usage with less square footage because it's better planned. If you can do the same with less, you save that much in construction cost.

With 300 to 400 square feet saved at $100 to $150 a square foot, you have saved the architectural fee—and you've also saved the future expense of maintaining that extra square footage.

Bjorn O. Sefeldt , AIA
Vice President, Architecture
MHI
Houston

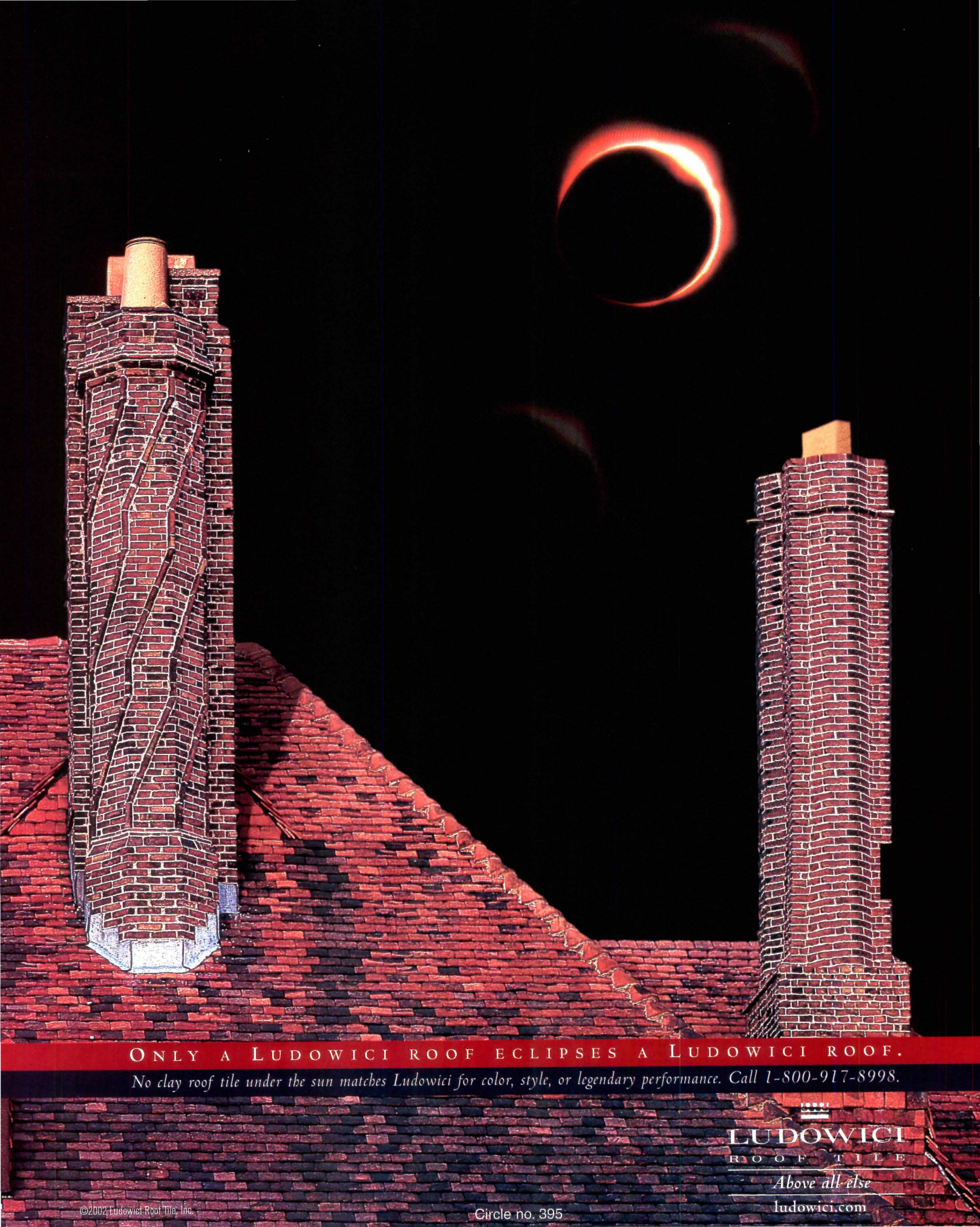
Your editorials from the March and April issues of *residential architect* were two of the best that I have read in a professional publication. Keep up the good work for those of us who still do houses.

Dick Jenkins
Jenkins Architecture
Raleigh, N.C.

What does an individual's choice in art tell about them? If they choose mass-produced art already framed, they may be happy with a mass-produced plan for a house. If items they display are chosen because they speak to the soul, then an architect should do the same with their living space.

Good residential architecture is about drawing out the essence of someone and translating that into a habitable space. Good architecture should help one feel present where they are. It relates back to that person and acknowledges the individual. In much of today's generic environment, most of us feel anonymous.

Jane Blumer, RA
Architectural Workshop, LLC
Englewood, Colo.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home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design

design/build/sell

For many architects, it's not a big leap from designing custom cabinetry for a house to designing furniture for sale. Consequently, many recently have tried their hand at select pieces: dining tables, chairs, and so forth.

Santa Monica, Calif.-based Marmol Radziner + Associates—an architecture firm known for meticulous restoration of Modern masterworks and carefully crafted custom homes—takes the enterprise even further by designing, building, and selling their own furniture collection. "As a design/build firm, it's very much part of our process to create things and then produce them ourselves," says Leo Marmol. "Furniture is something we can personally control from start to finish."

The Sling Chair, handcrafted of redwood and natural canvas, couples a relaxed style with clean forms.

Marmol Radziner Furniture debuted this spring with a set of reproductions from Schindler's Kings Road home, commissioned by the MAK Center for Art and Architecture. "We loved the idea of working with Schindler's powerful designs but also that some of the profits would go to preserve his own house, which we feel is the best residential example in L.A.," Marmol says. Later this year, the firm will launch an original line.

Restoring work by icons such as Schindler, Neutra, and Meier has influenced Marmol Radziner's custom architecture and furniture projects. "I appreciate the efficiency in their designs," says Marmol. "There's a nice environmental aspect and a wonderful respect for materials." His firm explores the aesthetic and functional qualities of steel, walnut, teak, and fine fabrics in

Photos: Benny Chan

The Kings Road collection—constructed of redwood with a choice of 28 fabrics—includes a sofa, chair, ottoman, stool, and child's chair. Prices range from $2,160 to $12,480.

pieces for the dining room, bedroom, living room, and outdoors.

"We're hoping to make physical objects that provide functional use and inspire joy," says Marmol. "We want to speak to people through what we do."—*shelley d. hutchins*

Kevin Appel

OpenOffice architects and designer/artist Kevin Appel integrate architecture with the landscape to ensure visual freedom. Semi-detached pavilions are enclosed by transparent, sandblasted, fritted, tinted, and mirrored glass.

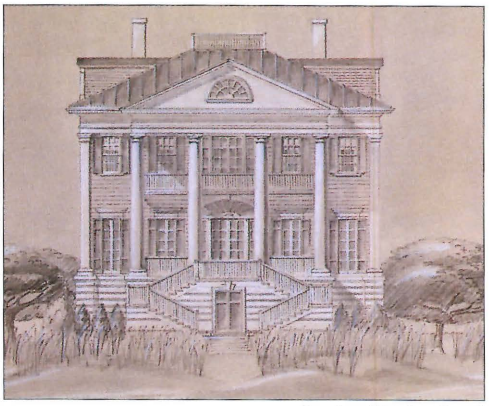
trespassers welcome

What kind of house would you design and build if you didn't need to worry about money, site conditions, and basic physics? That's the question Linda Taalman and Alan Koch of the New York City-based architecture firm OpenOffice and curator Cara Mullio sought to answer, with help from a group of artists. They set out to redefine the aesthetic, psychological, and physical lexicons of the Modern house. The resulting exhibition, which took three years to develop, is called "Trespassing: Houses x Artists" and includes fabrications in many media by Kevin Appel, Barbara Bloom, Jim Isermann, Jessica Stockholder, and others.

"Trespassing," now at the Steven Holl-designed Bellevue Art Museum in Bellevue, Wash., moves in January 2003 to the MAK Center for Art and Architecture, located in R.M. Schindler's Kings Road House in West Hollywood, Calif. The two museums collaborated to present the show, which will continue to travel next year.—*s.d.h.*

stock answer

When Jeff Davis, the owner of an architectural column company based in Wilmington, N.C., bought a lot on nearby Figure Eight Island, he decided to give himself a challenge. He would hire an architect to distill his love of classical proportions into a beautiful, livable home for himself—on one condition: "I wanted to show people that you can use stock products and stay true to classical architecture," he says. "We're not using any custom products in this house."



Courtesy Christine Franck

The Palladian-style house will employ Chadsworth's pattern book of prefab columns.

Instead, designer Christine Franck of New York City, local builder Robert Zapple, and Davis have spent many hours researching off-the-shelf building materials. "It's a lot of sifting through elements to find stuff that is well-designed and will stand up to the elements," admits Franck. She says the two areas where she's had the most trouble finding appropriate stock elements are windows and millwork. Presumably columns haven't been as difficult with Davis' company, Chadsworth's 1.800.COLUMNS, close by. Move-in is slated for spring 2003.—*meghan drueding*

calendar

residential architect design awards: call for entries

Hoachlander Davis Photography

entry form and fee deadline:
november 25, 2002
completed entries deadline:
january 7, 2003

Our annual *residential architect* Design Awards program honors outstanding residential architecture in the following categories: custom, renovation, multifamily, affordable, production, kitchens, baths, and design details. A project of the year is selected from the category winners; all winning projects will be published in the May 2003 issue of *residential architect*. Shown: Grand prize in a custom category by Alexandria, Va.-based architect David Jameson. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com or call 202.736.3407 to receive an entry form.

zaha hadid laboratory

the national building museum,
washington, d.c.
through november 17

Courtesy National Building Museum

Known for her unconventional designs, Zaha Hadid's work ranges from commercial and residential buildings to interiors and furniture. This exhibition will feature some of the London-based architect's most recent projects through drawings, paintings, models, and three-dimensional computer images. Call 202.272.2448 or visit www.nbm.org for more information.

Courtesy Architech Gallery of Architectural Art

frank lloyd wright and the prairie school

architech gallery of
architectural art, chicago
october 4–november 30

This exhibit features original drawings and historical prints of Frank Lloyd Wright's work plus some of the designers and architects who followed his lead by embracing horizontal lines and flowing spaces. Works by Louis Sullivan, George Mann Niedecken, Orlando Giannini, and Barry Byrne are included. Shown: Wright's 1900 Hickox House. For gallery hours, call 312.475.1290 or visit www.architechgallery.com.

Courtesy Peter Blum, New York © Thomas F

herzog & de meuron: archaeology of the mind

canadian centre for architecture, montreal
october 23–april 6

An exploration of the visual world that nurtured the designs of Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, winners of the 2001 Pritzker Architecture Prize. Their works include London's Tate Modern museum, Rue de Suisses apartments in Paris, and Dominus Winery in Napa Valley, Calif. Visit www.cca.qc.ca or call 514.939.7026 for museum hours.

acadia 2002

california state polytechnic university, pomona, calif.
october 24–27

The Association for Computer Aided Design in Architecture hosts its annual conference, which will focus on areas where humans come into contact with cyberspace at work, in public, or at home. For conference information, visit www.acadia.org.

the howard gilman archive of visionary architectural drawings

museum of modern art, queens, new york
october 24–january 6

More than 100 drawings representing works by Rem Koolhaas, Zoe Zenghelis, Cedric Price, Arata Isozaki, Ettore Sottsass, and more. Visit www.moma.org or call 212.708.9400 for exhibition details.

the remodelers' show

indiana convention center, indianapolis
october 30–november 2

Join more than 10,000 residential architects, remodelers, and custom builders to view 100,000 square feet of products and attend educational courses and workshops. For registration details, call 800.681.6970 or visit www.remodelersshow.com.

continuing exhibits

Hungarian Ceramics from the Zsolnay Manufactory, 1853-2001, through October 13, Bard Graduate Center, New York City, 212.501.3000; **American Modern, 1925-1940: Design for a New Age**, through November 10, Philbrook Museum of Art, Tulsa, Okla., 918.749.7941.—*shelley d. hutchins*

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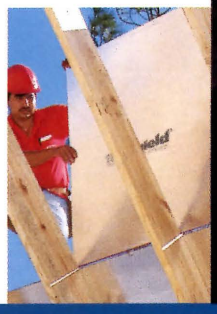

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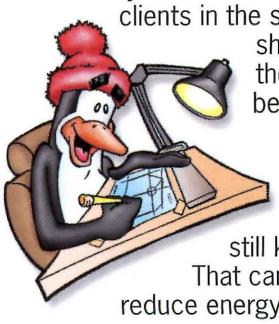

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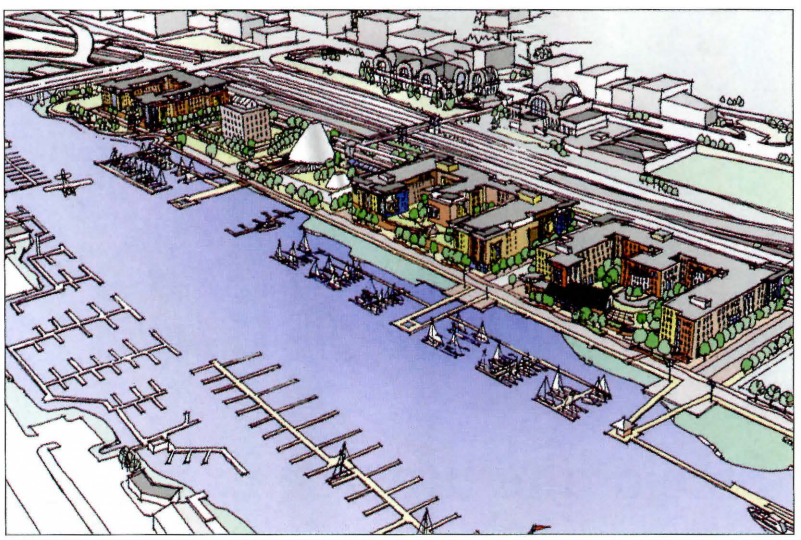
With Thea's Landing, the city of Tacoma, Wash., is gaining a lively urban waterfront—one that bridges the iconic historic district and a working harbor. The concept, by Mithun Partners, Seattle, was selected in a competition. Currently under construction, it stretches 420 feet along the Thea Foss Waterway Superfund site and includes an esplanade, restaurants, shopping, and 236 apartments and condominiums.



Renderings: Courtesy Mithun Partners

Brick buildings along Dock Street will face Tacoma's historic district (above). Corridors lead pedestrians to the waterfront esplanade, where an elevated public plaza on the harbor will provide mountain and water views.

Because the site is cut off from the city by railroad tracks and an elevated highway, Mithun's challenge was to create vibrant buildings that would draw people back and forth over a new glass bridge. "We wanted to provide something uplifting that had a lot of vitality and spirit," says design principal Stephen Cox, AIA. "We had to have exciting retail spaces and residential units to get people to live there."

Tall brick structures along Dock Street echo the historic district across the highway and create a wall of privacy for the people living behind it. Five-story "lanterns" light the entrance to corridors that usher pedestrians down to the waterfront esplanade. Clad in brightly colored metal and glass, they glow from top to bottom and introduce lighter, more fragmented forms on the waterfront.

The firm designed for a mix of street-level stores with five floors of living space above. The top floor houses 45 condo units, many of them lofts with spectacular views of the waterway and Mt. Rainier in the distance. The sights will be just as compelling on the public waterfront, where colorful buildings with strong white and metallic accents break down to pedestrian scale. "The buildings will look complete once the marina is complete," says Cox, "with its aluminum masts, white sails, and flags flying." Construction began in March 2001, and occupancy is slated for October.—*cheryl weber*

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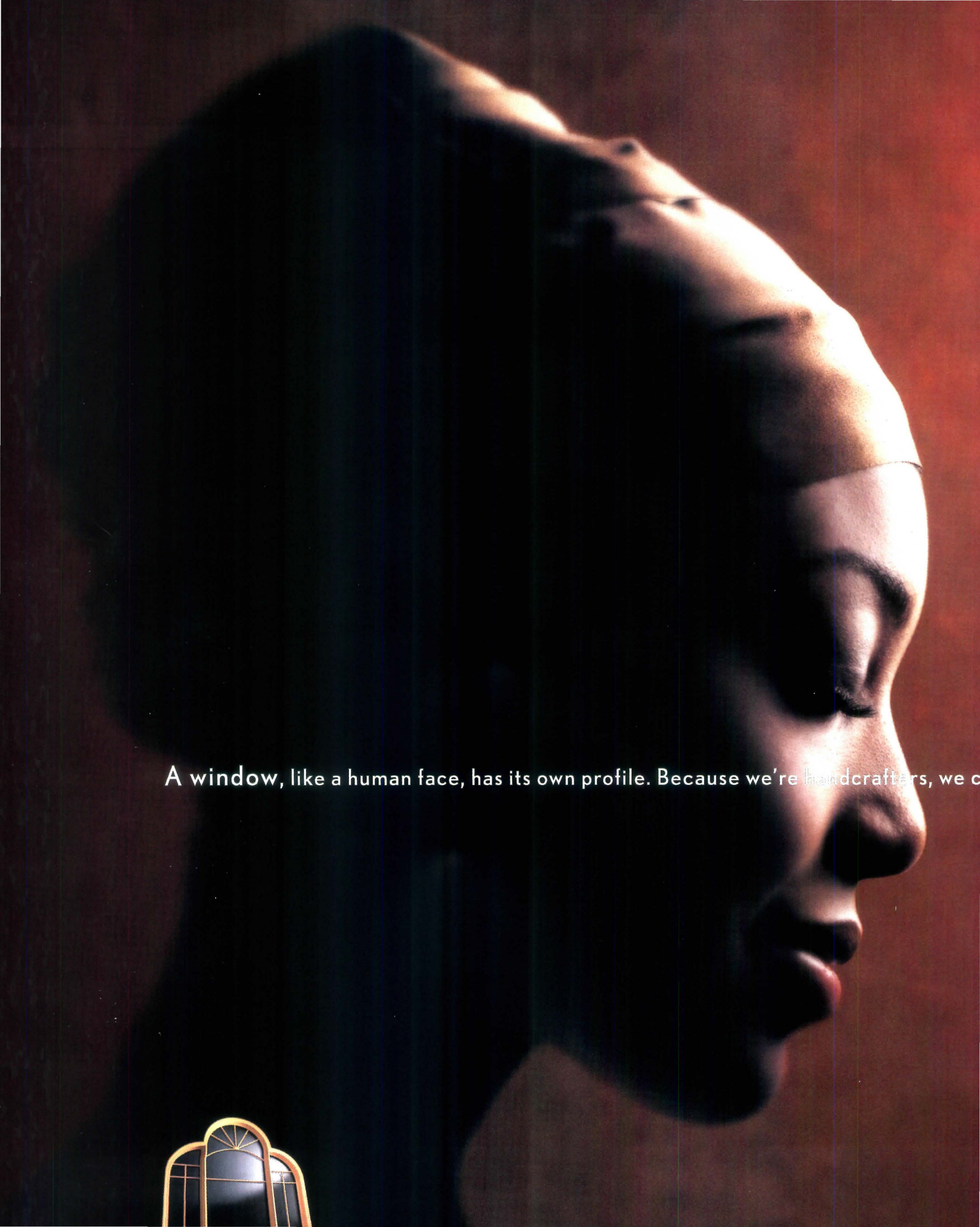
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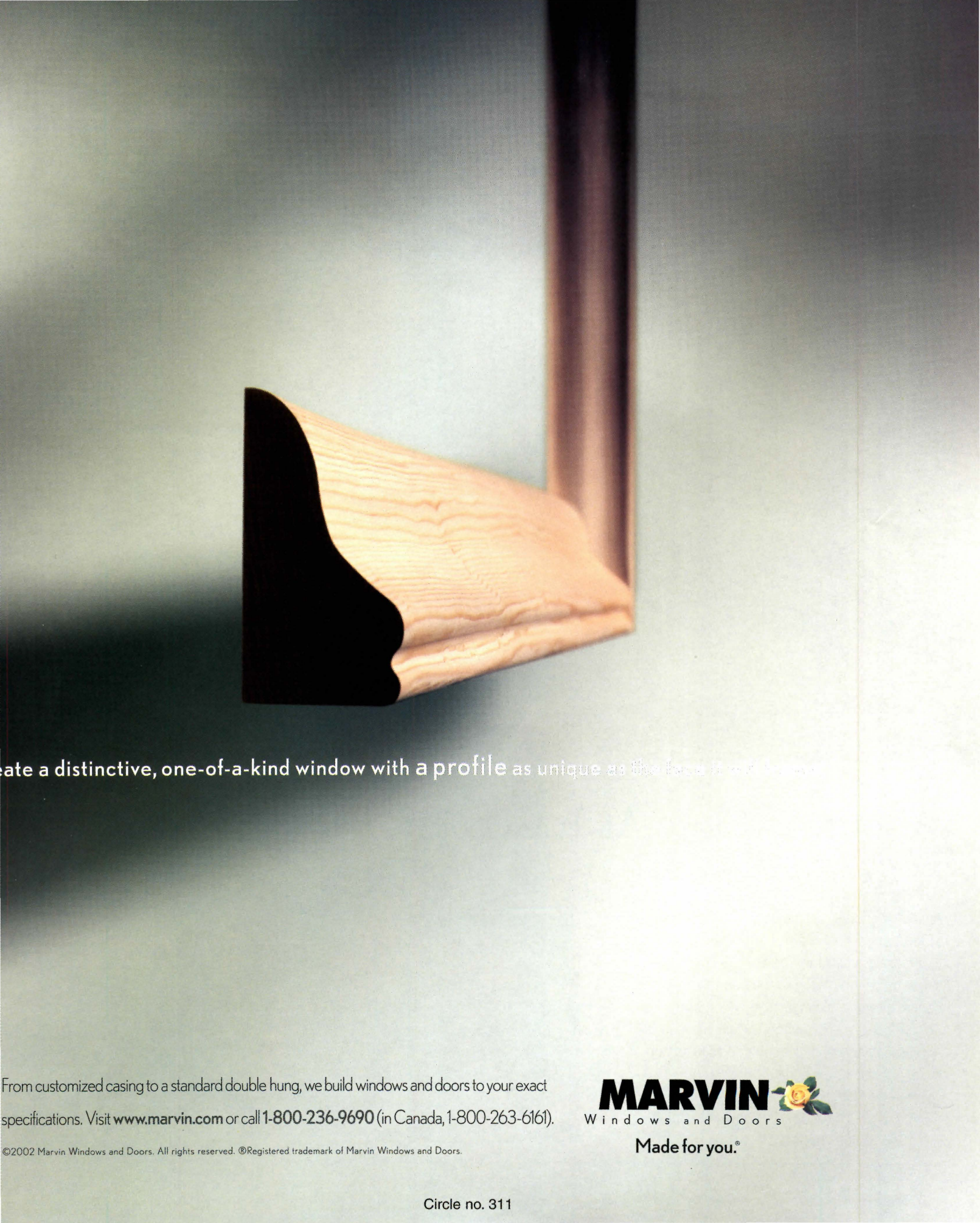

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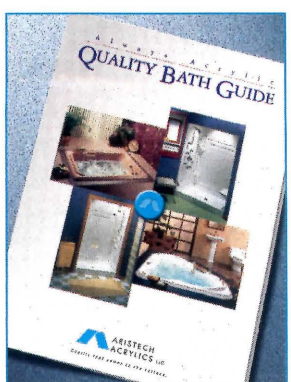

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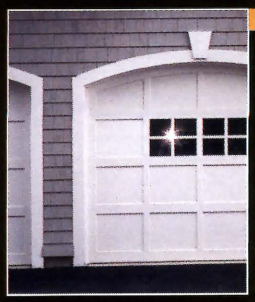

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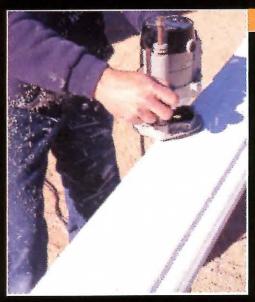

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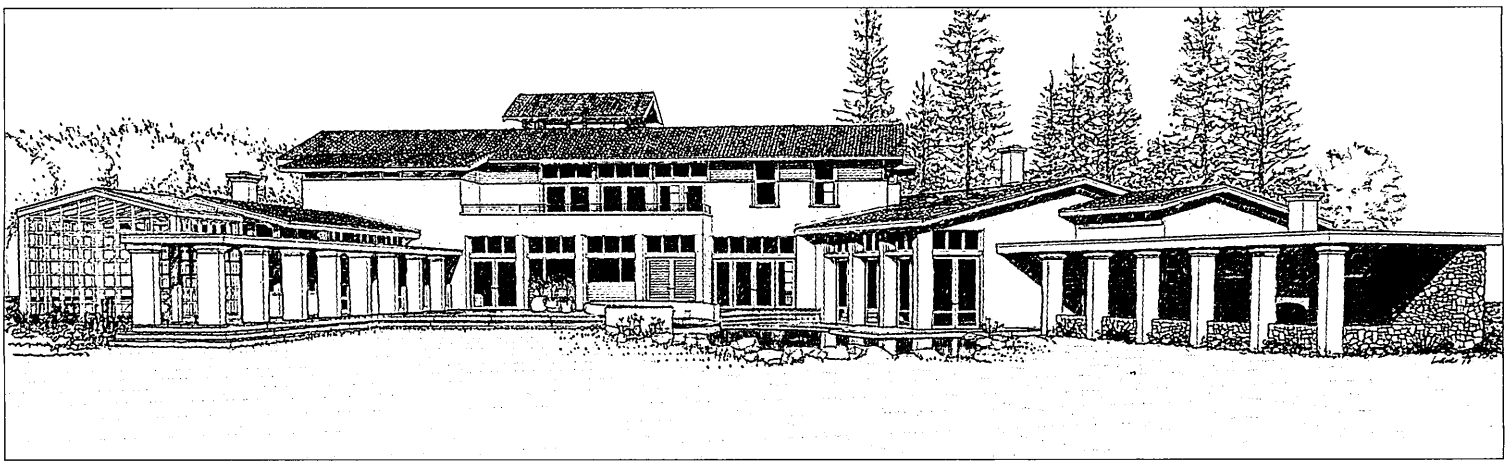

Courtesy Lane Williams Architects

Houses in Lane Williams's Seattle market are getting bigger and bigger. He finished this 10,000-square-foot home in May.

by lane williams, aia

When my career began in 1984, I thought a big house was anything over 3,000 square feet. Ten years passed before I received a commission approaching 5,000 square feet. In recent years, there's been a steady stream of 5,000-square-foot-plus home designs for Seattle architects like me, and we've seen a surprising number of 10,000-square-foot-and-up mega-homes. The current bearish stock market, rising energy costs, and shrinking family size would all seem to counter this trend. But there have always been big houses, and there probably always will be.

I made a few missteps in that first big house. My eagerness to win the commission overcame my reservations about the client's tendencies toward old-world ostentation (as a Modernist, I prefer contemporary ostentation). As work on the project progressed, I was alternately compelled by their generous budget and constrained by their direction to imitate images borrowed from "Street of Dreams" designs. The results were less than inspired.

Whatever a project's size, architects are often at odds with their clients' design requests. But large houses can increase the frequency and pressure of these conflicts. Considering the generous construction budget and commensurately large fee that a big house entails, saying no to clients' demands can seem like an act of treason. Even Seattle's top architects have lost control to newly rich millionaires anxious to fulfill their quest for the house that satisfies their every (perceived) need. Having designed several large homes now, I've gained confidence in my ability to guide clients successfully through the process.

new deal

Large homes present design challenges that we may never encounter elsewhere. Wealthy clients tend to have lengthy programs and a long list of specific and not necessarily practical features. How do you maintain design control when the client can demand—and write a check for—any feature they choose? For my firm, rising to the challenge has required implementing procedures not necessary for smaller homes.

I specialize exclusively in custom home design, and it has long been my habit to be personally involved in every detail. Until a few years ago, my staff was limited to two or three interns whose responsibilities were largely relegated to drafting.

With bigger houses, I learned to organize projects around a project manager who keeps track of all the details from the beginning of the job to the end of construction. State-of-the-art CAD systems with 3-D capabilities have replaced hand drafting. We frequently include interior designers and landscape architects as part of the design team. I've modified my role to be less hands-on and more supervisory, with more of my time committed to client communications. I write more

continued on page 34

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checklists, send more e-mail, double-check more plans, and review more change orders than ever before. To ensure I have time to design, I don't draft—something I used to enjoy.

Also, I try to be clear about design principles before signing a contract for our services. Our first meeting with a prospective client includes a thorough review of our past work, with a discussion of our design approach and ideas. If you believe in Modernism and don't wish to indulge in the client's Victorian fantasies, or if you have taken a stand on increased conservation, you may have to draw a line in the sand that could ultimately cost you the commission.

At the very least, architects need to educate clients by helping them understand the ramifications of their design choices. A discussion about why clay tile roofs are less than ideal in an earthquake or a calculation that shows how their home may consume 10 times the energy of a typical residence may help steer the client toward a better compromise.

James Frederick Housel

The author's firm designed this 6,500-square-foot house in Clyde Hill, Wash. All main living spaces exit onto shaded terraces. Interior and exterior materials include brick, concrete, granite, steel, and cedar.

large and in charge

Identifying the full program scope early in the process is critical to maintaining control of the design. Last-minute additions of extra bedrooms, with the commensurate demand that every bedroom have its own bath, can wreak havoc on a carefully conceived plan. A thorough review of storage requirements can uncover desires for wine cellars or walk-in fireproof vaults. We expanded the back of one four-car garage during construction after learning that the owner required a back-up generator capable of powering everything in his 8,000-square-foot home.

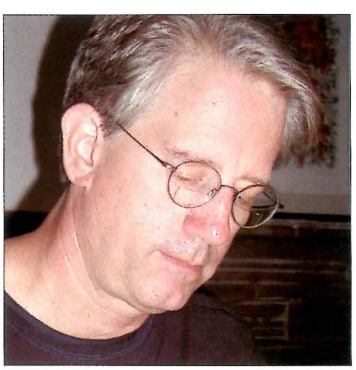
The works of Wright, Neutra, Meier, and others provide excellent lessons in the graceful execution of large houses. As houses grow in program, these architects have demonstrated an understanding of how spaces must be scaled up (or opened up) to avoid the rabbit-warren effect of many large spec homes.

I feel I've won a small victory any time I can persuade a client to eliminate a room from their program. Today's big house often includes a formal living and dining room, family room, giant kitchen with breakfast space, plus media room and den. Throw in a playroom for kids and a sitting room in the master suite, and before long a house for a family of four has enough living space that no one need ever interact with another again.

I've learned to share this concern with clients by discussing how the homes we build affect the way we live and, therefore, the values and behavior of us and our children. Large houses may not always be in the same demand as they are today, but a well-built, livable house never goes out of style. ra

Lane Williams, AIA, is the principal of Lane Williams Architects in Seattle.

"the homes we build affect the way we live and, therefore, the values and behavior of us and our children."



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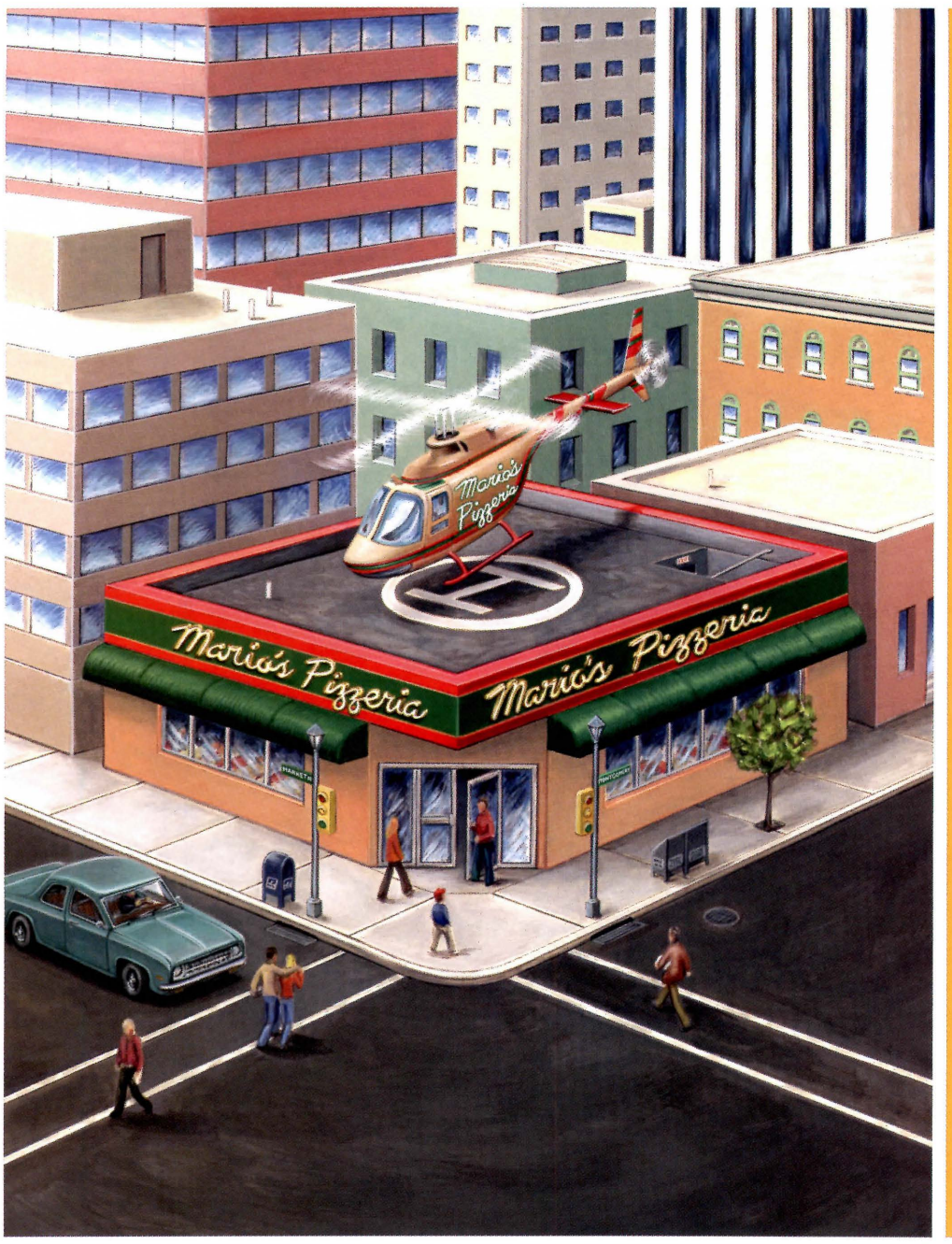

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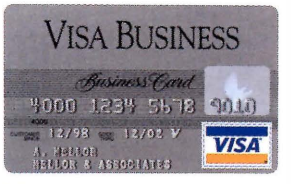

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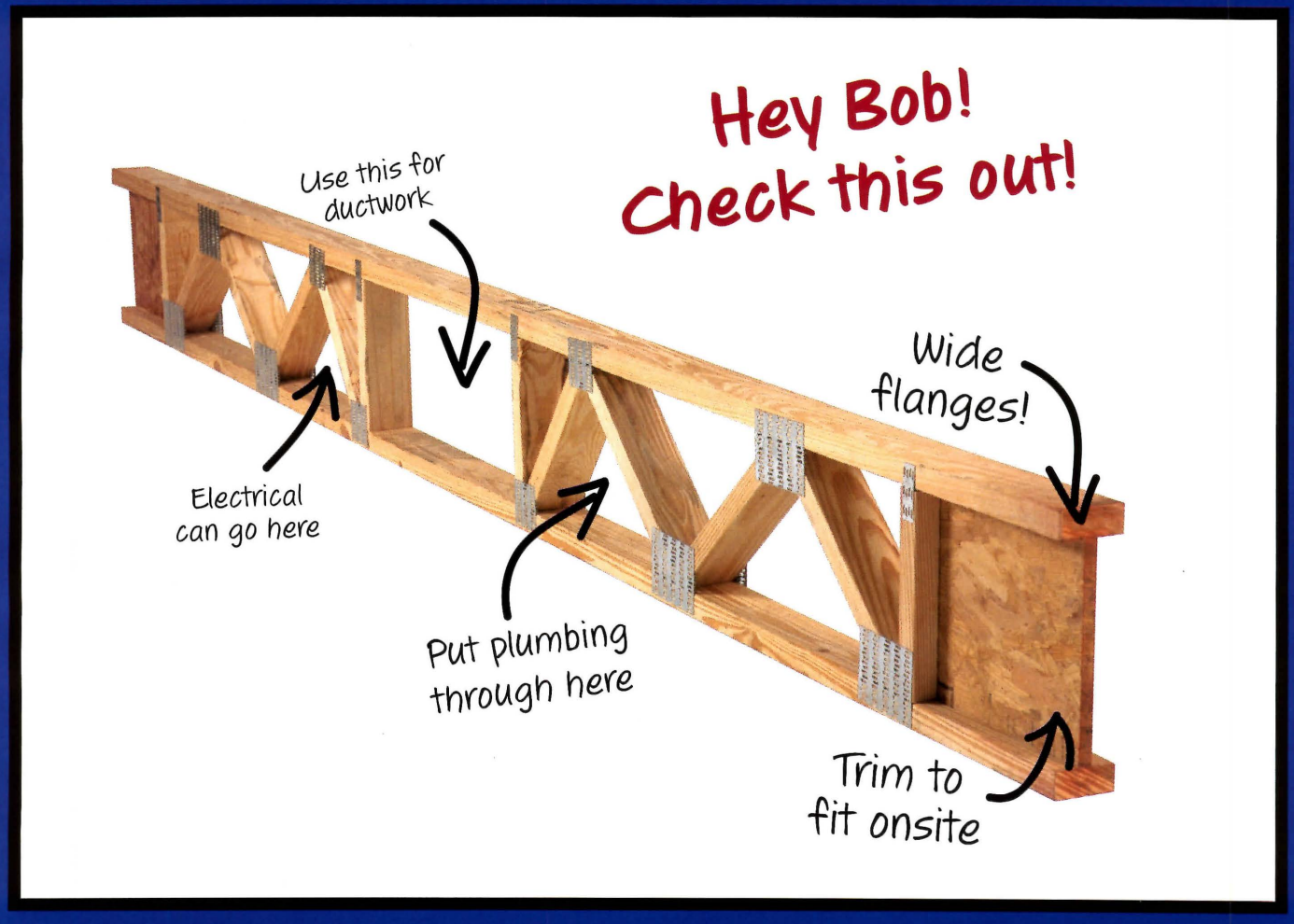

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the soul of propriety

staying ethical requires taking both your head and heart to work.

by cheryl weber

Gordon Studer

You are designing a 2,500-square-foot house for a couple who has $300,000 to spend. After doing preliminary drawings, you get an estimate from three different contractors, all of whose bids fall within the stated budget. Encouraged, over the course of the next six months you refine the design and finish up the drawings. But when the project is submitted for a final bid, the lowest bid—from one of the original contractors—comes in at $450,000. The shocked clients don't think they should be expected to pay additional fees for a redesign, when you ran roughshod over their budget. But because you acted on the best available information, you aren't inclined to do additional design work out-of-pocket, either. What now?

A disgruntled client recently brought this case before the AIA National Ethics Council. The council is a volunteer group of seven architects who get to play God by settling ethical disputes, usually scenarios that fall outside of a legal framework. In this case, the architect was absolved from responsibility for the final bid. At the hearing, the contractor said the high bid reflected a market that had turned hot virtually overnight. A large software company had moved into the area, and the influx of employees was generating so much construction work that contractors and trades people could almost name their price.

"The architect had gone above and beyond the contract to help the owner by getting preliminary costs at schematics," says Phil Gerou, FAIA, chair of the Ethics Council and founder of Gerou and Associates, a design/build firm in Evergreen, Colo. "The owners had to deal with the new reality that the house couldn't be built for $300,000 anymore."

shades of gray

What gets architects into trouble? Of the 15 to 20 cases that cross the desk of the Ethics Council every year, many of them are what might be called matters of professional etiquette, involving clients, contractors, and fellow professionals. They run the gamut from disputes between architects and former employers over credit and ownership issues to subcontractors accusing architects of showing partiality to their competitors (see sidebar, page 40).

Mismanaged clients, careless design, and bungled relationships are not irrelevant to a professional code of ethics, and they contribute directly to the public's opinion of the profession. But they are relatively trivial in the scheme of things. The broader ethical issues the code addresses, such as those of public health, safety, and welfare, rarely crop up in two-party disputes.

"In the discussion of ethics, you have to make a distinction between the ethical floor below which we should not drop, and an architect's role in society," says David Hinson, AIA, a professor of architecture at Auburn University in Auburn, Ala. "And there is a whole set of business-related challenges relative to residential practice that have ethical dimensions."

Architects seeking to run a disciplined practice see various shades of gray. When they were starting their firm, and in subsequent economic downturns, San Diego architects Taal Safdie and Ricardo Rabines struggled with whether or not to take on projects they

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didn't believe in. Whether it's working for a developer who's overreaching on density or a client who insists on using faux materials in an addition to a 1940s house, "those are the moments when you have to make some very deep ethical decisions about your practice," says Taal Safdie. "You can rationalize that another architect will do it if you don't. But at some point you have to make a stand because whatever you build represents the clientele you're going to get in the future."

Anne Fougeron, AIA, Fougeron Architects, San Francisco, laments being forced to engage in a dubious political process to get projects approved by bureaucracies, now the norm in San Francisco. "It's not just about the project's merit and abiding by the rules and regulations," she says. "People are wary about things getting built next to them. We wind up having to hire facilitators and expeditors at different levels. You're paying people a lot of money to get that work done, and the kind of relationships they have with the people in the building departments is somewhat questionable. The approval may be based on the fact that they know someone or on money being traded. More and more power is being given to individuals."

For architects who work

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truth or consequences

Failure to give proper credit for architectural work is the most common code violation filed before the AIA National Ethics Council in Washington, D.C., according to AIA staff attorney Vickie Allums. Let's say two partners who shared various design roles in a firm split. One of the ex-partners wants to produce a postcard of previous work to send to prospective clients. What's the protocol for assigning credit?

The architect should state his or her role in each project and designate in a plainly visible way the firm that produced the work, says Phil Gerou, FAIA, chair of the Ethics Council. The scope of the project also determines how credit should be defined. Saying that you were the project architect on a single-family home may be enough, Gerou says, but on a more complex project, your role needs to be explained in more detail, Gerou says.

With all the media formats available today, it's impossible to be specific about where and how large the credits should appear. Gerou recommends talking with the ex-firm about what they feel is appropriate. "Having an open discussion ahead of time will go a long way to averting the problem," he says.

Bernard Cywinski, FAIA, says his firm, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson, hasn't had to protect a claim of ownership. "We've set an example in our everyday practice by acknowledging joint ventures in our marketing," he says. "It builds mutual respect and regard for the idea that authorship should be fairly distributed."—*c.w.*

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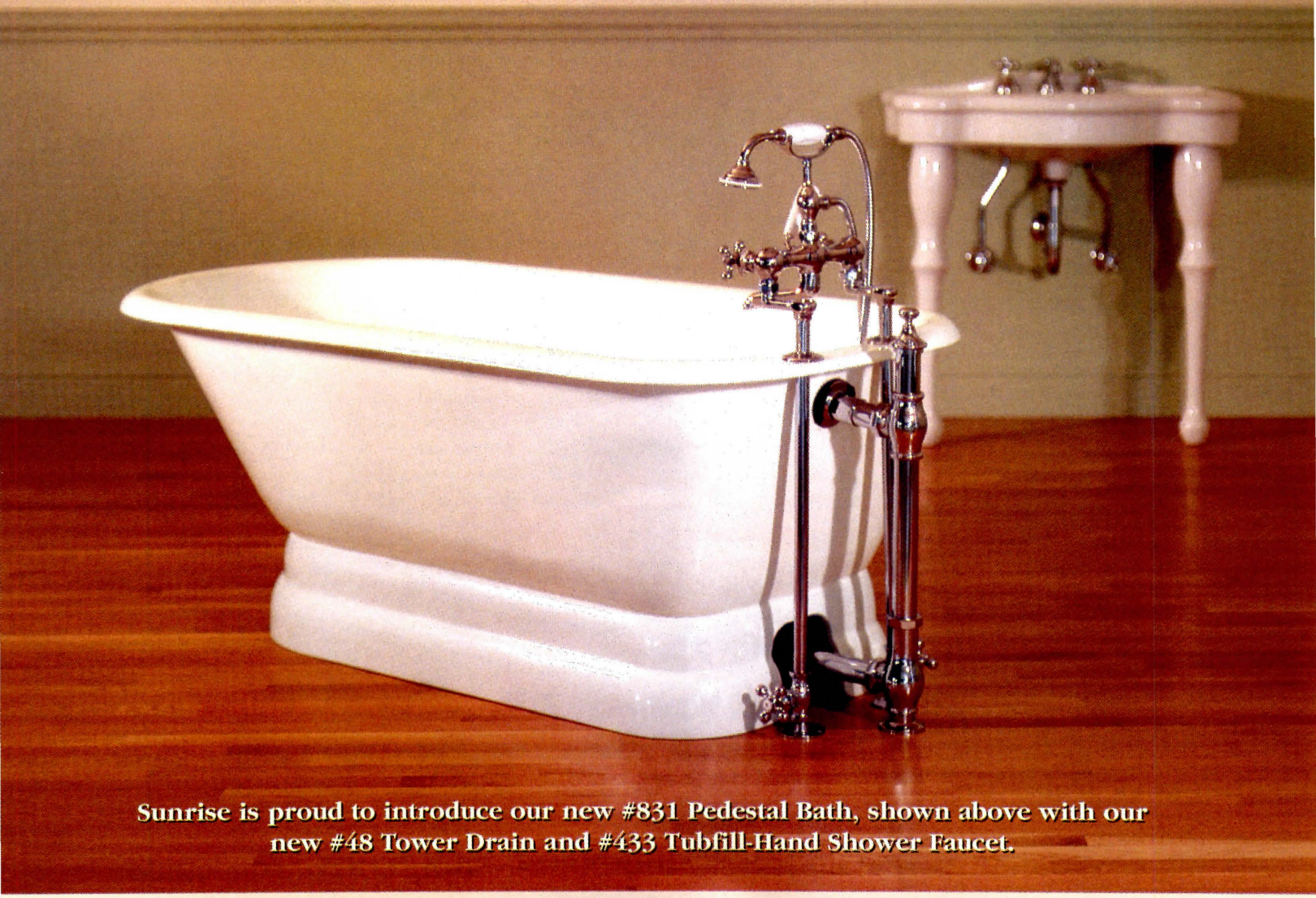

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for developers, the road from design to build is also fraught with ethical minefields. "Just yesterday a client asked us to strip back a design after it was approved by the city so he could save money," says Michael Woodley, AIA, Woodley Architectural Group based in Littleton, Colo. "We're careful to align ourselves with people who will stand up in front of a city council and mean what they say." But the staff turnover at building companies is high, Woodley says, and his architecture projects often outlast the person he's dealing with.

"whatever you build represents the clientele you're going to get in the future."

—taal safdie

the ethics of representation

Such ethical quandaries are as old as civilization. But Gregory Palermo, FAIA, an architecture professor at Iowa State University in Ames, Iowa, points to a modern-day dilemma introduced by digital technology—the ethics of representation. Architects now are able to use computer programs to trick the eye. Before submitting an entry to an awards program, they can play with the shot of a building to delete an unfortunate detail. The ability to manipulate images also carries a risk of misleading clients. "Because you can't mock up a whole building, one of the great challenges in architecture is to give the client some reasonable idea of what it's going to look like," Palermo says. "We know you can play with perspective angles and the sense of scale of a room. One of the ethical challenges is how to make the best use of current technology to get closer to expected results, rather than farther away."

That challenge will be even greater in the future. At Iowa State, Palermo's colleagues are doing architectural simulation on CAV 6, a computer program that includes motion as well as a sense of temperature, touch, and smell. Other labs are working on precise simulations of atmospheric light, Palermo says. These programs raise the possibility of the architect unwittingly misrepresenting a project to the client by using, say, foreshortened angles that make the space seem bigger than it will be when it's built. "It's not so much that people are willingly nefarious," Palermo says. "Three-dimensional and model images are powerful instruments whereby people try to understand unbuilt environments. Just be alert to the technology and its role in representation."

Representation of another kind concerns David Hinson. He believes an

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emerging ethical challenge for architects is the growing use of design/build to deliver projects. When architect and builder services are folded into one business entity, he says, it complicates the traditional expectation that the architect is being an objective advocate for the client.

"When an architect is working independently of the contractor, the architect's standard of care would be to review all the options and advise the client on the best way to solve the problem," Hinson says. "When an architect is part of the builder's team, their counsel is with the builder. What might be in the best interest of the owner might not be in the best interest of profitability for the design/build business."

Adds Hinson: "I think design/build is something the marketplace will demand increasingly, but it's important that we develop a clear set of standards about what clients, contractors, and architects can expect from one another. The first rule is full disclosure. We've created a classic conflict of interest that needs to be explained to clients."

> "i see architecture as fundamentally an ethical set of actions ..."
>
> —gregory palermo, faia

an ethical landscape

Upholding high ethical standards means being a knowledgeable professional on several fronts. It has to do with making equitable and ethical judgments about the expectations of clients, colleagues, and consultants. But beyond the professional process, what is the ethical content of built architecture? asks Palermo. "Rather than thinking about ethics as a profession protecting its integrity, it's the professional possessing integrity with respect to his or her offerings to clients, in a broad network of relationships."

If only top managers at big public companies such as Enron and WorldCom had taken that view. In the history of the architecture profession there have been few, if any, ethical crises like the ones affecting those companies, where massive accounting frauds are spectacular examples of misbehaving. And yet, collectively, architects have the ability and the power to affect the public's well being on that same scale.

"I see architecture as fundamentally an ethical set of actions, so that aesthetics links to very deep-seated, ancient philosophical questions about what it is to live well," Palermo says. "I see an ethical landscape when I see architecture underway. In school, what kinds of

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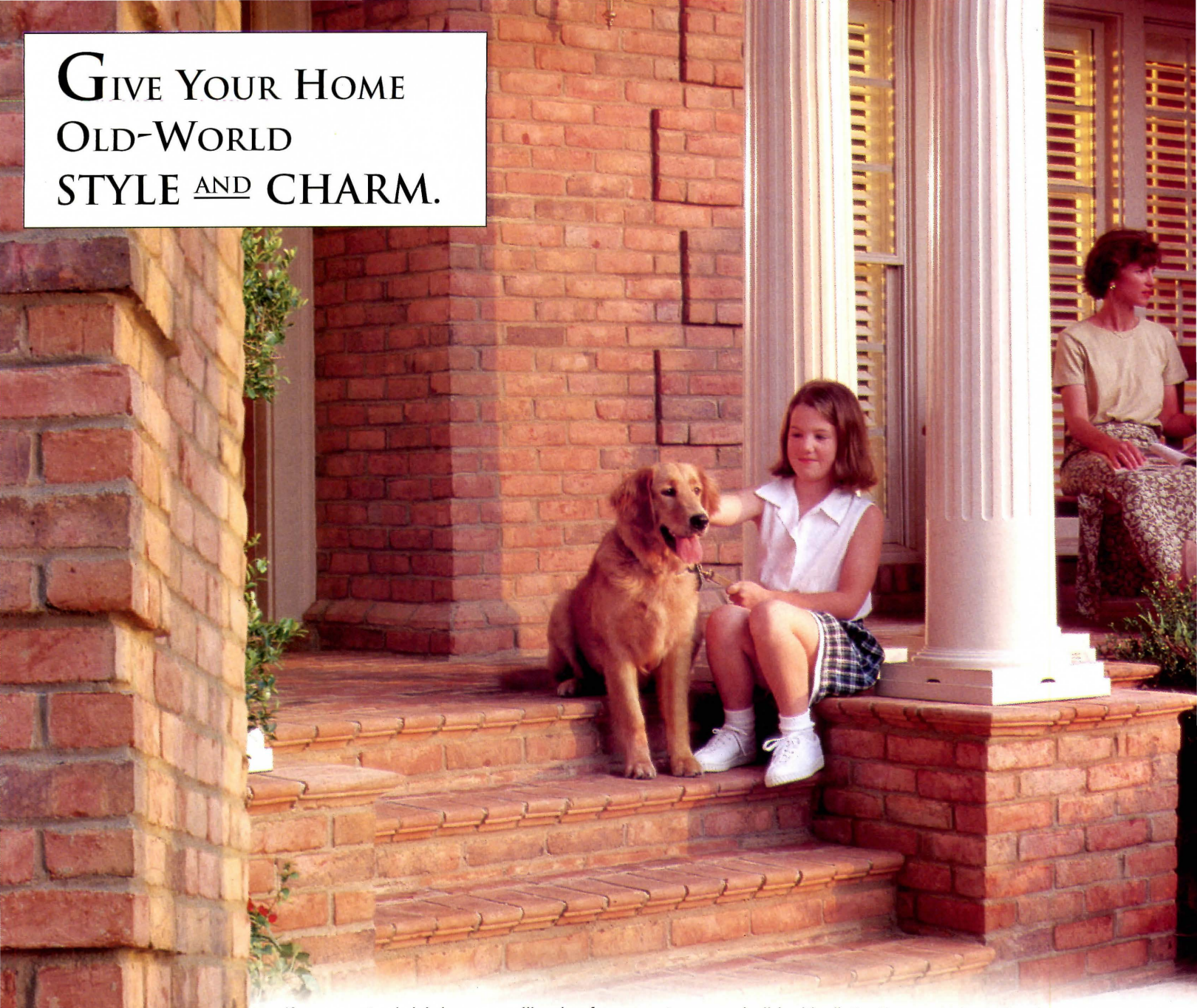

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design projects do you give? What is the content conceptually and socially? That doesn't mean every project has to be based on social housing. But you ought to understand the social and environmental implications of, say, sprawl as opposed to reinvigorating established infrastructures."

Eugene Kremer, FAIA, an architecture professor at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kan., says one of the hallmarks of professions is that they are self-governing. No one, for example, is going to be censured by or expelled from the AIA because they design a glass house that's barely inhabitable in the summertime due to heat gain and lack of ventilation. "Where is someone who will bring an ethics case on behalf of the public?" Kremer asks. "When the Corcoran builds its new Frank Gehry building in Washington, D.C., no one will be able to bring a case saying the neighborhood has been despoiled by this building that is totally out of character and context," he says, tongue in cheek. "Likewise, if it's legal to build a Wal-Mart in my little town of Manhattan, people in the residential neighborhood overlooking this site might still have felt this was a blemish on the face of the community. But I'm quite certain the residents wouldn't have been able to bring an ethics case to the AIA, nor would they have thought to do it. The council would have said, 'It's a matter of judgment.' But that doesn't mean it should be done."

sustainability

In Palermo's mind, the most important obligation an architect has is to do sustainable design—environmentally, economically, socially—even if there is no simple, agreed-upon prescription for doing it. Frank Harmon, FAIA, Raleigh, N.C., identified the same issue last spring in a talk he gave as part of an annual panel on architectural ethics at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City.

"How we build impacts

continued on page 48

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the environment in a dramatic way," Harmon says. "Here in North Carolina, the coastal sounds are dying because of the sediments in storm water runoff from Raleigh, 250 miles upstream." His firm currently is designing a public building that will have zero runoff. Water from the site will collect in ponds; roof water will irrigate gardens. And the parking lot will be composed of gravel combined with an organic material that stabilizes the surface while letting the water run through. In his speech at the cathedral, Harmon talked about a U.S. Fish and Wildlife statement that says buildings use nearly one-half of all the energy we make each year, one-third of the trees we cut down, and one-fourth of the water we use. And waste from the construction and demolition of buildings fills 40 percent of our landfills.

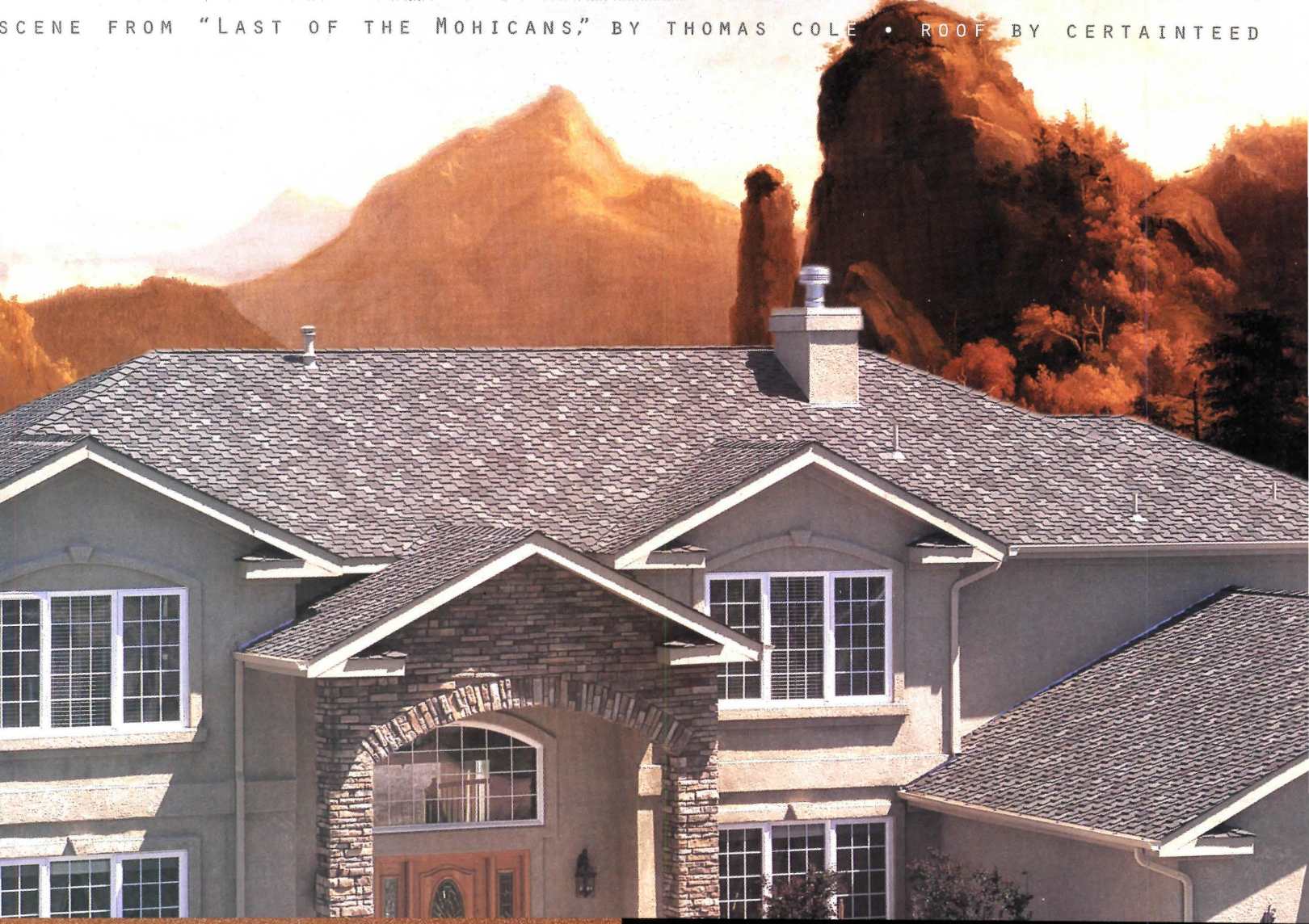
"Through architecture, architects have a unique medium to conserve and protect and improve our environment because of the mere fact that building consumes such a sizable amount of our resources," agrees Bernard Cywinski, FAIA, in the Philadelphia office of Bohlin Cywinski Jackson. "I think the awareness has been growing at a soft pace. It's not the race to the moon, but things that were shouted to the skies on the first Earth Day in the 1970s are now accepted concerns. In general, architects have a much more open-minded audience in their clients about using recycled materials, saving energy, and being sensitive to their neighbors, animal or human."

social studies

For Susan Maxman, FAIA, Susan Maxman & Partners Architects, Philadelphia, the ethical equation includes social sustainability—designing for the greater good of the public versus the greater good of the client. On a recent elementary-school project in a deprived neighborhood, the firm obtained a grant to pay for a green roof, higher ceilings, more glass, and more trees than the school district

continued on page 50

SCENE FROM "LAST OF THE MOHICANS," BY THOMAS COLE • ROOF BY CERTAINTEED



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could provide. "The school is better than it would have been had we not fought for those things," Maxman says. "That's our obligation, to fight hard for sustainable measures." The firm also applies that principle to neighborhoods, designing to benefit the community as well as the client. "You're not destroying the sense of place, not turning your back to the street," she says. "You can't win them all. But you have to try to go as far as you can with your client."

Socially sustainable design must also ask, who are our clients? says Tom Dutton, architect and professor of architecture at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He teaches a class on social ethics that explores the responsibility architects have to people who can't afford their services. Students work on design/build projects at inner-city Cincinnati's Center for Community Engagement in Over the Rhine, a nonprofit housing corporation in a neighborhood where annual median income is $1,000. "We get at the question of who are our clients in neighborhoods that are deteriorating and gentrifying at the same time," Dutton says. "Whose interests do you hold in mind? What kind of future do you see for the city?"

As associate chair for Iowa State's undergraduate program in architecture, Gregory Palermo has his finger on the pulse of the next generation of architects. And the vital signs are encouraging. "There's this sense of architecture being involved in designing and constructing not only places but lives," reads one quote by an incoming student about what she thinks architecture is. "It's the design of life's objectives," reads another.

Says Palermo: "Collectively, the students link their sense of architecture to not only beauty and an inventive, creative process, but also to the idea of quality of life for many different people. That's a pretty good understanding of an ethical foundation." ra

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

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at home *with the* past

allan greenberg makes the familiar fresh again.

by s. claire conroy

America's foremost Classicist doesn't exactly look the part. Allan Greenberg doesn't wear bow ties and vests with dangling watch fobs. There's not a monocle in sight. Au contraire, his attire is distinctly minimalist—a freeform black jacket, collarless dark gray T-shirt, and roomy black slacks. He looks like he could break into a mime act at any moment, or spout philosophy over a carafe of Côte du Rhône at a French café. The outfit is a big clue to Greenberg's sensibility. At 64 years old, the South African-born architect was raised on Modernism and even has loved and practiced it for a time. But he has come to embrace Classicism for a wealth of reasons, most of which have nothing to do with fashion or style.

For Greenberg, Classicism is simply the richest, most articulate architectural language available today. It is architecture's Esperanto, able to communicate among a great

Allan Greenberg's first big house commission, "Farmhouse in Connecticut," drew inspiration from George Washington's Mt. Vernon. His design for a garden bench evokes Edwin Lutyens, one of his favorite architects.

Photos: Mark Robert Halper (left); © Peter Mauss/Esto

at home *with the* past

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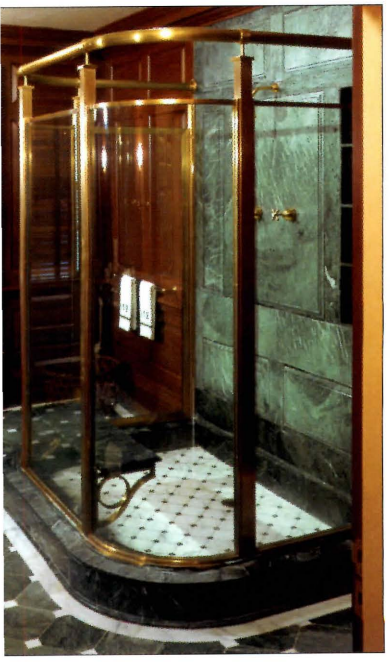

As with Mt. Vernon, open hyphens connect two dependencies to the Farmhouse in Connecticut's main building. Timeless materials distinguish the home's bathrooms (left). Befitting a country dwelling, the Farmhouse's entry hall (opposite) is richly but somewhat less formally detailed than Greenberg's other houses. Painted-wood moldings and simply-turned stair rails and posts contribute an understated elegance.

many cultures and across a great number of stylistic periods. "The problem with Modern buildings is they don't fit their environment," he says. They don't "talk" to the buildings around them; their solipsism makes them bad neighbors, bad stewards of the sites they occupy.

Greenberg has seen the worst Bauhaus had to offer. Johannesburg, where he grew up and went to school, had all the architectural charm of Houston, he quips. The city has had great cycles of "building up and taking down," and the binges and purges have obliterated the variety and character it once had.

He studied architecture at the University of Witwatersrand, where the curriculum at the time was divided into two years of training in Classical architecture and two years in Modernism. His education was rigorous in the European way—many hours of learning by rote to draw every proportion and detail of the buildings he studied. He became intimately acquainted with the strengths and weaknesses of the world's "great buildings." And committing so many structures to memory provided him with a tremendous database from which to draw for his own work.

It was at Witwatersrand that he learned to love Corbu. Here was a Modernist Greenberg could respect and admire, one whose forward-thinking architecture considered carefully what came before it. "More important than style is quality," Greenberg explains. "Le Corbusier understood all the architecture of the past. He took the new and fit it in. It's very hard to do, and he did it very well."

So taken was he with Le Corbusier's work, he set out to apprentice with him after architecture school. Unfortunately, only an unpaid position was available and Greenberg couldn't afford to take it. Instead, he went to work for architects Jorn Utzon in Denmark, where he labored on the Sydney Opera House, and Viljo Revell in Finland. In Scandinavia, he watched the same process that so horrified him in South Africa—old buildings coming down, new undistinguished buildings going up. "I saw the sophistication of Scandinavia being compromised," he says.

Determined not to go back to South Africa, whose political situation in 1961 he found "reprehensible," Greenberg emigrated to the United States. He sought and secured in 1965 a Master's Degree in Architecture at Yale University on scholarship. He trained with Robert A.M. Stern, among other luminaries. At Yale he also began to teach and to research, write, and publish scholarly essays, monographs, and the like on architecture and architects. "As an architect, I'm compelled to study all of architecture," he says. "It's so hard to master; you have to love it. There's so much to learn—mathematics is important, epidemiology, law, sociology—I see it all through the prism of architecture."

the great divide

South Africa and Scandinavia weren't the only cultures erasing their past. After graduating from Yale, Greenberg spent two years in

at home *with the* past

Photos: Tim Buchman

the City of New Haven's Redevelopment Agency, watching the same wave of destruction slapping down old buildings indiscriminately. What took their place was not the masterwork of Mies Van der Rohe, but the "banal commercial buildings" of lesser emulators and admirers. And was there, perhaps, something a little naive in America's embrace of Modernism on its own shores?

"There's this fixation on European architecture. But the social situation is so different over there," Greenberg says. "Not long ago they had Hitler. Europe's take on the past is very different. People here believe Modernism is evolution. But Europe's Modernism is after 1950. The world is very jealous of the way we could look at the past. It is a great divide."

Europe's espousal of Modernism was as much a move away from something as a reaching for something. Classical architecture bore the taint of Adolph Hitler and Albert Speer, exploiters of its evocative power. It became the architecture of domination, fear, nationalism run amok. Coming home to Bauhaus, which Hitler had shut down, must have seemed an affirming act. Modernism promised a new beginning, a new order. It was an International style that would reunite instead of divide (it was chosen for the United Nations building in New York). What a relief to leave the past behind.

Plus, there were just so many interesting things to do with reinforced concrete, steel, and glass. With new technology comes the desire to explore its possibilities. Walter Gropius and Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe had just begun to do so before their school, The Bauhaus, was closed. They came to the United States instead and found a welcoming audience among American architects. By the '60s, Modernism had seized the architecture schools; it was even beginning to do so in South Africa as Greenberg was finishing his studies there. The students who followed him at the University of Witwatersrand no longer had two years immersion in architectural history.

Although he loved Le Corbusier, Greenberg also liked Edward Lutyens. And as he witnessed more and more charming old buildings falling to the wrecking ball, he started to study Lutyens more closely. (In 1969 he published a paper through the Yale Press on the architect's houses.) Then he began to look around at the houses in Connecticut's countryside. "There was much Colonial Revival influence in Connecticut. Wonderful clapboard buildings, salt boxes. I loved the ad hoc lean-tos," he recalls. "It was such a soft, gentle kind of architecture."

A two-story domed ballroom enlivens the garden facade of Huckleberry house (top), a project Greenberg designed initially in the early '80s and added to in 1990. A head-on view of the front elevation (above) shows its broad symmetry; the flanking loggia and sunroom balance each other with a yin-yang openness and closure.

"classical architecture has remained viable … because it is not a style; it is a comprehensive language of architectural form."

—allan greenberg

at home *with the* past

Beechwoods house looks to Palladio and Mt. Vernon for stylistic antecedents. Greenberg greatly admires architecture that roots itself deeply in the landscape. The circular entry spins up to a flattened dome, topped by a lantern (opposite).

Photos: Tim Buchman

And so goes Greenberg's evolution toward a more humanistic architectural language. He wasn't interested in building machines for living that dictate how they shall be used and occupied. Instead he wanted to build human-centered structures that serve us and emerge from our beliefs and needs. He was concerned that the wholesale dismissal of Classicism meant the baby was tossed out with the bathwater. There is, he believes, no more democratic architecture and none that relates better to the human body, mind, and soul. After all, the column, with its capital, shaft, and base, is designed after the human figure.

"Classical architecture has remained viable—and classical buildings endure for centuries—because it is not a style; it is a comprehensive language of architectural form with a grammar and vocabulary to articulate form and meaning," he writes in the introduction to his monograph, published by Academy Group Ltd.

"That its birth coincided with the birth of the ideal of democratic government in Athens nearly 3,000 years ago is no accident; there is a fundamental, consanguine relationship between the ideals of classical architecture and democracy. … And while governments may use any architecture for noble or ignoble purposes, I maintain that classical architecture is still the most potent, the most appropriate, and the most noble language to express the relationship of the individual to the community in a republican democratic society."

greenberg variations

Greenberg's work as architectural consultant to Connecticut's chief justice from 1967 to 1979 deepened his knowledge and fervor for Classical architecture in the public sector. And it lead him to study not only America's early institutional buildings, but its early houses as well. Ultimately, it guided him to Thomas Jefferson and George Washington. "I'm an immigrant here, and I have a real passion and love for this country," he says. "I became fascinated with your

"i dream of houses so knitted together with gardens they're impossible to photograph."

—allan greenberg

at home *with the* past

An Atlantic coast residence shows the softer side of Greenberg's Traditionalism. Interiors are even more casual and welcoming.

Photos: Tim Buchman

"i'm an immigrant here, and i have a real passion and love for this country."

—allan greenberg

history; so many founding fathers were interested in architecture."

Greenberg opened his own firm in 1972, designing court houses and, eventually, adding residential work to the mix. His first house job was an addition to a 17th century house in Connecticut. He added a family room and kitchen, and he raised half of the attic for a studio.

Next came a 20,000-square-foot, new-from-the-ground-up house in Connecticut. Called the "Farmhouse in Connecticut," it isn't nearly as humble as it sounds. The first of Greenberg's variations on a theme—in this case, George Washington's Mount Vernon—it launched his career as a master designer of large residential houses and their accompanying outbuildings.

The Connecticut "farm" is a horse farm; and the house, by most people's standards, is quite grand. Similarly, Mt. Vernon, notwithstanding its illustrious pedigree, was a farmhouse, and George Washington was a farmer. Like Mt. Vernon, Greenberg clad the exterior of the Connecticut house in wood, hewn and painted to look like stone. Washington may have done so to save money while still making his house appear grand; Greenberg uses the trick to make the grand house seem less formal.

Many other similarities exist between the houses, and even more were planned but not executed. A la Mt. Vernon, Greenberg's house creates an entry court with the main building and two dependencies connected by open hyphens. And his rear elevation also has an open, columned porch—although no majestic view of the Potomac River. But an early plan for a lantern was snuffed. And, most interestingly, it appears Greenberg fixed the asymmetries that abound in Washington's version. (It's so difficult for an architect not to straighten everything out.) Later, as he researched Washington and Mt. Vernon for his book, *George Washington, Architect* (published in 1999 by Andreas Papadakis Publisher, an imprint of New Architecture Group Ltd.) he began to view those asymmetries as purposeful and cunning. It was, he thinks, Washington's attempt to make his big house seem less formal and intimidating.

CAD is in the details

Although Greenberg designed another riff on Mt. Vernon in 1989 (and in this case, he got to cap it with the lantern), he insists he has no desire to copy what's come before him. That is not what his practice of Classicism is all about. "I like to go back to the past, but I don't want to replicate the past." As he told writer Arthur Lubow for an article in *Departures* magazine,

The rear elevation of Conyers Farm uses durable, natural materials to set a solid tone: New York fieldstone, limestone, mahogany siding, cedar shingles, and slate roof tiles should stand the test of time. The entry hall (opposite, top) finds a similar grace in substance.

Designed to capture natural light at sunrise and sunset during Finland's winter solstice, this Helsinki residence (also pictured, opposite) takes its cues from the area's stylistic traditions.

at home *with the* past

Photos: Courtesy Allan Greenberg Architects

"The goal is to stand on the shoulders of all the architects of the past and see further."

Where Greenberg is solidly grounded in the present—and perhaps even perched on the cutting edge—is in the means he uses to design and build his wonderfully detailed creations. He is all about CAD. And drywall. And steel framing. He sees no reason at all to replicate the ways in which Classical details were once drawn and executed: "Drywall is a good material. And three coats of plaster on it is a great finish—or double drywall with a coat of finish. It's very expensive but very nice." He's especially fond of steel framing because it protects his precious details. "It allows the roof, windows, and walls to move independently of each other, so you won't get cracks," he explains. "You can recoup the extra cost of it because you can use the techniques of commercial construction to build it, which is much faster."

At 10,000, 15,000, and 20,000 square feet, his houses are not unlike commercial or institutional projects in their scope and complexity. Particularly challenging is coordinating all the team members, many of them as well-known and established as he. "An architect's job is to design the process so everyone can be heard—to create a milieu where everyone can come and be respected and heard," he says. He works intimately with interior designers and landscape architects to pull the whole vision together. Like George Washington, he believes the house and its landscape are inseparably important. "I dream of houses with gardens so knitted together they're impossible to photograph," he says. "Like the marriage of house and garden in turn-of-the-century English houses." Because of the caliber of his clients, Greenberg is uniquely poised to accomplish his goal.

His latest and possibly highest profile project to date offers such an opportunity. It's another "farm"—Cantitoe Farm, Martha Stewart's new compound on 153 acres in Bedford, N.Y. "She called me last August, and I started a week later," he says. "She's a very busy person, but very decisive. She sits down and focuses. Everything has been designed down to the last detail." The extensive project will encompass the renovation and new construction of several houses, a stable, a greenhouse, and a number of other outbuildings, including henhouses. "It's a really great project. Martha Stewart is a great woman," he says. "She has this vision of a farm as a work of art."

"Every client has a different dream of a house," he adds. "For some, it's standing at the stove and looking into the family room to see their children. Everybody worries about their uniqueness, but everybody has the same components. You have to get the parts that are the same down and then add the unique inflections. If you let the unique inflections drive the project, then you're in trouble. But within the rubric, there are enormous subtle differences."

For Allan Greenberg, working the rules, and the infinite nuances of interpretation within them, is an endlessly fascinating enterprise. ra

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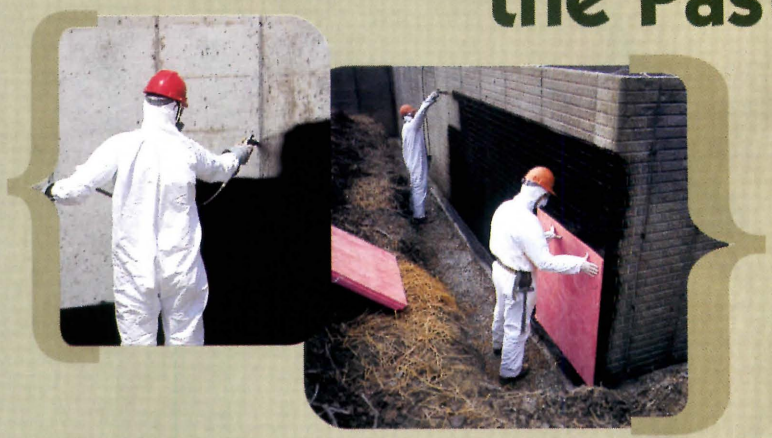

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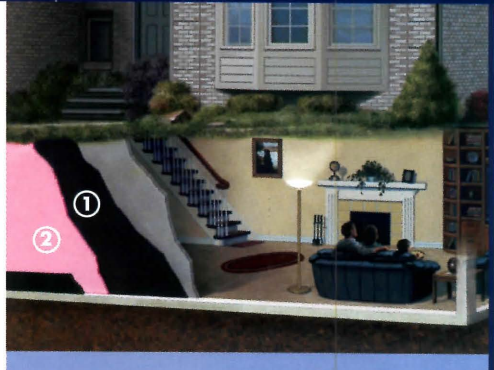

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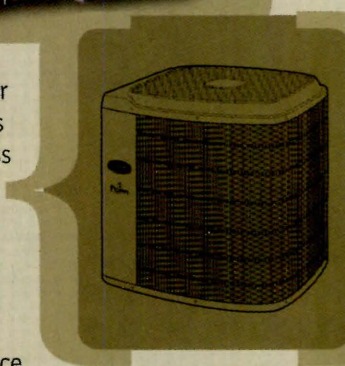

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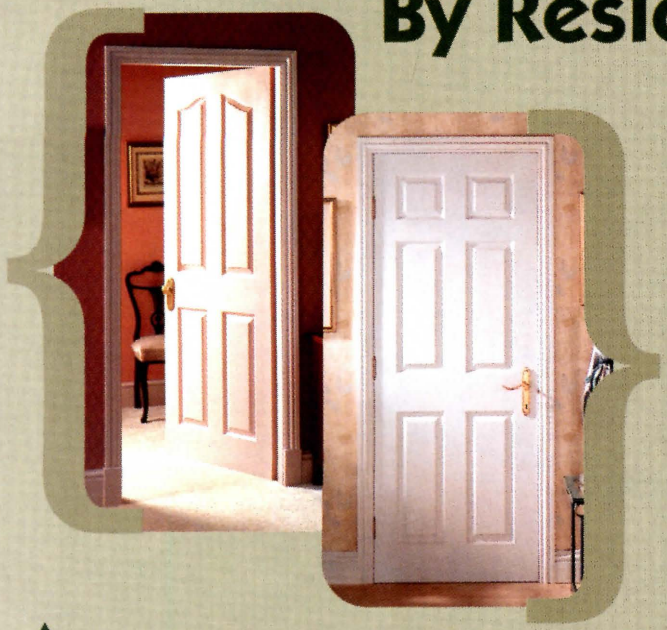
> BRAND AWARENESS

> BRAND USED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

{masonite}

Masonite Interior Doors Ranked #1 By Residential Architects



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as rated by readers of *residential architect*

housewrap

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> BRAND AWARENESS

> BRAND USED IN THE PAST TWO YEARS

> QUALITY

{tyvek}

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case study

the big house clinic

The average American house keeps on growing; it was about 2,300 square feet at last count. But chances are you don't design the average American house. If you design custom homes, your projects are likely much larger and growing bigger year by year. Maybe you're on the verge of your first 10,000-square-foot commission.

Big houses are a fact of American life. Someone will always agree to build them, and if we're lucky, someone talented will agree to design them. And it won't be easy—they're among the most challenging housing types you'll encounter. To help you tame the big behemoths, we've assembled a panel of experts—architects Jeremiah Eck, Mark Simon, Alexander Gorlin, and Buzz Yudell—to share their big house success stories.

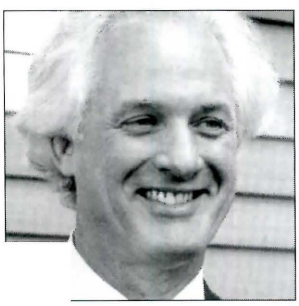
by shelley d. hutchins, meghan drueding, and melissa worden

jeremiah eck

jeremiah eck architects

Big doesn't have to be bad or ugly. From Biltmore to Buckingham, grand palaces of the past have proven that heft can be handsome. According to Boston-based architect, Jeremiah Eck, FAIA, the problem with most big houses today is not size, but rather bad design. He believes houses can plump pleasingly to fit certain clients' lifestyles as long as the added girth serves a specific purpose. Simply super-sizing the usual program can result in a bad case of big house bloat. But adding rooms for individual hobbies and pursuits can make a house more interesting both inside and outside.

"Over the last 10 years, the big house has gotten a bad rap," says Eck. "But there are numerous examples of big, well-designed houses." Although Eck doesn't consider himself a big house specialist, he has received decidedly more requests for them in the past five years. And, as a bit of personal research and professional outreach, he organized a seminar on the subject at Harvard's Graduate School of Design. "People like big houses," he says. "We can't deny them that, but it is our obligation to recognize what's ugly and give them something that's not."



theme and variations

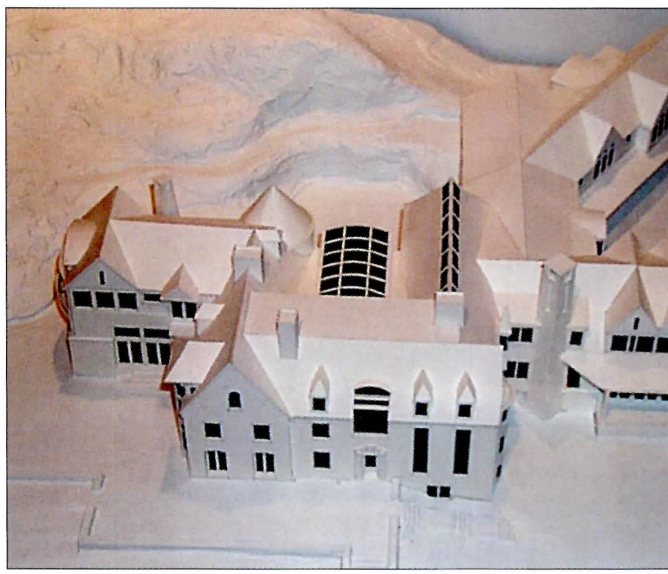
The key challenge in big house design is making such sheer mass feel human in scale, says Eck. It's easy for all that bulk to spin out of control as the exterior design struggles to rein in a sprawling floor plan. Unrestrained exteriors topped by ungainly rooflines become the overwhelming downfall of many projects. "Scale and mass are very much related," Eck says. "Rather than starting with a big box, one way to break down the scale is to divide the mass into three wings." It's a trick George Washington used to great effect at Mt. Vernon.

Eck's other minimizing methods include adding details, such as porches, to break up monolithic walls or changing materials from the first floor to the second floor. To knock height down to size, he might tuck space under the roof instead of adding a full second story.

"The roof is a hat in a way," he explains. "When you see a house from afar, if it has a nice roof, it'll most likely be a nice house. One

case study

boston area residence
18,000 square fe :

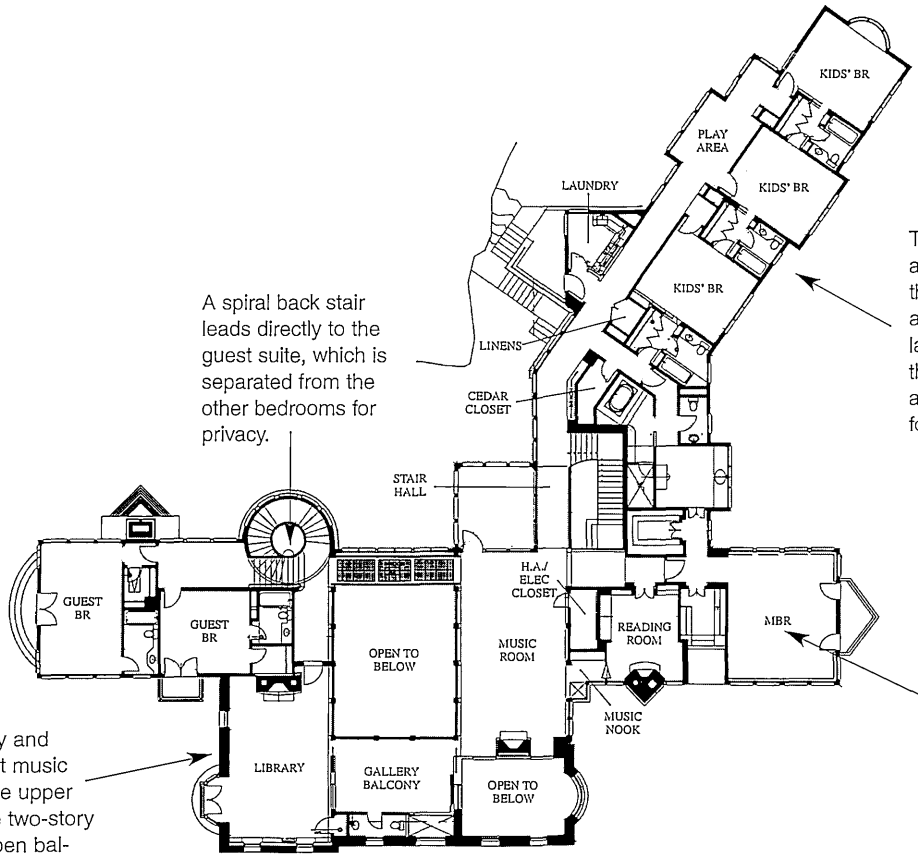


Photos: Courtesy Jeremiah Eck Architects

To mitigate the enormity of a big house, Eck varies the depth and height of the mass as well as the layout of the floor plan.

The opportunity to design a capacious estate on a rare 13-acre site in suburban Boston made this commission appealing to architect Jeremiah Eck. About 70 percent of the wooded property is unbuildable because of preserved wetlands; therefore, locating the house wasn't much of an issue. Eck decided to incorporate the property's existing house into the new project for two reasons: to revive at least the spirit of the now-decrepit stone structure and to expedite the approval process.

A client who was more concerned about quality and fine details than timeline or budget made this five-year project thoroughly enjoyable for Eck. Although, finding expert craftspeople to execute the design caused major delays. "There were a lot of changes in the early drawings," Eck says of the multiyear commitment. "But [the client and I] worked back and forth very well in coming to a solution. In a way, he taught me as much as I taught him."—*s.d.h.*



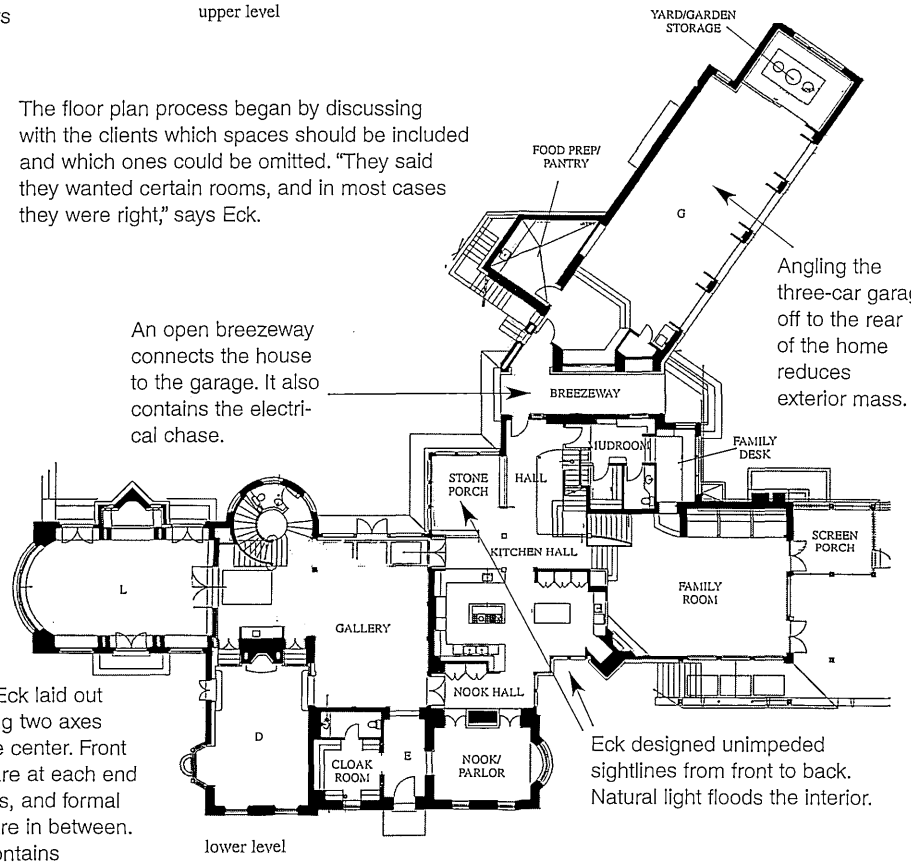
upper level

A spiral back stair leads directly to the guest suite, which is separated from the other bedrooms for privacy.

The angled children's wing above the garage comprises three bedrooms, three baths, and a shared play area. The laundry room is across from the children's spaces and adjacent to the master bath for convenience.

The master bedroom has three exterior exposures and is buffered from the rest of the house by walk-in closets, a reading room, and a hallway.

A quiet library and a not-so-quiet music room flank the upper portion of the two-story gallery. An open balcony connects the rooms and offers views to below.



lower level

The floor plan process began by discussing with the clients which spaces should be included and which ones could be omitted. "They said they wanted certain rooms, and in most cases they were right," says Eck.

Angling the three-car garage off to the rear of the home reduces exterior mass.

An open breezeway connects the house to the garage. It also contains the electrical chase.

For easy circulation, Eck laid out the living spaces along two axes with the kitchen at the center. Front and back entrances are at each end of the north-south axis, and formal entertaining spaces are in between. The east-west axis contains the informal living areas.

Eck designed unimpeded sightlines from front to back. Natural light floods the interior.

project:
Private residence, Boston
architect:
Jeremiah Eck Architects, Boston
general contractor:
Metric Corporation, Boston
interior design:
Pierce and Allen, New York City
landscape architect:
Richard Burck Associates, Somerville, Mass.
project management:
Design Technique, Newburyport, Mass.
structural engineer:
Boston Building Consultants, Boston
hvac & plumbing engineer:
Allied Consulting Engineering Services, Sudbury, Mass.
electrical engineer:
Prior Engineering, Everett, Mass.
project size:
18,000 square feet
site size:
13 acres
construction cost:
Withheld

of the real problems with big houses is that the massing is clumsy." His tips for the "hat" include hipping the roof to give it a lower scale, using different slopes and heights, designing continuous eaves to draw the eye downward, lowering the ridges, adding dormers, or varying types—such as going from gable to shed and back to gable.

Whichever tricks he chooses, Eck is careful not to overdo. "It's a balance between interest and scale versus looking too busy or jarring," he says. Drawing one roof with parts rather than a conglomeration of assorted pieces helps to preserve continuity. Eck thinks of it as a major-minor theme, where minor insertions attract attention but always return to the important major theme. "It makes the most sense if the roof changes to fit the interior space that it covers," says Eck. Then the modifications aren't arbitrary." This allows for appealing diversity without too much dissonance.

balance and harmony

A roof needs something to support it, however, so Eck begins each new project with a floor plan "that really works." He tries to teach his clients about the distinctive ways in which a big house lives and functions. They may not consider, for instance, such luxuries as a lounging area in the master bathroom or such necessities as the vast space required for a big house's HVAC systems. "It's not just a small house on steroids," he says. He points out for his clients how each room can function for one explicit activity such as music, kids' play, formal dining, relaxed reading, watching television, smoking cigars and drinking martinis or sipping tea.

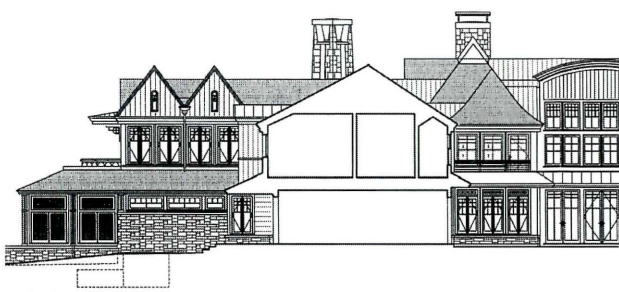
When devising a layout, "the relationship of the parts is more important than the parts themselves," explains Eck. Looking at most of today's big homes, he sees the interrelationship of the parts as the fatally missing ingredient. He recommends focusing on transitions that alter scale. A majestic foyer, for example, is a big house must for Eck—but not immediately upon entering. Starting out in smaller vestibule establishes an inviting atmosphere so that when guests move into a grand entry hall they are already at ease. It's a pattern that bears repeating elsewhere in the house, he says: Intimate alcoves, scaled-down hallways, and a small library or study placed among otherwise grand spaces increases the sense of comfort in a house.

To bring all of those varied spaces together in a cohesive way, Eck follows advice given by Eero Saarinen: "The answer to every design problem lies in the next higher order." He takes that to mean that when designing a doorknob, you must look at the door, or when determining the size of a fireplace, you must respect the dimensions of the wall. "Like a symphony, the house should have different parts that fit together but have very distinct moods and feelings," says Eck. "It should be a true composition."—*s.d.h.*

case study

south elevation

The existing house's stone shell became the centerpiece of the new plan and now houses the prominent entry gallery.



north elevation

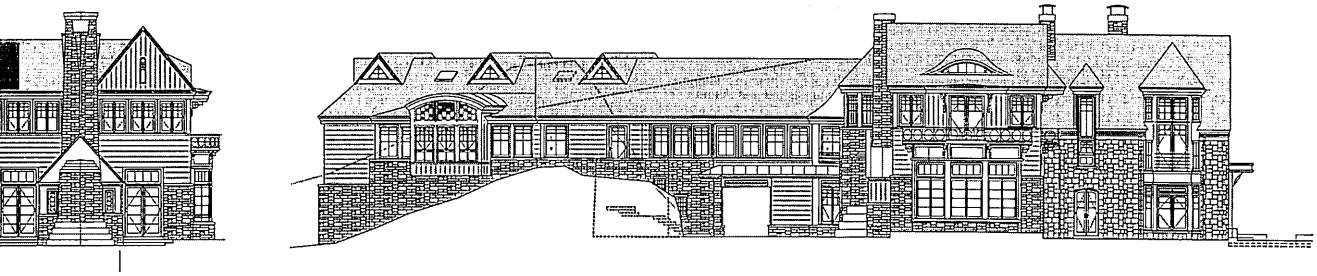
Superior materials speced sparingly intensify the level of detailing in the big house without becoming overwhelming. To complement the home's stonework, Eck selected a special dark mahogany.

Steel framing supports long roof spans and stone walls. "Bigger houses require more steel because dead and living loads are greater and more stiffness is needed," Eck explains.

Courtesy Jeremiah Eck Architects

"i think appreciating the uniqueness of each space in a well-designed big house is something that's lacking in our culture today."—jeremiah eck, faia

Drawings: Courtesy Jeremiah Eck Architects



west elevation

South Bay quartzite from upstate New York blends with the original structure's stonework. Eck insisted on picture framing each new stone for a cohesive and dressy finish. The effect keeps the exterior from "looking like a random pile of stone," he says.

east elevation

"Each roof change reflects what is under it," Eck says of his varied-massing design. The children's wing uses dormers to delineate each bedroom, an arched window tops the master bath, and a slender eyebrow dormer marks the entry gallery (top drawing).

alexander gorlin

alexander gorlin architect

New York City architect Alexander Gorlin, AIA, operates on the notion that what you see isn't always what you get. "You don't see the whole house at one time," he says of the largest house he's designed, a 13,000-square-foot residence in Genesee, Colo. "So you don't have a sense of its entire mass when you're looking at it from the outside." The same goes for the interior: The space visually collapses and expands, keeping its inhabitants guessing at its true size.

Not that disguising a home's square footage is Gorlin's main concern. It's variety he's after. "I'm interested in creating a range of scales," he says. "A large house—or any house, really—is its own little world. It should provide experiences—from a sense of intimacy to a feeling of grandeur."

site reading

He's achieved this goal in homes from New York to Seaside, Fla., to Santa Fe, N.M. No matter what the project's location, its layout and material palette stem from the site conditions. "The site is the primary element," says staff architect Brendan Cotter, AIA. "It's the antithesis of the classic Modernist approach."

Courtesy Alexander Gorlin Architect

In the case of the Colorado house, the steeply sloped, six-acre site contained two roughly parallel creek beds. Gorlin created a cross-shaped plan with a long axis that leaps down the hill, between the creek beds, in a series of terraces. He nestled the upper rooms, including a five-car garage and a master suite, into the hillside to reduce the building's aesthetic impact. "A site this large allowed us to let the house sprawl a bit," says Cotter.

While that particular site dictated a succession of levels, other settings might point to a more compact or otherwise different solution. "Basically, it's about having a formal concept," Gorlin says. "You have to have a very clear idea that motivates the entire design." In the 7,000-square-foot Santa Fe house, for example, he and Cotter hit upon the idea of using the plan to frame views in two directions. The home's C-shaped layout came out of that concept, making it a house of two parallel wings connected by a low passage. Interior courtyards take advantage of the desert climate and help supply that all-important range of scales.

case study

genesee, colo., residence

13,000 square f t

© Jock Pottle/Esto

The home's cross-shaped plan looks large from above, but at ground level it deceives the eye. No full view of any elevation is possible.

Alexander Gorlin's clients for a 13,000-square-foot house in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado initially asked him to design them an Italian villa. "When I went out there to visit the site, I was blown away by the mountains, the space, and the landscape," he says. "I wanted to do something more natural."

So he conceived the project as a reinhabited stone ruin that echoes the landscape around it. The long arm of the cross-shaped plan cascades down the sloped site in layers built into the hillside, while the shorter portion creates a protected entry court.

The homeowners and their guests traverse a metal footbridge over a ravine to get from the driveway to the front door. An office tower, the highest part of the house, yields views of the lower levels stretching out beneath it. "It's got caves, a bridge, a tower," says Gorlin. "It's a castle! But it's a Modern castle."—*m.d.*

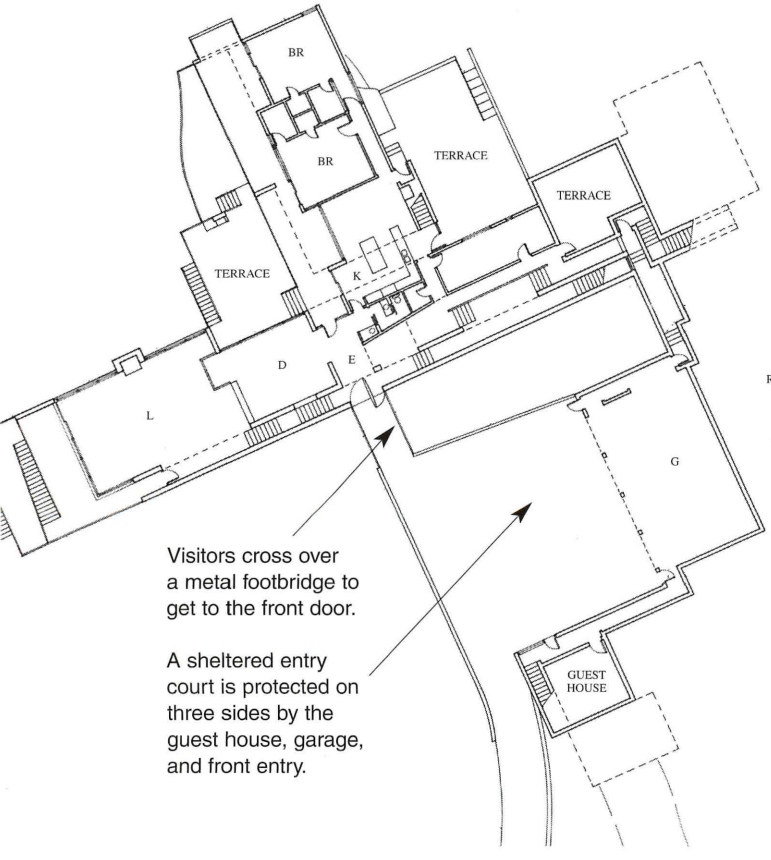
Outdoor rooms emerge from each level of the house, creating a very different space at each tier. Gorlin tucked a hot tub next to one of the moss rock "ruins."

Ron Pollard

© Peter Aaron/Esto

A skylit interior stair, pulled to one side of the long axis, runs the length of the house in a undulating ribbon.

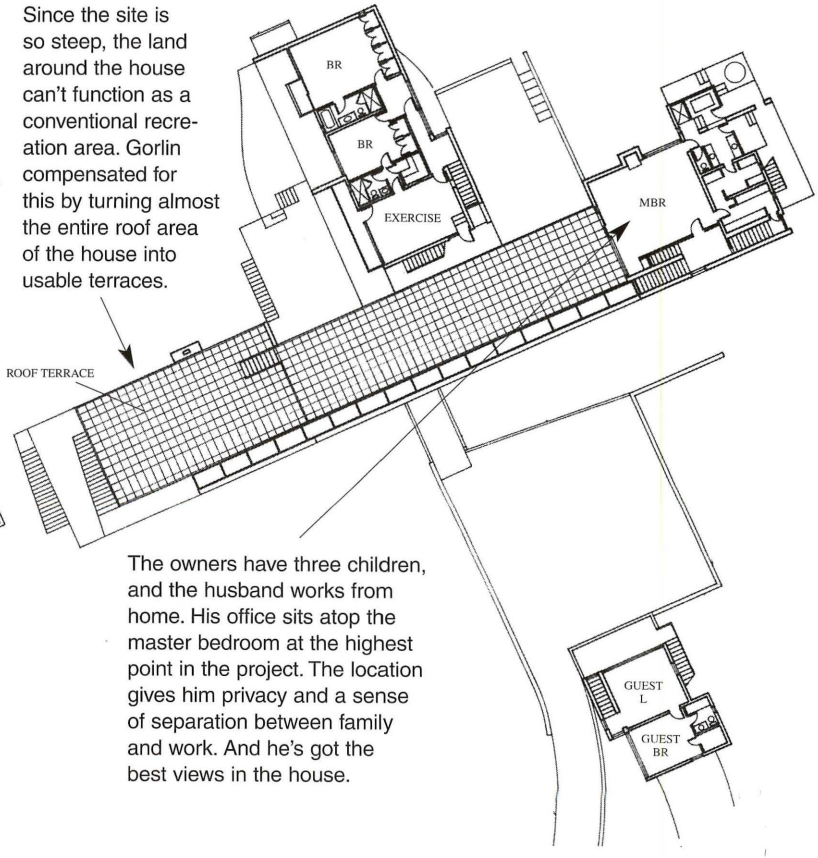
"it's got caves, a bridge, a tower. it's a castle! but it's a modern castle."—alexander gorlin, aia



Visitors cross over a metal footbridge to get to the front door.

A sheltered entry court is protected on three sides by the guest house, garage, and front entry.

Since the site is so steep, the land around the house can't function as a conventional recreation area. Gorlin compensated for this by turning almost the entire roof area of the house into usable terraces.



The owners have three children, and the husband works from home. His office sits atop the master bedroom at the highest point in the project. The location gives him privacy and a sense of separation between family and work. And he's got the best views in the house.

In neither the Colorado nor the Santa Fe project did Gorlin directly try to minimize the home's mass. But in each case that was the result. By finding an arrangement of rooms that relates to the site and offers a variety of experiences, he tamed the big-house tiger.

He also manipulates materials to ensure a sensitive scale. The couple who owns the Colorado house selected moss rock from Wyoming for the exterior and interior walls. The husband studied geology and collects rare minerals; the house sits amid the Rocky Mountains; and moss rock, which is partially covered with live moss, costs less than other stone types—all good reasons for its choice. But cladding a large house with such a heavy, strong material could have made it appear intimidating and monolithic. Instead, Gorlin opted to intersperse flat, horizontally placed stones among the vertical rock walls. These elements help thin the walls a little and lend a sense of order and control.

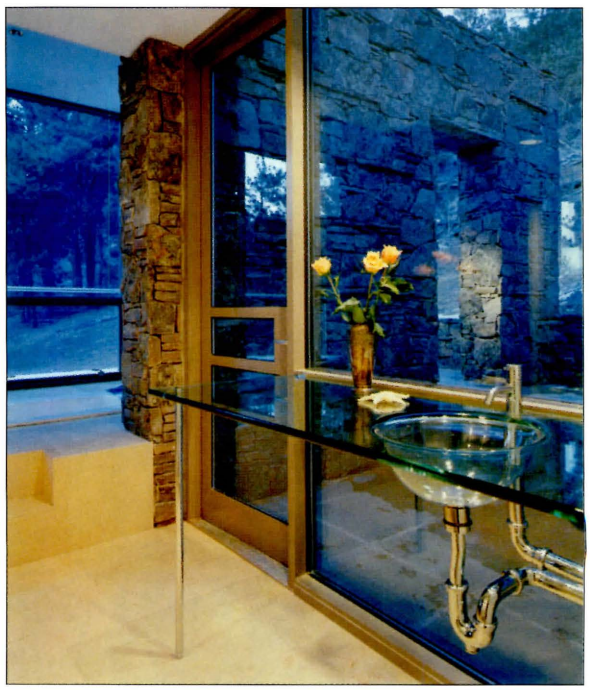
green machine

The house holds many surprises, such as an underground passage from the living room to the kitchen and two outdoor hot tubs. Most surprising of all, though, is its environmental bent. While many roll their eyes at the seeming paradox of a sustainable, 13,000-square-foot house, Gorlin makes a thought-provoking argument for it. "The house has no air conditioning," he points out. "It's oriented to the catch the winds coming up the mountain. In the winter, they don't need the heat on all the time because of the sun's intensity at this elevation and all the glass."

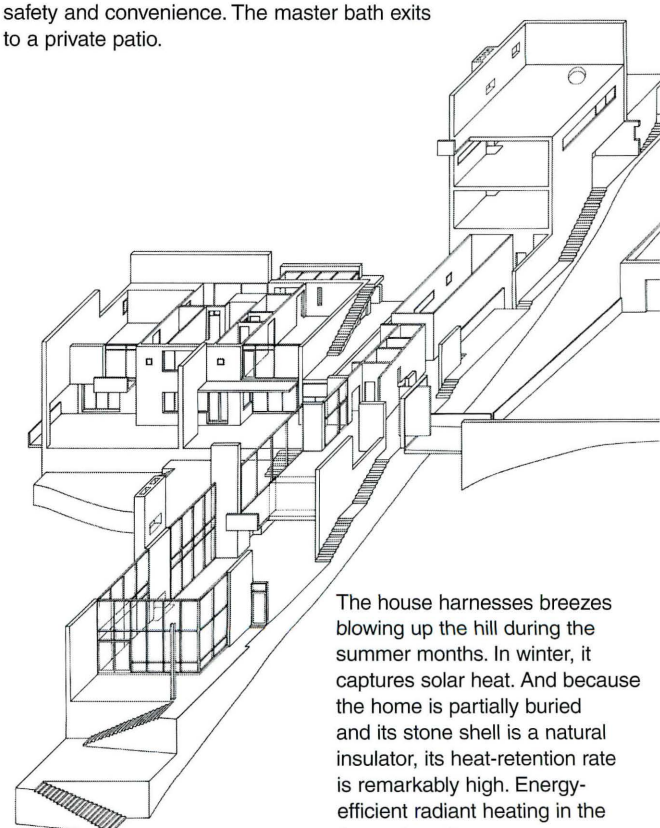
No matter what size house he's designing, Gorlin sticks to sustainable materials. The Colorado house is composed mostly of stone, glass, and metal—materials that don't need to be finished with toxic chemicals. "We don't do a lot of wide-plank floors or cabinetry, since that usually involves old-growth wood," says Cotter. "If we do use old-growth, we only use recycled—and then just in small amounts." They tend to stay away from exotic woods for environmental reasons, but they have found a sustainably harvested African cherry to use in place of pearwood.

Of course, conventional wisdom says the larger a house is, the less environmentally friendly it can be. But where does residential energy conservation matter more than in a house that already consumes an above-average amount of resources? Mitigating a big house's extra materials and embodied energy through the use of passive heating and cooling reduces the impact on both the environment and the clients' utility bills.

Gorlin believes he gets better at managing size and scale with each house he designs. "One of the most difficult, mysterious things about being an architect is understanding the meaning of scale, the relationship of bodies to space," he says. "Going through the process of getting each project built is essential to making better architecture."—*m.d.*



A house this large needs many exits for fire safety and convenience. The master bath exits to a private patio.



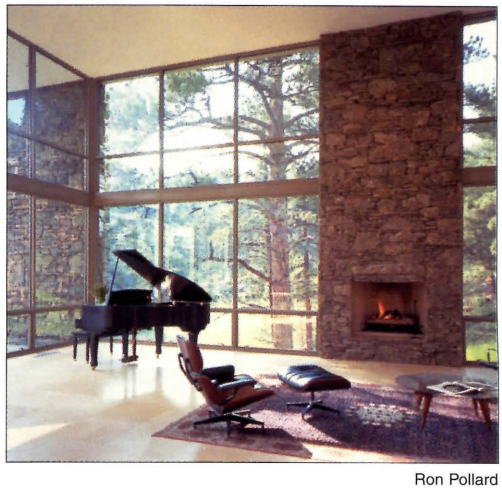
The house harnesses breezes blowing up the hill during the summer months. In winter, it captures solar heat. And because the home is partially buried and its stone shell is a natural insulator, its heat-retention rate is remarkably high. Energy-efficient radiant heating in the floors does the rest.

Gorlin dug the house into the side of a hill to reinforce a connection to its mountainous surroundings. Terrace-topped levels step down the site.

Ron Pollard

© Peter Aaron/Esto

Gorlin emphasizes the need for a variety of spaces within a home. The smaller kitchen, with its relatively low ceiling, represents a self-contained counterpart to grander rooms nearby.



Ron Pollard

Large windows with commercial aluminum frames bring views of the forested site into a dramatically scaled living room.

project:
Private residence, Genesee, Colo.
architect:
Alexander Gorlin Architect, New York City
general contractor:
Creamer Construction, Genesee
structural engineer:
Neujahr & Gorman, Genesee
consulting engineer:
Beaudin Ganze, Genesee
project size:
13,000 square feet
site size:
6 acres
construction cost:
Withheld

mark simon

centerbrook architects and planners

Mark Simon, FAIA, believes the success or failure of a big house depends in large part on the client's priorities. "The cost of any project is a measure of quality times quantity," he says. "Bad large houses tend to be big without much quality. The good ones have clients who care more about strong design than about size."

He should know. A partner at Centerbrook Architects in Centerbrook, Conn., he's designed several homes over 10,000 square feet. Each project is completely different from the others; there is no single formula that yields a good-looking, livable residence. But the firm's big houses do share some common characteristics that help explain its tendency to win awards, to have its work published, and to make its clients happy.

piece proposal

One is a propensity for breaking a home into pieces as a way of mitigating its size. This technique isn't that unusual, but it's hard to do well. For the 15,000-square-foot Pond House on a New England island, Simon scattered a group of buildings into a hook shape that mimics the form of the peninsula it sits upon. "The overall shape of the house is that of two archipelagos curving around each other," he explains. "The purpose was both to fit into the peninsula and to create a private entry court." One of these "archipelagos" contains the main living spaces and the other the guest quarters and pool area. The arrangement means that every room has a water view, and it also ensures that the houses across the pond can only see part of the compound.

Robert Benson

The divide-and-conquer technique has proved effective in many other Centerbrook projects. For a Hudson Valley addition, the firm tucked a series of barnlike structures behind the original house, rendering them barely visible from the road. And the 12,500-square-foot mass of a mountain home called Long View unfolds gradually from a modest garage/studio into three larger pavilions. In all these versions of the broken-up plan, the architects didn't just pull the house apart and call it a day. They tailored the placement of each individual build-

case study

pond house, new england
15,000 square feet

Transplanted scrub oak trees partially conceal the house from boaters and neighbors across the pond. The result is more privacy for the owners and a reduction in perceived mass.

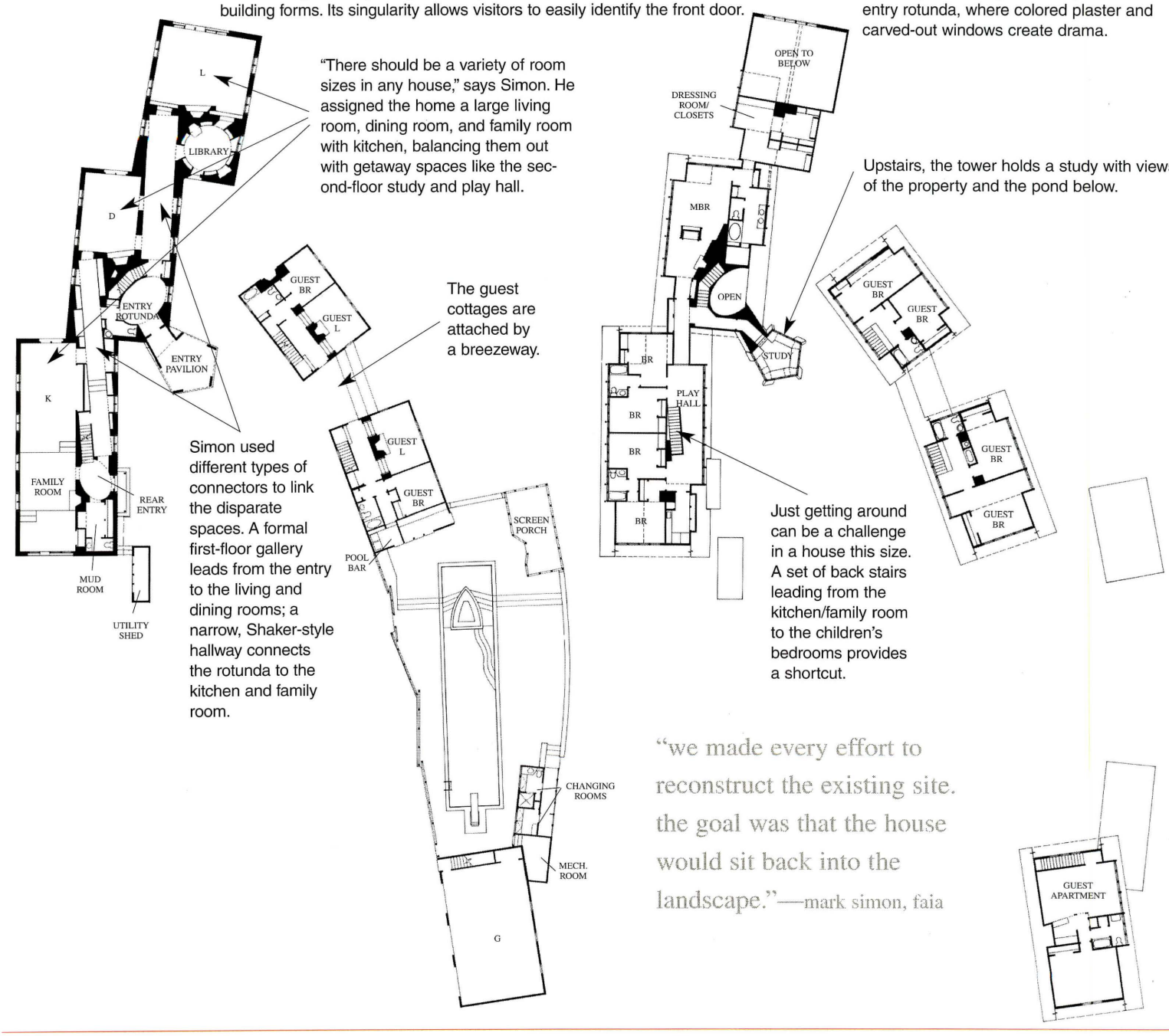
Mark Simon's firm, Centerbrook Architects and Planners, has gained a national reputation for witty, original takes on traditional architecture. The Pond House, which references several New England styles, is no exception. Its vertical battening and large eaves evoke the Victorian cottages on Martha's Vineyard. The slight curve to its rooflines and dormers resembles old shipwrights' houses on Nantucket. And Simon abstracted Gothic architecture with the home's stepped, arched windows.

He pulled apart the floor plan to create two separate strands of buildings. One contains the main living spaces and sleeping quarters, and the other a couple of guest houses, a pool, and a garage. Within each strand, various passages loosely knit the structures to one another. On the second floor, curved ceilings impart a snug, protected feeling to the bedrooms. The ceilings also serve to relate the home's interior to its curved exterior forms, creating a sense of cohesion throughout the project.—*m.d.*

Photos: © Jeff Goldberg/Esto

Simon designed the pentagonal entry tower to look different from the other building forms. Its singularity allows visitors to easily identify the front door.

Visitors pass through the entry tower into the entry rotunda, where colored plaster and carved-out windows create drama.



"There should be a variety of room sizes in any house," says Simon. He assigned the home a large living room, dining room, and family room with kitchen, balancing them out with getaway spaces like the second-floor study and play hall.

Upstairs, the tower holds a study with views of the property and the pond below.

The guest cottages are attached by a breezeway.

Simon used different types of connectors to link the disparate spaces. A formal first-floor gallery leads from the entry to the living and dining rooms; a narrow, Shaker-style hallway connects the rotunda to the kitchen and family room.

Just getting around can be a challenge in a house this size. A set of back stairs leading from the kitchen/family room to the children's bedrooms provides a shortcut.

"we made every effort to reconstruct the existing site. the goal was that the house would sit back into the landscape."—mark simon, faia

ing to the site, and they obviously thought deeply about the way the whole house would be used and seen.

Of course, Simon has more than one trick in his bag when it comes to big houses. He also presented the owners of the Pond House with a concept for a single large, barn-like structure. "The idea was to make it feel like a common agricultural building that might already have been on the site," he says. "There's a horse farm nearby, so it would have been contextual." The owners preferred the pavilion scheme, which Simon thinks in the end represented the best option for the site.

multiple choices

The same project demonstrates the power of landscaping as an additional tool for reducing visual bulk. Simon and landscape architect Lester Collins tried to keep the original vegetation—a forest of scrub oak trees, low-bush blueberries, and other native plants—as intact as possible. "We made every effort to reconstruct the existing site," he says. "The goal was that the house would sit back into the landscape." They carefully moved and replanted some of the scrub oaks to allow sight lines from the house down to the water. A clearing on the north side of the house serves as a yard for family football games, and at its far end lies a below-grade tennis court. Aside from these elements, the site remains a forest, effectively hiding much of the house from view and providing shade to its interior and exterior spaces.

Other tactics Centerbrook frequently employs on big houses include steeply pitched roofs and well-defined entries. Both Long View and the Pond House follow this pattern. "In the case of the Pond House, the low-hanging roof satisfied both desire and necessity," says Simon. "Local codes require a low roof scale. The resulting roof height was lower than you'd want for a two-story house, so we did dormers to make up for it." The steep roof pitch protects both this and the mountain house from the northeasters that sweep through New England, and it lends the homes a cottage-like quality that belies their mass.

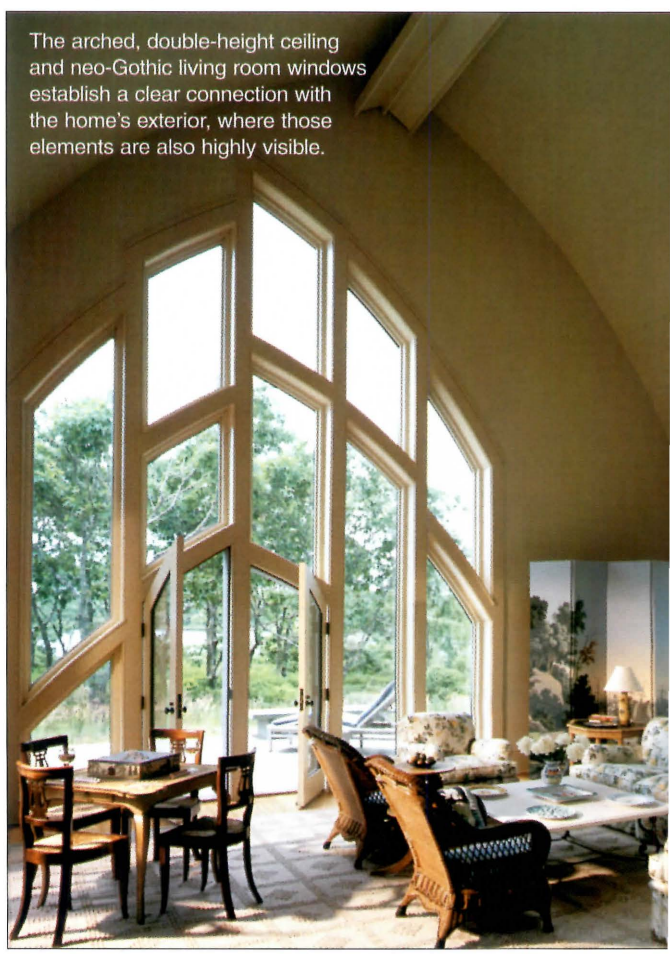
Each of these projects features a distinctive entry marker—a porte-cochere at Long View, and a two-story, pentagonal tower at the Pond House. This is no coincidence. When a home's square footage climbs into the five digits, the front door isn't as easy to locate as it is on most houses. "The tower is there so you know where the front door is," says Simon of the Pond House.

The question of finding the front door is just an example of the many issues architects must consider in a big house situation. But, according to Simon, the most important approach of all is to keep trying to solve that quality versus quantity equation. "With a big house, just as with a small house, you have to work very hard so the clients are getting just what they want and nothing more."—*m.d.*

case study

© Jeff Goldberg/Esto

The pool, with its freestanding screened-in porch and guest cottage containing an open-air bar, serves as a hub for summer entertaining.

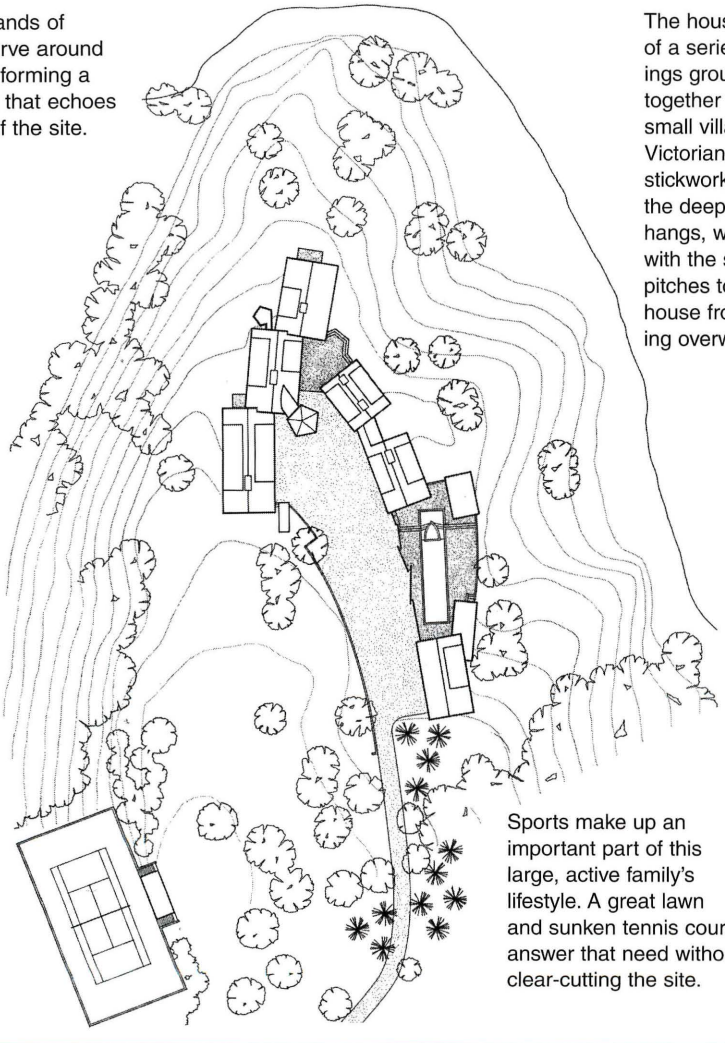


The arched, double-height ceiling and neo-Gothic living room windows establish a clear connection with the home's exterior, where those elements are also highly visible.

© Scott Frances/Esto

© Scott Frances/Esto

The two strands of buildings curve around each other, forming a hook shape that echoes the shape of the site.



The house consists of a series of buildings grouped together like a small village. Victorian-style stickwork supports the deep roof overhangs, which work with the steep roof pitches to keep the house from seeming overwhelming.

Sports make up an important part of this large, active family's lifestyle. A great lawn and sunken tennis court answer that need without clear-cutting the site.

"the overall shape of the house is that of two archipelagos curving around each other ... to fit into the peninsula and to create a private entry court."

—mark simon, faia

project:
Pond House (location withheld)
architect:
Centerbrook Architects and Planners, Centerbrook, Conn.
general contractor:
Doyle Construction (location withheld)
interior designer:
Michael LaRocca Limited, New York City
landscape architect:
Lester Collins, Millbrook, N.Y.
structural engineer:
Besier Gibble Norden, Old Saybrook, Conn.
mechanical engineer:
Savage Engineering, Bloomfield, Conn.
project size:
15,000 square feet
site size:
Withheld
construction cost:
Withheld

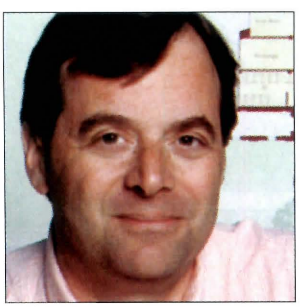
buzz yudell

moore ruble yudell architects & planners

When Buzz Yudell, FAIA, gets a commission to design a "big house"—a residence over 10,000 square feet—he treats it like any other project. "What I find interesting is not the scale of the house but the clients who live in them and how they want to express themselves through architectural design," he explains. "I don't see bigger houses as being better projects. As architects, we deal with ideas—how people live and coexist with landscape."

Yudell and partners Charles Moore (now deceased) and John Ruble started their Santa Monica, Calif.-based firm Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners in 1977, focusing on their passion: houses. (Later, they expanded to also work on large-scale institutional, civic, and mixed-use developments.) Over the years, they've watched the size of their residential projects grow as their clients lives have changed. Larger kitchens, lavish master suites, and specialty rooms such as home offices, exercise rooms, and media rooms have gobbled more and more square footage.

It's no surprise that a 4,000-square-foot house, considered "big" by 1970s standards, just isn't big enough to fit all of today's clients' perceived needs. Even the 10,000-square-foot houses MRY designs aren't the biggest of the big house genre these days. Nevertheless, with a porfolio packed with substantially-sized houses, MRY has learned how to cut a big house project down to size.



Courtesy Moore Ruble Yudell

avoiding the pitfalls

The first and foremost consideration is the site. If the clients' appetite for square footage exceeds the ability of the site to swallow it, the project is doomed from the beginning. "It's important to create a place that's harmonious with its setting," says Yudell. Similar to developing a master plan for an institutional or civic building, Yudell likes to do thoughtful, comprehensive site-planning for a large house. He plans not only for the immediate future, but also to accommodate changes that may occur over the years. A large house is not unlike a campus, where buildings, additions, and new landscaping are likely to be phased in over time.

Next comes careful programming. Just because a house is big doesn't mean it can afford to waste space. Every room must have a cogent pur-

case study

dodici giardini, calif.

10,000 square f et

© Timothy Hursley

The sloping site, which overlooks an orchard grove and nearby Santa Monica Mountains, was the catalyst for a stair-step design.

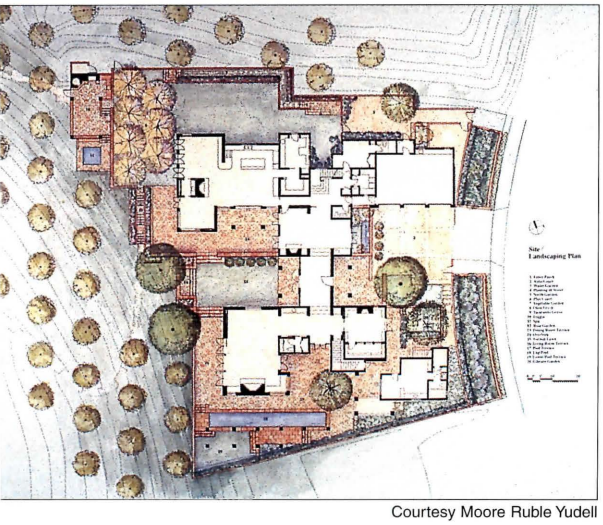
Dodici Giardini (twelve gardens) in Pacific Palisades, Calif., plays with indoor and outdoor spaces to take advantage of the site's lustrous landscape. Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners designed the residence for maximum flexibility—for formal and informal gatherings when the homeowners want to entertain and for privacy and intimacy when they're on their own.

Its H-shaped plan fills each room with natural light and ventilation and offers expansive views of the grounds. Extensions of the kitchen, living room, library, and other functional spaces spill into 12 outdoor courtyards (or gardens) tucked in pockets around the house. Each outdoor "room" possesses a unique character on par with important interior spaces.

The legs of the house create individual pavilions, which break down the large mass into smaller units. "It's like living in a village," says Buzz Yudell. "You get different experiences all day long as you move through the house." The layout's visual axes as well as similar materials and millwork link the pavilions together.— *m.w.*

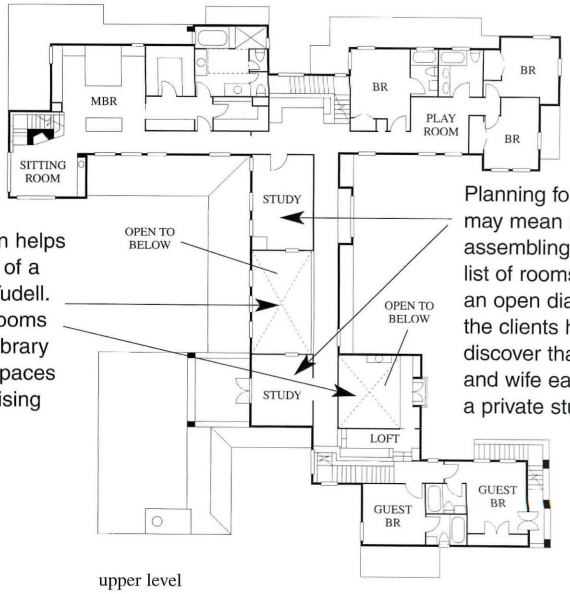
John Edward Linden

"Just because it's a big house doesn't mean you can't have an intimate space," Yudell says. This Zen-like garden conjures a contemplative vista from the dining room and entry.



Courtesy Moore Ruble Yudell

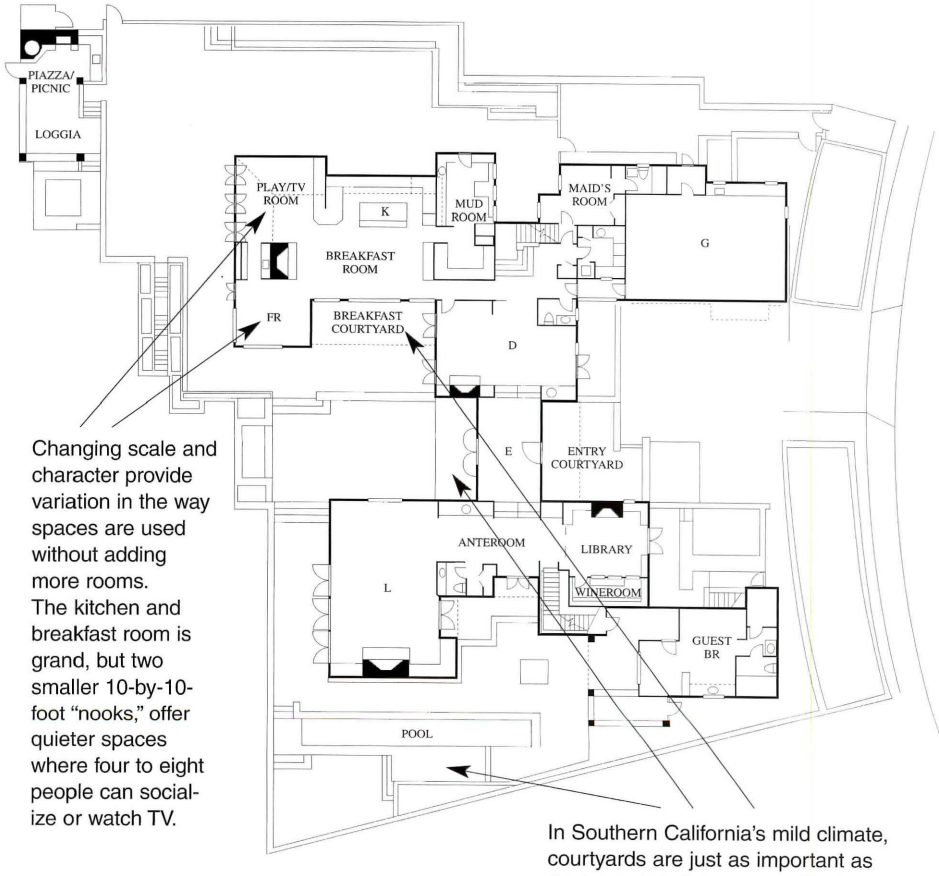
An H-shape plan allows every room multiple exposures to the site. Strong visual and formal axes link the pieces together. MRY does comprehensive site planning to make sure the house doesn't overpower its site.



Vertical dimension helps reinforce the size of a big house, says Yudell. Small two-story rooms in the entry and library create dramatic spaces without compromising intimacy.

Planning for a big house may mean not always assembling a conventional list of rooms. Maintaining an open dialogue with the clients helped Yudell discover that the husband and wife each wanted a private study.

upper level



Changing scale and character provide variation in the way spaces are used without adding more rooms. The kitchen and breakfast room is grand, but two smaller 10-by-10-foot "nooks," offer quieter spaces where four to eight people can socialize or watch TV.

lower level

In Southern California's mild climate, courtyards are just as important as the house's indoor spaces. Twelve "outdoor rooms" are tucked along the perimeter of the house and each has its own character.

pose and a scale appropriate to its use. "When it's a big house on a big budget, everything tends to become grand," Yudell says. "Just because the house is big doesn't mean all the rooms have to be big, too." Do that, he explains, and you'll end up with a stream of monotonous spaces.

Instead, he uses a range of scale to accommodate his clients' many moods. He discerns those moods by engaging homeowners in discussion about how they currently live and how they wish to live. Are they retired? Do they have children? Do they work from home? Do they prefer solitude or society? All of these factors will influence the design—but they're especially important when wielded across thousands of square feet.

For instance, after some heart-to-hearts, clients may admit they don't really need a formal dining room, even in a big house. Always adding rooms and never subtracting them will just make the place bigger—not necessarily better. "As an architect, you must challenge the client to question how they live," Yudell explains. "Do they really need that space?"

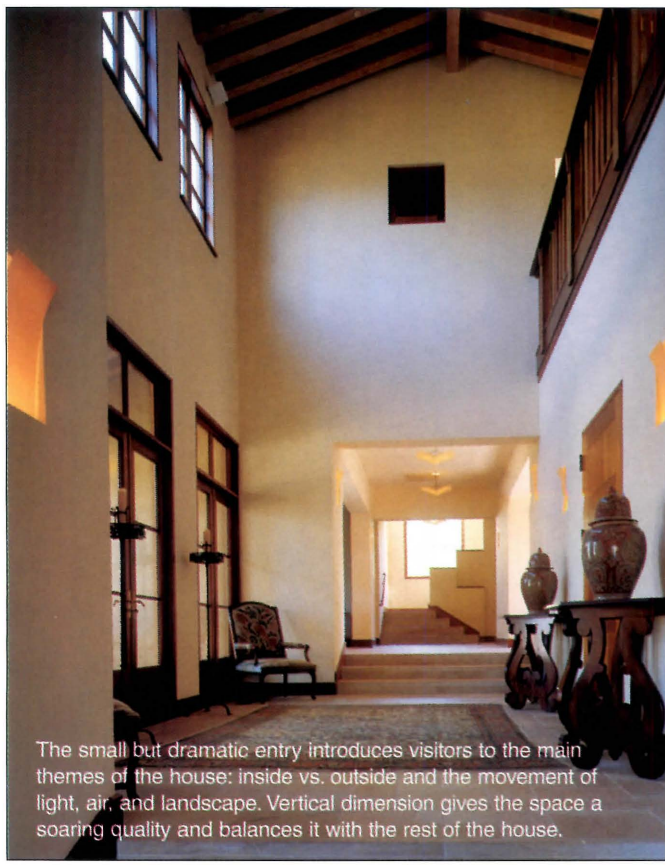
This kind of dialogue, unique to every project, is important because it will help cap program inflation and provide the opportunity to investigate more creative solutions. Also, keep in mind that if this is the clients' first big house, they may not realize how much work and expense goes into maintaining so much square footage. "They should think carefully about how much they want to expand before their home becomes a burden," Yudell says. "It's a balance of responsibility versus pleasures."

Another design challenge is maintaining the clarity of the conceptual form—the basic underlying geometric idea. Yudell recommends using similar materials and several strong design themes to unify a large project. You can mix it up, he says, by changing the scale and character of the rooms. Think about what happens in each space. What should the acoustics sound like? Is it an intimate space? Is it formal? Vertical dimension can provide a soaring quality while maintaining an intimate feeling, balancing a room with the rest of the house. But throw in a small room for contrast, too. Such variation can satisfy both practical concerns and inchoate needs.

communication is key

MRY works on only one or two residences each year, giving them time to fully explore their ideas with their clients. They also limit their design teams to a core group of three to four people, regardless of the size of the house. Smaller teams, they've found, facilitate better communication with their clients and preserve the project's continuity.

"Whatever the scale, what's most important is that the client is deeply engaged in the aspirations of the project and understands how you're going to go about achieving them," Yudell says. "They're not coming to you to give you something, but to explore something together with you."—*m.w.*



The small but dramatic entry introduces visitors to the main themes of the house: inside vs. outside and the movement of light, air, and landscape. Vertical dimension gives the space a soaring quality and balances it with the rest of the house.

Covered patios help transition the change between indoor and outdoor spaces. This breakfast porch creates a more intimate dining area for when the homeowners are free from the crowds.

Interior ceiling patterns are suggested in the exterior lattice work covering the courtyard spaces. These open-air roofs help define the outdoor rooms.

Photos: © Timothy [illegible]

Throughout the house, the same mahogany wood, hardware, and windows were used. "Every time you go across a threshold, you don't have to make a change in materials," Yudell says.

To break down the vastness of the living room (one of the largest spaces in the house) smaller nooks flank the fireplace and accommodate many moods.

project:
Dodici Giardini,
Pacific Palisades, Calif.
architect:
Moore Ruble Yudell Architects & Planners, Santa Monica, Calif.
general contractor:
Brown Osvaldson, Santa Monica
interior designer:
Brayton Hughes and
Richard Brayton, Santa Monica
landscape architect:
Tina Beebe and Mario Violich,
Santa Monica
project size:
10,000 square feet
site size:
0.48 acres
construction cost:
Withheld

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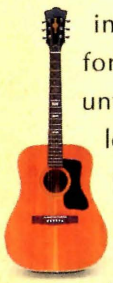

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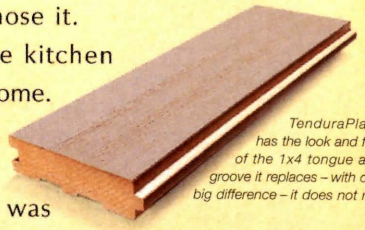

TenduraPlank has the look and feel of the 1x4 tongue and groove it replaces – with one big difference – it does not rot.

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grape expectations

can your clients trust you with their prized petrus?

by nigel f. maynard

In the throws of designing a 15,000-square-foot Mediterranean mansion, your clients request a wine cellar for a burgeoning collection of prized bottles of '97 Petrus, '71 Dom Perignon, and '82 Mouton Rothschild. They want a circular rack display and a combination tasting and dining room that will accommodate 12 people.

Sounds simple enough. And it may be within your abilities to handle if your clients are just casual collectors. But if they're true aficionados seeking to cellar for centuries, the job is likely over your head.

Manufacturers say the temptation to self-spec is so strong for architects with little wine cellar experience that some simply outfit a basement with standard cabinetry and shelving and a run-of-the-mill cooling system.

But if the mechanical system is inadequate, the shelving space inefficient, and the airflow poor, the vino will become vinegar and the client will turn bitter. Consulting someone with specialized know-how could mean the difference between a pat on the back or some choice words of mouth.

Courtesy Fine Wine Rack Cellar

In addition to custom cellars, Paul Wyatt has designed and developed an integrated racking system available in mix-and-match components.

top shelf

Expertise is available at most price points, from moderate to extravagant. Prefabricated rack systems and advice from a climate-control guru might just do the trick on a lesser job. But a top-of-the-line job means custom racking, elaborate temperature and humidity controls, lighting, security, earthquake protection, and a back-up power source.

Architect Stephan Collier, a principal with Anderson Collier in Seattle, has squired a number of cellar projects and consultants through their paces. "We provide the space, tell them how the client is going to use it, and they basically design it for us," Collier says. "They then provide drawings that we review."

Custom cellars start around $80,000 for a basic set up but can top $300,000 for a soup-to-nuts configuration. One of the top firms working at the moment is Design Build Consultants in Greenwich, Conn. "There are architects who don't want to invest their time on the interior layout of a wine cellar because they lack the experience," says Evan Goldenberg, architect and founder of the firm. "It could cost them greater exposure to liability if they make a mistake so they bring me in as a consulting architect."

Goldenberg's firm designs and installs high-end cellars and coordinates the subs—mechanical, electrical, and carpentry—though clients can use their own general contractor. Goldenberg, the firm's chief designer and purportedly the only licensed architect specializing in wine cellars, says designing a cellar may seem simple to some architects but is much more involved than it appears.

"Flow of space is very important, not just the access of a cellar but where it's located," Goldenberg says. "The type of refrigeration system is also key and some species of wood are better than others." His standard offering is mahogany, but teak, cedar, or other hardy species can be substituted.

Another top name in the business is David Spon, president of McLean, Va.-based Wine Cellar Concepts. The firm designs, fabricates, and installs custom cellars, including all the cabinetry work. Spon

continued on page 108

handles the designs, but uses a refrigeration engineer to calculate the project's humidification and dehumidification needs.

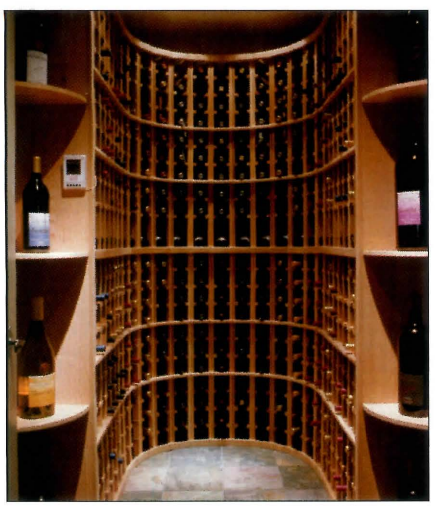
off the rack

When the budget is tight, manufacturers such as Wine Cellar Innovations in Cincinnati or Apex Saunas & Wine Cellars in Bellevue, Wash., offer frugal-gourmet solutions.

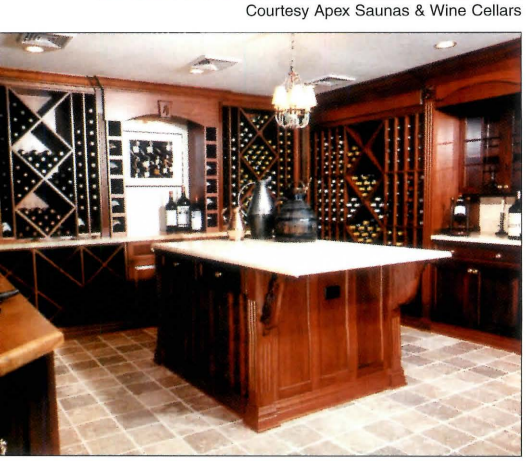
Wine Cellar Innovations frequently works with architects to design and manufacture custom wine cellars and wine racks. The company also offers a premium clear redwood kit that's available in custom sizes to fit most spaces.

Unlike most manufacturers, Apex has 14 regional offices across the country enabling consultation on a project from the first day to the last, touts vice president Doug Smith. Although 90 percent of its work is custom, Apex offers a line of stock racking kits that architects may have installed. Three wood species are available: all heart redwood, mahogany, and Western red cedar. "Typically we get calls from architects whose clients want a wine cellar and they have not done many of them," Smith says.

Because requests from architects are growing, the company now mails an "architect kit" booklet that provides information on wall prep, refrigeration, installation, and vapor barriers. "Those are the kinds of things that architects don't know much about," Smith says.



Courtesy Apex Saunas & Wine Cellars



Courtesy Design Build Consultants

Apex offers custom and stock wine cellar installations (top). Design Build is exclusively custom (above).

no hot air

Even when someone else is carrying the design load, you still have a part to play. Planning is key. Paul Wyatt, owner of San Francisco-based Fine Wine Rack & Cellar, another top practitioner, says architects often call him too late in the design process. His biggest complaint is inheriting space inadequate for the job.

"I don't mind getting the architect's design if there is no problem, but among the problems I have to engineer for are air flow and earthquakes," Wyatt says. "I need to get in early to specify vapor barriers, wiring, plumbing, and drains. If a wine cellar has a window in it, I want to know what kind of light it is getting and what kind of heat loads the window is carrying."

Architect Evan Goldenberg says a designer should be brought in no later than rough framing. At that point there's still time to make important decisions about where to locate the cellar and the mechanical system, perhaps a wine cellar's most crucial component. "For me it's better to have the space than to work blind on paper."

"The mechanical system is ugly, but it has a serious function," says Wyatt. Altering the temperature of every bottle in a wine cellar is a huge task that requires an efficient system, he says. That's another reason he likes to get in on the project early. "I specify where I want the ducts, how I want it to look, and I negotiate with the refrigerator contractor about what's feasible with the design."

Although every cellar is different, an engineer must determine which type can most effectively deliver 55 degrees and 70 percent humidity. Many systems are available, but most professionals agree that a ducted air handler dedicated to the cellar is the best way to go.

If your budget doesn't allow the luxury of a cellar expert, Spon distills his advice to one all-important caveat: "If architects want to use the same cabinetmaker who's doing the kitchen or the library, they definitely need to make sure the room functions properly and that the mechanical systems are well thought out and adequate," he says. "It's the feature with the smallest margin of error." ra

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www.apex-sauna-wine.com

design build consultants
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fine wine rack & cellar
San Francisco
707.251.8463
www.fine-wine.com

southern wine cellars
Palm Harbor, Fla.
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www.southernwinecellars.com

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Seattle
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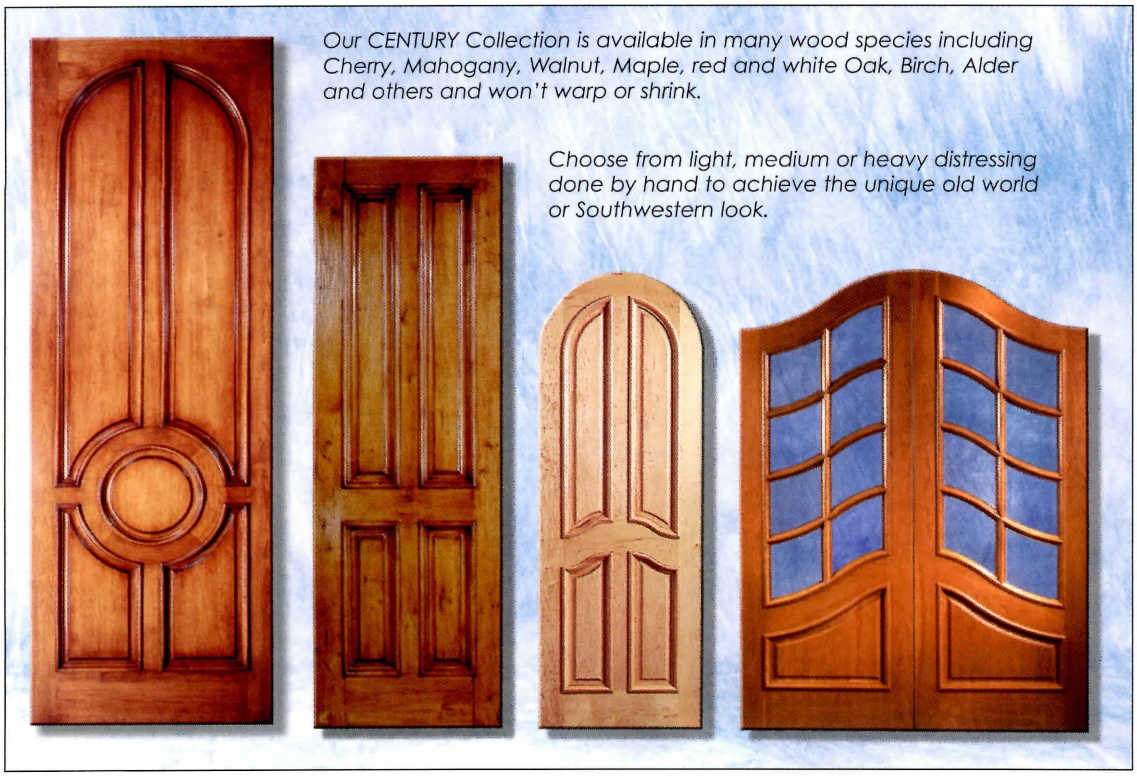

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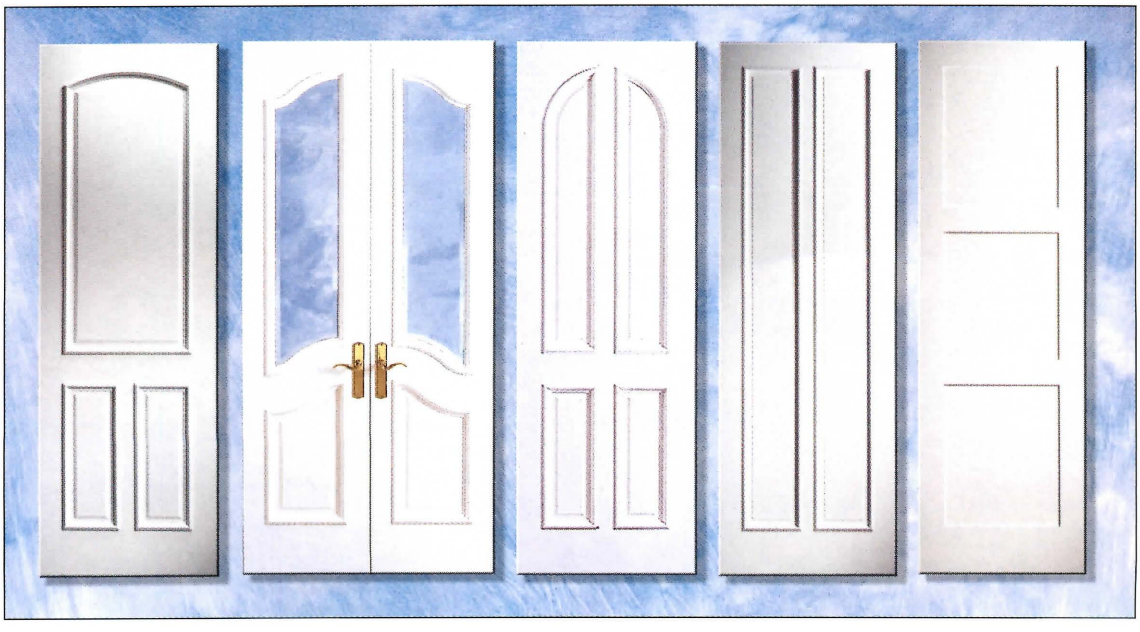

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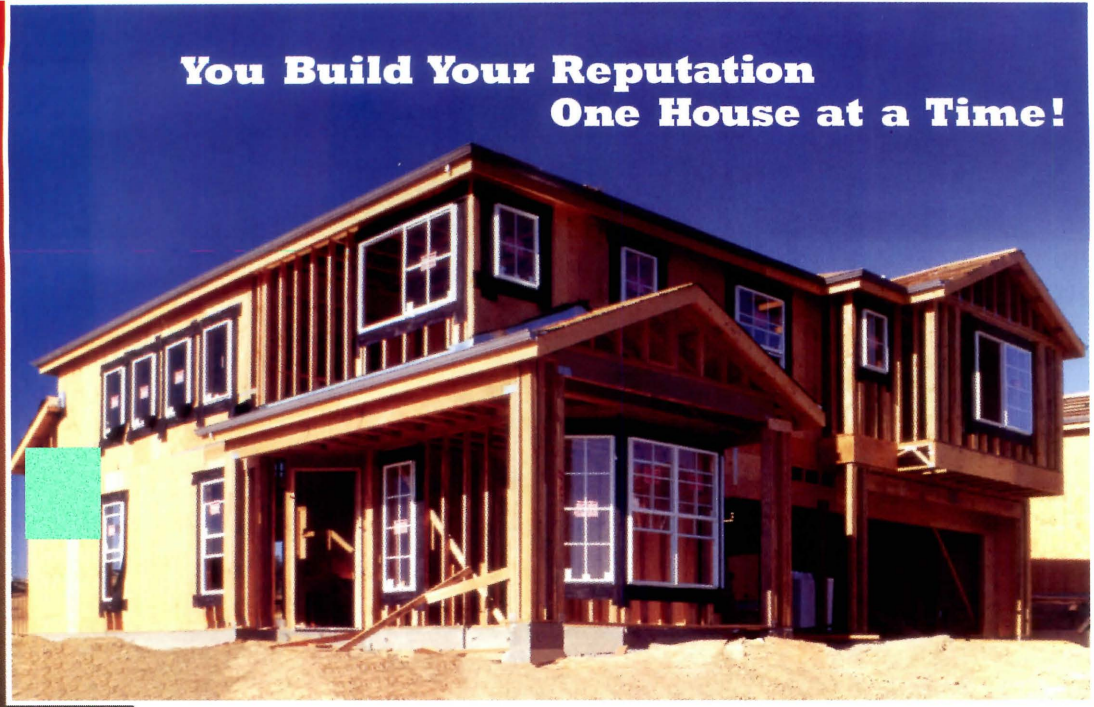

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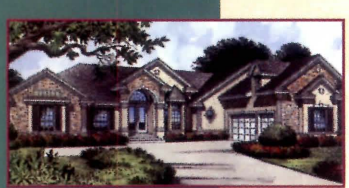

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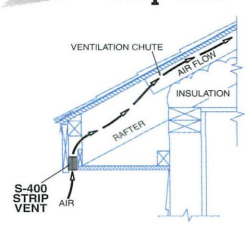
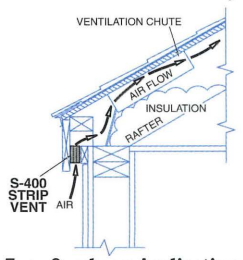


Extended Overhang Application



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Circle no. 216

product picks from the pros.

home store

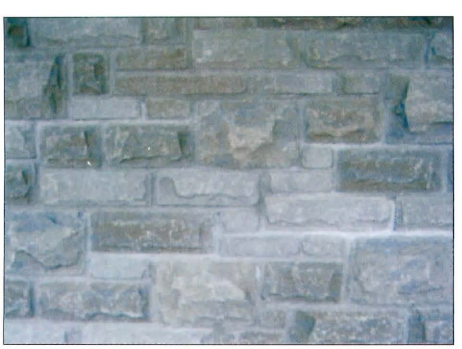
Prefinished aluminum storefront framing "has not been fully utilized for its potential in residential work," says Walker, who used it in his own house (shown here). "It's tough and durable and handles all the elements well." Vistawall offers the 1000 Series measuring 1 3/4 by 4 inches, the 2000 at 1 3/4 by 4 1/2 inches, and the 3000 at 2 by 4 1/2 inches. Available in anodized or painted finishes, they're assembled by screw spline, shear block, and stacking. Vistawall Architectural Products, 972.551.6100; www.vistawall.com.

archimania

todd walker, aia
memphis, tenn.

panel members

James Hardie's Hardipanel fiber-cement vertical siding is a favorite spec of Walker's because it's versatile enough for use outside and inside. "On the exterior, it creates a great monolithic look that's simpler than stucco and cement," he says. "And you can use it on the interior to create an industrial look." Available in 4-inch widths and 8-, 9-, and 10-inch lengths, the panels resist exposure to humidity, rain, snow, salt air, and termites, and they will not crack or delaminate, the company says. They come factory primed. James Hardie, 888.542.7343; www.jameshardie.com.



stone clone

Arriscraft is manufactured sandstone made from calcium silicate, hydrated lime, and mineral oxides. Pressed into units and aged to produce a fine grain, the stones are finished to resemble specific product types. Walker specs the stones because of their random patterns and the natural look they give to walls. Various configurations are available, including brick in different colors, sizes, and textures and the trademarked Adair Limestone Marble. Custom colors and sizes are available upon request. Arriscraft Stone Products, 800.265.8123; www.arriscraft.com.

—nigel f. maynard

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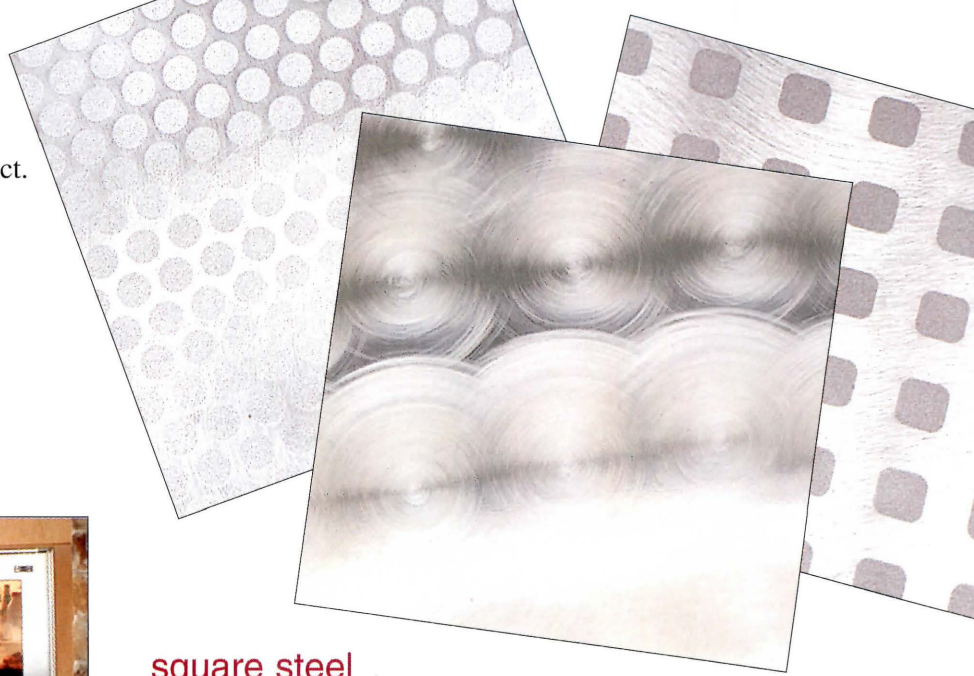

square steel

Manufactured from 14-gauge stainless steel, Neo-Tile can be speced for floors, walls, decorative applications, or in most places where traditional tiles are set, the maker says. Durable and highly water resistant, the tiles are easy to clean and help minimize bacteria buildup. They're available in five types of finishes, including satin and honeycomb, and in 4-, 6-, 8-, and 12-inch squares. Custom sizes also are available. Neo-Metro, 800.591.9050; www.neo-metro.com.

see food

With a commercial-looking glass door, the 601RG refrigerator from Madison, Wis.-based Sub-Zero allows neatnick homeowners an opportunity to display their high-end eats. The 19.9-cubic-foot unit has electronic controls and an adaptive defrost feature that helps save energy by self-adjusting for usage patterns. It comes in either a stainless steel finish or with custom overlay or framed options. Less tidy homeowners may select a subdued light setting or turn off the light entirely; show-offs may use a full illumination option. Sub-Zero, 608.271.2233; www.subzero.com.

modern turns

Diamond Spas, known for their stainless steel and copper bath fixtures, has stepped up to custom staircase design. Crafted of stainless steel or copper, the units' sleek lines fit many contemporary applications. Metal construction also permits designs impossible with other materials, the Broomfield, Colo.-based company says. The unit shown here has mahogany treads, but other species are available. Diamond Spas, 303.665.8303; www.diamondspas.com.

—nigel f. maynard

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hot links

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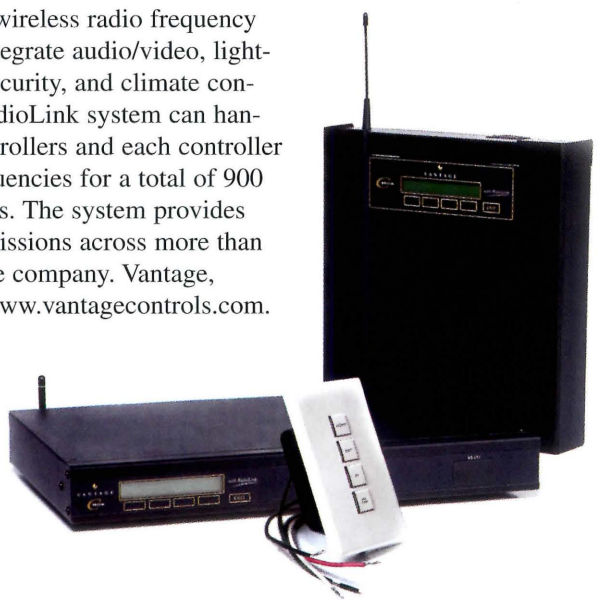
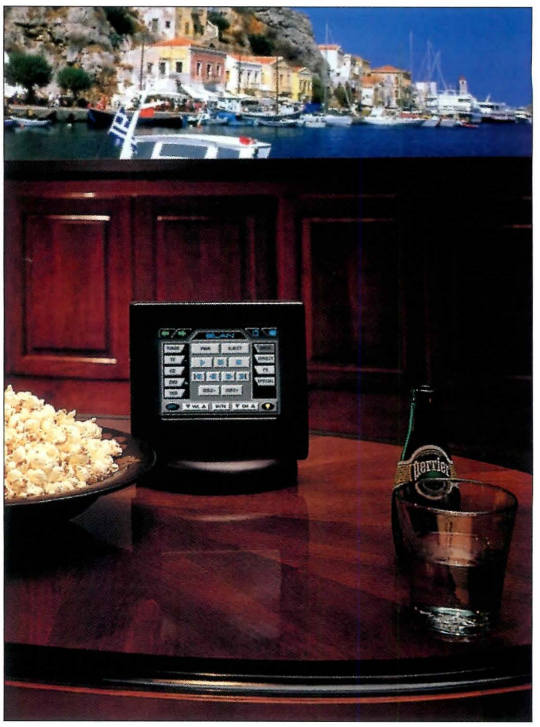
easy touch

OmniLT control panels—designed specifically for smaller homes, townhouses, and apartments—allow a home to be managed and programmed on site or from a remote locale. They interface with security systems, thermostats, phones, computers, and lighting systems, among others. Home Automation, 800.229.7256; www.homeauto.com.

radio rave

RadioLink uses wireless radio frequency technology to integrate audio/video, lighting, draperies, security, and climate control. A single RadioLink system can handle up to 15 controllers and each controller supports 60 frequencies for a total of 900 command options. The system provides error-free transmissions across more than 100 feet, says the company. Vantage, 800.555.9891; www.vantagecontrols.com.





control freak

Steer the way with VIA! Touch Panels' new SC-4 System Controller at the helm. The SC-4 is a little black box that integrates lighting, HVAC, security, and theater components throughout any home. What's more, the color display monitors security or nursery cameras. Program-free setup incorporates point-and-click technology for assigning system commands to touch pads. Elan Home Systems, 859.269.7760; www.elanhomesystems.com.

continued on page 118

Wood Windows from Caradco

When there is light, there is brilliance. And now Caradco offers our brightest idea yet. It's our Tradition Plus line of clad casement windows. These windows are more appealing in terms of both efficiency and beauty, because the sash is wet glazed and the cladding on the sash is mitered. Tradition Plus windows come in a host of shapes and sizes. We also offer seven standard clad colors, several trim packages and a variety of grille choices and simulated divided lites. What's more, we provide the dependable service you'd expect from a company that's been around since 1866.

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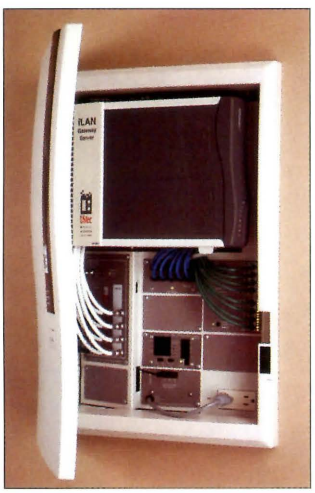
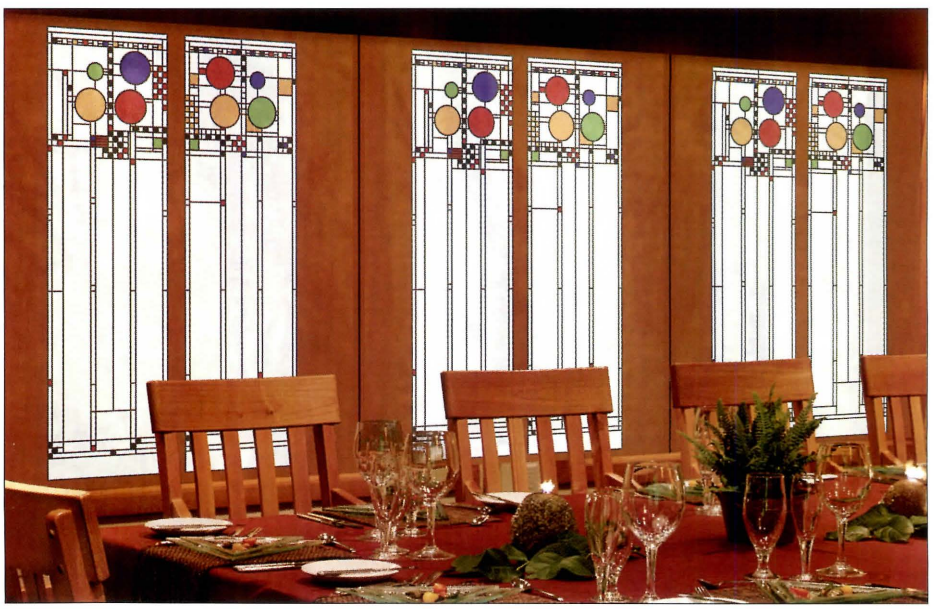
scene stealer

The DHC Toscana Deluxe Programmer sets the scene—64 whole-house lighting scenes to be exact—with one touch. Programmable mood or task lighting options add extra security when homeowners are away. Setup wizards simplify the programming process, and names rather than codes can be used to label fixtures or lighting options. Remote control is an added feature, and the real-time clock runs even during power failures. Leviton, 800.323.8920; www.leviton.com.



come together

iLAN Gateway Server series brings home electronic systems together in one discreet box. A built-in 80 gigabyte hard drive provides ample storage for computer files and whole-house MP3 audio, digital photos, or video. The unit also features wireless networking capability, firewall protection, and surge protection; it will link cable TV, multiline telephone service, surveillance cameras, and high-speed Internet access across multiple outlets. UStec, 800.836.2312; www.ustecnet.com.



shady behavior

Designer keypads and window treatments spice up the Sivoia Motorized Window Shading System. Color-matched, screwless wallplates with coordinated accessories come in more than 40 colors and glossy or matte finishes. These user-friendly keypads are available as single-preset surface-mounted and three-preset wallstation varieties. Window treatments include Roman shades and Frank Lloyd Wright designs. Lutron, 800.523.9466; www.lutron.com.

—shelley d. hutchins

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- Powerful Leadership Practices for Today's Business Environment
- Systems Design and Development for the Custom Builder
- The Paper Trail—Systems and Forms for a Successful Business
- Project Management for the Successful Builder
- Communicating More Effectivel
- Evaluating Your Profitability
- Marketing the Emotion of Your Homes
- CUSTOM HOME Pacesetter Awards Presentation

CUSTOM HOME Tour

See what's new and innovative in the Scottsdale area. Andersen Windows is again arranging an exciting custom home tour on Friday, October 25 from 7:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. Participants will tour a variety of custom homes both under construction and complete. Andersen will arrange for refreshments along the way as well as a special luncheon. More details and tour confirmation will follow at a later date. Register in advance as attendance is limited. Tickets will be mailed from Andersen to confirmed tour attendees a few weeks before the Symposium.

Andersen AW Windows · Patio Doors

CUSTOM HOME Pacesetter Awards Luncheon

Each year CUSTOM HOME and the NAHB Custom Builders committee bestow Pacesetter Awards for excellence and achievement in the business of custom home building to a group of outstanding custom builders. Join us for lunch from 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. sponsored by Pella Windows and find out who the winners are.

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The Symposium features some of the custom home building industry's most respected speakers, including **Al Trellis, Tom Stephani, Steve Maltzman, Paul Montelongo, Clay Nelson,** and **Beverly Koehn. Dennis DuRoff** is back by popular demand, offering practical advice for entrepreneurs who want to lead more satisfying lives and develop more productive and successful businesses. Also returning is author **Anne Warfield,** who will share her strategies to clear the communication path, build leaders, and strengthen teams.

October 25-27, 2002

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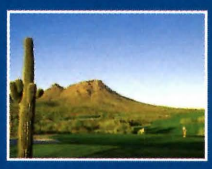
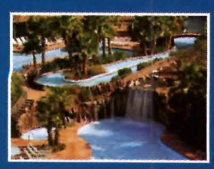
And there's no better place to plan for the future than in sunny Scottsdale. Surrounded by expansive mountain views, golf courses, and laced with blooming floral gardens and waterfalls, the Pointe Hilton Resort guarantees a relaxing and enjoyable stay.





doors & windows

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Circle no. 1

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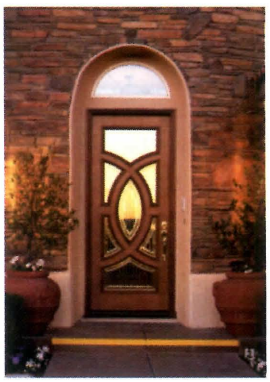

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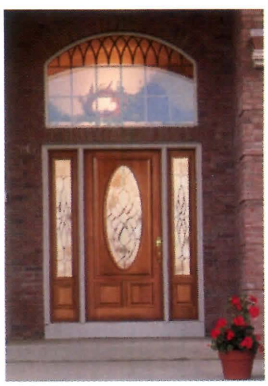

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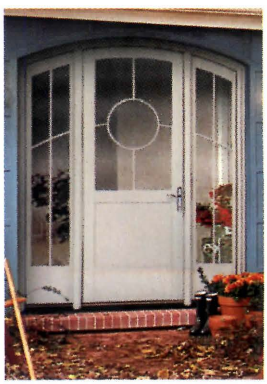

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Norco® Radius Head Clad Wood Patio Door The Norco patio door line now includes a radius head patio door and a half-panel clad patio door. for those who love the look of a patio door with arched transom. The sophisticated designs combine the look of bygone elegance with modern convenience . Full doors swing open for easy use. For product literature or a dealer near you, call **(888) 476-6726, ext. PSN** or visit **www.norcowindows.com**.

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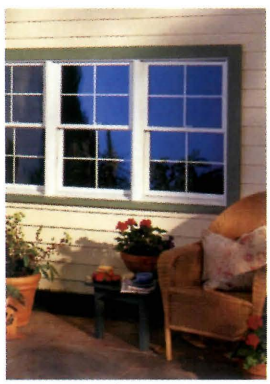

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doors & windows

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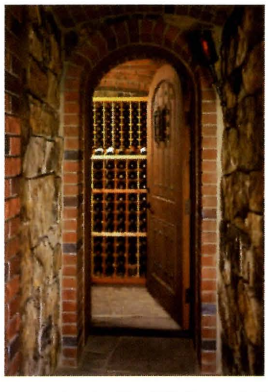

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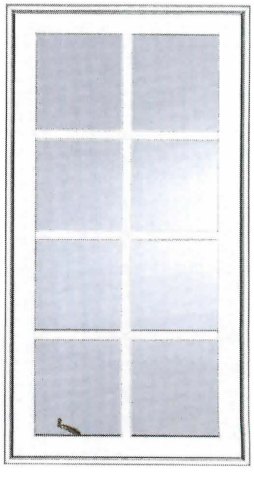

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architect's showcase

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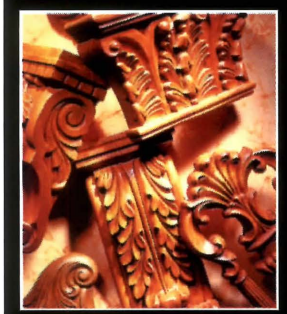
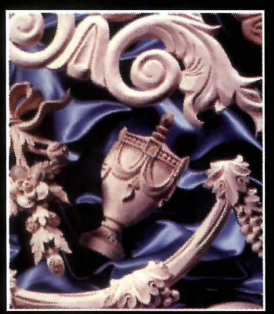
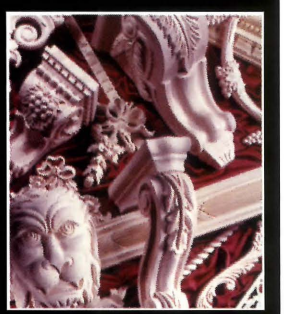

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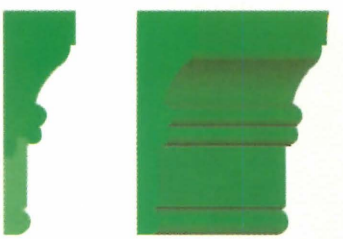

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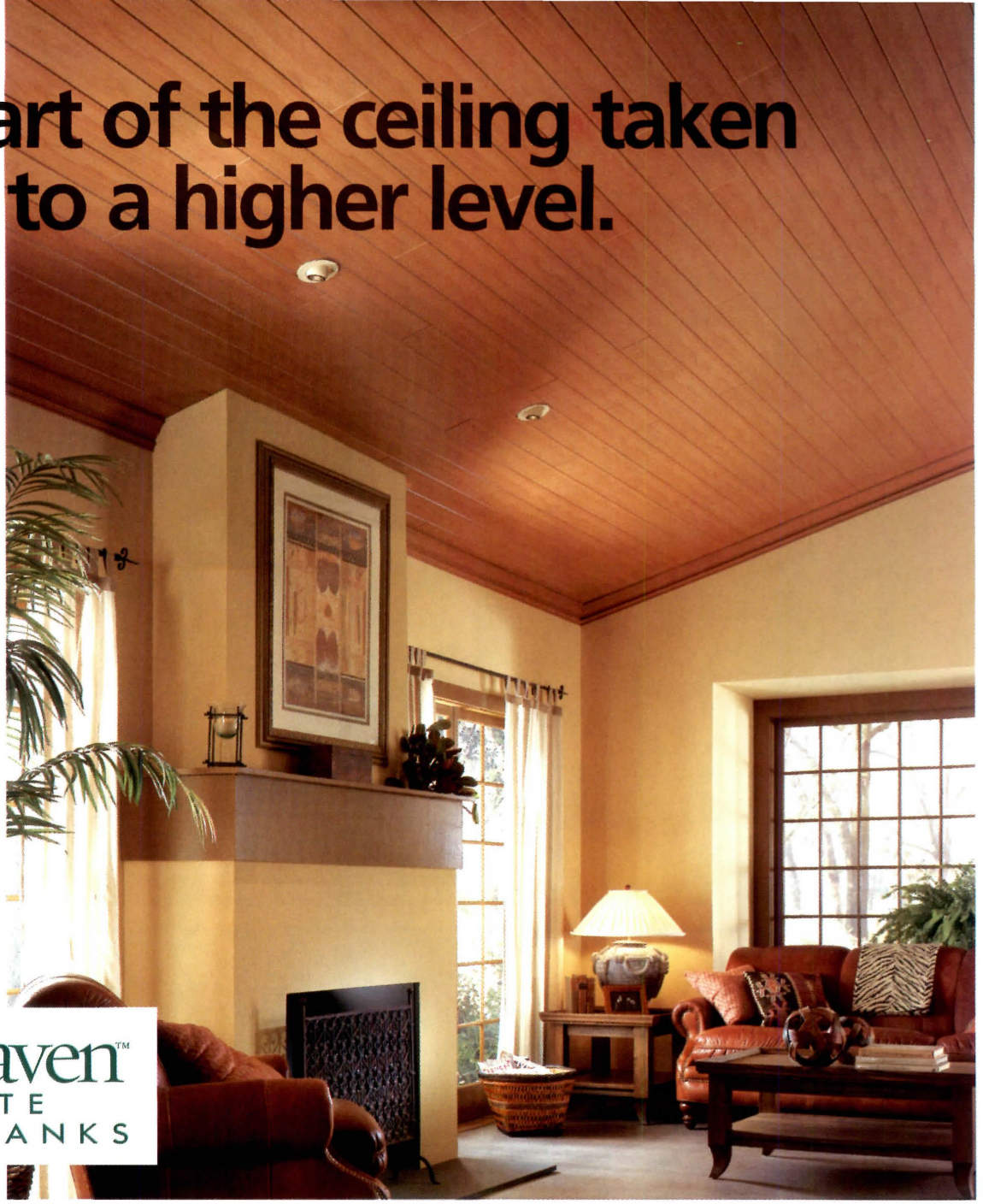

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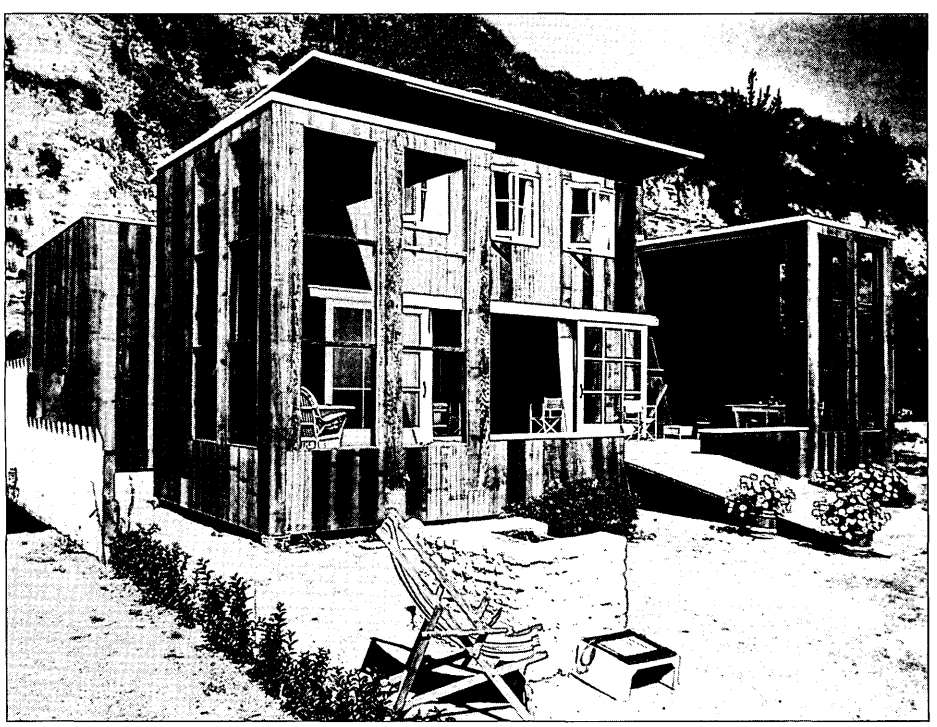
clean living

clark beach house, aptos, calif., 1937
william wurster, faia

"i like to work on direct, honest solutions, avoiding exotic materials, using indigenous things so that there is no affectation and the best is obtained for the money."

—william wurster

The idea of using humble materials to achieve an understated elegance is popular among many of today's top architects. But it wasn't such a common practice in San Francisco-based architect William Wurster's day. His beachfront Clark House in Aptos, Calif., exemplifies his devotion to straightforward, regionally appropriate design.



Sally Woodbridge Collection (1999-19) Environmental Design Archives, University of California, Berkeley

Locally obtained, vertical redwood planks clad the home's exterior. A large wooden deck links house and beach, allowing the residents to do much of their living outdoors. Glassed-in sunrooms flank the deck, shielding it from strong winds. And sliding, glass-paned barn doors enable the house to be closed up quickly in inclement weather. When open, they permit the living room and deck to function as one indoor-outdoor space. The Clark House has been remodeled under subsequent owners. (Photo shows the original house.) It is still privately owned.—*meghan drueding*