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ARCHITECTURE DESIGN Outlook

WHIRLPOOL CHALLENGES DESIGN PROFESSIONALS WITH UPCOMING COMPETITIONS

Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

I would like to announce two design competitions being sponsored by Whirlpool Corporation over the next few months. They are open to building

designers and architects and will be held at two national conventions: the Southeast Building Conference (SEBC) in Orlando in July, and the Remodeling Show in Baltimore in October.

For each competition, the venue will be unique, challenging, and not for the faint-of-heart. Design a house during two days on the trade show floor at a drafting table where show attendees watch you work. A wonderful aspect to this approach is that the building profession (let alone the outside world) normally doesn't understand or appreciate the design process. These

EVENTS OF INTEREST

Concept Awards Design Competition July 14-16, SEBC Convention Orlando, Florida Entry deadline is July 2, 2005 Vist www.theauroras.com for complete details

MasterWork of Design Competition October 13-15, Remodeling Show 2005 Baltimore, Maryland Call 1-800-366-AIBD for details competitions seek to make the process transparent while enlightening builders and remodelers about the distinct creative skills that design professionals can offer them.

Our experience last year was that show attendees came back several times to watch each

competitor's progress, see the completed designs and meet the architects and





2004 Master Work of Design winner Armen Hogtanian

building designers one-on-one. Some of the home designs were further refined and sold following the competition.

I've selected two very different winning designs from last year to show you the level of design and drawing skill that was achieved. As an architect who had the privilege of working for AIA Gold Medallist, Charles Moore, FAIA, an early advocate of the participatory design





2004 Concept Award winner Susan Berry, AIBD

process, I think it's important to share your skills outside the "black box." This venue fosters dialogue, understanding and insights into what you do so well.

So if it's not too threatening, please join us in July and October for a rare and memorable design experience. Details on how to enter are included in the box at the lower left. Email me with your comments at mark_r_johnson@whirlpool.com.



Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD Manager, Architectural and Design Marketing

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A lap pool marks the transition from built environment to natural realm at the York residence, by design/build firm The Construction Zone. Photo: Bill Timmerman. Cover photo: Danny Turner.

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from the editor

checks and balances and checks

is the ultimate reward in building what you design?

by s. claire conroy

hen we had the brilliant idea to do an issue on design/build firms, we thought we'd given ourselves an easy summer assignment. We'd already planned a cover story on multi-talented Marmol Radziner and Associates, so picking a few other likeminded firms for our design portfolio seemed like a nobrainer. Certainly, other residential firms excel in both design and construction. Turns out, these Jacks and Janes of all trades are few and far between. Sure, plenty of companies promote themselves as design/build, but they should really call themselves build/design because that's where their priorities lie. This isn't necessarily a bad thing for clients who want a pleasant design and a one-stop-shopping process for delivering it. But we were on the hunt for companies whose houses stand up to the best that the design-only firms produce. Our ace reporters eventually located a few stellar ones, but they were surprised at the effort it took.

Our cover partners spent some time looking for their mirror image too, hoping they could share wisdom with other large architectled design/build companies. Like some Transylvanians we know of, they saw no reflection in the mirror. Our associate editor Shelley Hutchins had better luck and uncovered a team in Arizona they might want take to lunch: The Construction Zone. We were all skeptical that a company with such a hard-edged name could also draw beautiful houses, but they do. Our other featured firms do lovely work as well. But all the companies we profiled are inventing themselves with only their instinct and passion to guide them.

Passion here is key. Because, for all our complaints about contractors, we understand what they do takes nerves of steel-and the house in their spouse's name. Anyone who has worked in the residential construction profession for any length of time knows a builder who has gone belly-up because he underestimated a job, got in over his head, made a tragic mistake. And even if he does 95 percent of the job right, his customers will remember the 5 percent that went wrong. If he messes up the equation enough times, he's out of work or worse. You've got to love the business to stay in it.



There's lots of risk but done well there's plenty of reward in construction. Many builders make more money than architects. They sell something clients have an easier time understanding. Their efforts result in something tangible. Our design/build firms enjoy earning the full financial benefits of their designs by assembling them, stick by stick. They also love the control, start to finish, that they have over the entire process. There's no one saying it can't be done. There's no one misunderstanding the drawing and hacking the way to a solution. There's no one slicing the heart out of a design to balance the budget or pocket the profit. Ideally.

Design architects worry

about removing the checks and balances of the architectbuilder-client triangle in favor of more padding in the checkbook. If the motivation to build is simply more revenue flowing through the company, perhaps it's a concern worth pondering. All of our profiled firms came at design/build through handson experience in construction. Quite simply, they love putting beautiful things together beautifully welland reaping all the rewards the effort entails. ra

Comments? Call: 202.736. 3312; write: S. Claire Conroy, *residential architect*, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005; or e-mail: cconroy@hanleywood.com.





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disagree with your premise that "because of those antitrust laws we can't just pick a price for all architects to follow and stick to it" ("The Charge Brigade," August 2004, page 13) and suggest residential real estate commissions as a pricing model.

A real estate commission is, in most U.S. markets, generally accepted to be 6 percent of the sale price of a property. Why is this fee so widely accepted? It is very arguable that a real estate agent provides the same value for this fee that an architect would. In terms of billable hours and expenses (to be generous), the fee per hour frequently approaches that received by class action attorneys. Why are all brokerage firms within a given area able to charge the same fee without being subject to antitrust action? Why do most brokerages within the industry charge the same fee without charges of collusion?

Perhaps the architecture profession should look to real estate brokerage as its potential pricing model. If the AIA lacks the influence in Washington and in the public perception to gain national acceptance of a universal fee, perhaps it could engage the National

Association of Realtors to lobby on its behalf.

Peter M. Rockwell Bloomfield, Mich.

he setting of fees is not a simple matter of percentages alone. I have found that there are three ways to charge for architectural services:

1. A percentage, but that will vary based on the complexity of the project, the amount of detailing, the design of extensive builtins, etc. In addition, I have found that the setting of a fixed fee from preliminary drawings to completion of the project poses a risk for the architect during the construction phase. I am perfectly willing to work on a percentage basis up to the completion of the working drawings and specifications because that is my own work and time, but I am not willing to be bound into a fixed percentage fee during construction when I have no control over the work schedule of the builder, which can be inefficient and can drag out the construction time beyond my control. During the construction phase, I charge on a per diem per visit to the site and an hourly rate for other related work. Since being badly stung in a project that was poorly

managed by the builder so that it went nearly a year longer than necessary, I never set a percentage fee for the entire scope of work.

2. A straight hourly fee for the entire project. Granted this requires trust on the part of the architect and owner. This is a fee arrangement suited to largescale residences. I find that that owners often do not feel they should pay (in a percentage fee arrangement) that percentage difference if a more expensive material is chosen rather than one less costly. The question asked: "If we want a ceramic tile for \$20 per square foot, why should we pay a percentage of the difference between \$20 and \$5?" I am happy to work on this basis because I am being compensated for my time.

3. A negotiated lump sum for the work through working drawings and specifications and a per diem and hourly rate during construction. I find that owners of modest means prefer this arrangement. They know what to expect, with the understanding that requested substantial changes are to be paid in addition. The architect may not earn as much this way, but for people who want a house for \$350,000 or \$400,000,

even a 10 percent fee for the drawings and specifications represents too much for them. If the owners are good clients and receptive to good design it may be worthwhile for the architect to work this way. Damn few of us are going to get rich in this profession anyway.

Donald Mallow, architect Leonia, N.J.

eal estate brokers get a 6 percent commission when they sell a house. Average home sale today: \$200,000. Commission: \$12,000, no liability. The average architect fee is 3 percent, which equals \$6,000. The real estate agent walks away at closing, but the architect is professionally responsible in some states for 20 years.

The average home inspection fee is \$350, which equates to \$175 per hour, with near zero liability. If it was a poor inspection, the architect is called in. But the buyer doesn't want to pay a consultation fee.

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> Robert Kiejdan, architect Northfield, N.J.

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home front

news from the leading edge of residential design

the mayne event

Los Angeles architect Thom Mayne, winner of this year's Pritzker Prize, has built his reputation on large-scale public and institutional buildings with striking, exuberant forms. One of his recent Southern California landmarks is the Caltrans District 7 building, headquarters of the California Department of Transportation. It has cantilevered upper floors and an illusive skin that changes in response to outside conditions, turning nearly transparent at dusk. Mayne, who founded his firm Morphosis in 1972, has done



only a handful of houses. But he says they still represent one of the most valuable project types in their freedom to explore and invent. "I want to do houses,





Roland Halbe

but I haven't had a house request in 10 years," he says. "People perceive you as doing one thing."

Pritzker juror Karen Stein, editorial director of Phaidon Press in New York, commented that the 61-year-old Mayne "sees architecture as a contact sport—a group activity that pushes physical limits," and that his work has "consistently explored and expressed architecture as a risk-taking, visceral experience." He has approached houses with that same iconoclastic attitude. His first large-scale residence, the Crawford house (1990), has no single focal point and no obvious front and back. Mayne says he's interested not in an architectural style or status but in

rethinking how to literally live in the land. "I'm really interested in the relationship of architecture and biology, which challenges the separation of building and land," he says.

Mayne, the first American to win the prize in 14 years, has also spent the past three decades as a theorist, author, and teacher. A tenured professor at UCLA, he helped found the progressive Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc) before going on to receive a master of architecture degree from Harvard in 1978. At a ceremony last month at Chicago's Millennium Park, Mayne received a \$100,000 grant and a bronze medallion.—*cheryl weber*







Photos: Kim Zwarts

At the 4,800-square-foot Blades residence (1995), elliptical walls extend from the house to define the outdoor rooms. An elliptical garden dominates the site.

mighty minis

he first-ever Green Dollhouse Competition produced pint-sized winners, but it packed an extralarge ambition: to educate the public about green building. A group of organizations led by Sustainable San Mateo (Calif.) County ran the pro-

gram, which challenged architects to design green, user-friendly dollhouses. Merit award–winning firm Hermannsson Architects of Redwood City, Calif., gave its tiny Tudor (shown) straw bale walls, a SIPs floor, and a standing-seam recycled metal roof. Among other winners were teams from Murdock Young Architects and Laura

Schwartz & Associates, New York City; Andrea Traber Architecture + Sustainability, Berkeley, Calif.; and Anderson Brule Architects, San Jose, Calif. Judges

Emily Hagopian/Essential Images

included Berkeley's David Arkin, AIA, and San Francisco landscape designer Topher Delany. An exhibit showcasing the winners will run from Sept. 24 through Dec. 3 at the Coyote Point Museum in San Mateo and will travel to other U.S. cities in 2006. For more information, visit www.greendoll house.org.—*meghan drueding*

deep green

riters Alex Wilson and Mark Piepkorn have put together the most accessible, up-to-date residential green building guide on the market. *Green Building Products, The GreenSpec Guide to Residential Building Materials* offers green product options that run the entire construction gamut—from



erosion control blankets to low-solvent waterproofing for foundations to reclaimed framing timbers and soy-based insulation.

"We've put our criteria for selecting the products in the front of the book," says author Alex Wilson, president of BuildingGreen, a publisher in Brattleboro, Vermont. "We try to be very public with why we choose the ones we do. And we solicit input such as how they work and whether there are some we missed."

Some products have "green" value because they protect the health of workers. For example, low-VOC concrete form release allows forms to be removed cleanly and non-toxically from foundations. "A product like that means healthier employees," he explains. "They don't go home with a headache, and they come back to work the next day."

What are the most promising new products? "Porous paving products have come a long way," says Wilson. "Recycled rubber 'slate' roofing is gaining popularity, and there's a new, pressuretreated wood product called TimberSIL (www.timbersil.com). It's made with sodium silicate, which is not a pesticide like other preservatives and could replace pesticidetreated wood entirely in a few years."

Order *Green Building Products* for \$34.95 at www.BuildingGreen.com/ ecommerce/gbp.cfm. —*matthew power*

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home front

on the boards / blue moon rising



here's an interesting infill phenomenon going on at the edge of downtown Tucson, Ariz., and an interesting new firm is behind it.

The firm is Dreamspace, a collaboration of Page Repp, president of Repp Design + Construction in Tucson; Luis Ibarra and Teresa Rosano, husband-and-wife principals of Ibarra Rosano Design Architects, also in Tucson; and Tucson investors Jerry and Desi Winter. The neighborhood is Barrio Blue Moon, and it's not far from the University of Arizona School of Architecture, where Repp, Ibarra, and Rosano all studied.

"Page was already building his own house in Barrio Blue Moon, as well as some other houses in the neighborhood when, about a year and a half ago, he and Luis and

I started talking about combining our efforts to do more projects in the neighborhood. As much fun as our custom projects are, we all wanted to be able to make good design available to more people," explains Rosano. "At the same time, the three of us were working on a remodel for Jerry and Debbi Winter's house. As we told them about our plans, they became very excited about it. Of the five of us, they're the largest financial investors."

Dreamspace's first completed project is a duplex called the Slice, so named because the back-to-back homes have been built on a 40-by-155-foot slice of land. Each of the 1,740-square-foot, two-story units, which share a masonry wall, includes three bedrooms, 21/2 baths, and plenty of wide-open living space.

That narrow lot did more than just give the paired homes a catchy name; it dictated almost all of the major design decisions. "The design for this project was based on setbacks and the city's zoning requirements," says Repp. "It's exactly as tall as it can be and exactly as wide as it can be."

The firm had a little more room to work with for its second Barrio Blue Moon project, the Double, which is now on the boards. Their identical plans are geared to families with children and include true master suites rather than the more equitable bedroom arrangement of the Slice.

With their wall-dominant outlook and clean, simple lines, Rosano thinks both the Slice and the Double mix well with their adobe neighbors. "Obviously, the shape of the Slice is different, but the massing and the plaster is actually not," she says. "It relates to some of the adobe structures, which have tall, fairly blank, plastered walls close to the street."—*kathleen stanley*







Straightforward building materials are a hallmark of Dreamspace's work. Integra masonry block walls were skimmed with stucco on the Slice (above), but will be left exposed on the Double (below).



28

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home front

calendar

recycled tire design competition

entry deadline: june 24 submission deadline: july 5

Entrants are invited to turn California's old tires into building products, to be judged at the California State Fair in Sacramento. Prototypes and corresponding drawings, renderings, or comps, plus descriptions, must be included in submissions. Categories include Best New Household Product and Best New Residential Building Product. Call 916.925.5080 or go to www.itsgoodforcalifornia.com to get entry forms.



brick in architecture awards deadline: july 15

Licensed architects should submit designs dominated by brick in residential singlefamily, multifamily, commercial, institutional, and special feature categories. Winners will

be published nationally. Shown: 2004 winner New Student Housing Complex at St. Mary's College of Maryland by Muse Architects. For entry forms go to www.gobrick.com.

unbuilt architecture





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any architect, architectural educator, or student anywhere around the globe; cash prizes awarded. Shown: 2004 winner 2.5D Tower in New York by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. For more information, call 617.951.1433 or visit www.architects.org.



taking place: photographs from the prentice and paul sack collection

june 2-september 6 san francisco museum of modern art

This extensive private anthology comprises architectural photography from 1840 through 1975. Sack chose individual photographs that

articulate a distinct sense of place and that collectively convey how people have shaped the built environment. Photographs by Margaret Bourke-White, Walker Evans, and Wright Morris (whose 1947 Untitled is shown), and more will be displayed. For details, call 415.357.4000 or check out www.sfmoma.org.

architectural visions: utopia and reality

june 4-september 4 cranbrook art museum, bloomfield hills, mich.

This survey of architecture covers the 18th century to the present but emphasizes contemporary works. Eliel Saarinen, Hugh



Max Protetch Gallery

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Ferris, Maija Grotell, Frank Gehry, and others are included through drawings, renderings, and painting and sculpture, including the 2003 Cloud by Iñigo Manglano-Ovalle shown. Call 877.GO.CRANBROOK or go to www.cranbrook.edu/art/museum for more details.

commencement 2003–2004

june 9-august 11 harvard design school

Works by recent graduates in architecture, landscape architecture, city and regional planning, and urban design are showcased. For hours call 617.495.4731 or check out www.gsd.harvard.edu/events.

bellevue arts museum opening june 18

bellevue, wash.

Physical and philosophical renovations to the Bellevue Arts Museum can be explored when the building reopens with a new focus on craft and design. Opening exhibitions highlight 20th-century teapot designs, the domestic designs of iron forger Albert Paley, and works from the Pilchuck Glass School. For information call 425.519.0770 or visit www.bellevueart.org.

ecobuild america

june 20–23 orlando, fla.

Ecobuild America offers classes and exhibits on new innovations in sustainable design, growth and planning practices, products, and materials. To register call 800.996.3863 or go to www.ecobuildamerica.com.

continuing exhibits

Heather Allen: Architectural Textiles, through July 29, The Octagon, Washington, D.C., 202.638.3221; Petra: Lost City of Stone, through Aug. 15, Calvin College, Grand Rapids, Mich., 800.PETRA05.

-shelley d. hutchins



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k+b studio kitchen: hover craft

Three young architects with a passion for craftsmanship launched their new design/ build firm and this 6,000-square-foot interiors project nearly simultaneously. "Most of these modern designs require learning as you go when building them, anyway," says principal Vincent Petrarca, Associate AIA. "We knew we could build our designs as well as a more



Photos: JWest Productions

An oversized range hood dangles 15 feet down from the ceiling to just above the cooktop. "The island and dining table are low and horizontal," says Petrarca, "so this gave us a way to fill the space and distinguish the zones." experienced contractor because it's all new with each house, and we see the whole picture and can anticipate how things need to be exactly."

The soaring story-and-a-half kitchen condenses functions so the room can remain open to outdoor views. Geared to a serious cook, the work zone circulates around a large doublesided island, containing a cooktop and stainless steel surround, and a concrete eating bar. Across from the cooktop is a concrete prep counter with integrated trivet and butcher block. Clear maple cabinets with custom designed drawers support the hefty countertops. Reveals and toekicks, however, create the illusion that the slabs hover independently in space.

Opposite the workstation, a dining table of thick maple planks cantilevers from the wall just beneath the gas fireplace. Honed concrete panels dress up the manufactured firebox and echo a concrete half-wall that shields the kitchen island from view. "The same materials were used in both spaces," says Petrarca, "but we put them together differently to signify distinct functions."

project continued on page 36



"There's a big flat plane to cook and a similar plane to talk around," says Petrarca of the relationship between the dining table and island. The maple tabletop is the same thickness as concrete and stainless slabs topping the island, making it too heavy for a true cantilever. Instead, a thin steel leg, pushed back toward the wall, heightens the contrast between the heavy material and its floating edge.






architect / general contractor:

Vincent Petrarca and Charles Holden, Tonic Design/Tonic Construction, Raleigh, N.C.

cabinetmaker: Hardwood Designs, Raleigh

concrete and range hood fabricator: Cheng Design, Berkeley, Calif. exterior architecture: Frank Harmon Architect, Raleigh.

resources: dishwasher: Miele; hardware: D-Line; plumbing fixtures: Dornbracht, Elkay, Grohe; oven: Gaggenau; refrigerator: Sub-Zero; towel warmers: Myson.

residential architect / june 2005

k+b studio

bath: asia calling

Out the kitchen doors and across the courtyard, a quiet master suite is the antithesis of the kitchen's constant buzz. The client travels extensively on business and asked that the master bath replicate the peaceful escape of high-end hotels—specifically Tokyo's Park Hyatt. A grid encapsulates the room in soothing symmetry. Pale ceramic tiles span the floor and climb the walls. On one wall, the grid manifests as storage cubes with center squares left open for an artful display of eye-catching toiletries.

Acid-etched glass tops the twin vanities, which face opposite directions—a marriage peacekeeper, jokes Petrarca. Concrete-capped end walls extend above counter height to hide quotidian clutter. A taller version screens the



The homeowner's previous job running the Asian outpost of Herman Miller gave him access to the furniture maker's famed veneers, which Petrarca used to line the powder room. A wall of glass block hints at the bamboo beyond and fills the room with discreet natural light.



shower stall. The open shower faces a bathtub surrounded by heated concrete that makes a cozy platform for shaving or just lounging under the spray. Climbing the steps to the shared shower-tub area, bathers shed the stresses of the day.—*shelley d. hutchins*



Concrete pieces around the bathtub and on top of partition walls are custom-colored to match the tile. Skillfully composed inserts and cutouts add interest without disturbing the room's serenity. Maple cabinetry completes a monochromatic, tranguil palette. Tub-to-ceiling glazing gives soakers ample gazing options. Fast-growing bamboo wraps the corner for a "feeling of floating in the trees" when looking out the windows.

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perspective

safe and sound

creating secure and vibrant communities from the outside in

by ian colquhoun

rime, fear of crime, and antisocial behavior can have a significant effect on quality of life. All three are key driving forces that determine where people wish to live, work, and send their children to school. They can have a major impact on the social, economic, and physical viability of a neighborhood. Architects and developers often fear that an overemphasis of these issues can lead to a fortress-like environment, but this does not need to be the case.

international efforts

During the last 50 years, the development of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) in the United States has had international significance. It began with Jane Jacobs and Oscar Newman laying down the principles of defensible space, which have since been universally accepted, and continued with the work of C. Ray Jeffrey in the 1970s. Christopher Alexander's book A Pattern Language (1977) formed the basis of the Dutch Policemarque Secured Housing design guidance. Since its intro-



lan Colquhoun

duction in 1997, the guidance has proved successful in reducing burglaries and other domestic crime. It saved Dutch society some 2 billion euros (\$2.6 billion) in its first three years. Alexander's book does not itself focus on crime, but it contains design elements that could have crime preventive and fearreducing effects. Of the 253 "Patterns," 55 were molded into the Dutch scheme, which applies to urban planning, public spaces, and housing layout.

The Dutch scheme has a British equivalent, Secured

With parking relegated to the basement of each unit, residents of De Paerel have adopted and personalized the territory in front of their houses. The project in Hoorn, The Netherlands, was designed by Inbo Architecten B.N.A and developed by Scholtens Projecten B.V.

by Design, which is a much more limited program. It contains only a small number of environmental design recommendations, many of which also demonstrate close parallels to Alexander's patterns. For example, it suggests designing a variety of housing types into a community, much like *A Pattern Language*'s Pattern #35, Household Mix.

The Dutch program also requires the provision of facilities for teenagers and children. It recognizes that young people rank high in the public's perception of the causes of crime. The American expert Al Zelinka writes: "The bottom line on public safety must be focused on youth. ... if we do not give youth an alternative to destructive, or counter productive, behavior, who has failed whom?" The key is to get young people involved and allow them ownership of what they come up with. After-school clubs, local cafes, meeting places, youth continued on page 40

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perspective

shelters, playgrounds suited to the various age groups, etc., are frequently at the top of their list.

In addition to CPTED, the influence of New Urbanism and smart growth in Britain is becoming increasingly significant. Prince Charles's new village at Poundbury in Dorchester was inspired by his visit to Seaside in Florida. Poundbury's concept is that of a walkable neighborhood with mainly row housing producing a higher density than traditional layouts of single and duplex housing. The larger number of houses facing the street affords more natural surveillance, but the use of row housing means car parking is placed in courts at the rear. These can be vulnerable to burglary, but at Poundbury the danger is lessened by locating a small number of houses within the court to ensure they overlook the parking.

new solutions

Design alone will not solve problems of crime. What is needed is the creation of "balanced communities" in age profile, income, and tenure, with an appropriate range of local facilities such as schools, shops, and meeting places.

"design alone will not solve problems of crime, what is needed is the creation of 'balanced communities.'"

Greg Saville from the University of New Haven in Connecticut and Gerry Cleveland from the Civitas Corp. in Perth, Australia, sum this up in their concept of "2nd Generation CPTED," a new form of "ecological sustainable development" based on traditional CPTED design principles but with resident participation and shared responsibility for management and maintenance. They advocate small, site-specific, human scale neighborhoods located close to work, with their own schools, meeting places, and facilities for young people.

Two London schemes illustrate this in relationship to city living. Cromer Street at King's Cross has combined the physical regeneration of 1960s high-rise public housing and 19th-century railway tenement housing with the social development of a multi-ethnic community. This included the establishment of a community trust to ensure the sustainability of social and economic initiatives developed alongside the physical improvements. The regeneration, completed in 2002, used many physical means to increase safety. The open



Environmental Assistance



Provincial Pictures

At Poundbury in Dorchester, England, most houses front onto the street for maximum natural surveillance; a smaller number of houses within the court overlook the parking, for additional security.

space around the blocks of flats was divided into semi-private areas that were enclosed with railings and gates. Residents park their cars in these areas and all have signed a management agreement that ensures they keep the gates locked at night. The three urban squares in the neighborhood were converted into parks with play and leisure facilities. These are also locked at night. Crime has been reduced considerably, and a strong sense of community has been created.

The second scheme, Beddington Zero Energy Housing, completed in 2003, comprises 82 mixedtenure/income dwellings. There were no special CPTED considerations in its layout design, which was based on low-energy principles, i.e., rows of south-facing housing. Nevertheless, there are few problems of security because, through sharing a common interest, a community has been formed that is capable of tackling such issues as they arise.

Creating safe and sustainable communities in these ways is now embodied in the proposals for the new residential areas planned in the South East of England to meet the needs of economic expansion. New housing will be supported by government funding for land acquisition and infrastructure, but development will predominately be private housing for sale with a small proportion of social housing (affordable housing, in American terms) for rent. This is the first real opportunity Britain has had for many years to demonstrate new planning and design concepts, but only time will tell how successful the approach will be. ra

Professor Ian Colquhoun is an architect and town planner in Britain. He has written five books on residential design and urban regeneration. His latest is Design Out Crime: Creating Safe and Sustainable Communities (Elsevier/ Architectural Press, 2004.)



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practice

peripheral vision

architects look beyond the artificial boundaries of disciplinary divides.

by cheryl weber

uccessful residential architecture often involves meticulous, almost obsessive attention to every aspect of a house. The ideal commission comes with a substantial budget that allows architects to package the total concept, from a house's layout and proportions to the pattern on the curtains and the shape of a chair leg. For many architects, even that is not enough. In the last decade, big-name architects have broadened their artistic reach-and their revenue stream-by mixing markets; middle-class consumers now happily buy bathtubs designed by Philippe Starck and dustpans by Michael Graves. But architecture can also influence seemingly unrelated areas of design, and vice versa. An increasing number of architects, it seems, are getting paid to design Web sites and product packaging and to invent brand identities. Some are making narrative films about their ideas; others are putting their architecture to music. For a growing subset of architects, the office has become quite a versatile place, an atelier of modern technology and creative culture.



On the one hand, this freewheeling design sensibility is most prevalent among graduates of progressive art and architecture schools such as the Pratt Institute, Columbia University, and the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). Los Angeles architect Liz Martin, a 1992 SCI-Arc grad and the founder of Alloy Design and Technology, notes that in preparation for largescale design competitions, Rem Koolhaas sometimes hires an extra 50 people from disparate design backgrounds for a brainstorming session, and that Thom Mayne, a SCI-Arc founder, also works that way. Recently, however, cultural theorists such as Richard Florida (*The Rise of the Creative Class*) and Daniel Pink (*Free Agent Nation*) have weighed in on the grassroots nature of this phenomenon. In his newest book, *A Whole New Mind* (Riverhead Books, 2005), Pink says cross-disciplinary design is part of a growing cultural shift in the way we *continued on page 44*

practice

think and work, and he predicts that the ability to master that kind of creative synergy will mean the difference between who gets ahead and who falls behind.

"Design is a high-concept aptitude that is difficult to outsource or automate and that increasingly confers a competitive advantage in business," he writes. By high concept, he means "the capacity to detect patterns and opportunities, to create artistic and emotional beauty, to craft a satisfying narrative, and to combine seemingly unrelated ideas into something new."

mixed media

Whether or not it's the wave of the future, architects with melting-pot practices say it enriches their professional lives. For Craig Bachellier, it's also a handy way to broaden his client base while he works toward an architecture license. Bachellier started his Manhattan firm Assemblages in 1998, a year after earning an architecture degree from Pratt. Trained as a classical cellist from age 3, he studied film and photography at Pratt, and along the way picked up Internet code programming. After setting up shop with three partners-an architect, a graphic designer, and another architect-in-training-an eclectic mix of projects began rolling in. Commissions from commercial clients often segued into requests for business branding, Web design, and residential work.

A serendipitous contact kicked off the business model by which the firm operates. While designing a house addition in Vermont, Bachellier was asked to create a Web site for the client's sister-in-law, Kerry Kennedy. Kennedy wanted a Web site to help publicize her book Speak Truth to Power, which tells the stories of 50 human rights defenders. That commission led to promotional pieces for several spin-off projects, including a multimedia presentation for a traveling photographic exhibit.

Unlike traditionally run large firms that compartmentalize their architecture and graphics divisions, charrette and crit sessions at these offices usually include everyone. "A lot of this is fluid, making connections in ways you wouldn't doing strictly residential work," Bachellier explains. "We've had some weird moments, talking about how we'll put a house together but having my programmers plugging in ideas for using a similar abstract language for Web projects and logo branding."

Big-picture thinking is second nature for students coming out of experimental schools, where traditional drafting and AutoCad are viewed as boring and outmoded. Eric Safyan, owner of Coney Island Architecture in Brooklyn, says PowerPoint presentations were banned at SCI-Arc because they are too linear. In one studio, students were required to create computer Flash sites for

the structure of music

rchitecture is sometimes described as lyrical, but for Los Angeles architect Liz Martin, its musical likeness is more than a vague metaphor. Martin, founder of the multidisciplinary firm Alloy Design and Technology, is composing a musical score to go with a house she's designing in L.A.'s Beechwood Canyon. The client is an industrial designer who commissioned the modern classical piece along with his 3,200-square-foot modernist house. "He understands the design process through music," she says. "Aesthetics, proportion, materiality, and texture are reflective in the sound of the music."

Martin is uniquely qualified for the job. Growing up, she attended the Manhattan School of Music and explored music and architecture in a SCI-Arc thesis. Later, her thesis was published in *Pamphlet Architecture 16: Architecture as a Translation of Music*, part of a series of small books edited by Steven Holl and published by Princeton Architectural Press. Martin hopes to distribute her music too, through a forum called Frog Peak (www.frogpeak.org), a composers' collective that publishes and performs works of art.

When the house is finished, the music, which is written for violin, cello, bassoon, and percussion, will be played at an opening hosted by the owner. "To him it's almost like a piece of furniture, something that came with the house that he'll showcase from time to time," Martin says. She named her 4-year-old firm Alloy Design and Technology because an alloy is a blend of different materials. The mixture of metals makes it stronger, she says, and represents the way she thinks about design. -c.w.

their presentations, showing how people move through and interact with space.

Safyan, who graduated in 2001, wants to attract multifamily housing clients who need not just construction drawings but a marketing concept that includes a Web site, brochures, and material samples. Currently, he's building a site for Terrence Blanchard, the Grammy Award–winning trumpet player and film score composer, which entails streaming music and video, message boards, and animation. For a friend who's a barbecue master, he's fashioning an identity for a new barbecue sauce. "A lot of this stuff just comes at me and I don't say no to a project, so I end up flipping back and forth," Safyan says. "Architecture is my first passion, so as soon as I get my license I'll be much *continued on page 46*

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practice

more involved with building. But this other stuff will be an important part of my practice, putting a whole concept together that you can market in the built world and the virtual world."

How architects think is as important as what they build, and filmmaking can enrich the architectural imagination too. At Lightroom in Decatur, Ga., an architect, a graphic designer, and a multimedia designer (or expat architect, as Kevin Byrd calls himself on his Web site, lightroom.tv) explore the various ways people experience space. Two years ago, Byrd founded the firm with Bill Carpenter, his architecture professor at Southern Polytechnic State University in Marietta, Ga. Byrd notes

that architecture, interactive CD-ROMs, and Web sites all use compressed and expanded space to provide information and entertainment. "To a certain degree that's why we became interested in film, because the narrative nature of that medium can inform architecture as well," he says. "When you're working with people from other disciplines, you're able to take on more complex problem-solving."

As well as designing modernist houses, Web sites, and print media, Lightroom has explored filmmaking mostly for pleasure and self-promotion. A recent film, *Insert Logo Here*, looked at the relationship between consumers and the corporate image. *The Cycle Theory*, a short narrative film, was shown this spring at the Rialto Center for the Performing Arts in Atlanta, part of an exhibition about the design process.

telling stories

Wherever it crops up, crossdisciplinary design caters to a creative class of people from artists to entrepreneurs. "I think we attract certain residential clients because they see we have a broader range of ability to solve problems," says Christopher Carr, a partner at Wiehle Carr, a 15-yearold Los Angeles firm that does architecture, graphics, interiors, and identity design. When the six-member team is designing a house, for example, the graphic designer might create the house numbers, help select the finishes, or suggest that a piece of

art be formed right into the concrete. "All of a sudden, because you have the ability in-house, you use it," says Carr, an environmental designer.

For startup business ventures, in particular, the physical building is only part of the solution. Wiehle Carr, whose work also includes historic restoration, retail, and health-care facilities, is currently helping to invent an identity for the 6-monthold MommyZone, a new concept that combines shopping and health care. It's a place where pregnant women and new moms can set up appointments with baby-care consultants, or come with friends to buy everything from clothing and continued on page 48



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practice

baby gifts to breast pumps. Wiehle Carr designed the storefront, signage, interior, logo, and furniture, and will create packaging for the products MommyZone plans to develop. Architects are there when business owners are changing their image, so they're in a perfect position to extend the story line. "Long ago, when we were doing exhibition work for museums and before all the branding buzzwords appeared, it became apparent that retail is about storytelling," Carr says. "You're telling a story and sharing information. If how you're selling product



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P.O. Box 1203 • New Haven, CT 06505 Phone: (203) 934-6363 • Fax: (203) 931-4365 Web: www.bilco.com • E-mail: bilco@bilco.com can relate to the architecture in a sophisticated way, people coming in will appreciate that."

Those stories can be rooted in all sorts of offbeat references. As Daniel Pink writes in A Whole New Mind, "It's no longer sufficient to create a product, a service, an experience, or a lifestyle that's merely functional. Today it's economically crucial and personally rewarding to create something that is also beautiful, whimsical, and emotionally engaging." Phillip Otto, the founder of Otto Design Group and a professor of architectural practice at the University of the Arts, Philadelphia, would agree. In fact, it's a concept his clients have long understood. "When we started to get commercial and residential commissions in San Francisco in the late 1980s, people would say, 'I hate architecture," he says. "Our premise was not antiarchitecture at all, but we realized we were inventing something different in our approach to buildings, using art-world references and asking cultural questions about the client and the building."

Otto majored in fine arts and cultural anthropology at Stanford University and then attended the San Francisco Art Institute, studies that prepared him for his roster of arty, subculture retail clients such as Urban Outfitters, Free People, Betsey Johnson, and Utrecht. The firm keeps a stable of about a dozen tenured people in the Philadelphia office and six in Los Angeles—architects, *continued on page 50*

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fine artists, and graphic designers—and uses freelancers when there's an influx of work.

Otto says his residential clients don't care about professional design categories. "It's in the residential area in particular that the blurring of boundaries happens," he says. "Residential clients like our company culture because there's a common thread that's evident in everything we do. It might be the extreme way in which we reflect our clients, and the end result is broader than it might be with an architectural rock-star approach."

The firm often consults on



artwork and inserts graphics components into homes it designs. A recent commission featured a giant wave-like gesture that led people from the front door into the living space. Retail spaces for the entrepreneur who started Urban Outfitters and Anthropologie led to the design of his private residence, which incorporates artifacts from all over the world. Otto Design Group is currently working on a house in L.A.'s Laurel Canyon for Joe Hahn, founder of the Grammy-Award-winning alternative music group Linkin Park. "Musically, they're in a similar place to where we are architecturally," Otto says. "Joe didn't worry about what category his music fit into, and we don't worry about our categories." If anything, Otto characterizes some of his work, particularly for Urban Outfitters, as a modernist handling of rustic materials. "We have an ongoing relationship with architect Dion Neutra, Richard Neutra's son," he adds. "It made me realize we're probably not modernist-there's a purism to it that I love, but it's not us. We'd be postmodernist-willing to use anything and not in tune with any theoretical premise."

flex mode

Architects with renaissance practices say it's not the easiest way to run a business, because the range of projects is so broad. Staff people have to stretch to solve problems that don't fall into their skill sets. On the other hand, *continued on page 52*



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Christopher Carr says that small firms like his have the luxury of spending less time managing departments and more time designing projects, and the team moves them through together. "I think what's so exciting is that people are broadening their skill base at every moment," he says.

At the helm of a larger firm, Otto says that although he's become the lead salesman and bill collector, he views hiring as a huge creative act. "We work hard to have hybrid overlaps, people who are sensitive to the multidisciplinary approach," he says. His youth-culture clients help him attract graduates from SCI-Arc, the Rhode Island School of Design, and the University of Pennsylvania, as well as people from such far-flung places as Australia and Japan.

In practice today, interdisciplinary design is an old idea with a decidedly 21st-century interpretation. Carr points out that his business partner, architect Louis Wiehle, studied with Frank Lloyd Wright for 15 years. In addition to designing buildings, the office was publishing a newsletter, making furniture, listening to music, and honing its appreciation for art and culture. The architects crossed boundaries, connecting dots that would help them solve design problems on many levels. ra

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



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Leo Marmol and Ron Radziner (opposite) and their staff splice indoors and outdoors in unexpected ways. At this house in Los Angeles, a glass walkway connects two pavilions, creating a private poolside courtyard.



Photos: Benny Chan/Fotoworks



by meghan drueding

from start to finish, marmol and radziner refine the art and craft of design/build.

right with the second s

In Los Angeles, would-be Hollywood stars go to sleep dreaming of their names up in lights. Leo Marmol and Ron Radziner had the same vision, only it was their philosophy they wanted posted for everyone to see. So, early in their careers, the ambitious young architects rigged up an old movie marquee outside their office and ran a weekly quote they found interesting or provocative. They drew from sources as diverse as Karl Marx and the 1984 cult film *Repo Man*. "We would try to make the quotes topical to what was happening in the city," says Marmol, AIA. "When the race riots happened, we put up a Martin Luther King quote. Or we'd put up things about urban issues or growth. People started noticing that—it was a way for us to communicate."

The marquee eventually came down when Marmol and Radziner, AIA, got too busy to go quote-hunting every week.

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Danny Turner





Photos: Benny Chan/Fotoworks

The firm's reputation as a master of Modern restorations also helps it to land new-house commissions such as this cleverly sited hillside residence in Los Angeles (2003; see also page 58).

right to the end

But that desire to communicate still remains. The two of them thrive on interaction—with clients, with colleagues, with the public, and with their own staff. Which works out well, because running perhaps the most sophisticated residential design/build firm in the country leaves little time for solitary pursuits.

Nowadays, Marmol Radziner and Associates operates out of a converted factory in West Los Angeles, with architects, landscape architects, and interior designers sharing one 14,000square-foot room. Behind the main space, an in-house wood shop and a metal shop take up an additional 3,500 soundproofed square feet. The firm's field employees, including superintendents, project managers, carpenters, and laborers, are scattered on jobsites. All in all, Marmol and Radziner oversee a 110-person fiefdom. Not bad for a couple of guys in their early 40s, who still vividly remember doing the painting themselves on the first new house they ever built, in San Pedro, Calif.

old fashioned

The story of how they got here from there is a familiar one: Two young idealists meet at school (California Polytechnic at San Luis Obispo), toil at separate firms, and then join forces in 1989. But there the script veers off into the unfamiliar, unglamorous territory of design/build. According to Marmol and Radziner, their choice was obvious. "We realized the loss of control we had from not build-



In 1992 they caught a break when the owners of a 1950 Richard Neutra house in the Hollywood Hills, Kun House #2, tapped them for a minor restoration job. The next year Marmol and Radziner landed an even bigger fish: the restoration of Neutra's 1946–47 Kaufmann House in Palm Springs,







A restoration and addition to Albert Frey's 1946 Loewy House in Palm Springs, Calif., demanded intensive research and a strong dose of humility. "You have to be willing to step into the original architect's mind," says Radziner. "If you inject your own ego, it doesn't work as well." Photos: David Glomb





While Marmol and Radziner are modernists at heart, they're not dogmatic over issues of style. At an addition to a 1923 clapboard cottage (1998), they gently grafted more contemporary pieces onto the original while preserving its design integrity.



Photos: Tim Street-Porter

right to the end

Calif. This high-profile commission garnered a glut of media attention, and soon the pair found themselves restoring (and sometimes expanding) Modernist gems by the likes of Albert Frey, R.M. Schindler, and A. Quincy Jones. The partners partly attribute their early success in winning such projects to their own modern portfolio. But both say their design/build background helped them land these technically challenging jobs. "The design process in restoration is so much about how to build stuff in the way it was made originally," says Marmol. Los Angeles-based architecture critic Michael Webb agrees. "They do such a good job on restoration because they fabricate the elements themselves," he says. "In each case they've captured the detail and spirit of the original house. That's a hard thing to do, because needs have changed. People want larger spaces and more amenities."

Modern restorations still make up about one-third of Marmol Radziner and Associates' work. The firm has another one under way on a 1961 Cliff May house, as well as its eighth and ninth Neutra restorations. Along with institutional and commercial projects, it's also doing more new houses and non-historic remodels, which follow a completely different philosophy than the restorations. "The goal with restoration is to have it be like you were never there," says

Radziner. "With a remodel or a new house, we can make it ours. The less history there is, the more freedom you have." These projects give the firm a chance to apply the lessons it's learned on restoration jobs—about materiality, for example, or interior-exterior relationships—in a fresh context.

nuts and bolts

In their earlier days, Marmol and Radziner handled design and construction together. While each still participates in both phases of a project, they've adjusted their method to give design principal Radziner the lead at the schematic design stage, and managing principal Marmol supervision of construction drawings, site work, and the building process. The strategy caters to the partners' particular skills and helps them manage their time while allowing them both to contribute at every stage of the game. The number of project managers assigned to a job depends on the services the company is

shop talk

Ex- and almost-architects lurk in every cor-



Marmol Radziner and Associates

ner of Marmol Radziner. Not only do many construction staffers come from architecture backgrounds, but so do the heads of the in-house wood and metal shops. Brent Bryan, the wood shop's leader, studied architecture at Tulane University. "I like getting dirty better than sitting behind a desk," he says. Just across the office, the four fabricators at the metal shop take their cues from Scott Enge, who worked for Steven Holl in the early 1990s and spent three years as an architect at Marmol Radziner. Now he oversees the making of custom windows, sliding doors, and hardware, often to match existing, out-of-production items in remodels and restorations. His metal expertise also factors into the firm's aspiration to build structural steel frames for prefab housing.

Placing the shops under the same roof as the architects' drafting tables facilitates the quality control the firm prizes. "In the process of drawing a cabinet or metal detail, the architect can go over and talk to the crafters," says Leo Marmol. The 13-person wood shop often makes full-scale cardboard mockups of closets or cabinetry, setting them up on the site for the client's approval before going ahead with the permanent versions. In a couple of cases with irregular existing walls, it's even established a temporary, on-site cabinet shop to ensure the results are a perfect fit.



Photos: Tim Street-Porte





The firm worked with an outside builder on this new house (1996) in Santa Monica, Calif. "Even if we're hired only as the architect, the client does appreciate our building expertise," says Marmol. "They don't want to be caught between the architect and builder."

right to the end

providing. If it's doing architecture, construction, and landscape design, for example, it will assign three project managers, one from each discipline. On-site personnel receive the same benefits package as office staff, a policy that serves the firm well in the constant industry-wide struggle to retain construction professionals.

Whether their background is in design or building, all employees answer to a company culture of perfectionism. "We're trying to be perfect with all this, but we fail," says Marmol. "I'd rather be frustrated this way than be satisfied with being mediocre." That means hand-dipping hundreds of individual tiles on a restoration job to render the new floor indistinguishable from the old. It means a weekly staff meeting devoted to dissecting a specific topic (closet design, waterproofing, and new building materials are some recent subjects) and understanding it from the inside out. And it means exhaustive research. Marmol and Radziner spend so much time at the famous architecture book-

store Hennessey + Ingalls in Santa Monica, Calif., that owner Mark Hennessey chose them to design and construct the store's 2003 remodel. "They were the only people I asked," he says. "I'd enjoyed their work, and it was a nice way to thank them for being such good customers."

Like Hennessey, the clients who select the firm tend to appreciate its exacting nature. They're often writers, fashion insiders (ex-Gucci designer Tom Ford, for one), and other creative personalities who share their need to get things just right. Unlike many architects, Marmol and Radziner feel they produce their best work when the homeowner is highly involved in the design process—even if their ideas and the clients' clash at times. "My understanding is that they're very willing to work with clients," says local architect and Schindler expert Judith Sheine, chair of Cal Poly-Pomona's architecture department. Customers generally approach the firm for design first. Then they choose from a menu of additional services—construction, landscape architecture, and interior design—paying a separate fee for each.

In contrast to larger-scale commercial and institutional projects, which it usually cedes to an outside contractor, Marmol Radziner builds about 80 percent of its house designs itself. Residential clients who don't use them as builders often have a previous relationship with another contractor, or they're simply more comfortable with the traditional separation of roles. Even







Photos: Above: David Glomb; right, top right: Benny Chan/Fotoworks

High-end custom isn't the only housing type to interest Marmol and Radziner. They've designed special-needs apartments (above), Marmol's prefab vacation home (top), and two single-family residences they're developing (middle).





right to the end

when it's serving solely as the architect, the firm's fluency in other disciplines enhances its ability to collaborate. It's reaped a handful of jobs from referrals by outside builders, a sure sign of mutual respect. As it does with the architect-client relationship, Marmol Radziner savors the tension inherent between the design and building sides of a project. "It's not that the conflict between design and build goes away," says Radziner. "We don't want that. That's where a lot of the good in a design comes from." Though many perceive design/build as a cheaper alternative to the standard, divided process, Marmol and Radziner don't make that claim for their work. They simply view design/build as a better way to create architecture, because of the immediate communication it allows and the quality control it provides them. "It's less about us than about a way of building we believe in, that's responding to the site, that's executed as efficiently as an inefficient process can be," Marmol says.

marquee value

Marmol and Radziner have shown they can wear two hats comfortably, and now they're trying on a third—that of developer. In April they broke ground on two high-end spec houses in Los Angeles, their first stab at developing their own properties. They're also experimenting with prefab housing, putting the finishing touches on a modular second home for Marmol and his wife in Desert Hot Springs, Calif. "Prefab is a tougher nut to crack than many are willing to discuss," he says. Assuming they can figure out a workable prefab strategy, he and Radziner hope to develop a whole community of modular houses.

They clearly relish their firm's position as one of the few design/builders in the nation to be recognized for high design quality. In addition to numerous awards and publications, Marmol Radziner and Associates received the AIA California Council's Firm of the Year prize in 2004. But it gets lonely at the top, and that ever-present need to connect with others about the challenge of finding labor, the give-and-take between the field and the office, and other issues that affect design/builders differently than traditional architects—keeps rearing its head. "We wish we had peers we could talk to about design/build," Radziner says, a bit wistfully. Though they've looked, they've been unable to find other architect-led design/build firms whose size comes close to theirs.

With their triumphs doing much to bolster design/build's image, perhaps Marmol and Radziner's wish will come true. If not, they can always reinstate their voluble marquee to get the word out. "People were disappointed when it came down," says Marmol. "We're actually thinking of reviving it." ra

fine furniture

Along with its handmade detailing and woodwork, Marmol Radziner



Benny Chan/Fotoworks

has a history of crafting custom furniture for clients. So its own made-to-order retail line seemed a logical next step. Five years ago it launched the Kings Road Group, a series of licensed, authorized replicas of the furniture in R. M. Schindler's 1922 Kings Road House. The firm fabricates the pieces in its wood and metal shops and sells them through showrooms in Los Angeles and New York City. It donates a portion of the income from the line to Friends of the Schindler House, which has given it full access to the original pieces. "We're recreating the originals in exacting detail," says associate Daniella Wilson, who guides the firm's interiors and furniture divisions. "For example, we hard-wire-brush the wood to raise the grain so it has an old feel."

More recently, Marmol Radziner Furniture developed an original line based on its bespoke pieces for Ron Radziner's own house. The luxurious, minimalist bedroom, living, dining, and indoor/outdoor collections come standard in walnut or maple with stainless or blackened steel hardware, and buyers frequently specify custom sizes or materials. Buoyed by its success with furniture so far, the firm plans a second original line modeled after the pieces designed for Leo Marmol's just-finished desert retreat. For more information on Marmol Radziner Furniture, visit its Web site at www.marmolradzinerfurniture.com.

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"even without every last detail drawn we're going to figure it out."

72

-andy byrnes

ndy Byrnes put himself through architecture school by building houses, and he enjoyed every minute of it. When he moved to Phoenix after graduation, his priorities were to get his contractor's license and track down fellow Tulane alumnus Richard Fairbourn. A mutual professor gave him

the lead on Fairbourn, who'd been practicing architecture in the area for 15 years. The lead proved prophetic. In 1992, just a year after meeting, the two architects joined forces to form a design/build firm called The Construction Zone. "Collaboration led us to our own niche of creating only architecture that we want to build," Byrnes says.

Another Tulane architecture grad migrated his way a few years later, and in 1998 D.J. Fernandes became the firm's third partner (as well as its CFO and graphic designer). The company now employs 65 staff and has recently launched two smaller divisions: CZ MULTI oversees multifamily and light commercial, while CZ WORK fabricates custom concrete, glazing, and carpentry. Every project supervisor has a degree in architecture and is trained in the art of construction by the firm's dedicated craftsmen.

"From our standpoint," says Byrnes of the design/build advantage, "I like to have control over a project and know that *continued on page 74*







york residence

Byrnes designed this 5,400square-foot house on spec using his family as theoretical homeowners. "I didn't know how to do it without thinking about a client's needs," he says. "Plus, if it hadn't sold we would have moved in." The site had a tight buildable envelope split in half by a *continued on page 75*

building it themselves

"i like to have control over a project and know that i'm going to satisfy the client." – andy bymes

continued from page 72

I'm going to satisfy the client." Because the company's only advertising is word-of-mouth, happy homeowners are key to its success. According to Byrnes, those homeowners benefit by getting more architecture per dollar and a more efficient process. These forward-thinking clients do take a slight leap of faith, because not every design element is put to paper before building begins, and some final decisions are worked out during construction. "Clients know our work and trust us enough to know that even without every last detail drawn we're going to figure it out," he explains. "It lets us create more architectural parts and it becomes a better project."

Known especially for innovative concrete and rammed earth fabrication, The Construction Zone aspires to make buildings that are good for the planet. "There's a nice poetry to digging up the desert and making walls out of it," says Byrnes. They do much of their own landscaping as well, with an eye toward naturally re-vegetating the desert. But they also use "intentional landscaping" to complement the house design.

Interior elements such as custom cabinetry and built-ins are fabricated by CZ WORK. Byrnes couldn't find subs to execute their complex designs at the level of detail they expected and at a price the budget would bear. Instead of forfeiting quality, Byrnes hired experienced and talented craftsmen to put together full-time specialty crews. This approach not only benefits design/build clients, who get more of their wish-list items without busting the budget, but it also attracts outside architects who know The Construction Zone can build things others can't.

Out of the 20 to 25 projects in progress each year about half are design/build; the rest are projects built for outside architects or an occasional design-only commission for out-of-town houses. Byrnes explains that projects done with other architects are somewhat design/build as well, because his entire team gets involved before schematic designs are complete. He credits Arizona's collaborative community of architects for cultivating The Construction Zone's multifaceted talents. "When you see all of these architects' work you get an immense education on every job," he says, adding, "One of the biggest successes in my career is that almost every architect we've worked with has also asked us to build their own house."

Success for Byrnes means taking on compelling projects regardless of size. "We do kitchen remodels up to houses that take five years with budgets of \$9 million," he says. Even as the company grows, the principals maintain a hands-on approach and a free-spirited willingness to take on collateral work, such as furniture design or sustainable land management planning. Byrnes sums up the philosophy: "We'll do anything relative to the field if it seems positive for the community and toward the end of good architecture." -s.d.h.





White carrera marble frames twin master bath sinks. The marble surrounds create the illusion that the undermount sinks are integral to the sanded stainless countertop.







continued from page 73

wash. The resulting plan features a 70-foot-long glass bridge that spans the wash and holds the open living spaces. Slender concrete rectangles containing bedrooms flank the bridge.

The lithe structure is castin-place concrete, but Byrne, liberated from client restraints, went a little wild with the finish materials. Chemically patinated copper siding glints in the setting sun. Slate floors keep their cool throughout the footprint and out onto adjacent terraces. Twin entry corners consist of thousands of 4-inch strips of clear layered glass. "They provide dramatic sources of light but mitigate undesirable views," says Byrnes, who admits to going overboard a little. But the current homeowners are thrilled he got so carried away.-s.d.h.

project:

York residence architect / contractor: The Construction Zone project size: 5,400 square feet construction cost: \$300 per square foot photographer: Bill Timmerman

75



building it themselves

superior interiors

zack I de vito architecture



"if we can make money building. it can help us be more selective about the projects we choose."

—jim zack

rchitect Jim Zack got his first taste of construction when he was 16. He liked it so much he continued to work as a carpenter for five years before heading off to the University of California at Berkeley. "Architecture was a natural extension of what I had been doing," he says.

As head of his own firm, Zack I de Vito Architecture, Zack doesn't get his hands dirty much anymore, but he's still building the occasional project that he's also designed. His wife and partner, Lise de Vito, has a pedigree that's pure design she's a Rhode Island School of Design graduate: "I didn't come from a construction background," she says, "but I've always been interested in it." Depending on what's on the boards, the firm varies in size from four to 10 employees, with a portfolio that's about 70 percent residential. To date, it's designed and built about 15 residential and commercial projects, much of it whole-house renovations and interior work.

The firm's approach to design/build is deliberate and discriminating. "We do them on a case-by-case basis or when the opportunity is appropriate," Zack explains. Instead of taking on the easiest construction jobs, he prefers to tackle the difficult ones. "The flexibility it provides us if we are doing creative, unique detailing is much better if we're the builder," he says. And it allows the firm to include those complex details other builders might value-engineer out of the project. He also maintains that the seamless integration of the design/build process saves the client money. Still, there's an obvious economic benefit for the firm as well, and that ultimately feeds its creative agenda. "Contractors make more money than architects," Zack says. "And in a smaller firm, that helps. If we can make money building, it can help us be more selective about the projects we choose."

The formula is so satisfying, Zack | de Vito is establishing a separate company, BuiltForm Construction, to help build more of its design work. At the moment, BuiltForm is working on its own speculative two-unit residential building and negotiating an infill deal in the city.

Because most of the architecture firm's work to this point has been rehab, liability hasn't been a serious concern. But the partners realize that intensive design/build commissions will bring more issues and exposure to consider. "We are still kind of developing." Zack says. "I don't really have all the answers yet." -n.f.m.





The firm's hands-on skills incorporate custom metal fabrication (top) as well as custom millwork, joinery, and other detailing.







cho/broady residence

One of Zack | de Vito's early design/build projects, the Cho/Broady residence exemplifies the firm's multidisciplinary capabilities within the confines of a condo. "We built everything," says Zack. "We built all the cabinetry and all the concrete counters, and did all the carpentry." The condo building was done by a developer who, caught in a financial squeeze, cheaped out on the materials and construction. "It was not a fabulous place, except for the view," Lise de Vito says. "So the owners wanted to do some interesting stuff." The team ripped out all the buildergrade finishes and started with fresh space. They opened up the main living area, installing modest detailing and shelving. Vertical-grain Doug fir cabinets line the renovated master bath and kitchen; poured concrete for the countertops and a fireplace hearth add an understated chic. The architects also designed and fabricated the custom metal staircase. "Maybe we get too involved in some things," Zack jokes. "We try to do everything because we like the craft of it."—*n.f.m.*

project: Cho/Broady residence architect / contractor: Zack | de Vito Architecture project size: 2,200 square feet site size: 0.06 acre construction cost: \$260 per square foot photographer: Jeanne Stack

building it themselves

perfect cube Qb³ philadelphia



"if there's a question, it's figured out there and then, we can make decisions right away."

—patrycja doniewski

t all started with an errant general contractor. The fledgling Philadelphia firm Qb³ (pronounced "cube") had been working on a residential renovation project for months, and the builder they teamed with just wasn't getting the job done. The firm's three partners realized they had the skills and background to construct the house themselves, and with their client's blessing they took over. The completed house (see sidebar) now serves as one of their showcase projects, and it won an AIA Philadelphia Honor Award last year.

The 2-year-old firm has since continued along the design/build path, capitalizing on its blend of multidisciplinary backgrounds. Partner Kevin Angstadt, AIA, put in eight years as a cabinetmaker, ironworker, and carpenter before architecture school at Penn State. "I went into architecture school knowing more technical, builderly things," he says. "In school I started thinking conceptually and abandoned all that for a time." Patrycja Doniewski, another partner, holds an architecture degree from the University of Virginia and has worked as a graphic designer. And third partner Stephen Mileto trained as a cabinetmaker before studying architecture, also at Penn State.

Custom residential jobs currently make up 80 percent of the firm's workload. Of that, its five-person staff physically builds nearly half themselves, taking to the jobsite with hammer and saw. On most of their other houses, they function more as general contractors, hiring subs and overseeing construction. Once in a while, they'll provide just design services. Any way they handle it, the design/build method presents a clear advantage. "In the beginning, we approached it almost as a financial necessity," Doniewski says. The ability to charge for building services as well as architecture allowed Qb³ a greater cash flow than if it offered only design, a bonus for a young firm that lacks the capital of a more established company.

In addition, design/build streamlines the construction process. "If there's a question, it's figured out there and then," says Doniewski. "We can make decisions right away. And there are certain provisions we can make while designing. We don't have to write out everything about a detail because either we're building it or we know the person who is." Qb³'s business plan honors the time-tested strategy of diversification; along with architecture and construction, it also specializes in custom furniture and graphic design.—m.d.







The immediacy of design/build streamlined the process of renovating this Philadelphia row house. "It's one-stop shopping for the client," says Doniewski. "That's a very attractive thing."



By lining up each stairwell with the oversized rear windows, Qb³ pulled natural light into the row house while maintaining a layer of privacy.

perret residence

One of Qb³'s favorite aspects of design/build is the close control it gives the architects over a project's final outcome. That sense of control results in satisfying, highly detailed projects such as the Perret Residence, a modern renovation of a dilapidated 1850s brick row house in Philadelphia. Partners Stephen Mileto, Kevin Angstadt, and Patrycja Doniewski restored the front facade out of respect for the street context. Then they made room for a new interior stair (the old one was missing) by tearing down the three-story house's rear facade and expanding into the back yard. With expansive windows at each of its three landings, the stairwell acts as the main conductor of light through the house. "It diffuses the hard light so you just get this glow in the living spaces," explains Angstadt. A restrained overall palette of white walls and Ipé floors highlights such niceties as a suspended living room fireplace and color-saturated bathroom tiles. -m.d.

project: Perret residence architect / contractor: Qb³ project size: 2,160 square feet site size: 0.01 acre construction cost: Withheld photographer: Frank Iaquinta/ Halkin Architectural Photography, except where noted.



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doctor spec

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deck out your projects with hard-wearing, good-looking lumber.

by nigel f. maynard

s a decking material, composite excels. Made from virgin or recycled plastic and wood waste, composite is durable, weather-resistant, and virtually maintenancefree. But while those attributes may satisfy your clients' practical side, the product's ersatz appearance may leave some of them feeling a little unsatisfied. For those consumers, only a wood deck will do.

Architects value the seductive powers of wood more than anyone; that's one of the reasons you spec it. Its random grain patterns are inherently beautiful, and wood can last a long time if properly cared for. "We prefer [Forest Stewardship Council]-certified natural wood for aesthetic and sensory reasons," says William T. Ruhl, AIA, of Ruhl Walker Architects in Boston. "Natural wood looks better and feels better on bare feet."

natural selections

Pine and Douglas fir are the most common and inexpensive species used for decks. Doug fir is strong, attractive, and tough. It holds up fairly well to extreme wear and remains level without cracking. Typically pressure-treated to resist weather, rot, and insects, Southern pine's unique cellular structure permits deep penetration of preservatives, providing longlasting protection, says the Kenner, La.-based Southern Pine Council, a promotional body that represents Southern lumber producers.

Despite their resiliency, however, these two species lose their luster after prolonged exposure to the elements, and they need replacing after 10 to 12 years, depending on the climate. Some architects avoid them for other reasons. "Pressure-treated pine is cheap up front, but the splinters are awful," says Ruhl.

Fortunately there are plenty of other deck-worthy trees in the forest, among them teak, Western red cedar, redwood, and mahogany. The lumber from these trees has exquisite grain patterns and its natural weather- and insectfighting properties will keep your outdoor decks attractive for a long time.

Although prized as one of the world's premier woods for fine cabinetry, mahogany is strong and dense enough for outdoor use and has natural rotresistant properties. Teak and Western red cedar are rich in natural oils that



Paul Bardagjy

Tom Hurt picked lpé for the deck of this Austin, Texas, project to counter the effects of the unforgiving Southwest sun. The tropical species is extremely tough and looks better for longer, the architect says.

make them extremely resistant to moisture as well as the drying effects of weather. And the oils in Western red cedar also act as a preservative to help the wood resist insect attack.

Moisture in the Pacific Northwest is one reason Seattle-based architect Nils Finne is a fan of Western red cedar. "We have also used redwood in California," he says. "It is beautiful, but the wood is somewhat soft so it needs fairly regular maintenance." The same applies to Atlantic white cedar, says architect Timothy Techler, principal of Techler Design Group in Watertown, Mass. "The wood is very soft and it goes a silvery gray color," he says. "You have to be careful with it, but it is lovely stuff."

The budget and the exterior finish of the house usually dictate what San Francisco-based Melander Architects uses. "If the project is on the moderate *continued on page 82*

doctor spec

end we use Doug fir," says Aaron Goldman, an architect with the firm. "On the high end, we have used redwood."

Possibly the hottest tropical species at the moment is Ipé (a.k.a. Ironwood). "Ipé is amazing stuff," says Techler. "It is heavier than water, so it does not float, and it handles the wet-dry cycle better than other woods." As its Ironwood moniker suggests, Ipé (pronounced epay) is extremely hard and dense, weighing 70 pounds per cubic foot. It does not accept preservatives well, but it doesn't need to. The lumber has the highest natural rating for rot and insect resistance with no treatment, the USDA Forest Service says. Austin, Texas-based architect Tom Hurt knows this first hand. The harsh Southwest sun can wreak havoc on a wood deck. No matter what you use, he says, the sun takes its toll. "Ipé is different," the principal of Tom Hurt Design Office says. "It is a lot more stable and looks better longer. If you don't treat it, it will gray out, but it will still look good."

endangered species

The trees that yield exotic hardwoods are disappearing fast. Unsustainable forest practices in South and Central America have made such species as Honduran mahogany rare. Teak is listed as endangered, Ipé is becoming increasingly hard to find outside of reserves, and Ajo, Manu,



Courtesy Techler Design Group

and Peroba Rosa, each incredibly durable and great for decks, have all but vanished, says Steve Brunner, founder of Tropical American Tree Farms in San José, Costa Rica.

It is important, then, to do your research. "We try to align ourselves with importers that take these issues seriously," Techler says. "We like to know who the contact is, where [the wood] came from, and what the process is for getting it here." For those reasons, Techler avoids Honduran mahogany.

"We ask these questions [about Ipé] and suppliers tell us it's a re-growth species so there is no threat to the tree, which means that it will not be extinct years from now," says Eric Barth, an architect with Tom Hurt Design Office. "But sometimes we wonder."

This gloomy outlook is one reason Brunner estab-

lished his farm in 1991. The company converted 10 cattle farms—about 12,000 acres—where they plant and harvest a wide assortment of species to sell to furniture designers, cabinetmakers, and architects. The farm is growing Ipé, mahogany, and teak, but the trees are young. "The Ipé and teak are only 13 years old and are not ready to be harvested for decking," Brunner says.

Avoiding lumber from too-young trees is also vital. Western red and Eastern white cedars, for example, have traditionally been excellent species for decks. The older-growth heartwood is very resistant to decay, but the lumber from young trees that are harvested too soon has a lower level of decay resistance.

hard costs

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Courtesy Western Red Cedar Lumber Association

Because lpé handles the wet-dry cycle better than most other woods, Tim Techler speced it for this beach-side deck (left). Above: Western red cedar is lightweight and resists moisture, decay, and insect damage.

lumber. Although cedar and redwood are fairly expensive (at about \$1.15 to \$1.50 per board foot), teak is much pricier, at \$8 to \$12. "[Ipé] is somewhat affordable at about \$2.50 per board foot, which is a quarter the price of teak," says Barth. But the wood's density makes installation extremely difficult. Finne, who now uses Ipé for about 75 percent of his decks, says installation "increases the cost of labor significantly."

Architect Ivor Brown applies simple strategies to cut cost. "It matters how much you use," the principal of Slant Studio in Emeryville, Calif., says. "I like to use less wood and make my decks less bulky." For example, he'll combine stainless steel and small amounts of Ipé for his rails. The result is a greatlooking, long-lasting deck and a small breather for Mother Nature. A win-win by design. ra





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digital home

the buzz

electronic essentials for the well-equipped house

by rebecca day

he cost of upscale electronics continues to slide toward the mainstream market, as evidenced by the wave of flat-panel displays and multi-room audio solutions unveiled at the 2005 International Builders' Show in Orlando, Fla. But it's not just the usual cast of characters promoting the world of home technology. Joining the likes of Sony, Sharp, and Samsung are waterheating specialist Rinnai and the appliance division of LG, delivering smart electronics to a broad segment of homeowners.

survey shows

According to a nationwide survey conducted by the Internet Home Alliance. homeowners continue to show strong interest in residential technology ranging from appliances to entertainment systems. IHA surveyed 400 new or prospective home buyers to learn how consumers make decisions about purchasing, installing, and maintaining home technologies. Forty-nine percent of the new home buyers presented with at least one home technology option made a purchase. Home security led the list of technology purchases, followed by prewiring for

cable or satellite TV and a built-in home theater.

Respondents assigned "somewhat important" status to technologies including structured wiring, multi-zone HVAC, air purification systems, wireless home PC networks, energy management, community-wide high-speed Internet connections, and home control/ automation and lighting control. The most frequently presented technologies to homeowners, after those that came standard with the home, were intercom/distrib-

uted audio, central vacuum, and home security systems. Survey respondents indicated that technology

options were typically the last-mentioned in the homebuying process. They are often presented in a checklist fashion without further description or explanation. Consumers said they would prefer to purchase options after seeing them featured in a showroom. Seventy percent of respondents said they considered making one or more technology purchase for their new home independent of the builder.





sound investment Among technologies they'll be able to choose from are some new ones introduced at IBS. Sony launched its version of the 21st-century intercom system, at the same time lowering the entry point for multi-room audio and video. The two systems, designed specifically for new-home construction, take a cookiecutter approach to wholehouse audio to provide a lower-cost alternative to custom-designed systems. By using pre-selected equipment, installers can reduce design and installation time for whole-house entertainment systems,



up to seven sources and seven zones.

> resulting in systems retailing for \$1,000 to \$2,000 per room, including installation. The systems come preprogrammed to control Sony components, with an emphasis on ease of use. Pressing a DVD button, for instance, powers up all the components required to play a DVD movie. A single remote control operates all the equipment. Sony's audio-only package is built around an in-wall module combining a CD player, AM/FM radio, amplifier, intercom, and room monitor along with Sony-selected speakers. The front panel conceals the disc player and continued on page 86

digital home

glides up to reveal the electronics when users press a button to activate the system. Panels can be painted to match the decor. The video package adds DVD players for each local room. The system supports from one to seven sources and from one to seven zones.

Designed for new homes costing up to \$500,000, the self-contained Sony systems are powered by low voltage and connected via router over Category 5 Ethernet cable. Connection to the whole-house PC network enables each sound station to pluck MP3 tunes from PC hard drives in the home and play them through any sound-enabled room. Each system also has line-in connections for local sources such as portable music players, cable boxes, or satellite receivers.

Both audio and video packages start with a home theater system built around Sony components including TVs and VCRs. Homeowners can choose from 5- or 400-disc CD and DVD changers.

clean viewing

In an attempt to bring new energy to the mature water heater market, Rinnai floated a new product concept at IBS-flat-panel TVs-to complement its tankless water heaters. In an effort to bring "35-year-old technology" up to date, Rinnai has added a waterproof 12-inch LCD TV to its product line for use in upscale bathrooms. Built into waterproof housings designed to be mounted beneath a showerhead or in another location away from direct spray, the Rinnai TV connects to cable, satellite, or antenna feeds to bring TV programming to the shower or bath.

The company claims its wall-mounted, continuousflow heaters shave \$6 to \$10 per month off monthly utility bills compared with standard tank water heaters, because the water is heated as needed rather than heated and maintained. Digital technology enables homeowners to further tailor water temperature and usage to their needs, and the TVs include operational buttons that communicate with the water heater.

Using the buttons on the TV and feedback from the screen, homeowners can set fill and temperature levels for the bath, including automatic shutoff when the proper level is reached. Auto-Fill enables users to preset the time they want to take a bath, choose the volume of water for the tub, and select the precise temperature. Aut

the precise temperature. Auto Preset enables users to preset the time, temperature, and water consumption of a shower. For instance, they could set the shower to come on at 6 a.m. at 98 degrees for 15 minutes using 40 gallons of water. The TVs will be available late summer; price has not been set.

loads of luxury

The company that gave the world the Internet refrigerator has now unveiled the networked washer/dryer.

At IBS 2005, LG Electronics launched the



Rinnai's new waterproof 12-inch LCD television brings TV programming to the upscale bathroom .

Remote Monitoring Laundry System (\$1,349 for the washer, \$949 for the dryer, \$99 for the remote monitoring kit). The system enables consumers to monitor their laundry cycle from elsewhere in the home using a remote device. Positioned for use in existing as well as new homes, the Remote Monitoring system communicates using Power Line Communication (PLC) technology over standard electrical wiring. A separate monitoring kit includes a wallet-sized remote monitoring device that can be plugged into any electrical outlet.

From the interface on the remote device, homeowners see the status of the washer and dryer operation, including cycle status and remaining time. A buzzer announces the end of each cycle. The Remote Laundry System will be available in the second quarter. ra

Rebecca Day specializes in writing about home electronics. She can be reached at customhomerd@aol.com. A version of this article originally appeared in residential architect's sister publication CUSTOM HOME.

Runds (andre Marketer F: 355 Verset (WASHER/OWYER EG LG

The Remote Monitoring Laundry System from LG Electronics lets homeowners monitor laundry cycles from anywhere in the home using a remote device.





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heather johnston seattle www.placearchitects.com.

super rohl

As far as Johnston is concerned, Shaw's Original apron-front sink by Rohl can be used in any architectural situation. "It looks fantastic in both renovations and modern spaces," says the architect, who used it in this firm project. Measuring 30 inches wide and 18 inches from front to back, the 81/2-inch-deep fireclay sink resists daily abuse and is hardy enough to be cleaned with abrasive pads or powders. Choose from black, biscuit, or white. Rohl, 800.777.9762; www.rohlhome.com.



lyte commercial

Place Architects often re-purposes industrial products for residential applications. Stonco's Roughlyte is one example. "[It's] a fun departure from typical residential fixtures," Johnston says. "It's even watertight, for exterior applications." Ideal for walls or ceilings, the fixture has a heat- and shock-resistant glass globe and a die-cast cage to protect against debris when used outside. Numerous styles and sizes are available. Crescent/Stonco, 800.334.2212; www.crescentlighting.com.

easy does it

When the budget is tight, Johnston reaches for Amana's Easy Reach refrigerators. "The stainless steel 26-inch-deep refrigerators are an alternative to Sub-Zero that work as well, if not better, for a fraction of the cost," the architect says. The unit's shallow depth matches the surrounding cabinetry for a built-in look, while a bottom-freezer configuration gives consumers eye-level access to fresh food. The unit also exceeds federal energy-efficiency standards by 15 percent, the company says. Amana, 800.843.0304; www.amana.com.



-nigel f. maynard

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screen shot

Residential garage doors are generally run-of-themill steel products or custom traditional styles made of wood. With its new aluminum and glass contemporary unit, Cincinnati, Ohio–based Clopay Building Products adds some flair to the mix. Described by the company as part shoji screen and part 50s-era gas station door, the Avante has a 2¹/₈-inch-thick aluminum frame that can be custom painted or sealed with a clear, white, or brown finish. Numerous window options are available including clear, frosted, tinted, mirrored, wire, or laminated glass. Clopay Building Products, 800.225.6729; www.clopay.com.



points of light

Monroe Township, N.J.–based Villeroy & Boch has combined ceramic tile and light technology to dramatic effect. Suitable for both floors and walls, Light Tiles are embedded with LED components. A wear-resistant stainless steel frame holds the lights flush to the tile surface. Low in energy consumption and impervious to dust and water, the lights should last about 11 years, the company says. Choose white, blue, or amber LEDs in square or rectangular tiles. Villeroy & Boch, 609.409.6792; www.villeroy-boch.com.



hats off

This isn't your grandmother's toilet-in fact, it's barely recognizable as one. Kohler, Wis.-based Kohler has reduced the traditional toilet to its bare essentials, a hatboxshaped minimalist unit. The tankless product has a soft-touch side actuator and a 0.2 hp electric pump that makes the most of its 1.6 gallon flush. It's an ergonomically correct 17 inches high-the same as the average chair-and comes in six colors. Kohler, 800.456.4537; www.kohler.com.

-nigel f. maynard

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flexible fix

Kompact staircase kits offer flexible configurations to solve numerous space issues. Risers are adjustable, as well as the height, depth, and rotation. Polished beech treads and railings complement gray powder coat or white or black gloss enamel-coated steel support systems. Three balusters per tread with double-tread attachment produce a strong stable railing; matching balcony railing kits are also available. Arke, 888.782.4758; www.arkestairs.com





metal detector

Copper and stainless steel, selected for their durability and visual appeal, are the exclusive metals used for DSI fabricated stair systems. Custom designs are built for each residential or commercial project and include detailed CAD drawings, fabrication, shipping, and installation. DSI Architectural Products, 800.951.7727; www.dsi architecturalproducts.com.

continued on page 94

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off the shelf



stair apparent

Stairways Inc. makes circular, spiral, and straight stairs in premium materials such as stainless steel, bronze, aluminum, and wood. Custom sizes and materials are a specialty and the company offers design support to architects and engineers. Stairs are manufactured in Houston and shipped in parts to the site. Stairways Inc., 800.231.0793; www.stairwaysinc.com.

pipe dream

Architect David Weingarten's brainstorm is now a patented prefab circular stair that's about half the cost of custom. Using a 3-foot-diameter steel pipe as supporting stringer and railing makes for easy installation. Treads and landings are attached to the pipe and then excess is carefully cut away to fabricate the helix shape. Ace Architects, 510.452.0775; www.aceland.com.



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