

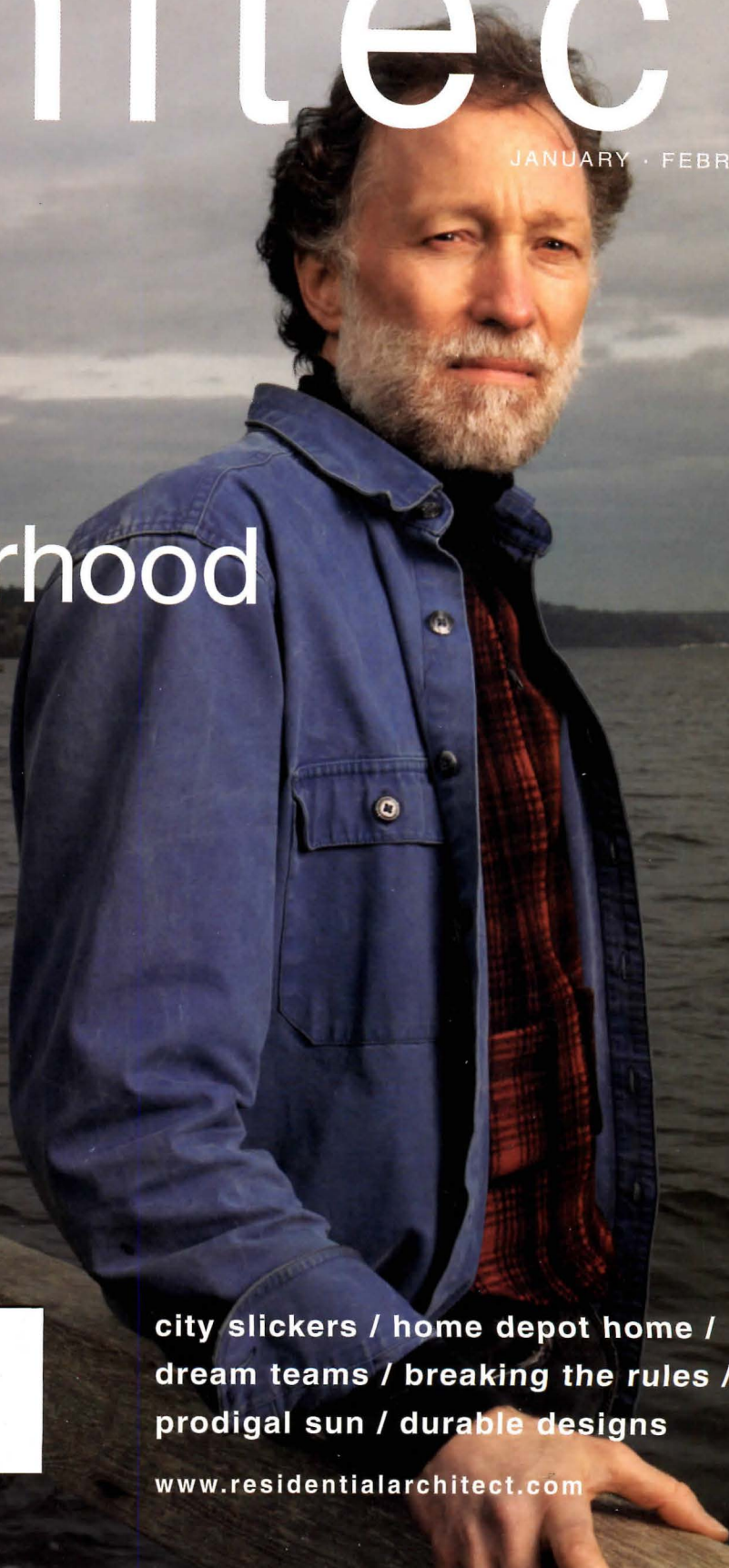
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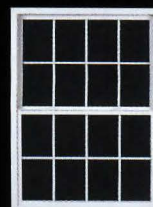
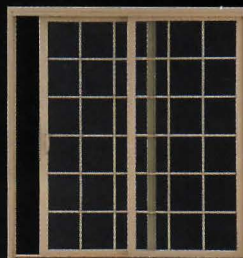
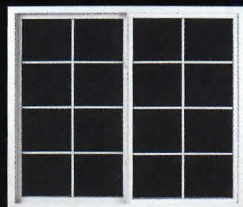
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Outlook

KITCHENAID® LUXE LAUNDRY

Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

A new design concept that's gaining a lot momentum is Luxe Laundry. If you haven't heard of it, here is a short tutorial.

For consumers who dread the task of laundry care, the isolation of the room and lack of attention normally given to its design, there is hope. By combining high-quality finishes, premium appliances,



Pedestals double as a shelf and additional storage.

a few creature comforts, and your design skills, you can transform this experience for the client with laundry obligations. Luxe Laundry has the ability to elevate the laundry space from a mundane room to an inviting destination by

incorporating high-design, ease of use, and enhanced appliance functionality.

Some options for your design palette include lighting, countertops, cabinetry, floor finishes, electronics, appliances, and accessories, along with a bit more square footage. If at all possible, bring in natural daylight and certainly don't settle for builder-grade fluorescent fixtures. With so many cabinetry options available, don't neglect this research; what may have been a custom cabinet just a few years ago is likely to be a standard cabinet today (with no extended lead-time or up-charge). With the price of consumer electronics dropping every month, consider a plasma screen TV, Internet access, or a music system. For lasting durability why not specify a stone or quartz countertop?

Of course, KitchenAid offers the ultimate Luxe Laundry solution for both function and aesthetics. It's the new Pro Line® Series laundry pair that combines dramatic styling with an extraordinary level of fabric care. Its Whisper Quiet Ultima™ sound reduction system gives you flexibility



The beautiful stainless steel finish adds durability and sophistication.

while designing the laundry space since everything from drain hoses to drum suspensions is designed to be durable and quiet. What's more, the Pro Line® Series washer and dryer feature stainless steel interiors that resist rust and corrosion to protect clothes from odors and stains. In fact, the pair was just named a "Best Product of 2005" by *Architectural Record Magazine*.



Finally, if you really want to delight your client, take their Luxe Laundry space over-the-top and accessorize it with the matching KitchenAid® Pro Line® Series coffee

maker and coffee grinder. So they can enjoy a fresh cup of coffee while they do their laundry chores. Just another inviting idea from KitchenAid.

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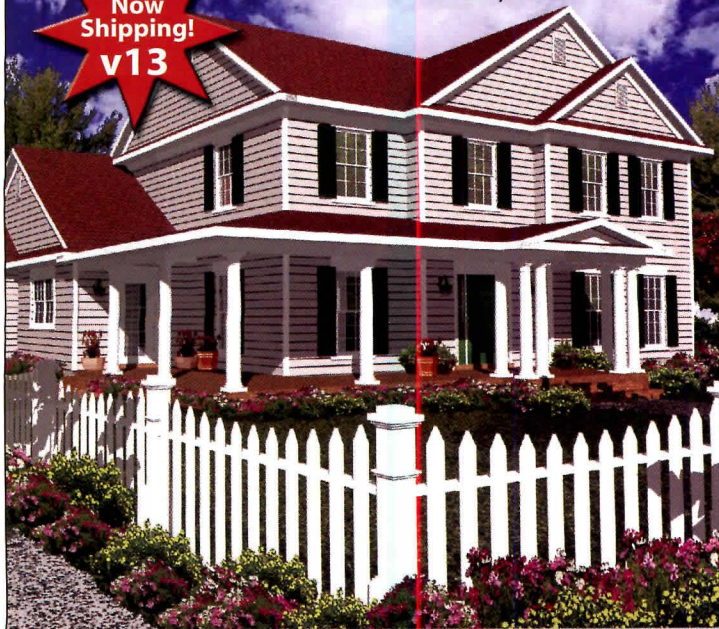
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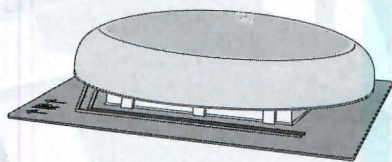
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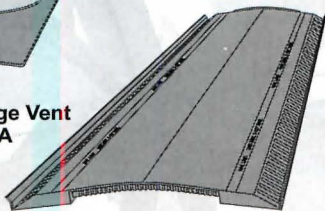
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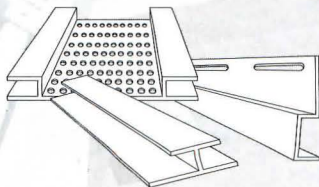
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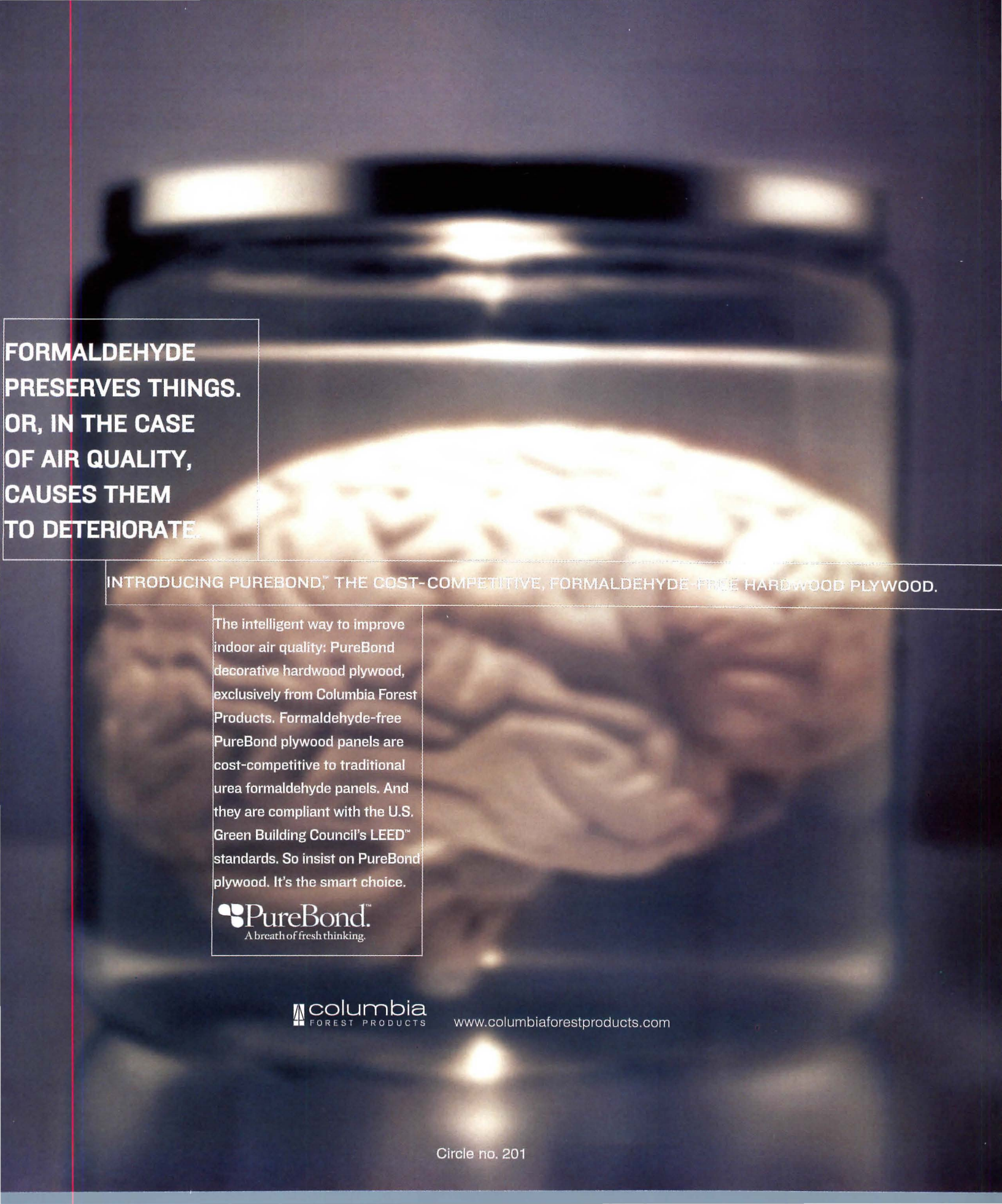
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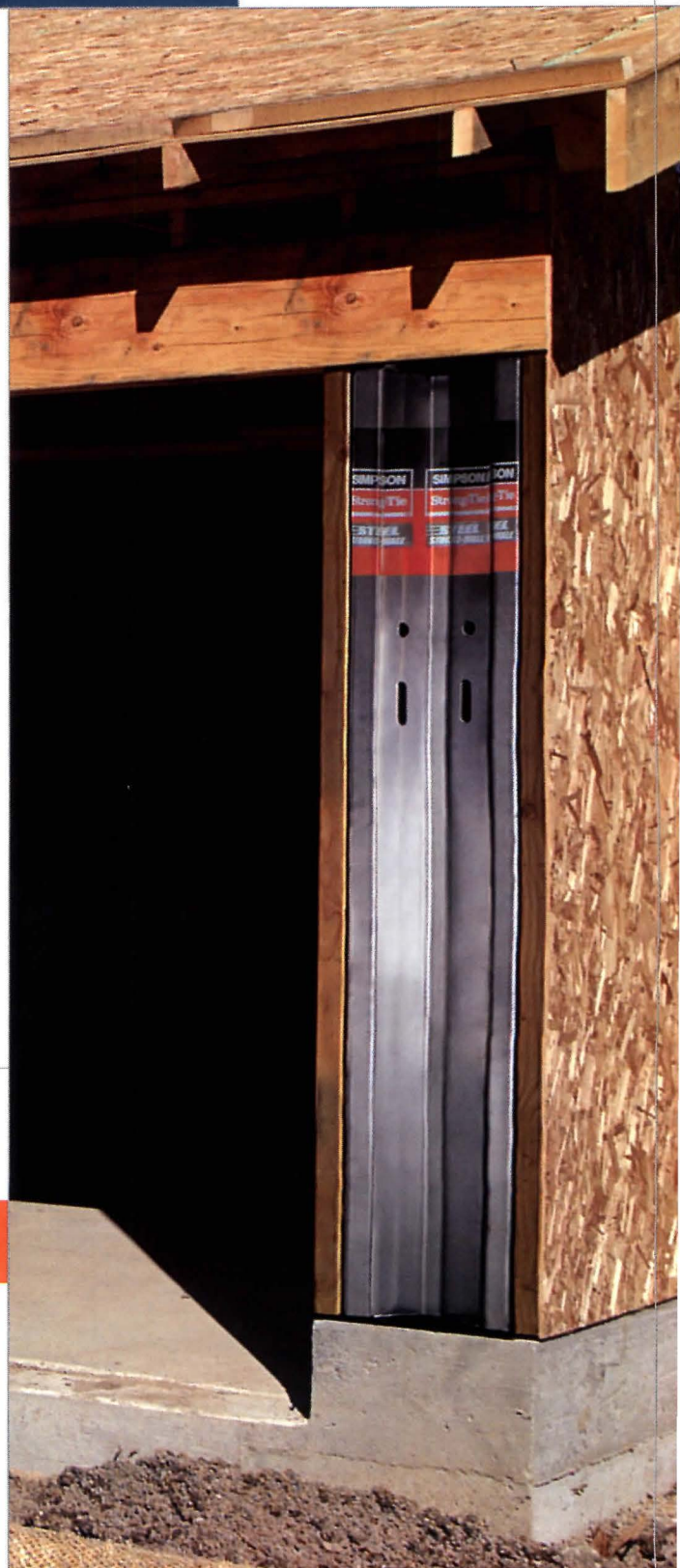
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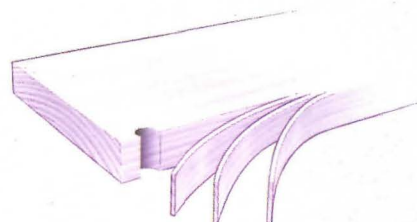


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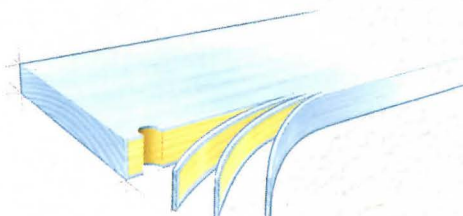
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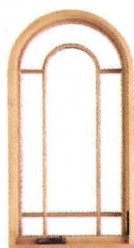
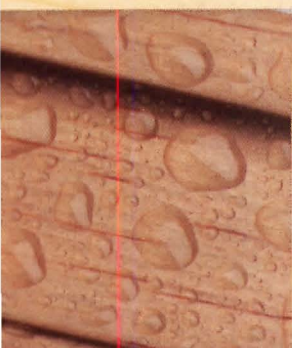
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go ahead and break some rules

better architecture doesn't always preserve the status quo.

by s. claire conroy

as good citizens, we're taught to follow the rules. They're there for a reason, arrived at by expert consensus to safeguard the public interest. A substantial part of an architect's job is to ensure compliance with building codes, zoning regulations, architectural guidelines. For the most part, this system works well and argues for the value of architectural services. After all, who else can properly balance these rules with the requirements of client, program, and site, and still squeeze something through the snake that's aesthetically pleasing or even delightful? It's an amazing feat that architects regularly achieve. You are problem solvers extraordinaire, able to reconcile seemingly irreconcilable differences of interest.

But the best architects are more than just mediators, tracing elegantly within the lines of the status quo. The best architects are also advocates for a better solution if one exists, even if it lies outside the boundaries of those comfortable rules. Because sometimes those rules actually stand in the way of the public interest; sometimes

they're just short-sighted, misguided, picayune, and arcane. For instance, I have a covenant on my property that turned up during my title search. It says I'm not allowed to drive wagons of alcoholic spirits across my 6,600-square-foot parcel. The rule dates back to the founding of the settlement by abstemious Adventists. Well, I sure hope it's OK that I pull my station wagon into my driveway to unload a case of wine from time to time. ... Needless to say, this relic has no relevance to contemporary life.

As buildable land grows increasingly scarce, more developers and private clients will turn to architects to solve roadblocks of one kind or another. Not only will they want a proficient problem solver, they'll need an adroit advocate for the cause. Maybe the project will require a simple variance, maybe it'll take rewriting zoning regulations for an entire jurisdiction, but your client will look to you to make it happen.

Our cover architect, Ross Chapin, AIA, was his own client with a cause. He didn't like the soulless subdivisions he saw grabbing land by the acre in his adopted hometown of Langley, Wash., so he worked long and hard to



Mark Robert Halper

change local laws to allow for "pocket neighborhoods" of more densely placed, smaller houses. The result is a more engaged kind of community that welcomes a variety of household types, not just the two-adults-and-two-children stereotype most builders target. There's no driving wagons of spirits across the land because cars are placed away from the buildings, which preserves common green space and fosters social interaction.

Now, Chapin didn't just ride in on a white horse proclaiming his superior idea for suburban development. He was a founding member of his town's design review board, earning the respect and trust of city officials,

developers, and interested citizens over the course of several years. This kind of grassroots involvement pays off in so many ways. Not only are you more likely to garner support for your ideas, but your ideas will gain depth and relevance from an intimate knowledge of your community. You'll develop a keener sense for which rules need elimination, revision, or upholding. Best of all, you'll end up a better architect, advocate, and citizen. **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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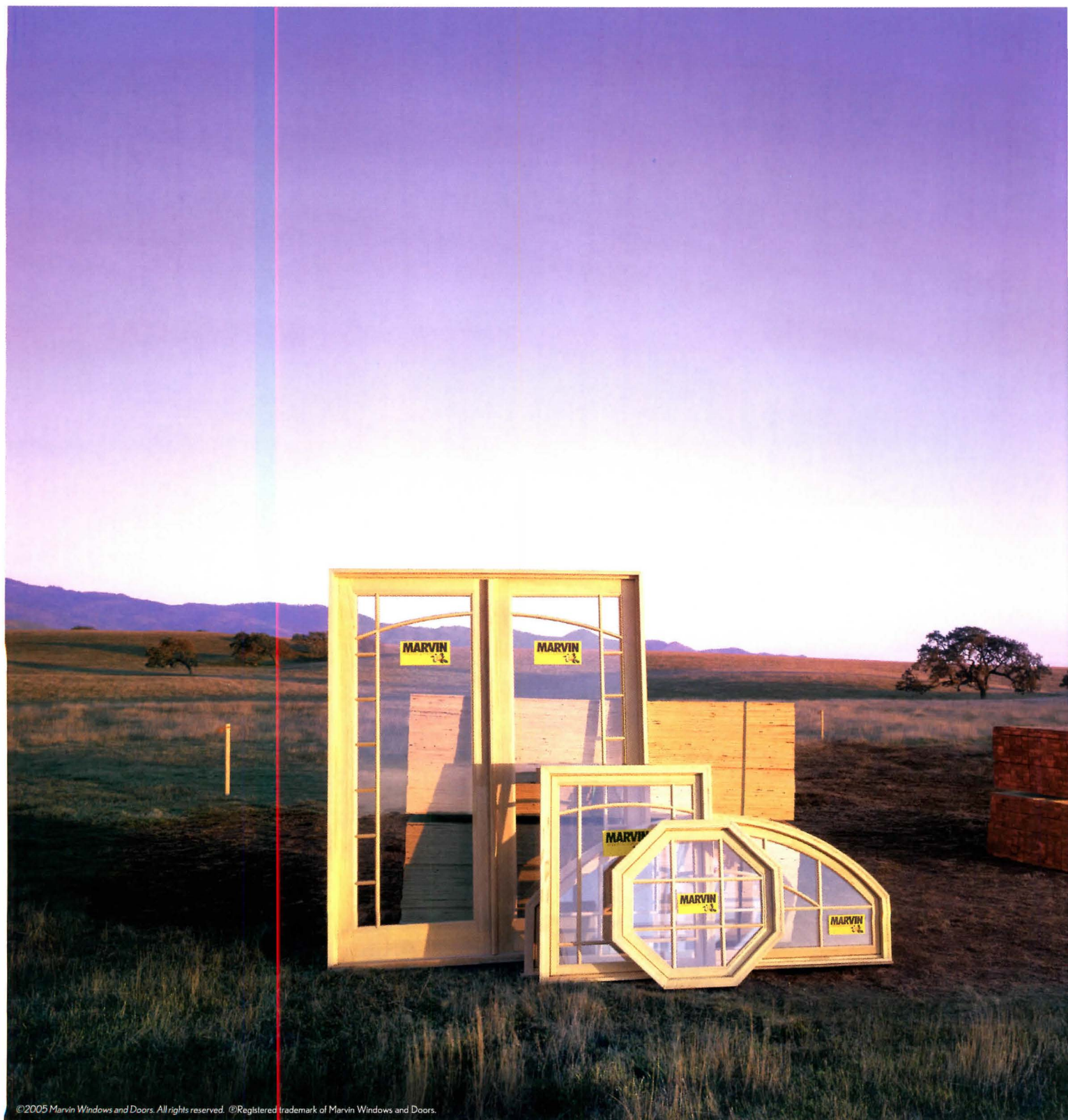
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To support this effort, in our professional architecture and planning schools, we

should require the establishment of a mandatory, full-year, innovative, studio-based program that promotes creative problem solving relevant to climate change. We also can effect major reductions in the emissions produced by the construction of buildings and infrastructure through the specification of innovative, low-embodied energy materials, technologies, and processes.

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To learn more, visit www.architecture2030.org.

*Edward Mazria, AIA
Mazria Inc. Odems Dzurec
Santa Fe, N.M.*

the enemy within, revisited

Thanks for your insightful article on the obstacles to realizing good design in production housing (“The Enemy Within, Part 2,” Jan/Feb 2005, page 15). The single biggest obstacle, though, is one you did not mention: lack of time. In the course of an average year, many production builder/design architects provide designs for 100 or more (sometimes many more) houses. At this pace, there is never enough time to

properly develop the design, especially considering the other factors you described so well.

*Joe Stein
M/I Homes
Columbus, Ohio*

Comparing the effort to design a truly custom home and a production home? The same? Not even in the same solar system!

Sure, the processes have their similarities, but the design efforts are dramatically different. Designs and construction documents for a production building of any type are conceived and developed using minimal detailing, [which] requires the builder to utilize standardized conventions within a narrow range of materials and assemblies. This is why a production effort is so efficient and can be duplicated with general ease.

A custom house designed and documented for a builder or developer and a custom house designed for a sophisticated owner are like comparing a high-end Mercedes with a Ford Escort. Both have seats, wheels, motors, and lights, but it takes at least 100 times the effort to make the Mercedes 10 times better than the Escort. The last 10 percent of change and cus-

tomization requires 100 percent more effort.

The inspired design knowledge to make this leap requires an equal base of technical as well as creative/artistic skill that very few in the profession have. Without this equal combination of skill and inspired talent, the production building (house) is a safe haven to practice in, as mainstream skills are adequate for this type of work.

This is the fundamental law of reality that separates all things that are custom and highly crafted [from] things [of] more moderate quality.

*Gary Orr
Orr Design Office
Sacramento, Calif.*

It is heartening to see written support for those of us who are in the trenches with builders. As a practitioner, my firm handles commercial projects [as well as] custom residential and production housing.

I have been fighting for years to get the local builders to put out a higher-quality product [and] to pay attention to aesthetics, [as well as] to convince them that good design will make them more money. Unfortunately, the message has fallen mostly on deaf ears. Meanwhile, the local newspaper and commu-

continued on page 24

nity activists rail against high density and ugly houses, yet the “ugly” houses are sold before the foundation is poured and the demand keeps rising, giving the builders little incentive to build a better product. We have to fight not only the builders, but their market, which simply does not demand higher quality. What the builders are putting up is better than what the buyers are currently living in; so many buyers just accept what is presented to them.

What we have to do is change the market so the builders will be forced to build better-designed houses. Just like the U.S. auto industry was forced to design better cars under increasing pressure from imports, the market must begin to demand better design in production housing, or else we will forever be trying to put pearls on a pig.

*David L. Businelli, RA, AIA
Salvadeo Associates
Architects, P.C.
Staten Island, N.Y.*

It's an interesting situation within the architectural profession when commercial architects look down on custom residential architects, who in turn look down on “production” residential architects. Having said that, there are certainly enough

poorly designed production homes out there to justify some of the criticism.

The bigger issue is that production architects generally understand what most people are willing to pay for and provide that. We do fight, cajole, and push for “good design” to the extent we believe people will appreciate and pay for our ideas. Most custom home architects are working with more highly educated and discerning clients who intend to live in their home for a long time. Our task is to find the common denominators within these market segments that will make us more appealing to customers than another builder.

Besides the architecture of the homes themselves, a builder can improve perceived value by creating neighborhoods that have a true sense of community through better land planning, landscape architecture, and amenity facility designs. Whether a country club community, an improved conventional suburban development, or a TND, home builders who understand and are effectively addressing this issue are gaining ground over their competitors.

*Bud McIntire
KB Home
Atlanta*

I have spent the past year trying to justify my career as a designer with a “production home builder” to some of my other “commercial,” a.k.a. “real,” architect friends. I have worked in the industry for the past 12 years, designing everything from schools to churches, factories, strip malls, and chain retail spaces. I am a “real” architect. I am here to tell you that designing for a production builder is infinitely more challenging than designing multimillion-dollar commercial projects.

I am in charge of taking our five standard “executive” home plans, providing six different elevations that all have to stand alone, yet work together in the same community, and be economical. Then, once a customer has selected a standard plan and elevation, I sit down with them and customize it down to the cabinet knobs. I might add or delete square footage; redesign a kitchen, bath, or laundry room; change the elevation to satisfy their desires for their dream home; or change around the plan to meet a family's needs for a main-floor bedroom or a grandparent—all while keeping in mind that this is a “production” home.

I do not get to go to a different manufacturer to

get the style I want or have something custom built. I have to work with the pallet of materials my company buys. Also, we are the aforementioned “production” builder in that things are “value-engineered” out on an almost-quarterly basis and “economy and efficiency” are the mantra of the company.

I don't get to work with the “money is no object” set. I have customers who have the resources to spend a lot of money on their homes, but they choose to build with our company so they can get more house for their money. They [still] want their home to be as beautiful as the custom home that their friends live in.

[Mine] is not an easy job, but it is much more rewarding than the “real architecture” that I was doing before. It is such a joy to go see homeowner[s] once they have added their own personal touches and lived in the home for a while, and to have them say to me, “We love our home, and it never would have turned out as wonderfully as it did if you hadn't helped us.”

They deserve a home just as perfect for them as the client who hands you a fistful of money.

*Robin Berlin
Grand Rapids, Mich.*




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SCHLAGE

Circle no. 39

home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.

urban league

homebuilders have long plied their trade in the nation's green-lawned suburbs and exurbs. Now they're turning their gazes to its cities. Spurred by growing consumer interest in city living, top companies like Toll Brothers, Standard Pacific Homes, John Laing Homes, and KB Home have started divisions devoted to urban infill. "An increasingly large [percentage] of the homebuying public are singles, childless couples, [and others who] don't need a big home in

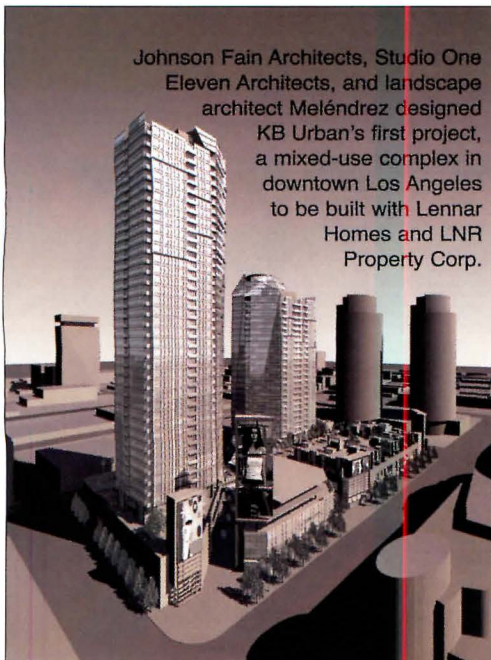
the suburbs," says Jeffrey Gault, AIA, president of KB Home's new KB Urban division.

In addition to demographics, sprawl-induced suburban traffic patterns are also fueling the boom in city living. "Urban might be pushing 15 percent of [John Laing Homes'] total product," says Phil Simmons, president of the company's year-old Laing Urban division in



Culver City, Calif. "It probably will grow every year, because people are tired of the commute."

The builders know better than to think they can simply transpose their design and construction processes from the burbs to downtown. High-density housing brings its own challenges, which fluctuate from city to city and even neighborhood to neighborhood. "In the case of KB Urban, everything's going to be unique, because every urban site is different," says Gault, himself a Yale-trained architect. "In the downtown lifestyle, the customer changes



Johnson Fain Architects, Studio One Eleven Architects, and landscape architect Meléndrez designed KB Urban's first project, a mixed-use complex in downtown Los Angeles to be built with Lennar Homes and LNR Property Corp.

Courtesy KB Urban



Renderings: Courtesy Laing Urban



The seven-story Madrone in Hollywood, Calif., designed by Cunningham Group Architecture and built by Laing Urban, will combine 180 residential units with a retail base.

depending on the city and the context.”

With the wide-ranging tastes of their baby boomer and echo boomer target markets in mind, many of the new divisions are offering options such as mixed-use buildings, high-rises, and adaptive re-use structures. And while architectural styles will vary according to site and context, look for contemporary design to enter the mix.—*meghan drueding*



Courtesy Standard Pacific Homes

Standard Pacific Homes' Redwood Lofts, designed by Withee Malcolm Architects, will open in Marina del Rey, Calif., this spring.

calendar

ge edison awards competition

deadline: january 18

GE has added a residential category to its annual lighting design competition. Open to architects, designers, engineers, and consultants, the program honors creative lighting designs that employ a significant number of GE lamps. Winners will be recognized on May 29 at a dinner preceding the LightFair International trade show and conference in Las Vegas. Visit www.geedisonaward.com for entry details.



Karin Grossauer/foto k

home stories: an inside look at single-family housing in austria

through february 25
austrian cultural forum, new york

Austria is enjoying a bit of a home design renaissance courtesy of Gerhard Fischill, Oskar Leo Kaufmann, and other forward-thinking architects who incorporate the latest in low-energy, high-efficiency construction materials in their work. This exhibition consists of photographs of the homes these innovators have designed and the people who inhabit them. Shown: A private home designed by gerner gerner plus. For more information, call 212.319.5300 or go to www.acfny.org and click on "Programs and Events" and "Featured Events."



Cameron Wittig

some assembly required: contemporary prefabricated houses

through march 26
walker art center, minneapolis

This exhibition capitalizes on the resurgent interest in modular homes with a contemporary edge, examining why prefab has returned and how it plans to survive. Highlighted are various approaches to broadening the mainstream appeal of modular or kit homes. Photo murals, drawings, videos, material samples, and models will describe houses like Lazor Office's 2004 FlatPak House (seen here) and the LVL kit house by Rocio Romero. For more information, call 612.375.7600 or visit <http://calendar.walkerart.org/canopy.wac?id=2108>.

architecture: pyramids to skyscrapers

january 13–february 28

museum of science and industry, chicago

The visions of current and future African-American architecture stars will be on display, and an interactive center will allow visitors to try their hand at drafting, assembling models of architectural icons, or helping to design a family home. For more information, call 773.684.1414 or visit www.msichicago.org/competition.

saving places 2006

february 8–10

sherman street event complex, denver

Colorado Preservation's annual historic preservation conference will feature 200 national industry experts covering projects, trends, and technology. More than 1,000 visitors are expected to attend the event, which will include workshops, educational sessions, tours, and a trade show of preservation products and services. Call 303.893.4260 for further details, or go to www.coloradopreservation.org/spc/index.html.



tropical green

february 9–10

miami dade college, wolfson campus

Geared to anyone interested in learning the ways of 21st century green design, this conference will focus on complex issues inherent to designing and building in hot and humid regions. Speakers include Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, FAIA, principal, Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company, and Gregory Kiss, partner, Kiss + Cathcart Architects. To register, call 800.715.2443 or visit www.metropolismag.com/cda/tropicalgreen.php.

building energy 2006

march 7–9

seaport world trade center, boston



"The Practice of Sustainability: Proven, Profitable, Partnership" is the theme for this annual Northeast Sustainable Energy Association-sponsored conference. Professional practitioners will lead workshops and seminars, and trade show exhibitors will display their latest products and technology. For seminar topics, visit www.buildingenergy.nesae.org.

—shelley d. hutchins



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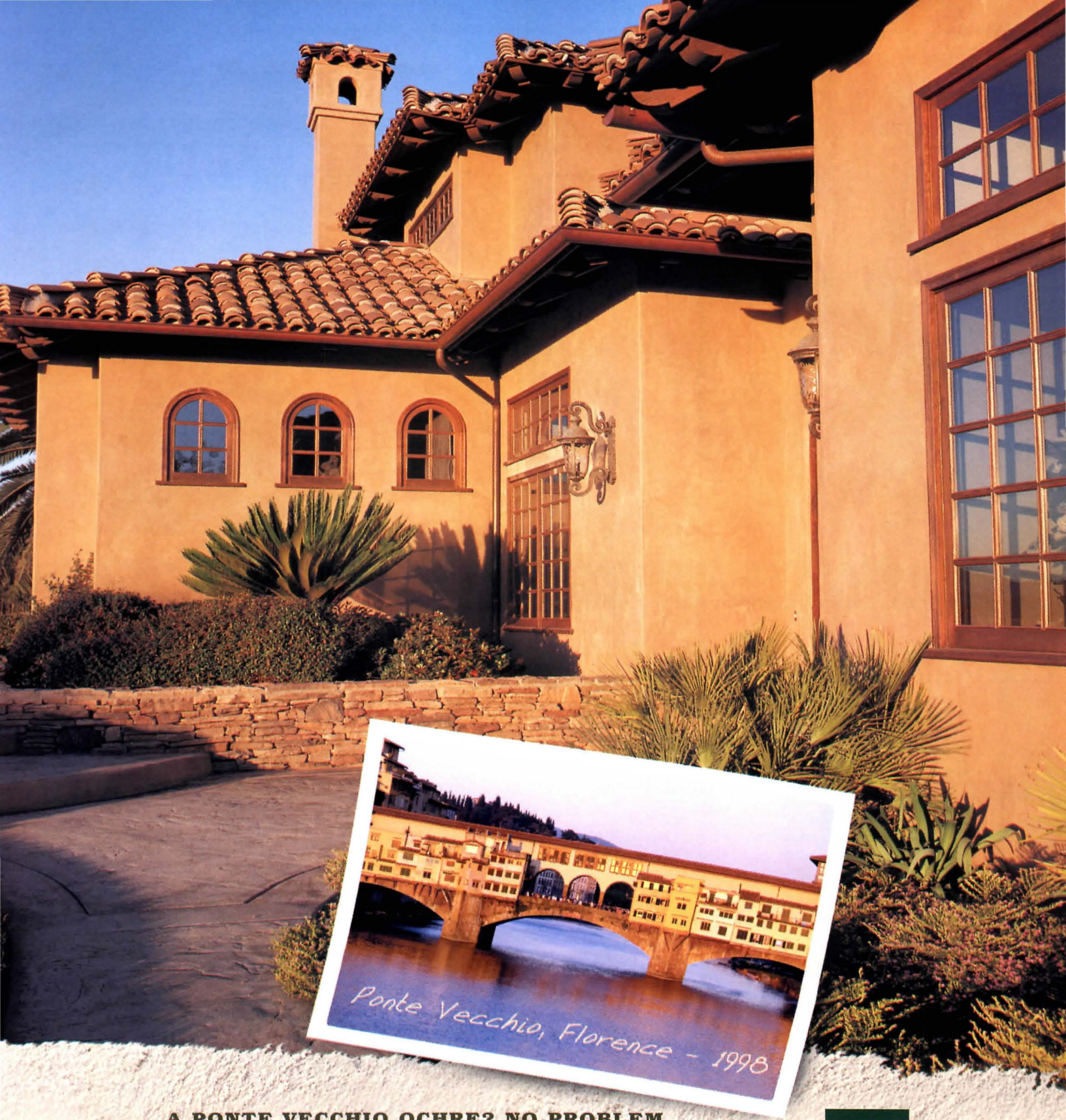
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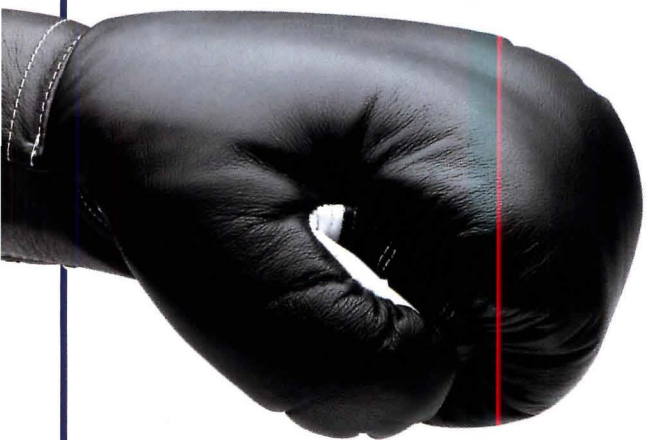
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kitchen: raising L

The residents of this Palm Desert, Calif., home wanted a kitchen design that would allow them to enjoy their meals al fresco. As grandparents, they also wanted a room where they could stay connected with the grandchildren. Their son, the architect, granted both wishes—and threw in efficiency for good measure.

An open kitchen sits at the crux of an L-shaped floor plan and provides easy access to both wings of the house. Through receding glass walls, the adjacent dining/living area extends to the pool and courtyard outside, enabling the homeowners to prepare dinner while watching the kids cavort outdoors. For quieter times, a door just beyond the cooktop leads to a small walled-in terrace with reflecting pool. Windows above the kitchen sink turn the corner, offering views to this outdoor eating nook. “The entire house is a series of Ls, from floor plan to details like the kitchen counters and cabinets,” says Jay Reynolds, AIA, principal, OJMR Architects, Los Angeles. “It goes to the idea of space flowing smoothly from one area to another.

“The layering of the stone and cabinetry is a continuum of that idea,” he adds. The eat-in counter’s solid-marble surface extends to the floor on one side. The marble also projects above adjacent slate countertops and its corner continues beyond the walnut base cabinets, giving the heavy stone a floating quality. “Having the black slate also wrap the corner and drop down makes the eat-in counter look even lighter and more separate,” Reynolds explains. Two additional L-shaped features—a marble backsplash and a gray cinder-block wall—bookend the space.

Because of the kitchen’s small size (just 195 square feet of working space), Reynolds speced only two upper cabinets and relied on some other spacial tricks to maximize efficiency. For instance, along the passage from the garage entry, a 17-foot-by-8-foot pantry and the refrigerator flank a spacious pass-through that doubles as a desktop. This layout facilitates grocery unloading as well as list-making. Reynolds also clustered the oven, stove, and sink in a corner with plenty of prep space. Long, shallow drawers beneath the eat-in bar hold dishes and glassware for simple service or a buffet. In yet another L-shaped detail, the drawer fronts bring along one side as they pull out. “I really like articulating the corner as an abstract shape of basic shelter,” he says.—*shelley d. hutchins*

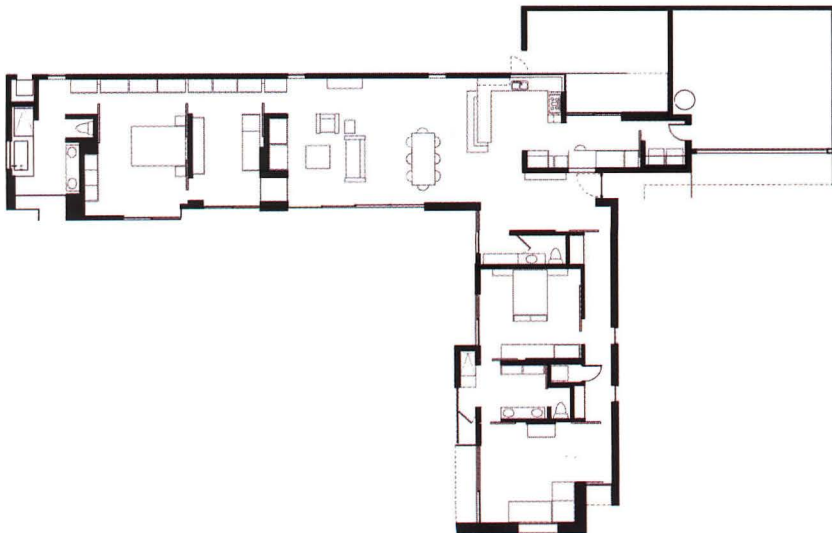


architect/general contractor/interior designer:
OJMR Architects, Los Angeles

resources: cooktop and oven: Dacor; plumbing fittings: Elkay; plumbing fixtures: Grohe; refrigerator: GE Appliances; windows and patio doors: Fleetwood



Reynolds specced cabinets to the ceiling (at left) because "aesthetically, it creates a more elegant look and it prevents dust [from] collecting in an empty space." He and his mother quibble about the stepladder she must use to reach the top shelf. "She complains, but I tell her it keeps her young and vibrant," Reynolds laughs. The pass-through (below) looks from the kitchen across the entry foyer into the guest wing. That way, "Grandma can keep an eye on the grandkids," he says.



Photos: Ciro Coelho

k + b studio

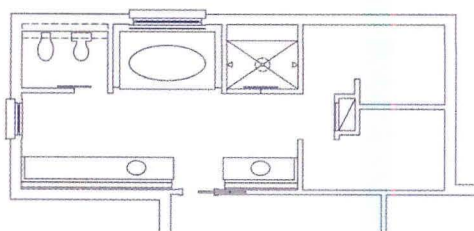
bath: simply perfect

*M*aterials in this Houston master bath are not unusual: marble for wet areas, slate floors for slip resistance, and warm walnut cabinetry protected by marine-grade polyurethane. The layout is straightforward: steam shower, soaking tub, and toilet in a row with vanities along the opposite wall. It's the details—the way materials intersect and meticulously align—that grab the eye.

"It takes a lot of patience to make something this complicated look so simple," says architect Shane Cook. One example is the quirk-miter joint used to connect horizontal marble slabs to vertical pieces. The joint's telltale groove highlights the stone's 4-centimeter thickness. It also facilitates alignment for the front panel on the bathtub, which attaches with industrial Velcro for easy pipe access. Another unseen detail hides above the steam shower. A stainless steel ceiling (pre-cut with channels to accept glass panels and holes for recessed lights) continues down two walls to meet marble tile. The steel is painted to look like the drywall, so the only hint of its true identity is a thin cap where it abuts tile.

Cook went to extremes to guarantee alignment was exact throughout. Part of creating serenity, he postulates, is ensuring that nothing jars the eye. Consequently, the tops of windows match the edge of vanity mirrors, which extend seamlessly into partial walls around the shower, closets, and toilet.

According to Cook, the cabinetmaker caught the symmetry bug, too, visiting at least four different suppliers to find pieces of walnut that matched in grain and density. Framing was also replaced in several places. "The new design required everything to be clean and crisp," he says, "and even the bones had to be plumb and nearly perfect."—s.d.h.



Fossilized Italian marble with a dense pattern "that simulates fabric" dispels the notion of stone as a cold material, says Cook. Draping the marble over the sides not only protects vertical surfaces from splashes, it suggests the idea of a hanging towel.



Photos: Aker/Zvonkovic

architect: Shane Cook Designs, Houston

general contractor: Robertson Construction, Houston

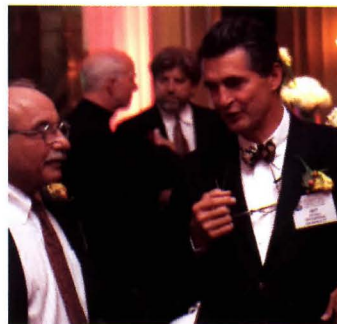
cabinetmaker: Southwest Millworks, Houston

resources: hardware: Forms+Surfaces and Rockwood Manufacturing Co.; lighting fixtures: Cooper Lighting and Lucifer Lighting; plumbing fittings: Brasstech, Hansgrohe, and Vola; plumbing fixtures: Aquaware and Duravit



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**Celebrating Its 25th Anniversary, This Year's
Winning Projects Exhibit Restraint—With Flair**

Marking its 25th anniversary, this year's Builder's Choice winners exhibited restraint in their design through the inspired use of materials that create much less clutter, from hiding utility boxes to creative parking solutions. Far from ho-hum, a brighter color palette was evident as well as sleek, sophisticated solutions to age-old, design problems.

Both BUILDER magazine and Marvin Windows and Doors offer their heartfelt congratulations to all of this year's winners.



2005
**BUILDER'S
CHOICE**

Inaugural Hall Of Fame Winners Announced At Gala Dinner

To celebrate its quarter-century achievements, the Builder's Choice Design And Planning Awards have launched a Hall of Fame for design excellence. Established to honor the residential market's architectural pioneers, this new Hall of Fame celebrates leadership and innovation. Named after fenestration industry pioneer Wm. S. "Bill" Marvin, these inaugural inductees into the Hall of Fame epitomize the effects of good design, creative vision and keen business acumen.



Industry Pioneer Honored



Wm. S. "Bill" Marvin

Wm. S. "Bill" Marvin assumed the presidency and chairmanship of Marvin Windows and Doors in 1960. Under his leadership, the business has moved from a regional manufacturer to a premier, made-to-order window company that offers design solutions for architects all over the world.

During Wm. S. Marvin's tenure, Marvin Windows and Doors introduced several innovative products that have created more flexibility in residential design. Among the most significant of these advancements was the reintroduction of the wood Round Top as an energy-efficient, wood window capable of replicating historic design trends. The reintroduction of the Round Top had a major impact on the look of homes across America as architects became more confident in specifying a "modern" Round Top in their projects.

"My father has supported innovation over the years because he realizes the importance of pushing the boundaries of residential design to arrive at unique building solutions," said Susan Marvin, president of Marvin Windows and Doors. "He has always understood the

important role manufacturers play in supporting creative design—and through his vision, Marvin Windows and Doors has introduced many 'firsts' to the industry."

Wm. S. Marvin's innovative ideas and forward-thinking business philosophy are why *BUILDER* magazine has named him as one of the 100 most influential leaders in the housing industry.

Today, Marvin Windows and Doors brings to life the visions of architects everywhere with Marvin's Signature Products and Services Department. Signature Products and Services combines the capabilities of a national brand with the craftsmanship of a local millwork shop with an unprecedented level of personalized service.

"We recognize this year's Hall of Fame inductees for collectively changing the face of residential architecture through their award-winning designs, innovative new styles and building philosophies," Ms. Marvin explains. "The Hall of Fame appropriately bears the name of my father in recognition of the vision and passion for product innovation that he brings to the building industry," she adds.

2005 Inaugural Wm. S. Marvin Hall Of Fame Award Inductees Include...

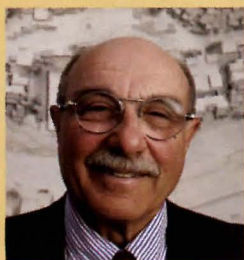


Barry Berkus

B3 Architects, a Berkus Design Studio | Santa Barbara, CA

"To create a house that is art, not just shelter... gives dignity to the people who live in it and creates a quality of life above what they'd find anywhere else."

With over 40-years of practice under his belt, Barry Berkus has won numerous design awards and industry accolades, including past Builder's Choice awards. He and his firm are responsible for an estimated 600,000 homes, communities and non-residential projects, although the vast majority of his work has been within the residential market.



Rodney Friedman

Fisher Friedman Associates | Emeryville, CA

"Others may have been [committed to modern design] at one time, but we're still locked into it as a fundamental part of what we do."

Rodney Friedman has an unwavering commitment to modernism in residential architecture. Although his design focus had lost favor in recent years, Friedman now sees a resurgence, especially within nonprofit and public housing projects, and among younger, urban residents who seem to be leading the charge, creating demand. His Golden Gateway Commons project won a Builder's Choice Award in 1982, one of 11 awards the firm garnered that year.



David Furman

David Furman Architecture | Charlotte, NC

"Multifamily design is extremely difficult... because you're dealing with architecture as a commodity."

David Furman and his firm are committed to breaking new ground in urban, high-density attached and multifamily housing. Established in 1980, his firm has won two Builder's Choice awards, including a Project of the Year award for Buckingham Station, a 358-unit rental apartment project in Midlothian, Virginia.

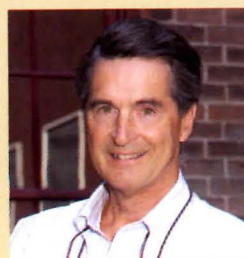


Walt Richardson

RNM Design | Newport Beach, CA

"You can never lose sight of the fact that [the project] has to sell to somebody."

RNM Design has won an incredible 13 Builder's Choice design awards, one for the ground breaking Ocean Point project in Huntington Beach, California. The firm proved it was possible to build an open, airy, 2,800 sq. ft. house on a seemingly impossible narrow lot.



Jefferson Riley

Centerbrook Architects and Planners | Centerbrook, CT

"It's important for buildings to have some part of your imagination and history and nostalgia of who you are."

Jefferson Riley has won nine of his firm's 27 Builder's Choice awards. His commitment to sustainable building practices, project individuality and listening to his clients' desires have all helped make him one of the industry's most forward-thinking and unique practitioners.

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custom for less

one architect's quest for high design
on a relatively low budget.

by ed binkley, aia

this story starts with the 1999 purchase of five acres amid an oak hammock in central Florida that were plagued by thick, humid growth; huge spiders; snakes; and occasional flooding. My wife, Sherry, and I had embarked on an experiment: to design and build a 2,800-square-foot custom home on a budget of \$50 per square foot (or \$300,000, including land costs). Although it seemed idealistic, we considered the task possible if we did some of the work ourselves and kept the systems and structure simple.

We wanted to address current affordability concerns by developing a contemporary model that falls within the means of most middle-class homebuyers. Ikea, Target, and Apple have done great jobs of exposing the mass market to high-end, low-cost design. I feel that we, as residential architects, owe that same level of opportunity to the public. Everything we design does not have to be out of reach of the mainstream buyer.

The design process began with many hours of walking, sitting, and experiencing the site—an opportunity I wish were available on more

projects. I spent hours there with a 300-foot tape measure, bug spray, a machete, the occasional six-pack of beer, a camera, and a stool. I really believe that before you start to design, you must learn the site, how it rests, and how a house asks to sit within its boundaries.

alternative means

Sherry and I were on the same page with regard to design. Our goal was to employ off-the-shelf items in unconventional ways. We used sanded and sealed MDF for countertops and bookshelves, 16-inch strips of bamboo plywood sheets applied with exposed stainless steel screws for wood flooring, and waxed concrete floors with impressions of naturally fallen leaves and critter footprints. Concrete block walls, galvanized ductwork, and floor and roof trusses were left exposed. We added industrial stairs and a floor grate as a bridge on the second floor, and we incorporated interior windows to allow visual and verbal connection and to assist with air circulation.



Everett & Soulé

The author's home in Oveido, Fla., features exposed concrete-block walls and bookshelves fashioned from industrial materials.

Because this house was more experimental than a typical job, the contractor needed to share our vision. After interviewing several, we selected one who understood and embraced our objectives and would make sure our expectations were met. Sherry worked as the job superintendent, coordinating with the contractor and taking care of the finances and scheduling. We wanted this endeavor to be a very personal and hands-on adventure.

We also felt it was important to team with a creative

craftsman—a guy who can do everything others may not want to deal with and do it with passion. This is the person who spent hours with me designing and collaborating on systems and details that were foreign to us both. How can we transform raw MDF board into a smooth and glossy countertop that will withstand wear and tear? How can we then mix cables and connectors with that same product to make contemporary bookshelves? How do we create stair rails out of electrical conduit and

continued on page 48

metal straps? We would walk through The Home Depot or Lowe's when we didn't need to go, find items we weren't really looking for, and develop techniques to use them in unintended ways. My suggestion for architects who are interested in doing something similar is to go through these big-box stores looking for nothing in particular and keep an open mind.

end result

The most rewarding part of the process was seeing construction actually start. In general, it went smoothly, despite several early delays with grading and earthwork due to bad weather. Some of the most exciting and gratifying moments came during the framing stage, when opportunities not apparent on paper would present themselves. For example, we raised the roof of the main living space to take advantage of a view to the upper branches of a 150-year-old live oak tree that we had never seen from the second-floor vantage point.

Our experience with The Home Depot and Lowe's greatly simplified the entire project. We purchased a majority of the interior items—cabinetry, lighting, fans, hardware, and pre-

hung, solid-core doors—directly through the store. The process was easy, cost-effective, and convenient.

In the end we exceeded our budget by about 50 percent. (The house cost between \$75 and \$85 per square foot.) This happened partially because we didn't allow for a learning curve for the labor force in performing the desired quality of work. They're used to covering up many of the things this house leaves exposed, like the concrete floors and the ductwork. We had to get through to them that *this* was the finished product. But the contractor was great, and everybody finally caught on. It became a challenge and an opportunity for all involved.

This home has helped create a model I intend to introduce to mainstream housing. My firm, Bloodgood Sharp Buster Architects & Planners, has developed a trademarked housing prototype called "off the shelf" that will give the buyer a chance to be more involved in the process, to have some DIY opportunities, and to make choices on finishes that allow the chance for self-expression. It offers them exposure to a variety of unique design solutions. We



Photos: Everett & Soule

Binkley and his family chose bright colors inside and out to complement the home's lush setting.

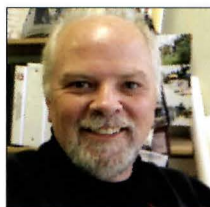
see plenty of contemporary models that are similar, but few of these homes reach the masses who appreciate that level of design at a reasonable cost.

We are currently developing a program for implementation with a select group of builders. The challenge for mass-housing builders is to rethink the way they normally do business—especially in a boom market, when they do not need to change protocol. It is very possible that the process will take longer than normal construction projects would due to the added involvement of the homeowner, so it does require a very entrepreneurial and broad-thinking builder; we are fortunate to be associated with several who

share our vision. In an effort to assist the homeowner further, we are also talking with banks and mortgage companies willing to create financing opportunities that offer incentives for alternative housing, green construction, and sweat equity. We may just open up a whole new range of possibilities for mainstream housing that is more creative, personalized, and affordable. **ra**

Ed Binkley, AIA, is a partner in the Orlando office of Bloodgood Sharp Buster Architects & Planners.

"everything we design does not have to be out of reach of the mainstream buyer."



Sharon Binkley

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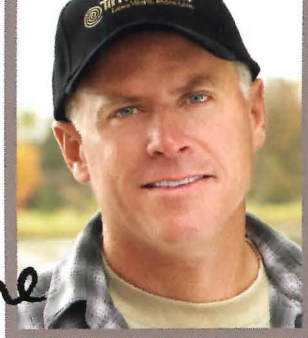


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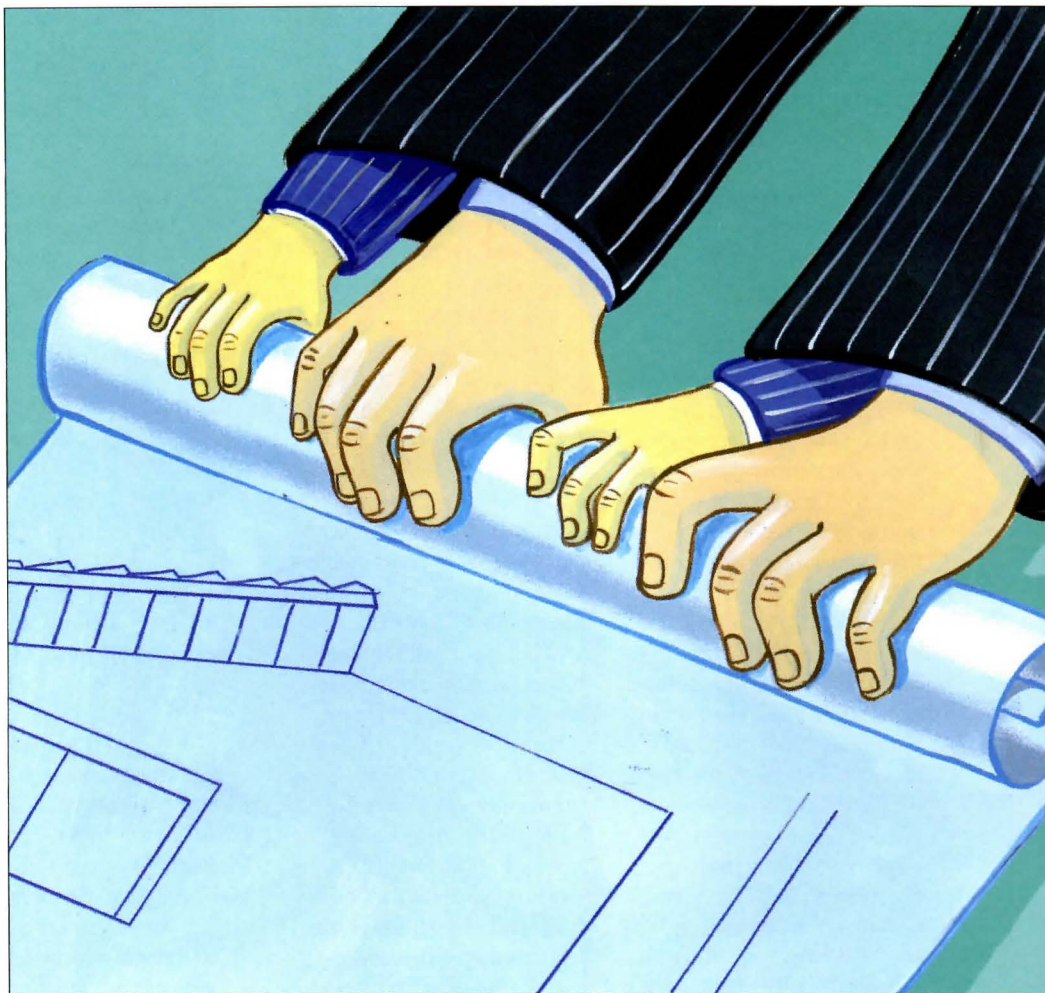
architects are partnering with other firms to win plum projects.

by cheryl weber

Santa Monica, Calif.-based Pugh + Scarpa calls itself a boutique firm—smallish, creative, and eclectic in the kinds of jobs it likes to take on. Its portfolio includes an array of nationally acclaimed work—from the sculptural Dwell House II and the energy-independent Colorado Court, an affordable multi-family housing complex, to highly innovative medium- and large-scale commercial and educational projects. Not bad for an office that started out in 1991 doing small bathroom remodels and master bedroom additions. As founding partners Gwynne Pugh, AIA, and Lawrence Scarpa, AIA, discovered a few years into the business, design talent takes a firm only so far.

Part of the reason their firm has enjoyed wide-ranging success is that it repeatedly joins forces with outside architecture offices to gain experience in a diverse set of building types.

For Pugh + Scarpa, strategic alliances are a response to what has become an increasingly specialized profession. “It puzzles me that as an architect today, it’s almost impossible to get a job on a project [type] you



Alison Seiffer

haven’t had experience doing,” Scarpa says. “People want to know, ‘Have you done a school? A K–12 school? In an urban area? How many on a corner lot?’ Everyone has become a specialist in a particular sector of work, and that’s something we had little interest in.” In 1994, a mutual friend introduced the pair to Steven Kodama, FAIA, who heads up Kodama

Diseño Architects in San Francisco. Kodama had been perfecting the design and delivery of affordable and special-needs housing for almost 40 years. The three hit it off and decided to create Pugh Scarpa Kodama, a separate legal entity, or joint venture, to attract top-notch clients within that housing niche. Since then, Pugh + Scarpa has simultaneously partnered with other archi-

tects, but more informally, to broaden its market reach.

This business model, while common in the corporate world, is rare among design professionals. But today’s sophisticated clients, hot real estate market, and tougher competition require architects to be increasingly savvy in their business dealings. A partnership—be it a legal joint venture or other

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affiliation—provides advantages lone firms may lack, allowing architects to step up production, add expertise, or gain entrée into related businesses or geographic markets. By teaming up with another firm, they're able to respond more quickly and more persuasively to requests for proposals or to an attractive opportunity outside their licensing jurisdiction.

handing off

For small operations such as Boston-based Hacin + Associates, partnerships with other firms work very well for farming out production work. "We are a small firm—just 11 of us—so we try to avoid the hire and fire cycle that sometimes accompanies a surge of work coming through the office, like a snake trying to digest a large mammal," says principal David Hacin, AIA. On large projects, such as a 40-unit condominium complex currently under way, he turns to a trusted local architecture firm for production help. "We're controlling all aspects of the project, taking on liability, and using their expertise as a drafting service through construction documents," Hacin says. Protocol dictates that he meet with the other firm members weekly or bi-weekly to answer design questions that come up. After the drawings are issued, Hacin's office reviews them, stamps them, and submits them for permits. And project fees get divvied up accordingly.

"A sizable portion of the construction documents fee goes to the other firm, along with a share of the construction administration fee if they participate," he says. "The lion's share of the fee comes to the architect who is taking responsibility."

On occasion, Hacin has agreed to design plum projects that he was too short-handed to execute, acting as a design consultant to a prime architect or as architect of record. "In that scenario I'm not going to take on the liability for the project," he says. "We'll provide construction administration in a critical phase and be on call to answer questions, but I would not be reviewing all the technical issues."

That kind of logistical baton-passing also makes business sense for David Baker, FAIA, David Baker & Partners Architects, San Francisco—particularly on high-risk projects such as condominiums. By working with an umbrella firm, Baker insulates himself from liability and doesn't have to go on a hiring spree to get the job done. Despite its efficiencies, this approach isn't his favorite way to create architecture. "We don't like to do that because it doesn't produce as good a product," he says. "So much of the design happens during construction documents." More likely, he's on the flip side of the equation, mentoring small associate minority firms as required by some of his nonprofit clients.

from chemistry to alchemy

hugh Hochberg of The Coxe Group, a Seattle-based management-consulting firm to the design industry, offers these ideas for striking the right collaborative balance on a project.

1. Goals. Be clear about the project's goals, making sure they're aligned with your partner's and the client's. "How does each firm define success?" Hochberg asks. "If one firm views a project simply as an opportunity to make money, and another firm sees it as a chance to create a presence in the community, they might be at cross-purposes."

2. Parameters. Define the job's scope, schedule, and process, and decide what happens if the scope changes.

3. Roles. Clarify each firm's responsibilities, sort out liability issues, and be accountable to each other.

4. Competency. Make sure the firm is competent for the joint venture and that its skills are on par with its responsibilities.

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In a joint venture, whether formal or informal, compatibility is everything, and the longer the history with an associate firm, the better. Baker, who oversees a staff of 20, recently formalized a long-running relationship with friend and sometime-business-partner José Vilar, AIA, an architect in nearby Emeryville, Calif. After 25 years of doubling up to go after affordable housing projects and "hanging out," as Baker calls it, the pair made their ad-hoc association official with a joint venture agreement called Baker Vilar Architects. Although Baker says the partnership is a "complete anomaly" because he has only a minor-

ity interest in the firm, being joined at the hip makes it easier to attract select commissions in the \$10 million to \$20 million range.

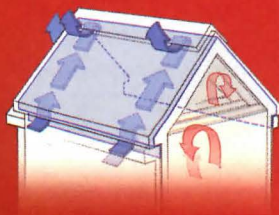
"It's really José's firm; I don't participate in day-to-day management, and typically BVA will go after stuff by itself," Baker explains, noting that BVA's expertise is in affordable housing and educational and institutional work. "But they have quite a good construction-review capability, and we joint-venture with them to add staff. We have this long relationship and know how good the other is, so it's not like handing part of a project to someone else."

continued on page 54



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both of which solve a multitude of design challenges. Tessie, who learned about AZEK Trimboards from a custom builder, recently spec'd AZEK for a town home complex at the Mid-South Country Club in Southern Pines NC. She finds that for about the same cost as clear red cedar, AZEK is durable, low-maintenance and finishes off better. "I was surprised at its workability," says Tessie. She said the subcontractors for the country club had no problem heating and bending AZEK into arches to trim 18 windows, using heat blankets right on the job site. "Even millwork firms such as PPW Millwork Unlimited are creating custom profiles with AZEK," she said, noting that she plans to enlist them for detailed brackets. Tessie feels good about AZEK's longevity and from a design standpoint, the product line's 18 ft. lengths means less seams and joints for a cleaner look. Great way to create timeless designs, Tessie!

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equal opportunity

Many large firms stay away from formalized joint ventures. With plenty of manpower and a presence in multiple states, there's simply less incentive to deal with the cumbersome process of setting up and managing a separate legal entity for a project. Bohlin Cywinski Jackson joint-ventured with Bainbridge Island, Wash.-based Cutler Anderson Architects to design the infamous Bill Gates compound because it was client-mandated—and justified by the job's size. Although BCJ typically avoids that setup, it does form non-joint-venture relationships with outside firms as a 50/50 participant on certain projects. BCJ's principals have come to the same conclusion Baker reached: Unless someone is bird-dogging to make sure the contractor is aware of tricky details, they won't get done—or they'll be done wrong.

"Sometimes we're the prime and the other architects are consultants to us, or vice versa," says Randy Reid, AIA, a partner in BCJ's Philadelphia office. "When we do team up with another firm, we always set up an arrangement where we're involved through all phases." There's no set formula for which firm does what, he says, because each job is different, but because BCJ typically takes the design lead, the firm plays a dominant role in

5. Personnel. Identify key people within each firm who will be involved in the project and assign them clearly defined roles. "Principals often set up a deal and delegate the daily activity to project managers, who may not have a good relationship with each other," Hochberg says. "It's important to get those people together early on."

6. Attitude. Not every aspect of a project can be determined ahead of time. "A good partner is willing to raise questions when boundaries aren't clear, making sure things won't fall between the cracks," Hochberg says. "In other words, make sure the other firm has a sense of ownership in a successful outcome."

7. Client relationships. Designate the people in each firm who will be responsible for communicating with and managing the client, thereby heading off problems that arise when the client gets conflicting messages.

8. Contract. A good contract spells out compensation in relation to the value each firm brings to the project. "The value a big-name architecture firm brings to a project may be disproportionate to the hours it puts in," Hochberg says. "The fee is a negotiation."

9. Conflict resolution. Agree on a predetermined process for settling team disputes.

10. Public relations strategy. What kind of recognition will each firm get, and how will its associates capitalize on it? "On a significant project, it's important for firms to decide who talks to what media and what the overall public relations strategy will be," Hochberg says. "There's also the issue of how publicity costs will be shared."—c.w.

schematics and design development. At the construction documents phase, the larger role shifts to the associated firm. "We'd focus on the issues we feel will make or break the job, and set it up for the other firm to have all the information they need to move on the other aspects," Reid says. If a project is a long

plane trip away, the local architect will have primary responsibility for site observation. But the job would still be staffed with at least one full-time BCJ project manager who deals with day-to-day activities and visits the site every other week to make sure nothing falls through the cracks.

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For that reason, BCJ would feel uncomfortable working on a job outside its licensing jurisdiction. "When you have that role and are involved in construction, you want to be licensed in the state," Reid says. "We find a way to draw a line on what they do versus what we do in a way that's reasonably efficient because not many clients will pay extra to involve two firms instead of one."

It's that client perception of two firms rather than one that Pugh + Scarpa tries to downplay when going after large-scale projects. Scarpa says informal associations can be a liability because clients are more comfortable with clearly defined lines of responsibility. "Every time we go to a client interview as a collaboration with another firm, most of the questions are about who's doing what," Scarpa says. "They want to be able to point fingers if things go wrong. The irony is that in almost any other profession, such as science, you get these incredibly creative people who team up to produce extraordinary results that they couldn't do individually. We form partnerships so we can go in and say, 'You don't have to worry about who does what, because we are one legal entity with insurance.'"

When Pugh and Scarpa made their relationship with Kodama official, Scarpa says they became overnight housing experts. They were, in essence, combining their

"in almost any other profession ... creative people ... team up to produce extraordinary results they couldn't do individually."

—lawrence scarpa, aia

high design profile with Kodama's stellar reputation for building affordable housing on time and on budget. "There's no question about their ability to deliver a viable project," he says, "and in an increasingly competitive market, you can't leave design excellence out of it." The partnership has no dedicated employees; all work is assigned to one or both firms. "Like any job in your office, some clients respond better to certain people, and we have the ability to be fast on our feet and make those adjustments when we're working on the project," Scarpa says. Compensation is also mix-and-match. Whoever does the work gets a paycheck, and profits are shared.

In hopes of presenting itself as the most qualified candidate for a job, Pugh + Scarpa also associates, usually informally, with other creative design firms. Currently it's working on a design competition entry for Santa Monica Village, a 300-housing-unit mixed-use project, in partnership with Moore Ruble Yudell and

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Koning Eizenberg Architecture, both of Santa Monica. Scarpa says MRY has the size and strength to be the clearinghouse for packaging and assembling the project, which is still in schematics. Koning Eizenberg came up with the most viable design scheme and is responsible for community outreach; Pugh + Scarpa is working on sustainability aspects and refining the massing models.

due diligence

A business affiliation is a trek into unknown territory. "We try it, and some [affiliations] work better than others," Scarpa says.

What's the secret to making these dream teams work? The folks at BCJ look for partners whose attitude, goals, and vision are compatible with theirs. "Some firms work until the fee for their phase has run out, and then look to wrap it up as quickly as possible," Reid says. "That's not necessarily our nature." And although there's always a contract that attempts to define each firm's role, partnering requires the ability to play it by ear. "It's important up front to have a strong relationship with an associate firm because it takes a lot of trust and working things out

"there's a lot to be learned, and for us, it's an enriching experience to be able to see how other people work."

—lawrence scarpa

as you go along," he adds. "Set up an arrangement that recognizes the need for flexibility, and keep both firms involved in all phases."

Turf battles are common, too. Scarpa says his staff can become more territorial than the partners, so it's wise to get second-tier architects

on board early on. Whatever the challenges, though, he believes the benefits of teaming up go well beyond the bottom line. Working with other firms, the architects pick up on better ways to do things, whether it's cutting foam models or negotiating fees. "We still educate architecture students that if you're a failure in the design studio, you're a failure as an architect," Scarpa says. "I think it's a much bigger and more complicated profession. There's a lot to be learned, and for us, it's an enriching experience to be able to see how other people work." **ra**



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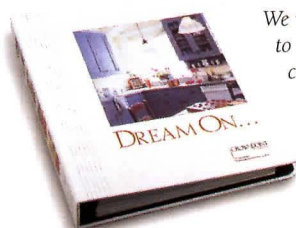
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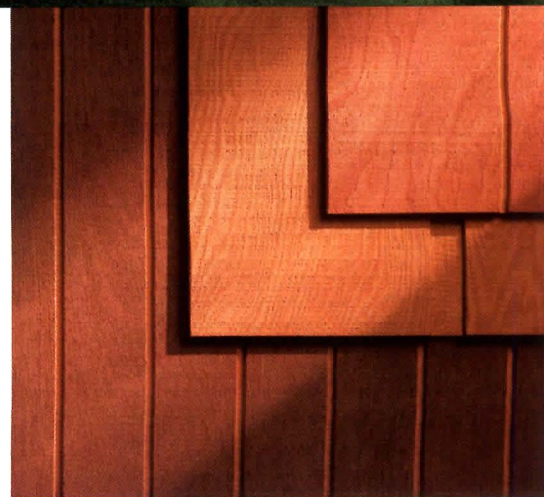
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Danny Turner

Langley, Wash., a beach town on Whidbey Island, is the kind of place that draws outsiders. An hour north of Seattle, tourists arrive here by the boatload to watch the orcas feeding in Puget Sound, to spot migrating gray whales in springtime, or to take in the restaurants, shops, and galleries of this pristine village, population 1,000. Ross Chapin, AIA, was a tourist who passed through Langley in the late 1970s. A few years later he came to stay, attracted as much to its strong sense of community as to its panoramic views of Saratoga Passage and the Cascade Mountains. In the past decade, though, Langley has struggled with the growing pains common to all prosperous towns. Big residential developers are beginning to eye the area, and while Chapin bemoans the sad “spaghetti bowl of cul-de-sacs and beige boxes” they usually bring with them, he doesn’t care much for pitched NIMBY battles. Instead, living and working in such an unspoiled spot has inspired him to come up with housing solutions that preserve small-town style and scale, changing local zoning ordinances if necessary.

Chapin knows that the loose edges of towns, with their mind-numbing mazes of streets, cannot be improved simply by sending out talented architects. Innovative solutions must come from better planning. So he’s teamed up with ace developer Jim Soules to create The Cottage Company, a Seattle-based residential development firm that specializes in what the pair calls pocket neighborhoods—sensibly sized houses and lots that share a courtyard garden. In 1998 they completed their first joint project, Third Street Cottages, which consists of eight exquisitely detailed homes in an existing Langley neighborhood originally zoned for four larger houses. It sold out immediately, and within months the national press picked up the story.



change agent

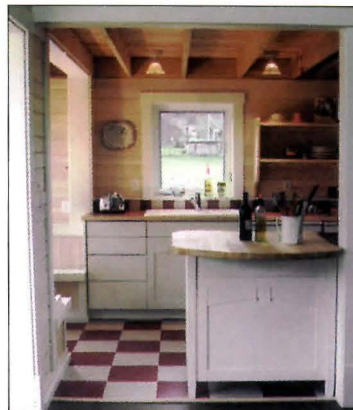
by cheryl weber

Since then, Chapin has completed eight other pocket neighborhoods throughout the Northwest with The Cottage Company or other developers. Last year, the partners’ Greenwood Avenue Cottages, in Shoreline, Wash., won a national AIA Housing Committee Award.

On his Web site, Chapin calls these cottages “the equivalent of the Mini Cooper—small, sensual, well-engineered, and reliable.” And indeed, just as the Mini’s market appeal is its design and performance, Chapin doesn’t use the D word when discussing the cottage concept, even though it is denser than the typical new-home development. He wants to make these homes so inviting that people who can afford more space actually choose less. When they’re offered an intimate neighborhood with carefully articulated public and private spaces, he believes people will choose quality over quantity, and a street-friendly approach to security over a gated community of big houses and big yards. “I’m trying to create models



The first project to take advantage of Langley's new cottage housing code, Third Street Cottages encompasses eight detached homes, all less than 1,000 square feet in size. With its built-in character, energy efficiency, and neighborly attitude, the pocket-sized community embodies Chapin's values of quality construction combined with a strong sense of place.



Photos: Courtesy Ross Chapin, except where noted

change agent



Conover Commons, phase one, is organized around Chapin's trademark child- and dog-friendly village green. The homes' fiber-cement siding, painted cedar battens, and Dutch-cut wood doors are updated versions of Northwest vernacular architecture.

other people can step into, take for a spin, and be inspired by," he says. "Hopefully a homebuyer can walk into a house that's 1,000 square feet, metaphorically kick the tires, and say, 'Oh, this isn't that small.' Or they'll say, 'I couldn't live in anything this size, but it makes me think about how much time and money I spend taking care of my house.'"

Few would question the need to broaden the housing palette. Chapin points out that demographic statistics put the number of one-person U.S. households at roughly 40 percent, and 60 percent are one- and two-person households. That's a large group of people for whom a big home on a 7,000-square-foot lot may not make sense in terms of space, money, or time spent on upkeep. By offering a detached alternative to townhouses and condos in single-family neighborhoods, he aims to provide the missing link between home and a spirit of camaraderie that both multifamily dwellings and 250-home suburban subdivisions ignore.

local lineage

"Most zoning is for suburban development, not community," says Chapin, who grew up in a small town north of St. Paul, Minn., in a shingled bungalow on a lake. It seems poetic that he ended up here in Langley—the first municipality in the Northwest to adopt the Cottage Housing Development provision, and perhaps the smallest town in the U.S. with a design review board. And yet, it is perfectly logical, in the way that people return to the values with which they were raised. His grandfather built the house Chapin lived in as a boy; his sister owns it now. "I was growing up in a location that had a very strong sense of place," he says. "I got to know the history of the neighborhood and the people who'd lived for generations in the same place. My grandmother would talk about when she was young, sitting in the crook of a particular tree, and [she would] point to the tree and say, 'Look how big it is now.'" When I looked at trees, I saw them not just as trees but as a continuum of life."

Fast forward to the early 1970s, when Chapin saw his hometown suffer the fate of other traditional settlements. As the freeways came out from St. Paul, the first waves of suburbia lapped the edges of the small town. Thousands of cookie-cutter houses went up in what used to be cornfields, and the town center began to decline as more and more people settled close to the shopping centers that were sprouting. It's a familiar story, but Chapin says the loss hit home as he was heading off to architecture school at the University of Minnesota. "My grandfather would walk in the woods; my dad played there, and I played there," he says. "When the ravine was filled in and the creek was straightened and put in a culvert, and houses went up, I felt almost a pain in my body." So he went off to college, determined to create memorable places that respond to history, neighborhood, the sun, and the contour of the land. "To me it was play," Chapin says of learning to make architecture. "It was all about not only form, but about people and relationships and detailing so that I could feel a place come alive when I would draw."

These pocket cottages are quaint in the best sense of the word. Their welcoming porches, flower

"what i'm going for is vitality and life, and it's not so much a mental aesthetic as a felt character and beauty."—ross chapin



boxes, and Craftsman details are strikingly familiar, with references to Northwest vernacular architecture and echoes from across the Pacific. But the compositions are contemporary, and might include a glassy tower or second-story terrace. When designing them, Chapin says he thinks about the deeply practical choices a farmer or shopkeeper might make. Some houses have a lively combination of shed and gable roofs, as though they were added onto over the years. And the details are never a pastiche. Deep eaves, cedar battens, and wide covered porches are indispensable for keeping out the Northwest drizzle. "I like to make houses as fresh as possible—not novel or gimmicky, but in a way that brings out the delight of the place," Chapin says. "What I'm going for is vitality and life, and it's not so much a mental aesthetic as a felt character and beauty."

The unprecedented appeal of these diminutive neighborhoods has led to knockoffs by other developers, who often miss the defining idea that makes Chapin's work so successful—the way the site layout encourages social interaction while protecting personal boundaries. At Danielson Grove, a Cottage Company project in Kirkland, Wash., garages

sit outside the commons, so residents walk through a shared courtyard to get to their houses. The courtyard is bordered by perennials and a low fence, providing a friendly edge between the commons and private yards. Flower boxes on shaded porches add another low-key boundary, and Dutch front doors offer the possibility for informal visiting. And one side of each nesting house has high windows, ensuring privacy between neighbors.

Chapin coined the term "pocket neighborhood" to refer to infill projects—New Urbanism on a smaller scale. Most of his developments slip into existing neighborhoods and consist of a dozen homes or less, ranging from 700 square feet to 1,000 square feet. "When we build, we need to build in clusters of natural, relatable households rather than trying to see how many houses we can fit on a property," he says. "This isn't about density. If you map out the aliveness of an area, and the relationship to connections, and color them in terms of their strength, I suggest that in a standard big development, the colors are going to be weak. We're trying to create a map that's as colorful and rich as possible."

cottage clout

Doing so has required close collaboration with city officials and developers—political skills Chapin honed as a founding member of Langley's Design Review Board, which he served on from 1984 to 1989. Still, he says he probably wouldn't have added speculative development to his repertoire had he not crossed paths with Soules, a Harvard MBA and former Peace Corps volunteer who introduced himself after a talk Chapin gave in 1996. The two formed The Cottage Company to take on individual joint ventures, which are set up as LLCs. Third Street Cottages was the first to take advantage of Langley's new Cottage Housing Development code, adopted in 1995 with the help of Chapin, who worked as an unpaid consultant to get it passed. Essentially, it permits four to 12 detached cottages on a site that would normally be developed with half that number of large homes. Each cottage must face a common area, and parking—a minimum of 1.25 spaces per cottage—must be screened from the street.

Soules says city leaders usually recognize the value of establishing an innovative design program. The greatest resistance comes from neighbors, who are afraid that cottage-style housing will devalue their larger homes. "Part of our mission is to build good examples to show what's possible while also



Each of the 12 cottages at Conover Commons in Redmond, Wash., is less than 1,000 square feet, so socializing often spills into the commons building (above). Its columns, beams, and paneling come from maple and fir trees on the land. One of the first buildings in the state to achieve zero net energy, its photo-voltaic panels power the building and light the commons area.

change agent

making a profit,” he says. Soules networks to see which cities are receptive to the signature concept and finds a parcel within the city on which to build. When the code is adopted, The Cottage Company is the first to build the project. Redmond and Shoreline are two Washington towns that adopted innovative housing codes after Chapin and Soules showed them the eye-pleasing Third Street Cottages project. The company subsequently built Greenwood Avenue Cottages in Shoreline in 2003, and a year later, finished phase one of Conover Commons in Redmond.

When opposition is strong, Chapin and Soules have gotten a foot in the door by asking city officials to grant code exemptions for a pilot project. Danielson Grove—a neighborhood of 16 one-, two-, and three-bedroom homes ranging in size from less than 1,000 square feet to 1,500 square feet—is a case in point.



“There was some reluctance on the part of neighbors to adopt a cottage code on a city-wide basis, so I said, ‘Why not adopt a demonstration code, set up parameters, and have a beauty contest? Developers could make proposals, and if you like them, allow a cottage project to proceed,’” Soules says. The city received five proposals from developers who had parcels of land under contract and chose two; one of them was The Cottage Company’s plan for Danielson Grove. When construction finished up last year, the homes were selling for \$550,000 to \$650,000—roughly on par with the lowest-priced larger homes in the neighborhood.

As word of Chapin’s cottage houses spreads, no doubt more and more neighborhood-planning groups will be coming to look at them. Once they step inside, it’s clear that the compact homes are not simply some nostalgic anachronism but rather, smartly designed and crafted. Chapin builds in storage wherever he can: beneath alcove benches, between 4-inch-by-12-inch wall studs, and under stairways. Trees sacrificed to construction are woven back into the building as framing or paneling. In fact, Sheetrock is completely absent at Third Street Cottages, whose interiors are covered in spruce salvaged from a piano factory. Energy efficiency is top priority, too. Advanced framing, high-density insulation, and tankless water heaters reduce the buildings’ heating and cooling costs.

Builder subdivisions are often the visual expression of bottom-line thinking. So can these meticulously constructed pocket neighborhoods be profitable? Soules says they cost no more or less to build than the average single-family home. Although the cottages use fewer resources than larger houses, as a group they’re more intensive to build and develop. “We see it as just another opportunity to step out from being in the herd,” he says.

“The homes in highest demand are those that have character, and a pocket

neighborhood is an ensemble, not just a series of small houses around a courtyard.”



A custom home inspired by local farm buildings in Dungeness, Wash., orients to views and weather. Chapin opened the house to the south, toward a view of the Olympic Mountain range. A flying rain shelter with polycarbonate roofing shields it from the strong winds and rain that blow in off the Strait of Juan de Fuca.

an engaging proposal

Cluster housing is just one building type in Chapin’s busy practice, which has recently grown from five to eight staff members. After years of designing modestly sized custom homes, which represent half of his practice, he’s begun to offer a dozen or so stock plans on his Web site. And it’s not just homeowners who’ve been calling. Chapin has been asked to modify the plans for developers, which, in turn, has led to site consulting on projects ranging in size from eight to 200 homes in Calgary, Alberta; Denver; Ann Arbor, Mich.; and Hilton Head, S.C. “I don’t accept everyone,” he says. “I’m hesitant to work with developers we don’t follow through with.”

Still, Chapin is clearly energized by the idea. One of his most exciting consulting projects is right in his backyard. The Highlands, an eight-minute walk from downtown, will consist of 50 houses on 15 acres of forest and farmland. Chapin was called in after three rounds of site designs by another architect. “The plans they’d come up with were a monoculture for Harriet and Ozzie and their grandkids,” Chapin says. He promptly called a town meeting, where residents filled two walls with 3-inch-by-5-inch cards on which they’d listed their concerns. Chapin posted those ideas on a community Web site and met with city



“a pocket neighborhood is an ensemble, not just a series of small houses around a courtyard.”—jim soules



At Greenwood Avenue Cottages (above left), personal gardens range in style from Japanese Zen to tousled English cottage. “Some people just manage to plant clover, but it all holds together,” Chapin says. Above: This custom home in Saratoga, Wash., slips between existing trees; the satellite outbuilding houses a guest bedroom.

officials and the project’s key stakeholders. What emerged was a strong need for diverse housing types for retirees, families, and singles, as well as concerns over affordability for a workforce being marginalized by land costs. A large grove of trees, some 3 feet in diameter, was also being threatened. The community wanted to preserve them not only for close-up enjoyment, but because they were part of the skyline.

Chapin eventually proposed a plan that increased the housing density while saving 75 percent of the trees and allowing more open land to be preserved. He observes that when a town center is more than a five-minute walk from home, people get in their cars. So he drew a neighborhood “living room”: a cluster of low-impact workplaces—say for a caterer, graphic designer, or massage therapist—around a courtyard. He’s also suggested limiting the size of houses to 2,500 square feet and offering a mix of housing types, including pocket neighborhoods that fit into the larger context. Chapin points out that if you commingle housing types, you’re tapping into a number of niche markets—families, retirees, singles, working people, and the wealthy—and that means you have only 10 houses to sell to each group, rather than 50.

Chapin’s presentation at the next town meeting drew two standing ovations. “It’s an engagement with the town rather than a strong-arm,” he says, noting that large national builders often dig in for two years of aggressive legal maneuvering to get what they want. “We’re changing a place people care for,” he says, “and if you slap the faces of the people who care, you’re going to get a big fight.”

Like the big national builders, Chapin is helping to package and sell an American dream, but one that appeals to a different subset of Americans. “There’s a huge group of people—100 million? I don’t know—who are saying smaller is beautiful,” he says. “Their values are about family and neighbors. There are people who are saying, ‘I’ve had a successful life, but success isn’t related to how big my house is.’ They want to go traveling and hiking on the weekend, and [they] can do that if their place is a good fit. Those people are the ones I’m trying to provide options for.” *ra*

breaking *the* rules

sometimes the word “no”
is just the start of the discussion.

by nigel f. maynard, meghan drueding, and shelley d. hutchins

city rhythms

Urban infill is perhaps the most important housing typology an architect can pursue. Not only does it promote density, it repairs decaying communities, creates new neighborhoods, and utilizes existing infrastructure. The specialty is also fraught with time-consuming obstacles—strict zoning laws, height limits, resistant neighborhood groups—that can thwart the noblest of efforts.

Minneapolis-based Elness Swenson Graham knows this all too well. The firm had to negotiate its way through a morass of problems in its quest to gain approval for Midtown Lofts, a 72-unit project featuring 12 attached townhomes. The project is part of a larger effort to transform an industrial site near a vacated railroad corridor south of downtown Minneapolis. “The old railroad corridor is being converted into a bike and pedestrian trail system called the Minneapolis Greenway,” says principal David Graham, AIA. “This project is one of the first pieces in that urban design vision.”

Before the Midtown could be part of that vision, Graham had problems to resolve. The former industrial site required rezoning for residential use and it needed environmental remediation. Moreover, Graham had to convince homeowners that the new townhomes would be sensitive to the small single-family homes along the northern edge of the site.

Graham’s first order of business was to hide the cars, so he designed an underground parking structure to decrease their impact on the neighborhood. “People still like their garages enclosed, so in this regard we can do high-density infill by building the [underground] box for parking.” The garage offers entry to central stairwells, to which two units share access.

Graham kept the project’s townhomes at two-and-a-half stories to maintain the scale and context of the nearby houses, and he employed architectural subterfuge to give them individuality. He started with traditional elements—chimney, gable, streetscape front porch—and experimented with forms and materials. “Once you establish that [traditional] rhythm and tectonics, you can





Photos: Albert Vecerka/Esto



Courtesy Elness Swenson Graham

Fronting the street near the northern edge of the site, these townhomes (above and far left) echo the traditional scale and massing of single-family homes nearby, but the architects used materials such as Hardiplank, stucco, corrugated metal, and steel to add a contemporary flair.

start to play with contemporary language," he explains, referring to the use of steel and concrete. Stucco exteriors add color, and corrugated metal ties the houses to their industrial pedigree. Despite their urban location, the units have rooftop decks and gardens.

Any project that breaks the mold of its surroundings is bound to encounter opposition, but neighborhood groups were welcoming once the architects explained how the townhomes would ultimately prove to be an asset to the community. Creative design helped, but so did a wise decision to push the south-facing buildings back to create breathing room along the greenway. This concession creates a city-owned and condo-maintained green space along the upper terrace to provide public access to the greenway, Graham explains.

Midtown Lofts is a welcome addition to its neighborhood and sets the bar high for future urban infill projects near the greenway. Decidedly different from the existing homes, the project also nestles comfortably among its neighbors. Graham explains it this way: "It is contemporary in design and spirit but with a traditional sense of rhythm and warmth."—*n.f.m.*

project:

Midtown Lofts, Minneapolis

architect:

Elness Swenson Graham, Minneapolis

general contractor:

Kraus-Anderson Construction, Minneapolis

project size:

1,050 square feet to 1,633 square feet

total units:

72, including 12 townhomes

site size:

1.49 acres

construction cost:

\$256 to \$285 per square foot

sales price:

\$419,000 to \$459,000

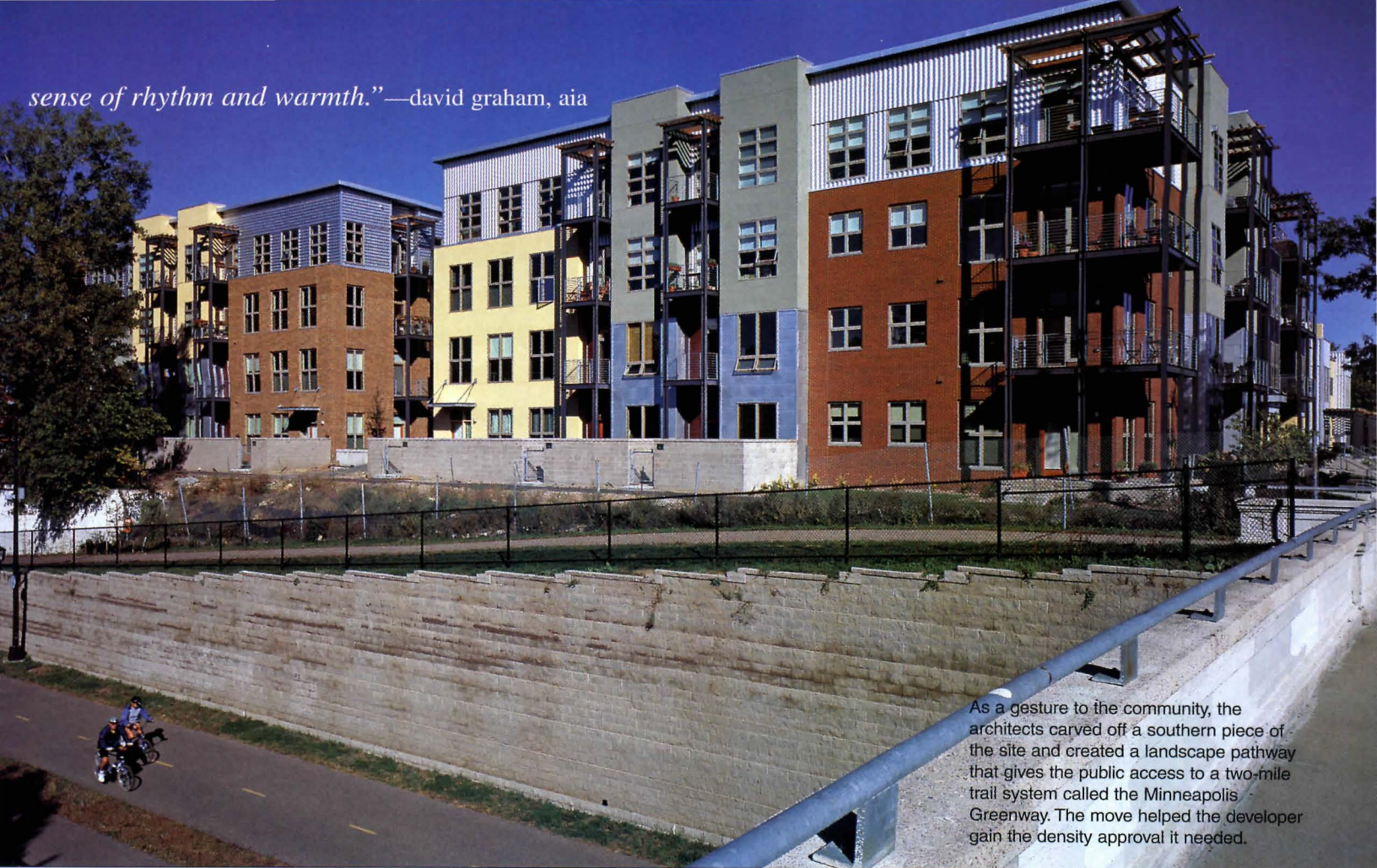


Photos: Alex Steinberg Photography



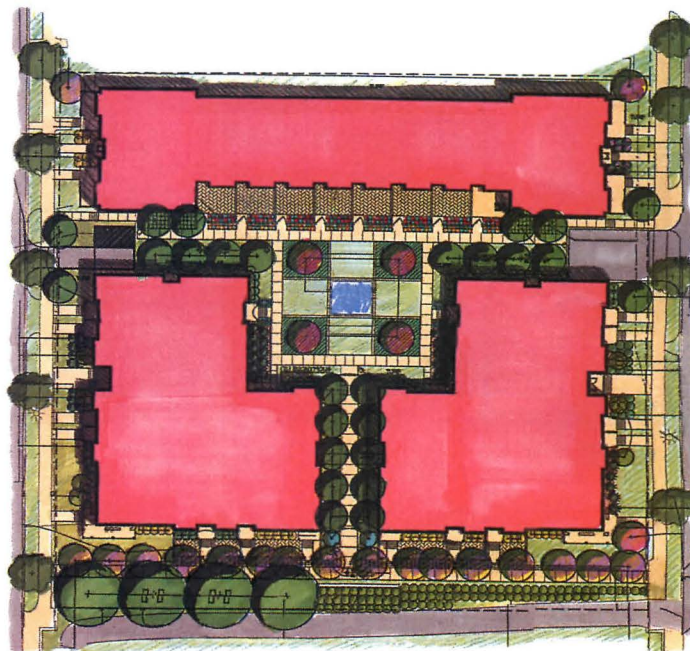
Midtown Lofts' interiors include sustainable design features such as bamboo floors, low-VOC paints, low-E windows, and recycled content drywall.

sense of rhythm and warmth.”—david graham, aia



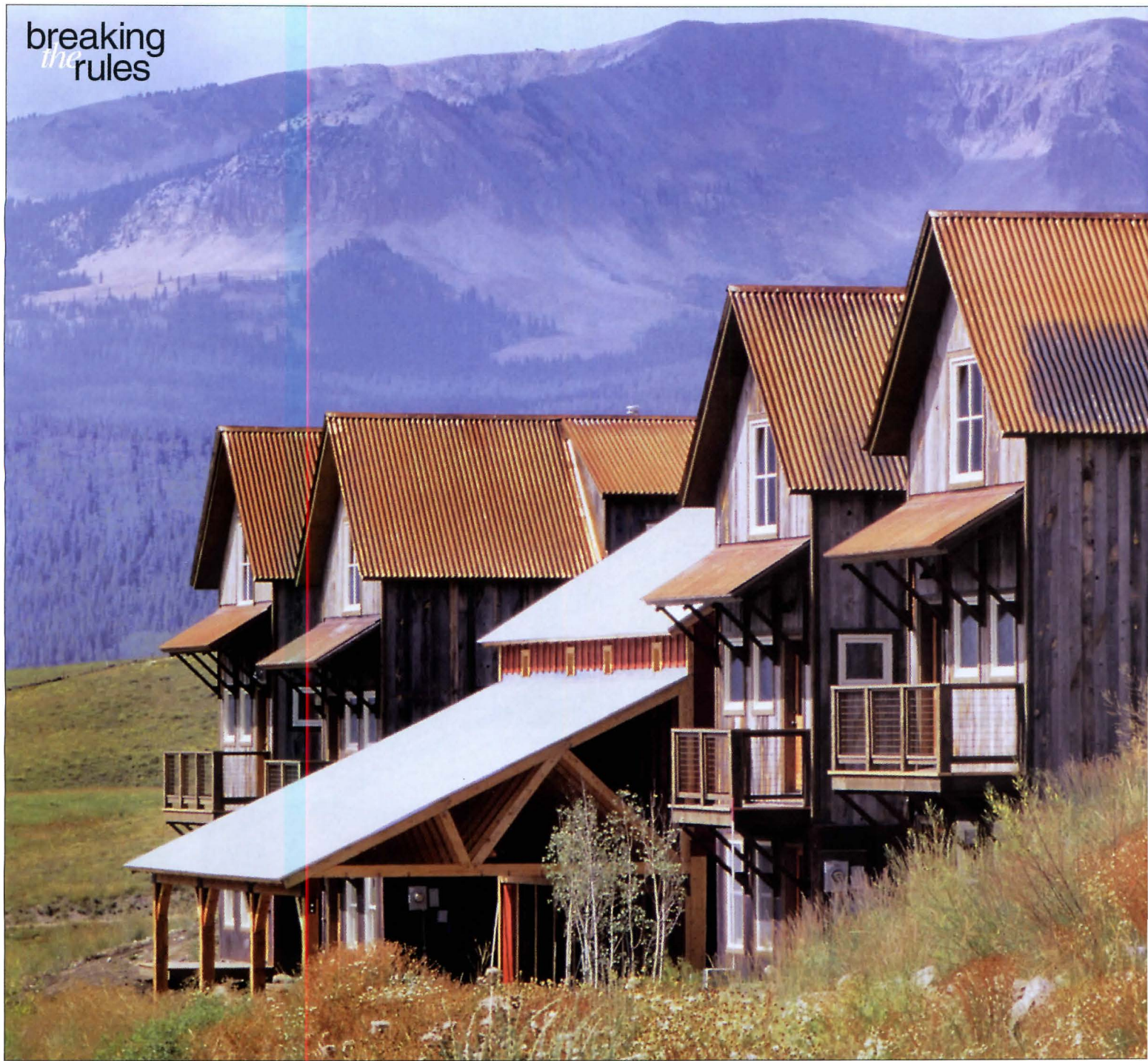
As a gesture to the community, the architects carved off a southern piece of the site and created a landscape pathway that gives the public access to a two-mile trail system called the Minneapolis Greenway. The move helped the developer gain the density approval it needed.

Albert Vecerka/Esto



Courtesy Elness Swenson Graham

breaking
the
rules



"we wanted a place for the locals to live."—pete weber, aia

The elemental materials and forms at Pitchfork recall the miners' shacks of historic Crested Butte, Colo. For many of the homeowners, community parking barns (above center) replace individual garages.



Photos: Pete Weber, AIA



good neighbors

a group of houses may appear beautiful and well maintained, but if the houses don't contain people, it's not going to seem like much of a community. Coburn Development, a Boulder, Colo.-based architecture, building, and development company, realized as much when it devised Pitchfork, a 101-unit project in Mt. Crested Butte, Colo. As a counterpoint to the ski resort town's typical large vacation homes that sit empty for much of the year, Coburn designed a series of modestly sized, single-family attached and detached houses. Clustered with four multifamily buildings on a 7.8-acre site, the homes range from 850 square feet to 2,500 square feet. "We saw the need for small single-family houses; they didn't really exist before [in this area]," says Pete Weber, AIA, Coburn's creative director. "We wanted a place for the locals to live."

He, company president Bill Coburn, and project architect Dan Rotner, AIA, loosely modeled the architecture on the old mining town of Crested Butte, located just two miles away. That meant rectangular forms, pitched roofs, and lots of wood and rusted metal. "It's so dry up there that you can let the metal rust and it doesn't significantly affect the life of the product," says Weber. The units' structural simplicity helped keep costs down while imparting a distinctive character to the neighborhood.

Coburn, Weber, and Rotner also obtained variances on setbacks, road widths, and building separation to lend Pitchfork the tightly knit feeling of historic Crested Butte. Brightly painted exteriors mix with natural, weathered wood facades to give the impression of a community that evolved over time rather than a brand-new development. Some units have their own garages; for those that don't, the architects interspersed covered structures they call "parking barns" throughout the project. "They're a way to get cars off the front of the house," Weber says.

Under the company's land-purchase agreement, Pitchfork had to include about 30 affordable housing units. These homes are deed-restricted, which typically means that any future buyers must have lived in the area for at least a year and must earn 80 percent of their annual income locally. The affordable aspect of the project also enhanced its appeal to full-time local residents, who now account for about 60 percent of the almost-complete community. Vacation homeowners make up the rest. "It's very rare in a place like this that you have people living there year-round," Weber says. "The neighbors know each other, even the second-home owners."—*m.d.*

project:

Pitchfork, Mt. Crested Butte, Colo.

architect/developer/general contractor:

Coburn Development, Boulder, Colo.

civil engineer:

Del-Mont Consultants, Montrose, Colo.

project size:

850 square feet to 2,500 square feet per unit (single-family attached and detached); 550 square feet to 1,400 square feet per unit (multifamily)

total units:

101

site size:

7.8 acres

construction cost:

\$110 to \$180 per square foot

sales price:

\$90,000 to \$725,000 per unit

photography:

Tim Murphy/FotoImagery.com, except where noted





"it's very rare in a place like this that you have people living there year-round."—pete weber



Dan Rotner



Pitchfork's houses huddle close together so their residents can enjoy expansive, open-space views rather than large yards. The architects drew the painted units' vivid color palette (left) from the region's Victorian-era housing.



Courtesy Weinstein|AU

high society

The Highland Parks community sits along a ridge in central Oregon's high alpine desert. The sloping site dips east, where a verdant valley gives way to remote scenes of the Ochoco National Forest's mountain majesty. Architect Joel Severud found ways to take advantage of the hillside locale for big-picture land planning as well as for the details of individual homes. Developer Steve Robertson of Pennbrook Homes has worked with Weinstein A|U on several projects and knows they share common ideals. "We both look to evolve a community based on embracing what we have to work with, like topography, existing landscaping, and solar orientation," he says.

Severud used a view corridor study, based on desired density and exact slopes, to position each house for "at least one dramatic view from a primary living area." Working with the topography also led to single-loaded streets with pedestrian entrances on the high side and the requisite two-car garage on the downward slope. The buried garage plan gussied up the homes' elevations on all four sides. "It allows for a smaller footprint on the land," says Robertson. "Plus, it makes the garage larger than a normal garage, but you don't really experience it from the main levels of the house or the exterior, so you get the best of both worlds."

Turning the houses perpendicular to the street created room to spread living spaces along southern elevations. "Instead of the typical front yard/back yard relationship, we rotated houses and pushed them back against [the] northern lot line to maximize solar gain," says Severud. Securing permission from local authorities for zero lot lines



increased the distance between buildings to around 35 feet, which was enough to get sunlight deep into the houses. Because of the sloped sites, living areas step down about two feet and kitchens peer over neighbors to those beautiful vistas beyond. Severud's thoughtful plan also saved a majority of the 500- to 1,000-year-old Juniper pines that dotted the hillside.—s.d.h.

project:

Highland Parks, Eagle Crest Resort, Bend, Ore.

architect:

Weinstein A|U, Seattle—principal-in-charge: Ed Weinstein, FAIA; project manager: Joel Severud; project architect: Tim Myhr, AIA

developer/builder:

Pennbrook Homes, Bend, Ore.

project size:

1,842 square feet to 2,034 square feet per unit

total units:

41

site size:

11 acres

construction cost:

Not available

sales price:

Currently around \$600,000 per unit

photography:

Phil Wise, except where noted

"[each home provides] at least one dramatic view from a primary living area."—joel severud



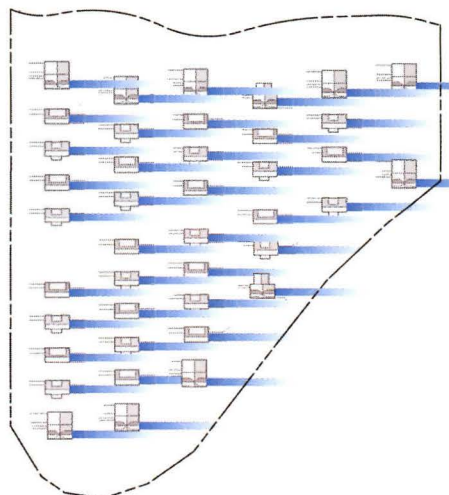
Steve Tague



Renderings: Courtesy Weinstein|AU



Indoor-outdoor living is encouraged at Highland Parks. Large expanses of glass line living areas, which all enjoy southern elevations and views of the distant peaks. The largest of three deck options adds 450 square feet of outdoor living space.



A stone base circles the perimeter of each house to visually anchor it to the site. "It's a conceptual rendering of how materials work," says Severud. "We felt it was more authentic to do these solid bases of stone with more traditional wood above."

The forward-thinking developer agreed to set aside one lot per block for pocket parks, which Severud placed across the street from one another in a cascade down the site. A path connects the parks and culminates in a larger community green.

breaking
the
rules



Photos (above and below left): Jimmy Fluker

*“you don’t want it to be just decks, decks, decks.
so we made two types of experiences.”—taal safdie*

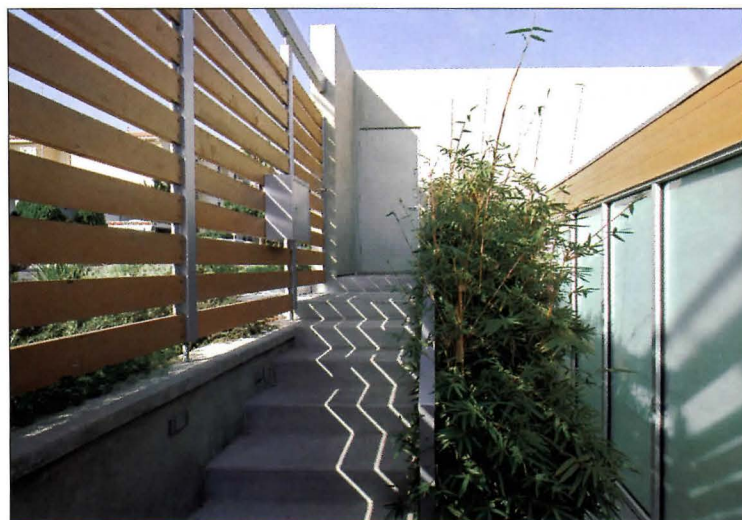




The homes keep a low profile in front (below left), unfolding their three levels down into the canyon. Strategic landscaping helps achieve a comfortable level of privacy on the extra-tight lots.



Courtesy Safdie Rabines Architects



double vision

a site that drops sharply into a jungle-like canyon isn't the first place one would think of putting two high-end spec residences. Nor would a well-preserved enclave of Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, and other historic house styles seem a prime location for a decidedly modern project. But first-time developer John Bertsch saw potential in a canyonside lot in San Diego's posh Mission Hills neighborhood, and he detected a hunger for progressive design in the local housing market. He acted on his hunch by hiring San Diego architects Taal Safdie and Ricardo Rabines to create a pair of sleek, single-family houses for the property.

Along with the developer, Safdie, Rabines, and project manager Susan Richard felt the project should take advantage of its unusual site rather than try to overcome it. So they nestled the detached, 2,600-square-foot units' three levels into the steep hillside, minimizing height to preserve the canyon's natural beauty. "The older homes in the area are built on top of the soil," says Bertsch. "We actually cut out the side of the canyon to keep ours as low-slung as possible." Decks off the top two floors supply high-up vantage points, while a terrace on the lower level lets residents see the canyon rising up around them. "We wanted to create outdoor living spaces," says Safdie. "When you have a hillside, that becomes a challenge—you don't want it to be just decks, decks, decks. So we made two types of experiences." The architects won setback variances that allowed them to pull the houses up closer to the street, thus conserving more of the landscape at the rear of the project.

"it was almost like designing two custom homes."—taal safdie

Thanks to the homes' contextual scale and sensitive placement, their design had little trouble winning support from a neighborhood review group. From the street only one story is visible, and an exterior materials palette of cedar and steel-troweled stucco picks up on the wood and stucco elements of the surrounding houses. Landscaping and simple cedar trellises provide privacy on either side of each unit.

Although the development team made one major concession to cost—wood shear walls instead of pricier steel framing—for the most part, they gave the project the same refined treatment a one-off residence would receive. Custom cabinetry and floors of bamboo and scored concrete, for example, grace the interiors. "From an architect's point of view, it was almost like designing two custom homes," says Safdie. "It might not have been quite as specific to someone's living habits, but the developer was very personal about it." The entire endeavor clearly pleased Bertsch. He chose Safdie and Rabines to design his next undertaking—a nearly complete 16-unit condominium building nearby.—*m.d.*

project:

Lewis Street Homes, San Diego

architect:

Safdie Rabines Architects, San Diego

developer:

Hip Pocket, San Diego

general contractor:

Brian Beeson Construction Management, Solana Beach, Calif.

landscape architect:

Nowell & Associates, San Diego

project size:

2,600 square feet per unit

total units:

2

site size:

0.2 acre

construction cost:

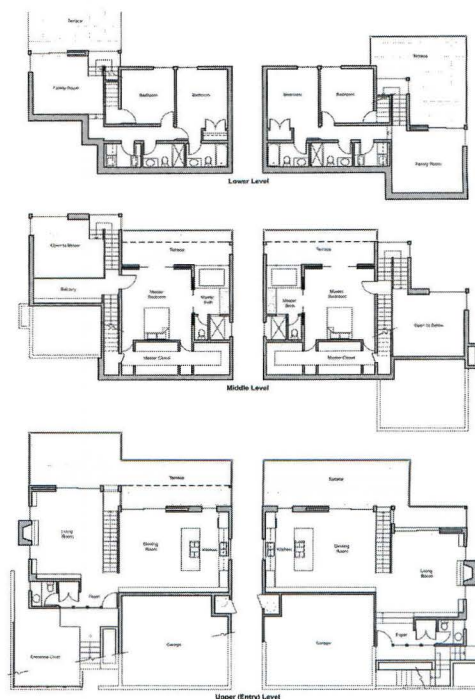
\$208 per square foot

sales price:

\$1.375 million; \$1.5 million

photography:

Adam Butler, except where noted



Sliding pocket doors separate the rear facades from the outdoors, letting in fresh air and canyon vistas. Extensive decks and ground-floor terraces create more connections with the site.



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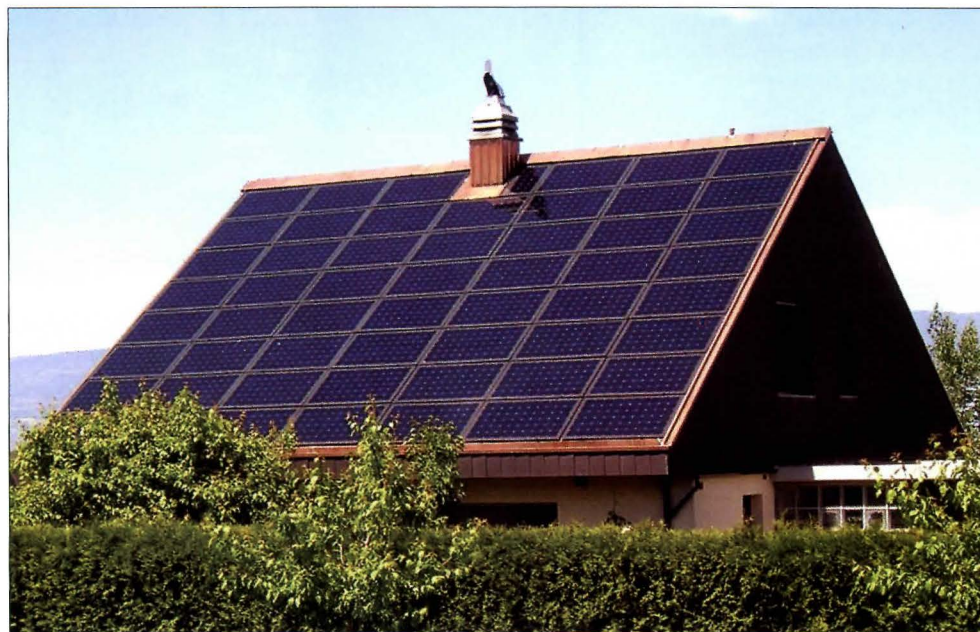
by nigel f. maynard

architects David Arkin, AIA, and Anni Tilt installed a solar system on their northern California home eight years ago, and judging from the results they've seen, there's little doubt they would do it again. "In our home we use roughly 4.5 to 6 kilowatt-hours per day," says Arkin, principal of Arkin Tilt Architects in Berkeley, Calif. "The [state] average is around 21."

Arkin says he and Tilt cool their house passively, using gas for cooking and heating and to power the backup hot-water tank. During off-peak hours, the home's solar panels generate an energy surplus that goes back into the power grid—and results in an average monthly electricity bill of \$6. "There are few thrills in this world greater than watching your meter spin backward," he says.

hot and cold

Harnessing energy from the sun is an old idea whose time may finally be dawning. With varying degrees of success, today's architects are using the sun for passive heating and hot water or photovoltaic (PV) solar panels to convert sunlight into electricity. Panels come in



Courtesy SunPower Corp.

Despite lagging behind European photovoltaic installations such as this one in Switzerland, U.S. solar-electric generation is growing at a steady clip due to falling panel prices and rising fossil fuel costs.

two forms: amorphous or crystalline (mono or poly). "Amorphous panels are the VW Beetle of the industry," says Lawrence Scarpa, AIA, principal, Pugh + Scarpa, Santa Monica, Calif. "They are cheaper to make and less temperamental, but they are also less efficient. Polycrystalline, on the other hand, is more high-performance and more efficient, but [it's also] very temperamental and easily damaged."

Although it's clean and renewable, solar technology also can be inefficient and costly. According to Warrenton, Va., architect Angus Macdonald, AIA, "a comprehensive solar system to supply electricity, hot water, and heating for a three-bedroom,

2,500-square-foot home costs about \$30,000 if it is to be grid independent for a ... time." Even so, Macdonald says solar power is increasing in popularity due to rising fossil fuel prices—a trend he expects to continue as fuel costs go even higher.

Solar power proponents point to Germany and Japan by way of example. High fuel prices forced those countries to invest in solar energy, and business is booming. According to Solarbuzz, a San Francisco-based solar research and consulting company, PV installations in Germany jumped 152 percent in 2004.

Other countries are seeing similar spikes. In the United States, for instance,

the number of PV installations rose 27 percent in 2004. (Ironically, the share of electricity produced by solar sources in this country hovers below 1 percent.)

According to architect Ken Wilson, AIA, principal, Envision Design, Washington, D.C., a confluence of factors might make solar technology a competitive energy alternative sooner than some might think. "I hear that the cost is coming down, panels are getting more efficient, and tax incentives are helping to increase interest," he says.

Others confirm that at least one barrier to entry is cracking. Solar technology in the 1970s and '80s "was

continued on page 88

10 times more expensive than it is today," says Rhone Resch, executive director of the Washington, D.C.-based Solar Energy Industries Association. Given the "90 percent reduction in price" that has occurred, he adds, a system can pay for itself in 10 years or less.

That price drop certainly has piqued the interest of volume builders, who are more sensitive to the bottom line. For example, Shea Homes announced in 2000 that it was developing in San Diego a high-performance subdivision in which each home has a 1.32-kilowatt PV system and solar-generated water heating.

It's not surprising that such a project would exist in California, where residents are known for their environmental consciousness. In fact, the state is widely considered to be the primary source of solar's popularity surge. "California accounts for 85 percent of the [U.S.] PV panel market," says Julie Blunden, vice president of external affairs for Sunnyvale, Calif.-based PV manufacturer SunPower Corp. "We also have some of the highest marginal energy rates in the country, too. As a result, a combination of rebates and incentives make solar ... a good option."

California architects Arkin and Tilt used California Energy Commission rebates and a now-defunct grant program to lower the cost of their \$15,000 system to \$6,000, and solar supporters agree that incentives are the most important catalyst for



Marvin Rand

growth because they attract users and lower system costs. Not every state offers incentives, but many of those that do are at the forefront of efforts to drive widespread adoption of solar technologies. California, for example, is eyeing another bill to put solar power in half of all new homes within 13 years, and Oregon recently raised its income tax credit to \$6,000 per installation. A federal energy bill signed by President Bush offers a \$2,000 credit to homeowners with installed systems.

Solar panels' increased efficiency and output are also driving installation growth. Today, a single panel carries a rating of 5 watts to 200 watts; the rating indicates the amount of power the panel can be expected to produce in full sunlight. Generally, the bigger the panel, the more watts it produces.

Solar-panel manufacturers aren't done yet. SunPower will soon launch a 220-watt silicon-based panel with the same dimensions as its older products. And d.Blue, the newest photovoltaic module from Scottsdale, Ariz.-based Kyocera Solar, reportedly offers a breakthrough in energy-conversion efficiency

that maximizes the amount of sunlight a cell can absorb. It's rated at 167 watts.

Other companies are looking to the future as well, developing new processes and technologies that could change the way electricity is produced and consumed. STMicroelectronics, a Geneva, Switzerland-based semiconductor manufacturer, recently discovered new ways to produce solar cells that will generate electricity at costs 20 times lower than those produced by current products. Meanwhile, Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. of Osaka, Japan, has teamed with Nanosys, a Palo Alto, Calif.-based nanotechnology company, to develop solar coatings that could be painted on roofs and walls. Related products are not expected to hit the market for several years, however.

before sunset

Scarpa, a solar-panel user for more than 10 years, says some architects avoid solar technology because it seems too complicated. "The truth is that it's very easy," he insists. "Don't be turned away by the perceived difficulty." He also advises architects to design

Architect Lawrence Scarpa, AIA, used solar panels as a design element on the 100 percent energy-independent Colorado Court housing project in Santa Monica, Calif.

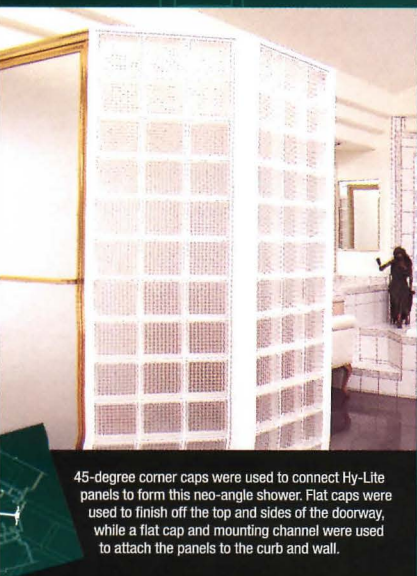
a house and its solar system as one unit. "If you treat it as part of the architecture, it will blend in much nicer," he says.

Other architects who have worked with solar systems warn that it's cheaper and easier to install panels when the house is being built. "If I tried to retrofit my roof with a solar panel now, it would require demolition," says Chicago architect Zoka Zola, AIA. "It costs five times more to retrofit, but a fraction if you do it at the beginning." She adds that architects working with limited budgets that won't permit installation during construction should design so the client may easily install panels later.

Solar-savvy architects also say that the best type of installation is tied to the homeowner's utility grid. "A large system turns the meter backwards so that during the day, excess power is sold back to the utility," Macdonald explains. Scarpa says architects also may choose a grid-independent system and store power in a battery, but he cautions that the battery "takes up a lot of space and costs a lot."

Arkin encourages architects new to solar to visit solar projects in their area and to contact their local utility companies for information about tax breaks and incentive programs. Even better, "try the panels on your [own] home," he says. "Study them and learn from them." **ra**

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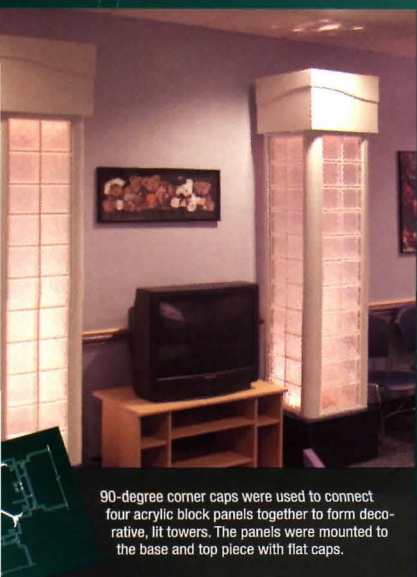


45-degree corner caps were used to connect Hy-Lite panels to form this neo-angle shower. Flat caps were used to finish off the top and sides of the doorway, while a flat cap and mounting channel were used to attach the panels to the curb and wall.

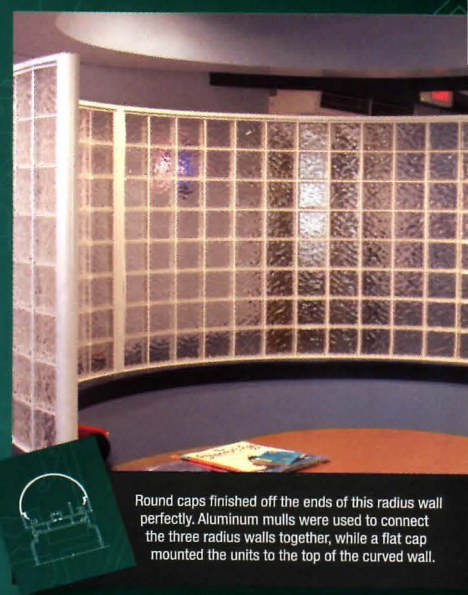
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90-degree corner caps were used to connect four acrylic block panels together to form decorative, lit towers. The panels were mounted to the base and top piece with flat caps.



Round caps finished off the ends of this radius wall perfectly. Aluminum mulls were used to connect the three radius walls together, while a flat cap mounted the units to the top of the curved wall.



Aluminum mulls were used to connect these flat panels and radius walls together. A flat cap and mounting channel were used to mount the units to the base and the walls. Flat caps were also used to connect the desktop to the top of the panels.

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by rebecca day

In a tract-home development, electronics subcontractors have the luxury of designing in a predictable array of audio systems, home networking gear, and maybe a home theater. They offer cookie-cutter packages, and then home buyers either opt in or out of the upgrades.

In a custom home, where homeowners can indulge every desire, electronics designers have to be ready for anything on the wish list. The smart ones also anticipate what a homeowner may want later on and build in an infrastructure that enables easy upgrades. Then they work closely with the builder and other subs to ensure that everyone's on the same page at each step of construction.

This penthouse project in New Hope, Pa., is an "every-

thing plus the kitchen sink" installation, according to Robert Baumann, director of project management and systems design for HiFi House, an electronics firm with offices in Broomall and Jenkintown, Pa., and Wilmington, Del. At various stages of the project, Baumann coordinated with builder Scannapieco Development Corp. and the electrical contractor to make sure wiring and framing were in place before concrete was laid and walls went up.

"This residence has concrete floors, which can muck things up because once they're in, it's hard to run wires," Baumann says. The location of TVs used to be fairly predictable, but because the newest models are just 3 inches deep, homeowners now can put them just about anywhere. In the master bedroom, a 37-inch Sharp LCD TV rises from a motorized lift at the end of the bed, so a floor outlet was needed to accommodate both the TV and the lift. "We had to talk to the electrician and the builder to make sure we had enough electrical service there," he explains, "because you don't want to be sharing the TV circuit with the washing machine or the bathroom outlet your wife uses for the blow-dryer. If you're look-



Photos: Mary Ann Kleschick

The homeowners wanted multiple televisions—including a projection TV and smaller plasma TVs—so they could watch Sunday football games or other programs and their grandchildren could play video games simultaneously.

ing for the purest signal—without interference—you want to run as much as you can on dedicated circuits."

Baumann also coordinated with the builder to frame a nook for a 15-inch LCD TV in the wall next to the master bath sink. Thanks to the flat TV, he sees the water closet TV trend taking off over the next few years. "Every morning you turn it on to get news, weather, and traffic," he says. In fact, the company recently added the Seura two-way mirror with integrated television to its preferred product list and would have sped it into this project if the TV had been on the market when plans were

drawn up. "When it's off, you see nothing but a mirror," he says of the Seura product. "When it's on, there's a terrific picture. We're expecting to sell a lot [of them]."

The New Hope project is controlled by a Crestron system that integrates lighting, motorized shades, audio/video, security, and HVAC, which are operated via wall- and table-mount touchpanels. The system is also Internet-capable, which benefits both the homeowner and the installer. "The homeowner has control over his entire home, whether he's sitting in his home office or check-

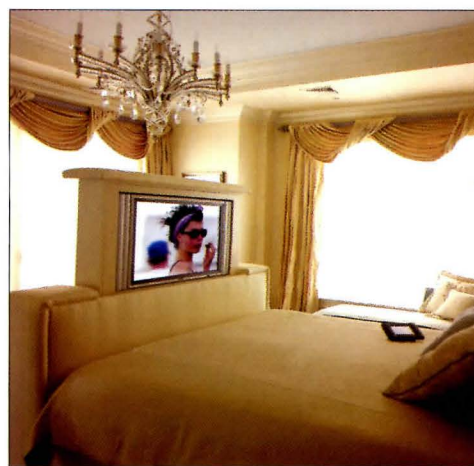
continued on page 92



ing in from Bangkok,” says Baumann. “He can turn on lights to check things, look at cameras, and turn the alarm off if he needs to let someone in.” HiFi House, meanwhile, benefits from the connection by being able to make programming adjustments to the system without having to make costly service calls. “If Comcast makes a channel change—which it does often—we can change the favorite channel on [the homeowner’s] remote control from our office,” he explains.

Internet and whole-house control require Category-5e wiring—and lots of it. Baumann estimates HiFi House threaded close to 25,000 feet of wiring for audio, video, control, and networking throughout the 5,800-square-foot home. “I always do redundant wire,” he says. “You never know when a customer is going to add something after the fact, and you never know when you’ll have a bad wire because the Sheetrocker put a nail through a Cat-5 cable.” He says the company made sure every room was spec’d for TV, computer, cable and satellite TV, and phone. They then ran an additional two-by-two port that included two Cat-5e runs and a pair of RG6 cables.

The customer initially balked at the \$10,000 wiring bill, but Baumann says the



Photos: Mary Ann Kleschick

HiFi House spec’d televisions of various sizes for the master bathroom and several bedrooms. The home’s RG6 network allows occupants to watch DVDs from any TV—without having a player in the room.

rainy day runs have already paid off. “He had a room where he said he didn’t need a computer or video feed, but he came back to us later and said his daughter was coming to visit and she wanted a TV in her room. So [those feeds] came in handy.” So did the extra Cat-5 run in the bedroom. The wife’s study and the master bedroom shared a thermostat in the original plans, but after a cold winter, the homeowners realized they needed separate thermostats to handle two thermally different rooms. “We had an additional Cat-5 wire running to the touchpanel that we could run to the thermostat,” he says.

Any home theater begs for extra wiring because homeowners always have to be prepared for the next big thing—and a core of smaller ones. In this penthouse’s home theater, Baumann ran

10 to 15 extra runs of Cat-5 “just in case” and ended up using nearly every one. The husband is a sports fan, so much so that he watches the big football game each week on a 110-inch projection screen and reserves the two smaller Fujitsu 55-inch plasmas for other games. When his wife or grandkids want to join him and view a cooking show or play Xbox, they can plug in wireless headphones—a late add made possible by Cat-5—and tune in their own audio.

The whole-house RG6 network enables every room with a TV to view a DVD without having a player in the room. A 400-disc Sony DVD changer in the main equipment room can be accessed from remote Crestron panels and fed through local TVs. “If you don’t have distributed video,” he says, “the only way you have access to 400 discs is if a player is sitting under your TV and you go retrieve a disc.”

According to Baumann, this project was successful

because of the weekly meetings that were held to keep the subcontractors informed of each other’s progress—a huge benefit when unforeseen issues arose. Because the property was built to commercial standards, it included features not required in residential installations; for instance, loudspeakers had to have back boxes for fire ratings. “The boxes are a lot bigger than the speakers, so if you have an 8-inch hole, it needs a 16-inch pathway because of the side wings that hold it in the ceiling,” Baumann says. “If you didn’t know beforehand, you’d have to cut into drywall—[something] you never want to have to do. It pays on any project to have all the subs talking so there’s open communication.” *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.

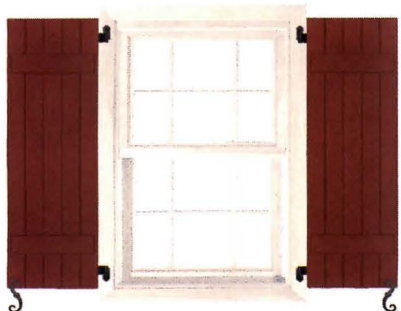
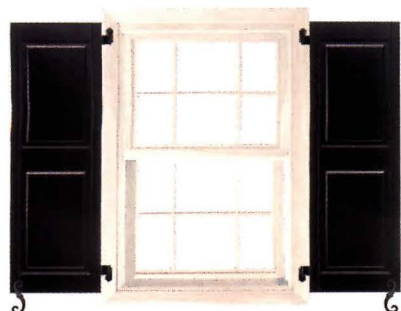
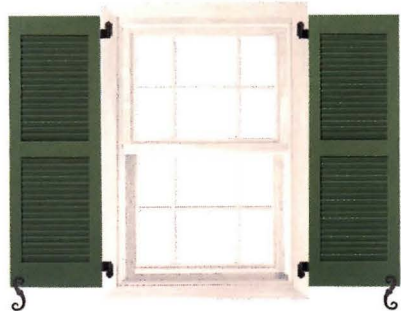
project credits

builder: Scannapieco Development Corp., New Hope, Pa.

electronics design and integration firm: HiFi House, Broomall, Pa.

interior designer: Mary Ann Kleschick Interior Design, Philadelphia

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Tobler Duncker specifies Duravit's Darling wall-mounted toilet, available in five colors, for its "well-designed, clean, simple look" and to maximize space, Duncker says. The firm often pairs it with Geberit's Tessera concealed tank/carrier system, which is built into the wall between the studs, freeing up 6 inches to 9 inches of space and making cleaning easy. Duravit USA, 888.387.2848; www.duravit.com. Geberit, 847.803.5000; www.geberit.com.

Courtesy Duravit

agri culture

Metal is Tobler Duncker's preferred material for attractive exteriors, and Copper Sales is the firm's supplier of choice. The



Photos (headshot and above): Courtesy Tobler Duncker Architects

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—nigel f. maynard



Trent Davol

wide angle

The Superior TM-4500 by Lennox Hearth Products is a clean-face wood-burning fireplace with a large 45-inch-by-29-inch opening. The unit has a brick-patterned interior, a zero-clearance design, and optional bifold glass doors. Tobler Duncker used it for this project "to eliminate the need for costly masonry construction," Duncker says, and "to create an elegant modern look." Lennox Hearth Products, 714.921.6100; www.lennoxhearthproducts.com.



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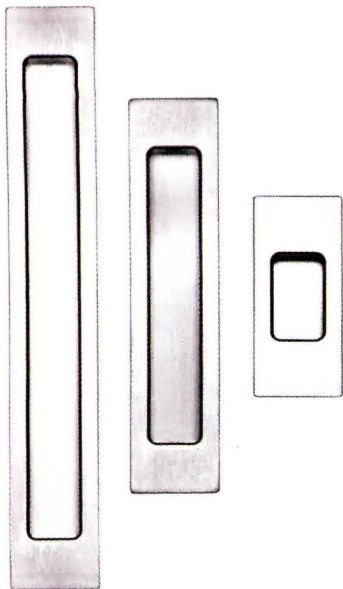
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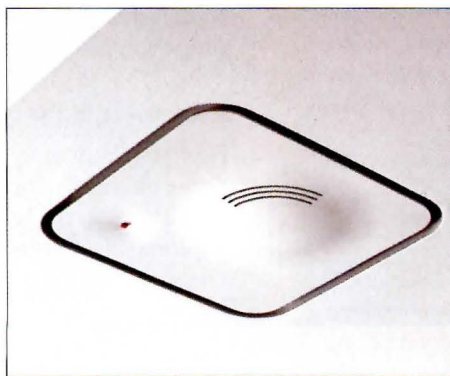


lovely flat

Good hardware is tough to find, but flush-mounted pieces are particularly elusive. New Zealand-based Halliday + Baillie is stepping in to fill the void. The manufacturer's latest introduction is a line of door pulls elegant in their simplicity. Available in three sizes, the zinc-cast pieces come in satin-pearl chrome, brass, and oil-rubbed bronze. Ironmonger, 800.621.1937; www.ironmonger.net.

wide by side

This double-wide refrigerator is actually two 24-inch-wide units joined by a built-in trim kit. Manufactured by the Liebherr Group, a German refrigerator and freezer company new to the U.S. market, the Premium BioFresh NoFrost combines 13.5 cubic feet of refrigerated storage in one component and a 4.1-cubic-foot no-frost freezer and 4.6-cubic-foot fresh-foods compartment in the other. All three compartments feature separate compressors and cooling circuits. Liebherr Group, 866.543.2437; www.liebherr-appliances.com.



sensible sensor

The Modern Smoke Detector by San Francisco-based Architectural Devices brings good looks to a mundane product. "Frustrated with these eyesores in the spaces I've designed, I felt determined to re-imagine [them]," says designer and company co-founder Jason Rosenblatt. The hard-wired device is 6 inches square with a ¼-inch reveal and has a photo-electric sensor and 9-volt backup battery. It can be painted for a custom look. Architectural Devices, 650.954.6124; www.architecturaldevices.com.

—nigel f. maynard



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(per ASTM D 3273).

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Proper and consistent installation is critical for maximizing performance. That's why Typar offers installation training tools and tips for your contractor and subcontractors. For example, certain areas require special attention, especially around corners and door/window openings. We recommend adequate overlap, wrapping gable ends, and consistently carrying the sheet around corners to help prevent potential problems in the future.

Keep the elements where they belong—outside.

To keep moisture out, you need a housewrap that prevents rain from seeping into the wall cavity and won't tear, or rip off entirely, before the cladding is up. As a matter of fact, Typar's water holdout is

approximately four times the U.S. minimum code with a tear strength that is nearly five times stronger than Tyvek® (per ASTM D-4533).

Final inspection is just the beginning.

Construction is complete. Final inspection is finished. Now what? How your housewrap performs over the life of the home is important because if moisture gets inside your walls, it can lead to mildew, rot and the dreaded four-letter word: mold.

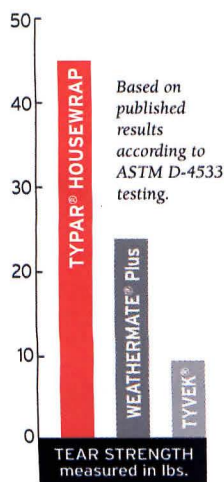
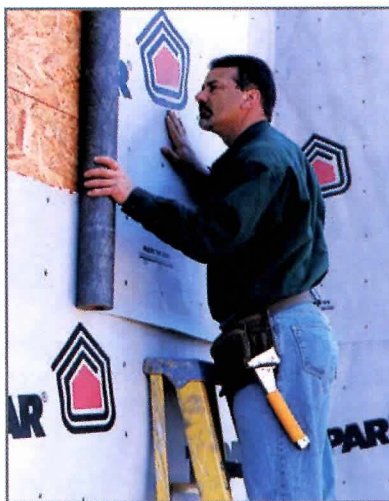
But moisture doesn't just come from the outside. An average home produces 3-6 gallons of moisture per day—from showering, cooking, etc. Typar's industry leading Moisture Vapor Transmission helps reduce moisture from settling in your walls.

After the cladding is up, you can rest easy because Typar also delivers unbeatable

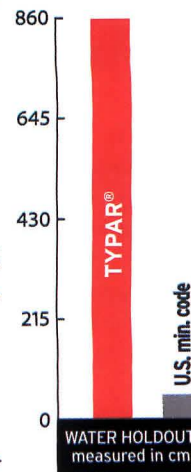
surfactant resistance. It minimizes damage caused by soaps from powerwashing and oils from cedar, which makes it ideal for installation under wood siding and stucco.

The proof is in the performance.

To protect the integrity of your homes, both during the construction process and for years down the road, specify the housewrap that's proven to outperform the competition—Typar.



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Tyvek is a registered trademark of DuPont.



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off the shelf

cabinet appointments

add drama to doors and drawers from these hardware stores.

casting call

The Marcel line of hardware from hip designers Jeffrey Goodman and Steven Charlton combines traditional sand-casting craftsmanship with contemporary flair. Hand-poured in small batches, the collection includes a single-post pull, handles and towel bars in two sizes, a toilet paper holder, and a hook. The aluminum pieces—all designed with asymmetrical geometric cutouts—come in either matte black or polished finishes and require minimal care. Du Verre, 888.388.3773; www.duverre.com.



absolute steel

Designed to blend with high-end stainless steel appliances, Providence Artworks' Absolute Zero Collection of cabinet and drawer pulls are made of solid stainless steel so finishes won't chip off or wear away. Six sleek designs are made in single-hole or crossbar configurations. Providence Artworks, 877.684.3362; www.providenceartworks.com.

right angles

Available in black leather, faux crocodile, and cocoa-brown washable suede, Atlas Homewares' Paradigm collection spices up kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanities. The line of square knobs, 3-inch and 7-inch pulls, and bath hardware combines rectangles and squares of leather with shiny chrome or brushed nickel. Atlas Homewares, 818.240.3500; www.atlashomewares.com.



continued on page 100

off the shelf

round again

Beach Pebble cabinet pulls from SpectraDécor are smooth circles of 100 percent recycled glass on a lead-free pewter base. Nearly 2 inches in diameter, the knobs feel good in the hand as well as on the conscience. The knobs are available in 10 earth-friendly hues, including cloud, moss, sand, spruce, and surf. SpectraDécor, 800.550.1986; www.spectradecor.com.



less is door

The Cutler Anderson Collection of hardware for the home, designed by architect James Cutler in partnership with Reveal Designs, includes door levers, passage sets, and alluringly unassuming cabinet pulls. The 2-inch-by-2½-inch fixture shown here attaches vertically or horizontally on cabinets or drawers. Choose from stainless steel, sandblasted stainless, or oil-rubbed bronze. Reveal Designs, 914.220.0277; www.reveal-designs.com.

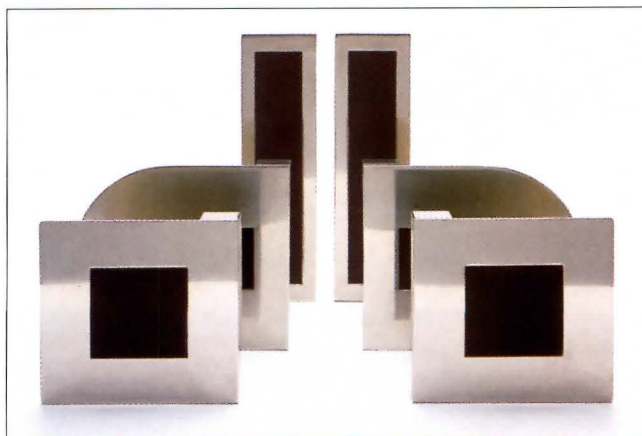


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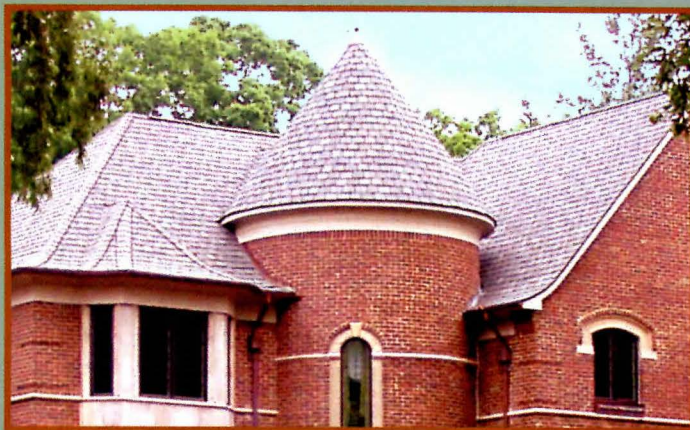
Pad door and drawer fittings are meant to be pushed and pulled.

The line's manufacturer offers funky designs in finishes ranging from dark bronze and brushed or satin nickel to polished brass and bright chrome. Cut from solid-brass sheets, each piece is precisely machined to accept fine leather or wood-veneer inlays.

The sophisticated shapes come in bigger versions for passage and entry doors. Turnstyle Designs; www.turnstyledesigns.com.



—shelley d. hutchins



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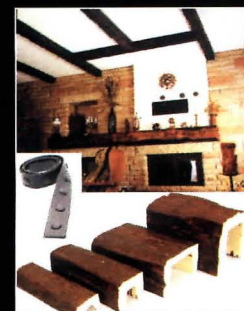
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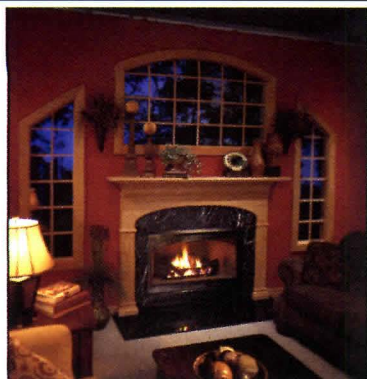
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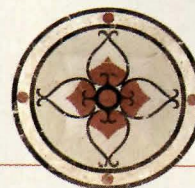
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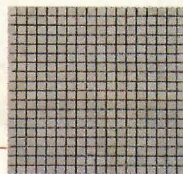
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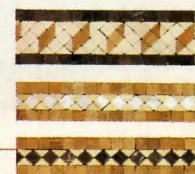
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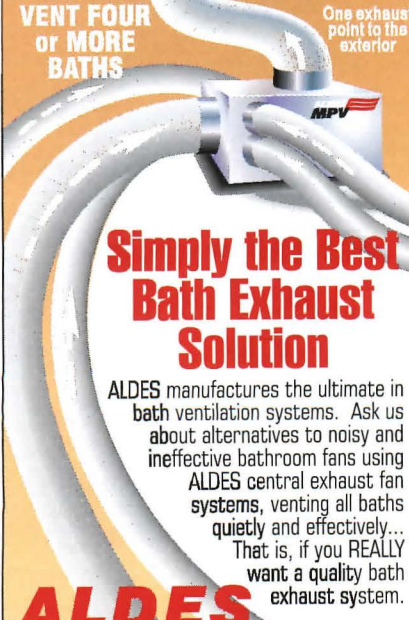
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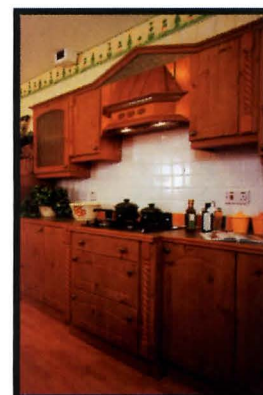
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MJ Neal, AIA

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Allan Shope, AIA

Shope Reno Wharton Associates, Greenwich, Conn.

"The Toyota Prius, because it gets 60 miles to the gallon, the design is beautiful, and it's a well-built machine. If you're trying to make a small difference as one person, it's a really great industrial object. I have one. It's blue."



James L. Nagle, FAIA

Nagle Hartray Danker Kagan McKay Penney Architects, Chicago

"The VW Beetle hard-top is classic."

Henry Siegel, FAIA

Siegel & Strain Architects, Emeryville, Calif.

"I am an avid bicyclist and like bikes. I ride a Calfee. It's a real classic design, done in carbon fiber. I have the clear finish and you can see the fiber through the finish. If you click on the larger picture (www.calfeedesign.com/pages/luna.php) and then click on the frame, you can see what I am talking about. I like how they show off the material rather than cover it with paint like most bikes do."



Photos (clockwise from top right): Courtesy Apple (mouse); Peter Panayiotou (Toyota Prius); Calfee Design, www.calfeedesign.com (bicycle frame); Volkswagen (Beetle); and Cassina USA, 800.770.3568, CassinaUSA.com (LC/4)

—shelley d. hutchins



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