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## ARCHITECTURE • DESIGN Jutlook

#### ARCHITECTURE STUDENTS TEAM WITH WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION IN THE SOLAR DECATHLON

Whirlpool

Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

Last fall the U.S. Department of Energy held its biennial Solar Decathlon competition for architecture students on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. Architecture schools from the United States and around the world competed in the ten-stage event to design and build the most attractive and energy-efficient solar-powered house. The eighteen-home "Solar Village" attracted over 100,000 visitors in one week. Whirlpool Corporation was pleased to sponsor six of the student teams, including the winner of the Appliance Competition, California Polytechnic State University (Cal Poly) of San Luis Obispo, California.

To earn points in the Appliance Competition, students used solar

(PCBC)



The National Mall, Washington D.C., site of the Solar Decathlon's "Solar Village."

energy to maintain a certain temperature in their refrigerators and freezers, wash and dry clothing, cook meals and clean dishes with a dishwasher. They also created

enough solar energy to leave the television on for six hours a day and a computer on a day. Cal Poly



for eight hours Home designed and built by architecture student team from Cal Poly, winner of the Appliance Competition.

beat the other seventeen teams with an all-KitchenAid® appliance kitchen.

"Our student team sought to incorporate 'state-of-the-shelf' technology by choosing appliances that are readily available to consumers," says Associate Professor Robert Peña of Cal Poly Department of Architecture."KitchenAid® Architect® Series was our first choice because of its modernist design vocabulary and ENERGY STAR® ratings. They are the best products we could specify to create a market-ready home with significant energy savings."

"We want the user to interact with the house," says Cal Poly architecture student and Project Manager Jon Gambill. "This means making a house that is 'switchrich'-plenty of user-friendly controls, operable windows, and shading devices."

Other participating teams that used energy efficient Whirlpool and KitchenAid brand

appliances include: University of Colorado (first place overall); Florida International University; University of Texas at Austin; Washington State



Washington State University's house featured energy-efficient KitchenAid<sup>™</sup> appliances.

University; and a combined team of students from Carnegie Mellon, University of Pittsburgh and the Art Institute of Pittsburgh. We look forward to working with more teams of sustainability-minded architecture students again in 2007 for the next Solar Decathlon.



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

insideadvantage.com



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## residential architect / june 2006 CONTENTS



Architecture we love. On the rocks, with a twist. Photo: Undine Pröhl. On the cover: Richard Neutra's stainless steel house numbers are produced through a collaboration between his son, Dion Neutra, and an independent type foundry. They were provided courtesy of Design Within Reach, www.dwr.com. Photo: Max Hirshfeld.



No Limits: The Entrepreneurial Practice Register now for the 3rd annual Reinvention Symposium—page 25

#### from the editor..page 15

letters..page 17

home front..page 20 A nostalgic look back at houses of the future / Calendar

#### perspective..page 31

An early *ra* contributor ruminates on the last 10 years in the residential architecture profession and the exciting decade ahead.

#### practice..page 39

There's a certain gravitas to the 10-year-mark that rouses design firms to gaze both inward and forward.



cover story: the power of 10..page 53

It's our birthday, and we've accumulated 10 candles on the cake. To celebrate, and with due credit to Charles and Ray Eames, we pondered other powerful combinations of 10 and invited them all to join our little party. Happy anniversary to us.

by Cheryl Weber, Meghan Drueding, Vernon Mays, Shelley D. Hutchins,

and Nigel F. Maynard

**10** architects making a difference...page 54 When they look beyond the four walls of structure, architects discover the power to change more than the simple site before them. These 10 talented and intrepid architects just say no to the status quo.

#### 10 design zeitgeists..page 76

Americans are a fickle breed, inclined to embrace and extol contradictions wherever they find them.

#### 10 hot specs..page 88

The material world has changed substantially in the last 10 years. Here's where they've taken your spec sheets.

#### 10 top products..page 96

And still, there are brands you return to year after year, secure in their quality and lasting appeal.

#### end quotes..page 112

How will housing change in the next 10 years?

residential architect / june 2006





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## from the editor credit where it's due

the inside story at residential architect.

#### by s. claire conroy

his issue marks *ra's* 10th anniversary. Apparently that's long enough for us to have permeated the consciousness of a few people in the architecture profession. We now frequently hear comments like this: "Your magazine has gotten so much better!" We like to take that as a compliment—without thinking about it too long.

But at times like these, you're supposed to do some reflecting on the past. I do think, perhaps immodestly, that our magazine has gotten better. And that's due in large part to the grace, talent, and long tenure of our staff. Our design director, Judy Neighbor, devised the original and still admirable design for ra-right down to those controversial lowercase letters. She's won many awards for her work with us and the other magazines she's designed and redesigned for our company, Hanley Wood. I suspect she derives her bottomless energy from the muses in her home office-two feisty, fetch-obsessed terriers. She's also built a first-rate team of spirited Homo sapiens with associate art director Maria Bishirjian

and assistant art director Kay Engman.

Senior editor Meghan Drueding came to us fresh out of college in June 1997. Her name turns up on the masthead of our second issue in October '97 and is familiar to you now through her excellent cover stories and feature work. She grew up in the home construction business, catching her custom builder father's enthusiasm for good design. I owe a great deal to her sound judgment, sophisticated sensibility, good-humored hard work, and strong, clearheaded prose. She's won so many young journalist awards, we've lost count.

Maybe you've seen our other senior editor, Nigel Maynard, on HGTV recently. He doesn't just cover the design world—he immerses himself in it. He buys and upgrades dwellings with his high-design, low-budget flair. He's not a mere flipper; his standards are far too high for that. After all, he is Doctor Spec: champion of the well-placed product.

Associate editor Shelley Hutchins was the first of us to actually hire an architect. She found a budding star to hip up her nondescript suburban house. Let's just say



Mark Robert Halper

she has the only "Un-Private House" in her neighborhood now. Shelley has a keen eye for talent (that budding star won an AIA Young Architects Award a couple of years back) and she snags many of our bestlooking projects for the magazine. If you've entered our design awards program, you also know her as its managing guru.

Our senior contributing editor, Cheryl Weber, is one of the best writers I've worked with in my 20-plus years in journalism. She brings poetry to her prose, finding just the right lyrical word to convey the visual alchemy of architecture. A former senior editor for our sister publication, *Remodeling*, Cheryl is searching for the perfect split-level house to mid-century-modernize.

Our enterprising managing editor, Marla Misek, and all the other names you see on pages 4 and 6 are also instrumental in our success. Once you know them, it's easy to see why they're so good at what they do: Their profession is their passion. Happy birthday to all of us. And we vow to keep getting "so much better" just for you. **"**a

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. "I SAID, 'PROVE TO ME THAT YOUR PRODUCT WORKS.' CRANEBOARD SHOWED ME SIX YEARS OF BEAUTIFUL PROOF."

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CraneBoard's numbers. Six years worth of proof. More than 100,000 homes in the field with no mold and no mildew. Independently verified. Still looking new with no maintenance. And the life-of-the-home guarantee didn't hurt either. CraneBoard is a no-brainer. I can trust it <u>not</u> to make my phone ring when I don't want it to."

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## letters

exercise your right to write.

#### driver's ed

hen reading of your dream house search ("To Have

and Hold," July 2005, page 19), I thought, "She's looking for something like that McInturff house on Dorset." Imagine my surprise when I [discovered] that was exactly what you meant. My wife and I considered buying that very house. And we thought we didn't like Modern.

I therefore thought you might be interested in our current dilemma: How do (semi-informed) clients choose the right residential architect, considering the wide range of fees?

We've done our homework-at least to the extent that we're convinced of the virtues of hiring an architect ("Where's the Architect?", April 2004, page 11) and we're not ashamed to ask how much each will charge ("The Charge Brigade," August 2004, page 13). To our surprise, we've found numbers that differ by a factor of five given the same program. I appreciate that, to some extent, you get what you pay for, but surely we don't get five times the value from the most expensive architect than from the least?

As a general rule ... we like to think of ourselves as thrifty. We occasionally look longingly at a Lexus or BMW but buy an Acura instead. We find that we're happy with the cheap seats at the Shakespeare Theatre Co. In these cases, we testdrove the expensive version but found that the cheaper alternative is just fine for us.

But for an architect, it's not so easy to sample and then decide. We're not planning a "starter" effort: This is it. We read the 14 AIA questions; we peer at the portfolios; we seem to "fit" better with one [architect] than another. None of [these efforts] answers the question of whether choosing the cheapest architect would leave us later regretting our choice. We've been offered references, of course, but as the clients haven't worked with more than one architect, they can't speak to the comparative value of their fees any better than we can.

It's as if everyone looked into a few car showrooms, made his choice, and never drove a different car again.

> Todd Rosentover Maryland

### can't we all just get along?

t is interesting to look at the projects [featured in the June 2005 issue] and then refer back to Claire Conroy's editorial ("Checks and Balances and Checks," page 19). When she says that "plenty of companies promote themselves as design/build, but they should really call themselves build/design because that's where their priorities lie," this is perhaps a toopolite way of saying that in many areas ... the so-called design/build firms that actually have professional architectural talent at the design helm are almost nonexistent. Instead, one finds that most of these are simply residential builders with access to cheap drafting labor, and the results of such collaborations are typically quite lacking in imagination and design quality.

The American general public, bless its conventional heart, does not understand, appreciate, or value the professional design process and is therefore not willing to pay for it. I suppose we architects are partly to blame for this, so we are now suffering the consequences.

#### Eugene W. Brown, AIA Raleigh, N.C.

currently run a small design/build company back in my native Pennsylvania, and I do get a bit of a kick out of architects in general. Some certainly not all—seem to hold builders and/or tradespeople as nonprofessionals. It seems the old adage of builder versus architect never goes away. I would attribute most of that to male ego and the desire to have "control."

After building or working on a great number of homes and buildings and correcting or pointing out some rather egregious errors committed by "design professionals," that architects should have an issue with qualified builders doing their own design work gets me going. I know when I am in over my head, I certainly bring in an engineer when needed, and [I always ensure] our plans are approved by an inspection agency.

I think builders get frustrated with architects for [a variety of] reasons. They not only tend to hold us in lower regard, I have had architects make underserved comments at inappropriate times [and I have] been accused of not knowing "how to build" something. Builders are not always right either, and I certainly am not perfect, but these types of incidents have led me to say, "Yes, we can design your home." I feel the debate needs to continue, and there needs to be more professionalism on both sides.

> Chauncey C. Wirsing Wirsing Builders Somerset, Pa.

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## home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.

### back to the future

rchitects never stop thinking about the future. Each drawing, site visit, and client meeting represents a step toward the eventual goal of a completed building, and then it's on to the next project. Over the years, a number of visionary designers have pondered the future in a bigger-picture way, dreaming up houses for 10, 20, or 30 years down the line. These creations didn't necessarily match real-life developments in housing, but they stand as an oftenentertaining, always-interesting testimony to their creators' intellect and imagination.

Here are some of *residential architect*'s favorites:



John McCann/RIBA Library Photographs Collection

#### house of the future, 1956

The groovy, plastic model home Alison and Peter Smithson designed for

the Daily Mail Ideal Home Exhibition in London contained built-in furniture,

a self-cleaning bath, and remote-control lighting.





Chicago History Museum (HB-09789-I

#### house of tomorrow, 1933

Chicago architect and engineer George Fred Keck designed this 12-sided house in Beverly Shores, Ind., for the 1933–1934 World's Fair. Crowd-pleasers included glass curtain walls, air conditioning, and a private airplane hangar.



Monsanto Collection, University Archives, Department of Special Collections, Washington University Libraries

#### monsanto house of the future, 1957

Designed by a team of MIT architects and engineers, this four-winged white plastic structure stood in Disneyland in Anaheim, Calif., for a decade. Some of its innovations, including microwave ovens and hidden entertainment systems, became mainstream success stories, while others have yet to materialize.



Wichita-Sedgwick County Historical Museum

#### dymaxion house, 1927

R. Buckminster Fuller's ambitious attempt at prefab housing contained revolving closets, "O-Volving" shelves that rotated behind a wall at the push of a button, and a premade, plug-in bathroom unit. Even the aluminum home's name—a blend of the words "dynamic," "maximum," and "tension"—sounded decidedly futuristic.



Frederick Kiesler, Model for the Endless House, 1959, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York City

#### endless house, 1947-1961

This unbuilt collection of biomorphic concrete bubbles represented Austrian-born architect Frederick Kiesler's radical thinking about the nature of spatial dynamics.

-meghan drueding



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#### home front

#### calendar

#### **unbuilt architecture design awards program** entry deadline: june 26

Architects, architectural educators, and students are eligible to participate in the Boston Society of Architects' 15th annual Unbuilt Architecture design awards competition. There are no geographic or other restrictions for entrants, who are encouraged to submit real, academic, and theoretical unbuilt projects. Winners will be notified in September and will receive their awards in November. Winning projects will be published in a future issue of *ArchitectureBoston*, BSA's member magazine. To register, visit www.architects.org or e-mail alee@architects.org.



24

#### 2006 vip awards

entry deadline: july 1

Vetter's sixth annual Vetter Inspired Projects (VIP) awards honor custom projects that use Vetter windows and patio doors. Architects, remodelers, builders, and designers can enter their team's projects in one of five residential categories; a sixth category is reserved for commercial

Courtesy Vetter Windows and Doors

projects. Winners receive cash prizes, recognition at the 2007 International Builders' Show, and free professional photography of their property. Shown: Silver Ridge Residence (JDA Design Architects), Deep Creek Lake, Md., a 2005 winner. For entry requirements, call 715.693.8407 or go to www.vetterwindows.com.

## modernism: designing a new world 1914–1939

through july 23 victoria & albert museum, london

This exhibition addresses Modernism in the designed world and its meaning as expressed in architecture, furniture and furnishings, graphic arts, fashion, photography, and art. Concentrating on the 25-year period encompassing the beginnings of World Wars I and II, the exhibit takes a decidedly international look at the Modern aesthetic and its implementation throughout Europe and the United States. Featured architects include Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, Walter Gropius, Richard Neutra, and Erich Mendelsohn. For details, go to www.vam.ac.uk or call 44.20.7942.2000.

#### new blood: next gen

through august 18 a+d architecture and design museum, los angeles



The A+D Museum celebrates its grand reopening with the debut of this exhibition, which highlights the work of 40 up-and-coming Los Angeles-area architects, landscape architects, and designers. Participants were singled out for their innovative experimentation with new ideas in fabrication, new applications of traditional materials, and development of new surface treatments. They include workshop LEVITAS, whose Bamboo Bridge is shown here, as well as null.lab, Predock Frane Architects, and Mark Tessier Landscape Design. For details, call 213.381.5210 or visit http://aplusd.org.

#### marcel breuer – design and architecture

through august 27 the lighthouse, glasgow, scotland

This exhibition marks the 25th anniversary of Marcel Breuer's death, highlighting examples of furniture he designed while working at the Bauhaus in the 1920s. It also features detailed 3-D models of 12 buildings Breuer designed during his time in the United States. The show opens during Glasgow's 10th annual Architecture Week. For additional information, call The Lighthouse, Scotland's Center for Architecture, Design, and the City, at 44.141.221.6362 or go to www.thelighthouse.co.uk.

#### a point of convergence: architectural drawings and photographs from the l.j. cella collection

through january 21 palm springs art museum, calif.

San Francisco collector L.J. Cella has amassed the impressive array of hand-drawn sketches and renderings that comprise this exhibit. Works from Frank Gehry, Daniel Libeskind,



Courtesy Collection of L

Richard Neutra, and others reveal the artistic touch of the architect and the thought process behind their designs. Two-dimensional images such as Neutra's *Kronish House* (1953, pastel on paper), seen here, can still bring a built form to life. Visit www.psmuseum.org or call 760.325.7186 for more information.

-shelley d. hutchins





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### **IT'S TIME TO EXPLORE**

beyond the traditional boundaries of singlefamily house design. All across the country, residential architects are applying their creativity, expertise, and problem-solving skills to a number of related disciplines and pursuing a variety of business and leadership opportunities.

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Reinvention 2006

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- · Other Clients, Other Buildings Broaden your palette of building types to enhance your residential practice.





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#### perspective

## what i saw at the evolution

how—and why—residential architecture

has changed in the past 10 years.

by duo dickinson, aia

esidential design and construction have taken a dramatic track over the decade of residential architect's existence. Ten years ago, the number of single-family houses built in the United States each year hovered just over a million. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, that number reached a new record of 1.7 million in 2005. The greatest supply in history seems to have increased demand, almost doubling average house costs from nearly \$160,000 in 1995 to nearly \$300,000 in 2005. What happened?

Smarter heads than mine would cite interest rates that dropped from 8 percent or 9 percent just a few years ago to 4 percent to 6 percent in this decade. Others would say it is the "echo boom"the children of baby boomers who, along with Generation Xers, bought 55 percent of all new homes in 2003, according to NAHB and the U.S. Census Bureau. Some might cite simple demographics: As baby boomers age and come into their peak earning years, they want to move up and sell their homes in order to buy new homes. Still others would cite the scarcity of buildable land near urban centers for creating a neo-land rush.



## the sophisticated consumer

What do I think? I think all of the above is true, but I also think one seminal difference has led the way. As with most things in a consumer-driven economy, the buyer leads the market. Over the last 10 years, Americans have become perhaps the world's besteducated housing consumers. This is due in large measure to the realization by an ever-growing number of people that their homes represent their greatest assets and their greatest liabilities and that they need to focus on and attend to them at least as much as they do their 401(k)s. In the past, the home was often simply a place to live that hopefully would increase in value and be large enough to accommodate all the furni-



ture you like. The word

"site" meant "neighbor-

hood," and "design" meant

a prototype plan-ranch,

Cape Cod, Colonial, et al.

seen the realization of the

American home's potential

as a fully formed manifesta-

hopes and dreams. How did

tion of any given family's

this happen? For starters,

a little over 10 years ago,

Home & Garden Television

came to the airwaves. Also

This last decade or so has

In 1995 Dennis Wedlick Architect of New York City designed a userfriendly modern cottage (above and left) as that year's *LIFE* Dream House.

Renderings: Tom Schaller

in the mid-1990s, Robert A.M. Stern, FAIA, and Dennis Wedlick, AIA, created homes for *LIFE* magazine that captured the public's imagination as almost nothing else in housing had in the last 50 years. And in 1998, The Taunton Press published *The Not So Big House*, a transformative, mindset-shifting book by residential architect Sarah Susanka, FAIA.

continued on page 32

#### perspective

A growing number of architects soon began to understand that designing homes was not just a point of passage in their careers. If they so desired, it really could be the focus of their professional lives. The critical factors of consumer enlightenment and professional response, along with the demographic and economic factors cited earlier, created the perfect storm of demand, product, and positive possibilities.

#### chain reaction

All of this enlightenment had its downsides, too. Though household size decreased over the past 20 years, NAHB says the average U.S. home size increased to about 2,450 square feet in 2005. NAHB also reports that 20 percent of homes built in 2004 (three times the percentage built in the 1980s) exceeded 3,000 square feet in size. These larger homes consume significantly more energy than their "normally" sized counterparts. The words "sprawl" and "McMansion" have entered everyone's daily lexicon and have an unquestionably negative flavor. While most homes have gotten bigger, they are virtually undesigned beyond accepting the developer's list of "must-have" features, and those non-designs ignore the land they sit upon.

The result of these distorting influences is a single word that often goes unsaid: ugly. While more and more thoughtful, innovative, and beautiful homes are being built, a far greater number insult both the landscape and the building arts in their thoughtless and wasteful design, scale, and materials.

There has been a professional response to this mixed picture, however. A few years ago, Jeremiah Eck, FAIA, Wedlick, and I agreed that the runaway freight train of the housing industry needed to have a cohesive countervailing mirror/watchdog/reality check. So many homes were being built so badly that we decided to rally our peers, starting with the group of thoughtful, responsible architects who were attending Eck's profes-



Charlie Brown

Sarah Susanka's *The Not So Big House* appealed to both architects and consumers and spawned a series of related books on residential design.

sional development course at Harvard's Graduate School of Design each summer. We needed to expand that group and extend it beyond architects to everyone who tries *continued on page 34* 





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#### perspective

to make better homes for more people.

And so, with the help of residential architect and the early support of The Taunton Press, we created in 2004 the Congress of Residential Architecture, a grass-roots coalition with more than 20 nationwide chapters. Partly in response to this new spirit, the American Institute of Architects—an organization that had long paid scant attention to custom house designers-made a major course correction. It co-

"in this time of change people need to hear our voices more than ever."





Jim Wilson

ing abstained for nearly 25 years.

So change has been rapid and slow-rapid in CORA's growth and in the net impact of housing consumer media, slow in changing the profitmongering misconceptions of those who build the vast majority of new homes concerning what a house can or should be for most people. It's also been slow in debunking the marketing hype that drives people to buy the most expensive item they'll ever own on the basis of a few millimeters of veneer that cloak hyperkinetic masses designed for driveby thrills.

Even a 10-year boom will have its bust. At the precipice of the long-anticipated change to a down cycle, our profession seems better prepared to deal with it. There's a growing sense of common vision, not to mention widespread interest in the pursuit of innovation, insight, and relevance. In this time of change people need to hear our voices more than ever. Sites and regulations will become more complicated, mortgage interest rates will grow, and real estate fears will increase as home values become questionable. But we have shown we can make a difference. ra

Duo Dickinson, AIA, is an architect in Madison, Conn. He co-founded the Congress of Residential Architecture (CORA) and has written several books, including The House You Build (The Taunton Press, 2004).

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# the 10-year itch

after a firm's first decade, what's next?

#### by cheryl weber

or most architectural firms, it seems that 10-year anniversaries come and go without much ado. If the date's significance registers at all, it's treated as just another day in the routine. And yet, if you look back, there are plenty of reasons for selfcongratulation. Ten years represents nearly a third of the life cycle of the average career, so you've come far from your humble roots. Likely, you've gone from working in a bare-bones office, possibly at home, to having a handful of employees. You're no longer getting most of your leads from the Yellow Pages, and you aren't grabbing just any job that comes along. You're more confident, you attract better clients, and you've built up a reliable orbit of consultants and craftspeople.

Even if architects don't think to celebrate this milestone, their firms do begin to undergo a transformation as they enter the double digits of their existence. This is the time when many architects sit back, look around, and ask themselves, "Is this something I want to keep doing, or is it time to shift gears? Am I accomplishing what I had hoped, and if not,



"Turning 10 professionally is like being in your 30s," says Rena Klein, FAIA, a practicing architect and management consultant in Seattle. As with the struggles of youth, it takes a long time to get a fledgling firm on solid footing, but by age 10 architects are beginning to know who they are and where they can go. Klein says they should have a client base established, know what their core competency is, and have honed in on their purpose. They should also have one or two key staff members who are beginning to contribute in important ways. And with those first big steps out of the way, they're figuring out the next phase.

"As is true in our personal lives, when we feel we've arrived, we start looking around for the next challenge and what the future could hold for our newfound strengths and abilities,"

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continued on page 40



39

### practice

Klein says, speaking from experience. It was when her firm turned 10, in the mid-1990s, that she began to get bored and look for the next step up. Although she felt successful as a designer, she was on shakier ground when it came to managing her employees and running the business. So she enrolled at Antioch University Seattle, earning a Master of Science degree in management. Once in school, though, her interests began to broaden. "I felt some sort of responsibility to the profession," she recalls. "I saw this lack of access to certain kinds of education among my colleagues, and I wanted to share what I learned." Thus, RM Klein Consulting was born alongside her private practice.

sharing the load As Klein had begun to realize, one of the first tough issues maturing architects encounter is how to manage that next layer of help. A major concern is that by adding more people, they risk losing control of design. And for many architectural free spirits, the idea of being a boss is as odious as wearing a suit and tie to work. Craig Steely, who opened his San Francisco studio in 1995, is resisting establishing a traditional office, despite the increasing demand for his services. "To me, it's exhausting having employees [and] having to spend the time to see that things are done right," says Steely, who employs two people. They all divide their time between jobs in California and Hawaii, where Steely has hit his stride designing small, minimalist houses on the Big Island's remote coastline, including one for himself, his wife, and their young son. He works nimbly-without much more than a sketchbook, a laptop, and a Web connection-and he is unwilling to give up the lightweight, flexible entity he's created.

"I hate offices; they take all the life out of your work," says Steely, an avid surfer. "But I'm getting to the point where I have to have people around. How do you create an office that doesn't become a dinosaur?" For now, the answer is to stay small and focused. He's working on six projects—the same number as five years ago—but he

"how to keep a few key people for longer periods of time so i could transition more of the workload to them—that's been the biggest challenge."—randy brown. faia "as is true in our personal lives, when we feel we've arrived, we start looking around to see what the future could hold for our newfound strengths and abilities." —rena klein, faia

enjoys a higher quality of clients, contractors, and jobs, which represent roughly \$8 million in construction costs. "I think having the predilection to keep things precise and in control will steer me in the direction I want to go," he says. However, he adds, "Ten years from now, who knows? At that point I might be burned out with being involved in every single project."

Where to go from here with a small staff is also the question that plagues David Jameson, AIA. Nine years old this fall, his Alexandria, Va.-based firm no longer has to beg for the attention of magazine editors; they're calling him, and so are high-caliber clients. Yet Jameson, who oversees a staff of four, is still more interested in the design details than in being a firm figurehead. "My end-all goal is to keep control of the project," he says, "and I think what will happen is that as the [people] who work for me get better and better, we can do bigger and bigger projects with the same amount of people." It's not larger houses he's hoping to add to his portfolio but rather commercial and public projects that are inhabited by more people. "We just did the interior build-out of an art gallery, and on opening night it was gratifying to have 300 people standing around enjoying the space," he says.

Berkeley-based architects David Arkin, AIA, and Anni Tilt are also revisiting the road ahead, balancing their management styles against their professional goals. Because the married couple value being an active part of every project, they've grown their nine-year-old firm slowly and deliberately, to four architectural staff, a bookkeeper, and an office manager. And although their ideal project mix runs to equal parts residential and non-residential, they've recently stepped up to largerscale work, such as a retreat center in China and a hot springs resort in California. As these project types evolve, "We'll need more people because there are more details to coordinate and systems to integrate, but there won't be that much more mental energy that needs our attention," Arkin says. "I've finally continued on page 42

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### practice

figured out that you can only carry so many projects in your head." The couple has added employees who are skilled in both construction management and the building efficiency that Arkin Tilt Architects is known for, and now they share office space with their structural engineer. "We're integrating those issues into the design process earlier on, and it's the right direction," he adds. "It's good and healthy. I think we have

### the decade ahead

10-year anniversary is a good time not only to look back and appreciate the progress you've made but also to do a reality check on where you're headed and then make the necessary course corrections. Seattle-based architecture business consultant Rena Klein, FAIA, says that at this point, many principals are working 60 hours to 70 hours a week and feeling overwhelmed. It's time to learn how to delegate and let the second generation advance. And that brings up staffing assessments. Do you have the people you need to move toward your future goals now? If not, what gaps need to be filled?

more bright brains around

Arkin has a good point.

At this age-having estab-

lished a solid footing but

still charting the mythical

next level-hiring exactly

of the marks of this age is

you really need and going

Mass., architect Jill Neu-

bauer. The age of her firm

coincides with her children's

the right mix of people takes

on greater importance. "One

knowing what kinds of staff

after them," says Falmouth,

the table."

That discussion also prompts a frank look at the organization's financial and organizational health. Maturing architects begin to realize they have to focus more on operating efficiently so they can compensate people competitively (and thus attract top talent). As you grow, more sophisticated tracking systems are necessary to make invoicing and billing systems efficient. What improvements need to be initiated so that your project delivery system works better? "People don't want to look at their weaknesses, but it's been said that your habits are your destiny," Klein says. "The good and bad habits of principals in small or mediumsized firms tend to really impact operational success."

As you prepare for the future, don't neglect educational and social needs either. Offer incentives to help employees get additional education, if necessary. And perhaps most important, "Check whether people are happy," Klein says. "If so, they work better, and that includes firm principals." -c.w.

ages. Since opening her doors in 1994, she has worked part-time while raising them-and wants to keep it that way. Thus, her growth plan revolves around building more intensive relationships with dedicated clients. Right now, for example, she's designing furniture for a client for whom she spent the last five years designing a house. And whereas over the years there's been an ebb and flow of employees, some of them part-time, now Neubauer is looking for a fourth person who will stick around and help take the firm to the next level. "I want to grow to these four people but have a very solid staff, the right staff," she says.

#### branching out

"At a certain point, it gets to be hard to do work as just one person or a couple of people. You start to understand that some of one's personal limitations can create limitations for the office," says Geoffrey Warner, AIA, Alchemy Architects, St. Paul, Minn. To help fill a management gap, in 2003, just after his 10th anniversary, Warner set up a partnership that lasted less than six months. "It was a miserable failure," he says.

Ten years marked another, more successful, turning point as well: Warner launched the weeHouse, a line of prefabricated structures that now represents 75 percent of the firm's work. continued on page 44

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### practice

He hit upon the concept almost by accident—the result of his design/build background and a prefab cabin he designed for a client. That project sparked his interest in supplying architecture as a product.

"After the initial wee-House was produced in 2002, the media had a lot of interest in it," he continues. We always want to be as good as we can and we expect to get good press, but when it happens you're surprised, and that creates a shift." After he and his partner split, he soloed for awhile before adding four employees, and he's now



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Omaha, Neb.-based Randy Brown, FAIA, is also in expansion mode, but he's following a script conceived when he hung out his shingle 13 years ago. In addition to doing custom residential work, at year eight he created a sister company, Quantum Quality Real Estate, with the goal of buying land, developing commercial buildings, and owning them long-term. "I don't ever want to be totally dependent on one type of project or project delivery," Brown says. The firm has completed four commercial buildings and is working on a speculative residential community called Hidden Creek, which consists of 13 Modernist homes featuring green roofs, native grass landscapes, and recycled materials-"something Omaha hasn't seen in a long time," he says.

Despite his early ambitions, Brown says startup was painfully slow. Five years passed before he *continued on page 46* 

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#### It's All in the Details



Jim Lucia, founding partner and designer (FAIBD) at Lucia, Kassik & Monday Inc., Winter Park, FL, loves designing detailed

trim on homes. But with 30 years experience in the sunbelt states, that hasn't been easy until recently. "AZEK has become one of our favorite materials to help overcome extreme heat and humidity, without the worry of rot and termites," says Jim. Along with designing new yet classically styled homes in Florida, he and his team speced AZEK for the NAHB's Renewed American Home 2007 at the IBS Show in Orlando, an older style bungalow renovation. "We can achieve awesome detail with cornerboards, brick mould and gingerbread trim," says Jim. "And, AZEK can be milled into brackets and C&C routed to create flutes on column trim." For Jim, it's all in the details, without the worry of maintenance and upkeep in a brutal climate. Way to bring classic tradition to the sunbelt, Jim!

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### practice

designed his first building, and it took another three years to get the design/build segment running smoothly. (With three carpenters, plus a welding and woodworking shop, the firm builds 75 percent of the projects it designs.) Then, at the magic age of 10, the firm suddenly began winning national AIA awards. That's when he realized he needed to rampup with staff members who could take on more responsibility. "How to keep a few key people for longer periods of time so I could transition more of the workload to them-that's been the biggest challenge," he says.

The physical office is also changing. This fall Brown will wrap up construction on a 4,000-square-foot office that the development partners will share. "When we started the office we were drawing by hand with parallel bars," Brown says. "We have gotten caught in this change to the digital age, which led to totally rethinking workspace issues and how to work as teams." With eight employees carrying 15 projects now, Brown is balancing between teams, making sure things are done to his standards. And as his entrepreneurial side evolves, he is spending more time managing the office and attracting top-notch business opportunities.

Indeed, one of the hallmarks of maturing firms is the chance to be strategic rather than opportunistic. Do you grow for growth's "we'll need more people because there are more details to coordinate and systems to integrate, but there won't be that much more mental energy that needs our attention. i've finally figured out that you can only carry so many projects in your head." — david arkin, aia

sake, or do you think more about what you want to accomplish? Will too much growth diminish quality? Do you want to be all things to all people or stay focused on one thing in particular? These are questions Bostonbased David Hacin, AIA, is grappling with 13 years on. A firm believer in taking stock and setting goals, Hacin is reading Small Giants: Companies That Choose To Be Great Instead of Big by Bo Burlingham (2005). He also solicited advice from his 12 employeesand says their responses were inspiring: "They helped make the next phase of the business plan even more ambitious than what I would have done on my own, in the sense that we could do more wide-ranging project types."

For the next five years or so, they've decided to maintain a mix of large and small select projects, because as the firm grows in size the smaller projects become harder to support. "We recognize that they're important for our office as far as exploration, identity, and relationship-building go," Hacin says. The firm is doing so much multifamily work now that a singlefamily home requires a disproportionate amount of Hacin's time. "The clients really want my involvement," he says, "so managing time becomes a very big issue."

Thinking strategically has led Hacin to consider his firm's legacy, too. What kinds of organizations should Hacin + Associates be involved with, and how does he want to connect back to the profession or the community? "As you become a more mature organization, these issues become more significant," he says. "You know more people and have more opportunity to connect. At some point it's really about being able to sustain a company that pays its people well and creates an environment that allows you to do good things." ra



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Most of you probably don't remember your 10th birthday. But if you've practiced your profession for at least a decade, you know this milestone has significant resonance. What were you doing 10 years ago? And what have you achieved since? What hopes do you have for the next decade? We asked these questions and more of 10 accomplished architects (actually, if you look closely, you'll count 11). The common denominator among them is that none is satisfied with the status quo. All are pushing for change, either directly in the discipline of architecture or in the broader world it touches. They are inspiration for anyone who aims to leave an enduring mark.

While shopping for orders of 10, we pondered the evolution of residential design during our tenure. We're often asked by others about prevailing trends—for instance, "Are houses getting bigger or smaller?" "Well," we say, "the answer is 'yes.'" Intrigued by these divergences, we collected a short list of trends that have substantial, concurrent countertrends. We left out the Venn diagrams, but several coexist in felicitous intersection.

And what kind of birthday would this be without tangibles to unwrap? Training our eyes on the material world of the last 10 years, we culled your 10 favorite brands and a complementary number of popular specifications. These products are your Top 10s.

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# architects making a difference

# design zeitgeists

diversities and divergences

# hot specs setting the new standard

# top products architects' choice favorites

by cheryl weber, meghan drueding, vernon mays, shelley d. hutchins, and nigel f. maynard



### terence riley

design educator





Courtesy K/R



William Abranowicz

The "split house" (top), designed with K/R founder John Keenen, is one of the Houses at Sagaponack in the Hamptons. K/R's Palm Island House (above) features a stair that resembles a fish spine.



architecture. He brought it into the public realm not only intellectually but physically too, presiding over the design and construction of MoMA's ambitious addition and moving the architecture section from a small side room to prominent space on the third floor of the new building.

Art's chief curator of architecture and design, Terence Riley, AIA, spent the last 14 years affirming the importance of

By the time he left MoMA this year to

become director of the Miami Art Museum, he had succeeded in making Modernism more accessible to laypeople. "By the end of my tenure there had been a real rethinking of Modernism, mainly to the positive," he says. "People realized Modernism was more than a cookie-cutter, white plaster, flat-roofed Le Corbusier kind of architecture [and] that it was much more complex and varied and had a great number of new possibilities."

One of Riley's favorite exhibits, 1999's The Un-Private House, took the most traditional of ideas-the single-family house-and looked at how cultural and societal shifts are transforming its design. It was a project type that people in the real world could understand, and they showed up in record numbers. "The public participated at every level they could, whether reacting personally or writing letters to the editor," he recalls. And if he were to curate a show on domestic design today, what would be the theme? Not the singlefamily house, but rather housing, he says: "Housing went through an awful period where it was done at the lowest possible cost and had a hospital look. In the last 10 years a lot more energy has gone into housing to make it more livable and more desirable."

Riley is now overseeing the selection of an architect who will transform the Miami Art Museum into a new \$200 million landmark on Miami's glittering coastline. He's also a partner in K/R, a New York City firm he helped found 22 years ago, though Riley says much of his involvement there is temporarily on hold. -c.w.



"by the end of my tenure [at moma] there had been a real rethinking of modernism, mainly to the positive."





Photos: Timothy Hursley

Riley oversaw the celebrated design and construction of the MoMA expansion (top left), designed by architect Yoshio Taniguchi, and made architecture shows a staple of the museum's exhibition program. A house by Scogin Elam and Bray Architects (left and above) was part of The Un-Private House exhibit-MoMA's first look at residential architecture in 30 years.

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"Having grown up near Chicago, I first learned about architecture from roaming the streets. I never decided to become an educator, in a formal sense, but I've welcomed the opportunities to share my enthusiasm for architecture and its possibilities."

#### what were you doing 10 years ago?

"I was in the midst of the early stages of discussing how we might expand the Museum of Modern Art. Should we open a second building off site? Should we move to a new location? Should we try to expand on site? The last option was the most difficult, but it was what we eventually did."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"[I hope] to have built the most exciting new museum in the world."



### john peterson

community service



Jeremy Mende, MendeDesign

Most of the time, John Peterson, AIA, projects a laid-back personality—the kind you'd expect him to have after 15 years in mellow San Francisco. But get him talking about a project that Public Architecture, the nonprofit he founded, is working on, and suddenly he can't talk quickly or enthusiastically enough. "I'm a project junkie," he admits.





Renderings: Patrick Perez for Public Architecture

A green roof and roll-up, glass-paneled aluminum garage doors grace the accessory dwelling unit prototype Peterson Architects and Public Architecture created for the city of Santa Cruz, Calif. (above).

56

It's easy to get caught up in his excitement: His four-year-old organization can already boast significant achievements. Its "1% Solution" program has convinced 75 architecture firms to reserve one percent of their working hours for pro bono service, sparking a national conversation about the role of such work. Public Architecture also led the design of ScrapHouse, a temporary demonstration home on San Francisco's Civic Center Plaza that drew more than 10,000 visitors in June 2005. Made exclusively from salvaged and reused materials and assembled with the labor of 150 volunteers, the project fit perfectly with Peterson and Public Architecture executive director John Cary's community-based mindset. So do their other endeavors, from an open-space plan for the SoMa district of San Francisco to a consulting role on a community center by The Miller/Hull Partnership.

In addition to guiding Public Architecture (and, this past year, living in Cambridge, Mass., as a 2005–2006 Loeb Fellow at Harvard's Graduate School of Design), Peterson keeps himself busy running Peterson Architects, a 10-person, for-profit practice focused on residential and civic commissions. He provides much of Public Architecture's funding from his own pockets, making the "1%" time commitment he's asking from fellow architects seem minor by comparison.-m.d.







Photos: Courtesy Peterson Architects

windows, and reused, back-painted shower doors

make up the exterior walls

A San Francisco residence remodeled by Peterson Architects (left) features

of ScrapHouse (above).

a second-story interior courtyard with a glass floor.

"i'm a project

junkie."

verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"We decided to enter an open competition [for a public project], but we looked at the competitions and thought the return on ... [them] was not good. So we had a simple, in many ways naive, idea: Why don't we take on a project in our own community? We selected a project ... and spent the next several months noodling over how to address it. The local planning department got wind of it and asked us to propose it to the staff. We did and got a good response. I went home thinking I'd like to do more. ... I woke up in the middle of the night and figured the way to move this forward was to create a nonprofit."

#### what were you doing 10 years ago?

"Ten years ago we moved the office out of the second bedroom of my apartment. There were three of us in an 11-foot-by-13-foot room. We [went] from that to having a real, legitimate office."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"I would like to believe we'll innovate to a degree we're unable to envision now. I'm more interested in innovation than in growth or in any other qualification you could dial up."

residential architect / june 2006

57



## glenn murcutt

regional design



Nearly 25 years ago, Murcutt received wide acclaim for the Ball-Eastaway House (above), which floats above the land on steel columns, protected from brush fires with complete coverage from an external sprinkler system.

58



light, shadows, wind, heat and cold, the scents from our flowering trees and plants, and especially, the vastness to the island continent."

Primarily working alone, the 69-year-old Murcutt has produced a body of work that is highly refined and responsive to climate yet stoic in appearance. "Fine-tuned to the land and the weather"—that's how his houses were characterized when he won the 2002 Pritzker Architecture Prize. But his personal credo of "touching the ground lightly" is not a personal whim. Rather, Murcutt considers it an imperative on a continent where the ecosystems are fragile. "I know if I put a building down, I change the water table [and] all the ground conditions below me," he says. "Plants in my country can't survive that."

Designing in a manner influenced by Mies van der Rohe—an appreciation he learned as a young boy from his father—Murcutt creates his art from a palette of metal, concrete, timber, masonry, and stone. He defends his frequent use of corrugated iron cladding on both aesthetic and pragmatic grounds, noting that it provides the thinness, lightweight quality, edge, economy, and strength he desires. "When laid with the ribs horizontal, the upper surface of the corrugation picks up the skylight and the lower surface, the ground light, accentuating the horizontal," he explained when accepting the Pritzker honor.

Nothing is taken for granted when Murcutt designs. He calculates how much sunlight penetrates his houses and works to capture cooling breezes that vary with the seasons. He reintroduced storm blinds to Sydney, Australia—a version of exterior Venetian blinds that shield window glass from the hot sun. Likewise, Murcutt is adamant that buildings should respond to the environment, just as animals perspire to cool themselves. "Buildings should do similar things," he reasons. "They should open and close and modify and re-modify, and blinds should turn and open and close." That, Murcutt insists, is what makes buildings live.—v.m.







Photos (above and below left): Courtesy Glenn Murcutt





Photos (above, bottom left, and opposite page): Anthony Browell

Murcutt's design for the Simpson-Lee House (top) met the client's demand for a cool place shielded from the hot northern sun. His linear scheme for the Fletcher-Page House (above and left) in Kangaroo Valley, Australia, results in a narrow house exposed to landscape views, filled with natural light, and cooled by cross-ventilation.

"when i consider the magic of our landscape, i am struck by the genius of the place."

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"[I was] raised in a family that sought responsible living patterns that involved the minimum use of available resources. My father designed and constructed boats and un-air-conditioned buildings where airflow was important, where waste was almost a crime, where initiative was rewarded with pocket money. At the same time, I was fined 3 pence each time electric lights were left burning. In a [place where] exotic plants were the pattern, native plants were propagated using the kitchen oven to 'fire open' seeds."

#### what were you doing 10 years ago?

"Working like mad, trying to do decent work and also teach and lecture by invitation internationally."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"I'll be reaching 70 years of age [this summer], so I hope to continue discovering and to survive with my head in gear!"



residential architect / june 2006



### anne fougeron

innovative design





Perhaps it's not surprising that Anne Fougeron, AIA, spent her childhood in Paris and her adult life in San Francisco two cities celebrated for their magical quality of light. For almost 20 years she has been designing buildings with inventive configurations that respond directly to topology and climate, and if there is a



hallmark of her houses, it is their luminosity. She is constantly experimenting with materials that modulate natural light, whether it's a stairway made of dichroic glass, laminated glass on an interior bridge, or terra-cotta baguettes spaced just far enough apart to play with light, shadow, and transparency.

This heightened sense of indoors and outdoors is evoked through a minimalist lens. She often creates discrete volumes that address specific program needs, and in her work the structural components—even the seismic requirements become the expressive soul of the building. "What we try to do is fold the restrictions into the architecture," Fougeron says. "We're always trying to figure out, if we're having to deal with these moment frames and seismic braces and structural members, how can we have them articulate the space as opposed to being something we need to hide?"

Fougeron says her background in architectural history and art history, combined with having grown up around a lot of great architecture in Europe, piqued her interest in how things look and how they're made. She and her staff of 10three of them senior architects—do a lot of product research, and from that, the use of one new material often leads to another. "On every new job we're pushing the envelope of what we've done before and constantly having to ask ourselves and others, 'What's out there that will allow us to do that?'" she says.

Working on the material frontier requires a great deal of interaction between design and production, and the firm brings steel fabricators and expert glazing contractors into the discussions early on. "They understand at a much deeper level what will work," Fougeron says. "There's no way to do what we do without being sure we can actually build it."-c.w.





The 1532 House introduces a new vocabulary to San Francisco's historic architecture—one that interacts brilliantly with the city's abundant natural light. Fougeron created two volumes separated by a courtyard and opened the house with window walls, glass floors, and skylights.





The seismic structural brace of the Jackson Family Retreat (top) in Carmel, Calif., is expressed as a stucco-clad stairwell on the rear. The living spaces are covered in standing-seam copper and the roof sits on a band of extruded glass with thin rods. Along the front façade (above), Alaskan yellow cedar turned in three directions serves as a rain screen, fence, railing, and multiple decks.

"on every new job we're pushing the envelope of what we've done before."

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"I have always liked the combination of practical skills and creativity involved in architecture—the arts and the nuts and bolts, the real and the theoretical. I have been attracted to projects that are not considered great design jobs, such as health care and low-income housing. I am convinced that democracy and great architecture can go hand in hand."

what were you doing 10 years ago? "I was just starting up the office again after taking a year's sabbatical in France, having practiced for about six years before that. I was asking myself if I should work for a firm when work started coming my way."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"I would like to have fabulous jobs and a great reputation—and ideally get some interesting public work. We're always trying to prove to the world that as a woman-owned firm we're as capable as anyone else. I would hope to help champion that cause, because I think architecture is still not a very friendly business for women."

residential architect / june 2006



### john v. mutlow affordable housing





Creating high design with low-budget materials is Mutlow's specialty. At Villa Flores (above), an affordable project in Los Angeles, a simple metal rooftop grid hides unsightly mechanical equipment.

As everyone knows, the British Invasion of the 1960s brought John, Paul, George and Ringo to American shores. But the United States welcomed another talented U.K. import around the same time: John V. Mutlow, FAIA. The young Architectural Association graduate arrived in Los Angeles in 1967—and never left. Today



dozens of his exuberantly modern affordable housing projects speckle the Southern California landscape.

After finishing grad school at UCLA in 1969, Mutlow spent more than three years working in Pico Union, a working-class, mostly Latino L.A. neighborhood. As director of planning and housing for the Pico Union Neighborhood Council (PUNC, an acronym whose subversive connotation he relishes), Mutlow guided the area's development process. The job helped him learn the importance of communicating with a building's end users—of essentially becoming an advocate for them in dealing with outside forces like governments and lending institutions. "They didn't trust me," he says of the Pico Union community. "But they saw I was representing them, and after about six months they turned around and trusted me."

Over the next 30 years Mutlow, who started his own firm in 1976, built on the record he established at PUNC. He's amassed a formidable, constantly evolving body of knowledge about the subtle ways in which housing affects the daily lives of everyone from seniors to families to special-needs residents. And he's learned the all-important (and all-too-rare) skill of getting projects constructed the way he wants them. "You have to understand the language of the people providing the goods," he says. "You don't just go in there—to HUD, say—and start talking in architectural language. You talk in HUD language. You have to understand their goal." Teaching housing design at USC and writing—most recently *The New Architecture of Mexico* (Images Publishing, 2005)—give him further opportunities for intellectual engagement.

Mutlow modestly attributes his professional success to a combination of luck and perseverance. But in these compromised times, it's his staunch idealism and commitment to social justice—also legacies of the '60s—that set him apart.—m.d.









Mutlow's sophisticated color choices bring energy to the affordable housing communities Fiesta House (top center and right) in Reseda, Calif., and Cleveland Villa (above) in Los Angeles.

"you have to understand the language of the people providing the goods."

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"Being English. [I think] we're maybe more community-oriented over there. Also, at the Architectural Association I became interested in the effects of housing form on social interaction. In the United States, I had my 'second grad school' at UCLA, where I had Professor Fred Case. He had been approached by [members of] an inner-city L.A. community. They asked him to help them and the whole class got involved. I ended up working in the community, Pico Union, for three-and-a-half years."

what were you doing 10 years ago? "Ten years back I received the AIA California Council's Community Housing Assistance Honor Award for contributions to affordable housing. It was important because this award usually doesn't go to architects—it goes to nonprofits or [to] anyone involved in affordable housing."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"I hope to pass on information or knowledge to a new, younger generation of architects and get them interested in social housing."



### maurice cox

public activism







While on the city council, Cox worked with and advocated for the East Chesapeake Bay community of Bayview, Va., (above) to help turn their "deplorable physical conditions without indoor plumbing" into an "exercise in empowerment and ownership." Residents were encouraged to make every design and planning decision themselves.

64



Mixed-use development, high density, and innovative architecture that fosters social interaction — these are Maurice Cox's ingredients for a great city. He should know. Having grown up in Brooklyn, N.Y., Cox went to school in Manhattan and then moved to Florence, Italy, for 10 years. Those years living, teaching, practicing, and people-watching in Florence

showed him that architects can effect major change through politics. "I was fascinated that a designer could advance an agenda through public office and that architecture was heavily debated in the public arena," he says of that period of discovery.

It was architect-cum-public servant Thomas Jefferson who lured Cox back to the United States in 1993. "I was attracted to Charlottesville, Va., and the University of Virginia, but I was mainly fascinated by Jefferson," he explains. In no time, he was involved in local development issues, and after several terms on the city council, Cox was elected mayor in 2002. His platform was simple: "Urban design based on density."

In quaint downtown Charlottesville, where some areas hadn't seen new construction for years, proposals for mixed-use development and higher density seemed extreme. As Cox learned by trial and error, "Citizens can make incredibly informed decisions if they are educated at a pace that allows them to absorb information and respond to it." In other words, trying to rush things doesn't work. As mayor, Cox instigated citywide replacement of commercial zoning with a mixed-use master plan. His ordinance tripling allowable housing densities also passed. Now out of office, he continues to pursue public support by encouraging participation. "The democratic process of designing in public gives you the authority and consent of the citizens," he says.

In practice with his wife and two other partners at RBGC Architecture, Research & Urbanism, Cox still advocates for smart city planning and design. He also counsels other city officials on how to "equate design with quality of life," adding, "It's the role designers can play in politics ... where the public looks forward to and is persuaded by big ideas." -s.d.h.









Rendering and portrait (opposite page): Courtesy RBGC Architecture, Research & Urbanism

Varying proportions and materials break down the scale of this RBGC mixed-use project in downtown Charlottesville (above in rendering and photos). The Terraces offer a pedestrian-friendly streetscape with galleries, shops, and restaurants. Residential units give occupants the option to live and work in the same building.

*"the democratic process of designing in public gives you the authority and consent of the citizens."* 

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"I became an architect in part because I believe the world around us can be made better by what architects do. I've come to view access to a quality environment as one of our unalienable rights—the one most directly connected to the concept of 'quality of life.' Following the path of citizen/architect has allowed me to use my discipline to engage a larger community in very fundamental decisions about how we live."

#### what were you doing 10 years ago?

"Ten years ago I had completed my first political campaign. I was immediately thrust into a controversial debate over how Charlottesville could grow its tax base. I believed we could grow more densely [by] resisting the outward pull of sprawl. Much to my surprise, the public overwhelmingly supported my urban agenda and I won the election by a landslide. By my direct engagement in ... public policy as an architect, I was finally able to create the rules capable of shaping the city for the better."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"I hope to create quality environments. Placing design within reach of ordinary citizens can be incredibly empowering. I hope to continue assisting many more communities, both rural and urban, to use design as a democratic tool for empowerment."



# peter pfeiffer

sustainable design







The Phipps Cannatti Residence (top) in Austin, Texas, achieved the highest possible rating in the city's Green Building Program. Inside, the house incorporates recessed fluorescent lighting, locally harvested wood flooring, and locally quarried limestone for the fireplace.

66

Earth Day—the first one, back in 1970 was a catalyst for Peter Pfeiffer, FAIA. Even as an impressionable high schooler, Pfeiffer had a taste for construction and an

enthusiasm for environmental causes. That inaugural Earth-fest simply showed that his two interests could coexist.

But sustainable design wasn't a passing fancy for Pfeiffer, who has dedicated the past 29 years to developing and advancing building practices that follow green principles. As a college student he gravitated naturally to Arizona, where he spent a summer with Paolo Soleri. "He really turned a lightbulb on in me [and] made me realize that you can define architecture by its ability to work with its setting," Pfeiffer says. His academic foundation in building science at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute was bolstered by graduate work at the University of Texas at Austin. There he earned a master's degree in sustainable studies, working with a professor who wrote software to analyze energy use in buildings. "I found out that a single-pane window in the shade is more efficient than a double-pane window in the sun," he says of the experience.

In 1987, Pfeiffer teamed up with partner Alan Barley, AIA, to launch Barley & Pfeiffer Architects in Austin, Texas. Since then, the firm has been preoccupied with creating "high-performance homes," which Pfeiffer describes as comfortable, maybe even luxurious, energy-efficient homes that are healthier to live in and easier to maintain than conventional houses.

Pfeiffer's firm is a national trendsetter in the fields of energy and natural resource-conserving design, low-toxicity living environments, and green construction technology. Even though the architects load their houses with thermal-siphoning strategies, Formaldehyde-free damp-blown insulation, nontoxic termite treatments, rainwater-harvesting systems, and sustainably harvested woods, they still value—and deliver—good design. Says Pfeiffer: "It's the appropriate marriage of technology and aesthetics." -v.m.





"you can define architecture by its ability to work with its setting."









Pfeiffer's home (top and left) demonstrates how a Craftsman-inspired house can be infused with green strategies. The architect linked the home's watercooled air-conditioning system to the swimming pool (above left) to provide free pool heat in fall and spring, and the living/dining/ kitchen area (above) opens onto a screened porch.

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"I am somewhat a product of the environmental movement of the 1970s. I grew up around construction, particularly residential remodeling projects, [but] it was the advent of the Earth Day celebrations, and then the Arab Oil Embargo of the early '70s, that galvanized my conviction to combine my interests in building and design with my concerns for the environment and energy efficiency. Designing buildings to rely less on imported energy and that lived 'lightly' on the environment became my focus, and I stuck with it."

what were you doing 10 years ago?
"The same thing—trying to build this
practice doing only green buildings.
We've never *not* done a green building."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"My partner and I have been wondering [about this]. I think we want to diversify into other building types. About 80 percent of our work [right now] is homes. I also will continue spreading the 'gospel of green.' I expect to continue doing this until green building has become so ubiquitous that it is no longer considered unique."

67



### andrés duany

placemaking





Group photo and drawings: Courtesy The Town Paper

The architects created a village-scale solution to a damaged Wal-Mart store in Pass Christian, Miss., that wraps the warehouse and parking lot with smaller retail stores and second-floor housing (above). For the triangular center of Long Beach, Miss. (top center), a sketch proposed a repaired and expanded marina bordered by a 15-acre waterfront park. Other solutions (opposite page, bottom row) include a civic square to ease traffic flow and housing for a variety of ages and income levels.



Two months after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita flattened huge swathes of the Gulf

an 80-mile stretch of coastline. Last spring they volunteered their services in Louisiana, too, conducting another grueling round of charrettes in four hard-hit regions. Suffice it to say that Duany, a founding partner and principal of Miamibased Duany Plater-Zyberk & Co., has been busier than usual this past year.

The sheer scale of the work was daunting, but it also represented an opportunity for New Urbanism's brightest minds to put their heads together and see what they could cook up from scratch. "Everywhere we engaged they were in need of drastic reform before Katrina," Duany says. "This is fully funded, and it's a chance to move decisively forward to a competitive condition for the future."

Not only did the group design houses and sidewalks, parks and promenades, but for the first time ever, a hotel ballroom full of high-end architects was persuaded to create the most affordable of housing. "People don't realize how badly affordable housing is designed in this country; as soon as you're good you climb the ladder," Duany explains. "I think manufactured homes and the panelization industry will emerge unrecognizably from the sheer talent applied to this. That's what I'm most excited about."

Given the pace of rebuilding after Hurricane Andrew in 1992, Duany estimates that the results of the charrettes will be broadly visible in 10 to 15 years—

a terrifyingly long time for displaced residents but faster than it takes to turn most cities around. "You can design all you want, but most cities have to molt," Duany says. "Things have to be knocked down and reassembled. Here, you catch it at the rebuilding. The outcome is still years away, but it's fast for planning."-c.w.



Several hundred architects and planners turned the Isle of Capri hotel in Biloxi, Miss., into a giant studio for a week, working around the clock with local leaders on plans for rebuilding the region.













In Bay St. Louis, Miss., an arts community of 8,000 residents, nearly 90 percent of the buildings were damaged. The design team envisioned rows of sturdy beachside buildings (left top) that serve as buffers for the smaller, less expensive structures behind them. It also proposed reconstructing the beautiful historic homes along Beach Boulevard and tucking denser buildings to the rear (left bottom).



*"this is a chance to move decisively forward to a competitive condition for the future."* 

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"Lizz [Plater-Zyberk] and I missed living in a good urban place ourselves, so we instinctively tried to make them when we could. It turned out that there were quite a few people who felt like us. Now New Urbanism is all the rage, and even the oldfashioned suburban developers who were skeptical are into it."

#### what were you doing 10 years ago?

"We were doing just what we are doing now, but not as well nor as intensely. The past 10 years has seen an incredible ramping up in the quality and quantity of New Urbanism."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"We would like to complete the change in the regulatory environment so that building New Urbanism is on a level playing field with conventional suburbia. It's currently more difficult because it's not envisioned by the codes and standards. When the market is able to freely decide, a substantial proportion of new developments will be New Urbanist. Some marketing gurus [put the] figure over 70 percent—and that is without factoring in the boost of environmental crisis or expensive gasoline."



### marianne cusato

rescue housing





Clean proportions and well-crafted details such as built-in bookshelves make the cottage a sweet alternative to the double-wide trailer. Cusato included vertical, double-hung windows that open top and bottom for better air flow.

70

It's fast, dignified, affordable, and flexible. It's the Katrina Cottage, Marianne Cusato's nifty alternative to the ugly FEMA trailers that were handed out after Hurricane Katrina. Welcoming and concise, the prototype house's pitched metal roof, yellow fiber-cement siding, and vernacular simplicity has resonated with people worldwide.

The Katrina Cottage was born after DPZ's Andrés Duany asked the architects' team at last fall's Mississippi Renewal Forum to develop immediate affordable housing that respects the place. Cusato's

design-the first to come from the charrette-was constructed at the International Builders' Show in Orlando last January. "You can show a cute drawing, but when you have something physical to show, there's a spark," Cusato says. "We needed that forum for people to walk through and see that at 300 square feet, you can have a pretty nice house." For Cusato, who just launched Marianne Cusato Associates last August, the eruption of interest has caused her to shift course, exploring possibilities for adapting the concept beyond the Gulf Coast. "My business was growing, then Katrina happened," she says. "I've decided this is really what I want to invest myself in. I'm intrigued by the possibility that we might be able to come up with a partial solution to the major problem of affordability in this country."

This April the Senate approved \$1.2 billion to build the Katrina Cottages. But while Cusato has little control over public funding, she is working privately to disperse her design as plans to consumers, as a kit of parts that contractors or Habitat for Humanity volunteers could assemble, and as a turnkey modular system. The simple design works in most U.S. regions, she explains, and as the idea grows it could be adapted. Interest has come from abroad, too. Just recently, a non-government association asked her to work with a local architect to create a model for the people of Ghana.

"The Katrina Cottage goes beyond emergency housing to affordable housing," Cusato says. "Why are people living in double-wide trailers? We're hoping to take this to the next level." It's a small house, but a big idea. -c.w.







Photos (above and opposite page): Courtesy Marianne Cusato

In addition to its appeal as temporary quarters, the Katrina Cottage can stay on site after the main house is built, either attached as a wing or used as a guest cottage. Designed to balance economy, speed, and aesthetics, the delivery method is flexible, too. It can be stick-built or prefabricated for roughly the same cost as a government-issue trailer.

"we're hoping to take this [idea] to the next level."

#### verbatim

#### what drew you to this path?

"I see a real need—and opportunity for change in the way we approach emergency and affordable housing. I think that by using ideas like the Katrina Cottage we can redefine the word affordable. The excitement that the prototype of Katrina Cottage 1 has generated gives me the encouragement I need to keep pushing the idea forward. We have support for the idea; now we need to make it a reality."

what were you doing 10 years ago? "I was studying architecture at the University of Notre Dame."

### what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"I'm hoping we can turn the panelized modular housing industry into a [vehicle for delivering] good design affordably to the masses. I'd love to personally work toward making that happen."

residential architect / june 2006



### kelly denk and john vetter

urban revitalization



Courtesy Vetter Denk Architects

Vetter Denk Architects has taken the postindustrial town of Green Bay, Wis., by storm. Block upon block of prime waterfront footage, a marvelous working river— "urban theater like you wouldn't believe."

"urban theater like you wouldn't believe," says John Vetter, AIA—and the city had turned its back on it. Green Bay is the state's third-largest city, and yet there was no for-sale housing downtown until recently, when the firm put together, pro bono, a boardwalk plan for residential, retail, and civic spaces. "Planning department [officials were] looking for commercial venues, but we convinced them that homes were their first ingredient," Vetter says.

Vetter and fellow Milwaukee native Kelly Denk, AIA, started out doing design/build some 20 years ago. They used the construction process to inform their design work, creating clean-lined, site-specific houses that are knit with nature. "We began to see the power that appropriate architecture can have on people's lives," Vetter says, "and translating that to the urban condition was compelling to us." The firm eventually stopped building its projects, but winning a design competition for Milwaukee's Beerline neighborhood eight years ago propelled them into development. Located on the Milwaukee River, Beerline's condos, row houses, and single-family homes are designed to attract an economically diverse group of buyers, ranging in price from \$140,000 to well over \$1 million.

The firm has work under way in downtown Sheboygan, Wis., too, converting the historic C. Reiss Coal Co. building into condos and lofts. But it is the Green Bay project that Vetter is most excited about. The partners have rights to develop a four-block area, which will include rental loft units built with affordable tax credits, a hotel, and a children's museum that had been slated for relocation out of town. The Astor Place condos, ranging in price from \$165,000 to \$800,000, are smartly designed, with good ventilation, 35-foot-long terraces on some units, and materials that mix the rough and refined. "People who want to live downtown are looking for something more playful and inventive," Vetter says. "It's more about where the city is going than where it's been."-c.w.





Courtesy Hsiao-Tsui Lu, Vetter Denk Architects Milwaukee's Beerline neighborhood, lined with breweries in the 1950s, is enjoying a renaissance. The 20 townhouses at River Homes (top) sold out before construction even began. Vetter Denk's sculptural Booth Street Stairs (above) connect River Homes with an existing neighborhood up the hill.








Vetter Denk partnered with

create a mixed-use master

plan for downtown Green Bay that includes a lively boardwalk (left and above left) and Astor Place Condominiums (above right), a 95-unit project slated for construction this year. Other planned buildings include for-sale and rental units, plus commercial, civic, and retail projects.

Boston-based StoSS Landscape Urbanism to



Renderings: StoSS Landscape Urbanism

verbatim

what drew you to this path?

"We are drawn to the rich diversity, vitality, and energy that we find in urban environments. In particular, the neglected or forgotten areas of cities attract us because we are able to make a greater impact on a local economy and community. Being our own developer allows us to get the job accomplished and to a higher standard."

what were you doing 10 years ago?

"We were focused on the singlefamily residential market from a turnkey master builder standpoint."

# what do you hope to have achieved 10 years from now?

"We want to help create urban neighborhoods that have the live/work/play dynamic. The skew we'd like to put on that is environmental awareness and the potential for mass customization, creating affordability but not having it all stamped out."

residential architect / june 2006

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### design zeitgeists

diversities and divergences in the american house

#### by meghan drueding



# bigger houses / not-so-big houses



Warren Jagger

Estes/Twombly Architects managed to give this 1,040-square-foot Block Island, R.I., residence (above) an iconic personality. Ferguson & Shamamian Architects skillfully endowed a 12,000-square-foot house in Palm Beach, Fla., (top) with an understated elegance.

It's the cliché heard round the world: We Americans love our SUVs, our monster houses, and our super-sized meals. Current housing statistics do back up the general notion that homes in the United States are larger than ever before. According to the National Association of Home Builders, the average singlefamily home measured approximately 2,450 square feet in 2005, up from 2,080 square feet in 1990. It's not that families are getting any bigger. Rather, we're doing activities at home that we used to do beyond its walls, like watching movies or working (hence the addition of extra rooms like home theaters and home offices). And the spaces we already counted as necessities are growing in size. According to the "AIA Quarterly Home Design Survey" released in February 2006, kitchens and baths are both gaining square footage.

Yet we're a fickle lot. Just as the SUV has left its mark on the highways and byways of the nation, so too has the oh-socute Mini Cooper ridden into our consciousness. Among a certain subset of consumers, the 1998 book *The Not So Big House* by Sarah Susanka, FAIA, stimulated a sincere desire for quality over quantity. Architects have long admired the staccato beauty of a well-done small house, and now it seems that many of their clients agree. As the sustainable design movement blossoms and people think more holistically about living lightly on the land, the countertrend toward smaller houses should only continue. Now if we could just do something about those enormous restaurant portions.



Casey Sills

# regional modernism / new traditionalism



As Post-Modernism's heyday faded, architects all over the country tuned in to regional modernism. Inspired by local design heroes—O'Neil Ford, FAIA, in Texas, Pietro Belluschi, FAIA, in the Pacific Northwest, and William Turnbull, FAIA, in the San Francisco Bay Area, to name a few many practitioners pursued an aesthetic rooted in local climate, vegetation, history, and topography. These regional modernists shy away from the goanywhere Modernism of the International Style, often emulating humble agricultural structures like silos, barns, and sheds instead. As the built environment grows more homogeneous every day, firms are fighting back by doing work that reinforces an ebbing sense of place.

In a different response to the same issue, another group developed a new traditionalism. They resurrected much-loved classic house styles with floor plans for modern-day living, emphasizing appropriate proportioning and materials. Exquisite traditional residences from the likes of Robert A.M. Stern, FAIA, and Allan Greenberg breathe new life into venerable house types. This movement influences production housing through New Urbanism. And new traditionalism's own educational organization, the Institute of Classical Architecture (now merged with Classical America) has grown substantially in scope and sway since its formation in 1992.

A West Pennant, Nova Scotia, house (left) by MacKay-Lyons Sweetapple Architects takes cues from the surrounding natural environment. The traditional lines of an English country cottage define a Dallas project (above right) by Merrill, Pastor & Colgan Architects.

residential architect / june 2006



## design zeitgeists

diversities and divergences in the american house



A cozy reading nook (left) occupies a corner in a house by Christopher Alexander's Center for Environmental Structure. Ben Trogdon Architects blurs the division between the kitchen, dining room, and living room at a Kirkland, Wash., project (below left).

Mark Darley/Esto

# open plans / private spaces



We live in a society that values flexibility more than ever before, and our increasingly open-plan homes show it. Just as our phones now double as cameras and computers, our kitchens now multitask as dens and dining rooms. Open floor plans appear everywhere from the highest-end custom homes to the "loft-style" layouts of suburban single-family developments. Even the once-untouchable wall between the master bedroom and master bath is up for grabs. The distinction between rooms isn't the only one that's losing ground: Massive, commercialstyle sliding, folding, and pivoting doors have almost erased the line between indoors and out. The new openness allows overscheduled families to spend time together doing different activities in the same space rather than sequestered in singlefunction rooms. And it reflects a new informality and personal transparency-a willingness to let guests watch meal preparation or cleanup, for example.

Too much togetherness isn't good for anyone's psyche, however. That's why more clients are requesting retreats within their open-plan houses. They're asking for meditation rooms, sitting rooms, studies, libraries—anywhere they can take a little break from the rest of the world (and even their loved ones). Some of the wide-open houses in MoMA's muchvaunted *The Un-Private House* exhibit in 1999 carved out rooms for getting away, proving that the most iconoclastic homeowners still need a little time to themselves.

Steve Keating

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Julia Heine

## manufactured products / natural materials



This Sea Ranch, Calif., remodel (above), designed by Obie Bowman, AIA, incorporates driftwood columns and redwood siding. Bucking convention, McInturff Architects coated the walls of an Accokeek, Md., house (top) with asphalt roof shingles. The cost of building a house rose steeply over the past decade as prices of traditional materials like wood and stone continued to escalate. Architects turned to manufactured products to help trim unwieldy budgets and soon realized that manmade materials could allow more design flexibility and require less maintenance. Durable products of plastic, aluminum, fiber cement, and engineered stone are now standard fare on many projects. Architects covet composites like Trespa and Parklex. And the tendency toward open floor plans creates a constant demand for light-transmitting, privacygiving products such as Polygal and Kalwall.

But every yin craves its yang. While thrilled by the array of exciting new manufactured products, have-it-all Americans are simultaneously embracing good old natural materials. It's a sign of the times: "Organic" and "natural" enjoy exalted status as marketing buzzwords, the Whole Foods grocery juggernaut reigns, and prices of George Nakashima's earthy furniture have skyrocketed. Consumers concerned about indoor air quality are asking for inert, non-off-gassing elements such as limestone tiles, hardwood floors, and marble countertops. The most forward-looking houses today satisfy both desires, mixing carefully chosen natural materials with the best manmade items the industry has to offer.



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### design zeitgeists

diversities and divergences in the american house



# urban living / vacation getaways



Remember when American cities were widely considered violent, abandoned hotbeds of crime? That reputation is a thing of the past, transformed into a vision of cities as urban paradises filled with cafés, culture, and nightlife. While neither extreme is completely accurate, it's true that many city neighborhoods have undergone a remarkable renaissance. As empty nesters downscale and recent graduates accept highpaying jobs, the market for downtown condos has soared. For these buyers (as well as renters, townhouse owners, and other city dwellers) the convenient and pedestrian-oriented urban lifestyle has replaced the suburban fantasy of green lawns and white fences. With gas prices rising all the time, the burgeoning popularity of car-independent city living just might continue.

Urban living has found its countertrend in the upsurge of vacation getaway sales. According to the National Association of Realtors, buyers scooped up a record 1.02 million vacation homes in 2005. It makes sense, demographically: Fitness-conscious baby boomers and adventure-happy Gen Xers and Gen Yers want to retreat to places where they can swim, ski, and sail, not to mention detach from their everyday lives. In a neat encapsulation of both trends, many suburban homeowners are buying pieds-à-terre in nearby cities to serve as weekend residences.

Frederick Phillips, FAIA, designed his own house (left) for a site near downtown Chicago. A Martha's Vineyard cottage (top) by Hutker Architects embodies the tranquil ideal of a vacation home.

William Kildow





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#### hot specs setting the new standard

by nigel f. maynard

Webster's dictionary defines "trend" as "a dominant movement revealed by a statistical process." One entry later, though, it characterizes "trendy" as "fashion-following."

We know design pros like yourselves don't succumb to fashion, of course, but you do set trends. So, to honor our 10 years of observing your achievements, we've collected your top 10 application predilections. These are products and materials you tell us are your favorites and that have come to dominate your designs. Perhaps these aren't really trends after all, but examples of design evolution-the development of better methods and practices that take into account sustainability, energy efficiency, and indoor air quality.



#### european cabinets

Europe is on the cutting edge of many progressive ideas-product innovation, architectural experimentation, resource conservation. It's also a leader in sleek kitchen and bath cabinets that use innovative materials and technology. Whether it's Varenna from Italy or Bulthaup from Germany, these cabinets are tops with our readers. "They have an evolved look with interesting finishes and details," says Mark McInturff, FAIA, McInturff Architects, Bethesda, Md.

#### energy-efficient appliances

It's been 14 years since the EPA introduced the Energy Star labeling program to identify energy-efficient products. Today, it's an important determinant of the



88

appliances architects and clients choose. Energy Starqualified refrigerators use about half as much energy as a pre-1993 model, and dishwashers use 25 percent less energy and less water. Allison Ewing, AIA, Hays + Ewing Design Studio, Charlottesville, Va., likes to spec single-unit washer/ dryers because they use onethird the water of a conventional unit.

#### glass tiles

Almost standard in a kitchen or bath, glass tile is the darling of the architectural world. Impervious to water and most chemicals, glass also has a natural ability to reflect and refract light.



Courtesy Oceanside Glasstile

"Its iridescence gives it great depth," says Stephan Jaklitsch, Stephan Jaklitsch Design, New York City. "When light hits this tile, the quality of the reflection is amazing." Once available mostly as mosaics, tiles now measure 24 inches and many contain recycled content.

Courtesy Thor Appliance Co.





#### metal cladding

Courtesy Berridge Manufacturing Co.

Courtesy Mountain Lumber Co.

For some architects, metal is the preferred material for roofing applications. And now more and more design pros are using it for siding, too. Though pricey, metal cladding is lightweight, strong, and noncombustible. Because of its high reflectivity, metal also helps keep houses cool and energy efficient. "It's durable, long-lasting, maintenance-free, fire-resistant, and goodlooking," says Christopher Davis, Semple Brown Design, Denver.

#### Courtesy Bulthaup

#### sustainable flooring

Perhaps one of the biggest developments in residential architecture over the last 10 years is a greater awareness of and sensitivity to the environ-

ment. Following this interest is a greater supply of sustainable flooring choices (including rapidly renewable bamboo and cork), the re-emergence of linoleum, and the salvaging of wood from old structures. "[Salvaged lumber] is superb, tightly grained wood with an aesthetically pleasing appearance," says Gail Lindsey, FAIA, Design Harmony, Wake Forest, N.C.



Courtesy Fine Paints of Europe

#### low-odor paint

The last thing an architect wants is an exquisite interior that's uninhabitable because of lingering paint fumes. This is why our readers favor paint with low volatile organic compounds and benign ingredients. Harmless to homeowners and the environment, such paint also delivers quality performance. In fact, San Antonio, Texas-based Michael G. Imber, AIA, says the pigments in his favorite brand are "so pure that you get true color saturation, with the effect of changing hues throughout the day."

#### alternative glazing materials

Most architects would agree that glass-sandblasted, frosted, or etched—is their first choice for any glazing spec. But when the budget doesn't permit such an extravagant option, pros turn to alternatives such as polycarbonate, acrylic, or resin-based sheets. And they're often cheaper and easier to work with than glass. "We use them for their light weight, [for] the ease with which they can be sanded for a nice texture, and for translucency," says William Ruhl, AIA, Ruhl Walker Architects, Boston.





#### hot specs setting the new standard

#### fiber-cement siding

Made from Portland cement, sand, cellulose, silica, and additives, this siding product has steadily gained favor among our readers. Some architects like to substitute it for wood because it won't burn, rot, or cup. Other design pros like its ability to accept paint and its resistance to termites and salt spray. "On the coast these shingles are bulletproof," says Nick Noyes, Nick Noyes Architecture, San Francisco.



Courtesy Sonoma Cast Stone

#### decorative concrete

Concrete has been a mainstay in construction for longer than most people can remember, but it has recently catapulted from regular to regal. Bolstered by the industrial look in residential architecture, concrete has gained acceptance for its adaptability and solid good looks. "Stone is one of the best products to use in a kitchen," says Michael Baushke, Apparatus Architecture, San Francisco. "But finished concrete goes one step further. You can play with thickness and edges because it's more versatile."

#### commercial window systems

The architectural tradition of adapting commercial products for residential use is alive and well. Commercial window systems are a significant example of the trend. Whether they're steel windows from Hope's or aluminum storefront systems from Kawneer, our readers use them to

introduce large glass openings in their houses and to achieve a contemporary look. "They don't rot or rust," says Archimania's Todd Walker, AIA, whose Memphis, Tenn., house is shown above. "You won't have to paint or caulk them."

Courtesy James Hardie Building Products



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## top products

architects' choice favorites

#### by nigel f. maynard

People love lists, even if they're sometimes arbitrary and capricious. We at *residential architect* love lists, too, and because we're dedicated to truth and justice, we've actually done some legwork on ours.

To compile our compendium of your 10 favorite product brands, we've combed through 10 years of back issues and identified your most oft-cited specs. These are the top 10 selections from our Architects' Choice coverage. The list is anything but capricious; it's time-tested by you.

#### sub-zero

The high-end refrigerator and wine-storage manufacturer is our readers' most preferred brand across all product categories. Though fond of the company's entire product line, our readers especially appreciate the versatility of the integrated 700 Series, which offers counterdepth full-size units and undercounter drawer units.

"sub-zero refrigerators" shallow 2-foot depth allows you to incorporate them into the face of cabinetry in a much



*more elegant manner than conventional refrigerators.*"—John MerkJe, AIA, TMS Architects, Portsmouth, N.H.

"our kitchens are usually part of larger rooms, so we try to de-emphasize appliances [with the 700 Series]."—Mary Griffin, AIA, Turubull Griffin Haesloop Architects, Berkeley, Calif.

#### polygal

There are many plasticbased products that substitute nicely for glass, but the brand our readers mention most often comes from this Charlotte, N.C.-based company. Prized for its ability to permit light while maintaining privacy, the product is also strong and easy to install.

*"we like to find ways to use it beyond even what the manufacturer envisions."*—John Vetter, AIA, Vetter Denk Architects, Milwaukee

*"it's very versatile. we use it as screens where we want light from outside."*—Ursula Emery McClure, AIA, emerymcclure architecture, Baton Rouge, La.



Photos: George Brown (Polygal); Max Hirshfeld (Benjamin Moore)

#### duravit

Employing the creative talents of such design stars as Philippe Starck, Dieter Sieger, and Michael Graves, the German bath manufacturer has elevated unexciting ceramics to new heights. Its entire collection of toilets and sinks is celebrated, but its Happy D line is tops with our gang.

'i like the simple graceful lines [of the happy d pedestal]—contemporary and classic."—Gary Furman. FAIA. Furman + Kell Architects. Austin. Texas



"the best pedestal sink is the happy d. it has a great design and is priced decently." – Chaudia Skylar,



#### marvin

Citing the Warroad, Minn.-based company's product quality, technical support, and willingness to take on almost any design challenge, our readers ranked Marvin as their preferred window brand whenever the budget allows it. The casement windows are especially popular with this crowd.

"*i like the flexibility and the quality.*" –John Senhauser, FAIA, John Senhauser Architects, Cincinnati "[marvin is] a step ahead of everyone else in terms of design and function." – Robert Knight, AIA,

#### kohler

Started in 1873 by an Austrian immigrant who made cast iron and steel implements for farmers, Kohler now produces high-quality faucets and fixtures for everyone and every budget. Whether it's a fitting for a bath or a cast iron sink for a kitchen, our readers turn to the Wisconsin-based company for many of their plumbing specs.

"we like kohler fixtures because they're discreet, they can be either contemporary or classic—they fit in anywhere,"—Stephen Tilty, ALA, Stephen Tilly, Architect, Dobbs Ferty, N.Y.

"*[the promuster kitchen faucet] feels good in your hunds.*"—Jean Rehkamp Larson, AIA, Rehkamp Larson Architects. Minneapolis



#### louis poulsen lighting

This manufacturer's brand of Scandinavian minimalism has been a hit with architects for many years. Always searching for light fixtures that follow through on the architecture, our readers consistently turn to this lighting company for such iconic pieces as the PH5 pendant (above) and the PH Artichoke, both by architect Poul Henningsen.

"[louis poulsen's nyhavn copper wall-mount] fixture has a classic sense of design and proportion. combined with the wonderful color of copper." – Nils Finne, AIA, Finne Architects. Seattle

"[the saturn ceiling fixture] is contemporary, gives off a great light, and creates a tremendous streetscape." —Paul Volpe, AIA. City Architecture. Cleveland

#### residential architect / june 2006



### top products

architects' choice favorites

#### pella

Beginning its life producing a retractable window screen, Pella now makes its name manufacturing wood windows and doors. A good idea is still a good idea, however, which is why the disappearing screen remains a versatile feature of its window products. Our readers admire the straightforward designs and quality construction.



"[pella windows] do not obstruct sight lines and allow clear vision of the outdoors," —Adele Chang, AIA. Lim Chang Rohling & Associates, Pasadena, Calif. "we like the quality of [its] windows and the flexibility to adapt them to unique uses."—Glade Sperry Jr., AIA, Westwork Architects, Albuquerque, N.M.

#### valli&valli

Before founding Valli&Valli in 1934, Pasquale Valli was a works manager in a factory where umbrella handles were made. His passion for tactile aesthetics continues to drive the company today, as evidenced by the high-quality door hardware it produces. Our readers rave about the Italian manufacturer's graceful door levers, which have found their way into countless residential designs.

"door hardware from valli&valli is well-priced and well-styled—a difficult combination to find." –Michael Ryan, AIA, Michael Ryan Architects, Loveladies, N.J.

"i don't even think about using another lever." --Peter Pfau, AIA, Pfau Architecture, San Francisco



#### dornbracht

The words "clean" and "quality" come up often when architects speak of this German manufacturer's products. And none receives more accolades than Tara (by Sieger Design), which balances form and function in ways that continually wow our readers.

"*sturdy*, *simple, elegant*,"—Taal Saidie, AIA, and Ricardo Rabines. Saidie Rabines Architects, San Diego

tara is modern and well-engineered, and [its] size is comfortable to the hand."

- Ronnette Riley, FAIA, Ronnette Riley Architect, New York City



#### benjamin moore

The Moore brothers started their paint company in a small Brooklyn, N.Y., building in 1883. Over the years, they developed washable flat finishes, lead-free paint, and latex-based products. Today, the company's Eco Spec line of low-VOC paints is tops among architects doing residential or commercial work.

"chemistry at its best—with emphasis on performance availability, dependability, quick occupancy, and healthy environments."—Michael McDonough, ALA. Michael McDonough Architect. New York City



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more and more Americans move into neighborhoods where they are able to walk as opposed to drive, their health will improve. Pollution from the use of fossil fuels will decrease accordingly. The only question is, 'Why do we have to wait?'"

-Terence Riley, AIA, K/R, New York City

"We'll see a paradigm change in the way we design that balances exorbitant cost with something that's enriching and personalized. There will be more mass customization—building systems that are affordable but allow for uniqueness." —John Vetter, AIA, Vetter Denk Architects, Milwaukee

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"We'll have to figure out how to provide affordable housing and

how to make everything we do more ecologically sensitive—not just picking the right linoleum but [doing] buildings that speak to a pretty

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