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JUNE 2007

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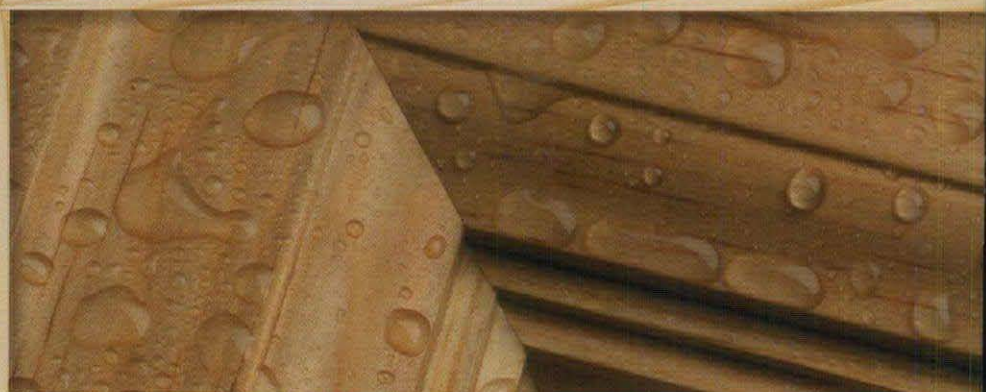
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# Outlook

## DISTINCT, DRAMATIC — AND DIFFERENT—DESIGNS FROM JENN-AIR®

Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, CKD, AIBD

Stainless steel, black or white? For the past several years, one of the most crucial decisions in kitchen design—the choice of appliance color and finish—has been relegated to a rather simple (and limited) set of options.

Thankfully, however, design innovations from Jenn-Air® now offer architects and designers more appliance options to choose from—including the distinctive Oiled Bronze and the dramatic Floating Glass. Both suites offer expressive color/finish options that make decidedly different statements.

Jenn-Air brand's new Oiled Bronze finish is an industry first, but more importantly, a warm alternative to stainless steel. It combines the richly hued traditional color of bronze sculpture and fixtures with handles of stainless steel. The result is an entirely fresh style and color



*Entirely original: Jenn-Air® offers a full suite of appliances with the new Oiled Bronze finish.*

palette that works well for both neotraditional and contemporary kitchen designs.

What's more, the Oiled Bronze suite gives you additional freedoms. With gas and electric cooktops, wall ovens, warming drawers, and select refrigerators and dishwashers, you can specify an entire kitchen with this finish to achieve a fully integrated look. Or, you can mix and match with other Jenn-Air® finishes to create a more eclectic design. The natural tone and metallic finish of Oiled Bronze also enable you to coordinate appliances with a broad range of finishes in faucets, lighting and hardware.

By contrast, the Floating Glass suite has a more modernist visual quality. Another industry-exclusive Jenn-Air® finish, it features a high-gloss glass surface without a metal edge trim, while minimalist stainless steel hardware provides the accent. Available in black or white, sleek,



*A one-of-a-kind suite incorporates Floating Glass with overlay panel appliances.*



*The Oiled Bronze oven handle has a soft, graceful curve.*

smooth Floating Glass appliances give kitchens a crisp look. A versatile alternative to stainless steel, Floating Glass can be used to blend in with kitchen décor or to stand out in distinct contrast.

Both Oiled Bronze and Floating Glass are breakthroughs to be sure. But they join a lineup already renowned for refined looks and true gourmet appeal. Take a moment to

enjoy a full view of all that Jenn-Air® offers—including the commercially inspired Pro-Style® Stainless collection and the sleek Euro-Style Stainless suite—at [jennair.com](http://jennair.com).



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

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Whirlpool Corporation is pleased to announce a new course at the AEC Daily Online Learning Center. *Built-in Kitchen Trends: The Design Landscape* provides an overview of visionary built-in kitchen concepts, while emphasizing the entire culinary landscape. There is no charge for the course, and it qualifies for one contact hour of continuing education credit. To take the course, please visit [InsideAdvantage.com/designers](http://InsideAdvantage.com/designers) or [AECdaily.com](http://AECdaily.com).





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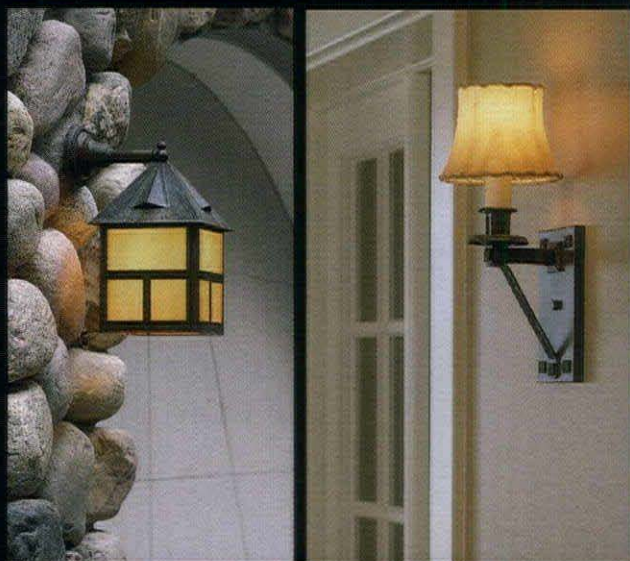


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# Manufactured Stone: Believability, Beauty and True Character

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By Julie Smith-Taylor

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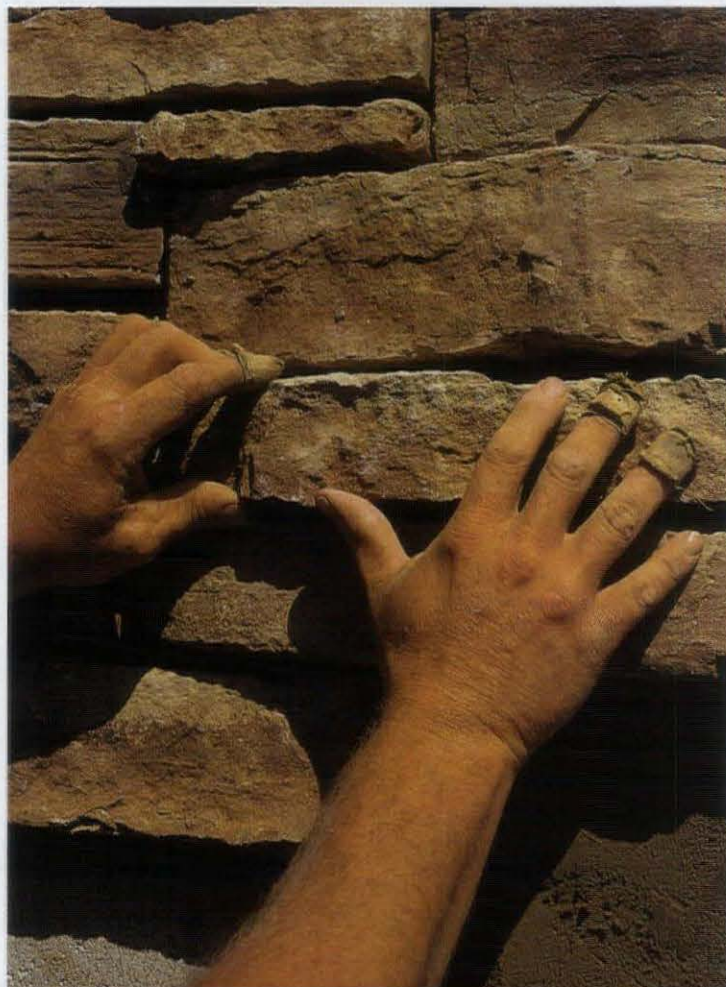
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Paul Hirzel's clients were open "to the strangeness architects have going on in their heads." Photo: Art Grice. Cover photo: Audrey Hall Photography.



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from the editor

# evaluating value

considering more than just the price of entry for a custom home.

by s. claire conroy

here at *ra*, we've long known the secret of the high-design, low-cost house: it belongs to an architect. In today's market—with today's prices for design services, materials, and labor—it's nearly impossible to deliver good custom work for less than \$200 per square foot. Unless you're an architect designing the house for yourself, shopping off the rack at The Home Depot, and donning the GC's hat to get it all done. Everyone else has to shop retail.

This is what we thought until we charged ourselves the task of finding some truly affordable but remarkably stylish custom homes. They're out there. And they all, to some degree, mine the secrets architects save for their own houses: keep it simple, keep it cheap, and use common things in uncommon ways. Put the biggest portion of the budget into items your clients will touch every day. And most important, make sure the house is very easy to build. Really, there's nothing wrong with a straightforward box.

You'll encounter in the following pages many tricks of the trade for minimizing

the sticker shock for your clients. But there's one other value equation you should include in your calculations: the amount of time, effort, and money it will cost to maintain the building you design.

Everyone in the home building business gripes about how difficult it is to find talented, competent, financially solvent subcontractors. But honestly, architects and builders have it easy. It's even more difficult for homeowners to assemble the army of experts a house requires to keep it in tip-top shape. And so important tasks often just don't get done—or get done too late. Our new cars are now designed to go thousands of miles without a service interval. We should aspire to the same level of performance from our houses. As the bulk of our housing grows older and more troublesome, we're putting greater pressure on our slim resources for repair. Ever try to diagnose the source of a mysterious leak in your own house? Is it the roof, the flashing, the chimney, a pinhole in an elderly pipe? No trade wants to claim it.

We certainly love modern design at *ra*, but we also worry about the longevity



Mark Robert Halper

of houses that have no roof pitch, overhangs, or window and door trim to shed water away from vulnerable places. How much can we rely on technology to protect us from the elements? Can you really count on your clients to take care of those little problems before they grow into major trouble?

I think nowadays you have to assume that homebuyers—often busy with dual careers, children, and other obligations—will not micromanage a high-maintenance home. And if something goes wrong down the line, they will likely look outward to assess blame—to the architect, the builder, the subcontractor.

So, yes, our featured

architects this issue are right about apportioning budget to big-bang areas of the house—to showcase rooms and high-touch items. But in the interest of self-preservation and, less solipsistically, in the best interests of your clients, you can't skimp on the integrity of the structure itself. Value isn't just about a good price for a neat house; it's also about a building that will withstand the test of time and the laxity of human nature. *ra*

Comments? Call: 202.736.3312; write: S. Claire Conroy, *residential architect*, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005; or e-mail: [cconroy@hanleywood.com](mailto:cconroy@hanleywood.com).





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# letters

exercise your right to write.

## forward thinking

In "Fitting In" (January/February 2007, page 15), you raise the issue of scale and compatibility of new housing with the existing streetscapes.

Having been a participant in a recent teardown project in a city in the Southeast, I have hands-on knowledge of the many factors surrounding that issue and feel compelled to respond. First, I question the appropriateness of the use of the term "McMansions." Other than giving free publicity to McDonald's, it takes readers away from the question of the evolution of residential neighborhoods over time—and puts an unnecessary focus on short-range considerations.

Instead, one should consider that once an older home is torn down and replaced with one of higher value, that home will influence the market for the area. Others will follow. Consequently, what is on the street today will not be there tomorrow. Yet, the value (price) will increase and benefit the larger neighborhood. If a home is going to be replaced by another, the economics must work: sale of existing home (X), construction of new home (Y), plus profit (Z). If a neighborhood can support the new sale, all parties benefit. That includes owners of existing older

homes and owners of resale and rebuilt homes. The new party will now own the highest-priced home on the street, with the benefit of having incorporated amenities that the replaced homes must not have provided.

Over the last 50 years, I've been involved in many projects of varying size, scope, and building type in various areas of the country. Many came at a period when most professionals in my field saw merit in—and commitment to—forward-looking design concepts, unfettered by the need for the embellishments of historical recall. Today, increasing emphasis is being placed on postmodern design. In the name of appropriate architectural design, we are confronted with elaborate cornices, false pediments, and arbitrary recesses and projections of rooms and spaces, leading to settings that seem more suited to past centuries rather than the future.

Which brings me to the main point of my response. The current tendency of our residential builders to tear down older homes and replace them with residences planned to meet future needs carries with it the recognition that those earlier needs often have changed.

It's quite possible that, over time, whole neighborhoods will change if the

dynamics of a typical city's evolution is forward-looking rather than an attempt to keep things as they were. In my view, the idea that neighborhoods can remain viable by replacing older homes with mirror images of those torn down is unrealistic. I sincerely believe history will bear this out.

*William J. Brown,  
AIA, NCARB  
Brown Architects  
Cincinnati*

■ see construction companies as being of two types—contractors and builders. Builders typically obtain a plan-book plan, often designed for a different topography and climate, and then change it any way they want to force a fit. Builders typically are not trained in design, nor do they have an aptitude for it. The house buyer is equally unaware of design and trusts the builder; after all, he does this for a living.

Contractors, on the other hand, contract to build exactly what an architect has designed and specified. The architect will observe the construction to make sure there are no changes that aren't sanctioned. As a result, a trained professional approves all decisions.

The architect's fee is many times the cost of a

set of plans out of a plan book, and the results are infinitely better—but this can be best appreciated only by a trained eye. Builders and house buyers are an example of the blind leading the blind, and those of us with trained vision are sickened by the results.

Builders are an arrogant lot and don't like to be told they don't know how to do their job. We must therefore educate the house buyer. And you are doing a great job of that. More house buyers should read your magazine. When I'm done with an issue, I take it with me to the dentist's or doctor's office and leave it on the table in the waiting room. What if all your readers did this?

*Richard Linderman, AIA,  
LEED AP, NCARB  
Chester, Pa.*

## redlines

The project credits for Carney Architects' New Fork Social Club Residence, on page 85 of the May 2007 issue, were incomplete. They also should have noted the following: **project size:** 3,611 square feet; **site size:** 10 acres; **construction cost:** Withheld. We regret the omission.

*Letters may be edited for clarity and length.*



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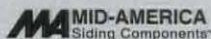
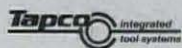
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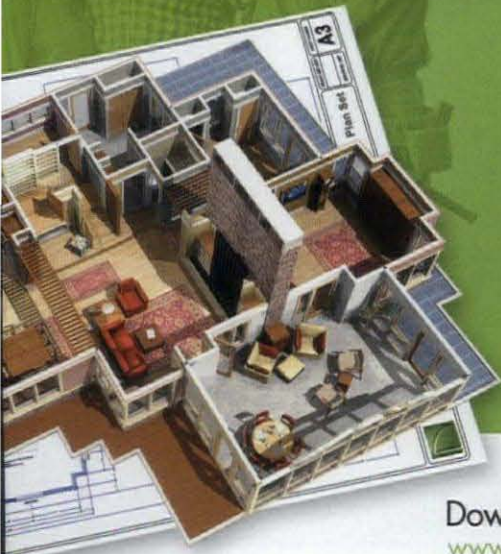
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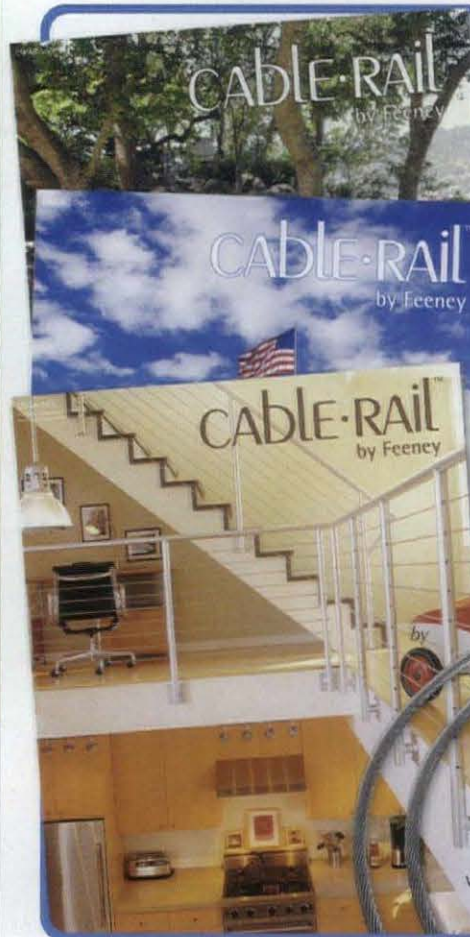
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# home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.

## urban flight

Broadway Court's pleats and folds look like wings, lifting it head and shoulders above the stucco boxes that characterize much of the affordable housing in downtown Santa Monica, Calif. Pugh Scarpa Kodama built simply and economically so it could "splurge" on a few arty exterior elements. According to principal-in-charge Lawrence Scarpa, AIA, the perforated metal sails, screens, and stairways accounted for less than \$300,000 of the project's \$8.6 million budget.

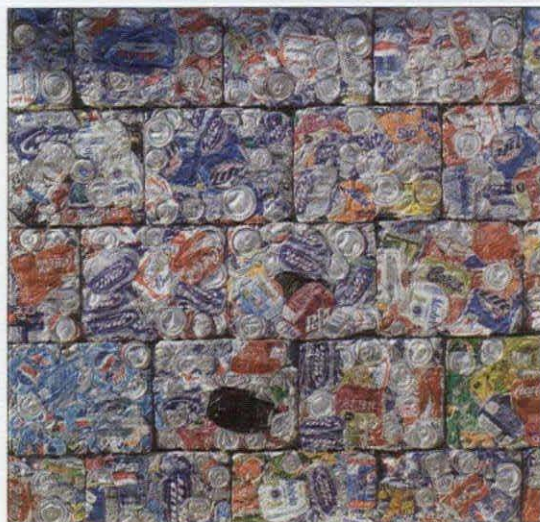
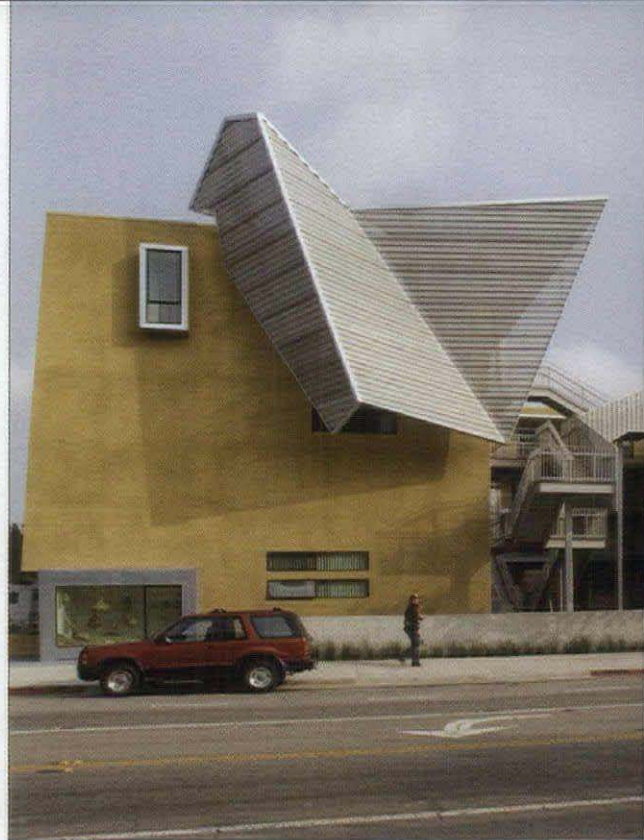
The inventive forms are as eye-pleasing as they are practical. The northwest-facing building is U-shaped to funnel prevailing breezes throughout the 41 two- and three-bedroom units. Metal cladding—like a see-through bug screen—on the main façade and west-facing walls deflects the sun's rays and the chaos of the busy street below. Meanwhile, the flying stairways and the east façade's asymmetrical

folds give the building visual

depth—"the thing these projects most often suffer without," Scarpa says.

As is their custom, the architects loaded the building with sustainable features—enough to exceed the state's energy code by 30 percent. Residents enjoy low utility bills, thanks to measures such as compact fluorescent lighting, double-pane windows, and dual-flush toilets. Material specs, like natural linoleum flooring and high-recycled-content carpet and insulation, are models of efficiency and good health.

All told, it's a building that saves resources, giving back to occupants who need them the most. —cheryl weber



Protruding and receding windows add visual depth on the east side. The building is chock-full of environmentally friendly materials, including accent cladding of custom-pressed blocks made from recycled cans (right and opposite).





Metal cladding on Broadway Court's main façade provides an animated sun and privacy screen. The 48,300-square-foot building offers low-income residents an additional 26,150 square feet of underground parking.



Photos: Marvin Rand

## global warmington

**V**antage of Palo Alto, Calif., is the largest solar-powered residential project ever built in the city. The 76-unit development was designed by Irvine, Calif.-based KTG Group in the spirit of Joseph Eichler's forward-thinking and forward-looking homes of the 1950s and '60s. "Many developments leave solar power as an option, but we've made it a standard feature on every home," says Stephanie Pruitt, marketing director for the project's builder, Warmington Homes California in Costa Mesa.

Each townhouse has a 2-kilowatt solar system, as well as 20 additional standard green features that save water, conserve energy, or contribute to indoor air quality—among them tankless water heaters; dual-flush toilets; formaldehyde-free fiberglass insulation; and low- or no-VOC paint, finishes, and MDF millwork. But the photovoltaic system "is the most significant of the green factors," Pruitt says. "It can run the entire unit and will help offset monthly utility costs."



Courtesy Warmington Homes California

Priced from the \$800,000s, the homes have five floor plans and range in size from approximately 1,200 square feet to 1,600 square feet. Despite the housing slowdown, 24 of the houses sold quickly after release, and Warmington isn't worried about its remaining inventory. Interest in energy-efficient homes, it believes, will only increase in the foreseeable future.—*nigel f. maynard*

## real simple

**W**hat is it about those architects in Minnesota? They're like apostles of an old wisdom most of us have forgotten. They have a fundamental understanding of what gives a house soul, character, and timeless appeal. Fortunately



for the rest of us, they're willing to share their knowledge of what makes domestic space intimate and enduring.

Sarah Nettleton, AIA, LEED AP, of Meyer, Scherer & Rockcastle in Minneapolis, is the latest emissary, and her message is simple. Really. *The Simple Home: The Luxury Of Enough* (The Taunton Press, \$40) details through case studies how houses can shed what's extraneous and, in the process, distill the essence of home.

What would it feel like to live in the quintessential, elemental vacation house every day, full time? Nettleton thinks it's not only possible, it's desirable—and deceptively simple to achieve.

—*s. claire conroy*



## calendar

### unbuilt architecture design awards program

entry deadline: june 25

This 16th annual design awards program from the Boston Society of Architects welcomes real, academic, and theoretical unbuilt projects of any type from practicing architects and design professionals, educators, and students. Projects already under construction or assured of construction are not eligible, but no other entry restrictions apply. Winners will be notified in September and honored in November. Visit [www.architects.org](http://www.architects.org) or e-mail [rfitzgerald@architects.org](mailto:rfitzgerald@architects.org) for details.



Courtesy Palm Springs Art Museum

### russel wright: living with good design

through september 2  
palm springs (calif.) art museum

Though Russel Wright died nearly 31 years ago, the designs he pioneered (blonde furniture, stainless steel flatware, and aluminum blinds among them) live on in many modern American homes—and

in this comprehensive exhibit. *Russel Wright: Living With Good Design* traces the Ohio native's early years, his exploration of new forms and materials, the new American lifestyle he created after World War II, his work in Asia in the 1950s and '60s, and the home and landscape he created at Manitoga in Garrison, N.Y. Shown: Wright's Water Pitchers, in production from 1939 to 1959. Call 760.325.7186 or visit [www.psmuseum.org](http://www.psmuseum.org) for more information.

### ourtopias – ideal cities and the roles of design in remaking urban space

june 14–16  
design exchange, toronto

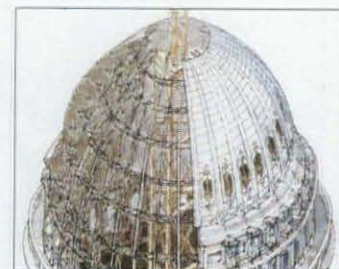


Organized by the Design Exchange, Canada's national design museum and research/education center, this interdisciplinary conference will examine the roles cities play in the economic, social, and cultural lives of societies. Sessions will be organized along seven tracks: mass media,

sustainability, transportation and movement, technology, infrastructure, policy and social responsibility, and design education. For details, call 416.216.2160, e-mail [conference@dx.org](mailto:conference@dx.org), or go to [www.dx.org/conference](http://www.dx.org/conference).

### david macaulay: the art of drawing architecture

june 23–january 21  
national building museum,  
washington, d.c.



Alan Sprecher, courtesy David Macaulay

David Macaulay's drawing style has been described as "visual archeology" because it peels back exterior façades and interior walls to reveal what they conceal. The architecture-trained artist and author is the subject of this eponymous exhibition, which includes original illustrations from his many books. Shown: U.S. Capitol Dome, unpeeled, from Macaulay's *Building Big* (Houghton Mifflin/Walter Lorraine Books, 2000). Call 202.272.2448 or visit [www.nbm.org](http://www.nbm.org) for exhibit details and related programs and activities.

### noah's ark at the skirball

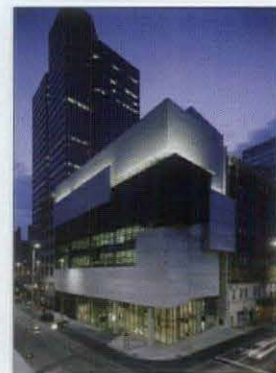
opening june 26  
skirball cultural center, los angeles

Inspired by the ancient flood story of Noah's Ark, this permanent installation is divided into three zones and themes: Storms (meeting challenges), Arks (finding shelter and community), and Rainbows (creating a more hopeful world). The galleries—designed by Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects with Moshe Safdie, FRAIC, FAIA—feature interactive exhibits and experiences that will rotate regularly. The ark houses animals handcrafted from repurposed, bass, and fir woods. For more information, call 310.440.4500 or go to [www.skirball.org](http://www.skirball.org).

### zaha hadid – architecture and design

june 29–november 25  
design museum, london

Two floors of galleries will be dedicated to the work of Zaha Hadid, Hon. AIA, an Iraq-born architect best known for such groundbreaking designs as the Lois & Richard Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati, shown here, and the Vitra Fire Station in Weil am Rhein, Germany. This exhibition is the United Kingdom's first full-scale show of Hadid's conceptual and built work. Visit [www.designmuseum.org](http://www.designmuseum.org) or call 44.870.833.9955 for additional details.



Roland Halbe

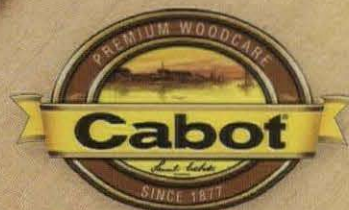
—marla misek





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# k + b studio

## kitchen: clean sweep

These homeowners wanted big remodeling bang on a moderate budget. Designer Kevin Alter suggested focusing their dollars on frequently used spaces such as the kitchen and master bath while choosing simple but effective upgrades (like new windows and fewer moldings) for other spaces. Alter kept construction costs to around \$113 per square foot and still gave his clients a high-end look. He says he intentionally spent time finding cost-effective alternatives because “it’s really important to me to provide architecture to real people.”

Alter’s big savings secret? Get the builder invested in the project. “We often bring contractors or craftsmen on early to work with their skills,” he explains. “Contractors come up with solutions that are less expensive but result in the same detail.”

True to his word, Alter selected “beautiful, yet affordable” cherry veneer (used throughout the house) and worked with cabinetmaker-cum-general contractor Joseph Zambarano to design easily fabricated flat-panel doors in sizes that required fewer cuts. The cabinets look expensive, though, with their seemingly continuous-grain pattern across their fronts. Grooves cut around each door eliminate the need

for hardware, resulting in another savings. Engineered quartz countertops in a peaceful blue-gray hue quiet the cherry’s lively grain. The countertop wraps around one end of the island and drops to the floor, adding interest but not big bucks.

Knocking down walls and integrating the entry foyer with the kitchen gave the owners more elbow room and an open relationship to other public areas. But it also raised concerns about how to keep things tidy. Alter responded with ample storage, spreading out elements a bit more than usual to reinforce an orderly appearance. “The owners like to cook but don’t mind taking that extra step from fridge to sink so another person has room to walk by,” he says. “Plus, lots of counter space lets someone sit and read the paper while someone else cooks.”

*project continued on page 24*



**designer:** Alterstudio, Austin, Texas

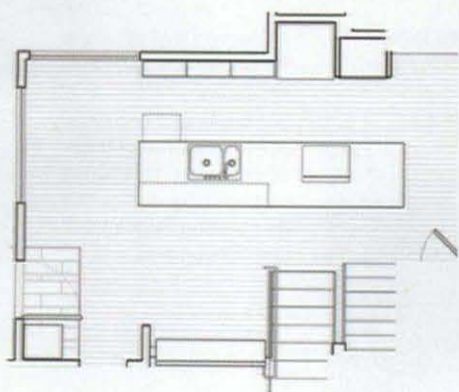
**general contractor:** Joseph Zambarano, Austin

**resources:** cooktop, dishwasher, and convection and steam ovens: Miele; countertops: U.S. Quartz Products (CaesarStone USA); faucets: KWC America (kitchen) and Dornbracht Americas (bath); refrigerator: KitchenAid; shower fixtures: Danze; sink: Blanco America; tile (bath): Lueders Limestone





Photos: Thomas McConnell



Glass rails, in lieu of old walls, liberate sight lines across the living room and through an enlarged window to the nearby Lake Austin inlet.





# k + b studio

## bath: clear choice

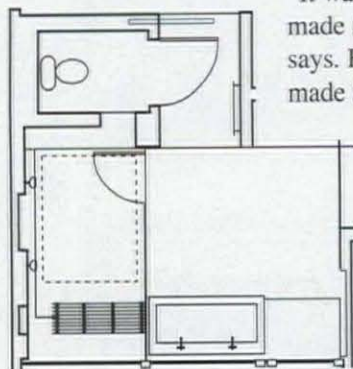
Like the kitchen, this master bath renovation looks like a million bucks but cost a fraction of that. A pared-down palette and tricks from tradesmen cut costs but not corners. It all started with the homeowner's request for a bigger window. Alter suggested replacing the entire wall with glass. A commercial storefront system with twin sliding-glass doors functions as one giant operable window ideal for capturing foliage-filled views and water-front breezes.

What better way to take advantage of that panoramic wall than to make the rest of the 130-square-foot room transparent? Thanks to the general contractor's experience as sculptor, woodworker, and furniture designer, putting together intricate pieces didn't break the bank.

"It was a matter of finding already-made things we could use," Alter says. For example, steel connectors made for building retail display cases were used to bolt the floating cherry vanity and ipe wood bench to the tempered-glass shower enclosure.

Limestone is usually pricey, but using a local variety and having the tiles cut by the construction crew instead of coming pre-milled

made it cost-effective. Alter often takes advantage of local resources for aesthetic as well as practical purposes. "Most of the expense in using stone," he says, "comes from shipping it." —*shelley d. hutchins*



Photos: Thomas McConnell



A mirrored wall opposite the shower doubles the appearance of the room's size while also concealing pipes and wires. A large skylight over the shower balances the quality of light spilling through the diaphanous wall.



# PEOPLE ARE TALKING



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*Michael A. Menn AIA, CGR, CAPS, Design Construction Concepts, Ltd.  
20 years in the industry, 12 years in attendance*

## AS VEGAS

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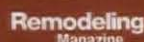
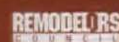
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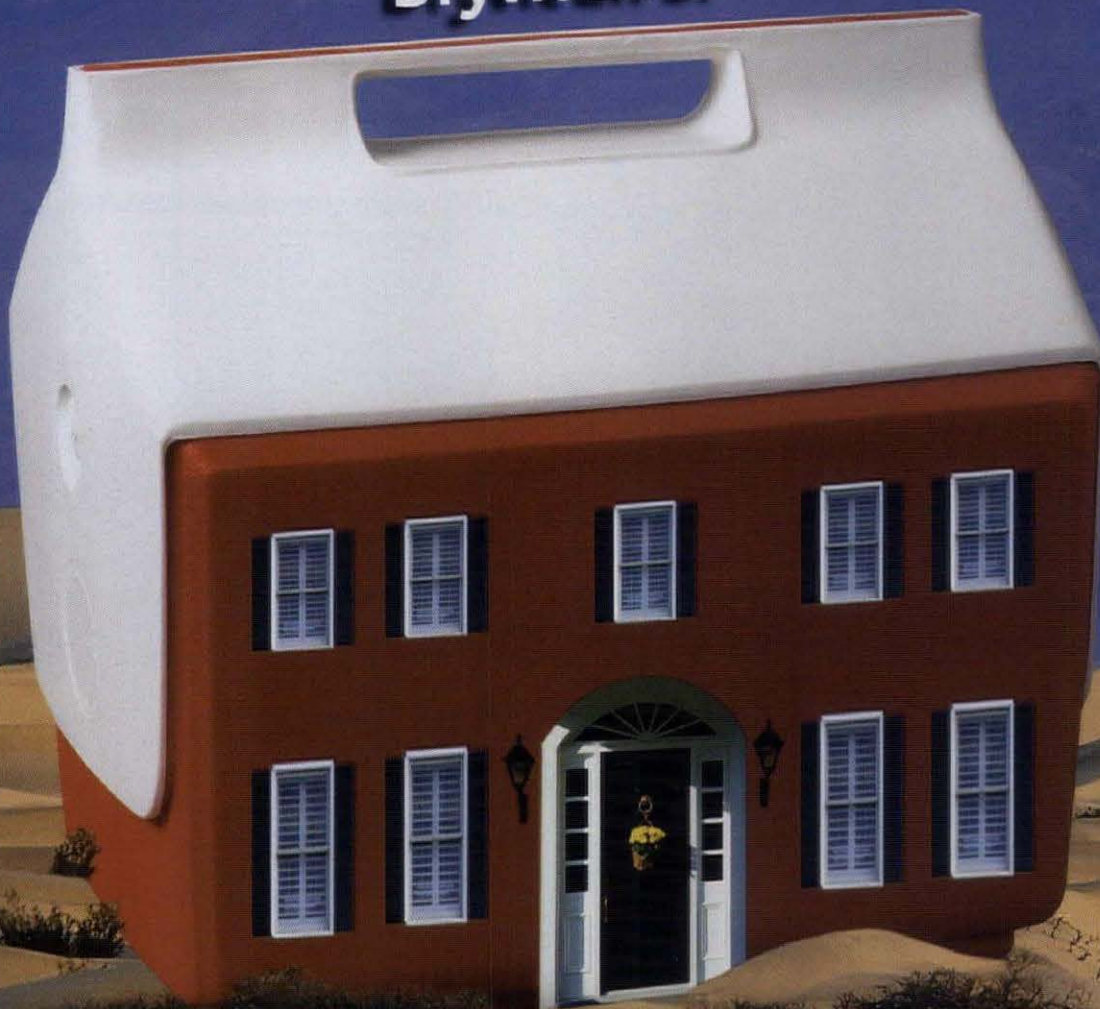
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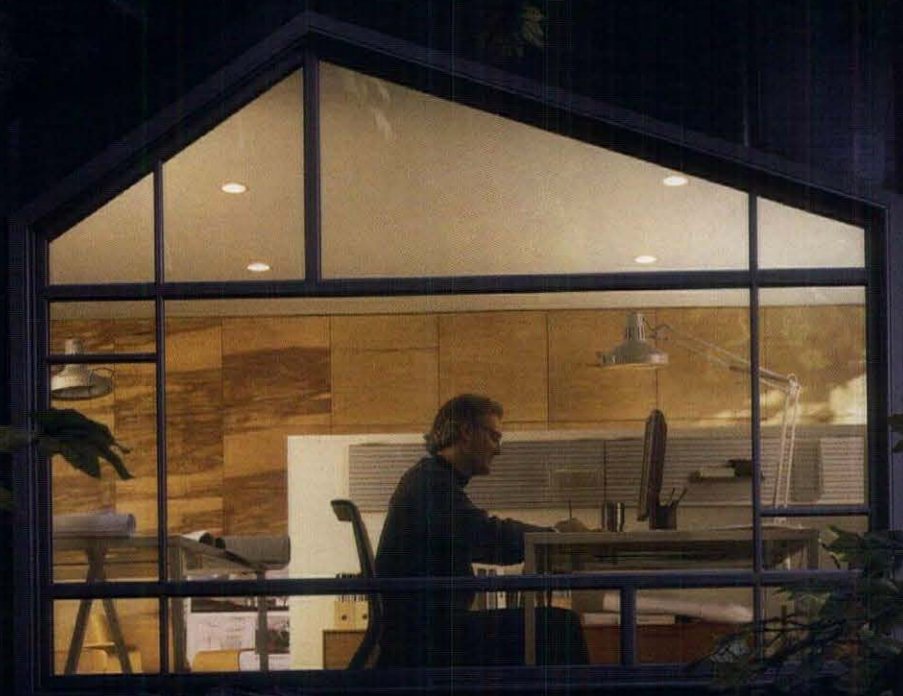
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# delivering the goods

architects must find a way to bring better design to more people.

by john gavin dwyer, aia

**W**e live in a design economy encompassing everything from the iPod to Ikea. Investment in, awareness of, and appreciation for design are at an all-time high. So why, according to Bryan Bell's *Good Deeds, Good Design* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2004), do only 2 percent of new home buyers work directly with an architect? How did this profession evolve into a mere luxury?

In the world of home building, every profession, trade, and specialist is commonly integrated into a form of financing, except one: the architect. As a result, everyone but the architect is popularly understood to be necessary to the building process, from the general contractor, plumber, electrician, and cabinetmaker to the mortgage broker, underwriter, appraiser, and real estate agent. How did this happen?

Quite simply, the architecture profession has failed to create a way to deliver design that's accessible to the other 98 percent. According to RSMeans cost data, the average residential architect charges about 10 percent of the construction cost for design. Standard

practices place the bulk of this payment before bidding. If bids come back over budget, the typical contract deflects any responsibility from the architect and gives the owner three options: Get more money, redesign (and pay more in design fees), or abandon the project.

So, if I hire an architect to design my \$300,000 house, I would have to shell out an additional \$30,000 up front without any guarantee that what's designed will meet my budget. If it doesn't, I either need to beg for more money or throw my \$30K in a recycling bin. How many people can afford to take that kind of risk? My guess is about 2 percent.

Whether we like it or not, the building industry has been left to figure out how to deliver design to the other 98 percent. And lending agents, forced to respond to the market, have to create financing options around the builders' solutions.

What they've developed as a delivery system is a beautiful dance of disciplines. Owners stroll into a model home on a Saturday, make their choices, and head to their lender with

plans and bids in tow. The lender ships it straight to the appraiser, then the underwriter. The loan is closed and construction begins. Often, this process can happen in less than a week, without a single dollar coming out of the owner's pocket. It's simple, easy, fast, and flawless—almost.

We are currently undergoing major global change—economically, environmentally, and culturally. We are at the brink of an affordable housing crisis. We're running out of oil, and January 2007 was the warmest month on record (worldwide). We're desperately in need of a better way of living: one we can afford, one that makes us fundamentally happier, and

one that helps the rest of the world. This is a design problem, and the one design profession perfectly poised to bring these disparate pieces into a mutually reinforcing whole is architecture. It is imperative, right now, that we develop a way to deliver design to the other 98 percent.

## integrated service

In our little Minneapolis office, called Shelter Architecture, we set out to deliver truly sustainable design to the underserved middle class. We tried everything: reducing our fees, limiting our services, streamlining our processes, outsourcing work, accepting payment by

*continued on page 30*



Courtesy Shelter Architecture

This Minneapolis house, designed by the author's firm, served as the catalyst for an innovative financing process. Energy-efficient systems and sustainable materials helped increase its appraised value.



credit card—even waiting until after the project was half built before getting paid. All were met with a relative degree of failure. It wasn't until we were graced with a mortgage broker as a client that we began to formulate a solution.

Dixon Diebold started Minneapolis-based Uptown Mortgage and quickly established a network of financiers who understood the value of sustainable design. "We established relationships with the right partners to ensure sustainability is a factor in how a home is appraised," he says. "In finance, it's all about the appraisal." When Diebold approached us to design him a LEED-certified home, we described our usual struggle. From now on, he said, "Just have your clients talk to us first." On the surface, this strategy seemed a little self-promotional. Underneath, it was genius.

What we developed was a simple way of moving

(one close for land acquisition, construction, and end mortgage), we're now able to know our clients' true project budget before we even start designing. The budget is no longer a fictional number the clients have come up with; rather, the financing that proves exactly what they can afford is already in place. Obviously, this assures we stay within the budget, but more importantly, we can conceive of the project as an investment. With hard numbers in front of us, we can evaluate paybacks for green building methods and assess design decisions based on the client's long-term financial goals.

For the client, the process is very simple. We have an initial conversation; ask some basic questions about their site, program, and design preferences; and put them in touch with Diebold or another good green lender. Together, the lender and client arrive at a

*"we're now able to know our clients' true project budget before we even start designing."*

financing so it precedes rather than follows the design process. "By using a bridge loan, homeowners can finance design fees while in transition from their existing home to their new home," Diebold explains. In combination with a "one-time close loan"

budget and set up the best way to finance it, and we start working with the client on the design.

This integrated process is also cheaper. When all aspects of home building are consolidated into one financial process, about 5 percent to 6 percent of the



Photos: Kurt Gough, Assoc. AIA

Shelter Architecture infuses its work with cost-effective green elements. One home (top) in Rochester, Minn., features local and recycled materials and passive heating and cooling strategies, while another in Chippewa Falls, Wis., draws on site-harvested stone, a reused existing foundation, and a compact, efficient floor plan.

total fee can be eliminated from closing costs. You also get better rates and lower monthly payments. Add to that the value of green design, and architectural fees have an immediate payback—even before construction begins.

The best part? Because the whole project is financed beforehand, it can be done with as much or as little out-of-pocket expense as our clients want. "All the homeowner needs is about 10 percent of the new project cost in equity," Diebold says. "That can be in the form of savings, equity in their current home, or other investments."

## real answers

With integrated service, we were still left with one key unanswered question: How do we help those who aren't sure what they can or should do? For this, we developed a focused service, turned it

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Of course, this is just the tip of the iceberg. To really start serving the other 98 percent, we need a movement. As a profession, we need to collaborate with each other and the rest of the building industry to develop better and more affordable ways of delivering design. Let's end the days of proprietary information and start sharing. *ra*

*John Gavin Dwyer, AIA, is a founder and principal of Shelter Architecture in Minneapolis. He also teaches at the University of Minnesota.*







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# field maneuvers

survival skills for your first forays in design/build.

by cheryl weber

**W**hen Richard Williams, AIA, designed his own house five years ago, he decided to forgo a general contractor and manage the fieldwork himself. He spent nights and early mornings coordinating the various trades before heading to his Washington, D.C., office, often sketching out construction details the day they were needed. Williams lived next door, and he remembers crawling around with a flashlight at night to see what had been accomplished during the day. "It was time-consuming," he says of wearing the GC hat for the yearlong duration. "But it was a good learning experience."

Architects sometimes slash construction costs on their own houses by cutting out the middleman. More rarely, they may agree to general-contract a client project to ensure tricky design or site nuances are handled correctly. Bill Austin, AIA, took on that challenge several years ago, when he conducted the daily construction work on a client's pool house, and he's currently GCing a second pool house. "Because of the tight tolerances and complexity of the ductwork, I still would have had to coordinate a lot of things," says Austin,



Hadley Hooper

principal of Colrain, Mass.-based Austin Design. "That extra step to just GC it wasn't very big."

As it happens, though, the step from architect to GC is bigger than many architects anticipate. The two-for-one arrangement may have worked for the master artisans of old, but today's firms typically aren't set up to support such divisions of time and identity. Dealing with on-site issues takes time away from

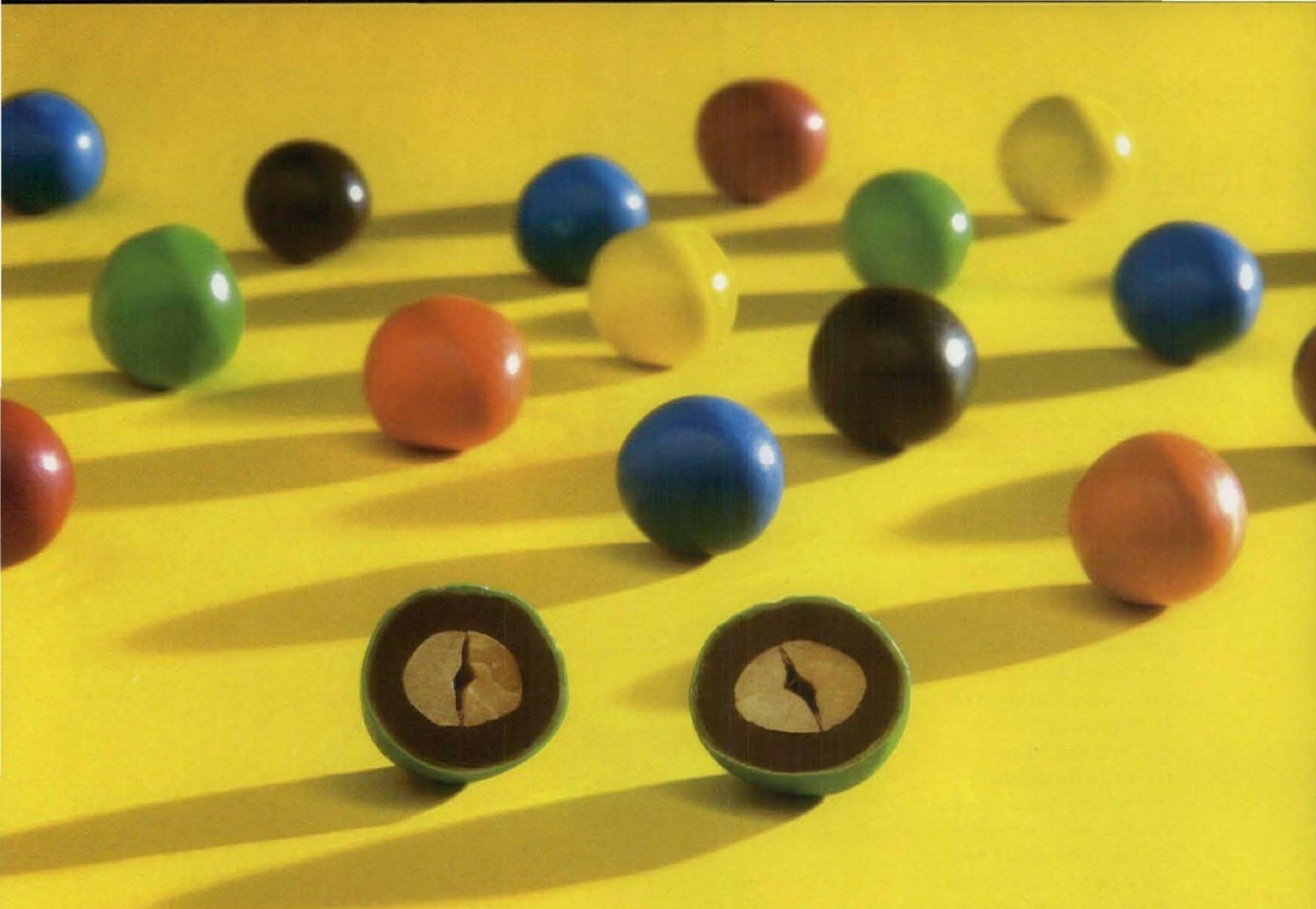
the real work of the office. Construction snafus cut into profits. And unlike general contractors or designer/builders, architects can't grab resources from another job-site in an emergency. How much to charge is another big question mark: While a firm's overhead costs remain virtually unchanged, the risks are higher, and few clients are willing to pay per hour.

Of course, there's another side to the ledger. A big bonus

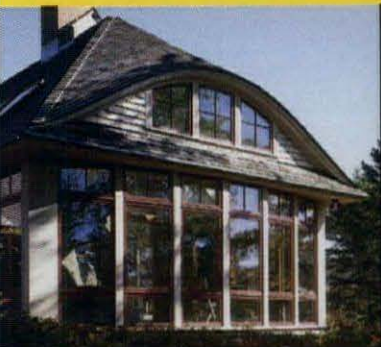
of GCing the occasional project is the thrilling sense of flexibility and control it engenders. You have the ability to solve construction puzzles speedily, the security of knowing that important details won't be overlooked, and the opportunity for hands-on experimentation. There's also the extra tier of knowledge gained from seeing design through the eyes of a builder. "Once you've

*continued on page 35*





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observed enough construction, you know enough of the sequence and can zero in on the critical stuff contractors need," Williams says. "If you get that level of information right, everything else falls into place."

## degrees of separation

The decision to GC a client project often results from unusual site conditions or construction specs with which local builders are unfamiliar. That was the case when Manhattan architect Stuart Narofsky, AIA, coordinated construction on a 6,500-square-foot waterfront house on suburban Long Island, N.Y. Because the house was made of concrete and steel and incorporated European rainscreen technology, he subbed out the shell to a commercial contractor. Once the first phase was completed, he brought in the other trades and assigned one of his eight employees to manage construction full time over the next year. Narofsky says the house turned out beautifully, eventually winning an award from the AIA Long Island Chapter, and adds that he relished the hands-on involvement it afforded. But now that he's been asked to do it for another client, he's weighing the pros and cons.

Topping his list of concerns is the frequency with which he was drawn into troubleshooting and advice-giving. "Because the job was managed in-house, I

was way too accessible," Narofsky admits. "I found myself dealing directly with the guy doing shower enclosures. I'm very detail-oriented, and I enjoyed the great control, but it was very time-demanding." And the odd juxtaposition of roles sometimes clouded jobsite objectivity. "My guy was building relationships with people in the field and softened up a little bit, so I had to be the heavy," he adds. "If we do it again, I would definitely lean toward hiring my own construction manager and field super and then set them up separately in a field office so it doesn't burden our office. It would be in the office but out of the office."

The fee structure, in turn, was off-kilter. Narofsky negotiated a fixed fee for his construction services, based on calculations for having a dedicated staff member on the job for 12 to 14 months. He figured that it's reasonable for the client to shell out slightly less to hire his firm than to hire a GC, since overhead doesn't need to be duplicated. But the fee, which worked out to be about 10 percent of construction costs, fell a little short.

"We didn't charge enough for what we did, honestly," Narofsky says. "It took longer than we anticipated. In the future I would ask for a percentage of net construction value and for a separate percentage to cover insurance—break it down more but keep it tied to a percentage. It's not like

we went bankrupt. But had we charged a normal contractor fee of 15 percent to 20 percent, it could have been a pretty nice profit."

Austin, who oversees a staff of seven, came to similar conclusions while GCing the pool houses. "We are charging 10 percent, because there's overlap between the architecture and construction, and we didn't feel we needed a full fee for both sides," Austin says. "However, we won't ever do that again."

In hindsight, he says, he would charge 15 percent to compensate for the separate roles of the architectural project manager and the construction manager. "We thought we could blend things together and it would be cheaper to GC, but the fact is, we're losing a little money," he says. "We need those two entities to work in the office as if they were from separate companies so they can deal with each other fully in their own roles and can argue out the standards. By keeping both people really sharp in taking care of their turf, we have fewer mistakes."

Austin's advice is to get the fee right, remembering that it's easy to underestimate the extra workload. Before taking the jobs, he also checked to be sure his liability policy covered him for construction (it did). Still, he felt more vulnerable, so he was a stickler for such documentation as digital photos, meeting minutes, and written change orders.

*continued on page 36*



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Would he do it again? Only in a rare circumstance, he says, adding that he agreed to the latest GC job partly as a hedge against the housing slump, which so far hasn't materialized in his market.

That GC fee is particularly attractive to enterprising young architects. The dual roles free them up to do fewer projects while teaching them to design efficiently. Case in point: Austin, Texas, intern Amy Dempsey, who, between client projects, has GC'ed three spec houses since finishing graduate school in 2001. "It's kind of completed my architecture education," she says. From her construction-side perch, she's learned how to create a concise set of working drawings and how much

things cost, as well as about cause and effect. "There are so many variables you don't think of," she says. "I can better foresee the problems: I spec'd this, and it didn't work well because it was too hard to cut. If you're the regular architect, you see it finished, and if it's not right, you never really know why."

### sub text

As an architect and part-time developer, Lloyd Russell, AIA, San Diego, is happy to also blur the design/build boundary on his real estate investments. Since launching his practice 10 years ago, he's GC'ed a handful of speculative multifamily projects, allowing him to keep a firm hand on the budget while indulging his penchant for

trying out new ideas. For example, while bidding out work on the 36-foot-high poured-concrete façade of the R3 Triangle Building, which won a 2007 RADA Merit award [see our coverage on page 75 of the May 2007 issue], he talked a sub into charging for a basic concrete wall and allowing Russell to experiment alongside of him. The resulting one-of-a-kind crenulations were made by randomly nailing plywood strips in varying thicknesses onto the form. "I only needed to stay two hours ahead of him," Russell says. "Another guy said, 'Oh, custom concrete,' and quoted me a price that was 50 percent higher. But it cost me just 5 percent more to get that trick pattern that people love."

For architects doing one-off projects, the bid process can be hit or miss. "Subcontractors size me up as an architect and figure I'll be high-maintenance or that I don't know what I'm doing," Russell says. "Or they might say, 'Oh, you'll be on the site the whole time, so this will be the easiest job I've ever done,' so I get even tighter bids." Subs also may feel less accountable to an architect than to a general contractor who will hire them for job after job. That's why Russell jokes that he tries to be the maître d' on projects. "I help them carry tools, make sure everything is going smoothly for them, remind them to get their invoices in, and pay them

*continued on page 38*

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promptly," he explains. "I try to be the ideal client, hoping they'll be the same for me."

Alexandria, Va., architect David Jameson, FAIA, professes admiration for general contractors after overseeing

several big-ticket spec remodels. Although he says he wouldn't want to tie up his design practice to do it for a client, the jobs went smoothly because he handpicked tradespeople he could trust.

And with his own investment at stake, he figured out how to coordinate his drawings with mechanical, plumbing, electrical, and framing conditions. "Nine out of 10 GCs will tell you that on projects

with architects, the drawings are sort of an idea of how something gets built," he says. By coordinating construction, "I think you become more detailed and in sync with the realities of building a project."

Carrie Meinberg Burke, AIA, took charge of construction on her family's Charlottesville, Va., house and agrees that the biggest eye-opener was the different way of communicating.

Viewed through a contractor's lens, much of the information on her drawings seemed useless, and as the job progressed, she began erasing things. "It became a joke that when the house was finished, the Mylar would be blank," Burke says. She began creating full-scale details in the field, drawing right on the wood rather than on an intermediate piece of paper. And rather than simply dimensioning her drawings, she saw the importance of identifying crystal-clear reference points from which everything else radiated—a practice that keeps errors from accumulating downstream.

"When architects do a site visit, it seems like they're just swooping in and don't have an understanding of what's going on," Burke says. "There's a removal that makes it difficult to really collaborate with people who are doing the building." In addition to working closely with subs, such as the roofing contractor who helped her refine the detailing on the copper siding system, Burke tried to build jobsite morale by supplying workers with

*continued on page 40*

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"Spudnuts" from a local doughnut shop. "We turned a dried-out Spudnut into a mascot that we nailed to the wall," she says. "We only had trouble getting the dry-wall trade to show up."

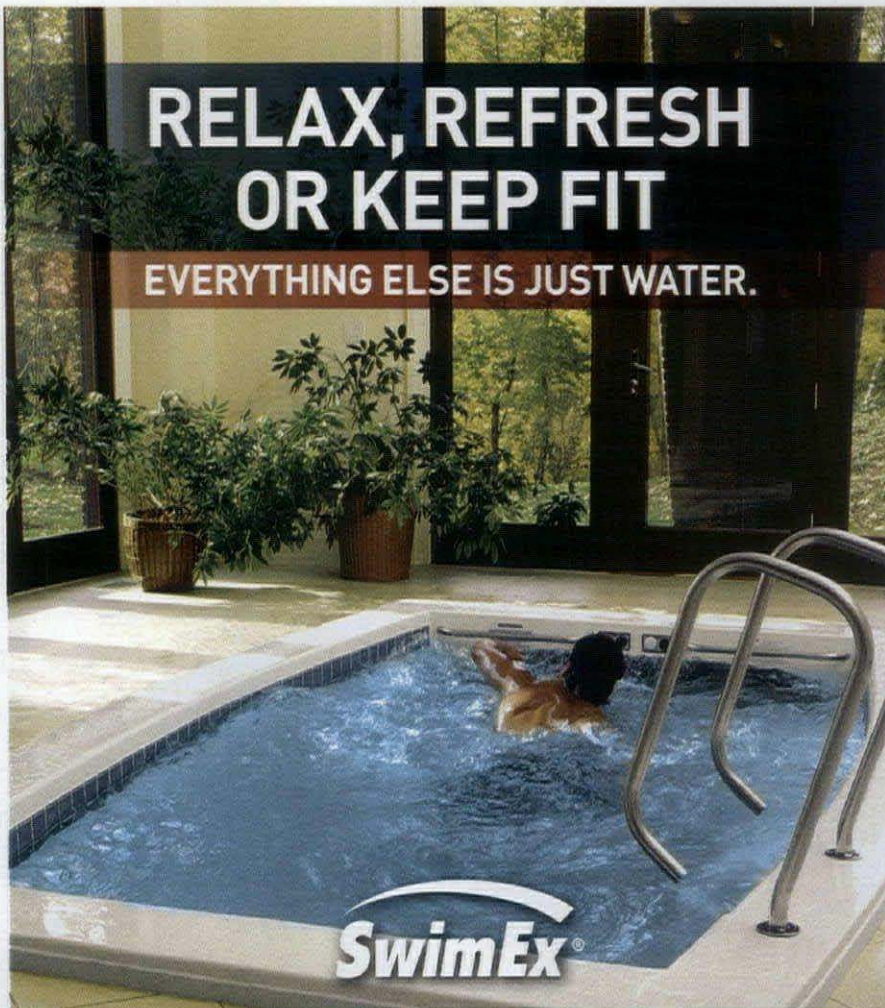
**architects without borders**  
Ultimately, these architects had to ask themselves, Is design/build a better way to work? While the experience was appealing in its direct-

ness and intimacy, those interviewed for this story said no, not for them. Their temporary roles raised larger issues too. For Russell, serving as owner, contractor, and architect meant decisions

often came down to ethics. "You want to waterproof the roof, but how much waterproofing is enough?" he asks. "We always joke that you can't make the perfect building. But if you're all those entities, you always know what you did; your actions are embedded in your conscience."

Williams' stint as a GC inspired him to let go of unhealthy—and potentially unprofitable—control instincts. Although architects typically do some building on projects, when things left to the GC wouldn't turn out as well, it's easy to lose that balance. Williams calls it the conservation of momentum—not doing more than you have to do to achieve 90 percent of the results. "I worry about that sometimes," he says. "You can lull yourself into thinking you're absolutely critical to the building. It's still a fluid boundary line, and every architect approaches it differently. I keep reminding myself not to do the GC job in terms of paperwork and information routing."

As a practice grows, Williams believes architects have to dispense what they do best, judiciously and equally, to get consistent results. "That's one of the lessons I take away from it," he concludes. "Are we being vigilant about doing our role professionally within the boundaries that are normative to the profession, or are we sort of being a GC on every single project?" **ra**



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lori ryker and brett w. nave  
merge practice and education  
under montana's endless sky.

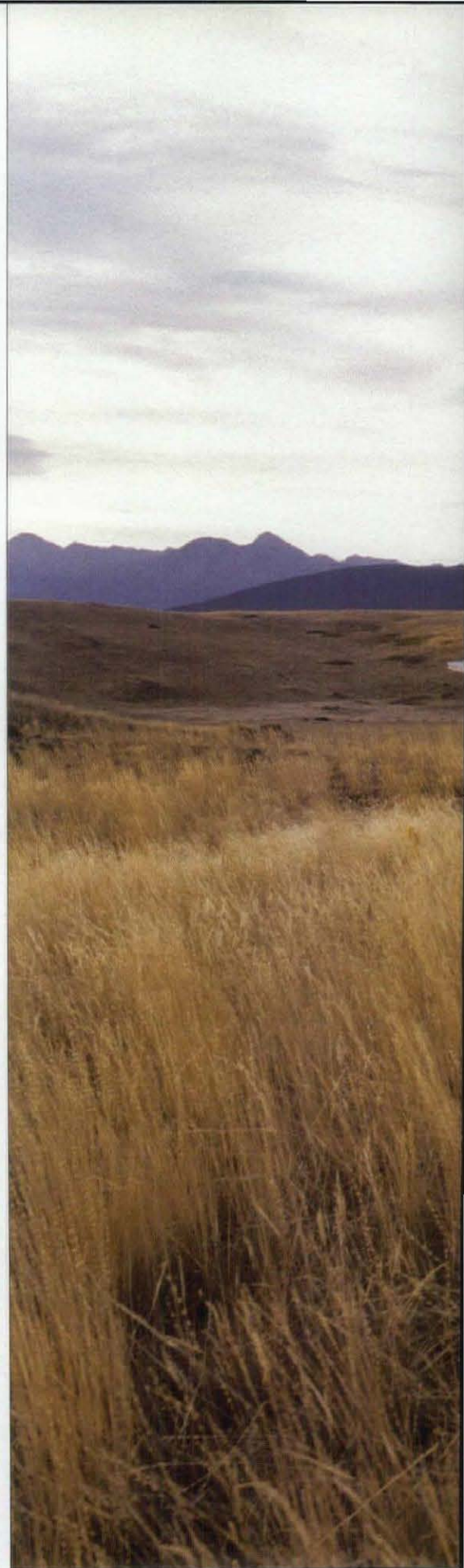
# *in the* middle *of* nowhere

by meghan drueding

Ryker and Nave use the landscape as a starting point for their intensely site-specific work. The angled roof planes of their own house (opposite) resemble the peaks of the nearby Absaroka Mountains.

Alongside the unpaved road to Lori Ryker and Brett W. Nave's home and studio, alpacas and horses nibble placidly at the surrounding grassland. Dusty pickup trucks drive well under the posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. The Livingston, Mont., compound is so remote, its exact street address doesn't show up on MapQuest.

Ryker and Nave have always sought out the undiscovered place. They hail from small towns in Texas and Alabama, respectively. Nave graduated from Auburn University in 1994 and worked for Sam Mockbee, through whom he met Ryker. She'd just gotten her master's degree from Harvard and was frustrated by the architecture community's focus on the East and West Coasts. "Nobody was paying attention to the people in the middle," she says. But then Princeton Architectural Press accepted her proposal to write a monograph on Mockbee/Coker Architects, and the famously charismatic







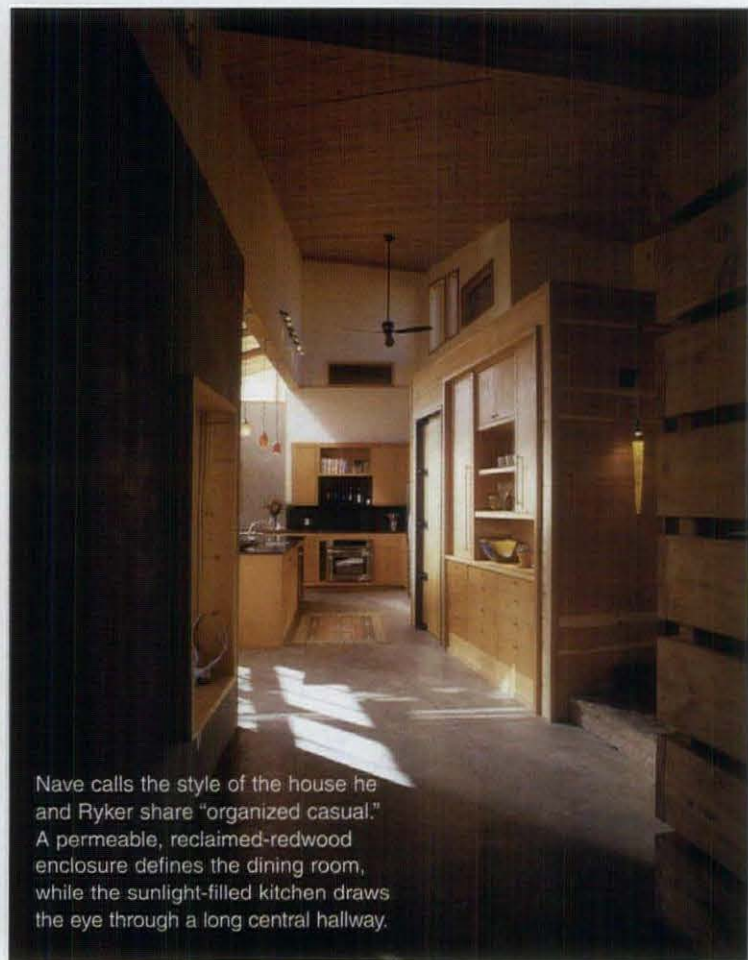
Audrey Hall Photography



# *in the middle of nowhere*

“you can do something  
you think is right and  
not necessarily what  
you’ve been taught.”

—brett w. nave



Nave calls the style of the house he and Ryker share “organized casual.” A permeable, reclaimed-redwood enclosure defines the dining room, while the sunlight-filled kitchen draws the eye through a long central hallway.

Photos: Audrey Hall Photography



Mockbee invited her down to Auburn, Ala., to learn more about his and Coleman Coker's work in the rural South. "Doing the book gave me faith that you could be in the middle of nowhere and create great architecture," Ryker says. From Mockbee and Coker, Nave adds, "we learned that you can do something you think is right and not necessarily what you've been taught."

Attracted by Montana's sweeping natural landscape, the couple, who were married in 1996, knew they wanted to settle there. But first they left Alabama for Portland, Ore., where Nave landed a job working for Brad Cloepfil, AIA, at Allied Works Architecture—another firm practicing outside the mainstream of American architecture at the time. After Portland came a move to Texas so Ryker could work toward her Ph.D. in architecture at Texas A&M, her undergraduate alma mater. In 1998, they fulfilled their original plan. Ryker got a job teaching at Montana State University in Bozeman, while Nave worked for a nearby firm.

## learning by doing

Ryker's Ph.D. studies focused on the complex emotional and intellectual connection between creativity and the natural environment. As a teacher, she decided the best way for students to understand this relationship was to embark on an immersive design/build course in the wilds of southern Montana. She created a for-credit program called the Remote Studio, in which a group of students designs and builds a public structure over a period of several weeks. Led by Ryker, they live near the site, staying in loaned housing and eating communal meals. The students read

assigned texts and engage in campfire discussions on ecology, art, and philosophy. "The primary goal is to give the students a hands-on experience of the backcountry and for them to become more invested in it," she says. Though the students receive course credits at MSU, the program is actually run through the Artemis Institute, an independent nonprofit set up by Ryker.

Many Remote Studio alums go on to work for Ryker/Nave Design, the firm the couple started in 2000. They currently employ a staff of three, as well as a moral-support team of two dogs, two cats, and a duo of ducks. The low-slung, organic-modern office—designed and built by the firm in 2005—is attached to a solar panel-topped workshop for fabricating furniture, cabinetry, and other custom items. "Our projects don't have many off-the-shelf objects," Nave says. At one point the firm built all its own designs, under his direction. "We started as design/build because build takes longer, so it helped support us at first," he explains. "Also, we had a hunch that it was the only way to really explore sustainable building." Since then they've found a few local builders whose craftsmanship meets their standards, so they've phased out the "build" portion of their practice.

But Nave was right: their tenure as general contractors did help them in their quest for sustainability, a cornerstone of the practice. "We learned how to create a deviation or an efficiency—not necessarily for economy, but to save energy," Ryker says. A recent Shield River Valley, Mont., house included straw bale walls, at the client's request. Standard straw bale construction isn't ideal for Montana's weather and seismic

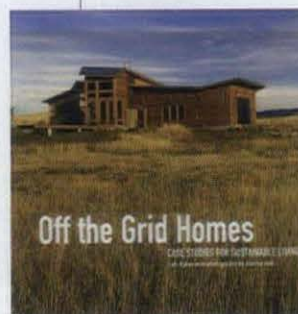
## reading matters

In addition to her monograph on Mockbee/Coker Architects, Lori Ryker has written two books on sustainable design. *Off The Grid* (Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2005) presented building strategies for reducing

dependence on conventional energy systems. This spring its sequel, *Off the Grid Homes* (Gibbs Smith, Publisher, 2007), hit stores.

The new book provides a more in-depth, hands-on look at resource-conserving tech-

nologies, including photovoltaics, geothermal heating, rainwater collection, solar hot water, and wind turbines. Ryker explains these systems through six case studies of homes designed by Ryker/Nave; David Hertz, AIA; Arkin Tilt Architects; and others. Photos, floor plans, and handy illustrations complement her clear prose, and a list of builders, technicians, and manufacturers rounds out the usual project credits. —m.d.



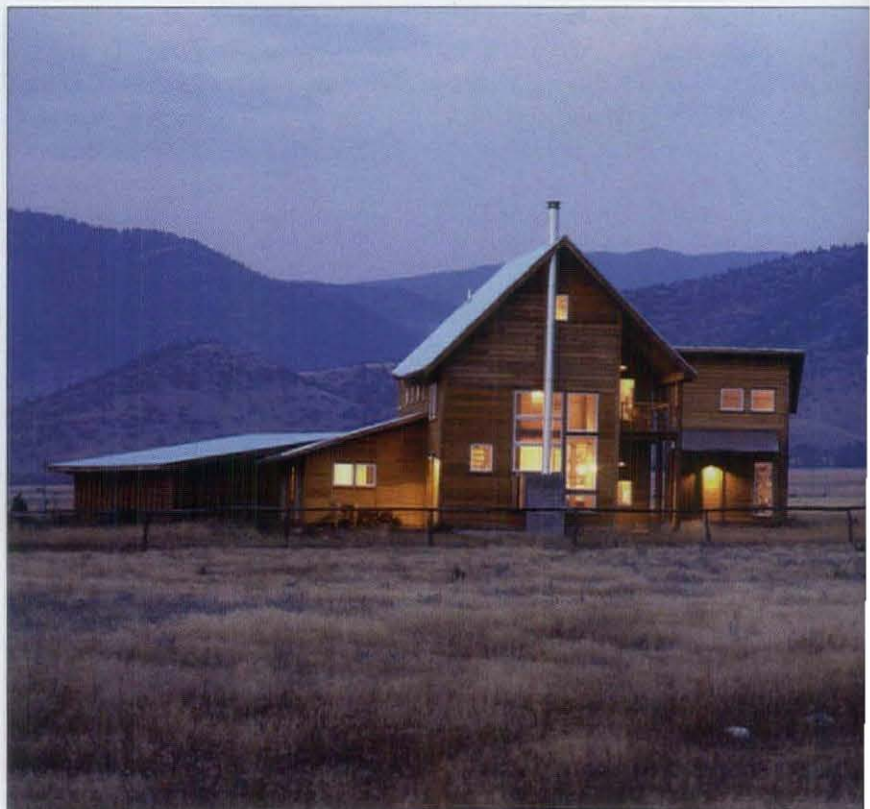


*in the  
middle of  
nowhere*



Photos (above and top): Paul Warchol Photography

From a distance, the Hall Residence and Studio in Paradise Valley, Mont., reads as a grouping of smaller out-buildings. The house reflects Ryker and Nave's penchant for mixing refined surfaces, like smooth plaster walls, with rougher ones, like exposed posts and beams.



Audrey Hall Photography



*“you can design  
sustainably and it  
does fit in a budget.”*

*—lori ryker*

conditions, so Nave and the home's builders devised a hybrid system of straw bale insulation and post-and-beam structure. At an under-construction Wyoming house with two rammed-earth walls, he and general contractor Mike Cantalupo experimented with different percentages of water, Portland cement, and earth to find the right mix for the climate.

### sustaining notion

Ryker and Nave's own house, also built by the firm and finished in 2005, serves as a laboratory for environmental concepts. It sits just a few steps from the entry to their office, eliminating the need for a gas-guzzling commute. Like their other work, the house is oriented for optimum solar gain. A rooftop rain collector harvests water to reuse for landscape irrigation. Reclaimed materials, such as massaranduba kitchen counters made from leftover floorboards, fill the 2,300-square-foot building. Radiant heat supplements the passive solar system, and nontoxic Icynene insulation keeps the interiors toasty during harsh winters.

An appraiser recently told the couple their energy-efficient heating and insulation systems added monetary value to the home. That was exactly what they hoped to hear. “There's a cultural trend lately that's assigning value to sustainability,” Nave says. “I think the change in the client mindset is starting to make a difference.” Cost-saving techniques, such as thickening some of the walls and covering them with grout for a poured-concrete look, helped limit the home's construction cost to \$205 per square foot (including an assumed contractor fee). While certainly not cheap, that's a pretty fair price for a completely

custom home. “You can design sustainably and it *does* fit in a budget,” Ryker says. Still, she and Nave do deem certain areas worth splurging on: They used long-lasting plaster instead of fragile drywall, for example, and they didn't skimp on their landscaping.

The two feel lukewarm about LEED's points-based green building rating system. “We both have issues with the quantitative approach,” Nave says. Still, he adds, “If we were doing a planned community, we would try it.” Their own intuitive, place-based approach to sustainability has many fans. Ryker's speech at this year's Structures for Inclusion conference in Charlotte, N.C., was rated by attendees as one of the most popular lectures on the program, according to conference organizer Bryan Bell, founder and executive director of the nonprofit Design Corps. “She's interested in the emotional side ... in getting in touch with nature,” he says.

Ryker and Nave also believe sustainable design extends to supporting local businesses as much as possible. Until about three years ago, they had trouble finding sources for environmental building products in Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, and the Dakotas, but a nationwide surge of interest in green building has made that task easier.

Every architectural choice Ryker and Nave make is a considered response to the spectacular, unspoiled environment in which they live. That environment responds back to them, shaping their lifestyles and points of view. “You are naïve to think you're at the top of the food chain when you're living here. We have bears and rattlesnakes,” Ryker explains. “It really teaches you to recognize you're part of the place.” **ra**



Renderings: Courtesy Ryker/Nave Design

The dynamic, faceted walls inside this on-the-boards commercial project in downtown Livingston, Mont., showcase the firm's sculptural approach to space.



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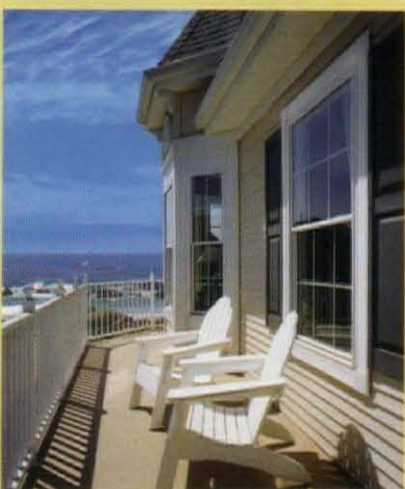
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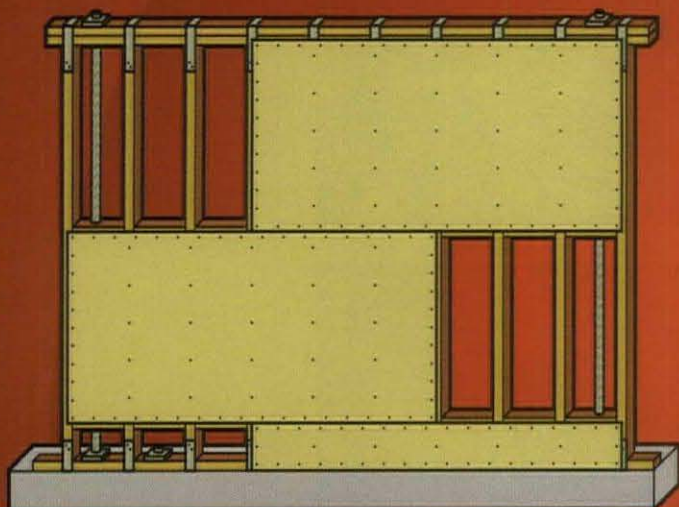
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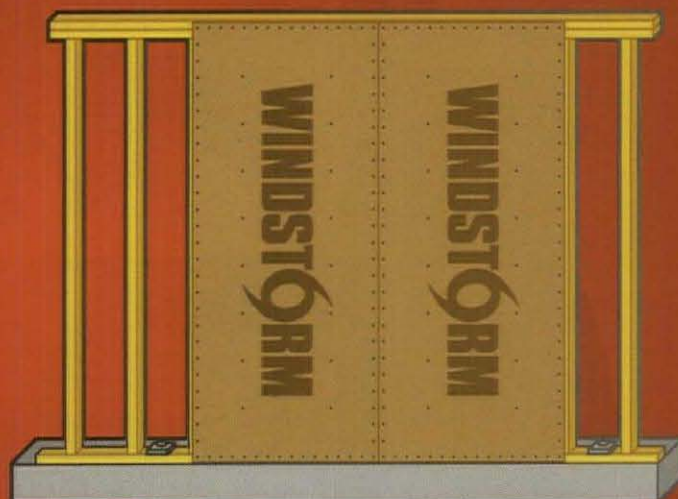


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# elements of value

## *b*risky business

Buying an empty lot in an iffy urban neighborhood with the hope it'll transition upward is a risk. Acting as general contractor for your new house when you've never built, designed, or even owned a home is also perilous. Making these plans contingent on getting a setback variance means putting it all on the desk of a bureaucrat and wishing for a miracle. For Jill Salter, a recent architecture graduate, and her artist husband, these gambles were

their best bet for owning an affordable, yet beautiful home. "Simplicity in form, cost, and construction was our mantra" for navigating the tricky terrain, she says.

First, Salter met with local Raleigh, N.C., city planners. "We were told there was a 25-foot setback requirement for our lot, but it seemed out of character with the neighborhood," she says. Most of the neighboring houses, built before the roads were paved, hug the streets' edges. Salter won her variance by measuring setbacks, photographing those nearby houses, and then submitting those photos with a set of permit drawings.

The variance allows Salter's L-shaped house to align both streets along its corner lot. Placing the garage/studio at a perpendicular angle to the long bar of the house generated a three-sided courtyard and an unhindered indoor-outdoor flow. Salter and her husband favor

a contemporary aesthetic, but incorporating traditional forms made approval from city planners easier and price quotes from subcontractors more reasonable.

Ultimately, finding reliable subs wasn't a problem, but serving as general contractors meant learning hard lessons. For example, the couple discovered too late that their lot was too small to properly stage the entire lumber order, so they ended up moving

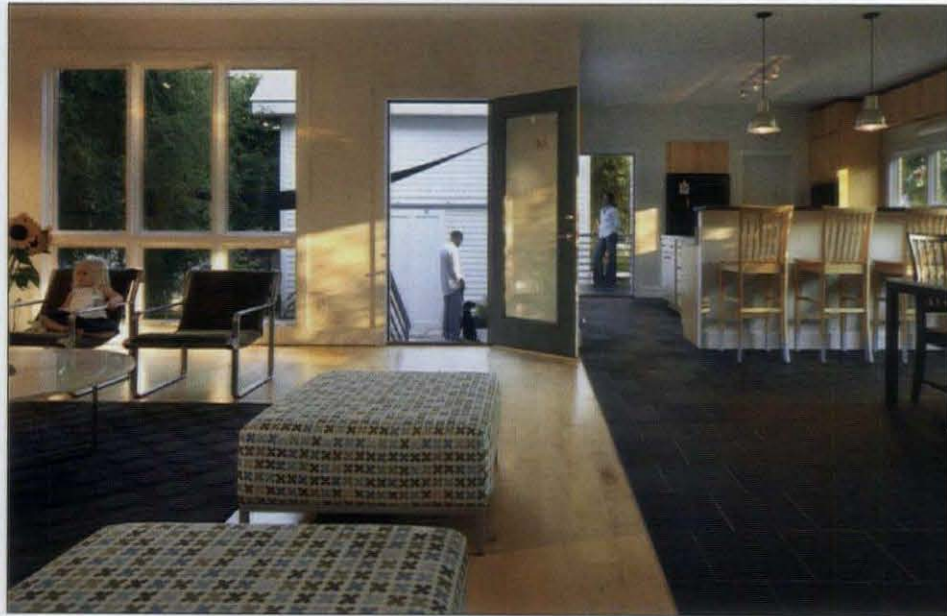
*high design  
doesn't demand  
a hefty budget.*







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



The Salters bought one shade of white paint in bulk and used it both inside and outside the house, covering everything from the ceilings to the porch railing.

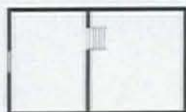
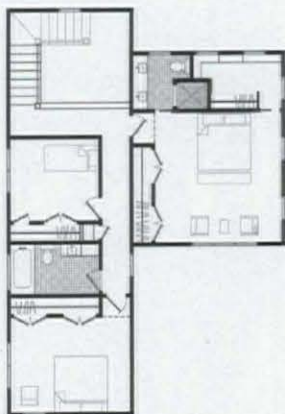


# elements of value

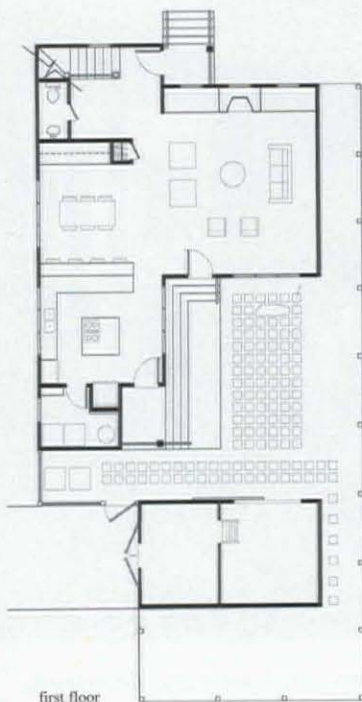
huge piles of it as needed. In fact, buying anything required meticulous planning, because the bank's construction loan reimbursed expenses only after segments were built. "We ordered materials directly from suppliers and charged everything so we could get frequent-flier miles and have a month to pay," Salter explains.

Products from big-box stores—stock cabinetry, for example—proved to be among the most cost-effective solutions. Not just relegated to the kitchen, off-the-shelf cabinets provide extra storage throughout the house and serve as room dividers. The couples' creative backgrounds also helped them look at items in new ways: more than one light fixture in their house was stripped of its plug-in cord and hardwired in place.

But not every choice was about cutting back. Salter wasn't stingy with important, defining materials. She installed black slate tiles for the entry, kitchen, and dining area floors and ¾-inch maple flooring in the living area. And pricey Galvalume roofing earned its keep with its heat reflectivity and 40-year warranty. Stainless steel countertops in the kitchen were a planned splurge also chosen for their reflective quality. "We wanted materials in their natural state that didn't have to be heavily processed," Salter says, "so we picked rich but not uncommon ones." —*s.d.h.*



second floor



first floor

## project:

Salter Residence, Raleigh, N.C.

## designer:

Jill Salter

## general contractors:

Jill and Michael Salter

## structural engineers:

Willy E. Stewart, PE, Stewart Engineering, Raleigh, and Jonathan Allgaier, AIA, PE, Mendenhall Smith, Frederick, Md.

## project size:

2,200 square feet (house); 350 square feet (studio)

## site size:

0.09 acre

## construction cost:

\$90 to \$100 per square foot

## photography:

JWestProductions.com







*"simplicity in form, cost,  
and construction was our  
mantra." —jill salter*

#### **delivering value**

*Invest your own labor.*

*Simplify forms for ease of construction.*

*Celebrate natural finishes.*

*Orient for daylighting to save on fixtures.*

*Design for stock cabinets.*

#### **budget-minders**

##### **Corian countertops**

*"The dark charcoal background with yellow and sage particles reminds me of terrazzo. It really ties together the maple and slate flooring."*

DuPont, 800.906.7765;  
[www.corian.com](http://www.corian.com).

##### **Vermont natural black slate flooring**

*"The dark slate tiles were used to reinforce the long, rectangular volume of the house."*

Hilltop Slate, 518.642.2270;  
[www.hilltopslate.com](http://www.hilltopslate.com).

##### **Kolbe & Kolbe wood windows**

*"The windows have solid wood construction and come with great features at an affordable price. We combined a variety of standard sizes to create a 10-foot-by-10-foot glass wall."*  
Kolbe & Kolbe Millwork Co.,  
800.955.8177; [www.kolbe-kolbe.com](http://www.kolbe-kolbe.com).

##### **White subway tile on bathroom walls and white octagonal floor tiles**

*"A timeless, classic finish."*  
Triangle Tile & Stone of NC,  
919.859.5860; [www.triangle-tile.com](http://www.triangle-tile.com).

##### **3/4-inch solid maple flooring**

*"A gorgeous blonde wood, which richly contrasts with the slate material."*  
Union Church Millworks,  
540.862.0767; [www.millwork2002.com](http://www.millwork2002.com).

The courtyard is the focal point of the house. Made possible by a setback variance for the corner lot, it creates private outdoor space in a tight urban setting.



## encore effort

When Scott Rappe, AIA, met with the family for this weekend home, one member had a simple request: "I want you to design it, not draw it." The family member happened to be John Holabird Jr., FAIA, grandson of the founder of Holabird & Root and a former principal of the prestigious Chicago firm. Holabird knows a thing or two about design, of course, so his directive was succinct but clear. "He had no parameters," says Rappe, a principal of

Chicago-based Kuklinski+Rappe Architects. "It was wide open. It's an opportunity that doesn't come along every day."

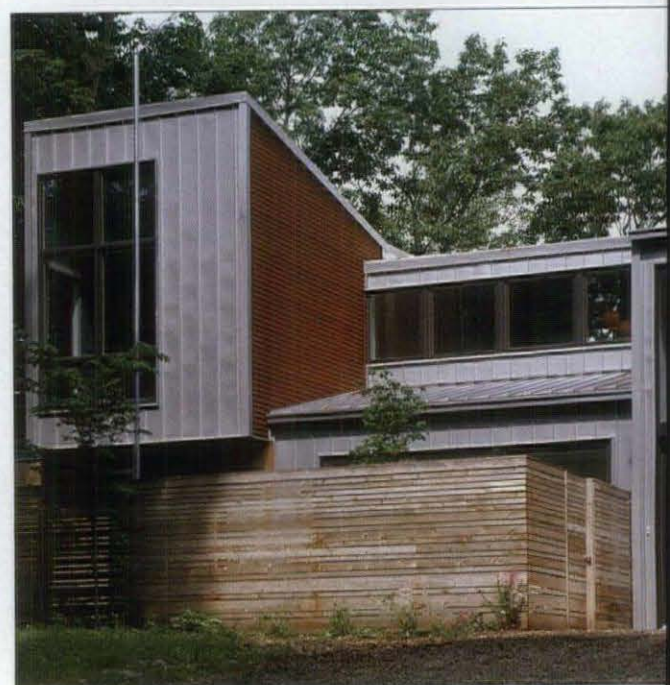
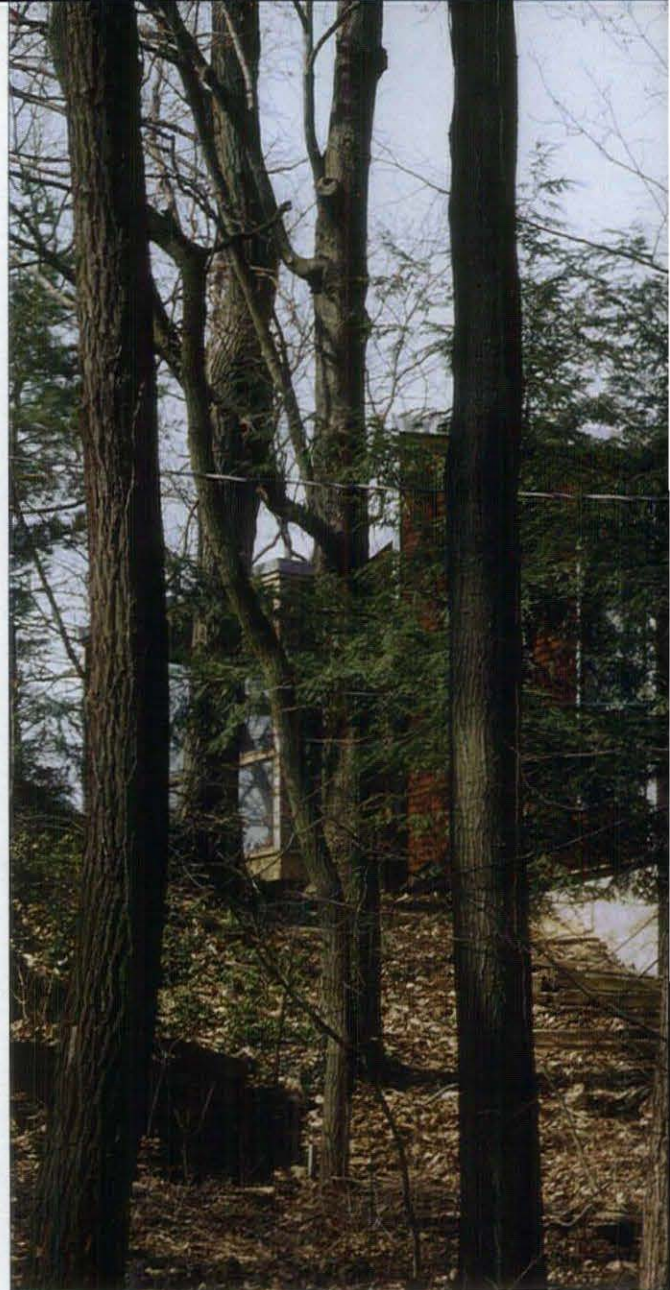
The opportunity for Rappe arose out of misfortune—a Thanksgiving Day fire burned the 1970s-era vacation home Holabird built 30 years prior. And Holabird had no interest in going through the design and construction process again. "He didn't want any part of building the house, so someone recommended me," Rappe recalls.

Rappe says Holabird and his two daughters were inclined to spend as little as possible to rebuild the house, though no specific conversation expressly stated it. "I don't think we talked about a [price per square foot], but it was implied," he explains. "People usually don't want to spend a lot of money on a weekend home."

But Rappe had extensive structural issues to address before he could even think about construction costs. Because he was reusing the existing

foundation, he had to make modifications to accept the additional living space the clients wanted. He succeeded in underpinning the former crawl spaces and excavated them further to create a new on-grade, one-level suite for Holabird and his wife.

The family wanted a house each member could use without disturbing the others, so in addition to the ground-floor suite, Rappe designed two additional second-floor suites flanking a double-height common space. The interiors offer a contemporary take on the traditional weekend home, with stylish but budget-







Scott Rappe excavated a dune to insert a first-floor living space within the existing foundation wall and placed the home's second level on the dune's crest (above). The sides of the house are clad in weathered Cor-Ten to discourage nosy neighbors; the portion that faces the road wears silver standing-seam metal.

*"people usually don't want to spend a lot of money on a weekend home."*

*—scott rappe, aia*



# elements of value

conscious touches, such as open shelving, laminate countertops, natural-finish MDF cabinetry, and bamboo flooring.

Rappe used the house's rustic southwest Michigan location to guide his exterior material choices. "I wanted to express the rusticity, and I wanted it to look different from a primary residence," he says. And again, the budget was a concern. Straight-forward elements such as industrial railings and cargo netting, standing-seam metal, and Cor-Ten steel did the trick.

Rappe completed the project for about \$155 per square foot without significant corner-cutting. "It's pretty typical for us," he says. "We always work out ways to get more value for our clients."  
—n.f.m.

**project:**

Holabird Weekend Home, Harbert, Mich.

**architect:**

Kuklinski+Rappe Architects, Chicago

**general contractor:**

Jack Lane Construction, New Buffalo, Mich.

**project size:**

3,150 square feet

**site size:**

0.75 acre

**construction cost:**

\$155 per square foot

**photography:**

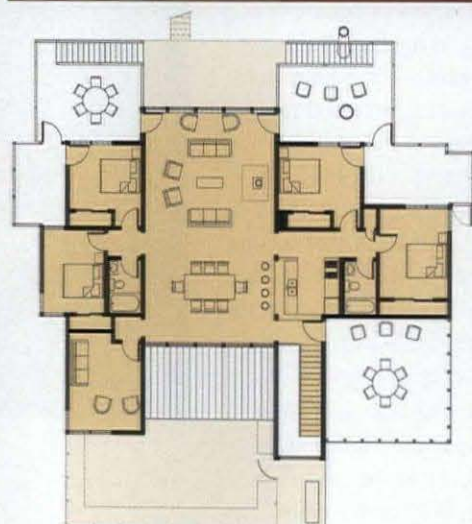
Doug Snower, Doug Snower Photography



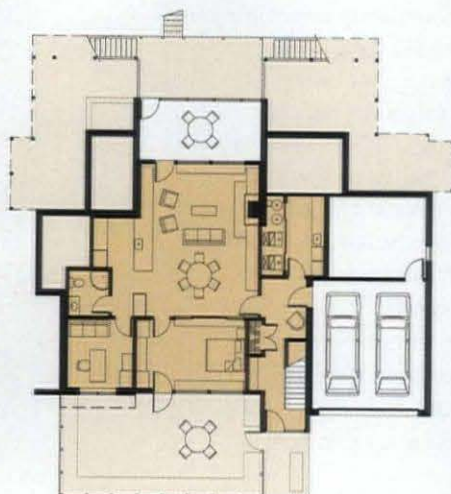
*"i wanted to express the rusticity, and i wanted it to look different from a primary residence."*







second floor



first floor

The architect balanced the budget by spending money on high-visibility items—the ash-veneered MDF paneling and the woodburning stove in the family room, for example—and offsetting those expenses with laminate countertops and other discount products from Ikea.

## delivering value

*Design modestly and flexibly to allow future change. Challenge clients on extraneous spaces.*

*Make schematics clear. The less contractors see, the more they charge.*

*Tightly integrate the building. A simple structure is easy to build.*

*Create a hierarchy of finishes. Spend the money where you get the most value.*

*Let the house be what it is. If the roof is pitched, don't add wall-board to make the ceiling flat.*

## budget-minders

### Standing-seam metal roofing and siding

*"Attractive, durable, versatile. It's fantastic stuff."*

Corrugated Metals, 800.621.5617; [www.corrugated-metals.com](http://www.corrugated-metals.com). Petersen Aluminum Corp., 800.722.2523; [www.pac-clad.com](http://www.pac-clad.com).

### Medium-density fiberboard

*"I love the natural wood color. It's easy to machine and can be used for cabinets or wall panels in living areas."*

Hylan Design, 312.243.7341; [www.hylan.com](http://www.hylan.com).

### Ikea

*"Ikea has really great stuff—lighting, sinks, faucets, vanities."*  
Ikea, 800.434.4532; [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com).

### Marvin windows

*"Great products. They aren't the cheapest out there, but they're the best-looking and most reliable."*

Marvin Windows and Doors, 800.346.3363; [www.marvin.com](http://www.marvin.com).

### Speed-Rail industrial fittings

*"They're easy to assemble and very low-maintenance. I used Speed-Rail with cargo netting for railings on the deck."*

McMaster-Carr Supply Co., 630.833.0300; [www.mcmaster.com](http://www.mcmaster.com). U.S. Netting, 800.331.2973; [www.usnetting.com](http://www.usnetting.com).



## simple pleasure

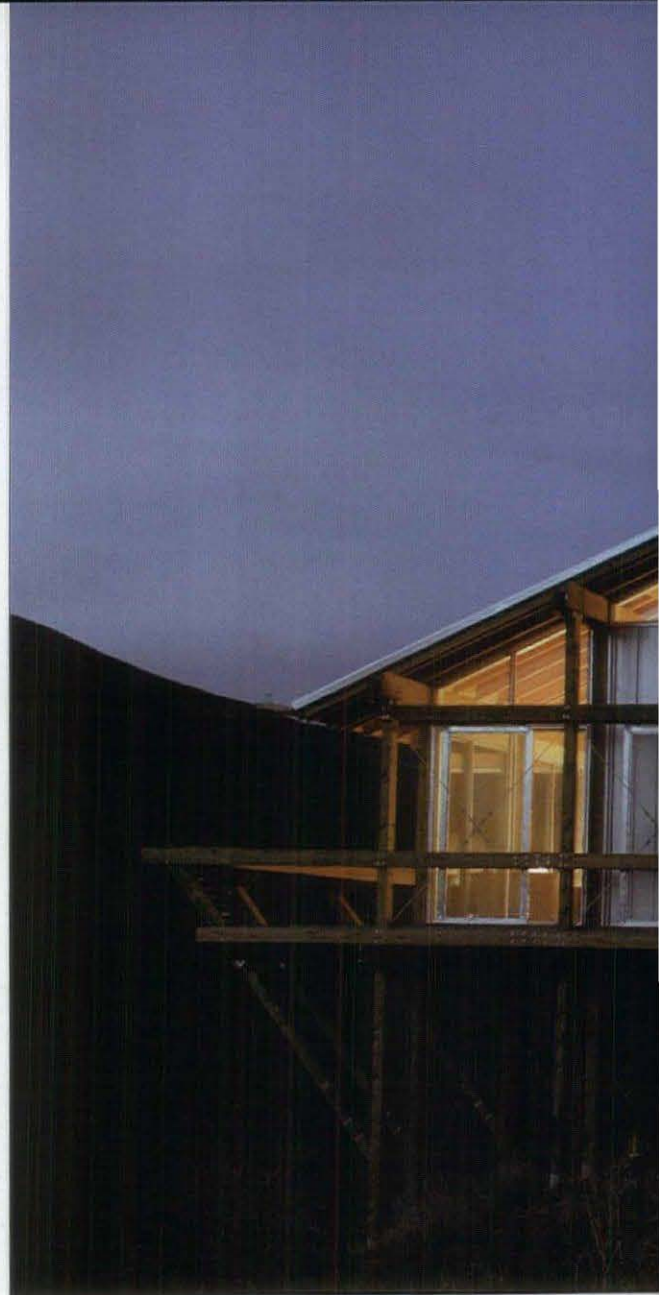
**P**aul Hirzel, AIA, spends most of his workdays teaching at Washington State University and heading up its architecture graduate program. So he limits his one-person practice to projects he can't bring himself to turn down—projects like this vacation retreat in a Juliaetta, Idaho, canyon. The clients found Hirzel through their daughter, a former student of his. Their receptive attitude and rugged, 40-acre site proved too tempting to decline.

"They're amazing clients who are open to the strangeness architects have going on in their heads," he says.

He decided to split the home into two buildings to provide different experiences. The 1,414-square-foot main residence is anchored along a steep ridge, while a 756-square-foot bunkhouse lies in a protected ravine. Wind gusts of up to 100 miles per hour can whip across the land, so he gave the main house a moment-resisting wood frame. "A steel frame would have been double the cost," he explains. He slipped floors and walls clad in standing-seam metal inside the Douglas fir frame, leaving it exposed to the elements. "To do a house on this site that isn't tough didn't make sense to me," he says. Placing the building on concrete piers proved less expensive than digging a conventional foundation and minimized damage to the land.

Low-grade white pine, locally grown and cut, forms the interior walls and cabinetry. "It's as cheap a

wood material as you can buy," Hirzel says. Sheets of low-cost, diamond-plate galvanized steel cover the bathroom and entry floors, as well as the shower walls. Instead of expensive standard railings, he had general contractor Robert Wilson assemble off-the-shelf ones using cables, bolts, and connectors. Sealed OSB, another budget material, lies underfoot in most of the public areas. To reduce construction time and material cost, Hirzel eliminated interior doors, room partitions, and even stair risers. The open plan encourages cross-ventilation—a key component



*"to do a house on this site that isn't tough didn't make sense to me."—paul hirzel, aia*





The multilevel house follows the site's steep slope. Strengthened by steel connectors and cross-bracing, the exposed pressure-treated wood frame traces a bold, graphic pattern across the exteriors.



# elements of value

of the project's no-air-conditioning, passive cooling strategy. A wood stove with a fan-driven air recirculation system provides most of the heat.

The home's total cost came to less than \$100 per square foot. But Hirzel cautions that construction in Idaho and Eastern Washington generally carries a much lower price tag than in the coastal Pacific Northwest, adding that building costs have risen dramatically since the house's completion in 2003. He also credits Wilson with keeping his own fees low. "Bob was game to do a project that would push his portfolio of project types," he

says. "That was a significant reason why the house came in as it did."

Hirzel also cites indigenous structures as his models for straightforward, cost-effective shelter. "The house is a distant derivative of some of the old mining structures in the canyon," he says. "These utilitarian buildings are extremely efficient. They use the least amount of material to achieve the greatest amount of shelter." —*m.d.*

**project:**

Canyon House, Juliaetta, Idaho

**architect:**

Paul Hirzel: Architect, Pullman, Wash.

**project team:**

Mike Jobes and Greg Kessler, Washington State University, Pullman

**general contractor:**

Robert Wilson, R. Wilson Construction, Troy, Idaho

**structural engineers:**

Harold Sorenson, Pullman, and Jeff Filler, PE,

Advance Professional Engineering, Moscow, Idaho

**project size:**

1,414 square feet (main house); 756 square feet (bunkhouse)

**site size:**

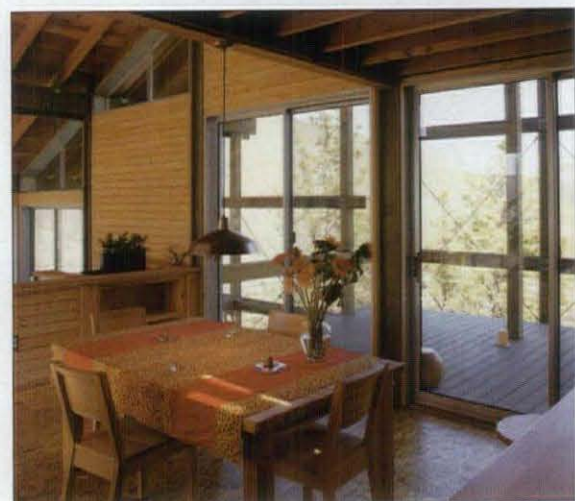
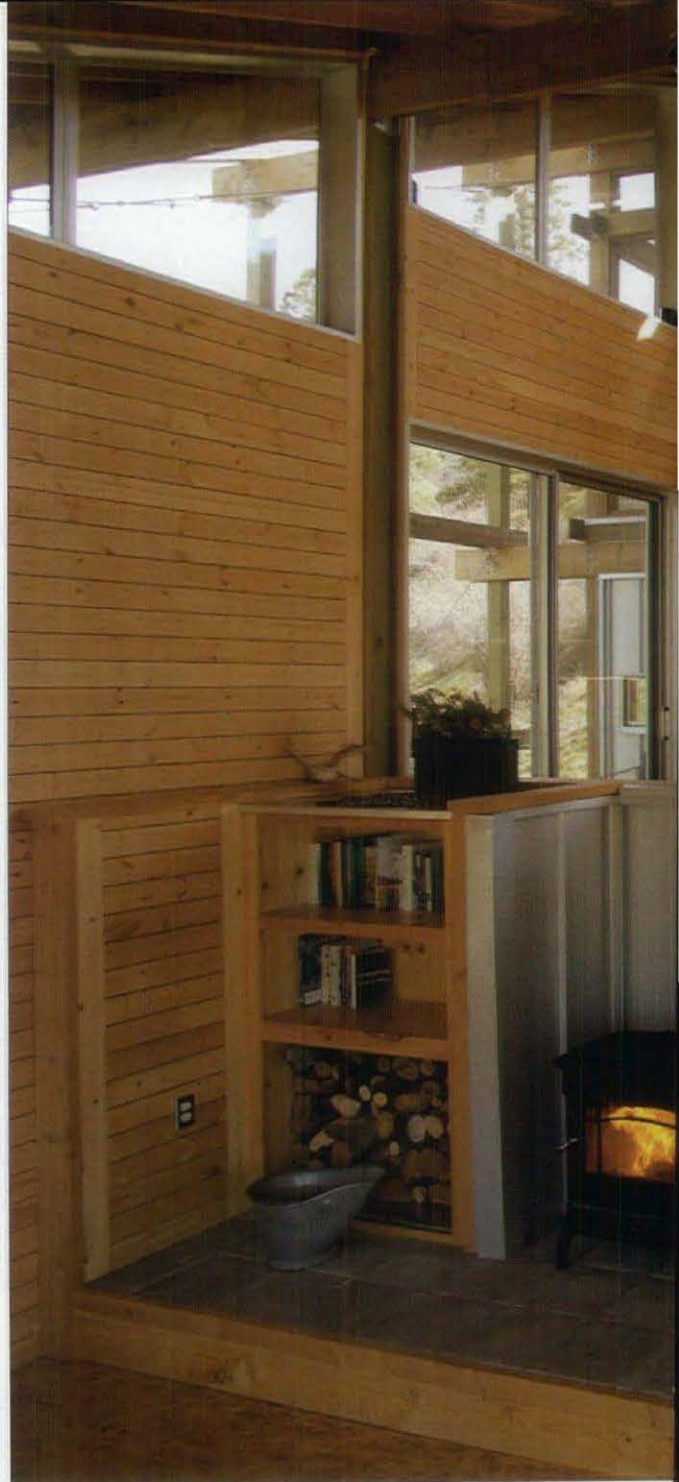
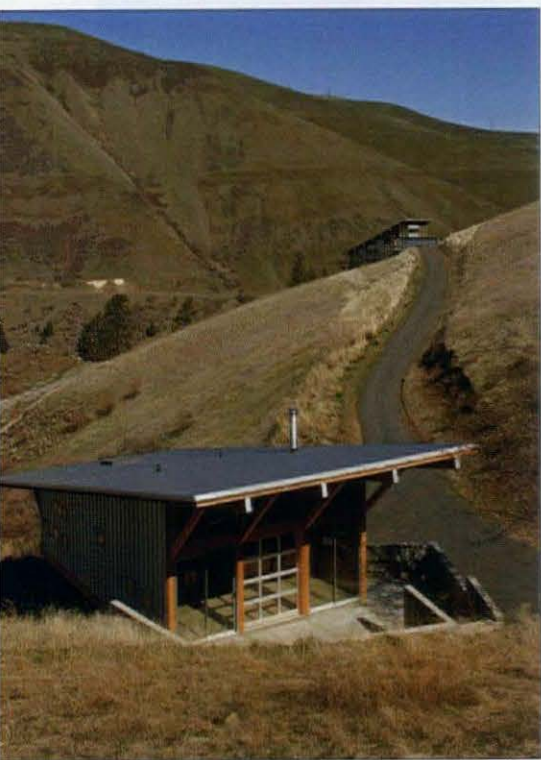
40 acres

**construction cost:**

Less than \$100 per square foot

**photography:**

Art Grice

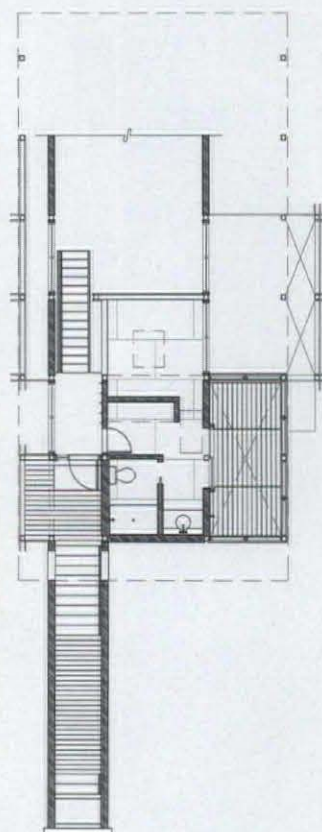




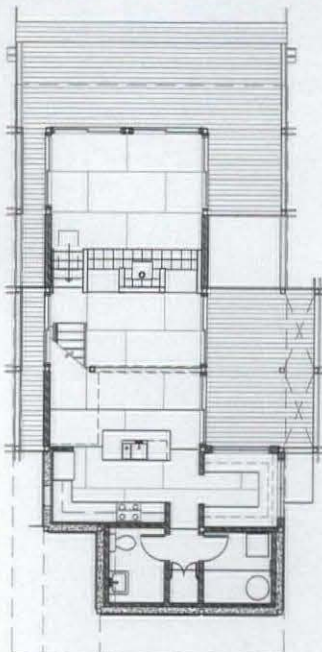


A separate bunkhouse (opposite) provides space for visiting family and friends. Inside the main house, strategically placed doors and operable windows assist the passive cooling process.

*"the house is a distant derivative of some of the old mining structures in the canyon."*



second floor



first floor

## delivering value

*Minimize the number of interior doors and walls.*

*Use finishes sparingly.*

*Incorporate industrial materials.*

*Don't excavate.*

*Employ passive cooling strategies.*

## budget-minders

### Idaho white pine

*"It grows like a weed in this part of the Pacific Northwest."*

Idaho Forest Products  
Commission, 208.334.3292;  
[www.idahoforests.org](http://www.idahoforests.org).

### Insulspan roof insulation panels

*"You have essentially the insulation and the nailer prefabricated. The fact that it's prefab saved a lot of labor."*

Insulspan, 517.486.4844;  
[www.insulspan.com](http://www.insulspan.com).

### Sonotube concrete forms

*"A great forming mechanism for round columns and piers."*

Sonoco, 888.766.8823;  
[www.sonotube.com](http://www.sonotube.com).

### Easy Lock standing-seam metal roofing

*"You get this amazing bounce off of the Galvalume that picks up the color of the sky. And it's less expensive than painted metal."*

Taylor Metal Products, 800.574.1388; [www.taylormetal.com](http://www.taylormetal.com).

### Trex decking

*"Being a composite, it's a much better choice [than wood]. The client's very happy with it because it doesn't require [much] maintenance."*

Trex Co., 800.289.8739;  
[www.trex.com](http://www.trex.com).



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# shop talk

bargain hunting can really pay off for your design and your clients' bottom line.

by nigel f. maynard

In a bizarre world, all of your clients are surgeons, hedge fund managers, or high-net-worth individuals with the resources to afford anything they want. If they want custom hardware from The Nanz Co., they can have it. Salvaged vintage stone tile from Paris Ceramics? Sure. Teak windows from Zeluck? Why not?

You design homes in the real world, however, and your clients have budgets—sometimes small ones.

"Everybody's tight on money," says Bill Feeney, principal of William L. Feeney Architect, Washington, D.C. "It's so much easier when you create [custom] architectural elements from scratch, but in most of the work, everybody has a budget." With that reality will come some concessions, but that doesn't mean the design has to suffer. Deals can be found—if you know where to look.

## spec and spec alike

For San Diego-based Kevin deFreitas, AIA, who acts as architect/developer on many of his own projects, a tight budget is a necessary way of life. As a result, no resource is off limits when he needs to find the right



Kevin deFreitas Architects, AIA

Architect Kevin deFreitas believes even houses on tight budgets can pull off inspiring design with well-chosen materials. His entry-level row houses in Escondido, Calif., include such high-value items as solid-core doors, Bosch appliances, and upgraded cabinets.

product for the right price. Trade magazines are among his favorites. "There are so many American and international journals," he says, that architects now have an unprecedented "ability to source what architects all over the world are using. I look at what I like," he adds, "and try to fit [those products] into my work."

Architectural publications give architects the ability to see what their global counterparts are using, and the Internet allows them to get it in (relatively) short order. Says deFreitas: "The Web has forever changed the way architects research materials."

Without question, the Web has created opportunities that didn't exist 20 years ago, giving architects

previously unheard-of access to inexpensive products from multiple suppliers. If you want to find a good price on faucets or other plumbing products, for example, you can shop [www.designerplumbing.com](http://www.designerplumbing.com), [www.plumbingstore.com](http://www.plumbingstore.com), [www.faucetdirect.com](http://www.faucetdirect.com), or [store.irawoodinc.com](http://store.irawoodinc.com), among other retailers. Lighting showrooms are snazzy, to be sure, but your computer allows you to search sites such as [www.destinationlighting.com](http://www.destinationlighting.com), [www.ccl-light.com](http://www.ccl-light.com), or [www.lightinguniverse.com](http://www.lightinguniverse.com) in your pajamas and place orders on the spot.

One favorite among architects is McMaster-Carr Supply Co. ([www.mcmaster.com](http://www.mcmaster.com)), an online retailer with five U.S. offices and access

to seemingly everything—from hard-to-find hardware and electrical products to plumbing supplies and raw materials. The bricks-and-clicks company claims to carry more than 450,000 products and says 98 percent of ordered products are shipped from stock. What's more, it says most orders can be delivered either the same day or within one business day—at standard ground rates, to boot.

Of course, online research can generate plenty of dead ends, and it's easy to blow three hours looking for the right product. Because online stores carry familiar brands, it's a good idea to make sure your virtual store is an authorized dealer for your

*continued on page 68*



favorites. Online stores also fall short in one aspect of specing architects love—actually handling the merchandise. For this reason, the virtual store is a perfect complement to another great resource for products: the big-box retail outlet.

Big-box retail stores are handy for architects who need products immediately and for those who feel guilty about ordering via the Web and using fossil fuels to ship the products. The “big box” is already a source for architects seeking budget-minded products, but some design pros say architects don’t mine them nearly enough. With stock products priced at a fraction of the cost of custom pieces and inexpensive (but limited) fixtures and lighting, the big-box outlet certainly can be a good friend to have. “A lot of times, they have assembled products and kits” that are easy to spec, deFreitas says. The challenge, he adds, “is finding ways to use their [products] in atypical ways.”

One architect who knows the benefits of the big-box outlet personally is Ed Binkley, AIA, national design director in BSB Design’s Orlando, Fla., office. Binkley and his wife, Sherry, designed and built their 2,800-square-foot custom home on a budget of about \$85 per square foot—cheap by any standards. But they had hoped to get it down to \$50 per foot [see “Custom for Less” on page 47 of the January/February 2006 issue]. Of course, acting as his own designer saved

Binkley some cash, but he and his wife also speced plenty of off-the-shelf products, including cabinetry; lighting; fans; hardware; and pre-hung, solid-core doors. “It’s about going in [the stores], looking at things in a different way, and then putting your twist on it,” he says. In their case, getting creative involved sanding and sealing MDF for the countertops and cutting bamboo plywood sheets into strips and using them as wood flooring.

Binkley cautions that the big-box store isn’t the only place to find products—both conventional and unconventional—that can be adapted in new and interesting ways. For example, he says he’s been known to scour tractor and industrial supply stores for possible architectural elements.

John K. Burke, AIA, says his Washington, D.C., firm also doesn’t set boundaries when trolling for budget-minded products. For Studio27 Architecture, everything is in play: the Web, magazines, product samples—you name it. His firm even employs a freelance librarian to update its new products collection regularly.

### rules of the game

Despite your best efforts, you’ll only save so much by selecting the right products for the right price. You’ll need other strategies to realize additional savings. “Labor is always the No. 1 cost, so finding something that’s easy to install is key,”



John K. Burke, AIA

Studio27 Architecture shaved 15 percent off typical square footage costs for this Avalon, N.J., beach house by designing a foot-print based on uncut stock lumber lengths; laying out foundation pilings in an efficient manner; and creatively arranging off-the-shelf windows, doors, and other readily available materials.

Burke says. One strategy his firm employs is to eliminate specialty installations from the general contractor’s scope of work. “They charge more for things they don’t understand,” he explains, “so we get a specific sub to do the installation and we coordinate the process.”

Another workaround Studio27 uses is to frame only in standard sizes and spec only stock windows. “They make a big difference,” he says. The same goes for products in general: “We find out how products are made and what sizes they come in, and then we design around the products to save money.”

Feeney takes an even more unusual approach to help his clients save money: he leaves the decision-making to them. After giving his clients a little guidance—suggesting perhaps a big-box store or The Home Depot’s higher-end EXPO Design Center—Feeney sends them off to explore. “I let them go look

and tell me what works for them,” he says. That way, “they won’t break the bank, even if they choose the high-end products.” If nothing else, they’ll at least see for themselves what things cost.

Feeney has other tricks too. He might use low-end tiles and fixtures in a secondary bathroom or in other private rooms of the house, for instance. He might even go so far as to work for a reduced fee or limit the amount of new construction in a remodeling job.

Most importantly, Feeney makes sure his clients are informed of all costs along the way. “I do a line-item estimate for each item in a space—construction, materials, finishes, flooring, and so on,” he says. That way, there are no surprises or last-minute changes. And that may be the best deal of all. *ra*

For more information, visit [www.residentialarchitect.com](http://www.residentialarchitect.com).





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# disappearing act

must-not-see tv.

by rebecca day

It's on every homeowner's wish list, and it's the interior designer's dream. The flat-panel TV—plasma or LCD—has become both status symbol and style statement. Those that are thin enough to hang on a wall eliminate the need for awkward furniture and free up precious floor space. Even so, to many, a TV is still a visual intrusion, no matter how thin it may be. The custom electronics challenge facing today's designers: how to hide the plasma TV?

TVs measuring 4 inches to 5 inches deep offer woodworkers and entrepreneurs possibilities that never existed in the tube-TV world. Innovative lifts can store a flat-panel TV in the ceiling, beneath the floor, or in customized credenzas. A roll-down canvas can unfurl to cover a plasma TV and then morph into a framed painting when the TV isn't in use. A hutch with a revolving center section can store a flat-panel TV on one side and bookshelves on the other.

"People don't necessarily want to show off their flat-panels," explains Dave Tovissi, president of Criteria, an upscale electronics and interior design firm in Naples, Fla. "They want to get rid of their big TV and the

bulky piece of furniture that used to hide it. I don't care if it's a high-gloss Pioneer Elite or a standard Fujitsu model—it's still a black box. When the TV is on showing a stunning 1080p [high-quality resolution] picture, it's beautiful, but when you turn it off, it's a piece of metal and glass hanging on the wall. There's nothing attractive about that."

## curtains up

Discreet concealment solutions abound. Vutec Corp.'s ArtScreen is one such option. Sold by Criteria and other authorized dealers, ArtScreen is a masking system for plasma and LCD TVs with screen sizes of 32 inches to 65 inches diagonal. When triggered by remote control, artwork descends to cover the TV screen and retracts again for viewing. Vutec maintains an image library of more than 280 reproductions from a variety of artistic periods and styles, and consumers can also choose their own custom artwork or photographs. A wide selection of frames and liners can be speeded to match any room's décor.



Randall Perry Photography

Plasma and LCD televisions are shallow enough to be hidden inside cabinetry when not in use and then appear at the touch of a button when needed, as seen in this installation by Ambiance Systems.

Frames can be mounted to the surface of the wall or installed recessed.

For interior designers, solutions like ArtScreen and Solar Shading Systems' VisionArt complete the cycle started by the flat-panel TV. Marcia Van Liew, managing director of Lawrence & Scott, a Seattle-based interior design firm, says a product like VisionArt frees the designer from having to deal with the TV as an appliance. "We can basically make it go away," she says.

Such systems, she continues, free designers "to think in terms of the traditional tools of interior design, and that's art." Specifically, the VisionArt masking system allows designers to fit the plasma device into any style of frame, so the TV no longer dictates the overall size of the mounting

solution. "Because you don't have to conform to the size of the plasma, you're completely free—as you were before television entered the picture—to design the interior with a work of art," she says.

VisionArt offers several features that appeal to Van Liew as a designer. The system doesn't require a separate remote control, for instance, but has power circuitry that's triggered by the TV's on/off button. "You turn off the TV and the artwork automatically glides up to cover the screen," she explains. Despite the repeated wear and tear on the canvas, Van Liew says the giclée technique used to reproduce artwork is top-quality and professional. She has speeded artwork from the VisionArt collection, as

*continued on page 72*



well as original artwork from clients.

Art frames from both companies also come with sound provisions for TVs without speakers. Vutec's solution is the SoundScape 360 option—a bar-shaped speaker compartment that's positioned near the base of the frame. Installers can then specify their own speaker options to fit the compartment.

Solar Shading Systems recommends that installers who want to offer clients more dynamic sound opt for a larger-size frame—a 60-inch frame for a 42-inch TV, for instance—and use the extra space for custom-mounted speakers. A masking system and acoustically transparent fabric can then cover the remaining space and speakers.

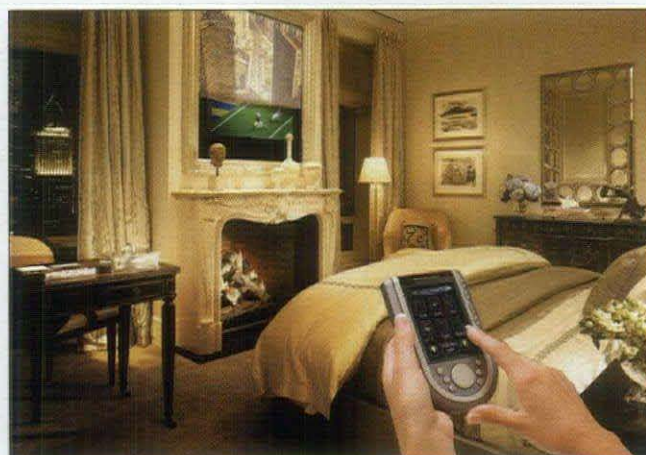
## scene-stealers

The shallow depth of plasma and LCD TVs has helped installers with built-in solutions as well. "We're doing everything from hiding them with paintings and dropping them out of ceilings to popping them up out of floors and pieces of furniture," says Marc Leidig, president and CEO of Ambiance Systems in Clifton Park, N.Y. "We love hiding plasmas. We're in an area that's pretty conservative, and we serve a large number of clients with second homes. The architectural styles of those houses are very traditional. We love being able to put in a system that's going to let the architecture speak."

Leidig says meeting the wishes of his clients often allows him to flex his creative muscles. One customer didn't want to mount his plasma in the typical way—behind standard doors—because he knew the doors would always stay open when not in use, "so I devised a plasma facing backward in the cabinet," Leidig explains. "The cabinet slides out and then the TV rotates around." The magic trick itself becomes entertainment for the room.

Leidig warns that the cost of such custom installations can be steep. Now that prices for name-brand 42-inch and 50-inch plasma TVs have plummeted to \$1,000 and sub-\$2,500, respectively, the cost of designing and building a flat-panel housing solution can far outweigh the price of the product itself. "The overall cost of concealing a TV has come down because plasmas are now so inexpensive," he says, "but people have to ask themselves whether they're going to spend \$5,000 for a painting that will house a \$2,000 plasma TV."

Another consideration is space. If you want to use a VisionArt system flush-mounted in the wall, for example, you may want to make the wall artificially deeper. "A product like VisionArt has a back box with a frame and roller attached to it," Leidig says, "and then the TV is about 5½ inches deep" on top of that, "so we like to create a false space that's 8 inches deep."

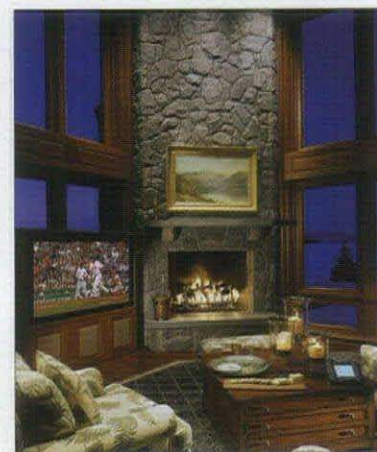


Tony Soluri

For ventilation, Ambiance Systems uses kits that exhaust the air to the basement or the attic. "The death of most equipment isn't keeping it on all the time, but rather the on/off cycles of going from really warm to room temperature," Leidig says. "The expansion and contraction of components is what leads to premature [system failure]."

Hiding signal-source devices is also a concern. Nowadays, a TV typically requires an external box for programming whether the content source is HD cable, satellite, or even Internet TV. "You also have to figure out where the equipment will go," Leidig says. Clients typically want a clean look, he adds, so where possible, he centralizes all equipment on a rack in the basement.

In one recent project—a New England weekend home—Leidig built a custom cabinet that rises out of the floor hoisting a 50-inch plasma TV. The cabinet was built to look like furniture



Randall Perry Photography

With VisionArt (top), a flat-panel TV can be masked by nearly any size and style of frame. When the TV is turned off, artwork automatically descends to cover the screen.

but is actually a façade with cutouts for speakers beneath the display. When the TV is turned off, the entire mechanism retreats to its hiding place beneath the floor. "It simply goes away," he explains. "There's something inherently cool about that." ra

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



A collage of construction-related images including a hammer, a power drill, a wrench, and a screwdriver, overlaid with a grid pattern and several large, stylized, and partially obscured text elements like 'www.counterpointclick.com' and 'www.pickapolly.com'. The background is a light blue grid. The text elements are in various colors and fonts, some appearing as if they are floating or attached to the tools. The overall theme is construction and home improvement.

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### scientific method

If the budget is tight, Kaplan Thompson often turns to TopLabPLUS, a cellulose fiber- and resin-based surfacing material known for its sterility and imperviousness. (Its manufacturer, Trespa North America of Poway, Calif., claims the product is widely used for work surfaces in scientific laboratories around the world.) Thompson says the firm uses TopLabPLUS for countertops because it's "chemical- and heat-resistant, comes in a variety of colors and thicknesses, and is half the cost of Corian." Panels can be milled using standard woodworking tools in 12 colors and four thicknesses.

Trespa North America, 800.487.3772; [www.trespa.com](http://www.trespa.com).

### tough customer

"When we're searching for a value window with high performance, we often look to Marvin's Integrity line," Thompson says. The brand's windows and doors are made from Ultrex, a polymer of glass fibers and polyester resin



said to produce strong frames and weatherproof exteriors. Kaplan Thompson likes the windows' low thermal expansion and conductivity and their wood interiors. Integrity Windows and Doors, 888.419.0076; [www.integritywindows.com](http://www.integritywindows.com).



Photos (above and top): Courtesy Kaplan Thompson Architects

### metal winner

"Many times, a standing-seam roof is desired, but the budget is stuck in the three-tab asphalt [shingle] range," Thompson says. When that happens, the firm specifies 5V crimp metal roofing from Lancaster, Pa.-based Fabral. Constructed of 26-gauge steel, the fire- and impact-resistant panels are available in six colors. Each sheet covers a 24-inch surface area. Fabral, 800.477.2741; [www.fabral.com](http://www.fabral.com).

—nigel f. maynard



# products saving graces

by nigel f. maynard and shelley d. hutchins

12

Finding worthy products for price-conscious custom homes is a tough gig. But if you love the hunt like we do, it's bound to reward everyone involved. Yes, your products must prove penny-wise, but they can't look cheap or perform poorly. They must withstand the rigors of everyday life at least as well as their more precious counterparts.

Admittedly, cheap is in the eye of the budget holder, but we think the collection on the following pages is a bargain at twice the price.



## cheap fills

You'd be hard-pressed to find a pot filler this handsome for less than \$300. But now you can. Danze's Melrose has an MSRP of \$250 but can be found online for less than \$200. The wall-mounted faucet has a 15-inch swing arm for easy access and brass and ceramic disc valves controlled by lever handles. It's designed for cold water hook-up and can be spec'd in chrome or stainless steel. Danze, 877.530.3344; [www.danze.com](http://www.danze.com).

## working the angles

The contrast of rich espresso-stained wood against the polished, angular forms of West Elm's metal/wood bathroom accessories lends sophistication to the budget-savvy bath. The line's most expensive piece, an 18-inch glass storage shelf, retails for \$44. Other accessories include a \$16 hook for robes, a toilet tissue holder (\$19), and three stylish hangouts for towels: a \$24 square ring, an 18-inch bar for \$29, and a 24-inch bar for \$39. West Elm, 888.922.4119; [www.westelm.com](http://www.westelm.com).







### playing the numbers

These Sausalito house numbers from Chiasso have a clean Art Deco-inspired design and exposed fastening screws. Made from solid zinc with a polished finish, each number varies slightly in size for visual interest. Priced at \$18 apiece. Chiasso, 877.244.2776; [www.chiasso.com](http://www.chiasso.com).



### starck reality

Some of the basins in Duravit's Starck 3 series retail for less than \$300, and a couple of them can be had for less than \$200—a sweet deal for a designer label. Minimalist lines and maximum choices in size, mounting styles, and faucet pairings characterize the collection. Duravit USA, 888.387.2848, [www.duravit.us](http://www.duravit.us).



### la dolce venicia

No need to worry about foreign exchange rates with Venicia Euro-style frameless cabinets from KraftMaid. All three collections—Lustra, Mirra, and Natura—are affordable, yet customizable to suit nearly any décor. The system offers 28 door styles plus two glass door choices, 31 colors and finishes, and more than 40 hardware options. Premium features like blended-color cabinets to match doors come at standard price points. KraftMaid Cabinetry, 440.632.5333; [www.kraftmaid.com](http://www.kraftmaid.com).



## products saving graces



### flor score

FLOR modular carpet tiles are easy to install, easy on the wallet, and easy on the environment. The 19.7-inch-square tiles come in a variety of colors, textures, and patterns and install over wood, tile, or unsealed concrete. Crafted from recycled or renewable resources, the chic tiles sell for roughly \$4 to \$6 per square foot. An added plus: the manufacturer will take back customers' used tiles for recycling. InterfaceFLOR, 866.281.3567; [www.flor.com](http://www.flor.com).



### bargain bamboo

Ikea's Kvist bamboo flooring is gentle on the planet and the pocketbook, at just \$2.88 per square foot. The 5-inch-wide planks install over most types of materials, from raw concrete to existing finished floors, and can be re-sanded twice. They're available in natural bamboo or with a light brown finish. Ikea, 800.434.4532; [www.ikea.com](http://www.ikea.com).



### sterling opportunity

The Stanton dual-force toilet from Sterling is European in design sensibility, but its \$348 list price is pure Yankee thrift. Cheaper toilets do exist, but at this price, you'll get a toilet that sits flush to the wall. The modified one-piece design, crafted of vitreous china, also has a fully glazed and concealed trap and an elongated bowl. A two-button actuator provides a 0.8-gallon or standard 1.6-gallon flush. Sterling by Kohler Co., 888.783.7546; [www.sterlingplumbing.com](http://www.sterlingplumbing.com).



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### a real baldwin

Known for its traditional door hardware, Baldwin now has a line of contemporary levers and entry handle sets that won't cost a fortune—if you choose carefully. Available in solid forged brass or stainless steel, the levers come with matching roses in three sizes. More than 20 finishes are offered. Shown: the \$75 contemporary stainless steel lever (SKU 5173.324) from the Estate Collection. Baldwin Hardware Corp., 800.566.1986; [www.baldwinhardware.com](http://www.baldwinhardware.com).



### square deal

Restoration Hardware's Dillon wall sconce is made from cast brass with a white frosted-glass square shade for a soft glow. Also sold in double- or triple-sconce configurations, the fixture is available in chrome, polished nickel, or satin nickel. (A bronze version comes with an amber frosted-glass shade). The single-shade light shown here measures 4½ inches wide, 7 inches deep, and 9½ inches high and costs \$89. Restoration Hardware, 800.910.9836; [www.restorationhardware.com](http://www.restorationhardware.com).



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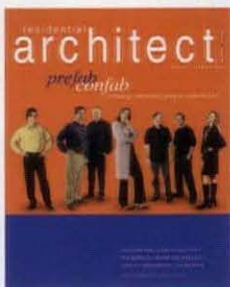


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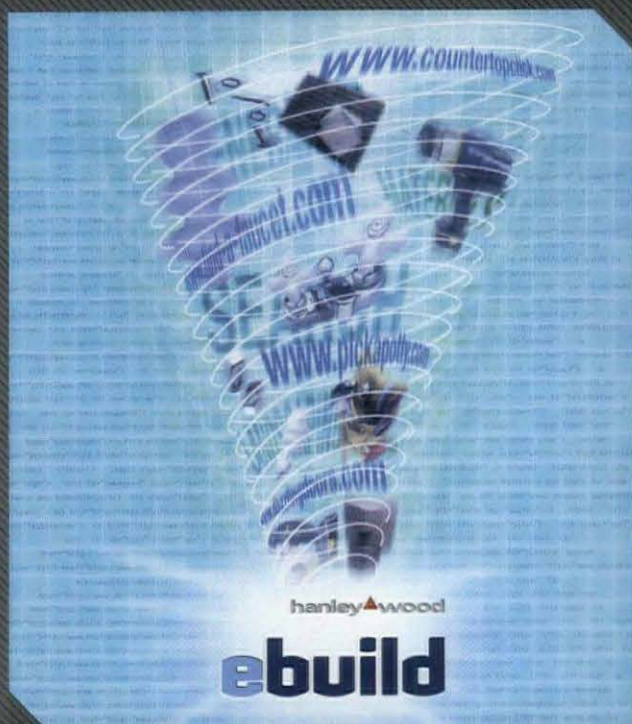


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| <b>Architect Jobs Online</b>                | 41      | —        | —                      | www.ArchitectJobsOnline.com         |
| AZEK Trimboards                             | 32      | 389      | 877-ASK-AZEK           | www.AZEK.com                        |
| Bilco Company                               | 38      | 206      | 800-854-9724           | www.bilco.com                       |
| Brasslight Gallery                          | 6       | 75       | 800-243-9595           | www.brasslight.com                  |
| Cabot                                       | 21      | —        | 800-STAIN-60           | www.cabotfactoryfinish.com          |
| CEDIA                                       | 2       | 384      | 800-669-5329           | www.cedia.org                       |
| CertainTeed Restoration Millwork            | C3      | 396      | 800-233-8990           | www.certainteed.com                 |
| Chief Architect                             | 17      | 70       | 800-482-4433           | www.chiefarchitect.com/FreeTrial    |
| Cosella Dörken                              | 74      | 326      | 888-4DELTA4            | www.DELTADRY.com                    |
| Designer Doors                              | 31      | 309      | 800-241-0525           | www.designerdoos.com                |
| <b>Digital Home Summit</b>                  | 26*, 51 | —        | —                      | www.digitalhomeonline.net           |
| Dryvit                                      | 27      | 264      | 800-556-7752 ext. 9    | www.DryvitHomes.com                 |
| Eagle Windows and Doors                     | 69      | 249      | 888-74-EAGLE           | www.EagleWindow.com                 |
| <b>Ebuild</b>                               | 50*, 73 | —        | —                      | www.ebuild.com                      |
| Eldorado Stone                              | 8-9     | 32       | 800-925-1491           | www.eldoradostone.com               |
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| Hanover Architectural Products              | 66      | 250      | 800-426-4242           | www.hanoverpavers.com               |
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| International Window Corporation*           | 40a-b   | —        | 562-928-6411           | www.WindowsForLife.com              |
| iLevel by Weyerhaeuser                      | 7       | 350      | 1-888-iLevel8          | www.iLevel.com                      |
| JELD-WEN Windows & Doors                    | C2-1    | 1        | 800-877-9482 ext. 1219 | www.jeld-wen.com/1219               |
| Knauf Insulation                            | 5       | 82       | 800-825-4434 ext. 8300 | www.KnaufInsulation.com             |
| Kohler                                      | 24a-p   | —        | 800-4-KOHLER ext. YD7  | www.KOHLER.com/introductions        |
| LAMARITE SLATE BY TAMKO                     | 14      | 207      | 800-641-4691           | www.tamko.com                       |
| Marvin Windows & Doors                      | 28      | 99       | 800-236-9690           | www.marvin.com/clad                 |
| Masonite                                    | 12      | 64       | 800-663-DOOR           | www.masonite.com                    |
| Norbord*                                    | 50      | 357      | —                      | www.windstormosb.com/RA             |
| Pella                                       | 34-35   | 19       | 866-829-9051           | www.pella.com/pro                   |
| <b>RADA Thank You</b>                       | 85      | —        | —                      | —                                   |
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| <b>Remodeling Show</b>                      | 25      | —        | —                      | www.theremodelingshow.com           |
| <b>residential architect Online</b>         | 52      | —        | —                      | www.residentialarchitect.com        |
| Silver Line Windows and Doors               | 49      | 251      | —                      | www.silverlinewindow.com            |
| Simpson Strong-Tie                          | 10      | 26       | 800-999-5099           | www.strongtie.com                   |
| SoftPlan                                    | 4       | 79       | 800-248-0164           | www.softplan.com                    |
| SwimEx                                      | 40      | 204      | 800-877-7946           | www.swimex.com                      |
| The Tapco Group / Atlantic Premium Shutters | 16      | 303      | —                      | www.atlanticpremiumshutters.com/RA/ |
| The Tapco Group / InSpire Roofing Products  | 87      | 368      | —                      | www.RA.INSPIREROOFING.com           |
| The Tapco Group / StoneCraft Industries     | 53      | 215      | —                      | www.stonecraft.com/tapco            |
| The Unico System                            | 36      | —        | —                      | www.unicosystem.com/iah             |
| VELUX Skylights                             | 79, 81  | 23       | 800-888-3589           | www.veluxusa.com                    |
| Weather Shield Windows & Doors              | C4      | 49       | 800-477-6808           | www.weathershield.com/RA            |
| Whirlpool                                   | 3       | —        | —                      | www.insideadvantage.com             |
| Wolf  | 37      | 15       | —                      | www.wolfappliance.com               |

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