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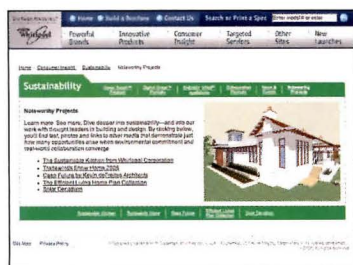
SUSTAINABLE

EXPERIENCE THE SOLAR DECATHLON. AND A NEW WHIRLPOOL CORPORATION WEBSITE.

Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, CKD, AIBD

We're always delighted to showcase notable projects by architects and designers, especially when green design is part of the picture. But when the architects and designers happen to be up-and-coming college students competing in an event known as the Solar Decathlon, the opportunity is especially rewarding.

Allow us to demonstrate. The Solar Decathlon is now featured at Whirlpool Corporation's new micro website devoted to sustainable residential projects: insideadvantage.com/sustainable. By visiting, you can learn about a variety



Carnegie Mellon University interior. Photo by Kaye Evans, Lutterodt/Solar Decathlon.

of stand-out sustainable projects that incorporate energy- and water-efficient appliances from the Whirlpool Corporation portfolio of brands.



University of Colorado exterior. Photo by Jim Tetro, Solar Decathlon.

As for the Solar Decathlon, this biennial international collegiate competition is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. Here's the challenge:

architecture and engineering students must design, build and operate highly energy-efficient—and completely solar-powered—homes. The homes are constructed in the Solar Village (aka, the National Mall in Washington, D.C.). In this ample space, students compete in 10 separate events over two weeks in the presence of more than 100,000 visitors.

In the most recent Solar Decathlon, Whirlpool Corporation sponsored the following five teams through in-kind donations: Carnegie Mellon University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), University of Cincinnati, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and the University of Colorado at Boulder.

These teams chose KitchenAid®, Maytag® and Whirlpool® products as part of their competition in the Appliances contest category.

Working with these student teams prior to the event allowed us to be inspired by their creativity, energy and enthusiasm. But the highlight came as we toured the homes and witnessed the students' passions firsthand. It was truly a life-changing time for all of them.

Again, you can share this experience by visiting insideadvantage.com/sustainable. On the Noteworthy Projects page, you'll find the Solar Decathlon overview, along with photos, Google® SketchUp™ 3D models and video links, including a video from the U.S. Department of Energy where I discuss Whirlpool Corporation's support for the Solar Decathlon and commitment to sustainable design.

You'll see why we're already looking forward to the 2009 Solar Decathlon and the opportunity to collaborate with another new crop of architecture and engineering students.



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

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CONTINUING EDUCATION

View the new multimedia course, "Sustainable Design Practices for Kitchens, Systems for Homes, and Lumber for Wood Framed Construction," at www.aecdaily.com/whirlpool. Sponsored by Whirlpool Corporation, this one-hour course is composed of three video podcasts and an article on sustainable design. It is designed to qualify for the new AIA SD (Sustainable Design) requirement, as well as continuing education credits for AIBD, NKBA and other design associations.

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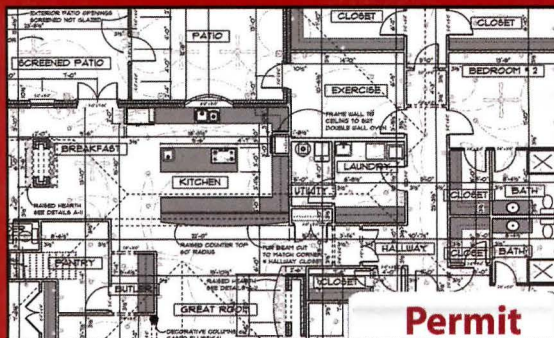


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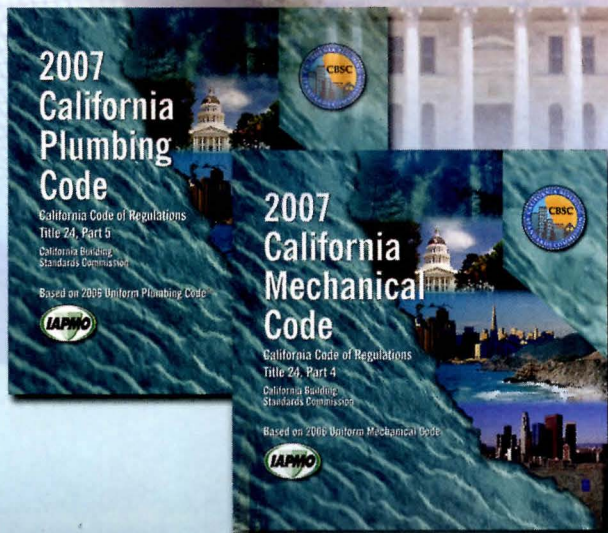


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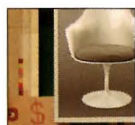


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So far, the proponents of prefab housing have overpromised and under-delivered, but one architect may just make good on the promise. In fact, Michelle Kaufmann might just prove prefab's answer to Joseph Eichler.
by Meghan Drueding

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Not every architect can tread the quicksand between historic and modern without calamity, but Cecil Baker has done so sensitively and beautifully for more than 30 years.
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Applying hard-won lessons from the Arizona desert, Ibarra Rosano has developed its own naturally cool modern vernacular.
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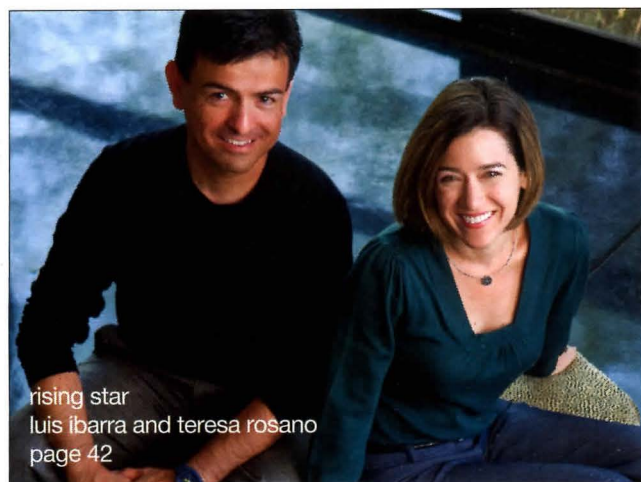
All the new that's fit to print.

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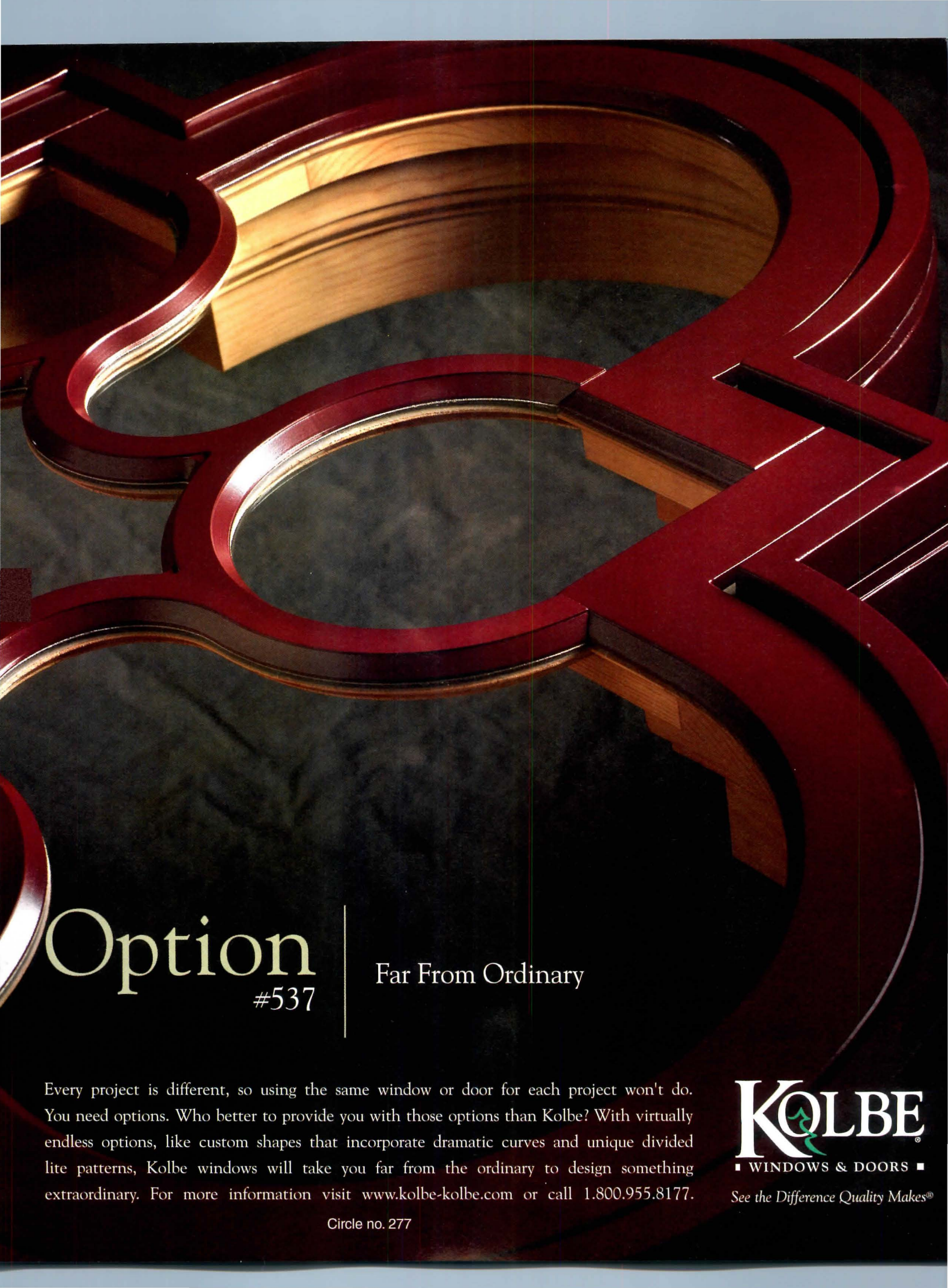
The 2008 Leadership Award winners. Photos (from top): Max Whittaker/WpN; Bill Cramer/Wonderful Machine; and Steven Meckler. Cover photo: Max Whittaker/WpN.

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2009

Call for entries:

Enter your best projects in the 10th annual residential architect design awards—page 31



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from the editor

what plays in peoria

why television shows about architecture won't let architects speak.

by s. claire conroy

■ admit it, I am powerless against my addiction to television house shows. To preserve harmony in my household, I have agreed to swap off TV time with my family: one house show for one political show. If left to my own devices (the remote control, for instance), I will fast-forward through five of them in a sitting. Thank heavens for DVR. My two current favorites are *Extreme Living* and *Beyond the Box*. I discovered *Extreme* on my own, but our high-design, bargain-loving Senior Editor Nigel Maynard turned me on to *Beyond the Box*.

I love these shows because they finally provide a regular forum for architect-designed houses on major cable TV networks. They aren't decorating shows; they are true architecture programs that address the minutiae of difficult sites, unusual construction methods, and innovative use of materials and products.

In the case of *Beyond the Box*, they also emphasize cost-saving solutions that come from a highly unusual source—surprise!—the architect. So, they promote the architect as someone who can save the project money while at the same time

imbuing it with compelling, custom design solutions. You and I knew this was possible, but the rest of the world—until now—did not. This is a huge public service for the architecture profession.

Of course, nothing is perfect. These two architecture series also have two major problems. And those problems are revealing of how the public perceives architects and the houses they design and build. The difficulty with *Extreme Living* is embedded in the title itself. If you've watched the show, you've seen that, for the most part, there is nothing extreme at all about the houses it features. They are simply individual, site-specific, custom dwellings—a break from the monotonous multiples in suburban subdivisions. If America thinks “architect-designed house” equals “extreme house,” that does not advance our cause. “Fine Living” or “High-Design Living” is a more accurate and less intimidating image to spread among the populace.

Beyond the Box has a subtler, but no less insidious message it's communicating to your potential patrons. The projects are often quite strong (many of them are by architects who've appeared in this magazine), and the



Mark Robert Harper

presentation is sensible. But I've noticed that even when the project is an architect's own house, it's the spouse who does all the talking. The architect seems almost physically restrained from uttering anything but a few quick sound bites. The spouse gives the grand tour, with backstory anecdotes about why decisions were made, products and materials chosen.

Do architects really need a layperson translator to do all the talking for them? Are they so off-putting or esoteric when they talk about design—of even something as emotional and personal as their own home—they're not allowed to speak for themselves in prime time? Obviously, architects have a

communication problem. Either they don't use language that the rest of the world can understand, or they don't talk about the elements that are of essential importance to the people who occupy their buildings.

Plain talk about how a house really lives, and a simple explanation for why a detail was chosen and executed—that's what plays in Peoria. And while we may not all live in Illinois, we do want everyone to understand the value and the quality of life talented architects can provide in every house they design. There's nothing extreme about that. **ra**

Comments? E-mail S. Claire Conroy at cconroy@hanleywood.com.

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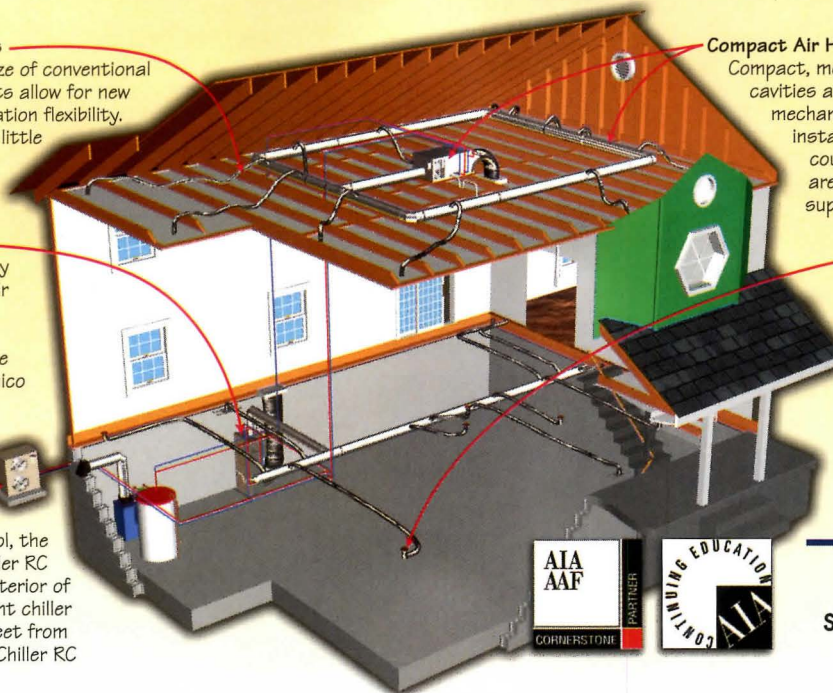
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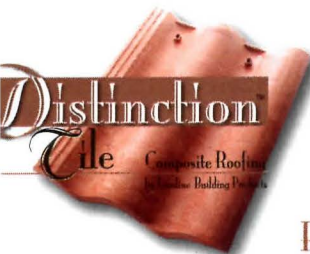
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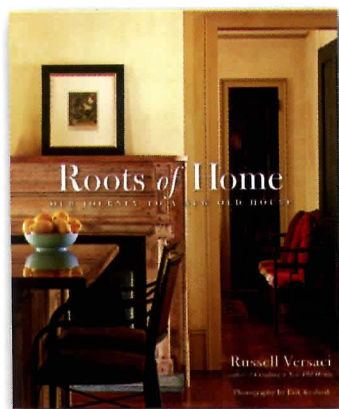
In his 2003 treatise, *Creating a New Old House* (The Taunton Press, \$39.95), Russell Versaci, AIA, taught readers how architects use precedent to design historical homes. His latest effort, *Roots of Home: Our Journey to a New Old House* (The Taunton Press, \$45), traces the origins of those classic American house styles.

Early settlers, Versaci argues, brought with them house styles from countries such as England, France, and Spain. "They tried to create what they knew," he explains, "but it wasn't always

successful because of the different climates. It was a real trial-and-error process." Over time, however, they adapted their traditional building methods to local conditions and resources—and thus was born regionalism, according to Versaci. He

ties classic American house styles, such as the Spanish Colonial of Alta California, to the regions from which they evolved.

As principal of Middleburg, Va.-based Russell Versaci Architecture, Versaci specializes in high-end custom homes, but he's also on a quest to make traditional design more affordable. Using the successful Sears Home model, he has formed a partnership with Connor Homes in Middlebury, Vt., to design a line of kit houses. "I'm not sure I will be a highly custom architect much longer," he says, noting that soon the need may not be there. "I saw prefab as a solution for getting better design into the marketplace, a solution for the cost problem, and a way to diversify my practice."—*nigel f. maynard*



Russell Versaci's new book tracks how Old World customs shaped regional styles in the U.S. To increase the affordability of traditional houses, he's also designed a Greek Revival (above) and a Williamsburg-style guesthouse (right) as kit homes.



Photos: Courtesy Russell Versaci Architecture (above) and Connor Homes (top)

perspective on the move

Jennifer Siegal has spent more than a decade researching and creating portable architecture. The firm she founded and runs, Office of Mobile Design in Venice, Calif., produces prefab homes, schools, and commercial projects. And she has a book out this fall called *More Mobile: Portable Architecture for Today* (Princeton Architectural Press, \$24.95). She spoke with *residential architect* from Florence, Italy, where she's been traveling recently.

What are some of your firm's current projects?

"A project I'm really excited about (though it's not 100 percent confirmed just yet) is a series of prefab housing units for the elderly in the city of Hawthorne, Calif. Another pending project is a series of bathroom units for the Los Angeles Unified School District."

What do you think of the current market for prefab homes?

"Obviously, I'm incredibly optimistic in general. Especially in my region of southern California, we've seen a huge group of



Mike McGregor

Jennifer Siegal's new book examines global explorations into portable architecture. A sequel to her 2002 tome on mobile design, it highlights the work of architects, as well as visual artists.

enthusiastic dwellers and users and a lot of buildings being built. It's a better way of producing dwellings: less waste, less time. Which potentially leads to less cost, but the only way you get there is by having more demand. In the next five years, the industry is going to continue to move forward. It's not just a flash in the pan."

Which other prefab architects and designers do you admire?

"Marmol Radziner + Associates—the work they've been doing is really commendable. Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, LEED AP, has been doing really good work [see pages 32–37 for more on Kaufmann]. And Rocio Romero."

What is the subject of your new book?

"It's about things happening around the world in terms of portable architecture. There are some incredible solutions out there ... it's a global movement. Being here [in Italy], I see this concept is something that is really important for a lot of people. In some ways, I see the antithesis of mobile architecture here—I see buildings built hundreds of years ago. That's really interesting, but to me it's a monument. I'm [more] interested in ideas of the present and future. I'd love to try to imagine what would happen if you could actually take your dwelling with you when you travel."—*meghan drueding*

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frank o. gehry: design process and the lewis house

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What began as a simple remodel turned into a decade-long, albeit unrealized, commission for a new house. More than 120 models (one of which is shown here), photos, drawings, plans, videos, and furniture pieces chronicle the evolution of architect Frank O. Gehry, FAIA's spatial experimentations and free-form imaginings for client Peter Lewis. The exhibit also explores how this unbuilt project ultimately informed Gehry's designs for later built projects—among them the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in Spain. For details, call 215.763.8100 or visit www.philamuseum.org.



Courtesy Gehry Partners

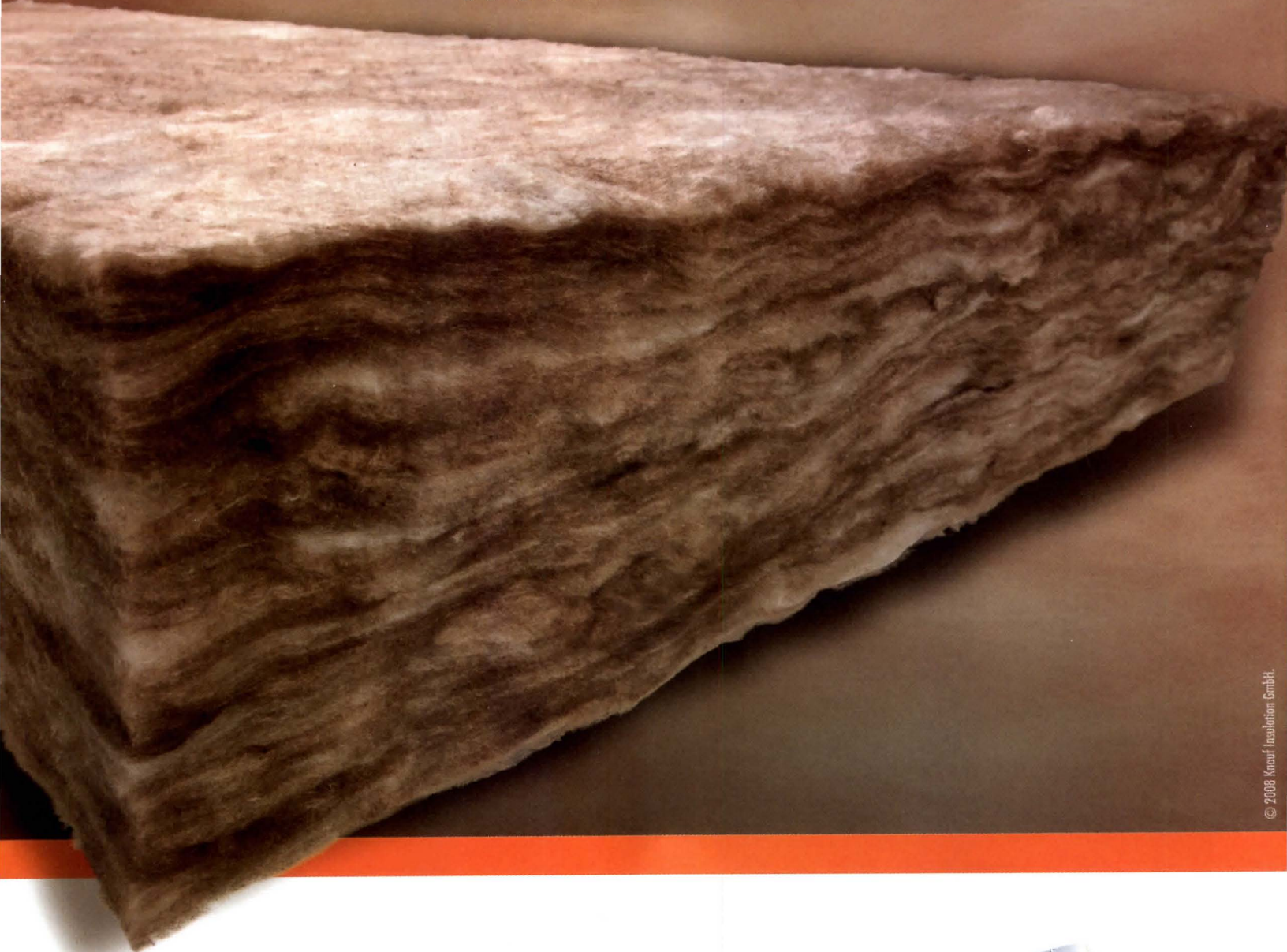
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2009 residential architect Design Awards, deadlines: November 25 (entry form and fee), December 23 (completed entry packets), www.residentialarchitect.com or shutchins@hanleywood.com; **I.con.i.cal.ly**, through December 4, Bridge Gallery, New York City, www.bridgegalleryny.com; **The Furniture of Eero Saarinen: Designs for Everyday Living**,

through January 25, Virginia Center for Architecture, Richmond, Va., www.virginiaarchitecture.org; **AIA's 2009 Grassroots Leadership and Legislative Conference**, February 4–7, Grand Hyatt Hotel, Washington, D.C., www.aia.org/ev_grassroots_2009.

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objects of desire

when it comes to product design, what creates a classic?

by cheryl weber

think iconic furniture, and the names of 20th-century architects come to mind: Mies van der Rohe and his Barcelona Chair, Eero Saarinen's Womb Chair, Frank Lloyd Wright's Barrel Chair, and benches and credenzas by Florence Knoll, to name a few. Their creations are sculptural, yet functional and express the elemental qualities of the materials from which they're made. Unable to find furniture that suited their concrete, wood, and glass buildings, the Bauhaus architects designed their own. They experimented with emerging materials and manufacturing methods, and in the process pared down and reimagined ideas about the home.

Many of the classics were designed for specific commissions, so the architects were thinking in broad strokes while responding to the problems at hand. The Barrel Chair was originally created for a client named Darwin D. Martin in the early 1900s and modified in 1937 for the Wingspread house of Herbert Fisk Johnson Jr., of Johnson & Johnson fame. And van der Rohe created the Barcelona Chair for the King and Queen of Spain to

sit on inside his showpiece German Pavilion for the Barcelona World's Fair of 1929.

Now a new generation of architects is using the latest technologies to create industrial designs, not unlike the heyday of the early modernists. Among them is James Cutler, FAIA, Cutler Anderson Architects, Bainbridge Island, Wash., who

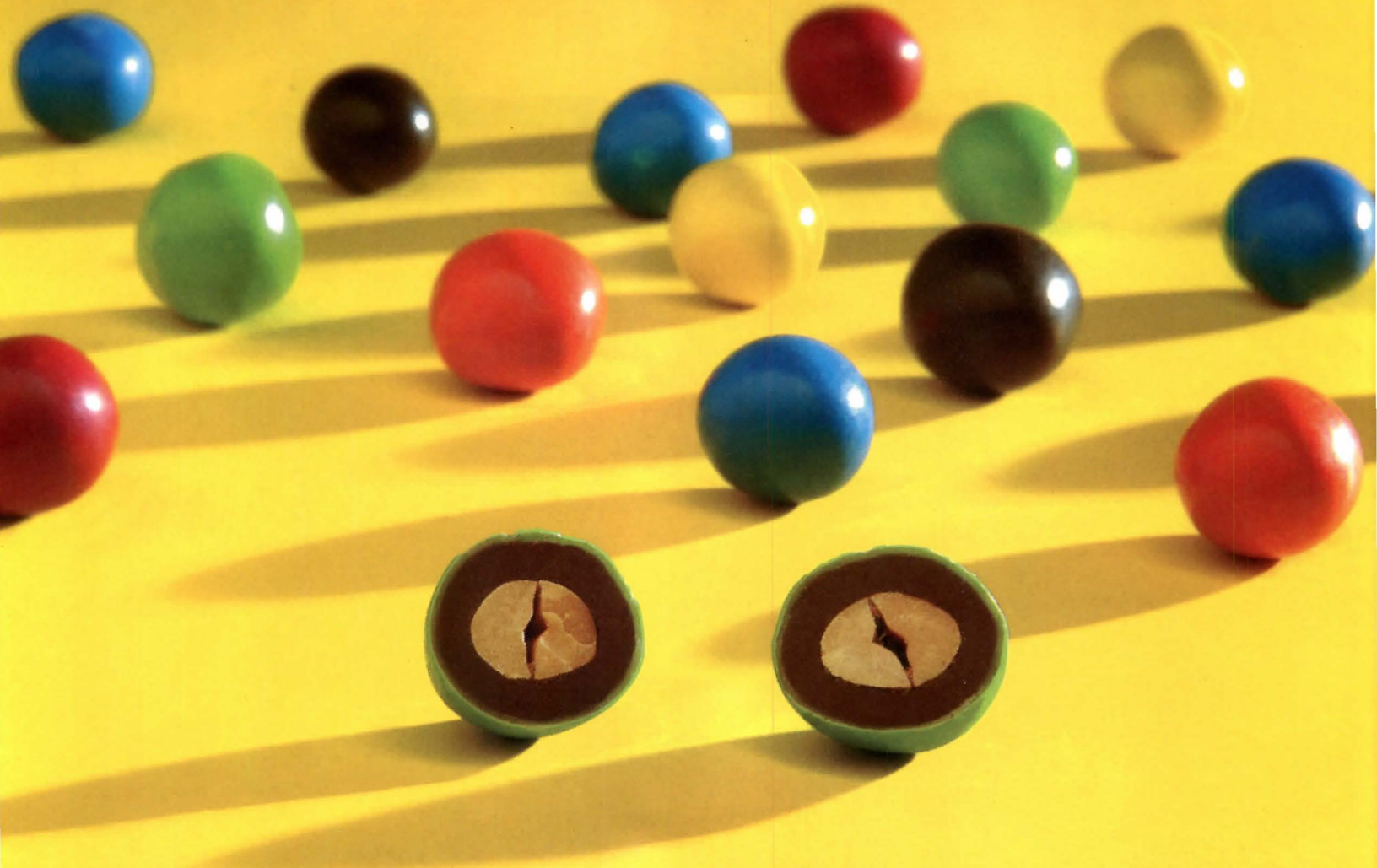
sells furniture and hardware through Reveal Designs of White Plains, N.Y. "I would so love to be an industrial designer," he says. "When you're designing a building, there are hundreds of people you have to get to move in the same direction. When you design an object, it's you and the pencil and the manufacturer."

He isn't the only architect to think so. Others—including, most famously, Frank Gehry, FAIA, and Zaha Hadid, Hon. FAIA—are producing furniture and objects people touch every day. And while there will always be demand in the art world for limited-edition work by star architects, it's

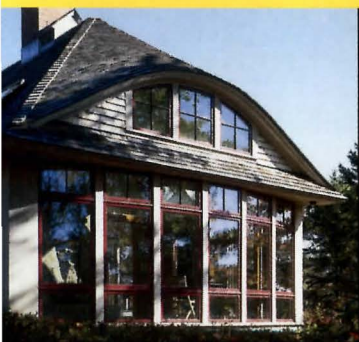
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worth asking the everyday question: What qualities of industrial design lead to long-term value and collector interest? What past work continues to appeal to new generations of buyers, and

"You *see* the connections," he says, adding that when work is true to the nature of a place or material or function, it will be timeless.

Joeb Moore, AIA, principal of Greenwich, Conn.-

"works that consistently have the most market value are inherently zoomorphic or biomorphic, sexy, curvy. they look like sculpture, as well as being classical works of furniture."

—james zemaitis

what clues might they give us for the future?

the power of one

Ask Cutler if he's pondered these questions, and he'll say they've never crossed his mind. But he simply approaches the issue of cultural and aesthetic impact from a different direction. "With our buildings and anything we do, we're trying to describe reality and display it for other people," he says. "If you look at the door handles we've sold, their strength lies mostly in understanding how the hand wants to operate something, the nature and strength of the materials, and the mechanical relationship of all the parts." His elegantly spare lever door handles are made of a flat metal bar that wraps around and through a round metal shaft that activates the locking mechanism, and a gently curving slip of wood on top that feels warm to the touch.

based Joeb + Partners, Architects, has come to the same conclusion. What will make an object valuable 50 years from now? "According to curators we spoke to, objects that are put into collections, especially from the mid-century, have this primitive formal/functional relationship," he says, "where function and form are direct expressions of each other." Moore, who launched in November a line of domestic products ranging from extra-small (door pulls) to extra-extra-large (a 15-foot-by-15-foot portable studio), believes that architects' current foray into industrial design is a systemic shift that's been building over the course of the last decade. His product categories are a witty take on the idea that architects aren't just putting bricks in place but organizing the entire visual field, and that carries over to all scales of the environment.

The way Moore sees it, "advanced consumerism" is driving one side of this phenomenon. People want immediate gratification, yet designing and engineering a high-end custom home has never been more complex, time-consuming, and expensive. "Sophisticated clients understand they can go to Madison Avenue or Greenwich Avenue and walk into Prada and buy a product for \$10,000 that's right there on the shelf," he explains. "It's personal and exclusive, but mass-produced. As an architect you have to find ways—instead of having to go through prototyping, testing, and getting it into one house—to take those architect-designed details and market them to a wider audience."

Following the lead of last century's modernists, Moore began designing objects when he couldn't find the right ready-made solutions. His art-piece pocket door pull, for example, was invented as a simpler solution to the usual hardware installed on each side of the door. By carving away part of the narrow side and inserting a handsome metal bar that can be grasped from either side, he made a design detail out of the act of opening and closing the door. The hardware looks like what it does, and is devoid of masking or ornamentation.

When it comes to furniture, there's no shortage of manifestos from which to draw. What the classics all

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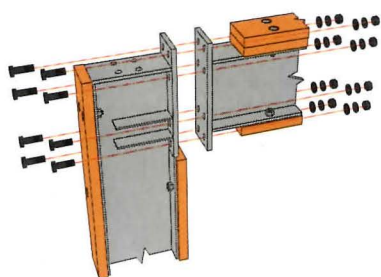
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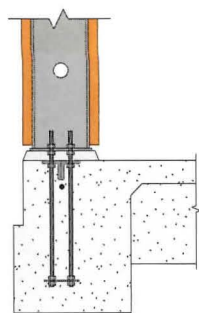


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practice

have in common are striking proportions, seductive materials or forms, and beautifully executed ideas—the same as signature homes. Wright's Barrel Chair sells well not only because it's attractive by itself, but because it epitomizes his work. "It says Frank Lloyd Wright the minute you see it," says Oskar Muñoz, assistant director of the Frank Lloyd Wright Archives and director of licensing at Taliesin West, Scottsdale, Ariz. "It's clearly not a Stickley piece and not Arts & Crafts, but it can go in an Arts & Crafts interior or a mid-century modern interior."

Those are the principles that have guided Deborah Berke, FAIA, in designing the special-order wood, glass, and steel furniture she distills from one-off commissions. "I feel the pieces designed for a certain person or house or hotel with a certain art collection or palette of materials—those are the things that will have long-term value, because they really are no different than a building created by me," says Berke, principal of Deborah Berke & Partners Architects in New York City. "We see their value as being so simple as to be timeless."

Indeed, not everyone can own an architect-designed house. But furniture is more accessible—a way for people to have a piece of the architect's aesthetic. Rudolph Schindler devotees, for example, can purchase reproductions of

the raw redwood furniture he designed for the well-known Kings Road House. "The original furniture was made out of scraps of redwood from the house, so it's very tied to the architecture

probably have the most value," Radziner says. "Ours are expensive and time-consuming to construct, so there's not that many of them out there, versus a piece that's mass-produced."

"according to curators we spoke to, objects that are put into collections, especially from the mid-century, have this formal/functional relationship, where function and form are direct expressions of each other."

—joeb moore, aia

he was working on at the time," says Ron Radziner, FAIA, whose firm, Marmol Radziner + Associates, Los Angeles, is licensed to produce and sell the pricey, wire-brushed reproductions through the MAK Center for Art and Architecture in West Hollywood, Calif.

In their own shop, Radziner and firm co-founder Leo Marmol, FAIA, also painstakingly produce small quantities of furniture based on the long, thin houses they like to design. Their product design affiliate, Marmol Radziner Furniture, sells about 100 pieces a year, which are modifications of furniture from the firm's Glencoe Residence and prototype prefab Desert House. Every item is numbered and dated, making it potentially more valuable down the road. "Although the Barcelona Chair is still made, those earlier versions

art for everyman

It's easy to see why collectors covet limited-edition furniture made by top-tier architects. But furniture that's less about space and more about the body may fare better in the long run. As Radziner points out, neither Schindler's nor Wright's furniture is particularly comfortable, compared to work by, say, Charles and Ray Eames. "With Eames comes the sense that they were really crafting it for the body, exploring materiality by bending and forming plywood," he says, and that they "were less encumbered by imagining the piece in a particular place."

Eames' chairs—including the Lounge Chair and Ottoman, Molded Plastic Chairs, Aluminum Group, and Molded Plywood Chairs—are among Herman Miller's most iconic pieces.

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practice

Outwardly sculptural, yet with an ingrained sensibility for daily use, they were designed around the human body before the word “ergonomic” was coined, says Gregg Vander Kooi, classics manager for Herman Miller for the Home, Zeeland, Mich. “One of the key design traits of mid-century modern furniture is the use of simple, honest materials,” he says. “It’s this trait that allows consumers to appreciate design for what it is. It’s also this trait that I feel inspires contemporary designers, which you can see translated into forms outside of furniture.”

Another hot item for Herman Miller is the

of time and talent

auction houses are cultural hunter-gathers unrestricted by eras or prevailing tastes, and there’s no predicting the vicissitudes of period trends. But right now, postwar and contemporary design is commanding the highest prices at auction, says James Zemaitis, senior vice president and director of 20th-century design at Sotheby’s, New York City. The hot items range from work by American mid-century modernists and French postwar architects to contemporary designers. “That doesn’t mean that prices for important prewar 20th-century design—Greene and Greene, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Tiffany—haven’t also been increasing at a rapid rate,” he says. “Trends are driven by interior designers, museum shows, and the media. Today you have serious collectors in all areas. But the press writes about what’s new and contemporary.”

sinuous coffee table by Isamu Noguchi, who made his mark in the 1940s doing biomorphic sculptures. With a retail price of around \$1,195, it’s within reach of the average consumer, as are his popular Akari lamps. “His objects can fit into so many different settings,

even with antiques,” says Douglas de Nicola, design director of The Noguchi Museum, Long Island City, N.Y. “The coffee table’s timelessness is its simplicity and clarity; it makes a statement and makes the room. He wanted to enhance the quality of people’s lives.

You can live with art: that was his mind-set.”

collector value

What impact the continued availability of new mid-century modern furniture has on vintage objects depends on the piece and the marketing approach.

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This interest is fueled by today's fast-moving art market and a network of important fairs, such as Art Basel Miami Beach, that show product design in context with contemporary art, he says. There are also more auction houses than there were 10 years ago, and more art and design to choose from. That's because young, contemporary designers are savvier than previous generations about finding gallery reps and auction houses and doing limited editions. Over the years, "the auction market went from being open only to trade and antiques dealers to receiving constant attention in the way movies receive box office attention," Zemaitis says. As a result, "industrial designs made in 2007, exhibited at a specific show, and retailed through a gallery can almost immediately be flipped on the auction market in 2008."

So far, however, only a handful of contemporary architects are successfully navigating this circuit. According to Zemaitis, 90 percent of the furniture makers he works with today are industrial designers.—c.w.

Noguchi originally made 10 chess tables for Herman Miller, and the company later reissued 10 more. "We priced them at \$25,000 and sold" all but one, de Nicola says. "The vintage ones are probably more valuable, but who knows what the re-versions will be worth in

the future?" When pieces are reintroduced after years out of production, the vintage market doesn't necessarily collapse. "The reverse sometimes happens," says Vander Kooi. "As consumers experience a wider breadth of designers' collections, they gain a greater

appreciation for their depth of talent."

At auction houses, unique furnishings from specific commissions fetch the highest prices, according to James Zemaitis, senior vice president and director of 20th-century design at Sotheby's in New York

City. Most of the work he sells from that period is by architects, not industrial or interior designers. "We're [on the lookout for] artifacts that should be in museums and original houses open to the public but are not," he says. "On the other hand, built-ins by Richard Neutra have less value once they're removed from interiors, because they might not have the same presence.

Chairs that can stand on their own—like the Barrel Chair—still have a sculptural quality and epitomize the work of the architects." Likewise, he adds, the prototypes for a Herman Miller commission have more market value than the

continued on page 26

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From Zemaitis' perspective, today's architects have several options. They can design one-off pieces for clients for posterity, have their work mass-produced and hope it's a commercial success, or work with a gallery to create a limited number of specific pieces. "You have to be an incredible 'boldface' name to capitalize on the limited-edition market, to be honest," he says. But regardless of the venue, Zemaitis has one word for what endures: organic. "Works that consistently have the most market value are inherently zoomorphic or biomorphic,

sexy, curvy," he says.

"They look like sculpture, as well as being classical works of furniture."

Even if only the most famous find large-scale success selling limited editions in their lifetime, Benjamin Pardo, senior vice president of design at Knoll, says any architect with a striking concept can profit from mass marketing. But it takes someone who understands interiors—a strong suit of residential architects. "The largest group of architects thinks about a building's exterior, not necessarily circulation," he says. "The question becomes: What is the object we're putting in a space?"

The way Pardo sees

it, furniture either creates interior architecture—think of a Florence Knoll sofa—or is a foil for it, meaning an organic form such as a Bertoia or Saarinen chair that represents the human in space. "The interesting thing about Saarinen is that he went to Paris and studied sculpture. When you're looking at any of his work, remember that," Pardo says. "At the end of the day you need all those things: the big box sofa that creates architectural space, and the organizing piece that represents the figure or person, like the Womb Chair. Something in the space that calls attention to itself, some form of visual delight."

Ultimately, the pursuit of

visual delight is what motivates all architects. That, and objects that stand the tests of usability and time. But Cutler, recalling a conversation he had with his longtime mentor Peter Q. Bohlin, FAIA, says that you can't try to make something timeless. It just is, or it isn't. "For a while, mid-century modern was the worst thing in the world," he says. "That's just the nature of cultures. Time tells you what was good and bad in a period; the good stuff ultimately falls out." *ra*

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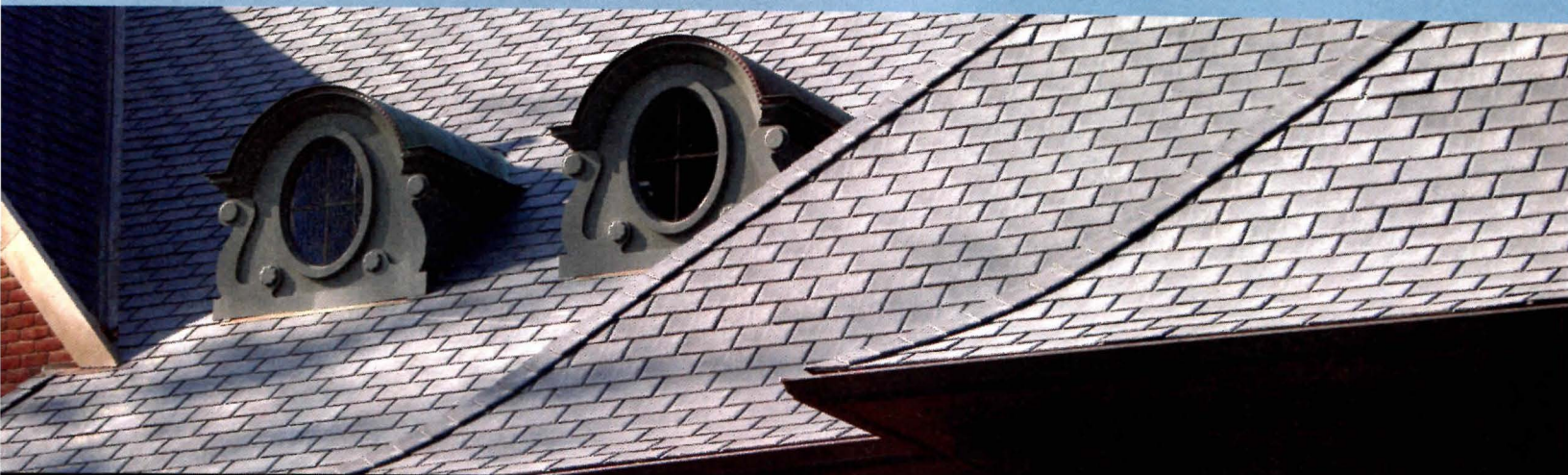
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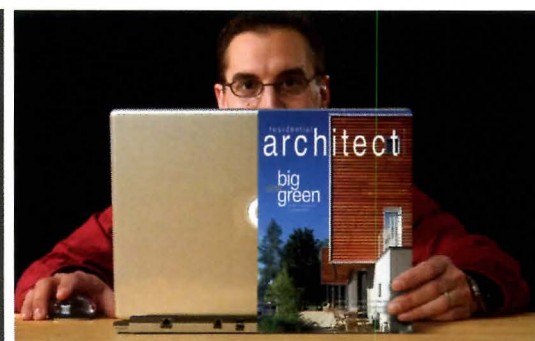


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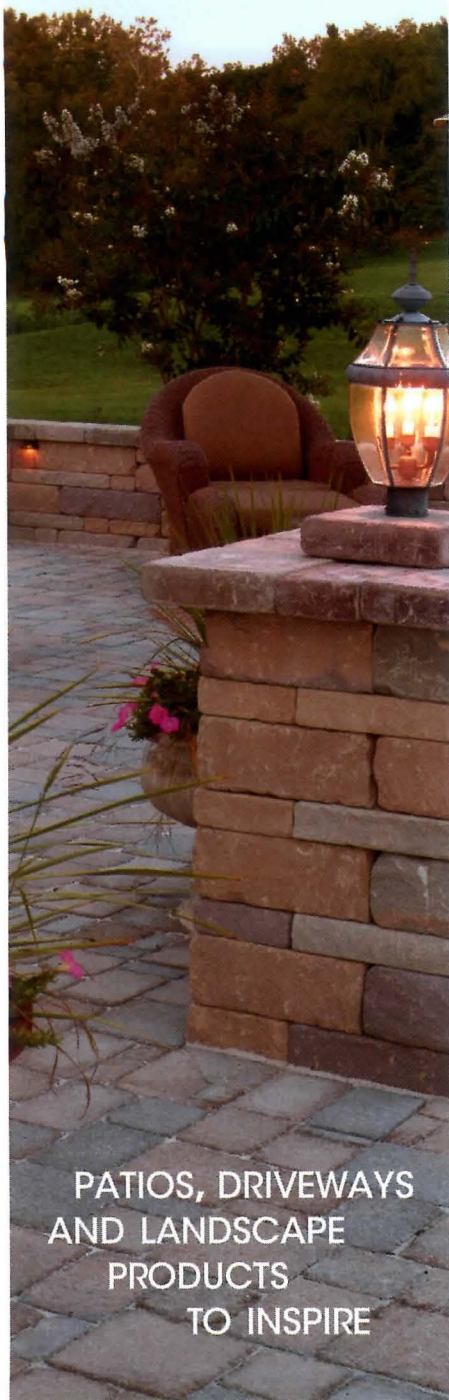
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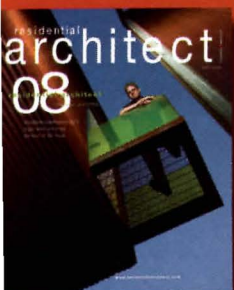
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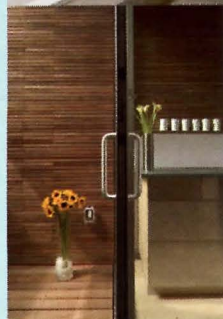
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2008 leadership awards

this year's winners don't just design houses, they're reinventing how housing gets designed and delivered.

top firm:

michelle kaufmann, aia, leed ap

*michelle kaufmann designs
oakland, calif.*

michelle kaufmann infuses modular housing with sophisticated, eco-conscious design.

by meghan drueding



Max Whittaker/WpN

It all started with a headache. In 2001 Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, LEED AP, and her new husband, general contractor and wood craftsman Kevin Cullen, moved into a rented bungalow in Sausalito, Calif. She experienced one migraine, then another. Soon the pain became an unwelcome nightly ritual for which she and Cullen couldn't pinpoint a trigger.

Until they investigated inside the bungalow's walls and found an unchecked spread of toxic mold. The mold, it turned out, was causing the headaches. But it also caused Kaufmann—who'd spent the previous five years working for Frank Gehry, FAIA—to begin thinking about the impact people's

homes have on their health. She researched nontoxic materials and products, becoming more intrigued with every discovery. When she and Cullen decided to look for a different house, they noticed that many of the features they wanted—natural light, fresh air, and low energy bills, along with a definite absence of mold—fell into the green building category.

Discouraged by a lack of available green housing options, they decided to design and build their own home on land they'd bought about 25 miles north of San Francisco. The events that followed have been well-documented in the press: Kaufmann designed a house for Cullen to build, and friends and colleagues asked if they could have something



Michelle Kaufmann (opposite, in her own Glidehouse) and her staff consistently try to maximize the relationship between house and site. A Sunset Breezehouse in San Geronimo, Calif. (above and right), welcomes sunlight and mountain views into its central dining and living room and its cobalt-blue kitchen.



Photos: John Swain, courtesy Michelle Kaufmann Designs



The rusted, corrugated metal cladding on a custom Sunset Breezehouse picks up the red hue of the tiled roofs that populate its Santa Barbara, Calif., surroundings. Accordion glass doors and floor-to-ceiling curtains allow the owners to control air flow and privacy in the main living and dining area.



similar. Their requests sparked her idea of mass-producing the design. She found an interested factory and a client willing to take a chance on a prefab house. In the end, Kaufmann and Cullen's stick-built home took 14 months to construct, while the identical

prefab version took just four months and cost 20 percent less. It also produced, according to her calculations, 50 percent to 75 percent less construction waste.

The stark contrast between the two projects sold Kaufmann on the virtues of prefab. "I became so focused on my mission, which is to make thoughtful, sustainable design

accessible," she says. "Everybody should be able to have a green house. For it to be accessible, it has to be time-efficient, cost-efficient, and easy."

easy does it

In the five years since she started her firm, the Iowa State University- and Princeton University-educated Kaufmann has made remarkable progress in achieving this mission. Michelle Kaufmann Designs (MKD) has built 33 green, modular homes to date, mostly on the West Coast. Some have been custom. Others are off-the-shelf or "preconfigured" residences, such as the Glidehouse, which is based on her own home, and the Sunset Breezhouse, which features a central space that opens to the outdoors. Other preconfigured offerings include mkSolaire, designed specifically for narrow urban lots; mkLotus, a retreat or vacation home; and the new mkHearth, a modern farmhouse based on barns in Kaufmann's native Iowa. (All preconfigured houses are tailored to the owners' sites and offer a carefully vetted palette of eco-friendly materials and systems.) Thirty employees buzz busily around the

firm's Oakland, Calif., headquarters, which possesses the same design sensibilities as its houses: clean lines; simple, yet high-quality materials; and an overall sense of calm and order.

Since 2006, the firm has built many projects in its own factory, mkConstructs, in Lakewood, Wash. MKD purchased it from another modular housing company, retaining much of the existing staff and recruiting new workers to ensure the highest possible building quality. "Now we're taking what we've learned in all the construction phases and applying that to our designs," says Paul Warner, AIA, a principal at MKD who oversaw the transition to an in-house factory. "We're taking advantage of the fact that we are true design/builders." Kaufmann believes one of her firm's biggest strengths is its ability to learn from its mistakes, and being closely involved with the factory process gives her and her staff more opportunity to do so.

This trial-and-error approach also came in handy when she realized that her original idea of having a traditional real estate broker handle sales just didn't fit MKD's identity. "For us it's about helping guide people through complex choices," she says. "That's a very different thing." Now, the company's business development strategy centers on gently educating potential clients about sustainable design and modular building, as well as walking current customers through the design and construction process. The firm's Web site even features a series of how-to videos showing Kaufmann making green, do-it-yourself home crafts projects. "It's an entry point into green—an effort to meet people where they are," she explains.

mission control

For Kaufmann to truly accomplish her mission of providing cost-effective, sustainable housing, she'll need to achieve greater scale. She's already started, having signed on with developers to create assisted-living multi-family housing in Half Moon Bay, Calif.; 24 townhomes in San Leandro, Calif.; a



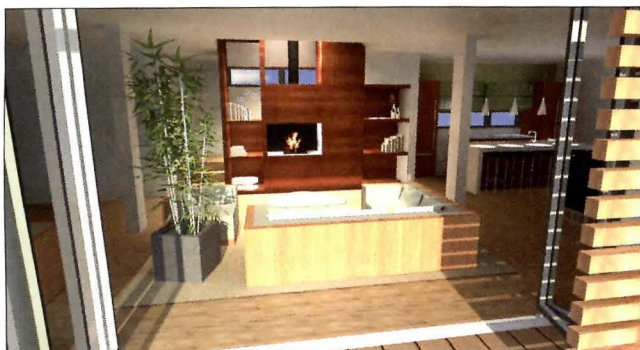
By creating entire communities—such as Big Wave in Half Moon Bay, Calif. (above), and a mixed-use, mixed-income development in Denver (top)—MKD will be able to vastly increase the number of sustainable dwellings in its portfolio.



Kaufmann and her husband outfitted their Glidehouse (above and left) with solar panels. At another Glidehouse in Ukiah, Calif. (top), the kitchen island doubles as a casual dining spot. "We're in the middle of a cultural shift," she says of this move toward multipurpose features. "We want homes that aren't necessarily bigger but do more, like an iPhone. We want to pack more into them."

Photos: John Swain, courtesy Michelle Kaufmann Designs

A three-story fireplace-and-cabinetry element serves as the centerpiece of the mkHearth, the latest addition to MKD's stable of prefab home types. Its form recalls barns and farmhouses in the Midwest, where Kaufmann grew up.



Renderings: Courtesy Michelle Kaufmann Designs

2008 leadership awards

community for a group of Benedictine monks in Big Sur, Calif.; and a 122-unit mixed-income project in Denver. (Coincidentally, part of the Denver project will provide housing for Franciscan nuns; Kaufmann speculates that her emphasis on restful, serene spaces may attract those with a strong spiritual bent.)

Using mid-century housing pioneer Joseph Eichler as a model, she hopes to have 475 homes built by 2010 and 10,000 by 2015. "Then the energy savings, water savings, and carbon savings will get really interesting," she says. MKD itself takes on liability for the units, which appeals to developers managing their risks in a slow housing market. It's a burden Kaufmann feels comfortable handling, given her firm's setup as a sort of industrial design firm that happens to make houses. "We find what we believe to be the best balance of being beautiful, sustainable, low-maintenance, and long-lasting," she says. "Adding on that layer of liability means we *really* care. If we were just the architect or just the builder, we might make different choices."

A common knock on prefab housing is that it's been tried for decades and never fully succeeded, at least not in the United States. "In Japan, if you're doing a high-end home, you *want* it built in a factory," Kaufmann points out. The American tendency to associate modular housing with trailer homes is slowly going away, thanks in part to her efforts. She also believes consumers are growing more attuned to energy savings. In areas with high labor costs, she estimates

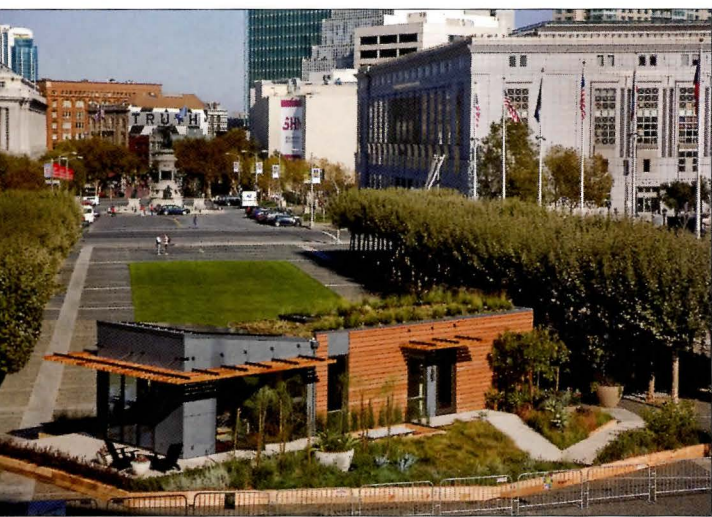
that her homes can cost 20 percent less than their stick-built counterparts. But no matter where they are, their operating costs will be lower than most houses due to their energy-efficient and water-conserving traits.

As important as the energy issue is, Kaufmann cites communication technology as the

key to the current prefab wave. "Technology unlocks geography," she says. "If your range is within 60 miles, it's tougher to achieve scale. We don't have those limitations." In 2007 she brought on a principal from the high-tech world, Lisa Gansky, to join her, Warner, and principals Scott Landry, AIA, and Joseph Remick, AIA. Gansky—co-founder of Ofoto, the online photo-sharing company that is now Kodak Gallery—has helped the firm develop an innovative software tool called the Configurator. Debuting in January 2009, the Configurator will let potential clients easily walk through different MKD homes online, trying different materials, finishes, and systems. In a particularly ingenious twist, it will also let them set filters per their own environmental preferences; if, say, water conservation is their top priority, they can set the Configurator accordingly.

Although Kaufmann's lofty goals demand a forward-thinking mind-set, she hasn't forgotten the basics. "There's so much to be learned from an Italian courtyard house or a barn in terms of light and airflow," she says. The office's many talented architects and designers share her passion for suffusing spaces with natural light, uniting indoor and outdoor rooms, and making maximum use of square footage and materials. Kaufmann also embraces the personal aspect of her work, thinking about each home as if she herself were going to live there. If she can find a way to maintain that overall sense of care and connection as she moves into community design, she and her staff just might crack the prefab code once and for all. For now, she'll keep planting pockets of prebuilt beauty, improving our battered landscape one dwelling at a time. *ra*

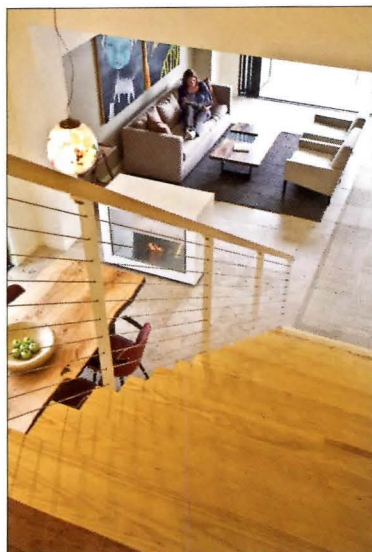
To learn about the "Sustainability Facts" labeling program Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, LEED AP, has proposed for homes, visit <http://tinyurl.com/3r3qqx>. To read Kaufmann's reflections on her years working for Frank Gehry, FAIA, visit www.residentialarchitect.com.



A green-roofed mkLotus temporarily graced the lawn in front of San Francisco City Hall in 2007. Conceived as a retreat or vacation home, it was installed as part of that year's West Coast Green conference.



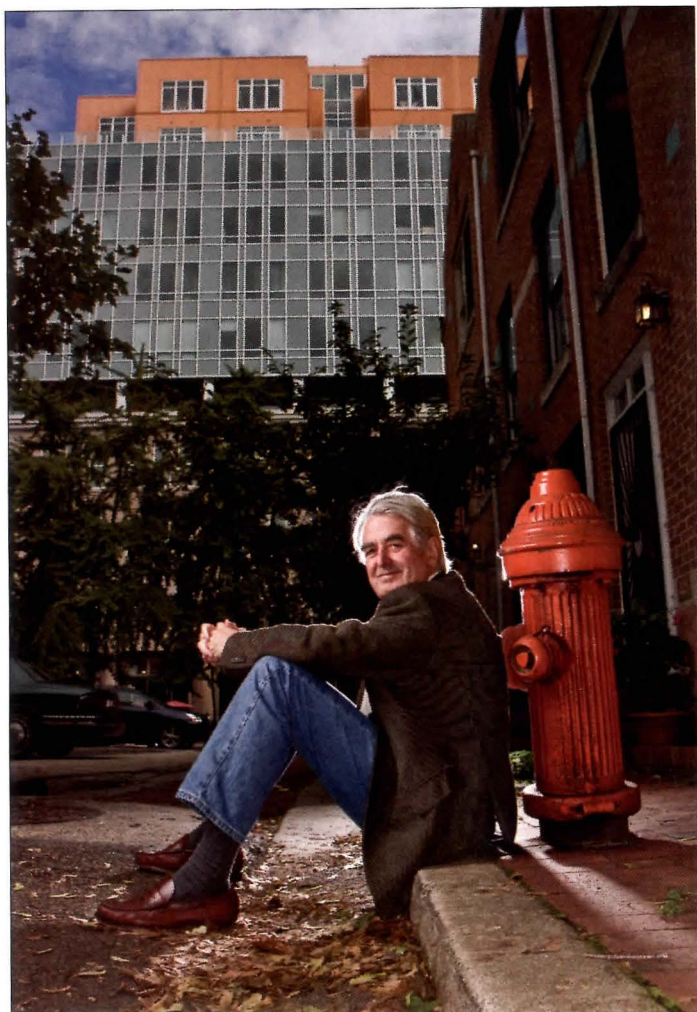
JB Spector, courtesy Michelle Kaufmann Designs



Currently on display at Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry as part of the exhibit *Smart Home: Green + Wired*, mkSolaire is designed to slip into slim city lots. The 2,500-square-foot house will be open for tours through Jan. 4, 2009.



Photos: John Swain, courtesy Michelle Kaufmann Designs



Bill Cramer/Wonderful Machine

hall of fame:

f. cecil baker, aia

cecil baker + partners
philadelphia

cecil baker's graceful work and bold risk taking have contributed significantly to his city's revitalization.

by cheryl weber

For a young architect in Philadelphia, 1972 was a bad year to be starting a business. There was an energy crisis, the U.S. federal deficit had topped \$400 billion, unemployment hovered around 6 percent, and *TIME* magazine ran a cover with the question: "Is the U.S. Going Broke?" With no design work to support them, F. Cecil Baker, AIA, and the three architects he'd chosen as partners pooled their limited resources to buy an abandoned factory in a derelict part of town. Over the next year and a half, they rebuilt Candy Factory Court with their own hands, turning it into light-filled, modern townhouses that maintained the historic fabric of the urban neighborhood. The project put the firm, BRHB Developers, on the map, and the partners spent the next decade reinvigorating more than \$30 million worth of real estate in Philadelphia's forgotten industrial corridors.

By 1982, coinciding with another deep recession, Baker was ready to pursue a more conventional design practice on his own. Soon after startup, he landed an office complex commission in Austin, Texas, that got him through the trough. And he used the slow time to teach himself CAD. "Recessions have defined my career," he says. It's prescient, then, that the *residential architect* Hall of Fame award comes at a moment when the economy is in another financial wringer. Coincidentally, his professional leadership points the way toward survival in tough times. Those challenging early years helped shape the design ethic of Cecil Baker + Partners, which is rooted in resourcefulness, simplicity, and a strong sense of place.

Among the multiple strands of Baker's success is his penchant for finding the abstract patterns in urban architecture. He picks up



Cecil Baker revels in the "flywheel of energy" in Philadelphia, where he lives and works. His recent 100-unit condo project, the Western Union Building (above and left), rises above the narrow residential streets of Washington Square West.



A glass box floats above the four-story, 1922 Art Deco Western Union Building, separated by a shadow line of terraces just above the existing cornice (far left). A new tower anchors the adjacent street corner (left). Clad in copper-colored metal panels and black brick, the building dematerializes, helping to maintain the residential character of its neighbors.

Photos: Courtesy Cecil Baker + Partners

Completed in 2000 for less than \$200,000, three infill townhouses on 11th Street rethink traditional residential elements—the Mansard roof, the corbelled party wall, and the block's storefront cornices. A vertical glass reveal skews conventional row house symmetry, blurring the line between units. Quintessential brick façades give way to light, airy interiors.



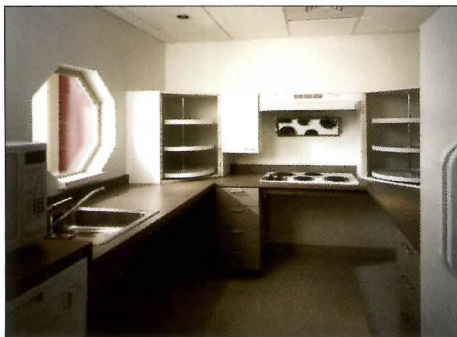
Photos (above and right): @Tom Crane Photography



Halkin Photography



2008 leadership awards



At Inglis Gardens at Eastwick (1998), continuous porches encourage socializing among low-income residents with chronic disabilities. The simple brick base and rhythmic A-frame roofs kept costs down while integrating playfully with neighboring homes.

on the city's Colonial elements, but there's nothing Colonial about his buildings. In that regard, Baker likens himself to a sculptor who, rather than approaching a piece of stone with preconceived notions of what it should be, looks into the nooks and crannies to see what's there. "The form of the architecture is already buried in the stone, so context is enormous," he says. "I don't bring a vision to anything. I let everything into my palette and connect all that to the framework in which we live. I turn everything upside down and try to distill it to its basic ideas and proportions."

Baker has become an architect's architect, admired by his peers for making buildings that fit in, yet are slightly askew. A hallmark of his residential work—from low-income housing to a recent penthouse without a budget cap—is its mix of calming symmetry and restless asymmetry. It could be a metaphor for the city itself, in which a streetscape becomes an ordered backdrop for the quirky energy of urban life. Ed Bronstein, AIA, a local architect-turned-painter, is a fan of Baker's work. "There's a wonderful subtlety to everything Cecil does," Bronstein says. "I love his architecture because it compels you to look closely and enjoy every detail of it." He adds: "A group of us got together every month for many years to talk about common problems with our practices. I never got a sense of competition from him."

mystery and simplicity

Tall, soft-spoken, and refined, Baker is the son of British parents who met on a boat sailing to Argentina, married, and settled in the arid high plains of the Andes foothills. He traces his architectural awakening to Los Alamos, an 1890s Argentine camp house that his parents' friends used as an artist's salon. Baker was amazed by the simple, rectangular building framed by verandas, its lovely tall rooms and thick adobe walls. "I sensed the sensuality of the house," he says. "It placed value on mystery and yet, on simplicity. It stayed with me, and when I came to this country and saw Luis Barragán's architecture, there was an 'aha' moment."

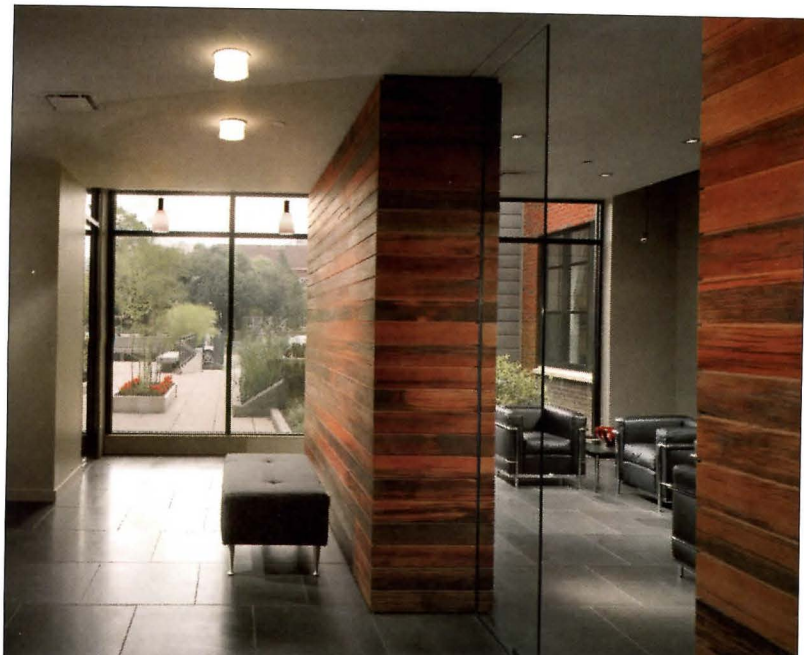
Baker came to the United States to attend Williams College in Massachusetts and went on to graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied with Louis Kahn. After finishing up in 1967, he stayed in town to accept a job offer from Louis Sauer, FAIA, a prolific housing architect with projects across the country. Sauer was the mentor who taught Baker the most important lesson of his career: to set up architecture with readily available building components. "What I learned from Lou is this fundamental practicality," he says. "From those standard systems you create modules, and these modules became the tools by which you then generated the entire project. The architecture was unquestionably modern but had this geometric rigor that brought out the joy in practicality. If you're not cutting every 2x4, you're saving money to be put into some other generosity on the project."

It's a philosophy Baker still brings to every project. He calls it "spending money on the sunny side of the drywall," and in adaptive reuse it means embracing the poetry of what's there instead of, say, tearing out walls and inserting steel beams that are hidden by drywall. At the candy factory, for example, the chocolate vats became part of the architecture, and rooms were made to feel larger through the use of what he terms "quiet theater"—diffused light, borrowed views, materials that blur the vertical and horizontal planes, and spaces that alternate between restlessness and repose.

urban patterns

Baker has found his passion in designing architecture that makes art out of the gritty details of everyday life. "I am invested in the simple shapes of kindergarten architecture," he wrote for a recent lecture. "This landscape has the power to lift us above the complexities and contradictions, the superfluous clutter of our lives. Simplicity has the potential to resolve the visual chaos around us."

Over the years, local community leaders have enlisted this magical touch. In 1996, Paul Levy—then head of the Central Philadelphia Development Corp.—looked across



Photos: Halkin Photography



Courtesy Cecil Baker + Partners

Built on the site of a former auto service station and warehouse, the 60-unit York Square matches the height of an adjacent warehouse and steps back at the corners to echo the row house rhythms across the street. Brick and zinc panels marry old industrial materials with 21st-century patterns. Inside, stacked salvaged lumber creates lobby partitions (above left).

the city and saw a profusion of vibrant sidewalk storefronts with abandoned real estate above. Retailers, with no use for the second story, had removed the stairs to get an extra bit of square footage. That meant leaks went unnoticed, and the buildings were rotting from the top down. Levy asked Baker to do a study for 10 of the buildings to determine how their upper floors might be made into residential use. The plans were financially unfeasible for investors with modest purchasing power, but the seed had been planted. Levy went on to propose a tax-abatement program that would lift property taxes on the renovated buildings for 10 years. Its enactment was followed by other initiatives; banks began seeing the neighborhoods as good places to put their money, and thousands of buildings were brought back to life.

Baker's enthusiasm for such collaborative work continues. He lives a few blocks from his office on Walnut Street, just off Washington Square. In a firm of six employees, including partners Nancy Bastian, AIA, and Eric Leighton, AIA, residential projects comprise about a third of the work. Whether it's an unassuming West Philadelphia row house or a luxury penthouse apartment, "Cecil is a wizard at creating spaces that inspire the people who live in them," Bastian says. "We worked on an awful apartment building that had a fire. The units were pretty sub-standard, and he figured out a scheme so that each of the 47 units would have something that makes them special. Maybe not a good view but a lot of light—something that made it memorable in some way. There's a real thoughtfulness and care brought to anything Cecil does. It keeps us all on our toes." **ra**



Steven Meckler

Working with extreme desert conditions rather than fighting against them, Luis Ibarra and Teresa Rosano fashioned hardy materials like galvanized steel and concrete into elegant tableaux on the Winter Residence (right).



rising star:

**luis ibarra and teresa rosano,
ra, leed ap**

*ibarra rosano design architects
tucson, ariz.*

arizona mavericks luis ibarra and teresa rosano are making dreams come true—one thoughtful house at a time.

by shelley d. hutchins

Luis Ibarra just had one of his original music compositions performed by a local high school orchestra. Teresa Rosano, RA, LEED AP, is about to test for her black belt in karate. Houses in Six, the couple's latest development venture, are selling before they're built, and their five-person firm has been tapped to work with Will Bruder, AIA, among others, on a 76-acre mixed-use development in Glendale, Ariz. Things are going well for the husband-and-wife team, who just nine years ago used prize money from a kitchen design competition to launch their own firm.

That award-winning kitchen is in Ibarra and Rosano's house—the testing ground for endless experiments with new techniques and materials. "It's a lab for ideas," Ibarra confirms. "There are pieces of our house that you'll see in our other projects." They bought and began renovating the house as an outlet for their modernist tendencies while working for Vint & Associates Architects. Although their former firm favors a more traditional aesthetic, Ibarra and Rosano learned there that the fundamentals of good architecture have nothing to do with style and everything to do with the relationship of a building to its site. Out on their own, the couple continue to infuse their contemporary structures with historical references. "We combine modern aesthetics with an idea of place," Ibarra says.

For them, the place in question is the high desert in and around Tucson, Ariz. Both native Tucsonans, they understand all too well

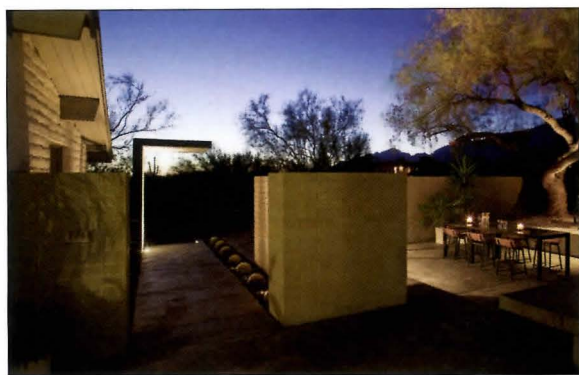


Even as a fledgling firm designing its first new house, Ibarra Rosano let the landscape lead the design. The Garcia Residence's concrete block structure follows the contours of the steep hillside lot, while its thermal mass works wonders in keeping interiors cool. Oversized, loftlike windows carefully frame the dramatic scenery.



Photos: Bill Timmerman

2008 leadership awards



Photos: Bill Timmerman

Ibarra and Rosano used their landscaping design prowess to transform a side door into a grand entrance for the Moltz landscape commission. The abstract entry arch also draws guests toward the outdoor living area, with its desert-viewing platform.

that the most dramatic aspects of this locale—incredible heat, intense sun, and limited rainfall—also present the biggest design challenges. To combat these extremes, the pair has found that indigenous construction techniques, including thick walls, earth-based building materials, courtyards, and strategic solar orientation, still pack the most punch for keeping desert structures cool.

Unfortunately, Ibarra and Rosano's hometown doesn't always recognize these important, locally specific solutions. "One of the frustrations of working here is that the city isn't really looking for architecture that fits," Ibarra says. Rosano adds that their time spent on various planning and political committees hasn't seemed to yield results. Now that their firm is gaining recognition, they plan to push a bit harder against zoning laws that favor sprawl instead of density. They'll also continue to show how sensitive architecture effects positive change. "We spend the majority of our lives and experiences at home," Ibarra explains, "so we feel we make a difference in many people's lives

by doing houses. But it's also great to create spaces that touch greater masses of people."

coming together

Ibarra cites Glenn Murcutt, Hon. FAIA, as his biggest influence.

Murcutt was a visiting professor at Ibarra's architecture school, The University of Arizona (UA), in the early 1990s—long before he won the Pritzker Prize and garnered international fame. Murcutt "really filled in a lot of gaps about archi-

tecture for me," Ibarra explains. He was particularly wowed by Murcutt's ability to design stunning buildings that nonetheless defer to their environment. (Like Murcutt, Ibarra Rosano does the landscape design for its projects.) Ibarra was also inspired by Murcutt's accomplishments as a sole practitioner. "Our business model is based on his practice. We have that same mission of staying small so we can stay hands-on and be selective about our projects."

Rosano met Ibarra at UA, but her journey to a career in architecture began much earlier. "When I was 1 year old, my father built our house out of adobe blocks that he made from earth on the site," Rosano says. "That imprinted my life." Rosano's father was a pneumatic control contractor and a metal artist. Her mother was also an artist and a teacher. That childhood filled with learning the mechanics of putting things together and appreciating beauty gives Rosano an eye for exquisite detail and a curiosity for figuring out new ways to build.

Ibarra asked Rosano to work with him on a project while in school; the collaboration went so well that they've been life and design partners ever since. Ibarra graduated in 1993 and went to work for Manuel Rojo. He recommended Rosano for an internship at Rojo's firm, where she continued to work after her graduation a year later. The couple then worked at different firms for a while, but both ended up working together again at Vint before leaving to start their own firm in 1999.

developing bonds

Officially, Ibarra Rosano Design Architects is less than a decade old, but its principals bought the house that launched the firm 12 years ago. They joke that their house will always be a work in progress. The addition of a backyard studio is one recent change. (For more on the firm's workspace, see page 80 in the January/February 2008 issue.) Currently under way is a remodel of their award-winning kitchen, because it was designed for a 900-square-foot house that "now is 2,600 square feet," Ibarra explains. Along with earning the couple national exposure and the funds to start their business, the award delivered the firm's first official whole-house client: a college acquaintance of Ibarra's who saw and admired the kitchen in a local newspaper.

The resulting Garcia Residence has since been published many times over and looks as fresh today as it did then. Created using commonplace materials (concrete, plywood, and steel) in lofty ways, the house reflects the couple's ongoing belief that thoughtful

The firm frequently uses enclosed courtyards, like this one at Six, to maximize cross-ventilation. Glulam beams form an extruded window seat overlooking the entry courtyard.



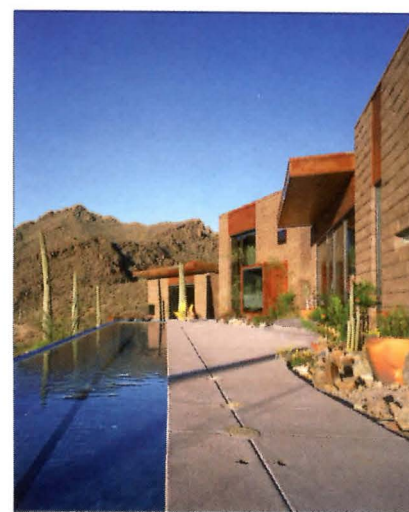
design can elevate even the most ordinary materials. The project also launched a long-time collaboration with general contractor (and fellow UA School of Architecture grad) Page Repp Jr., of Repp Design + Construction. The trio became fast friends and soon realized they had more than a passion for good design in common. Says Repp: "We have a similar idea of what we want to accomplish: to improve the quality of housing by providing a high level of design to people in an affordable way."

Driven by this shared mission, Ibarra and Rosano mortgaged their house to buy a vacant piece of land for a speculative project. Together with Repp and another set of believers, former clients Desi and Jerry Winter, the group formed a development company called Dreamspace. The empty lot became The Double—two houses designed on a tight budget and built with eco-friendly

materials. (For more on this project, see pages 58–59 in the January/February 2008 issue.) To date, Dreamspace has completed eight houses and a duplex. Indeed, Ibarra and Rosano's speculative work is so successful because they approach it as if it were custom work for an impassioned client.

The duo hope to apply their philosophies to more commercial and mixed-use projects that promote higher density. Until then, they continue to find inspiration in the surrounding landscape. There are a multitude of plants that thrive in the desert, says Ibarra, and each teaches a lesson of durable beauty in harmony with its surroundings. For Ibarra and Rosano—and their lucky clients—that's a lesson already learned. **ra**

To view more of Ibarra Rosano's landscaping work, visit www.residentialarchitect.com.



Integrated color in the split-faced concrete block helps the Downing Residence blend into its surrounding rock outcroppings.



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"If you only enter one contest, it has to be this one."
Barbara Houston
2006-2007 Judge
Vancouver, B.C.

production values

what it takes to bring alternative housing models to market.

by nigel f. maynard

Grant Kirkpatrick, AIA, found himself in a place that's familiar to architects: staring at a great site, wondering what type of house would do it justice. "We wanted it to be green and light and respectful of the land," says the founding principal of Los Angeles-based KAA Design Group. Because the property was located some 230 miles from his primary residence, he also wanted an efficient way to deliver a non-site-built house.

Although the mobile home doesn't have the best architectural reputation, KAA used the 85-year-old industry for inspiration, designing an attractive unit and finding a manufacturer to build it. The discovery also spawned a new venture: HOM Escape in Style, a line of KAA-designed modern manufactured houses and lifestyle products.

Indeed, architects know better than most that, when it comes to delivering an attractive home in line with a client's budget, the need for problem solving is acute. Such situations come with the territory and make the practice of architecture all the more exciting. Rather than simply finding solutions,



Courtesy KAA Design Group

KAA Design Group took two years to develop the HOM prototype, but the result is a sustainable, modern manufactured housing line priced at about \$200 per square foot. Three models are available.

some firms go further by turning their ideas into businesses that revolve around alternative housing models.

factory direct

How, exactly, does a design professional turn a one-time architectural solution into a full-fledged business? Those who have done it say it's crucial to investigate fully the possibilities of what you're proposing.

When Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, LEED AP, moved to Northern California, she encountered a dearth of affordable,

sustainable, well-designed homes. Believing off-site construction was the solution, she embarked on an experiment to build two houses—a modular unit for a client and a custom, site-built version for she and her husband, Kevin. Both houses measured 1,566 square feet and were created from the same house plans with the same materials, but the site-built house took 21 months to design, permit, and build and cost 20 percent more than the prefab home, which was completed in far less time.

Geoffrey Warner, AIA, principal of St. Paul, Minn.-based Alchemy Architects, took an even more hands-on approach for a small retreat he was doing. "The site was a couple of hours away, so it led to talk about prefabrication as a solution," he explains. He and his staff felt they'd have more control over the prefab process and learn from it if they built the structure themselves, so they did. But they also learned that if they wanted to pursue a prefab line, they would need to forge rela-

continued on page 48

tionships with factories that were capable of building their designs. "Most of the modular builders we found were doing modular homes in a suburban vernacular," Warner says. The trick, he adds, is forming a partnership with a factory that can produce your work.

Kaufmann, principal of Oakland, Calif.-based Michelle Kaufmann Designs, echoes the sentiment. "The biggest issue in launching our own line of modular designs was finding good factory partners to work with," she says. "That took quite a bit of time, especially on the West Coast."

Even when the factory is selected, a lot of work remains. For us "it was trial and error," Kirkpatrick recalls. It took less than three months for the first HOM to be delivered to the site once the order was placed, but working out the



Alchemy Architects believes prefab houses such as its Arado model offer significant advantages over site-built or partially prefabricated houses.

Courtesy Alchemy Architects

quite a bit of back and forth, and engineering, tooling, and sourcing."

Architects agree that working well with the factory is vital to the strength and quality of the homes. "Some manufacturers are bottom-feeders," Kirkpatrick says, so they care little for high design, "and most are resistant to different ideas." While developing HOM, he says KAA encountered manufacturers who balked at certain material selections, modern design, and architectural detailing.

According to Warner, Alchemy's work-around was to design for easy construction. "We tried to bend over backwards to design a house that can be built on a modular framework," he says. The firm designs its ceilings at 8 feet, for example, and uses 8-foot doors to avoid trim. It also bypasses complicated flourishes that could hold up the assembly line.

But there are other solutions. For Kaufmann and her team, "the best way for us to really maximize the benefits of our designs was

to have our own factory," she says. So, in 2006, they bought one. They've since found "a few good factory partners who also build our designs," she adds, but the bulk of the building is handled by Kaufmann-owned mkConstructs. (For more on Kaufmann and her housing solutions, see pages 32-37 in this issue.)

And then there's Marianne Cusato. The Coral Gables, Fla.-based designer doesn't have a factory building her designs, nor does she have a modular line of houses, yet she still manages to produce affordable housing. Cusato's "Katrina Cottage" was designed as an emergency housing solution, but it has become the answer to many things. "People were looking at it as more of a vacation home," Cusato says of the builders who toured the prototype at the 2006 International Builders' Show, "and not so much as emergency housing."

For \$700, interested individuals or builders may purchase a Katrina Cottage plan from a number of Web

sites (including www.cusato cottages.com). Or they can buy the plans from Lowe's. Each store "has the takeoffs for everything that goes into the house and can walk you through [the process of making] changes," she explains. "The house still has to be built on site, but you get the materials and products you need, when you need them." (For more on Cusato, see pages 70-71 in the June 2006 issue.)

hat trick

In the end, Kaufmann says, design pros interested in bringing their ideas to market must focus on due diligence. "It's critical to not just think like a typical architect, but to also think like a production worker, a builder, and a product designer," she says. "We have found that when we wear multiple hats, we come up with our best work." **ra**

To view other images of projects by these architects and designers, visit www.residential architect.com.



Cusato Cottages/Cottage Living magazine

Designed as an alternative to FEMA trailers, the Katrina Cottage is currently used as affordable housing and vacation retreats.

issues involved in the design and production process took much longer. "It was two years in the making for the first home, as it was the prototype," he says. "There was

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The casing is engineered to dissipate heat generated by the LED bulb, and

a built-in switch allows users to control brightness with 6-watt, 11-watt,

and 16-watt settings. Its maker, Journée, estimates that LOTUS uses up to

50 percent less energy than an incandescent bulb and

should last 10 years. The fixture is Energy Star-rated and

contributes toward LEED certification. Journée Lighting,

800.886.1880; www.journeelighting.com.



new b

Affordable is a relative term. Take Bulthaup's system b1 modular kitchen. Starting at \$18,000 (with many systems averaging \$35,000), b1 would be considered pricey in some circles, but when compared to the company's signature b3 collection (which costs 35 percent to 40 percent more), it's a steal. The b1 even offers similar features, such as central islands, full-height architectural cabinetry, and overhead shelves with optional sliding doors. Other choices include lacquered doors, solid wood and stainless steel tops, and laminate or aluminum toekicks. Bulthaup Corp., 800.808.2923; www.bulthaup.com.



forge ahead

The bold look of Sonoma

Forge's WaterBridge faucet (and

accessories) collection suits a

range of aesthetic styles. Hand-

crafted fixtures come in wall- or

deck-mount configurations. Finishes include oil-rubbed

bronze, rustic copper, and rustic nickel. Sonoma Forge,

800.330.5553; www.sonomaforge.com.

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Electrical and Lighting

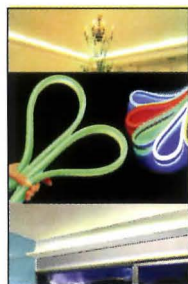
Lighting is an easy and relatively inexpensive way to transform a room entirely, not to mention a home's exterior. The right lighting products, placed correctly, meet functional needs but also create ambiance and depth. Fortunately, lamps and lighting fixtures are available in any style you can imagine on today's market. Read on to learn about lighting products that will cast a warm glow on your next home.



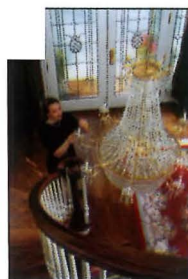
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Brass Light Gallery
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Outwater
Circle no. 503



Aladdin Light Lift
Circle no. 504

An Artisan's Touch

Done well, lighting adds warmth and style to any home — not only the light itself but also the light fixtures. At **Steven Handelman Studios**, the most discriminating customers can choose from over 350 lighting products, such as handwrought iron chandeliers, wall sconces, outdoor lanterns, and accessories. The company's beautiful, traditional designs have been installed throughout the country in the finest homes and commercial settings. These handmade, finely detailed products will be treasured for years to come.

A Tribute to Eras Past

Vintage lighting never goes out of style. The crisp, clean geometry of **Brass Light Gallery's** Moderne No. 1 Sconce was influenced by the 1930s design movement that bears its name. Today, this wall sconce is appreciated for its simplicity and versatility of use. In the photo on this page, the sconce is shown in polished nickel with J170 Opal Gloss Shade. Brass Light Gallery, designers and manufacturers of architectural lighting since 1974, is known for its quality finishes and breadth of selection.

A Greener Way to Light Your Home

Thinking "green"? One easy way to "go green" is to choose more energy-efficient lighting products. If you liked **Outwater's** previous generation of incandescent rope lighting, the company's new UL-Listed, 120-volt Non-Neon Flexible LED Lighting will really open your eyes. Up to 70 percent more energy efficient, and rated for 100,000 hours of usage, Outwater's Non-Neon Flexible LED Lighting is not only built to withstand heavy weight loads, high impact, extreme temperature differentials, and water and UV penetration, it is also sturdy enough to be bent into almost any shape without breakage.

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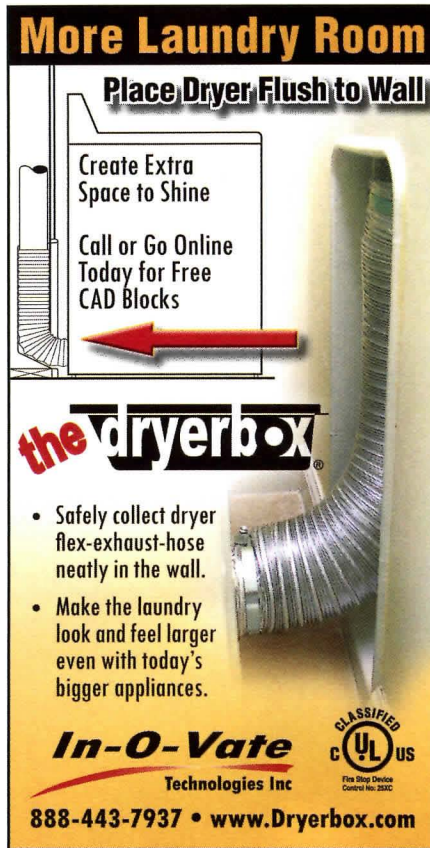


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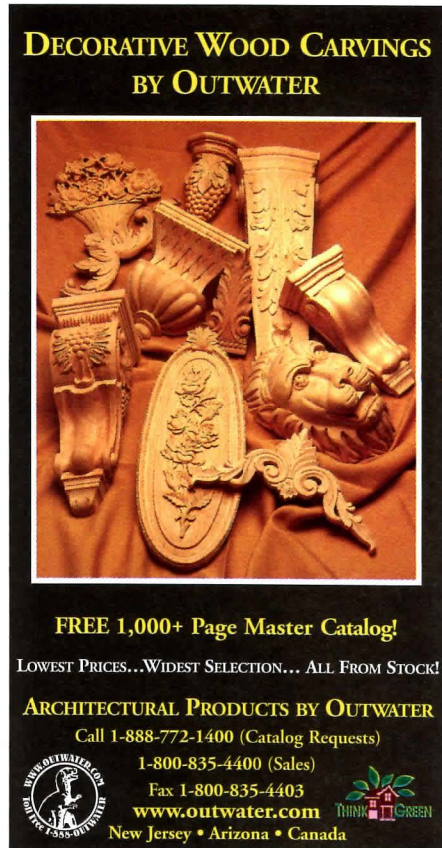
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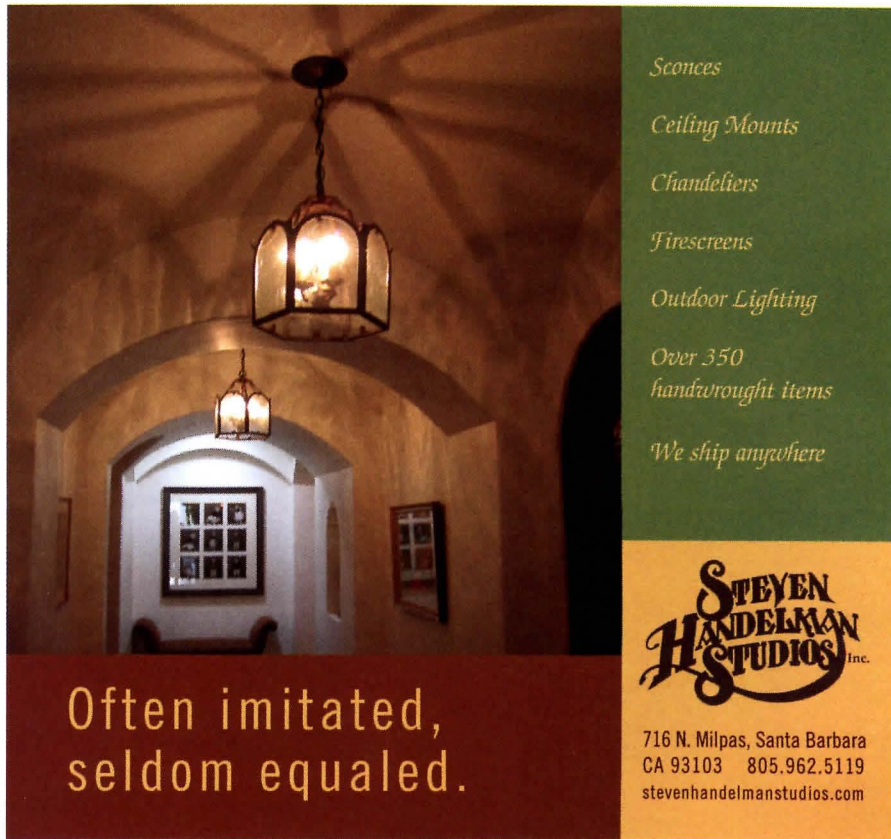
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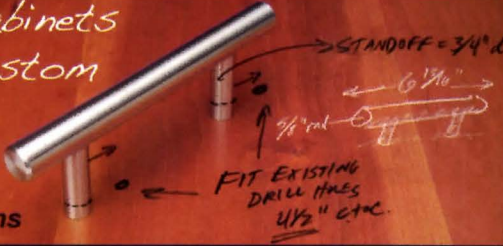
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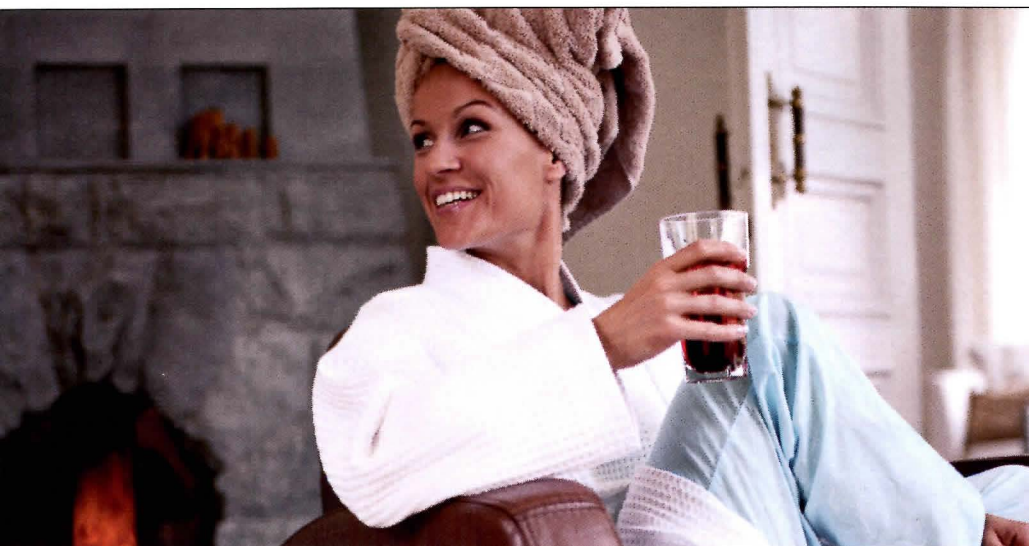
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Morgan Hare, LEED AP, grew up in the Leroy Street brownstone from which he and Marc Turkel, AIA, LEED AP, co-founded their design/build firm in 1995.

The space held many memories, but by 2000 it couldn't contain their burgeoning office, so they found a new home—and fresh inspiration—in nearby Chinatown.

“People talk about choosing their neighborhood, but for us, it was an accident of fate,” Turkel says. The 5,600-square-foot building they targeted “wasn't where you'd expect to find a design firm,” but it offered Leroy Street Studio (LSS) a chance “to rip a building apart and discover its potential.” Another compelling opportunity sat just across Hester Street,



Photos: Paul Warchol Photography



Hare adds—a school “that looked like it needed some help.”

The pro bono work LSS did for M.S.

131 in 2001 (while transforming

its new digs at just \$36 per square

foot) led them to create the nonprofit

Hester Street Collaborative (HSC),

which works with the community and students to improve public spaces and teach design skills.

Turkel says the relationship between the ventures “is made manifest in the building we occupy.” HSC and a shared workshop are on the ground floor, and 23 LSS staffers (including partner Shawn Watts, LEED AP) utilize the top two floors. “Moving to this neighborhood, we didn't want to make an office that looks like every other firm's office,” Turkel says of the light-filled studio's open, nonhierarchical floor plan. “The idea is that you can make anything, anywhere. There's no office to it.”—marla misek clark



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