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David Salmela’s Superior dance.
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from the editor

back to the bauhaus box

in the face of tough times, will architecture shed its fanciful curves?

by s. claire conroy

Given the country’s dire economic state, many pundits are predicting a shift from the conspicuous consumption of luxury products to more humble displays. Apparently, any new acquisition must also manifest a strong utilitarian streak and a level of pious sobriety. It’s all the better if that new thing you buy isn’t sexy or is even a tad dowdy.

Going to treat yourself to a new car? Better steer clear of ostentatious Audis and boasting BMWs, even if they’re “super ultra low emissions” and thrifty on gas or diesel fuel. Instead, a Prius will fit the bill. It’s the librarian with her hair up in a bun—only the glasses never come off and the hairpins stay firmly installed. But you get 48 mpg, city.

What does that mean in the house design realm? Well, one principal with a large firm says architecture in the near future is going to shed its curves, because no client in his right mind will foot the bill anymore for something as gratuitous as Gehry’s titanium curlicues. It’s back to the Bauhaus box, he suggests—this time with double-pane windows and roofs that don’t leak. Right angles will rule the day, and design will deign to lumber’s stock dimensions. Everyone will have less of what they want, in keeping with our new dedication to austerity.

I have a hard time believing any of these predictions will take hold in any universal way and for any extended length of time.

Back in 1991, when Washington Dossier, the city magazine I worked for, was on the brink of falling victim to the widespread recession, we made some similar earth-shattering pronouncements about the luxury class. The magazine was founded on covering the social scene in Washington, D.C., especially the super-highway of the very rich—the charity ball circuit. The last issue of the magazine, before its owner pulled the plug? It had an all-black cover with white type announcing “The Death of the Charity Ball.” We predicted that such frivolous expenditures of money in the name of supporting the less fortunate would no longer be tolerated. People, with their newfound virtue and sensitivity, would write a check instead, with the full amount applied to the needy organization.

That last issue of Dossier never made it to the printer, nor to anyone’s mailboxs. There were no digital editions back then or magazine websites for us to post it to. I have a photocopy of it in a box somewhere in my basement.

Do I need to tell you that charity balls came back in a big way just a short time later? How could Washington society do without the Cancer Ball, the Hope Ball, or my personal favorite, the Eye Ball, for very long? It would be like sawing the rungs off the social ladder. No way up for the aspiring newcomer, and no public stockade for the disgraced wrongdoer. And, as it turned out, if people didn’t get something in return, they didn’t give as much.

So, no, I don’t think all the color and joy will drain from American architecture. It defies human nature not to strive for higher levels of achievement and greater depths of expression. We are aspirational and inspirational creatures. We just have to add more perspiration to the mix as well. When we make the decision to produce, we have to make a far greater effort to conserve every resource involved: money, energy, materials, land, water.

The first LEED Platinum house—designed by Ray Kappe, FAIA, and built by Steve Glenn’s LivingHomes—comes to mind as a case in point. Good and gorgeous, it’s got the heart of a Prius and the soul of a Ferrari.

Comments? E-mail cconroy@hanleywood.com.

Mark Robert Halper

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practice

an unsentimental education

architecture schools' hands-on studios move design from the ivory tower to the edges of town.

by cheryl weber

As an undergraduate at Auburn University in 1994, Jonathan Tate, a white suburban kid from Huntsville, Ala., signed up for Rural Studio, where he helped to design one-of-a-kind "charity houses" on a shoestring budget. The university-affiliated program was only in its second year, but director Samuel Mockbee was a compelling figure who offered two things Tate wanted: exposure to the poverty-stricken rural South and a chance to build something unique. As it turned out, he got more than he expected. "It's not how to hang a door in a frame that I carry with me," says Tate, a partner at New Orleans-based buildingstudio and an adjunct assistant professor of architecture at Tulane University. "It's the strong confidence in who I am as an architect and the role I can play to affect people in this world."

On the West Coast, Geoff Piper chose the University of Washington's architecture program because of the design/build studio offered through BaSiC Initiative. As he worked alongside community folks to build a library in Mexico in 2000, he, too, became less focused on the pragmatics of building and more attuned to architecture's social power. During the course of his studies, Piper worked with BaSiC Initiative founder and director Sergio Palleroni on several low-income projects, including a straw bale house in South Dakota. Today, he divides his Seattle practice, Fivedot Design/Build, between traditional design/build/development and nonprofit international projects. (For more on the BaSiC Initiative, see page 20 in the April 2008 issue.)

Just 10 years ago, community-based design/build studios were a novelty in architecture schools. But now they're commonplace. When Fivedot organizes a project and looks for students to participate, "we're competing against 30 design/build programs happening over the summer, as opposed to about two when I was going to school," Piper says. It's as though the profession is rediscovering
social agendas after a long hiatus following the failed public housing experiments of the 1960s. It's not that architects didn't care about social issues, Tate says. But in Mockbee's hands, Rural Studio may have marked a point where they could once again be involved, by raising the idea that it was time to get over the stigma and back into the discussion. “For a few decades, architects were afraid to step out and say something about these things, not to mention that there was a period of heavy intellectualizing about what architecture was,” he says.

As Mockbee brilliantly illustrated, doing good and doing good architecture can be the same thing. And when students are involved, everyone wins. They get to experience the thrill of building their ideas while also leaving a legacy. But it's not just the hands-on time that's ultimately of value. Community-based design trains budding professionals to work as a team rather than as a single genius architect, to take control over complex real-world conditions, and perhaps most important, to have a greater sense of agency in the world. In short, it exposes them to the side of architecture that schools tend to miss.

mixing altruism and ego
Back in 1995, another designer observed the disconnect between classroom conjecture and real-world design—and decided to do something about it. But The University of Kansas' award-winning Studio 804 was born almost by accident. As professor Dan Rockhill tells it, his firm, Rockhill and Associates, needed help on a project out in the country. He enlisted his students, who were wildly enthusiastic. In 1999, isn't mandatory, Rockhill truly believes that having their hands in the concrete makes his students better architects. And by working in poor communities where there are few English speakers, students see a side of life they never knew existed nearby. “Helping them be accountable to sustainable practices is “it’s not how to hang a door in a frame that i carry with me. it’s the strong confidence in who i am as an architect and the role i can play to affect people in this world.” —jonathan tate

Studio 804 was incorporated as a 503(c) organization, and the model evolved over the years. After stick-building five affordable houses, the group began designing prefab structures that could be transported to sites farther away. And unlike many school studios, this one is run as a business, without university subsidies. Rockhill borrows money from the community development corporation that sponsors each speculative project. When the house is sold, he pays back the loan with interest and plows any profits back into Studio 804. Meanwhile, he gets a salary from The University of Kansas and students get credit for the course.

Another thing I feel good about,” Rockhill says, “Students are anxious to produce buildings that are responsible to the environment. They're the ones who will bring about change.” (For more on Rockhill, ra's 2006 Top Firm Leadership Award winner, see pages 58–63 in the November/December 2006 issue.) Accountability is the big bonus at Tulane’s URBANbuild program, too, according to director Byron Mouton, AIA. In this case, he says, it’s about helping each other maintain energy, stay on schedule, and practice diplomacy with colleagues and city agencies. Unlike design studios in which students work on a
graduation from architecture school brings with it energy, idealism, and an appetite for self-invention, but it often brings a mountain of debt too. What’s a socially conscious young graduate to do? One option is the Frederick P. Rose Architectural Fellowship. Established by the late developer Frederick P. Rose, of the New York City-headquartered Jonathan Rose Companies, and run by Enterprise Community Partners (ECP), the program pays a community development corporation (CDC) to bring an architect on staff for three years.

ECP chooses the CDCs and drafts the work program, which typically includes the roles of project manager, green guru, and vision keeper. In exchange, recipients receive more than the security of a regular paycheck. In addition to being sponsored for licensing and LEED accreditation, the nine fellows (three are chosen annually) meet several times each year for formal training on such topics as understanding tax credits, how to use a financial calculator, and negotiating skills.

“Our goal is to create a next generation of architects who understand the community development process and can be leaders in that field,” says fellowship director Katie Swenson.

Through May 1, ECP is accepting applications for the next round of fellowships, which begin in September (www.rosefellowship.org/join). “We look for good designers with a demonstrated commitment to social and environmental justice and an entrepreneurial spirit,” Swenson says, adding that this isn’t the Peace Corps. “We don’t look for people who want an experience, but for people who want to make a career in this work.”—c.w.

series Architecture School, which aired last year on the Sundance Channel.

Occupying the gap between theory and practice can be painful. The documentary-style Architecture School series drew some criticism—mainly that the finished house didn’t blend with the Central City neighborhood and that no locals could afford to buy it. Mouton admits that encouraging innovation within nonprofit parameters can be a tricky balance to achieve. The agency with whom URBANbuild works asks for a 1,200-square-foot, three-bedroom, two-bath home because it’s the easiest model for matching low-income buyers with government subsidies. So size and function are non-negotiable. And to keep things interesting, URBANbuild experiments with different building systems each year. The first house, built in summer 2006, used familiar wood framing to ensure that the project could be completed in 12 weeks with unskilled labor. The second project featured prefab metal panels, the Architecture School house was made with SIPs, and LEED Silver certification is the current project’s goal.

But Mouton is unapologetic about giving students a long design rope. “We won’t ask a group of 12 students to work for free on a tight schedule and then just produce a Habitat for Humanity house,” he says. “What we give them is design opportunity.” Sometimes that means allowing students to design special components that aren’t cheap but that can be eliminated without compromising the basic scheme if the house is reproduced with paid labor. As hard as URBANbuild works to keep costs low, finding qualified buyers in down-and-out neighbor-

If they’re cutting a material, they need to know the ordering lead time and how and where it’s made. “All of those things are abstract until the moment it’s your obligation to deliver it to someone,” says David Lewis, director of The Design Workshop at Parsons.

continued on page 16
New School for Design, where nine of the design/build projects in the New York City-based studio's 11-year history have been urban. "More important, your design won't be erected if you don't understand how those things operate and control them."

William Jelen, director of The Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Planning's CUAde program, agrees. "There's a certain kind of maturity in being able to follow through on a real project, because you have to be responsible and self-motivated; these are real people's money and lives you're dealing with."

He's noticed that students are energized by those dynamics and the deeper understanding that comes from exposure to neighborhoods they never would have visited as an outsider. That's why, for Jelen, an integral part of architecture education is its relationship to clients and the community. "I always felt that you have all these talents and skills in school that are underutilized in terms of harnessing that creativity and applying it to real-world problems," Jelen says. "In school I wondered why we had to tackle some theoretical problem in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, instead of dealing with issues in Philadelphia." He adds that there is strong ongoing interest in the university's design/build program; some alumni even jump in on local projects. "A lot of times, young people in architecture firms have little responsibility; this is something they do have responsibility for," he explains. "And there's a desire to do something for the common good."

public-spirited entrepreneurship

There's no doubt that for many young, idealistic architects-in-training, designing and building for the disenfranchised is a powerful experience. But does it change their career aspirations? David Buege, one of Rural Studio's first participants, doesn't think so. "If there were a kind of methodological study of what has happened with people who've gone through such programs, I'd say the impact would be pretty subtle," says Buege, director of the architecture program at Philadelphia University. "Even in good times, survival strategies take over."

"if there were a methodological study of what has happened with people who've gone through such programs, i'd say the impact would be pretty subtle, even in good times, survival strategies take over."

—david buege

Ball State University and co-director of CapAsia, which takes students to South Asia for 11 weeks every other spring. He's also led field trips to border towns in Northern Texas and Skid Row in East Los Angeles, as well as Midwest distress tours to Rust Belt cities that have been failing for years. He says he gets too many e-mails from former students saying they're dissatisfied with their jobs or altogether disillusioned with the profession, like the graduate in Fort Wayne, Ind., who was working on construction documents for a Holiday Inn.

"I say, Just calm down, keep paying off debts, try to be patient, and do some volunteer work," Janz says. But he feels their angst. "As educators we need to have a better answer to..."
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the question, What is this bridge after graduation?
If I could, I'd probably bring a social entrepreneurship curriculum to the architecture school, because in the end I think becoming aware of entrepreneurship at an early age might be the foundation piece

building by specifying minimum bedroom size and a certain number of closets, so that by the time you're done, you're stuck with a cookie-cutter project to get the tax credit,” Smith says. “It’s about not letting the client make the wrong decision, which is so often

designing forward-thinking homes that aren’t prohibitively expensive. “More and more people are beginning to realize that custom progressive homes are, in fact, accessible,” Mouton says. “We’re not just training architects to make cool houses; in a culture where most houses are designed by builders, we’re showing people that there are affordable options.”

Hands-on skills surely give affordability a boost. The Yale School of Architecture’s community-based Building Project studio, for example, teaches students to challenge the prevailing notion that architects should not build. “We have quite a few students who’ve tried to address larger social issues through design/build in their practice,” says director Adam Hopfner, who launched his own design/build firm after participating in the program.

The hope is that, with their real-world focus, these studios are creating a different kind of architect—one motivated by imagination and public spirit. “Students coming out are raising interesting questions about how one practices today,” says Parsons’ Lewis. “We’re seeing alumni translating the knowledge they get into design/build or offices with a more immediate relationship to construction economies.” That’s good news—not just for the profession and nonprofits, but for everyone. ra

students need to create roles for themselves.”

Ted Smith thinks so too. That’s why he created the master’s in residential development program for architects at Woodbury University in San Diego. With its focus on affordability, it’s one way for socially conscious designers to invent their own opportunities. The premise is simple: Instead of trying to work within the limits imposed by cash-starved community development corporations, architects are taught how to conceive, finance, and sell a project, often leveraging affordability by taking advantage of zoning loopholes. Smith says it creates a different kind of dynamic than simply designing something cool.

“The nonprofit sector puts huge constraints on the case. Very often the goal of affordable housing is to make it look like every other house, but every other house is 50 percent too big. My son grew up with his crib in a closet with the doors removed; it’s those sorts of crazy solutions that are efficient.”

Working with Mockbee’s former partner, Coleman Coker, in a practice that serves both mainstream and marginalized clients, Tate says Rural Studio had a profound personal impact. It’s taken a good 10 years, he says, to begin to structure his practice nontraditionally, but he sees more young graduates finding ways to do so immediately.

And there’s another, perhaps unintended, outcome of community-based university studios: Architects are doing a better job of

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It may feel like dreamy nostalgia to peruse these award-winning projects, conceived and built in more felicitous times. You’ll certainly encounter some lusciously extravagant flights of fancy and indulgence, as was the tenor of the mid-oughts. We still have a giddy affection for those houses that know no budgetary bounds, that find constraints only in the limits of architectural skill and creativity. Ah, what the mind can imagine and humankind can build! In a pure design competition, is it even fair or relevant to consider what we should build in addition to what we can build? Well, responsible architects are always pondering these questions. And no doubt in times to come, the fevered debates will rage even hotter.

Our 10th annual residential architect Design Awards received more than 1,100 entries in 16 categories. Just 44 projects were recognized for honors, making RADA the most competitive residential architecture awards program in the country. The jury comprised six distinguished architects, including Gary L. Brewer, AIA, Robert A.M. Stern Architects, New York City; William Kreager, FAIA, Mithun, Seattle; Mell Lawrence, FAIA, Mell Lawrence Architects, Austin, Texas; Mark McInturff, FAIA, McInturff Architects, Bethesda, Md.; John Sheehan, AIA, Studio E Architects, San Diego; and John Vetter, AIA, Vetter Denk Architects, Milwaukee. At their discretion, the judges granted no award in the Bath category this year. In all, they bestowed 33 Merit awards, 10 Grand awards, and one Project of the Year award. Coverage begins here and continues in expanded form—with floor plans, more photos, and product specs—on www.residentialarchitect.com next month.

Go ahead, sit back and page through the best of what came before these troubled days. And let us begin to dream anew.
Issues with neighbors often arise during the design of a new multifamily building. When the neighbor is R.M. Schindler’s Kings Road House, those concerns take on an even larger significance. Lorcan O’Herlihy, FAIA, understood as much when he signed on as the architect of this 19-unit condo building in West Hollywood, Calif., residential architect’s 2009 Project of the Year. “The site was going to be potentially controversial, but very interesting,” he says.

He was right on both counts. The MAK Center for Art and Architecture, which operates the Kings Road House next door, strongly opposed the project. Yet the finished building, known as Habitat 825, shows respect for the experimental spirit—as well as the physical space—of its iconic neighbor.

Schindler was drawn to the idea of easing the strict divisions between a building’s public and private zones. O’Herlihy, too, likes to question these conventions. He broke Habitat 825’s street-facing façade into two pieces, angling one so passersby can catch a glimpse of the project’s internal courtyard. Between the entry and the sidewalk, he and landscape architect Katherine Spitz, AIA, ASLA, placed a series of concrete benches, turning this traditionally private area into semi-public land.
Inside the entry gate, the exploration of communal spaces continues. Backed by his enlightened developer client, Richard Loring, Assoc. AIA, O’Herlihy and his team managed to place all the building’s circulation in the courtyard. Residents reach their units via extra-wide walkways, which are sized to accommodate outdoor furniture and informal social gatherings. “We wanted to encourage people to deal with the public/private realm,” O’Herlihy explains. “They have to engage each other. It changes the equation a little bit.”

O’Herlihy and Loring, who doubled as the general contractor, could have filled in the courtyard with more units. If they had, though, residents’ access to natural light, fresh air, and casual social interaction would have suffered. The individual condos benefit from the same high-minded approach; each balcony and terrace offers a generous amount of square footage that doesn’t count toward the “official” unit size.

To keep Habitat 825 from casting shadows on the Kings Road House, the architects limited the height of its north portion to 30 feet, rather than the permitted 45 feet. Additionally, they cut a substantial void into that side of the building and angled the remaining walls away from the lot line, creating a bit of breathing room between the two properties. While these strategies defer to Schindler’s building, Habitat 825 also maintains its own distinct identity. The judges enjoyed its bold exterior color scheme of lime green, white, and black. “It’s a fun façade,” said one. “I like the playfulness.”

The quality that impressed them most, though, was O’Herlihy’s willingness to address crucial matters of density, privacy, and public space in multifamily housing. “These are great residences from a community point of view,” observed one. “This project solves some really tough problems.”—m.d.
The columns supporting a second-story footbridge resemble the bamboo that flourishes in the courtyard. Scooped-out balconies and terraces (opposite) supply private outdoor rooms.
Shipping container architecture is nothing new, but adapting the shells for living often undoes their built-in economy. With only minimal modifications, these serve as rugged guest cabins on a West Texas ranch. “We didn’t want to leave a scar on that somewhat fragile landscape,” Mark T. Wellen, AIA, says of his solution. “If you disfigure the surface, the cacti and low shrubbery can take years to come back.”

The containers (one is for storage) were outfitted off site with a rear window and MDF floor, walls, and ceiling—almost like a cigar box. Then they were hauled in, two at a time, on an 18-wheeler and craned into place from the existing road.

Concrete footings for small piers were hand-poured, and floating roofs were popped on for shade. The jaunty roofs allow breezes to cool the units. “Most of our sun is overhead here, so they’re largely in the shade,” Wellen says. When the containers are occupied, the big doors of each unit swing open and are strapped in place. Closed down, they’re impervious to weather and wandering wildlife. What’s more, they’re a playful mirror image of the boxcars rolling by on distant tracks.

Down in the valley and 45 minutes from the closest town, the cabins are “a romantic and poetic folly. Great fun!” said a judge. “And it looks like it will last forever.”—C.W.
principal in charge / project architect: Mark T. Wellen, AIA, Rhoenberry Wellen Architects; general contractor: Steve Ekstrom, Ekstrom Construction Co., Midland, Texas; project size: 800 square feet (combined); site size: 3,500 acres; construction cost: $202 per square foot; photography: Hester + Hardaway. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.

The rusted boxes rest lightly on hand-dug piers. Coplanar floating roofs shield inhabitants from the sun's heat. A rear window and swing-open double doors invite cross-ventilation through the MDF-wrapped interiors.
mall buildings get attention because every detail is exposed, and there's a lot to admire on this accessory cottage in a meadow overlooking Long Island Sound. Working within strict height restrictions and a program that included an accessible ground-floor bedroom and bath, open kitchen, and loft, the project team made every move count. "It became an essay on scarcity," says Alan Organschi, AIA. "How do you, with simple moves, create richness?"

Simple in plan but complex in execution, the building's eaves come apart, corners detach, and the roof plane folds up into a skylight to create headroom and sight views while accommodating upper-story clearances. These innovative gestures heighten the sense of being on the edge of the land. In the loft and the bedroom downstairs, tall corner partitions slide into a pocket in the wall, putting the occupants at one with the rocky perch. The sloped sod roof is planted with the same sedum species that grows in the meadow, and the interior is wrapped in bleached bamboo.

One judge marveled at the exquisite detailing: "It's like a little music box, organic and joyous. It goes through all these machinations unselfconsciously."—c.w.

On approach, the sod roof tips up, preserving the building's scale while allowing for head clearances upstairs. Transparent eaves help the cottage blend with the landscape.
Sculptural gestures and disappearing corners create playful indoor-outdoor relationships. Partitions slide into the wall, deleting the corners on two floors (bottom).

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Our jury appreciated the light-filled spaces in this house designed by Alex Terry, AIA, for his family. The architect orchestrated the steep site by elevating living areas to the top floor. He placed the kitchen/dining area on grade with the backyard, and oriented the living room to the front, embracing distant vistas with a large covered balcony.

The front and rear walls of the house are mostly glass, maximizing light, ventilation, and views throughout the open plan. Wood floors and ceilings add richness and texture. Thick concrete walls form the sides of the house and encompass a cast-in-place fireplace and precast grooves for the glass panels.

"The trick was keeping materials minimal to give them power," Terry says. "In doing a simple palette, you create calm space." —s.d.h.
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dark, gated wall lends intrigue to this small house in the forest. Unfussy and simply organized, the house has two wings connected by a boardwalk and interior courtyard. “It seemed right to go into the space through a wall, almost like a veil, and then to find this outdoor room that really is an extension of the wings of the building,” says Peter Q. Bohlin, FAIA.

One of our judges liked the way the wall creates focus and a “transition from urban life.”—c.w.

principal in charge: Robert E. Miller, AIA, LEED AP, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; design principal: Peter Q. Bohlin, FAIA, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; project designer: Amy Williams, Bohlin Cywinski Jackson; general contractor: Norm Gove, Cambridge Custom, Redmond, Wash.; landscape architect: Randy Allworth, ASLA, Allworth Nussbaum, Seattle; structural engineer: Jim Harris, PCS Structural Solutions, Seattle; project size: 1,611 square feet; site size: 28 acres; construction cost: Withheld; photography: Nic Lehoux. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.
n the high-desert landscape of sagebrush, scorching winds, and boundless sky, a house needs to be “hard on the outside, soft on the inside—like a Tootsie Pop,” says Tom Kundig, FAIA.

Designed for an artist, this house is a concrete block bunker, but its interior materials—Carrara marble kitchen counters, reclaimed barn wood, and plaster made from natural clays—are earthy and pleasant to touch. The floor plan lives like a studio, with a single large room combining kitchen, dining, and living areas, and above, a mezzanine bedroom supported by an exposed steel beam. It may be a fortress, but it feels like a glass house. Enormous windows on all sides, some as large as 11 feet wide by 8 feet tall, take in the Idaho horizon. That sense of prospect and refuge extends outdoors, where concrete block walls—11 feet high and twice as long as the house—protect the owner’s flowers, vegetables, and fruit trees from the resident deer and antelope.

The contrast delighted the jury. “The allée of trees is so controlled and urban, surrounded by wild grasses and deer,” said one judge. “You can picture a mountain lion roaming around right outside.”—c.w.


in this remote outpost, the long, walled garden is a direct reference to the paradise garden—sacred inside and profane outside. “You can’t really grow much there unless it’s protected,” says architect Tom Kundig.
The compact concrete block shell was built quickly and inexpensively. Inside, the steel and recycled fir were left exposed and unfinished, resulting in little waste and low VOCs.
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The architect and the owner, a landscape architect, worked in tandem from day one of this project—and it shows. Perched on the edge of a river gorge, the house and guesthouse align from south to north and are linked by a stone wall that serves as a spine. In between, overlapping interior and exterior spaces keep the lush setting front and center. “We’d flip things back and forth until we found a nice balance between the formality of the house and this pretty rough and rambunctious landscape,” says Richard Williams, AIA. “We looked at vernacular forms, stretching the dimensions to a point where it seemed spacious but never out of scale.”

One judge said the design “elevates the mundane Virginia farmhouse, yet does so with a complete lack of pretension.”—c.w.

Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects challenged convention with this residence in the Houses at Sagaponac development on Long Island, N.Y. “It’s addressing the problem of the American suburban dwelling, which is an object on a lot with space all around it,” explains Henry Smith-Miller, RA. He and his colleagues pulled the house’s two main masses—a two-story volume containing guest and family quarters and a one-story wing comprising living/dining functions—to the outskirts of the site, creating a series of private outdoor rooms between them.

“It feels generous without being ostentatious,” said one judge.—m.d.

By wrapping the one-room-deep house around the property, the architects formed a central courtyard and covered terraces. The walled front elevation (left) affords a sense of quiet and seclusion.

Smith-Miller + Hawkinson Architects challenged convention with this residence in the Houses at Sagaponac development on Long Island, N.Y. “It’s addressing the problem of the American suburban dwelling, which is an object on a lot with space all around it,” explains Henry Smith-Miller, RA. He and his colleagues pulled the house’s two main masses—a two-story volume containing guest and family quarters and a one-story wing comprising living/dining functions—to the outskirts of the site, creating a series of private outdoor rooms between them.

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Sited by an agricultural preserve in one of Long Island, N.Y.’s most exclusive enclaves, this new building wraps three floors of high-style living in a package that reads from afar as more potato barn than trophy home. A masterfully detailed skin of teak slats serves as rainscreen siding at insulated walls and as a privacy scrim for open-air decks and porches. A great open-truss roof unifies the whole, which our judges called “a nice reinvestment in the barn as a starting place for a house.”—b.d.s.

principal in charge / project architect: Marc Turkel, AIA, LEED AP, Leroy Street Studio; general contractor: Thomas Lettieri, Lettieri Construction, Westhampton Beach, N.Y.; landscape architect: Douglas Reed, FASLA, Reed Hilderbrand Associates, Watertown, Mass.; structural engineer: Andrew Rentfroe, P.E., Blue Sky Design, New York City; mechanical engineer: Michael McGough, P.E., Laszlo Bodak Engineer, New York City; project size: 6,000 square feet; site size: 2.5 acres; construction cost: $600 per square foot; photography: Paul Warcho Photograph.
The renovation of this vintage mid-century home bears Bohlin Cywinski Jackson's hallmark moves: the choreographed passages, the connection to the land, and the sense both of exuberance and calm.

The architects edited more than they added. A new entry—defined by a spine of ipe decking and playful circular skylights—ends in a living room pavilion and a pivoting door to the woodland garden beyond. "We think of our buildings a bit like designing a dance," says Peter Q. Bohlin, FAIA. "You come in under those skylights and end in the heart of the building. As you approach the house, you don't know the garden is there."

Taller ceilings and a new fireplace make the space soar, and glass walls put the outdoors on constant display. The driveway approach was strengthened, too, with bright red elongated boxes (storage units) that mark the music studio/garage and house. Between the two, a linear concrete wall forms an entry court and screens the bedrooms from view.

"We like to do houses because they have a nice scale," Bohlin says. "We like them to have a kind of ease and calm. It's critical to get those things right." The judges agreed they'd gotten it right. "It's an excellent change," said one. "They've stripped it down, grouped things in boxes, and really opened it up."—c.w.
A red fiber-cement-clad storage box defines an edge of the music studio/garage (above) and reappears on the house. The living area’s level change and concrete floor reinforce the sense of a pavilion in the woods.
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pedestrian suburban house turns into a little jewel." That's the way our judges summed up this raised ranch makeover, and we could not have written a better headline.

Architects Brian Johnsen, AIA, and Sebastian Schmaling, AIA, retained the building's existing foundation and utility core while raising the roof with a new system of wood-and-steel trusses and a full-length clerestory. Cor-Ten steel wraps the existing exterior walls, while red cedar defines modest but high-impact amendments to the building shell.—b.d.s.

A clerestory of energy-efficient, gel-filled polycarbonate fills the interiors with gentle northern light (top). The cedar-sided entry addition periscopes through the house as a circulation spine, emerging at rooftop level in the form of a loftlike study.

The client for this San Francisco addition hoped to leave the original 1950s house as unaltered as possible. So Joshua Aidlin, AIA, placed the new, three-story portion within an adjoining tree grove, connecting it to the main house with a minimalist glass bridge. The trees give the steel-clad addition privacy while framing ocean views. "The temptation would have been to fill up the site on the view side," noted a judge, applauding the project's restraint.—m.d.

principal in charge / project architects: Joshua Aidlin, AIA, Aidlin Darling Design; project architect: Michael Hennessey, LEED AP, Aidlin Darling Design; general contractor: Daniel Pelsinger, Matarozzi/Pelsinger Builders, San Francisco; interior designer: Steven Miller, Steven Miller Design Studio, San Francisco; structural engineer: William Lynch, Berkeley Structural Design, Berkeley, Calif.; project size: 1,800 square feet (addition only); site size: 0.19 acre; construction cost: Withheld; photography: Dwight Eschliman, except where noted. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.
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restoration/preservation
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four stairs: addition and renovation to a historic Virginia farmhouse, Great Falls, Va.
barnes vanze architects
Washington, D.C.

...presented with a diverse collection of buildings, Barnes Vanze Architects restored the architecturally significant structures and inserted a glassed-in room to unify the house. “We made it look like a porch,” says Stephen Vanze, AIA, LEED AP. “It’s the only space with modern conveniences.” And the space, which comprises the kitchen and family room, is key. Modern appliances and a flagstone floor update the look, but other details, such as the Douglas fir beams made from trees on site, complement the original structures. A new structural insulated roof increases energy efficiency.

“They brought the house into a 20th-century lifestyle and maintained the richness,” said a judge.—n.f.m.

Guided by the original plans, Sara and Rafi Segal removed some partitions on the second floor to open it to the living areas below. Window profiles were also restored to their original design, improving the sense of connectivity to the outdoors.

few judicious moves reclaimed this vintage Marcel Breuer home, whose design was based on a house he exhibited at The Museum of Modern Art in 1949. Architects Sara Segal, LEED AP, and Rafi Segal restored the house for themselves, using archival research as a guide in stripping paint from plywood walls, rebuilding partitions, and restoring window profiles.

The Rockefeller Foundation, which owns the exhibit house, supplied a color analysis keyed to today’s paint colors. “Breuer had a special blue that was a combination of blue, white, and gray,” says Rafi Segal. “The white has a bit of yellow in it, and these nuances make a huge difference.”

“This house could easily have been torn down,” a judge said of the restoration’s rigor. “It’s a good precedent that they kept it.”—c.w.


restoration/preservation
merit
marcel breuer “house in the garden” (lauck house, 1950), princeton, n.j.
sara segal, leed ap, and rafi segal
princeton
The site for this luxury condo building is in a re-emerging section of Washington, D.C., but its location—next to an operating service station and wedged between two converging traffic arteries—made it less than promising. Instead of resisting the conditions, Shalom Baranes Associates embraced them. The firm’s design team inserted a bar-shaped building that blends with its context and created façades that respond to the street. They even incorporated the eyesore service station. “We came up with this sculptural piece that’s topped by a floating garden,” says Robert M. Sponseller, AIA.

The curvilinear building includes 7,500 square feet of retail and restaurant space, as well as five ground-floor duplexes. “We sought a variance to increase the height of the building to stretch the ground floor, so that everyone is above the [service station’s] canopy,” Sponseller explains. As a result, every unit has a view of the garden. Eschewing the city’s ubiquitous brick cladding, the firm chose a zinc rainscreen system that’s installed on a material-efficient 3-foot module, which offers flexibility for an exterior door or window. The team also recessed portions of the building to carve out balconies and used the roof for additional outdoor space.

“The way the building works on the site ... is remarkable,” said one judge. Another added that it “makes good streets and good housing for the people who live there.” —n.f.m.
The bar-shaped building responds to its context with ground-floor retail on the busy M Street and 22nd Street sides (above). The design team filled the entire site, inserting the building next to an existing structure on the south side (right).

**principal in charge:** Shalom Baranes, FAIA, Shalom Baranes Associates; **design principal:** Robert M. Spanseller, AIA, Shalom Baranes Associates; **project managers:** John Narnack, AIA, and Barry Habib, AIA, Shalom Baranes Associates; **project architect:** Juan Tampe, Shalom Baranes Associates; **project team:** Joseph Boyette, AIA, Chris Hoyt, AIA, Grace Kang, Dan Friedman, and Xin Wang, Shalom Baranes Associates; **developer:** Anthony Lanier, Eastbanc, Washington, D.C.; **general contractor:** Tom Hornbaker, Bovis Lend Lease, Bethesda, Md.; **landscape architect:** Don Hoover, ASLA, Oculus, Washington, D.C.; **project size:** 950 square feet to 3,000 square feet per unit; **site size:** 0.65 acre; **construction cost:** Withheld; **sales price:** $30,000 to $3.9 million per unit; **units in project:** 95; **photography:** Maxwell MacKenzie. Visit [www.residentialarchitect.com](http://www.residentialarchitect.com) for floor plans and products.
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despite their radical break with tradition, the three black cubes dotting this hillside received no negative feedback from their blue-collar neighbors.

No doubt it’s because the unassuming homes foster community by making the neglected pocket neighborhood part of the larger one in density and scale. New plat lines respond to elevation shifts and views of the Lake Superior harbor. “There are no lawns, just native grasses running over the whole site,” says David Salmela, FAIA. “We intentionally tried to hide the property lines, so the place has a European courtlike quality.”

The judges praised Salmela’s craftsmanlike use of materials—many of them local—and his Scandinavian pragmatism. (For more on this project, see Workspace, page 88.)—c.w.

Equinox merged two lots for these live/work lofts. An open ground level welcomes commercial ventures; ample glazing in the steel-clad volume brings light to the private realm.

Raw inspiration from the eclecticism of Venice, Calif., Equinox Architecture designed Abbot Kinney Lofts as an antidote to the stark white contemporary boxes going up in the neighborhood.

Adaptable to owners’ changing needs, the 20-foot-wide units are a mix of exposed elements on the lower levels, but transition to warmer materials and a more residential layout on the upper floors. “The materials are honest and true and pick up on industrial loft living,” says Jim Gelfat. The lofts’ materials reference the area’s commercial pedigree, but a warm, rusted steel-and-ceramic mural depicting Venice street life gives back to the community in a personal way.

The judges praised the connection to the street: “There’s a lot going on,” said one, “but not too much.”—n.f.m.
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Allison Ramsey Architects re-energized an abandoned downtown Charleston, S.C., lot with 34 housing units that our judges lauded as “wonderfully contextual.”

Referencing vernacular architecture, the design team varied the massing and scale of the buildings to harmonize with the existing residential context. “We changed as much as we could as often as we could to make the project look as if it were built over time,” says Cooter Ramsey, AIA. The housing types—including single-family, townhouse, and duplex—refresh the transitional neighborhood, while such exterior treatments as stucco, fiber cement, exposed rafter tails, and shutters animate the streets.

The project “breaks down massing into recognizable shapes and forms handsomely,” said the judges.—n.f.m.

Using elements of New Urbanism and smart growth, Morris Square fills a missing-tooth lot in Charleston, S.C., with something golden. The architects used “every square inch” of the site for a walkable development that connects all 34 units to existing sidewalks.

principal in charge / project architect: Cooter Ramsey, AIA, Allison Ramsey Architects; project manager: Steve Hand, Allison Ramsey Architects; land planner / developer: Vince Graham, I’On Group, Mount Pleasant, S.C.; general contractor: Cameron Drolet, Chastain Construction, Charleston, S.C.; landscape architect: Patrick Pernell, ASLA, SGA Architecture, Charleston; interior designer: Mary Margaret Nevin, Nevin Interiors, Atlanta; project size: 900 square feet to 2,000 square feet per unit; site size: 1.09 acres; construction cost: Withheld; sales price: $389,000 to $725,000 per unit; units in project: 34; photography: Charles Street. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.

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Despite tight constraints, Khoury & Vogt Architects designed this spacious, light-filled house with an efficient plan. Their efforts were much appreciated by our judges. It “does a lot on a very small site,” observed one. “It’s a really sweet project.”

The design draws inspiration from the courtyard-style casitas common in Antigua Guatemala, an architecturally significant city in central Guatemala. “You first enter a zaguan,” says Marianne Khoury-Vogt, AIA, referring to an entry passage leading to a courtyard. “There’s a pool on one side and a loggia on the other, so there’s ample outdoor space before you even get to the front door.”

A chimney draws light down into the loggia and reflects it off of a stucco-framed mirror. A second, rear courtyard does double duty as a garden and dining pavilion. Three separate loggias on the second level offer additional outdoor space, while also illuminating private realms. “Almost every room has access to the outdoors,” Khoury-Vogt says.

Situated with a sight line exposure to the gulf, the house is further brightened by Mediterranean-inspired interiors and a material palette of white stucco, Spanish cedar, Dominican shell stone, and colored Cuban concrete tiles. “It has lots of light and speaks eloquently to the anonymity of the city,” said a judge.—nfm.
principals in charge / project architects: Erik Vogt, AIA, and Marieanne Khoury-Vogt, AIA, Khoury & Vogt Architects; project team: Jamie Van Dyk and Kendall Horne, ASLA, Alys Beach, Alys Beach, Fla.; developer: Jason Conner, Alys Beach, Alys Beach; general contractor: Scott Barnes, Alys Beach Construction, Panama City Beach, Fla.; project size: 2,300 square feet; site size: 0.05 acre; construction cost: $420 per square foot; sales price: $1.8 million; photography: Tommy Crow. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.

The house's many outdoor spaces are designed for privacy. Its Moroccan tilework and Latin American and Mediterranean-inspired architectural details celebrate diversity.
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Design/build firm PLUMBOB LLC subdivided two vacant city lots and inserted these eight condos that blend contemporary interiors with energy-efficient, sustainable living. The two-level units have light-filled, open floor plans and private outdoor spaces in the rear and on the roof. “The condos only measure 18 feet wide, but open spaces were achieved through glass floors and changes in texture,” says Howard Steinberg, AIA. An eclectic materials list—including tigerwood, solid surface, and bamboo—also helps.

Slated for LEED Platinum approval, the project includes such green features as a sod roof, a water collection system, and solar hot water collectors. It’s “got a lot going on for a simple spec townhouse project,” said a judge.—n.f.m.
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his Santa Barbara, Calif., infill project stands out for achieving LEED Platinum and doubling the area’s typical density, but it also blends smoothly with the neighborhood’s Spanish Colonial style and single-family house profile. Jeffrey Berkus, AIA, eased the tight proximity of five houses on a quarter acre of land by including ample public and private outdoor space. “Creating privacy was a big issue,” Berkus explains. “Our main way of accomplishing that was through strategic window placement and plantings, along with well-located terraces, balconies, and roof decks.” In addition to individual outdoor areas, Berkus devised alluring shared spaces.

His efforts didn’t go unnoticed by our jury, who commended the project’s “great site plan” and “nicely handled entry court.” —s.d.h.
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etlev Peikert, AIA, squeezed a long list of “must-haves” onto a tiny piece of land. The building masks a four-story parking garage, offers housing for low- to very low-income workers, and establishes a pedestrian-friendly thoroughfare in downtown Santa Barbara, Calif.

Our judges felt his design achieved all the required goals and more: “It takes care of the garage, creates public and private outdoor space, respects local style, and looks like a pleasant place to live. What’s not to like?”

Peikert implemented a sustainable strategy too. The south-facing units have high ceilings and balconies to usher in light. A bicycle station with maintenance equipment and showers encourages cheap eco-conscious transportation while creating a courtyard. “The way all of these elements come together,” Peikert says, “makes it a great place to live.” —s.d.h.

affordable merit

casas las granadas, santa barbara, calif.

peikert group architects
santa barbara

principal in charge / project architect: Detlev Peikert, AIA, Peikert Group Architects; general contractor: Ken Trigueiro, Peoples’ Self-Help Housing, San Luis Obispo, Calif.; landscape architect: Phil Suding, Suding Design, Santa Barbara, Calif.; structural engineer: Thomas Long, Thomas Long Engineering, Santa Barbara; project size: 485 square feet to 602 square feet per unit; site size: 0.09 acre; construction cost: $230 per square foot; rental price: $560 to $680 per unit per month; units in project: 12; photography: Emmalee Thomas. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.

Contextual architecture, eco-sensitive amenities, and an inviting pedestrian plan make this low-income project a very good neighbor.

affordable merit
paseo senter at coyote creek, san jose, calif.

david baker + partners, architects
san francisco

principal in charge: Kevin Wilcock, AIA, David Baker + Partners, Architects; design principal: David Baker, FAIA, LEED AP, David Baker + Partners, Architects; developers: David Neale, The CORE Companies, San Jose, Calif., and Dan Wu, Charities Housing, San Jose; general contractor: David Neale, CORE Builders, San Jose; landscape architect: Kevin Conger, ASLA, LEED AP, CMG Landscape Architecture, San Francisco; project size: 610 square feet to 1,100 square feet per unit; site size: 4.77 acres; construction cost: $140 per square foot; rental price: $260 to $1,185 per unit per month; units in project: 218; photography: www.vantagepointphoto.com. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.

A daring exterior color palette highlights communal areas, such as a main entry and circulation zone, while more neutral hues let the residential components recede into the background.

“The challenge,” Baker says, “was to make architecture out of the common spaces.” —m.d.
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Bonstra | Harresign Architects converted an abandoned public school building into 92 loft-style condos with two levels of underground parking. Our judges lauded the results as “skillfully done inside and outside.”

Preserving while creating, the design team retained the brick shell, standing seam roof, and wood windows but widened the connection between the two wings, added new dormers, and replaced the mechanical exhaust cupola. The sleek units highlight 11-foot to 14-foot ceilings, 12-foot windows, exposed brick, and Italian ceramic tile.

“We wanted to do modern insertions, so the interiors are simply detailed,” says David T. Harresign, AIA. —n.f.m.
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On an urban site bisected by a major highway, RTKL saw an opportunity to display to tens of thousands of passersby what exactly happens in an art school. The Maryland Institute College of Art building includes living and studio space, and its pixilated drum façade mixes 16 types of glass, reflecting diversity and change. “Baltimore has a lot to do with glass technology,” explains Douglas B. McCooch, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP, “so we took that as a cue for the exterior.”

Facing the highway is a studio tower that showcases artwork in progress, and ground-floor amenities—a café and a black box theater—unite the campus and community. A judge noted that its cloistered organization is a savvy solution to a tough urban site.—c.w.

The three wings of this campus housing project form semi-private courtyards with visual access to the existing green. A modern interpretation of similar buildings on campus, the project uses operable storefront windows to bring in natural light and fresh air.


Campus Housing

The Whitman- Turner Contracting Co., Baltimore; landscape architects: Julie Higgins, ASLA, Hord Coplan Macht, Baltimore, and Jonna Lazarus, ASLA, Lazarus Design Associates, Baltimore; mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and structural engineer: James Stewart, RTKL Associates; lighting designer: Glenn Shrum, IALD, Flux Studio, Baltimore; project size: 600 square feet to 900 square feet per unit; site size: 0.75 acre; construction cost: $255 per square foot; units in project: 63; photography: 2009 RTKL.com/David Whitcomb. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.
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The judges praised the character and scale of this master-planned graduate student community on the edge of historic Westwood Village in Los Angeles. Orderly, elegant, and inviting, its seven varied buildings match the massing, height, and materials of the adjacent 1920s Spanish Colonial village. "A lot of student housing is very boxy and minimal," says Johannes Van Tilburg, FAIA. "We wanted to create something quite charming, with courtyards in the middle of the complex where students could sit outside."

To preserve the residential character, two-story parking garages are tucked under the taller apartments and hidden with "liner" townhouses. Each building encloses a palm-filled central quad, providing a welcome classical contrast to the vernacular flavor.—c.w.
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This loft in San Francisco’s Mission District was dark and cluttered before Joshua Aidlin, AIA, and his client got their hands on it. Working with a talented contractor and fabricators, they turned it into a well-organized, sunlight-filled home. “It’s quite charming,” observed a judge. “For a small apartment, it has wonderful details.”

Aidlin stripped the space down to its bones and came up with a set of five key, cost-effective architectural moves—with catchy names, no less. The “Cradle,” a Douglas fir entry feature that holds home office space, bookshelves, and storage, is interwoven with the “Zipper,” a steel-and-wood stair and railing piece. The plate-steel “Hearth” anchors the living room, while the “Stage” is a bilevel, sit-down kitchen counter that lets guests witness the client’s formidable culinary skills. And the “Scrim,” a wall of translucent sliding panels made from fabric stretched and stapled onto wood frames, supplies privacy and solar shading.

“The materials are very off-the-shelf,” Aidlin explains. “Instead of building a lot of infrastructure, we decided to paint everything white and just add furniture elements.”—m.d.

Most of the apartment’s pieces were made in the shop, reducing on-site labor costs. These include the metal stair, the floor-to-ceiling fabric scrim lining the living room wall, and the translucent plastic panels that screen the loft bedroom upstairs.
The architects continued the home's textured ceiling outside to form an exterior soffit. Dark red paneling in the dining area provides a punch of vibrant color.

architectural interiors
merit

chuckanut drive residence, bellingham, wash.
the miller|hull partnership
seattle

architect Bob Hull, FAIA, and his staff judiciously deployed wood detailing inside this Bellingham, Wash., home. Mindful of the client's budget, as well as the aesthetic risks in using too much of one material, they interspersed poured concrete and drywall with a palette of maple, cedar, and Douglas fir. "We tried to detail the house in a simple, not extravagant, way," Hull says.

The project's honey-colored ceilings consist of exposed plywood, roof joists, and skip sheathing. Red and yellow tongue-and-groove paneling echoes the home's exterior siding. And metal-clad wood windows serve to strengthen the link between indoors and out.

"The warmth of the wood palette is great," said a judge. "The interiors are amazing—beautifully detailed."—m.d.
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the showstopping city views from this Manhattan pied-à-terre created a clear directive for architect Wayne Turett. “The client’s main objective was to display the view,” he explains. “It comes down to not distracting you when you’re looking out the window.” So Turett and his team specified a mostly white palette for the ultra-minimalist, 3,400-square-foot apartment, including white lacquered columns, polished white quartz floors, and a glossy, white-painted ceiling.

“It celebrates New York City,” remarked a judge. “It really takes glamorous architecture to the extreme, in a fun way.” —m.d.


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According to Stephen Muse, FAIA, the biggest challenge to designing a large house lies in balancing variety and consistency. “The idea is to make the spaces similar enough to hold together but different enough that you have reason to move from room to room,” he says. For this residence in Howard County, Md., he and his staff devised historically appropriate trim and millwork profiles that accomplish both goals and also match the rooms’ oversized scale.

“Masterfully done,” noted a judge. “It’s classic and restrained—a beautifully crafted, well-proportioned interior.” —m.d.
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Tom Kundig, FAIA, likens his six Rolling Huts to "a little Thoreau hut on Walden Pond," but Henry David Thoreau never had it so sweet. The cabins, which hover over rusted wheels, each face a different view of the mountains and have butterfly roofs, clerestory windows, plywood walls, and cork floors. A woodburning fireplace supplies heat.

The elevated "wooden tents" resulted from the creative interpretation of a zoning ordinance that allowed only RVs on this spotless slice of wilderness. One house—Delta Shelter, also by Kundig—already stood on the property, and the owner wanted not only guesthouses for friends but units he could rent out to cross-country skiers. Local codes prohibited additional buildings, but previous owners had established a permit allowing 14 parked RVs. Hence the steel wheels, which can roll but are intended to be more sculptural than practical. "As soon as we put the huts on wheels, we discovered that in code they were mobile homes, so we didn't need a building permit," Kundig says, adding, "They've since changed the codes." (For more on Delta Shelter, see pages 56–57 in the May 2006 issue.)

The jury applauded the inventive, low-tech solution. "The idea of a house on wheels is great," said one judge. "It's lovely and minimally invasive."—c.w.
After purchasing 27 acres of land in Upper Tract, W.V., Jeffery Broadhurst, AIA, thought long and hard about what to put there. He ultimately came up with a “shack” that may be a step up from camping but still has architectural merit. “It was designed on napkins, envelopes, and church bulletins over three years,” the architect jokes. Our judges gave him a Grand award for his tenacity and the simplicity of the outcome.

The off-the-grid retreat consists of a 10-foot-by-14-foot main living area and two 4-foot closets. The materials list is equally modest—just 2x4s, pine siding, and a metal roof. Broadhurst, who built the cabin with help from family, friends, and neighbors, used elemental solutions for daily necessities, such as rainwater collection for an outdoor shower, a wood stove for heat, and a propane burner and tank for hot water. An aluminum garage door and carefully placed windows help ventilate, and a deck doubles the living space in good weather.

Said one judge: It “has a folksy quality without being sentimental.” (For more on this project, see page 21 in the July 2008 issue.)—n.f.m.
How 22 last-minute, custom-sized, impact-resistant windows didn’t stall the project.

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Rather than remodel an old one-bedroom cottage as their main house, a Texas couple asked Andersson•Wise Architects to convert it into communal living space and to build this new tower for sleeping quarters adjacent to the existing house. Our judges approved of the “cool” result. “The building is really simple,” says Chris Wise, AIA. It consists of a first-floor master suite, a second-level guest room and bath, and a large rooftop terrace with a kitchenette. Plywood panels warm the interiors, and a hard-wearing tropical hardwood domesticates the exterior. Mini-split air conditioning units provide cooling, but the building is sited for natural ventilation.—n.f.m.

A dark, quiet, enigmatic shape in the woods, this building responds to a very simple program. “It’s mostly about reading and writing, watching the fire, and listening to music,” says Wendy Evans Joseph, FAIA, LEED AP.

But in simplicity there is power, and Joseph’s distilled forms and highly tuned surfaces imbue familiar elements with iconic force. Our judges noted the deft handling of walnut in building assemblies and sculptural custom furnishings.—b.d.s.

With its abstracted building forms and deftly controlled surfaces—matte on the outside, highly polished within—this single-purpose building delivers multiple layers of surprise.
The owner of this penthouse pied-à-terre overlooking the Atlantic Ocean uses it primarily to entertain business colleagues. To that end, Eiríka Dógg Ingjaldsdóttir, AIA, Assoc. IIDA, and Tryggvi Thorsteinnsson, Assoc. AIA, created a dramatic, disappearing kitchen that works equally well for meetings or dinners. “It has everything you need in a kitchen—dishwasher, refrigerator, stove, coffee machine—but it’s all hidden,” Ingjaldsdóttir explains.

The multipurpose island, for example, conceals four custom stools with backs that mimic file cabinets. Push the stools in and the island morphs from conference table to sleek, stand-up bar. Along the room’s textured stone wall, a flip-up section of stainless steel counter reveals a recessed sink and cooktop. That same countertop flows seamlessly into handles for cabinets containing the fridge and other built-in appliances.

“It’s a new way to interpret urban kitchens,” one judge raved, while another simply liked how the kitchen “does really cool things.”—s.d.h.

Changes in cabinet depth indicate a subtle shift from living space to kitchen (above). Beyond the sleek Murphy bed (inset), etched glass pocket doors screen the combination bath/laundry/closet in this hardworking space.

The kitchen wall is solid black lava stone. The material reflects Iceland’s volcanic topography and suggests a kind of black box theater for the owner’s live/work space.

principal in charge / project architect: Eiríka Dógg Ingjaldsdóttir, AIA, Assoc. IIDA, Minarc; principal in charge / project designer: Tryggvi Thorsteinnsson, Assoc. AIA, Minarc; project size: 1,200 square feet; construction cost: Withheld; photography: Courtesy Minarc. Visit www.residentialarchitect.com for floor plans and products.

For his own home and kitchen, Jack Hawkins, AIA, LEED AP, “wanted to see how small we could live.” The result “really talks about the kitchen as being more than a kitchen,” said one judge. “It’s art the way it’s done,” added another. Hawkins loaded as much storage as possible into custom cabinets that climb step-by-step with a hot-rolled steel stair until they level out at counter height. The smooth steel also works as a low-maintenance backsplash that blends nicely with cast-in-place concrete counters. Steamed beech millwork, which Hawkins used throughout the house for continuity, provides a warm counterpoint to the otherwise raw materials.

“The biggest challenge was talking my wife into having our bed in the kitchen,” he chuckles. Much like our jury, however, she quickly fell head over heels for the Murphy bed, along with all of the clever cabinetry.—s.d.h.
Joe Moore, AIA, intended this white-and-stainless steel kitchen to both please and surprise. “It’s playing off traditional New England kitchens and reinventing them a little bit,” he says.

So he exaggerated the room’s vertical proportions, stretching the cabinetry a few feet taller than usual. Layers of grooved glass in the cabinet fronts create a spectral effect; from some angles they reveal blurred outlines of the dishes behind them, and from others they turn opaque.

“It’s sparkling,” said a judge. “The monochromatic color scheme softens its industrial look.” — m.d.
Architect Mark Jensen, AIA, took the goal of curb appeal seriously with this façade makeover. Supported by a cantilevered cast-in-place concrete platform, a glass box beckons to passersby and offers glimpses through the house toward stunning vistas of downtown San Francisco and the Bay beyond. “The vestibule is not part of the conditioned space,” Jensen explains. “There’s a sliding glass door into the house, so it’s more of a transparent gateway to celebrate the views out back.”

A few inches outside the glass enclosure, a waterfall flows over variegated blue ceramic tiles on the garage wall and into a pool that extends beneath the entire floating front porch. Stairs suspended on a steel riser, a cantilevered overhang with a slot skylight, and a moss-filled band of porous concrete add to the mystique of the entry sequence. “It takes what would normally be three steps and makes a huge deal out of it,” summed up one juror, while another found beauty in “the combination of pattern and clean lines and water.”—S.D.H.

ise de Vito and Jim Zack, AIA, lavished attention on the design of the skylight-topped staircase in their San Francisco townhouse. The result—a glowing transmitter of light, sound, and air—won praise from the judges. “I like the luminous quality,” said one.

The couple hand-sanded the staircase’s clear acrylic treads and risers to achieve a translucent appearance. Waterjet-cut steel stringers hold these pieces together. A slim mahogany handrail adds warmth, and guardrails of glass and steel usher light into the heart of the house.—m.d.

principal in charge / project designer: Lise de Vito, Zack / de Vito Architecture; project architect: Jim Zack, AIA, Zack / de Vito Architecture; general contractor: Jim Zack, AIA, Built Form Construction, San Francisco; construction cost: $75 per square foot (staircase fabrication and installation only); photography: Bruce Damonte.

architectural design detail
merit
laidley street residence, san francisco
zack / de vito architecture
san francisco

The view from the lower level up through the top-floor skylight shows how the staircase distributes light throughout the house. One-inch gaps beneath each riser (left) enhance the effect of airiness and transparency.
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The owners and their guests will be able to walk along a sea grass-planted roof to enter the glass pavilion on grade, or follow the dune downhill to a private courtyard entrance on the lower level.

**on the boards**

**merit**

drust dun house, Truro, Mass.

ruhl walker architects

Boston

The owners of this Cape Cod acreage want to take advantage of its ocean views and white sand beach without damaging the delicate dunes. Making a sensitive situation even trickier is the neighboring Edward Hopper house that overlooks the site through the famous painter’s studio window.

Brad Walker, AIA, proposed renovating an 1820s house that sits on the inland edge of the lot as a primary residence, then building a retreat on the water. His design features a two-bedroom concrete base burrowed into the sand and topped by a glass pavilion. The long, narrow footprint barely disturbs the dunes’ regular shifting pattern, and existing dune trails link the old and new structures.

Our judges liked how the building acts as “background architecture with a sculptural quality” and called it “a poetic folly.” —S.D.H.

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**on the boards**

**merit**

the bayou district at park city, New Orleans

**JHP architecture / urban design**

Dallas

When Hurricane Katrina roared through New Orleans, it devastated the already deteriorating St. Bernard Housing Development. Fast-track plans to demolish and rebuild the area resulted in this design our judges called “very strong.”

The first phase of the project includes 466 rental units, assigned to two- and three-story townhouses and a “mansion” building. JHP Architecture broke up the massing into smaller elements and provided through access to maintain consistency with the existing fabric of New Orleans. “We tried to break the blocks down so it didn’t look like the projects,” says Ronald E. Harwick, AIA, CSI. The firm also created multiple semi-public spaces, internal parking courts, and a diverse streetscape with stoops and deep galleries.

“It’s a remarkably contextual solution for knitting a city back together,” said a judge. —N.F.M.
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*Issue mailed in regional editions.
Sun-drenched white walls, taut wood, and trim slate-gray floors are trademarks of David Salmela's Scandinavia-inspired architecture. Add a cobalt blue conference table and precise stacks of white project boxes, and you have his Duluth, Minn., workspace. With its long, oiled birch plywood counter and raw basswood slatted rails, this jewel box of a room typifies the fresh, yet familiar approach for which the architect has become known.

Salmela, FAIA, works on the main level at the long countertop, which doubles as a display shelf for models of active projects. An employee occupies the space a few steps down, and upstairs is an administrative office and storage mezzanine.

“It’s really fun to work here,” Salmela says of the sunny, ground-level office in his home, which won a Merit award in this year’s residential architect Design Awards competition (see page 49). Adding to the pleasure is the sight of ships passing in the Duluth-Superior Harbor below. “The windows at my desk are 7 feet square and 2 feet off the floor,” Salmela says, “so we have an immense view of the world.”—cheryl weber
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