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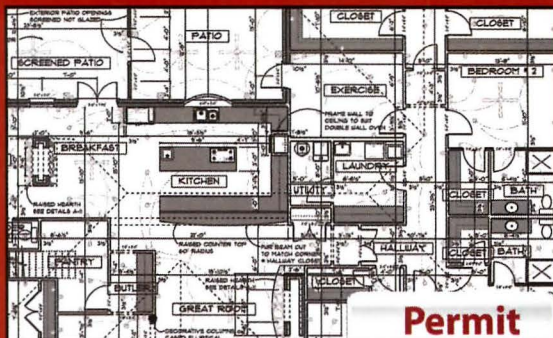
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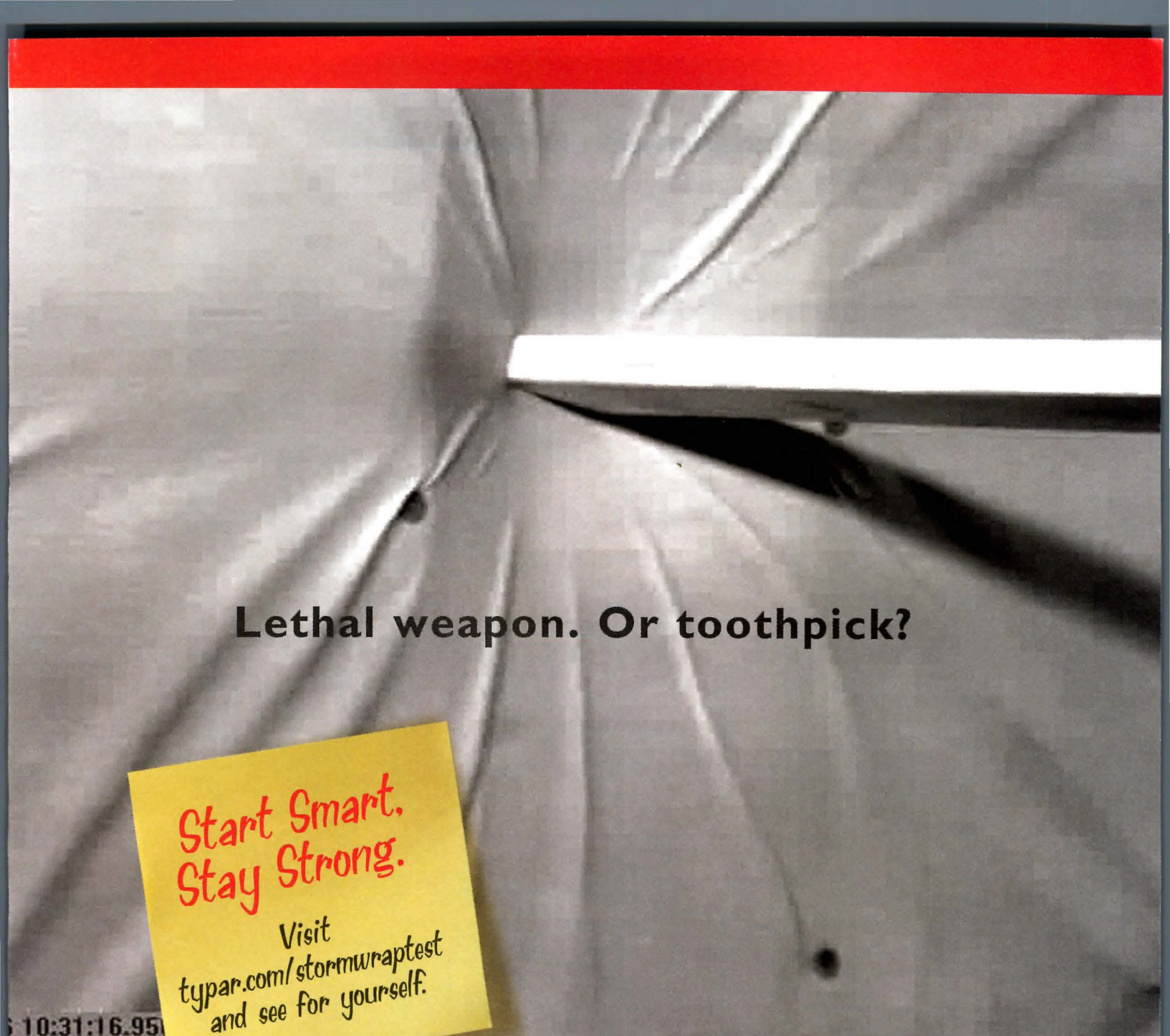
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The third in our series of special-focus green features addresses the triple whammy in residential architecture: small, remodeled, sustainable homes. Three times the charm.

by Nigel F. Maynard, Shelley D. Hutchins, and Meghan Drueding

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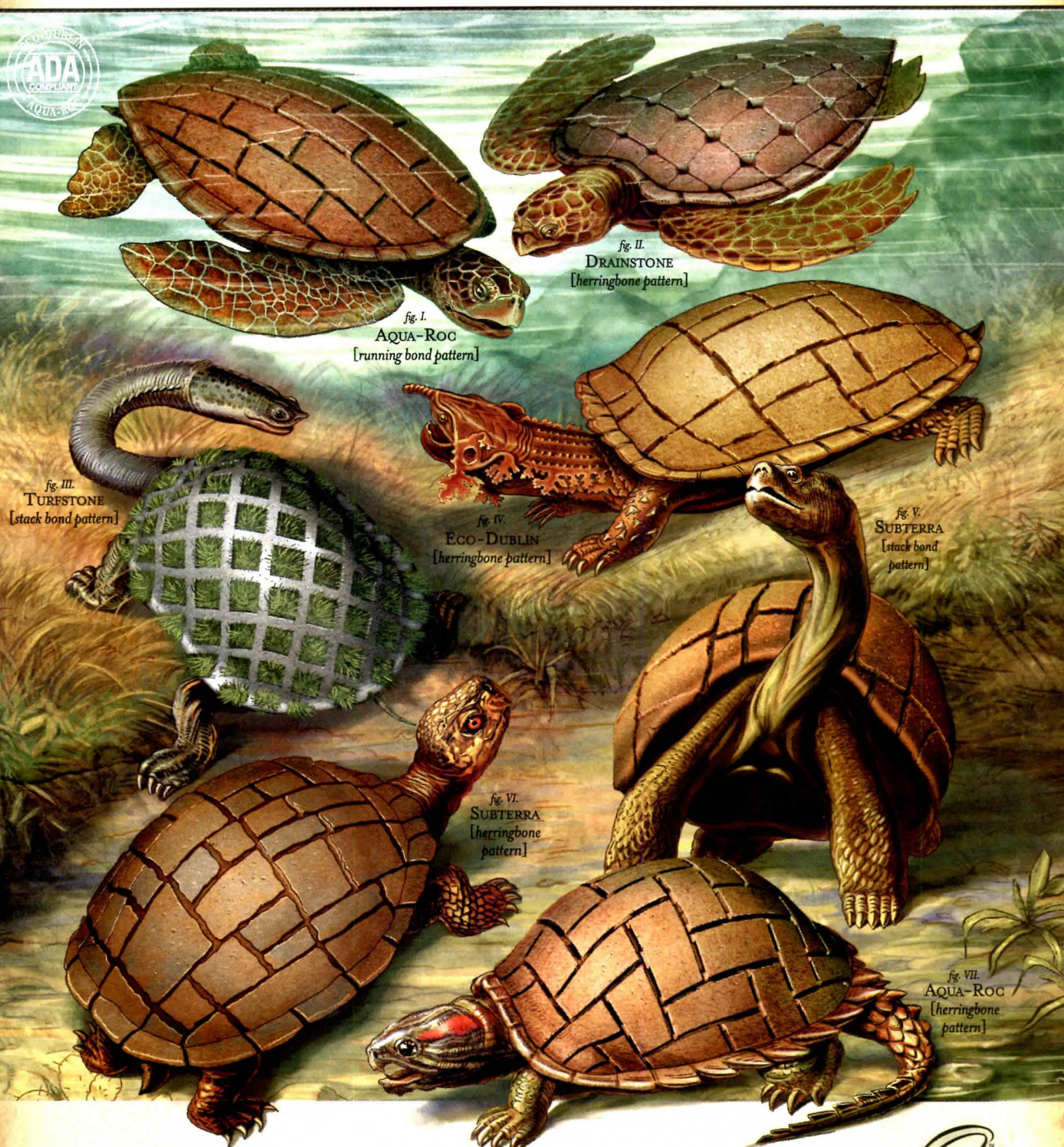
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from the editor

# living large

it doesn't take a heap of square footage for a house to feel like home.

by s. claire conroy

**h**ow small a space do you think you could live in—happily and for a long period of time?

We went out looking for small residential projects for this, our annual issue devoted to sustainable design, and we found a handful of nicely executed, not-too-big dwellings for our feature report. None of them exceeded 1,500 square feet.

All are remodels. And, even more impressive, their owners resisted the powerful, human urge to supersize them. One house—a project in San Antonio—did grow by about 1,000 square feet, but it started at only 500! It's probably no surprise that the smallest bump in square footage was in our Australian house—a mere 75 feet. Other countries always seem to figure these things out first.

But maybe our country is catching on. Last year, for the first time in more than a decade, the median house size dropped—from 2,277 square feet to 2,219 square feet, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Seems impressive. I read a newspaper story about this trend quoting quite a few architects

who thought it signified a major cultural change. It's nice to think so. But, being the optimistic skeptic I am, I had to check the numbers myself. I looked for previous drops in house size (the Census tracks back to 1973 online), and it's obvious the dips reflect the state of the economy more than any real paradigm shift in the way Americans wish to live. Guess when the last substantial decreases were? Yup, in 1991 and 1981–82—recessionary years.

Except for those hiccups in the economy, the American house has bloated relentlessly larger each year. The last time the median house size was solidly, consistently in the 1,500-square-foot range was in the early 1970s.

Are we ready to roll back our typical house size to that '70s sweet spot? (Coincidentally, the '70s were also the last time we thought seriously about the environment and our consumption of natural resources.)

Properly designed, that amount of space can feel luxurious—unless you're Octomom and family. I happily lived through the go-go late '90s and early oughts in an 850-square-foot converted garage.

Even when I added another



Mark Robert Halper

person to the mix, it still felt ample, especially in the warmer months when we could spread to the patio. The only thing that made me feel claustrophobic in the place was the litter box. Needless to say, it's never been so well-maintained.

Ah, the power of the Internet. I just looked up Octomom's house size: The new home she bought this spring is, by most reports, 2,583 square feet—about 50 square feet larger than the western U.S. average for 2008. Surely if her family of 15 can make do with 172 square feet apiece, the typical, shrinking American household can get by with less than it's consuming.

Chances are it will have

to, at least in the near term. Builder/developers aren't likely to return to their biggest house plans for quite some time—not while banks are tightening lending to them and to their customers. And custom clients are apt to watch their square footage closely, too, as they try to limit their exposure in this volatile market.

All this offers an opportunity for enlightened architects to demonstrate how large small can really live. If you do your jobs properly, no one will feel the need to supersize again, even if the good times start rolling once more. **ra**

Comments? E-mail cconroy@hanleywood.com.



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# letters

exercise your right to write.

## reality bytes

I'm optimistic the next revolution in work and life will be more upbeat than your project in your January/February 2009 editorial ("The New, New Reality," page 11).

But in the meantime there will be a great deal of contraction and pain. Witness the 30-plus résumés a week our firm is receiving for jobs we don't have to offer. It's hard to see peers out of work, especially ones in the same stage of life as you, with mortgages, kids in college, and the nagging possibility they may never again have a meaningful career in architecture. In their cases they will not only be making due with less, but also nursing lasting disappointment with a career they chose for love that couldn't provide for them a meaningful life.

*Michael J. Malone, AIA  
The Michael Malone  
Studio, WKMC Architects  
Dallas*

## problem solving 101, redux

We totally agree with your November/

December 2008 editorial ("What Plays in Peoria," page 11). You've pointed out a major problem in the profession.

Architects aren't taught how to communicate with nonarchitects. They do learn a lot in school, but this ability isn't part of any curriculum I've seen—and I've served on three faculties and lectured at a dozen schools over the last 40 years. The profession as a whole has done a miserable job of explaining what we do and why our services aren't just a commodity. There have been exceptions, but in general, most architects simply have no idea what to say to help homeowners understand what we do and why many of them need our help to achieve the best financial return on their life's biggest financial investment.

After more than 30 years of commercial, institutional, and multifamily projects, my partners retired in the mid-1990s and I decided to refocus the practice, with an emphasis on designing single-family residential renovations and additions. With residential renovations, each one is very different—and

that makes each day I come to work endlessly interesting.

As my colleagues and I got deeper into residential design, we discovered that homeowners have no idea what we do, how to interact with us, how to select an architect, or how to determine reasonable fees. Most think choosing an architect is like bidding out a residential plumbing job: explain the project and then ask for "competitive bids" to get the cheapest fee possible. Since that strategy usually works against an owner's best interests, we never participate in that sort of arrangement.

After more than a decade and much trial and error, we eventually figured out how to sell strong design, how to explain what we do, and how to suggest to potential clients that they sort through alternatives and choose appropriately. Even after more than 30 years in the profession and many years running a commercial office, it wasn't easy.

We discovered that it doesn't have much to do with architecture, but it does have a lot to do

*continued on page 12*

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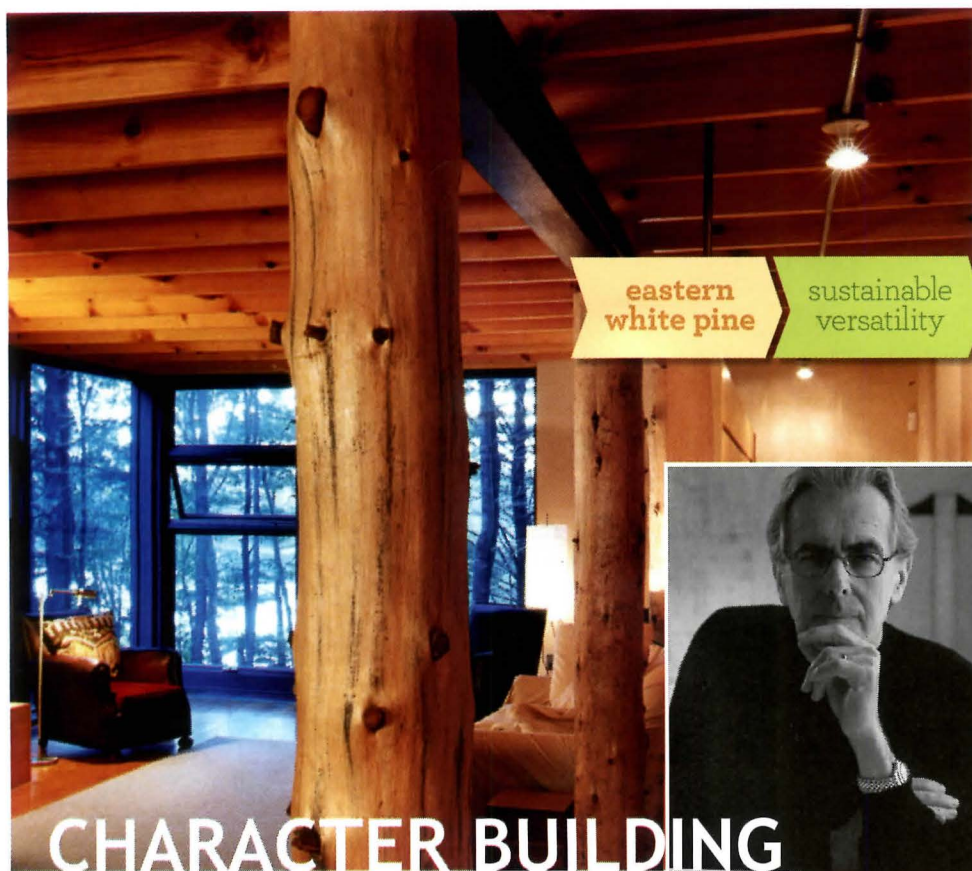
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## letters

with basic selling techniques. If your magazine were to take on this topic with an ongoing series of articles helping architects communicate with the public (particularly with regard to how they fit into the process of designing residential projects), it would be a great service. I can't think of anything more important you could do for the profession.

*Tom Clark  
Thomas Clark Architects  
Baltimore*

**r**egarding who does the talking in architectural presentations: Architects do indeed

have to be able to speak plainly to their clients and potential clients, but they really need to be able to speak at every level of sophistication ("What Plays in Peoria," November/December 2008, page 11).

Most architects present excellent drawings but do not always have the skills to articulate the nuances of their designs. If our ideas precede our drawings, our words must accompany those drawings. Developed verbal skills can make an architect's interactions with clients and contractors more useful for all and more successful for the architect.

*Peter W. Charapko, AIA  
Peter W. Charapko Architect  
New York City*

*Letters may be edited for clarity and length.*



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# home front

news from the leading edge of residential design.



Renderings: Courtesy Collaborative Designworks (above) and HouMinn (below)



Hometta's modern house plans will include Binary House (top), by one of the company's core designers, James M. Evans of Houston-based Collaborative Designworks. Draft House (above), another Hometta offering, was created by core designer Blair Satterfield and Marc Swackhamer of HouMinn in Houston and Minneapolis.

## stock exchange

At one point or another, almost every residential architect dreams of providing well-designed, affordable homes to the masses. Some try to reach this goal through prefab, while others become developers themselves. Houston builder and developer Mark Johnson has taken a different approach: His new company, Hometta, offers stock modern house plans by a handpicked pool of accomplished architects and designers. "There's a real need for people who can't afford a high-end custom home to have lower-cost access to modern design," he says.

He and Hometta's co-founder, Houston designer Andrew McFarland, enlisted four well-respected local practitioners—James M. Evans, AIA; Dawn Finley; Blair Satterfield; and Brett Zamore—to serve as the company's minority owners. They, in turn, lined up about 20 more firms from around the country to provide innovative home plans. Participants include Min I Day of San Francisco and Omaha, Neb.; Garofalo Architects of Chicago; and KRDB of Austin, Texas. "It seemed like an interesting group doing interesting work," says KRDB's Chris Krager, AIA.





Courtesy Min | Day

Min | Day's first plan for Hometta is the Wide Open House, a one-story, 2,500-square-foot residence. "Hometta is a serious effort to bring design to the general public," says firm principal Jeffrey L. Day, AIA. "They're very committed to quality."

Hometta requires all submitted houses to be sustainable, modern in style, and 2,500 square feet or less. Johnson, McFarland, and their team review the designs and often send them back for revisions, looking for ways to make them as easy as possible to build. To the same end, the company has created an online construction guide that helps homeowners with basic plan and builder selection, site placement, and common construction issues. The plans will range in cost from \$1,195 for a studio-sized house to \$3,195 for a three-bedroom dwelling. For more information, visit [www.hometta.com](http://www.hometta.com).—*meghan drueding*

## tennessee squire

What happens when a former city planner puts his time, effort, and money where his mouth is? The first LEED Platinum housing in Tennessee. Chattanooga's Madison Street houses ([www.madisonmoderns.com](http://www.madisonmoderns.com)) are designed and developed by Christian Rushing, AICP, LEED AP, a principal with planners Kennedy, Coulter, Rushing & Watson, and built by Collier Construction. The three finished houses (of six planned) are under 1,600 square feet, sited for passive solar, sided with rainscreens, and specced with local, recycled, and renewable materials. And they're bolstering Jefferson Heights in Chattanooga's revitalized downtown, which Rushing helped devise. "As a planner and designer, I've advised clients on how to do the 'right thing,' and I saw this as an opportunity to walk a mile in their shoes," he says.

Oh, he's keeping the shoes—Rushing's family occupies one of the houses. The other two are for sale for less than \$250,000. "It's not necessarily more expensive to build green, if you make the proper choices," he says.—*s. claire conroy*



Courtesy Christian Rushing

## living the "i" life

Is it possible to build a truly affordable modern, sustainable home? Wes Boyd, AIA, and Andy Hutsell have tried their hand, designing for Maryville, Tenn.-based manufactured home builder Clayton Homes a modular housing framework known as the i-house ([www.claytonihouse.com](http://www.claytonihouse.com)).

Conceived to offer flexible indoor-outdoor living within a small, simple footprint, the i-house comes in two basic models that can be customized into 14 different configurations. The one-bedroom/one-bath "i-house I" and two-bedroom/one-bath "i-house II" have base prices (including delivery and installation) of \$74,900 and \$93,300, respectively. Options include a separate "flex room," which adds supplemental living or sleeping space.

A central design feature of the i-house is its butterfly roof, which accents the house's exterior, facilitates rainwater harvesting, and creates dynamic interior spaces within the main volume. Each home will be built to Energy Star guidelines, with both standard and optional green upgrades available.—*stephani l. miller*



Courtesy Clayton Homes



# a bright idea

a prefab barn promotes green benchmarks.

**W**hen Keith Collins called on Kaplan Thompson Architects to design an outbuilding for his wife, Mary, it seemed like a straightforward commission. But almost immediately Collins, a repeat client, revealed a loftier goal: to create a beautiful, high-performance demonstration project that could help teach the industry about “net-zero” houses. “We did research and decided that we wanted a flexible building that was livable, affordable, sustainable, and replicable,”

explains Phil Kaplan, AIA, LEED AP, principal of the Portland, Maine-based firm.

Collaborating with the client, Walpole, N.H.-based prefab manufacturer Bensonwood, and a variety of green engineers, Kaplan Thompson came up with the BrightBuilt Barn, a 756-square-foot, single-level outbuilding on the clients’ property in Rockport, Maine. The structure is designed as a working studio, but Kaplan says it can easily be configured into a one- or two-bedroom house.

The 90 percent prefabricated barn measures 18 feet wide by 42 feet long and has a continuous, superinsulated R-40 shell. Its 2x6 exterior walls comprise blown-in cellulose insulation, timber-frame structural insulated panels, and triple-glazed windows. Built without a furnace, the barn has an air-to-air heat pump (which operates at temperatures as low as 0 degrees Fahrenheit), a 5-kilowatt photovoltaic system, solar hot water, and a heat recovery ventilator. “When you have a house this tight, you need [the ventilator] to bring fresh air into the building,” Kaplan says.

One of the project’s most exciting features is its real-time energy feedback system. A series of LED



Photos: Naomi C.O. Beal Photography

BrightBuilt Barn uses materials with at least 25 percent recycled content and locally sourced wood products. The prototype building will be sold at a per-square-foot cost equivalent to the average small home.

lights installed around the base and inside the structure are programmed to glow in three colors that signify current energy usage levels. Bulbs turn green when the building is using less energy than it’s producing, yellow when it’s borderline, and red when it exceeds net-zero goals. Live feedback encourages human modulation of energy use, Kaplan Thompson argues, and has been shown to reduce electricity costs by up to 12 percent. In addition to the lights, a large meter on the structure’s front façade monitors energy use and consumption and displays the information on the BrightBuilt Barn blog ([www.brightbuiltbarn.blogspot.com](http://www.brightbuiltbarn.blogspot.com)).

Since completing the original BrightBuilt Barn, Kaplan Thompson and Bensonwood have transformed the concept into

a product line that can be purchased at a base price of less than \$200,000 (not including site and foundation work and other essentials). Several upgrade options also are available.

Kaplan says the project team hopes to be able to offer the plans and specs online by summer “so people can build their own” BrightBuilt Barns. But there will be a caveat: “They must agree to log their [homes’ performance] data on the website,” he says, adding that such information-sharing is what the barn is all about.

As his firm sees it, performance data from other BrightBuilt Barns will “stop our guessing at the combinations of systems and assemblies that will eventually bring us to attainable, carbon-free homes” and at long last make them a reality.—*nigel f. maynard*





# DESIGN

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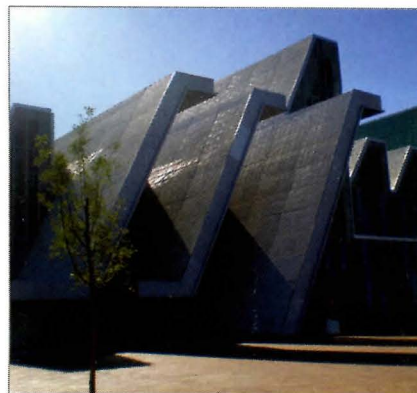
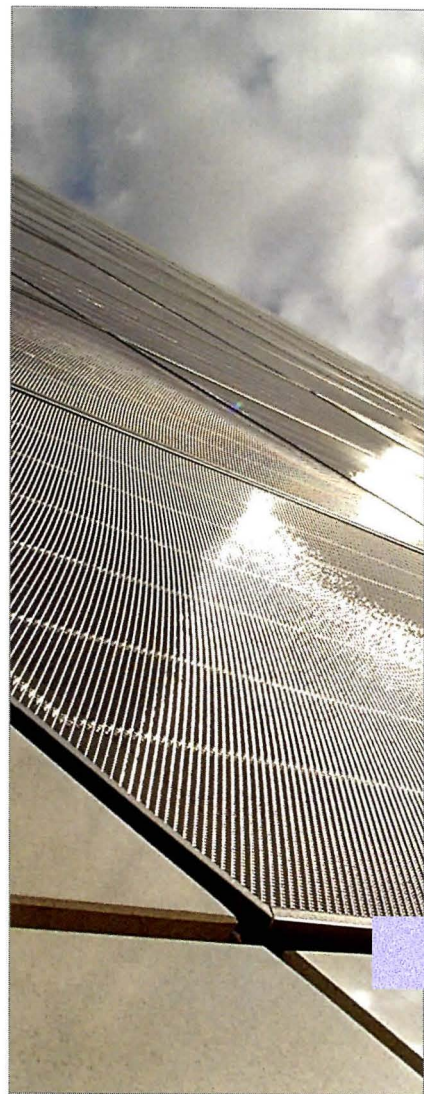
Additionally, damaged individual tiles can be easily replaced, versus replacing an entire installation. Ceramic tile doesn't fade or discolor when exposed to UV rays. It even withstands fire and flood, where most other surface materials fail.

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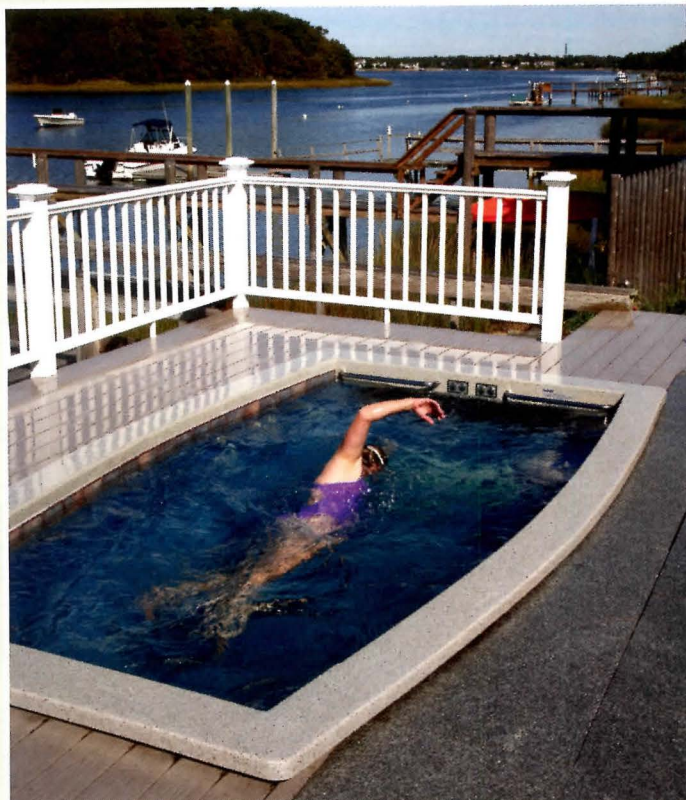
Indoor air quality benefits because tile is neither a primary nor a secondary source of air pollution, as it emits no fibers, gases or other harmful byproducts. It reduces allergens, and doesn't absorb smoke, paint fumes or other contaminants. And tile inhibits the growth of mold, mildew, fungus and other organisms.

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# k + b studio

## kitchen: can-do attitude

San Francisco is famous for its Victorian row houses, which typically feature small, dark kitchens tucked in at the back. Neal Schwartz, AIA, remodeled one such kitchen for a family of four that cooks almost every night and makes canning fresh produce an annual event. “Even though the original kitchen was inadequate, we paid attention to the spirit of the space and the way the family used it,” Schwartz explains. “It had

practicality and a casual quality that I tried to keep.”

Incorporating an adjacent sunporch created an inviting, yet hard-working kitchen that meets the clients’ myriad needs without overwhelming the rest of the house. To make the tidy 250-square-foot space welcoming and usable for tasks as varied as pickling and art projects, Schwartz maximized functionality where possible and finished the room with refined details. A stone-topped island, for example, offers prep space while supporting one end of a roomy drop-leaf table. Cookbook shelves cap lower cabinets. Doorway detailing helps camouflage an oversized corkboard that’s ideal for displaying grocery lists and homemade masterworks. Converting a hallway bath into a powder room yielded space for an open but unseen pantry where the fridge resides.

Schwartz’s material choices reflect his habit of “suggesting sustainable and nontoxic materials, whether a client asks for them or not.” Refinishing the kitchen’s original wood floors saved resources and gave the room continuity. For cabinet doors and drawer fronts, he chose local, responsibly harvested domestic walnut. The room is bathed in abundant natural light during the day, with energy-efficient fluorescents providing ambient lighting after dark. With most of the glazing facing west, operable clerestory windows help manage the room’s microclimate by venting hot air; discreet rolling shades do the rest.—*shelley d. hutchins*

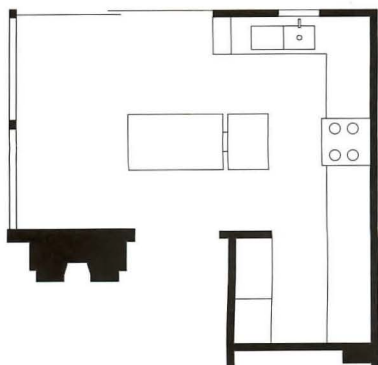
In architect Neal Schwartz’s new plan, “you don’t really see the functioning kitchen until you enter the kitchen itself,” he says. Nestling the refrigerator, storage, and pantry in the back “service area” opens the rest of the space to multiple uses.



Photos: Matthew Millman







**project:** Buena Vista Terrace Residence, San Francisco

**architect:** Schwartz and Architecture, San Francisco

**general contractor:** Gillispie Construction, Mill Valley, Calif.

**resources:** hood: Viking Range Corp.; oven: Wolf Appliance; refrigerator: Sub-Zero; windows and doors: Roto Frank of America

A distinctive 4-inch gap separates the stone-topped countertop from the adjacent drop-leaf table. Concealed metal supports beneath the table's walnut-veneer top allow the piece to open up to accommodate 10 people.



# k + b studio

## bath: chamber plot

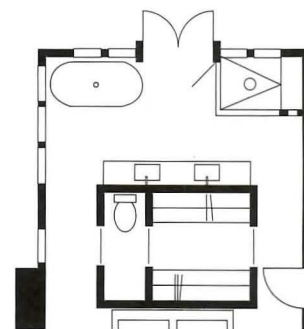
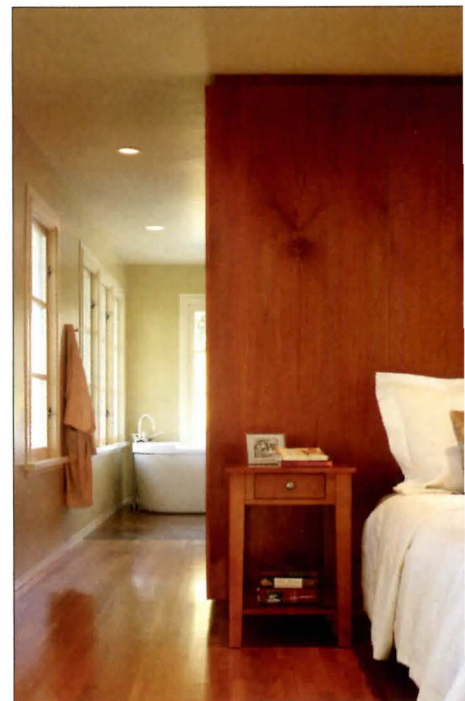
Neal Schwartz, AIA, describes the original master suite in this Bay Area Mission-style house as “a weird warren of rooms where you had to walk through the closet to get to the master bath.” He replaced the maze with an open, multifunctional room for sleeping and bathing, and infilled it with a mahogany chamber containing water and clothes closets. “I tried to solve everything with a single box that you can walk around or through,” Schwartz explains. “It gives you a lot of bang for your buck.”

On the sleeping side of the 525-square-foot room, the floor-to-ceiling box serves as an oversized headboard that echoes the size and shape of a facing window wall. Concealed within the box is a walk-through closet and separate toilet room. Three sets of sandblasted glass doors offer

visual privacy or open up to a tall mirror at one end with reflected views of leafy birch trees outside. A matching double vanity with flat-front cabinets, a soaking tub, and a frameless glass steam shower occupy the bathing area on the back side of the box.

With the exception of the divided-light wood windows, which suggest the home’s Mission exteriors, the revamped master suite is a showcase of contemporary detailing. “The words our client used to describe what he wanted for this space were much more modern in concept,” Schwartz explains. An open layout, a strong connection to nature, and a lavish, spalike retreat were top priorities. “By keeping the perimeter more like the rest of the house, we had the freedom to create a different world inside.”—*s.d.h.*

Natural materials—including mahogany for the casework, marble for the countertops, and stone tilework—complement the rest of the house’s rich palette.



**project:** Ross Circle Residence, Oakland, Calif.

**architect:** Schwartz and Architecture, San Francisco

**general contractor:** Lawrence Construction, Richmond, Calif.

**custom window and door fabricator:** White Owl Woodworks, Oakland

**resources:** ceramic floor tile: Ann Sacks Tile & Stone; fixtures: Duravit USA



Photos: Matthew Millman





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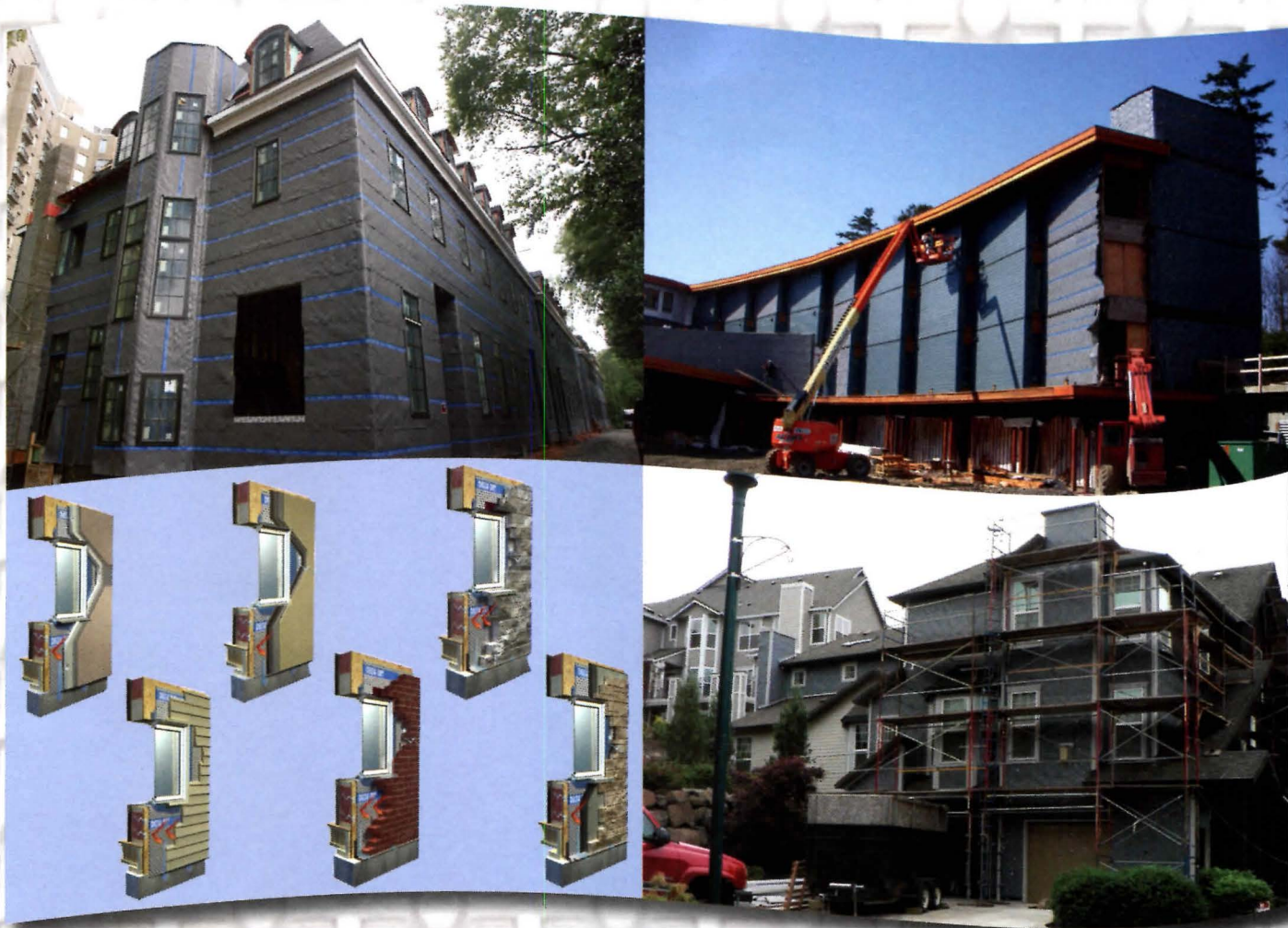
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# the new networking

online social media turn personal connections into professional allies.

by cheryl weber

**m**arketing is a chore for most residential architects, who would rather draw than dream up ways to attract new business. It's easier to rely on word-of-mouth advertising and the casual connections formed at kids' soccer games, dinner parties, and board meetings. Conventional wisdom says that personal networking is, in fact, the most powerful marketing tool there is. Consumers place far more trust in people they know than they do in advertising messages, and that explains the growing number of companies turning to online social media—blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and the like—to generate interest in their work. There's a lot of hype around online schmoozing, to be sure, and some see it as a trendy Internet time drain. But there's evidence that it can be a powerful professional ally—especially for small firms and independent practitioners, for whom each connection is a multipliable building block.

So many people now socialize online that the local Chamber of Commerce mixer seems positively "old

school." Facebook alone saw a 116 percent jump in membership from September 2007 to September 2008, according to Nielsen Online. And Twitter has grown tenfold over the past year, a comScore analysis showed. When you consider the thousands of businesses that host Facebook groups, thereby creating an online community of people who

share their interests, it's clear that social media is catching on with business in a big way.

A mid-2008 study by the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Center for Marketing Research bears this out. A survey of the Inc. 500—a list of the fastest-growing privately held companies in the United States compiled annually

by *Inc.* magazine—showed that their use of online social media doubled between 2007 and 2008. Thirty-nine percent of the companies were blogging in 2008, up from 19 percent in 2007.

Social media is still in its nascent stages, and not yet second nature for many design firms. But some are figuring out how to use it  
*continued on page 30*



Michael Austin



## practice

judiciously. One example is Charlottesville, Va., architect Lance Hosey, AIA, LEED AP, a former director at William McDonough + Partners. Last fall he set up a Facebook page for *Women in Green*, the book he co-authored with Kira Gould, to spread the word about the topic. Feedback poured in so quickly that within months it had attracted several hundred fans—mostly people he didn't know. Besides the page's direct marketing value, the comments left by viewers are more illuminating than sales figures alone. An added bonus: It's easier to set up and amend than a website.

Last year, Hosey also created a personal Facebook

page that, he's discovered, adds color to his professional life. "I joined because family and friends were pressuring me, but I immediately realized the value of it," he says. For Hosey, it's the chance to get to know workaday peers as real people. "Someone can announce that she's just won a design competition or launched a new book, and in the same day say she's overcoming a cold and frantic about meeting a deadline. In moderation, mixing the personal and professional can be a good thing. If people know me from my résumé, they only see one side of me."

Yen Ha, LEED AP, a principal at Front Studio,

*"in moderation, mixing the personal and professional can be a good thing. if people know me from my résumé, they only see one side of me."*

—lance hosey, aia, leed ap

New York City, thinks so too. She and co-principal Michi Yanagishita created LUNCH, a blog that reveals bits of their style in a way that a portfolio could not. The luscious photos and mini-musings on repasts ranging from lamb saagwala to apple puff pastry are "a reminder to stop, chill, breathe in fresh air, and most importantly—eat,"

according to the website. Ha says a lot of clients are fascinated by it, and it may explain some of the restaurant projects that are starting to come their way. "It helps, for someone whose portfolio is low on restaurant work, that clients coming in are saying, 'Oh, you guys really like to eat.'" The pair also ties

*continued on page 32*



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## practice

Front Studio to Twitter, using it to remark on an interesting design they've seen or something delicious they've just eaten. "I think for a lot of designers, the Web presence is just a way of making little comments here and there that reflect your personality and design sensibilities," Ha says.

### virtual chatter

Online social networking's other essential beauty is that it unlocks geography, making it attractive to architects with a national and international range. For example, Chris Pardo—whose Seattle firm, Pb Elemental Architecture, has work in China, Hong Kong, and South America

—uses a combination of blog submittals, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter for publicity. He hooks up with developers and sub-consultants on LinkedIn, a strategy that paid off when he landed a client through a Realtor who had requested a connection. In addition, five new clients found Pardo through his year-old Facebook page, but it's the blogs that have had the biggest ripple effect.

Blogging is easy on the budget, so it's perfect for small firms. And it's more believable and engaging to the viewer than most other forms of advertising. In short, it's a way to push news at people who've volunteered to read it. In

*"i read certain websites for design news and link interesting things from my twitter feed or blog. i have this reflex now where i share it if it's interesting. as a sole practitioner, that stream of links is part of my work community."*

—gregory la vardera

Pardo's case, though, the blogs are less personal and more project-focused. "We identified people who blog about architecture and asked if they were interested in our projects," he says. The firm regularly uploads photos of work under way to blog sites such as Contemporist

([www.contemporist.com](http://www.contemporist.com)), Offbeat Homes (<http://offbeathomes.com>), archiCentral ([www.archicentral.com](http://www.archicentral.com)), Studio House Design ([www.studiohousedesign.com](http://www.studiohousedesign.com)), and ArchDaily ([www.archdaily.com](http://www.archdaily.com)). "We're probably on 100 different sites, because

*continued on page 34*



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## practice

once you get on one blog site, another blog sees it and asks for permission from that blog to put it on their site," he says. "That's how we got onto international blogs. It catches on without us having to submit to them."

Likewise, for architects who package and sell their house designs, the blogosphere is a dream marketing machine. When Interface Studio Architects principal Brian Phillips, AIA, LEED AP, joined developer Chad Ludeman to create the 100K House—a production model for small, green urban infill housing in Philadelphia—Ludeman's blog quickly became a feedback loop. "We got very excited about the ongoing focus group that unfolded," Phillips says. "A rendering would go up, and people would comment on it." Ludeman, the founder of Postgreen, then set up Facebook and Twitter fan pages to keep people connected. Several houses have presold, and "the next step will be a website that allows people to put together a house like you put together a Dell computer, by choosing pieces and getting pricing feedback," Phillips says.

In this case, the blog is a powerful forum for touting an innovative concept—the housing equivalent of a Prius—at the right cultural and economic moment. "The thing we're excited about with the 100K House

## through the media portal

Does one have to be a tireless self-promoter to be an online social networker? Not really. Just be yourself—and beware of any skeletons in the company closet, says Frederic Brunel, associate professor of marketing at the Boston University School of Management. Online social networking is really consumer-mediated marketing, which means the consumer controls the message, he says. "The paradigm change is something that companies have to come to terms with; you can't play in that space with the old rules."

In this public forum, comments from a disgruntled client or neighborhood association can backfire. "If you have a dirty house, don't open the door," Brunel says. "Make sure you've cultivated a customer base that's connected to you at an emotional and a rational level." It's also a system that behooves you to be honest. If you're participating in an online discussion with homeowners doing remodeling projects, make sure you're speaking from an architect's perspective, but not directly trying to sell your services. "Engage them as an adviser and participant in the discussion," Brunel says. "It's not like direct marketing where you expect a 3 percent return; it takes place on a deeper, and often more powerful, level."

A company Facebook page can boost business, but there must be a compelling reason to friend it, he continues. One idea: Develop video or photo essays of a project you're working on and let your client show the link to friends. Likewise, a blog must have meaningful content. And you have to accept feedback. "Some companies that didn't want to give up control have censored negative posts," Brunel says. "It takes 24 hours to 48 hours for [an online] community to figure it out."

Online social media's other potential advantage is its possibilities for inviting community input in planning multifamily projects. "Taking advantage of Web 2.0 means that consumers are creating content, instead of just being consumers of content," Brunel explains. "It's collaborative in nature, and in many ways the rules are still being redefined." —C.W.

blog," Phillips adds, "is that it's related to a project. We thought about doing a blog for the office, but do you really want everyone to know what's happening in the office every day?"

Probably not, says David Andreozzi, AIA,

of Barrington, R.I.-based Andreozzi Architects. He rejects the idea of a blog for his high-end market. But, like Phillips and Ludeman, he does chat online about his emerging sideline developing modest house plans for sale. "I

*continued on page 36*

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## practice

want people to see that there's a lot more to architecture than just drafting a house," he says. "It's a fun way to teach people about what goes into good design."

Both Andreozzi and Merchantville, N.J., architect Gregory La Vardera enlist social media platforms to plug the Congress of Residential Architecture (CORA). In addition to the website message board and LinkedIn, La Vardera recently started CORA groups on Facebook and on Flickr, where like-minded architects can post images of their best work and tag them so they come up in other searches. In addition to an office blog, La Vardera has two Twitter accounts; one feeds into his Facebook page, the other to LinkedIn. Through these venues, which he, too, uses to promote house plans, he's landed a couple of custom home commissions.

La Vardera started leaving comments on message boards in 2000, not only to cultivate a Web presence but to stave off the isolation of solo practice. "It's a big part of my daily routine," he says. "I read certain websites for design news and link interesting things from my Twitter feed or blog. I have this reflex now where I share it if it's interesting. As a sole practitioner, that stream of links is part of my work community."

If there's a leading

light in the online design community, it's Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, LEED AP. Although she announced in late May the closing of her eponymous firm—the latest casualty of the credit crisis—her fan base was stronger than ever. Kaufmann was far ahead of her colleagues in

were constantly multi-tasking. "Producing your own videos is not for the faint of heart," she admits. "One needs to be pretty dedicated and kind of crazy." But she views her parallel online persona as that of an educator. "Some people teach at universities; we made the decision to

*"producing your own videos is not for the faint of heart. ... some people teach at universities; we made the decision to use those resources at the public level."*

—michelle kaufmann, aia, leed ap

embracing multiple media outlets to beam out her firm's mission of making sustainable design accessible through simple and stylish modular homes. An early adopter of Twitter and Facebook, she also spent about six hours a week blogging and posted Martha Stewart-style videos of green-it-yourself projects on YouTube. She mastered a down-to-earth conversational style, often translating her design principles into ideas people could apply to their own homes. Response was gratifying. In 18 months, her YouTube channel on green living attracted nearly 2,300 subscribers and 67,000 viewers.

Coming up with fresh video material meant that Kaufmann and her staff

use those resources at the public level," she says, adding that people are clambering for alternatives to energy-hungry homes. "If we don't start [offering sustainable solutions], we'll become obsolete," she says of the profession. "It extends to using nontraditional modes of communication."

### a matrix of connectivity

Other architects and designers are channeling the power of online media toward a social cause. Design Corps founder and executive director Bryan Bell, Raleigh, N.C., is still testing the waters, but he senses that the shift is inevitable. "I have people showing up for our summer

*continued on page 38*



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student program after just doing a Google search of us," he says. "It's amazing how rapidly they seem to absorb information on the Internet." An employee put up a Facebook page for

Design Corps recently, but Bell hasn't jumped in yet, for fear it will consume his time. "If I see that it's not just entertaining but also productive, I'll be a devotee," he says.

In garnering support for his nonprofit design work, Bell wants to avoid the glut of unedited self-review that circulates on the Web. Instead, he and like-minded colleagues are trying to

establish credibility through the emerging Social/Economic/Environmental Design (SEED) Network, an interactive matrix that not only facilitates contact-sharing, but also certifies finished projects through an objective review process.

"The idea of SEED is that economic and social issues are the second and third leg of sustainability," Bell says. "Like LEED did for the environment, once you can measure change, you have a real clarity and ability to communicate among yourselves and with the public."

By contrast, Cameron Sinclair has been canvassing the multitudes electronically for years. For the co-founder of San Francisco-based Architecture for Humanity (AFH), being linked in is less of an ego thing and more about the necessity of running an international nonprofit from the road. In fact, online networking is critical to a decentralized operation like AFH. With 120 chapters around the world, within seconds he can know what's happening on the ground and react quickly. For example, after a cyclone hit Myanmar in May 2008, followed within days by an earthquake in China, AFH turned to its global network to gauge where to focus its efforts. "People came back overwhelmingly saying that Myanmar needs our help more because of lack of access," Sinclair says. "It helps us to be very agile in our decision making."

*continued on page 40*

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## practice

Sinclair blogs on The Huffington Post because it gets translated in about 30 dialects, he says. A month into his Twitter account last February, he'd attracted 500 followers and was following 700, ranging from people at nongovernmental and funding organizations to reporters and influential designers. "I'm interested to see what Michelle Kaufmann is doing with innovative design and technology, because she's been doing sustainable design for the top 25 percent of the world and I'm doing it for the bottom 25 percent," he says. "She's one of the most tech-savvy people I know." He, too, is embedding video clips on YouTube; among them is his interview with a citizen journalist at Davos 2009, in which he plugged the Open Architecture Network, his latest brainchild.

"I used to get 250 e-mails a day; now I get about 60 since I moved to social networks," Sinclair says, simultaneously responding to a ping from Italy. Yes, but doesn't a Twitter account mean a lot more messages to answer? It does, except that given the 140-character limit, "rather than someone writing a four-page treatise on what they want to do, they're usually succinct," he says. Social media may still be a time drain, but at least some of it inspires brevity. And in an era of information overload, the ability to distill thoughts to a few short, declarative sentences is something to which we can all aspire. **ra**



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The 2009 Leadership Awards

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### Monday, September 14

Housing Tour

Welcome Reception

### Tuesday, September 15

Keynote Address

"Beyond the Building"

Andrés Duany, FAIA, Duany  
Plater-Zyberk & Co. (DPZ)

Panel Discussion

Partnering With Allied Professions

Leadership Awards Luncheon

- Hall of Fame
- Top Firm
- Rising Star

Breakout Sessions

- Architects as Real Estate Agents
- Green, Then and Now
- Citizen Architect

### Panel Discussion

Using Mass Media to Promote  
Good Design

Cocktail Reception

### Wednesday, September 16

Panel Discussion

The Big Think

Special Charrette

Greening the McMansion

Co-produced by *residential architect*  
and *EcoHome* magazines, AIA Seattle,  
the Congress of Residential Archi-  
tecture, and AIA Custom Residential  
Architects Network (AIA-CRAN)

Reinvention Symposium Adjourns

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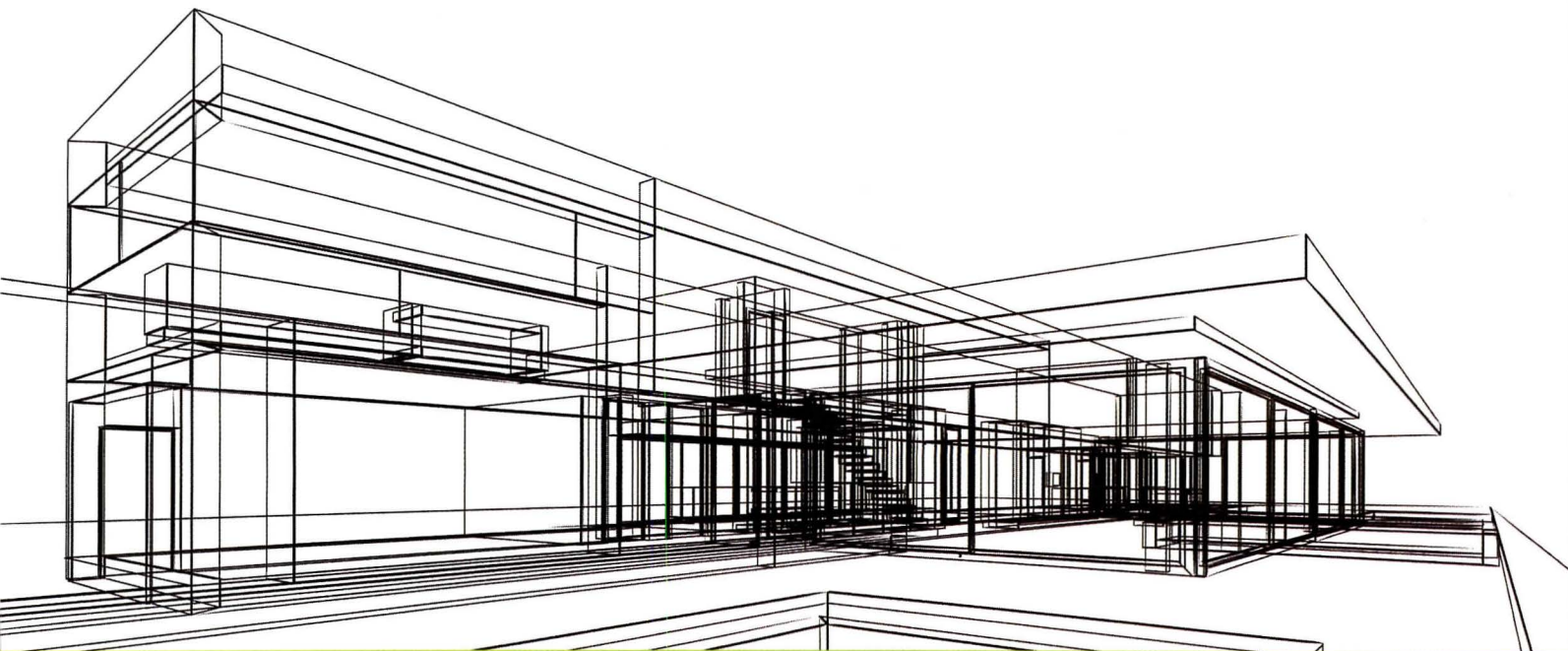


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#### **Special Charrette**

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As of May 29, 2009

**John Brown, RAIC**, housebrand

**Andrés Duany, FAIA, DPZ**

**Jeremiah Eck, FAIA**, Eck MacNeely Architects

**Robert Hull, FAIA**, The Miller|Hull Partnership

**Michelle Kaufmann, AIA, LEED AP**

**William H. Kreager, FAIA**, Mithun

**Tom Kundig, FAIA**, Olson Sundberg Kundig Allen Architects

**Erik Lerner, AIA**, RealEstateArchitect

**Chris Pardo**, Pb Elemental Architecture

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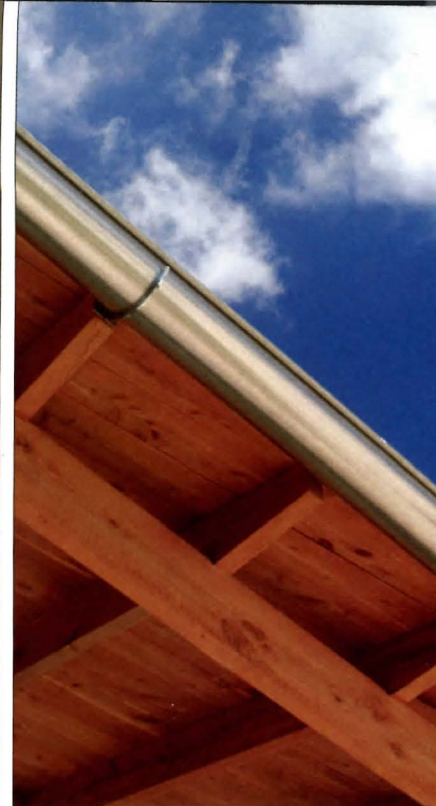
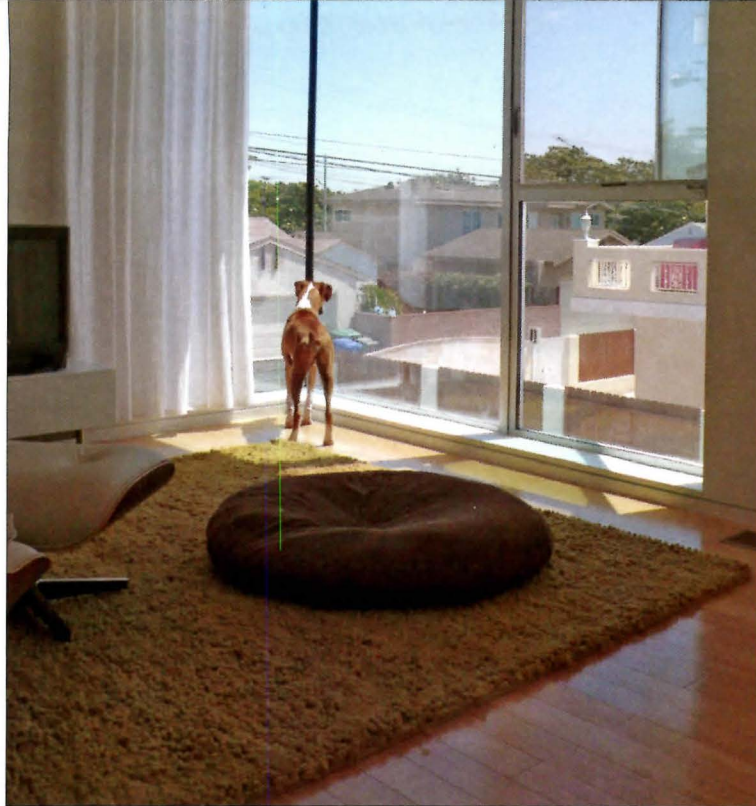


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Photos (from left): John Wheatley and Shannon McGrath (Australia); Robert Sweet, ras-a inc. (California); and Chris Cooper (Texas)

# small+green

when designing with sustainability in mind,  
it doesn't hurt to also think small.

It feels almost anachronistic to do a special focus on sustainable design, given that it's a *de rigueur* obligation in any and every project an architect takes on these days. Indeed, you'll find we cover such matters in all issues of the magazine—with dedicated departmental editorial and in a seamless, fanfare-free fashion within our feature well.

Still, we think it's useful to gather clusters of ideas together in a single issue every now and then, just to take stock of where certain

roads are headed. This is the third in our series that also includes "Tall and Green" and "Big and Green" (March 2008 and 2007, respectively). We could also call this go-round "Old and Green," because all three projects highlighted involve an existing building that was salvaged and reworked to answer modern living requirements and renewed awareness of our environmental peril. Unlike past trends in remodeling, though, these resisted the urge to upsize and undermine their fundamental sustainability.

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



## the lady revived

The Victorian terrace house is a common typology in Melbourne, Australia. Sited on a long, narrow lot in the Melbourne suburb of South Yarra, this circa 1930s iteration greets the public with a covered, lacework-decorated front porch; a stained glass bay window; and a hallway tucked along the party wall. Topped with a terra-cotta tile roof, the one-story structure's detailing incorporates elements of the Arts & Crafts and Art Nouveau styles, but its diminutive size "lends itself nicely to a contemporary addition/renovation," says architect Matt Gibson, RAIA, principal of Melbourne-based Matt Gibson A+D.

And that's exactly what Gibson did, reusing most of the existing structure, recycling and salvaging existing materials, and deploying natural and local products wherever possible to bring the house into the 21st century. "The project provides a case study for the revitalizing of inner-urban, small-plot terrace houses on economic budgets and within sustainable means," he says.

The architect embraced many of the home's period elements, using them to inform his design. He kept the details on the façade and maintained the size and layout of the two bedrooms in the front of the house, but he moved the bathroom from the rear and extended the back to create an open kitchen/living space. The bath now occupies the middle of the house and has a better relationship to a light-facilitating interior courtyard.

Gibson oriented rooms toward the interior and exterior courtyards to encourage natural ventilation and used vents to these outdoor areas to promote airflow under the house. Interior surfaces are finished with natural oils, natural wax, and low-VOC paints to promote clean indoor air. Large sliding doors and a central pivot door create thermal zoning, and extended eave linings provide shelter from the sun. "Passive cooling and breezeways enable supplementary air conditioning to be used only on the very hottest days," Gibson says.

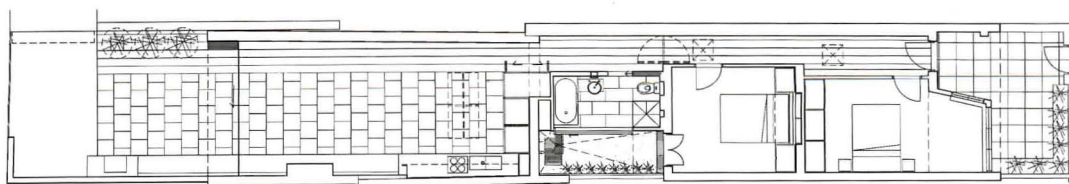


The decorative lacework and stained glass bay window on the façade of this 1930s Victorian-Federation hybrid house belie its modern, light-filled interiors. Full-height folding doors (right and opposite) bring in light and open up the house to a concrete tile-and-wood patio and garden.





**project:** Talbot Residence,  
Melbourne, Victoria, Australia  
**architect:** Matt Gibson A+D,  
Melbourne  
**general contractor:** O'Neill &  
Vogel, Melbourne  
**project size:** 1,098 square feet  
(before), 1,173 square feet (after)  
**site size:** 0.03 acre  
**construction cost:** Approximately  
\$145 per square foot  
**photography:** John Wheatley and  
Shannon McGrath





The highlight of the large living space is a site-poured concrete banquette/bench that crosses the threshold to become the outdoor countertop.

The home's interior is a contemporary, yet warm mix of salvaged items—lumber, bricks, and mirrors, for example—and natural products, such as stone walls, sisal carpets, tree bark blinds, and bamboo shade screens. "The kitchen bench top was poured on site using materials from the site, concrete tiles were made locally, the floorboards and furniture timber were salvaged from a local factory in Richmond [another Melbourne suburb], brickwork was reused, and the bronzed outdoor mirror became a last-minute design decision to be reused on the rear fence," he explains.

"I think the recycling notion in this building is a more holistic approach, as opposed to a literal one of items being recycled," he adds. "It's the recycling behind the scenes that makes the building cost-effective and embodied energy-effective."—*n.f.m.*



## super savings

Salvage lumber and other reclaimed building products are worthy choices, but architects shouldn't forget the intrinsic value of reusing a building's existing structure. This house has its share of recycled boards, bricks, glass, and other materials, but it's the less obvious recycling that provides the biggest bang for the buck, says architect Matt Gibson, RAIA.

"Recycling the building's 'superstructure'—including its envelope and other structural elements—led to an [approximate savings] of \$100,000," he says.

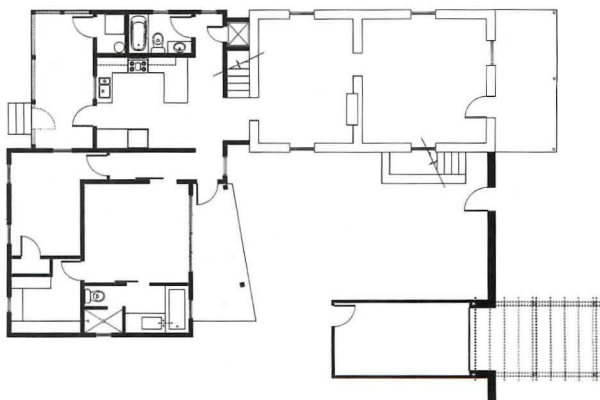
Recycling incidentals, on the other hand, reduced overall costs by roughly \$10,000 to \$20,000.—*n.f.m.*





The project's rich material palette is strategic. The dark slate tiles in the relocated bath provide contrast and variation for fixtures and fittings, while salvaged lumber throughout the house ensures soothing continuity.





**project:** Casa 218, San Antonio  
**architect/general contractor:**  
 candid rogers studio, San Antonio  
**project size:** 500 square feet (before),  
 1,460 square feet (after)  
**site size:** 0.13 acre  
**construction cost:** \$120 per square foot  
**photography:** Chris Cooper





The orientation of openings in San Antonio's hot, humid climate is key, so architect Candid Rogers positioned primary entry points on the buildings' north façades. A large overhang and tree on the south side provide welcome shade.



## discovery mission

Architect, builder, and homeowner Candid Rogers, AIA, had to use all his powers of imagination and plenty of elbow grease to capitalize on the original building's potential. Beneath layers of plaster, stucco, and paint stood enviable limestone block walls. A crumbling porch at the front and rotting kitchen addition at the back had to be torn down. But Rogers salvaged what he could, repurposing wood beams to make a new front door and kitchen shelves.

His mission was mainly to clean up the ravages of time and misguided remodels. So he stripped existing window and door casings back to their natural wood and removed gypsum ceilings to expose old rafters. He also discovered rich red pine floors beneath chipped tile. "I added insulation to the roof and inserted a central cooling system, but anything else I did to that space kept to its original intent," he says. "I let the house speak of its age and time."—*s.d.h.*

# stone unturned

Candid Rogers, AIA, fell in love with a two-room stone house built in 1873. When the architect decided to renovate the tiny structure as his own home, he honored its intimate feel with a similarly compact 960-square-foot addition. "Its scale was what attracted me to the old house," he explains, "so I wanted to respond sensitively to it."

Living and dining spaces now occupy the pre-existing stone dwelling, with kitchen, bathing, and bedroom functions filling out the new space. Siting the addition away from the main house offered several benefits. The resulting L-shaped footprint generates a small north-facing courtyard that captures prevailing breezes and connects almost every room to the outdoors. Aesthetically, Rogers says he "set back the connecting walls by a foot on both sides to let the original house stand proud."

Deferring to the surrounding neighborhood, Rogers chose common local materials for the new rooms and applied them in uncommon ways. Locally milled cedar planks clad the exterior bridge linking old and new. Each horizontal board was custom-cut to fit snugly against and preserve the 136-year-old limestone walls. Raw cedar siding connects the stone to rolls of galvanized steel strips that wrap around the addition. More often seen on Texas rooftops than walls, the low-impact, low-maintenance metal will retain its luster over time. Inside, natural, nontoxic finishes such as cork, flyash concrete, and reclaimed wood complement the original rooms with their casual, contemporary tones.

Rogers wanted every detail in his humble house to sing, so he celebrated everyday functional objects, such as the sculptural water collection system that irrigates the landscape. In an effort to preserve the old house's existing roofline while uniting it with the addition's taller massing, he created a valley between the two and outlined it with an eye-catching gutter.

Rogers couldn't be happier with the results: "The experience of sitting on that porch on a rainy day and hearing the water flow is very pleasant," he says.—*s.d.h.*



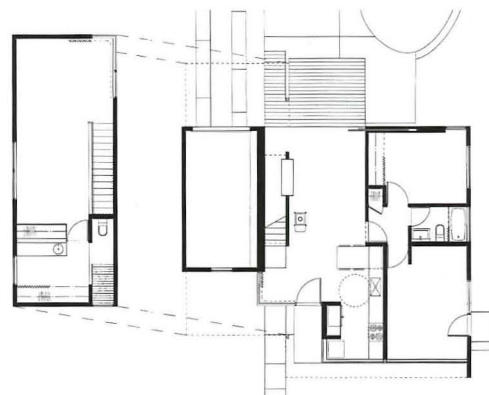
Pre-existing materials were used in new ways wherever possible. The shelves in the new kitchen, for example, are made of reclaimed pine.



## suburban renewal

Before choosing a single material or product for his own house in Redondo Beach, Calif., designer Robert Sweet was well on his way to creating a sustainable dwelling. He included a home office on the main level, thus removing the necessity of a gas-consuming commute along Los Angeles-area freeways. And he limited the home's size to 1,420 square feet, which, along with the rear yard and pool, provides plenty of elbowroom for Sweet, girlfriend Lauren Bayne, and their dog, Rosci. "Relating the floor plan to the large backyard allows me to use the yard as living space," he says.

The project is technically a renovation. Sweet tore down the original 920-square-foot house on the property and reused its foundation and external framing, keeping to the existing footprint. He mapped out an open kitchen, living, and dining space with custom 14-foot pocket doors that lead to the backyard and revamped kidney-shaped pool. Sweet's kitchenette-equipped studio adjoins a guest bedroom and bath and has a separate entrance, which allows him the option of turning it into a rental apartment someday. "I needed



The building's exterior colors play off the hues of the surrounding landscape. A glass bump-out shaded by an overhang (below, left and middle) hints at the home's interior spaces without giving too much away.





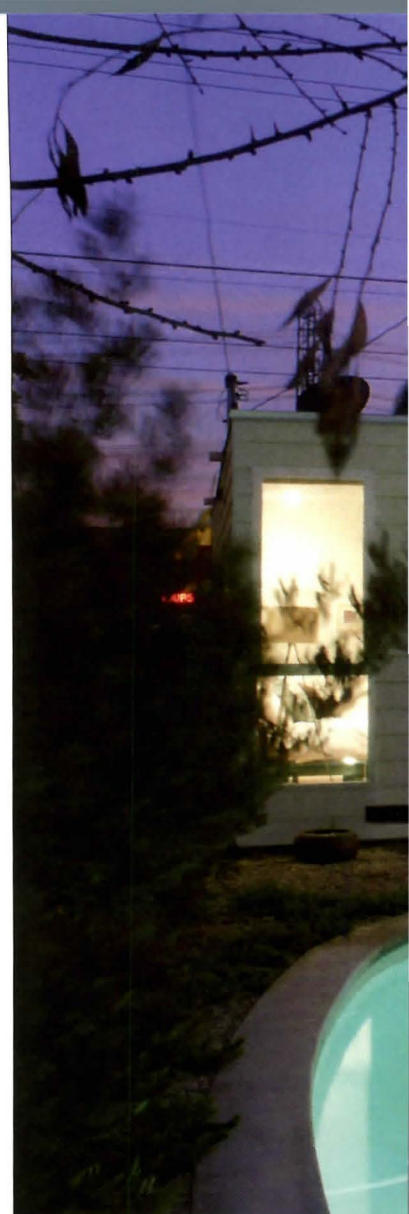


The home's restrained composition avoids architectural chaos, a common pitfall in designers' own homes. "I tried not to use every idea I've ever had," Sweet says.



that flexibility to make it affordable for me," he says. Alternatively, he could convert the studio to a third bedroom.

Sweet topped the project's one-story garage with a cantilevered master suite, which shades the parking area. More examples of passive solar design include strategically placed windows and light-colored rooftops and exterior walls. [See <http://tinyurl.com/r5wbp8> for the story behind Sweet's decision not to use a green roof.] A high-efficiency woodburning stove often provides enough heat for the winter, and ceiling fans help cool the interiors in hot weather. Other low-impact choices, such as bamboo flooring, FSC-certified cedar siding, a tankless water heater, and native plants, serve to further minimize the project's carbon footprint.—*m.d.*



**project:** Sweet Residence, Redondo Beach, Calif.

**designer:** ras-a inc., Redondo Beach

**landscape designer:** Swamp Pink Landscape Design, Los Angeles

**structural engineer:** Palos Verdes Engineering Corp., Rolling Hills Estates, Calif.

**project size:** 920 square feet (before), 1,420 square feet (after)

**site size:** 0.1 acre

**construction cost:** \$200 per square foot

**photography:** Robert Sweet, ras-a inc.






## what lies beneath

There's no doubt that salvaging his home's original concrete foundation helped Robert Sweet financially. But the reuse strategy had other important benefits. It kept the building's existing footprint intact, which enabled Sweet to register it as a remodel and bypass local code requirements for new construction. Plus, the very notion of saving all that concrete supported his sustainable approach.

The renovation included a new second level above the garage, so the foundation there needed extra support. Sweet and his structural engineer, Paul Christenson, P.E., inserted concrete pads under the existing footings and added a new steel grade beam—minor steps compared to the task of replacing an old foundation. "It doesn't always save money, because sometimes you have to do a lot to the existing foundation," Sweet cautions. "But in my case, we hardly had to do anything."—*m.d.*

Sweet and landscape designer Gabrielle Newmark saved and spruced up the retro pool and much of the original hardscaping. Inexpensive flourishes, such as a stowaway kitchen table, glass bathroom tiles, and ethereal tree-patterned wallpaper, add interest to the interiors.





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# baja fresh

a handmade haven on the mexican coast.

Off-the-grid living is the one and only option at this improvised vacation home in Baja California, Mexico. Co-owned by Venice, Calif.-based prefab designer Jennifer Siegal and several friends, the 800-square-foot home is part of a utility-free trailer park that sits right

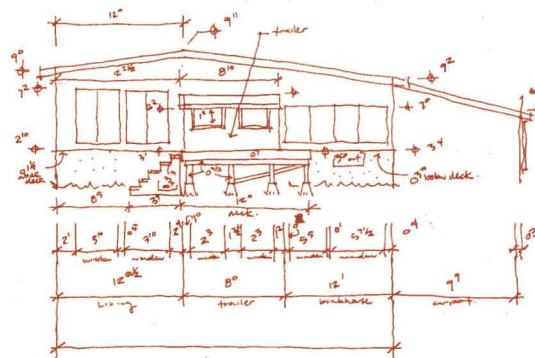


next to the Pacific Ocean. Fresh water, propane, and firewood are trucked in and sold to residents.

Siegal and her friends, many of whom attended SCI-Arc with her, have gradually gutted and remodeled the home over the past decade. In doing so, they've limited themselves to using found objects and materials from the immediate area. They've also rigged up a gravity-fed water system. Even their



Photos: Gerardo Grazia; Sketch: Todd A. Erlandson, AIA



Siegal and her fellow co-owners have expanded and revamped their trailer over the years. "It's a place to go and hang out and relax, but it's also a place to play out our fantasies of architectural projects," she says.

Baja eating habits have a local, do-it-yourself spin: they often feast on grilled fish they caught that day.

The community's cobbled-together nature initially drew them in, along

with the beach's alluring proximity. "There are at least 40 little compounds, and all of them are artistic," Siegal says, comparing the trailer park's resourceful, ad hoc mentality to the ideas

expressed in Bernard Rudofsky's classic book *Architecture Without Architects*. "They're all intellectually designed installations. They're all funky."—meghan drueding





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# gray matters

is graywater harvesting worth the effort and expense?

by nigel f. maynard

**m**ark Larson, AIA, looks forward to the day

when a client gives the green light on graywater harvesting, a system that allows homeowners to capture and reuse wastewater. So far the co-principal of Minneapolis-based Rehkamp Larson Architects hasn't had any takers. "Most clients are leery of it," he says. "Plus, in the Midwest, water availability isn't a crisis, so there's no [sense of] urgency."

Allison Ewing, AIA, LEED AP, feels Larson's pain. Though Ewing's firm, Charlottesville, Va.-based Hays + Ewing Design Studio, incorporates water conservation in all of its projects, it hasn't yet found a client willing to do graywater collection. "We've tried to put graywater systems into multiple projects, but they've always been cut during the 'value engineering' phase," she explains. Like Larson, Ewing attributes part of the reluctance to her location. Water supply issues aren't as grave a concern on the East Coast as they are in other regions of the country. Still, increasing drought conditions in unexpected

places are slowly changing perceptions, she says.

## potent nonpotable

Graywater is generated from typical household activities such as shaving, showering, and laundering. Because graywater accounts for 50 percent to 80 percent of a typical household's wastewater volume, environmentalists say letting it flow into the sewer is, well, a waste—and a missed opportunity. It can easily be captured, treated on site, and reused in toilets or landscaping, which would obviate the need to use potable water. "There is so much wastewater generated from a house, so we love the idea" of reusing it, Larson says. "It's back to basics."

The benefits of graywater reuse extend far beyond individual households, though. "If you think about it, using graywater means city wastewater treatment plants are using less energy and less chemicals, which is good for the community," says Pete Muñoz, P.E., LEED AP, senior engineer with Natural Systems International, a Santa Fe, N.M.-based water infrastructure engineering firm. Plus, homeowners who recycle their graywater will save significant amounts of water and money over time.



Courtesy Holst Architecture

Scheduled for completion in 2011, the Resource Access Center will be Portland, Ore.'s first commercial building to incorporate graywater harvesting. The system will capture wastewater from showers and clothes washers, filter it, and use it for flushing toilets.

Muñoz says it's this long view that has spawned widespread interest in graywater harvesting, particularly for moderate-to large-scale commercial, industrial, and residential buildings. The Resource Access Center, a low-income, mixed-use building by Portland, Ore.-based Holst Architecture, is one such project. "It's the first time our firm is using a graywater system, and it's the first time graywater is being used on a commercial scale in Portland," says architect Dave Otte, AIA, LEED AP, a project manager at Holst. "Only recently did the city allow it in commercial projects."

Otte says graywater harvesting makes sense for this building because the Portland area gets more rain than it can use in the winter but experiences water

shortages in the summer. With a system in place, water from the showers and washers will be filtered for large particles and collected in a tank before it goes into a second tank with a UV filter for finer contaminants. The water that emerges will then be used to flush the toilets year-round.

The product Holst is using, from Montreal-based Brac Systems, accounts for roughly \$300,000 of the overall \$27.5 million budget, but Otte says the project will reap significant savings because of it. "Right now we're trying to negotiate lower service-development fees with the city," he says. "We're also likely to get a reduced rate on our water-use fees, so the developer is anticipating a 10-year to 15-year payback on the system." The financial risks

*continued on page 60*



seem reasonable, Otte says, since the Housing Authority of Portland will likely operate the building for a long time.

Dennis S. Yasar, president of Brac Systems, says his company offers a number of systems—including tanks, filters, and pumps—in various sizes to meet the needs of both commercial and residential markets. The products collect water from sinks, baths, and even air conditioners, making them highly versatile. “An air-conditioning unit can generate as much as 15 gallons of water per day,” he explains. “That water can be put to good use.”

## bringing home the harvest

According to Yasar, gray-water systems are becoming more commonplace in the residential space as well. His company has sold more than 1,300 residential systems in the last three years alone.

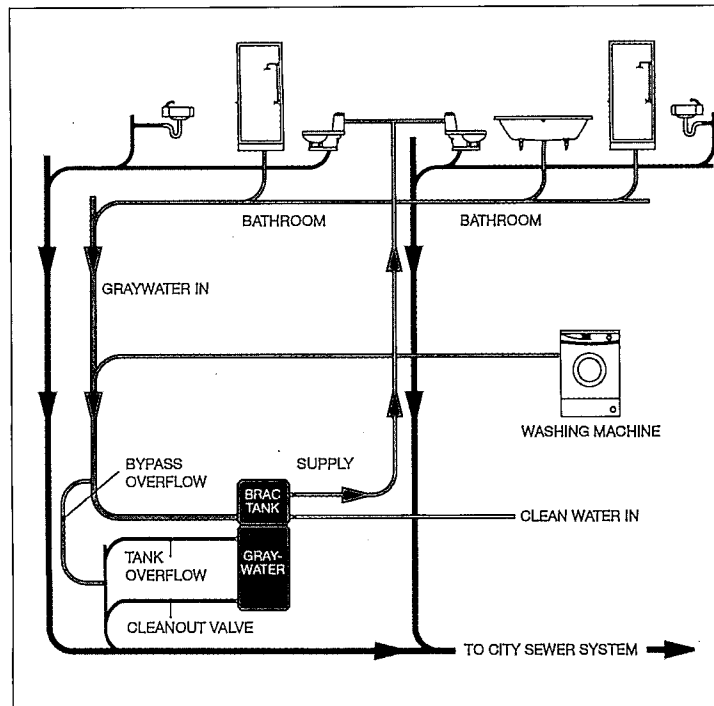
John Quale, LEED AP, assistant professor of architecture at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, is interested in graywater harvesting and a fan of the process, but his take on the system’s prospects in the single-family house is less enthusiastic. To investigate its effectiveness, Quale—who also directs the university’s ecoMOD research and design/build project—is installing a modest system on one of his

houses. “It’s a small-scale tank system for a sink and a shower,” he explains. “The technology is perfect for this type of domestic application, because it’s only five gallons.” Homeowners can fairly easily manage systems of this size, he continues, but once you get into more complex whole-house systems, the questions begin. Will homeowners change the filter on a regular basis? Will they perform the routine maintenance? Will they be careful about what goes down the drain?

“I’m a little worried about many people doing this in their homes, because there are legitimate health concerns,” Quale continues. “For a homeowner, it’s one extra thing to think about, whereas in a large-scale apartment building, these things would be taken care of by an engineer.” Still, he adds, “If the technology continues to evolve, it could become more feasible.”

## tread carefully

Fortunately, graywater harvesting systems can be simple affairs or complex setups. They can be as basic as a pipe that drains underground to a mulch basin for irrigation, for example. “That’s the low-tech solution,” Muñoz says, and it would essentially cost the same as “putting in an extra pipe—possibly as little as \$20 or \$30. Packaged systems with all the bells and whistles,” on the other



Courtesy Brac Systems

In many areas, wastewater from bathtubs, showers, and dishwashers is considered gray. In other jurisdictions, however, water from washing machines and kitchen and bath sinks would be deemed “dark gray” or “black” and could not be harvested and reused.

hand, “can go as high as \$4,000 to \$5,000.”

In either case, graywater must be treated with care. Though it comes from non-sewage sources, it can contain significant amounts of bacteria and contaminants. “Graywater breaks down very fast,” Muñoz explains. “It can smell bad pretty quickly, so it shouldn’t stand around for more than 24 hours.” Homeowners must also be mindful of what goes down the drain.

What’s more, many city codes don’t allow water from kitchen sinks to be reused, because of potential contamination from certain food particles or high concentrations of household cleaners. And in some jurisdictions, water from washing machines is prohibited, because homeowners may wash cotton

diapers, which can compromise water integrity.

Perhaps the most crucial thing to remember about graywater harvesting is that acceptance of the practice varies by region and even municipality. “We’ve found over the last 10 years that it’s less a problem of selling it to clients and more about the regulatory agencies,” Muñoz admits.

In the end, Muñoz says graywater harvesting is a viable water-saving strategy that can contribute to LEED points in multiple ways. Architects interested in pursuing the practice should begin by conducting a water audit to see where their area’s water comes from and where its wastewater goes. In many cases, they’ll discover methods far superior to the conventional treatment process. **ra**



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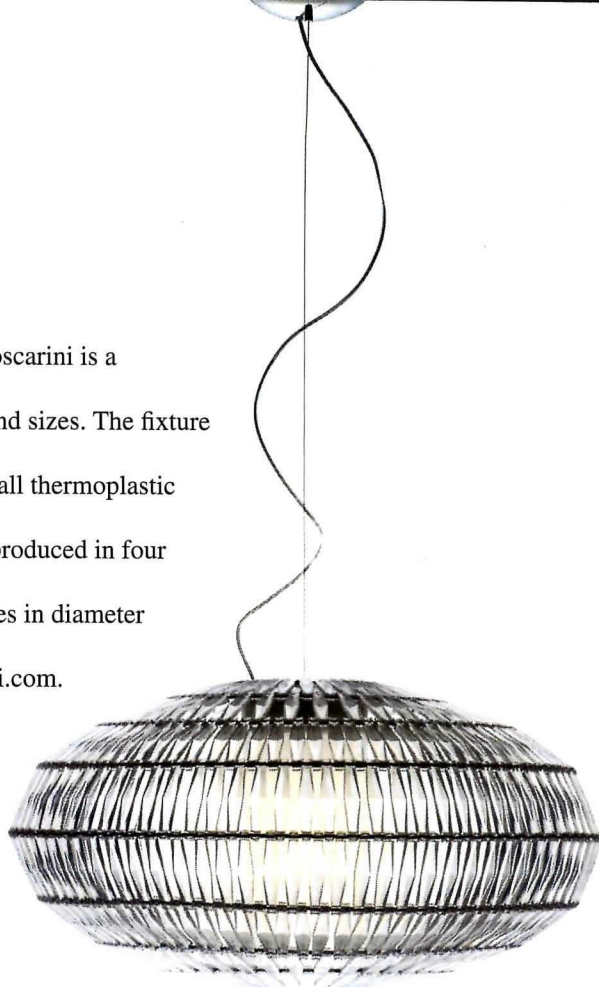


## new material

by nigel f. maynard

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### sea fare

Swiss manufacturer LAUFEN's new Palomba Collection by Italian designers Ludovica and Roberto Palomba draws inspiration from the sea, blending the organic with the contemporary. The line includes wall-hung and traditional toilets, bidets, basins, bathtubs, and furniture. Shown here are the 63-inch lagoon-shaped basin and a console in a macassar finish. LAUFEN USA, 866.696.2493; [www.laufen.com/usa](http://www.laufen.com/usa).



*continued on page 64*



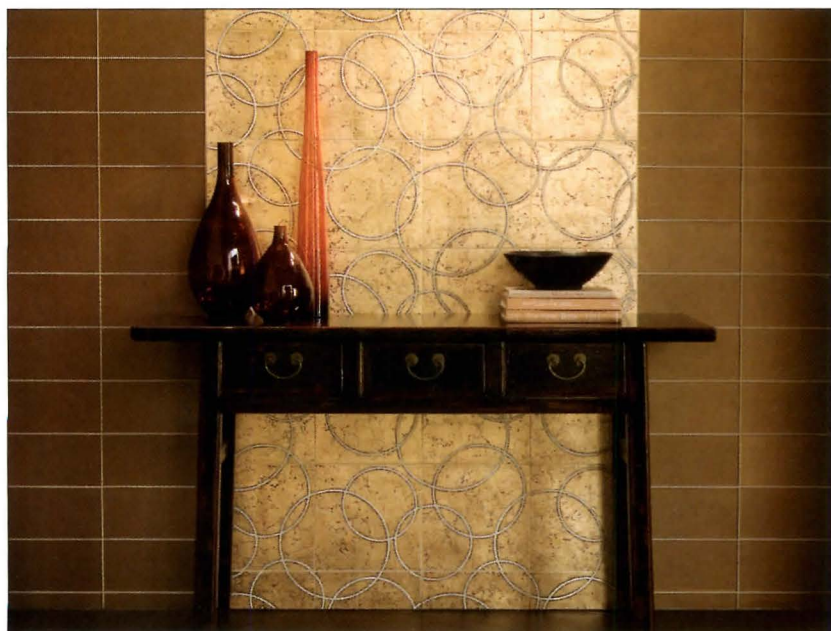


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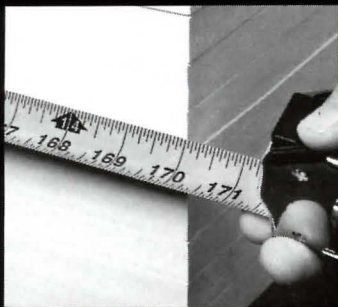


## dual identity

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workspace

## front studio

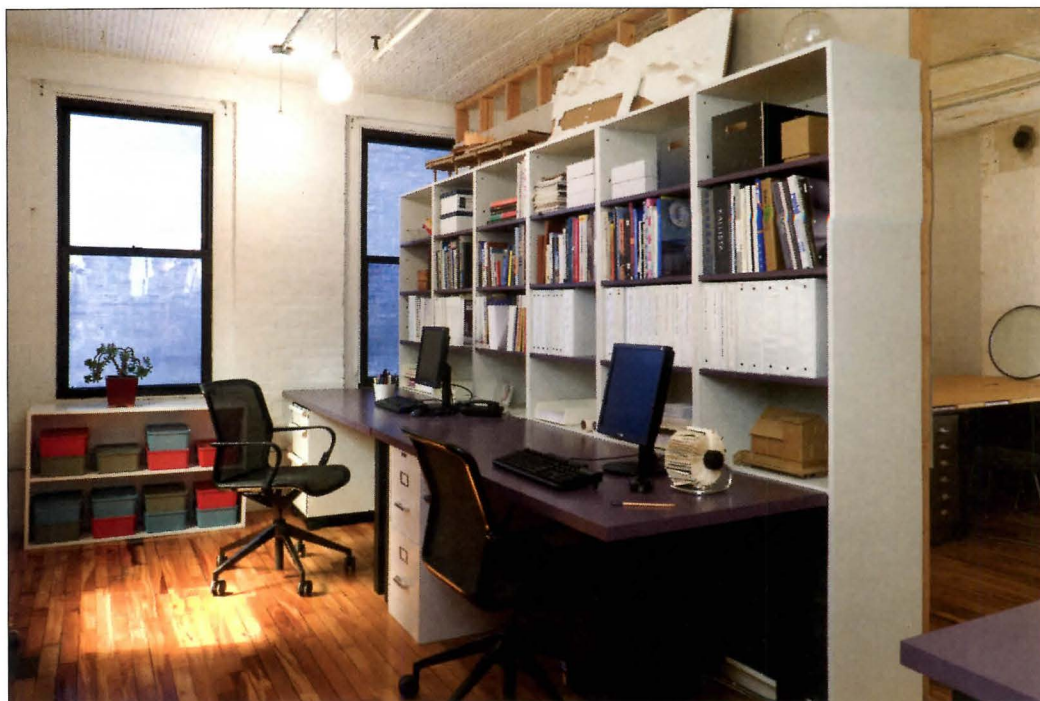
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When Front Studio renovated its downtown New York City office, principals Yen Ha, LEED AP, and Michi Yanagishita applied a light but sure hand. “We try not to be overly fussy,” Ha says of the firm’s general design approach.

The 1,500-square-foot space already featured some appealing characteristics: original hardwood floors, a pressed-tin ceiling, and exposed brick walls. Ha and Yanagishita opted to

leave these items in place, adding quirky touches such as sliding wall partitions made of old desktops from the firm’s former studio. Oak-framed nooks hold a small pantry and a copy/fax station, and hexagonal floor tiles form an unexpected backsplash over the pantry sink.

Friends at the local graphic design company Omnivore created a custom, black-and-white wallpaper pattern for the studio, incorporating and blending drawings of buildings, flowers, and abstract images. “The wallpaper is very feminine, but architectural at the same time,” Ha explains.—*meghan drueding*



Photos: James Ewing





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