

ECHOES

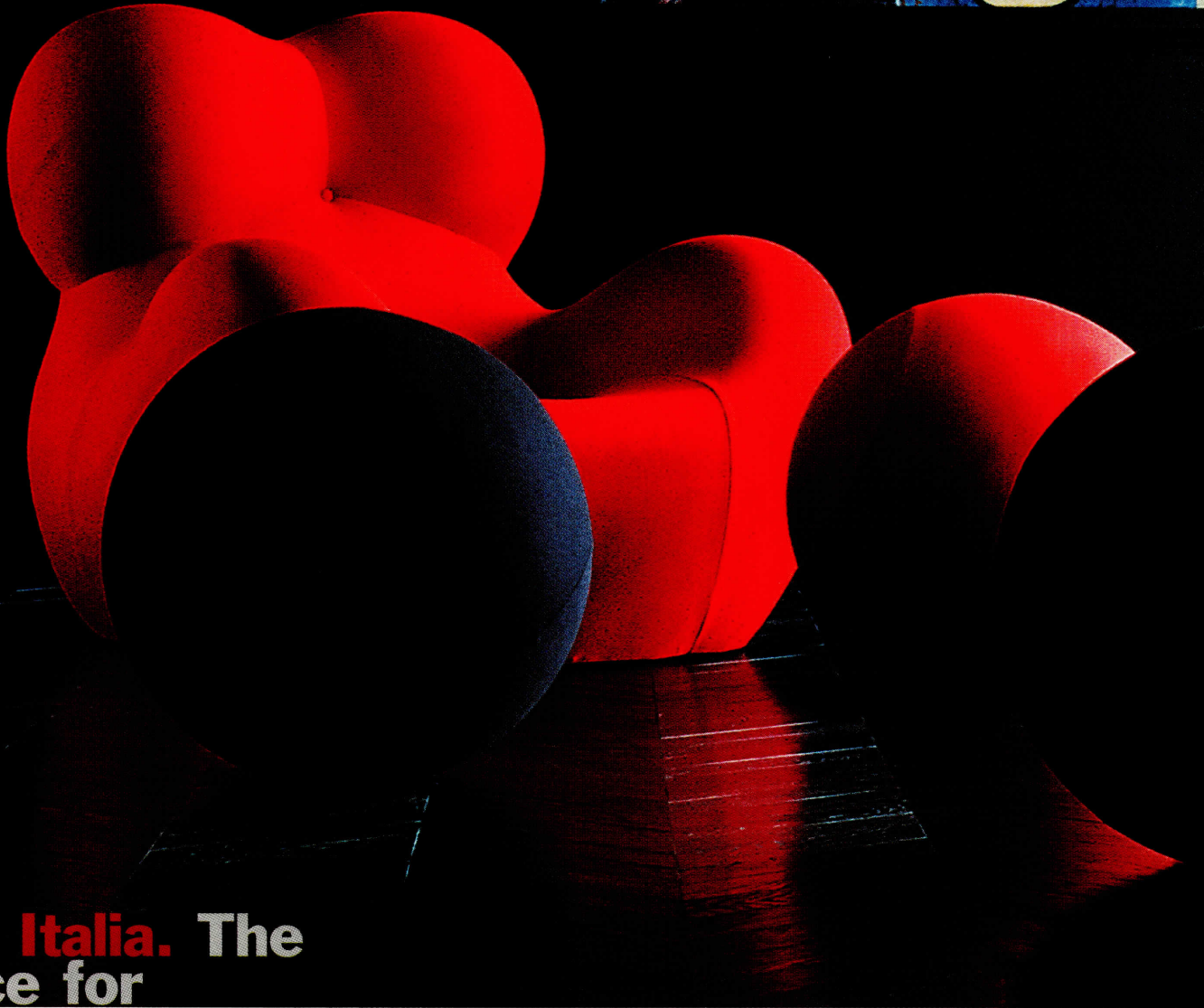
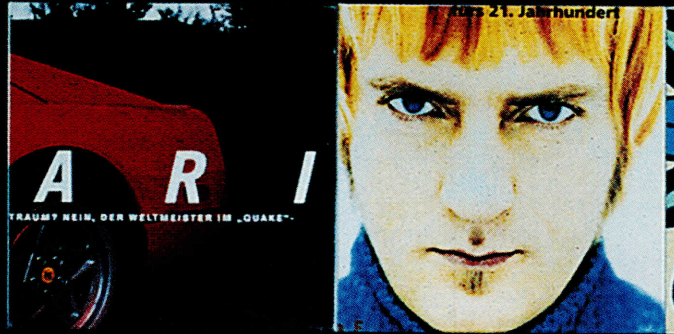
modern life style

Breuer's Houses

Harvey Propper's Modulars
Modernism with a French Accent
Paul Rudolph and Toshiko Mori

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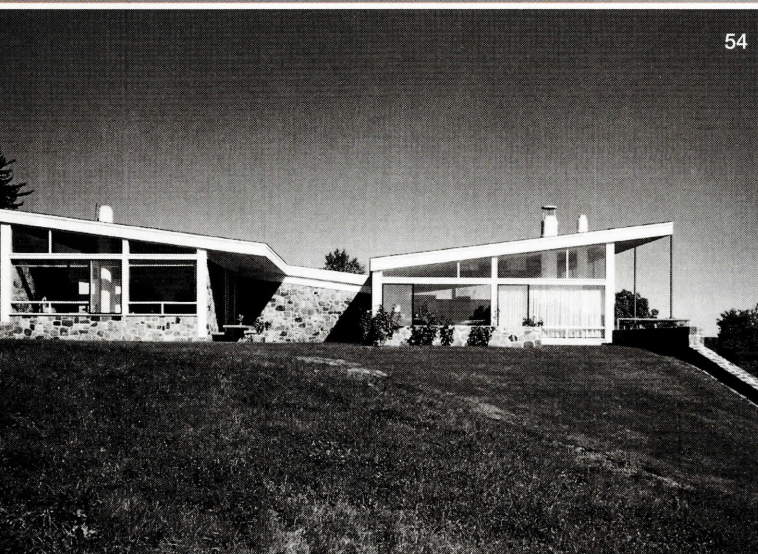
January 2002 Issue 38



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cover

In Marcel Breuer's little-known Wolfson House—for which he designed a classic modern house around the owner's existing Spartan trailer—the simple open plan of the large main room contains the dining and living areas separated by a signature Breuer two-way stone fireplace. See "Modern Spaces" below. Photograph by Geoff Spear



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46 modernism with a french accent

Recently there has been an exodus of French dealers who exhibit at shows in America and then set up shop here permanently. What has lured them here, and why do they stay? By Ginger Moro

52 jean royère rediscovered

Axel de Heeckeren d'Anthès was a clerk in his mid-twenties at the Salles Drouot auction house in Paris when he received a call from Jean Royère asking for an estimate on the value of his family's 18th century furniture. At Axel's suggestion Drouot also included a Royère-designed bar in the sale, spurring a resurgence of interest in the designer's work. Ginger Moro, a former proprietor of an Art Déco boutique in Paris, interviewed Axel for *Echoes*. By Ginger Moro

54 marcel breuer: architect of houses

Residential architecture is a thread which runs through the whole of Marcel Breuer's career; however, history tends to focus instead on his furniture designs. What do we really know about Breuer's houses? By Joachim Driller

60 harvey probber: master of modulars

Although Harvey Probbber's upholstered pieces and casegoods from the '60s and '70s are spearheading the current revival of his designs, it is his modular seating from the early 1940s which merits history-book recognition. By Judith Gura

67 modern spaces: outside the box

In 1950 Marcel Breuer was asked to design a house around a Spartan trailer. The result is a somewhat quirky but endearing structure that unites the "modern-age" metallic trailer with a fieldstone and cypress-sided "modern" Breuer box. By Carol Berens

74 modern spaces: heir to the legacy

When Toshiko Mori was commissioned to design a guest house for the Cohen retreat on Casey Key, which also contains the 1956 Burkhardt Residence by Paul Rudolph, it was a rare opportunity. Mori was able to assimilate context, requirements, and broad ways of thinking about architecture today, and then create something entirely new. In this way she is an heir of Paul Rudolph's legacy. By Joseph King



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 Harris G. Strong's extra curricular activity of experimenting with glazes on blank tiles became the catalyst for the creation of his famed framed ceramic tiles. By Donald-Brian Johnson
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 It's finally here, the weekend. Enjoy your down time in easy, smart clothing surrounded by comfortable modern furnishings in warm browns, leathers, and soft materials. You may refuse to acknowledge that Monday ever arrives.
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corrections

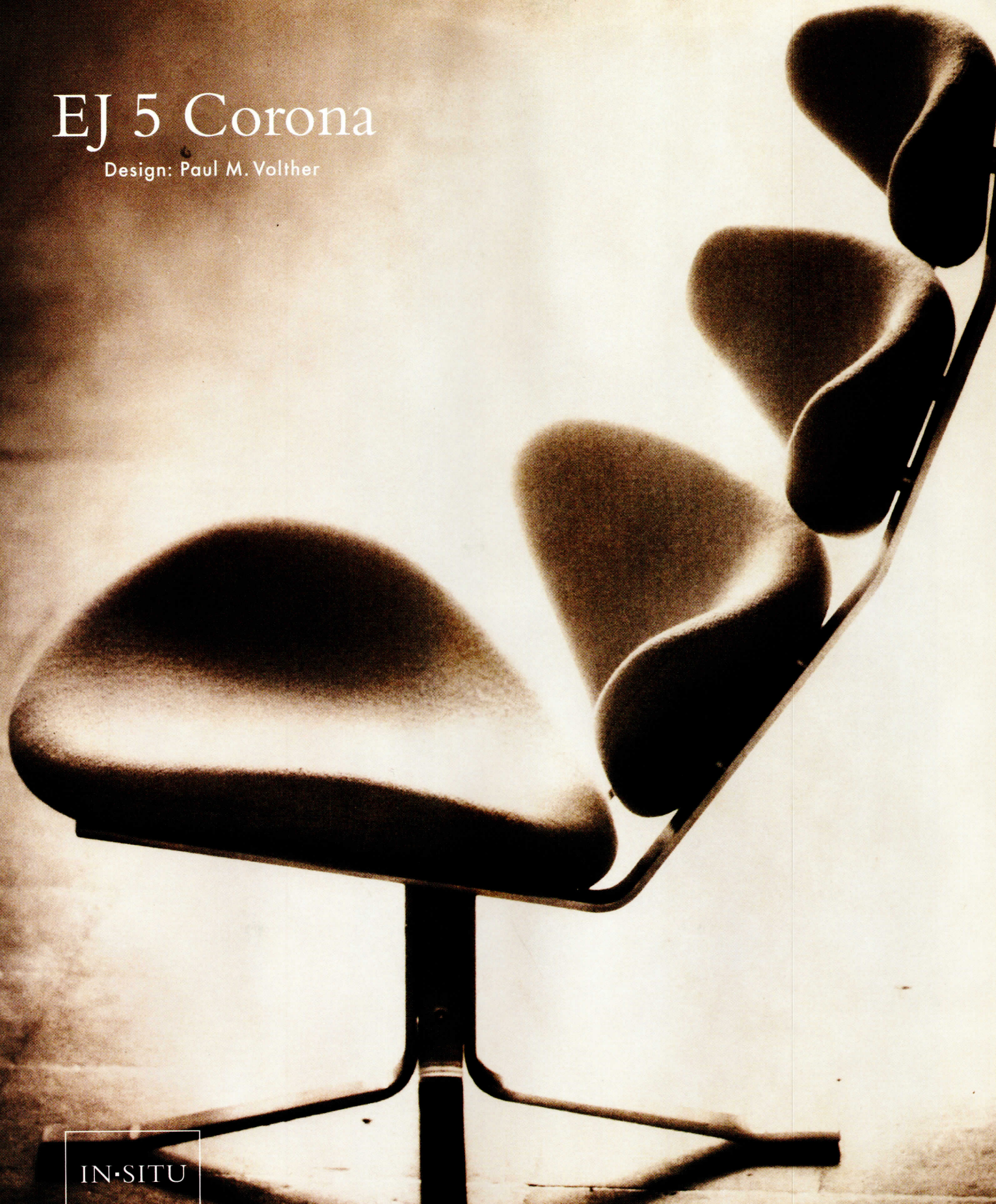
In the article "Twentynine Palms" within our last issue, Issue 37, the designer of Huell Howser's dramatic rusted steel wall and pool patio was not credited. Hagy Belzberg A.I.A. of Belzberg Architects was the architect and designer of that project. Belzberg Architects 1653 Stanford Street, Santa Monica, CA 90403. T: 310 453-9611.

To the Editor,
 I can't describe how wonderful it felt seeing my home featured in the last issue of *Echoes*. From the very beginning the restoration and creation of this special place has been a labor of love for everyone involved and seeing it in your magazine in full, living, glossy color was the icing on the cake. As with any project, of course, this was a shared effort and I'd like to publicly thank Hagy Belzberg Architects for coming up with a creative design and engineering scheme that made that huge steel wall work, and for the other design work and advice along the way. Art Parker, a local Twentynine Palms metal guy was given the creative task of actually installing this huge wall (each panel was 20 feet long by 8 feet high and weighed 1 and a half tons). And in fact, as the wall was being put up, everyone in town had an opinion about it—most favorable, but some skeptical to say the least. My local painter Chris Shury spent literally two years at the house and became as involved and obsessed as I did. And, of course, along the way there were countless others who brought their expertise and input into this project. An unexpected plus to all this is the fact that many of those people have become friends of mine as well. I've given copies of your magazine to them all, along with my sincere thanks and appreciation for a job well done! And I can assure you that from now on when I see a home in your publication, I'll know first-hand just how much sweat, love and tears were invested by so many people to make it what it is.

From a Happy Camper,
 Huell Howser

EJ 5 Corona

Design: Paul M. Volther



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Shown above, the Cubist Chair, also available as sofa and custom configurations. Exclusively at Lost City Arts.

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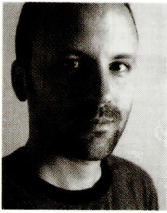


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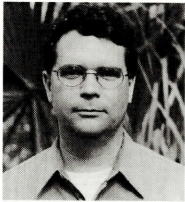
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Eric Piasecki

Eric Piasecki, a Cape Cod native, is a still life photographer based in New York City. He regularly contributes to *House & Garden*, *This Old House*, and *New York* magazine, among others.



Joseph King

Joseph King is an architect practicing on the west coast of Florida. His award-winning residential development, River Forest, is recognized for advancing regional issues of sustainability in site planning and architecture. With Christopher Domin, he is co-author of *Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses*, being published by Princeton Architectural Press, March 2002.



Ginger Moro

Ginger Moro is an author, lecturer, collector, and dealer specializing in 20th century jewelry and the decorative arts. She spent 16 years in Paris where she was actress by day and *chanteuse* by night. She was co-proprietor of an Art Deco antiques boutique, *Aux Trois Graces*, in Montpar-nasse for six years. In Los Angeles she exhibits at the Modern Times and Santa Monica Antiques shows, and conducts guided tours of architectural icons.

Ginger is the author of *European Designer Jewelry*, and has contributed to *Jewelers' Circular-Keystone*, *Heritage Magazine*, and *Silver Magazine*. A regular contributor to *Echoes* since 1997, she

serves as *Echoes'* foreign correspondent.



Dana Van Tilborg

Dana Van Tilborg teaches Women's Studies at the University of New Mexico. Trained as a Cultural Anthropologist, her writing focuses on women's life histories, autobiographies, and personal narratives. She grew up in Paul Rudolph's Umbrella House in Sarasota, Florida and for this issue, explores her mother's life story through her love of modern design.



Donald-Brian Johnson

Author of several titles on modern design, including *Chase Complete and Higgins: Adventures in Glass*, Donald-Brian Johnson received his master's degree from Northwestern University, and is an award-winning theater director as well as an advertising and media writer. His work in the latter field has been recognized by the Associated Press.



Geoff Spear

It's a testament to the range of Geoff Spear's photographic repertoire (and client base) that he recently shot both a new American Express ad campaign and the cover for John Updike's latest book of poems, all in the space of a week.

For over 15 years, Spear's photographs have appeared on the covers and pages of *Newsweek*, *Entertainment Weekly*, *GQ*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and many others, as well as on countless book jack-

ets. His architectural work has appeared in *Elle Decoration*, *Harper's Bazaar Australia*, and *Interiors*, which won Best Residential Space of 2000.

Spear and his wife Fiona live in New York City.



Susan Ottaviano

As an avid collector of vintage cookbooks and 20th century modern design, creating recipes and styling food for *Echoes* is a dream job! For this issue, Susan focuses on "What's in a Name?" including Waldorf Salad and Steak Diane. Susan styles food for a variety of publications. She is also the lead singer of the band Book of Love.



Tucker Shaw

Tucker Shaw, who daringly attempted to read *The Joy of Cooking* straight through from the beginning (he failed, caving midway through the dry rubs chapter), lives in New York City for the food. His book, *Who Do You Think You Are?* was published by Alloy Books/ Penguin Putnam in 2001.



Jim Huff

Jim Huff is best described as a freelance, maverick design curator. Inside Design is a multi-faceted company dedicated to promoting forward-thinking design through product development, special events, design talent management, lecture series, a TV show, and *insidedesign.com*. Jim's friendly, trustworthy, and passionate persona has endeared him to the international design scene. His endeavors have been pub-

lished nationally and internationally in publications such as *Interior Design*, *The New York Times*, and *Wallpaper*.



Mel Byars

Currently the editorial director of *www.designzine.com*, Mel Byars received a Bachelor's degree in journalism before studying anthropology in the Graduate Faculty of The New School University. He began specializing in design history in the late 1980s shortly before his *Design Encyclopedia* was published, the second edition of which is expected in 2002. His eight books include volumes on the making of contemporary products such as *50 Chairs* and *50 Lights*, as well as introductory essays in a number of books. Prof. Byars, who teaches at Pratt Institute and lectures widely, is a contributor to *I.D.*, *Graphis*, *Metropolitan Home*, and other design magazines.



Carol Berens

Carol Berens, the author of *Hotel Bars and Lobbies*, was trained as an architect and is based in New York. She writes about design, architecture, and travel, most recently for *TWA Ambassador* and *Ulysses*.



J3 productions

J3 productions is a visual communications agency specializing in brand imaging, design, and photography. Founder Jonathan Lo and his crew, including in-house photographer Mark April, work together to create imagery through a wide variety of mediums, ranging from graphic

design and marketing collateral, to styling and photography. A sort of "one stop shop."

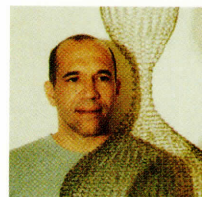
Based in Southern California, J3 productions' recent clients include KBond in Los Angeles, and designer labels such as Roxy, Alex Goes, Modern Amusement, Buz Jones Jeans, Sugar clothing/shoes/cosmetics, and Urban Decay. Their photography has been featured in *Echoes*, *Mac Directory*, and *Glue*. www.j3productions.com



David Glomb

With his roots as a sound engineer for the touring companies of *Grease* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, David's photographic career began while assisting fashion photographer Albert Watson, but his first published work resulted from the photography of Anglo Donghia's new showroom on the West Coast in 1976.

David relocated from Los Angeles to the desert outside of Palm Springs in 1991. A collaboration with Adele Cygelman in the production of *Palm Springs Modern* was published by Rizzoli in 1999.

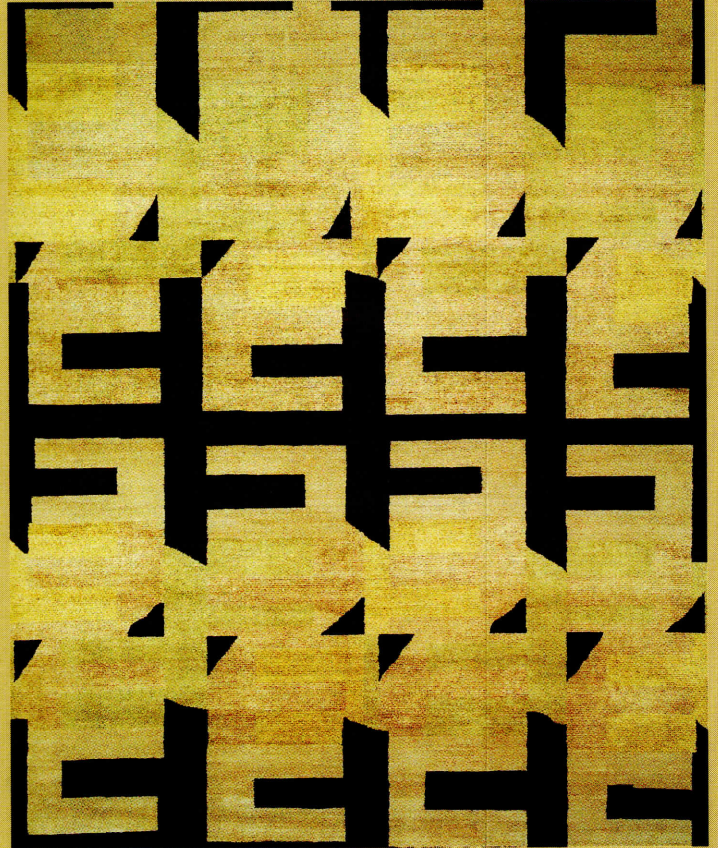


Steven Cabella

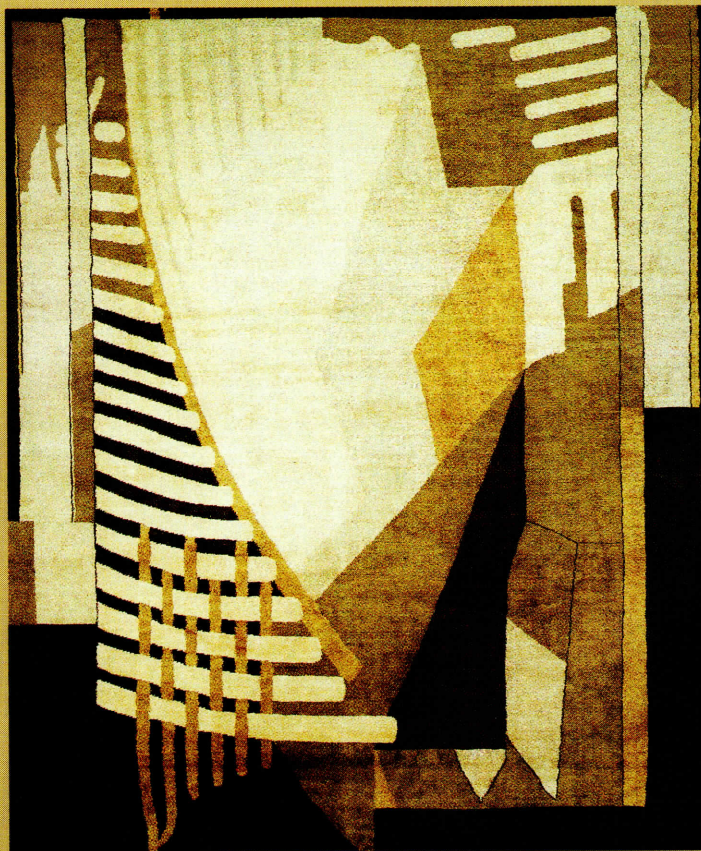
Steven Cabella is the owner of one of the oldest vintage design shops in America, The Modern I 1950's Shop. A writer/design historian who organized one of the first 1950's retrospectives in 1979, he has been collecting and documenting the work of Ray and Charles Eames for over 20 years. His collection of Eames things is currently on display in Tokyo, Japan and San Francisco, California. Mr. Cabella has been a contributor to *Echoes* since 1995, writing the off-beat "Modern Eye" column. He is always happy to speak with curators and collectors through his web site, www.eamescollector.com.



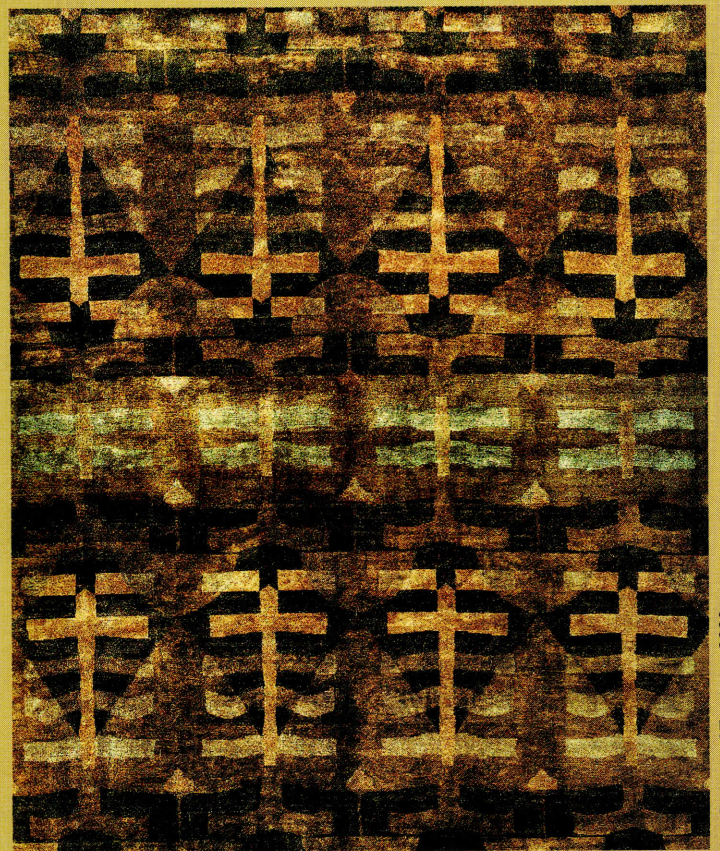
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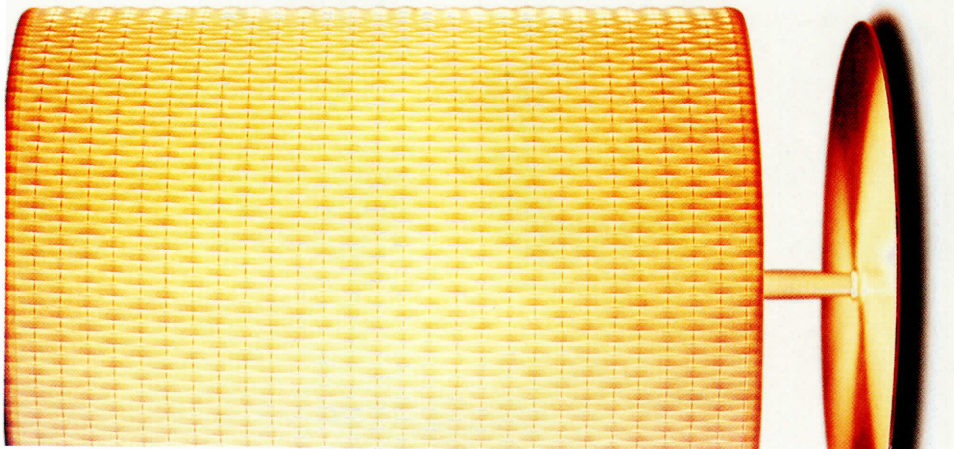
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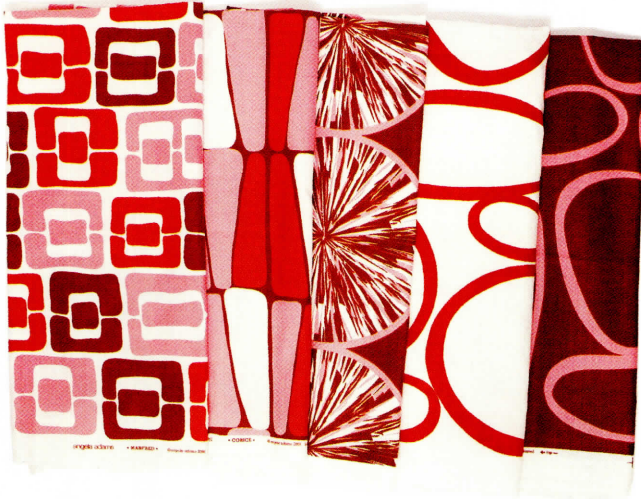
Choose Your Color

Designed in 1954 by Edgar Bartolucci and Robert Cato, the Bartolucci/Cato coffee table features interchangeable and reversible lacquered color panels spring-loaded into a golden maple finished frame, supported on iron-finished legs. Originally manufactured from 1954-1955, Lost City Arts is now producing an authorized reproduction of the table, allowing one to own a changeable piece of history. Bartolucci/Cato coffee table, 15.5H x 59.75L x 17.25D, \$1400. Lost City Arts, 212 375-0500, www.lostcityarts.com.

what's hot

coordinate your lifespace

Designer Angela Adams, well-known for her retro-graphic rugs, has now introduced fabric printed with the same bold patterns. Shown below: *Manfred*, *Corice*, *Freda*, and *Lulu* in the red colorway. 50% cotton, 50% linen, 54"W. \$75 per yard. Angela Adams, 800 255-9454.



functional art

In collaboration with three-dimensional artist Jon Grauman, Rohl has introduced a line of solid aluminum above-counter basins. The basins can be installed above the counter or partially submerged, and standard drain openings are incorporated into the design. A nearly limitless array of custom finishes is also available—from anodized to bonded copper. Rohl, 714 557-1933, www.rohlhome.com.



take it easy

The *Bowie* lounge chair and footrest by David Design was created by award-winning Swedish designers Eero Koivisto and Ola Rune in the spirit of the Swedish design tradition of maximal function via minimalist means. The shell and base of the *Bowie* are available in either molded birch or oak, and the upholstery in sheepskin or a wide range of fabrics and leather, as well. Lounge 26"H x 28"W x 27"D. \$474-865. Footrest sold separately. Available from Lampa + Mobler, 323 852-1542. www.lampamobler.com.

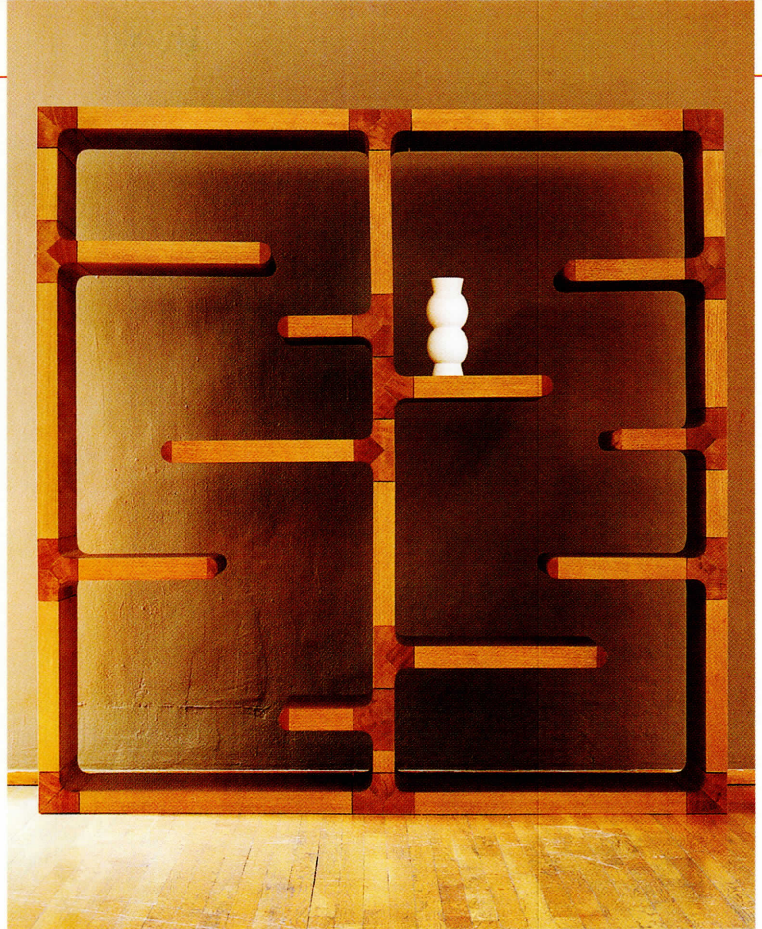
toolbox

The *Toolbox* by Piero Arosio for Emmebi's "Box Collection" is a storage system available in almost any configuration you can imagine. From one or two drawers to 100, *Toolbox* is available in natural pear, cherry, or black walnut, or matte lacquered in up to 21 standard colors. Available with or without casters. As shown, with 10 drawers, 25"W x 20"D. \$2386. Available from Lampa + Mobler, 323 852-1542. www.lampamobler.com



glamour retreat

Designer Barbara Barry showcases the best of 1940s Hollywood in her new *Glamour* bath collection for Kallista. "This collection embraces people's nostalgia for the opulent mirrored furniture of the 1940s and scales the pieces for today's lifestyles," says Barry. 888 4-Kallista. www.kallistainc.com.

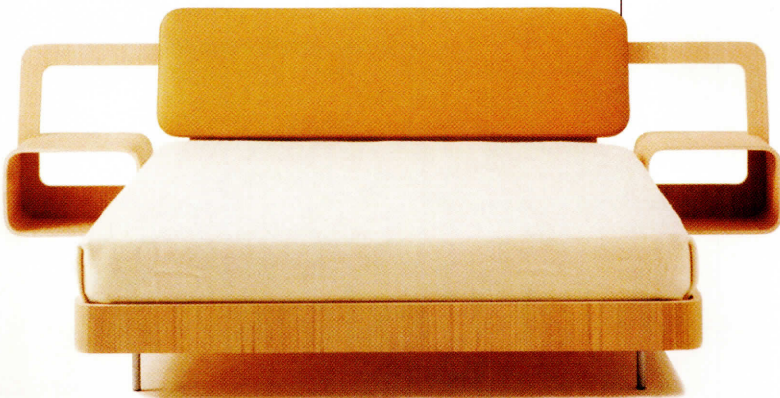


sculpture or storage?

Designer Christopher Delcourt, known for his subtle design language and extraordinary craftsmanship, recently introduced a 21-piece furniture and lighting collection at Ralph Pucci International gallery in New York. Among the offerings is his sculptural *PEN* library bookcase in gray oak, shown above. \$1500. Ralph Pucci International, 212 223-1811.

soul of a bed

The Emmemobili company of Italy is known for their high skill in creating bent wood furniture. Their latest offering, the *Valentino* bed, is comprised of a panel in wood covered in light-colored leather that accommodates two bedside tables in a double 'C' on the sides. The bed frame is made of chestnut and rests on chromium-plated feet. Available in the USA through Property in New York, 917 237-0123; or Limn in San Francisco, 415 543-5466.



high wire act

It's almost 50 years ago that one of the signature designs of Alessi was steel wire bread and fruit baskets. Thanks to the talents of a young Turkish designer, Defne Koz, the Italian company now has introduced a new generation of the genre that demonstrates its unflagging mastery of the material. *Ray* is a basket that has graceful, fluid lines, its open weave contributing to the duality of its character—strong yet delicate. \$129. Alessi, 212 431-1310. www.alessi.com.





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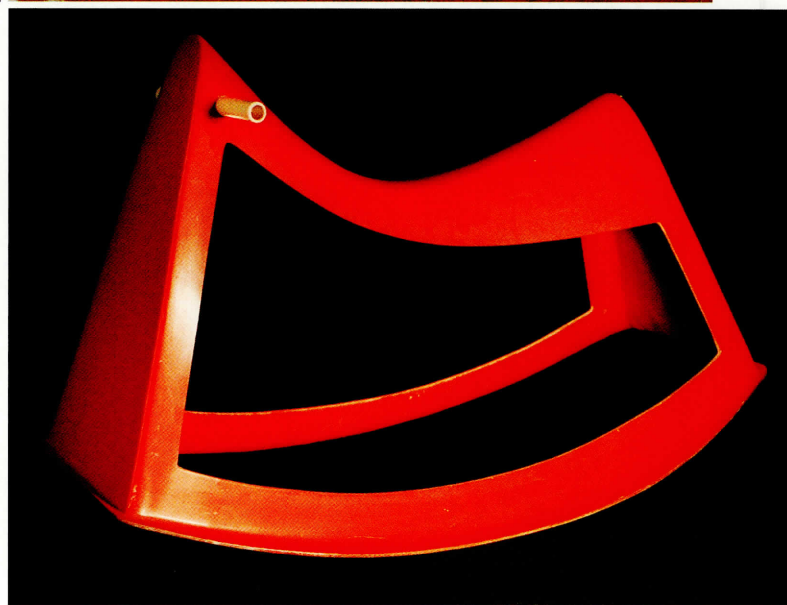
up close

Modern Design as Memoir

Writer Dana Van Tilborg reflects on growing up in the Umbrella House and the legacy of taste, style, and the idea of home her mother has given her



Clockwise from above: Sarasota School architect Paul Rudolph's Umbrella House, where the author grew up and her parents lived for 30 years; The author as a young girl in her bedroom in the Umbrella House; An abstract rocking horse from the author's childhood—though she never particularly liked the toy, it fit perfectly into the modern decor of her room



"At least you come by your modernism honestly," my neighbor said to me as she surveyed the furniture in my apartment. At that moment, she was staring at a fire engine red rocking horse that I have had since I was a child. This horse is not your typical brown, furry toy, but a sleek, streamlined one with no face and just a wisp of a tail. Very modern, very abstract. My mother tells me that I never particularly liked the toy, but it fit perfectly into the decor of the Paul Rudolph-designed Umbrella House, where I grew up and my parents lived for 30 years.

I guess you could say that I was born into modern design, as I am the daughter of a woman who fell in love with the furniture and architecture flourishing in California in the 1950s. My mother, Rachel, tells me that she visited the Eichler model homes in Palo Alto on the weekends, just for fun, and even bought her dining room table right out of one of them. I ask her about the attraction to modern design and she tells me, "I was hungry for art. I didn't see much of that growing up. We moved around a lot, and we never had good-looking furniture. We had big, heavy, dark furniture, and I hated it. I loved beauty, and what I considered beautiful were progressive new homes and new furniture. They were bright, airy, and open."

She loved the look then and brought it with her through both time and space. She's been living with it for practically 50 years—transporting it from California to Florida. She's been in style and out, but is currently enjoying a renaissance. Young, hip people in her community who are currently acquiring '50s furniture know about her taste, her collection, and wonder if she's ready to part with it. The answer seems to be no, as she has just put the finishing touches on an extremely white, sleek, and modern furniture-filled condominium overlooking the Gulf of Mexico. The design continues to make her happy.

Modern design has always been a part of my life, and now as I survey my own home, I see the family legacy. Not only do I have

actual pieces of furniture from the house I grew up in, but I also live with a certain sparseness and openness that I remember from my childhood. I am just beginning to understand the influence that my mother has had on my life and the way I live. This is not to say that she didn't influence me beyond design and furniture; she did. I definitely get my tenacity, honesty, and sense of joy about the world from her. But I also wonder about the legacy of taste, style, and the idea of home that she has given me.

Perhaps the connection between the terms "legacy" and "modern design" is unclear; after all she isn't leaving me expensive antiques that have been handed down through generations of family. She has given me her Charles and Ray Eames *Eiffel Tower* chairs, the George Nelson white table bought in the Eichler model home, and the Metlox *Aztec* pottery that I eat on and adore. Many people would not consider these objects a legacy, yet when I look at > 25

THE MAGAZINE



photo: S. Green 510.528.4439

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Front row: The first Eames all rubber foot for fiberglass chairs and ESUs is flanked by the 2nd and 3rd versions of this foot. **Middle row:** (L to R) Plastic tip for wood dowel leg, 2nd *Eiffel Tower* tip, 1st H-base foot with small plastic insert. **Back row:** (L to R) first *Eiffel Tower* tip next to final H-base tip next to 3rd and 2nd *Eiffel tower* tips

“Domes of Silence” and other evolutions in Eames chair tip design writer **steven cabella**

The earliest of the Eames plywood production chairs had few feet design issues and presented no real problem in this regard. In fact, the four small metal tack heads, placed at the ends of the legs of the *LCW* and *DCW*, facilitated sliding the chair on the floor and also elevated the chair just enough to protect the plies of the wood legs from chipping off when dragged on some rougher flooring surfaces.

The early metal-framed plywood chairs prompted the recognition that a chair tip was an honest visual part of the function of the chair and of concern to the consumer. The first tip was a simple gray solid rubber washer attached to the bottom of the metal leg with a washer and machine screw. In fact, like several of the early parts for the Eames tables and chairs, this gray rubber bumper was borrowed from the plumbing industry. The ability of this simple rubber tip to be torn off while sliding the chair necessitated its redesign for better functionality—the reevaluation being a common step in the overall design process at the Eames Office.

The result was the use of the black rubber and stainless steel “Domes of Silence,” a push-on version of a smooth sliding chair tip or glide which acted like a more developed version of the tack head used on the all-wood chair. This new glide exactly matched the design and materials used in the rest of the chair frame. The small, slightly rounded stainless steel tip was designed to glide silently over most flooring surfaces, thereby doing away with noisy chairs sliding in schools, offices, and lecture halls.

These new slide-on boot tips were again replaced in the early '50s with an improved model. This time the design solution was to permanently attach the glide to the chair leg, first with a shorter glide that was force-fitted on with a knurled stud. When this made the replacement of broken feet impossible for the consumer, they again redesigned the glide to screw in and out. These same tips, only larger, were used on most every piece of Eames-designed furniture including the *671 Lounge Chair*.

Once the Eames Office designed their new fiberglass chair and the variety of new chair bases that evolved with it, the issue of glides was confronted again. The 1950 wood dowel-legged chair was the last Eames chair with wood elements almost touching the floor. Learning from the rusting and staining of the metal tacks used earlier, the Eames office chose to use a clear round plastic-tipped foot. Made at a local factory in Santa Monica near the Eames Office, the tips were made of a small nail cast into a clear acrylic button. This not only solved the rust issue but had the added visual benefit of making the foot element almost disappear.

The other new bases were all made of metal tubing or resistance-welded wire rods and prompted yet another evolution in chair tip design at the Eames Office. The first production tip for the new *Eiffel Tower* wire bases was a “Dome of Silence” glide that bolted through a hole in the bent leg end that formed a foot for the bolt. This glide was followed a few years later with a black rubber and steel foot that pushed on the ball end of the rod legs. This tip was self-leveling for more comfort on slightly uneven surfaces. And again in the mid-fifties, this model glide was replaced by the all-new and all-white nylon self-leveling glide.

In 1955 the replacement of the heavy solid metal tubing X-bases that used the “Domes of Silence” with the new H-bases made from hollow steel tubing meant that new feet were needed again. The first foot tried was the same first issue slide-on boot glide but with a small plastic tip inserted into the tubing end to provide better footing for the boot glide. The next year new black rubber and steel self-leveling tips were designed to be inserted into the hollow tube end of the new steel H-base legs. This was followed by another design change the next year—the use of long lasting and non-rusting white plastic nylon for a newly designed self-leveling foot which provided the final answer for the H-base foot connection.....

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A Modern Oasis

Check into the Cha Cha Room at the recently opened Orbit In in Palm Springs and return to the days when aperitifs poolside and lounge music were the way to relax photographer **David Glomb**



The ten guest rooms and grounds of the Orbit In are appointed with classic modern designs such as Saarinen pedestal tables, Eames *Eiffel Tower* chairs, *Womb* chairs, and Richard Schultz loungers

Located in the historic Tennis District of Palm Springs, the recently restored Orbit In is an oasis of modern design in the desert. The In's ten guest rooms are appointed with original mid-century furniture and decor by Eames, Saarinen, Bertioia, Nelson, Noguchi, and Schultz, with themes such as the Martini Room and the Rat Pack Suite to the Atomic Paradise and the Cha Cha Room. The careful planning and restoration of each room reflects the design concepts that modern architects and designers brought to the desert.

The classic 1950s kitchenettes and pink tile bathrooms are original—a trademark of the hotel's designer Herb W. Burns. Burns designed several of the neighborhood's classic mid-century inns and private homes. Rooms feature Melmac tableware and vintage cook-book art, along with the amenities of the 21st century such as data

ports, air conditioning, CD players, televisions, and VCRs.

When you need some quiet time, you can grab a cold drink from your fridge and a magazine from your room and retreat to your secluded patio, or soak up the sun on a sleek Richard Schultz lounge chair while sipping an "Arnold Palmer"—a refreshing house blend of lemonade and ice tea. The view to the hills beyond includes Albert Frey's landmark home.

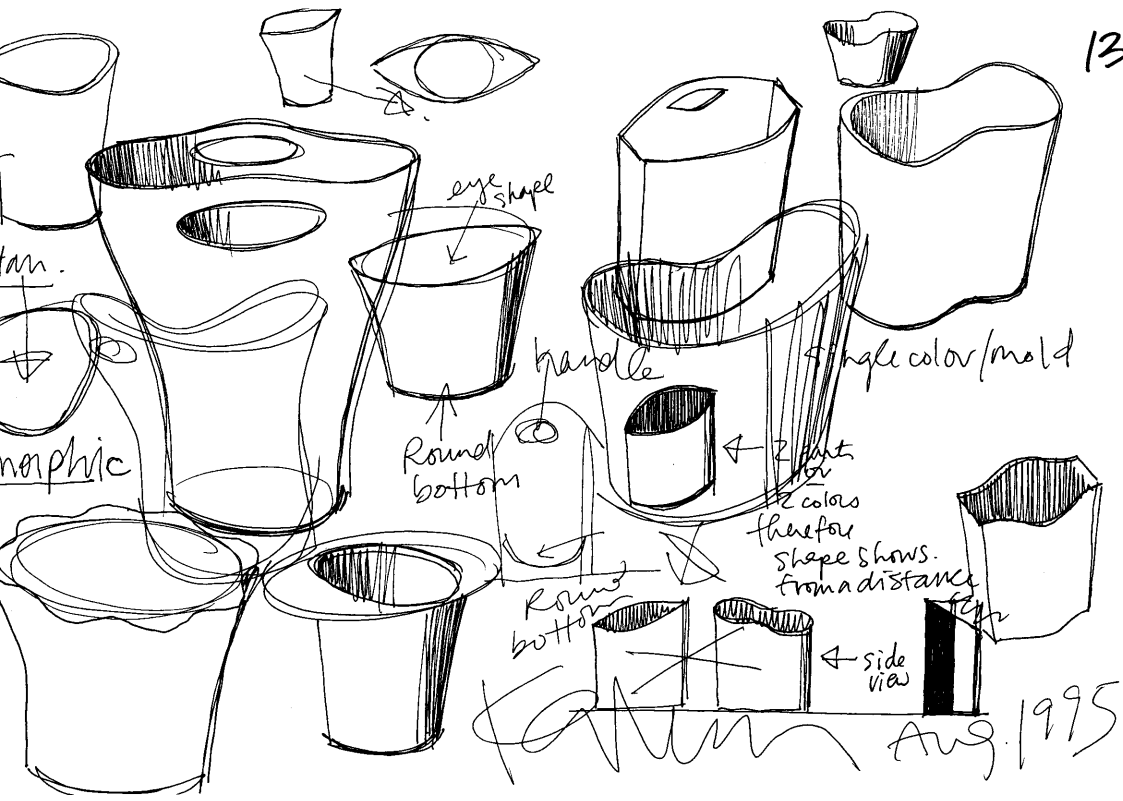
"This hotel represents a complete turn around in the recognition of mid-century architecture by the public," said Tony Merchell, a Palm Springs authority of mid-century modern architecture.

Orbit In, 562 W. Arenas, Palm Springs. Rates range from \$189-249 per night. For information and reservations call 877 99-ORBIT. www.orbitin.com.





object focus



Left: One of Rashid's early jobs for the Garbo bin. The finished product.

Garbo multi-particle bin
 Designer: Karim Rashid
 Year of design: 1995
 Manufacturer: Umbra
 Material: High-density polyethylene
 Colors: Seven
 Price: Less than \$10
 Number sold: Over 500,000

The Garbo Waste Bin:

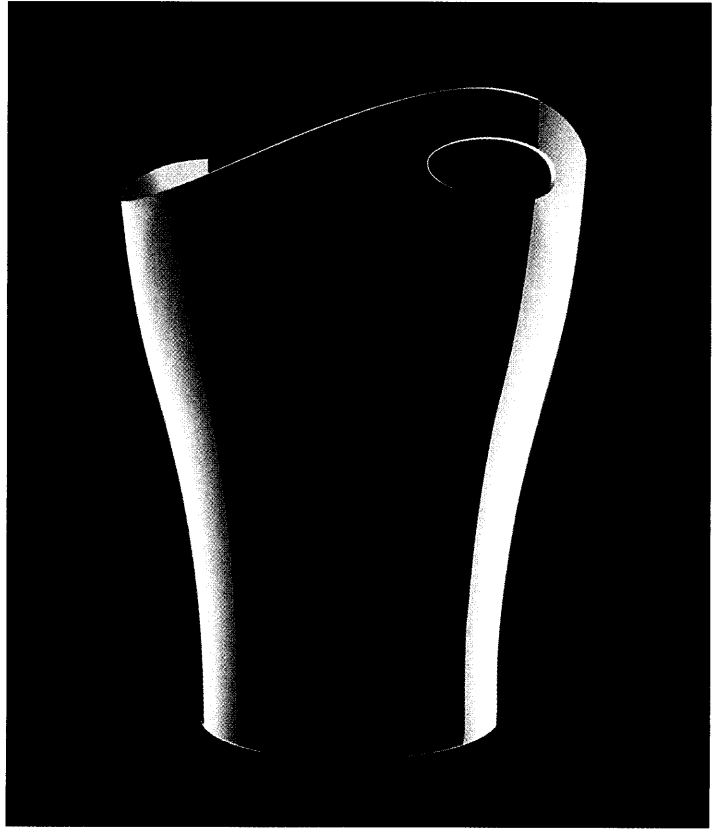
A piece of high design for \$10 writer **mel byars**

You would think that someone as famous as 41-year-old Karim Rashid easily finds clients like Umbra for which he could design products like the *Garbo* trash bin that would sell in the millions. Well, sorry, this isn't the way life really works, and it isn't the way the true story of *Garbo* unfolded.

When Rashid first came to New York from Canada, he slept on the floor of his brother's apartment before moving into the cheapest loft he could find—one with no bathroom or kitchen. With \$1500 in his pocket and pittance pay from teaching at Pratt Institute, he finally found a client after knocking on the doors of 100 others. It was the firm for which he designed the Nambé tabletop collection that called on reprocessed aluminum refuse, and the *Garbo* trash bin.

The goal for the *Garbo*—whose name represents "garbage" and the actress Greta Garbo—was to make a waste bin that would hopefully be perceived as unique and new but not be too bizarre for the taste of the general consumer, and it could not cost more than \$2 to produce. In a close collaboration between manufacturer Umbra and designer Rashid, a low-cost polymeric material was chosen because it is recyclable, easy to mold, and friendly to the formation of curvaceous shapes.

The costs of tooling for dies is always a great concern in plastic-product manufacture; after all, at the beginning of a project, no one ever really knows if a product will be successful and dies can be costly—often far more than \$100,000. So, in order to diminish the initial monetary outlay, Rashid conceived of plain rather than compli-



ILAN RUBIN

cated male and female dies. Even though his design solution was simple, the appearance is that of a more complicated, asymmetrical object due to the way the top edge is cut away.

Injection molded from a virgin polymeric-plastic material, the bin's no-right-angle interior facilitates easy cleaning, especially of dried liquids like coffee. The heavy, double-wall base discourages tip-overs, and the yawning mouth permits stacking for condensed, economical shipping to stores.

For the family of home-or-office waste bin sizes—known as the *Garbo*, *Garbino*, *Garbonzo*, and the mini *Garbini*—Rashid's "intention was to revisit and redesign these banal objects by bringing new character, life, function, and accessibility to the everyday object, the garbage can," in his own words. He further reveals, "The strategy was to develop and design high-quality but very affordable housewares that would be greatly appreciated by a very large market. I chose to 'deproductize' the landscape by designing an object that would last in the marketplace for years, be very economical to produce, and replace many other inferior objects. Also, I believe that a company can increase its profitability by making fewer individual products. And, with fewer individual products in its line, a company will become more streamlined, focused, and efficient."

Indeed, Rashid's prognostication for Umbra was realized. And the \$10 *Garbo* has become so successful, with sales in excess of 2,500,000 units, that about 60 products in the Umbra line have been eliminated and some of the waste bins by others firms, threatened by the *Garbo*, have been discontinued. *

Up Close: Modern Design as Memoir

(continued from page 16) my home I see things that have memories and my mother's history embedded in them. I am surrounded by things that she loved and that I continue loving and living with. It is a legacy of design, but also a way of life.

My mother moved to California in the 1940s when she was a teenager, following her own mother and dreaming of a new life away from small-town Illinois, a new life in a western Eden. She met my father, Ross, at a club in Anaheim in 1952, and so began the next phase of her life. They have been married for 47 years, have two children, moved across the country to Florida in 1965, and have lived and continue to live full lives there. Aside from her love for and care of her family, the other major passion she has had is modern design. Perhaps this passion symbolizes something more than a desire for good-looking or functional furniture; perhaps it symbolizes a new way to live in the world. A shedding of a country girlhood and a transformation into a new way of being > 80

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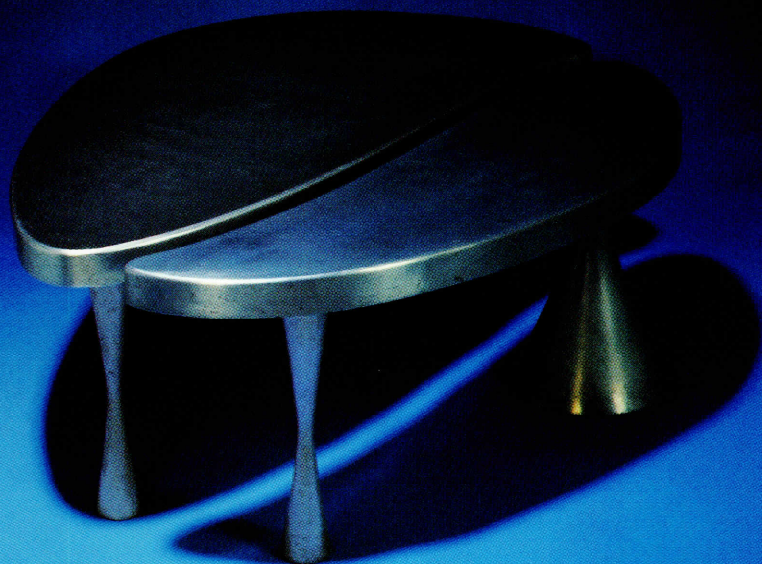


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Comma undertook the gut renovation of this apartment located in a Fifties apartment block in New York City's Gramercy Park. The original brick wall onto the terrace was replaced by a wall of glass, and the ceiling was removed to expose the beams beneath. The floor is poured epoxy resin in sky blue. All cabinetry, finishes, and furniture are by Comma with the exception of the vintage Poul Kjaerholm sofa in the foreground

Design on All Levels

Jim Huff from Inside Design catches up with David Khouri and Roberto Guzman of COMMA writer jim huff

What is modernity exactly? We often presume that it is exclusive to designs which are radically new or something that we have never seen before. But can a design be up-to-date and still possess a classic, timeless quality—one which evokes a confidence that your acquisition will not be laughably unfashionable in five, ten or fifteen years? Perhaps a hallmark of a successful Modern design is a correlation with tradition, or an understanding that good ideas are not just for now, they are forever.

David Khouri and Roberto Guzman, who work under the moniker COMMA, have proven, in only two and a half short years, that classicism and experimentation can be married—tastefully. They have melded a passion for forward thinking design with a curiosity for material experimentation and polished the end result with traditional Columbia architectural backgrounds. Comma inspires faith in their clients and confidence that they have made an investment for the long haul. Khouri and Guzman have produced a wide array of ideas, ranging from product and furniture designs to interior architecture and buildings. They are two of the most promising current young designers to emerge from the United States. You may not yet recog-

nize their names, but their work rises above the sea of competition.

JH: How would you define your design aesthetic?

C: We try to take a familiar form and make you look at it in a new manner. We want you to see something in a way that you had not seen before. It is kind of didactic.

JH: Tell us about some of your past and current influences.

C: The architect Jean Nouvel is a genius. Jasper Morrison is a big influence because a lot of what he does is about reduction. It is not about bells and whistles. It is about quietly discovering something that can really change the way you feel about something. I really appreciate Mies and Gropius as well.

JH: What is the Comma mission?

C: It is to design on all levels. We like to redesign every aspect of a space, including the objects within it. We want to design the frame of the door, the furniture, everything. A lot of architects, at some point, just put the pencil down and leave it to someone else. I do not think they need to. >

Below, clockwise from top left: Ms. Kathleen cocktail table in stainless steel with recessed top; Hola Bowla tables of cast polyester resin; 6-PAC ottoman/stool cushions/cocktail table of stainless steel, self-skinning urethane, and plastic laminate. The six cushions lift out for party seating, the base lifts up to become a table top. Also available as a 4-PAC ottoman

JH: Is that why you made the transition to furniture design?

C: We were tired of compromising. With architecture, you rely on so many other people and you end up with a product that is not satisfying. Designing furniture has allowed us to have more control of the project as a whole. When people see what you can do on a micro level, they believe in what you can do on a macro level.

JH: What does it mean to work in New York City?

C: There is constant stimulation, constant pressure, and you always have to prove yourself. It is a very competitive place to be, which is good because you do not get lazy. You are surrounded by the best of the best. There is so much visual overload all of the time.

JH: What are your thoughts on the state of new design in the United States?

C: Improving, but still hooked up to an IV. I think it is pretty bad. There is not a lot of public or private support for design. Builders and developers could give a crap. The government could give a crap. There is no respect or you're suspect. It is a different situation in Europe.

JH: So, how do you get work?

C: It is really hard to find people to let you do what you are

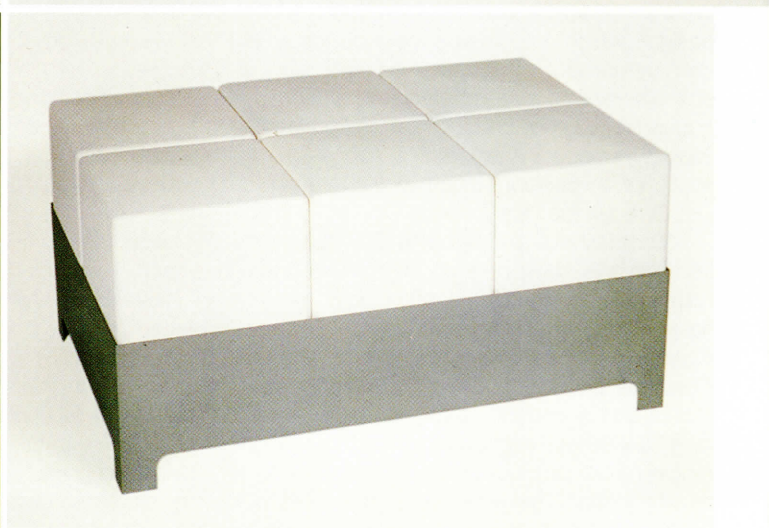
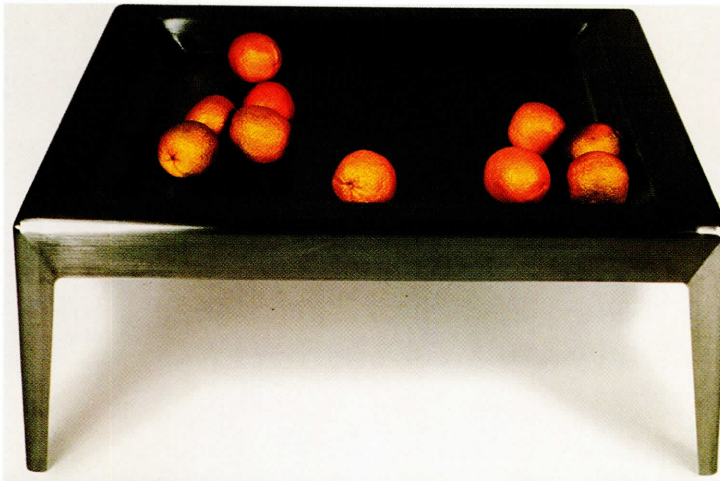
trained to do. It's sheer will to convince people to do something new. You have to constantly reassure people. The only way we can do this is by gaining their trust and to let them know our intentions are pure. You have to show devotion and that you are not in it to make a quick buck. Nothing is more effective than seeing someone doing what they do because they really believe in it. The quality of our work is our best calling card. Without that, you have nothing.

JH: What inspires new design ideas?

C: Discovering new materials really inspires us a lot. Pyrex is a favorite right now. We are always inspired by the possibilities of metal. It is incredibly malleable even though by definition it seems to be the opposite of that. Anything that, when used, can help define an object that you know. The idea of skins on things has always been appealing. A skin of a wood veneer or a paint finish can express an incredible thinness. It is about versatility and using materials in a non-traditional manner. It is about rediscovering a material. Every designer is on the quest for a new material usage. Whatever inspires us becomes valid.

JH: How was COMMA started?

C: (David Khouri) I started Comma because I felt compromised at my old job. I was not in control and I could not do > 80



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class bites

what's in a name?

Photography by Eric Piasecki
Recipes and Food Styled by
Susan Ottaviano
Text by Tucker Shaw
Props Styled by Susan
Ottaviano, Annichelle Saludo
Assistant Photographer:
Sean Riva
Assistant Food Stylist:
Annichelle Saludo

You're no one in the culinary world until you've had a dish named for you. (Just ask Caesar Cardini, a Tijuana restaurateur who masterminded the first Caesar Salad for an Independence Day fete in 1924. Or Dick Foster, vice chairman of the French Quarter's famed Vice Committee, who inspired a New Orleans chef to create Bananas Foster back in 1950.) Here we showcase four of our favorite providential flavors. First up? A bracing **Rob Roy**, so named to honor the romantic rogue hero of Scottish yore. Think it's a shock to fly commando in a kilt? Try tossing back one of these "Scotch Martinis." Or a few. Next, a fresh take on the classic **Waldorf Salad**, first tossed in the Waldorf Hotel Dining Room in 1896 by maitre d'hotel Oscar Tschirky, the legendary (and prolific) host who also invented Lobster Newburg and Veal Oscar. Our version, while lighter, is as elegant as the original. Third round? Warm, earthy **Steak Diane**, a sautéed steak served with mustardy **Sauce Diane**, named for the enigmatic Diana, Greek Goddess of the Hunt. First crafted tableside at the Copacabana Palace Hotel in Rio in 1951 (paging Barry Manilow? Lola? Rico?), the decadent dish—always served rare—sits solo on the plate for maximum impact. And finally, a sundae of **Cherries Garcia** drenched in a **Brandy Alexander** sauce will warm the cockles of any Deadheads who grace your table. You'll score bonus points if they're also descended from Russian royalty, as the original Brandy Alexander, defined by a dusting of nutmeg, was first introduced around 1900 at the court of Tsar Alexander Romanov.

Will your name be the next to grace a menu? Who knows?

Get cracking in the kitchen and you could discover the next Fettucine Alfredo!



Opposite page

Steak Diane

Plate from MXYPLYZYK. Black leaf **bowl** from Aero. Polished *Piano* **fork** from Breukelen.

Set of 6 *Planete* **coasters** by Roger Capron, circa 1969, available from Gueridon

This page

Waldorf Salad

Plate from Aero. Lynx **throw** from Capital Furnishings *see resources*



Waldorf Salad
Serves 4

2 cups salad greens (such as Butterhead, Romaine or Red Leaf) washed, dried and torn into bite sized pieces
1 cup celery, diced
1/2 cup red seedless grapes, halved
2 apples, cored and cut into eighths
1/4 cup mayonnaise
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1/2 cup walnuts, coarsely chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Combine salad greens, celery, grapes and apples in a medium bowl. Stir in mayonnaise, lemon juice, and salt and pepper. Toss to coat. Garnish with walnuts and serve.

Steak Diane
Serves 4

4 6-8 oz filet mignon steaks, trimmed
Salt and pepper to taste
1/2 cup brandy
1 tablespoon olive oil
2 tablespoons butter
1/2 cup shallots, chopped
1/4 cup beef stock
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
2 tablespoons fresh chives, snipped

Place steaks in a shallow dish with 1/4 cup of the brandy. Marinate in the refrigerator for one half-hour. Turn steaks and marinate the other side for an additional half-hour. Remove steaks from marinade. Season both sides of the meat with salt and pepper. Heat a large heavy skillet or grill pan over medium high heat. Add olive oil and sauté steaks for about 5 minutes per side for medium rare. Remove the steaks to a warmed platter. Return the pan to medium high heat (do not wash pan). Add butter and heat until melted. Add shallots and sauté for about 2 minutes or until softened. Stir in beef stock, remaining brandy, mustard, lemon juice and Worcestershire sauce. Boil for 1-2 minutes, scraping up any brown bits. Pour sauce over steaks. Garnish with chives and serve.

Rob Roy Cocktail
Makes 2 cocktails

6 ounces Scotch
1 ounce sweet vermouth
Orange slices

Chill two cocktail glasses. In a cocktail shaker filled with ice cubes add Scotch and vermouth. Shake well to mix. Strain mixture into glasses. Garnish with orange slices.

Cherry Garcia Ice Cream with Brandy Alexander Sauce
Serves 4

2 quarts Ben & Jerry's *Cherry Garcia* Ice Cream
Brandy Alexander Sauce (see below)
1/4 cup pine nuts
Fresh mint sprigs or fresh cherries (optional)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Toast pine nuts in warm oven for 6-8 minutes or until slightly browned. Using four bowls, serve two scoops ice cream in each bowl. Top each with 2 teaspoons BRANDY ALEXANDER SAUCE and teaspoon pine nuts. Garnish with mint sprigs or fresh cherries if desired.

BRANDY ALEXANDER SAUCE
8 tablespoons (1 stick unsalted butter)
1 cup sugar
1/4 cup brandy
2 tablespoons water
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 large egg

FOR SAUCE: Melt butter over low heat in a small heavy saucepan until melted. Stir in sugar, brandy, water, nutmeg and salt. Cook, stirring, until the sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat. Add egg and whisk until frothy. Set the sauce over medium high and, stirring gently, bring to a simmer. Cook until thickened, about one minute. Serve at once.

Opposite page

Rob Roy Cocktail

Vintage **glass**—Photographer's own. Patented leather stamped Crocodile **pillow** designed by Craig Vanderbrulle and Barry Rudnick for Capital Furnishings

This page

Cherry Garcia Ice Cream with Brandy Alexander Sauce

Plate and **bowl** from Galileo. Red dyed raccoon fur **pillow** from Capital Furnishings
see resources



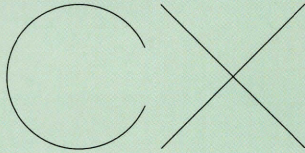


Acquired last year in Europe, this oil on canvas painting is one of three that hung in the Alhambra Theater in Amsterdam until the early 1950s.
The approximate size is: 6' x 18'

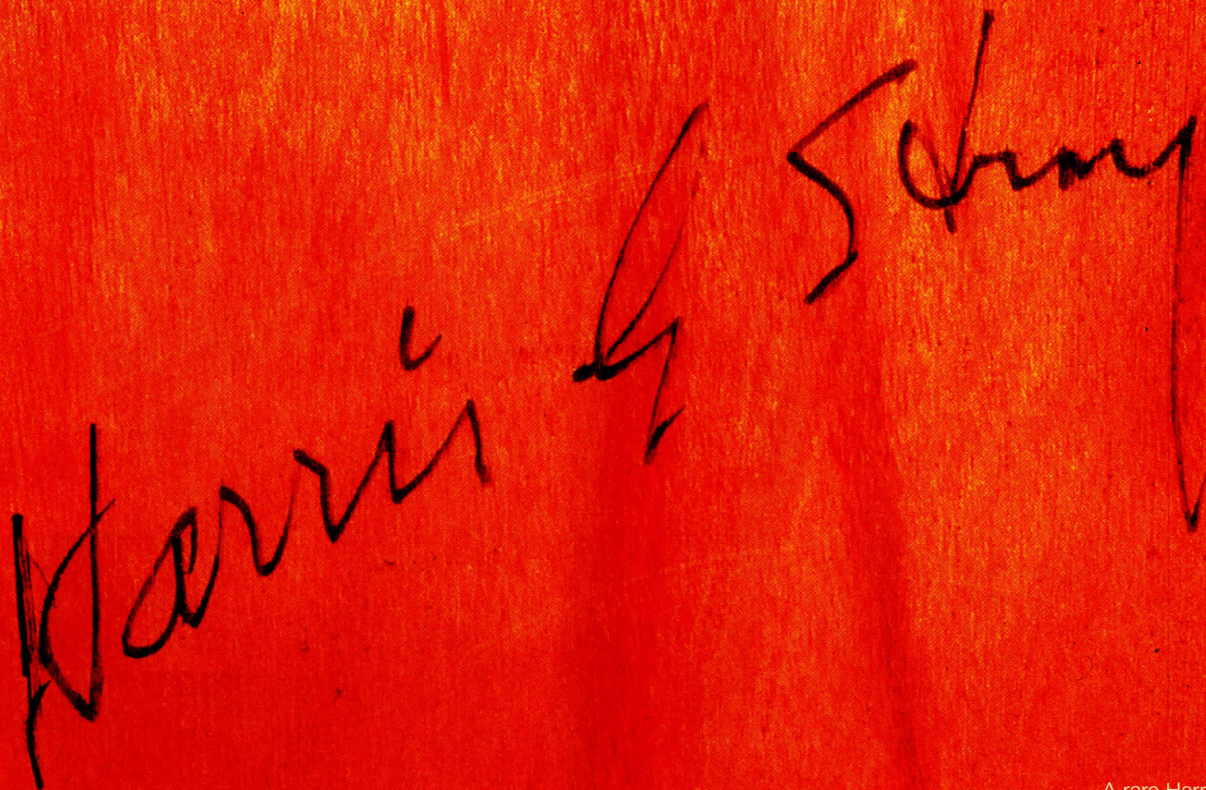
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A rare Harris G. Strong signature on a wood plaque reverse

In the Frame

Harris G. Strong's extra curricular activity of experimenting with glazes on blank tiles became the catalyst for the creation of his famed framed ceramic tiles writer **donald-brian johnson** photographer **leslie piña**

Harris G. Strong essentially created the market for decorative wall hangings. In the early 1950s, before the innovative ceramics engineer and designer introduced framed ceramic tiles, wall decor was, at best, an afterthought. "I was the first person to show wall hangings," recalls Strong. "Previously, furniture stores were not buying them. They'd say, 'I only buy lamps—they go with the sofa.' We'd say, 'These will go, too.' Years later, over 50 percent of the exhibitors in New York's lamp building were showing wall decor."

Harris Strong was born in Waukesha, Wisconsin, in 1920. Early artistic influences included legendary carnival artist "Snap" Wyatt, who patronized the Strong family diner and gave Harris art lessons in exchange for meals. "He did the weirdest things," notes Strong, "like *The Snake Lady*. Not really 'The Snake Lady,' but what you thought she should look like."

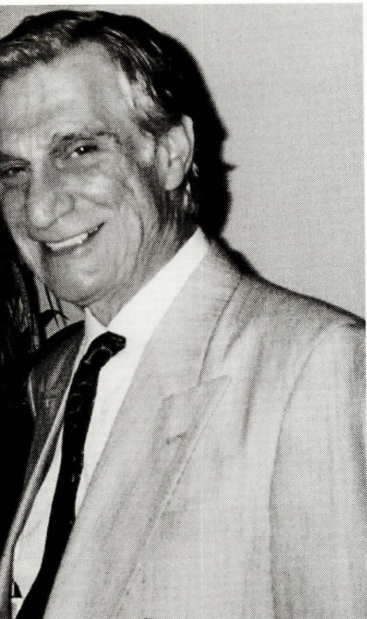
More lasting was the influence of his artist aunt, Brownie, who ran a greeting card company. "She had a little place in the village—'Brownie's Block Prints'—and I used to go there.

Well, I just got the idea that this was what I wanted to do. I mean, not make greeting cards, but to be an artist. So I drew a lot."

Strong later enrolled at North Carolina State, studying ceramic engineering. "That way," he says, "I would have a fallback—I could always do engineering. It was the Depression, and your education was your meal ticket. But my hope was that I could start making pottery—manufacture it, not just 'play' with it."

After service in World War II and completion of his college degree, Strong moved to New York in 1946 and was associated with the Brooklyn pottery, Kelby Originals. After a year, Strong and co-worker Robert Krasner left to found their own firm, Potters of Wall Street. "Basically we made ceramic lamps, ashtrays, and small wares. I did all the glaze chemistry. That was my big 'schtick'."

After dissolving the partnership in 1951, Strong set up a pottery for American Art Industries, devising all glazes and casting techniques. It was during this brief period that the ceramic tiles for which he would achieve his greatest acclaim made their debut—as an



Clockwise from above left: Harris Strong, 2001; Potters of Wall Street *Minotaur* lamp, #1601.30. From the late 1940s, the *Minotaur* was available in "brownstone, bronze, greenstone, blackstone, greystone, and chartreuse;" Triangular ceramic dishes, with incised "Harris G. Strong" signature on reverse. #B-77 (red-domed buildings), #B-80 (birdcages); Detail of a dancing stick figure motif; Harlequin slab-tile panel with design by Marvin Waller, #P-15

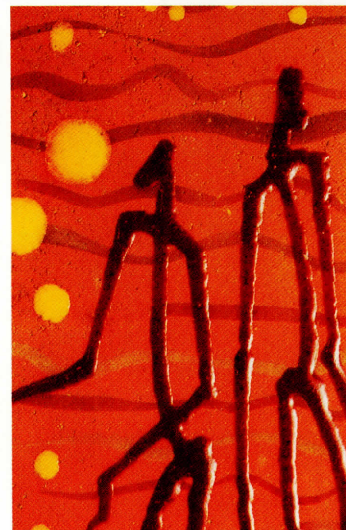


experimental by-product: "There were not enough hours in the day to work on glazes, and I loved to work, so eventually I bought myself a little home kiln—I could fire seven tiles in it. I'd come home after work and go down in the basement where I had this little thing. Well, I didn't want to do casting and mess up the whole house, so I bought tiles—eight cents a piece in those days—and I worked out all my glazes with those. I couldn't see throwing those glazes away, so I'd keep them. When I got my results back, I'd say 'oh this is nice,' and then I did designs on them. My ex-wife (Roslyn Pignard-Strong), did some too. We used them for trivets.

"One of my former accounts was an outfit called 'Lampland.' Their representative came out to dinner one night, saw the tile trivets and said, 'My God, these are beautiful—I could sell these things. How much do you want for them?' I said, 'They're just tiles—they're nothing. A buck a piece. I only paid eight cents for them.' I had 200 tiles, so he gave me \$200 cash. This was in 1951—it was like finding money in the street! He called me up two weeks later and said 'I sold all of those—I want some more. And if you put frames on them, we could really do a big job.' So we added frames, and he kept selling them like crazy."

Initial success led, in 1952, to the establishment of Strong's own firm, Harris G. Strong, Inc. Located in the Bronx, the company began with a staff of four, with Strong doing all glaze chemistry. Over the years, many talented artisans were employed, although Strong made it a rule not to hire art school graduates. "They'd say, 'We always did it this way,' and I'd have to say, 'Here, we don't.' I worked out all our techniques. You go to these pottery schools, and they do bisque firing and all of that. I'd say, 'We don't do any bisque firing. We fire one fire, because that gives us more available techniques. You build on your strengths. You don't build on something that's in a book for hobby potters.'"

The techniques developed by Strong served as a creative springboard for the artists he employed. "Much was developmental," he notes. "I used to fire over 100 glaze tests a week. I kept all those results—the colors, the textures, whatever—and I would work up the technique. Then the artists would all gather around, and we'd talk



about it: 'Wow, you know this would be great for such-and-such.' The designs sprang from the techniques, not the techniques from the designs, because it didn't work that way."

From single framed tiles, Strong moved on to tile groupings, and eventually complete scenes and portraits comprised of multiple tiles. Subjects covered a wide range—among them, landscapes, urban settings, fanciful abstracts, Etruscan nobility, harlequins, and knights -in-armor. The vivid colors and rich detailing of the ceramic wall hangings brightened modern decorating schemes, while the sheer size of the larger pieces made them ideal for wall accents in hotels, office lobbies, restaurants, and other public spaces. "People thought they were colorful and very well done," says Strong. "I had some really fantastic artists working for me. The quality of the designs was excellent and the price was low: originally they retailed for \$6 > 80



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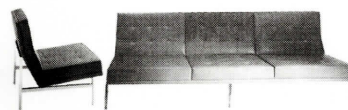
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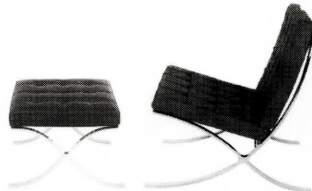
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Tan **pajamas** with Super 8 cameras by Paul Frank, \$70, from Paul Frank; Orange sleeveless **turtleneck** by Paul Frank, \$54, from Paul Frank; Cream **shorts** by FAL, \$63, from Lisa Kline, Fred Segal-Flare, and Bergdorf's; **Bed** with leather head and footboards by Richter, \$3600, from Room Service; Graphic **sheets** by Dwell, \$125 each sheet, \$66/pr. of pillowcases, from Room Service; Striped **duvet** by Dwell, \$154 (queen), from Room Service; **Bed tray** by Cassina, \$545, from Modern Living; Small wood **bowl** by Bahari, \$32, from Shelter; **Glass** by A1, \$5, from Room Service *see resources*

sunday morning

It's finally here, the weekend. Time to slow down and take in life's simpler pleasures—breakfast in bed, reading the Sunday paper, taking a jog around the park, cozying up on the couch in front of a fire. While the mood may be relaxed, there's no reason your style sense has to be. Enjoy your down time in easy, smart clothing surrounded by comfortable modern furnishings in warm browns, leathers, and soft materials. You may refuse to acknowledge that Monday ever arrives.

Photography and Styling: **J3 Productions** Make-up: **Dehx** Hair: **Julio @ the Projekts**
Models: **Michael Sarah @ M Models, Michael Brake @ Q Models**



THIS PAGE
 Cream "Morning After" **robe** by Alex Goes, \$189, from Fred Segal and American Rag; Tan cashmere lounge **pants** by FAL, \$345, from Lisa Kline, Fred Segal, and Bergdorf's; **Camisole**, model's own; **Table** with bull's eye by Pure Design, \$195, from Room Service; Mango **lotion** by Star & Rose, \$11, from Room Service

OPPOSITE PAGE
 Brown **sweatshirt** by Modern Amusement, \$44, from Modern Amusement; Heathered brown lounge **pants** by Modern Amusement, \$52, from Modern Amusement; Light tan suede **shoes** by Car Shoe, \$270, from Silver Feet; Translucent **Pocket Chair** by Zuckerman & Lawton, \$175, from In House; Wicker **magazine holder** by Zanotta, \$756, from Modern Living; Orange and brown **pillows** by Jonathan Adler, \$105 each, from Shelter
see resources





THIS PAGE

Orange long sleeve button-down **shirt** by Diesel, \$79, from the Closet Limited; Tan **corduroys** by Obey, \$56, from the Closet Limited; Brown zip-front **sweater** by Modern Amusement, \$150, from Modern Amusement; **Sneakers** by Ben Sherman, \$60, from the Closet Limited; Black, white, and tan **dress** by Alex Goes, \$188, from American Rag and Fred Segal; Tan **couch** by Austin, \$1995, from Room Service; Standing wood floor **lamp** with square lampshade by Seascape, \$475, from Room Service; Chocolate **throw** with leather trim by Golden Bear, \$335, from Shelter; Orange leather **pillow** by Matco, \$225, from Shelter; Brown felt **floor cushion** by Paola Lenti, \$810, from Modern Living; Leather **magazine holder** by Arte & Cuoio, \$646, from Modern Living

OPPOSITE PAGE

Tan **sweater** with brown dots by Alex Goes, \$98, from Fred Segal and American Rag; Wood grain **table** with white wire stand by Pure Design, \$265, from Room Service see resources



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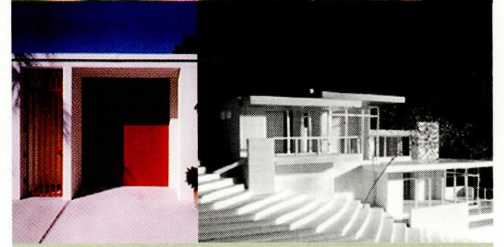
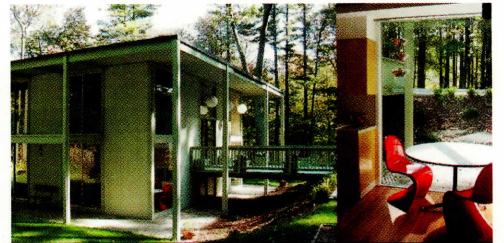
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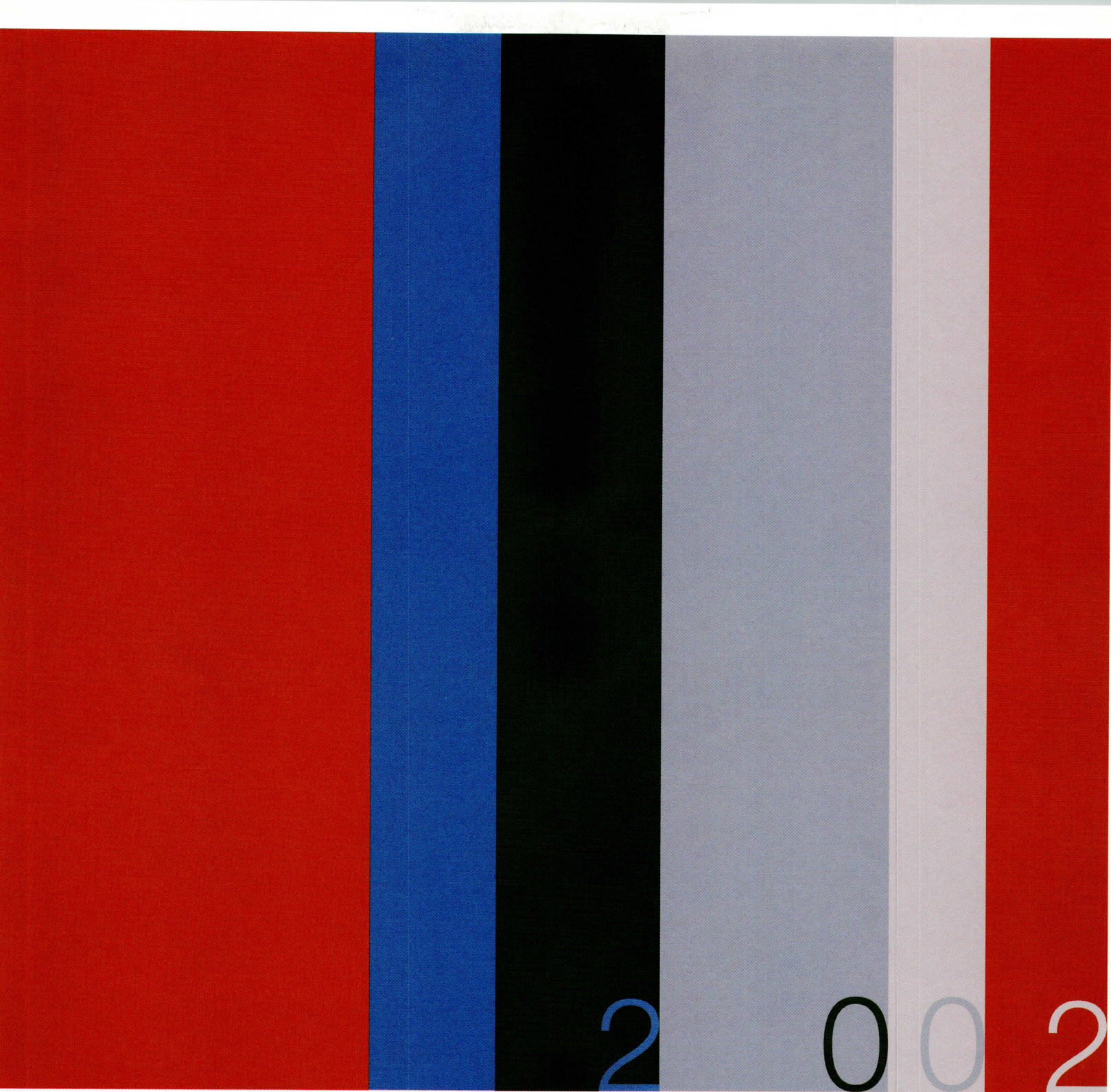


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january 2002, issue 38

modernism with a french accent

jean royère rediscovered

marcel breuer: architect of houses

harvey probber: master of modulars

outside the box: breuer's wolfson house

heir to the legacy: mori and rudolph on the cohen estate

Modernism With a French Accent

Recently there has been an exodus of French dealers who exhibit at shows in America and then set up shop here permanently. What has lured them here, and why do they stay?

Writer **Ginger Moro**

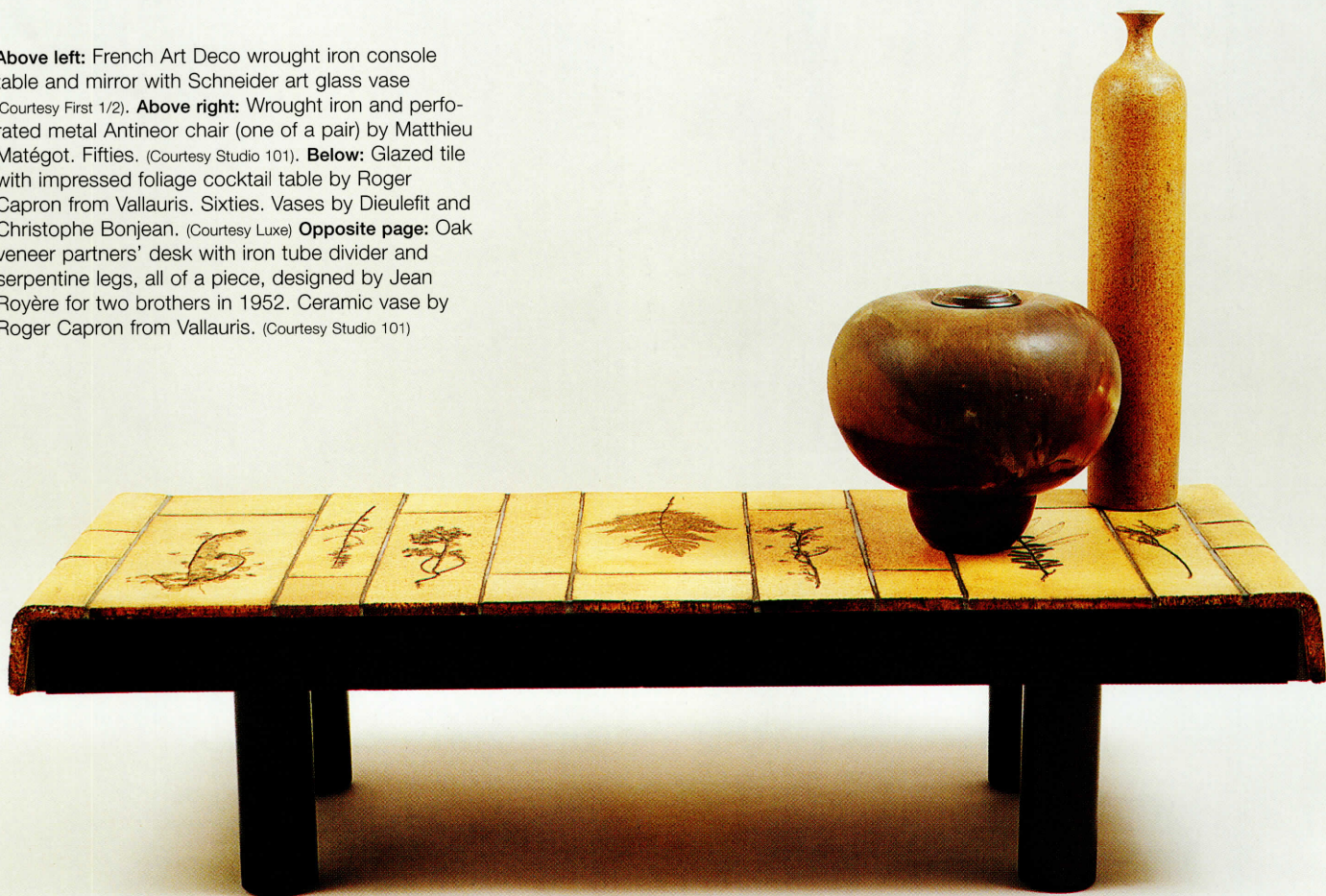
Photographs Courtesy **Luxe, Studio Hexagon, First 1/2, Studio 101**



Compass table desk by Jean Prouvé, with laminated yellow Formica top and bent steel legs painted blue, Fifties, lacquered metal and oak chair by Pierre Guariche. Courtesy of Luxe



Above left: French Art Deco wrought iron console table and mirror with Schneider art glass vase (Courtesy First 1/2). **Above right:** Wrought iron and perforated metal Antineor chair (one of a pair) by Matthieu Matégot. Fifties. (Courtesy Studio 101). **Below:** Glazed tile with impressed foliage cocktail table by Roger Capron from Vallauris. Sixties. Vases by Dieulefit and Christophe Bonjean. (Courtesy Luxe) **Opposite page:** Oak veneer partners' desk with iron tube divider and serpentine legs, all of a piece, designed by Jean Royère for two brothers in 1952. Ceramic vase by Roger Capron from Vallauris. (Courtesy Studio 101)





The French are renowned for many things: Existentialism, *haute couture*, and Art Déco. Traditionally, they have been content to export their ideas and designs to America, while remaining firmly rooted in their beloved land. Recently, however, there has been an exodus of French dealers who exhibit at antiques shows in America, then set up shop here permanently. At the May, 2001 Modernism Show in Santa Monica, California, there were several Frenchmen selling Art Déco glass, ceramics, and lighting, as well as French and Italian mid-century furniture. Seven of their business cards bore American addresses. What has lured them here, and why do they stay?

Michele Sommerlath is co-proprietor of Luxe in Venice, CA. "I'm originally from Morocco," she explained, "so I was drawn to rollerblading by the beach. I previously owned Art Déco shops in France, but I switched from Ruhlmann to Prouvé when I opened a Fifties shop on Abbott Kinney Blvd. two years ago." David Lasseron, her partner, added: "Five years ago there were gang wars in the neighborhood between Blacks and Latinos. Our shop had been a hairdresser's who told me she had to step over dead bodies in the back. But now it's been yuppified, and the only war is between real estate agents."

In the Luxe shop, a *pochoir* painted canvas cartoon of the *Goat* tapestry by Jean Lurçat, (1892-1966) hangs over the *Compass* table by Jean Prouvé. Lurçat studied art with Victor Prouvé (Jean's father) in Nancy, France. His Cubist art decorated Pierre Chareau's *Maison de Verre* in the Thirties. Lurçat's Aubusson tapestries successfully integrated the decor with each architectural site. He rendered his bold design on a full size cartoon, with the wool colors numbered for the weaver to work in coarse gauge. The weaver was left to interpret his design on the loom. Lurçat's stylized animals depicted his Surrealist vision of the Zodiac and the seasons. The *Goat* (Capricorn) was woven in the '60s. Lurçat brought the *tapissier* technique into the 20th century.

Jean Prouvé (1901-1984) had a passion for metals. He designed aluminum and steel railings for architect Robert Mallet-Stevens' residence in 1928. A founding member of the Union des Artistes Modernes (U.A.M.) in 1929, he collaborated with Le Corbusier, Pierre Jeanneret, and Charlotte Perriand on post-war design projects at his Maxéville factory. In 1954 he founded "*Les Constructions*" to mass-produce his functional furniture, preferring to work with bent steel rather than the Bauhaus tubular steel. Prouvé's *Compass* table desk (named after the attenuated steel legs) was designed in 1948 and distributed by the Galerie Steph Simon until 1960. The desktop is laminated Formica blockboard. (A separate drawer unit could be attached.) His minimalist furniture, like his architectural projects, (Forum des Halles) was designed with prefabricated elements and interchangeable structural components.

The French dealers explain that the American collectors' interest in French post-war furniture began in New York 20 years ago. Axel de Heeckeren d'Anthès, of Studio 101, Santa Barbara, remembers: "In the early '80s, a gallery on the rue de Lille in Paris mounted a show of furniture by Prouvé and lighting by Serge Mouille. The French weren't ready to welcome the Fifties back. But the De Lorenzo Gallery in New York took up the idea and brought Prouvé and Mouille to Madison Avenue. From there the trend spread to Lafayette Street in Soho."

Serge Mouille (b.1922) was trained as a silversmith. He applied his silver craftsman technique to hand-fabricated metal lamps for the *Compagnie des Arts Français*. For ten years his work was commissioned by avant-garde interior designers for specific sites. The Galerie Steph Simon distributed his lamps to complement the furniture by Prouvé and Adnet.

Fifties furniture by Pierre Guariche (b.1926) is a current favorite. Guariche worked with Alain Richard and Joseph Motte for A.R.P., 1953-57. Guariche mixed oak with lacquered metal tubing along



simple, rational lines. His *chauffeuses* (armless chairs) were originally named for chairs which were kept next to the fireplace to warm oneself (*se chauffer*). These were made of plywood or molded polyester fiberglass. Luxe carries furniture by all three of the A.R.P designers.

Roger Capron (b.1922) is a ceramist who works in Vallauris in Provence, a ceramics center known for its exceptionally fine clay since Roman times. (His neighbor, Picasso, created pottery there from the mid-Forties on.) Capron bought an old pottery factory in 1952, where he created vases, bottles, and lamps. In the '60s he produced ceramic wall murals. In 1980, high production costs forced Capron into bankruptcy. Still sharp at 80, he has recently returned to sculpting ceramics and producing new editions of his glazed lava tiles—"retro-Riviera" style. French Fifties has a vintage Capron cocktail table impressed with leaves. "In the past two years, Capron vintage pieces have quadrupled in value," Michelle Sommerlath notes.

Thierry Curial reports that: "According to the French Consulat, there are more Frenchmen in Los Angeles than in any city outside of France. I have lived and worked here for 13 years." Thierry was a photographer before he began collecting French Art Déco furniture. His Galerie Curial booth at Modernism presented an Art Deco sideboard of macassar ebony and bronze. *Animalier* art by Andre Margat and a bronze Rochard panther prowled over a palissander and sycamore table. Two leather and chrome armchairs by Marcel Breuer produced by Thonet are as close as Thierry will come to the Forties. "I think the designs of the Forties and Fifties are ugly. Too much metal, not enough wood."

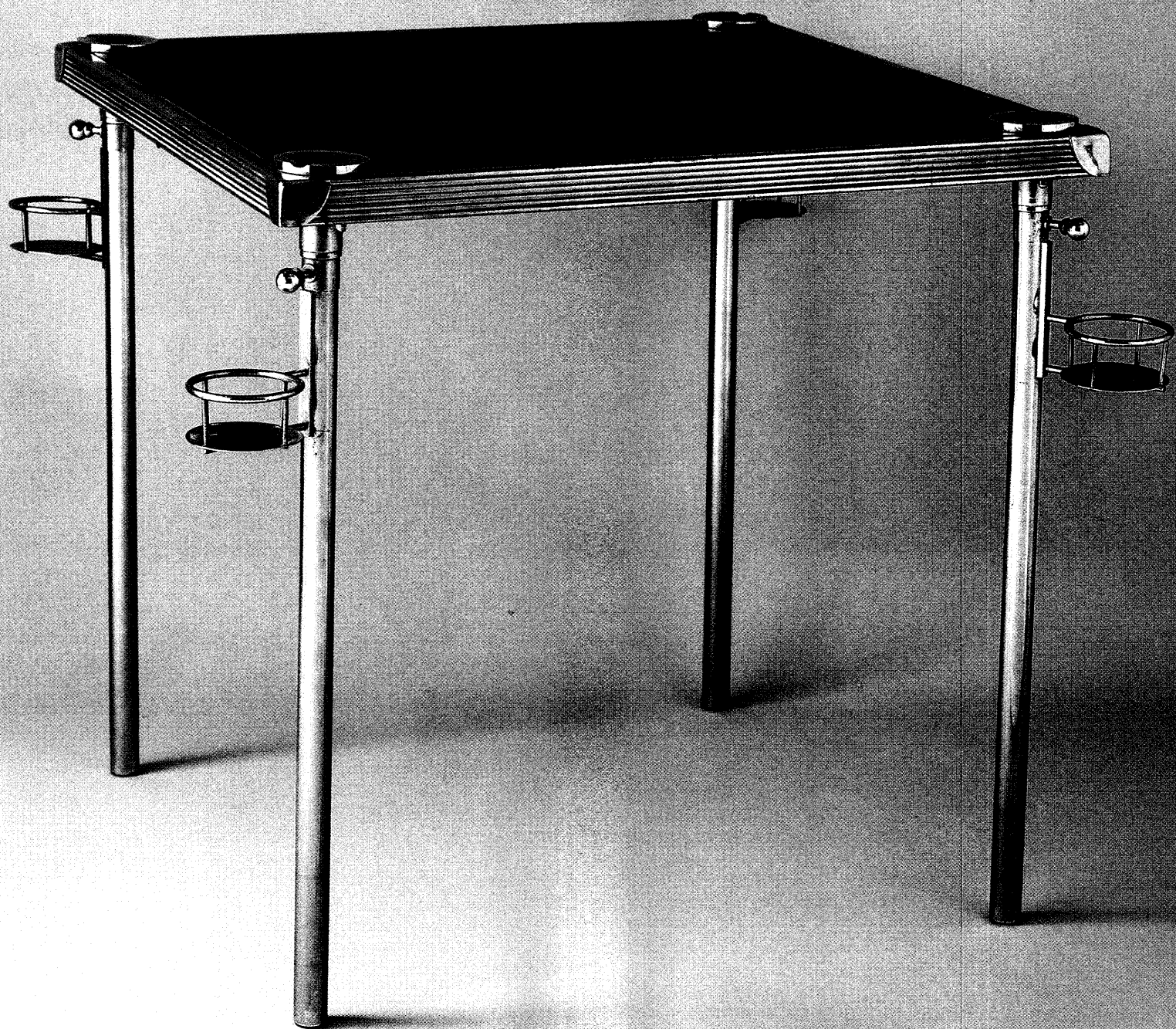
Vesna and Dominique Bamberger moved to America 18 years ago. Their Art Déco/Moderne shop, Atelia, is located in West Hollywood. Vesna, originally from Yugoslavia, has an eye for French icons. "Thirty years ago I bought a capsule-shaped sofa at auction (from Pierre Chareau's *Maison de Verre*) even though Lurçat's origi-

nal tapestry upholstery had deteriorated." Atelia recently sold a Fifties desk by André Leleu (Jules' brother) to a film executive. It was a one-of-a-kind piece with floating wooden drawers and copper legs. A vivid royal blue set of three chairs and ottomans by Pierre Paulin (b.1927) is waiting to be claimed. The fabric over latex foam and steel frame (F560 for Artifort) was designed in 1963. Paulin's ergonomically sculptural and functional forms cradle the body.

Denis de la Mesiere of Studio Hexagon on Beverly Blvd. came to L.A.: "In search of the American Dream—the music, the films, the sun. I restore ceramics, so the auction houses kept me busy while I settled in." He opened his modernist store two years ago. Michel Dufet's cabinet (1928) of palissander, elm, and mahogany with nickel plated knobs beckons from the window. An ingenious aluminum collapsible card table by Jacques Adnet is equipped with glassholders and ashtrays on each corner. The ashes fall into the hollow tube legs which unscrew to be emptied. Denis imports copies of Pierre Chareau's alabaster and wrought iron lamps, *Curcule* stool, and fan table, all originally found in the architect's House of Glass.

Modernism has traveled up the California coast to Santa Barbara, a town known for its wealthy, conservative citizens ensconced in their Spanish Colonial villas. Not exactly modernist territory. Patrick and Hélène Aumont are proprietors of Europa, located in the El Paseo historic district. They mix French and Italian modernist furniture with classic 17th to 19th century pieces. Patrick explains: "I'm trying to emulate the typical French apartment where what works is a blend of the classics, rather than the narrow focus of just modernist pieces. Recently, there's an inflated market in France. Because the Euro will be the recognized currency in January 2002, private parties are selling their merchandise at auction, not to dealers, and buyers who are eager to get rid of their francs are paying high prices for art and antiques." Patrick imports chandeliers and glassware by Seguso and Venini; as well as Italian parchment furniture from the Forties. >81

Opposite page: Goat painted canvas cartoon for tapestry by Jean Lurçat, 1960. (Courtesy Luxe). **Below:** Ingenious collapsible card table with ashtrays and glass holders on each corner. The hollow table legs unscrew for emptying chainsmoker's ashes. Jacques Adnet, 1930s. (Courtesy Studio Hexagon)





Photographer **Pascal Faligot**
 Courtesy **Axel de Heeckeren d'Anthès**

Jean Royère Rediscovered

Axel de Heeckeren d'Anthès was a clerk in his mid-twenties at the Salles Drouot auction house in Paris when he received a call from Jean Royère asking for an estimate on the value of his family's 18th century furniture. At Axel's suggestion Drouot also included a Royère-designed bar in the sale, spurring a resurgence of interest in the designer's work. **Ginger Moro**, a former proprietor of an Art Déco boutique in Paris, interviews Axel for *Echoes*

GM: Did the name, Jean Royère, ring a bell with you?

AH: *Not at all. When I got to Royère's storage space, I found it half-filled with 18th century furniture. The other half was crowded with furniture that Royère had designed. I suggested that Drouot include one of his pieces in an upcoming Art Déco sale. He looked at me, astounded: "Are you joking? I won't be able to buy a box of chocolates with the proceeds!" His bar sold for \$600, which was a lot in 1975. In 1980, Drouot introduced the first Fifties furniture sale which included 38 lots from Royère's residence.*

GM: Was Drouot aware of Royère's former exalted reputation as a Fifties decorator/designer?

AH: *I was timid at first, but I believed in it, so Drouot took a chance with Royère. One dealer bought the bar in the first sale, but by 1980, there were several French dealers bidding*

up his lots.

GM: Who had the foresight to recognize the value of Royère's designs ?

AH: *Surprisingly, it was the son of a haute époque 17th century dealer who bought the bar. I was surprised to see Royère's piece in Perpich's window on the Boulevard St. Germain.*

GM: I'd like to get inside Royère's head. What inspired his original twist on traditional French design?

AH: *He was an intelligent man with a whimsical sense of humor, the black sheep from a wealthy conservative family. Royère went beyond the taste of the day, searching for perfection in harmony.*

GM: One photo of a 1939 Royère interior in *Art et Decoration* shows Champignon lamps with perforated orange shades on tall metal poles, an Elephanteau wingback



Opposite page: Royère's living room, 1947. The gilded wrought iron "Peking" lamp rests on a marble table with gilded astrolabe pediments in the foreground. An iron ribbon lamp with gold balls is visible thru the painted metal wall divider on a low table with perforated metal legs and handles. The yellow *Teddy Bear* sofa curves by the fireplace. Shag area rugs define space. **This page, clockwise from left:** The chubby chairs and sofa with cylindrical oak legs, variously called the *Polar Bear* or *Teddy Bear*, are upholstered with red or green plush velvet "fur," impossible to find today. The low table and chair are mounted on undulating wrought iron legs with gilded balls. Curtains with cattails design are by Paule Marrot; Salon with sycamore bar, low bar table, and coffee table impressed with dried flowers under glass, and gilded iron nesting tables. The serpentine brick fireplace provides log storage on either side of the hearth. Circa 1950. A Lurçat tapestry hangs over the fireplace; Pony skin *chauffeuse* chair perched on its oak knees, with the seams outlining the form, 1955. A tapestry model of this chair was installed in the Shah's palace winter garden; Royère's personal office, 1947, rue du faubourg Saint-Honore, with oak and blue lacquered metal desk and chair



chair with polka dot upholstery, a travertine coffee table mounted on gilded wrought iron astrolabe spheres, and a long-haired goat fur chair on its knees. The lamps were tall and the furniture low. The walls were almond green and the ceiling orange. One critic called it an "interior for Martians with bad taste."

AH: *Royère told me that he was "never attached to any school or theory, and had never been dependent on any previous prejudice." He was an independent spirit. The astrolabe was an ancient astronomical instrument used to find the time of a celestial event by the stars. Royère adapted the movable parts to create intertwined metal spheres which served as table legs and lamp bases.*

GM: His anti-rationalist interiors were the antithesis of Le Corbusier's "machine for living." His work was both light-hearted and serious—functional without being dysfunctional. Who were the clients who appreciated his modern touch?

AH: *They were wealthy middle class people with a sense of humor. He was inspired by his clients' needs. One gentleman raised chickens on his farm, so Royère designed the Egg chair and bed for him. Another client was a soccer fan, > 82*

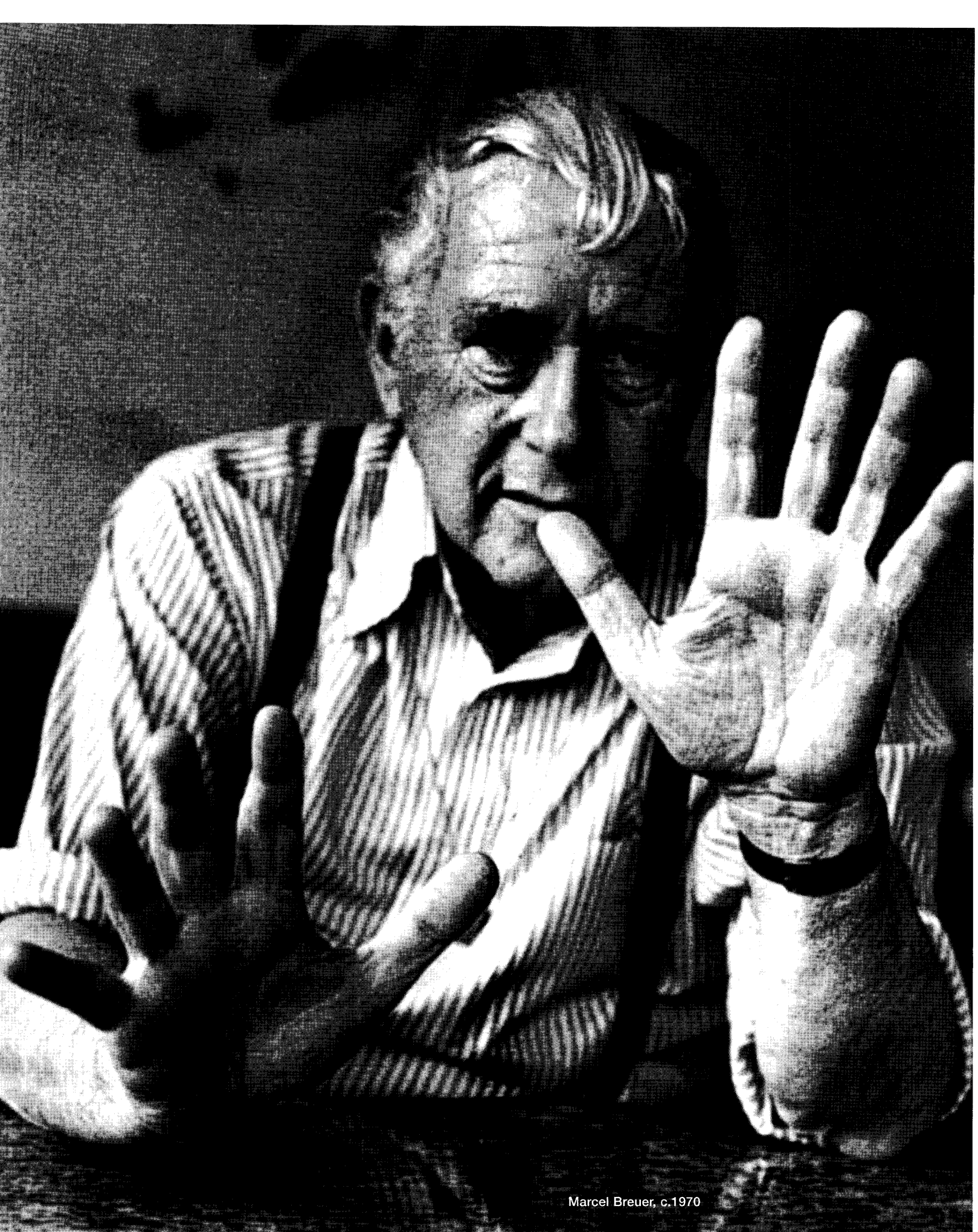


Marcel Breuer: Architect of Houses

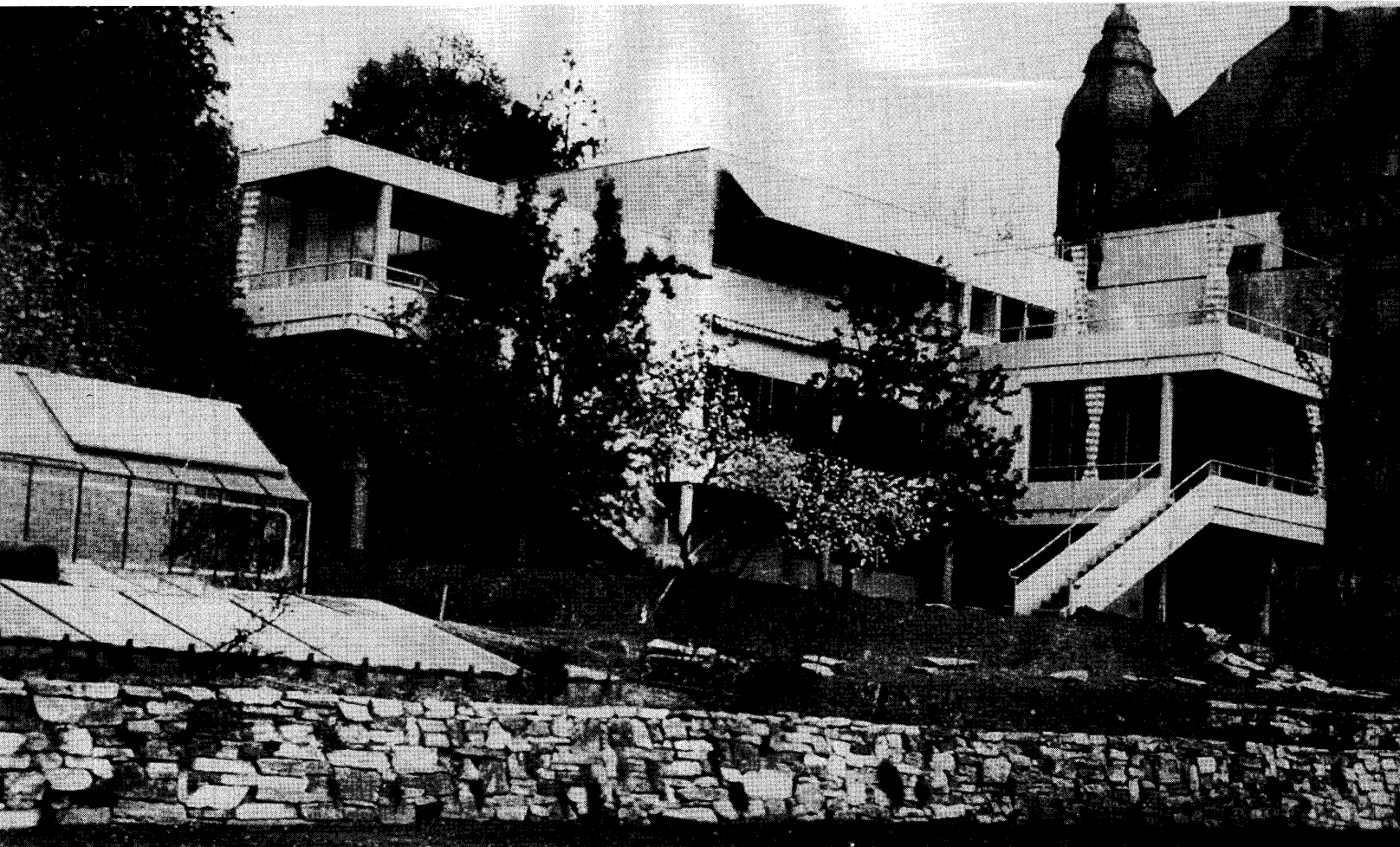
Residential architecture is a thread which runs through the whole of Marcel Breuer's career; however, history tends to focus instead on his furniture designs. What do we really know about Breuer's houses?

Writer **Joachim Driller** (Excerpted with permission from *Breuer Houses*, Phaidon Press)

Photographs Courtesy ***Breuer Houses*, Phaidon Press**



Marcel Breuer, c.1970



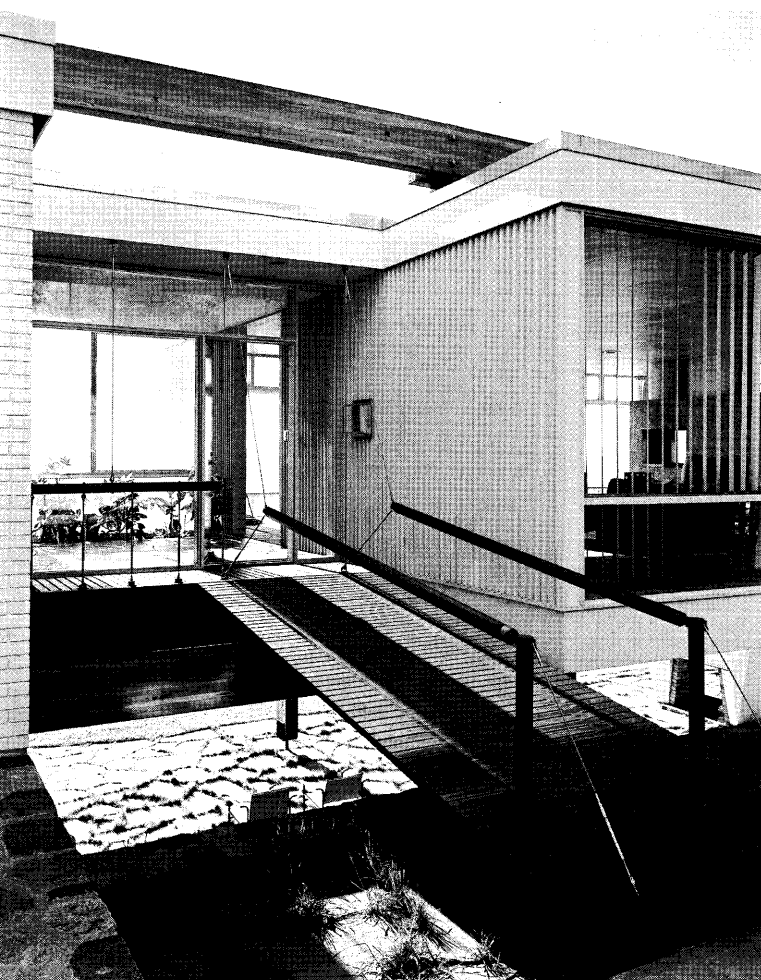
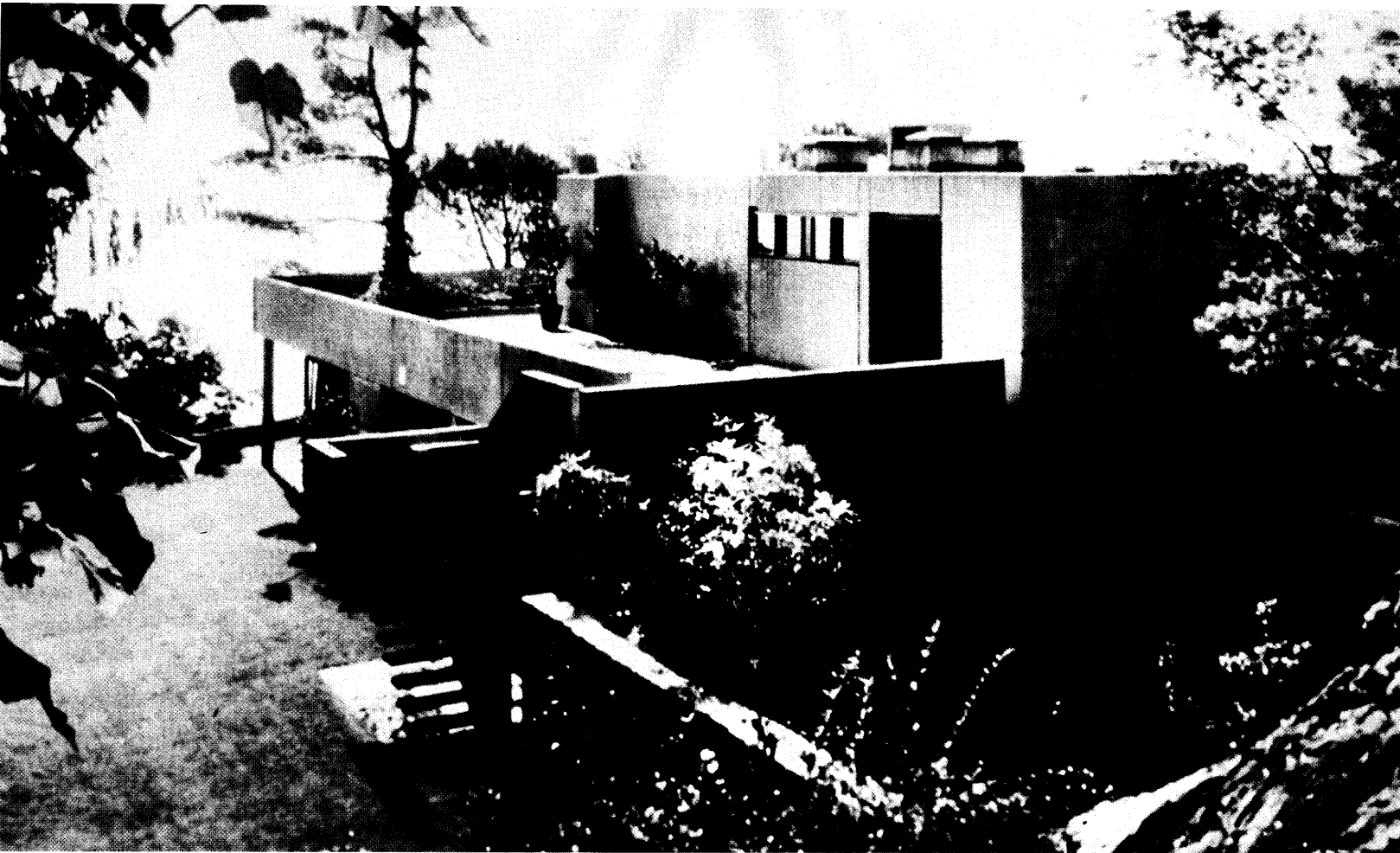
Marcel Breuer's architecture conjures up images of flat roofs, large glass surfaces, slabs of wood and natural stone, bungalows, and his later work of 'monumental' buildings of exposed concrete. Yet which particular buildings or projects immediately come to mind? Most probably the Harnischmacher House in Wiesbaden of 1932 and the Doldertal Apartments in Zurich—both are "classics" of Modernist architecture. Another might be Breuer's own cantilevered house of 1947. Finally, there are Breuer's country houses, which were partially "rediscovered" some time ago. In terms of building types, Breuer is best remembered as one of the architects of the UNESCO building in Paris and as the designer of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. Those who know those two projects well are probably also familiar with the Staehelin House—that elegant villa above Lake Zurich which, at the end of the 1950s, helped to set the standard for this type of building in Europe—and the Koerfer House. Recent art historical discussion (in Germany at least), however, tends to concentrate on Breuer's architectural projects from his time at the Bauhaus. At best, his early American buildings are mentioned occasionally—yet usually only in connection with the Breuer-Gropius partnership or with Breuer's furniture design.

One of the reasons for this lack of interest may be that Breuer's furniture has the aura of ground-breaking innovation and is thus of greater interest to researchers. His buildings, in contrast, fit under the heading of a "clarified" and "established" Modernist architecture, i.e. Modernist architecture that carried less weight compared to that of the previous generation of architects, with their polemical struggle against obsolete stylistic categories, and whose wider acceptance and ultimate loss of visionary intent made it seem less remarkable. However, as the preoccupation with the work of the Modernist "heroes" has advanced greatly in recent years, it is now necessary to turn to the following generation and to debate and define their often highly individual achievements.

Above: Harnischmacher House I (view from the southwest), Wiesbaden, Germany, 1932. This was Breuer's first commission to design a house. **Opposite, top:** The Koerfer House (rear view from the northeast), Ascona, Ticino, Switzerland, 1963-1967, was the most expensive villa Breuer built in his series of homes for dedicated art collectors. **Bottom:** The Alworth (Starkey) House, Duluth, Minnesota, 1954-55, was one of the few built by Breuer in the Midwest. The living area is raised slightly above ground level, with a ramp and platform providing access

Marcel Breuer created his first architectural designs in 1923 while a student at the Bauhaus in Weimar, founded by Walter Gropius in 1919. Though he received no formal architectural training at the school, Breuer did gain a certain grounding in structure and architectural design from the different courses held by various lecturers in these fields, such as the one on technical drawing run by Adolph Meyer.

The architectural designs that Breuer created during his time at the Bauhaus showed a high degree of individuality. This is particularly true of the model for a slab-shaped apartment block from 1924. Besides such visionary proposals for large buildings, Breuer also produced studies for individual houses, especially prefabricated houses. All these studies were aimed at mass-produced homes for the low-income segment of society, although this does not seem to have ever been a primary concern of Breuer's. Even as early as his Small Metal House, he proposed an alternative use for the building as a weekend house—in other words, he considered it a wholly private form of architecture for those members of society who could afford second homes. As numerous diary entries from Ise, Gropius' wife, show, Breuer—despite manifold support from Gropius—felt limited in the opportunity to develop his talents at the Bauhaus, especially with respect to architecture. He left the Bauhaus in April of

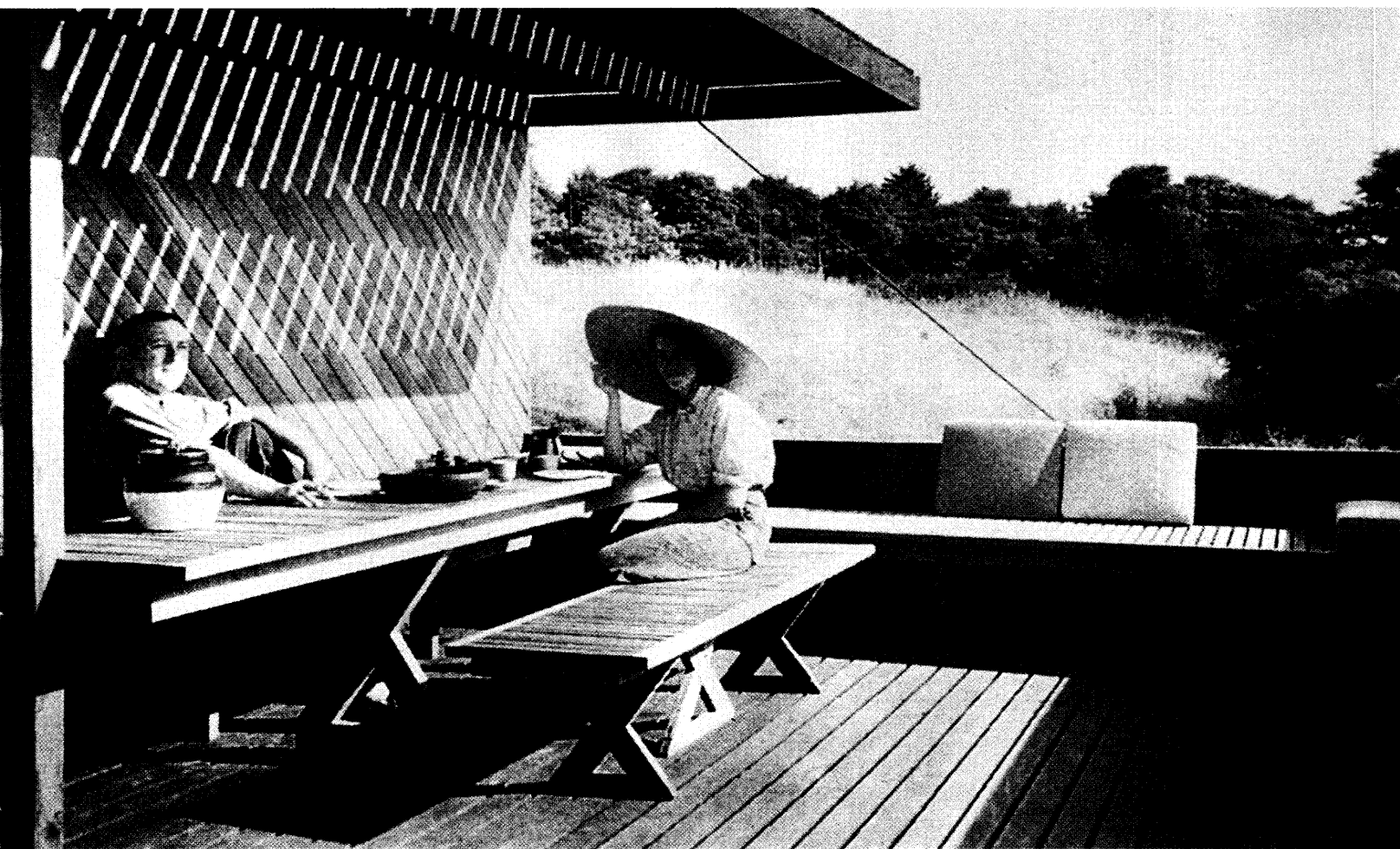


1928 to start working as a freelance architect in Berlin.

During the period until 1931, Breuer produced numerous large-scale architectural designs, mainly for competitions and tenders. None of these designs had the remotest chance of realization. It seems that Breuer's main income at this time came primarily from his furniture design royalties and from renovations and refurbishments of apartments in older buildings. In November 1931, when even this source of commissions dried up, he decided to close his office in Berlin and spend several months motoring in the south of France, Spain, and North Africa. Breuer's first commission to design a house—the Harnischmacher House in Weisbaden—may have been received while he was on this grand tour and must have come as a great surprise. Now he was able to put his architectonic ideas into practice for the first time, under the patronage of a well-to-do upper-middle-class couple. This was the kind of client he was to encounter repeatedly for the rest of his life.

At the end of 1933, Breuer, who was Jewish, left Nazi Germany and returned to his native Hungary. Here, without an official architect's licence, he set up an office with Farkas Molnár and Jozsef Fischer. Only two architectural projects are known from Breuer's stay in Hungary: a partially realized design for the Budapest spring fair of 1935 and a project for a house on the Danube. Alongside his partnership with Molnár and Fischer, which lasted until the end of 1935, Breuer also worked with Alfred and Emil Roth on the Doldertal Apartments for Sigfried Giedion in Zurich.

From December 1934 onwards, Breuer toyed with the idea of moving to England, where his mentor Walter Gropius had also immigrated. In November 1935 Breuer signed a partnership agreement with Francis Reginald Stevens Yorke—a prominent proponent of Modernist architecture in Great Britain—and abandoned his home in Budapest to move to London. During his London years Breuer devoted himself primarily to furniture design. Apart from a model for





Opposite, top: Breuer House II (view from the southeast), New Canaan, Connecticut, 1947-1948, was the ideal type of a "long house" in which Breuer attempted to display his characteristic of bipolar living and sleeping areas in a single box. **Bottom:** Marcel and Constance Breuer on the balcony of Breuer House II. **Above:** Soriano House (view from the garden), Greenwich, Connecticut, 1968-72

an ideal city, he created few buildings or architectural projects. However, those he did create were in part of great importance as the groundwork for his later American house designs, not least because they already show his awareness of the possibility of softening the severe appearance of his designs by the use of natural materials.

Walter Gropius was invited to take up a professorship at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University in 1937 and left Europe in the spring of that year. Gropius obtained a teaching position for Breuer at Harvard, and he and Breuer opened an architectural office in Cambridge together. Breuer's emigration across the Atlantic was not politically motivated, as he was relatively safe in England. What drew Breuer to America was the opportunity to work with Gropius and the hope for large joint projects. However, with the exception of the New Kensington settlement for workers in the war industries near Pittsburg, these never came to fruition. Being much younger than Gropius, Breuer was much more willing to adjust to this situation. In this way, Gropius must have found almost all the commission received by the office—mainly small scale private houses—a disappointing step backwards after his European housing development buildings and projects. The majority of the houses were therefore principally or entirely the work of Breuer, for whom they represented the fulfillment of his long-standing wish to build.

The private houses which Breuer designed in partnership with Gropius helped to pave the path for his later success. Most of them

were described in leading American architectural journals, not least because of Gropius' reputation and the fact that anything that happened at Harvard almost automatically attracted attention. In the early post-war years, this was what inspired some potential clients to approach Breuer to design their houses. These new buildings provided him with his first opportunity to put into practice the concepts of a future "residential design" which he had been developing since 1943. It is certain, however, that Breuer had no intention of pursuing a career solely as a house architect when he was devising these concepts. Rather, they emerged, at least in part, from designs for competitions and expressed his realization that this was the area in which he was most likely to succeed as a modern architect in the USA. However, Breuer must have struck a cord with certain clientele, and his houses soon became textbook examples of "informal living."

Breuer split with Gropius in May 1941—possibly because he felt he was receiving insufficient recognition for his personal achievements—and from then until the spring of 1946 he ran a private practice in Cambridge, which met with little success due to the depressed situation during the war. He then gave up his teaching post at Harvard and moved his practice to New York City. Not far outside the city, Breuer's much-acclaimed first post-war house, Geller House I, was nearing completion, described in the professional press as "Tomorrow's house today." This was rapidly followed by a series of further commissions.

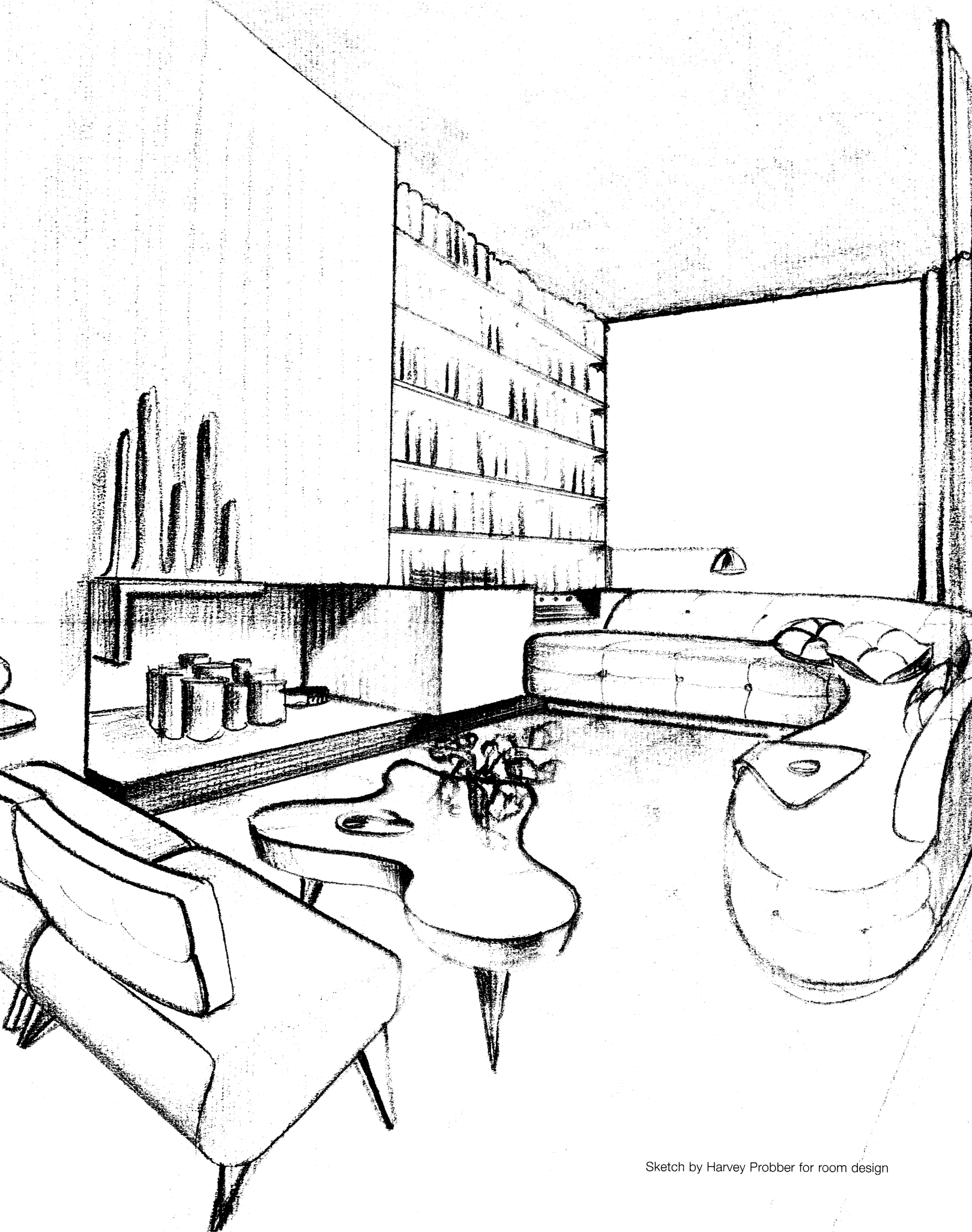
At the end of 1948, The Museum of Modern Art arranged the first major exhibition of Breuer's works. The touring exhibition and the display house that he was allowed to erect in the garden of MoMA in 1949 made a significant contribution to Breuer's profile. The display house, in particular, greatly impressed potential clients and convinced them to entrust Breuer with the design of their houses. Many of these clients were in a rush to get their buildings completed, as they feared a rise in the cost of materials due to the >87

Harvey Probber: Master of Modulars

Although Harvey Probber's upholstered pieces and casegoods from the '60s and '70s are spearheading the current revival of his designs, it is his modular seating from the early 1940s which merits history-book recognition

Writer **Judith Gura**

Photographs Courtesy **Harvey Probber archives**

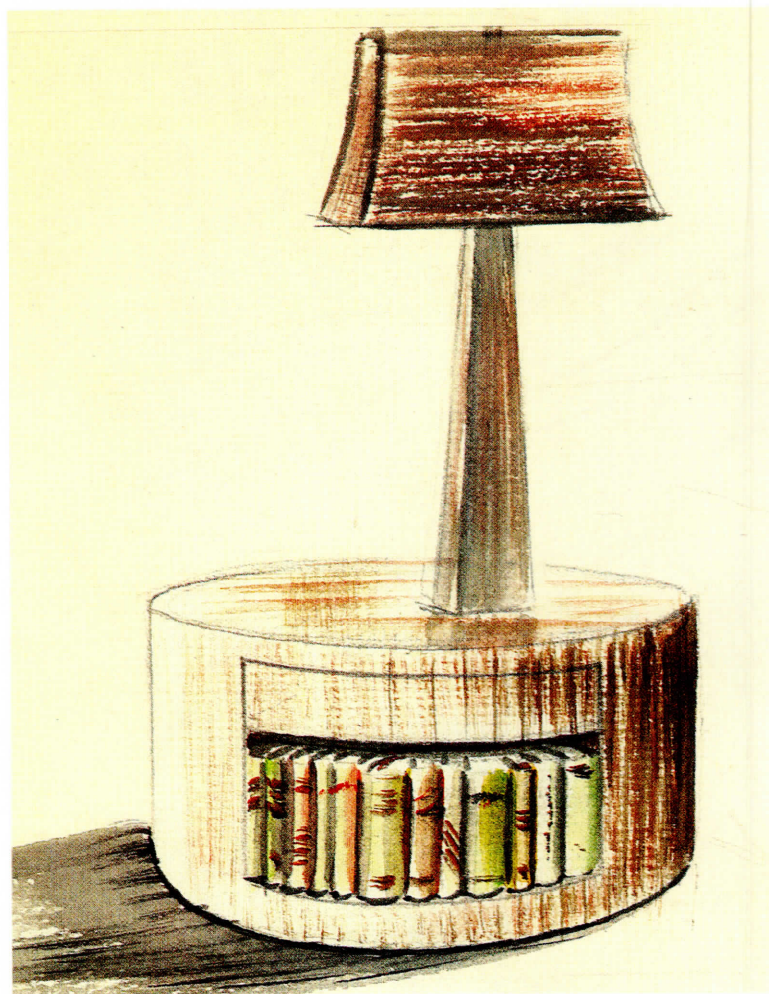
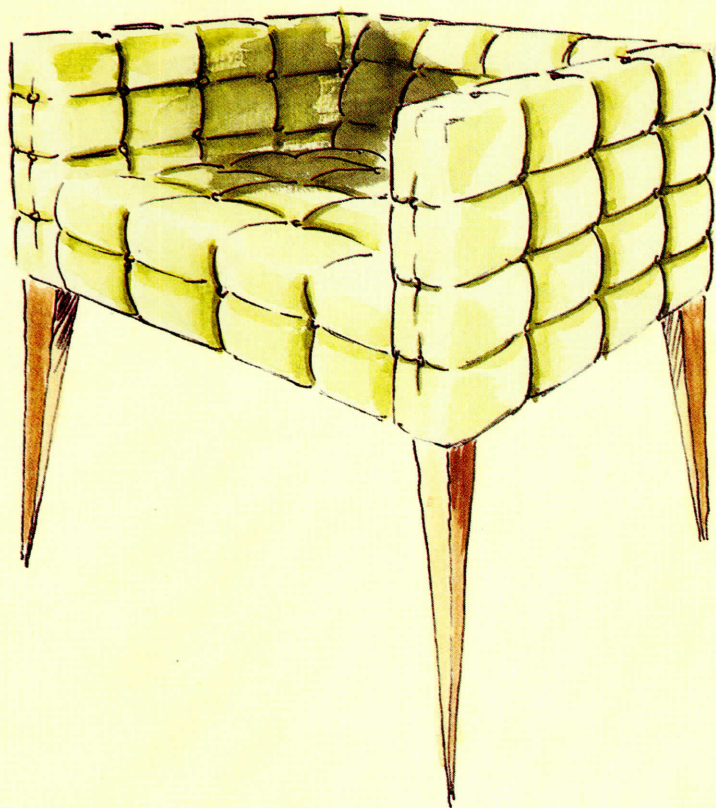


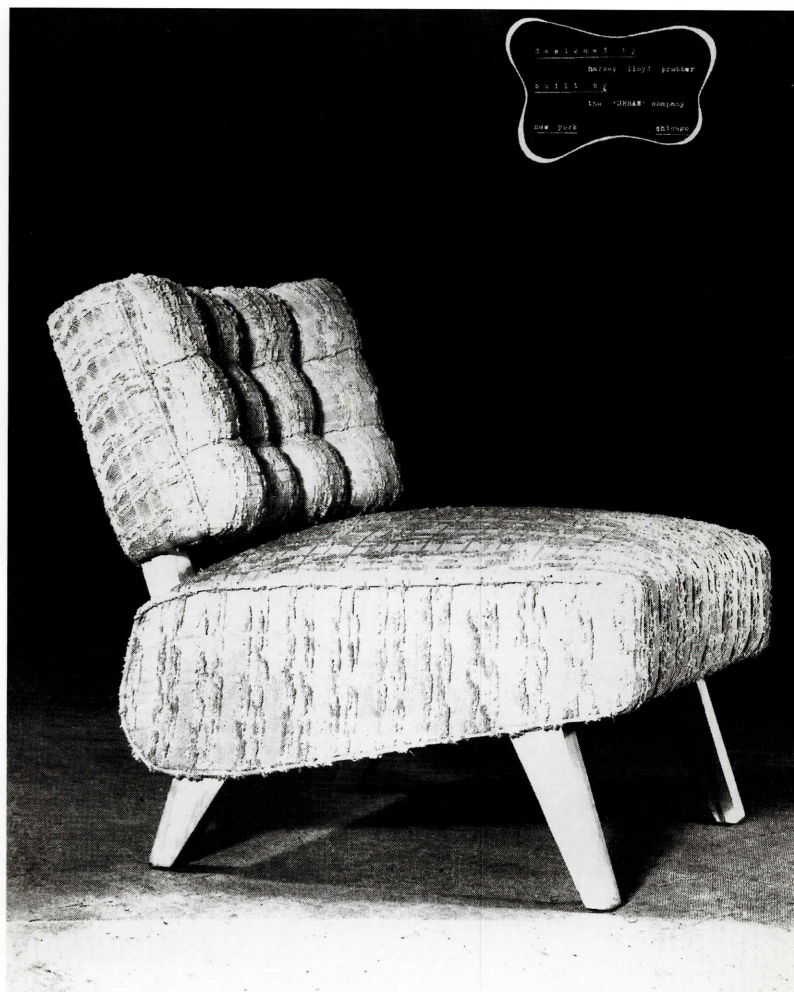
Sketch by Harvey Propper for room design

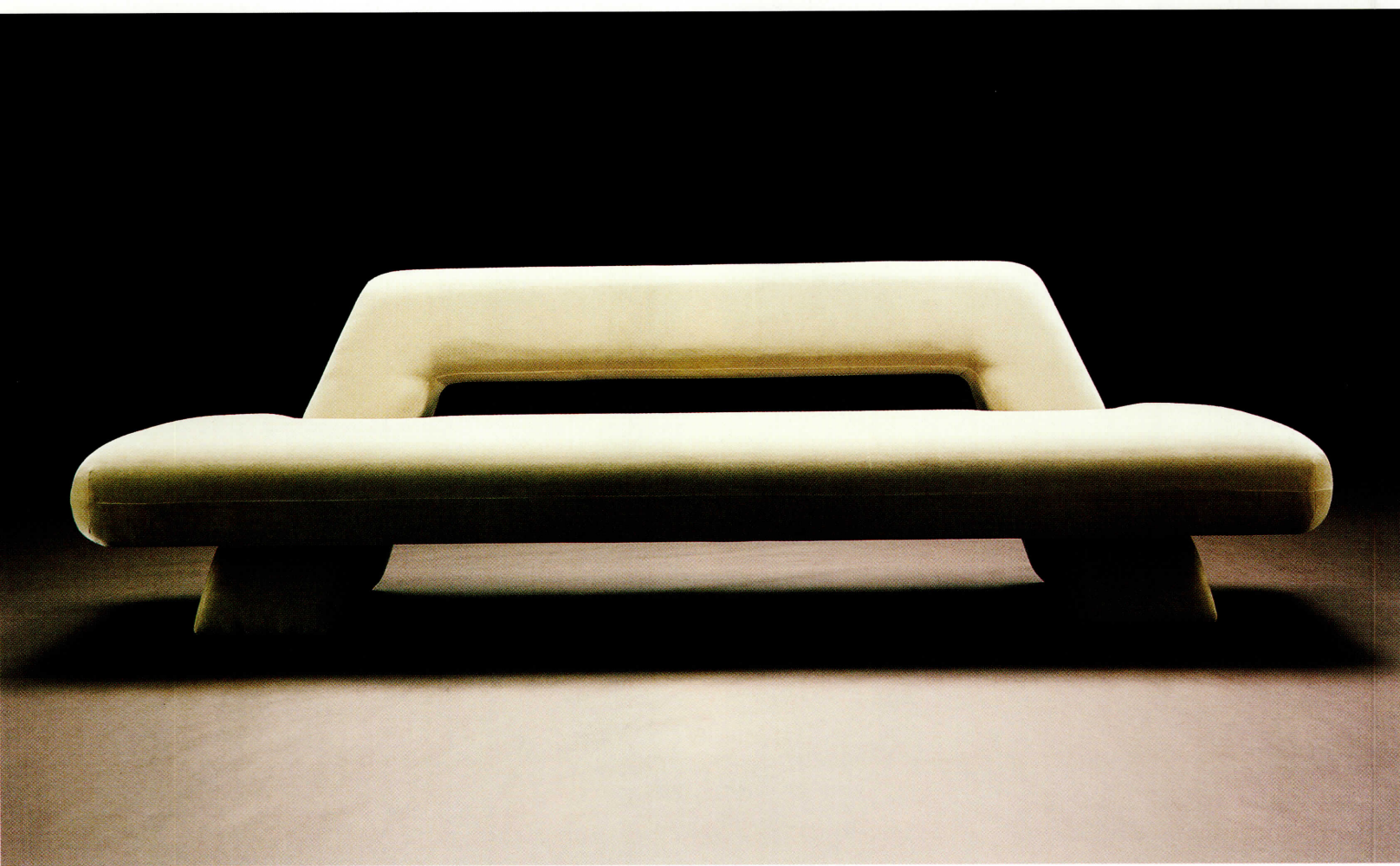
This page: Watercolor sketches by Harvey Probbler for furniture designs. **Opposite page, clockwise from top:** Harvey Probbler; Chair design by Harvey Probbler for the Urban furniture company of New York and Chicago; Cutout back seating, made round or rectangular, as armchair and sofa

In the design community that flourished in New York in the third quarter of the 20th century, Harvey Probbler was something of an anomaly—a Brooklyn boy with virtually no training, who sold his first design when he was in high school, opened his first firm when he was barely 20, and ran every aspect of the business from design to distribution. Until he sold his factory, almost 20 years ago, Harvey Probbler, Inc., was one of the longest-running success stories in the industry. It remained in the hands, and the control, of the original owner during a period when most upscale furniture producers were swallowed by hungry conglomerates or fell victim to changing fashions.

Now enjoying a return to the limelight, Probbler is the latest success story in the roster of under-recognized or newly-rediscovered 20th century designers. Interestingly, the well-crafted upholstered pieces and beautifully-finished casegoods that put his furniture high on the must-buy list of interior designers in the '60s and '70s, and are spearheading the current revival of his designs, are not his most important. Nor are they the designs for which he merits history-book recognition. That distinction lies with the modular seating he developed in the early 1940s, and which became so universally accepted that its original source was forgotten. Harvey Probbler introduced the concept of "unit" furniture to upholstery, in a brilliantly-simple series of geometric shapes that could be arranged into any number of configurations. In the years following World War II, variations on his concept proliferated at every level of the marketplace, virtually









Opposite page, top: Probbler's *Cubo* modular seating. **Bottom:** Probbler's *Mayan* sofa. **This page, top:** Oval arm modular seating. **Bottom:** For recreation Harvey Probbler sketched a group of chair-like characters he titled "Probbler's People." Shown is *Last Tango in Piraeus*

transforming the look of upholstered furniture. Modularity, by one name or another, became the most popular type of seating furniture in mid-century living rooms. A November 1992 article in *Metropolis* magazine cited Probbler's modularity as an epitome of American design, a "then-radical seating design whose clones and adaptations are still—after half a century—manufactured throughout the world."

Born in 1922, Probbler had been interested in design since he was a grade schooler sketching in his notebooks. By high school, inspired by a part-time job in a used furniture store, he had moved from drawing cars and planes to drawing furniture. In 1938, when he was just 16, he sold his first design, a sofa, for \$10. Amazed that people would pay money for his sketches, he did 10 more and made his first trip to Manhattan to seek (and get) additional clients at the New York Furniture Exchange, a wholesale showroom building. After graduation from high school, he was offered a full-time job as designer for an upholstery manufacturer, at a salary of \$35 per week, and began a seat-of-the-pants education in furniture construction and design. As he later recalled, Probbler learned about frames from a helpful supplier, while "field trips were to borax furniture stores and textbooks were newspaper ads, *Good Housekeeping*, and the *Ladies' Home Journal*." His only formal training came from evening classes in interior design at Pratt Institute. Alfred Auerbach, an influential trade-publication editor, mentored the young man's introduction to the design world—in 1940, at 19, Probbler heard of the Bauhaus and first visited the Museum of Modern Art. (This was the year that Charles Eames and Eero Saarinen, then 33 and 30 respectively, came to national attention by winning MoMA's Organic Design competition.)

His career interrupted by the outbreak of World War II, Probbler enlisted in the Coast Guard. After his discharge, he returned to the field in which he had found a toehold. His first venture in the furniture business, in 1942, with two older (and less forthright) partners, was less than altogether successful. After being maneuvered out of the facilities, company name, and his designs, Probbler established his own, eponymously-named firm in 1945. He initially juggled a design career with that of pop singer and songwriter. In January 1948, *The New York Herald Tribune* described him as a "designer-crooner," illustrating the article with an image of the pompadoured young man as well as his furniture designs. In July of the same year, an article in the *Grand Rapids Press* quipped "He can Design Love Seat or Croon a Love Song." Probbler abandoned show business only when it became clear that designing and making furniture would be at least as lucrative, and far more stable, for a young family man—he married in 1952 and, in the ensuing years, he and his wife Joan fathered four sons.

Probbler happened on his most important design idea when, starting his own firm, he was floundering to revise the designs his partners had usurped and realized that, in his words, "the key to salvation was in bits and pieces of plain geometry...they were meaningless alone, but when fused to conventional shapes, profoundly altered their character." These "bits and pieces" became the templates for the line he named the *Sert Group* (after Spanish-born architect Jose Luis Sert, later dean of Harvard's

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Opposite: Front entrance to the Wolfson House.
Above: Original blueprints

Outside the Box

In 1950 Marcel Breuer was asked to design a house around a Spartan trailer. The result is a somewhat quirky but endearing structure that unites the “modern-age” metallic trailer with a fieldstone and cypress-sided “modern” Breuer box

Writer Carol Berens
Photographer Geoff Spear



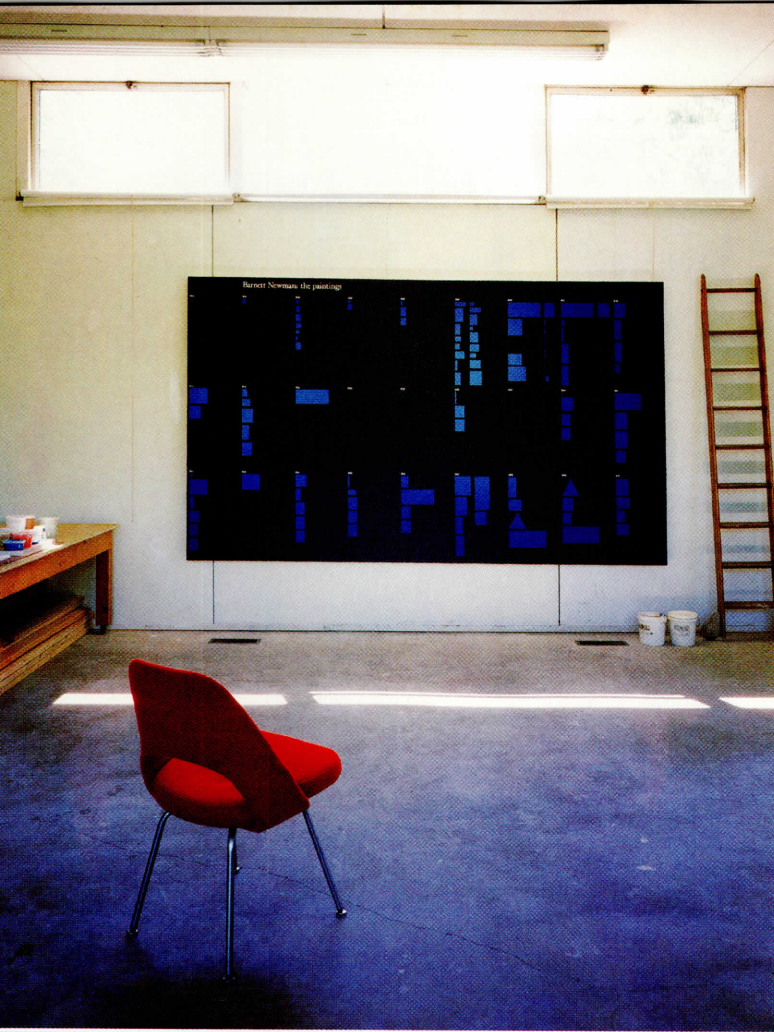
Above: The house floats above the land, sitting asymmetrically atop a 20-foot square stone ground floor, which creates a carport below. **Opposite, clockwise from top left:** The simple open plan of the large main room contains dining and living areas separated by a signature Breuer two-way stone fireplace. 1948 Eero Saarinen dining chairs for Knoll, 1820s American Federal dining table; In the living room—1929 Le Corbusier chaise lounge, 1948 Saarinen chair for Knoll, 1946 George Nelson coffee table for Herman Miller, 1994 *D* and *M* paintings by Mira Schor; In the bedroom, Verner Panton's *Geometri* pattern of 1960 enlivens the bedspread (Maharam). *AJ* bedside lamps by Arne Jacobsen, 1960. *Blacksun* print by Robert Motherwell, 1976; These built-in closets were designed by Breuer for the original owner in 1950

Trees tell the passage of time. Early photographs show a two-story wood and stone house isolated in the landscape. Today this rarely-publicized modernist gem by Marcel Breuer is nestled under—indeed almost consumed by—mature woods. Time has also been cruel. The newest and fourth owners, New York artists David Diao and Maureen Connor, found the house in great disrepair and over the last five years have been restoring the house by themselves, plank by plank, window by window.

The story of this house started soon after WWII ended, when Sidney Wolfson, a New York artist, bought land about 90 miles north of New York City in the rolling hills of Dutchess County where he moored his shiny new aluminum Spartan trailer atop concrete blocks. By the late 1940s, he had outgrown the trailer, but apparently could not give it up. Perhaps he agreed with the Spartan 1948 advertisement proclaiming that life in a “Spartan Manor is Life in the best manor.” For some reason, he asked Breuer to design his new country home around it. Although Breuer supposedly tried to talk Wolfson out of this idea, the result is a somewhat quirky but totally endearing structure that unites a typical Breuer house with, yes, a trailer. Today, the contrast is still a bit startling, with a “modern-age,” metallic, factory-made trailer that sticks out from the fieldstone and cypress-sided “modern” Breuer box.

When David and Maureen bought it on a whim, the house had been barely altered, a feature that is both lure and burden. To fix up a modernist house is an all-consuming, life-changing project. Things fall apart, and every replacement turns into a lesson in invention, a challenge that a visit to Home Depot seldom solves. Where can you get the bronze screens wide enough for windows that extend from wall to wall? What local plumber can or is willing to unobtrusively replace 50-year-old pipes? These loft-dwelling city artists found themselves nailing up siding, installing stainless steel kitchen sinks,







Opposite, clockwise from top left: Hanging in the studio, David Diao's 1991 *Barnett Newman: The Paintings*; Painting racks in the studio; The exterior of the studio is clad in standing-seam metal panels to relate to the trailer. Owner David Diao is dwarfed by the 13-foot doorway. *Sea Sound metal* sculpture by Sydney Wolfson. **This page, left:** Inside, the studio has been transformed into an upstate version of a New York loft. Diao's life-long accumulation of classic modern furniture such as the 1964 *Sling* sofa by George Nelson for Herman Miller, 1922 *Berlin* chair by Gerrit Rietveld, 1929 *Barcelona* coffee table by Mies van der Rohe for Knoll, furnishes the space. 1965 *Oh Hell* painting by Al Held. Right: In the bath, a 13-foot window lets in the outdoors

and searching for code-complying 12 foot wide windows. Aside from absorbing all free time, the house has changed their outlook. Now, a storm is not just rain and wind, but fear that one of the trees will fall on the house.

The house that demands all this attention is a 43-foot by 24-foot flat-roofed box that sits asymmetrically atop a 20-foot square stone ground floor, creating a carport below. (Breuer apparently learned his lesson from his New Canaan residence whose cantilevers drooped and needed shoring up. This house is supported on steel girders.) Breuer believed that nature and architecture were "distinctly different" and that they should "live together the way a man and woman live together." That is, they should celebrate differences, not try to be the same. This house reflects these ideas: it floats above the landscape while the land flows underneath. Nature is experienced in different ways, from inside through the large sliding glass and screened walls open to the view outside, to being perched above it in the south-facing semi-enclosed balcony or being in it by sitting in the grassy backyard between the dining room and trailer.

The entrance foyer separates the trailer from the living room. Originally, a wood trellis or "parasol" visually connected these two areas, serving the dual duty of announcing the front door and shielding the trailer from the heat of the sun. One of the many projects Diao has planned is the installation of a replica of this brise-soleil. The trailer, however, sports its original interior varnished plywood paneling and functions as a kitchen and breakfast nook. The trailer is surprisingly intact—from its vintage cabinet hardware, perforated sconce lamp shades, and pop-up roof hatches. Up a few steps from the entrance is the main portion of the house. The simple open plan of the large room contains dining and living areas separated by a signature Breuer two-way stone fireplace. A bedroom nook is tucked off the living room. The present dining room was originally an art studio



This page: The Spartan trailer sports its original interior varnished plywood paneling and functions as a kitchen and breakfast nook. This view of the trailer kitchen is captured through the window.

Opposite, clockwise from top left: The entrance foyer separates the trailer from the living room; The interior of the Spartan trailer features the original built-in sofa from 1948. The dining chairs are by Alvar Aalto for Artek, 1930; The trailer entry door detailing includes riveted aluminum with a porthole window; The trailer bathroom is fully clad in aluminum

that became insufficient for Wolfson. About 10 years after the house was built, Wolfson hired another artist, Tip Dorsel, to design a separate workspace and showroom for his paintings and sculpture. This newer structure, with its 14-foot ceilings and three sections, dwarfs the Breuer house in size. Its graduated roof heights and 13-foot door make the studio seem smaller than it is. It respects the scale and feeling of the original house, allowing the Breuer house to remain the focal point of the complex. Diao reclad the building, which was originally sheathed in homosote, with standing seam metal panels to relate to the trailer. Inside, this building has been transformed into an upstate version of a New York loft. Diao's life-long accumulation of classic modern furniture such as the George Nelson sling sofa, Charles Eames dormitory desk and Murphy bed, and Saarinen chairs furnish the two houses.

Marcel Breuer, born in Hungary and educated at the Bauhaus in Germany, immigrated to America in 1937. He taught at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and formed a partnership with his mentor, fellow Harvard professor and Bauhaus émigré, Walter Gropius. The partnership did not last, and by 1946 Breuer moved his family to New Canaan, Connecticut, about an hour's commute to his newly-formed office in New York City. When he designed this house, Breuer was well on his way to making his mark as an architect specializing in single family homes, a reputation solidified in 1949 when he constructed a model house for the "typical" post-war family in the garden of the Museum of Modern Art.

Because the trailer/house was designed as a country retreat, ease of upkeep was of primary concern for Wolfson. "The only painting that needs to be done once in a while is around the trim and fascias," Wolfson boasted to *House and Home* in 1952. David and Maureen are looking forward to the day when they will be able to say the same. ✱





Heir to the Legacy

When Toshiko Mori was commissioned to design a guest house for the Cohen retreat on Casey Key, which also contains the 1956 Burkhardt Residence by Paul Rudolph, it was a rare opportunity. Mori was able to assimilate context, requirements, and broad ways of thinking about architecture today, and then create something entirely new. In this way she is an heir of Paul Rudolph's legacy

Writer **Joseph King**
Photographer **John Ellis**



Opposite page: Paul Rudolph's 1956 Burkhardt residence, an elegant wood structure built under a canopy of live oaks, is a refined example of the regional modernism that he had been developing since the 1940s when he worked with local architect Ralph Twitchell. **This page:** Toshiko Mori's guest house for the Cohen retreat on Casey Key



In 1956, when Paul Rudolph designed the Burkhardt Residence on Casey Key, a subtropical coastal island near Sarasota, Florida, it was still sparsely inhabited and primarily in its native state. Rudolph's house, an elegant wood structure built under a canopy of live oaks, is a refined example of the regional modernism that he had been developing since the 1940s when he worked with local architect Ralph Twitchell. In recent years, unfortunately, much of the island has become crowded with over-scaled houses designed with very little awareness of the appealing natural qualities of the place.

So when Betsy and Ed Cohen engaged New York architect and Harvard professor Toshiko Mori to design a guest house for their retreat on Casey Key, it was a rare opportunity. Here was an expansive estate in a secluded, private section of the island, fronting on both the Gulf of Mexico and Little Sarasota Bay, containing the same grove of oak trees that Rudolph had designed with 40 some years before. The Cohens, a remarkable family of means and ability, had restored and beautifully maintained the Rudolph house. In the best tradition of informed patronage, they selected Mori, then provided her with the resources and freedom to design.

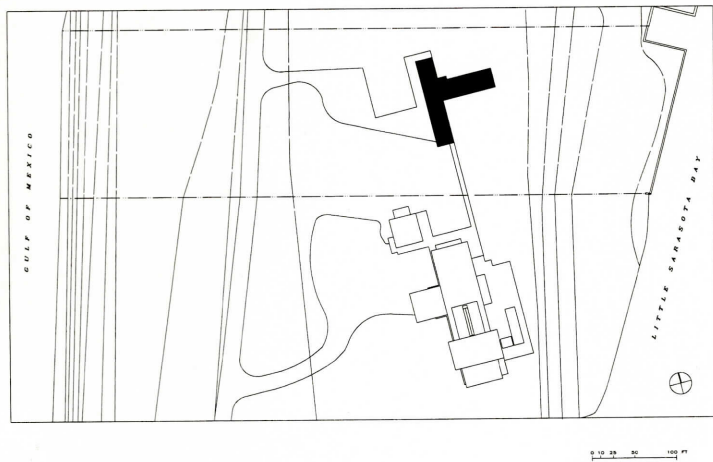
A lesser architect might have copied or adapted the forms of Rudolph's historical precedent, or conversely might have designed an entirely independent formal exercise. Mori took a more challenging path and engaged this project by developing a deep empathy with the site and the client's needs, approaching it essentially as a humanist looking to the physical, emotional, and social experience of the place. The strength of this project is in the way that Mori has been able to assimilate context, requirements, and broad ways of thinking about architecture today, and then create something entirely new. In this way she is an heir of Paul Rudolph's legacy.

Rudolph's Florida houses are characterized by lightness and an intimacy of scale; they are essentially pavilions, set within the coastal





Opposite page: In the living room of the Burkhardt residence, LC2 Petit Comfort chairs and LC2 sofas, Breuer side table, pair of Rene Herbst side chairs (in foreground). **This page, top:** The living room window wall blurs the distinction between indoors and out. **Bottom:** The bedroom wall is a lesson in solids and voids



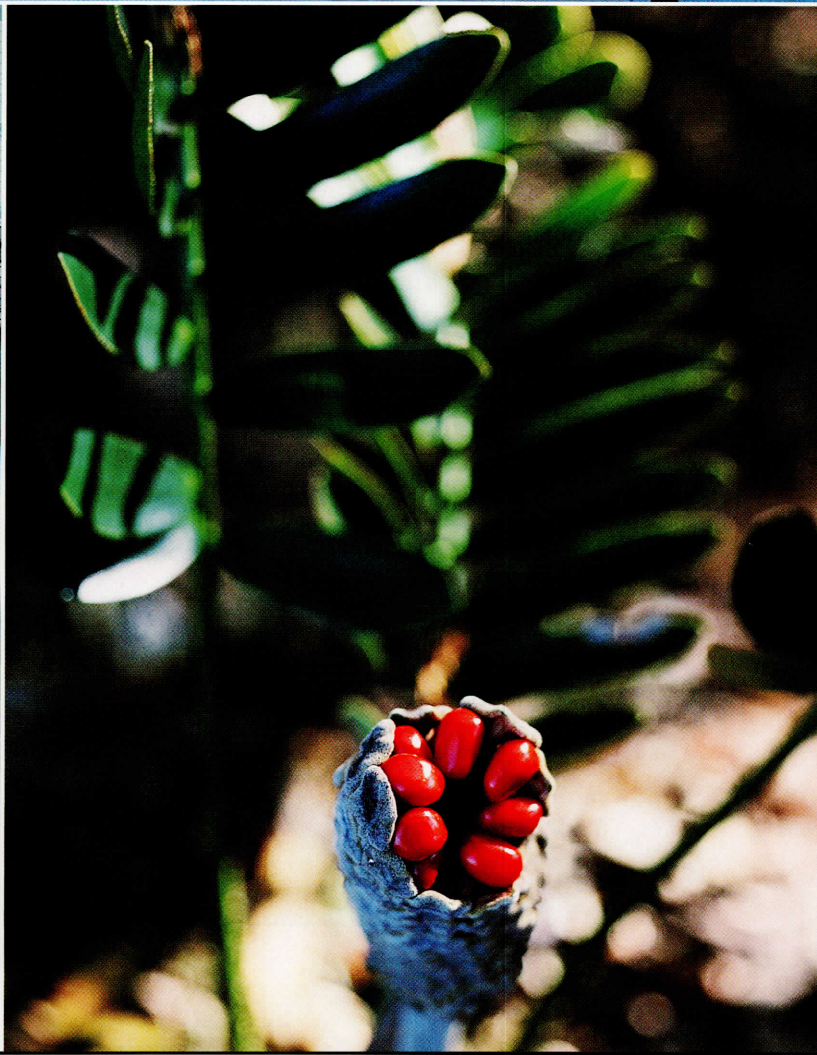
This page, top: The guest house is designed as three living areas, one for each of the Cohen's adult children, with an awareness of individual personalities and interests. **Above:** The site plan shows the spatial relationship between the two structures on the property. **Opposite page, clockwise from top:** Mori raised the living areas higher than required, and took advantage of the rich experience of views out into the treetops, and to the gulf and bay beyond; Local vegetation; The exterior stair requires the occupants to engage the outside environment

environment. This delicacy was also the result of modest budgets, a highly experimental working method, and an acknowledgment of impermanence, as it was understood that occasional devastating hurricanes tend to sweep the land clean. One can see this in Rudolph's construction directly at ground level, where wide openings and ambitious wood cantilevers supported by attenuated columns create a dramatic visual effect, and form a clear relationship to the forest in which it is nestled.

Today elaborate regulations govern the construction of houses on barrier islands. Mori's rugged structure, built of concrete and galvanized steel, and elevated on pilings that are sunk deep into the earth, is of necessity detached from the landscape. Mori raised the living areas higher than required, and took advantage of the rich experience of views out into the treetops, and to the gulf and bay beyond. At ground level, the house neither blocks views nor fills the site, so that it augments the experience of the setting. Because it is intended to withstand hurricanes, the guest house can be read as a form distinct from the site's geography, which may someday change dramatically.

The guest house is designed as three living areas, one for each of the Cohen's adult children, and with an awareness of individual personalities and interests. In this way the building, like the entire estate, is an idealized family retreat: it is a place of both privacy and connection, of carefree living and nurturing.

Appropriately, the Rudolph and Mori buildings share a family relationship: individuals, they are yet clearly related and stand comfortably together. This is evident in their shared elongated massing and cantilevered horizontal planes, as well as their purposeful arrangements of sub-forms. The Rudolph house was designed with a screened central circulation/living space, like a traditional southern dogtrot that joined but made distinct the separate elements of > 93



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Up Close: Modern Design as Memoir

(continued from page 25) and living.

I am struck by the fact that we are allowed access only to particular parts of people's lives. There are stories told and others untold. This is particularly true of our knowledge of our parents. When I think of the stories that my mother is willing to tell me about her past, they often revolve around the way my parents have lived, the houses and furniture they have loved. There are few mentions of the girlhood in Illinois or the salesman father that she and her mother left behind in the move west, yet these facts beg for more explanation. Stories left untold. And so, we listen to the ones available to us. But what histories and stories of my mother's life does her embrace of modern design tell me? She says, "I was hungry to live in beauty. I enjoyed the light and the feeling of being outside and inside at the same time. It felt like doors were opening for me. It was a whole new life."

This knowledge moves me closer to understanding my mother, our relationship, her past, and our future. The move to California, the marriage to my father, and the love of this new design came together in transforming her past and the possibilities of her future. We recreate and reinvent ourselves many times in our lives, perhaps until we find the identity that suits our image of ourselves and our dreams. Modern design was a piece of her reinvention beginning in the 1950s and continues to encompass a major part of her image of herself in the world. Modern design as memoir. It has stories to tell, beyond the objects themselves. *

New Moderns

(continued from page 28) *what I really wanted to do. I never had anything to be proud of. It was time for me to go out on my own. We rented a booth at the International Contemporary Furniture Fair as a way out. We signed up for the booth space before we had one design completed. We designed and manufactured pieces right before the show. The names of the objects and the name of our company were thought up the night before the fair. We were forced to get things done, and in turn we received a lot of attention for our efforts.*

JH: So, does your passion lie with architecture or furniture design?

C: *There is no separation. It is a matter of scale. There is only one spectrum of design. There is an artificial separation between furniture design, product design, and architectural design. The only thing that keeps you from doing one is technical knowledge. We are lucky that we have the technical architectural backgrounds. It has allowed us to segway to furniture in an easy manner. There really should not be a separation. That is the problem. You have architects doing build-ings, and then they bring in an interior designer to spit it out. The agendas are usually different. There is something wrong when an architect does not want that aspect of the job as well.*

It was Mies van der Rohe who wrote, "God is in the details." Khouri and Guzman were listening indeed, and they learned this lesson well. To see such a high caliber of work shows promise for the future of modern design in the United States. Our nation is anemic in design talent, and these two are making impressions that warrant respect. Their goals and abilities will allow them to remain New Moderns for years to come. *

Harris G. Strong

(continued from page 36) per tile!"

Although tiles were the cornerstone of Harris Strong's early success, the company eventually phased out tile production. "Two things happened," Strong states. "First, we reached a plateau where we were doing about all the business we could in tiles, and I wanted to expand. We came up with the idea of doing multiple paintings and just couldn't make them fast enough. So we raised the price—and



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sold more! Because now they were 'worth' more.

"Then in 1970 we relocated to Maine and were only up here about four months when our factory burned to the ground. Unfortunately, all the glaze formulas which I had worked on for 18 years went up in smoke. I just didn't have the energy to go back and try to reconstruct all of them, because they're very technical. It's not just 'this is about what it was.' It has to be exact. I redeveloped a number of things, and we still sold tiles for awhile, but I kept it very limited. If you want to be on the cutting edge in any field, you have to be innovative—and I found that we were just rehashing things and using the same old glazes and techniques over and over and over again. That's not what built this name. Finally I said, 'let's get out of it totally and just concentrate on the rest—printmaking, serigraphs, woodcuts, etchings, engravings, collage—you name it!'"

Strong closed his Maine firm in 1999. Today, he fills his active retirement with private design, stamp collecting, travel with his wife Maria, and following with curiosity the popularity of his early work on the secondary market. "It's like serendipity, finding something you weren't looking for. You have no idea what it does for your ego! People always say 'weren't you clever!' I wasn't clever—it was just the way I could sell. Like I always say, I was standing on the right street corner when the bus came by.

"Nobody ever handled tiles the way we did, because we regarded them as a piece of pottery; most people doing tiles were doing underglaze work and things like that. A lot of us worked together to achieve our goal. What I provided, I hope, was the continuing thread that went through all the years—of quality, workmanship, and good design. If I did that, then that's enough. The world doesn't owe me a nickel. I just have had a ball." *

Modernism With a French Twist

(continued from page 50) Patrick is the son of French movie star, Jean-Pierre Aumont, and Italian actress, Marisa Pavan. He and his wife, ex-model Hélène, are good looking enough to have made their mark in Show Biz, but they chose interior design. (Hélène designs furniture.) "We sell not so much to Santa Barbarans as to visitors from New York, L.A., and Europe. Five years ago the market was stagnant, with a notoriously high turnover of design retail shops. This year they're moving to larger quarters and seem to be here to stay. The international design crowd has discovered Santa Barbara!"

Axel de Heeckeren d'Anthès (former Paris auctioneer) of Studio 101 in Santa Barbara agrees. "We have to educate the collectors about what's happening on the West Coast. Often at shows a client will say, 'Oh, I saw that in New York. I had no idea I could find it here in California.' To establish a taste we need a combination of the press, museum exhibitions, shows, and shops." Axel restores antique *objets d'art*. His wife, Claire, deals in works on paper. Axel has acquired a pair of *Antineor* chairs by Matthieu Matégot (b. 1910). "Matégot was a painter who created Aubusson tapestries, more abstract than Lurçat's. In the Fifties he designed perforated metal and bent iron chairs."

Jacques Adnet (1904-1984) successfully fused the luxury of Art Déco materials with a modernist edge—his work was both plush and crisp. Bronze furniture was swathed in Hermès glove-leather. Trained as an architect, Adnet became artistic director of the Compagnie des Arts Français in 1928. During the '50s, he collaborated on suede lounge chairs with French industrial designer Raymond Loewy (available at Studio 101). Bankers and business executives commissioned furniture from Adnet and Paul Dupré-Lafon, (1900-1971) a designer who shared the same sophisticated aesthetic. Since Dupré-Lafon's work was conceived as part of residence installations (rather than produced in limited editions like Adnet's), his pieces fetch higher prices—five figures and up. Patrick Aumont has a Hermès leather "party planner" by Dupré-Lafon which perfectly complements his Adnet desk, sheathed in leather with slender legs ridged to simulate bamboo.

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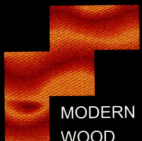
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Modernism With a French Twist

(continued from page 81) Jean Royère (1902-1981) was one of the most imaginative designers of the post-war period. From a privileged background, he became a successful decorator without formal training. He had innate good taste but remained outside the mainstream. His designs were both witty and functional. Royère played loop the loop with lacquered metal lamp mounts and gilded iron spherical furniture legs. His lampshades were traditional conical shapes mounted unconventionally with organic forms. Studio 101 has a 1950s graceful partners' desk of oak with a metal divider and serpentine legs which was designed for two brothers, and a leather-wrapped lamp by Royere. (See: "Jean Royère Rediscovered" this issue)

Jacques Caussin produces the Modernism Shows in Miami, FL and Palm Springs, CA. He studied engineering in France, which got him interested in industrial design. "I moved to the States in 1971 to become bilingual and learn business knowhow for the French Ocean Liner company I was working for. Fascinated with Thirties American design, I opened First 1/2 Gallery in Soho, then relocated to Detroit." Jacques imports Art Deco Schneider and Daum glass sconces and table lamps mounted in wrought iron, from Nancy, the center for art glass and metal smithing. Vintage iron radiator grills can be custom-made into console tables. Ironwork graced many of the French pavilions at the 1925 Exposition des Arts Décoratifs, then fell out of favor in the Thirties to be replaced by Bauhaus chrome tube furniture. It reappeared in the Forties with metalwork by Gilbert Poillerat and sculptors Alberto and Diego Giacometti which is highly collectable today.

European artists have a cultural confidence which is rooted in their sense of place. The Italians exude fantasy and sensuality; the French excel in elegance and style. Transplanted to America, the French dealers resonate cosmopolitan panache. America came of age artistically in the Forties when many of our pioneering achievements were designed by European émigrés. The creative results of this fruitful global cross-pollination are back in vogue today. *

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All of the French dealers mentioned above exhibit at the Santa Monica and Palm Springs Modernism shows, and have established shops in Los Angeles and Santa Barbara, with the exception of Studio 101 T805 563-7633, and Galerie Curial T310 826-6713, which are open by appointment only. Also, Michelle Sommerlathe, a former partner at Luxe, has opened her own shop on Abbott Kinney Boulevard called French Fifties. For more on Pierre Chareau's Maison de Verre, see: "The Lighthouse of Modernism" by the author in Echoes, Spring, 2001.

Jean Royère Rediscovered

(continued from page 53) so he created bar stools like soft soccer balls mounted on metal "yoyo" legs. He lamented the post-war trend towards mass-production over furniture design for the individual—calling it "fast food vs. haute cuisine."

GM: He played many variations on a theme. Royère designed a number of floor and wall lamps with conical shades mounted on patinated iron in organic shapes. Did he have one particular ironworker who executed his designs, like Pierre Chareau who worked with Dalbet in his *Maison de Verre*?

AH: Gilbert Poillerat worked with him on architectural commissions like the Shah's Teheran Senate. Otherwise, Royère used different artisans for small residential projects.

GM: Royère designed chubby furniture humorously named after animals e.g. the *Young Elephant* chair or the *Teddy Bear* sofa which had exaggerated proportions and plush velvet upholstery.

AH: He likened his *Teddy Bear* chair to "a cat making a round back by a fireplace." Today it's impossible to find the plush velvet "fur" he used to upholster those pieces.

GM: Royère collaborated with manufacturer Pierre Gouffé on his furniture, from 1934-1940. Were these limited editions?

AH: The main technical training Royère received was with Gouffé

Modernism With a French Twist

(continued from page 81) who had a traditional furniture atelier in the faubourg Saint-Antoine. Gouffé urged him to contribute his modern ensembles to the different decorator Salons. Their collaborations were mostly special-ordered. Royère opened his own business on the rue d'Argenson in 1943. Then he opened a larger shop, in 1947, on the rue du faubourg Saint-Honore.

GM: Did he close his shop during the war?

AH: Royère was reticent about his wartime experiences, but his friend, Micha Djordjevic, told me that he was in the Resistance and saved some Jews as well as Allied pilots by hiding them thru an underground network. He was arrested by the Gestapo, then released. He was clever and convinced them that he was just a simple decorator. Then using his metier as cover, he performed secret missions for General de Gaulle in Berlin and Munich. So I think he kept his store open during the war.

GM: Royère and the Shah Reza Pahlavi of Iran found each other thru the uncle of his third wife, Farah Diba. I can't think of two more disparate design aesthetics than that of ancient Persia and the French Fifties! Royère's elegantly restrained decoration in 1958 of the Shah's palace and office must have been a shock to those who were accustomed to Persian opulence.

AH: It was well received, because when they saw his work, the Shah's daughter, Princesse Shahnaz, and his two sisters, Princess-es Chams and Ashraff, had to have Royère, too. Royère designed interiors for the Kings of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Jordan as well as the Presidents of Lebanon, Peru, and Brazil. His Cairo office closed when Nasser deposed King Farouk and luxury interiors went out of fashion.

GM: He seems to have appealed to heads of state outside of France. The Shah was forced to leave his country in 1975 by fundamentalist religious groups who were angered by his social reforms. Do you know what happened to Royère's furniture? I can't picture the Ayatollah Kholmeini lounging in his *Teddy Bear* chair or snoozing in the *Starlette* bed with the frothy silk baldaquin curtains!

AH: (Laughter) I have no idea what happened to all of that. There were tapestry chairs in the Shah's office which were embroidered with his Imperial crown. Those were probably destroyed.

GM: I'm intrigued by the *Starlette* bed—one version was designed for Princesse Shahnaz. The baldequin is such a romantic image—like a sheltering canopy.

AH: The portable baldaquin was originally designed to protect royalty from the sun. Royère designed a garden seat like a > 84



Le Corbusier, P. Jeanneret, and C. Perriand, Chaise Lounge, 1928, \$1,995
Photo: Antoine Bootz

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Jean Royère Rediscovered

(continued from page 83) throne for the Princess Shahnaz with a baldaquin of red floral fabric by Paule Marrot.

GM: As a boy, Royère constructed sets of the *Thousand and One Nights* in his attic. He finally realized his dream of the *Arabian Nights* in the Middle East.

AH: Royère designed several luxury hotel installations in Beirut, Lebanon in the Fifties and Sixties—the Hotel Saint Georges, the Hotel Capitole, and the Bristol.

GM: When I saw the vintage pictures of the Hotel Capitole, it was really *déjà vu!* Beirut was the swinging resort town of the Middle East. When I was a *chanteuse* based in Paris, I sang French songs to the sheikhs in the Roof Garden nightclub of the Capitole. I remember the serpentine bar, and the lantern lights undulating up the the lobby walls like ivy, but I had no idea who had designed them. Royère's sinuous rhythms suited the Lebanese sensuality. The Capitole was in the Muslim section of town, and the Saint Georges was in the Christian side; I witnessed intense sporadic violence between the two factions. Do you know if Royère's decors survived the civil war?

AH: Royère got along well with the Lebanese, who were bi-lingual in Arabic and French. He was remembered with affection. When I visited Beirut in 1976 after the cease-fire to appraise collections for auction, I heard that the Hotel Capitole was damaged by bombs. I wasn't allowed into the Muslim section to check. Some of Royère's private residential interiors did survive the war.

GM: Why did Royère ask you, as Drouot auctioneer, in 1980 to sell his family and personal furniture?

AH: Royère decided to join his Serbian friend, Micha Djordjevic, who was professor of literature in Harrisburg, PA. That meant selling or donating his personal effects. Royère retired in 1976 and donated furniture and archival documents to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Curator, Yvonne Brunhammer, loaned a number of these to the Centre Georges Pompidou for their "Paris-Paris" exhibition in 1981.

GM: You mounted a Jean Royère exhibition with the Maison Jansen on the rue Royale in 1985.

AH: Yes, I wrote the catalog for the first private exhibition of Royère's Fifties work chez Jansen. Royère was a modest man. He asked me, with amused indulgence: "Why resuscitate a work that already belongs to the past? I lived with as much passion as amusement in my professional life. I still feel a real friendship for the people I met. You are going to make me someone who pontificates about himself, which I detest."

GM: Why did the Musée des Arts Décoratifs wait 25 years before

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Shows/Events

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18-20 Art Deco Weekend, Miami, FL. T: 305 672-2014
Web: www.mdpl.org
www.artdecowebweekend.com

february

2-3 Vintage Fashion Expo at the Santa Monica Civic Center in Santa Monica, CA.

15-17 Palm Springs Modernism Show at the Palm Springs Convention Center in Palm Springs, CA. Web: www.palmspringsmodern.com

27 William Doyle's Belle Epoque: 19th and 20th Century Decorative Arts auction in New York. T: 212 427-2730.

Web: www.doylenewyork.com

march

2-3 Triple Pier Expo at the Passenger Ship Terminals in New York City. T: 212 255-0020. Web: www.stellashows.com

9-10 Vintage Fashion Expo at the Masonic Auditorium in San Francisco, CA.

9-10 Triple Pier Expo at the Passenger Ship Terminals in New York City. T: 212 255-0020. Web: www.stellashows.com
Web: www.sanfordsmith.com

10 Wright's Modern Art & Design auction in Chicago, IL. T: 312 563-0020. Web: www.wright20.com

16-17 Modern Times Show at the Glendale Civic Auditorium in Glendale, CA. Web: www.modern-timesla.com

17 Butterfield & Butterfield's 20th Century Furniture & Design auction in Los Angeles, CA. T: 323 850-7500. Web: www.butterfields.com

21-23 Restoration & Renovation trade show and conference in Boston, MA. T: 800 982-6247. Web: www.restorationandrenovation.com

23-24 20th Century Cincinnati Show at the Sharonville Convention Center in Cincinnati, OH. T: 513 738-7256. Web: www.20thcenturycincinnati.com

26-27 Westweek 2000 at the Pacific Design Center in West Hollywood, CA. T: 310 360-6419. Web: www.p-d-c.com

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17 William Doyle's 20th Century Art and Design auction in New York City. T: 212 427-2730. Web:

www.doylenewyork.com

25-28 20th Annual Smithsonian Craft Show at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. T: 202 357-4000. Web: www.smithsoniancraftshow.org

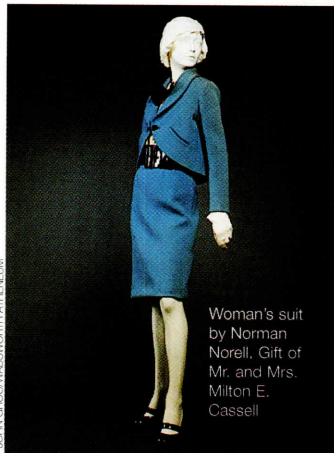
27-28 Michigan Modernism Exposition at the Southfield Civic Center in Southfield, MI. T: 586 465-9441

Museum Exhibitions

Through January 25 "Blenko: American Art Glass 1940-1980" at R 20th Century in New York, NY. Web: www.r20thcentury.com

Through January 27 "Memphis Remembered" at the London Design Museum in London, England. Web: www.designmuseum.org

Through February "Design 21: Continuous Connection—Part 1" at the Felissimo Design House in New York, NY. T: 212 247-5656. Web: www.felissimo.com



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Woman's suit by Norman Norell, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Milton E. Cassell

Through February 17 "Architects of American Fashion: Norman Norell and Pauline Trigere" at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT. T: 860 278-2670

Through February 17 "Venini: Masterpieces of Italian Glass" at the Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, NY. Web: www.cmog.org



ALFRED HAN

Kubus storage containers and tray, 1938, Wilhelm Wagenfeld

Through February 24 "Glass of the Avant-Garde: From the Vienna Secession to the Bauhaus" at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design



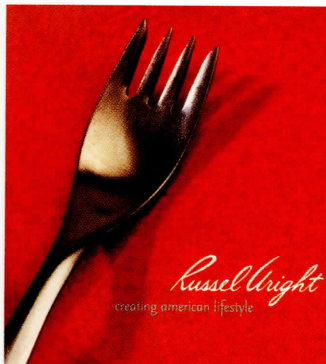
Plymet cabinet prototype of cast and sheet aluminum, steel sheet, and birch veneer, 1945-46, designed by Clive Latimer, manufactured by Heal & Son

Aluminum by Design: Jewelry to Jets

Once considered more precious than gold, aluminum transformed 20th century culture. The Wolfsonian-Florida International University's exhibition, on view until April 7, showcases more than 180 objects which trace the history of aluminum. For more info: www.wolfsonian.org.

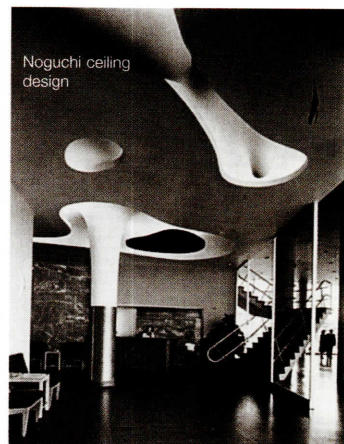
Museum, Smithsonian Institution in NY. T: 212 849-8400

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creating american lifestyle

Through March 10 "Russel Wright: Creating American Lifestyle" at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum in NY. T: 212 849-8400



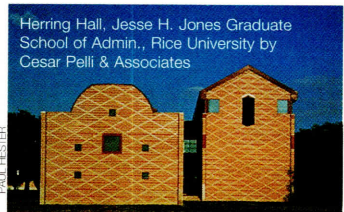
Noguchi ceiling design

Through April 21 "Isamu Noguchi—Sculptural Design" at the Vitra Design Museum in Weil am Rhein, Germany. T: 011 49 7621 702 3351



Salvatore Ferragamo anodized aluminum handbags, 1996-97

Through April 7 "Aluminum by Design: Jewelry to Jets" at the Wolfsonian-FIU in Miami Beach, FL.



PAUL HESTER

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Through April 28 "Cesar Pelli: Connections" at the National Building Museum in Washington, DC. T: 202 272-2448

Through Spring "Art Deco and Streamlined Modern: Design Between the Wars, 1920-1940" at

the Dallas Museum of Art in Dallas, TX. T: 214 922-1200

Through June 23 "Noncomposition: 15 Case Studies" at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, CT. T: 860 278-2670

January-February "Koos van den Akker Retrospective and Sale" at Decades Gallery in Los Angeles, CA. T: 323 655-0223.

Web: www.decadesinc.com

January 18-April 12 "Marsden Hartley: American Modernist" at the Wadsworth Atheneum in Hartford, CT. T: 860 278-2670

January 19-April 14 "Stylish Hats: 200 Years of Sartorial Sculpture" at the James A. Michener Art Museum in Doylestown, PA. T: 215 340-9800

January 20-April 14 "Louis Faurer Retrospective" at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston in Houston, TX. T: 713 639-7540

January 24-March 24 "Robert Doisneau's Paris" at the Portland Museum of Art in Portland, ME. T: 207 775-6148. Web: www.portlandmuseum.org

February "Design 21: Continuous Collection—Part 2" at Felissimo Design House in New York, NY. T: 212 247-5656. Web: www.felissimo.com

February-May "Vital Forms: American Art and Design in the Atomic Age, 1940-1960" at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, MN

February 1-May 26 "Agnes Martin: The Nineties and Beyond" at The Menil Collection in Houston, TX. T: 713 525-9400.

Web: www.menil.org

February 10-May 5 "Willem de Kooning: Tracing the Figure" at The Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, CA. T: 213 621-2766. Web: www.moca-la.org



Neutra's *Windshield*, 1936-38, proposed view from southwest

February 15-April 14 "*Windshield*: Richard Neutra's House for the John Nicholas Brown Family" at the RISD Museum in Providence, RI. T: 401 454-6500.

Web: www.risd.edu/museum.cfm

February 23-May 12 "US Design, 1975-2000" at the Denver Art Museum in Denver, CO. T: 720 865-5000

March-April "Holly Harp Retrospective and Sale" at Decades Gallery in Los Angeles,

CA. T: 323 655-0223. Web: www.decadesinc.com

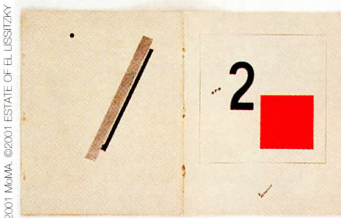


Working chair, 1934, by Bruno Mathsson

NATIONAL MUSEUM, STOCKHOLM

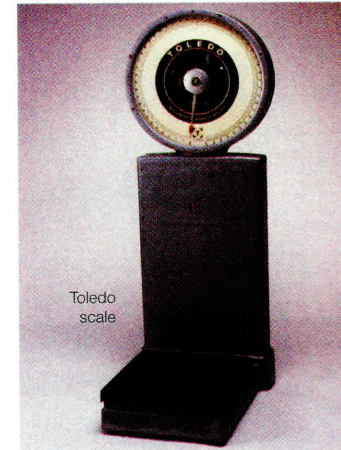
March 14-June 16 "Utopia & Reality: Modernity in Sweden, 1900-1960" at The Bard Graduate Center in NY, NY. T: 212 501-3000

March 16-August 18 "The Art of French Fashion" at the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art in Hartford, CT. T: 860 278-2670



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March 21-June 11 "The Russian Avant-Garde Book, 1910-1934" at MoMA in NY. T: 212 708-9400



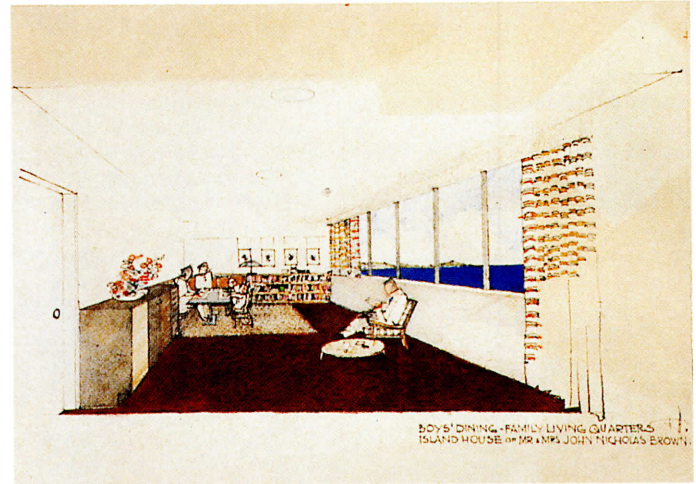
Toledo scale

March 24-June 16 "The Alliance of Art and Industry: Toledo Designs for a Modern America" at the Toledo Museum of Art in Toledo, OH. T: 419 255-8000

Web: www.toledomuseum.org

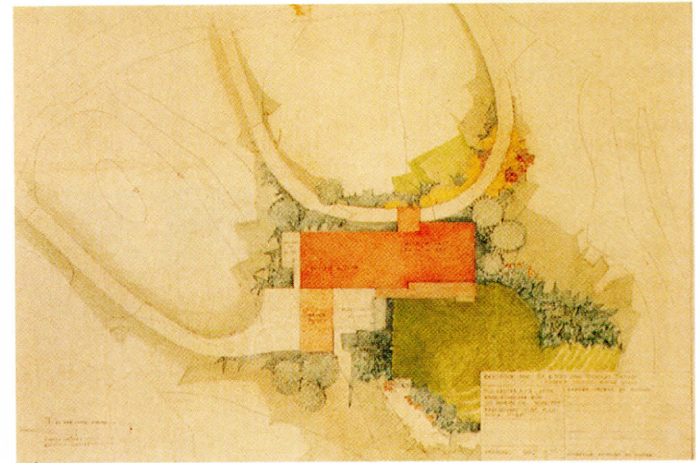
April 2-June 1 "Vienna 1903-1932" at Historical Design Inc. in New York, NY. T: 212 593-4528

April 23-September 8 "Skin: Surface, Substance, and Design" at the Smithsonian Cooper Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York, NY. T: 212 849-8349.

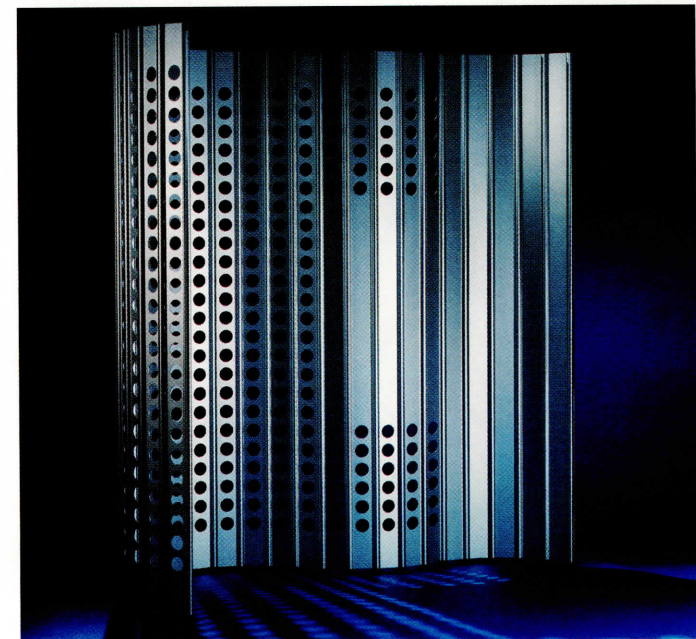


BOYS' DINING - FAMILY LIVING QUARTERS
ISLAND HOUSE OF MR. & MRS. JOHN NICHOLAS BROWN

Rendering in colored pencils of Richard Neutra's *Windshield*, Fishers Island, NY, 1936-1938, Interior: Boys' dining room-family living quarters from the exhibition "*Windshield*: Richard Neutra's House for the John Nicholas Brown Family" at the RISD Museum in Providence, RI. on view from February 15-April 14



Site plan, colored pencils over blueprint of *Windshield*, Fishers Island, NY, 1936-1938 from the exhibition "*Windshield*: Richard Neutra's House for the John Nicholas Brown Family" at the RISD Museum on view from February 15-April 14



Ali Taylor Plaza Screen, 1999, from the exhibition "US Design 1975-2000" at the Denver Art Museum on view from February 23-May 26

Jean Royère Rediscovered

(continued from page 84) **mounting a Royère exhibition?**

AH: *Museums are chronically short of money. So, when designer Tom Ford of Gucci, who could afford it, offered to fund the 1999 "Jean Royère, Decorator in Paris" exhibit because he was "personally interested in the Fifties period," the museum was happy to accommodate him. The Galerie du Passage and Galerie Jacques Lacoste presented Royère exhibitions in the '90s. In 1989 the Galerie 1950-Alan showed the contents of singer Henri Salvador's apartment designed by Royère in 1955, so collectors were increasingly aware of Royère's work.*

GM: **Why do you think it took so long for dealers, curators, and collectors to appreciate mid-century design? Most of us leap-frogged from Art Déco to the Sixties. The post-war designers finally crept in under our radar in the early '90s.**

AH: *Everything in the art field is cyclical. I missed the Art Déco boat when prices were too high to buy. But then I thought...what's going to be the next trend? It had to be the Forties and Fifties decades. And that's where Royère came in.*

GM: **Antiques are getting younger every year. The cut-off vetting date at the venerable Paris Biennale des Antiquaires last year was 1940. This year it was 1960, valuing pieces from that period right up there with Art Déco. Will the mid-century designer renaissance have a longer shelf life the second time around?**

AH: *Yes, it definitely will, although I'm not sure that the prices will remain the same. Royère was part of the post-war designer boom, but his innovative designs were fresh and special. He will always stand out. **

Marcel Breuer

(continued from page 59) **burgeoning Korea crisis.** So Breuer's small office, scarcely able to handle the number of commissions that had been coming in since 1947 with America's new-found prosperity, found itself even more overcommitted, and this seems to occasionally have affected the quality of his buildings.

Many of Breuer's post-war American houses were designed for a largely homogeneous clientele, namely well-off young couples who believed in the "modern" (which was incidentally the prevailing taste), and who, for their children's sake, wanted to move from the city to detached houses in the surrounding countryside. Mark Jarzombek ironically described the phenomenon of custom-built family houses of this kind as "Good-Life Modernism." However, it should not be forgotten that this gave gifted architects the opportunity to produce highly individual and aesthetically challenging buildings. Breuer's houses, for example, > 88

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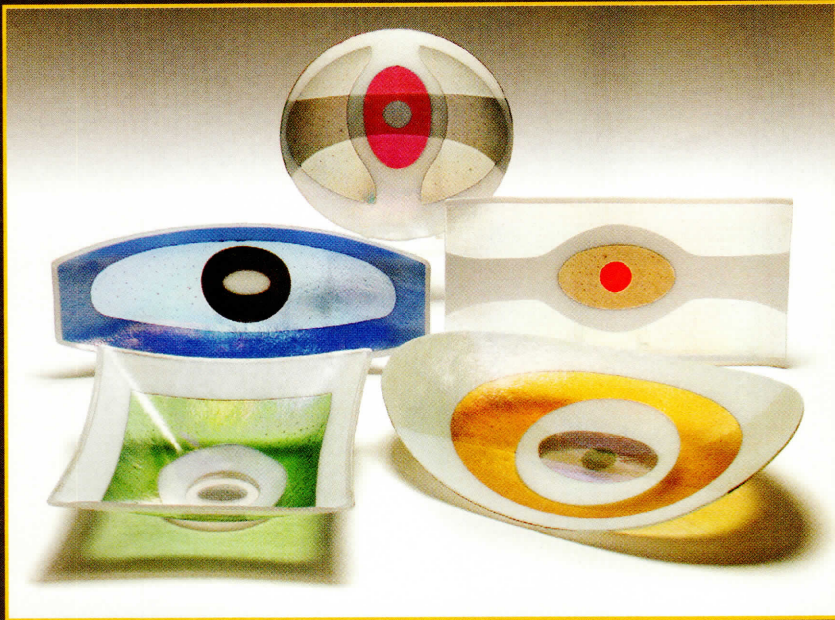
Sam Kramer
ring in silver with glass taxidermy eye
1950s

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Marcel Breuer

(continued from page 87) were based on a totally independent formal vocabulary. This he had already developed to an important degree in Europe, and even in the USA he never subordinated it to the trend of simplified 'light' Modernist architecture propagated by some of the professional magazines. In this sense Breuer remained basically an avant-garde architect and designer—even during the peak of his career as a house architect which lasted well into the first half of the 1950s—much as he had been back in Europe. The number of well-off clients had increased considerably, with the result that Breuer's post-war houses were no longer within reach of the average person—very much as had been the case with his tubular-steel chairs in the pre-war period. Breuer, however, does seem to have been convinced that his relatively expensive houses could serve as models; in other words, he seems to have regarded them as standard-setters for future design.

Of course, this idea was still based on the concept of "improving the world through good architecture," in which new ideas would eventually spread and filter through to cheaper housing. This idea made Breuer's extensive American works—at least with regard to the houses designed up until about 1955—fundamentally distinct from the works of the other two major Bauhaus architects in the USA. For Breuer's aim in architecture was neither the single-minded aesthetic perfectionism of Mies van der Rohe, nor the increasingly theoretical investigations of Walter Gropius. Breuer's intention was to provide generally usable formal and functional solutions.

Even at the height of his success as a house architect, Breuer was scarcely more than a local name in the USA. Although his houses were built from Maryland to Maine, and even in the Midwest, most of the projects were limited—Massachusetts excepted—to three states: Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey; in other words, the direct environs of New York. It is conceivable that Breuer, who also built two houses for himself and his family in Connecticut, intuitively felt that the northeastern USA had the ideal landscape for his wood and natural stone structures, which may be why he avoided "expansion."

In January 1955, Breuer decided he was "definitely not interested in any more houses." Apparently he considered them too time consuming and not profitable enough. Breuer never completely turned his back on individual houses though—he was evidently too closely committed to the field to which he had devoted so much of his earlier career. What definitely did change after 1955 was the price of a Breuer house. Few were less than \$100,000, and many were significantly

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more. This put them beyond the reach even of the majority of his earlier upper-middle-class clientele. And while architects in the USA, as well as in West Germany, made more or less faithful copies of his houses, Breuer, who now had reached international prominence, worked mainly on luxury villas for art collectors. The Staehelin, Hooper II, and Koerfer houses still provided a benchmark for villa design, but no longer for general residential architecture. In retrospect, it is difficult to ignore the thought that these magnificent houses, especially with the works of art they contained, were already becoming monuments to modernism with a museum-like character. Created just before Breuer's monumental "concrete-sculpture" large-scale projects, they were already themselves beginning to crystalize into monuments to their creator. *

Harvey Propper

(continued from page 65) Graduate School of Design). They were simple upholstered forms like half-circles, quadrants, wedges, and corner sections, to arrange into any desired seating configuration. The *New York Times* described it as "19 units that may be combined in innumerable variations that make this grouping as flexible as special-order built-ins." Propper even developed scale models that enabled clients to "build your own." Customers could order the modules as rearrangeable individual pieces, or as a single seamless one—an alternative to standard sectional sofas. The use of modules also made it possible to adapt the same basic form to any styling—loose cushions or tight, skirted or plain.

An immediate success, the line sold to retailers like B. Altman, Neiman-Marcus, Barker Brothers, and Wanamaker's. Propper insisted on referring to it as a modular system, a name not then in use. Stanley Marcus, Neiman Marcus' president, defended the firm's use of the term "sectionals" in its advertising, saying, "everybody knows what sectionals are...modules sounds like an incurable disease." Nonetheless, the store installed a modern furniture gallery featuring the *Sert Group*.

Although what was then called "unit furniture" dates to the first decade of the 20th century with Bruno Paul and other early German modernists, and Sears actually showed "sectional bookcases" in 1909, Propper's modular seating was the first of its kind. Taking the modular idea further, Propper introduced "nuclear furniture"—his name for table sections that could be arranged to form any shape. In the 1960s he extended the concept to casegoods. He explained, "We were a small company, and couldn't make too many different designs, so we gave more options," customizing the same basic carcass with different finishes, legs and > 91

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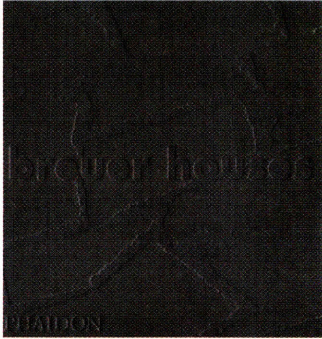
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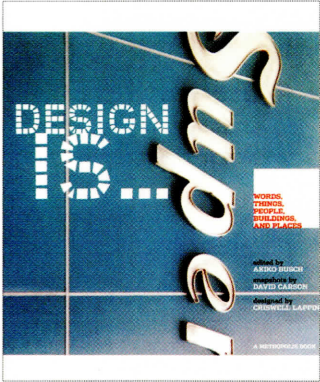
great modern books

Breuer Houses (Phaidon Press, \$59.95)

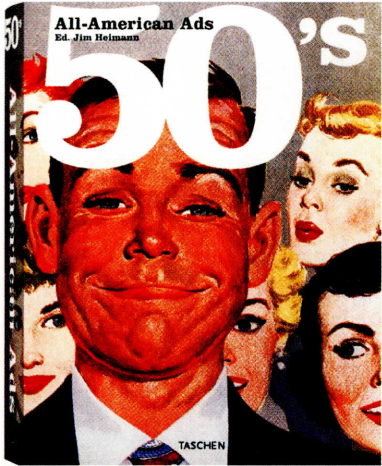
This monograph on Marcel Breuer's residential work discusses his architectural "language" and background. It describes in detail 25 projects and built houses dating from between 1923 and 1973. The text explains how each new project grew out of the visual and technical experience of the ones preceding it. Projects and buildings covered include: "Gane's Pavilion," 1936; "Sea Lane House," 1938; Breuer House I, 1939; and the Museum Garden House, MoMA, NY, 1949.



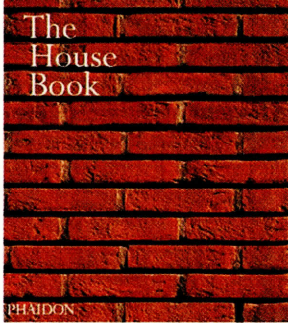
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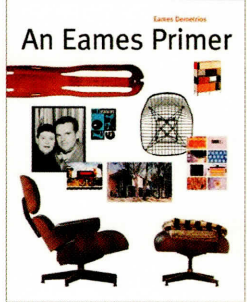
Design Is... Words, Things, People, Buildings and Places (Princeton Architectural Press/Metropolis Books, \$29.95) Culled from 20 years of writing on design from *Metropolis*, the essays in *Design Is* comment on how design affects our lives—from the buildings we pass through, to the products we consume, and the media messages we see. Edited by *Metropolis* contributing editor Akiko Busch, designed by Criswell Lappin, with snapshots by David Carson.



All American Ads of the 50's (Taschen, \$40) From "The World's Finest Automatic Washer" to the Cadillac which "Gives a Man a New Outlook," you'll find a colorful plethora of ads for just about anything the dollar could buy. Oh, and "Have you noticed how many of your neighbors are using Herman Miller furniture these days?" If only you could travel back in time and pick up a few chairs for your collection...



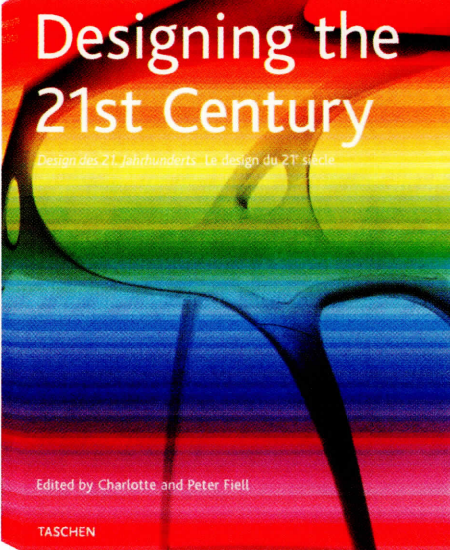
The House Book (Phaidon Press, \$45) From Hadrian's Villa to Le Corbusier's Villa Savoye and the contemporary houses of Frank Gehry, *The House Book* presents an interesting and fresh view of 500 iconic houses and traditional dwellings.



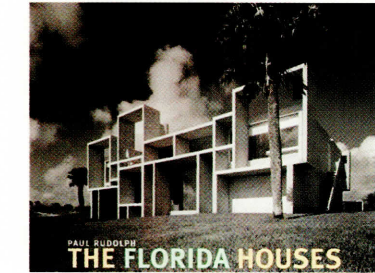
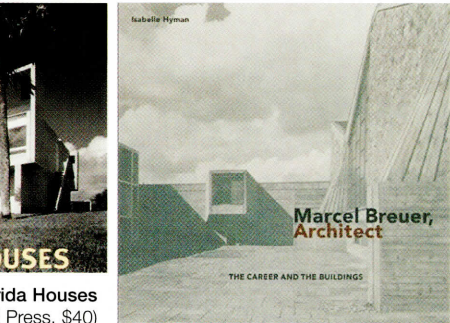
An Eames Primer (Rizzoli/Universe, \$45) The first book to capture the philosophy and spirit behind the work of Charles and Ray Eames, *An Eames Primer* offers an in-depth look at the couple's prolific legacy. Author Eames Demetrios explores the rich energy of the Eameses' world from a unique perspective, informed by his close relationship with Charles and Ray. He shares personal anecdotes, previously unpublished photos, and his extensive interviews with former friends and colleagues of the Eameses to make connections between the Eameses' influential philosophy and their widely admired work. For those unacquainted with the designers, the stories behind the design process will inform, entertain, and inspire, while readers with an extensive knowledge of the Eameses' work gain a deeper understanding of their process.

Designing the 21st Century

(Taschen, \$40) How do today's designers see the future of design? In response to this question, Taschen put together the definitive book on cutting-edge product design, furniture, ceramics, glassware, and textiles. Includes a cross section of the world's most influential designers and stunning images of their most progressive work.

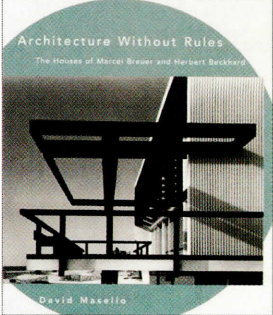


Marcel Breuer, Architect: The Career and the Buildings (Harry Abrams, \$85) This is the first comprehensive study of Breuer's architectural oeuvre. To write it, architectural historian Isabelle Hyman utilized extensive unpublished archival material and hundreds of photographs, plans, and sketches.



Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses (Princeton Architectural Press, \$40) Paul Rudolph's Florida houses, some 80 projects built between 1946 and 1961, brought modern architectural form into a subtropical world of natural abundance. Along with Rudolph's personal essays and renderings, duotone photographs by Ezra Stoller and Joseph Molitor, and insightful text by Joseph King and Christopher Domin, this compelling book conveys the lightness, timelessness, strength, and transcendence of Rudolph's work.

Architecture Without Rules: The Houses of Marcel Breuer and Herbert Beckhard (W.W. Norton & Co., \$21.95) The collaboration between Bauhaus architect Marcel Breuer and American architect Herbert Beckhard is explored through the examination of 20 innovative houses of their design. A chapter is dedicated to each home, accompanied by 100 black-and-white photographs and 16 pages in color.



Harvey Probbler

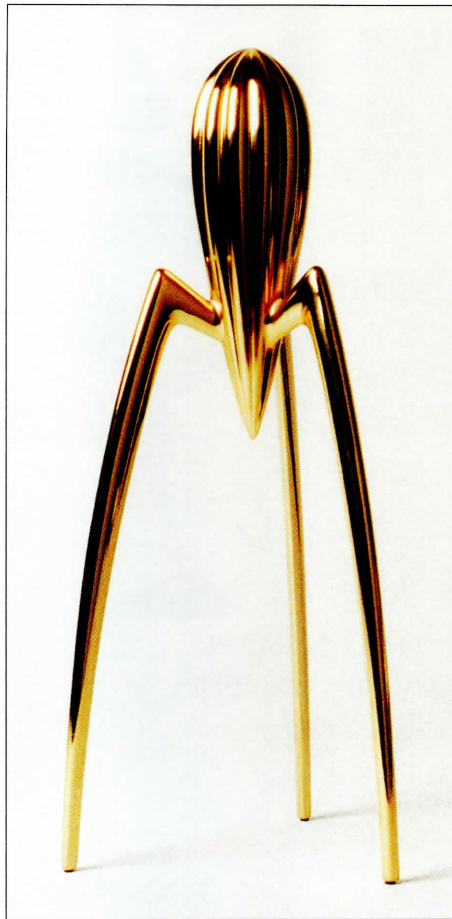
(continued from page 89) bases, heights, and fittings. By offering variations that were essentially cosmetic rather than conceptual, and therefore economical to produce, Probbler was proving himself a smart merchandiser and a good businessman.

Throughout his career, success came easily to Probbler, who was quick to seize opportunities in the marketplace. In 1947, when showroom space wasn't available in Chicago's Merchandise Mart, he took his line to Grand Rapids, then the center of the furniture manufacturing industry, picking up good press and new customers. In 1948, noting the potential of cultivating sales to interior designers and their affluent clients, he opened a showroom at 136 Fifth Avenue. His designs were chosen for MoMA's "Good Design" exhibition in 1951 and for prestigious Roscoe industry awards. In 1958, the *Toledo Blade* described him as "one of the top names in contemporary furniture design," and by the 1970s there were Probbler showrooms in major design centers across the country. He developed furniture for offices as well as homes, moving the firm into the profitable new contract market. He was continually interested in new materials—an early user of foam rubber in the mid-'40s, he found urethane foam in Europe in the '70s and molded furniture models from it, though he never forsook his preference for warm woods over hard-edged metal. In the 1960s Probbler wrote, "Function is not nearly enough, as evidenced by what might be called a national boredom with the 'machine' look."

As business flourished, Probbler's production facility expanded from its original modest Brooklyn quarters, first to Manhattan and later to Fall River, Massachusetts, where it remained until he sold the factory (but wisely, neither his name nor his designs) in the 1980s.

Probbler remained involved in the furniture industry as a consultant, lecturer, and occasional gadfly about industry and design issues. He penned witty articles for trade publications, decrying the equation of fashion with good design, and the proliferation of me-too merchandise and transient styles. He traveled to several Central American countries to advise an investment group on business opportunities, and consulted to developing companies in Belize and the Philippines. Having more time for non-business pursuits, he filled his home with witty artworks like the "Probbler People," a series of watercolor caricatures of chairs-as-personalities, with clever names like Chairlady, Laminated Man, Fancy Pants, and Embraceable Me—*Interior Design* magazine published some of them, and the full family lines a hallway in the Probbler home.

In 1990, *Interiors* magazine referred to Harvey Probbler as a "noted pioneer in >92



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Harvey Propper

(continued from page 91) modular seating design and customization." And in 1995, Stanley Abercrombie in *George Nelson: The Design of Modern Design*, described him as "a pioneer in the application of modular seating." Yet in the last interview he gave before a stroke two years ago that left him physically diminished but mentally intact, Propper criticized the lack of broader recognition for his achievements.

Some possible explanations for this oversight emerge in examining his career and the furniture marketed by Harvey Propper, Inc. In the 1950s and 1960s, his was considered one of the leading names in furniture made for the interior design market. Propper's sophisticated designs were often compared to those of his high-profile contemporary (in business, though not in age—Propper was 15 years younger), Dunbar Furniture's Edward J. Wormley. Wormley had become celebrated for modern furniture designed with a nod to historicism, and for the kind of rich materials and finishes distained by the more radical, Bauhaus-influenced modernists. The same aesthetic characterized Propper's designs, many of which were uncomfortably similar to those produced by Wormley. Wormley's celebrity, however, outstripped that of Propper, perhaps in part because the latter was perceived more as a businessman than designer. Despite the exceptional quality of the furniture, Propper's designs—like most of those bought by interior designers and affluent clients, rather than seekers of the avant-garde—rarely ventured into unexplored or uncomfortable territory. Propper, as Wormley, understood how to translate the needs of his clients into furniture that, even today, reflects quality and sophistication. It must be added, however, that Propper owned the company as well as designing for it—his ego as a creative designer had to wrestle with his instincts as a savvy merchant who knew what would sell.

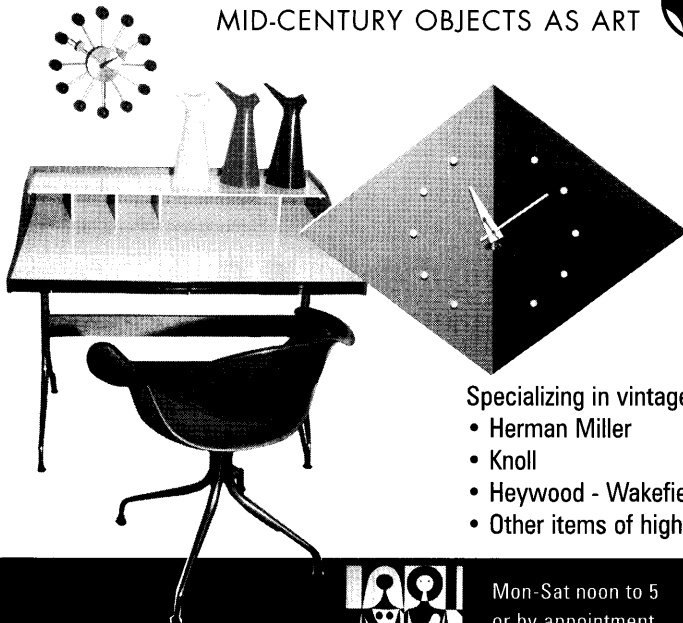
There was another factor that tended to keep Propper on the fringes of the design community. Though personable, he was relatively shy, perhaps because he was younger than many of his colleagues. More significantly, he put his family life ahead of the social side of New York "design scene" in which almost all of his colleagues participated—a social life that nurtured the kind of celebrity he coveted.

Nevertheless, Propper has observed with not a little resentment the rediscovery (and adulation) given to contemporaries like Wormley and Parzinger. He is stung by the fact that his innovations have been overlooked and even more by his feeling that many others have claimed, or been awarded, credit for the concepts he originated. "This was the basis of what others adapted,"

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he said, speaking of his modular upholstery. Design piracy has been a crusade throughout his career...as early as 1949, he wrote a trade publication article denouncing the practice—noting “deformed copies” of original designs by unscrupulous scavengers.

But Probbler may yet have the last laugh. In the *New York Times* last year, William Hamilton noted that some stylish new chairs designed for Crate and Barrel “owe a heavy debt to Harvey Probbler.” And increasingly, Probbler pieces have been turning up at upscale vintage dealers like Donzella, Lobel Modern, and Palumbo. They are in the auction market as well—at 20th Century Modern Auctions in March 2001, a Probbler silk sofa quadrupled the low estimate, selling for \$3,335.

Though Harvey Probbler’s furniture may not end up in many museums, it will apparently be furnishing a new generation of the kind of sophisticated for which it was originally designed. As for his innovative modular pieces, the revived interest in Probbler’s work bodes well for some appropriate editing of design history in his favor. *

Heir to the Legacy

(continued from page 78) the house. At the guest house, the exterior stair is much the same device, though oriented vertically, and requires the occupants to engage the outside environment when going from place to place.

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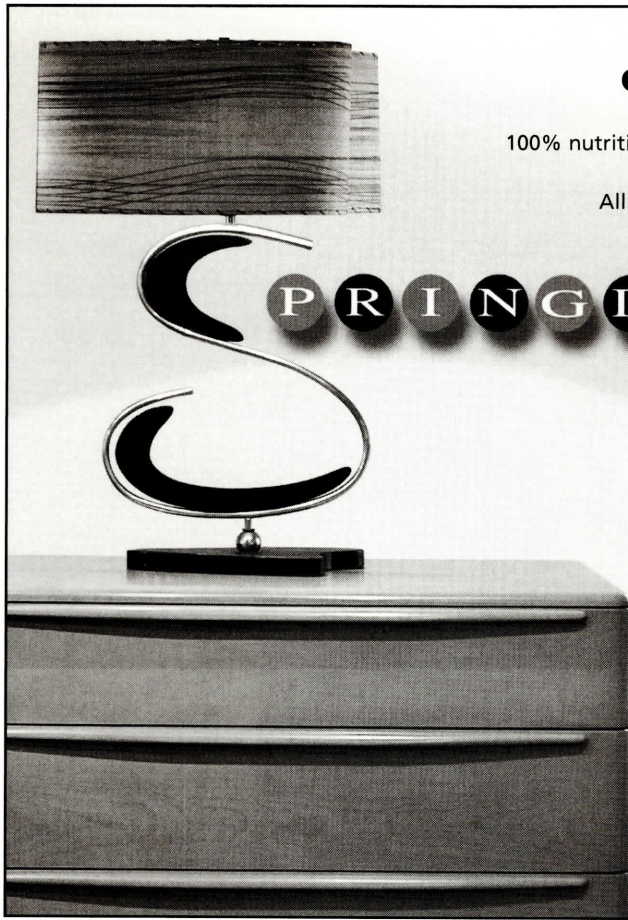
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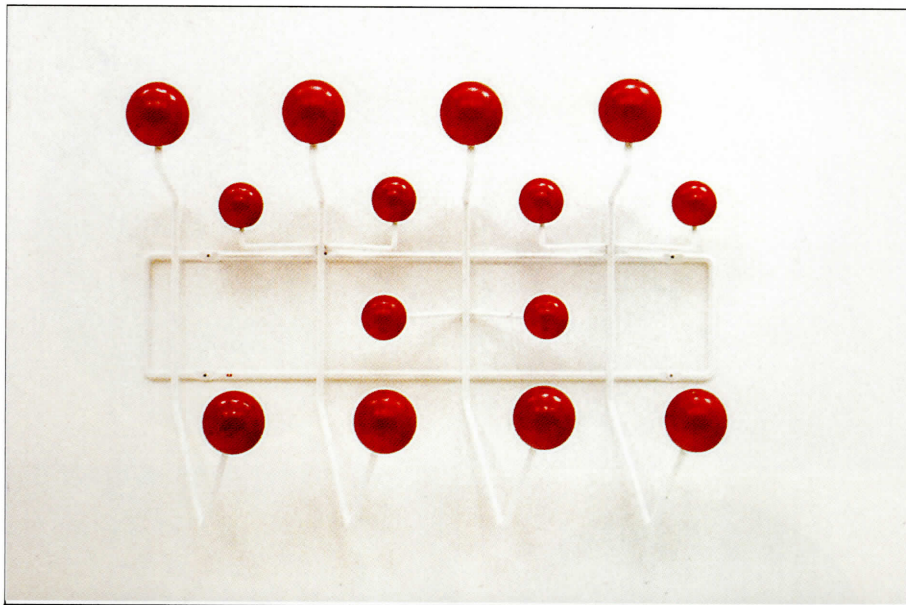
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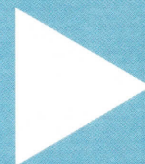
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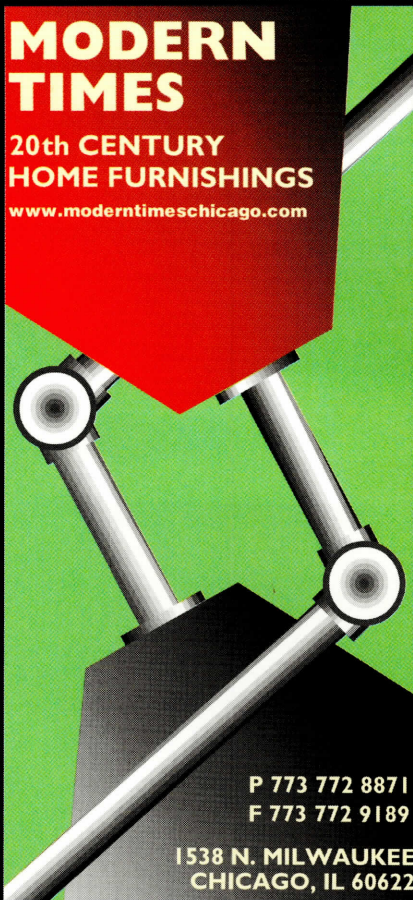
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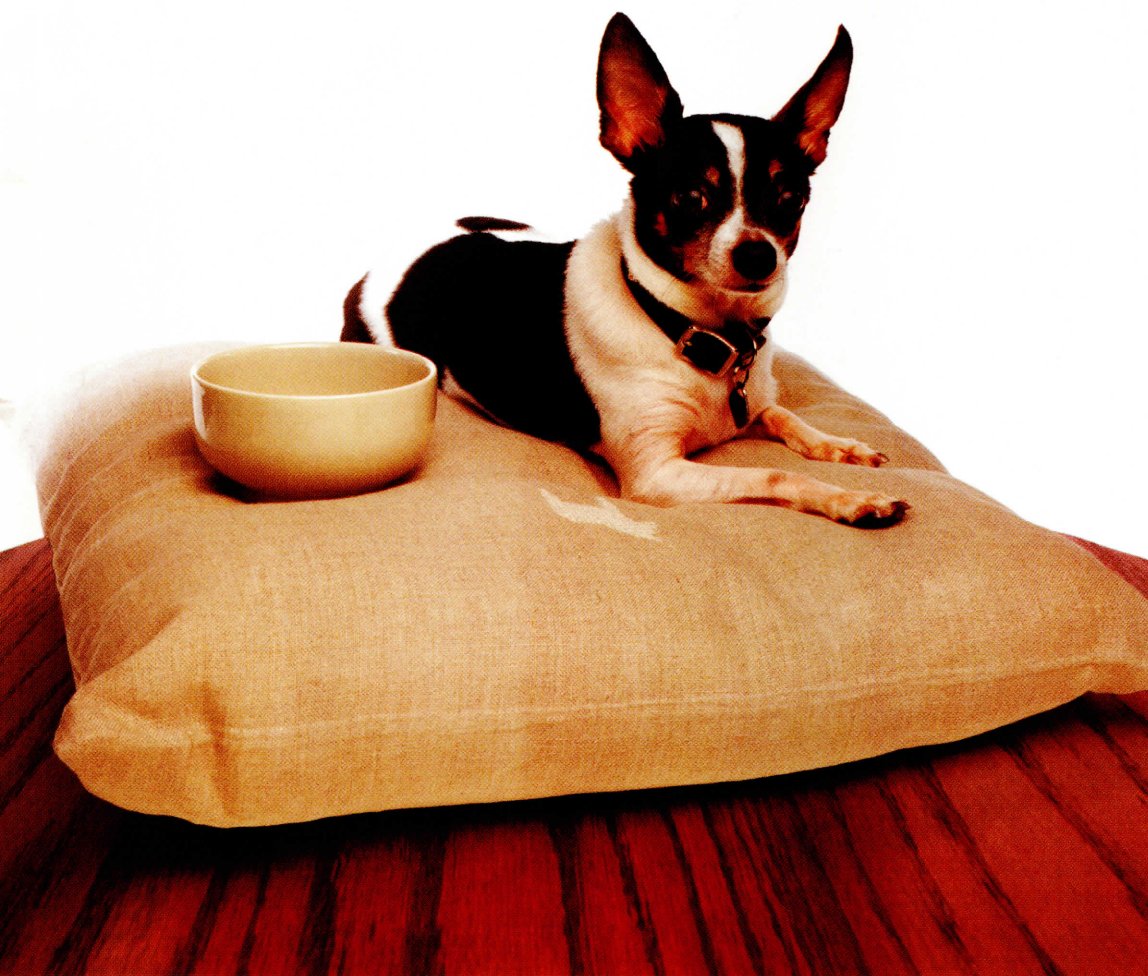
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Architecture should be received by the whole body, by all our senses...

Colors which you can hear with ears;
Sounds to see with eyes;
The void you touch with your elbows;
The taste of space on your tongue;
The fragrance of dimensions;
The juice of stone

Marcel Breuer, 1961

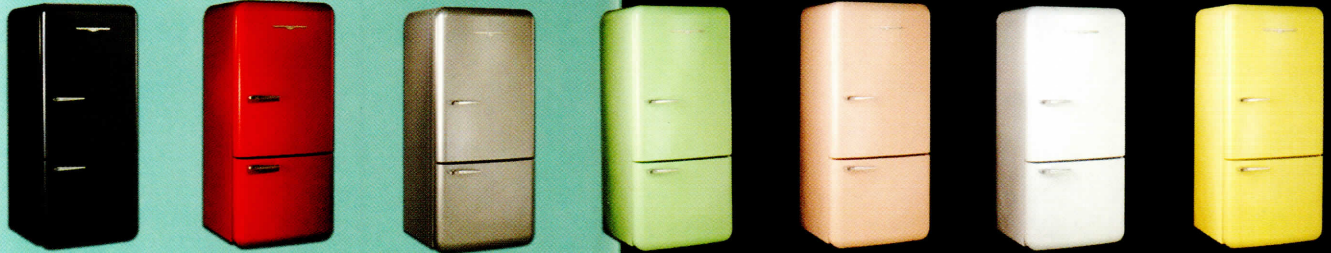
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