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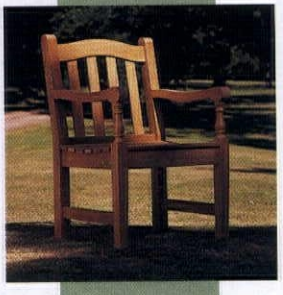

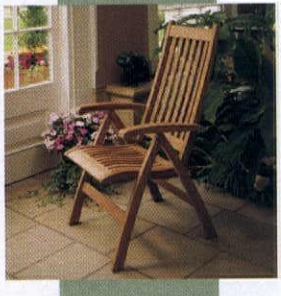

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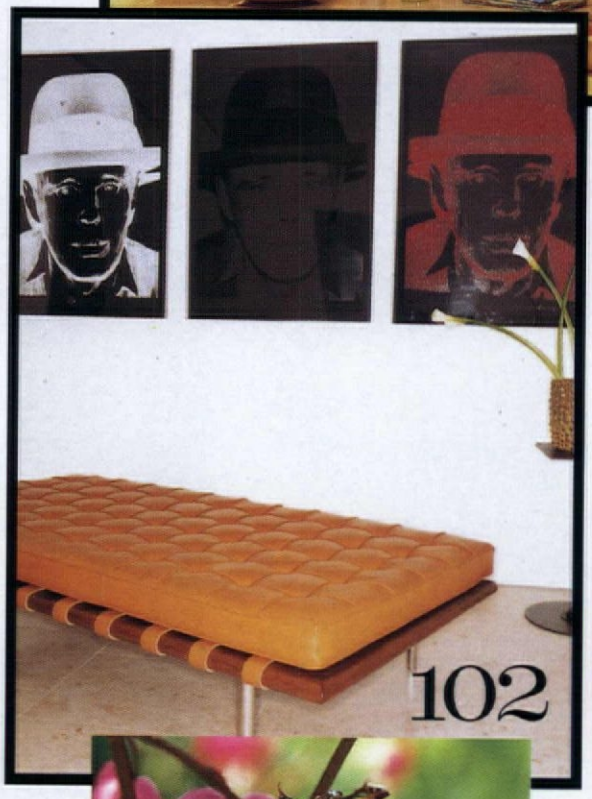

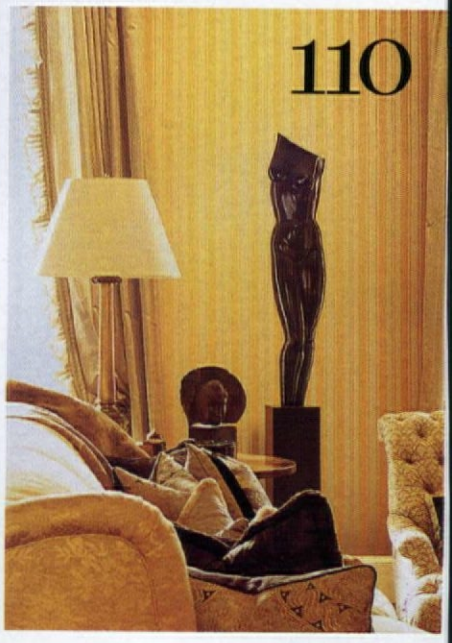

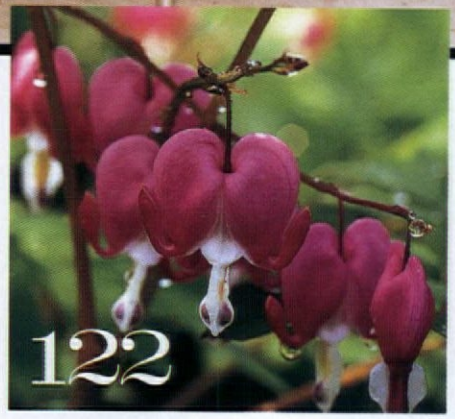

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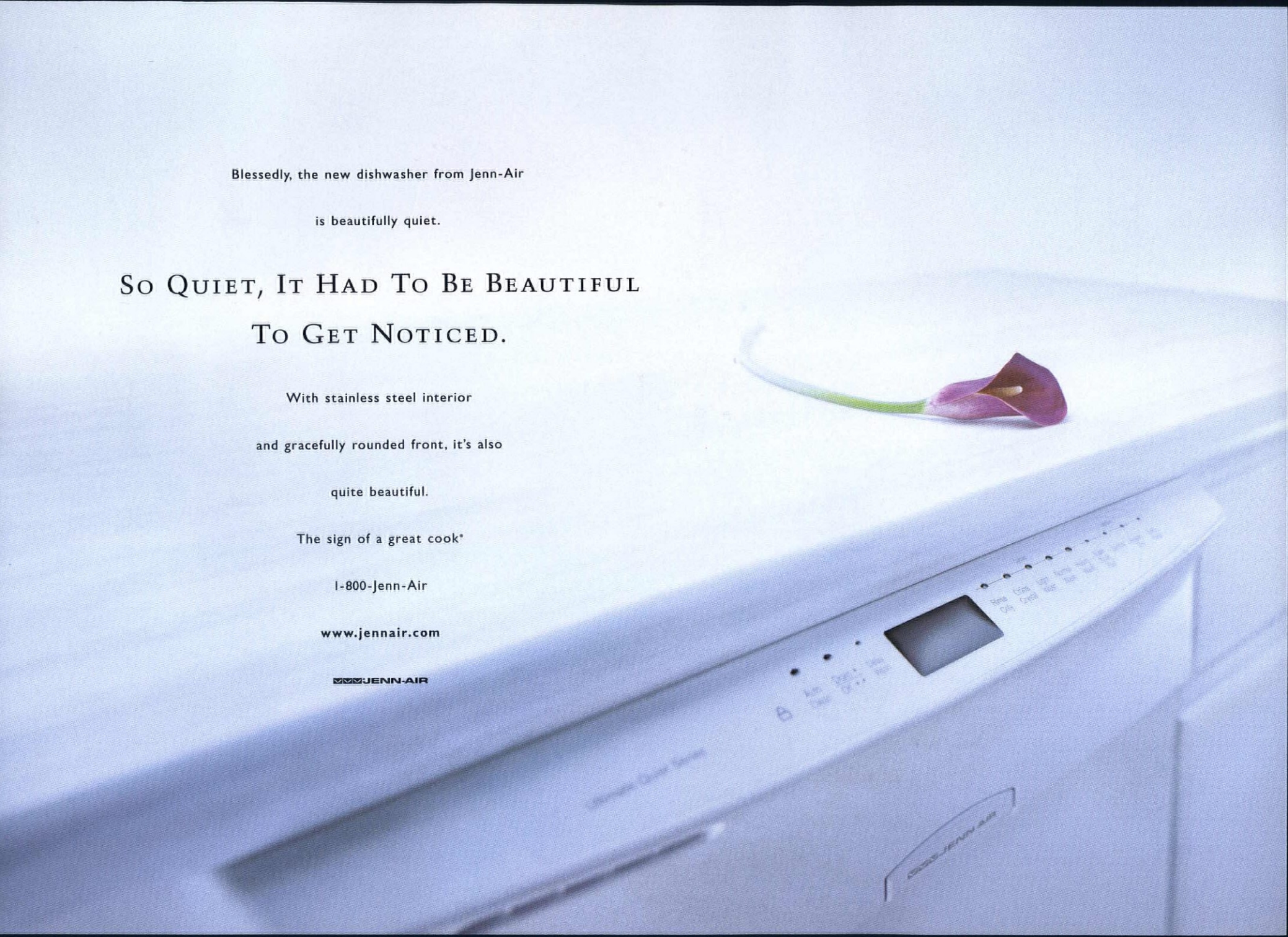

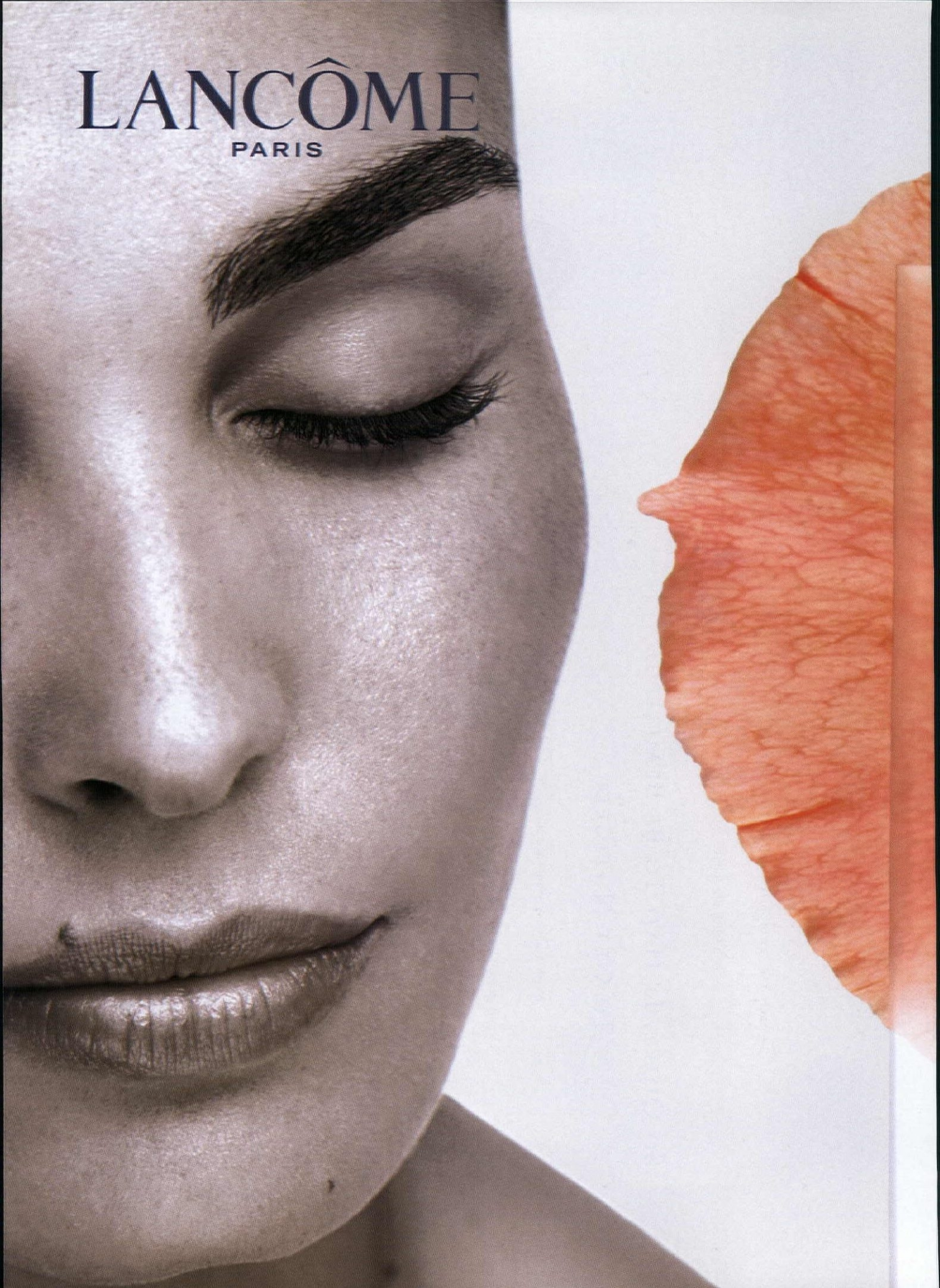
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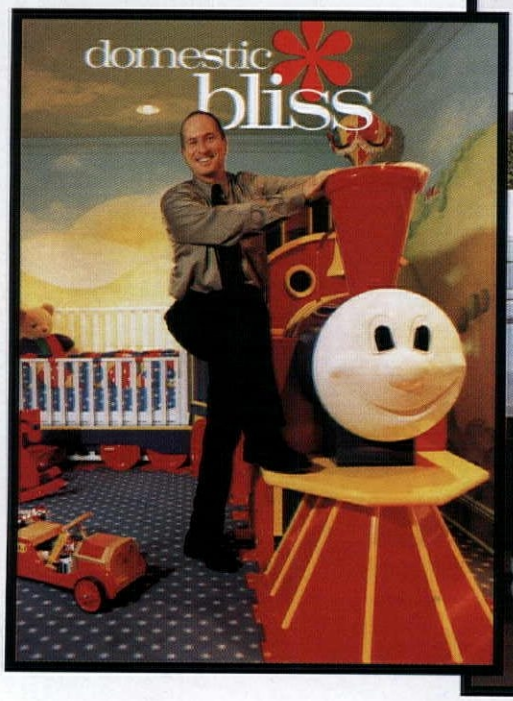

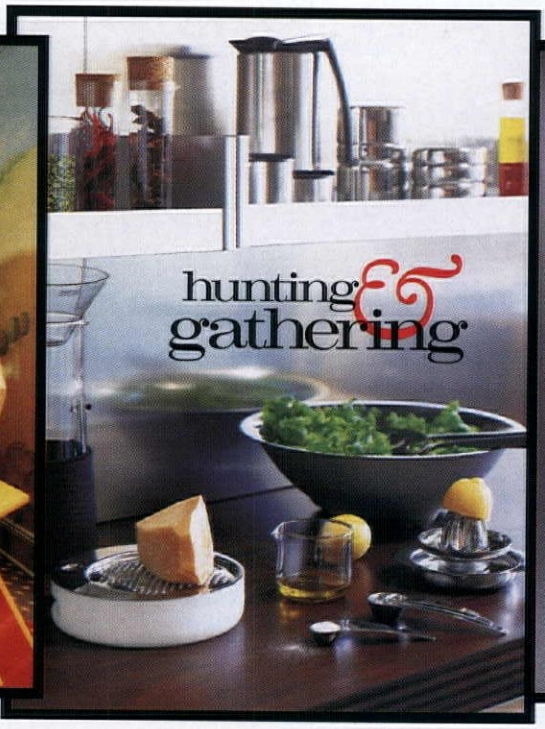

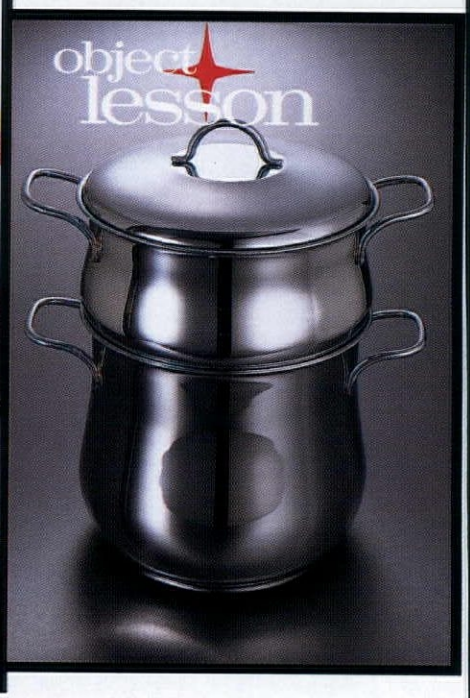

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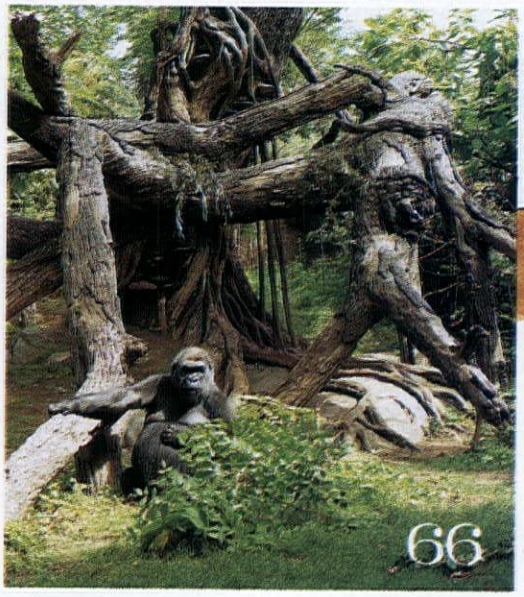

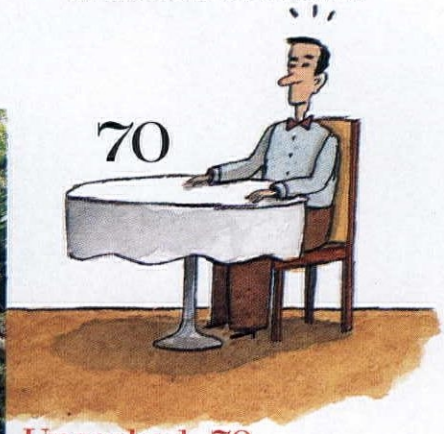

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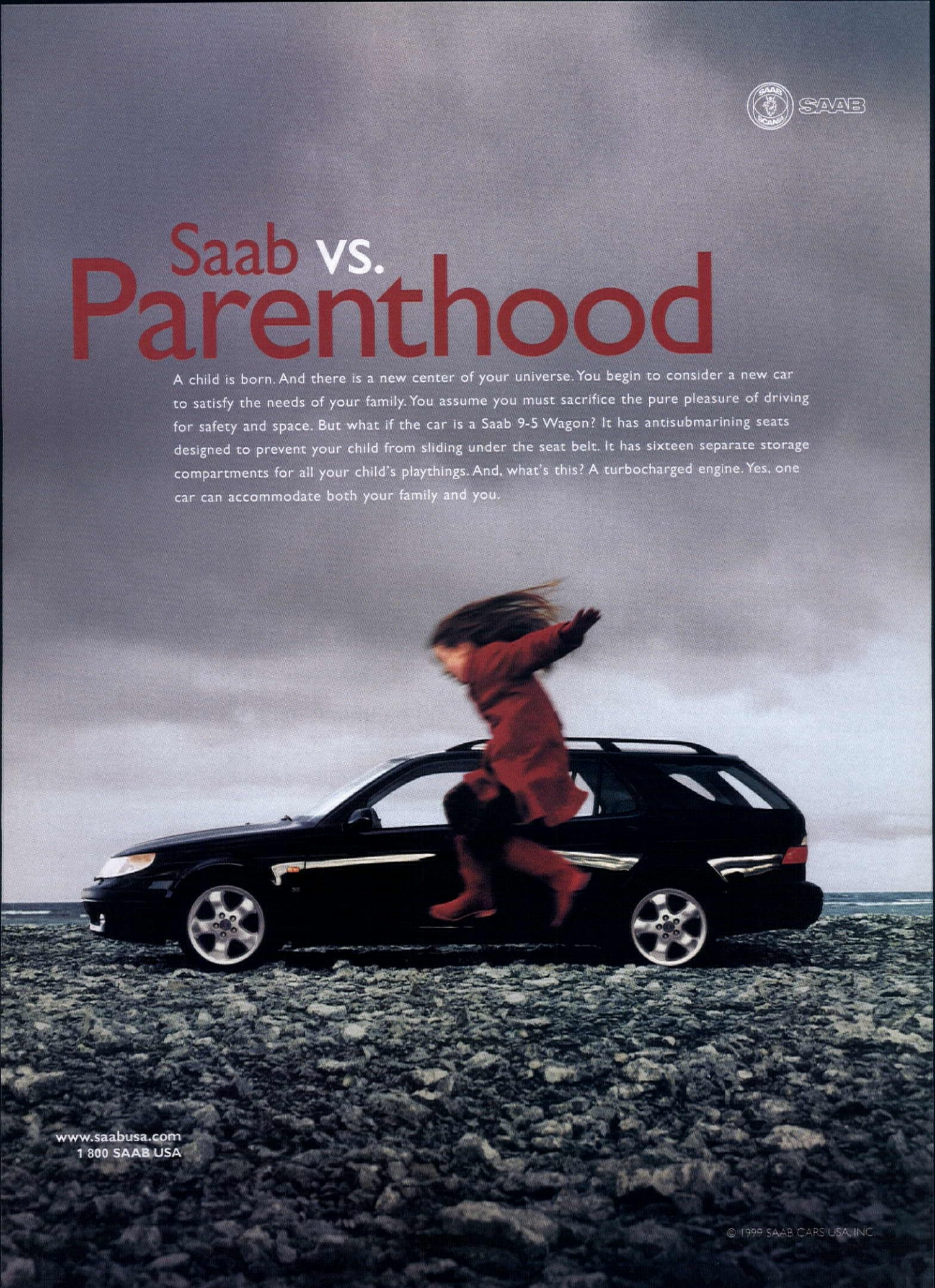

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doing the **dishes**

ONE EVENING NOT LONG AGO, I was talking to a friend as he bustled around, clearing the table and washing the dishes after a dinner he had prepared for a rather large group. (O happy role reversal!) He seemed to enjoy the cleanup as much as he had the cooking—soaping each plate, glass, and pot lavishly, rinsing it thoroughly and placing it to dry on a rack. I asked him why all this seemed to give him so much pleasure. "It's my way of saying thank you to the pot," he replied, patting its bottom as tenderly as if he had just diapered a baby.

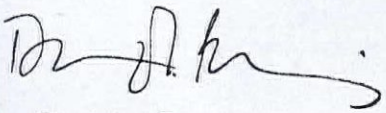
No dishwasher. No caterer. No maid. Preparation, cooking, serving—all accomplished in a spirit of steady, patient, and companionable effort. Of course, everything we build into our kitchens today goes in the opposite direction. Several dishwashers. Caterer's kitchens. Enough Sub-Zeros to set the house humming. Naturally, we need all the help we can get. Every gadget that promises a cleaner house, a better dish, is something I want in my life. I've started turning down the corners of pages in the Williams-Sonoma catalog in search of the ever elusive tool for better—best!—living.

It's been ever thus; our enthusiasm for the things that make housework easier certainly isn't new. Each generation simply finds its own tools for liberation. And buying these things for someone else is even considered a mark of love, affection, and solidarity in the mutual assault on homemaking. ("And he bought her a dishwasher and a coffee percolator . . . ," as Joni Mitchell traces the arc of a courtship.) Myself, I can't wait to buy a brand-new, superquiet, elegant dishwasher whose door doesn't need slamming five or six times to convince it that I'm seriously ready to get this load done.

But what have we lost in all the acquiring? Some attitude of caring for, of gratitude for, the things that make up the everyday rituals of life. One of my fondest childhood memories is of enormous Sunday meals with my grandparents in Kentucky, a place we never visited often enough, as far as I was concerned. I loved everything about it—the white clapboard house, the sleeping porch where I was placed in a cot so high off the ground I had to be lifted out in the morning, the farm, the cows, the little pond where I caught my first fish, my grandfather's pipe, my grandmother's radiantly sweet soul. . . . Anyway, they used to serve elaborate dinners after the church service, huge affairs, aunts, uncles, cousins gathered round a table piled high (in my child's eye) with chicken and mashed potatoes and greens and gravy and biscuits—well, you get the idea. Afterward, my grandparents would head into the kitchen to clean up.

Many years later, long after they had died, my father made a remark, almost off-handedly, probably during one of our incessant arguments about whose turn it was to do the dishes, about how his parents had never owned a dishwasher, so who was I to complain? When my dad had urged them to "modernize," they refused. Cleaning up after meals was a pleasure for them. There was nothing he liked more, my grandfather explained, than standing next to my grandmother after dinner while she washed the dishes and handed them, one by one, to him to dry and put away. They loved each other. And together, they made a home. What more could they want?

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIGITTE LACOMBE



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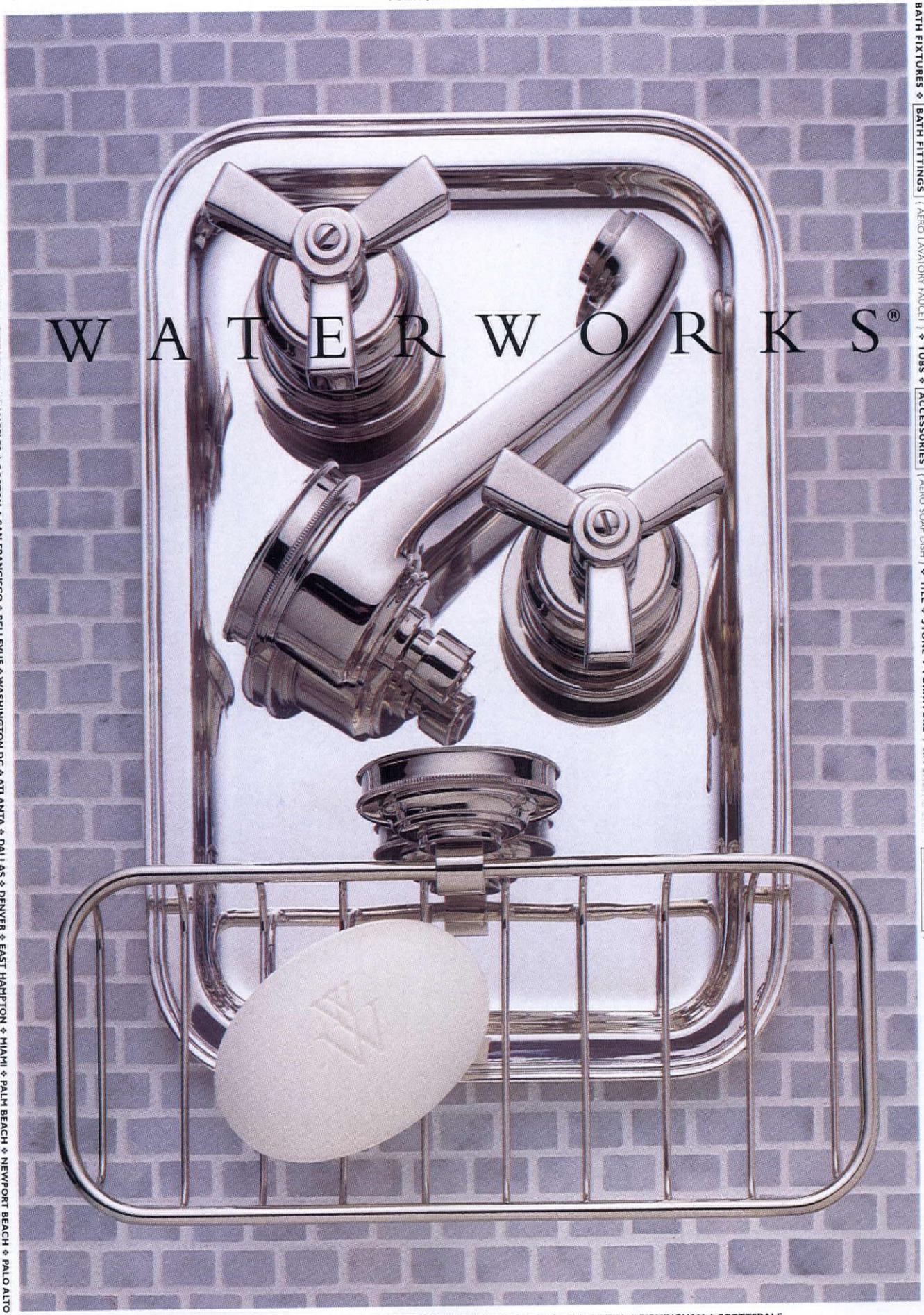

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letters

out of the closet

THANK YOU FOR the recent issue on closets ["Domestic Bliss," November]. It inspired me to do the following: (1) go through each closet in my house and ruthlessly cull items that were worn infrequently, outgrown, or redundant; (2) make a pact with my family that if new items were purchased, something in the closet had to go; and (3) give away those perfectly good clothes that we don't need to those who do. Because this issue followed on the heels of the one on luxury, it made clear the difference between luxury and excess. Most of us do not need bigger closets. Maybe bigger hearts, instead?

SHERRY TUCKER DAVID
McKinney, TX

I JUST FINISHED reading "Welcome," by Dominique Browning [November]. It's lovely—as usual—but I have one thought to add. I believe that people in general (translation: me, in particular) clean and order their homes according to the chaos and hysteria that is taking place in the larger world. My home is never so neat as when a nuclear treaty is being negotiated or another schoolyard shooting has taken place. Peace in the closet is a poor substitute for peace in the world, but when we need to find tranquillity—and don't—it becomes our responsibility to create it somewhere. And behind our closet doors is as good a place as any to start.

MAUREEN K. POLIFRONI
Harrington Park, NJ

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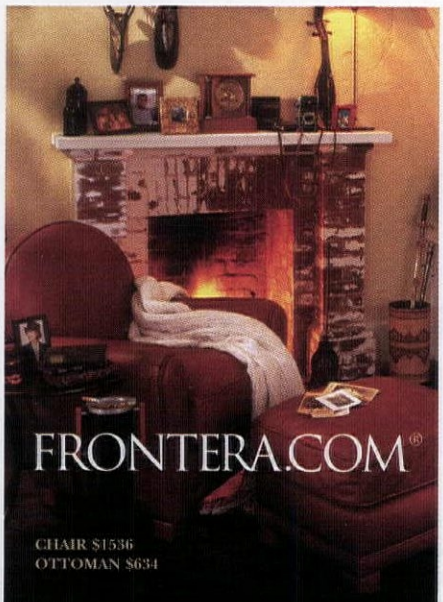

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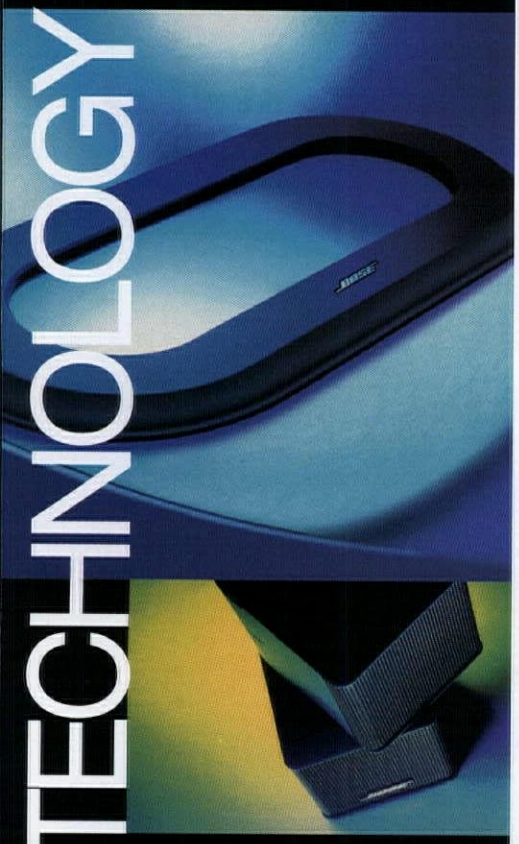

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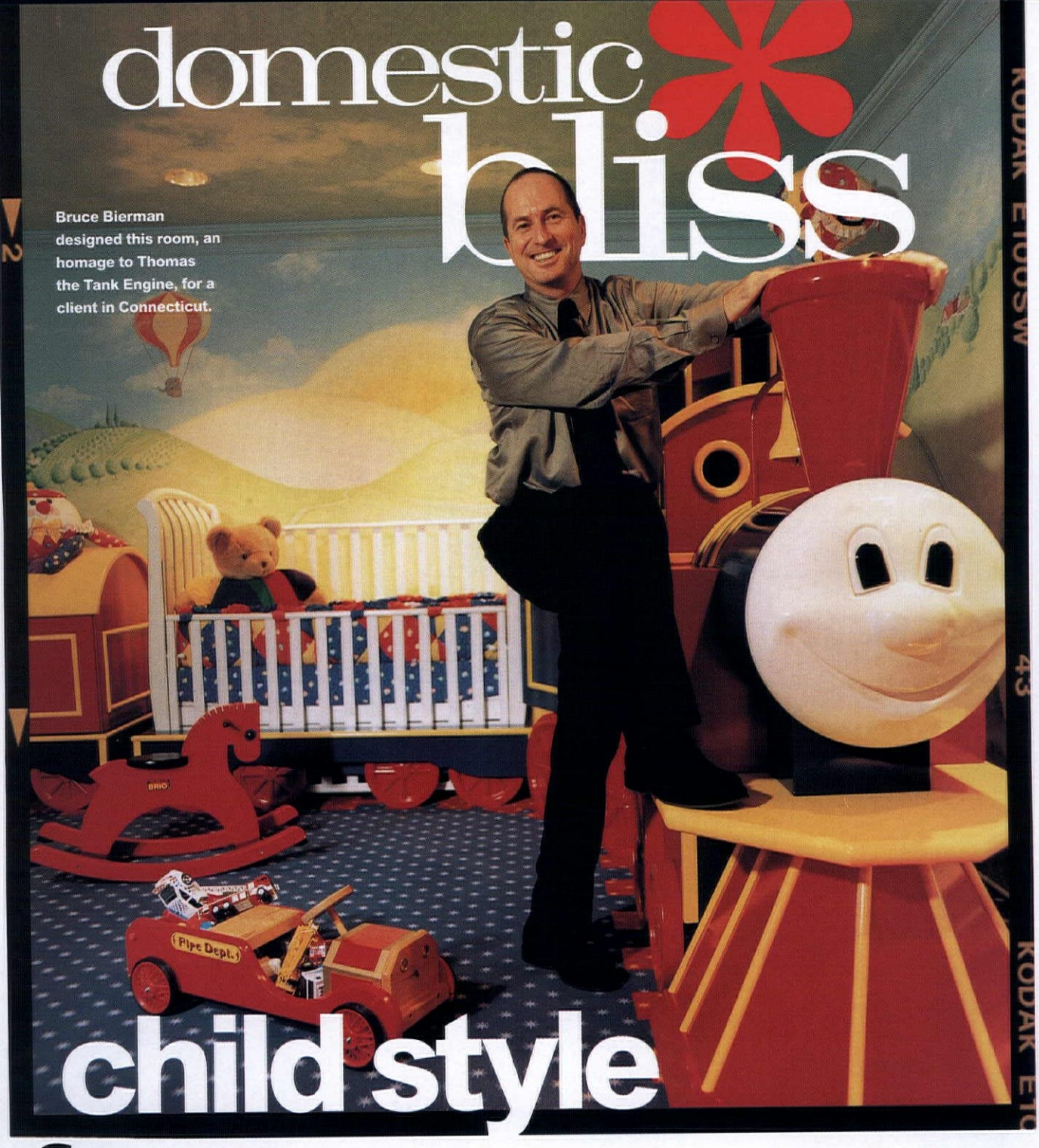
domestic bliss



Bruce Bierman designed this room, an homage to Thomas the Tank Engine, for a client in Connecticut.

child style

FOR SOME FAMILIES, the right decorator is just as vital as a good pediatrician. "My client said, 'We're having a boy, and my husband wants a drop-dead baby's room,'" recalls designer Bruce Bierman, who created this Thomas the Tank Engine fantasy for a little boy in Connecticut. "Drop-dead" meant hiring an imaginative cabinetmaker to fashion an engine and four cars that do double duty as a crib, changing table, chest of drawers, and toy box. It meant meticulously cutting up and reassembling two Stark carpets to create a track. It

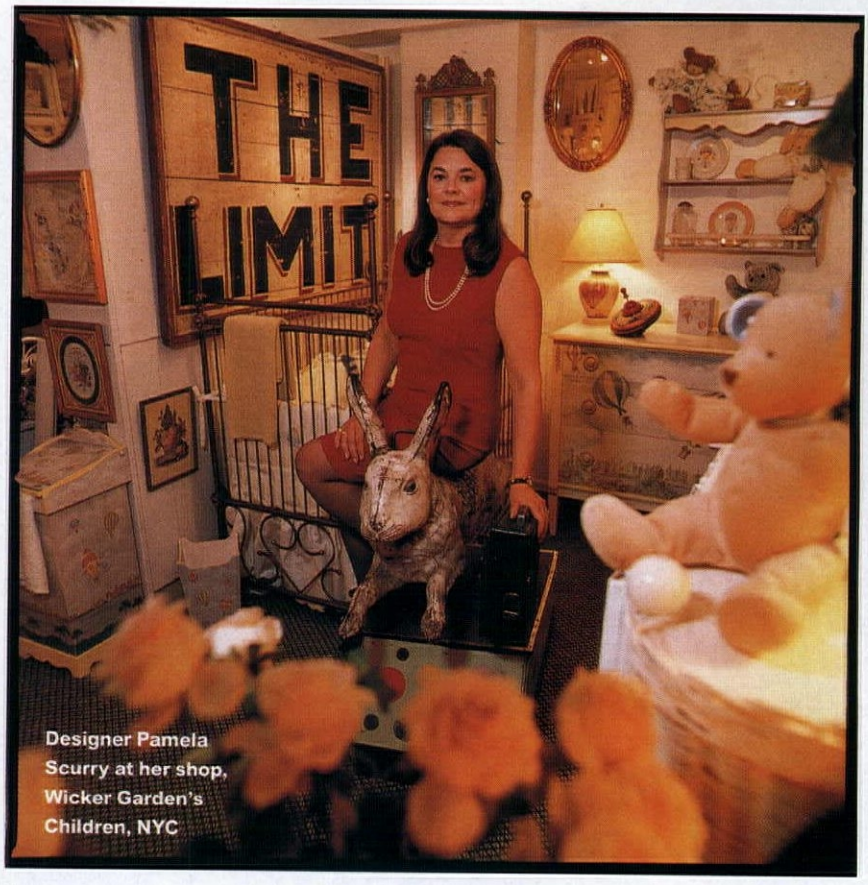
then and now
page 36

EDITED BY DAN SHAW

PHOTOGRAPH BY STEFAN STUDER; SOURCES, SEE BACK OF BOOK

meant painting clouds on the ceiling and rolling hills on the walls. It also meant spending about $50,000. Is that too much? Not if you know that the parents' rooms cost at least that much, says Victoria Carrique, who helped Bierman design the room.

In this new age of excess, the question comes up again and again. "When Is Enough Too Much?" read a headline in *The New York Times* last fall, referring to the brawl between billionaire Ronald O. Perelman and his ex-wife, Patricia Duff, over their four-year-old daughter, Caleigh. In case you missed the domestic kerfuffle, Duff's lawyer argued that Caleigh deserved to live as nicely as Perelman's daughter from a previous marriage and, reported the *Times,* in "rough parity with an Upper East Side family." According to testimony given by an interior decorator, this meant a $130,000 bedroom with $13,000 upholstered walls, a $6,500 painted ceiling, a $19,500 antique desk and chair, and a walk-in closet with a $6,500 carpet. *Sixty-five hundred dollars for a kid's rug? In a closet?* Apart from the outlandish details, the Duff-Perelman story raised some actual issues—such as, if you wake up every morning and stumble across a near priceless Aubusson, isn't your child also entitled to do so? Many normally free-spending designers say no. "It seems irresponsible," says William Sofield, who designs Gucci stores as well as residential projects for young families. "Unless you have a very effete child who happens to appreciate the value of signed Nakashima pieces, for example."



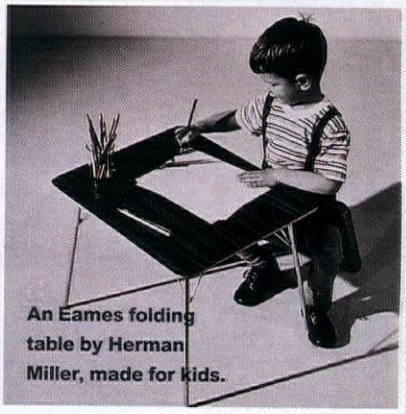
Designer Pamela Scurry at her shop, Wicker Garden's Children, NYC

More important, kids grow. Babies don't stay babies for very long. Painted duckies and mounds of eyelet might not be appealing to the five-year-old who lives and breathes Spawn creatures; and eight-year-olds become teenagers in a terrifyingly short time. "My thinking is, buy things that are going to last a lifetime," says Pamela Scurry, who designs kids' (and adults') rooms using the hand-painted furniture from her Manhattan store, Wicker Garden's Children. "So you have a chest of drawers in the baby's room with

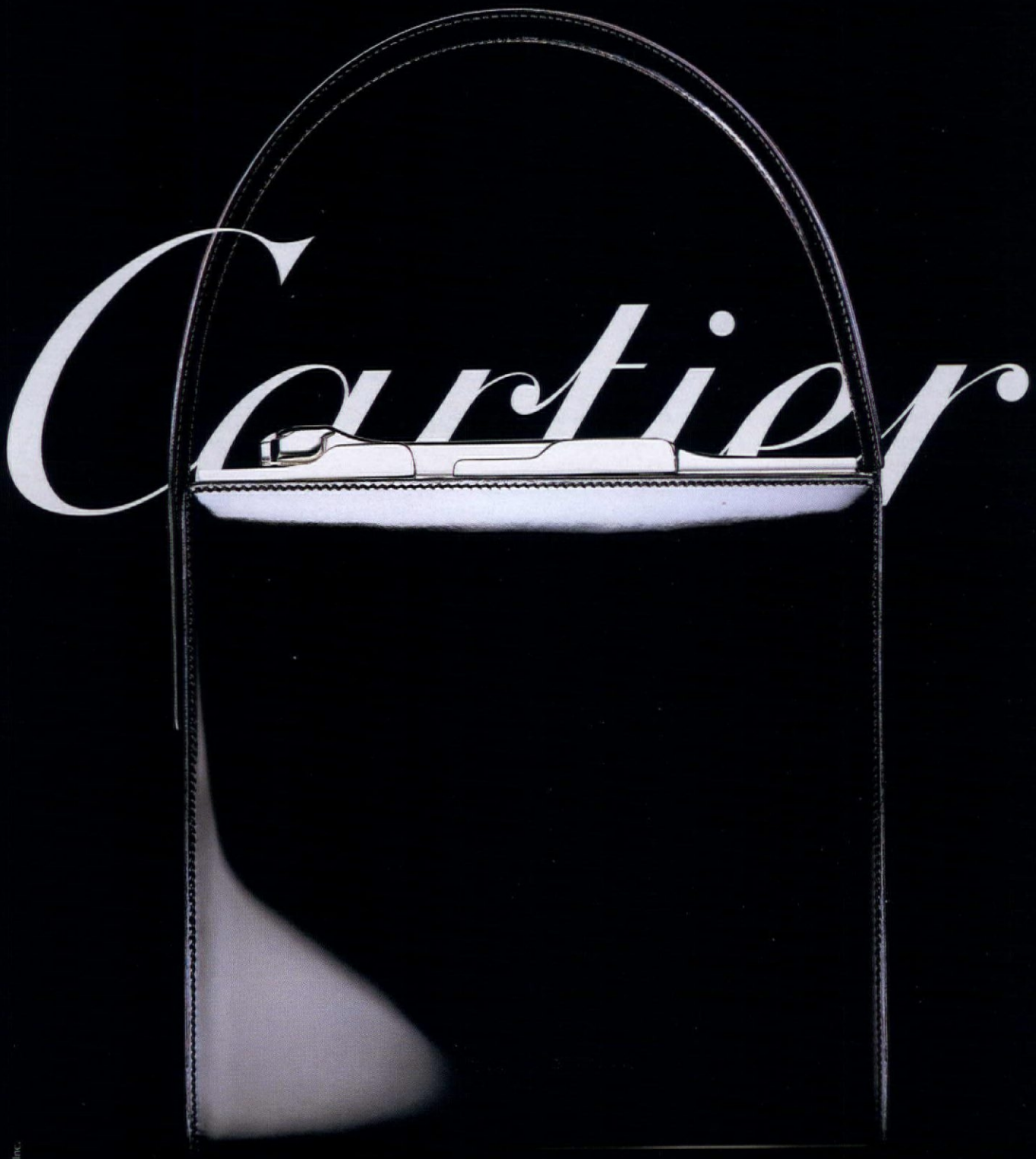
A 1955 Knoll ad for Bertoia chairs, above. Coveted Eames chairs, right.

elementary design

When the Eameses were young, so were some of their customers. In the '40s and '50s, both Knoll and Herman Miller produced children's furniture by their star designers. In fact, Charles and Ray Eames's first production pieces were for kids—5,000 molded plywood chairs with a heart shape cut out in the back section, which came off their Evans Products assembly line in 1945. "It enabled Charles to work out some of the problems for the adult chairs that came one year later," says Peter Loughrey of Los Angeles Modern Auctions, which will sell a rare cache of the chairs (estimate: $8,000 to $10,000 each) in March. Not all vintage modern kids' furniture is so dear. Pint-sized Bertoia chairs manufactured by Knoll from the '50s to the '80s fetch $200 to $300. Alas, it's unlikely that Herman Miller or Knoll will reissue these classics. "There would have to be so many engineering changes to meet today's safety standards," says Herman Miller's Kelli Gierz. "The original designs would be spoiled."—L.G.


An Eames folding table by Herman Miller, made for kids.

TOP: STEFAN STUDER; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY SUZETTE RORIGUEZ FOR PRICE, INC.; BOTTOM LEFT: COURTESY OF KNOLL, INC.; RIGHT: LOS ANGELES MODERN AUCTIONS



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a shelf that fits on top as a changing table. In a year, the shelf comes off, and maybe in fifteen years, the chest moves out into the hall, or the room becomes a guest room. A good chest of drawers is a good chest of drawers." And it might cost about $3,000 at Scurry's shop.

Esther Sadowsky's Manhattan firm, Charm & Whimsy, also creates hand-painted interiors for kids, with prices ranging from $5,000 to $20,000. She has a pretty strict "No ducky" policy: "I tell the parents that we'll put the ducks—meaning stuffed animals—on the shelves with the little baby books. In a few years, the stuffed animals and tiny books will be replaced by other things."

During a recent project, Matthew White, a Los Angeles designer, was somewhat stunned at the final cost of a bedroom for a three-year-old girl: $40,000. "Which is not so much," says White, "if you consider that the other rooms averaged about $100,000. But I thought we'd do a fun flea market room for $10,000. Something theatrical and whimsical, with stuff you can throw out and not feel guilty about, because in two years she's going to be a completely different person." But Mom won out, so this child will live in a set straight out of *The Little Princess*, with canopies and a princess bed and flowers on the ceiling. The props were delivered in one day so that the room could be presented to her as a fait tout accompli. "What really drives kids' rooms is the parents' fantasy—don't you think?" White says.

But what do kids *really* want? "There have been a lot of studies showing that kids are drawn to wide-open plains," says Robert Bechtel, professor of psychology at the University of Arizona in Tucson and the editor of the journal *Environment and Behavior*. "Of course, if you ask them to draw pictures of places they like, kids tend to draw caves."

"Just give them a safe place to sleep, a little nook to climb into," says Walter Chatham, a Manhattan architect whose children spent babyhood sleeping in an industrial laundry hamper, an ad hoc cave-crib that could be wheeled around the family's lofts. You might—gasp!—even ask a kid what appeals to her. "Not whether she likes Barney or Barbie," Sadowsky says, "because that will inevitably change. You ask what activities she's into, what colors she likes." L.A. designer Rose Tarlow says, "You ask what makes her feel safe and special. It doesn't matter if it looks strange. Because you're building memories. Not *your* memories. *Hers.*"—PENELOPE GREEN

"C" is for catalog

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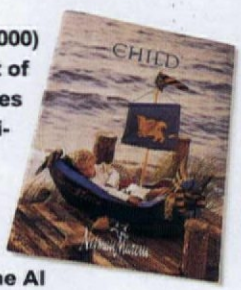

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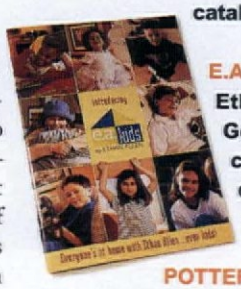
Though some of the beds are straight out of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, the decorating stories sold here are both whimsical and accessible, considering this is a Neiman Marcus catalog offspring.



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The catalog that revolutionized the industry. The choices are as varied as the menu in a Greek coffee shop—furniture for tots and tweens with motley sensibilities.

Charm & Whimsy's Esther Sadowsky in a girl's room she designed on the Upper East Side

BOTTOM: STEFAN STUDER; HAIR AND MAKEUP BY SUZETTE RODRIGUEZ FOR PRICE, INC.; TOP: JOHN LAWTON

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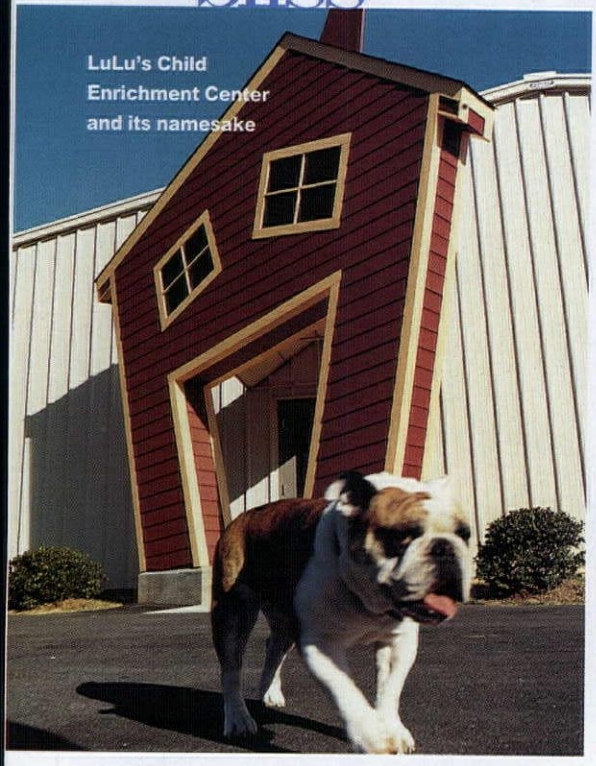
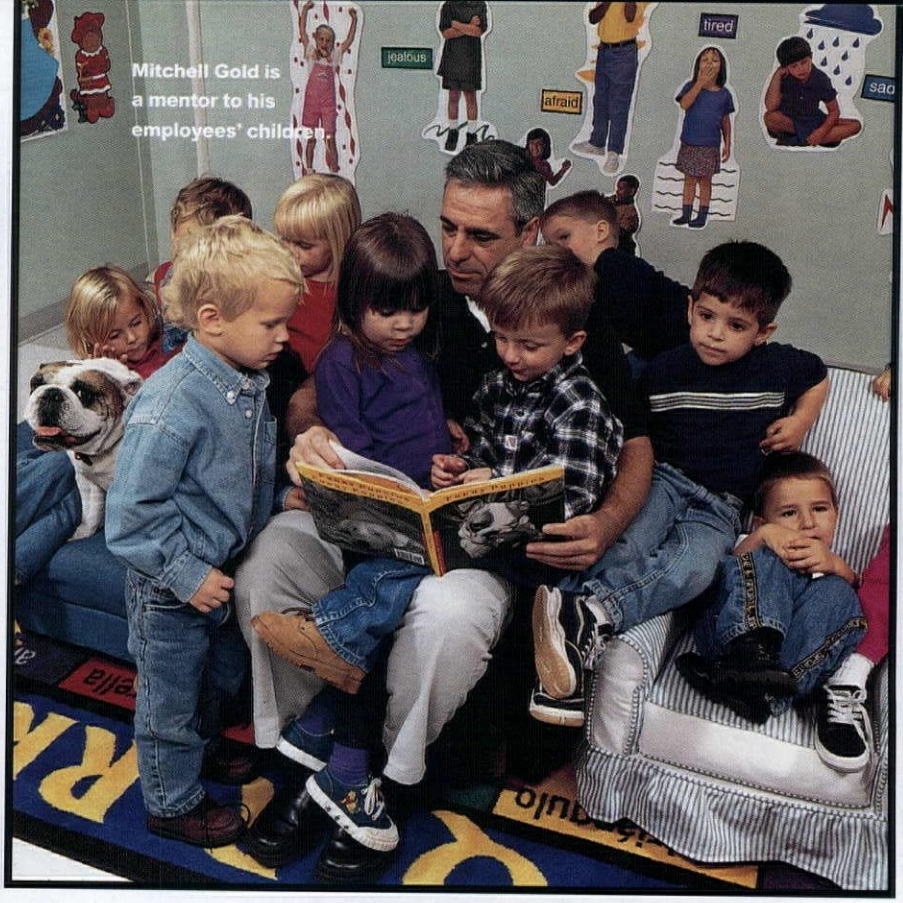


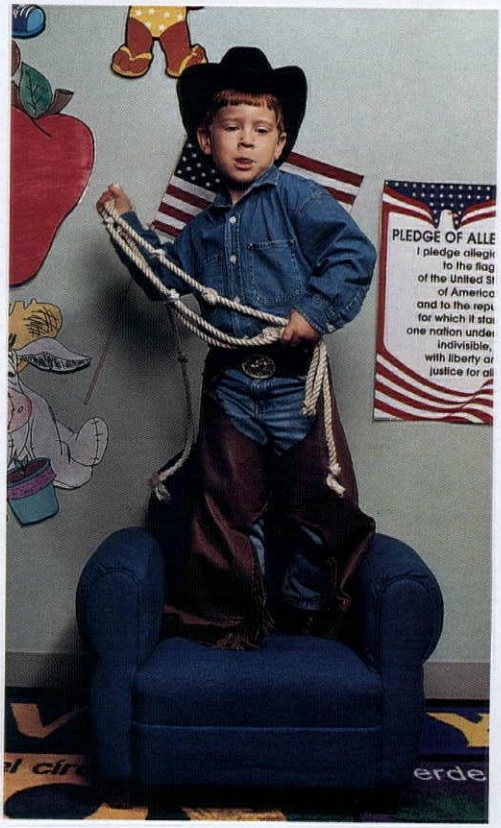
LuLu's Child Enrichment Center and its namesake

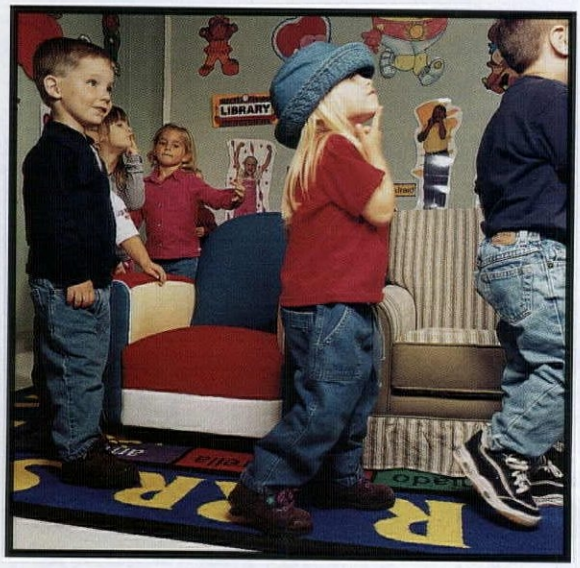


Mitchell Gold is a mentor to his employees' children.

the gold standard

There is no other day-care center in the country quite like LuLu's Child Enrichment Center. Named after the bulldog belonging to Mitchell Gold and Bob Williams, the duo who run the Mitchell Gold Co., the center is located at the company's furniture factory in Taylorsville, NC, and fees are just $65 to $75 a week for employees' children. "This is my proudest accomplishment," says Gold, who also takes great pride in having built, in ten years, a $50 million company whose customers include Pottery Barn, Crate & Barrel, and Restoration Hardware. Naturally, the center is outfitted with Mitchell Gold's line of club chairs for children. "I love coming in and seeing the kids reading in their chairs," Gold says. "Then they get up and jump all over me. Even though I'm their parents' boss, they call me Mitchell, not Mr. Gold."





His benevolence has had an unexpected payoff: the center doubles as a product-testing laboratory. "We thought we could make children's furniture much less expensively than our regular furniture, but we learned that's not possible," he says. "Kids climb all over furniture, so it needs to be really tough." It also needs to be good-looking. "A lot of our children's furniture doesn't end up in kids' rooms," he point outs. "Customers put it in their living or family rooms. They want this furniture to go with the rest of the home." —D.S.

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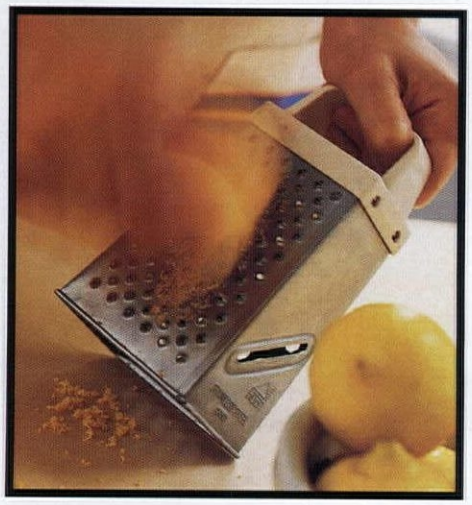
e-verything and more!

HomePortfolio.com blows my mind. This *über*-site was conceived as the first place to go when you are thinking about buying something new for your home—a place to comparison-shop before getting into the car and visiting a store or showroom. You can preview everything from architectural elements (111 types of moldings by five different manufacturers) to woodburning ovens (19 models by five different companies). "We help you know what's out there," says chairman and CEO Rolly Rouse. If you're considering a leather sofa, you can see 187 examples on HomePortfolio.com—from Cassina's avant-garde Veranda model to Coach's all-American Madison. And if you decide that you like the Coach aesthetic, the site allows you to click on the ten other Coach products that have been posted. Instead of bookmarking individual pages, you can create your own portfolio of favorites on the site itself. "It's our version of the manila envelope of magazine pages that you keep in your nightstable drawer," co-founder and publisher Tom Ashbrook says. "We're embracing the metaphor that consumers already know, and infusing it with more power." Indeed, this virtual clip file lets consumers show their architect or spouse what they've "clipped" via an E-mail program that's built into the site.

Since HomePortfolio.com's contents are already overwhelming, Rouse and Ashbrook have devised many ways to edit searches and help users leapfrog among categories. "We had to disaggregate and reaggregate the industry," says Rouse, explaining how difficult it was to create a vehicle to unite the home-furnishings industry. "It's a complex mathematic matrix that makes this possible."

When it comes to on-line purchases, the site isn't always so logical. If you're searching for computer workstations, you'll find several by Herman Miller—but no direct link to Miller's site, hmstore.com (though there *is* a link to hermanmiller.com on the "Resource Guide" page, along with other E-tailers, like furniture.com). This winter, HomePortfolio.com will start selling products from 50 of its more than 750 manufacturers, but its main purpose will always be guiding users to the right brick-and-mortar store from a growing list of 25,000 retailers. "We want to expand consumers' options," says Rouse. "Nobody says, 'I want to decorate my house only with stuff that I can buy on-line.'" —D.S.



E-DITORS' CHOICE

the joy of clicking

Clear out a few of your kitchen cabinets, drawers, and countertops, and make room for all the great stuff you are going to find (and find that you need) at cooking.com. There are hundreds and hundreds of gadgets here: five ice cream makers, eight kinds of rolling pins, 15 graters (like my new four-sided one, left, perfect for zesting lemons), 25 types of bottle openers, and no fewer than 62 types and sizes of spatulas. The site is divided into a dozen different "stores," like the one for outdoor entertaining, which offers everything from kabob racks to indestructible tumblers. If you discover that all this new stuff is making you feel like a professional chef, then you might want to order one of the chef's hats ($9.95 and $22.95) that are available, too. —KELLY WINKLER

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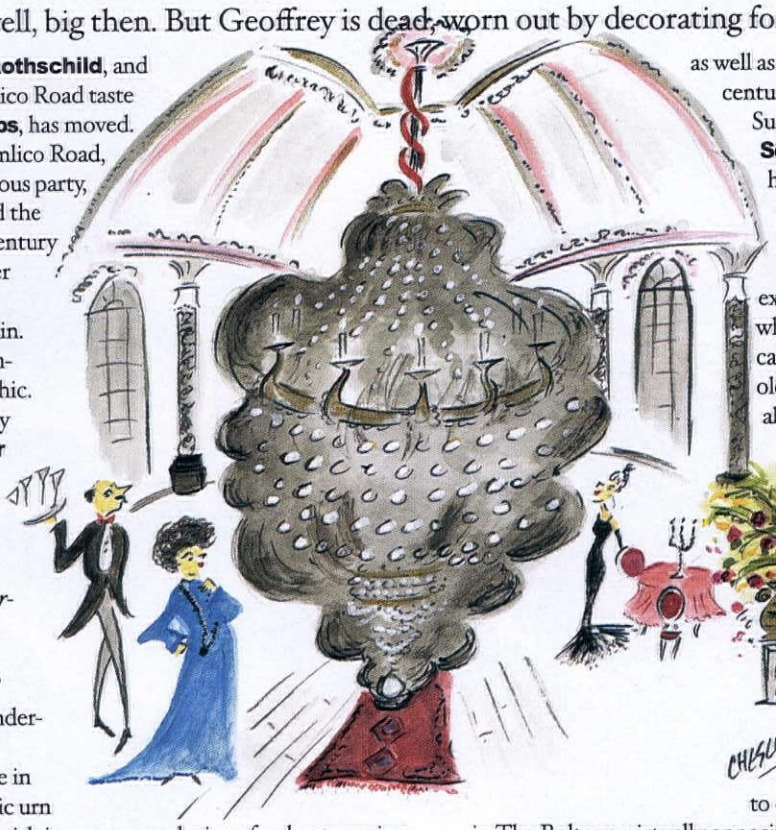
the next BIG thing

The taste map of London is changing—fast. Ten years ago, if I wanted to know what was stirring in the world of decorative antiques, I walked down the Pimlico Road and gazed longingly into **Geoffrey Bennison**'s window, which usually featured a 20-foot-high neoclassical urn with moss still clinging to it. Big was, well, big then. But Geoffrey is dead, worn out by decorating for **Marie-Helene de Rothschild**, and that other great Pimlico Road taste broker, **Carlton Hobbs**, has moved. Before he left the Pimlico Road, Hobbs gave a marvelous party, which swirled around the biggest eighteenth-century chandelier I have ever seen, which he had bagged in black muslin. It was absolutely wonderful. Big. Big and chic.



Big is still very, very big with **Christopher Gibbs**, a refugee from what remains of the antiques trade in Bond Street, and now the grandest *fournisseur* of the Pimlico Road gang. "It's the Rialto of taste, dear," he told me, sitting underneath a 14-foot-high mottled faience stove in the shape of a gigantic urn on a stepped plinth, with its own wrought-iron fender, towering over his showroom in a tiny street behind the Pimlico Road. "Wonderful, that, isn't it? Made for the Duc de la Roche Guyon for the Salle des Gardes at the Château de la Roche Guyon. We had to get a crane to get it in." He beams. Gibbs, a rumpled, jolly figure, is busy at the moment with **Dinah Casson** and **David Mlinaric**, helping the Victoria and Albert Museum rehabilitate the British Galleries. And, although discreet enough not to mention names, he is also helping **Sir Paul Getty** and clients in the field of pop, such as **Mick Jagger**, to find extraordinary, but not necessarily expensive, objects and furniture.

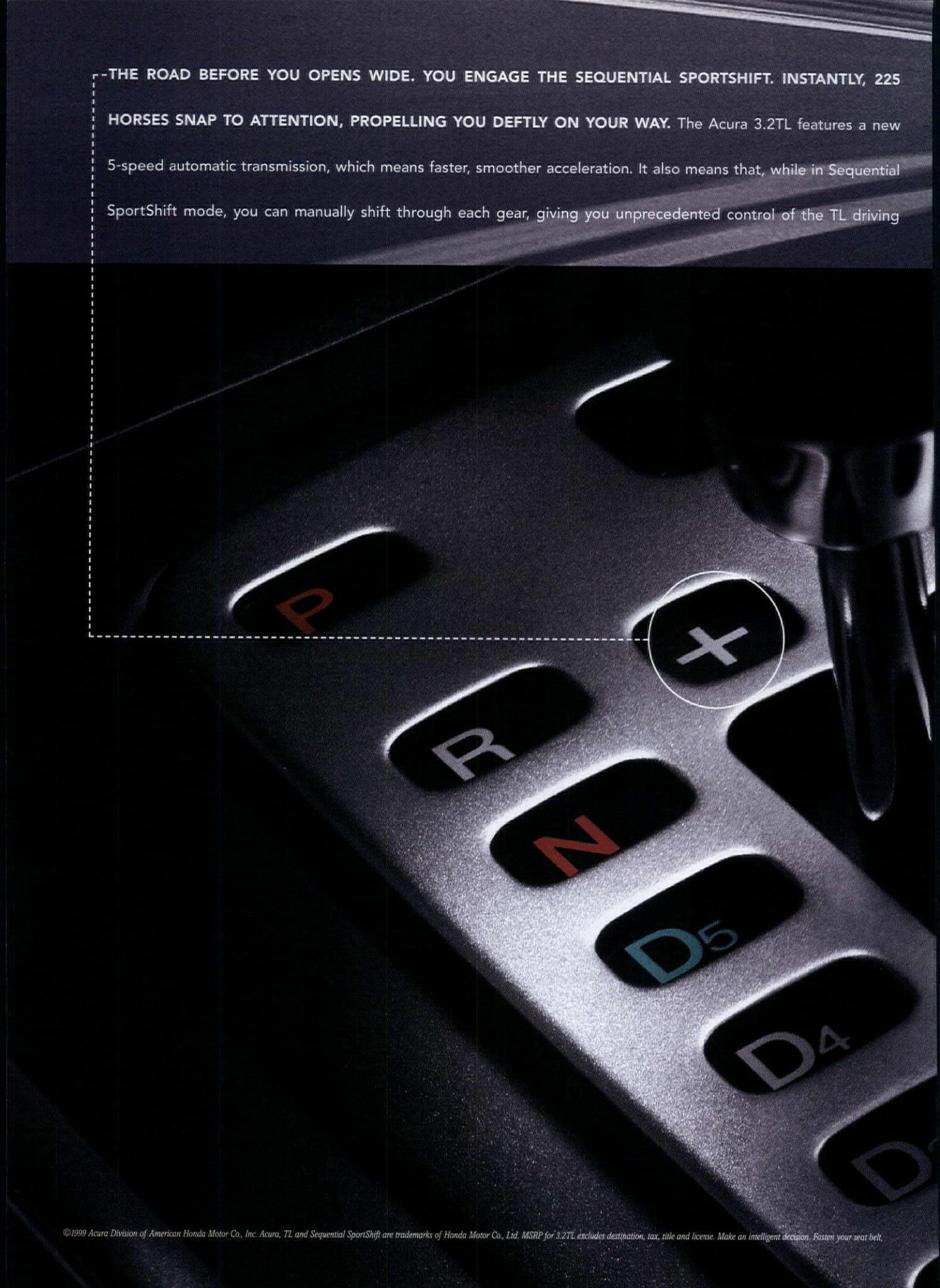
"I only buy what I like," he tells me, "and you know, you can still find marvelous objects for not much money." As I left, **Tony Ingrao**, the American decorator, came in, followed by a slipstream of clients.

But if I want to know what's going to play in terms of less haute-decorative looks, the junction of Ledbury Road and Westbourne Park Road, in the heart of ferociously smart Notting Hill, is a must on Saturdays from about one o'clock. Check out **David Champion**'s shop, full of such African tribal art as Giacometti-ish groups of wooden figures from Tanzania, as well as ammonite fossils and nineteenth-century French Provincial furniture. Supermodels such as **Claudia Schiffer** and the **Spice Girls** shop here, reflected in the silvery depths of Venetian mirrors.

Opposite is Solaris. Here **Hassan Abdullah** usually has an exquisite Biedermeier chair or two, which he upholsters in plain white canvas, as opposed to those boring old Napoleonic bee brocades. He also has a passion for '50s-*moderne* lights, mostly Murano. He combines these with eighteenth-century girandoles, Swedish Gustavian furniture, and modern glass. "**Donna Karan, Nicole Farhi, Lulu Guinness**, and **Patrick Cox** come in here a lot, and so does **David Collins**," he tells me. (Collins, rumor has it, is very much in line to do up **Madonna**'s huge new house in The Boltons, virtually opposite **Tom Ford**'s new house.)

Shoreditch, in London's East End, is obviously going to be the next Very Big Destination. If it's really, really modern you are after, this is the place. It's easy to explore: just tap in www.hiddenart.co.uk for a cybertrip round many of these studios. And what could be more modern than a millennium plantation? **Lord Rothschild**'s daughter **Beth**, a horticulturist, is planting an avenue of 2,000 paces, one for each year of the millennium, at Waddesdon, the High Victorian house restored by her father. The woodland areas featured along its length are inspired by members of Beth's family. For her mother, who loves English woodlands, only native trees will be used; for her American brother-in-law, the film director **William Brookfield**, the trees will be native to his homeland. I cannot think of a nicer or more permanent homage to life far, far beyond Y2K.

CHESLEY McLAREN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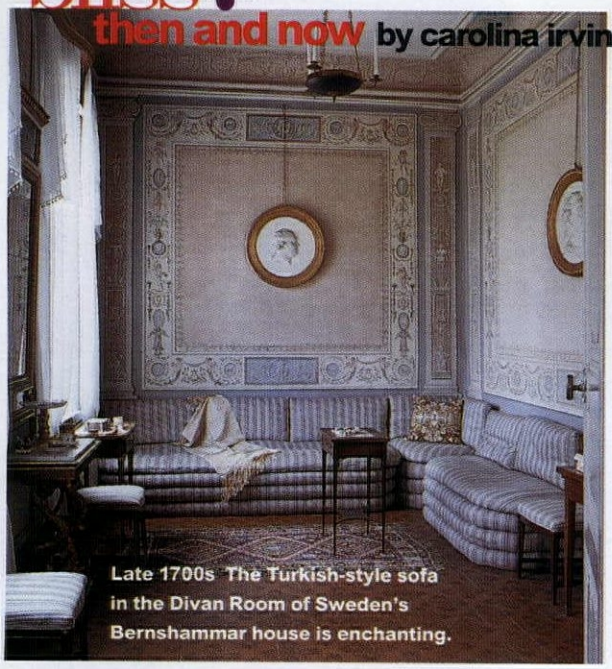
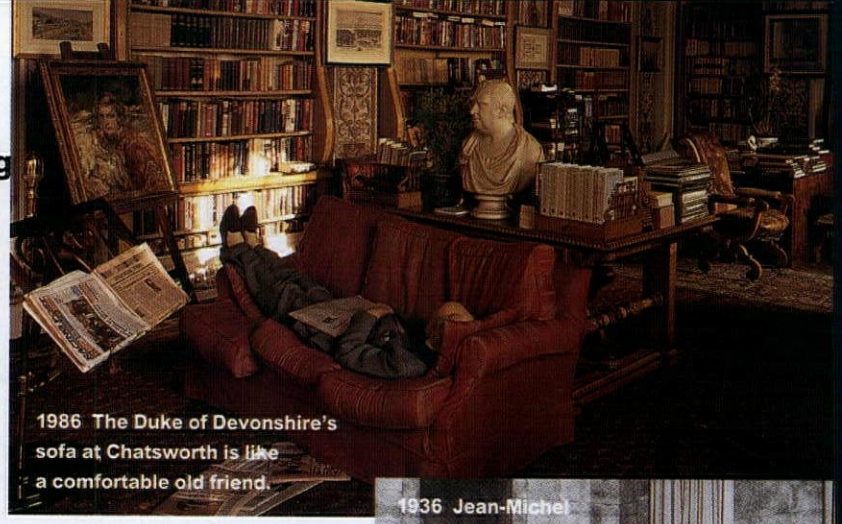
bliss
then and now by carolina irving



Late 1700s The Turkish-style sofa in the Divan Room of Sweden's Bernshammar house is enchanting.



1986 The Duke of Devonshire's sofa at Chatsworth is like a comfortable old friend.

sublime sofas

there's nothing worse than a bad sofa; it can ruin the best of rooms. I can usually spot one miles away—short of seat, teetering on chubby legs that are a little too high, arms rounded and overstuffed, and generally bursting at the seams. Sofas like this belong in Botero paintings, not in living rooms. Over the centuries, the English have come up with some of the best basic sofas: deep, low, and lean. Many are slipcovered, which makes them chic but unpretentious. The French like their sofas a bit more *habillé* and pulled together, but they are still of perfect proportions. Coco Chanel's was exquisite—miles long, but slim, with a single suede seat cushion. Then there's Jean-Michel Frank's masterpiece for the Villa Noailles, which is still being copied by designers today. I could go on and on—I am truly obsessed. Here are ten famous sofas I could live with forever.

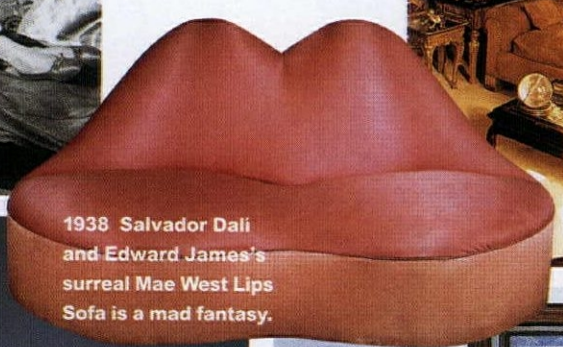
1936 Jean-Michel Frank's iconic sofa for the Villa Noailles

Ca. 1640 The Knole settee is a wonderful English classic.

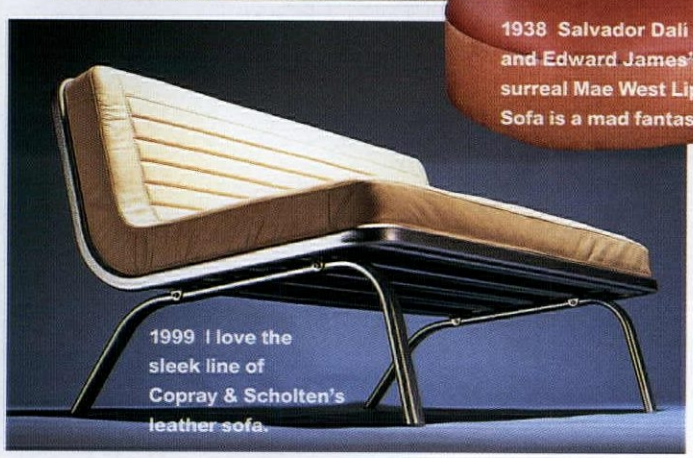
1954 Florence Knoll's classic is low and lean.

1913 Madame Poiret reclines in Oriental splendor on her long, low sofa.

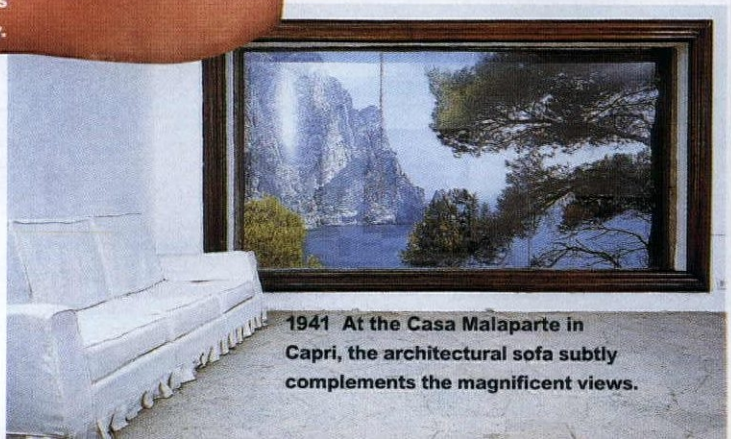
1930s Coco Chanel quilted her bags after she quilted her sofa.



1938 Salvador Dali and Edward James's surreal Mae West Lips Sofa is a mad fantasy.



1999 I love the sleek line of Copray & Scholten's leather sofa.



1941 At the Casa Malaparte in Capri, the architectural sofa subtly complements the magnificent views.

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coastal bliss

by paul fortune

the good earth

The status game is getting very expensive. It's no longer enough to boast the latest Learjet or a Patagonian ranch; you've got to come up with something that requires not only a bucket of dough but also some commitment and passion. One's own vineyard definitely fits the bill.

Restaurateur **Michael McCarty** was not interested in the status game so much as using his ideally situated Malibu property to realize his dream vineyard. Ecco, **Malibu Vineyards**. Located midway on Rambla Pacifica, with stunning views of the coastline, the tidy 2.5-acre vineyard was planted with stock from Chalone Vineyards and nurtured through the first few seasons by experts who checked for rot and pests. The vineyard began producing in 1989, and to the astonishment of many skeptics, world-class cabernets and Chardonnays began to appear in Michael's restaurants a decade later. The small output (200 cases a year) only adds to the mystique. "This time of year, I love to barbecue the local langoustine clawless lobster you find off the Channel Islands, with truffles and my own Chardonnay," McCarty confides. "Need I say more?" Well, actually, yes. You could invite me to your next shindig. Neighbors and friends, including **Anjelica Huston** and **Bette Midler**, are always on hand when the mesquite chips start a-smoldering.

whole lotta love

What is love? Needless to say, it's never what you expect. But if all you expect is a basket of yummy fruits and vegetables, you're in luck. For many Angelenos, true love is the **L.A. Organic Vegetable Express**. No time to shop? Let LOVE do it for you. They guarantee fresh, chemical- and pesticide-free fruits and vegetables delivered to your door just hours after they've been harvested. LOVE is the child of Venice resident **Rick Segal**, who worked for a similar service in San Francisco. Scores of customers, including actress **Jennifer Grey**, are more than happy to let Segal do the early-morning shopping for them. "I love coming home after a hard day on the set to find that the food fairy has left me a fridge full of delicious food," says the very healthy-looking Grey. "And I'm doing something good for the environment. What could be better?"

compost happens

Actually, it doesn't just *happen*. But more about that later. So what do you need to manifest your dream kitchen? A Gaggeneau broiler? An under-counter Traulsen wine cooler? No matter how good your appliances, when all is said and done, the final result is always compost. Or, more accurately, the raw material for compost. Dinner-table conversations that could turn raucous over the best *huile d'olive vierge* have lately taken a decidedly odorous turn.

Do you use a **Gedye** or a **Biostack**? How about an aerated system? Do you rotate weekly? (Not on my schedule, darling!) And the most intimate of queries: Do you use your own biosolids? (No, I'm not explaining that one.) It's not enough to grow your own vegetables anymore; you must use your own compost—and lots of it. For the uninitiated, the City of Los Angeles has a Solid Resources Recycling Division, which holds regular seminars on composting. Even if you don't have a garden, you're expected to compost in your apartment with an ingenious self-contained unit that employs red worms that just gobble up all those coffee grounds and papaya peels—and, presto, fresh fertilizer that your house plants will devour. **Bette Midler** (she's certainly working this column!) has been a spokesperson and avid compost campaigner for many years, and the Divine One certainly knows her compost!

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT CLYDE ANDERSON; SOURCES, SEE BACK OF BOOK

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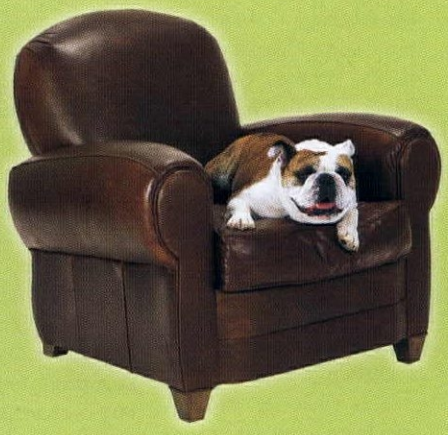
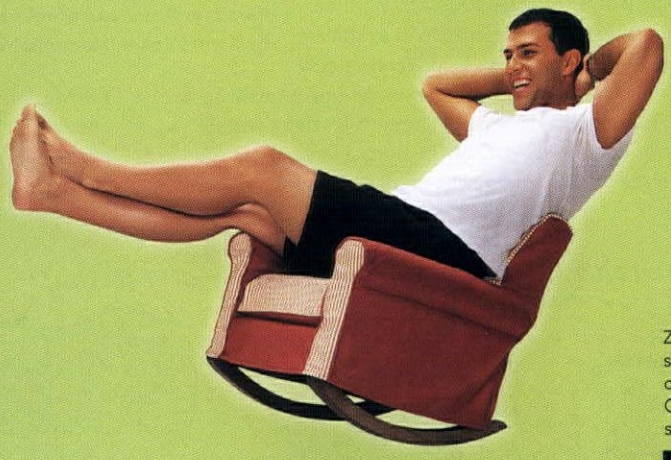


Whatever kind of kid you have.



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Zachary Sofa in easy-care white-denim slipcover over feather-blend duvet cushions; Biarritz club chair in Old America Ranch leather; Tootsie slipcovered kid's rocker.

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garden bliss by carol king

fond of fronds

Creating a fernery in a shady spot can be a one-day project

During the height of the Victorian fern craze, people donned stout boots, took up their collecting gear, and strode into the countryside in pursuit of that coveted but elusive fern *Dryopteris oneupmanshipii*. Their frondy trophies were then proudly installed in an area of the garden called a fernery. To Victorians, a fernery was proof that one was fashionable, scientific, artistic, and, probably, rich.

A fernery is still a lovely and relevant addition to a garden. It looks lush and green from a distance, and architectural and textural when you get up close. Ferneries don't even have to be entirely green, since some ferns have surprisingly colorful new fronds. For the gardener who loves to have one of everything, or who enjoys tracking down treasures when passing unfamiliar garden centers, or who, like the Victorians, enjoys having a couple of plants so rare that no one else has them, a fernery is just the thing.

One of the beauties of a fernery is that it will succeed in places where many other kinds of plants fail: next to the foundation on the north side of a house, for instance, or in front of a group of rhododendrons that need facing down with something frilly. Anyplace, in fact, where there isn't much sun and where there is, or where you can supply, sufficient moisture.

A fernery can become a one-day, instant-gratification project. Select a shady spot and prepare the soil by digging down at least a foot and a half. Dig in a six-inch or deeper layer of organic matter and, if drainage is poor, some sharp sand or grit. Fern expert Judith I. Jones, owner of Fancy Fronds Nursery in Gold Bar, Washington, says that digging in a water-absorbing hydrophilic gel polymer will help young ferns get established during their first two years, although it isn't essential.

Select your ferns from a garden center or, for jazzier varieties, from a specialty catalog. Jones recommends choosing a variety of frond shapes, sizes, and colors. Bold, vertical plants such as the log fern will contrast nicely with a selection of lower-growing ferns with matte, shiny, or feathery fronds.

Arrange the potted ferns about four feet apart on the prepared ground until you are pleased with the composition. Take into account how much the ferns will grow out, as well as up. Then simply tuck them into the soil, water thoroughly, and mulch. Ferns are social creatures and look good with early spring bulbs and shade-tolerant perennials such as hellebores, tiarellas, and hostas. Of course, once you have a fernery, you'll always be on the lookout for new specimens to add to your collection.

Fernery care is confined to keeping the soil moist during the growing season, removing ratty fronds just before the new fiddleheads emerge in spring, and adding a spring and fall mulch of compost. Then take your cue from the Victorians, and on summer evenings, invite guests to stroll outside and view your fernery.

RESOURCES

NURSERY

Fancy Fronds
P.O. Box 1090, Gold Bar, WA 98251; www.fancyfronds.com

FERN SHORT LIST

***Dryopteris filix-mas* 'Linearis polydactyla'**
***Dryopteris filix-mas* 'Cristata'**
Dryopteris erythrosora
Polystichum polyblepharum
***Athyrium filix-femina* 'Vernoniae cristatum'**

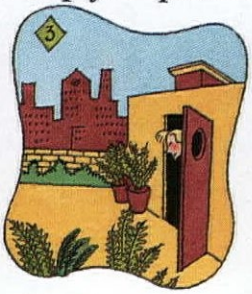
BOOK

***Ferns for American Gardens*, by John Mickel (Macmillan)**

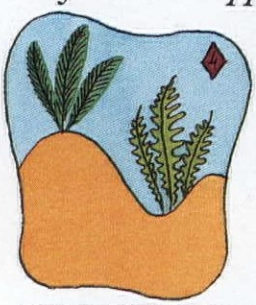
fernery tips *A few simple steps to keep your plants—and friends—happy* — STEPHEN ORR

Use a large stone or an old log to anchor your fernery visually.

Avoid fertilizing ferns, since artificial nutrients cause weak growth.



Many ferns do well in pots, so city dwellers needn't feel left out.



Plant moisture-loving ferns lower, and drier types higher.

Easily divided ferns are perfect gifts for gardening friends.

STEVEN GUARNACCIA

AT FIRST

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hunting & gathering

LIQUID MEASURES
From left: Hakatie pitcher, $83, by Annaleena Hakatie; Salad Sunrise oil-and-vinegar cruet, $58, by Arnout Visser for DMD. Both at Moss, NYC.

kitchen caboodle

EVERYONE ALWAYS SEEMS TO CONGREGATE in the kitchen. Is it any wonder that's where our favorite designers have headed, too? Whether you want your kitchen to be a fun and **quirky place** or a **sleek laboratory** for inventive cuisine, a master like **Ettore Sottsass** and a younger designer like **Stefano Giovannoni** will stir your heart as well as your pots with practical, affordable tools.

PRODUCED BY BROOKE STODDARD PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANA GALLAGHER

FOOD STYLING BY BRETT KURZWEIL

THE PIONEERING force behind many a creative foray into the frying pan, if not the fire, is the great Italian manufacturer Alessi, which has long encouraged architects and designers to create household objects with originality and charm. It has paved the way for some of the latest designs in kitchen accessories, from such ingenious pieces as Arnout Visser's Salad

INSIDE SCOOP **Top shelf, from left: Salt boxes, $30, by Enzo Mari; Stefano Giovannoni's Ship Shape butter dish, $30, both from Alessi USA; Pack A Snack containers, $1.24 each; and Rubbermaid Seal 'n Saver, $3.47, both from Target. Middle, from left: Ron Arad's Infinity wine rack, $50, for Kartell; stainless-steel milk and juice carton holders, $28 each, by Metrokare, available at Chiasso; Marta Sansoni's Folpo mixer/measurer, $59; Giovannoni's Cocodandy egg holder, $28; and Alibaba thermos, $83, all for Alessi USA. Bottom, from left: Butter dish, $65, by Ettore Sottsass; Treats biscuit box (without lid), $44, by Anna Gili; and salad bowl, $38, by Jasper Morrison, all for Alessi.**

Sunrise, in which oil and vinegar, divided only by chemistry, pour from separate spouts, to whimsical items like Viceversa's Cactus salt and pepper shakers. Here these objects sit pretty in architect-designed kitchens at Poliform's New York showroom. Even if you're not ready for a new kitchen, you can still stock the shelves with good design. —SABINE ROTHMAN

SHELF LIFE **Top row, from left: Ross Lovegrove kettle for Hackman, $149; Moss butter dish, $65; Abdi Abdelkader's couscoussière, $39; Philippe Starck cheese grater, $60; Mr. Meumeu grater/server, $59; Magic Bunny toothpick holder, $30, and cutlery drainer, $34, Alessi. Middle shelf, from left: Alessi's salt and sugar castors, $36 to $40, and biscuit box, $44; Cactus salt and pepper shakers, $15, Chiasso; Marc Newson bottle opener, $22, Alessi; canisters, $4.99 to $11.99, Target. Bottom shelf, from left: Cups and saucers, $42 a set, MoMA Design Store; Love glasses, $18 for four, Chiasso. On counter, from left: Alessi's Ovo cookie jar, $125, Chiasso; Michael Graves brush, $3.99, Target; Tykho rubber radio, $49.95, by Lexon, the Terence Conran Shop; Karim Rashid's Sumo bowl, about $10, Umbra.**

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object lesson

SQUARE MEALS This nonstick aluminum cooking box by Aldo Rossi for Alessi, $359, is especially good for salt crusts; it comes with recipes, like Escoffier's Stuffed Chicken Souwaroff. From Moss, NYC. 212-226-2190.

cookware

lesson a good pot is a cook's best friend **material** copper to stainless
shopping tip don't stick to one line **design** stylish enough to serve in
budget $12 and (way) up **news** improved metal alloys and nonstick pans

AT A DEPARTMENT-STORE cooking demonstration some years ago, James Beard, the late, great dean of American cooking, turned on the stovetop and discovered that the burners weren't working. His partner at the demonstration, food historian Burt Wolf, remembers Beard's graceful solution. Quickly improvising, Beard requested that ten clothing irons be

WRITTEN BY INGRID ABRAMOVITCH PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICHELE GASTL

PRODUCED BY LORA ZARUBIN

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: ELIZABETH GOTTFRIED

fetched from Household Appliances.

"Suddenly we had sauté pans and grills," Wolf says. Bystanders were treated to an entire meal cooked with steam-iron heat: silver-dollar pancakes with caviar, grilled chicken medallions, and steamed broccoli.

CAST IRON is one of the oldest types of cookware, and is still the best at handling high temperatures for purposes such as frying or cooking in a wood-burning oven. Untreated cast iron needs to be seasoned, and should be rinsed with water but not soap. 1. This versatile 12-inch skillet, $16.50, by Lodge, comes in many sizes. Available at Broadway Panhandler, NYC. 212-966-3434. 2. Perfect for stews, the Hackman cast-iron pot is $105, from the Museum of Modern Art Design Store and catalog. 800-447-6662. 3. The Lodge crepe pan, $16.50, has rounded edges. Dean & Deluca, NYC. 212-226-6800. 4. 10 1/2-inch grill pan, $105, by Hackman, MoMA Design Store. 5. This Japanese Iwachu Yanaganabe soup pot with wooden lid, $50, can go straight to the table. Dean & Deluca.

As BEARD PROVED many times, you don't need a copper *sauteuse* or a state-of-the-art pan developed with French aerospace technology to prepare a meal. Still, it can't hurt. And for the majority of us culinary mortals, having the best pots and pans for the task at hand truly can affect the success of a dish.

Because different materials conduct heat differently—the stainless-steel pan that's perfect for braising may make that omelette stick—the makeup of the pot you choose is important, and there are now many choices beyond the classics in copper and cast iron. New metal alloys such as stainless-steel-

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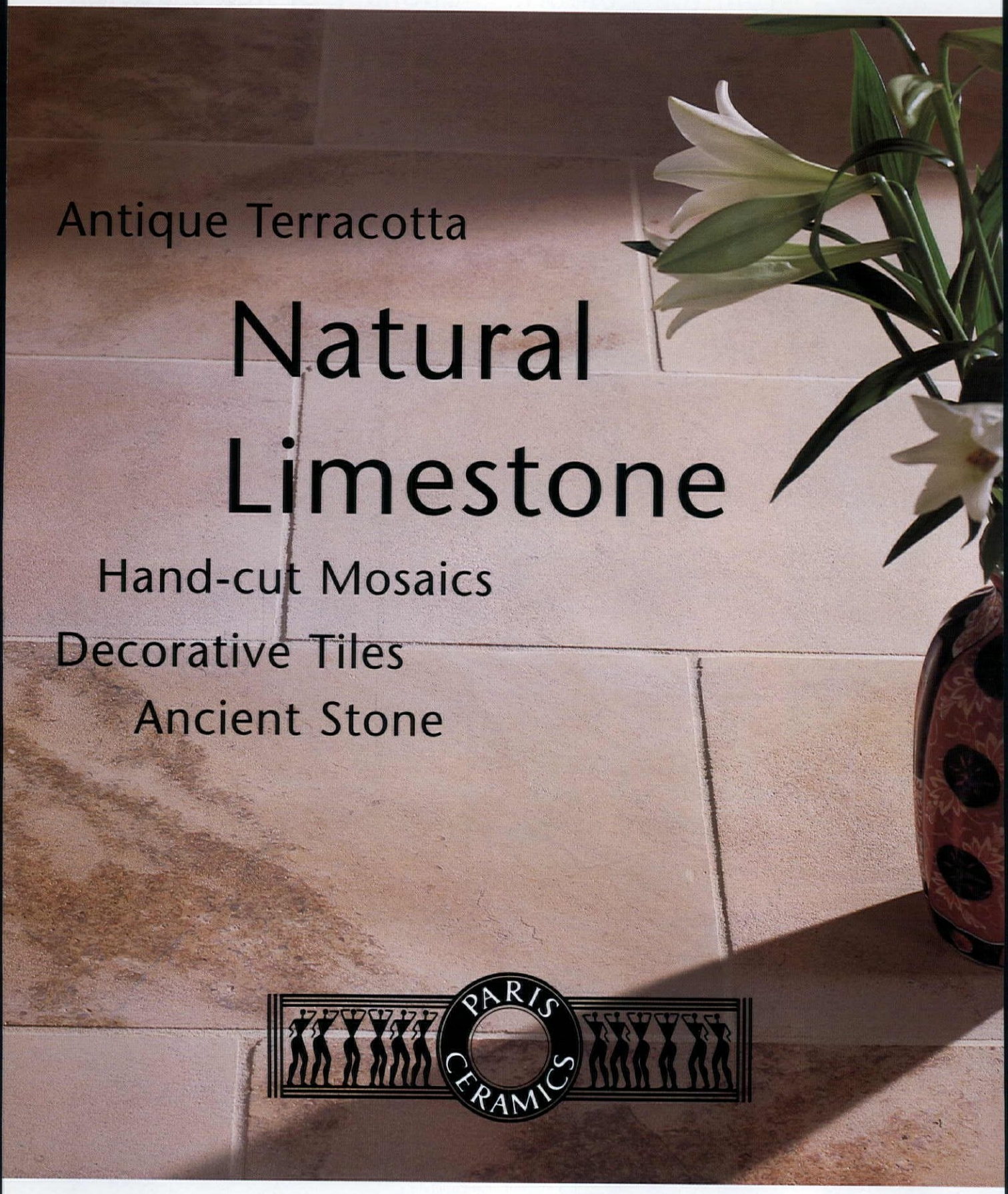

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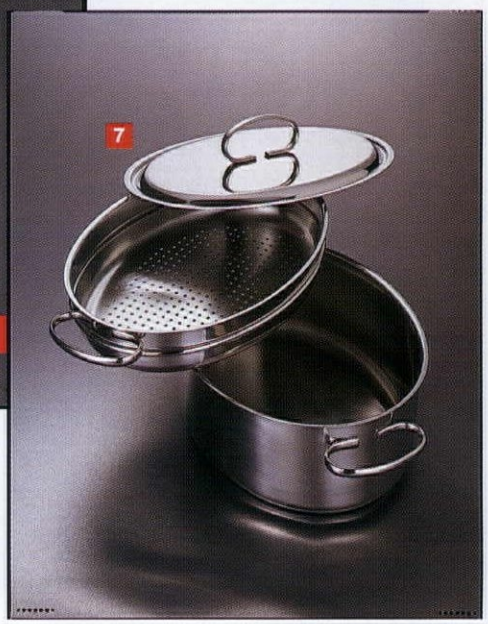
and-aluminum hybrids—many developed in the past 20 years—are light and surprisingly effective in their handling of heat. On the other hand, some older pots, like recipes, can hold memories, not to mention be powerful tools. Food writer Betty Fussell, whose latest book, *My Kitchen Wars,* is a memoir, says one of her favorite pans is her grandmother's cast-iron skillet. Besides reminding her of her grandmother's cooking, "it's been seasoned for a hundred years," she says.

Shape is another consideration: small design touches such as rounded

COPPER spreads heat evenly throughout the pan, and heats and cools quickly, making it ideal for caramel sauces. It also looks beautiful, provided it is polished regularly. Be aware that unlined copper can react with acidic foods such as tomatoes; make sure the copper pan is lined with tin or stainless steel. (Unlined copper is safe for sugar sauces.) 1. If you have a weakness for the classic French side dish of layered potato slices and butter, this Pommes Anna pan, $188, is for you. It makes quite an impression when the dish is flipped and served in the pan's top (which doubles as an au gratin). Bridge Kitchenware, NYC. 212-688-4220; 800-274-3435. 2. The stay-cool handle on this copper sugar pan, about $125, helps avoid burns. World Cuisine. 877-778-2711. 3. Oval frying pan with brass helper handle, $124, Bridge Kitchenware. 4. Alessi designer Richard Sapper consulted with French chefs Pierre and Michel Troisgros on the design of this saucepan, $145. Their suggestion: add a spout. At Moss, NYC. 5. Another Sapper design, this low casserole with lid for Alessi, $318, is copper lined with stainless steel. Available at Moss.

STAINLESS STEEL is easy to clean but on its own is not a good conductor of heat, so it is usually layered over aluminum, which does conduct heat well, or given a copper or aluminum bottom. 1. The Alessi pasta set has a built-in colander. $329, Moss. 2. Cook pancakes on this stovetop griddle, $143, Williams-Sonoma. 800-541-2233. 3. This All-Clad saucier has rounded sides that are ideal for reducing liquids or making risotto. $130, Williams-Sonoma. 4. Round pasta cookers let you cook two pastas at once; 1- and 2-quart sizes, $54 and $80, World Cuisine. The cookers hook onto most any stockpot, including 5. 10-quart pot, $112, World Cuisine. 6. This Bain-Marie double boiler has a hollow core: pour water into the outer layer through the handle. $136, World Cuisine. 7. Stackable steamer set, $225, Bridge Kitchenware.



edges or a spout make pouring easier. If there is a specific dish you love, it is always gratifying to have a pot designed for that purpose, whether it's a pasta cooker with a built-in colander, or a long, oval fish pan that lets you sear evenly from head to tail. A two-tiered *couscoussière* lets you steam couscous North African style: you place the semolina grains in a perforated strainer that fits over a deeper pot, which holds the stew, so that the couscous absorbs the aroma rising from below.

Some pots are simply beautiful in themselves. A copper Pommes Anna pan, which is used to make that classic French dish of layered, thinly sliced potatoes and butter, and architect Aldo Rossi's square, nonstick aluminum cooking box, La Cubica, are striking enough to go directly from the stove to the table.

These days, your stockpot can be coordinated with a matching paella pan, butter warmer, or gratin—which you might find appealing if your collection is on display. In practice, however, most people who do a lot of cooking prefer to select equipment in varying materials, choosing the right tool for the job.

Madhur Jaffrey, an award-winning cookbook author and actress, is definitely of the mixed-media school of cookware. In preparing the recipes for her new book, *Madhur Jaffrey's World Vegetarian,* she stocked her kitchen with nonstick pans for making pancakes such as Indian rice-flour *dosa* and chickpea-flour *poora,* a stainless-steel pressure cooker for cooking beans and chickpeas, and stainless-steel pots for sauces and stews. For the latter, including such recipes as Anatolian red lentil stew with wheat berries and chickpeas, she splurges on the heavier, semi-professional pots by companies like Paderno of Italy. "You pay more for those to begin with," she says, "but you end up with a wonderful pan."

In cookware, the top of the line has always been copper, which spreads heat evenly and gently, making it ideal for dishes with fragile chemistry, such as sauces. Equally important is copper's

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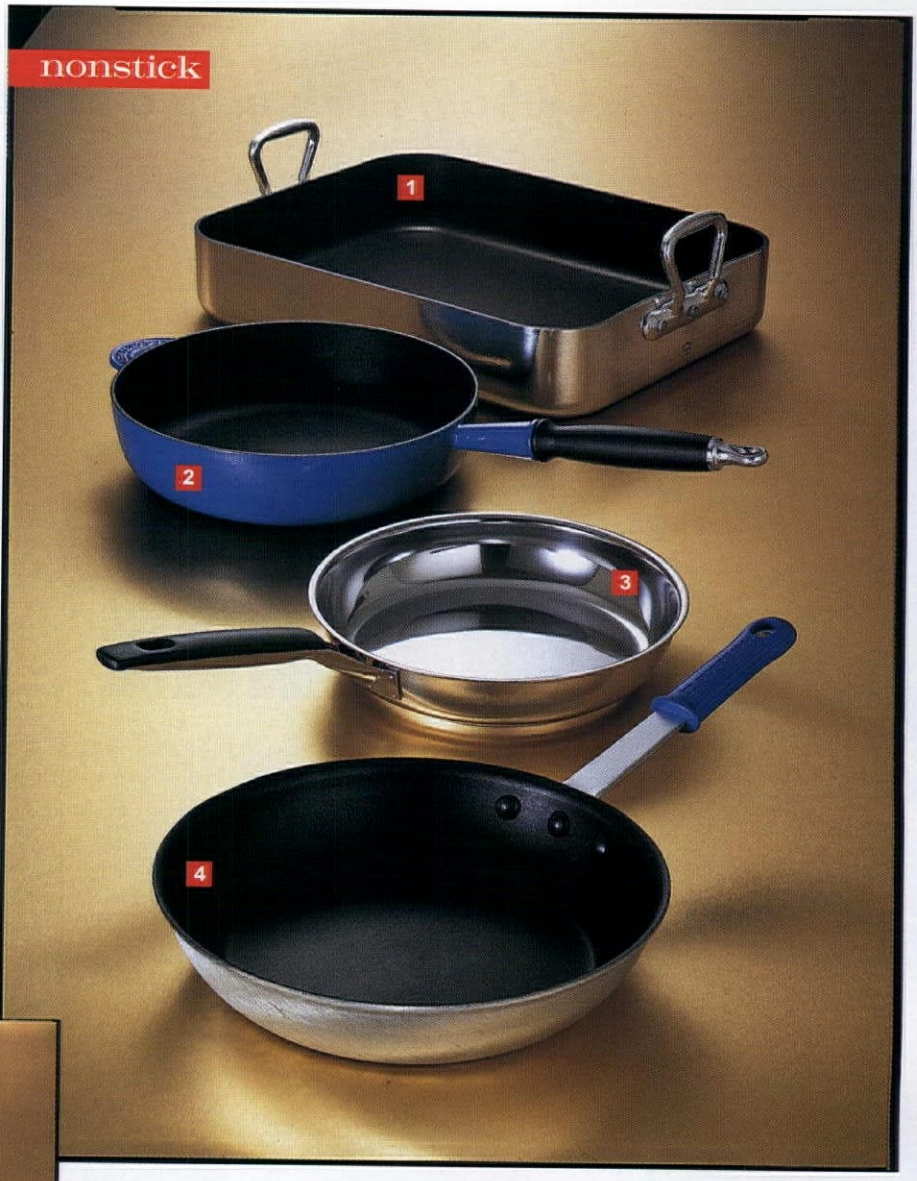
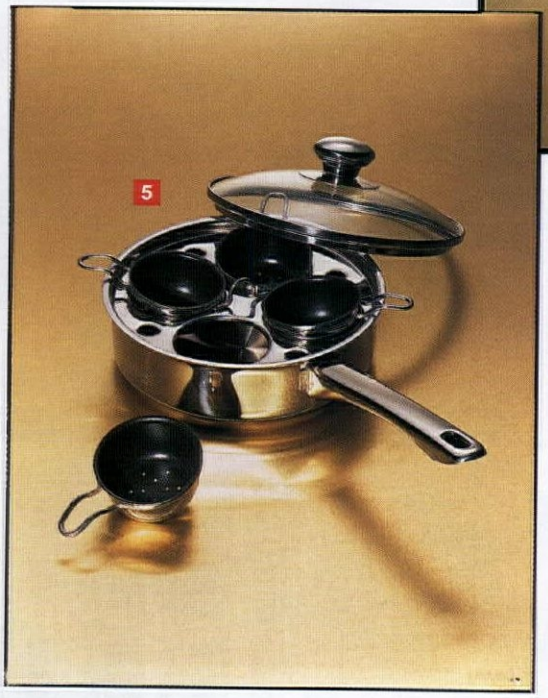
object lesson



NONSTICK Unless you *want* food to stick (if you're making a reduction, say, and need those pan scrapings), nonstick pans are remarkably versatile for cooking almost everything, from omelettes to sautéed beef dishes. The technology has come a long way since those early versions, which tended to flake and peel. 1. Professional roasting pan (18 x 14 x 6), $140, Williams-Sonoma. 2. Le Creuset's 11-inch nonstick sauté pan, $150, in coated cast iron. 877-CREUSET; www.lecreuset.com. 3. The newest nonstick material on the market is Cybernox, an alloy developed for the French aerospace industry. The 10-inch skillet, $99.95, will sear and brown meat, and you can use it with metal utensils and put it in the dishwasher. From Sitram. 800-515-8585. 4. Norman Kornbleuth of Broadway Panhandler always steers customers to the relatively inexpensive, nonstick aluminum CeramiGuard pan, $31.95, by Lincoln Wear-Ever (800-374-3004.) Available at Broadway Panhandler. 5. Nonstick egg-poaching set, $39, Williams-Sonoma.



ability to cool quickly once it has been removed from the heat source. "It's the most responsive thing you can buy," says Norman Kornbleuth, owner of Broadway Panhandler, a kitchen supply store in New York. "Of course, gold, silver, and platinum are better conductors, but I haven't found any cookware on the market in those materials."

While not quite as pricey as gold, copper doesn't come cheaply. Apart from the cost, it has two other catches. One is that classic copper pots are lined with tin, which wears out; and, says Caroline Bridge of Bridge Kitchenware in New York, if the pot is not relined, the copper can be toxic. Fortunately, many copper pots are now lined with stainless steel, which lasts for years.

There is no getting around the second issue, which is that copper oxidizes and needs constant care. You can let your copper tarnish, but if you want it to shine, you must polish it every week. Pastry chef François Payard, author of *Simply Sensational Desserts* and owner of the New York

acid test

Whenever a customer enters New York's Bridge Kitchenware looking for a pot, Caroline Bridge asks if it will be used to cook tomatoes, lemon, wine, or vinegar. If the answer is yes, she suggests cookware made of stainless steel, copper lined with tin or stainless steel, or enameled cast iron. Other materials will interact with these acidic ingredients, darkening them and changing their taste. "I wouldn't recommend using plain aluminum or cast iron with reactive foods," Bridge says. "You'll end up with a metallic flavor and take the seasoning out of those pans." If unlined, copper interacts with salted foods and can be toxic. (If the pot is lined with tin over copper, and copper peeks through, it's time to have it retinned.) But sometimes metal interaction is a good thing: cooking in a cast-iron pot imparts essential dietary iron to food.

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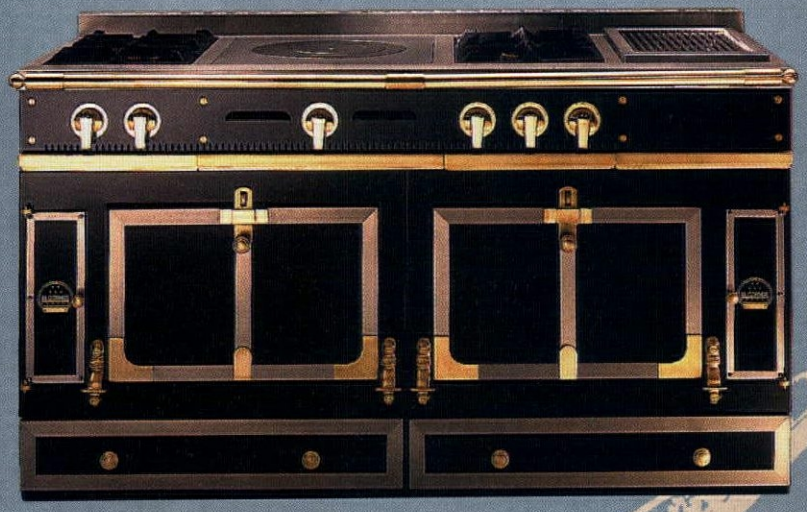

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café/restaurant Payard Patisserie and Bistro, cleans the copper pot collection he inherited from his grandfather by using an old French recipe. He rubs the pots with a paste made of vinegar, coarse salt, and flour. He admits, though, that the copper pots are on display in his restaurant mainly for their looks. For everyday use, he finds All-Clad stainless-steel and aluminum-lined pots more practical.

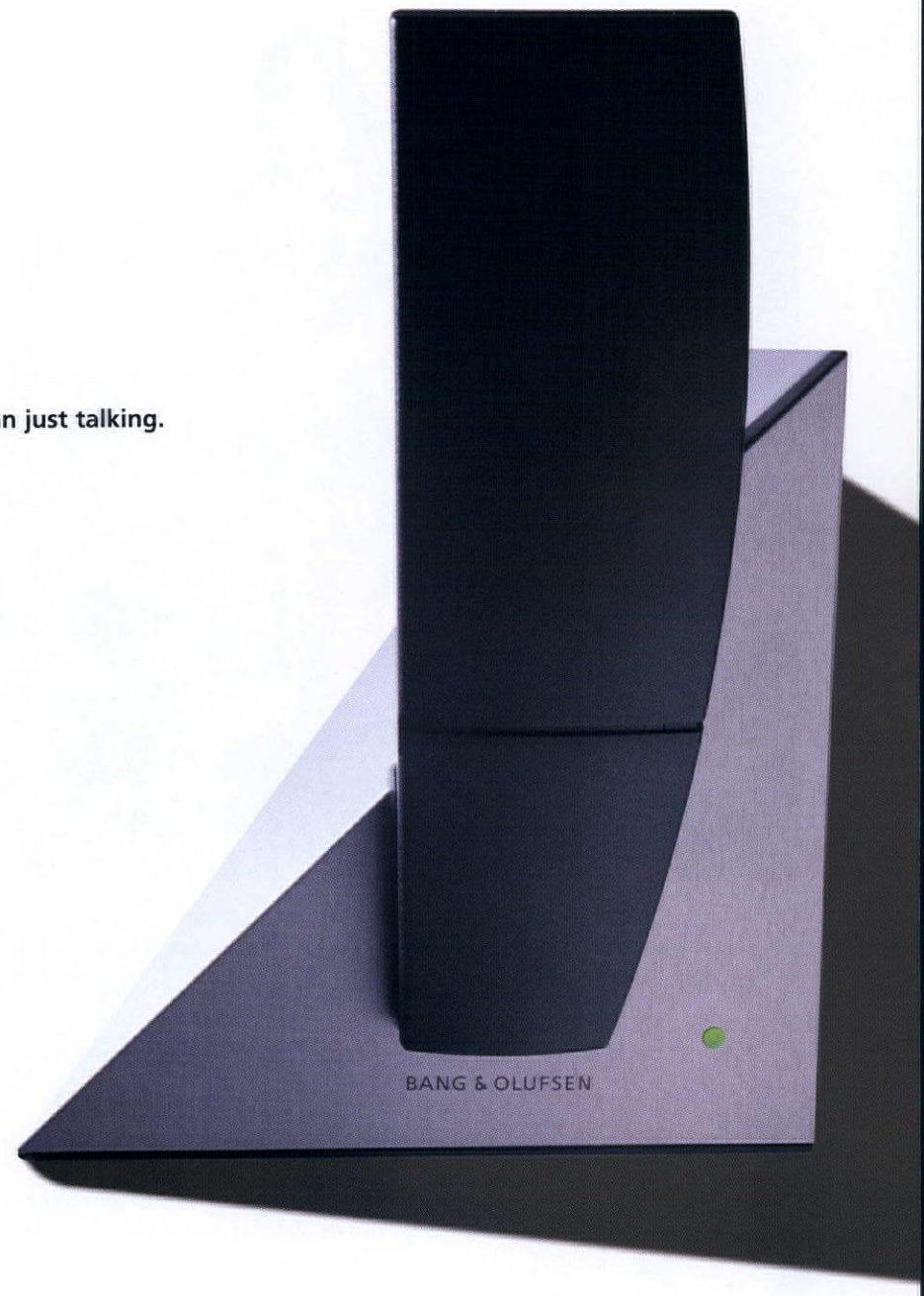
Not all good cookware has to be expensive. Mark Bittman, author of *How to Cook Everything* and a food columnist for *The New York Times,* uses inexpensive ($20 to $40) cast-aluminum nonstick skillets almost exclusively in his recipe testing. These pans have come a long way since the first Teflon versions, which used to peel off, he says. "Nonstick is the answer to a lot of people's prayers," Bittman offers. Also a bargain are cast-iron pans, which cost as little as $12 and are considered among the best for heat retention. They're a staple for foodies who grew up in the American South, says Jim Garland, a Texas-born gourmet who now lives in Salem, New York. He uses his collection of ten cast-iron pans in varying sizes far more often than his pricier copper pots. "I take advantage of their depth and really use them as pots, for sauces or for making chili," he says.

Burt Wolf, who is working on the 25th-anniversary edition of *The Cooks' Catalog* (to be published in September 2000), which he co-edited with James Beard and Milton Glaser in 1975, says that a basic set of pots should include a frying pan, covered sauté pan, braiser, stockpot, and casserole. He uses everything from Calphalon to sheet-steel omelette pans from Spain. His favorite, however, is a huge French hammered-copper sauté pan with a tin lining, which he pulls out when his three grown sons come home for dinner. "I use it to cook the comfort food of their childhood," Wolf says. When does he find time to polish the pan? "Right before they come."

perfect for roast chicken

If you like your roast chicken moist, one of the best pans for the task is a pottery baking dish, which is also among the most ancient forms of cookware. Earthenware pans are well suited to roasting because they give a uniform heat, compensating for any hot spots in the oven. The Bridge Kitchenware oval earthenware baking dish, $35, shown above, is glazed on the inside and outside to seal the surface of the clay, while the bottom is unglazed for better heat absorption. Place the chicken on a rack to allow heat to circulate.

There's more to communication than just talking.



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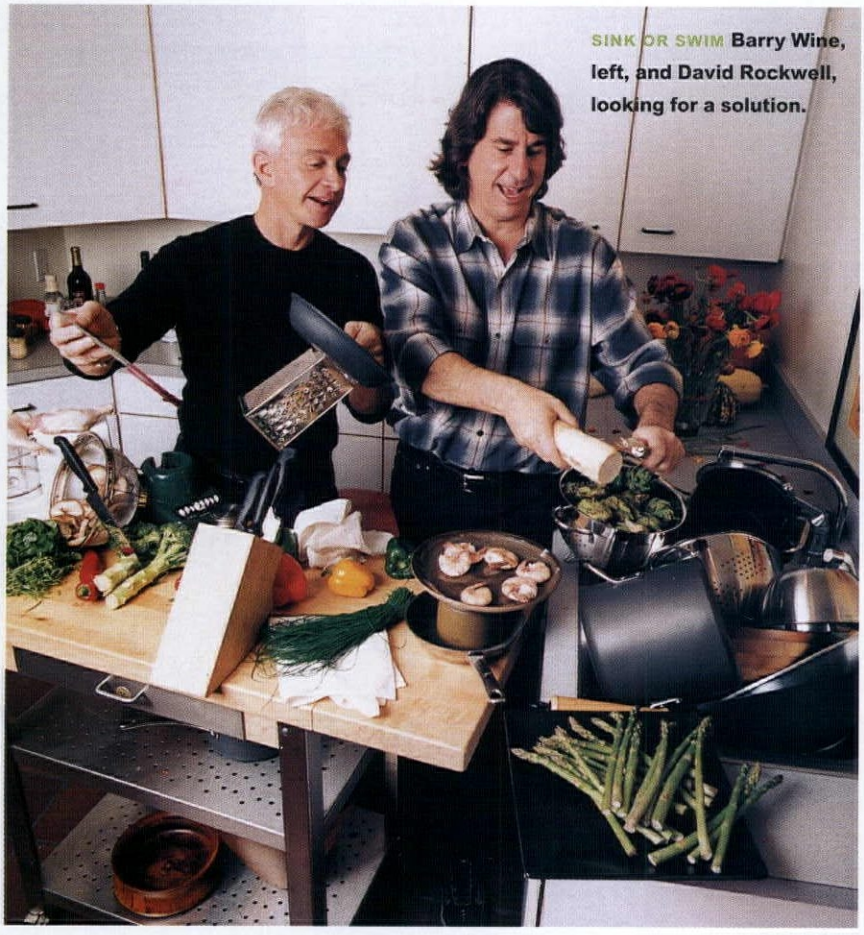


SINK OR SWIM **Barry Wine, left, and David Rockwell, looking for a solution.**

reinventing the sink

A top architect and a star chef get together to cook, and a product is born

DAVID ROCKWELL has designed many prominent hotels and restaurants, but only a few years ago did he really start cooking. At his weekend home in New Paltz, about 80 miles north of New York City, he would follow a long hike in the region's seductive hills with a marathon cooking session, sometimes working with his neighbor and friend Barry Wine, a chef, whose Quilted Giraffe restaurant was considered one of the best in the country during the 1980s.

While they experimented in the kitchen, the two men inevitably started talking about the space. Although many time-saving devices have been invented for the kitchen over the past 50 years, its basic design has changed surprisingly little. Kitchens have grown and become more elaborate, but that hasn't necessarily made them more efficient. In fact, larger kitchens can consume more time, because there are more steps to take, more gadgets to clean, more islands to navigate.

As Rockwell and Wine cooked, they decided that it would be fun to come up with something fundamentally new that would deal with the only real downside of cooking: the cleanup. "Our guiding light was, where could we come up with something helpful?" Rockwell says.

With a design team from his firm, Rockwell Group, Rockwell and Wine spent part of last year working on a device they have dubbed "thekitchensink," inspired by their conviction that there is much wasted effort in taking out cutting boards, working on counters, and cleaning up the resultant mess. Wouldn't it be easier, they thought, if everything was always done over a sink, on surfaces slightly lower than the sink's edge, so that the mess could simply be washed down at the end, or even covered up?

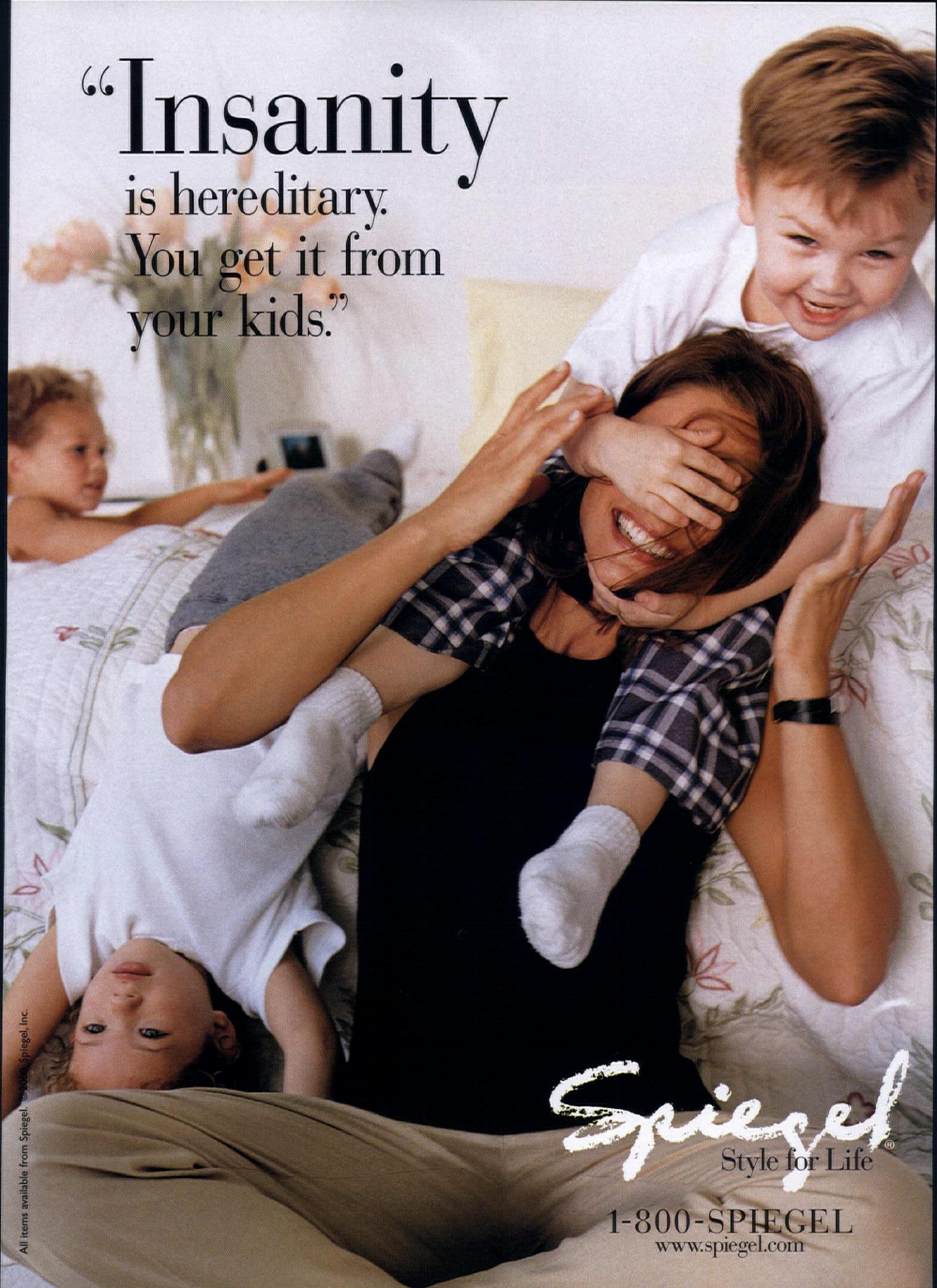
The way they see it, everything for preparing a meal should be close at hand, so that it isn't necessary to go to one part of the room to roll out dough for pizza, and then to another to chop up the garlic, onions, and peppers for the topping. With their sink, the cook could simply pull a marble board out from its storage spot under the sink, put it on top of the sink, roll out the dough, then transfer it to a baking sheet or pizza stone. The marble could then be cleaned with a spray of water. Nothing would dribble onto the floor or onto a counter, because the marble would be sitting below the edge of the sink.

Next, the cook could pull out a cutting board from a second slot and put it in another section of the sink, for chopping this time, taking vegetables from a strainer in yet a third sink compartment. After the chopping, the cutting board would go back into its storage place, leaving the sinks free for dirty pots and pans. After cooking, the sink could be covered up and the faucet pushed down, leaving a smooth counter. Although the sink is space-saving, Rockwell says, "it's not about space; it's about efficiency. It's about making a lobster quesadilla dinner in a hundred steps, rather than four hundred."

Suddenly it hit them: if the mess could just be sprayed away, cleanup would be easy

And it's meant to respond to today's open kitchen, where the dinner guests gather around the island after the meal. "I'm not bringing them in to help wash the dishes," says Wine, who closed his

STEFAN STUDER; STYLED BY REBECCA OMWEG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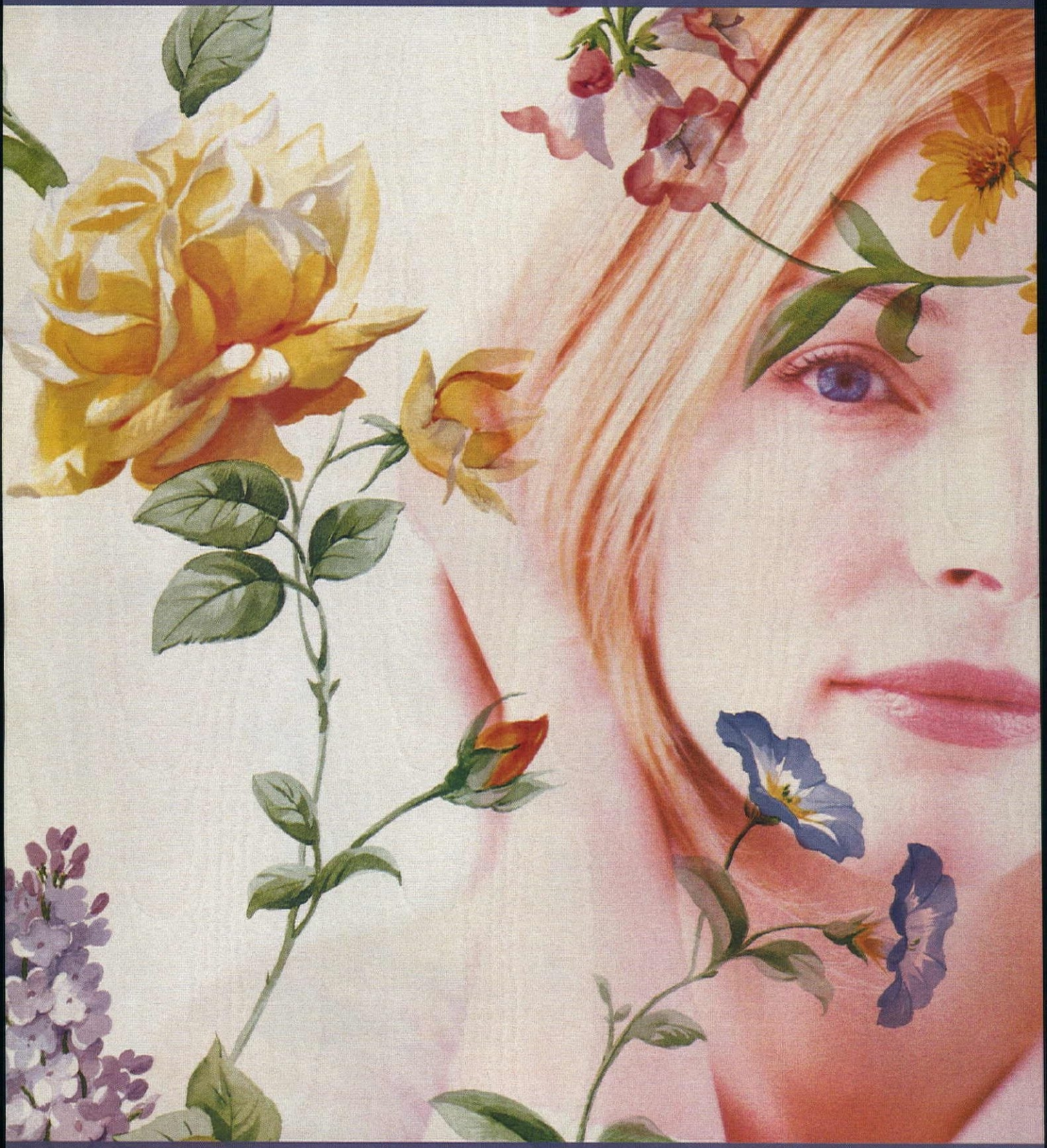

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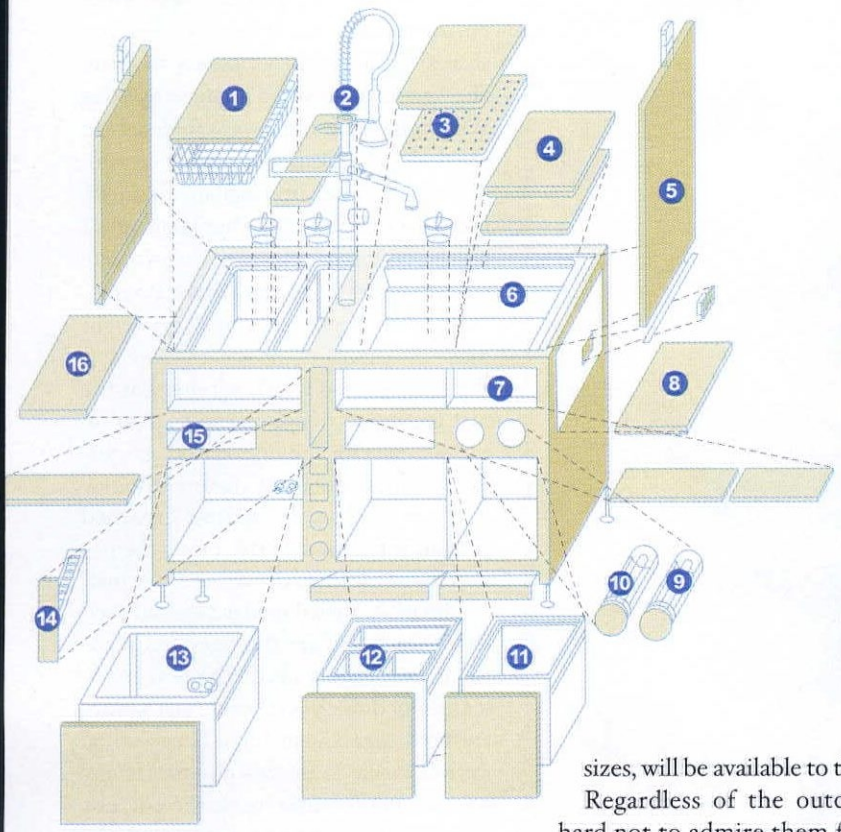
rockwell/wine kitchen island

The sink has three sections that can be used for straining, chopping, and cleaning. Cutting boards are stored below, along with other necessities like a trash can, paper towels, a small dishwasher, a knife drawer, and pull-out shelves. A top cover pulls up from the sides so that the island can be used as a counter for serving or eating.



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3. STRAINER
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5. TOP COVER
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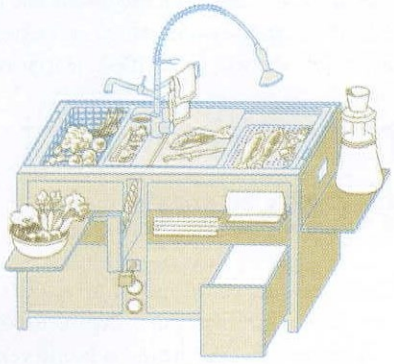
8. SHELF
9. ALUMINUM FOIL
10. PLASTIC WRAP
11. TRASH
12. RECYCLING
13. GLASS WASHER
14. VERTICAL KNIFE DRAWER
15. CUTTING-BOARD STORAGE
16. SHELF

four-star restaurant in 1992. "I'm having them whip the cream." And you don't want to do that if the counter is cluttered.

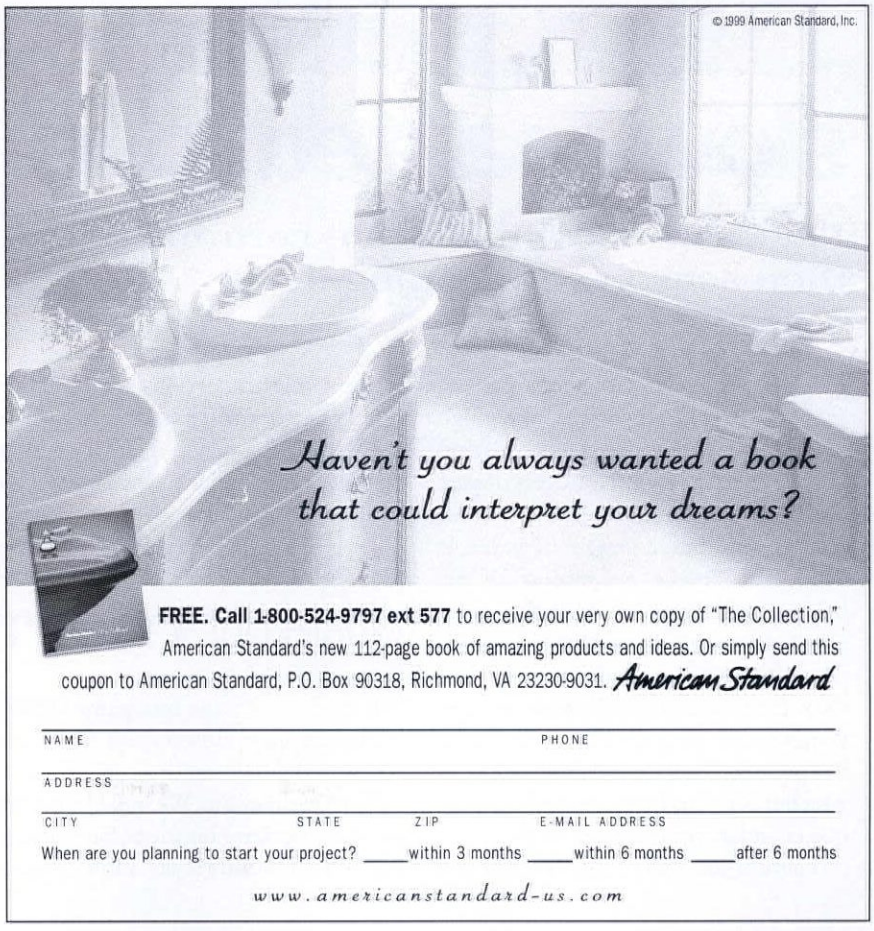
Sometimes when Wine and Rockwell talk about their sink, and everything it would store—aluminum foil here, garbage bins there, and knives right here—it seems so fanciful, so Rube Goldberg–like, as to be absurd. Would it really make a difference to work over a sink and to have so many utensils close by? It's hard to say, because thekitchensink is not yet in a store, ready for testing. But by late spring, the two expect that their new sink, in three sizes, will be available to the public.

Regardless of the outcome, it's hard not to admire them for thinking about something that has bedeviled people for so long: making a meal without its becoming a chore. And it's hard not to be curious where Rockwell and Wine will go next. They admit to just one thing: they're thinking about the refrigerator.



MULTIFUNCTIONAL **A sketch of the new sink shows three work areas, pullout shelves, and storage below.**

GRAPHICS BY JOYCE PENDOLA



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I'm not a religious person, but I'm superstitious enough to endow objects with magical properties. Not everything I own has transcended its decorative or utilitarian design, however. It would defeat the purpose if all my belongings had spiritual or mythic properties, since what gives them meaning is the fact that only a few can mirror and chart the course of my life. Most of these things have been gifts. The occasion for the present, the love and good will with which it is given, I believe resides in the object and serves to hold it there.

There is one object that has reached such totemic proportions in my life that I'm about to retire it to a safe place where nothing can happen to it. It's a wedding present Frank and I received 21 years ago.

I felt that the tiny fissure was a marker of where our **marriage** stood

It came in a large box painted with chalky tempera flowers and vines, the colors and design reminiscent of a kindergarten classroom. We smiled when we saw it, recognizing his friend Pat's charming, unpretentious style. Inside several layers of crumpled, shredded, and balled-up newspapers was a delicate clay pot shaped like a squashed sphere with a handle. A round lid covered a narrow opening at the top. Inside there was a folded sheet printed in stark black letters in old-fashioned type, in English, Spanish, French, German, and other languages I didn't understand. I learned that we were the owners of a Thomas Potato Roaster.

The pot's elegant lines and light weight made it beautiful enough to display, I thought, but too fragile for use. For the first few weeks of our marriage, it sat on a shelf, graceful and mysterious, gathering compliments from anyone who saw it. Me, it resented. Every time I reached around it for my favorite bowl, the potato roaster seemed to call out, "Use me!"

The multilingual instructions advised that I wash and dry the potatoes, place (don't drop) them inside the pot, cover, set the pot directly on a burner at low heat, and cook for about an hour. They warned me not to season the raw potatoes in any way, not to put water inside the pot, not to wash the pot after use, not to place the hot pot on a cold surface. It seemed like too much trouble for a potato.

But after we ate our first buttery, smoky, crisp-skinned potatoes cooked in the pot, the clay potato roaster rose to a status not accorded any other item in my kitchen. It was not just a lovely object whose function more than matched its beauty. It was a gift from a creative, loving, generous friend who later informed us that she had carried it on her lap all the way from Germany, so that she could present it to us upon our marriage.

The voyage across an ocean echoed my own trip from Puerto Rico to the United States, and the mental journey Frank had to take to get to the point where, as he puts it, "a Jewish boy from West Hartford, Connecticut, could fall in love with a non-Jewish girl from rural Puerto Rico."

That two people from such different linguistic, economic, and cultural backgrounds could meet, fall in love, and marry was a miracle. And it was in the

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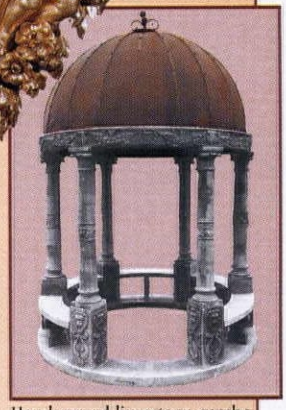

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clay potato roaster that I placed every hope that our union would last in spite of the many challenges I knew were ahead.

A year after the wedding, we bought a house, and when I unpacked, I noticed a hairline crack along the bottom of the potato roaster. I couldn't help feeling that the tiny fissure created by the most stressful thing we'd done as a couple was a marker of where our marriage stood. We had argued over the mortgage commitment, over the house we chose, over the renovations it would demand, over what it meant that we no longer lived in a fashionable part of the city but had moved to a suburb.

The pot would crack, I remembered reading in the now lost instructions for use, but I was not to try gluing it together. The cracks would not affect its function. When I next cooked potatoes, they tasted just as good as they had before the move, and our marriage was still strong, in spite of all the pressures.

WE STRUGGLED with other challenges: the small business we ran, the birth of one child, the death of loved ones, the birth of another child, economic woes due to our both being, essentially, self-employed. Once a week I pulled the clay pot from its shelf and carefully placed potatoes on the bottom, noticing how the first tiny crack grew and spread up one side, then another. But the potatoes and the Puerto Rican *batatas* that I prepared for our family tasted better each time, as if the cracks and fissures added to the flavor.

It has become a ritual, the roasting of the weekly potatoes, the wonder at how well the clay roaster holds up, even with cracks on every side. Its warm natural color has acquired a gray patina. It has survived numerous moves, each time emerging from its box looking slightly more stressed, but still strong. It reflects a marriage that has endured 21 years of ups and downs and sometimes sideways. But we're still cooking.

ESMERALDA SANTIAGO, *the author of* Almost a Woman *and* When I Was Puerto Rican *(Vintage), is based in New York.*

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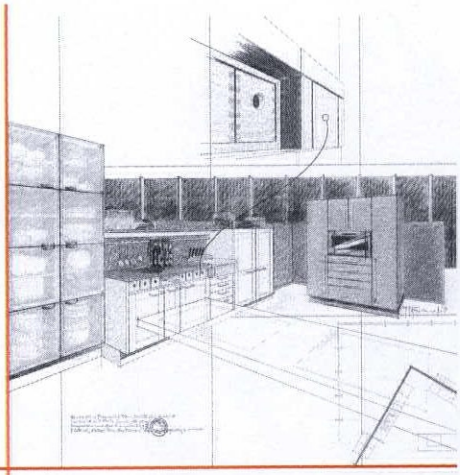

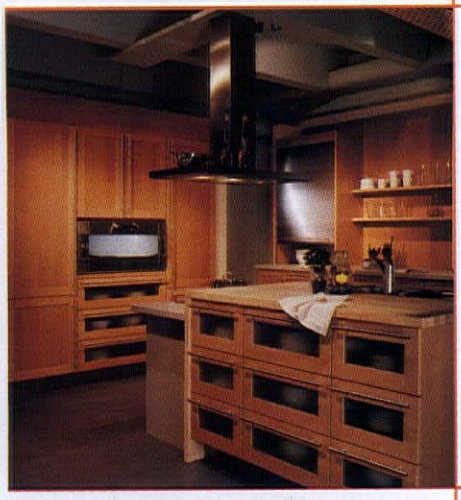

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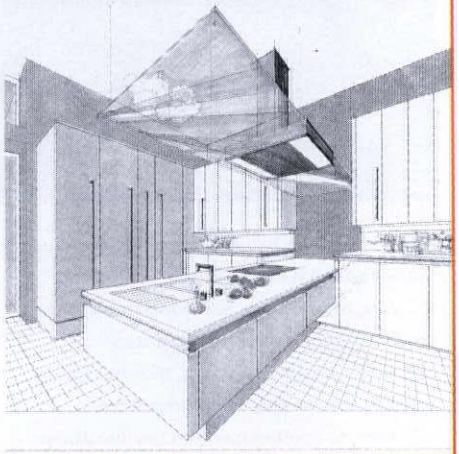

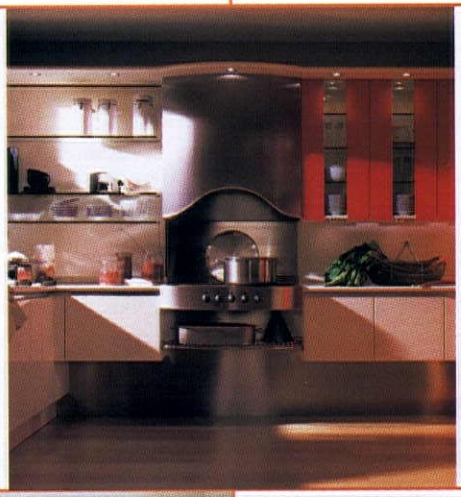

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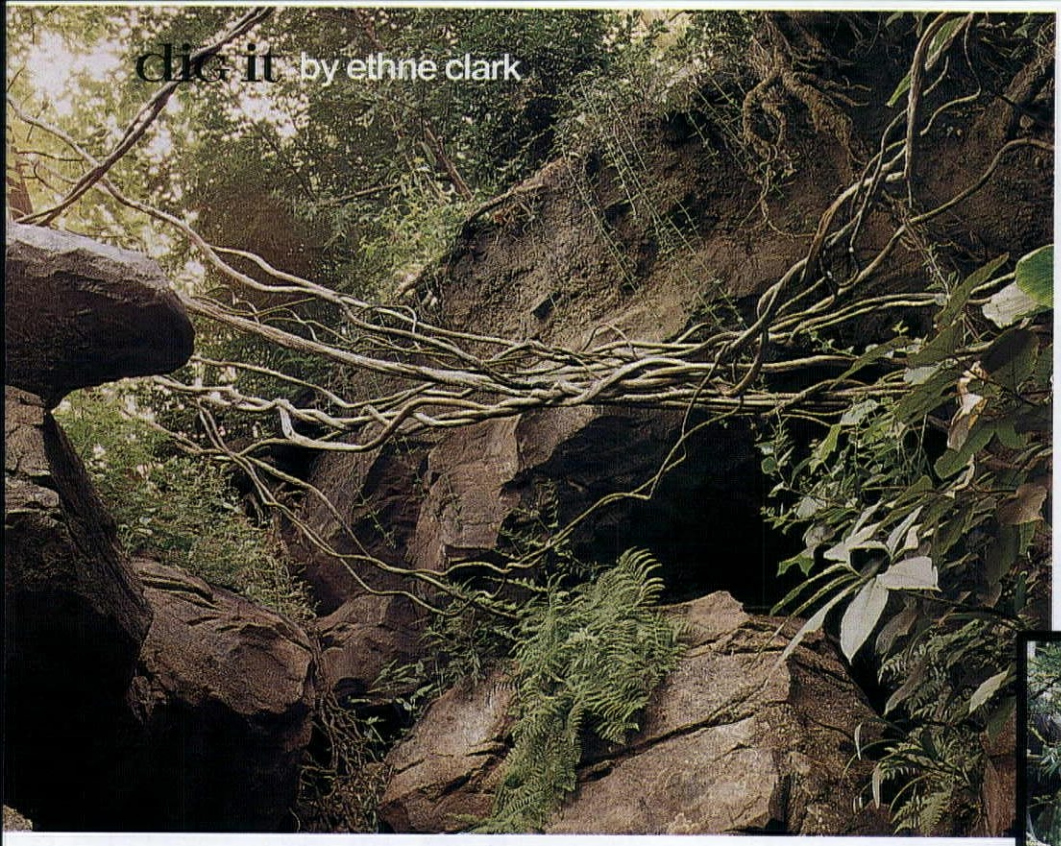

man-made congo

The environment created for the Bronx Zoo's new Gorilla Forest uses plants and techniques indigenous to this biosphere

LIKE MANY midwesterners, my father was an uncomplicated man who made few demands of life. He was also a patient man, a characteristic he shared with Samson, a resident gorilla at the Milwaukee Zoo during the early 1960s. Every visit to my grandmother meant a stop at the zoo to say hello to Samson. He and my dad were great pals. They'd gaze at each other wistfully through the bars, my dad ruminating over his popcorn, Samson delicately nibbling a chunk of banana, as though each was pondering where life had taken them.

I remembered Samson the other day as I marveled at the Bronx Zoo's newest display, the Congo Gorilla Forest. On 6.5 acres in the heart of one of the world's greatest cities, a slice of the central African rain forest has been replicated to the blissful satisfaction of its inhabitants—22 lowland gorillas living in two family groups. The extended gorilla family shares the space with 75 species of animals, including such rare primates as the elusive mandrill, exotic birds like the gray-cheeked hornbill, scary reptiles like the ornate Nile monitor, and various other denizens of the central African rain forest, whose habitats are threatened.

The need to establish a new exhibit, one that would fully represent the efforts of the Wildlife Conservation Society (formerly the New York Zoological Society) to save the world's endangered species and the biodiversity upon which this planet depends, brought together John Gwynne, head of the WCS Exhibition and Graphic Arts Department, and Rob Halpern, curator of horticulture at WCS. Standing at the entrance to the "Congo," both men seemed stunned by what had been achieved, like magicians surprised that a trick has worked. "The one thing we don't want to hear is, 'Haven't they done a lovely job planting this exhibit,'" Halpern declares. "It's not supposed to look planted."

Believe me, it doesn't, even though the artifice begins the moment you cross the threshold. Beyond the wooden palisade entrance, the walkways are framed by mud walls, which are actually voluminous containers made of cement and fitted with drip irrigation systems, and speakers issuing bird calls and frog croaks, for that special jungle aural

ILLUSIONS **The exhibit joins organic and man-made materials. The ferns in the canyon, top left, are surrounded by vines made of steel cables and painted urethane. Natural barriers, like the fallen branch, top, separate visitors from inhabitants like the lowland gorilla, above.**

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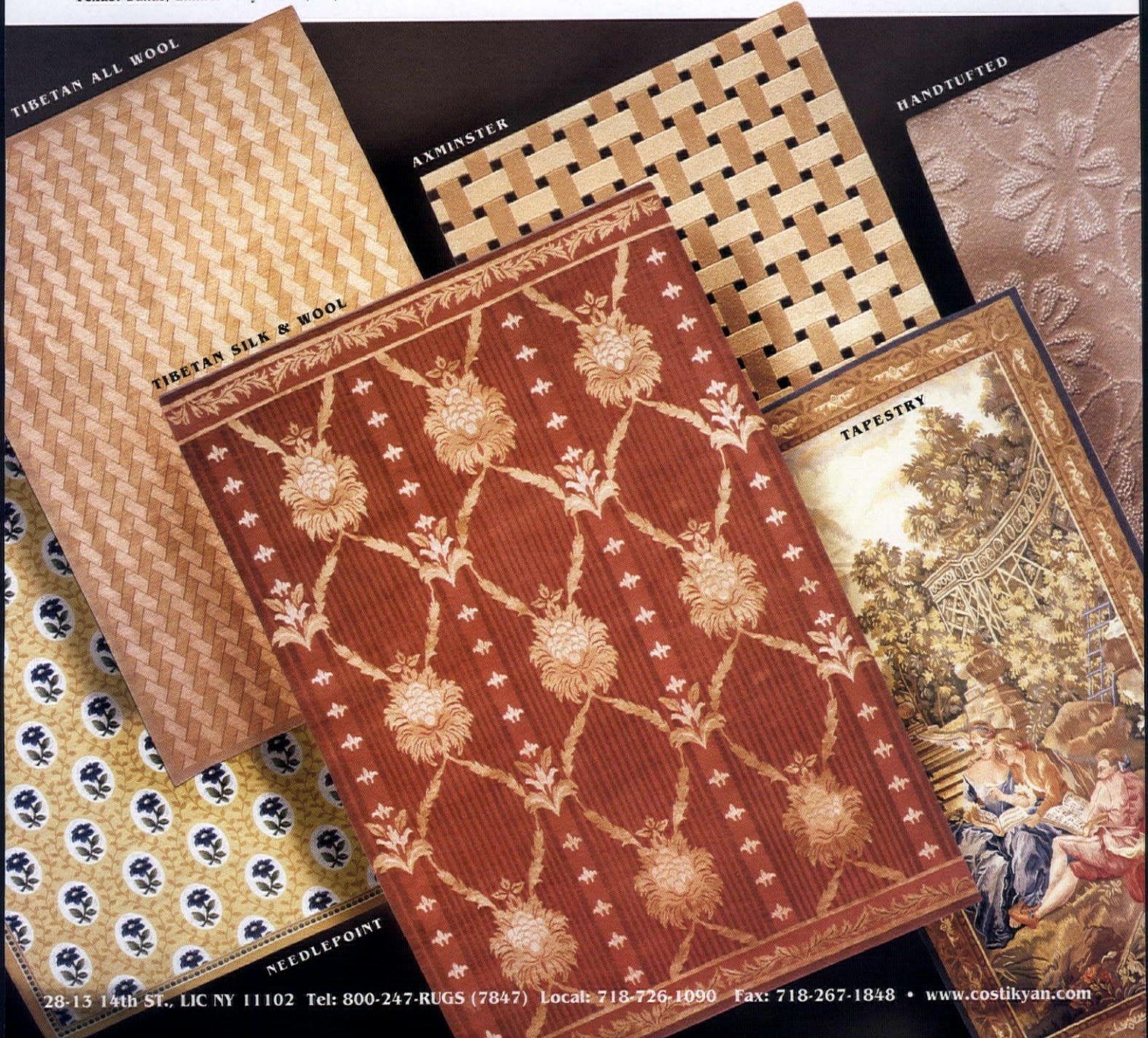

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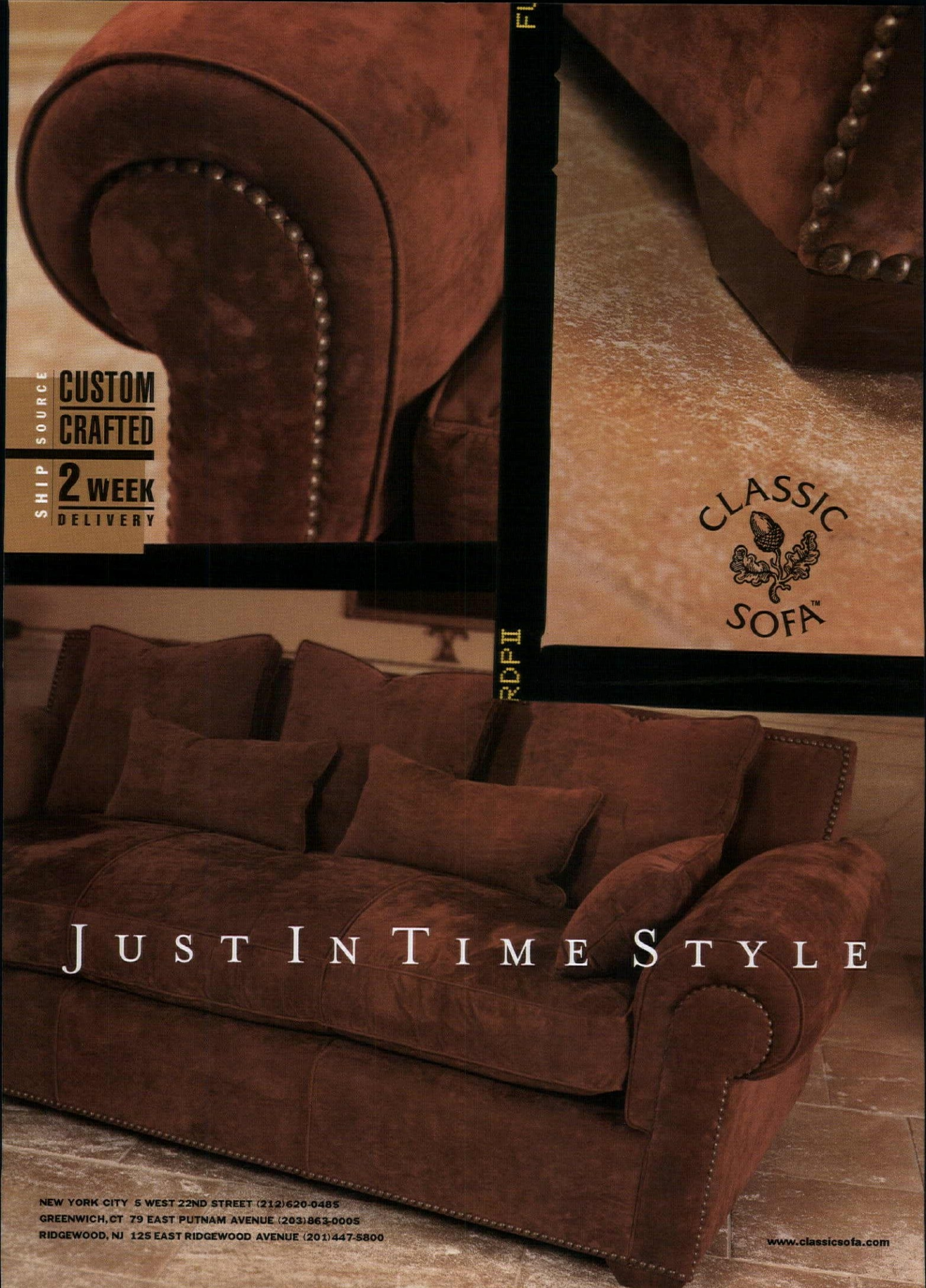
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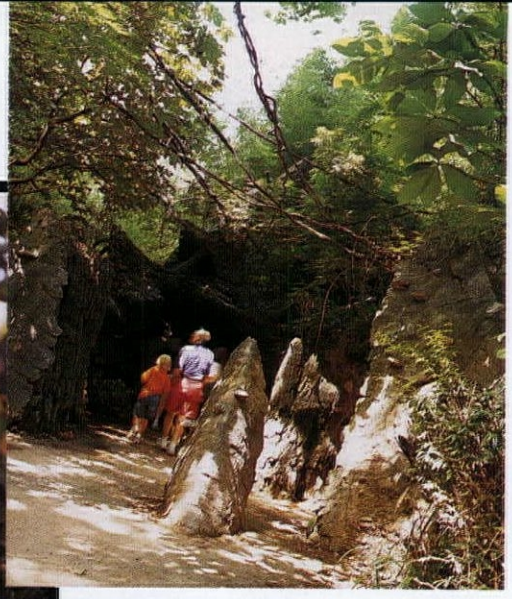

DAY TRIPPING **John Gwynne, far left, has given visitors the full jungle experience. Here they walk into a cave made from the simulated roots of a fallen Ceiba tree.**

effect. The mud walls bristle with tree roots crafted from pipe cleaners and carefully aligned with the trees they are meant to be supporting.

There are no bars or cages. Instead we observe the animals through artfully positioned tree branches and bamboo glades. Fallen logs serve as fences outlining the paths, which are textured and often springy underfoot, as they would be in the rain forest.

Studying the artifice of the man-made Congo, I start to think about how gardens—this Congo is a very large garden indeed—are designed as theaters of illusion. All that is needed to create a particular illusion is a clear image of what that landscape represents emotionally and intellectually. After that, the rest is mostly mechanical: identifying the materials that will bring the scheme to life. At the Congo, the magic has shaped a natural-looking landscape that, Gwynne hopes, "is awe-inspiring enough to bring visitors closer to the animals and to the message of the Wildlife Conservation Society."

At the same time, the landscape has to provide a safe and stimulating environment for the animals. "Many zoos have gone the quasi-tropical-forest route—'If it has big leaves, it must be good,'" Halpern says. "We wanted to go beyond that and establish living systems that are representative of the actual rain forest habitat." Which meant they had to study the form and function of the rain forest and identify its component parts. Then the landscapers had to look for plants that would match the central

Take everything you thought about minivans and throw it out the roll-down sliding

African rain forest criteria, yet be suited to the demands of a site in eastern North America—in other words, plants hardy enough to take the climate, and tough enough to survive daily contact with the animals.

For example, ground orchids are found in the tropical rain forest; so, for the exhibit, the hardy perennial orchid *Bletilla striata* was used. "We planted a thousand day lilies for the gorillas to uproot and munch on, using the 'Child Bride' cultivar, since it is deep-rooting and persistent," Gwynne says. "It keeps them engaged with their surroundings."

As Gwynne points out, not many people are aware of the threatened ecology of the central African rain forest, because the public's attention has been focused on the Amazon. "We hope that by presenting visitors with more than an entertaining experience, and by demonstrating to the best of our ability the interdependence of the forest's living systems, the Congo exhibit will create a new league of conservationists whose hearts and minds will have been affected by what they have experienced," he says.

The last part of the exhibit is the Conservation Choices Pavilion, an interactive voting booth where visitors can choose how their three-dollar entrance fee will be spent by making a selection from WCS projects. As I contemplated my vote, I thought again of Samson. He would have loved this rain forest garden. And I know how he would have voted. Don't you?

PLANTING A RAIN FOREST

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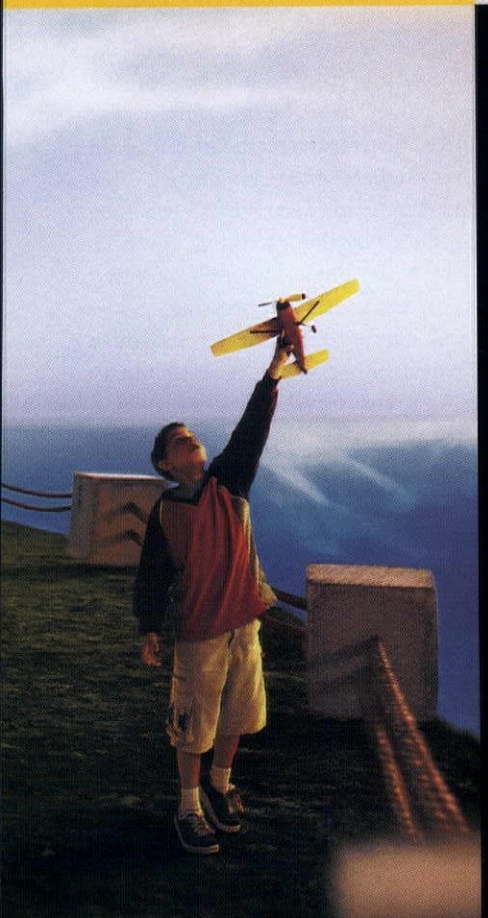

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happy endings

Italy's aromatic and flavorful dessert wines are the perfect finish to an evening meal

If one were to find fault with any aspect of Italian cuisine—aside from the fact that the term itself is something of a convenient fiction, referring to dozens of diverse regional cuisines—it would be with the paucity of memorable desserts. Tiramisu, panna cotta, gelato: that's about all that leaps to mind for me. Fortunately, this third-act weakness at the Italian table is more than compensated for by the abundance of delicious sweet wines, or *vini dolci,* which, to my mind, make a better and more stimulating conclusion to a meal than any of the above.

Probably the best-known Italian sweet wine is *vin santo,* a.k.a. "holy wine." It hails from Tuscany and is traditionally made from Trebbiano and Malvasia grapes that have been dried on straw mats under the rafters of an attic, in a process that concentrates the grape sugars. In his book *A Tuscan in the Kitchen,* restaurateur Pino Luongo offers one explanation for the righteous name: "When I was a kid, my father told me about the monks who used to travel from door to door throughout Tuscany to bring charitable assistance to the sick and the elderly, always offering a little shot of this mysterious sweet wine. Since it had the power to give a little relief to suffering and loneliness, the wine became known among the peasants as *vin santo.*" An alternate explanation I heard in Chianti is that the wine is considered holy because a significant amount of the stuff is shared with the angels while it is aging and evaporating in small oak and chestnut wine casks.

Holy it may be, but the quality of *vin santo* varies wildly, some of it tasting every bit as bad as the altar wine I used to sample as an altar boy. The level of residual sugar and sweetness varies wildly as well. Some of the drier *vin santo* tastes very much like dry sherry—not necessarily a compliment, in my book. Aging in heated attics often results in madeirization. The best *vin santo* can be fascinating. The worst can make you incredibly grateful for the biscotti with which the wines are inevitably served. (They are supposed to be dunked in the holy beverage.)

Italy's other great red wine region, the Piedmont, also produces a number of delicious sweet whites. Like the food of this beautiful mountainous area, these tend to be underappreciated in our country. Perhaps the most refreshing is Moscato d'Asti, a very light, slightly fizzy expression of Muscat, Piedmont's oldest varietal and one of the world's most versatile dessert wine grapes. It may be necessary to block out your associations with brash Asti Spumante in order to appreciate the virtues of its near relative. If Asti is basically Jerry Springer, Moscato d'Asti is more like Dennis Miller. A good Moscato d'Asti is like a spritzy liquid sorbet. It has the added virtue of being very light in alcohol—as low as 5 percent. (If this seems like a drawback, you can always have a second glass.) Richer, nonfizzy styles of Moscato are also made in the Piedmont, and some can be very serious, indeed. Exported in tiny quantities, the quality of these seems consistently higher than that of *vin santo.*

The most promising area for white wine production, both sweet and dry, is the northeast—the back thigh of Italy, as it were—from Verona up to the Austrian border. Friuli, source of some of Italy's best dry whites, also produces several interesting sweet wines, like *picolit.* Made from the grape of the same name, *picolit* was a favorite of some of the most epicurean European courts of the eighteenth century. Like many Italian dessert wines, this one is produced by the "raisining" method, in which the grape bunches are dried out on mats before pressing. Some estates harvest very late to maximize sweetness. Either way, producers get hefty prices for this delicate nectar, which is much prized by the Italians themselves.

Nearby, Soave, which produced so much of the insipid white liquid we sloshed down while listening to Cat Stevens and Dan Fogelberg, is enjoying a renaissance. Among the makers of wonderful dessert-style Soaves are Anselmi, Sandro and Claudio Gini, La Cappuccina, and Umberto Portinari.

If Asti is basically Jerry Springer, Moscato d'Asti is like Dennis Miller

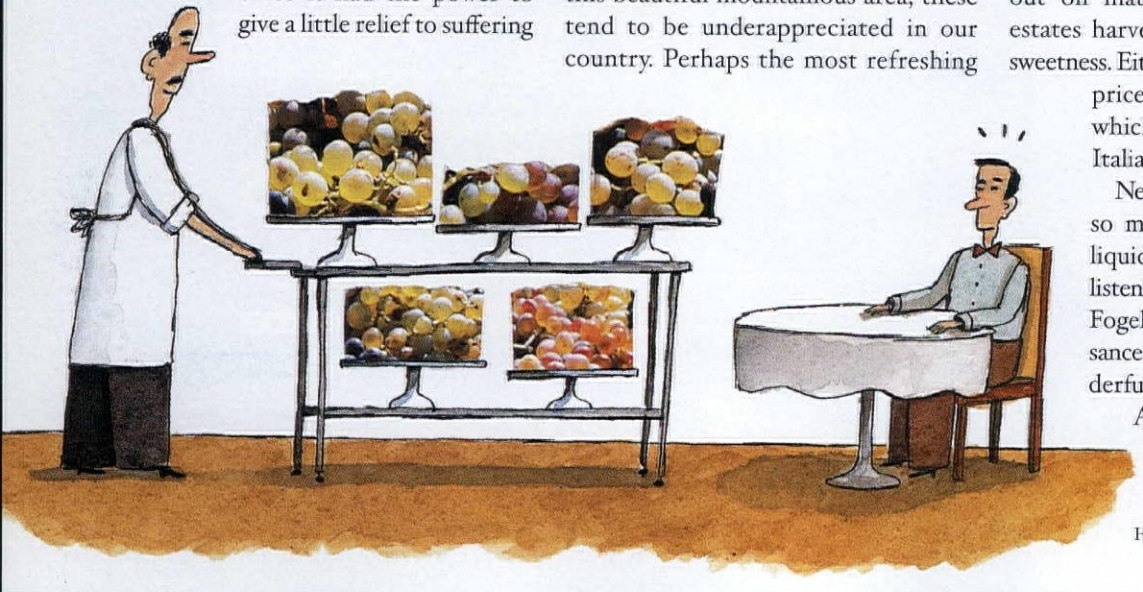
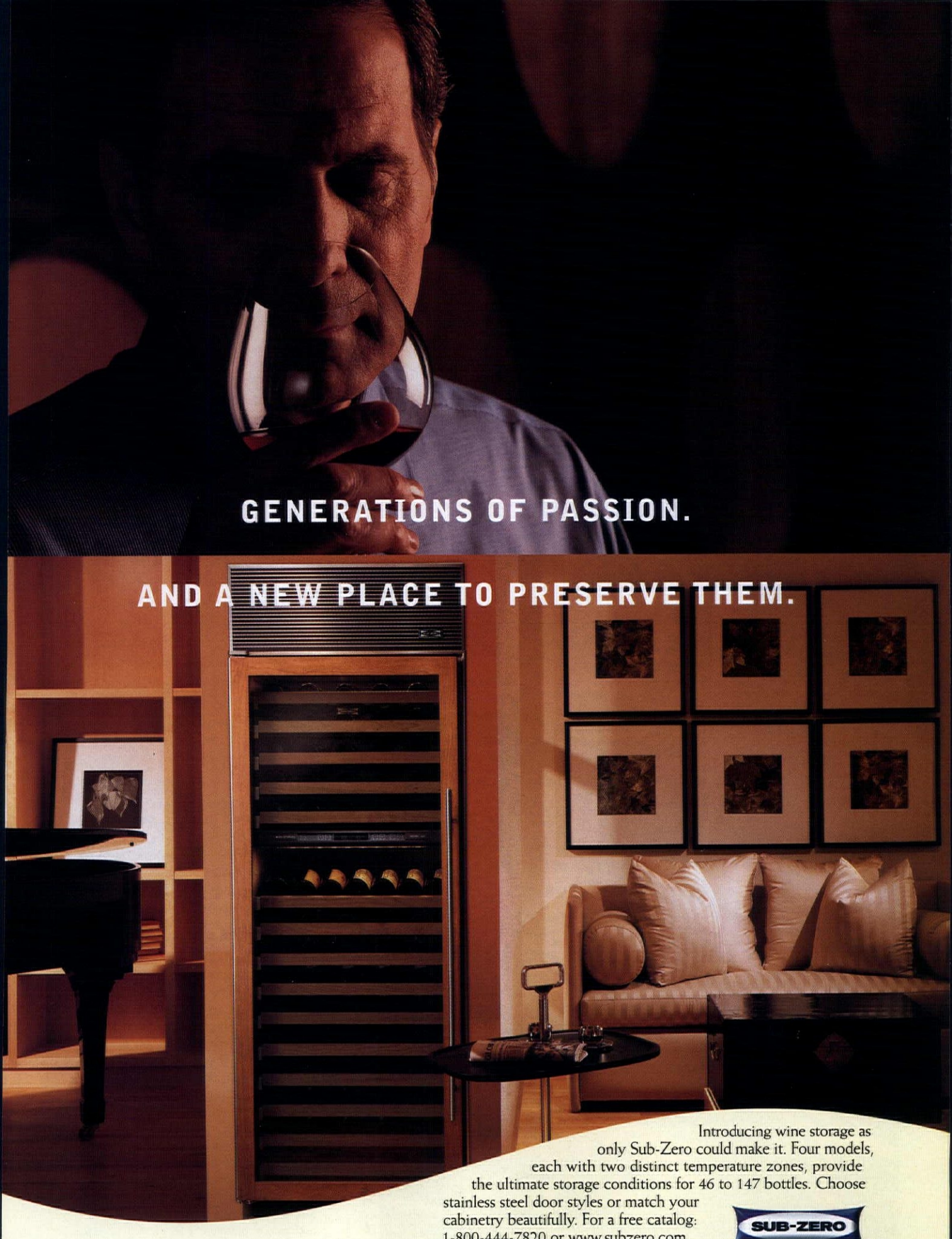


ILLUSTRATION BY GARY CLEMENT



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uncorked

Valpolicella is another incredibly lame wine of the Veneto that is threatening to become worthwhile. Recioto della Valpolicella is, of all things, a sweet red produced by the raisining method. Look for those made by Tedeschi or Tommaso Bussola. They are an excellent novelty at the dinner table, and a good accompaniment to light chocolate dishes.

Although the north of Italy produces far better wines at the moment, the future probably lies to the south. Among the signs of Sicily's great potential are the sweet and velvety Moscatos of the island of Pantelleria, such as those from Salvatore Murana and D'Ancona.

As far as I can tell, Italy produces more varieties of *vino dolce* than France does cheese—a situation that is both inspiring and daunting. One of my New Year's resolutions is to devote part of the new millennium to exploring their variety in situ, as well as at my favorite New York City trattorias. And to those of you who made unlikely vows about calories last month, remember, unlike pastry, pudding, and cake, a glass of *vino dolce* is superlow in fat and cholesterol.

THE OENO FILE

Please note that all of these prices, save the last one, are for half bottles.

'96 SCUBLA GRATICCIO (FRIULI) You may need a spoon for this decadent delight. Musky-sweet marzipan fruit with highlights of cedar and vanilla. Incredibly viscous and mouth-coating. $30

'96 PRA RECIOTO DELLE FONTANE SOAVE Very clean and honeyed, almost like a German eiswein, with a long, luxurious finish. $27

'97 ZENI MOSCATO ROSA TRENTINO One of the most exotic dessert wines I've ever tasted. Smells like roses and nutmeg, looks like Pinot Noir, tastes like essence of cherry and plum. Sweet, but with a nice Campari-like backbite on the finish. $15

'97 MACULAN TORCOLATO One of my favorite ways to end an Italian meal. Very viscous and rich, like drinking a good clover honey. $32

'98 CERETTO MOSCATO D'ASTI A spritzy, superrefreshing palate cleanser that tastes like peach sorbet. Only 5 percent alcohol, so have a couple of glasses. $17

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august 1972

PHOTOGRAPHED BY HORST

In 1972, when *House & Garden* published this view of Julia Child's kitchen in the South of France, words like *roux, duxelles,* and *deglaze* sent shivers of delight down the spines of American housewives. This was the golden age of American home cooking—before diet fads and the fury over pesticides, fat, and cholesterol cooled our gastronomic ardor. A compulsive gadget collector, Child stored what today would be considered a rather unassuming *batterie de cuisine* on a kitchen Peg-Board. Her husband, Paul, had drawn the outline of each instrument under its hook, to encourage the notoriously scatty *gourmande* to put her tools back in the right place.

For readers, many of them fans of Child's beloved television show, this photograph was as much fun as a game of concentration. As aspiring foodies, they would have identified the tool on the table as a rolling pastry piercer, the two-handle contraption on the upper right as a croissant cutter, and the wooden fork above the mixer as a blending fork. The most observant could have made out Child's transistor radio hanging between the saucepan and the strainer, and her wineglass sitting on the counter. (Some TV viewers were shocked by Child's on-air wine drinking.)

Known as the French Chef, Child, born in Pasadena in 1912, was neither French nor a chef. Except for a stint at a Nantucket restaurant in the late 1970s, she never did actual "on-line" professional cooking. Rather, Child was—and still is—a passionate and tireless scholar/cook/teacher/tinkerer. Every winter in the late '60s and the '70s, she would escape to the little house above Grasse to work on recipes for her books. It was here that she tested the finer points of baguette making or *paté en croûte*—"rushing from stove to typewriter like a mad hen," she recalls. The many guests who came to visit, from M.F.K. Fisher to James Beard, would help in the cooking and the washing up, enjoying what Child modestly called "the mechanics of food."

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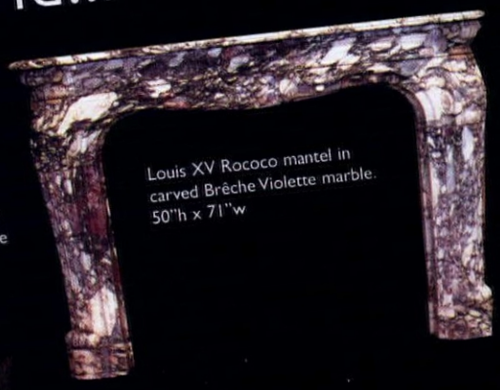
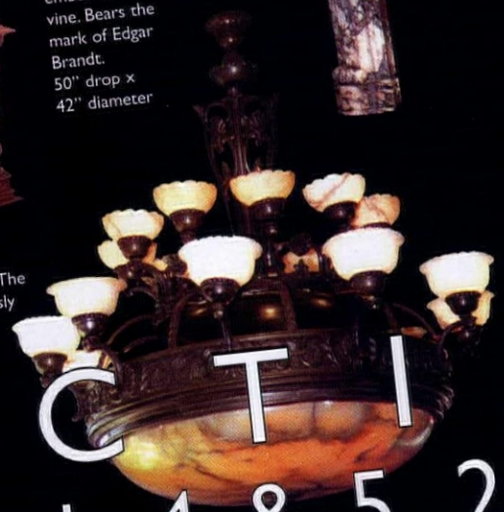


Louis XV Rococo mantel in carved Brêche Violette marble.
50"h x 71"w



Finely detailed two tier Art Nouveau chandelier in bronze with carved alabaster central dome and shades. The frieze is embossed with a stylized grape vine. Bears the mark of Edgar Brandt.
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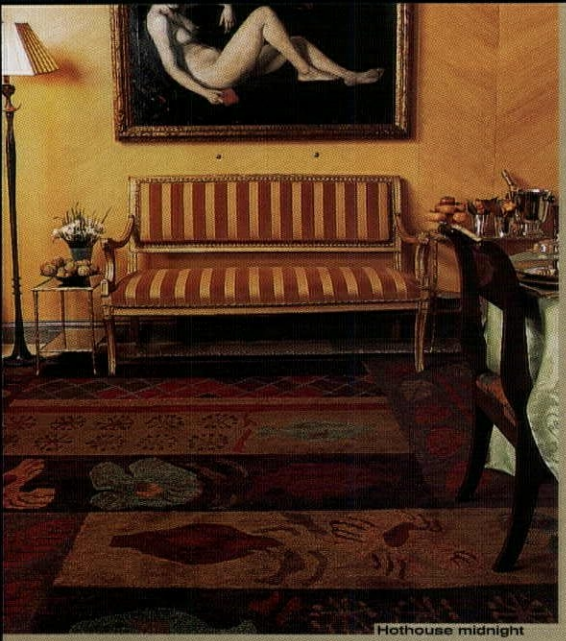

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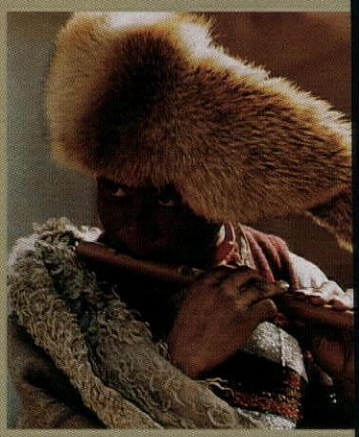

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Hothouse midnight room designed by Odile de Schietere, French Designer's Showhouse.

Brisas citrus and Lagoon hue room shots—furniture by Grange Furniture, Inc.

House&Garden

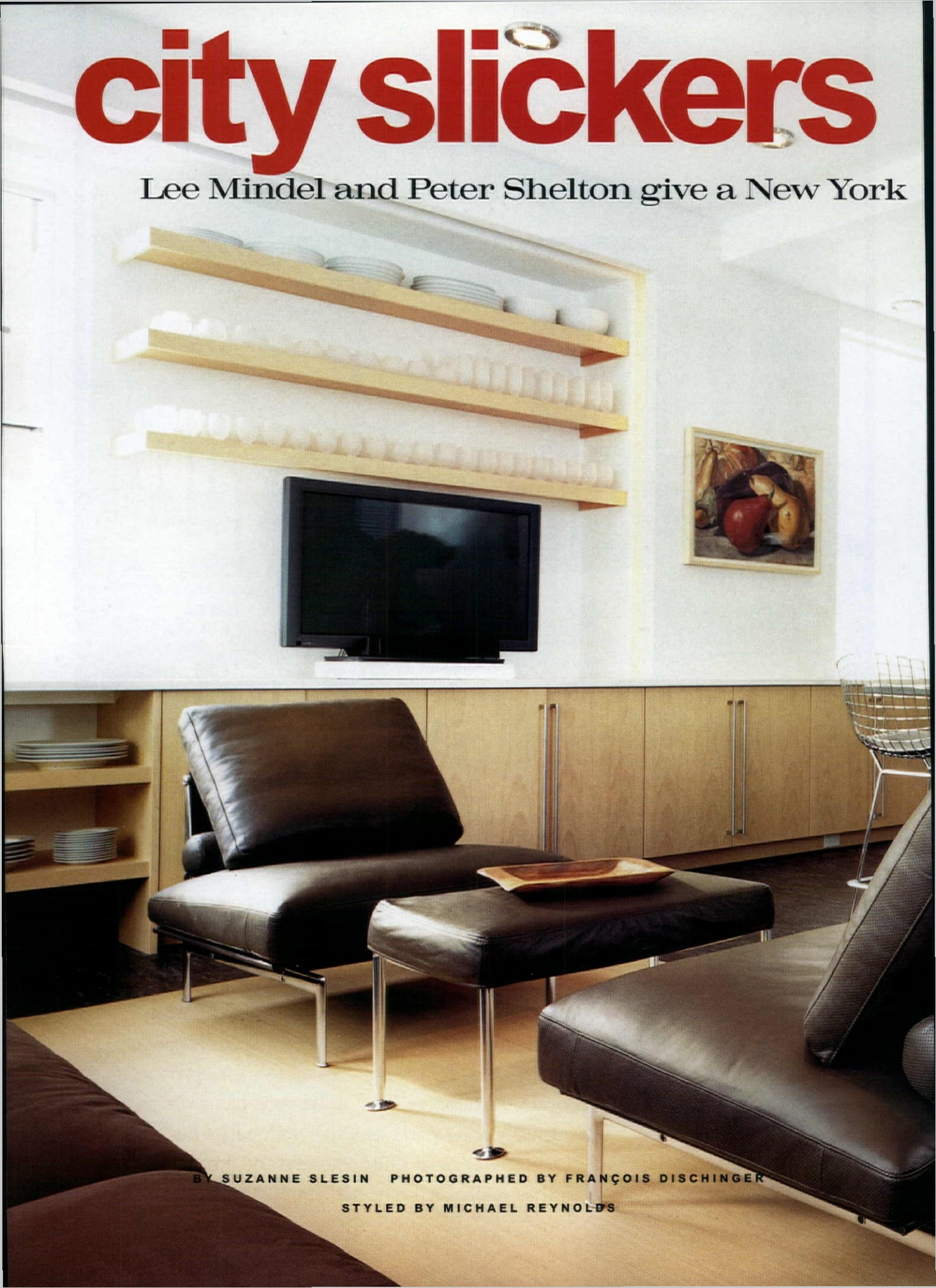
streamline

STYLED BY REBECCA OMWEG; SOURCES, SEE BACK OF BOOK

first principle It's an evolution that has slipped effortlessly into our lives: the streamlining of the kitchen. The walls are down; the space is open to the formal dining room. There is lots of put-your-feet-up seating, and fewer overhead cabinets. The look is crisp and cool. But open any drawer and see that the age-old dictum of a place for everything and everything in its place has really hit home. **Stainless-steel appliances and counters, as well as nifty shelves ideal for near-at-hand storage and great display, are new kitchen classics.**

city slickers

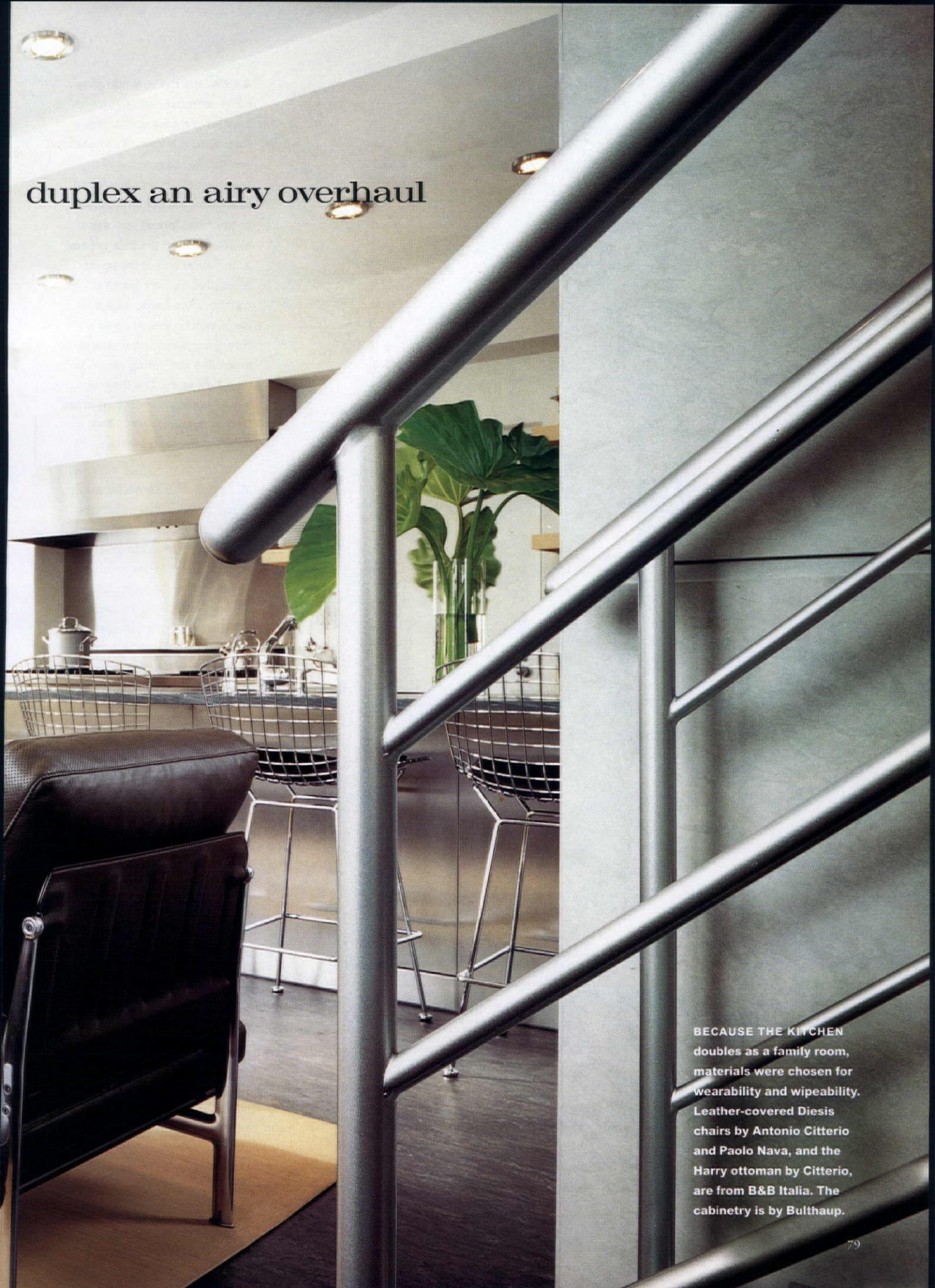
Lee Mindel and Peter Shelton give a New York



BY SUZANNE SLESIN PHOTOGRAPHED BY FRANÇOIS DISCHINGER

STYLED BY MICHAEL REYNOLDS

duplex an airy overhaul



BECAUSE THE KITCHEN doubles as a family room, materials were chosen for wearability and wipeability. Leather-covered Diesis chairs by Antonio Citterio and Paolo Nava, and the Harry ottoman by Citterio, are from B&B Italia. The cabinetry is by Bulthaup.

A NEW, HIGH-TECH spiraling steel staircase, left, has sand-blasted glass treads lit with fiber optics. It links the kitchen and family room to the bedrooms on the floor above, and acts as an anchor and contrast to the more formal stairs that offer access to the living room at the other end of the apartment. STOOLS BY HARRY BERTOIA for Knoll, opposite page, can be pulled up to a freestanding counter, whose base, like the Viking stove, is stainless steel. The Smaragd vinyl flooring is from Corporate Carpet Systems, NYC. The vase is from Aero, NYC.

ARCHITECTS OFTEN SPEAK their own language, punctuating their sentences with such words and phrases as "potential vertical spaces," "connection to the park," "centralizing the mechanicals," and "planes that bring light down." At least that's the way Lee Mindel and Peter Shelton, partners in the New York firm Shelton, Mindel & Associates, describe the glorious renovation of an Upper East Side Manhattan apartment that they recently completed.

Their clients, Diana and Errol Rudman, put it a bit differently. "We were very interested in having a place that was fresh and airy, and took advantage of a quality of light that combats the claustrophobia of the city," says Errol, who manages a hedge fund. His wife adds, "We wanted the apartment to float, to feel open and modern, and yet be a family home." In other words, they all spoke the same language.

In the beginning, the 3,900-square-foot duplex was divided into two low-ceilinged horizontal spaces that were connected by a single staircase. But Mindel and Shelton soon saw the potential of capitalizing on what they called "a not fully realized view" of Central Park. "Our first reaction was to make the place breathe spatially, and have walls that sweep up to allow light to sweep down from above," Shelton explains. The architectural solution? First, remove part of the upper floor to make a two-story salon with two bay windows that allow for a direct park view. Then, create a two-story limestone box that encloses the stairs (one rebuilt, another added outside the box), all the mechanical systems, and part of the kitchen.

Both the sophisticated lighting system and the intricate detailing of the woodwork contribute to the vitality of rooms that are all open to one another, and in which the sunlight creates especially dramatic patterns on the walls as the day unfolds.

"One game is played by going inside and outside of the box," says Mindel, emphasizing the new vertical aspect of the space. "The other is about expressing the prewar shell of the building with

many textures
To keep the kitchen from feeling harsh, the architect mixed materials, including stainless steel and maple for the shelves. The stone on the counter is dense and shows few stains.
burnished
gentle touch
The vinyl on the floor evokes the stone counters, but is soft underfoot. Bertoia stools from Knoll provide comfortable, see-through seating.

such traditional elements as raised paneling, baseboards, and moldings." Yet here, these old-world details seem more contemporary, paired with dramatic modern elements such as the fireplace wall in the living room, where a trapezoidal east-facing window allows the early morning sun to become a nearly abstract source of light. "It becomes an artful amenity," says Mindel, "which makes you smile when you see it." So does the felicitous contrast in the dining room, between the Rudmans' grand Italian old master paintings in elaborate gilt frames and the near asceticism of the space itself.

The overall palette of the apartment takes its cue from the park views.

Chocolate and apple green predominate, in leather, cashmere, and flannel that deliver what Mindel calls "another sensibility on a more subliminal level when you walk past and touch the pieces." Custom-made V'Soske rugs, shot with brightly colored silk threads, emphasize the subtlety of the controlled color scheme.

The big, open kitchen, which both clients and architects call "more than a kitchen," and which Mindel refers to as a

EARLY-17TH-CENTURY old master paintings contrast with the dining room's contemporary architectural lines. The antique table is from Reymer-Jourdan Antiques, NYC. Armless chairs by Shelton, Mindel & Associates were made by Ernest Studios, NYC.

THE TWO-STORY LIVING ROOM, these pages, was created by removing part of the upper floor. The fireplace wall incorporates a window and a niche for a Bruscoli sculpture. The table is by Le Corbusier for Cassina. NEW SCULPTURAL STAIRS are visible from the living room, opposite page, where custom-designed Spinneybeck leather-covered chairs surround a Mies van der Rohe table for Knoll. The custom-made rug is by V'Soske. Sources, see back of book.

"kitch-sit-eat," was crafted out of a series of small rooms. Light now pours into the space, which is outfitted with a TV and lots of luxurious seating. With kids—there are four in the household—"this is where it's happening," Mindel says. The Swedish vinyl floor, rubberized mats, and furniture in leather and Ultrasuede are all "wipeable, washable, and child-friendly."

That particularly pleases the Rudmans. "The open plan gives us everything we wanted," Diana says. "You constantly feel beckoned to go from one space to the other," Errol adds. "We managed to achieve functionality without formality." That just might be the paradigm for contemporary interior architecture.

sleek kitchens

Warm, inviting, and uncluttered

BY TRISH HALL PHOTOGRAPHED BY DANA GALLAGHER

STYLED BY REBECCA OMWEG

THE KITCHEN HAS BEEN LIBERATED from its old confines. It is free to look as homey as a country cottage or as hard-edged as a loading dock. Every material is being used, from concrete and steel to plastic and finely detailed wood. The most exciting kitchens balance an unadorned efficiency, learned from restaurant kitchens, with personal touches, even antiques. They are sleek, but moderated with a bit of warmth; calm, but not cold. They rely on one great piece, like a worktable, to give architectural interest to rooms without boundaries. Overhead cabinets are limited so that the kitchen won't seem too—well, too much like a kitchen. And increasingly, Americans are incorporating modern-style cabinets into older homes—the way Europeans always have—as cabinet companies like Snaidero, from Italy, and Bulthaup, from Germany, open showrooms here. On these pages are three such kitchens, all inviting, all elegant.

interchanging Textured plastic doors come in blue, yellow, orange, or clear, and can be alternated for a new look.

what Boffi

where Southampton, NY

why Dr. Robert Atkins, the famous diet doctor, and his wife, Veronica, his partner in writing cookbooks, are modernists who were drawn to the simplicity of this Italian kitchen.

flexible
blue on blue These Murano glass lights provide atmosphere, while 40 small lights set into the 18-foot ceiling illuminate the room like a blanket of stars.
real and faux Metals and metallic colors give a light, airy feel. The hood is steel; the cabinet doors below were lacquered to resemble aluminum.
textural contrast
The orange plastic-laminate counters are visually softer than stone and metal, and give another jolt of color. Veronica Atkins, a self-described Italophile, likes the entire Alukit line, including the stainless-steel trash can.
ready to go Wood cabinets on wheels slide right under the counter, and can then be moved to wherever storage is needed.

rock solid Using stone on several surfaces creates a consistent look, while subtly varying the color and pattern of the material provides greater visual interest. Shaled slate is used on the backsplash; Italian slate is on the island; and on the counter, a green-gray Brazilian granite, which is wavy rather than speckled.

metallics The legs of the countertop and the legs of the chairs add a sheen to the room and balance the wood, keeping the kitchen from looking too countrified.

natural

what SieMatic
where Wilmette, IL
why Mick DeGiulio created a kitchen for his clients using light-colored wood and three kinds of stone, emphasizing horizontal lines to make the high-ceilinged room feel calm and serene.

open and shut Frosted-glass-fronted cabinets offer openness without displaying the contents so literally that a single misplaced cup would ruin the effect.

into the woods The house needed to be expanded and updated, but its setting, in the middle of the woods, was spectacular. The kitchen was constructed to give the idea that the outside had simply decided to come in, bringing along its trees and subtly colored stones. Cabinets from SieMatic are made of Vermont maple.

coffee zone As houses grow larger, kitchens tend to have two of everything. Often, designers are putting a kitchen within a kitchen, just for breakfast making. This one is stocked with all the morning essentials, including its own Sub-Zero drawer and dishwasher.

defined Large drawers are efficiently divided, making every utensil easy to find. The plain-fronted cabinetry is a seafoam color that complements the pale gray granite, which is sealed with a nearly matte finish and nothing at all on the edges.

special handling
Long metal drawer pulls are easy to grab. Unadorned, they give a clean horizontal look, but they can also be used as towel racks.

what Bulthaup Studio Inc.
where Alexandria, VA
why Maria and Harry Hopper wanted low cabinets, so that nothing would block the sun from the addition to their 1840 Federal house.

mixing materials

A funky light fixture pleasingly disrupts the uniformity and individualizes the Bulthaup kitchen, in a windowed addition.

storage strategy

The cabinets on either side of the range's hood are used for spices, teas, and mugs, and are the only ones in the room set above the counters. Their unusual placement highlights the artwork that the Hoppers have placed on the nearby wall. Under the cooktop, pullout racks hold pots and pans.

old and new The modern European cabinets and slick stainless-steel island are surprisingly easy to mix with American antiques, like this table. The floor was made of pine boards taken out of an old house in Virginia that was being torn down. Sources, see back of book.

trade secrets

kitchens are on wheels and well-designed interiors adapt to

"Multitasking" is a buzzword no longer restricted to the office. Kitchens are going mobile. Wheeled workstations, cabinets, and trolleys do double duty, from preparation to presentation, in lofty spaces or cramped city apartments.

PRODUCED BY JOYCE BAUTISTA PHOTOGRAPHED BY JAY ZUCKERKORN

a classic

Designed by Joe Colombo for Boffi Studio, the complete electric kitchen is as modern today as it was when it won the silver medal at the Milan Exhibition in 1964. Made of birch plywood and cherry veneer, it has hot plates, storage, a pullout countertop, sockets for appliances, and a stove cover that is also a serving tray; $8,684. In NYC, 212-421-1800.

easy-bake Just slip an electric oven into Varenna Poliform's base unit, from their Planet Collection. The aluminum top provides extra work surface; $2,365, including Miele oven. 877-VARENNA.

waste not

No need to carry carrot tops across the kitchen to the garbage can. Bulthaup's trash can, from $1,400, comes to you. With its two sizes of plastic inserts on top and a drawer on the bottom, separating recyclables and waste materials for compost is easy. Made of anodized aluminum, it is lightweight and virtually smudgeproof. In NYC, 212-966-7183.

a roll . . .

all of your needs

serving size

The spareness of the Eiffel trolley, $1,160, from Doma, the Home Design Collection, belies its versatility. Made of stainless steel, cherry wood, and glass, it has slats that can be moved to adjust for serving trays and dishes of any width. It's also sturdy enough for a television, if you want some company. 877-DOMAUSA.

cross hairs

The stainless-steel and oak lab trolley, $3,200, designed by Jasper Morrison, is available at Capellini Modern Age. In NYC, 212-966-0669. Utensils are by Philippe Starck, from Moss. In NYC, 212-226-2190.

silky drawers

This anodized-aluminum storage unit with beech top, about $1,900, from the German company Bulthaup, comes in several combinations of drawers, work tops, and shelves. It is also available with cherry-wood drawers.

travel kit

This mobile three-drawer cabinet, $1,228, designed by Piero Lissoni for Boffi Studio, comes with well-designed spaces to accommodate flatware and utensils. Made of solid cherry wood, it is attractive enough to be wheeled out to the dining room, to set the table, and then used as an extra surface to hold platters of food.

trade secrets

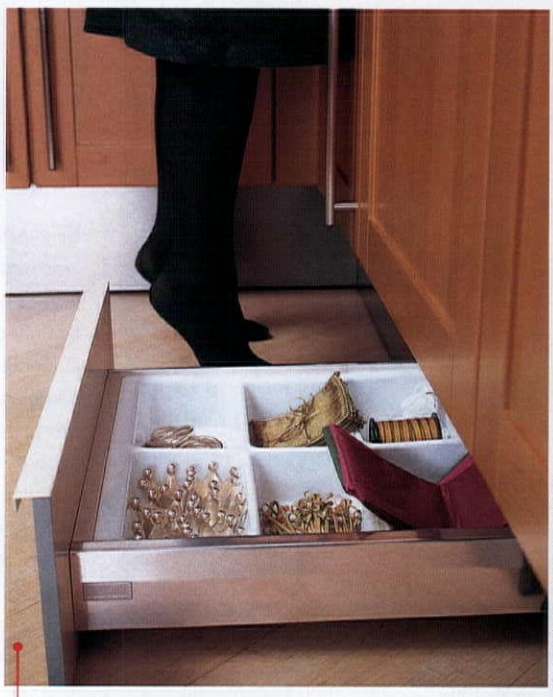
. . . and playing hide-

There's no reason to have cabinets crammed with jars, or drawers jumbled with kitchen equipment. Architects, kitchen designers, and cabinetmakers are customizing interiors to utilize every inch of space. Here are some of the more appealing choices. PRODUCED BY TRISH HALL PHOTOGRAPHED BY TARA SGROI

practical pantry Space can be configured in many ways, to suit the food you store most often. This Poggenpohl pantry, $2,400 to $3,800, offers slides, shelves, hooks, and a sealed cabinet to keep foods dry.

silver tower Two levels in this drawer, $262, from SieMatic (in NYC, 212-593-4195) allow twice as many utensils to be stored as usual; each level fully extends. Many cabinetmakers also offer fabric-lined drawers to keep silver from tarnishing.

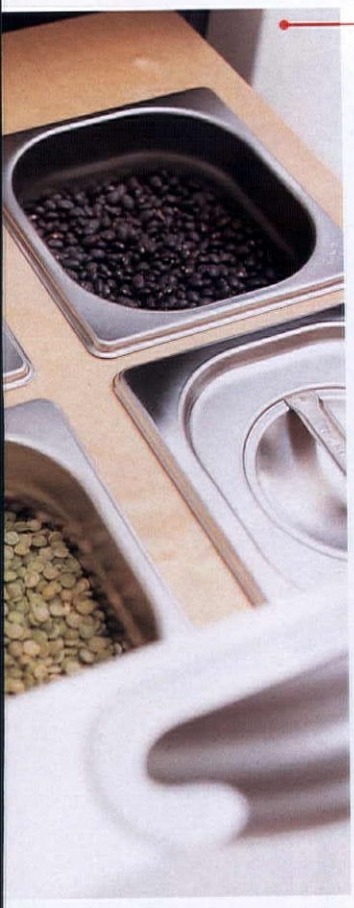
pullout drawer Narrow cabinets in awkward spaces become usable when they are pullouts fitted with shelves; $900 to $1,500 from Poggenpohl. In NYC, 212-228-3334.



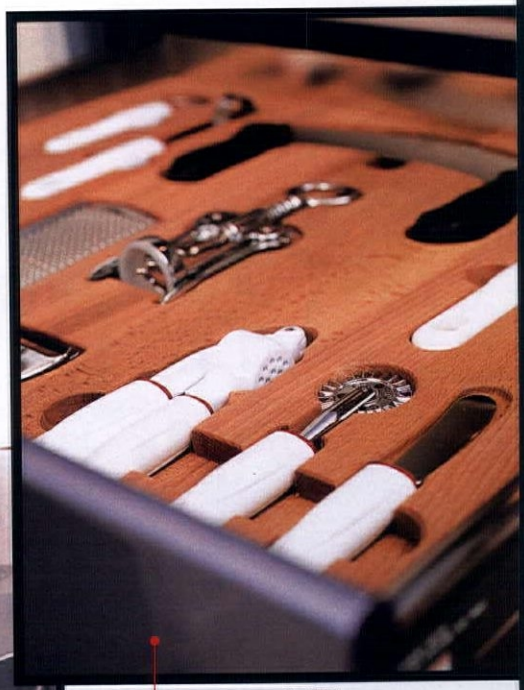
found space The kick plate under the cabinet used to be wasted space. Now designers are installing drawers that can hold anything from stepladders to string. The drawer above, $285, is from SieMatic.

STYLED BY NATASCHA WITTGENSTEIN

and-seek



no mess Bags of beans, rice, flour, and sugar often spill over in cupboards and drawers. Snaidero's restaurant-style tray with canisters, $400, keeps dry foods neat. It is installed in a drawer so counters can be free of clutter. The canisters are easily removed for cleaning. In NYC, 212-980-6026.



a neat fit

Utensils will never be jumbled together in this Snaidero drawer, $528, which has cutouts for the 13 included tools. Among them: a corkscrew and a zester.

lid storage

Pots can be stacked on shelves or in cabinets, or hung, but the tops always seem to go awry. These Snaidero wooden slats, $130 to $230 depending on size, keep the tops in place.

like magic

Kitchens once contained a lot of unused space. Now mechanisms exist for turning dead corners into great storage. This Snaidero cabinet, $2,900, opens to reveal not only the space directly behind it but also shelving hidden in the corner. Clever slides pull the wire racks and their contents forward.

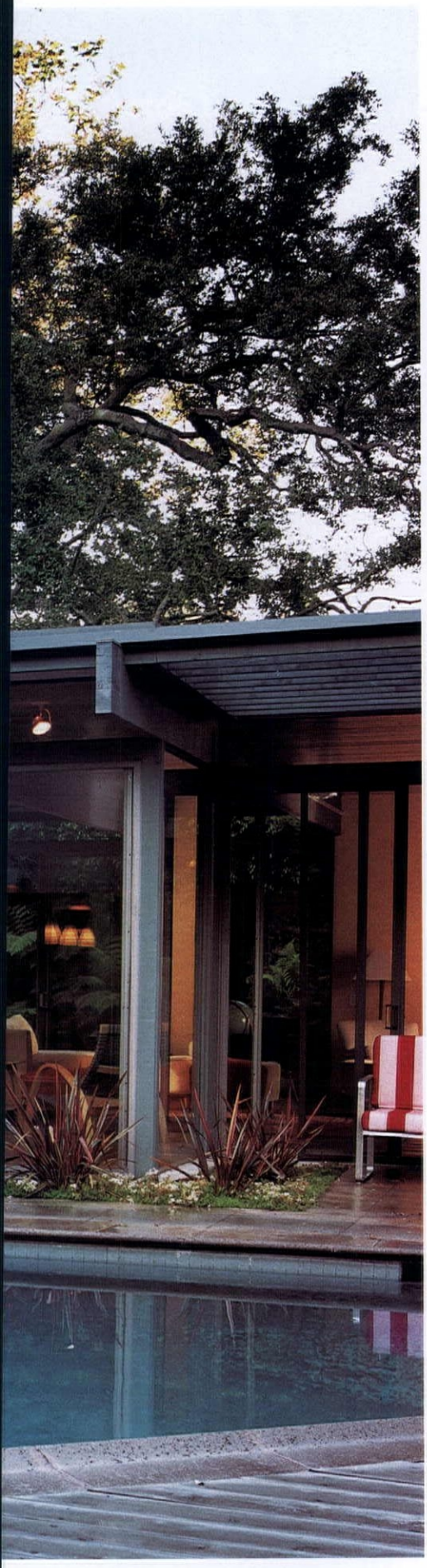
customize

Pull-out units, $900, like this one from SieMatic, can be fitted with dividers suited to your needs, with plastic containers for beans and grains, and with a bottle rack for oils.

changing the script

Redesigning a modernist house near Santa Monica, architect Mark Mack started out with a bachelor for a client, but ended up with a family

THE LIVING ROOM, seen from the pool-side patio, this page, is at the heart of the original early-'60s, open-plan house. The outdoor-furniture cushions are covered in a red-and-white Sunbrella fabric from Diamond Foam & Fabric, L.A. THE TWO-STORY ANNEX, opposite page, is a recent addition by L.A. architect Mark Mack. The green patio chairs placed outside the annex were a flea-market find.



It's an old Hollywood story. First, someone has the modest kernel of a good idea; then the hotshots get involved, the script gets rewritten, and the costs begin to mount. Before you know it, a small-scale production has grown into a big-time blockbuster.

No doubt screenwriter Larry Levin has seen the scenario played out time and again with movie deals. This, however, is the tale of Levin's house, near Santa Monica. And for his money, it couldn't have a happier ending.

The scene opens in 1994, when Levin, an Illinois native with, he says, "no taste," decided to buy a 3,500-square-foot '60s-modern house in the Rustic Canyon area. "I'd been a renter for twenty-one years," he recalls. "My New York apartment was a bachelor museum. This is the first house I ever owned. I felt it was time to be a grown-up." Besides, he adds, "I loved the neighborhood."

Rustic Canyon, not far from the ocean and nestled between hillsides covered with chaparral, has great cachet. The community was started in 1922 by the Uplifters Club, a group of Los Angeles artists and businessmen, as a rural retreat. In the 1950s, celebrities moved in, from Johnny Weissmuller and future Chief Justice Earl Warren to Lee Marvin. The canyon is still a tony address, but Levin's house had fallen on hard times. Built in the early '60s by architect Matthew Robert Leizer—and photographed in 1966 by Julius Shulman—the house, 32 years later, "was sad, dank, and dark," Levin recalls. "My friends' jaws dropped in alarm when they saw it."

BY WENDY MOONAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHEL ARNAUD

STYLED BY PAULA FOX

Still, Levin saw its possibilities. As soon as he purchased the house, it went into development—in the Hollywood sense of the phrase. Which is to say: nothing happened. Preoccupied with his film work, in the midst of a divorce that left him sharing custody of his young daughter, Eden, and a bit intimidated by the prospect of renovation, Levin let the house sit, empty, for two years.

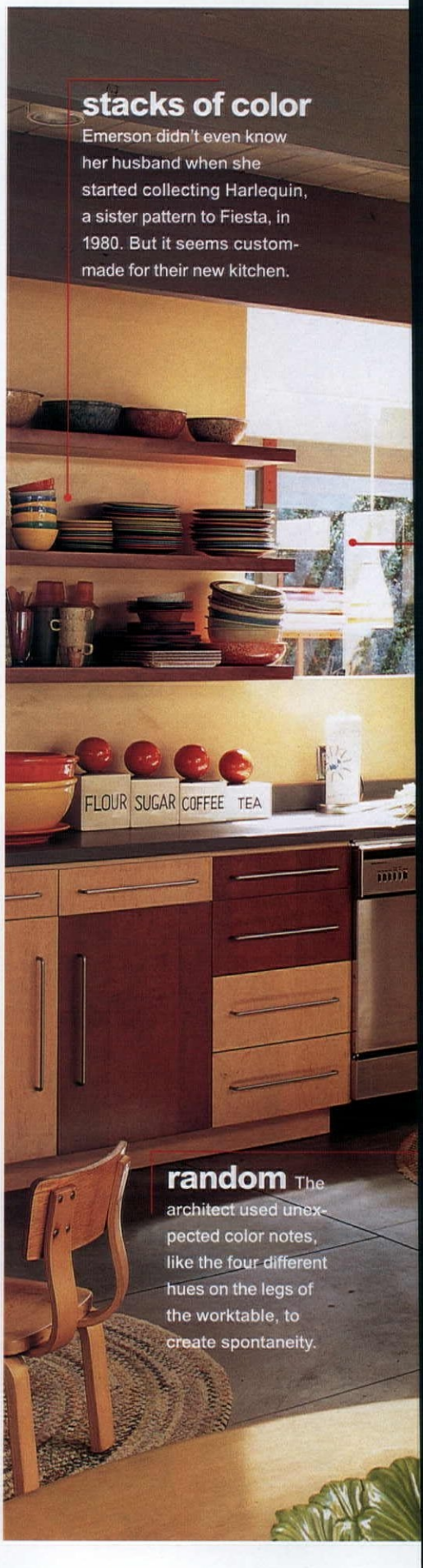
Then he read an article about architect Mark Mack, an Austrian who had opened a California practice in 1984 and was a professor at UCLA. The subject of several books, with widely published residential projects in the Napa and Sonoma valleys, Mack has an international reputation for his use of bold color and his smooth contemporary design sensibilities. He has worked on such public buildings as the temporary headquarters for the Getty Research Institute in Santa Monica, the Boise Art Museum, and the Nexus housing complex in Fukuoka, Japan. Given Mack's serious credentials, Levin was relieved to see him arrive for their meeting at the house wearing a pair of surfer shorts and sandals. "Mark was so understated," Levin recalls, "so humble and sweet."

Mack smiles at the reaction. "I like to be characterized as an easy-living California architect," he says. "I use indigenous and vernacular elements. You could call me a relaxed modernist."

Originally, Levin wanted Mack to remodel the small kitchen only. To open up the space, Mack knocked down walls, converting three tiny rooms into one. He laid a new cement floor, scored it in an irregular pattern, and stained certain quadrants palm green. He designed a large maple worktable and new maple cabinets, staining a few random cabinet fronts cherry red.

But the project gained its own momentum as Mack's eye for color began to roam over the rest of the house. He respected Leizer's original open-plan scheme, and didn't touch such elements

TO REMAKE THE KITCHEN, right and below, Mack combined three small rooms into one. Random blocks of color serve as a counterpoint to the natural wood cabinets and 1950s school furniture. Mack custom-designed the metal rack for the pots and pans. The vintage valet rack, below, is from Orange, in L.A. The aluminum Kartell stools are from Diva, L.A.



stacks of color Emerson didn't even know her husband when she started collecting Harlequin, a sister pattern to Fiesta, in 1980. But it seems custom-made for their new kitchen.

random The architect used unexpected color notes, like the four different hues on the legs of the worktable, to create spontaneity.

colorful
in sight A large overhead rack holds all the pots and pans. The downside to open storage, Emerson notes, is that everything has to be kept spotless and neat.
cutouts
Openings that face the living room and the pool bring more light into the kitchen, and allow the parents to keep an eye on their girls.
double duty
The family uses the worktable for almost all food preparation. The second sink is convenient for washing fruits and vegetables. The table also serves as an island for socializing and eating.

ASIDE FROM MACK'S dramatic new fireplace, right, the living room is little altered from the original, down to the Mexican floor tiles. The sofa, covered in a cotton from Diamond Foam & Fabric, was found at the Rose Bowl flea market. The '50s Heywood-Wakefield chaise is from Orange and is upholstered in vintage mohair by Knoll. The ottoman is Sasha Emerson Levin's own design. Sources, see back of book.

as Mexican paving tiles, sliding glass doors that open out onto the pool, and a breezeway. But the interiors, Levin says, became "a blank canvas for Mark."

Mack stained the wood beams white and covered the rough stucco walls with hand-applied colored plaster. Some walls are butter yellow, others mint green. Levin describes the fireplace surround and a few other walls as "the orange of the Golden Gate bridge."

The renovation took four months. One day, Levin arranged a play date for Eden with the daughter of Sasha Emerson, then an executive at New Line Cinema and herself a single parent. Eden and Sophie Emerson had a grand time, but the adults had the real fun. Ten months later, Levin and Emerson married—and needed more house. "Suddenly," Emerson says, "we were the Brady Bunch."

ENTER MARK MACK for the sequel. Emerson had already renovated three L.A. houses, one a Paul Williams junior mansion, and Mack was happy to collaborate with her. "I like to get into the intricacies of merging my vision with someone else's," he says. One of their signal successes is the master bathroom—a riot of tiles in vivid stripes of red, yellow, blue, and green. "Mark sat at the kitchen table and sketched," says Emerson. "We planned it out with graph paper and colored pencils."

Mack is known for houses with independent pavilions. Here, he turned an L-shaped house into a U, replacing the carport with a square tower that includes two children's bedrooms, two baths, a playroom, and a guest bedroom. He linked it to the main house by glassing in the breezeway. The parents sleep in the old house, the girls in the new. "The tower has big open rooms where we all play, but each child has her own room for privacy," Emerson says, adding, "Mark designed the kitchen with cutout windows, so I can see what's going on."

When it came to decorating, the couple headed for the flea markets. "Nothing in the house cost more than $1,500—we spent everything on the architecture," Emerson says. "The markets are so good here, you can bumble your way through if you have a good eye." Along with china, glassware, and lamps, the couple found

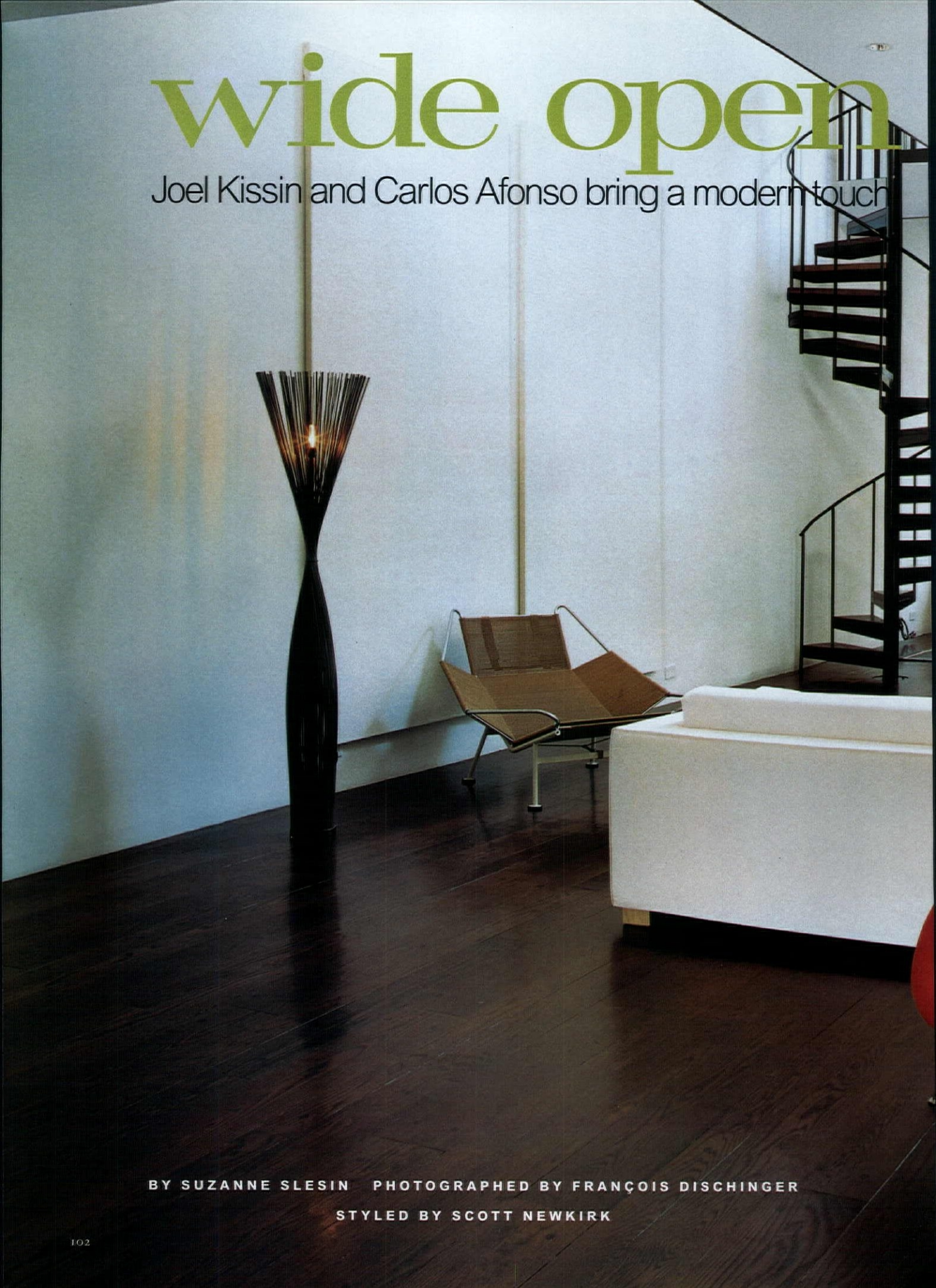
an old wooden library book-card file, which they use to store art supplies. They dine off an old school table and sit on Heywood-Wakefield chairs that once graced a classroom. Most of the pieces are period, but Emerson explains, "We wanted great design, not names."

The shopping was so much fun, it inspired Emerson, along with her friend Marne Dupere, to open a vintage-furnishings store, Orange, in Beverly Hills. For Emerson, the whole experience of the Rustic Canyon house has been a homecoming of sorts. "It's ironic," she says. "I grew up in Manhattan in a Kips Bay building by I. M. Pei. My parents had bright walls, Marimekko bedspreads, Azuma pillows with Peter Max designs. When they saw this house, they said, 'It looks just like the place where you grew up.' "

For his part, Levin is content to bask in the satisfaction of the discerning patronage. "I didn't know it was going to turn out so well. I sit on the deck and look back at the house and can't believe it," he says. "I finally have good taste."

wide open

Joel Kissin and Carlos Afonso bring a modern touch



BY SUZANNE SLESIN PHOTOGRAPHED BY FRANÇOIS DISCHINGER

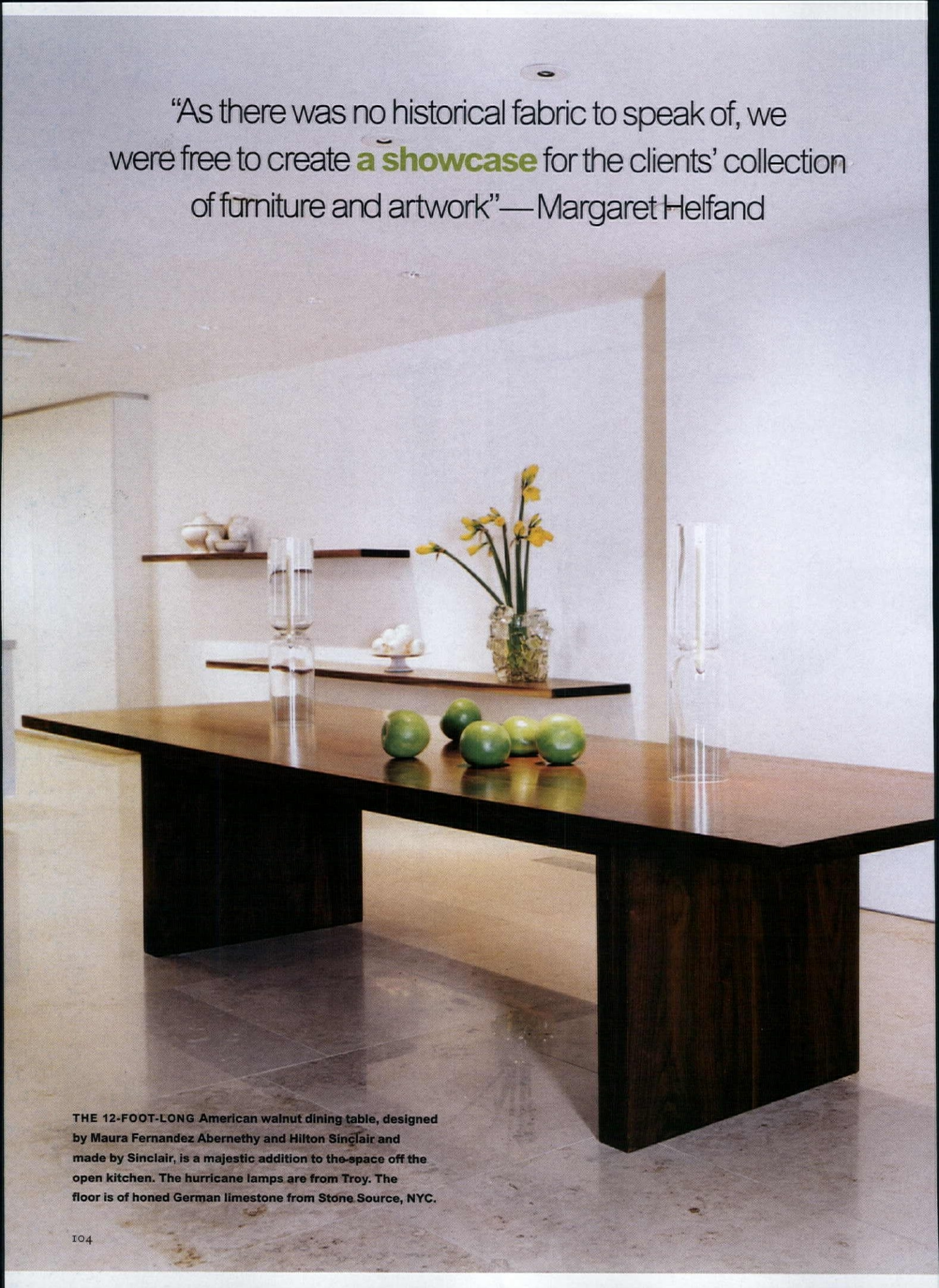
STYLED BY SCOTT NEWKIRK

spaces

to their old Manhattan brownstone

THE FOCAL POINT of the two-story living room is a 22-foot-high window that overlooks the garden. A pair of sofas from Capellini Modern Age, NYC, contrast with the stained oak floor. The 1940s surgical lamp is from Urban Archeology, NYC. The orange chair, a 1959 design by Pierre Paulin, sits by a console attributed to George Nakashima. The Flag Halyard chair, far left, is a 1950 Hans Wegner design, and the standing lamp is from Bowles & Linares, London. The sculpture by Harry Bertoia on the table is from Troy, NYC.

"As there was no historical fabric to speak of, we were free to create **a showcase** for the clients' collection of furniture and artwork"—Margaret Helfand



THE 12-FOOT-LONG American walnut dining table, designed by Maura Fernandez Abernethy and Hilton Sinclair and made by Sinclair, is a majestic addition to the space off the open kitchen. The hurricane lamps are from Troy. The floor is of honed German limestone from Stone Source, NYC.

THE TURN-OF-THE-CENTURY brownstone renovated in the '60s fit Joel Kissin like the proverbial kid glove. Kissin, president and co-owner—with Sir Terence Conran—of Guastavino's, a restaurant that is nestled under the spectacular tiled arcades of the Queensboro Bridge in Manhattan, had looked at dozens of lofts and large apartments. But when he and his partner, Carlos Afonso, a design consultant, saw the house, with its two-story living room and 22-foot-high window, they knew they had found the place in which they wanted to live. "The house's big, dramatic spaces gave it a loftlike quality," says Kissin. "We were lucky, because today, due to building codes, I think we would never have been able to make the changes of thirty years ago."

Nevertheless, they hired Margaret Helfand, of Helfand Myerberg Guggenheimer, a New York architectural firm, to oversee a year of construction. Kissin and Afonso felt the house needed updating, and ended up changing every bathroom, installing a new kitchen, and keeping only the staircase and the soaring living room. "It's not often you get this kind of building that has gone through an aggressive renovation," says Helfand, who worked with project architect Maura Fernandez Abernethy. "And as there was no historical fabric to speak of, we were free to create a showcase for the clients' collection of furniture and artwork."

That was the fun part. "We wanted to lighten the whole thing," says Kissin, who reluctantly did away with the copper mantel in the dining room, and more easily got rid of the brightly colored bathroom tiles, cork floors, and '60s detailing. "We didn't want anything fussy," Afonso says. "We took all the color away and painted everything white." The idea was to have a "clean space to live in, so that you could close the door and feel cozy in your own habitat."

While they brought some furniture and artwork with them when they moved from London, they purchased many things, or had them made specially for the new house. Still, there

playing with light

The backsplash was created by laminating etched glass to mirror. The look is both frosted and opaque, giving the space more texture and an airier feeling.

reflecting pool

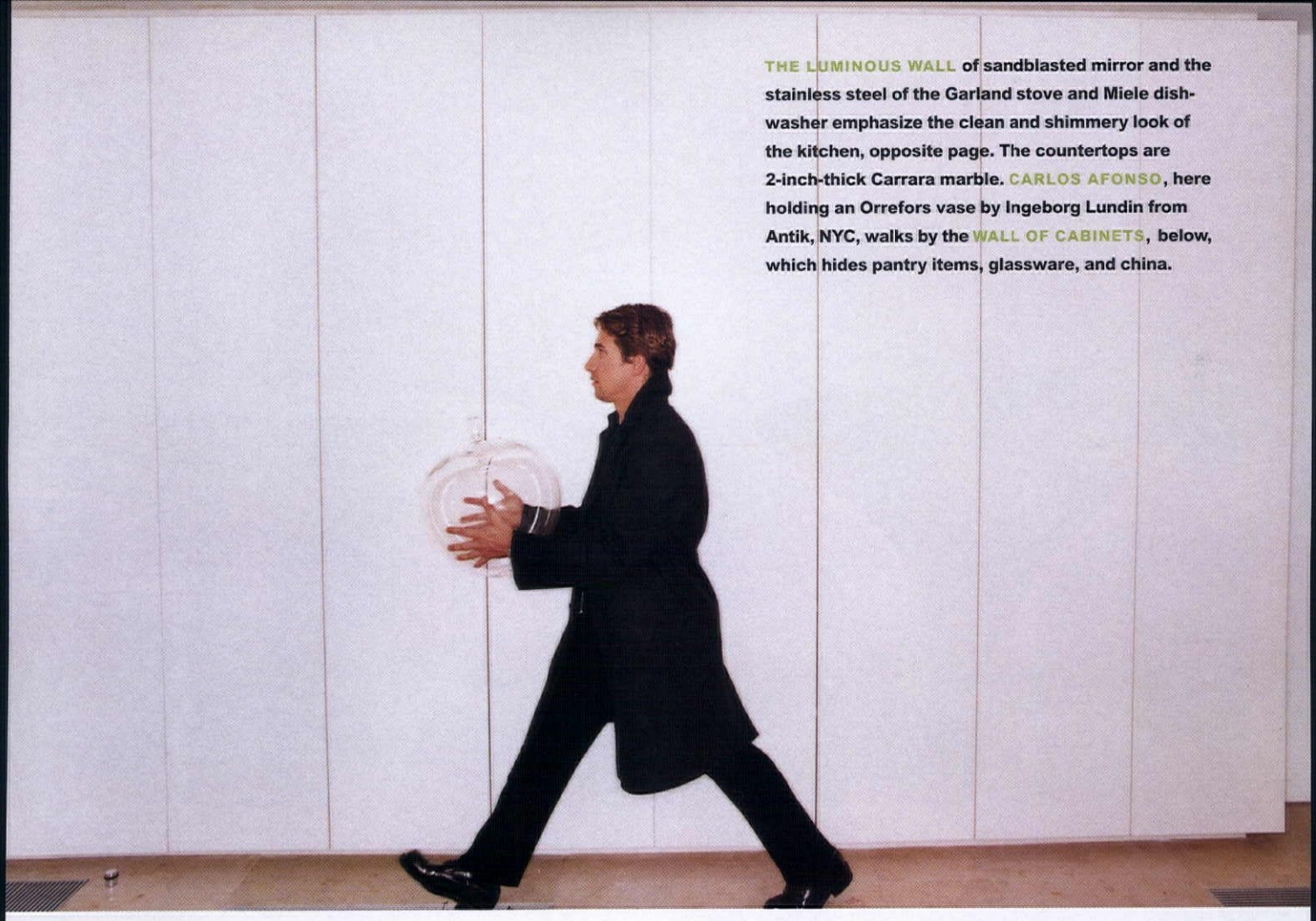
To enhance light, the architects wrapped stainless steel around the walls holding the hood and behind the stove, and on the sides of the refrigerator.

close at hand

A Carrara marble ledge above the kitchen counter is perfect for plates, cooking equipment, and bottles of vinegar and oil.

working space

Kissin wanted his kitchen to be "simple and contemporary, but not too cold." The maple table is used for chopping, eating, and storing pots.



THE LUMINOUS WALL of sandblasted mirror and the stainless steel of the Garland stove and Miele dishwasher emphasize the clean and shimmery look of the kitchen, opposite page. The countertops are 2-inch-thick Carrara marble. **CARLOS AFONSO**, here holding an Orrefors vase by Ingeborg Lundin from Antik, NYC, walks by the **WALL OF CABINETS**, below, which hides pantry items, glassware, and china.

THE MASTER BEDROOM suite occupies the entire fourth floor. The Tallis bed, above, is from the Conran Shop, London. The 1952 chair is by Poul Kjaerholm. The bedside table, designed by Carlos Afonso, is from Troy; the Cobra lamp, from Wyeth, both NYC. IN THE MINIMAL BATHROOM, left, limestone from Stone Source, NYC, is the material of choice. The faucets are Kroin. IN THE DRESSING ROOM, opposite page, a chaise covered in calf suede sits on a carpet from Einstein Moomjy, NYC. Sources, see back of book.

were no snap decisions. "I wanted to have the things that I loved all my life, that were in my head for many years," says Afonso, pointing out the Mies van der Rohe Barcelona daybed in the foyer, the Cat's Cradle table by Harris Rubin, and a 1930s side table by Pierre Chareau. The majestic 12-foot-long dining table of American walnut that anchors the kitchen floor was designed by Fernandez Abernethy and Hilton Sinclair and made by Sinclair, a craftsman who also made the floating wood shelves, some of which function as a kind of minimal sideboard.

The couple had planned to have the master bedroom on the third floor, but after renovation began, they decided to turn the entire fourth floor into a bed, bath, and large dressing

room suite that spans the width of the house. "Why not go for it?" Kissin asked, and Afonso ran with the idea. "I wanted something glamorous," Afonso says of the quiet bedroom that overlooks the garden, and the limestone-covered bathroom, the wood-lined closets, which have leather-handled drawers, and a comfy chaise. "That's where I can sit and read a book, look at my clothes, and put outfits together in preparation for a good night out," Afonso says.

The kitchen was Kissin's domain. "As a restaurateur," he explains, "I wanted to have lots of space for cooking and plating up." That explains the large, solid-maple island that also serves as a table. Kissin wanted what he calls "semicommercial equipment, but nothing that was too terribly commercial," because, he adds, "that's what I see every day." There are no overhead cabinets ("They make me feel closed in," he says), but lots of storage drawers installed below the counters. "When you are cooking, it's nice to have everything out," he says. After all that, there was one more requirement: a very quiet dishwasher. With that in place, nothing disturbs the serenity of what Kissin and Afonso call their "oasis."

ambassador

Designer Stephen Miller Siegel's pied-à-terre for U.S. envoy

BY SUZANNE SLESIN PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIETER ESTERSOHN

suite

Paul Cejas and his wife, Trudy, is a model of decor diplomacy

STYLED BY BARBARA KURGAN

THE CLIENTS, Paul Cejas, the United States ambassador to Belgium, and his wife, Trudy, wanted a "fantasy in Manhattan"—at least that's what they conveyed to their designer and architect, Stephen Miller Siegel. When they are not in Brussels, the couple's primary residence is in Miami. But they were fortunate to have as a pied-à-terre a relatively small, yet still quite grand, apartment in one of New York's legendary white-glove buildings, with high-ceilinged reception rooms, glossy parquet floors, and dreamy views of Central Park.

"Neutrals, neutrals, neutrals," became Siegel's mantra. "Because the Cejases have a very large collection of important Latin American art, I wanted to make sure that, even in an opulent setting, the furnishings would not fight with the paintings," says Siegel, who worked for architect Peter Marino for ten years and recently joined with Nannette Brown to form Brown Siegel Design Associates. The decor would be "almost period," says Siegel, meaning, "we didn't want to refer to a particular time frame. I never wanted the rooms to look 'decorated.' "

Nevertheless, quite beautifully decorated they are. In each room, a different color—Siegel's idiosyncratic view of neutrals—plays a starring role. Here rich blues, there mellow ochres; deep reds in one room, glittery silvers and golds in another. "I don't like bold colors," explains the designer, "but rather colors that are indescribable."

That is certainly true in the dining room, where a Russian cranberry-glass chandelier complements walls painted in

IN THE LIVING ROOM, furniture is arranged around a pair of Oriental rugs, making the space feel like two rooms in one. A 19th-century Indo-Persian carpet lies on the left, one from Agra on the right. Both are from F. J. Hakimian, NYC. The walls are covered in a gold-and-silver-striped fabric from Christopher Hyland.

a rich hue that many in the decorating trade would call aubergine. Not Siegel. "I hate that word," he says. "It's tacky." Mind you, Siegel wouldn't prefer "eggplant." He describes the color as "somewhere between porphyry and mahogany."

Each of the rooms—from the striking octagonal foyer, where bronze mesh has been laid over a dark blue wall, to the large living room, where seating is placed in genial groupings—has a distinct personality. But there is an overall feeling of controlled opulence. "When you go into an interior," Siegel says, "I don't think any room should jump out at you. Colors should flow from room to room." And so they do, with a carpet in the living room picking up the blue from the foyer, and a

A CHARLES X ormolu-and-blue-crystal engraved chandelier adds an exotic note to the marble-floored foyer, opposite page, where *Gandiar,* a ca. 1941 oil by Rufino Tamayo, hangs above a French Empire rosewood commode. IN THE DEEPLY HUED dining room, this page, early-19th-century Russian mahogany chairs, from the Chinese Porcelain Company, NYC, a late-18th-century ormolu console, from Didier Aaron, NYC, and a 19th-century Russian chandelier, found in Paris, contribute to the opulent look. The draperies are a custom-woven silk damask from Georges Le Manach.

AN ANTIQUE MAHOGANY baldachin (canopy), found in London, sets the stage in the master bedroom. The Empire-style mahogany bedstead, designed by Brown Siegel Design Associates, looks like two twin beds but accommodates a king-sized mattress. An 18th-century creamware vase from Bardith, NYC, sits on the Empire side table. The walls are covered in a toile from Ramm, Son & Crocker.

JOAQUIN TORRES-GARCÍA'S *Paisaje de España,* ca. 1948, hangs between windows framed by Veraseta silk taffeta draperies, right. The Empire bench, from Florian Papp, NYC, is upholstered in a Lee Jofa silk/rayon. The sofa, by Brown Siegel Design Associates, is covered in a Brunschwig & Fils cotton and silk. The herringbone wool carpet is from Patterson, Flynn, & Martin, NYC. THE MASTER BATH, below, features a custom sink and gold-plated fixtures and cabinet hardware, all from P. E. Guerin, NYC. Sources, see back of book.

hand-printed Italian wallpaper in the bathroom (with a design inspired by early-twentieth-century Indian textiles) reflecting the rich hue of the dining room. "The palettes are almost uniform in each room," Siegel adds. "I didn't do a pink and blue one, or a yellow and white."

The cozy elegance of the master bedroom stems from the European-style use of fabric. The walls are upholstered in toile de Jouy, and Veraseta silk taffeta is draped around an antique baldachin found at the Portobello Road market in London. To diminish what he calls "the too massive look of king-sized beds"—the size most clients want—Siegel cleverly designed a headboard and footboard that, he explains, "look as if they were made from two Empire-style twin beds."

THE LIVING ROOM, done in hues of silver and gold, has a more festive mood. Not that completing the room, with its unusual arrangement of furniture, was a relaxed affair. Two rugs—instead of one large one—divide the room into two distinctive areas. "Typically, you find the carpet first," says Siegel, "but here it was more difficult. The furniture was already done." They chose two compatible nineteenth-century Indian carpets that, with pillows made of antique textiles, lend a patina of age to the room. Simple, charming draperies—edged with a tailored pleat rather than a ruffle—pull it all together.

"I try to bring a masculine edge to everything," says Siegel, "although, in general, each room should appeal to anyone, of either gender." That is, of course, another form of neutrality. Or, at the very least, consummate diplomacy.

eagle's nest

Barbara Barry creates an interior in a Brentwood Italianate serene enough to soothe the soul of rocker Glenn Frey of the Eagles and his energetic brood

"POND-SCUM GREEN" is the color that greets musician and actor Glenn Frey when he walks through his front door in Los Angeles. Or so the mischievous Eagles guitarist can't resist joking. In truth, the shade is one of those elusive almost-neutrals in which designer Barbara Barry specializes: a calming, citrusy hue that seems to dissolve into the khaki-green-ivory spectrum enveloping the entire house. Walls, upholstered furniture, draperies, wood tones—all is of a single, enfolding piece. "The idea," says Barry, "is to create places that are a hug around you."

Those hugged in the embrace of Barry World are Frey, his wife, Cindy, and their two children, Taylor and Deacon. What

WRITTEN BY ALISON COOK PHOTOGRAPHED BY SALLY GALL

STYLED BY WILL McGAUL

Barry has wrought inside their unpromising Brentwood Italianate house is both more svelte and distinctly less showy than the prevailing aesthetic of the city outside. "If the phone wasn't ringing when I come in," Frey observes, "I wouldn't know it was L.A."

And that, according to Barry, is the point. Tranquillity is her overriding aim ("You make many simple choices to achieve it, as opposed to giving in to all your impulses"), and it dovetails neatly with her clients' needs. "We have a lot

The serenity of these rooms leaves the buzz of Los Angeles far behind. IN THE FOYER, opposite page, the curtains are Pandora, a Rogers & Goffigon linen. The lanterns are from Paul Ferrante, Hollywood. THE LIVING ROOM, this page, is elegant and informal enough to suit Deacon, left, and Taylor, who pose on the hearth. The Mattaliano armchairs are covered in Cowtan & Tout's Rustington. The slipper chair, custom-designed by Barbara Barry Inc., is covered in Ashford from Nancy Corzine.

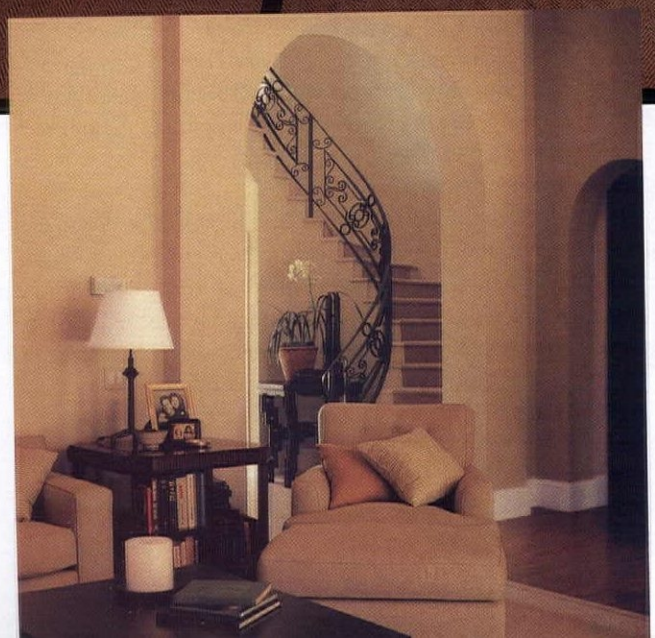
going on in our lives—rock and roll, golf, kids, family, charity—and we didn't want a lot going on in our home environment," says Frey. "We wanted a haven."

THAT IS WHAT BARRY gave them, working in association with designer Will McGaul. (The pair also did the Freys' "golf goes Zen" retreat in Palm Springs.) Barry's rooms exert the quietest sensual pull. A single chartreuse pillow gleams amid taupes and grays. Softly tailored chairs in the master bedroom tug at the eye and brain with their subliminal hint of blush. A sleek ottoman beckons with a subtle velvety texture.

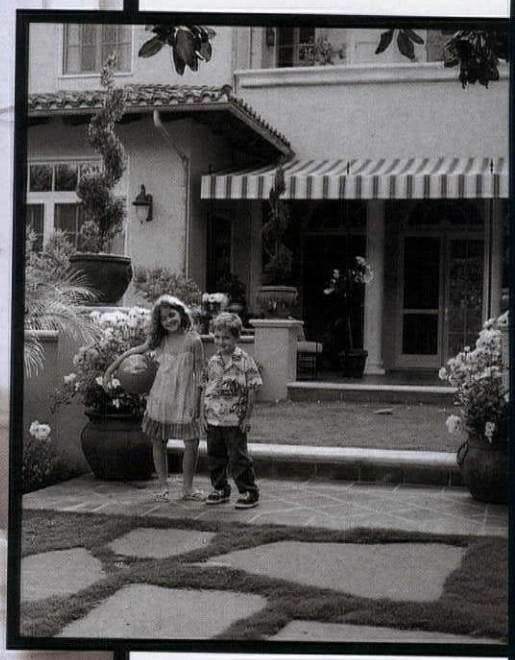
The pleasures of a Barry room are not always apparent at first glance. "Sometimes a client feels it's too quiet, repetitious, boring," Barry admits with the smile of a woman husbanding secrets. She finds her drama in the details. "It's all about that little leg flaring out," she says, patting a settee that presides over the entry hall. Or the way a little stripe echoes in a herringbone sisal matting, in a pillow, in a ribbed-walnut sideboard, in the gray-browns of a Barry-designed Tibetan rug. "You may not notice it," Barry says of her small harmonies, "but your psyche will."

Time is as elusive as color in the world according to Barry. The

"I don't care about the provenance of things. I'm more interested in design. I want handsome pieces that work together"—Barbara Barry



VARIATIONS ON ONE HUE bring warmth and light into the dining room, above. The ebonized table is from the Collection, Los Angeles. Barbara Barry designed the chairs for Baker Furniture. The chandelier is a Fortuny design. The antique Japanese screen is from Imari Gallery, San Francisco. **IN THE LIVING ROOM**, left, a custom-made Nancy Corzine chair covered in a fabric from Decorators Walk cozies up to a 1930s rosewood side table topped with a Giacometti-inspired lamp from Holly Hunt. **THE MUSIC ROOM**, opposite page, has a mahogany William IV hall table from Licorne Antiques, Los Angeles. The armchairs, upholstered in a worsted wool from HBF Textiles, and mirror were designed by Barbara Barry.



THE MASTER BATH, left, like the rest of the house, is enveloped in powdery tones. "To make it more of a room than usual," says Barry, "we brought in a little furniture." The chair by Mattaliano and vanity stool by Barbara Barry Inc. are upholstered in fabric by Rogers & Goffigon. The rug is from Decorative Carpets, Los Angeles. Barry framed the windows with what she calls "my little Grecian curtains," custom-made with handkerchief hems. GLENN AND CINDY FREY relax on the patio, left. The chairs by Michael Taylor Designs are covered in a resilient Sunbrella fabric, available at Diamond Foam & Fabric, L.A. "The house had to have a certain element of durability because of the kids," says Frey of Taylor and Deacon, above.

Frey house simmers with a certain Deco-inspired glamour and a strain of 1930s Jean-Michel Frank style, but it inhabits no particular period. "I don't care about antiques," declares Barry. "I don't care about the provenance of things, the fineness of things. I'm more interested in design. I want only handsome pieces that work well together. I'm always trying to find a thread of connectedness between things." That thread brings a reissued Mariano Fortuny chandelier of hand-painted silk (the original was made in Venice, circa the 1920s) together in the Freys' dining room with a nineteenth-century Japanese screen and a 1940s American table by Baker.

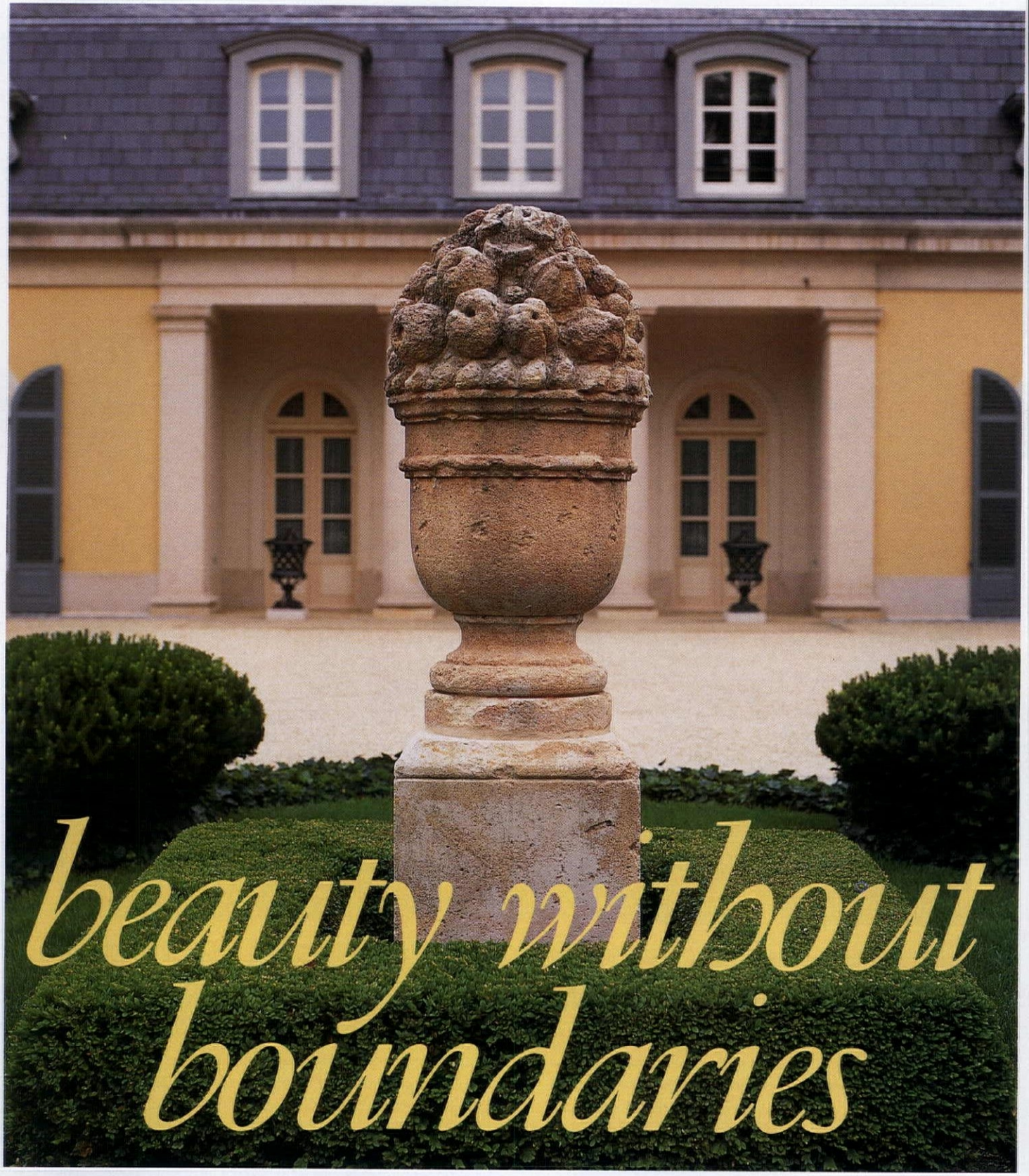
Barry reworked this table with a black stain and surrounded it with the ivory velvet, roll-backed dining chairs she designed as part of her own line for Baker—one of the projects that have turned her into something of a media phenomenon. There are the Tibetan rugs for Tufenkian; the office collection for HBF, a division of the Lane Company; and the pristine array of housewares assembled in the La Jolla Avenue place that Barry used to call home. Now she calls it Barbara Barry Home, and its careful settings—open only to her clients—house everything from her

"We have a lot going on in our lives, and we didn't want a lot going on in our home environment. We wanted a haven" —Glenn Frey

THE MASTER BEDROOM is both sensual and tranquil. The chaise longue, designed by Barbara Barry Inc., is covered in Elegance cotton from Ian Crawford. The floor lamp is from Brian Bell, L.A. A pair of Lloyd Loom wicker chairs from Janus et Cie, L.A., are visible on the balcony beyond. Sources, see back of book.

favorite champagne/water tumblers to "the perfect porcelain teacup"; from her ideal silver tray to five kinds of mattress pads. "Everything but the husband," she cracks. "We furnish everything for our clients, right down to the sheeting and the linens," says Barry, sitting in the Freys' capacious kitchen and tapping one of those slender Barbara Barry water glasses so that it chimes. "We work really hard to finish a house out, so the client will feel comfortable as a hostess." The result, she says with an aplomb that Martha Stewart might envy, is "a house that is like a kit of parts for basic elegance."

And more, of course. In the end, the Frey house is a splendid backdrop for human beings, who pop out against its studied tranquillity as vividly as the bowls of green apples that are a favorite Barry accessory. "It's an easy house to live in," says Frey. His eyes dance with a final thought. "When Barbara designs a house, there are still places to put your things," he says, laughing. "Those pictures I see in magazines—if I walked in with a bag of groceries or a jacket, where would I put them?"



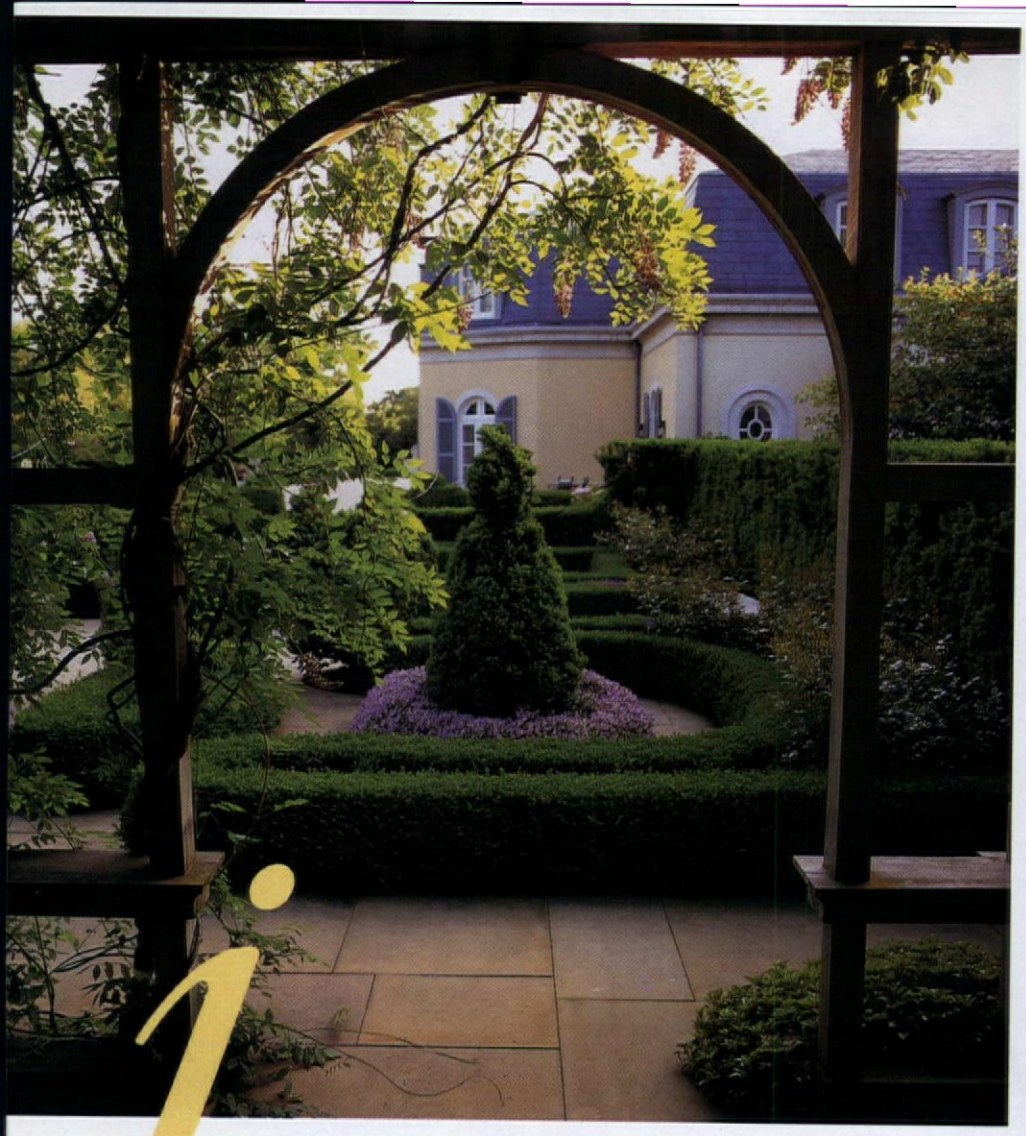
beauty without boundaries

With a few design tricks, Deborah Nevins creates a Midwestern garden that can be enjoyed by visitors of any age or ability

WRITTEN BY DEBORAH NEEDLEMAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY NINA BRAMHALL

PRODUCED BY CHARLOTTE M. FRIEZE

THE HOUSE'S FORMAL MOTOR COURT, opposite page, features an elegant Yorkstone entry. The entrance was built flush with the driveway, eliminating the need for steps, easing access for those who use wheelchairs. **TULIPS AND CRABAPPLES,** planted along the service court, this page, provide a dash of spring color.



IT IS OFTEN SAID that good gardens are built from the inside out—from the house, and into the world. But perhaps the best gardens are those that begin even further inside: in the heart. To be sure, this three-acre garden in the Midwest could not be imagined without its house—for the layout and spirit reflect the architecture of a classical French-style manor. But this grand house and garden are as they are for another reason, both humble and personal: a place that everyone in the family can enjoy.

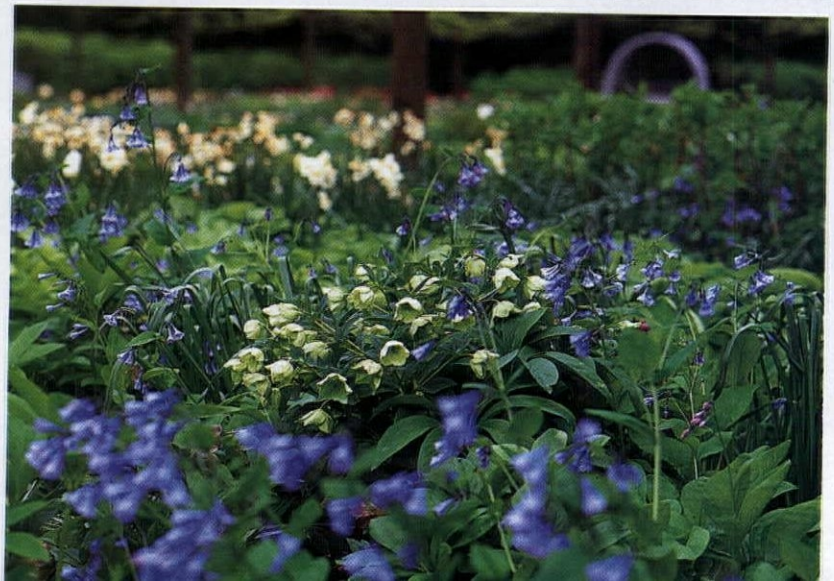
With one child who uses both a wheelchair and a walker, the owners wanted a home accessible to all people. The garden, like the house, is constructed according to the principles of universal design. The idea is to remove barriers so that physical limitations of mobility or sight pose no limit to someone's ability to take full advantage of a place and its pleasures.

Architect Thomas Beeby and decorator Stanley Falconer of Colefax and Fowler were already at work on the house when they invited garden designer Deborah Nevins to meet the owner. An architectural historian and a former lecturer on landscape history, Nevins is known for her classically inspired gardens and her sensitivity to architecture.

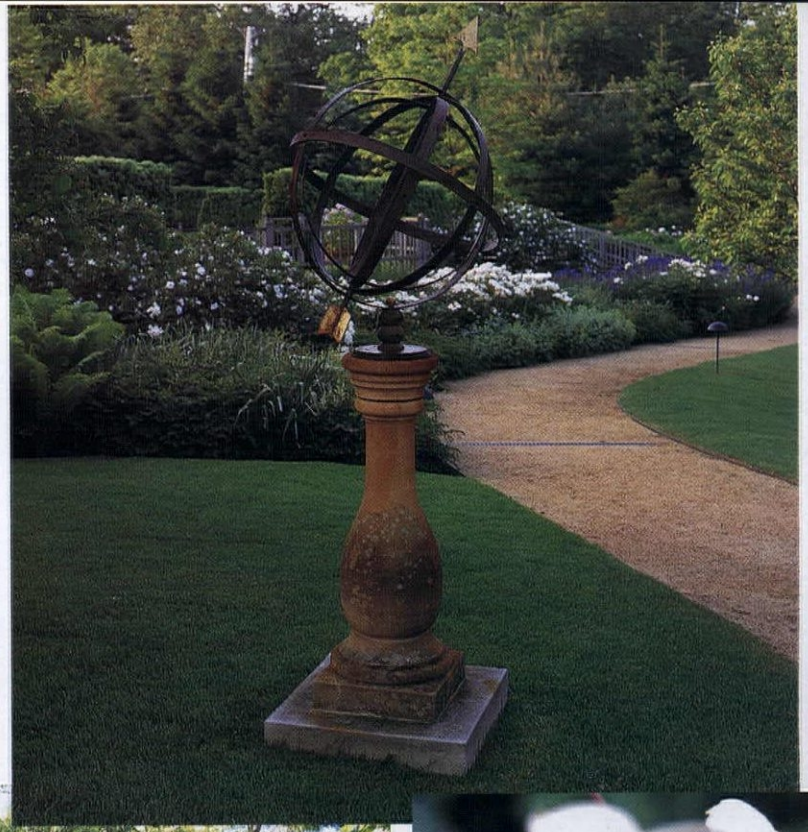
Nevins and the owner struck an immediate rapport, probably because both are perfectionists, in the best sense of the word. The owner involved herself in every detail of the project. She scoured books, asked questions, and made trips to France to examine architecture, ornaments, and gardens. Her level of attention inspired Nevins, who says, "We should all apply such care to any life project."

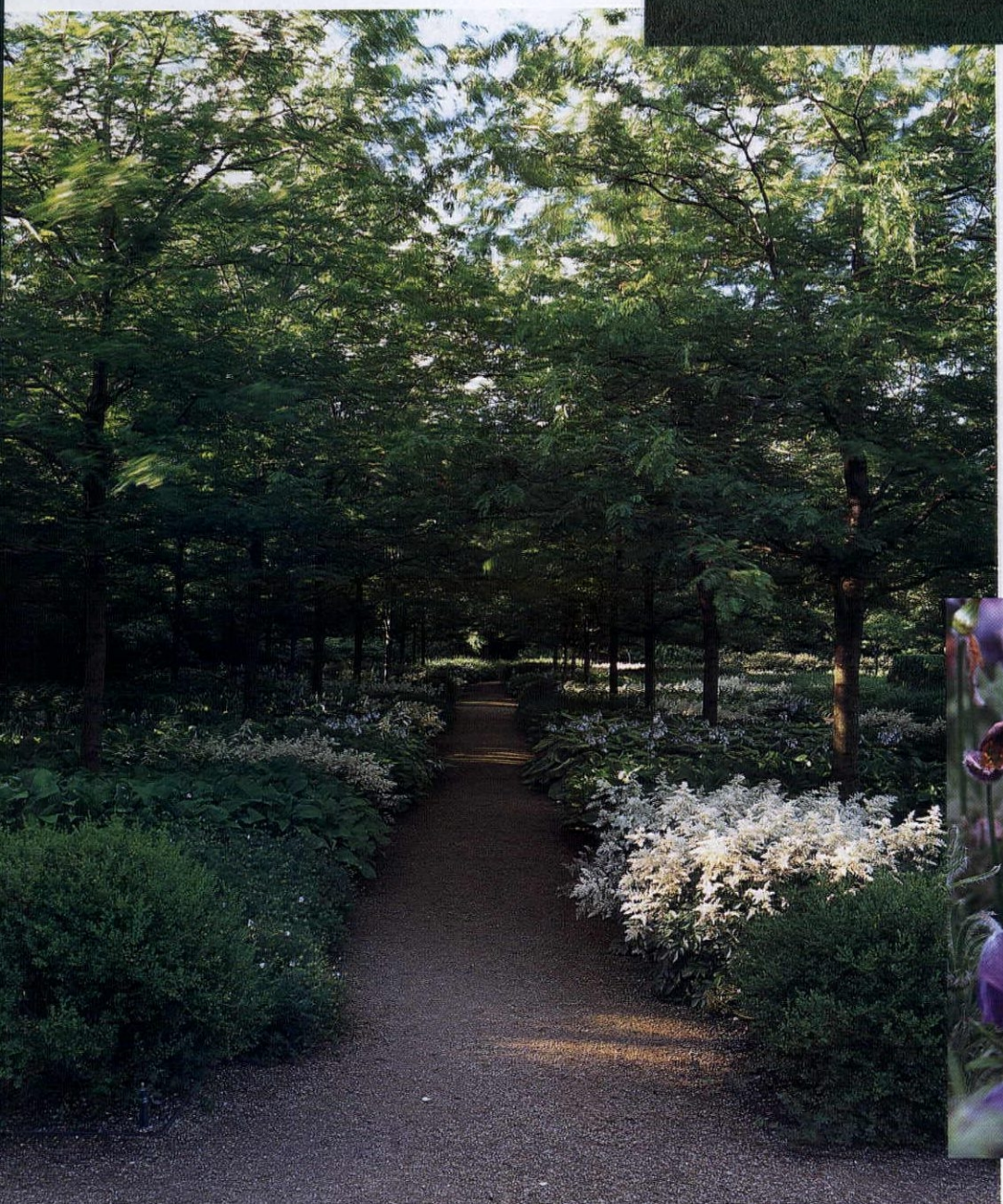
For her part, Nevins is motivated by a belief that well-articulated spaces encourage intimacy between people and the landscape. This garden was influenced by the classic seventeenth-century French gardens of André Le Nôtre. Following his example, Nevins organized the space into a series of garden "rooms," each of which

A QUIET ARBOR, opposite page, graces one end of an intimate 16th-century-style garden. When fully grown out, the yew at center will resemble a swan. THE CONSERVATORY VIEW, this page, takes in a winsome froggy fountain. The Yorkstone pavers in the walkway, set tightly on a foundation of stone dust for fast drainage, have enough roughness, or "tooth," to grip shoe soles and rubber tires, but not so much as to be bumpy.



THE WHITE GARDEN, above, features a border with 'Krinkled White' peony. **AN EARLY SPRING SHOW** of bluebells, hellebores, and mini-narcissus, left, blooms near an allée of honey locust trees. Opposite page, clockwise from top left: **THE CONSERVATORY** was suggested by a friend who gets around on a motorized scooter, as a place to view the garden comfortably in any weather; **AN ARMILLARY SPHERE** stands by the garden path, which is made of decomposed granite mixed with Stabilizer—the blend creates a firm surface that lets water percolate through; **WOODLAND BLOOMS**, white *Anemone sylvestris,* and purple *Pulsatilla vulgaris;* **THE LOCUST ALLÉE** is softened by underplantings of hostas, astilbe, and ferns.





IN A PURPLE EXTRAVAGANZA, a patch of *Scilla siberica* and violas, this page, blooms near one end of the house. The stairway in the distance—and another flight, outfitted with an electric seat—lead to AN AMPHITHEATER framed in boxwood, opposite page, which is hand-pruned to maintain a puffy, cloudlike shape.

offers a different experience. Walking from the terrace, one can hide away in the small, enclosed topiary garden or wander under the dappled shade of the honey locust allée, where plantings spread out like a tapestry. In the other direction, tough, sturdy lowland plants populate a dell, and a luscious amphitheater is formed by billowy cushions of boxwood. A generous path, resembling the packed-earth paths of France, curves like a golden ribbon, uniting the entire garden.

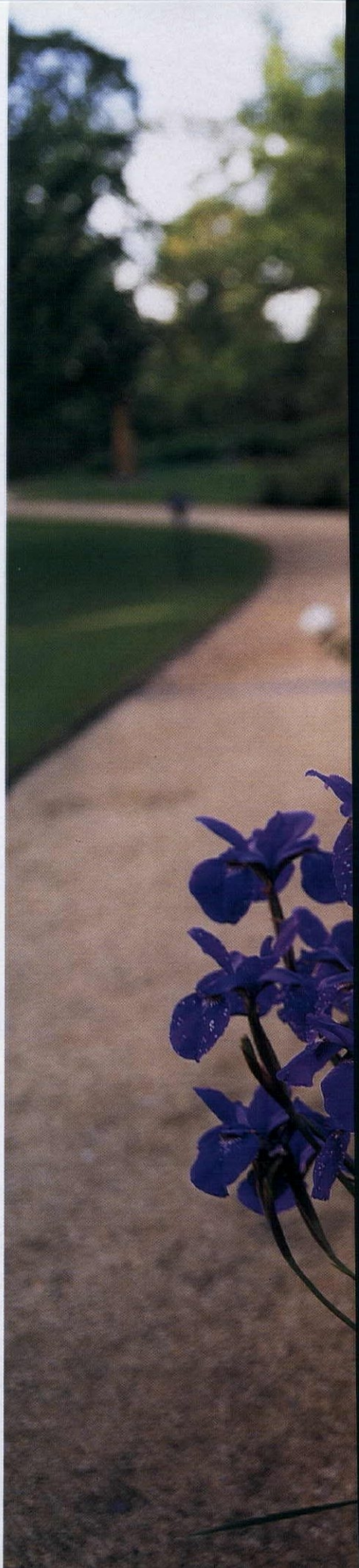
In this garden, each beautiful surface or gentle dip in the land has a purpose. The gracious path, which is in perfect proportion, is in fact wide enough to accommodate two people, one in a chair, moving side by side. The path is made of decomposed granite (in a sandy color that matches the house) mixed with a binder called Stabilizer, forming a base that drains quickly. "A bark or gravel path is a Do Not Enter sign to someone in a wheelchair," says the owner. Benches punctuate the path at strategically close intervals. "Distance," the owner says, "can also be a barrier."

Seamlessly blending the aesthetic and the pragmatic, the garden is a place where family members can reconnect with one another, read, or meditate on nature. Nevins has even created an area that simulates a visit to the woods, an experience difficult for someone in a chair. She planted evergreens close to the path, to give guests the feel of being enveloped in a forest. When those in wheelchairs remark on how delightfully cool it feels in this area, and how intense the evergreens smell, the owner rejoices. She has succeeded in creating a place where sensual delights are open to all.

site plan

1 Arbor
2 16th-century-style garden
3 Fountain terrace
4 White garden
5 Bench
6 The locust walk
7 Shade garden
8 Covered garden seat
9 Grass terrace
10 Fountain
11 Viewing terrace
12 The dell
13 Armillary sphere

MAP ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL HILL



THE WIDE LAWN, opposite page, includes a 12-foot-wide border that is much like a putting green. It has a sandy subsurface that packs hard, drains quickly, and is bump- and barrier-free. **THE FOUNTAIN** sits on the main axis of the landscape plan, and can be seen from some of the surrounding gardens. On this page: **ALONGSIDE THE PATH** sloping gently into the area of the garden called the dell, a patch of Siberian iris catches the morning dew. Sources, see back of book.

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HUNTING & GATHERING
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HUNTING & GATHERING
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COVER

Stove, Viking. 888-VIKING1. Linoleum **rug**, Westling Design, Los Angeles, CA. 800-690-8007.

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DOMESTIC BLISS Pages 23-40

Page 23, Bruce Bierman Design, Inc., NYC. 212-243-1935. **Page 24**, Wicker Garden's Children. 212-410-7001. Los Angeles Modern Auctions. 323-845-9456. **Page 26**, Charm & Whimsy, NYC. 212-683-7609. **Page 28**, Mitchell Gold Co. 828-632-9200. **Page 33**, Christopher Gibbs. 011-44-207-730-8200. David Champion. 011-44-207-727-6016. Solaris. 011-44-207-229-8100. **Page 38**, L. A. Organic Vegetables. 310-399-7866. L.A. Solid Resources Recycling Division. 213-847-1444.

HUNTING & GATHERING Pages 43-45

Moss, NYC. 212-226-2190. Alessi USA. 212-431-1310. Chiasso. 800-654-3570. Target. 800-800-8800. MoMA Design Store. 800-793-3167. The Terence Conran Shop. 011-44-171-589-7401. Umbra. 800-387-5122. Kartell, NYC. 212-966-6665.

SKETCHES Pages 56-61

Mango **wood bowl**, $42, stone **dinner plate**, $20, square **buffet plate**, $12, conical mango **wood bowl**, $98. Banana Republic. 888-BR-STYLE.

UNCORKED Pages 70-72

Tim's Wine Market. 407-895-9463. Table & Wine. 413-584-7775. Green Lane Wines. 914-666-7272. Italian Wine Merchants. 212-473-2323. Sutton Wine Shop. 212-755-6626.

FIRST PRINCIPLE Page 77

Harry Bertoia **stools**, Knoll. 800-445-5045. **Stove**, Viking. 888-VIKING1. Alessi La Cintura **stockpot**, $248, **colander**, $139, **casserole dish**, $259, and **kettle**, $229. Alessi **condiment set**, $125. Hackman **salad bowl**, $185. Moss, NYC. 212-226-2190.

CITY SLICKERS Pages 78-85

Interior designer, Lee Mindel and Peter Shelton, Shelton Mindell Associates, NYC. 212-243-3939. **General contractor**, Warren Pearl Construction, NYC. 212-226-5069. **Lighting design**, Johnson Schwinghammer, NYC. 212-643-1552. **Pages 78-79**, B&B Italia, NYC. 212-758-4046. Bulthaup, NYC. 212-966-7183. **Lighting**, Bega, Carpinteria, CA. 805-684-0533. **Rug**, V'Soske Joyce, Galway, Ireland. 011-353-91-552-113. **Television**, Fujitsu. www.plasmavision.com. **Glassware**, Muriel Grateau Boutique, Paris. 011-33-40-20-90-30. **Pages 80-81**, Knoll. 800-445-5045. Viking. 888-VIKING1. Corporate Carpet Systems, NYC. 212-448-0510. **Vase**, $275, Aero, Ltd., NYC. 212-966-1510. **Sofa**, B&B Italia. **Pages 82-83**, Reymer-Jourdan Antiques, NYC. 212-674-4470. Ernest Studios, NYC. 212-988-4900. **Vase**, Alexandre Biaggi, Paris. 011-33-44-07-34-73. **Pages 84-85**, Cassina. 800-770-3568. Spinneybeck. 800-482-7777. John Pomp **vase**, $350, right, Aero. **Lamp**, Cedric Hartman, available through Pollack & Associates, NYC. 212-421-8755. Available through architects and designers.

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TRADE SECRETS Pages 92-95

Kitchens Are on a Roll...: Pages 94-95, Poggenpohl items: Basic stripe **mitt**, $6, and **apron**, $18, ABC Carpet & Home, NYC. 212-473-3000. **Dish towel**, $3.50, Fishs Eddy, NYC. 212-420-9020. SieMatic two-tiered drawer, top drawer, five- piece Boulevard **place setting**, Pottery Barn. 800-922-5507. Bottom drawer, five-piece Montana **place setting**, $47.95, five-piece **server set**, $69.95. SieMatic **under-cabinet drawer**, Crown **napkin ring**, $2.95, gold silk **coasters**, $14.95, Russian **napkin ring**, $2.95, and **bamboo knot**, $5.95. Crate & Barrel. 800-996-9960.

CHANGING THE SCRIPT Pages 96-101

Architect, Mark Mack, Los Angeles. 310-822-0094. **Interior designer**, Sasha Emerson Levin, Sasha Emerson Levin Studio, Los Angeles. 310-454-3740. **Upholstery work** throughout, BFR Custom Up, Los Angeles. 323-939-3092. **Pages 96-97**, Diamond Foam & Fabric, Los Angeles. 323-931-8148. **Pages 98-99**, Orange, Beverly Hills. 310-652-5195. Diva, Los Angeles. 310-278-3191. Most **pots** and **pans**, All-Clad. 800-255-2523. High circular **table** and **chairs**, Heywood-Wakefield. 305-858-4240. Also available at Futurama, Los Angeles. 323-937-4522. **Rugs**, Imagine, Los Angeles. 310-395-9553. **Pages 100-101**, Knoll. 800-445-5045.

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group.com. Miele. 800-843-7231. Antik, NYC. 212-343-0471. **Stools**, The Conran Shop, London. 011-44-171-589-7401. **Pots**, All-Clad. 800-255-2523. **White bone china**, Wedgwood. www.wedgwood.com. **Pages 108-109, Bedside table**, $1,015, and **coffee table**, $1,900, Troy. Cobra **lamp**, $3,200, Wyeth. Kroin. 800-OK-KROIN. Einstein Moomjy, NYC. 212-647-5900. **Chaise**, Ou Baholyodhin, London. 011-44-171-426-0666. **Table**, Troy. Axelsalto **vase**, Antik.

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Interior designer, Stephen Miller Siegel, Brown Siegel Design Associates, NYC. 212-832-5400. **Pages 110-111**, F. J. Hakimian, NYC. 212-371-6900. Christopher Hyland, Inc., NYC. 212-688-6121. Available through architects and designers. **Side chairs**, Georges Le Manach, NYC. 212-644-4100. Available through architects and designers. **Gueridon**, Newel Art Galleries, Inc., NYC. 212-758-1970. **Fabric** on side chair and armchairs, Fortuny, Inc., NYC. 212-753-7153. Available through architects and designers. **Fabric** on sofa, Decorator's Walk, NYC. 212-319-7100. Available through architects and designers. **Coffee tables**, Jean Karajian, NYC. 212-751-6728. **Sculpture**, *Spring II*, by Anita Huffington, O'Hara Gallery, NYC. 212-355-3330. **Curtains**, Verel de Belval, available through Brunschwig & Fils, NYC. 212-838-7878. Available through architects and designers. **Pages 112-113, painting**, *Gandiar*, by Rufino Tamayo. Rufino Tamayo works available through Associated American Artists, NYC. 212-399-5510. Chinese Porcelain Company, NYC. 212-838-7744. Didier Aaron, NYC. 212-988-5248. Flora Danica **china**, Georg Jensen. 800-546-5253. **Centerpiece**, Schlesch and Garza, Ltd. NYC. 212-838-3923. **Console**, Didier Aaron. Curtains, Georges Le Manach. **Pages 114-115**, Bardith, NYC. 212-737-3775. Ramm, Son & Crocker. 011-44-494-446-555. Joaquin Torres-Garcia works available through Cecilia De Torres Ltd., NYC. 212-431-5869. Florian Papp, NYC. 212-288-6770. Lee Joffa, NYC. 212-688-0444. Available through architects and designers. Patterson Flynn & Martin, NYC. 212-688-7700. Available through architects and designers. P. E. Guerin, NYC. 212-243-5270. Veraseta **curtains**, available through Brunschwig & Fils, NYC.

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Interior designers: principle designer, Barbara Barry; senior designer, William McGaul. Barbara Barry Inc., Los Angeles, CA. 310-276-9977. **Pages 116-117**, Rogers & Goffigon, Ltd., NYC. 212-888-3242. Available through architects and designers. Paul Ferrante, Inc., Los Angeles. 323-653-4142. Mattaliano **chairs**, available at Holly Hunt, NYC. 800-229-8559. Available through architects and designers. Cowtan & Tout, NYC. 212-753-4488. Available through architects and designers. Nancy Corzine, NYC. 212-223-8340. Available through architects and designers. Mattaliano **nesting tables,** available at Holly Hunt. **Ottoman**, Barbara Barry Inc. Ottoman **fabric**, ICF Group. 800-237-1625. Henry Calvin **fabric** on lounge chair, Donghia. 800-DONGHIA. **Plate** on mantel, Robert Kuo Ltd., Los Angeles. 310-855-1555. Pandora living room **curtains**, Rogers & Goffigon. Wool sisal **carpet**, Decorative Carpets, Inc., Los Angeles. 310-859-6333. **Pages 118-119**, The Collection, Los Angeles. 310-205-3840. Baker Furniture. 800-59-BAKER. **Chandelier**, Fortuny design reproductions, available at Odegard Inc., NYC. 212-545-0069. Imari Gallery, San Francisco. 415-332-0245. Decorators Walk. 516-249-3100. Available through architects and designers. Licorne Antiques, Los Angeles. 323-852-4765. HBF Textiles, Hickory, NC. 828-328-2064. Pair of African **mortars**, Blackman-Cruz, Los Angeles. 310-657-9228. Paul Frankl **sideboard**, Downtown, Los Angeles. 310-652-7461. **Rug**, Decorative Carpets Inc. **Throw pillows** in music room, Rogers & Goffigon. **Coffee table**, J. Robert Scott. 877-207-5130. Giacometti style **lamp**, Holly Hunt. **Pages 120-121**, Michael Taylor Designs, Inc. 415-558-9940. Available through architects and designers. Diamond Foam & Fabric, Los Angeles. 323-931-8148. Ian Crawford, Ltd., NYC. 212-355-2228. Available through architects and designers. Brian Bell, Los Angeles. 323-662-4679. Janus et Cie. 800-24-JANUS. Master bedroom **curtains**, Henry Calvin, available through Donghia.

A GARDEN FOR ALL Pages 122-131

Landscape designer, Deborah Nevins, NYC. **Landscape contractor**, Mariani Landscape, Illinois. 847-234-2172. **Plant markers**, Beason Engraving, South Carolina. 800-968-2187. **Stabilizer paths**, Stabilizer Solutions, Inc., Arizona. 602-952-8009. For information on accessible gardens, www.pathwaysawareness.org.

PHOTO CREDITS

Page 36, Chanel couch, by François Halard for *House & Garden*, 1986, courtesy of CNP archives. Dali couch, from *A Surreal Life*, courtesy of Philip Wilson Publishing. Villa Malaparte, by Thibault Cuisset, courtesy of Métis. Copray & Scholten couch, courtesy of Same EU. Blue striped cotton couches, by Fritz von der Schulenburg, courtesy of Interior Archive. Knole settee, courtesy of the National Trust Photographic Library. **Page 74,** *House & Garden*, August 1972, courtesy of CNP archives.

CORRECTIONS

On the cover of the December 1999 issue, and on pages 106-107 of "A Passion for Our Past": the **silverware** is from F. J. Shrubsole, 104 East 57th Street, NYC 10022. 212-753-8920.

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—PRODUCED BY MARGARET A. BUCKLEY

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polite society

by william norwich

"THE BEDROOM is the only room in the house where you can misbehave," veteran social figure Nan Kempner observed recently. "Well, officially misbehave," she qualified, with a ladylike laugh.

Bedrooms and romance, cads and cupids—the advent of Valentine's Day had sparked a conversation about the future of romance in the twenty-first century. "Is there a future for romance in the twenty-first century?" Kempner said. "I think it depends on whether flirting crosses into the New Age. You do know it's good manners to flirt? Never the home-wrecking sort—of course not. One flirts politely, to be entertaining. To interest your dinner partner. And when you go home, you flirt with your husband. It is very important."

Kempner, who has been married to investment banker Thomas Lenox Kempner for nearly 50 years, expressed concern that the typical, increasingly work-oriented American bedroom turns off, rather than turns on, reveries of flirtation: "Do people have seductive bedrooms anymore? My greatest investment is the embroidered sheets in our bedroom. I have eighteenth-century chinoiserie *papier peint*. Two upholstered chairs in front of the fireplace, which are so cozy. Always be prepared, is my motto."

Bring on the tapestries, the cashmere, the frills, the peekaboo whatever, a European colleague advises. She blames acute American political correctness for muddying the bedroom. "This American preoccupation with equality of the sexes shows itself in the bedroom as the most unbelievably boring decorating," she opines. "American bedrooms are either minimal or, worse, unisex. Political correctness is a form of tyranny which should never be confused with good manners. Forgive me if this isn't p.c., but a man wants to enter a cocoon when he enters his lover's bedroom. Otherwise, he can check into a minimalist hotel with a stranger."

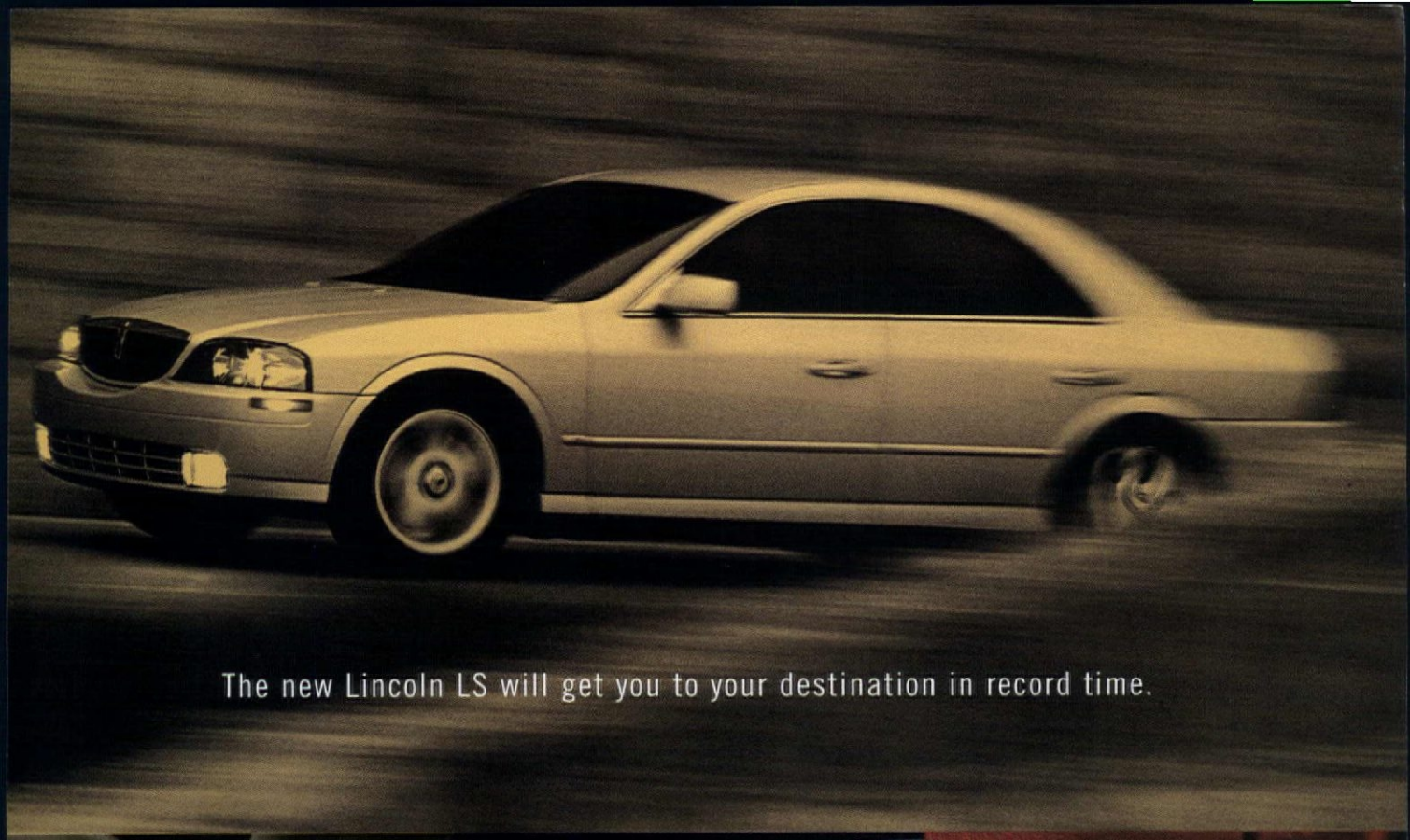
"A good host is considerate of his guests in every room of the house," says interior designer Alan Tanksley. "This includes decorating in the master bedroom. Consider the number of photographs of former flames and ex-spouses you rest on shelves and bureau tops. Pay attention to how certain colors in the bedroom can flatter your company, rather than casting them in an unpleasant light. I think steel blue is a real problem in the bedroom. Too cold. I also think uncontrolled overhead lighting in a room is death to sensuality. A mirror overhead, on the other hand? Well, go for it. I'm all for bold strokes."

For fashion designer John Bartlett, Tanksley covered bedroom walls in a lush gray. For a current client, he is going all out, with bedroom frills and rich colors and fabrics: "She's a married woman who told me, 'I want my husband to find me sexy and pretty.' "

And always, a dimmer for the lighting: "Dimmers are one hundred percent necessary." With the dimmer comes the enlightening matter of who reaches for it first. Who takes the lead? "We're talking about turning the dimmer down," Tanksley says, "but on your partner's fiftieth birthday, or on Valentine's Day, why not turn the dimmer up a notch and say something nice? It could be a great gesture of acceptance."

"Is there a **future** for romance in the 21st century?"—Nan Kempner

ILLUSTRATION BY WILLIAM NORWICH



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