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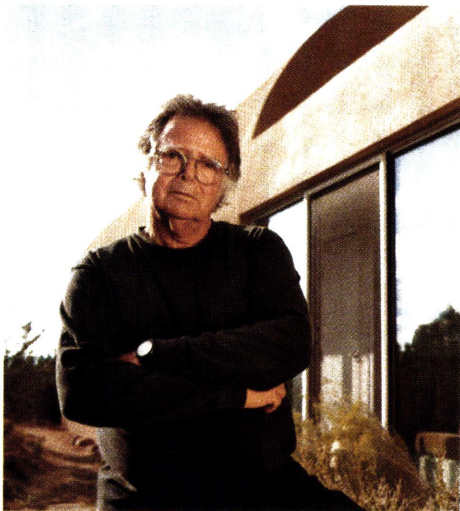
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The
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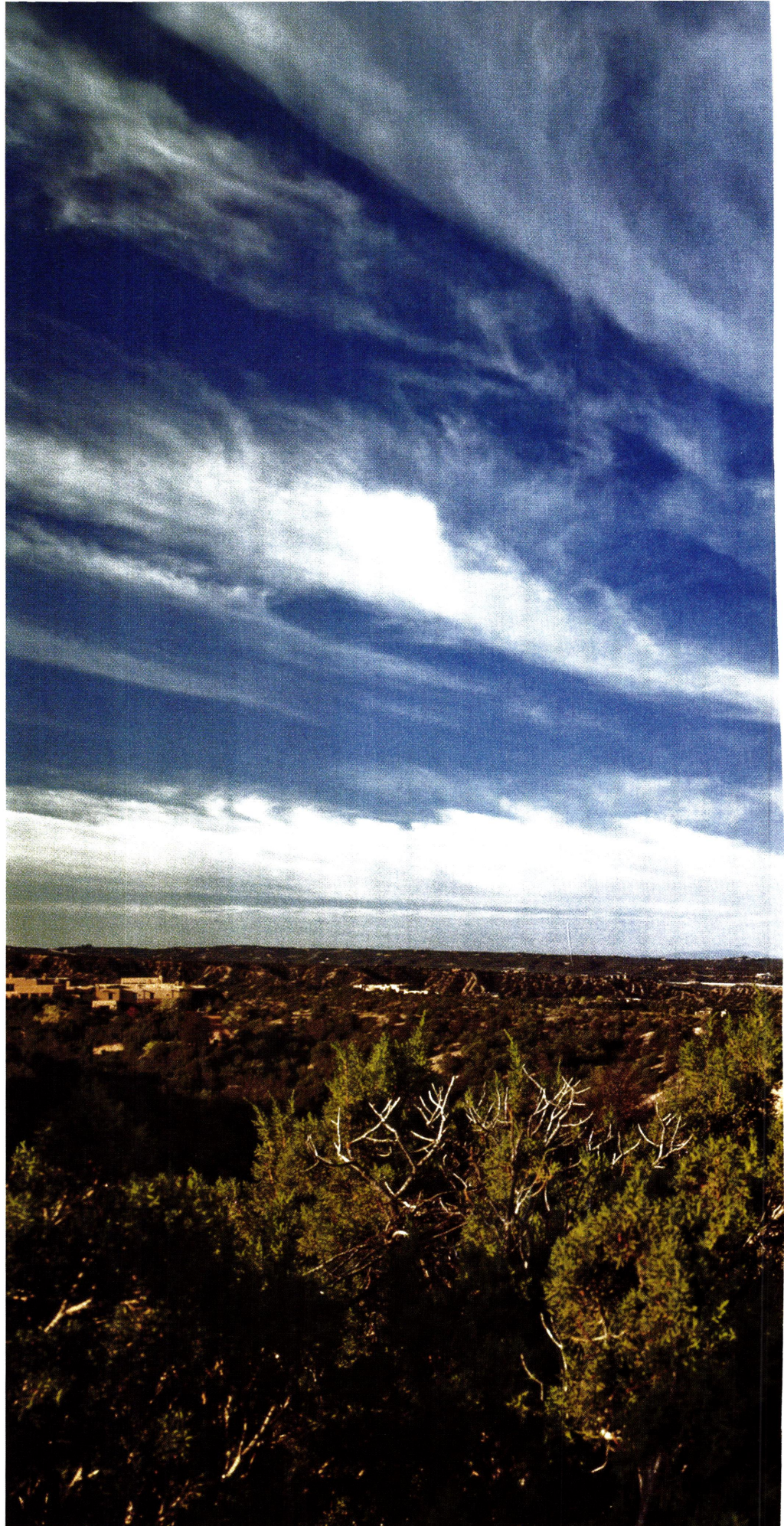
MYRON GOLDFINGER IS SERIOUS about creating an architecture based on function and necessity. Over the course of his nearly 40-year career, he has studied the indigenous dwellings of the Mediterranean and the Caribbean and the “ordinary” people who conceived them. And although he is perhaps best known for his large sculptural buildings in the United States and on the island of Anguilla, where he designed a villa for himself and his family in 1983, Goldfinger considers his “modest vacation houses” in New Mexico and Westchester County, New York, to be among his best works. “These residences,” he says, “express the essence, the basic roots, of my more complex grand residences and my respect for the anonymous builders of all time.”

While they were designed for sites that differ vastly from one another—the New Mexico house is perched on a ridge in Tesuque, north of Santa Fe; the other sits on a wooded spot in Waccabuc, 50 miles north of Manhattan—both buildings live in harmony with their settings, their ge-



NEW MEXICO

“Even though they may look different to someone else’s eyes, I see them as very similar—it’s the use of solid surfaces and glazed surfaces,” says architect Myron Goldfinger (above), who has built site-sensitive vacation houses in New Mexico and New York. **RIGHT:** His barrel-vaulted house in New Mexico “sits gently on top of the hill.”

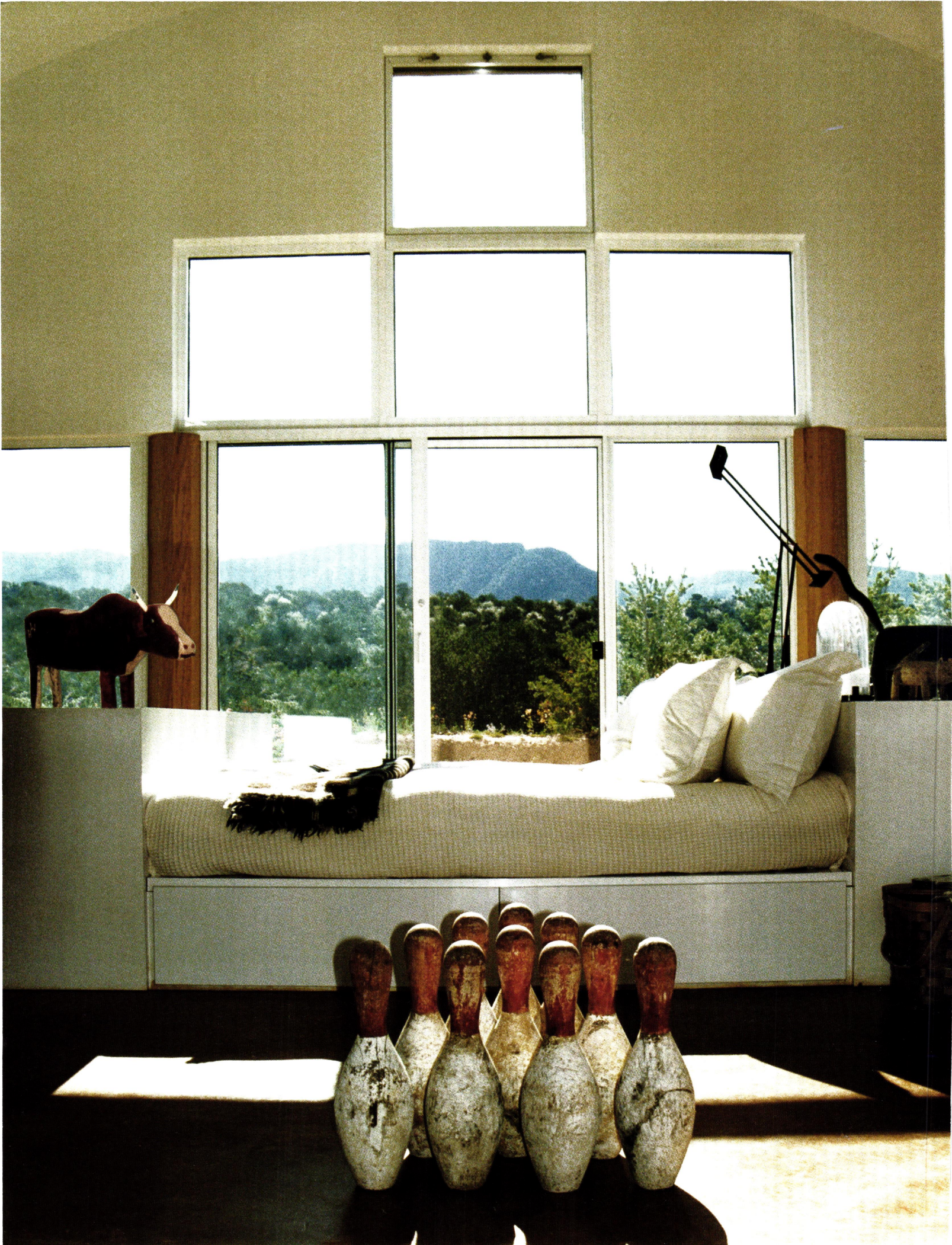


Myron Goldfinger | New Mexico & New York

Small in Scale, Long on Site

In Desert and Forest, Two Houses
Adapt to Their Settings





Myron Goldfinger



ometries following the curve of the land or the verticality of the trees nearby. Both reflect a judicious use of solid and transparent surfaces and an economy of space.

The houses form part of a trio of “secondary” homes that the architect and his wife and frequent collaborator, interior designer June Goldfinger, maintain. When they first came to New Mexico 15-odd years ago, they wanted something different from what they had in New York and the Caribbean. “To me, this was another experience of the earth’s environment,” Myron Goldfinger says. “On Anguilla we have the water experience. In New York it’s the trees. In Tesque it’s the desert. It’s a perfect triangle of our interests.”

The Tesque property stretches over 30 hilly acres dotted with piñon trees and chamiza. Surveying the high desert, Goldfinger knew immediately where he would locate the house: high on a slender strip of land, where it would have views in every direction.

The house itself is long and narrow,
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ABOVE: The living room—“the largest space in the house”—looks out to the mountains and valley. In addition to light and space, a main goal was “that very little nature be disturbed,” he says.

Goldfinger’s wife, June, an interior designer, filled the rooms with folk art. “Our collection has an inherent roughness to it,” she notes. LEFT: A pair of carved bison are displayed in the bedroom.



NEW YORK

LEFT: "It's a three-story tree house," Goldfinger says of the house in Wacabuc. The cylindrical rear façade has no windows; the architect framed views on both the front and side façades.

BELOW LEFT: In the living room, which has double-height windows, is a cheetah on a tricycle by Ron Rodriguez. BELOW: The master suite is cantilevered above the pathway to the glazed entrance.

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with a barrel-vaulted roof; depending on the elevation, the 2,000-square-foot structure calls to mind a railway car. Two double-height spaces rise at either end—the master bedroom to the east and the living area to the west—and at the center is a skylighted dressing area.

There are no separate rooms in the house—each space flows easily into the next, though sliding doors can be closed for privacy. On all sides there are windows and sliding glass doors. "From a functional point of view, it works perfectly in terms of ventilation," notes the architect. Echoing the landscape just outside, the floors are polished concrete stained the color of the soil. The exterior is earth-toned stucco; and though it's not apparent at first glance, the walls are a foot thick.

The house's ample glazing pleases Goldfinger: "As the sun moves around, you get different shadows and forms inside," he says. "From the master bedroom we can watch the moon rise. The house has a wonderful continuity of experiences."

June Goldfinger has filled the house
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Both buildings live in harmony with their settings, their geometries following the curve of the land or the verticality of the trees nearby.

Myron Goldfinger



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with upholstered pieces of her design, Le Corbusier chairs, rough wood furniture acquired over the years, kilims and Gabbeh rugs from Iran. "Myron's shapes are such well-proportioned volumes," she says. "The trick is not to be pedantic but to do something that stands up to them."

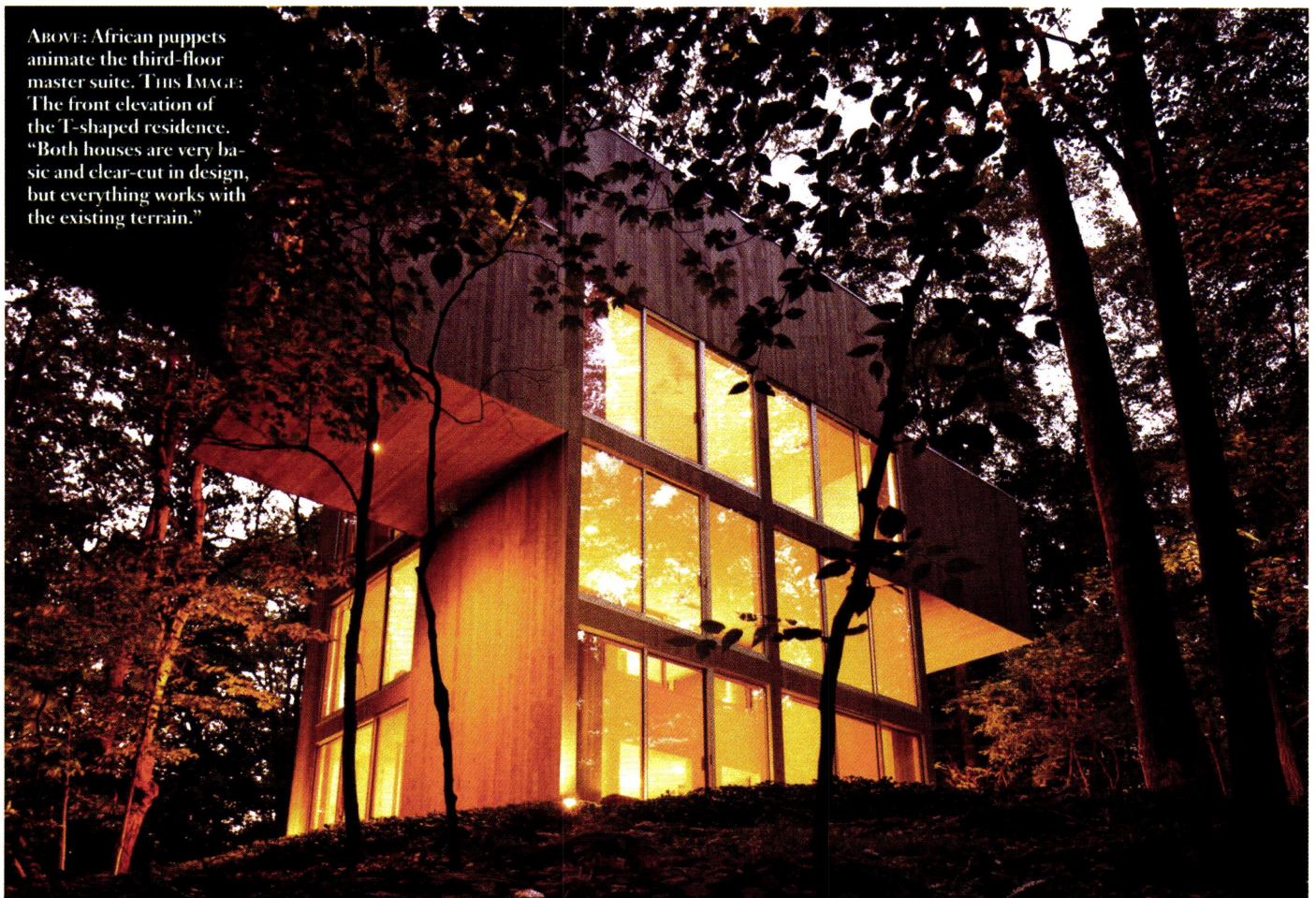
Before the couple met, each collected folk art; together they have assembled animal pieces by Southwest artists. Among their favorites here are carvings by the late Felipe Archuleta and his son Leroy. "We collect things that are true to themselves," says June Goldfinger.

The folk art collection in their New York house is just as spirited: There, June Goldfinger's animal puppets used by the Bozo and Bamana peoples of Mali adorn spaces that open into the trees. "We look

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"I used floor-to-ceiling sliding glass panels because I wanted to be able to look down as well as out," says Myron Goldfinger.

ABOVE: African puppets animate the third-floor master suite. **THIS IMAGE:** The front elevation of the T-shaped residence. "Both houses are very basic and clear-cut in design, but everything works with the existing terrain."



Myron Goldfinger

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at both these homes, in addition to our main house, as personal museums in a sense,” says Myron Goldfinger.

The Waccabuc house is, in fact, set on the other end of the 10-acre property from where the architect placed their primary residence some 35 years ago. “We built it as a vacation home for our adult children,” he says. “We use it because it’s such a wonderful experience being there.”

What he calls their “tower in the trees” emphasizes the geometries Goldfinger has employed throughout his career. One’s initial view of the house is of a three-story

There are no separate rooms in the house—each space flows into the next.

half cylinder clad in red cedar. The top-floor master suite cantilevers out to either side—“like Mickey Mouse ears,” he says dryly. But the elevation on the opposite side is nearly all windows. “I used floor-to-ceiling sliding glass panels because I wanted to be able to look down as well as out,” he adds. Indeed, the double-height living room, which faces a pond, seems to float among the trees.

Joining the African puppets there are two whimsical works by Ron Rodriguez that the couple bought in New Mexico: a cheetah and a pig balanced on tricycles.

As in Tesuque, Myron Goldfinger came up with a “clear-cut” plan in Waccabuc. “It’s very economical in the way it’s put together. It’s a very straightforward design, and the spaces are quite interesting as you move through them.”

That approach is reflected in June Goldfinger’s interiors, where travertine floors are combined with white Formica cabinetry and neutral tones. “We both like environments that don’t need a lot of ‘toddying,’” she says. “There’s no fluffing of pillows; you don’t have to tiptoe.”

In respecting the sites of both houses, Myron Goldfinger has come up with designs that offer refreshing solutions to modest spaces. “A lot of my work in recent years has been large projects,” he explains. “I get a lot of pleasure out of working on this scale—it really makes you think.” □