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LAS VEGAS

Livability Report:

OUR NEW BEGINNING

How the next generation of ideas will boost our subpar grades, starting with the Springs Preserve

Plus...

OUR ANNUAL DESIGN AWARDS

The Morelli House—Our mid-century marvel BY ALAN HESS
A fresh perspective on the **World Market Center** BY WILLIAM L. FOX
Here's looking at Vegas ... in **2032** BY JOHN L. SMITH



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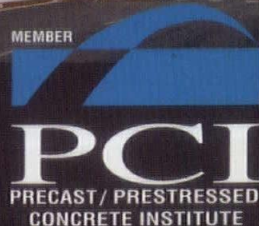
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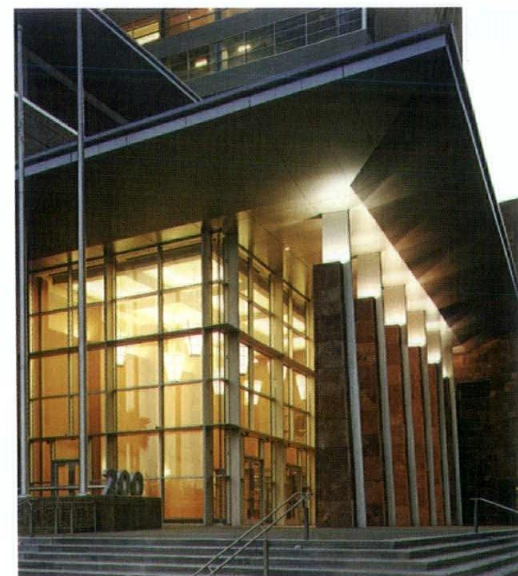
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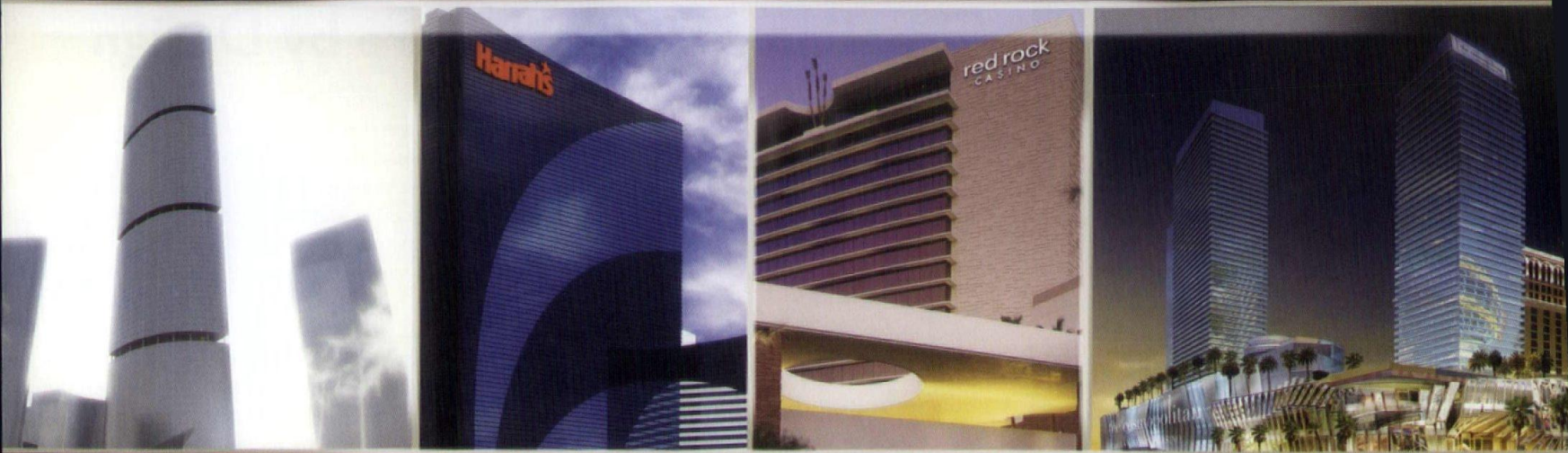
The last Livability progress report is a natural: We present the latest achievements by AIA Nevada architects.

BY PHIL HAGEN



COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF THE LAS VEGAS SPRINGS PRESERVE VISITOR CENTER BY KEVIN KEMNER, ASSOC. AIA

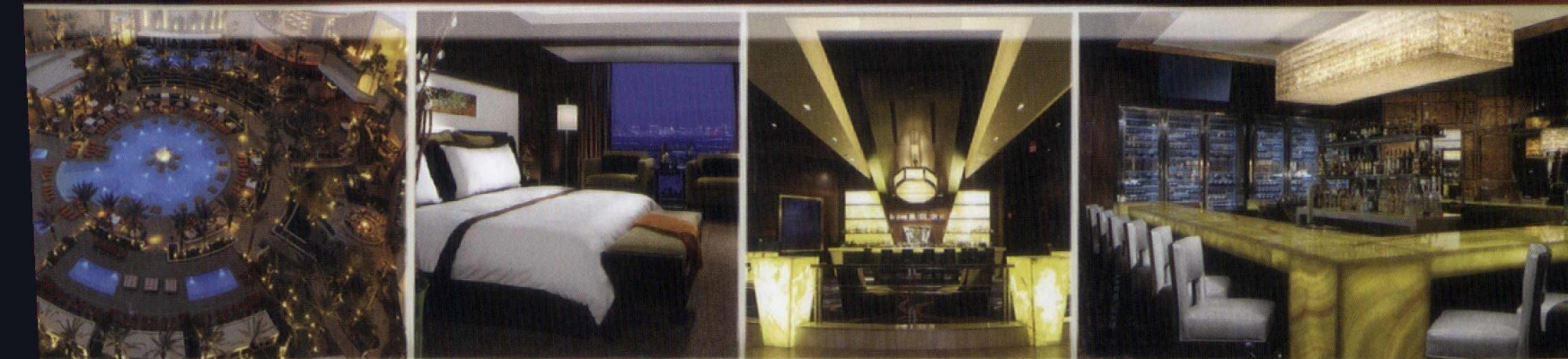
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THE POWER OF ARCHITECTURE IS UNDENIABLE. PEOPLE FORM immediate impressions about a building, its purpose and its occupants. The same can be said about communities in general. Our instinctive and often unconscious reaction to the architecture around us can greatly influence where we work or live, and can even alter our behavior within an environment.

The theme of this edition of *Architecture Las Vegas* is "Building a Livable Las Vegas." Using the AIA's 10 Principles of Livable Communities as our guide, we have assessed the "livability" of our city objectively and identified opportunities for improvement. While in most categories we have given Las Vegas a below-average grade, we also recognize projects that are already addressing these shortcomings. In the end, we are encouraged by the forward momentum that will make Las Vegas a more livable and sustainable city.

This year's livability theme was chosen to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the American Institute of Architects. AIA chapters across the nation are celebrating

by giving a gift of community service to their cities and towns. This massive undertaking is known as the Blueprint for America, and it brings citizens, politicians, and civic and business leaders together with architects in order to create a dialogue about community design principles, identify neighborhood conditions in need of improvement, and create better communities and quality of life for all. This issue of *Architecture Las Vegas* supports the AIA 150th celebration by opening the dialogue in our own community.

Starting with Flo Rogers' "Lost Vegas," a telling commentary on our lack of community identity and how architecture is an important element in creating a "sense of place." Then a team of esteemed writers guides us through our special Livability section, bringing to light 10 excellent examples of where we're doing it right. For example, "Water Street Reborn" discusses redevelopment issues, "Planned Serendipity" highlights the long-awaited Union Park project Downtown and "Character Builders" gives three examples of livable neighborhoods.

As testimony to the fact that "Design Matters," the winning projects from the 2006 AIA Nevada Design Awards show us the beauty, sustainability and livability that come with excellence in design.

William L. Fox's comprehensive "second look" at the World Market Center, and Chuck Twardy Q&A with David Schwarz, designer for the Smith Center for the Performing Arts, provide a stimulating glimpse into the near future of Las Vegas. And, as a final note, John L. Smith's flight of fancy into the wonderland of tomorrow's Las Vegas is a treat!

A key factor for the success of any community is involvement. Involvement by the general public is paramount in order to establish the critical factors local residents deem to be important; involvement by the profession is important to help strategize, guide and design solutions that solve the problems; and involvement by public officials is crucial to implement these programs. I encourage everyone to get involved with his or her community, and *you* are definitely invited to get involved with the AIA. Working together, we can achieve a safer, more beautiful, sustainable and livable Las Vegas for us all.


Curt Carlson, AIA, LEED
2007 President, AIA Las Vegas

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Phil Hagen has been editor of *Architecture Las Vegas* since its launch in 2000. Twice it has won a Maggie Award for Best Annual Publication in the West. Hagen owns Vegas Ink, a writing, editing and consulting company, which helps produce the annual *Cultural Guide* for Nevada Public Radio, among other publications. He is also editor of *Vurb*, a new magazine about "City Living in the New West."

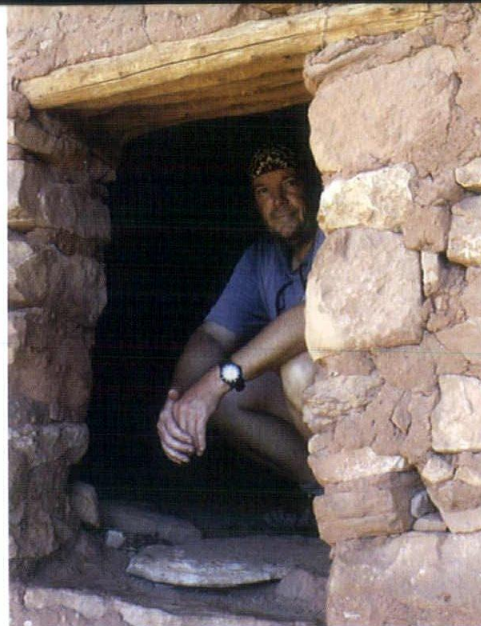


◀ DialV9Design's **Sonda Andersson Pappan** is a national-award-winning designer who specializes in the creative development of consumer magazines, newspapers and custom publications. While design director for New Times (now Village Voice Media), Pappan headed the redesign or start-up of more than a dozen of the company's publications. She has also designed for *SPY*, *GQ* and *Rolling Stone*. This is the third year she has art-directed *Architecture Las Vegas*.

Los Angeles-based author **Alan Hess**, a regular contributor to *Architecture Las Vegas*, is one of the leading architecture critics in the West. For this issue, the expert on Mid-Century Modernism wrote about the Morelli House (Page 24), where he will give a lecture on April 9. Hess's latest books are *Oscar Niemeyer: Houses* (Rizzoli International), *Organic Architecture: The Other Modernism* (Gibbs Smith, Publisher) and *Frank Lloyd Wright: Prairie Houses* (Rizzoli). Coming this fall: *Frank Lloyd Wright: Mid Century Modern Houses* (Rizzoli) and *California Masters* (Gibbs Smith Publisher).

John L. Smith, a fourth-generation Nevadan and award-winning columnist for the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, knows what makes Vegas tick. Which made him our choice to envision the future of our community and its famous corridor. His creative conclusions are on Page 108. Smith has written several books, including *Moving to Las Vegas* (co-authored with his wife, Tricia), *Of Rats and Men: Oscar Goodman's Life from Mob Mouthpiece to Mayor of Las Vegas* and, most recently, *Sharks in the Desert: The Founding Fathers and Current Kings of Las Vegas*.

T.R. Witcher was well-qualified to handle most of our "Livability" writing duties. In addition to studying urban design, he's a graduate of the University of Missouri and has practiced journalism for 10 years in cities as far flung as New York, Denver, Kansas City and Las Vegas. He's been published in *Crain's Chicago Business*, *Black Enterprise*, *American Legacy* and *Drill*, among others. He also has worked on the staffs of *Las Vegas Weekly*, *Westword* and *The Pitch*.



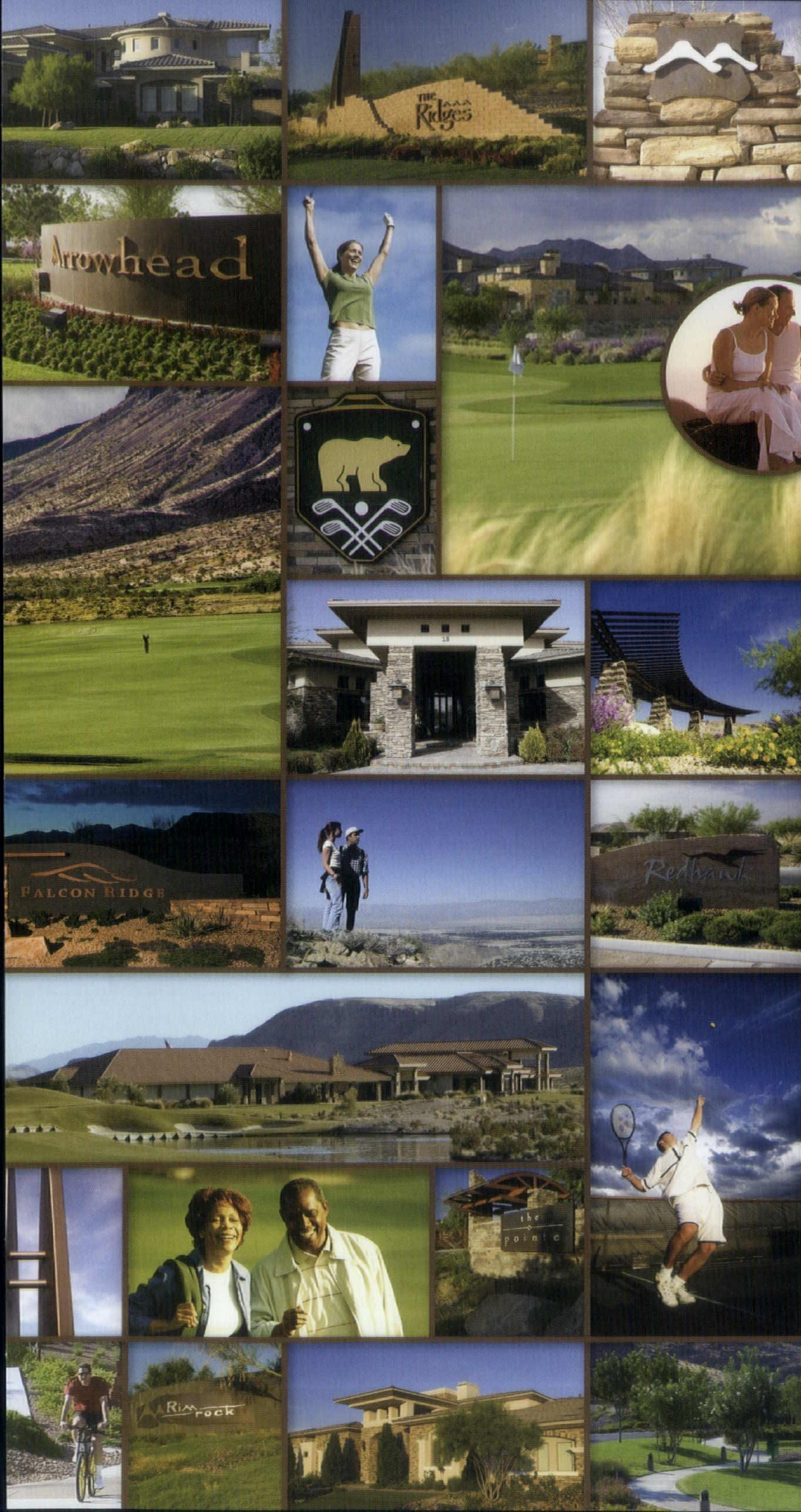
◀ Los Angeles-based writer **William L. Fox**, who gives us a progress report on the increasingly amazing World Market Center (Page 46), has published 10 books about art and architecture in landscapes as varied as the American Southwest and the polar regions. His latest book is *Making Time: Essays on the Nature of Los Angeles*

(Shoemaker & Hoard). He has received awards from the Guggenheim Foundation, National Science Foundation and National Endowment for the Humanities, and has been a visiting scholar at the Getty Research Institute and the Clark Art Institute.

Chuck Twardy, a frequent contributor to *Architecture Las Vegas*, has written about art, culture and architecture for several daily newspapers and for magazines, including *Metropolis*. Unfortunately, he will not be around to watch his subject on Page 38 (architect David Schwarz) deliver his creation (the Smith Center for the Performing Arts) to Las Vegas, as he recently left for North Carolina, where he will continue writing and teaching.

John Locher, a transplant from Milwaukee, is a staff photographer at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*. When time permits he freelances for the *Boston Globe* and *The New York Times*. For the night photographs of the Springs Preserve on Pages 62-65, he used long camera exposures and "painted" the structures with a \$10 spotlight from the local hardware store. ▼





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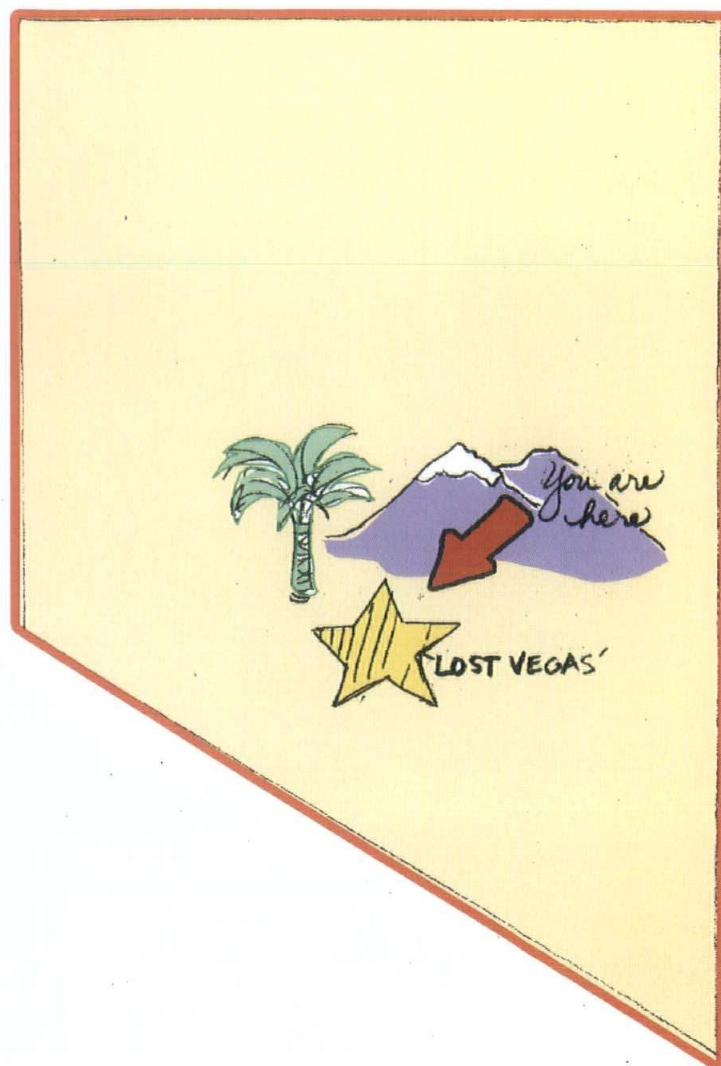
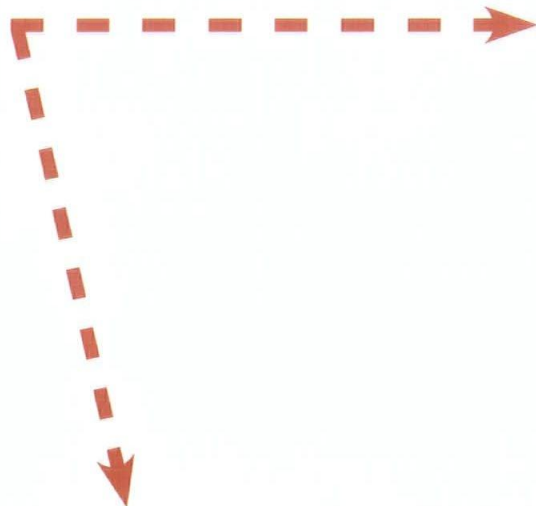
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Lost Vegas?

'Sense of Place' project gets to the heart of what our city needs most. **BY FLO ROGERS**

MOMENTS AFTER WALKING INTO THE SHERATON CITY CENTER Philadelphia, I realized that this was not going to be a Vegas-tastic hospitality experience. It's not a flashy hotel, for starters. In fact, it's about to get a makeover. Then an unenthusiastic bellboy explained the convoluted method of getting my bags to my room. And when a competent but insistent waiter told me the soup listed on the menu wasn't being served this evening—nor any soup, for that matter—I tried to adjust my Vegas attitude to that of "brotherly love."

Back home we're world class at making sure that Las Vegas leaves an indelible impression on visitors. Yet our own relationship with this place is often dissonant. A 2006 Harris poll placed Las Vegas fifth on a list of cities in which Americans would most like to live other than where they currently reside. Trouble is when we get here ...

It was "Sense of Place" that took me to Philadelphia for a national gathering of public radio programmers, where the results of a research study were to be presented. My station, Nevada Public Radio, was one of nine seeking to find out how our listeners' sense of place might let us create more valued local radio content. I'd signed on eagerly.

The "Sense of Place" project by Walrus Research surveyed 36 focus groups in nine cities, yielding 54 hours of

videotaped observations. Las Vegas was the kickoff location last March. Respondents were listeners to the news station, KNPR 88.9-FM. While their comments reflected a cross section of the KNPR audience (curious, interested in world news, well educated), they were much more diverse than we'd imagined our listeners to be—from professional gambler to psychologist, gun owner to gourmet picnic packer.

Research guru George Bailey, in the role of neutral visitor, moderated. "Tell me about this place," he asked the groups. Sitting behind the one-way glass, I wondered if they'd secretly memorized the texts of architect Robert Fielden's KNPR commentaries. Consensus was established quickly. Growth, they said, was a mixed blessing. We surround ourselves with walls, traffic is getting worse, a transient population, sleaze, "anyone can be bought," "everything looks the same," "people remain strangers," "lack of tradition is the key to our tradition," "I never thought I'd wind up living in Las Vegas!"

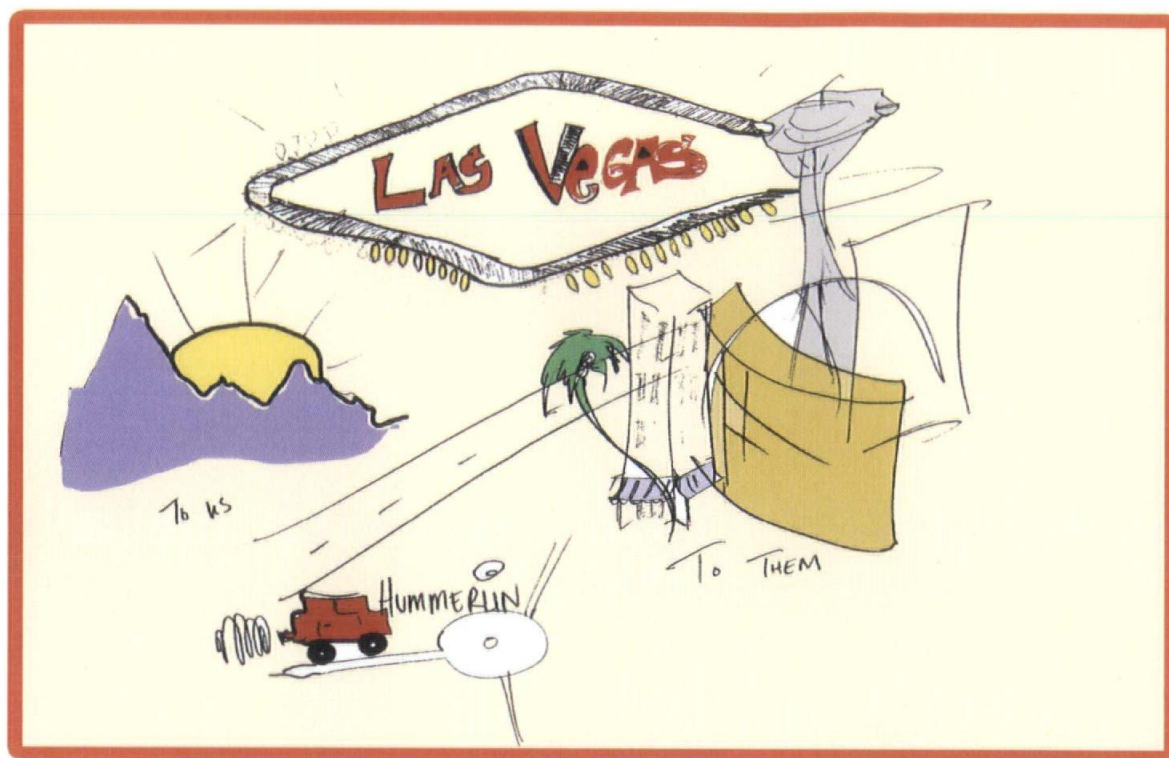
Far from being despondent about their hometown, they were eager to acknowledge the upside. Most considered the desert a beautiful and treasured resource. They relished the economic vibrancy, the growing diversity, the 24-hour lifestyle, "the energy, the electricity."

Above and next page: Drawings by Las Vegans for public radio's "Sense of Place" workshop.

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They were shown the famous *New Yorker* cover illustrating a New Yorker's worldview from Ninth Avenue, in which everything west of the Hudson—all the way to the Pacific—was a flat, barren wasteland.

Our participants put pen to paper to create "mental maps" of Las Vegas. Many drew distinct boundaries: "us" and "them," locked in by desert and mountains; residents vs. tourists; Summerlin snobs vs. Green Valley nouveau riche. One map identified swathes of land only as "Samesville." Roads out of town led to the "People's

All but a few maps feature the Strip as a great gash dissecting the Valley, at once a dividing line and a backbone.

Republic of California" and "a totally other Nevada."

One Las Vegan marked the Strip as "the center of the universe," and all but a few maps feature it as a great gash dissecting the Valley, at once a dividing line and a backbone. Another interpretation included Europe and Asia with vibrating magnets over Las Vegas, pulling in smiley faces and dollar signs from around the world.

Meanwhile, no one identified Carson City, and just a few marked Reno. One carefully drawn outline of Nevada featured Las Vegas, its palm trees and the legend "You Are Here: Lost Vegas."

The sarcasm wasn't lost on the researchers. The super-sized projections in the Philadelphia hotel ballroom drew smug chuckles. Where we had strip clubs and casinos, other cities' groups had placed churches, universities and urban

trails. Some labeled "home," and one even wrote the word "family" next to a little heart.

No Las Vegas respondent wrote those words.

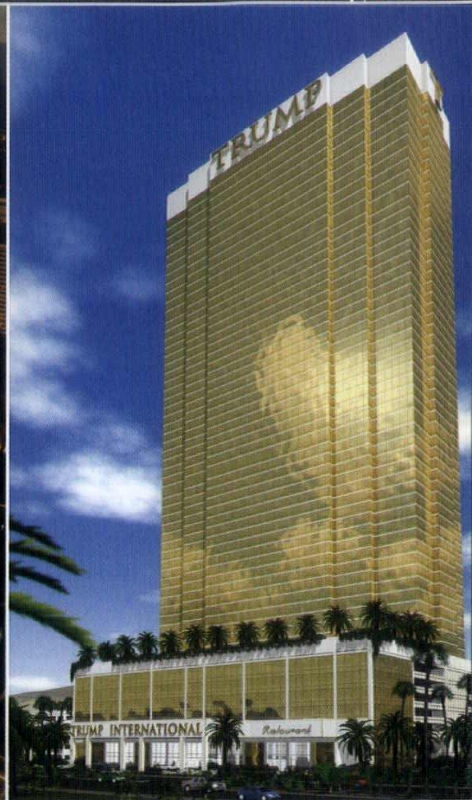
Alain de Botton wasn't surprised. He's the author of *The Architecture of Happiness* (Pantheon, 2006), a book that explores how we might underestimate the power of our built environment to affect our mood. "Las Vegas has the classic problem of places supposed to be fun and escapist for people who come from somewhere else for a short period of time. You get the same problem in ski resorts, seaside resorts. How do you get a living community out of a place that is for most people a piece of entertainment for two or three days?"

The frenetic, ever-changing architecture of the Strip contrasts with the sameness of the suburbs, and both let us down in ways we may not be able to articulate.

"I think architects have been shy about talking about this mood-altering power of architecture. They are, on the whole, practical people," De Botton says. "Too often architecture is seen as accommodating our bodies rather than delighting our minds."

Our sense of place is forged by our relationships, our daily travels, our connections to civic or cultural affairs. The natural and built environment resonates on intangible levels we still might not yet fully understand. Maybe the Springs Preserve, Union Park and CityCenter will forge a unique type of brotherly love for the place we live. While deconstructing "Lost Vegas" was fascinating, I look forward to the vision of our architects and planners in constructing the "Found Vegas." ■

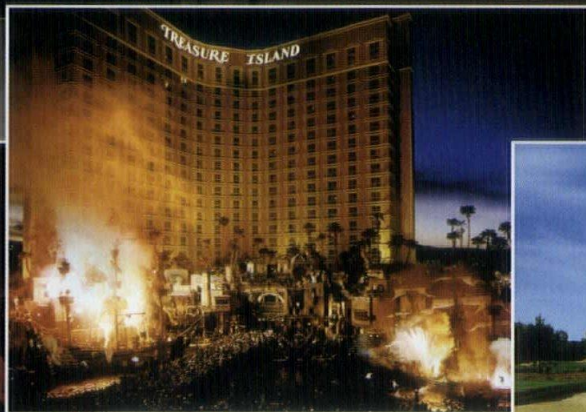
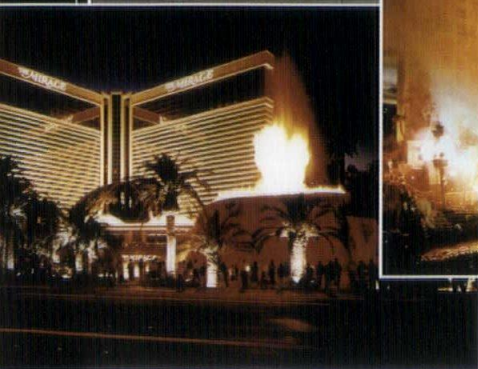
Florence Rogers is general manager of Nevada Public Radio and an editorial board member of *Architecture Las Vegas*.



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Fresh LEEDs

After a slow start to green building, Southern Nevada—with 19 registered projects—is catching the spirit. **BY T.R. WITCHER**

JUST TWO BUILDINGS IN LAS VEGAS ARE LEED CERTIFIED: the Tate Snyder Kimsey Architects design studio and the Morse Arberry Jr. Telecommunications building at the Community College of Southern Nevada. If that seems a low number in a place that builds more than anyplace else, you're right. Seattle leads the nation with 23 LEED-certified buildings.

Then again, the U.S. Green Building Council program has been around less than 10 years, and buildings can be certified only after they're built. In 2005, Nevada passed legislation that offers developers up to 50 percent off property taxes for up to 10 years for buildings that accrue sufficient points in the LEED rating system. Builders can also get sales tax relief when they purchase recycled materials.

"It's probably the biggest single incentive in the country," says Kim Hosken, director of LEED for New Construction at USGBC. As a result, she says, green development is on the upsurge in Southern Nevada.

With 19 projects having registered for LEED certification in Las Vegas and Henderson—including those at the Springs Preserve (see Page 62)—Southern Nevada can hope to be among the green giants of the future. Here are two LEEDers of the pack:

A Broadcasting First

Only in Vegas can a green building transcend its environmental bona fides and become an act of pure showmanship. Take the new Educational Technology Campus, which will house the television studios of Vegas PBS and the distance education program of the Clark County School District. It has applied for LEED Gold certification with the USGBC—the first television facility in the country to do so.

"We think we can have a building that will be a national showcase," says Vegas PBS General Manager Tom Axtell. Fittingly, the building's groundbreaking this April should coincide with the convention of the National Association of Broadcasters—a chance not only for JMA Architects to shine, but for vendors supplying the campus with sophisticated audio/visual equipment to tout their wares.

The 112,000-square-foot, \$49 million building will tap geothermal energy with 400-foot wells drilled into the rock below, and Axtell says that Nevada Power has made a "substantial commitment" for solar energy. Extensive daylighting will be used throughout: "We figure on most days we're not going to need overhead lighting," says Axtell, who estimates that Vegas PBS will save 45 percent of normal energy costs.

Vegas PBS:
The nation's first
television station
to go for LEED.



Enchantment means that tourists of the future will be able to opt for a more sustainable Vegas vacation.

The parking garage will be made with white concrete to reduce the heat-island effect. The structure will use recycled steel and contain furniture whose wood comes from sustainably managed forests. Even the high-tech video and audio gear will be selected on the basis of its recyclability.

The center, on Flamingo Road at McLeod, will open in '09.

The Eco Destination

Real estate investors Frank Woodbeck and Suzan Hudson are planning an eco-tourist-friendly community called Enchantment Way. The five-acre project near Rainbow Boulevard and Blue Diamond Road will consist of seven luxury

houses—one for them, six for visitors—that could be the city's first green neighborhood. (The USGBC just began a pilot test of the LEED for Neighborhood Development rating system.)

The Enchantment Way homes will attempt to collect and store our few inches of annual rainwater. "We figured from one house we'd be able to save 4,200 gallons a year," says Vincent Novak, AIA, project designer for Tate Snyder Kimsey Architects. That's enough to irrigate desert plantings for half a year. TSKA may also attempt to store wastewater from sinks and tubs in another cistern to supplement irrigation.

The energy-efficient homes will have radiant floor heating and triple-glazed, low-E windows. For insulation the homes will use either polystyrene, which is extremely efficient but doesn't degrade in landfills quickly, or straw bale, which the developers like because of its sustainability. "It's a waste product, basically," Novak says. "It goes through landfill or it gets burned. This way you're using it."

As for design, you won't find any tile roofs here. Metal siding and clean lines will give the homes a striking contemporary flavor. U-shaped floor plans will allow courtyards to achieve a greater harmony between indoor and outdoor living spaces.

The Enchantment Way groundbreaking will be in May, with completion set for later this year. The question now is whether green design can flourish in the desert among mainstream homeowners and businesses, or will it remain a boutique "amenity" for the wealthy or for progressive builders?

"It's gonna take off," Novak says. "It has to if we're going to survive here in the Valley." ■

THE GREEN CHURCH

Who better to push the sustainability envelope than the Almighty, the god whose "green Earth" this is in the first place? Well, He did need the best-laid plans of a Las Vegas architect, backing from a Manila-based developer, the blessing of the Catholic Church and 38 acres of California desert, but the Mission and Inn at Golden Ridge promises to be nothing less than divine.

The project, in Inyo County just over the Nevada border and along the Old Spanish Trail, aims to be one of the greenest in the country. "This thing will put Inyo on the map," says Robert Fielden, FAIA, head

which comprises a mission and a small stand-alone chapel.

RAFI is no stranger to sustainable building technologies, but this project demanded an intense focus on the structures' surrounding environs as well. "This really goes beyond what we have done before in terms of pushing the envelope as far as we can possibly push it," Fielden says.

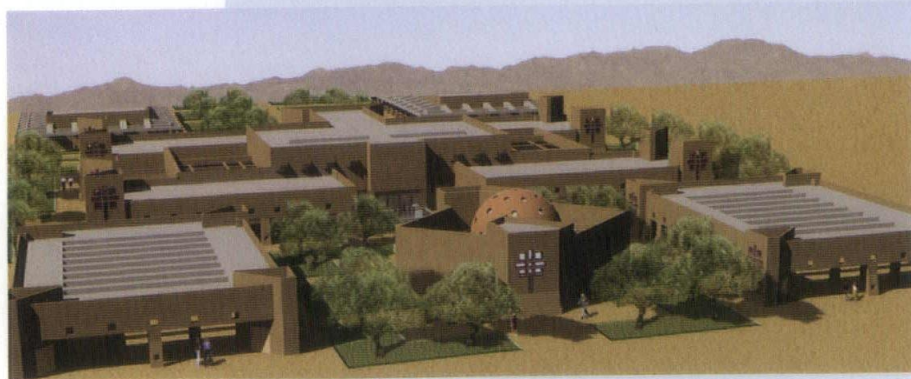
The pushing involves an "edible landscape" with hundreds of pomegranate, almond and olive trees, plus a greenhouse for vegetables and herbs, and wastewater recycling for irrigation.

Another power-generating idea involves a jet engine. The sun will heat an aluminum panel, which will heat a "transfer medium" (such as Freon), converting it from liquid to gas. The steam will drive the engine turbine to create electricity. This system, says Fielden, will power about 400 houses. The by-product? Outside moisture condensed by the heat into distilled water, which the mission may bottle and sell.

There are plenty of rainy-day ideas, too. The mission site will provide flatter grades to slow the movement of water across the site, so that it can be absorbed into the soil. There will be "earthen architectural depressions" along with bio-retention cells to retain water for reuse. Porous pavement materials will collect and filter pollutants from rainwater runoff.

As for the building, Fielden plans to construct the walls with structural foam panels made by Henderson-based Kama. The panels are much more eco-friendly and efficient than wood-frame construction, he says, and it's possible to install an 8-by-30-foot wall in one setting.

Permitting should be complete by the end of 2007 with construction expected to take nine months. "If this gets realized," Fielden says, "it's going to be a boon to development in the future, and a model that people will come from all over the world to study." — T.R.W.



of RAFI Architects. "We think it will be a world attraction."

The three-part development, which Fielden has nicknamed "Solar-con Valley," consists of an inn and RV park, 100 detached homes and the centerpiece: a 35,000-square-foot Catholic church,

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Can You See Me Now?

Charrette addresses the growing cell-tower dilemma: to disguise or not to disguise?

BY PHIL HAGEN

FORM CAN ONLY FOLLOW FUNCTION SO FAR, IT SEEMS. LOOK AT the cell-phone tower, the fastest-growing vertical addition to our landscape since the telephone pole. Humans are obviously crazy about its function—two billion of us are wireless-phone users. We're just not too crazy about how it looks, which is a problem, because in America alone there are already nearly 200,000, each tower stretching 90 to 270 feet skyward.

These "base stations" are not exactly easily hidden from sight, but lately the industry has been trying. Back East they're putting antennae in steeples and bell towers. Out West, they're disguising them as giant cacti, evergreens

and palm trees. The industry calls them "stealth" designs.

Ironically, Glenn Nowak, AIA, didn't even notice cell-phone towers before companies started that campaign. "I didn't know what they were. I just played them off as radio towers, I guess," says the visiting lecturer at UNLV's School of Architecture. When he saw his first palm tower, he thought it was a "bungee jumping platform or something."

So naturally Nowak, who specializes in design and cognitive studies, jumped at the chance to do a charrette on the subject when *Architecture Las Vegas* offered. For four hours on Nevada Day last fall, 20 of his studio students worked the problem of cell-phone tower design.

And that problem is this: If the Not In My Back Yard outcry doesn't allow form to follow function, how should the structure look? In other words, under the presumption that giant fake palm trees are not an appropriate response for Las Vegas, students sought to strike an imaginative balance between engineering and art.

"At first everybody was very eager just to create something beautiful in form, in terms of sculpture," Nowak says. "But after a bit of discussion, they saw this as an opportunity to do a design critique on urban sprawl issues or as an opportunity to embrace technology."

The group was split between wanting cell towers to be designed so they "disappear into the landscape or be highlighted in some way that they turn into a focal piece," he says.

Two of the ideas that teams came up with: a 360-degree spiral billboard that not only houses an antenna, it determines the prominence of the ads by real-time call volume; and "The Parked Cow," which takes Chicago's "cows on parade" idea and asks the city to erect a unique structure in each park—"a more practical alternative to Las Vegas' talk of desert tortoises on 'every' corner."

A third, "The Headdress," stemming from Nowak's charrette recruitment poster of showgirl-as-cell-tower (pictured), attempted to "tell a better joke" than the palm tree does. If form can't fully follow function, the team decided that "at the very least the result should not be so ersatz." They went for a more honest design that "responds with an acute sense of place": a tower capped with peacock feathers and a boa. "Design ought to make people smile!" they concluded.

If a cell-phone tower does succeed in getting noticed in such a way, it might also reach Nowak's ultimate goal of design being discussed around the dinner table. "Not only talk about the direction of technology," he says, "but the way architects are choosing to deal with those technologies." ■

THE INVISIBLE SOLUTION

Sprint Nextel has stepped up its work on "stealth" designs for base stations—from palms to chimneys—as part of the industry's never-ending quest to provide cell-phone service while not offending the public eye. It isn't easy, given that Sprint alone—one of five cell phone providers here—has 600 cell sites in Southern Nevada (yet still can't get a decent signal to a few prime residential areas). So while its designers attack the problem of what kind of disguised tower would be acceptable near prickly neighborhoods, they're also about to

implement a new alternate strategy in places where they can't plant one at all. The Distribution Antenna System piggybacks antennae on short but ubiquitous infrastructure such as light poles. This clustering method, which should debut in reception-deprived Anthem/Seven Hills area by year's end, requires about 20 mini stations instead of a few towers to achieve comparable coverage. Like the stealth solutions, it costs twice as much as the plain old tower, but it may be worth it to those who aren't turned on by design debates. — P.H.

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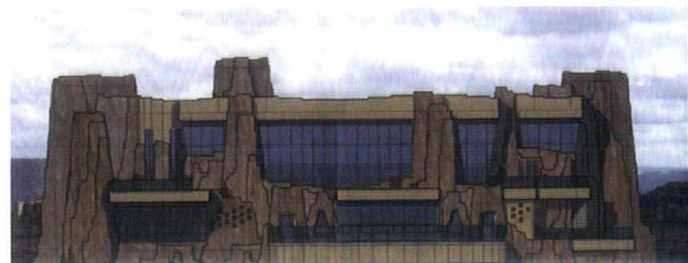
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Road-Trip Inspiration

Five fun architectural destinations out West that will get your motor running. **BY AMY SCHMIDT**

A California Case Study House

It's not surprising that *Arts and Architecture* publisher John Entenza tapped Charles and Ray Eames to take part in his Case Study House Program (1945-66), a series of 36 prototype homes designed by architects such as Richard Neutra and Eero Saarinen who were "best suited to express man's life in the modern world." After all, the young designers were already well known for their high style and innovation in the world of design. The Eames House, which sits atop a wooded bluff that was once part of Will Rogers' estate in the Pacific Palisades, "represented an attempt to state an idea rather than a fixed architectural pattern," said Entenza then. Today it remains one of the most famous houses in the program (*Case Study Houses: The Complete CSH Program*, Taschen 2002). While the design was first sketched out by Charles



MRJ Architects and engineered by Lochsa Engineering, both based in Las Vegas, the Skywalk was built with more than a million pounds of steel beams designed to support the weight of 72 Boeing jets and withstand an 8.0 magnitude earthquake 50 miles away, but only 120 people will be permitted on the bridge at any one time. By year's end, the Skywalk (owned and operated by the Hualapai tribe) will also include a 6,000-square-foot, tri-level visitor center featuring a museum, movie theater, VIP lounge, and several restaurants and bars, including the Skywalk Café, offering rooftop seating on the edge of the canyon. (702-878-9378, grandcanyonskywalk.com)

A Mid-Century Modernist Mecca

In swinging Palm Springs, especially the Tennis Club District, there's an array of small historic inns that celebrate Mid-Century Modern design. Check out the Orbit In (760-323-3585, orbitin.com), built by Herb Burns (the designer who introduced the city to the ultra-modern motor court inn in 1947), featuring studios decked out in mid-century design icons surrounding a saltwater pool in a classic modern courtyard compound. The Movie Colony Hotel (760-320-6340, moviecolonyhotel.com), built by Albert Frey and recognized as a pioneer of modern architecture, is a gem flush with old Hollywood glamour. One of the first Palm Springs hotels to lead the Mid-Century Modernism revival, the Ballantines Original Hotel (760-320-1178, ballantineshotels.com) celebrates vintage '50s kitsch, complete with period furniture by Eames, Miller, Bertoia and Knoll—there's even a blue-artificial-turf sundeck. Ruby Montana's Coral Sands Inn (760-325-4900, coralsandspalmsprings.com) is a shrine to mid-century desert ranch design, featuring the renowned collector's museum-quality vintage decorations.

The Art of Architecture

Reopened in Golden Gate Park in 2005, San Francisco's De Young Museum, designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architects Herzog & de Meuron in collaboration with San Francisco's Fong & Chang Architects and landscape architect Walter Hood, integrates art, architecture and nature



The Eames House (above) and the Grand Canyon Skywalk visitor center (top right).

and Eero "as a raised steel and glass box projecting out of the slope," three years later, following "intense collaboration between Charles and Ray, the scheme was radically changed to sit more quietly in the land." So quietly in fact that Charles and Ray lived out the rest of their lives there. (310-459-9663, eamesfoundation.org)

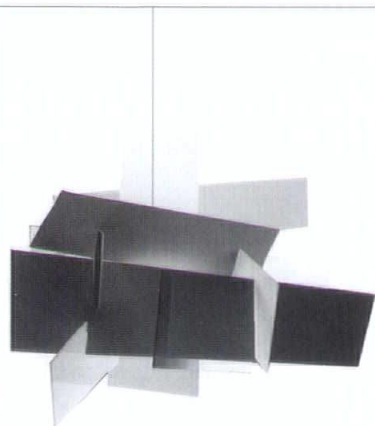
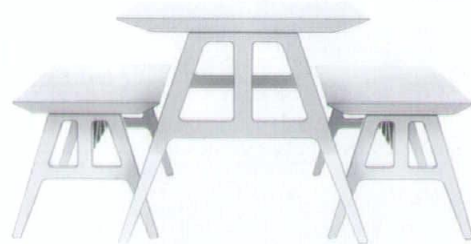
The Grand Canyon's Newest Wonder

Leave it to someone from Las Vegas to dream up the Grand Canyon's most radical manmade wonder. The brainchild of local entrepreneur David Jin, the new Grand Canyon Skywalk is as much a feat of engineering as it is of architecture. The cantilever-shaped glass walkway, suspended more than 4,000 feet above the canyon floor, extends 70 feet from the canyon's west rim. Designed by

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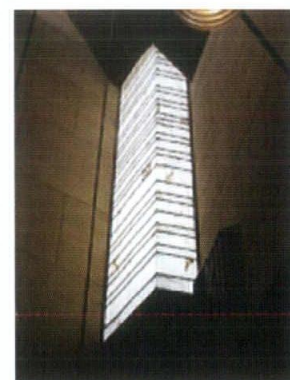
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in a three-level, 293,000-square-foot building that further blended the museum within its natural surroundings. The exterior is circled by ribbons of windows that allow park visitors glimpses of the art and offer museum patrons panoramic views of the park. A copper façade that will eventually rust to a rich green patina is perforated with a design that mimics dappled light filtering through a canopy of trees. The public sculpture garden incorporates the original sphinx sculptures, the Pool of Enchantment and the park's famous 100-year-old palm trees. The new design even gave an acre of land back to the park. (415-863-3330, thinker.org/deyoung)

Downtown LA's Urban Revival

The area's slow resurgence, which began with the opening of the Museum of Contemporary Art (213-626-6222, moca.org), designed by renowned Japanese architect Arata Isozaki in 1986, seems to be picking up speed in the historic Bunker Hill area. In 2002, Spanish architect Jose Rafael Moneo built the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels (213-680-5200, olacathedral.org) near the Hollywood Freeway because "many European Cathedrals are built near rivers, and Moneo considered the Hollywood Freeway as Los Angeles' river of transportation." In 2003, the stainless-steel curves of Frank Gehry's Walt Disney Concert Hall (323-850-2000, laphil.com) opened with a "vineyard"-shaped hall designed to retain the superb acoustical characteristics of a traditional "shoebox"-style concert hall. And you can witness two other exciting projects taking shape: the Los Angeles Sports and Entertainment District, six city blocks that are being called "Times Square West," and Grand Avenue, a 16-acre civic park with streetscape improvements and nearly four million square feet of mixed-used development including affordable housing. (cityofla.org) ■



Our Lady of the Angels

DESIGN AGENDA

MUST-SEE WEST COAST ARCHITECTURE EXHIBITIONS

Some Assembly Required: Contemporary Prefabricated Houses (Through May 20) This exhibition features eight modern modular house projects whose designs address a range of approaches to prefabrication, complete with scale models, multiple photographic panels, drawings and renderings, as well as material samples. (Pacific Design Center, West Hollywood, 310-289-5223, pacificdesigncenter.com)

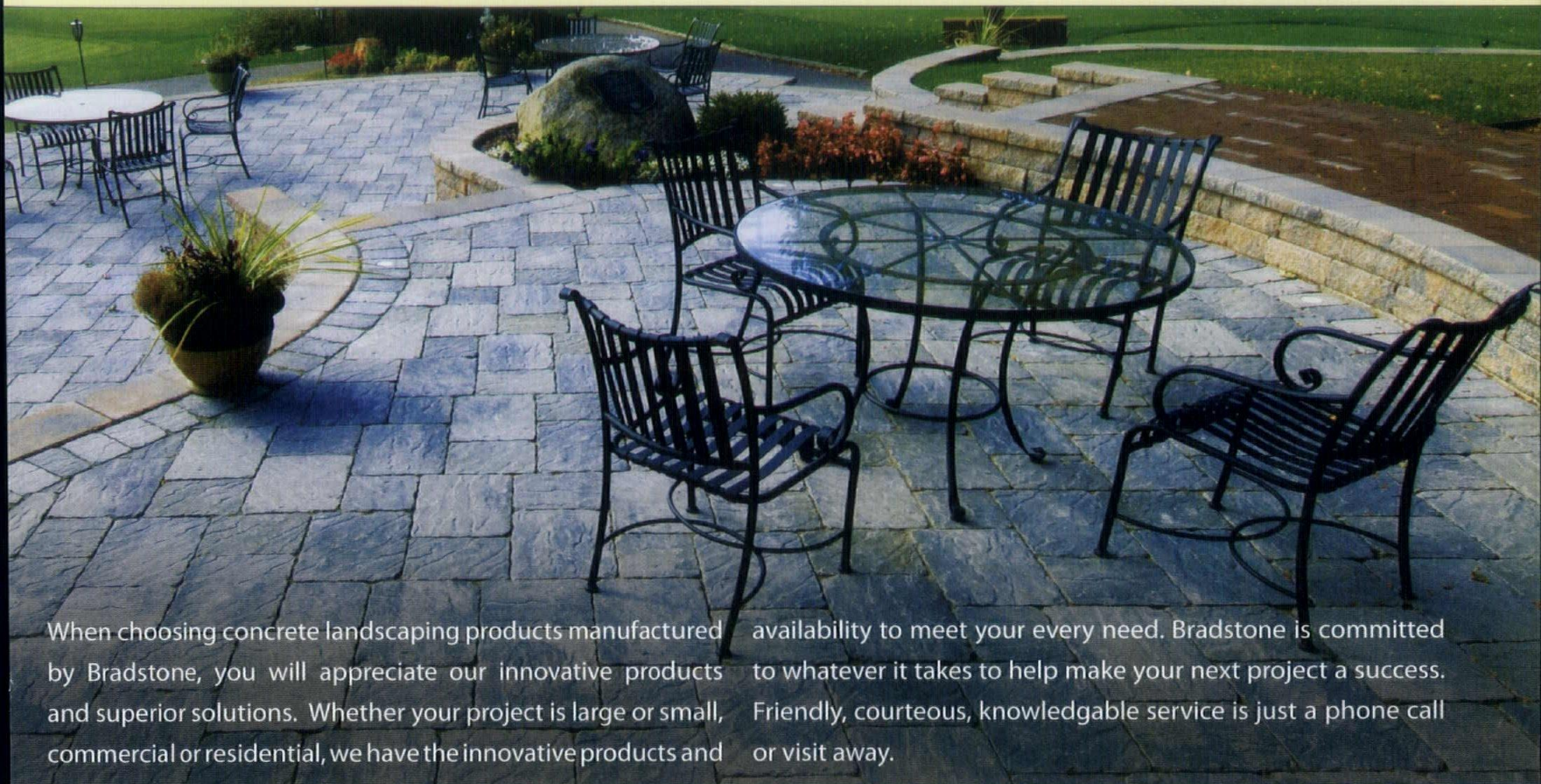
Open House: Architecture and Technology for Intelligent Living (April 14-July 1) Nearly 100 teams of emerging designers, whose work focuses on technology and domestic architecture, will envision the house of the future as a place for new spatial experiences, systems of sustainability and sensory enhancements. Produced in part by the Vitra Design Museum of Germany. (Art Center College of Design South Campus, Los Angeles, 626-396-2319, artcenter.edu)

New Blood: Next Generation (June 1-August 18) Groundbreaking work by LA's most talented new architects and landscape architects. (Architecture and Design Museum, Los Angeles, 323-932-9393, aplusd.org)

— A.S.

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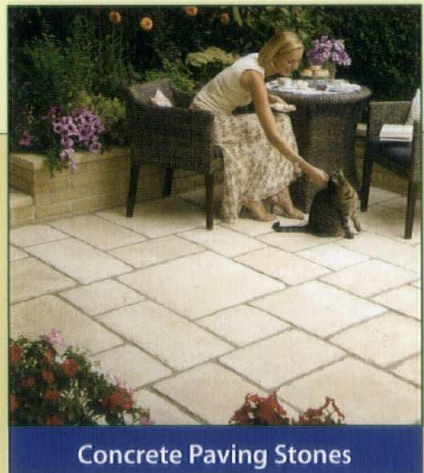
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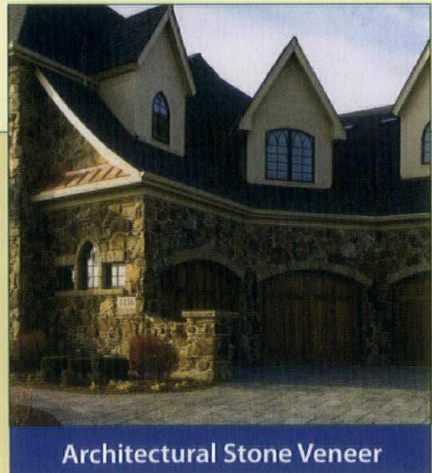
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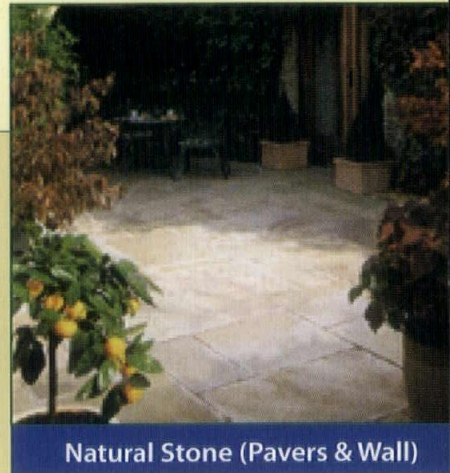
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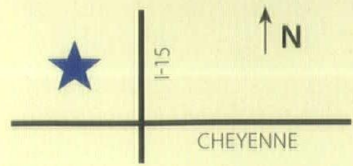


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Our Living Heritage

Junior League effort preserves a Mid-Century Modern marvel of residential architecture.

BY ALAN HESS

LAS VEGAS' SPARKLING NEON SIGNS, SLEEK HOTELS AND space-age casinos long ago established it as a leader in Mid-Century Modern architecture. But those turn out to be only one facet of this suburban metropolis' design heritage from the booming years of the 1950s. Like Los Angeles, Palm Springs and Phoenix, Las Vegas is rediscovering its great modern residential architecture from that same era.

Encouraging this dawning realization is the Junior League of Las Vegas' bold project to rescue and restore the 1959 Antonio Morelli house. This elegant contemporary house originally sat in the 1952 Desert Inn Estates, home of Keely Smith, Betty Grable, Harry James and Governor Bob Miller, and one of the exclusive—and exclusively Modern—subdivisions built to house casino executives and the local gentry as the city and county expanded. While Las Vegas' older upscale neighborhoods were designed in traditional Tudor, Spanish or Colonial styles, the new wealth demanded Modern, the style associated with progress, prosperity and success.

The Morelli living room has Mid-Century Modern furniture again, thanks to designer Vladimir Kagan and the Junior League.

Morelli House Lecture

Author Alan Hess will give a talk at 7:30 p.m. April 9 in the auditorium of the Downtown Senior Services Center, 310 S. Ninth St. (and Bridger, directly across the street from the Morelli house).

Steve Wynn bulldozed the stylish Desert Inn Estates subdivision for his new hotel in 2002, but on the advice of UNLV's School of Architecture, the Junior League selected the Morelli house to preserve. To get a glimpse of the vanished Desert Inn Estates, you'll need to rent Martin Scorsese's *Casino*, now the best remaining historical record of that modern oasis. But to get a full view of the Morelli house itself, all you need to do is drive by 861 Bridger Avenue, where it serves as the League's offices. Also, on April 9, they will open it to the community as a house museum highlighting mid-century design.

The two-bedroom house's clean lines, flat roofs, glass walls and spacious, open interiors are emblematic of 1950s modern design found in all Sunbelt cities. A tall central pavilion frames the front door and rises above lower flanking wings, allowing high clerestory windows to let in light. Wide eaves clad in highly polished redwood sail out far beyond the walls to shield the house from the desert sun.

In place of traditional ornament-like classical columns or Mission arches, this modern design exploits its materials to add texture and detail. Screens of ornamental concrete block (similar to those used by Edward Durell Stone at his celebrated 1958 American Embassy in New Delhi) create a rich filigree that catches the brilliant sun and deep shadows and bestow a lightness on the wood-frame structure. The roof is covered in large white rock to reflect the heat and add a natural desert texture.

Inside, the house has the open, airy plan of modern homes; only a low partition divides the entry from the living area. The back of the house has floor-to-ceiling windows that once allowed the view to flow out to the green fairways of the golf course, and now look out onto a walled back yard. The entry, living room and dining room combine as one large open space accented with a white stone wall and a prominent fireplace hood of pleated copper.

The house still has unpainted wood paneling that shows off the beauty of the natural grain, but the Morelli's taste and Italian heritage is expressed in several decorative touches. The display cabinet built into the living room divider is outfitted with paneled doors and a decorative lozenge-pattern wire screen; the front door is surrounded by a mottled rain

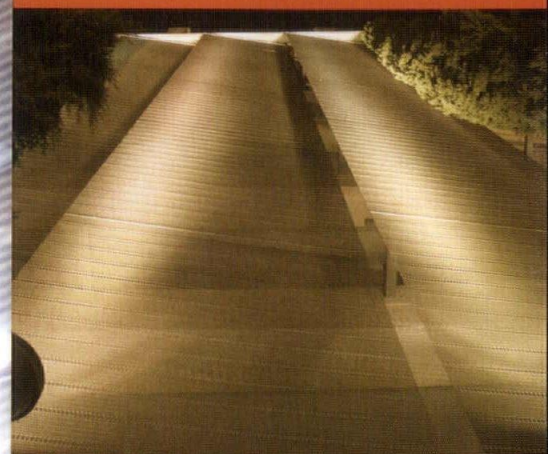


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drop-textured glass. The kitchen still boasts its original antique copper oven, refrigerator and stove cook-top hood, now classics of mid-century design. These elements add an opulent flourish to the house that contrasts with the minimalist austerity usually found in modern designs.

Though the house was essentially designed by a talented amateur, it compares favorably to many of the desert modern houses that have put Palm Springs on the international map as a Mecca for modern design—and helped lead that desert resort's resurgence in the last decade.

The Morelli house reminds us that Las Vegas still boasts many Mid-Century Modern houses and housing tracts that deserve preservation.

Antonio Morelli was a typical resident of the Desert Inn Estates (as was second owner Kay Glenn, Howard Hughes' press secretary, who bought it in 1978). Classically trained in music (with all of the culture and taste that implies), he was hired by Jack Entratter as orchestra leader and music director at the height of the Sands' glamour years when the Rat Pack cavorted on its stages (and worked on arrangements with Morelli at his house). Deciding to put down roots in the desert, he designed the house himself with the help of Richard Small, chief carpenter at the Desert Inn,

and from architect Hugh Taylor, who had completed the design of the modern Desert Inn itself after the original design by Wayne McAllister.

Though the Desert Inn Estates is gone, the Morelli house reminds us that Las Vegas still boasts many Mid-Century Modern houses and housing tracts that deserve preservation. The Scotch 80s, between Charleston and Sahara on Rancho Drive, was another fashionable development. Beginning in 1952 at Charleston Heights (near Decatur Boulevard and Alta Drive) developer Ernest Becker began a long career of building contemporary and ranch-house tracts. The well-known Southern California architects Palmer and Krisel (they did the celebrated Alexander Homes in Palm Springs) designed the Paradise Palms subdivision. These and other neighborhoods still to be cataloged form a substantial stock of modern design that is part of the living heritage of all Sunbelt cities, including Las Vegas. ■



THE FURNISHING TOUCH



Top: The Morellis' front entrance in the 1950s.
Right: The Kagan table and chairs in today's Junior League dining room.

While they were living in the house, the Morellis preferred comfortable and moderately modern furnishings accented with traditional touches. Floral prints covered the lounge chairs, and swagged drapes covered the windows. The restored version of the house boasts the strikingly modern furnishings of noted furniture designer Vladimir Kagan. This change will bring out the clean, spare lines and spaciousness of the modern design. Kagan agreed to furnish the house with his classic modern designs when the Junior League contacted him during a visit to Las Vegas last year. The choice is appropriate. A native of Germany who came to the United States in 1938, Kagan first came to the attention of the design world in the same era that the Morelli house was built. His highly regarded career has straddled private commissions for Las Vegas-class stars such as Xavier Cougat and Marilyn Monroe, and fine-arts museum collections. The strongly sculpted shapes of his couches, chairs and tables fit the human body in recline. Their full, organic forms often contrast elegantly with the exposed structural elements of the furniture (the legs and stands) fashioned of slender metal struts. Though part of the house will be used as offices, the new furniture will accent the living room and the kitchen. Kagan's bright colors and rich textures will bring the Morelli house space alive in an entirely new way.

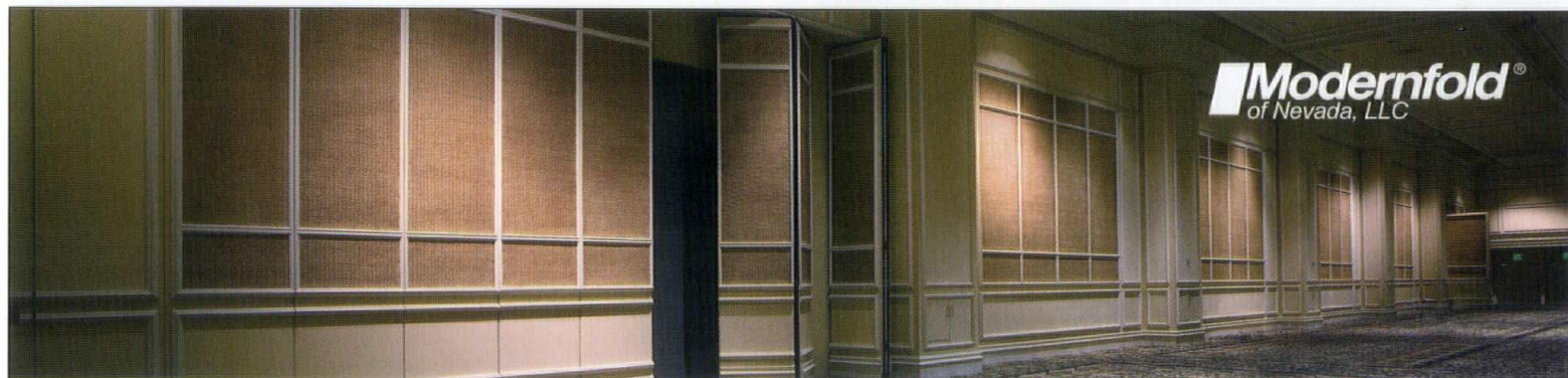
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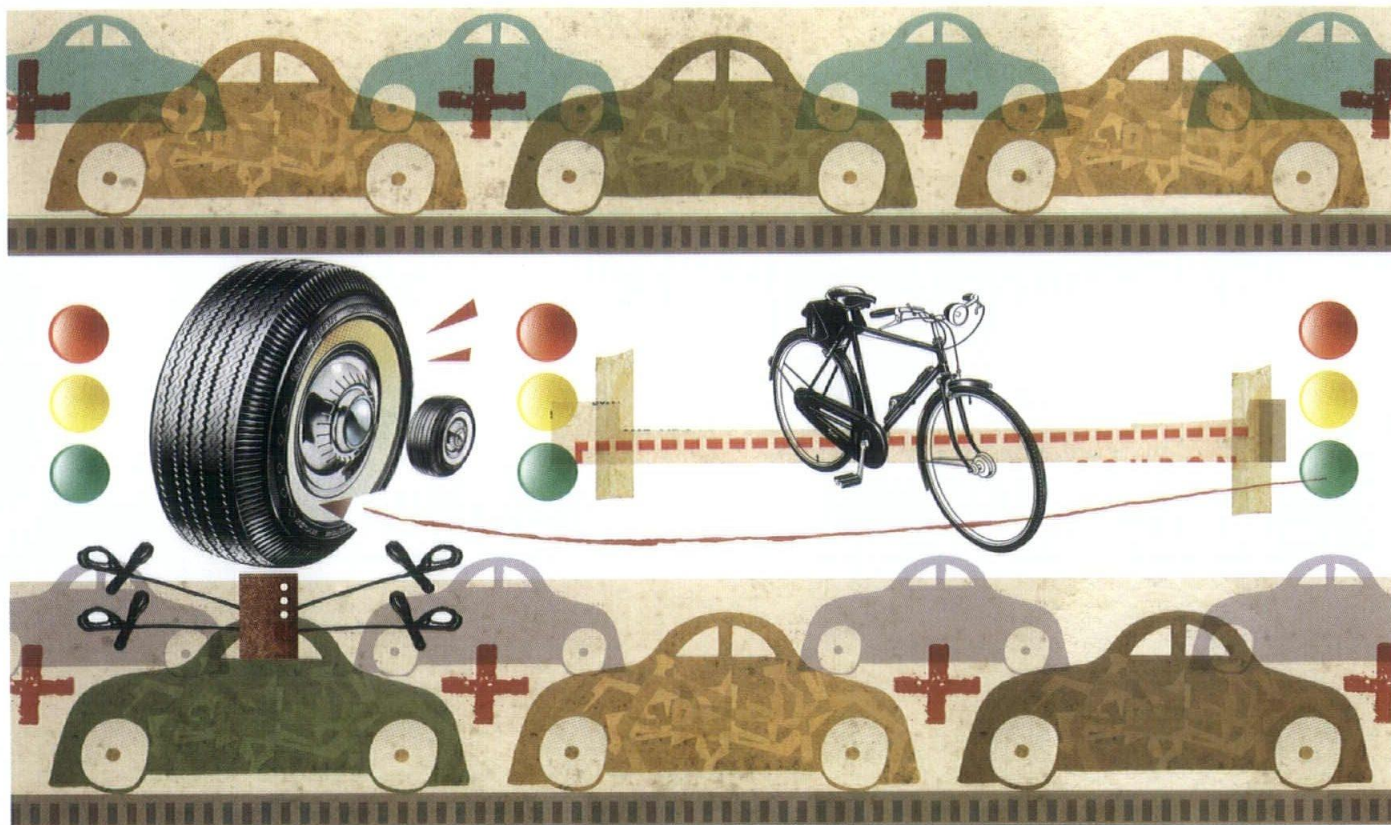
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Beyond Road Rage

Another slow arterial in the Valley isn't what's really maddening—it's the acceptance of the Eastern Avenue philosophy. **BY PHIL HAGEN**

WE ALL HAVE OUR ROADS OF PERDITION. YOURS MAY BE Charleston Boulevard near Interstate 15, where automobiles move like the molecules in granite, or Stephanie Street near the Galleria Mall, where drivers make more turns than Shriners on parade.

Eastern Avenue in Henderson, though, is a special case. Not because it's my case—nothing's less interesting than someone else's traffic gripe. But because it was such an opportunity to not settle, once again, for a less than livable community. We had a blank slate from Interstate 215 south to Seven Hills and Anthem. We had projected that some 50,000 people would reside in those new communities. We knew that Eastern Avenue would have to serve as the main artery between them and the rest of the Valley.

Yet we built a six-lane, two-mile-long clog, with 25 strip malls, more than 500 shops, and traffic lights every fifth of a mile. Some call it progress. But where will that get us?

Today and the next day—even if that's a Sunday—the answer on Eastern Avenue is "nowhere quick." That's a livability problem that some days borders on the existential for those of us who are stuck in traffic—or can't even get into traffic in order to be stuck. So we get by on the hopes of having synchronized signals someday, the kindness of window-

tinted strangers and anything Zen.

Unfortunately, this particular arterial seems destined to have other livability detours as well. Which is why my traffic story is not really about traffic.

The Expert Witness

At first I thought we all might be too far down the road to care about lessons from Eastern Avenue. So I sought out a guy who keeps preaching about such matters, even when he's pretty sure it's just the choir who listens.

I picked up Dr. Robert Fielden, FAIA, on an autumn weekday morning. He's a 30-year resident, urban planner and architect whose headquarters, RAFI, is five-and-a-half miles farther north up Eastern from 215. (Somehow it takes the same amount of time to drive my two-mile stretch.) "Dr. Bob" is one of four AIA Fellows in the state, but he is most famous for his commentaries on KNPR—in fact, you probably hear his soft Texas drawl on the radio while you're stuck in traffic.

Bob hasn't been down my way in awhile, so I'm looking forward to his naked appraisal of the road. It starts with his offering a preface just as we reach the 215 underpass: "The purpose of this road is to get people from Point A to Point B. In this case,



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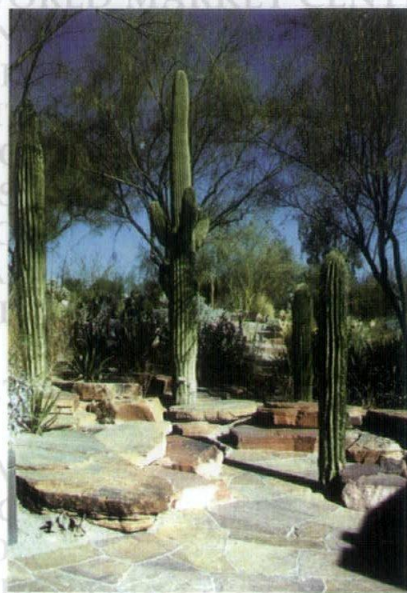
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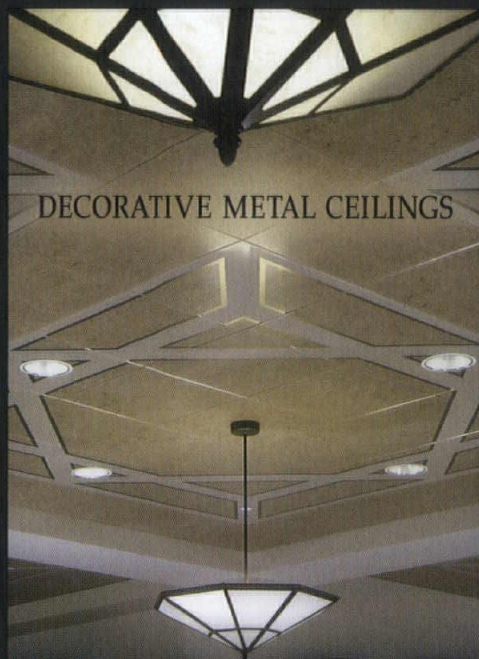
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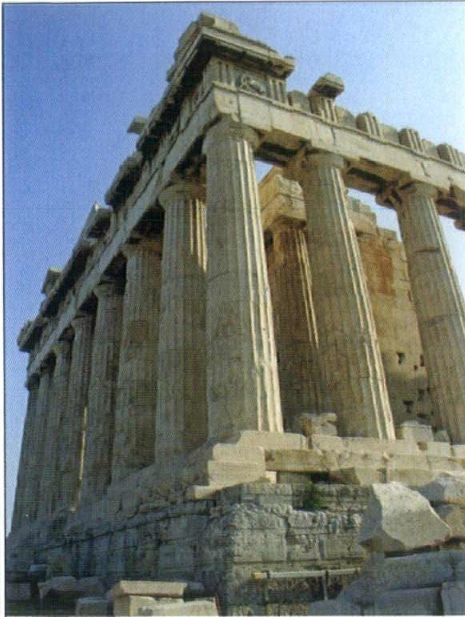
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to get people from Anthem to the 215. By definition, an arterial is something that has interruptions only every mile or two."

So far so good, he adds. "We've been in a state of motion since we left."

Then we hit our first red light, between the Home Depot/Wal-Mart/Office Max/Sam's Club shopping center on the right and a maze of restaurants and retail on the left. The pause gives me time for a preface of my own.

Back in 2000, those two strip malls were here, but they are now completely built out. This traffic light in front of us was but a stop sign, and beyond that was the Thunderbird bar and grill, the newly opened St. Rose Hospital and a long, dusty road to Anthem.

Then, "in nothing flat," as one City of Henderson planner put it, Eastern Avenue went from an access road to a six-lane arterial. But we're used to fast in Vegas. The crucial and evidently unforeseen development was that Eastern Avenue would also become one of Southern Nevada's largest retail corridors.

Just after the green light, we almost rear-end Exhibit A on why shopping corridors and arterials don't mix: a man in a Cadillac trying to figure out how to access a mall on the left. Too many choices. "The result is that we're stopped in the middle of the road," Bob says. "That's what happens when you have a curb cut every 50 feet."

The City Planner's Kryptonite

The first contributor to Eastern Avenue's fate was the very place it was designed to serve: Anthem.

"We at the City of Henderson learned a valuable lesson when master-planning that area," said Councilman Andy Hafen, who's been serving the district around the arterial since 1987, when the entire city was only 50,000 people. "One of the things that really snuck up on us was that we had all residential zoning there with very little commercial. In other words, everybody in that community has to travel down Eastern to get to any kind of commercial."

Anthem debuted in 1998, followed by the Home Depot shopping center, which is on the Clark County side of the street—the west side, from the 215 to St. Rose Parkway. The fate of all points between was sealed once Anthem kept commercial development out and the county let it in.

"You've got a market that always sees arterials as prime commercial ... and with its curvilinear street pattern [there's a 45-degree bend in the middle], Eastern quickly became an obvious location," says Tracy Foutz, the city's assistant community development director. "We had a lot of applications early on after Anthem got approved that said, 'Hey, we want to change the zoning from residential to commercial on Eastern.' I think that was questioned or resisted at first, but once the ball got rolling, it was a domino effect and there was no stopping it."

Money.

"As much as we city planners think we guide and direct with our recommendations—and to a certain extent we do—the market is still a strong force that eventually gets heard."

The Greed Factor

Bob and I are stopped at the road's major intersection, St. Rose Parkway, which was expanded to eight lanes a couple of years ago to relieve some of Eastern's stress. I ask him how Eastern Avenue should have been designed in the first place.

"What sensible people would do is say, OK, here we're going to have an arterial system and that's for moving traffic. And then we're going to have a collector road system, and that feeds traffic onto the arterial from the



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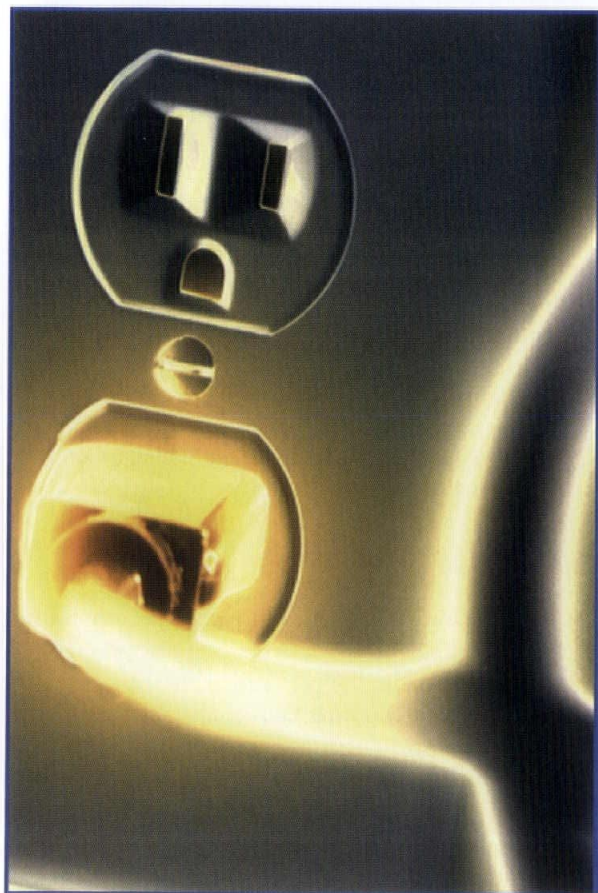
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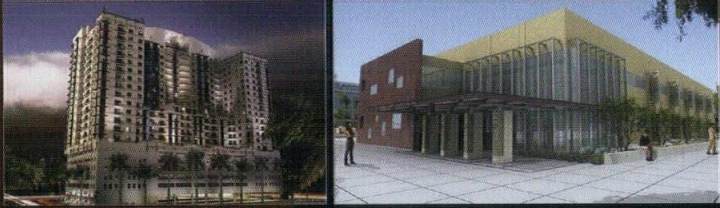
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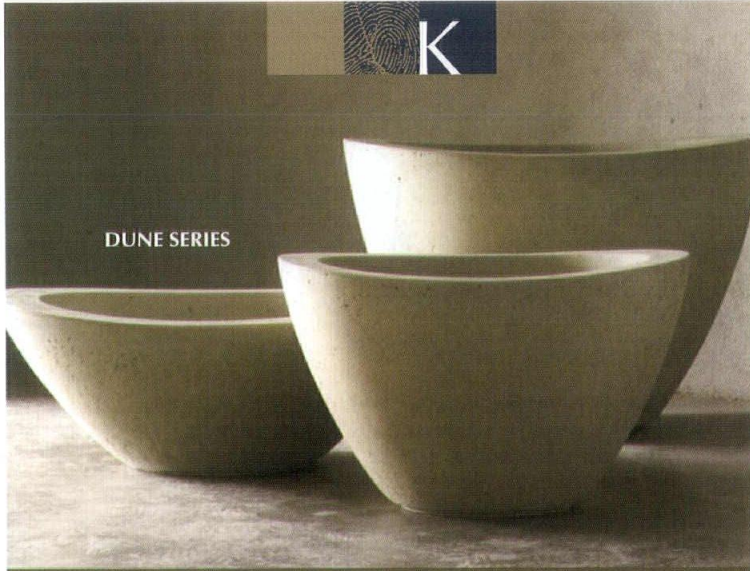
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smaller, local roadway system. It's a matter of making all these networks work in concert with each other."

And a matter of keeping a circus of shopping centers off the main road. Otherwise, "you get strip zoning, and that's when traffic ceases to move."

So why do we keep sacrificing long-term livability for short-term profits?

"There's always been this notion of let the free market control and everything will be OK," Bob says. "Well, now that we look back with experience we know that's not OK. The free market is all based on initial greed—buy it, sell it and move on to something else."

'It's Well Worth It'

If drivers are enraged, they certainly don't write their councilman. Hafen hasn't heard "anything negative" about Eastern Avenue for a while, not since the early frustrations with construction and improvements.

"We wait for the development of the frontage property to get the property owners to pay their fair share. That takes a little time. But as far as the citizens are concerned, it's well worth it, because how many times do we hear, 'Well, let's let the city or county pay for it'? But in reality that's you and I paying for it. So when we make these property owners come to the plate, we actually save the residents money."

And maybe in an area where some residents get LID'd and association-fee'd to near unconsciousness, a little savings takes the edge off. Or maybe we just take a deep breath and forget. Who wants to hear it anyway?

One Stressed-Out City

Bob and I close in on Sunridge Heights Parkway, home to a new strip mall anchored by Lee's Liquor, when he notices something that I'm evidently numb to.

"Look what's happened: We've slowed down, we're not moving. And it's not rush hour, it's 10 in the morning, so you can imagine what it's like then. But look at all these interruptions in the roadway. The stoplights are getting closer, and it's hard to tell where the street is because it has less presence than do the curb cuts."

The obvious result is "frustration, because there's no opportunity for you to get where you need to go," Bob says. "That's one of the reasons why this is such a high-stress community."

And there are no other options. You certainly can't walk to the corner store in Seven Hills. There isn't one.

"You have to drive," Bob says. "You can't take the bus; it'd take two days to get anywhere. We don't have a rail system. And you take your life in your own hands if you try to ride a bicycle—though in rush hour you'd make better time. We're a sophisticated enough society that there should be alternative ways of getting from Point A to Point B."

Westerners: A Confused Breed

The city tries to compensate by improving traffic signal synchronization through the RTC (they're still trying), as well as by finding other ways in and out for residents.

Armed with 21st-century urban-planning knowledge and growth estimates that must have been relatively fine-tuned after two decades of being the fastest growing metro area in America, we—the planners, the politicians, the developers and, yes, the people—all let the problem happen and then try to work around it.

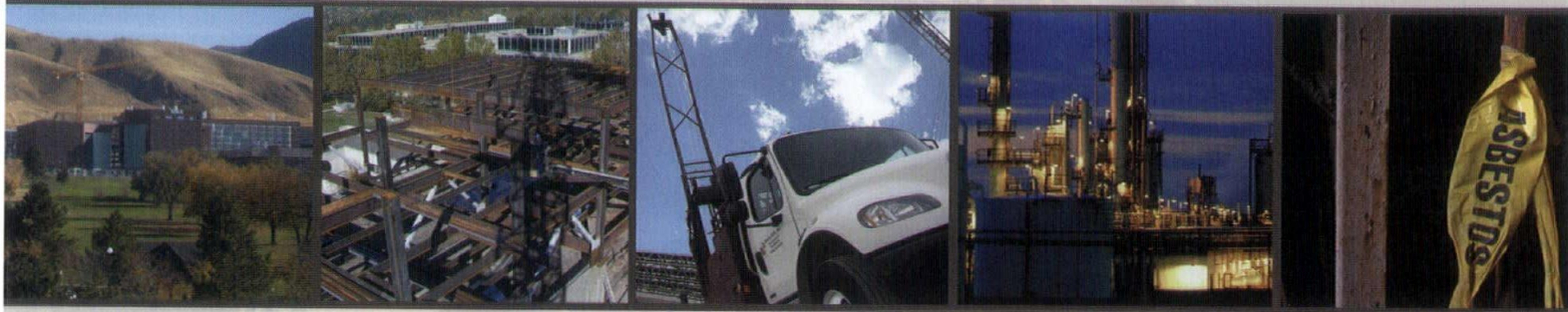
"Everybody wants to live in a cul-de-sac in a quiet neighborhood, and



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they want retail nearby," says Robert Herr, Henderson's assistant public works director. "But they don't want to live by the grocery store's trash bin or a high-volume street. It's the Western mentality—wide-open spaces."

And yet, according to a survey of those residents in the 2006 *Henderson Demographic Overview*, the two most important issues facing the city today are managing growth/development and traffic congestion. Nothing else comes close.

When I mentioned that stretch of road to one Anthem resident, he replied: "Oh you mean The Zoo? That's what I call the urban planning goop that's gone on there."

Ninety-Day Wonders

We turn around in the Anthem Shopping Center (it isn't really in Anthem) and head back downhill, where we see mall after mall lining the road. Manicure shops, sub shops, jewelry stores, cell-phone stores, Kmart, Wal-Mart and Target, Lowe's and the Home Depot, and a few hundred places whose business I've yet to notice amid the beige architectural noise.

And just when you think there couldn't possibly be any more ...

About halfway back, I turn into the dirt parking lot of the under-construction Park Place shopping center, whose dozens of for-lease spaces

"As much as we city planners think we guide and direct with our recommendations ... the market is still a strong force that eventually gets heard."

take up nearly a quarter-mile of Eastern Avenue. I don't really have a point for Bob; I just blurt, "Have you ever seen so many strip malls on one street?"

"No," Bob blurts back. "I would bet you that this one center alone could serve a community of 25,000 to 30,000 people. Just by itself. How many of these things [strip malls] do we have, 20 or 30? So will we have a half million people in this neighborhood?"

The city estimates that 98,000 people are potential daily users of the corridor. But there's more to the answer.

Remember the part earlier where Bob says the free market is based on buy it, sell it, move on? Well, the hundreds of businesses that occupy these retail spaces tend to do the same thing as the developers, he says. They migrate to the next new thing.


It happened a few miles to the north, along Sunset Road, at the Green Valley Town Center. It was the new thing in the mid-'90s, with Barley's brewery-casino, hip cafés, a cinema and a pet superstore. "Now it's half empty," Bob says. "They all moved to Summerlin or to Eastern. That's what happens. Why do they move? Because the guys they're renting from over here are over there as well, and they cut them a deal to move to this other place, where there's more profit for the owner."

That phenomenon ultimately affects the whole Valley. "As they move

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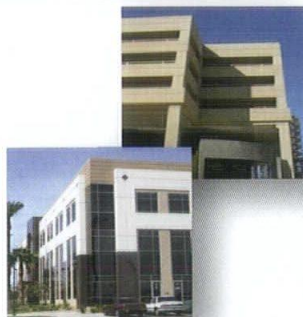
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out, they leave a hole in the center of the community. That's why we need to pay more attention to some of these older neighborhoods, which are actually of greater value than newer neighborhoods because they're a more stable environment."

And there's what ultimately bothers me more than another clogged arterial. Right now, Eastern Avenue—love it or hate it—is the next new thing. But what happens next?

As we leave the lot, Bob says, "My feeling is that many of these stores will be 90-day wonders."

Applying the Lessons

Though most everything along Eastern Avenue is built and done with, the City of Henderson Planning Department hasn't taken itself out of the equation. Sean Robertson, for one, is still crunching numbers while moving from his old demographer's job to his new post as principal planner. He's studying the road from Anthem to 215, trying to get a grip on what's out there retail-wise and who's using it. "One of our concerns is to not make Eastern any worse," he says. "And hopefully relieve it some."

Besides retro-planning, the city wants to know how to better handle new developments, namely the just-underway New Urbanist development of Inspirada, which lies next to Anthem and will eventually be inhabited by 22,500 new residents. "We're trying to come up with a template that can be used in the future," Robertson says. One that could tell him things like, "Once you get to so many people, what does that mean for this area in terms of facilities?"

They've also hired the Theodore Roosevelt Institute as consultants to study the retail square footage needs for Inspirada "to make sure we don't hurt the traffic flow and we get enough commercial to support the new developments."

Asked what he's gotten out of the Eastern analysis so far, Robertson replies, "Maybe I'm learning that this type of research needs to happen more often for new developments."

With Inspirada comes hope, thanks to two remedies:

- Three hundred of its 1,900 acres will be devoted to a town center, featuring a significant amount of retail.
- A new arterial called Volunteer Boulevard will provide a fresh escape route, from Anthem Parkway through Inspirada and west to Las Vegas Boulevard.

Says Community Development's Foutz in conclusion about the Eastern Avenue problem: "It's something we're trying not to repeat with our Inspirada project."

Striving for Havoc

"Someplace between order and chaos is havoc," Bob says as we near the Home Depot again. "And this is chaos. If we can't get back to order, then we have to get back to at least havoc."

Maybe Inspirada and Volunteer Boulevard will elevate the area to mere havoc then, setting a decent example for the rest of the Valley.

For Bob, though, there's still a bigger question that looms on the horizon, one that we've been refusing to answer for years now.

"Here we are, with two million people. Are we better off than we were with one million people? There are enough models around the world to look at to determine what good quality of life is. And it's not stuck in traffic at Eastern and Serene." ■

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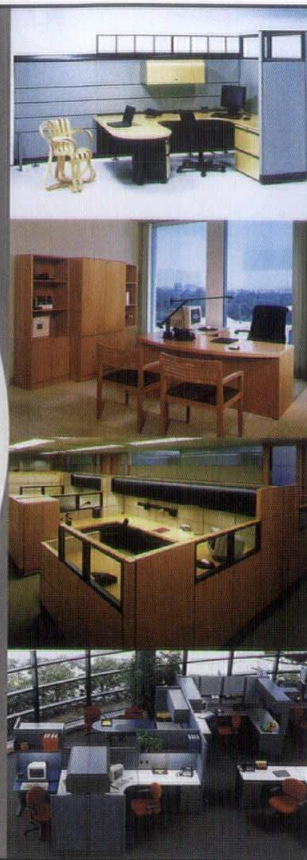
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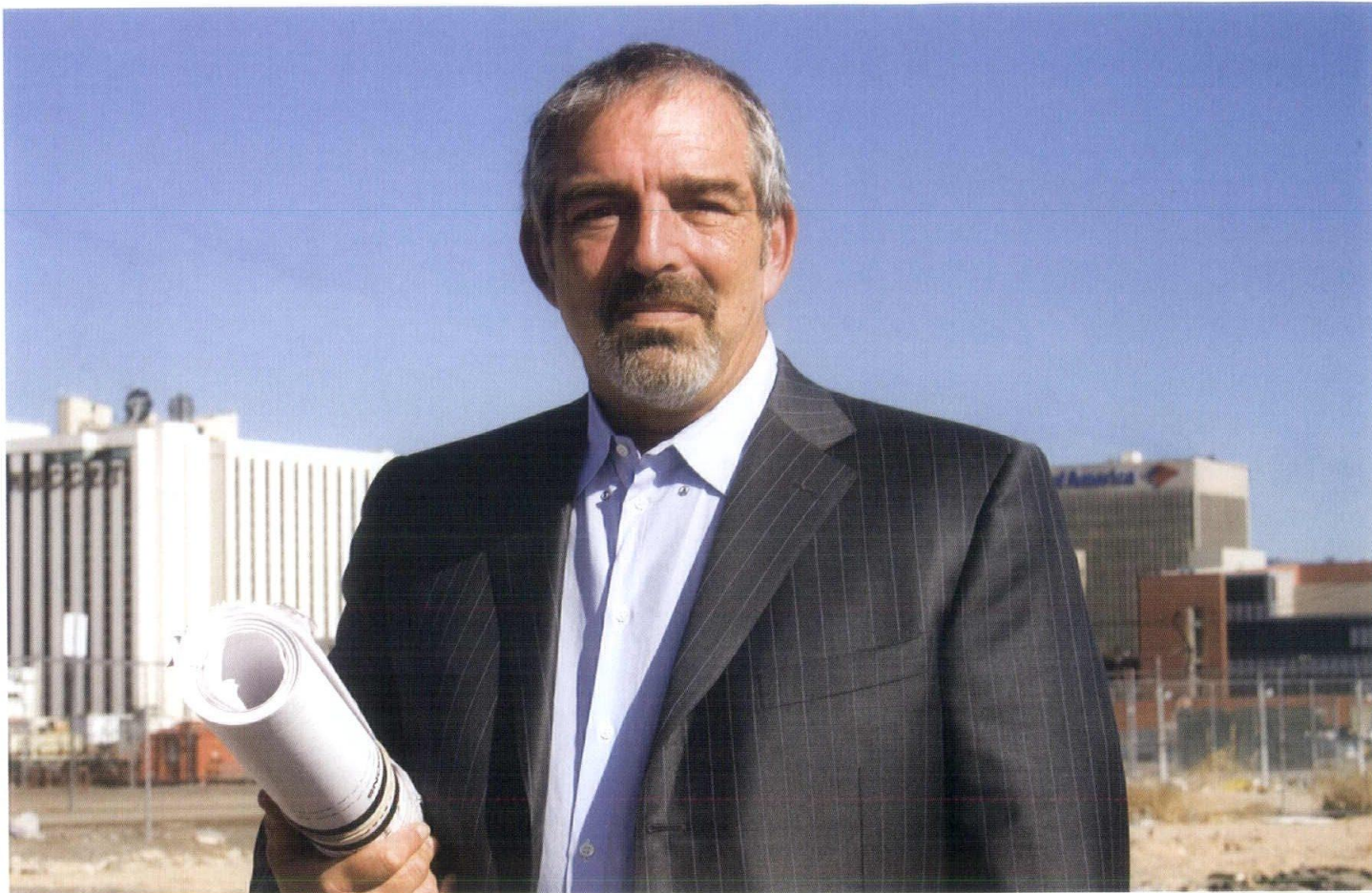
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A Lasting Impression

PAC man David Schwarz, AIA, discusses Vegas' need for a permanent fixture, his 'world-class' pressure and putting neoclassical next to a Gehry. **BY CHUCK TWARDY**

IT IS A LITTLE DISORIENTING IN THE LAND OF STARDUST memories to hear of buildings lasting centuries. "Most construction in Las Vegas is temporary," says architect David Schwarz, who hopes to buck the trend. "It isn't built to last 100, 200 years, and this is going to be built to last 100, 200 years. And that makes a huge difference..."

Schwarz's "this" is the \$250 million Smith Center for the Performing Arts, and that difference accounts for the challenge he senses in designing it. The PAC is the second building, after Frank Gehry's Lou Ruvo Brain Institute, approved for Union Park, the city's prized 61 acres between the developing World Market Center and the hotel-casinos of old Downtown. When David M. Schwarz/Architectural Services surfaced last year as the Las Vegas Performing Arts Center Foundation's choice, it was a safe bet the new hall would be a traditionalist counterpoint to the rakish cubes of the furniture mart and Gehry's tossed salad of metal and glass. The Washington, D.C., firm has turned out several more-or-less modern buildings since its founding in 1976,

but Schwarz is best known, in the words of *Architecture* magazine, as an "unrepentant classicist." His goal, in his own words, is "a style of architecture in which everyone can find something they recognize."

Schwarz has not revealed a design timetable for the three-theater hall, set to break ground late in 2008, and he insisted he had no preconceptions about its look, that he never enters the design process with a pictured building.

That is how Smith Center President Myron Martin preferred it: "We really wanted to focus on working from the inside out." At the same time, he says, "It became pretty clear this wasn't a Gehry or Calatrava." Not an icon of "starchitecture," in other words, but a centuries-spanning statement "able to stand the test of time."

The term most associated with the project since its conception has been "world-class," and Martin acknowledges "this has to be a special place in the eyes of the world." The board of directors, at work on the PAC for a decade, "are folks who, when they use words like 'world-class,' they don't use them lightly."

Schwarz at Union Park: the site of his first Las Vegas project.



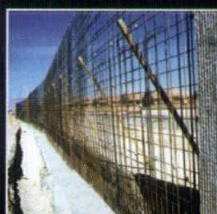
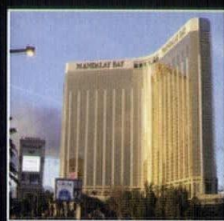
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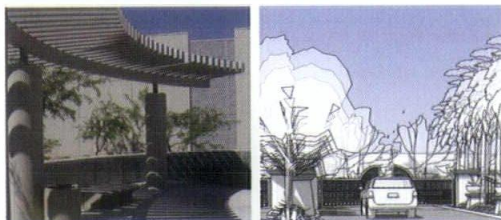
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PROFILE

Perhaps that's why, at a reception for the project last fall in front of the board and their guests, Schwarz presented a slide show that recalled the world's greatest performance halls.

The party's purpose was not to unveil any design clues, but to introduce the design team, which is similar to the one that produced the Bass Performance Hall in Fort Worth, Texas, with Schwarz's firm working with executive architect HKS Architects Inc. and acoustical consultant Akustiks. There Schwarz devised 48-foot-tall limestone angels to mask blank walls resulting from ductwork being shunted to the envelope for acoustic reasons.

Up the road, in Dallas, anchoring a 70-acre urban development, is another Schwarz-designed performance center of sorts—a basketball and hockey arena for the Mavericks and Stars. Writing in *Architecture*, C.C. Sullivan finds that Schwarz's "interest in classical expression is truly only skin deep: Beneath the familiar forms and details lie up-to-the-moment construction assemblies that serve as armature, some more rationally than others, to support the look of the ages."

Architecture Las Vegas sat down with Schwarz before the design-team ceremony to discuss other projects and topics in an effort to gain insight into how his latest contribution to the world's built environment—and his first in Las Vegas—might shape up. While the articulate, award-winning architect seemed genuinely perplexed by the project, he was obviously drawn to the challenge of finding, or setting, a context in a town riddled with recognizable styles. "One of the things I'm wrestling with myself is ... how do you create something that feels authentic in Las Vegas?"

How the Smith Center fits into the city's Union Park master plan, which is being designed and orchestrated by Newland Communities.

What we're trying to do is to create a center of activity. There's one side of the site that's going to take significant advantage of the park [Symphony Park, which lies in the center of Union Park]. The side of the site that we're going to put the offices on faces the office buildings in the master plan. We're looking at trying to get a lot of retail exposure on the promenade [a few blocks to the north].

All of us are somewhat surprised as to how the site plan worked out, and it really was some of our ideas, some of their desires. And I think really the architectural process works best when it's a process of discovery for everybody.

How he envisions the project.

We try and look at this project through the eyes of a potential patron. And for us that is a person who lives in Las Vegas, doesn't travel extensively—so they don't have the opportunity to go to these sorts of events other than in Las Vegas—and they're really interested in culture as it is experienced in the rest of the country and the world rather than simply culture as it is expressed currently in Las Vegas.

I don't know that it tells us so much as it does give us a measure by which to look at our various ideas. I think we use a paradigmatic client as a measuring device. There's a metrics rather as a proscriptive kind of thing.

Similarities with Nashville, where Schwarz designed the new, classically inspired Schermerhorn Symphony Center.

Both cities have ... desires for culture that exist outside what they're known for on an international basis. And I think in both cities these facilities are mechanisms for realizing that desire. And not only real-

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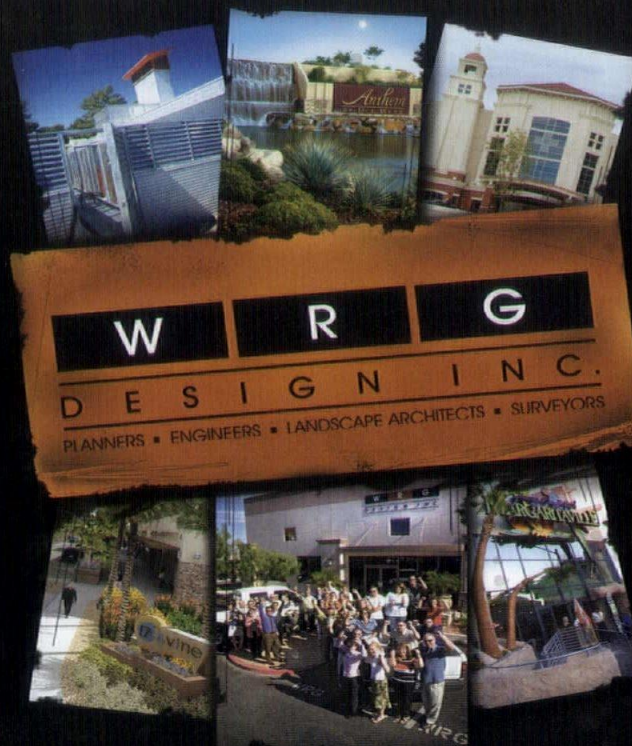


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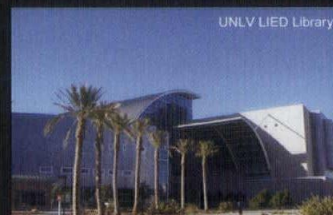
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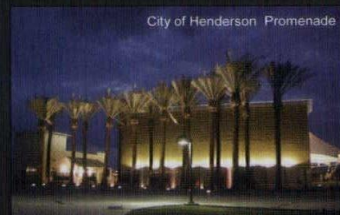
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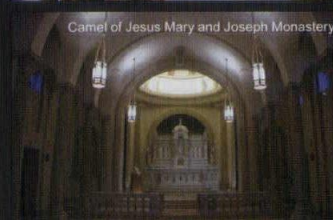
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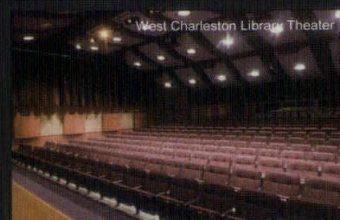
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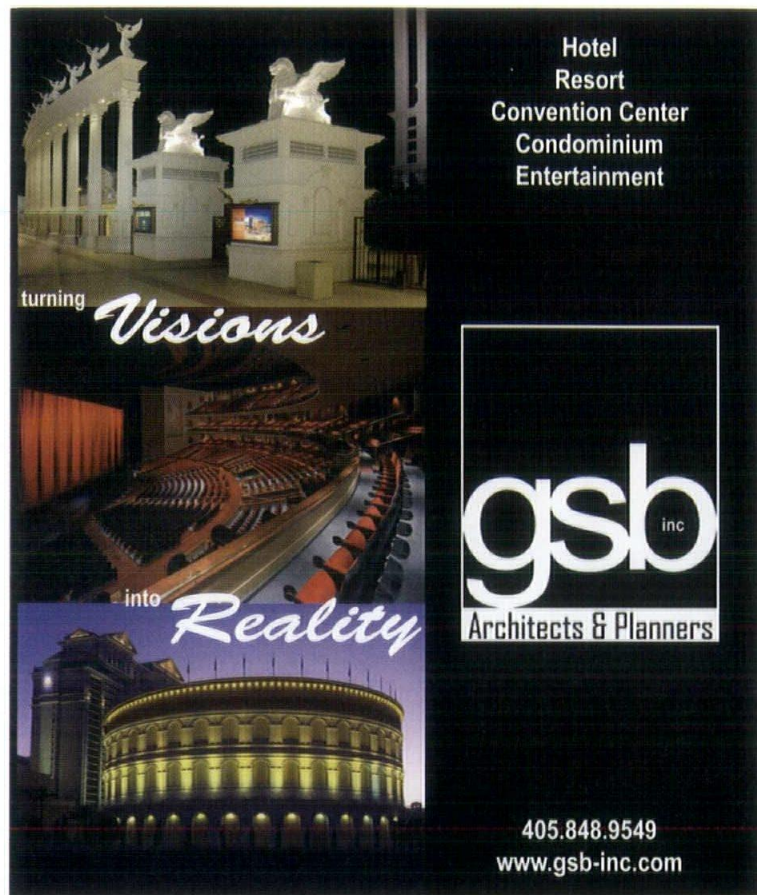
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izing that desire from a personal or local point of view, but saying to the larger community—be that the state, the county, the world, whatever—we are a city that is far more culturally diverse and has far more cultural depth than you understand.

[Nashville has] a greater indigenous root of cultural institutions. ... That's not the case here. So in ways this facility needs to act as an incubator as well as a statement, whereas in Nashville it was the culmination of a long tradition that Nashvillians had been building for a long time.

How will the PAC be an incubator?

One of the things that's most discouraging is to be a nascent theatrical company or orchestra and give a concert and feel like nobody's come. I mean, it's sort of like giving a party and having nobody show up. [How] can it feel full and active with different numbers of seats being sold? ... I think the steps of ... seat-count occupation need to be much more finely sculpted here than they would in most places.

Nashvillians are schooled in going to the symphony, whereas I don't think the folks in Las Vegas, for the moment, are schooled in going to the symphony. And how you create rituals and traditions to make them feel part of a cultural tradition and yet make it feel not intimidating, and welcoming, is a really interesting question.

In most show houses in Las Vegas the point is ... get them into the show, get them out of the show and back into the casinos. In our venue, one of the points is to get them to linger, chat, visit and be social. So I think the spaces need to retrain people to a degree as to a sense of community as it combines with culture.

On its context, particularly Frank Gehry's Ruvo Brain Institute.

If you look at the master plan Newland is working on now, and you look at the urban environment they're trying to create, and you look at their attitude toward pedestrianism, looking to Frank's building as a piece of context would be a mistake, because I think it would erode the desire, both of the mayor and of the Newland plan, for what this neighborhood is to become.

Western culture as a design source.

One of the wonderful things about western [United States] culture, it is something that is recognized throughout the Western world, and it creates a commonality amongst people. Some of the traditional forms of expressing western culture are extremely important to cultural institutions because they do act as a bridge between people and cultures and geographies.

Classical music does have a tradition, does have an architecture in which it was historically performed. I would maintain that there are acoustic attributes to more traditional architecture that lend themselves to better acoustics.

On the social experience of culture.

If you look at most performance spaces throughout the world, they are vertical as opposed to horizontal in their expression; they arrange people in large measure so that you not only see the performance, you see other people. And part of the wonder of going to the opera in Paris or a ballet in Moscow is looking at the performance as well looking at your fellow Muscovites, if it is the Bolshoi, and seeing how people are dressed, what they are wearing, who they're with. ... We did the hockey facility in Dallas, and the president of the team told us ... that

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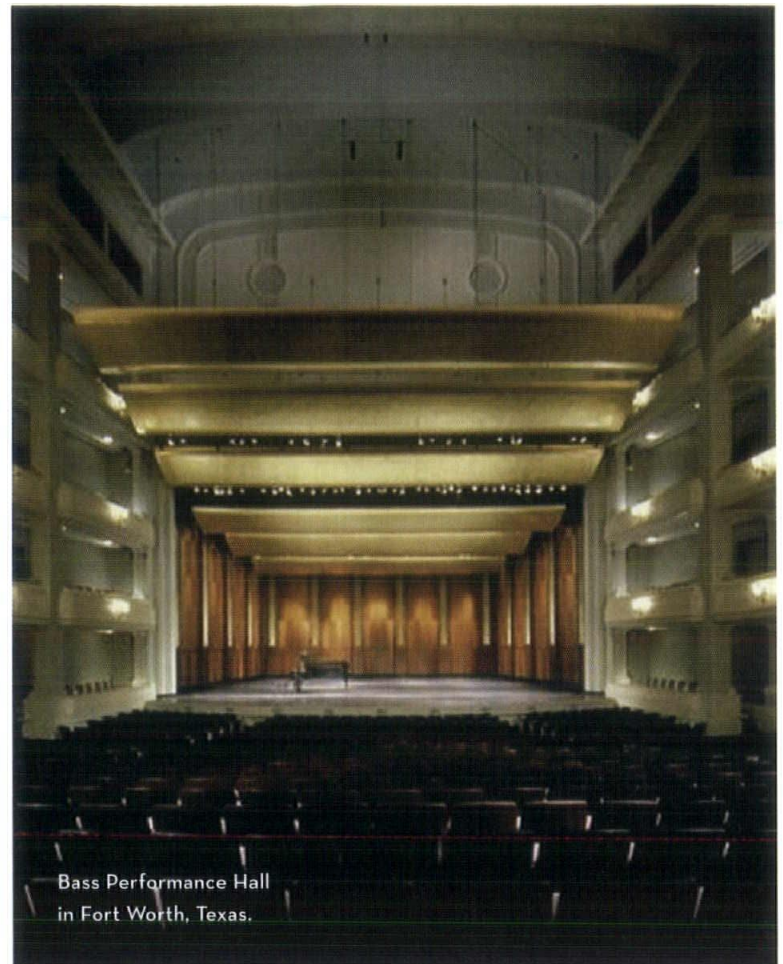
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Bass Performance Hall
in Fort Worth, Texas.

people's favorite sport is hockey, and I said, no, people's favorite sport is people-watching.

People come ... to listen to the music but they also come to see their neighbors. ... And that, again, is not what the casinos are about.

On client expectations.

They certainly know what our work is known for, so I think they're certainly comfortable with more traditional forms. I don't think they would have hired us if they had wanted a highly sculptural building.

On reflecting Nevada.

We're all very committed to this being a Nevada building, that it's celebrating Nevada materials, using Nevada colors and not being a transplant from somewhere else, but being an indigenous building whatever form it takes, and that's both quite important to us and to the client.

On creating "world-class."

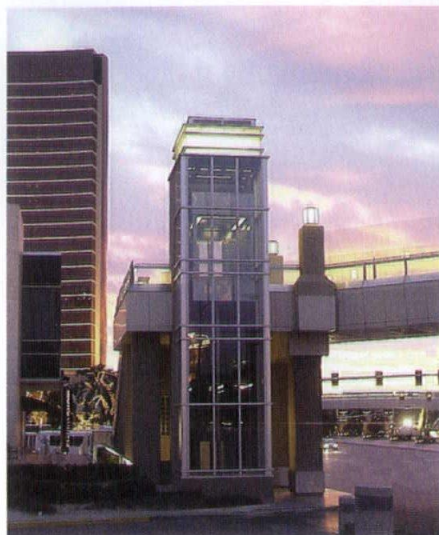
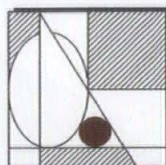
What has been communicated to me is a desire for excellence that will result in its being world-class. I think that the measure has been excellence, not whether or not it is being viewed as being world-class.

The building needs to have excellence throughout ... it needs to express its purpose and be suitable for its purpose and express its mission from everywhere it's viewed and used. ■

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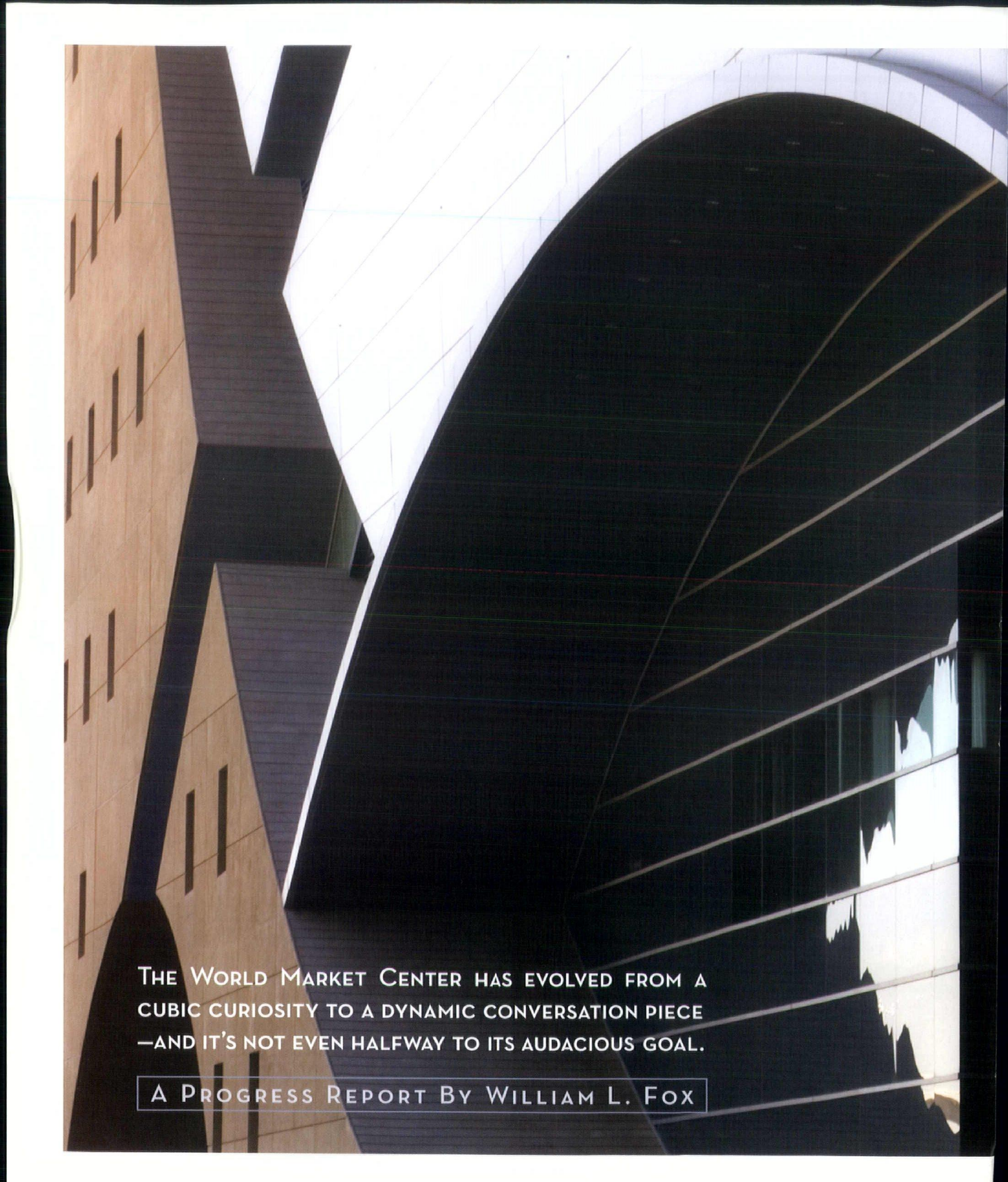


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THE WORLD MARKET CENTER HAS EVOLVED FROM A
CUBIC CURIOSITY TO A DYNAMIC CONVERSATION PIECE
—AND IT'S NOT EVEN HALFWAY TO ITS AUDACIOUS GOAL.

A PROGRESS REPORT BY WILLIAM L. FOX



DIALOGUE BOX

When I saw the first building, while driving by Downtown on Interstate 15, just in from Los Angeles, I knew I'd missed something significant in the months since I'd last been here. The monolith was a buff-colored mass of what looked like giant stone blocks and a minimal grid of outsized louvered vents.

An enormous inset half-circle of titanium panels fronted the building, its bottom curving over a reverse arc that defined the glassed-in entrance. Cutting through the metal, a third curve made a bold slash across the building. No name or logo. Perhaps a department store, I mused. Or maybe some kind of high-tech company that required secure walls.

Whoever the architect was, he had used the curves and offset surfaces to reveal—yet simultaneously deny—the nature of a functional cube. It was a nifty and slightly mysterious trick. Each time I drove by on the freeway, I puzzled over the building, then let it go.

Then, on my next trip, an even larger addition, connected at right angles to the first building, had appeared. The only other structures in town that approached them in size were the megaresorts, but these two buildings were so obviously divergent in purpose from the Strip that they actually seemed to put the hotel-casinos into perspective. The almost windowless and complex geometrical blocks were more like vertiginous parallelograms than rectangles, and massed far too close together for conventional buildings.

I asked around. The World Market Center, I was told, is an operation with such gravitas that it had pulled the annual furniture trade shows from their traditional home in North Carolina to Las Vegas. The complex was a combination of permanent showroom for home furnishings and a convention center, an integration of sales and display larger than any other trade showroom in the world. The first building was large: 10 stories, 1.3 million square feet of permanent exhibition space. The second building was larger: 16 stories and 1.6 million square feet. (Keep in mind that the average office building contains about 100,000 square feet of floor space.) Elevated skyways connected

JIM LAURIE



every level of the first building to the second, and eventually others would connect the second to the third structure—which will be gargantuan.

Shawn Samson, one of the cofounders and managing partners of the market, had been deeply involved in two of the largest malls on the planet: the West Edmonton Mall in Alberta and the Mall of America in Minnesota. Both are combined retail and entertainment venues, and their profitability per square foot is staggering. The former is 5.2 million square feet and attracts 22 million people per year. The latter is smaller, 4.2 million square feet, but attracts more than 40 million. Think of it: a shopping mall that brings in as many annual visitors as Las Vegas.

The largest mall in the world, Dubai's Mall of Arabia, when it's finished in 2008, will have 10 million square feet under roof. The World Market Center, when it's completed in 2013, is projected to encompass an astonishing 12 million square feet. Its business plan integrates the international display of home furniture and furnishings, pulling together manufacturers and wholesalers and retail buyers. The complex will be so large that prospective buyers will need to visit for multiple days, and would be well advised to take advantage of a proprietary software system online to match their needs with exhibitors, then map and schedule their course through the complex.

To achieve the body count necessary for all this to work, the

THE FEATURE IS HIDDEN UNTIL
YOU'RE STANDING UNDERNEATH IT
IN THE LOBBY, A CIRCULAR
REVEAL CUTTING UP THROUGH
14 FLOORS ABOVE AND
CROSSED BY ESCALATORS.

complex had to be located in a destination city with visitor facilities at a comparable scale. Las Vegas was a clear choice. But that presented another challenge. Furniture is an issue of design, an art form that requires innovation in order to expand its consumer base. The market complex required an architectural presence that not only manifested this aspect of the industry, but used it to inspire buyers.

The design of the market would have to provide an exciting alternative to the buildings on the Strip.

Samson's résumé made it clear that he knew something about scale and commerce, but when I met him for a tour of the complex, I found a man of modest height and soft speech. That seemed fitting for someone who started out as an accountant with Arthur Andersen, then went to work for the company that owns the aforementioned malls. What the PR sheets fail to mention, however, is that his first two years in academia were spent studying architecture at the University of Southern California, where he came under the influence of architects such as Jon Jerde and Frank Gehry. Jerde is his architect for the World Market Center, and Gehry is building the Lou Ruvo Brain Institute just across the street. Once we veer from discussing the business aspects of the market and into architecture, it's clear that Samson is more than a client for Jerde, but a strong and sophisticated partner in ideas.

The architecture of the complex, Samson says, was not tra-

ditionally programmed to meet function, but rather specific goals, one of which is to create an iconic statement for both the home-furnishing industry and Las Vegas. As a result, a striking visual conversation is emerging among Jerde's project, the Gehry building and the Anasazi-inflected Clark County Government Center by Fentress Bradburn that stands across the way. This conjunction of genuinely progressive architecture will be large enough to provide a viable contrast to the Strip, which is a deeply conservative stronghold of nostalgia for the European Grand Tour of the late 19th century. It will, literally, put the Strip in its place.

When you approach the front of the first market building, the logo on the sign out front, the pavement under your feet and the facade of the building all match up. Suffice it to say that architecture rules—the logo was derived from the building, not the other way around. Jerde used the Red Rock cliffs to the west for his palette, now a common enough convention in town, but then also adopted the shape of local landmarks. The curves in the facade are aerial representations of Lake Mead and the Colorado River, while the arched entry mimics Hoover Dam. Building-as-landscape-as-logo is about as complete an exterior identity as an architect can manage.

Most architects make an attempt to humanize a building by relating it to human scale. Windows, a sense of propriety regarding distance between exterior walls, and straight lines falling to the ground help the perception. People displaying interior furnishings, however, don't like windows. They want to control precisely the lighting of their products to best effect. Eliminate the windows, however, and you suddenly have unplumbed freedoms with how you design and mass your exteriors. The World Market Center reflects on the outside what is inside, the largest physical shopping nexus on the planet, but one that is reserved for transactions at the international wholesale level and is not available to casual retail customers.

After working on malls for more than a decade, Jerde first garnered widespread attention with his 1977 design for Horton Plaza in San Diego, an outdoor mall revitalization project that introduced entertaining and nonstructural design elements into shoppers' lives. He had created a safer, more profitable environment for seller and buyer, much to almost everyone's delight. Shoppers loved the visual challenge of postmodern freestanding facades, cul-de-sacs that imitated real streets in old cities, and a sense of adventure in trying to figure out an unexpected space. It was Jerde's way of creating place through an interactive, exploratory experience, of creating what he labeled a "community of consumers."

Jerde went on to work on the Mall of America in 1982 (where he and Samson intersected again) and the following year the acclaimed Universal City Walk in Los Angeles—the evocation of an entire metropolitan area through synecdoches such as miniature wave machines standing in for the beach and a King Kong model suspended from a storefront to signify Hollywood. Although his first project in Las Vegas, capping Fremont Street with an arched electronic display meant to sanitize a rowdy and somewhat seedy street into a

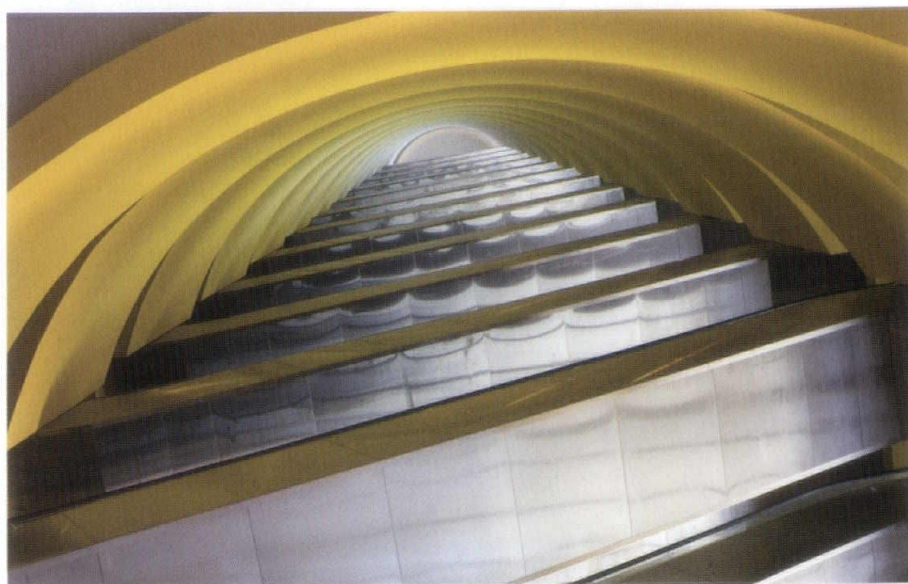
pedestrian mall, was, at best, a mixed success, his work for Steve Wynn on Bellagio was a marvel. As Norman Klein, the writer and historian, points out, Jerde had mastered the art of "scripting" a place along the lines of a European public space. The hotel had a backstory, and the architecture, landscaping, water features and interior design reinforced your experience of entering the narrative. Strolling through the shopping arcades, you felt buoyed up by a sense of the foreign. It was only natural that you would want to shop to memorialize the experience.

What Jerde and Samson have done is transcend the 20th-century themeing of consumption by creating on a 57-acre parcel not the re-creation of a street in Milan or Paris, but what Samson describes as "an entirely new platform for the industry. I wanted a break with the past, when buildings were seen as product containers. I wanted to use architecture to empower both exhibitors and buyers to rise up to the future—to reinvigorate the industry. I told Jerde that we needed a landmark, an iconic complex. There's no business reason, really, to do so, but by creating an experience, we change the industry."

Most trade shows are conducted in drab convention centers with all the personality of a Styrofoam cup. But as Samson and I toured the first building, I found water flowing over copper-clad walls that flank escalators on either side of the two-story lobby, inviting me upstairs. The showrooms, which begin on the second floor, face hallways that are wider and higher than you would expect. The lighting from contemporary fixtures is indirect but exemplary in its coverage. Floors vary pleasantly from cool, hard stone to a variety of softer treatments. All of the glass-fronted showrooms front onto a single corridor that circles each floor, an efficient and egalitarian "racetrack" design adopted from mall architecture.

The environment is a cross between an upscale hotel and an expensive home, an atmosphere that is respectful to exhibitor and buyer alike. Samson notes that first-time attendees of the trade shows seldom place orders—but that even novices coming to market

continued on page 106





How Livable Is Las Vegas?

THE BAD NEWS IS THAT OUR LIVABILITY REPORT
CARD SHOWS WE'RE NOT MAKING THE GRADE. BUT
WE ALSO BRING YOU PLENTY OF GOOD NEWS ...



ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE NOT ONLY THE RESULTS OF A SURVEY OF local architects and urban planners—who, as you'll see, pulled no punches in grading their city—but we also showcase special features that zoom in on progress or attempts at progress on each of the AIA's 10 Principles for Livable Communities. Drafted by the national organization's Center for Communities by Design, these goals promote the conviction that "architects are critical to designing safe, attractive, economically viable and environmentally sustainable communities." For more information on the national program, visit aia.org.



Las Vegas Meets New Urbanism

By T.R. Witcher

WHEN DEVELOPER JOHN RITTER WAS READY TO BEGIN WORK ON LAS VEGAS' TWO LARGEST NEW Urbanist projects, he didn't mess around—he signed up two of the movement's key disciples to help him find the way. Andreas Duany and Peter Calthorpe are founders of the Congress for the New Urbanism, which preaches the principles of neotraditional town planning, and Ritter says their commitment to those ideals is akin to "religion."

Las Vegas seems the perfect sinner for the cause, which aims to reverse the alienating effects of auto-dependent suburbs. But Las Vegas is also the capital of marketplace reality, which, not surprisingly, Ritter's revival ran straight into. Both New Urbanists eventually parted ways with his Focus Property Group before their designs had advanced much beyond the preliminary stage.

For these two unbuilt Focus projects—Inspirada in southwest Henderson and Kyle Canyon Gateway in northwestern Las Vegas—one question remains: How much New Urbanism remains intact after the collision?

"Both those guys are incredibly gifted architects," says Ritter, chief executive of Focus, a master-plan developer. "Both those guys have given us the backbone of the community design. I would say that it is difficult to marry a purist with the reality of finalizing and building a project. It is not uncommon for the visionary to come in initially and do his thing, and then for those who have to get the project approved and built to take over the reigns."

That tension is unavoidable, he says, but often results in a good end product.

"I think they will be far better than anything built here locally. I think these projects will be some of the best New Urbanist and traditional neighborhood developments in the country. Are they pure? Do they meet the tenants of the Congress of New Urbanism? Probably not."

The Charter of the New Urbanism, the book by the Congress, lists 27 principles, each focusing on development at the regional, neighborhood and street levels. They cover everything from affordability to sustainability. At this stage it is too early to really know how many of those principles will be fulfilled by these projects—though some of the regional recommendations, such as revenue sharing between municipalities, are understandably beyond the program of either project.

What's at stake could be future attempts at New Urbanism in Las Vegas. "People are waiting to see how it turns out for Focus," Las Vegas city planner Michael Howe says, "which scares me because Focus hasn't made the real commitment" to New Urbanism.

A second lingering question is how much "commitment" is enough to qualify? Duany, founder of Miami-based Duany Plater-Zyberk, came to oversee a design charrette on Inspirada in 2004. Calthorpe, founder of Berkeley-based Calthorpe Associates, joined the Kyle Canyon project in 2005, early in its development cycle.

Duany left over disagreements about the specifics of the project's design and execution. However, Ritter says the architect's scaling of the 2,000-acre project's collection of neighborhoods, street layout and town center are reflected in the final iteration.

Calthorpe wanted to break the Kyle Canyon Gateway down into three-to-five-acre blocks and have builders build different products on every block. The idea, no matter its merit, was too difficult in today's marketplace, but Ritter says that the Focus property did gain from Calthorpe's insights on the traditional neighborhood and he "established the backbone of the road network."

continued on page 104

REPORT CARD

Design on a Human Scale

D

Compact, pedestrian-friendly communities allow residents to walk to shops, services, cultural resources and jobs, and can reduce traffic congestion and benefit people's health.

"I don't know of any communities like this in Vegas."

"The Valley fails miserably on this topic. The sizes of our roads encourage speeding. If we had smaller scaled areas, built for pedestrians, more people would ride their bikes or walk safely. Walking encourages people to slow down and talk."

"Newer communities like Summerlin achieve pedestrian scale communities very well. Older streets like Decatur still sport the 100-foot setback from the sidewalk on most shopping areas, which are left behind a sea of parking."

"Some commercial spaces pretend to be 'walkable' but you must drive to get there."

"Very poor integration of different community uses."

"Master plans are continuously changed and the mix of commercial and residential is thrown off due to a developer-drive market and a lack of resistance with regards to rezoning."

"Las Vegas lacks the density to make this viable."

"The shopping centers can't even begin to be at a human scale. Don't get me started."

"We've become a little LA."

LIVABILITY

A HOUSE AS A LIVING CELL

The homes in Category III of Henderson's residential design competition forced designers to work with lots that were 2,500 square feet (the other categories allowed lot sizes of 4,000 and 6,000 feet). The winners, a team of young architects from the Las Vegas office of PGAL, began their design process with a concept far, far smaller—a living human cell.

Their HeLa House takes its name from the world's first human cells to live and reproduce outside the human body (the cells were taken in 1951 from a woman named Henrietta Lacks). The idea was to work with a simple cellular structure and allow for that structure to multiply in diverse ways, producing not only unique homes but unique communities.

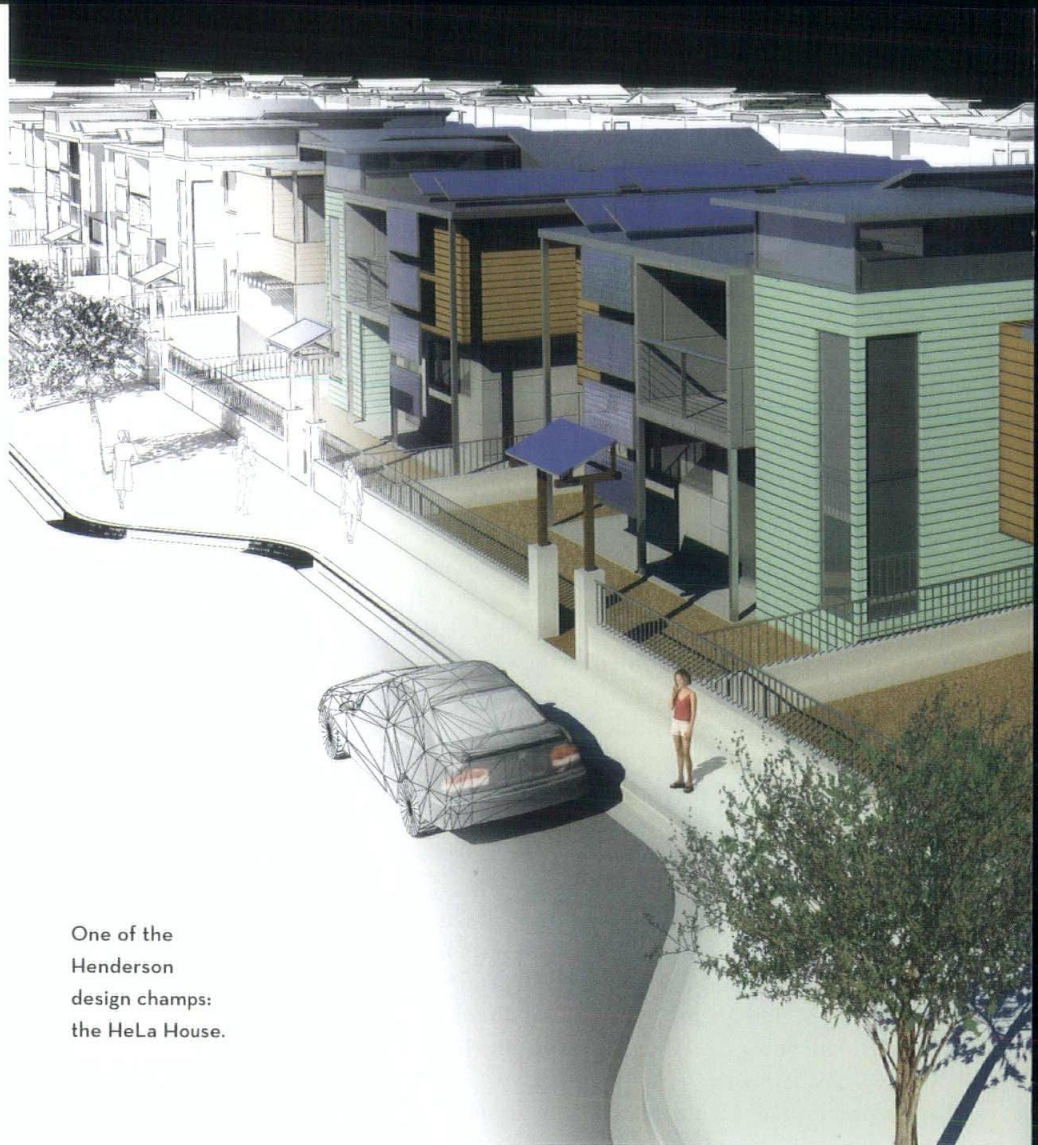
That underlying structural unit turned out to be a shipping container. The house and all of its spaces, both exterior and interior, were planned around the rectangular dimensions of these containers. Containers would actually be used to construct the houses. The designers felt this was the best way to combine affordability, flexibility and sustainability—to accommodate growth without numbingly endless repetition.

"We didn't want to be so literal that each container is its own function but it came down to making sure the pieces go together in the right way," says architect Matthew Johnston. "We did have two or three different models we were working with. We wanted to stay with the most affordable consideration and the most interesting architecture we could do."

Unlike most of the other entries, the HeLa House is designed to fit into a neighborhood of such houses—with options for community resource management that range from a public garden to a shared wind turbine or photovoltaic array.

The architects' working methods proved as organic as the house they designed. The PGAL team met once a week for two months, and held a series of design charrettes, which generated sketches, pinups and study models. Despite the inevitable tensions of putting a creative team together, they developed a collaborative process wherein all ideas were welcome and the group voted on which ideas to keep. Johnston says that PGAL may use this approach again as a template for designs that stress collaboration rather than the imprint of one master designer.

— T.R.W.



One of the Henderson design champs: the HeLa House.

Henderson Contemporary

By T.R. Witcher

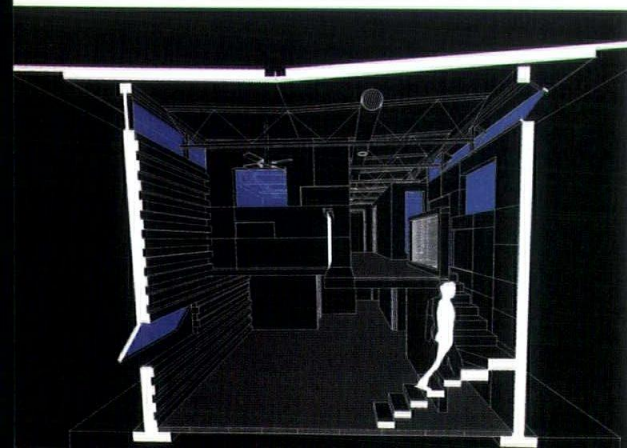
THE CITY OF HENDERSON DID NOT HAVE TO LOOK FAR TO FIND THE RIGHT GUIDELINES FOR ITS inaugural Innovative Designs for Desert Living Competition last fall. They were in its new comprehensive plan, which covers development for the next 20 years and focuses on themes such as balanced land use, quality development, integrated desert environment, connected places, and arts and culture.

But the instructions were also just right in what they didn't say. "All we gave them was the criteria for the setbacks and lots," says Principal Planner Scott Majewski.

This encourages the way for the 55 entries—from as far away as Malaysia and the Dominican Republic—to think outside the stucco box that dominates the Valley's residential landscape. The result was a showcase of what is lacking: variety.

Imagine a neighborhood where garages are de-emphasized, and balconies and courtyards positioned to provide extra outdoor space. Instead of cookie-cutter Mediterranean, many designs were spare and modern, while others were downright voluptuous. One was a series of connected circles, while another took a rectangular-shaped home and cracked it into two angled segments. A third was even protected from the sun by a series of overhead sails.

While plenty of imagination came through, the results were also practical. Designs were aesthetically clean while managing to steer clear of the bone-cold modernist minimalism that few people outside the design cognoscenti truly embrace.





And all designs followed the comprehensive plan's concern with building community and respecting the desert environment. One house, by a team of architecture students from the Dominican Republic, had a container that collects, filters and stores rainwater on the roof, where it is used to help cool the house in the summer and provide pumpless water. Other sustainable features included a stairwell that doubles as a natural air vent, dual-flush toilets that use gray water, recycled materials such as carpet fibers, rammed-earth walls, and paper fibers water-hardened into a stone-like surface for counter tops.

It remains to be seen whether any of the 15 winning entries (all available for viewing at cityofhenderson.com) will be built. City planners may expedite the review process on some, enabling them to be permit-ready for interested developers. There also may be encouragement from the book celebrating the top designs, sent to the Southern Nevada Home Builders late last year.

"These are prototypes," says architect Bob Fielden, FAIA, one of the jurors for the competition. "While they may not get built, they may influence others that will be built."

Part of their acceptance hinges on Henderson's desire to embrace the urban lifestyle, as most entries are more fit for the so-called "creative class"—the arts and culture professionals revitalizing inner cities across the country—than for suburbanites. But overcoming stigmas such as shared walls and closer living quarters could be more a matter of semantics than architecture.

"People panic more when they hear 'multi-family' than when they hear 'density,'" says Bristol Ellington, head of Henderson's Community Development Department, who is confident that these fresh designs and a new civic attitude will work hand in hand. "Hopefully this can spark something."

REPORT CARD

Provide Choices

C-

People want variety in housing, shopping, recreation, transportation and employment. Variety creates lively neighborhoods and accommodates residents in different stages of their lives.

"There are no nonsprawl options available for the average family."

"Almost all housing is two-story walk-up apartments, suburban-style detached housing. Very little choice, all car dependent."

"Static monotony is the norm. ... The abundance of HOA's and gated communities has nothing for the actual health of the greater Las Vegas community."

"Although Las Vegas offers much in terms of entertainment and shopping, much needs to be done to make these places more accessible without cars."

"We should encourage single-home building without walls and AIA discussions with community associations."

"All housing development should be viewed as 'community building' with a requirement of parks and possibly some type of public facility in every subdivision larger than 20 acres."

"Las Vegas is the land of opportunity. There is a great number of choices provided in most aspects of life."

"Five years from now will be a better story."

"The problem with New Urban living that is being created is that it is economically exclusive."

A Real Live Downtown ... in Summerlin

By T.R. Witcher

SINCE THE FIRST FAMILY MOVED INTO SUMMERLIN IN 1991, THE MASTER-PLANNED COMMUNITY has developed 22,500 acres and welcomed 94,000 residents to northwest Las Vegas. In a booming market where developers compete over 1,800-acre parcels, the sprawling suburb still has 7,500 acres of land left to develop. At build-out—give it 20 years or more—Summerlin will be home to 200,000 people.

That means Summerlin, emblematic of suburban sprawl, is going to get quite a bit denser, and that density will happen in a place that right now doesn't exist: downtown Summerlin.

Summerlin Centre, the 400-acre parcel adjacent to Red Rock Casino and bounded roughly by Charleston Boulevard, Sahara Avenue, the 215 and Town Center Drive, is planned to be the high-density heart of Summerlin, and a regional center for commercial and retail development. Of note are entitlements for 10,000 residential units, at least 1 million square feet of office space, 1.5 million square feet of retail in its shopping center, a grid-like street layout and space set aside for a transportation hub.

The developer, General Growth Properties, envisions this as a full-service downtown built from scratch. "It's not a pocket of urban village development," says Tom Warden, vice president. "It is a downtown."

It wasn't initially planned to be. Original plans for the centerpiece of Summerlin called for a complex of Class A office buildings—akin to the Hughes Center—and a Galleria-esque enclosed mall. It wasn't until seven or eight years ago when the project began to slowly shift its focus toward a large-scale mixed-use concept, prompted by a rising concern among developers, consumers and city officials about sustainability and smart growth.

The core of this urban development is a large-scale mixed-use shopping complex (by ELS Architecture & Urban Design out of Berkeley) and informal civic center. It will be some six times larger than The District in Henderson. At first glance at the renderings, it still looks like a mall. There are the vast plains of asphalt parking. There are the sturdy, boxy department store anchors. One expects to find the same retailers that are already prominently located in other parts of Summerlin.

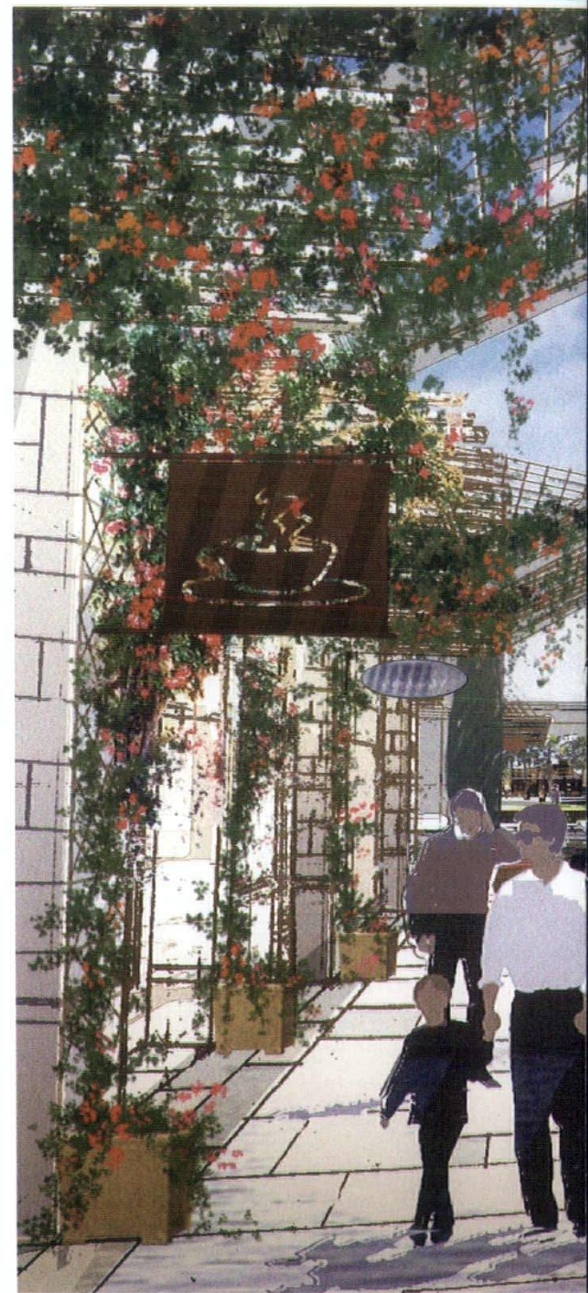
But a closer look reveals something more dramatic. At the center of the shopping is a half-mile-long open-air pedestrian concourse called a paseo. At its center is a large greensward that will be the civic and entertainment nexus of the project, anchored by a boutique hotel. The paseo is meant to be a robust pedestrian street, and it is intersected regularly by half a dozen cross streets that lead from the large stores anchoring the shopping on the west straight into an enclave of town homes and residential blocks planned just to the east. A second, traffic-bearing north-south street parallels the paseo.

Two of the mall tenants will be high-end emporiums, and they will anchor, at the north end, a concentration of complementary luxury retails. "It will be a place not so much where people come to shop for 20 minutes but a place where they come to spend the day," says Julia Cleaver, General Growth's director of planning and design.

Summerlin is, for better and for worse, a nearly perfect iteration of the suburban paradigm that has drawn Americans to the outer edges of cities for the last 50 years. But Warden is convinced that Summerlin will embrace this planned urban center.

Baby boomers and young urbanites who grew up in the suburbs and want a taste of a more connected lifestyle—one to match their iPod/Internet sensibilities—will drive demand, he promises. "This is what a huge part of the buying populace wants."

"We don't want to just be a draw," Cleaver adds. "It's where people live. So, it's gotta be real. It's gotta be authentic." ■



Encouraging Mixed Use

C-

Integrating different land uses and varied building types creates vibrant, pedestrian-friendly and diverse communities.

"The Valley does not have good examples of this. ... The environment at The District in Henderson doesn't feel very friendly, though the development appears to strongly encourage public interaction through music and events."

"I read a newspaper article that said The District was 'just like New York City.' That's funny."

"Newer projects both in the suburbs and on the Strip are integrating retail, office and housing at a rate that is better than average for the rest of the U.S."

"This is just starting up and needs time to mature."

"It's a new concept in Las Vegas, and it is embraced by developers."

"Just because it is the rage doesn't mean it will be the greatest. I myself will never live in a development like that."

"The basic regulatory environment is still very single-use-oriented, although new mixed-use ordinances have been developed in the city and county in the last year."

"Zoning should be less-restrictive regarding mixed-use development to allow these developments to occur naturally instead of in predetermined pockets."



Union Park: Planned Serendipity

By T.R. Witcher

IN THRIVING NEIGHBORHOODS, THE NEEDS FOR COMMONALITY AND DIVERSITY TEND TO balance themselves organically. People feel it along a block of town homes or row houses that are basically the same in their dimensions and collectively create a unified street wall but are also stimulatingly diverse in their details. This balance goes a long way toward creating a sense of place.

Developers have already tried and failed to catalyze a vision for Union Park, the 61-acre plot of dirt that represents Las Vegas' best chance to create its very own icon of urbanity. Two previous proposals were centered on a stadium, but no team ever materialized, and the scale of the project has proven too much for a single developer.

Enter Newland Communities, which in 2005 signed an agreement with the city to generate a master plan for the site then arrange for the city to sell parcels for steady development over the next decade. Its plans appear capable of delivering a synergistic and appropriate mix of uses, and a layout that extends the city's street grid whenever possible. Indeed, the groundwork for a "sense of place" seems to have been laid.

But will a master-planned project so carefully calibrated in its effects eventually come off as a place made out of pieces that fail to form a coherent, organically dynamic neighborhood? Right now, the vital balance at least exists in theory.

"We want a rich, multilayered urban environment," says Chuck Kubat, AIA, Union Park's project manager for Newland, whose vision involves mutually supportive mixed use, pedestrian energy, sufficient density and a memorable skyline. "We want some variety, but there are going to be common elements throughout that tie the districts together and give us an overall sense of quality while providing a certain amount of serendipity."

These districts are distinctive zones planned for office, residential and entertainment-oriented development. To the south, the project will include medical offices anchored by the Frank Gehry-designed Lou Ruvo Brain Institute. Residential town homes and high-rises suitable for 3,000 residents are planned north of the park, and boutique-style hotels and entertainment venues will anchor the site's northern edge.

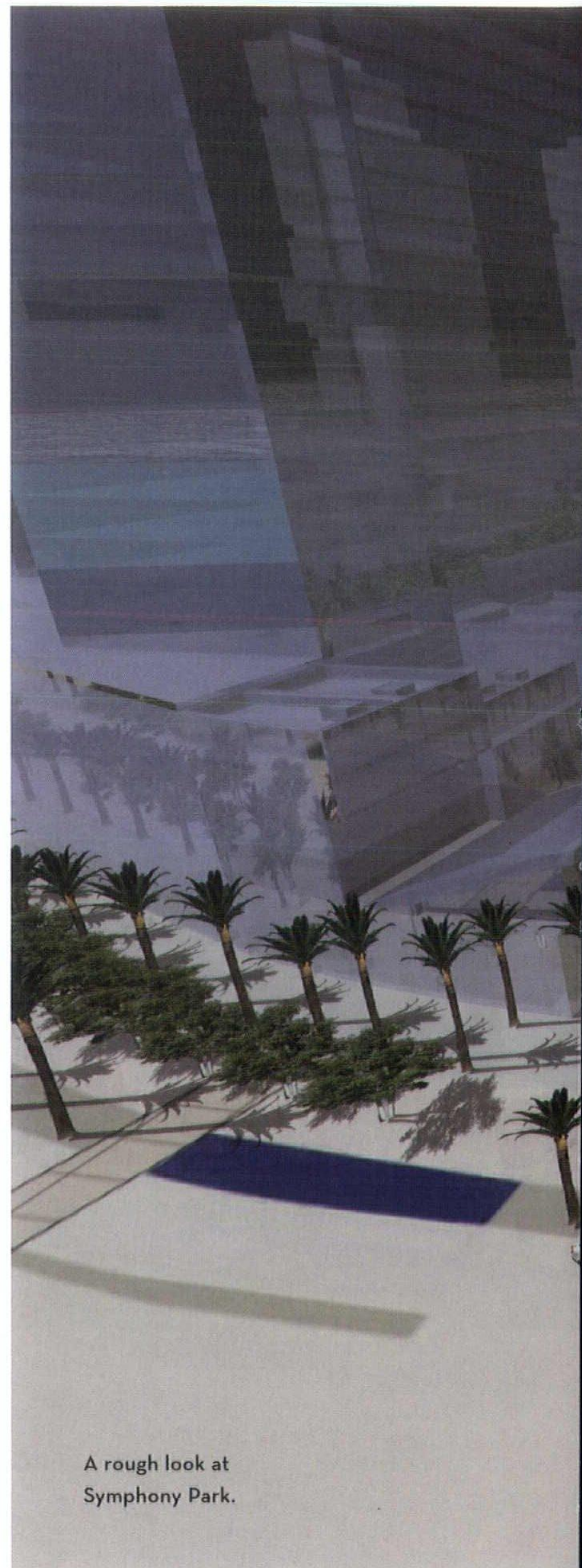
Bisecting the parcel are two north-south streets: City Parkway, meant to serve as a wide commercial boulevard, and Union Park Promenade, a smaller-scale "Main Street" shopping environment. The two streets join at Union Park's northern edge, an intersection that will be anchored by the World Jewelry Center.

In the middle will stand the Smith Center for the Performing Arts, with Symphony Park as its front lawn. This three-acre green space (whose design likely will be determined through competition) will be the heart of the neighborhood. During the plan's unveiling during an AIA presentation last fall, Kubat called it "a great statement of center, an outdoor living room, a sense of park, a soul to this project."

While that sounds like just what Las Vegas needs, it also brings up a potential organic chemistry problem. Symphony Park, like all of Union Park, will be privately owned, which means it won't be a place for affordable housing, the homeless or the displays of public expression that—whether you like the displays or not—can boost a city's serendipity. Some architects at the AIA presentation asked whether a true city center requires genuine public space.

Kubat's response was that the city has "made great strides in affordable housing throughout Downtown," and that security is necessary to make people feel confident about taking the plunge into a more urban lifestyle. "By having some control of their use, they're actually of greater benefit to a larger portion of the population."

Newland's perspective is long-term, he says. "We want to create destination-quality public spaces, and we want to create legacy buildings. If we do that correctly ... we will then be creating the whole place." ■



A rough look at
Symphony Park.

Build Vibrant Public Spaces

C

Citizens need welcoming, well-defined public places to stimulate face-to-face interaction, collectively celebrate and mourn, encourage civic participation, admire public art and gather for public events.

"Public spaces other than neighborhood or regional parks are almost nonexistent."

"Too few and far between and usually not built for a broad civic purpose."

"Henderson and Las Vegas have made improvements."

"We're creating our own spaces, like the way we just take over Charleston and Main for First Friday."

"There is not a lot of public art."

"There are great spaces ... such as the Clark County Government Center. Would like to see many more."

"Even the Clark County Government Center has little gathering space that would encourage civic participation."

"We have many good 'piazzas' in Las Vegas, they just happen to be indoors (Fashion Show plaza, Forum Shops at Caesars)."

"Maybe the CityCenter project will help."

"Almost all public spaces are privately owned."

"The Strip doesn't count."



The Green Dream

By Phil Hagen

Photography By John Locher

RIGHT IN THE HEART OF IMPLOSION CITY LIES PROOF THAT LIVABILITY WILL vastly improve in Las Vegas' second century. It's the 180-acre "eco island" known as the Springs Preserve, and when it opens three miles west of the Strip in June, there'll be a new and dramatic contrast between the two "centers" of our existence.

We all understand what Las Vegas Boulevard is about; the Springs Preserve will take some time to get to know, which is only appropriate. What's our hurry? We're not going anywhere. It's taken us a century to figure out that concepts such as green building and protecting our resources are key components in a community that not only plans to stick around awhile, but could do so in an appropriate way.

Our city's new central park has a mission to not only provide an oasis amid our sprawling metropolis, but to protect and shed light on our birthplace. This is where it all began, with water, and only with water will this miracle in the desert last. What's more, this touchstone to our past also serves as the cornerstone of our new future. The Springs Preserve will preach sustainability, with hundreds of exhibits on everything from composting to ancient Anasazi homes, and practice it, with an unprecedented collection of green architecture. Seven buildings may eventually be LEED Platinum certified, an honor the U.S. Green Building Council has bestowed on only 26 others thus far.

Perhaps the most unique twist is that these buildings will actually be exhibits themselves. "A lot of museums are going green," says Springs Preserve spokesman Jesse Davis, "but none of them are interpreting it. We're taking the next step and using it as an educational tool."

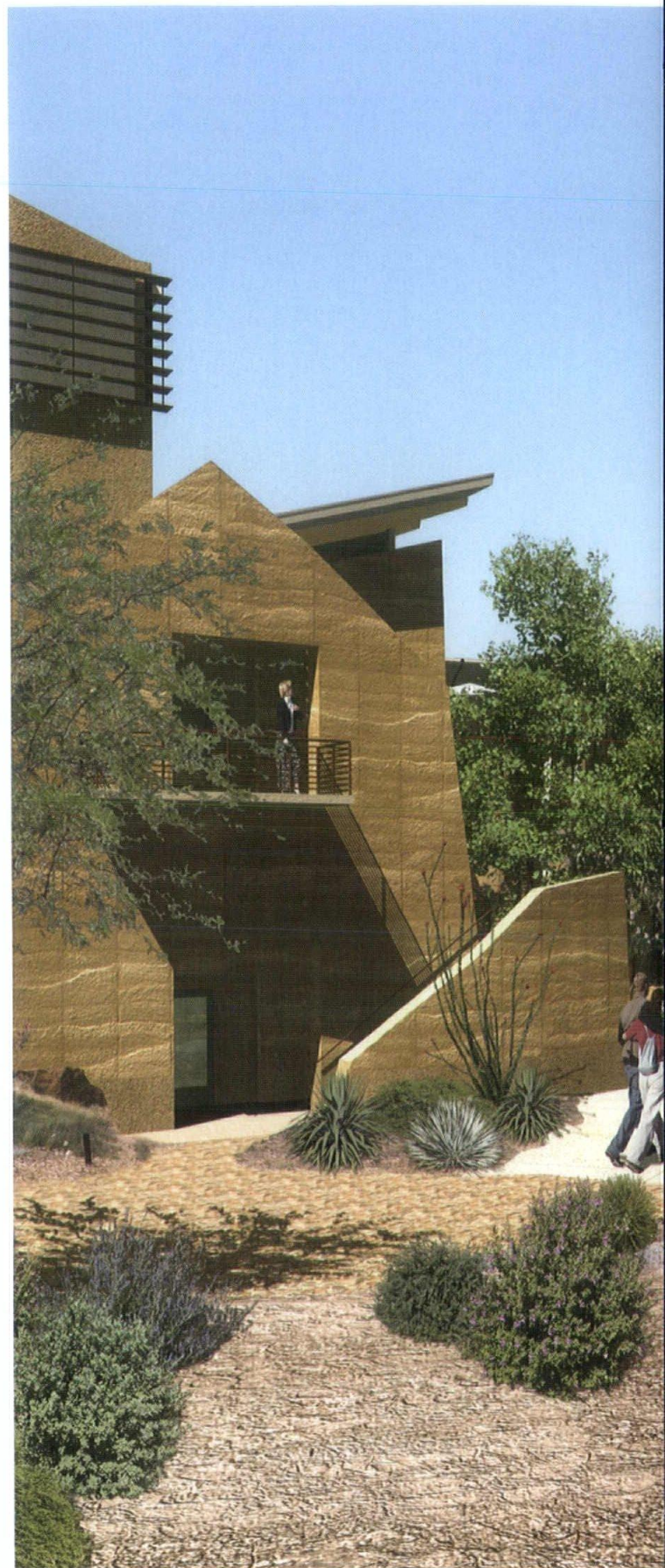
The project teams all came up with different ways to approach LEED, so the Desert Learning Center will have a component called "Inside Out" that actually "shows how each credit is earned and how we approached it," says Jeff Roberts, AIA, project manager of the Desert Living Center for Lucchesi Galati.

The lessons have already had a lasting impact on the two main architecture firms involved. For example, six years ago Lucchesi Galati had a decision to make about which Springs project to go after. Some in the firm lobbied for the high-profile Visitor Center, but Ray Lucchesi, AIA, was convinced that the Desert Living Center was "where we wanted to take our firm," Roberts recalls. "That decision completely changed our organization. Lucchesi Galati now designs every project with a sustainable approach and with the community's input. This allows us to feel good about our building's impact on the environment and what we are designing in the marketplace, while allowing any client the option to proceed with the LEED rating process if they so desire."

For Tate Snyder Kimsey Architects, which landed the Visitor Center, it has not only been an ante-upping challenge to get their project up to Platinum standards, but it's given the firm a leg up on the design community. "We believe that this is what the future is going to be," says Project Manager Randy Spitzmesser, AIA, "and it starts to separate us from the other architects out there."

But it's the finished project itself that he's most proud of.

"The architecture and exhibits really work together to tell visitors about the responsibility of stewardship, and that's the best message we could hope to deliver." >





REPORT CARD

Protect Environmental Resources

D+

A well-designed balance of nature and development preserves natural systems, protects waterways from pollution, reduces air pollution, and protects property values.

"We need to push our clients to make the right (environmentally conscious) choices in their designs and material choices."

"New codes that encourage planting buffers on properties have done a good job in newer areas to keep down dust and pollution—both noise and air."

"Good things are happening with natural resource initiatives tied to public information and access."

"Las Vegas Wash and Red Rock are example of great public projects."

"The Springs Preserve is about the only place that comes to mind outside of the state parks."

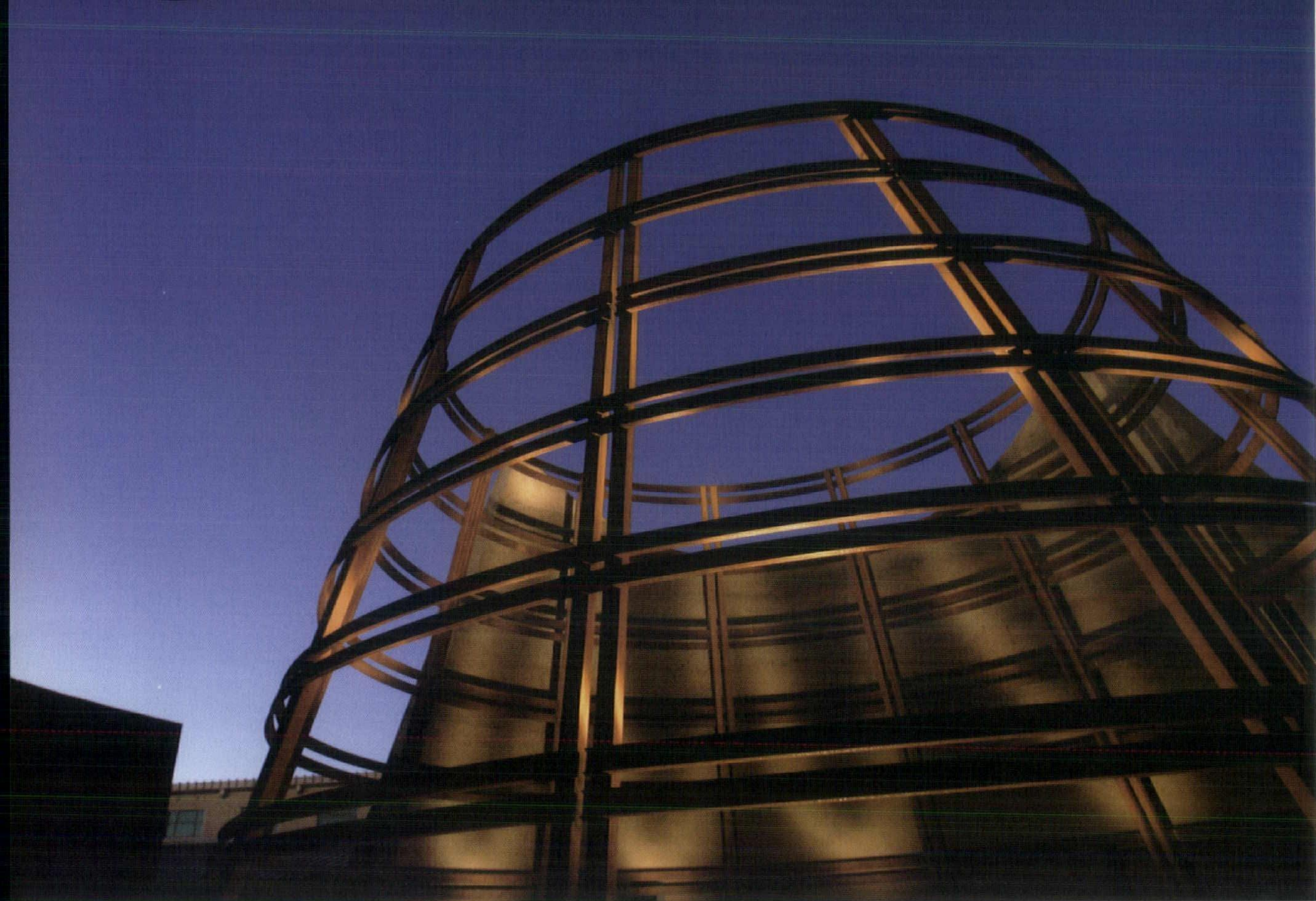
"The whole nation is failing, so we are, too."

"Water is a problem."

"Plant more trees, create open spaces. Quit building community centers on limited open land."

"Las Vegas is in a very harsh environment, but only a small proportion of new development acknowledges this reality with eco-focused or sustainable projects."

LIVABILITY



When completed, the Rotunda (above)—the iconic centerpiece of the Desert Living Center—will double as a housing for solar panels. At the Visitor Center, children will get to see, touch and play on a re-creation of an Anasazi pit house (right), while adults will learn that the ancient ones understood a lot about desert living.



An old water derrick (below) that once drew water from the springs serves as a reminder of Las Vegas' origin. The park entrance (right) references ancient Anasazi designs, while the pathway's corrugated canopy undulates in an appropriately subtle tribute to water.



LIVABILITY



Visitors will get a chance to pause and reflect on whatever comes to mind while passing through the Rotunda of the Desert Living Center (above).

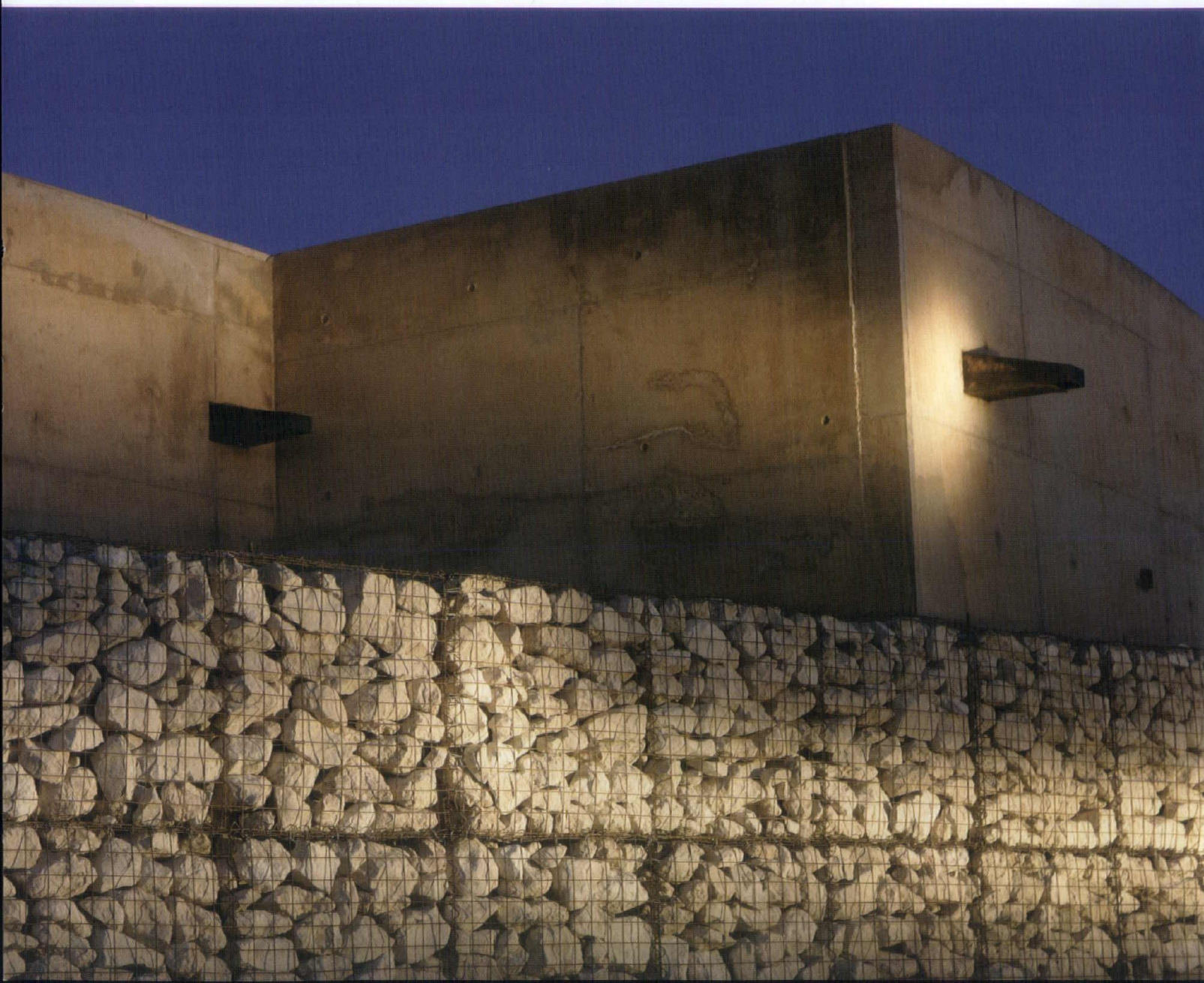
The Administration Building has louvres to shade the low-E windows from the summer sun, cooling towers to take the load off the AC, and an inverted V-shaped roof to collect rainwater.





A shady outdoor passage leads to the Desert Living Center's Sustainability Gallery (left).

If the DLC achieves the highest level of sustainability (LEED Platinum), it'll be thanks to such innovative touches as this screen wall (below), whose chief material, caliche, was reclaimed from the site.





Water Street South is home to a credit union, a coffee shop and some Nevada State College classrooms.

Water Street Reborn

By T.R. Witcher

IN THE MID 20TH CENTURY, WHEN HENDERSON WAS BASICALLY A ONE-STREET TOWN, WATER STREET was that street. One of Las Vegas' few true urban centers, it was home to shops, restaurants, a post office, even a movie theater. Then it suffered predictably as the city grew from factory town to modern suburb.

Over the decades, the living area expanded, regional malls opened, and Henderson's focus shifted away from downtown. By the mid-'90s, city leaders saw blight that was economic as much as physical—lower incomes, high rates of vacancy and no prospects for investment. "It met all the criteria for a redevelopment area to be formed," says Michelle Romero, the city's acting redevelopment manager.

So, with the formation of the Henderson Redevelopment Agency in 1995 began the process of preserving the city's urban center. But the revitalization has been just as gradual as the deterioration. The first seven years was spent putting in the "paper" infrastructure: programs to assist commercial developers and businesses, and funding for existing businesses to improve their façades. The project was spurred by tax-increment funds with a 30-year shelf life.

That was just the foundation. Leaders realized that until people had a reason to come back to the center, nothing would get done there. So the city launched special events such as farmer's markets, a monthly art walk, a car show and a firefighters competition. Marketing studies confirmed that the city could exploit several niches, including housing—most of the surrounding blocks still contain the temporary housing built for wartime factory workers—along with retail and cultural arts.

The breakthrough started less than two years ago, with two mixed-used projects, Water Street South (SH Architecture) and the Pinnacle (MWT Ofra), which gave the area a much-needed visual identity.

That style is art moderne, a nod both to the Hoover Dam and Henderson's roots as a center for magnesium production during World War II, when the streamlined style of bold vertical and horizontal lines was in vogue. New projects to Water Street, as well as façade rehabs, require use of moderne elements. Prospective developers are shown a booklet with color pictures of moderne and deco buildings from Kansas City to Miami—a much better way to communicate a visual theme than by machining it into a series of dry codes.

Now there's \$230 million worth of projects in the pipeline for Navy Street, including five luxury apartments at the mixed-use Meridian (MWT Ofra); 65 condos at the Parkline Lofts (San Francisco-based Holt Hinshaw), a 120-plus condo project called City Tower (Suzana Rutar Architect), and an even more ambitious building called Water Street Commons (Breslin Builders), which may contain as many as 500 units.

The redevelopment agency is also keen to bring in more retailers, but with a focus on local boutiques more than national chains. "We want this to be a place you can't find anywhere else," Romero says. "We want it to have a unique character."

Water Street, after a decade of rehab, remains a hodgepodge. Its small-town Main Street roots are visible, but they are interspersed with abandoned buildings, unsightly gas stations and trailer homes, modern civic structures, well-worn casinos and newer infill projects. The blocks around city hall are energized, but things quickly turn sleepy.

Dave Beason, whose muffler shop has been on Water Street for 25 years, hopes to be one of the few residents to say he's straddled both the old and new eras of vibrancy. He remembers when he was a kid and the street was the center of the action. In five or ten years, he hopes, "You'll be able to go down Friday nights and you'll have the restaurants, and it'll be thriving at night and it'll be busy during the day."

But from his unique vantage point, he also knows what it takes to preserve city centers. "It takes forever. It's just slow. As a business owner, I wanted it to happen yesterday."

"Sometimes people are looking for the silver bullet to come and make everything magically change," Romero says. "That can't happen—it would be a house of cards built upon the sand." ■

REPORT CARD

Preserving Urban Centers

C-

Restoring, revitalizing and infilling urban centers takes advantage of existing streets, services and buildings, and avoids the need for new infrastructure. This helps to curb sprawl and promote stability for city neighborhoods.

"We need to establish requirements for redevelopment and historic properties using greater tax credits."

"Due to high land costs, people are buying into areas that need to be redeveloped."

"Downtown has been doing a good job filling in old leftover lots compared to 20 years ago."

"The nature of urban revitalization has been more about getting activity going. ... Quality of activity has not been achieved yet."

"Downtown rolls up the streets after all the lawyers go home, leaving behind no resources for a neighborhood to take hold."

"Las Vegas needs an extended monorail or passenger train to allow for easy access to the city center."

"Get away from the Las Vegas implosion syndrome."

"The whole city is a suburb."

LIVABILITY



Historic John S. Park has preserved its character.

Character Builders

By Jennifer Robison

AS WITH ADOLESCENTS, DESPERATION TO BLEND IN COULD DESCRIBE LAS VEGAS IN THE 1990S. Developers, keen to move acres of suburban master plans, built row after row of pastel, stuccoed homes inside walled subdivisions. These days, more and more developers and community groups are ditching conformity and daring to be different. They're dumping walls, mixing up housing styles and working hard to forge a sense of community. In the process, they're helping Las Vegas grow into its next stage as a city. Here are three examples:

JOHN S. PARK: AN ASSOCIATION THAT WORKS

The pride of ownership that permeates John S. Park is a return to its upscale origins more than half a century ago, when it was Las Vegas' first custom-home neighborhood and its ranch homes and bungalows skirted the city's edges, between Ninth Street and Las Vegas Boulevard, and Oakey and Charleston.

It's a "return" because as the newer suburbs drew the neighborhood's affluent away from the city's center by the 1980s, John S. Park fell victim to urban decay. When Bob Bellis moved in almost 20 years ago, the 135-home community was hardly idyllic. "It was very dilapidated and had a lot of issues with crime," he says.

In the late '90s, professors, journalists, attorneys and other agenda setters, on the prowl for a neighborhood with character, discovered John S. Park's varied housing styles and big lots. They began moving in and recommended the area to their friends. The emerging Arts District down the street also lured new residents in the market for a community with an eclectic feel.

Then, in 2000, the City of Las Vegas established John S. Park as an official historic district and asked its residents what they wanted from their community. Over the next two years, regular community meetings produced a wish list that included redesigning parks, placing markers at historic sites and preventing the spread of commercial development into the neighborhood.

"We had an overall idea of how we wanted the neighborhood to be, and that gave the city some idea of the direction," says Bellis, president of the neighborhood association.

Today, John S. Park is a neighborhood in the old-fashioned sense. The community holds block parties every six months. Residents have meetings to discuss noteworthy issues. They've banded together to battle everything from an expansion of the Olympic Garden strip club to the invasion of high-rise condo towers. A community website enables residents to reach out to their neighbors on everything from city council meetings to lost pets. One homeowner dusts off his tractor every fall and takes kids on hayrides.

"What's developed is a unique character that everyone wants to protect," Bellis says. "We're probably the closest, tightest-knit neighborhood in Las Vegas. It's just the most amazing neighborhood ever."

CARRIAGE CLUB: WHEN THE SUBURBS GET IT RIGHT

You can't swing a T-square without hitting some urban planner, designer, architect or developer who's talking up a "mixed-use" or "urban village" project these days. But who'd have imagined that a small, decade-old corner of garden-variety suburbia would have beaten all the other newfangled projects—from Downtown to Summerlin—off the drawing board?

At the edge of the ungated Carriage Club subdivision in Green Valley Ranch, Benji Road turns into a small walking trail leading to a cluster of top-flight amenities just a few hundred yards away. The Paseo Verde Library, with its Heritage Resource Center for genealogists and its expansive reading room, has become a favorite haunt for families. The Henderson Multigenerational Center, only a hop, skip and a jump away, provides concerts, an art gallery, enrichment classes, a basketball court and public swimming pools. Walkers can hoof it a little farther to the west, across Green Valley Parkway, and

continued on page 105

REPORT CARD

Create a Neighborhood Identity

C-

A "sense of place" gives neighborhoods a unique character, enhances the walking environment and creates pride in the community.

"Either you live in a master-planned community or in an 'old' part of town."

"A few mid-century neighborhoods are the difference."

"Summerlin, Anthem, Green Valley and Rancho Circle do this very well through architectural review boards and resident-funded maintenance programs."

"Some neighborhoods are catching the vision."

"Branding and sense of place are not equal."

"There's a nice compromise somewhere between the junk man and the HOA that lets places develop with character."

"We should incorporate design review at the residential level with a mandate to diversify building materials, design aesthetics and establish standards for pedestrian space."

"The new communities begin with gates."

"A great majority of neighborhoods are just where people sleep."



Outside the Lines

By Tony Illia

JACOB SNOW LIKES TO RIDE HIS BIKE TO WORK. IT NOT ONLY KEEPS HIM FIT AND TRIM, IT SENDS A message. As Southern Nevada's transportation chief, he practices what he preaches: a more pedestrian-friendly, mass-transit-minded community.

As you can imagine in a city where the population has doubled every decade since the 1950s and is nearing two million, being general manager of the Regional Transportation Commission for the last eight years hasn't been a walk in the park. For every 1,000 new residents, 750 more vehicles join the local roadways. And that doesn't include the city's nearly 40 million visitors a year, half of whom travel by car.

Those numbers add up to some major congestion. Interstate 15, for example, is 69 percent over capacity with 219,000 cars a day, and in five years the RTC expects more than 300,000 vehicles. What do you do? Widening I-15 would cost more than \$1 billion.

Other transportation issues abound, with complaints about everything from the lack of a monorail plan to the dangers of bike riding (see Report Card). Yet Snow comes off as calm and unfazed, tackling the traffic problems with scrappy resolve and infectious enthusiasm. His leadership is helping reshape everything from the look and feel of avenues, sidewalks and corridors to how people circulate around the Valley. He knows what's at stake.

"Communities that invest in mobility have an economic and a social advantage over those that don't," Snow says. "If we don't have good mobility in Las Vegas, it affects the economy of the entire state."

In 2002, area voters agreed and passed a \$2.7 billion tax and developer fee package for improving Southern Nevada's transportation network over the next 25 years. The money enables the RTC to fast-track completion of the 215 Beltway, while building high-speed vehicle lanes on highways and freeways. It will also create seven Citizens Area Transit routes, replace 225 aging buses, place new freeway message boards and ramp meters, and improve traffic synchronization.

While Snow believes it'll take a combination of ideas to bring the Valley's system up to speed, he seems to be banking on one particular innovation to get us there quicker.

The Metropolitan Area Express—a mix between a bus and rail line—saw a 30 percent increase in ridership after just one year of service. Ten MAX vehicles carried an average of 7,000 passengers a day in 2005. Its rapid success has prompted the RTC to expand the initial 9.5-mile route in North Las Vegas, with a \$60 million leg from the Fremont Street Experience to the Sahara hotel-casino coming in 2009.

The rubber-tired MAX vehicles use a dedicated lane with half the stops and twice the speed of a normal bus. They look and act like a light-rail train but are more flexible, and they feature a hybrid electric-diesel engine for maximum fuel mileage and fewer noxious emissions.

"The key thing is that we're getting people out of cars," Snow says. "If riding MAX saves time, then we're providing people with value."

The RTC has already ordered 50 second-generation MAX vehicles, each holding about 100 people. The new route will have its own environment with colored concrete and paver stones, wider sidewalks and distinct landscaping. The RTC has even partnered with the Neon Museum to incorporate vintage signage into 28 new passenger platforms.

The Deuce, meanwhile, has been a success, too. The new double-decker bus moved some 50,000 people a day up and down the Strip in 2005, about double the traffic of the monorail, while generating \$2.5 million in ad revenue. And it seems to be popular in other ways, too: "You know you've created a good place when people take their wedding pictures there," Snow says. "We're on the right track."

The RTC will spend \$250 million on rapid transit initiatives over the next 10 years, including more park-and-ride structures and commuter bus lanes along U.S. 95. And, yes, there's \$50 million for 1,700 miles of bicycle paths, which will quintuple the current system.

"Every car and bus trip starts with a pedestrian trip," Snow says. "We are trying to provide a rapid transit service for everybody, not just tourists, not just people who work in the resort corridor, but for everyone in the community. That's the direction we are trying to take." ■

REPORT CARD

Vary Transportation Options D-

Giving people the option of walking, biking and using public transit, in addition to driving, reduces traffic congestion, protects the environment and encourages physical activity.

"Public transit that is connected to existing overloaded roadways is only an option for the underprivileged. Options for biking and walking do not exist except in minimal fashion."

"The 'back street' feeling is created by enclosed communities which provide nothing but a tall masonry to main streets ... and create isolation, encourage speeding, reject pedestrians and enable crime."

"Half of your commute is spent idling at lights, which is bad for you and the environment."

"We need to build homes closer to work, slow down automobile traffic and add large areas for biking. It's key that we cut down our community distances."

"No one installs showers at offices for the biking option."

"Not many businesses have visible racks to place bikes."

"Every Las Vegas needs a car to have any mobility."

"The whole city was designed around car culture."

"Billions of dollars pass through this city daily and we have no discernable plan for public transportation."

"Expand and make the monorail work."



The Urban Orchard

By Geoff Schumacher

CAVALIERLY, WE SPEAK OF AN "OASIS IN THE DESERT." TOO OFTEN, THE PLACE WE SPEAK OF IS NOT worthy of such a dramatic description.

The Gilcrease Orchard is worthy.

The 67 acres in northwest Las Vegas are almost impossible to believe. Fifty are covered by about 11,000 apple, pear, peach, pecan and apricot trees, while the other 17 are planted with pumpkins, melons, peppers and other vegetables.

The orchard entrance is near Tenaya Way and Whispering Sands Drive — about one-and-a-half miles north of the Las Vegas Beltway and three miles east of U.S. 95. To the south: a smattering of custom homes with unimproved lots waiting for more. To the north: the upscale Silverstone Ranch planned community. To the west and east: future subdivisions.

But wander a few hundred feet into the orderly forest of leafy trees and you'll quickly forget suburbia encroaching on this last bastion of agriculture in the Las Vegas Valley. Instead, you immediately notice two things: fresh air and a temperature drop of several degrees.

Of course, the pulse-slowing solitude of a weekday stroll through the Gilcrease Orchard is not the usual experience. More common, and just as satisfying, is a Saturday visit alongside hundreds of other Las Vegans seeking a respite from city life.

The orchard has a faithful customer base that relishes the "pick-and-pay" philosophy, fresh produce and below-market prices. Kids have a ball picking fruit and running free, and they often learn something in the process.

"Kids think apples grow at Albertson's," says Bill Allan, the orchard manager who has worked on the Gilcrease spread since 1956. "Here, they figure out where things are really coming from."

They also get a taste of the best apple cider in the region. Apples from the orchard are cleaned, mulched, squeezed and pumped through pasteurizing filters en route to large tanks. Without preservatives or corn syrup, the cider's full-bodied taste contrasts notably with drab supermarket offerings.

Peak time for the Gilcrease Orchard is the run-up to Halloween, when families and busloads of schoolchildren come to pick pumpkins, most of which will be carved into jack-o'-lanterns. Sadly, in 2006, somebody broke in and made off with the bulk of the Gilcrease pumpkin crop. "That won't happen again," says Allan, suggesting that more proactive measures are planned to prevent another midnight heist.

The orchard represents part of 1,500 acres the Gilcrease family farmed starting in 1920. Using water from the nearby Tule Springs, the family grew alfalfa and grain, then raised turkeys, then grew hay. None of the ventures delivered a financial windfall, but the Gilcreases persevered, selling pieces of land now and then to subsidize the operation.

The orchard, started in the early 1970s, was the brainchild and obsession of Ted Gilcrease. After hauling 190 truckloads of rock out of the field, Gilcrease experimented with numerous varieties of trees, figuring out what worked and what didn't in the harsh Mojave Desert climate.

The orchard used to be much larger than it is today. Forty acres of it was sold to the Clark County School District in 2001 and is now the home of Arbor View High School.

Before Gilcrease died in 2003, he formed a foundation to operate and preserve the orchard. Faced with annual losses of about \$200,000, the foundation's president, Mary Ellen Racel, decided to sell another 40 acres to a home builder for \$15 million. Racel defended the sale as a way to ensure a long life for the remaining orchard.

Allan adds that part of the 40 acres on the orchard's west end had been badly damaged by severe flooding, and expensive work would have been required to bring it back into agricultural operation.

Still, neighbors and activists fought the development, fearing it was simply the next step in the orchard's ultimate demise. The Clark County Commission received a petition with 1,924 signatures opposing Royal Construction Company's plans.

continued on page 105

REPORT CARD

Conserve Landscapes

C

Open space, farms and wildlife habitat are essential for environmental, recreational and cultural reasons.

"Open space preservation is sporadic and not very well planned. Variances are granted that make the existing design standards worthless."

"The [Clark County] Multi-Species Habitat Plan is cutting edge."

"We sprawl through everything."

"Our city will preserve it if they can charge you more money for it."

"If we could focus more on infill instead of encroaching on the perimeter lands, we'd do a good thing for the wildlife habitat."

"There are some great examples of parks that were created in flood basins. Developments such as these set a good example of smart development from many viewpoints."

"The BLM owns everything."

"We have mowed this valley down. The only thing we seem to have saved is the Springs Preserve and the Old Mormon Fort (which was moved)."

Design Matters

C

*Design excellence is the foundation
of successful and healthy communities.*

"How can I find good design practices
when all houses look alike?"

"Design seems to be temporary and lacks
the architectural maturity that one
would expect from a city this size."

"Las Vegas has a pretty good level of design
for public venues."

"Private sector development is mostly
speculative in nature, developed as cheaply
as possible for immediate resale."

"There is an overabundance of cookie-cutter
strip mall and residential architecture."

"The focus is too much on eclectic modern
or postmodern architecture. We need more
Frank Lloyd Wright prairie architecture,
a blending with the environment."

"Successful and healthy communities
demand design excellence. Las Vegas is filled
with 10-year, ROI-driven, thoughtless
buildings void of design."

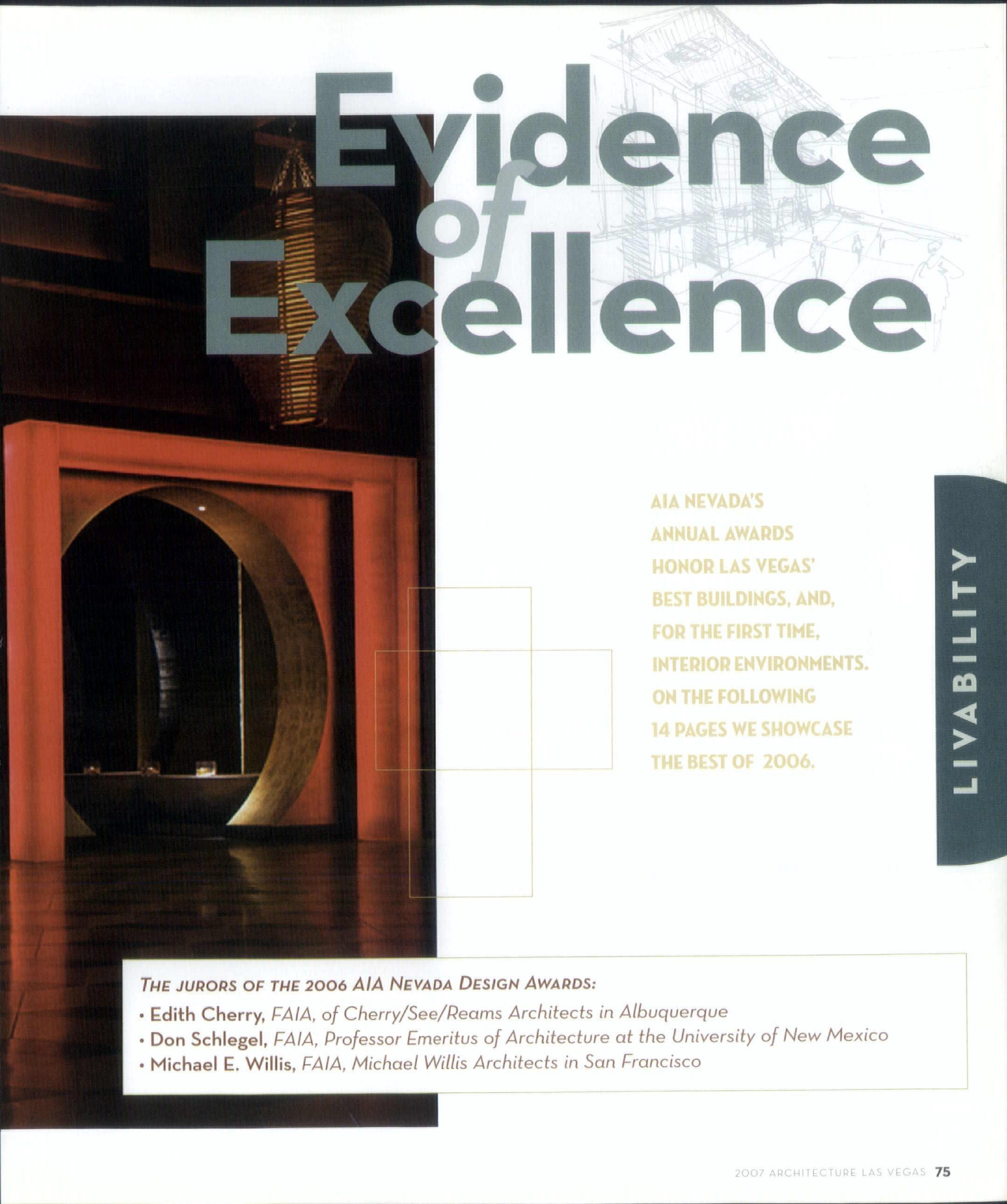
"I'd be OK with ugly if it were a
zero-carbon building."

"Las Vegas is home to many great designs
and many great architects. It is discouraging
that so many public projects rule
out local architects."

"No one seems to be able to look past
the next five years."



The double entrance to
Tao in the Venetian, a
Merit winner for Built
Interior Environment.



Evidence of Excellence

AIA NEVADA'S
ANNUAL AWARDS
HONOR LAS VEGAS'
BEST BUILDINGS, AND,
FOR THE FIRST TIME,
INTERIOR ENVIRONMENTS.
ON THE FOLLOWING
14 PAGES WE SHOWCASE
THE BEST OF 2006.

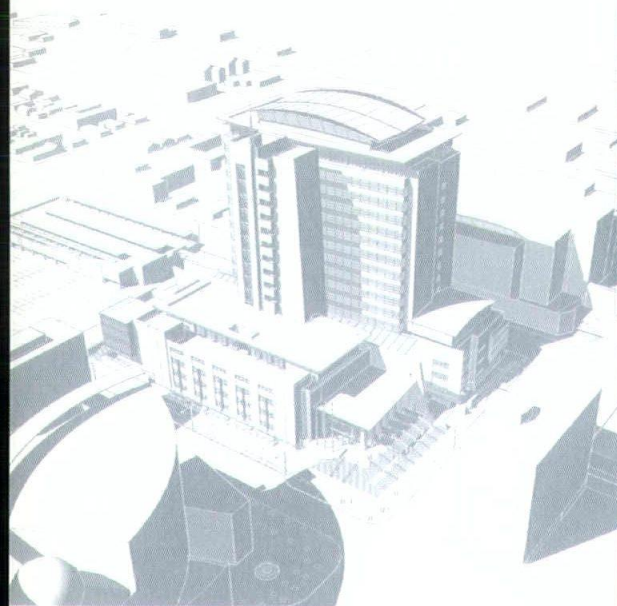
LIVABILITY

THE JURORS OF THE 2006 AIA NEVADA DESIGN AWARDS:

- Edith Cherry, FAIA, of Cherry/See/Reams Architects in Albuquerque
- Don Schlegel, FAIA, Professor Emeritus of Architecture at the University of New Mexico
- Michael E. Willis, FAIA, Michael Willis Architects in San Francisco

**CLARK COUNTY REGIONAL
JUSTICE CENTER**

Honor Award (Built),
Tate Snyder Kimsey
Architects



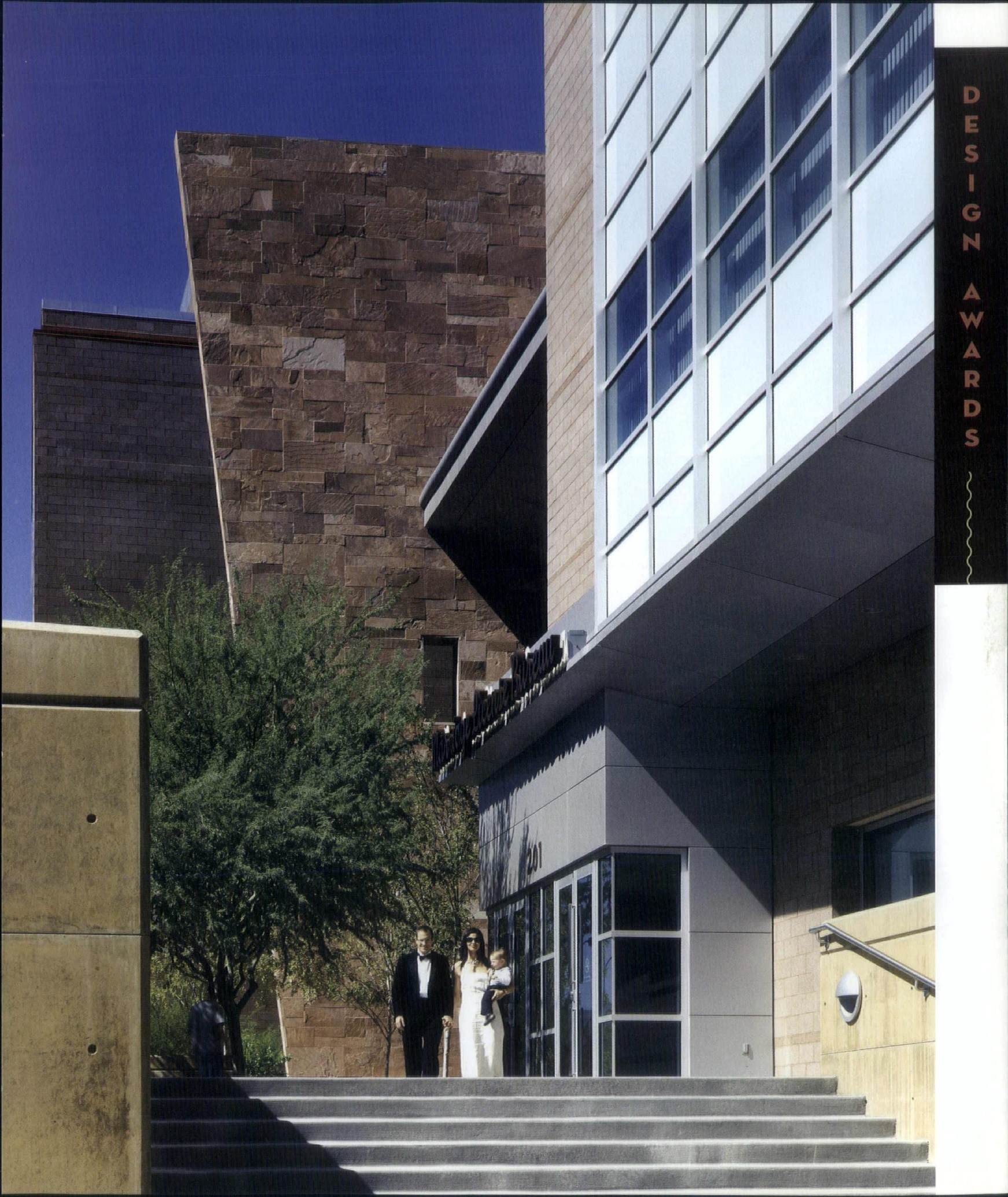
Opposite:
The Marriage
License Bureau.

Above right:
The RJC's
"Canyon."



A "mall of justice"? That's how Tate Snyder Kimsey Architects describe the base of the Regional Justice Center, the 710,000-square-foot complex that consolidated the operations of the municipal, justice and state supreme courts into "one user-friendly courthouse." If that sounds a little playful for a place of justice, the result is a serious, handsome and—thanks to some down-to-earth thinking—functional contribution to Downtown architecture and the local justice system. The five-story base houses public service offices and is scaled to match "the existing Downtown fabric." One of those public services *should* be fun: the Marriage License Bureau. A busier (if not more spectacular) segment of government than in most cities, the bureau gets its due, with a separate entrance that features a limo drop-off, plus a small courtyard and treed canopy for photo ops. On the nothing-but-the-truth end of the RJC is the 19-story tower where the 40 high-tech courtrooms and their judges reside in a well-organized mix of public, private and secure circulation areas. Every mall in Vegas needs a theme, so the two structures' lobbies are connected by a "canyon," a three-story glass atrium with "an interior street revealing individual agencies behind storefronts." This "heart" of the RJC features native sandstone walls (inscribed with quotations on justice), natural light that streams deep (and efficiently) into the building, and an overall space (60 feet high by 350 feet long) that's an homage to the Downtown grid system.

Judges' comment: "It's a challenge to do any large building well, but the architects here addressed every façade with careful delineations of forms and textures. Plus they created a welcoming public entry in a covered 'street' flanked by stone walls and lit by daylight. The atrium is a strong organizing element that presents to the public the dignified character of our justice system."

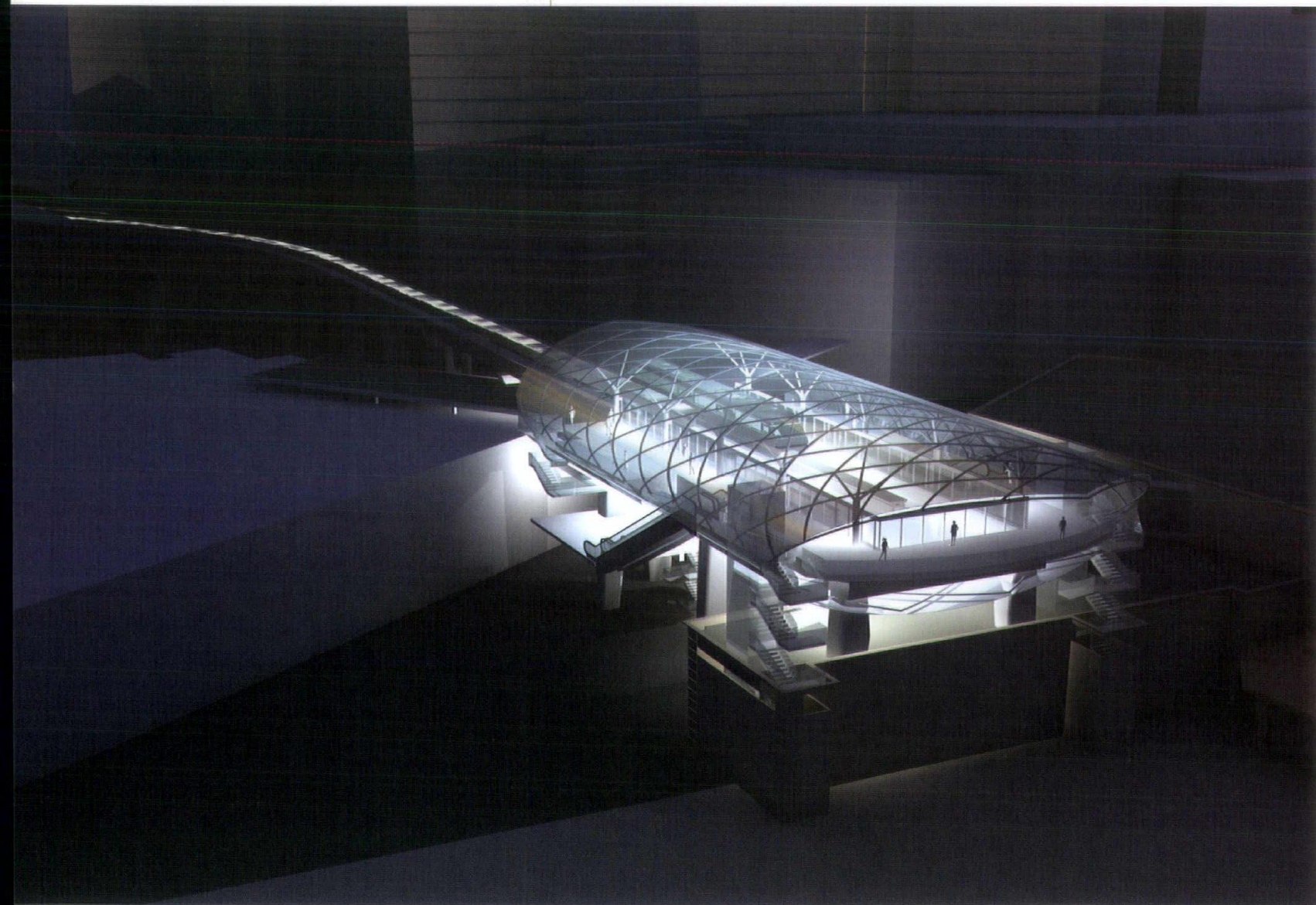


DESIGN AWARDS

**CITYCENTER'S
AUTOMATED
PEOPLE MOVER**
Honor Award (Unbuilt),
Gensler of Nevada

The People Mover idea, like the monorail, was an idea made futuristically famous at Disneyland back in the 1960s. While Vegas adopted the latter without much evolution (or success, so far), it's set to launch the former deep into the 21st century thanks to Gensler and an ambitious client, MGM Mirage, whose CityCenter will drastically alter the Strip landscape come November 1, 2009. The "city within a city" features high-rise hotels and condo towers designed by internationally admired architects. Slicing through the vertical volumes will be the APM, an elevated, horizontal "tendon" of laminated glass and tubular steel connecting "both diverse programs and diverse architectural statements." (More practically, that means up to 1,500 tourists and tenants per hour can travel the half-mile stretch, which has three stops: Bellagio, the coming Sobella shopping district and the Monte Carlo.) More than an airport-style conveyor, the APM will be "a dynamic visual marker, a locator and an anchor of orientation in an oversaturated field." Yes, this "ribbon of light" that will cut through the night stands a chance to join the legendary icons along Las Vegas Boulevard. Even its nodes look pretty cool: Each is an elliptical cylinder of fritted glass that serves as a "punctuation along the linear path—literal explosions of light." And at the end of the line "it will swell to enclose the space of its destination." For the client, the APM is what's called branding. For the rest of us, it means the future is almost here again.

Judges' comment: "This project demonstrates that elements of infrastructure can be objects of beauty in the urban landscape. This idea, taken for granted in the 19th century, may be making a comeback. This design captures the sense of transportation, movement, speed and dynamics that sets it in the 21st century."

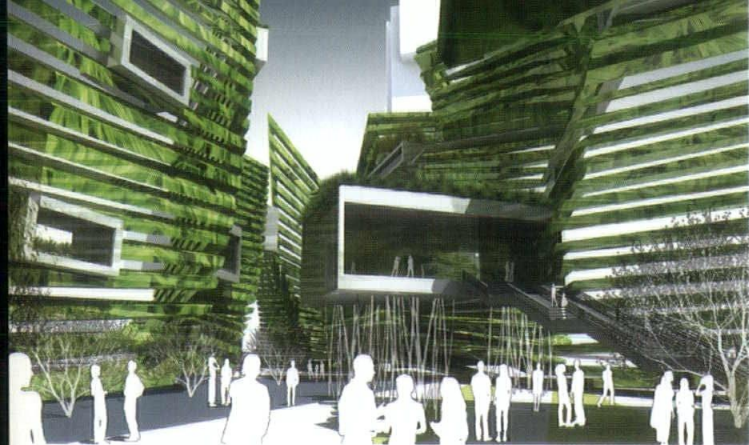


The People Mover
will connect
CityCenter to
Bellagio and the
Monte Carlo.

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**THE CANYON:
PEDESTRIAN FILTER**
Merit Award (Academic),
Drew Gregory, UNLV

Unlike Hollywood, there's not much excitement going on in the back lot of Las Vegas Boulevard. Between Interstate 15 and the Strip resorts, for example, sits a dead space of service accesses, staging areas, parking lots and various voids. UNLV grad student Drew Gregory deals with the more complicated image of today's Las Vegas, whose corridors can be seen in a variety of ways by a variety of people. "At high speeds, such as the I-15 corridor, the Strip becomes very blurred. A high level of detail is not necessary, but an image of excitement, color, flash and signage is needed." Besides vehicular viewing pleasure—which at one time was the primary way you saw the Strip—there's an increased demand for the pedestrian perspective, too. Once CityCenter is populated (see previous page), tourists and residents will need new ways to roam and see the city. In that case, details are important. Gregory's "Canyon" deals with both perceptions. He proposes a "cultural edge" along I-15 that engages CityCenter, takes the canyon-like forms created by that district's five residential towers and extends the idea south to Tropicana Avenue by erecting "a large wall that would begin to blur and separate" interstate from Strip. Meanwhile, down within the concrete, steel, glass and zinc Canyon walls, he would create spaces to serve as "pedestrian filters" (such as a museum for cultural enlightenment and parks for self-reflection) while hiding the Strip's architectural voids behind walls or, where appropriate, carving out "viewing corridors."

Judges' comment: "An impressive range of ideas that address urban form, movement, building designs and open space, all tied together along filtered green walls that make up the Canyon. This is an exciting example of design that looks beyond the block to create a device that actively links pedestrian with destinations. The graphics are great as well."





Above: The Canyon garden and museum. Opposite left: A lookout from New York-New York. Opposite top: The pedestrian filter leading from the museum to the park/convention area (the "pods" in the Canyon walls are mixed-use spaces for such purposes as retail and a demonstration garden).

TAO LAS VEGAS

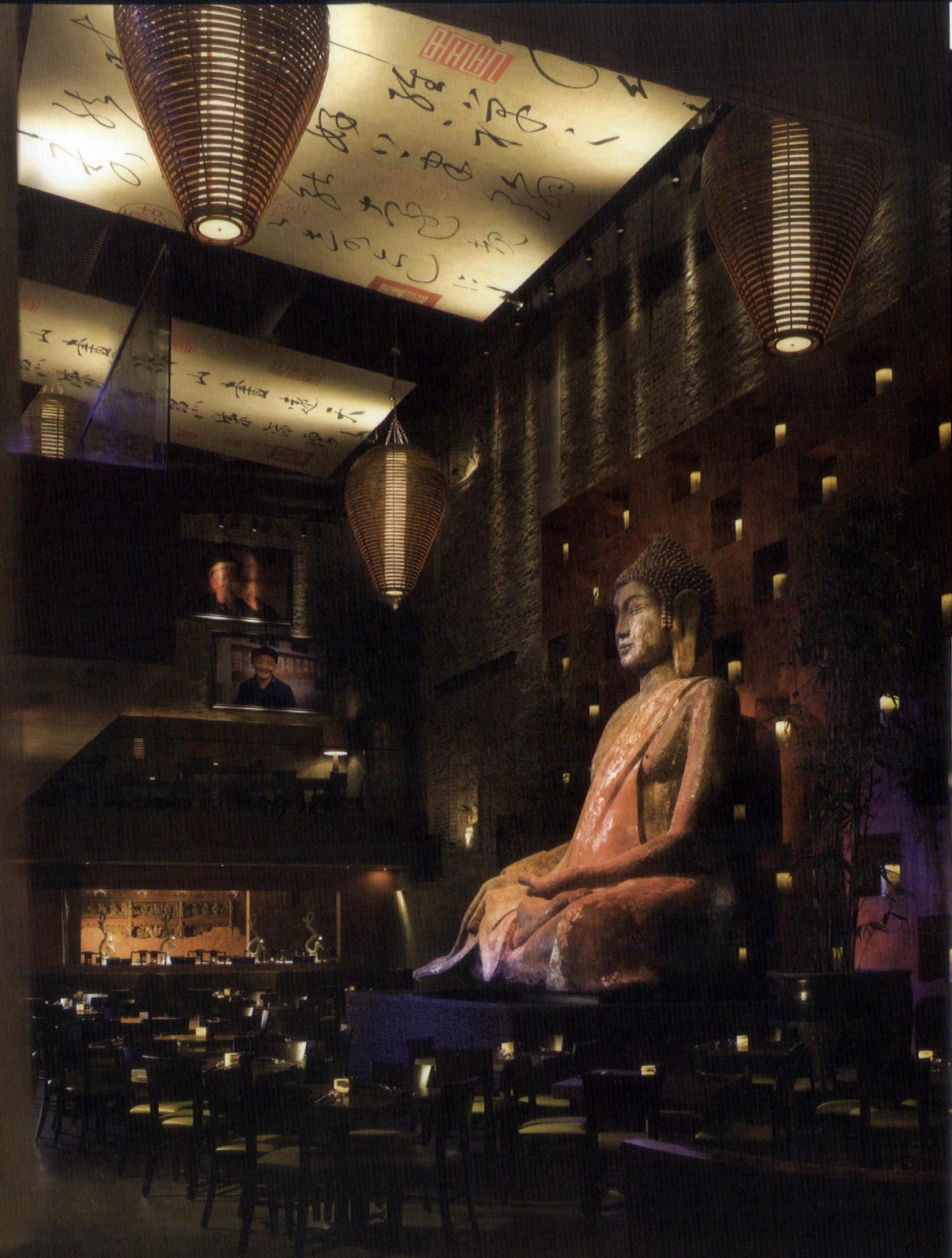
Merit Award (Built Interior Environments),
Klai Juba Architects, with design
consultants Studio GAIA of New York and
Thomas Schoos Design of West Hollywood

Right: The entry-
way to the main
dining room.
Opposite: What
you'll find in that
dining room.



How do you create a "contemporary Zen sanctum" and yet compete with the trendy restaurant and club crowd on Las Vegas Boulevard? And, oh, the space you have to work with used to be a Warner Bros.-themed restaurant, and its overall context is the baroque interior of the Venetian resort. Klai Juba is an old pro when it comes to Strip architecture, having designed everything from the laid-back elegance of THEhotel at Mandalay Bay to the boisterous Studio 54 at MGM Grand. With a mastery of hospitality spaces, and help from big-time design consultants from LA and New York City, its architects created a variety of experiences in the four-story, 43,000-square-foot Tao restaurant/lounge/nightclub that differ in function yet harmoniously exude a sensual Asian spirit. The multiple journeys start with twin options, as Tao offers side-by-side entryways—one for club access (via elevators) and the other for the restaurant/lounge (via a tunnel with Chinese-inspired moon gates). The latter exemplifies "a design strategy that resonates throughout Tao ... establishing strategic spots for observing the action inside." The tunnel gives just a hint of what lies within, then opens to the spectacular dining space with its 37-foot-high ceiling and 20-foot-tall Buddha statue, which floats above an infinity koi pond. Other observation spots include the third-floor nightclub, which overlooks the dining area below. And there's plenty to marvel at, from the club's centerpiece—a 9,000-pound Quan Yin statue—to the variety of handsome materials (such as teak walls and river rock floors). The result seems to have pleased not only clients and patrons (judging from the crowds) but the all-important celebs. Yes, Britney and Janet have both thrown parties there.

Judges' comment: "This restaurant manages the feat of transporting diners from the casino environment to a series of serene spaces. These spaces remind one of Asian themes in a restrained way—choosing subdued lighting and elegant materials, fabrics and furnishings to make the case. The addition of a major vertical space within the typical casino floor plates literally and figuratively adds dimension to a constrained space."



THE MERCER
Merit Award (Unbuilt),
assemblageSTUDIO



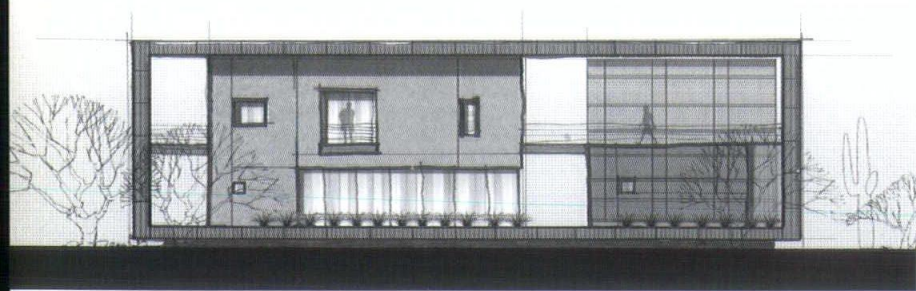
This three-story multi-family condo dwelling doesn't just take on Las Vegas' suburban stucco; the Mercer also makes a statement against the city's shiny vertical madness. It's a "creation of a modern sense of living in an environment of high-rise glass structures and low-rise Mediterranean." The architect's low-slung contemporary design makes a good argument in both cases, as the condos, out west at Tropicana Avenue and Grand Canyon Drive, confront several under-addressed possibilities of Las Vegas living. Design is a priority inside and out at the Mercer, yet—in a city where cutting-edge residential architecture often equals a \$5 million house in the hills—it will ultimately be "attainable to the service workers of this community." (The one-bedroom units start at \$229,000.) Some of the qualities of the Mercer should be considered common-sense architecture by now, but they still come across as bold statements: creating a sense of community with outdoor spaces (helped by a mixed-in 12,000 square feet of retail) "oversized street walking edges," and cross-ventilation through each unit from the shady courtyard. Inside, the design offers the framework for true urban-style living, with high ceilings, built-in workspaces, track lighting, full-length windows and open living areas that are oriented to make the most of natural light.

Judges' comment: "This project demonstrates that housing intended for the service workers of this community can be a social and aesthetic asset in the urban setting. While the program seems to have dictated density at the expense of more ground space, the architect has skillfully portrayed a modernist design of dignity and delight."



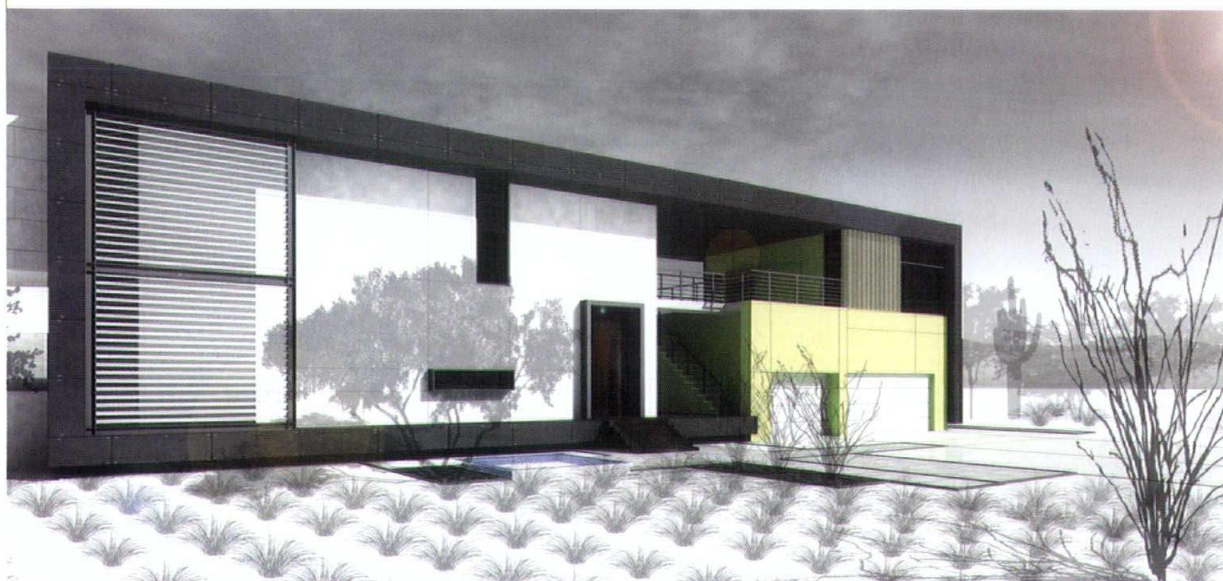
Opposite:
Sustainability starts
with the cool courtyard
between buildings.
Above: Mercer condos
feature an urban-style
openness.





The safest guess as to what "M" stands for is the client's last name, and the planned dwelling of the 30-something single male certainly earns a monogram. It also deserves a capital M for modern. Among a smattering of typical custom homes on a patch of raw, unincorporated Las Vegas desert, the Box will surely stand out. It is actually two boxes of contrasting colors wrapped by black zinc, resulting in a neat package of shapes (all rectangular), materials (glass, zinc panels and stucco) and escapes (indoor-outdoor living is emphasized). The first volume is an open, two-story space that interweaves the client's private and public functions. The latter has to do with entertaining, of course, so MBox is designed to seamlessly expand into the exterior courtyard to increase such opportunities. The architect also created "exterior rooms" in the landscape using screen walls, elevated patios, a recessed turf play area and a pool. The home's second volume is for overnight guests, who will enjoy privacy and a deck overlooking the Las Vegas Valley. Up there they might also notice another possible M reference: mountains. As in the nearby Black Mountains, which offer solid evidence as to why MBox fits into the residential landscape as much or more than any of its neighbors.

Judges' comment: "This simple residential program is given an appropriately simple response. ... It reminded us of the era of the Case Study houses—clear diagram and a celebration of contemporary forms and color. ... Within this roofed, boxed frame, outdoor spaces are distributed and protected with an understanding of environmental conditions of place."



Above: The front colorfully shows off the separation of spaces that lie within MBox.
Top: A drawing of the back.
Right: The Interior.

MBOX
Merit Award (Unbuilt),
assemblageSTUDIO

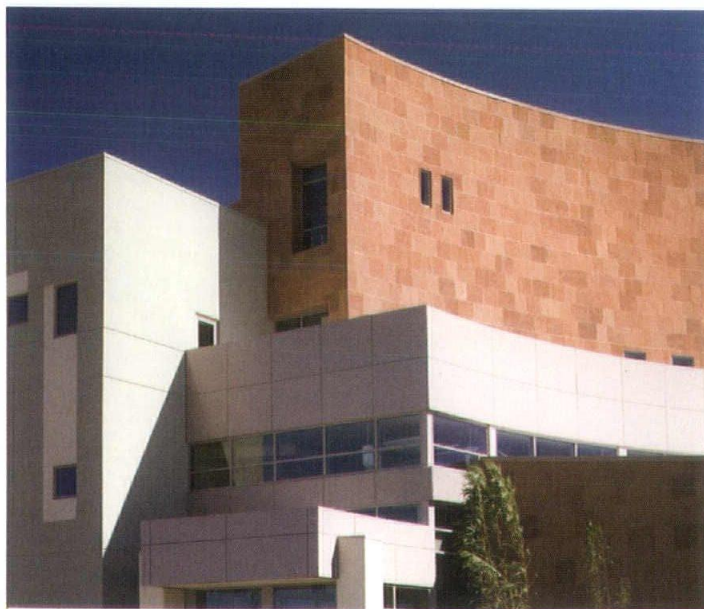


**CENTENNIAL HILLS
LIBRARY**
Citation (Unbuilt),
JMA



The architect of this library facility, which includes a 300-seat theater, used sustainable design and construction practices in hopes of achieving LEED Silver certification. "This design uses the issues of controlled daylighting to generate interesting, dignified forms within the modest budget limitations of public work," the judges commented. "If the completed project lives up to the expectations presented, it will demonstrate that LEED certification and handsome proportions can be good partners." The library is expected to open at Buffalo Drive and Deer Springs Way in September 2008.

**CCSN HEALTH SCIENCES
& NURSING BUILDING**
Citation (Built),
JMA



These science labs and classrooms are an attractive and authoritative addition to the Community College of Southern Nevada's West Charleston Campus. "A very well-designed, clear expression of functions and a simple direct use of materials," the judges said. "The massing reads well at distance with its contrast of synthetic stucco and stone with a play of darks and lights. This is a total three-dimensional composition with total continuity on all four elevations." And it has continuity with the already established campus, thanks to a plaza the architects created to complete the main pedestrian mall. They also made the building energy smart, with the aforementioned stucco and stone as the chief materials, and a rooftop designed for future installation of photovoltaics.

**ARLEN NESS
MOTORCYCLE SHOWROOM**
Citation (Built),
Carpenter Sellers
Architects



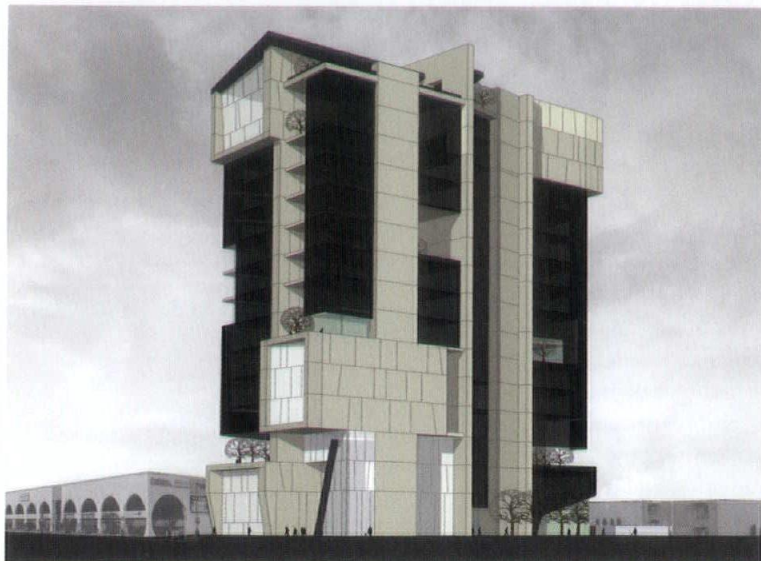
The client didn't give much input, but evidently he didn't need to—his individualized bikes provided enough inspiration for the project, which used an infill site across from a casino along Boulder Highway. "The challenge of this project was to give a simple Butler building the pizzazz worthy of Arlen Ness's fantastic motorcycle designs," the judges wrote. "The solution is a canopy and custom showroom window frame that roars action, motion, fun and 'zoom-zoom' while stopping short of painted flames." The canopy is made of Galvalume metal, which can reflect the colors of the motorcycles and the neon signage. Lighting was also an important part of the design, helping to establish the showroom's presence in an older part of town.

KONAMI GAMING
Citation (Built Interior
Environment), JMA



What's the most effective way to design a demo showroom for new slot machines? JMA's answer is a contemporary look that's unlike the traditional casino. In other words, an inviting but nondistracting environment. "There is a sparkle to the interior settings of the office that is derived from gaming but detailed and organized without the thunder of the casino," the judges wrote. "The warm tones of the color and materials along with the careful detailing of desks, counters, glass, material junctions and stair railings set this interior project apart." The two-story building, near Sunset and Bermuda roads, also houses the company's assemblage, storage and corporate office components.

DIA LAND ART CENTER
Citation (Academic),
Dave Nedrow



The future architect generated this design studio experiment by drawing from ideas of the Land Art movement. It's essentially a 17-floor high-rise of translucent concrete and black copper near UNLV (at Harmon Avenue and Maryland Parkway) that serves as a cultural mini city, with a gallery, classrooms, retail, residences, a café and, naturally, the Land Art Museum. But as the judges summed up, Dia is also "a piece of sculpture in itself," one inspired by the works of such land artists as Christo and Michael Heizer. On the more pragmatic side, the judges said that Nedrow's real challenge was, "How to provide interest and excitement to the usual high-rise curtain wall shafts. This solution creates a lively tower of blocks, ledges and atrium with green spaces, which expresses vertically its interior functions on each façade." Overall they found it to be "a wonderful place for displaying an art form that has as much to do with landscape as with architecture."

**CCSD TECHNOLOGY
BUILDING**
Citation (Unbuilt),
JMA

This Clark County School District structure's intent is to house and enhance pursuits of discovery, but it ended up being quite a find in its own right. Not only does its network of paths and interstices help echo the functions of the technology center's work, the building, on Covington Cross Drive, applies cutting-edge technology in the green field that could earn it a LEED Gold rating. "The pièce de résistance is the extensive sunshade over about 40 percent of the building," the judges commented. "While we wondered if a well-detailed sunshade would weather the inevitable budget crunching, we felt the design was worthy of citation with or without it." They also admired the overall look: "Simple, handsome massing, distinguished by a reserved material palette set this design apart."





Celebrating the Past, Designing the Future

TO COMMEMORATE ITS 150TH ANNIVERSARY, THE American Institute of Architects is presenting the nation with a gift: *Blueprint for America*. This centerpiece of a yearlong observation is a nationwide community service program designed to engage and empower citizens to share in creating better communities.

The goal of *Blueprint for America* is to help communities see what is possible when architects, mayors, civic and business leaders, and fellow citizens collaborate on community concerns and work together to produce a shared vision for a more livable future.

Meantime, the AIA Las Vegas and AIA Northern Nevada chapters have pledged to their support to an important program called the 2030 Challenge (see sidebar), designed to better integrate sustainability into practice and to build more livable communities. Chapter programs and events throughout the year will focus on these areas, and the public will have an opportunity to join in and make a difference.

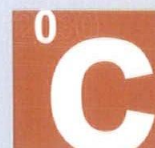
Across the nation, April 9-14 has been officially declared as "Architecture Week," and during this time programs and events will give citizens a voice in determining the future of their community. In Las Vegas, as a tribute to our rapidly growing desert city, the AIA Las Vegas Chapter will hold a "24-Hour Town Hall Meeting." Citizens, city officials, and civic and business leaders will collaborate on architect-led teams, focusing on the areas of energy, water, economic development, parks and recreation, education, health care, arts and culture, housing, public safety and transportation. They will develop a plan for making our city more sustainable and more livable.

The AIA's 10 Principles of Livable Communities will be used as the basis for the 24-Hour Town Hall Meeting. Once developed, the plan for Las Vegas will be memorialized into a "Blueprint for Nevada" and will be presented to the Valley's mayors and the governor along with a request to

establish an ongoing taskforce on livability and sustainability, and to implement the plan. The meeting will take place from noon April 13 till 1:30 p.m. April 14 on the UNLV campus. Call 702-895-0936 to RSVP and be assigned to a working group. ■

THE 2030 CHALLENGE

The American Institute of Architects supports the 2030 Challenge, issued by Ed Mazria, AIA, to educate our membership, with the goal of halving the amount of fossil fuel consumed by new buildings before the year 2030. Architects can make a profound impact on the condition of global warming and climate change simply by designing high-quality buildings that significantly reduce energy consumption and carbon dioxide production. Meeting the 2030 Challenge will reduce the amount of CO₂ (the primary "greenhouse" gas) in the atmosphere to pre-industrial levels.



Two ways to follow our progress

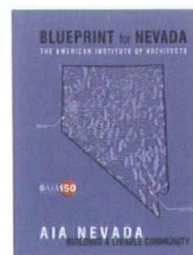


Through a strategic alliance with Google Earth, the American Institute of Architects has created an innovative, dedicated Web vehicle that makes it possible to see what other cities across the country are doing to incorporate sustainable design and to improve their communities. The site, earth.google.com, will highlight key elements of the AIA *Blueprint for America* projects, including the activities in Las Vegas and Reno, in the form of "bubbles" appearing on a navigable map of the United States.



Nevada Public Radio's KNPR News 88.9 will report on the progress of the Town Hall Meeting for the full 24 hours as well as provide interviews with key participants in the events during Architecture Week, including noted architectural critic Alan Hess and renowned environmental and sustainable design architect, Sim Van der Ryn. Tune to News 88.9 to learn about architectural projects and events that are important to the growth, development and livability of Las Vegas.

Blueprint for Nevada



The Las Vegas and Northern Nevada chapters (based in Reno) of the American Institute of Architects have pledged to create their own

Blueprint for Nevada, to be released at the end of this year. The publication will provide guidelines and information that can be used by government and public officials as well as citizens to improve their communities. This publication will be officially presented to Governor Jim Gibbons.



Moving On Up ...

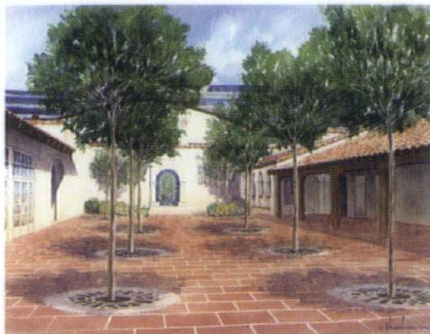
Fifth Street School revitalization project makes room for new AIA headquarters

ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING PROJECTS UNDER WAY IN LAS VEGAS IS THE revitalization of the historic Fifth Street School. Built in 1936, the 70-year-old former elementary school complex on Las Vegas Boulevard is being completely renovated for reuse as a "cultural oasis" in the heart of Downtown.

As if in answer to a prayer, the City of Las Vegas has invited the AIA Las Vegas Chapter to become a permanent tenant in the building, along with the UNLV Fine Arts Program, the Design Center for the School of Architecture, the Nevada School of the Arts and the City of Las Vegas Cultural Affairs Division.

This new location will help the chapter to establish a more visible, central presence in Las Vegas and will make it easier for the public to attend the lectures, exhibits and events that are offered by the organization. The revitalized facility will include a multipurpose gymnasium capable of accommodating up to 300 people, and a gallery space for exhibitions and smaller meetings. In addition, there will be open courtyards for outdoor activities, as well as the 16,000-square-foot Centennial Plaza that can be used for gatherings.

Projected completion date is December, with tenant move-in scheduled for January 2008. ■



A rendering of how the Fifth Street School courtyard will look by January.

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LOOKING AHEAD

ARCHITECTURE WEEK, APRIL 9-14

In celebrating this special week, in honor of the 150th anniversary of the American Institute of Architects, AIA Las Vegas has planned a variety of events and activities:

On April 9 we'll kick off Architecture Week with the opening of the newly restored Mid-Century Modern treasure, the Morelli House, at Ninth Street and Bridger Avenue, a project recently completed by the Junior League of Las Vegas. We will also be celebrating the publication of this magazine and welcoming Alan Hess, an authority on mid-century architecture, for his lecture on the Morelli House. RSVP to 822-6536 in order to attend.

On April 11 AIA Las Vegas will host its annual High School Design Awards. This is the recognition of fledgling designers from Clark County High Schools—tomorrow's architects in the making. Students, parents and instructors are invited to join AIA members and guests in the second-floor ballroom at the Gold Coast for the reception and awards ceremony, which begins at 5:30 p.m. RSVP to the AIA office, 895-0936.

The 24-Hour Town Hall Meeting, noon April 13 until 1:30 p.m. April 14.

AIA members, affiliated organizations, community groups and the general public are invited to participate in this charrette-style session, which is designed to figure out how Las Vegas can become a more livable and sustainable community. This working session, to be held at UNLV, will generate the ideas that will help to formulate the *Blueprint for Las Vegas* (see story on Page 90). Beginning at noon April 13, an introductory session will present the scope of the Town Hall Meeting. The keynote speech, by renowned environmental and sustainable design architect Sim Van der Ryn (see sidebar), will be from 1:30-2:30 p.m., followed by working sessions, led by architects and focused on Resources, Economic Development, Planning, Education, Social Infrastructure & Wellness, Arts and Culture, Housing, Public Safety and Transportation. Final presentations and concluding comments will be made to a panel of civic Leaders from noon to 1:30 p.m. April 14.

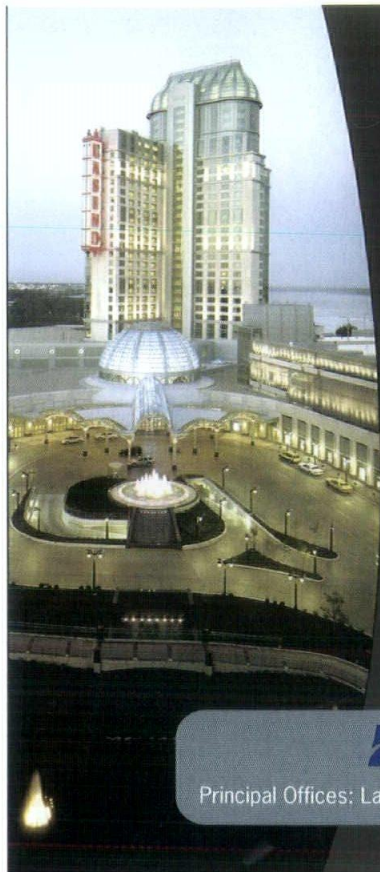


A 2006 Fall Putting Tournament Team.

Putting & Golf Tournaments

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• **Spring and Fall Putting Tournaments—April 27 and Sept. 7.** Both start at 6 p.m. at the Angel Park Golf Course.



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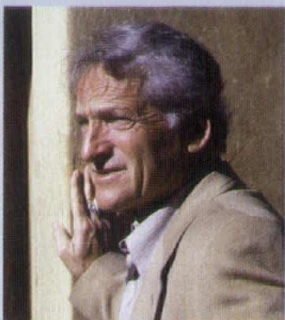


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Town Hall keynote speaker



Sim Van der Ryn, president of Van der Ryn Architects, is a renowned leader in sustainable architecture. For more than 35 years, his design, planning, teaching and public leadership have advanced the viability, acceptance and knowledge base of ecological principles and practices in architecture and planning. His vision, passion and keen insight into the opportunities and challenges of every project, in concert with his collaborative skills, have made ecological design a real solution for our times. Throughout his professional life, Van der Ryn has pioneered sustainable

design at the community scale and the building-specific scale. While serving as California State Architect, he developed the nation's first government-initiated energy-efficient office building program and led adoption of energy standards and disability access standards for all construction in California. In this capacity, he was responsible for planning and design of all state facilities, including the design and management of the State Park System.

• **34th Annual AIA Las Vegas Golf Tournament—June 1.** The longest running annual golf tournament in Southern Nevada continues, this year at the fabulous Paiute Golf Course. Besides a great day of golf, there will be prizes, food and awards, including the presentation of the coveted AIA Commemorative Trophy to the winning team. Teams and sponsorships available. Noon registration and 1:30 shotgun start.

• **AIA Western Mountain Region Conference—Sept. 12-15.** Hosted by the AIA Northern Nevada Chapter at beautiful Lake Tahoe, "Dreamscapes to Greenscapes" features a three-track program on sustainable design with nationally known speakers, featuring Ed Mazria, AIA, author of the "2030 Challenge," as the keynote.

AIA Nevada Excellence in Design & Distinguished Service Awards—Oct. 27. Hosted by the AIA Las Vegas Chapter at the Red Rock Resort, exceptional architectural projects from across the state will be on display.

For information about these or any AIA Las Vegas programs, please contact the AIA office at 702-895-0936, or visit our website, aialasvegas.org.

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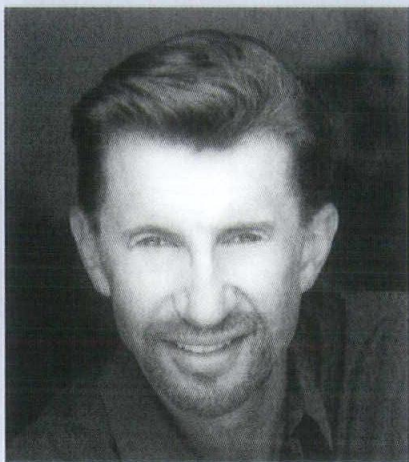


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HONORS & AWARDS

Each year, the state Chapter of the American Institute of Architects honors members and firms who have made significant contributions to the community and the profession through the various levels of AIA membership.



THE AIA NEVADA SILVER MEDAL

Edward A. Vance, AIA

The Silver Medal is the highest honor that the Nevada Chapter of the American Institute of Architects can bestow upon an individual. It is awarded in recognition of the most distinguished service to the profession of architecture. Only one Silver Medal is awarded each year, and in 2006 the honoree was Edward A. Vance. As a principal of Ed Vance & Associates, he has been an active and contributing member of AIA for 18 years. He has served as chairman of numerous committees, and served on the Board of Directors and as president of both the AIA Nevada and AIA Las Vegas chapters. Vance's leadership has advanced the profession of architecture in Nevada and throughout the region. He has established aggressive education and mentoring

programs for interns and has served as an adjunct professor at the UNLV School of Architecture. He was the AIA State Intern Development Program coordinator from 1997-2003, assisting numerous students and young designers to licensure. His extensive service to the Las Vegas community includes continuing service on the Board of Trustees for the Lied Discovery Children's Museum, the Boy Scouts of America Executive Committee, and the Faith Lutheran High School Business Advisory Council. Vance is dedicated to elevating the profession of architecture and to enhancing the livability and sustainability of his community. He is an excellent role model for young architects everywhere.



THE AIA NEVADA SERVICE AWARD

Larry J. Macias, AIA

This award is presented annually to an AIA member architect in recognition of service to the profession and to the American Institute of Architects. The 2006 recipient, Larry Macias, was selected in recognition of his efforts to build a stronger profession in the state through continuing education of architects. He is a past president of AIA Nevada, currently serves as president of the Northern Nevada Chapter and is chair of the 2007 Western Mountain Region Conference.

AIA NEVADA YOUNG ARCHITECT CITATIONS

This award is presented to architects who, at an early stage of their career, have shown exceptional leadership in design, education and service to the profession. In 2006, two recipients were selected:



Mike Del Gatto, AIA

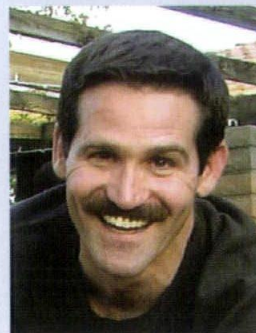
Del Gatto became licensed as an architect in 2003 and has been an active and contributing member of AIA Las Vegas since then, currently serving on the Board of Directors. He is dedicated to elevating the profession, volunteering his time to programs that support the UNLV School of Architecture, Clark County School District and other civic organizations. His design work has received praise from clients and awards from AIA Nevada, NAIOF, CEFPI and other organizations.



AIA NEVADA ALLIED MEMBER AWARD

Shelly Cannon

This award is presented to the AIA Nevada allied member who has contributed significantly to the profession of architecture through participation in his or her local chapter. As an ardent supporter of AIA Las Vegas and a dedicated member of the architecture and design industry, Cannon has contributed significantly to the betterment of both the chapter and the profession. Her work as a volunteer and a team leader for important fundraising projects for AIA and the SDA have helped each organization to prosper.



Mark Hobaica, AIA

Licensed as an architect in 1997, Hobaica is dedicated to building a better community through the AIA and through his work as director of construction for the City of Henderson. He currently serves as president-elect for the AIA Las Vegas Board of Directors and will ascend to the presidency in 2008. He believes in the value of continuing education and its ability to elevate the profession and to protect the health, safety and welfare of the public.

THE AIA NEVADA LIVABLE COMMUNITY AWARD

The Nevada Chapter of the American Institute of Architects has created the Livable Community Award in order to recognize individuals and organizations outside the architectural profession who have made contributions to the security, culture, revitalization, beauty and sustainability of their communities, helping make Nevada a better place to live. Since established last spring, the award has been given to the following people:

Hal K. Rothman

Former Professor of History, UNLV

Rothman, who passed away earlier this year, was a longtime advocate and spokesman for Las Vegas. As an author, professor and columnist, his insights and commentaries helped to redefine our city and create a better understanding of our unique community—here as well as throughout the world.



Lamar Marchese

President and CEO

Nevada Public Radio

Marchese's dedicated effort to bring quality radio programming and an enhanced awareness of arts and culture to our communities has been exceptional and has certainly contributed to the livability of our community.



E. Dale Scheideman, AIA

*Former Director of Planning and Construction
Clark County School District*

Scheideman believed that schools should be functional for the whole community and could make communities more livable by being used as the centers for community activities. Through his efforts, sustainability and public access have been integrated into the design and planning process for all schools in Clark County.



Mayor Oscar Goodman

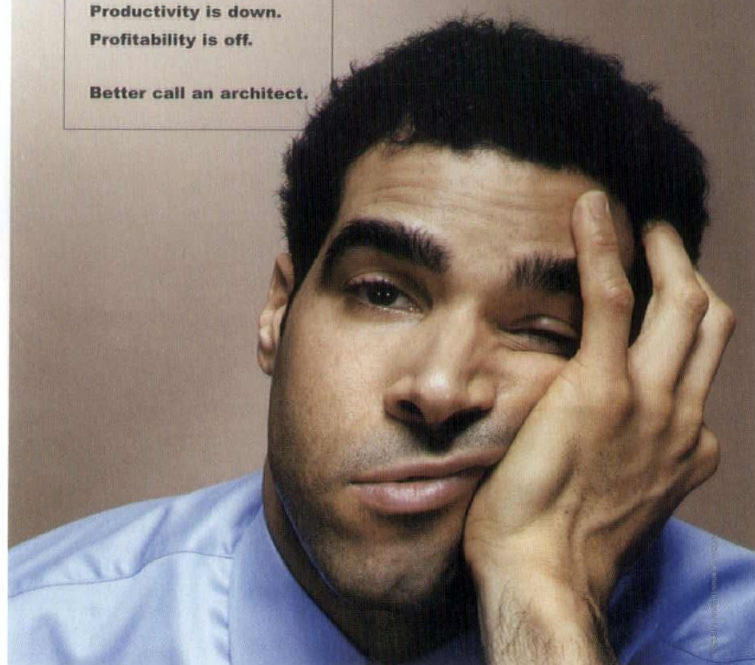
Mayor of the City of Las Vegas

Mayor Goodman's dedication to promoting our city, generation of a greater awareness of our built environment, continuous encouragement of quality architecture and his efforts to create an enhanced appreciation of arts and culture prove his commitment to building a more beautiful, sustainable and livable Las Vegas.

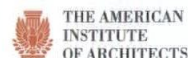


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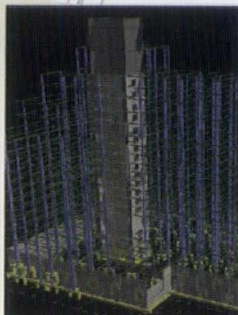
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HARMON CENTRE

Architect and lead designer: JMA

Client: DR Horton

Builder: DR Horton

Location: Koval Lane and Rochelle Street.

Objectives: Create a multi-use project including residential (1,500 units, from studios to penthouses with rooftop terraces), office, retail and restaurant. Due to the overall site grade variance of 17 feet, it was a challenge to maintain and integrate the various levels of the multiple buildings that work together.

Special attributes: The overall architectural appearance and use of materials with Frank Lloyd Wright detailing is strongly influenced by the Chicago theme. The center is comprised of three residential towers ranging from 15 to 24 stories. Each has a brick facade similar to residential areas on the East Coast, and a unique design with a target age group in mind.

Size: 500,000 square feet

Completion: June 2009

BOYS & GIRLS CLUB, McCABE UNIT

Architect and lead designer: SH Architecture, Curt Carlson, AIA

Client: Boys & Girls Club of Las Vegas

Builder: TBD

Location: Harris Avenue and Manning Street

Objectives: To replace an existing club with a functional, no-frills building that provides a safe place for children to play and study in this east Las Vegas community. There will be an administrative wing that includes a community education center, gallery, food bank and satellite offices for other community service organizations. SH has been providing design services to Boys and Girls Clubs in the Valley for nearly 20 years. This time, SH sought to freshen the club design vocabulary and update the brand for the 21st century.

Special attributes: Security, openness and light. While the McCabe Unit is a no-frills building, SH has not abandoned good sense. By incorporating time-tested principles of building orientation, daylighting, shading and building envelope design, the energy models suggest that the McCabe Unit will run efficiently with low operating costs. The updated design includes the trademark blue roof enclosing a light-filled multi-purpose room. The new units, with repeated features such as window patterns, entry canopies and materials, will be recognizable throughout the Valley as part of the Boys and Girls Club.

Size: 27,000 square feet

Completion date: TBD



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WHAT IS THE AIA?

The AIA stands for the American Institute of Architects. It is the national association for architects and design professionals. When you see the designation "AIA" following the name of an architect, it means that he or she is a fully licensed and registered architect who upholds the highest standards of ethics and professional practice. It means that he or she is a member of The American Institute of Architects (AIA), and they are dedicated to providing quality design, safeguarding the public and improving our built environment.

The American Institute of Architects was created in 1857. For the last 150 years the organization has provided education, government advocacy, community development and public outreach activities, and has endeavored to create an environment that is responsive to the people it serves. As members of the AIA, more than 80,000 licensed architects and associated professionals express their commitment to quality design and livability in our communities throughout the country.

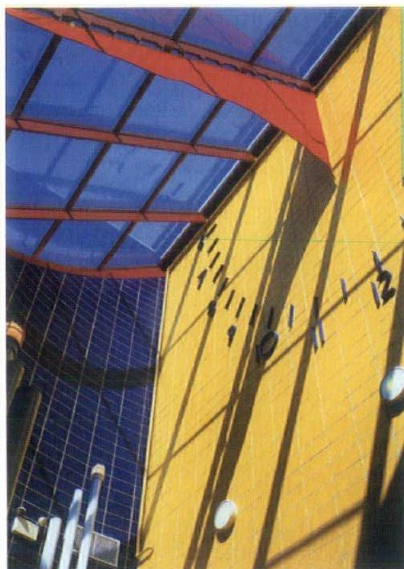
The Las Vegas Chapter of the American Institute of Architects – AIA Las Vegas – was established in 1956, and has served the Las Vegas community for over fifty years.

JOIN AIA LAS VEGAS

The architects and design professionals of AIA Las Vegas invite you to join with us to generate a greater awareness of art and architecture in our community and to improve the quality of our built environment.



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
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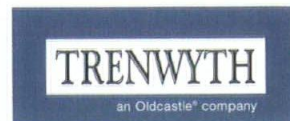


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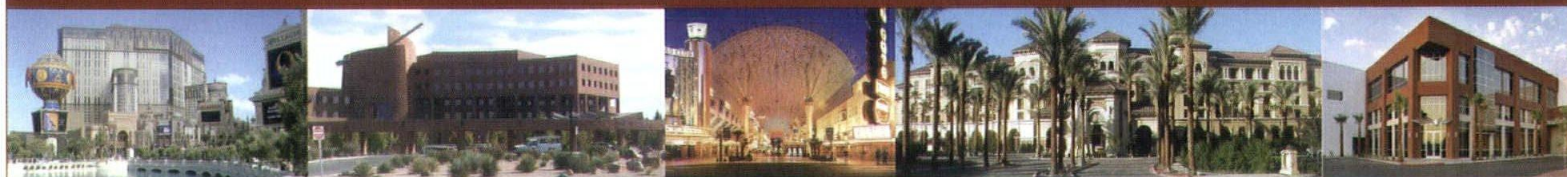
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TERMINAL 3

Architect and lead designer: PGAL, Ken Brown, AIA

Client: Department of Aviation

Location: McCarran International Airport

Objectives: To build a new terminal with 14 new aircraft gates, an ATS Station connecting it to the existing 36-gate Concourse D, and a new Central Plant, plus facilities that range from ticketing and baggage claim to concession and gaming areas.

Special attributes: The terminal features maintenance-free exterior materials intended to weather naturally in the desert environment. The "landside" building is a simple stone form with carved stone glass "fissures" or "canyons" marking the entry points to the terminal and an expansive, sun-controlled glazed west wall offering views to the terminal interior. The airside building is a truncated zinc-clad form with deep-set glazed openings to shield the southern exposure. Glazing within the roof structure marks vertical passenger movements to landside facilities.

Size: 2 million square feet

Completion date: 2011



PANORAMA 3

Architect and lead designer: Klai Juba Architects, Jon DeVries

Client: Panorama Tower III, LLC

Builder: Taylor International Corp.

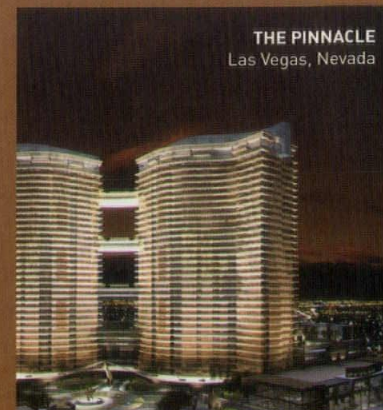
Location: 4471 Dean Martin Dr.

Objective: To build the third tower in the Panorama residential development—on a very tight site.

Special attributes: Contains 378 condominiums ranging from one-bedroom units to penthouses. Facilities include spa and pool, exercise rooms and meeting spaces. The tower is orientated to maximize views of the Las Vegas Strip.

Size: 45 stories, 927,500 square feet

Completion date: Summer 2008



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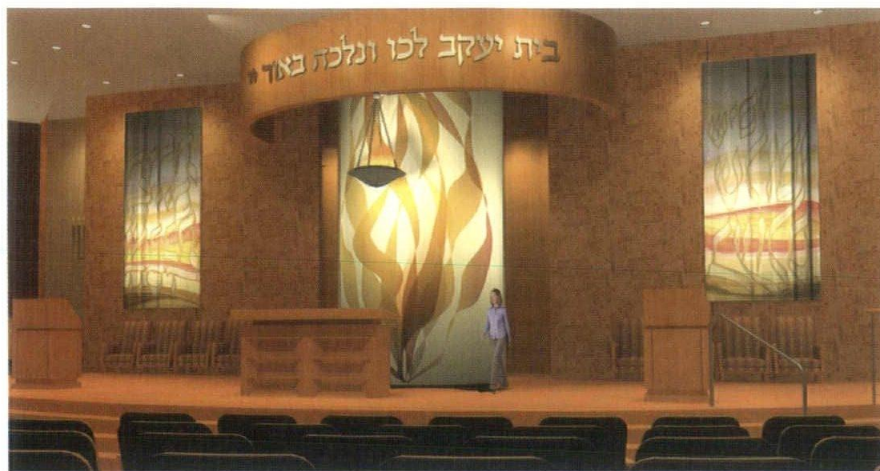


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Architect and lead designer: YWS Architects and Jonathan Sparer

Client: Congregation Ner Tamid

Builder: Isaac Building and Design.

Location: 55 N. Valle Verde Dr. and I-215, Henderson

Objectives: To create a warm, welcoming and intimate campus-like environment and sanctuary for Jewish life, learning and spiritual renewal.

Special attributes: The campus incorporates many renewable building materials, including the concrete tilt-up panels that form the structure, metal deck roofing and thick insulation. Passive solar energy design maximize the energy efficiency of the building. The large windows in the sanctuary have roll-down solar shades that protect the room when not in use. The colors of the campus were derived from seven species of plants from the Bible: wheat, barley, pomegranate, fig, honey, grapevines and olives. These colors are also associated with our desert.

Size: 60,000 square feet

Completion date: First phase completed; Phase II (classrooms) in August.



NEVADA STATE COLLEGE ACADEMIC & STUDENT SERVICES BUILDING

Architect and lead designer: Carpenter Sellers Architects, Michael Del Gatto, AIA, NCARB, LEED AP

Client: State of Nevada Public Works Board

Location: Henderson

Objectives: The first building of the new campus, housing classrooms, labs and faculty offices, is to fit into the desert landscape to enhance the natural surroundings. CSA is working closely with NSPWB and NSC to develop a program that meets curriculum requirements and maintain the strict budget. The goals for design include maximizing the square footage, and daylighting classrooms and offices.

Special attributes: This design responds to desert, setting the tone for future buildings on campus. It will also provide outdoor spaces.

Size: 42,000 square feet

Completion date: TBD; construction under way



NORTH COMMUNITY POLICE STATION

Architect and lead designer: Tate Snyder Kimsey

Client: City of Henderson

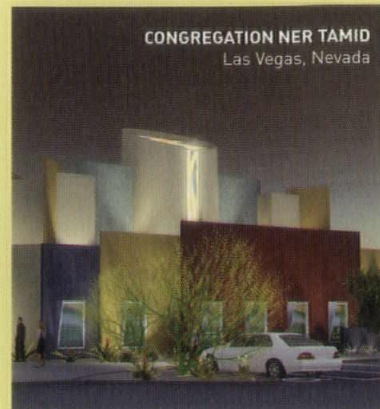
Location: Sunset Road and Moser Drive

Objectives: Tate Snyder Kimsey began this project in 2004 with a study to identify the City of Henderson's needs for law enforcement facilities through 2015. Expanding service areas and explosive population growth led to the strategy of building new community police stations throughout the city, beginning with this facility, which includes training and briefing rooms, offices, evidence handling and storage areas, lockers, a fitness room and an armory. Ultimately, the new police stations are designed to deter criminal activities in neighborhoods, improve response times, promote safety, enhance connections to the community, and encourage economic growth in the targeted service areas.

Special attributes: Designed to meet LEED-NC standards. The building envelope has been designed to exceed the requirements of the 2003 International Energy Conservation Code. Large overhangs are intended to mitigate direct solar gain through the windows, which are high-performance low-E. The metal panel system will quickly dissipate heat at the end of the day, allowing the building skin to cool, rather than storing and saturating the skin with heat. To demonstrate the use of alternative energy resources and take advantage of rebate programs offered by Nevada Power Company, a 30-kilowatt photovoltaic array will be installed on top of carports in the employee parking lot. To maintain a high level of indoor air quality, the construction documents specify low or zero VOC requirements for all adhesives, sealants, paints and coatings, carpet systems and composite wood products.

Size: 35,600

Completion date: December



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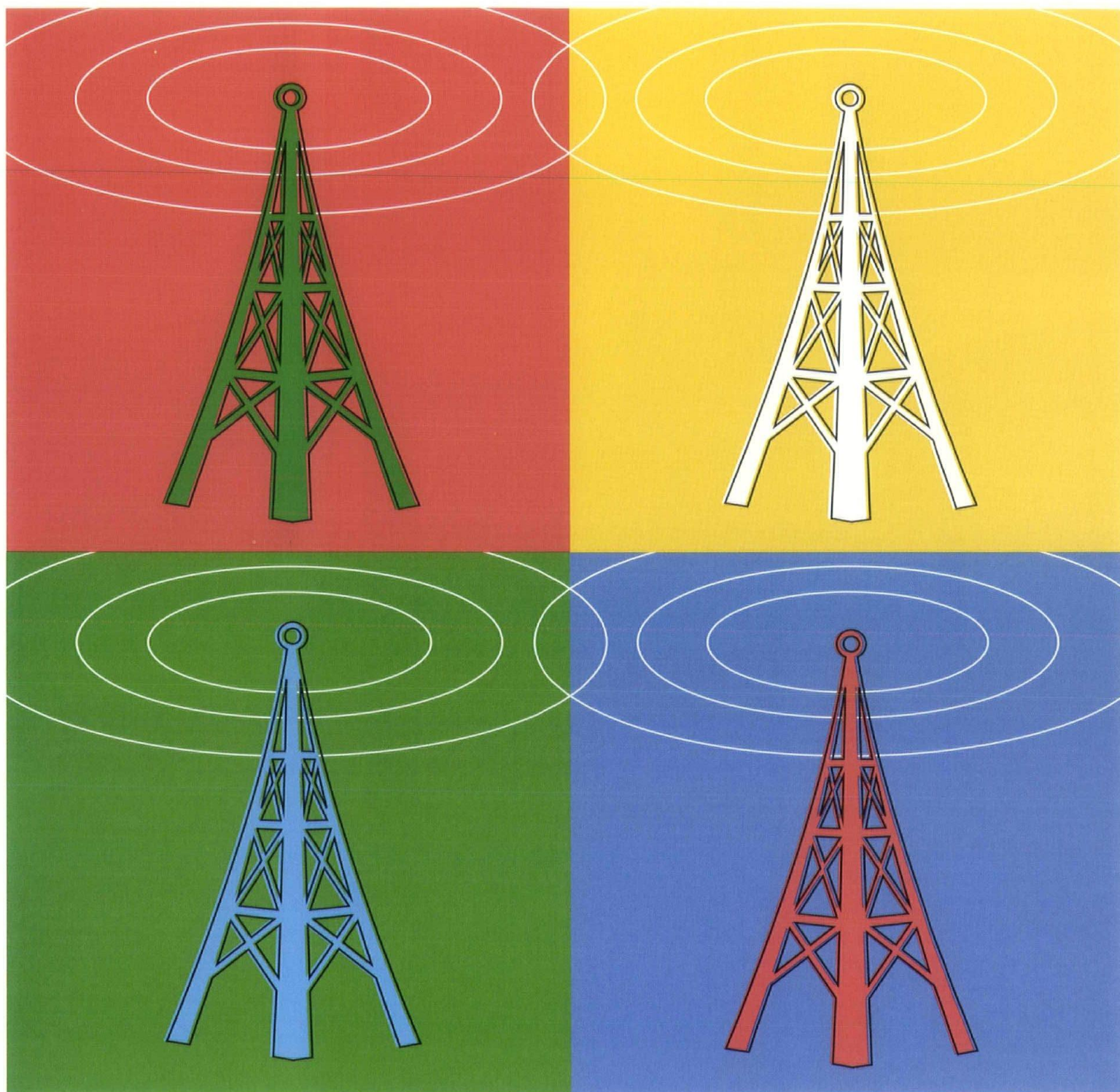
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PLANET HOLLYWOOD

Architect and lead designer: Klai Juba Architects, Jon DeVries

Client: OpBiz, LLC (Planet Hollywood)

Builder: M.J. Dean

Location: The old Aladdin, Las Vegas Boulevard

Objective: The transformation of the facade, complete renovation of all casino areas to a club and lounge atmosphere (designed by Dougall Design Associates), remodel of existing and creation of new restaurants, complete remodel of the hotel lobby including various structural infills, and refitting of all hotel guest rooms. Concurrent with remodel of the adjacent Desert Passage Shops by Gensler and Friedmutter Group, the result will be a modern facility based on contemporary design, shifting away from the themed style of the former Aladdin.

Completion date: Fall 2007



NEVADA STATE MUSEUM

Architect and lead designer: Paul Steelman Design Group

Client: Las Vegas Springs Preserve

Builder: J.A. Tiberti Construction

Location: The northern end of the preserve.

Objectives: To fit its context and reflect Nevada's sense of place. To educate, motivate and inspire people to explore Nevada's rich history. To achieve LEED certification.

Special attributes: More than 16,600 square feet of exhibition space as well as many support areas, such as educational class and orientation rooms, a historical documents library, major collections storage areas and a special events area with stunning views of the Strip. There will be many interactive exhibits to engage the visitor to enter into a specific moment in time, as well as exhibits that relate specifically to this area as part the entire history of Nevada.

Size: Two stories, 78,000 square feet

Completion date: Spring 2009

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New Urbanism *continued from page 53*

While both projects may serve as an indication that New Urbanism has yet to catch on here, Calthorpe believes that Las Vegas may be better poised than its bigger desert sister city to the south, Phoenix.

"Part of it is the governance," he says. "There seems to be a tradition of progressive governance there [in Las Vegas], and a fairly creative developer group."

Fairly creative, maybe, but not completely. City planner Howe, who has been unsuccessful in launching a mountain states chapter of the Congress, notes that the design movement still suffers from the stigma that it's "that cute crap with the picket fences." Figures like Duany have emerged as a cult of personality, and some developers think they're being asked to commit too much money to meaningless details such as doorknobs.

Calthorpe wouldn't respond to questions about Kyle Canyon, and Ritter concedes the architect would likely not consider the project his own. On the other hand, "I think Inspirada is very close to Duany's vision. It certainly is very close to the original plan he put together."

Duany noted that his firm is doing New Urbanist projects "everywhere at the rate of three per month for developers," and refused to comment on the Vegas project without seeing detailed renderings.

Inspirada, located south of the Henderson Executive Airport, is slated for 11,500 units, but another couple thousand units will likely be added. Homes started selling there in January. The project is organized into "villages" built around a community center and park that's no farther than a quarter-mile walk from any residence. The community center will be configured to support a variety of small retail outlets, like a general store or community newspaper. Inspirada will preserve the major arroyos that run through the landscape to help provide clearly definable open spaces that run between the communities.

As is typical in New Urbanism, garages will be deemphasized and services such as trash removal will be moved to alleyways. The homes will be closer together, and Ritter promises more four-sided architecture that mixes different design styles more freely—a Tudor next to a French colonial next to a mission. "If you keep doing what you are doing and create this sea of stucco boxes with red tile roofs and push them closer together it

just becomes hideous and monotonous."

Inspirada apparently takes its cues from the pleasingly random arrangement of streets of a European central city. Ritter goes so far as to reference, as a design touchstone, Barcelona, whose dazzlingly urban Las Ramblas district, with its narrow, pedestrian-friendly streets angling this way and that, is a study in perfectly calibrated chaos.

Kyle Canyon Gateway, at the junction of Kyle Canyon Road and U.S. 95, is planned for 15,000 units on 1,700 acres. Its first models won't be ready until 2008. Kyle will be more American in its standard street grid layout—though there will be sections pulled off the grid. Perhaps improbably, Ritter likens the aesthetic that Focus is shooting for to the quintessential American urban environment, New York's Greenwich Village.

The town centers of both projects will feature vertical mixed-use buildings that Ritter likens to the The District on steroids. Both will have transit hubs, but it's unclear what they will connect to. Las Vegas lacks a compelling valley-wide transportation network. The Northern Beltway, which runs adjacent to Kyle Canyon, has room for light rail or another transit option, but Inspirada is not on the route for the mass-transit system Henderson planners have been working on. "We are woefully behind in mass transit in our city," Ritter says.

Despite that, he disagreed when asked whether these projects represent an exception in a market still pitched squarely toward the usual suburban development. "I think that working closely with the cities of Henderson and Las Vegas, they were as much pushing this kind of a project as we were," he says. "I doubt you will see them approve traditional post-World War II-type projects again. We haven't done one of these in the county yet. At least in Las Vegas and Henderson, the bar has been raised."

And consumer interest, he hopes, will soon follow. Despite the slowing market, Focus has received a thousand website hits from interested parties, who liken the developments to the neighborhoods where they grew up. "There is a huge pent-up demand," Ritter says.

As for the New Urbanist architects, there are no hard feelings. He describes Duany and Calthorpe as "the best guys in the world. I would work with either of them again."

Then again, "I don't know about the builders in our consortium." ■

Neighborhoods *continued from page 69*

stroll through The District, with its shops and restaurants. At nearby Discovery Park, people watchers will find families on leisurely walks and Sunday-morning yoga lessons al fresco.

"It's got everything a family needs for play right in the area," says Mike Altishin, a Realtor with Realty Executives of Nevada. "It has all the things you could want for a good, fun life."

Altishin, who doesn't live in Green Valley Ranch but has indulged in the Sunday yoga sessions there, says that if he were in the market for a new home, he knows where he'd look. "With that concentration of amenities nearby, Carriage Club has a sense of community that much of Las Vegas has lost as it's grown. Green Valley Ranch in general is just a really tight community, with its greenbelts and leisure infrastructure. People love it. I can't imagine anyone would want to leave."

INSPIRADA: IDENTITY FROM THE START

Few structures sap a city of communal energy like subdivision walls. And across Las Vegas, mile after mile of cinderblock stand sentinel over neighborhoods, acting as symbolic and literal obstacles to forging a broader community character and identity.

Finally, a local developer is going borderless. Inside Focus Property Group's Inspirada, a 2,000-acre master plan under way in Henderson, subdivision walls are out. The goal, says Project Manager Greg Varricchio, is "to create a sense of interaction within the community, where people know their neighbors

and feel they belong to the community.

Focus is doing more than inspiring principles of New Urbanism (related story on Page 53), it is requiring each homebuilder to feature a minimum of four housing styles in each neighborhood. That means a Spanish colonial might flank a traditional American craftsman. Alleys allow builders to shift garages to the homes' rears and emphasize front porches, and streets have a grid layout that minimizes the use of chokepoint-forming cul-de-sacs. The home and community designs will "create a more interesting streetscape and more of a sense of place," Varricchio says.

The plans are all part of the five "community characteristics" that Varricchio says will drive Inspirada: walkability, enhanced architecture and planned design, integration of public facilities into neighborhoods, preservation of the area's natural environment, and open space.

Varied housing styles and grid-style street layouts account for the enhanced architecture and design. As for the remaining elements, Inspirada's seven villages will each have its own central public space, with parks or neighborhood shops and stores. Villages will be linked via trails and linear parks, and every subdivision will be within a short walk of a community park. Shade trees will line narrow boulevards to encourage walking.

"There's an emerging, broader conscience on behalf of consumers to create a sense of community," Varricchio says. "We've really tried to weave the design into the fabric of Henderson, so it becomes a made-in-Henderson solution." ■

Gilcrease Orchard *continued from page 73*

But the commission voted 6-0 in September 2005 to approve the development, arguing that it conformed to the county's land-use plan.

Orchards, needless to say, are not a prominent feature on Valley zoning maps.

Neighbors and preservationists still worry about the orchard's future, but Racel insists the proceeds from the land sale ensure the orchard will be here "forever."

"Forever is a long time but forever is our goal," Racel says. "The orchard has arrived at a kind of balance: It still loses money but it does so at a rate that the Gilcrease Foundation's endowment can support it in perpetuity. Everything we do is aimed at keeping the land operating as an orchard for the public to visit and enjoy."

Racel's words are heartfelt, but some still

fear for the orchard's future. Among them is Bob Morris, a longtime horticulturist with the University of Nevada Cooperative Extension.

"The demise of the Gilcrease Orchard is inevitable unless a comprehensive plan is put together to save it and protect it," Morris says. "That does not appear to be happening. What the Gilcreases will get is a road named after them and we will again lose part of our history and heritage."

The Gilcrease Orchard is a vital remnant of historic Las Vegas, a relic from a time before concrete, stucco and iron dominated the landscape. Besides being a rare and valuable urban green space, it's a place that improves the quality of life just by existing. If it is ever swallowed up by suburban sprawl, Las Vegas will gain a few hundred houses but lose a unique agricultural resource and a living link to its past. ■

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here place orders before leaving. It seems that the strategy of deploying architecture to motivate consumption works at the wholesale as well as retail levels, yet another layer in Jerde's community of consumers.

The second building, sited at a right angle to the first, opened earlier this year and its character is revealed in two major ways. First is the exterior feature of a triangular glass prow that juts out into what will be a partially enclosed plaza. It points along and defines the axis for the remaining six buildings, and is a transparent column that, although the building has no windows until the top floor, uses natural light to integrate all 16 levels. The second feature is hidden until you're standing underneath it in the lobby, a circular reveal cutting up through 14 floors above and crossed by esca-

high. While the market's exterior walls are made of lightweight reinforced stucco-covered foam, they nonetheless will present an almost Pharonic sculptural mass defining a boulevard. This bulwark will seal off the gaze of travelers on the freeway, a deliberate reference to Wynn's new strategy on the Strip of allowing you to satisfy your curiosity only if you enter the premises. This will heighten the sense of privilege for the buyers, and we know how that works: It strengthens the sense of ownership within an exclusive community, which encourages buying.

Samson and Jerde are participating in an international consolidation and consequent marketplace expansion that major industries are pushing in a global economy. It's not as simple as large firms buying out small ones, jobs being outsourced from North Carolina to China, and economy of scale. It also has to do with increasing access to new products and raising

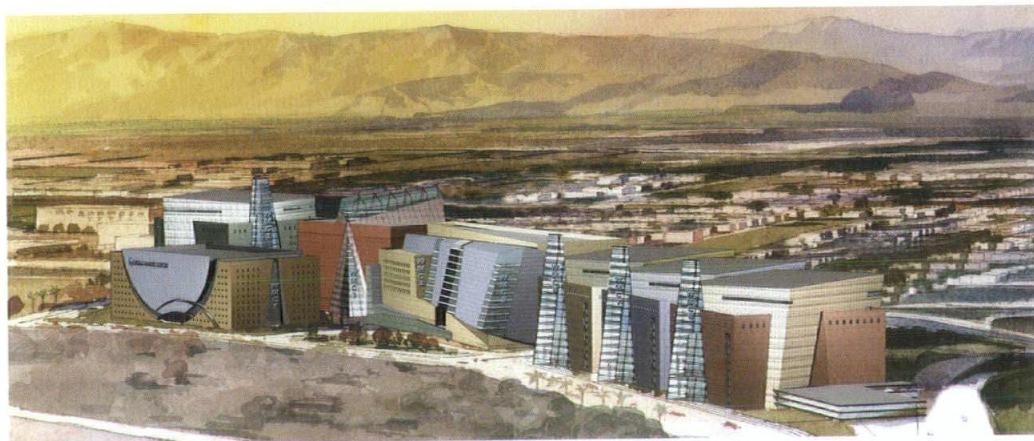
they put a picture of it on one of their banknotes. The towers were boxy, architecturally undistinguished and stuck up like sore thumbs in Lower Manhattan until, years later, their profiles were gradually subsumed into a stepped pyramidal skyline as office buildings grew up around them. But they were—by virtue of their designation as the World Trade Center, and their enormous verticality—America's tallest minarets, and they symbolized our worship of commerce.

The World Market Center is a horizontal instead of a vertical mecca, the opposite of a skyscraper. Its architecture both participates in and expresses a broad integration across an industry that is expanding the breadth of its market. But it is also a rhetorical device that announces globalization has style. Regardless of what one thinks of homogenized products in a global economy, or the conflation of consumerism with community, it is impossible not to admire the ambition of the market's owners and designers, and the level of creativity being applied in both the architecture and financing. It is understandable that Samson, standing in the middle of what will be a contemporary version of a European plaza surrounded by 300-foot-tall geometric forms, would gesture around him and say, "I want people to experience awe when they stand here in the middle of what I call 'cathedrals of commerce.'"

Jerde and Samson have also been much more savvy in their conception of a world center than was the developer of the brute modernism shoehorned into the bottom of Manhattan. The market in Las Vegas is designed with sensitivity to its initial environment, as well as to what will evolve around it—namely the 61 acres across the street that is being developed into a mixed-use urban center.

Las Vegas was a destination that I always thought might be so dependent upon gaming and entertainment that, no matter how clever its themeing, could prove stale in the long run. In the last decade it has been a relief to see the money in town move beyond re-creating everywhere else's greatest hits, be they the Eiffel Tower or a Roman villa, and to commission original architecture of note. People began to erect signature business and residential buildings by terrific local firms, as well as by notable architects from around the country. That trend has only intensified with superstars such as Gehry and Norman Foster now designing buildings in town.

Jerde and Samson are cutting yet another edge, one that allows Las Vegas, along with cities such as Shanghai and Dubai, to invent the future. I can't think of another American city where that is more likely to happen. ■



lators. Providing visual interior balance with open transport in a windowless building is at once an obvious and intelligent strategy.

After we visited the 16th floor of the second building, the 22,000 square feet of which include a restaurant and ballroom for special functions, we stood outside in order to envision the effect the remaining buildings will have. Buildings three, four and five—out of the total of eight structures—will, in essence, be a single long structure completed in three stages. When first drawn, the third building was to include just over two million square feet. It's currently up to five million and counting.

"The Pentagon is the world's largest building, you know—6.5 million square feet," Samson mused. He looked around, grinned, shrugged. Its clear he wouldn't mind breaking the record, and given the overwhelming response to the market so far, it seems possible.

The completed buildings will form a long wall that in places will stand more than 300 feet

the sophistication of the wholesale sector, which translates into educating retailers and their customers. That creates market growth. Samson's background in architecture didn't just provide him with an opportunity to develop a connoisseurship for contemporary design, it enabled him to correctly surmise that Jerde's architectural strategies at the retail level could be applied to good effect within the deeper interactions between manufacturers and wholesalers.

The naming of the World Market Center promotes comparison with its near namesake, the World Trade Center, which held 10 million square feet of office space for up to 50,000 office workers. If you designate something a "world center" and build to scale, you automatically assume iconic status. The architecture of the twin towers had, ironically enough, incorporated some of the same Islamic themes the architect Minoru Yamasaki had used when he created the King Fahd Dhahran Air Terminal in Saudi Arabia, a building the Saudis admired so much



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Las Vegas, 2032

How will the city have reinvented itself 25 years from now? For starters, you won't need any friends ... **BY JOHN L. SMITH**

I FINISHED A MARTINI WITH HUMPHREY BOGART AT MY FAVORITE table by the big picture window at Icon, the Boulevard ultra-lounge, and watched as the latest leggy diva of desire flashed like an inferno of flesh up the 60-story Wah tower.

This place tells you all you need to know about what Las Vegas has become in 25 years. The view is incredible, and in recent months I've hung out at Icon with Tony Bennett, Marilyn Monroe and even Jenna Jameson. But Bogey remains

level. Las Vegas has passed through the flat-screen billboard phase and has embraced a technology so advanced that by night the buildings come alive like giants. The effects are so dramatic—there's nothing like watching a 600-foot-tall image of Jilalynn Spears (you remember Britney's baby girl, right?) as she undulates the entire length of the Wah—that it's easy to lose yourself along the Boulevard's air-conditioned moving walkway.

The Strip is a pedestrian mall with musicians and acrobats and kiosks featuring everything from margaritas to brief sexual encounters. Above the endless carnival towers the world's greatest architectural gallery. A different master has designed each new resort. There's Frank Gehry (we knew he'd come around), but also Zapata and the spiritual descendants of Antonio Gaudi. There's even a Chihuly design on the Hotel Fleur de Lis.

Who would have thought that what began as attempts by Wynn and Adelson to outdo each other as art aficionados would manifest itself in the last great reinvention of the Strip? Never underestimate the power of the entrepreneurial ego.

As for the rest of the Boulevard, well, let's just say no one went broke here tickling the lowest common denominator. There are the twin towers of the Dolly Parton Casino, the Vivid Adult Network's porn-themed pleasure palace, Joan Rivers' annoying Can We Talk? Comedy Club, the Don King Boxing Bar & Grille with its faux follicle façade, and the Starbucks

Resort, where the scent of French roast fills the air.

We've lost the Tropicana, Riviera and Excalibur, but have kept our sense of humor.

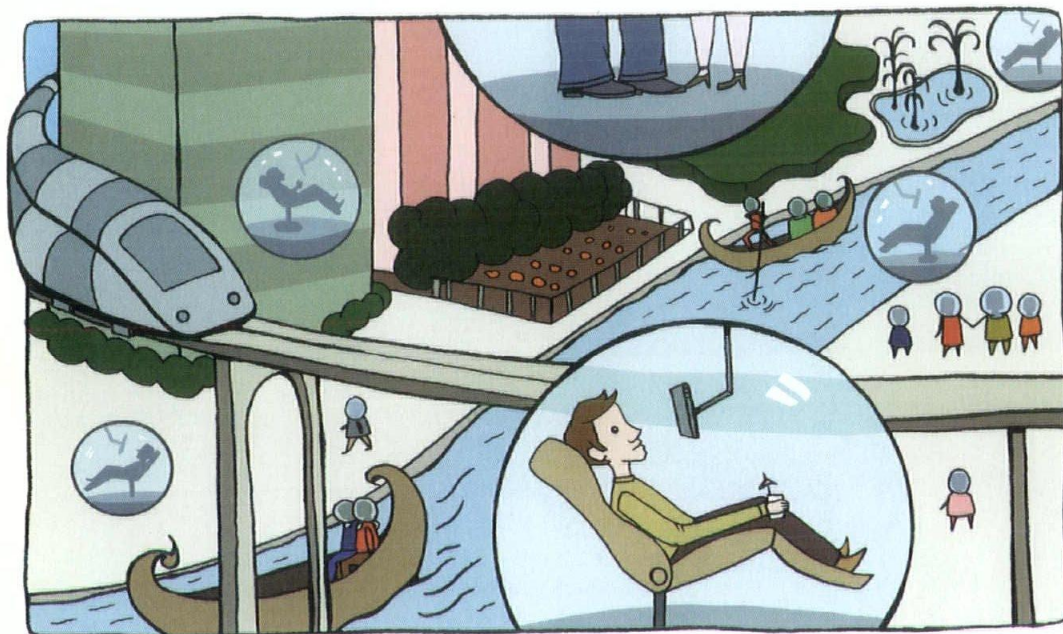
Though sunburn isn't funny. Global warming has made daylight dangerous. Mayor Trump has privatized the city parks, which are now domed and tinted to enable children to play without suffering heatstroke and third-degree burns. Few tourists recline by the pool: Twenty-something hard bodies have been known to fry like Jimmy Dean sausages in the time it takes to say, "It's a dry heat."

The good news is, someone finally bought the gigantic boring machine from the bankrupt Yucca Mountain Project and has begun carving a web of light-rail tunnels from Indian Springs to Boulder City. The bad news: The project is designed by the folks who brought us the Spaghetti Bowl.

For me, all roads lead to the Icon and my seat by the window. With Bogey's help, you can beat the blues in the new Las Vegas.

Alas, you still can't beat the tables.

Some things never change. ■



my favorite holographic character. His programming is so advanced I long ago stopped playing 20 questions with the image of the consummately cool Hollywood loner and have begun to develop what feels like a friendship. These days, the feeling of friendship is worth the 1,000 Euro credit-card hit.

It was Bogart, not Sinatra, who coined the phrase "Rat Pack" back when the Boys ran the town and the nightlife at the Sands defined hip for a generation. Bogey gives good advice, laughs more easily than you'd imagine, and remembers our previous conversations. He even says, "Here's looking at you, kid."

The Strip still has discos where couples and groups party all night, and Oscar Goodman's Block 16 brothel district Downtown draws sex tourists from around the world, but Gaming Inc. increasingly markets to the solo traveler. The guy drinking alone and gal dining with her paperback now have a refuge. Andre was onto something when he said, "Image is everything."

The Wah's great wall of media takes Venturi, Izenour and Brown's signage-as-architectural icon theme to the next

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