

residential architect

A HANLEY WOOD PUBLICATION / JANUARY · FEBRUARY 2002

mr. plan man

stock-plan king
don gardner
has a new scheme
up his sleeve



well-tailored american home / chilewichcraft
disarming the citizenry / dressed to infill /
great pretenders / moore is more

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ONE DEDICATED REP • ONE PERSON

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Stock-plan architect Don Gardner is drafting a new future for his family business. Above and cover photos by Ann States/SABA.

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Architect Don Gardner made his fortune drafting stock house plans. Now, the king of Country-style home design is building castles in the sand.

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INDUSTRY CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Building Security through Design: Protective Environments in an Open Society

American Institute of Architects
January 10-13 in Albuquerque, NM

This timely conference focuses on the balance of security issues and design. In the wake of September 11, architects and building owners face new challenges to design buildings that help protect the safety of occupants and visitors. This need for security measures must be balanced with the values of openness and accessibility in a free society. For more information contact CD Pangallo at (202) 626-7410 or cpangallo@aia.org.



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Experiences in Design-Build: The Expanding Dimensions of Practice and Education

American Institute of Architects and the
Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
February 15-17 in Atlanta, GA

This conference addresses the challenges practitioners and academics face as they strive to embrace the design-build method of delivery. For more information contact Patricia Lukas at (202) 626-7576 or plukas@aia.org or www.aia.org/pia/db/.

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in·spi·ra·tion *n.* the stimulation within the mind of some idea, feeling or impulse which leads to creative action.



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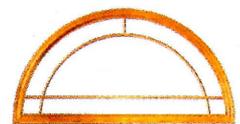
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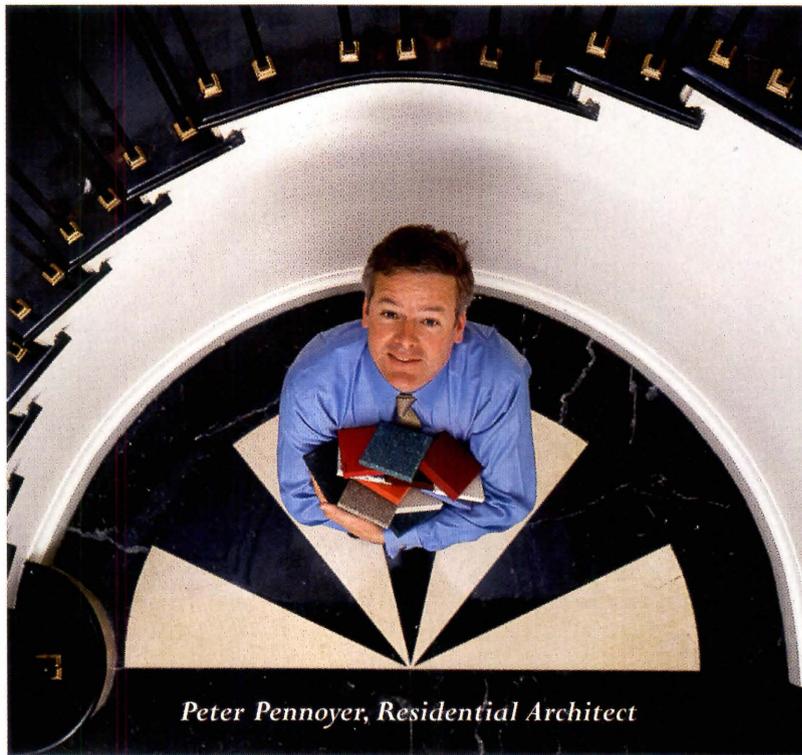
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Peter Pennoyer, Residential Architect

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architect Vitruvius. With a strong residential focus, Peter's designs are as functional as they are stunning. How do Corian® and Zodiaq® surfaces live up to such principles? Quite well. "They stand the test of time aesthetically and structurally," Pennoyer says. "And they're available in a wide range of unique colors and

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from the editor

so far, so good

residential architects are in the right niche at the right time.

by s. claire conroy

We've all enjoyed a great luxury in the past few years: a booming economy. During the boom, many talented architects found it difficult NOT to succeed. In a downturn, it takes more than natural ability in your profession to do well—it also requires some sharp business skills. Those architects who weathered the last recession may have the strongest posttraumatic-stress symptoms right now, but they're also likely the best prepared for any hit to the housing industry.

Fortunately, the housing industry is still alive and kicking. Thank you very much. While your peers practicing other kinds of architecture are struggling a little these days, residential practices are holding their own.

So far in this peculiar recession, it's the specialists who are standing strong. The generalists are getting hit from all sides. Of course, it matters what niche you're in, but for now, the housing industry is flourishing. And the kind of housing most residential architects design is especially hardy. The latest numbers from the American Institute of Architects, issued last winter, indicate that small, dedicated practices

are faring better than any other kind of firm. According to a report from the AIA's chief economist, Kermit Baker, "While firms focusing on residential, commercial/industrial, or institutional buildings all expect a modest drop-off in billings [in 2002], firms with a mixed practice—those with less than 50 percent of their work in any of the major sectors—anticipate a more substantial decline."

just say yes

The residential architects I've talked with aren't hurting yet. And even if residential construction stumbles a bit, they still may not suffer any bruises. Most of them learned important lessons from the last recession. They kept their shops lean and mean during the boom, so they aren't staff-heavy. They preferred to remain choosy about the work they took on instead of growing to grab all the dollars that knocked at the door. Many had a backlog of jobs just waiting for their time. While busy, the smart ones continued to market themselves and build their referrals through good client relations.

Those architects can keep things going simply by saying yes a little more often, after so many



Mark Robert Halper

months of saying no. They tell me there's plenty of work out there right now, but if things slow down, they can just reapportion the number of remodels vs. custom homes they do. Instead of another blockbuster new home, they could take on a half dozen high-end remodels, which tend to keep going even in recessionary years. Remodels cost as much these days as new custom homes did just a few years ago.

Some harried architects are actually hoping for an opportunity to catch their breath. One architect told me, "We had so many projects on the boards, we could barely keep our heads above water. I'm looking forward to having

time to design again—to really think a project through."

So, oddly enough, a little slowdown might be a blessing in disguise. You might actually find a good builder available to build the house you design. That builder might even manage to assemble a team of reliable, experienced subcontractors. And you might find time to put a little more art in your architecture. *ra*

Questions or comments? Call me: 202.736.3312; write me: S. Claire Conroy, *residential architect*, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005; or e-mail me: cconroy@hanley-wood.com.

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l e t t e r s

keep those cards, letters, and e-mails coming, folks.

defining the terms

I'd like to answer the question posed by John Holmes in his letter to the editor in the October 2001 issue of *residential architect* (page 16).

AIBD is an organization of custom residential building designers who work within the statutes of their states to design residences and light commercial projects (where allowed). The professional membership requirements for joining AIBD are strict. One must show sufficient experience, education, and referrals from within the building industry, as well as three sets of plans to be reviewed that must meet the association's minimum plan standards. Certification is available to professional members to further enhance their professionalism through the National Council of Building Designer Certification. Applicants for certification are required to pass a two-day exam consisting of nine sections ranging from ethics and administrative procedures to engineering and design problem-solving. AIBD also has a professional liability insurance program available to members.

I hope this clarifies for Mr. Holmes and others what AIBD and NCBDC are. For more information,

contact AIBD national headquarters at 800.366.2423 or www.aibd.org. Contact NCBDC national headquarters at 888.726.7659 or www.ncbdc.com.

*Bobbi Morgan
Executive Director, AIBD
Stratford, Conn.*

a call for coexistence

I have enjoyed reading the recent letters in response to Bob Morales' "License Unneeded" in the August issue (page 16). Surely we can all get along! Some might consider that apples and oranges can and do coexist. While the other letter writers speak from the viewpoint of licensed practitioners, Mr. Morales speaks from the nonlicensed segment of the discipline.

Are his comments about licensing vs. talent valid? The citizens of the great majority of states and the legal bodies representing them seem to think so. So, it appears, do code officials, FmHA, insurers, and—most important—clients.

Regardless of personal opinion, there coexists with licensed architects another group that engages in the residential discipline. Residential building designers practice by means of exemptions written into the architectural laws of virtual-

ly every state. How can such exemptions exist? Isn't the whole thrust of testing and licensing purported to be in the best interest of the health, safety, and welfare of the public? Maybe so, but the public seems to be doing just fine, thank you. If there were examples of structural failures, property damage, or loss of life and limb that pointed to an obvious problem regarding the lack of qualifications among these residential designers, the exemptions would not—and could not—exist.

Starting in the 1950s, a number of California designers formed a group they hoped would grow to represent the professionalism they wanted to instill in their cottage industry: the American Institute of Building Design. From those beginnings, membership has grown to include 47 states and four countries.

The residential designer who joins AIBD generally has no desire to practice "architecture" as it is legally defined, and, therefore, has no interest in or need for licensing. He or she is interested in providing the best-designed product for the client.

By the way, it appears that Bob Morales has been more than willing to go "back to school," as one of his critics suggested. I believe his exact words

were: "I hope never to graduate!" An admirable philosophy.

*James C. Lucia,
FAIBD, CPBD
Winter Park, Fla.*

high praise

Thank you for your excellent From the Editor column. There is no other trade publication that offers the broad vision and wisdom you project in such few lines.

You are always in the center of the many issues that affect us, the residential architects in this country. It is so energizing to find those issues on paper and with comments directed to the obvious solution.

Our side of the business is normally neglected or distorted out of proportion by the traditional architectural magazine and even by our national association. We look to builders' magazines to be knowledgeable about new products and alert to the design issues around us. *residential architect* fills the gap with extraordinary class compared with the other publications. It is with great expectations that I look forward to reading your next issue.

*Sydney V.P. Head, AIA,
Architect
Costa Mesa, Calif.*



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home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design



new american hideaway

When Melanie Taylor signed on to design The New American Home 2002, an annual project sponsored by BUILDER magazine and the

NAHB, she thought back to the turn of the 20th century. “It was a peaceful, relaxed time when people traveled by boat and brought back things for their homes,” she says. “There was a relaxed richness to life, especially in Florida and the Caribbean, where people had easy access to water travel.”

The New Haven, Conn.–based architect decided to combine elements of old-fashioned Florida- and Caribbean-style houses with

the characteristics of a Southern farmhouse, thereby relating the project to its setting in Smyrna, Ga., outside Atlanta. BUILDER (*residential architect’s* sister magazine) gave her an imaginary client: a busy, affluent couple in their 40s with elementary-school-age children. Both parents work in Atlanta’s burgeoning technology sector; they want a home

that’s technologically advanced and suited to their modern lifestyles, but they also crave a safe, comforting escape from the outside world.

Taylor responded by designing a rambling, 6,700-square-foot plan

filled with eye-catching details. The garage, styled to look like a carriage house, connects to the main house through a covered breezeway. Taylor points out that this secondary entry also works as an accessible entry, allowing a wheelchair to pass easily to the kitchen, family room, and guest suite. The master suite is secluded in a private, cottagelike wing on the other side of the main house. Romantic items like balconies, a private tearoom, and a pyramidal ceiling give the cottage the feeling of a vacation resort. “It was very important to me that the house have a playful image,” Taylor says. “We all need our homes to be a haven these days. I wanted a sense of excitement and discovery to start unfolding the minute you pull in the driveway.”

The New American Home’s builder is John Wieland Homes & Neighborhoods, Atlanta, and the interior designer is JP Limited, also in Atlanta. The house will be open to attendees of the International Builders’ Show in Atlanta, February 8 through 11, and to the general public for two weekends after the show. For more information, contact the National Council of the Housing Industry at the NAHB, 202.822.0200 or 800.368.5242, or see BUILDER’s February issue in print or online at www.builderonline.com.—*meghan drueding*



Courtesy Melanie Taylor Architecture



Architect Melanie Taylor envisioned this year's New American Home as a refuge from the stress of everyday life. So she placed a strong emphasis on outdoor living, including in the plan a disappearing-edge pool and an outdoor kitchen.



REAR ELEVATION

Courtesy John Wieland Homes & Neighborhoods

call it chilewichcraft

New York City-based designer Sandy Chilewich loves taking textiles out of their conventional context. This predilection led her to create Plynyl, a new flooring composed of woven vinyl fabric bonded to a high-performance urethane backing. The product is flexible, fire-resistant, durable, and low-maintenance—"a new function for something familiar," says Chilewich.

Plynyl styles include tweed, bouclé, basket weave, and ikat, with colors ranging from naturals to metallics. Colors and styles can be mixed and matched for funky patterns or subtle statements. Wall-to-wall installations can be secured with adhesives or left loose over any hard-surface floor, because the backing material clings to smooth surfaces.

Tiles are \$6.50 per square foot for 17-inch squares; wall-to-wall Plynyl is \$4.75 per square foot. For more information, call the Chilewich Design Studio at 212.679.9204.—*shelley d. hutchins*



Courtesy Chilewich Design Studio

designing women

The goal of *The Architect: Women in Contemporary Architecture* is not to celebrate the work of leading women architects, but to showcase talented architects who just happen to be female. So says the book's editor, Maggie Toy. What a false premise, especially given the female symbol that's coyly embedded in the cover typography.

In fact, the book is an entirely subjective who's who of contemporary women architects. Nearly all of the 33 subjects are American or British, and most do good work. Their profiles follow a tightly scripted format: architect photo; design statement; professional history and firm background; list of awards, publications, and clients; and two pages of the architect's work.

The book's narrow focus and catalog approach limit its appeal. *The Archi-*

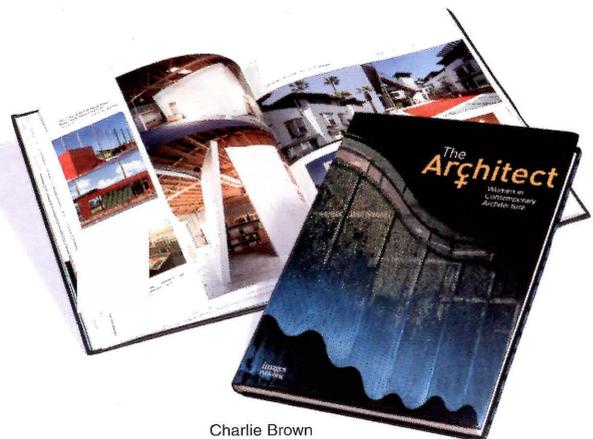
tect: Women in Contemporary Architecture will be best appreciated by clients who are armchair-shopping for a female architect.—*susan bradford barror*

shelf fulfillment

American Home: From Colonial Simplicity to the Modern Adventure. *Wendell Garrett, David Larkin, and Michael Webb.* 360 pp. New York: Universe Publishing. \$60 (hardcover). Available in bookstores. A celebration of American homes. Essays by some of today's leading architectural historians and critics, accompanied by more than 400 color photographs.

The House Book. 512 pp. New York: Phaidon Press. \$45 (hardcover). 877.742.4366. A massive, illustrated reference guide to 500 iconic houses from around the globe, arranged alphabetically by architect.

Staircases. *Eva Jiricna.* 192 pp. New York: Watson-Guption Publications. \$45 (hardcover). 732.363.5679. An illustrated examination of 50 of the world's most beautiful and innovative staircases, including designs by Tadao Ando, Richard Rogers, Renzo Piano, Philippe Starck, and others.



Charlie Brown

The Architect: Women in Contemporary Architecture. Maggie Toy, editor. 180 pp. Mulgrave, Australia: The Images Publishing Group. \$50 (hardcover). 800.252.5231.

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International Builders' Show
February 8-11, 2002

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The Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta

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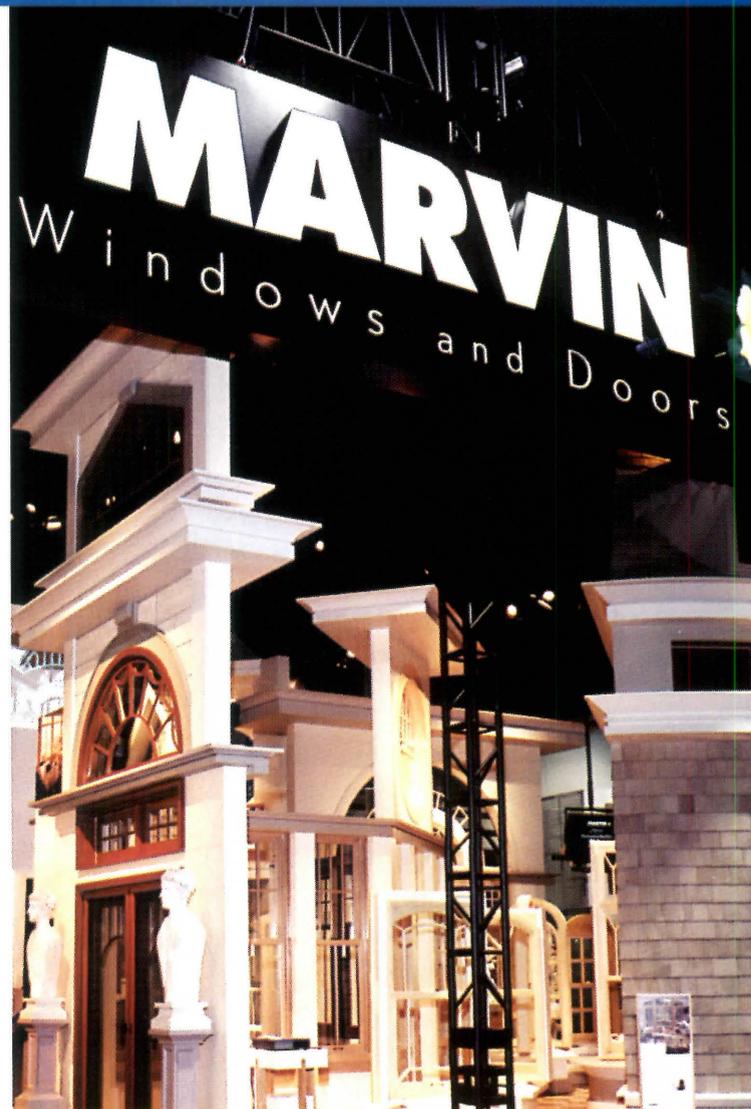
A revolutionary product line called Integrity Windows and Doors also will be displayed at Marvin's booth this year. The Integrity line blends the classic interior of solid wood with the unmatched strength of Ultrex® exterior cladding. The Ultrex manufacturing process bonds glass fibers and liquid polyester resin to create a material that is so strong, it requires a diamond-impregnated blade to cut Ultrex to proper lengths. From sun to rain, airborne pollutants to saltwater, Ultrex stands tough against anything that Mother Nature can throw its way.

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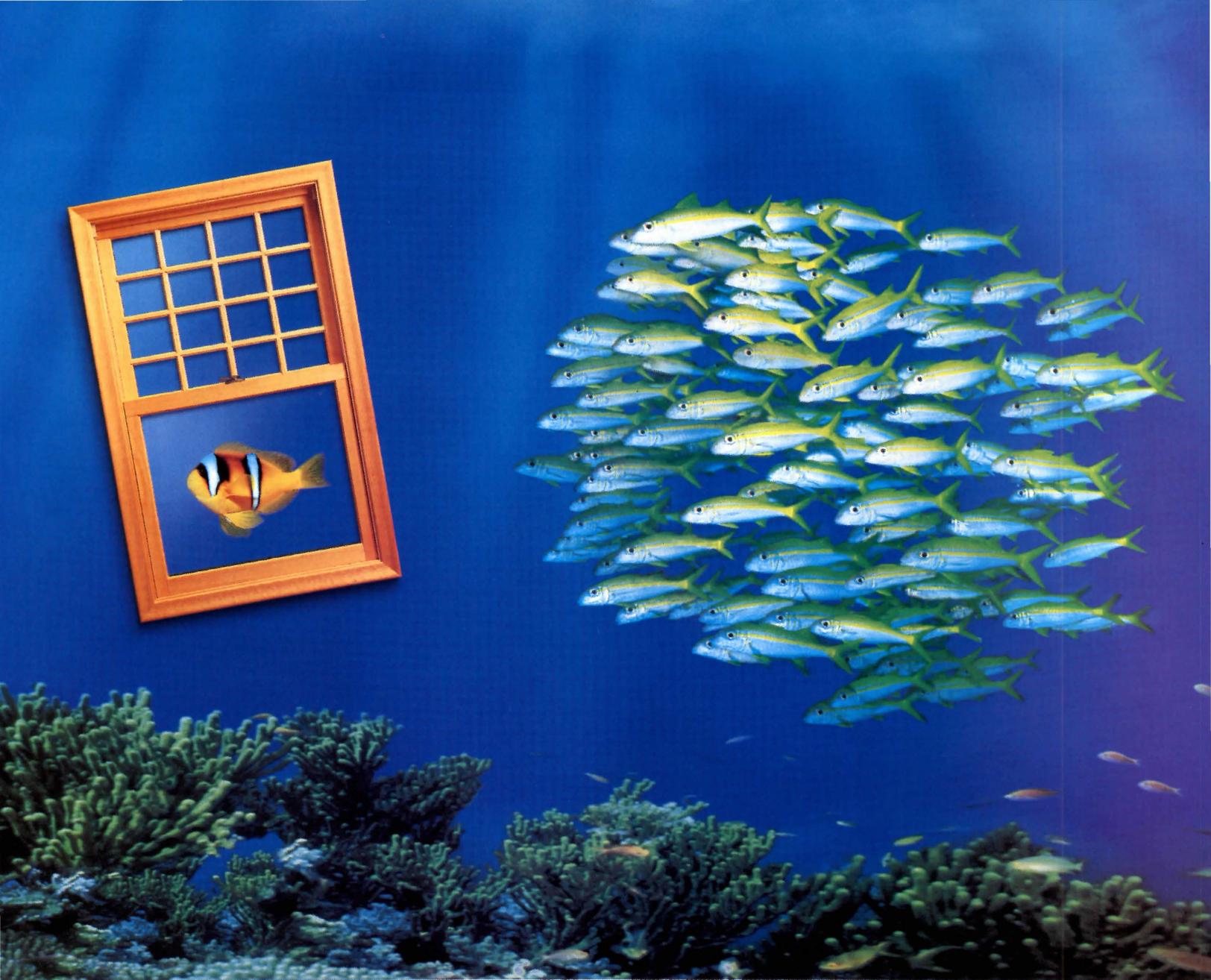


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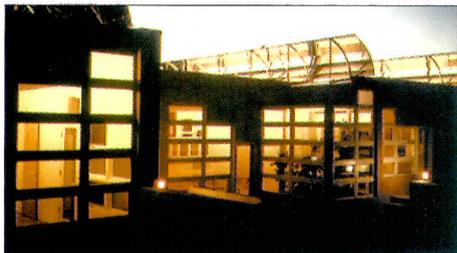
calendar

2002 lighting design awards

entry deadline: february 1

The International Association of Lighting Designers is accepting entries for its 19th annual international lighting design awards. Projects should feature permanent interior or exterior architectural lighting solutions and be completed after June 1, 1999.

Shown: the Sawyer House, by Don Felts & Associates, previous winner of an Award of Excellence. For entry specifications, call 312.527.3677 or e-mail iald@iald.org.



dupont benedictus awards

entry deadline: march 1

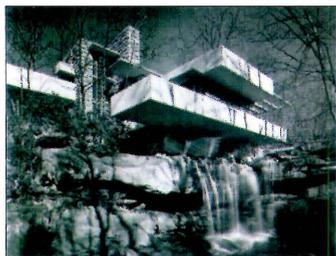
Celebrating its 10th anniversary, this design competition recognizes innovative use of laminated glass in architecture. Project categories include residential,

health care, government, and commercial. Shown: the Dayton House, by Vincent James Associates and James Carpenter Design, Special Recognition winner in 2001. For entry information, visit www.dupontbenedictus.org or call 202.789.2424.



hedrich blessing: painting with light

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SFMOMA Experimental Design Award Exhibition, through February 5, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 415.357.4000; **Russel Wright: Creating American Lifestyle**, through March 10, Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, New York, 212.849.8400; **Art Deco and Streamlined Modern: Design, 1920–1950**, through May 20, Dallas Museum of Art, 214.922.1200; **Olafur Eliasson—Seeing Yourself Sensing**, through May 21, Museum of Modern Art, New York, 212.708.9400.



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little houses on the plaza

These playhouses may be for kids, but their materials and attention to detail are anything but childlike. Designed by architects, the mini masterpieces were auctioned off last October for Irvine, Calif.–based HomeAid Orange County, a charity that builds and renovates shelters for temporarily homeless children, women, and men in Orange, Los Angeles, and Ventura counties.

Architect Dave Viggiano of William Hezmalhalch Architects in Irvine says that a recent trip to France inspired his “French Country Farmhouse” (above), so he used imported 18th-century oak flooring and 19th-century barn wood for authenticity. He also made the little abode wheelchair-accessible, and gave it a natural stone wall and a hayloft.



Photos courtesy HomeAid Orange County

Dave Viggiano, William Hezmalhalch Architects, chose a French theme for the playhouse he designed (above), while Thomas Stephens, KB Architecture, borrowed from American architecture for his creation (left).



Architect Thomas Stephens of Los Angeles–based KB Architecture turned to Robert A.M. Stern and Frank Lloyd Wright for inspiration. His “Lighting the Way” house (left) has a standing-seam copper roof, custom cabinetry, and natural wood shingles. “We tried to present something that represents the kind of work we do,” says Cecil Hernandez, director of design for KB Architecture.

Ultimately, the fund-raiser was about lending a hand. HomeAid’s Project Playhouse auction raised more than \$360,000, says communications manager Delene Garbo. Final bids for the playhouses ranged from \$6,000 to \$70,000.—*nigel f. maynard*

market me

The Washington, D.C., chapter of the American Institute of Architects has launched a new magazine—with a twist. Unlike most chapter pubs, the four-color glossy targets a consumer audience, not a professional one, thereby providing the association’s 1,800 members with a slick, ready-made marketing tool.

“We already have a fine newsletter directed at our membership,” says chapter executive director Mary Fitch. “We thought this was a colorful way to get across to the public what an architect can do for them.” The new quarterly, *AIA/DC Magazine*, focuses not



only on projects—commercial, institutional, and residential—but on such consumer-friendly topics as how to work with an architect, says Fitch.

The publication is mailed to chapter members and is available free at D.C.–area

bookstores. Interested readers can also be added to the mailing list.

How can the chapter afford such an endeavor? “We pay the publisher nothing,” says Fitch. “They sell the advertising, and we fill the editorial pages.”

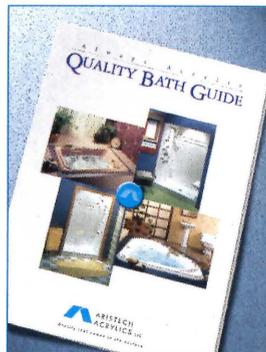
All writing is done in-house or for free by contributors. “For the last issue, we brought in some of our architect members to write stories,” says Hannah McCann, communications manager for the Washington chapter and editor of the magazine. “It makes for a richer voice if different people are writing for the magazine.”—*nigel f. maynard*



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on the boards / culture havens

The ranks of empty-nesters continue to swell. But instead of buying into a golf-course resort community in the middle of nowhere, more of them want to be close to cultural events and rely less on cars, says San Antonio architect Davis Sprinkle, AIA. That's the kind of client his firm, Sprinkle Robey Architects, and local developer James Lisschutz hope to attract with the Dallas Street Townhouses.

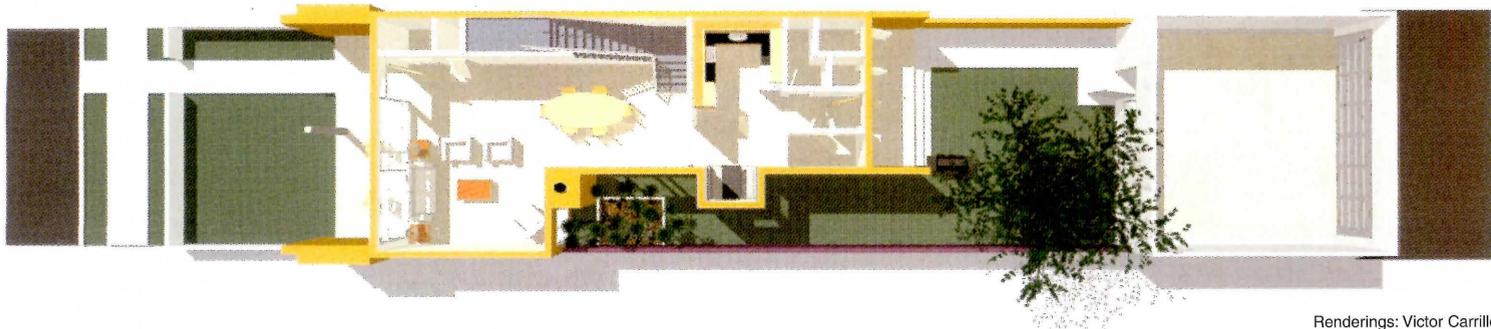
The three units will occupy an empty pocket between San Antonio's business district and an old residential neighborhood. "From here you can take a cab to a symphony or ball game, and in five minutes you're there," Sprinkle says. The 2,000-square-foot townhomes will include a detached two-car garage, a sliver of courtyard that shoots light to the interior, two balconies, and a roof terrace with a downtown view. "We brought in a cherry-picker lift to establish the roof height," Sprinkle says, "and raised it until we liked what we saw." In each house, a closet with removable floor panels provides the option for a future elevator to the second-floor bedrooms.

The red, yellow, and purple stucco exteriors capitalize on the



A 10-foot recess in the front, south-facing elevation keeps direct sunlight out of living areas, except in winter, and the facades have commercial-grade, operable windows. The townhomes touch a commercial building that Sprinkle Robey renovated (left). Amenities include a detached two-car garage, concrete floors, and, in front, a 20-foot square of lawn. The architects envision a stand of bamboo behind the wall for screening.

local penchant for color. "Someone once said San Antonio is the only city that considers purple a neutral," notes Sprinkle. And the crisp composition was inspired by the work of Mexican Modernist Luis Barragán. "We'll use wood-frame construction, so it's very cost-effective to build," Sprinkle says. The homes will be priced at about \$100 a square foot.—*cheryl weber*



Renderings: Victor Carrillo

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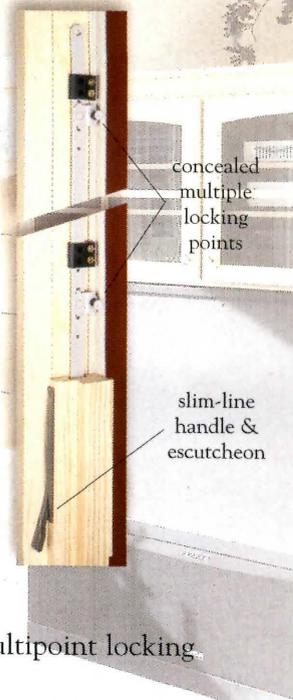
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disarming the citizenry

winning community support for your projects may be easier than you think.

by cheryl weber

Under the best conditions, the road to a finished residential design is circuitous. Before getting the go-ahead, the design must visit, and perhaps revisit, a series of checkpoints: owner or developer, builder, banker, budget. And many times, architects inherit an additional client with fears and hopes of its own—the local community. Not only do you have to please your immediate clients with your concept, you may also have to escort the concept through an unknown and unpredictable group of people who have little understanding of zoning codes, environmental restrictions, urban planning issues, or architecture.

“Objections can range from the simple to the bizarre,” comments Long Island, N.Y., architect Stuart Narofsky, AIA, who designs single-family and multifamily housing. And because the complexions of ad hoc community associations are constantly changing, he says, the roadblocks—and the stick-holders—are often difficult to pinpoint ahead of time. “It’s common knowledge around here that I prefer classical architecture,” a community member once informed Narofsky as



Jorge Colombo

he walked into a meeting holding a model for a Modern home.

Architects have honed a handful of skills for helping the public make peace with a place, depending on whether their immediate client is a homeowner, a

builder or developer, or the community itself. “It works from the ground up,” says Dennis Hertlein, AIA, Surber Barber Choate & Hertlein, Atlanta. “Neighborhood groups have fairly strong power. If you get their approval before going

through the city review board, it’s fairly straightforward. If you don’t, it can be a very long battle.”

due process

A veteran of the town meeting, Hertlein’s strategy is to *continued on page 32*

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make early introductions to the movers and shakers of neighborhood groups. Before putting a multifamily project on the agenda at a public forum, for example, he may meet informally with key leaders to discuss the project and respond to their respective concerns, be it traffic control, visual impact, or historical relevance. Based on the heads-up, he arrives at the larger town meeting with his presentation package—photos of the neighborhood context, area maps, a site plan, conceptual three-dimensional sketches, but never a model. “It seems too final,” Hertlein says. “We try to keep the drawings as flexible as possible because we’re going in with the attitude that we’re expecting and willing to have some neighborhood involvement.”

For George Metzger, AIA, HMFH Architects, Cambridge, Mass., giving community involvement its due process is also a priority. And that begins with crystal-clear visuals. You may know your project intimately, but it’s difficult for others to fully grasp how it is oriented in a neighborhood and what the boundaries are, he says. And whereas perspectives and 3-D models are useful, it’s also important to relate the proposed building to something people know in the community—say, “We’re going to make the top of this building exactly the height of that one.”

Says Metzger: “When

sticks and stones

From your place at the podium, you see it coming—the diatribe against your project and all it represents. Or the obstructionist bent on making unreasonable demands. What’s an architect to do?

Charlottesville, Va., architect Maurice Cox tries to diffuse aggressive behavior by setting up different venues in which people can get to know each other, often in a living room. “Frequency builds trust,” he says. “We found if we could build strong enough relationships between people in a small group setting, when we got into the public arena people had a far greater sense of respect.”

Small groups aren’t always an option, though. When Atlanta architect Dennis Hertlein faces a hostile contingent, he finds that having patience and respecting the other person’s right to speak is generally an effective strategy. “Usually someone who’s extra strident is quickly seen to be exactly that by the other partici-

you use very real references, instantly people can understand the dimension of the building. If you don’t make the information easy to understand, you add to the mystery and potential antagonism, inadvertently giving people the impression you’re not being open.

“Community activists are extremely smart,” he adds. “They know the issues, and to do anything but engage them by laying out everything at the outset only prolongs the agony. A good community process usually results in a better project, so I don’t see it as something to be avoided. But it has to be managed fairly. It’s important to be clear in your mind and with the citizens where their participation stops.”

pants and will be marginalized,” Hertlein says. “If you try to silence them, it will appear you’re trying to control what people are saying.”

One of Boulder, Colo., landscape architect Thomas Kopf’s best strategies is to divide and conquer. If one person appears to have the ability to incite others, he breaks the meeting into two groups. “I’ll say, ‘I want to talk to you about your specific concerns, but want to continue the meeting so others can be heard. Those interested in that issue, come over to this corner of the room with me,’ while the other architects continue on with the meeting.” Alternatively, at the end of the meeting he’ll pull the person aside, write down the concerns, and offer to mail a response. “If you don’t put it on paper, they’ll keep finding new issues,” Kopf says. “In front of the planning commission, it shows you’ve responded to those issues.”—c.w.

talking points

Those lines are precisely drawn in the minds of architects at Downing, Thorpe, James in Boulder, Colo., many of whose clients are production builders. “We’re asking the community how our project relates to them, but not specifically how to design it,” says landscape architect Thomas Kopf, ASLA. “That’s the worst thing we can do for our client.”

Kopf uses a site analysis to educate homeowners about the opportunities and constraints of a parcel of land. “Without it, they don’t understand why we make some of the decisions we make,” Kopf says. He talks to them about the impact of zoning ordinances and the municipality’s expectations

for the design. Then he moves to micro issues such as soil, slope, vegetation, drainage, and access.

Rather than showing comprehensive drawings, the firm keeps the graphics loose and conceptual, focusing on massing and open space and what it calls visioning. “We’ll say, ‘We haven’t worked out all the details, but these are the kinds of images we’d like this community to have,’ and show photos of similar projects, cutouts from magazines, and sketches. We’re careful not to address the design specifics of the project, but rather the edge of the community and how they want the project to relate to them.”

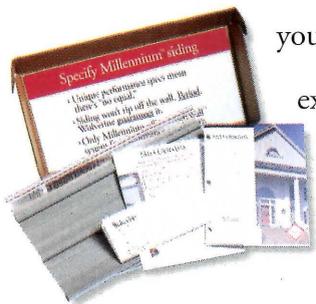
Conversations with the
continued on page 34



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neighbors about a recent golf-course housing development centered on the usual traffic concerns, and fears that the new homes would block their view of the mountains. The architects explained that, for fire safety reasons, the municipality insisted on a road connection between the two communities, but that they could mitigate those concerns by using speed bumps, narrowing the road, and planting trees on the median to make the street feel more enclosed and intimate. “We try to show that we’re willing to spend money—on landscaping,

fencing, or architectural design—to make the relationship between our project and their home as good as it can be,” Kopf says.

The resolution of the mountain-view issue surprised the architects. The neighbors were given two choices. The first one entailed moving the development farther west, which meant running the access road along rear property lines. The second option proposed opening up select view corridors within the development. Given the choice, the community chose the solution that preserved the views for everyone.

“The most important lesson was that we didn’t focus so much on our project, but on the relationship of our project to them,” Kopf says. “The presumption that our project was a given never left our minds.”

Working in the culturally and socially complex coastal region of Oakland, Calif., Michael Pyatok, FAIA, does solicit community help to design multifamily projects in fairly detailed ways, while still holding firm on unit counts and the mix of program ingredients. On affordable projects, the goal is to make sure the design turns out in a way

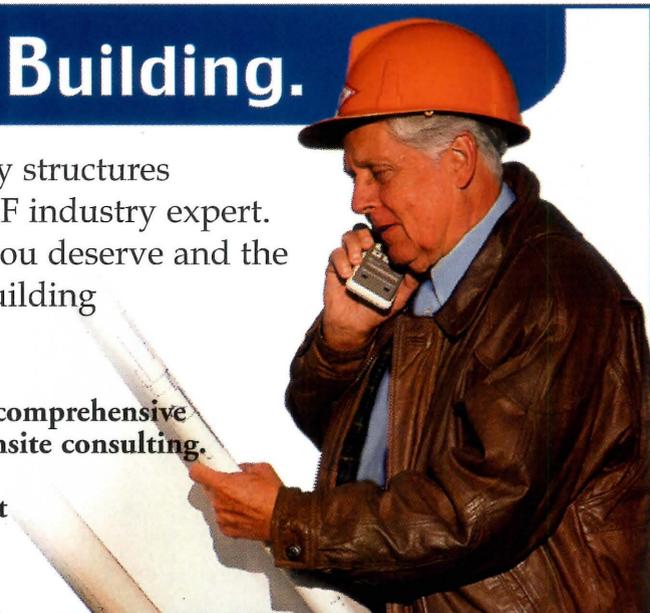
that’s relevant to residents’ needs—and thus is marketable—and to organize residents as a political force to get the project funded. In middle-income neighborhoods, the approach typically diffuses potential nimby reactions. In either case, Pyatok Associates offers three sets of community workshops—one on site planning, one on unit planning, and another exploring the appearance and character of the housing. Each group of 10 gets to play with a model of the larger neighborhood and a to-scale kit of parts that includes both

continued on page 36

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housing and nonresidential ingredients. "I've found that kind of involvement enriches the final outcome," he says. "As you open the door to other opinions, the project gets massaged in unique ways that transcend the biases of the architect."

in the trenches

Of course, the balance of power shifts even further to the people when the community is the client. Roberta Feldman, an architect, environmental psychologist, and director of the City Design Center at the University of Illinois in Chicago, is at the beck and call

of neighborhoods underserved by the design and planning professions. The center, staffed by UIC students, helps neighborhood associations envision how to improve their environment, come up with schematics, and raise funds.

"Research has shown that not only do people take more ownership of a place, but they are more satisfied if they have a role to play," Feldman says. "Also, people have a tendency, if you ask them what they want, to speak to only what's familiar. They can't express a preference for what they haven't experienced. So they

prefer what's dominant in our culture, even if it's inappropriate for the way they're living. One of the roles an architect can play is to help people understand what their options are."

For example, Feldman has found that a lot of low-income residents say they want a single-family home, despite the fact that many of them live collaboratively, baby-sitting and cooking for each other. So, in some cases, the center has proposed building two-family houses. Resistance from the larger neighborhood was overcome when the architects explained why the

model works and that it would be designed to look similar to other, single-family homes. "I've never come out with a wild, way-out building in terms of style for low-income people," Feldman says. "Stark, Modernist forms stigmatize them. For low-income housing, there are good reasons to make it contextual and fit into the community."

Michael O'Brien, AIA, Neighboring Concepts, Charlotte, N.C., also gets invitations from community groups to help revitalize neighborhoods. The firm's projects usually include a

continued on page 38

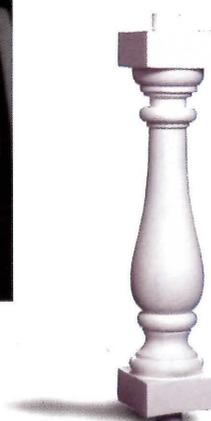
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mix of residential and commercial. Part of its approach, particularly if the citizens aren't well organized, is to send in a corporate trainer to do team-building exercises focusing on neighborhood issues. "What we're asking these folks to do is difficult in the first place," O'Brien explains. "You can't put a bunch of people together who happen to live near each other and expect them to function like a well-oiled organization."

Another group-dynamics expert helps people visualize the big picture. Working with them around a table, he'll show aerial photos of the

neighborhood in Photoshop, allowing them to arrange parks, trees, and streetscapes and see results on the screen immediately. "People really get that in a real-time fashion," O'Brien says. The firm also solicits ideas by sending locals out with disposable cameras and asking them to snap pictures of important parts of their neighborhood, make a poster, and present it to the group.

our town

Given enough time and the right information, even deep conflicts of interest can often be resolved, believes architect Maurice

Cox, an associate professor of architecture at the University of Virginia and a partner at RBGC, Charlottesville, Va. One of his recent successes is Kellytown, a post-World War II neighborhood within walking distance of the university campus that had been rezoned from single-family to multifamily housing. Subsequently, two developers bought up 10 acres of land in the center of the town—an "urban forest" that residents had assumed would always be there. Unhappy about the potential influx of students and the loss of its beloved green space, the

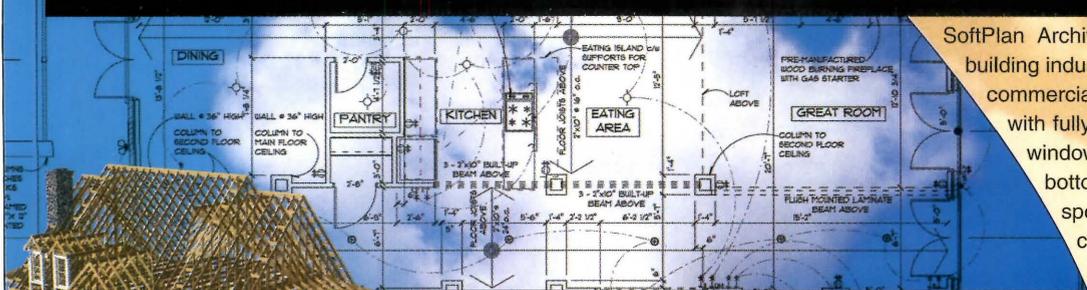
neighborhood association swiftly hired Cox and his seminar students to help devise a land-use plan everyone could agree to.

With the surrounding county growing by leaps and bounds, this new development needed to be much denser than the existing traditional neighborhood with its deep lots, mature trees, and suburban ranch houses pushed far from the street. "What we were proposing was the antithesis of that," Cox says.

Rather than beginning with listening sessions, Cox and his students educated the community on the pres-

continued on page 40

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asures of infill development—including the urgent need for student housing—the history of the site, and how architecture can foster community. The idea was that by giving everyone a common base of knowledge, “we could present multiple solutions, and people would, by the depth of their understanding of the issues, gravitate to the best solution.”

A group of eight students conducted an extensive public-education campaign that drew on hours of archival research and oral history, reconstructing how a former slave plantation had become the neighborhood they

knew. Old photo albums brought to light intimate neighborhoods with clusters of family homes strung along the street, and the neighbors began to gravitate to the idea of development occurring around discrete parcels. “All of a sudden the site started to take on a sense of embodying their collective history,” Cox says.

Over the course of a year, forums ranged from public meetings of 75 attendees to living-room sessions to discuss proposed house models. In the end, five groups of community members independently chose the same design concept—32 houses

and 10 accessory units arranged in small groupings, with five acres preserved as a natural habitat. The pattern book emphasized such Neo-Traditional principles as front porches, narrow streets, and small front yards.

“The solution came directly from understanding the history of the site,” Cox says. “That model would have been coming from thin air had they not seen literally dozens of photos dating back to the ’30s, ’40s, and ’50s.” Not coincidentally, the project proved to be a real estate success, as well. The first house sold for \$160,000 in 1998;

two years later, the last one went for \$300,000.

So, when they invite the neighbors to the party, do architects, on some level, fear for the fate of their design ideals? Sure, George Metzger says. But aesthetics is just one of many issues. “If you’re careful about the process, you can expect a lot of input in some areas and less in other areas where community groups have less expertise,” he says. “If you’ve done a good process, they’ll begin to respect you, and it helps on issues of design.” *ra*

Cheryl Weber is a contributing writer in Severna Park, Md.

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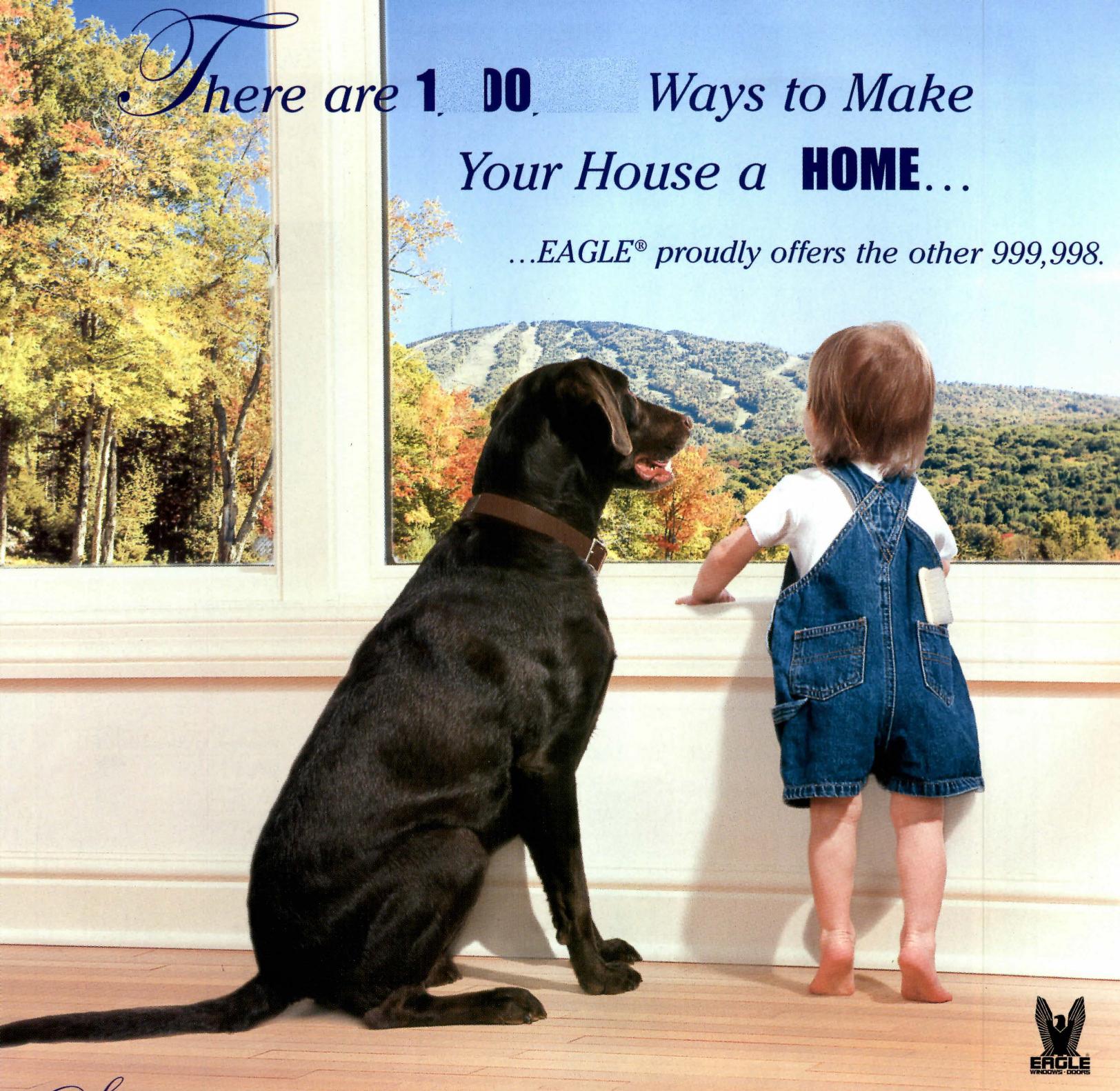
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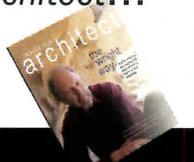
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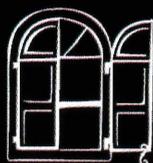
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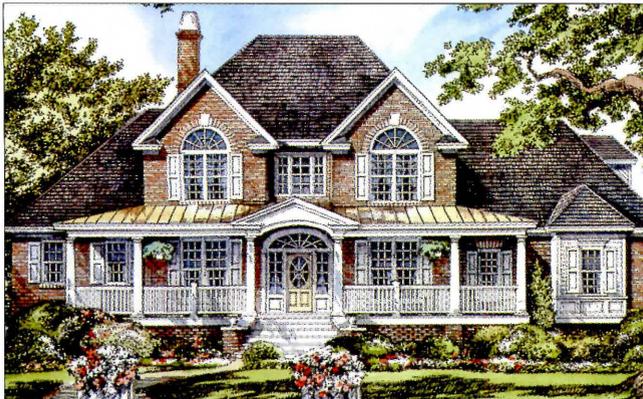
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knows exactly what makes
middle america feel at home.

by s. claire conroy



© Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc.

Don Gardner, AIA, made his reputation and fortune by mining America's nostalgia for its agrarian past. Variations on the farmhouse theme (The Hickory Ridge is shown here) make up a hefty portion of the firm's 500-plus-plan portfolio.

So what's wrong with designing house plans for a living? Donald A. Gardner, AIA, knows his peers in architecture look down on what he does, but do they drive a BMW 740i? Do they have businesses that can support 50 employees and keep their adult children busy and challenged?

Donald A. Gardner is a successful businessman whose business happens to be residential architecture. He also happens to be the top-selling stock-plan architect in the country. The clean-cut fiftysomething-year-old looks like a cross between Pat Boone and Mr. Rogers, and like those icons, he has his finger on the pulse of what makes middle America feel at home. He doesn't fancy himself a creative genius, an artist, but he does pride himself on his ability to put together houses that are reasonably efficient and economical to build, and packed with plenty of crowd-pleasing curb appeal. He's the king of country design—the updated farmhouse with wrap-

around porch. He may not be Frank Gehry, but does Gehry have 100,000 houses built from his designs stretched across the United States and other spots around the world?

Since 1978, Gardner has nurtured his little cottage industry—started as a moonlighting job to pad his retirement fund—into a thriving family business that promises to take care of his progeny's retirement needs for several generations. He's moved the business out of the bonus room in his house and into a pleasant office park in suburban Greenville, S.C. And he's expanded his scope of services. He publishes his own stock-plan magazines and books, in addition to working with other publishers (among them, Home Planners, a division of *residential architect's* parent company, Hanley-Wood, LLC). He'll modify those stock plans for customers, he'll design and build them a house, and he'll help builders market their services to potential clients. That's more than enough work to keep 50 employees and



Photo: Ann Staes/SABA

mr. plan man



Courtesy Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc.

Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc., is now a family business with separate but overlapping divisions, including stock plans, design modification services, marketing services for builders, a construction company, and a new custom design/build firm, called Allora. The top brass of Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc., clockwise from left: CEO Don Gardner; vice president of marketing and sales Don Gardner Jr.; CFO Bill Santerini, also president of Donald A. Gardner Builders; president Angela Santerini; and vice president Gloria Gardner.

*“i’ve always been
fascinated about business.
i’m especially interested
in what made someone
successful.”*

—don gardner



all but one member of his immediate family busy. His wife, Gloria, is vice president; daughter Angela is president; son-in-law Bill is CFO and heads up the construction company; and son Don Jr. is vice president of marketing and sales. His youngest daughter, Sonia, a model, is moving back to Greenville and doesn’t work for Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc.—yet.

business 101

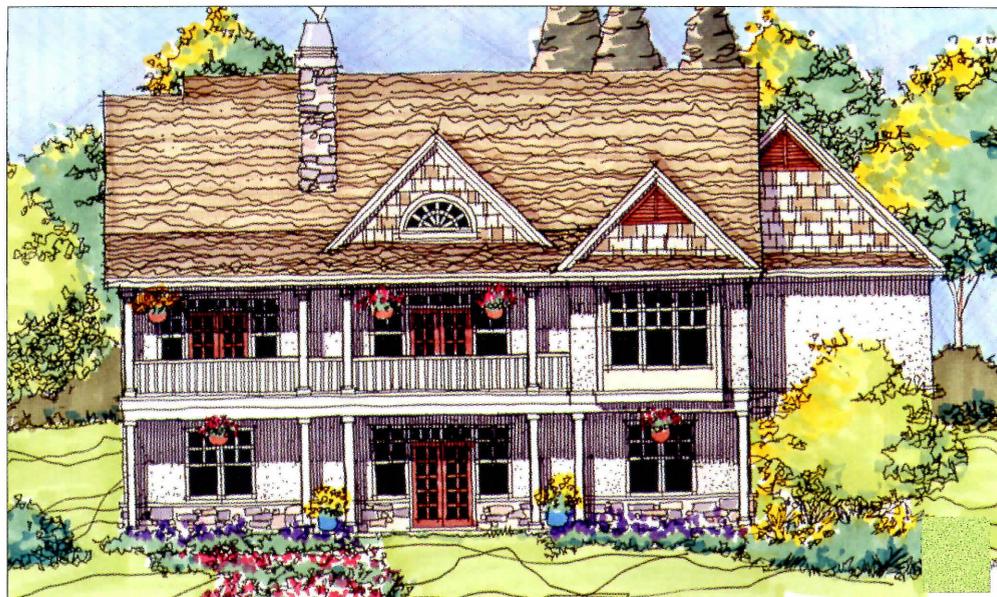
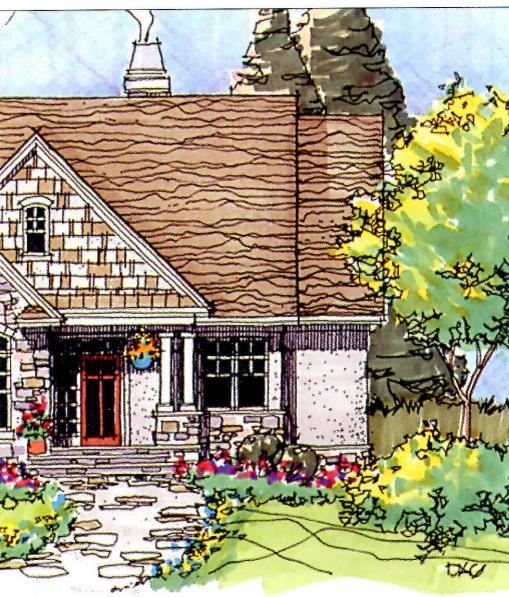
Although he’s been at the plans business for more than 20 years, Gardner didn’t quit his day job (working for a multidisciplinary architecture firm) until 1984. “I was kind of pushed into it,” he recalls. “The firm I worked for had financial problems. All the managers had to take a pay cut. I ended up making 20 percent less than people who worked under me.” And so, his retirement plan became his full-time career.

Working for someone else underlined for him how ill-equipped most architects are as businesspeople, he says. It’s a fate he was determined to escape. “You don’t learn it in architecture school. Architects really need to

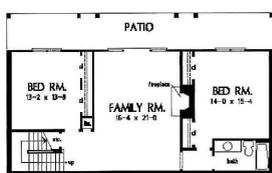
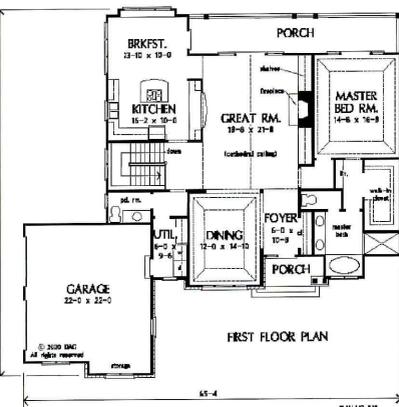
have business classes. Most want to have their own businesses. But the curriculum is so filled up with other requirements. I did the bachelor of architecture program at Clemson. It was a five-year program. I started with 97 students in my class; only 11 finished. I was very strong in math—that’s what helped me through.”

The problem is particularly acute for residential architects, who generally have a difficult time charging enough for their time and effort to make any money. “One of my professors told us, if you plan to go into residential architecture, don’t plan on making a very good living,” says Gardner. That accounts for why he didn’t go into the field at the start of his career. “My father was successful; I wanted to be successful.”

However, working for that other firm was the slow track and a frustrating one for the bright, ambitious architect. What he’s learned about business since is largely self-taught—and happily so. “I’ve always been fascinated about business,” he says. “My wife reads tons of novels; I like



Renderings and floor plans © Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc.



The 2,904-square-foot Fitzwilliam is typical of how the firm's houses have evolved with its customers. The farmhouse roots show in the rear elevation, but the front is suburban traditional. Inside, contemporary floor plans reflect the way middle America lives today. Gone is the formal living room, and in its place is a combination great room, kitchen, and dining area.

to read business information. I'm especially interested in what made someone successful and what mistakes they made."

Apparently, Gardner's made few mistakes since launching his own firm. There've been only two years when profits failed to rise, and those years were simply flat. "We're among the most unique firms. I don't know one that has approached it the way we have—the publishing part, designing, building. Once one area profits and can profit the other, then profits are compounded."

That equation determines which new businesses Gardner adds to his core enterprise. At every turn he asks, What endeavors can the stock-plan business help? What

new efforts can strengthen the stock-plan business?

best-laid plans

Gardner is not unlike a popular novelist with a blockbuster formula. Tom Clancy, Stephen King, John Grisham. Or maybe, more accurately, a romance novelist like Barbara Cartland, because what's so appealing about his plans is the romantic fantasy they spin. The front elevations exude homespun charm; the interior floor plans squeeze casual living into every square foot.

Gardner's plans sold well from the start because he studied the industry and aimed his designs squarely at mass-market consumer tastes. The sweet spot was

plans in the 2,000-square-foot range; the magic style was "Country." The New England-born architect made the style his own by adding a round-top, or Palladian, window flanked by two dormers. Other plan designers went after builders with simple, boxlike plans that were cheap and easy to build. Gardner's plans, with their fanciful elevations and ubiquitous porches, were more expensive to build but more attractive to the homeowner.

He sold countless iterations of those Country plans. And when a plan didn't sell, he made sure he learned why. He surveys consumers regularly about their likes and dislikes, further distilling his successful formula. He estimates



Gardner's latest venture is a high-end design/build company, called Allora. Its calling card is this vacation home for Gardner and his wife in Hammock Dunes, Fla. He hopes to expand the business into resort designing, building, and planning.

*"we probably put more
money in plans than most
other companies do,
because of the number of
licensed architects we
have working for us."*

—don gardner

it costs about \$20,000 to develop a new plan, and he wants to spend the money wisely. "We probably put more money in plans than other companies do, because of the number of licensed architects [eight] we have working for us and because of the amount of research we do," he says. Ten years ago, the company designed about 12 to 15 new plans a year; now, it's up to 50 or so. Gardner reckons the total portfolio is at 500 plans and counting.

Not only did he strive to design the perfect house plans (maybe they should be measured in Nielsen ratings), he also sought to maximize the profit in every plan sale. He was the first, he claims, to charge for basement plans—an extra other designers threw in for free. It caused some friction with plan publishers who worried the move would hurt sales, but it's now common practice. He also started offering half-size plans in addition to full-size blueprints, and CD-ROMs with CADD plans. "Our average dollars per plan is higher than anyone else in the business," Gardner says.

Part of what boosts those numbers is the company's plan-processing department. Plan-book and magazine publishers handle a major portion of order fulfillment, but, says Gardner, "they can't handle the number of responses we need to make our money." So, he has his own Web site where consumers and builders can order online through his customer service department, and he partici-

pates in a group Web site with other plan designers. He also has his out-of-house publishers trained to send questions they can't answer to his people. They are, he says, deal closers.

What's more, he's streamlined all the links between order and fulfillment to the point where he can send out a plan the same day if it's ordered by 10 a.m. EST. For a price, his design department will modify those plans, too, for consumers or builders. And from there, it was just a short leap to design/build and starting his own construction company.

steel magnolias

Son-in-law Bill Santerini pushed the idea of adding a home building company to the mix. Santerini, who's married to Gardner's daughter Angela, has a background in finance and came to the company from Cantor Fitzgerald in New York City. As soon as Gardner gave him the go-ahead, he went out and earned his license as a builder.

They began the venture in 1994 by building one of Gardner's "starter" home plans. But they soon learned that the entry-level market in and around Greenville was saturated by national builders who had efficiencies and economies they couldn't match. So they decided to refocus on the higher end, designing and building one-of-a-kind custom homes. Gardner thinks it's exactly the right niche for them. All that experience



Renderings © Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc.

knocking the pennies out of 2,000-square-foot homes has, he feels, taught him how to make a profit from larger, more elaborately detailed homes.

This new opportunity doesn't come without risk. For the first time since he started the business, Gardner has borrowed money. "We've had banks wanting to lend us money for years." But he's genuinely, palpably excited by the prospect. He thinks moving into high-end custom home building will help balance out the stock-plan business, especially during these recessionary times. Right now, he's designing and building in a golf resort in the mountains near Greenville. But that's just the

warm-up for his and Santerini's big expansion plan: Hammock Dunes, Fla., a golf resort community near St. Augustine.

On the wall of the firm's conference room is a rendering of a large house, a sort of antebellum-meets-Mediterranean mansion. It's Don and Gloria's future vacation home. It'll also serve as the calling card for the design/build company's new satellite office at Hammock Dunes. Frilly on the outside, underneath the house is a steel magnolia. That's the construction company's plan for differentiating itself from the competition. "Some of the materials they're putting in high-end homes down there, we wouldn't put in

starter homes," says Santerini. "And you need an advantage when you're new. We think steel construction, steel homes are the answer. We found a manufacturer who will fabricate and assemble the materials off site. The plusses for us are durability, strength, a clean jobsite, and we can hire just average drywallers. And we think we'll be able to charge more."

Don and Gloria will drum up business on the golf course, while the satellite office, staffed by an architect and a construction manager, will handle the nitty-gritty. Tethered to the mother ship by a DSL line, the architect will spend downtime researching and drawing regionally specific stock

Although Gardner is known for his Country-style houses, his design shop is busy adding more upscale traditional styles to the stock portfolio, in keeping with the mass market's changing tastes. Clockwise from top left: The Yankton; Bill and Angela Santerini's home, The Santerini; The Quartermaine; and The Galveston.

mr. plan man

*“architecture is just
a piece of the business.
i wanted to do something
unique that would have
a good chance to sell.”*

—don gardner



Renderings © Donald A. Gardner Architects, Inc.

plans. “It’s a risky venture for a design/build firm to pick up and go seven hours away,” Santerini explains. “One of the goals is to pick up stock-plans business. There’s lots of business in Florida and we don’t have a large share of it.” The strategy is in keeping with the company’s feed-the-core-business philosophy, or, as Santerini says, “We wouldn’t want to do anything to threaten the food chain.”

Gardner and Santerini believe the high-end work and the stock plans are a perfect yin–yang fit. “Stock plans go up and down with the economy,” says Santerini. “But a weaker economy is a good time to build. Interest rates are low, and we’ll be able to find good crews and forge business relationships.” “When we have the house done in 2003, the economy will be on the way up again,” Gardner adds.

The dream doesn’t end there. One day, Gardner hopes to have “20 satellite offices across the country, with 20 different architects feeding the stock-plans business.”

401-okay

So who’s retirement plan is this? The irony is, Gardner is having so much fun, he may never retire. He loves being the big-picture guy, especially now that people he trusts—his own family—are safely minding the store. The only thing that makes him grimace is the thought of how other architects perceive his firm’s work.

“They look at stock plans as beneath them. It may not be glamorous, but for some architects it’s the perfect job—you can design houses without having to work with clients,” says Gardner. “But architecture is just a piece of the business. I wanted to do something unique that would have a good chance to sell. I’ve never thought of myself as an artist—I’m more of a technical type of architect.

“You know,” he continues, “what Frank Lloyd Wright did was very interesting, but you had to turn sideways to get in the door. I’m more intrigued with how to run a profitable business. And the return we’ve had here is better than any stock I ever owned.” *ra*

A build-your-own Gardner house is a deal for the American home buyer. Four sets of blueprints for the 4,776-square-foot Crowne Canyon, top left, cost \$865. A reverse set is \$130 extra; a basement plan is \$275. Blueprints for the 2,976-square-foot MacLachlan, top right, cost a couple of hundred dollars less. The Cliffs Valley Tennis and Fitness Center, above, represents one of the company’s first forays into resort designing and building.



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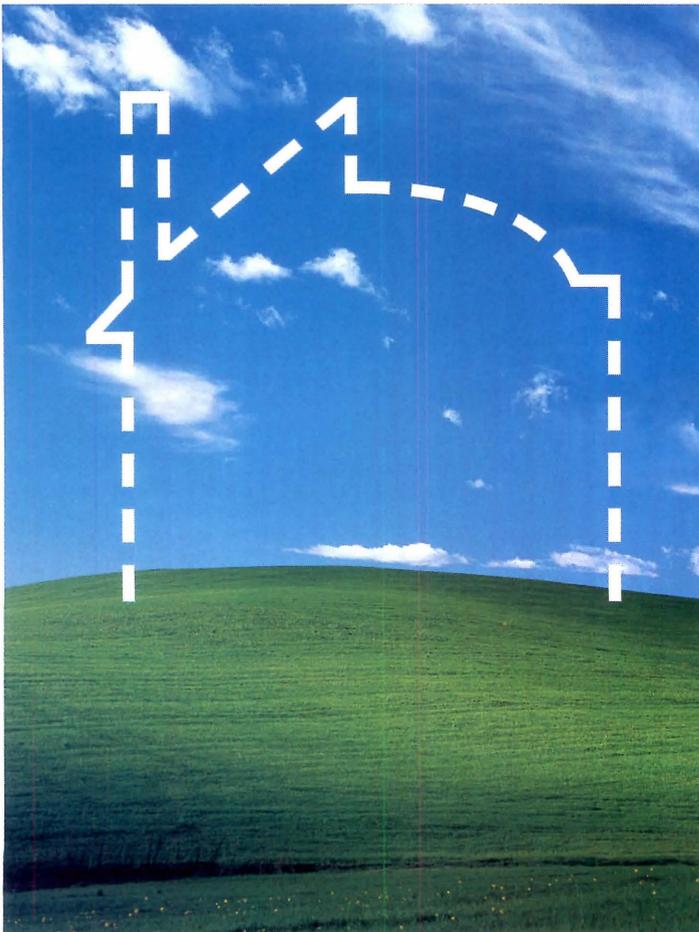


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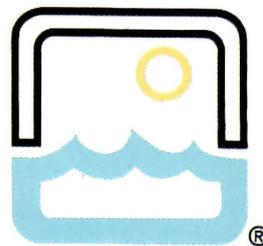
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Each front unit has large windows and contemporary bays to capture light in the loftlike interiors, while skylights serve the same purpose in the rear units (far right). A fiber-cement and metal skin make the building durable.

three infill projects respond
to the sites and sounds
of their urban locales.

city moves

by nigel f. maynard and meghan drueding

leading light

San Francisco's Hayes Valley district was a typical urban horror story. Rife with drugs, crime, and poverty, the area needed revitalization. Today, it's a hip and happening community teeming with boutiques, wine bars, and design centers. Some argue it's the city's best shopping district, and, in typical San Francisco fashion, property values are going through the roof.

"The area is sort of up and coming," says architect Peter W. Pfau, AIA, principal of Pfau Architecture in San Francisco. "It has a bunch of shops, some good restaurants, and a retail character. It's one of those treasured neighborhoods that most people don't know about except the young and hip." One of the newest arrivals to the neighborhood is Pfau's condominium complex at 419 Fulton Street. Previously a single-story plumbing-supply warehouse, the building was an anomaly on a primarily residential street. "The developer came to us and said, 'What can you fit in here?'" says Pfau.

Opting for loft-style interiors, the firm's solution was to create seven live/work units over ground-level parking. "Our exploration of unit types is a continuing investigation of how people live and how unit types can evolve to better accommodate them," the architect says. "The units have to be compact and economical, so you are balancing economy and compactness against livability and visual comfort."

Light and space permeate the compact, vertical interiors. The four 900-square-foot front units have double-story voids and large windows that filter light into the first and second levels. Skylights handle the



Photos: Cesar Rubio Photography

city moves

job in the 1,400-square-foot rear units. “It’s a three-story void that has a skylight at the top,” Pfau explains. “All the services, like bathroom, kitchen, and so forth, are on the back of that void. So you cross over from the stairs and the bathroom volumes to where the bedroom volumes are.”

The rear units also have small yards. Those yards and the unusual configuration of the rear units were major issues for the architects and for the neighbors. With the approval of the neighbors and a variance from the city, Pfau shifted the units horizontally and aligned the project’s three yard blocks with the yard blocks of the adjacent building. This optimized light for the neighboring units and created a shared outdoor podium level.

The facade, punctuated with rectangular bay windows, is a mix of simple design and straightforward materials used in an honest way. “It was a balance between economy and a desire to vary from normative materials, but we also wanted to use materials that make a connection in some way to other vernacular buildings in the neighborhood,” says Pfau. Thus, the architects used durable fiber-cement siding on portions of the skin and wrapped the bays in metal. In the back and at the base of the building is exposed brick. “A lot of our interest is in using materials that are simple but using them in compelling ways,” Pfau says.

With the tight parameters, the architects had little wiggle room, but their solutions managed to deliver a streamlined project that makes optimal use of the space. “We had budget limitations and site constraints, and we had to make the units attractive,” says Pfau. “But sometimes having to work within constraints enhances a project. A little discipline is good for everybody.”—*n.f.m.*

project:

419 Fulton Street, San Francisco

architect:

Pfau Architecture, San Francisco

developer:

Ulrich Schmid-Maybach, San Francisco

general contractor:

Gaehwiler Construction, San Francisco

site size:

.1 acre

project size:

900 to 1,400 square feet per unit

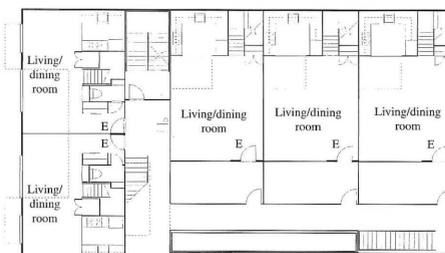
units in project: 7

construction cost:

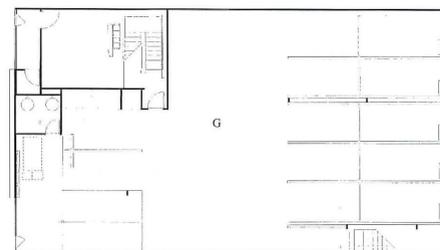
\$125 per square foot

sales price:

from \$400,000 per unit



second floor



ground floor

The rear units’ horizontal private yards allow for indoor/outdoor living (above and below right) and help maximize light for the adjacent building. The architects also created a podium level (above right) that bridges the backyards and existing neighborhood gardens.



Double-story voids and large glass openings help the compact front units live larger than their 900 square feet (above right and top right). The architects chose oak flooring and engineered-stone countertops for durability.

Photos: Cesar Rubio Photography

stoic expression

Take a quick glance at Washington Square West in Philadelphia, and the block of turn-of-the-century brick storefronts looks perfectly normal. Then, as your eye becomes adjusted, it's likely to be drawn to three buildings in the middle of the block. They're the same height and width as the other buildings, but they have a Modern crispness and elegance that differentiates them just a bit.

Those units are the Eleventh Street Townhouses, three attached residences developed and designed by local architect Cecil Baker, AIA. Baker and his development partner, landscape architect Gretchen Hoekenga, purchased the lots in 1994, when the city was in the midst of a deep recession. Since the site was an undesirable vacant lot, none of the retail tenants on the block took issue with the idea of homes going into the space. Absent the usual hassles of finding land and dealing with unhappy neighbors, Baker's main challenge was to design dwellings he could sell in a depressed real estate market, while satisfying the city's design requirements.

To that end, he drew up elevations that match the dimensions of the old buildings but reinterpret their traditional design elements. For example, the units' front garage doors line up with the retail storefront windows so that they don't break the street's rhythm. A cost-effective masonry base of blocks made from powdered, recycled stone gives way to brick second and third floors, echoing the proportions of the shops.

Although the neighborhood's property values have doubled since Baker and Hoekenga came onto the scene, security is still an issue. The units present a rather anonymous facade to the street, saving exterior gestures for the back of the houses. There, rear gardens, Juliet balconies, and roof terraces allow the owners—including the developers, who each kept a unit for themselves—to experience the outdoors to their hearts' content. From front to back, Baker's effort to integrate three Modern structures into a very old city has met with aesthetic and financial success. "Our goal was to create contemporary residences,"

he says. "We wanted to be honest about it, and make something that was Modern through and through."—*m.d.*

project:

Eleventh Street Townhouses, Philadelphia

architect/interior designer:

Cecil Baker & Associates, Philadelphia

developers:

Cecil Baker and Gretchen Hoekenga, Philadelphia

general contractor:

Foster Wilsson, Philadelphia

site size:

.06 acre

project size:

2,000 square feet per unit

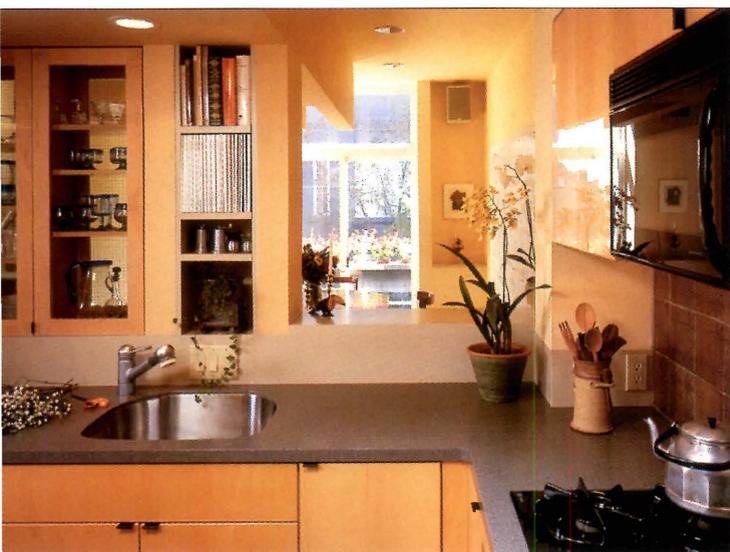
units in project: 3

construction cost:

\$100 per square foot

sales price:

\$300,000 per unit



The floor plans are open so natural light can penetrate as deeply into the 16-foot-wide units as possible. Three variations on a warm, french-vanilla paint capture and amplify sunlight.



Photos: Tom Crane Photography



Architect Baker drew up elevations that match the dimensions of the old buildings but reinterpret traditional elements. For example, the units' mansard roof resembles the neighboring roofs in form but is rendered in corrugated steel and Kalwall. Inside, maple accents inject a note of luxury into a mostly drywall framework.

vertical limit

The conservative mind-set of Cleveland's residential real estate market has long been a source of frustration for hometown architects. "We'd go to other cities, see cool projects, and think, 'I wish we had something like that in Cleveland,'" says Mike Caito, AIA, a principal at the local firm City Architecture. Firm president Paul Volpe, AIA, saw the dearth of progressive design as an opportunity when he founded the company in 1989, and for the past 12 years City Architecture has been designing innovative urban housing in Cleveland and in neighboring cities.

Its latest success is Edgehill Townhomes, a grouping of nine three-story row houses adjacent to the city's historic Little Italy neighborhood. The site, a steep hillside previously deemed unbuildable, dictated that the project be supported by rear stilts and retaining walls. But once site problems were resolved, the question of dealing with angry neighbors remained. Some of the families living in Little Italy have been there for two or three generations, and they weren't happy about the prospect of new construction in the area.

Volpe and Caito, the design principals on the project, addressed the issue with elevations that refer to the neighborhood without mimicking it. They used a combination of fiber-cement siding and brick to evoke the century-old, clapboard-and-brick row houses of Little Italy. "We had to use a very light material for the siding, since the framework couldn't support a whole lot of weight," says Volpe, who retained one of the townhomes as his own residence. "Fiber cement was perfect." Flat roofs, covered entries, and front stoops also recall the surrounding streets.

The developer opted to treat the interior of each townhome as a custom residence. Styles run the gamut from Volpe's streamlined home to the heavily detailed, Tuscan-inspired interior of one of the other units. The project also features rooftop decks.

Edgehill sold out before completion. City Architecture is in the middle of designing several more small, upscale infill projects; it looks like Caito might finally have his wish granted.—*m.d.*

project:

Edgehill Townhomes, Cleveland

architect/interior designer:

City Architecture, Cleveland

developer:

Edgehill Homeowners Association, Cleveland

general contractor:

Snavely Construction Co., Cleveland

structural engineer:

Leinweber & Associates, Cleveland

site size: .5 acre

project size:

2,300 to 3,200 square feet per unit

units in project: 9

construction cost:

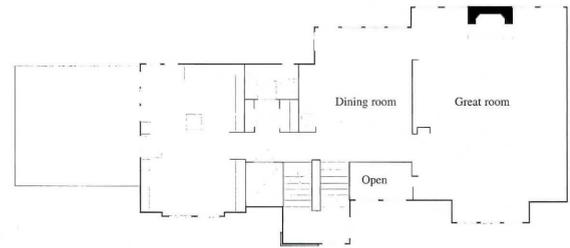
\$135 per square foot

sales price:

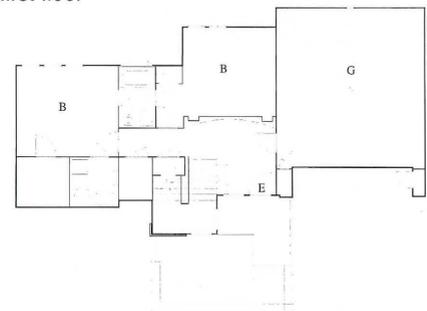
\$340,000 to \$400,000 per unit



Photos: William H. Webb/Infinity Studio Photography



first floor



ground floor

Note: Floor plan shown is for an end unit; it is not typical of all units in this project.



The townhomes' multicolored exteriors, layered facades, and custom steel-and-Lexan sunshades strike a pleasant, lively visual rhythm (top right and opposite). The architect's own unit (above) sports spare, sunny interiors.



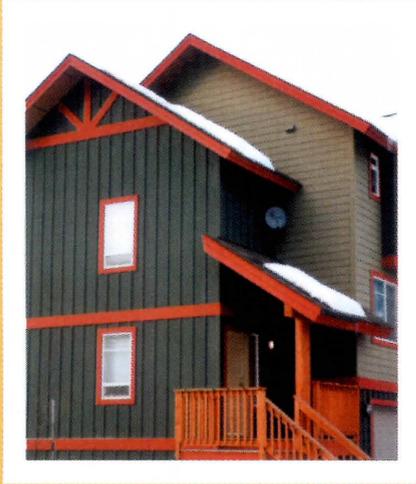
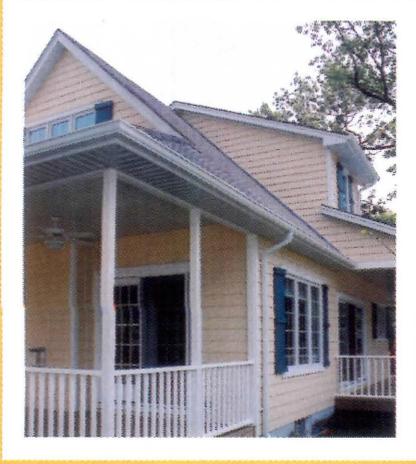
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Smart *system*™

Home of the Year



Great Elevations

The winners of the first-ever SmartSystem™ Home of the Year Awards exemplify the versatility of this premium engineered wood siding material.

Talk to the winners of the first-ever SmartSystem™ Home of the Year Awards, and you might get the impression they each used a different exterior siding material on their award-winning homes.

On one house, for instance, the siding selected needed to hold vibrant colors through a four-year build-out of the project and beyond; on another, the exterior cladding had to meet stringent environmental and occupant health standards – and also withstand dramatic changes in climate conditions without causing maintenance headaches.

For another winning home near Lake Superior, the contractor needed an exterior siding he could apply quickly as winter weather approached, while the design-build firm behind a project in British Columbia deftly combined a board-and-batten look and timber-framed logs to create an updated version of a local design tradition.

Despite their disparate priorities, all of the winning homes used the same exterior finish material – SmartSystem™ siding, a premier, treated engineered wood siding material from Louisiana-Pacific.

On the next 10 pages, you'll discover the range of benefits offered by just one siding material. With that, you'll come to appreciate why builders and contractors throughout North America are converting to SmartSystem™ siding panels and lap boards instead of traditional and other alternative siding products for two simple reasons: versatility and value.

Every builder appreciates a product that delivers a wide variety of aesthetic and performance benefits, installs quickly and easily, is cost competitive, and greatly reduces service call-backs. That's SmartSystem™ siding.

In each case, the builders of these award-winning homes were looking to solve a problem; in all but one instance, they were using SmartSystem™ siding for the first time, relying on their own diligence and confidence in engineered wood technology to trust this new and improved treated engineered wood siding material. That trust was rewarded not only in the performance of the product, but with the achievement and recognition of some truly "Great Elevations." Enjoy.





SmartSystem™

Home of the Year



Home of the Year

Category 1: Single-Family Detached Homes
under 3,000 square feet



A Winning Combination

For years, design-builder Les Stevenson had been trying to convince his custom-home clients to let him design a house that combined the best of the timber-frame style and traditional stick construction. But it wasn't until his firm, Stevenson Design Works in Langley, BC, was selected to design and build the annual Prize House at the 2001 Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) in Vancouver, BC, that he got the chance to showcase his intentions.

Essential to Stevenson's design approach for the project was the use of a wood-based siding product that complemented the large timbers of the home's center section. In addition to its aesthetic qualities, the siding had to meet the builder's expectations for environmental stewardship. Stevenson found his answer with SmartPanel™.

Flanking the dramatic, centered entry/great room dominated by heavy log timbers and ganged windows, the SmartPanels™ were applied to the framed sections of the home and painted a deep green. The vertical lines of the panels complement those of the standing seam metal roof, while 1x2 cedar battens applied every 16 inches on center not only add a dimensional quality to the panels but also conceal the butt joints between them. "The texture made people think it was sawn wood," Stevenson says of the engineered wood panels which feature a deep-embossed wood grain.

In fact, by using a combination of the 4x8-, 9-, and 10-foot panels offered in the SmartSystem™ line of exterior panel siding, Stevenson eliminated the majority of butt joints he might have created with a less-versatile panel product. "The installers really liked it because it was easy to work and apply," he says. The product also arrived preprimed, allowing Stevenson to accommodate his painter's schedule to finish the job in time for the annual summer fair, one of Canada's largest public events.

The environmental benefits of SmartPanels™ were an equally attractive aspect for Stevenson. SmartPanels™ use the entire log – nothing is wasted as it is with center cut cedar. "The time has come when builders are going to have to look at 'green' building products harder because buyers will demand them," he says. "It's not only a good thing to do, but it's a good marketing angle."

The house itself, measuring about 2,500 square feet of living space, was built on the PNE grounds and visited by more than 200,000 people during the 17-day fair. PNE attendees bought raffle tickets for the chance to win the fully furnished house. It has since been moved to its permanent location, a picturesque, wooded lot overlooking Pender Harbour, where its color scheme and framing/finish combination blend with the environment and take advantage of waterfront views.

"The texture made people think it was sawn wood."

– Les Stevenson
Stevenson Design Works

Project Specs

Project:

PNE Prize House, Vancouver, BC

Size:

Approx. 2,500 square feet

Price:

\$750,000 (Canadian; estimated value of total prize package)

Builder/Designer:

Stevenson Design Works, Langley, BC

Completed:

August 2001

Products Used:

SmartPanels™; 1x2 cedar battens; log and frame construction.





SmartSystem™

Home of the Year



Gold Winner

Category 2: Single-Family Detached Homes
over 3,000 square feet

To Your Health

With this project, North Carolina builder Michele Myers was out to prove that a house could be both beautiful and healthy, combining dramatic and marketable design with arguably the most stringent environmental standards around. Essential to that objective was the selection of a siding material that also embraced and satisfied those goals, leading Myers to employ the SmartSystem™ line of treated engineered lap siding.

Inspired by her personal battles with allergies and other environmental sensitivities, Myers only builds homes that meet the

prescriptive and performance-based Healthy House standards of the American Lung Association (ALA). As a builder, however, she also needs to keep marketability in mind, from a product's aesthetic qualities to its long-term reliability.

Satisfied that the borate treatment in SmartSystem™ siding would not cause any health problems for the home's occupants, Myers also appreciated the product's appearance and its toughness. "It looks good, holds paint, and functions in a difficult climate that promotes rot and pests," she says. "With traditional cypress and cedar siding, the cost of call-backs in this climate is a real liability."

Built in Treyburn, an exclusive and architecturally diverse neighborhood in Durham, NC, the house replicates the area's traditional home styles, specifically that of author Thomas Wolfe's birthplace in nearby Asheville, NC, including the detailing under the bay window, the window mullions, and the porch and roof lines and finishes.

Myers credits the SmartSystem™ siding for not only helping her achieve the goals for the house, but staying on schedule and going on to her next project



“[SmartSystem™ siding] was instrumental in helping me create a beautiful home within the ALA Healthy House standards.”

*- Michele Myers
MSquared Builders & Designers*



worry-free. “The siding arrived pre-primed, so it was protected until the painters arrived to finish it,” she says. “Siding performance is a tremendous issue here because we get lots of weather on our houses. You have to be ready for anything.”

One thing Myers wasn't ready for – but fought successfully to change – was the neighborhood covenants for Treyburn that restricted exterior materials to either brick or sawn wood clapboard siding. Prepared to walk away from her lot purchase over that issue, Myers eventually convinced the board that SmartSystem™ siding not only effectively replicated the look of traditional wood clapboards, but also out-performed them and delivered superior curb appeal.

Project Specs

Project:

The Meredith at Treyburn, Durham, NC

Size:

Approx. 4,005 square feet

Price:

\$889,000

Builder:

MSquared Builders & Designers, Bahama, NC

Designer:

Walter Davis Designs, Pittsboro, NC

Landscape Architect:

Red Mill Landscape & Nursery, Inc., Durham, NC

Completed:

September 2001

Products Used:

SmartLap™ siding (8-inch exposure; 5/8-inch thick); pine and spruce trim details; frame construction.



SmartSystem™

Home of the Year



Gold Winner

Category 3: Single-Family Attached Homes

A Legacy of Color

Developer Serge Côté was worried. The 70-unit, for-sale townhouse project he was planning for Pemberton, an area near the resort town of Whistler, BC, would require a four-year build out. But he was unsure if the vibrant color scheme he had selected for the panel and lap-sided fourplex buildings would hold up from phase to phase.

On a suggestion from his lumberyard, Côté investigated and eventually selected SmartPanels™ and SmartLap™ siding, as well as SmartStart™ trim accessories, for The Peaks at Pemberton. With the last phase of the project scheduled for completion in early 2002, Côté remarks how the colors used on the first homes built in 1999 are just as vibrant as those now being finished. "You can't tell them apart, even side-by-side," he says of the meandering clusters of country-style townhouses serving buyers who work at the nearby resort town.

In addition to retaining the two-toned scheme used on the buildings, the SmartSystem™ siding and trim also added dimension to the walls of the three-level, four-unit clusters. "The siding needed to be versatile in its shape and size to help us break up the amount of wall area," he says. "This product gave us a uniformed look for all of the building envelopes."



“With colorful buildings, it was important to use a product that would remain vibrant colors.”

- Serge Côté
The Peaks at Pemberton



Having used plywood panel products and sawn wood clapboard siding in the past, Côté was looking for better solutions. “As soon as we started to install [SmartSystem™ siding], we saw it was a superior product,” he says. In addition, the preprimed siding and trim was easy and fast to apply, helping Côté and his crews stay on schedule.

Côté also appreciated the warranty that accompanies the SmartSystem™ siding and trim pieces. “Buyers demand a solid warranty, and it gave us a competitive edge against projects in Whistler (20 minutes away),” he says. Meanwhile, the majority of buyers believe the SmartSystem™ siding is sawn wood despite its engineered wood construction, he says, providing another marketing advantage.

Côté was so impressed with the product that he did something few developers would do: he showed it to the competition. “I’ve invited other developers and builders to come out and see it and take some samples with them,” he says. “It really sells itself once they see and feel it.”



Project Specs

Project:

The Peaks at Pemberton, Pemberton, BC

Size:

1,084 - 1,482 square feet (townhomes)

Price:

\$184,900 - \$232,900 (Canadian)

Builders:

Hammer Holdings Ltd. & The Peaks Country Townhomes, Ltd., Whistler, BC

Developer:

Glacier Creek Development Corp., Whistler, BC

Completed:

Winter 2002 (began in 1999)

Products Used:

SmartPanel™ and SmartLap™; SmartStart™ trim; 2x6 frame construction.



SmartSystem™

Home of the Year



Merit Award Winner

Category 1: Single-Family Homes
under 3,000 square feet



Looks Prevail

Canadian builder Matt Johnstone had always been drawn to the architecture of the South Carolina coastline, but it wasn't until he developed and built Harbour Park in the lakeside resort area of Grand Bend, ON, that he was able to bring that passion northward.

Articulating a southern style, however, necessitated clapboard siding, as well as the use of a wide color palette. That may be fine for Charleston, but Johnstone needed to make sure his vision didn't fade in a more northern climate. Never a big fan of vinyl, and more accustomed to the bulk of brick, he turned to SmartSystem™ siding and SmartStart™ trim to bridge the gap. "I really liked the looks of it," he says of the SmartSystem™ siding. "It was mostly an aesthetic decision to use it."

Begun in late 1999, the five-acre project offered six different models and a selection of six to seven exterior colors seeped in South Carolina history. Johnstone was careful not to allow the same house and color side-by-side, resulting in a streetscape that truly harks back to its southern roots.

Painting and finishing, in fact, are fast, easy and require less paint because SmartSystem™ siding comes preprimed. For this project, the colors are a solid-based stain applied in a distributor's factory and brought to the site prefinished and ready to install. Johnstone's crews found the SmartLap™ siding as easy to work and fasten to the exterior walls as traditional wood clapboards



In addition to SmartLap™ siding, Johnstone also applied SmartStart™ trim at the corners and around the windows, in some cases using the treated engineered wood material to add extra stability to the window frames. The combination of SmartLap™ siding and SmartStart™ trim enhanced the southern architecture by adding depth and texture to the facades of the 20 homes in Harbour Park.

Attracting second and vacation-home buyers, the project sold out in less than two years. Even with no other resort-like projects on his radar screen, Johnstone says he is anxious to use the SmartSystem™ siding on a future development of homes.

“I really liked the looks of it. It was mostly an aesthetic decision to use it.”

*- Matt Johnstone,
MT Johnstone Construction Ltd.*

Project Specs

Project:

Harbour Park, Grand Bend, ON

Size:

1,600 square feet (Suncrest model, shown)

Price:

\$185,000 - \$300,000 (Canadian)

Builder/Architect/Land Planner:

MT Johnstone Construction Ltd., London, ON

Completed:

September 2001 (began in late 1999)

Products Used:

SmartLap™ siding; SmartStart™ trim; frame construction.



SmartSystem™

Home of the Year



Merit Award Winner

Category 1: Single-Family Homes under 3,000 square feet

Project Specs

Project:

Tigelaar Board & Batten, Carlisle, ON

Size:

3,300 square feet

Price:

\$489,000 (Canadian)

Builder:

Tigelaar Construction Ltd., Carlisle, ON

Completed:

1999

Products Used:

Products Used: SmartPanel™;
SmartStart™ trim; frame construction.

Style and Stability

Rummaging through his shop a few years ago, Ontario builder Mike Tigchelaar uncovered a section of a SmartPanel™ he'd used on a previous job. "It still looked the same as when I bought it," he says. "For a wood-based siding, it's very stable."

Looking for a reliable siding product for the custom home he was building for his nephew in Carlisle, ON, Tigchelaar also wanted to replicate the rustic look of the old barn on his parents' farm. SmartPanels™ met both objectives.

Using mostly 4x10-foot, no-groove, pre-painted SmartPanels™, Tigchelaar added 1x4 battens – also pre-finished to match – made from the same treated engineered material as the siding, and placed 12 inches on center, to create a traditional board-and-batten look. "It creates an authentic look once the house is finished," says Jim Hall of Goodfellow, Inc., the local distributor. "It looks like one of the older homes in Carlisle."



“It’s hard to get good lumber that will last a number of years. The SmartPanels™ are very stable over the long term.”

**- Mike Tigchelaar,
Tigelaar Construction Ltd.**

In addition, Tigchelaar not only found the SmartPanels™ and trim able to meet his aesthetic needs, but easy to work with. “Because its a panel, it stays straight and square and true along the entire wall,” he says.

His crews also saved time installing a prefinished product – “we didn’t touch it once it was installed,” he says – and because the SmartPanels™ fastened directly to the rough wall sheathing, it saved Tigchelaar the task of strapping the sheathed walls for a watershed system.

Finally, Tigchelaar was able to optimize the SmartPanels™ by designing friezes and skirts that, when fastened, appeared to extend the length of the panel another foot.

More recently, the builder has installed SmartPanels™ and SmartStart™ trim on another house nearing completion – his own. That house also includes materials such as insulated concrete forms (ICFs) and reclaimed brick to showcase innovation and environmental friendliness – two issues addressed by SmartPanels™. The product also was specified for its reliability in the often volatile climate of humid summers and dry winters in this southern Ontario town. “It’s hard to get [sawn] wood or lumber that’s stable enough for this area,” Tigchelaar says. “But this product is stable enough.”



What is SmartSystem™ siding?

Few products can promise the moon and deliver it, especially to a naturally skeptical bunch of builders. But SmartSystem™ siding from Louisiana-Pacific does just that. Available in lap boards and panel configurations, as well as a variety of complementary accessories, SmartSystem™ siding combines the aesthetics of sawn wood cladding with the performance of a treated engineered product.

Not only does SmartSystem™ siding feel and work like sawn wood siding, it holds paint or stain better and longer, resists splits and warp, and simply can’t delaminate. Every board and panel is treated with a proprietary borate-based process to mitigate termite infestation and fungal decay in application, while a resin-saturated paint base overlay fused to the embossed (not cut) substrate for a surface creates a material that is easy to paint and holds its color. Add in a fully transferable, 30-year warranty with a seven-year repair/replacement feature and you’ve found a siding product unmatched in virtually every category.

The SmartSystem™ siding lap product is available in 16-foot lengths to reduce joints and deliver a clean look, while the panel version is offered in 4x8-, 9- and 10-foot dimensions to accommodate almost any situation and deliver high-impact curb appeal.

For more information about SmartSystem™ siding, call 1-800-648-6893 or on the web at www.lpcorp.com.

Circle no. 11

The Judges



The SmartSystem™ Home of the Year panel of judges met in Washington, DC. From left to right: Bill Devereaux of Devereaux and Associates in McLean, VA, Tom Glass of Glass Construction, Washington, DC, Wayne Speight of SPEIGHT studio architects in Annapolis, MD, Amy Weinstein of Weinstein Associates Architecture, Washington, DC, and Jack McLaurin, of Lessard Architectural Group, Vienna, VA.

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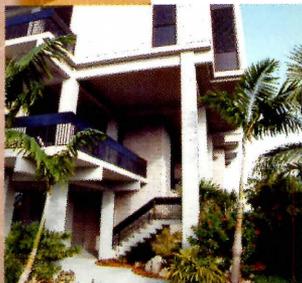
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**The 1998 Homeowner Report. Portland Cement Association. Study available on request.*

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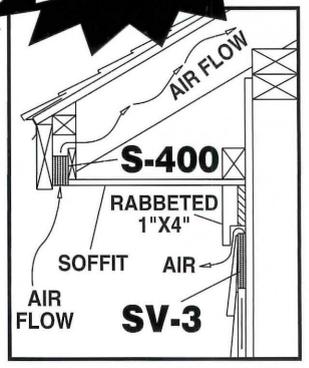
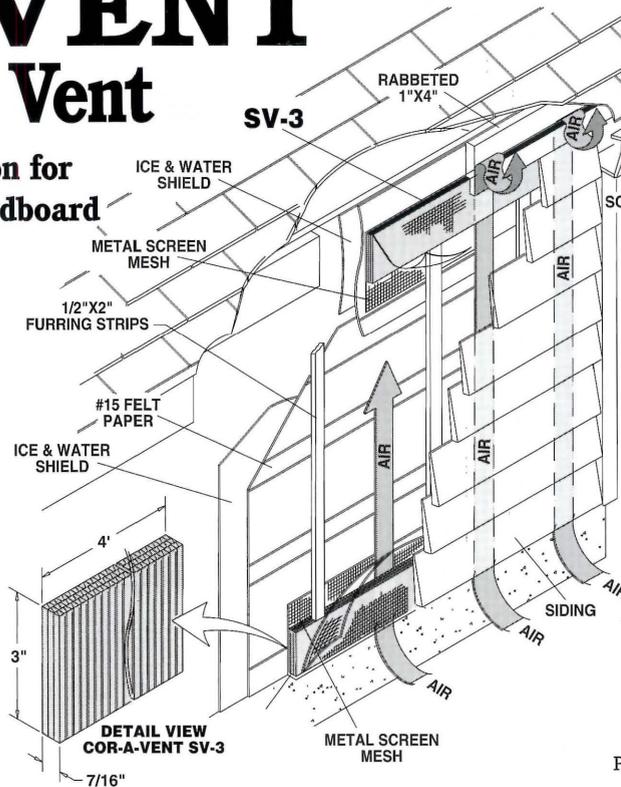
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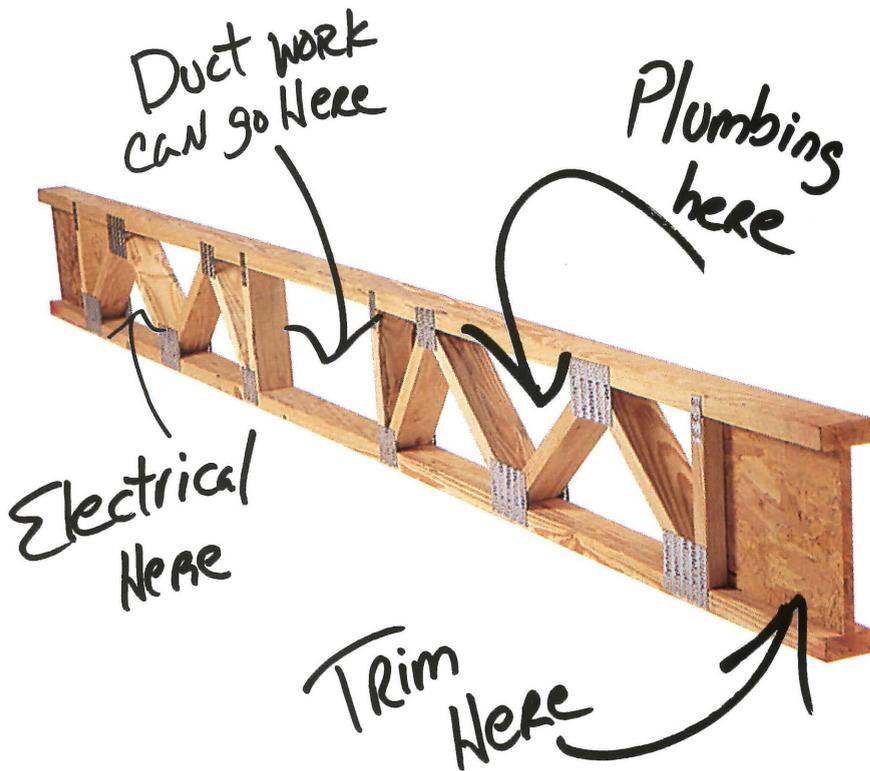
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faux building products can make a real impression.

by nigel f. maynard

Architects are masters of illusion—they manipulate layers, light, and sight lines to trick houses into living larger than their true size. Merchant home builders love this ability, but they also want their houses swathed in strong, durable, thrifty exteriors. If money is tight, natural materials might be the first luxury spec to go.

That's where man-made materials (a.k.a. synthetics) come in. Although they've been around for a long time, synthetics have had a bad rap for looking cheap and unconvincing. But manufacturers have learned a few tricks of their own, and the newest generation of pretenders looks and feels more like the real deal.

Take faux stone, for example. "It used to be cost-prohibitive, and from the street people could tell it was fake," says architect Jack McLaurin, a principal at Vienna, Va.-based Lessard Architectural Group. "Now, it's cheaper and has gotten really nice." Vinyl siding, too, was an obvious compromise for wood. "Now, we recommend fiber-cement siding," McLaurin says, which looks far more like nature's own.



Courtesy Robert L. Earl & Associates

For this Earl & Associates project, architect Robert Earl used eye-deceiving fiberglass cornice and window trim. The slate-look-alike roofing and "brick-veneer" walkway are really concrete.

In addition to budget concerns, performance is another reason many architects spec synthetics. "You don't have the maintenance or warping or rotting when the product comes in contact with the ground," says Robert L. Earl, AIA, whose firm, Robert L. Earl & Associates, has offices in Los Angeles and Irvine, Calif. "With wood, we can't do that."

Production home designers also like these products because they save on labor dollars for builders, says architect Marcus DesPlantes, an associate with Downing Thorpe & James in Boulder, Colo. "A lot of the faux material is more expensive,

but the cost for putting it on the building is cheaper," he explains. "The net result is the project is cheaper."

copy cats

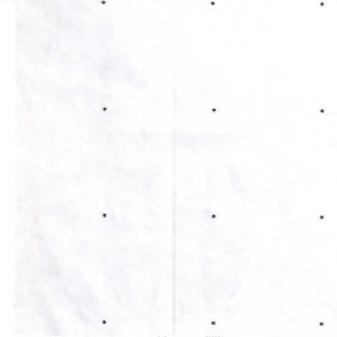
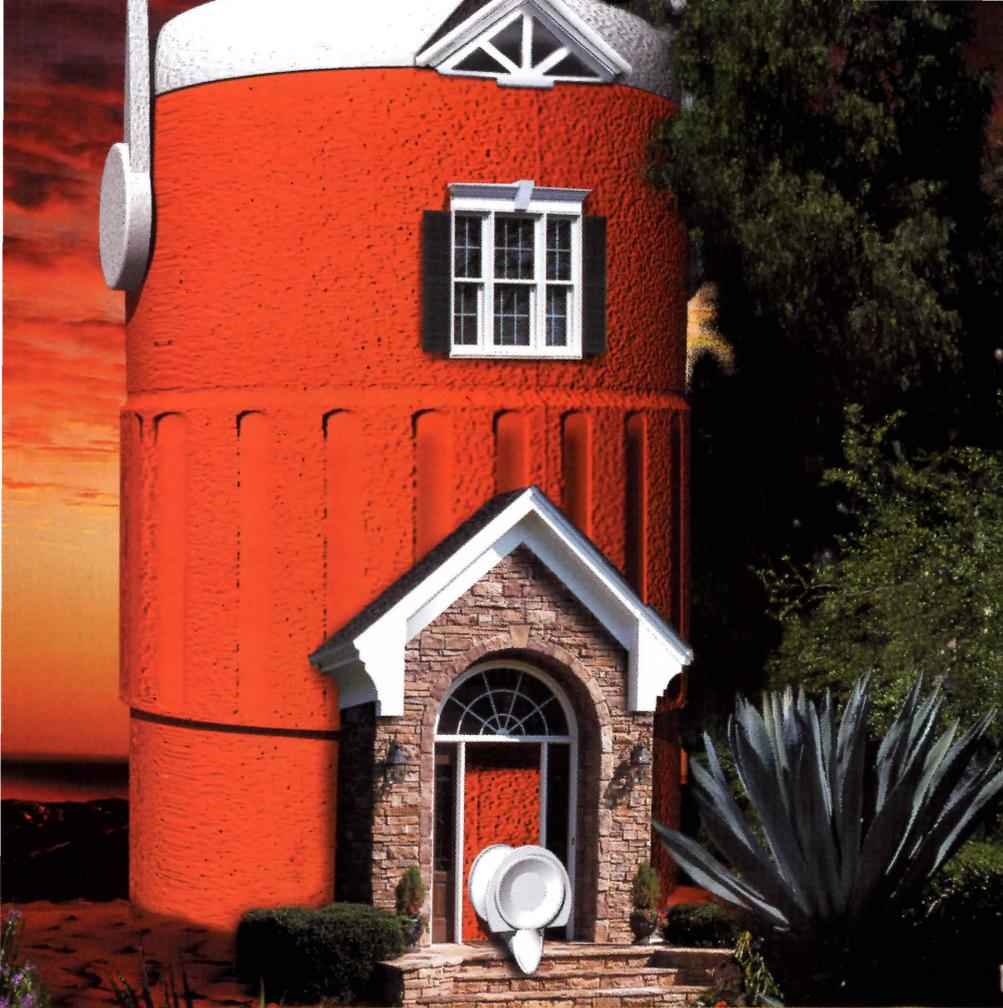
Among the best impostors are fiber-cement siding and trim, wood-plastic composite decking, engineered stone, fiberglass columns, PVC balustrades and railings, and cement-based roofing products that bear an uncanny resemblance to slate.

When a project calls for a stone look, Earl often passes on the real thing. Instead, he uses lightweight faux stone from Fontana, Calif.-based Coronado Stone Products. "It doesn't

have the same structural and weight concerns," he says. "And it allows us to do a two-story residence for much less."

For his trim work, architect Mark Orling uses Royal Wood Trimboard, a wood-plastic composite manufactured by Phoenix-based Precision Composites. Royal Wood comes in a smooth white finish that can be painted or left as is. Larry Demaree, the company's vice president of marketing and business development, says the product handles like wood but will never split, warp, or rot. "It can be nailed closer to the edge, and it will not fade or yellow."
continued on page 80

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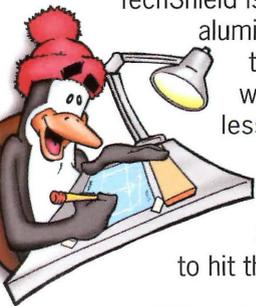


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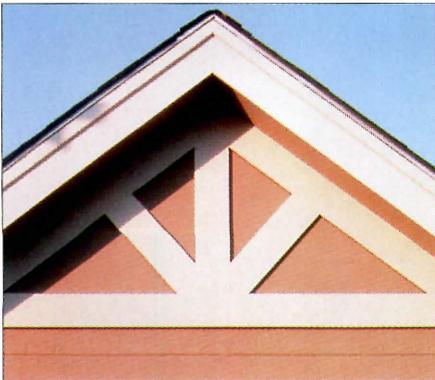
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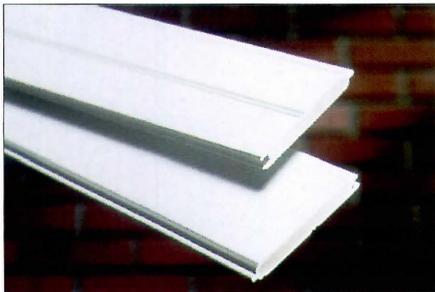


low over time," he says.

Comparable in price to cedar, redwood, and clear pine, Royal Wood is not cheap, but Orling, a principal at Rust Orling & Neale Architects in Alexandria, Va., says his builder clients are usually willing to pay for the maintenance and quality-control advantages. He also says the product



Courtesy CraftMaster Manufacturing



Courtesy Precision Composites

MiraTEC exterior trim (top) looks like wood, but without knots and cracks. Royal Wood's reversible beaded and V-groove panels (above) are dead ringers for painted wood.

seems to hold paint better than wood. One caveat: It's nonporous, so paint dries more slowly than on natural wood, Demaree says. Boards are 16 feet long and up to 12 inches wide.

If your project calls for a more rustic look, Fypon Molded Millwork in Stewartstown, Pa., offers a polyurethane molded mill-

work that has a rough-sawn look resembling heavy-beam timber. The manufacturer says the product is insect-, rot-, and crack-resistant and virtually maintenance-free.

CraftMaster Manufacturing's new MiraTEC treated exterior composite trim features a cedar-textured look on one side and a smooth finish on the other, for greater design flexibility. The Chicago-based company says the product is water-repellent and treated with a wood preservative for rot and termite resistance. Boards are 16 feet long and 3 to 12 inches wide.

full decks

For no-maintenance decks, Valley Forge, Pa.-based CertainTeed produces Boardwalk composite decking and railing, which is made from recycled wood and PVC. "Boardwalk cuts, fastens, saws, and sands just like wood, but it will not split, crack, cup, rot, or warp like wood," says manager of new business development John W. Pruett. Its stiff properties also allow for greater joist spans, he says. It may be painted to match exterior colors, although the company says painting is unnecessary. According to CertainTeed, a typical deck made with Boardwalk will cost about \$4,500 but will not incur any additional costs over a 10-year period; a similar deck with pressure-treated wood, it says, will cost \$3,500 to install but cost

\$6,450 over 10 years.

Similar products are available from Winchester, Va.-based Trex Co., which offers a product made from waste-wood fiber and reclaimed plastic bags, and from Kandant Composites in Bedford, Mass., whose Geo-deck decking is made from recycled plastics, cellulose, and fillers.

hot roofs

Earl also uses cement-based products for roofing, especially in fire-prone California, where wood shakes are forbidden. A vast array of look-alikes is available. Garland, Texas-based Slate/Select sells a fiberglass-reinforced cement product molded from natural slate shingles. It comes in various sizes and thicknesses, and in eight standard colors that can be blended.

Reading, Pa.-based Eternit fabricates a slate-like roofing product out of portland cement, sand, mineral fillers, and organic fibers. Three lines are available in various sizes and colors. Ron Hruz, vice president of sales, says the products are good alternatives to natural slate because they're lighter and, at \$180 to \$200 per 100 square feet, half as costly.

Other roofing products include Mira Vista Slate, an Owens Corning product made from ground slate and cast in molds; Eco-Shake, a vinyl and recycled-wood product offered by Wagoner, Okla.-based Re-New Wood; Dura Slate,

a polymer product from Royal Building Products in Ontario, Canada; and Flex-Shake, steel-reinforced rubber roof tiles from San Antonio-based US Century.

With all the benefits, synthetics seem like a simple spec, but architect Earl sounds a note of caution: Most synthetics are available only in standard sizes, so you have to adhere to those restrictions. "We have to make sure our designs accommodate the products as the builder receives them," he says.

Each synthetic has its strengths and weaknesses, and architects must take those into account as well. For example, DesPlantes points out that synthetic stone is much thinner than real stone, so revealing the edge will expose its most negative attribute. "If you terminate that material on the inside corner, it will be less apparent that you've got a house with a Hollywood facade."

Another option is to use real stone on the bottom 10 feet of the house and spec synthetic stone in the upper areas, DesPlantes says. "It's lightweight, so it does not require additional structure to hold it up. Using it where the owner cannot touch or see it will save money."

Skillfully speced and strategically placed, great pretenders can save time and money, both on the front end for the builder and at the back end for the buyer. And that can make the architect a real hero to both. **ra**



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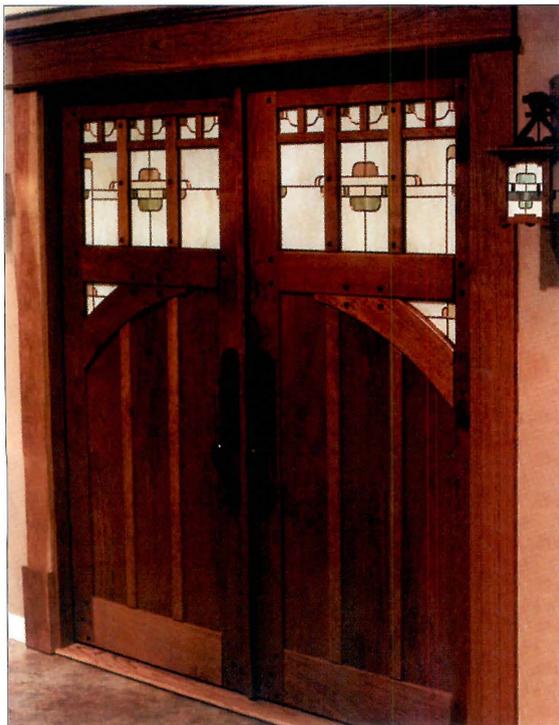
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—*nigel f. maynard*

jet set

Kathryn Streeby, a product manager at Kohler, says low-flow toilets are inefficient because they have inexact flushing sys-



tems. The solution, she says, is the new Ingenium. This gravity-fed, siphon-jet system performs as well as the now-banned, 3.5-gallons-per-flush toilets, Streeby says, thanks to water channels that work as one unit to create greater flushing force. The toilet has a 10-inch water surface for improved hygiene and odor reduction. Kohler, 800.4.KOHLER; www.kohler.com.



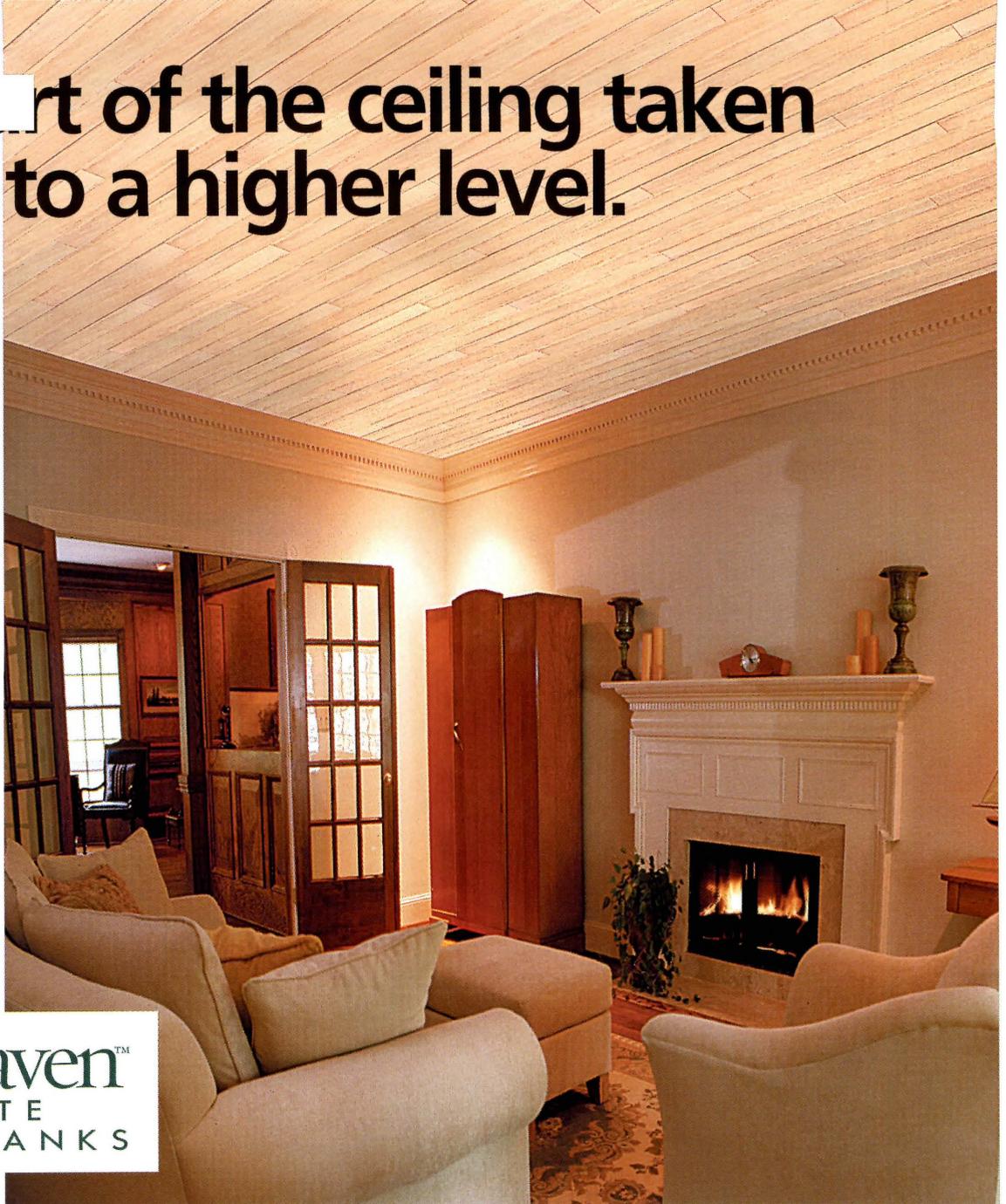
the professionals

Because installing washers and dryers in multi-family units can pose space and venting obstacles, ASKO (now owned by AM Appliance Group) created the Professional Laundry Series. The products can be stacked, installed in a closet, or built in under kitchen or bathroom countertops. “The series includes a ventless dryer—something you don’t see that often,” says Jim Howser, in the company’s commercial products division. The washer uses fewer than 15 gallons per cycle, washes as many as 14 bath towels per load, and uses less electricity than comparable units, says the maker. ASKO, 972.725.1772; www.askousa.com.

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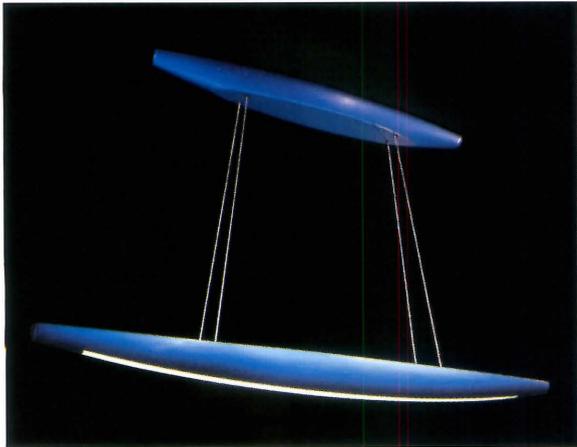
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righteous retro

The V2 series' opaque white glass shades—made from a 1950s mold—lend the fixtures retro flair. Modern casting and machined aluminum hardware update the look. The pendant shade hangs 27 inches long; a matching sconce and portable cordless lamp complete the set. 2thousand degrees, 510.234.2086; www.2thousanddegrees.com.



glowing review

The environmentally correct Lulu fixture sports a shade made from recycled plastic and uses dimmable compact fluorescent bulbs or standard incandescents. The shade—composed of two offset semicircles—also comes in a slightly tapered version, as well as in various patterns and colors. Fire & Water, 212.475.3106; www.cyberg.com.

continued on page 86

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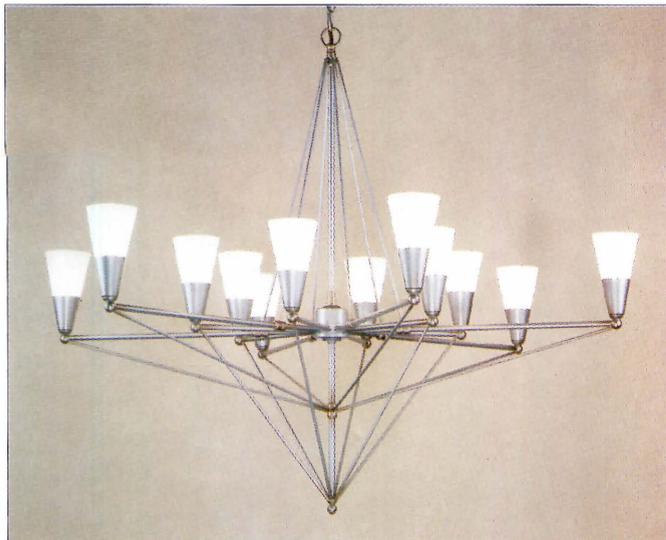
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drum roll

Characterized by smoothly curved aluminum segments with raised vertical seams, Meridian lighting fixtures feature drumlike fittings available in either 3- or 8-inch depths with 9- or 16-inch-diameter, nonglare acrylic lenses. The pendants hang from heavy-gauge steel aircraft cables. Funky finishes include brushed natural aluminum as well as gloss, crinkle, matte, or metallic baked enamels.

d'ac Lighting, 914.698.5959; www.daclighting.com.

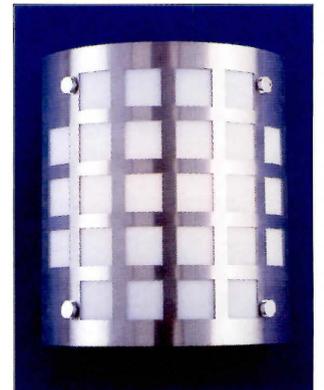


star light

Part of the Futura Range collection, this handmade iron chandelier is available in natural or matte black finishes with frosted glass globes. Individually created and finished, the chandeliers span nearly 41 inches in diameter and use 40-watt incandescents. The Futura is available in a wall sconce with one or two globes, and as a hanging fixture with three, nine, or 12 globes. Smithbrook Lighting, 678.445.5556; www.smithbrooklighting.co.uk.

arc de squares

Aptly titled Squares, this fixture consists of white acrylic squares punctuated by chrome knobs within a sleek, stainless-steel frame. Part of a modular collection, the



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LBL's indoor/outdoor die-cast aluminum luminaire. Mountable on the wall or ceiling, the fixture's 6-inch-deep arc covers 14 by 15¾ inches. Finishes include brushed stainless, black, white, bronze, rust, and custom colors. LBL Lighting,

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—shelley d. hutchins

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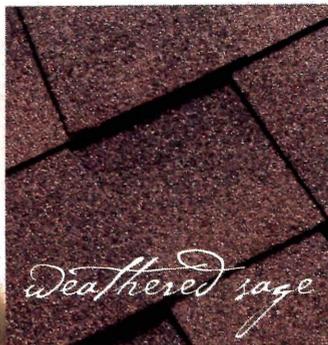
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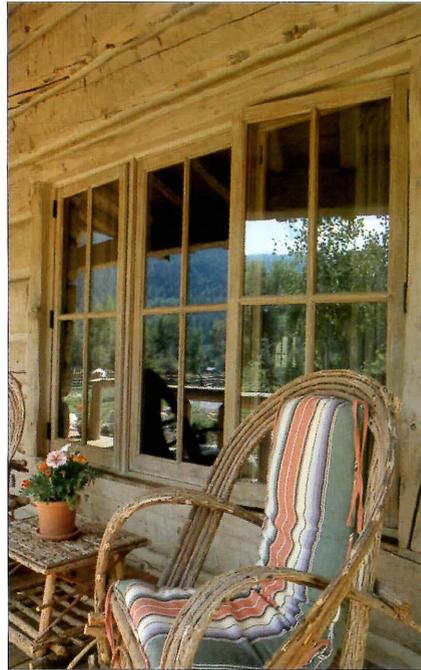
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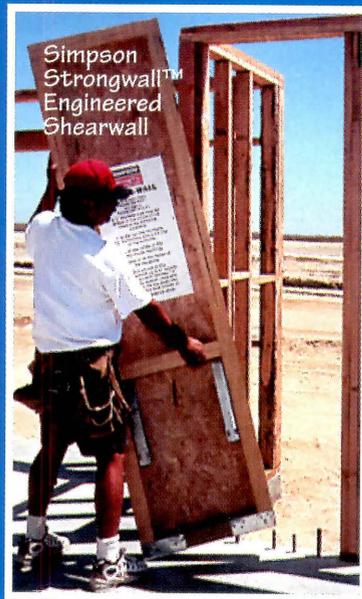
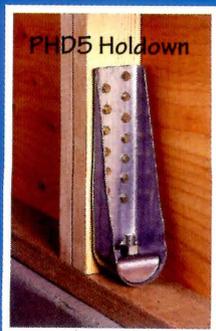
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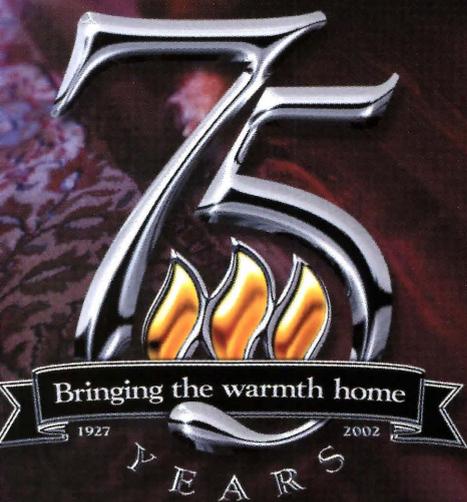
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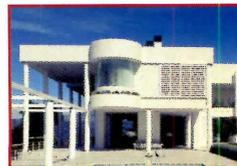
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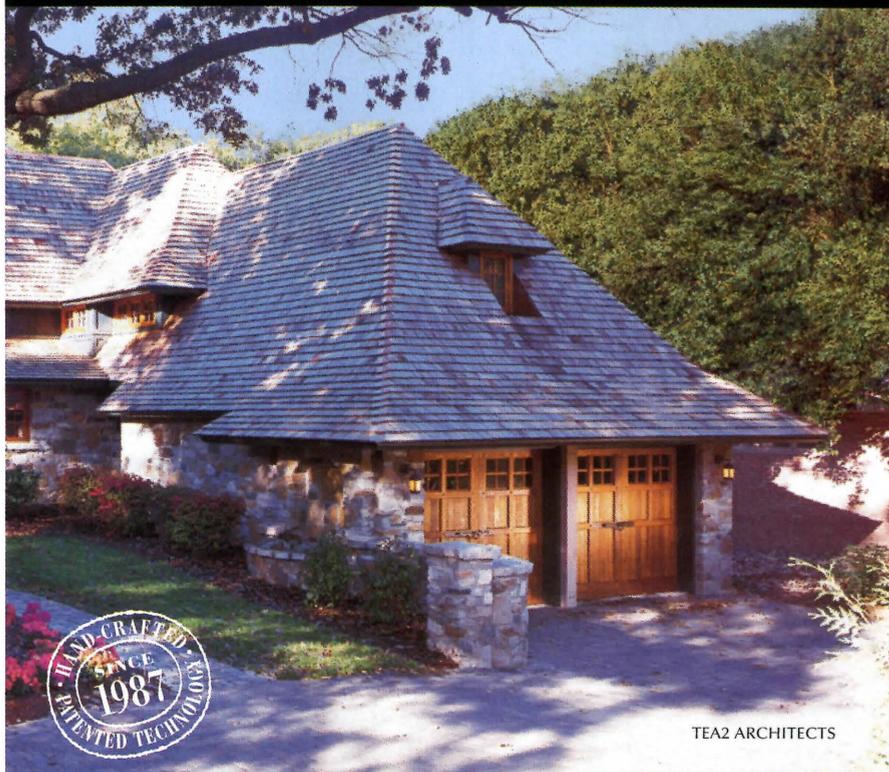
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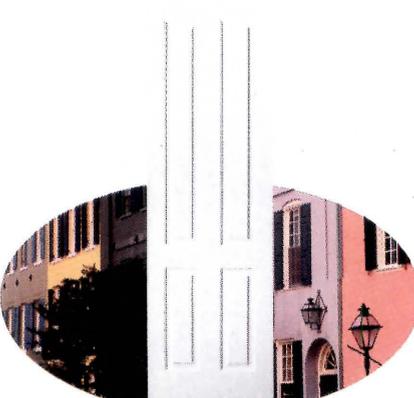
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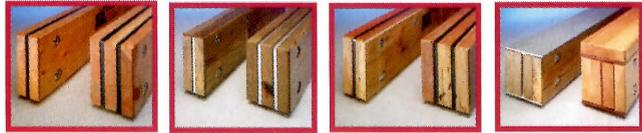


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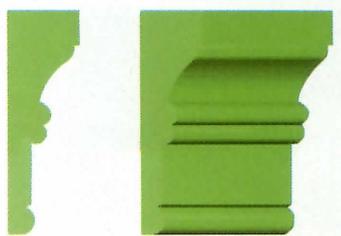
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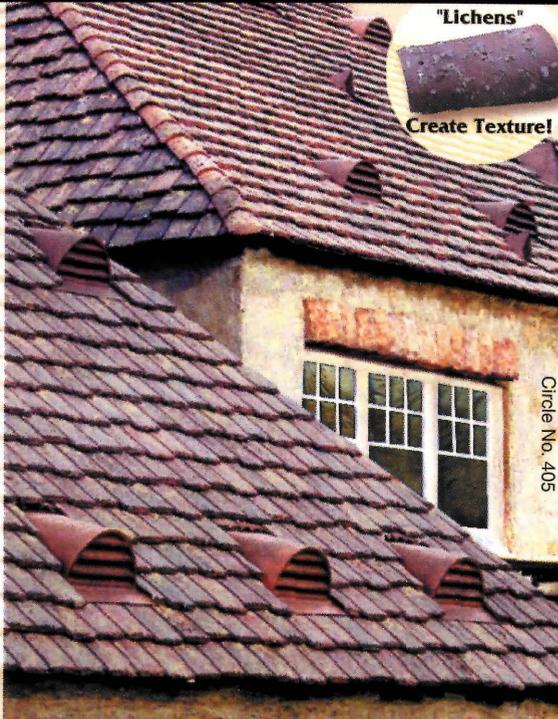


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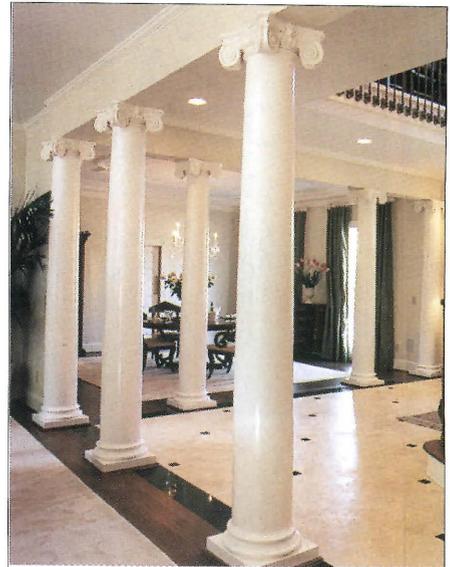
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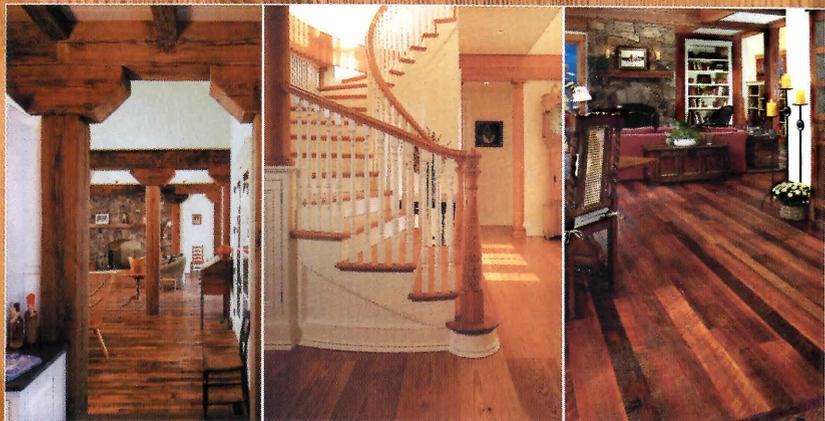
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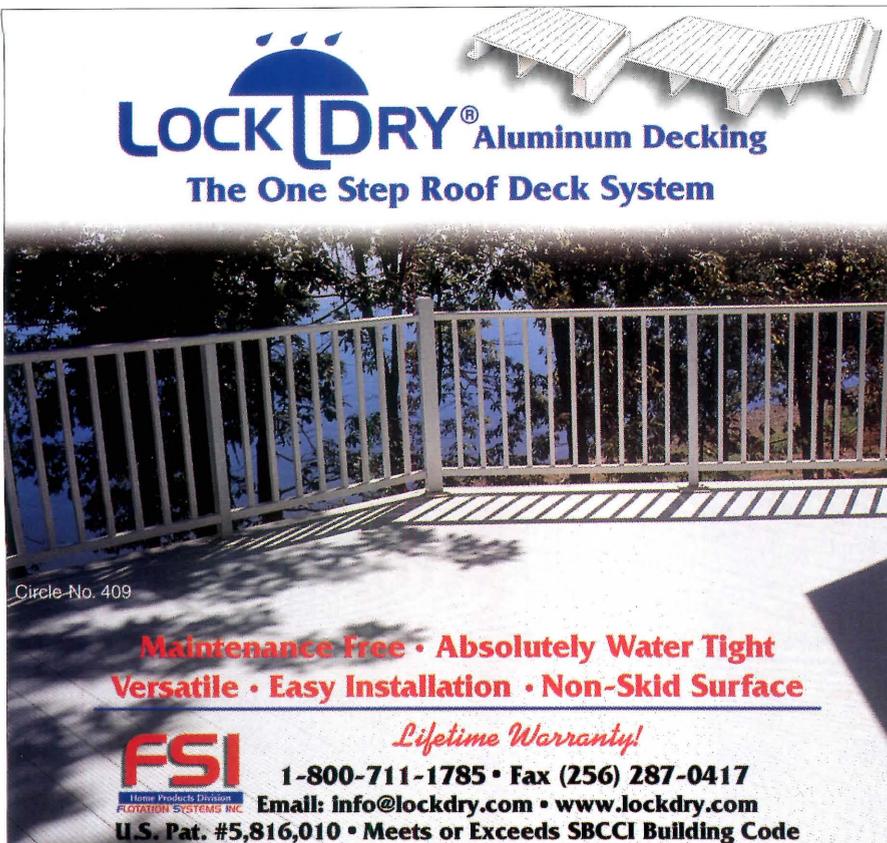
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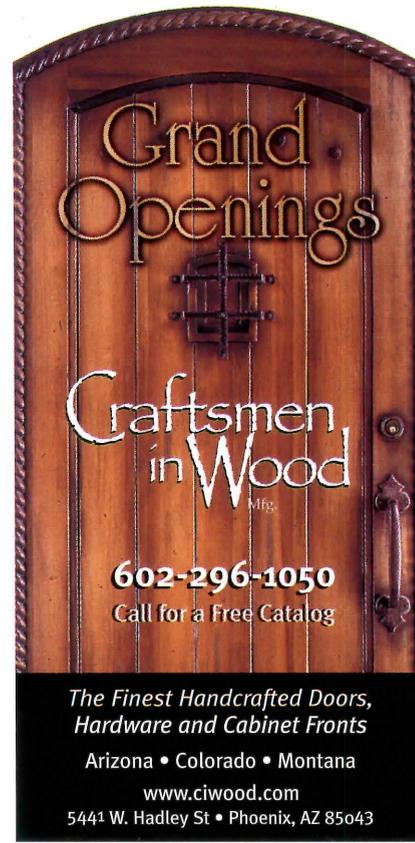


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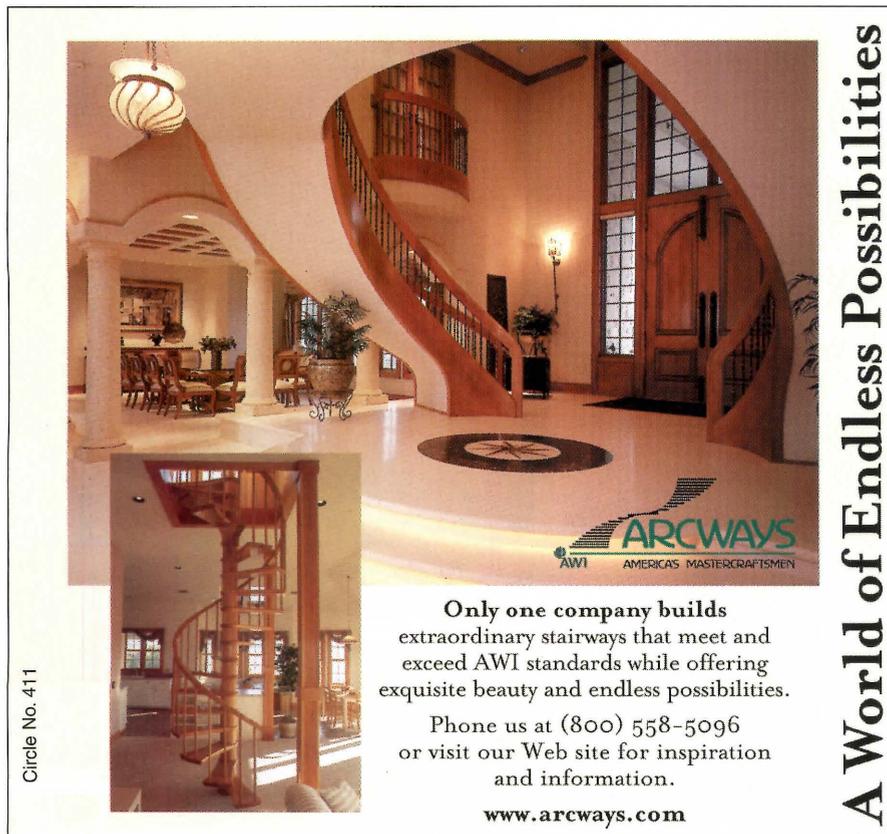
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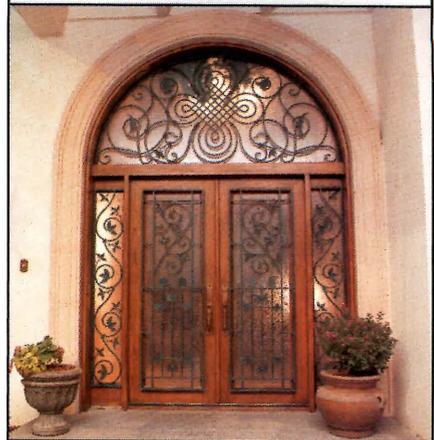
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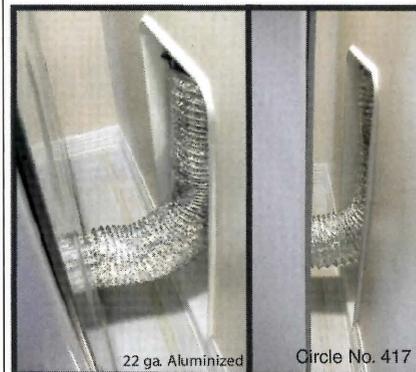
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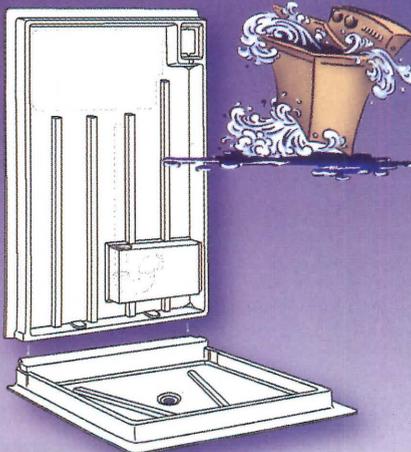


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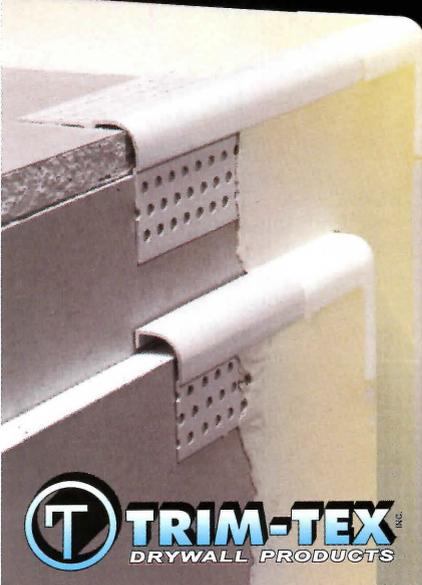
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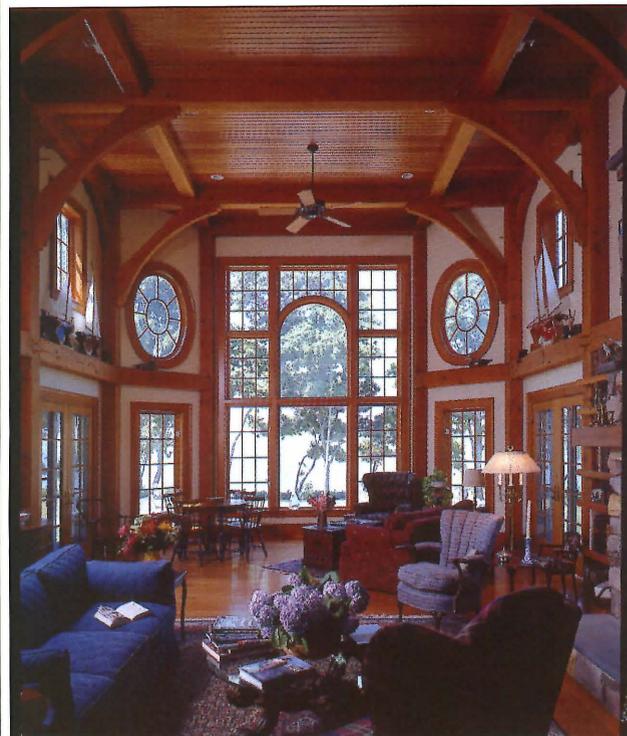


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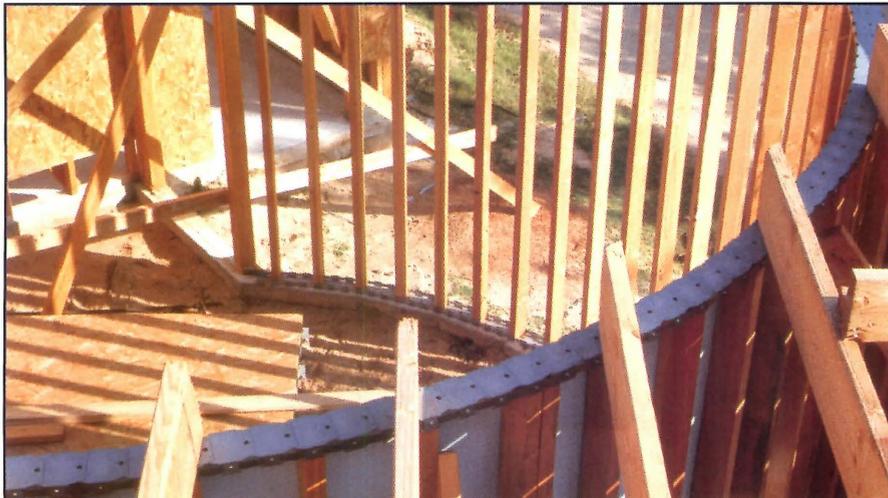


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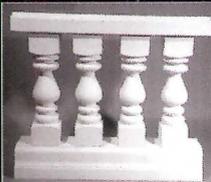
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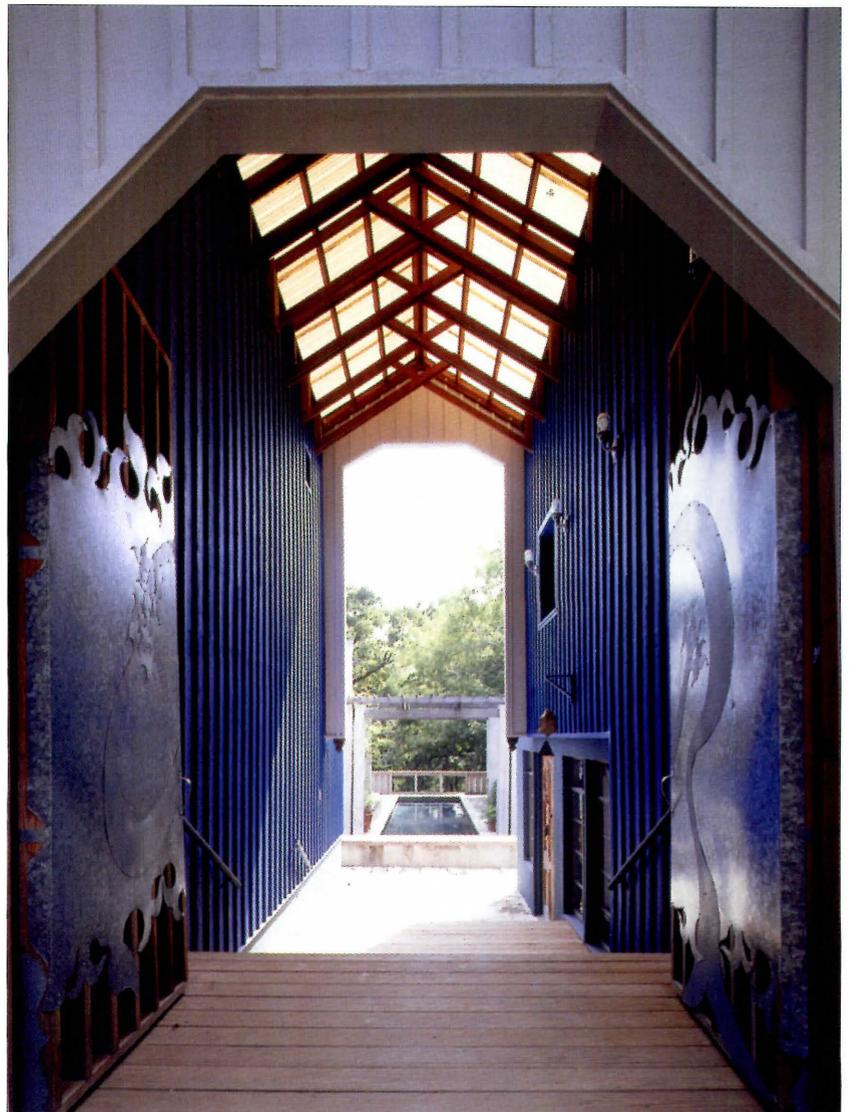
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