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Mark R. Johnson, FAIA, AIBD

Design professionals may be aware of Habitat for Humanity® International and its commitment to providing safe and affordable homes to communities across the country. As a partner with Habitat for Humanity, Whirlpool Corporation shares in this commitment to help families in need by inspiring hope and building lives – one home at a time.

Millard Fuller, founder and president of Habitat for Humanity International speaks about our shared vision this way, “Every family deserves a simple, decent place to live.” As a corporate sponsor, we couldn’t agree more and are proud to

Photography: Caron Greathouse/ Robert Baker Habitat for Humanity



support such an important program in helping to build a better environment for us all.

Whirlpool demonstrates its partnership with Habitat in a number of ways.

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More than 40,000 appliances have been donated to Habitat since 1999 as part of Whirlpool’s \$25 million commitment to the organization’s “More than Houses” campaign, which will build more than 100,000 new homes by 2005.

Whirlpool employees get behind the effort as well by donating their time and labor skills. Thousands of our employees have volunteered at local Habitat builds in their communities across the country and will continue to do so in the years to come.

If you’re in the Michigan area, Whirlpool welcomes you to join us as a volunteer for the June 2005 Jimmy Carter Work Project in our hometown of Benton Harbor.

Or get involved with Habitat for Humanity in your own community. Having worked on Habitat projects myself, I can promise you it’s a rewarding experience for all involved. For more information on how you can participate and a list of Habitat events in your area, visit www.habitat.org.



Former President Jimmy Carter (center) at a neighborhood groundbreaking ceremony in Americus, Georgia.

As the International in their name implies, Habitat has extended its reach to Europe, and Whirlpool Corporation is there too, providing the appliances to assure those families in need, *a decent place to live*. We’re proud of our global partnership with Habitat’s ministry of compassion and outreach. Join us.

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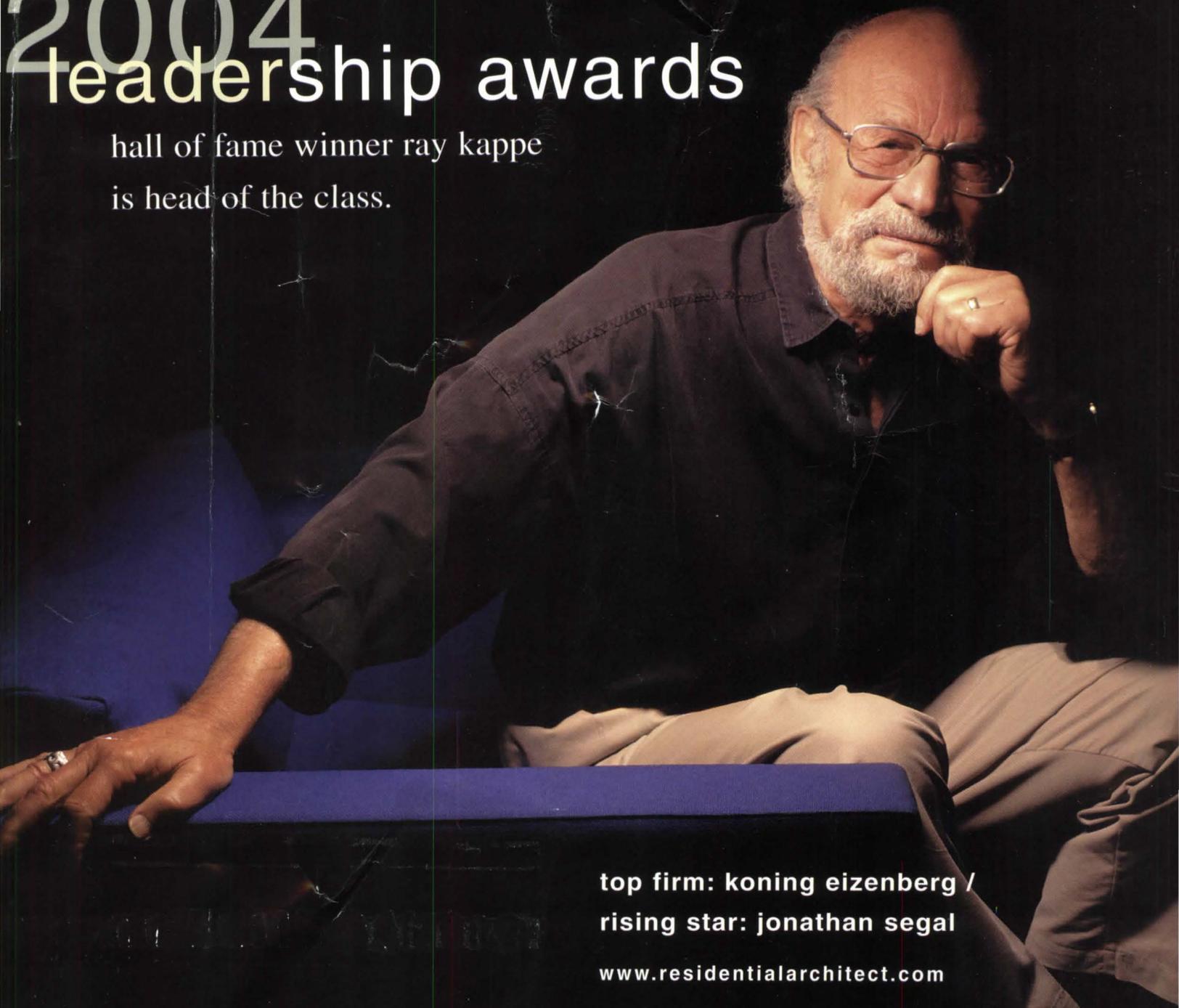
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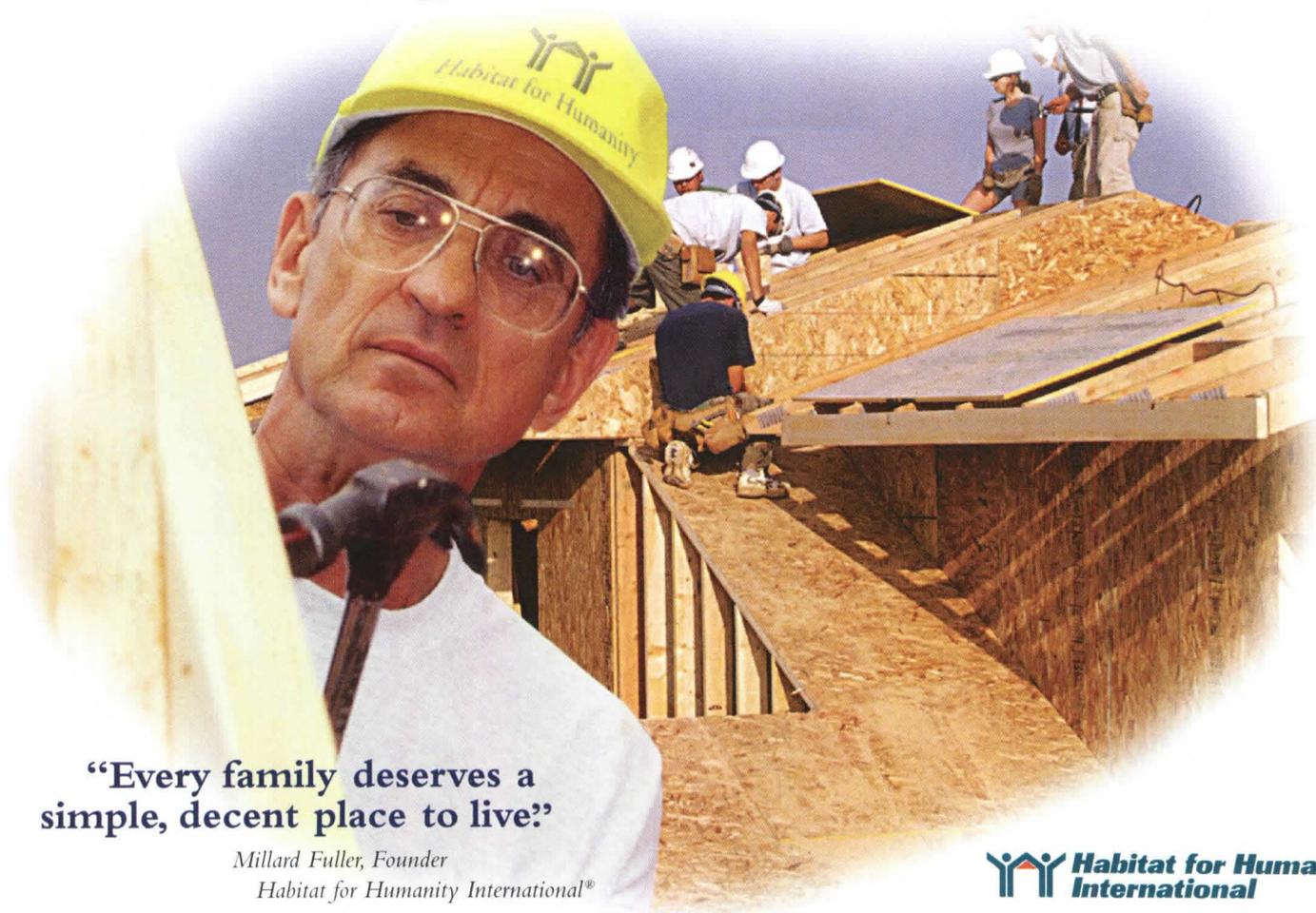
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*Millard Fuller, Founder
Habitat for Humanity International®*



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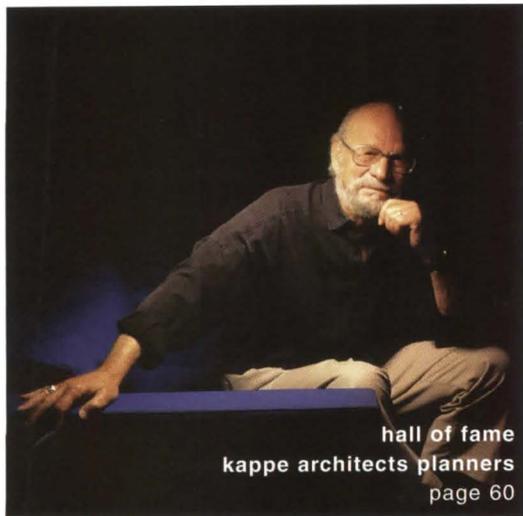
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from the editor

object lesson

let's shoot all the ugly houses.

by s. claire conroy

Roll up your sleeves and take out your digital cameras, I've got an assignment for you. I want you to proceed to your nearest subdivision of new homes, find the ugliest house you can, and photograph it. Then I want you to do a little write-up explaining why it's ugly. Use plain, straightforward language. E-mail me the photo and your short write-up by *August 15*. Let's see if we can explain to each other and the public why we think mass-market housing needs improvement. We've got a problem, and I think show and tell is the best way to explain what's wrong.

An architectural photographer once called me up and asked me to help her out with a client. She had taken some scouting shots of a house for a spec builder of luxury homes. She's a pro, accustomed to shooting some of the best design work in her area, so she knew something was amiss with the design of this house—yet she couldn't articulate what was wrong. Her builder/client wanted

her honest opinion about whether the house was publishable. He was very proud of it and wanted to see it in a magazine. She didn't want to disappoint him, but she knew it didn't stand a chance with the better house publications. She sent me the photos and asked me to explain why we would reject it.

The builder had certainly spent some money pushing all the hot buttons he thought his prospective buyer would want. The house had a big open family room/kitchen/eating area, the latest greatest appliances, soaring ceilings, a grand staircase, Palladian windows aplenty. It would not look out of place in any luxury subdivision in America. So, what was wrong with it? Why was it not deserving of media coverage? Because it was just so darn homely. Not one proportion was pleasing. Seeking to impress, every element was overblown. It was like trying to read an e-mail typed in all caps. A silent scream ringing in the ears.

Beauty is not the only quality that is subject to the vagaries of a beholder. What we perceive as ugly is



Mark Robert Halper

subjective too. The spec builder thought he'd designed a beautiful house; he had certainly lavished lots of care and money on it. He saw its like all around him; it fit the current fashion. It probably sold quickly to someone who wanted that many bedrooms in that neighborhood. When we're surrounded by mediocre design, we become inured to it. Eventually, it doesn't look so bad to us anymore. Our tolerance for pain grows over time. For instance, everyone in my neighborhood has the same blandly ugly Rubbermaid garbage can from The Home Depot. It holds a lot

of trash, it has wheels so it's easy to move, and it stands up to the abuse of our garbage collectors. Lots of problems solved, but the whole neighborhood is homelier on trash day. Why do we put up with this?

Send me your ugly houses. Show me and tell me what you think is wrong with them. Let's explain why the emperor has no clothes. **ra**

Comments? Call: 202.736.3312; write: S. Claire Conroy, *residential architect*, One Thomas Circle, N.W., Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20005; or e-mail: ccconroy@hanleywood.com.

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letters

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

high hopes

I wanted to compliment you for what I felt was a fair and balanced report on the HOPE VI program (“The Great Blight Hope,” January/February 2004, page 62). The design community is very supportive of HOPE VI efforts since they result in very pleasing images of well-detailed houses and streetscapes.

We need to be reminded that while the program houses some people much better, many, many others end up displaced from their homes as a result. As you noted in the article, only 11 percent of former residents of the redeveloped communities end up with the opportunity to live in the new HOPE VI community; the rest end up elsewhere.

Compliments also to Michael Pyatok for making it a condition of taking on a HOPE VI project in East Oakland that there be a one-to-one replacement ratio as a result.

*Jim Wentling
James Wentling / Architects
Philadelphia, Pa.*

legacy builder

I read with great interest the Torti/Gallas and Partners cover story in the January/February 2004 issue (“Change of Heart,” page 54). Having

known John Torti and Tom Gallas for many years, I have great respect for their abilities and achievements and recognize the transformation of the predecessor firm, CHK Architects and Planners, to the completely “New Urbanism” firm of Torti/Gallas and Partners.

The transition, I feel, was not quite as drastic as the article suggests. I believe that the South Riding project, which won a Progressive Architecture Award in 1994, was started before the transformation. One is left with the impression that CHK was a lack-luster firm content to churn out mediocre “unimaginative suburban subdivisions” and aspired to nothing more. The assertion that the principals, Jack Cohen, Lenny Haft, and my late husband, Jack Kerxton, knew they would “never be esteemed in design circles” is not true and is belied by the fact that the firm won numerous awards for residential and commercial endeavors. It was a highly respected firm both locally and nationally, not one noted for “creating sprawl.” Two wonderful examples of CHK non-residential projects are the Transpotomac Canal Center in Alexandria, Va.,



and the Arlington Courthouse Plaza, Arlington, Va.

Jack Kerxton was extremely

proud of the firm and those who made the firm what it was. He strove for recognition and was sufficiently inspired to hire Tom Gallas in 1985 and to name John Torti as his successor in 1993. He mentored both men and took great pride in their achievements. It would be wrong and misleading to associate his legacy with “suburban sprawl.”

*Cookie Kerxton
Chevy Chase, Md.*

working costs

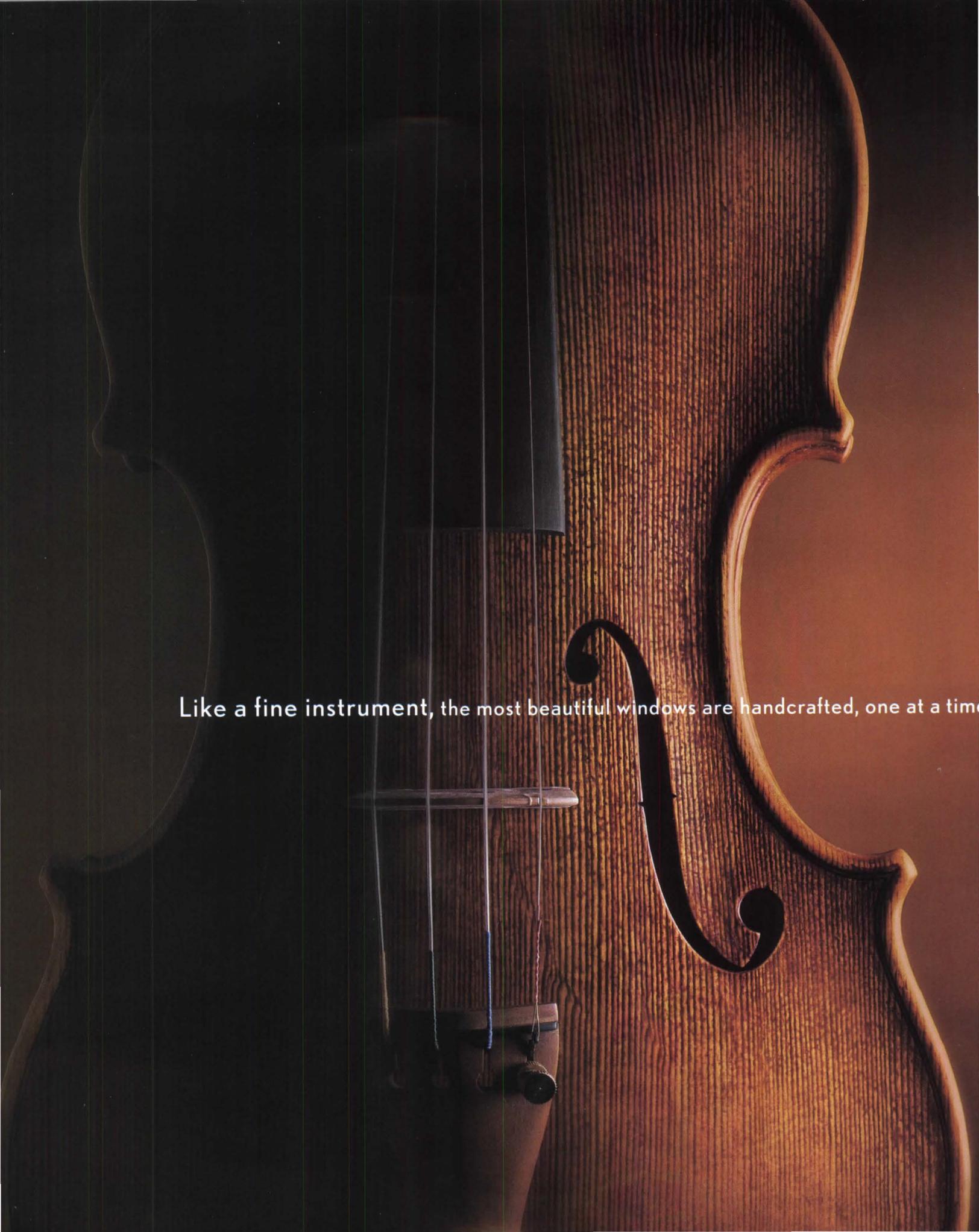
I enjoyed reading your issue on start-up firms (November/ December 2003). A close reading of the feature article (“Start-Ups,” page 45) indicates to me that all the firms shared these characteristics: They were all very talented designers; they were all very happy to be working for themselves; and they were all underpaid.

Revenues ranged from \$33,333 per person (the “year two” firm) to \$86,000 per person (the “year three” firm). Those of us in the business—I have had my two-person firm for the past 28 years, with a history of revenues exceeding the

ones listed in this article—know that gross revenue tells only half the story. It costs money to operate a business—particularly an architectural business. Rent, utilities, health insurance, and errors and omission insurance (if you can get it) are just some of the costs that must be paid monthly (regardless of how talented you are). And what about retirement? Where will the money come from? When these costs are totaled, you arrive at a “cost multiplier,” the true cost of doing business. Assuming a cost multiplier of two, actual revenue is reduced by 50 percent. That means that the “year two” firm is generating only \$16,666 per person, while the most profitable firm generates \$43,000 per person (a more respectable amount assuming you are working only 40 hours per week).

What’s the problem? Architectural schools do not teach anything about how to start and operate a business. Without this valuable information, such young and talented firms as these will continue to struggle to stay in business, and our profession will be the worse for it.

*A. Richard Glance,
AIA, AICP
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home front

tips and trends from the world of residential design

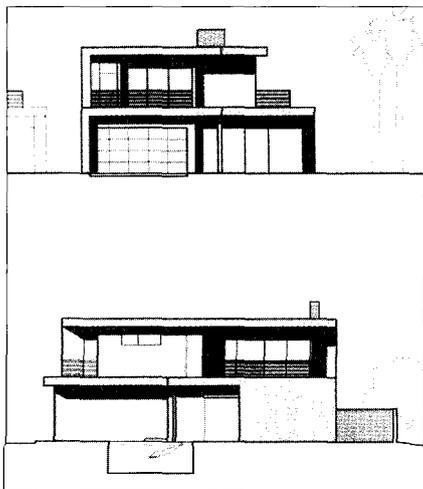
modern oasis

While earning his architecture degree at Columbia University, Jay Reynolds, AIA, also took some courses in real estate development. Those classes are coming in handy now, as he immerses himself in 2801 South Palm Canyon, an on-the-boards community of 16 single-family detached houses in Palm Springs, Calif. Reynolds' Los Angeles-based firm, OJMR Architects, is developing the project in conjunction with L.A.'s Symphony Development, as well as providing design services for the Modernist project. "I'm interested in

the mid-century Modernism of Palm Springs and have gotten to know the market there," he says. "We've done enough research in the area to see that people really wanted this type of architecture." Reynolds and Symphony envision a buyer group of both weekenders and full-time Palm Springs residents, drawn by Modern architecture and views of the nearby San Jacinto Mountains. The project's 2.2-acre site backs up to Palm Canyon, another view-friendly asset. A simple materials palette of plaster exteriors, sealed and polished concrete floors, metal windows, exposed concrete block interior walls, and walnut cabinetry will keep the homes in tune with their streamlined elevations. And natural cooling techniques, such as deep roof overhangs and cross-ventilation, should temper air-conditioning costs. "I designed a home for my mother in the area, and the concrete floors really do help cool her house," Reynolds says.

When the desert heat gets hard to take, each household can jump into its own 8-by-15-foot plunge pool. 2801 South Palm Canyon is slated for completion in early 2005, and its 1,700- to 2,600-square-foot homes will be priced from the \$400,000s. However, Reynolds hasn't gotten over the development bug yet: He and Symphony are now looking into three more infill projects in Palm Springs, this time in the mixed-use vein.

—*meghan drueding*



Renderings courtesy OJMR Architects

The unadorned designs for 2801 South Palm Canyon by OJMR Architects tap into Palm Springs' rich history of Modern residences.

the mid-century Modernism of Palm Springs and have gotten to know the market there," he says. "We've done enough research in the area to see that people really wanted this type of architecture."

Reynolds and Symphony envision a buyer





Models courtesy OJMR Architects

“when the desert heat gets hard to take, each household can jump into its own 8-by-15 plunge pool.”

everyday objects

Come November, Isamu Noguchi’s interior design work will have a new arena for study and appreciation. The newly renovated Isamu Noguchi Garden Museum in Queens, N.Y., is planning a gallery specifically for the artist’s decorative arts work, which derived great beauty from everyday household objects. Drawing from the permanent collection and loans, the space will host a series of rotating installations of Noguchi’s furniture and other interior objects and settings. For more information, go to www.noguchi.org or call 718.204.7088.—*meghan drueding*



Photo by Kevin Noble, courtesy The Noguchi Museum, New York, N.Y.

A planned interiors gallery at the Noguchi Museum will showcase the artist’s sculptural designs for home and office furnishings. Custom and vintage versions of his famous Akari, above, will appear periodically.



Courtesy VJAA



Tim Griffith

pour relations

Visitors to Washington, D.C.’s National Building Museum are invited to see through solid slabs of concrete—no X-ray vision required. Three versions of new translucent concrete will be unveiled (along with other more typical formulations) in the museum’s exhibition “Liquid Stone: New Architecture in Concrete.” A favorite material among forward-thinking architects, concrete is the most common building material around the world. “Architects who like to experiment with form and space love it,” says curator G. Martin Moeller Jr.

Thirty built and on-the-boards projects are divided into three categories: structure, surface, and sculptural form. In the structure category, Longitudinal House(s), designed

for twin brothers by Minneapolis-based VJAA, consists of two vacation houses joined by a single ribbon of concrete serving as floor, ceiling, or wall (above left). In the surface section is San Francisco-based Jim Jennings Architecture’s Visiting Artists house (above, right), with poured-in-place concrete walls etched by artist David Rabinowitch then ground down and polished. Sculptural pieces showcase the work of such architects as Pugh Scarpa, Steven Holl, Richard Meier, and Estuio Sancho-Mederidejos. Says Moeller, “Sculptural is the largest category, because it gets at the heart of what the material can do.”

“Liquid Stone” runs from June 19 through Jan. 23. For more details, call 202.272.2448 or visit www.nbm.org. —*shelley d. hutchins*

calendar



Courtesy Moskow Architects

unbuilt architecture design awards 2004

deadline: july 12
boston society of architects

Unbuilt architectural designs of any project type—from theoretical to client-sponsored—may be submitted by any architect, student, or educator anywhere in the world. Certificates and/or cash prizes may be awarded. Shown is one of the 2003 winners: “Zipcar Dispenser” by Moskow Architects, Boston. For

additional information call 617.951.1433, ext. 232, or visit www.architects.org/design_awards_programs/.

big & green: toward sustainable architecture in the 21st century

june 1–september 12
chicago architecture foundation

Models and drawings of major projects around the world demonstrate that large-scale architecture can be environmentally responsible, healthful, and stylish. Featured buildings, including the pictured

Esplanade apartments by Moshe Safdie and Associates, Somerville, Mass., address such issues as renewable resources, efficient energy sources, natural light and air, and green construction practices. Call 312.922.8687 or visit www.architecture.org for additional details.

margaret bourke-white: the photography of design

june 5–october 10
the wolfsonian at florida international university, miami

This exhibit explores the early work of Margaret Bourke-White and follows her path to becoming one of the best-known female photographers. Trained in Modernist composition, Bourke-White focused on the raw aesthetic of American industry through its buildings, machines, and icons. The photographs (and a companion book) illustrate her grasp of Modern design and her talent for conveying its drama. The 1930 image of the Chrysler Building, “Gargoyle Outside Bourke-White’s Studio,” (shown) is a case in point. For gallery hours call 305.531.1001 or go to www.wolfsonian.org.



Courtesy Estate Margaret Bourke-White

faster, cheaper, newer, more: revolutions of 1848

june 4–january 9
smithsonian’s cooper hewitt national design museum, new york

Artifacts from the United States and abroad are arranged in ways that highlight the rapid technological, social, and political changes that occurred around 1848.

Drawings, prints, furniture, decorative arts, wall coverings, textiles, and more are on display as examples of this critical time during the Industrial Revolution. Shown is an 1870 armchair by Thonet Brothers in Austria, one of the first examples of bent beech wood techniques. Call 212.849.8400 or see www.cooperhewitt.org for museum information.



Matt Flynn

architect’s tea and coffee towers

june 5–august 15
cranbrook art museum, bloomfield hills, mich.

The Italian design house Alessi commissioned 20 innovative architects from the United States, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong, and Australia to design tea and coffee sets. The pieces address topical issues in architecture, such as digital design, experimental materials, and the changing ways in which people interact with their domestic environments. Participating architects and firms include Will Alsop, Massimiliano Fuks, Future Systems, Zaha Hadid (whose prototype is shown), Tom Kovac, and Dezso Ekler. To learn more, call 248.645.3323 or visit www.cranbrook.edu.



Max Protetch Gallery/ Cranbrook Art Museum

ruhlmann: genius of art deco

june 8–september 5
the metropolitan museum of art, new york

Emile-Jacques Ruhlman employed sumptuous materials, refined designs, and impeccable craftsmanship to create the glamorous furnishings that are the focus of this comprehensive exhibition. Ruhlmann’s style epitomizes the age of 1920s French Art Deco through a wide range of decorative arts from furniture to lighting, and ceramics to textiles. Call 212.535.7710 for exhibition information or go to www.metmuseum.org.



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calendar

art deco paris

june 8–september 5
the metropolitan museum of art, new york

This companion exhibition to Ruhlmann: Genius of Art Deco provides a broader context for high-style Parisian design in the 1920s. Outstanding works from Ruhlmann's collaborators and competitors such as Süe et Mare furniture, Georges Fouquet jewelry, metalwork by Edgar Brandt, and Jean Dunand lacquer will be on display. Call 212.535.7710 for more information or go to www.metmuseum.org.

isamu noguchi: sculptural design

june 12–october 4
noguchi museum,
long island city,
new york



Courtesy Noguchi Museum

Following a nearly three-year renovation, the Noguchi Museum re-opens with an exhibition containing more than 100 works by artist Isamu Noguchi. Starting out as a sculptor, Noguchi enjoyed a varied career that included collaborations with architects Gordon Bunshaft and Louis Kahn, designing furniture for Herman Miller and Knoll, creating stage sets for Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham, and producing landscape architecture in Tokyo, Paris, Detroit, Miami, and for the Lever House in New York. To visit the museum, call 718.545.8842 or check out www.noguchi.org.



Chuck Seem

recycled materials, including this 2004 piece, "Proposed Bike Shed," which Peterman created for the exhibit. Call 312.280.2660 to get museum hours, or visit www.mcachicago.org.

dan peterman: plastic economics

june 26–september 12
mca chicago

Chicago-based artist Dan Peterman seeks to reveal how people interact with both the natural and built environments. This survey of works highlights Peterman's ideas about recycling systems and

ronan and erwan bouroullec

june 27–october 18
museum of contemporary
art, los angeles

These 20-something French designers have received international recognition for their bracingly Modern furniture, products, and interiors.



Morgane Le Gall

This exhibition documents many of the 20 selected works in site-specific installations. Shown is Cabane, 2001, an interior setting executed in wood, felt, plastic, and metal. For additional details, call 213.626.6222 or see www.moca.org.

reinvention 2004

december 6–8
los angeles



What's next for the American single-family house? *residential architect's* first symposium

gathers industry leaders to brainstorm, develop, and plan the livable, lovable house of the future. Seminars will address issues of sustainability, notable ideas of the past, and cutting-edge ideas of the present. A design charrette will bring together the best thinking to generate The Next American House prototype. Special Bonus Event: The newly formed Congress of Residential Architects, an organization of specialists in single-family residential architecture launches its first forum on The State of Residential Architecture immediately following Reinvention 2004. For registration call 888.584.5665, fax 202.624.1766, or e-mail reinvention2004@hanleywood.com.

continuing exhibits

Envisioning Architecture: Drawings from The Museum of Modern Art, through June 27, National Building Museum, Washington, D.C., 202.272.2448; **Archigram**, through July 4, Design Museum, London, 011.44.870.833.9955; **Right at Home**, through January 17, Smithsonian American Art Museum's Renwick Gallery, Washington, D.C., 202.357.2700; **Yves Béhar Fuseproject**, through October 3, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 415.357.4000.

—shelley d. hutchins

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shades of green

There's more than one way to be green, as the winners of two recent awards programs show. The AIA/

Committee on the Environment's 2004 Top Ten Green Projects include The Solaire, a high-end apartment building in Manhattan by Cesar Pelli & Associates Architects, and Factor 10 House, an affordable single-family dwelling in Chicago by EHDD Architecture. The 293-unit Solaire features the latest in green applications, including blackwater recycling and photovoltaic panels. Factor 10 House's solar chimney and vegetated roof demonstrate a more low-tech sustainability.



Jeff Goldberg/Esto

Sustainable design award winners (clockwise, from top) in New York City, Boston, Vermont, Pittsburgh, and Chicago vary widely in their green methodology.



Doug Snower Photography



Greg Premru Photography

Two projects tied for first place in the "Places to Live" category: a strawbale home in Vermont by LineSync Architecture and a renovated convent outside Pittsburgh, Pa., by Perkins Eastman Architects.



Joseph Cincotta/LineSync Architecture



Denmarsh Photography

The Northeast Green Building Awards, administered by the Northeast Sustainable Energy Association, also reveal diverse green approaches.

"The building needed to be gutted, but it had beautiful hardwood floors from the 1930s," says Laura Nettleton, project architect for the convent. "The thought of sending that to a landfill was intolerable, so we picked it up and put it back down."

While Perkins Eastman reused existing materials, LineSync took the Vermont

house in a live/work direction. Designing into the project full-time workplaces for both owners eliminated gas-consuming commutes. The honorable mention in the same category, Linden Street Housing in Somerville, Mass., by Mostue & Associates Architects, used prefabricated building parts to reduce waste.—*meghan drueding*



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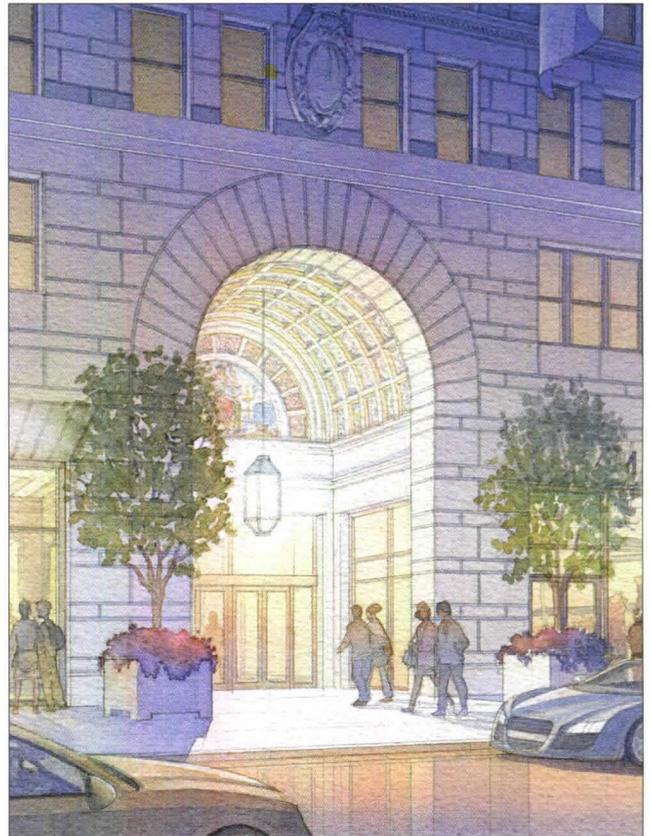
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on the boards / transportation transformation

at its peak, the now-defunct 1925 Subway Terminal Building in downtown Los Angeles accommodated 65,000 commuters and office workers. After its closure in 1955, it became a Social Security Administration office and then, in 1970, a Veterans Administration clinic. In recent years, the 500,000-square-foot “Los Angeles Cultural Historic Monument #177” has languished with only a few remaining office tenants. But, happily, the complex will soon

be teeming with life again. Los Angeles-based AC Martin Partners has been tapped by developer Forest City Enterprises to revitalize and convert the 12-story building into 277 luxury apartments.

Metro 417, as the project is called, is not your typical urban loft project, says CEO Christopher Martin, FAIA. “It’s a higher class of adaptive reuse than what the market is seeing.” Designed by Thomas P. Cox Architects of Orange County, Calif., the modern interiors will have walls and room divisions, a departure from the current vogue for free-flowing, undefined spaces. The units will also have high-end finishes,



Renderings: Doug Jamieson courtesy AC Martin Partners



AC Martin Partners will restore the exteriors of L.A.'s Subway Terminal Building and modernize the interior with wood, granite, and marble apartments.

among them marble and granite kitchens and baths, hardwood floors, and glass tiles. Unit types will comprise studios, one- and

two-bedroom apartments, and three two-story penthouse apartments with large balconies. A garden designed by Mia Lehrer Associates will top one of the towers, and AC



Photos: Security Pacific Collection/ Courtesy Los Angeles Public Library

continued on page 28



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WINDOWS & DOORS

on the boards / transportation transformation *continued from page 26*

Martin will design a new health club and media center.

The building, designed by Shultze and Weaver Architects, “has an ‘E’ shape for ventilation,” says Martin, “which makes it perfect for seamless adapting into apartments.” Although interior spaces had suffered some insensitive and expedient changes over the years, the architects were able to resuscitate many of the original oak interior doors and marble from former public bath-



rooms. Fortunately, the Italian Renaissance-inspired exterior was in excellent shape, needing only minor cleaning of its granite and terra-cotta facing. When all is done, says Martin, “the guts of the building will be a modern apartment, but the exterior will be a historic structure.”

Martin is no stranger to such transformations. In fact, he was instrumental in developing the

city’s 1999 Adaptive Reuse Ordinance, which helped make possible the conversion of office buildings to residential units. The Subway Building is a poster child for the program, he says. “It represents a sea change in housing for California. That is, high-density inner-city urban living.”— *nigel f. maynard*



Renderings: Doug Jamieson courtesy AC Martin Partners



Courtesy Security Pacific Collection/
Los Angeles Public Library

Despite ill-advised “remuddlings,” the main lobby remains largely intact with mosaic tile panels, marble walls, and polychromed plaster coffers.



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esherick's insights

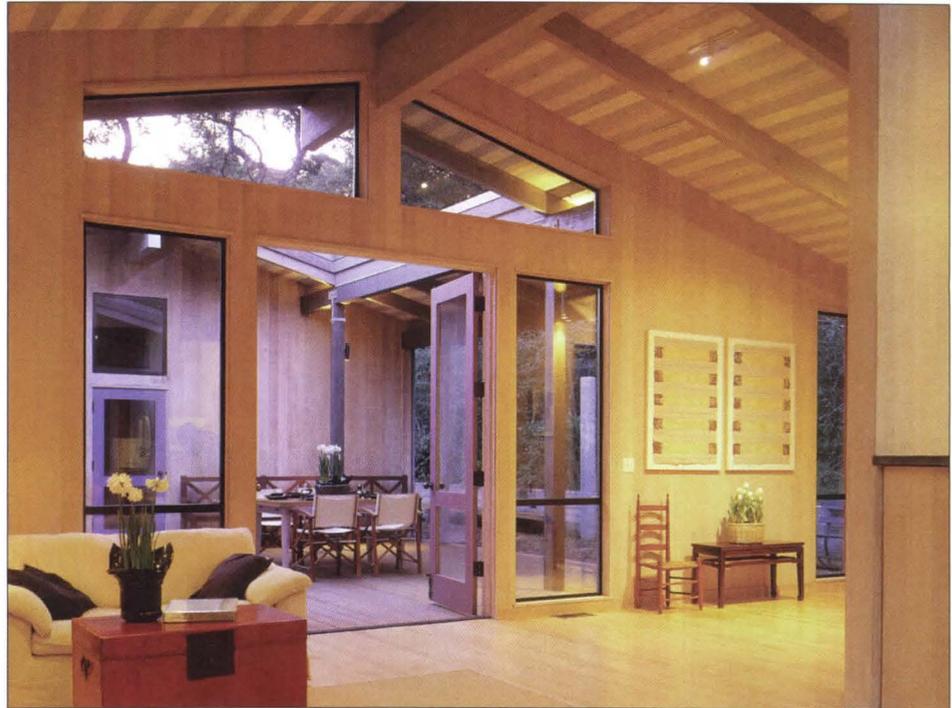
what a bay area architect learned from her mentor, joseph esherick.

by cathy schwabe, aia

early in my architectural life, while working at the San Francisco firm Esherick Homsey Dodge & Davis Architecture, I was assigned to a series of house projects with Joseph Esherick, FAIA. I was acquainted with Joe from architecture school at the University of California, Berkeley, and had spoken with him a few times in the office after being employed by the firm, but I didn't know him well.

Working with him on many projects over the years that followed, and thus being directly exposed to his thinking about design and buildings, was an incredible, life-shaping experience for me. It was also an exercise in self-education. Like the best teacher-architects, he was a rich resource, waiting to be tapped for information and wisdom.

My first house with Joe, curiously enough, also ended up being one of my last while at EHDD. Design work on the Genn house began when I was still an intern architect. Construction was completed almost 10 years later, after a many-year break. Completion happened not long



Photos: David Wakely

before Joe died, in 1998, at a time when I was beginning to think seriously of starting my own firm. I learned much during those years working with Joe, and those lessons both inform and guide me as I shape my own practice.

arts and architecture

The Genn house was the result of a genuine collaboration between architect and client that brought out the creative best in each. Nancy Genn is a painter. She used her paintbrush as

Joseph Esherick taught the author the importance of a home's livability, not just its looks. She collaborated with him on this house for Nancy and Tom Genn while working at EHDD Architecture in San Francisco.

a way to interact with us during the design process. Meetings would begin with her vibrant, light-infused, watercolor responses to architectural ideas generated on yellow trace in previous meetings. Her images
continued on page 34

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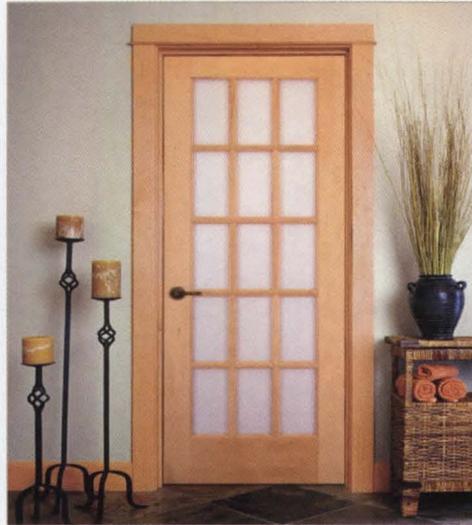
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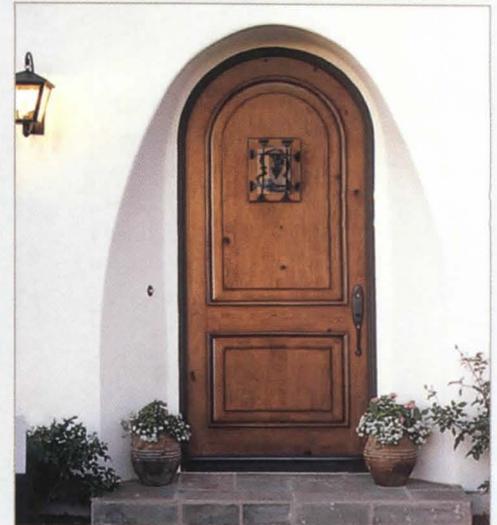
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were both reactive—a playback of what she thought was being proposed—and generative, as colors and patterns began to make their way into the design. Nancy’s respect for the architectural process and for the architects was like the respect one artist would optimally have for another: You can like or not like the work, but you don’t tell the artist how to do it.

This particular architect-client interaction exemplified Joe’s method, which was a deliberate and iterative one that was based on a belief that the best houses are designed with the client at the architect’s shoulder. Joe brought much to the process. He knew how to understand and achieve a fit with the site as well as a philosophical fit with the client’s ideas and program. And he had an eclectic, artistic sensibility and spirit. These qualities were coupled with a commonsense attitude toward building that was best expressed in his oft-quoted statement/question, “How would a farmer do it?”

process into practice

From the start, the Genn house was to be a vacation house, located on a north-facing slope looking toward Tomales Bay in Inverness, Calif. Nancy envisioned a place similar to a house she had summered in as a child in Los



Courtesy Cathy Schwabe Architecture

“Like the best teacher-architects, he was a rich resource, waiting to be tapped for information and wisdom.”

Gatos, Calif.—two buildings connected and separated by an outdoor terrace room. Standing on the site, Joe imagined a long, thin, barn-like form. Over time a simple rectangular house emerged—two wings flanking a partially covered outdoor room under a common gable roof. A row of free-standing concrete columns lines the gravel garden to the south. The rectangular form is broken at intervals by projecting bays that extend rooms and activities toward the site or views beyond.

Nancy’s paintings hang on the walls, her tile murals are integrated into bathroom walls and floors, and her sculpture is built into the house. Interestingly, the common quality she and Joe share in their work—

light—was never specifically discussed. It simply emerged. Skylight, door, and window details, perfected over the years by the firm, bring materials together in a clean, careful manner with an eye toward long use and minimizing shadow. These items are located carefully to allow light to wash adjacent surfaces and expose people to the passing of the day, as well as to mark the transition from inside to out simply. Walking through the house is like walking through a three-dimensional painting of subtly changing light.

continuing education

Many architects worked with Joe over the years. Each of us took away

something different from that experience. I think his legacy is not only his built work but also the ways in which his methods and ideas have been adopted, personalized, and perpetuated by the architects who worked with him.

The ones that have especially influenced me range from using light as a medium to letting the site inspire and suggest a fit. Of equal importance is the “dialogue drawing” method at which Joe excelled. Through careful listening and questioning, the architect sketches in front of the client, keeping both sides part of the process—on the same team. As the participants propose ideas, the drawing is reshaped. In this way the design gradually emerges on paper.

But the lesson that carries most personal resonance for me is the one that a good house is not an architectural statement but a backdrop and framework for the lives within it. In a good house, the sense of place is strong, the connection and fit with the site is obvious, and the overall feeling is one of harmony and simplicity. The ordering principles are such that you can understand and imagine living in the house from the first moment you see it. **ra**

Cathy Schwabe, AIA, is the principal of Cathy Schwabe Architecture in Oakland, Calif.

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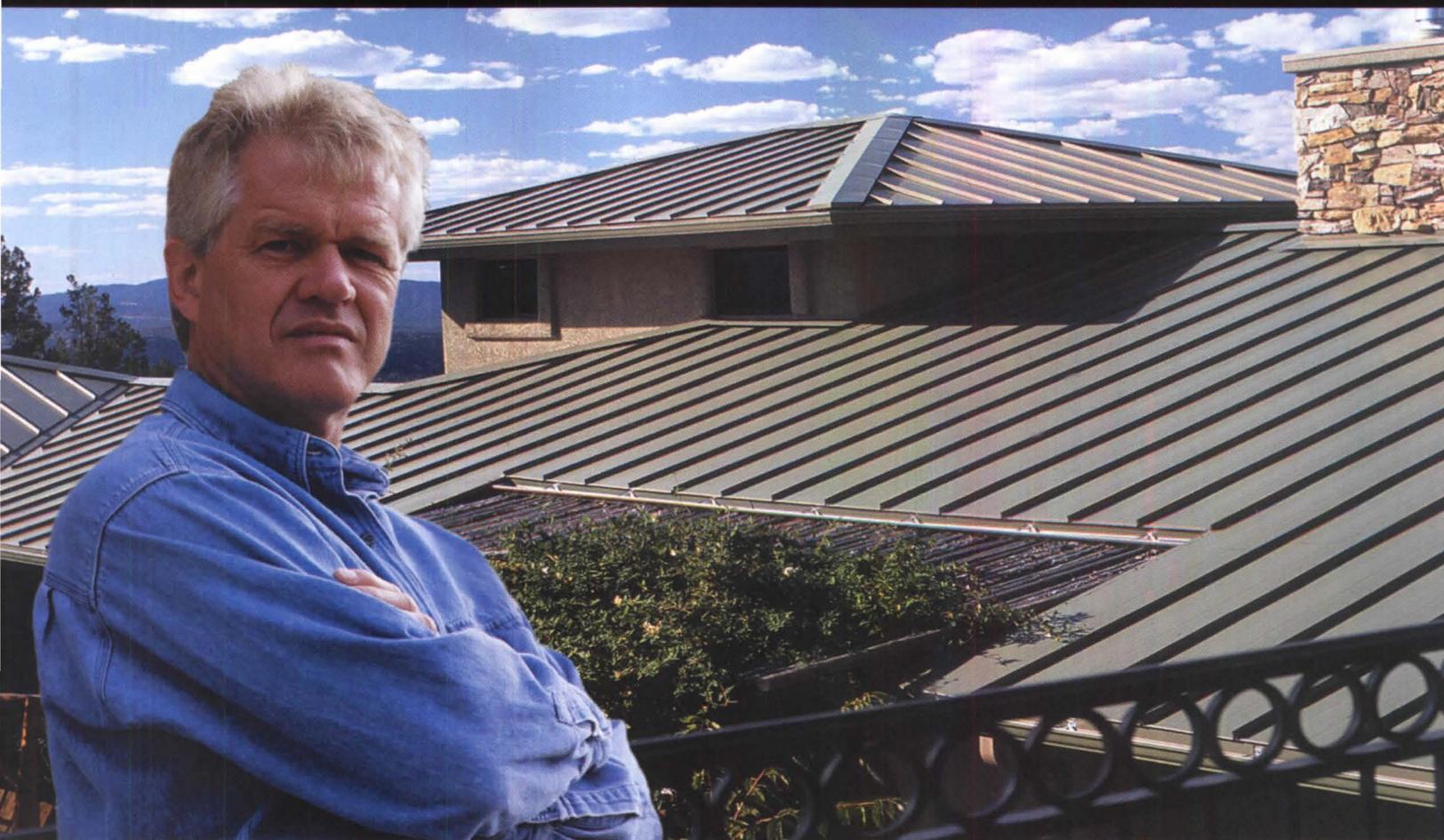


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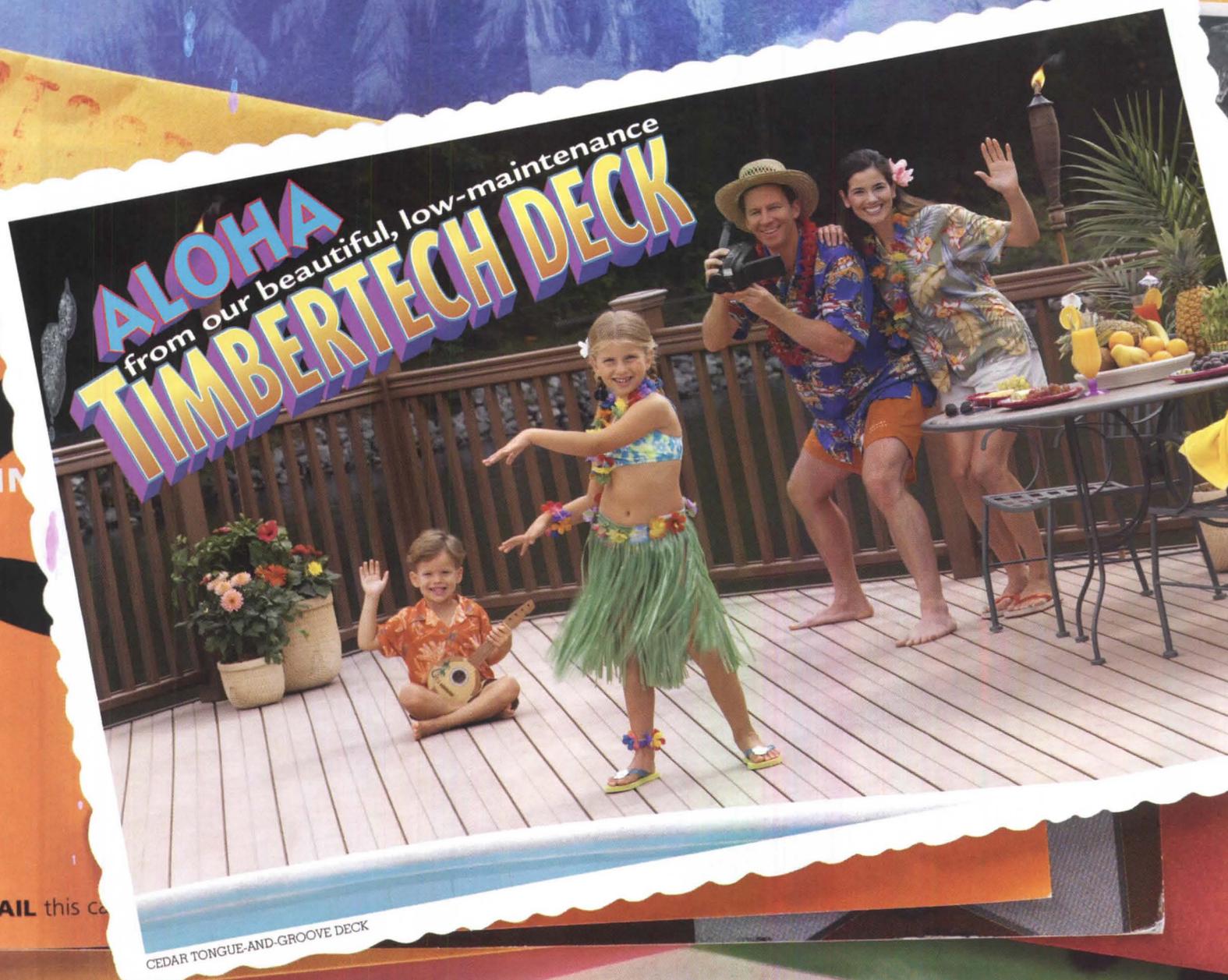
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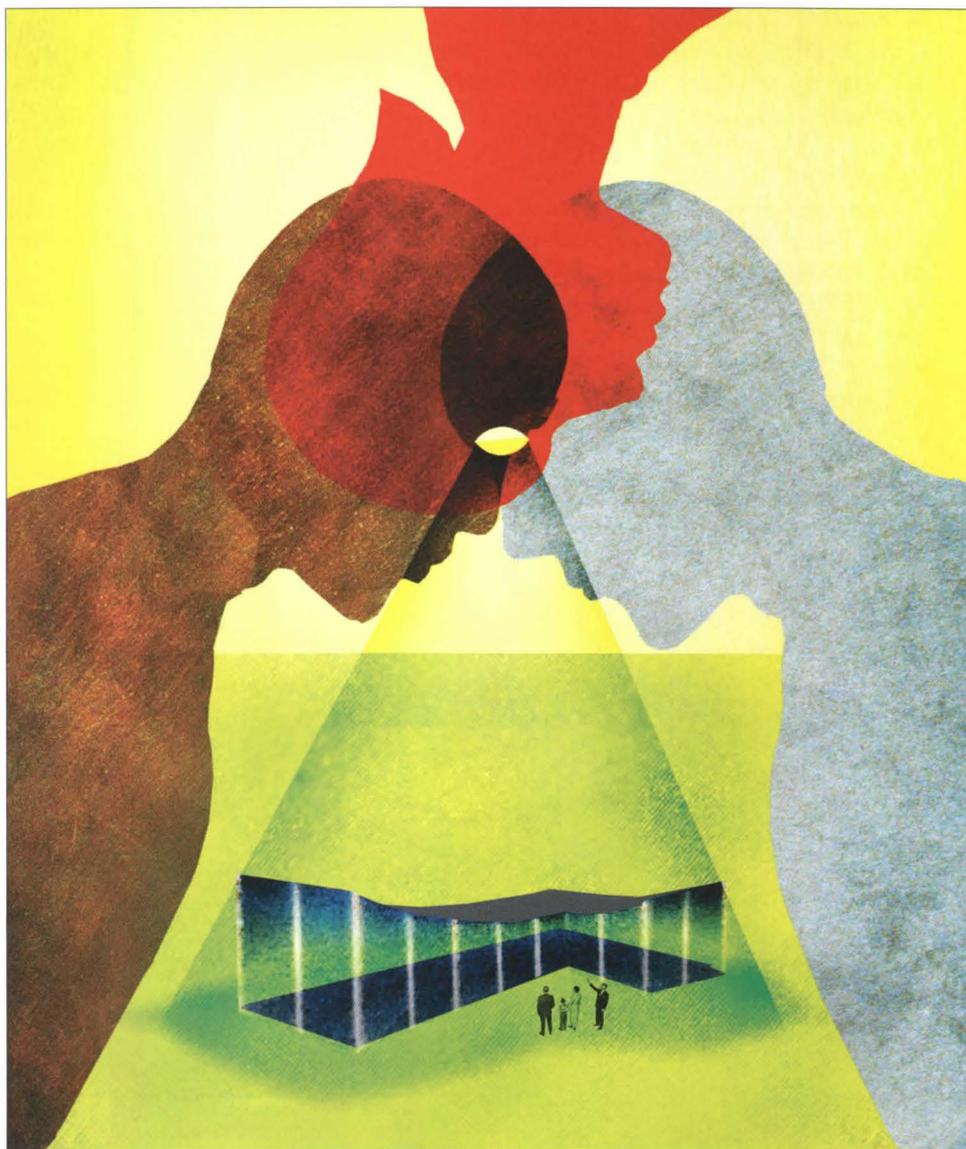
contractors are human beings, too. mostly.

by cheryl weber

It's that time of year again—peak season for home building—and that means the sound of backhoes, band saws, and the barely audible shuffling of blueprints. It's a time when an architect's sense of orderliness meets the uncertainties of construction, when the masters of the thin blue line team up with the masters of the material underworld, and the dream of a custom home inches closer to reality. All across the country, builders and architects are longing for that quality that's next to godliness, and almost as difficult to achieve: a clean set of drawings and a cleanly executed design, respectively.

On construction sites today, the traditional battle between architects and contractors is largely over if not forgotten. Veteran team members have gotten the dance down. They learn from each other, giving a little here and a little there to get the job done. Still, a complicated set of tensions will always exist, rooted in real differences of outlook and interests.

Builder Andrew Goldstein, of Thoughtforms in Acton, Mass., sees those



Brian Stauffer

potential conflicts all the time. Watching “The Fog of War” prompted him to put the tension in philosophical terms. “In the movie, [former defense secretary] Robert McNamara talks

about the idea of really trying to see things from the opposite side’s perspective and understand what they’re after,” says Goldstein, whose company started out as a design-build firm

but now just builds. “The same thing has to happen in a building project. It’s basic stuff, but people don’t do it.”

Goldstein’s founding
continued on page 40

partner, an architect who is no longer with the firm, taught him to view building projects through an architect's lens. That means taking time to understand the subtleties of the design intent, building not only to plan but making sure, on a Modern house for example, that a roofline or doorway lines up with another architectural element the way the architect envisioned. The discipline of respecting the other point of view works both ways, of course. Whether it's because of time constraints or because there are issues the architect wants to resolve during construction, sketchy plans are a potential point of frustration for builders. "As long as builders are asking the right questions early in the process, they're usually flexible," Goldstein says. "But if it's late in the game and there's a time

"good contracts make good relationships. ... you write a rigorous contract, and hopefully you'll never have to look at it again."

—david hacin

deadline and things get designed without consulting the builder, it becomes problematic."

Some years ago, curiosity about the building point of view led Vetter Denk Architects, Milwaukee, to construct a half dozen of its own designs. Partners John Vetter and Kelly Denk wanted to experiment with the idea of making a house versus "predetermining it," as Kelly Denk, AIA, puts it. Doing construction was an eye-opener. They saw how difficult it was to keep a project on schedule when working with people who aren't on staff. It was a challenge to get the subcontractors there on time, get them to do it right the first time, and come back when there was a problem. Now, "we have a pretty good idea of how buildings get built, at least in this part of the country," Denk says. "It's made us better designers as well."

a good fit

If tackling architecture with a table saw helped Vetter and Denk think like contractors, it also taught them to hire contractors who think like they do. Builders should be eager to do some of the things they see in your portfolio, Denk says, and be motivated to expand their expertise and add to their own portfolio—similar reasons that architects take a job. If a client doesn't already have a contractor in tow, the firm suggests several that the client can

continued on page 44

you're fired!

between a builder and an architect, there are very few construction problems that can't be solved—unless the problem is the builder. Several years ago, Alexandria, Va., architect Bob Gurney, AIA, and his client were at their wits' end when, six months into construction, the house hadn't been framed up. Over the next three months, the builder kept promising to put more manpower on the job, but work proceeded so slowly that Gurney and his client lost faith and fired him. Later they found out that the builder's partner had left the company, taking the staff with him. "No matter how much homework you do on a builder," Gurney says, "you can still get burned."

What's the proper way to fire a contractor for breach of contract? The termination letter must address the contract agreement, says attorney David Pfeffer, LePatner & Associates, New York City. The owner needs to show that the builder has repeatedly failed to provide skilled workers, make payments to subs, or meet any of the other conditions spelled out in the contract. (Article 14.2 of the AIA's General Conditions of the Contract for Construction lists typical performance requirements.)

Second, the owner must have a letter from the architect verifying the problems. "Often, this is overlooked," Pfeffer says. "The owner will write the termination letter, and when the claim comes up down the road, the contractor may say it was never certified by the architect. By that time, getting the architect involved again may be a real problem."

Just as important, before giving a contractor notice, devise a game plan to make sure the project can be completed:

- Find a replacement contractor who is ready to go.
- Take stock of funds, especially if the job is nearly finished, to make sure there's enough cash to complete it with another builder. That's usually what the retainer is for, Pfeffer says.
- Secure the construction documents and materials from the contractor. Often, the contractor is holding onto everything in a job trailer. Or he may have a load of stone in a storage facility that's been paid for. Come up with a plan for retrieving CAD disks, if the contractor has the only copies, or asking for the stone to be

continued on page 44



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practice

interview to see if there's a good chemistry. And although most contractors know how to build, not all are so good at keeping track of paperwork. "Many of our clients are entrepreneurs, and they want to make sure their money is being managed correctly," Denk says. "If they commit to this builder, how do they know they're getting the best value for their money?"

To assure competitive pricing down to the subcontractor level, Vetter Denk requires its general contractors to have an open-book management system and to get several bids per trade. Clients can see the drywall bids and their percent of markup. The architects also seek out builders who are sticklers for communication, whether returning phone calls and e-mail or leaving a detailed paper trail. "A lot of work in this area does get done very casually," Denk says. "That only works when things are going well. It's when they aren't that things get ugly." And when something goes wrong it invariably reflects on the architect. Denk recalls the otherwise successful project that ended on a sour note because the contractor forgot to bill for change orders until the very end.

David Hacin, Hacin & Associates, Boston, is always happy to recommend builders to owners, but he makes sure they understand that the contract is between them and the

from page 40

delivered to the site.

• Advise the owner to protect against contractor counter-claims by keeping project photos and correspondence from the design team. And for every payment made during construction, make sure lien waivers are signed not only by the contractor, but by subs as well. "Without that, an owner can't be sure subs are being paid," Pfeffer says. "The owner and architect have to look at the numbers and figure out how to protect the project financially. If an owner thinks he wants to terminate the contract in the next month, deny payment for work that is defective. You certainly don't want the contractor to be overpaid at that point."—c.w.

builder. He wants them to feel confident in the contractor rather than taking his recommendation at face value. Hacin also encourages his clients to read between the lines on references from past clients. Even a glowing account can inadvertently convey a contractor's weaknesses. "Someone might say, 'We loved working with Joe.'

"if it's late in the game and there's a time deadline and things get designed without consulting the builder, it becomes problematic."

—andrew goldstein

It didn't matter that the project was late because he was so terrific," Hacin says. Clients should find out how many jobs the builder is working on at a given time and how the projects are managed—does he have experienced job captains on the site daily, or is he splitting his time between jobs in three different communities?

Builders also must be willing to negotiate contracts. Often, the contracts builders use don't follow a format architects are familiar with, so they need to be reviewed by an attorney. They may be vague, omitting penalties for being late or missing budget numbers. "Once a house is torn up and the builder says, 'Whoops, I forgot about X,' you're not in a good position to negotiate unless you've got a good contract," Hacin says. "Good contracts make good relationships and keep

continued on page 46

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everyone honest. You write a rigorous contract, and hopefully you'll never have to look at it again. It's only when you don't write a good contract that you find yourself looking at it."

Clients are fairly resourceful about finding a builder through friends and neighbors, but often they spend less time selecting a builder than they do the architect. Yet no matter how good the plans are, like the telephone game, the project's layers can get lost in translation. Conversely, an experienced contractor can deliver a project that's better than what's on paper. When it came time to build 17 tightly spaced row homes in downtown San

Diego, for example, Kevin deFreitas, AIA, hired a contractor who'd installed "miles and miles" of the concrete tilt-up wall panels he was using for the first time. Working as a team, the two of them caught glitches before they turned into problems and ended up with a better project than what was drawn. "I am thoughtful about my interactions with subs," deFreitas says. "We made a number of changes; they were very willing to do it because they felt like they were part of the process, and fairly compensated. Once the process gets adversarial, it's very difficult to recuperate from that."

"i am thoughtful about my interactions with subs. ... once the process gets adversarial, it's very difficult to recuperate from that."

—kevin defreitas, aia

DeFreitas learned the value of building bridges with contractors early in his career. His first job was doing drafting for a

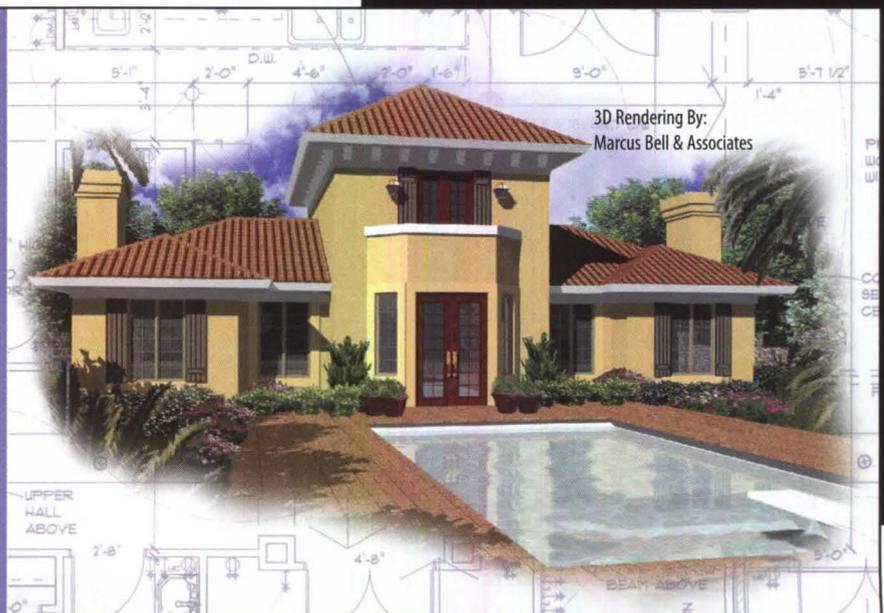
production housing firm. As a junior designer drawing up mechanical ducts, he rarely went out to the job-site, and the lines were abstract to him. On one particular project, he remembers, the developer had a fractious relationship with the contractor. "One day the contractor called us out in front of the client and looked at me like, hey, monkey boy, how are you going to get this duct through this big beam?" deFreitas says. "I had five minutes to figure it out, but he had already worked it out in his head. Contractors can make you look incredibly bad in front of the client. It was a significant

continued on page 48

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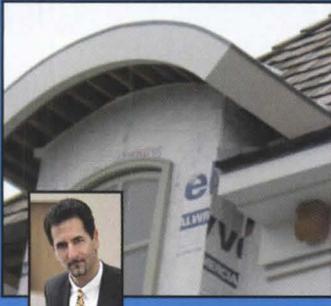


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moment for me in terms of how things get done in the field."

taming the budget

Denk agrees that the best projects are those in which the builder and architect come in as equals. The firm encourages both client and contractor to be present at design meetings, when window and structural systems are being established. "The contractor brings a lot to the table: I've used that window system; the windows went in great, but the service was bad, so we'll never use them again," Denk says. "That will probably influence our design." Such input builds respect and trust. And when the project goes out to bid, the builder is not only familiar with the design intent but also with the budget expectations.

Of course, some collaborations aren't so seamless. Three times in the past year, contractors who had been on board with Leesburg, Va., architect Randall Mars during design development submitted a final bid that was 75 percent higher than the budget they were all working toward. "One contractor did it twice," Mars says. "The biggest thing is that clients lose confidence in us. My clients had great difficulty with our position, so we won't use that company to estimate anything else."

Those problems do occur, admits Andrew Goldstein. What happens,

"you can have a 40 percent difference in the cost of certain materials between the estimate and the time the project gets under way."

—andrew goldstein

he says, is that all the forces are working to make the job more expensive. Builders give their best guess based on the developing design, but invariably materials and details become more complex on the final drawings. By the time a project has progressed to a full set of plans, most of them have to be value engineered.

"Most people in construction underestimate what things are going to cost; they want to be optimistic based on the last job they did," Goldstein says. "But until you really get it out to bid, you don't know what things will cost. Sometimes prices escalate dramatically, as they're doing now on steel. You can have a 40 percent difference in the cost of certain materials between the estimate and the time the project gets under way."

field of dreams

As the Chinese steel industry has increased its metal consumption, resulting in U.S. shortages, spiking prices have caused Vetter Denk Architects to go back and figure out substitutions for steel during construction. Because circumstances can change as a house is going up, a lot of problems are alleviated by good construction oversight, Denk says. Recently, for example, a pipe froze and burst in a house that had just been completed, destroying some of the interior. Everyone gathered at the house to determine why it had occurred and who should take responsibility. "When the contractor has regular jobsite meetings and minutes, such issues are more easily addressed," he says. "This whole business-like approach could be stronger in a lot of companies."

Platinum Homes, Scottsdale, Ariz., uses a whole constellation of management systems to keep its projects orbiting smoothly, from critical path scheduling and weekly e-mail updates to digital progress photos and a comprehensive selections database that's cross-referenced by trade. Owner Dave Reese makes sure his crew keeps photo records of what's behind the walls, in case a question comes up. And at the end of the project, each customer gets a CD-ROM containing the photos. The company also uses a three-part

continued on page 50



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method to keep tabs on all those elusive change orders: those made on the jobsite; changes made in the office, such as adding soffits with crown molding and lighting; and a budget recap sheet to track pricing on the finished items and record where the project costs stand against the original budget.

On the other hand, the builder is lithe enough to keep the process fluid, something architects appreciate. “We like to see a good clean set of drawings, that’s for sure,” says Reese, whose homes range from \$1.5 million to \$5 million. “But these projects are so custom that too much detail on certain things can get in the way.” It’s fine with him if items such as kitchen cabinets, fireplaces, and built-in barbecues are modified over time. “We don’t require architects to reissue drawings once someone changes his mind about things like that,” he says. “Solving it in the field, with subs, is more expedient.”

Flexibility, underpinned with a solid structure, is also the modus operandi at Harwick Homes in Naples, Fla. Thanks to new custom software, the builder is close to being 100 percent electronic in its management and communications. Most of its customer base is gone during construction, and they can be in the loop as little or as much as they wish. “The way we handle customer A is completely different than how we handle customer B,” says

“a lot of work in this area gets done very casually. that only works when things are going well. it’s when they aren’t that things get ugly.”

—kelly denk, aia

builder Rick Harwick. “Some want to know everything; others just the high points. You need good systems and processes, but you can’t shove everybody down the same hole.”

In the end, it’s clear that it takes a truly golden triangle—client, architect, contractor—to work out discrepancies between the design and the feasibility of building it, which are inevitable. Goldstein says that to have a really successful project, all three parties have to make a concerted effort. “Somewhere along the line there will be issues for all three to deal with,” he says. “If one of them isn’t competent, ethical, and reasonable, and not willing to see the others’ points of view, you’re headed for a problematic job.” **ra**

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



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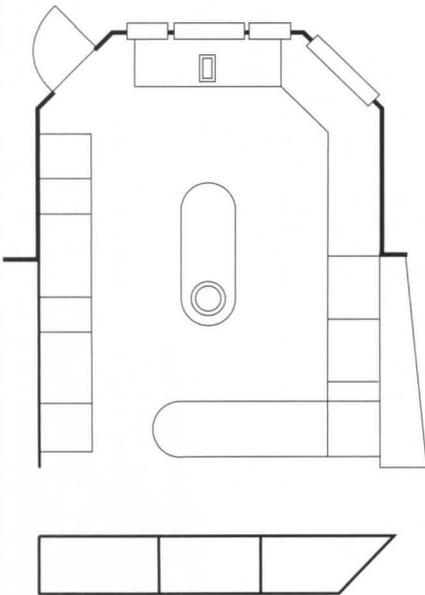
kitchen: cuisine art

Once Gregory Fonseca, AIA, had determined the three-dimensional layout of this Linthicum, Md., remodel, he donned his artist's cap and began applying finishes and surfaces to bring his kitchen canvas to life. "It's like making a painting," he says. "I selected materials that complement each other with a visual balance of light and color."

Stainless steel appliances and surfaces placed among white, floor-to-ceiling cabinetry provide a light backdrop, while cherry-veneered drawers, bamboo flooring, and bursting stone tiles bring on the color. The textural depth of the cherry and bamboo woods adds vibrancy and complexity to the cool stainless steel and the white-on-white walls. The combination not only achieves the "cutting-edge look" the client wanted but also blends easily with the more casual style of the rest of the home.

The architect chose finishes with equal parts art and science. "We began by establishing the focal point—this series of islands—which then generated the rest of the plan." Two oval islands bisect the space to form an axis of steel. On one side, stainless steel elements—double ovens, steaming and warming drawers, a built-in coffee machine, and a super-sized Sub-Zero—are grouped together in a cooking covey clad in chef's white. On the opposite side, cherry cabinets forge a furniture-style alliance with the adjacent sitting area. The prep island aligns with the cooktop and twin storage coolers.

The cooktop is on a latitude with the warming drawer and steamer. And the bursting stone tiles about the edge of the wine coolers to provide a spill-friendly path along appliance row. "The aesthetically pleasing visual balance translates into physical efficiency," says Fonseca.
—shelley d. hutchins



The stainless steel archipelago maximizes available work surface in the kitchen. Fonseca lightened the look by suspending the end of the island facing the nearby sitting room (far right).



Fonseca varied the flooring in order to help create mood changes within the open kitchen. The random pattern in the bursting stone playfully counterpoints the strong lineal order of the bamboo.

Photos: Hoachlander Davis Photography

architect: Gregory J. Fonseca, AIA, Mobius Design, Washington, D.C.

contractor: Jones Premium, Barnsville, Md.

stainless fabricator: Stromberg Metals, Washington, D.C.

resources: cabinets: Poggenpohl; cooktop, dishwasher, and ovens: Gaggenau; light fixtures: Flos; refrigerator and wine coolers: Sub-Zero.



k + b studio

bath: meditative mix

1 The owner of this 1970s rambler remodel is a collector of contemporary art and a believer in the benefits of feng shui. He hired architect Mark Krittenbrink to transform a warren of gloomy rooms into a light-filled, barrier-free backdrop for his collection. Especially important was the master bathroom, which the client hoped would serve as an oasis of spiritual, mental, and physical rejuvenation.

“The owner had a very clear vision about what auspicious colors he wanted,” says Krittenbrink. “We also wanted to keep the material selection minimal.” And so they chose slate as the primary finish because of its natural texture and calm, earthy palette. Glass block solved the problem of introducing natural light while also providing a discreet silhouette for the freestanding tub. And the pattern of the blocks mimics the shoji screens used in other areas of the house. Transparent glass for the shower enclosure and double vanity enables those elements to fade gracefully out of focus.

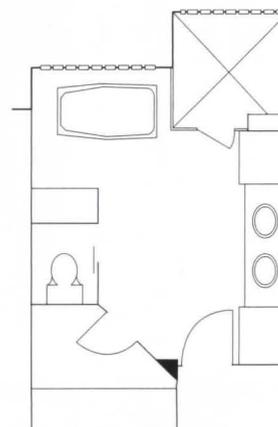
Twin storage towers made of maple present soft hues, a counterpoint to other, more visually intense materials. Maple reappears in stair treads that lead to the adjacent meditation room, and red cedar lines a dry sauna positioned opposite the vanity; both woods reinforce the natural warmth of the space.

—*shelley d. hutchins*



Photos: Michelle Wurth Photography

Golden tones in the slate tiles inspired the use of clear maple for two furniture-style cabinets. The storage towers bookend a cast glass vanity with integral basins.



architect: Krittenbrink Architecture, Norman, Okla.

contractor: Sun Construction, Noble, Okla.

interior designer: Sharon Stewart Designs, Oklahoma City, Okla.

resources: glass block: Pittsburgh Corning; light fixtures: Lighting Concepts; plumbing fittings and fixtures: Duravit.



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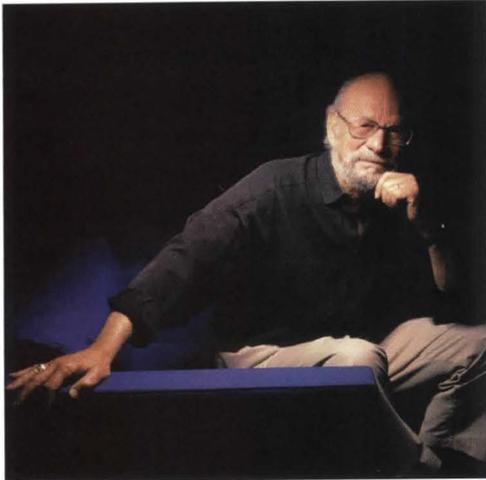
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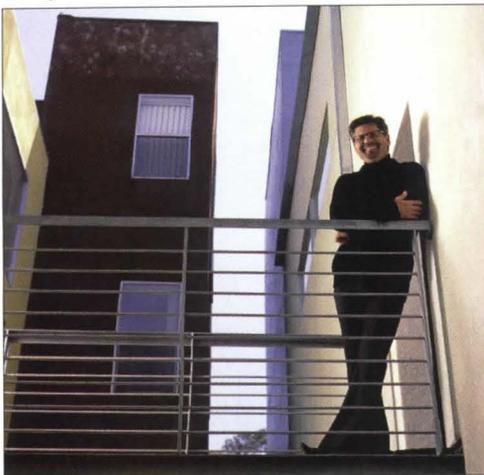
2004 leadership awards



ray kappe
kappe architects planners

julie eizenberg and hank koning
koning eizenberg architecture

jonathan segal
jonathan segal, faia



Photos: Danny Turner

W

What is it about California that cultivated and continues to foster great architects and architecture? A temperate climate that inspires compelling relationships between indoors and out? Vast agricultural lands that supplied a blank slate to design visionaries? A collection of architecture schools that honored the house as a worthy endeavor? Maybe it was a little magazine called *Arts & Architecture*, sponsor of the Case Study program, or an enlightened developer/builder named Joe Eichler. Even the considerable constraints of seismic codes and environmental regulations have served as catalysts to good design. Whatever the causes, the results

speak for themselves: a tradition of excellence in residential architecture.

For this year's Leadership Awards, the editors of *residential architect* chose three exemplary Southern California firms: Kappe Architects Planners, Hall of Fame; Koning Eizenberg Architecture, Top Firm; and Jonathan Segal, FAIA, Rising Star. For 50 years, Pacific Palisades-based Ray Kappe has practiced his own brand of modern residential design, and it's taken that long for others to learn what he's known all along:

Modern architecture can be warm, earth-friendly, site-sensitive, and very livable. Transplants to Los Angeles, Hank Koning and Julie Eizenberg had no reason to believe interesting architecture couldn't also be affordable. They proceeded to prove good design is indeed within reach. In San Diego, Jonathan Segal didn't see the kind of rental housing he wanted to live in, so he designed it, built it, and managed it himself.

These are three trailblazing firms that have made the path much smoother for those who come after. They are indeed true leaders and fine examples for us all to follow.

2004 leadership awards





A stream runs through it: Ray Kappe's 1968 house in Pacific Palisades tiptoes over its toppling topography and spilling stream. The 4,000-square-foot house rests on a mere 600 square feet of concrete towers (six of them) spanned by laminate beams.

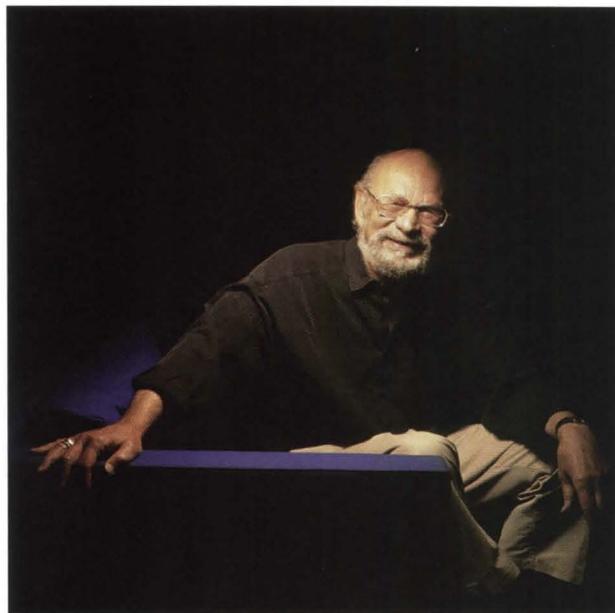
hall of fame: ray kappe, faia

ray kappe reinvented the house on the hill and architecture education as we know it.

by s. claire conroy

Ray Kappe, FAIA, is an enormously accomplished architect with a vast portfolio of diverse achievements. But after 50 years of enviable professional successes, there's one task he hasn't yet pulled off: He can't seem to fully retire. Well, you see, people keep knocking at his door with interesting projects in their pockets. There's a prefab community in the California desert and a Modern house in Mexico. And there's a client whose house merits a 25-Year Award because she's kept Kappe working on it for nearly that long. The house is so gorgeous, it's in constant demand as a backdrop for television commercials. Still, it's a work in perpetual progress. So, too, is Ray Kappe.

The Los Angeles-based architect has never been one to rest on laurels, even though his collection is ample. Among them are lifetime achievement awards for himself and 25-Year Awards for his house from both the American Institute of Architects California Council and AIA's Los Angeles Chapter. AIA National and the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture honored him with their Topaz

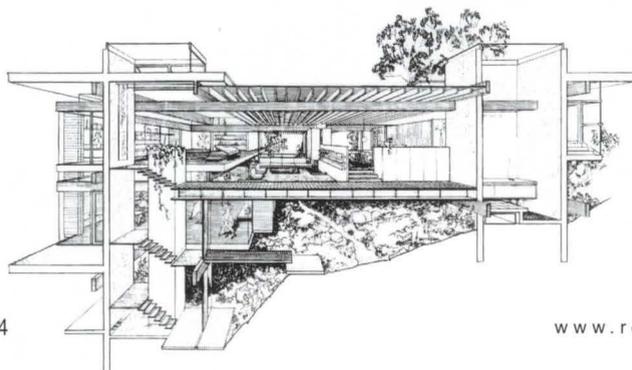


Danny Turner

Medallion for his work founding and directing the Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). And the walls of his house are chockablock with design awards. He certainly deserves to sit back and enjoy the accolades, and he fully intends to after he finishes these few projects on the boards. Yes, indeed.

against type

Kappe started experimenting with housing in the early 1950s, the height of mid-century



2004 leadership awards

“i’ve always sought out the edges, the views, and a feeling of expansiveness.”

—ray kappe, faia



Julius Shulman

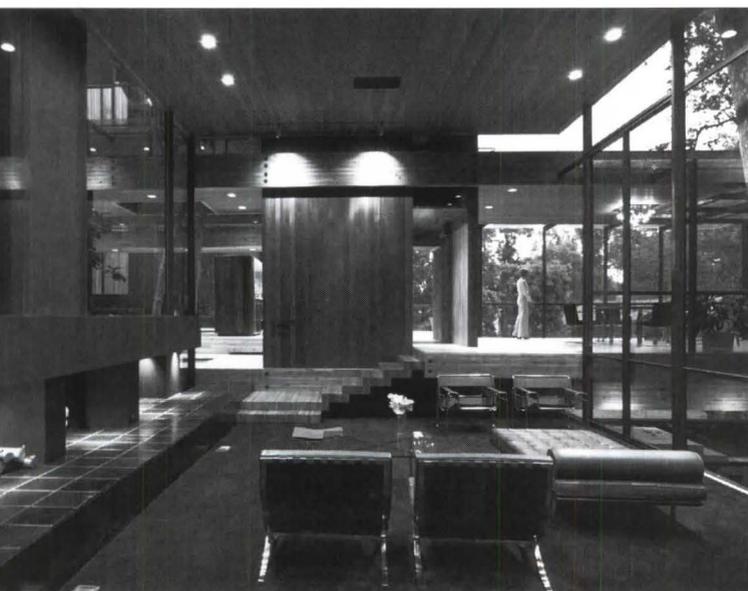
After Berkeley, Kappe worked for Eichler architects Anshen + Allen. His early solo work included open-plan patio houses, such as the 1959 Hayes house in Sherman Oaks.

Modernism. Some architects of the time zeroed in on a style and proceeded to hone it over a lifetime, but Kappe has continued to experiment, always excited to try something new. That’s why he eschews the label of Modernist. He doesn’t wish to be pigeonholed by a word that now represents in the public mind a fixed period on the architectural timeline. He doesn’t mind being called a modern architect, however, with that lower case “m” signifying an ongoing desire to try innovative ideas, technologies, and materials.

With his disdain for typecasting, Kappe hasn’t attracted as much attention for his design work as some other Los Angeles-based architects have enjoyed. He’s also designed largely in wood and has done a few pitched roofs, no-no’s for some Modern purists. “Some of my clients wanted pitched roofs, so I experimented with long, low gables. And most of my clients didn’t want steel,” he says. Despite the trespasses, his houses are just as beautiful as those Case Study tours de force, perhaps even more so because they’re far more livable. They marry Modernism’s love of open floor plans, indoor-outdoor

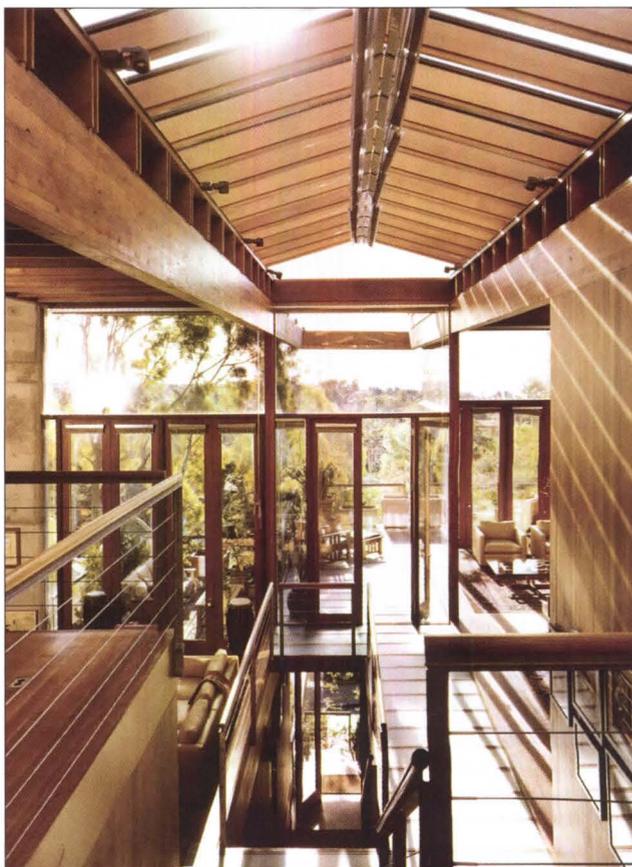
connections, and manipulations of space for dramatic effect with a deep respect for the site and the intimate relationship between human beings and their built environments. “You know, architecture doesn’t have to do it all. The natural layer should show through too,” he says.

After graduation from the University of California, Berkeley in 1951, Kappe cut his housing teeth working for the San Francisco firm of Anshen + Allen, a designer of Eichler houses, and Los Angeles-based architect Carl Maston, with whom he designed apartment buildings. But he soon hung out his shingle as a solo practitioner, eager to tap the post-World War II housing boom and its remarkable tolerance for new ideas. He settled in Sherman Oaks and built his first houses in the San Fernando Valley. They were open-plan, post-and-beam suburban houses designed to exploit Southern California’s temperate climate. Bedrooms were small, with most square footage applied to living areas that opened to patios. “They were all about getting as much feeling of space as possible,” he says. “As a kid, my mother would find me



Photos: Above: Julius Shulman; right: Jason Schmidt

Kappe’s tower system freed walls from load-bearing duties, opening the 1976 Sultan/Price residence to expanses of glass.



The 1986 Keeler house scrambles up its precipitous and narrow site on a series of concrete towers and columns until it reaches its goal: a straight-shot view to the Pacific Ocean.

The Benton house, a multi-year work in progress, stretches its dramatic wings on a skeleton of laminated beams. Kappe designed the house in association with son Ron.



Marvin Rand

sitting in the open window of our apartment building. I've always sought out the edges, the views, and a feeling of expansiveness. That's the common denominator in my architecture."

home schooling

Kappe has completed some 100 single-family houses over the years, but his tour de force is his own house in Pacific Palisades. Built in 1968, it's the best example of his strength as an architect: his ability to answer complex design problems with inventive, beautiful buildings. The biggest problems on the project were a steeply sloped site and a running stream. His answer was a series of six concrete tower supports and a bridgework of laminated beams. The house tiptoed over the site, sparing trees, stream, and the delicate beauty of the topography. "Developers at the time were cutting hills to make pads. I'd been working on the idea of a system of modules to get buildings above grade," he says. "Many of my houses ended up using

this system because it required the least amount of foundation."

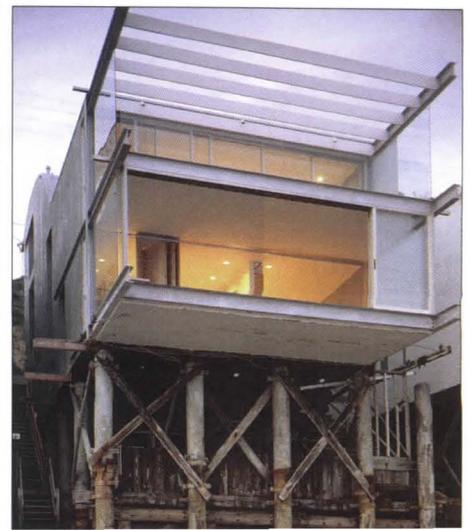
Throughout his career, Kappe has explored many avenues of interest to his inquisitive mind, all the while continuing his residential practice. He was especially drawn to urban planning and co-founded a collaborative, Kahn Kappe Lotery Architects Planners, to work on those projects and others. He taught design at the University of Southern California and in 1968 founded the architecture department at California Polytechnic State University at Pomona (Cal Poly). After a falling out with Cal Poly's administration three years later, he left with a few of his teachers, some of his students, and his wife, Shelly, also a teacher and his great partner in life, to start SCI-Arc. He directed the school—which quickly became

famous for its free-thinking and freewheeling creativity—until 1987.

Somehow during his trailblazing work in architecture education, Kappe still found time to design houses. "I think it's easier to do a lot than a little," he explains. "You use your support better. And I always designed quickly. Houses were a great laboratory for experimenting with design and construction ideas." Over the years, he's employed and trained many SCI-Arc students who've gone on to make names for themselves, among them his sons Ron and Finn, both residential architects. And today he works on his own again, a one-man shop just as he was in 1953. "I'm no different in my mind than when I first started," he says. "I'm doing the kinds of things now I would have done 50 years ago. I feel like a 25-year-old kid." ra



Grabbing height with a wave-like roof, Kappe created two levels for the 1998 Culbert house that open fully to the ocean view. The Malibu house preserved an existing piling-supported floor.



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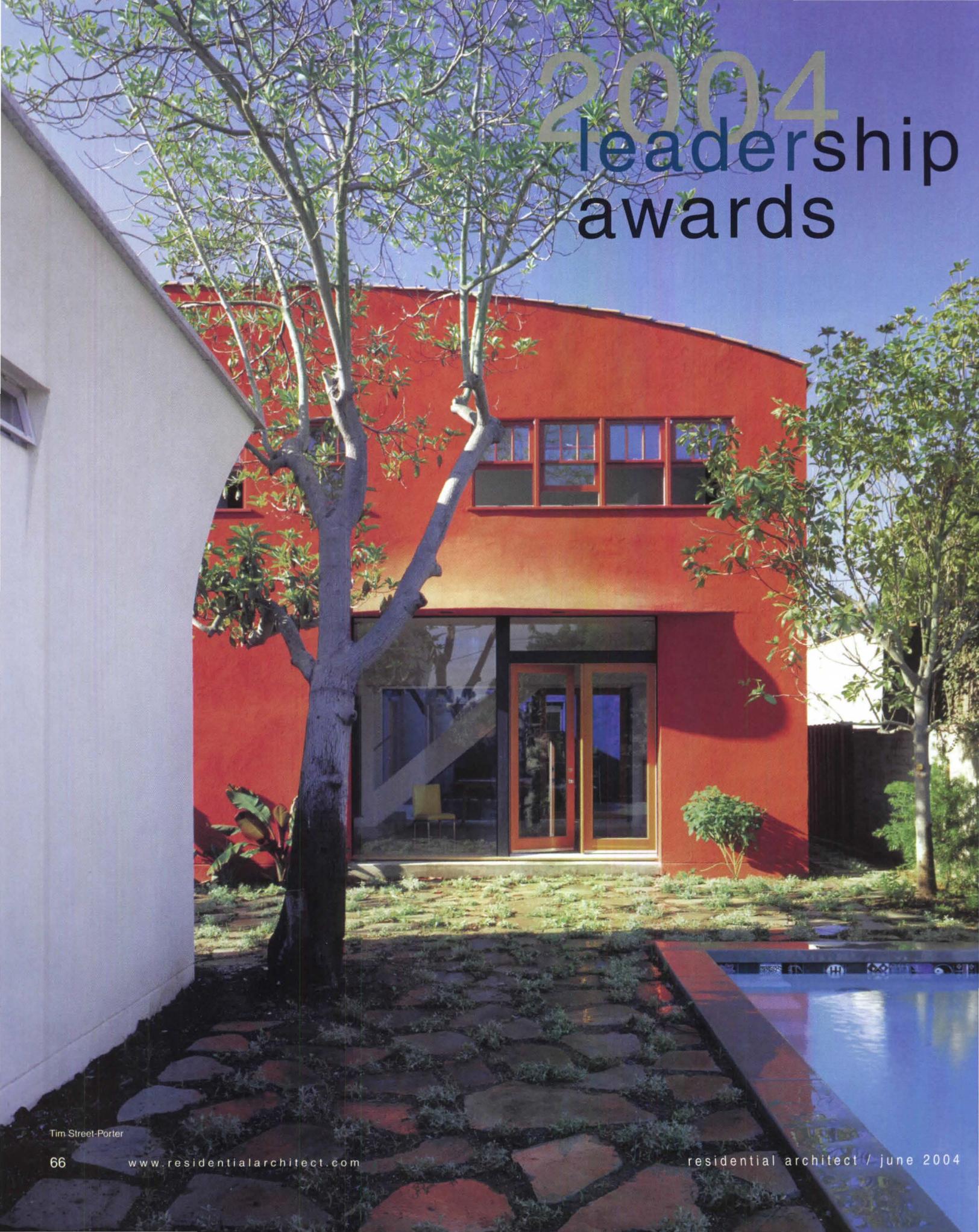
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top firm: koning eizenberg architecture

Hank Koning and Julie Eizenberg emphasize affordability and livability in every project they design.

by cheryl weber

If Hank Koning, FAIA, were living in a single-room occupancy (SRO) hotel on Skid Row, here's what would be on his wish list: "What I want is pretty simple, but I want a window that's big, and it has to be double hung so the top and bottom can open, or I won't get good ventilation," he says. "I want to feel safe, so I'd like an elevator that has a glass back so people can't do drugs. OK, you could stick a camera in there but it would last about a week, and the nice glass elevator feels like someone cares. And I'd want to have the lounge near the street, so I can see what's going on."

Play acting—phantom living in the design, he calls it—is part of every project Koning Eizenberg Architecture takes on, whether it's a hip boutique hotel or an SRO, a multimillion-dollar home for a Tinseltown hotshot or subsidized apartments for the disabled. In fact, the slightly iconoclastic Santa Monica, Calif., firm, founded in 1981 by Koning and his wife, Julie Eizenberg, AIA, has made a name for itself designing just such extremes in project types. Unusually versatile for its size—there are 18 on staff—KEA's award-winning portfolio also includes affordable middle-class housing, schools, community centers, a children's museum, and mixed-use projects. Currently, the firm has more than \$177 million worth of projects on the boards or in construction.

As natives of socially progressive Australia, Koning and Eizenberg grew up



Danny Turner

thinking about design with a capital D—not just the kind that appears in glossy magazines, although the firm's meticulously crafted custom homes appear regularly in the national consumer press, but of the caliber and scope that improves whole communities. It simply never occurred to them that one type of building would have more status than another, or that they should specialize in one area. Eizenberg, in fact, is annoyed when potential clients ask if they've done a particular project type. "It's an artificial division, and it's simplistic," she says. "You want to fit with someone because they think about housing the same way you do. It's more about sensitivity and attitude."

What KEA's buildings do have in common, though, is their commitment to Modernism, their intense practicality, and



Tim Street-Porter

This 1995 addition to a 1920s Spanish colonial reflects KEA's deference to the house's history and casual charm. Bedrooms and art studios occupy two buildings, one of which forms an edge to the pool courtyard (far left).

2004 leadership awards

“what appealed to us was a certain modesty, not in terms of compromising experience, but a modesty of ease.”

—julie eizenberg



Tim Griffith

This addition to a 1930s cottage bridges old and new. Its simple stucco forms recall the region's Modern and Spanish architectural traditions.

a sense of joy and ease. The firm's 3,800-square-foot office/studio illustrates its genius for delivering solidly innovative work on modest budgets. Constrained on time and budget by a Small Business Administration loan, they finessed the limitations in several ways. In lieu of an underground garage—the typical West Los Angeles solution, and an expensive one—cars are parked at grade under the building, so the studio floats lightly above it. The swooping roof funnels rainwater to a single spout, eliminating the need for gutters. A monitor window that rises from the third floor ceiling adds space and light without violating the city's building height restrictions. Texture comes from corrugated metal siding, a floor of high density fiberboard, and a plastic membrane ceiling with whitewashed joists as wood battens. And when they ran out of money to install vertical sunshades on the west side, they put up a big blue curtain that can be pulled over the windows on summer afternoons. Inside, Eizenberg says, it's like working underwater.

social and spatial connections

At the helm of a thoughtful practice that's determined to raise the bar on housing while keeping costs down, Koning and Eizenberg's blend of talents serves them well. Although they both design, Koning's strengths are on the technical side. He is the expert on materials, costs, and structural codes, whereas Julie is the visionary, focusing on what's going to feel right and look good. Fortuitously, they met on the first day of architecture school at the University of Melbourne. After receiving bachelor's degrees and practicing for a few years in the late 1970s, they went on to graduate school at UCLA. There, classes taught by Charles Moore had a humanitarian bent that appealed to their sensibilities. So did the climate and the Modernist traditions of Eames and Eichler, with their natural connections between indoors and out. “What appealed to us was a certain modesty, not in terms of compromising experience but

a modesty of ease, not trying to show how clever you are,” Eizenberg says. “It was setting things up so people look good.”

The broader social aspects of design hadn't yet caught on with their peers, however. “People were shocked that we wanted to take classes in the planning school,” Eizenberg says. “There were few students who crossed over. We weren't doing it to make any political point, but we didn't see that social housing programs would not be an area where you could do interesting architecture.” She adds: “To a certain extent, being from somewhere else was liberating. You didn't have to do things the way other people did them.”

Indeed, the firm consistently seeks out projects that are viewed as pedestrian and steps them up a notch, making them unexpectedly fresher, smarter, and more valuable to the end user. Zoning codes and standard cost-conscious practices are frequently called into question, since the firm vows not to create something they wouldn't want to live in themselves. At Harold Way Apartments, a 51-unit affordable housing complex in Hollywood, Calif., that meant ruling out double-loaded corridors in favor of units with windows on both sides and pushing for sliding glass doors that go from floor to ceiling, which were only marginally more expensive than standard 6-foot, 8-inch openings. The design team also lobbied to relax setback requirements so it could cluster the four-story buildings on the edges of the property and vary the scale with smaller buildings and courtyards in the middle.

Fortunately, the firm has a single-minded perseverance nurtured by Eizenberg, whose role is to guard the design idea through session after session of value engineering and on into construction. “You're on site, and the contractor has done something wrong,” she says. “Even though we could save time, someone has to say, ‘This is important,’ or ‘This isn't.’ Someone has to fight to keep the quality. Doing Modern architecture in multifamily housing means you have to do more management on site to make sure things line up. Punched



Renderings courtesy Koning Eizenberg Architecture

On the boards is a \$30 million condominium project in Venice, Calif., that includes 10,000 square feet of retail and underground parking for 581 cars. The 204 living units will range in size from 800 to 1,250 square feet and are designed to capture sunlight and ocean views and breezes. The project's layout blends with the urban fabric, reinforcing existing pedestrian street patterns.



Asked by *The New York Times* to develop a scheme for rebuilding Lower Manhattan near the World Trade Center site, KEA responded with a concept that includes a bookstore, a day-care center, and a coffee shop on the ground floor. The upper floors would hold a senior citizen center, retirement housing, and a public gym and pool. The "country club" color scheme was inspired by the big striped awnings on boardwalk rec clubs that Eizenberg observed while visiting relatives in the New York City boroughs. A folding sunscreen would shade the building's west side.

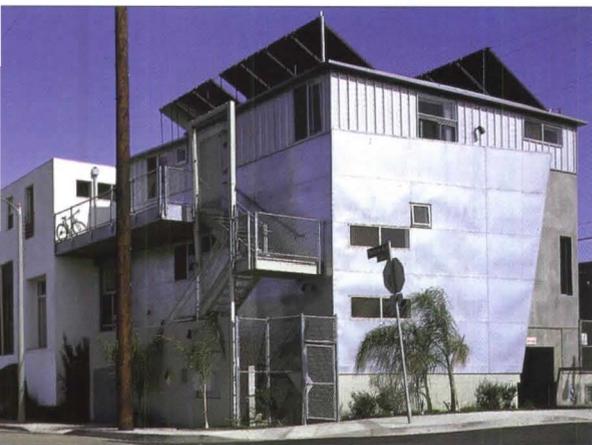


An adaptive reuse project in L.A.'s downtown loft district illustrates the firm's commitment to creating people-friendly, mixed-use neighborhoods. Its design for the \$32 million conversion of an old Nabisco bakery includes 3,000 square feet of retail, 109 condos, and the addition of 120 new units.

2004 leadership awards

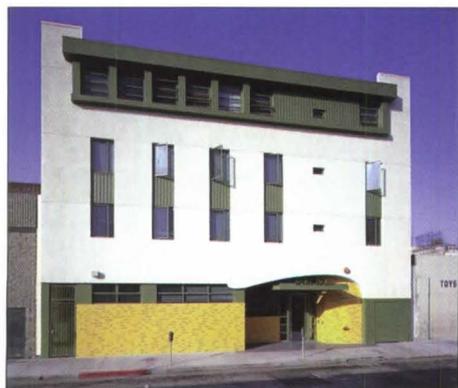
“other countries have a lot more prefab components than we do. it’s another area i feel needs to shift.”

—hank koning, faia



Tom Bonner

Electric Art Block, a 20-unit loft building in Venice, Calif., illustrates KEA’s commitment to providing options for how people live and work.



Benny Chan

The Boyd Hotel (1996) draws on L.A.’s stylistic traditions from the 1930s and features exterior window shading and plenty of natural light.

openings are very forgiving, but they won’t give you that continuity between inside and out and increase the amount of space you think you have.”

livable cities

Their ability to create unique spatial experiences with limited square footage, combined with a bold practical streak, also attracts developers of mixed-use infill projects. KEA has become increasingly engaged in how to meet housing demand while making the city a pleasant place to live and work. Now, most of its residential projects are being built on land zoned for commercial or industrial use.

“There’s such a stigma against density in L.A.,” Koning says. “I’ve lived in Santa Monica for 20 years, and I think it’s a more interesting place to live now, despite some horrendous buildings. The culture, arts, street life—everything is so much richer. We need the density to encourage and sustain public transportation. But architects have to do beautiful projects to make people feel good about this stuff.”

One recent success is Birch Street, a mixed-use neighborhood made from whole cloth. The project was unusual in that it created an entirely new street in northeast Orange County, which had no significant urban fabric or rental market, says developer John Given, a principal with the CIM Group, which has partnered with KEA off and on for more than 20 years. KEA’s contribution was 32 moderately priced loft-style apartments above 12,300 square feet of retail space. Built for \$65 per square foot, virtually all of them leased before they were finished.

“They were bold in putting in a large commercial window and providing the kinds of small touches and simple solutions that when residents moved in, they said, ‘This really works,’” Given says. “Koning Eizenberg fundamentally understands the building process yet continues to strive to make a higher-quality living environment out of every unit, largely by the quality of indoor-outdoor space. They will not let go of what it’s like to live there.”

a new checklist

Fortunately, KEA has not left the suburban middle class out of the loop entirely in the quest for affordable design. Its multifamily dwellings cross-pollinate the design of budget-minded single-family homes. One strategy is to spend money on one or two gestures that light up a simple box, like the oversize doors and louvered pop-out window on the firm’s so-called Crate & Barrel house, which won an award in this magazine’s annual design competition (May 2004, page 65). KEA also experiments with common materials that create layers and texture: cement boards that lap in different patterns or, even more inexpensively, a tree that throws a shadow. “We don’t think of architecture as the complete product,” Eizenberg says. “For us, it’s a combination of the landscape and the building, even in an urban context. There’s always a setup.”

In the best of all worlds, such an approach would spread from design-savvy homeowners to the public at large. But fundamental changes are needed in the way houses are appraised for real estate value, Eizenberg says. She would overhaul traditional checklists and introduce new categories, such as natural light and, yes, that indoor-outdoor connection. “You must spend the resources on creating something that has longevity, that has an enhanced sensibility of the elements of being alive—nature, light, air—and is conducive to social behavior,” she says. “It’s not about the pretension of ‘I have one of these and one of these.’ You don’t need a lot of space, but it needs to be considered about how it may be used, and used alternatively. The vocabulary of design could also be fresher. Does it all have to look like Cape Cod or Spanish style?”

Modernists that they are, the architects are beginning to think about new ways to build houses even more efficiently, whether it’s with pattern books or through the use of prefabricated components. “Other countries have a lot more prefab than we do,” Koning says. “It’s another area that I feel needs to shift. It’s very romantic to have these guys out there pounding nails, but



Photos: Benny Chan

it's not particularly efficient. We don't make cars that way anymore; no one wants to spend \$100,000 on a car."

firm foundation

Ever mindful of the future, the firm recently restructured to get to the next level of practice. Koning and Eizenberg promoted longtime employee Brian Lane, AIA, to managing principal. His job is to encourage collaboration among employees and create opportunities for professional growth. "There's a kind of synergy between Hank and Julie that's also being developed in the office between staff," Lane says. "They both have a very good eye, and many of the people here are bridging Hank and Julie's skill sets to become good designers and also technically very competent." From them, Lane has also learned what it means to be a leader. "It's about leadership within the office, with clients and contractors, but also within the community at large," he says. "For me, that's been a nice eye-opener."

With the firm's growth has also come the appointment of four new associates to head up different areas of practice. Ian MacDuff looks out for large-scale commercial and public sector projects. Julio Zavolta will expand his role in business development and the firm's knowledge of schools and sustainable design. Jason

Kerwin is keeping an eye on the Los Angeles Department of Recreation & Parks and spearheading materials research and public relations, and Oonagh Ryan leads the custom residential work.

That frees up Koning and Eizenberg to accept larger and more diverse projects and to take more risks with design. Eizenberg is particularly excited about their design for the expansion of the Children's Museum of Pittsburgh, now under construction. Rather than featuring bright colors and patronizing graphics, it tracks the movement of light and wind across a fluttering translucent screen the firm designed with an artist. "Getting something like that made is hard work. It doesn't fall into traditional construction categories," Eizenberg says. "We're fighting harder to do things like that." She's also exploring how fabrics can be crinkled and pleated to organize forms. More so than an object, fabrics can resonate emotionally with people, she believes. "We're not so much into objects," she adds. "An object may come out of it, but that's not where we're starting. We don't always know why we do what we do, but what we do is personal, and that's when you have a better chance of making contact from one human being to another." ra

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



Built in 2001 for \$160 per square foot, the "Crate & Barrel" house offers well-crafted stock materials and just a few special effects, such as oversize glass doors and the louvered master bedroom bay. The kitchen corridor opens up views from the front to the back of the house.

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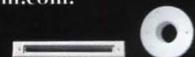


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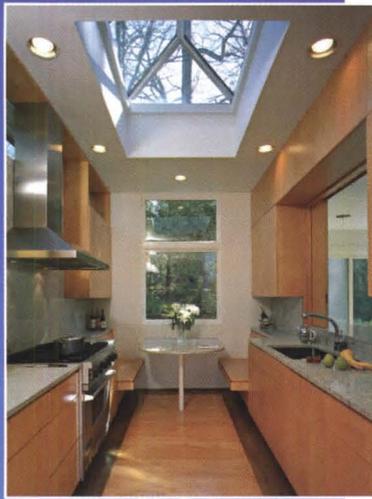


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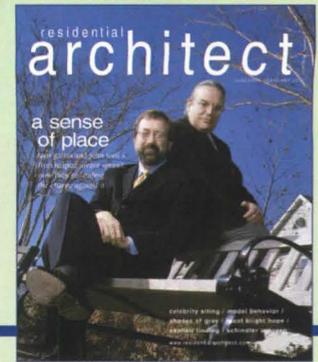
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2004 leadership awards

rising star: jonathan segal, faia

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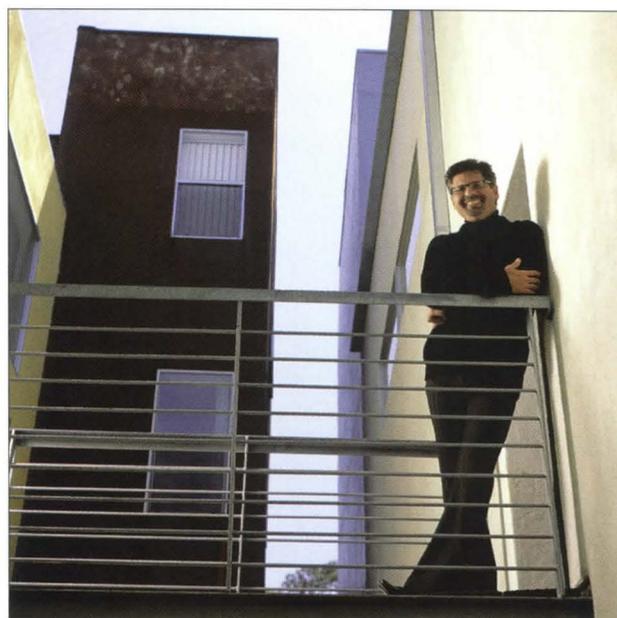
by meghan drueding

Jonathan Segal, FAIA, may be the world's hardest person to interview. He zooms from one conversation topic to another with the speed of a Porsche gunning down an open freeway, leaving you mentally gasping for breath. By the time he's gotten to the end of his verbal maneuvers, you've forgotten your original question.

While it's daunting to a journalist, this talent for internal multitasking has fueled the 42-year-old Segal to the top of the architect-developer pack. "I have to be doing a lot of things at once," he admits. "I'm hyper, I guess." He needs to be, to handle his roles as architect, developer, and contractor of residential and mixed-use communities throughout downtown San Diego. Since his first development in 1990, Segal has created 16 high-design, small-scale downtown projects containing a total of 275 housing units. With the help of his wife and business partner, Wendy, and a tiny staff, he's become a mini-mogul with a distinctly unmogul-like accomplishment: He's won a truckload of design awards.

fast lane

Segal's penchant for speed was already apparent in 1979, when the Greenville, S.C., native entered the University of Idaho on a track scholarship. Afterward he spent two years working for San Diego architect Homer Delawie, FAIA, and a couple more with Antoine Predock's San Diego office. Then a real estate investor



Danny Turner

whom he met in an elevator offered him a throwaway downtown lot for \$5,000, and Segal's entrepreneurial side found a venue to come out and play. The seven row homes he designed and developed in 1990, 7 on Kettner, sold briskly, just before a dive in local real estate values. The project showed lenders that a downtown housing market did exist in this traditionally urban city, and eventually won Segal his first of several AIA San Diego Awards.

He and Wendy developed three more downtown housing projects over the next few years, always with Jonathan as the architect. They didn't worry much about conventional market wisdom. "We've never thought about 'what will sell,'" he says. "We've always developed our architecture from what we thought was right: urban residential and mixed-use buildings." Wendy, who manages the 141



Jimmy Fluker

Segal's buildings turn leftover sites into viable real estate. The 22-unit Titan faces a freeway ramp and lies below San Diego International Airport's flight path, but it offers a hip, approachable alternative to high-rise living.

2004 leadership awards

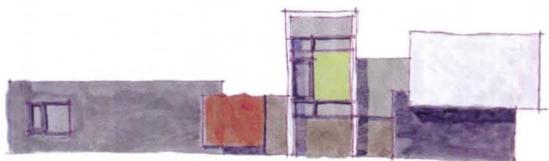
"the latitude we have is unparalleled. we make big art with our hands."

—jonathan segal, faia



Jonathan Segal

A knack for anticipating rising rents follows Segal from neighborhood to neighborhood. Angove Lofts, built in 1999, occupies a now-booming part of town near San Diego's baseball stadium.



Jonathan Segal

Creative solutions flow fast and furious out of Segal's office. He plans to handle the old grocery store on the site of K Lofts (above) by incorporating it into his design. At Kettner Row (top right), flexible live/work and rental apartment spaces give homeowners options for how they want to live.

rental units they currently own, remembers the on-the-fly nature of their business' early days. "We used credit cards a lot, and we did a lot of juggling," she says. "We had very supportive investors to whom we gave a big piece of the pie."

In 1997 the Segals tried something different. Jonathan teamed with a group of other local architects, including Rob Wellington Quigley, FAIA, and McCormick, Smith and Others, to revitalize a block in downtown's Little Italy neighborhood. Each architect designed part of the mixed-use project, which garnered national acclaim as a new model for urban development. Segal's widely published portion, 16 fee-simple townhomes known as Kettner Row, represented the maturing of an idea he'd experimented with in previous projects: the notion of "convertible" housing. Just like his multi-track mind, his ideal residence can serve more than one purpose simultaneously. The units at Kettner Row feature private-entrance ground floors that can be used as retail or office spaces or rented out as separate apartments.

Kettner Row's success established Segal as a true player in the downtown housing market, and he never looked back. He continues to explore live/work arrangements in many of his projects. "Jonathan has been really influential in creating a good example of live/work units activating the street," says Garry Papers, AIA, manager of architecture and planning at San Diego's nonprofit Centre City Development Corp. "Downtown is generally becoming more pedestrian and more urban, and that's something he has contributed to."



Jonathan Segal

well-oiled machine

Segal's architecture and planning undergo a continuous refinement. Always designed in a Modern vein, his buildings have grown progressively sleeker and more simple. Where an older project might contain an ornamental gate or light fixture, he's stripped his newer jobs of all that to concentrate on pure form and material. He's also removed underground parking, double-loaded corridors, and elevators from his work. "They're all very inhumane ways of architects designing buildings to create an interactive environment," he says. "Take an elevator. It puts people who don't know each other well in a small box. Why would I ever want to do that?" Now parking takes place in central courtyards, hallways are single-loaded, and, because few of Segal's buildings are more than four stories, residents take the stairs. "By entering our front door on our stoop, we see the neighbors coming in and out," says landscape architect Marty Poirier, who lives at Kettner Row. "It's better for the community."

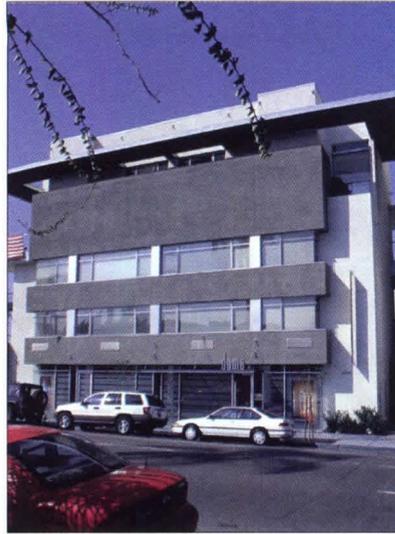
Along with his design sensibilities, Segal constantly tweaks the way he does business. Put off by California's "strict

liability” laws for condominiums, he stopped developing condos in 1996. Since then he’s focused on rental buildings, with an occasional fee-simple, for-sale job thrown in. His reach within San Diego has expanded from the Marina district and Little Italy to the East Village/Gaslamp Quarter, and most recently to Golden Hill, a rolling enclave on the edge of downtown. Filled with old Victorian and Craftsman-style houses, the neighborhood will soon be home to two Segal projects: The Union, which combines 20 lofts and 5,000 square feet of office space, and K Lofts, a nine-unit adaptive reuse of a former Circle K grocery store.

After a couple of contractor debacles in 1999, Segal decided to start doing his own general contracting. This new wrinkle has given him and the local architects he often works with on a consulting basis, including Guillermo Tomaszewski and Sebastian Mariscal, even more design freedom. “The latitude we have is unparalleled,” he says. “We make big art with our hands. We can continue to refine it as it’s getting built.” Right now he’s working on an unusual (for him) project: a custom home for a client who is using an outside contractor. “If there’s a problem with how something’s being done on one of our regular projects, we can go directly to the person who’s responsible for it,” he says. “The loss of that control on the house I’m doing now scares me.”

budget living

Contracting has given Segal’s restless mind the chance to investigate new uses for standard building materials. The budgets on his rental projects are incredibly tight. The 22 units at The Titan, built in 2003, cost \$87 per square foot to construct, and they rent for \$900 to \$1,900 a month. The average monthly rent for one of his units is \$1,300, which is moderate for downtown San Diego. But Segal is by no means a large-scale developer; the biggest project he’s done is 37 units. He simply doesn’t have the deep pockets of a national company, so he’s got to keep his building costs as low as possible. What renters sacrifice in high-end



Photos: Jonathan Segal

Respecting the fabric of the city is part of Segal’s game plan. At The Waterfront, a 37-unit mixed-use project completed in 2000, he saved a group of existing structures and incorporated them into his building.

materials they gain in style and spatial quality, the value of which can’t be overestimated. But perhaps it can be estimated: He’s recently been approached by several developers interested in buying his rental properties and converting them into for-sale housing. “They think they can sell them for 20 to 30 percent above average prices,” he says, but he’s still mulling the offers.

Regardless of the outcome, he’ll continue to use his favorite cost-effective goodies, such as ground and polished concrete slab floors, commercial storefront windows, and the rusted mild steel he calls “the poor man’s Cor-Ten.” He hopes to replace interior stucco and drywall altogether with concrete block and plywood, and inserts two-story volumes into most of his rentals. “By distorting a small space, by making it taller, you get a better feeling,” he says. And he dreams of simplifying the building process enough to mass-produce a 20-by-25-foot urban box, making it into a kit of parts that anyone, anywhere could buy.

According to Segal, his life changes every two years. He, Wendy, and their teenage kids, Matthew and Brittany, have lived in many of his developments. Last year they left Little Italy for a house Segal designed in the posh suburb of La Jolla, motivated by a desire to place Brittany in one of the area’s top-notch public schools.

Though he’s no longer a city dweller, Segal is in no danger of losing his urban roots. True to form, he situated his new house directly across the street from La Jolla’s downtown—right in the middle of the action. **ra**



David Harrison

Segal’s custom homes, such as this 4,200-square-foot residence in La Jolla, Calif., lean toward the sleek and dramatic. The project, with its floating roof, all-glass wall, and collage of geometric forms, will be completed in 2005.

Transcend the ordinary

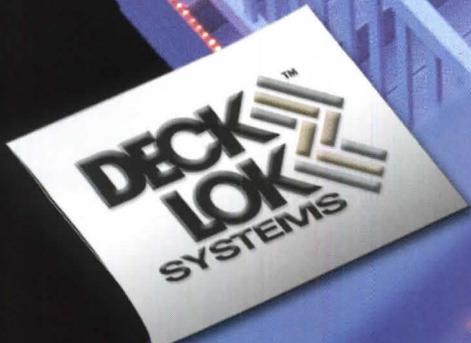


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blue ribbon panels

support builds for energy-efficient structural insulated panels

by nigel f. maynard

Retired architect William M. MacMullen fondly remembers the Ocean Colony Landing project he designed 11 years ago. Located in Marshfield, Mass., the 50 1,800- to 2,000-square-foot homes cost half the area average. Each unit had R-30 walls and heating bills of less than \$500 each season. To top things off, the groundbreaking took place in May and the units were occupied by September of the same year. How were these homes so energy efficient and so quick and, therefore, cheaper to build? The answer: structural insulated panels (SIPs).

An innovative building system, SIPs are made from expanded polystyrene (EPS) or polyisocyanurate rigid foam insulation sandwiched between two structural sheets of oriented strand board or plywood. Although less widely used than stick framing, SIPs are quicker to assemble, stronger, and more energy efficient. Manufactured by such companies as Premier Building Systems in Fife, Wash., Team Industries in Grand Rapids, Mich., Insulspan in Blissfield, Mich., and Brattleboro, Vt.-based Winter Panel Corp., SIPs were once considered a fringe technology.



Today, forward-thinking architects see them as an alternative to conventional systems and a likely solution to the need for low-cost, energy-efficient housing.

"This system essentially replaces a wood-framed wall and other types of wall assemblies," says New York City-based architect Michael McDonough, who is a huge fan and is using the panels to build his own house in the Hudson Valley.

"Anything you can frame in wood or steel, you can frame in SIPs."

over achiever

"Energy efficiency is the No. 1 reason to use SIPs," says Joe Hagerman, a research associate at the Mississippi State University College of Architecture. The technology, he says, results in tighter homes—a claim supported by a 1999 Oak Ridge National Laboratory study, which found that the R-value of a 2x4 wood-framed wall insulated with R-11 fiberglass is 9.8,



For this project, Face Design used a hybrid system of SIPs and steel framing. Structural bents are assembled flat and tilted into place, while pre-cut panels are bolted into the frame to create a rigid shell.

Top photos courtesy Face Design; Above: Face Design, Sean Tracy, Principal Architect; Photograph © / Esto

compared with 14 for a SIP wall with a 3½-inch EPS core. Such numbers also mean that the size of heating and cooling equipment can be reduced for additional savings.

That level of performance is one of the reasons Raleigh, N.C.-based architect Sarah Susanka used SIPs for her Home by Design Showhouse at the 2004 International Builders' Show. Home by Design is 70 percent more efficient than a house built to meet model energy codes, thanks

in part to SIPs. Susanka says the panels' fast assembly time allowed the house to go up in just three days. "It is a really good idea that's about to catch on," says Susanka, who's been an advocate of the technology for 20 years. "It's the wave of the future."

The strength-to-weight ratio of the panels is yet another benefit users appreciate. The Gig Harbor, Wash.-based Structural Insulated Panel Association (SIPA) says the composite

continued on page 82

assembly yields stiffness, strength, and predictable performance. McDonough can vouch for those claims. One feature of his house is a pair of cantilevered rooms that protrude from opposite ends of the building. The rooms had to be light but strong enough to support the 7,500-pound steel and engineered lumber roof. "We could not have done the two



Courtesy Michael McDonough Architect

Michael McDonough's SIP-constructed light catcher (in red, above) was lightweight and affordable but strong enough to support the 7,500-pound steel and engineered lumber roof.

view catchers without SIPs," the architect says, adding that stick framing would have required thicker walls, which would have been heavier and more expensive.

outside the box

If you believe SIPs are only applicable to traditional design, architects are incorporating the systems in imaginatively nontraditional ways, too.

Troy, N.Y.-based architect William E. Massie has devised prototype housing made with insulated panels that are prefabricated with all rough electrical and plumbing for appliances and fixtures. The brightly colored exterior

panel surfaces are finished with a sprayed-on, high-density plastic that's impervious to UV rays and normal expansion and contraction.

The contemporary Branford Point Residence designed by Brooklyn, N.Y.-based Face Design is another example. The 5,500-square-foot prototype house has a prefabricated galvanized steel frame that was bolted together on site and clad with SIPs. "That was my first time using SIPs, but I am looking forward to using them again," says Sean Tracy, principal at the design/build architecture firm. Tracy says the potential for SIPs is huge, but architects fail to exploit the technology's creative potential. "Most people use [SIPs] to replicate colonial homes," he says. "They use it to replace stick-framing systems, but they never use it in a progressive way."

lingering concerns

SIPs may have advantages over stick framing, but they have their own set of issues. Even advocates say there are kinks to iron out before the technology gains wider acceptance. One chief concern is hard cost: SIPs can cost the same as stick framing but are never cheaper. Architect Peggy Duncker used SIPs for her family's home in Wilson, Wyo., and says the price was comparable to stick framing. "We designed the house to be stick-built but decided to use SIPs for the roof after we found out that we could

have exposed rafter tails," says Duncker, a principal at Tobler Duncker Architects in Jackson, Wyo. "Meanwhile, the company wanted to see how much it would cost to do the walls with panels. They came up with the identical price."

Stick framing, says Mike Bryan, division manager for panels at Premier Building Systems in Fife, Wash, is currently cheaper because the lumber infrastructure is well established. The infrastructure for panels is not completely in place but once it is, he predicts, the price will beat stick framing. Until then, time-saving SIPs may prove cheaper to use in areas with high labor costs.

Material cost isn't the only issue. "There is still some concern about the long-term durability of the panels," says M. Scott Ball, co-executive director at the Atlanta-based Community Housing Resource Center, which built a SIPs demonstration home to research building methods and products. Ball believes in insulated panels but says some questions must still be answered: What is the life-span of the binders that glue the OSB together? If the OSB delaminates, is there a remedy? Is there any information on the life-span of the bond between the OSB and the foam?

Based on his experience, Ball says SIPs take some time getting used to. They're tricky to install, do not facilitate complex roof design, and are difficult to wire. "Despite what manufacturers

SIPs come in a variety of thicknesses and styles. These pieces from Winter Panel come as a direct substitute for conventional framing (bottom), as curtain walls (middle), or with 1x8 V-groove pine interiors (top).



Courtesy Winter Panel Corp.

say, electricians hate fishing wire through the foam," he says.

Bill Wachtler, executive director of SIPA, says all of Ball's questions can be answered. "For the most part," he says, "you can put up a more complex roof a little faster with SIPs than with dimensional lumber. You definitely have to plan ahead, but after you do it a couple of times, it becomes easier." Exposure to rain won't reduce the structural capacity of panels made with OSB, he says, adding that it's unlikely that an OSB skin would come apart from the foam.

Despite success with the system, Duncker remains skeptical. "For me as an architect, it is still a bit new," she says. "It is not a tried-and-true product like stick framing, so [architects] are reluctant to use it."

McDonough takes another view. "The negatives of SIPs are those of any technology," he says. "Just because something is new doesn't mean that it's not well built. The reluctance to use [SIPs] is because architects just don't know much about them." ra

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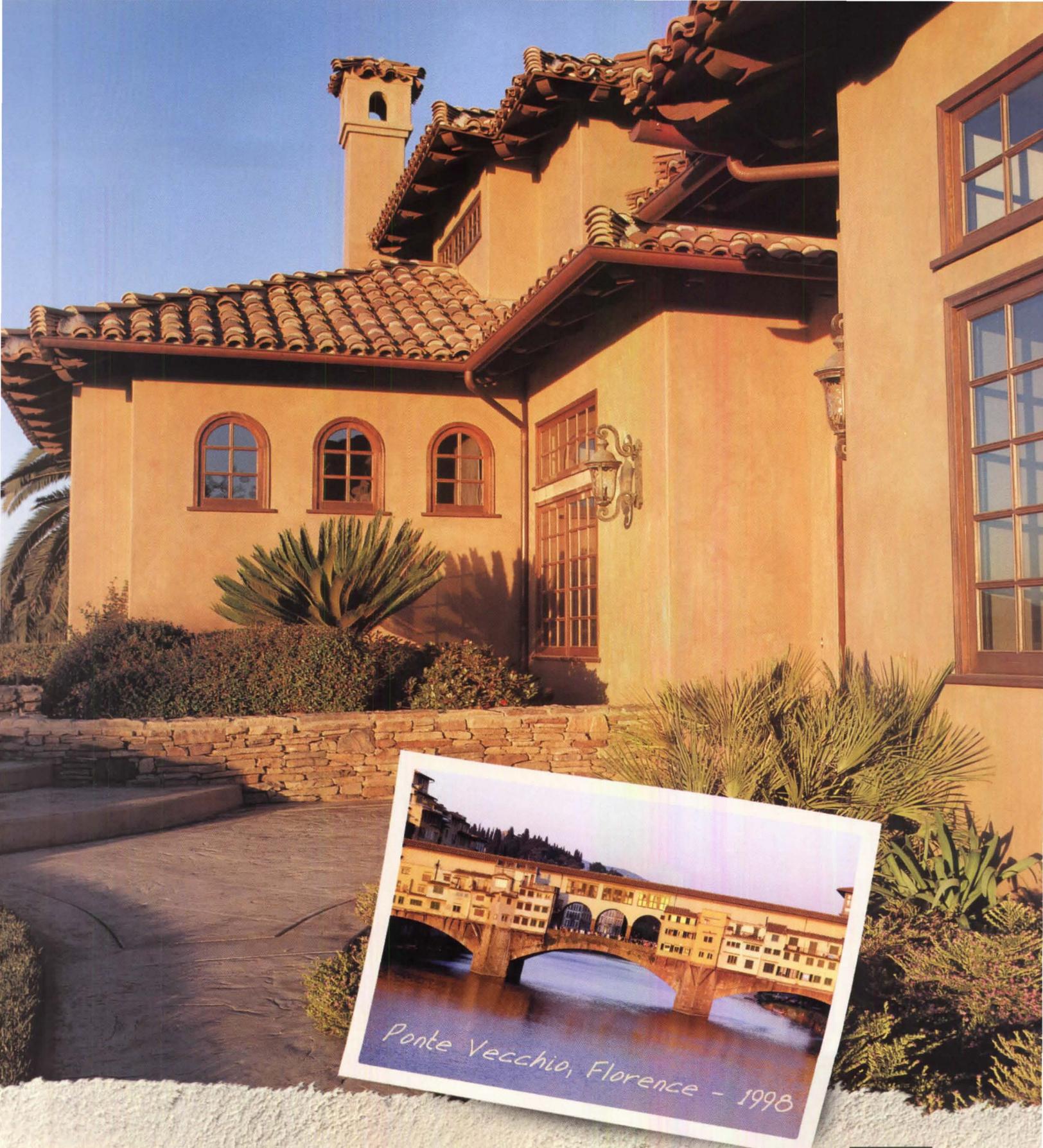
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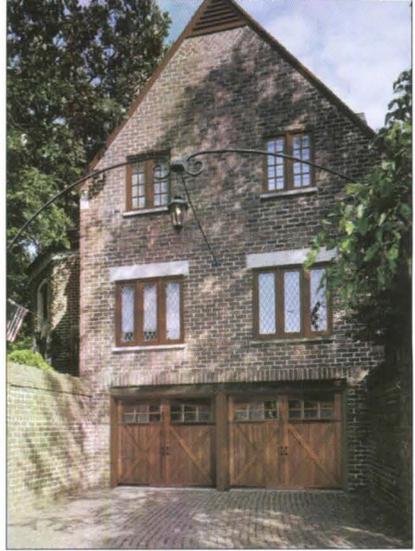
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continued on page 86

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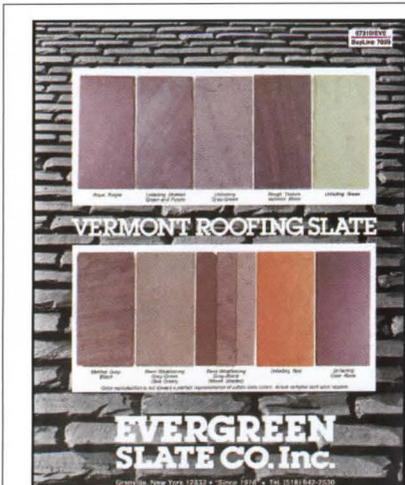
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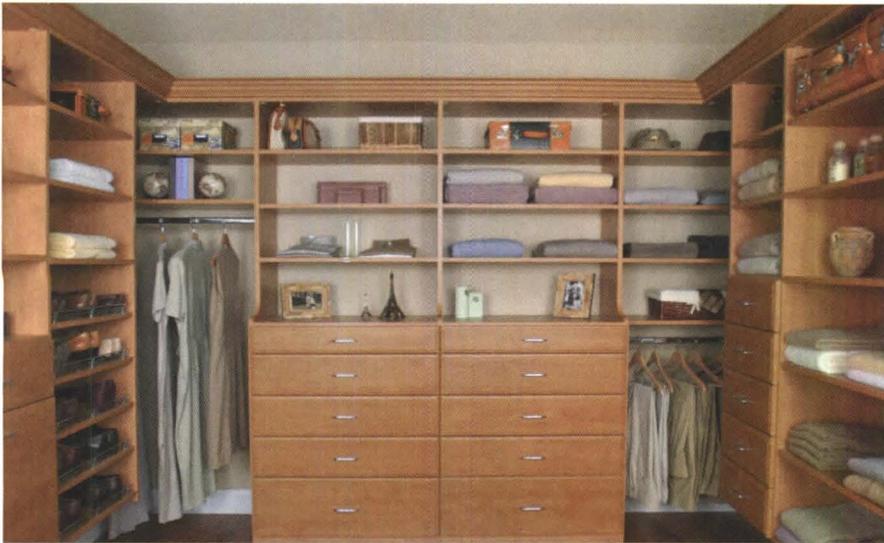
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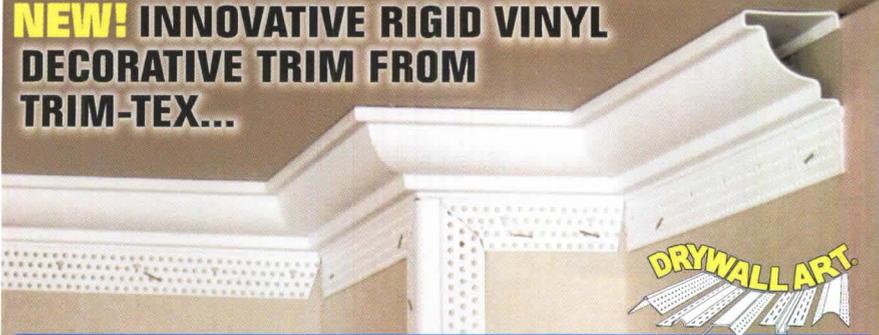
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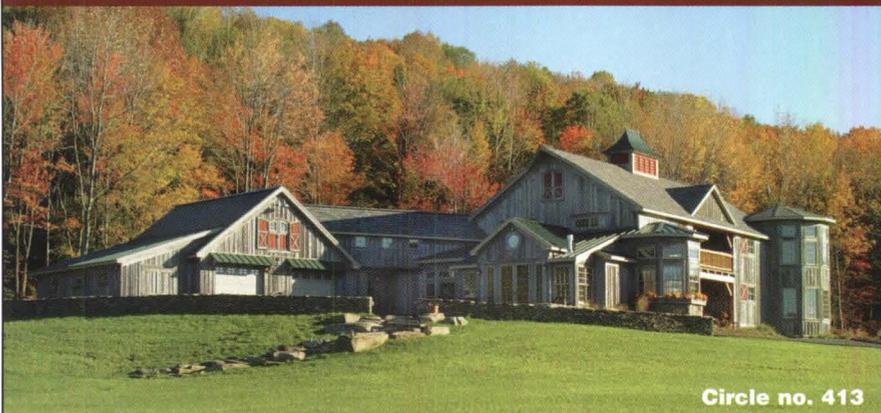
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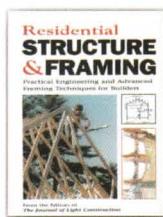
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end quote

the art of inquiry

deering residence, casey key, fla., 1956-1958

paul rudolph, faia

“architecture, at least for me, is to a degree an art, and I feel fundamentally that it’s the business of art to always question, to always turn everything upside down so that one sees it anew.”

—paul rudolph, faia



Photograph © Ezra Stoller/Esto

The houses Paul Rudolph designed early in his career make up a cornerstone of the famed Sarasota School, the East Coast’s unofficial version of the California Case Study program. One of his most celebrated, the Deering Residence, marks a daring departure from his previous work. Instead of the lightly built, wood-framed buildings he was known for, it consists of a substantial masonry frame rising solidly from the sand. Rather than seeming suspended atop its site, as many of his other homes did, the Deering Residence looks almost invincible. “This

structure appears strong enough to resist the destructive force of ... seasonal hurricanes,” wrote Christopher Domin and Joseph King in their book *Paul Rudolph: The Florida Houses* (Princeton Architectural Press, 2002).

Nine lime block pillars on the west and east facades divide floor-to-ceiling expanses of glass, casting changing shadows on the sand-colored terrazzo floors throughout the day. The architect selected the furniture as well, choosing low tables and chairs that underscore the two-bedroom home’s sense of repose.—*meghan drueding*



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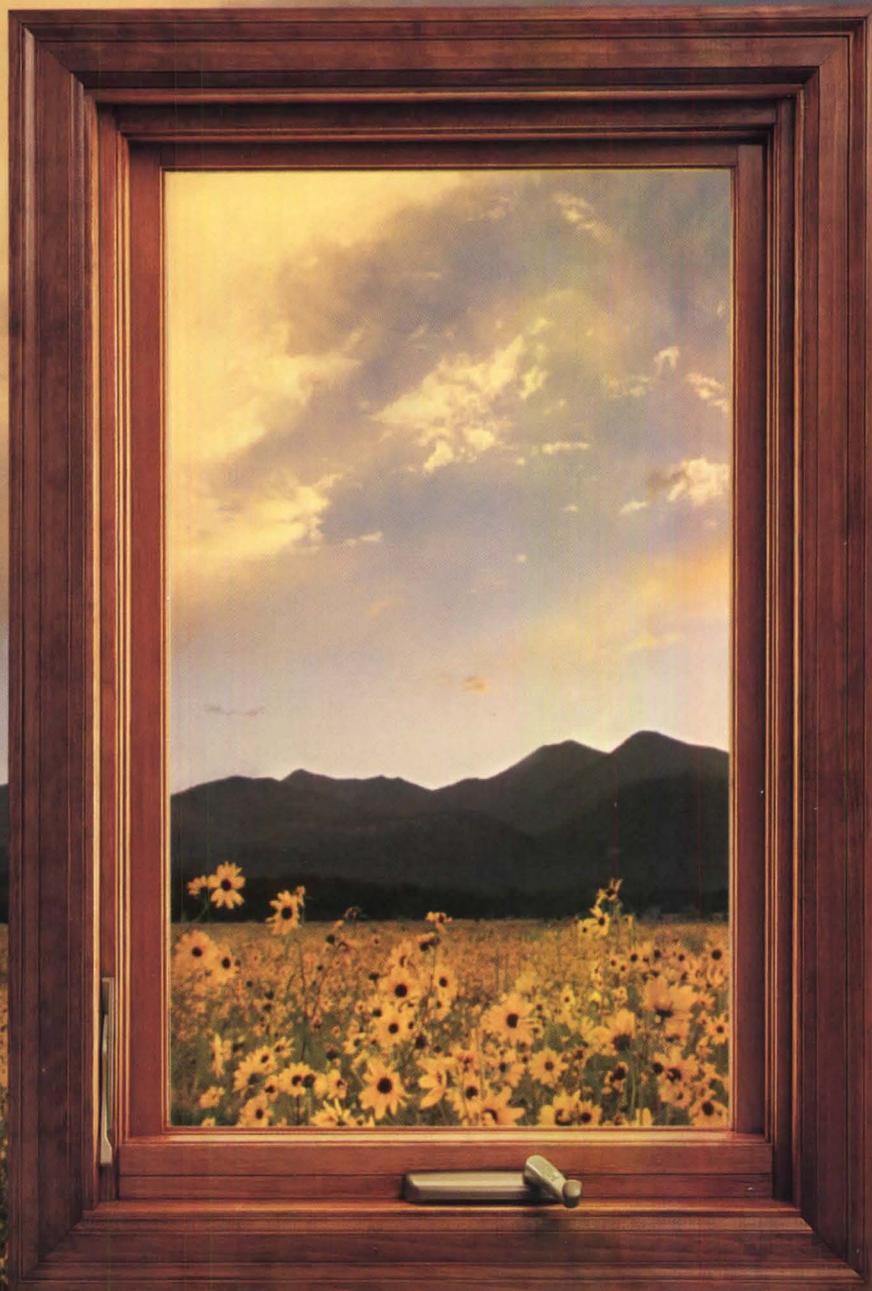


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